

EVERGREEN BRICK WORKS

Interpretive Planning

AldrichPears Associates developed an interpretive program that helps visitors to Evergreen Brick Works experience **a renewed sense of place and connection to the city**, having experienced the benefits of nature, culture and history first-hand.



With an emphasis on partnership development and community consultation, AldrichPears facilitated a visioning workshop with Evergreen and its partners. The following design approach outlines the challenges, opportunities and outcomes that, along with the workshop, formed the basis of the interpretive plan. It is intended to guide Evergreen Brick Works through subsequent design stages.

Work with the environment

Evergreen is an organization that explores the relationship between nature, culture and community in urban spaces. AldrichPears developed a design approach that respects the strong characteristics of the Brick Works site. These characteristics include a variety of environmental conditions such as snow, humidity and occasional flooding; a massive site composed of many buildings, which challenges intuitive access and circulation; and an impressive range of interpretive opportunities scattered throughout the site.

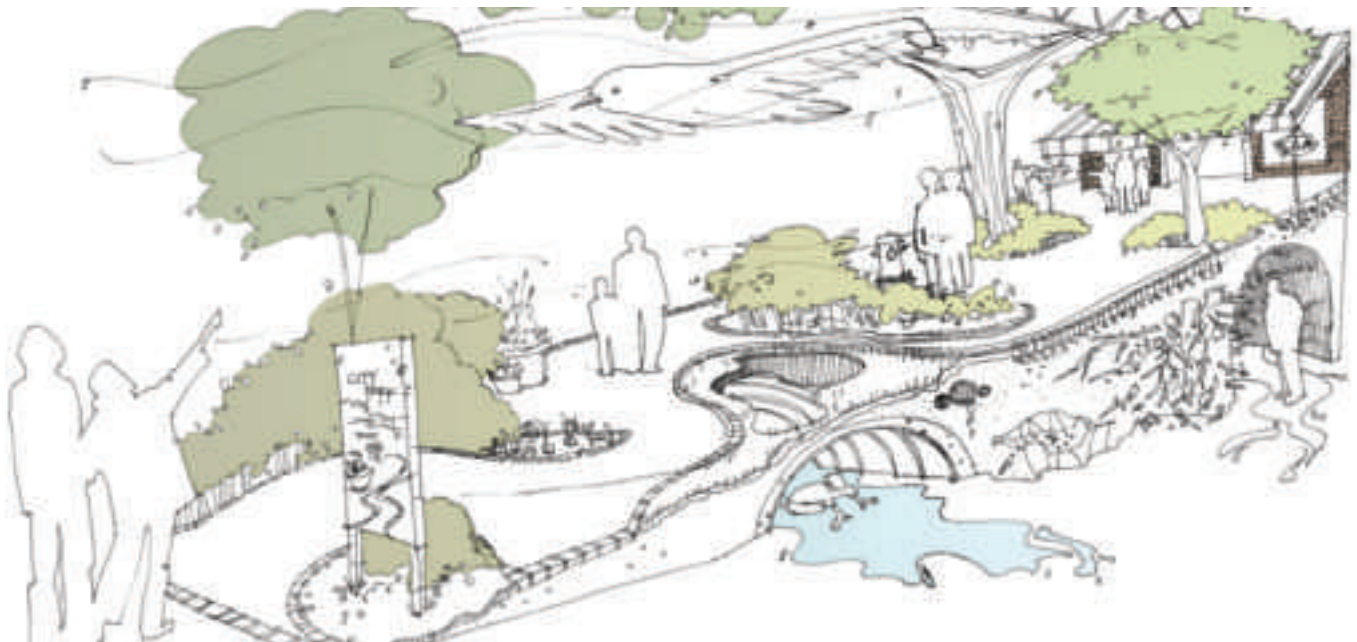
Connect people with real things

Visitors like to see, hear and touch the features they are learning about. For this reason, AldrichPears investigated site locations that best connect visitors with Brick Works' riches.

Located on the northwest side of the site, Building 9 offers valuable adjacencies to real things. It provides views to the park and a window into the last million years of geological history, and it is near the highest concentration of industrial artifacts – the dinosaur-sized machines that pulverized, pressed and baked the clay into bricks.

In addition, Building 9 is within feet of outdoor gatherings spaces and the site's primary orientation hub. It also offers double-height ceilings and a footprint that is conducive to sustainable operations.





Capture the spirit of the place

To create a rich interpretive program that respects visitor needs and supports the site's sustainable operation, AldrichPears developed a hierarchy of interpretive experiences. They are intended to foster visitors' emotional connection to the area's history, wildlife and legends.

The core exhibits will be consolidated in Building 9. As it is above the floodplain, the exhibits will be protected from flooding. This location also provides visitors with beautiful views, a fully conditioned space, and immediate access to outdoor gathering areas and the core industrial artifacts. Creating this interpretive core not only organizes the experiences for visitors, it also improves intuitive access, circulation and operational efficiencies.



Within Building 9, compelling, ever-changing visitor experiences will inspire, educate and foster action. They will describe what makes Brick Works unique, examine the area's natural history, and draw attention to Evergreen's work in the community. To facilitate this, AldrichPears developed themes that will guide the stories and the exhibits' physical design: *When we cultivate enduring relationships with nature we can shape sustainable cities; In Toronto, brick making equaled city making; Our limited resources make us more creative; and Nature constantly shapes and reshapes communities.*

These themes will also guide the interpretation of features in the park and industrial pad. Sculptural elements composed of reclaimed material will activate the features and draw visitors' attention to their historical or sustainable significance. There is also potential to expand this interpretive program along the Don Valley, connecting informal-education centres within the ravine.



Lead by example

Evergreen is in a unique position to lead by example. The site's rich natural environment and industrial history provides opportunities for Evergreen to showcase its work rehabilitating urban areas and its commitment to exploring creative ways to conserve our limited resources. The brick-making factory that once helped build Toronto is well on its way to conceptually rebuilding the city's sustainable future.

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