

"HAMILTON: HAMMER CITY"

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Design Statement

Hamilton: Hammer City

Hamilton is a proud waterside city forged in the fire of industry. For over two centuries, ships have docked in Hamilton Harbour to exchange raw materials for goods processed by Hamilton's factories. Today industry still employs over 30,000 people. Hamilton has developed a character that is best described by the native Hamiltonian term "The Hammer," expressive of the authenticity, edginess and raw potential that is shared by the city and its people. These characteristics have more recently contributed to the surge in a young, educated, and artistic demographic. By creating an urban destination at Pier 8, we provide a catalyst to strengthen the connection along James Street between the downtown core the waterfront, allowing the benefits of new development to extend beyond site boundaries.

The Story

The design for Pier 8 Park tells the story of the three ways visiting ships would have used the site; creating one site with three places of distinct character and program. "Ships loaded with goods, arrive at Pier 8 and moor along its north edge awaiting clearance (**Boatworks Promenade**). Disembarking visitors encounter local Hamiltonians who graciously share the amenities of the Pier with visitors. Once cleared, ships pass through the threshold (**the Landing**) and into the protection of the inner harbour (**Hammer Harbour**). This area bustles with purposeful activity; work and play coexist as cargo is exchanged and the transformation from outsider to insider begins. Welcome to The Hammer."

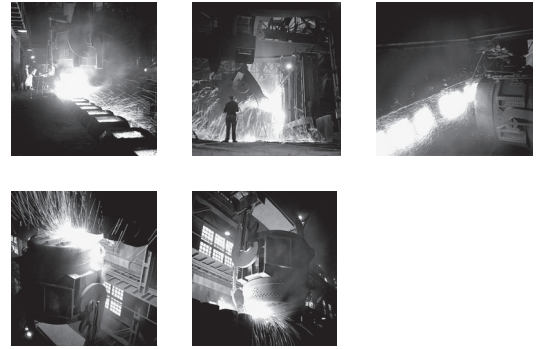


Figure 1: Stelco c. 1944. Image from City of Hamilton archive.



Figure 2: By transforming Pier 8 into an urban destination, the connection between the downtown core and the waterfront will strengthen.

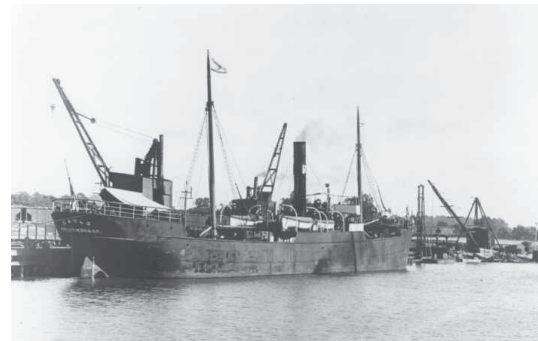


Figure 3: Steamer CARLO: the first deep sea tramp steamer seen in Hamilton c. June 1900. Photo: Robt. J. MacDonald, reproduced by Randolph Rhodes

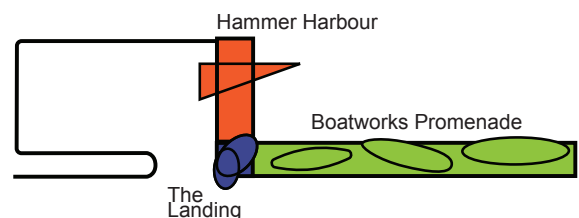


Figure 4: 1 Site, 3 Places

The Design

The **Boatworks Promenade**, runs along the north edge of Pier 8. The waving surfaces of concrete and wood deck, are in harmony with the natural views and transition seamlessly into the existing waterfront trail. Modulating the length of the Promenade are the partial hulls of three tankers (see Art Project #1) that serve to transition the grade change between the shorewall and street levels and to provide sheltered areas for year-round program.

The first hull encloses sand beach complete with dune grasses and views of the escarpment. The sounds of wind and water echo from the protective hull backdrop and offer a seductive respite from the city's bustle. The second hull, accessed from street level, is a playground for children and a mixed-use ball court. Shady seating areas and contained play spaces provide a safe and fun setting for the entire family. The third hull is the Games Room for teens, adults and seniors. Accessed from upper and lower levels, this area consists of terraced decks that transform the proposed pumphouse into the superstructure of a tanker ship. On the first level is the Pumphouse Café, with outdoor tables for eating and board games. The shaded second level contains bocce courts and ping-pong tables. With an elevated view of the park, the top level contains a mix of permanent and loose furniture, as a setting for a community-run library, and is an ideal place for rest and escape.

Between the boat forms, at the terminus of two streets, are plazas containing a demonstrative remediation wetland, with cattails and public art (see Art Project #2). Adjacent to the wetlands are gentle slopes with fully accessible ramps and walkable, turf. At these locations, the promenade expands to accommodate impromptu performances, busking, temporary kiosks and art exhibitions. Along the south side of the street is a line of native trees, expanding the bird and insect habitat, while groves of Carolinian species local to the Hamilton area create an authentic identity.

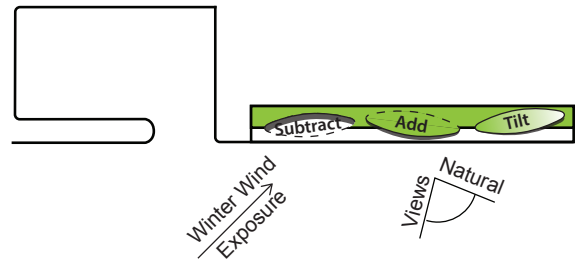


Figure 5: Boatworks Promenade

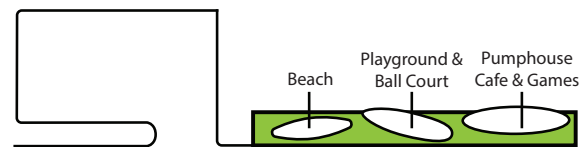


Figure 6: Boat Program

The Design Con't

Hammer Harbour runs along the east harbour wall where the repurposed skeleton of a gantry crane frames the dramatic view of the iconic industrial skyline. This giant steel structure creates a proscenium for a waterfront stage. A tree-lined cobblestone street, animated by cafes and restaurants parallels the new residential development. Broad terraces gently slope toward the harbour, providing accessibility and programming to every level. Midway along the quay the terraces incorporate fixed, stepped seating for special performances. A re-purposed floating barge is available to extend the stage for larger productions. The Gantry Pavilion and terraces are designed to accommodate expansive programming like Art Crawls, craft fairs, concerts, markets, theatre, movies and picnics. The Gantry can also be exploited for its funding potential, with signage, marketing and private sector partnerships.

The Landing is the knuckle between the two edges of the pier and a vantage point to contemplate the contrast between the industrial and natural skylines of Hamilton Harbour. It marks the transition from outsider to insider and is a place for Hamiltonians to layer with ceremonial and spiritual ritual. A looming hull rises above the adjacent walkways and sculpts through the existing harbour wall to create a sunken water feature, where the remnants of buried wooden cribs are still visible and where public art will be located (See Art Project #3). The water level changes with the lake, cycling through the seasons and marking solstices and equinoxes.

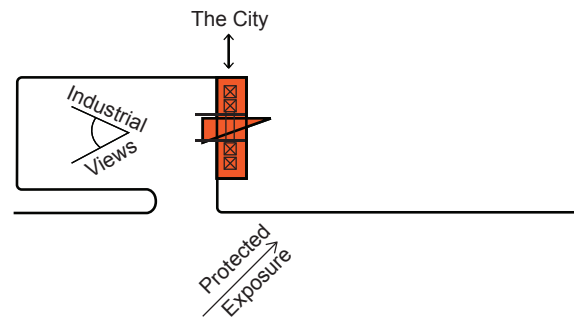


Figure 7: Hammer Harbour

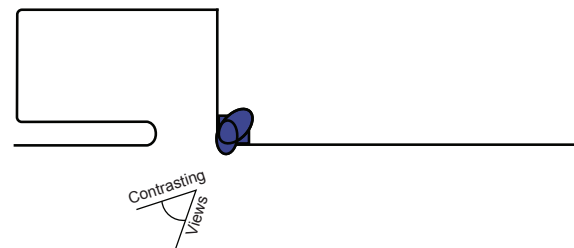


Figure 8: The Landing

Public Art

Art Project No.	Description	Artist	Example Artist
1	In collaboration with local elementary school students, a local Hamilton artist will develop concepts related to Hamilton's identity, to be etched onto sections of the steel ships.	Local Hamilton artist, prepared to work with the community.	Simon Frank, artist and elementary teacher.
2	Working with Lake Ontario Water Keepers, the artist will create a work for each of the wetlands that remediates the water from the harbor and brings awareness to the harbour's water quality issues.	Nationally recognized, with experience on large-scale integrated projects.	Jill Anholt; Marman and Borins; Michael Singer
3	An element within the void space at the centre of The Landing. The work could be a permanent element decided by an international competition or one that rotates yearly as part of the Supercrawl.	Internationally recognized artist, whose work can capture the public's imagination.	Artist will be chosen through a competition.

*CARFAC recommended artist fee included in costing.