HOME away from HOME

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# HOME AWAY FROM HOME

**REVISING THE CIRCLE / SQUARE IN WASHINGTON D.C.**

**TRUXTON CIRCLE REHABILITATION**

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**Abstract:**

This thesis looks at the interplay between neighborhood space and public space as they come together in the circles and squares of Washington D.C.. The outcome of the thesis is a designed landscape that would perform the same roles as traditional circles in serving both neighborhood and public needs, at the site of the former Truxton Circle, a place where there had been a traffic circle and a public space but where it is not possible to make a traffic circle today.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my tremendously supportive committee. Paul Kelsch, Wendy Jacobson and Nathan Heavers. This thesis is testiment to their dedication and support in guiding me through the last three years.

To Jaan Holt and Henry Hollander, the director and coordinator of WAAC, I couldn't have finished this degree without all your help.

To my freinds and fellow classmates.

And to my family. For all of the love and continuous support they have given me throughout my time in graduate school; I could not have done it without you.

# INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an exploration of the relations between public and neighborhood spaces, the needs that each of them serve for, and the interplay between them if in the same space.

Human beings strive to be peaceful and prosperous, but money alone will not ensue these needs, other factors are necessary. One of the most important factors is to live in a "good" environment. A good environment is a clean, livable, well designed and socially suitable neighborhood that meets the needs of the individuals living within it. The exploration began with an interest in the importance of neighborhood spaces, and by studying the components of a well-designed neighborhood in an urban situation.

As the population in cities has increased neighborhoods have become more and more boxes of condos and apartments without enough green areas. Designers began thinking about public spaces and beautiful landscapes designed in cities. These areas made cities better places to live, but as with any other theory or idea, urban parks had flaws; they could get too crowded, they could be unsafe, they could be the bad environments for children, and therefore parents would not feel safe letting their children be alone in these areas. Although, there may have been a sense of anonymity in these areas because they were too crowded and too big for someone to see a familiar face, and strangers would not care and look at what are others doing. But this privacy had a con; neighbors who were living around the park would not feel as welcome as they should; as locals, there should be a difference between them and tourists. For these reasons and many more social and political reasons, the concept of "neighborhood space" developed in the design field. Randolph Hester defines neighborhood space as: "public outdoor territory close to home which, because of the residents' collective responsibility, familiar association, and frequent shared use, is considered to be their own." (Hester 1975) (p10) Neighborhood spaces are defined as spaces that are open to the public but have a certain private character to them. They can be small parks, open courtyards, alleys, or something similar. They are usually accessible by everyone but are understood to be used primarily by the surrounding residents. Users meet a set of needs in neighborhood spaces that includes feeling secure in an open space, getting to know people who live around them, having a healthy small society, feeling the joint ownership (symbolic or

real) over something with neighbors and having a safe playground for children. (Hester 1975).

For the past few decades urban designers, landscape architects and other design professionals have been discussing the idea of public spaces and semi-public spaces, sometimes without acknowledging semi-public spaces (neighborhood spaces are categorized as semi-public spaces) and counting all the not-private spaces as public. I think the first step to design a good neighborhood, urban or suburban, is to acknowledge these spaces. As Brill argues: "A piece of important work for us all would be to seek more appropriate forms, by understanding community life more fully (and how it differs from public life), in some joint effort by those in psychology, sociology, anthropology, urban design and landscape architecture, and by citizens." (Brill 2001)(p51)

After deciding to work on this issue for my MLA thesis, the need to distinguish between these spaces became apparent. There have been numerous works written in the past few decades on these two topics, and this thesis took shape based on literature and ideas from Michael Brill, Lyn H. Loftland, T. Banerjee, Stephen Carr, Barry B. Greenbie, Jan Gehl, Clare Marcus Cooper, Randolph Hester and Rob Krier.

In order to understand the differences between public spaces and neighborhood spaces, there is a need to define public spaces. Public spaces are social spaces that are open to the public and are accessible by all people. Public places include a varied range of different types of environments, from public parks to streets to beaches. In the modern era, people have been withdrawing from the public realm to the private realm. Although this process mainly began in the 19th century, with the development of suburbs and became very significant in mid-20th century, the idea of distaste for urbanity and the glorification of rural life goes back as far as Thomas Jefferson. In the 20th century, there was a strong emphasis on the privacy and sanctuary of the family realm. The notion of going out to the public realm, especially in urban areas, and of trusting strangers, and engaging in unfamiliar activities was very undesirable in the culture. Favoring this idea too much resulted in a culture and design type in which private realm was overly praised, which might not necessarily be a bad thing, but since it was damaging the

public realm it had negative effects. People have social needs; they need to meet new people, engage in new activities, and wander in areas they do not know and discover, or simply relax. Public life and public spaces are supportive of many of these human needs.

According to Carr, (Carr 1992) Homo sapiens in nature, are not very public creatures, they tend to seek out others they know intimately, or live in small groups in order to seek identity. They depended on a small group or tribe to survive. "Reptilian" is the primitive area of the brain that is responsible for survival and controls such behaviors as fighting, mating, searching for good, defense and territoriality. But as humans evolved, a new layer of brain developed, the Neocortex.  The Neocortex is more complex than the Reptilian, controls speech, language, technology and abstract thoughts. Human relations are divided between these two parts. Even though we might not need a very small group of people intimate to us 'to survive', we would still rather have them. This is why it is very unusual for someone to intimately know more than the "number of the original hunter-gatherer band". On the other hand, the Neocortex which is more developed is responsible for understanding concepts such as humanity and the common good, and what makes it necessary for us to live in a public realm. This is what that drives us to donate money to people who we have never seen and may never see in our lifetime. Overall, these two parts of the brain are the reasons that we feel secure in small groups of people we know well, while appreciating the public realm and people who are strangers. These are also the reasons that we interact different with our friends as opposed to strangers, nevertheless, enjoy both types of interactions. (Carr 1992)

Another important aspect of public spaces is the privacy and anonymity that they provide, as they are big enough and public enough that one might never see a familiar face and can relax and observe others without being judged or being expected to engage. This characteristic can be very important for two groups of people; teenagers and people who are classified as low-income. Teenagers tend to seek out places that are far away from the eyes of people they know, in order to experience the world on their own. The second group; low-income people who live in crowded conditions and very populated domestic area, especially people who live in shared rooms with their family members or with roommates. These people might not have enough privacy in the domestic realm and they may choose to escape to public spaces to have

privacy from their own family members.  (Hester 1975)

Semi-public or neighborhood spaces are defined as spaces that are open to the public but have a certain private character to them. They can be small parks, open courtyards, alleys, or something similar. They are usually accessible by everyone but are understood to be used primarily by the surrounding residents.

Compared to public spaces, semi-public spaces are supportive of different needs of people and therefore have different functions and different criteria for design. The needs that semi-public spaces or communal spaces support include feeling secure in an open space, getting to know people who live around them, having a healthy small society, feeling the joint ownership (symbolic or real) over something with neighbors and having a safe playground for children. (Hester 1975) As Clare Cooper Marcus says: "A community of neighbors where one can recognize everyone, where numerous causal encounters occur each day, and where a sense of ownership and control allows subtle modifications to be made to the shared environment as community needs change. People have a need to relate to a group which is larger than the family unit but smaller than a planner-designed neighborhood. In brief, there is a need for community life as distinct from public life." (Marcus 2003) Marcus argues, neighborhood spaces are complementary and parallel to the public life of streets, plazas, and parks. Except psychological reasons, there are proven facts and reasons why there is a need for these spaces. For instance, in situations where both parents are employed, the neighborhood space can become a safe playground for children where strangers have limited access and neighbors can keep a watchful eye. This brings up the importance of the proximity of these spaces to the private realm or home. The proximity is the reason that people can watch their children from the window or on the porch while they are playing, or even be confident that if they cannot be there for some time, some of the neighbors will be, and they do not expect any stranger to be in communal spaces. All of these characteristics are related to proximity.

# INTRODUCTION

According to Marcus the characteristics of successful neighborhood spaces includes the following:

1. Being bounded by the dwellings and being very distinctive to a public park

2. Entry points from public streets make it clear that these are not public spaces

3. The dimension and the height-to-width ratios of buildings should create human scale

4. There should be clear boundaries and easy access between the private realm and the neighborhood space. These boundaries depend on the culture, and the amount that different cultures value privacy, but they should be permeable, yet clearly visible. Shrubs and plantings, or topographic change are common ways to delineate spare. (Marcus 2003)

According to Jan Gehl, all these spaces are connected to each other with transition spaces. If we imagine back yards or porches as private outdoor spaces, a good boundary would be a transition space between the private realm and semi-public realm, where neighbors who are alike engage in activities. This way neighborhood space would be a transition space to a more public realm, in which more diverse people and neighbors who have less in common come together. (Gehl 2011) As Richard Sennet mentions, one of the most important roles of shared spaces is to encourage people to confront each other and their differences in a non-combative way. (Fleming et al. 1990)

In his book Neighborhood Space, Randolph Hester states that a key in communal spaces is different types of social interactions. There is a spectrum of types of interactions in neighborhood spaces which ranges from cooperation and accommodation to acculturation and conflict. Cooperation happens when two different types of users use a space in a similar or cooperative way. This would not create any issues in the design. Accommodation happens when two different types of users want to use the same space for a different purpose. The ideal solution would be if the designer could accommodate both of the activities and let them happen simultaneously by separating them geographically.

Acculturation, which can be a very important need in societies, refers to when users observe other people, think about what they are doing, and learn by watching and observing. They may or may not decide to engage in that activity at the moment, but just by observing they will experience something new and may participate in the neighborhood activities later. The most common design implication of acculturation is related to children's playgrounds; children go to a playground, stand and watch other children, and find an opportunity to engage. Another design implication is when there are edges designed around a center activity, and new users linger around the edges, and observe what sort of activity is going on, and decide to participate or not. This makes the design of the edges very important; they should be supportive of notion of acculturation. The last type of interactions that Hester mentions is competition, which also can be seen in some children's playground. It should be noted that there is a difference between competition and conflict. Competition can make a design richer but if a design brings conflict to the neighborhood, it can be a very negative issue (Hester 1975).

As previously mentioned, public spaces and semi-public spaces respond to both different and similar needs of users. Some similar needs that people seek in both of these spaces are comfort and relaxation; these needs make necessary the creation of comfortable and correctly oriented seating, shade in some areas and light and sun in other areas. There is also need for some spaces that are loosely programmed to let users decide how to use spaces to their own liking.

The most obvious differentiation between public and semi-public spaces is their size. While it is expected that public spaces be bigger so that they can include more varied activities while also allowing people to maintain their privacy, semi-public spaces require a more human scale. They are usually smaller than 80 feet long, because that is the range for human eye and most users prefer a certain level of visibility. (Hester 1975 and Marcus 2003)

Another difference between public and semi-public spaces is the boundary, while public spaces can be loosely bounded to feel more integrated

into the public domain, semi-public spaces are usually more enclosed in order to show that they are not actually a public space, as mentioned in the last chapter. The boundaries seem to try to hide the semi-public spaces from the street. (Carr 1992 and Marcus 2003)

One other difference is the circulation and path pattern; the public spaces should usually be easy to navigate because many of the users do not use them often. On the other hand, semi-public spaces have regular users who will use the paths on a regular basis, which allows the neighborhood spaces to be more complex in design.

One need that is supported in public spaces and not neighborhood spaces is the need for discovery. People go to public spaces to discover and experience new things, and this changes the design criteria extensively. For instance, the vegetation in public spaces is usually more varied than neighborhood spaces, while in neighborhood spaces vegetation is used for the specific needs of neighbors (shade or fruits), the vegetation in public spaces should be more playful. For example, it is common to see trees with different types of foliage in public parks. (Greenbie 1981) The type of engagement in activities also varies. Passive engagement occurs more frequently in public spaces, where one of the main activities is to engage in people watching. But users of semi-public spaces are expected to be more actively engaged in activities and even in the landscape by participating in what their neighbors are doing, and by maintaining and even sometimes modifying the space themselves (Greenbie 1981).

In my research, it appeared that neighborhood spaces are being overlooked and not enough attention is being given to them, due to circumstance relating to budget, free space and lack of users since for the city, not all cities and neighborhoods can afford to have both types of these spaces and it makes more financial sense to make public spaces rather than neighborhood spaces. I started to wonder if it is possible to design a landscape that will support the needs that residents of a neighborhood have to meet both in a public space and a neighborhood space.

# NEIGHBORHOOD SPACES: CASE STUDY

Lansburgh Neighborhood Park is located in Washington D.C..  Renovation in 2013, transformed an unpopular park to a neighborhood popular space. The new design is suited for the specific Lansburgh's community needs. It includes a multifunctional ball field (mainly for Basketball) a community garden, a dog park and a "fruit path". The feedback that the designers has got back from the community has been very positive. Neighbors use the community garden for producing fruits and vegetables, having events and classes for children. The basketball court is very well used with different competitions and daily games.

Studying Lansburgh Park, showed the importance of the participation of neighborhood in design. Moody LA, the firm in charge of the renovation, held numerous hearings to find out the needs of the neighborhood, and they programmed the space based on these hearings. The tennis courts were transformed in to a multifunctional ball field, dog park was added and community gardens were introduced to the space. All these were a response to the needs of the specific neighborhood that the park is located in.

## Lansburgh Neighborhood Park
### Southwest, Washington D.C.

The newly renovated Lansburgh Park, transormed an unpopular park to a neighborhood space. The new design is suited for the specific Lansburgh's community needs. It includes a multifunctional ball field (mainly for Basketball) a community gaden, a dog park and a "fruit path". The feedback that the design has got back from the community has been very positive so far. Neighbors use the community garden for producing fruits and vege- tables, having events and classes for children. The basketball court is very well used with different competitions and daily games.

Proposed Garden Area

Transferred Tennis Courts to Basketball Courts

Proposed Dog Park
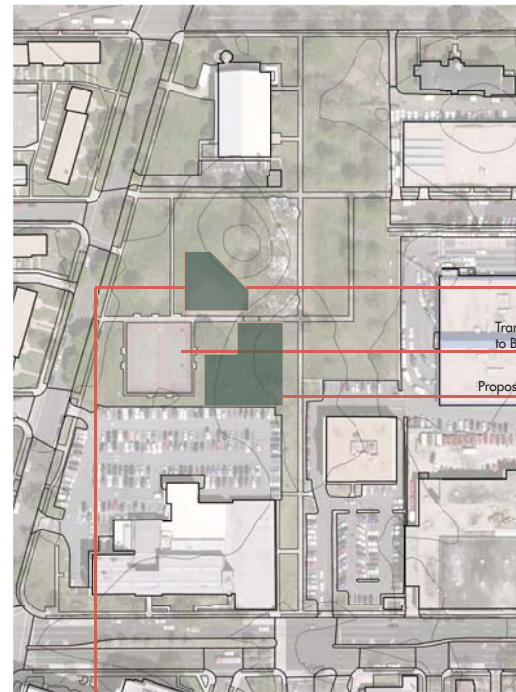
Interaction between neighborhood's children and landscape the community garden

Neighborhood residents helping in the process of renovating

Fruits and vegetables are growing to be mature after a year community garden with the help of the neighbors.

The new basketball court is very popular. daily games and a petitions happen at the court.

# PUBLIC SPACES: CASE STUDY I

## Nathan Phillips Square-City Hall
Toronto, Canada
Nathan Phillips Square is Toronto's premier public space and civic gathering place, it is a leading tourist attraction for the city and a national landmark. Surrounding the 12-acre civic space at Toronto City Hall, the City of Toronto has been renovating Nathan Phillips Square from 2009 to 2014 to restore its original beauty, preserve and enhance its unique heritage qualities, and reintroduce the public space as a more functional and environmentally sustainable community meeting place. The original design was done by Finnish architect Viljo Revell in In 1965. The modernist design of the podium level of Toronto City Hall included designs for a raised public plaza at the time, but because of budget issues his vision was never completed and the podium space was abandoned for years. The renovation was completed in 2014. The square attracts about 1.5 million visitors yearly.
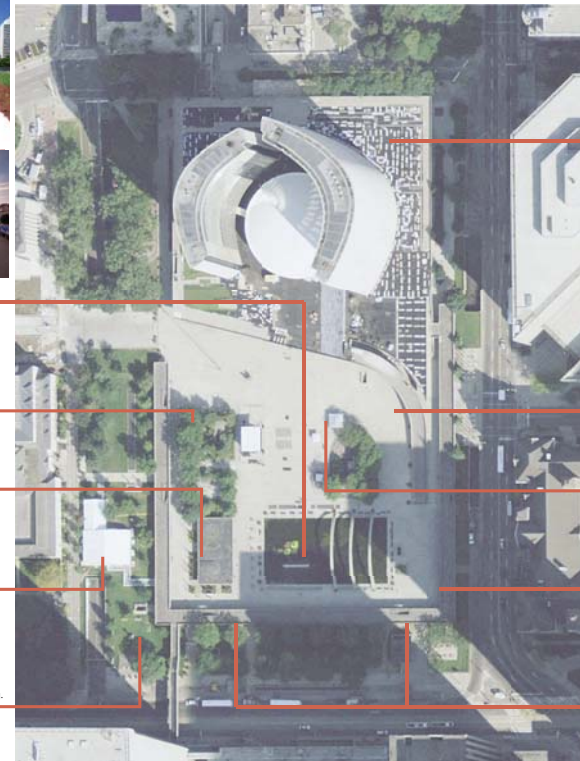
Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto is the first case study as a successful public space design.

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Studying Nathan Phillips Square showed how some design elements could make a true public space. The renovation successfully regained the space as a part of public realm, using elements and programs that people of Toronto are fond of, such as ice skating, theatre, and a gathering place for festivals. Another important factor in success of this urban landscape is its location, a historic location in the heart of the city; while all people of the city are proud of it, no one feels ownership over it.



**Green Roof and Sculpture/Shade Garden**
The design of the green roof is in keeping with the original architectural design of City Hall and was from the start designed to be grown and installed in a modular system. New landscaped gardens, courtyards, terraces, furniture and walkways provide unique views of downtown.

**Ice Skating Rink**

**Theatre/Public Terrace**
Integral Stairs for seating, stage roof and lighting grid

**Public Roof Terrace**

**Restaurant/Food Court**
with disabled accessibility

**Queen St. Forecourt**
trees, integrated seating, and lighting.

**Water feature**
The seasonal disappearing fountain has made the space very lively. Tourists and city residents, especially children use the water feature as a toy in summers.

**Glass Entry**
The entrance elevator to bike and car parking and also the tourist information kiosk.

**The Civic Boulevard**
The new canopy of trees will cover the sidewalk, making it more desirable and there is also a new entrance to the square.

**Two main entrances**
Reorinated towards the City Hall

# PUBLIC SPACES: CASE STUDY II

Although originally in L'Enfant's plan, Dupont Circle in Washington D.C., remained undeveloped until 1871 when U.S. Army Corps of Engineers started construction of it. Later in 1917 Henry Bacon and Daniel French, designers of Lincoln Memorial, were commissioned to design a fountain for the center. The white marble fountain with carvings of three classical figures symbolizing the sea, the stars and the wind is still sitting in the middle of the circle.

Studying Dupont Circle was a turning point in this thesis; while exploring Dupont Circle, I found out that it works as a neighborhood space at certain times for Yoga classes, chess games and more. The importance of intersections in D.C. was discovered and how they can be potentially public and neighborhood spaces at the same time.
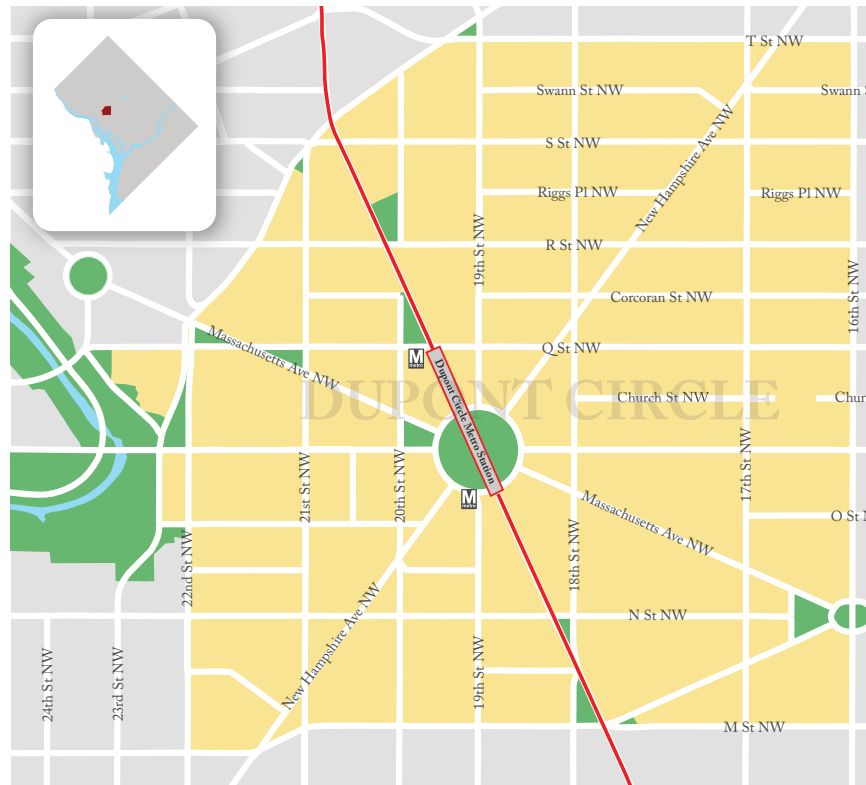
# Dupont Circle
**Washington D.C.**

Dupont Circle has a symbiotic relationship with the surrounding neighborhood, often serving as the community's front yard and gathering space. Businesses and residents are drawn to the area because of the proximity to the park and the park benefits from the foot traffic from shops, restaurants and the nearby Metro station. Office workers frequently spend their lunch hours here during the week to get some fresh air and local residents use the park during the weekend to relax, gather with friends, attend exercise classes and other events.

Michael Vergason

## Strong Central Element
The sculpture is rising from an elevated, circular fountain basin. The central location of the fountain helps to resolve the convergence of multiple paths that extend the avenue geometry across the park. The seat wall surrounding the basin allows people to congregate while also providing a place of prospect where visitors can survey activities both near and far.

## Extruded Bench & Hedges
Benches are on both side of the hedges and form a ring thirty feet from the edge of the fountain to provide a feeling of enclosure and a place to linger in the brightest area of the park. Because the benches all face toward the fountain, it makes the paved area between feel less like a walkway and more like a public stage.

## Wooded Area
The presence of large shade trees makes the lawn ringing the outer edge of Dupont Circle feel like an arboretum. This zone is clearly defined on its inner edge by the hedges and a paved circular path lined by benches along the perimeter. The trees help to absorb a lot of the street noise. These panels of shaded lawn often provide respite for apartment dwellers and tourists alike in search of a place to relax and escape the summer heat.

## Outer Planted Edge
Pedestrians are welcomed to Dupont Circle from the street by its planted outer perimeter. Mature canopy trees standing in panels of grass at the outer edge make a strong contrast to the asphalt and concrete paving that approaches the Circle. This outer ring of tree canopy makes the character of the wooded central lawn.

## Chess tables
The famous chess tables attract regular and professinal chess players from the neighborhood and city to chess games. Chess tables are usually occupied even in winter.

## Planned and Inprompty Yoga
It is very common to see people doing yoga under the trees. There are usually classes, free or paid, for the neighborhood. Yoga classes are very common in Spring and Summer.

**Major Intersection**

**Minor Intersection**

**Neighborhood Intersection**

**City Pedestrian Flow**

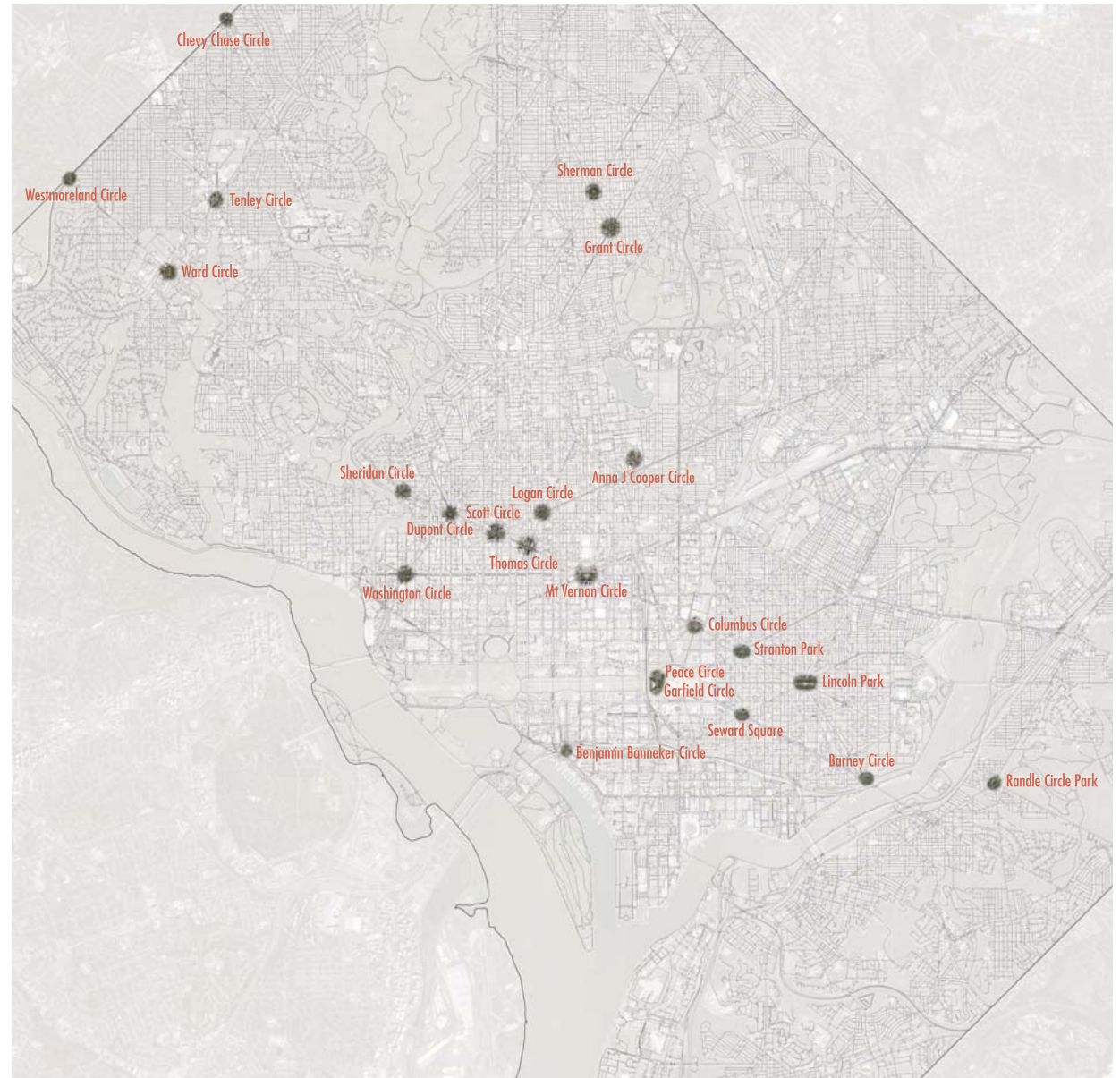**Neighborhood Pedestrian Flow**

Here is a neighborhood where nobody's your neighbor. Yet everybody is.
Eve Tushnet-Dupont Circle Resident & Freelance Writer

# SITE: TRUXTON CIRCLE

After exploring Dupont Circle, it was clear that intersections in D.C. could be spots with potentials for this thesis. While they are completely public, and also a part of the urban fabric, they could be places for neighborhoods around them to use be used as neighborhood spaces and residents could take over parts of traffic circle at times.

Therefore studying and researching the other traffic circles, squares and intersections in D.C. was the process of finding a site for intervention. I was looking for sites with a potential of becoming a new urban landscape with needed qualities for both the neighborhood and the city. The most important criteria, as found in case studies, were a location that is public enough to let the people of city engage in the landscape, and also with a neighborhood with residents who have a sense of responsibility about their neighborhood. In other words, a site where there is a need for residents to have a neighborhood space.



Chevy Chase Circle
Westmoreland Circle
Tenley Circle
Ward Circle
Sherman Circle
Grant Circle
Sheridan Circle
Anna J Cooper Circle
Logan Circle
Scott Circle
Dupont Circle
Thomas Circle
Washington Circle
Mt Vernon Circle
Columbus Circle
Stranton Park
Peace Circle
Garfield Circle
Lincoln Park
Seward Square
Benjamin Banneker Circle
Barney Circle
Randle Circle Park

# SITE: TRUXTON CIRCLE

In my exploration I came across an interesting intersection named Truxton Circle, with no circle in the middle.
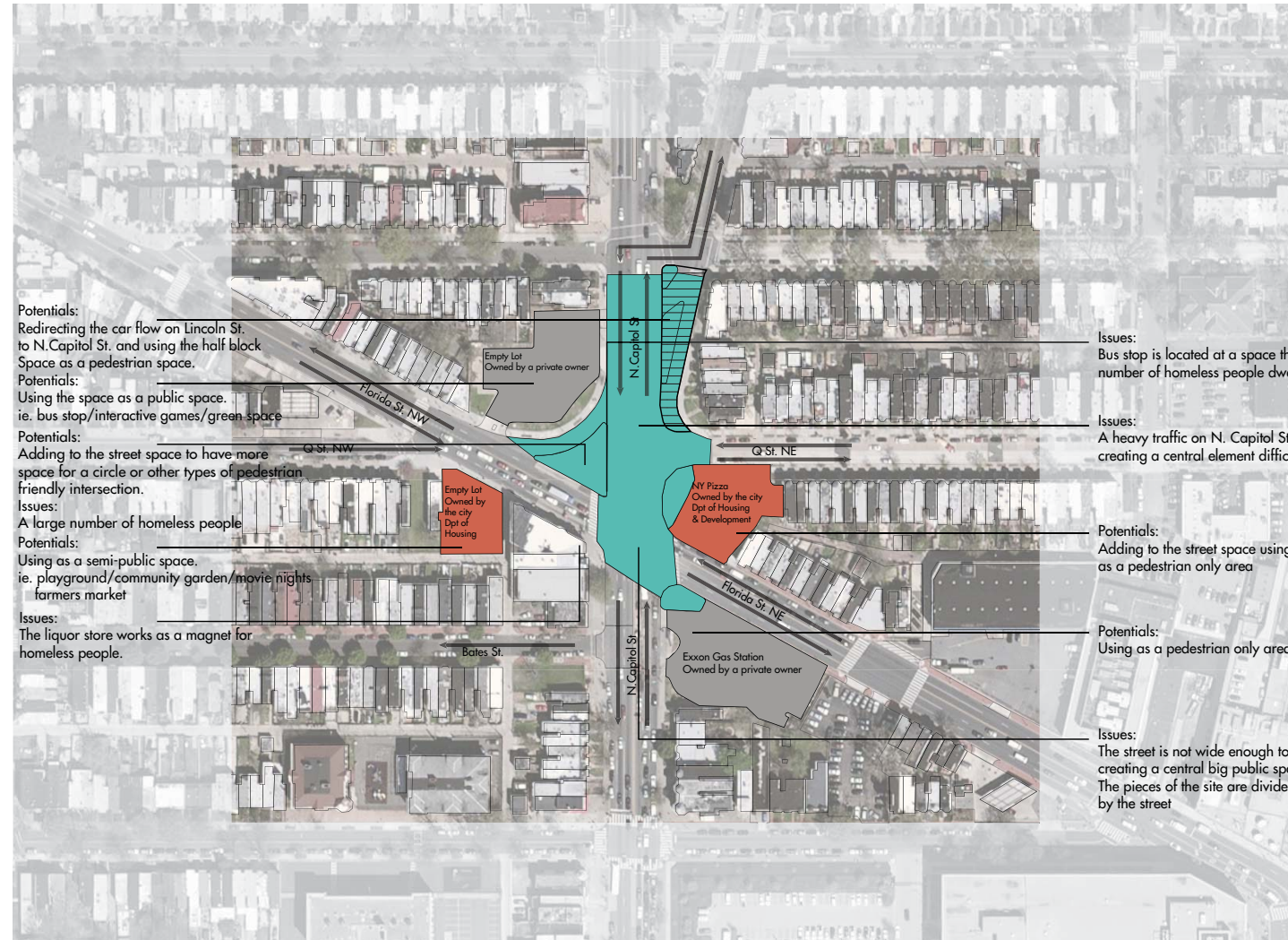
A few important qualities that made Truxton Circle an interesting design problem in the context of this thesis, were:

-Location: located on N. Capitol St. with a pleasant view to the nation's Capitol, as one of the most public symbols of United States.

-Neighborhood: The transformation mentioned in next page's timeline, brought the new residents of the neighborhood together, they care about their neighborhood. There are two different neighborhood associations, and they hold different events such as movie nights.
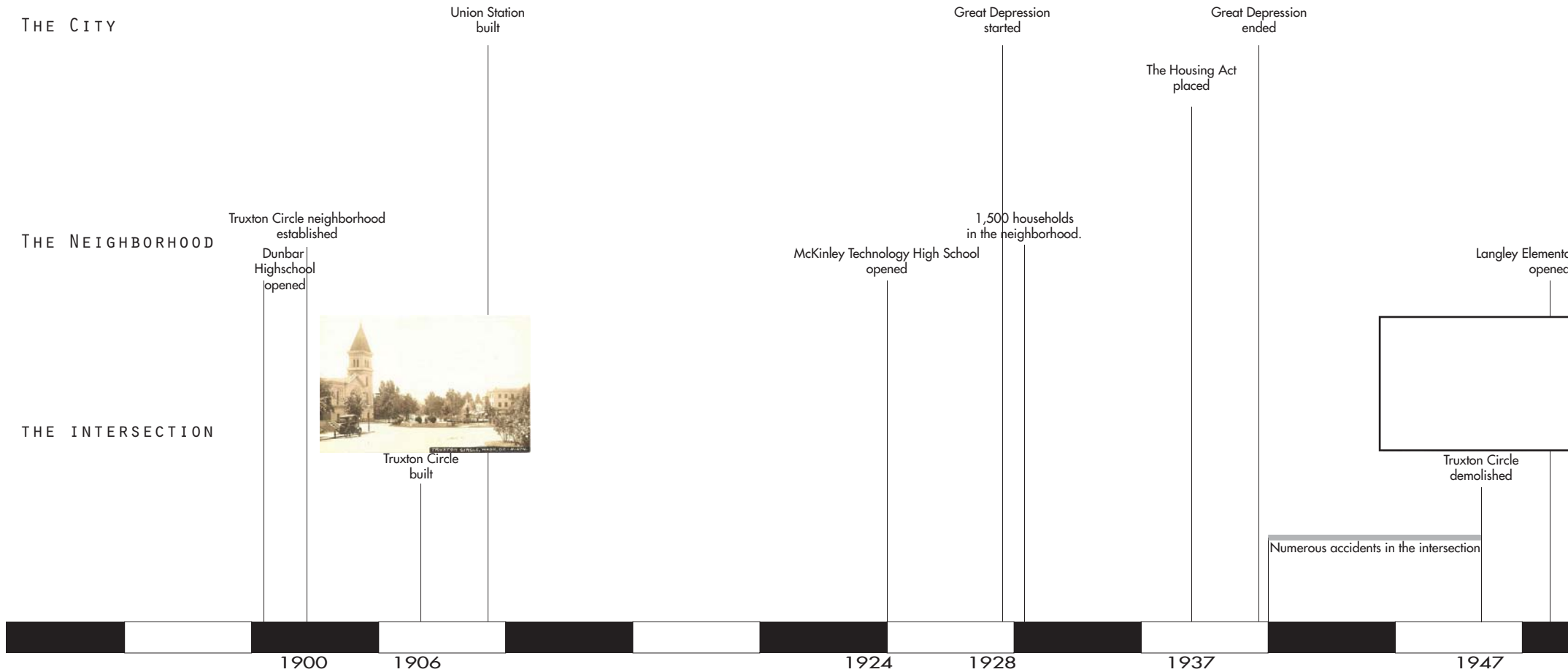
-History: Truxton Circle is a historic neighborhood, with lots of different stories and details that only the current and previous residents are aware of.

-Range of users/residents: The intersection is used by a range of people, from relatively affluent young professionals, to low-income old households and to homeless people.

Potentials:
Redirecting the car flow on Lincoln St. to N.Capitol St. and using the half block Space as a pedestrian space.

Potentials:
Using the space as a public space.
ie. bus stop/interactive games/green space

Potentials:
Adding to the street space to have more space for a circle or other types of pedestrian friendly intersection.

Issues:
A large number of homeless people

Potentials:
Using as a semi-public space.
ie. playground/community garden/movie nights
farmers market

Issues:
The liquor store works as a magnet for homeless people.

Empty Lot
Owned by a private owner

Empty Lot
Owned by the city
Dpt of Housing

NY Pizza
Owned by the city
Dpt of Housing
& Development

Exxon Gas Station
Owned by a private owner

Florida St. NW

Q St. NW

Bates St.

N. Capitol St

N. Capitol St

Q St. NE

Florida St. NE

Issues:
Bus stop is located at a space th
number of homeless people dwe

Issues:
A heavy traffic on N. Capitol St
creating a central element diffic

Potentials:
Adding to the street space using
as a pedestrian only area

Potentials:
Using as a pedestrian only area

Issues:
The street is not wide enough to
creating a central big public spa
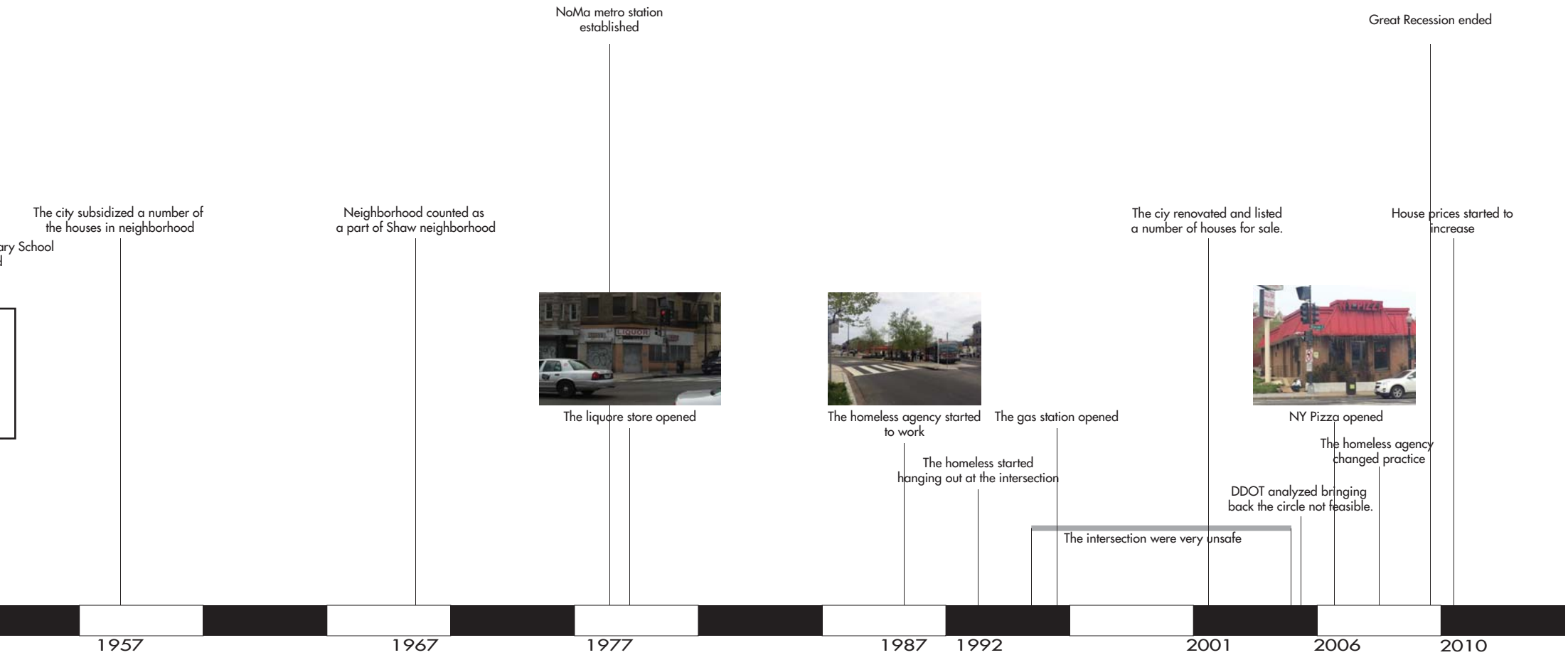The pieces of the site are divide
by the street

## SITE: TIMELINE

Truxton Circle neighborhood  was established in 1902 as a black neighborhood. The circle was located at the intersection of Q st. NE and North Capitol st., but was removed in 1947 due to an effort to make N. Capitol st. wider.  The destruction of the circle along with some other factors such as subsidizing some of the houses in the neighborhood and renting them for short term leases, changed the dynamics of the neighborhood.  By 1975 the neighborhood became a dangerous neighborhoods of D.C.. In 2000 the city decided to renovate and sell some of the subsidized houses in the neighborhood.

THE CITY

Union Station
built

Great Depression
started

Great Depression
ended

The Housing Act
placed

THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Truxton Circle neighborhood
established

Dunbar
Highschool
opened

1,500 households
in the neighborhood.

McKinley Technology High School
opened

Langley Elementa
opened

THE INTERSECTION



Truxton Circle
built

Truxton Circle
demolished

Numerous accidents in the intersection

1900      1906                          1924      1928          1937                  1947

NoMa metro station
established

Great Recession ended

The city subsidized a number of
the houses in neighborhood

Neighborhood counted as
a part of Shaw neighborhood

The ciy renovated and listed
a number of houses for sale.

House prices started to
increase

ary School



The liquore store opened



The homeless agency started
to work

The gas station opened



NY Pizza opened

The homeless agency
changed practice

The homeless started
hanging out at the intersection

DDOT analyzed bringing
back the circle not feasible.

The intersection were very unsafe

1957    1967    1977    1987    1992    2001    2006    2010

## SITE: BOUNDARY SELECTION

After deciding to work on Truxton Circle as the site, I started researching about the intersection, and the close by potential sites to find the exact boundaries of the site. The bird eye view drawing on the right shows the parts of the intersection, and their problems and potentials. In choosing spaces to intervene there were a few factors involved, the first one was the importance of the current space to the neighborhood. In my research and case studies, it was apparent that one of the important factors that could make a neighborhood space successful is its relation to the neighborhood's identity. For instance, the row houses on northeast of site could have been a good potential to be demolished and added to the pedestrian space, this could have helped to make a full circle in design, however, the row houses are relatively new, and are owned by caring owners, and demolishing them, wouldn't work as the same approach of keeping the neighborhood's identity. The other factor was the current program and function of the space, and how it is being used, whether by the public or the neighborhood, for instance, the empty lot (more information below) that the neighbors use as their movie night space.

The first part of the site is the intersection itself, the street and the sidewalks. The next part, is the empty lot on the North West of the intersection that is privately owned (img 1). Another piece of the puzzle is the small empty lot that is in Q St. NW, and is where the neighborhood association holds their summer movie night events currently (img 8). The last piece is where currently the NY Pizza Fast Food is (img 4).

As mentioned, In the process of choosing these pieces my goal was to choose places that by taking them out, the neighborhood would not lose any of its identity, and the neighborhood would stay as intact as possible. This was one of the reasons that NY Pizza is the only building that is being taken out and used as a part of the site; in my research, I found out that the restaurant is not popular neither in the neighborhood, or in the city, by counting their costumers in 5 different occasions, weekend and weekday.

The intersection of Lincoln St., and North Capitol St . north of the intersection), includes a pedestrian island, which is not being used as a pedestrian space because of its odd shape and location. A conjunction to the site is the decision to connect that island to the sidewalk, and have the vehicle traffic (about 10 vehicles a minute in rush hour) in the Lincoln St. to make a turn and continue in North Capitol St.

The last piece of the complexity in the side is the problem of homeless people. There are usually about 15 to 20 homeless people on the island pedestrian space in the west of the intersection (img 6). To add to the complexity there is bus stop right on the pedestrian island, and the people who are getting on or off the bus would have to walk in between in the homeless people.

# SITE: BOUNDARY SELECTION



Img.1
The empty lot at north west of the site, is owned by a private owner. It is approximatel y 18000 sq ft.

Img.2
The view from the intersection of Florida Ave and North Capitol St towards South, The Capitol is clearly visible from the intersection.

Img.3
The original circle was located in the intersection of North Capitol St. and Q St., and the Florida Ave. used to run next to the circle. At the time Florida Ave. was the Boundary Rd., the boundary of D.C.

Img.4
One of the corners of the intersection is occupied by NY Pizza fast food restaurant. The building has been on a 20 year lease which will end in a year (2016). The restaurant is not very popular in the

Img.5
Q St. NE. towards the intersection. The houses are being sold in this street very fast, and getting renovated one by one. The streetscape as you can see is not very

Img.6
The island triangle is completely dominated by the homeless people. Neighbors try their best to avoid walking in the triangle; one neighbor mentioned that the homeless don't have anything to do with neighbors unless you walk right in the middle of them. There is a bus stop on the triangle and it's hard for people who are getting off the bus to not walk in middle of the homeless.

Img.7
The empty lot on west of the side in Q St. NW, is owned by the city, and it is where neighbors hold their summer movie nights weekly.

Img.8
The liquor store on the intersection.

Img.9
DCITY Smokehouse, located in west of the site, is a relatively new restaurant, it is filled with young people for lunch and dinner. The vibe of the restaurant is very different comparing to the shops next to it. Neighbors (who I interviewed) love this place. The owner of the restaurant in a short tallk with me mentioned that he hopes there will be more new shops

Img.10
Bates St. a block south of the intersection was the first street with a neighborhood assosiaction. Most of the houses in this street were owned by the city and they were sold in 2000 to private owners.

Img.12
North Capitol St. towards north.

Img.13
Exxon Gas station on south east of the intersection is one of the 3 gas stations in a 4 block distance.

# D.C.'S CIRCLES RESEARCH I

A closer study of three existing circles in Washington revealed important relationships between the design of the circles and their use (or not) as neighborhood space.

To be able to intervene smartly and successfully on the site, a closer study of three existing circles in Washington was done. The goal was to find out how do traffic circles in D.C. operate for pedestrians. The study included looking at the design elements of three circles in D.C., Dupont Circle, Logan Circle and Washington Circle.

I started by making a section/axonometric of Dupont Circle, to closely look at the elements. The result is the drawing to the right.



the fountain

area around the fountain

8-inches steps to the fountain

20 feet wide walkway

all-around bench

3 feet high bushes

lawn with randomly placed trees

3 feet railing

15 feet wide walkway

all-around bench

3 feet high bushes

fenced-off vegetation area

3 feet railing

narrow walkway next to the street
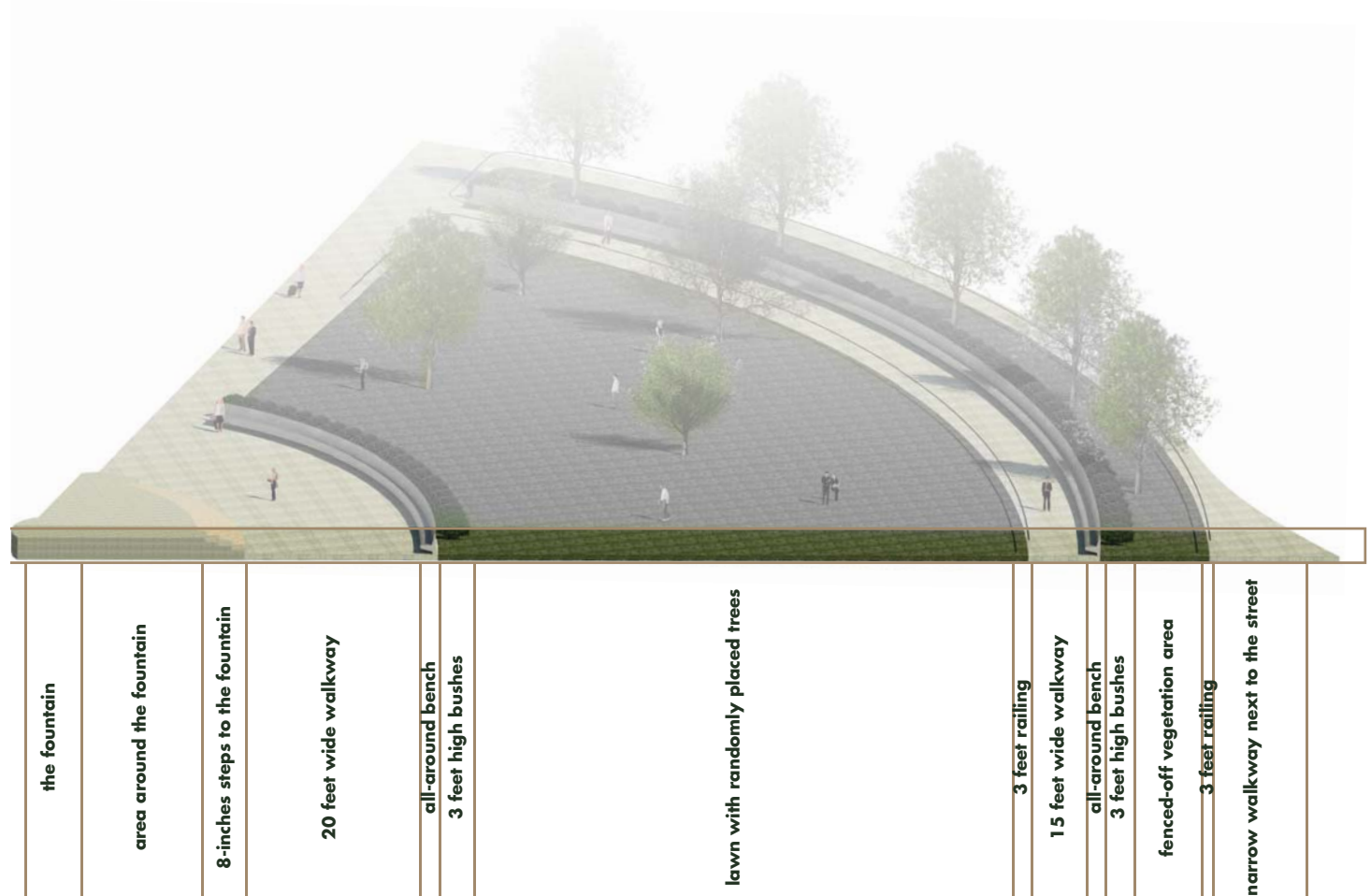
# D.C.'S CIRCLES RESEARCH I

The circles are similar in size, but quite different in character and use. so in my next drawing, I explored all of them, by looking at their design elements and characteristics in comparison. I found out that in all these three traffic circles the goal of the designer was to separate the street and enclose the circle. However, each of them has a different strategy, and different succession. Below are the design elements and their strategies in depth.

### Dupont Circle

- Introvert design, all the elements head toward the fountain
- Layered design with careful placement of railings, walkways, bushes, benches and lawn.
- The space inside is divided from the street and vehicles by the layers mentioned working as different walls
- Benches are only on one side of the walkways, looking inside.
- Different sized lawns, 4000 sq ft to 9000 sq ft.
- Trees are few but quite big.
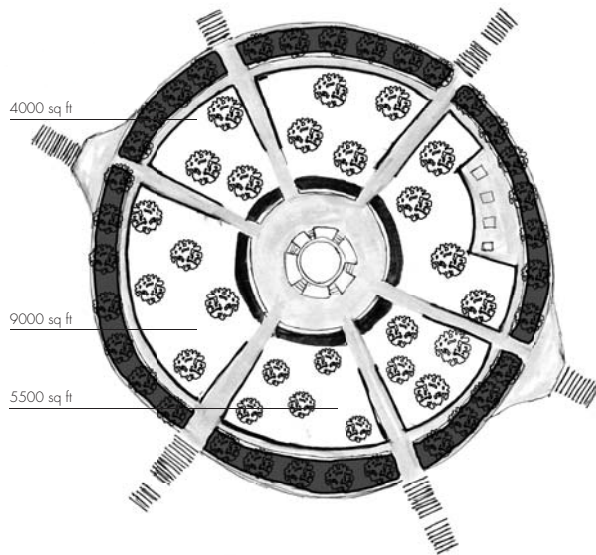
### Washington Circle

- Extrovert design, the sculpture in the middle is the main element of the design, and other elements are used to differentiate and protect it.
- Layered design with with railings, walkways, bushes, benches and lawn.
- The space inside is transparent to the street and vehicles.
- Benches are only on both sides of the walkways.
- Small sized lawns.
- Trees are few and young.
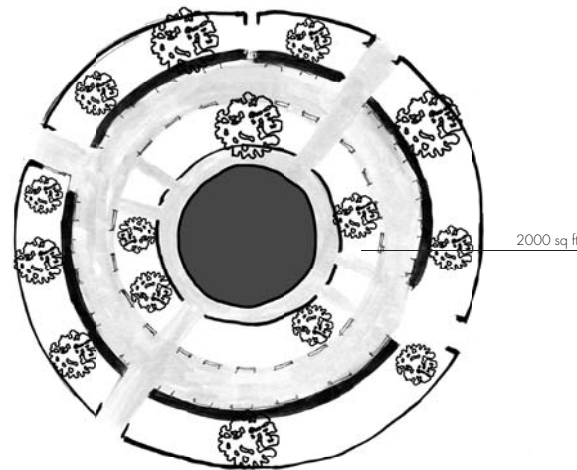
### Logan Circle

- Extrovert design, the sculpture in the middle is the main element of the design, however, it doesn't take over the space.
- Very few layers
- The space inside is divided from the street by diffused walls of lawn and densly spaced trees.
- Benches are only on one side of the walkways.
- Different sized lawns.
- Trees are numerous and big.

4000 sq ft

9000 sq ft

5500 sq ft

2000 sq ft

east & west lawns less populated by trees

south & north lawns less populated by trees
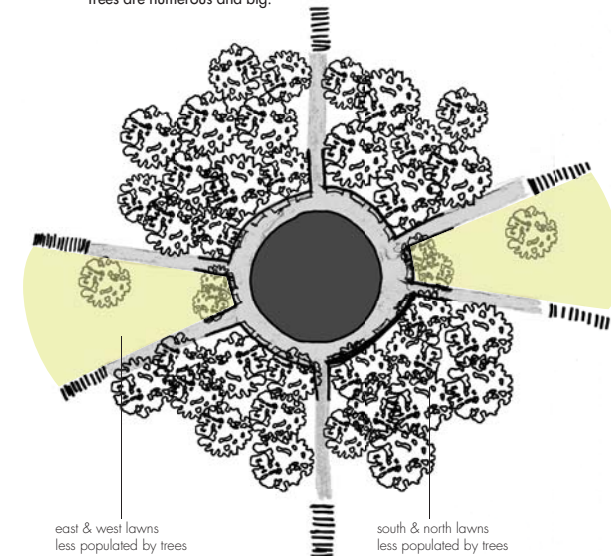
# D.C.'S CIRCLES RESEARCH II

Mapping the use of the circles revealed identifiable patterns at each circle and clear differences between each circle.

The goal in this analysis was to find out how users occupy these spaces. The analysis consists of counting stationed visitors. I visited each of these circles 3 times in the morning, 3 times in the afternoon, and 3 times at night, all in weekdays, and counted stationed users in different areas, and averaged them in relatively close spaces. The outcome was a few drawings that you can see in the this and next pages.

Each of red dots stands for a person who is stationary in the landscape.

As you can see, in the this analysis, I found out that the newly designed Washington Circle is not as successful and popular as the other two circles, and it doesn't have as many visitors.

**DUPONT CIRCLE**

morning
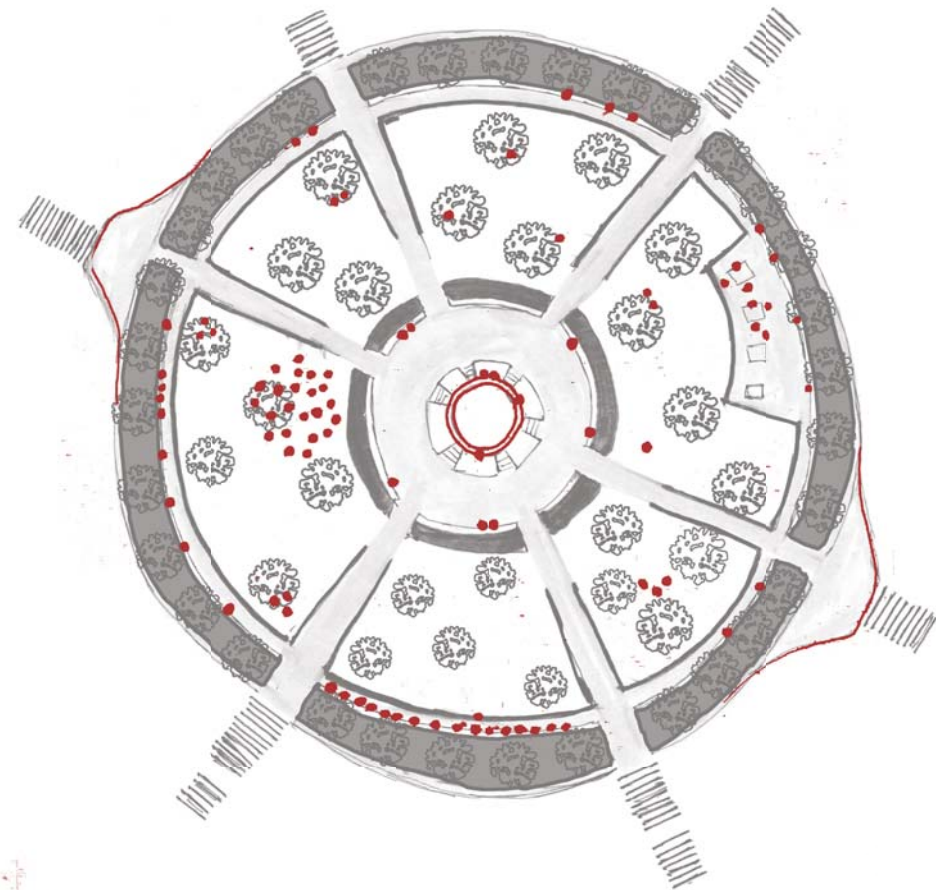
# D.C.'S CIRCLES RESEARCH II

**WASHINGTON CIRCLE**
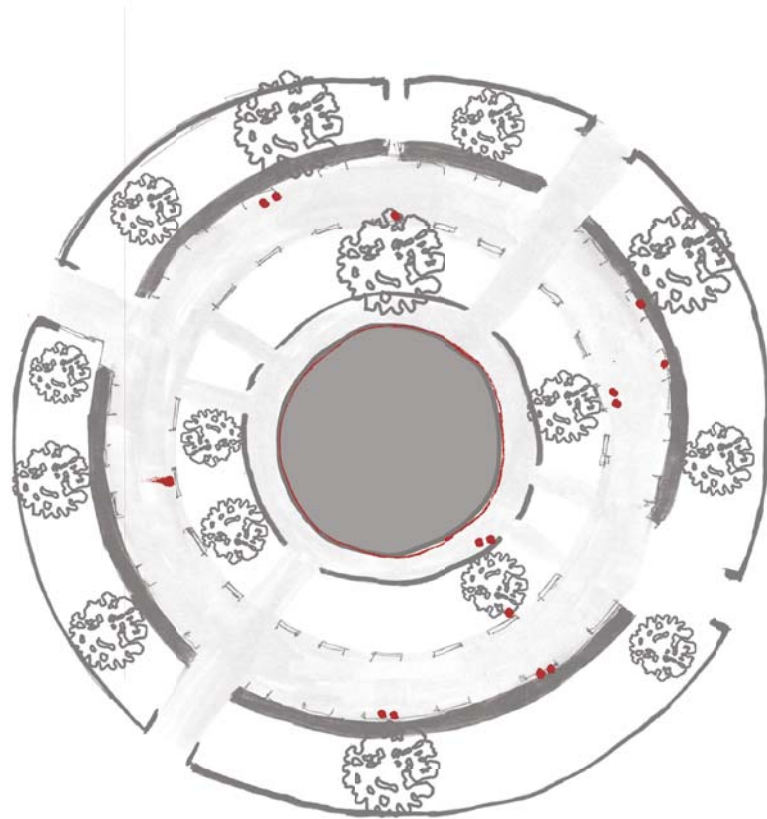
**LOGAN CIRCLE**
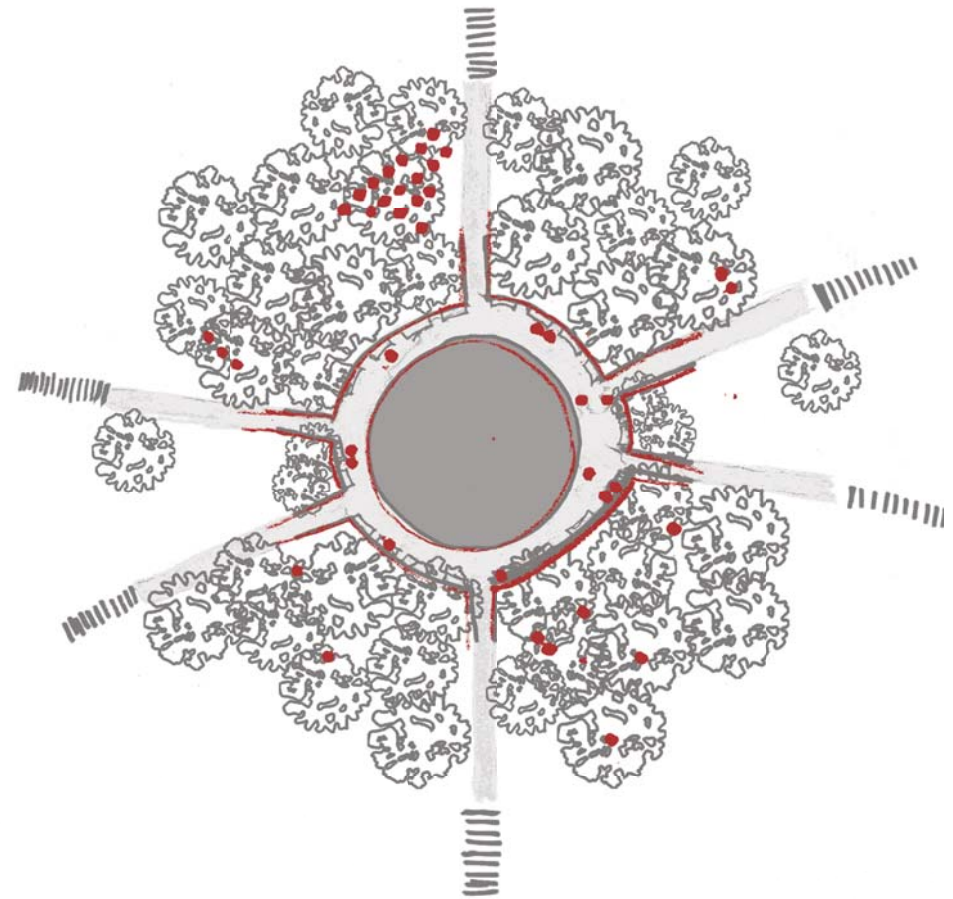
# D.C.'S CIRCLES RESEARCH II

Looking at analysis, I figured many positive and negative design moves that could affect how well people occupy the space.  Some of them are:

-Having a main and central 'distraction' element helps the urban landscapes to provide a setting for users to use the space in parallel to each other while looking or paying attention to something other than people. This element will help users to have a social interaction by looking and praising an element, and not feel that there is too much attention on them.

-Having an 'accessible' lawn area can be very important. Dupont Circle and Logan Circle both have different size lawns with shade, and they are being used well. One of the observations was that users would rather use  lawns bigger than 4000 sq ft.

**DUPONT CIRCLE**

afternoon
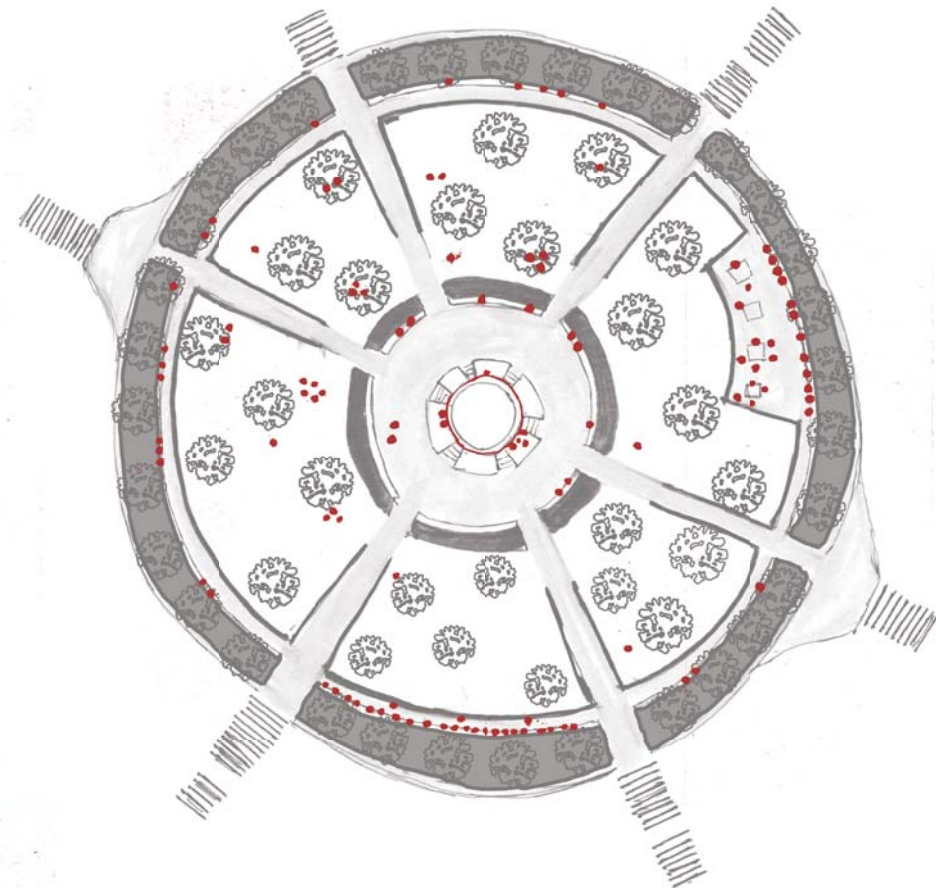
# D.C.'S CIRCLES RESEARCH II

## WASHINGTON CIRCLE
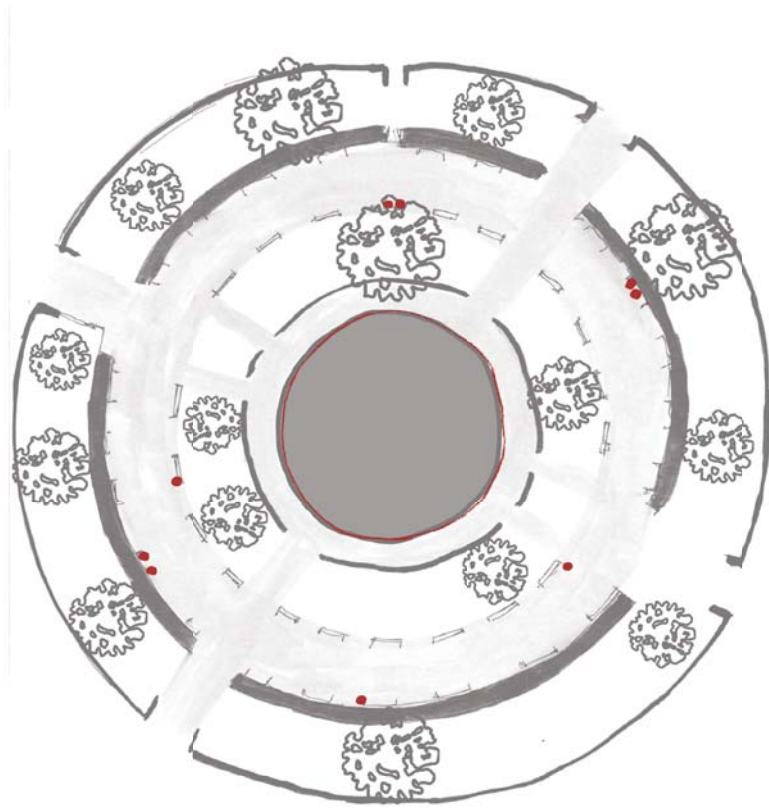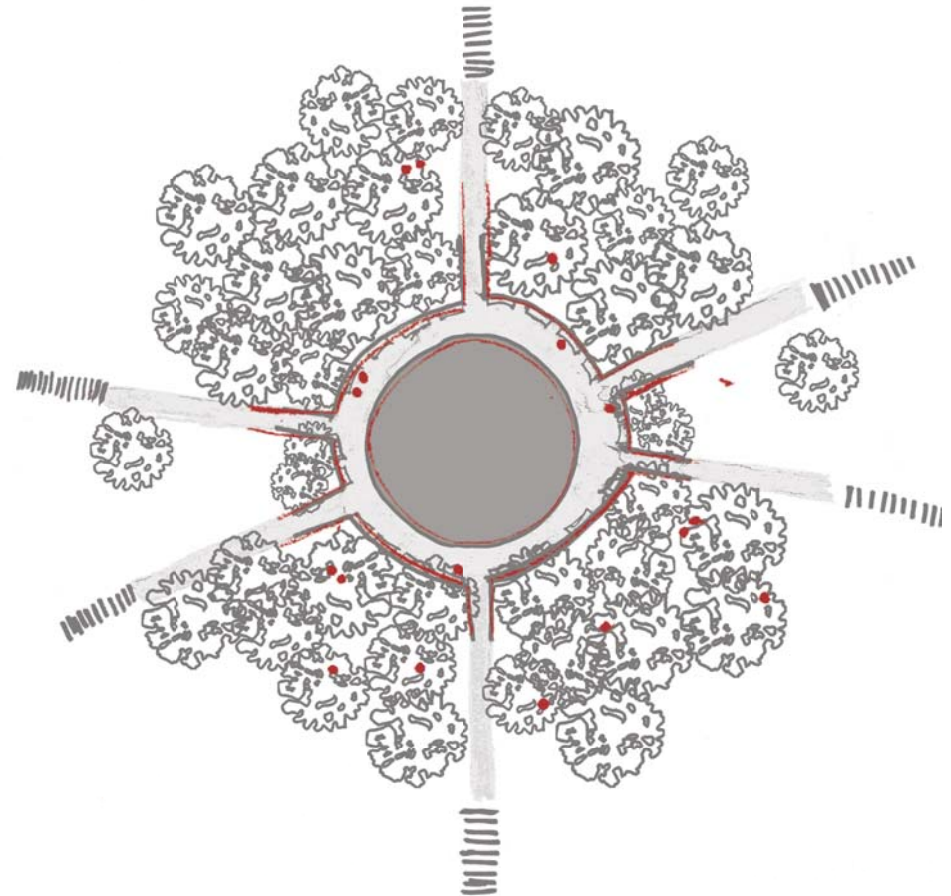
## LOGAN CIRCLE

# D.C.'S CIRCLES RESEARCH II

-Another important observation is about placing of benches. Dupont and Logan have benches that are only facing inwards, and none of them face each other. In other words there is not chance that users would sit on a bench that another person is sitting right in front of them. However, Washington Circle is different, benches face each other and I observed that users would not sit on a bench that the one in front of it is taken.

-Shrubs and railings can be used as barriers and walls with careful placement. Dupont uses railings on some sides of the lawns to prevent users from walking in from any point, in other words, lawns become rooms with specific entries.

-There are more than 20 homeless people occupying Dupont permanently, however, the chess tables in east of the site, provide entertainment for them, and also makes a dialog between them and the people of the neighborhood and the city.
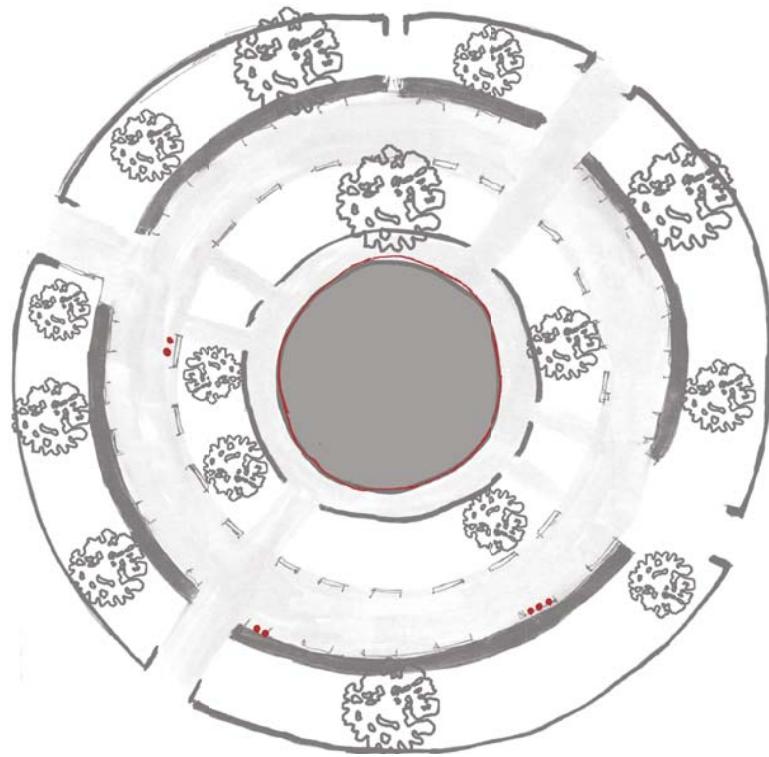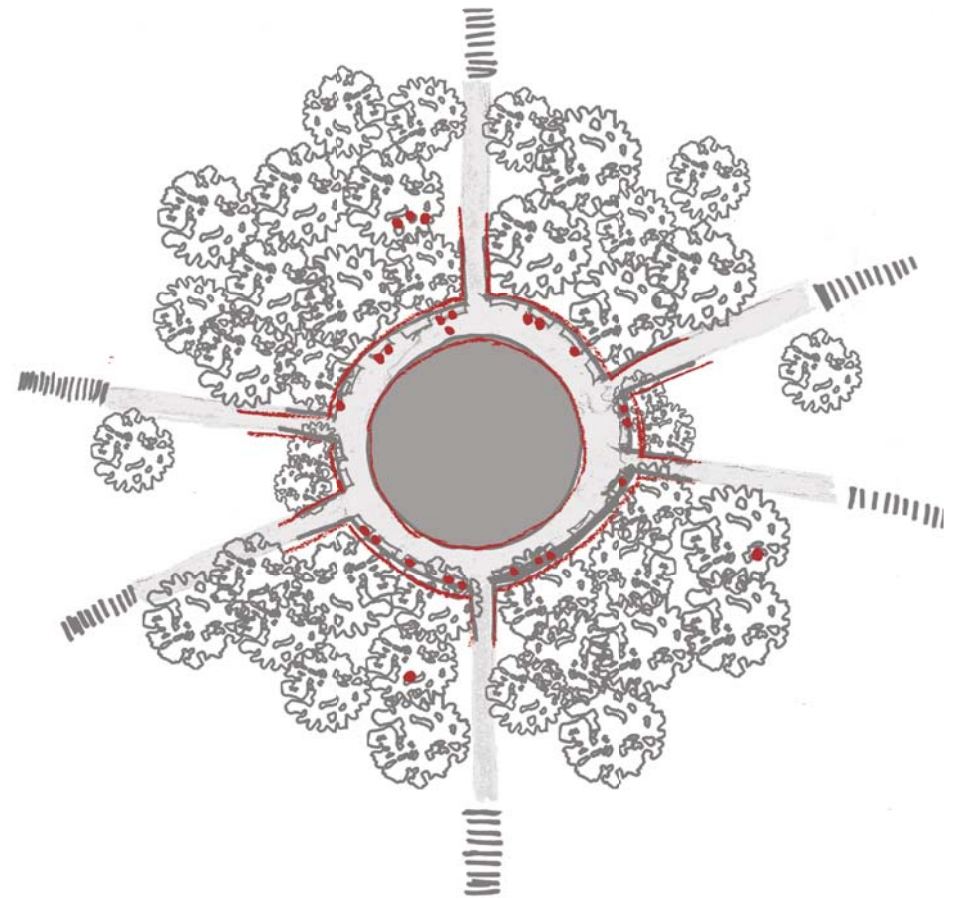
**DUPONT CIRCLE**

night
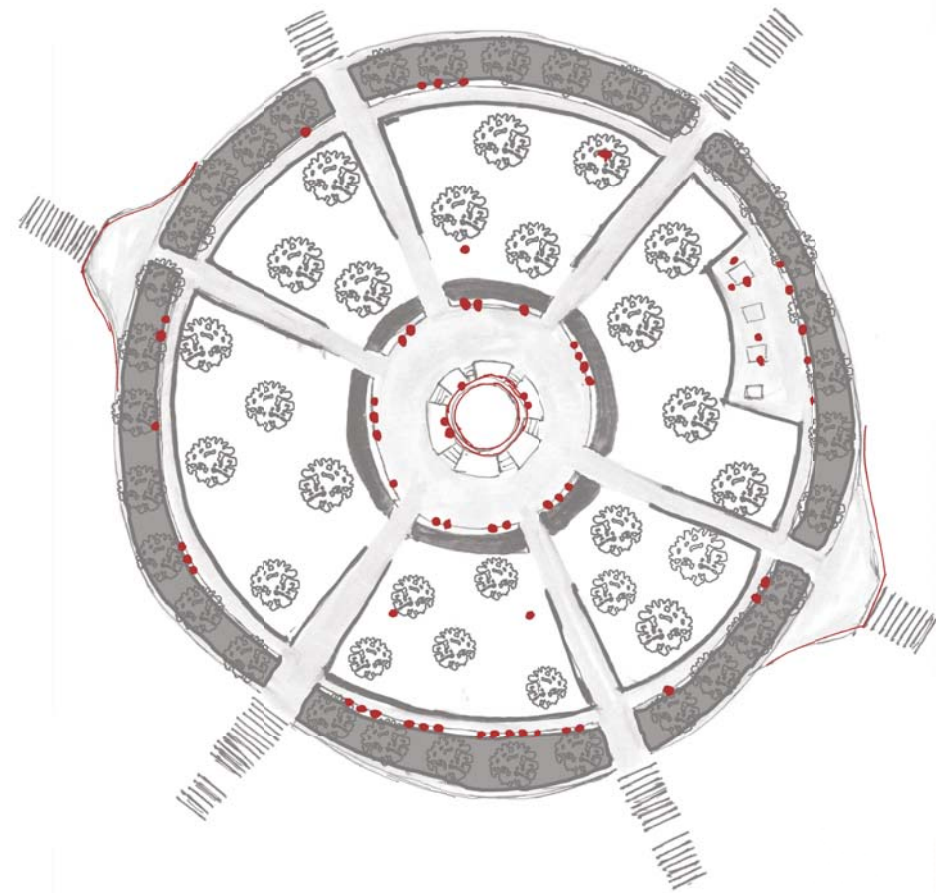
# D.C.'S CIRCLES RESEARCH II

## WASHINGTON CIRCLE

## LOGAN CIRCLE

# TRUXTON CIRCLE STATIONARY OCCUPANTS

The same process in the last analysis applied to Truxton Circle revealed different patterns. I learned a few things from this analysis on Truxton Circle:

-The most used pedestrian area of the site is the island where is occupied by the homeless, and it is one of the few areas that is not associated with the buildings. This fact might be giving the homeless people an ease of mind.

-The island in the north of the site, separating Lincoln St. and North Capitol St. is not being used at all. Although it is being counted a 'park' in the city map.

-Although there is a lot of pedestrian space in the site, none of the include any seats, even for the homeless people, the only available seats are cut-down tree trunks.

morning

afternoon

night
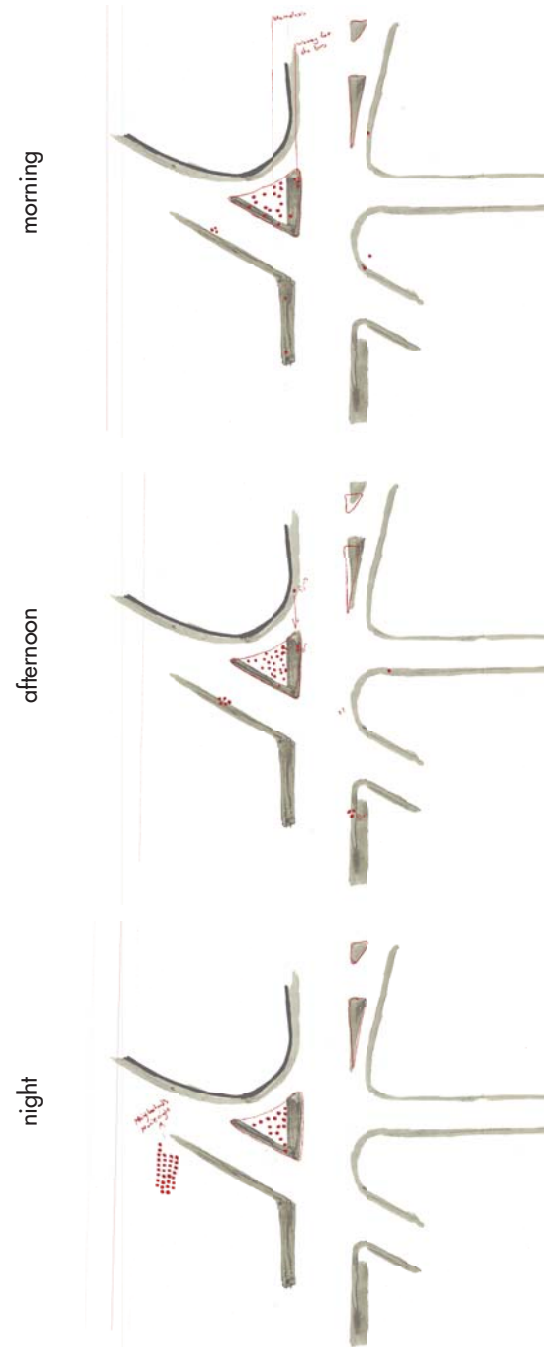
## DESIGN: CONCEPT ALTERNATIVES

My design process started by looking at different themes that were brought up by the research. If the pedestrian island in the east is the only space not associated with buildings and it's being used more often that other spaces, does that mean that a big space, not associated to buildings is the answer? Is there a need for a central element that connects other spaces? Should be a literal circle in the design? Does solving the traffic problem more important than making a pedestrian space?

I explored many themes, out of which, the 4 on the right seemed to be more successful, so as an experience I tried designing them by applying approaches I learned from the two successful circles that I studied earlier, Dupont Circle, and Logan Circle.
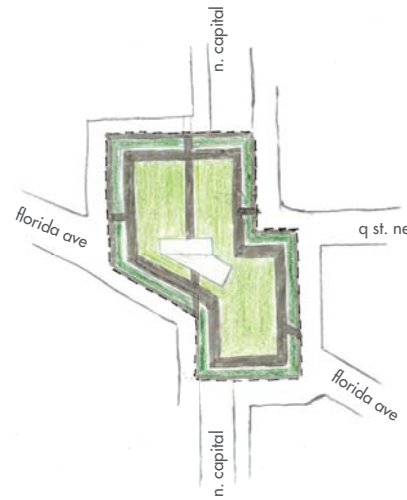
## DESIGN: CONCEPT ALTERNATIVES

**Dupont Circle Approach**
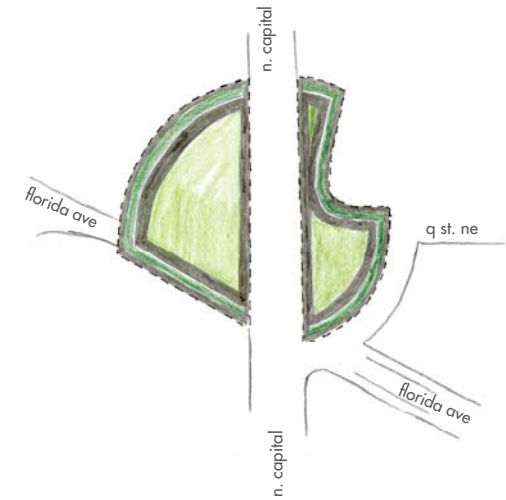
**Logan Circle Approach**
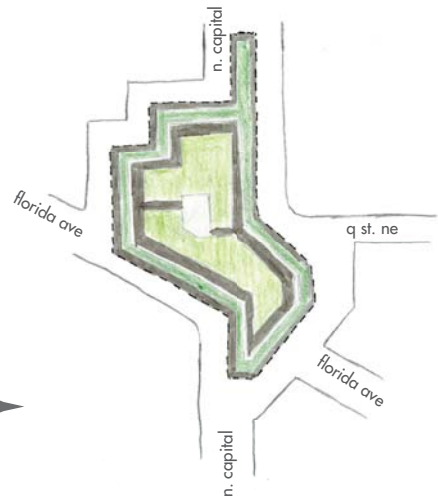
1. the biggest island of pedestrian space independent of the buildings no streets are tunneled
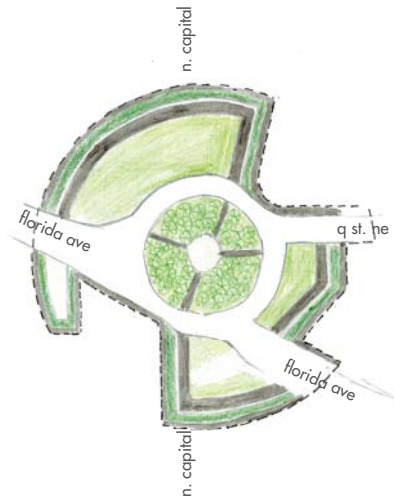
2. a strong central element in a bigger circle that is defined by the boundaries of the site n. capitol street is tunneled
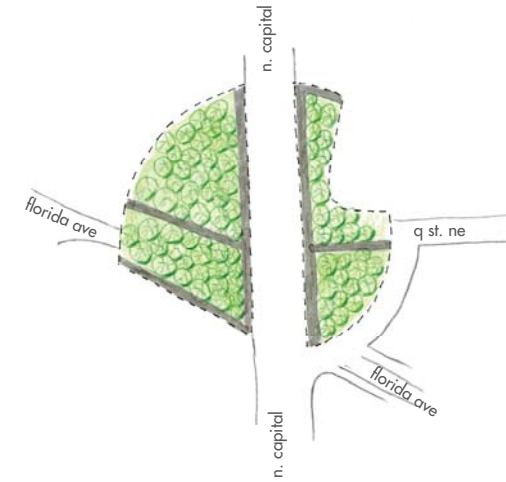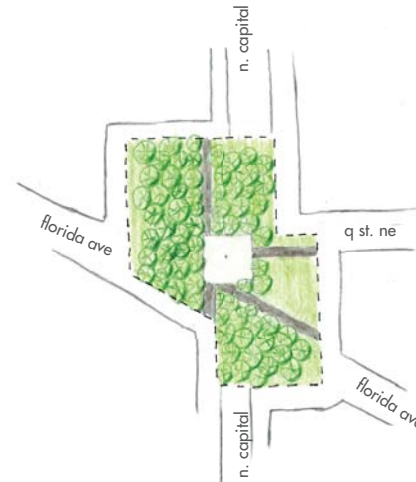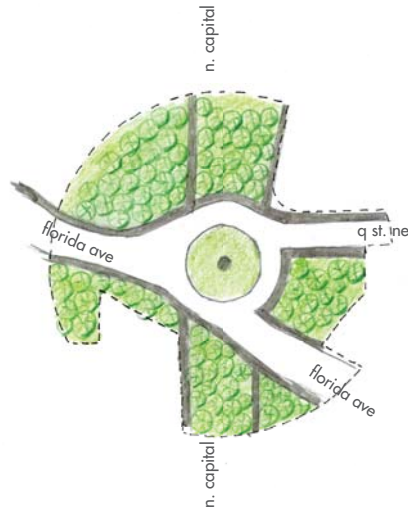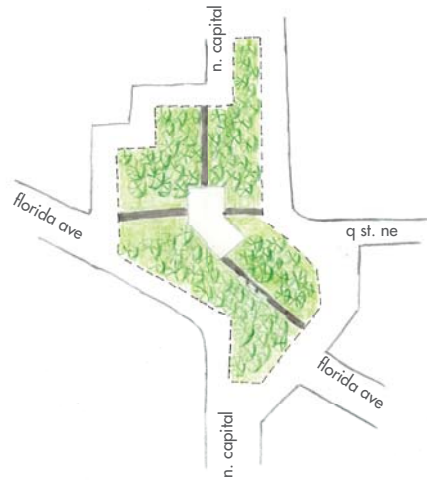
3. public square that is defined by the boundaries of the site no streets are tunneled

4. a big cirlce shapes an strong edge, the street is used as a central element florida ave. is tunneled

## DESIGN: CONCEPT ALTERNATIVES

Out of the 4 themes that I explored, no. 2 and no. 4 seemed to have the most potential, therefore, I did another experience; I wanted to find out how to solve the traffic problem, so I had to make a decision in tunneling a street, in this experience, I defined out the two approaches with different scenarios: 1. tunneling North Capitol St. 2. tunneling Florida Ave. 3. not tunneling any of the streets.

I noticed that having a circle or square has become the dominant theme in my design explorations, mainly because of the finding about importance of the center and a 'distraction' element, and even because of the burden of the name Truxton Circle.  These attempts were unsuccessful because of the specific restriction of the site. This was when I started to think about what are exactly helping the mentioned intersection (Dupont and Logan) other than being a circle. Thinking about this problem, and scaling my research and exploration to the site, my thesis question slightly changed at this point and became more specific to D.C.; if in D.C. circles are where neighborhood and the public meet each other, what happens if there is no circle? How can a design accomplish this task if there is no way of having a circle in the site? Or in other words how can I design a space that has the traditional functions of a public space/traffic circle, without having a traffic circle?
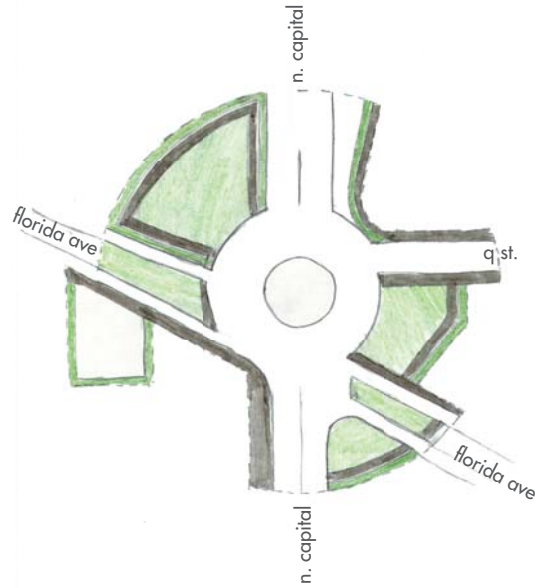
Doing various design exploration, I chose the second alternative on the following page as the final theme of my design; having a strong edge, and using the street as a distraction element.

# DESIGN: CONCEPT ALTERNATIVES



using a strong central element
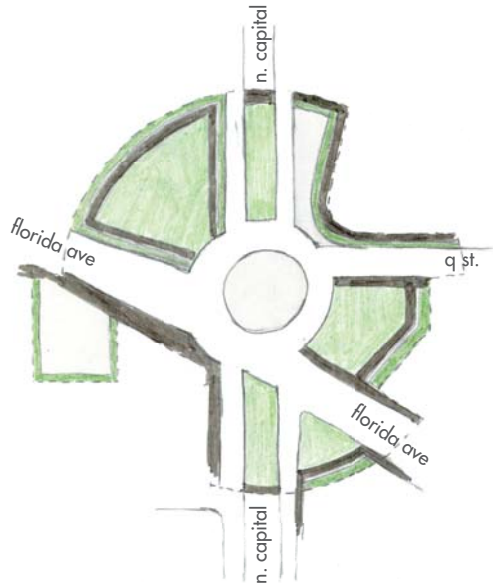
tunneling n. capitol st.

tunneling florida ave.
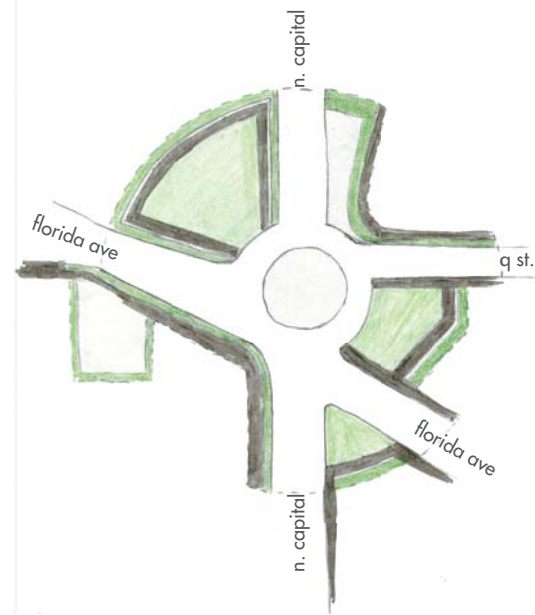
no streets tunneled

using a strong edge
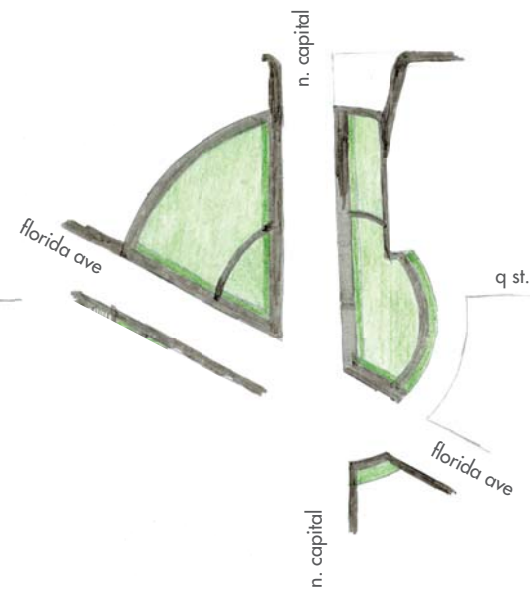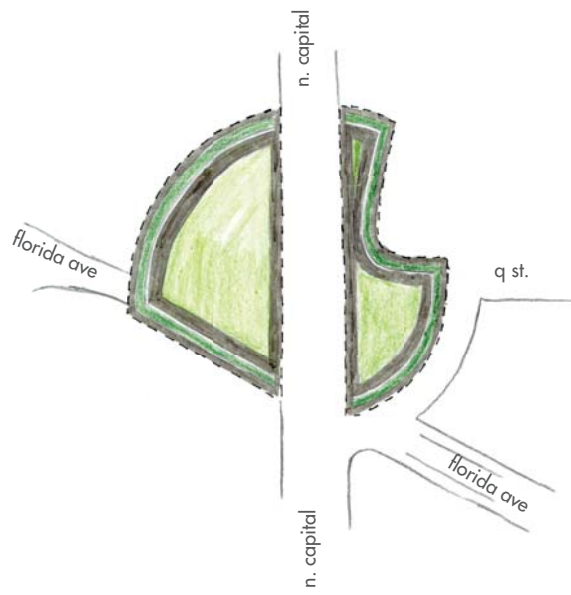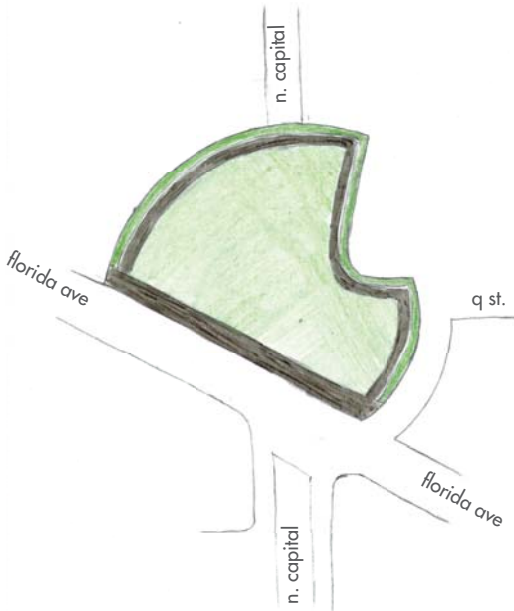
## DESIGN: CONCEPT

The design suggests using the street as the center of the 'circle' and as the distraction element. The scheme drawing to the left shows the main idea of the design. As you can see, the scheme is simply using a main central area, the black square or the street, which is bounding other spaces together. U.S. Capitol plays an important role in the public part of the design. North Capitol St. has a great view to the Capitol, but there is no place in the street that people could stop for a second, stand or sit and look at the Capitol.

I'm seeing the street as the center of the circle, and the other spaces as satellites around this center. These satellites respond to different needs of the people from the neighborhood, and the city.
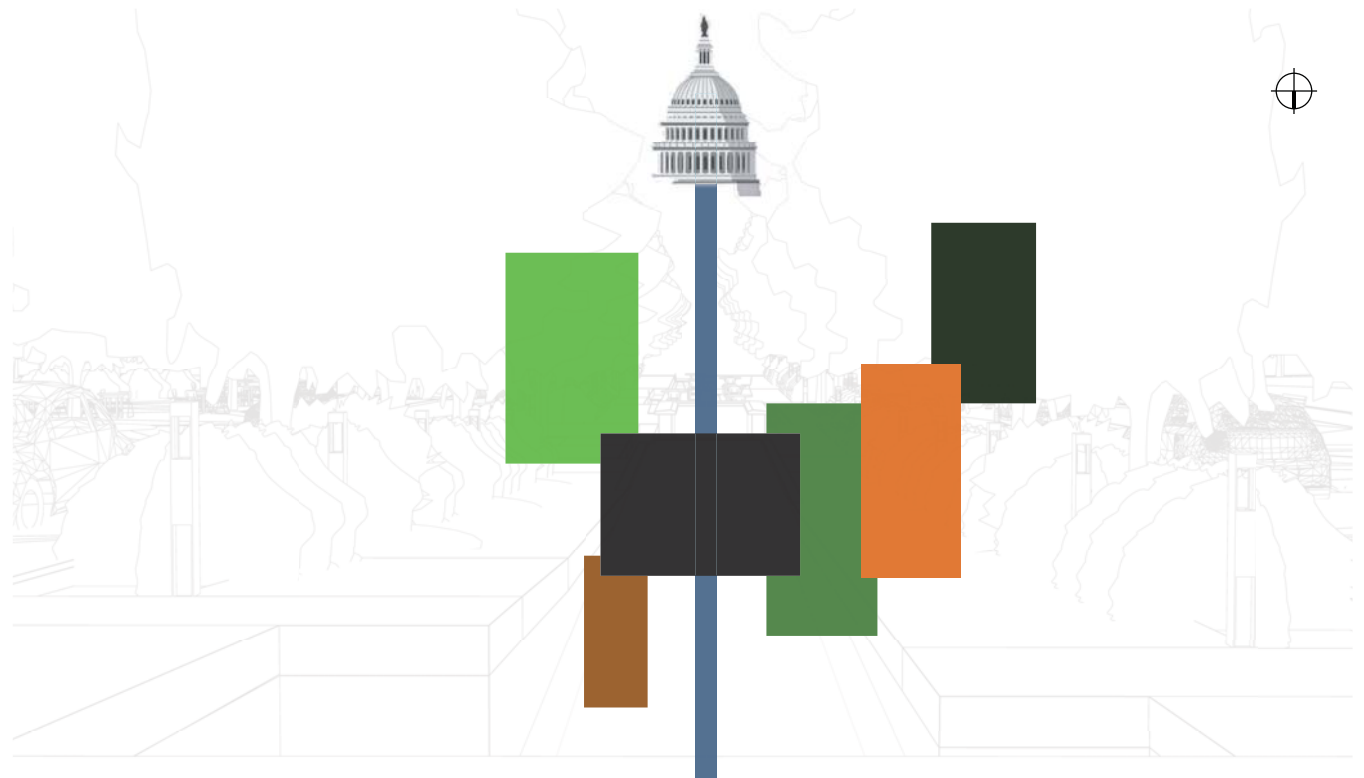
# DESIGN: MASTER PLAN

My analysis explains that streets in D.C., or at least in this neighborhood, are not visually pleasant, but they are important, at least in the planning and engineering side of urban design. If we approach the design without keeping this in mind, we will be ignoring a part of the design that could make it acceptable by other disciplines. We also need the intersection to have other features than just being a place for cars to pass.

My approach to these two sides of the equation is finding a way to integrate the street in the design in a positive way, in other words, street becomes a part of my design and I'm suggesting to use the street in a way that will make it a positive element, instead of trying to hide it or make it inconspicuous.

**HOME AWAY FROM HOME**
truxton circle rehabilitation
plan

BUS STOPS-P. 49

DOG PARK-P. 49

MEDIAN-P. 40, 41

PUBLIC LAWN-P. 47, 48

SECTION I

HORSESHOE PITS-P. 52

SECTION II

NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALK-P. 46

SECTION III

NEIGHBORHOOD LAWN-P. 50

MOVIE SPACE-P. 51

## DESIGN: MEDIAN, DETAIL PLAN

One of the design elements that integrates pedestrian space into the street is the median. It includes three parts. The two parts in the north and the south, are designed as spaces to pass by north to south, and the middle one, is where the stationary activities are happening, and also is designed to have movement in both directions. Through numerous site visits, I understood that jaywalking happens in this intersection, and no matter how I design the space, it still will happen, so I tried to at least stage it in a way that will be safer. The design makes almost impossible to cross the street in the top and bottom part of the median using elements such as walls, shrubs and pools.



HOME AWAY FROM HOME
truxton circle rehabilation
detail plan

0   20   40   80
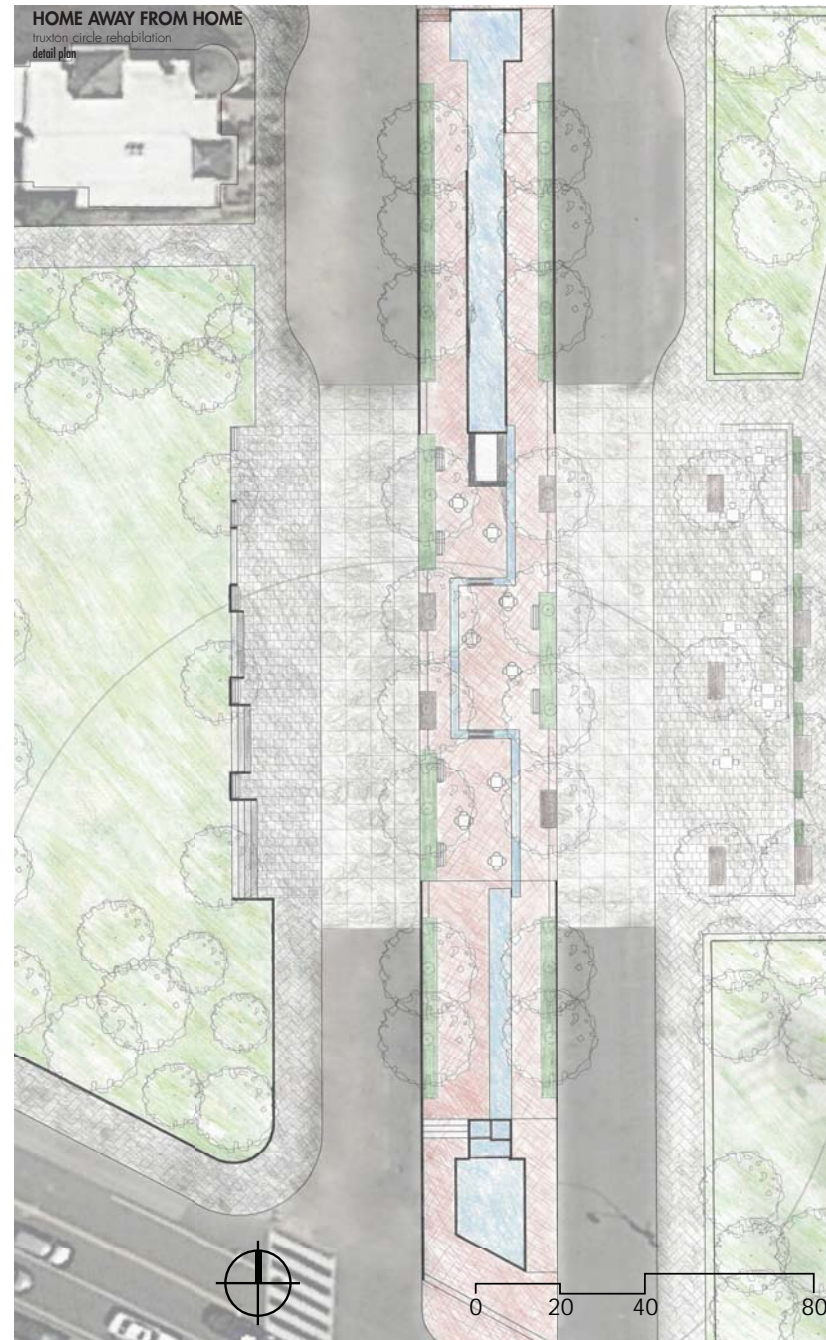
## DESIGN: PERSPECTIVE I

The median will be the only place in all North or South Capitol Street that people can sit in the street and enjoy the Capitol's view.

The area in the middle part of the median includes a small cafe, movable chairs, tables and fixed benches. The pool becomes a narrow stream, and visitors can sit next to water, and enjoy a coffee while looking at the view of the capitol. This area is one of the most public areas of the design.



**HOME AWAY FROM HOME**
truxton circle rehabilation
**perspective view i**

## DESIGN: SECTION PERSPECTIVE

The section perspective to the right shows the relations between the median and the street, and how the details of the median and the street helps to stage jaywalking in safer places.  The median is below street grade in north, about the same height as the street in the middle, and higher than the street in the south. This design solution makes two small walls (less than 3 feet) where jaywalking can be dangerous because of vehicles that are turning from perpendicular streets, or vehicles that have just passed a green light. Also, the median itself is not easy to cross, there are shrubs, trees, and the width of the pool in the middle is wider than a person can jump over it. On the other hand, the street also has two design moves in this regard. The pavement in the middle is concrete panels, and the slope is lower comparing to the asphalt areas, this move, while not reducing the speed of the traffic, informs the drivers that they are in a realm that they might face a pedestrian, therefore they drive more carefully.

## HOME AWAY FROM HOME
truxton circle rehabilation
**section perspective - along the street**
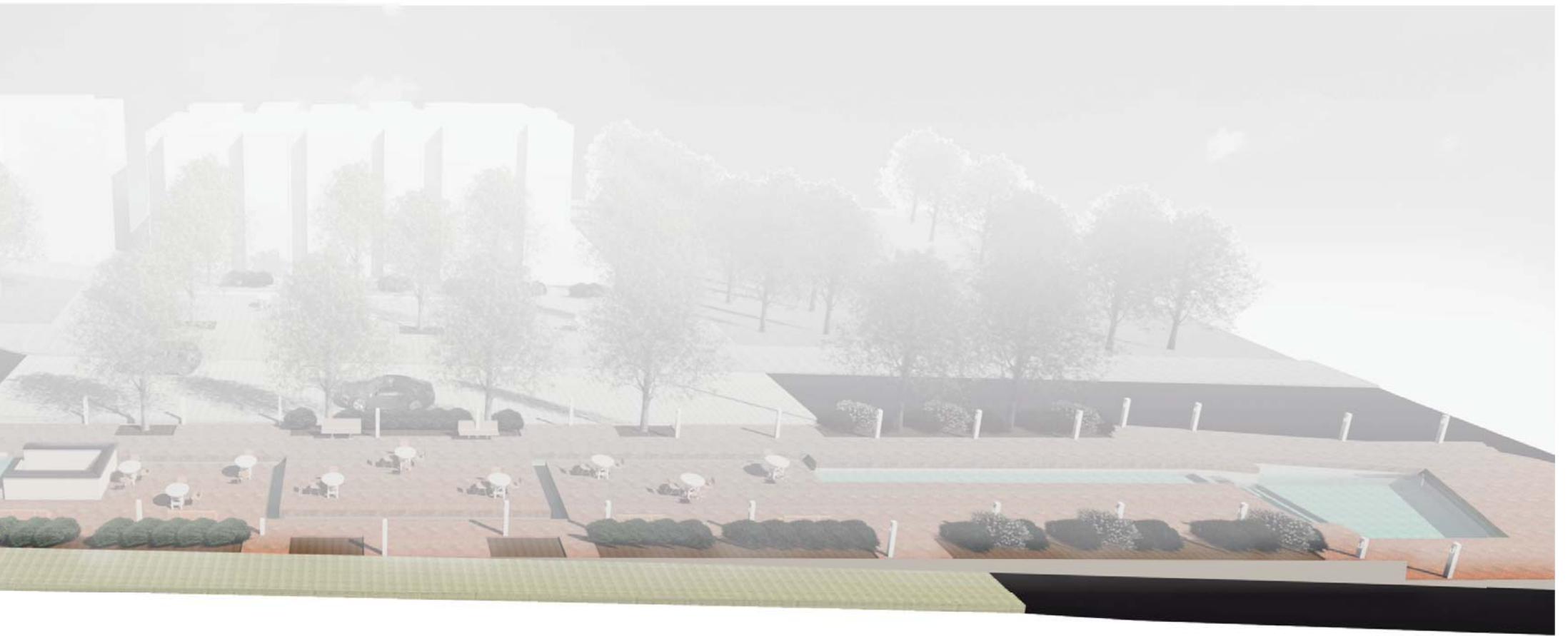
# DESIGN: EXPLODED AXON & CROSS-STREETSECTIONS

The section on the next page show the cross-street design in the three different conditions. You can see the walls made be the grade difference, and the width and location of the pools changing.

Also, the exploded axon to the right, shows the street, the median and the satellites. Each of the satellites has a different character that is responding to the range of people who use them, hence they have different programs or are loosely p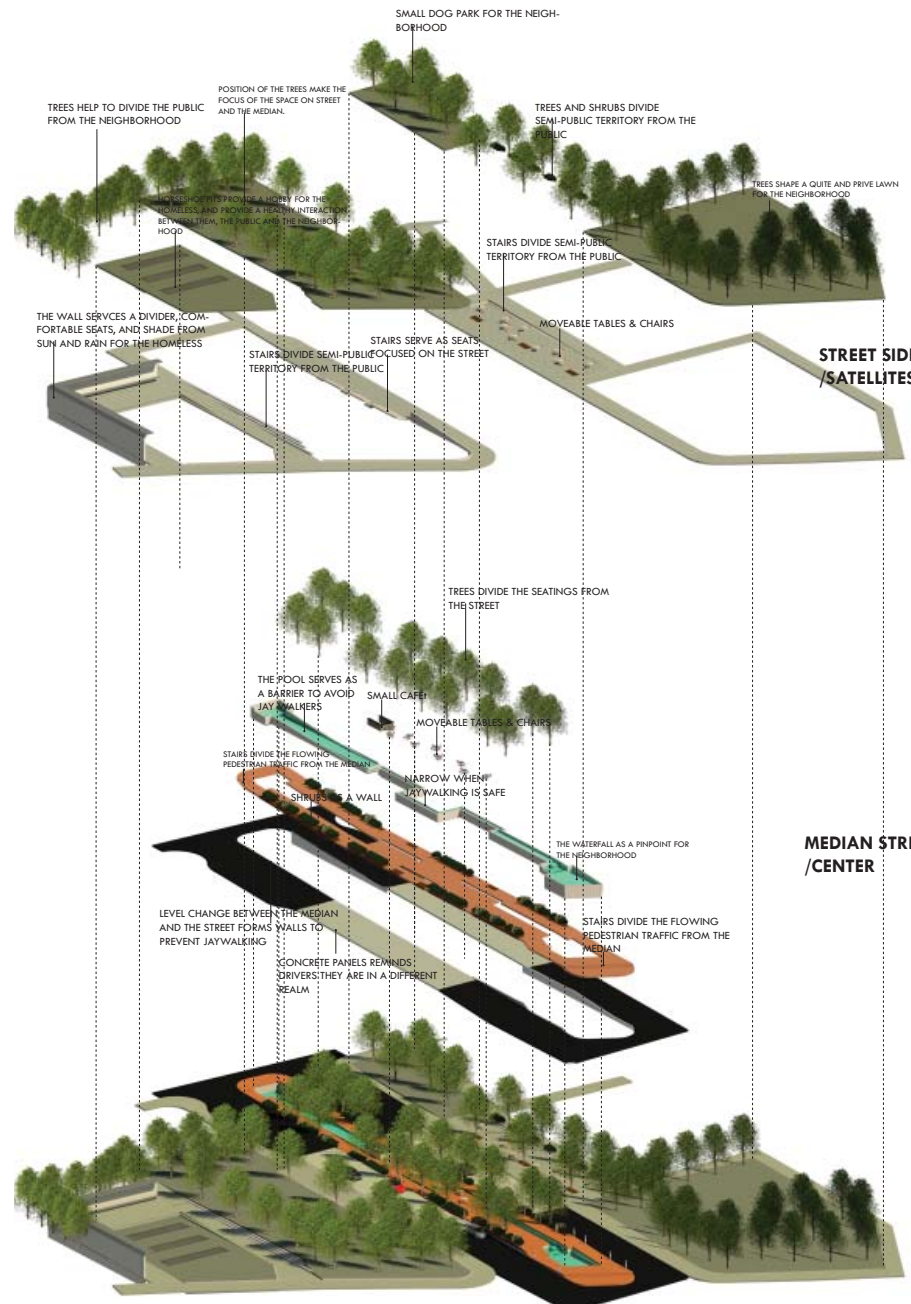rogrammed. Designing a space that is for public and neighborhood both, needs a fine balance in programming, too much programs specific to the neighborhood will make the space too private, also, if the neighborhood changes gradually programmed spaces might become useless, on the other side of the argument, if there are not programs defined for the space, it might become completely a civic realm, and neighbors don't feel the place as their own.

SMALL DOG PARK FOR THE NEIGH-BORHOOD

POSITION OF THE TREES MAKE THE FOCUS OF THE SPACE ON STREET AND THE MEDIAN.

TREES HELP TO DIVIDE THE PUBLIC FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD

TREES AND SHRUBS DIVIDE SEMI-PUBLIC TERRITORY FROM THE PUBLIC

HORSESHOE PITS PROVIDE A HOBBY FOR THE HOMELESS, AND PROVIDE A HEALTHY INTERACTION BETWEEN THEM, THE PUBLIC AND THE NEIGHBOR-HOOD

TREES SHAPE A QUITE AND PRIVE LAWN FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD

STAIRS DIVIDE SEMI-PUBLIC TERRITORY FROM THE PUBLIC

THE WALL SERVCES A DIVIDER, COM-FORTABLE SEATS, AND SHADE FROM SUN AND RAIN FOR THE HOMELESS

STAIRS SERVE AS SEATS FOCUSED ON THE STREET

MOVEABLE TABLES & CHAIRS

STAIRS DIVIDE SEMI-PUBLIC TERRITORY FROM THE PUBLIC

**STREET SIDES /SATELLITES**

TREES AND LAWNS
LAWNS ARE FLEXIBLE AND PLEASANT SPACES TO GATHER OR ENJOY INDIVIDUALLY. TREES PROVIDE SHADE, AND WORK AS A DESIGN ELEMENT TO CHARACTERIZE DIFFERENT SPACES.

WALKWAYS & LEVEL
WALKWAYS ARE DESIGNED DIFFERENTLY TO PROVIDE CHOICE FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERACTIONS. LEVEL CHANGES ARE USED AS DESIGN ELEMENT TO DIVIDE SPACES AND MAKE BOUNDARIES.

TREES DIVIDE THE SEATINGS FROM THE STREET

THE POOL SERVES AS A BARRIER TO AVOID JAYWALKERS

SMALL CAFE

MOVEABLE TABLES & CHAIRS

STAIRS DIVIDE THE FLOWING PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC FROM THE MEDIAN

NARROW WHEN JAYWALKING IS SAFE

SHRUBS AS A WALL

THE WATERFALL AS A PINPOINT FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD

LEVEL CHANGE BETWEEN THE MEDIAN AND THE STREET FORMS WALLS TO PREVENT JAYWALKING

STAIRS DIVIDE THE FLOWING PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC FROM THE MEDIAN

CONCRETE PANELS REMINDS DRIVERS THEY ARE IN A DIFFERENT REALM

**MEDIAN STRIP /CENTER**

TREES
TREES WORK AS A DIVIDER TO MAKE MEDIAN LESS NOISY, AND HELP VISITORS FEEL SAFER.

SEATS
CHAIRS, TABLES AND BENCHES PROVIDE DIFFERENT CHOICES FOR DIFERENT ACTIVITIES.

POOLS
POOL MAKE THE SPACE MORE PLEASANT, SERVE AS A DISTRACTION ELEMENT, AND WORK AS A BARRIER TO PREVENT PEOPLE FROM JAYWALKING WHEN NOT SAFE.

WALKWAYS & STAIRS
WALKWAYS ARE DESIGNED DIFFERENTLY TO PROVIDE CHOICE FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERACTIONS. LEVEL CHANGES ARE USED AS DESIGN ELEMENT TO DIVIDE SPACES AND MAKE BOUNDARIES.

STREET
THE STREET IS PAVED WITH CONCRETE PANELS, WHICH IS AS EASY TO DRIVE ON AS THE USUAL ASPHALT, BUT RE-MINDS DRIVERS THAT THEY ARE IN A DIFFERENT REALM, AND THEY MIGHT ENCOUN-TER JAYWALKING.

**HOME AWAY FROM HOME**
truxton circle rehabilation
**cross street sections**

cross street section north



cross street section center



cross street section south

## DESIGN: PERSPECTIVE II

The next pieces of the design are the two sides of the street.

To the east, as shown in the perspective, there are a few row town houses, I used elevation change (two stairs), shrubs and trees to divide the houses from the more public side of the site. These elements connect the sidewalk that is specific for the houses to a wider and more public sidewalk. This space, will include a few movable chairs and tables that both people from the neighborhood and city can use, but I imagine that proximity will help the people from the neighborhood to occupy this space and use it as a transition between the public side (street) and their houses.



**HOME AWAY FROM HOME**
truxton circle rehabilation
**perspective iii**

## DESIGN: PUBLIC LAWN

Located in the west side of the street, is the big lawn or public lawn. This lawn, is designed with a focus on the street, using slope (note the grading plan on page 45) stairs and placement of trees. The lawn is connected to the side walk by a wall that becomes seatable stairs in the middle (such as the benches that face the center of the circle). There are also a few benches available in between the stairs.

To the north of this lawn, there is a bus stop.



0    15    30    60

## DESIGN: PERSPECTIVE III

To the right you can see the perspective of person standing in the lawn and looking at the street.

This lawn is designed as a public and relaxed place for all visitors to sit, or lay down, under the sun, or a shading tree and enjoy their time.



**HOME AWAY FROM HOME**
truxton circle rehabilation
**perspective ii**

# DESIGN: BUS STOPS & DOG PARK

Northeast of the site includes two bus stops. In my research using Census Data, I found out that about 37% of the residents of the surrounding area use public transportation to commute. However, there are no designated bus stops in the intersection, and a few block north or south. Another problem, as mentioned, is the proximaty of the available bus stop to the area that is occupied by the homeless in the site. This proposed design solves both of the problems.

In the north east of the site, there will be a small (about 3,000 sq ft dog park specifically for the people of the neighborhood. The closest dog park to the intersection is a 15 minute walk, and is 5,000 sq ft.

# DESIGN: NEIGHBORHOOD LAWN

The neighborhood lawn is located at the south west of the intersection. This area makes Q St. NE a dead end. This was decided after finding out that there are less than 7 cars a minute driving through this street to the intersection, and also, a 1 minute re route will bring them to Florida Ave. The lawn includes a railing facing the intersection, a series of 4 feet high shrubs, and 12 rows of community gardens specifically for the neighbors. Enclosed by these elements there are two other areas, a playground that provides a safe playing area for children of the neighborhood, facing only the houses, and a quiet and private small lawn that can bring the neighborhood together.
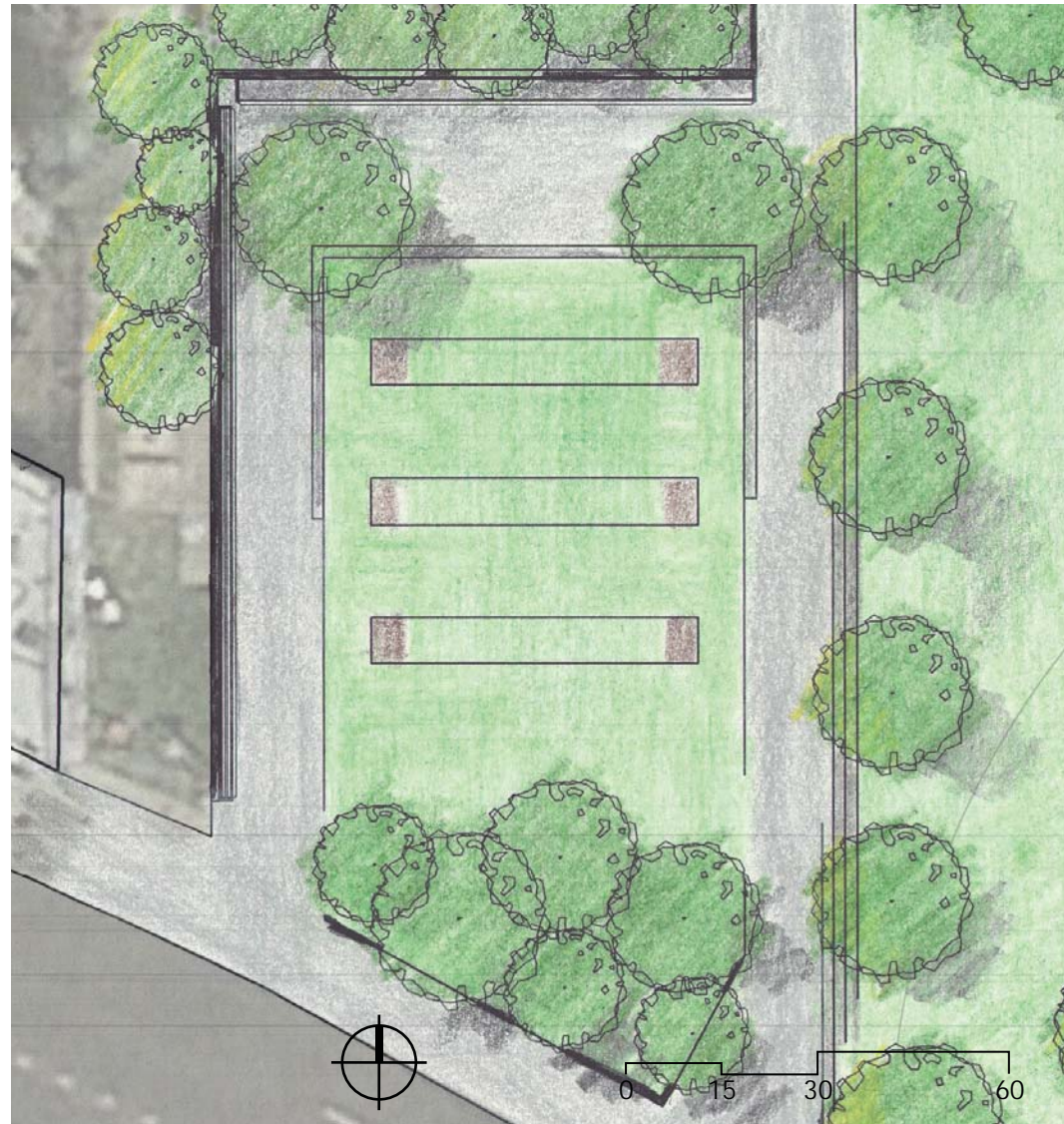
# DESIGN: NEIGHBORHOOD MOVIE SPACE

The small empty lot in Florida Ave. next to the intersection is where the neighborhood association currently holds its summer movie nights. In order to honor this decision, this lot is designed simply to provide a better experience for them. There are a few stairs that they can use as seats and they have a curve with the ideal degree based on the distance to the wall they project the movies. On the other side of lot, there will be a few forage trees and community gardens.



0   10   20        40

## DESIGN: HORSESHOE PITS

Looking at the problem of the homeless people occupying the site, and counting them as a part of the neighborhood, I designed a specific area that can meet a few of their needs. A wall with a shade that protects them from wind, rain and sun and more comfortable and wider benches are provided in this area. (Note the section in page 37). In the lawn close by, there are the horseshoe playing area. In my site research, I found out that this game has been played historically in East D.C., and providing a few pits, makes an entertainment for the homeless, and could possibly make a dialog and interaction between them, the people from the neighborhood and city. As you can see, the sidewalk is also wider in this area.



0  15  30  60

# DESIGN: GRADING



**HOME AWAY FROM HOME**
truxton circle rehabilitation
**grading plan**
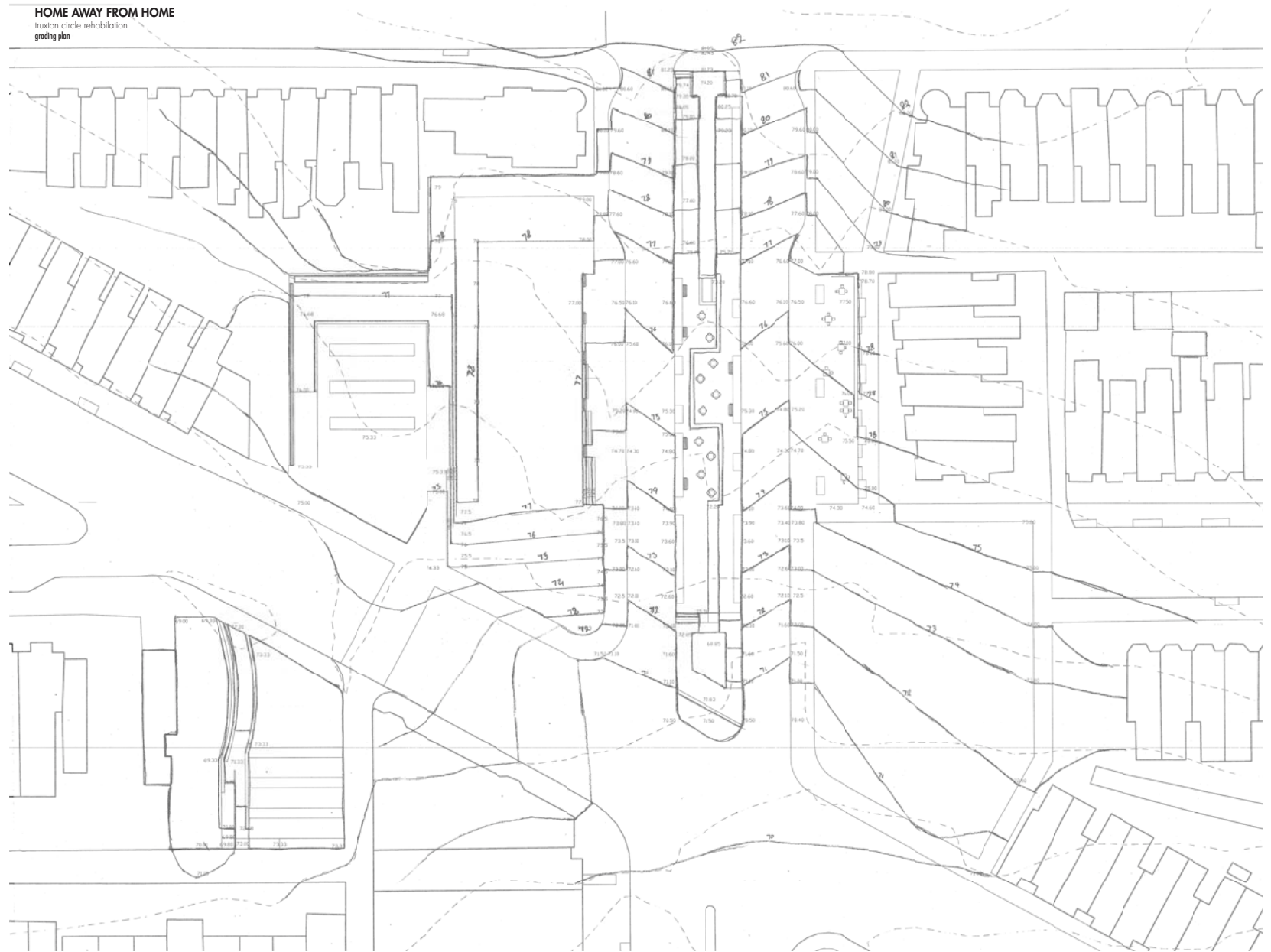
## Truxton Boulevard

-Introvert design in public areas. Elements head toward the street
-Extrovert but secured design in some semi-public spaces, and introvert in others.
-Layered design with careful placement of stairs, shrubs, benches, lawn and railings.
-Spaces are divided from each other using level change.
-The street is integrated, and designed as a central element.
-Benches are only on one side of the walkways, looking inside.
-Different sized lawns, 3000 sq ft to 9000 sq ft.
-Trees are placed based on the characteristics of the lawn.
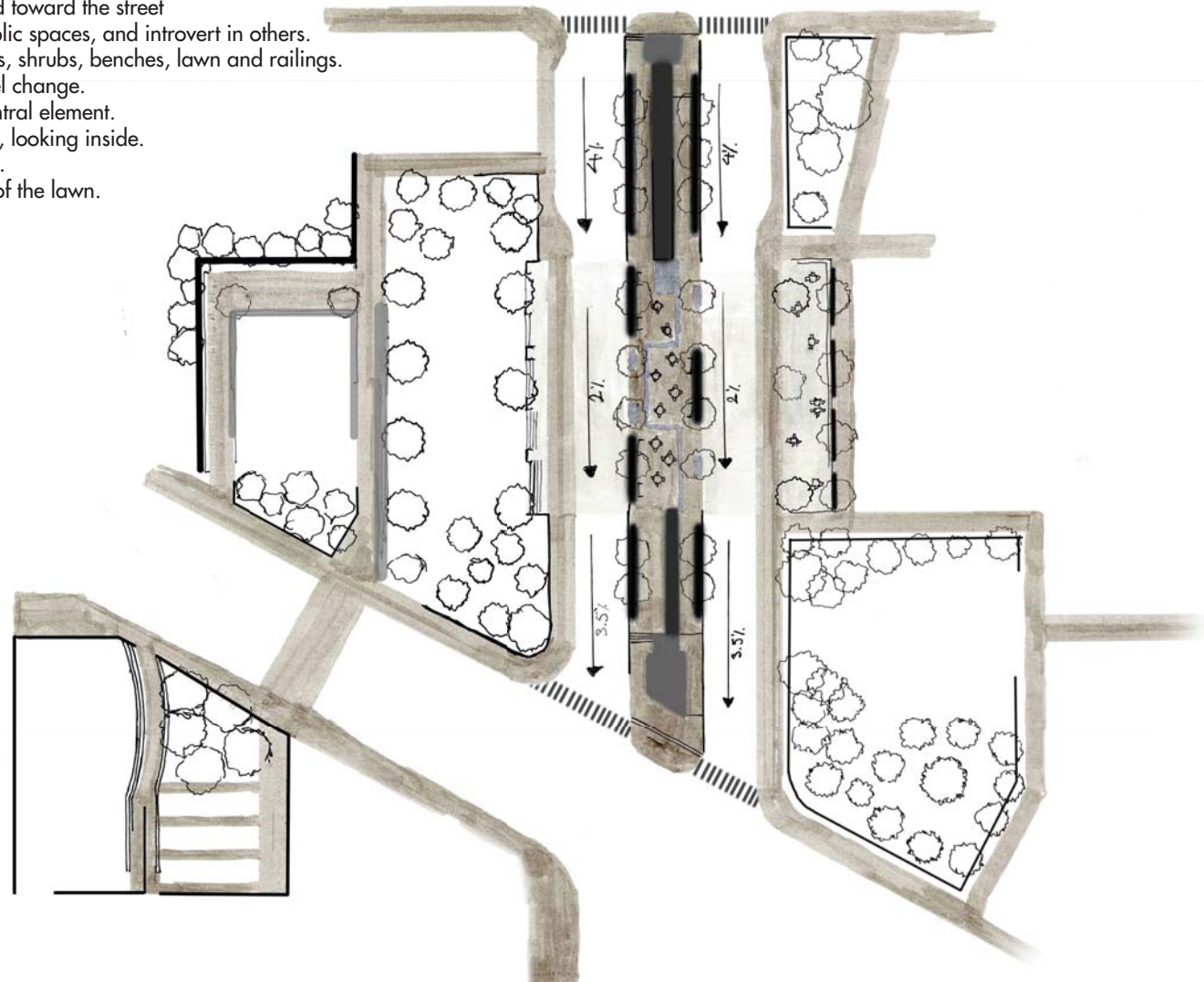
## ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC / PRIVATE

The diagram to the right shows the degree of the private/publicness of the designed areas.

Black stands for the most private areas, and white stands for the most public ones, and the range of gray in between shows the range of spaces in between.

The moves in this proposed design are subtle. The design makes moments for people to stop and enjoy the landscape, or the city. They will have the choice for different types of social interactions to both the people from public and especially people from the neighborhood. There will be a range of spaces that they can choose to use, a range of private/ intimate to public/adventurous.



HOW PRIVATE/PUBLIC ARE SPACES?
DARKEST = MOST PRIVATE / LIGHTEST = MOST PUBLIC

# CONCLUSION

The design outcome of this thesis was the result of the exploration to find out more about the interplay between public spaces and neighborhood spaces. The exploration in design added a number of aspects to the argument mentioned in the introduction. Guiding principles extracted from scholars shaped the design of public and neighborhood spaces in the proposed design. This study shows that it is possible to accomodate public and neighborhood spaces together with consideration of few important criteria; the first one is the careful design. Creating these integrated spaces could be only possible if the principles for public and neighborhood spaces are met. For instance, in the public space design, the size of the spaces should be relatively bigger, also the space should be designed in a way that the neighbors would not grow ownership over it. The other criteria is easy navigation. Public spaces should be easy to enter and exit. On the other hand, neighborhood spaces need to be smaller in size, and designed in a way that neighbors could grow a sense of symbolic ownership over them, a good example is creating elements such as community gardens that invite them to maintain the landscape. Also, these spaces do not need to be easy to navigate to and from, since the users go there frequently (some times on a daily basis) and can get used to more complex circulations, and it should be noted that these spaces should not be easy to access for people who are visiting the public parts of the site, hence the fencing, walls and suggested entrances in the proposed design.

After scaling my study to Washington, it was noted that intersections, especially circles, in this city has been playing an important role in serving the needs of users, not only their needs in public life, but also, in some cases, the needs that can be served only in neighborhood spaces. For instance, Dupont Circle, one of the main intersections of the urban fabric, and one of the most public spaces in D.C., becomes a neighborhood space in instances such as neighborhood yoga classes. This conclusion led to more questions about the nature of this phenomena, for instance, what qualities make this happen? What opportunities are there to improve the situation? How important are the neighbors in creating this situation? If the public traffic circles are where neighborhoods meet, how should we shape the public spaces that there will be enough distinguishability between them and the neighborhood spaces? And if in D.C. circles are where neighborhood and the

public meet each other, what happens if there is no circle? How can a design accomplish this task if there is no way of having a circle in the site? The design exploration answered these questions, and added a few principles to this conversation, including:

a. A focal element, such as the fountain in Dupont Circle, or the sculpture in Logan circle, is a very important part of a public space design. Specifically in places such as intersections, the focal element plays many roles; it helps to navigate the space, it becomes a distraction element to avoid direct interactions when not needed, for instance it allows stranger to sit close to each other and watch an element, and not feel uncomfortable by feeling someone's eyes on them. It could be an important part of a neighborhood, it helps to give a neighborhood an identity, especially when well-designed, it brings a sense of pride and responsibility for residents and it could become a landmark and meet-up point. However, one of the most important criteria of designing such an element, is to design it in a way that is visible from most of the spots on site and is easy to navigate.

b. Through different explorations and experiments, I found out that because of restrictions of this specific site mentioned in site analysis, it is almost impossible to provide a traditional 'central' distraction element, such as the ones we see in traffic circles and squares. Given the importance of this element, there was a process of experimenting different options, and the result was using the street (North Capitol Street in this case) as the distraction element. Using the street as the central element and making it both beautiful and working, could help to solve this design problem, and make a space that is not a circle, but play the role of a circle in D.C.. Designing the street also helps to solve another problem; landscape architecture as a discipline hasn't been given enough attention to the design of the street, although there has been many works on designing the pedestrians spaces next to streets, not much on the streets themselves and the integration of these two, how they correlate to each other and how they can work to improve the other one. This proposed design suggests many detail elements that is working to integrate the two, and it could help to provide a new perspective that allows landscape architects collaborate with other disciplines in an more efficient way.

c. Designing a space that is for the public and neighborhood residents both, needs a fine balance in programming, too many programs specific to the neighborhood will make the space too private, also, if the neighborhood changes gradually programmed spaces might become useless, on the other side of the argument, if there are not programs defined for the space, it might become completely a civic realm, and neighbors won't grow a sense of ownership. Hence, the public areas need to be loosely programmed, and should be flexible in how users are going to occupy them, however the neighborhood spaces could and should be programmed based on the needs of the neighborhood, for instance providing a playground, dog park or a outdoor movie area, allows the residents of neighborhood use these spaces more often, since they have been designed based on their specific needs.

d. Looking at the current users of the site and current activities that are happening is a very important guideline for designers. For instance, with the problem of homeless people in Truxton Circle, there could have been a reaction to design the space in a way that does not include them, or encourage them to leave the intersection, however, we need to note that not only they are users of the site, they are a part of the neighborhood and not keeping them in mind while designing could result in a displaced design. Another example is the issue with jaywalking in the intersection, the designers, frequently try to stop jaywalking by interrupting the street using nonpermeable elements. This could work, but the approach that was used in this thesis was to accept that jaywalking is a part of this intersection, and a part of this neighborhood, therefore, I tried to incorporate this part of the neighborhood in the design that is safer for users.

e. My study shows that there should be a range of various spaces for different types of social interactions in designing designing a public/neighborhood space. This matter becomes considerably important when designing a space that is going to serve the needs of public and neighborhood space both, especially for the residents of the neighborhood. The design needs to provide the neighbors with a range of choices; they should be able to have an interaction with the public realm if they desire to, or use the space more privately if they choose to. There should be spaces designed for different types of social interactions for both the people from public and especially people from the

neighborhood. This range should include a range of private/intimate such as the neighborhood movie space in the proposed design, to public/adventurous such as the median.

f. The role of the residents of the neighborhood in this process is very important. Through the research and design exploration, I learned that one of the most important factors in the success of a neighborhood space is the 'existence' of a neighborhood. This existence cannot be achieved by just counting the number of residents in the neighborhood, there should be a sense of responsibility and care about the neighborhood, other neighbors and the outdoor spaces in residents of the neighborhood. One of the factors that could create this sense is knowing that they will be a long time resident of the neighborhood, for instance, in the case of short time leases, residents do not grow this sense since they know that they are leaving the neighborhood soon. This factor is one of the opportunities in Truxton Circle, with the increased amount of new owners in the last 10 years, and the new ones that will move to the neighborhood as the city is renovating and selling the subsidized houses, the new residents know that they will be living in this neighborhood for a relatively long time.

There were also a few questions raised in this context that creates further research opportunity that could be pursued in the future by the author or other scholars or designer, such as:

a. Could a space such as the proposed one fulfill all the expectations of its residents from a public space? We know that public realm plays an important role in creating opportunities for social interactions of people, proximity of the proposed spaces, which worked in favor of a successful neighborhood space, could work the opposite in the idea of public realm.

b. Objection of this thesis was to look into the interplay between public and neighborhood spaces in urban settings such as the on in Washington D.C. and in Truxton Circle, further research could study this issue in a suburban area, considering lack of public life in suburbs.

important lack of public life.

c. What are the principles for restoring neighborhood spaces? Neighborhoods, such as Truxton Circle change over the years. It is a very natural process. They cannot stay static, due to circumstances as the economic ladder; newer immigrants from different cities or countries come to cheaper neighborhoods and older immigrants move somewhere else relatively more suitable to their needs. These changes could include the range of residents, their income, their ethnicity, and even the physical situation of the neighborhood and the urban fabric around them. Therefore there is a need to think about these changes and the restoration made to neighborhood spaces. How can designing and restoring a neighborhood space help the neighborhood become successful? How should it be restored so it will support the new needs of the incoming residents of the neighborhood? Can restoring the landscape prevent higher costs?

d. What are the impacts of the era of internet on public and neighborhood spaces, and also the interplay between them? For instance, what positive or negative effects can the phenomena of telecommuting have on these spaces?

At its core, this thesis sets out to define a new type of landscape, one that challenges the design of modern urban landscapes, insisting on the integration of daily life and its social interactions and the urban context. By doing this, I hope that this study will enforce a better awareness to strengthen the social needs of residents of a neighborhood, specifically in an urban context.

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