

Quality

in Canada's Built Environment:

Roadmaps to Equity, Social Value and Sustainability

Booklet gathering experiences shared by members, partners and students associated to the research partnership on quality

Positive Lived Experiences of Quality in the Built Environment in Canada

July 2023

Edited by Jean-Pierre Chupin, PhD
Scientific Director of the SSHRC Partnership on Quality

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
(SSHRC) Partnership #895-2022-1003

Canada Research Chair in
Architecture, Competitions and Mediations of Excellence



Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Canada



POSITIVE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF QUALITY IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT IN CANADA

***Booklet of experiences shared by members, partners and students
associated with the Quality Research Partnership
(SSHRC #895-2022-1003)***

Edited by Jean-Pierre Chupin, PhD, CRC-ACME, Université de Montréal

The SSHRC Partnership research initiative, **Quality in Canada's Built Environment**, engages citizens, decision-makers, students and researchers across the country in collaborative efforts to reimagine how Canadians consider, create and inhabit urban spaces, buildings and landscapes. It responds to the growing expectations for more democratic, equitable and sustainable built environments.

MAPPING POSITIVE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF QUALITY IN CANADA

(a potential book written by more than 135 authors)

Building upon the success of community mobilization and engagement showcased at the Montreal 2022 convention, where 'Barriers to Quality in the Built Environment' were collectively addressed, the second annual gathering, held in Calgary in May 2023, focuses on "**lived experiences of quality**" in interacting with the built environment and related insights, which will inform the development of a vision for reimagined quality, as well as the roadmaps for getting there.

From January to April 2023, we have been collecting views from partners and students concerning **positive lived experiences of quality in Canada**. Lived experience is about the personal knowledge, perceptions and feelings we have within our world – in our case within the built environments in which we live, work and play. The responses reflect these personally significant views, versus any researched or more formal traditional descriptions.

This booklet gathers all the submissions – so far more than 135 – received before April 25, 2023. The compilation was put together by Shantanu Biswas Linkon, Catherine Meunier, Dimitri Weibel and Joëlle Tétreault under the direction of Jean-Pierre Chupin.

<https://livingatlasofquality.ca>

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Typologies, Scales and Categories:

1.	Houses, Accommodations, and Residential Facilities	6
2.	Public Buildings: Libraries and Archives	23
3.	Public Buildings: Educational Institutions	54
4.	Public Buildings: Museums, Galleries, Exposition Centers	71
5.	Public Buildings: Community Spaces, Religious, and Recreational activities	86
6.	Public Buildings: Commercial and Mixed Use	104
7.	Public Buildings: Healthcare Services	118
8.	Public Spaces: Cafés, Restaurants, Street cafés	128
9.	Market Areas and Places	133
10.	Streets and Paths	141
11.	Public Places, Squares, Plazas, and Nodes	152
12.	Pedestrian Activity Areas: Gardens, Parks, Waterfronts, Trails	179
13.	Neighborhoods, Districts, Regions	217
14.	Large Scale Natural Landscapes	242
15.	Other Views of Quality	266

1. Houses, Accommodations, and Residential Facilities

Chellew, Cara

*Ph.D. Student at McGill University; Research Assistant,
Night-time Design with/for Marginalized Communities
Member of the Research Site Led by: McGill University*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality in the built environment should reflect inclusivity. Spaces and places that are designed to be inclusive promote both individual and community wellbeing. Removing barriers to accessibility not only benefits individuals with disabilities, but it also increases accessibility for diverse communities with varied lived experiences and life cycles. For example, spaces that are designed for wheelchair users also benefit families pushing strollers and elderly people with mobility devices. In addition, inclusive spaces are designed to support human wellbeing and provide amenities like proper seating, accessible washrooms, and places of shelter and shade.

Although inclusion is often talked about in terms of accessibility, it also concerns social and cultural belonging. Social inclusion means creating spaces that are open to all, regardless of income level or housing status. This means not using architectural designs that are meant to 'move along' people who are unhoused and creating spaces that are free of charge. Furthermore, cultural inclusion can be promoted through placemaking practices that use art and other design features to celebrate diverse cultures. For example, cultural districts are spaces where people could celebrate their identities and see themselves reflected in the fabric of the city.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

A concrete example of inclusivity in the built environment is the repurposing of Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal to provide shelter for unhoused community members. Founded in 1645, Hôtel-Dieu was the first hospital established in Montreal and functioned as an active hospital until 2017. Over the Covid-19 pandemic, it served as test and treatment site and in July 2021, Le Royer Pavilion of Hôtel-Dieu was adapted and repurposed to serve as a 24/7 shelter space. The opening of Hôtel-Dieu coincided with the closure of Place Dupuis, a downtown hotel which operated as an emergency shelter during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Hôtel-Dieu is operated by the Old Brewery Mission and Welcome Hall Mission in partnership with a local board of health and the CHUM super hospital. In addition to providing shelter, the goal of Hôtel-Dieu is to help residents connect to long-term housing through rent subsidies and other programs. Hôtel-Dieu features 186 beds over six floors. Each room has two beds and a shared bathroom with showers. Residents can keep their belongings secure in their room which contributes to a sense of belonging and ownership of the space. In addition, Hôtel-Dieu is more inclusive than traditional shelters because it can accommodate couples as well as pets so that families can stay together. Since many residents are facing complex health issues including addiction and mental illness, there is extra support with three employees per floor who work on the site permanently.

While the shelter staff at Hôtel-Dieu strive to create a dignified space for the unhoused community, there are still conflicts between housed and unhoused residents, especially around the use of public space. Although more resources are needed to help people work through mental health and addiction issues, more communication can be fostered in the neighbourhood to come up with community solutions to address spatial conflicts. One way staff at Hôtel-Dieu attempted to address conflict over the use of public space is by providing outdoor space on site for unhoused residents. Equipped with a small tent and a few tables, the space is always full, illustrating the importance of space for unhoused people to socialize, connect, and just be. The adaptive reuse of Hôtel-Dieu from hospital to emergency shelter honors its original purpose as a space for care. While providing shelter for unhoused residents is of utmost importance, Hôtel-Dieu also provides unhoused community members with a space of their own where they can feel secure and included.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Image of Hôtel-Dieu, by Cara Chellew



Danielle Fenn

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

One of my positive lived experiences of experiencing quality in the built environment would have to be my parents' log cabin on LacLu. I feel incredibly privileged saying that my quality experience is a summer home. I am incredibly privileged to be able to say that and have it be true. The quality for me comes from the connection to the land. The cabin is situated on an island. You can always see or hear the water. Growing up we had a wood stove and no electricity. Now we have a composting toilet and an electric stove but the place is simple. It has a few additions and a screened in veranda. Everything is imperfect and cobbled together but that makes it homey. The log core is over a century old and it's an insurance nightmare but its priceless.

I don't spend much time there now. I don't have the time or money to get out to the cabin as much as I would like. In fact, getting out of the city is a challenge in and of itself without a car on my budget. I rent the main floor and basement in a house in West Broadway in Winnipeg with a roommate. I think I have quality where I live now because there are no bed bugs, or cockroaches, I have ensuite access to a washer and dryer and a big soaking tub. When I open the window in the summer, I can hear the community. Especially the skateboarders in the park out back or the kids at the splash pad or on the swings. These sounds are what bring quality to my life here. Also, I am allowed to have a dog whom I love.

The house needs work nothing about it is perfect. There's not enough sunlight. The basement leaks. Mice come in in the spring, ants get in in the summer. Once we had a squirrel visit. But again, its homey and I like my roommate. To me connection is quality and I am glad I can experience that in starkly different places. But when the seagulls came back in the spring and the sun was shining as I sit out back, and I close my eyes I am transported momentarily to the cabin. Its that powerful of a place for me.

If I were to design a quality building, I would want to be able to hear the wind, see the rain, and feel the sun. I would want refuge from these elements but I would want connection to them as well. That is what I have at the cabin. That is what I feel like I have with my community here in West Broadway. It's not as picturesque in the city it's a different kind of connection but it remains a strong one for me.

I see the privilege of my youth as I struggle to keep one roof over my head never mind take over or care for a summer home. One good enough home is enough for me. What makes a place good enough for you? What makes it better? What makes it luxury? If connection to the wind, the rain, the sun, and the community feel like luxury how can we bring these simple pleasures to everyone?

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Matt Nomura*VP, Calgary Homeless Foundation**Calgary***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect...

A positive experience of quality in the built environment should encompass several key elements. First and foremost, it should provide an aesthetically pleasing, safe, comfortable, and functional space that promotes the well-being of individuals and the community. This includes considerations such as natural light, ventilation, noise control, and ergonomic design.

In addition, a quality-built environment should prioritize sustainability and durability to ensure the long-term impact of its construction and use on both the environment and its occupants is minimized. This includes elements such as energy-efficient systems, the use of environmentally friendly materials, and waste reduction practices.

Moreover, the built environment should be accessible to all, regardless of physical abilities or socio-economic status, and promote inclusivity and diversity. This includes designing spaces that can be navigated by people with disabilities and considering the needs of a diverse range of users.

Overall, a positive experience of quality in the built environment should enhance the quality of life for all who interact with it, inspiring and supporting a healthy and happy life for individuals and communities.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

The Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary (AFCC) is opening a dedicated Elders' Lodge that offers affordable housing, indoor and outdoor spaces for land teachings, ceremonies and healing. The Lodge will be located in the northeast community of Highland Park and will be home to 12 residents, integrated with areas used for ceremony, cultural activities, supports, and a meeting space for the Elders Knowledge Council. This is a community and a gathering place that creates a sense of ownership and pride. The Lodge will provide access to cultural activities for many Indigenous seniors who may otherwise become depressed as the offerings in other seniors' centres are just not the same type of lifestyle they had. Many Elders moving into urban centres have nowhere to meet as a community, tell stories, and practice and connect to cultural activities.

Calgary is home to more than 41,000 urban Indigenous Peoples representing various Nations across the country. The 2016 census indicates a 23.1% increase in the Indigenous population aged 45 and over in Alberta, highlighting the growing need for housing tailored to the needs of Indigenous seniors. To address this demand, the City of Calgary's 2018 Housing Needs Assessment acknowledges the necessity for culturally sensitive housing and related support services tailored to the local Indigenous community.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



<https://www.calgary.ca/our-leadership/articles/elders-lodge.html>

Nicole Langlois

member of Union Sustainable Development Cooperative (and general manager of Langlois Eco Homes, a developer based in Southwestern Ontario)

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I will address the notion of quality in a home environment rather than a public one, as I believe the feelings we seek to experience at home are subtly different from those we seek when in public spaces. A good home offers both energizing and relaxing atmospheres, places to gather and places to retreat. In public, the balance between these dynamics is the inverse of what is desired at home. Achieving true quality in a home verge on an art form: it is difficult (requiring skill, practice, observation, reflection and refinement), yet it must appear effortless. The practice of building a quality home uses practical means such as thoughtful storage, well-planned traffic flow within and through rooms, abundant glazing, and durable materials to achieve the ineffable: a place of light, warmth, serenity, calm, and order. It meets Le Corbusier's dictum that a home should be "a machine for living," and pairs it with natural materials, within a human scale, to become the place from which we leave each day, refreshed and ready to take part in the outside world, and to which we later return, with a sense of welcome and reassurance. A quality home is above all a place of security and repose, a place where individuals, families and friends are free to be at rest or at play, according to individual needs and circumstances.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I am attending this conference in my capacity as a founding board member of [Union Sustainable Development Cooperative](#), which has the sole purpose of purchasing and maintaining affordable housing within the Region of Waterloo, Ontario. After several years in development and government approvals of the co-op, we recently made our first purchase: two buildings with a total of 58 apartment homes in the City of Kitchener, with many qualifying as affordable. As we maintain and improve these buildings (and others that we will purchase in time), it is our hope to reach the high standards of quality that will allow our tenants to live well and thrive. But it is from my work as a small-scale developer and builder of new housing that I will draw my experience of quality. I do this not as a marketing opportunity but rather because I have been amazed by what can be created when design, building science and construction are done slightly differently, slightly better, using tried and true strategies. The Village Farm, being developed by Langlois Eco Homes, is based in a Southwestern Ontario village called Embro, surrounded by farmland. It is about 20 minutes from the theatre city of Stratford, and a 10-minute drive will take you to the region's largest traffic artery, Highway 401. My parents have lived and farmed in this area since 1965. In the first homes that our company has built, I have had the privilege of being part of a certified Passive House project. Building to the [Passive House standard](#) — arguably the most air-tight and energy-efficient building standard in the world — is usually done only by custom home builders; it's a rarity among production home builders. Within our family and our company, we chose this standard because we felt it would result in the highest quality, most comfortable and most environmentally responsible homes we could build. In 2021-22, we built six townhouses that have received full certification from PHIUS (the Passive House Institute of the United States). The houses are now available for purchase. The results have surpassed our hopes. These homes are exceptionally comfortable to simply spend time in. Passive House building methods eliminate drafts and cold spots with nearly obsessive levels of air-tightness.

While there is almost no loss of air through the building envelope, there is a constant supply of fresh air. Energy recovery ventilators filter and pre-condition the air that is brought into the homes (heating or cooling it slightly as needed), then deliver it to every room through a series of mini ducts. With all indoor materials being low-VOC, there are none of the toxic smells that we typically associate with new products. The air feels fresh and alive, never stale. The houses are remarkably quiet, with no outdoor traffic or construction sounds audible. Superior levels of insulation, along with triple-glazed windows and certified Passive House doors, make for a more serene indoor environment than any I've experienced. Some features of accessible design were subtly incorporated into these homes to allow for aging in place. Barrier-free doorways and extra-wide passageways on the main floor, as well as a large, barrier-free bathroom and shower in the primary suite, are the benchmarks that bring these homes to the visitability standard, with further adaptations possible as future needs require. Daylight gently suffuses these homes. Historically, achieving the energy conservation levels of Passive House too often led to minimal glazing and insufficient natural light. Our architects, Michael Wilson and Associates (based in Stratford), worked creatively within and beyond many constraints. They managed to design fenestration that maximizes daylight, with exterior shading elements keeping sunlight from being overwhelming. Remarkably, even with so many windows, the final air-tightness level achieved in these homes (0.3 air changes/hour) was even better than required for Passive House certification (0.6 ACH).

Finally, the material palette we've used is visually calming. With a focus on natural woods and cloud-white walls, we've created spaces that encourage relaxation and contemplation, and are ready for personalization. For now, many of our plans for the 72-acre site remain on paper only, but over time we plan to build a community that matches the high standards of quality we've achieved in these first homes. Our goals for the development are ambitious: using prime farmland sensitively, with extensive areas designated for community gardens and small-scale market gardening; an emphasis on green space, shared trails, active transportation, and safe, playful, pedestrian-friendly design; accessibility features throughout the community and within living units; and housing options for people at every income level, family size, and stage of life. As we develop, we will require that other builders embrace Passive House or Net Zero building practices to ensure that all homes meet high levels of quality and energy efficiency.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Living room at one of six townhomes built and certified to the Passive House (Credit: Michal Pasco for Langlois Eco Homes, with permission)

[Online flyer with Google map link](#)

LANGEVIN, Alex

Member of the research site directed by: Laval University

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive quality experience should focus on wellness. That said, it's hard for an experience to affect every person positively, since well-being is quite personal to each person. Of course, there are elements, such as light intake and thermal comfort, that make a space physically comfortable. However, on a more personal level, comfort is also about how you feel psychologically when you are in the space. Whether it is human scale, pleasure, a sense of home, etc., all of these feelings can bring comfort to people, but depending on the person experiencing the space the way in which this is applied to the built environment can vary. For example, for a child, the pleasure will not come through the same program as for an adult. Also, depending on what the built element is, comfort, or well-being, will not have the same criteria. For example, for a workspace to be comfortable, it must be efficient, while a playroom must provide pleasure to the occupants. In short, I believe that in general, the built environment should provide well-being for the occupants, but for a space to be comfortable, there is no one specific element that the built environment should provide. Thus, for a positive experience of the space, it is important to properly identify the occupants and activities of the space.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

As mentioned in the previous section, the positive experience of a space is very personal. So a space that is interesting to me may not be interesting to someone else. One place in which I have a positive experience is the faubourg Nord in Saint-Férréol-des-Neiges. This neighborhood is located near Mont-Sainte-Anne, a ski and outdoor center, and is characterized by a rather unique architecture. First of all, the location of the neighborhood is clearly a plus for me as I am an alpine skiing enthusiast. In addition, I also like the fact that this neighborhood is well integrated with nature unlike other residential developments in the area. Biodiversity is preserved, the houses are small to minimize tree cutting, and except for the streets, there is not really any mineralized space. Moreover, since my family has lived here for a few generations and we have a good circle of friends in the area, our sense of belonging to this place is quite great. It feels like home, which contributes to a positive experience. However, given my field of study (architecture), what gives this neighborhood its uniqueness is clearly the architecture and design of the built environment. Indeed, unlike residential developments made by developers, this neighborhood emphasized self-construction. Thus, each home has its own qualities and flaws, but they all have their own color or personality. Personally, this allows me to easily identify with this living environment, but also with my own house, reinforcing my sense of well-being, or my positive experience of the place. Its integration in the natural context makes the number of possible activities numerous, given the large place occupied by nature, which contributes to my pleasure, and consequently my well-being. Yes, there is sport, but it is also pleasant to go for a walk and observe the architecture, to visit friends in their own spaces, to meet people in the local shops, to contemplate nature, to simply be with your family, etc. In summary, as you can see this experience is very personal, but it testifies to my well-being in this built environment.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I have found to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Interior of a cottage in the neighborhood. We see the entry of light and the integration of biodiversity through the opening. Photo taken by Alex Langevin.

CORMIER, Anne

Member of the research site directed by : University of Montreal

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:

My own relationship to the built environment is, if anything, very visual. I am also very sensitive to "attentions", to everything that has been thought (and realized) for pleasure and comfort, but also to what has not been thought (and realized) especially when it causes discomfort.

The lived experience I speak of here is quite personal. It is obviously not what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer to everyone, but what I want it to offer to me.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

Spontaneously, several places came to mind, not far from twenty. The two examples I have chosen to briefly describe are interiors that I know well. The first example is a project by an architect whose work always touches me deeply, Dan Hanganu, the second by a team whose projects generally leave me, at best, indifferent, CannonDesign and NEUF. In both cases, the relationship to the exterior plays a key role in the experience.

I regularly go to eat at the HEC cafeteria, which is located right next to the Faculty, and each time I am happy to be there, alone or with others, especially because this space is spacious, bright and very open to the outside, both on the side of the wooded area, the interior of which is separated by an undulating glass wall, and on the side of the Faculty, where potted trees create a continuity with the outside. I appreciate the fact that it is possible to perceive what is happening on the upper floors and sometimes in the adjoining auditorium. However, I hate the sudden changes in light intensity generated by the large digital screen that was installed there a few years ago. I would add that this place is much less pleasant when there are activities going on and access to the whole space is restricted.

For a long period of time, I visited a person hospitalized at the CHUM almost every day. At that time, all the construction work on the first floor was not finished and the route from the entrance to the floors remains hazy in my memory. However, I have fond memories of the generous and quite frankly magnificent views of the city and the river from the rooms, common areas and the ends of the corridors (all very bright spaces). In addition, the rooms were private and large enough for two or three visitors to be comfortable. Then, clearly, someone had spent time designing the wall coloring and knew how to do it well.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I have found to be an example of quality in the built environment:



A few days ago, I walked around this building that I didn't know, a residence for elderly people designed by Saia Barbarese Topouzanov. I was touched by the cheerfulness of the facade and the effort made to make the outside space (on the edge of an inhospitable boulevard) make you want to move in. It may not be the most meaningful or moving place I've seen in Canada, but it is.

Copyright: Anne Cormier

Link to Google map:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/3601+Bd+Ga%C3%A9tan+Laberge,+Verdun,+QC+H4G+%20A2/@45.4676479,-%2073.5627379,17z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x4cc9107b2022ac25:0x4b9002752c38f680!8m2!3d45.46%2072096!4d-73.5630019!16s%2Fg%2F11bw3zjy3n>

TAILLEFER, Étienne
mdtp atelier d'architecture inc.

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:

Architecture and/or design frames and influences the way of life of a society, regardless of its scale. Whether it is through objects, furniture, space, architecture or urbanism, human beings are constantly influenced by this art. It is therefore essential to create our spaces with intelligence and sensitivity, to allow users to evolve in a quality space. First, it should be noted that this architectural quality is subjective, since it reflects the values of its author and its cultural heritage. It varies according to time, geography, dogmas, cultures and concerns. In short, many contexts influence a society to adhere to certain criteria in architecture.

Thus, a quality architecture is the result of a reflection on certain basic criteria, to meet the current and future needs of the user. Indeed, we are today in a context of climate crisis, it is the responsibility of creators to ensure sustainability to their projects. This sustainability is manifested by the choice of materiality, the multifunctionality of spaces or by the ecological management of the end of life. The criterion of sustainability allows us to offer a certain eco-responsibility. Then, a quality architecture is one that takes into consideration all the contexts of a given site. Whether it is the geographical, sociological, cultural, climatic or historical context. Creating a building that meets the needs of the user, while respecting and harmonizing with the existing, is a success in itself.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

In my opinion, the architectural space that adds value to a way of life is the Pointes-aux Renard residence in Pincourt, which was built by the mdtp atelier d'architecture team. It is a residence for seniors with a slight loss of autonomy. For this type of project, careful consideration must be given to ergonomics and the well-being of the user. One of the conceptual goals for this project was to encourage active travel. We therefore put a lot of effort into making the design of the main stairwell user-friendly. In a building where elevators were mandatory and necessary, this stairwell is located near the lobby and is accessible from all five floors. The design has been thought out in terms of its emotional influence on the user, through its brightness and aesthetics. With its large glass walls, this space allows for contemplation of the exterior environment. This residence is located on a large wooded lot. In addition, the colors chosen for this stairwell are dynamic, which invites users to use it.

Firstly, the entire concept of this residence has been thought out in terms of improving the quality of life. The balconies offered to the residents are very large, which favors the outdoor use of the premises. In addition, the building is certified Novoclimat, which allows for a certain degree of eco-responsibility.

However, there were ecological issues at stake, as the land was close to a wetland, home to a variety of frogs. We therefore developed an action plan, with the Ministry of the Environment, to allow the survival of this species.

Our team then worked on the universal accessibility of the premises, through the parking lot and the integrated furniture. In fact, the underground parking lot has a specific layout for trippers, not to mention the access ramp to the basement. Finally, with regard to the more mechanical aspect of the project, each unit is equipped with a wall-mounted air-conditioning area, as in residential units. In short, the design chosen contributes to the quality of life and active transportation of users. We are particularly proud of this project, as the human experience within this project is unique.

Mechanical: wall-mounted air-conditioning installation, as in dwellings.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I have found to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Link to Google map:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/R%C3%A9sidence+Pointe-aux-Renards/@45.357727,-73.9737692,17z/data=!3m1!4m6!3m5!1s0x4cc947ef7fdaaaab:0x4b2eb1288077e093!8m2!3d45.357727!4d-73.9715805!16s%2Fg%2F11flpjtns3>

Bechara HELAL

*Professor-researcher, School of Architecture, Université de Montréal
Member of the Outreach Committee*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality of the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of a built environment is directly related to its potential to respond to the multiple lived experiences of possible users. From this perspective, quality is not tied to the resolution of a specific program, nor to rigid formal configurations in response to a given architectural problem. Rather, it is the sign of an open and flexible space in which each user can find himself and project his own motivations (worldview, particular interests, modes of existence). This approach echoes the notion of "open work" introduced by the semiologist Umberto Eco (*Opera aperta*, Milan: Bompiani, 1962) to qualify modern artistic productions that operationalize the viewer's gaze in order to go beyond the fixed limits of the inert object: the open work is rather a dynamic system that puts in relation the designer and the viewer and allows the co-construction of an always changing meaning according to the load and the expectations mobilized by these actors. The more this setting in relation is strong, the more the work of art has a strong impact on the spectator.

An open built environment follows this same logic. While it may be a formal design to meet given constraints, it is essential that it allow for non-pre-programmed uses. Such a built environment is not defined by what it is, but by what it could be, and its quality is measured by its potential to accommodate multiple and unexpected lived experiences.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of a positive quality experience:

Project disciplines are generally very focused on clarifying clear gestures and are more concerned with the accuracy of the response to specific requirements than with creating blurred areas and voids that can be invested in unexpected ways.

Although some practitioners favor this approach (such as, in particular, Rem Koolhaas), this conceptual posture remains rare. However, unprogrammed spaces at the periphery of projects can be found on a fairly regular basis: these residual voids are those that are not invested by the resolution of the program. When these voids are at the heart of a project (and the periphery becomes the center), their capacity of attraction and their potential for investment are increased. This is the case of a flagship project of Canadian architecture: *Habitat 67*, designed by Moshe Safdie for Expo 67 in Montreal. The image of this project is strongly marked by the plastic and material expression of its components, which are these concrete cubes stacked and connected to each other in a structuralist logic.

When I had the opportunity to visit the building, I was struck by the great spatial richness of the square covered by these pyramids of blocks. It is not a neutral, uniform space, but a collection of small interrelated spaces. Some are low and squashed while others are much higher. Some are very dark, while others are brightly lit with direct natural light. The whole is brought back to a human scale by the large roof composed by the inhabited concrete cubes.

The ground is not continuous either, but fragmented by changes of level allowing to approach all these spaces in a varied way.

It is both the variety of the devices and the complexity of their assemblies that make this "residual" space a place conducive to being mobilized in very different ways by users, whether

they are simple individual visitors or groups of project residents. At once small and large, closed and open, buried and suspended, this undefined volume is a true built environment whose quality is measured by its openness to the lived experiences of its users.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I found particularly meaningful and moving:



Photo: Oliver Parini, The Wall Street Journal, <https://images.wsj.net/im-617104>

Link to Google map: <https://goo.gl/maps/YU2HBrAScESwVFEe6>

2. Public Buildings: Libraries and Archives

Bridgette Norwood*New Research Assistant**Member of the Research Site Led by Susan Fitzgerald at Dalhousie University***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect...dynamic opportunities for use and communal access. Rather than having a building that limits the use of the space to meet a single intention, in my opinion, quality buildings open up the potential for new and creative uses. Quality in the built environment allows the users to create and reinvent the meanings and utilizations of the space while simultaneously fostering feelings of inclusion, collectivity, and community. I see value in buildings that facilitate diverse intentions and use through architecture that has predominantly open spaces with some semi-private spaces to create inclusive levels of access, noise, and comfortability. I believe that quality in the built environment provides the opportunity for each user to experience the space uniquely. While the structure and design of the built environment play a key role in fostering community and inclusivity, in my opinion, the shared experiences within the structure are what reveals its quality.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting...the Halifax Central Library for the first time and feeling an incredible sense of community. Not only is the visual construction of the library striking, but the creation of distinct spaces on each level, all providing different environments and purposes, is rather functional. While there are designated spaces, such as areas intended for children, the uses of most of the spaces are formed through patterns of use. For instance, while there is no sign claiming the fourth floor as the "study area," most people on this floor (especially along the desks facing the windows) use this space for quiet work. By implementing various seating options, particular areas lend themselves more to relaxing reading, such as the fifth-floor leisure chairs, or for socializing, such as the spaces located by the two cafés. In addition, the Central Library hosts daily events that range from free music performances to workshops on filing taxes. While the library is restrictive in terms of its hours, the space is open to the public and used by various sub-communities and individuals to convey a sense of publicness, community, and collaboration. Evidently, the Central Library serves as a hub for the Halifax community fostering the inclusivity and positive experiences that I see as so critical to the quality of a space.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

A photograph of the open staircases Adam Mork



Google map link: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Halifax+Central+Library/@44.6427638,-63.5777588,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x4b5a223391907ad3:0x520186fbd5f800ac!8m2!3d44.6427638!4d-63.5751839!16s%2Fm%2F0zmy64q?hl=en>

Chris Johnson*Master's Student Research Assistant**Member of the Research Site Led by Terrance Galvin, Shannon Bassett, & Thomas Strickland***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect a contribution to services that respond to the site meaningfully. It shows that quality can be for the people and by the people to describe their cultural heritage, way of life, and the necessary amenities needed. Quality promotes interconnectedness between value and spatial awareness, from community consultations to building together on-site. It describes how spaces impact human behaviour to enhance the discourse through meaningful connections. We represent quality through layers of the site to contribute to a healthier neighbourhood. As Stewart Brand, Frank Duffy, and many other scholars explain, the built environment includes the layers of a building and the surrounding context. It describes elements from street lighting, natural elements, open public spaces, service infrastructure, and transportation to promote change through time. These layers occupy the social and physical makeup of the site to promote change while creating awareness for social prosperity and expressing the site's materiality.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting La Grande Bibliothèque du Québec by Patkau Architects, Menkès Shooner Dagenais Le Tourneux Architectes, and Croft Pelletier. It was one of the first buildings I visited during a class trip. I remember the long corridor connecting the upper floors, which created an intimate experience that welcomed me inside the building. The atmosphere of the building was unlike anything I had visited.

When I first arrived at the site, I was greeted by a large façade that made me enter from the side door to enter the main lobby space. I found that the building was close to public transportation, which made the project accessible. Each library space was connected by pedestrian pathways that connected the public. What most impressed me was the vertical circulation that connected me to the rest of the building through the large atrium space. It provided easy wayfinding to program spaces such as the exhibition space, bookstores, public library, and café. I found the rooms knit together, especially the separation between the archives and public spaces. The views throughout the building were spectacular because they showed transitions between the public open areas to the more privatized program elements. I found myself drawn to the size of the library because it felt like the building catered to many people for different uses throughout the day. You could go to the area for a conversation, to eat food, explore the archives, and find a book, DVD, CD player, among others. The building made me feel like I was in a mall shopping for something, given its extensive program catered to accessory uses.

At the same time, offices and breakout spaces surround the building and connect the user with the central circulation pathways. Another point I found necessary in the building was its rich history in francophone culture. When I learned more about the building in my class, I found that culture was essential to developing the building with different atmospheres in mind. Living outside Montreal has taught me how different cultures can unite to promote togetherness through

the built environment. From the building to the rich history of the community, the building creates an atmosphere that has to be admired for its willingness to be accessible to all while contributing to the area's cultural heritage.

Here is an image and a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Image of Exterior Façade with Copper and Glass

Photo taken by James Dow

Google

map

link:

<https://www.google.ca/maps/place/Grande+Biblioth%C3%A8que+de+BAHQ/@45.515459,-73.5648932,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x4cc91bb33b2f88f9:0xc74e1f9c890593ed!8m2!3d45.5154553!4d-73.5623129!16zL20vMDQ0M2Y2!5m1!1e1>

David Down, Architect AAA, FRAIC

*Architect, Chief Urban Designer at the City of Calgary, SSHRC Governance Board Member
Member of the Calgary Research Site Led by Dr. Brian Sinclair*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality in the built environment should be reflected by each individual's sense of comfort, belonging, engagement and connectedness with the buildings, public spaces and natural environments around them. For these aspects to come together to create a quality environment we must think of each building or place as part of a larger system, each piece working together with those around it to create a continuous and connected and understandable whole. As an architect and urban designer whose job it is to encourage and guide the creation of a high-quality urban environment, I am continually struck by the disconnect I see between building and public space designs and their immediate context. A successful design will not only immediately feel like it makes sense in its location, but it will logically connect with and enhance the context in which it is placed. It will be transparent about its purpose. It should be generous in inviting people to engage with it and provide clear messaging as to how this can occur while it will itself engage with its surrounding streets and public spaces. It should stir the interest of and perhaps even inspire its users. It should illuminate and animate, contributing to both the visual interest of and the safety of its neighbourhood at all times and during all seasons. It should create no barriers, being easily and simply accessible to all and, if a public use, not signalling exclusivity in any way. These things are achievable at all scales and within all form typologies from the design of individual homes to that of larger residential and commercial buildings, institutions and public spaces. A small intervention into the built environment should be considered as carefully as a very large one. The design of a warehouse or a fast-food drive-through has the same responsibility to fit and enhance both its neighbourhood and its city overall as a public institution.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember my experience of the imagining, approving, building and visiting the new Calgary Central Library designed by architects Snohetta and Dialog. While this may seem like an obvious choice for this discussion, as it is already renowned as a spectacular example of high-quality civic architecture, my own experience of this speaks to the process involved in getting to a successful outcome. Through my role as Chief Urban Designer, I was engaged first in evaluating and recommending potential site choices. While the chosen site was seen as particularly encumbered by its odd shape and dimensions straddling LRT tracks, it was also seen as potentially catalytic in bringing public attention and acceptance to its emerging East Village context. In this case, the new building itself would be the piece which creates the context and connections based on an imagined future state which informed the call for proposals. I was also involved in adjudicating the design competition, and the successful team was the one that most completely saw the role of the future building in healing the urban fabric and establishing strong connections, architecturally and socially, with the neighbourhood, city and region. In my role guiding the project through the application review process I saw the care which the design team took to respond to technical requirements, stakeholder concerns, and user requirements.

Through the construction process, as always, changes were necessary but never resulted in any compromise to the spirit of the design or the quality of the product. The result is, indeed, somewhat different than originally proposed but still exceeds expectations and was immediately publicly accepted as an iconic centrepiece of both East Village and Calgary overall. The form is distinctive yet easily recognizable as a public place. The shape is unique yet familiar as it recalls a Chinook arch and the materials civic and durable yet warm where people are closest to them. The entrance is unmistakable as the site and landscape draw users in, and the entire building forms a new bridge over the barrier of the LRT trench to act as both a crossing and a gateway into the East Village. The interior is both grand and welcoming, inspiring and engaging exactly as an important public place should be. In all, a successful example of quality in our built environment achieved at the highest level.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Photo: D. Down



Google map link:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Central+Library/@51.0453808,-114.0575273,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x537170003cb69fe3:0x65642e5fb9371572!8m2!3d51.0453775!4d-114.0549524!16s%2Fg%2F11cn9ym65>

Tsang, Henry

Assistant Professor

Member of the Research Site Led by Athabasca University

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect a place that is place that tells a story of the people that it houses. A well-loved building shows care in its design, its transformations and maintenance. An old building would tell a story of its rich history, past and present.

This experience should positively excite the senses, by making us feel welcoming, belonging, comfortable, safe, enlightening, exciting and relaxing. The usage of the building should feel effortless, and we should not be struggling to find our way around. After being inside the building for a long time, I should not feel sick, tired or depressed, but rather uplifted and productive.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting the new Calgary Central Library designed by Snohetta and Dialog.

I appreciate the entrance design, that guides users through a beautiful set of stairs and ramps to a wooden clad womb. I feel like it is an example of inclusive design that does not separate the entrance path for people with different abilities. The wood is warm and inviting.

The central lobby-atrium is spectacular, well light, and presents all of the paths one can take to navigate the building. It is very clear. The winding stairs that are visible from the atrium provides sculptural visual qualities to the space. A ramp also snakes around the side of the walls allowing one to slowly ascend or descend the different levels of the building.

The materials and colors are rich, warm, and exciting. I love how the natural light floods the different spaces, while not creating glare. I feel welcome, excited in this space. I love working and meeting here, and I also love taking my kids here to play in the play areas. They love it too.

I spoke with someone with autism once, and she told me that it is a nightmare for people who are neurodiverse. I am hoping to learn more about the feelings and experiences of people with different abilities/disabilities.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Calgary Central Library (Getty Images)

ArchDaily link to the Central Library (Calgary)

<https://www.archdaily.com/905263/calgary-central-library-snohetta>

Google map link:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Central+Library/@51.0453808,-114.0575273,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x537170003cb69fe3:0x65642e5fb9371572!8m2!3d51.0453775!4d-114.0549524!16s%2Fq%2F11cn9rym65>

Chupin, Jean-Pierre
Université de Montréal

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality comes when we want to pause for a few minutes, when the flow of activities is slowed down by a sense of wonder. We are literally bombarded with images and stimuli on a daily basis, especially in the hustle and bustle of the city, and it is rare that the places we live in surprise us. So, it's very important to preserve the effects of surprise and wonder. I don't think the urban façade is always the best way to create these feelings. The urban façade, especially in a public place, should remain as neutral and sober as possible. It can be very worked and should be perfectly composed but it does not have to shock or disturb and the shock of unusual forms is not a sensation that is repeated for a long time outside. On the other hand, it is always very interesting to experience a great contrast between the impression given by the exterior and what one feels inside a public building. Atriums are excellent typologies to constitute these places of both wonder and appeasement. But they must be well proportioned and natural light must be present. It is by reworking the interior spaces of existing buildings that we can create so many places of calm and even meditation in the urban agitation.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of a positive experience of quality:

I particularly remember revisiting the National Archives building on Viger Street in Montreal in October 2022 and experiencing an intense moment of surprise and serenity. It is a heritage building that was completely refurbished by architect Dan Hanganu in the late 1990s. The exterior façade on Viger Street has been carefully preserved and there is no indication of what is going on (magically) inside. On the face of it, no one really wants to enter an archive.

Two types of experiences struck me although I thought I already knew this place. On the one hand, the very gradual ascent to the center of the archive center itself, and on the other hand, the discovery of the atrium and the archive consultation room. The place is now a particularly timeless mix of classical and modern architecture. The facade is quite classical, a bit pompous from my point of view a bit banal. It is a beautiful heritage building very constrained by the aesthetics of the Beaux-Arts as found in all countries that followed the aesthetics of this great Parisian school in the 19th century. It's not the most interesting thing about it though, although heritage advocates will rightly see it as a jewel to be preserved.

On the other hand, the complete refurbishment of the interior and the very subtle integration of modern modernity into the roughness of the preserved stone gives rise to an initial shock. The experience of the entrance works in several levels that gradually rise to the atrium in the center of the building. The experience is very jerky through the stairs. The experience of this 25-year-old place is unfortunately not very accessible and the priority given to the stairs should be reconsidered today so that this beautiful experience is truly inclusive. The fact remains that this succession of landings is accompanied by a sort of decompression of the height under the ceiling to really hollow out the interior space. Once past the two entrance locks, we brush against the

stone and the reading room begins to appear with its cast iron and steel colonnades. One doesn't know if one is in a Jules Verne novel or in a very modern office building. A spiral staircase brings the eye up to the ceiling of the atrium located more than 3 floors above the ground floor. It is not really a library but it is a place of memory and a memorable place.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I have found to be an example of quality in the built environment:

<https://www.banq.qc.ca/notre-institution/archives-nationales-montreal/visitez-les-archives-nationales-montreal/>

<https://goo.gl/maps/UixaFSa2Kp7ynqkb6>



Hutt-Taylor, Kayleigh

Research associate working on the biodiversity component of the research project.

Member of the Research Site Led by Dr. Carly Ziter

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect the values and interests of a community. Should inspire curiosity and engagement. Should allow community members to travel between different areas of the built environment with flow and should prioritize sustainability, connection, and practicality.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting Marc Favreau library which although is currently beside a large area of construction- I believe has been built and designed with quality in mind. The library is directly beside the Rosemont metro station and sits in front of many bus routes. There is a large green space behind the library with a garderie attached to the building. Children play outside in the winter and summer while local resident bring their dogs or simply walk through the green space during a break in their day. The library is full of windows and brings in light in every aspect of the building. Kids areas are downstairs while quieter areas are upstairs with desks, study rooms, reading rooms etc.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Marc Favreau library in Rosemont directly east of the Rosemont metro.

Google map link: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Biblioth%C3%A8que+Marc-Favreau/@45.5319459,-73.5994198,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x4cc91964f676e947:0x15867a6d0fd6574a!8m2!3d45.5319459!4d-73.5972311!16s%2Fq%2F11b6v77325>

Kristen D’Penna*Student Research Assistant**Member of the Research Site Led by Toronto Metropolitan University***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect a holistic approach to the built environment. The experience of quality is dependent on a site’s ability to cohesively address many aspects of life including wellbeing and health, inclusiveness, accessibility, and overall design quality. Engaging with these aspects of quality allow one to feel as though they are a part of their city and that they are a priority in their built environment.

When the built environment offers daylight spaces, natural spaces, and spaces with nice air quality, one can feel comfortable. Enclosures have previously been sourced as causes for lacking health and wellbeing due to insufficient focus on the human experience of comfort and atmosphere as well as indoor environmental quality. Responding to these concerns with spaces that are healthy to be in and contribute to a positive wellbeing define this aspect of quality.

Inclusiveness and accessibility are aspects of quality that respond to the needs of the public. The functionality of the built environment is inherently dependant on its ability to be used, and to be used by anyone. Design ideas that encompass wayfinding, multi-sensory cues, and prioritize equitable experiences are examples of those that engage quality. A positive experience of quality reflects design that is, at its core, about the experiences of people and their connection to place. A space of quality creates belonging through design that engages the needs of human life in a built environment.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

As a student, I often spend time in educational facilities and I particularly remember my experience of the Daphne Cockwell Health Sciences Centre. I had experienced several lectures from my courses in the classrooms just before the universities went into lockdown in 2020. The building is located on the south edge of the Toronto Metropolitan University Campus and was designed by Perkins & Will. The purpose for the building was actually to unite the different faculties of Health Sciences however, lecture rooms throughout the campus are often used across many faculties. I can recall the flexibility of the spaces and the vast amounts of daylight pouring in. Through its program, the design of the building attempts to make spaces for learning about healthcare, healthier. Documentation of the design indicated that the design focused on healthy building materials, indoor environmental quality, daylight, views and other sustainable initiatives. The building had been developed with engagement from faculty and students at its inception which is a positive indicator of quality. In my experience, the building is stimulating, adaptive, and conducive to wellbeing. In achieving these perceptions, I could feel it was designed for my comfort and needs as a student.

I currently study in Toronto Metropolitan University but like many other students of this school, I commute from another city in the Greater Toronto Area. I live near the downtown core of Mississauga where there are several public sites that I am more familiar with. The Hazel

McCallion Central Library (formerly Central Library) is a building that I have spent a great deal of time in as a student. A public library is a prime example of a space that should embody quality through its ability to be inclusive of all ages, accessible to all of the public, and a pleasant learning space. The library was built in the 90s and is located in a block containing the major public square, and is also adjacent to the city hall. It is then imperative that visitors of the building and site feel welcome and that it is designed for their needs. The public square had previously been awarded by the Rick Hansen Foundation and all of the buildings on the site are accessible as well. The library engages equitably accessible experiences of the building through its layout of circulation and views. Wayfinding through the building is very clearly laid out and the visual connections engage opportunities for fostering community. The building also contributes to wellbeing through its vast overhead glazing for daylight and its views to gardens, vegetation, and street activity. The interior space engages the idea of quality as design that addresses inclusivity, accessibility and wellbeing to contribute to a sense of participation in the city.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



[Daphne Cockwell Health Sciences Centre](#)
[Google Maps](#)



[Hazel McCallion Central Library](#)
[Google Maps](#)

Lara Pinchbeck

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect...

- Should provide me with multiple options of experience that I chose rather than the designer prescribing or directing what experience I should have. Balances of options are provided like energetic and calm, bright and dim.
- Sensory stimulation should be rich and coordinated across all eight sensory fields
- I want to determine my own level of interaction with nature, with crowds or groups, and with sensory inputs.
- Always consider larger questions of social and psychological impact for a diversity of folks and use Universal Design goals to measure well-being.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting...

The Calgary Public Library downtown location. It was an unseasonably hot late spring day and I was tired from teaching all week at SAIT. I was heading home and downtown near the bus station to catch the bus to go home and see my kids. I was drained and looking forward to a quiet weekend in the country. I had some time before the bus arrived and thought I would walk the few blocks to check out what everyone had been talking about.

The late afternoon air was stifling. The prairie sun that everyone loves is my kryptonite; its powerful rays burn my eyes fueling a festering migraine. Those rays amplified by commercial glazing amplified my disdain for urban environments. No solace was available from the desiccating wind. Dust peppered my skin and grit at my teeth. Revving truck engines and rumbling train engines reverberated and engulfed my pedestrian stature. The rigidly rectilinear layout of streets and building facades provide me no refuge from this hostile environment.

Suitcase in tow, I tripped over sidewalk dips until I rounded the corner. Originally my heart sank as I saw the significant slope up to the main entrance. With resignation I mustered up remaining energy and proceeded step by step. My back bearing the lashings of the sun's rays. Head down I inched step by step without awareness of the possibility that this monolith would defeat me.

There is a moment that is permanently embedded in my being. With every breath I can conjure up the feeling that this singular unexpected moment provided. The nanosecond I traversed from the sun into shade. My whole being sang out in joy. The difference in the environmental conditions that this step afforded me were divine. Firstly, the change in temperature provided reprieve from the prairie desert. In the shade my eyes could recalibrate after being blasted by the bleached landscape. The scoop of the building let me tuck in under her wing to be comforted and secure in out of the open predatory exposure. With every subsequent breath I can still congeal the best feature, the smell. That smell. Of real things, of

living things or something antithetical to this artificial environment. The hemlock continued to emit its intoxicating oils as medicine a year after opening. The instantaneous immersion into this combination of sensory delights remains available within my corporeal library accessible with each intentional breath.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Google map link:

https://www.google.com/maps/@51.0445936,-114.0556759,3a,75y,51.22h,84.92t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1srA5WYtkQqm6EJzN_Pnp6CQ!2e0!7i13312!8i6656

Hanson, Lorelei

Not sure – collaborator maybe
Member of the Research Site Led by Douglas MacLeod

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect...

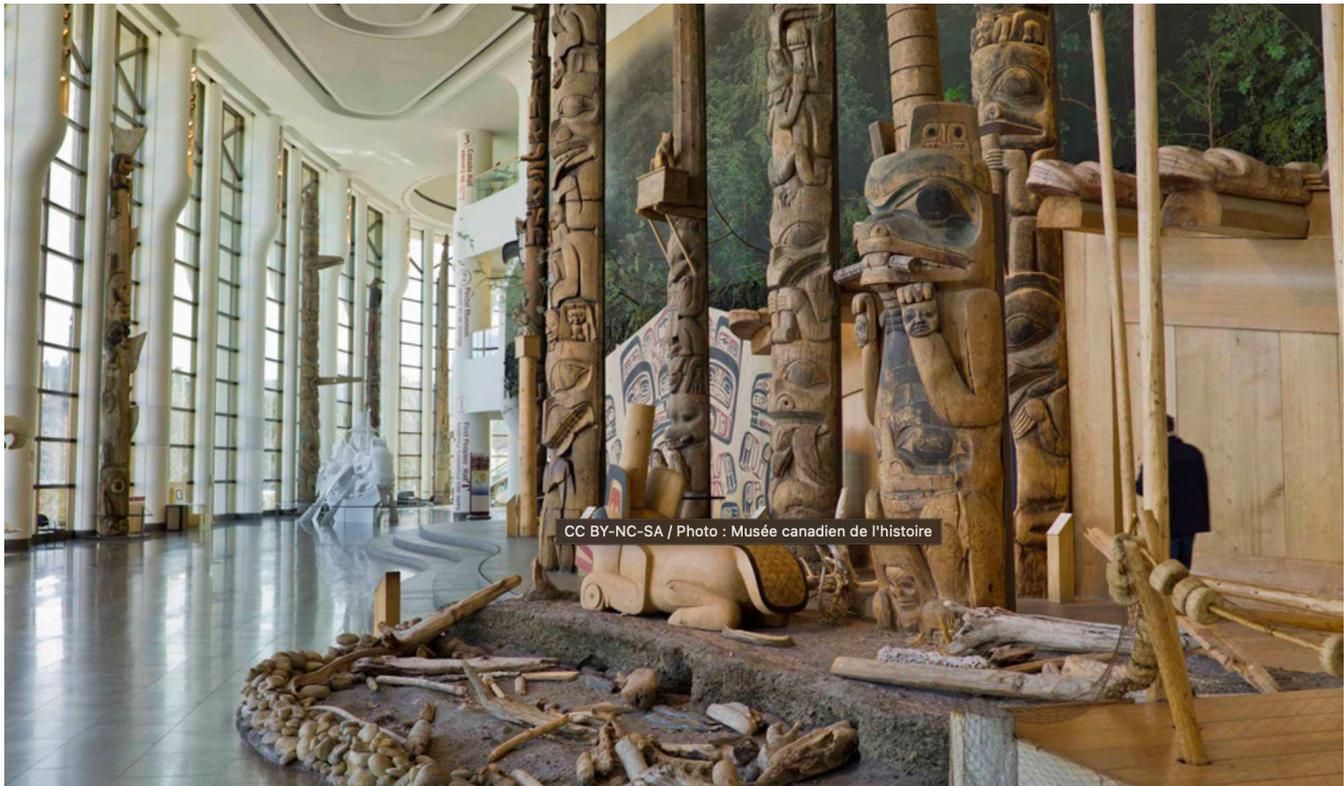
- ecological connectivity - the materials and presence of the structure should take away as little from the ecological integrity of a place, fit within that geographical location and that ecological biome
- the context (geographical, cultural, biological, etc.)
- multiple functionality
- collective well-being
- cultural diversity (represent the historical and cultural traditions of the region)
- accessible
- durability
- aesthetics (why make something purely functional that is ugly)
- responsible material and land use
- economic efficiency
- promote social justice (consider who is excluded and rid the place of those exclusions as much as possible but also that people who build the structure are paid fairly and treated with respect)
- cohesion (for me this particularly applies to well-done renovations but also relates to the broader context of the building within a community)
- the needs/ideas/concerns represent the diverse input of many different people/stakeholders rather than represent the preferences of an elite few

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting...

I am not an architect and so these two buildings may not completely align with the principles I listed above of what constitutes quality, but I love the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau as well as the new library in Calgary. They are both beautiful buildings that fit there geographic location and you feel a sense of awe and calm just walking into them. The natural light streams in and externally they are both stunning and memorable buildings.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau: <https://www.historymuseum.ca>

Calgary Central Library: <https://calgarylibrary.ca/read-learn-and-explore/central-library/>

Nicole Hobbins*temporary hire for Calgary conference*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect the needs and wants of the occupants. Quality in the built environment means contributing to the health and wellbeing of its occupants, both physical and psychological, the environment, and the society it is part of. I think this manifests in the sustainable use of local natural materials, with a form that complements the local architectural language but also challenges outdated beliefs about the passive function of the built environment, and makes some statement about the society it is built for. A quality-built environment would be dynamic and flexible, changing over time and adapting to the ways it is used and the people who use it. It would allow for changes in ideas about what quality is – we are always learning better ways of doing things and the built environment should be able to adapt to this.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting the new Calgary Central Library. The use of wood finishes gives an immediate feeling of warmth, welcoming, and comfort – before even entering the building. The large overhang at the entry makes you feel like you are welcomed in before you are physically inside. This kind of welcoming, flowing movement continues into the building where the wood motif takes over the central atrium and the configuration of stairs and ramps guides you gently but purposefully around the library, offering areas of reprieve to explore the stacks and reading areas. I think the way that circulation is facilitated here encourages people to use the library as it should be used – as a safe gathering space, a place of learning and exploring, and as an environment that offers comfort.

The use of natural light via oculi in the library also adds to this quality in the built environment. The large, slightly shaded oculus in the central library gives a warm light that is constantly changing throughout the day. I think that having this environmental cue of the passage of time is really important for our psychological wellbeing, as it helps to reinforce our internal clocks. The oculus, and the windows around the exterior of the building, give us a connection to outside – the oculus connects us to the natural environment by way of the sun (or lack thereof, on rainy days) and the windows connect us to the urban environment and the neighbourhood surrounding the library, keeping us aware of our connections to each other. There is a second oculus in the great reading room which is diffused instead of direct, but still maintains a warmth that contributes to the quality of the environment – especially since that reading room is largely wood finish; these natural elements work together to create a harmonious welcoming environment. Finally, the form of the library adds to its quality because of its connection to the city via incorporation of the train route through/under the building, and because its curvature brings something novel to the area and encourages us to think about new, innovative possibilities for our environment and beyond. By having such an integrated but unique-looking building, it challenges people's notion of a building as a box using all electric lighting and HVAC, and encourages us to consider what else could be changed for the better in our built environment.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Central atrium at the Calgary Central Library. Photo by Nicole Hobbins, 2021.

Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/dDtEQYEHJcHFBA358>

Stavros Kondeas*Student**Member of the Research Site Led by Susan Fitzgerald***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect a built space which incorporates the experiences of many people. It is important our buildings, especially ones that cater to the public, are composed with a variety of spatial experiences and qualities — light/dim, soft/hard, high/low, natural/built, loud/quiet, big/small, etc. This variety of spatial qualities offers the opportunity for inclusion to a large group of people whose abilities and sensitivities vary. I think designing with this perspective in the built environment is an essential skill because it is independent of program and use, it is a way of designing *space*; whether its schools, libraries, hospitals, workspaces, or parks, these qualities relate to people, their senses, and how they experience the world. Often, you may hear ‘a space for everyone is a space for no one’, and I think this points to a type of public space which in its quest for inclusivity achieves a generic quality that welcomes few. This is where I believe that a positive experience of *space* comes from a feeling of belonging, and a space which belongs to everyone includes a rich assortment of spatial character.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting the Halifax Central Library. The library is a neighbour to my School of Architecture, making it a space which has welcomed me for many years and across many roles — *tourist, student, friend, book borrower, computer user, etc.* With these shifting roles, the library somehow shifted the way I experience it. I was a tourist in Halifax the first time I visited the Library. Upon approach, I was immediately taken by the shifting glass volumes and large central staircases which weave overtop each other. In these first moments, I interpreted the building as large, open, bright, and public. My perception of the library began to change with more and more visits. As a student, I learned how the library could be a place with quiet enclaves for reading and writing, large tables for group meetings, dark rooms for viewing film, and an auditorium for public debate and performance. Corners of the library and the spaces between the stacks served as refuge for grieving, confiding, and sharing intimate moments with friends. It's funny that the expected use of the library — somewhere to reference books, access resources, and gain knowledge — was the use I relied upon the least. I think it is due to its range of spatial qualities — light/dim, soft/hard, high/low, natural/built, loud/quiet, big/small — that I keep getting surprised with how I can use the same space repeatedly. Beyond my own experience, I have witnessed the library become home, sometimes in a literal sense, to many people. The library's outdoor spaces to the front and back share similar contrasting qualities to the interior. A combination of landscape, hardscape, lighting, seating, and coverings make the exterior spaces suitable for many uses. I have seen art shows, protests, busking, dancing, eating, crying, shelter seeking, animal handling, among other activities take place around the building.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Image caption with copyright owner:

Central staircase in the library with a handrail at multiple elevations to suit the needs of adults and children. Image credit: Doublespace Photography

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Halifax+Central+Library/@44.6427638,-63.5773726,17z/data=!3m1!4m6!3m5!1s0x4b5a223391907ad3:0x520186fbd5f800ac!8m2!3d44.6427638!4d-63.5751839!16s%2Fm%2F0zmy64q>



Terrance, Galvin

Member of the Research Site Led by LU (Terrance Galvin)

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

A positive experience of *quality* should reflect in the design of the built environment through different kinds of places (including buildings) that make one feel included in the life of the city, or town, or village. Overall quality in the design of the built environment begins with those in decision-making roles, and then transfers to those who translate policies, and then to those who design environments that frame these policies. So many cities have festivals that include and excite groups, individuals, families, etc. How do we make those events inclusive and accessible? This requires forethought and the design of a process that is not top-down, but bottom-up; that is not object related, but experiential and truly multi-valent. Parks and streets are often the venues for such positive experience, so how can a landscape or a building do the same? Can a building, even a house, participate in the life of the individual, but also in the collective. Citizens always use terms including 'sense of belonging' when they feel included. Think of farmers markets, busking, going to a 'good' library, where one isn't left out, or excluded. This may be the way the front entrance lends itself to accessibility, or inverts the way many 'public buildings' turn their backs on the very public who they are intended for. The Tate Modern in London is such a place. Positively, good design is achieved through a complex process that involves including people in the process from the onset, and ends in sensitive design that challenges NIMBY rhetoric in favor of social values.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting the Halifax Central Library, after it was completed. On this vacant site for years, nothing happened, a major intersection of the main street (Spring Garden Road) was a non-place. Then, through the addition of a place for people in the form of a public library, the entire corner, and the street, and downtown Halifax was transformed. Lived experience was ever-present in my first visit to the Halifax Central Library: in addition to books, there were curated art installations, there was a community-run café (two I believe) in place of a commercial chain; there were books of course, but the place was filled with light, and was a hive of activity, the proof that the place was inclusive. This was carefully designed, from the grand circulation of the stair, to the children's play area and library, tucked away from the street but very visible and easy to watch children in. As in a piazza, circulation plays a huge role in moving through a series of intimate spaces and tying them together. I ran into an award-winning composer from CBC who told me that since the library opened, it was now his second 'home' and his office. This is truly public architecture. And then, moving to the top of the building, there is an additional "room in the city" – a public room that one can rent for birthdays or conferences, that has a 360-degree view of Halifax, from the large harbour port to the 18th century Citadel. This room is tall enough to look over other buildings and makes one feel on the same level of Citadel Hill. Most importantly, this building that boasts design quality now, for the first time, offers an experience to Haligonians that was not available before. This glass pavilion over the library is an *entirely new experience*, and one that takes your breath away. This is the power of well designed, inclusive architecture.

And next, moving back down and exiting the building, it is set back to create an outdoor plaza, where music and performances can take place in good weather – which is a few months in summer and fall in the Maritimes. This is an essential part of the program of this library complex, a well-designed addition right next to the School of Architecture. What better place for students to study a qualitative social condenser that promotes learning and living together.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Halifax Central Library



Google map link:

<https://goo.gl/maps/yU6APkacdnGMDpyo9>

Blank, Sonia

Title or Partnership Status: Architect + Researcher, ASFQ - Community Organizations
Member of the research site directed by : Ipek Tureli + Anna Kramer (McGill U)

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should look like:

As a woman, I notice that I unconsciously seek out the presence of others when I walk around the city, especially at night. I enjoy crowded and busy streets and public spaces, whether they are commercial or more informal in nature: I feel safe there. I associate movement, noise and urban lighting with a sense of well-being. For me, this is what a quality environment should support; the possibility to live together while being able to choose to be alone. The possibility to look, without necessarily being seen. To have access to the space, without choosing to go there, to sit there, to lie there. A space, or spaces, with which one can engage. A positive experience, in other words, is that of a place that welcomes, allows to move, to take refuge, to settle down, to be confronted, without being restrictive.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences with quality:

I will always remember the first time I visited the *Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec (BANQ)* in the Latin Quarter. Over the years, it has become a place to which I have returned often and in which I feel serene. This immense building emerges from the ground, connected by multiple accesses to the dense and hectic network that lies beneath it. By its imposing presence, it is a reflection of the activity of the metropolis, of the flow of anonymous people who pass through it without even realizing it. During the day, despite its size, it disappears into the clouds, enveloped by the reflections of the sky above it and the buildings that surround it. At night, it is a lighthouse in the city. It is a crossroads between so many spaces, non-places, services, people, that it often becomes a meeting point.

I like this space because it extends on the public domain, while allowing to be sheltered from it, a kind of haven. A refuge from the cold, the rain, but also from the incessant noise. When one arrives there from the metro, one discovers a vast interior public square, cleared upwards on a surprising scale. This space radiates by its emptiness. In this hollow is the second skin of the library, an interior wooden facade, whose porosity allows a glimpse of the animation, or the ambient calm, which reflects the time of day. In short, for me, entering the library is synonymous with discovery, security and familiarity. This space also represents quality in the sense that it is open to the city and open to all.

It's a place where I've talked to strangers, where I've met teammates for teamwork, where I've sat in the chairs for a long time, contemplating the view from the 4th floor, on a day when I didn't feel like doing more. It's a place where I can come in alone, without being obliged to consume anything, to be dressed in a certain way, where the only requirement is silence and respect for others. Quite simply, it is a space where I can go to the bathroom and fill my water bottle, a space where I can stroll, work, read, sleep and meet. I hope that this space will evolve and transform over time to keep the qualities that make it special to me.

Here is an image or link to the above location that I consider an example of quality in the built environment:



Grand Library of Quebec / Patkau Architects + Menkès Shooner Dagenais Le Tourneux Architects + Croft Pelletier © James Dow

Link to Google Map: [BAnQ's Great Library](#)

WHITE, Jacques

Member of the research site directed by: Laval University

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality lies in the discovery or rediscovery of places that stimulate the senses and have meaning for those who find themselves there. The experience is not so much about the architectural objects themselves or the spaces they circumscribe as it is about their multiple possible appropriations. The ways of experiencing a project vary greatly depending on the conditions (season, time of day, mode and duration of occupation, atmospheres, stimuli of the moment, etc.) and the people present (predispositions, sensitivities, density of occupation, mode and speed of movement, interactions, etc.). Experiences are both unique and linked, because every experience is conditioned by previous experiences and thus conditions future experiences. This dynamic process calls upon memory and at the same time builds it. The experience can be intuitive and emotional (we like or not, we feel good or not, all the nuances being possible between such polarities), otherwise reasoned and intellectual (the perceptions engage understandings, reflections, debates, sometimes even indifference). A positive experience of quality is inscribed in memories, shared, recommended to others, transformed and eventually becomes collective. It is perhaps from this point on that it becomes not only positive, but participative in improving the quality in the built environment.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

One example that comes to mind is the Maison de la littérature de l'Institut canadien, built in Old Quebec City, following a provincial competition won by Chevalier Morales Architects. This project has received numerous awards, including the Grand Prix d'excellence en architecture awarded by the Ordre des architectes du Québec in 2017. It is a sensitive and radical transformation of a once heavy and dark space into a light and airy setting bathed in light. This project establishes new dialogues with its host environment, between building and neighborhood, between heritage and contemporaneity. The strong constraints of the project have been transformed into a conceptual lever. This is particularly illustrated, with great eloquence, in the questioning of the recommendations of the competition program, which originally foresaw the simple redevelopment of the existing building. By hollowing out the existing building in order to increase its size, and by relegating the compartmentalized and technically constrained spaces of the program to a new annex, the designers not only posed the competition question in a different way, but also introduced unforeseen qualities to the originally imagined architectural project. The success of the project is due in particular to a particularly harmonious combination of the multiple qualities desired in the program and added by the designers, which gives the whole a unique character and an exceptional coherence. It must be said that the designers spared no effort in constantly aiming for a certain balance between old/new, whole/parts, unified/articulated space, mass/lightness, neutrality/expressiveness of materials, container/content, calm/animated atmosphere, interiorization/exteriorization, etc. Clearly, the approach to design is integrated, holistic and inclusive, and this can be felt in the result. Above all, it is the strong attendance and appreciation, which has been constantly renewed (except for pandemic-related reasons) since the project's inauguration, that testifies to its exceptional public qualities.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I have found to be an example of quality in the built environment:



House of Literature of the Canadian Institute. Photo credit: Chevalier Morales

Lien vers la carte Google : <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Maison+de+la+litt%C3%A9rature/@46.8130424,-71.2130942,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x4cb895dee6e70f97:0x73323c3986dd8b45!8m2!3d46.8130424!4d-71.2109002!16s%2Fg%2F11bxdzlf7s>

Alex, Polito

Architecture Student

Member of the Research Site Led by: Laurentian University

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should create a feeling of comfort for everyone experiencing the space; by definition, this would mean a feeling of ease and/or relief, a sense that 'no matter who I am this place is for me'. The space should be personal for everyone, there should be some reflection of the community everywhere one looks. And not only in the aesthetic, also in the design; this means programmatically, circulation, lighting qualities and all those fancy architecture metrics. These should relate directly to the people using that space, because at the end of the day that is who architecture is made for. This is a very broad explanation, but to bring it into reality I believe that accessibility is a very large part of creating a comfortable space. In so many urban cities the street life is there, but the architecture tends to turn it's back, often adding complicated, unwelcoming entrances. An experience of quality should invite that urban culture into the building, merging the street life and the architecture seamlessly and through this ensure accessibility for everyone.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

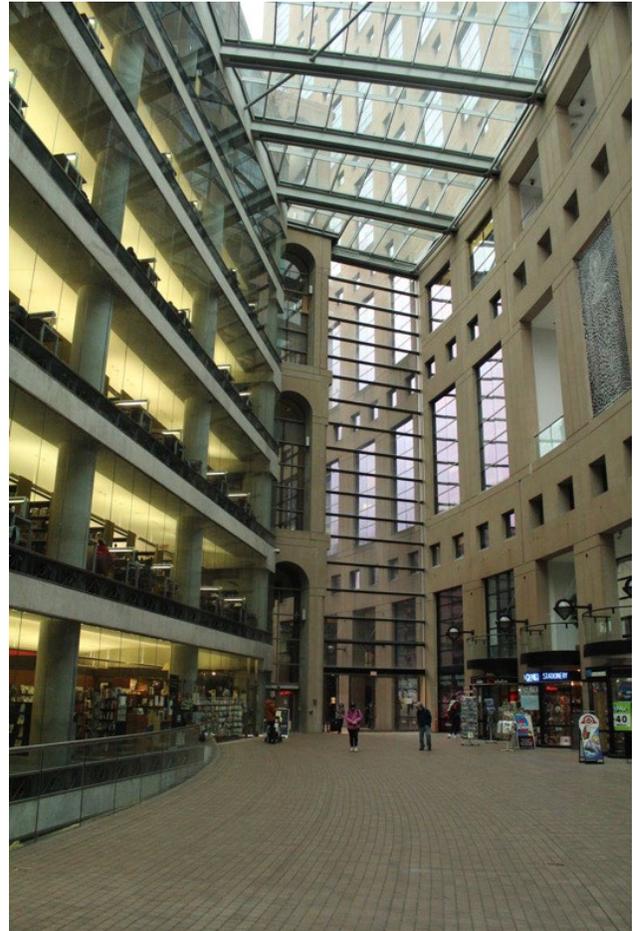
The Vancouver Public Library (Central) is one of these places that demonstrates an inclusive comforting environment for everyone that walks in. It starts from the street level, where the building unwraps its arms to invite everyone in. The façade delaminates to reveal a set of automatically opening doors, that invites the street life into an indoor street. This is my favorite part of the building as it takes the concept of the Vancouver Street, and brings it into a indoor setting, away from the ever constant rain. This indoor street has a row of shops tucked into the wall, a open to below space that looks into lower into the library. And, I think most successfully there is a glass wall looking into the main levels of the library, in a similar way that the glass facades of the buildings border a street. From the sidewalk, into the indoor street and into the main library is an accessible experience with ramps, auto opening doors and consistent graded walks. This creates a fluent, accessible experience for everyone who comes across the building.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Image caption with copyright owner:

Left: *Exterior of the library,*

Right: *interior street – copyright owner: Alex Polito*



Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/aRAjeAq1qJExAM1r7>

3. Public Buildings: Educational Institutions

Brendan, Roworth

Member of the Research Site Led by Susan Fitzgerald at Dalhousie University

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

The built environment should offer nothing but the opportunity for experience. It does not have to prescribe it, actively influence it, or shape it in any overt manner. The spaces that I experience the most enjoyment in are those that allow for life to exist without purpose. They act as a platform for anything the current occupant can ask of it. In my experience these kinds of spaces exist between the necessary, between the planned and programmed points in your daily life. They may exist as leftover space, an empty lot or an unfinished courtyard, for which the intended purpose has been forgotten, or they may be carefully designed to allow for people to sit and converse on a bench while taking in a view or to flip through a magazine in a corridor between lectures. The most important aspect of these spaces is that they allow for adoption without dictating or restricting use, they exist solely as a container of activity. The very best of these spaces create a sense inclusion in public life without the necessity of participation, where the diversity of activity within a community can coexist without one overpowering another.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

While an undergraduate at U of C I spent most of my time in two buildings: Scurfield Hall and Engineering G block. Scurfield tended to separate each activity within it. The atrium had friends chatting and getting coffee, the halls were for walking between classes, seminar rooms were for meetings and group work, and individual study took place in the library or a cubicle on the lowest level. Each area had its designated activity with little interaction between them.

Block G combines its dedicated use as a research and teaching facility with the in-between space I previously described by wrapping the central block of Labs on all sides with inhabitable mezzanines and corridors. Constructed within the courtyard of existing faculty buildings the block maintains public gathering space withing a continuous central atrium that runs up from the basement level to glass ceiling. Within it you will find students playing ping pong, reading and chatting on the inhabited stairwell at its center, or working in groups at tables and modular furniture pieces. It is the halls and mezzanines that run above this however that give this space its particular quality. Each level above the ground floor hosts a wrapping hall that runs from one side of the atrium, around the block of labs in the center, and back to the atrium on its opposite end. These halls are left open to the lowest level, allowing the noise of life below to filter up to the benches, tables, and chairs that line them. You are able to inhabit these spaces for any purpose you may have. I have eaten lunch alone on the top-level watching skateboarders in the courtyard below, spent hours talking with friends, and worked on countless assignments all within the same space. It allows you to move up and down between levels coming closer to and moving away from the other activity within the space based on your current needs without ever completely removing your connection to the social space below. Users are able to make themselves equally comfortable within the space regardless of their purpose for being there, and

without the building necessitating any particular activity or method of inhabitation in order to do so.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



<https://www.azuremagazine.com/article/schulich-school-of-engineering-glass-facade/>

Google map link: <https://www.google.ca/maps/@51.080263,-114.1318927,18.75z>

Ogulnabat Jumayeva*Graduate Research Assistant**Member of the Research Site Led by University of Waterloo***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

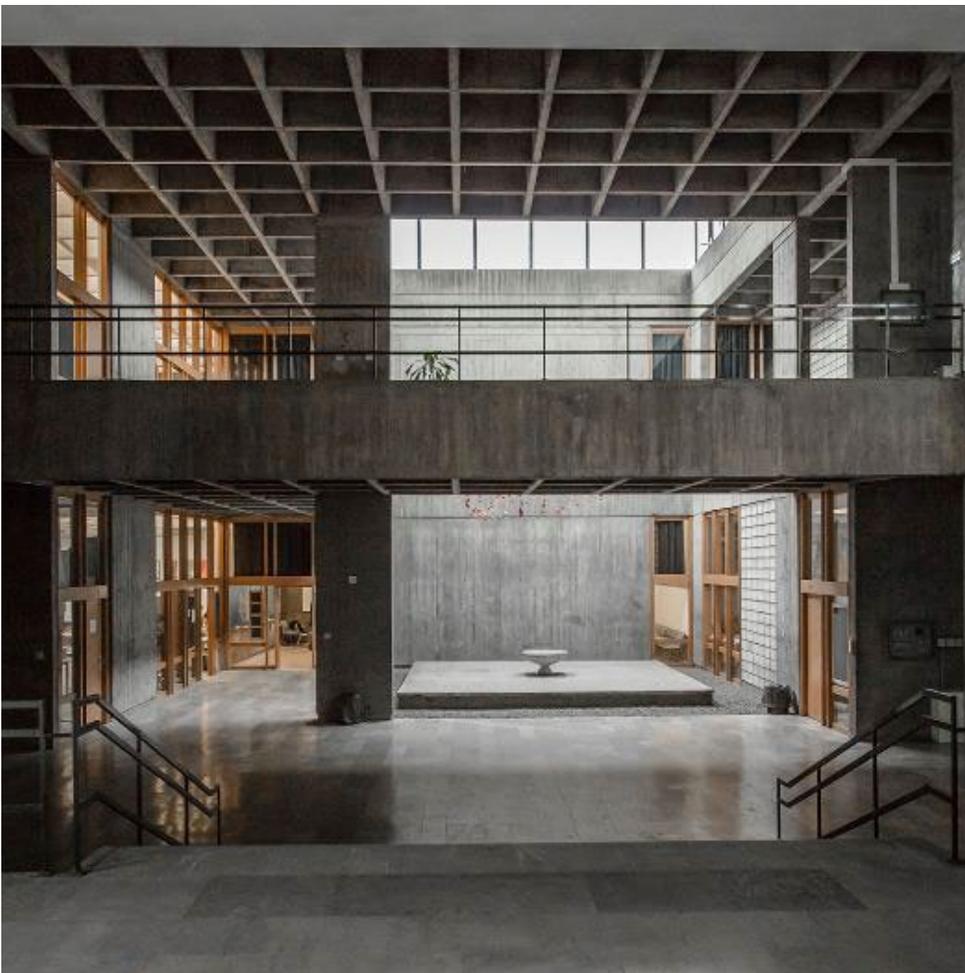
I believe that a positive experience of quality should create an opportunity to make positive memories. As people spend majority of their time indoor, built environment is the background and sometimes the participant of human experiences. Just like the collective memory of a society is linked with religious/cultural/national heritage establishments, a personal memory, I believe, is inherently associated with the built environments the person has inhabited. Since a positive or a negative architecture shapes the memory in a respective way, architecture becomes relevant to our perception of past. This proves that architecture is not only about present or future but the whole lifetime including the past. I think positive experience of quality in the built environment should address as many of the human needs as possible. I think built environment is relevant to every level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. I think lower levels of physiological, safety and security needs are addressed by quantitative aspects of built environment such as structural integrity, environmental qualities and wayfinding. The upper levels of love and belonging, self-esteem and self-actualization are linked with more qualitative aspects of built environment. Is the space inclusive? Does it promote positive social interaction and sense of belonging? Do I feel respected and dignified in a space? Does the space look aesthetically pleasing? How much of a control I have over the arrangements of the space? How sustainable is the space? Am I being a responsible individual by owning/occupying this space? Do I feel happy in this space? I believe positive experience of quality in the built environment should address all of those needs in one way or the other.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

As I am new to Canada, I recall my undergraduate faculty building in Ankara, Turkey being a very good example of positive experience of quality. When I first visited this building as an applicant, I was struck by its overall tectonic articulation. Having spent 4 years in it, I am convinced that the building made my university experience 10x better by its inspiring and airy atmosphere. METU Faculty of Architecture building remains one of the first and best examples of brutalist architecture in Turkish context. The building is significant both as a masterful application of brutalist and traditional architecture aesthetics and as an institution that fosters education of future architects by being their literal "teacher". The building is made up of rectangular prism blocks interconnected by wide circulation areas with unexpected open courtyards in between. While individual box-like studios beautifully gather around a central courtyard, classrooms and offices follow linear arrangement along wide corridors. The use of exposed concrete for walls, columns and corniches with visible marks of wooden framework gives it a special raw aesthetic. Penetration of natural light is cleverly designed through different types of fenestrations such as skylights, clerestories and courtyards. On top of providing a creative environment for students who spend most of their time there, it serves as a laboratory and case study for student with its unique architectural features: freshmen learn about scale and dimension by counting the 1mx1m grids on ceiling; students usually find themselves producing

drawings of the building in the scope of drawing courses. Every instructor will have at least one example from the faculty building related to the taught material. Moreover, specific places of the building with unique features gain their own identities and are even called by their nicknames such as kubbealti (under-dome). Wide circulation areas allow organization of various spontaneous activities such as exhibitions, juries, cocktails and others, thus creating a transparent education environment. If a building's merit is to be measured by its quality of user experience, then it is one of the best examples I have ever seen. It is a wholistic building that allows free flow of movement and creation of sense of academic community. It is also an intriguing and inspiring space that not only makes the students feel dignified but also invites them to observe and appreciate the architecture. It is an example of how built environment can meet specific needs of the users.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Kubbealti (under-dome) © D. Tuntas

Google map link:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/METU+Faculty+of+Architecture/@39.897465,32.7804936,17z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x14d3463cebd7f0cd:0xb2294b23d01917a6!8m2!3d39.897268!4d32.781732!16s%2Fq%2F122yssnr>

Twylla, Soosay*Research Assistant at Athabasca University*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect...the people and how they are in the built environment. It is sometimes referred to as quality of excellence when I think of any quality it is an inherent knowledge of what is excellent. When discussing quality, it should not be difficult to express how to accomplish this. It is true that the whole environment is affected by negativity as well as positivity, so to accomplish this as being indigenous I believe nature or natural features should be incorporated. To be comfortable is important as well, whether it's the environment or the elements used inside. The elements of the natural environment brought in by windows is important, shapes of the building round or even shapes of the culture like a tipi. Everything about the Cree culture is circles, ceremonies, how we conduct ourselves in a group setting is even circular. Everyone is equal and everyone can see each other. It is a kind and gentle group setting that would set anyone at ease. Creating the good quality environment should reflect openness and having a wide open area for people to gather in is important to community. Community being able to gather here is also important being welcoming.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting...our local schools. A great deal of thought went into the design and a good quality team helped develop them. There are five schools operating as well as a head start program. It is on the Samson Cree Nation Indian Reserve 137 in Alberta, Canada and is part of the Treaty 6 nations. The high school in particular I do believe had local community input, when it opened it was called Nipisihkopahk Secondary School (NSS) then when Maskwacis Education Schools Commission (MESC) took over it became Maskwacis Cree High School (MCHS) where all the students from the four nations of Maskwacis attend high school. From their webpage they quote, "Through education today we empower our youth for success tomorrow."

I had the opportunity to be a part of the staff when the high school first opened and it was exciting being the pioneers rather than just teachers of this wonderful setting of a school. The students and staff were very proud once it opened and were able to be host to other schools with the sports and activities. One of the great features was incorporating a theatre at the front of the school and is capable of being a location that could feature great acts such as the "Bear Grease" troop and many others invited to the four nations of Maskwacis. It is called the Jonas Applegarth theatre, it is a 300-seat multi-purpose performing arts centre, used not only for school assemblies, but also for concerts, special presentations, workshops and community events. Two other valuable parts of the school are the Nancy Louis-Yellowbird Wing and the Sister Nancy LeClair (Lightning) Library.

Walking through the school it is hugely impacting, it is open as soon as you walk in and the outdoors is brought in with the huge windows looking at the back of the school. That is important being able to stay connected to the land and it is good for the students to see that every time they walk through to their next class. It is also the lunch room and sitting area where most of the students and staff gather at their breaks. The classrooms extend on both sides of this open area and you see at either end of these hallways open windows to the outside again. Some of the classrooms wished to close off the windows due to the students special needs abilities, due to over stimulation but most of the classrooms have windows that bring in the natural light. They really enjoy their school and the community as well is proud of it.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



<https://mchs.maskwacised.ca/>

Farah, Leila

Co-applicant (Member of the Steering Committee of the grant application, 2020-2022)

Member of the Research Site Led by Toronto Metropolitan University

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that there are many positive experiences of quality in the built environment and in what follows, I refer to three facets: emotion, meaning, and relation.

Some spaces can be sensed at the emotional level, and the experience can be a profoundly moving one. Many architects have written about such places and their affective impact. Other spaces have a more cerebral effect; they can contribute and provide a deeper understanding of place(s), context(s), cause(s), event(s), resource(s), culture(s), and many more. Yet another positive experience from the built environment is its relational power. This includes how a space enables inclusivity, embraces diversity, and invites engagement.

Hence, I believe that positive experiences of quality in the built environment are manifold: they can touch us emotionally, nourish us intellectually, and enrich us relationally. At the same time, what remains constant is that they leave a lasting effect on us.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

With regard to a positive experience of the built environment in Canada, in this short piece, I write about a project that I have been involved with—the ‘Edible Campus.’ This undertaking started in 2007 and introduced a vegetable garden on the premises of McGill University’s downtown campus through community participation. It reimagined, transformed and ultimately revitalized underutilized spaces, actively tended to by diverse partakers with the resulting produce going to Santropol Roulant’s meals-on-wheels program. I believe this is a fitting example of an endeavor that has elicited a plethora of positive responses. It has provided inspiration for participants, students, and bystanders alike, who contributed to setting up, caring for, and harvesting, or simply watched this garden flourish seasonally. It has also offered meaning, both in inviting reflection on environmental and social sustainability, as well as on urban revitalization. Further, it fostered links between socially diverse communities, raising awareness among different participants, providing opportunities to learn about urban agriculture, and supplying produce to vulnerable citizens. It has achieved this by engaging participants to become active stakeholders, and by creating synergies and bonds between those involved. Ultimately, the ‘Edible Campus’ was more than the sum of its parts and it served as an inspiration for other campuses in Canada and beyond.

For more information on the Edible Campus led by Professor Vikram Bhatt, please visit:

Minimum Cost Housing Group, McGill University:

<https://www.mcgill.ca/mchg/projects/ediblecampus>

The project has been widely published and received a number of recognitions including a Merit Award in 2017 from International Making Cities Livable and a 2008 National Urban Design Award in the category “Urban Fragments” by the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC), Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP), and Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA).

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Photo: Leila M. Farah (former member of the Minimum Cost Housing Group), 2008

Robert Balay
Mayor Town of Athabasca

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect...

A positive experience would provide residents with a comfortable, safe, and convenient lifestyle. These environments can vary widely in layout and design, but they all share one common goal: to create a comfortable place to live and work.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

The ARC building at Athabasca University was designed to celebrate the region's timber-based economy, the team used wood extensively to achieve sustainability targets and a stunning architectural aesthetic. Built in 2010, the new building combines energy-efficient building technologies with leading-edge networking and communications technologies to facilitate online and distance learning.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Martha Radice*Coapplicant (academic)**Member of the Research Site Led by Susan Fitzgerald at Dalhousie***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality in the built environment should reflect respect for the building's users. The sensations of natural light and air are important, as they represent freedom, breathing room, visibility, and the potential for relaxation or a break in the working day. If there are large windows, and if one can see green space outside them, so much the better. Accessibility is vital to make the built environment inclusive, and it is not always about ramps and elevators. As a person with a severe hearing impairment, I recognize that acoustics are one of the most important yet neglected elements of quality in the built environment. If I am invited to a social event in an echoey room or a room with a strong machine hum, I feel miserable as I struggle to hear what is being said. Unfortunately, many public gathering spaces have terrible acoustics, making them less accessible. Quality can be hard to pinpoint: I could not tell you what makes some materials seem flimsy while others are durable, but durable materials and furnishings also signal respect to building users to me. If the furnishings are cheap and disposable, then perhaps the users of the environment are considered equally disposable.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

The building in which my own department is situated at Dalhousie University, the Marion McCain Arts & Social Sciences building, generally offers me a positive experience of quality in the built environment. This is good, because I spend a lot of time there. The first time I visited it, I was struck by how light and well-designed faculty members' offices are. Most importantly, most have an entire wall of built-in bookshelves, which is important for professors in the arts and social sciences. The classrooms, which mostly fit 35 people, are light and spacious, with big windows and working blinds. The two big lecture theatres are fine with decent acoustics. The dominant materials are wood and glass. I like how the departments are set up: rather than stretching along a horizontal corridor, the departments are organized 'vertically', with their main office on the first floor, and faculty offices spread over the first, second, and third floors along the vertical axis of a spiral staircase. Apparently, back in the days before this building was built, the departments each had their own house – literally a former residential house – and the architects wanted to keep that homey, 'house' organization. I like it very much; it feels friendly and cozy and I like the spiral staircases (there are a lot of staircases, for the size of the building!). There are also a couple of good common areas: the main lobby, an atrium style space that is very spacious and airy but feels quite 'public', and the 'Fireside Lounge' which has a real fireplace and is often used for departmental social events. It is very light (lots of windows) but feels more private, because while there are no doors the fireplace wall creates a partial partition from the adjacent corridor. It is a carpeted area so the acoustics are good (easy to hear conversation), unlike the main lobby/atrium area which is very echoey. There are three main practical problems with the building: 1) the third floor gets very hot in the warmer months and there is no air conditioning; 2) we can no longer open the windows, apparently because replacement parts are no longer available for when the window hinges and latches break so the solution has been to permanently

close the windows; and 3) there are only two single-person toilets on the first floor, meaning that it is a long hike to the nearest toilets for anyone on this floor.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



The bookshelves in my office. Photo: Martha Radice. CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0



First floor hallway in the Marion McCain Arts & Social Sciences Building, showing the middle of three spiral staircases. Photo: Martha Radice. CC BY-NC-ND 4.0



Fireside Lounge in the Marion McCain Arts & Social Sciences Building. Photo: Martha Radice. CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/ZYvkKtprUi8V3Z8q7>

CASTONGUAY-RUFINO, Paloma

Member of the research site directed by: University of Montreal

In my own words, this is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:

Note that this response is greatly influenced by the architectural journey of the HEC Montreal pavilion, designed by Dan Hanganu architects and completed in 1996. I believe that a positive experience of quality must explicitly reflect architectural intentions. In the case of the HEC Montreal pavilion, and particularly in its library, the mundane is sublimated. The everyday tasks that we all have to do, that we cannot escape, are carried out in a setting that welcomes us, facilitates us, helps us, elevates us, reassures us, and does not disappoint us. Without necessarily giving it a predetermined color, matter or texture, it is rather by the variety of possible occupations, at different times, solo or accompanied, that this framework works so well. From this place, one observes the changing aspect of life itself. The passage of time is not hindered, and this place provides a comfortable protection from the weather for the person who is there. It is a place to gather, to reflect, to mingle, or to think introspectively. The access and uses are clear, not so much in their signage as in their architecture, because these spaces are intelligently integrated into the pavilion as a whole. The walk is good, easy, efficient and at the same time, leaves us opportunities for contemplation. Finally, and this is part of the quality of a built environment, one has the feeling of perceiving one or more intentions, because it expresses in some way ideas, concepts, that can be clearly decoded. These are the architectural intentions, which we can read, apprehend, feel and finally understand.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

A visit to the HEC Montréal building is always synonymous with light, views, perspectives and calm. What emerges from this place is that it seems to be equipped, even equipped, to welcome students, professors, professionals, and citizens. In fact, during the recent ice storm in Montreal, the building remained open, with its multi-purpose spaces and vast circulation areas with abundant natural light. From the pavilion's library, it is possible to contemplate the horizon, visible from all points of view, an element that the architect himself had emphasized as an explicit intention during a lecture given at the Pointe-à-Callière museum in 2015, just two years before his death. This gesture of creating views to the outside at all orientations ensures that everywhere in the library-with the possible exception of the restrooms strategically located in a central toilet block-is in contact with the surrounding urban and natural contexts. This gesture may seem simple and insignificant, but in reality, the effect it has is powerful, because the feeling is one of lightness, satisfaction, a kind of immateriality, grace and ease. We have the feeling that our ideas will go far, as far as we want to take them. The limitless horizon is what the architecture that surrounds us encourages us towards. With colleagues from Brazil and Bangladesh, I remember a moment when we gazed at the colors of the autumn leaves from the cafeteria, designed to have a completely open and unobstructed view of the trees around the pavilion. A precious, and at the same time ordinary, lunchtime moment, shared with colleagues who are in Montreal for the first time and who freely marvel at the seasonal beauty, while swallowing their "no crust sandwich". With other colleagues, I will also remember summer meals spent comfortably seated at outdoor tables in the cool shade of the pavilion, taking advantage of the

adjoining facilities provided for this purpose. An interesting experiment was to analyze the plan of this pavilion as posted on the architects' online site, with the specific intent of comparing the lived experience with the architectural intentions. I was pleasantly surprised by the correspondence between the sensations perceived in the pavilion and the architectural intentions contained in the plan. I had also experienced the place extensively, but never paid attention to the project drawings. As an architect, by relating the drawings to my experience of the place, I gain a better understanding of how the plan (the architectural intentions) impacts life (the lived space).

What follows are images and a *Google Maps* link to a place in Canada that I find particularly meaningful and moving:



Left: Direction to the library, ascent to the top. Middle: Invigorating proximity to the curved glass wall. Right: Generous presence of the wood in the computer space. Photo credits: Paloma Castonguay-Rufino.



Left: Making a photocopy, a banal moment sublimated. Middle: Life in the library! Trees and colors. Right: "Sandwich no crust" and quadruple height. Photo credits: Paloma Castonguay-Rufino.

Link to Google map: <https://goo.gl/maps/7AbSJPe8ENG1VkSH8>

HUXLEY, Sarah

Research and Development Manager, Véro & Louis Foundation

Member of the research site directed by: University of Montreal

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of the quality in the built environment must reflect openness, ease of access, and transparency about the possible uses of the space. This does not mean that the use must be constrained or specific, on the contrary it must be multiple and flexible. A built environment must be adaptable to the needs of its users, and offer this potential. This adaptability must not only be possible, it must be accessible, without the need for third party intervention.

I also believe that a quality positive experience is the feeling of safety that comes from a space. Can I retreat if I need to? Is the space warm and welcoming? Do I have time to anticipate what's coming and experience the transition at my own pace? These aspects, of crucial importance for a neuroatypical population, are also beneficial for the general population, to varying degrees.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of a positive quality experience:

I particularly remember visiting Room 600 in the Faubourgs tower at Concordia University in Montreal. Usually used for continuing education, this room was being used that day for a presentation of the results of a survey on the housing needs of people with autism. Several people with autism were present at the event.

Upon entering there was a changing room for personal belongings, and then immediately there was a small room dedicated to soothing and sensory stimulation. So it was reassuring to know that there was already a space for this. The large room was divided by dividers that allowed one to see and hear what was happening on the other side. These dividers were able to determine functions for the different areas of the room (classroom type area for presentation, area for the food and beverage buffet, and registration/hospitality area), and at the same time offer a gradient of socialization. That is, a person could move away from the presentation area (where there are many people and stimuli) and be in a quieter area while still being able to hear and see the presentation. The further one moved away from the presentation area, the closer one got to the quiet room, thus offering several degrees of participation in the event.

The room also offered different seating options, and different layout options. Although it was adapted for this specific event, it was easy to see the possibilities of rearranging it for other types of activities, whether it was through partitions, furniture, and lighting. Throughout the event, the autistic and non-autistic guests circulated, moved around, and used the different modalities of the room at their convenience, without causing any disruption to the other participants. It was therefore easy to socialize in their own way.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I have found to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Lien vers la carte Google : https://www.google.ca/maps/place/Faubourg+Tower/@45.4949617,-73.5783606,18.25z/data=!4m7!3m6!1s0x4cc91be1c9066443:0xb3f21c580837a8ec!4b1!8m2!3d45.494724!4d-73.5779688!16s%2Fg%2F11h04_nbt8

4. Public Buildings: Museums, Galleries, Exposition Centers

Alex McLean*Community Partner**Member of the Research Site Led by Susan Fitzgerald, Brian Lilley, Dalhousie University***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect...

A sense of safety in an environment, as well as proximity to aspects of nature and open space. I also appreciate a sense of aesthetic wholeness, ie. a sense that the various aspects of the environment are talking to one another / reflecting one another. When an environment becomes to 'busy' (overload of stimulus, rules and regulations, crowded with people or objects) I find it less inviting.

I like a space that can be moved through easily but that also invites staying. I suppose in this sense I appreciate a built environment that mirrors the kind of natural environment I'm drawn to: curated enough to feel safe, open enough to invite reflection and immersion.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting...

The Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto. I love the architectural design and the wide array of artworks. I enjoy being in the building and appreciate the cohesion of *each* of the spaces as well as the sense of variety from space to space.

I have fond memories of visiting the gallery with my children, when they were still toddlers. They loved to wander the building and play in the various spaces. Though there were rules (don't touch the art, generally) the space was open and flexible enough that there was always something for kids to climb on and explore while me and my wife were able to appreciate the art. Staff of the gallery also seemed good at knowing when to intervene to protect valuable artwork and when to hang back and let people (kids, in my family's case) do their thing.

For me, the building's atypical shape and arrangements of rooms provided a sense of discovery: you never quite know what to expect as you enter a certain chamber, climb a certain set of stairs etc. To me, this makes the space seem playful as opposed to rigid and bureaucratic. It is public without being managerial.

I think my favorite space in the gallery was always the Galleria Italia that runs along the Dundas-facing side of the building. The Douglas Fir materials feel distinctly Canadian, locating the building within a national environment. Though the space is narrow, it is long and the ceiling is high, so it nonetheless feels open... not unlike being in a fir forest. It also inverts the galleries relationship to its surroundings: from this gallery you look outwards onto busy Dundas Street. The city, in this sense, becomes part of the exhibit. This helps locate the gallery specifically within its urban surroundings.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

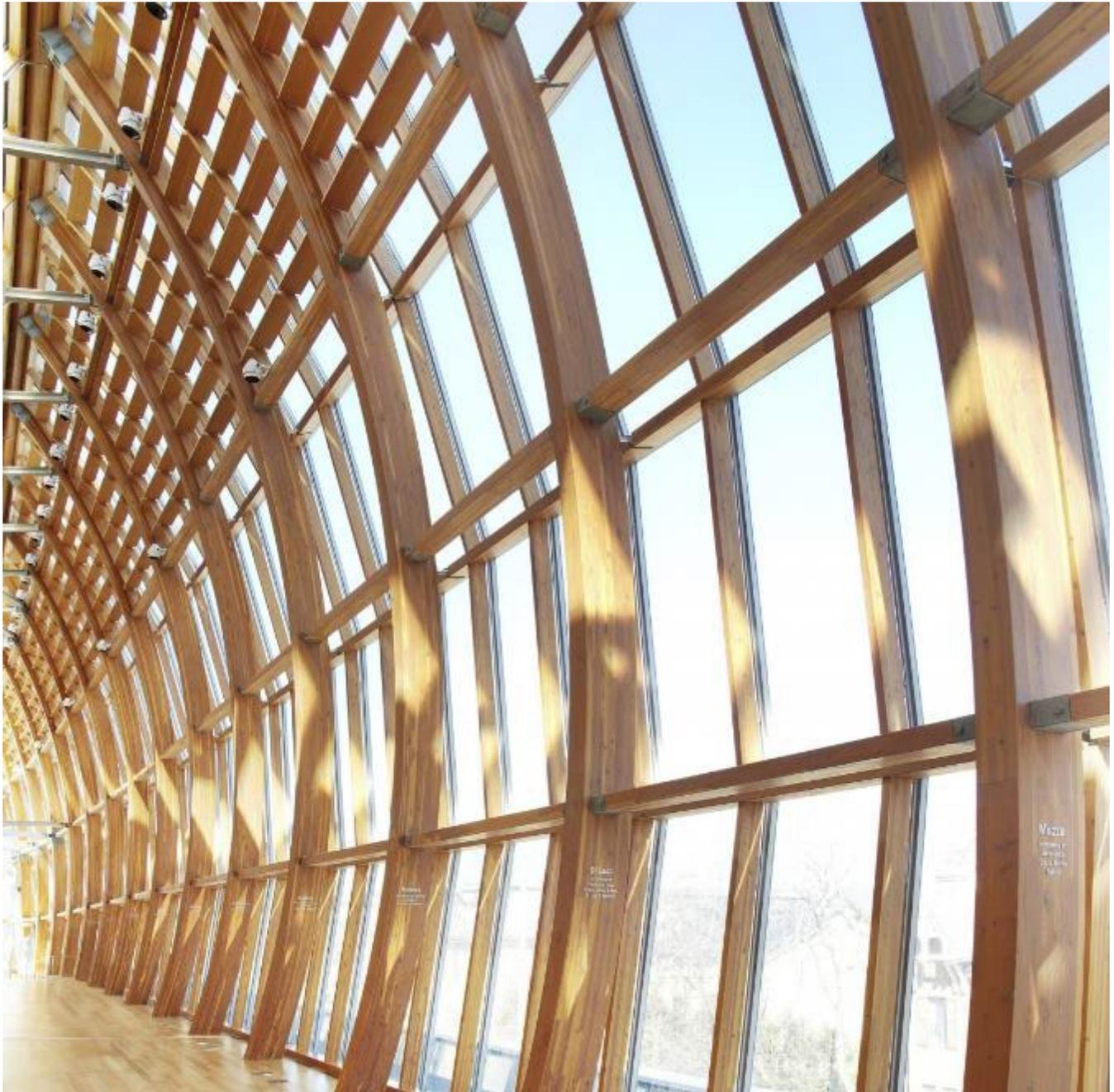


Image courtesy of AGO (from AGO website: <https://ago.ca/agoinsider/view-torontos-living-room>)

Ékoué, Mak

Research Assistant

Member of the Research Site Led by Virginie LaSalle

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality is one that accurately reflects and caters to the environment and community in which it is established; it should also provide a safe, innovative, and engaging place of meeting and interaction for the members and visitors of said community.

When thinking of the built environment, the elements that stand out to me as most important are the ways in which it can enhance daily life as we know it, be it in its strides in terms of accessibility measures or in the ways it has the ability to put us in contact with culture, nature, or even simply our fellow citizens. I feel there is an undeniable, strong social value to the buildings we pass by, and for our experiences of them to be positive ones, they cannot leave us unmoved; they must pull us in, offer spaces and services we do not necessarily have access to from the comfort of our own homes, make us feel welcome and wanted. The built environment is most successful when it is found to be actually useful, and positive experiences are from what happens when the spaces we inhabit efficiently present solutions to our problems. Overall, it needs to be made obvious they were conceived from the very beginning with our specific needs in mind.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting the Benny Library in my neighbourhood of Montreal, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (NDG). There is a reason for it being a project that comes up so often in discussions of the city's successful architecture, and having experienced it firsthand I can attest to the strategies both architectural and social that contribute to it having become nothing short of a neighbourhood staple. Its location on the calmer part of one of the main streets of the area, placed inside a cultural centre and facing a sports facility, as well as its colourful and dynamic façade, immediately signal its welcoming and family-friendly atmosphere; the feeling of safety and comfort is established well before the library-goers even step foot in the place. Inside, it is lively but still relatively quiet; while it is made clear the library does largely cater to families and children especially, the zoning of the interior spaces is done in an efficient and logical way that allows all patrons to quickly find their respective spaces without disturbing the peace of the others. Furthermore, whether it be activities, services, theatre, readings... Everything the centre has to offer is clearly announced and the distinction between the space's different functions is done in such a way that people who frequent the library are bound to one day come into contact with the performances or cultural events taking place, which is perhaps what I most appreciate about this place. I can even comment on this myself: after a few months of moving to NDG and making my way over to the Benny Library solely for books, I eventually found myself picking up a pamphlet announcing the upcoming plays being put on, and as the library had already become such a familiar place, I found myself highly inclined to get some free tickets to attend one of them.

Upstairs, we get even more of an idea of what makes this library special. Music partition and instrument rentals are clearly announced right by the help desk, which is a service I was always

aware Montreal libraries offered but had never seen on display for myself. In the teens and adults' sections, work tables are set all the way alongside the windows, making for a hugely enjoyable space to come sit down and be productive in, all the while getting a view of the neighbouring park and the rest of this familiar area. In the back, tutoring services are also proposed, and the environment is made to feel more relaxed with colourful walls and bean bags. Again, the space is divided in such a way that feels efficient and accommodating to all who might pass through it. The Benny Library does not feel like a place you just drop into, but rather a building in which you want to stay for a while. In my ten years of being a frequent visitor of it, I have never been able to simply stop and borrow or return a book quickly; every single time, without fault, I feel the need to take that grandiose centrepiece staircase, make my way upstairs, and take the time to get lost between the bookshelves, even just for a few.

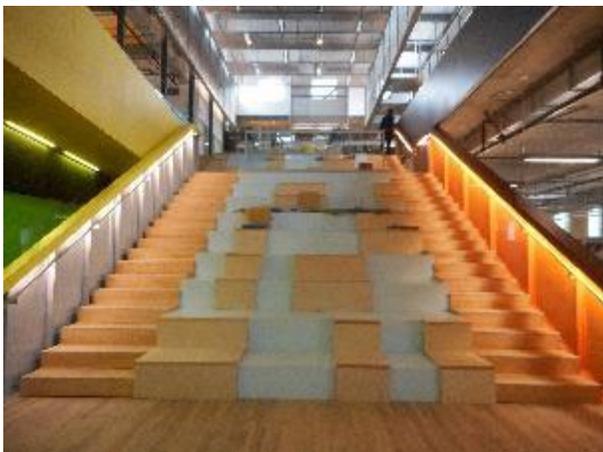
Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Photo: CDN-NDG



Photo: baburek.co



Photos: Jean Gagnon



[On Google Maps](#)

Melissa Lengies

Group or organization affiliation within the partnership:

Student Researcher with Carleton University

In your own words, describe those features of built environments that contribute positively to your encounters and experiences:

I believe that positive lived experiences in the built environment arise from being able to form an emotional connection or feel a part of something. This could be with one's own self, with a community, with history, etc. A space that is bland or does not feel as though it responds to or evokes any emotions or social connection is less likely to be considered a noticeably positive experience, even if it meets one's needs in a practical sense.

The types of spaces I have considered as positive experiences vary to such extent that I feel this underlying quality of emotional connectivity is what I feel contributes the most, whether it's a sense of comfort, belonging, or simply awe. I think there is not just one set of features that guarantees a positive encounter, but those that respond well to the local socio-cultural, political, and environmental context are perhaps better positioned to elicit deeper connections and better experiences with those who engage with them. Materiality, aesthetic, and spatial organization also contribute to how we interpret or feel about the space with respect to its context. On top of that, I believe spaces that are inclusive, accessible and healthy are simply fundamental to quality.

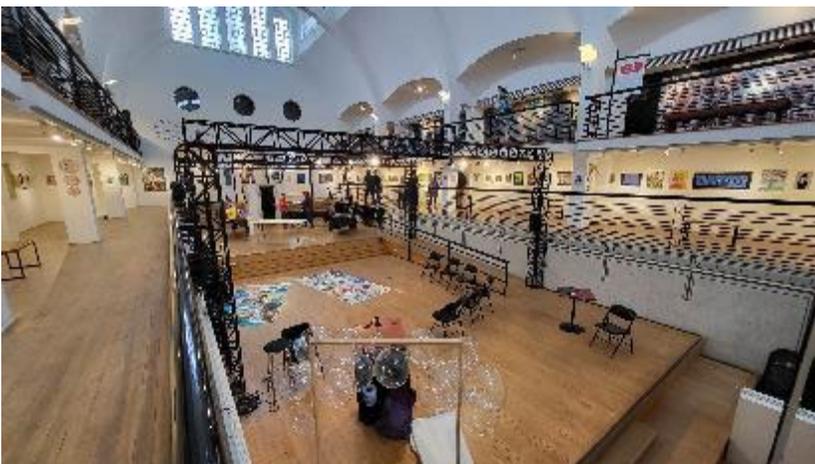
In your own community within Canada, provide some concrete examples of positive lived experiences of quality:

I recently visited the Écomusée du fier monde in Montreal, which is a beautifully repurposed Art Deco building that housed an indoor public bath known as the Bain Généreux for 65 years starting in 1927. While still retaining its historic character and an understanding of how the various spaces – such as the central pool and the changerooms along the sides - were used, the building now hosts a community museum, a gallery and event space. From the moment you walk through the doors, and as you explore the upper and lower levels of the building, it recounts the story from past to present of the people who reside(d) in the historic working-class neighbourhood in which it is situated.

This building struck me as a positive example not just because of the beautiful historic architecture and its tasteful adaptation, but because of the way in which its new use embodies the socio-cultural values of the original program as an active community space in the neighbourhood while responding to its modern values and diversified population. In this space, you can witness the layers of history, get a better sense of the community, and feel a part of something. The space was also flooded with natural light, welcoming, and barrier-free, with ramps and elevators well-integrated into the design. In addition to sharing historical and current information on the neighbourhood, it is a gallery space for local artists, both professional and non-professional. Events which engage the community are also hosted here, occupying even the former pool area and bringing an additional layer of life to the space as locals and visitors can experience the same space together.

The following is an image and/or a link to a space or place in Canada that I found especially meaningful and moving:

Provide an image 'caption' together with the source of the image (photographer, artist, etc.):



Écomusée du fier monde, Melissa Lengies (March 2023)

Google map link (optional): <https://goo.gl/maps/dkbCNsnTDVFT1q678>

Address: 2050 R. Atateken, Montréal, QC H2L 3L8

Michael McClelland*Industry Partner**Member of the Research Site Led by Mario Santana and Mariana Esponda of Carleton University***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality in the built environment should first and foremost reflect a sense of place. This sense builds idiosyncratically and over time. It has the potential for multiple interpretations and contains the lived experience of many people simultaneously.

A sense of place is both tangible and intangible. It's possible to isolate specific physical, aesthetic, and experiential characteristics of a place that contribute to its sense. But, ultimately, the uniqueness and identifiability of particular built environments rely on a gestalt of forces that are observed and contributed to by the people who visit them.

While positive qualities of built environments are as diverse as the environments themselves, there are nonetheless commonalities between them. A sense of beauty, for instance, is equally present in Kensington Market and in Cabbagetown, yet it stems from very different experiences in each case. Both places have the quality of refreshing your senses by offering, whether by design or organically, something cohesive, harmonious, and alive.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

As an example of a specific positive experience of quality in the built environment, I remember visiting Sharon Temple in East Gwillimbury, York Region, before the pandemic. The temple is a unique piece of early 19th-century Southern Ontario architecture that's steeped in significant historical connections. The Children of Sharon were strong and early supporters of a democratic Canada. They elected Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine as the representative of their local riding in the 1840s, paving the way for him to become the first head of a responsible government in Canada along with Robert Baldwin.

The form and setting of Sharon Temple have many positive qualities, including the building's four identical sides comprised of beautiful geometric shapes whose symmetry suggests everyone is welcome. It's a place of music and of light. It carries for me personal memories of restoration work I did at the temple in the 1990s, which helped facilitate a continuation of almost 200 years of occupation. The Illumination of Sharon Temple – which has taken place on this site every September since 1831 – stands out in my mind as encapsulating this place's positive quality. During the Illumination that took place when I was working on the property, I was tasked with the challenging but rewarding job of lighting the candles on the temple roof.

Participation, sublimity, continuity, and an awareness of the past and future are all indicators of quality in built environments. That said, these can manifest in myriad ways.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Sharon Temple during the yearly Illumination (Photo credit: Sharon Temple National Historic Site and Museum, [link](#)).

Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/nDpLHtXyd8R28vJY7>

MARMEN, Patrick

Team Leader and Design Commissioner, Bureau du design, City of Montreal

Member of the research site directed by: University of Montreal, Concordia University

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality must stimulate all the senses of the user. Of course, to offer visual qualities either by the colors or the rhythms formed by the pattern of the materials, but also to see to offer positive sensory qualities for the hearing, the touch, the smell. This means an optimization of thermal comfort, but also exposure to natural light and work on textures.

Sensory experiences lead to a reflection that raises the question of individual emotion, but also concerns the health of individuals. The creation of paths that facilitate physical activity or the reflection on the quality of the air or water also speak to the quality of the experience while touching the environmental dimension of the building.

A positive experience also leads to socialization, promoting interaction between people.

In short, a positive experience puts people at the center of design concerns.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting the new Insectarium of the City of Montreal. Visiting this place was a completely new experience for me: a museum visit based solely on creating a feeling.

The Montreal insectarium aims to immerse us in the life of an insect. Upon arrival, we are led down a dark corridor to live as an insect underground. This long, winding, dark path immediately creates a break between the outside world and the inside world of the insectarium. This moment of pause brings a disposition that facilitates the discovery.

At the end of the corridor, a round room offers a view of the beauty of the insect world. A double series of display cases surrounds a circular space. The first one displays a gradation of butterflies that amazes by the range of colors. The second illustrates the diversity of physical characteristics of insects. Then, an ascending corridor brings us back to the light. Under the bright glass roof, the butterflies twirl around.

Thus, touched and amazed by a unique sensitive experience and by the beauty of the natural world, the exhibition-building raises awareness of environmental protection. From ugliness comes beauty. From fear comes enchantment! And architecture is at the heart of this conversation.

What is amazing about this experience is that the architecture does not frame the exhibition. It directly communicates the theme by emphasizing the user's perspective, experience and senses.

The Montreal insectarium is designed by Kuehn Malvezzi + Pelletier de Fontenay + Jodoin Lamarre Pratte + Dupras Ledoux + NCK

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I found particularly meaningful and moving:



Montreal Insectarium. Photo : Patrick Marmen

Link to Google map:

<https://goo.gl/maps/BMBzbJJ2B1NJsNWSA>

THIBAUT-MALO, *Victorian*

Member of the research site directed by: University of Montreal

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality must be reflected in a place that is accessible to all, first. Secondly, the built environment must offer a unique experience that justifies its construction. Thus, the place must respond to the needs of its users in the most precise way possible. This is where I think the key element comes into play: empathy. Empathy via the users, via the environment, but also the empathy that the place provokes in people towards others and the environment. A positive experience of the quality in the built environment should therefore offer a reflection on one's habits and allow one to see what impacts these habits have on the world around us. In other words, the quality in the built environment can be summed up by the notion of responsibility, in my opinion.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting the National Holocaust Monument in Ottawa. For me, this is a place that reflects quality, as it is not only accessible to all, but also allows for reflection on the world around us. In this place, the values, the narrative and the constructed enter in relation with the user with the aim of making him reflect and/or to sensitize him to an important moment of the History. In other words, architecture acts here as a vector of education.

The architecture also acts as an element of identity, where people who have a close connection to the Holocaust can come and worship. Their presence is recognized by the direct marking of the territory, while they previously suffered the wrath of a genocide trying to eradicate them.

The designer must therefore educate himself and listen to the community he is building for in order to translate the message into design language in the most authentic way possible. It is his work that will mark future generations and allow the diffusion of the past to the future.

As I entered this space, I was struck by the coldness of the place. The use of concrete is probably the cause, but the atmosphere immediately guided the rhythm of my steps, which slowed down as soon as I crossed the threshold of the monument. The other people present showed signs of respect, such as removing their hats and whispering, even though this is an outdoor venue. The heaviness of the subject was irremediably perceived. There were several recesses that allowed us to take time to sit, reflect, appreciate the architecture and commemorate the too many victims of the Holocaust.

It is a place that touched me deeply and that will remain engraved in my memory, as it now engraves the Canadian territory.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I have found to be an example of quality in the built environment:



National Holocaust Monument. Copyright: Victorian Thibault-Malo (2022).

Link to Google map:

https://www.google.com/maps/place/Monument+National+de+Holocauste/@45.4170146,-75.7170312,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x4cce045afce9349d:0xce736eea4c5c4bdf!8m2!3d45.4170109!4d-75.7144509!16s%2Fg%2F11fx_4sf7v

PAGÉ-ROBERT, Théo

Université de Montréal

Member of the research site led by: Université de Montréal

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality of the built environment should offer:

In my opinion, a quality-built environment is one that fades away in favor of the life that takes up residence there. It would be a free space that does not pretend to stage anything, but rather is content to set the necessary parameters for the materialization of multiple and varied potentialities. Such conditions would include in particular the possibility of developing a familiarity, an impression of proximity at the same time bodily and cultural accelerated by an expression of the built marked out by familiar sensitive marks which, in a very concrete way, would testify of the provision of the space to welcome any body and the baggage which accompanies it. In the layout, this openness would be translated by a language of malleability that calls for leaving its trace on the walls and its imprint on the floors. The well-considered building would then echo the echoes of time and shamelessly display the patina of its appropriation. Of course, not every space can vibrate in tune with its audience, the maestro often absorbed by his baton and the orchestra with him. Nevertheless, I cling to the persistent rumor of the popular hymns that - I hope - will give the note to the voices of tomorrow.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of a positive quality experience:

A recent experience with the quality of the built environment goes back to last spring when I visited the Red Bird artist studio, located at 135 Van Horne Avenue in Montreal. This is an industrial building reinvested as a shared space where artists from all walks of life rub shoulders. Far from constituting a unique scenario of appropriation of Montreal's industrial buildings, this experience also testifies to impressions generalized to the visit of several such cases.

Here, spontaneous planning and constructive experimentation reign, and intuition is the *modus operandi*. The regular and functional framework of the hangars is bent to transform the face of the building from top to bottom. Spatial strategies are dictated by means and needs, punctuated here and there by a diversity of disparate and unusual objects that end up really defining the space when they manage to pass the test of time. Every turn is an open border between spaces of completely different use and character. To the outsider's eye, the canvas walls are open books, the wide winding corridors tell their story and unwillingly expose their artifacts as witnesses to their origin. Even if deserted, the space is inhabited by a resolutely sensitive presence that the best planners struggle to reproduce. It is a perceptible climate, almost corporeal, which although tangible remains elusive. Since then, I often try to understand why only certain spaces emanate such substance. It would seem too simple to assert that the occupation alone has revealed the quality of this a priori inhospitable place. If the interest of a space lies in its content rather than its container, what is the point of designing? Should we try to seize this presence in order to reproduce it, is it possible to do so? Would it be forcing the hand to the freedom to occupy? It is perhaps what we call the force of things.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Inside a workshop - Julie Hamaide



Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/LPrTTHm6Kah4DniV6>

5. Public Buildings: Community Spaces, Religious, and Recreational activities

Elsa Lam

Editor, Canadian Architect magazine

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality in the built environment should reflect the people, culture, and history of a place. Places that exhibit quality are often built with a high degree of thoughtfulness to the way that they will be experienced: how does someone find their way in a place? What is the first thing they encounter as they approach or enter? What is the texture and material of the surfaces that their hands come into contact with? There is no one 'right answer' as to how a built space does this. In a hospital where clients are dealing with difficult circumstances, clear wayfinding, daylight waiting areas, and calming colours may be appropriate. On the other hand, in a children's playspace, narrow passages and darkened secret mazes may lend a sense of discovery and surprise. In all built things, the depth of a creator's resourcefulness, thoughtfulness, knowledge, and presence are often apparent in the resulting creation. I believe this is true of built environments as well, and, given that such environments are usually created for others, the quality of empathy (in the form of deep listening and understanding of a client's needs) is equally important in the creation of such works. Author, illustrator and educator Lynda Barry speaks of an "aliveness" that is present in some drawings, and not in others, and can be intuited upon seeing them. I think that this can also be true of the built environment, and that some places are 'alive' in a way that is immediately felt, consciously or unconsciously, by those that enter them.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

There are many places that come to mind that I've visited once, or just a few times, or have heard of and wanted to visit—spectacular museums that have been wonderful to discover, playgrounds that have appealed to my young child's sense of adventure, multi-unit housing that aims to be sensitive to its place in the city and the daily needs of its inhabitants. We strive to publish such projects in *Canadian Architect* magazine each month. But there are also measures of quality that perhaps can only be appreciated through visiting a space with some frequency, and understanding how it functions over time. It's a bit like getting to know a friend and appreciating the qualities and quirks of their character: there is a certain relationship that you develop with places after having experienced them on several occasions, in different seasons of the year, and when you are yourself in different emotional states. For this reason, I'd like to present the Beach United Church, in east Toronto, as an example of architectural quality. The original church dates back to 1914, and was renovated in 2013 by Black & Moffat architects. The worship space occupies the upper loft, and it's designed to be open concept—instead of fixed pews, chairs are placed in a variety of configurations for Sunday services.

This means that the large space can also be used by community groups, and that's how I've encountered it. For the past decade, I've been part of an improvised dance community that meets on Tuesday evenings. Over the past year, the group has rented the church's main hall for our dance jams. While bounding across the room and rolling on the floor, I've appreciated the warm qualities of the exposed brick walls, the large arched windows, and above all, the majestic wood ceiling. The faceted arches of the ceiling appear parabolic in geometry, recalling the

ceilings of Dom Paul Bellot's worship hall crowning the St. Joseph Oratory in Montreal. The space feels complete, if different, whether there are a half dozen dancers in the room, or three dozen. Our dance jams have recently included live music, which brings an added dimension to the hall, which has lovely, warm, acoustics. There are some practical elements that can also be appreciated about this space: it is fully accessible (and our dances have occasionally included a wheelchair user), and has a sliding glass divider to a room that we use as a spill-over social space—a feature that allows this room to be connected, yet acoustically separate, from the main dance area. Downstairs is another large community room, which is rented out to an AA group on Tuesday evenings. Kitchen areas on both floors allow for catered events, and have been used for free meal programs serving seniors and community members. Efficient mechanical systems and a large rooftop solar PV system (the latter installed during a time when a provincial grant program for solar systems was active) provides energy savings and annual income for the church. For me, this is an example of architecture that is not flashy, but is well-designed as a community space. It has a kind of timeless beauty and generosity that makes it a pleasurable place to be, week after week.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/09/26/green_renovation_transforms_beach_united_into_a_welcoming_neighbourhood_place.html#:~:text=Architects%20Black%20%26%20Moffat%20designed%20a,greenest%20building%20in%20the%20neighbourhood.

Copyright Toronto Star

Google map link:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Beach+United+Church/@43.6715495,-79.2989409,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x89d4cc0736cfd21:0x65e5fc3e7323a090!8m2!3d43.6715495!4d-79.296366!16s%2Fg%2F1fxhp2b>

Lee Stevens*Vibrant Communities Calgary**Member of the Research Site Led by the University of Calgary***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

Community hubs offer a positive experience of quality because they are free public indoor spaces that operate on a *universal model of service* available to anyone without income or means testing. Other elements of a community hub include,

- Multi use spaces - a room within a building or a separate building.
 - Intentionally welcoming and inclusive, that facilitate authentic connections among residents for community building.
 - Informal gathering spaces where neighbours can build connections
 - Spaces that can act as a gathering point for a diversity of residents and that facilitates social connections, relationships, actions and initiatives that are outside of the sphere of 'professional services'
- Accessible - spaces that are readily accessible to a diversity of residents through multiple means, including transit, by foot, car and bicycle and which is in close proximity to other critical services and amenities in a neighbourhood/community.

There are six Community Hubs across Calgary,

- Sunalta Community Association,
- Bowness Community Association,
- The Alex Community Food Centre,
- Village Square Leisure Centre,
- Bob Bahan Aquatic and Recreation Centre, and
- 1000 Voices at Genesis Centre.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting...

The Alex Community Food Centre. The Alex community food centre is a welcoming space where people come together to grow, cook, share and advocate for good food. Calgary's community food centre is located in greater Forest Lawn on International Avenue. In Forest Lawn, there are almost double the amount of people living below the low-income cut-off; and International Avenue is home to an amazing diverse range of food in Calgary, making it a natural fit for such a hub. The centre offers programming in three key areas: access to healthy food, food skills in the garden and kitchen, and education and engagement around building community connections and civic engagement to talk about the bigger systemic issues related to our food system, community health and wellbeing, and inequality and inclusiveness.

Quote from a staff member of the Alex –

“Building community is about place making, where everyone has a seat at the table, and furthermore it is about everyone being able to participate in the conversation and having an opportunity to be part of the solution. Food is a very powerful community building tool.”

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/KGoEN5u1XF2vm1676>



Dr. Samantha Biglieri, MCIP, RPP*Co-Investigator**Member of the Research Site Led by: Toronto Metropolitan University***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality in the built environment should be felt in your body, mind and spirit. For me – it is a place that includes some experience of nature (be it blue or green, manicured or not), and an opportunity to be around people (but not necessarily have to interact with them). For me, a positive experience of quality means that the space is truly accessible, has places to linger and watch passers-by. There are places for shade and places to be in the sun. It is a place that feels and sounds calm (although this can happen in a city too!). Ideally, it would be a place that I have some sort of attachment to – some sort of memory or social significance in my life. Thus, a positive experience of quality in the built environment is about the potentiality for social interaction and memory-making.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

For me, the place that is a concrete example of quality is primarily tied to my own identity growing up. The place is the Crescent Town Club in Toronto, Ontario. It is located within Crescent Town, a classic 'Towers in the Park' development sandwiched between Dawes Road and Victoria Park Boulevard in the former Borough of East York. It was completed in 1971 and is currently home to many newcomers. The Crescent Town Club is part community centre-part sports facility-part hang out place. The club itself is unique in that it is a private amenity for the condos and rental buildings around it, but anyone can join, and it is an incredibly affordable way to access swimming, racquet sports, basketball, a gym, community programming from kids camp to dance to programs for newcomers and seniors and more. It serves highly diverse folks and has partnerships with non-profits and city agencies to deliver services.

The building itself was built in the late 60s, and the 25-metre pool is my favourite – one of the walls is all glass – letting you see out to the trees beyond the plants scattered on the deck. I grew up competitive swimming here (see photo), almost every morning at 5:30am (or 6:30am on weekends) and at night in the gym from 10 to 22 years old. The smell of the chlorine, the pool itself, all bring back significant memories, and remind me of the strong place attachment I have to this community centre, especially as it was my home away from home. It is where I learned life's important lessons and shaped me into the person I am today.

Crescent Town Club is an example of a modernist, utilitarian building in a classically critiqued 'Towers in the Park' neighbourhood. However, despite its age, it has been lovingly cared for through the generations to serve the communities around it. But it has also been shaped by the community – (re)making and (re)purposing spaces to suit the needs of community in the moment. I think that quality in the built environment is inherently socio-spatial – that people shape places, and places shape people. It is more about creating potentiality in space for social interactions and community life than anything else.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Crescent Town Club Swimming Pool © Biglieri, 2017



Google map link: https://www.google.com/maps/place/CREST+Swimming/@43.6960573,-%2079.2936245,15z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x89d4cc8c90853337:0x108b4b2ef5cbaf0d!8m2!3d43.696%200573!4d-79.2936245!16s%2Fg%2F11hzhf3_zc

LINKON, Shantanu Biswas*Ph.D. student and member of Graduate Student Committee**Member of the Research Site University of Montreal led by Virginie LaSalle***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality in the built environment should reflect its inclusiveness, which will increase the quality of life and produce social value, not only in terms of accessibility but also in terms of age, gender, and equity. The space should welcome and address every type of user of society, at least to some extent. Yes, it does not mean that by focusing on inclusiveness we could ignore innovation and its environmental effects on the built environment. Moreover, there should be an equilibrium between the meaningful activities of a built environment and its inclusiveness. It should not be like that in the name of social value and inclusion its functionality and efficacy remain ignored. Furthermore, every type of user should feel welcome, safe, and comfortable in that space. And the built environment itself encourages them to occupy and spend some time in it on a regular basis so that they become habituated to it as a part of their daily life. Diversity in terms of accessibility and race, age, economic class, and gender is a must to make an inclusive built environment that ensures positive quality and value.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting the Complexe Aquatique Rosemont, which is located in the heart of a diversified urban neighborhood. It offers a program housing a library, a community center, and a swimming pool. But I mainly visited the contemporary and respectful expansion that consists of a semi-Olympic pool, an acclimatization pool, and multifunctional rooms. When I visited there, it feels good to me that anybody can access the entrance from the bus stop. Besides, the main entry is also accessible for differently abled people. After visiting the project, I must say that it is an exemplary attempt how to make a built form universally accessible. The effort which has been deliberately put into inclusivity in terms of universal accessibility can be felt from the main entrance. All the parts are designed in a way that every type of user in terms of age, gender, and race has different options. Personally, I loved the locker zone. It is a colorful space, made by following the Art Deco style. Besides, it has enough scope for natural light as well as privacy, which is completely opposite of the traditional regular locker and shower zone. The glass wall provides permeable visual connectivity with the pool area and allows a peek at the swimming pool. It has designated facilities for the differently abled person. Besides, all the furniture, fixtures, and fittings like lockers, shoe racks, washbasins, and water collection points are designed so that they can be used simultaneously by all types of users. Moreover, this space has a special option for cleaning the wheelchair just at the beginning of the locker zone. Furthermore, this complex facilitates every user with two types of swimming pool, not to forget about the facility of ramp and handrail in both the pool. By these measures, this complex also includes the patient and sick people. In fact, when the peak hour comes, no matter what the season is, this place turns into a festive space for the community with the participation of users of all age groups, economic classes, and races. It can be a good demonstration of how to make and promote a built form as a proper 'third space' within the community. I must say and

appreciate that this aquatic complex is a great example of how a building or architecture becomes a social and festive reality and a real space for the community!

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



The accessible, universal locker rooms. The glass wall allows a peek at the swimming pool. Photos by Maxime Brouillet/ courtesy v2com

Google map link:

https://www.google.com/maps/place/Complexe+aquatique+Rosemont/@45.5522643,-73.5835575,19z/data=!4m14!1m7!3m6!1s0x4cc91991e3aac999:0xd3f5971507da9b1d!2sComplexe+aquatique+Rosemont!8m2!3d45.552355!4d-73.5833706!16s%2Fq%2F11t3c4_qnv!3m5!1s0x4cc91991e3aac999:0xd3f5971507da9b1d!8m2!3d45.552355!4d-73.5833706!16s%2Fq%2F11t3c4_qnv

Dr. Susan Fitzgerald*Architect, Design Director FBM, Associate Professor*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

We live in a time when most of the emphasis is on vision over our other senses and we need our built environments to engage with the other senses – touch, smell, and sound. When you look at an image of a place you do not feel the place - the image does not stand in for the experience – likewise built environments need to evoke the senses. Architecture should engage with the nuance and complexity of a place, the passage of time, the climate, the light and shadow along with the everyday life and evolving culture of a place. There is an urgency for hybridity in architecture, where built environments embrace the layers and intricacies of a place by listening to lived experiences and layering of everyday life into the work of the designer.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

Over the last ten years I have been studying sites of urban agriculture around the world. These spaces are often found in the cracks of the city – a small, abandoned piece of land that has been taken over by a community group for the purposes of cultivating food. One such space is Hope Blooms in the north end of Halifax. Located in between the now abandoned St. Patrick's-Alexandra School and Uniacke Square this site consists of a kitchen and community space, solar greenhouse, and garden. The grouping of buildings loosely makes a plaza that hosts events such as markets or the annual Nocturne art festival. Beyond the buildings are other community assets including a playground and recreation equipment and solar charging benches and tables. Multiple visits to the site emphasise the evolving rhythms of the space, the widespread community use, and breadth of activities that take place.

The garden evolves over the day: in the morning it is a space for work, in the afternoon children arrive and it is a place for education and play, in the evening people attend workshops, and at other times it is a place to sit and relax amongst the growing fruits and vegetables. It creates a room surrounded by nature within the city; formed by fragrant smells, dappled sunlight, and light breezes. It is possible to find both silence and activity within the garden, to be both part of the community and to find solace.

The garden has been formed by necessity and ingenuity over the years. It has something of the bricoleur about it, created from readily available materials, community relationships and resources. Experimentation and creativity are apparent as different strategies of planting are tested throughout the space. The effect is not haphazard or disorganized but rather a mosaic of ideas and opinions.

Hope Blooms has many experiences of quality within it. Most of all it is a multisensory community space that reflects the evolving culture of the place and the richness of everyday life.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Hope Blooms 2022 (Susan Fitzgerald)



Uli, Egger*Rick Hansen Foundation, Accessibility Certification***RICK HANSEN FOUNDATION MEMBER**

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality in the built environment should start from the outside in, not specifically itemized accessibility features, but instead that sum of its parts that equals a whole.

The built environment affects both of us (My spouse has a spinal cord injury and uses a mobility device and I am hard of hearing and use hearing aids.)

As an example, how do we get there (bus, car, walk, wheel)? and when we do arrive, is it built with us in mind? Will we be safe? Can we use the main entrance? Is there a person at the reception counter to answer our questions? Is there a washroom, can I get out if there is an emergency?

- If we are driving, which is most of the time, where do we park and is there enough space for us to transfer from our vehicle and safely access the path of travel that leads to the main entrance? Generally, I would say that there is never enough accessible parking.
- Is there clear easy to understand signage and wayfinding? Generally, not.
- If there is a reception counter, is there a hearing loop so I can better comprehend what the person I am speaking to is saying? My spouse is a person that uses a mobility device. Is she able to easily communicate with the reception person on the other side of the counter in a meaningful way, or is she staring at the counter without being able to see the person who is speaking? Many reception counters are not at an accessible height and most do not have a hearing loop.
- Is there a universal washroom near reception, or is it located on an alternate floor? Often when we get to a site, one of us needs to use the washroom and similar to designated parking spaces, there are never enough.
- If we are visiting a site such as community centre/pool, can we get around? If we want to swim, what accessibility features are present? Is there a ramp and pool chair that provides access or do we have to use a lift where everyone is looking at us? Is there dressing room area that privacy and is there an adjustable height change table and roll in shower? We don't want to be a spectacle. We want to enjoy or use the site the same way everyone else does.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I remember visiting the Grandview Heights Aquatic centre in my hometown of Surrey BC and how impressed I was with the parking, despite the fresh snow that had fallen overnight.

There were many accessible parking spaces, cleared of snow that were easy to find and there was a direct route for us to get to the main entrance. There were helpful people at reception that

directed us to the change rooms, showers, adult sized change table and where to find a pool wheelchair.

Being able to swim together and getting in and out of the pool without a struggle, was wonderful. Thanks to the adult sized change table, we were able to get dressed/undressed with ease and remember the time spent swimming, not the usual struggle.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Grandview Heights Aquatic Centre

16855 24 Ave, Surrey, BC V3Z 0A2

Google map link:

<https://www.surrey.ca/parks-recreation/recreation-facilities/grandview-heights-aquatic-centre>

Susan Speigel, Architect
OAA, IPP

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

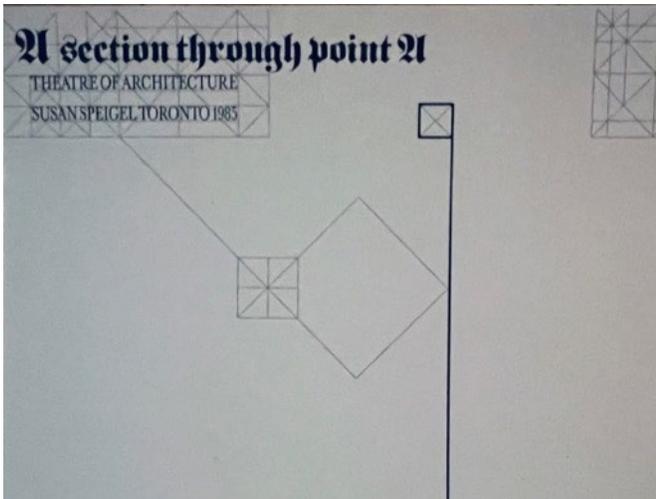
THERE IS NO TIME IN MY SPIRIT

What is the origin of a sensibility?

Where does that sense of SPACEness come from as a maker?

Design students are given a project – each one imagines something totally different in their understanding of the spirit of space.

I draw the genesis of spatial feelings and preoccupations by translating dreamwork into narratives to navigate my spatial compass.



a section through points a was one chapter.

I drew an inverted pyramid shape with Escher like stairs up and down and imagined that space – the stairways created a unique stepwell to view life as a real living SECTION as if by magic.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

On an unexpected side trip, 30 years after, while in India our driver took us through a massive wall into the very space I had dreamt of and drawn.

I realized I had lived there before

or

I had even designed and participated in building it

.....centuries ago.

Ideally, the result would be a perfect crystallization, as in a dream, of everything pertinent to the context, the moment. And the architecture, like a dream, contemporary, timeless and irreproachable. Gold

The Section peeled back the skin into a 35-meter depth – a Community gathering space, conserving water, a fresh water source filtered through the earth, leisure, washing, drinking, social gathering and worship,

in an arid desert.

Indigenous, vernacular infrastructure generating sustainable nature-based millennia-old technology living in symbiosis with nature, ala Julia Watson Lo-Tek Design by Radical Indigenism. Digging while building, the stairs have multiple purpose.

Shoring, while creating construction access and future access.

A climate action necessity made beautiful and inclusive long ago.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



CHAD BAORI, ABENERI. GODDESS OF JOY AND HAPPINESS

<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=CHAD+BAORI%2C+ABENERI.&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chand_Baori

Zen Thompson

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

A positive experience I've had with local, community-oriented architecture was with a splash park. In my neighborhood beside the community center there is a free splash park that's open in the summer. It's small and functions by a push pump that makes it run for around 10 minutes at a time. This small splash pad brings the community together. On hot summer days people of all ages run through the splash pad. Kids are able to meet and have fun in safety and parents have options on where to take their kids rather than have to take them to the same play structure every day. As a child Saturdays were my favorite because my mom would take me and my friends to the splash pad. Not only did I enjoy it but my mom did too as after running in the cold water all us kids were completely tuckered out and needed a nap.

Veronica Madonna*Centre for Architecture at Athabasca University**Member of the Research Site Led by Athabasca University.***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality in the built environment stems from social resiliency, in the ability of a community or society to withstand and recover from social, economic, or environmental challenges or shocks. This can be achieved by designing and planning built environments that promote social cohesion, equitable access to resources, and community engagement.

A positive quality experience in the built environment regarding social resiliency involves creating a socially cohesive, inclusive, and equitable community with access to essential resources such as affordable housing and public spaces that promote social interaction and a sense of belonging.

One example of a positive experience of quality in the built environment in terms of social resiliency is the creation of public spaces that encourage social interaction and promote a sense of belonging among residents. Such spaces may include parks, playgrounds, community gardens, or other shared areas that allow people to connect and build relationships.

Another example is the provision of affordable housing that supports a diverse and inclusive community. Access to safe and affordable housing is essential for social resiliency. It enables individuals and families to maintain stable living arrangements and avoid displacement in the face of economic or environmental challenges.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

Wychwood Barns is a community hub located in Toronto's Wychwood neighbourhood. It is a multi-use space that was once a streetcar maintenance facility but was transformed into a community hub in 2008 by the City of Toronto and a group of community organizations.

The restoration of the Wychwood Barns was done with sustainability in mind. A range of sustainable features was added, such as a green roof, rainwater collection system, and geothermal heating and cooling system. These features helped the building achieve LEED Gold certification for environmental sustainability.

Today, Wychwood Barns is home to various community organizations, including artists, non-profits, and community groups. The hub features a range of spaces for events, performances, and community activities, including a generous event space, a community kitchen, and a greenhouse. The hub also includes artist studios, a workspace, and a public gallery showcasing rotating art exhibitions.

Wychwood Barns is committed to promoting sustainability, community engagement, and accessibility. The hub offers a range of programming for the community, including farmers'

markets, art exhibitions, workshops, and community events. It is also fully accessible, with barrier-free entrances, washrooms, and various accessibility features throughout the building.

Wychwood Barns is a unique and vibrant community hub providing a valuable space for artists, community groups, and the wider community to connect, collaborate, and engage and a key example of quality in the built environment.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Image caption with copyright owner:



Image of the outdoor markets at Wychwood Barns. Photo credit: Ted Chai Photography.

Google map link:

<https://www.google.com/maps/search/artscape+wychwood+barns/@43.6799176,-79.425712,17z/data=!3m1!4b1>

6. Public Buildings: Commercial and Mixed Use

Brian Robert Sinclair

Team Lead of the Research Site Led by the University of Calgary

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

A quality lived experience of the built environment should fundamentally be about deep connections. As we encounter spaces that resonate with us – cognitively, culturally, spiritually, and so on – we find a fit or a sense of belonging. Such spaces and places are inspiring and uplifting – they precipitate unique feelings of flow, of harmony (yin-yang), of ‘oneness’. Such environments can be high art, or iconic design, or equally can be low art, or vernacular. When spaces and places connect with us, they promote health, they foster well-being, and they facilitate happiness. We know that our environments help shape who we are – they play roles in our identity, they contribute to a sense of attachment, they correlate with both public and personal healthiness. Some years back I developed a framework for design and planning that sought to induce more balance and instill more accord – seeking to bring together subjective and objective, qualitative and quantitative. It included the controversial quadrant of ‘delight’ – an emotional construct that is not readily measurable. In our bottom-line driven world those features that are less tangible and more ethereal matter more than the easily countable. To my mind quality in the built environment somehow resides at the core of this model.



Sinclair Holistic Framework (2009)

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

As I reflect on spaces and places of positivity, a few examples come to mind – and they can be understood through scale and sphere: residential, architectural, and environmental. On the residential side, an example of a connected & meaningful space is the **Living Room of My Home**. The room is a soaring, double-height space with glass lining the south face – with views to the city and skyline beyond. It is a minimal space with white walls and a beautiful natural wood-sloped ceiling (with several sizable skylights). Due to the serious volume of the space, I have several large pieces of art displayed, including one of my wife's life-sized figurative oil paintings. Having coffee in this space during a dramatically colorful Calgary sunrise presents a wonderful opening to the day. On the architectural side, the **Banff Springs Hotel** presents a historic exemplar of quality that is unparalleled. It's sitting in the national park, soaring high like the mountains that provide company, is simply spectacular. Its deployment of crafted sandstone connects it to the land, and its rich delineation and articulation of form creates interest and wonder – a spectrum of nooks, crannies, caverns, and corridors that enchant the visitors. It provides a larger-than-life fantasy that reminds us of our capacity to create and construct buildings and landscapes that stir our imaginations and move our souls. On the environmental side, one of the most potent and qualitative spaces is **Nose Hill Park**. On an almost daily basis, I spend time in the park, in some instances deeply immersed in and connected to nature, accompanied by an abundance of deer, coyotes, and porcupines, while at other times dwelling in the interstitial spaces caught between the serenity of the wild and the urban bustle of a major Canadian city. Nose Hill is a magical ethos residing quietly and confidently in the vast sea of urban fabric. It is a place of respite, recharge, and reflection.

Here is an image or a link to the location I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



(left) Nose Hill Park | Medicine Wheel with the Calgary Skyline Beyond © brian r sinclair 2023

(right) Santiago Calatrava's City of Arts + Sciences Complex, Valencia, Spain © brian r sinclair 2023

Chris Wiebe

NGO Partner, National Trust for Canada

Member of the Research Site Led by Mariana Esponda, Carleton University

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect...

Structures built of simple (not mixed materials embedded in assemblies), non-toxic, high-quality materials (ideally locally sourced), that respect the local climate to increase occupant comfort, decrease energy use and carbon footprint, maximize longevity, and are easy to maintain. These buildings must also be readily adaptable, to be capable of “learning over time,” in the famous words of Stewart Brand. Their design should therefore be practical, straight-forward, and resist ephemeral tick-box gestures that will not stand the test of time (e.g. the whimsical spiral staircases). The design should be responsive to, not contemptuous of, local climatic conditions. It should also be a balance between form and function. This kind of architecture should have the ability to transcend its origins, the necessarily limited intentions of its creation, to become many, many new things over time.

Contextually, quality architecture adds to what is already there rather than privileging the easy “look at me” genius of the clean slate, and works within its site constraints and exploits creative opportunities.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I have visited the Clegg-Feller Building (155-159 Rideau Street) in Ottawa, innumerable times over the years. Completed around 1864, it is the oldest surviving commercial building in the city, and has housed at least 13 different commercial operations: from a law firm to a tobacco shop, jewelry, clothing, straw hats, furniture, a photography studio, and most recently a convenience store. An remarkable chameleon, the robust, self-effacing little structure vividly embodies adaptability, and is also beautiful, constructed of wood milled to look like cut stone, an early 19th century vernacular practice in the Ottawa area. So useful and adaptable has the building been, that the first threat of demolition only came in 1980 – almost 120 years into its life – and was saved via heritage designation by broad public outcry.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Ottawa's Clegg-Feller Building (155-159 Rideau Street). 160 years of durability, flexibility, and unsung innovation. Photo: Chris Wiebe

Gavin McCormack*Researcher/Academic (University of Calgary)**Member of the Research Site Led by Dr. Brian Sinclair***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect a built environment that is enjoyable, interesting, safe, and memorable. A high-quality built environment should be inviting, where its functionality and purpose (or purposes) is easy to identify and determine, whether it be indoors or outdoors, regardless of whether it is public, private, or semi-private space. A quality-built environment is inviting and friendly to all visitors or users of the space or features regardless of their demographic, economic, cultural, social, physical, or mental circumstances. Quality built environments do not discriminate and they offer a sense of belonging. Quality built environments are those with which humans have the propensity to form emotional attachments and bonds and that become to be known as places, rather than mere spaces.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel (Banff, Alberta). It is located in the mountains on the outer edge of the town. It is shadowed by mountains and surrounded by large trees and greenery. Wildlife (for example, Elk and deer) are sometimes observed in the grounds surrounding the hotel. From the outside, the building has an appearance of a historic palace. Entering inside the hotel, the building has a unique aged smell, dimmed lighting, and a design that gives it a historic peaceful feel and a sense of stepping back in time. The hotel has a sense of mystique. The hotel includes small boutique shops and restaurants. I remember the feeling of wanting to explore the outside and inside of the hotel. It seemed apparent as to what was considered within and outside the building to be public and private spaces. The hotel building is interesting and inviting and different from what you would normally experience in the built environment. Many of the people, I observed visiting the hotel were not likely patrons staying at the hotel but rather local and non-local tourists. I visit Banff several times a year and will often revisit the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel to casually walk around the grounds and through the building or sit with a coffee and enjoy the scenery.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



(Creative Commons; Flickr; Creator: Adam Fagen)



(Creative Commons; Flickr; Creator: Jerry Bowley)

Google map link: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Canmore+Environmental+Svc/@51.164332,-115.56183,17z/data=!4m1!1m10!3m9!1s0x5370ca3b2e2fb8bf:0x99e9a92cf4f6ce!2sFairmont+Banff+Springs!5m2!4m1!1i2!8m2!3d51.164332!4d-115.56183!16zL20vMDUydHZy!3m5!1s0x5370ca395662563f:0xa16ddf15455c95e6!8m2!3d51.1664153!4d-115.5675643!16s%2Fq%2F11b5wk4943>

Quibell, Taylor

Student Researcher, Carleton University

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Quality is not one thing and cannot be measured in silos. For example, when looking at quality in the built environment, one could look at quality building materials, quality accessibility features, or quality user experience, but how quality is measured and how quality is experienced varies, which makes it difficult to quantify. Since there are multiple qualities in the built environment all qualities need to be analyzed to get a more accurate measure of quality. In today's climate, a quality project should address multiple issues and contribute to a more prosperous future. To me, a quality project is accessible to all, has community benefits, does not have a negative environmental impact, and addresses societal issues. To me, converting office buildings into housing is quality. Typically, these projects have positive environmental impacts as they reduce waste and carbon emissions, which aids in the climate crisis. These projects also address the homelessness crisis by providing more housing. Above this, a quality office-to-residential project is affordable and accessible to all. As a researcher, I measure the quality of these projects by looking at their sustainability features, accessibility, creativity, user experience, and how they contribute to the community because these elements are what quality means to me.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting The Slayte at 473 Albert Street in Ottawa. The Slayte is one of Ottawa's first office-to-residential conversions. The former federal downtown office building was converted into luxurious apartments. This reuse project reflects quality in the built environment because it has improved downtown health through the increased vibrancy and sense of place, provided more housing, and met broader sustainability goals. In addition, converting 473 Albert reduced waste and carbon emissions while utilizing an unutilized space. Although this project had its challenges, for example, managing the city's stormwater requirements and creating fire exits, this project exemplifies how reuse does not limit creativity. Each unit was thoroughly thought out and has a unique layout (Figure 2). The project also shows how the benefits of reusing a building, such as accelerated project timelines, safer construction processes, improved public realm, and reduced land consumption outweighs the challenges. Studies show that high office vacancy rates can have damaging impacts, such as maintenance issues, increased crime in the downtown, decreased livability, and business loss in the core. With the federal government vacating older office buildings in place of larger consolidated office complexes, there is an opportunity for building reuse. Finally, this project shows how older and less desirable office spaces are excellent candidates for housing. However, there are elements of this project that could be improved, such as creating affordable rental units and reusing more of the original materials. Nonetheless, this is still a good starting point.

This building stood out to me as it provided me with hope for the future of our built environment. The Slayte is an example of the potential of converting buildings and can act as a precedent for future projects in Ottawa. More projects like the Slayte will revitalize Ottawa's downtown while

aiding in the climate and homelessness crises. However, challenges such as lengthy planning processes, limited awareness of the benefits of reuse, lack of incentives, and high government fees, make it difficult for quality projects like these to become the standard. I hope that the success of this project, paired with the research and outputs of Carleton's research on adaptive reuse in this grant, will inspire and champion projects like the Slayte.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Figure 1: Render of The Slayte (473 Albert Street)²



Figure 2: 473 Albert Street prior to Conversion¹

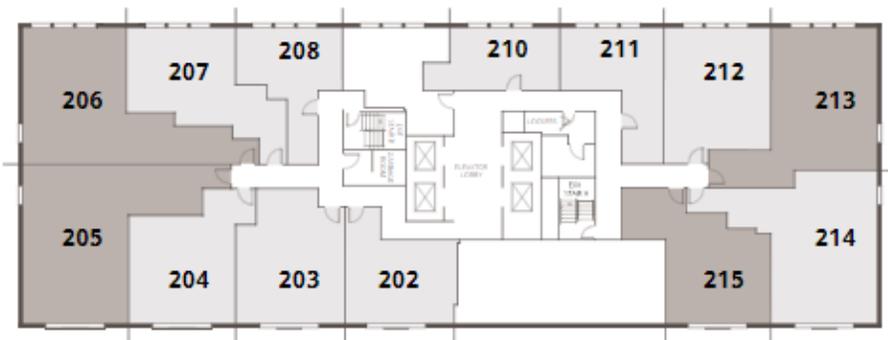


Figure 3: The Slayte, Level 2 Floorplan³

Google map link:

<https://goo.gl/maps/vF77VXEpt46TP9dy9>

¹ [The Slayte - Conversion of Office to Rental - The Molly & Claude Team \(claudejobin.com\)](https://www.clvdevelopments.com/project/the-slayte/)

² <https://www.clvdevelopments.com/project/the-slayte/>

³ [Suites | The Slayte](#)

Will Straw*Researcher**Member of the Research Site Led by McGill*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

The Saint-Michel Flea Market in Montreal

The drab, flat and unexpressive exterior of Montreal's St. Michel flea market hides a busy urban microcosm. In the more than fifteen years that I have been going there, the enclosed market has seemed to grow like a city, expanding into new subdivisions that have pushed it outward in at least three directions. New little corridors take you into corners that can seem, on first visit, like undiscovered neighbourhoods, where vendors you have never seen before all seem to know each other as they bargain or gossip over tea.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I know nothing of how the flea market is managed or administered, but it seems to be organized in a way that resists hierarchy. To be sure, the antiques on the second floor are a little fancier and the books up there are more collectible, but the space of the market overall seems to be that of an inclusive and chaotic democracy. Dingy spaces overflowing with uncatalogued junk sit beside lovingly curated displays of fine china or vintage watches arrayed in glass-covered display cases.

No other part of Montreal's built environment seems to me to better capture the inexhaustibility of the city. There is no better museum of old technologies, of household decor, of tools of work, of popular culture both local and transnational. Few other places serve so efficiently as repositories of feelings. These are preserved and offered for sale on postcards, in personal letters, in the signs of prior use on dishes or furnishings, as dedications in books and in all those items, like vinyl recordings of old Québécois pop music, to which memory has attached itself.

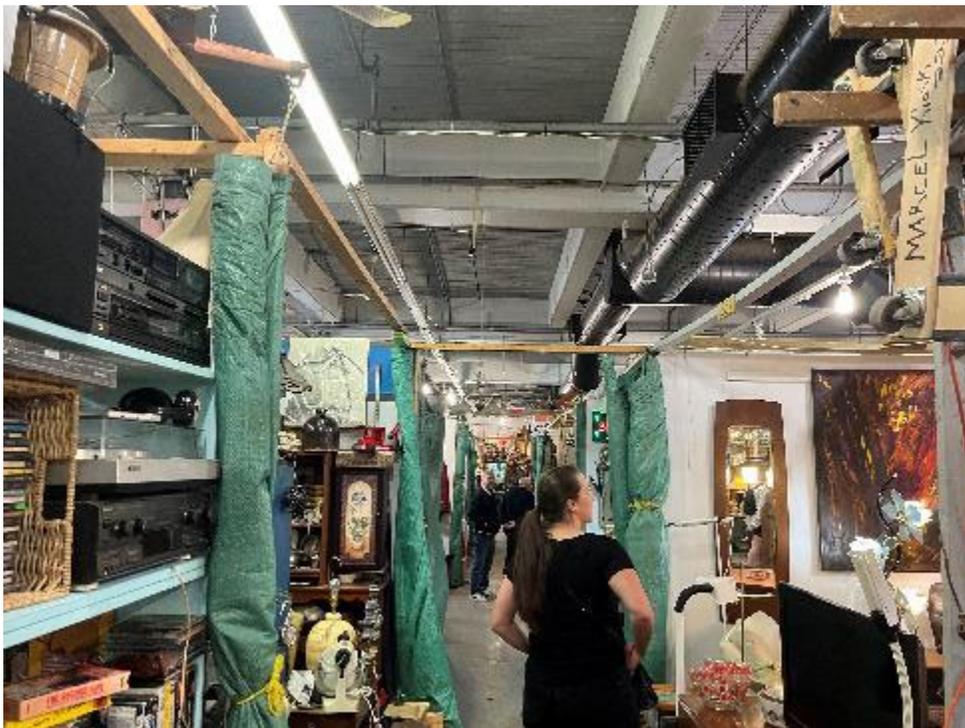
The physical layout of the St. Michel flea market is such that it always feels like a labyrinthian, mildly disorienting territory. In a space with so many corners, narrow thoroughfares and alleyways, interactions with others are inevitable. I know of no other urban space in which conversation seems so constant and lively, or in which it erupts so quickly between people who do not know each other. And, with no clear vantage points from which the market as a whole may be observed, the St. Michel flea market also feels like one of the most unpoliced and unsurveilled places in Montreal.

Material and expressive culture of Quebec

Although my interests now are primarily in the night, the flea market is a day-time space, the meeting ground of what Hervé Sciardet called "the merchants of dawn" and I wonder where in the world night-time flea markets might be found.

ervé Sciardet, *Les marchands de l'aube. Ethnographie et théorie du commerce aux puces de Saint-Ouen*, *Economica*, Paris, 2002, 218 p.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Erin Shilliday and Nabeel Ramji*Pedesting Corp. - Founders**Member of the Research Site Led by the University of Calgary***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

We believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect Universal Design for accessibility. Quality in the built environment can be measured in many ways: location, materials, natural light, volume, scale, and human activity, to name a few aspects of space that can define the quality of any room.

We have decided to look at an architectural moment of quality that resulted in Universal Design, that is a space that is equally accessible to a person walking or a person using a wheelchair. The highest measurement of Universal Design, to Nabeel and me, is when we can both arrive at the same place without deviation, that is, when we can take the identical route and not be separated. Can we continue our conversation while we are moving through a space? This is the simplest of measurements.

The most successful spaces that have Universal Design as a tenet do not look different from any other space, except for the notable absence of barriers. The design is often more organic, especially where a grade change is involved.

Typically, an entrance to a building is a few stairs above grade and often there may be a ramp alongside the stair; while we may arrive at the same place, the entry doors, we were divided along our way and hence our chat was interrupted. The person using the ramp can feel shunted to the side, like an after-thought. A truly egalitarian solution would find us travelling together from the edge of the site to the entrance and onto the lobby of the building. This type of entry sequence is the best solution and offers our idea of measurable quality: our conversation was not interrupted, and we both used the same path to arrive at our destination.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

We particularly remember visiting the Dandy Brewing Company in Calgary, Alberta – which is a micro-brewery that was built in an industrial garage. The space is a small, simple room approximately 15m x 15m. While waiting for Nabeel I noticed that the floor had a very slight inclination from the front entrance to the back wall where the bar was located. Since the room was repurposed from a garage, I suspected that the additional plumbing requirement for the bar necessitated raising the slab. The designer could have raised the entire room by 150mm (6”) to accommodate the new plumbing but instead the solution merely involved raising the floor near the bar area and then gently sloping the rest of the floor towards the entrance. No stairs (or ramp) were required, and this universally designed space is truly accessible by everyone, everywhere. One would hardly notice that the entire room is really a long, gentle ramp! In fact, the fire extinguishers are placed at a height that is accessible by someone using a wheelchair. Looking at the interior photo, one cannot discern that the floor inclines from the front to the back of the room. (Perhaps the observant patron might notice that the beer in the glass is not parallel to the table.)

On the exterior, it should be noted, that the entire landscape gradually slopes up to meet the entrance to the bar. The designer was masterful in creating an outdoor and indoor environment

that has no barriers even when different grades and requirements may have introduced stairs, etc. to the experience.

Another example of a sculpted, organic design solution to grade changes can be found at Disneyland. There are no stairs or ramps along one's journey: the entire park is universally accessible due to a thoughtful sculpting of the built environment to overcome grade changes.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Dandy Brewing Company - interior



Dandy Brewing Company - exterior

Google

map

link:

<https://www.google.ca/maps/dir/51.03616,114.0588544/The+Dandy+Brewing+Company+and+DandyPizza,+2003+11+St+SE,+Calgary,+AB+T2G+3G6/@51.0370252,114.0653191,14z/data=!3m1!4m1!4m9!1m1!4e1!1m5!1m1!1s0x53716521bdabb8b3:0x2c006f88d3aea143!2m2!1d-114.0371459!2d51.0352455!3e0>

7. Public Buildings: Healthcare Services

Doramy Ehling*National Partner, Rick Hansen Foundation*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality in the built environment should allow someone experiencing the space to feel inspired, connected, included. I want to feel a sense of belonging. I want it to appeal to my senses – beautiful, elegant design that is open and welcoming not pretentious. I think quality should be defined by the ability to understand how the space is being used and shared by a variety of individuals. In order to be deemed quality I think the design of the space needs to align with the purpose of the building or public spaces and it needs to stand the test of time. I also look at how the building design incorporates sustainability principles including accessibility and green design. I want to look at the entire experience from the area surrounding the building through travels throughout the building looking at how all the common spaces align with the working areas. I look at how the building is oriented on the site and the use of space, light, textures, finishes, way finding, etc. I look for connectivity in how the building tells a story of the vision and purpose of those occupying it.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting the Blusson Spinal Cord Centre in Vancouver when it first opened in 2008. It was built to be accessible and inclusive for everyone working in and visiting the Centre. It is light and bright. It incorporates multi-purpose spaces (offices, medical clinic, labs, fitness centre, lecture halls, atrium, ramps) all of which are fully accessible incorporating elements of universal barrier free design. These accessibility features have been incorporated through innovative and elegant design. When the building was in the design phase there was a lot of consultation with persons with Spinal Cord Injury to understand how their needs could be addressed through the design of the various spaces. This included persons (physicians, researchers, lab technicians, allied health care professionals, administrators) who were working in the building who had lived experience as well as those who would come in to receive services or participate in programs. Innovation was a critical component and research was done looking globally at how similar spaces had been designed to allow people with SCI to work, teach/study, participate in research, seek medical advice, do rehab and exercise, fully participate in meetings and events, etc. I have attended meetings, conferences, musical events, galas in this building and I always hear people commenting on the innovative accessibility features that in fact benefit everyone accessing this space. There is a sense of hope and that anything is possible as a result of the work that goes in in the building. Guests from around the world have admired how the building design supports collaboration and knowledge translation. It has been a bit of a living lab for others wanting to explore accessible design for similar spaces.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



UBC/Vancouver Coastal Health/ICORD copyright owner

<https://vancouverspinesurgery.com/blusson-spinal-cord-centre/>

<https://icord.org/our-facility/>

Google map link: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Blusson+Spinal+Cord+Centre/@49.2621128,-123.1245401,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x548673c2e547db53:0xc371e4b07a951948!8m2!3d49.2621093!4d-123.1223514!16s%2Fq%2F11c3k31crf>

**Kim,
RICK**

HANSEN

FOUNDATION

**Egger
MEMBER**

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

The built environment affects both my spouse and I. I have a spinal cord injury and use a mobility device and my spouse is hard of hearing and uses hearing aids. When I travel independently outside my home, I usually use my power wheelchair and/or my accessible van with a ramp. When I get to my destination and find a vacant van accessible parking spot (there's never enough) and I have a clear, safe path of travel my anxiety begins to unravel. If these conditions are not met I either go home, drive around looking for another place to park and if absolutely necessary I ask a stranger for assistance (the latter significantly increases my stress). Once I park my vehicle, a number of factors affect my experience:

- How close is the building and does it have a relatively level path so I can easily get to it?
- Can I get to the main entrance or do I have to find an alternate way inside the building?
- Can I open the door to get into the building? How heavy is the door? Double doors are especially difficult to open and navigate.
- Is there clear and easy to understand signage and wayfinding to find where I'm going?
- Is the flooring easy to maneuver on/are there obstacles in my way?
- Is there is a reception counter if I require assistance, and will I be visible due to my lower stature? If my spouse is with me will the receptionist speak loud enough so he can hear them? Many reception counters are not at an accessible height and most do not have a hearing loop.
- Is there a universal accessible washroom that is designed so I can use it? If not, I need to restrict my fluids.
- If I am able get to a destination and independently accomplish what I set out to do it is likely to be a positive experience physically and emotionally.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

My experience with health care and having a spinal cord injury (SCI), goes back four decades. Finding a doctor or specialist familiar with SCI was next to impossible and many health care professionals literally guessed at "how to fix" what was wrong.

When I was first injured, they told my family that my life expectancy was my mid forties. I have long passed that expiry date.

Thanks to the Blusson Spinal Cord Centre in Vancouver BC, there is now a centre of excellence geared towards people like myself and others living with similar disabilities. Before Blusson, there was little to no research being conducted for a cure. A cure means different things for different people. For me, quality of life, maintaining my independence and spending time with friends and family are my priority and the research conducted at Blusson contributes to all of the goals. An important aspect of my quality of life is being able to go to the same places that my family and friends can go. Not having to be left behind or go through onerous efforts to be included enhances the quality of my experiences.

That is why I find the Blusson Centre a such a positive place where not only myself but others who have more significant disabilities can be free to participate in all activities-from urodynamics to the gym. There are patient lifts, a universal washroom with a wheel in shower, adapted gym equipment, an accessible receptionist as you enter the building and even elongated bar controls for the elevator which is extremely rare.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



The Blusson Spinal Cord Centre
818 W 10th Ave, Vancouver, BC

Google map link:

<https://icord.org/our-facility/visit/>

Kristen D’Penna*Student Research Assistant**Member of the Research Site Led by Toronto Metropolitan University***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect a holistic approach to the built environment. The experience of quality is dependent on a site’s ability to cohesively address many aspects of life including wellbeing and health, inclusiveness, accessibility, and overall design quality. Engaging with these aspects of quality allow one to feel as though they are a part of their city and that they are a priority in their built environment.

When the built environment offers daylight spaces, natural spaces, and spaces with nice air quality, one can feel comfortable. Enclosures have previously been sourced as causes for lacking health and wellbeing due to insufficient focus on the human experience of comfort and atmosphere as well as indoor environmental quality. Responding to these concerns with spaces that are healthy to be in and contribute to a positive wellbeing define this aspect of quality.

Inclusiveness and accessibility are aspects of quality that respond to the needs of the public. The functionality of the built environment is inherently dependant on its ability to be used, and to be used by anyone. Design ideas that encompass wayfinding, multi-sensory cues, and prioritize equitable experiences are examples of those that engage quality.

A positive experience of quality reflects design that is, at its core, about the experiences of people and their connection to place. A space of quality creates belonging through design that engages the needs of human life in a built environment.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

As a student, I often spend time in educational facilities and I particularly remember my experience of the Daphne Cockwell Health Sciences Centre. I had experienced several lectures from my courses in the classrooms just before the universities went into lockdown in 2020. The building is located on the south edge of the Toronto Metropolitan University Campus and was designed by Perkins & Will. The purpose for the building was actually to unite the different faculties of Health Sciences however, lecture rooms throughout the campus are often used across many faculties. I can recall the flexibility of the spaces and the vast amounts of daylight pouring in. Through its program, the design of the building attempts to make spaces for learning about healthcare, healthier. Documentation of the design indicated that the design focused on healthy building materials, indoor environmental quality, daylight, views and other sustainable initiatives. The building had been developed with engagement from faculty and students at its inception which is a positive indicator of quality. In my experience, the building is stimulating, adaptive, and conducive to wellbeing. In achieving these perceptions, I could feel it was designed for my comfort and needs as a student.

I currently study in Toronto Metropolitan University but like many other students of this school, I commute from another city in the Greater Toronto Area. I live near the downtown core of

Mississauga where there are several public sites that I am more familiar with. The Hazel McCallion Central Library (formerly Central Library) is a building that I have spent a great deal of time in as a student. A public library is a prime example of a space that should embody quality through its ability to be inclusive of all ages, accessible to all of the public, and a pleasant learning space. The library was built in the 90s and is located in a block containing the major public square, and is also adjacent to the city hall. It is then imperative that visitors of the building and site feel welcome and that it is designed for their needs. The public square had previously been awarded by the Rick Hansen Foundation and all of the buildings on the site are accessible as well. The library engages equitably accessible experiences of the building through its layout of circulation and views. Wayfinding through the building is very clearly laid out and the visual connections engage opportunities for fostering community. The building also contributes to wellbeing through its vast overhead glazing for daylight and its views to gardens, vegetation, and street activity. The interior space engages the idea of quality as design that addresses inclusivity, accessibility and wellbeing to contribute to a sense of participation in the city.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



[Daphne Cockwell Health Sciences Centre](#)
[Google Maps](#)
[Hazel McCallion Central Library](#)
[Google Maps](#)



Marco L. Polo*Site Leader**Member of the Research Site Led by Toronto Metropolitan University***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality provides users with a sense of ease and well-being, derived from a few fundamental strategies: ease and clarity of navigation, clarity of spatial relationships, connection to daylight and natural elements, and a sense of repose and serenity. Such experiences of the built environment are essentially invisible: we are not so much aware of them when they are present, as when they are not. Confused and chaotic environments, devoid of natural light or clear wayfinding, can create a sense of disorientation and confusion, exacerbating any negative mental states in which users may find themselves.

This is particularly key in spaces that are often associated with stressful events in people's lives: institutional environments such as schools, courthouses, and health care settings. In such environments where users are often in heightened states of distress, a serene and welcoming environment is essential to help calm and ease the user experience. The negative impact of confusing, chaotic and disorienting environments on people who are already under stress can be mitigated by providing carefully designed spaces that consider spatial and material qualities, provide natural light and greenery, and clarity in terms of accessibility, wayfinding and navigation.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

Like many architects, I've visited a wide variety of buildings, studied drawings and photographs of many more, and made my share of pilgrimages to iconic buildings and sites. By comparison, the buildings we experience as users rather than educated visitors are precious few, and these two perspectives can be dramatically different.

When the addition to Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children designed by Zeidler Roberts Partnership/Architects (now Zeidler Architecture) opened in 1993, architectural reviews of the project noted that the innovative atrium scheme clearly succeeded at the level of building organization, orientation, circulation and sensitivity to patient needs, but its expression and detailing bore a striking resemblance to that much-maligned building type, the shopping mall. The fact that the same firm had also designed the nearby Eaton Centre only underscored this association.

My initial impressions of the project, formed on the basis of a few brief visits, were consistent with these critiques. Three years later, I experienced the building in a different capacity. Complications at birth required that our daughter spend the first few days of her life at Sick Kids'. By the time she was released with a clean bill of health, we had spent three days in the hospital, and my relationship to the building transformed from that of architecture critic to a fully-immersed user.

Typically, we encounter the architecture of health care at times of great vulnerability and emotional stress. From the point of view of parents consumed with worry over their child's health, the question of whether the hospital's detailing resembled that of a mall faded into obscurity. On another level, however, the architecture of Sick Kids' yielded important benefits. Although stuck

in a hospital room for three days, we were only a few steps away from the generous spaces and natural daylight in the atrium, which did much to alleviate the claustrophobia associated with confinement. The building's larger architectural strategies of spatial organization, provision of daylight and ease of orientation had a significant positive impact on our experience. None of this is to suggest that expression and detail aren't important. They are fundamental to a building's contribution to architectural culture and constitute an important component of the public realm; as such they must be part of any serious critique. However, from a user's perspective, spatial relationships, scale, proportion and access to daylight may play a more important role in the development of successful, user-responsive architecture.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

*Atrium, The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Canada
From Wikimedia Commons*



Google map link:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/The+Hospital+for+Sick+Children/@43.6573692,-79.3894775,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x882b34c9b2253cc9:0xd626f96dbbd306cf!8m2!3d43.6573653!4d-79.3869026!16zL20vMDJyOXIx>

8. Public Spaces: Cafés, Restaurants, Street cafés

Fionn, Byrne

Academic Partner

Member of the Research Site Led by UBC, Right to Land

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should serve the needs of multiple publics. Groups of citizens with shared needs, desires, and aspirations use the built environment. A quality space will understand who it serves. This service, furthermore, should be productive, efficient, and effective. However, because space serves multiple publics with differing needs and desires, there must always be negotiation and compromise. In recognizing this, it follows that a single and static definition of quality is impossible. To answer what constitutes quality, we must know who is asking the question, who they are asking, and when. I'd also suggest that this shifts the focus from seeking an answer to what constitutes quality towards recognizing greater significance in how the question is asked.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting Loafe Café on UBC's campus. For me, an ideal space in the built environment should offer several key qualities. (1) Sun, with an option of shade, ideally cast through a light textured, airy and leafy tree. (2) Collective seating, for example, a cluster of picnic tables suitable for people watching and being alone, together. I would estimate 30 people as an upper maximum. In addition, having people moving past the seating area is ideal for people watching, a necessary component of quality in my opinion. (3) Coffee with an option for drinks at a fair price. Thus, economic activity is not antithetical to quality, but quality is not a value that is purchased or an expense that is bought. (4) Background conversation, but not noise, meaning no cars.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



@loafecafe

June 18, 2020

Original image:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CBlyA2tn5IM/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY%3D>

Full size image:

https://scontent-sea1-1.cdninstagram.com/v/t51.2885-15/103843311_264665937973307_4031158389811581430_n.jpg?stp=dst-jpg_e35_p1080x1080&nc_ht=scontent-sea1-1.cdninstagram.com&nc_cat=111&nc_ohc=7FPRB7gaCBsAX-tccjZ&edm=AP_V10EBAAAA&ccb=7-5&oh=00_AfBu42eFsgmKJUqdTFEVrUEMGOsaVNjyetswLebtaSDmxg&oe=643BA29D&nc_sid=4f375e

Google map link:

6163 University Blvd, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1

Karen Keddy

RICK HANSEN FOUNDATION MEMBER

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality must reflect inclusiveness. This means that there must be as few barriers as possible for the space to be used in the way that it was intended to be used, by as many people as possible. Barriers to participation include architectural barriers, technology barriers and attitudinal barriers. A lack of barriers can reveal intentionality towards inclusiveness and in my opinion, this is “quality” in the built environment. If it appears that efforts are not made to mitigate barriers for people who live with disabilities, then the space lacks experiential quality. Speaking from my own lived experience, I look to see if attempts have been made to address the barriers that exist in the built environment for people who live with hearing loss. This includes anything that exists in the space that can mitigate background noise and will absorb sound. Often hearing disabilities are not addressed in the design and the space is not accessible for people with hearing loss, especially those who have difficulty with speech comprehension.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting a charming little coffee shop called *Charts Café*, just off the Harvest Moon Trailway bike trail in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. Coffee shops are one of the most difficult spaces for a person with a hearing disability to communicate in, because of the background noise and lack of acoustic treatment to the interior space and furnishings. The background noise in a coffee shop is inclusive of other patrons having conversations as well as sounds from behind the counter, such as the noise made when operating an espresso machine. I was pleasantly surprised to see that the *Charts Café* has a couple of dropped ceilings in a two-story high space in which they installed standard acoustic ceiling panels that are typically found in schools and workplaces – the Tectum acoustic ceiling panel which has superior sound absorption qualities. This was obviously an intentional design intervention that contributed greatly to significant sound absorption, especially in the area of the coffee shop with tables and chairs. This one design move provides a high-quality space in which anyone with difficulty with speech comprehension or noise sensitivities can engage more fully in conversation.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Interior space of *Charts Café*, Wolfville, Nova Scotia
Photo taken by Karen Keddy (summer, 2022)

9. Market Areas and Places

Michelle Gagnon-Creeley
Researcher, Landscape Designer
Member of the Research Site Led by UBC

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality in the built environment should reflect a sense of feeling connected to something greater than the individual. Well-designed spaces should leave us feeling safe in our bodies and feel comfortable enough for us to visit without fear of not belonging. A positive spatial experience always leaves me feeling as though I am home; I am connected to the land, and I am connected to my neighbours. These kinds of spaces foster a sense of community, where individuals are seen and heard, and we collectively care for one another.



Image caption with copyright owner:
When you find a good place, Michelle Gagnon-Creeley

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I used to live in the Pointe-St-Charles neighbourhood in Montreal. It's where my great-great-grandparents settled when they first arrived in Canada from the Irish famine. Up until that point, I had lived in suburban Quebec, and had felt rather disconnected from the idea of community. Very close to my home was the Atwater Market, an institution in the city. As a young adult trying to navigate identity, community and connection, the market felt central to that.

Visiting Atwater was my first real experience of a food market, with so much to look at and experience. While it is a space that feels familiar, there is also an element of adventure and excitement to visiting. There is familiarity with its layout and shop owners, but there is also always new food items on display ready to be experimented with. It is the ultimate multisensorial

experience—from the intricate placement of the strawberries in June, to the pine tree forest for Christmas, you are surrounded by a myriad of colours and textures, smells and tastes. The market was an important landmark in my everyday experience of the sud-ouest. It was often the space for gathering when the sun was warm, and it was the goal to make it at least that far on a winter's day walk. Its distinct art-deco shape located along the Lachine Canal makes it easily recognizable as you pass through the area. On the sunniest of days, the routine was to find fun snacks from the market and to gather along the grass lawn connected to the canal. You could watch the ducks swim in the water while cyclists zoom by while hearing the endless sounds of community chatter; it is both the perfect meeting spot and the perfect people watching spot. I was always marked by how connected I felt in this space. Walking the same streets and spaces that those who came before me did leaves me feeling connected to this neighbourhood in a very special way. It is a space where you run into friends, recognize community, and you feel seen and surrounded by your neighbours. It feels like home, and has led me to a lifelong journey of finding home through community no matter where I am.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



*Image caption with copyright owner:
Atwater Market in Winter, Michelle Gagnon-Creeley*

Google map link: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Marché+Atwater/@45.4795202,-73.5769653,15z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x4cc91a78389aaeb9:0x1caf52f4e17890dc!8m2!3d45.4795202!4d-73.5769653!16zL20vMGR5cXRy>

Zineb, Hameda Benchekroun*Group or organization affiliation within the partnership:**Member of the Research Site Led by McGill University***In your own words, describe those features of built environments that contribute positively to your encounters and experiences:**

I believe that positive lived experiences in my built environment arise from these qualities, but not restricted to, inclusion, accessibility, safety, and social engagement. Quality in the built environment is when a space is inclusive to all publics. This is true when spaces are designed or adapted to be welcoming and accommodating for diverse populations and their needs. Inclusive environments promote equal access to public spaces, services, resources, allowing people to engage fully in social and cultural activities. Furthermore, built environments should account for diverse abilities and be accessible to most bodies. Care given to physical and sensory features, light, color, and sound should enable people with these diverse abilities to access, use and interact with the built environment and to appropriate the space. Safety also contributes to positive experiences in these spaces. In fact, features like adequate lighting, clear signage, open and enclosed spaces and point of views should be well thought through when designing for different communities and temporalities.

Finally, social engagement that is experiences in public spaces allows people to feel a sense of identity, belonging and appropriation of the space they are using.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

In Saint-John, New Brunswick, I still vividly remember my visit to the City Market, one of the oldest farmer's markets in Canada. The market itself is an indoor open space, with high ceilings, large open windows, and plenty of natural light. The aisles are wide and inviting, making it easy to move around, and are displaying items from merchants and restaurants of different cultures. The original building dates back to the 1870s and has been lovingly preserved. The walls and floors are made of beautiful old brick, and the wooden beams are painted in bright colors. The market is often used as an outlet for local artists to hold small exhibits within their city. In fact, it also hosts a Night Market on the adjacent street expanding the buzzing activities to its surroundings. Bands and performers also often use the market to entertain the visitors creating a warm welcoming atmosphere.

One of my favorites spots within the market was the solarium, which is mainly used by visitors to have lunch, read, or take a break. This naturally lighted space provides a vibrant and animated place of encounter within the city.

When I visited the market, it was bustling, but it was also peaceful. There was a feeling of community that was clearly palpable. From the moment I stepped inside, I was enveloped by the sights and sounds of the market. Under sunlight, as I was surrounded by these different sensory experiences, it reminded me of my experience in Morocco, remembering the markets, the encounters with people, the smell of fresh produce and the sound of food cooking.

The Saint John City Market was for me a great example of how a space can be appropriated and can create a sense of belonging and engagement by its local community, contributing to a general positive experience in the built environment.

The following is an image and/or a link to a space or place in Canada that I found especially meaningful and moving:



An interior shot of the Saint John City Market in the Christmas season of 2018. (Saint John City Market/Facebook). <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/saint-john-market-plan-1.6418601>



@naomi.studio.nb, Saint John City Market solarium, 2023. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CpNyhEPud9-/>

Google map link: Saint John City Market <https://goo.gl/maps/155CYFNQ8P8p67Z77>



Tamara Steele, *The Germain Street entrance of the Saint John City Market.* <https://www.thewave.ca/2021/09/20/10-year-plan-coming-for-city-market/>

Jonathan Bisson*RAIC President-Elect**Member of the "Processes & Policies Supporting the Reinvention of the Built Environment" cluster led by Université Laval*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:

I think a positive quality experience should reflect some of what is expected by the occupants, but more importantly, a multi-scale experience.

When a variety of expertise is brought together to complete a given location, there is a simple, effective and comfortable feeling of well-being.

Comfort is felt in the diversity of lighting, the sense of sustainability and the ease of orientation and movement. A built environment supports its occupants, the community and visitors, it is a platform for communication on a strictly human scale. At another scale, the experience can influence adjacent development, the emergence of positive aspects of the community or the resulting urbanization.

A quality place is durable and will survive the effects of time because we will want to maintain it and we will be inclined to modify it in respect with its original version. Sometimes, we will even want to rebuild it identically in case of a disaster.

In short, a positive experience is rarely something that can be easily described by the users, but something that is lived, discussed, discovered, understood and brings simple well-being in the short and long term.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

Although the project is recent, the new Grand Marché de Québec is a concrete example of the quality described above. To meet the needs of a market and its visitors and to maintain a privileged contact with the producers and processors of the region's products, a building with heritage value was recycled into a public market with efficient, sustainable and aesthetic infrastructures. Everything in the choice of materials added (wood, concrete and huge skylights for natural light) combined with the existing ones (steel, brick) was first made to generate a simply functional experience. Then the balance between function, versatility of the spaces and their durability welded the experience of discovery, of communication between a producer and the consumer. At the end of this great project of relocation of the most important public market of the City, which was not done without some anxiety or opposition to change, it is now possible to perceive the emergence of positive aspects for the community and the urbanization of the area that is being renewed. New medium-density buildings are being built nearby, a huge shopping center from another era is being transformed into "a new living environment in the heart of the city to accommodate 4,000 new residents", which is also "a mixed project on a human scale and a living environment that will last for years to come".

The requalification of the exhibition center and particularly the transformation of a heritage building (the Pavillon du Commerce, built in 1925) is an example of quality. It is a place with large halls, generous openings, an east-west orientation favorable to generous natural lighting and which was topped by a second floor that allowed the addition of functions but also the creation of sub-places that inhabit the volume and offer different scales to visitors.

Whether it's the family area or the open, light-filled mezzanine that welcomes the youngest (photo 2); or the chefs' table - a collective cooking area that brings people together and is displayed like a public showcase (photo 3); or the market gardeners' alley that subtly divides the territory and marks the stall (photo 4), everything is designed to make the customer experience unique.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I found particularly meaningful and moving:

Image caption with copyright owner (ideally):

Grand marché de Québec : architects Circum and Atelier Pierre Thibault in Consortium

<https://www.legrandmarchedequebec.com/fr/>

<https://www.legrandmarchedequebec.com/en/>

Photo 1:



Photo 2:



Photo 3:



Photo 4:



10. Streets and Paths

Sneha Mandhan*PhD candidate / Research Coordinator/ Manager**Member of the Research Site Led by Fadi Masoud, Robert Wright***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect the needs and preferences of a wide variety of users, first and foremost. I think a good quality space is comfortable, feels welcoming and fosters a sense of belonging for everyone, and is designed in response to the lived experience of potential users. The spaces that I gravitate towards the most are those where design has played a bit of a background role, and where users – whether they are local residents, or people working in or visiting the area – have been able to make the space their own, whether temporarily or permanently. Good quality spaces are also those where a variety of different people feel comfortable to show up and spend time in – where no one is kept out. I also gravitate towards spaces where natural elements – whether it be dirt, water, air, sun/moonlight – have a strong presence.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting Church Street in Bangalore every weekend when I lived there. It was a street that felt safe and comfortable to be in at all hours of the day. It was easy to get to, being located in central Bangalore and close to a well-connected bus terminal. It was a destination for visitors and local residents alike. I think a part of its success was because along this short stretch, there were really great and affordable places to eat and drink, places to shop, and places to just sit, hang out, and catch up with friends. It is also home to my favourite bookstore in Bangalore – Blossoms Book House – which has three wonderful stories of floor to ceiling stacks of used and new books of every genre and category. Another memorable local store along the street was a magazine store where a family of cats lived. When at the store, the cats would come over for pets. I spent a lot of time in those stores browsing – never felt any pressure to purchase anything to spend time in those spaces.

The ground and upper floors of many of the buildings along the street are home to restaurants, bars and shops. I often spent weekends on Church Street where I would meet friends who lived in different parts of the city – we would get a drink and spend hours on a first-floor patio watching people walk along Church Street.

I am a woman and safety at night was a big priority in choosing spaces where I spent my time. Church Street, because of its mix of uses and users – women, families, seniors all frequented the street – was active and busy late into the night, which made it feel safe to be in. It was also a short walk away from a metro station and it was always easy to find autorickshaws nearby – an important factor when thinking about travelling home later at night.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/m8UEELZhdCKfu1AF9>

ARMSTRONG, Alexander

Director, Special Development Projects Section, Quebec City

Member of the research site directed by: Laval University

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:

A quality-built environment should include mature trees, safe walking, biking and driving spaces, spaces to play, lively facades open to the street, clean air, sunshine. Buildings should be integrated into the environment and made of sustainable materials.

In the future, buildings will have to integrate so-called green technologies, without losing sight of the fact that the human being must remain at the center.

The quality-built environment is designed for people and their comfort, first and foremost.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of a positive quality experience:

I love to frequent 2^e Avenue in the Limoilou district of Quebec City. It is lined on both sides with stone duplexes and triplexes, with outdoor balconies actually inhabited by the residents. Traces of the past are visible in the stonework. No building exceeds 3 or 4 stories, except for the majestic church transformed into a circus school. Almost exclusively residential, one or two businesses surprise us on a street corner.

There are sidewalks, which are separated from the street by ancient trees that inspire respect. One can walk or circulate in the street, while still feeling safe.

This built environment is soothing. It is green, it is inhabited, it is peaceful. I voluntarily make detours to pass through it.

Taking a break on the church square to admire the trees and buildings is well worth it.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I have found to be an example of quality in the built environment:



The 2^e Avenue in summer

Link to Google map: <https://www.google.ca/maps/@46.824876,-71.2306302,3a,75y,144.86h,95.86t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1szR1IZW-sT1vgK5SEkTf17Q!2e0!7i16384!8i8192>

DROLET, Valerie*Director, Strategic Land Planning Division, City of Quebec**Member of the research site directed by: Laval University***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should evoke an emotion, put a smile on your face and make you want to come back. This place must be appreciated in every season, under the sun in summer and under a blanket of snow in winter; we look at it differently depending on the light, depending on the path taken to get there - we enjoy rediscovering it. It should be walkable first and foremost, be on a human scale, and be inviting to all members of the community. It is a place where we want to build relationships, bring family and friends, and talk about them often. It can also remind us of places we've already visited in another city, another country.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember walking through the ruelle des Ursulines located in Old Quebec. Above all, I enjoy walking in the alleys in general, whether they are in Limoilou, Montcalm, Montreal, or elsewhere. They are the witness of the life of the people who live there, who move around there, who appropriate it (or not!). Alleys are a strong illustration of the community, of a neighborhood space that carries the colors of a neighborhood. They are also at the scale of the pedestrian; regardless of their age, they are a significant place for its residents.

The Ursuline's Street is special because some residences and hotels are located there. Walking along it, we have the impression of having discovered a secret place in the busy Old Quebec, especially by tourists. The rich presence of the trees, the cobblestone floor and the narrowness of the alley envelop us. The morning light invites us to walk softly towards the city hall or my boy's school. The color of the materials is enhanced by the foliage of the trees in the fall (or the other way around?).

The alleyway was recently planted with new trees and shrubs as part of a greening program. We appreciate the coolness and shade in the summer that this provides.

Finally, one does not pass by this alley because it is a shortcut, but because one chooses.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I found particularly meaningful and moving:



Ursuline Alley. Photo credit: Alain Caron

Link to Google map:

https://www.google.com/maps/@46.8110823,-71.20961,3a,90y,90h,90t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1skZkEI_xlzE1M0Q7frle-Q!2e0!7i16384!8i8192

ST-ONGE, Sébastien*Votefor.ca*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:

The built environment must have components in balance to ensure a positive experience. This balance must encourage social interaction, support inclusion and, of course, promote the well-being and safety of citizens. The form of place must also be defined by the functions it serves. Since these functions are often multiple and a single place must respond to several needs, it is essential to consult the population in order to first identify their needs and aspirations and then to ensure the social acceptability of the projects that will structure the built environment.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of a positive quality experience:

The development of 3^e avenue, the backbone of the Limoilou district in Quebec City, seems to us to be the perfect example of a positive experience, because its development and activities are in tune with the uses and needs of the community.

The 3^e avenue is more than a commercial street. It is also a space for socializing. The shape of 3^e Avenue encourages people to meet while having access to local businesses. It is the backbone of the neighborhood. A range of commercial and social activities and active travel are articulated from this thoroughfare, which goes well beyond traffic.

As for commercial activities, they offer several proximity services to residents. Although the service offer has become more specialized in recent years, merchants generally seek to offer local services at an affordable price and are sensitive, for the most part, to the different economic realities of neighbourhood residents.

For many citizens, 3^e Avenue is also a transit route between their home and work. Even though a relatively large number of cars travel on this artery, there is a good cohabitation with pedestrians and cyclists. Pedestrians are numerous and have access to wide sidewalks that allow for safe movement. These sidewalks are also a meeting place for citizens who wish to socialize. In recent years, a bicycle path has also been added to encourage safe bicycle travel. Some parking lots have even been removed to allow for the installation of electrically assisted bike shares.

Despite its different functions, 3^e Avenue admirably supports a set of factors essential to social life, as the components of the built environment are in tune with the movements and needs of its community.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I have found to be an example of quality in the built environment:



The 3^e avenue, Alexandre Gilbert.

Link to Google map:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/3e+Ave,+Qu%C3%A9bec+City,+QC/@46.8255785,-71.2332966,16.25z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x4cb89616afccd305:0x882a0fa042f0bceb!8m2!3d46.825237!4d-71.2287011!16s%2Fg%2F1thvgjxl>

Joy, Meghan

Co-applicant

Member of the Research Site Led by Concordia University

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect...

Spaces that have ample natural light as well as shelter, where folks can rest and replenish as well as reflect and observe. Spaces that take into account the access and equity needs of users and potential users, thinking about the various dimensions of safety and accessibility. As a person who is neurodiverse and lives with chronic illness, I feel safest in a place where there are public bathrooms and where there is not too much crowding, loud noise, and bright lights. As a person who lives with PTSD, I also appreciate spaces with windows that are quite open in layout (no dark corners) and that have promoted mixed uses that encourage 'eyes on the street.' Finally, quality also imbues a sense of playfulness and/or thoughtfulness. I appreciate spaces that have local art made by community members and/or pictures of the history of the space.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting...

My neighbourhood in Montreal, particularly the rue Mont Royal Corridor between Papineau and Des Erables, is an interesting example of quality for me. The street is fairly narrow and has a cozy atmosphere, with medium density mixed use buildings with retail at grade. The shops are relatively small, with a mix of small food shops and cafes and retail that cater to a mix of incomes that are very practical and interesting. This promotes eyes on the street as it is quite busy at most times. There are medium size trees lining the sidewalks, with some benches and garbage cans. There are often lights and banners on the trees/traffic lights, celebrating the season or advertising events. There are several crosswalks, which promote pedestrian safety. There is also the newly renovated Parc des Compagnons-de-saint-laurent, which has local art and lots of benches to people-watch (there are lots of older adults that sit on the benches and chat). The park has new swings and a play structure as well as an outdoor gym, promoting intergenerational play. It is a flat park and thus relatively accessible. In the summer, this part of the street has been pedestrianized and there are some lovely bright blue benches with shade cover and flowers put up. There are also several terraces and local art projects/photo histories that creates a lively atmosphere. There are certainly problems with the street as well but I will focus on quality for the purposes of this exercise.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Image caption with copyright owner:

This is a link to the park: <https://montreal.ca/lieux/parc-des-compagnons-de-saint-laurent>



Google map link:

Note that the park is now completed: https://www.google.com/maps/@45.5339541,-73.5736275,3a,75y,107.87h,90t/data=!3m7!1e1!3m5!1srxvHADXvP7LQe1t9idDx4w!2e0!6shttps:%2F%2Fstreetviewpixels-pa.googleapis.com%2Fv1%2Fthumbnail%3Fpanoid%3DrxvHADXvP7LQe1t9idDx4w%26cb_client%3Dmaps_sv_tactile.gps%26w%3D203%26h%3D100%26yaw%3D114.71551%26pitch%3D0%26thumbfov%3D100!7i16384!8i8192

11. Public Places, Squares, Plazas, and Nodes

Andrew Payne*Industry**Member of the Research Site Led by University of Waterloo***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect...

The built environment provides setting for our communities across Canada. Depending on this the setting the experience of the individual and the community as a whole can be profoundly affected by the quality of that setting. A number of qualities can contribute to a positive experience in any particular built environment. In my experience the most positive built environments incorporated the following qualities:

- A) Inclusive and accessible design that creates a sense of place for a community.
- B) Durable/Resilient design; the built environment can and should be a connection to past generations. The most impactful places have been experienced by multiple generations, this tie to the past creates a sense of place in the present. In order to last for generations these built environments require durable and resilient design.
- C) Connection to nature/outdoors; use of materials that are from the earth combined with design elements which allow the natural environment to incorporate into the build landscape.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting...

When reflecting on positive experiences of quality in my own life there are two places which stand out. Both places are often used as community gathering spots and as such have formed fond memories.

- 1) Downtown Orangeville, Ontario: I was fortunate to grow up in a town which prioritized place making and preservation. Downtown Orangeville has served many purposes for over 160 years; however, it has always been a place for the community to gather. The design of the built environment has remained the same over period of time meaning that a collective memory through familiar street scape creates a sense of collective community through memory which can be passed down through generations and new commers to the town. Downtown Orangeville hosts several events and festivals throughout the year which always attract large crowds.
- 2) Toronto Distillery District: The Distillery District in Toronto attracts events and festivals year-round and through doing so attracts diverse crowds from around the world. The Distillery District is a great example of how durable and resilient design can be used and repurposed for as the socioeconomic fabric of the city changes.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Image: *Broadway Downtown Orangeville during Jazz and Blues Festival (J.A.W Photography, Orangeville Jazz and Blues Festival Facebook)*



Image: *Toronto Distillery District Christmas Market (image courtesy BlogTO <https://www.blogto.com/radar/2022/09/distillery-winter-village-toronto-2022/>)*

Google map link:

Orangeville Downtown: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Orangeville+Town+Hall/@43.9203388,-80.0963416,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x882b009ced85555d:0x69ecc076024c0948!8m2!3d43.9203388!4d-80.0941529!16s%2Fg%2F11ckqr7myr>

Toronto Distillery District:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Distillery+District,+Toronto,+ON/@43.6505494,-79.3687429,16z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x89d4cb3dc701c609:0xc3e729dcdb566a16!8m2!3d43.6503055!4d-79.35958!16zL20vMDcwNDBw>

Marveh Farhoodi

Community Partner with the Toronto Metropolitan Research group

I am the Program director of Open Architecture Collaborative Canada (OACC). OACC is a community partner in this research.

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I firmly believe that a positive experience of quality in the built environment offers a human connection with all the elements that shape the space, including the physical components, natural elements such as natural light, natural breeze, greenery, and of course, people. This human-centred experience is all about a tangible, immersive connection that engages all five senses in a variety of ways.

Looking through this lens, I believe such experience of the space happens when the space doesn't consider people merely as users but also as an integral part of shaping it. The space should tell a story- or many stories- with people, not for people. Therefore, the elements of discovery and playfulness are inseparable from the positive experience of the space.

Furthermore, this positive experience is closely connected to humanistic experience of the space. This includes how relationships are formed and maintained in the space, how included – and related- the individual feels, and how much the space provides opportunities to feel part of something bigger, and ideally, to act creatively, innovatively, or proactively.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

One of my most memorable experiences was visiting Market 707 in Alexandra Park, Toronto. It's a stretch of sidewalk near Dundas and Bathurst lined with upcycled shipping containers offering sweet and savoury foods, and everything in between. What sets this place apart is the immediate sense of being part of a community with a strong entrepreneurial vibe. As a visitor, I couldn't help but be inspired by the sense that there's more to the space than just tasty food. I felt like I am part of a story where people are trying to make food accessible and provide opportunities for foodies and entrepreneurs to share their stories.

What really drew me in was not just the vibrant colours and creative use of the space, but the deep sense of community that's woven into every aspect of it. It's an experience that truly connects visitors to the place and makes them feel like they are a part of something bigger.

There are so many small things to discover, from the enticing smells to the amazing tastes, it is like a journey of discovery and connection that leaves a lasting impression. It's a prime example of how a positive experience of quality in the built environment can go beyond just design and aesthetics, to create a space that fosters community and human connection.

Visiting The Museum of Innocence in Istanbul was an unforgettable positive experience that left a deep impression on me. What really made this experience stand out was how it breaks the stereotypes of a traditional museum experience, converting it to a scenario in which visitors play an integral role. The whole design and narraiton and flowof the space allows visitors to step into the story, creating a sense of being part of something bigger. As I explored the exhibits, I felt like I was being transported to the time and place described in the novel. The exhibits themselves were carefully curated and meticulously designed to evoke the spirit of the story, from the objects and artifacts to the lighting and sounds. The intimate and human-scale experience that the museum offers is unexpected, and goes against many of the assumptions

about what a museum should be. In fact, there is nothing in the entire experience that makes you feel like you're just a user or a spectator. The museum was not just a place to look at objects, but a place to feel the emotions and stories of the characters.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Market 707- Source: [Blog Toronto](#)
[Google map](#)



The Museum of Innocence Source: [Wikipedia](#) - Source: [International Traveller](#)
[Fuzheado](#) (talk) - Own work

Cucuzzella, Carmela*Scholar, Concordia University**Member of the Research Site Led by Carmela Cucuzzella***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect a place that feels at once vibrant, while also providing a sense of safety in the sense that there are no (or very little) barriers to enjoyment. In terms of the public realm, vibrancy refers to a diversity of spaces, such that walking through the space enables a richness of experiences that can stimulate a variety of senses, while also providing spaces that compel us to stop and enjoy the view, the smell, the sounds, the textures, or the overall composition of the space that surrounds us. It is important for such places also feel safe to a point that we are not thinking of this quality while we are on the site. Safety for me also comes with a sense of belonging in some way. Especially in a multicultural city like Montreal, where it is easy to get lost in a hegemonic state of mind, and loose oneself in the chaos of urban life, it is important that we feel some part of ourselves in the public realm. A sense of belonging in the public realm can come in so many different forms that address especially the underrepresented groups in many designs. For example, for the elderly, it is important to have public spaces that make them feel safe, where they have access to walking paths that are far from cyclists or skateboarders - that often represent danger in their perspective. Such walking paths would also need benches installed in a rhythmic approach so that the elderly feel capable of walking along the paths without fear of extended distances. Vibrancy and safety are two core elements of quality places in the public realm, but they are not always easy to achieve at once.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting the Old Port in Montreal on so many occasions. Born and raised in Montreal, I have visited this site for decades. But it has been about 3 decades, since its redevelopment in the 1990s, that I experienced the most enjoyment. In the 1990s, my children were very young, and the Old Port already offered a variety of activities for the whole family. It was a place where each of us found moments of pleasure and escape. Then, it already offered a plethora of activities for all kinds of people, whether in groups or individuals. The diversity of activities has been an attraction for me and my growing family over the years and continues till this day. Decades ago, when my kids were very young, the Montreal Science Centre, the SOS Labrynthe, and the IMAX theatre, offered amusing activities for all of us, where every member of our family can find enjoyment. In the summers, the Segway, quadricycle, and pedalo rentals offered active enjoyment. We cannot underestimate the health benefits, both physically and mentally, of these active activities. Since the Old Port attracts so many tourists, even when I visit the site on my own, I always feel connected to the others enjoying the site too. This sense of connectivity contributes to a sense of belonging and makes you feel 'at home' – a very positive experience. I have continued to visit the Old Port, even after my kids have grown up. Its proximity and connectivity to the Lachine Canal, makes Montreal's Old Port even more vibrant for me now, as I can cycle or walk long paths while taking time along the path to enjoy moments of rest and beauty. It offers a healthy option full of possibilities. The changes in greenery, seating areas, park installations, cafes, and even the market, enable this walking and cycling path to provide a

different experience at every visit, and this is rare. The diversity of amenities and services, with the careful design that separates the walking and cycling paths makes it accessible to most people. And the path has been designed with meticulous attention to detail, making it a complete sensorial experience: the sounds and smells of nature, the waterway, and the cafes; the views across the river on the old port, along the canal, and of the heritage buildings, are just a few examples. I do believe that most people find their sense of place on this site and can be why it has become such a popular getaway within the city.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Figure 1: Montreal Silos Summer Sunset © Cucuzzella 2018



Figure 4: View of Habitat 67 and Bota Bota Spa on the water, © Cucuzzella 2023



Figure 3: Montreal Old Port walking path, winter, © Cucuzzella 2023



Figure 2: Lachine Canal Connectivity © Cucuzzella 2020

Google

map

link:

<https://www.google.ca/maps/place/Old+Port+of+Montreal,+Montreal,+QC/@45.5006105,-73.5617621,15.1z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x4cc91a57c0570d4f:0xd16f257ab5a74cac!8m2!3d45.5076798!4d-73.5508688!16s%2Fq%2F1hg4vlnzn>

Darryl Condon
Chair, Rise for Architecture Steering Committee

I am a registered architect and Managing Principal of **hcma** architecture + design. I am also the Chair of the Steering Committee for Rise for Architecture, a group pursuing goals of a transformed profession as well as an Architecture Policy for Canada.

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality be welcoming for all. It should encourage social interaction and provide a place where all citizens are able to participate. The best examples also challenge us to see the built environment differently and to imagine a more impactful future.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

My example of a quality lived experience is a semi-permanent laneway transformation in Vancouver called Alley-Oop. It is an example that demonstrates the potential to transform under-utilized public space with minimal investment. It was intended to start a conversation about how scarce public space is prioritized.

In 2015, the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (DVBIA) conducted 'Re-imagine Downtown Vancouver 2040,' a collaborative visioning process. Public space emerged as a major theme; 11,000 Vancouverites said they wanted "more public space, including plazas, rooftop patios and alleyway activations". hcma partnered with the City and the DVBIA to transform alleyways from utilitarian service corridors into bright, playful public spaces. These spaces are shared by people and vehicles, which continue to access the lane from service purposes.

Each laneway transformation has an identity and theme in contrast with its surrounding area. In juxtaposition to its location in the heart of the business district, the reimagined Alley-Oop laneway is themed "Play". Bold pink and yellow paint, basketball hoops and furniture act as a beacon to those working in Vancouver's business quarter, encouraging them to play, exercise and socialize in the space.

Since opening in 2016, the number of pedestrians using Alley-Oop has more than doubled (from 30 an hour to 73), and where men made up about 75% of alleygoers before, they now represent only about 58%. These numbers suggest that the #MoreAwesomeNow project has created a much busier, more welcoming place.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Images: Kim Bellavance / Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association
Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/Jn7cFrUC4fNNw5tM8>

NIZAR, Firdous*Research Assistant**Member of the Concordia University Research Site Led by Dr. Carmela Cucuzzella***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect the values of the communities they are designed for. However, positive experiences or good design are always taken for granted or present in hidden layers of the urban fabric. To appreciate them, one needs to constantly realign their conceptual model of what a positive experience entails, often falling back to and comparing with nostalgia for hometowns or childhood homes. Familiarity and comfort are tied into these spaces that make us “feel at home”, feelings of collective ownership and care.

As a woman, I appreciate public spaces that are welcoming and do not threaten my sense of belonging, safety, and embodied experiences. I want to be able to take up as much space mentally and physically as I possibly could, without the patriarchal norms embedded in the design of the built environment dictating where I “should” be. Hence, a positive built environment is one where no one feels like a second-tier citizen simply because the space is not designed with them and their needs in mind.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

The animated square of Quartier des spectacles (Place des Arts section) blending seamlessly into the symmetric design of Complexe Desjardins holds as much wonder for me now as it did when I first came to Canada. The spacious steps overlooking the complex and the square provide a space of relaxation and observation of the daily rhythms that unfold. Sitting on these steps on a sunny afternoon with friends lent me a vantage point not only on the people passing by but also on the people seated beside and around me. All from different walks of life, seemingly lost in conversation or thought—a collective claiming of space in the public sphere.

Despite the hard textures of concrete and stone, there is a sense of comfort and belonging when one sits on these steps, either taking a break from a long day or planning their next social or cultural activity. No matter the weather, there is always ample daylight on this square, the foresight of its planners and designers evident. The MAC Museum, Place des Arts theatres, and the Quartier offer a myriad of local cultural experiences that populate the heart of a metropolitan city like no other. The strategic integration of the Place des Arts metro station makes this public space accessible to a wider range of citizens from different socio-economic groups. In fact, the diversity of land use within 15min radius of this square makes it a good example of transit-oriented development that incorporates the diverse needs of citizens.

The complex provides refuge from harsh winter weather as well as ample restrooms that are well-maintained and free to use. The massive atrium of the complex draws my eyes into the ceiling that bathes its interiors with ample natural light while looking elegant and timeless. This complex is one of the few that is aesthetically pleasing to me due to its symmetric hexagonal spaces and does not have austere textures or linear, unengaging layouts as seen in most

Canadian shopping complexes. Albeit needing more seating options, the atrium offers areas for repose and socialization while being surrounded by commercial activity.

Overall, this example urges city planners and designers to prioritize mobility, accessibility and safety while developing public spaces, with sustainable strategies to keep them active and welcoming for all.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Place des Arts, Montreal. Jeangagnon, 2012. [Wikimedia Commons](#):



Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/HVoxqAro2vQnTRtQA>

Keir Stuhlmiller*Assistant Professor – Mount Royal University*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that positive experiences of spatial and environmental qualities offer individuals insight into the significance of our environment to our wellbeing. While the concept of positive experiences is broad, I believe that access to experiencing a wide variety of conditions results in a willingness and interest to act and engage with our context. This level of engagement can ultimately result in greater empathy, community participation, and connection to others.

In my experience, a connection to context and environment leads to a deeper understanding of how individual wellbeing is linked to community wellbeing. This insight often has the result of supporting, or even generating, a fundamental understanding that individual action can influence community values and improve quality of life. And I believe context and spatial quality can contribute to the basis of that perspective.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

Since 2017 in Calgary, the Beltline Urban Murals Project (BUMP) Festival (<https://yycbump.ca/>) has been installing murals on existing structures to “create accessible public art that uplifts communities across Calgary.” With over 180+ public art installations, the impact of this interventions is not only significant, but transformative to public space. The vast variety of murals, artistic perspectives, and relationships generated within public space creates a dialogue and discussion between people and their environment, their friends, and their own perceptions of context. The quality of the project is linked to variety and influence, rather than a specificity.

I have been at numerous person and community events where the murals are actively discussed and debated. They challenge previously held perceptions of what people like or appreciate – not only about art but about their community and the buildings hosting the art. The direct relationship between personal value and appreciation is linked to our built environment through these murals. On countless occasions, these installations have been the foundation to discussions about public space, it’s value, and emergent perspectives on our city’s public space.

Although this strategy of generating a significant public art fabric is neither new or unique, the vast footprint of the BUMP Festival has realized significant response and engagement – and is a remarkably positive contribution to experience and quality of space.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

[\(https://yycbump.ca/\)](https://yycbump.ca/)



Artist: BirdO



Artist: Adam Zhu

Shauna Mallory-Hill

*Lead Investigator / Academic Partner with the University of Manitoba Research Group
I am an associate professor in the Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality in the built environment should not only meet an individual or community's needs but allows them to transcend to the very highest level of inclusiveness, behaving and relating, to oneself, to other human beings, to other species, to nature and one's place in the world. For me, places that help one transcend beyond every day are effortlessly understood, inherently beautiful, and intellectually delightful. Sensory and environmental quality, acoustic, texture, colour, geometry, and lighting all play important roles. Places that are "alive and at peace with each other" in this way are what Christopher Alexander referred to in *Timeless Way of Building* (1979) as "quality without a name." Beyond this, I love a place with a good story.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

Having done a variation of this exercise to explore environmental design quality with my own students, I anticipate that most people will struggle to find a non-nature-based location that leaves them with a particular sense of experiencing something transcendent. For most Winnipeggers, the first thing they will say is a quality space is "The Forks," which is a waterfront public space in the heart of the city located where the Red and Assiniboine Rivers meet. Archaeological evidence suggests that it has been a meeting place for over 6,000 years. It was designated a National Historic Site in 1974. Amongst other things, it features a riverwalk, a marketplace inside refurbished stables, shops and restaurants in an adapted train warehouse. It is home to the Manitoba Children's Museum, Manitoba Theatre for Young People, and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Best of all, however, is the Nestaweya River Trail, a 6-10 kilometre skating/cross-country skiing/walking path that extends between the two rivers. Every year an annual international competition invites architects and artists to create "warming huts," six of which are added to huts from years past. I love walking and the experience of being on the river trail with a rich diversity of other people embracing the frigid winter and enjoying the hut designs together.

My most positive experience of built quality ever was, however, outside of Canada – La Sagrada Familia Basilica, Barcelona, Spain. A story for another day?

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



1. Nestawaya River Trail



2. Skater – Forks Pavilion



3. Example Warming Huts



Photo credits: Robyn Mallory (1-2), Shauna Mallory-Hill (3-4)

Google map link:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/The+Forks,+Winnipeg,+MB/@49.8903554,-97.1306725,16z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x52ea714e67a59973:0xec4cff18c72ef18a!8m2!3d49.8909396!4d-97.1299378!16s%2Fg%2F1td766y5>

Simon Blakeley

Regional Manager - Program Development & Government Relations, reThink Green Community Partner and Member of the Research Site/Project Group - SSHRC LU Cluster "Materiality and Social Prosperity for the North" - led by Terrance Galvin, Laurentian University.

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe a positive experience of quality in the built environment should reflect the core needs and values of the diverse communities they serve, while contributing to a strong sense of place. Quality is found in well-designed, distinct, yet-unifying communities, which lend themselves to different social, economic, environmental, cultural, and heritage-led activities.

Quality built environments should be practical, functional, and intuitive through their layout and design. They should aim to incorporate natural features, and produce welcoming, safe, inclusive, and resilient places - that inspire new ways of thinking; allow creative expression; and showcase progress through innovation. Quality built environments should also recognize some of the competing pressures and tensions that exist within modern day society, and create spaces for learning, understanding and acceptance. They should explain the historic and / or natural significance of local assets, foster dialogue and, where applicable, provide space for public gatherings, celebrations, and other forms of cultural expression, and entertainment, that enriches the minds of people who choose to live and visit there.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I remember visiting the waterfront (Quayside) in Newcastle / Gateshead in Northern England. This location includes the River Tyne, and adjoining developments, which literally bridge the gap between the City of Newcastle and the neighbouring town of Gateshead.

For reference, the study area comprises the following key features:

1. The world-famous [Tyne Bridge](#) which opened in 1928, and became an early-inspiration for the much larger Sydney Harbour Bridge.
2. The [Gateshead Millennium Bridge](#) - the world's first tilting bridge, opened in 2001.
3. The [Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art](#); an imposing Art-Deco style museum located in the remains of a Flour Mill (which opened its doors in July 2002); and
4. The [Sage Concert Venue](#) and musical education centre - which opened in 2004.

The study area (shown in red below) was once a heavily industrialized and busy commercial dock side location that served as a focal point for trade and commerce in the City of Newcastle. Towards the end of the C20th the area was in decline, and a longer-term regeneration strategy was produced to forge a new identity for the Quayside. One of the Quayside's main lasting features is the Tyne Bridge (also known as the "New Tyne Bridge", which is a Grade 2* listed structure of national significance. The bridge was considered a marvel of engineering at the time of construction and, in many ways, embodies the historic tradition of Northeastern England - as one of the world's former dominant producers of steel. Around the turn of the Millennium, proposals emerged to construct a new pedestrian-only bridge (The Gateshead Millennium Bridge). The bridge was designed to provide an important new connection to allow recreational pursuits and open up new opportunities for economic development. The bridge has a unique tilting-design which allows larger ships to continue sailing along the River Tyne.

Another close-by feature is the Sage Concert venue, which sits upslope from the water's edge and has a unique mirrored glass exterior that reflects the changes in movement and colours of the River Tyne. Both the form of the millennium bridge, and the Sage concert venue, were designed to respect the heritage and form of the nearby Tyne Bridge. Other bridges which connect the two sides of the river, and contribute to the unique character and setting of the Quayside, include the low-level Swing Bridge (built in 1876) and the High level bridge (originally built in 1849); which provided important new road and rail connections - allowing continuous travel from London to Edinburgh. Perhaps my most favourite part of the Quayside is the Iconic Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art. Originally commissioned in the late 1930s, by the Industrialist Joseph Rank Limited, as a dual-purpose factory for the production of flour and animal feed; progress stalled on building the structure until 1948 - after the Second World War. The mill employed hundreds of people until it closed in November 1982. Proposals to transform the Silo building to an Arts Centre first emerged in the 1990s. The final result is a building which visually demonstrates how large former Industrial structures can be repurposed in ways that meet the current day needs of local populations - while preserving the building's unique built form, heritage, and identity. The modern-day quayside also includes additional space for the arts, music, culture and sport (including the annual Great North Run - which is said to be the world's largest half marathon event). It combines these activities with other enabling development, including but not limited to housing, office space, restaurants, bars, nightclubs, and the Newcastle Law Courts.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Figure 1: Newcastle / Gateshead Quayside - Study Area
Location One: The Tyne Bridge



Gateshead Millennium Bridge Concert Venue



Location Two: The Sage

Sage



Location Three: The Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art

DROUIN, Alexandre

Member of the research site directed by: Laval University

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:

A quality-built environment allows one to experience a balance between stimulation of the senses and a level of calmness. In terms of sound, negative sounds such as car noise are limited, and positive sounds such as the sound of water, birdsong or snatches of conversation are perceptible. The sound environment is quiet enough to easily maintain a discussion.

The sense of smell is also positively stimulated, such as by the smell of flowers, or that of a bakery. At least, negative smells like gasoline or garbage are avoided.

The space is universally accessible and safe and is frequented by people of all ages and conditions. Comfortable seating areas are available to shelter from the elements such as wind and sun depending on the season and temperature. A variety of services and activities are offered in the vicinity to keep the site busy.

Visually, the building facades are stimulating in their rhythm and textures, with a balance of architectural detailing and openings that create an interaction between the interior and exterior of the building, primarily on the first floor. Views are unobstructed enough to see and be seen.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of a positive quality experience:

An example of quality development in the heart of Old Quebec is located at the intersection of Saint-Paul and Saint-Pierre streets and Sault-au-Matelot Street. The unique configuration of this five-branch intersection allows for 700 m² of space. Although modest in size, this node contrasts with the narrowness of the adjacent streets. A small square is laid out around the La Vivrière monument. Vehicular traffic is light and low speed on the streets that border this site since they are narrow and one is even shared. The intersection is paved throughout, which contributes to the distinctive character. The patterns in the pavement mimicking the movement of waves recall the historic position of the waterfront and integrate perfectly with the fountain which adds a pleasant background noise. The noise of traffic on the boulevards located a few dozen meters away is masked.

This small square would not have the same atmosphere without the old buildings of 2 to 6 floors that border it. Not only do the facades frame the space, their unique architecture creates a strong identity. There is enough space to showcase the buildings, including the century-old Canadian Bank of Commerce building. The size of this square gives an impression of intimacy and human scale. The façade of the restaurants on the first floor of the other buildings animates the square, especially in the summer when they extend their terraces. Benches also allow everyone to stop and enjoy the place. The pedestrian traffic allows for an informal animation of the space. Even in the evening it is pleasant to walk around.

It's not only a place I'm proud to show off when I show friends around the city, but also a comfortable place that makes me want to stop in. I wish this kind of space was more common in the heart of all neighborhoods and not just reserved for touristy areas.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I have found to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Place de la FAO. Images: Google Maps

Link to Google map:

<https://www.google.ca/maps/@46.816118,-71.203394,3a,59.9y,300.62h,90.1t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1s2NwdRvdKZi9J9o2TzWAFJg!2e0!7i16384!8i8192?hl=fr>

Link to the Quebec Cultural Heritage Directory :

<https://www.patrimoine-culturel.gouv.qc.ca/rpcq/detail.do?methode=consulter&id=109854&type=bien>

LEBLANC-TRUDEAU, Jeanne

Design Commissioner, Bureau du design, City of Montreal

Member of the research site directed by: University of Montreal, Concordia University

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality in the built environment offers first and foremost a positive memory. This positive experience can then lead to the desire to revisit a place (through memory or physically). When one physically revisits the valued place, the experience may be different or renewed, but will remain positive. The needs of the moment are met, but beyond the functional qualities may be some details: framing on the outside, soft lighting, a bench to rest, an invitation to participate in making the space like us, cleanliness, security, special acoustics, a reminder of nature, ease of access or comfortable temperature. These attention to detail may go completely unnoticed, but they certainly contribute to the ease and pleasure of using, living, crossing or inhabiting this interior and/or exterior space.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of a positive quality experience:

I particularly remember visiting the Esplanade Tranquille pavilion, located in downtown Montreal. It is an indoor and outdoor public square in the heart of the entertainment district.

I first visited this space as part of a panel the Office of Design was hosting. Here are the two main things that made my experience one that is positive:

The unexpected / the discovery: I was amazed to discover this quiet place in the heart of the frenetic entertainment district. The contrast between these two states contributes to the quality of the place. I also appreciated the discovery of a public space on the second floor of the pavilion, a much-used gathering place that I didn't know existed in the city I've lived in all my life. On my subsequent visits to the first one, I enjoyed sitting in the common space of the pavilion, among people of all ages. It was a positive experience to be in a public place used by a diversity of people. Another part of the unexpected and discovery is the view from the pavilion of skaters from the most experienced to the most novice. This shared experience with unfamiliar people of a constantly changing bird's eye view enriches the experience of the place.

A proximity to the elements / people: This positive and personal experience of this small detail still makes me think. It is about an outdoor walkway connecting the indoor public space to a multipurpose room. On the day of the event we were organizing in the multi-purpose room, it was cold and raining. As I was helping to organize the panel, I walked through this walkway several times. I always came out wet, disheveled, but also energized and happy. I enjoyed being in contact with the natural elements, as difficult as they can be at times. During one of these crossings, someone shared with me their negative experience of this outdoor walkway and I in turn shared with them my positive experience of this same few meter long space. I appreciated the fact that a space, because of the weather, elicits reactions, exchanges, debates and in the process some connection with others.

Beyond the undeniable qualities of the architecture of the pavilion space, but also because of them, i.e. the durable materials, the large windows, the choice of furniture and the harmonious layout of the interior spaces, the greatest quality of this built environment is, in my opinion, its capacity to welcome and bring together a large number of people in their diversity.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I found particularly meaningful and moving:



Photos taken from FABG's website: [Esplanade Tranquille - Quartier des Spectacles - FABG \(arch-fabg.com\)](https://www.fabg.com)

Link to Google map: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Esplanade+Tranquille/@45.5095722,-73.567904,17.75z/data=!4m10!1m2!2m1!1sEsplanade+Tranquille+%E2%80%93+Quartier+des+Spectacles+%E2%80%93+FABG!3m6!1s0x4cc91a4e8805c227:0xb18dc87353d70f63!8m2!3d45.5095946!4d-73.5649557!15sCjIFc3BsYW5hZGUgVHJhbnF1aWxsZSDigJMgUXVhcnRpZXIqZGVzIFNwZWN0YWNsZXMg4oCTIEZBQkeSAQVwbGFjZeABAA!16s%2Fg%2F11b77fzsnv>

CARDINAL, Isabelle*Architect, Société Logique**Member of the research site directed by: University of Montreal***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:**

In my opinion, a quality environment is first and foremost designed on a human scale. It is about people, in all their diversity.

Inside and outside, you feel invited, welcomed, comfortable and safe. One can be surprised and one likes to come back. The scale, the volume and the materiality are thought out in this sense. It generates emotion, sensations and well-being.

Some people appreciate more a perspective or a view, others a smell, a sound ambiance, textures or colors. A quality environment is plural and solicits several senses, allowing each person to live an experience, HIS experience...

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I recently had the opportunity to visit the new Esplanade Tranquille pavilion in downtown Montreal. As an architect, I went first because I was curious to visit this new icon of the Quartier des spectacles; imagine, an outdoor skating rink in downtown Montreal!

But what surprised me the most was the popularity of the place. On a very cold winter day, the place was packed... Was it the fact that you could enjoy an activity with family and friends, laugh and have fun, warm up and eat? No, because all of that is possible in any park pavilion. I felt a sense of well-being that goes beyond these aspects.

The impressive windows offering a plunging view of the nearby skating rink, the feeling of being in the action inside, the abundant luminosity despite the grey winter sky, the warmth of the wood-lined ceiling, the cheerful flame of the fireplace, the comforting smell of coffee, the soothing greenery of the plants, not to mention the comfort of the many armchairs that invite you to linger...

The feeling of being at the cottage in the heart of downtown Montreal! A memorable experience where you don't necessarily expect to find it....

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I found particularly meaningful and moving:



Esplanade Tranquille in the Quartier des spectacles, Montreal: exterior view of the square and the pavilion. Source: FABG Architects website. Photo credit: Not mentioned on the website



Esplanade Tranquille in the Quartier des spectacles, Montreal: exterior view of the square and the pavilion. Source: FABG Architects website. Photo credit: Not mentioned on the website

Lien vers la carte Google : <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Esplanade+Tranquille/@45.5095983,-73.5698266,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x4cc91a4e8805c227:0xb18dc87353d70f63!8m2!3d45.5095946!4d-73.5649557!16s%2Fq%2F11b77fzsn?authuser=0>

DOAN-LAVOIE, Eva

*Affiliation with a group or organization within the partnership: Greening and Development Project Officer, Groupe de recommandations et d'actions pour un meilleur environnement (GRAME)
Member of the research site directed by: Concordia University*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:

A positive experience of the quality in the built environment should aim to make people comfortable in the space through inclusive, human-centered design. All essential services would be accessible locally to avoid long trips. The majority of trips would be by active transportation, and these would be safe and enjoyable. A structured and integrated public transit system would also make long trips efficient. The architectural quality of buildings would be emphasized and the built heritage would be enhanced and invested in to promote the connection between people and their living environment through beauty and history. Nature would be integrated into the urban fabric so that people interact with a wide variety of plants and derive physical, psychological and social benefits. Streets, alleys and buildings would be vegetated as much as possible and local parks would be accessible to all. In addition, public spaces would be designed to provide people with the opportunity to gather, rest and enjoy themselves in all seasons, but also to have an enriching cultural experience through art and performance.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of a positive quality experience:

I'm riding my bike in Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie in Montreal and it's late spring. I feel safe thanks to the network of bike paths. I have access to a bixi station right next to my house, which is very convenient. The mature street trees provide welcome shade when the sun is down. They are home to squirrels and birds, which I enjoy watching. The patches of flowering trees and street gardens created by the residents are beautiful and soothing to me. The textures, colors and decorations inspire me. I get off my bike to get a better look at the gardens which often have their own personality. People garden in front of their homes and I smile at them and ask them questions. I also like to look at the houses, the duplexes, the triplexes, the exterior spiral staircases: I am in Montreal and nowhere else. The buildings are low and the streets and sidewalks are wide, so I feel comfortable. I sometimes cut through the alleys, especially those that have been greened. It's nice to be in these more intimate and invested spaces, where children play and parents chat. I sometimes stop for a moment in a café on Bélanger, Beaubien or Saint-Zotique; I like this panoply of small businesses, cafés and boutiques on my way. It's easy to abandon my bixi at one of the many stations so I continue my walk. Although I prefer to walk in the quieter streets and alleys, it's also nice to be on the busier streets where I look at the windows and want to buy everything, taste everything. I arrive at the Beaubien cinema and decide to go see a movie. I like to have access to Quebec films, auteur and independent: culture at my fingertips! The movie I want to see doesn't start for another hour, so I go sit in Molson Park. I choose a quiet corner and read a book. A friend joins me and we chat. Sitting on a park bench, happy and as if in a bubble of calm and coolness, we miss our movie. Too bad! I'm a little tired so I go home and decide to take the bus. I don't wait very long: the bus on Beaubien passes every ten minutes. After a few stops, I'm home, happy with my afternoon walking around my favorite neighborhood in Montreal.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I have found to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Maple Street in the summer: a street that has been greened up and taken over by residents, where it is pleasant to walk

Source : Google Maps

Link to Google map: <https://goo.gl/maps/UMPvj1hUwYQSMJqf6>

Nguyen, Annie Thao Vy

Research Assistant

Member of the Research Site University of Montreal led by Virginie LaSalle

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality in the built environment should be marked by a feeling of comfort, and of being generously served by spaces and the various programs/services they hold.

Precisely, in my opinion, a positive experience of quality in the built environment means to enter a space where you feel like you are not only welcome to enter, but also invited to use the spaces in various ways for various occasions. It is the feeling that the space was conceived considering your needs, while also considering the variety and changing nature of these very needs.

And naturally, this feeling should be shared by all users with great inclusivity, allowing everyone to experience the wide spectrum of what the space can offer.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

The first time I stumbled upon Esplanade Tranquille, a year-round indoor public space in Quartier des Spectacles, at the core of downtown Montreal, I lived a positive experience of quality in the build environment.

During my summer visit, I was not sure what the specific program of the building was, nor what kind of services they had to offer. All that I could confidently observe was that it was a public space holding a great variety of services such as a café, a boardgame rental counter, a self-serve library, and tables and terrasses for studying and chit-chatting. And that all of this was situated in the heart of the city, where finding free interior public spaces can be quite difficult. And so, I was very pleasantly surprised from the very first visit.

A few months later, during winter, I realized that this public space could transform itself to serve various programs, turning into a refrigerated skating rink with common areas and storage for skaters. It looked as lively as during the summer and hosted all sorts of events all year-long.

Hence, Esplanade Tranquille is a positive experience of quality in the build environment thanks to its public nature, versatile spaces, generosity in services offered, and adaptability to changing needs.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Esplanade Tranquille's versatile Café-Boardgame-Rental-Counter next to its public living room, in the core of downtown Montreal

Image by Annie Thao Vy Nguyen (myself)



Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/NyYcrNUpXrJc5bay7>

12. Pedestrian Activity Areas: Gardens, Parks, Waterfronts, Trails

Afsaneh, Tafazzoli

Director of Strategic Partnership at 'Open Architecture Collaborative Canada' (OACC) – Citizen's group with TMY

Member of the Research Site Led by Marco Polo

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect a sense of belonging, which can be derived from a space that is welcoming, comfortable, safe, accessible, inclusive, vibrant, playful and aesthetically pleasing. It is important that the space and its vibe resonate with you. In my opinion, everyone will have a positive experience in a space with a humane scale that triggers nostalgia or opens a window to a new experience, which can excite, calm, or cheer you up.

The designers tend to see the positive experience of quality only through the aesthetic lens, and elements like form, structure, materials, and color. But the key is to observe and understand how people use and interact with the space and how a space can help people to thrive. And by people, we mean individuals from all walks of life and all socioeconomic classes.

To provide a stimulating space, incorporate a touch of mystery and playfulness that gradually reveals itself and allows people to experience a variety of scales, light and sound, and different views and scenery. Additionally, incorporating elements of nature and biophilia, such as natural light, greenery, and ventilation, as well as authenticity, can create a positive experience for people of all backgrounds.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting The Bentway. The Bentway is a public space located in Toronto, Canada, which was transformed from a forgotten area under the Gardiner Expressway into a vibrant and innovative urban park. The quality of the built environment in the Bentway is notable for several reasons:

- A. **Functionality:** The Bentway is a functional space that provides several amenities and activities for visitors, including an ice-skating trail in the winter, a public market, and outdoor art installations. The space is well-utilized and organized to meet the needs of its users.
- B. **Aesthetic appeal:** The design of the Bentway is visually appealing, featuring several architectural elements such as the wooden amphitheater and the red metal arched frames that create a unique and dynamic urban landscape.
- C. **Safety:** The Bentway has been designed with safety in mind, with proper lighting, security cameras, and other safety measures that ensure the safety of its visitors.
- D. **Accessibility:** The Bentway is accessible to all users, including those with disabilities, through the incorporation of features such as ramps and accessible washrooms.
- E. **Sustainability:** The Bentway incorporates several sustainable features, such as the use of permeable pavement, and the implementation of a green roof on the skate pavilion building that helps to reduce the park's environmental impact.

Overall, the Bentway provides a positive experience of quality in the built environment in Toronto, offering a functional, safe, aesthetically pleasing, accessible and inclusive, and sustainable space that enhances the surrounding area and provides a unique and innovative urban park experience for its visitors.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Google map link:

<https://goo.gl/maps/ryxZHvmJD6x5WtW19>



Nic Lehoux



Andrew Williamson

Anosha, Alam*Research Assistant**Member of the Accessibility on the Waterfront Site Led by Samantha Biglieri***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should be reflected and centred on the emotions of belonging, community, and rest invoked by the built environment. In addition, the journey to the destination should also contribute to the site's overall experience. While the elements of a positive experience are unique to each individual, activating all five senses (sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch) is integral in forming a connection to the built environment for everyone. Thus, the inclusion and integration of all member's needs are essential to a successful experience and space. A thriving environment is designed and curated with visitors and users of all accessibility ranges. When one sense is limited, the presence of other sensory factors need to be engaged by the environment.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:**(Toronto Music Garden)**

I particularly remember visiting the Toronto Music Gardens at the city's waterfront. My last visit to the harbourfront retreat was by myself in July of 2022, during the weekend. I did not feel lonely despite attending a very active and social meeting point alone. The musicians and tranquil environment provided everyone, including me, the space to freely roam, sit, observe and listen to the live music performances. The iconic grassy steps of the Music Garden are oriented towards a large tree with the Lake Ontario Harbourfront boardwalk in the background of the clearing under the large tree, which serves as the performance stage space. The steps are over a meter in depth, allowing the perfect space to sit, recline, and even spread out a small picnic blanket. The area surrounding the Music Garden steps consists of lush greenery and colourful blossoming flowers in the summer. Various seating bench options were present from different materials, such as wood, plastic and steel. Beyond the grassy steps, the partially covered grass area provided more social and resting areas, some falling under the shade of the plethora of trees and some under the clear open blue sky. During my visit, the grass was densely occupied by families, friends and couples. Between all the groups, the level of preparation and perceived spontaneity of the visit could be seen, based on the amount of equipment and picnic preparation. Like me, many individuals were seated alone but visibly relaxed while conducting unique activities. The activities ranged from reading, writing, sketching, painting, people-watching, eating, napping, and speaking or using their phones. The notion that all the members in the sounding area were content with conducting their own activities removed the sense of loneliness as we all were connected in the open-air environment, forming a unique transient sense of community.

The Toronto Music Garden engaged all my senses. From the auditory symphony of the classical music, the laughter and activity of individuals of all ages with the softened noises of the urban form coming from the main road behind the barrier of trees; providing their own sound of rustling leaves to the sound of the lake water splashing against the harbour wall. The sight of the rippling

lake from the summer sun, the Kaleidoscope of shadows created by the tall trees contrasting the colourful plants, and flowers of the spiralling garden nearby. The feeling of the warm sun and wind on my face, the feeling of the fresh grass on my legs and hands, the mixture of various smells from everyone's picnics, and lastly, the taste of my own dessert in hand; the Toronto Music Garden has been preserved in my mind as a quality experience of the built environment, nature and community.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



View of the CN Tower from the Toronto Music Garden in July 2022 (source: Anosha Alam)

Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/EDKYR6r6PsSYd5EUA>

Caelin Sandhurst*U of C Student - Breakout Room Recorder*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

Quality can be found in a built environment that makes effective use of biophilic elements. These promote positive mental health and helps users maintain a connection to the natural world. When I'm stuck inside for a long period of time, my connection to the natural world is more important to me than ever. An urban environment can be alienating, and biophilic design helps to ground architecture. This grounding can occur through the installation of living elements through landscaping, for example, or by incorporating non-living natural forms that evoke a similar reaction. A branching steel structure can be just as effective as a tree at reminding users of the natural world. This opens less obvious opportunities for architects to fully integrate biophilia into the core logic of their projects, without forcing them into greenhouse typologies. In short, I have better experience occupying a space that takes design cues from nature, and that is why I find biophilic design to be important to the quality of the built environment.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

As a child, one of my favourite places to visit was the urban garden at the east end of the Core mall in downtown Calgary. The progression to the gardens felt like an ascension to a greater space to my young mind. My parents would park in the cave-like underground lot, and we'd have to walk past the noisy and overwhelming storefronts. Eventually we'd climb the stairs to arrive at Devonian Gardens. I would run through the seemingly endless and wild jungle. The garden fell off the sides of the main floor like water in an infinity pool, making the space feel enormous while I played hide-and-seek. Plant-lined pathways and stairwells caught the greenery and offered more play space. I remember the central pond, stocked with Koi fish and turtles, and how you could interact with them using food purchased at a repurposed bubble-gum dispenser.

Devonian Gardens has since been renovated, but when I returned to take the accompanying photo, the memories were rekindled and I felt some of the same childlike joy. The space acted as an oasis of respite and made me feel distant from the bustling mall. There were opportunities to engage in the site in public seating areas, or you could find more privacy on the aforementioned lower, outer levels of the gardens. The gardens offer a direct biophilic connection with their large biomass of plants, but even the sculptural structures outside the gardens on Stephen Ave evoke a similar sense of natural awe with their towering, forms. They could be trees, leaves or even strands of DNA, but what is important is their form's unmistakable connection to nature. In my mind, Devonian Gardens will always illustrate the way an alliance between the built and natural environment enhances the quality of a space.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



*Quality in the built environment is unity between the natural and the urban
(Caelin Sandhurst, 2023)*

Google map link:

<https://goo.gl/maps/DxD9pLg7SmQ8m2dj6>

Carly Ziter*Co-PI, Concordia University**Member of the Research Site Led by Carmela Cucuzzella***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect a space that facilitates interactions with nature and the outdoors, is accessible and welcoming to a diversity of users, and promotes intergenerational use and experiences.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

A recent example of a positive experience of quality in my own community is Parc du Lac-à-la-Loutre in St Henri. This community park was recently developed on a former vacant lot. It is a space clearly designed for multiple users of various interests and generations, including accessible children's play areas, a "micro-forest", a relaxation area, and a collective garden. The micro-forest is designed to highlight native species, and includes walking trails with dedicated signage to encourage connection with nature and educate about biodiversity. There are also musical instruments available throughout the space to provide a multi-sensory experience. The relaxation zone includes hammocks and seating areas to encourage use of the space, and includes seating created from Montreal ash trees, encouraging reflection on local nature, and re-use of urban materials. The collective garden encourages community engagement and residents working together to share the harvest (rather than individual allotments that characterize many community gardens), and includes experimental plots to highlight indigenous plants. The garden includes an access ramp, as well as accessible/wheelchair-friendly picnic tables and garden beds to ensure that aging members of the community or those with reduced mobility are included in the space. The park is connected to the Saint-Pierre Woonerf, allowing safe, off-street access from many nearby houses and apartment complexes.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Link: <https://montreal.ca/lieux/parc-du-lac-la-loutre> (park);
<https://lists.riseup.net/www/info/lall> (garden)

Google map link: <https://www.google.com/maps/search/Lac-%C3%A0-la-Loutre+Park/@45.4707329,-73.5889774,17z/data=!3m1!4b1>

MEUNIER, Catherine

Member of the Research Site Led by University of Montreal

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive quality experience should offer:

- 1) A feeling of being included, or the opportunity to participate in the space equally to all. An accessible environment is a quality environment.
- 2) A feeling of security, i.e. a feeling of being at ease in the space and of comfort. This feeling allows us to appreciate the space without being distracted by fear, overstimulation, and red flags. This feeling of security depends on criteria unique to each person. For example, for neurodivergent people, noisy and busy environments can be over-stimulating and cause feelings of danger. For other people, these environments are pleasant and energizing. In short, in my opinion, the quality of the space is defined according to the feeling of security, and the feeling of security is defined according to criteria specific to each person.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I often go to the Marina Port De Plaisance, a small park on the edge of the water near my home where there is a pavilion, a volleyball court, a large green field, a descent of landings along a boat launch and a path along the edge of the water strewn with large rocks. I often go to sit in the rocks on the edge of the water when I want to isolate myself from the public. I appreciate the possibility of isolating myself and spending time in peace while being close to the large lively public space. The large rocks are not arranged in anticipation of being used as isolation space, rather it is an accidental appropriation. This place offers a view of the water and the passing boats and watercraft. It is a space where I feel safe, where I have the opportunity to choose my level of social interaction, and where I can enjoy nature close to home.

The descent to the edge of the water is accessible by the landings, and also by the launching ramp for boats. It is a perfect place for a picnic or a gathering with family or friends. Being in a small residential area, the place is never too busy, and is easily accessible to residences around. I often go there when I want to enjoy the outdoors on a whim, and I don't want to go very far. The proximity to my home gives me a sense of belonging to this space and security, since I can quickly return home.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



The image I have chosen is a photo of the landings on the waterfront of the Marina Port De Plaisance. This photo represents the possibility of grouping on the edge of the water and the proximity to nature. Photo taken from Google Maps. Credits: Jay Kassef, June 2020.

Google map link:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Marina+Port+De+Plaisance/@45.5092092,-73.7854604,18.25z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x4cc92334cf0280ed:0x41633cd874482a11!8m2!3d45.5090037!4d-73.7848348!16s%2Fq%2F11b5wgc67d?authuser=0>

Christina Baldanza*OACC Team Member of the Research Site Led by Toronto Metropolitan University***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect...

- Proximity (linkages) does the space seamlessly transition into what it borders?
- Enduring character
 - Sturdiness, generally represented in the physical materials like concrete or brick
 - References that remind you of a past, or a current
- Well-lit
- Accessible
 - To enter and exit from
 - For different bodies and abilities
 - By public transportation, foot, and by car
- Multiple and practical uses (think USB charging ports on buses)
- Environment
 - Spaces that look like they could withstand or even help cope with environmental disturbances like lightning storms and floods.
 - Young people are increasingly stressed by a built environment that neglects very real environmental conditions.
- Variation – because no place or space exists in a vacuum, its quality is always relational.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

The Sunnyside Boardwalk stretches for about a kilometre alongside Sunnyside Beach in Toronto's west end. It is made of a light-panelled wood suitable for walking barefoot on in the hot summer months. It could be wider, but it is not bad compared to most pedestrian paths in Toronto. It probably accommodates about 5 people comfortably walking side by side. But what really makes the boardwalk a space of quality is how it unites the surrounding park areas. In good weather, the pedestrian boardwalk animates the parkland between a highway and the urban beach. On the side of the boardwalk opposite to the beach is a strip of grass, then a cement path for bicycle or scooter traffic. While the boardwalk affirms that pedestrians need their own space, those who desire can enjoy the lakeshore bike route on their way downtown. Beyond the bike path are the surrounding facilities, which includes the largest public pool in the city, a skate park, and playground. The Boardwalk crucially links the beach to the park area.

People want to walk along the boardwalk because it offers a spanning view of Toronto's lakeshore. Far enough in the distance that you see rocky 'escarpment' and question where the east end even is. From the pool or park areas, catching a glimpse of the boardwalk and the many people with their fold-up chairs, umbrellas, children circling around, dog walkers, and

people of all ages, really, with lunch baskets(!) presents a convivial allure inclining one to venture out into the beach.

The thing about urban beaches though, is that they are almost always disappointing. There can be funny smells carried by the wind, the lake is terribly cold and some parts terribly polluted, and sometimes the beach is just a pure wind tunnel. The boardwalk gives you the experience to enjoy the view and imagine that it might be a nice place to sit. The grassy side is also lined with benches for those who don't want to take off their shoes. When it's not enjoyable, do not fret, there is the pool and the other park areas to return to.

For brief stretches the boardwalk serves as a kind of extension of a private restaurant patio. However, in the busy summertime months, it feels as if the restaurant is intruding on the public boardwalk, crossing a boundary it shouldn't. The Sunnyside Pavilion predates the highway and is genuinely nice to look at. You can enjoy its presence without having to dine there.

Despite the area being sectioned off by a highway, the Sunnyside Boardwalk revives and animates the waterfront park area.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Aerial view of the boardwalk between the Sunnyside Pavilion and Sunnyside public beach in Toronto (Photo: [Sunnyside Pavilion – Restaurant Site](#)).

Google map link: [Sunnyside Boardwalk - Google Maps](#)

Coco, Wang

Research Assistant at the Centre for Landscape Research at the University of Toronto Led by Fadi Masoud

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

Any built environment should provide the basic needs of its constituents, such as comfort, safety, and functionality. A high-quality built environment satisfies these needs and goes beyond to create a positive and enjoyable environment that accounts for the range of experiences of people of all backgrounds and bring them together. The built environment should provide of range of experiences that engage people, provide a sense of happiness or fulfilment, and enhance their overall well-being.

However, it is important to note that positive experience of quality is not universal and cannot be reduced to a set of checklists to ensure positive experiences for all. Quality in the built environment is not only reflected in its design, material quality, or maintenance, although these are also important objectifiable definitions currently adopted. What is currently lacking in the consideration of quality in the built environment is process. Quality in the built environment is not just about what is built, but how it's built and how it's used. The process of creating and using the built environment must be inclusive, participatory, and adaptive to the needs of the people who use it and the environment in which it exists.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I lived right across from Parc Jeanne-Mance when I was pursuing my undergraduate degree at McGill University. During most of the year when Montreal is covered under thick layers of snow, I would use the park as a more straightforward path from home to campus, but during summer days in the park have provided me some of my favourite memories living in the city. The park is mainly an open field with a variety of sports amenities, including a football field, a baseball diamond, a playground, and a volleyball field. As I did not play any of these sports, what I enjoyed the most was Parc Jeanne-Mance's open lawn filled with picnic tables and under plenty of shade. I would often visit the park with my roommate to enjoy the sun, gather here with a group of friends for a picnic, and by myself for a relaxing stroll in the evening. I'd often observe many different types of people of all ethnicity and ages frequenting the park through various time of day, enjoying the park in their very own ways. The park has a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere with people of all ages and backgrounds coming together to enjoy the music and space.

Parc Jeanne-Mance isn't strictly an "award-winning" or a famous tourist destination, it doesn't have highly designed circulation or was built with the best quality of materials. It merely provides some of the most basic facilities such as washrooms, drinking fountains, shade, and clean picnic benches. The success of Parc Jeanne-Mance in creating positive experiences of quality lays in its diversity of recreational activities, cultural events, natural beauty, and most importantly, its community engagement. The many events that take place within the park promotes a sense of connection and belonging that encourages a collective sense of responsibility for the well-being of the park and its surrounding community. As a woman of colour without any real connection to the neighbourhood other than my very temporary occupancy for less than a year, I always felt

comfortable and safe using this park because of the freedom and diversity of activities, and also because it's always filled with laughter.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Google map link:

<https://goo.gl/maps/n4c8i3ubLeCT4NmE9>

Marianne de Zeeuw
Collaborator, assistant Speaker (SOUR)

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect the needs of the people, nature and systems, beyond primary needs. Besides proper housing, a healthy and exciting built environment offers secondary services that are in demand by the community. Through co-creation and participation, urban decision makers can make informed interventions for both people and nature to thrive.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting the Golden Horn waterfront in Istanbul. As one of the most beautiful spots in the city, it has long been an inaccessible space for the general public and in particular pedestrians. Many shores and water boulevards in Istanbul are slowly opening up to pedestrians again, who have a big need for green, flat and accessible areas, and places to unwind among the busy city life and noise.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Short, isolated cycle track on the Golden Horn waterfront, Istanbul - just for kids learning to ride their bikes.

<https://www.cyclestreets.net/location/107792/>

Google

map

link:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Azapkap%C4%B1+Sahil+Park%C4%B1/@41.0237492,28.9692414,17.63z/data=!4m14!1m7!3m6!1s0x14cab9fa533dad31:0xcff2052e22f40bd5!2sGolden+Horn!8m2!3d41.0291684!4d28.9611125!16zL20vMDFwemtm!3m5!1s0x14cab96f70556175:0x9c654982c2345868!8m2!3d41.0237581!4d28.9687589!16s%2Fq%2F11gy3lf4wf>

Michael Otchie

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should be representative of the needs for contemporary society in a broad range of ways including:

- fulfil current accessibility requirements and wherever possible principles of universal design to ensure no one has barriers preventing use of the environment;
- demonstrate a democratic expression of public space where there are no intangible cultural barriers for its use, including affordable options for visiting or living in that place;
- have a strong connection to the identity of the local area that is respectful of architectural character, a comprehensive landscape strategy, and appropriate building uses that respond to the needs of the surrounding community;
- enable individuals to feel safe by offering well maintained spaces are lend themselves to natural forms of surveillance;
- emphasize the human scale particularly with regards to prioritizing people's mobility over that of vehicles;
- provide opportunities to enhance an individual's health and well-being, meeting criteria set out in the WELL standard;
- prioritize the stewardship of natural resources both in the construction of the place and the ongoing use of it, and in doing so meet criteria set out in the LEED accreditation standards,
- integrate an artistic and/ or heritage interpretation of the site that allows for layers of meaning to be legible to those who visit or use the site on a regular basis.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting...

The Evergreen Brickworks is an excellent example of a post-industrial site that has been adapted for a contemporary use. The tagline on the centre's website is ' A place where the world can experience sustainable practices that enable flourishing cities of the future' and on the occasions that I have visited I have found that it offers experiences that are representative of that aspiration.

As the name suggests, the site formerly housed the facilities to produce the bricks that were used to construct many of the buildings, including much of the housing stock, constructed throughout the 20th Century. The site is also located within the Don Valley, a natural arterial route through the city and therefore benefits from remarkable views that reflect the changes of the seasons and an important destination for understanding the biodiversity that exists within proximity to dense urban areas.

The sensitive redevelopment of the site has been an ongoing process for over 30 years, and it has allowed for the character of the industrial facility to be maintained and to allow for the re-naturalization of the former quarry that provided materials for the site's former operation.

Alongside the weathered industrial remnant structures, the site also integrates new built elements, and their programming emphasises both formal education opportunities with the addition of office and conference spaces and informal opportunities with play areas and viewing areas.

The naturalized landscape that surrounds the site offers habitats for a variety of native species and trails that enable public access of different physical abilities, including challenging cycle routes that connects to one of the adjacent neighbourhoods. Although walking to the site from the closest transit station can be challenging due the steep descent to the base of the Don Valley, there is a dedicated shuttle system that provides continuous public access. Artwork throughout the site refers to the natural landscape and highlights the educational aspect of the facility. Similarly, the heritage interpretation strategy highlights the legacy of the brickworks as an industrial site and the value that it has provided as a resource in the development of the city.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Evergreen Brickworks on a summer's day with a family observing the diversity of life within one of the ponds from a viewing platform.

Google map link: [Evergreen Brick Works - Google Maps](#)

Morteza Hazbei*Student Leader at the Concordia University site**Member of the Research Site Led by Dr. Carmela Cucuzzella***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect positive human feelings. Enhancing positive emotions is closely tied to the physical and non-physical characteristics of the built environment. Among these positive emotions happiness and well-being are the primary ones that the built environment can foster. For example, when a place offers ample greenery, proper lighting, and aesthetically pleasing views, it can create a positive experience for its inhabitants. In addition to these physical characteristics, which elicit positive emotions, there are also intangible and subjective aspects of the built environment that contribute to a positive sense of place. These aspects are intertwined with the cultural, historical, social, and environmental significance of the place. More specifically, cultural significance refers to the visual images of a place and the ease of understanding a place. While social-cultural aspect that enhances a positive experience is the sense of place, which encompasses the atmosphere, quality of the environment, and perhaps its appeal, creating a certain indefinable sense of well-being that motivate people to return (Jackson, 1994). A sense of belonging, such as through frequent or ritual use of a space, can create a strong sense of connection (Radoine, 2017). The environmental friendliness of a space can also contributes to a positive experience. Imagine being in a space that is adequately warm during winter or has ideal air quality and humidity levels. You would feel comfortable and enjoy spending time in that environment since it is in your comfort zone. Overall, a positive experience of quality in the built environment is not dependent on any one of these criteria alone, but on their combination, which creates a desirable and positive experience of place.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting Manoir Westmount retirement home. I was impressed by the different amenities that improved the neighborhood's quality of life and increased livability. Among these amenities were a library, a community center, a temporary gallery, and a greenhouse, all located next to a park that further enhanced the livability of the area. I thought that the area was designed primarily for elderly people, however, I observed that people of different generations used the space and created a multi-generational and active place.

Despite some barriers to quality, I found many exemplarities of quality in the area. For instance, the library, which was housed in a historic building, gave the people of the neighborhood a sense of belonging and attachment. The temporary gallery, on the other hand, exhibited paintings by children about their lived experience in the neighborhood, and they had a voting system to choose the best one. This encouraged people to know more about their neighborhood from the perspective of children, and people felt more attached to the area. The greenhouse was undoubtedly the most impressive feature of the area and it place represent exemplarity of quality. I visited it on a sunny fall day, and while the outside was cold, the inside was warm and comfortable, with the sun rays penetrating between the plants' leaves. The water pond was

located at a corridor leading the greenhouse, and it had light blue tiles that reflected the plants' images on the water. In addition, there was a water fountain at the center of the pond, which produced a pleasing soundscape. The benches and some parts of floor area were made of wood with a nice texture, improving the area's quality and giving a feeling of being in nature. I also noticed that people used this area to visit their parents or grandparents in the retirement home located near the greenhouse. The area's architectural circulation was also impressive, with it being connected to the temporary gallery and city hall on one side and the library on the other. The most intriguing part for me was the designer's effort to make the small greenhouse area accessible to people with mobility disabilities by designing a slow ramp in the greenhouse. Overall, the greenhouse provided a positive quality experience since it considered livability, biodiversity, and energy concerns. The area also is a great example of how different amenities can come together to create a livable and vibrant space for people of all ages.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

From left to right: accessibility ramps inside the greenhouse, The pond and water fountains, and benches inside the greenhouse



Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/tF2Uj7H3YNcjGbX36>

Naomi Grant*Community organization representative**Member of the Research Site Led by Laurentian University***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

You feel welcome, comfortable, safe. Your needs are met. It is accessible and inclusive in all aspects (including to get there), and free (financially) to use.

You can gather and do things together with others (informally or in organized ways). It fosters social connections.

You belong. You see yourself, your language and culture and values around you.

You can make things happen. You have agency in the space (you can contribute to it, have a say).

It is part of/integrated into the surrounding neighbourhood.

It is beautiful. It includes colour and art. It is human-scale, walkable, vibrant, interactive.

Nature is incorporated and is part of the daily experience of the space. The design cares for land, water, and people. It is climate resilient, and mitigates climate impacts.

Everyone is welcome in this space to be, gather, learn. There is no gatekeeping or hostile architecture.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I will highlight the Delki Dozzi gardens in the west end of Sudbury. This is an area on the edge of a larger community park. It includes:

-An edible forest garden (planted and cared for by volunteers through Sudbury Shared Harvest). This is the first and largest edible forest in Sudbury. Now 5 years old, it is very beautiful, produces a lot of food, and is a source of seeds and cuttings (edible and pollinator plants) to create new gardens around the city. Handmade and handpainted plant ID signs, painted rocks along the curving clover paths, and quirky art among the plants all create a welcoming, delightful and pleasing experience. People gather there informally, and for workbees and workshops.

-A community garden. Planted and cared for by volunteers of all ages from the neighbourhood and wider community, fun community garden beds grow food, teach gardening skills, and bring people together. Neighbourhood school kids grow seedlings to add to the beds. People come together to care for the garden and to share food. People have contributed their skills, labour and ideas to create an innovative rainwater irrigation system, and an artistic garden shed. Work is being done to make the garden and garden beds accessible, and bring accessibility to other local community gardens.

-Global Garden's bed. The circular garden grows food traditional to several countries anchored by Indigenous medicine plants at the centre. People come together to prepare, plant and care for the garden, share food, recipes, and advice. Global Gardens brings together new Canadians, long-time residents, and Indigenous gardeners and elders to grow food and medicine familiar to them, and share growing & food preparation skills, stories, and meals.

-Large trees create shade where people rest, have picnics, or sit to talk.

Together, these three gardens make a beautiful, welcoming and vibrant space where people are gathering, making positive things happen together, forming relationships, collaborating, meeting new people and new ideas, and contributing to the neighbourhood and neighbourliness. They also contribute to the ecological health of the area, adding biodiversity, native seed sources, habitat, rainwater capture and filtration, etc. This is especially important in our community, and in this specific area due to the historic Industrial impacts on the natural environment. There is a city-owned field house nearby that can be used for meetings, workshops, etc. It would be a big benefit if this small building (and the washrooms, sinks, etc) were always available to people working in and visiting the gardens.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



People come together to create the circular Global Garden bed. *Photo by Sharon Roy*



Path through the edible forest, at apple harvest time. *Photo by Naomi Grant.*

Edible forest, global garden and community garden. *Photos by Naomi Grant.*

Edible forest, field house, west end neighbourhood. *Photo by Naomi Grant.*

[Google map link](#)

Nooshin Esmaeili*PhD Candidate, Research Student, President of Graduate Student Committee**Member of the Research Site Led by Dr. Brian Sinclair***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should offer a strong sense of self both on a micro and macro level. Quality is about creating a positive experience that resonates with us on a deeper level. Place has strong qualities that can be felt and experienced by each of us. We move through space with our body and use our multisensory systems and spatial perception to recognize, understand, feel, and overall experience the place. A positive experience of quality requires many factors such as inclusivity, accessibility (to even get to that place), safety, comfort, and many more. However, at the end of the day, we collect all this data within ourselves and try to make sense of it. A place might have all these factors and still not have quality. Why? Because it is important how all the elements are choreographed and arranged with an end goal in mind - to create a sense of self and attunement in the person. It is then that the environment can resonate with us and bring about a sense of connection, comfort, and belonging. I believe that having harmony and attunement in the environment is also one of the most important elements that create quality in space. Distancing ourselves from functionality and aesthetics, we enter the world of quality and lived experience, where we connect with the world outside, and the world connects with us - the space in between is where quality exists.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting Bowness Park in Calgary during wintertime before sunset. As you slowly enter the park you are able to hear laughter, joy and happiness of kids, families and grandparent. You see teenagers come as a group, laughing and putting on their skates, grandparents helping children to slowly get on the ice, a mom with a stroller sitting on a bench enjoying her time with her baby while waving at her husband and her 3 years old laughing and skating. as it slowly gets dark, beautiful lights are turned on all around the park. Its simple magnificent and just like a fantasy world. You feel you are in a Disney cartoon. On the other side I see a couple taking their engagement photos with these beautiful lit trees, and the scenery is heartwarming and simply beautiful. Some just came to walk their dogs, others are there to gather around the fire pits to have marshmallows, hot chocolate or like me a very good Persian tea with some delicious pastries with my family! Beautiful pathways are made all around the park with large trees fully wrapped in golden lights all the way to the top of the branches. It gives you a warm cozy feeling. There is skate rental service provided for all levels! The café is open for hot drinks and food while people are slowly putting wood in the fire pits that are placed all around the park. Smell of the burning wood, the light music, fresh breeze touching my face, the beautiful shiny ice all come together and create such an amazing feeling that makes you not want to leave!!! This place has become one of my favorite places to visit and I cannot wait till next winter to go there again. I even started learning skate simply because I want to go to this park all winter WHY? because this place offered something different, made me feel different? A place that anyone can enjoy and accessible to everyone. It is inclusive and overall, it has quality. For those of us who live in a cold weather knows that we really want to get out and be outdoor, but there are not many places to go that are inclusive and cozy. Not everyone participates in winter

activities, but this park has something for anyone no matter if you skate or not. There are even many different games designed for everyone to enjoy! One of the great qualities of this park is that the walking path is parallel with the skating pathway that goes through the park and between the golden lit trees. This way you are able to walk, bike, roller skate, walk your dog, roll your wheelchair or stroller side by side with the ice skaters and enjoy the beauty of thousands of golden lights glowing in the dark. In a cold city like Calgary Bowness Park Ice Skating Rink is like a gem that shines during winter, and you are able to see the beauty of this park from very far and know that you want to be there!!!

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/03/24/learning/24VocabQuizSkating.html>

Google map link:

<https://goo.gl/maps/AFzPa1Hrcrn8SkKG6>

More details about the park:

<https://travelwiththesmile.com/blog/skating-bowness-park/>



https://canada247.info/explore/alberta/division_no_6/calgary/bowness/bowness_park.html

https://canada247.info/explore/alberta/division_no_6/calgary/bowness/bowness_park.html

<https://travelwiththesmile.com/blog/skating-bowness-park/>

<https://twitter.com/SonyaSharpYYC/status/1469399812462182405>

<https://travelwiththesmile.com/blog/skating-bowness-park/>

Panos Polyzois*Senior Research Assistant**Member of the Research Site University of Manitoba led by Dr. Brian Sinclair***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

Quality is subjectively experienced, felt, and lived over time. Despite differences in how quality is perceived – whether it describes a property, a process, or an emotion – sharing and co-creating knowledge towards finding common ground should always be made a priority.

In my own words, quality describes more than a single experience snapshotted in time, or a property/characteristic (quality) of a building or cite. Rather, quality is reflected by a continuum of positive and reciprocal experiences necessary for sustainable outcomes.

By examining snapshots, as commonly done by awards committees, we may risk missing the depth of the human experience in the built environment. Such experiences can be sensitive to ongoing change, shifts, and impacts. More specifically, sustainability inherently relies on mutual benefits that are sustained, and therefore I believe we must look past examining idealised frames of existence (i.e., perfect representation (snapshot) of a cite in seeking awards) and look towards sharing and co-creating knowledge based on actual lived experience (i.e., through things like post occupancy evaluation).

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

One example from my own life, would be: “access to my BBQ”. In this case, the BBQ represents more than just a means for sustenance. Through an ongoing access to my BBQ at home, or elsewhere, not only am I able to enjoy the outdoors (ushering the new spring weather) and sharpen my cooking skills – I can further continue to spread my joy of food and BBQ with others around the dinner table, all while learning and growing as a cook through their feedback, and together creating lasting and positive memories. In this case, quality represents an enabling of inclusion and reciprocity. (i.e., access to BBQ = brings people together to enjoy a nice meal one person couldn't possibly enjoy on their own, to share knowledge, experience, and wisdom useful towards finding common ground.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Outdoor BBQ access is very common in outdoor spaces in city parks. Examples include the Assinaboine Park here in Winnipeg, where many come to enjoy BBQ with family and friends. In some cases, people have even held large events around a BBQ, which is a cheap alternative to catering or eating out.



This is also seen in many parks in and around New York City: <https://ny.curbed.com/maps/best-new-york-city-parks-bbq-picnic>

Samuel Oboh*Architect AAA, FAIA**Member of the Research Site Led by Prof, Brian Sinclair***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect...a combination of functionality, comfort, safety, aesthetics, sustainability, beauty, balance, tranquility, and inclusivity. The built environment should be designed with the intended use in mind and should be efficient and easy to use, while also being comfortable with appropriate lighting, temperature control, and ventilation. Safety and security measures should be put in place to protect people from physical harm, crime, and natural disasters. The built environment should be visually appealing, with a design that is pleasing to the eye and harmonious with the surrounding landscape. Sustainability should be taken into account, with consideration given to energy efficiency, waste reduction, and the use of environmentally friendly materials. In addition, a positive experience of quality in the built environment should also incorporate aspects of beauty, balance, and tranquility. Achieving a sense of balance in the built environment can create a feeling of calm and order, and can enhance the overall sense of quality. Beauty refers to the aesthetic qualities of the built environment, while tranquility refers to a peaceful and calming atmosphere within the built environment. Finally, inclusivity is an important aspect that should be considered when creating a positive experience of quality in the built environment. Inclusivity refers to the ability of the built environment to accommodate and be accessible to people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds, without discrimination or exclusion. By designing a built environment that is inclusive, designers and planners can create a sense of belonging and foster a sense of community among diverse populations, promoting social equity and enhancing the overall quality of life for everyone.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

One example of a positive experience of quality in the built environment for the community of Canadians of African descent could be the creation of a cultural center that celebrates the history and contributions of Black Canadians in Edmonton. Although the project is currently suspended or on hold, this center proposed for the Athlone Community in Edmonton, could be designed with inclusivity in mind, ensuring that it is accessible to people with disabilities and accommodating the needs of diverse users. The center could be aesthetically pleasing, evoking sense of pride among Africans and locals from the Athlone Community and incorporating elements of beauty and tranquility that reflect the cultural heritage of the community. Inside the center, the functionality of the space could be designed to serve the intended purpose, such as hosting events and workshops, displaying artwork and artifacts, and offering resources and support to the community. Safety and security measures could be put in place to ensure the well-being of visitors and staff. Sustainability could also be taken into account, with the center being designed to reduce energy consumption and minimize waste. The use of environmentally friendly materials could be incorporated wherever possible, further enhancing the overall sense of quality. Overall, this African Multipurpose cultural center in Edmonton would serve as a positive example of quality in the built environment for the community of Canadians of African

descent, promoting inclusivity, celebrating cultural heritage, and enhancing the well-being of the community.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Tranquil Environment for family at the Aga Khan Gardens in Devon Alberta. Image Copyright Owner; Samuel Oboh

The University of Alberta Aga Khan Garden is a 4.8-hectare Islamic-inspired garden located on the University of Alberta's Botanic Garden in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. The garden was designed by landscape architect Nelson Byrd Woltz and opened to the public in June 2018.

The Aga Khan Garden features a variety of elements inspired by Islamic architecture and garden design, including a pavilion, fountain, courtyards, and geometric patterns. The garden also includes more than 25,000 trees, shrubs, perennials, and annuals, many of which are native to Alberta.

One of the unique features of the garden is the Islamic-inspired chahar bagh, or "four-part garden," which divides the garden into four quadrants using water channels and paths. Each quadrant is planted with a different theme, including plants from the Mediterranean, South America, China, and the Himalayas.

The garden was made possible by a gift from His Highness the Aga Khan, the spiritual leader of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, and is intended to promote understanding and appreciation of Islamic culture and the natural world. The Aga Khan Garden is open to the public from May to October each year.

Google map link: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/University+of+Alberta+Botanic+Garden/@53.4080087,-113.7630995,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x539ff37559a0fc25:0x92a5293c7c4a1549!8m2!3d53.4080055!4d-113.7605246!16zL20vMGJyOWpj>

Peters, Terri*Co-Applicant, Assistant Professor, Toronto Metropolitan University**Member of the Research Site Led by Prof. Marco Polo, Toronto Metropolitan University*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

A positive experience of quality in the built environment depends on who is using the space, for what purpose and when they visit. For me, I particularly enjoy spaces that are sunny and comfortable in nice weather, that are walkable, and that can be used in different ways. My favorite spaces offer something slightly new each time I visit.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

The example of quality I chose is The Bentway public space. I believe that quality public space is open to all, and with the Bentway I use this space in the summer to take my family and meet friends, and in the winter our family uses the Skate Trail. The Bentway is a public park under the Gardner highway in Toronto and it is not very green, or very quiet. It is an unlikely favorite for me since a key area of my research is about biophilic design and connecting people to nature. What people sometimes forget is that biophilic design is about connecting people to other people, as well, to other forms of life. I think the Bentway offers a really interesting informal public space that demonstrates quality because people now inhabit this space under the highway in a positive way.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Photos of The Bentway, on the left in the evening in January 2023 while using the Skate Trail, and on the right in the morning in April 2023 visiting with a group of students for a course about sound in the built environment. Photos taken by Terri Peters):



Google map link: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/The+Bentway/@43.6398047,-79.3954453,15z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x882b351ecc69d891:0x4a4339bb9597af4e!8m2!3d43.6398047!4d-79.3954453!16s%2Fq%2F11f3p2kbnz>

Traci Berg*Graduate Student Researcher**Member of the Research Site Led by University of Calgary*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect...

...cultural, environmental and emotional values of place. My own positive experiences of quality have common threads of legible spatial organization, equitable access and use, ecological integration, creative collaboration, local aesthetic and provide a sense of joy, wonder, calm and/or reverence. I think that the places that we identify as 'quality' are those that bring us delight; those that we can't wait to share with our friends and family, or quietly appreciate each time we visit.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting...

...Calgary's Bow River Waterfront. As a cyclist, I use the riverfront shared pathway network for communizing and recreation, but every time I journey to the river, I feel I am enjoying the absolute best parts of the city. I love seeing people from all different walks of life out sharing the pathways, enjoying the weather, relaxing on the riverfront, stopping for food or happening upon a street performance. The riverfront is where the city is at its most vibrant, where Calgarians mingle with Calgarians against the backdrop of our unique riparian ecology. Even in the coldest, darkest times of the year, the riverfront is an activated hub, with the most dedicated citizens bundled up and out for a jog, watching the ice flow, or enjoying the winter lights. I believe the Bow Riverfront exemplifies quality as it is shared by the public, is accessible to all modes of non-vehicular transport including to those living with disabilities or those with limited income, it is highly navigable, provides space and opportunity for creative initiatives and installations and brings Calgarians both outdoors and closer together. It simply pulses with life and is quintessentially Calgary.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



The Bow Riverfront on an autumn day. Traci Berg

Google map link: <https://www.google.com/maps?q=loc:51.0478528,-114.0470722>

FRANCOIS, Dener*Member of the research site directed by: Laval University***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive quality experience should reflect a :

- great harmonization in the common understanding of the quality concept itself
- good understanding of the components of this concept by the different actors and their level of application in the implementation of activities by each site
- a kind of unambiguous or clearly defined frame of reference to propose and ensure a common understanding of the quality objectives pursued in the processes of planning, design, implementation, monitoring-evaluation and quality control of interventions
- Identification, survey and sharing between the different actors of the consortium sites linked to the SSHRC partnership to better facilitate the process of co-creation, co-production and co-learning required in the dynamic
- Determination of the limits of the selected experiments and their conditions of replication within the partnership sites
- assurance that the link between the concepts or criteria of qualities defined reflect the levels of apprehension of the beneficiaries or the citizen towards them
- an attitude that ensures the scientific documentation of these criteria, the analysis of their level of integration and their dissemination, particularly by students in scientific journals

It will be necessary to be able to integrate these elements in a perfect combination or approach

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting Montmorency Falls last summer where I had a great time with my family members before the reopening of the school year in the fall of 2022. As it was the first time that I went there, I was really impressed to see how all the elements of the space or area reserved for visitors or tourists have been arranged and combined in order to facilitate an exceptional experience for everyone. Naturally, safety was at the rendezvous, harmony in the spatial organization, management of movements, zones of observation, contemplation and appreciation of the exploits of nature through the prodigious Montmorency Falls. My family members were most impressed by the wealth of options in terms of activities available as well as the diversity in the path or route to take from a point upstream of the falls to one further downstream. Seen in this light, it is a setting that is also dedicated to meeting old and new people while offering an enchanting setting for a distinguished reunion. The shooting sessions with the digital cameras of the visitors also brought another level of exploitation more durable for the immortalization of the memories.

It was also necessary to appreciate the hospitality of the hosts in charge of welcoming people to the site's restaurant areas. Indeed, after having spent a good amount of time savoring this marvel and/or this spectacle offered by nature, it became urgent to eat. I must admit that such an experience in the middle of nature here in Quebec has a lot of meaning for a newcomer like my family members who were looking for a nice place to recharge their batteries. And we were quite

pleased with the content of the offer and the elements or accessories of the environment that accompanied it.

However, sites such as Montmorency Falls seem to present enormous challenges in terms of maintenance and constant innovation to ensure a certain level of quality in accordance with the norms and standards in terms of security. I imagine that similar infrastructures should exist and be available to be visited by the general public throughout Canada. In this perspective, a plan to harmonize the level of quality between these different sites would allow the promoters of these services to have more credibility in the eyes of the local population or visitors who take refuge there throughout the year.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I found particularly meaningful and moving:



Montmorency Falls. Source Francois, 2022.

Link to Google map:

<https://www.google.com/maps/search/chute+montmorency/@46.8875573,-71.1485037,16.25z>

ZEPEDA, Nilson

Project Manager, Conseil régional de l'environnement de Montréal

Member of the research site directed by: Concordia University

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect a general sense of well-being, brought about by airy, green and safe public spaces, for all segments of the population. Pedestrian corridors should be wide enough to allow people to move around easily, with rest areas that encourage encounters and stimulate the senses through art as well. The built environment must also have trees of sufficient size to cast shade and plants that promote biodiversity in the urban environment. Finally, a quality-built environment ensures a better distribution of public space between the different modal shares, thus improving travel safety.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of a positive quality experience:

I particularly remember visiting the Voisinérie, a project to green a parking lot located in social housing in Montreal North. This space, which started out almost entirely mineralized, has become an oasis of freshness, which also makes room for urban agriculture, while allowing people to socialize. This space was designed in conjunction with residents and local partners and attempts to meet all the needs expressed by the project's stakeholders. As a result, the facilities respond to concrete needs, particularly those of the residents, which favours their ownership and the sustainability of the facilities. The contrast is striking when one moves to the parking lot next door, which is a heat island and a sterile space.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I have found to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Formerly a mineralized parking lot, the courtyard of the Pelletier block has become a haven of freshness and conviviality, for the benefit of the residents of the site, but also of the entire surrounding community

Source: Béatrice Viens Côté (CRE-Montréal)

Link to Google map:

<https://goo.gl/maps/JrSktp43wkcoS1tQ7>

PARENT, Lyne*Association des architectes en pratique privée du Québec, Executive Director**Member of the partnership steering committee*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality of the built environment should offer:

For me, a positive experience must be overall stimulating and peaceful, intriguing and familiar. In my personal experience, balance is essential; yin and yang must be present in everything. My positive experiences are often based on the appeal of complementary characteristics. I find them essential. Stimulation of the senses must be accompanied by a call to serenity, calm and interiority, all within the same temporal space.

When I enter a place, it's the details that catch my eye first before I get a general view, whereas the architects I work with seem to mentally photograph the entire space in a first glance. I perceive a color, the detail of an object, the activity of a human being, then I step back and my brain stops on another detail. This perception of things and places takes time; my positive experience is shaped; it is not immediately imposed, in most cases. Except perhaps in the case of a love at first sight experience in 2020. I remember entering a rather magical place where the whole enveloped me with an intense feeling of peace as soon as I arrived; it must have been a completely balanced place, an absolutely harmonious whole. I entered this place by chance and I didn't want to leave; it was, in the context and in the moment, a perfect place.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of a positive quality experience:

My positive quality experience is located in the neighborhood where I live. This place came into its own in all its liberating power at the beginning of the lockdown decreed in March 2020. The Parc de la promenade Bellerive is located on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River, in the Tétéreaultville neighborhood (Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve borough) in Montreal. I walked this park morning, noon and night to escape the stress of adapting to a new situation. This public place allowed me to connect with the plants and their calming power. I saw the shapes, colors and sizes change with the seasons. I didn't try to know the names of all the types of trees that live in this park; I followed their growth, their power of attraction. My favorite tree, an olive tree - I didn't know we had olive trees in Quebec - has very low branches. It is the perfect playground for children. I'm afraid it will get hurt! I didn't think a tree had so much power and then Susanne Simard's book, *Finding the Mother Tree*, accompanied me on my daily walks for a while.

I have lived the seasons to the rhythm of this place that has become more and more familiar. I have felt the warm summer wind; the surprising autumn wind; the cold morning wind, which calls for respect and confirms that I am solid and adapted to my environment.

I spied the wildlife that cohabits as best it can with the humans who frequent the park: squirrels, foxes, geese, woodpeckers, swallows, and even a poor disoriented whale lost in an inhospitable river between Quebec and Montreal.

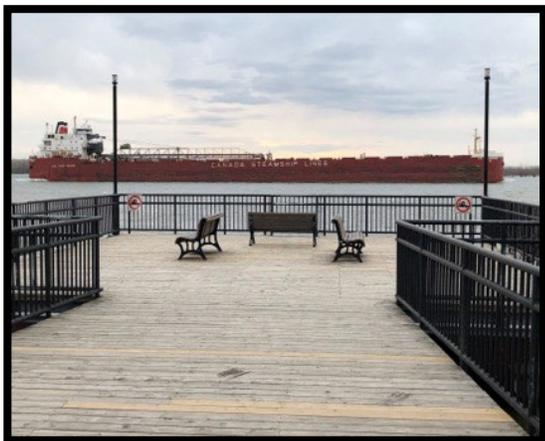
I spied the family celebrations that multiplied in this place and the rituals of immigrant families: weddings, baptisms, birthdays...

I've listened to so many books haggled over in this surreal context of a global pandemic; some of the most powerful passages are now associated with where I heard this author or that actor read a meaningful passage: Yuval Noah Harari, Hope Jahren, Rebecca Solnit, Joan

Didion, Annie Ernaux, Margaret Atwood, and the others you've made me feel good; even Laura Spinney's essay on the Spanish flu has found its way into my worried ear

When you think about it, it's so simple: finding refuge in a park as a reaction to being confined to your home. However, this type of refuge was not accessible to everyone. The quality of the built environment is also about fostering this connection to space, to plants, to the blue sky for people who found themselves isolated and unable to go outside. We have not all been equal in this pandemic.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I have found to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Photos of Promenade Bellerive Park with an iPhone by Lyne Parent

Link to Google map (optional): <https://www.google.com/maps/@45.5943518,-73.5201762,14z>

13. Neighborhoods, Districts, Regions

Leslie Evans | Adithi Lucky Reddy*Non-profit Partner*

Member of the Research Site Led by Brian Sinclair, University of Calgary

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

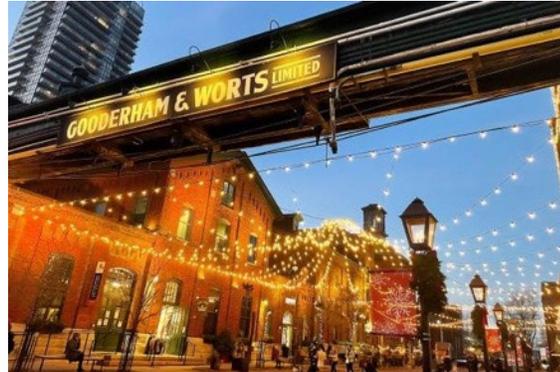
As the leader of the community association movement in Calgary, we are actively engaged in community building. Community associations are volunteer run, geographically based organizations that provide social and recreational opportunities to residents and are a recognized voice in the City of Calgary planning process. Calgary is the only Canadian city with a wide volunteer-based community association. Botanical Gardens of Silver Springs in Calgary was a project that was designed and developed by volunteers at community associations and still is maintained by them. This entire project was purely a result of various fundings from Alberta Lotteries, Community Spirit Grants and Community Facilities Enhancement Program. The Community Associations, partnering with the Calgary Foundation, worked with the City of Calgary to install 19 gardens over 1.5 km of length. This project was done without taxpayer support - just an idea, a willing community, and their contributions. All the gardens and hardscape were designed and built by the volunteers - a part for their camaraderie and learning. This is a great example of positive experience of quality in the built environment as this project gathered like-minded volunteers to build a space that is close to their hearts and provide for various communities with an understanding of Calgary's climate. A positive experience is where there is a sense of community belongingness, and the botanical gardens delivers the congregation of people from various parts of Calgary with sensory and therapeutic experiences. *Volunteer efforts can motivate an inspired workforce of stewards dedicated to restoring and maintaining parks & open spaces, thereby enhancing community resilience. (Jennings, 2019). Volunteering builds a sense of place attachment with the settings in which people volunteer. (Jennings, 2019)*

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

An example of my positive experience of quality in built environment is the Distillery District in Toronto. It is a commercial and residential district that contains cafes, restaurants and shops housed with heritage buildings. Easily accessible by transit, Distillery district is a fun gathering place for people across Toronto to socialize and explore. Distillery district is a place of congregation for different cultural and social events. Personally, a positive experience is when you feel welcomed in a gathering space. Distillery district celebrates different cultures and people with the portrayal of installations and lightings. The space is modified to accommodate for various events, and it is a different experience every time. This place attracts people of varying age groups with the commercial uses in the district. This gathering hub is hugely appreciated because of its history and the portrayal of the Victorian-Era Architecture. Historically, the district was a large Canadian distillery that it presently gets its name from. The Distillery was closed in 1990 and the economic recession of early 1990s delayed the efforts to revitalize the district.

The district was reopened in 2003 and now it is occupied with local boutiques, restaurants, cafes, and microbreweries that give a unique character and sense of belonging to the users. The Distillery District was designated as a National Historic Site. My favourite part of the experience is the “feel” of the place. Mixing the old with the new. It was a fantastic job done to seamlessly collaborate the new installations and lights with the older building façades and character. That is, what I believe to be the main attraction of this place. I visited this place during different times of the year, and it was a different experience every time.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/QtESfTis7gpQYFAN8>

Fadi Masoud
Researcher / Lead

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect the spontaneous, diverse, and layered nature of a place. Areas and neighbourhoods that are not overly prescribed. Places where land uses, urban functions, and built form intersect with culture and personal expression. Places where the front and back of house disappear, where the right of way is not that of exclusive use of transportation but also gathering and culture.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

Kensington Market in Toronto is a unique place where the above elements intersect. Layers of history, non-confirming land uses, buildings that are not to code generate spaces where livelihoods meet diverse cultural and authentic experiences. This is a place impossible to design from scratch, not to replace but it is in the absence of over-prescribed uses and areas protected from gentrification from community land trusts are we able to allow for pockets of uniqueness to emerge in the banality of developer driven urbanism.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Kensington Market – Seasons Fadi Masoud

Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/6dW2HKkb6GP4wv3D9>

McCausland, Geoff*Cluster Member**Member of the Research Site Led by Laurentian University***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect the same fundamental principles that govern quality. I believe those to be (in no particular order) Comfort, Reliability, Accuracy, Precision, Efficiency, Aesthetic, Performance, Durability, Consistency, Serviceability, Safety, Simplicity and a perception that aligns with all of these traits.

I believe the problem with our built environments, especially external ones, is that we have built them for the quality of moving and storing automobiles, and not for the quality of hosting and moving humans.

I positively experience the built environment when it feels safe and comfortable, when a space is consistently vibrant or serene, aesthetically-pleasing, simple and efficient in providing to my needs (whether to sit, eat, go to the bathroom, meet with others, or do work), and that I can feel that my experience is valued and considered in the space around me.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

When I lived in Montreal, I was surrounded by places that I consider to be of excellent quality. The Plateau provides for dense and vibrant neighbourhoods, where everything is within walking if not biking distance. Each residential row of triplexes links to a main boulevard that is full of interesting shops, restaurants, workplaces, and gathering places. A major improvement would be to remove cars from those boulevards, or at the least shrink their footprint, but as it stands, this model provides an excellent balance of private and public space and allows people of all incomes and backgrounds to move and gather together.

Another high-quality space is the area around the Danforth in Toronto. I find it frustrating that most current zoning bylaws do not permit lots that are less than 30ft in width, and yet here you can see houses that are 14ft wide on 16ft lots, which allows so many more families to live within walking distance to the main thoroughfare. That dramatically increases the vibrancy on the Danforth and other main streets, as well as in the many parks throughout the area.

Uptown Saint John, New Brunswick is another excellent example of a place that was built and that thrived well before the advent of the automobile. From the boardwalk to the City market, there are indoor walking paths for comfort in all seasons, outdoor gathering spaces for everyone to come together, lovely shops up and down King Street, and lots of people living, working and going to school in close proximity.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



<https://photos.app.goo.gl/faZgfmjjXR5tWxfU6>

Google map link: *In front of 32 Canterbury St, Saint John, NB E2L 2C5*

Jeanie M. Gartly

Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals, Board of Director (CAHP Board Representation); Heritage Conservationist/Urban Designer, J M Gartly Design Studio Inc.

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality in the built environment is most evident when a layering of architecture, use, and materials has been preserved through redevelopment eras. A neighbourhood, community, downtown, town, and city - at each of these levels – should exemplify preservation of its architecture resulting in experiential historical references and architectural development eras. A positive experience of quality in the built environment should tell a story and be experiential through quality and diverse architectural styles including how the architecture interfaces with the semi-private and public realms. The diversity of built-form that comes from a historical layering of architecture provides the most positive experience for me. I love to walk in my neighbourhood, an established one, and trends in redevelopment to demolish the bungalow or two-storey built during the decades from the late 1880s through to the present has left no layering of architectural styles for me to experience as I walk through my neighbourhood or others in my city. Those that are left are fighting to save that experience and character that comes a layering of historical architectural styles. A positive experience is experience quality through a layering of historical architecture be it residential, commercial, office, and light industrial.



Scarboro community, Calgary, AB (diversity of historic architectural styles – my positive experience of the built environment). All photos by Jeanie M. Gartly

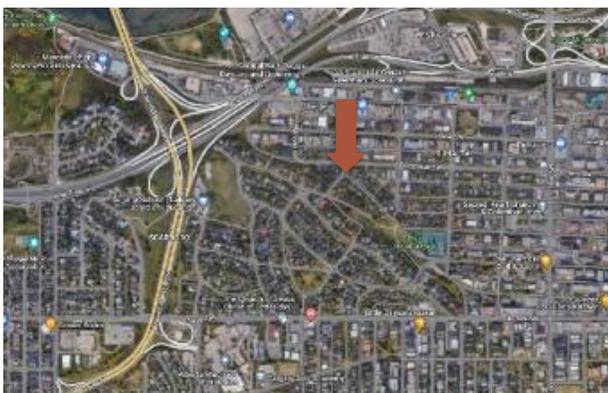
In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

A concrete example of a positive experience of quality in a built environment is the community of Scarboro in Calgary, AB. The Scarboro historic community is a cultural landscape comprising roughly 45.8ha (113 ac) in the southwest Calgary community of Scarboro (historically aka Sunalta Addition). Located mainly on top of the escarpment, Scarboro consists of parks, boulevards, extensive landscape, and horticulture features, 330 single detached homes, Scarboro United Church, Sunalta Elementary School, and the Calgary Tennis Club.

With a high degree of conformity, the streetscapes have a layout of curved street, planted boulevards, sidewalks, no fence or a low barrier, deep house setback, 45% or less lot coverage,

and steeply pitched roofs, which creates an extensive tree canopy and a more subtle massing and appearance. Scarborough is a “Picturesque Suburb” residential design that connects people with the past and tells the story of how Calgary developed during its Building Boom (1906-1913), and later in the 1920’s through to complete build-out of residential in the 1950s. The Scarborough community is a rare, fully executed, and intact, John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920) designed “Picturesque Suburb” in Calgary and one of only three in Canada. As the stepson of famed American Landscape Architect, Fredrick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), John Charles expressed his park landscape design philosophy by integrating it with suburban planning. The Scarborough landscape exhibits design principles conceived to give therapeutic respite from the city with curvilinear streets and irregularly shaped lots that follow natural topography. His mastery of landscape design is artistically displayed in Scarborough’s residential design crafted to fit with nature. The residential parkland reflects the skillful execution of “Picturesque” ideals in other Olmsted projects such as: Uplands, Oak Bay, BC and Riverside, Illinois, retaining these characteristics to this day. The historic community is a fully integrated residential suburb developed by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company at the height of Calgary’s Building Boom (1906-1913). The early building development reflects what was happening locally and internationally and in the “architectural layering” evident in the intact Foursquare (“Homestead”), Prairie, Tudor Revival, Queen Anne Revival, Gothic Revival, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and Ranch styles. The curvilinear streets resulted in several large and irregular shaped lots at the intersection of curves. While most urban areas in North America are characterized by a gridiron plan of 25 ft. lots, the Sunalta Addition boasted typically 50 ft. lots with many larger homes built on double lots, which allowed for large front and side setbacks and gardens. While working on the Historical Context Paper with the community and doing an evaluation of it, I walked the terraced streetscapes photographing and experiencing the various architectural styles, the cultural landscape, and streetscapes. I felt at home with the large front yards, streetscapes – architecture and landscapes. It was a most positive experience for the quality of built form and landscaped public realm – one of much interest, inspiration and layering of architectural styles.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:The Scarborough community encompasses the area between the bottom of



the slope mainly along 12 Avenue SW and 14 Avenue SW to the north; 17 Avenue SW to the south; 16 and 17 Street SW on the east; and Crowchild Trail SW on the west.

Scarboro Community Map prepared by Zoe Crandell, (U of C Landscape Architecture Student, Historical Context Paper team member). Prepared for the Historical Context Paper.

Jonathan Monfries

Partner Representative (AAA) – Calgary Research site

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect the context it is situated within. As designers, new buildings should acknowledge its context and make the lived experience in the immediate area improved. This does not mean the building should have a similar aesthetic as surrounding buildings – rather there should be site considerations for the different interactions of building interface with street at all edges of the site to create a quality built form.

More specifically, a positive experience of quality is where it is evident that the built environment is having a positive influence on your mental well-being. The proportions of streets (road vs public realm vs building) provide a simple analysis of how well the built environment considers the well-being of humans. Certain streets have proportions that optimize vehicular circulation and have minimal public realm. Streets that provide a positive experience have a larger proportion of the street dedicated to public realm, with the building proportion approachable in scale (not overbearing) and vehicular traffic is minimized.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting Canmore, Alberta where for the majority of the COVID-19 pandemic the main street was closed to vehicles. In Alberta, we are not used to seeing major urban arterials closed to traffic – however this is fairly common in European contexts. Seeing the impact of this street closure was inspiring. The number of pedestrians and cyclists occupying the street was much higher than I have ever seen before in Canmore, simply because there was sufficient space for the public to move and interact with the built environment. This relates to the previous question discussing what a positive experience should offer – however this does not simply imply that we should close all urban streets. The pilot project demonstrated that more public realm could bring more people and activity to the downtown core. If street parking is maintained, and drive-lanes were reduced to 1 or 2 lanes, you would be offered up 2-3 lanes of vehicular traffic that could be dedicated to pedestrian or cyclist use, which brings people downtown. These active modes of transportation allow people to stop and window shop or visit local cafes and restaurants. Vehicular traffic does not offer such an ability. So in sum, these proportions of the street can have a significant influence on mental well-being and experiences for the user while also providing economic benefit depending on the context. The reach of how we define quality can then be pushed even further.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Figure 4: Credit: Town of Canmore, jewhyte

Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/KyYrzNaKRG3DfHbF9>

Bowman, Melissa

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect the multitude of histories, peoples, stories of that community. There should be a diversity of building types, sizes, styles, uses, affordability, etc. There should be spaces that people can spend time in without paying money (libraries, green spaces, plazas). Wide sidewalks, trees, and public art all add creativity and a sense of welcome and wonder to a space.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting Montreal in 2022. I appreciated the ease of getting around the city without relying on a vehicle. It was relatively easy to access transit, and to get many places by foot. I really loved that many streets in the downtown were cycling/walking friendly, with several even being closed off to vehicles completely. The street was also activated with various cafes. Patios, street vendors, events, and more. While we didn't cycle when there, it was clear that many people did, and that was often supported with separated and protected cycle lanes.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Stratford, Ontario



[Google map link](#)

Nurielle Gregorio*Graduate Research Assistant, UWaterloo**Member of the Research Site Led by Adrian Blackwell***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect the spatial and humanistic connections that establish narratives and memories beyond the physical space; the smell, sound, taste, light, emotions; simply implying the small anecdotes of life (not just human life, but the life of the space itself). It is impossible to experience quality in the built environment when the space is seen just as is, a physical manifestation for users; dependent only on its physical, aesthetic offerings. A positive experience in space is the totality of everything (like an everything bagel, all at once).

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting Kensington Market in Toronto for the very first time. The positive experience of quality in Kensington Market was embedded within the never-ending layers of life evident within the ins and outs of the stores and quite literally onto the streets. It is this aspect of the physical space where a sense of community, diversity and humanistic connections is established. As one of hundreds of people who was at Kensington that day, I was still able to feel a sense of welcome and belonging. I felt connected to the space as I walked down the sidewalk, enjoying the music, the food, different cultures and simply the people. Kensington Market offered human connections independent of the aesthetics of space, it was within the 'chaos' of the streets that allowed these layers of narratives to overlap and be experienced, everything all at once.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Kensington Market, Source: BlogTO

Google map link:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Kensington+Market,+Toronto,+ON/@43.654834,-79.4072525,16z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x882b34c23d02c2eb:0x472d5132915be00c!8m2!3d43.6545236!4d-79.4014566!16zL20vMDI3X3A2?hl=en>

Shirley Thompson

Co-applicant, Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership, University of Manitoba.

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect...

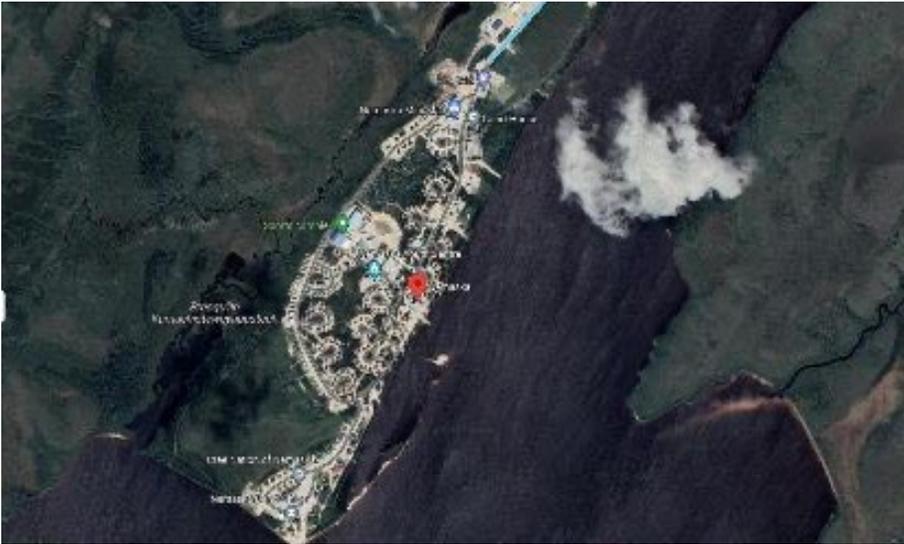
Experiencing beauty, well-being and peace as a part of the natural ecosystem, cultural integrity and community, within walking distance of swimmable lake, forest and other sustaining features (schools, food store, health centre and community sports centre).

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting...

Nemaska means "Place of Plentiful Fish," and the reason they chose their community in 1979 after a proposed Hydro-Quebec dam project threatened to flood their ancestral village. Jolly reported that the colonial government wanted to relocate them in a swamp but they fought back and determined where to settle: "At the time, the Department of Indian Affairs wanted to impose another site on us, but it was partly a swamp so we chose to settle here instead, where it's dry, in a place where there is everything we need to hunt and fish" (CBC, 2023). I both visited the new and old Nemaska. Both are gathering places with walking access to the lake, forest, school, band office and community centre from any home. They have cul-de-sac and energy efficient housing embedded in nature to allow people to thrive and be remain comfortably experiencing Cree culture and modern conveniences. They have biomass heating to ensure energy security and local hunters and fishers for food security.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Google map link:

Source: Google map, Nemaska Hotel. 2023.

Caption: Being culture, nature and community with the fish at Nemaska

Monet, Stephen

Manager, Strategic and Environmental Planning, City of Greater Sudbury:

Member of the Greater Sudbury Led by Terrance Galvin

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should be one that appeals to the senses and offers surprise and delight by progressively revealing itself rather than providing an overwhelming experience that then quickly leads to boredom.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

Growing up in old LaPrairie, Quebec, which was founded first as a fort in 1687, provided my positive experiences of quality. Narrow and winding streets, narrow sidewalks that were perilous to ride with a tricycle, mixed uses (bank, post office, mini-grocery store, bakery, a mini-store that sold everything one needed and even a yeast factory across from my home), various building styles to reflect the various uses – all contributed to the magic of place. The clip-clop sound of the horse-driven wagon delivering milk – yes, until the mid-1960s. The smell of fresh baked goods down the street. The micro-store (quinze cents) where I could buy two round candies for a penny. The sound of the bell from the big church just a couple of streets away. Many things to discover but never revealed all at once. It was 'heritage' before the term 'heritage' was in vogue. The municipality has sought to better profile this 'heritage' over the years and, in my opinion, has largely succeeded. Economic change over the years has removed the yeast factory, the mini-grocery store, the post-office, the bank, the quinze cents and the bakery. But the feel of the place is still there, without the convenience of having everything you needed within strolling distance.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Google map link: https://www.google.com/maps/@45.4196408,-73.4968846,3a,75y,49.06h,80.03t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sWFwF9R0ikU_PuGqmOfJQaA!2e0!7i16384!8i8192?aut_huser=0

Tatev, Yesayan

Group or organization affiliation within the partnership:

Member of the Research Site Led by Concordia University

In your own words, describe those features of built environments that contribute positively to your encounters and experiences:

I believe that positive lived experiences arise from qualities in the built environment that contribute to a sense of community and belonging.

For me, these often take the form of characteristics that would be attributed to a village, like a microcosm within the city where all your main activities can take place within a walking distance. This creates an environment where you're more likely to know your neighbors, as you find yourself running into familiar faces on the street or in the many meeting spots of the neighborhood, whether it's a coffee shop, the grocery store, the community center, or the park.

Additionally, something that I have noticed contributes to a sense of community, belonging, and overall well-being more than anything, is to live in an environment to which you have contributed in some way, by helping with the design or construction of a building, of a public space, of a community garden, etc. This creates a level of investment and attachment to your living space by making it feel more personal, and it produces a sense of empowerment to know that you can affect your living environment for the better.

In your own community within Canada, provide some concrete examples of positive lived experiences of quality:

My experience of living in my neighbourhood, the "Petit Laurier" in the Plateau-Mont-Royal borough, is the best example of a positive lived experience of quality in the built environment that I have. It is the perfect microcosm for me in the city of Montréal.

Within a 10 minute walking radius, I have access to my gym, my favorite coffee shop, grocery stores, restaurants, dépanneurs, a hardware store, an art supply store, and the park. As I spend less time commuting from one place to another, I spend more leisurely time in the neighborhood shops and cafés, such that I know most shop owners and they know me. The moment I walk into my favorite coffee shop, the owner of the café has my favourite coffee cup ready for me before I have to say anything.

Laurier street itself is a single lane street in that section of the city, with stop signs at every intersection, making it a fairly quiet area where the sound of people chattering on Sunday mornings is louder than the sound of cars and trucks. It has a bike path and multiple Bixi stations, which allows me to easily move around the neighborhood and beyond without having to take public transportation. Its many benches offer resting and gathering places for residents.

In the summer, the Laurier park is everyone's favorite gathering spot, and groups of friends get together over a picnic and drinks. The park also has a space where people exercise in groups, or offer free dance lessons to salsa enthusiasts like myself. In the late summer and early fall,

there's a farmer's market offering organic vegetables twice a week at the exact intersection where I live.

The neighbourhood is full of young families, and dog owners which makes it feel like a safe and friendly environment. One of the residents of the neighborhood has created a Facebook page called "Le Petit Laurier" where community members can interact and share news, articles, stories or updates about anything related to the neighborhood, from the newest pastries at the local pastry shop, to updates about power outages. It contributes to the feeling of being part of a community. Le Petit Laurier is overall a vibrant little village where life can still be quiet and slow.

The following is an image and/or a link to a space or place in Canada that I found especially meaningful and moving:



The intersection of Garnier and Laurier streets in the "Petit Laurier"
Photo by Tatev Yesayan

Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/vraQY2PVWrYrp5PW9>

Eicker, Ursula

CERC

Member of the Research Site Led by Concordia

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality occurs in vibrant, mixed and inclusive neighborhoods, which are walkable, with green spaces, but also full of life, people on the streets, occasions to meet and hang out, with music or street art, coffee shops, bars, shops and more.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting the Plateau in Montreal as an example of a vibrant neighborhood (at least on the main streets). Density could be still higher and less traffic would improve the quality.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



*(from FUN THINGS TO DO IN MONTREAL: PLATEAU MONT-ROYAL
May 1, 2022 [Sarah Binns](#))*

<https://blog.viarail.ca/2022/05/01/fun-things-montreal-plateau-mont-royal/>

HOBART, Catherine

*Executive Director, Group of Recommendations and Actions for a Better Environment (GRAME)
Member of the research site directed by : Concordia University*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of the quality in the built environment is made up of ingredients that promote comfort and conviviality and that have a practical/utilitarian side, as well as an aesthetic side, or at least something that invokes a positive feeling (grand and/or warm and/or playful and/or intriguing, in short, that leaves a particular and marked impression). I also like to know that the built environment contributes to its surroundings or at least limits its impact on them: the fact that our heritage buildings are made of local stone, that our office building has a geothermal system and a green roof, that another building I frequent uses rainwater in its plumbing system, for example. Obviously, I have past experiences that shape my experience of a new place. For example, I love walking on small rock and dirt paths in some of the back streets of Montreal because the sound of my footsteps reminds me of the sound I hear while hiking in the forest. An acceptable noise level, even a quiet environment, is also part of the positive aspects to look for in a built environment. The whole thing is definitely multi-sensory. I reiterate that it must also be practical, ergonomic.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

Take my neighborhood, Pointe-Saint-Charles, in Montreal. It has a dense built environment composed mostly of 2 to 4 storey row plexes, a mix of uses making daily life very practical, a metro station, several parks, public services (library, arena, indoor pool), and some heritage buildings. It has a fairly straight street pattern, but with occasional triangles and turning streets. It is very pleasant to walk and bike. Many large trees line the streets. The neighborhood also has many alleys, including dirt alleys and green alleys. I wish the architecture was less eclectic, as the shapes and claddings vary greatly, especially since unsightly buildings have replaced beautiful period buildings over the years. However, I like the diversity much better than the boring uniformity that we see in new neighborhoods where the houses are all the same. I'd also like to see a friendlier commercial street with less scattered businesses and wider sidewalks. I would like to see more greenery because this is a neighbourhood with a lot of heat islands. I would like to see some streets become pedestrianized, or shared. Nevertheless, it is pleasant to walk there because of its dense, variable, surprising shape, the two commercial streets that criss-cross it, the vegetation that is very present. At one point, there is a pedestrian walkway and a promontory that gives a view of the entire downtown. A few other special attractions dot the area, such as Building 7, which has a lot of vegetables and chickens, and the beautiful Lachine Canal. It's also convenient to live in because of the good public transportation and the many local businesses, as well as being fairly close to downtown. My street itself is very busy, unfortunately it is dusty and noisy, but we have a very large grassy yard, with vegetable gardens and beautiful fruit trees, which we share with the other neighbors of our housing cooperative, also promoting meetings and cohesion. The children can play there in complete peace of mind.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I have found to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Link to Google map:

Le quartier : <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Pointe-Saint-Charles,+Montr%C3%A9al,+QC/@45.4819822,-73.5703797,3697m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m6!3m5!1s0x4cc91a80e020ab4d:0x2372fdb8bb578dc4!8m2!3d45.4764329!4d-73.5599278!16zL20vMDQ5Y2hx?hl=fr>

My home : <https://goo.gl/maps/T7M2w73hMJPzVyGd9>

PEDRO, Garcia

Member of the research site directed by: Laval University

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive quality experience must reflect the essence of the built environment. A well-designed and constructed space should be functional, aesthetically pleasing and conducive to the well-being of its occupants. I recently had the pleasure of touring a newly built neighborhood that contains all of these qualities.

As an architect, I believe that a positive, quality experience in the built environment should provide a sense of place. This means creating spaces that are human in scale, visually appealing and foster a sense of community, while prioritizing the health and well-being of those who use them. The use of natural light, green spaces and sustainable materials are just a few of the ways to achieve this goal.

A positive, quality experience in the built environment should be driven by the needs of its occupants to begin with. As architects, it is our responsibility to listen to and understand these needs in order to create spaces that not only function well, but also enhance the human experience. By prioritizing quality in every aspect of the design process, architects can create spaces that have a positive impact on the community.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting the eco-neighborhood in Hammarby, Sweden. Hammarby Sjöstad is a new district in Stockholm, Sweden, which has become an exemplary project of sustainable urban development. I had the pleasure of visiting it and was struck by the positive experiences of quality in the built environment. The focus on sustainability is one of the most impressive aspects of the project. Hammarby Sjöstad was designed with the goal of reducing the environmental impact of urban living while maintaining a high standard of living. This has been achieved through a number of innovative measures, including a district heating and cooling system, solar power generation and waste management systems.

I was also impressed with the use of green space throughout the neighborhood. The area was designed with an emphasis on easy access to nature, with green roofs, community gardens and parks scattered throughout including bike paths. This created a sense of balance between urban life and nature, which is essential for a positive quality experience in the built environment.

Another aspect of the project that stood out was the attention to detail in the building design. The architecture has the right scale to accommodate the functions and promote a sustainable environment. The use of materials such as wood and natural stone added warmth and a sense of connection to nature, which is often missing in modern urban developments. The emphasis on community and social interaction was also evident throughout Hammarby Sjöstad. The neighborhood was designed with a pedestrian layout and a variety of public spaces for socializing and gathering.

Overall, my experience with quality in the built environment during my visit to Hammarby Sjöstad was extremely positive. The sustainability, green spaces, attention to detail in building design, and emphasis on community and social interaction created a sense of balance and harmony. I left the area with a sense of inspiration and hope for the future of sustainable urban development. Hammarby Sjöstad is a model of what can be achieved when an inclusive approach improves quality and drives the design and construction of the built environment.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I have found to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Hammarby Sjöstad, Sweden. Copyright: unknown

Link to Google map:

<https://goo.gl/maps/gkXRCVswMTxtKbU8>

14. Large Scale Natural Landscapes

Hieu Ngo*Academic Researcher**Member of the Research Site Led by Brian Sinclair*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should provoke a sense of wonder, being and belonging. I would feel connected to nature, history, lives and their related stories.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly enjoy the pathway along the Bow River. I can go downtown, to grocery stores and shops in good time. I can choose to walk, run, or bike. I can stay connected with nature- with expanding view of the river, the meadow along the hills, the regular sights of geese, beavers, birds...Across the train track, I can walk along the river or get lost among trees. I could feel connected to the story of the Canadian railroad, the lives of those who helped build the city and the respect for contemplative space in the middle of the city.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/MFna7mLUdDJKJvN79>

Jessica Blakeley*Newcomer Employment Consultant*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

In my experience, quality in the built environment encompasses the needs of all members of society and considers the accessibility, religious, social, environmental, and cultural expectations of diverse groups while maintaining and highlighting heritage buildings and places.

When building new spaces, or improving existing ones, care should be taken to ensure that the space also allows for social needs to be met, i.e., open, safe streets to encourage active transportation and the ability to interact with others. This fosters happiness and a sense of inclusion in society, which is one of the leading determinants of health and longevity. Humans evolved to value social inclusion, as being excluded from the group could result in starvation, injury, or death. It is for this reason social inclusion is so important to people of all ages.

Another key consideration should always be access to green spaces and nature. Humans evolved to connect green flora to an abundance in the food supply, thus lowering our stress levels as we knew we would not have to work as hard to gain nutrition. We still possess this particular trait in modern times, and thus feel calm and less stressed when we are surrounded by greenery and nature. In fact, doctors have been known to prescribe “forest bathing” to patients dealing with mental health concerns, as it can be just as effective as medication in some individuals.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I lived in Birmingham, United Kingdom, for two years. The place I would like to highlight are the canals that run through the city centre and extend out to other areas of the city and the countryside. There are more miles of canals in Birmingham than there are in Venice, Italy! The canals are fairly accessible, considering the canals were built well before accessibility laws were put into practice. Many are paved and people with limited mobility can access many that are in the city centre. The canals also offer access to nature, as can be seen in the pictures provided. Trees, native pollinator plants, and wildlife are in abundance along the canals, and they are open to all members of the public. These spaces also offer alternate modes of transportation, including active transportation. Walking, running, cycling, and long boating are all popular along these waterways. I used to them to cycle to my work across the city-this was a wonderful way to start the day and a welcome change from the crowded busses. These canals offer the chance to greet people as you make your way to your destination, contributing to some much-needed social activity. The canals were also a place to meet, and in the city centre they were dotted with restaurants and cafes in historical buildings that were preserved and open to the public. Historical landmarks were sometimes highlighted with the use of signs or plaques, adding to the multifunctionality of these waterways and contributing to historical knowledge and preservation.

The canals are a truly a gem in the city of Birmingham, which was heavily bombed during WWII due to its industrial and munitions factories, leaving parts of the city empty of historical buildings and green spaces. While the canals were built in the past, we can emulate many of their

characteristics in modern builds today: Access to nature and green space, opportunity for social inclusion, wildlife corridors and connections, places where wildflowers and native species can thrive and grow, active and environmentally friendly modes of transportation, and the ability to foster mental, emotional, and physical health in our population.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Josie Auger

*Member of the Steering and Governance Committees and Co-Applicant
Associate Professor at Athabasca*

University

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

We respond to this topic from diverse cultural backgrounds with multiple responses on quality in the built environment. In the Cree language “mamo instohtamawin,” is translated to English to mean, we have “positive understandings” and in French to mean “compréhension positive” of quality in the built environment including public spaces. Relationality in Indigenous research contexts is respectful, reciprocal, responsible, and relevant. As humans we share the ecosystem with waters, plants, rocks, air, animal/insect beings and more. Turtle Island (Canada, the US, and Mexico) is one part of Mother Earth. The name Turtle Island reminds us of the near extinction after the great flood. An Elder said to me that Mother Earth is currently experiencing pain, and Western scientists identified the shift happening with climate change, so I am using this opportunity to share my cultural viewpoint on this topic. By sharing our positive experiences of quality, I encourage that we build more relationality with natural spaces, seek balance and harmony and reflect positivity. I offer my view as an Earth Woman and I am thankful for Mother Earth. This gratitude is expressed as a reciprocal way of respectful relationality. We must strive to demonstrate responsibility through allyship.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

Architects identify the built environment in multiple ways including outdoor spaces. The built environment that I refer to is in nature adjacent to a town. The Muskeg Creek Trails in the town of Athabasca is located on hills near the Athabasca Rivers. The town borders Treaty 6 and Treaty 8. Alberta is within Treaty 6, 7, and 8 areas homelands to many Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The Muskeg Creek Trails are within the dense bush. There is a canopy of poplar, spruce, birch, willow, trees covering the forest. The hush of wind, a crackle of shrubs, and the softness of the earth beneath the feet connect walkers and runners to the hills. As I walked through the Muskeg Creek Trails, I breathe the living Mother Earth. I hear the streams trickle with life. My senses are awoken and I feel alive. I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect...the feeling of being alive in those spaces of quality. I am not sure how that can be captured in a built environment except in natural spaces like parks. I particularly remember visiting... the Muskeg Cree Trails a few times when I moved to the area near the town of Athabasca. I discovered a sign showing the length of loops to walk. Each time I went to the Muskeg Creek Trails, I was so grateful for having a beautiful sacred space to walk and connect to Mother Nature without feeling rushed for time. The online work environment kept me very busy with projects to work on, writing to complete, papers to mark, and meetings to attend. At times exhaustion from sitting for long periods of time in front of hurtful screen light and feeling the stress of world events, weighed heavily on me. Walking in the outdoors helped me to recharge my mind, body, spirit, and heart. Spending time in outdoor places in nature offered me experiences to decompress and pay attention to my senses and breathe. If connection to the natural world is combined with our contemporary way of living and working, appreciation for the natural way is clarified in our vision. Through this exercise of sharing positive experiences of Quality in the Built Environment, we learn together, share cultural ideas, and promote the

Leah Perrin

Manager of Regional Planning, Halifax Regional Municipality, City Partner and Member of the Governance Board

Member of the Research Site at Dalhousie University Led by Susan Fitzgerald

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

When I envision places that generate positive experiences, I think mostly of public spaces. Walking through any city, it's not the buildings alone that generate interest and make a great place to visit, it's the public realm – the streets, the sidewalks, parks and parklets, trees and art. We collectively own these spaces between buildings, and it's these spaces that are responsible for forming the “environment” of the built environment. I believe that most importantly, a positive experience of quality in the built environment must be a place where everyone is made to feel safe and welcome. Private spaces and places, though they may be beautiful, are often designed to specifically exclude people. The best spaces are accessible and open to all.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

In a small city like Halifax, we have a unique blend of city and nature. Many of our best public spaces are inextricably linked to our natural setting – we are a coastal region, with the core of our city built around a sheltered harbour that supports much of our economy. The Halifax Harbour, as a major tourism destination, has many wonderful public spaces, supported by both historic and modern architecture. The Halifax Waterfront is an obvious example of quality in the built environment – but as someone who grew up just a ferry ride across the harbour in Dartmouth, I would be remiss to not write about Lake Banook.

Within the municipal boundaries of Halifax Regional Municipality, there are over 1000 lakes. The former City of Dartmouth branded itself *the City of Lakes* (shout out to our very own [Matt Mays](#)). I grew up on Lake Banook, in the heart of the city. This lake was a critical waterway used by the Mi'kmaq people and was the first natural lake in the Shubenacadie Canal waterway. Today, Lake Banook is known as a world-class course for sprint canoe/kayaking. Having hosted several national and international championships, including the 2022 Canoe Sprint World Championships, public spaces have been built around the lake that supports both the activity on the lake and residents' daily recreational activity. A boardwalk lines the lake adjacent to the racecourse, and spectators' stands have been built into a natural hill that overlooks the lake. The judges' tower, built on piles in the lake itself, is one of the city's most recognizable landmarks.

Named after the Mi'kmaq word *Panuk* meaning “at the opening/beginning”, Lake Banook was once connected to the Halifax Harbour by the Sawmill River. The small river flowed openly and was used for mills until the 1970s, when a hurricane caused severe flooding in downtown Dartmouth, and it was subsequently forced into underground culverts. Federal fish passage regulations have required alterations to those culverts, which has provided an opportunity to daylight the stream. The first phase of this project has resulted in a beautiful addition to the existing Sullivan's Pond park. A wide pedestrian bridge spans the new fish ladder, adding a new focal point for the park. The bridge is lit up for the holidays, and as it sits next to a Cenotaph,

residents of a local nursing home decorated it with [6,000 hand-knit poppies](#) for Remembrance Day. This small change to a local park is now a cherished part of the built environment.

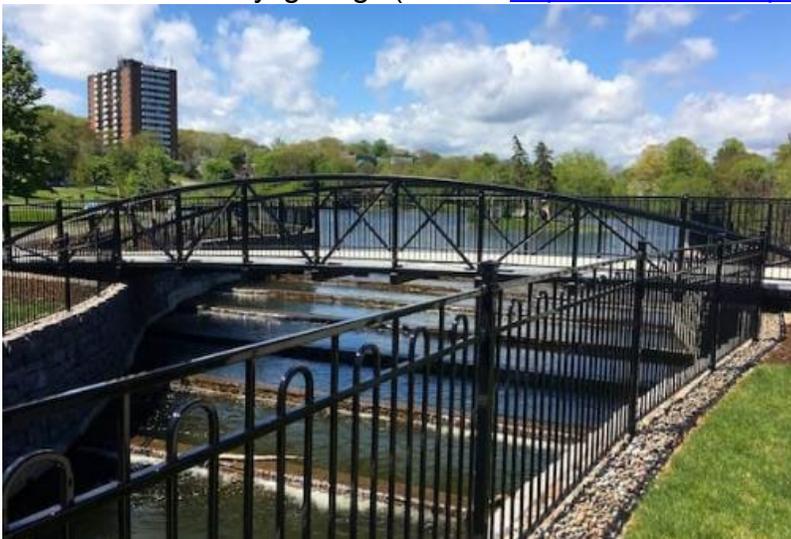
Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Judges Tower, Lake Banook (Credit: Halifax Regional Municipality)



Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/XhT3ZydqhLKHpXDS9>

Sawmill River Daylighting: (Credit: [https://www.ail.ca/project/pedestrian-bridge-anchors-canal-](https://www.ail.ca/project/pedestrian-bridge-anchors-canal-daylighting-project-in-dartmouth-ns/)



[daylighting-project-in-dartmouth-ns/](https://www.ail.ca/project/pedestrian-bridge-anchors-canal-daylighting-project-in-dartmouth-ns/))

Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/twWQ2e7sPAvy5c3w9>

Lucy Genua*Data Specialist, City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation**Member of the Research Site Led by University of Toronto*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

Definitions and experiences of quality vary between different types of built environments. As someone working in Parks, Forestry & Recreation at the City of Toronto, I would like to focus my answers on the quality of parks and urban greenspace. In general, I believe that high-quality parks are those that support both human life and wildlife, offer access to nature, support multiple uses, and are highly connected, easily navigable, inclusive, inviting, and visually appealing. High-quality parks serve their local communities, and, at the city-wide park system level, parks should be equitably distributed.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

In my personal perspective — which I acknowledge is not reflective of all park users — two criteria that most strongly influence my experience in urban greenspace are:

- 1) Connectivity. I want to be able to extend (temporally and spatially) my experiences in greenspace with the option of traveling through multiple parks and open spaces. This is easiest when spaces are contiguous and signposted, allowing for seamless navigation.
- 2) Ability to support multiple uses. As someone who lives in a high-rise building, I rely on parks for a variety of purposes, including physical activity, peaceful retreat into nature, and social gathering. I appreciate the versatility of parks and green spaces with multi-use trails and benches/seating areas.

One of my favourite outdoor built environments in Toronto is Mount Pleasant Cemetery and the adjacent ravine lands. This is a prime example of green space connectivity. The cemetery is a privately-owned publicly-accessible open space, which is connected to city-owned parkland at two separate access points on either end of the cemetery. You are able to travel in a 6+ kilometre loop from the cemetery, through city-operated parks and trails in the ravine, and back to the cemetery – crossing only 2 streets in the journey, via pedestrian crossover. The experience can be further extended by taking a side trip into Don Valley Brick Works Park.

A trip through the cemetery and ravine parks and trails takes you through a variety of settings and experiences. The cemetery is beautiful, with huge, old, rare trees; botanical gardens; winding, roundabout paths; and benches for quiet reflection. Many people living in the area use the cemetery as a park, and it is common to see families riding their bikes and taking daily walks there. This combination of beautiful greenery and active use makes the cemetery feel very alive. The adjacent ravines offer multi-use pedestrian and bike trails under a dense tree canopy, which in some places gives the sense of being deep in nature, all the while being in the heart of the city.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Google map link:

https://www.google.com/maps/@43.6946603,-79.3801692,3a,75y,280.92h,90.98t/data=!3m7!1e1!3m5!1spV_O6VoajZ7CHyJtZfVpVA!2e0!6shttps:%2F%2Fstreetviewpixels-pa.googleapis.com%2Fv1%2Fthumbnail%3Fpanoid%3DpV_O6VoajZ7CHyJtZfVpVA%26cb_client%3Dmaps_sv.tactile.gps%26w%3D203%26h%3D100%26yaw%3D234.78076%26pitch%3D0%26thumbfov%3D100!7i13312!8i6656

https://www.google.com/maps/@43.6927542,-79.3935171,3a,75y,328.83h,114.61t/data=!3m8!1e1!3m6!1sAF1QipPM4ewBAeML14bZ59jeT0VP5dF4_emUBG-Li3Tv!2e10!3e11!6shttps:%2F%2Fh5.googleusercontent.com%2Fp%2FAF1QipPM4ewBAeML14bZ59jeT0VP5dF4_emUBG-Li3Tv%3Dw203-h100-k-no-pi-0-ya36.93791-ro-0-fo100!7i8704!8i4352

Lui Greco

RICK HANSEN FOUNDATION MEMBER

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

What makes a positive experience is when entering a building, I'm not overwhelmed. Yes, accessibility features such as navigable spaces, elevators with appropriate features are essential, but if a lobby has a water fountain that creates so much noise then I can't use other audible queues to navigate.

Ideally, I should be able to hear where hallways start, be able to find an elevator or be able to use land marks to orient myself.

It doesn't matter if these landmarks are audible or not.

A bad example is the Canadian Blood Services office in Halifax. In the same complex my eye doctor has his office. Sure it's accessible, but finding both these offices from the bus is almost impossible!

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

A national park in Saskatchewan with displays of wildlife.

A museum where the displays were tactile and, a building where customer service was readily available and easy to find.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Check out Lake Waskasu in Northern Saskatchewan, the Grande pres **tactile map**.

Robert Ferguson*Graduate Research Assistant, GSC Member**Member of the Research Site Led by University of British Columbia***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

In order to create meaningfully positive experiences, a quality space should foster a strong sense of 'ownership' or belonging. With this feeling -- that you not only have the right to be in a space, but that you should be there (confidence that 'it is *good* for me to be here') -- comes the security, comfort and perceived personal and social license to slow down and be yourself. Only by establishing these foundational feelings of belonging can we escape personal inhibitions to fully engage our environment, and all the physical and psychological opportunities it might offer. I believe that this is why we so often feel at our most comfortable in 'wild', 'natural' spaces. In urban parks, the dynamic messiness of living things can obscure the need to conform to expected activities or states of mind. I think, despite political tension around 'resource extraction' in Canada and private ownership of public space in our cities, there is a basic consensus that the experience of nature is shared by everyone, and therefore owned (or held and stewarded) by everyone, too.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

Last summer, I frequently visited the Colquitz River Trail in Saanich, B.C. (part of the Greater Victoria Region on Southern Vancouver Island). My parents had recently moved to Victoria, and while visiting them I walked, jogged, and cycled along the trail to relax and exercise on hot summer days, as well as to explore the city. The trail cuts through a lush strip of green that follows Colquitz Creek right across Saanich. Though this space is narrow, sandwiched on either side by busy roads and residential streets, it feels like you are a different world, totally separate from the city. The trail and river often dip a few meters below the urban areas to either side, and dense vegetation, tall trees and wide canopies further the feeling of refuge that this provides. This creates an exciting contrast with the trail's highly urban context. Along its length, it weaves under rail bridges and highway overpasses, past homes and across roads. Though the need to cross busy streets can be disruptive, I believe this urban condition is an overwhelmingly positive one, and actually enhanced the sense of comfort and tranquility I found on the trail. Rushing water, high embankments, dense vegetation, and persistent birdsong (and 'insectsong') muted the busyness of the roads enough that I felt separated from it, while still connected to an exciting urban buzz. For me, this created a unique sense of peace and calm that somehow felt more 'intentional'. This urban proximity also makes Colquitz River trail a highly accessible natural refuge. Even on the hottest summer days, the trail was cool and well-shaded, with plenty of opportunities to approach the water and cool down. During these times, it was busy with pedestrians, joggers and cyclists in search of a more comfortable route, away from hot paving and full sun. Unhoused people, too, seemed able to find a cool refuge along the river, where dense vegetation affords privacy. With so many points of entry in so many neighbourhoods, it is easy for urbanites to access this space, unlike some parks which require access to a vehicle.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Constructed stepping stones and pedestrian bridge over Colquitz Creek along the Colquitz River Trail. (Photograph courtesy of Visitor in Victoria, visitorinvictoria.ca)



View of Panama Flats, accessible from the Colquitz River Trail (photograph by Robert Ferguson)

Google map link: https://www.google.com/maps/place/Colquitz+River+Trail+Parking/@48.4627756,-123.3966061,213m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m14!1m7!3m6!1s0x548f7378e21908ff:0x459940bd1b58a9ca!2sColquitz+River+Trail!8m2!3d48.4895354!4d-123.3927237!16s%2Fq%2F11f64_v3gz!3m5!1s0x548f73c721118417:0x36c179a98cfdd93d!8m2!3d48.4625044!4d-123.3958901!16s%2Fq%2F11qm3v92pn

Sydney Sheppard*Student Representative**Member of the Research Site Led by Laurentian University***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect... an inclusive, sustainable approach with a considered sensitivity to its surrounding environment. While a space demonstrating quality should provide a level of comfort to its occupants, it should also provide a space that is flexible and adaptable to its users. An experience of quality should be a sensitive reflection of its place—extending positive impacts beyond its users, to a greater symbiotic relationship with its surrounding environment.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting... A series of ice stations situated on the skate path of Ramsey Lake, a water body that is central to the downtown fabric of Sudbury, Ontario. As structures that were designed and constructed by students at the McEwen School of Architecture, they are intended to provide spaces of refuge for the users visiting the public space. Not only functioning as pieces that suit the education of the students, the structures are carefully designed to be easily disassembled, and resourced from wood from local manufacturers to leave as little of a footprint on the local environment as possible. It was interesting to experience the way the spaces were adapted by other community groups for organized events - a spontaneous silent disco was organized between the structures on the skate path, open to all users - even to those passing by through accidental discovery. It provided an alternative, vibrant experience to these spaces of refuge, on a gloomy winter evening. Families with strollers, children, and those of all age groups were able to participate in this event, without contributing to the noise pollution of the surrounding environment and to local residents. The structures were a sensitive response to improving the natural landscape, contributing to the social experience of the Bell Park skating path. Therefore, this environment provided an inclusive experience to its community members, conscious of the relationship to the users of the site and its situated environment.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Ice Stations on the Ramsey Lake Skate Path in Sudbury, Ontario, adapted for a silent disco event led by the community.



Google map link: <https://goo.gl/maps/GdZy4xrLLaLvQjg6>

TalyDawn, Salyn

Master's Student - University of Calgary, School of Social Work

Member of the Research Site Led by Dr. Brian R. Sinclair

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect the make-up of our world. What I mean by that is that our built environment should serve all members of our society. And all members of our society should contribute to defining and enacting quality.

I want to see more folks of different demographics respectfully interacting in beautiful spaces that genuinely reflect themselves. Whether these spaces are outside or inside, they are inclusive, offer safety (cultural, emotional, physical safety), reprieve, and community. I believe that these spaces also are respectful and take into consideration the needs of all biodiversity.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting Harvie Passage in Calgary, Alberta in the Summer. This is a man-made portion of the Bow River that is used recreationally most for river sports; however, it is also used by people and families to swim. The space has many pockets of still water where kids splash around, and people cool down. This section of the river is also fantastic for folks floating on the river in tubes or mini floating boats.

Besides the ability for people to cool down and enjoy the water together. For me the most notable memory of this place that really defines a quality experience is that there is much space for people to set up bbq's, blankets, and music, and be in community together. It is the perfect example of a place where people can just hang out and relax by the water. When I would visit in the Summer, I saw every cultural and racial make-up of people in the space. Smelt all kinds of food and heard all kinds of music.

I also love that the location of this place is central and accessible by transit, has a lot of parking, and is along the river walkway - which has wide and smooth paved pathways. It reminded me of when I was a youth worker and I found that so many teens made dangerous decisions out of boredom. This space felt like a place where kids can go to hang out, enjoy the water, and have fun.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

(Not my image unfortunately - I am not the best with taking photos, so it does not capture the full diversity and community that I have seen here, but it gives one an idea. Photo captured by Neil Zeller <https://neilzellerphotography.zenfolio.com/>) .



Google map link:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Harvie+Passage/@51.0427129,-114.0159051,17z/data=!4m1!1m7!3m6!1s0x53717b1b64c42c45:0x48eea796590699a4!2sHarvie+Passage!8m2!3d51.0427129!4d-114.0133302!16s%2Fq%2F11q0msgcf!3m5!1s0x53717b1b64c42c45:0x48eea796590699a4!8m2!3d51.0427129!4d-114.0133302!16s%2Fq%2F11q0msgcf>

LAGUEUX, Bianca

Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSAC)

Member of the research site led by: Carleton University

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of the quality in the built environment should offer:

In my opinion, a positive experience of a quality environment implies that users of the outdoor and/or indoor space feel:

- comfortable in the conduct of the activities contemplated or initiated by the visit or occupation of the site;
- able to walk around and perform expected activities without experiencing obstacles or feelings of insecurity;
- influenced, inspired to return to this place again.

Often this type of space can be considered ordinary or "unmemorable," lacking in extraordinary attributes, but its success lies in implementing a vision of place that focuses on the experience of various types of users. A quality environment allows the users of the environment to go about their business naturally, to use it, to work in it, to have fun in it, to learn in it, to rest in it, to celebrate in it while feeling welcome, welcomed, and included as human beings. The approach to the place is easy, the circulation is without obstacles, the orientation is coherent and efficient. Materials and building systems are selected and detailed for hassle-free use and appropriate service life. Ideally, a quality environment is a catalyst for human relationships and experiences. It is associated with socio-economic and socio-cultural successes, building resilience and community sustainability. It meets and exceeds the order.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of a positive quality experience:

As a resident of the federal National Capital Region (NCR), I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of the City of Ottawa in creating the multi-purpose outdoor space outside of its City Hall. This outdoor open space may appear at first glance to be relatively simple, but underneath this visual simplicity lies a complex functional program that must integrate all the amenities related to socio-cultural occupations with a number of security requirements dictated by the official nature of this site. Indeed, this space is available to the community in summer and winter and hosts multiple events throughout the year. Within a relatively complex urban space, they have integrated services that allow for the installation of various kiosks for the various events and festivals that take place there, as well as the construction of a winter skating rink that transforms into an in-line skating space and/or dance floor during the summer season. Access to the site is relatively easy by foot, public transit, bicycle and car. The landscaping incorporates vehicular security systems while inviting pedestrian traffic (visitors) to experience some of the points of interest created by the defensive systems and to access the site for use of its services; the result of an analytical exercise necessary to balance the need for protections with the community nature of the site. The continuity between the site circulation and the interior circulation of the building allows the public to experience the central space of the building as an exterior street leading to a gallery, gathering spaces, public services and various rental spaces. The use of materials throughout the site and within the building is simple, yet robust; allowing for the accommodation of crowds while ensuring the durability of the building systems used.

The following is an image and/or link to a space or place in Canada that I found particularly meaningful and moving:



Growing up on the south shore of Quebec City, a traditional educational activity organized by the public elementary schools is a visit to the Cap-Tourmente wildlife conservation site ([Cap-Tourmente National Wildlife Area -- Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/nature/locations/wildlife-areas/cap-tourmente-national-wildlife-area.html)). I visited this site again last year, in the fall, when the snow geese feed there by the hundreds before their migration to warmer areas for the winter. I hadn't been back there in over 30 years. Besides bringing back fond memories of my youth, I was really moved by the landscapes, the vista, and especially the scents carried by the steady breeze (from the river and the flora). This revived my memories - the spirit of the place was always present. I particularly appreciated the rehabilitation of the building and the pathways, providing a barrier-free environment for visitors/families, and designed to minimize the impact on delicate ecosystems. This place is a little treasure, resilient but also fragile. It is a haven of peace, a place of contemplation for nature lovers, but above all a dynamic and powerful environment. By designing a system to control visitation and impacts on the site, this little corner of the world and its ecosystems will be protected for future generations of students (young and old!).

Photo credit: David Boily, LaPresse

Link to Google map:

<https://www.google.ca/maps/place/R%C3%A9serve+nationale+de+faune+du+Cap-Tourmente+%2F+Cap+Tourmente+National+Wildlife+Area/@47.0660436,-70.7969232,15.5z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x4cb8ccaf6a71d053:0xdb5096f5794bb2ec!8m2!3d47.0641479!4d-70.7963781!16zL20vMDFqbDIz?hl=fr>

Cortney St-Jean

*Uptown Sudbury CAN, Chair, RAC de la Haute-Ville Sudbury, présidente:
Member of the Research Site Led by Laurentian University*

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

Quality in a built environment should make you feel 'something'. That 'something' should be positive and it should lead to an emotion or thought. It should make you feel like something has been awoken inside of you like you have noticed something out of the ordinary or you feel something novel or you remember something from your past that hasn't been recalled for a long time.

I struggled with this assignment as I cannot remember a particular built environment – a building, a public space, a street or park making me feel 'something'. Too much of our collective built environments have been built to a cost, built unimaginatively, built with no one particular in mind or built with someone or something very specific (like cars) in mind.

Quality in a built environment should be based on nature, sustainability and integration with the natural world. Living things (like water, trees and plants) and natural materials (like wood, cork, stone) should be part of our environments, whether we live in cities or in the country.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

In my home city of Sudbury, Ontario, we are fortunate to have Lake Laurentian Conservation area. It is 950 hectares of forested greenspace with over 60 kilometres of trails with which to navigate and immerse yourself in nature. The built environment of this space, namely the trails, allows a person to explore the wetlands, forests, and lakes with minimal impact. The trails also permit you to safely navigate along your journey in nature.

Each and every time I visit this area, I am better for it. My well-being is improved and I am in a better position, physically, mentally and spiritually, to tackle the everyday stresses, struggles and challenges that life throws our way. While I am hiking, I think about the way my father would take me in the forest as a child and how enthralled I would be to touch the different mosses or watch the birds fly above us. I love feeling the wind on my face and smelling the pine trees as I climb beside them. No built environment could ever be so immersive. Being in nature makes me feel more alive than any built environment ever could. The complexities of all the living features and creatures can easily be reduced to one all-encompassing view or feeling of belonging. I feel alive and part of something that is bigger than anything we humans could ever create.

The quality of this built environment is not what we as humans have built for ourselves but rather what we have left untouched. When walking on these trails you can admire what nature has built. With over one hundred years of large-scale industrial mining and environmental degradation in the Greater Sudbury area, these trails allow me to marvel at how the natural environment can recover from harmful human activities.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



Lake Laurentian Conservation Area – View from the Nature Chalet looking out on to the waters of Lake Laurentian

Source: *Lake Laurentian Conservation Area*
<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=459928599502982&set=a.459022402926935>

Google map link: <https://www.google.ca/maps/place/Lake+Laurentian+Conservation+Area/@46.4518005,-80.9436882,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x4d2effdb5197ccb5:0xa3c403bd1af59cfc!8m2!3d46.4518005!4d-80.9414995!16s%2Fm%2F02rpgmi?hl=en-CA>

Mercedes, Garcia-Holguera*Co-applicant**Member of the Research Site Led by University of Manitoba***In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:**

A positive experience would be one that combines matter, time and nature in a balanced way. Such places allow the visitor to engage with and enjoy the natural environment in a variety of forms/ways that go beyond a good control of daylight and views. These places integrate natural sounds and smells too, and nature is not only an outdoor element, but it is an essential piece of the architectural composition.

These places also show great mastery including time as a central character of the architectural piece. This architecture is not trapped in a fight against time, but instead it feeds from temporal changes and improves with every 'scar' time dynamics inflict on it.

Finally, structures that provide great experiences to their users are built with materials that emanate honesty, meaning that there is no artifice or complicated trick, no unnecessary need of exhibition, and in some ways, it would seem as if the material had a will of its own that impelled the architect to place it there.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I believe there are many man-made places where this balance between matter, time and nature is achieved. Some make part of our collective understanding of what a 'good architectural space' is, whereas others are more subjective and respond to personal views of the world. For example, the Alhambra de Granada in Spain has this atemporal beauty where all your senses are stimulated by the perfect integration of natural elements and construction materials. There is also some of that atemporal quality in old religious spaces, for example the Catholic Church of Santa Maria del Naranco in Oviedo (Spain) is one favourite of mine. But walking in Vancouver's Stanley Park can produce a similar sense of wellbeing and spiritual lifting or just sitting in a well-designed porch observing a lake, a sunset, a forest...

More recent buildings that in my opinion achieve this beautiful balance would be the Therme Vals by Peter Zumthor (Switzerland) or the Universidad Adolfo Ibanez by Jose Cruz Ovalle (Chile).

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

Alhambra: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alhambra>

Santa Maria del Naranco: <https://www.turismoasturias.es/descubre/cultura/prerromanico/santa-maria-del-naranco>



Photo: Flickr, Colin Knowles

Stanley Park: <https://www.insidevancouver.ca/2018/02/27/if-these-stumps-could-talk-exploring-stanley-parks-rain-forest/>

Thermes of Vals: <https://en.wikiarquitectura.com/building/thermas-vals/>

Universidad Adolfo Ibanez: <http://compo3t.blogspot.com/2014/12/universidad-adolfo-ibanez-jose-cruz.html>

15. Other Views of Quality

McAdam, Jenna

Youth Coordinator for One House Many Nations

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

I strongly believe quality in a built environment should incorporate indigenous knowledge laws and systems. Indigenous people have a long history of being ignored, our experience in the colonial world has had a lot of both positive and negative impact. The original people of this land are deserving of a space to create and amplify their ideas. A positive experience would mean taking into account, climate change, and taking action toward slowing it down or stopping it.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

In my community, I witnessed, in entirety, caring and selflessness. Working together to build a safe space for our growing families, teaching the younger generations of our traditions and culture and taking care of the lands and water. Being taught to care for each other, to hunt and gather, to create art and build homes. To sing and dance and pray. I was always taught that working together, as a collective, insured our safety and survival. To never take more than we needed and to be thankful for what we had.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:





Laura Beeston

Director of Summit Programming, MTL 24/24

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

We believe that a positive experience of quality should reflect...

... a dynamic, community-based and citizen-led cultural and social offering that remains available to the public 24h. At MTL 24/24, we work collaboratively across sectors to foster mindful development that favours shared uses of space.

Through exchange and communication with citizen, nightlife and civic actors, we are convinced that night time activities are a stimulating, cultural and economic force that contributes positively to the built city environments.

In Europe and elsewhere, we have witnessed the positive contribution of night spaces. Namely, we are delighted to welcome the following projects to our annual Summit:

- The [innovative approach](#) to building a 'cultural sound zone' in **Sofielund, Malmö (SE)**;
- **Holzmarkt Berlin (DE)**, a creative village downtown with roots in the nightlife scene;
- **PIP Den Haag (NL)** A multifaceted cultural space, contemporary urban incubator, production house and training universe, [INTER-CITY](#) evolves from PIP and will be The Hague's new cultural hub.

MTL 24/24 is here to assist cities and citizens in realizing public policy that meaningfully enhances local realities.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

I particularly remember visiting...

In 2022, MTL 24/24 in collaboration with La Société des Arts Technologiques (SAT) were proud to host a ground breaking pilot project that has paved away for 24-hour licensing in Montreal. For 26-hours nonstop, the [event](#) comprised of two days of indoor and outdoor cultural nightlife programming, catering to both a public of early risers and night owls.

I particularly remember meeting my colleague, co-founder and General Director of MTL 24/24 Mathieu Grondin, during the day party, after a well-deserved nap and shower since he had manned the event all through the night.

I had only arrived at 9h30 AM and it was a joyful occasion to witness an indoor and outdoor event that catered to both our schedules and preferences.

The party was a huge success. It also opened the door for [18 other venues to remain open for 24 hours](#) for this year's edition of Nuit Blanche. And this year, NON STOP is pushing the

envelope even further, offering Montrealers and visiting guests a continuous, 36-hour event, where diversified, cultural programming and performances highlight artists from the local and international nightlife culture. NON STOP is proof that creating space for cultural programming, day and night contributes positively to the built environment. Even in Montreal, it's increasingly difficult to sustain cultural spaces, indoors and outdoors, since noise bylaws and less-than-tolerant neighbours continue to push venues and programs to the far edges of the city, which is not serviced by collective transit or strategically centralized. This is why, within three years MTL 24/24 aims to create a permanent place called "*Mairie de la nuit*" that would serve as a broadcast and culture centre, museum and a school for night studies. Inspired by spaces like PIP and Holzmarkt for bringing together music, dance, gastronomy, art galleries, courses, workshops and even artist studios or residencies in one place to express local talent in a multidisciplinary way, a built environment like this allows for 24 hour operations, offering a variety of activities for different audiences any time that suits them.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:



<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/4/folders/1RG3s45cJxl7O75v8hEONqjigIbGB5Xpl>

Sylvia McAdam

Collaborator

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

In my own experience, a built environment respects and incorporates Indigenous knowledge systems as well as Indigenous Sovereignty. Indigenous Peoples have long experienced 'erasure' within the brutal colonial systems and still do. For this collaboration, it offers and creates space for Indigenous voices to be heard and woven into the fabric of architecture through the dialogue with the schools of architecture on a regional and national level. A positive experience of quality in built environment must take seriously the impact architecture has on the climate crisis and take solemn consideration and action to be part of mitigating and stopping its continuation.

In Canada and/or in my own community, here is a concrete example of one of my positive experiences of quality:

The conversations have been unique in terms of sharing how Indigenous Peoples move on their own lands. Incorporating Indigenous knowledge means giving space to share that nêhiyawak share the lands and waters with the "little people" that we call memekwesewak; in sharing this knowledge we understand that nêhiyaw laws guide and instruct how to give respect and gratitude for creation even those of the spiritual and unseen nature. The cosmology and creation is incorporated in the quality of architecture, changing and guiding conversations on how to mitigate architectures footprint on the lands, waters and resources of the environment.

Here is an image or a link to the location above I consider to be an example of quality in the built environment:

I learnt that materials such as mushrooms can be grown and used for building shelters as well as sealants to keep the houses warm. It is a dream and hope to incorporate alternative biodegradable materials to mitigate the destruction of the environment and climate. It was an amazing experience to see the work that architecture students are exploring. It expanded my ideas of what materials can be used.



Walter Kahpeechoose

In my own words, here is what a positive experience of quality in the built environment should offer:

My positive living experiences is learning my culture from elders as well as living off the land and learning to survive, even trying to learning my mother tongue Nehiyaw, it has been quite a journey having to keep a positive mindset despite living in a reservation where there's not really much to do unless its planned culturally or scheduled in the future for people to come together. I'd like to see more housing for people in their own homes, even living off the grid, and having sustainable housing and power such as solar, wind, and hydro etc. I can see the positive impact it would have on the community in my home of Big River First Nation.

Ékosi (that's all)
Thank you.

