

*The Office: A Portable Amenity Kiosk for Female Outdoor Sex Workers*

by

Robert Wise  
Bachelor of Fine Arts (Hon.), University of Victoria, 1990

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts  
in the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies



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**Supervisory Committee**

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**Supervisor**

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## **Abstract**

This report describes the evolution of a prototype portable amenity kiosk to be used by female outdoor sex workers. Following recommendations by Benoit and Millar (2001 pg. 96), I have worked collaboratively with Prostitutes Empowerment, Education and Resource Society (PEERS) to find solutions to two serious problems affecting the outdoor sex trade:

1. The lack of safety, security and well being for on-street sex workers;
2. The persistent negative perception of sex workers by the public, linked to depression and low self-worth.

Through small focus groups with sex workers held at PEERS, interviews with social service providers and deep phenomenological immersion in the community, this research has attempted to elicit a strategy for making life on the street safer and better. Central to this thesis is the idea of a portable kiosk that would facilitate a cooperative, rather than territorial model of soliciting.

This kiosk or *Office* idea was introduced at the outset of the meetings with sex trade workers. The concept was presented as a way to improve safety, self-worth, sense of

place and level power relations between sex trade workers and their clients. The focus groups revealed that the participants were unanimously in favour of this cooperative or team based model and were forthcoming with design suggestions. The final design that emerged was a small, well-lit shelter with seating for three, safe storage for valuables, and a small toilet. The kiosk will be a stand-alone base for a self-selected, non-hierarchical group of five women per shift. It will be serviced and resituated in low impact areas every two weeks, freeing any given location from becoming a permanent host.

This report explains my rationale for the project, outlines some of the preconditions that can lead to the deplorable experience of working on the street and the often repeated cycle of the “whore stigma,” resulting in sex workers being “sequestered” in the most desolate and dangerous parts of town. It argues that the sculptural design of the kiosk and its concomitant referential associations will help mitigate these conditions.

Soliciting is illegal, and the issues of abetting this activity in relation to the police, city officials, local business, and the community at large are discussed. Finally, the obdurate physical presence of the kiosk as material discourse is the culmination of the findings of this research project although it still poses many questions. The stage is now set for field testing by PEERS, public discussion and introduction to the wider community.

## Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee .....	ii
Abstract .....	iii
Table of Contents .....	v
List of Plates .....	vi
Acknowledgments .....	viii
Chapter 1: My Story: Why Build A Kiosk? .....	1
Chapter 2: The Victoria Context – What are the issues? .....	11
Chapter 3: The Research Methodology .....	14
Chapter 4: Introduction - <i>The Office</i> .....	18
Chapter 5: Psycho-symbolic Referents for the Sculptural Form: Or Why should a Kiosk Be a Duck? .....	26
Chapter 6: Plotting and Planning – <i>massaging a tacit approval</i> .....	42
Chapter 7: <i>The Spleen</i> : Urban Planning Antecedents .....	45
Chapter 8: Discussion and Final Thoughts .....	47
Bibliography .....	50
Appendix 1: Explanatory Note of Research .....	52
Appendix 2: Verbal Consent Form to Participate in Research .....	53
Appendix 3: Tri-Council Policy Statement on the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans .....	56
Appendix 4: Design and Construction of <i>The Office</i> .....	72

**List of Plates**

Plate 1: “Convenience Apparatus” .....	4
Plate 2: “Convenience Apparatus” Deployed.....	5
Plate 3: “The Co-opularium” .....	8
Plate 4: The “A&W Model” .....	9
Plate 5: The Office.....	10
Plate 6: Recruitment Poster.....	15
Plate 7: Washroom & Flowers.....	27
Plate 8: The Duck.....	29
Plate 9: Googie Style.....	31
Plate: 10 Endless House Project.....	33
Plate 11: Coco Taxis.....	35
Plate 12: Dancing Building.....	38

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This research would not be possible without the support of key agencies in the community. I am pleased to say that the following people stood by me, despite the controversial nature of the subject:

Chris Leishner, Executive Director – Prostitutes Empowerment and Education Resource Society (PEERS);

Jody Paterson, Former Director – PEERS;

Les Sylven, Detective Inspector – Victoria Police Department;

Dean Fortin, Executive Director – Burnside Gorge Community Association and Councillor – City of Victoria;

Denise Savoie, Member of Parliament for Victoria; and

Wendy Zink, Manager – Social Planning and Housing – City of Victoria

I am also grateful to my supervisors for their interest, guidance and criticism:

Dr. Jutta Gutberlet, Department of Geography – University of Victoria;

Professor Daniel Laskarin, Department of Visual Arts – University of Victoria;  
and

Dr. Helga Hallgrimsdottir, Department of Sociology – University of Victoria

This project also speaks to the importance of belonging to a community. So many friends helped in whatever way they could, without knowledge or contact with the sex trade. *The Office* would not have come into being without the help of David, Al, Phil, Ethan, Grant, Nick, Danny, Bill, Cliff, Dwayne, Dan, Jimmy, Jim, John, Tod and many others who lent a hand without hesitation.

## **Chapter 1: My Story: Why Build A Kiosk?**

There are many stories to be told in this report, and I will begin with my own. I am a practicing sculptor and have been involved with art in the public domain and community issues for over twenty years. My house is located directly above a storefront in a busy community that the City of Victoria likes to refer to as an “industrial area.” At the turn of the century, the “industrial area” was a thriving example of organic mixed-use development. It was home to soda factories, hotels, rooming houses, cafes, boat builders, soap factories, single-family dwellings and two schools. My building was “Dr. Popes Academy for Girls” – one of the few private schools for girls in Victoria. Premier McBride’s daughter was one of the earliest pupils. We have been here for eighteen years and have restored the building from derelict condition to a landmark on the street. This location affords a continuous and intimate view of the street life.

During the past four years the outdoor sex trade has become more visible in our neighbourhood. City Hall has not really responded to complaints from the community, as officials appear to consider the “industrial area,” or Rock Bay as it is known to residents, as one of the least problematic areas for the sex trade to take place. It is often thought that the “stroll” emerges spontaneously in different locations, but “insiders know that sex trade sites are premeditated through negotiations between police, local governments and sometimes, the community” (Anderson, 2005).

My story is subjective so I will tell it as I see it, at the risk of the attendant bias. In 2002, we held a community “charrette” with the aim of developing an up-to-date Official Community Plan (OCP). The meetings were held and the data examined but city planners left the results at the bottom of the pile and no OCP was forthcoming, leaving us in a kind of limbo. With no OCP, the parameters for future development were undefined and the City had a convenient nebulous zone. At about this time, city officials quietly amended the noise bylaws for the Rock Bay area allowing dumpster trucks to start earlier with no supervision by city bylaw officials, making it still harder to live in the area.

By 2004, the sex trade and, worse, the drug trade were in full swing, operating openly twenty-four hours a day. Our newspaper carrier was threatened at this time and now will

only throw the paper over our fence from his moving car, if all is clear. That year my wife witnessed a near fatal stabbing next door while returning from a dog walk! We also had paint thrown on our windows by an injection-drug user living on the other side of our house. During a family birthday dinner we later watched the same man's body being removed by the coroner. Kitty corner from our house under a cantilevered roof, on what could be an attractive modernist building, is a secluded concrete stairway. Three or four drug dealers plied their trade there with impunity, while the building's owner, separated only by a window and closed Venetian blinds, was too intimidated to deal with them. Meanwhile, the recessed doorway of our storefront was becoming a toilet and shooting gallery at night. We had all had enough! That a once thriving community could become so dangerous and go downhill that fast was a shock to all of us. That the downtown business lobby and city officials could do this to us was a slap in the face.

We formed our own group to try to tackle the problems in our neighbourhood. First we considered hiring security forces to drive the problem away, but later realized it would only move the issues elsewhere. Finally, we settled on practicing environmental design. Following the tenets of Oscar Newman's "Theory of Defensible Space" (Gifford, 1987), we worked at increasing our sense of ownership. We eliminated spaces that looked uncared for or lacked vigilance. Whether our fears were real or imagined, we felt that our territory was being invaded. We gated off alcoves where people would lurk and created effective psychological barriers, such as a three-foot high gate over our store front that anybody could step over. With increased lighting, greater surveillability and other measures, the hard-core street dealers moved away from the neighbourhood.

Although the sex trade has continued in the area, and even continues to grow, the process of amending the physical environment spurred a change in my attitude. The turning point for me was witnessing a young woman (perhaps as young as 18) squat on the sidewalk to relieve herself in broad daylight. Witnessing changes such as that made my hostility gradually give way to compassion and sparked the idea for this project.

As a sculptor I have had some experience with unsanctioned street interventions. Every artist knows the problematic of working within the "white cube," so I was naturally drawn to the honesty of the street. The ontology of an art object on the street

must be earned in competition with signage and the hustle and bustle, while it is automatically conferred with arthood in the gallery.

Some few years prior to this project my first attempt at intervention in the urban landscape of Rock Bay was a response to observed behaviour at the fishing reel factory across the street. Four or five people would come out to the unsheltered sidewalk up to ten times per day, rain or shine, to smoke. I responded by developing “convenience apparatus,” a device that clamped onto a street sign or parking meter and looked like a sleeping bat (pl.1). When the handle was grasped, the device came forth, deploying an umbrella and proffering an ashtray and drink holder (pl. 2). I was shocked to observe that not a single pedestrian could walk by without doing a double-take. I was starting to understand the power of art on the street.

Plate 1: "Convenience Apparatus"



Plate 2: "Convenience Apparatus" Deployed



As we were trying to improve our neighbourhood, we removed graffiti. When we pressed BC Hydro to be a good corporate citizen and do the same they refused to clean their transformer boxes. In fact, when I offered to clean the boxes for them, they threatened to sue me. This launched another intervention in the local environment. I had some special paint formulated and spent an entire day masking off warning labels and technical information, before repainting it a bright mint green. Within a few days, three men in suits with clipboards were milling about and scratching their heads. I was operating from the standpoint of a stakeholder trying to beautify the neighbourhood.

My first response to help the sex trade and mitigate some of its impacts upon the neighbourhood was to design a large, three-story, integrated facility that would function as a co-op brothel (ca. 2005). There would be a Tim Horton's franchise, an open-air interior space and the convenience of drive-in privacy stalls in the underground parkade (see pl. 3). Social service offices, daycare, dormitory and apartment living and even a rooftop vegetable garden would complete the picture. Over a period of four months this idea went from being viewed as ludicrous to being taken seriously by our Member of Parliament, Denise Savoie. It was clear, however, that for this vision to become any more than a thought experiment, laws would have to be changed and a lot of money raised – tasks which seemed impossible.

My next attempt to help the sex trade was the development of the "A&W" model (see pl. 4), a simple open structure with a roof and surface parking around the perimeter. This concept was borrowed from the drive-in burger joints with car-hop service, still popular in some quarters. A similar model had been tried in Holland and is documented in a film *De Zone*. The camera shows the isolated outdoor locations where prostitutes gratify their clients (van Lieshout, 1999). This institutionalized approach met with little success in Holland and still requires the same approvals as the co-op.

Finally I arrived at the idea of the portable *Office* for sex trade workers (see pl. 5). The concept offered many of the benefits of the more grandiose ideas but was benign enough to fly under the radar. Most importantly, being portable exempted it from building codes and the usual litany of bureaucratic impedance.

I was invited to speak at the “Landmark Series on Public Art” at City Hall and I concluded with a brief description of *The Office* project. I was shocked to receive a standing ovation from several hundred audience members, who must have felt that this idea resonated with them at some level. The public endorsement of something that most politicians and officials would avoid like the plague gave me the impetus to see the project through.

Plate 3: "The Co-opularium"

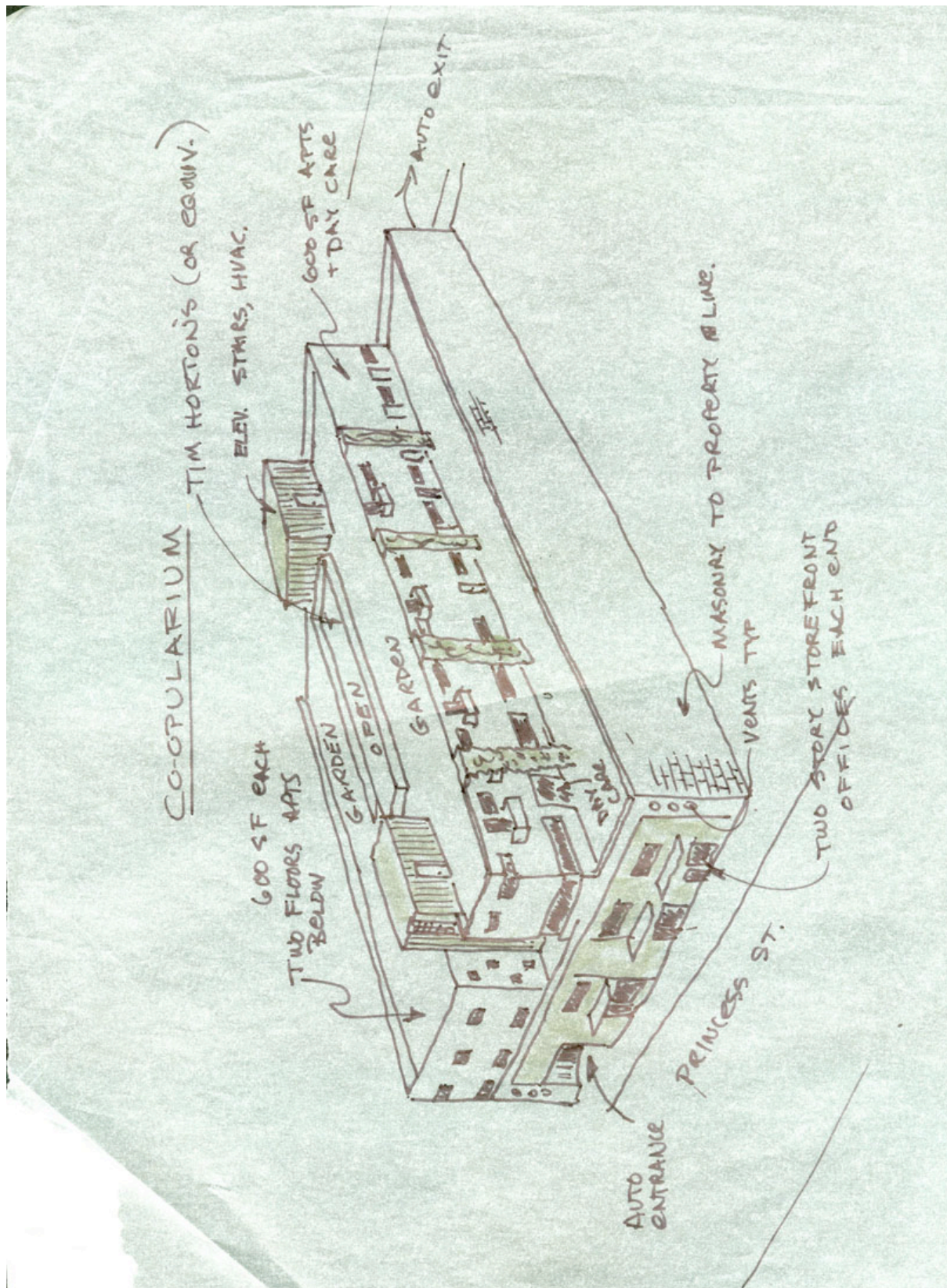
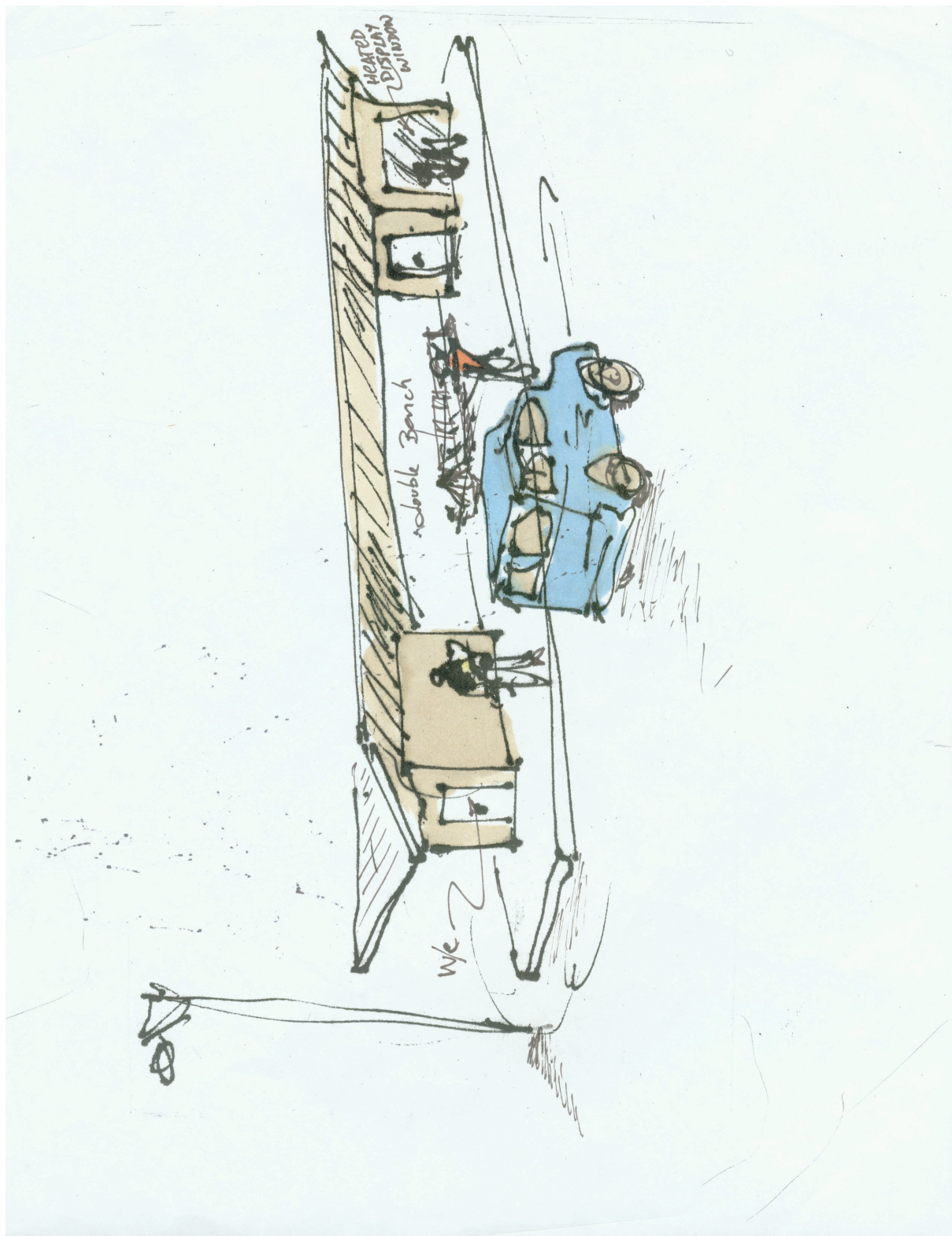
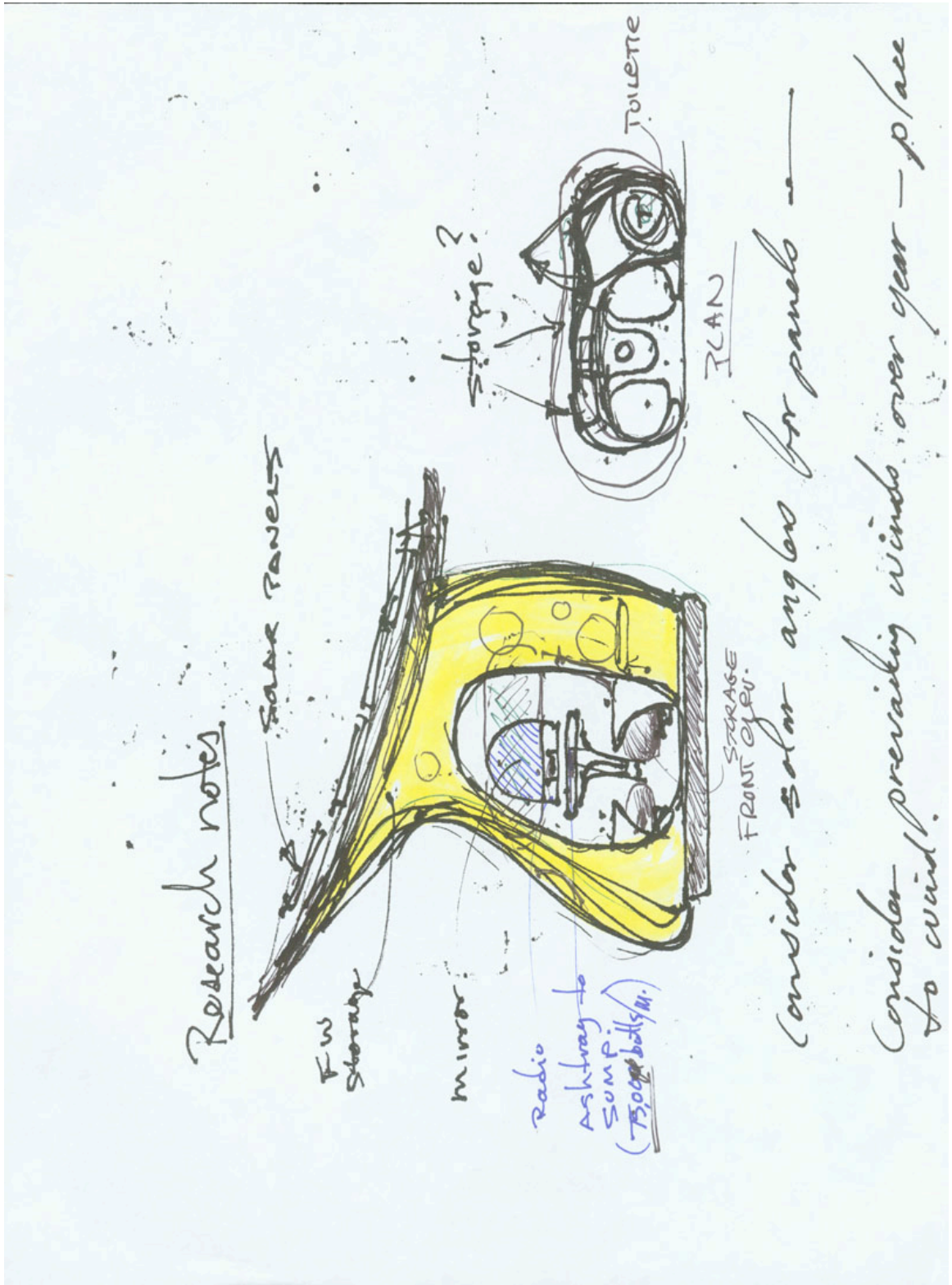


Plate 4: The "A&W Model"





## **Chapter 2: The Victoria Context – What are the issues?**

The migration of outdoor sex trade workers into any given neighbourhood has an immediate and negative effect. Homelessness, addiction, mental health issues and public attitudes are inextricably linked to the problems and need to be addressed in any proposed solutions (Wilkie & Berdahl, 2007 and Anderson, 2005). In Greater Victoria, years of government policy changes have resulted in a crisis of high-needs, high-risk people becoming homeless; deinstitutionalization in the mid-nineties, reduction of affordable housing support by senior government and the lucrative conversion of rental apartments into condominiums have resulted in a huge increase of homelessness. Recent data from the 2007 “Mayor’s Task Force on Breaking the Cycle of Mental Illness, Addictions and Homelessness – A Victoria Model” (MTF 2007) estimate the number of homeless in Victoria at about 1,200 – 1,500, with about half suffering substance abuse disorders and about one third with mental health issues. Data from the last major comprehensive study of Victoria’s sex industry (Benoit & Millar, 2001) based on a respondent-driven sampling technique placed the number of outside sex workers at 90 to 100. This population is difficult to study as the boundaries between on-street and other sex work are very fluid. Members are so marginalized and distrustful as to be almost invisible. PEERS outreach workers have determined that since this last study the number of female outdoor sex trade workers has doubled from 90-100 to 185-200 today.<sup>1</sup> It may be the case that PEERS is becoming more successful at locating workers or that by gaining trust now, more women are approaching them. All this really tells us is that the absolute numbers are elusive but it seems that there is an increase. Of these, approximately sixty five percent (65%) are

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<sup>1</sup> These figures fluctuate seasonally and are much lower in the winter months. Perhaps this explains the discrepancy with PEERS data and the MTF data (P 61).

homeless and most have addiction issues (Dr. M. Kovacs, Victoria Mental Health Centre, Sept. 12, 2007). There are approximately three hundred (300) homeless females in Victoria and about fifty (50) beds dedicated to women that are located at Streetlink, Sandy Merriman House and other sources (Don McTavish, Manager Housing, Cool Aid, Aug. 27, 2007).

Dr. Kovacs, a psychiatrist to PEERS, describes the health of outdoor sex trade workers as follows:

- Most have addiction issues (see MTF p. 78);
- Most were abused during childhood; and
- Bi-polar disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder are common among this group.

In general, he rates their health as very poor. Self report by sex workers to the PEERS outreach surveys estimates rates of Hep-C at about 80% and HIV at about 10%. PEERS operates a mobile outreach van from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm and 8:30 pm to 1:30 am. In addition to providing some comfort and safety for the sex workers, PEERS keeps a meticulous account of demographic data and location trends. PEERS' research indicates that the number of outreach encounters with sex trade workers rose from 406 to 530 per month between August 2005 and August 2007. During the same time period the number of "drug rigs" distributed rose from 937 to 5082 per month, with about one fifth (1/5) returned.

As Chair of the Mayor's Task Force, Charlayne Thornton-Joe argues that "the status quo is not an option" for dealing with the marginalized in Victoria. The report posits a solution virtually identical to the intuitive conclusion already known to PEERS and the

sex workers. They recommend four (4) things to cure the social problems related to homelessness, mental illness, addiction and outdoor sex trade work.

1. Provide permanent affordable housing for all;
2. Provide enough beds for treatment of addiction and mental health with easier access;
3. Provide non-judgmental counseling; and
4. Improve public awareness and attitudes towards the marginalized.

Here is the cruelest irony in this sad account: the MTF (p. 51) estimates that the costs of implementing the aforementioned solution would vary from \$17,500 per annum, per person, to \$47,700 for the most severe cases. However, under the current system, public sector costs are in excess of \$50,000 per person, per annum, without housing or adequate services. The savings by adopting all of the recommendations in the MTF would likely cut the current cost by 60%. Sadly, if past performance is any indicator, the recommendations will probably be ignored or implemented in some lesser degree, hence the introduction of *The Office*. Within the whole spectrum of issues of the population at risk, I am only addressing a tiny problem, but at least it will happen soon. *The Office* will do nothing for the homeless and generally marginalized as it is specifically intended to help female sex workers. It will provide some physical comfort on the street and potentially offer psychological benefits and improved safety.

### Chapter 3: The Research Methodology

#### Recruitment:

Previous studies (Benoit & Millar 2001) have investigated conditions for sex trade workers but have not isolated outdoor workers from their findings. This group represents the least visible and cooperative within the whole spectrum of the sex trade. In order to encourage their participation, I started by placing posters in shop windows, on telephone poles on the stroll and at PEERS (see pl. 6). I did not offer incentive for their participation but daily transportation by taxi to and from PEERS was provided. This strategy proved to be an utter failure. Not one participant arrived by taxi. Because of the advertised times on the poster, I was obliged to be present at PEERS. After three weeks of sitting in the PEERS waiting area, some of the women started to trust me enough to at least be civil. By the fourth week, I had broken the ice and we started a few interviews. At this time, I was able to amend my ethical review protocol and offer a five dollar (\$5.00) honorarium and that was all it took. I had hoped for twenty (20) participants and interviewed twenty-four (24). Further data collection (and collaboration) took place with interviews with social service providers and PEERS outreach statistics; anecdotal information was also obtained during conversations while waiting for a meeting or just being present at PEERS.

Plate 6: Recruitment Poster



# Are You Working On the Street?

## *We need your input.*

We are a small group of researchers from UVic, working with PEERS to try to learn from you what might make your working life better and safer.

We will provide a taxi to PEERS to hear your views. Leaving Rock Bay and Hillside, each Wednesday and Friday at 1:00pm and returning at 3:00pm during the month of August.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Please contact PEERS at (250) 388-5325

## Data Collection:

Data collection consisted of semi-structured open-ended interviews with two to three participants at a time in a PEERS meeting room.<sup>2</sup> The PEERS offices are an ideal research site, as the sex workers feel comfortable there. The interviews revealed the immediate problems and needs on the street. Sample questions for the focus groups included:

- How do you feel about safety on the street?
- How is territory established or is it variable?
- How are territory conflicts resolved?
- Could you describe working the street as feeling “placeless”?
- Can you talk about the community on the street, i.e., sex workers, bidders, dealers, business people, homeless people, etc.?
- What can you say about relying on a cell phone for safety?
- How is your health and well-being affected by working outside?

A secondary inquiry ranked potential office sites in low impact areas. Low impact was defined to the participants as being at least two blocks away from residential use and with safe traffic laybys. At the end, each participant was given a summary of the research goals and contract information (see Appendix 1: Explanatory Note of Research). Interviews were tape recorded and verbal consent was obtained (See Appendix 2: Verbal Consent Form to Participate in Research). It was my opinion that a population oppressed and abused by many would prefer to remain anonymous, so no individual names are used in the study. An information letter was read aloud and distributed to all participants (N=24). The principal rationale for verbal consent, however, was functional illiteracy.<sup>3</sup>

Outdoor sex trade workers are highly stigmatized by media narratives and public stereotypes, as well as debilitating self-stigma. I believe that displaying illiteracy, even to each other, is one more indignity that can be avoided. During the interviews, every effort

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<sup>2</sup> Five interviews took place at PEERS offices from Aug. 1 to Sept. 7, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> A 1997 study (Southam) revealed that 17% of B.C. adults had level 1 literacy skills (difficulty reading any printed matter).

was taken to preserve anonymity and confidentiality. Only first names were used for the verbal consent; however, there are inherent limitations. The participants shared narratives of lived experience and personal thoughts within the small (2 to 4) focus groups. The sample population is small enough that most members are known to each other and information is shared. Keeping these limitations in mind, none of the responses in this report can be associated with individual participants.

A one-sixth scale maquette was present during all interviews, as well as preliminary engineering plans and elevations. The model proved to be engaging and useful and went a long way to concretize the conceptual aspects of the project.

I am now in an unusual position, having been gradually accepted at PEERS and with this project being well known, I no longer have objective distance or anonymity. Greenwood and Levin (Carroll, 2004, p. 285) discuss the dynamic between outsiders and insiders. Outsiders can get things started, but insiders possess the real knowledge.

I was walking down my street the other day when a woman on the corner said, "Hey, I saw you on TV last week in jail. What a great idea." We were approached by a man with knife scars all over his face, and she introduced me to him as the "kiosk guy." Without compunction, she said, "This is my dealer, he just got out yesterday." Perhaps I am becoming an insider.

## Chapter 4: Introduction - *The Office*

The name *The Office* reinforces the attitude that the kiosk is a place to conduct business. The concept also displaces the idea that sex work is an identity category by putting emphasis on work. The kiosk provides what any of us expect to find in our own office – comfortable seating across a table, storage, both task and ambient lighting, a toilet nearby and even advertising for the service.

One encouraging result of the interviews is that one hundred percent of the participants were in favour of trying to work cooperatively from *The Office*. If they had rejected it, this project would have ended with the interviews. I encouraged them to think of it as their own and try to improve on the ideas presented by the maquette. The following points were recurrent themes in the interviews, and I will suggest illustrations of how *The Office* will help mitigate some of the effects. The interviews exposed a lot about the women themselves and the lives they are living. Their personal stories are interspersed in this section in order to reveal more about their lives and the conditions of their work on the street.<sup>4</sup>

### Summary of Interviews

#### Violence

All participants felt that the stroll was getting progressively more dangerous. They indicated that approximately one third of car dates resulted in violence. This figure is corroborated by PEERS outreach workers who suggest that it might even be a bit low. Most workers have experienced enacted stigma (i.e., direct discrimination and rejection by others) in the form of insults or objects (eggs, pennies, etc.) hurled at them from passing cars. I have personally cleaned eggs from my storefront and until this project, had no idea why they were there. Territorial disputes often end in violent altercations. A cadre of “Bully Girls” will commandeer the best corners through physical intimidation. I once

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<sup>4</sup> The names used are fictitious.

witnessed a large woman punch a small woman in the face, knocking her off her feet to the concrete sidewalk. As I was dialing 911, the small woman crawled to her feet only to be knocked down again. After what seemed like too long I called 911 again and the same dispatcher informed me “those hookers are always slapping each other around” (fortunately those comments were recorded). When I queried some “Bully Girls” about their behaviour, they countered that they were merely trying to maintain an equitable price structure and ultimately were helping the industry.

***Sandra:***

*Sandra was born with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. She endured an unimaginably tough childhood, addictions, arrests and by age 23 had four children. She has been unable to fit in with the scant housing options available in Victoria, so since age 16, she has lived on the street. Ironically Sandra is known as a “bully girl” ostensibly trying to maintain equitable pricing for sexual services. The sad fact is that she can barely manage to keep her own life from spiraling out of control. What kind of living arrangement could accommodate Sandra’s needs?*

Everyone on the street is armed one way or another – most carry knives. On my street the city has a policy of not maintaining some boulevards, which they argue are untaxed and therefore the responsibility of the nearest landowner. The upshot for people involved in violence on the street is that under any bush or shrub you can find a length of pipe, a piece of re-bar, or a length of two-by-four.

Participants have mentioned that some of their colleagues will lift a client’s wallet while on a date, with the result that some clients are now carrying handguns. Two of my participants reported minor bullet wounds from shots fired from a passing car.

One serious operational problem that has not been resolved is the “bar crowd.” Generally between 2:00 a.m. and 3:00 a.m. groups of intoxicated males are making their way home from the clubs. During this time most female sex workers just fade into the shadows to avoid confrontations. In March of this year at 2:30 a.m., a group of males walked down our street kicking in plate glass windows on several storefronts (including mine). An anonymous sex worker told me the following morning that when she asked them why they were smashing windows, they replied, “just for the fun of it.” Consultation with Detective Inspector Les Sylven of the Victoria police confirmed that they would provide covert surveillance of the kiosk during the field trials.

**Shelly:**

*I had known her for some time, she had always respectfully avoided working in front of my house. It was raining, she was soaked, and had been up all night working. I invited her for coffee at Romeo's but she had to decline. They had once accused her of smoking crack in the washroom and banned her. We went to my house instead. She told me that her apartment had been rezoned for condos and she was now living in a motel paying by the week. She had to get rid of her cat. I asked about the bruises on her face and the broken tooth. The bruises were caused after the police forced her to move from her usual corner and she was beaten in a territorial dispute. The broken tooth was from a bad trick – she knew better but had no choice. As it happened, he drove off with her purse so she had no ID and no BC Health card. The motel was costing her more but, without ID, references or even a telephone she couldn't find better accommodation. Between the high cost of rent and a small maintenance crack habit, there wasn't much money for food and other necessities. She had been cut off social assistance years ago. I suggested that she go to PEERS, but she said she didn't have the \$20.00 for cab fare and had no money anyway. She said she couldn't go to the Mustard Seed kitchen because her only other clothes were drying on her electric heater and she was too embarrassed to go like this.*

*By pressing some of the institutions, we were able to have some emergency dental care provided and a temporary advance from social assistance to give her some breathing room. With her ID restored and the immediate problems resolved, life didn't seem so daunting. She was able to move into a friend's apartment and share the rent if she stayed clean. Now her monthly costs were halved, she did not have to work so hard and she could be more selective about whom she dated. She was able to get several new outfits at the "Village" and the laundromat was only a few blocks away. Ain't life grand.*

**Placelessness**

Participants seemed divided on issues of placelessness on the basis of age. The older workers seemed contrite and suggested that they don't really belong anywhere anyway and that making a mess and too much noise is unavoidable. They seem to have become resigned to being unwanted everywhere. The younger workers seemed to feel that the street is their turf at night and the rest of us can go to Hell. I am reminded of Ken Wilbur's ideas of social value memes – the reason George Bush can't understand Michael Moore and vice versa (Boomeritus 2002). PEERS outreach staff confirmed this notion as a plausible reason for inconsiderate behaviour by sex workers, claiming that "they have their thing and you have your world and the two don't intersect" (Alicia Koorn, Aug. 27, 2007).

**Vicki:**

*I met Vicki at PEERS and we had a coffee before our interview to help her relax. She was so high that she asked if we could go outside so she could smoke a doobie to calm down. This helped a little and we were able to talk about her life on the street. She was from Vancouver, had a university degree and worked in a professional capacity. Three kids, husband, house and a two-year old minivan. That was two years ago. Now she is homeless, sick, addicted and has lost her family. She pointed out, quite philosophically, how fine a line can separate the good life from one of abjection and misery. Vicki's story is not unusual. I met a woman shooting up in my doorway recently and she mentioned that until last year she was an acupuncturist. She shocked herself with the slippery slide to addiction.*

**Community Relations on the Street**

There are many sub-cultures on the street that sex workers interact with. To the straight pedestrian passing by, the usual response is “You looking for company?” “Can you spare a smoke?” or “Can you spare some change?” While this information did not arise from the interviews, I have heard it often enough on the street to know it to be a pattern.

The interviews revealed that there is generally an amicable relationship with the homeless, binnars, and dealers – everyone is just trying to get by. The only real problems are the rowdy drunks leaving the bars between 2:00 and 3:00 a.m. and bad tricks.

**Pimps**

Most female outdoor sex workers in Victoria don't have pimps, although several reported in the interviews that they have dependant boyfriend/dealers. PEERS staff concur; however, they suggest that traveling pimps will bring four or five women from another city to work for a few weeks. A new face on the stroll generates more business. I have witnessed these “out of towners” treating their workers like a drill sergeant, “Quit slouching!” or “You're not trying hard enough.”

## **Guardian Angels**

The stroll, or “low track” as it is now called with the disappearance of the “high track” (for non-addicted workers), is rife with young men in dark hoodies riding BMX bicycles. The focus groups revealed that these “angels” will take orders for a single dose of whatever type of drug is wanted, go to some secret repository and then deliver it, all for a 10% fee. If there are no orders to fetch, they will lurk in the shadows and watch – providing some small measure of security. Interviews indicated that the “guardian angels” generally force voyeuristic masturbators who watch the women through binoculars from parked cars to leave the stroll. The Victoria police are fully aware of these single dose dealers but choose to leave them alone. They simply cannot afford the court cost to prosecute and to confiscate their drugs would only result in more property crime. Interestingly, the interviews revealed that ten years ago there were three “angels” per ten sex workers and now there are about seven to ten. This ratio accords well with PEERS outreach statistics regarding the increase in drug rigs handed out. When asked about the purity of drugs available, the participants said that there was a cornucopia out there. “It’s like going into a bakery,” said one. “You got your whole wheat, your rye, gluten free, anything you want , you just have to know your dealer.” They suggest that reputable dealers don’t sell crystal meth and those who do will actually give it freely to generate new customers. Most participants claim that crystal meth is a young girl’s drug of choice.

## **The Police**

An outreach survey done by PEERS asked sex workers who they turn to in case of an emergency – in every case the police were the last on the list. Some participants said they would not help or cooperate with the police under any circumstance. Several felt that they had been abused and mistreated so badly by the police that the emotional scars would never heal. Some reported that they had been apprehended in Vancouver’s Downtown East Side and transported to the Tsawwassen Ferry with only the clothing on their backs.

This practice of “Greyhound Sociology” has been corroborated by PEERS staff and one Vancouver police officer (Sept. 13, 2007, anonymity requested).

On the other hand, some participants remember “Police Protection for Prostitutes,” an initiative that ended about four years ago. This program had sex workers register and check in to the police station every few months, just to let them know they were okay. The program atrophied due to pressing caseloads. There is another nation-wide police initiative referred to as D.I.S.C. (Determining and Identifying Sex Criminals). At the time of this writing the Victoria Police do not even have a sex crimes unit (Constable Kerry Lee Jones – Apr. 2008). New information suggests that “Sex Crimes” has been reinstated under Inspector Mark Knoop, but this cannot be confirmed with holiday absences. I was given the impression by Constable Jones that whomever had spare time would take up the “Sex Crimes” cause. Some sex workers felt that these programmes showed at least a modicum of concern for their plight.

***Jane:***

*Jane suffers from bi-polar disorder, like many of the outdoor sex workers. She was originally from Alberta but hard line attitudes there resulted in an outstanding warrant for her arrest and her subsequent move to Vancouver’s east side. She worked the street for several years until 2006 when the Vancouver police decided it was time for her to leave. Initially they wanted to send her on a bus to Alberta but because of the warrant they relented and put her on a ferry to Victoria where I met her. She laments the lack of public telephones on the stroll and is very worried about safety. “I’ve been shot by punks – we deserve it – we keep people up, leave garbage and ruin their neighbourhoods.” I was shocked by this contrite admission but even more so to learn that she would never call the police for any reason.*

*Her un-medicated mental condition tends to make her overly emotional and when approached by Victoria City Police one night, she burst into tears. The constables called her a retard and a disgrace to the human race before placing her in jail for the night. In the series of indignities that she has endured this treatment by the police has stigmatized her more than the shooting. Despite all this, Jane is friendly, well spoken and perhaps even hopeful.*

## **Communication**

A common complaint heard in the focus groups was the lack of telephone booths. Some years ago, Telus removed public phones in an attempt to reduce drug dealing and

because they were no longer competitive with cell phones. Most of the participants that I interviewed, do not have cell phones, and have no way to report an emergency or even call a cab. The problem, they point out is that if you take your purse and phone on a date, there is a good chance you will be robbed. If you try to hide them under a bush or in a garbage can, there is a good chance a colleague will find it.

The following points came up when the idea of actually using *The Office* was discussed in the focus groups:

- They were in favour of a movable stroll, reasoning that it would improve relations with local business people;
- Preferred areas of operation should not overlap with transvestite or male zones;
- They felt, generally, that a self selected, non-hierarchical group of five could work effectively and with more safety from *The Office*;
- They felt that they could resolve internal disputes on their own;
- They were quick to point out that the working groups had to be segregated by drug choice. The crack users were adamant that the injection users worked well away from them. The heroin users blamed the crack users for most of the street problems. No one admitted to using crystal meth and all wanted to be clear of meth users;
- Older workers tended to appreciate the safety and creature comforts afforded by *The Office*;
- Younger workers seemed drawn to the symbolic and psychological possibilities;
- There was a general sense that *The Office* would frighten the “Johns” but that they would eventually get used to it;
- Most felt that the “Bully Girls” would respect their entitlement to *The Office*, if not their numbers;
- They recommended safe storage for their valuables while on a date;
- They suggested a simple chalk board to record the license number of a colleague’s date;
- They felt a signaling device to contact outreach or the police was needed; and
- They expressed a fear of opening the bathroom door and finding someone unexpectedly and wanted some way to avert this possibility.

**Colleen:**

*Colleen is in her early 50's and has been on the job most of her life. Fortunately her drug use is only enough to numb her for a shift. When we met she was somewhat distraught as her brother had been found "dead by mysterious circumstances" the previous day.*

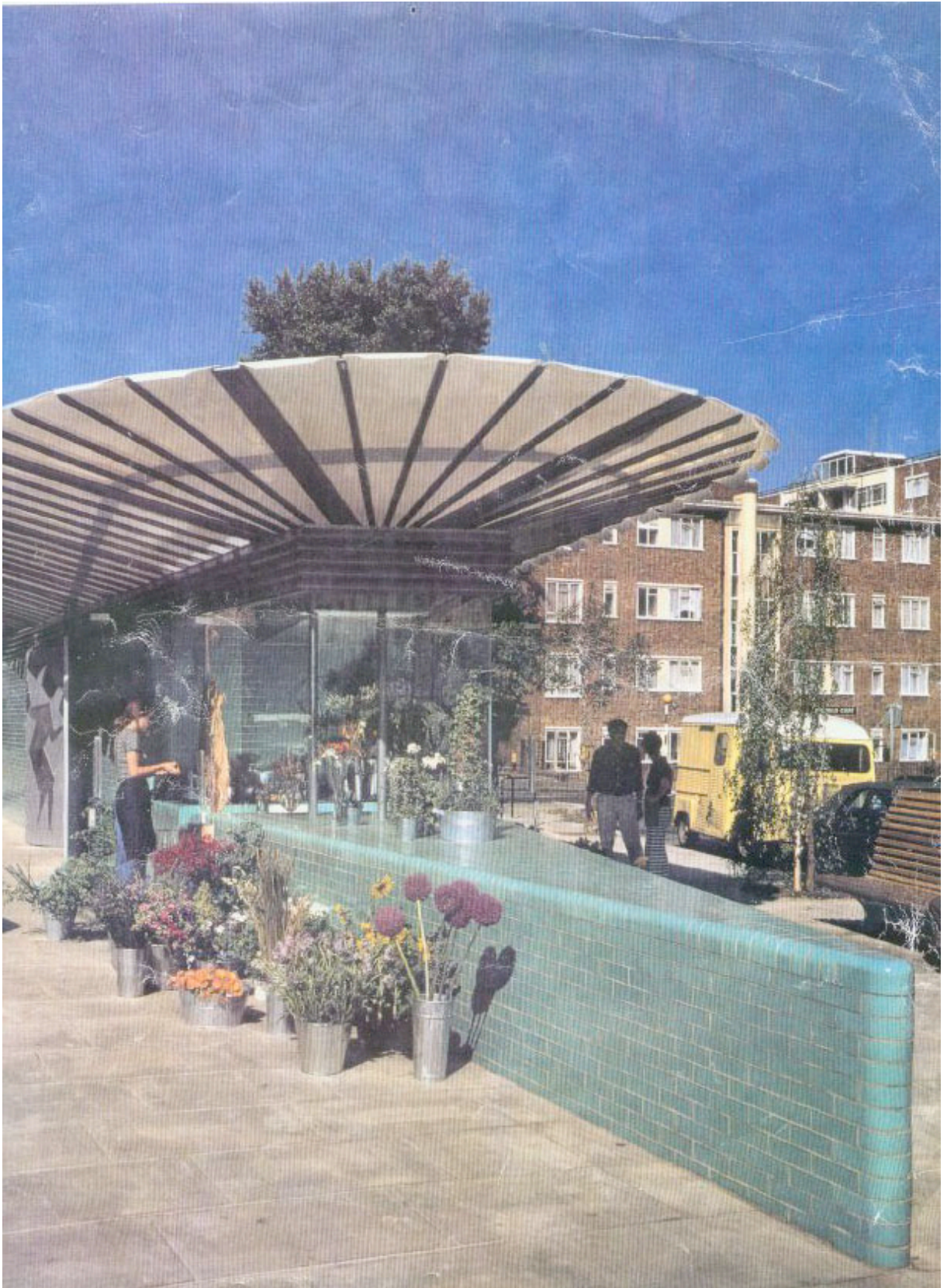
*I was shocked by her candor and willingness to share her story, which entailed a litany of violence. Perhaps the worst involved a car date where she was taken to Thetis Lake, sexually assaulted, robbed and beaten unconscious with a baseball bat. When she came to later that night, she was naked, bleeding and had no idea where she was. Even her clothing had been taken!*

## Chapter 5: Psycho-symbolic Referents for the Sculptural Form: Or Why should a Kiosk Be a Duck?

### Introduction

For fifteen years, a wrinkled image of a public washroom attached to a flower seller's kiosk (see pl. 7) has followed me from office to office, into my studios, in and out of storage, and back on the wall wherever I work. The little building is beautiful (alas no provenance) but the reason it gets under my skin is the conflation of two disparate uses. It was the rediscovery of this image that sparked my interest in *The Office*. This whimsical but elegant little building has a dialectical constellation of meaning swarming around it. It is in this spirit that Denise Scott-Brown attempted to close the gap between sociologists and architects in her essay on formalism and meaning (*Oppositions*, 1976). She argues that the formal languages of *Late Modernism* are limiting and should no longer be acceptable. The rigid formal purity of Bauhaus derived *International Style* and the even weaker derivatives seen today are at odds with the psycho-social needs of its occupants. This male-dominated canon is derived from industrial practice and is in lockstep with modern technology. Scott-Brown argues that a more humanistic relationship between form and meaning must be made evident. In other words, the meanings that the architecture elicits should be congruent with its use (e.g. no yoga classes in Albert Speer buildings or day cares in Paul Rudolph *Neo-brutalist* buildings).

Plate 7: Washroom & Flowers



In their seminal text (*Learning from Las Vegas*, 1966, p. 87) Scott-Brown, Venturi and Izenour differentiate two architectural paradigms:

- A. *Decorated Sheds*: “systems of space and structure are directly at the service of the program and ornament is applied independently of them” (e.g. new Social Sciences and Math Building, UVic).
- B. *Ducks*: “By contrast the *Duck* (see pl. 8) is a building that has morphed into an ornament where the decoration is the building.” Wong Kok Keong puts it another way: “The architectural systems of structure and program are submerged and distorted by an overall symbolic form... building – becoming-sculpture” (2003).

This somewhat tongue-in-cheek language owes its origin to *The Long Island Duckling*, a roadside attraction built in the 1920’s (see pl. 8). Using the taxonomy of the Yale Graduate School, where the authors taught, our kiosk could be termed nothing less than a *Duck*.

In his introduction to Robert Venturi’s book, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, Vincent Scully sums up the essentially humanistic philosophy of Venturi’s approach: “it values before all else the actions of human beings and the effect of physical forms upon their spirit” (1968, p.14).

Plate 8: The Duck



It is from this standpoint that the formal design of *The Office* evolved. If you ask an artist where the inspiration came from or what a particular work means, you will probably get a blank stare. As the ideas for *The Office* began to gel, my thinking was informed by many sources, some fleeting, and some lingering. The following notions, presented in no particular order came together to produce what is essentially a hand formed object. The shape literally changed by the minute as a function of impulse and exigency.

### **Googie Style**

It is easy to cite examples of failures in *Late-Modernism*; however, the movement was not monolithic. Iconoclasts like Morris Lapidus (Hotel Fontainebleau Fla., Hotel International, Cuba), Frederick Keisler and others who were generally marginalized and dismissed by the mainstream, worked on a strand of modernism that was rife with symbolic meaning. Well outside the formal language of the canon, these largely unknown architects developed *Pleasure Zones*, say *Disneyland*, *Coney Island*, *Las Vegas*, *Roadside Attractions*, etc. This style reached its heyday in the 1950s and although perceived as crass by the cognoscenti at the time, it is now appreciated academically and known variously as *Populuxe*, *Atomic Modern*, or *Googie* (see pl. 9). This style was flamboyant, futuristic, optimistic and some say attributed to a Southern California restaurant called “Googies.” Tom Wolfe links *Googie Style* to *Pop Art* and suggests that essential characteristics are lightness (freedom from gravity – in both senses), the quality of being an oasis in a perhaps hostile context, heightened symbolism, and the ability to engulf the viewer in a new role (*From Our House to Bauhaus*, 1988).

Plate 9: Googie Style



## Frederick Kiesler – Endless House

Kiesler is well known for his concept of spatial continuity—endlessness. I think he meant materially, like a *Klein Bottle* not metaphorically. Although like me, he was trained as a constructivist, he worked within the realm of biomorphic forms rather than the usual grid structure and intersecting geometry. He worked in relative obscurity for forty years in America but to the vanguard he was legendary.

I have borrowed his idea of spatial continuity from his *Endless House* project (see pl 10), which occupied much of his life. The distinction between inside and outside is negotiable and nebulous. My design for the street side opening was changed many times and was ultimately informed by one of Kiesler's set designs (Helen Retires, 1934, George Antheil Juliard School of Music).

Plate: 10 Endless House Project



## **Joep van Lieshout – Desire Machines**

This anarchist Dutch artist challenges norms of sexuality, rationality, and morality through human-scaled interactive enclosures. His agenda is completely within the realm of symbolic thought experiments (whereas I still have one foot firmly planted in the real). While our *Office* shares some of the intentions of van Lieshout, I sincerely want to help improve the day-to-day experience of sex workers. I admire van Lieshout's extremism, but find the irony ultimately undermines it. I am supported in this notion by Jeannene Przyblyski in her fifteen point unofficial manifesto for telling the truth about public art: point 5, "I am for a public art that believes that irony alone is an insufficient perspective, as is earnestness" (2002).

## **Coco Taxis Cuba**

This anarchist Dutch artist challenges norms of sexuality, rationality, and morality through human-scaled interactive enclosures. His agenda is completely within the realm of symbolic thought experiments (whereas I still have one foot firmly planted in the real). While our *Office* shares some of the intentions of van Lieshout, I sincerely want to help improve the day-to-day experience of sex workers. I admire van Lieshout's extremism, but find the irony ultimately undermines it. I am supported in this notion by Jeannene Przyblyski in her fifteen point unofficial manifesto for telling the truth about public art: point 5, "I am for a public art that believes that irony alone is an insufficient perspective, as is earnestness" (2002).

Plate 11: Coco Taxis



## Alexander Pope's Grotto

One often-repeated request during the focus groups was for a mirror. Perhaps this is because this population is disproportionately afflicted with obsessive-compulsive disorder (Dr. Kovacks, PEERS, Sept. 12, 2007). It is not uncommon to see the passenger side mirrors on parked cars in the neighbourhood turned toward the sidewalk in the morning. It is sad to see someone repeatedly primping in a dirty store window under sooty sodium vapour light.

It occurred to me that the mirror could play a larger role in the project than any of us imagined at the outset. Alexander Pope, the famous British poet and essayist, was only four and one half feet tall in middle age and was publicly called a *hunchbacked toad* or, emphatically, a *monkey*. The man knew something about enacted stigma. His solution was to construct a mirrored grotto where he could look out to the Thames without being seen. I liked the idea of a sex worker having the choice to return a gaze or merely glance in the mirror and decide whether to proceed. Artist Barbara Kruger dealt with the objectifying power of the gaze directly with text and images. A typical work depicts a female Greek statue with the black and red, propaganda style caption, "Your Gaze Hits The Side Of My Face" (Kruger, 1981). Her work is widely disseminated through popular culture in the form of T-shirts, greeting cards, posters, etc. Film and cultural critic Laura Mulvey's studies have linked the pleasures of looking to gender inequalities in society. She says "The male gaze denies women agency, relegating them to the status of objects." (Harrison & Ward, 2002). In Mulvey's analysis, it comes down to who gets to look at whom. Foucault related the gaze to power rather than gender in his discussions of surveillance – possibly a factor with the voyeuristic masterbators previously mentioned. Foucault says, "An inspecting gaze which each individual, under its weight, will end by internalizing to the point that he is his own supervisor, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against himself" (Miller, 1994). A great revelation came when the mirror was actually installed – anyone looking into *The Office* would have to confront their own intentions in the manner Foucault describes. It is my hope that this robust effect will intimidate some of the bottom tier of the client base responsible for the violence. It

has been mentioned that 30-35% of car dates end with violence but it is not clear what percentage of the clients are responsible.

## **Ginger and Fred Building, Prague**

Architect Frank Gehry's *Dancing Building* (pl. 12) situated on a corner of historic Prague on a lot created by an American bomb in WWII is not without its critics. To me it is a building in motion, but to others it represents an *aesthetics of catastrophe*.

The reference to the *Dancing Building* came to mind when one of the participants commented that the maquette looked full of motion and life – a reality quite unlike her experience of the job, where she felt numb or dead. The notion of *Ginger and Fred* dancing lightly might be romantic and far from reality, but this is an inscription that I don't mind.

The foregoing influences are the most immediate to my current thinking, although, as every artist knows, a lifetime of experiences informs each project, consciously or otherwise. These ideas affected the sculptural look of *The Office* and I hope are available through its material discourse. The comments from participants certainly had an effect as form is clearly related to function. But there is a third layer of influence that is not so obvious and has more to do with affecting the psychological well-being of those who use *The Office*.

Plate 12: Dancing Building



## Combating Workplace Stigma

Some feminists see prostitution as an act of violence and exploitation and are active trying to get sex workers out of the industry. This attitude is lauded by some but seen by others (including Benoit & Millar 2001) as only reinforcing the *Whore Stigma*. One of Benoit and Miller's conclusions is that if we want to improve life for sex workers, we need to name prostitution as *work* with the potential for exploitation like any other job. Their respondents noted that a large part of sex workers' relatively poor mental health had to do with negative portrayal in society. They also noted that the internalized stigma of having worked in the trade never leaves. This last sentiment was reported by participants in this study as well. Camille Paglia suggests that the solution depends on women owning their sexuality and flaunting it as they see fit (Paglia, 1994).

Another study (Hallgrimsdottir, Phillips & Benoit, 2005) used critical discourse analysis to investigate media based stigma. This study also revealed a prevailing attitude that reifies the assumption that sex work represents an identity category, not a vocational choice. The authors note that media representations are important sites of personal identity construction however for those that bear the burden of negative scripts, whether or not they are true, the emotional damage is still done.

The type of stigma these studies have revealed is external and cast like a shadow by society's normative values. The stigma can be resisted if you possess sufficient agency and self worth or even belligerence (Goffman, 1963). But there is a second kind of stigma that is more insidious and difficult to resist. This is internalized *felt stigma*. Hallgrimsdottir, Phillips & Benoit comment on Goffman's historic and most pointed definition of stigma as "a social attribute that is deeply discrediting and reduces the bearer from a whole and usual one to a tainted and discredited one." They elaborate on Goffman's definition by arguing that there is a constellation of negative elements and perceived negative elements which can be damaging to selfhood even in the absence of observable discrimination (p. 206).

## Placelessness

Yet another burden that I assert can add to the already internalized *felt stigma* borne by outdoor sex workers is *existential outsidersness*. This term comes to us from the phenomenologist Edward Relph (*Place and Placelessness*, 1976). He argues that people experience *place* through a dialectical continuum from complete alienation to utter belonging. An essential quality of *place* is its power to focus human intention and agency. This is one purpose of *The Office*. Providing a *sense of place* where sex workers can unselfconsciously *belong* and feel entitled to the area within the neon aura is vitally important. This feeling is related to Relph's idea of *insideness* – here rather than there, safe rather than threatened, enclosed rather than exposed, all the opposites of alienated loneliness. “*Outsideness*” may feel alienating, unreal, unwelcome, or oppressive. Sex workers who are unwelcome on every corner must feel *outsideness* profoundly.

## Humanizing Aspects

In addition to providing shelter from the weather and a toilet, *The Office* affords seating for three across a small table, things we all take for granted in our daily lives. And it is not just any seating, but stylish *Eames* chairs, icons of sophistication around the world. Upon viewing *The Office*, passersby will not be able to resist the normal response to mentally project their own bodies into the space, thus re-humanizing, de-reifying the sex workers. Public curiosity will implicate them in the larger discourse, whether or not they resist.

On the Rock Bay stroll during evening hours, approximately one car in two hundred stops to negotiate. The ratio could be higher late at night but for the most part people are just driving from A to B. Unfortunately, sex workers try to catch the attention of every passing car by opening their shirts, lifting their skirts or dangerously leaping onto the street. It is my hope that the colourful, brightly lit *Office* will relieve sex workers of this degrading task. Instead they can sit comfortably across from their colleague and converse like regular folk. If a reasonable offer presents itself, they can decide to go or not.

The current territorial model has women ranged like sentries at every corner. This is not only bad for stabilizing the price of services but also lonely. Sometimes out of boredom or need for companionship, they will shout back and forth at all hours of the night. A quiet conversation in *The Office* will go down much better with the neighbors.

## Chapter 6: Plotting and Planning – *massaging a tacit approval*

As an artist I have always had the privilege of autonomy—I can make whatever I want. The unsanctioned street interventions that I had installed were relatively benign. When I casually announced *The Office* project at the Landmark Series Lectures at city hall, I had my first brush with officialdom. I was approached immediately after the lecture by Wendy Zink (Manager, Social Planning). “We have to talk,” she said, before even introducing herself. However, after a private meeting on the stroll, she has become one of my strongest supporters. I was starting to realize that involving marginalized human subjects in a sculpture project was trickier than I thought. The idea was enthusiastically received by Jodi Paterson, then Executive Director of PEERS. She did, however, caution me about the pitfalls and politics surrounding this type of endeavour. I realized about this time that I needed the authority of the university and the rigor of ethical review if the project was to succeed. Fortunately the ideas were well received by the University of Victoria and I had no trouble finding an appropriate committee.

I am active with the Burnside Gorge Community Association (BGCA) and was describing this project at a safety meeting where several Victoria police officers were present. Just like at City Hall, when I was finished, Detective Inspector Les Sylven approached me saying, “We have to talk.” Les was very skeptical but offered to be my liaison with the police, perhaps to keep an eye on things.

The current police strategy to minimize on-street sex work is to trap the *Johns*. They are forced to undergo a *Shaming Ritual* where they must attend *John School* in Vancouver, take a day off work and pay one thousand dollars tuition. Les and I went for several walks around the stroll and debated various approaches to issues around the sex trade. We both agreed that it was imperative to engage the general public in the discourse and that it should not take Willie Picton or a tasered victim at the airport to get some attention. I argued that the *Shaming Ritual* removed the upper echelon of the client base and the largely addicted population of sex workers would still keep working. Eventually Les came to believe that *The Office* concept might work. He has agreed to publicly offer

the support of the Victoria Police Department during pilot studies and wants the project to succeed.

Several years ago, Sheila Orr, a popular and well-respected politician, publicly advocated for a permanent stroll where the sex trade would be unmolested by the police. That was the kiss of death, she was soundly defeated and has not run for office since. It is a rare politician that will allow themselves to be aligned with prostitution. Denise Savoie, our NDP MP, is also a rare exception. She has supported this project from the outset and introduced it to Vancouver MP –Libby Davies. However, Denise admits to facing tremendous opposition in Ottawa.

Dean Fortin, city councilor and Executive Director of BGCA, is more circumspect with his support. I think he believes in the project but fears the problems that Sheila Orr faced.

I have canvassed local business people who, conceivably, could end up with *The Office* sited outside their premises. Their responses were mixed and interesting. Some didn't care beyond the fact that the sidewalk might be left a little cleaner. Some embraced the idea as humanitarian and offered to supply electrical power for the two-week siting duration. The final group of business people were adamantly opposed and some were morally outraged at the thought. One foam spraying contractor came by my studio during the construction phase and agreed to apply foam. After two weeks of avoidance, he finally admitted that he and his staff were morally conflicted and saw the project as enabling or even glamorizing the sex trade. I spent an hour discussing the issues with them but in the end, had to find another contractor.

It is difficult to delimit the sphere of influence and opinion caused by *The Office* project. The Dean of my home department refused to let me put the university phone number on my recruitment poster. I heard anecdotally that she said, "We can't have those kind of people calling here all the time." This resulted in only the phone number being on the poster, for PEERS. When I dropped off a poster to the Manager of Public Works (including a note with my home phone number) it stirred up a hornet's nest. Through a calamitous chain of events and misinformation, I received a hostile phone call from the City's chief engineer who had visions of yellow *Offices* on every corner from Rockland to Vic West. Wendy Zink was on holidays at the time and warned me to go through her

office in the future. This episode only reinforces the second point of my research agenda: to challenge “the persistent negative image of sex workers by the public...”

I have learned that politics involves spin, posturing, half-truths and ambition, as well as sincere commitment to the community. I sit on the land use committee for re-zoning and raised hackles by asking hard questions about the relocation of the Streetlink Transient Shelter to the Rock Bay neighbourhood at the expense of our only park. It is beyond the scope of this report to discuss the shelter relocation although it will affect the sex trade. I mention it because I am now walking on eggshells. I have turned down media interviews where some of the issues could be aired because to do so would quash any support for *The Office* project by city officials. How Faustian!

## Chapter 7: *The Spleen*: Urban Planning Antecedents

For several hundred years the dominant epistemological frame for scientific truth was logical positivism. This approach reached its zenith in the 1950's, but also saw its hegemony threatened. There are two reasons that I situated many of the formal referents of *The Office* in this time period.

- A. The *Googie Style* transgressed the positivism of late modernist architecture.
- B. Urban planning was practicing the universal application of a principle rather than allowing for organic or anomalous development.

By the end of the decade, sociologist Howard Becker was questioning objective neutrality and C. Wright Mills had challenged the abstracted empiricism that was prevalent (Carroll 2004). Architectural critic Jane Jacobs had written her seminal text *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Jacobs, 1961). Simone de Beauvoir had started to give women a voice (de Beauvoir, 1959). There were challenges at every front but much damage had already been done. The *Blanket Zoning* practice of the 1950's resulted in cookie cutter suburbs, low-rise industrial peripheries and eviscerated city cores. The positivist planning mantra was "dissimilar uses must be separated," a quote that was recently repeated by one of Victoria's senior planners even though the younger planners seem to be more open minded.

Jane Jacobs made a case in 1961 for mixed-use development, with services a short walk away and "eyes on the street". This model is practiced by most modern planners now but the positivists left a legacy of desolate, dangerous, dead zones at night. The Rock Bay neighbourhood has degenerated as a result of this legacy and thus becomes a *Spleen*, or repository for the marginalized.

The reference to the Spleen comes from one of the earliest examples of this form of top-down social engineering. Georges von Haussmann was responsible for the "rationalization" of Paris in the mid 1800s. Beggars, prostitutes, rag pickers and the poor were simply moved and sequestered in the East Arrondissement, while the city was rebuilt with grand boulevards and matching trees and facades. The romantic poet Baudelaire wrote "Les Fleurs du Mal," a one hundred and thirty-nine poem critique of von

Hausmann's *Radiant City*. Several of the poems were titled *Spleen* as a reference to the marginalized zone.

## Chapter 8: Discussion and Final Thoughts

It has been my intention from the beginning of this project to design and build *The Office* prototype to a high enough standard for field trials. This construction phase has been accomplished and the object will be donated to PEERS, which will undertake the field testing.

Throughout the research and design phase of this project, my thinking was informed by two issues.

- a. The persistent negative perception of on-street sex workers by the public.
- b. The lack of safety, security, and well being for sex workers.

Now that *The Office* actually exists as an object in the world, it will develop multiple histories. One of the trajectories that will address the first of the aforementioned issues will be public exhibition. *The Office* was present at CUexpo08,<sup>5</sup> held at UVic this year and will be featured in “Assume Nothing: New Social Practice,” a major show at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria in the spring of 2009. It is my hope and expectation that the public, upon encountering *The Office*, will pause, engage discursively and perhaps reconsider their stereotypes. When confronting a previously-unseen form in an art gallery, most viewers will expect a richly layered experience and be willing to be contemplative. But I think *The Office* will also speak to passing motorists and especially to pedestrians who see it in use. I expect it will bring media focus to the working conditions of the outdoor sex trade as well. I can’t predict the outcome of bringing these issues to the suburban household but at least a fair account of an almost invisible population will be available. I hope this will help to relieve the burden of external stigma that only worsens the already abjectly difficult lived experience of on-street work.

Another history will be from the standpoint of sex workers using *The Office*. They are the experts and only they can tell us if it improves conditions. Field testing by PEERS will be able to answer three of the research questions that have been at the core of the concept:

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<sup>5</sup> Community-University Partnerships: Connecting for change May 4-7, 2008.

- A. Sex workers are unwanted on nearly every corner and thereby suffer a form of “Placelessness.” Can *The Office* provide a temporary “Sense of Place” and belonging?
- B. The current mode of soliciting involves attempts to engage every passing car through suggestive actions, when most are just driving from A to B. Can a sculpturally interesting, well-lit, kiosk do the soliciting itself, freeing sex workers from the degrading task?
- C. Will the humanizing aspects of the design alter the dynamics of the power relations with potential clients, and result in better client selection?

These questions address psychological issues and any changes may take some time. The pragmatic benefits however will be immediate and will profoundly change existence on the street. A toilet, comfortable seating, shelter from the weather are all things we all take for granted and sex workers lack. Even the opportunity to sit across a table and have a quiet conversation with a colleague is not currently possible. PEERS outreach workers will assess the success through observed behavior and self reports from sex workers.

In a community-based qualitative study there are no empirical truths. I have tried to represent the wishes of my collaborators to the best of my ability; however, there are some issues. Several participants were high during the interviews and barely coherent. The data that I collected was skewed to the extent that anyone recruited at PEERS was already trying to leave the sex trade. Ethical review prevented me from simply questioning women on the street, although they are most in need and because they are most in need. I can say anecdotally however, that women working on the stroll and not involved with PEERS have approached me in my studio and reacted to the project with enthusiasm. Three of those women actually started to cry upon viewing the project, as they were so moved by seeing something done for them.

I have tried to prepare for every eventuality but this is hypothetical and there are no precedents I can draw from. The following issues may be problematic:

- A. Victoria Public Works is reluctant to get involved with servicing *The Office* and will only do so if directed by council and given a budget for it. (I estimate a cost of \$200.00 per week for the prototype and less for production models). Commercial portable toilet companies are frightened by the thought of needles and their own fear of this unknown population.
- B. The “Bar Crowd” – rowdy drunks could harass the sex workers in *The Office* or vandalize it. There are ongoing efforts by the Bar Owners

Association and the police to mitigate the problem. Given the police support for this project, I expect no problems, at least for the field study.

- C. Despite what the participants told me in the interviews, I have my doubts that even a self-selected group will work regular shifts and a looser operational strategy will have to be used. Some participants indicated that the duration of a shift was as long as it took to get enough money for a fix. It may be that people will just drop in to *The Office* for a while when it suits them. There may be issues over maintaining control over the toilet code. Workers could share it with their dealers or boyfriends, although it is in their best interest not to.

Even with these potential problems, I am optimistic that *The Office* will be a force for good. The great Russian Constructivist sculptor, Vladimir Tatlin designed an unbuildable “Monument to the Third International” in 1917. Of course only the maquette was built, but it functioned as a revolutionary symbol and continues to this day as an icon of opposition, imagination and hope. Even if the logistical and personal problems render *The Office* prototype unusable on the street, it will still function symbolically like Tatlin's monument. It will speak volumes about the experience of on-street sex work every time it is publicly viewed. This research will help sex workers to be seen as more than one dimensional – as full human beings with lives outside the sex trade. But changing attitudes is not easy, even for insiders. This became clear to me recently when I was standing in a grocery line behind one of my participants and her family and rather than acknowledging our acquaintance we both opted for tacit silence. In a way we were both complicit in perpetuating the moralistic stereotype that sex work is defined by deviance and disease.

Charles Baudelaire, whose poem cycle “Les Fleurs du Mal” critiqued the authoritarian city planning methods of 18<sup>th</sup> century Paris, used the prostitute as an example of exile, displacement and loss. The few lines I’m about to offer are an oversimplification of the complex themes explored in “The Swan” (Le Cygne) but they ring true every time I look out my window.

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## **Appendix 1: Explanatory Note of Research**

In addition to providing a little more comfort and safety on the street, this research project seeks to answer four questions:

1. Sex workers are unwanted on nearly every corner and thereby suffer a form of “placelessness.” Can a kiosk provide a temporary sense of place and belonging for those who work around it?
2. Currently most sex workers attempt to engage the attention of every passing vehicle while we know that most are just traveling from A to B. Can a sculpturally beautiful, well-lit kiosk do the soliciting itself, freeing the workers from the task?
3. Will the humanizing aspect of sitting across a table from a friend, rather than on a concrete stoop, result in better client selection?
4. The form of the kiosk will be unique and unseen by anyone before. Will this cause the public to pause, and reconsider the easy stereotypes they have formed?

It is my hope that through discussion and field testing, we can answer these questions and many more that will surely arise. Finally, on completion, this experimental prototype will belong to you and PEERS and will perhaps point to a new direction for doing business in Victoria and other cities.

## **Appendix 2: Verbal Consent Form to Participate in Research**

### **Introduction:**

Title of Research Project: Portable amenity for outdoor sex workers in Victoria: a collaborative approach to improving working conditions.

YOU ARE BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT WHICH AIMS TO IMPROVE LIFE WORKING ON THE STREET. MY NAME IS ROBERT WISE AND I AM THE PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER. THIS RESEARCH IS BEING CONDUCTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF A MASTERS DEGREE (INTD.) AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA. THIS PROJECT IS BEING SUPERVISED BY DR. JUTTA GUTBERLET, (GEOGRAPHY ) DR. HELGA HALLGRIMSDOTTIR ( SOCIOLOGY ) AND PROFESSOR DANIEL LASKARIN ( VISUAL ARTS ) THE RESEARCHERS CAN BE CONTACTED BY EMAIL AT [jutta@uvic.ca](mailto:jutta@uvic.ca) OR [bobwise@shaw.ca](mailto:bobwise@shaw.ca) OR BY PHONE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA ( 250 ) 721-7360

### **Purpose:**

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROJECT IS TO INVESTIGATE THE IDEA OF USING A PORTABLE AMENITY KIOSK FOR OUTDOOR SEX WORKERS. THE AIM IS TO INCREASE SAFETY AND REDUCE THE STIGMA OF WORKING ON THE STREET.

### **Importance of Research:**

RESEARCH OF THIS TYPE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT WILL, TO THIS AUTHOR'S KNOWLEDGE, TEST AN ENTIRELY NEW MODEL FOR OUTDOOR SEX WORK. THE RESEARCH WILL ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO THE SCANT DIRECT KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD OF LIVED EXPERIENCE OF OUTDOOR SEX WORKERS. THE OPEN ENDED FOCUS GROUPS WILL YIELD SOME INSIGHT INTO NON-INSTITUTIONAL ALLEGENCES WITH OTHER MARGINALIZED GROUPS (HOMELESS, BINNERS, DEALERS, ETC.) FINALLY IT IS HOPED THAT THIS WORK WILL HELP THE PUBLIC RECONSIDER THEIR STEREOTYPES AND STIGMAS ABOUT SEX WORKERS.

### **Procedure:**

THIS RESEARCH WILL BE CONDUCTED IN SMALL GROUPS (IDEALLY 3 TO 4 PEOPLE ) AT A PEERS OFFICE. I WILL LEAD THE DISCUSSION WITH SOME OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS AND ASK YOU TO RESPOND. YOU WILL BE

ASKED TO PROVIDE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE IDEA OF USING A PORTABLE AMENITY KIOSK TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS OF COMFORT AND SAFETY ON THE STREET. YOU WILL ALSO BE ASKED TO RANK A PREFERENCE ORDER FOR A NUMBER OF POTENTIAL WORKING SITES.

- IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS AT ALL, AS I READ THIS VERBAL CONSENT SCRIPT, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO INTERRUPT AND I WILL TRY TO ANSWER THEM.
- ALL DISCUSSION WILL BE TAPE RECORDED
- AN EXPLANATORY NOTE OF THE RESEARCH WILL BE LEFT WITH YOU.
- You may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you may have, by contacting the Associate Vice-President Research at (250) 472 – 4545 or [ethics@uvic.ca](mailto:ethics@uvic.ca)

### **Conditions for Participating:**

- You understand that you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time without negative consequences and the data will not be used in the research.(SERVICES YOU RECEIVE FROM PEERS WILL NOT BE AFFECTED )
- You understand that your participation in this study is confidential.
- You understand that this study WILL be published.
- YOU UNDERSTAND THAT YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY WILL BE LIMITED DUE TO THE NATURE OF A GROUP ACTIVITY.
- YOU UNDERSTAND THAT YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY MAY BE LIMITED DUE TO THE RELATIVELY SMALL POPULATION OF OUTDOOR SEX WORKERS.
- You understand the purpose of this study and know there is no hidden motive of which you have not been informed.
- You understand that a PEERS outreach councilor may be present during the meeting. This means that the information will be known to a PEERS staff member. The staff have been asked to provide their initials to acknowledge that they understand the information you provide is confidential to the research project.-----

### **Benefits / Risks:**

**YOU WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPLEMENT IDEAS THAT YOU THINK WILL MAKE WORKING ON THE STREET BETTER AND SAFER WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE PORTABLE KIOSK MODEL.**

There are no likely risks in participating in this research.

### **Compensation:**

Your participation in this research is voluntary. There is A \$5.00 HONOURARIUM OFFERED FOR YOUR participation. If you agree to participate in this study, this form of compensation to you must not be coercive. It is unethical to provide undue compensation or inducements to research participants. If you would not participate if the compensation was not offered, then you should decline.

**Access to information and confidentiality / publication of results:**

- ONLY THE RESEARCHERS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO THE RESEARCH DATA.
- RESEARCH DATA WILL BE KEPT IN A LOCKED FILING CABINET AT THE RESEARCHER'S RESIDENCE.

**Access to Research:**

- A summary of the final report will be available from the researcher for you to view.
- CONTACT INFORMATION IS PROVIDED FOR YOU ON THIS FORM.

## Appendix 3: Tri-Council Policy Statement on the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans



### Human Research Ethics Board Application for Ethics Approval for Human

**The following application form is an institutional protocol based on the  
[Tri-Council Policy Statement on the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#)**

#### Instructions:

1. Download this application, save immediately, and complete it on your computer. Hand written applications will not be accepted.
2. Use the *Human Research Ethics Board Guidelines* to complete this application: <http://www.research.uvic.ca/Forms/>. Note: This form is hyperlinked to the guidelines but must be unlocked to open links to each section. To do this, open the View dropdown menu, open toolbars, forms, click on the yellow padlock. Open links by pressing down the CTRL key and clicking on the blue text.
3. Submit one (1) original and two (2) copies of this completed, signed application with all attachments to: Human Research Ethics, Technology Enterprise Facility (TEF), Room 218, University of Victoria, PO Box 1700 STN CSC, Victoria BC V8W 2Y2 Canada
4. If you need assistance, contact the Human Research Ethics Assistant at (250) 472-4545 or [ethics@uvic.ca](mailto:ethics@uvic.ca)
5. Please note that incomplete applications cannot be processed and will be returned to the applicant.

#### A. [Principal Investigator](#)

*If there is more than one Principal Investigator, provide their name(s) and contact information below in Section B, Other Investigator(s) & Research Team.*

Last Name:

First Name:

Department/Faculty:

Email:

Phone:

Fax:

Mailing Address:

*(if different from Dept/Faculty)*

Title/Position:

Faculty

Undergraduate

Ph.D. Student

Staff

Master's Student

Post-Doctoral

Students: Provide your Supervisor's:

Name:

Email:

Department/Faculty:

Phone:

Graduate Students: Provide your Graduate Secretary's email address:

#### B. [Project Information](#)



Date

D. [Project Funding](#)

Have you applied for funding for this project?  Yes  No

If yes, please complete the following:

Source(s) of Project Funding	Project Title used in Funding Application(s)
------------------------------	--

E. [Level of Risk](#)

The [Tri-Council Policy Statement](#) (TCPS) definition of “minimal risk” is as follows:

*The research can be regarded as within the range of minimal risk if potential participants can reasonably be expected to regard the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research to be no greater than those encountered by the participant in those aspects of his or her everyday life that relate to the research. The designation of minimal or non-minimal risk affects the way the application is reviewed not the substance of the ethical review.”*

Based on this definition, do you believe your research qualifies as “minimal risk research” research?

Yes  No

Explain your answer by referring to the level of risk stated in the TCPS definition:

F. [Scholarly Review](#)

What type of scholarly review has this research project undergone?

- External Peer Review (e.g. granting agency)  
 Supervisory Committee or Supervisor—required for all student research projects  
 None  
 Other, please explain:

G. [Other Approvals](#)

Do you need to seek approval from other agencies, community groups, local governments, etc ?

- Yes  No

*(Please forward approvals upon receiving them)*

If so, what types of other approval will you need?

- School District, Superintendent, Principal, Teacher
- VIHA or other regional government authority ***If you are planning to conduct research in a VIHA facility, you must use the Joint UVic/VIHA application form on the ORS website***
- Indigenous Community (see item 13)
- Other, please explain:

## H. [Description of Research Project](#)

### 1. Purpose and Rationale of Research

Briefly describe in non-technical language:

*Please use 150 words or less. The form will expand to the length of your answers.*

1a. The research objective(s) and question(s)

1b. The importance and contributions of the research

## I. [Recruitment](#)

### 2. Recruitment and Selection of Participants

2a. Briefly describe the target population for recruitment.

2b. Why is this population of interest?

2c. What is the desired number of participants?

2d. What are the salient characteristics of the participants (e.g. age, gender, race, ethnicity, class, position, etc.):

2e. Provide a detailed description of your exact recruitment process. Explain:

i) Who will recruit/contact participants (e.g. researcher, assistant, third party)

ii) Describe any relationship between the investigator(s) and participant(s) (e.g. instructor-student, manager-employee). (See question no. 3 if there is a [power over relationship](#)).

iii) Describe how recruitment will be done (e.g. in person, by telephone, letter, email, advertisement) and from what source(s) will the participants be recruited. If applicable, include how contact information for participants will be obtained.

iv) Describe the steps in the recruitment process.

- v) Whether the permission of other bodies is required (e.g. school boards).

### 3. Power-Over

If you are completing this section, please refer to the following guidelines:  
[http://www.research.uvic.ca/ethics/action\\_research\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.research.uvic.ca/ethics/action_research_guidelines.pdf)

Are you or any of your co-researchers in any way in a position of authority or power over participants? Examples of a “power-over” situation include teachers-students, therapists-clients, supervisors-employees and possibly researcher-relative or researcher-close friend.

Yes       No       Varies

If *yes* or *varies*, describe below:

- i) The nature of the relationship.
- ii) Why it is necessary to conduct research with participants over whom you have power.
- iii) What safeguards (steps) will be taken to minimize inducement, coercion or potential harm.
- iv) How the dual-role relationship and the safeguards will be explained to potential participants.

## J. [Data Collection Methods](#)

### 4. Data Collection

*For community-based research, autobiographical or observational research, please see Appendix III of the Guidelines.*

<http://www.research.uvic.ca/ethics/HREguidelines/appendix3.htm#appendix3>

4a. Which of the following methods will be used to collect data? *Check all that apply.*

Interviewing participants: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in-person <input type="checkbox"/> by telephone <input type="checkbox"/> using web-based technology (explain)
Conducting or administering a: <input type="checkbox"/> standardized questionnaire or test (one with established reliability and validity) <input type="checkbox"/> non-standardized questionnaire or survey (one that is un-tested, adapted or open-ended)
Administering a questionnaire or survey: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In person <input type="checkbox"/> by telephone <input type="checkbox"/> mail back <input type="checkbox"/> email <input type="checkbox"/> web-based <input type="checkbox"/> Other, describe:
<input type="checkbox"/> Administering a computerized tasks
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conducting group interviews or discussions (including focus groups)
<input type="checkbox"/> Observing participants

<i>[In 4b, describe who will be observed and where]</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recording of participants Using: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> audio <input type="checkbox"/> video <input type="checkbox"/> photos or slides <i>[If using images in disseminating research results, attach a copy of release to use participant images]</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Analyzing secondary data <input type="checkbox"/> Anonymized data (Eligible for <i>Application for a Waiver from Full Ethical Review</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> Non-anonymized data (Skip to Item 7g, 8, 11-12, 17, and 19-23) <i>In 4b describe the source of the data, (e.g., institutional, organizational, educational files, personal writings) and explain whether and how consent was obtained from the individuals for use of their data.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Using human tissue (e.g., blood, hair, DNA, gametes) <i>Ensure that you apply to the <a href="#">Biosafety Committee</a> for the storage and use of biological materials. Also, complete the <a href="#">Human Tissue Form</a> available on the ORS website, have it signed and attach it to your application. If using human tissue only, skip to 7g-8, 11-end.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify:

4b. Provide a sequential description of the procedures/methods to be used in your research study. List all of the research instruments and assessment tools, and in an appendix provide copies of all instruments. If not yet available, provide drafts or sample items/questions. For multi-method or other complex research, use the following sections in ways best suited to explain your project.

4c. Where will participation take place? (e.g., UVic classroom, private office, workplace)

4d. How much time will be required of participants?

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## K. [Possible Inconveniences, Benefits, Risks and Harms to Participants](#)

### 5. Benefits

Identify any potential or known benefits associated with participation and explain below. *Keep in mind that the anticipated benefits should outweigh any potential risks.*

To the participant                       To society                       To state of knowledge

### 6. Inconveniences

Identify and describe any known or potential inconveniences to participants: *Consider all potential inconveniences, including time devoted to the research.*

## 7. Estimate of Risks

Could this study involve the following? Please answer each question by putting an **X** in the appropriate boxes:

- 7a. Could a participant feel demeaned or embarrassed during their participation in the research?  
 Very unlikely     Possibly     Likely
- 7b. Could a participant feel fatigued or stressed due to the research?  
 Very unlikely     Possibly     Likely
- 7c. Could a participant experience any other emotional or psychological discomfort as a consequence of participation?  
 Very unlikely     Possibly     Likely
- 7d. Is there any social risk, possible stigmatization, loss of status, privacy and/or reputation?  
 Very unlikely     Possibly     Likely
- 7e. Are there any physical risks?  
 Very unlikely     Possibly     Likely
- 7f. Could a participant experience any economic risk? (e.g. job security, job loss)  
 Very unlikely     Possibly     Likely
- 7g. Do you see any chance that participants may be harmed in any other way? (e.g. risk to community)  
 Very unlikely     Possibly     Likely

## 8. Possible Risks

If you indicated in Item 7 (a) to (f) that any risks are *possible* or *likely*, please explain below:

8a. What are the risks?

8b. What will you do to try to minimize or prevent the risks?

8c. How will you respond if the risk of harm occurs? (e.g. what is your plan?)

## 9. Deception

Will participants be fully informed of everything that will be required of them prior to the start of the research session?

- Yes     No (If no, complete the [Request to Use Deception form](#) on the [Office of Research Services website](#).)

## L. [Compensation](#)

**10. Compensation**

Is there any compensation for participating in the research? (e.g. gifts, money, social advantage, bonus points)

Yes  No

If yes, explain the nature of the compensation and why you consider it to be necessary:  
*Also consider if the amount of compensation could be considered to be a form of inducement.*

M. [Free and Informed Consent](#)

*The following questions address the competence of participants to give consent, the process used in your research to obtain consent, ongoing consent, and the participants' right to withdraw. Consult Appendix V of the Guidelines for further information.*

**11. Participant's Capacity (Competence) to Provide Free and Informed Consent**

Identify your prospective participants: *(Check all that apply.)*

- Competent adults
- Non-competent adults:
  - Consent of family/authorized representative will be obtained
  - Assent of the participant will be obtained
- Competent Youth
- Competent Children

**Minimal Risk Research**

- Children under 13: consent of parent/guardian will be obtained, and child consent will be obtained
- Youth 13 to 18: consent of youth will be obtained, and parental consent is required due to institutional requirements (e.g. school districts)
- Youth 13 to 16: consent of youth will be obtained, parents will be informed
- Youth 13 to 16: consent of youth will be obtained, parents will *NOT* be informed
- Youth 17 to 18: consent of youth will be obtained, parents will not be informed
- Other, explain:

**Above Minimal Risk Research**

- Parent or guardian consent will be obtained and child/youth assent/consent will be obtained
- Other, explain:
- Non-competent Children:
  - Consent of parent/guardian
  - Assent of the child/youth will be obtained

A protected or vulnerable population (e.g., inmates, patients).

**12. Means of Obtaining Consent:** (Check all that apply and attach copies of all consent materials.)

Initial verbal explanation and signed Consent Form. (Attach consent script(s) and [consent form\(s\)](#).)

Letter of information and signed Consent Form. (Attach information letter(s) and [consent form\(s\)](#).)

Letter of information and verbal consent. (Attach information letter(s). Explain below why written consent is not appropriate and how verbal consent will be documented.)

Implied consent (E.g. anonymous, mail back or web-based survey. Attach information letter.)

Other means. (Explain below and provide justification.)

Consent will not be obtained. (Explain below)

Explain consent procedure if “verbal consent,” “other” or “consent will not be obtained”:

**13. Indigenous Community Approval**

*Indigenous community approval may be required when the research involves Indigenous people from a community (whether residing in urban or reserve areas), the cultural knowledge and/or resources of Indigenous people, or where individuals speak on behalf of an Indigenous nation.*

13a. Does your research specifically involve or include in the study’s population sample individuals from an Indigenous community?

Yes       No

13b. Will a particular Indigenous community or communities be a central focus of the research?

Yes       No

13c. If you answered “yes” to questions a) or b), have you sought approval from an Indigenous community or communities for this study?

Yes       No

13d. If you answered “yes” to question c), briefly list the people you have contacted and describe the approval process that you have or will follow:

13e. If you answered “no” to questions c), briefly justify your decision not to seek Indigenous community approval:

**14. Informed Consent**

Describe the exact steps you will follow in the process of obtaining informed consent.

**15. Ongoing Consent**

*Ongoing consent is required for research that occurs over multiple occasions and/or multiple research activities and/ or extended periods of time (i.e., more than one point of contact, including second interviews, review of transcripts, etc.)*

15a. Will your research occur over multiple occasions or an extended period of time?

Yes  No

15b. If yes, describe how you will obtain ongoing consent:

**16. Participant's Right to Withdraw**

*Free and informed consent requires that participants have the right to withdraw at any time without consequence or explanation.*

Describe what participants will be told about their right to withdraw from the research at any time. If compensation is involved, explain what participants will be told about compensation if they withdraw.

**17. What will happen to the person's data if s/he withdraws part way through the study?**

- It will not be used in the analysis.
- It is logistically impossible to remove individual participant data.
- It will be used in the analysis if the participant agrees to this. Describe how this agreement will be obtained:

N. [Anonymity and Confidentiality](#)**18. Anonymity**

*Anonymity means that no one, including the principal investigator, is able to associate responses or other data with individual participants.*

18a. Will the participants be anonymous in the data gathering phase of research?

Yes  No

**19. Confidentiality**

*Confidentiality means the protection of the person's identity (anonymity) and the protection, access, control and security of his or her data and personal information during the recruitment, data collection, reporting of findings, dissemination of data (if relevant) and after the study is completed (e.g., storage).*

19a. Will the confidentiality of the participants and their data be protected?

- No
- Yes, completely
- Yes, with limits (*Check relevant boxes below.*)

Limits due to the nature of group activities (e.g. focus groups) the researcher can not guarantee confidentiality

- Limits due to context: The nature or size of the sample from which participants are drawn makes it possible to identify individual participants (e.g. school principals in a small town)
- Limits due to selection: The procedures for recruiting or selecting participants may compromise the confidentiality of participants (e.g. participants are identified or referred to the study by a person outside the research team)
- Limits due to legal requirements for reporting
- Other

19b. If confidentiality will be protected, describe the procedures to be used to ensure the anonymity of participants and for preserving the confidentiality of their data.

19c. If there are limits to confidentiality due to the methods (e.g. group interview), sample size or legal requirements (e.g., reporting child abuse) so that you cannot guarantee confidentiality, explain what the limits are and how you will address them with the participants:

19d. If confidentiality will not be protected, explain why. If you are asking the participants to waive their right to confidentiality (you plan to identify them with their data), explain what steps will be taken to respect their privacy, if any.

O. [Use and Disposal of Data](#)

**20. Use(s) of Data**

20a. What use(s) will be made of the data?

20b. Will your research data be analyzed, now or in future, by yourself for purposes other than this research project?

- Yes       No       Possibly

20c. If yes or possibly, how will you obtain consent for future data analysis from the participants?

20d. Will your research data be analyzed, now or in future, by other persons for purposes other than explained in this application?

- Yes       No       Possibly

20e. If yes or possibly, by whom and how will you obtain consent from the participants for future data analysis by other researchers?

**21. Commercial Purposes**

21a. Do you anticipate that this research will be used for a commercial purpose?

Yes  No

21b. If yes, explain how the data will be used for a commercial purpose:

**22. Maintenance and Disposal of Data**

Describe your plans for preserving, protecting and destroying all the types of data associated with the research (e.g. paper records, audio or visual recordings, electronic recordings, coded data) after the research is completed:

22a. means of storing data (e.g., a locked filing cabinet, password protected computer files):

22b. location of storing data:

22c. duration of data storage:

22d. methods of destroying data:

**23. Dissemination**

How do you anticipate disseminating the research results? (*Check all that apply*)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Directly to participants            | <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis/Dissertation/Class presentation       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presentations at scholarly meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> Published article, chapter or book           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internet                                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Media (e.g. newspaper, radio, TV) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other, explain:                     |   |

P. [Researchers](#)**24. Conflict of Interest**

24a. Are you or any of the research team members in a perceived, actual or potential conflict of interest in regard to this research project (e.g. in relation to participants, partners in research, private interests in companies or other entities)?

Yes  No

24b. If yes, please provide details of the conflict and how you will manage it:

**25. Researcher(s) Qualifications**

In light of your research methods, the nature of the research and the characteristics of the participants, what special training or qualifications do you and/or your research team have or need to acquire?

**26. Risk to Researcher(s)**

26a. Does this research study pose any risks to the researchers, assistants and data collectors?

26b. If there are any risks, explain the nature of the risks, how they will be minimized, and how they will be responded to if they occur.

**Q. [Further or Special Questions](#)****27. Multiple Site Research**

27a. Does this project involve collection of data at multiple sites within Canada?

Yes  No

27b. Does this project require the approval of other sites, bodies or organizations (e.g., other ethics board(s), school board, etc.)?

Yes  No

27c. If you responded Yes to 27a. or 27b above, list the sites, bodies or organizations:

**28. International Research**

28a. Will this study be conducted in a country other than Canada?

Yes  No

28b. If yes, describe how the laws, customs and regulations of the host country will be addressed:

**29. Other Information**

If there is anything else you would like to inform the HREB about this study, provide the details below:

**30. Attachments\***

As applicable, attach the following documents (check those that are appended):

- Recruitment materials, e.g., script(s), letter(s)  [Consent form template](#) or the [Consent form checklist](#)
- Copies of all other research instruments, including standardized instruments, questionnaires, sample interview questions and/or focus group questions (if large, attach sample questions)
- Approval from external organizations (or proof of having made a request for permission)
- Permission to gain access to confidential documents or materials
- [Request to Use Deception](#) form
- Human Tissues form
- Other, please describe:

\*Ensure that all applicable attachments are included with all copies of your application. Incomplete applications cannot be processed and will be returned to the applicant.

## Appendix 4: Design and Construction of *The Office*

Synthesizing the input from sex workers, budget constraints, aesthetic possibilities and practical realities has been a challenge. The fixed parameters were:

1. Provide a sewage plinth of sufficient capacity to accommodate five women working three shifts for fifteen days (125 litres);
2. Provide a wet sump for the ashtray to accommodate 8 litres of water and 7000 cigarette butts;
3. Provide comfortable seating for three across a small table;
4. Provide lockable storage for personal items for four people;
5. Minimize the footprint on the sidewalk to fit within a three and one half by seven foot rectangle.

### Construction

The starting point was the septic plinth constructed of plywood and cedar, and sprayed inside and out with polyurethane (Rhino Lining). Surmounting the oval plinth and cantilevering four inches all around is a base of treated plywood. From this platform on a more or less ad hoc basis, a plywood armature was constructed.

At this point electrical chases, rainwater leaders, and vent stacks had to be incorporated. The compound roof structure was created by laminating thin sheets of plywood and using wood ribs. The whole structure was enveloped with 18 gauge galvanized wire mesh for extra strength. It was particularly difficult to get the toilet door to open from a compound curved surface.

The more or less fully-formed object was now sprayed with high density (3lb/ft) polyurethane foam—it looked like a lumpy blue *smurf* house. The hard work of hand sanding the lumpy foam to a fair form took several weeks. The next surface was fiberglass mat and polyester resin and then many layers of gel coat. This was hand sanded again and finally coated with catalized *Endura* polyurethane paint and given a 3000 grit polish that yields the finished sheen.

## **Electrical**

I had hoped to use solar panels and low voltage lighting but the budget would not allow this. The electrical system is now 120 VAC at 15 A with GFI protection. The system comprises:

- A. Single pole switch for the pink neon soffitt lightin;
- B. A 30 minute timed switch for task lighting over the table;
- C. A 5 minute timed switch for the toilet light;
- D. A pressure switch under the toilet seat to indicate occupancy;
- E. A 5 minute timed switch activating an emergency signaling device on the roof (blue xenon strobe).

## **Rainwater**

The curved roof is concave on top preventing rainwater from dripping from the edge and conducting it through a stainless steel funnel and hose to the sidewalk, away from either of the entrance points.

## **Wastewater**

The septic sump can be cleaned by pumping through a 9-inch diameter ABS tube under the toilet. The ashtray sump can be cleaned by opening a 6-inch diameter marine deck flange on the floor of the seating cabin.

## **Security**

The toilet is accessed via a four digit illuminated push key combination lock which always relocks upon closing. This lock has a keyed override feature. The storage lockers are accessed by a three digit combination lock which resets after each use. This locker

has a keyed override feature as well. Toilet tissue (1500 ft. 2 ply) is in a locked dispenser with keys held by maintenance staff and outreach workers (see attached photos).