

Catch/Renew/Release



The current OAA Headquarters site: A hilltop building with a thin, static landscape and clay soil that propels stormwater downhill, uncleaned.

Our concept: A hilltop building with a thick, dynamic, soil-enriching landscape that slows and cleanses stormwater – demonstrably.

Landscape isn't a blank canvas awaiting an architect's vision. Landscape is connected – it extends far beyond property lines. Merely thinking about the topography and vegetation of 111 Moatfield Drive isn't enough. You must consider how stormwater travelling down from the Oak Ridges Moraine passes through this site, funnels into the Don River ravine system, and ultimately reaches Lake Ontario. You must ask: how could this site support an ever-richer array of plants,

fungi, pollinators, birds, soil microorganisms, and other life forms native to this region to contribute to that system?

CATCH/RENEW/RELEASE celebrates the centrality of water to life. It slows the path of stormwater to cleanse it in ways that the stewards of the land now known as Ontario implemented and respected – many centuries before sewer systems existed here.

Our concept envelops the building and goes below grade. It's dynamic and resilient, anchored in native plant models, in flux both seasonally and year to year. It addresses long-term, transformative climate change effects and imagines the future **beyond** the 100-year storm. It is a succession of improvements that will, over time, greatly enrich the experience of visiting the site – and even the act of driving past it.

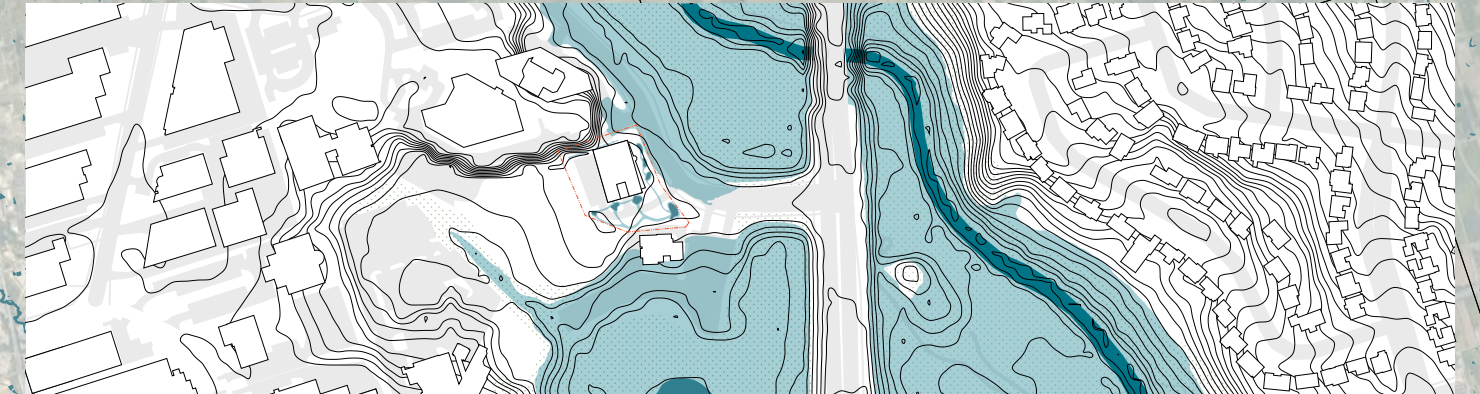
CATCH/RENEW/RELEASE proposes five didactic Water Collection elements, connected across the site. The site goes from static to dynamic; it becomes a teaching garden.

CATCH/RENEW/RELEASE transforms the experience of arrival. Currently, arriving at the OAA headquarters is all about arriving at a building. The only pedestrian access runs alongside the vehicular route to the carport entrance. It's efficient, but it ignores the potential of the landscape. Our concept provides pedestrian access from multiple directions. It retains a direct pedestrian route, while offering meandering pathways to explore a landscape that will become more engaging with each passing year.

The new signage location at the southeast announces the *entire site* as a place of arrival.

Team Basswood

Moraine ecology



River ecology

OAA site

Lake ecology



Catch / Renew / Release

WATER COLLECTION

By allowing stormwater to be visible, and utilizing natural functions to attenuate and infiltrate flows, CATCH/RENEW/RELEASE'S five didactic Water Collection Elements help the landscape become diverse, healthy, and characterful. Collectively, they abstractly and functionally represent water's moraine-to-lake journey, with The Weir as the moraine; The Vessel, The Channels and The Rain Gardens corresponding to the Don River Valley's interconnected tributaries; and The Wash marking the journey's end. (Briefly delineated below, these elements are more fully described on subsequent pages.)

The Weir: Three stepping pools cascade down the slope near the front of the building, filling with rainwater that is purified as it descends from tier to tier.

The Vessel: A sculptural table whose rain-collecting surface depicts the watershed.

The Channels: Six open water channels cross the road, connecting each of the water collectors into a visible system.

The Rain Gardens: By collecting stormwater south of the building, these gardens enable an increasingly varied mix of native-species plants to flourish.

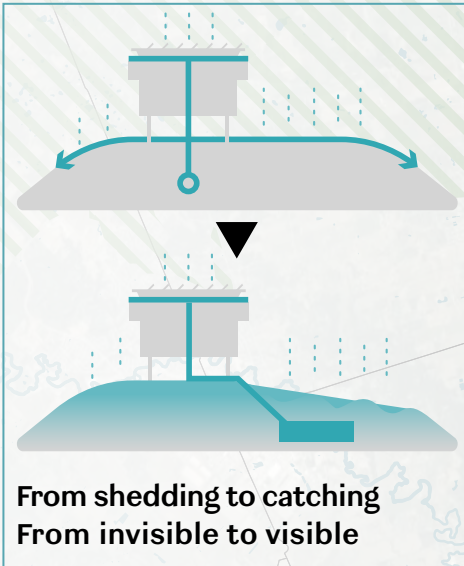
The Wash (and detention tank): South of the entry road, The Wash abstractly represents the Don Valley. Lined with plants and gravel, this meandering channel will have water streaming past its jagged precast concrete forms following significant precipitation. In drier periods, the flow will subside or stop, with water continuing to collect in tidal pool-like cavities. A below-grade detention tank retains excess water from the most severe storms.

PLANTING

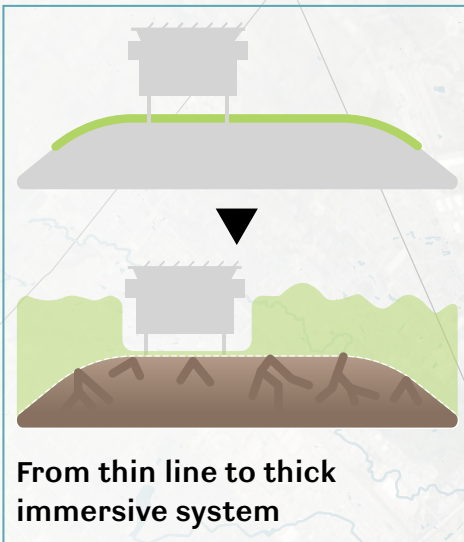
CATCH/RENEW/RELEASE's stormwater strategy integrates topography, planting, and soil modification to create an increasingly varied landscape over time. Plants have natural capacities to attenuate and infiltrate flows in ways that purify stormwater and improve soils. These actions in turn facilitate plant community diversification.

The planting plan uses plant community reference models drawn from ecosystems along the moraine/river/lake route. Plant community placement addresses site variations in slope, sun access, and exposure/enclosure. It preserves healthy existing trees and encourages communities already present in this system to thrive.

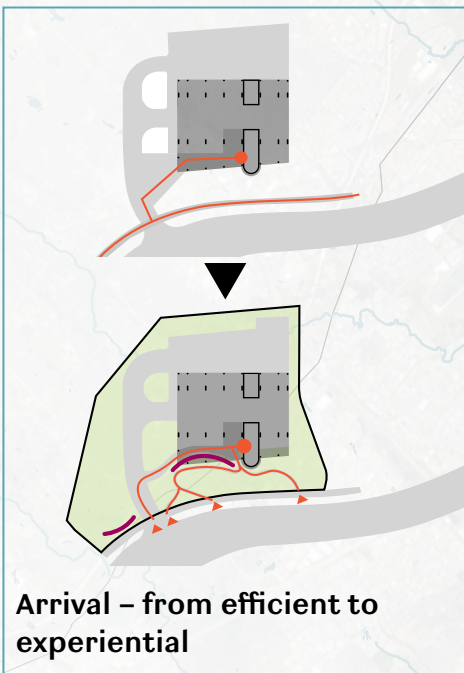
In myriad ways, CATCH/RENEW/RELEASE deploys nature-based solutions to promote climate resiliency.



From shedding to catching
From invisible to visible



From thin line to thick
immersive system



Arrival – from efficient to
experiential

The site is part of a big, interconnected ecosystem

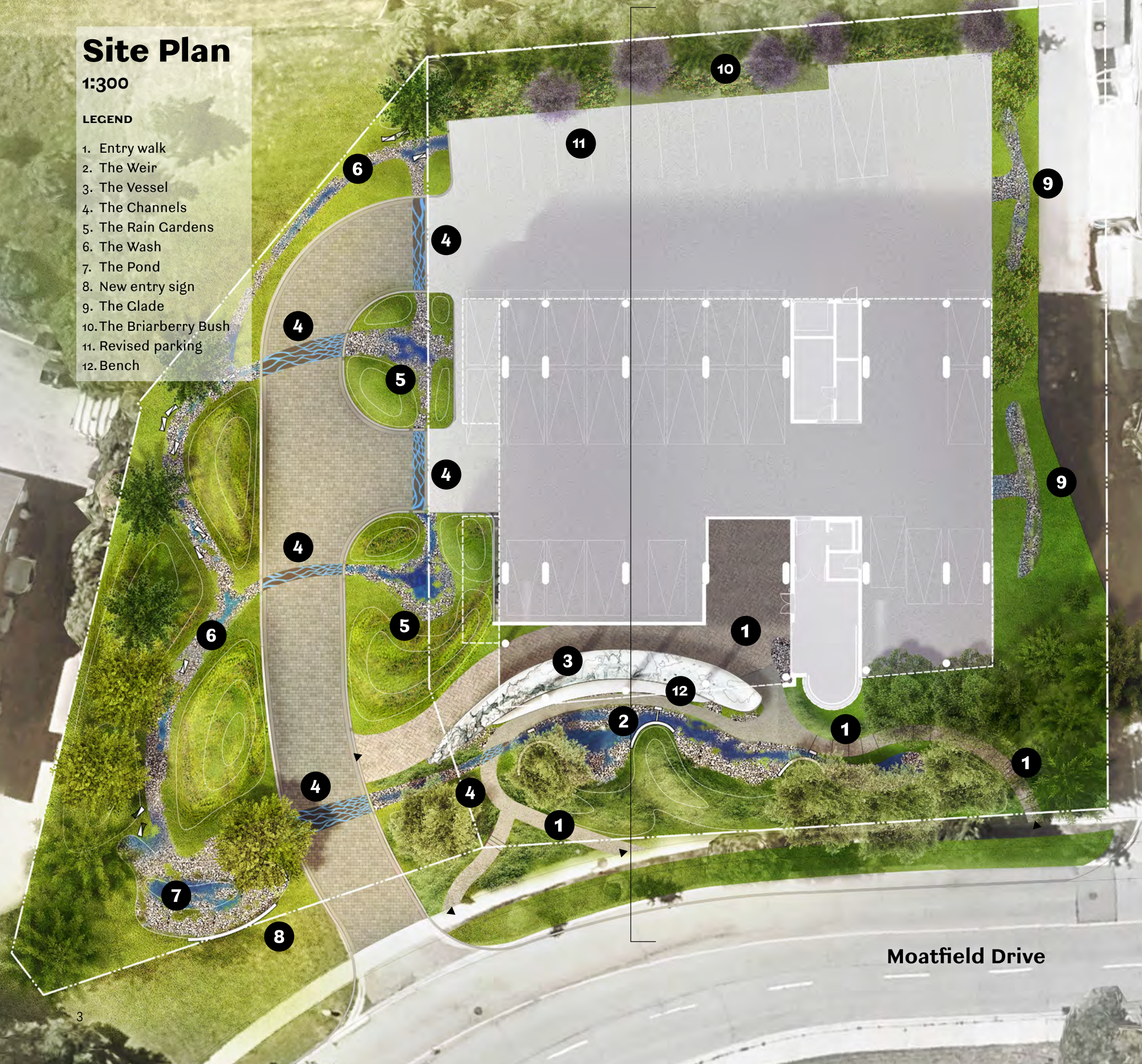
Team Basswood

Site Plan

1:300

LEGEND

1. Entry walk
2. The Weir
3. The Vessel
4. The Channels
5. The Rain Gardens
6. The Wash
7. The Pond
8. New entry sign
9. The Glade
10. The Briarberry Bush
11. Revised parking
12. Bench



East-west section through The Weir - spring

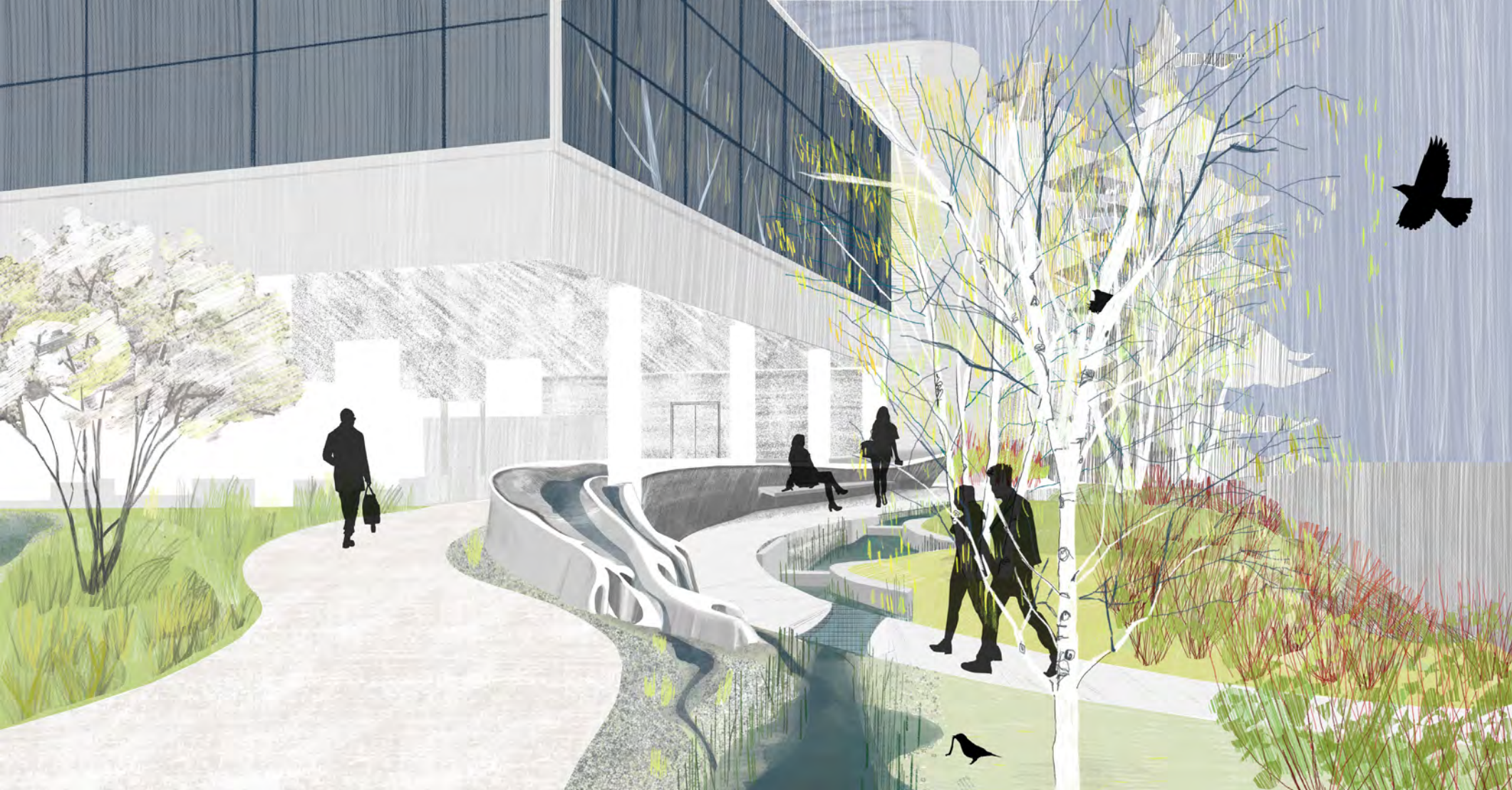


East-west section through The Wash and Pond - fall

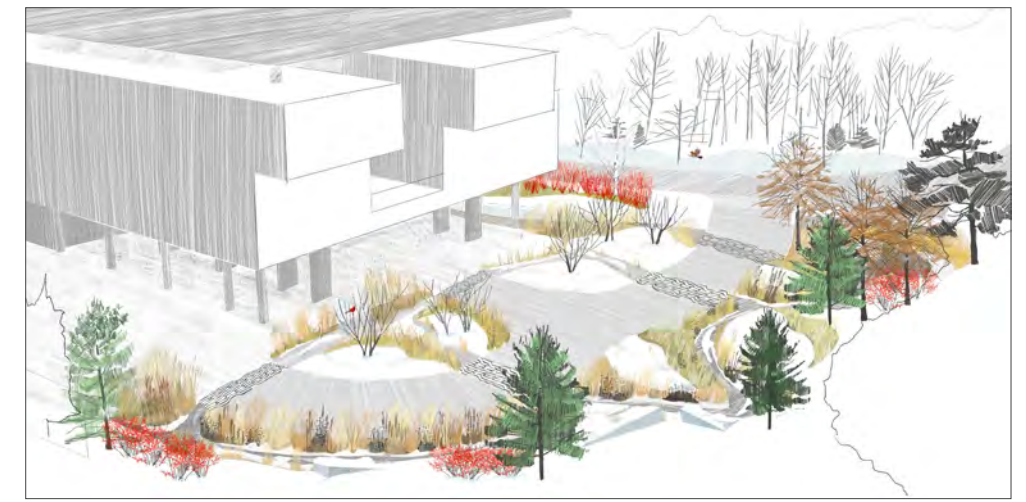


North-south section through the Rain Garden - spring

Team Basswood



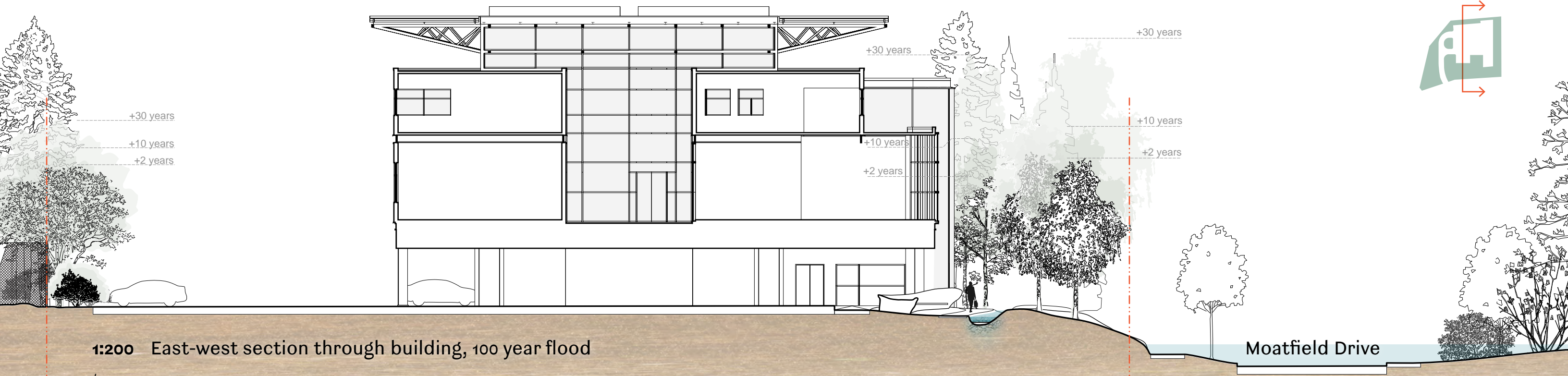
Arrival in spring



North-west view in summer



South-west view – The Wash in winter



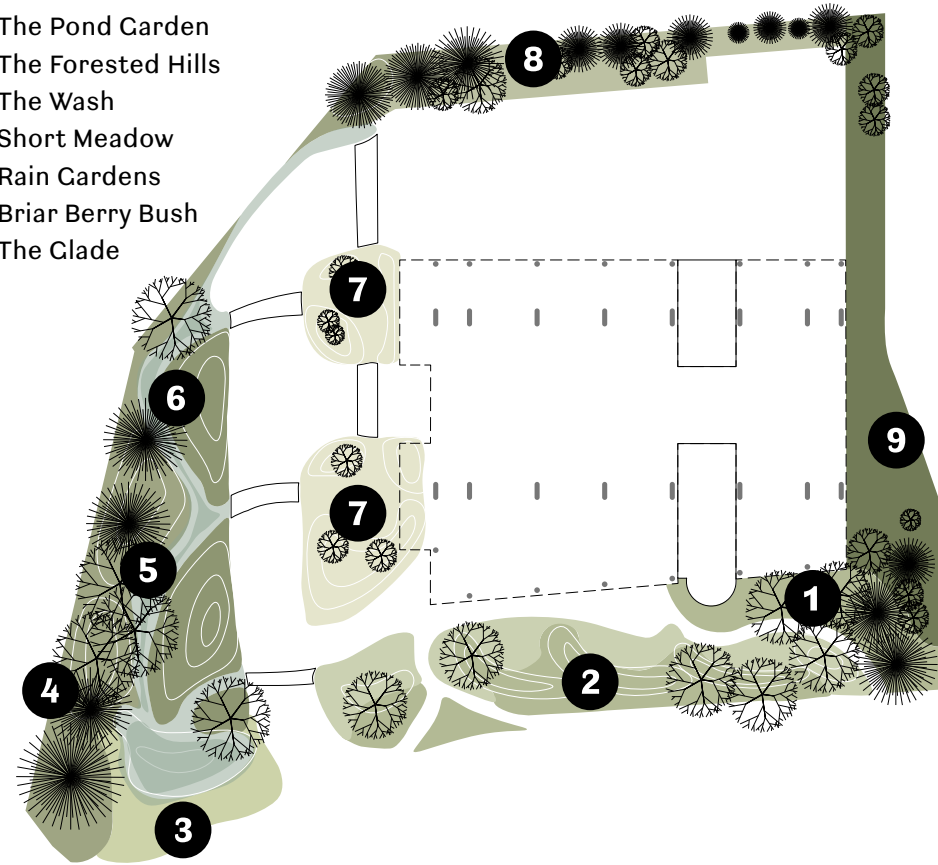
1:200 East-west section through building, 100 year flood

Moatfield Drive

Planting

LEGEND

1. The Edge
2. The Weir
3. The Pond Garden
4. The Forested Hills
5. The Wash
6. Short Meadow
7. Rain Gardens
8. Briar Berry Bush
9. The Glade



PLANTING

The plant community models include:

The Edge: Thicket Oak Ridges ecozone, filling the front of east-facing mounds with red-branched Red Osier Dogwood. In behind, Paper Birch trees on mounds enliven views to and from the building.

The Weir: Depressions filled with grasses, rushes, and sedges. Washed regularly with water, these plants act as a riparian edge and retain delicate flowers in the summer.

Forested Hills: On the southern edge, North-

ern Red Oak trees and Eastern White Pine provide a contrasting background to red Winter-berry shrubs.

The Wash: A meandering, riparian edge depression, filled with meadow marsh planting, sedges, and delicate native flowers (e.g. wild Bergamot and Dense Blazing star), terminating in the pond meadow marsh.

Short Meadow: A Meadow and Prairie Oak Ridges ecozone, filled with native forbs such as wild Bergamot, Bee Balm, and Canada Anemone, among meandering swaths of grasses.

Rain Gardens: Native Low Impact Development planting, with grasses, rushes, and sedges Colourful shrubs (e.g. Common Serviceberries and Hop Hornbeam) on mound tops attract birds and pollinators.

The Briar Berry Bush and Glade: Among the existing tall coniferous trees, purple flowering raspberries and American plum trees define the west edge, and mixed forest with understory shrubs and ferns.

SOIL RENEWAL

To boost soil diversity, CATCH/RENEW/RE-

LEASE proposes both wooded and prairie sites. Compost and loads of leaf litter and woody mulch will help build up the fungal-dominated wooded soils, while compost and straw will promote the growth of the prairie/meadow plantings that help propagate soil-enriching bacteria. Adding soil “tea” from the healthy soils of the reference communities will help introduce microorganisms that foster healthy plant systems. Over time, the site’s water-repelling clay soil will become more sponge-like and retain more stormwater. Healthy soils support ecosystem functions including carbon capture and storage/sequestration, bio-

logical and functional diversity, and productive capacity.

ARTWORK

We see two major site feature opportunities for collaboration with an artist or artist team: The Vessel (the sculptural, rainwater-collecting topographic model) and the water-inspired grates over The Channels across the driveway. We feel strongly that the art should not be an object that sits on the landscape; it should instead be *embedded* into the landscape design.