
TONGVA PARK



'The landscape belongs to the person who looks at it...' - Ralph Waldo Emerson

1	introduction
2	history
3	context
4	analysis
5	concept
6	site plan
7	pencil drafting and sketches
8	enlargement
9	perspectives
10	plant palette
11	materials
12	park amenities
13	summary
14	student bio
15	acknowledgements

introduction

The UCLA Extension Program in Landscape Architecture starts by teaching students how to draw, draft, and color by hand before introducing them to digital tools. A three course series uses Tongva Park as a case study to guide students in building the necessary skillsets for producing and presenting professional landscape designs.

In Design Graphics I, we learned how to draw with pencil to develop perspective drawings, hand lettering, and dimensioned site plans. Design Graphics II introduced us to pen and color mediums. We learned to further develop our own graphics and designs using pens, colored pencils, and markers to communicate ideas and portray aesthetic concepts. Finally, Design Graphics III taught us to digitize our work, enhancing graphics, images, and color schemes in Photoshop and InDesign.

This booklet represents a compilation of the work produced in the Design Graphics course series.



Figure 2

Santa Monica, a coastal city in California, has a rich history that dates back to its original inhabitants, the Tongva people. The Tongva, also known as the Gabrielino-Tongva, were a Native American tribe who lived in the Los Angeles Basin and the Southern Channel Islands. They thrived in the region long before European settlers arrived, with a complex society and culture centered around the abundant natural resources of the area. Spanish explorers arrived in 1769, followed by the establishment of the Mission San Gabriel Arcangel in 1771. The land that would become Santa Monica changed hands several times, eventually becoming part of Mexico before being ceded to the United States in 1848. Santa Monica was officially founded in 1875 by John P. Jones and Robert Baker. Over the decades, it developed into a vibrant city known for its iconic pier, beautiful beaches, and thriving cultural scene.

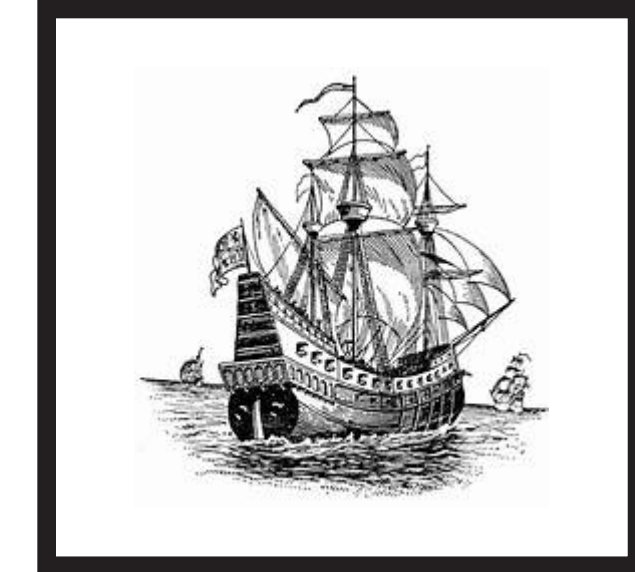
Tongva Park, situated in the heart of Santa Monica, pays homage to the city's indigenous roots. Opened in 2013, the park was named to honor the Tongva people and their deep connection to the land. Designed by the acclaimed landscape architecture firm James Corner Field Operations, Tongva Park transformed a former parking lot into a lush, sustainable urban oasis. Spanning 6.2 acres, the park features meandering pathways, native plant gardens, a playground, and stunning views of the Pacific Ocean. It serves as a testament to the city's commitment to preserving its cultural heritage while providing a green, vibrant space for the community. Tongva Park is not only a place of recreation and relaxation but also a living tribute to the history and legacy of the Tongva people in Santa Monica.

Figure 3



THREE TONGVA WOMEN

Figure 4



SPANISH ARMADA

Figure 5



SAN GABRIEL MISSION CIRCA 1870

Figure 6



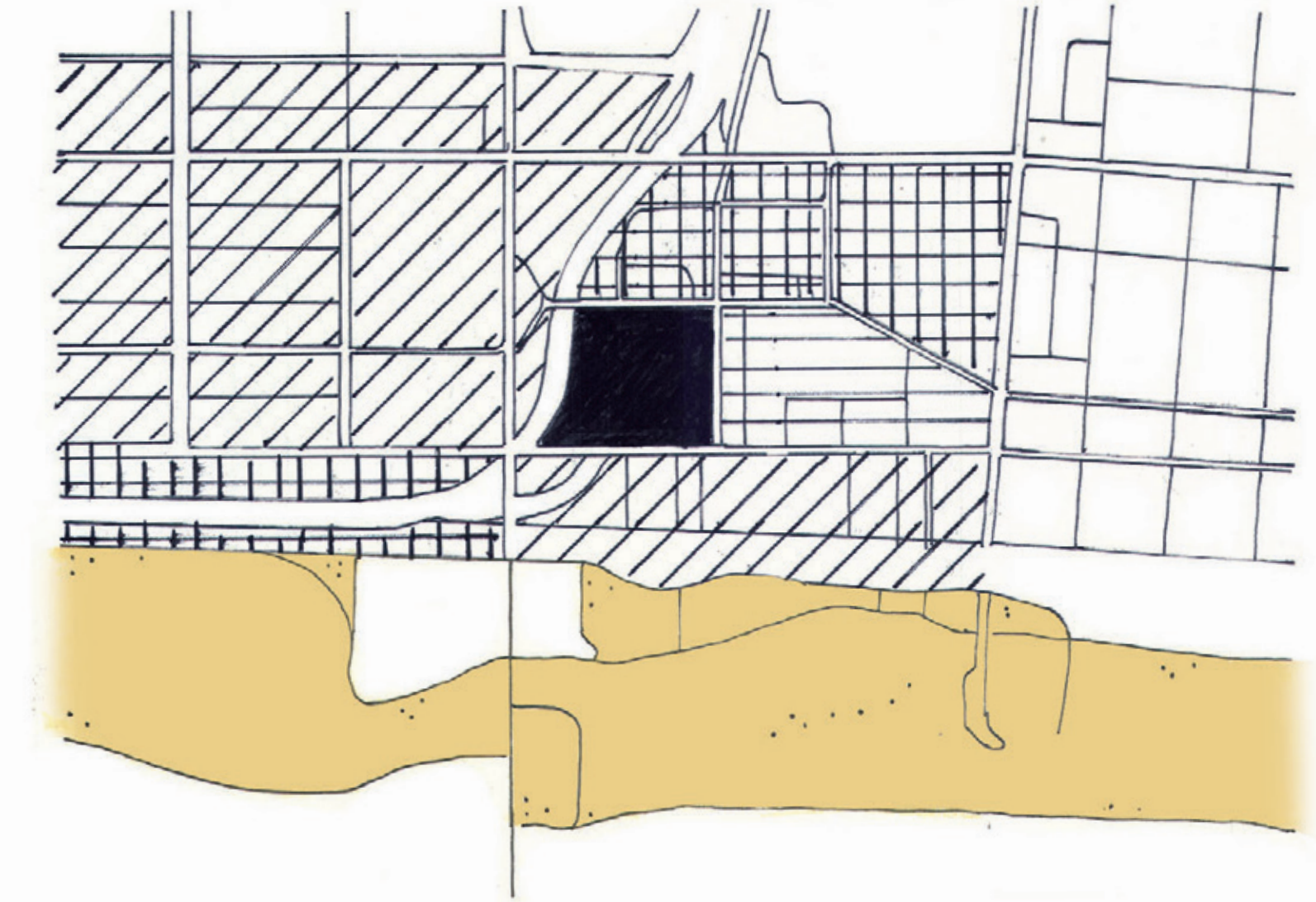
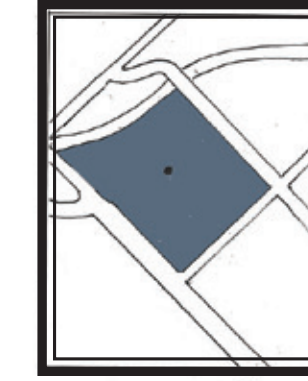
OLD SANTA MONICA CITY HALL, 1930s

context

Tongva Park is situated in Santa Monica, California. It is enclosed by Main Street and Ocean Avenue and between the i10 freeway and Olympic Avenue. To the north-east, across from Main Street, is Santa Monica City Hall. To the southeast, across from Olympic Drive, there are apartment complexes, and to the southwest, on the other side of Ocean Avenue, there are commercial buildings, with the beach just once block further behind them.



SITE LOCATION

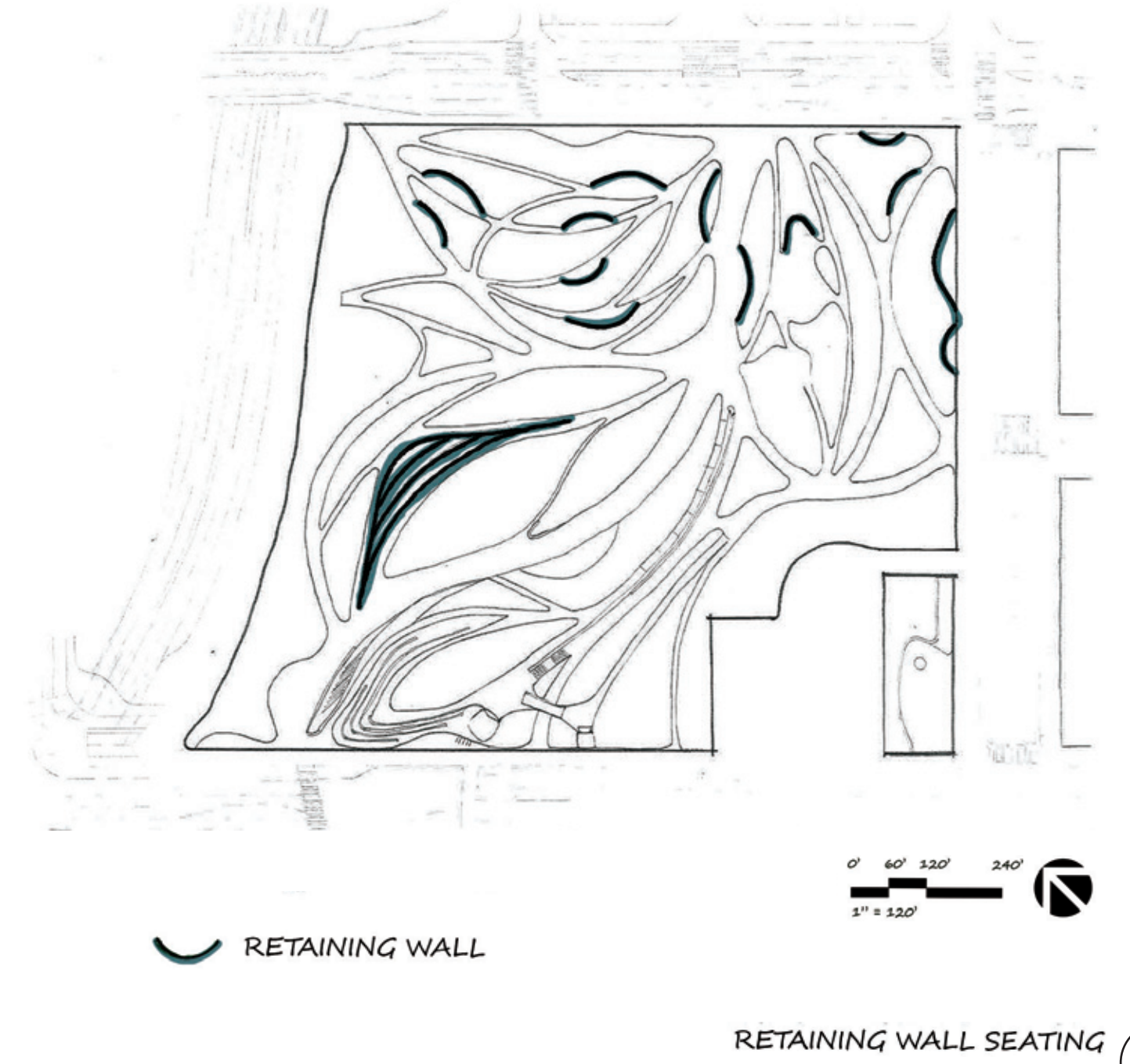
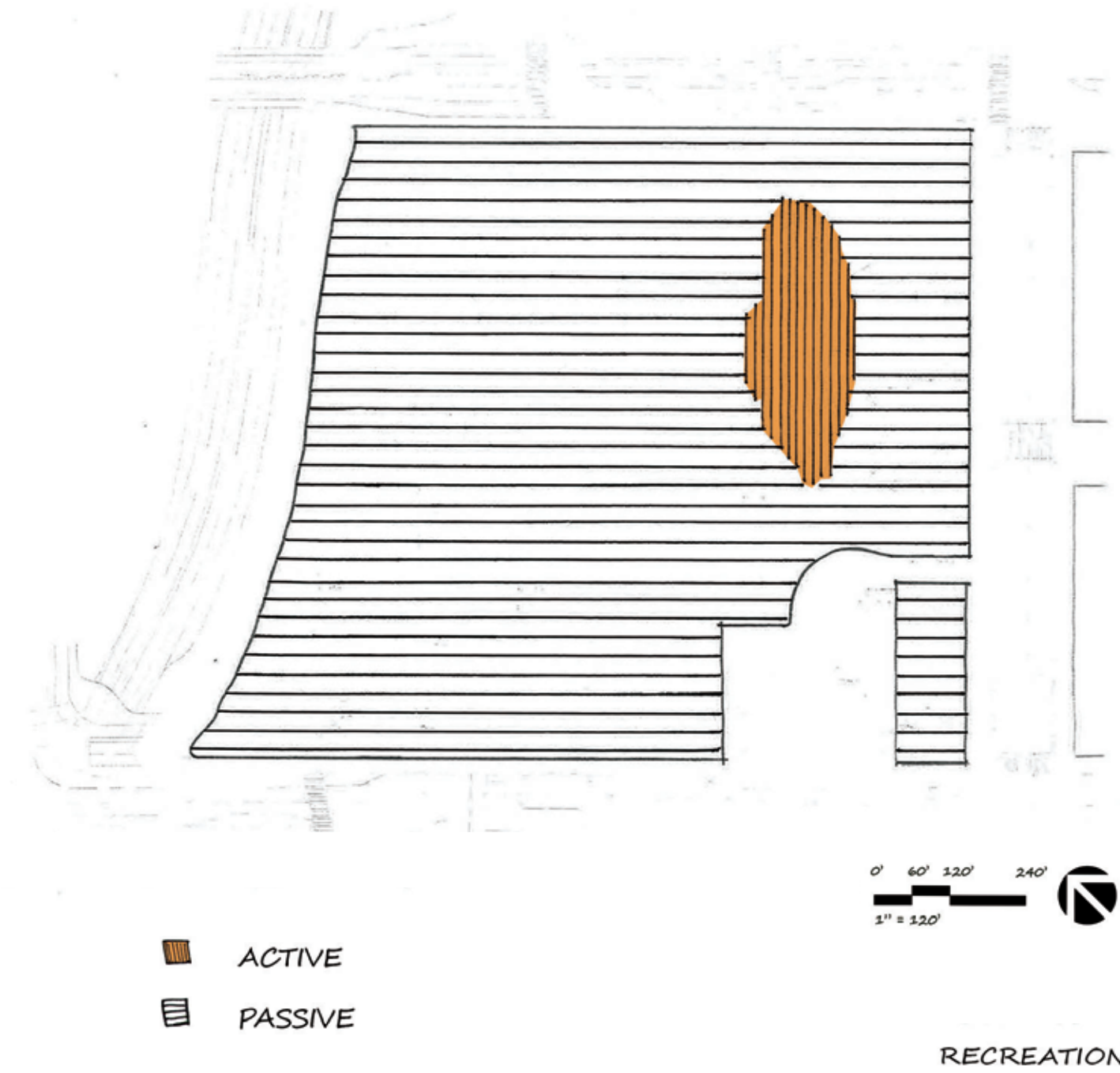
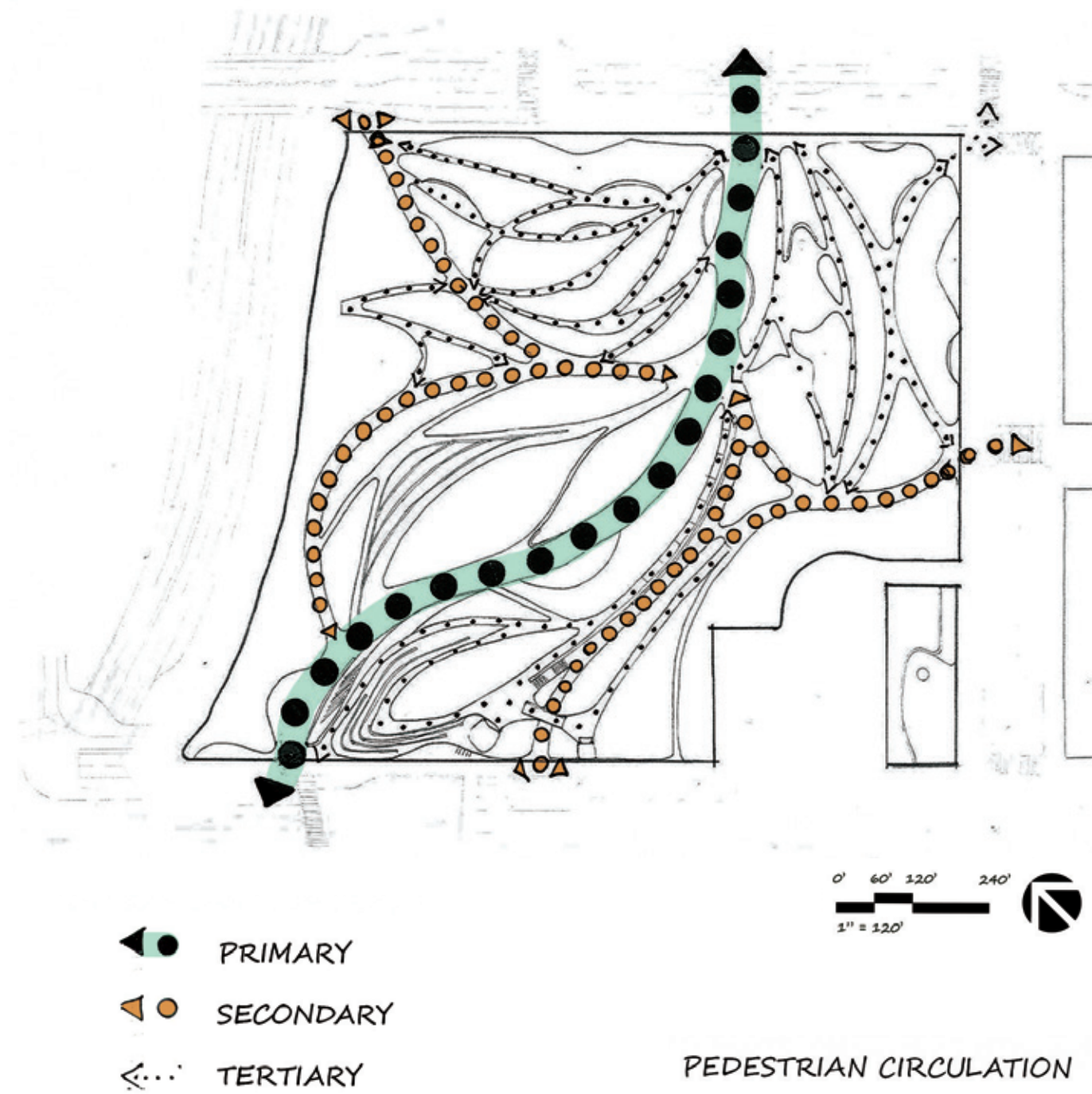
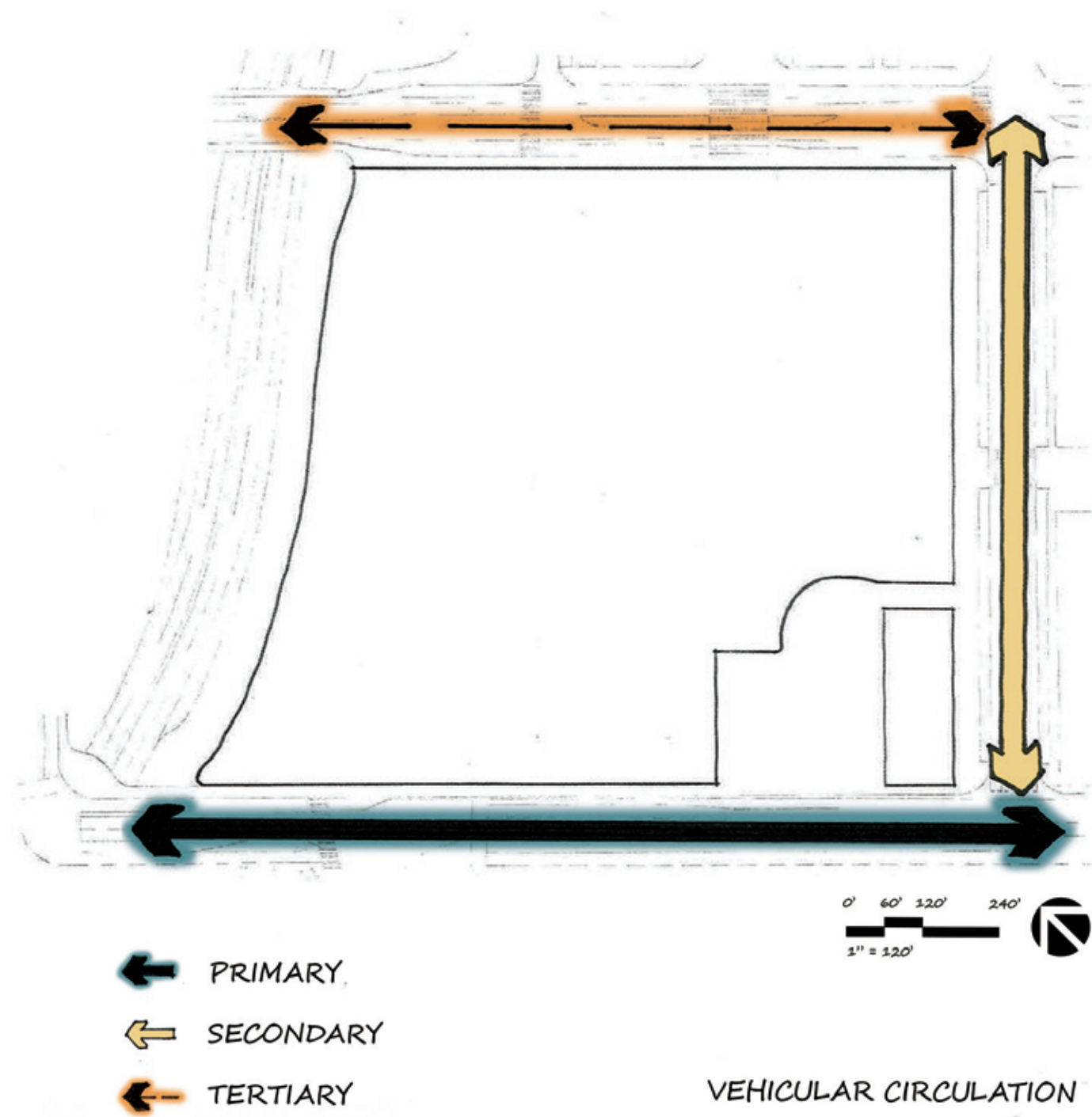


-  PUBLIC
-  COMMERCIAL
-  RESIDENTIAL
-  BEACH

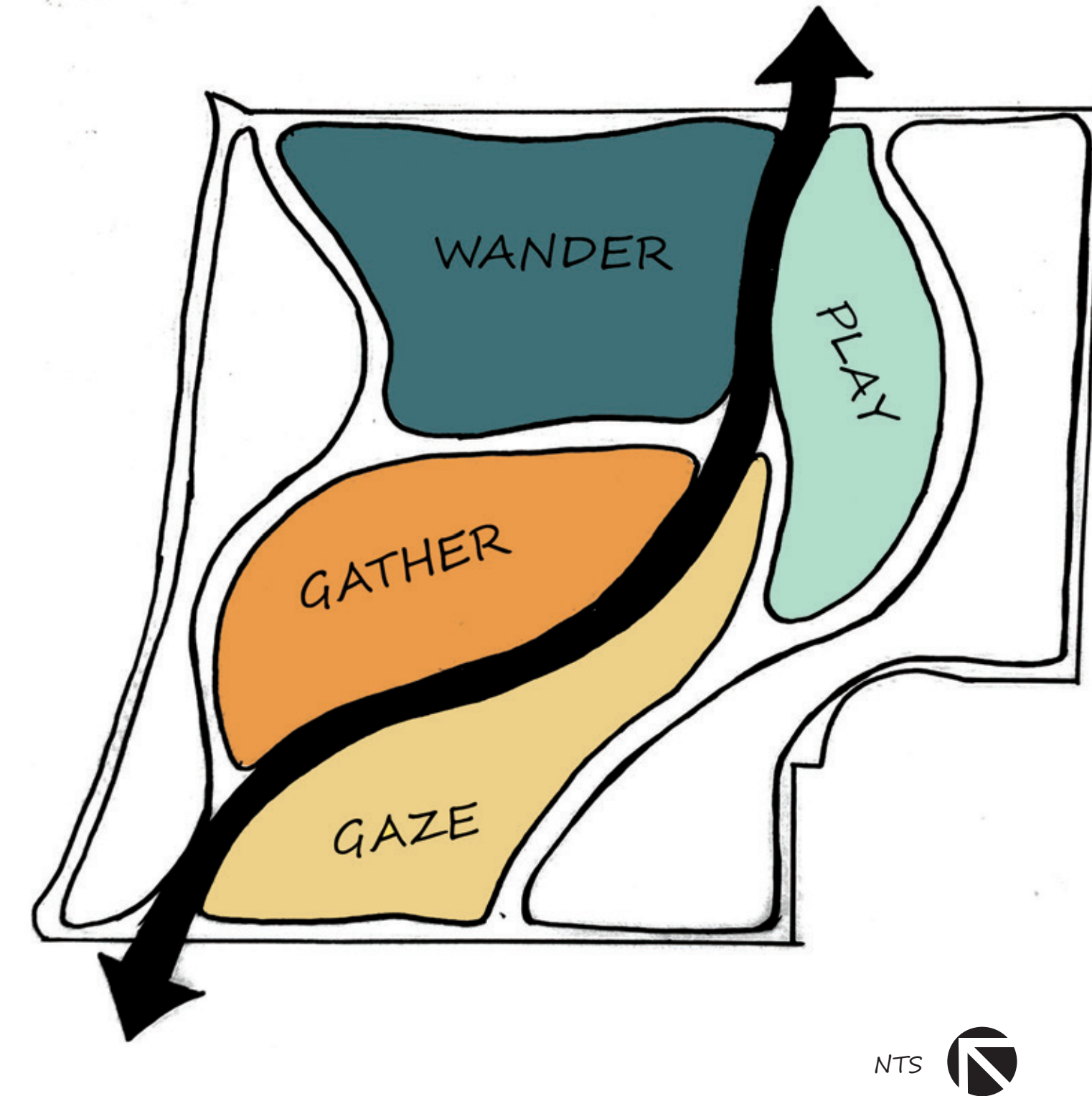
NTS

CONTEXT

analysis



James Corner's design for Tongva Park in Santa Monica exemplifies his vision of transforming urban landscapes into natural spaces that fosters community interaction while also offering quiet space for wandering or observing. The park, spanning over six acres, integrates native plantings, rolling topography, and innovative water features to create a serene yet dynamic environment. Corner's approach emphasizes sustainability and a deep connection to the local ecology, providing a versatile public space that balances recreational needs with environmental sensitivity.



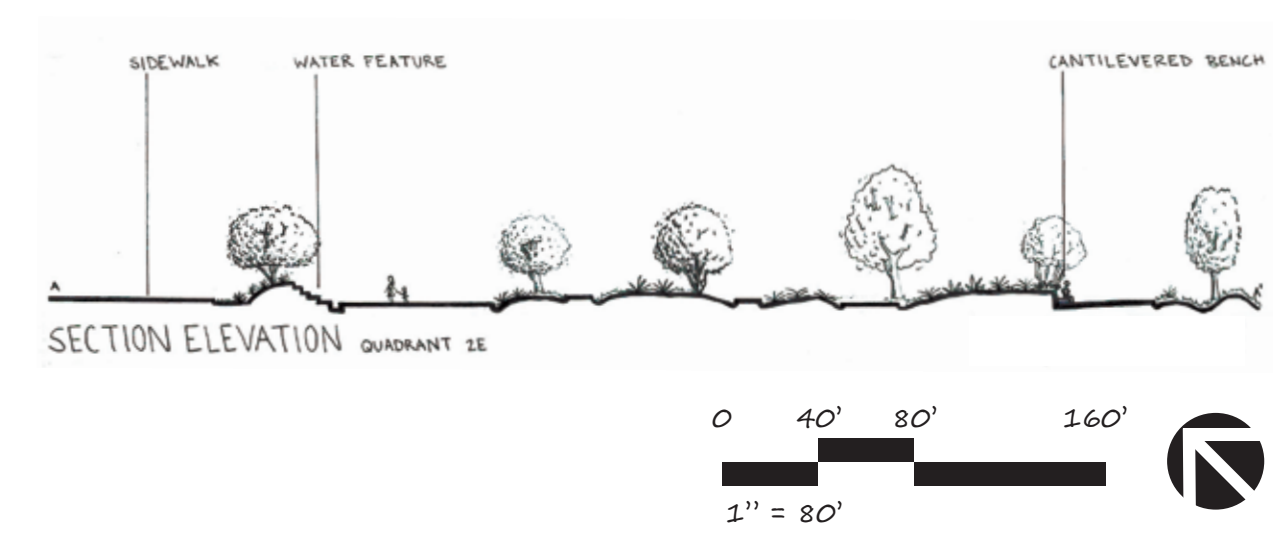
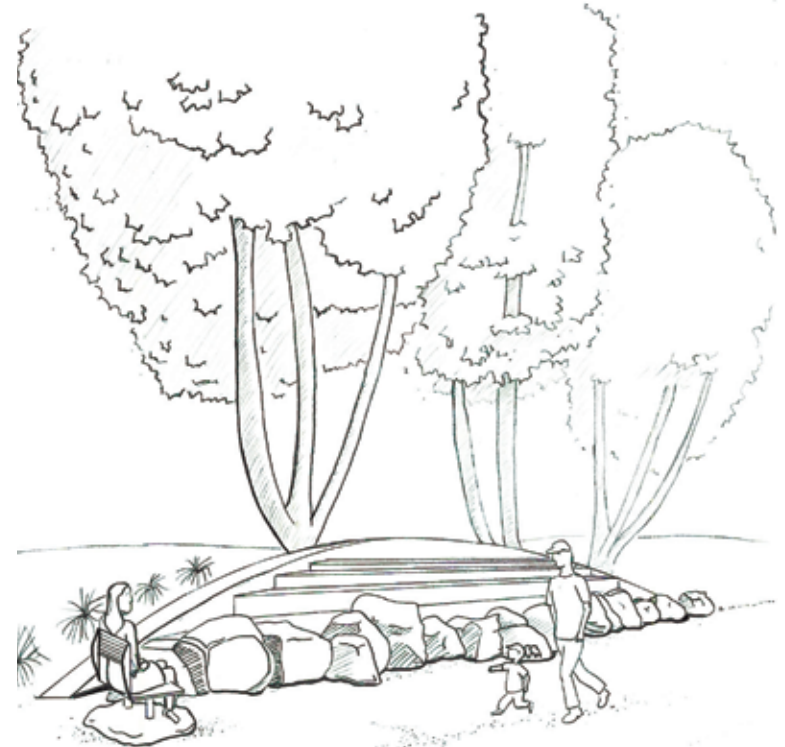
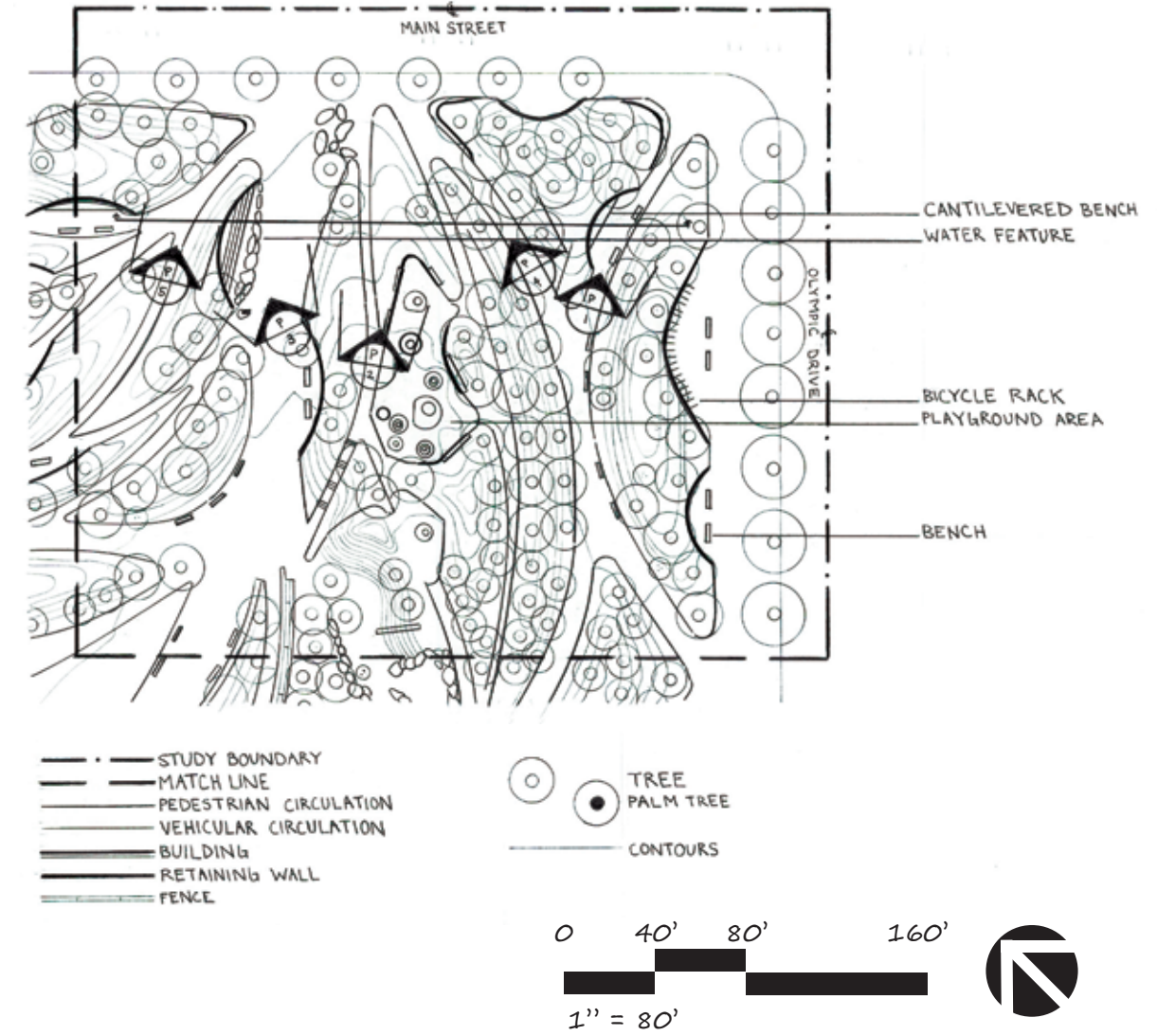
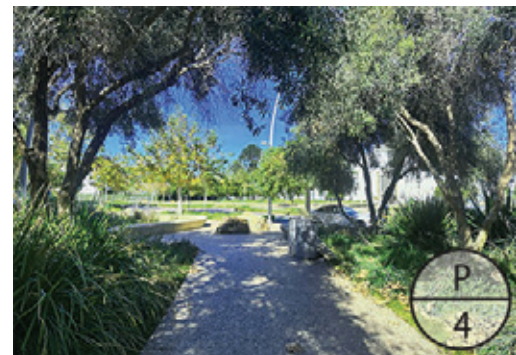
site plan

The site plan of Tongva Park thoughtfully integrates various elements to create a harmonious and inviting urban oasis. Adjacent to the I-10 freeway stands an existing Moreton Bay fig tree, serving as a majestic focal point and testament to the park's commitment to preserving natural heritage. Nearby, an amphitheater designed for community gatherings and performances fosters cultural engagement. The park features overlook baskets that provide visitors with stunning views of the surroundings, while unique water features add a tranquil, reflective ambiance. Practical amenities such as bike racks are strategically placed to encourage eco-friendly transportation. For families, a well-designed playground offers a safe and engaging area for children, and a nearby picnic area provides an ideal spot for relaxation and socialization. Each element is thoughtfully positioned to enhance the park's accessibility, functionality, and aesthetic appeal.



pencil drafting and sketches

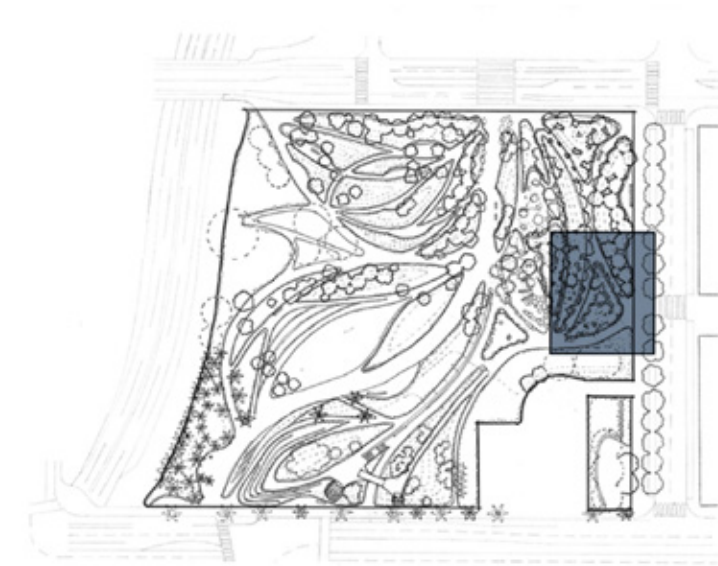
In Design Graphics 1, I analyzed the northeast quarter of Tongva Park, creating a site plan, section elevation, and perspective sketches. This study highlighted key features including the playground area, benches, water feature, and bicycle racks. These elements combine functionality and aesthetics, catering to families, providing resting spots, adding elegance, and promoting eco-friendly transportation.



enlargements

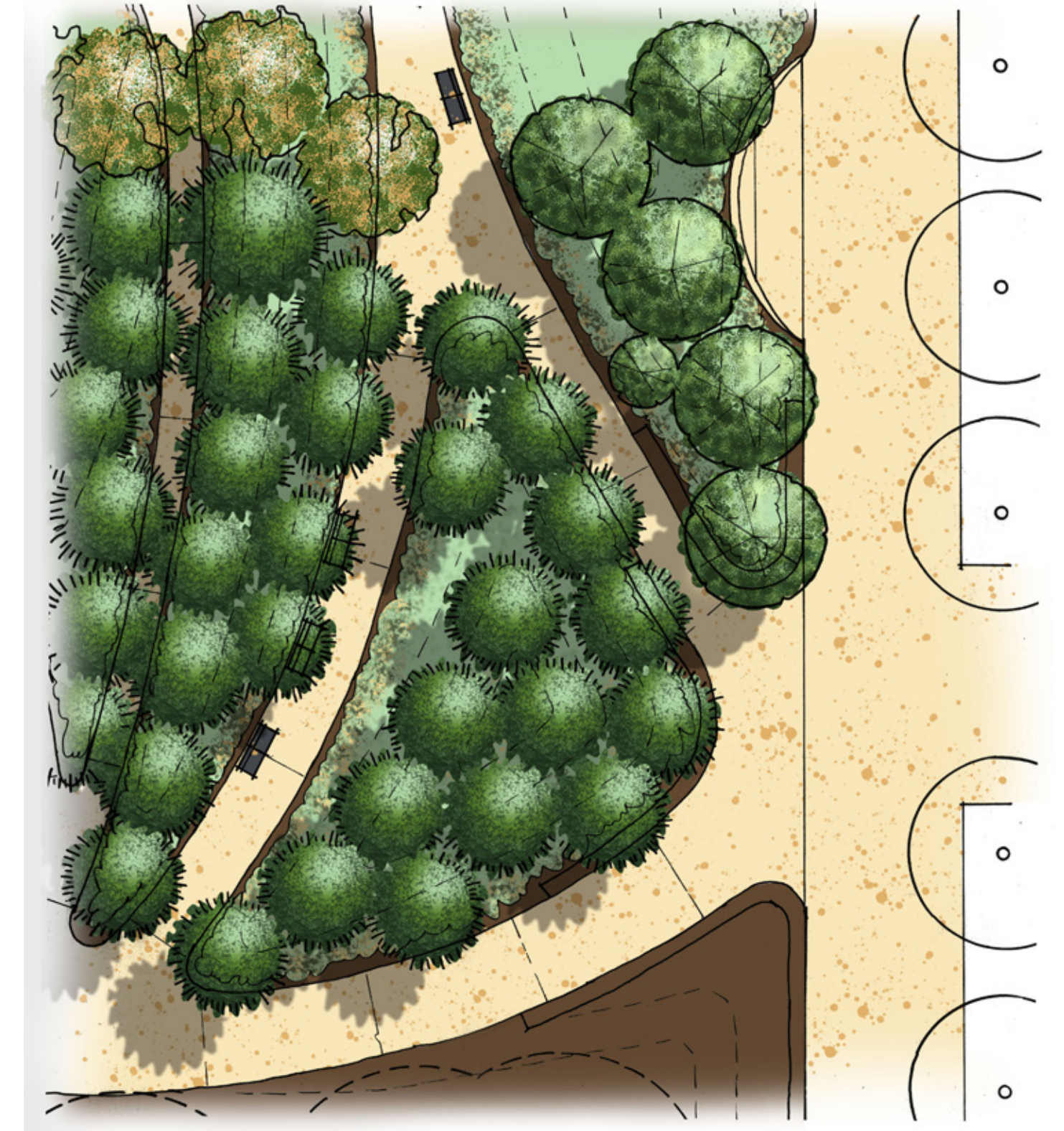
The parkway along Olympic Drive is one of the stunning features of Tongva Park. Dual-colored pavers form a striking striping pattern that guides visitors past seating areas and bike racks, complemented by a row of trees lining the pathway. This design not only invites passersby into the park but also extends the park's boundaries, seamlessly integrating the parkway into the overall landscape.

Other notable features include the upper level of the park with the overlook baskets and bridges, the mound formations and water features, the amphitheater, and the playground area.

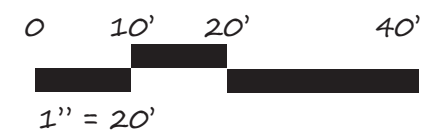


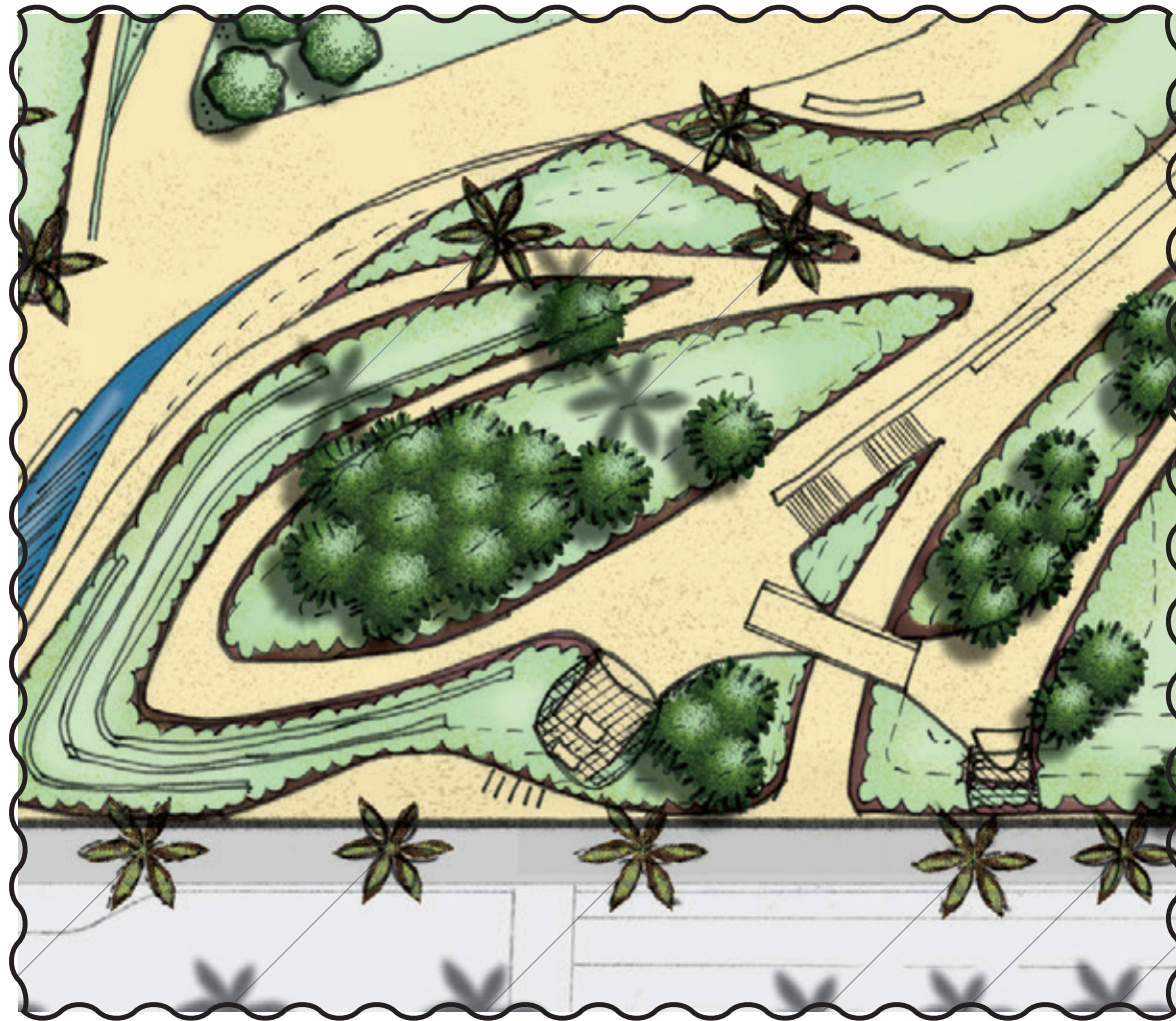
KEY MAP

NTS

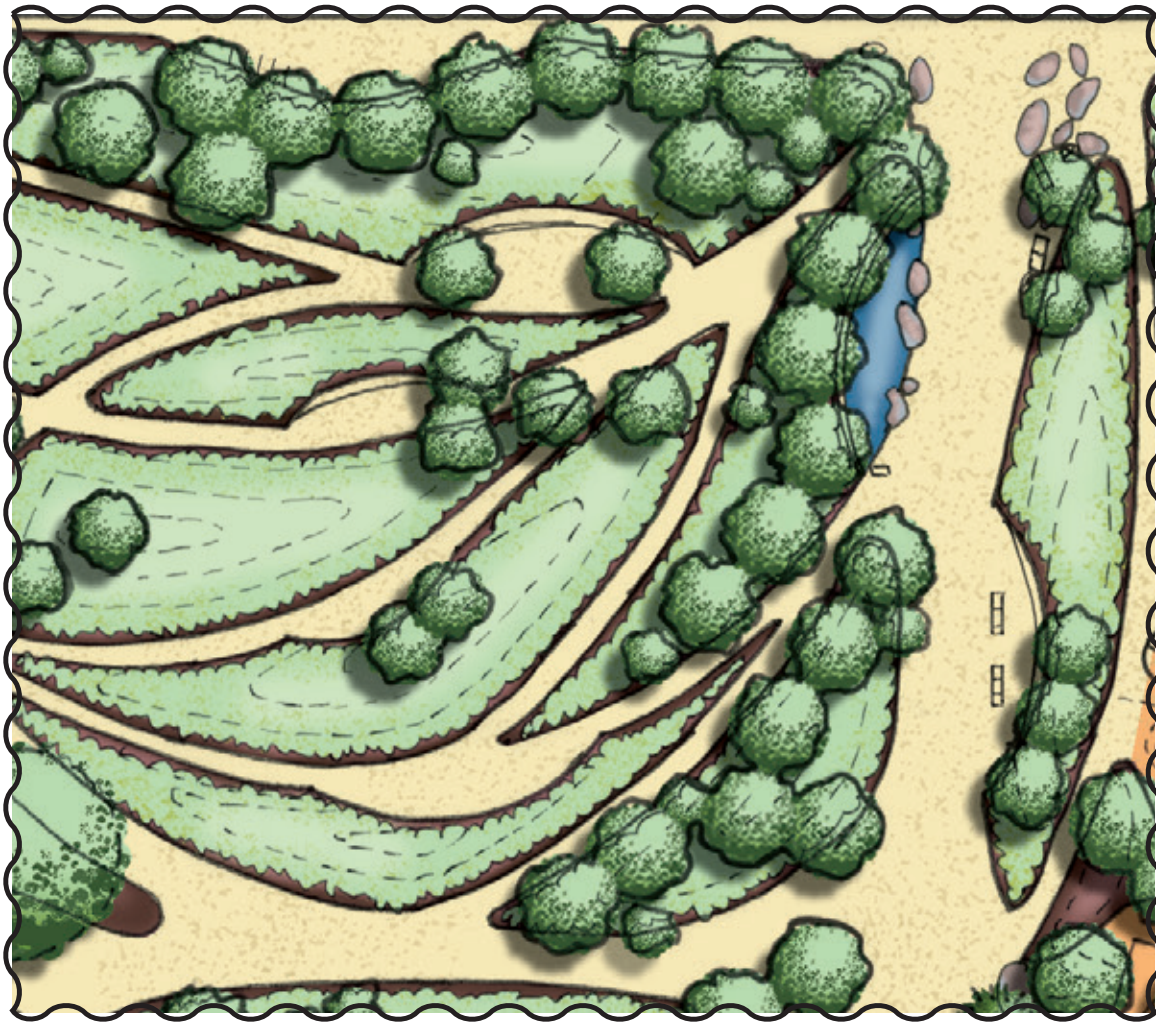


ENLARGEMENT OF OLYMPIC DRIVE ENTRANCE





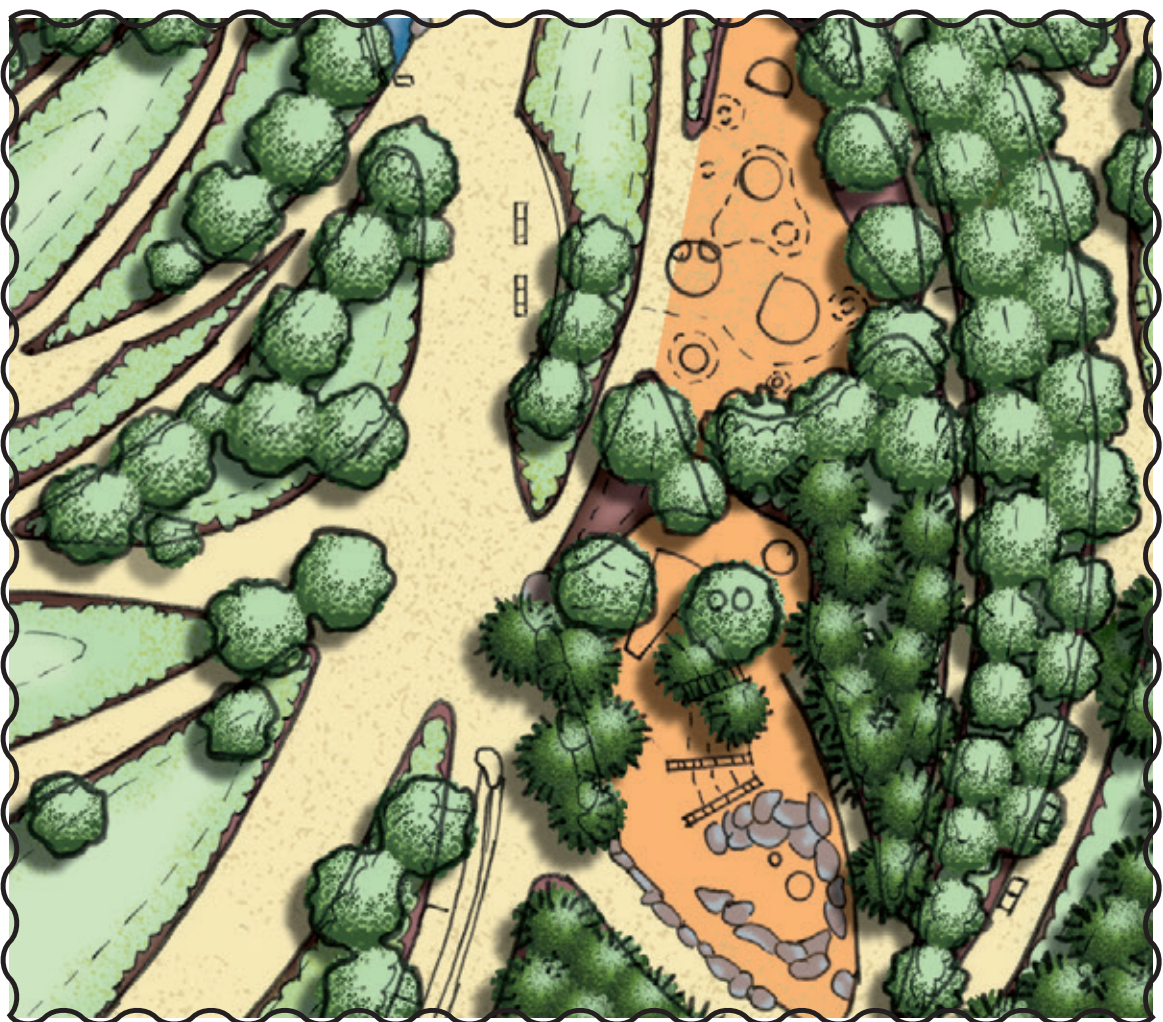
ENLARGEMENT OF UPPER LEVEL



ENLARGEMENT OF MOUNDS AND WATER FEATURE



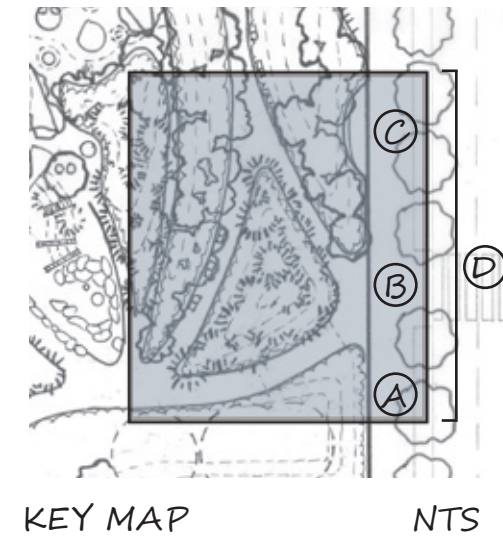
ENLARGEMENT OF AMPHITHEATER



ENLARGEMENT OF PLAYGROUND AREA



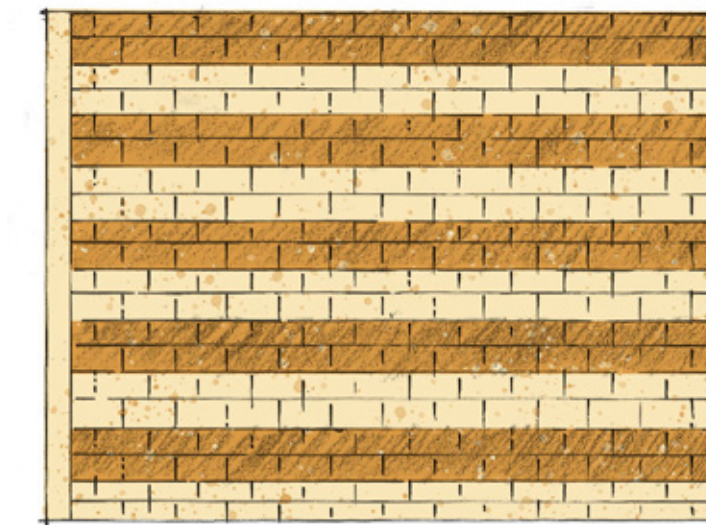
perspectives



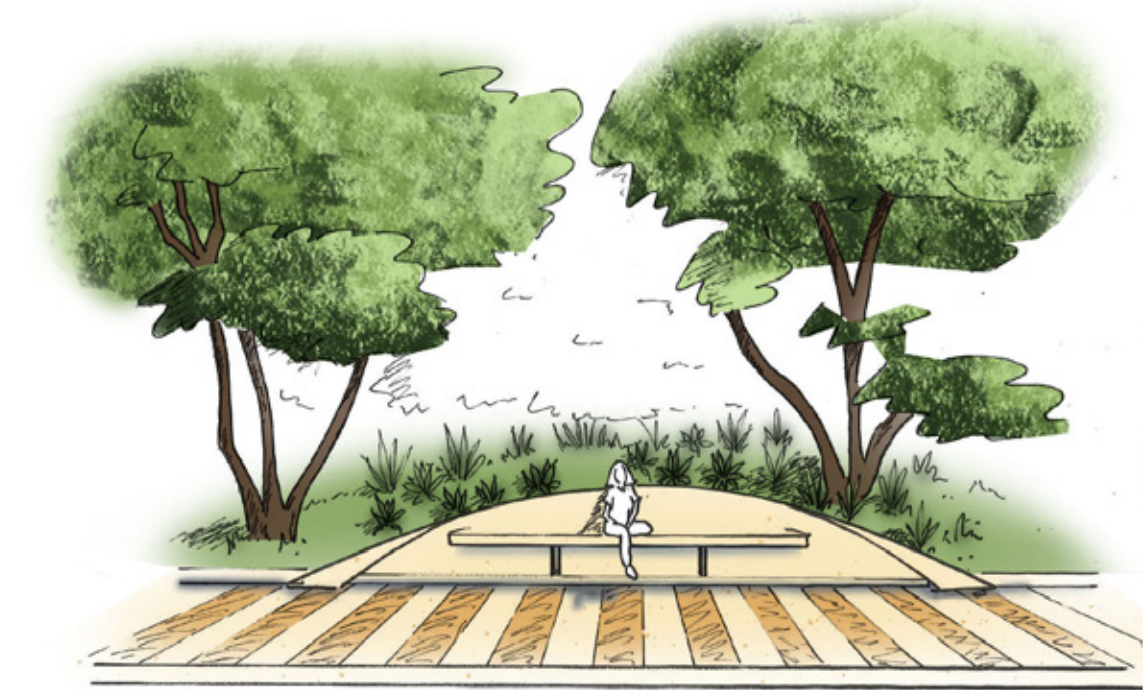
KEY MAP NTS



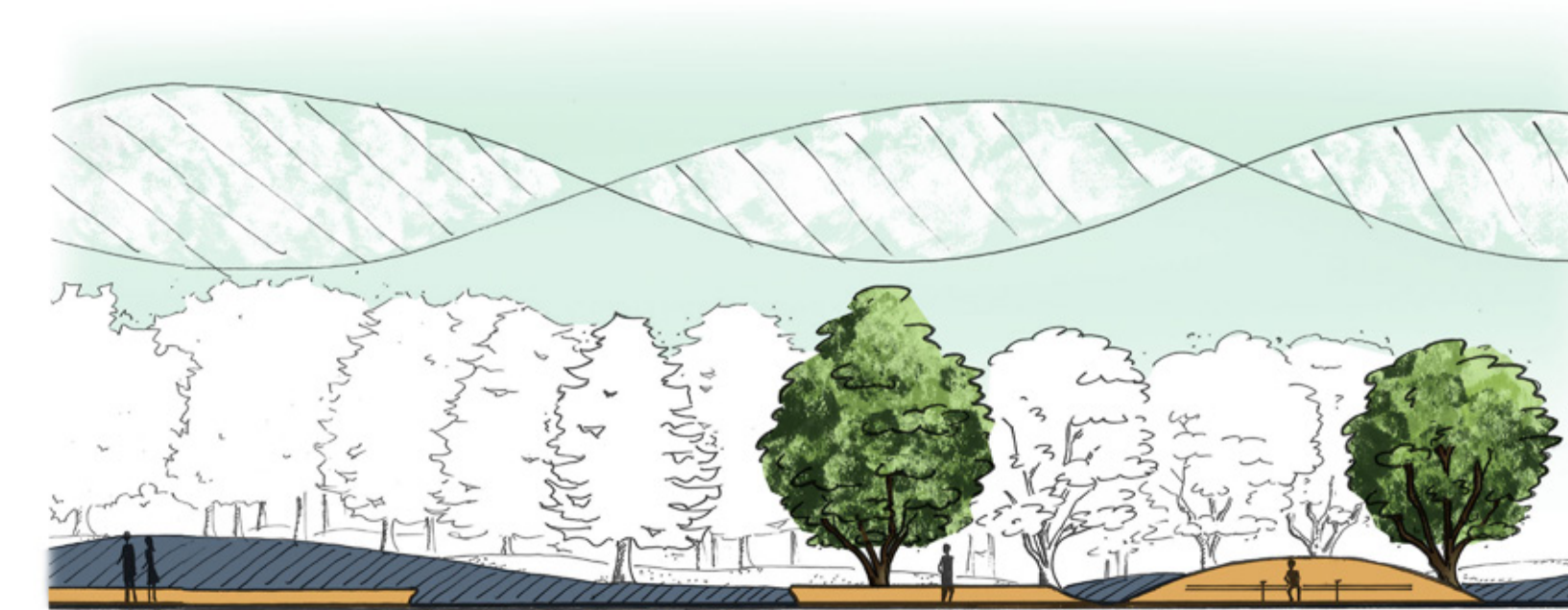
OLYMPIC PARKWAY



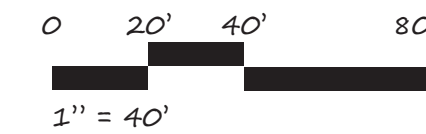
ⓑ DETAIL OF PAVING PATTERN NTS



ⓒ BENCH SEATING ALONG OLYMPIC PARKWAY NTS



ⓓ SECTION ELEVATION



plant palette

The plant palette at Tongva Park in Santa Monica is a carefully curated blend of diverse species that enhance the park's natural beauty and ecological value. Central to the park's landscape is a majestic Moreton Bay fig tree, complemented by stately olive, oak, and sycamore trees, which provide ample shade and a sense of grandeur. An array of native plants, including drought-tolerant shrubs and grasses, further enrich the park's biodiversity, creating a lush, sustainable environment that reflects Southern California's unique flora.



MORETON BAY FIG TREE



SYCAMORE TREES



PALM TREES



OLIVE TREES



AGAVE



MIXED SHRUBS AND GROUND COVER



materials

Tongva Park features a thoughtfully selected array of materials that contribute to both its aesthetic appeal and functional design. The parkway is adorned with patterned pavers, adding visual interest and guiding visitors along the space. Exposed aggregate pathways blend seamlessly with the natural surroundings, while strategically placed boulders enhance the park's organic feel. Traction grooved steps and sturdy metal handrails ensure safety and accessibility, and the wooden benches provide comfortable, inviting spots for rest and contemplation, harmonizing with the park's overall natural theme.



PATTERNED PARKWAY PAVERS



BOULDERS



TRACTION GROOVES ON STEPS



EXPOSED AGGREGATE



METAL HANDRAILS



WOOD AND METAL BENCHES

park amenities

Tongva Park offers a variety of amenities designed to cater to visitors of all ages and interests. The park features innovative playground structures that provide children with engaging and safe play spaces. Overlook viewing baskets offer views of the beach, ideal for watching sunsets over the ocean. Bridges connecting the upper level areas add a sense of adventure and exploration. The bathroom facilities, tucked under a staircase and encircled by vibrant bougainvillea, seamlessly integrates with the park's design. Bike racks on exterior retaining walls promote eco-friendly transportation, while two unique water features create serene focal points, enhancing the park's tranquil atmosphere.



BIKE RACKS



BATHROOMS



OVERLOOK BASKETS



UPPER LEVEL BRIDGE



PLAYGROUND STRUCTURES



WATER FEATURE

summary

The learning process in the Design Graphics course series was an evolving journey of technical proficiency and creative expression. I learned to embrace imperfection, recognizing that the iterative nature of design is crucial to personal and professional growth. Throughout the courses, I explored and played with various methods of communicating ideas through drawing and drafting, from freehand sketches that capture initial concepts to precise technical drawings and digitally enhanced presentations. Each technique offers a unique way to convey thoughts and solve problems, highlighting the multifaceted nature of design communication.

I truly loved the learning journey throughout Design Graphics I, II, and III. Each class was an exciting opportunity to explore new techniques and push my creative boundaries. The process of developing my own visual language and mastering various drawing and drafting methods was incredibly rewarding, and I am looking forward to applying the tools and insights I have gained moving forward in the program and my career.



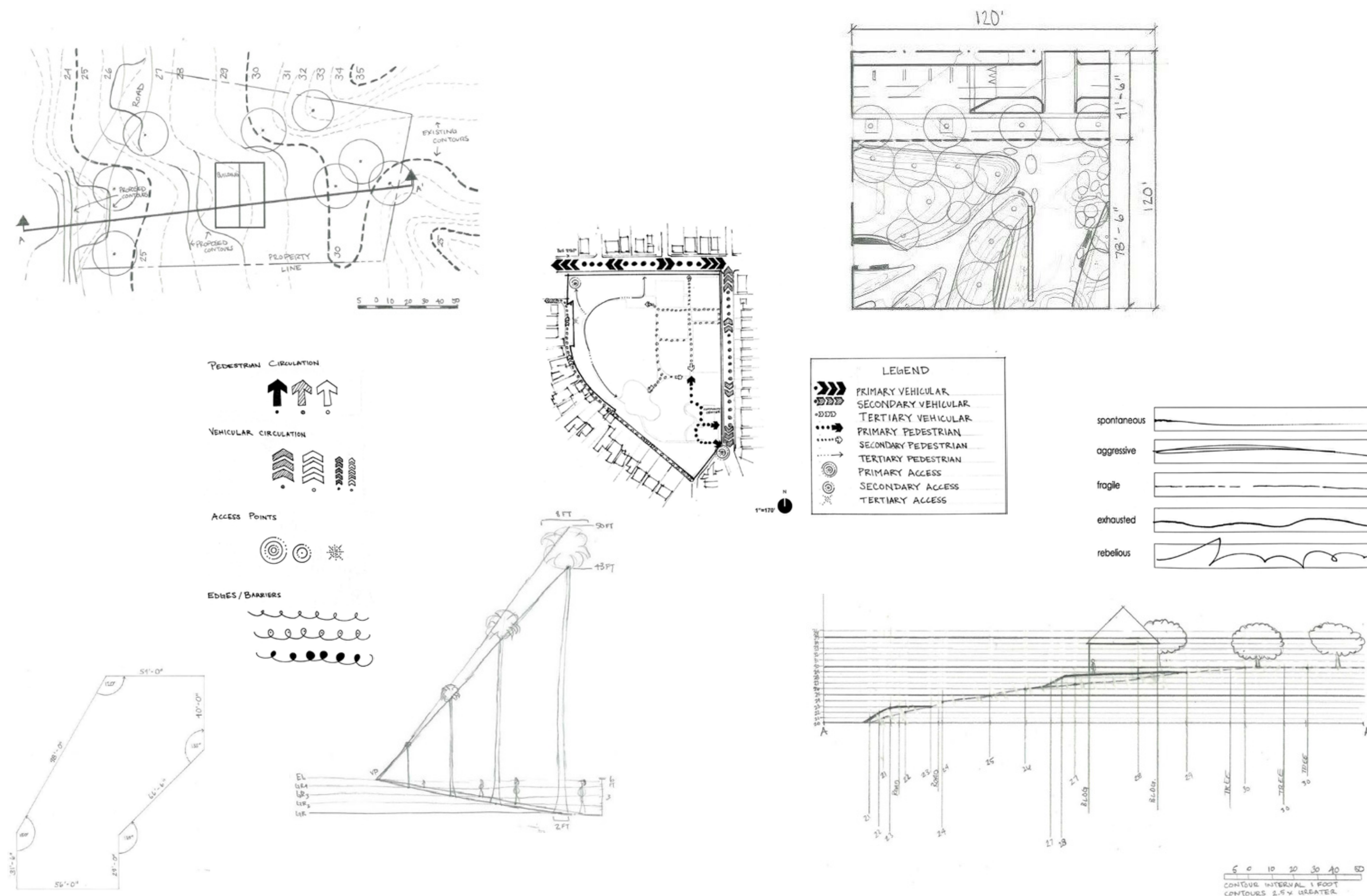
Figure 7

14 student bio



Callie Ham is an aspiring landscape architect, passionate about creating regenerative spaces. Her first career in international development took her around the world to work on projects that aimed to foster economic growth, create jobs, and promote a just transition to more environmentally sustainable economies. A decade later she returned to California to support regenerative land management policies and programs and to pursue a career in landscape architecture.

In her free time, Callie can be found rock climbing in the desert, snowboarding and hiking in the mountains, or playing beach volleyball at the beach. She is driven by a love for nature, adventure, and connection and hopes to share that in her work as a landscape architect.



process

acknowledgements

A big thank you to Laura Razo, Rebecca Schwaner, and David Squires for teaching me to draw, draft, observe, color, digitally render, and think critically about design.

REFERENCES

"Santa Monica History." *Santa Monica History Museum*, www.santamonicahistory.org/santa-monica-history/.

"History of Santa Monica." *Santa Monica Conservancy*, <https://smconservancy.org/explore-santa-monica/historic-places/history-of-santa-monica/>.

FIGURES

Figure 1: Morley, Jack Balderrama. "Tongva Park in Santa Monica is Californian through-and-through." *The Architect's Newspaper*, 6 Nov. 2019, www.archpaper.com/2019/11/tongva-park-feature/. Image of Tongva Park from above by Steve Proehl.

Figure 2: "The Sustainable Quality Awards Celebrate Outstanding Leadership In Sustainable Economic Development And Social Responsibility." **Santa Monica Mirror**, 18 Apr. 2022, www.smmirror.com/2022/04/the-sustainable-quality-awards-celebrate-outstanding-leadership-in-sustainable-economic-development-and-social-responsibility/. Photograph by Getty Photos.

Figure 3: "Tongva People: A dynamic study of the Villages and Locations of the Gabrielino-Tongva Indians." n.d., <https://www.tongvapeople.org/>. Photograph of Three Tongva Women.

Figure 4: "Spanish Explorers." *U.S. History Images*, n.d., <http://ushistoryimages.com/spanish-explorers.shtm>. Image of Spanish Armada.

Figure 5: Lloyd, Annie. "A Brief History of LA's Indigenous Tongva People." *LAist*, 8 Oct. 2017, <https://laist.com/news/la-history/a-brief-history-of-the-tongva-people>. Photograph of San Gabriel Mission circa 1870.

Figure 6: "Santa Monica History." *Santa Monica History Museum*, www.santamonicahistory.org/santa-monica-history/. Photograph of Santa Monica City Hall.

Figure 7: Shaw, Matt. "From Parking Lot to Urban Oasis: James Corner's A+ Award-Winning Tongva Park and Ken Genser Square." <https://architizer.com/blog/inspiration/industry/james-corner-field-operations-tongva-park/>. Image of Tongva Park entrance on Ocean Avenue.

Figure 8: "Tongva Park: Finalist for Prestigious Award." *Canyon News*, <https://www.canyon-news.com/tongva-park-chosen-as-finalist-for-prestigious-award/32979>. Image of Tongva Park Santa Monica.

