The Hearth at the Exchange

Remember...“time, culture, and history are a continuum”

Your five aspirations and our engagement with Winnipeg’s creative community, and numerous indigenous leaders, have ignited our imaginations and formed the basis of our overall design approach.

“The Hearth at the Exchange” is a dynamic ground designed to kindle the dramatic and vital transformation of the Exchange District. This ground focuses inwardly to support the new mixed-use community and radiates outwardly to encompass the existing surrounding neighborhoods and the larger city. The Hearth connects the city’s heart: City Hall, Market Square, Red River College and the future Market Lands Community.

This ground is based on both memories and aspirations. It is a ground of reconciliation, regeneration and creativity. It is a framework for generating future memories, as well as weaving together historic layers of the Exchange District’s urban fabric and the site itself.

This ground will be a truly remarkable place, a hearth.

True placemaking requires more than strong architecture. The Hearth must be affordable. It must be supported by a community-focused governance model; a sustainable economic model; and, a flexible and adaptable operations model.

The Hearth design supports a wide range of both programmed and spontaneous seasonal uses. It will attract events from both the surrounding community, and the city at large.

It beckons both Winnipeggers and visitors to explore, enjoy and pass through its doors.

Like the dynamic Prairie sky, the circular Hearth induces a sense of movement. The ground with its paving patterns, its grasses and undulating benches sets up a clockwise flow connecting City Hall with the Hall of Creativity and the Hearth Residences. The Market Hall is the beacon of this gathering space.

The Hearth design supports a wide range of both programmed and spontaneous seasonal uses. It will attract events from both the surrounding community, and the city at large.

The highly translucent and light-filled timber Market Hall is designed to combine both permanent food and beverage vendors with a full array of temporary and seasonal uses ranging from fresh food markets, to banquet nights and recreational activities.

Built on the recycled basement and foundations of the Public Safety Building, this highly flexible and adaptable Hall is also a beacon of sustainability. It provides for the building’s servicing, cooling, water retention, storage and future Market Lands’ central District Energy plant. The Market Hall food producing roof gardens provide for urban agriculture, market produce and potentially urban bee keeping while the greenhouses allow for the cultivation of native indigenous plants.

Supporting the mandate of the nationally recognized Urban Shaman gallery and a number of other community creative enterprises, the Hall of Creativity is a major gathering space to support new ways of arts programming and presentation. The Urban Shaman frames the south end of the hall, while access and servicing of the Hearth Residences frame the north. The work areas of the Hall animate Princess Street on the west.

The central Meeting Drum creates a unique focus and public presence within the grand volume of this Hall. A grand stair accesses the Hall’s upper gathering space of arts and community offices and ultimately connects with the amenity spaces of the Hearth Residences above.

The seven level Hearth Residences have been designed to insure that they are integral to the dynamic life of the whole Hearth. Opportunities for community connections have been designed into every floor level of this residential community, including light-filled corridors for storage lockers and laundry. Major amenity spaces and outdoor areas for all residents overlook the Hearth and the Hall of Creativity. Community garden plots are provided on the roof.

A strong and dynamic visual expression of movement is provided by the sculptural vertical solar shading fins on the east face of the residential block facing onto the Hearth. The use of brick on the west face of the Hearth Residence facing Princess Street connects with the historical faces of the Red River College and the Exchange District.