

# Inuit VAW Shelter

250 Forestglade Crescent

Urban Design Brief  
April, 2025





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# PROJECT DESCRIPTION

01



# Project Description

The architectural essence of the Inuit Women’s Shelter is sculpted by the guiding tenets of safety, dignity, and healing, giving rise to a warm and inviting sanctuary attuned to the singular healing needs of Inuit women and their children. Cultural motifs are interwoven throughout the design, ensuring that the space mirrors and connects to heritage and traditions of the Inuit people. The structure manifests as a low-rise, two-storey building, with an accessible attic dedicated to storage and service functions. This form nestles contextually within its residential environs while preserving a distinctive expression inspired by Inuit culture.

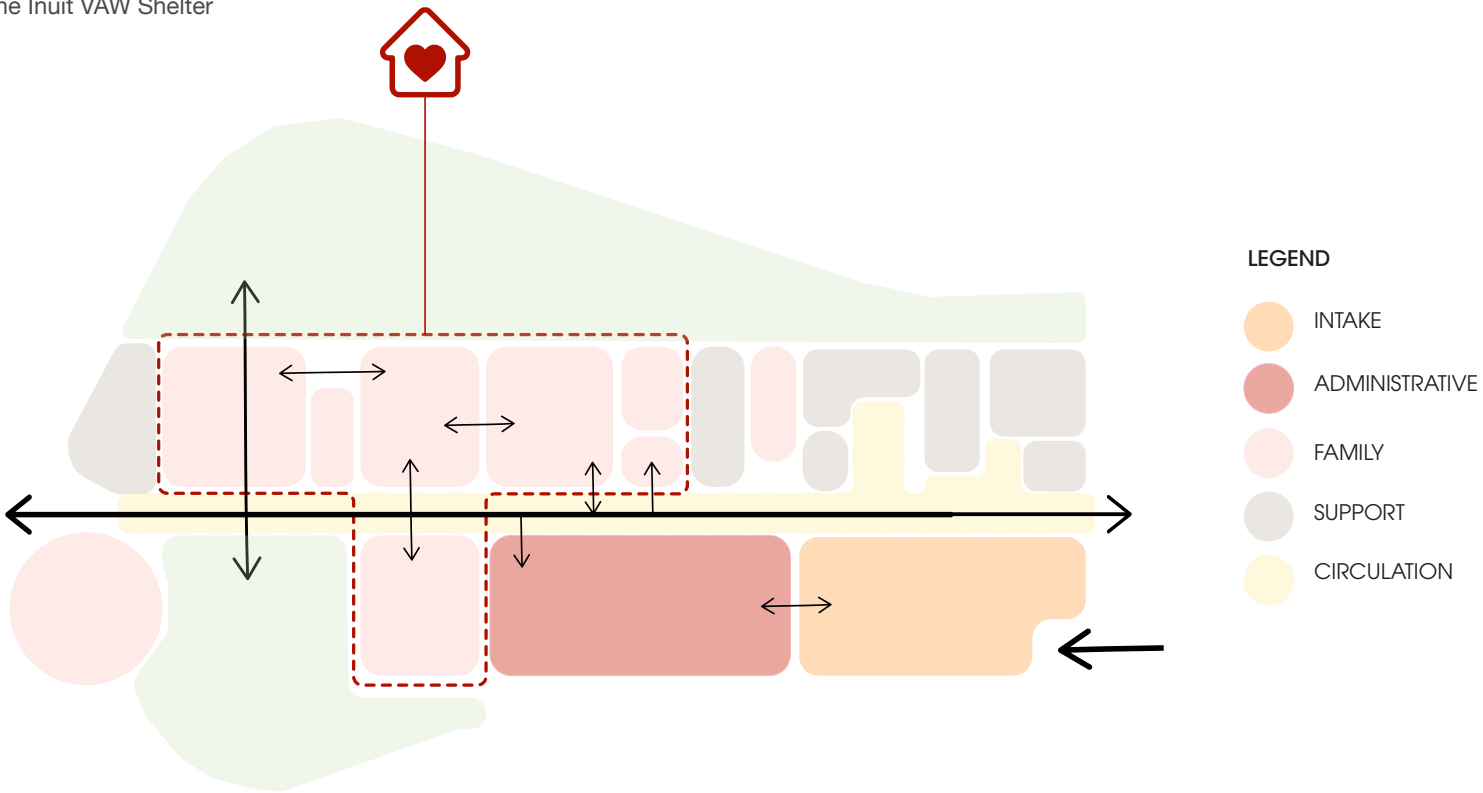
To strengthen cultural connection, the circular form is integrated into the interior plan of the building becoming discrete circular rooms with one at the corner of the site fully expressed on the exterior wrapped in glass block. Archways and circular floating ceilings also enhance the reference to the northern form found in the high arctic. The dining room has a defined circular eating area which can be used for “country food” which is eaten while sitting on the floor.

The pitched roof integrates an arched peak, a graceful gesture permeated by arched dormer windows along its edge, recalling the timeless forms of traditional Inuit architecture. This articulation not only strengthens cultural identity but also imbues the shelter with an air of familiarity.

The programmatic layout unfolds with adaptability at its core, offering multi-functional spaces that embrace communal and cultural gatherings within courtyards, harmoniously balanced by secluded realms crafted for repose, introspection, and personal care.

Drawing from Inuit culture, the selection of materials, finishes, and spatial configurations fosters an atmosphere of inclusivity and solace. The exterior presents a luminous palette: white brick anchors the base, rising to meet white cement panels, while glass blocks encircling the multi-purpose space

Functional Layout of the Inuit VAW Shelter



evoke the ethereal gleam of daylight piercing through ice—a subtle homage to the northern expanse. Accessibility and environmental sustainability are foundational to the design, delivering an energy-efficient, universally navigable environment that embraces all who dwell within.

In its entirety, the architectural vision of the shelter masterfully reconciles security with openness. It stands as a protective refuge that simultaneously elevates the soul, deeply anchored in cultural resonance devoted to the pursuits of healing and empowerment.

# Project Statistics

Category	Building Statistics
Lot Area	2338.6 m²
Lot Coverage Percentage	28.9%
Gross Floor Area	1619.6 m²
Ground Floor	673.6 m²
Second Floor	687.7 m²
Third Floor	258.7 m²
Building Height	3 Storeys (3rd level is attic space) 11.80 m above established grade
Total Number of Units	13 units
Studio unit - 1 to 2 bed capacity	1
Studio connected unit - 1 to 2 bed capacity	8
Accessible bedroom unit - 3 bed capacity	4
Total Number of Beds	30 beds
Vehicle Parking Spaces	11 parking spots (2 type A, 9 type B)
Bicycle Parking Spaces	9 spaces

# DESIGN DIRECTIVE

02

The City of Ottawa Official Plan provides a vision of how the city will grow over time and sets out policies to guide the development and growth of our city to 2046. Additionally, the Official Plan addresses matters of provincial interest as defined by the Provincial Policy Statement and serves as a basis for a wide range of municipal activities.

Transect & Designation

The subject site is located within the Outer Urban Transect and is designated Neighbourhood. The Outer Urban Transect comprises neighbourhoods inside the Greenbelt built in the last third of the twentieth century. The neighbourhoods represent the classic suburban model and are characterized by separation of land uses, stand-alone buildings, generous setbacks, and low-rise building forms. Neighbourhoods are contiguous urban areas that constitute the heart of communities. It is the intent of the Official Plan to permit a mix of building forms and densities.

The proposed development meets the following Outer Urban Transect and Neighbourhood policies, among others:

Section 5.3.1, Policy 2(a) states that development within the Outer Urban Transect shall be low-rise within Neighbourhoods and along Minor Corridors.

**The proposed development is a three-storey low-rise building and is compliant with the policy.**

Section 5.3.4, Policy 1 stipulates that Neighbourhoods located in the Outer Urban area shall accommodate residential growth to meet the Growth Management Strategy as outlined in Section 3. The Zoning By-law shall implement development standards that transition away from a suburban model and move towards urban built forms as described in Table 6 as applicable and that:

- a) Allows and supports a wide variety of housing types with a focus on lower density missing-middle housing which generally reflects the existing built form context of the neighbourhood, which may include new housing types that are currently not contemplated in this Plan;

**The proposed development will respect the existing built form context of the neighbourhood, while introducing a housing type that is not prevalent in the neighbourhood.**

Section 6.3.1, Policy 2 states that permitted building heights in Neighbourhoods shall be Low-rise, except:

- a) Where existing zoning or secondary plans allow for greater building heights; or
- b) In areas already characterized by taller buildings.

**The proposed development will be a low-rise building.**

City-Wide Urban Design Policies

Section 4.6 of the Official Plan sets out a framework for built form and the public realm. Urban design plays an important role in supporting the City’s objectives including building 15-minute neighbourhoods, growing the urban tree canopy, and developing resilience to climate change. New developments should be designed to make healthier and more environmentally sustainable living accessible for people of all ages, genders and social statuses.

The proposed development meets the following Urban Design policies, among others:

Section 4.6.3, Policy 9 states that opportunities will be explored to commemorate the culture, history and current interests of the Algonquin Anishinabe Host Nation, Urban First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples through place-making, naming, wayfinding, monuments, interpretive features, public art, streetscaping, landscaping, signage, and programming.

**The proposed Inuit VAW Shelter has been designed in consultation with the Inuit and Urban Indigenous community in Ottawa to integrate Inuit culture, knowledge, and art into the building. The Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition and the members have worked closely with the architectural partners and consultants to create a building, landscaping, and programing that is rooted in their community and will provide a safe, culturally relevant environment for the future residents.**

Section 4.6.5, Policy 3 requires that development shall minimize conflict between vehicles and pedestrians and improve the attractiveness of the public realm by internalizing all servicing, loading areas, mechanical equipment and utilities into the design of the building, and by accommodating space on the site for trees, where possible. Shared service areas, and accesses should be used to limit interruptions along sidewalks. Where underground parking is not viable, surface parking must be visually screened from the public realm.

**The proposed site access point is located towards the rear lot line, minimizing conflict between vehicles and pedestrians at the corner of Forestglade Cr and Blohm Dr. Trees and other vegetation are proposed to be planted on the property within the front and corner side yard to provide a comfortable pedestrian environment and provide screening for the surface parking lot.**

Section 4.6.5, Policy 4 states that the development shall demonstrate universal accessibility, in accordance with the City’s Accessibility Design Standards. Designing universally accessible places ensures that the built environment addresses the needs of diverse users and provides a healthy, equitable and inclusive environment.

**Accessibility is a core principle in the building design. All communal spaces of the building are accessible and four (4) of the ten (10) units are designed to AODA standards.**



Section 4.6.6, Policy 4 states that amenity areas shall be provided in residential development in accordance with the Zoning By-law and applicable design guidelines. These areas should serve the needs of all age groups, and consider all four seasons, taking into account future climate conditions.

**The north and south courtyards are designed to be multi-functional and offer residents with choice. The children's play structure, gazebo, sacred fire pit, and outdoor kitchen are located in the north courtyard, making it a space for gathering, ceremony, and play. Whereas the south courtyard is designed as a quieter space with raised planter boxes and space for seating. The two courtyards offer residents space to enjoy or respite from the elements in all four seasons.**

Section 4.6.6, Policy 6 stipulates that low-rise buildings shall be designed to respond to context, and transect area policies, and shall include areas for soft landscaping, main entrances at-grade, front porches or balconies, where appropriate. Buildings shall integrate architecturally to complement the surrounding context.

**The buildings main entrance is at-grade and there is soft landscaping in the front and corner side yard. The low-rise built form conforms with the Outer Urban Transect policies. As a multi-unit building, the proposed design incorporates a front yard and back yard akin to the townhouses and semi-detached houses in the surrounding neighbourhood.**





# Response to Pre-consultation Comments

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Comment #14: Please prepare a short design brief with the site plan application to describe the proposal

**Response: This Design Brief has been prepared in response to the Urban Design Brief Terms of Reference received following the pre-consultation meeting.**

Comment #15: Can the turn around at the rear of the site be decreased? Does it need to be round – can it just be a small hammerhead?

**Response: The parking lot turn around has been changed to a hammerhead style and reduced in size.**

Comment #16: Look for opportunities to remove the van parking space in front of the building.

**Response: The van parking space has been retained to accommodate programmatic needs. Soft landscaping has been added around the pathway to the building entrance and around the driveway to provide transition to the Forestglade Cr right-of-way.**

Comment #17: Will the childrens place area be fenced? If so, please consider transparent fencing – such as low metal pickets and low landscaping to help integrate the proposed development into the neighbourhood.

**Response: The rear courtyard will have ample soft landscaping surrounding the gathering area and children play area. There is an existing chain link fence abutting the multi-use pathway to the north of the rear courtyard.**

Comment #18: Please ensure that parking and garbage are well screened from the public realm (including pathway) with landscaping

**Response: Extensive soft landscaping is proposed on the site. The garbage area will be screened from public view with an opaque screen.**

Comment #19: Are there opportunities to provide the bicycle parking more interior to the site to increase security?

**Response: Bicycle parking has been relocated to the north edge of the parking lot.**

Comment #20: Please ensure that you provide street trees along the ROW and MUP.

**Response: The design incorporates landscaping with trees and shrubs along the Blohm Dr and Forestglade Cr right-of-way. The rear courtyard which interfaces with the MUP will also have extensive landscaping with native planting.**

Comment #21: Please ensure that the elevations fronting the public realm include a high percentage of glazing.

**Response: The ground floor includes generous glazing and the rotunda on the corner will be wrapped with glass block.**

Comment #22: Please ensure that the design brief discusses the purpose and programming of the outdoor amenity spaces.

**Response: The two outdoor courtyards are designed to be multi-functional gathering spaces, with opportunity for recreation, learning, gathering, and eating. Space in the south courtyard has been dedicated for raised planter boxes. The north courtyard will function as a residential backyard, with a outdoor kitchen area, space for dining and gathering outdoors, and the children play area.**

Comment #23: Please discuss treatment to provide transition to adjacent residential buildings.

**Response: Please see the Built Form Transition section.**

Comment #24: Please ensure that the landscape treatment and architecture highlight the front entrance of the building.

**Response: Landscaping along the Forestglade Cr right-of-way and pedestrian pathway highlight the front entrance. Glazing and signage are also proposed to identify the main entrance.**

# SITE CONTEXT & ANALYSIS

03



# Site Photos

The images below show the existing site condition of 250 Forestglade Cr and surrounding area. As illustrated in Image A, there is a multi-use path along the north property line of the subject site buffered with a row of mature trees and a chain link fence, as shown in Image B. The subject site is a vacant lot. As illustrated in Image B and C, the neighbouring residential buildings to the east and south are two-storey townhouse dwellings with peaked roofs. The building shown in Image C is a stacked townhouse with twelve (12) units.





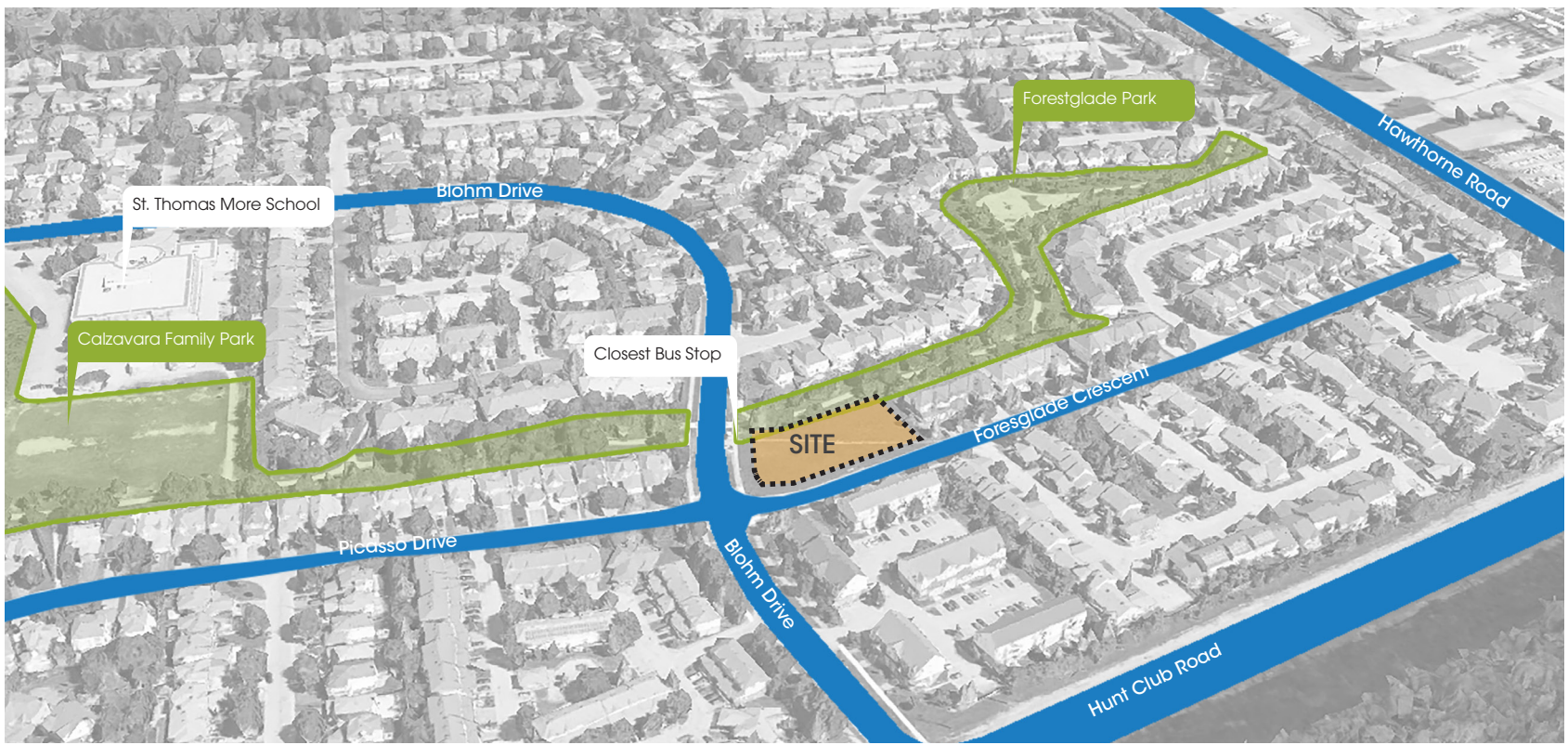
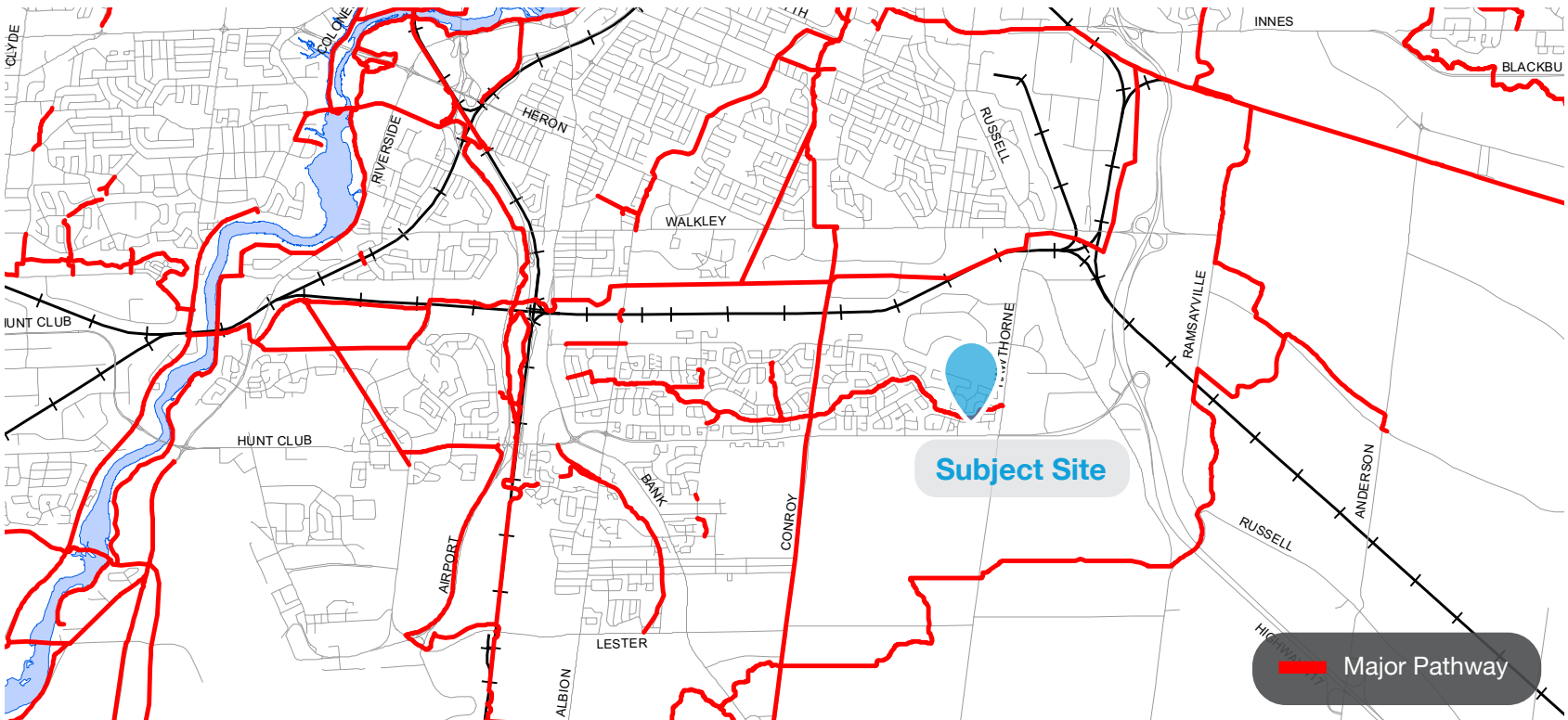
# Characteristics of Surrounding Area

The subject site is in a predominately residential neighbourhood characterized by low-rise multi-family dwellings including semi-detached dwellings and townhouses. Houses are on average two to two and a half stories in height.

There are sidewalks along Blohm Dr and on one side of Forestglade Cr. The north lot line of the subject site abuts a multi-use path (MUP) which traverses through the neighbourhood, connecting Forestglade Park to the northeast with Calzavara Park to the northwest. The MUP is integrated with the city's active transportation network as illustrated on the top image to the right.

Hunt Club Road is an arterial road south of the subject site and Blohm Drive, which is west of the subject site is a collector road. Bus route #98 travels down Blohm Dr and the nearest bus stop is adjacent to the northwest corner of the subject site.

St. Thomas More School, a catholic elementary school, is close to the subject site, abutting Calzavara Park to the northwest.



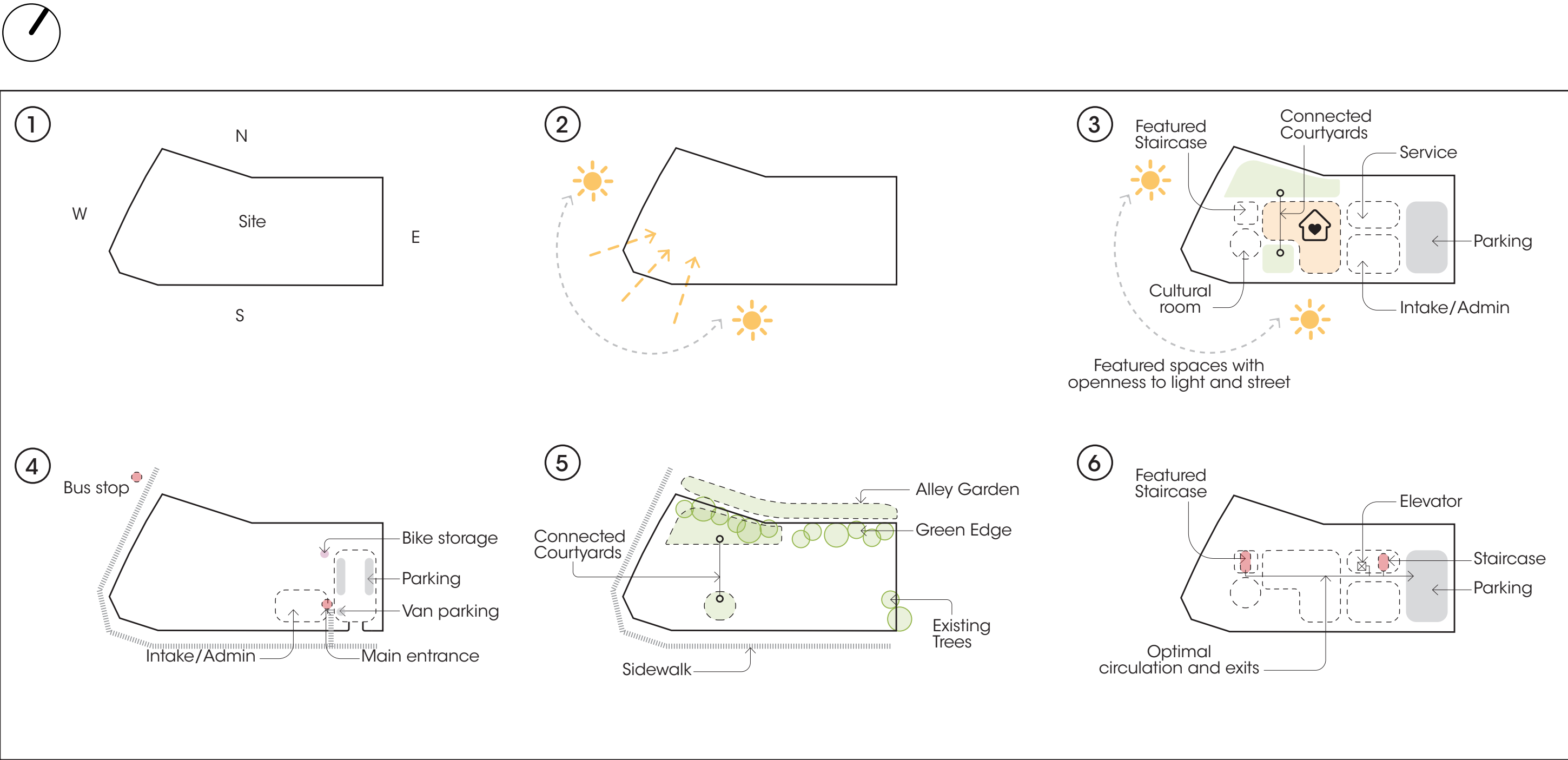


# DESIGN RESEARCH

04

# Organizing Principles

The diagrams below illustrate the organization principles that guided the initial planning and design of the Inuit VAW Shelter.





# Built Form Transition

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The design of the Inuit Women's Shelter ensures a smooth transition between the new building and its surrounding residential neighborhood. The structure is three stories high, respecting the low-rise character of the adjacent residential area. The gently sloped metal roof and dormer window details soften the building's presence while adding warmth and familiarity to its form. The front elevation integrates a rhythm of windows and materials that echo residential-scale proportions, avoiding an institutional appearance.

The use of neutral and natural tones, along with soft landscaping elements such as shrubs and trees, creates a visually harmonious relationship with the existing streetscape. Landscaping will include native plants and greenery, contributing to the site's integration into the local ecological context. The design will also maintain a respectful distance from neighboring properties, ensuring privacy for both residents and the community.





# Response to Public Realm

The shelter actively engages with the public realm by maintaining a welcoming yet discreet presence along the street. The design incorporates an accessible pedestrian pathway leading to the main entrance, ensuring easy and inclusive access. The front yard features layered landscaping with trees and shrubs, acting as both a buffer for privacy and an inviting green edge that enhances the pedestrian experience.

The curved volume on the southwest side appears to create a distinct architectural feature, offering a translucent yet private enclosure, promoting respect and understanding of Inuit culture. This design choice, combined with generous glazing at the ground level, fosters a sense of openness while maintaining security for residents. The building’s massing, setbacks, and green frontage help it integrate seamlessly into the neighborhood, creating a respectful yet prominent addition to the community fabric. The building’s orientation will provide a safe and accessible connection to public transportation, and the parking lot will be screened from view, minimizing its impact on the streetscape.



# Qualifications

This Urban Design Brief was prepared by Fotenn Planning + Design in partnership with Formline Architecture + Urbanism and LGA Architectural Partners.

The Urban Design Brief was prepared in accordance with City of Ottawa Urban Design Brief Terms of Reference received on October 30, 2024 following the pre-consultation meeting held October 9, 2024.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at [bates@fotenn.com](mailto:bates@fotenn.com).

Sincerely,



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Genessa Bates, M.Pl.  
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**FOTENN** Planning  
+ Design