



SUGAR BEACH

JARVIS SLIP PUBLIC SPACE
INVITED DESIGN COMPETITION
WATERFRONToronto _ January 2008

CLAUDE CORMIER ARCHITECTES PAYSAGISTES INC.
The Planning Partnership _ Leni Schwendinger Light Projects Ltd. _ Beth Kapusta



View Toward The Lake

Sugar Beach is the sequel to a new wave of urban beaches, this time designed with a sweet twist. Tinted by Redpath sugar spray carried on westerly breezes, dozens of candy-colored umbrellas are scattered across a sandy wedge of beach along Jarvis Slip. Integrating the future Waterfront Promenade and a plaza for programmed and unprogrammed events, the design playfully adopts some of the most enduring elements from Toronto's emerging landscape identity – beaches, bedrock, trees and water, as well as the urban horizon and a trace mood of the city's industrial past.

Narrative Summary



Sugar Beach is the second urban beach proposed for Toronto's downtown waterfront, and the latest addition to the amber necklace of Toronto's lakefront beachescape. Starting from the city's beach typology, the proposed design for Jarvis Slip playfully recomposes other signature elements of the city, with Toronto playing the role as its own design precedent. And above all, the omnipresent horizon of the lake.



HtO - Toronto _ 2007



Paris-Plage - La Seine _ 2003



Berlin - Spree River _ 2007



Ohio Street Beach - Chicago

HtO has demonstrated that the urban beach phenomenon, like its European counterparts such as the Paris Plage and the numerous temporary beach installations along the River Spree in Berlin, has found its place in Toronto and is rapidly becoming an icon for the city. Since opening in 2007, the popular appeal of HtO is clearly evident within the online community alone, as any search on Google, Flickr, or Youtube can attest.

Urban Beach Precedents



East Bayfront Precinct



Georges Seurat, *A Sunday at La Grande Jatte* (1884-1886)

Sweet Breeze and Georges Seurat

The curious chemistry between the park and the Redpath Sugar Factory gives rise to notions of flavour and colour, with the muscularity of Redpath's industrial forms accented by a sweet twist. The taste of sugar in the air, along with the site of giant ships in the slip, are two of the key ingredients that underlie the expressive genius for the site.

Bathing at Asnières, a painting by Georges Seurat, portrays a timeless leisure envisioned for Jarvis Slip. Distinct from the hypercasual bustle of HtO, that was inspired directly by Seurat's later painting, *An Afternoon at La Grande Jatte*, we can imagine at Jarvis Slip the peaceful contemplative urbanity evoked in *Asnières*.



Georges Seurat, *Bathing at Asnières* (1884)

Conceptual Reference



The three types of space proposed at Jarvis Slip – the beach, the plaza, and the promenade – are embedded within the East Bayfront in a way that influences the emerging character for future development, and affirms earlier urban design strategies that promote a cohesive precinct.

Plugging into the ground floor colonnades of the two buildings at the edge of the site is the plaza, a flexible space to accommodate plans for a Tedco-Corus performance venue. The triangle of space north of Queen's Quay East, an extension of the plaza, dramatizes the Lower Jarvis view corridor that passes through Sugar Beach and the Toronto harbour, and ends at Ward's Island. This geometry merges seamlessly with the proposed promenade by West8/DTAH, without deviating from the base premise for a consistent 19 metre wide geometry throughout.

The promenade parts briefly from the water's edge to align with the diagonal across the site originally proposed in the initial urban design vision of Koetter Kim + Associates. This reconfiguration of the water's edge consequently forms an opening for the beach wedge.

Connections, Thresholds



Redpath Sugar Factory



Sweet Shade

The spectacle of the ships unloading raw sugar at Redpath is whimsically manifested in the sand texture of the beach and the form of the candy-coloured umbrellas. With the exception of a few trees for comfort and movement, this is predominantly a place for the sun. And in winter or on cloudy days, the beach and its colours help to keep the space dynamic.

Sand Plane and Extended Promenade

The diagonal promenade establishes the spine of this compact park, and is flanked on the south by the wedge of sand gently inclined towards the lake, and on the north by a hardscape which extends the materiality of the waterfront promenade to the edge of the Tedco-Corus building. Large bedrock “outcrops” are positioned in both areas, creating a hardscape topography that offers casual vantage points towards Corus and its large outdoor stage doors, or towards the beach, the working slip, the city skyline, and the lake. The theatrical possibilities of the site go beyond just watching ships. Infrastructure and lighting are flexible and movement through the park is unlimited, allowing for a wide range of creative programming by both Corus and the city. The visual continuity of the ground plane is reinforced by the choice of tall trunked high-canopy trees (a loosened allée of maple, a scattering of willow, and some tall evergreens), providing shade while maintaining views.



A Urban Beach _ B Continuous Promenade _ C South Plaza _ D North Plaza (future)

Contextual Reference



The presence of the harbour horizon is emphasized by a slight excavation in the quay of about 1.25 metres, creating a slight tilt towards the lake. The design respects the exact boundary of the site and the sanctity of the dock wall. This shall ensure that the beach can be built economically and within a manageable time frame, minimizing adverse interference with the lake ecosystem.

Repertoire of the Urban Elements



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All the Luxuries of a Modern Urban Beach

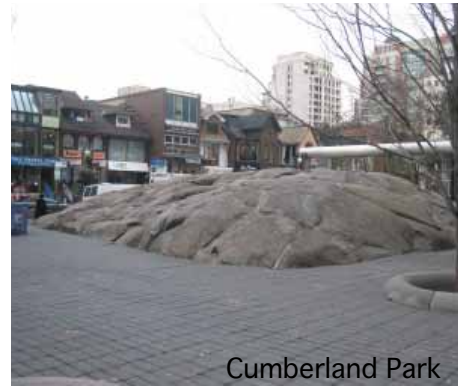
The culture of a beach is influenced by its amenities. Sugar Beach shall be replete with a cantina, washrooms, and places to buy refreshments or other beach essentials. These amenities could either be placed along the ground floor colonnades of the adjacent buildings, or, in the spirit of the iconic beach stations found at the Beaches and Cherry Beach, through a small beach house “cabane”. The scale of the cabane is well-suited for a local design competition for young designers, which could also activate the larger community and create some spin about the project overall.

In addition to the three dozen umbrellas anchored in the sand, it is also important to include durable urban furniture. Possibilities for furniture range from the permanent, such as concrete-resin chaise longues and an urban version of the Muskoka chair, to the temporary, like strapped bundles of large inner-tubes or simply a towel laid on the sand. Foot and body showers emerge along the edge of the sand to keep the beach from going home with the kids. The same style of toe rail used on the boardwalk of the proposed promenade as well as at HtO shall be used at Jarvis Slip to provide protection along the water’s edge.

The Elements of the Urban Beach



Cap Bon Desir



Cumberland Park



Coronation Park



Devonian Square



Harvard Yard



Bedrock Plaza Hardscape Topography

The space between the diagonal promenade and the buildings at the edge of the park shall form a dynamic waterfront gathering space for all Torontonians.

The durable surface of the site and the completely unobstructed groundplane permits a potential event range of ALL sizes. Access into and out of the site is provided at each of the four corners (including the stepped boardwalk route at the south end of the beach). Circulation in and through shall remain unconstrained, allowing for a wide range of programming at any spot within the park. The bedrock topography and the slight slope of the beach create vantage point options and panoramas of the whole site for larger events, such as outdoor concerts or film screenings towards Corus, or perhaps even towards stage-barges anchored in the slip. Two grass mounds form an ensemble with the bedrock outcrops, positioned to create more intimate spaces from which to watch buskers or other types of smaller-scale or spontaneous performances.

The Elements of the Plaza



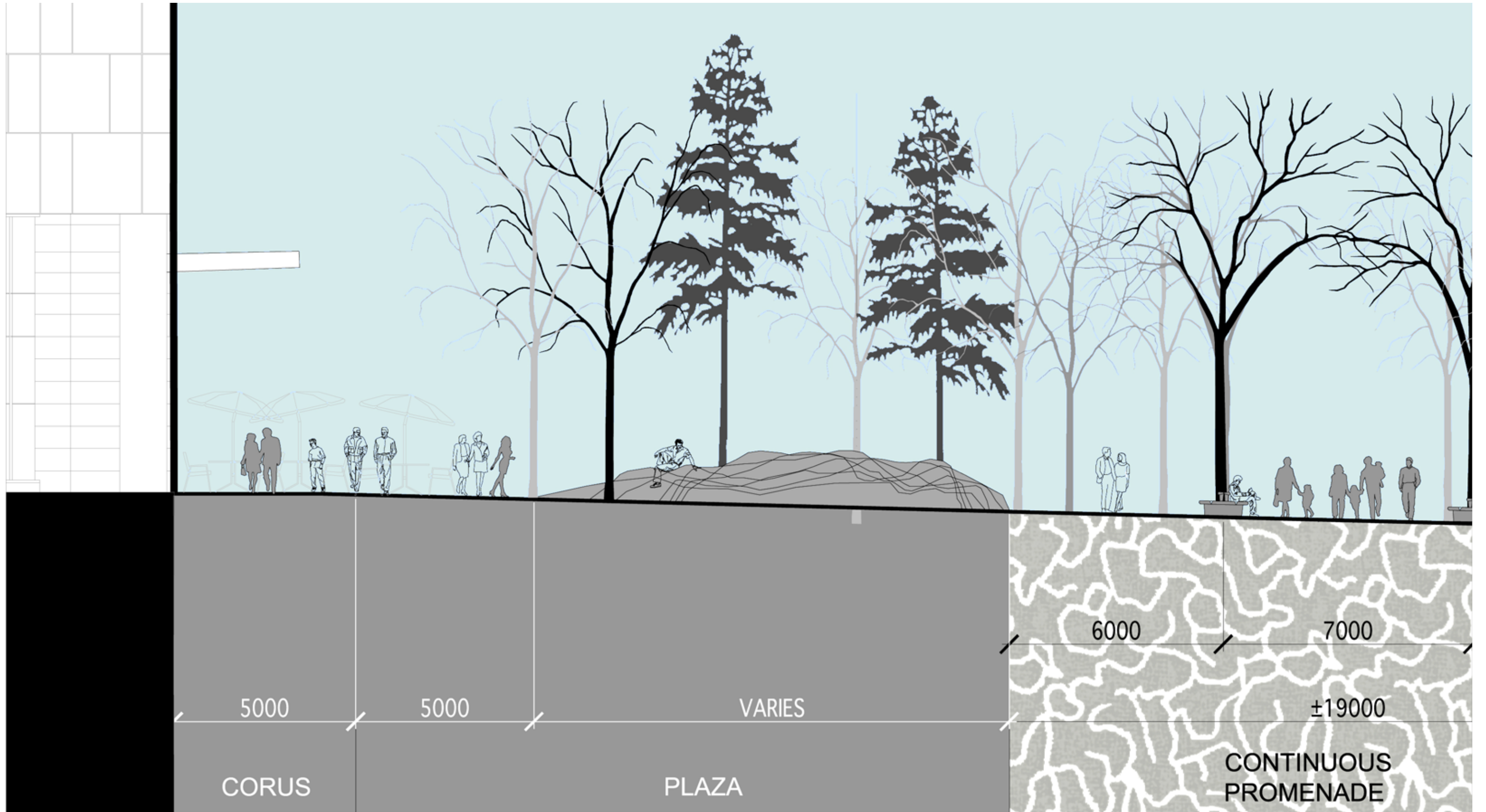
Trees Distribution



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The promenade aligned along the diagonal of the site shall be based on the details of West8/DTAH's design for the continuous waterfront promenade in their Central Waterfront masterplan. The prescribed tree-spacing rhythm in the masterplan is here syncopated to increase transversal movement and overall porosity across the site. The material and pattern of the central waterfront promenade shall remain intact as it passes through the park. Linear benches are installed along this diagonal to accent the order of the promenade and reinforce the vanishing point across the water.

The Elements of the Promenade (19m-wide)





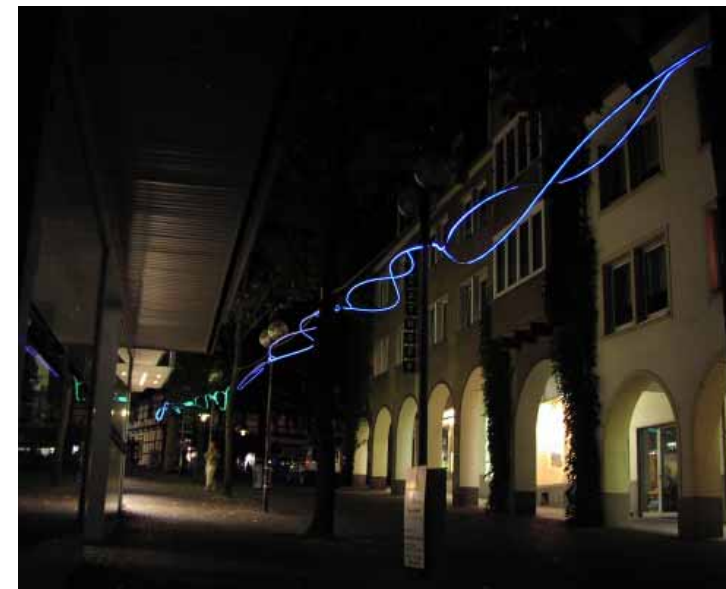
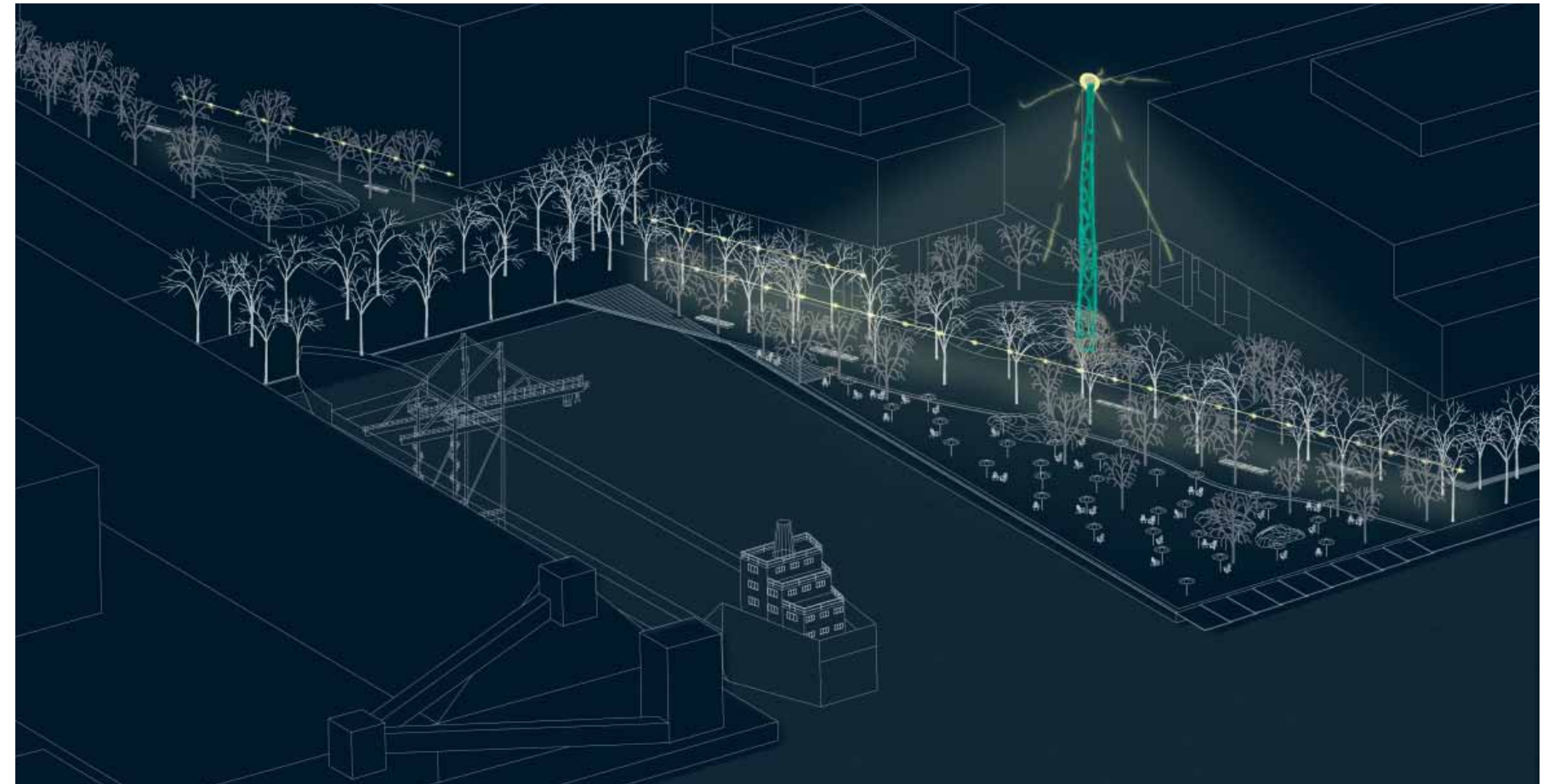
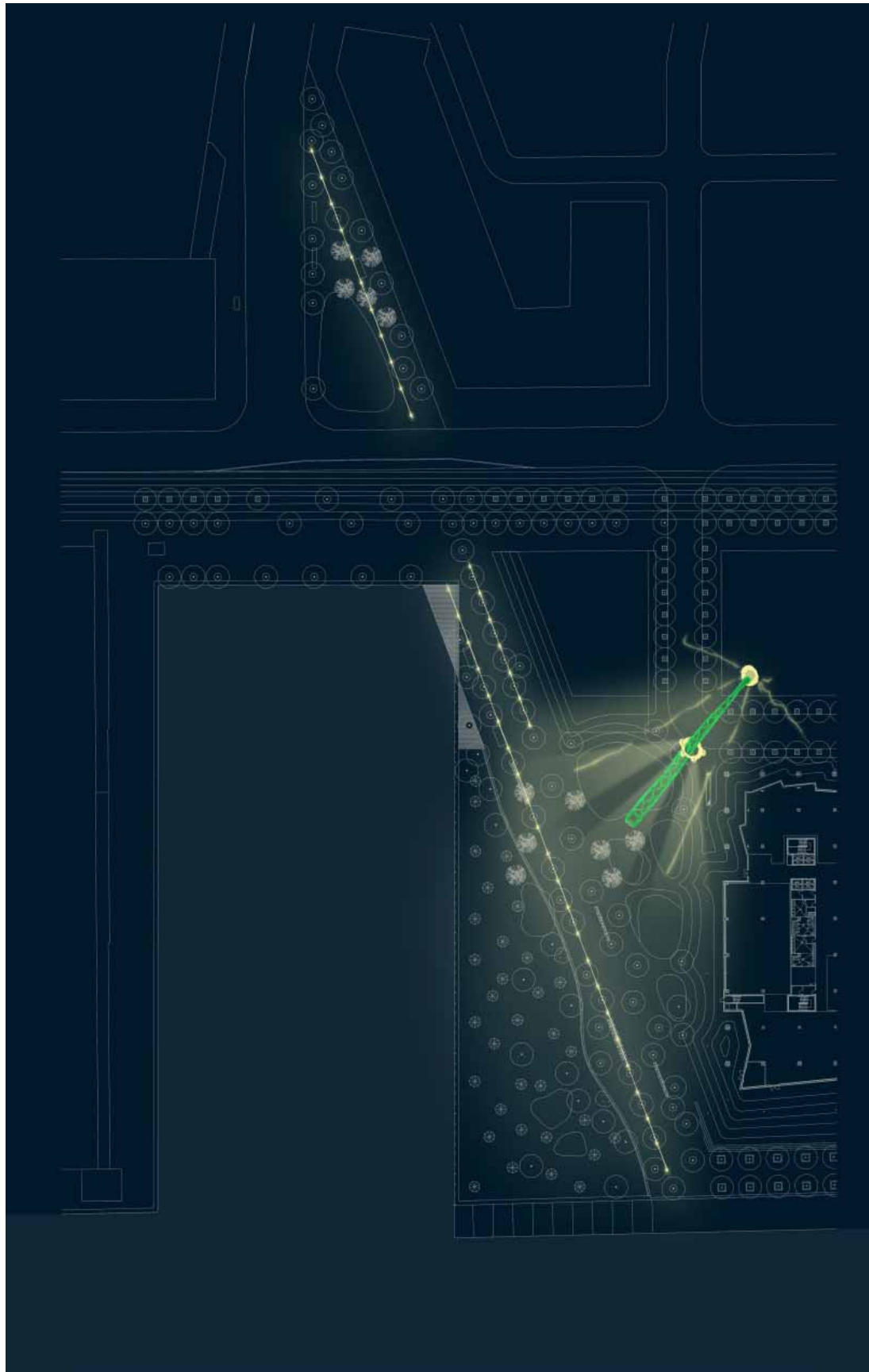
6000
VARIES

CONTINUOUS
PROMENADE

URBAN BEACH

DOCK WALL

Detailed site section 1:100



The park illumination strategy is based on three systems – the suspended line of light along the promenade, the moonlight pylon, and the standard functional lighting implicit in the Central Waterfront promenade.

As the daylight hues of the harbour succumb to night, a lighting strategy has been conceived that softens the urban glare and highlights the phenomenon of dusk. A soft luminous filigree of light suspended above the promenade contrasts against the darkening sky, and reinforces the lines of the pedestrian axis that extends beyond Queen’s Quay to connect into the city. A slender truss-work pylon, taking a cue from the Redpath gantries, rises above the park to support a “moon” which casts a soft light over the site. This moonlight pylon fulfills the role of beacon, while providing an anchor for temporary lighting installations. The absence of residences immediately around the park could even allow for interventions at a larger scale, for festivals such as the city’s annual Luminato, or throughout the seasons and holidays.

Spectacle, Festivals, Illumination



The approach to sustainability is fundamental.

The design aims to cultivate an experience of the city that will compel Torontonians to make leisure local, and dispense with driving to a far-off cottage or flying away on a foreign beach holiday.

Materials are local—from Canadian-sourced granite for the bedrock and hard paving, to sand and wood. Native trees shall be planted, augmenting animal habitat and shade. The hardscape and beach are porous and shall be designed to promote infiltration on-site.

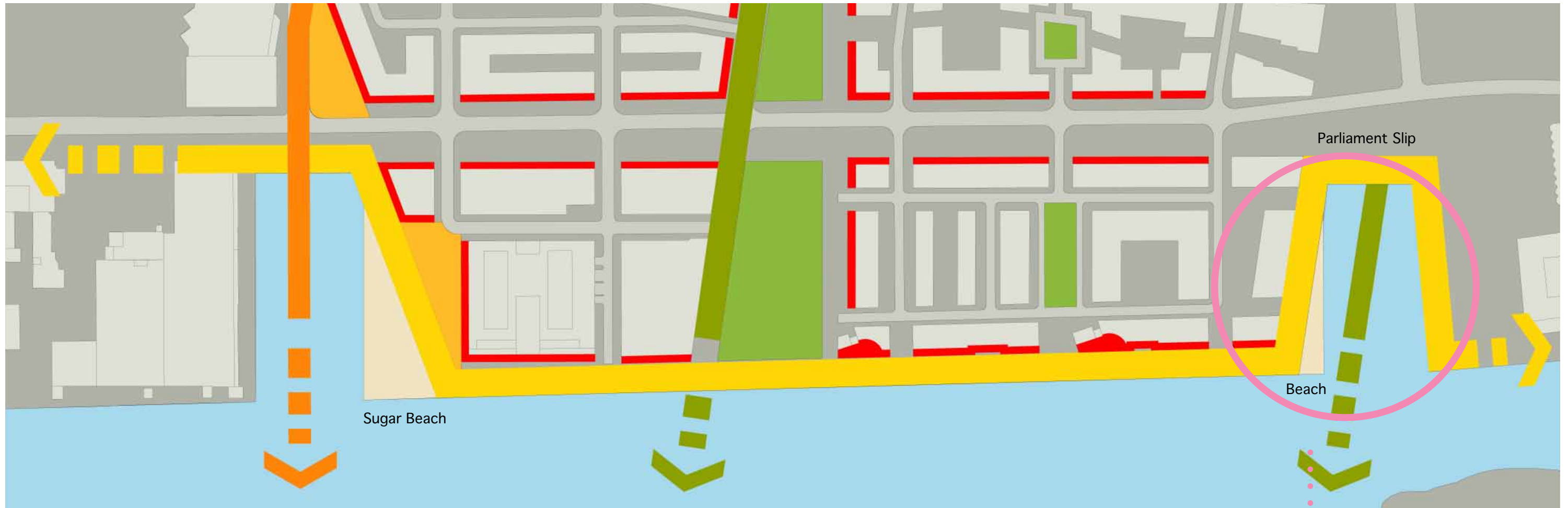
The Beach is the City's Own Cottage

Caution: City at Play

The shape of Toronto's skyline testifies of a city that knows how to work. Sugar Beach provides a place for the city's alter ego: City at Play! The flexible design is rooted in a sense of fun and whimsy that equally attracts kids and adults, cultivating a civic sense of humour where Torontonians can splash up their "play ethic".



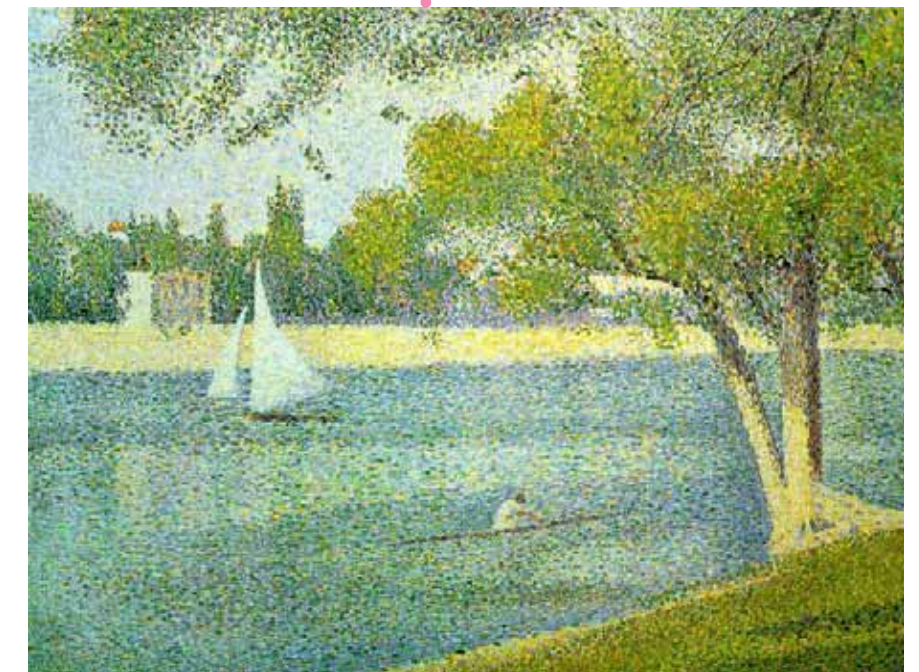
View Toward the City



Georges Seurat, *Bathing at Asnières* (1884)

The urban beach phenomenon is growing. This is the kind of place in the city that enhances livability, conviviality, leisure, and overall joy, a space to be in the city without having to buy something for the privilege.

First came HtO. Next comes Sugar Beach. After that... Parliament Slip?



The Seine at la Grande Jatte (circa 1887)