



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Certificate of Appropriateness Case Report

HEARING DATE: JUNE 17, 2015

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Filing Date: May 7, 2015
Case No.: **2015-005727COA**
Project Address: **355 McAllister Street**
Project Name: **Renovation of Playgrounds at Joseph L. Alioto Performing Arts Piazza (Civic Center Plaza)**
Landmark: Civic Center Landmark District
Zoning: P (Public)
OS (Open Space) Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0788/001
Applicant: Karen Mauney-Brodek, Recreation & Parks Department
501 Stanyan Street
San Francisco, CA 94117
Staff Contact Gretchen Hilyard - (415) 575-9109
gretchen.hilyard@sfgov.org
Reviewed By Tim Frye - (415) 558-6625
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PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

355 McAllister Street (Civic Center Plaza) is bounded by Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Larkin Street, McAllister Street and Grove Street (Assessor's Block 0788; Lot 001). The subject property is located within the P (Public) Zoning District with an OS (Open Space) Height and Bulk limit. The subject property is located within the Civic Center Landmark District, which is locally designated under Article 10, Appendix J of the Planning Code.¹ The period of significance for the Civic Center Landmark District is 1896-1951. Civic Center Plaza (aka. Joseph L. Alioto Performing Arts Piazza) is a contributing site within the landmark district.

Civic Center Plaza was originally designed by A.S. Warwick of the City Architect's Office during the post-earthquake reconstruction of the Civic Center in 1906. The plaza was redesigned as part of the expansion of the Civic Center in the early 1950s that included the creation of an underground parking garage and exhibition hall (Brooks Hall) beneath the plaza. The existing plaza was demolished at that time and redesigned to its current appearance in 1961 by landscape architect Douglas Baylis. The two existing playgrounds located in the plaza were installed along Larkin Street in 1993 (NE corner) and 1998 (SE corner). The playgrounds are considered non-contributing features of the Civic Center Landmark District.

¹ The Civic Center Historic District was also listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 and as a National Historic Landmark District in 1987.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project involves the replacement of the two existing playgrounds at the Joseph L. Alioto Performing Arts Piazza (Civic Center Plaza), including new play equipment, plantings, site furnishings and lighting. Specifically, the work includes:

- New play structures and surfacing: including swings, slides, climbing nets, thin poles with interactive lit play features, play mounds, screening for existing vents and other small-scale play features and safety play surfacing
- Benches
- Perimeter fencing
- Planting areas, trees and lawn
- Drinking fountain
- Projected lighting concept for the Larkin Street sidewalk
- Concrete paving to match adjacent conditions
- Slight expansion of the footprints of the NE and SE planting areas by aligning with the edge of the plantings areas to the west.

OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

The associated platforms and equipment for the projected lighting on the Larkin Street sidewalk will be reviewed under a separate Certificate of Appropriateness application. The platforms/projectors will be installed on the roof of the Asian Art Museum and San Francisco Public Library.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE PLANNING CODE PROVISIONS

The proposed project is in compliance with all other provisions of the Planning Code.

APPLICABLE PRESERVATION STANDARDS

ARTICLE 10

Pursuant to Section 1006.2 of the Planning Code, unless exempt from the Certificate of Appropriateness requirements or delegated to Planning Department Preservation staff through the Administrative Certificate Appropriateness process, the Historic Preservation Commission is required to review any applications for the construction, alteration, removal, or demolition of any designated Landmark for which a City permit is required. Section 1006.6 states that in evaluating a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for an individual landmark or a contributing building within a historic district, the Historic Preservation Commission must find that the proposed work is in compliance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, as well as the designating Ordinance and any applicable guidelines, local interpretations, bulletins, related appendices, or other policies.

ARTICLE 10 – Appendix J – Civic Center Landmark District

In reviewing an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, the Historic Preservation Commission must consider whether the proposed work would be compatible with the character of the Civic Center Landmark District, as described in Appendix J of Article 10 of the Planning Code, and the character-defining features specifically outlined in the designating ordinance.

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS

Rehabilitation is the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features that convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values. The Rehabilitation Standards provide, in relevant part(s):

Standard 1: A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.

The proposed project would retain the subject property's use as a public open space, and would maintain the area's civic character.

Therefore, the proposed project complies with Rehabilitation Standard 1.

Standard 2: The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

The proposed project involves the replacement of existing contemporary features of the Civic Center Landmark District. The existing playgrounds were installed in 1993 and 1998—outside the period of significance for the Civic Center Landmark District (1896-1951). The new playgrounds will be constructed in the same locations as the existing playgrounds and will require slight alteration of the NE and SE rectangular planting areas of the plaza by extending the edge of the playground areas to align with the neighboring planting areas to the west. This work will not involve the removal of any historic features and will not alter features or spaces that characterize the district or Civic Center Plaza.

Therefore, the proposed project complies with Rehabilitation Standard 2.

Standard 3: Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

The proposed project does not involve conjectural features that create a false sense of historic development of the subject property. In general, all additions to the property will be rendered as contemporary alterations that are compatible with the historic character of the site yet clearly differentiated as contemporary features.

Therefore, the proposed project complies with Rehabilitation Standard 3.

Standard 4: Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

Civic Center Plaza has undergone numerous alterations since it was completed in 1915, including a modernist redesign by Douglas Baylis in 1961. The plaza is considered a contributing site within the Civic Center Landmark District for its importance as a public gathering space within the district. The proposed project involves the reconfiguration of the existing playgrounds

constructed in the plaza in 1993 and 1998 and will not remove any contributing features of the district or Civic Center Plaza.

Therefore, the proposed project complies with Rehabilitation Standard 4.

Standard 5: Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of fine craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

The proposed project would preserve all distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques that characterize the Civic Center Plaza and the district, including the overall form and use of the plaza and the adjacent public right-of-way. The new playgrounds will replace the existing playgrounds in the same locations and will require slight reconfiguration of the NE and SE rectangular planting areas. This change will not alter any distinctive features, features, construction techniques, or examples of fine craftsmanship that characterize the district and plaza.

Therefore, the proposed project complies with Rehabilitation Standard 5.

Standard 9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

The proposed project involves replacement of the existing playgrounds that were constructed in 1993 and 1998. These features date outside the period of significance established for the district (1896-1951) and are not character-defining features of the plaza.

The new playgrounds feature a cohesive materials palette of metal and concrete in neutral colors, and a limited plant palette. These materials are consistent with the character of existing features of Civic Center Plaza and the district. The design of new playground and landscape features draws inspiration from the surrounding district. Examples include perimeter fencing inspired by the metalwork at the Asian Art Museum and City Hall, and tree species that are similar in size and character to the existing Olive and London Plane trees found throughout the plaza.

New features will provide minimal visual intervention in order to avoid competition with the important east-west axis from City Hall to Larkin Street. The new play equipment will be designed to be open and airy in character and will read as a cohesive system through the use of consistent color, materials and style. Lighting will be projected on the Larkin Street sidewalk and will be a removable intervention with no physical impact on the plaza.²

The Department finds the proposed project to be a compatible alteration that does not destroy historic materials, features and spatial relationships that characterize the property.

² The installation of associated projectors on the Asian Art Museum and San Francisco Public Library will be reviewed by the HPC under a separate Certificate of Appropriateness.

Therefore, the proposed project complies with Rehabilitation Standard 9.

Standard 10: New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

If the playgrounds were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the plaza and its role as an open space within the district will be unimpaired. The footprint of the proposed playgrounds will be extended to align with the rectangular planting areas to the west. This change will not alter the overall form and integrity of the plaza and will not affect the overall historic character of the Civic Center Landmark District.

Therefore, the proposed project complies with Rehabilitation Standard 10.

PUBLIC/NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT

Prior to the date of this report, the Department received four letters of support for the project from neighboring institutions including Asian Art Museum, San Francisco Public Library Main Branch, Civic Center Community Benefit District and the Bay Area Women and Children Center.

ISSUES & OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed project must comply with Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 650, which requires that “sufficient public access is included in historic properties that house City government services, programs or activities, prior to any HPC approval, either the ADA Coordinator from the Department of Public Works, or the Compliance Officer from the Mayor’s Office on Disability, shall review the proposed work and determine that the design of those areas open to the public are accessible to and useable by people with disabilities.” The project sponsor consulted with John Paul Scott, AIA, CASp, Disability Access Coordinator for the Department of Public Works during the design of the proposed project to ensure that all areas open to the public are accessible to and useable by people with disabilities. A letter from Mr. Scott is attached confirming this review and ongoing involvement with the project.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff has determined that the proposed work will be in conformance with the requirements of Article 10 and the *Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation*. Proposed work will not damage or destroy distinguishing original qualities or character of the Civic Center Landmark District or Civic Center Plaza. The overall proposal includes the replacement of two contemporary playgrounds at Civic Center Plaza in existing locations, by provision of new site furnishings and plantings, and slight expansion of the existing NE and SE rectangular planting areas. The new playgrounds feature a cohesive materials palette of metal and concrete in neutral colors, and a limited plant palette that are consistent with the character of existing features of Civic Center Plaza and the district. The design of new playground and landscape features is inspired by the surrounding landmark district. New features will provide minimal visual intervention in order to avoid competition with the important east-west axis from City Hall to Larkin Street. The new play equipment will be designed to be open and airy in character and will read as a cohesive system

through the use of consistent color, materials and style. Lighting will be projected on the Larkin Street sidewalk to create a safe and active public amenity associated with the playgrounds. The projected lighting will be a removable intervention that will not damage any features of the plaza.³

Staff finds that the historic character of Civic Center Plaza will be retained and preserved and will not result in the alteration of the character-defining features and spatial relationships that characterize the district. The proposed project will maintain the essential form and integrity of the plaza and district and will not impair the significance of the landmark.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS

The Planning Department has determined that the proposed project is exempt/excluded from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guideline Section 15301 (Class One-Minor Alteration of Existing facility) because the project is a minor alteration of an existing structure and meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Planning Department staff recommends APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS of the proposed project as it appears to meet the *Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation*. Staff recommends the following conditions of approval:

- That prior to construction, the following will be forwarded for review and approval by Planning Department Preservation Staff:
 - Samples of the final materials and finishes.
 - Final plant palette selection.
 - Final design details, materials, and finishes for curbs, perimeter fencing, light poles and play structures.
 - A Certificate of Appropriateness application for the installation/mounting of projectors on the Asian Art Museum and San Francisco Public Library. The projectors are associated with the projected lighting scheme on the Larkin Street sidewalk associated with the playground rehabilitation project.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft Motion
Exhibits
Letter from the Disability Access Coordinator
Letters of Support
Plans and renderings

³ The mounting of projectors on the Asian Art Museum and San Francisco Public Library will be reviewed by the HPC under a separate Certificate of Appropriateness.



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Motion No. XXXX

HEARING DATE: JUNE 17, 2015

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Case No.: **2015-005727COA**
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ADOPTING FINDINGS FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR PROPOSED WORK DETERMINED TO BE APPROPRIATE FOR AND CONSISTENT WITH THE PURPOSES OF ARTICLE 10, TO MEET THE STANDARDS OF ARTICLE 10 AND TO MEET THE SECRETARY OF INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION, FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED ON LOT 001 IN ASSESSOR'S BLOCK 0788, WITHIN A P (PUBLIC) ZONING DISTRICT, AN OS (OPEN SPACE) HEIGHT AND BULK DISTRICT, AND CIVIC CENTER LANDMARK DISTRICT.

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, on May 7, 2015, Karen Mauney-Brodek of the Recreation & Parks Department (Project Sponsor) filed an application with the San Francisco Planning Department ("Department") for a Certificate of Appropriateness to remove and reconfigure the two existing playgrounds on the subject property located on lot 001 in Assessor's Block 0788. The work includes new play equipment, curbs, railings, paving, planting areas and lighting.

WHEREAS, the Project was determined by the Department to be categorically exempt from environmental review. The Historic Preservation Commission (hereinafter "Commission") has reviewed and concurs with said determination.

WHEREAS, on June 17, 2015, the Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing on the current project, Case No. 2015-005727COA (“Project”) for its appropriateness.

WHEREAS, in reviewing the Application, the Commission has had available for its review and consideration case reports, plans, and other materials pertaining to the Project contained in the Department’s case files, has reviewed and heard testimony and received materials from interested parties during the public hearing on the Project.

MOVED, that the Commission hereby grants the Certificate of Appropriateness, in conformance with the architectural plans dated May 6, 2015 and labeled Exhibit A on file in the docket for Case No. 2015-005727COA based on the following findings:

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

- That prior to construction, the following will be forwarded for review and approval by Planning Department Preservation Staff:
 - Samples of the final materials and finishes.
 - Final plant palette selection.
 - Final design details, materials, and finishes for curbs, perimeter fencing, light poles and play structures.
 - A Certificate of Appropriateness application for the installation/mounting of projectors on the Asian Art Museum and San Francisco Public Library. The projectors are associated with the projected lighting scheme on the Larkin Street sidewalk associated with the playground rehabilitation project.

FINDINGS

Having reviewed all the materials identified in the recitals above and having heard oral testimony and arguments, this Commission finds, concludes, and determines as follows:

1. The above recitals are accurate and also constitute findings of the Commission.
2. Findings pursuant to Article 10:

The Historical Preservation Commission has determined that the proposed work is compatible with the character of the Civic Center Landmark District as described in the designation report dated December 1994.

- That the proposal is compatible with, and respects the character-defining features within the Civic Center Landmark District;
- That the footprint of the proposed playgrounds is consistent with the footprint of the existing playgrounds located in the plaza and will not remove any character-defining features of the Civic Center Landmark District; and
- The proposed project meets the following applicable *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation*:

Standard 1.

A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

Standard 2.

The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

Standard 3.

Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

Standard 4.

Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

Standard 5.

Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

Standard 9.

New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

Standard 10.

New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

3. **General Plan Compliance.** The proposed Certificate of Appropriateness is, on balance, consistent with the following Objectives and Policies of the General Plan:

I. URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

THE URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT CONCERNS THE PHYSICAL CHARACTER AND ORDER OF THE CITY, AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEOPLE AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT.

GOALS

The Urban Design Element is concerned both with development and with preservation. It is a concerted effort to recognize the positive attributes of the city, to enhance and conserve those attributes, and to improve the living environment where it is less than satisfactory. The Plan is a definition of quality, a definition based upon human needs.

OBJECTIVE 1

EMPHASIS OF THE CHARACTERISTIC PATTERN WHICH GIVES TO THE CITY AND ITS NEIGHBORHOODS AN IMAGE, A SENSE OF PURPOSE, AND A MEANS OF ORIENTATION.

POLICY 1.3

Recognize that buildings, when seen together, produce a total effect that characterizes the city and its districts.

OBJECTIVE 2

CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES WHICH PROVIDE A SENSE OF NATURE, CONTINUITY WITH THE PAST, AND FREEDOM FROM OVERCROWDING.

POLICY 2.4

Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.

POLICY 2.5

Use care in remodeling of older buildings, in order to enhance rather than weaken the original character of such buildings.

POLICY 2.7

Recognize and protect outstanding and unique areas that contribute in an extraordinary degree to San Francisco's visual form and character.

The goal of a Certificate of Appropriateness is to provide additional oversight for buildings and districts that are architecturally or culturally significant to the City in order to protect the qualities that are associated with that significance.

The proposed project qualifies for a Certificate of Appropriateness and therefore furthers these policies and objectives by maintaining and preserving the character-defining features of the landmark for the future enjoyment and education of San Francisco residents and visitors.

4. The proposed project is generally consistent with the eight General Plan priority policies set forth in Section 101.1 in that:
 - A) The existing neighborhood-serving retail uses will be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses will be enhanced:

The proposed project is for the renovation of a civic property and will not have any impact on neighborhood serving retail uses.

- B) The existing housing and neighborhood character will be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods:

The proposed project will strengthen neighborhood character by respecting the character-defining features of the landmark in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

- C) The City's supply of affordable housing will be preserved and enhanced:

The project will not have any impact on the City's supply of affordable housing.

- D) The commuter traffic will not impede MUNI transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking:

The proposed project will not result in commuter traffic impeding MUNI transit service or overburdening the streets or neighborhood parking.

- E) A diverse economic base will be maintained by protecting our industrial and service sectors from displacement due to commercial office development. And future opportunities for resident employment and ownership in these sectors will be enhanced:

The proposed will not have any impact on industrial and service sector jobs.

- F) The City will achieve the greatest possible preparedness to protect against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.

All construction will be executed in compliance with all applicable construction and safety measures.

- G) That landmark and historic buildings will be preserved:

The proposed project is in conformance with Article 10 of the Planning Code and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

- H) Parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas will be protected from development:

The proposed project will not impact the access to sunlight or vistas for the parks and open space.

5. For these reasons, the proposal overall, is appropriate for and consistent with the purposes of Article 10, meets the standards of Article 10, and the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, General Plan and Prop M findings of the Planning Code.

DECISION

That based upon the Record, the submissions by the Applicant, the staff of the Department and other interested parties, the oral testimony presented to this Commission at the public hearings, and all other written materials submitted by all parties, the Commission hereby **GRANTS WITH CONDITIONS a Certificate of Appropriateness** for the property located at Lot 001 in Assessor's Block 0788 for proposed work in conformance with the renderings and architectural sketches dated May 6, 2015 and labeled Exhibit A on file in the docket for Case No. 2015-005727COA.

APPEAL AND EFFECTIVE DATE OF MOTION: The Commission's decision on a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be final unless appealed within thirty (30) days. Any appeal shall be made to the Board of Appeals, unless the proposed project requires Board of Supervisors approval or is appealed to the Board of Supervisors as a conditional use, in which case any appeal shall be made to the Board of Supervisors (see Charter Section 4.135).

Duration of this Certificate of Appropriateness: This Certificate of Appropriateness is issued pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code and is valid for a period of three (3) years from the effective date of approval by the Historic Preservation Commission. The authorization and right vested by virtue of this action shall be deemed void and canceled if, within 3 years of the date of this Motion, a site permit or building permit for the Project has not been secured by Project Sponsor.

THIS IS NOT A PERMIT TO COMMENCE ANY WORK OR CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY UNLESS NO BUILDING PERMIT IS REQUIRED. PERMITS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING INSPECTION (and any other appropriate agencies) MUST BE SECURED BEFORE WORK IS STARTED OR OCCUPANCY IS CHANGED.

I hereby certify that the Historical Preservation Commission ADOPTED the foregoing Motion on June 17, 2015.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

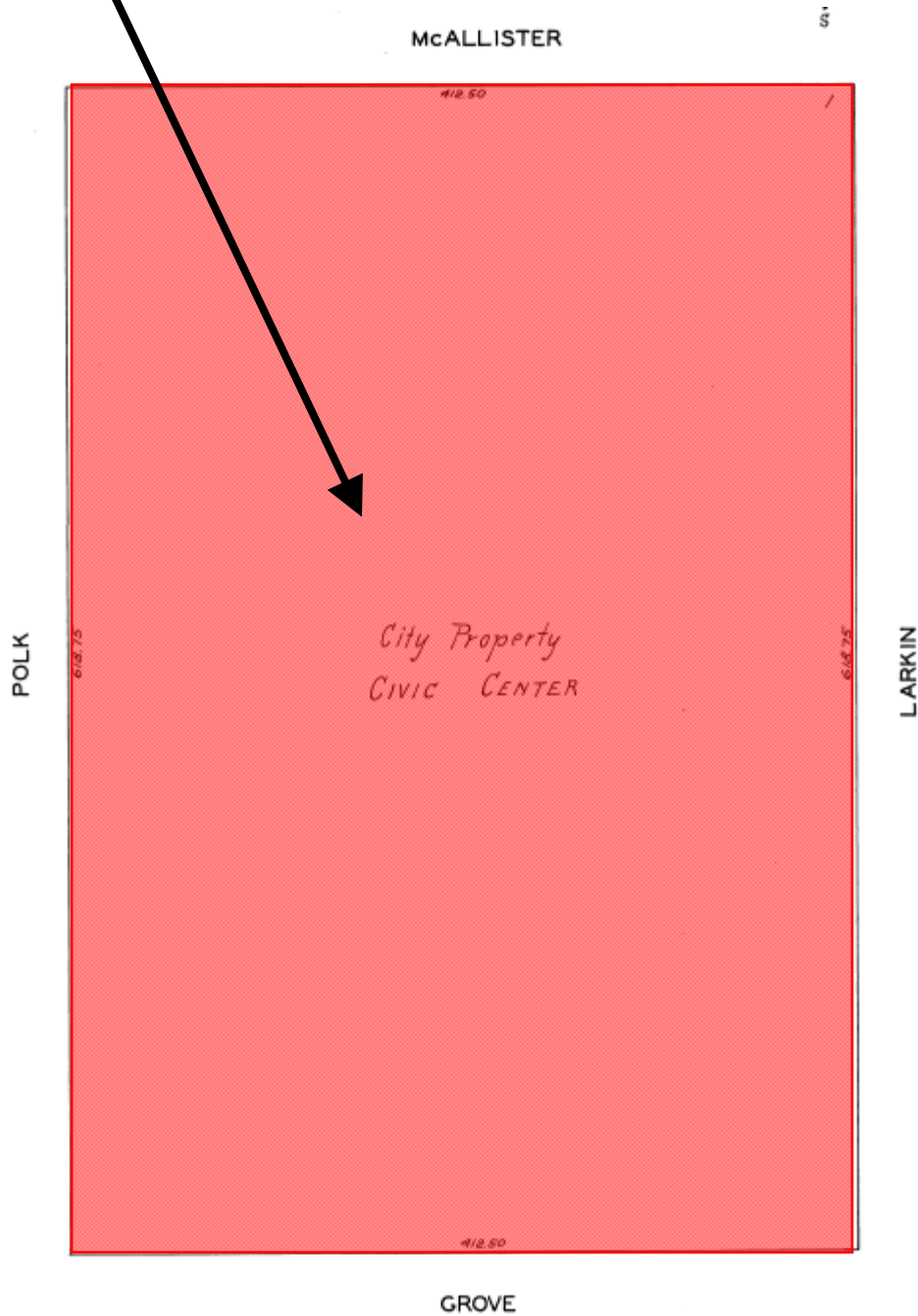
NAYS:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED:

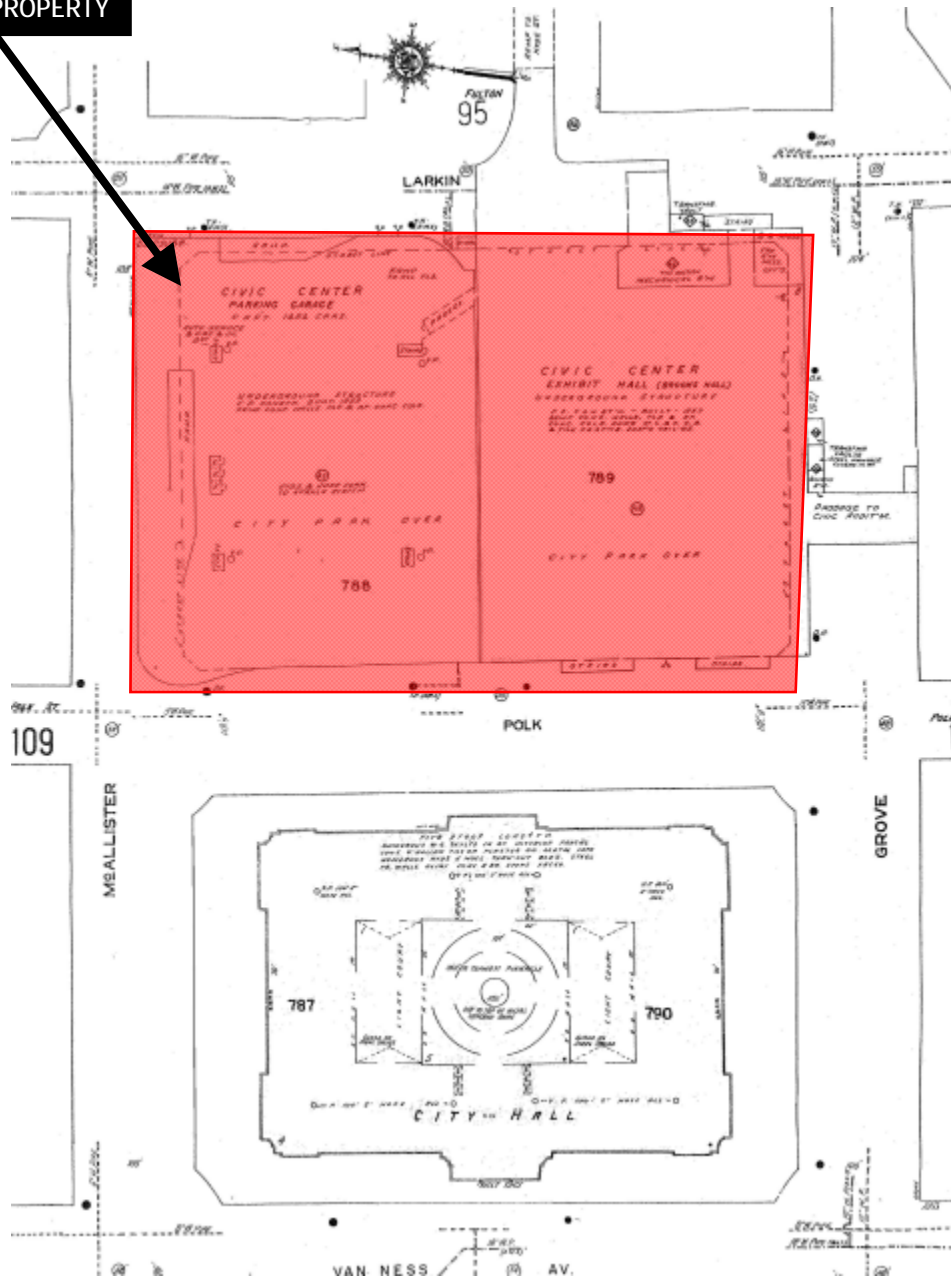
Parcel Map

SUBJECT PROPERTY



Sanborn Map*

SUBJECT PROPERTY

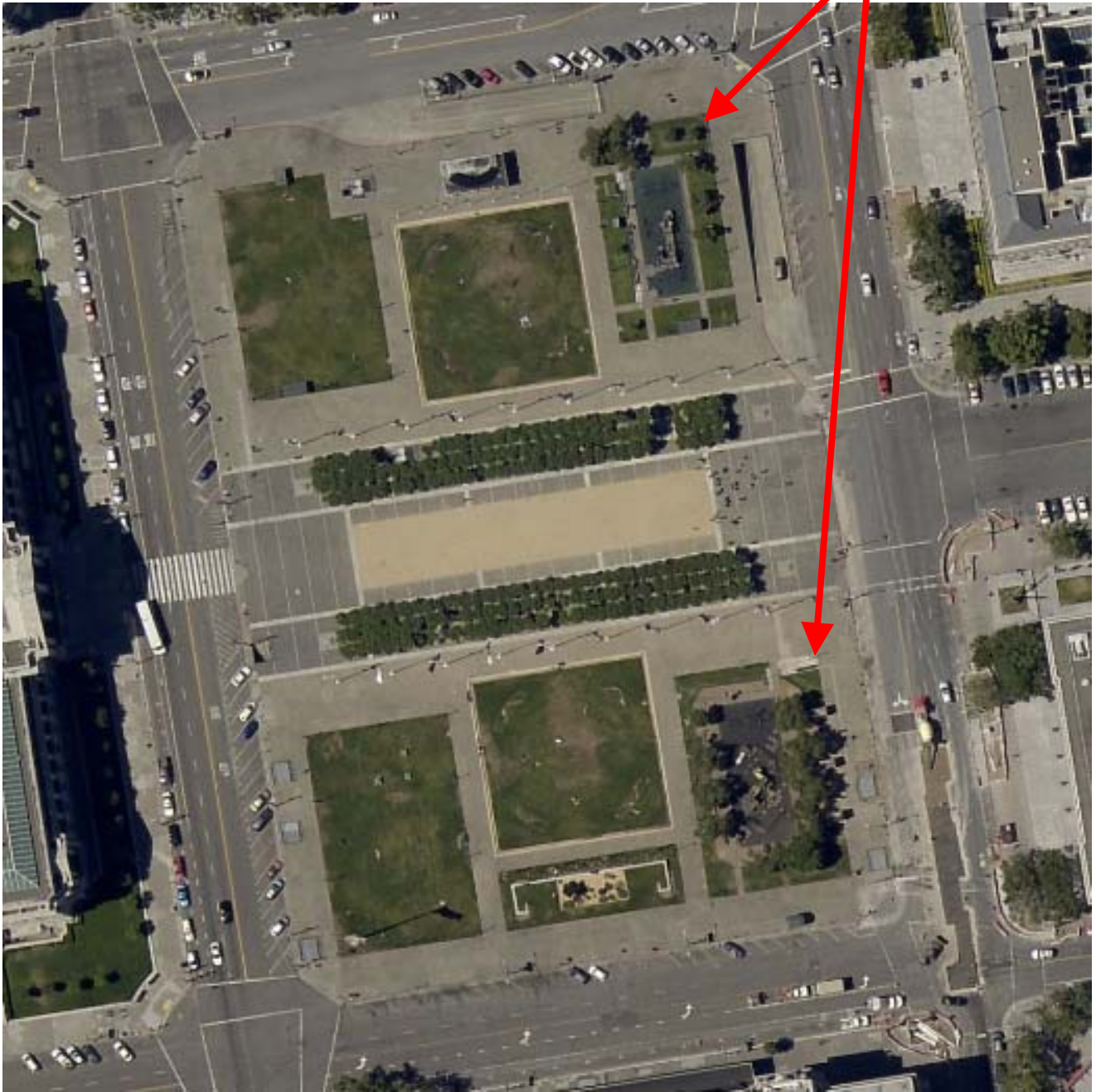


*The Sanborn Maps in San Francisco have not been updated since 1998, and this map may not accurately reflect existing conditions.

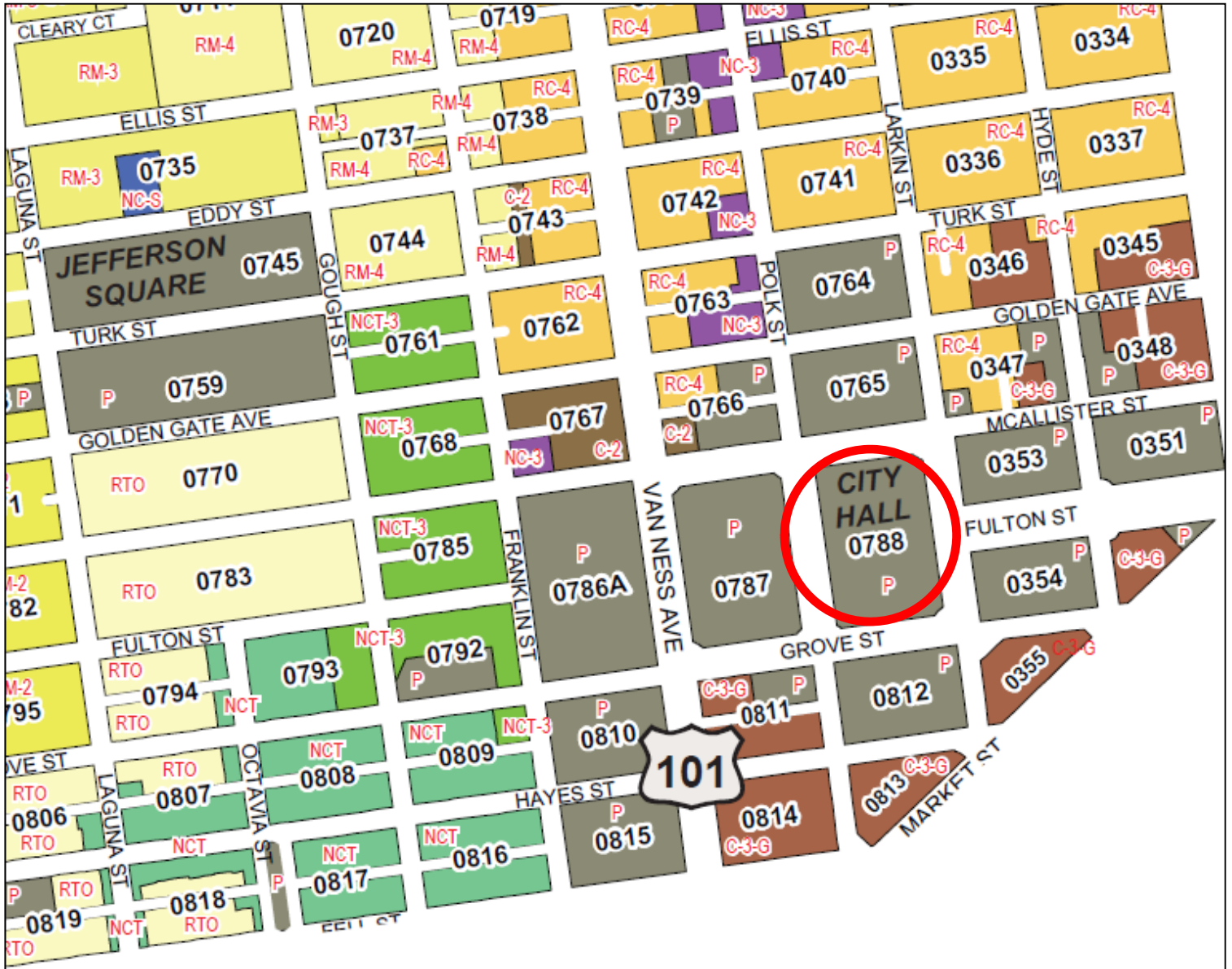


Aerial Photo

SUBJECT PROPERTY



Zoning Map



Site Photos



North playground, opened 1993.

Certificate of Appropriateness Hearing
Case Number 2015-005727COA
355 McAllister Street
Civic Center Plaza- Playground Improvements

Site Photos



South playground, opened 1998.



Edwin M. Lee
Mayor

Mohammed Nuru
Director

Julia Laue, AIA LEED AP
Principal Architect
and Manager

John Paul Scott
AIA CASp
Disability Access Coordinator

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May 21, 0215

Karen Mauney-Brodek

**Recreation and Parks Department
Capital Division**

30 Van Ness Ave. 3rd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102

**RE: Civic Center Plaza Play Areas, ADA and California Building Code Disabled
Access Compliance Reviews.**

Dear Karen,

This letter serves to confirm that I, John Paul Scott AIA CASp, will be serving as the City's ADA Disability Access Coordinator (BDC DAC) for the Civic Center Play Area, and playground project. Recreation and Parks Department has retained the Public Works Building Design and Construction (BDC), in support of the Trust for Public Land's project in Civic Center Plaza.

I will be reviewing and plan checking the play area design, construction documents and conducting construction inspections. My reviews cover both compliance with the [2010 ADA Standard](#) and the [2013 California Building Code's](#) requirements for play area accessibility and accessibility elements. In addition. BDC will be providing support to the project's application for play area building permits for construction.

These reviews will include use of the Public Works and Mayor's Office on Disability's [Play Area Inventory Form](#) and compliance with the SF Building Department's [G-19 Informational Sheet](#) "Permit Processing Guidelines for Play areas and Play Components at the City of San Francisco (City) Owned, Leased, or Publicly Funded Sites."

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours

John Paul Scott, AIA, CASp
Disability Access Coordinator (BDC DAC)
Public Works, Building Design and Construction

CC. Julia Laue

-

ASIAN ART MUSEUM
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Asian

May 28, 2015

City and County of San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission

Attn: Tim Frye

San Francisco Planning Department
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Historic Preservation Commissioners:

On behalf of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, I am writing in support of the proposed renovation of the two playgrounds located in Civic Center Plaza.

During the design process led by the Trust for Public Land, I participated in a series of community meetings, site meetings and focus groups with educators, parents and institutions. The innovative and artistic designs of the new playgrounds encourage creative play and exploration, much like the Asian Art Museum, and although our mission is to generate participation with people and artworks inside the building, the visitor experience begins in the Civic Center before audiences reach the museum.

The museum sees itself as an integral member of the Civic Center neighborhood, contributing to the vibrancy of our location in the heart of San Francisco, the center of which are the playgrounds. Opportunities for both artistic and physical expression encourage visits to and generate interest in the area, building awareness for the richness of this vital heart of the City.

The museum community is excited about the project and its anticipated impact on our visitors, particularly young people, schools and families. These important audiences utilize Civic Center Plaza as a place to gather before and after visiting the museum, and see the playgrounds as integral to their museum-going experience. The Asian Art Museum considers the new playgrounds part of its own backyard: welcoming, inventive—home.

Sincerely,

Allison Wyckoff
Manager of Public Programs



Board of Directors and Officers

Chair
Bill Whitfield
Shorenstein Realty Services

Vice Chair
Tim Vrabel
Emerald Fund

Treasurer
John Updike
San Francisco Real Estate

Secretary
Jennifer Norris
San Francisco War Memorial
and Performing Arts Center

Sarah Ballard
Dept. of Recreation and Parks

Anthony Boas
San Francisco Honda

Mary Conde
Another Planet Entertainment

Jim Haas
Neighborhood Advocate/Resident

Roberto Lombardi
San Francisco Public Library

Katie Nicely
San Francisco Symphony

Janan New
San Francisco Apartment
Association

Ruth Nott
San Francisco Opera

Sam Smith
San Francisco Conservatory
of Music

Annette Turner
Judicial Council of California

Patricia Unterman
Hayes Street Grill

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June 1, 2015

Historic Preservation Commission
Andrew Wolfram, President
Aaron Jon Hyland
Karl Hasz
Ellen Johnck

Richard S. E. Johns
Diane Matsuda
Jonathan Pearlman

RE: Playgrounds at Civic Center Plaza

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of the Civic Center Community Benefit District, I am writing to offer our full support of the proposed renovation of the two playgrounds located at Civic Center Plaza.

The goal of the Civic Center CBD is to improve the image, safety, beautification and cleanliness of the greater Civic Center area for the benefit of patrons, residents, employees, merchants, property owners and other visitors within the district.

We believe this project meets those goals in the following ways:

- The current playgrounds have served well, but they are well worn and need not just a coat of paint, but a whole new concept.
- The CBD has participated in the design process that has been community driven, led by the Trust for Public Land and the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department. The process included community meetings, meetings with parents, children, educators and institutions, agencies and City officials.
- The design has been carefully thought out to fit in the context of the plaza and improve sightlines and visibility. This will be a prized asset of the neighborhood.
- The Civic Center neighborhood will double in population in the next few years bringing more families and children into the area. This will be a highly used playground for many.
- The CBD believes that the proposed playgrounds project and associated lighting improvements are going to help activate the area and generate momentum for much needed additional improvements.

We believe that the new playgrounds will bring new life and activation to the plaza area and is in perfect alignment with our CBD's goals. We strongly urge you to support this beautiful addition to the Civic Center.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Donald W. Savoie'.

Donald W. Savoie, Executive Director
Civic Center Community Benefit District

Bay Area Women's & Children's Center
318 Leavenworth Street
SF, CA 94102
www.bawcc.org 415-474-2400

Historic Preservation Commission
Attn: Tim Frye, SF Planning Department
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Historic Preservation Commissioners

June 2, 2015

I am writing to assure you of Bay Area Women's & Children's Center's enthusiastic support of the proposed renovation of the two playgrounds located at Civic Center Plaza.

The Bay Area Women's and Children's Center (BAWCC) is a 35-year-old organization that is located in SF's Tenderloin community, and focuses entirely on the needs and issues of low-income families, children, and women. BAWCC offers a variety of direct services that address immediate needs as well as long-term stability. BAWCC also leads advocacy and planning work that has resulted in significant public policies and the creation of neighborhood institutions that have tangibly improved the daily lives of thousands of families, children, and women since 1981.

BAWCC initiated and led the effort to create and install the existing playgrounds in Civic Center Plaza which are now close to 20 years old and in need of renovation. These playgrounds have served children and families from adjacent neighborhoods, all over the City, and visitors from around the world. We believe that the renovated playgrounds are needed to continue to serve and inspire children, as they have for the past two decades.

BAWCC actively participated in the design process led by the Trust for Public Land for the proposed renovation. We organized several community meetings, school focus groups at the Tenderloin Community School, site meetings with parents and educators, and presentations at the BAWCC's Tenderloin Network of Children, Youth & Family Services.

We are asking that the Historic Preservation Commission support this exciting renovation project that is so important to families and children in our City! Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Midge Wilson

Midge Wilson, BAWCC Executive Director



San Francisco Public Library

100 Larkin Street
San Francisco, CA 94102

June 3, 2015

Historic Preservation Commission
Room 400, City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place

Dear Historic Preservation Commissioners:

In May 2015, San Francisco Public Library staff had the pleasure of meeting with representatives from the Trust for Public Land and the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department to discuss *Civic Center Playgrounds*. This project is an exciting opportunity to re-imagine these public spaces. I am confident that this initiative will strengthen the quality of our neighboring outdoor spaces for children and their families, and, by extension, improve the experiences for Main Library visitors.

The proposed *Civic Center Playgrounds* design will bring necessary excitement about a public space directly across the street from the Main Library. Library patrons and staff will be able to enjoy a view of the redesigned playground, as well as have quick and easy access to an improved family-friendly zone. Additionally, *Civic Center Playgrounds* will help redefine the Civic Center experience by strengthening connections between the area's discrete buildings, thus creating a powerful sense of cohesion.

The project's proposed lighting installments will also be a tool in activation of the space, increasing the overall safety in the Civic Center. The heightened attention that *Civic Center Playgrounds* brings to the neighborhood may also encourage subsequent projects that, at their cores, will add value to our shared public space.

For these reasons, San Francisco Public Library is excited to offer our support to the Recreation and Parks Department, the Trust for Public Land, and the *Civic Center Playgrounds* project. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Luis Herrera
City Librarian

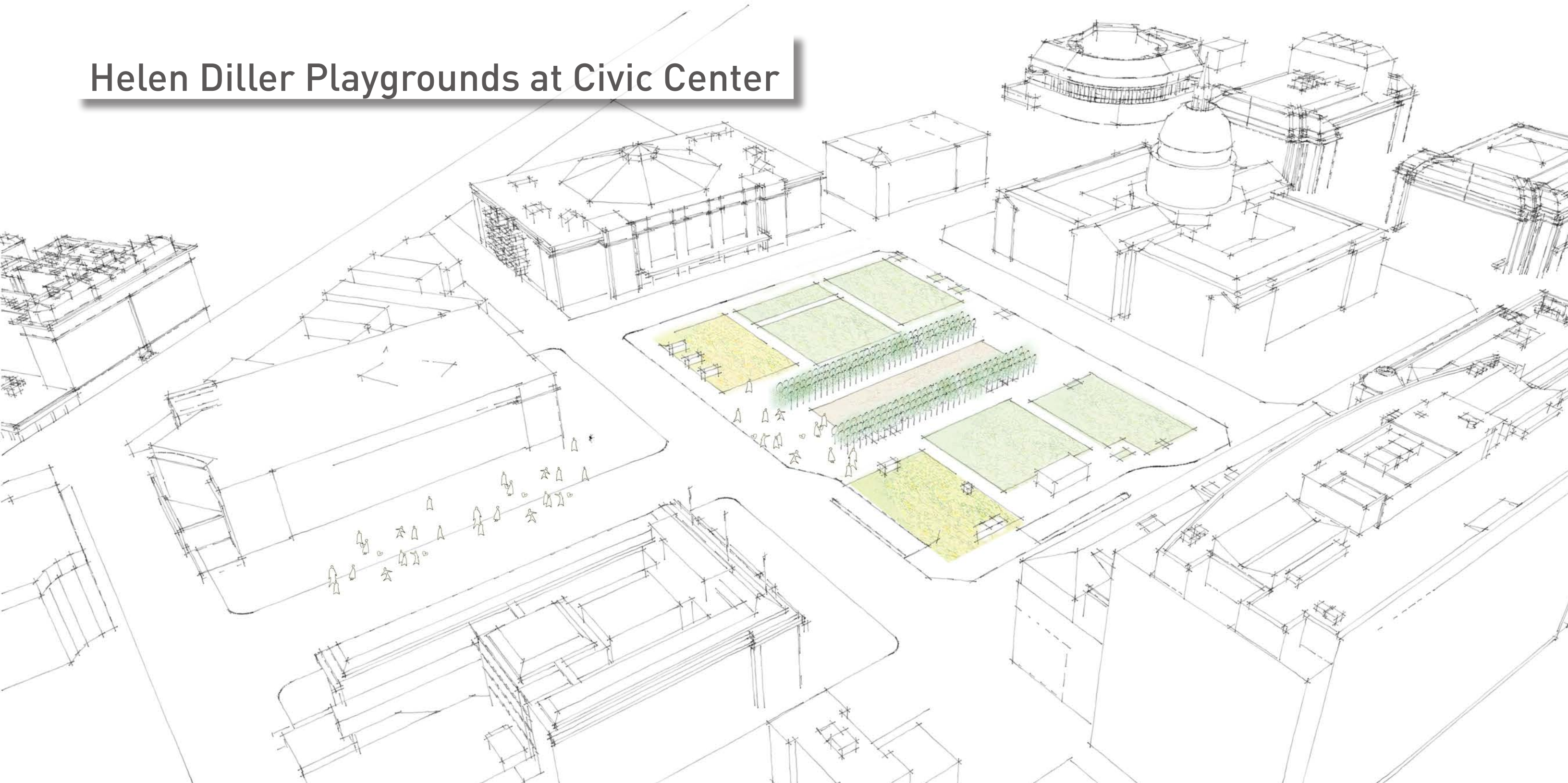
cc: Michael Lambert, Deputy City Librarian
Roberto Lombardi, Director of Facilities
Michelle Jeffers, Chief of Community Programs and Partnerships
Karen Strauss, Chief of the Main Library



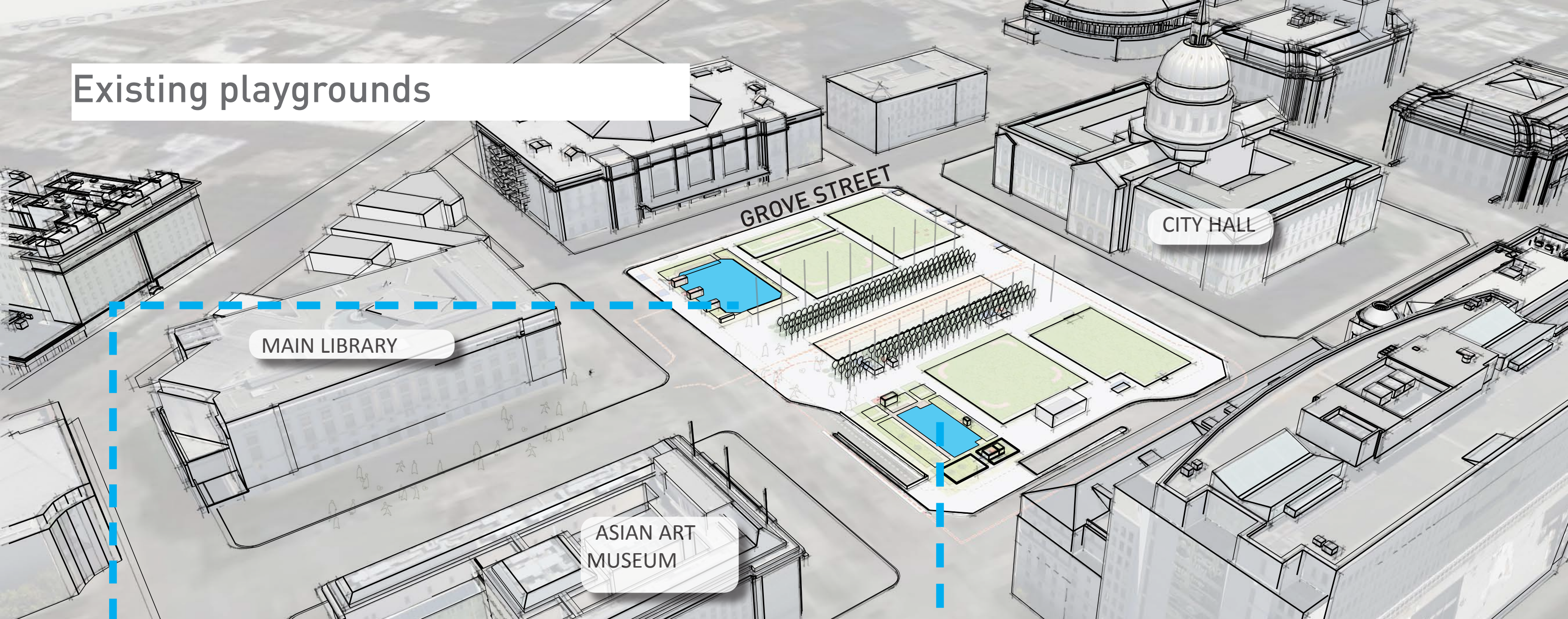
ANDREA COCHRAN
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
2325 Third Street #210
San Francisco CA 94107
415.503.0060

The Helen Diller Playgrounds at Civic Center
Certificate of Appropriateness Application
05.06. 2015; page 1

Helen Diller Playgrounds at Civic Center



Existing playgrounds

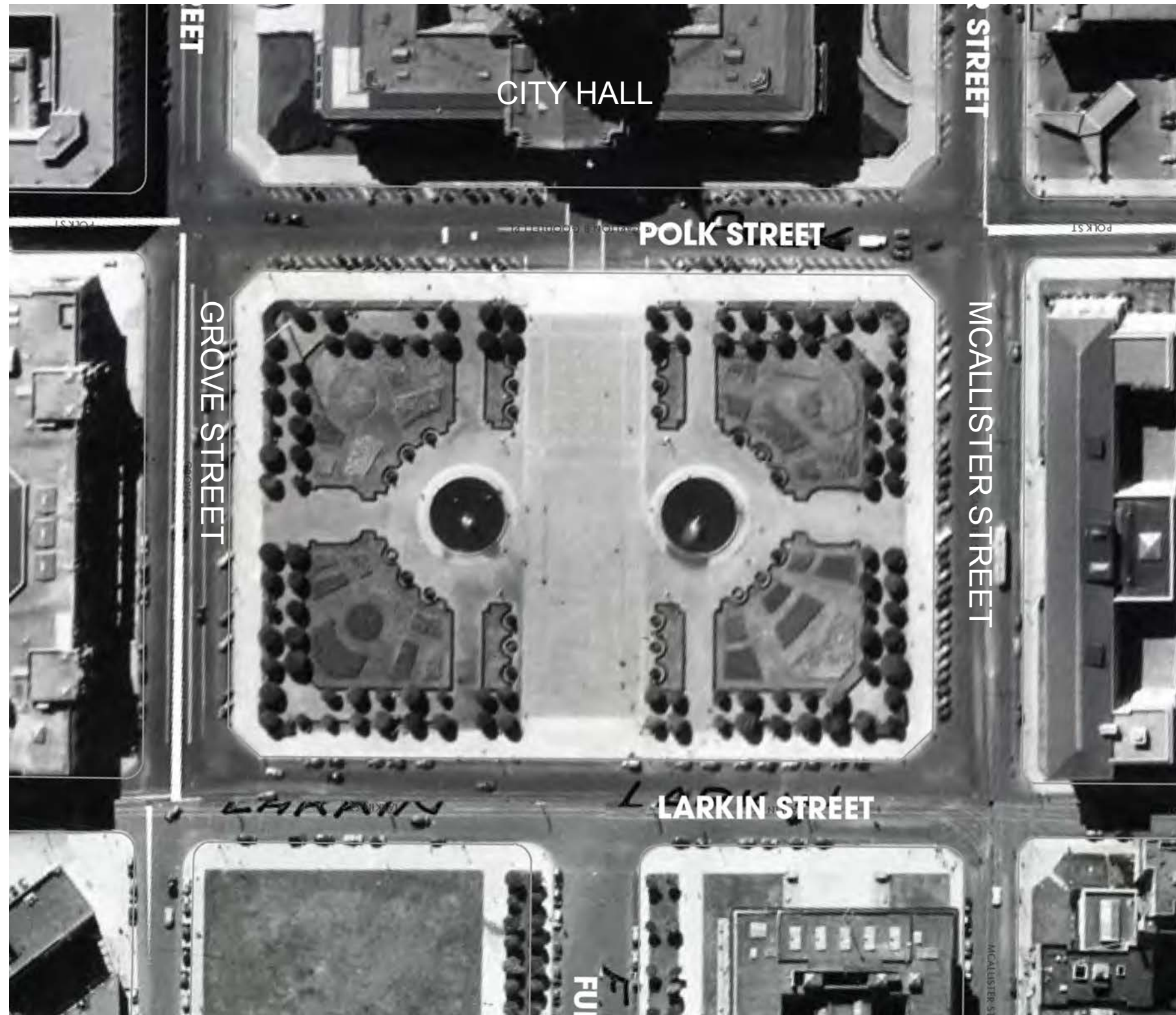


South Playground, opened in 1998

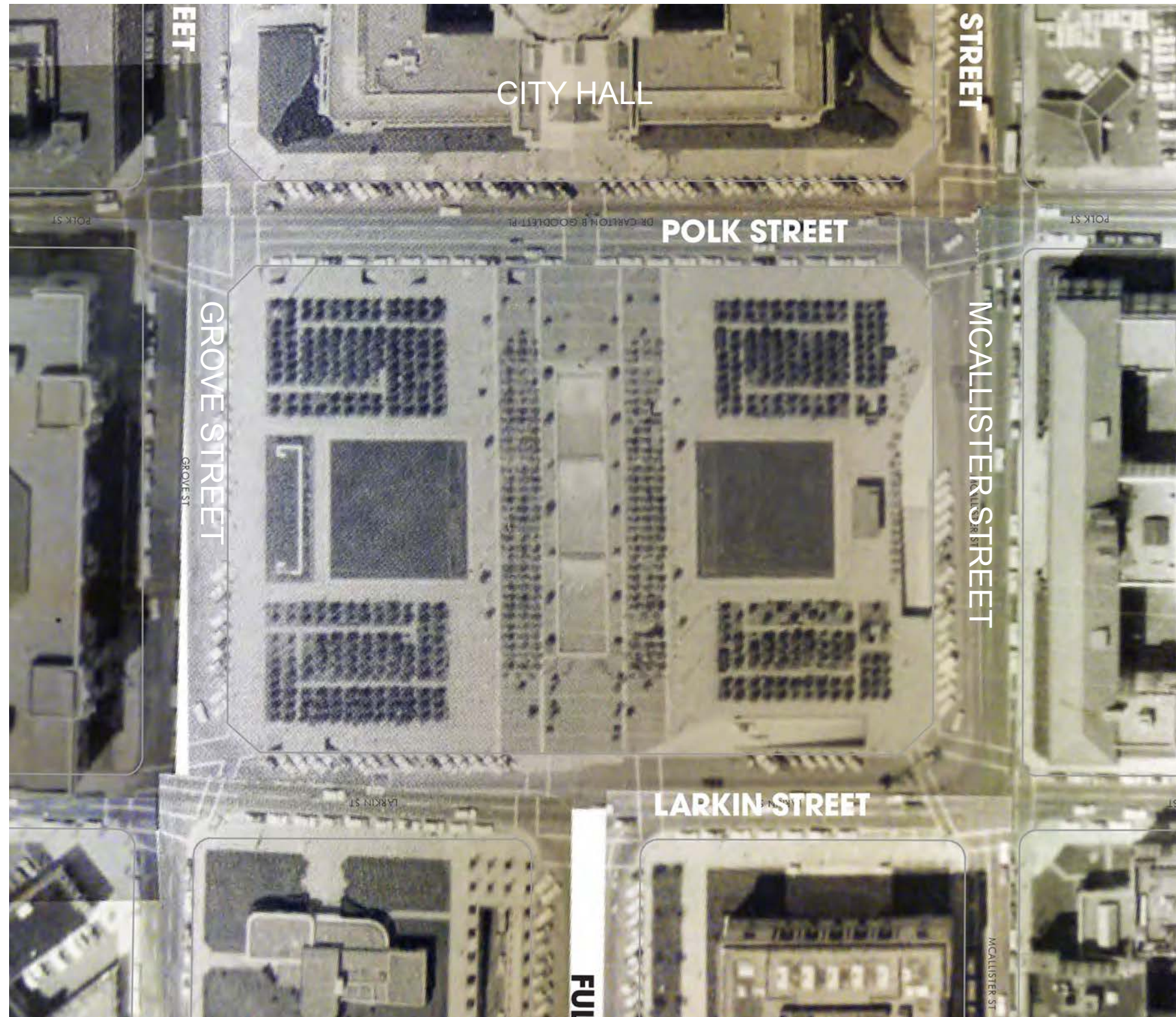


North Playground, opened in 1993

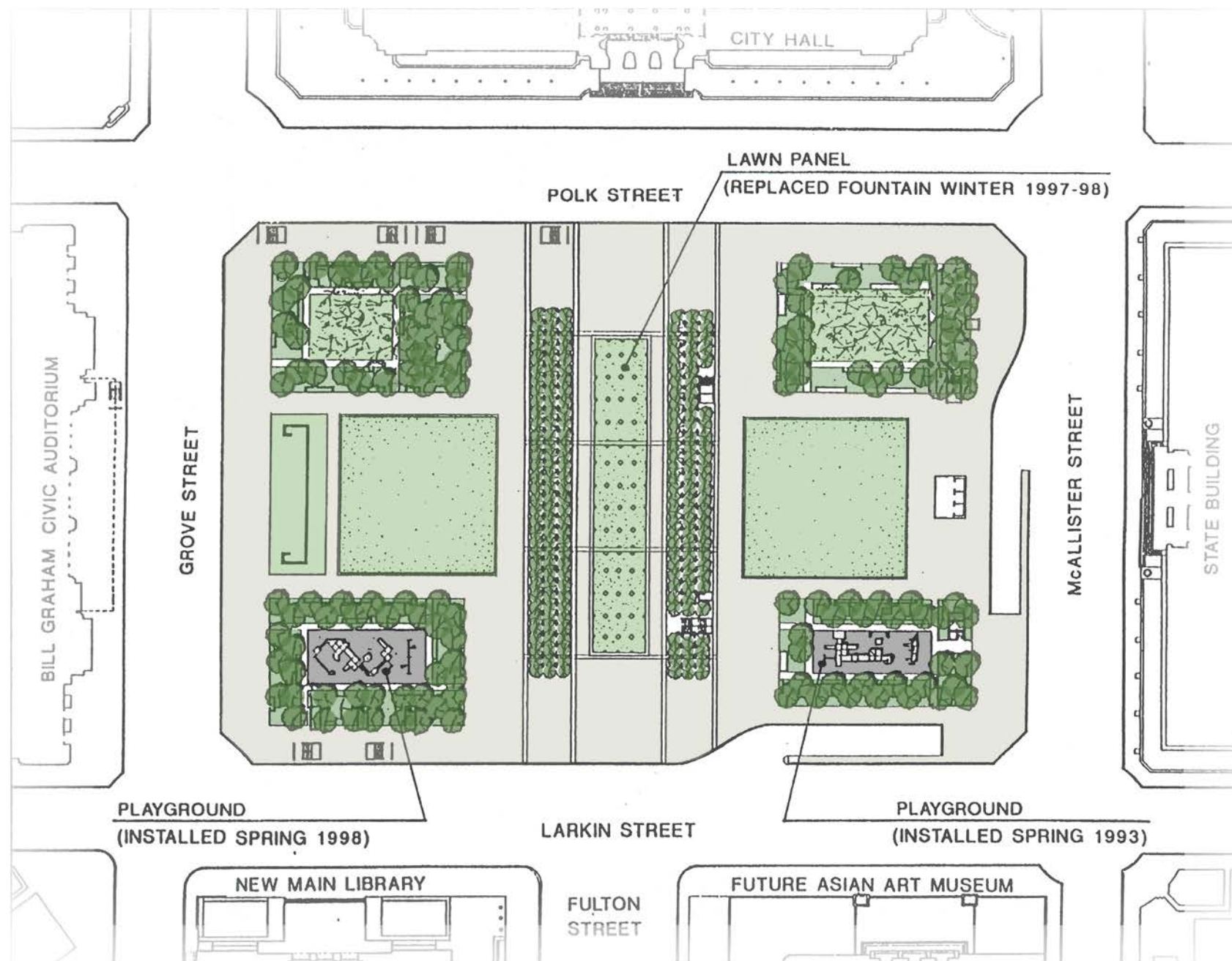
CIVIC CENTER PLAZA: 1930



CIVIC CENTER PLAZA: 1965



CIVIC CENTER PLAZA: existing conditions 1998

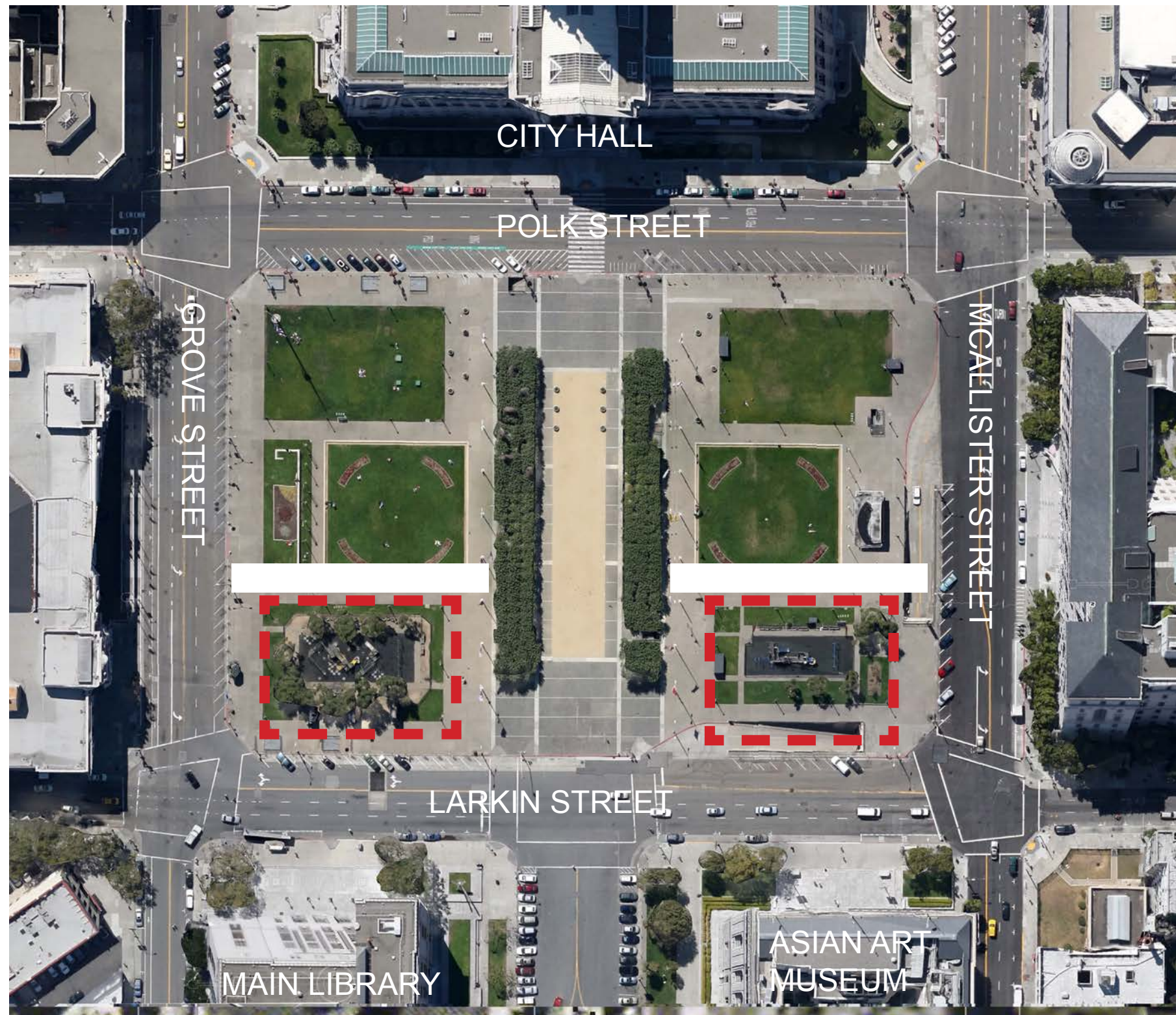


Civic Center Tiny Tot Playground, opened 1994



Civic Center School Age Playground, opened 1998

CIVIC CENTER PLAZA PLAYGROUNDS: existing conditions 2014



North Playground, 2014

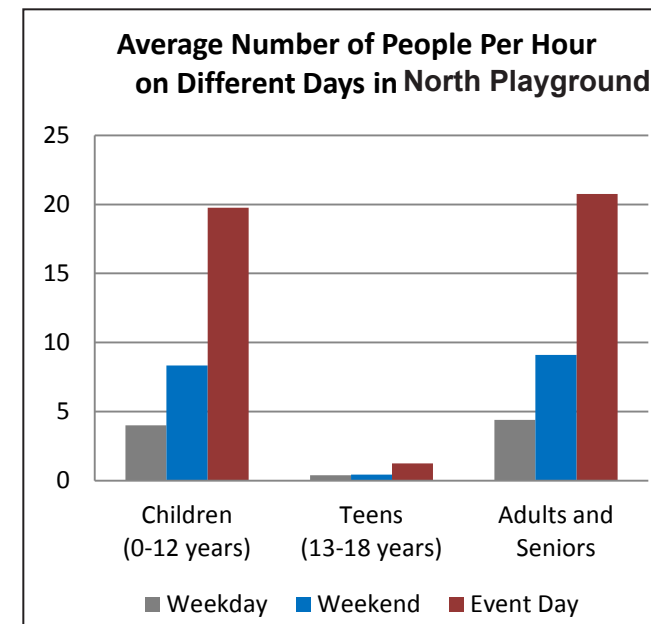
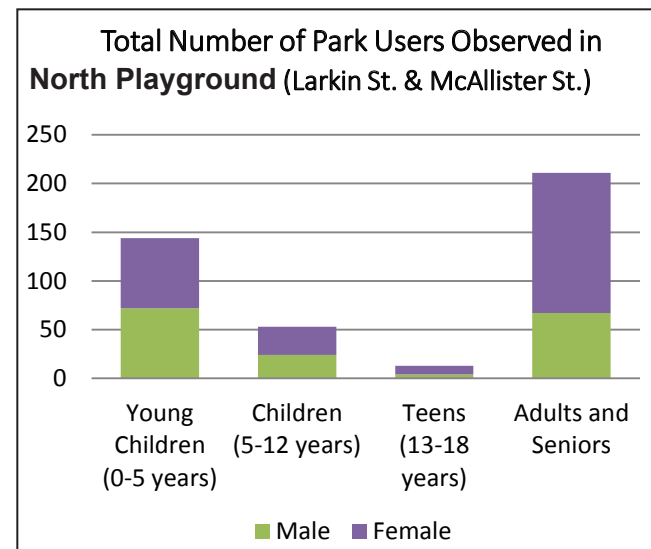


South Playground, 2014

Data Collection, November 2013: Park Observation and User Survey



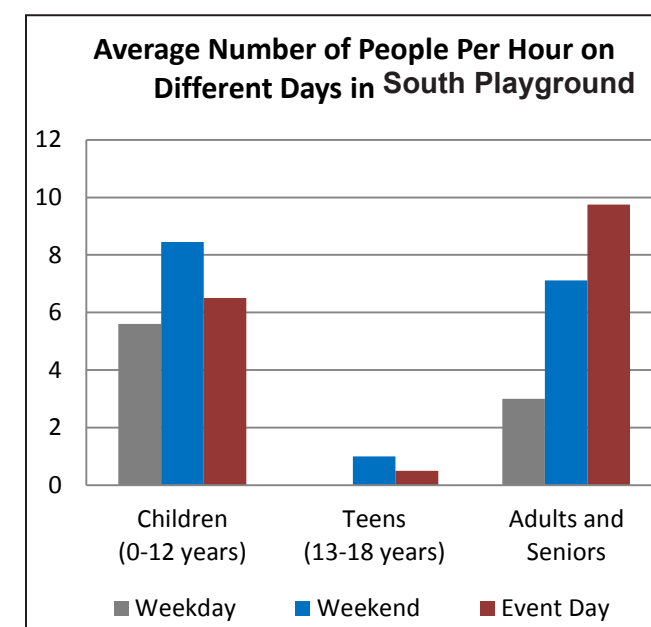
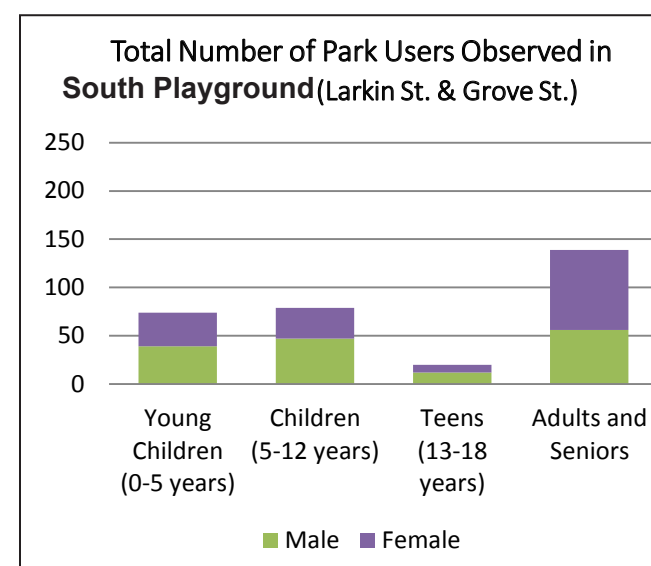
North Playground



- Surge of playground users on event days
- Some large school groups at lunchtime on a field trip
- Most (50%) visit playgrounds 1x per week
- 30% visit several times per week
- 10% visit daily
- 20% were first time



South Playground



CIVIC CENTER PLAZA PLAYGROUNDS: today



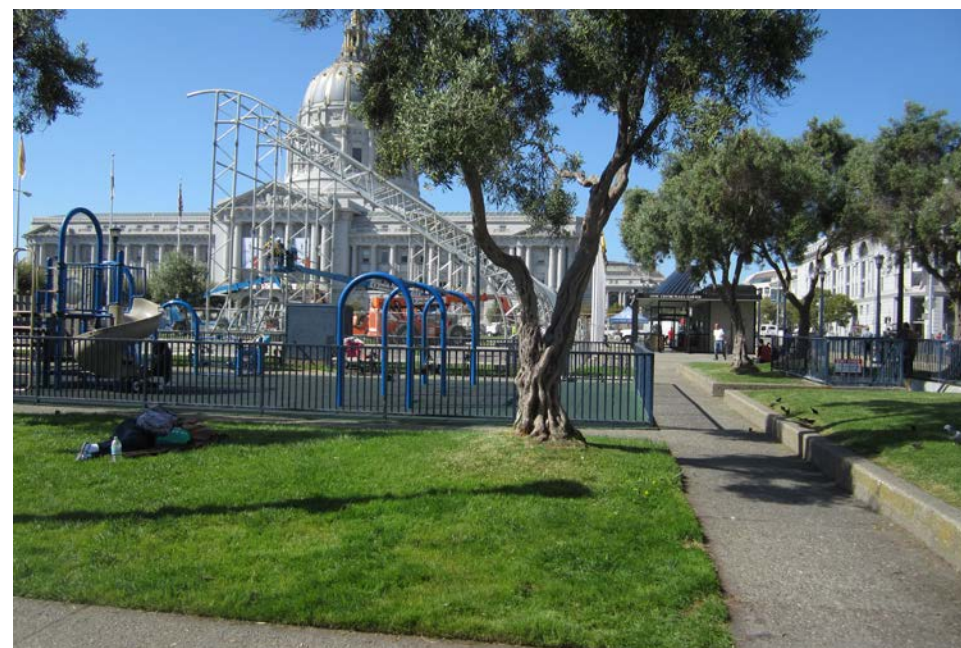
Vent structures impact the playground



Aging equipment and fencing



Worn and tired surfaces



No clear entry

What is working

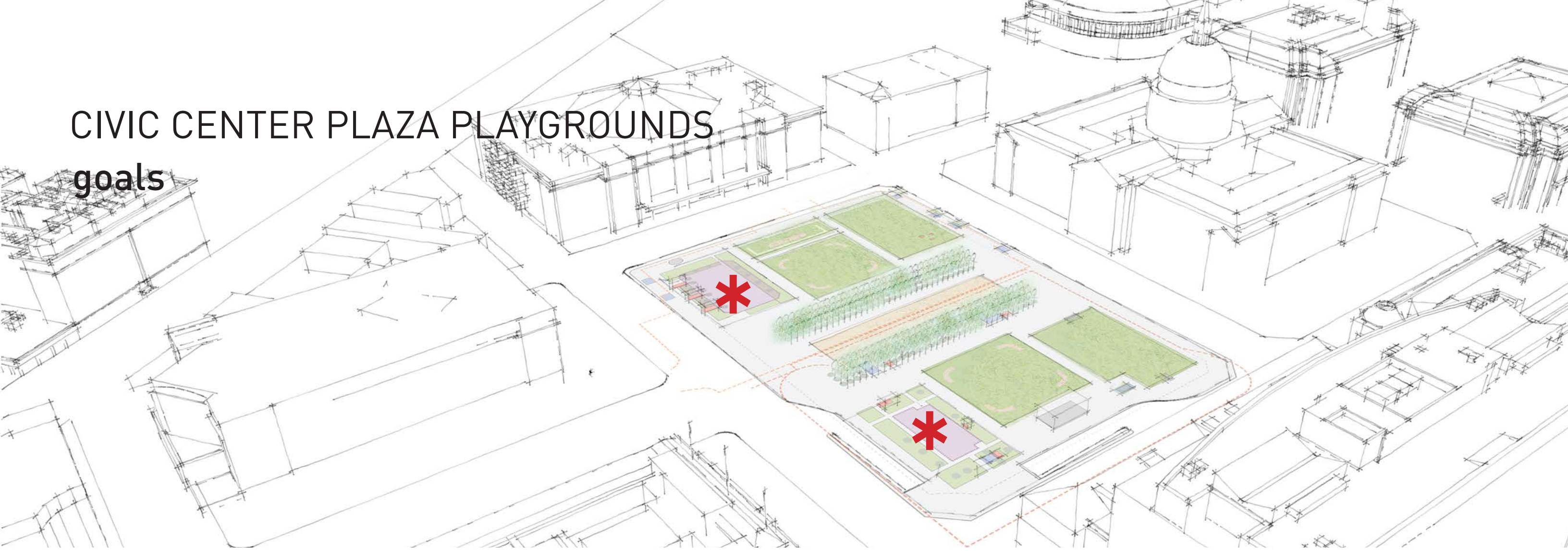
- Great location
- Near many youth + family destinations
- The fences creates an enclosed space

What is not working

- Current equipment is not challenging enough for older youth and teens
- Flooring is old + wood is splintering
- No group sitting areas
- Lack of trashcans
- Tall vent structures impact the playgrounds
- Views into the playground are blocked at the corners
- Unclear pedestrian access to playgrounds feels unwelcoming
- Low evening lighting makes the space feel unsafe

CIVIC CENTER PLAZA PLAYGROUNDS

goals



- Create an inviting, inspiring, fun and safe place for families
- Create unique and artful play spaces that fit with the scale of Civic Center
- Increase programming opportunities with cultural institutions
- Engage and activate children's sense of play

Playground Design / Agency + Organizations Coordination

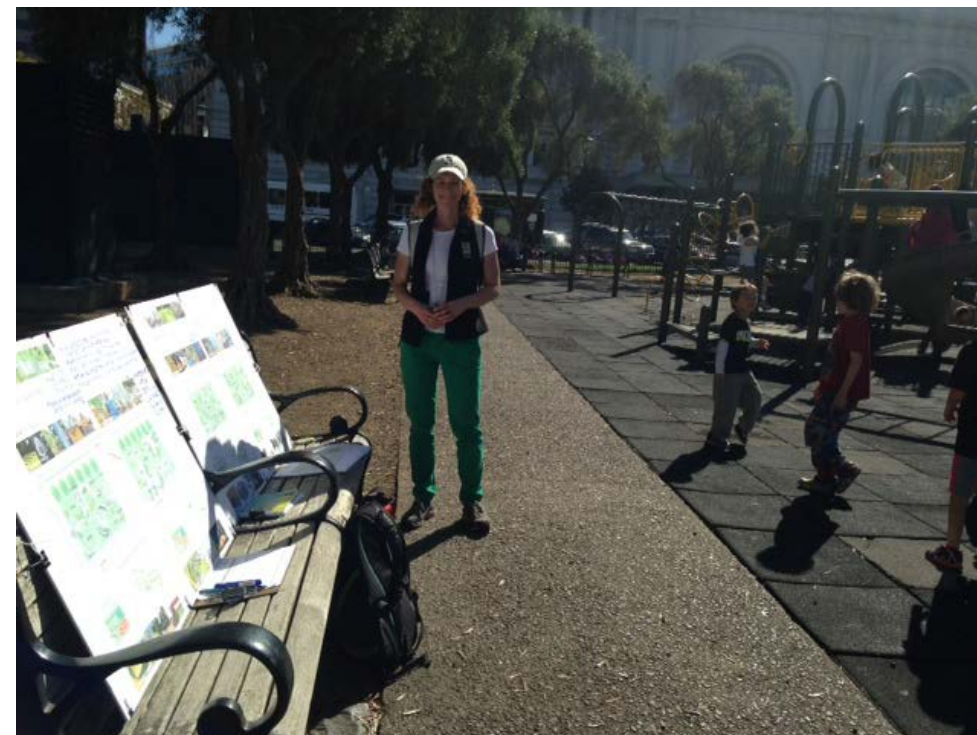


City Agencies

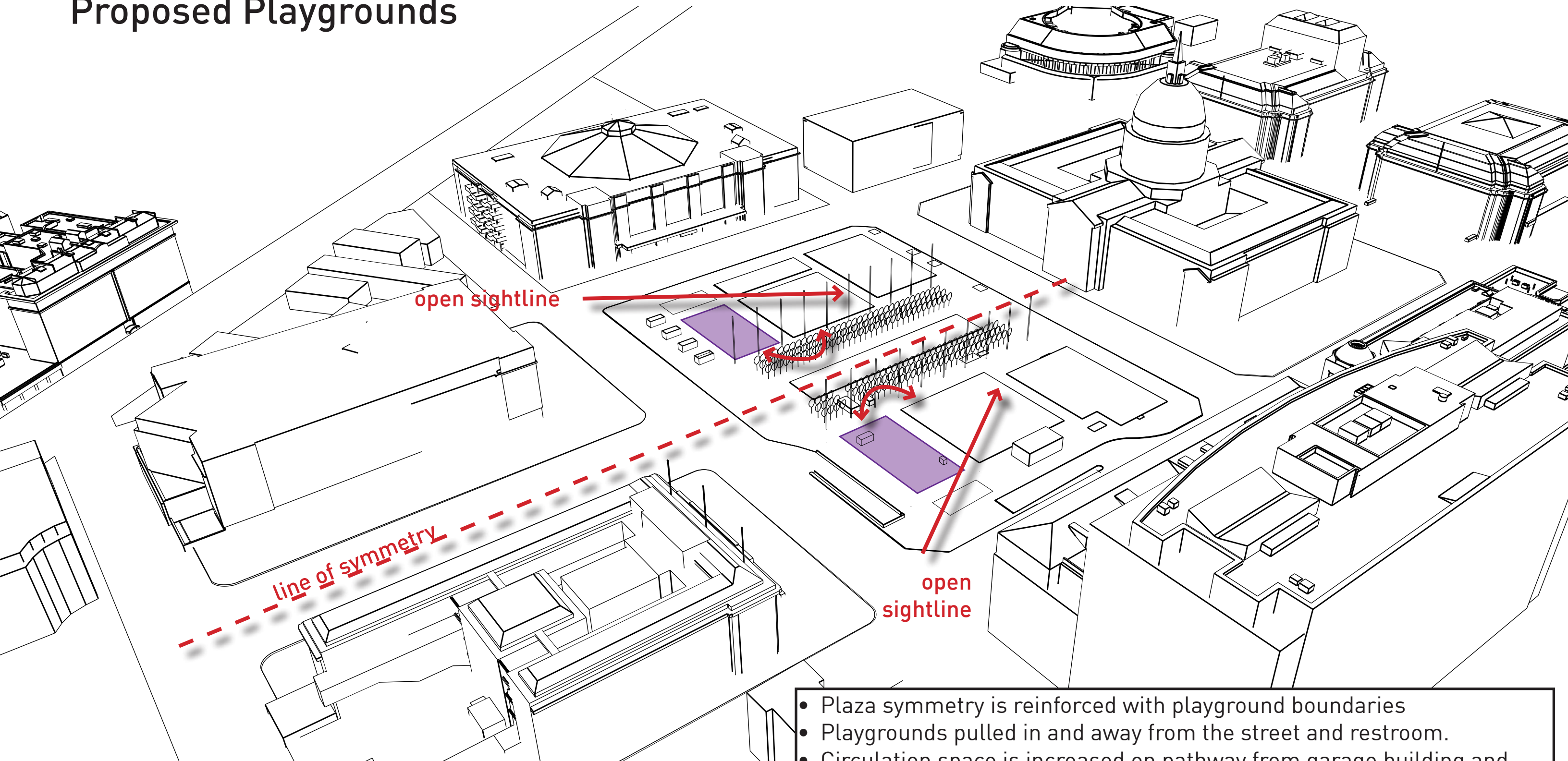
SF Recreation and Parks Department
SF Planning Department
SF Department of Public Works
SF Public Utilities Commission
SF Department of Real Estate
Office of Mayor Ed Lee
Mayor's Office of Housing & Community Development
Supervisor Jane Kim's Office

Other Institutions and Organizations

Civic Center Community Benefit District
SF Public Library
Asian Art Museum
Bay Area Women's & Children's Center
Tenderloin School
Bill Graham Auditorium / Another Planet Entertainment



Proposed Playgrounds

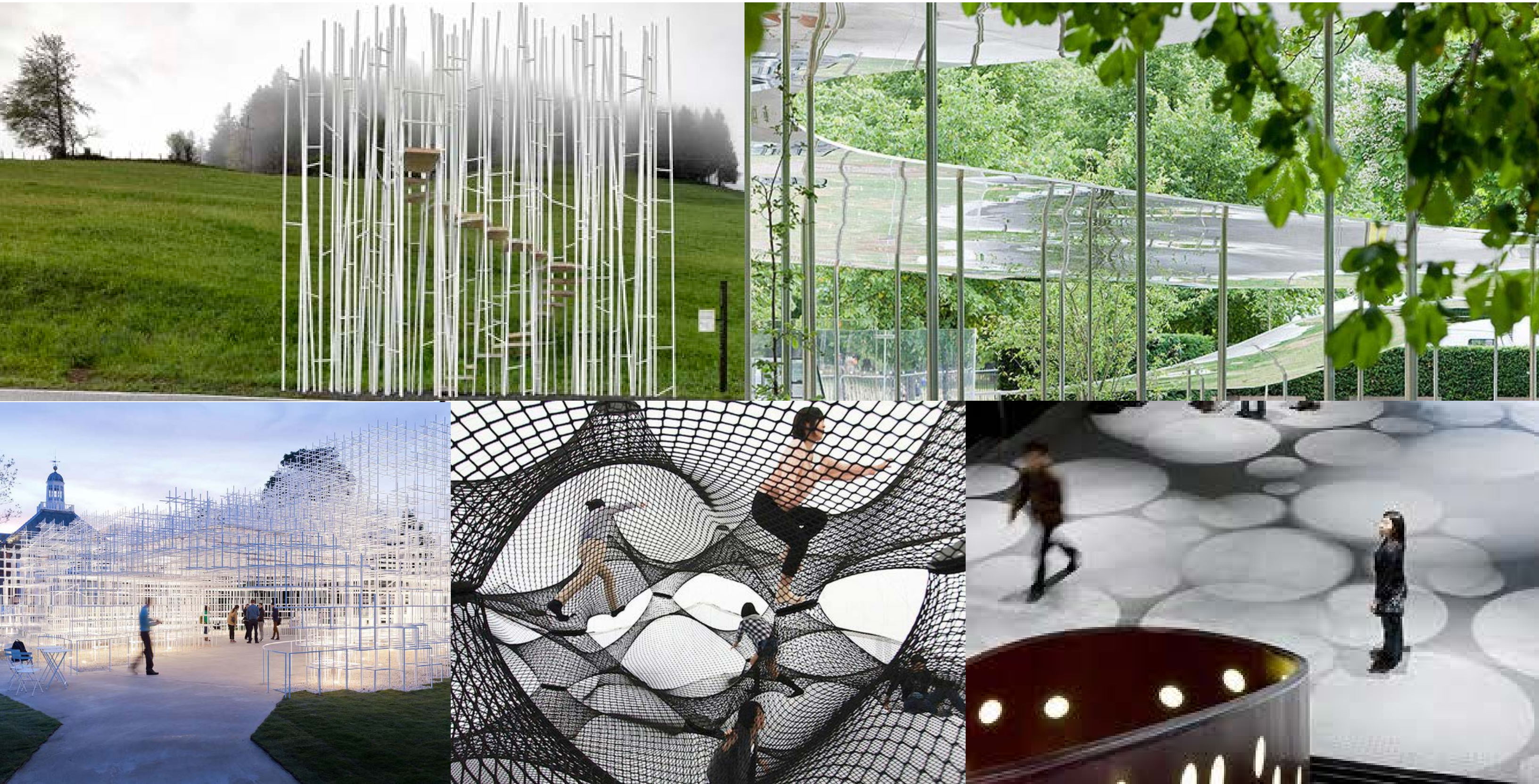


- Plaza symmetry is reinforced with playground boundaries
- Playgrounds pulled in and away from the street and restroom.
- Circulation space is increased on pathway from garage building and around Brooks Hall vents.
- Sightlines from the corners are created.
- Line of symmetry with City Hall is enhanced.

Inspiration

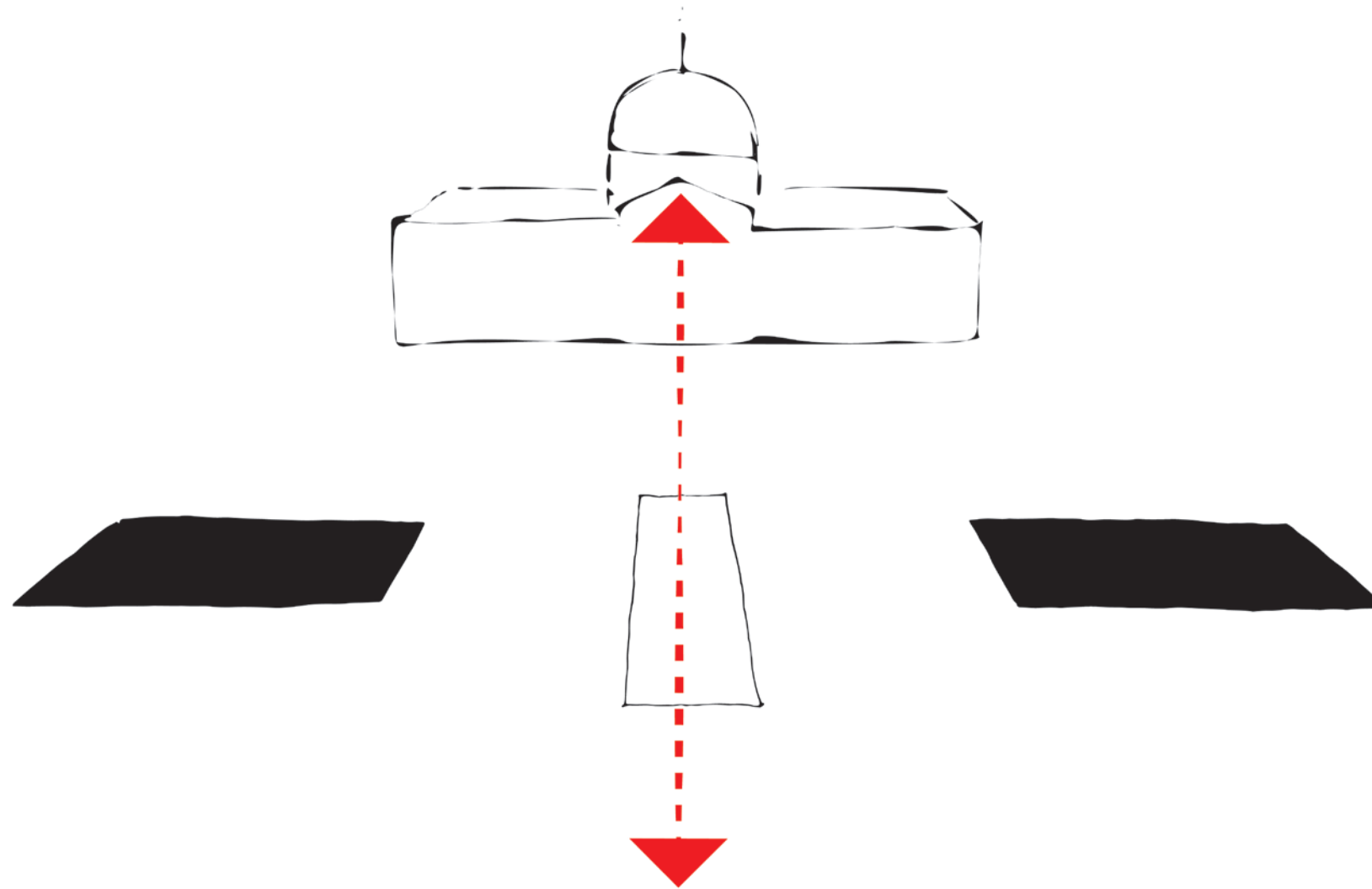


Cloud Forest

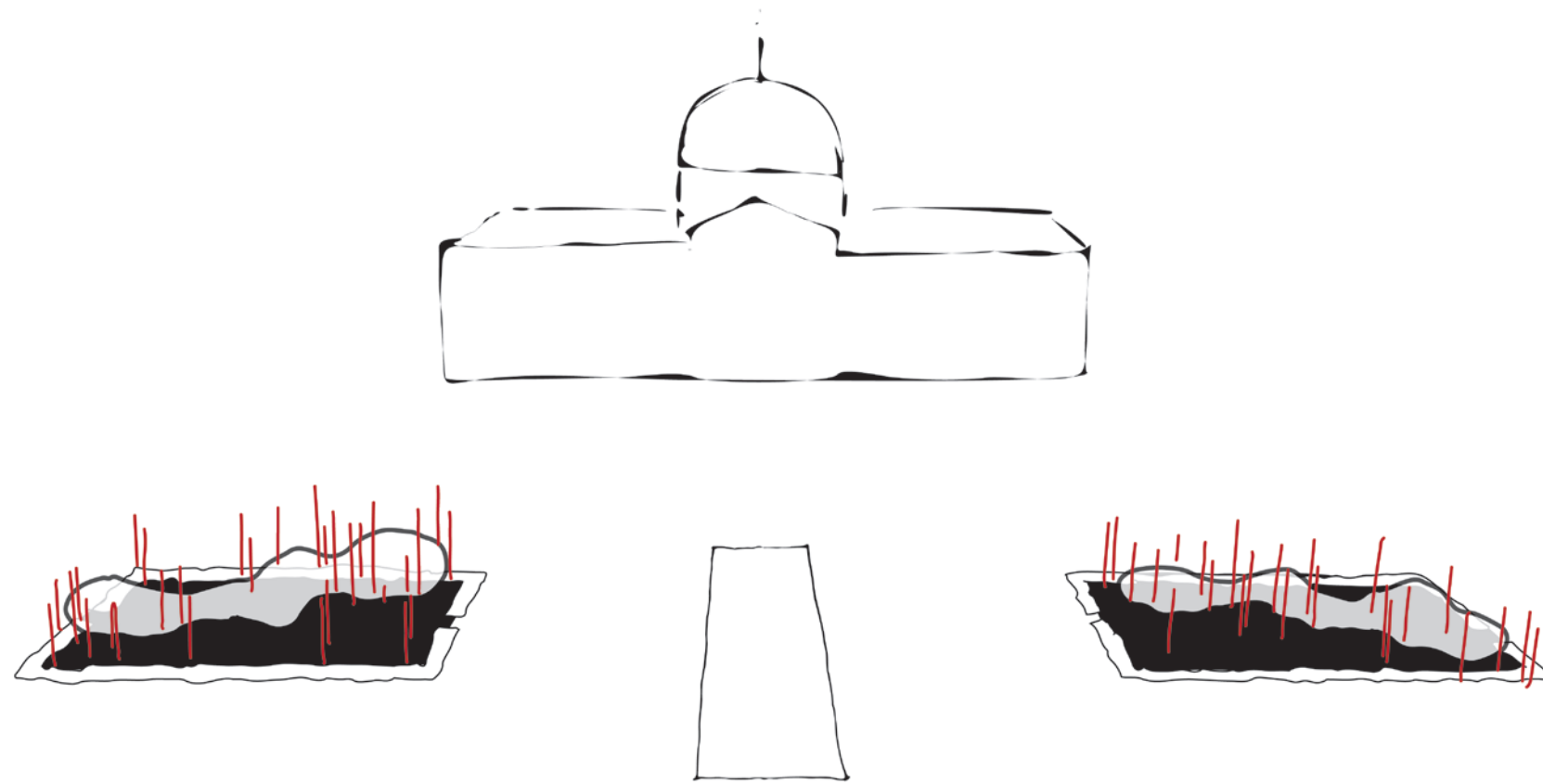


Concept diagrams

two symmetrical playgrounds



tethered cloud sculpture



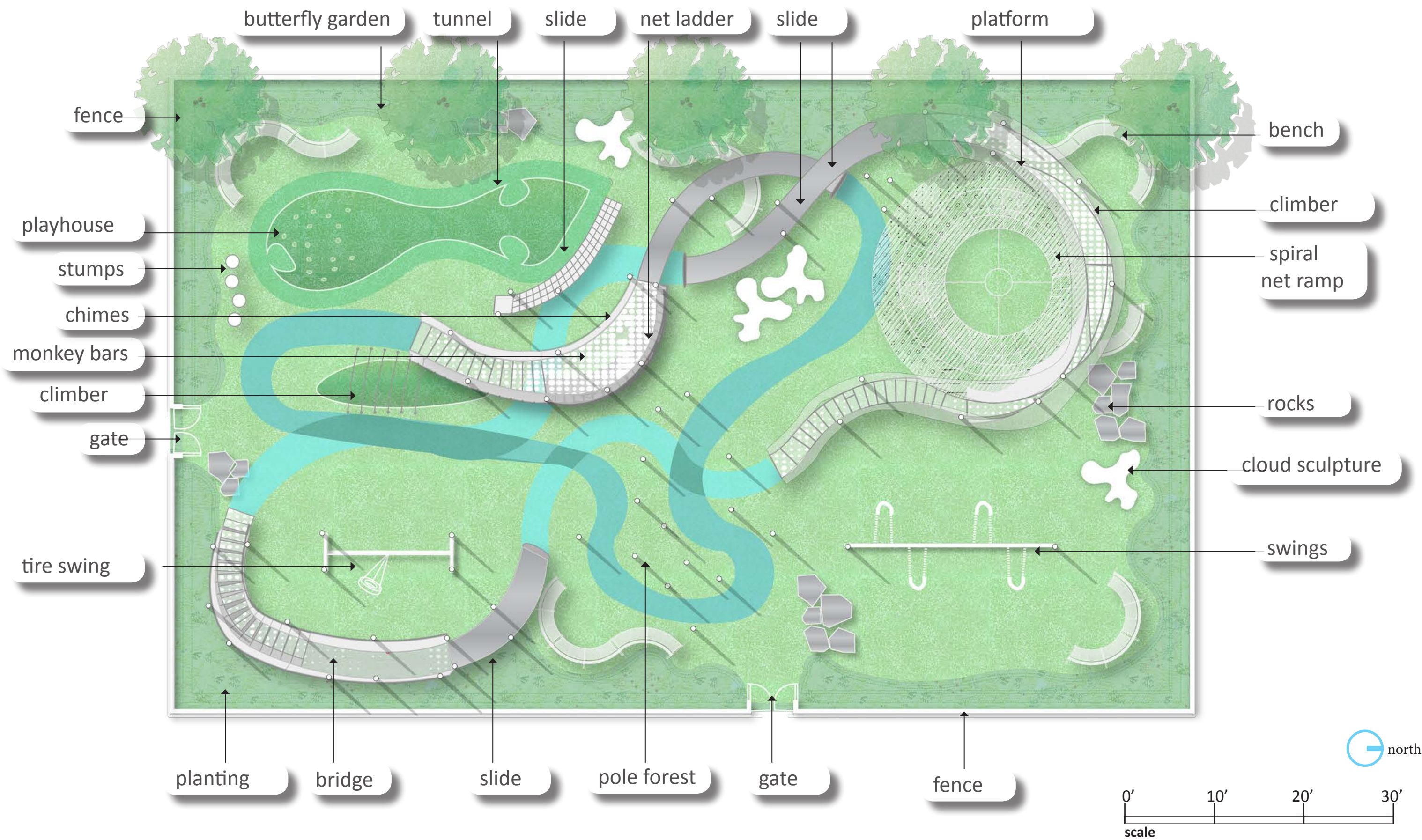
Proposed Site Plan



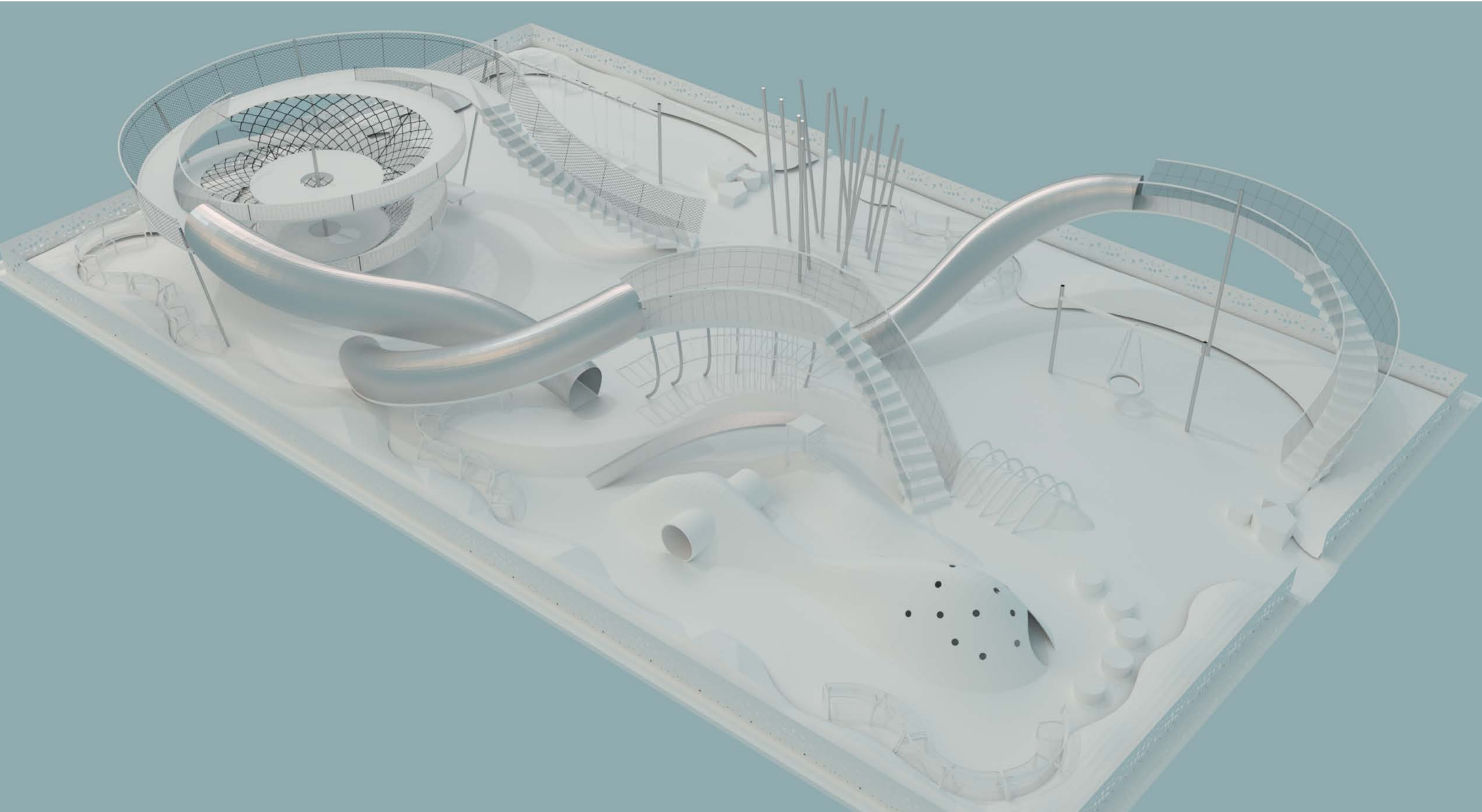
Public Library

Asian Art Museum

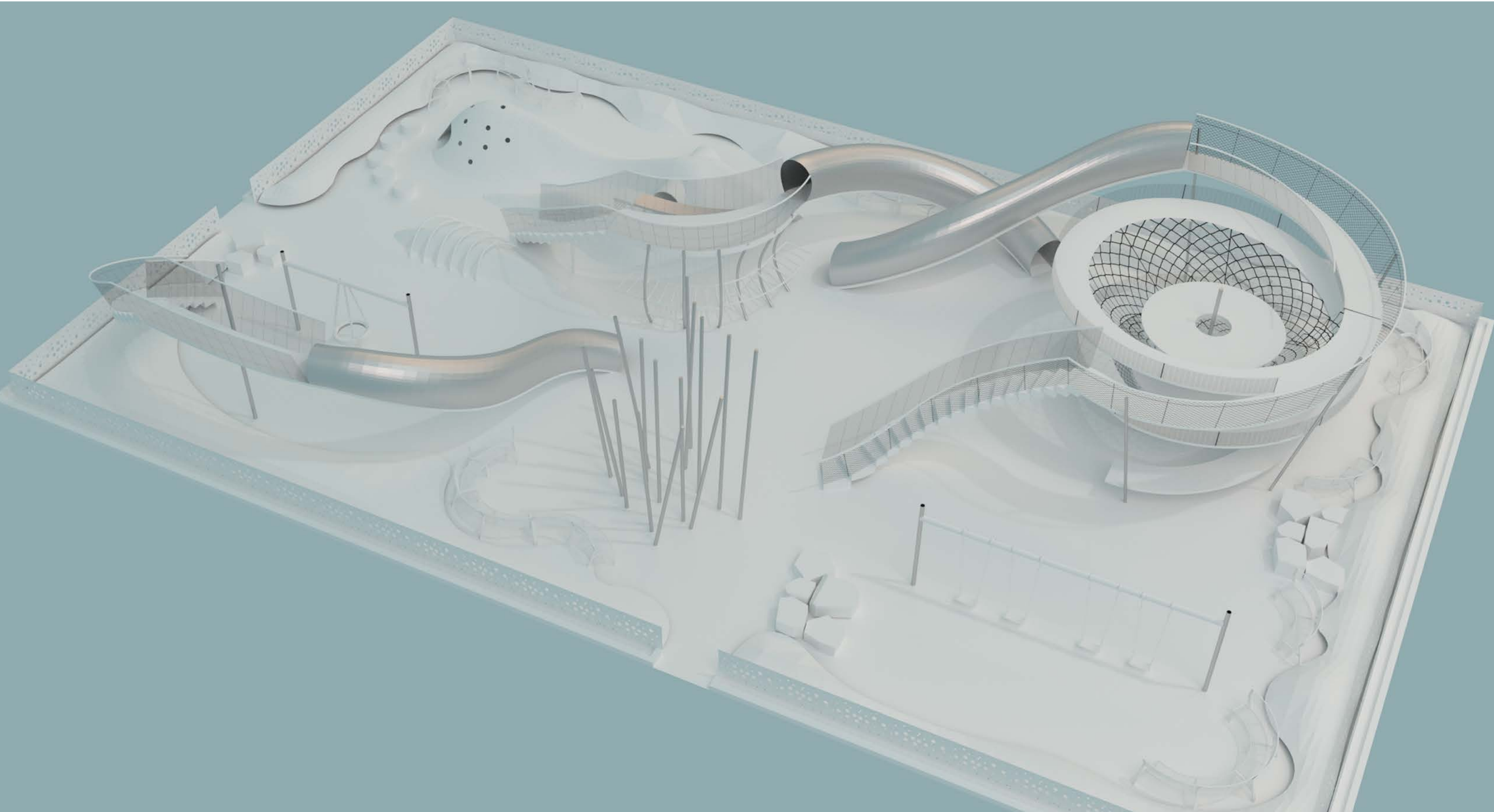
South Playground, enlarged plan



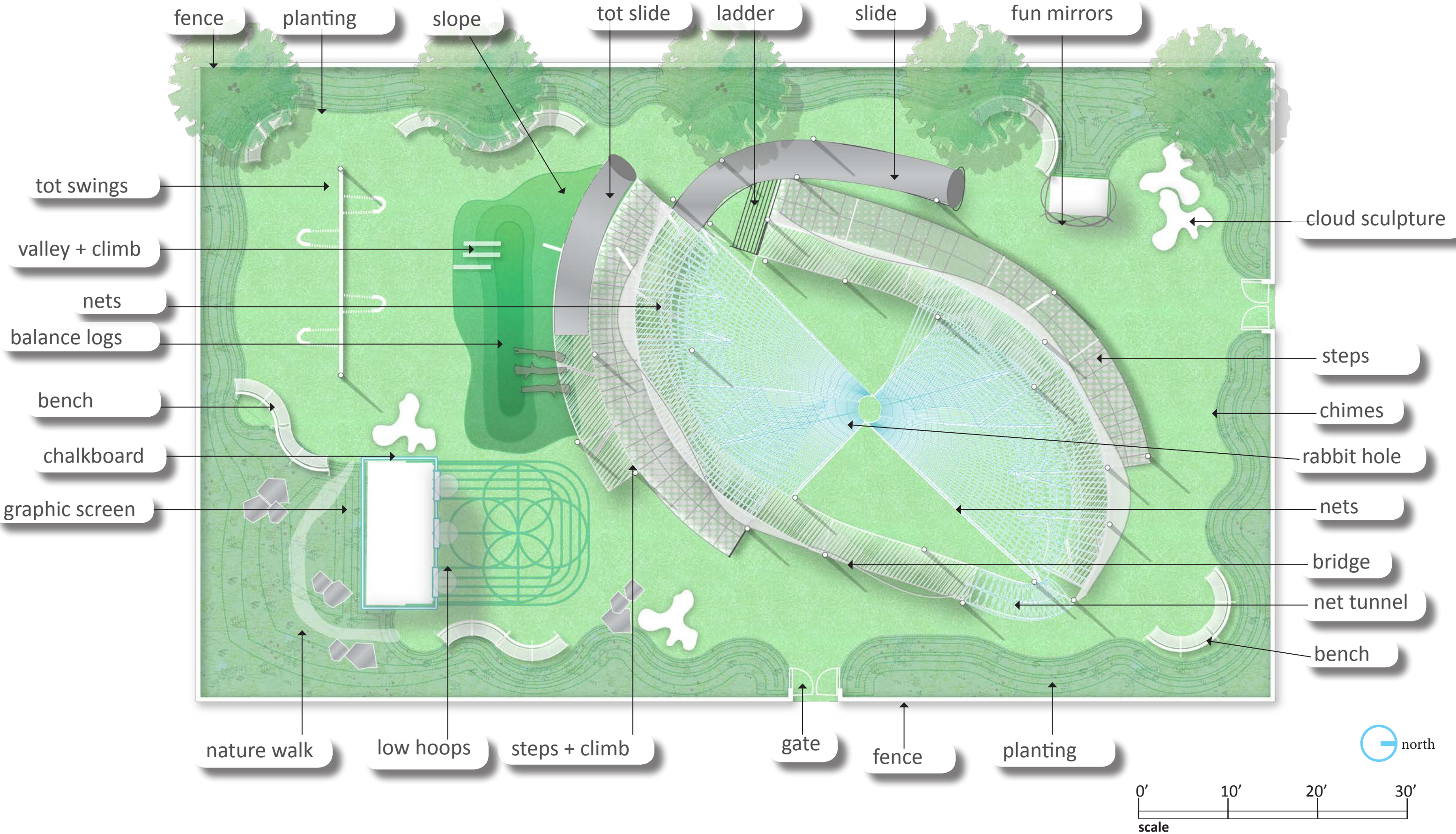
Forms: South playground



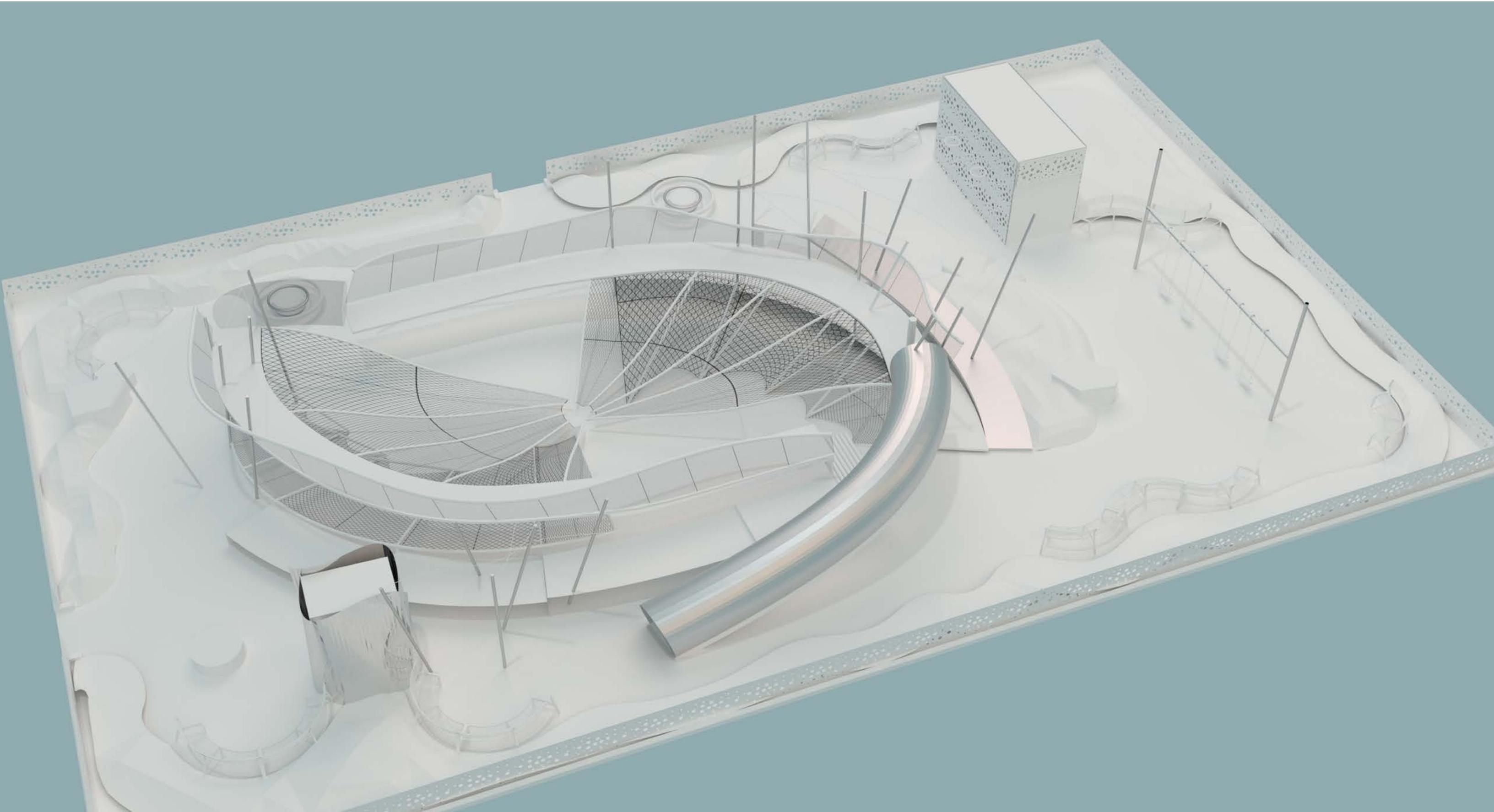
Forms: South playground



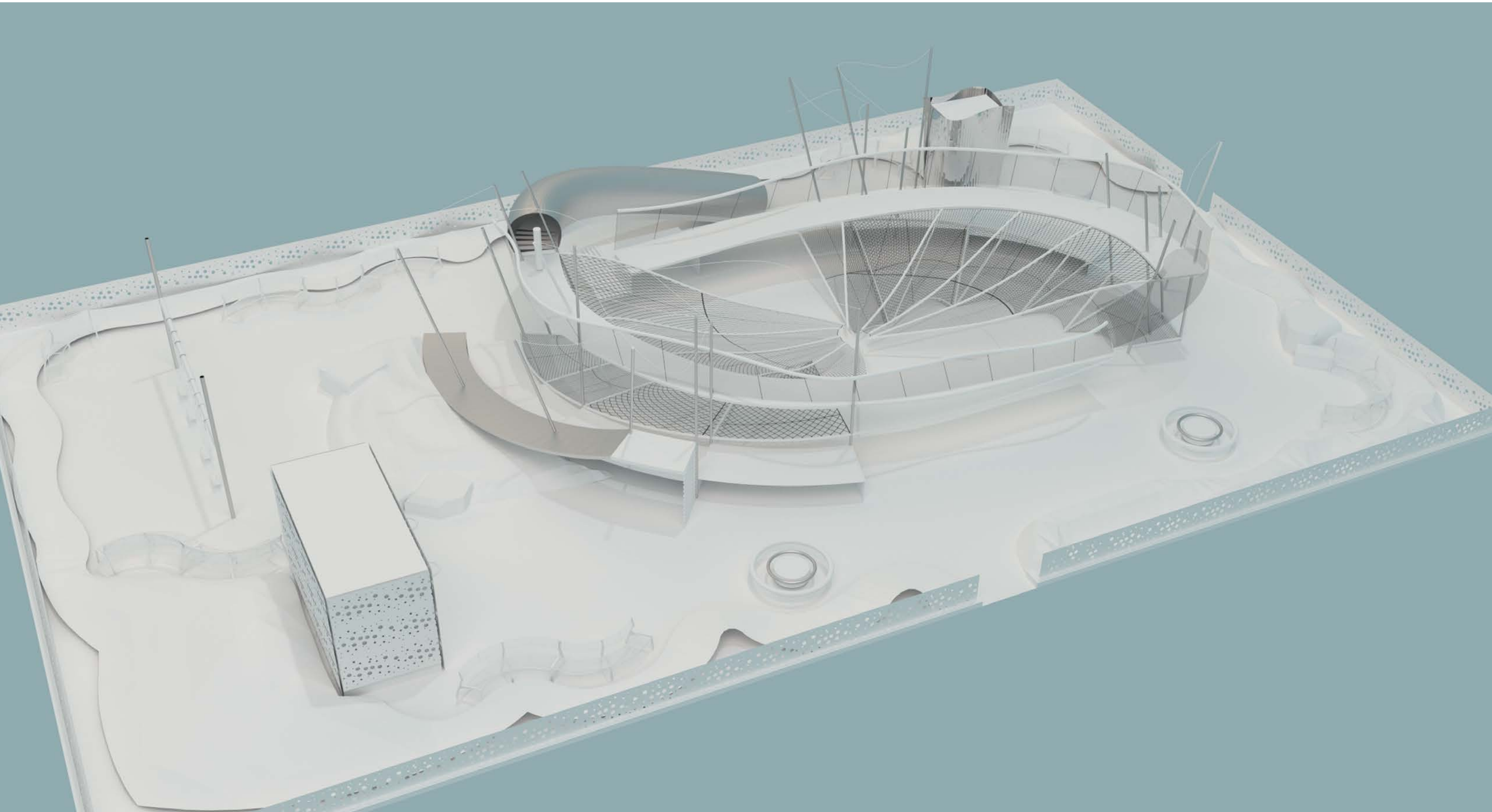
North Playground



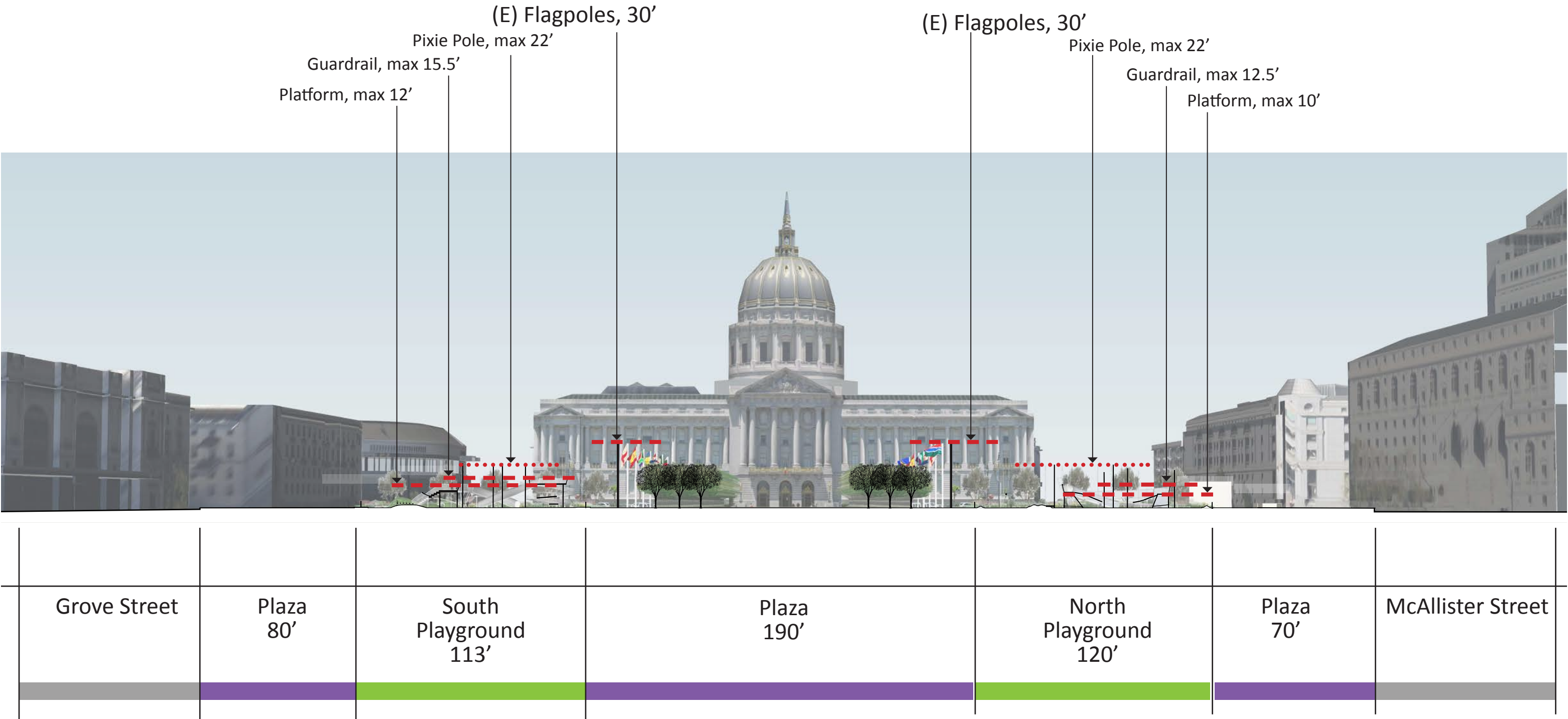
Forms: North playground



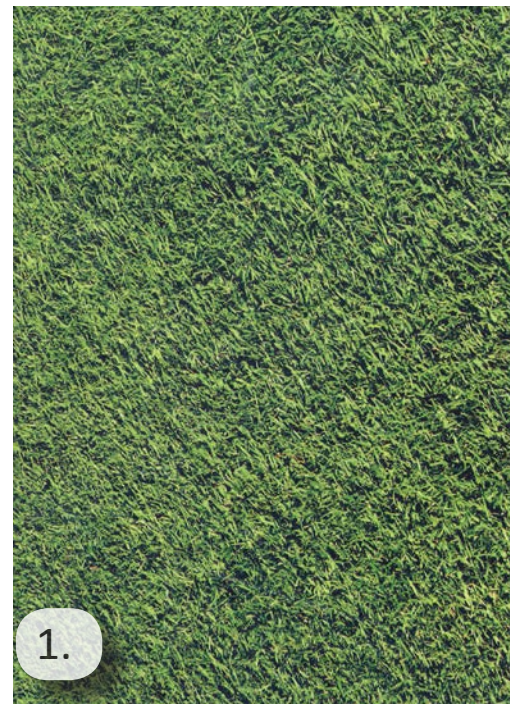
Forms: North playground



site section: relative heights



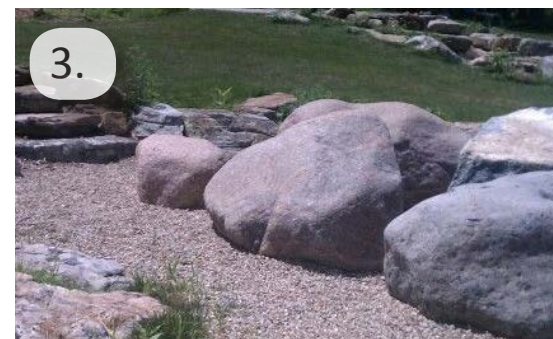
materials: playground



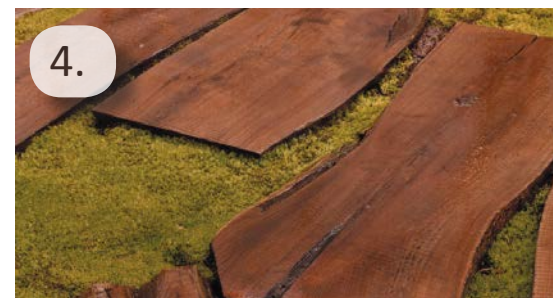
artificial turf



poured rubber pathway



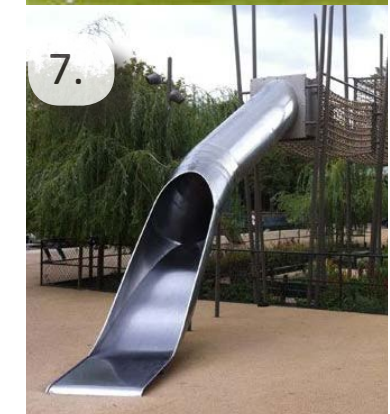
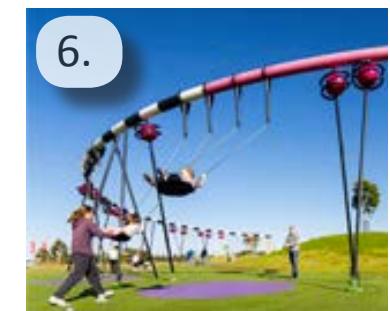
boulders and rock



timbers



butterfly + pollinator planting



swings slides



materials: playground



seating



cloud sculpture



poles and pixie poles



downlights on structure



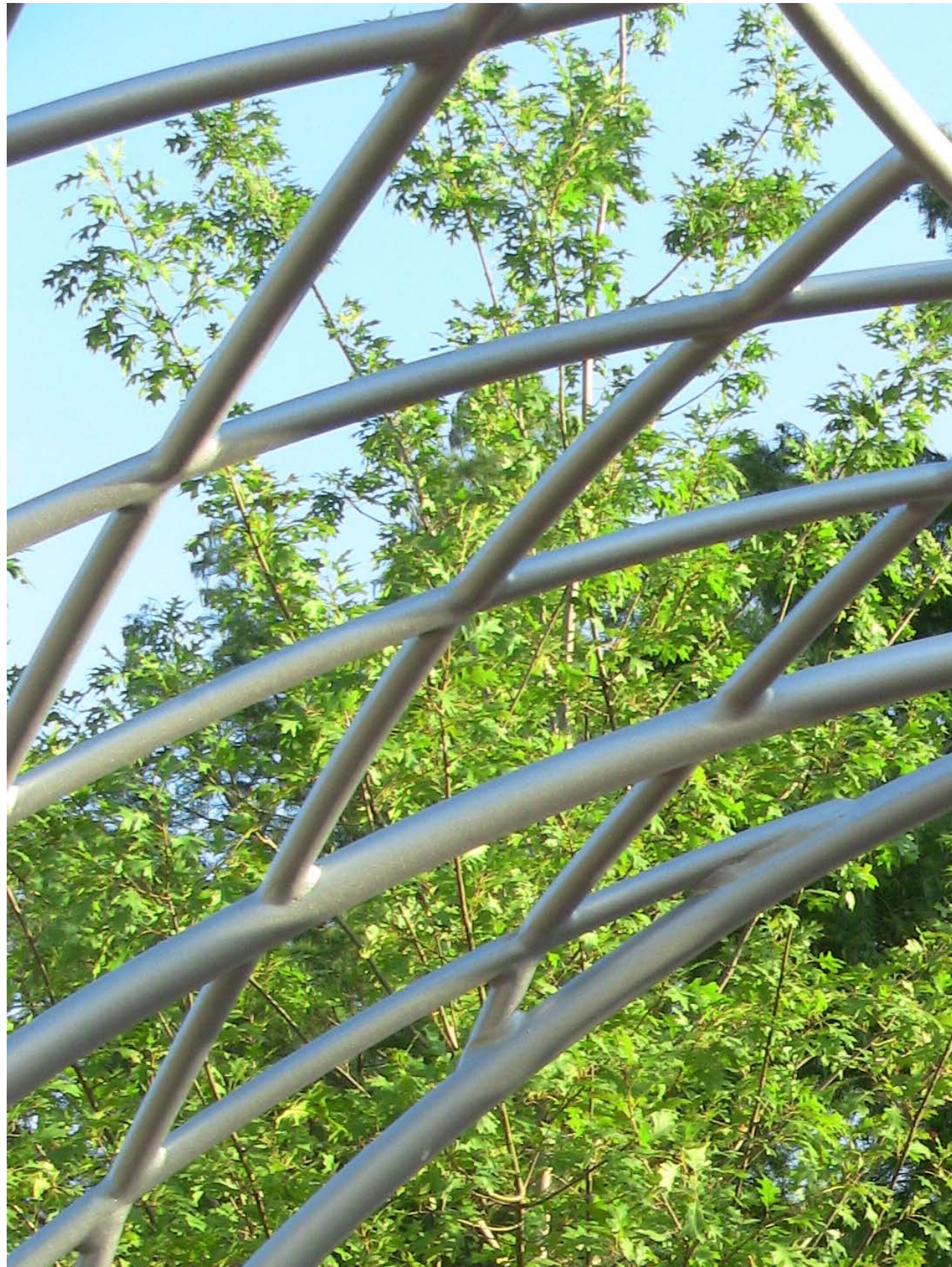
drinking fountain



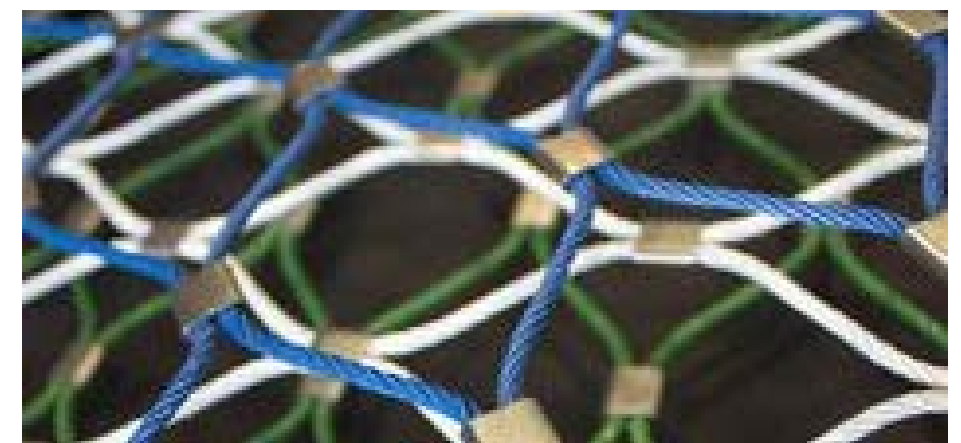
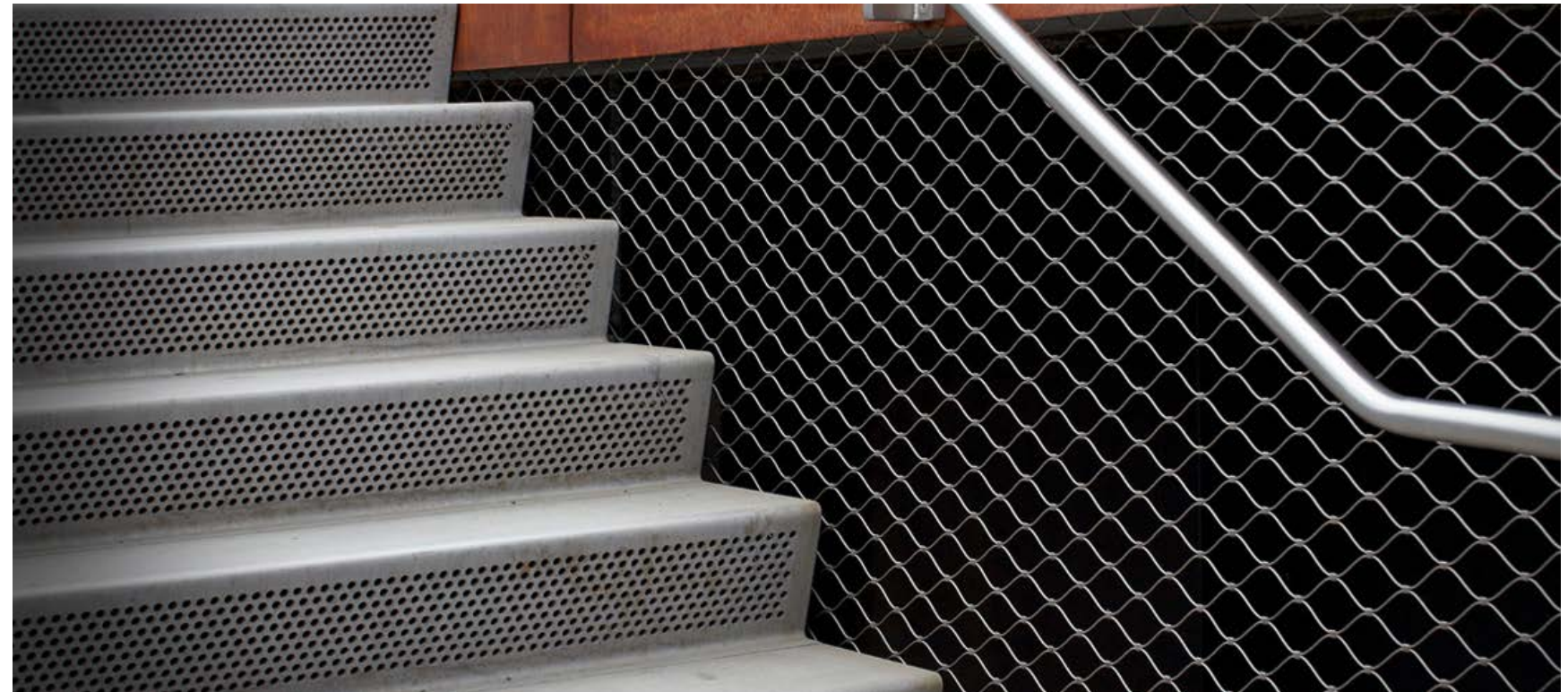
cable nets



materials: playground superstructure



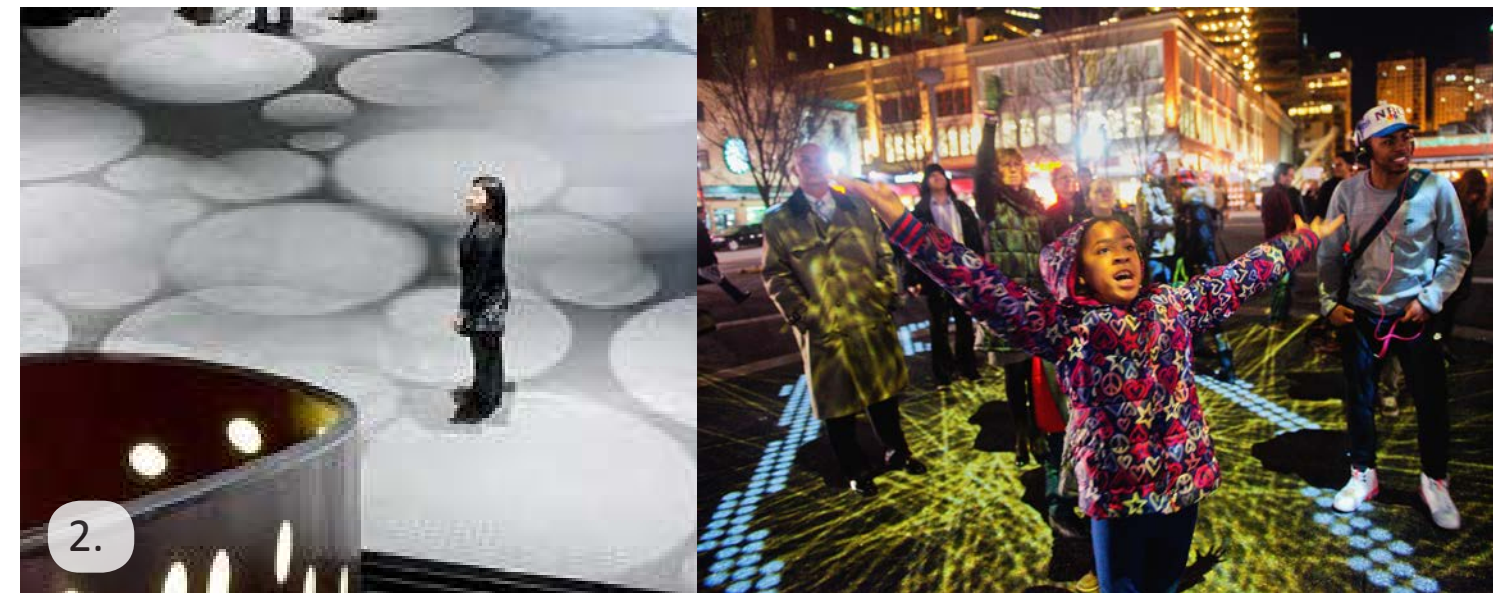
materials: playground connections



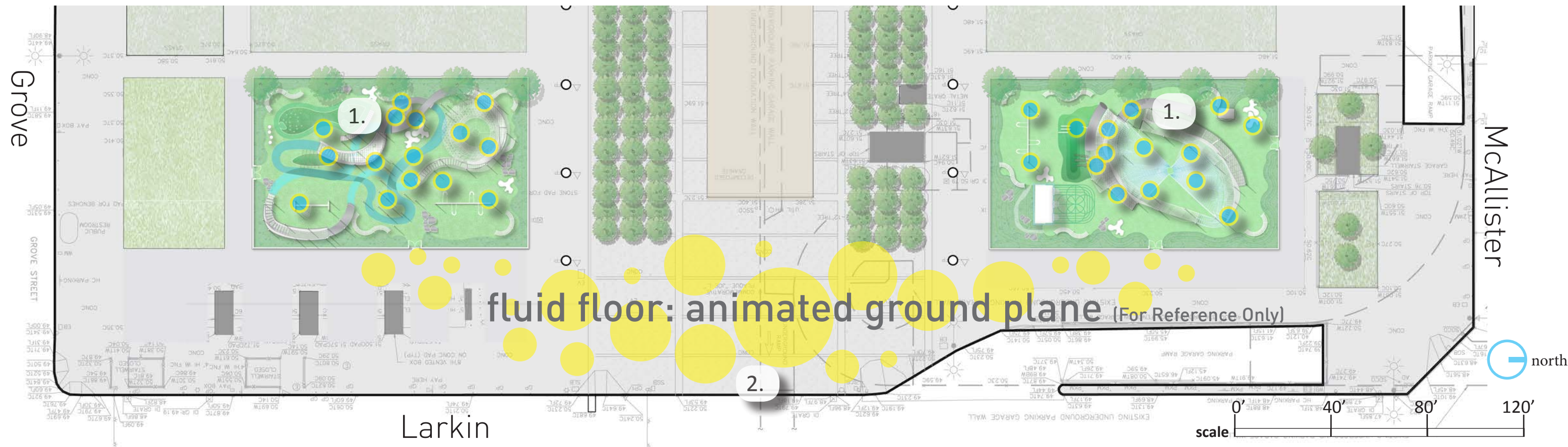
connect the playgrounds with light
create a civic gesture with play for all ages



Pixie Poles



Fluid Floor- animated ground plane (For Reference Only)



materials: fence



Asian Art Museum - context



proposed playground enclosure



materials: donor signage



materials: civic paving + planting



1.
lawn



2.
concrete paving



3.
trees



4.
formal edge



5.
limited palette of plants

