

5.0 PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Confederation Park

The analysis of Confederation Park recognizes that it, along with City Hall, is the symbolic heart of Kingston. While the existing layout is surprisingly recent, and does not reflect a heritage resource, the site itself has always been a key interface with Lake Ontario. Symbolically and functionally, the park should serve as a forecourt to City Hall and reinforce the heritage character of the Historic District. The park must serve to orient visitors and support special events of varying sizes, while providing and maintaining a comfortable sense of scale for small numbers of people to sit and stroll on an everyday basis. It is critical that the new design provides a clearly organized hierarchy of spaces. These spaces should relate to the axial symmetry of City Hall and provide clear views both out to the Shoal Tower and Royal Military College, but also back to City Hall. Many existing artifacts could be better appreciated in other locations, with site



Confederation Park offers grass, shade and water views.

specific commemorative and interpretive plaques integrated into the design. The slope down toward the water's edge could be used to provide terraces of different sizes, with steps and landings potentially doubling as a dias or stage. The character of the Park design should be sympathetic with the heritage quality of City Hall, so it becomes a forecourt Ontario Street passes through, rather than separates.

Boat docking should be reorganized to open uncluttered views to Lake Ontario, and the Waterfront Promenade should be clearly defined at the water's edge with its own signature, rather than being interrupted by the park. Confederation Park's conceptual design (Plan Six), articulates the key attributes of site organization which would support the park's function and enhance the identity and character of City Hall and the Historic District. In order to strengthen the association with City Hall and provide an ability to close Ontario Street to traffic for special events, Ontario Street should be narrowed from four to two lanes with architectural columns and functional gates at Clarence and Brock Streets. These gates will provide corner definition and a clear sense of entry into the Park for pedestrians. As well, the gates will calm the everyday traffic by conveying the impression that vehicles are passing through, rather than beside the Park. These gate columns should be a scaled down version of the downtown gateway columns located at Princess and Division, and both ends of Ontario Street. Functional gates must not only block vehicles, but be large enough to be seen from a block away to allow drivers to detour when they are closed. A gap at the centre of the gate will allow pedestrians to pass through during a major event.



Confederation Park - Concept Schematic

The columns and corner fences might also be useful for connecting temporary fencing for access control to the Park during a paid event. Further, integration of Ontario Street at the park would be accomplished by use of textured 'pedestrian' pavement to match the plaza, along with banding connecting the architectural elevation of City Hall across the road surface. The sidewalks along Ontario Street should be very broad and well defined, with formal street tree planting along the west side of the park.

A central, large (60 x 120 metres) paved plaza will serve as a venue for special events of various scales. It will facilitate diagonal through movements and allow open, clear views to the Shoal Tower from the steps of City Hall or Ontario Street. Direct axial connection to City Hall is by way of broad, terraced landings and steps designed to accommodate the approximate 1.5 metre grade difference from Ontario Street down to the main plaza.

The geometry of the southern edge of the plaza reflects the line of the Market Battery Fortification, which would be expressed as stone, flush with the plaza pavement. Universal access would be facilitated from the flanking paths or by ramps along the steps.

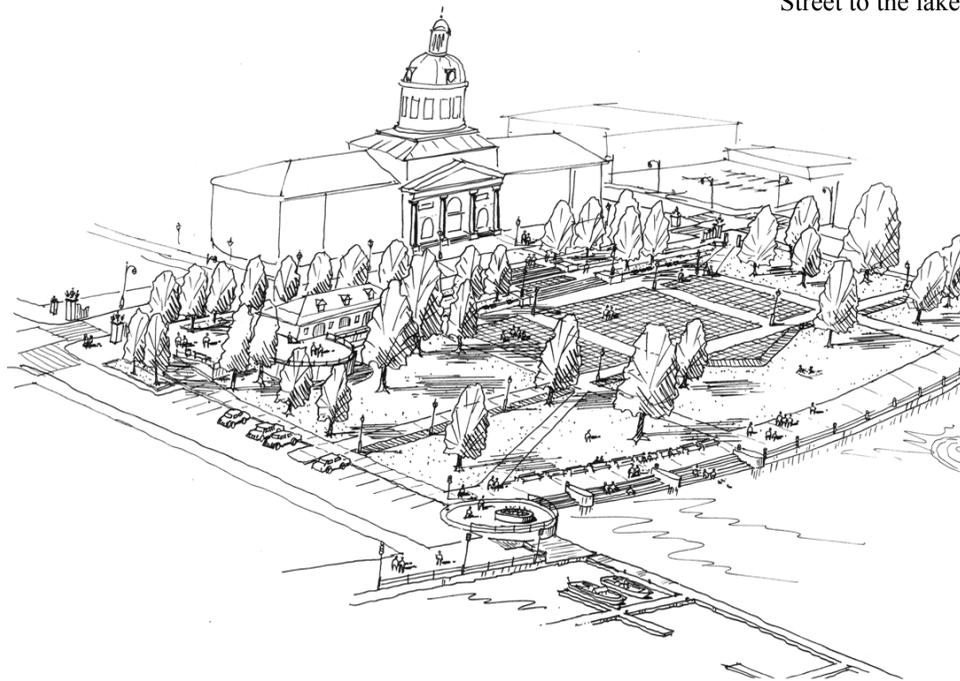
A variety of set-ups could be developed for special events or performances taking place in the park. A stage could be accommodated on three sides of the plaza depending on the size of the crowd anticipated and complexity of the stage. For example, a small performance might be organized in the plaza where people could use the terraces and steps for seating looking out to the lake beyond. Larger, more elaborate stages might make use of the terraces, or north side to allow not only for a stage and canopy structure, but all the trailers, sound mixing and equipment associated with the ‘back of house’.

The terraces on either side of the central steps would function not only as smaller sitting areas, with sitting height walls and benches, but could also serve to organize and integrate the various commemorative and interpretive plaques. The lawns on each side of the main plaza should be graded nearly level to allow for crowd overflow in special events, and picnicking on normal days. Large deciduous trees would provide shade and, with an informal layout, imply the picturesque landscape approach of the 19th century.

The need for a large public washroom facility was expressed in the consultation phase of this project. A suitable location for this would be as an annex to the old train station. A low building with a flat roof could be benched into the slope east of the train station with minimal interruption of lines-of-sight from Ontario Street to the lake.

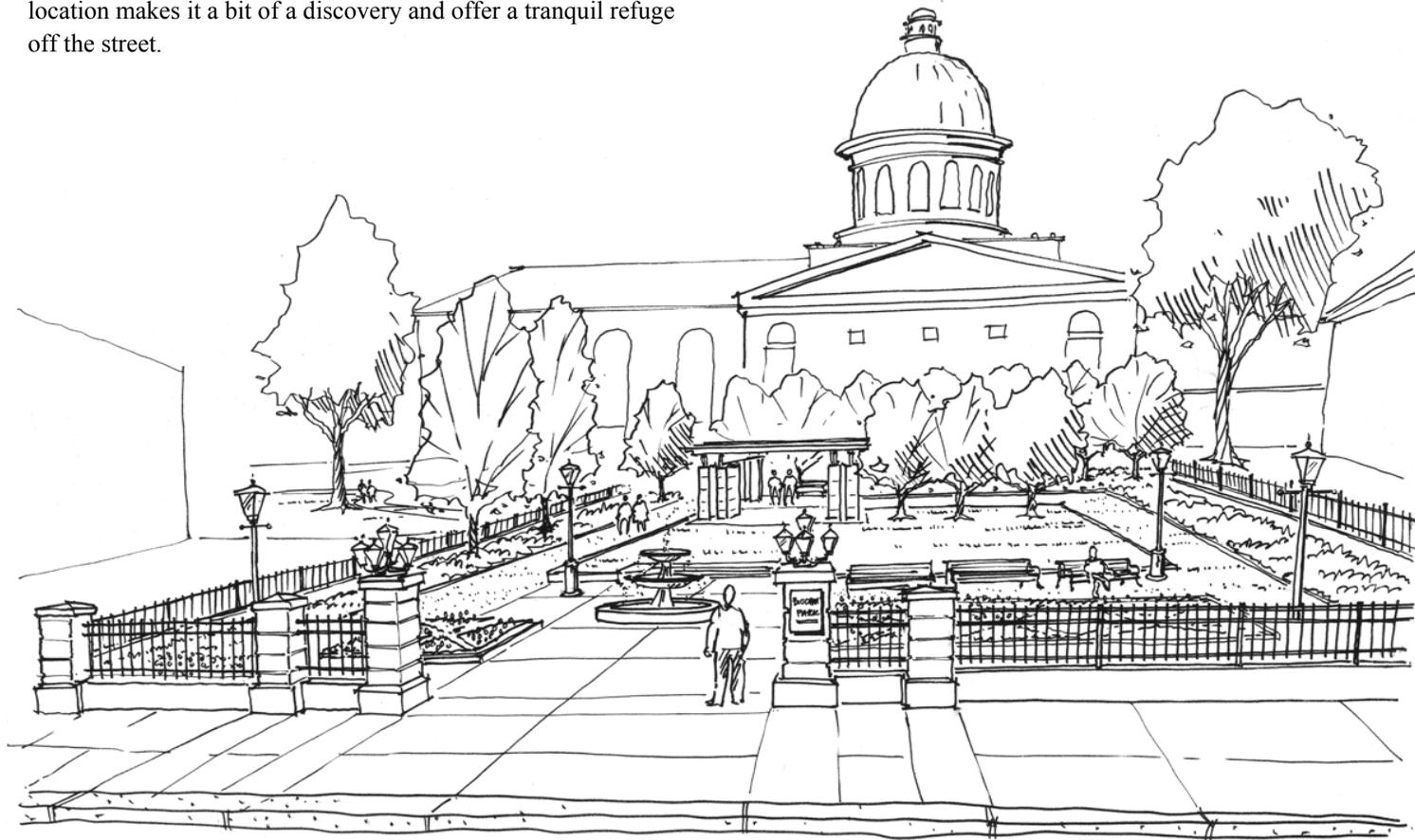
The docks between Confederation Park and the Shoal Tower should be relocated to the basin adjacent Block ‘D’. This would help animate Block ‘D’ (as described in the Waterfront Promenade) as well as, open up uncluttered views to the Shoal Tower and the longer vistas to the Royal Military College and beyond. While the Waterfront Promenade constitutes the east edge of Confederation Park, it is envisioned as a distinct element that passes along the waters edge, rather than having the park interrupt its continuity. The central portion of the promenade would have a ‘canal’ edge with railing and signature pedestrian lights. The flanking portions would have bleacher type steps into the lake, separated by balusters. The balusters would form smaller social spaces and encourage the natural desire for people to get close to the water. The park side of these flanks would be lined by double sided benches to allow people to look to the water, or back to the park, while limiting the creation of worn paths across the grass.

A low, four to six metre high, floating fountain would accentuate the formal axis between City Hall and the Shoal Tower. As well, it will create a minor event along the Waterfront Promenade. While the Shoal Tower should be illuminated around its perimeter, the fountain should be turned off after dark. Lighting in the park should be provided with working gas lamps, or electric lamps typical in the Historic District. The Waterfront Promenade, as it passes through Confederation Park, should have it’s own signature pedestrian lamp. It should be a variant of the marine/industrial fixture, low lamps to cause minimal disruption to night views to and from the water.



5.2 Boucher Park

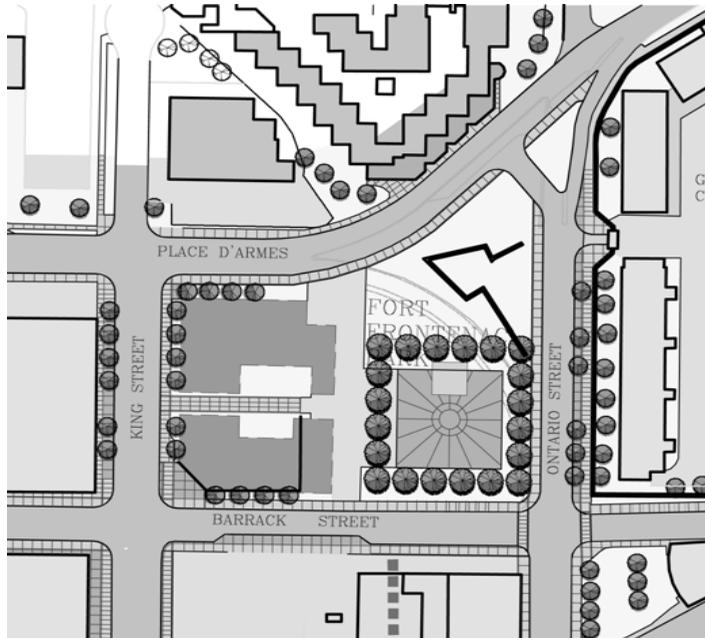
The small size of Boucher Park, along with the historic context and ecclesiastical influence of St. George's Cathedral, suggest a serene and intimate response. The park is similar to the courtyards in terms of its strong architectural edges and through-block connection. Like the courtyards, its scale and mid-block location makes it a bit of a discovery and offer a tranquil refuge off the street.



Boucher Park

The program for Boucher Park flows from its context, as it offers a court-like space within the Historic District, which will contribute to the overall courtyard movement system. On a daily basis Boucher Park will serve as a shortcut or pass-through space, as well as a destination for lunch or quiet outdoor area for sitting or meeting. It is also expected to serve as a venue for small scale performances, outdoor receptions and wedding photographs.

The design concept for Boucher Park responds to the architectural axis established by the adjacent buildings. The sideyard stone walls and iron railings should be extended along the Clarence Street frontage, and open with ornamental gates placed on axis with the spire of St. George's Cathedral. The park sign should be a bronze cast plaque mounted on one of the stone columns flanking the gate. The St. George's axis would be further reinforced with a cast iron fountain, or public art in the park's forecourt with a shade structure at the back edge. A formal perennial border behind a granite curb would flank all sides, framed with a crushed gravel walk. A raised annual bed would be centred on the Post Office building axis. The central area of the park would be a raised grass lawn. Benches and functional gas lamps would be located to reinforce the orthogonal geometry of the layout.



Consolidation of traffic island into a city block and creation of Fort Frontenac Park.

5.3 Fort Frontenac Park

Fort Frontenac Park is a new proposal, which emerged in response to the rationalization of the urban block structure, traffic movement, and need for open space associated with the North Block Character Area. From an urban design perspective, the existing Fort Frontenac ruins are isolated in a freeway-like traffic island, which is hostile to pedestrians. This free-flow right turn lane is an inappropriate response to the urban block grid of downtown. Removal of this roadway pavement will integrate the ruins into this block, and, with some additional open space, will improve access and profile of the ruins. Traffic circulation will be improved by widening of Place D'Armes to allow two-way flow. This improvement will relieve the existing conflict experienced as vehicles head north to the causeway attempting to turn left from Barrack or Queen Street onto Ontario Street. This also presents an opportunity to widen the Ontario Street boulevard along Fort Frontenac to improve the legibility and function of the sidewalk, which is currently a weak link in the waterfront trail.

Consolidation of the fort ruins with additional open space will contribute not only to the gateway location to downtown and visual significance, but offer a greenspace amenity to the North Block. With the prospect of redevelopment for these lands, this park will lend value and compliment the densities likely to be associated with this urban infill. This new park's association with the ruins and existing Fort Frontenac, as well as proximity to the Royal Military College, suggest a parade square character. This park could accommodate military memorabilia, as well as facilitate remembrance ceremonies or festival events.

Concept design has not been advanced for Fort Frontenac Park as it is a new proposal which will require traffic, engineering, urban design, and park programming refinement. This park is illustrated as part of the Open Space Master Plan (Plan Five).

