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## Landscaping & Urban Design: The Role of Pillars

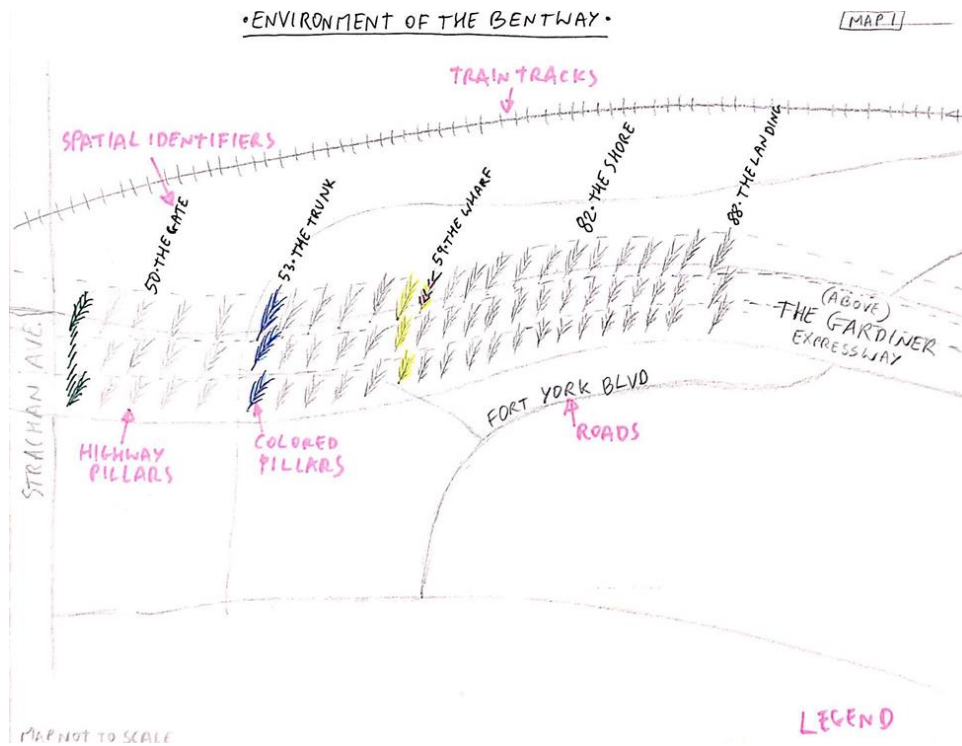
As you walk into the Bentway from any entrance, you are immediately surrounded by a considerable number of giant pillars that are holding up the Gardiner Expressway, highlighted within 'Map 1'. The design of the Bentway seems to be planned around the pillars as everything from the roads, corridors, bleachers, and the skating rink are either wrapped or embedded around them. They are also a part of an overall linear design, as the pillars generate segments and curves creating corridors in a linear way. This could relate to the history of the site as history is generally not perceived as linear, and the pillars therefore represent segments within history. That said, these corridors created through the perception of the pillars entice movement in different modes while also creating possible pathways. The pillars also artistically dictate the physical use of space within the area and have been observed as a key component of the design as well as the design features surrounding them. Further, the pillars create five zones within the Bentway, highlighted within Map 2. This includes; the bleachers zone, movable seating zone (consisting of picnic tables and lounging chairs), hanging lights zone and the skating rink zones (west and east side). Within the urban design, there is also a significant amount of zig zags. As you look around the Bentway while you are walking in between the pillars, the zig zags can be seen as a feature of the linear design within the space. They are also represented within the design details and art pieces which interpret zig zags. Another example of this zig zag pattern is the discontinuity of going straight when you get to the skating rink. This relates to a detailed observation made by walking

all the way from the West side to the East side of the Bentway toward the skating rink and beyond, located at the end of the trail where you have to take a sharp 'zig zag' to navigate around it. Furthermore, as you walk through the Bentway you can see the city and the buildings surrounding it and at the same time, the Bentway is also a view for those buildings, highlighted within 'Map 3'.

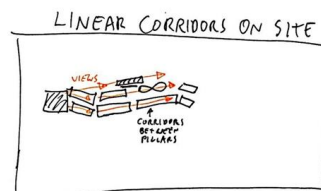
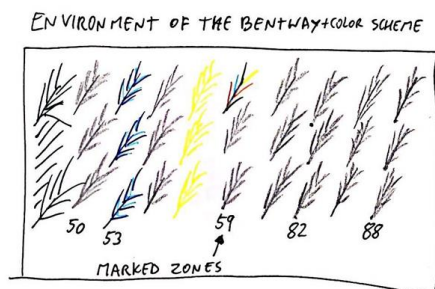
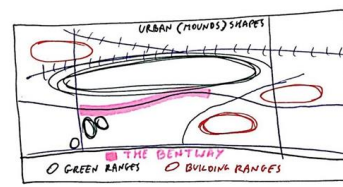
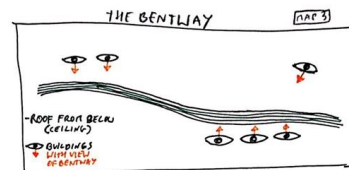
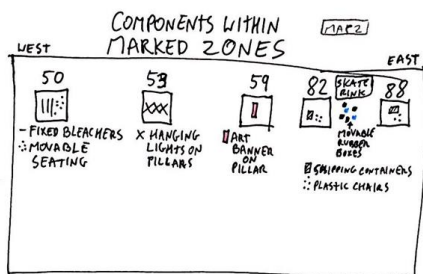
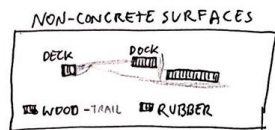
Due to the significance and dominance of the pillars, highlighted within the 'Map 1', they can be seen as a representation of trees within an urban forest. Within that map, each pillar is interpreted as a tree as it intuitively reminds the researchers of nature as there is historical significance of the connections between roads and trees. As you walk through the pillars, the structure of them also supplements trees within the space,

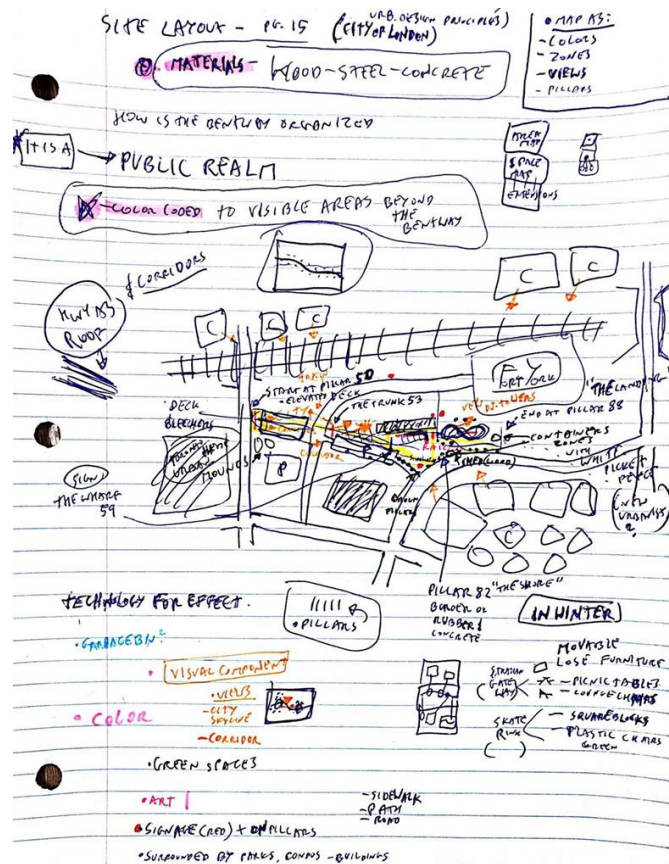
creating an imaginary connection to nature. They represent the duality between concrete materiality (skyscrapers) and forms of nature (trees), as there is a park adjacent, that connects to the Bentway. The pillars also create an environment that evokes the feeling of walking down an avenue filled with trees, represented within 'Map 1'. That being said, each pillar row has signage; a number and a colour to signify spatial identity within the trail and to overall to inform you of where you are. Regarding spatial identifiers, there is a significant amount of color coding within the space, generating connections between the urban design in significant ways. This connection of colour is connected throughout the Bentway as the pillars host specific colours, which are also found and visible throughout the site and are reflected within the urban fabric. Some of the pillars also have names allocated to them including; The Gate: 50, The Trunk: 53, The Wharf: 59, The Shore: 82 and The Landing: 88. These names along with numbers are examples of spatial identifiers and many of them are associated with historical significance. For example, the pillar that is called Wharf 59, "represents a lighthouse that was built in 1861 which originally stood in that spot, directing the only navigable entrance to Toronto Harbour at the time" (Heritage Toronto). Additionally, in front of Wharf 59 there is a wooden floor surface which may represent a 'wooden dock' highlighted within 'Map 3' to signify the shoreline that once historically existed there. The signage including the numbers, names and colour coding are therefore fundamental in shaping, identifying and getting around the space of the Bentway. Overall, the maps highlight the significance of the pillars as they are clearly an essential feature in distinguishing the landscape and urban design principles of the Bentway.

## Maps



Map 1: Environment of the Bentway





## Works Cited

The Bentway: Home. (2019). Retrieved January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019, from

<http://www.thebentway.ca>

Queen's Wharf Lighthouse. (2014). Retrieved February 3, 2019, from

<http://heritagetoronto.org/queens-wharf-lighthouse/>