

WE ARE THE MEMORY WE INHABIT

Photo credit: City of New Westminster Museum and Archives

Without memory, we lack identity, both individually and collectively. Constructing memory in the land involves identifying traces of the past, recognizing the present, and creating a new collective discourse for the future of society. Memory is the reconnection with the history and inhabitants, especially in the territory of the 'Halkomelem' community (hənqəmin̓əm, Halq'eméylem, Hul'q'umi'num'). This recognition seeks justice, truth, and reparations in a society that, for many years, remained oblivious to the history of colonization.

MEMORY AS A DESIGN CONCEPT:



Memory would be interwoven into the community through art, the incorporation of names in the Halkomelem language on streets, trails, and signs, and the creation of a garden with native plants.

Centering memory as a design concept that intersects every aspect of the neighbourhood, comes from the need of resisting erasure as an option of existence.





At the core of the community, the 'House of Memory: Truth and Reconciliation Museum' and Community Centre blend art, education, sports, and social activities to foster intercultural integration. The goal is to revitalize the urban environment, enrich the community experience through memory dissemination, and create a dynamic space for culture, recreation, and reflection on truth and reconciliation.

Memory serves as the foundation for constructing an inclusive future for society. This neighbourhood is designed to welcome neighbours from diverse socio-economic backgrounds by allocating 25% to 30% for affordable housing, including family and artist housing. Additionally, Indigenous Housing organizations are encouraged to manage this housing stock.



MEMORY AND SOCIAL CONNECTION







At the heart of the project are The House of Memory: Truth and Reconciliation Museum and the Community Center—essential foundations of the community. The former is a key driver for historical reconciliation, while the latter serves as a comprehensive sanctuary fostering human development and social cohesion.

The strategic location of the museum and cultural center, in proximity to the 22nd Street station, ensures excellent visibility. This advantageous placement allows easy access for both the local community and visitors, enhancing outreach and engagement.



This project aims to transform the empty lots in the neighbourhood into lively green areas with native plants, offering a variety of spaces for people of all ages to connect. Specifically, one area will be designated for a community garden, and a small farmers market will be established to promote food security and stimulate the local economy.

In these spaces, memory will be interwoven through the incorporation of native art and references to the truth and reconciliation process. Additionally, signage in the Halkomelem language will enhance the cultural richness of these areas.







INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE LIVING



20th Street - a mix of a commercial and residential area. A place for galleries, coffee shops, mini markets and art studios.

This project aims to introduce density to a traditionally single-family housing neighbourhood by incorporating a variety of housing types, including multiplexes, row houses, and laneway houses, with structures reaching up to three stories in most of the neighbourhood. Additionally, an area for six-story apartment buildings is contemplated next to 22nd Street Station on 7th Avenue.

The proposed approach seeks to preserve the neighbourhood's character while creating space for more residents. This strategy ensures a balanced approach to neighbourhood growth without causing extreme intensification.

In this resilient neighbourhood, the focus is on promoting active transportation over private automobiles, featuring sidewalks and bike paths while minimizing parking spot requirements in new developments. The community is characterized by its green environment, abundant with trees, native plants, and green roofs, and neighbours actively utilizing renewable energies.

Additionally, it fosters a live-work community model that encourages the establishment of micro-businesses throughout the neighbourhood.



A variety of housing types from single-homes, row houses and multiplexes.



On 7th Avenue, we envision 6-story apartment buildings with commerce on the lower level.

Housing is designed to provide comfort and dignity to those living in the area. Throughout the neighbourhood, 25% to 30% of housing would be designated as affordable, with a specific percentage allocated for three-bedroom apartments. Preference would be given to Indigenous non-profit organizations for housing management.



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WHO WE ARE

We are three Latin American women who have made Canada our new home, hailing from Venezuela, Colombia, and Perú. Our rich cultural heritage, spanning before colonization to the present, reflects multicultural identities shaped by various conflicts in Latin America. Despite these challenges, Latin America has navigated processes of peace, memory, truth, and reparation, showcasing resilience and a commitment to justice and reconciliation for our communities. Demonstrating resilience and a commitment to justice and reconciliation, we share our knowledge and experiences in Canada to honour human struggles, defend life, and embrace diverse perspectives. Our mission is to strengthen New Westminster's identity by actively contributing to a community centred on memory, recognizing and celebrating the city's diversity while respecting the legacy of the Halkomelem community.

The posters' outcomes are the result of knowledge exchange among us, research conducted in the area, and the utilization of AI technology.



Johanna Pabon

I am a Venezuelan journalist and refugee with a background in marketing. After the conflict in my country, which led to one of the largest exoduses in Latin America, I became interested in contributing and expressing gratitude for the privilege of being welcomed in another country. In New West, I use my photographs and videos to tell stories that explore institutions, places, events, and characters in the city, contributing to the strengthening of our community.



Natalia Botero

As a photojournalist from Colombia, I have witnessed various forms of violence for three decades. These include drug trafficking, illegal armed groups, and state violence. My goal through photography is to bring visibility to the victims of war, honor the survivors, and prevent erasure. The photographs I take serve as a testament to truth, recognizing the memories of communities and reconstructing the social fabric. As a refugee in a city like New Westminster, I have learned the importance of recognizing my experiences, acknowledging the past, and building connections with diverse cultures.



Fiorella Pinillos

I am a Peruvian-Canadian planner and community engagement specialist who centers equity in all of my work. I operate at the intersection of urban planning, creative public engagement, and arts & culture, bringing over seven years of experience working with equity-denied groups.
I am the Co-Founder and Co-Director of City in Colour Urban Consultancy Cooperative, our mission at City in Colour is to engage those who are often left out of planning processes. Additionally, I founded La Libélula Cooperative, an organization working to connect the Latin American Community in BC through art.

INSPIRATION



Photo credit: Natalia Botero

The experiences of memory and resilience are important for people who have been the victims of social, political and economic struggles. They allow for reconciliation with the past, justice, and truth.
In the world there are several examples of places of memory, such as Comuna 13 in Medellin, Colombia and the Apartheid Museum in South Africa.

These places represent resistance and recognition of the community to prevent the repetition of a violent past.





Comuna 13, Medellin Colombia

Photo credit Comuna 13: civitatis.com/es/medellin/comuna-13-museo-memoria-parques-medellin/





Apartheid Museum, South Africa

Photo credit Apartheid Museum: apartheidmuseum.org