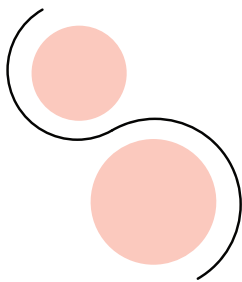


The Contour – An Urban Sanctuary

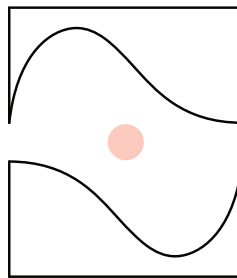
Designed for women and single parents, this mixed-use housing project creates an urban sanctuary in Toronto. Inspired by the metaphor of the hug, the building's massing forms a resilient exterior that encloses soft, flowing courtyards, fostering care, safety, and connection across public and private realms.

81% of single-parent households in Canada are led by women, and nearly one in five of these families live in core housing need. The Contour offers an alternative: a housing model shaped by care, adaptable to the evolving lives of women and single parents. Located at Dundas and Ossington, the project's strong exterior gently transitions to a soft, curved interior, forming both spatial and emotional architecture.

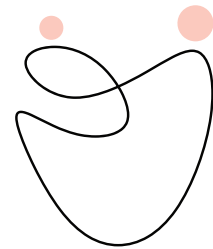
Organized around a clear spatial hierarchy, the project navigates between public presence and private refuge. Living units adapt over time, while shared spaces such as the courtyard and community kitchen foster belonging. The Contour responds to a clear gap in Toronto's housing landscape—offering a place that is secure, adaptable, and grounded in the lived experience of those too often left out of the conversation.



The Embrace



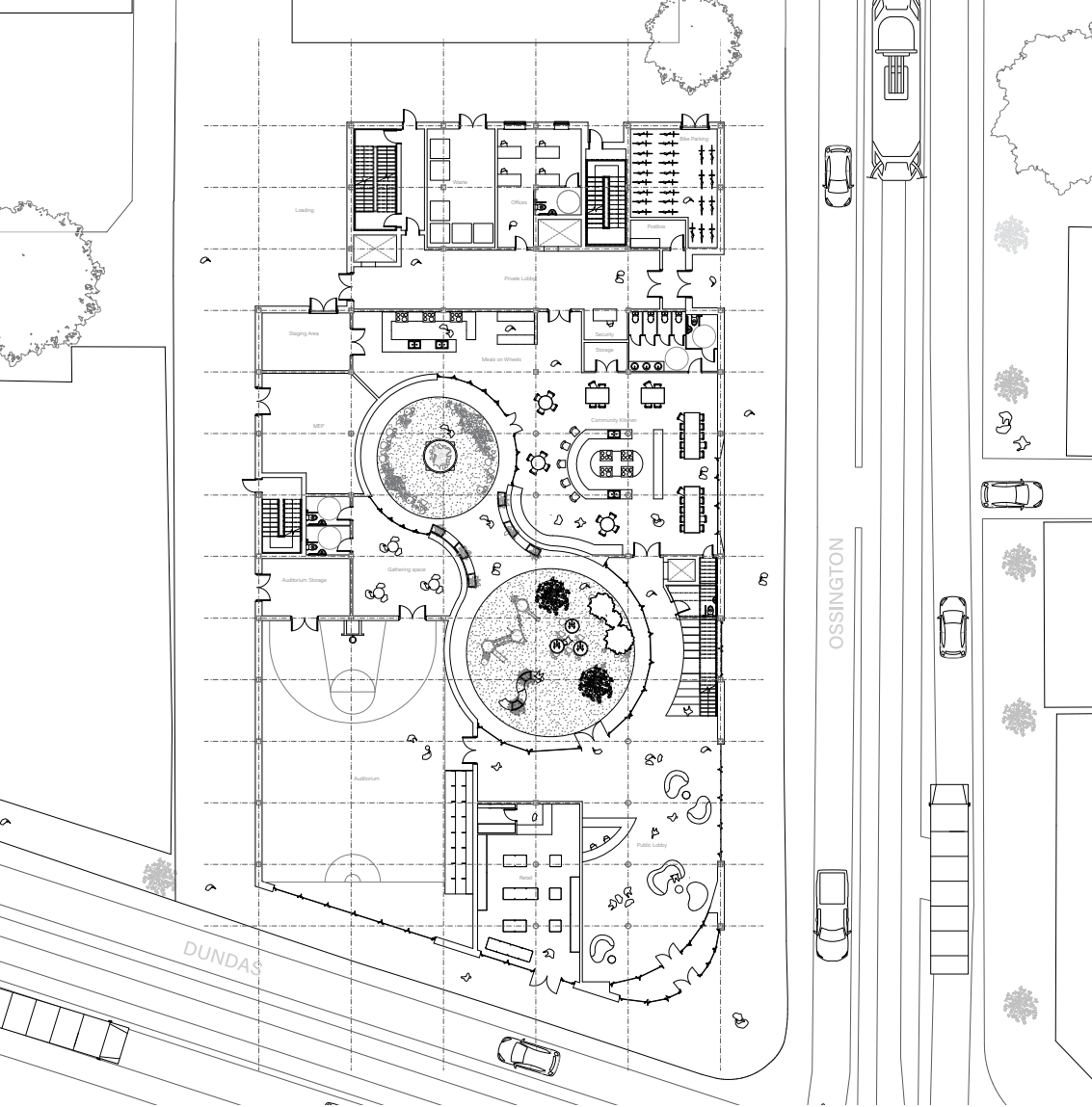
The hard v/s soft edge



The targeted demographic -
Women + Single Parents

ARC2014 - Design Studio 4: Comprehensive Building Project
Ashneet Sachdeva
(in collaboration with Malak Saeed)





Above: Site plan illustrating the mix of community spaces, residential amenities and retail within the site. Retail spaces and other public programs front Dundas Street to activate the urban edge, while shared spaces connect to the landscaped courtyard and private residences are oriented along Ossington for quieter access and security.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion are embedded throughout The Contour's design, from its program distribution to its material expression.

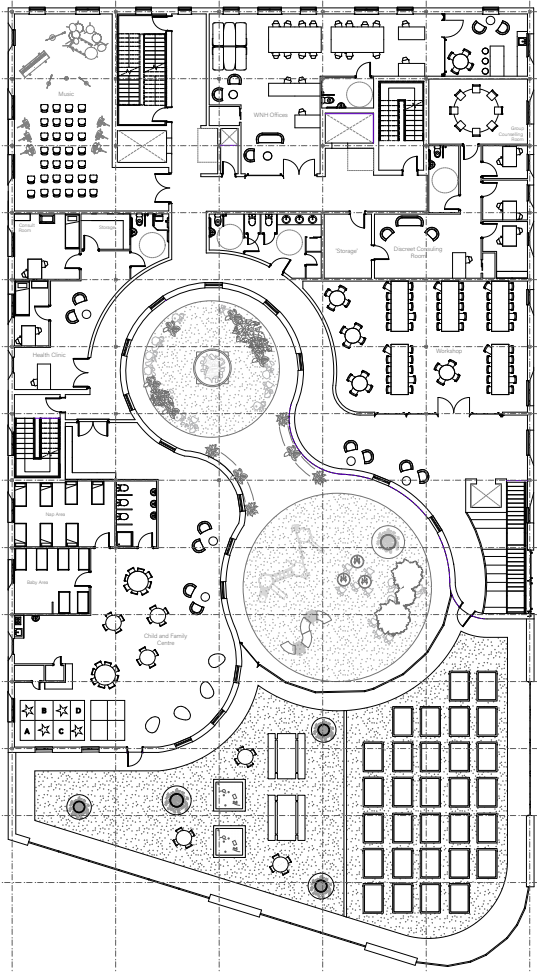
Safety and accessibility are prioritized through secure residential access points, public/private spatial gradations, and universal design principles. The program includes a community kitchen, after-school/music spaces, daycare facilities with dedicated play and nap areas, and a discreet counselling room accessed via a storage space to ensure privacy.

The courtyard acts as a visual and social anchor, providing a safe, landscaped space for gathering and play. Materials and spatial layouts were chosen to create a sense of dignity and belonging, with careful attention to how women, children, and families experience and navigate the building.

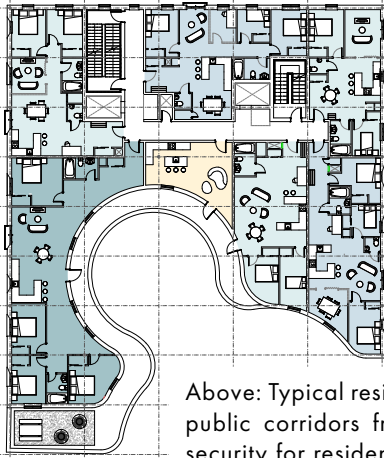


The result is a replicable housing model that promotes inclusivity, empowerment, and resilience in the urban context.

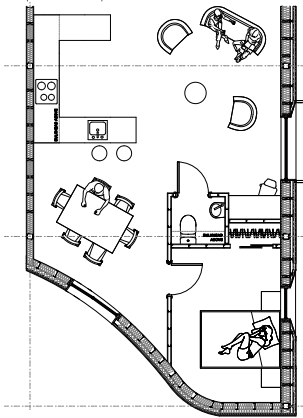
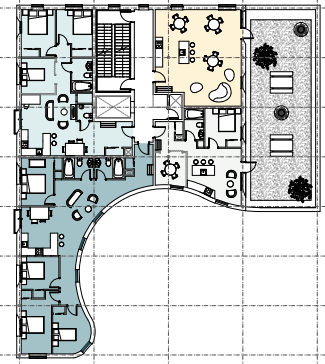
Left: Section through the building showing the double-height auditorium/gymnasium and community kitchen opening onto the courtyard. Ample glazing provides daylight and visual connection between interior and exterior gathering spaces, while the vertical arrangement places active community functions at the heart of the building. Flexible layouts allow the gymnasium to host events, workshops, and recreation, reinforcing the project's role as both a social hub and a high-performance community asset.



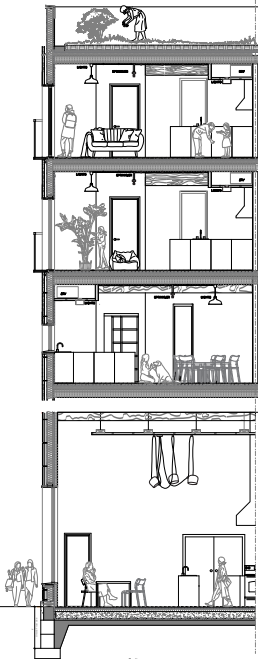
Above: Level 2 combines creative, childcare, and wellness spaces to serve residents of all ages. Workshops, music rooms, and daycare areas with dedicated play and nap zones are paired with a discreet counselling room, accessed through a storage space, ensuring privacy while fostering learning, support, and community connection.



Above: Typical residential layouts are organized to clearly separate public corridors from private living areas, ensuring comfort and security for residents. Units are designed to maximize daylight and natural ventilation, with many opening onto courtyard-facing balconies that encourage casual interaction and foster a sense of community across floors.



Above: Close-up of a typical residential unit where the kitchen is centrally located to ensure clear visibility across living and dining areas. This layout supports ease of supervision, accessibility, and connection within the home while maintaining an efficient, functional workspace.



Above: Brick, GFRC, and terracotta form a resilient, low-maintenance envelope with warmth and texture. The high-performance wall assembly achieves a U-value of 0.14 W/m²K, reducing heat loss, enhancing comfort, and maximizing daylight."



Above: The landscaped central courtyard is conceived as a secure and nurturing heart of the housing community. Open sightlines, seating, and planting encourage interaction while ensuring safety, embodying the project's commitment to spaces where women and families can thrive.