

PROJECT NAME: PEDRO PARK

LOCATION: SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA

CATEGORY: UNBUILT WORKS

ABSTRACT

One of few public parks in downtown Saint Paul, Pedro Park is a premier, multi-functional community amenity that is sociable, accessible, comfortable, and activates the streetscape. The design manifests the ethos of the parcel as an existing community art and performance place with new public and intimate spaces. The design uses water, interaction, shelter, and transparency to expand the experiential qualities of a small urban space. The landscape architect, in partnership with St. Paul Parks, led the design of the park and shelters through a community design process and the development of construction documents.

NARRATIVE

In partnership with the Saint Paul Parks Dept., the landscape architect led a collaborative design process that engaged community representatives to develop plans for a new urban park in the heart of downtown Saint Paul. The designs were developed to transform a half-acre parcel of land formerly occupied by Pedros Luggage and donated to the city by the Pedro Family. The small size of the parcel and the density of programming identified during the public engagement process led to the need to find multifunctional solutions in every area of the design. The design challenged the landscape architect to improve circulation, address future expansion of the park, respond to difficult grade issues while embracing the ethos of a site the community had transformed from a vacant parcel into a place for gathering, a space for performance, and an urban oasis. This texture framed a vision and the experiential quality of the design as an expression of context and fit.

The new design features a grassy, open-air field surrounded by trees, two park shelters, three water features, a variety of seating types, picnic areas, a splash pad, a dog area, and integrated streetscape spaces. The design uses a central axis that links the two shelters, creates views into and out of the park, and manages the flow of water. This axis establishes a relationship to a neighboring parcel, a key feature of the new design that was required to accommodate potential future growth of the park. A central feature of the park, the custom Community Table challenges the preconceived forms of a table and serves as a place for people to gather, interact, and relax next to the integrated water feature. The landscape architect designed all structures and worked closely with precast concrete designers to develop the fountains, park shelter structure, and seat walls. The shelter was optimized to be built off site to minimize onsite assembly. The shell is supported by the end walls and four small interior posts, and the interior is clad in clear cedar with integrated lighting.

The neighborhood surrounding the park is primarily residential and has grocery stores, cafes, coffee shops, breweries, restaurants, and shops. The area has minimal trees and lacks green space; nearby open spaces feature hard civic plazas and parking lots. Pedro Park maintains the urban and historic feel of the area while introducing vital greenspace. The design includes a robust tree canopy that works together with water features, walls, and shelters to cool the park during the hot summer months and provide wind breaks during the area's cold winter.

The central green space forms an oasis within the park's urban context. The space is surrounded by a series of seat walls which create a small amphitheater for public events and performance. In the center of these walls, a fountain cascades from the Community Table down a series of stairs into a splash pad with stepping cubes. This space provides opportunities for play, wading, reflection, and cools the surrounding area.

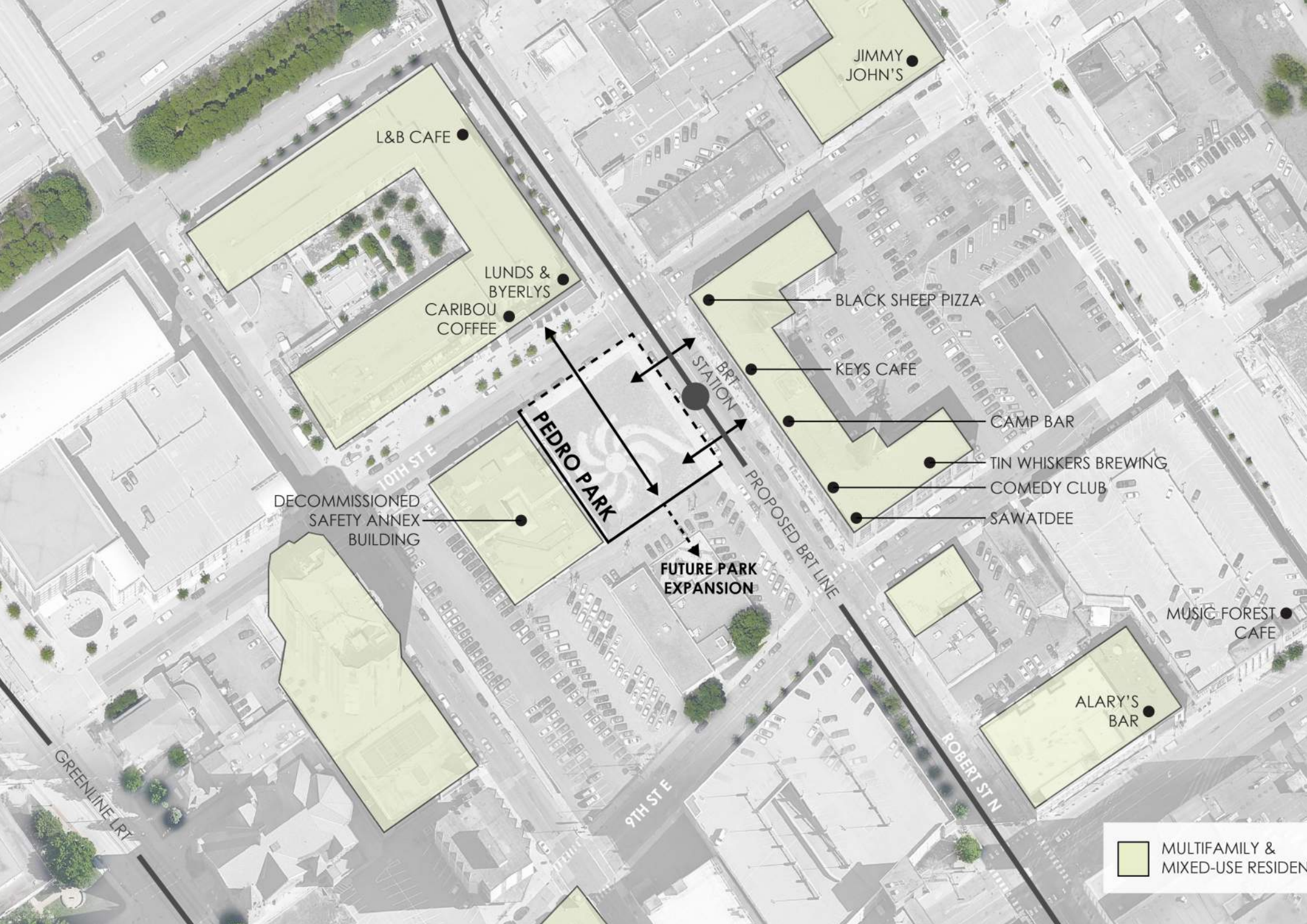
There are two edges to the park that interact with the surround businesses on the corner of 10th St E and Roberts St. Along 10th St the park's largest shelter acts as a gateway into the park. The proportions of the shelter resemble the entry of the former Pedro Luggage building and functions similarly, acting as a permeable front door activating the street and park. Here, the brick paving found throughout the park extends to the curb, activating the streetscape. Along Roberts street, a series of jogging walls create small street spaces that serve a future Bus Rapid Transit stop. The wall is key to addressing accessibility issues with the site's existing profile, allowing the design to become more densely programmed and welcoming to all.

The design plays off a polka-dot mural on the adjacent building's wall. The portal window through the southern retaining wall repeats the mural's theme. Within that space, a timber cube acts as a small shelter to play under and around. Colored panels create a kaleidoscope of shadows activating the space. Adjacent to the Playful Space is the Park Studio that functions as a casual neighborhood lounge space with internet and opportunities for art installations.

The design is noteworthy for creating a multi-functional public amenity that balances residential and civic scale programs using limited space. It further develops the original concepts into a green space that is integrated into the surrounding streetscape, works for a diverse community of people, and forms a new backyard for urban gathering and living.



site location



L&B CAFE ●

JIMMY JOHN'S ●

LUNDS & BYERLYS ●
CARIBOU COFFEE ●

BLACK SHEEP PIZZA ●

KEYS CAFE ●

CAMP BAR ●

TIN WHISKERS BREWING ●

COMEDY CLUB ●

SAWATDEE ●

DECOMMISSIONED SAFETY ANNEX BUILDING ●

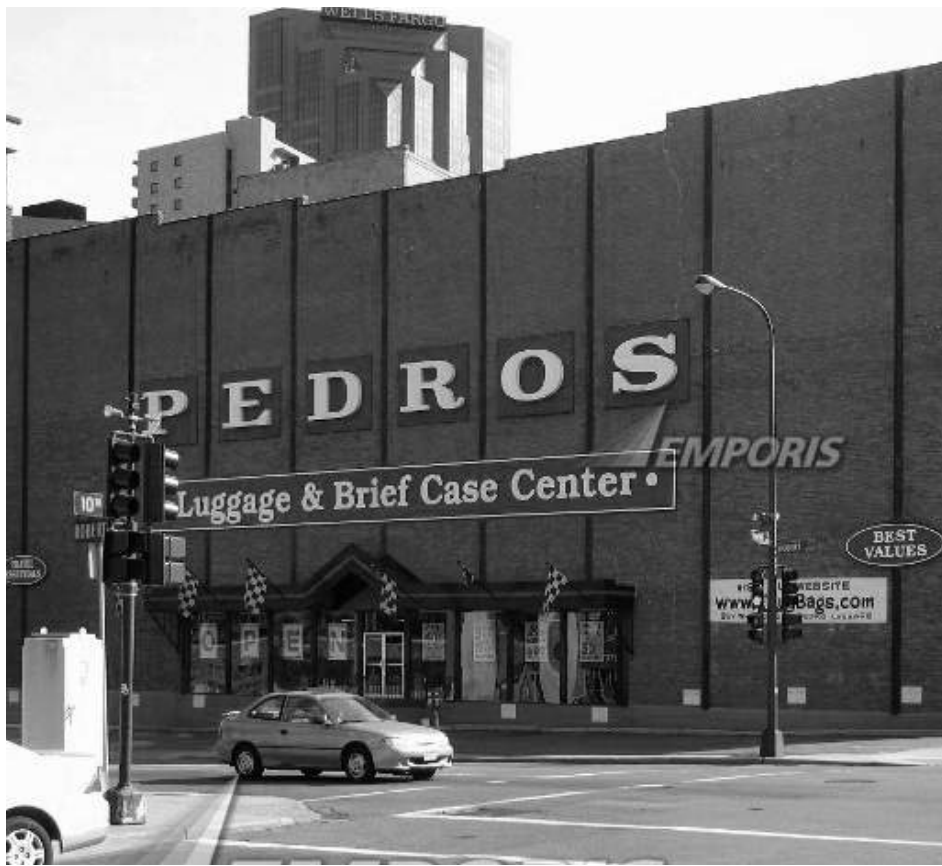
FUTURE PARK EXPANSION

MUSIC FOREST CAFE ●

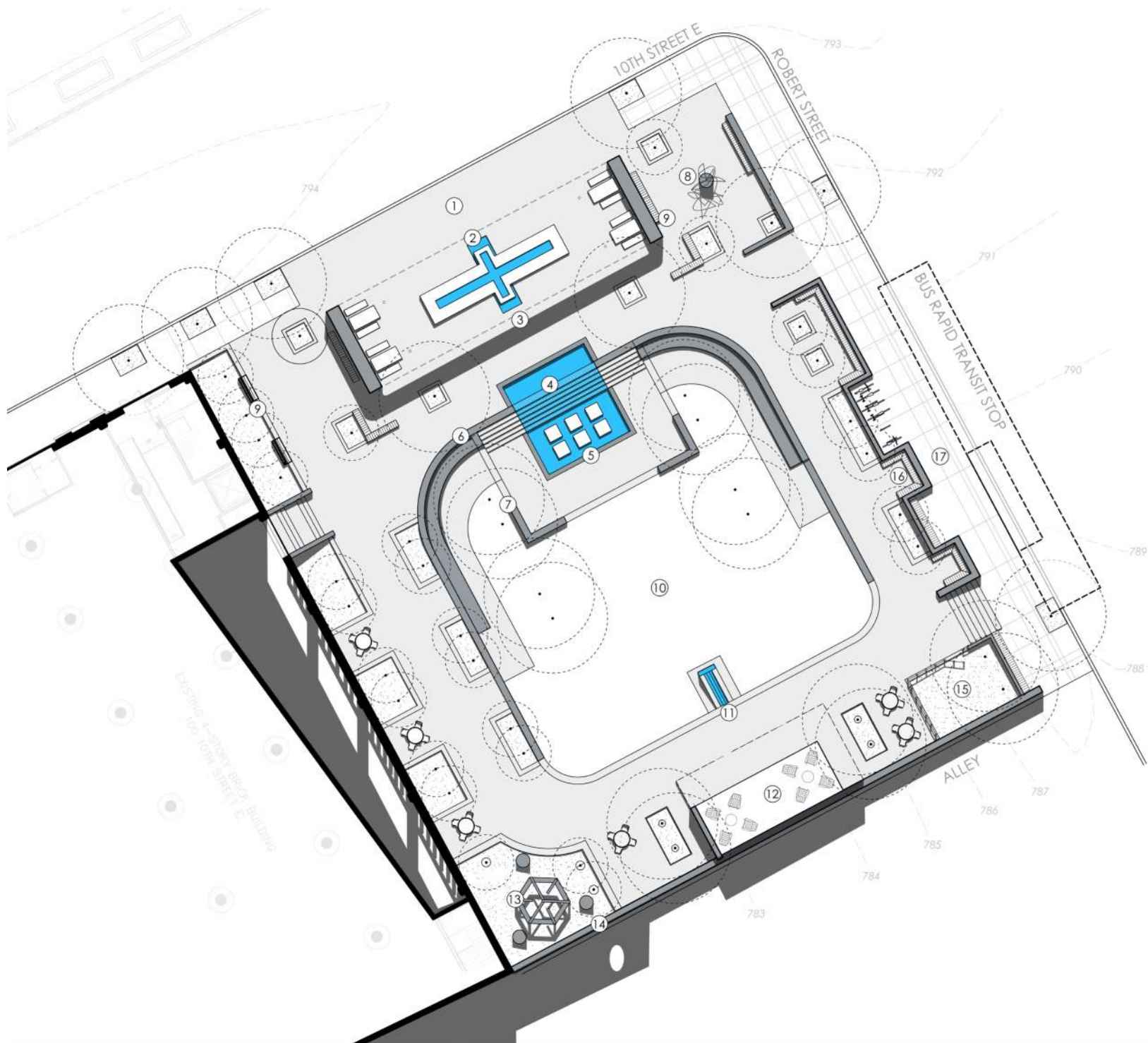
ALARY'S BAR ●

MULTIFAMILY & MIXED-USE RESIDENTIAL

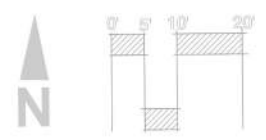
site context



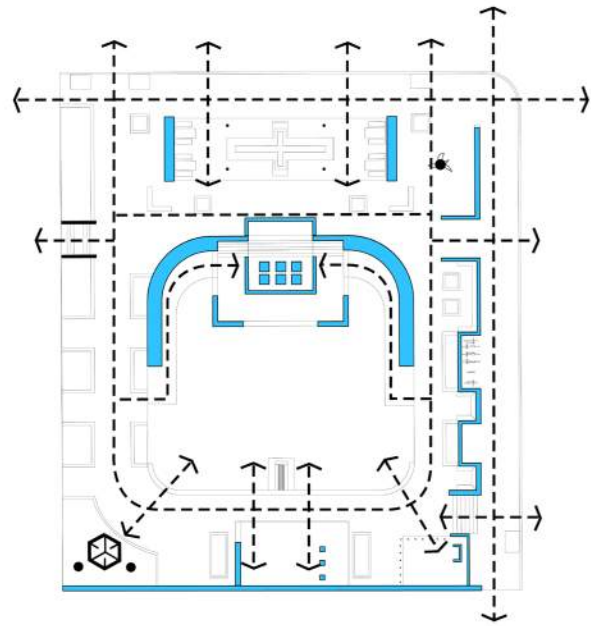
historic imagery



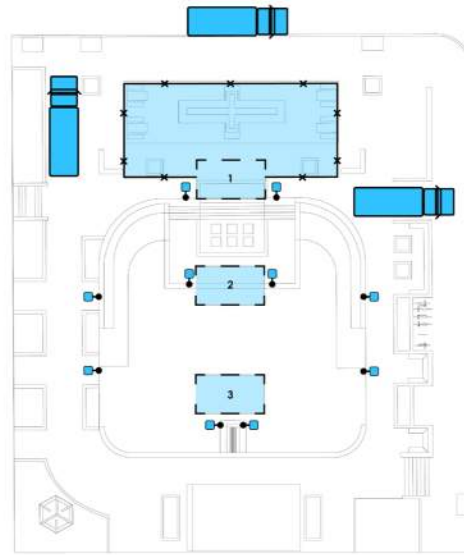
- ① Brick Paving, Typ.
- ② Community Table
- ③ Park Shelter
- ④ Fountain Stair
- ⑤ Play Fountain & Cubes
- ⑥ Seating Steps
- ⑦ Seating Walls, Typ.
- ⑧ Sculpture Commission
- ⑨ Bench, Typ.
- ⑩ Open Green
- ⑪ Fountain Terminus
- ⑫ Park Studio
- ⑬ Play House
- ⑭ Retaining Wall & Portal Window
- ⑮ Dog Stop
- ⑯ Retaining Wall & Nooks
- ⑰ Integrated Streetscape, Bike Parking & Seating



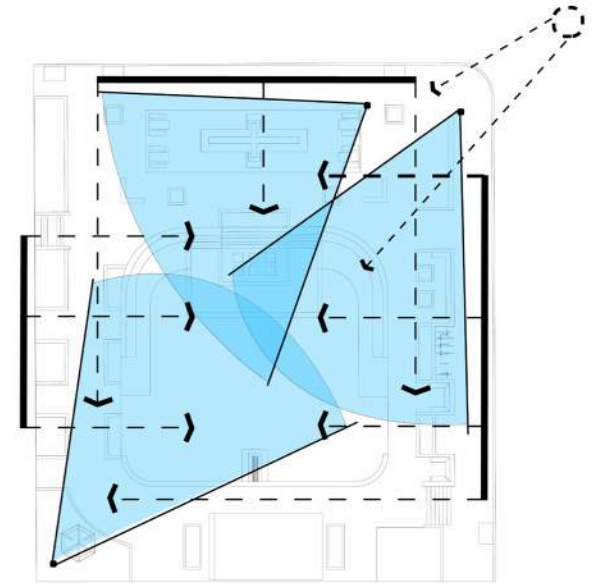
site plan



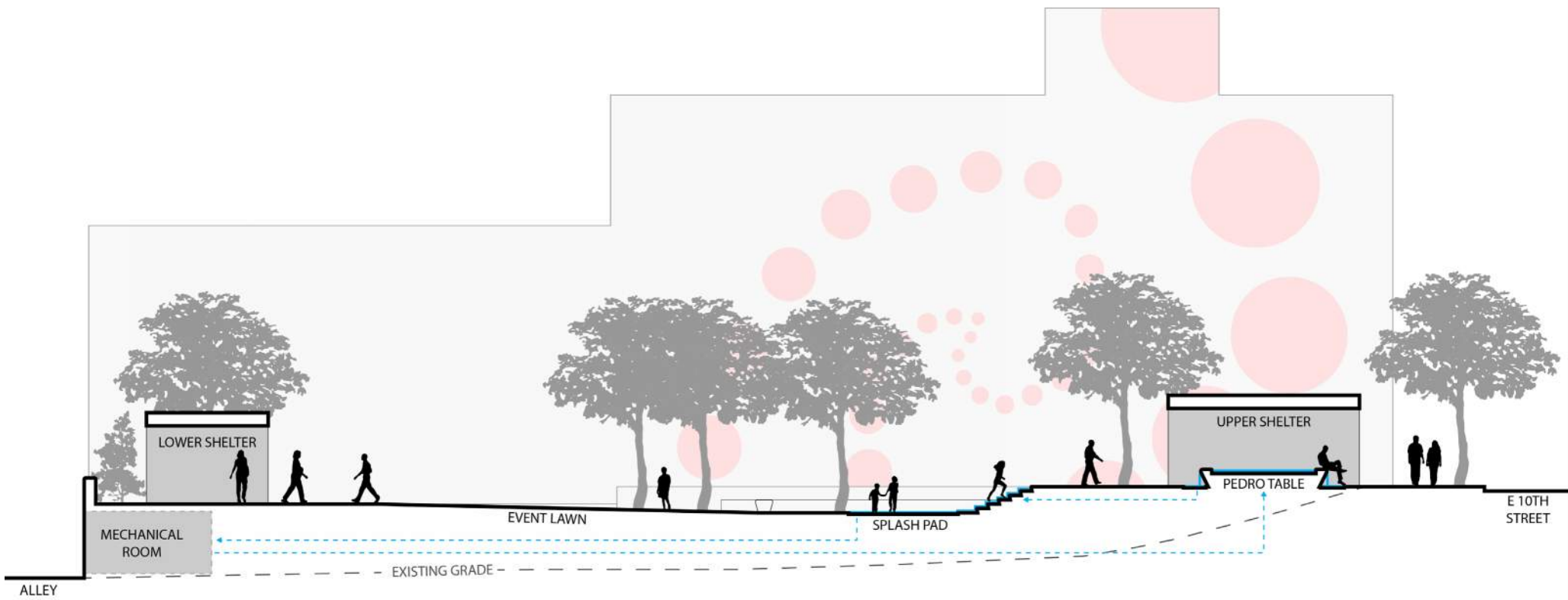
1. Walls & Movement



2. Event Flexibility



3. Visibility & Safety



site section



PEDRO PARK









