

Winter Shelters in Vancouver

Exploring successes and opportunities for design interventions

Adam Maitland
March, Intern Architect AIBC



Katie Tweedie
MPH, MSW Student

Winter shelters in Vancouver

- Open continuously through winter
- In unused buildings
- Operated by non-profit housing providers
- Low-barrier



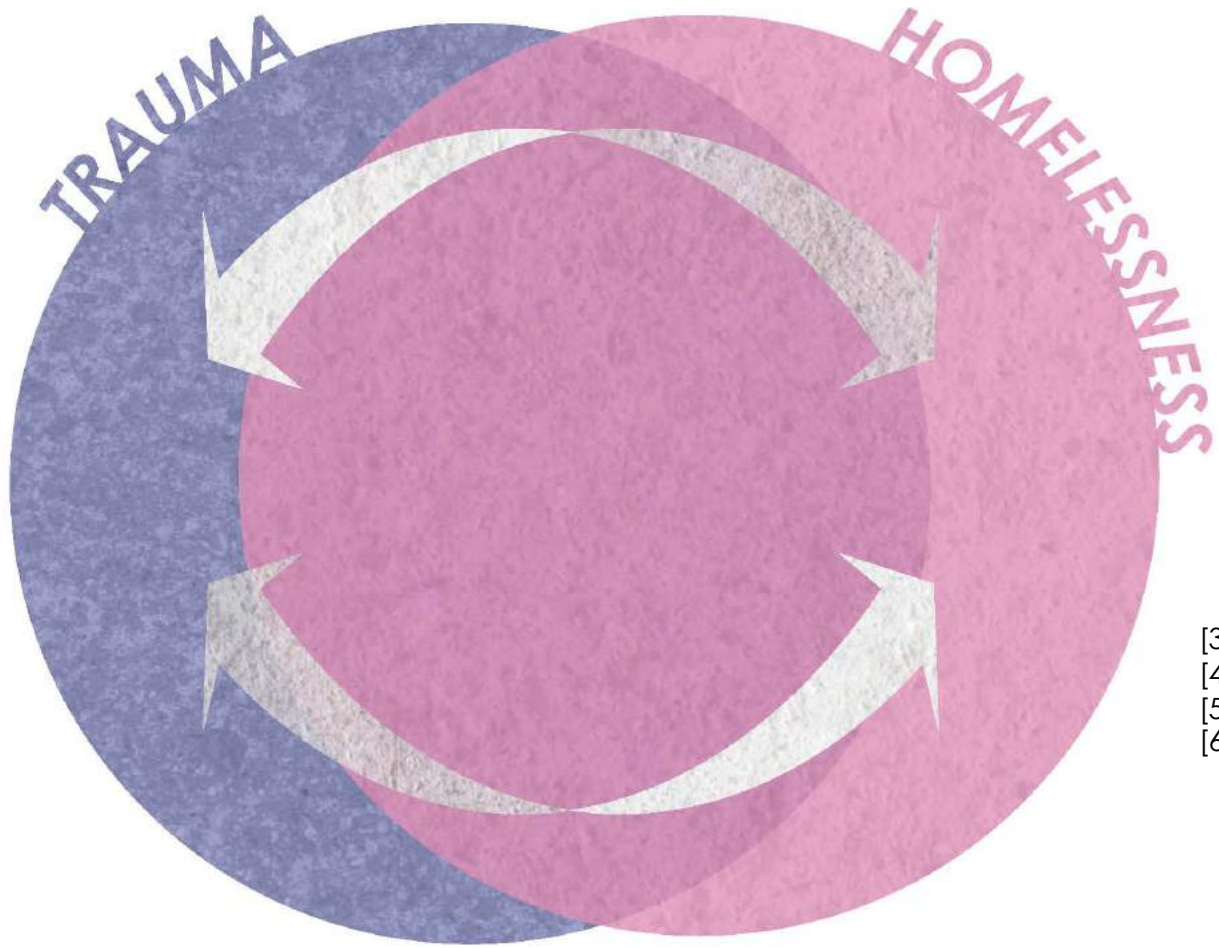
Housing continuum



Adapted from City of Vancouver's 'Housing Continuum' (Context Ltd., 2011)

Homeless people in Vancouver

- Have health problems and complex needs [2]
- Long periods of homelessness – 38% longer than a year [2]
- High rates of trauma



[3]
[4]
[5]
[6]

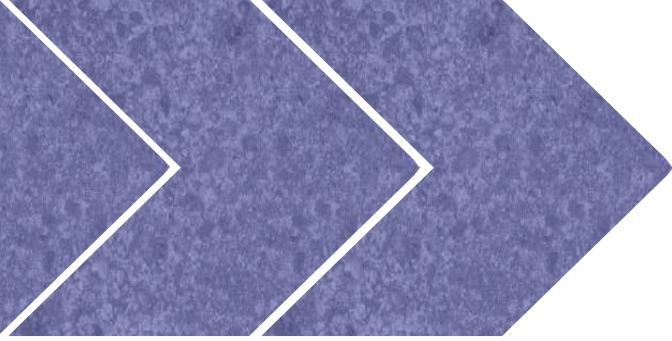
Purpose of study

- *1. Investigate successes in Vancouver winter shelters, pertaining to supporting vulnerable people who experience homelessness to access shelters and transition to housing.*
- *2. Identify design strategies for winter shelters that can support access and transition.*
- *Cross disciplinary: employing both social work and architectural lenses and research approaches.*

Phase 1.
Investigating successes in winter shelters

Phase 1 Methods

- Key informant interviews
 - 5 managers, front-line and outreach staff involved in winter shelters.
 - Inquire about what worked to provide access and support transition.
- Analysis
 - Interviews analyzed using grounded theory approach



Phase 1 Findings:

Responding to trauma

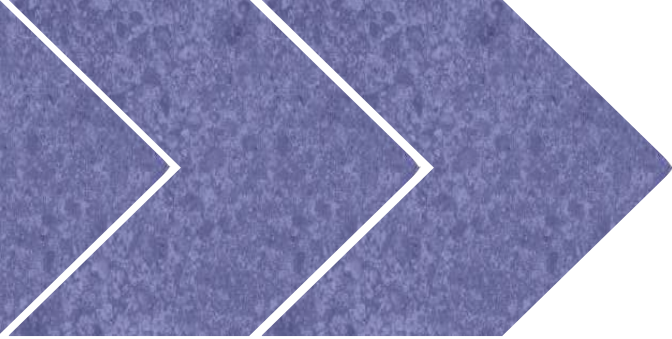
- Safety
- Choice and control
- Building on people's strengths and abilities



Phase 1 Findings:

Supporting relationship building

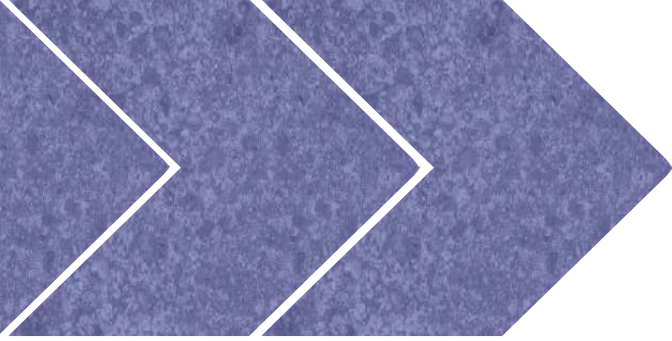
- Negotiate living with others
- Strengthening supportive community



Phase 1 Findings:

Developing skills for success in housing

- Maintaining personal space
- Participating in daily activities



Phase 1 Findings:

Connecting to services

- Outreach staff
- Person-centred
- Non-institutionalized space

Phase 1 Summary of findings:

Success in winter shelters

- **Responding to trauma**
- **Building relationships**
- **Developing skills for success in housing**
- **Connection to services**

Phase 2.
Identifying emergent design strategies

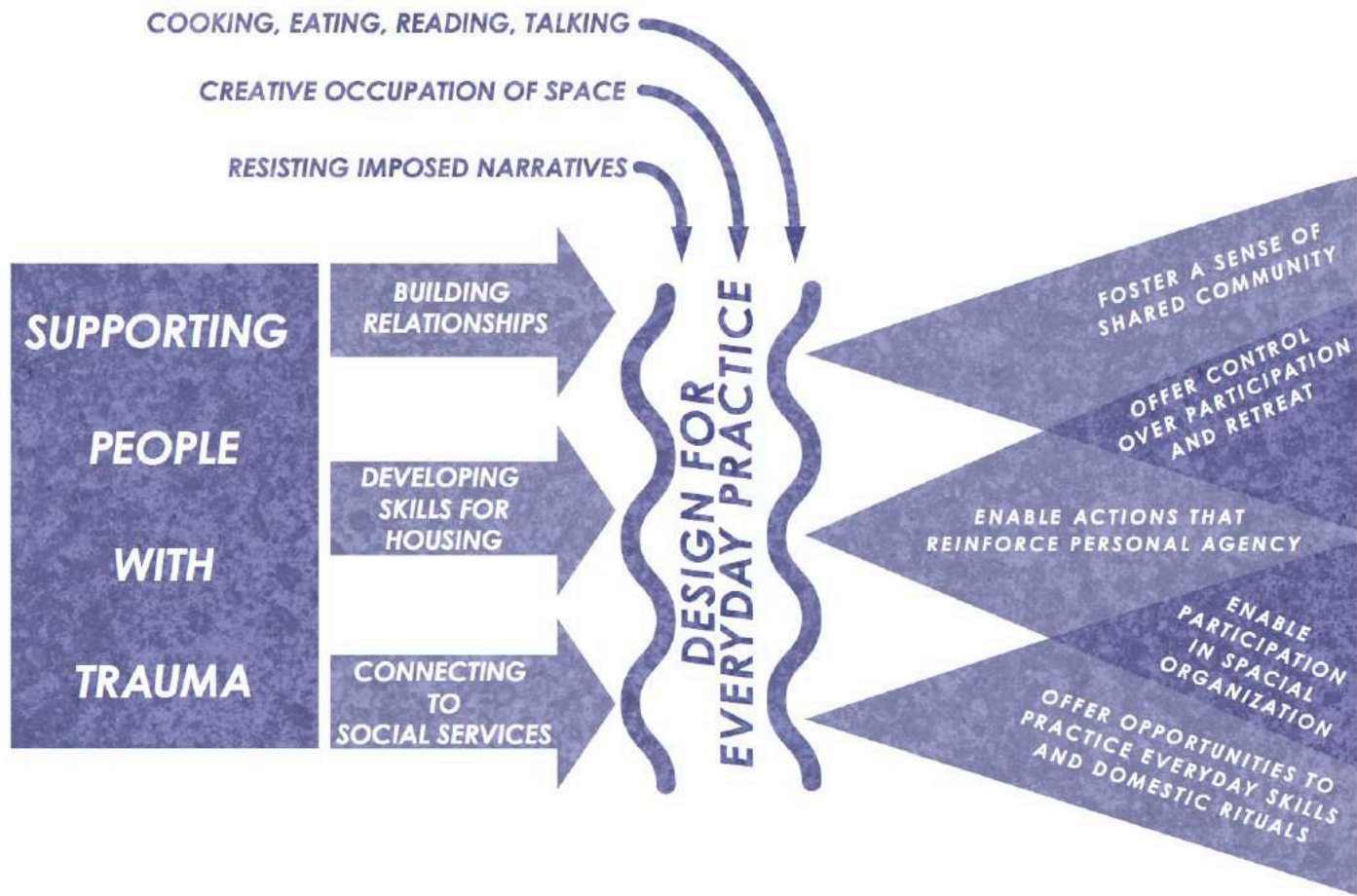
Phase 2 Methods

translating phase 1 research

- Analysis – Use “design for everyday practice” as a framework for examining themes from phase 1

Design for Everyday practice:

- “the navigation of everyday spaces, the ordinary, unexceptional sites of most of our sensory and intellectual experiences, is the primary arena within which selfhood and personhood are forged. In the give and take of everyday life we learn the personal and social meanings of our agency.” [9]



Phase 2 Methods

case study selection

Spatial Priorities for Case Study Selection

- Space for domestic ritual
- space for ad hoc community
- space for social service access
- adaptive space

Phase 2 Methods

research outline

- Theory-building qualitative design review [12]
- Cross typological
- Design practices geared towards the production of space that enables emotional health through a focus on fostering feelings of agency and identity
- Not focusing on “basic” programmatic needs or first principals of design for the homeless [13]

Phase 2 Findings

emerging design themes

- Gradated Space
- Space with domestic focal points
- Space with gestures of privacy
- Space with the potential to personalize and negotiate



GRADATED SPACE

*PRIVACY TO COMMUNITY
COMMUNITY TO PRIVACY*

Gradated Space: Space that offers various options on a spectrum from public to private, allowing people to chose their own level of engagement with a community, and/or to enable retreat towards privacy. Different spaces are often separated by soft boundaries rather than hard borders, empowering individuals to dictate their own level of comfort with engagement or seclusion. Space with more privacy may be use for support service access.

Precedent 1 - Ti kay là / Bonaventura Visconti di Modrone (2015)

Location: Anse-à-Pitres, Haïti

A shelter for homeless youth with a vast range in age and background that would require separate spaces, but also with the stated goal of creating a space that the children can share and feel part of a familial group. The orientation of floating rooms under a large roof create 3 distinct types of spaces: for privacy, for small groups, and large shared spaces [14]

Precedent 2 - Healing Garden in the Desert / Studio TAMassociati (2012)

Location: Port Sudan, Sudan

A pediatric care centre is designed at the centre of a new public square, to create a community hub for new refugee communities at its outer edges, and access to care at it's core. In the interstitial spaces, chance encounters between community members and care providers create opportunities for understanding, bond building, and trust. [15]

Precedent 3 -Eva's / LGA Architectural Partners (2016)

Location: Toronto, ON

Housing for homeless youth in a warehouse takes the form of communal townhouses complete with an interior street which serves as a common area, with more separate common areas above the residences. Layered spaces allow residents to choose their own level of integration. [16]



DOMESTIC FOCUS

**SPACE IS ANCORED BY
GATHERING PLACE
FOR COOKING
AND EATING**

Space With Domestic Focal Points: Spaces centred around domestic practices and rituals, such as cooking and eating. These spaces being made focal points offer clients visual confirmation that they are not entering an institution or prison, and engender closeness and interaction while practicing domestic skills or activities in familiar and safe settings. Casual or chance encounters with service providers are promoted by this space.

Precedent 1 - Yokohama Apartment / ON Design Partners (2010)

Location: Yokohama, Japan

Description: Artists lofts revolving around a communal kitchen, which doubles as an exhibition and work space. The location of cooking and eating facilities in the common area creates a catalyst for interaction amongst the residents, whom may otherwise stay in their apartments and avoid the common area unless it is unoccupied. [17]

Precedent 2 - Refettorio Felix Community Kitchen / Ilse Crawford (2017)

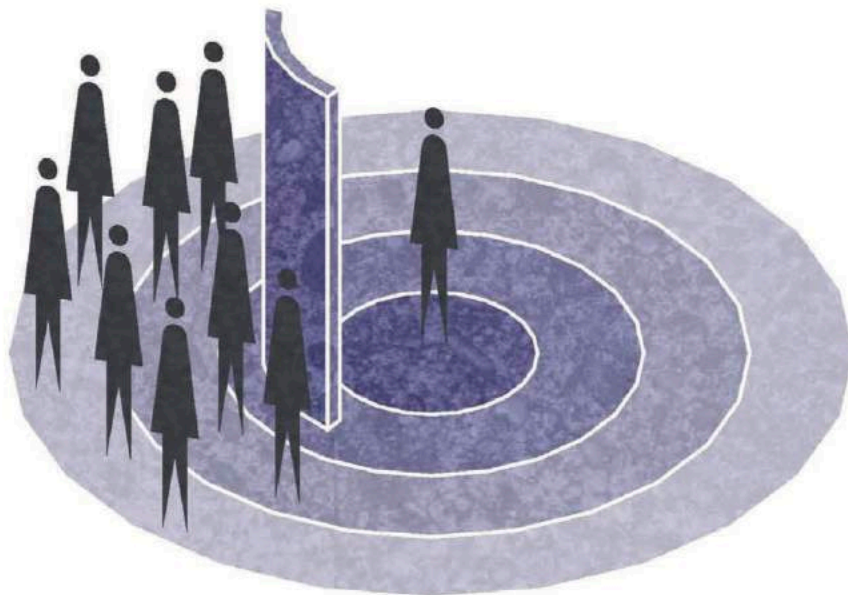
Location: London, UK

Description :A soup kitchen inside a community centre, uses identifiable design vernacular and interior design features to transform a large, uninviting space into one designed to foster feelings of togetherness while sharing a meal - furniture signals safety and relaxation, and hanging lights make the vaulted space feel more intimate and less institutional. [18]

Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership / Studio Gang (2014)

Location: Kalamazoo, MI, United States

Description: Envisioned as a space within the University for students, faculty, community organizers and the public to engage and share. References to domestic space are meant to disarm and bridge differences in understanding and culture, while facilitating casual or chance encounters around its central hearth, living room, and kitchen spaces. [19]



**GESTURES
OF
PRIVACY**
*SPACES OF RETREAT
WHERE FULL PRIVACY
IS NOT AVAILABLE*

Space With Gestures of Privacy: Spaces that offer some feelings of retreat, anonymity or limited privacy, when full privacy is not available. Spaces that allow for the opportunity to retreat and establish control over your own level of privacy or seclusion from other residents or the public, while maintaining a visual link to staff.

Precedent 1 - South Essex Rape & Incest Crisis Centre / Featherstone Young (2004)

Location: Essex, UK

Description: a crisis centre renovation to create cocoon like pods that act as a separate and personal space that feels safe and intimate, without completely limiting care provider's visual connection to residents. The degree to which one is visible or shrouded within the pod can be dictated by its occupant's location. [20]

Precedent 2 - Dellow Day Centre / Featherstone Young (2011)

Location: London, UK

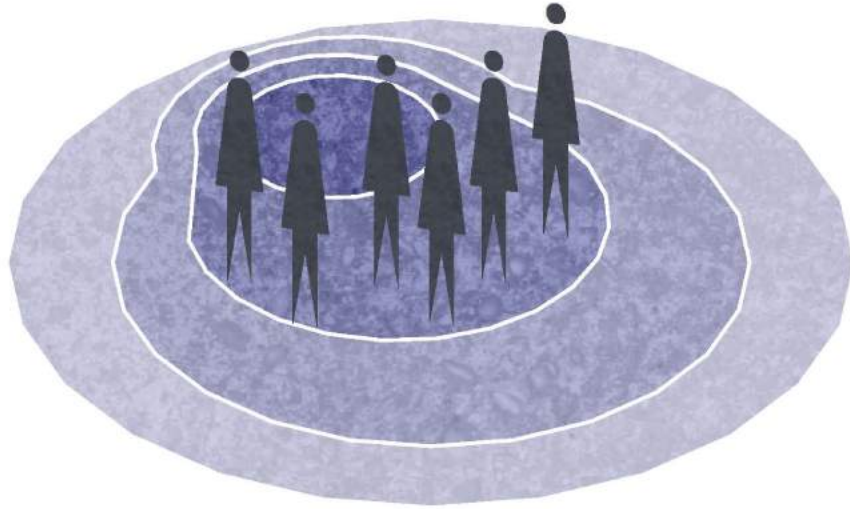
Description: A day centre for at risk adults with a faceted plan and louvered facade which shields direct views of the occupants from the street, but provides views into the centre from its adjacent administrative offices. [21]

Precedent 3 - The Blend Inn / Tato Architects (2017)

Location: Osaka, JP

Description: A hostel-style hotel uses removable shrouds on beds in dormitory style rooms, allowing individuals to determine and signal to others the degree of privacy from or interaction with their fellow travelers they prefer. [22]

POTENTIAL TO NEGOTIATE AND PERSONALIZE



FLEXIBILITY TO
MAKE UNIQUE
ON LARGE
AND SMALL SCALES

Space With Potential to Negotiate and Personalize: Spaces that enable occupants to interact with or act upon them to personalize, or to inscribe a space with their personality. On a small scale, this may mean enabling the ability to make one's own space "special"

Precedent 1 - Softshelter / Molo (2011)

Location: Vancouver, CA

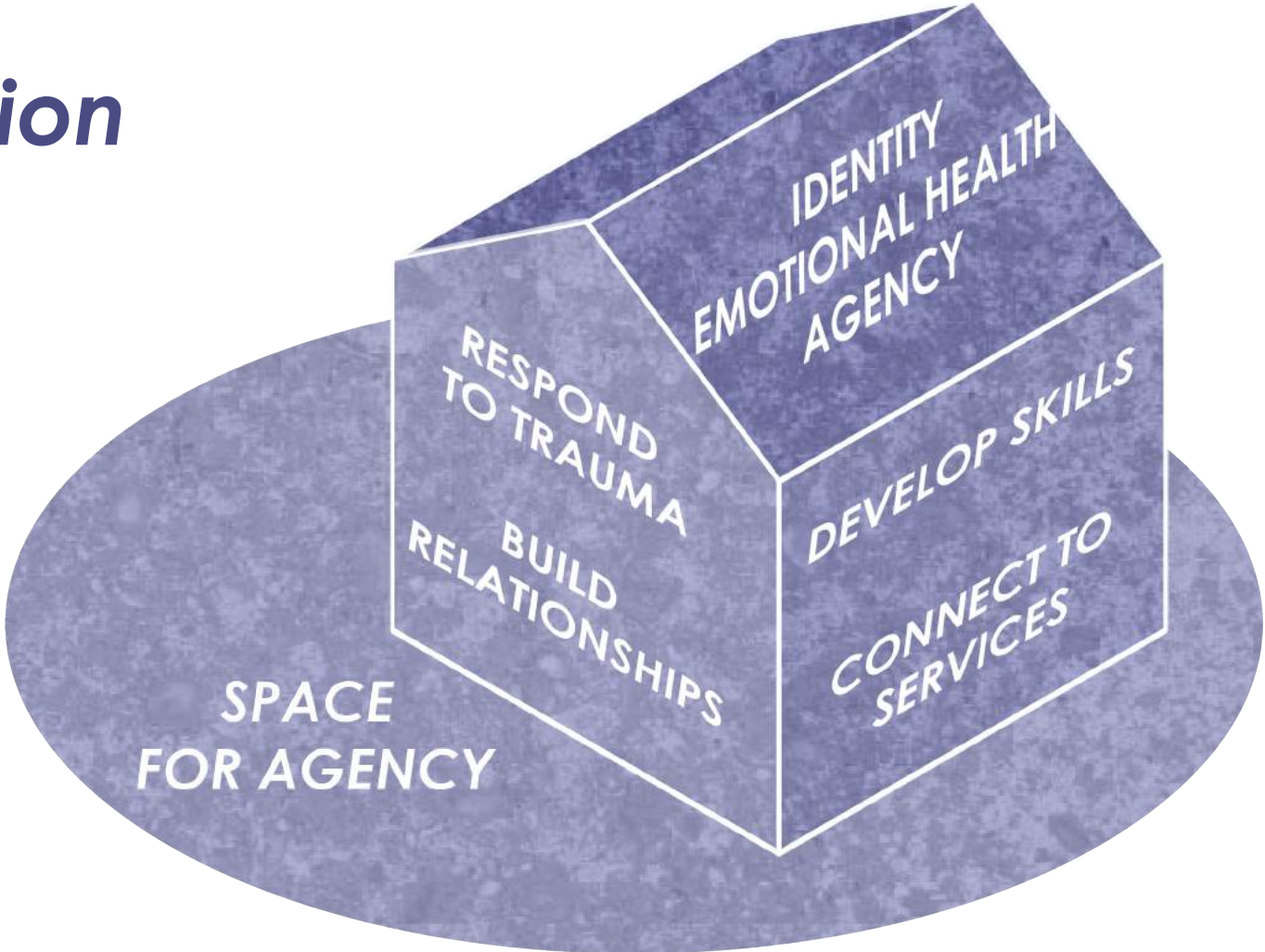
Description: Flexible modular dividers designed provide personal space in disaster relief settings. Users can determine the shape of their space, and personalize things such as lighting location, display of personal effects. Multiple units can be deployed to create a user defined layout of multiple unique private or semiprivate spaces. [23]

Precedent 2 - Kanagawa Institute of Technology Workshop (2008)

Location: Atsugi, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan

Description: A university workspace is designed to allow users to reconfigure space, through loose rather than rigid spatial identification - reconfigurable furniture, and permeable borders. The nature of the space and the activities possible therein are negotiated by the building's occupants. [24]

Conclusion



References

- [1] City of Vancouver . Winter Response Shelter Strategy. City of Vancouver Website. 2017
- [2] Thompson M . Vancouver Homeless Count 2016. 2016
- [3] Novac S. Family violence and homelessness: A review of the literature. Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada. 2006.
- [4] Peressini T. 8.2 Pathways into Homelessness: Testing the Heterogeneity Hypothesis. In: Hulchanski JD, Campsie P, Chau SBY, Hwang SH, Paradis E, editors. Finding Home: Policy Options for Addressing Homelessness in Canada. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. 2009
- [5] Sanders B, Albanese F. "It's no life at all" Rough sleepers' experiences of violence and abuse on the streets of England and Wales. Crisis UK. 2016.
- [6] Mitchell C. Trauma and homelessness In Encyclopedia of trauma.: An interdisciplinary guide. Ed Figley, C.H. SAGE. 2012
- [7] Glaser BG, Strauss AL. The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research. New Brunswick, NJ. Aldine Transaction. 1999.
- [8] Blauvelt A. Strangely familiar: Design and everyday life. 1st ed. Minneapolis, Minn: Walker Art Center. 2003
- [9] Upton, D. Architecture in Everyday Life. New Literary History, 33(4), 707-723. 2002
- [10] De Certeau, Michel. The Practice of Everyday Life. Berkeley: University of California, 1984.
- [11] Berke D, Harris S. Architecture of the Everyday. New York: Princeton Architectural Press. 1997.
- [12] Groat L, Wang D. Research Methods. 2nd Ed. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. 2013.
- [13] Davis S. Designing for the homeless: Architecture that works. Berkeley: University of California Press. 2004.
- [14] Jehl E . Bonaventura Visconti di Modrone brings hope to a Haitian village. 2016 May 4. Retrieved from <https://www.mark-magazine.com/news/bonaventura-visconti-di-modrone-brings-hope-to-a-haitian-village>
- [15] Crepeau K. Building Dignity in War-Torn Sudan. 2014. Retrieved from <http://publicjournal.online/building-dignity-in-war-torn-sudan/>
- [16] Minutillo J. Fresh Start. Architectural Record, 205(2), 86-89. 2017
- [17] Oshima KT. Balancing the cramped with the communal: Recent Japanese housing. Harvard Design Magazine, (35), 142-189. 2012.
- [18] Dick-Agnew D. Ilse Crawford Designs Soup Kitchen Refettorio Felix. 2017 Jul 10, Retrieved from <http://www.azuremagazine.com/article/ilse-crawford-designs-london-soup-kitchen-refettorio-felix/>
- [19] Cary J. Five lessons on designing for good. Forefront. 2017 Oct 30.
- [20] Richardson H. The Role Of Architecture In Healthcare From Past To Present. N.D. Retrieved from <https://www.museumofarchitecture.org/healthcare.html>
- [21] Mara F. Into the fold. Architects' Journal, 235(11), 50-56. 2012
- [22] Tato architects animates retro hotel in Japan with colorful curtains and eclectic furnishings (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.designboom.com/architecture/tato-architects-blend-inn-osaka-japan-10-27-2017/>
- [23] Modular system for a soft shelter. 2011 Sept 22. Retrieved from <https://www.detail-online.com/blog-article/modular-system-for-a-soft-shelter-25679/>
- [24] Ishigami J. Jun'ya Ishigami: small images. Shohan, editor. Tōkyō: INAX Shuppan. 2008.

Thank you

- Aaron Monroe, Raincity Housing & Support Society
- Cassandra Pynn, Salvation Army Harbour Light
- Catherine Sandilands, Carnegie Outreach
- Celine Mauboules, City of Vancouver
- Christine Meyers, Portland Hotel Society
- Danielle Scott, BC Housing
- Justin Sekiguchi, BC Housing
- Kevin Hawken, Salvation Army Harbour Light
- Noha Sedky, UBC SCARP/City Spaces
- Tammy Bennet, BC Housing

Thank you!!

