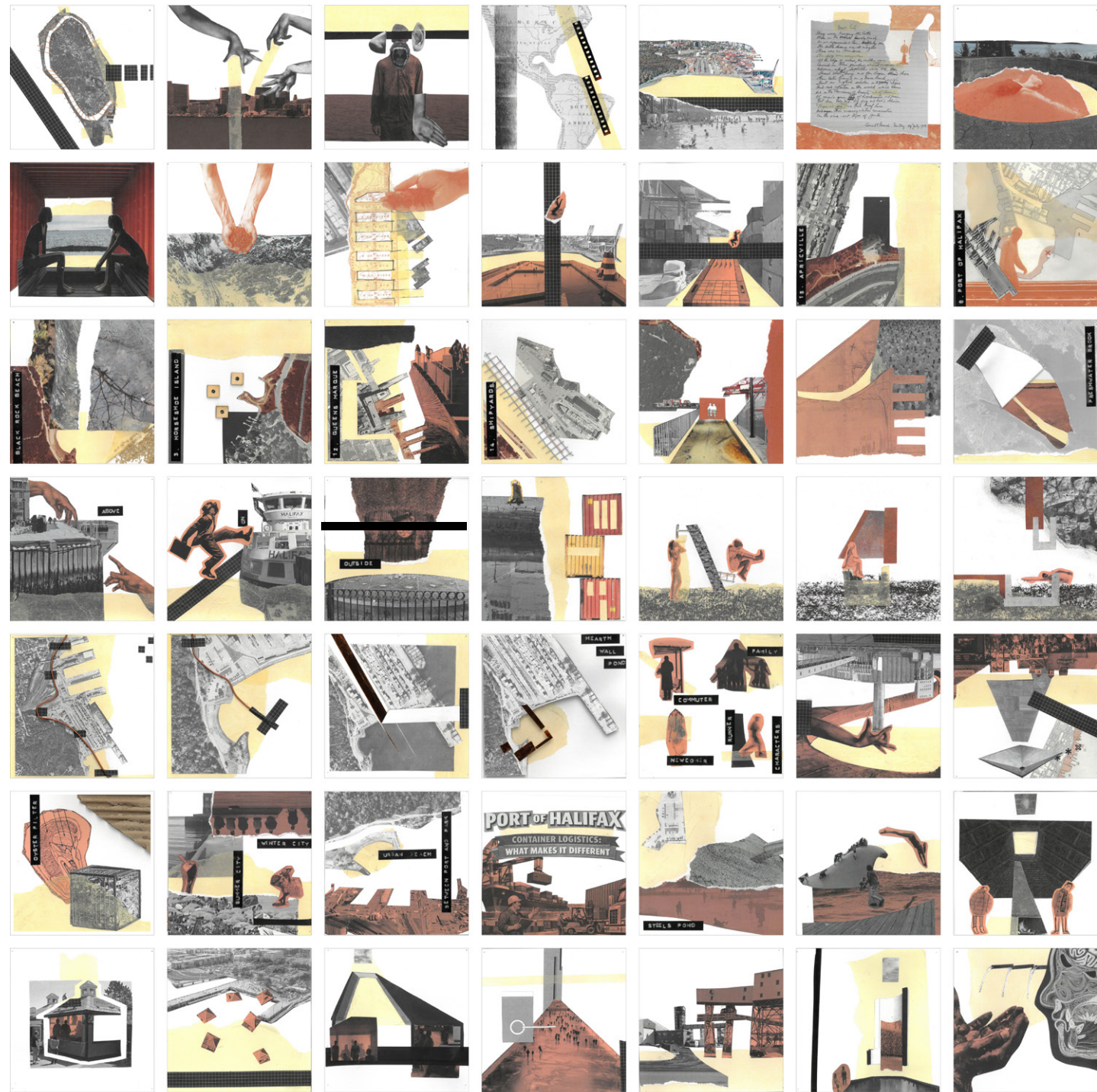


The Water Edge as Thermal Commons:
A Network of Bathing Infrastructure for Halifax

THESIS PORTFOLIO

APRIL 2026



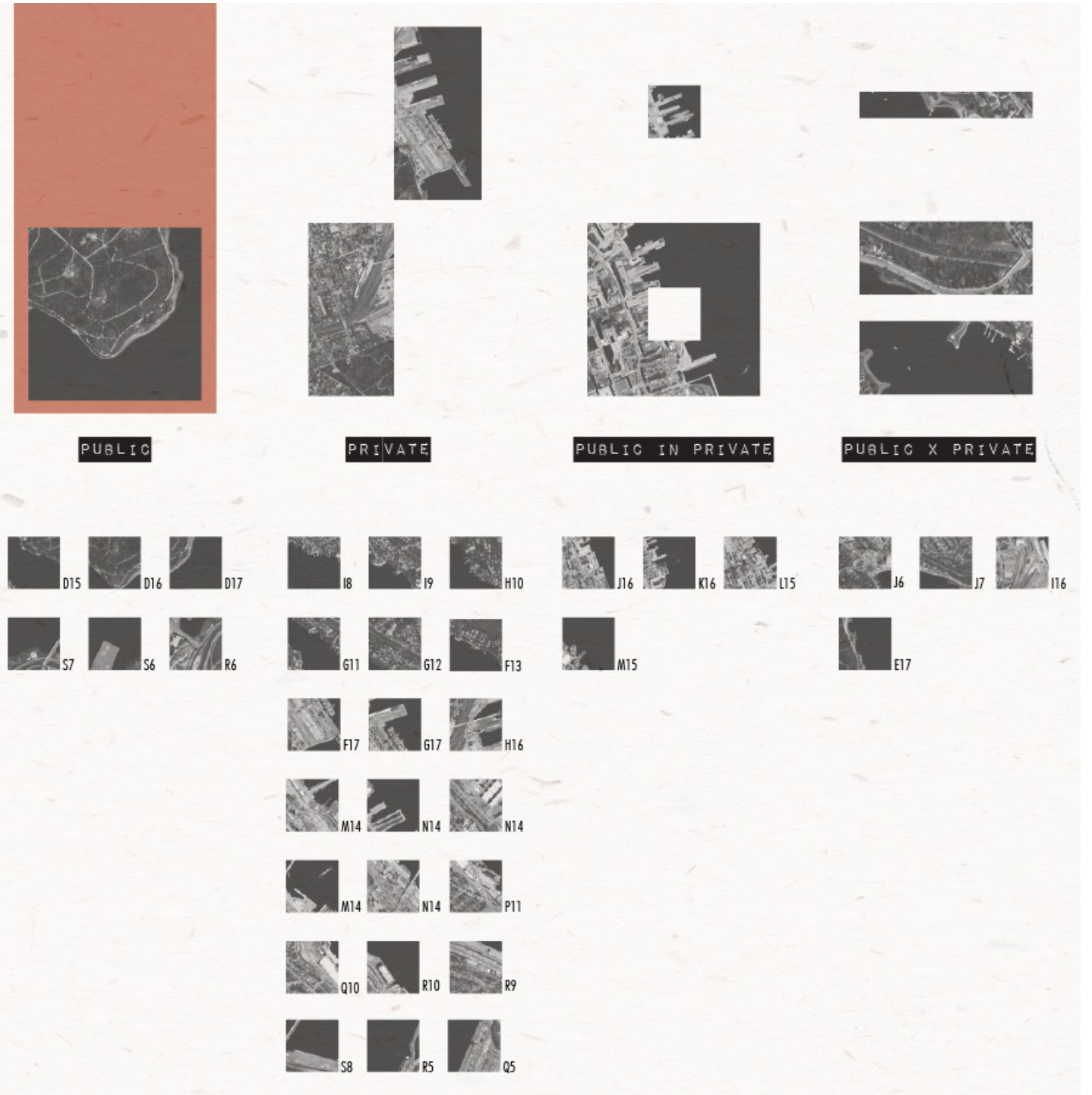
ABSTRACT

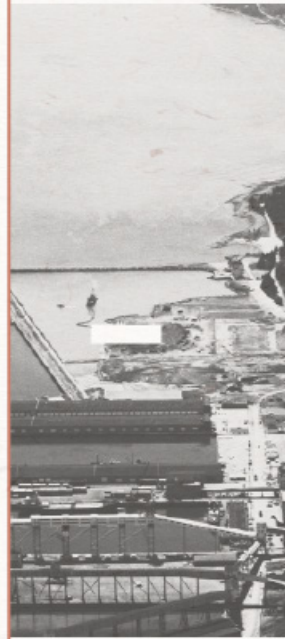
The commodification of water in urban development has reduced our relationship with this element into a predominantly visual experience, weakening embodied engagement and social affordances. In response, this research uses Halifax as a prototype to explore the concept of dispersed commons: a network of public bathing programs conceived as nodes of social infrastructure and anchored by a neglected urban beach. To challenge this sensorial detachment, the project positions temperature as a primary medium of architectural investigation. In a country defined by long winters and increasingly hot summers, seasonal extremes become an opportunity to re-engage the body with water through thermal enjoyment. The principles of collage operate as a generative method, enabling the reinterpretation of program and the speculative reassembly of fragmented site conditions. Ultimately, the thesis proposes a design framework for reclaiming the edge, reframing the collective perception towards urban waters, and collaging city and ocean back together.

THE QUESTION

How can architecture transform, through a network of thermal enjoyment, the urban water interface in cities like Halifax?

ERASURE OF BATHING INFRASTRUCTURE





UNFRIENDLY WATERS

SOCIAL WATERS

INDUSTRIAL WATERS

STIGMATIZED WATERS

1940'S

1960'S

1970'S

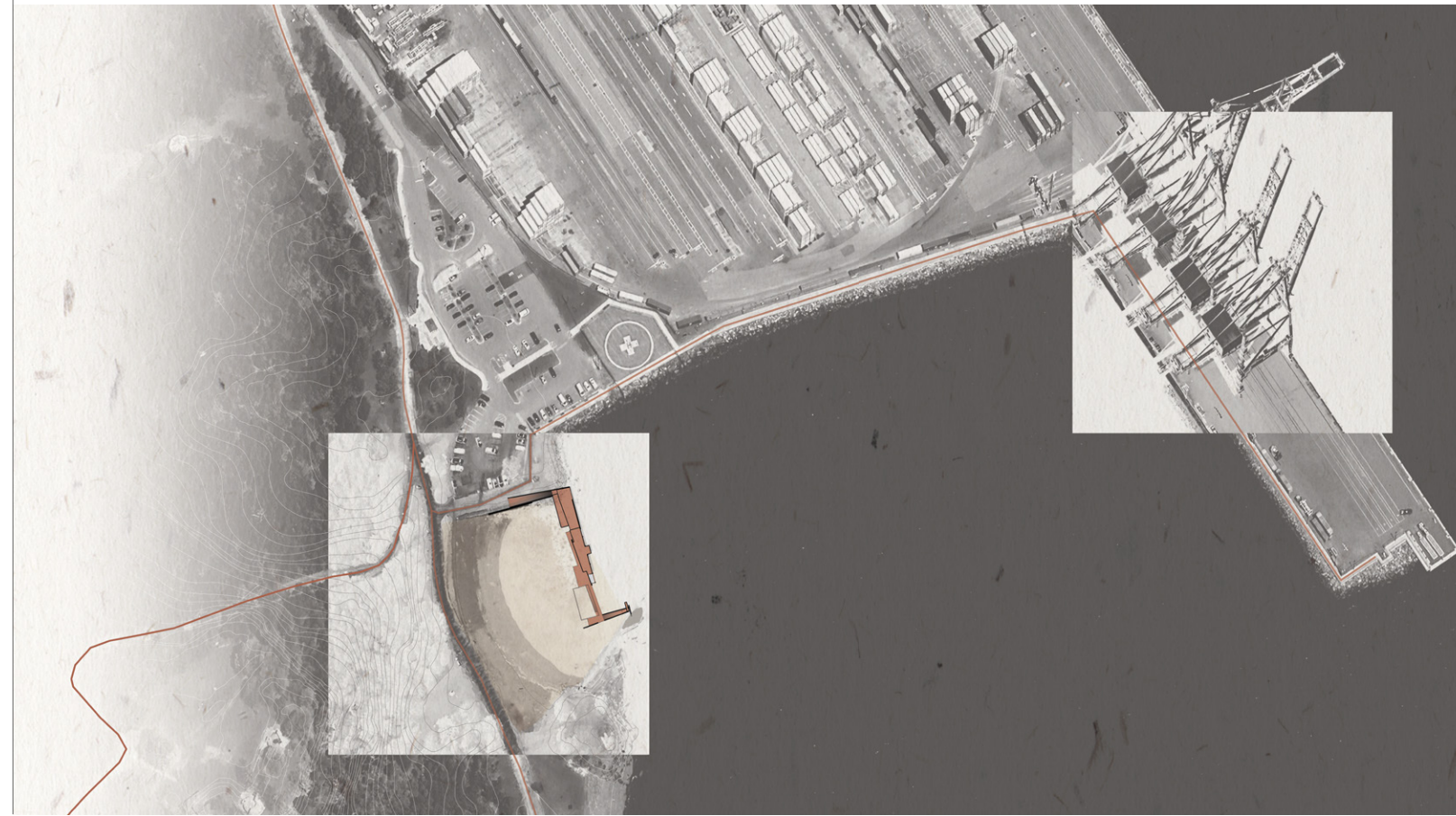
1990'S



2026

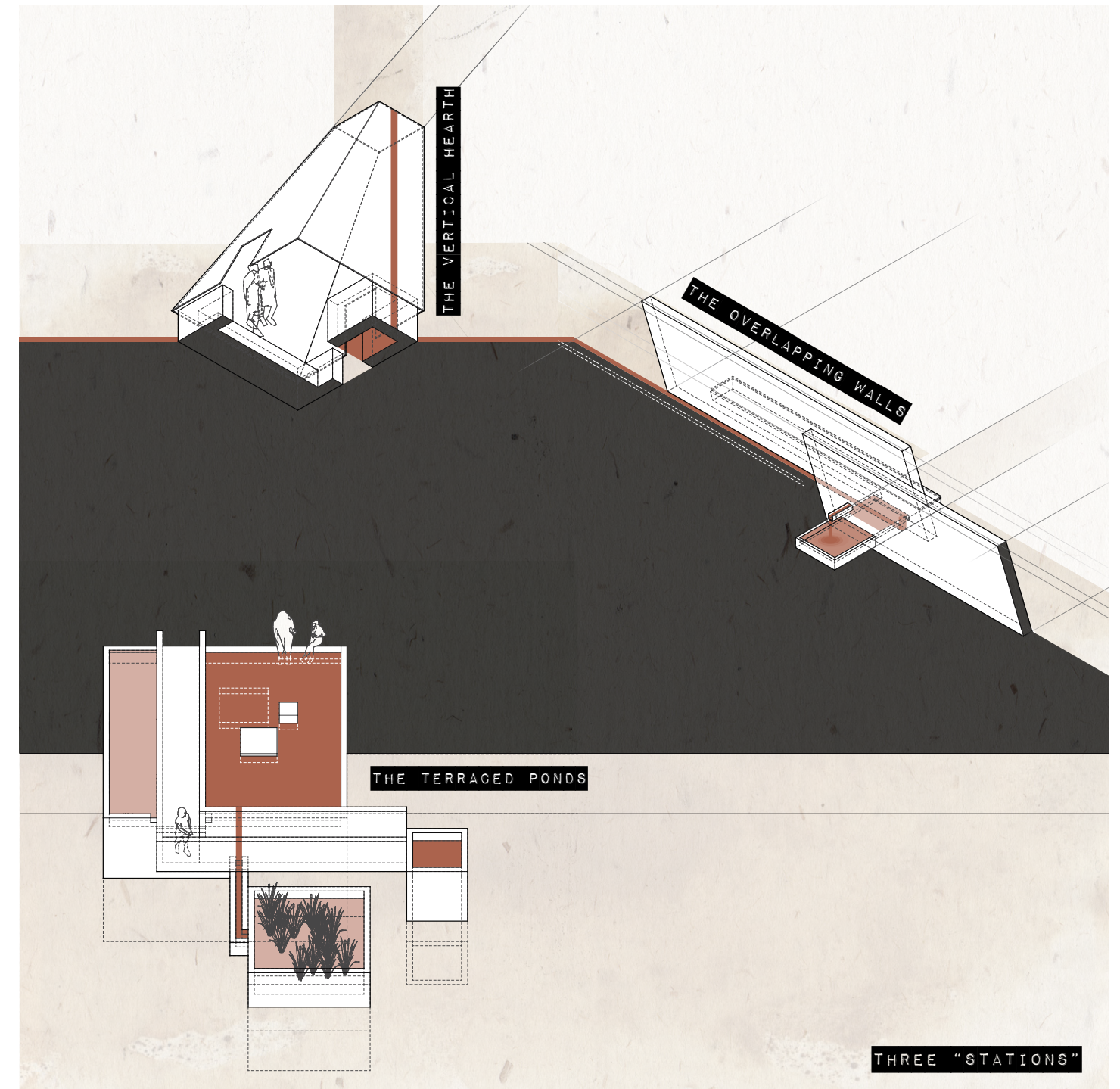
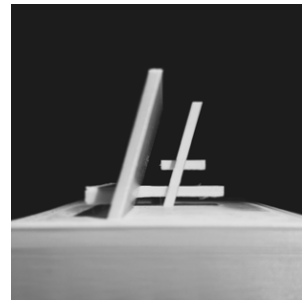
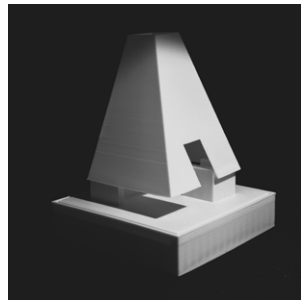
SITE

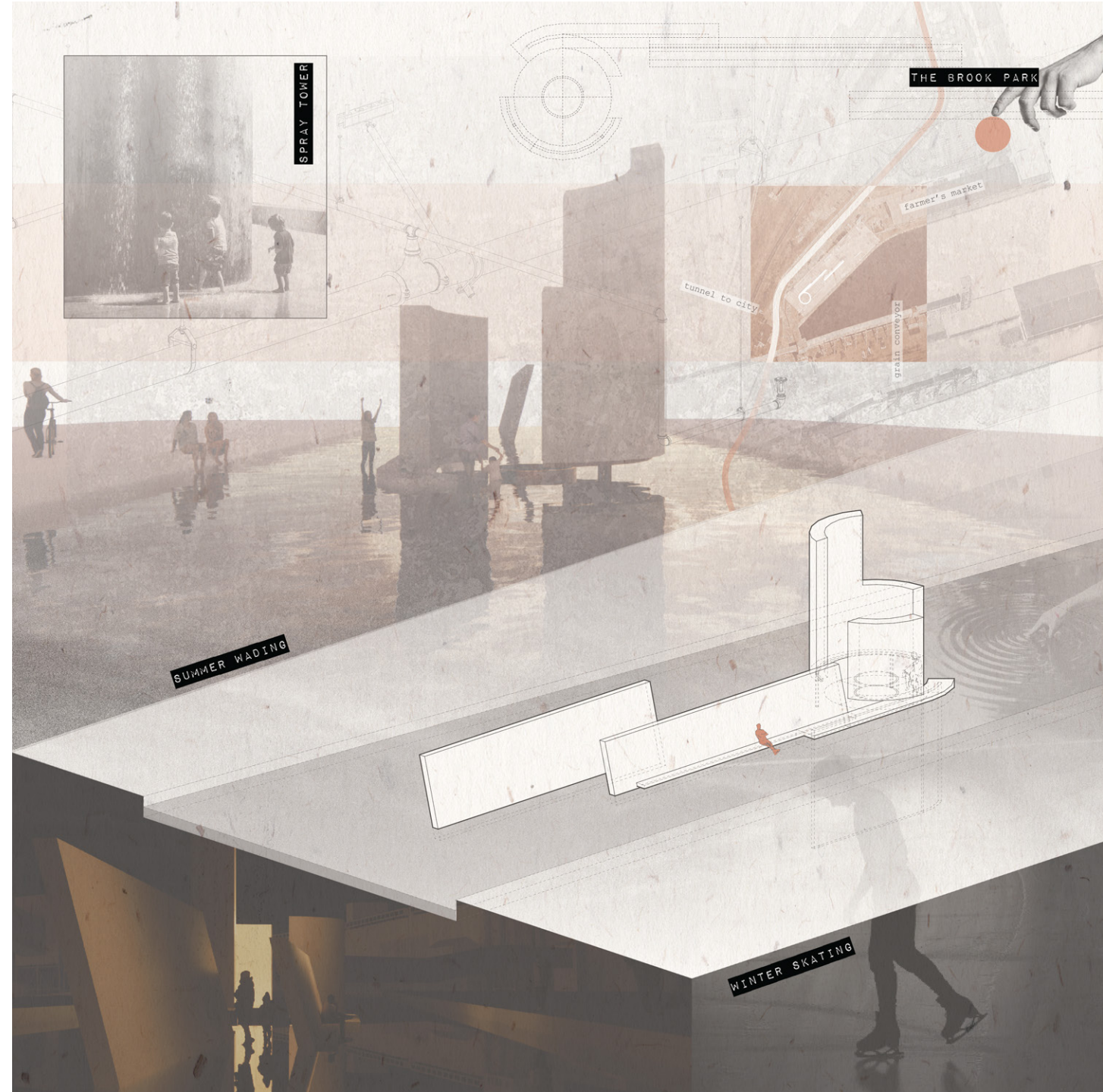
Halifax is used as a test city because it is a prime example of the fragmentation of water access. Despite gaps in ocean-based recreation, Point Pleasant Park; specifically the space between Black Rock Beach and the South End Container Terminal; is used as a prototype site to demonstrate the potential of the program.



METHODS

The thesis reframes bathing as a network of social infrastructure, distributing stations along Halifax's waterfront to support shared rituals, sensorial engagement, and collective wellbeing. Through a collage-based design method and three urban interventions, it explores how dismantling and collaging bathhouse elements can reconnect people to the ocean.

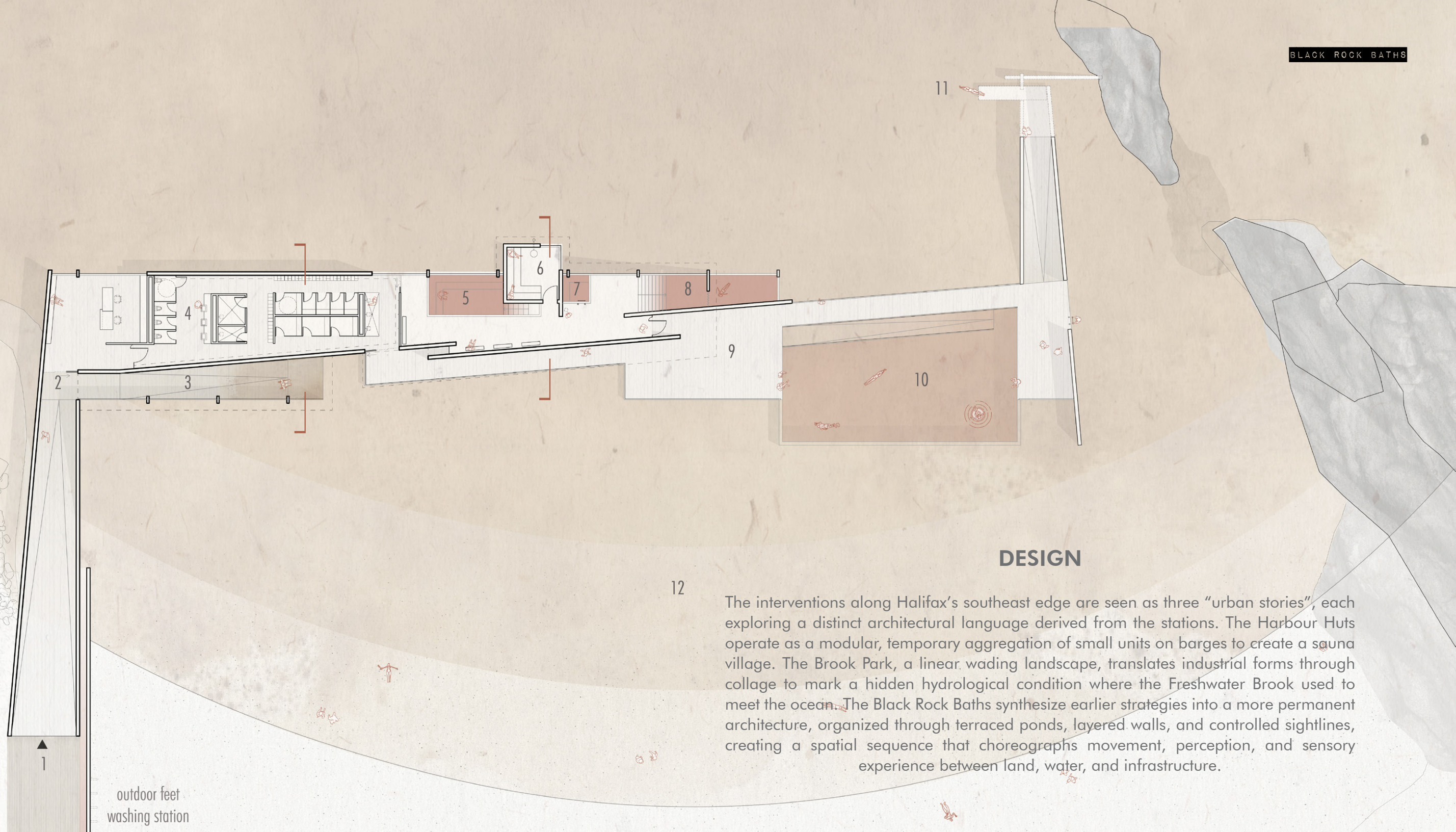




- 1 arrival
- 2 entrance
- 3 tidal ramp
- 4 changing/wc
- 5 hot bath
- 6 sauna
- 7 plunge
- 8 soak pool
- 9 exterior deck
- 10 sea pool
- 11 diving tower
- 12 new saltwater lido

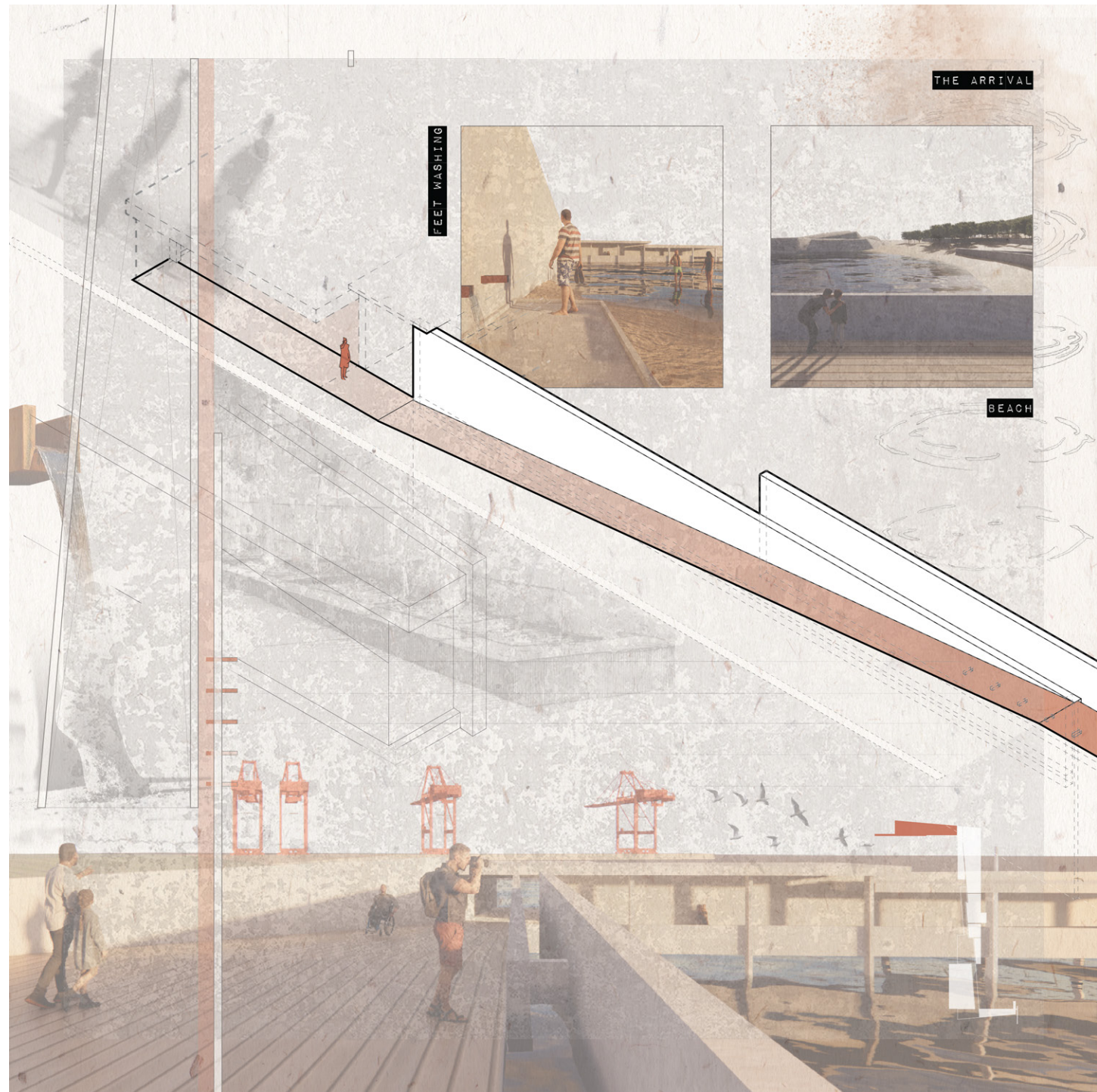
existing parking lot

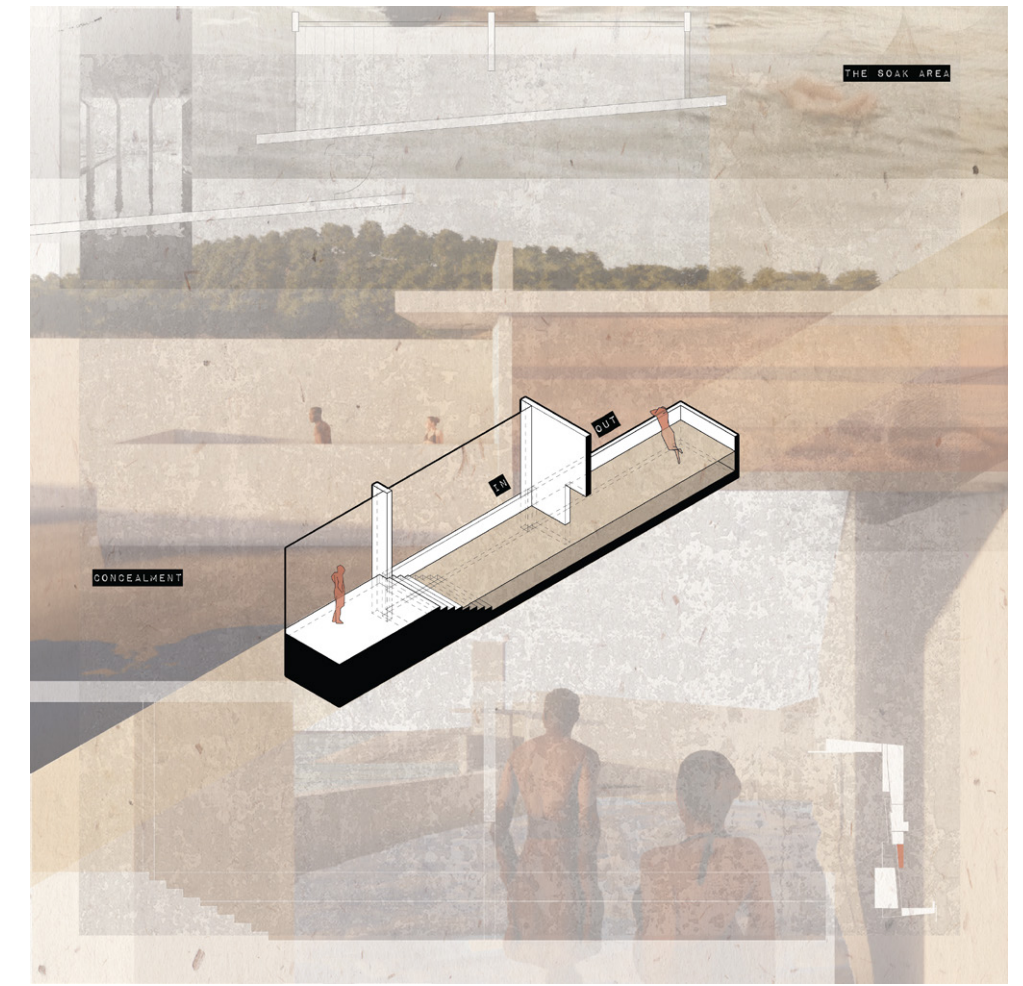
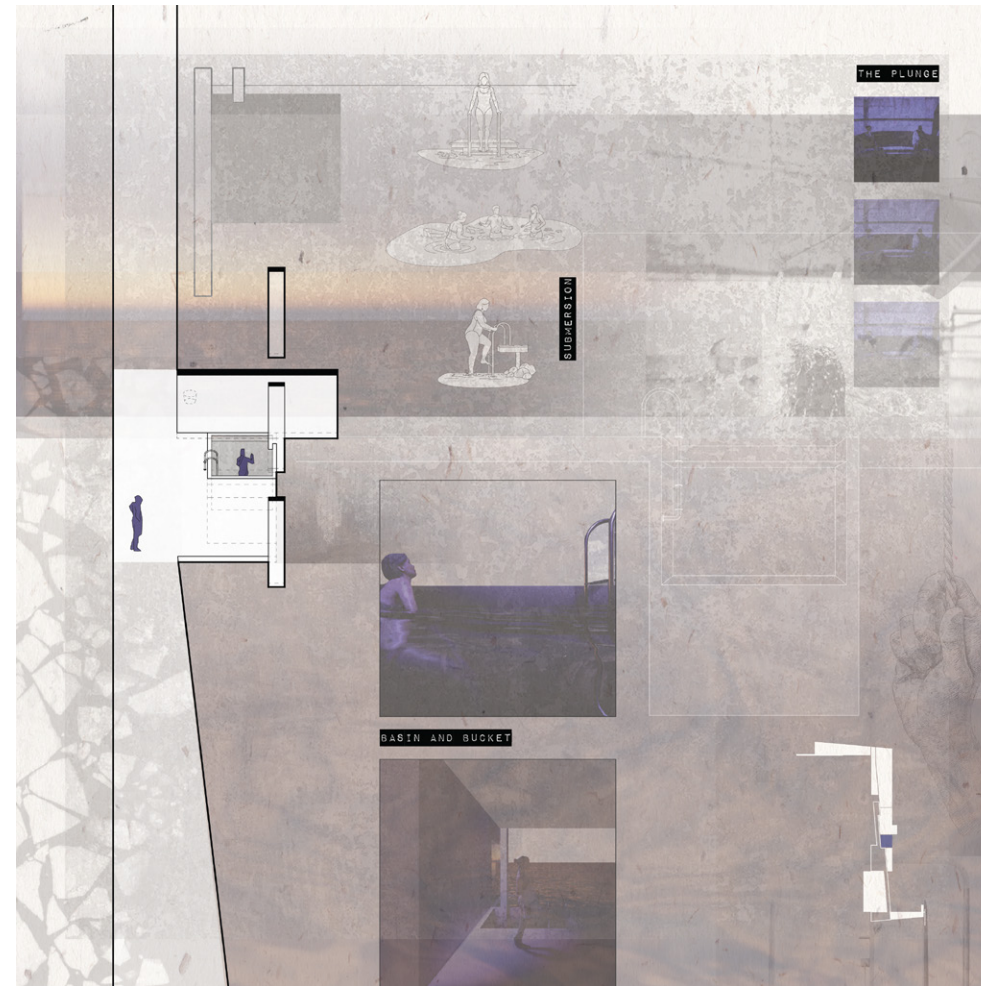
outdoor feet washing station



DESIGN

The interventions along Halifax's southeast edge are seen as three "urban stories", each exploring a distinct architectural language derived from the stations. The Harbour Huts operate as a modular, temporary aggregation of small units on barges to create a sauna village. The Brook Park, a linear wading landscape, translates industrial forms through collage to mark a hidden hydrological condition where the Freshwater Brook used to meet the ocean. The Black Rock Baths synthesize earlier strategies into a more permanent architecture, organized through terraced ponds, layered walls, and controlled sightlines, creating a spatial sequence that choreographs movement, perception, and sensory experience between land, water, and infrastructure.





CONCLUSION

Ultimately, the intention here is not to propose a bathhouse in the traditional sense, but rather about creating thermal encounters across the city's edge. Such conditions frame the water itself as a shared commons and the term "thermal" in the title of this thesis refers to the temperatures related to program but also the opportunities of seasonal variation. Such conditions, translated through the programs of public bathing, not only restore the possibility of physical proximity to the water but also the joy of being immersed in and constantly awed by the ocean.

“...because the ocean’s motor never wore out, we knew we were in the presence of something special. (Goyette 2013, Poem Twenty-Three)