

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: CONNECTIONS TO COMMUNITY
(INTEGRATING PIMLICO RACE COURSE
INTO A RENEWED COMMUNITY VISION)

Chi Y Yan, Master of Architecture, 2007

Directed By: Professor Karl F. G. DuPuy, AIA, School of
Architecture, Planning, & Preservation

Historic Pimlico Race Course holds many distinctions as a time honored American landmark whose life spans three centuries and many noteworthy events. It is the crowning jewel to a vibrant and historic Maryland thoroughbred industry as the home to the Preakness Stakes. Pimlico embodies the truest sense of a rural Maryland identity within the context of its most urban city.

Pimlico Race Course is in the northwest quadrant of Baltimore City adjacent to the Park Heights neighborhood. Once a vibrant immigrant community, today it is home to a struggling predominantly African American community suffocated by crime, drugs, and a high degree of housing and property vacancies. This thesis asserts that Pimlico must become an asset to its neighbors. To survive and revitalize, a new Pimlico must become an active participant in the community through the integration of a program conducive to its business, the culture of horseracing, and the community.

CONNECTIONS TO COMMUNITY (INTEGRATING PIMLICO RACE COURSE
INTO A RENEWED COMMUNITY VISION)

By

Chi Y Yan

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Dedication

I dedicate this to my fiancée, Sarah. I would not have been able to complete this journey without your unrelenting love, support, and patience. Thank you.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank everyone for their generous offerings of time and knowledge that made this possible. To you I am eternally grateful.

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Introduction

This thesis explores the complex and unique relationships between an urban residential community and a large sports venue. There exist tremendous issues regarding scale that appear to be at odds with each other. Matters of use, circulation, dimension, typology, program, transportation, connectivity, use, all have seemingly divergent needs yet there is precedent for a solution to this difficult problem. In an ideal situation, where the community is flourishing and the athletic program is financially viable, this would prove to be a profound design opportunity. This thesis does not have that luxury. Instead, it suggests an engagement between neighborhoods among the most neglected and treacherous in the city with a sports industry that has steadily fallen in popularity in this state for many years. As both have fallen on hard times, it is clear that neither have listened to each others' needs and concerns. The solution then involves a greater understanding of what it means to help ones fellow neighborhood regardless of the circumstances surrounding its failures. The solution to both problems requires a unified strategy.

This thesis confronts the rethinking and redesign of Pimlico Race Course as a way to engage the neighborhood and elevate reinvestment, while serving its own interests to better compete with the crowded sports entertainment market. The design solution introduces a number of programmatic elements that offer keys to issues of best use for the site. It is equally important to introduce outward focused elements that open the site to public activity throughout the year. The plan will not be a success unless it encourages reinvestment into the local residential communities and commercial

development. At present the 130 acre site has horse racing as its lone programmatic function, of which only 31 days are occupied by live racing. Despite activity associated with the year round training of horses and live race simulcasting, the site remains largely idle through much of the year. The site has a social, physical, and financial responsibility and opportunity to become much more than that. The solution also involves a partnership with existing neighborhood amenities through urban connections. Sinai Hospital of Baltimore, Levindale Hebrew Geriatric Center & Hospital, and Cylburn Arboretum are located just east of Pimlico Race Course. There is an opportunity through their proximity that these amenities can be made accessible to the community for services, community space, and employment, all of which bring value to the area.

This thesis addresses the needs of a large site and advocates an exclusive program to bring about positive changes to a difficult neighborhood. It asserts that there is great value in the thoroughbred racing industry for the state of Maryland. Pimlico Race Course is the ceremonial and historic epicenter of Maryland Horse Racing and as a result requires a concerted commitment to an accessible solution to assure its future existence. This existence requires a dramatic shift in philosophy and an obligation to the surrounding communities and the greater region if it is to thrive. This thesis is not just about horse racing. Its success requires a much broader view taking into account issues that affect the broader community, the city, and the entire state.

Figure 001: Pimlico Race Course Starting Gate [David Hobby]

I. Maryland Equine, Thoroughbred Racing, & Pimlico

Pimlico Race Course – Unique Beginnings

Figure 002: Pimlico members' clubhouse circa 1959
[<http://www.pimlico.com/About+Us/History/MJCHistory.htm>]

The idea for Pimlico Race Course was born in 1868 out of a friendly wager between then Governor Oden Bowie and prominent racing figures at a dinner party in Saratoga, New York. The wager would be settled by a race of three year old horses with the winner given the honor to host the losers for dinner, thus the Dinner Party Stakes (now referred to as Dixie Handicap) was born. Governor Bowie pledged to build a racetrack in his home state to hold the race beating out Saratoga and the American Jockey Club for the honor and thus Pimlico was born. The winning horse, in the seven horse race was a first time starter named Preakness. Three years later to commemorate the event, Governor Bowie introduced a mile and one half stakes race with the namesake of this winning horse.¹ Given the long standing history of the Preakness Stakes as part of the Triple Crown Races, Pimlico rose to national prominence and played host to the most famous horses and racing events in history.



Figure 003: Preakness, the winner of the first Dinner Party Stakes at Pimlico. 1870. [<http://www.preakness-stakes.info/preakness.php>]

Action at the Track

Attendance has been on a steady decline at Pimlico. At one time, spending the day at the track was reserved for special occasions spent with the entire family. It was the sport of the privileged and the wealthy. Pimlico prospered in a time when the suburbs of Baltimore were full of stable middle to upper income neighborhoods. As more and more people moved from Baltimore City to the surrounding counties, the attendance at Pimlico began to decline. Further accelerating the decline, was the transformation of Baltimore City from what was once a mostly blue collar port city, to a city with many cultural and entertainment tourism attractions to choose from. Families that once went to track to spend the day now went to the Inner Harbor to visit the Aquarium or the Science Center. For much of the racing season, Pimlico is left with only the committed racing enthusiast. It had missed the mark and failed to adapt to the market in order to attract a diverse clientele.



Figure 004: Pimlico Race Course Grandstands. [author]
The original grandstands (foreground) remain empty except during the running of the Preakness Stakes.

Tracks throughout the country are facing similar declines in live attendance. Horse racing grew and thrived out of the late nineteenth early twentieth century when horse betting was one of the few forms of gambling entertainment available. The years have spawned many more forms of entertainment options while Pimlico has relied largely on live racing as the lone draw to the track. In addition, as other tracks have greatly improved their infrastructure and amenities, Pimlico has depended upon minor incremental changes in the maintenance of their facilities. Pimlico now has a difficult time attracting patrons beyond the dedicated seasoned gambler.



Figure 005: Laurel Park Simulcasting Parlor during the running of the Maryland Million. Simulcasting clientele is generally limited to an older male demographic. Only a small percentage is women or men under 35 years old. [author]

Attending the racetrack used to mean the whole family including the children; they would spend the full day the track. It was always a special event and would bring people out wearing their best attire. Short of the Preakness, today's attendance at Pimlico is largely made up of long time racing devotees. The environment is no longer an appropriate option for a family excursion.



Figure 006: Simulcasting Parlor at Pimlico Race Course. The connection to the race track is largely lost as facilities have no view to the outside. [author]

In addition, the advent of off track betting and the recent growth in internet wagering has greatly reduced the attendance at the track. Race tracks can no longer rely solely upon live racing as the only form of entertainment to attract customers.

Maryland Racing – Difficult Times

One look at the current physical conditions at Pimlico Racetrack exposes the true state of the thoroughbred industry. Once referred to as the sport of kings, thoroughbred racing has seen a steady decline in attendance following the wide national popularity of Triple Crown performances by Secretariat, Seattle Slew, and Affirmed in the 1970's. The equine community is divided when it comes to racing. Sporting events such as carriage driving, dressage, and show jumping are seen differently than racing events such as "flat" racing, steeple chasing, and harness racing where purses are involved. Also, there is a perception in the equine community that the thoroughbred industry does not look out for the best interest of the horses as compared to other sporting events and pleasure riding. Despite the struggles and division among the various sports, most agree that racing is critical to the success of the entire industry as it supports many other related businesses.

The Maryland Horse Park, a proposed 800 acre facility housing equine sporting and recreational facilities, as well as educational public outreach facilities to be located in Gambrills, Maryland, represents a committed investment from the state and private interests, to the equine industry. The horse park will focus on the non purse events such as carriage driving, dressage, and show jumping with facilities worthy of Olympic competition. Developed through participation from private industry and the

Maryland Stadium Authority, when realized, this world class facility will bring major sporting events and national exposure to the area. Pimlico has the opportunity to expand the goals to include thoroughbred racing as part of the equine industry's economic growth strategy. Through a partnership of program development, both facilities can begin to rebuild interrelationships while offering amenities that would attract both new and existing enthusiasts to all equine sports.

Economic Impact of Thoroughbred Industry in Maryland

The statistical data illustrates the fact that the Maryland horse industry is a vital part of local economy. The popularity of the industry locally is evident in that there are more horse shows in the Washington, D.C. region than anywhere else in the country. According to the 2002 Maryland Equine Census, the total of all equine-related assets in Maryland are valued at \$5.2 billion dollars. There are a total of 20,000 horse farms and 87,000 horses in the state of Maryland. Horse people own 685,000 acres of land which amounts to a full 10% of available land in Maryland. Maryland has more horses per square mile than Virginia and Kentucky combined. 38,000 people are actively involved in the equine operations in the state. Racing horses accounts for a full 40% of the total horse population in the state of Maryland and therefore plays a vital role in the general health of the entire economy.² Pimlico Race Course represents the crowning jewel in this long standing Maryland industry. It becomes imperative for the success of horse racing in Maryland that Pimlico not only return to its past glory, but to also look forward to become current and viable in the today's climate. The Maryland horse industry cannot stand to lose its hold on one of the three

premier stakes in horse racing. The Preakness Stakes and its related activities represent 60 million dollars for the state of Maryland as well as invaluable national and international exposure.³ It shines the spotlight on Baltimore once a year with coverage that highlights Maryland's true commitment and legacy in the racing industry. If the Preakness stakes were to move to another state, the negative impact would be measurable on the entire Maryland horse industry.

Redevelopment Strategy

This thesis proposes a design strategy that addresses the state of Maryland horse racing and Pimlico Race Course from a variety of perspectives. It is an affirmation that horse racing is a vital part of Maryland identity not only in terms of its relationship to the rich equine tradition, but also to the state's agricultural identity*. Pimlico plays host to one of the three biggest events in all of horse racing around the world and as such, becomes an international stage to showcase all that there is in Baltimore City. Pimlico requires a renewed commitment from all stakeholders, the industry, and city and state governments to preserve its existence and carry it forward into the 21st century. This initiative must do more to bridge the gap that currently exists between it and the surrounding communities. It would be shortsighted to put forward a design strategy absent from addressing many of the needs and concerns present in the area.

This thesis has the opportunity and obligation to do more and will be successful by addressing the following:

- a) must improve upon the existing spectator accommodations to reflect current standards; It is also imperative that the accommodations provide good light and air, comfortable accommodations, and generous views to the racetrack and the outside;
- b) should introduce program elements that will bring additional visitors and commercial activity throughout the calendar year;
- c) should introduce mixed use program elements including housing, retail, commercial, and local services that provide ways to support and enhance the local communities;
- d) 28 acre infield should be utilized as part of the program and design strategies and include new publicly accessible green space;
- e) proposal should make connections so as to connect the site to Sinai Hospital, the Cylburn Arboretum, AND all local communities.

Figure 007: Park Heights Community Mural
[Jessica M. Garrett, Special to baltimoresun.com]

II. **Northwest Baltimore**

Baltimore City & Northwest

Northwest Baltimore developed alongside the transportation routes for accessing farms beyond the city; these were the routes used to transport crops harvests to the port of Baltimore, where they were shipped to Europe and the West Indies. As Baltimore served as an active port for European immigrants beginning in the early 19th century, many of these communities were settled largely by these hard working immigrants. Through an expansive network of streetcar lines, many urban communities prospered, including those nearby Pimlico. Main streets and local businesses developed in and around public transportation and as a result, neighborhoods thrived. By 1950, Park Heights settled into a stable neighborhood of 2nd generation Jewish immigrants.⁴

Figure 008: Park Heights Avenue Streetcar Line. [www.btco.net]

Northwest Baltimore at Present

Today, Northwest Baltimore is an illustration of drastic contrasts. Neighborhoods just north and east of Pimlico continue to prosper as stable, vibrant communities with great street activity and cultural diversity. But neighborhoods just south and west of the racetrack have fallen victim to the suburban migration that has so greatly

impacted much of the Baltimore City. These neighborhoods are saddled with low property values, high poverty levels, and building vacancies and abandonments. Since 1990, the vacancy rate in Park Heights has doubled. One clear sign of struggle, while the latest real estate surge has produced rising home prices for much of the state, property value in Park Heights has declined by twenty percent.⁵

Figure 009: Park Heights Community Aerial Photograph [local.live.com]

The population has little diversity and is over 96% African American. A large percentage of children are born out of wedlock and live in single family households. Drugs and crime have taken a strong hold in the area holding people hostage in their own homes. This turmoil in the community has greatly affected the safety in the area and has greatly accelerated the downturn in attendance at Pimlico. Though the area is not without hope; there has been a quiet growth of an entrepreneurial Jamaican community with an increasing number of Jamaican restaurants and grocery stores. In addition, communities just east of Park Heights show healthier signs of physical and social stability.

Citizens are attempting to fight back. Local community leaders have worked with city planners, and design professionals to develop a comprehensive master plan for the Park Heights community. This document is a guide to jumpstart reinvestment into the neighborhoods. It is an indication that there is hope from both the city and community leaders to bring about positive changes in the area. It seeks to provide opportunities for those who wish to stay in the community and oversee its redevelopment.

The following chapter analyzes the Pimlico site through four primary scales. This analysis aims to broaden the understanding of the property from a regional perspective, a local urban relationship, and a site specific breakdown. It addresses a range of issues including transportation (public, vehicular, pedestrian), program use and relationships, architectural form and dimension, jurisdictional codes, existing building conditions, and site usage.

Figure 010: Aerial image of Pimlico Racecourse, Baltimore, MD. [Google Earth]
A look at the Pimlico property in relation to the neighboring communities reveals the astonishing impact the site has on the area.

This thesis begins by confronting the segregation the existing program has with its community and formulates a strategy and a program focus that breaks the perceptual and physical divide between the neighborhood and the site. It asserts a greater responsibility to the surrounding communities, but within that accountability lays a solution that can serve both community and racing interests. To formulate a solution requires understanding the site as it relates to not only the surrounding communities, but also to Baltimore City and the region.

Regional Relationships

Pimlico Race Course is located in the northwest quadrant of Baltimore City and is the second oldest racetrack still in operation today, having first opened its gates in 1870. It is the only racetrack in Maryland within Baltimore City limits and is accessible via a collection of major roads and highways. Laurel Park Race Course located conveniently between I-95 and I-295 and equally accessible from Washington D.C. and Baltimore handles the majority of the racing calendar. Since its inception in 1911, Laurel Park has continued right up to today to invest in the quality of both its track facilities and client accommodations. Apart from Preakness Day and the 31 day meet at Pimlico, the attention of Maryland racing falls on Laurel Park the majority of the year. Timonium Racetrack situated in Baltimore County hosts a nine day meet as part of the festivities every summer during the Maryland State Fair.

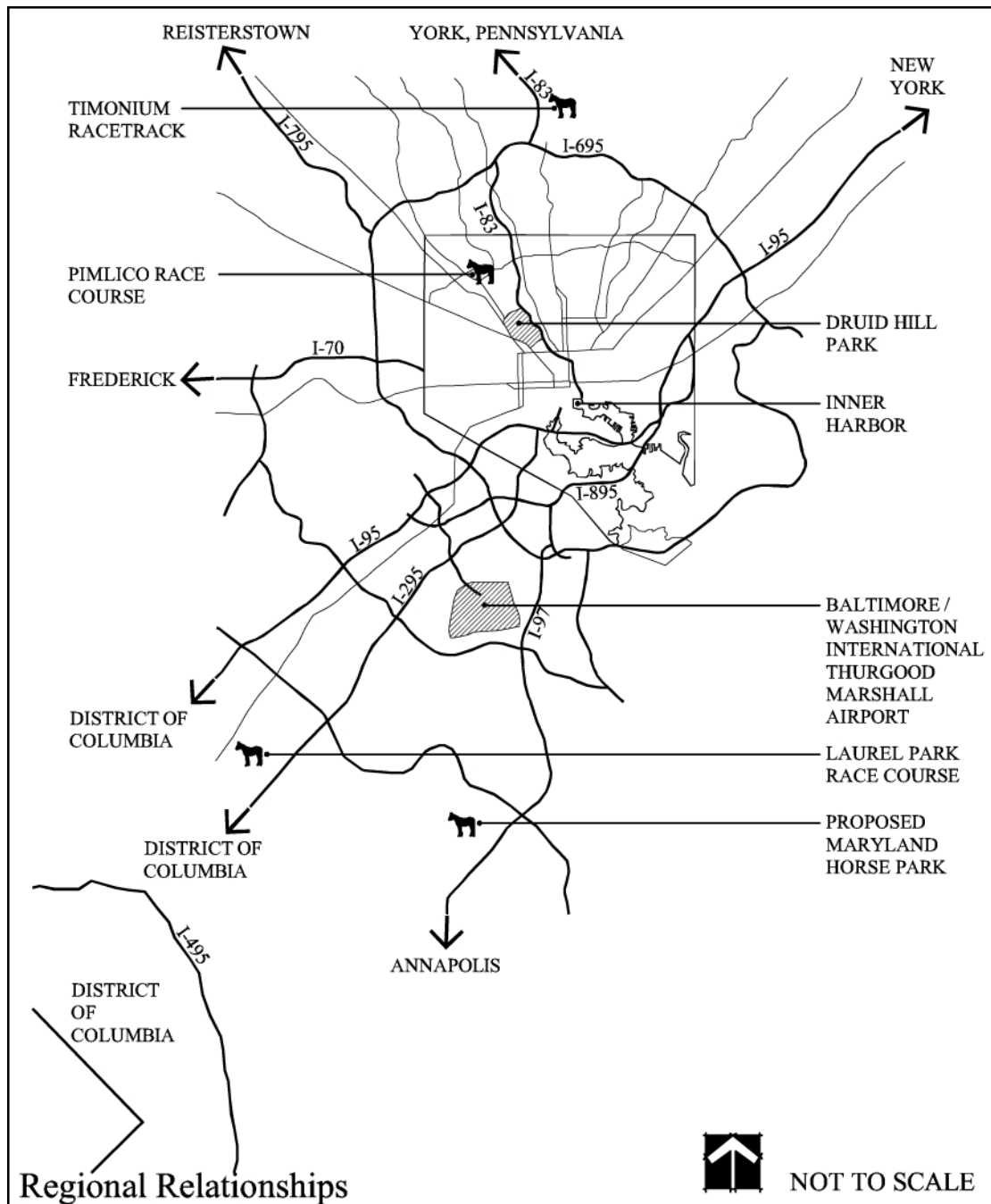


Figure 011: Baltimore City Vicinity with Major Roads. [author]
Pimlico is easily accessible through a number of major highways. Of the three racetracks Pimlico is the only one located in Baltimore City.

Northwest Baltimore

Pimlico Race Course was one of the early inhabitants in northwest Baltimore City.

Introduction of street car networks in the late 19th and early 20th centuries saw the growth of immigrant urban communities in and around Pimlico. Today, this area is a reflection of a number of socio-ethnic-economic conditions.

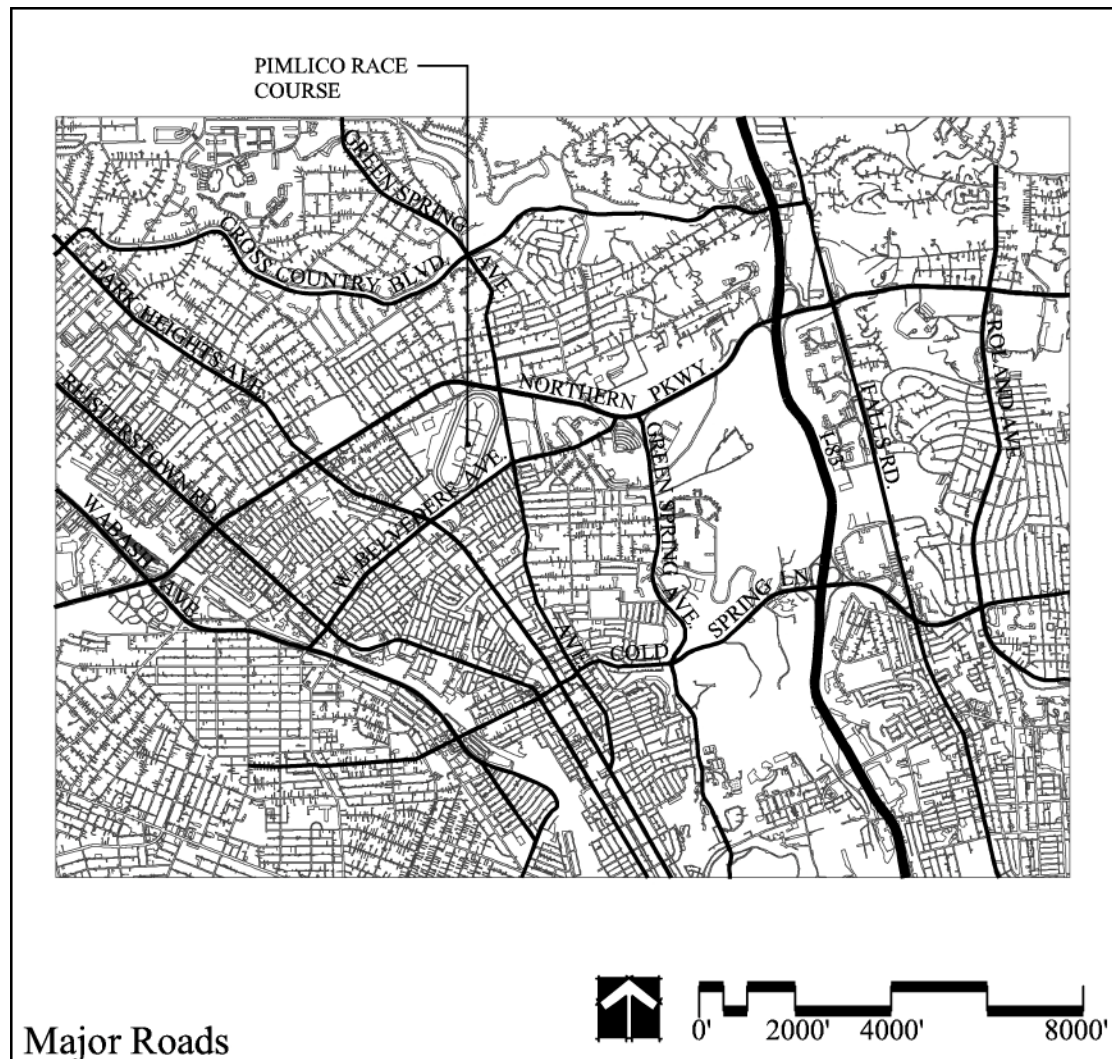


Figure 012: Northwest Baltimore with Major Roads. [author]

Pimlico is accessible through an abundant street network. Interstate 83 is the main artery that provides accesses to the site via Northern Parkway which runs East/West. Additional roads including Reisterstown Road, Park Heights Avenue, and Greenspring Avenue provide many options for access from North/South.

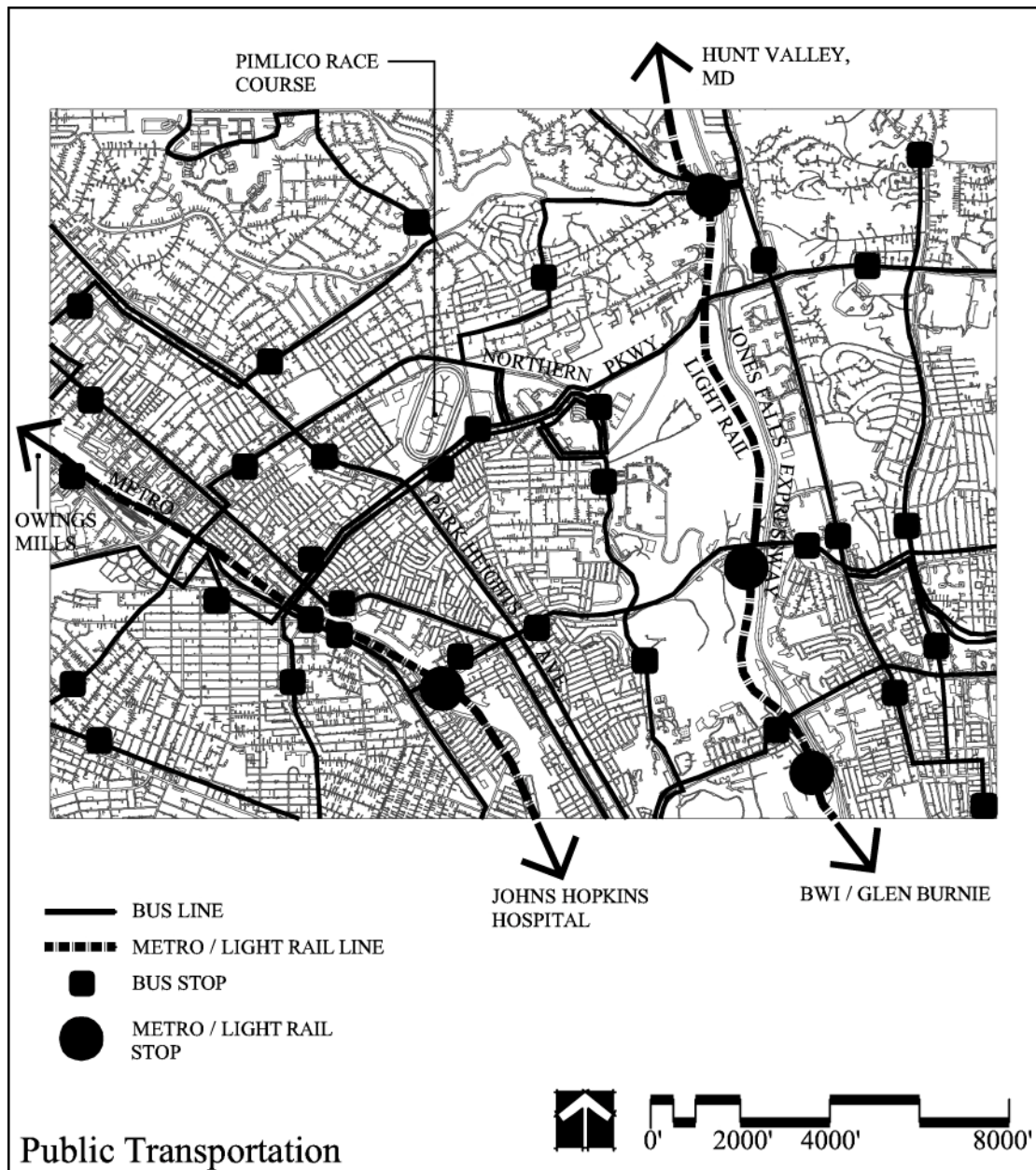


Figure 013: Northwest Baltimore with Public Transportation. [author]
 Baltimore City is supported by three major regional public transportation networks all of which operate within 1.5 miles of Pimlico. Baltimore City's extensive bus network has five bus stops within a short walking distance from Pimlico and extends out to include parts of Baltimore County through a regional express bus network. The light rail service extends from northern Baltimore County to Baltimore / Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport. The Metro Service extends from Owings Mills, through west Baltimore ending at Johns Hopkins Hospital.



01



02



03



04



05

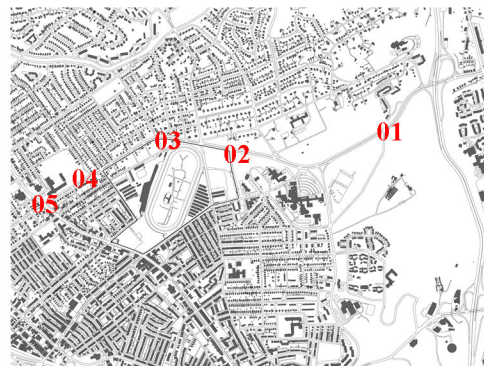


Figure 014: Photographs of Northern Parkway. [author]
Northern Parkway is a 6 lane road with a speed limit of 40 mph. Note the change in character progressing from a parkway character (01), to a boulevard with a receding level and quality of trees and plantings.



01



02



03



04



05



Figure 015: Photographs of nearby roads. [author]

West Belvedere Ave. (image 01) serves as the transition from the residential neighborhoods to just south and Pimlico just north. Pimlico Road (image 02) extends north and south beyond the property, but the stretch within the site has been closed to traffic for a number of years. Park Heights Ave (images 03,04,& 05) has scattered small retail businesses some of which serve as refuge for loitering and criminal activity. The CVS drug store is the largest retailer along this stretch of Park Heights Ave.

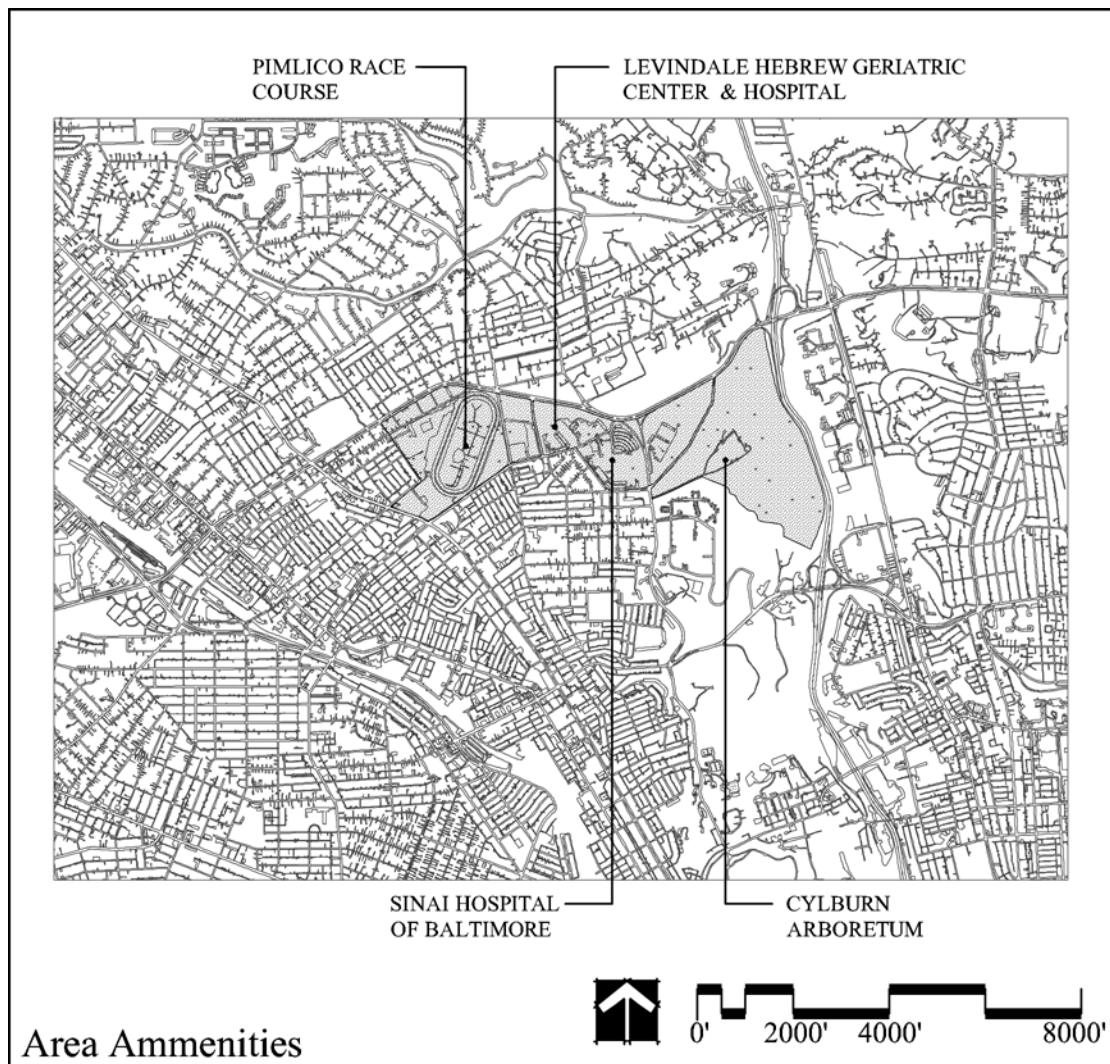


Figure 016: Northwest Baltimore with Adjacent Amenities [author]

The Pimlico Race Course site is adjacent to some valuable community assets and connective opportunities. Immediately to the east are Sinai Hospital of Baltimore and Levindale Hebrew Geriatric Center and Hospital. Further east is the Cylburn Arboretum, a 207 acre nature preserve and city park that serves as a horticulture educational and preservation organization open to the public. Pimlico has opportunities to make connections with all four programs as well as the community.



01



02



03



04



05



Figure 017: Photographs of area amenities. [author]

Sinai Hospital (image 01) provides the largest number of jobs in the area and serves as single source healthcare provider to a large number of local residents. The Cylburn Arboretum (images 02, 03, 04, & 05) is a nature preserve and city park that is currently underutilized by the community.

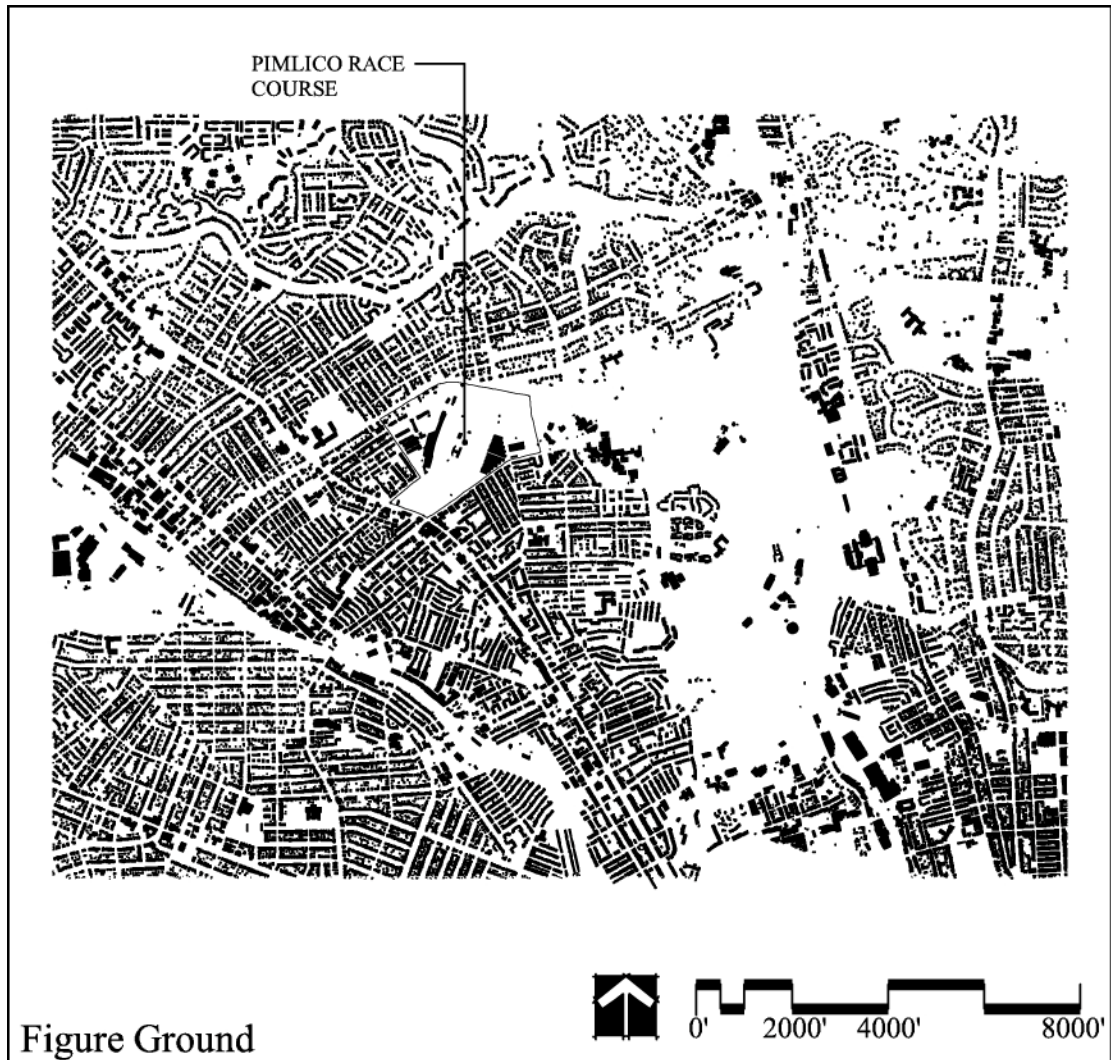


Figure 018: Northwest Baltimore Building Figure Ground. [author]
Pimlico Race Course extends west into the urban communities as a part of a large area of open space from the east. Green space comprises of green buffers adjacent to Northern Parkway, and the Cylburn Arboretum to the east.

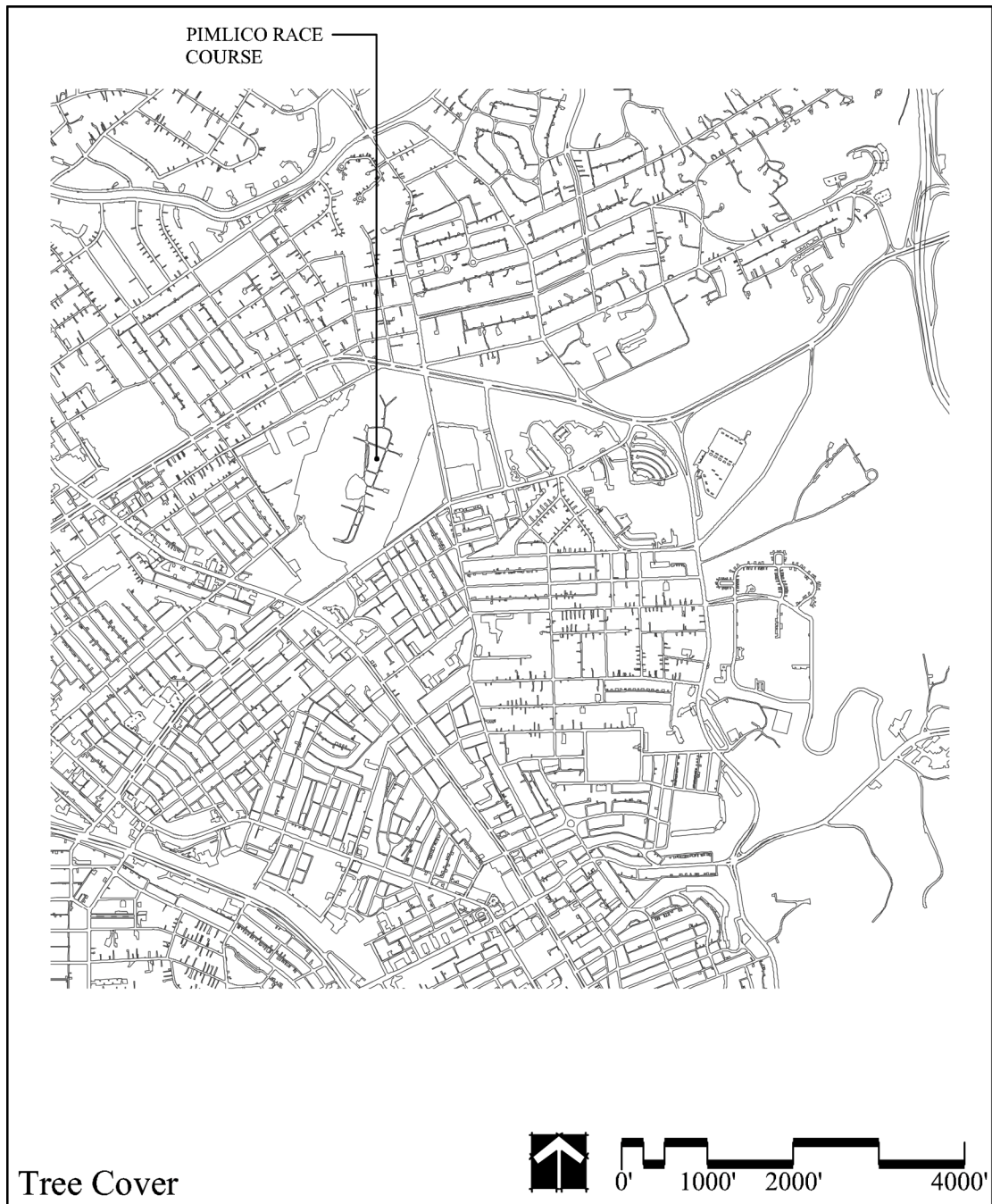


Figure 019: Pimlico Vicinity with Tree Coverage. [author]

Absent the Cylburn Arboretum, areas south of Northern Parkway have little tree coverage. Public right of ways and private property have few mature trees. Neighborhoods north of Northern Parkway have an abundance of trees on private property, in public right of ways, and on undeveloped parks and buffers. This creates drastically different physical neighborhoods reflected also in their crime statistics.

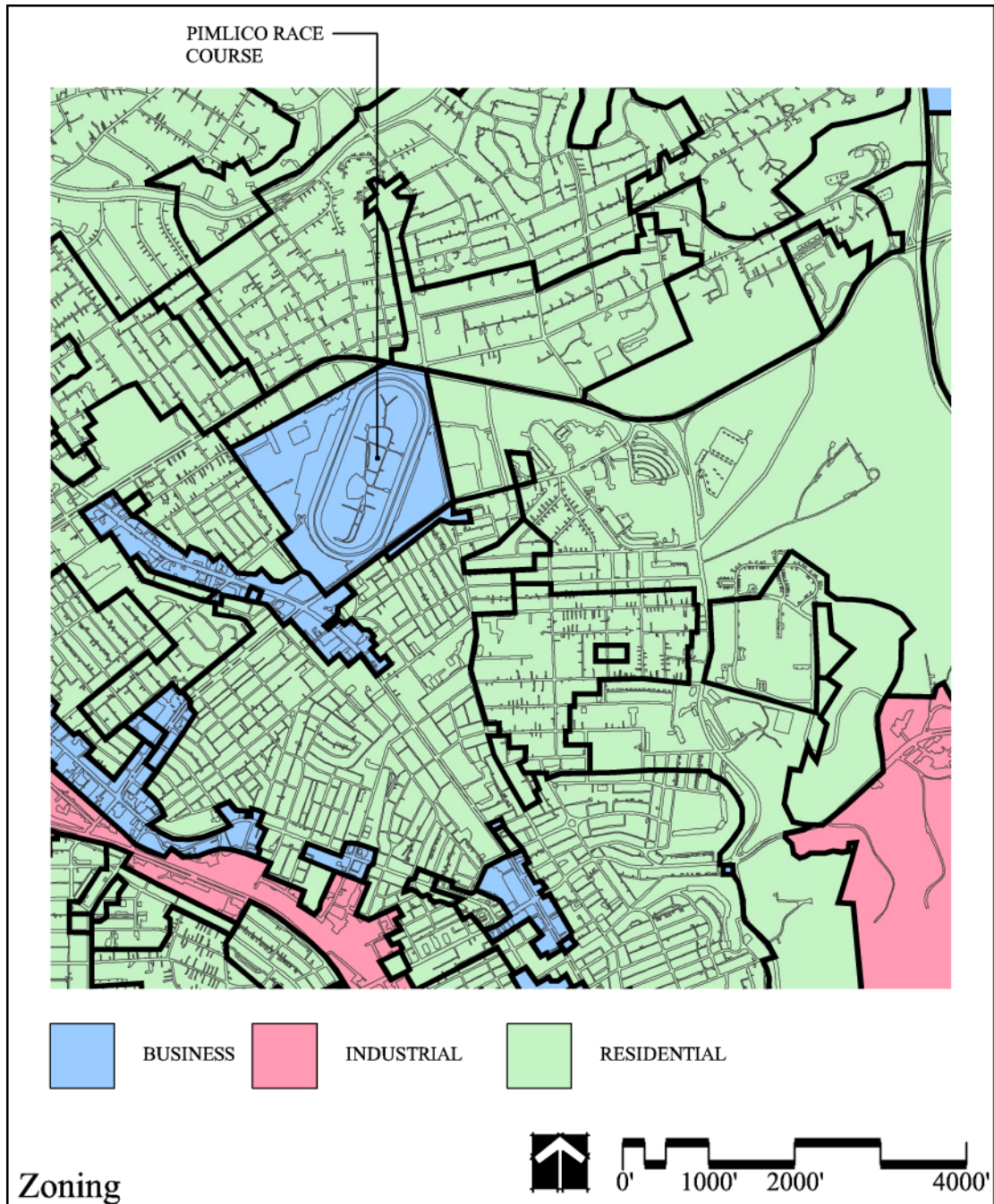


Figure 020: Pimlico Vicinity with Zoning Boundaries. [author]
 Park Heights Avenue serves as the main commercial thoroughfare though much of the commercial core has since deteriorated. There are weak pockets of remaining commercial activity concentrated just west of the site as well as $\frac{3}{4}$ mile further south along Park Heights Avenue. Much of Reisterstown Road commercial activity is mostly focused on vehicular convenience and does not favor pedestrian activity.

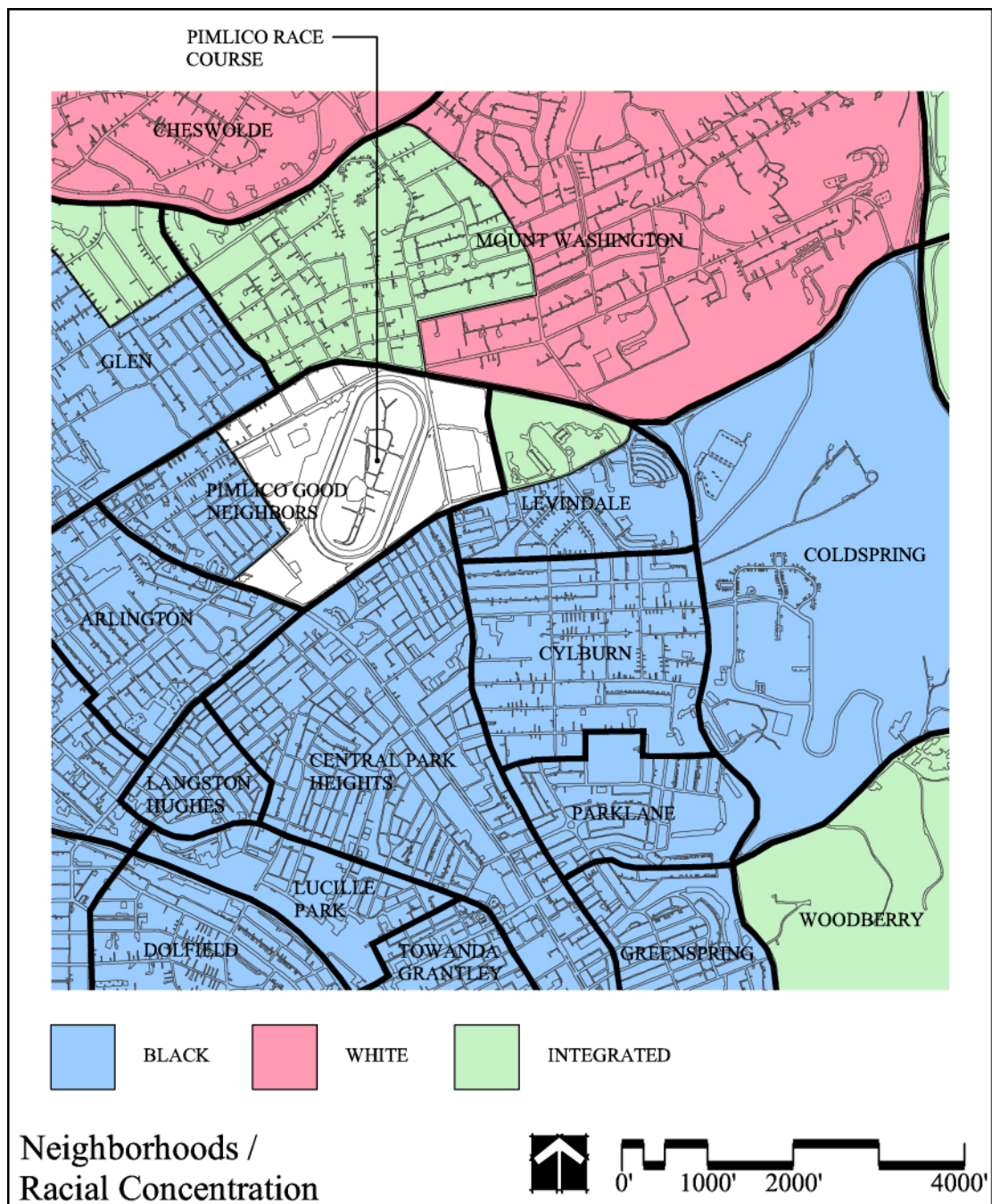


Figure 021: Pimlico Vicinity with Neighborhood Borders & Racial Concentrations [author]. The neighborhoods in and around Pimlico Race Course, south of Northern Parkway are predominantly low income African Americans, whereas the majority of the neighborhoods north of Northern Parkway are either integrated, middle income to affluent whites and African Americans. The Glen neighborhood is home to a large Jewish population.

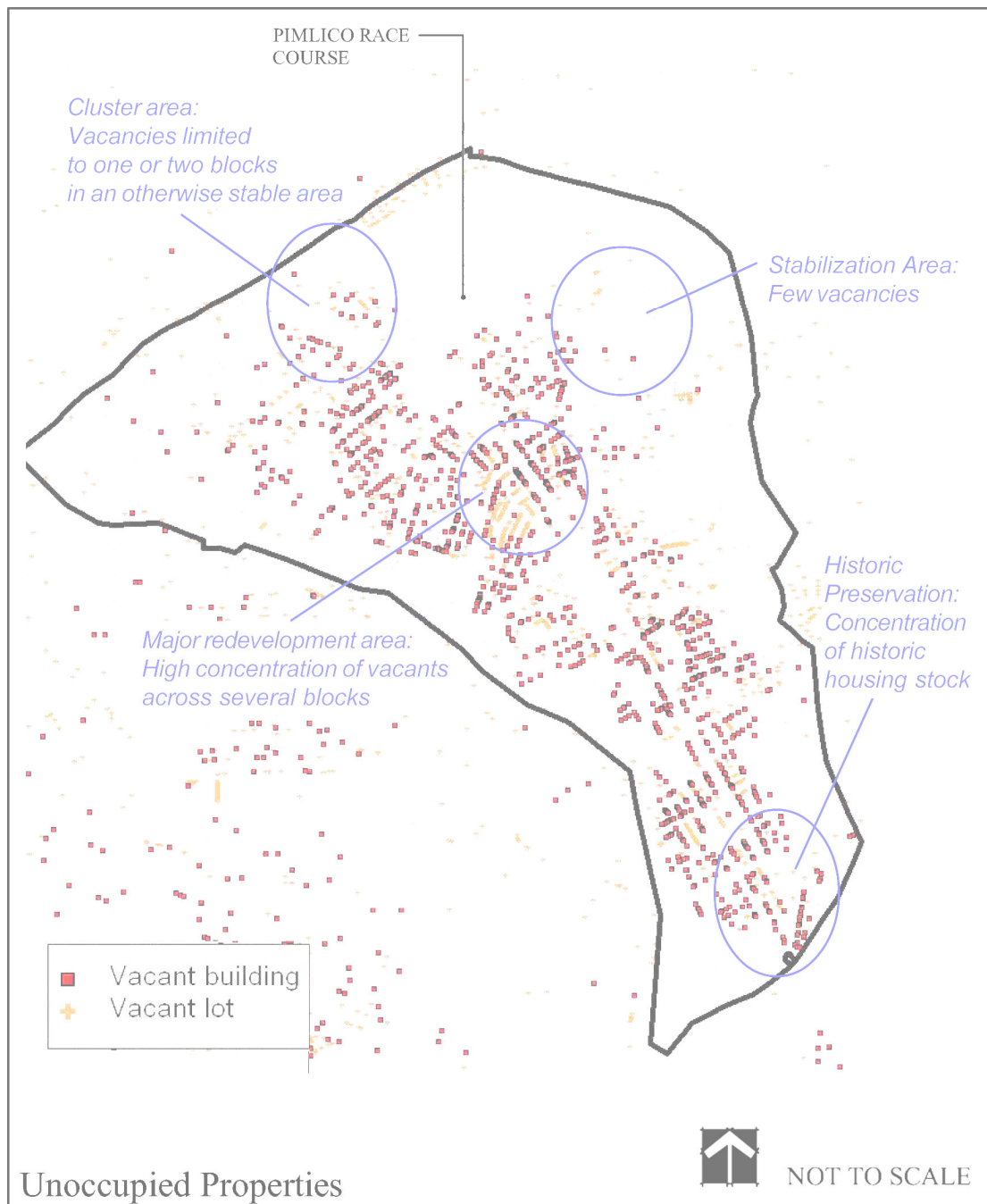


Figure 022: Pimlico Vicinity with Vacant Buildings & Lots [City of Baltimore. Department of Planning].

Many of the neighborhoods in and around Park Heights Avenue have seen high levels of crime through the years. Crime figures place the area among some of the most dangerous in Baltimore City. This coupled with the vacant properties has been unfavorable to the perception of Pimlico. An aggressive redevelopment of the property offers an opportunity to spark a turnaround in the neighborhoods and offer opportunities for business development, jobs, and capital investment.

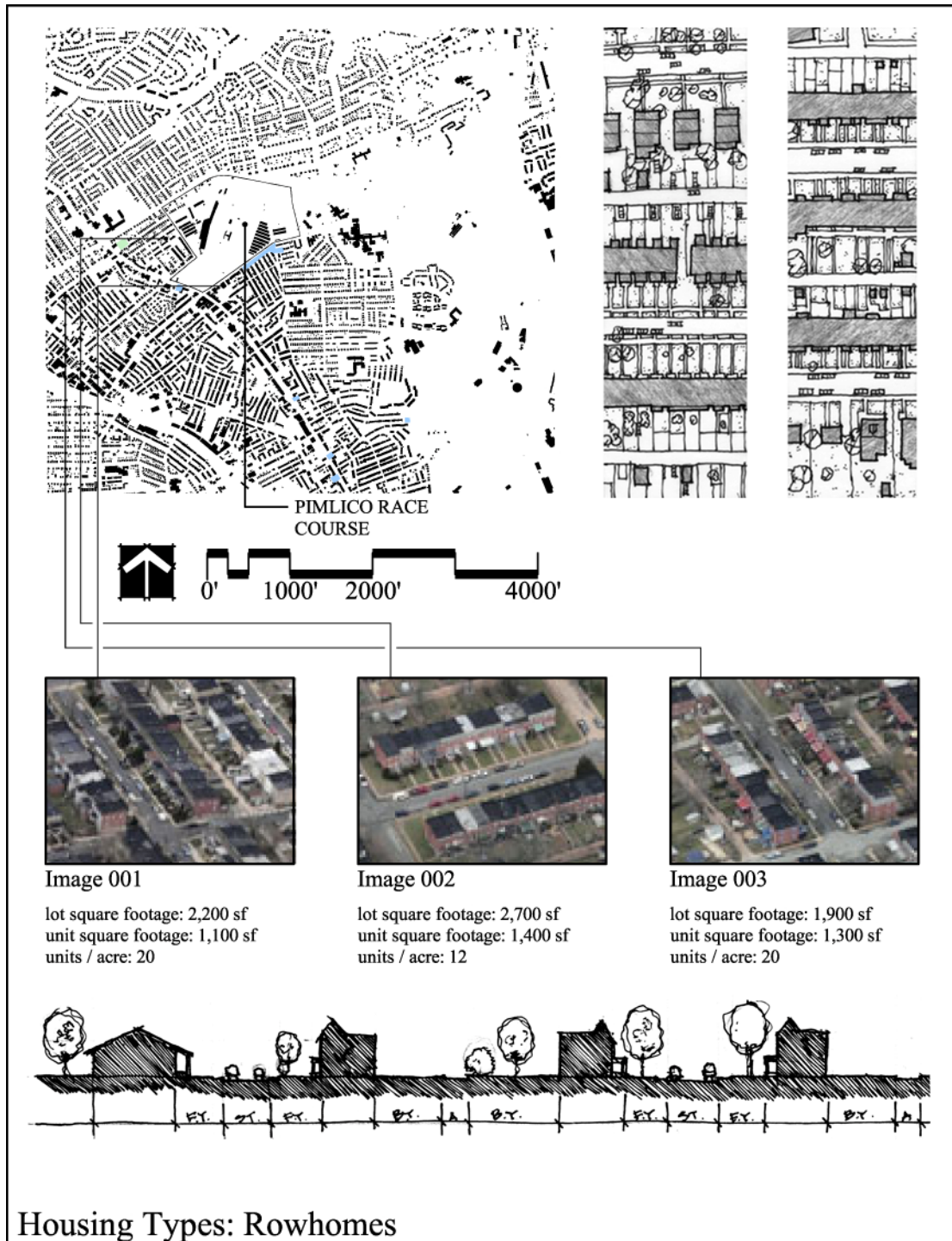


Figure 023: Pimlico Vicinity Row Home Housing Typology. [author]

The majority of housing in Pimlico Good Neighbors, Arlington, Central Park Heights, Langston Hughes, Lucille Park, Towanda Grantley, Parklane, and Greenspring are comprised of this row home typology. The current housing condition is reflected in the assessed median home values ranging between \$3,000 and \$55,000 for this area.

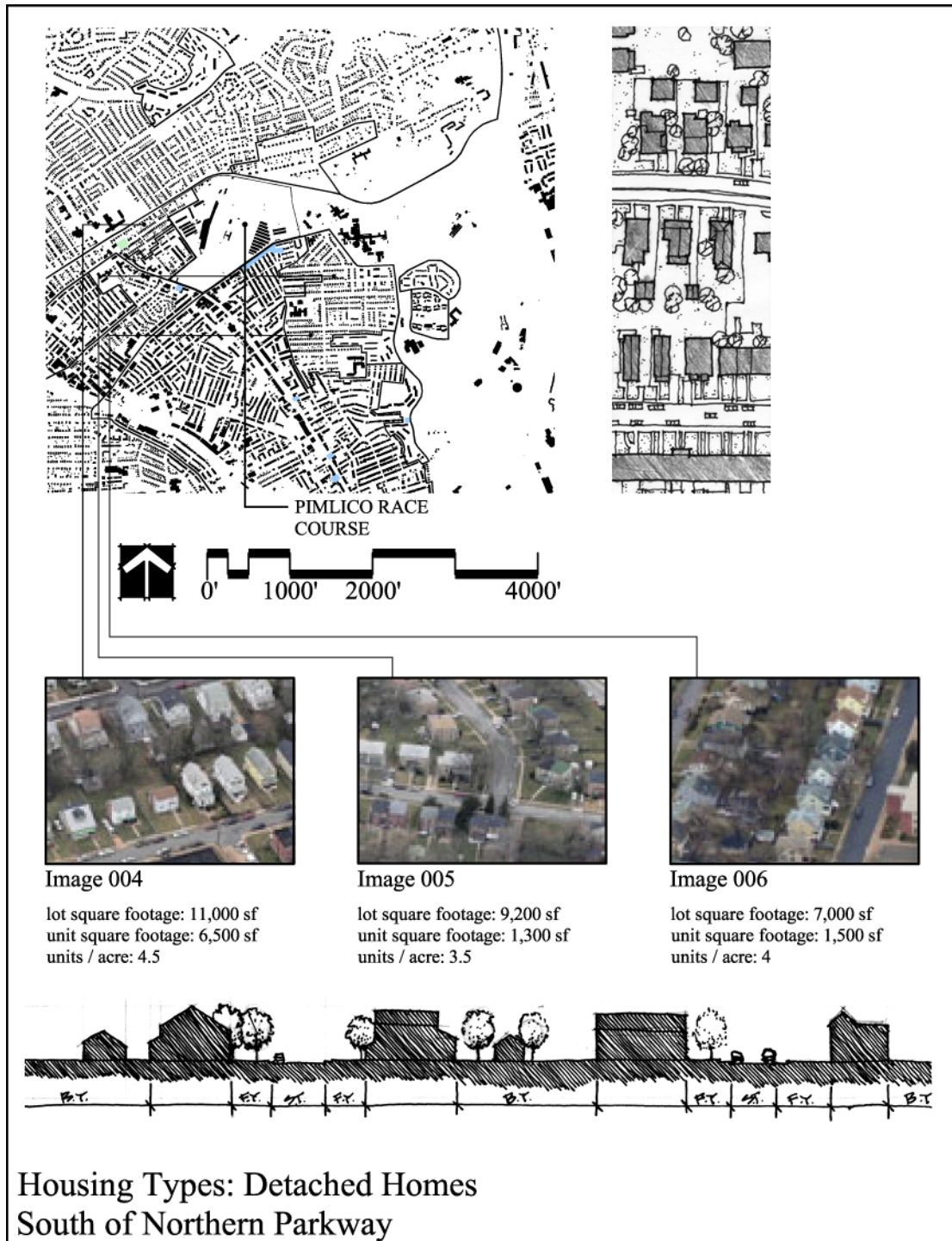


Figure 024: Pimlico Vicinity South of Northern Parkway Detached Housing Typology. [author]
 Housing in Levindale, and Cylburn are comprised of detached homes of various styles and configurations ranging from small bungalows to paired brick homes to larger Victorian homes. Homes are generally in good condition and would support stabilization efforts

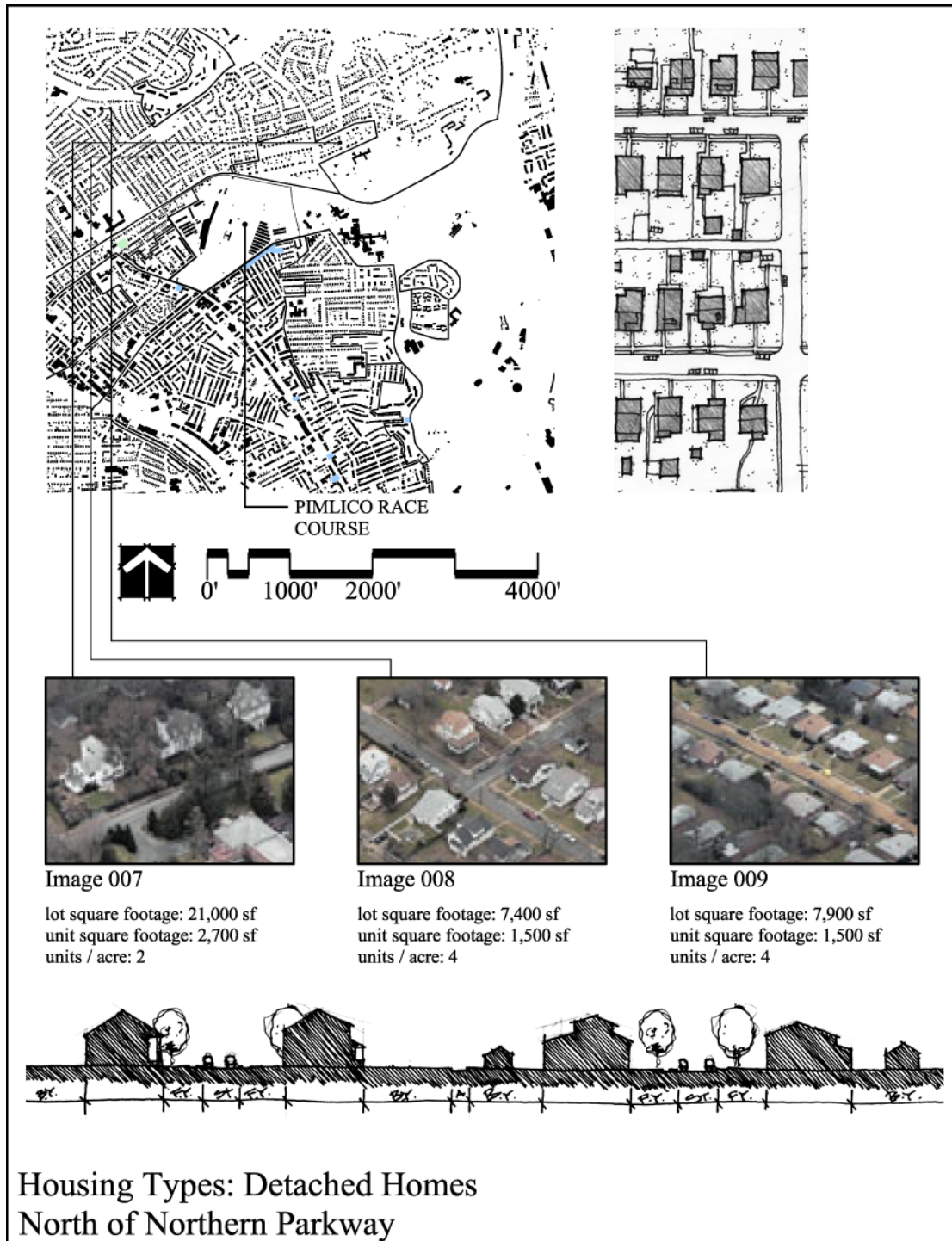


Figure 025: Pimlico Vicinity North of Northern Parkway Detached Housing Typology. [author]
Housing in Mount Washington is comprised of detached homes of various styles and configurations ranging from small bungalows on modest lots to larger Victorian homes on large lots with generous mature landscaping. The neighborhood generally enjoys stable home values. The Glen Neighborhood closer to Reisterstown Road does not enjoy the same level of stability.

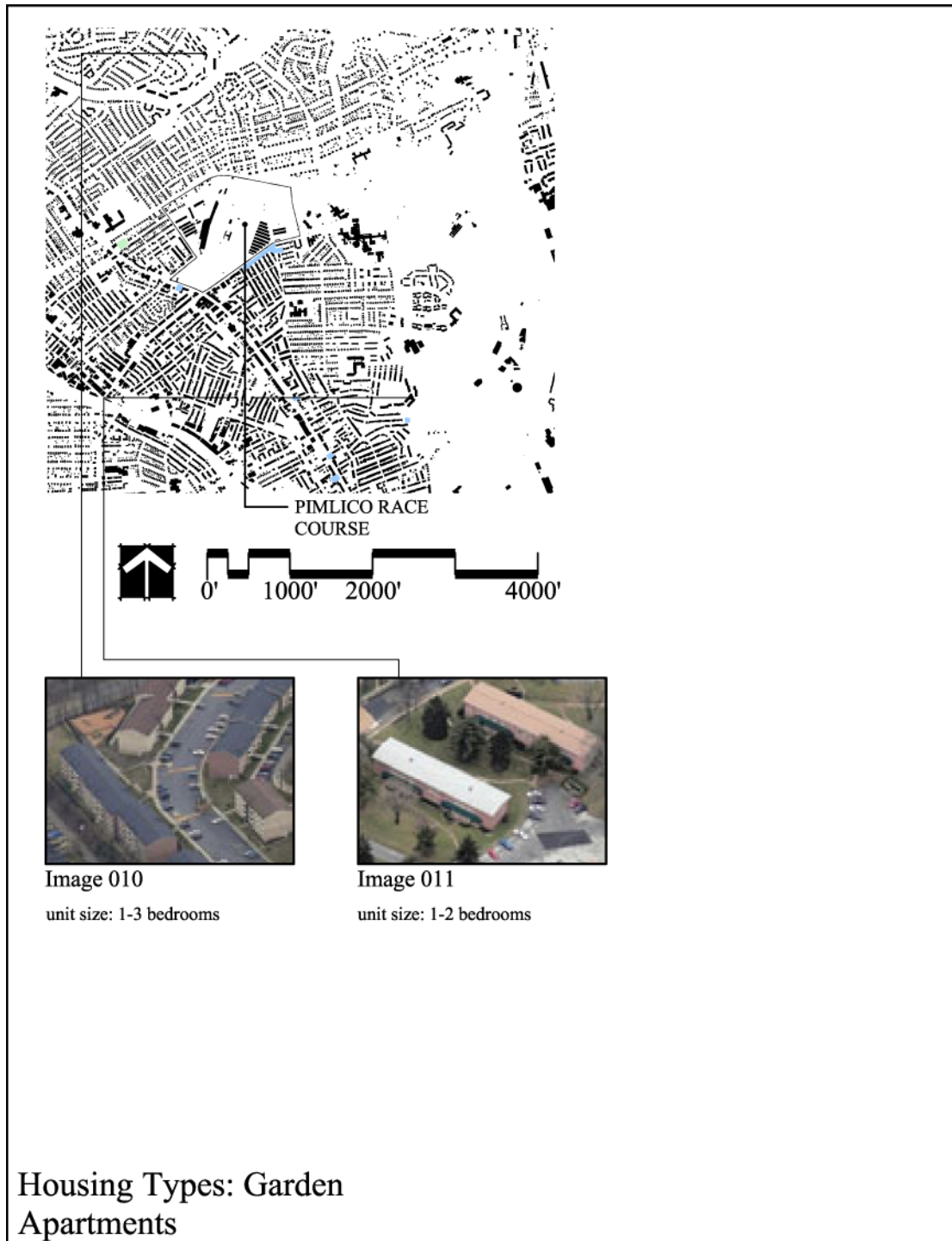


Figure 026: Pimlico Vicinity Garden Apartments Housing Typology. [author]
There are only two garden apartment developments in the area both of which are 3 level low rise buildings with surface parking.



01



02



03



04



05



Figure 027: Photographs of local communities. [author]

The Cylburn neighborhood (images 01, 02, 03, & 04) has remained a stable community. The Park Heights neighborhood just west has fundamental drug and crime issues along with poor physical condition of the housing stock. The Glen (image 05) and Mount Washington neighborhoods immediately north of the site are stable and benefit from stable property values.

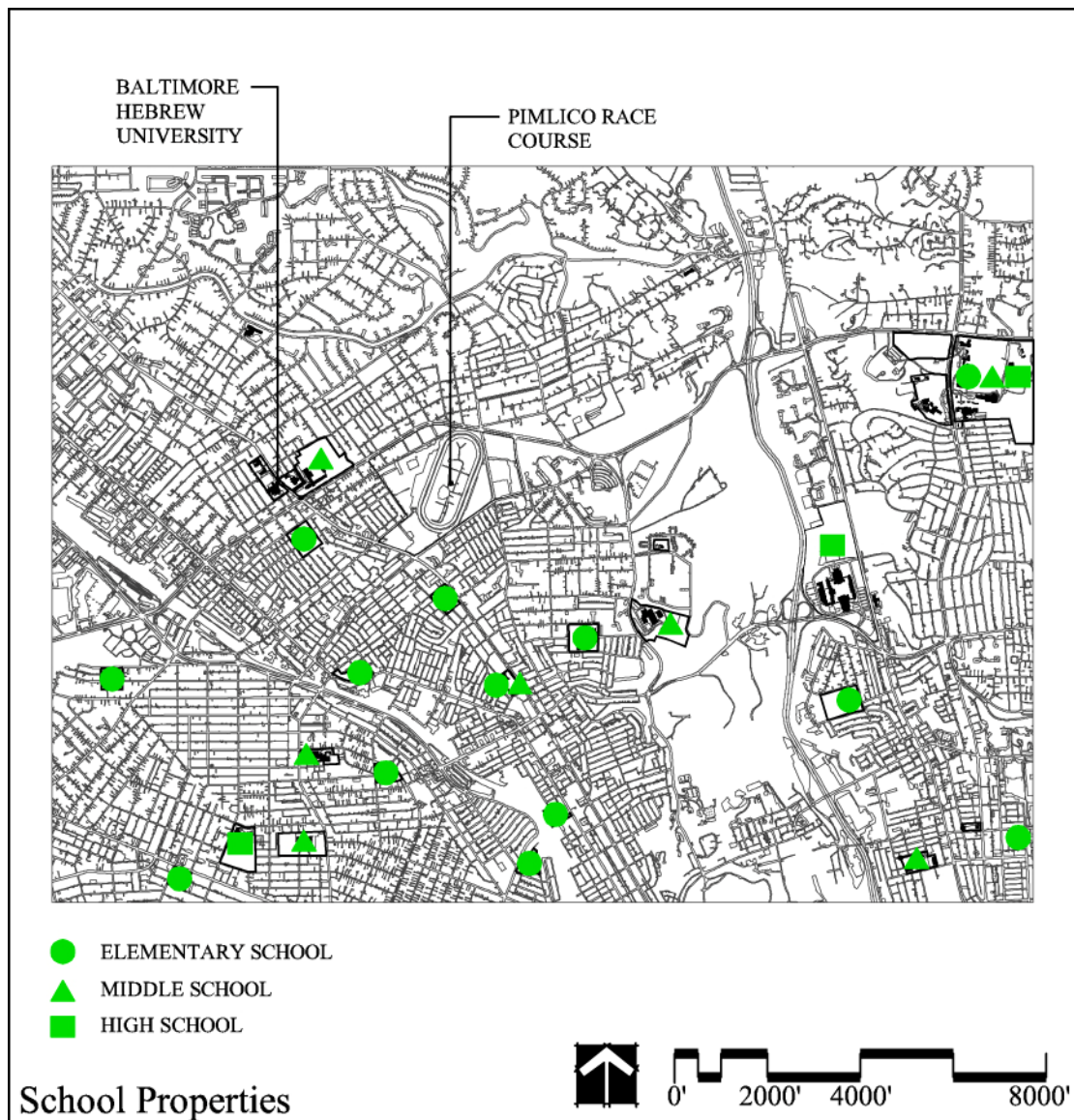


Figure 028: Northwest Baltimore with School Properties. [author]

There are a number of public schools interspersed in the neighborhoods within a mile of Pimlico Race Course. These schools are crucial to the health of the community and serve a vital role in development strategies. Pimlico has an opportunity so make programmatic connections with these and other Baltimore City schools through youth oriented community outreach.

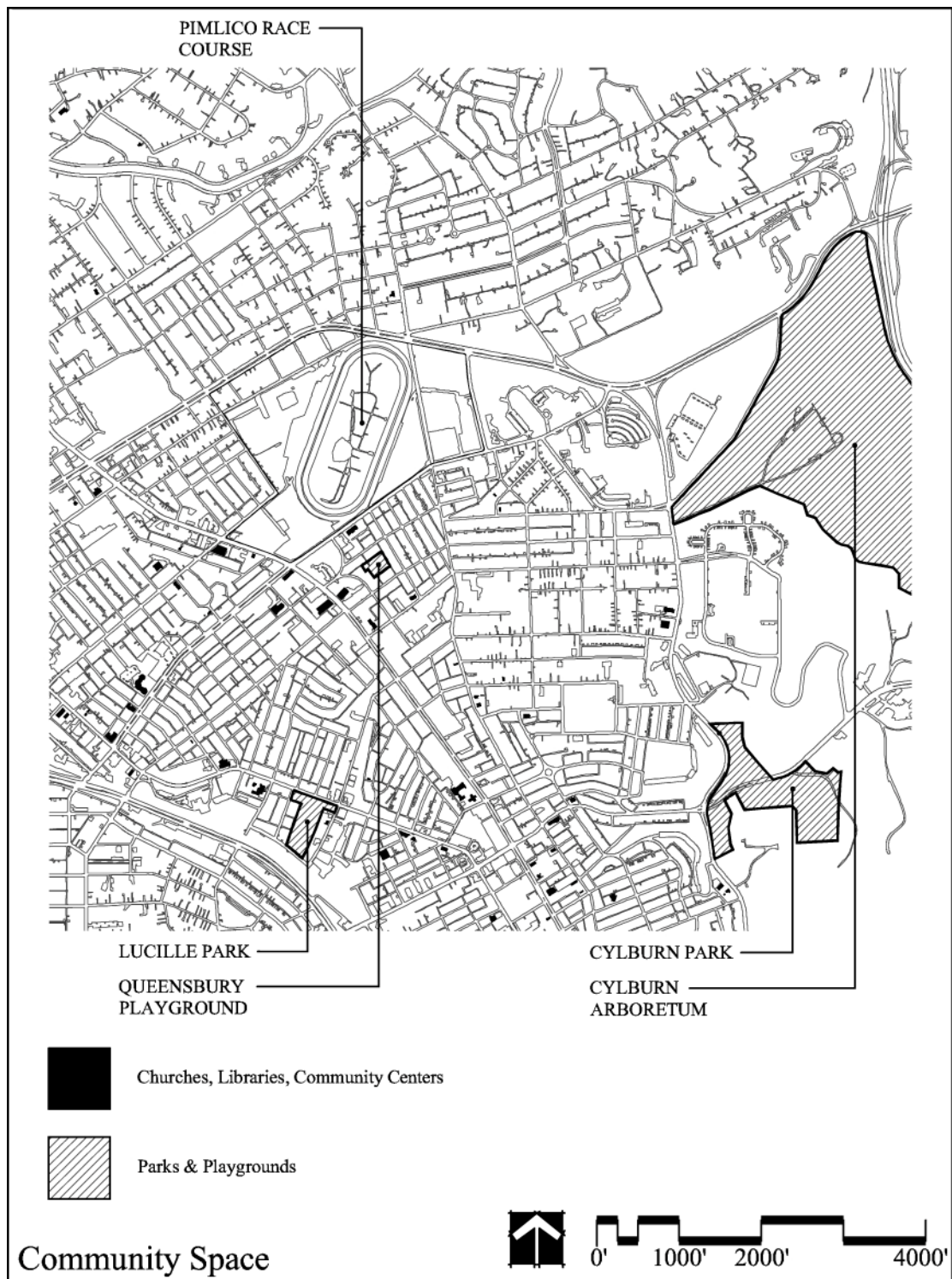


Figure 029: Pimlico Vicinity with Community Facilities, Parks, and Playgrounds. [author]
 There are is abundance of faith ministries along Reisterstown Road and Park Heights Avenue in what can be described as neighborhoods with significant crime and drug issues. There is only one playground located within a 1/2 mile vicinity. This leaves few options for places of outdoor community activity.

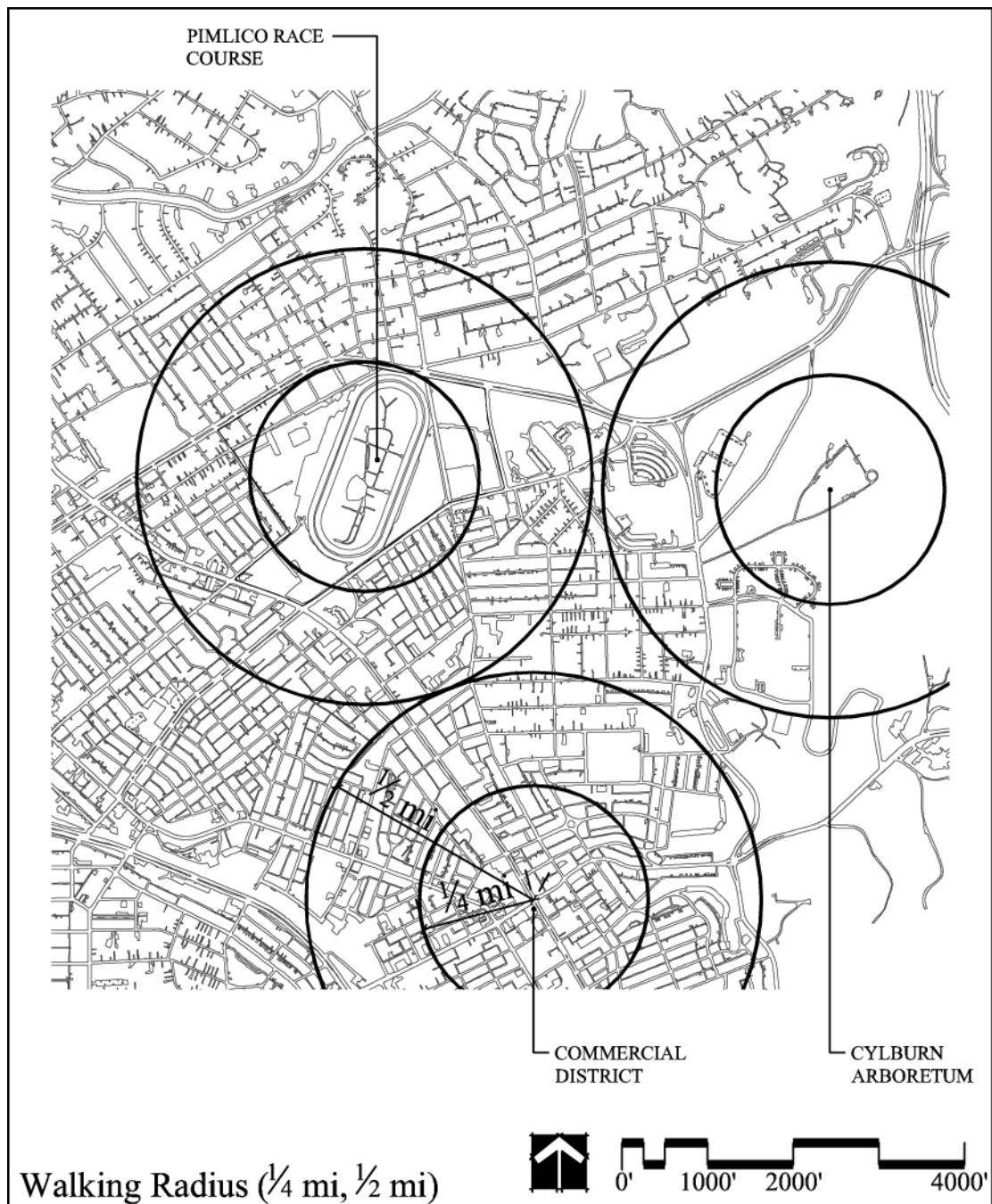


Figure 030: Pimlico Vicinity with Walking Radii. [author]

The Pimlico property is accessible within 1/2 mile distance to a large part of the surrounding neighborhoods. As such, the proposed program will not only provide amenities for the track patrons but also the community. Additionally, this will have the added benefit of spurring economic redevelopment along Park Heights Avenue.

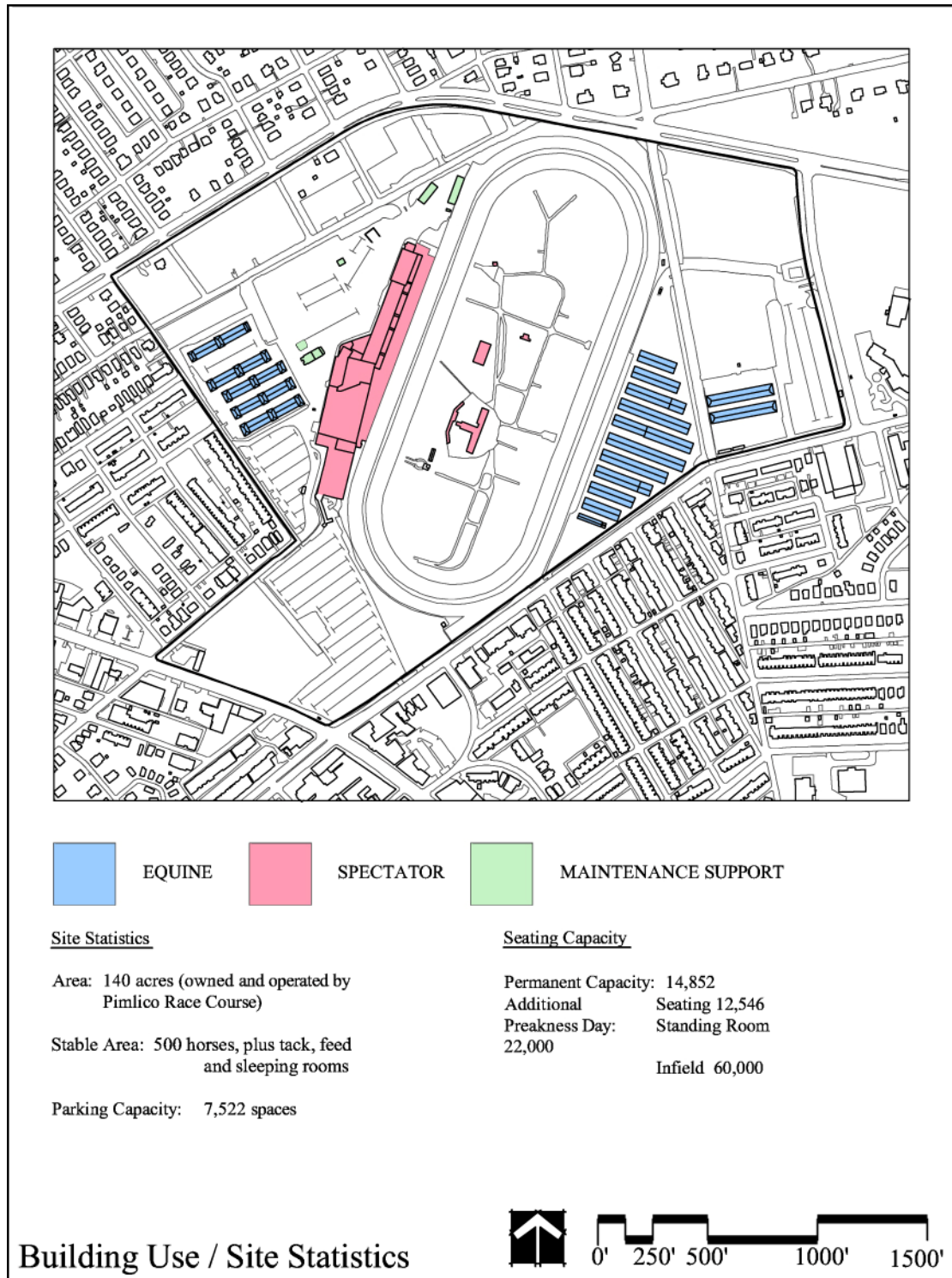


Figure 031: Pimlico Property with Building Uses and Site Statistics. [author]
 The Pimlico Property holds three major functions (spectator seating, horse barns, and surface parking) none of which have a real physical or programmatic tie to the community.

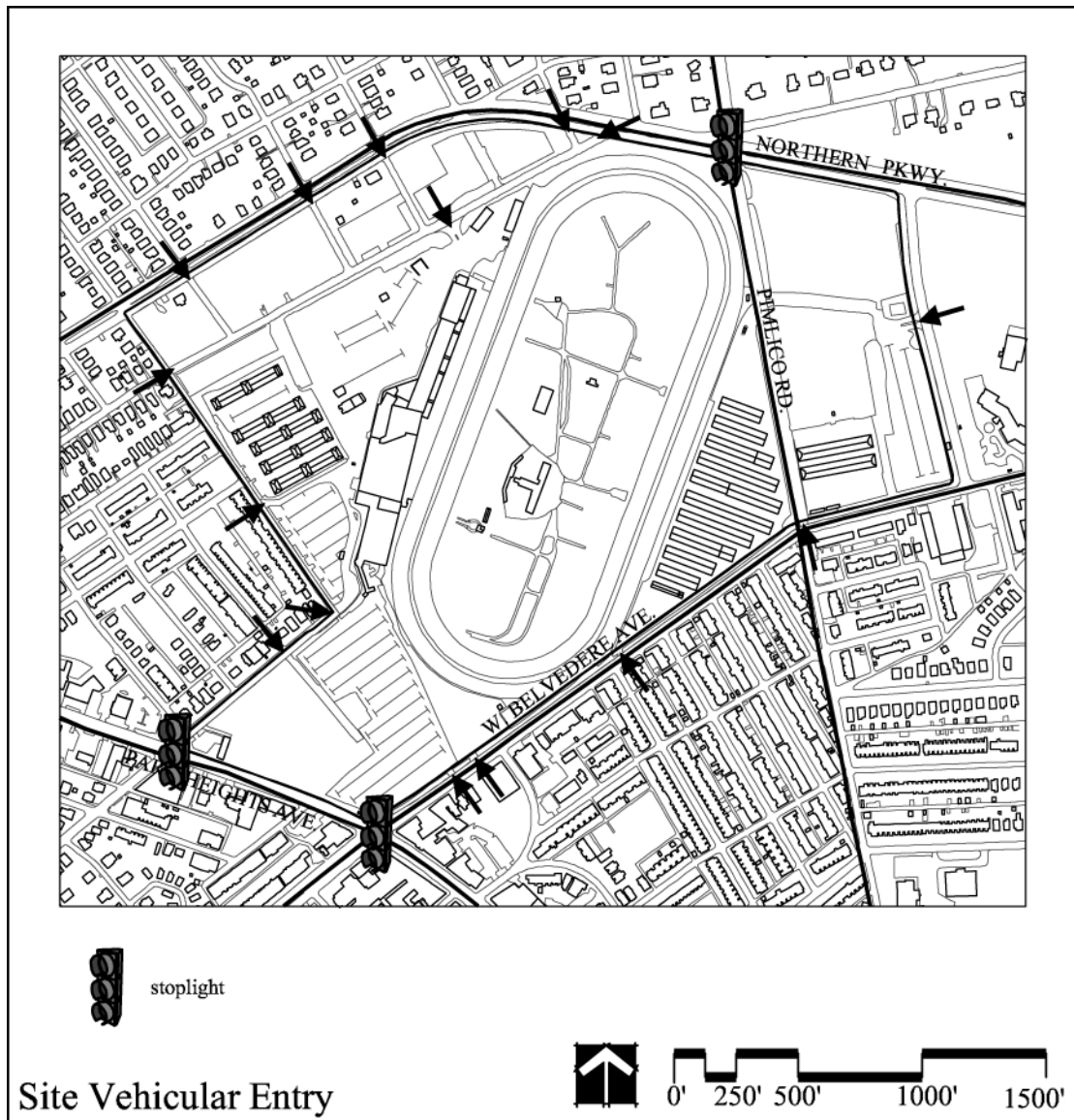


Figure 032: Pimlico Property with Site Access Points. [author]
 Pimlico is accessible by no less than fifteen points of entry onto the property. This creates a matter of confusion and there is no clearly designated main entrance onto the site. All entrances are designed primarily to serve vehicles and not pedestrian circulation.

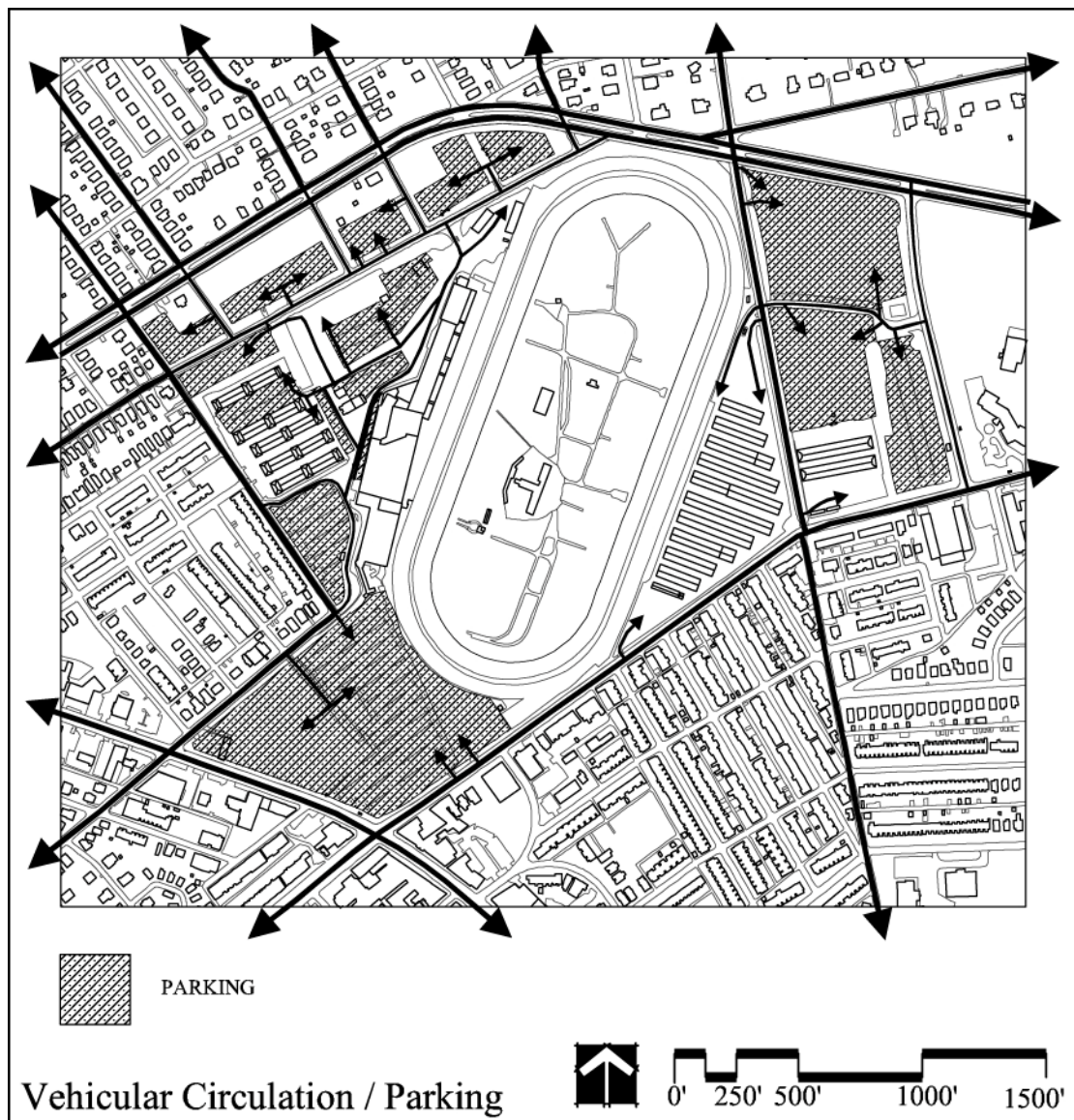


Figure 033: Pimlico Property with Vehicular Circulation Paths and Parking. [author]
 Situated in an urban context, Pimlico is served by many means of vehicular access through an abundant network of streets that run through and around the site. This access is ideally suited to support high volumes of traffic during large events such as the Preakness Stakes and the recently held Virgin Music Festival in 2006. Despite being used less than 1% of the year for large events, a majority of the site is taken up by surface parking lots which serve to disengage Pimlico from the surrounding neighborhoods.

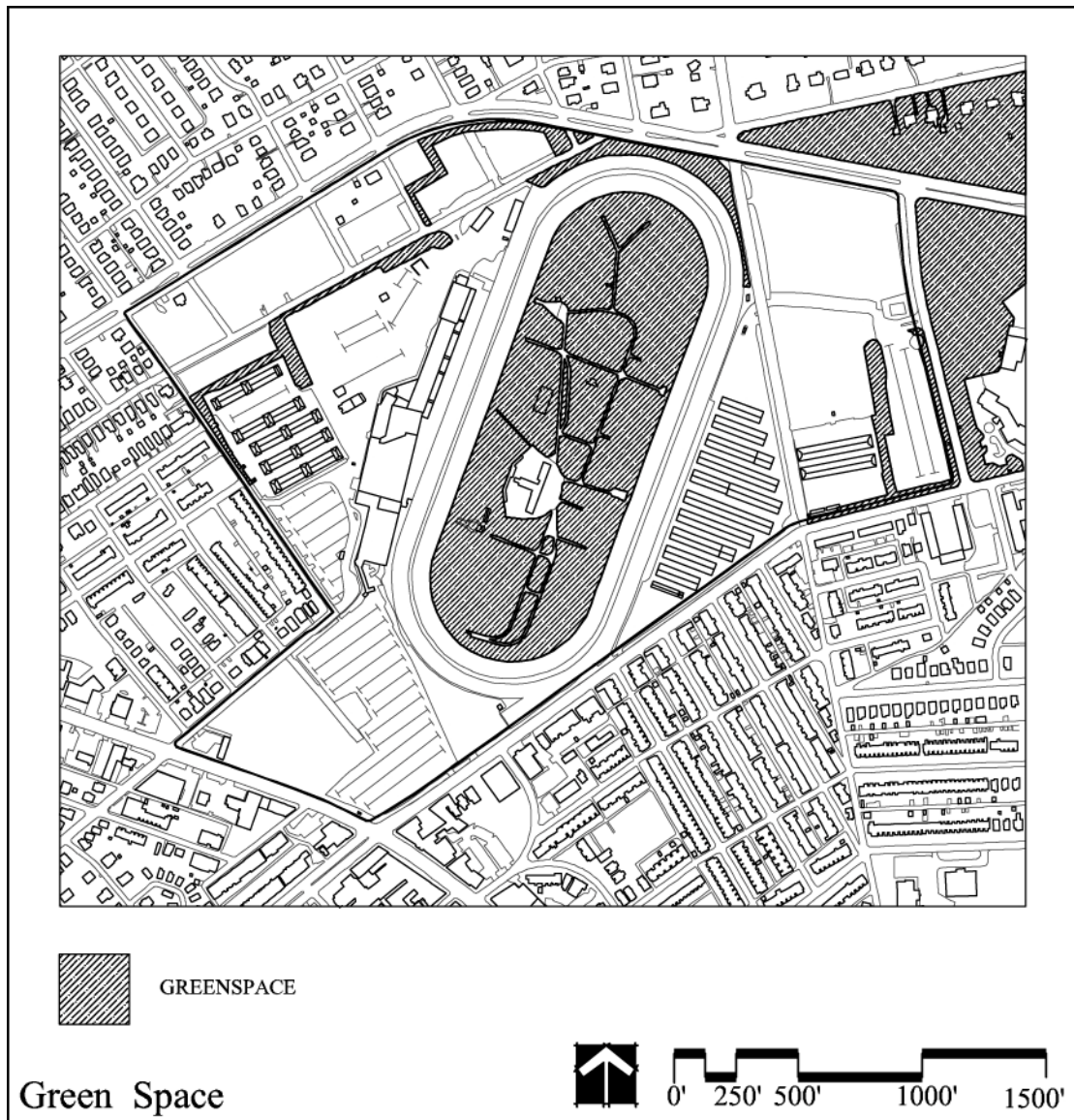


Figure 034: Pimlico Property with Green Spaces. [author]

The only significant green space on site is the course infield. The 28 acres is used once a year during the Preakness Stakes while remaining largely unused the rest of the time. Its surface is made up entirely of grass with the exception of a few paved pedestrian paths. There are no trees, dirt and trees, or landscaping to speak of. The infield is accessible only by one underground tunnel or across the tracks. There is a clear incentive for both community and Pimlico to find a way to utilize this green space in a meaningful way.

Project Precedent – Le Parc de La Villette

Figure 035: Le Parc de La Villette is an urban park in Paris, France designed by Architect Bernard Tschumi. [Le Parc de La Villette, Tschumi, Bernard]

There are interesting features of Parc de La Villette that are similar to the Pimlico Site to draw references to:

- 1) La Villette site remained as one of the largest underdeveloped sites in its city prior to the design; It measures at approximately 130 acres;
- 2) major portion of the site edge is defined by a major vehicular road;
- 3) site is located beyond the main area of the city;
- 4) program includes both large public functions as well as public park space;

- 5) program is meant to serve both regional and local users.

La Villette Park has a variety of elements to organize the large site. Along with the major interior program functions (Museum of Science and Industry, a grand hall for exhibitions, and a concert hall) Tschumi utilized various surface geometries and materials, a regularized grid of pedestrian circulation marked with a series of striking red garden *folies* serving various public functions, and a juxtaposed thematic garden. These elements serve to organize the large site for the visitor while at the same time creating multiple physical and visual experiences.

Reasons to Stay

In February 2006, Baltimore City in partnership with local community leaders produced a development vision for the Park Heights community. Its intentions were to revitalize the area through a comprehensive strategy. The master plan proposed four alternatives for the Pimlico property only one of which sought to keep the race track at its present location. The remaining three site proposals relocated the race course to an undetermined location. This thesis demonstrates that Pimlico Racecourse will indeed develop into the catalyst for effective change in the community. Preserving its place in the community and pairing it with an aggressive redevelopment strategy should provide many new jobs, attract local and regional visitors throughout the year, and revive the community. Pimlico is the catalyst to unify the area and jumpstart it toward long economic growth.

Figure 037: Schematic Programming sketch of Alfred Lerner Hall
Student Center, Columbia University, New York, New York. [Bernard
Tschumi]

Thesis

This thesis recognizes and embraces the value of the horse racing industry, Pimlico Race Course, and the Preakness to the State of Maryland. It realizes the broad impact Pimlico has on the Maryland economy, local industries, tourism, and the health of the local neighborhoods. The building program listed below addresses the following mission:

- a) remake Pimlico Racecourse and return it to a premier horse racing venue;
- b) develop program to make the site active year round while generating positive revenue to support the racing program;
- c) connect with the community by providing services and amenities that will enhance their daily lives;
- d) maximize the site to take advantage of its features, its local connections, and regional relationships.

Due to the size and scope of the program, applied square footages are merely a starting point generated through an overall program and site survey, as well as analysis of project precedents. The square footages can and will change as site strategies alter during the process.

	10,000 permanent capacity +
<u>Spectator Accommodations</u>	<u>35,000 temporary (Preakness Day)</u>

Spectator support facilities must remain a key program component. An assessment of the current state of the facilities demonstrates clear reasons why attendance is at historically low levels. As tracks around the country have managed to upgrade

facilities to attract new generations of race fans, Pimlico has remained passive. In order for the racing industry to survive in Maryland, Pimlico must extend its reach to a much broader demographic. The ideal spectator amenity is an unobstructed view of the race track. At present, areas that have views are often obstructed by the glass and structure required to enclose the grandstands. At certain viewing areas, this view is compromised by an additional glass and structure to further remove the spectator from the live racing experience. The new facilities should reconnect spectators to live racing, whether they are at the grandstands, the betting window, and/or the restaurant. Obstructions must be eliminated, and the grandstands should return to an outdoor facility.



Figure 038: Obstructed view of track from grandstands at Pimlico Race Course. According to facilities management at Pimlico, only approximately nine days of live racing require environmental controls due to weather. [author]

Figure 039: Unique grandstand configuration at Happy Valley Race Course [Topliff, Brad] The distinctive verticality of this facility demonstrates the viability of alternative configurations.

Athletic Venue

20 Acres

The new program continues to offer the two existing track configurations at their present historic locations. The dirt track measures to a length of 1¼ miles. There is an additional turf track situated just inside the dirt track measured to a length of 7/8 mile. Both tracks operate throughout the year as a training facility. This arrangement should continue. Additionally, there is a network of support spaces meant to assist in the preparation of both horse and jockey. It is essential to maintain a proper relationship between the track and these uses. Pivotal to the redevelopment of the Pimlico program is a greater relationship and connection between spectator, and the athletes (horse & jockey). The paddock area is currently housed inside the grandstand facilities and is thoroughly inadequate for both spectator and athlete. This is one of few opportunities for spectators to interact with and get up close to both

horse and jockey. As much effort and care should be placed on this relationship as part of the spectator experience.

Figure 040: The paddock area at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Kentucky. [www.newsday.com] The spectator experience at the paddock is just as important as at the racetrack. Fans gather to get an up close glimpse at the horses just before their race.

Figure 041: The paddock area at Del Mar Racetrack in San Diego California. [www.dmtc.com] Terraces and balconies near the paddock allow for multiple vantage points.

The new program maintains the current horse boarding capacity. The barns accommodate 900 stalls for horses, plus tack rooms, feed rooms, and hay sheds. Unlike the present configuration, all barns are to be consolidated to one location on site. These facilities require daily maintenance and attention from a dedicated group of workers who begin the day long before sunrise. The program includes dorm style housing for approximately 130 maintenance staff located adjacent to the barns.



Figure 042: Barns at Pimlico Race Course. [author]
Proper ventilation, stall and aisle dimension, and flooring type are important elements of a successful horse barn.



Figure 043: Second level barn attendees living quarters above barns at Pimlico Race Course. [author]
It is important to have living quarters for barn maintenance workers due to the job's early morning requirements.

Equine Hospital

15 acres

A new equine hospital complex offers a broad array of medical services for the care of horses stabled at the track as well as horses brought in from elsewhere. While there are smaller medical facilities available in Maryland, a major on site facility located at the track would be of great benefit for horses competing at Pimlico. The hospital should have space dedicated to its own service and mission including:

- a) horse barns (100 stalls capacity);
- b) surgery Facilities;
- c) examination, treatment, podiatry facilities;
- d) riding pen.

Figure 044: Rood and Riddle Equine Hospital, Lexington, Kentucky.
Full service hospital on 24 acres. [www.roodandriddle.com]

Pimlico Riding Program

12 acres

The program introduces a new riding program aimed at students in the Baltimore City school system. Its mission is to:

- a) provide educational riding and horse care instruction for students that would otherwise have no opportunity to do so;
- b) utilize the program curriculum to teach students a host of valuable life skills;
- c) create a program to serve the community and fulfill its positive social mission;
- d) broaden the appeal of horse riding and agriculture to a new demographic thereby enhancing the value of the industry.

The program includes:

- 1) barns to house and maintain a stable of horses dedicated to the program;
- 2) a number of arenas and pens for riding;
- 3) classrooms for instruction;
- 4) space for administrative staff, storage, restrooms, etc.;

Operations Support / Administrative

S.F.

The Maryland Jockey Club (MJC) is owned by Magna Entertainment Corporation. The MJC maintains and operates Pimlico Race Course and a Laurel Park Race Course with offices at Pimlico serving as headquarters. Pimlico's current administrative facilities have capacity for approximately 12 management personnel plus staff. This capacity would be required to double to accommodate additional administrative staff and personnel to handle the new on site programs. As appropriate, administrative offices are located appropriate to their locations on site.

Event Facilities**30,000 S.F.**

The program includes event facilities capable of holding events of various sizes ranging from small business functions, to weddings, to large community functions. This space can service both business and community needs and provide an ideal venue to house various local events.

Figure 045: Facility map of Del Mar Race Track Fairgrounds near San Diego California.
[www.sdfair.com]

In addition to a live racing season that runs from July to September, Del Mar holds many events throughout the year including fairs, concerts, exhibits, parties, corporate functions, and weddings. The site remains active throughout the year, generating positive revenue.

As the community around it has fallen on hard times through urban flight, infiltration of drugs, and a neglect of infrastructure, Pimlico has done little to show support for its neighbors. No part of the property offers any amenity or services for the community. Acres of land made up of the infield and the empty parking lots intended only for peak usage lie empty for much of the year. It is crucial for the future success of both the local community and Pimlico that the program includes public amenities.

A Park Heights community master plan just released in 2006 proposed four possible scenarios for the Pimlico property, only one of which suggests that Pimlico race track remain. This clear signal indicates that Pimlico must provide improvements that will be of benefit to the community, not just to racing interests if it is to be retained at its present location.

At present, there are few green spaces in the neighborhoods. This thesis utilizes the unused infield and develops it into a quality family park, open to public use. The park contains picnic areas, pedestrian paths, children's playground facilities, and maintained fields and landscaping. This emphasis of public green space and landscape extends to the remainder of the site and beyond. It extends out to make connections into the community, as well as with Sinai Hospital and the Cylburn Arboretum. The coordination of landscape improvements serves to benefit the entire area.

Figure 046: The infield at Santa Anita Park in Arcadia, California. The infield is open to the public and offers extensive picnic facilities and a large children's playground. It is accessible through four underground tunnels at various points around the track. [google earth]

<u>Housing</u>	<u>600 – 800 Residential Units</u>
-----------------------	-------------------------------------------

The program incorporates market rate and affordable housing onto the site. The residential development provides:

- a) needed source of stable housing to offset the phased redevelopment of troubled residential communities in the area;
- b) level of activity consistently present on site that helps support the new retail and commercial activity;
- c) transition from residential neighborhoods bordering the property to the commercial mixed use development;
- d) positive revenue to assist in funding Pimlico racing program;

Retail**300,000 +/- S.F.**

The program incorporates a mixture of retail space to service a variety of end users:

- a) grandstand concourse level retail – this facilitates attendance at the track during simulcasting, live racing, and major events such as the Preakness;
- b) Preakness Way Town Center ground level retail – this serves as a new local and regional shopping and entertainment destination;
- c) Park Heights community retail – this is to be the anchor to much needed community retail development along Park Heights Ave. and includes a much needed grocery store; this retail development provides much needed retail services presently missing.

Office Space**800,000 +/- S.F.**

The program is intended to generate a high quantity of jobs at various levels. New office space is very attractive to area businesses bring an increased level of activity on site. The property has many advantages. It is easily accessible by mass transit and can be reached through Baltimore's expansive street network. Office uses partner with the racetrack and share the parking requirements of both programs. Its proximity to new open space and retail development is an attractive component. Its proximity to Sinai Hospital may attract health care related service and businesses that would enhance the community.

Transportation

The current public transportation network operates to support the level of activity present on site. Redevelopment should generate a substantial influx of new visitors to utilize all of the additional and improved facilities. As such, the existing network is to be reconfigured and enhanced to handle the new level of pedestrian activity. To improve access for riders from the metro line and light rail, express bus routes must shuttle riders from the local stop and offer direct access to the site. This serves the site especially well during peak usage such as the Preakness and events such as the recent Virgin Music Festival. Improvements to public transportation should have the added benefit of reducing the number of parking spaces required on site.

Figure 047: Conceptual sketches for Parc de La Villette by
Bernard Tschumi. [Bernard Tschumi]

Strategy 1 – Garden

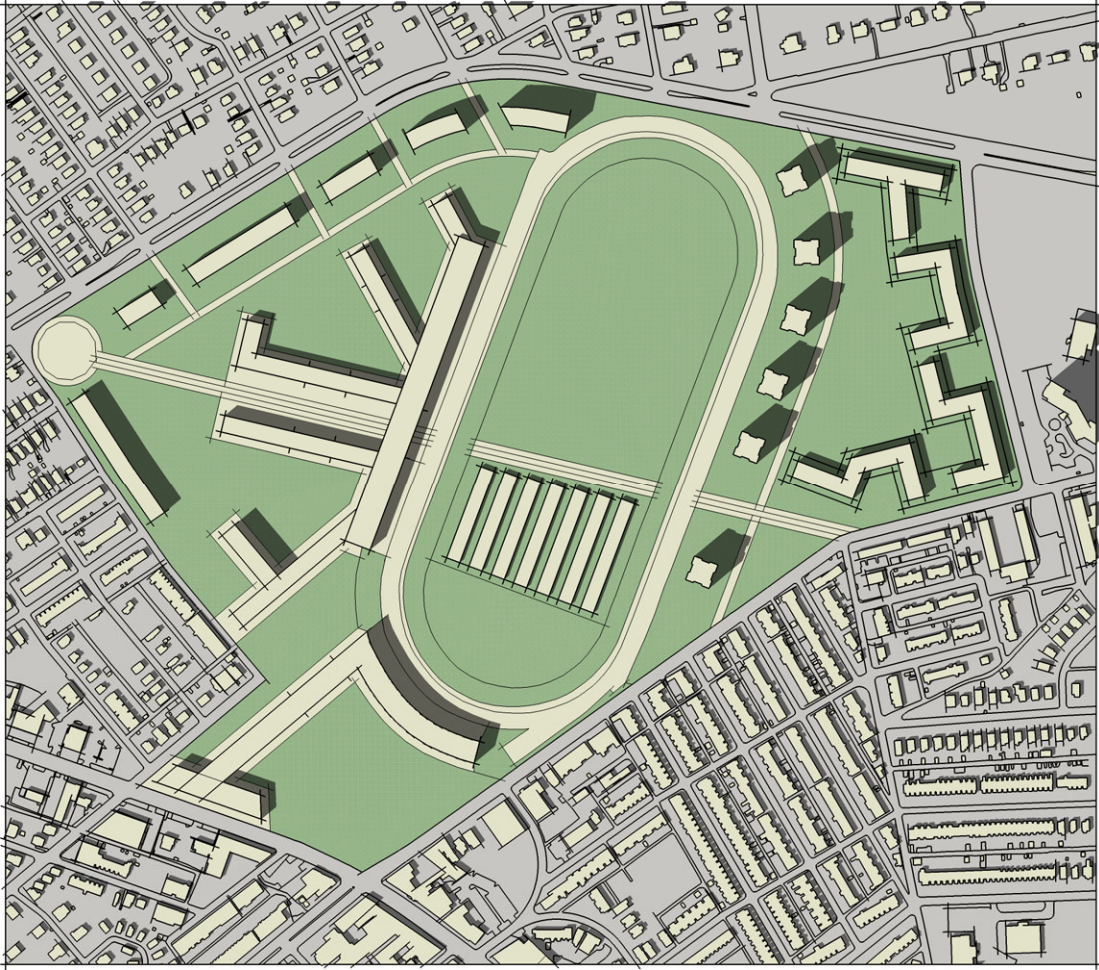


Figure 048: Strategy 1 - Site Plan [author]

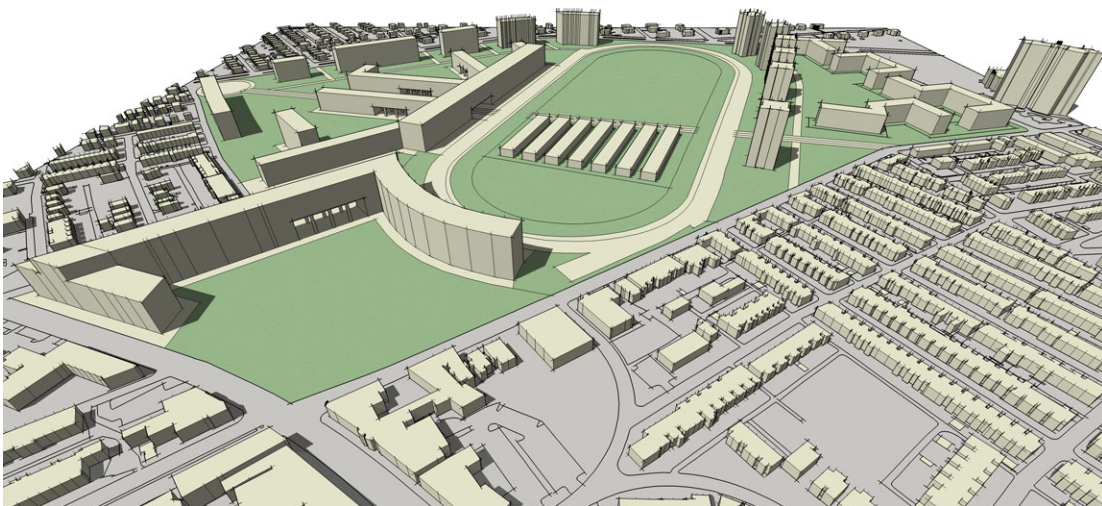


Figure 049: Strategy 1 - Aerial Perspective [author]

Strategy

This scheme places great emphasis on maximizing green space and providing good light and air to as much of the buildings as possible. This strategy utilizes buildings of various dimensions, all of which provide natural daylight throughout. Buildings are then allowed have varying heights ranging from 3 to 4 stories to residential towers over 10 stories. The site is thought of as an internally focused system with a street network independent of the surrounding urban grid.

Advantages

This scheme has the advantage of providing a maximum amount of green space without loss of square footage. Buildings have equally abundant light and air and are immediately adjacent to public green spaces.

Disadvantages

Without connecting the existing urban grids into the site, the internal nature does not offer many opportunities for connections into the surrounding neighborhoods. The large buildings themselves have poor relationships to the existing residential character surrounding the site.

Strategy 2 – Campus

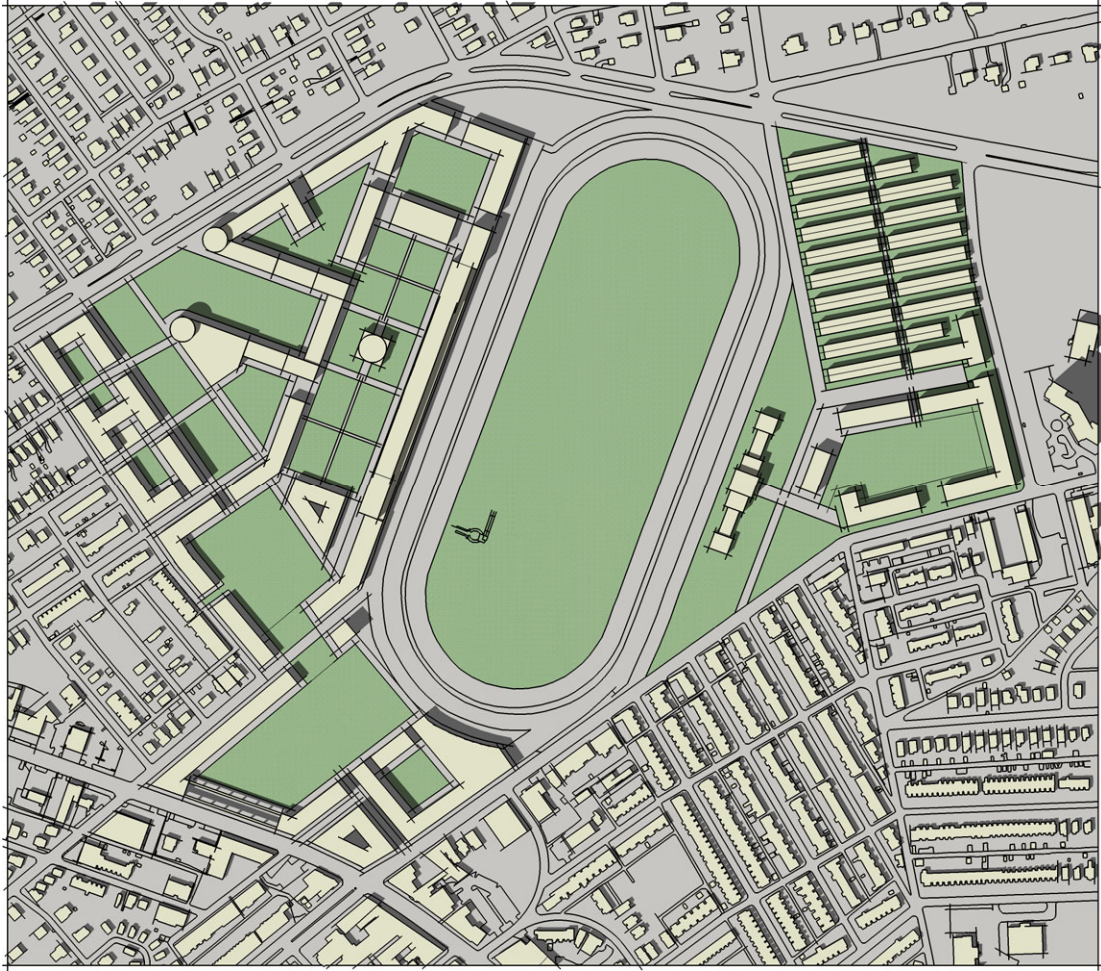


Figure 050: Strategy 2 - Site Plan [author]

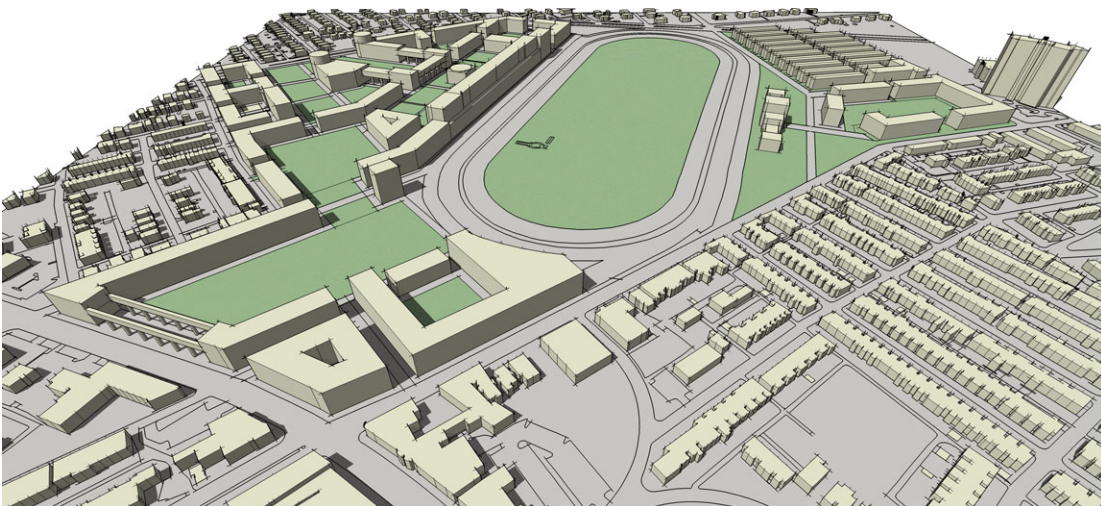


Figure 051: Strategy 2 - Aerial Perspective [author]

Strategy

This scheme creates a campus where buildings are organized to create primary and secondary green space. As in many urban campuses, the internal street organization does have *some* relationship to pre-existing urban pattern. Buildings are generally no more than 4 stories except for the grandstands and tend to have good building dimensions for day lighting.

Advantages

The campus like nature offers a range of open spaces. Though the organization is patterned after a campus organization, the site is intended to be open for public use. Spaces are well defined and have clear hierarchies.

Precedent – Trinity College

Figure 052: Trinity College, Cambridge, UK.
[Lynch Kevin, Site Planning].

Disadvantages

The organization tends to compartmentalize the site into separate zones. The connections to the urban grid are limited and do not offer real porosity through the site. Again, the buildings offer little relationship of scale to the surrounding residential typology. The message of the site organization remains internalized.

Strategy 3 – Urban Grid Extension



Figure 053: Strategy 3 - Site Plan [author]

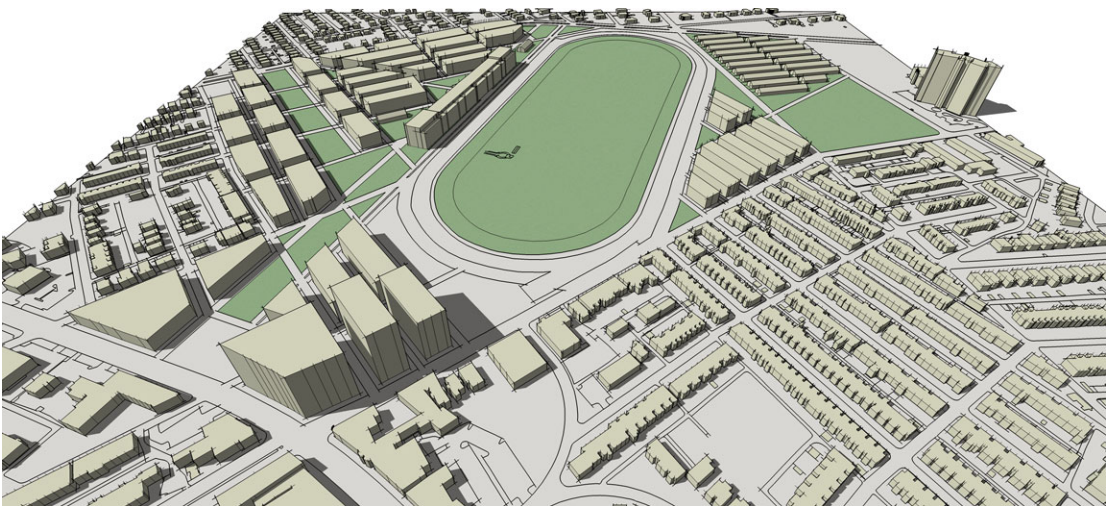


Figure 054: Strategy 3 – Aerial Perspective [author]

Strategy

This scheme brings the orientation of the urban grid directly into the site. Buildings are organized within this new grid extension generally occupying the block. A diagonal grid orientation is introduced along the grandstands and intersects the more orthogonal street grid. Open space is reserved for linear spaces bisecting the site as well as a plaza serving the main entrance into the grandstands.

Advantages

The street grid begins to make connections to the community from every direction. What was once an area closed off by the site program as well as physical barriers is now opening itself to the community.

Disadvantages

The strategy of extending the existing street grid onto the site has the undesired effect of creating undesirable block sizes. Buildings occupying the blocks are either forced to underutilize their site or are forced to into undesirable building dimensions. Additionally, the important west edge of the diagonal street running parallel to the grandstands is left with an irregular edge conditions.

Strategy 4 – Urban Grid Orientation

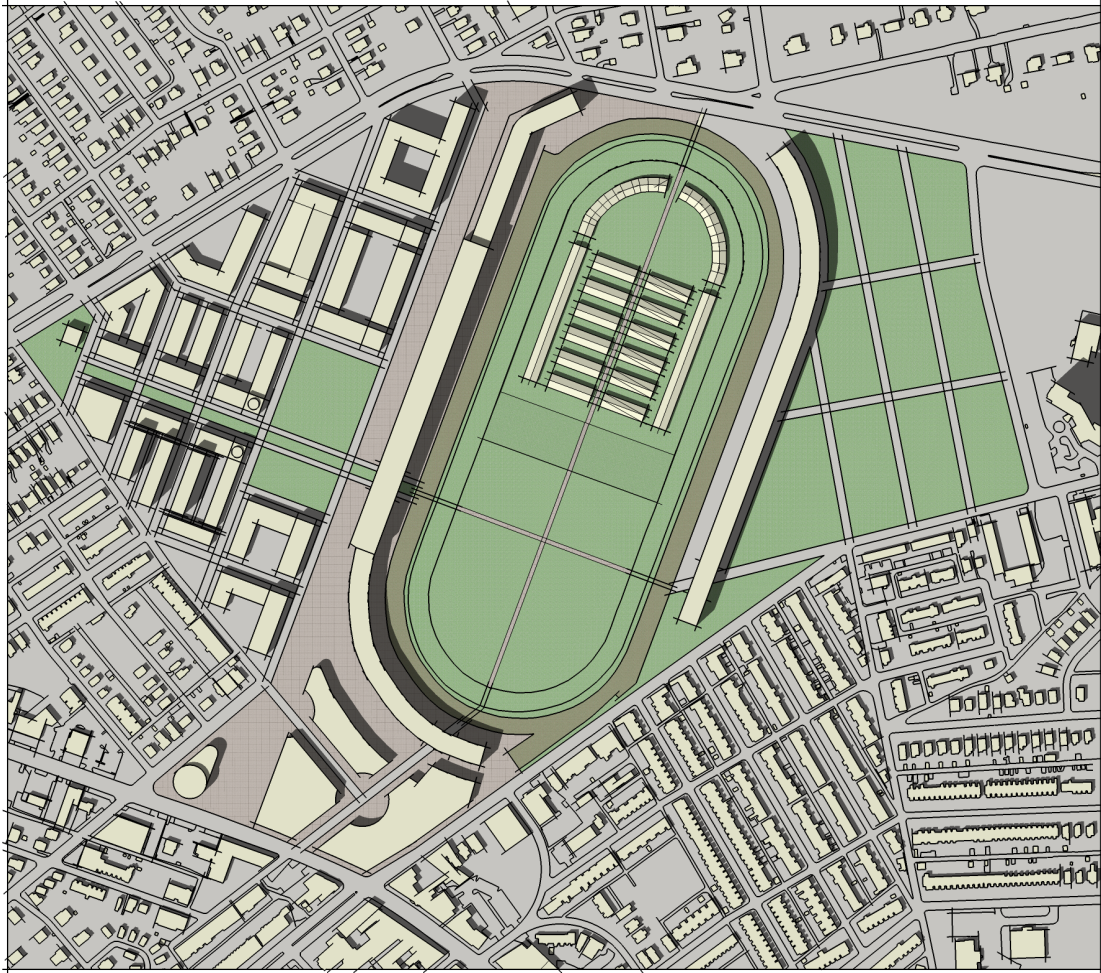


Figure 055: Strategy 4 – Site Plan [author]

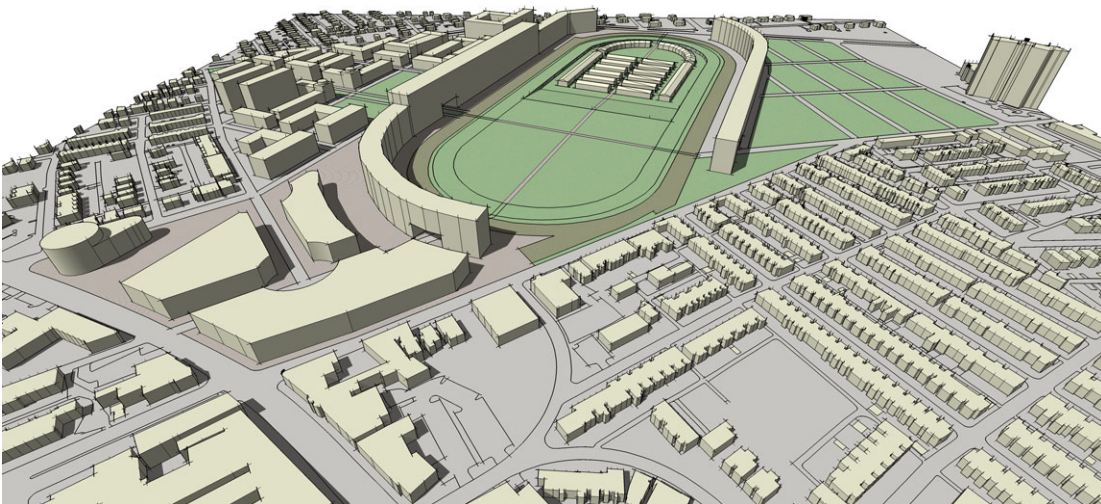


Figure 056: Strategy 4 – Aerial Perspective [author]

Strategy

The site's street grid is oriented to run parallel with the track orientation, while at the same time maintaining alignment with the surrounding street patterns. Buildings surround the racetrack a la Piazza Navona and offer views to the running of horses.

Advantages

The blocks begin to have proportions more suitable for good building placement and dimensions. The main street running parallel along side the grandstand structure maintains a well defined edge and terminates at the southern edge of the site at the proposed community retail development. Buildings orient towards the track to take advantage of the views. Open spaces become clearly defined, and well organized.

Precedent – Piazza Navona

Figure 057: Piazza Novona, Rome, Italy. The piazza is defined at the edges by the surrounding buildings. The resulting space has a remarkable sense of definition and order. [www.imago-terrae.com]

Precedent - Piazza del Campo, Sienna, Italy

Figure 058: Piazza del Campo, Sienna, Italy. Throughout the year, this medieval town square serves as Siena's main public forum, gathering space, and market. But twice a year, the space transforms itself into a racetrack to hold the festival, Palio di Siena. This tradition, born out of the medieval games, is a race where each horse and rider proudly represents the different wards in the city. Thousands fill the square and the surrounding buildings, and witness this most famous event. In this scenario, the space is truly the public domain and the horse racing is subservient and only occurs on those rare occasions.

[001 - University of California, San Diego / 002 – www.tuscanmarket.ca / 003 – Art Images for College Teaching / 004 - www.asahi-net.or.jp]

Disadvantages

Care must be taken to provide visual and physical access to the track and new infield park. This new green space will not be successful unless there are meaningful ways to access it from multiple directions.

VI. Design Conclusions & Documentation

This thesis has been a great lesson. It has solidified and enhanced teachings that design requires a complete and thorough examination of the particular subject matter both direct and related in order to come to a successful design conclusion. The subject of Pimlico Race Course has imbedded in it a complex array of issues, both acting as strengths as well as challenges. Pimlico has tied to it, a rich history in the state, a large and diverse industry, neighborhoods of varying conditions, and an internationally prominent event in the Preakness. Add to that, the current debate on slots in Maryland, and you have a contentious situation with parties from all sides staking their positions regarding the future of the Pimlico property.

While as a professional, the designer has to ultimately answer to his/her client, this thesis was the opportunity to step away from that immediate relationship, and imagine all parties having ownership of the property. These parties, from the city of Baltimore to the owners of Pimlico Race Course to the Breeders Association to the communities of northwest Baltimore now have equal voice in the design decision process. This imagined process has manifested a vision for the site that is far different than any I've come across for Pimlico. Being inclusive in the decision making process has resulted in a site that no longer is internally focused. Words such as porosity, accessibility, best use, and public amenities ruled the day. The bit of irony in all this is that this actually results in a project that has a greater financial windfall and chance for long term success for the owners of Pimlico than those schemes previously considered.

As I set out in the beginning to prove and now that the thesis is complete, I believe even stronger to this day that the best long term outcome is for Pimlico Race Course to remain at its present and historic location. Given the size of the property, all programmatic requirements for the day to day operation of the course can thrive while incorporating a new program and site strategy that could be the linchpin in the renaissance of the community and Maryland Horse Racing. This site has proven to possess a very real opportunity to reverse the declining fortunes of both Pimlico and the area communities. This was the goal I set for at the start of this thesis.

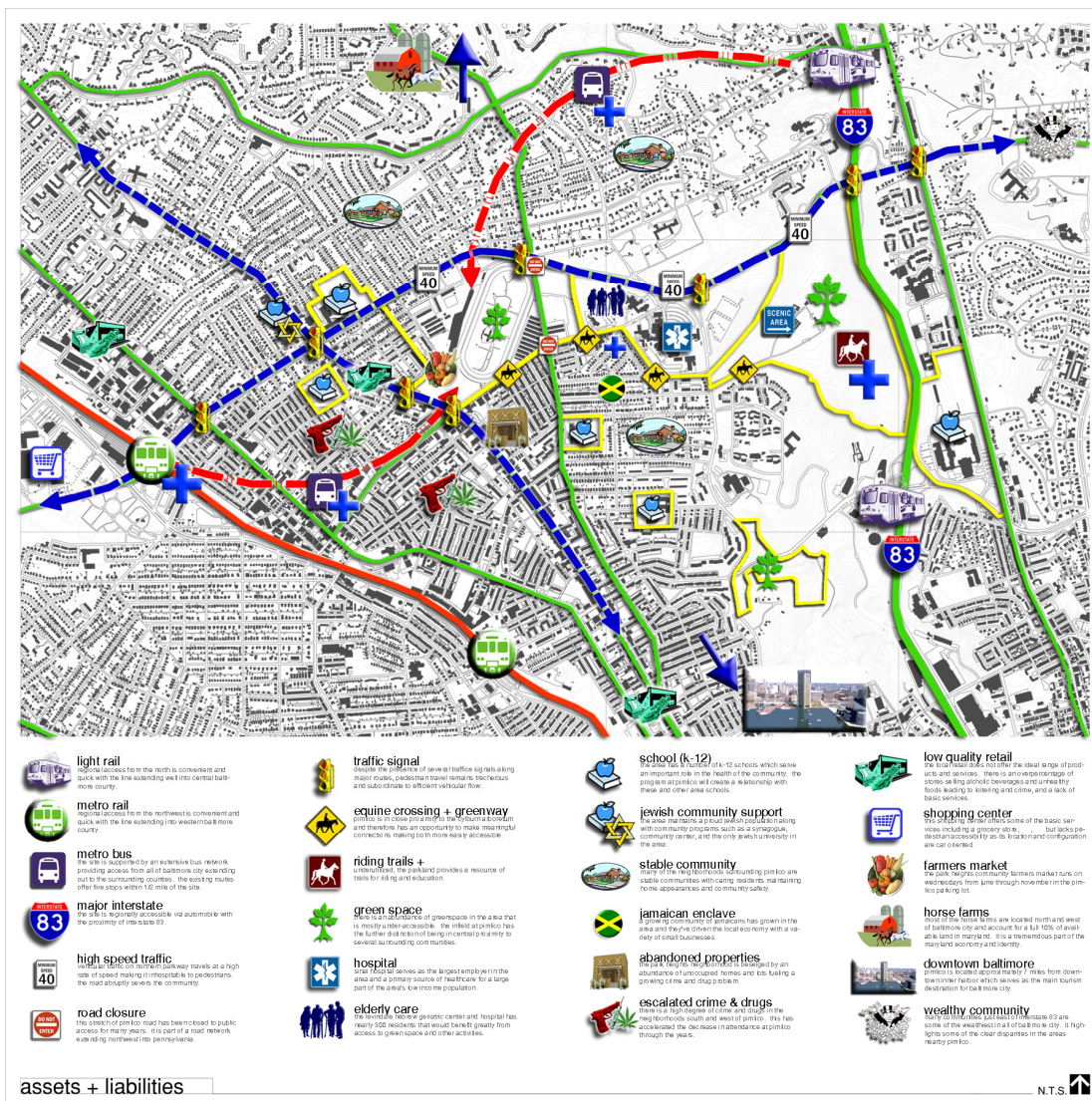


Figure 059: Existing Site Conditions. Assets and liabilities [author]



Figure 060: Design Methods and Project Issues [author]

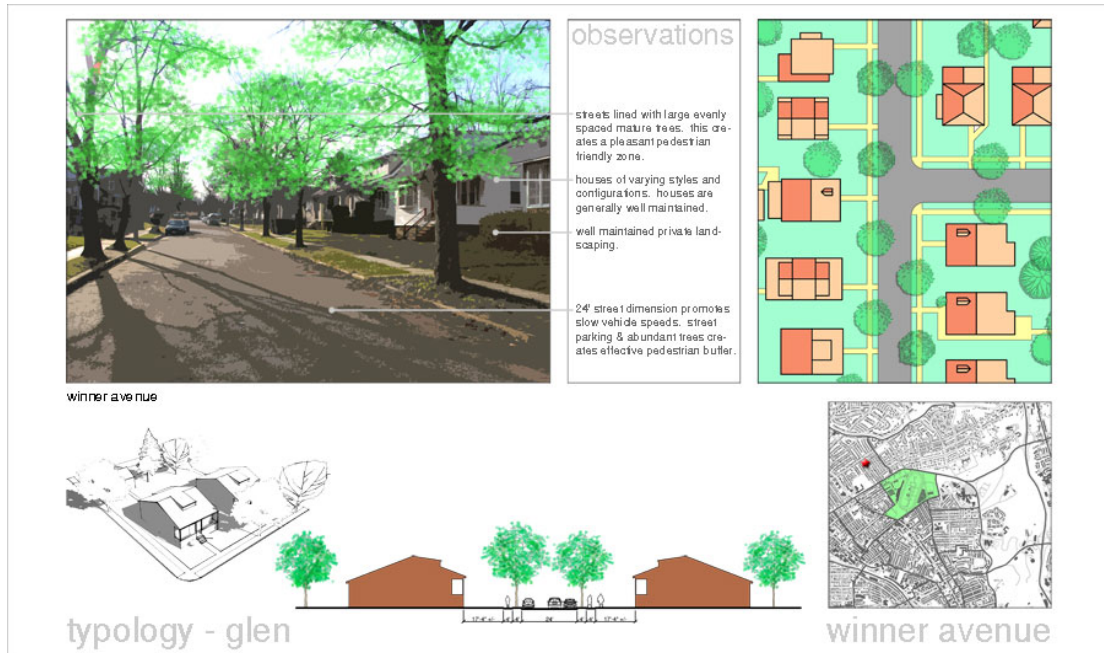


Figure 061: Neighborhood Conditions – Glen Community [author]

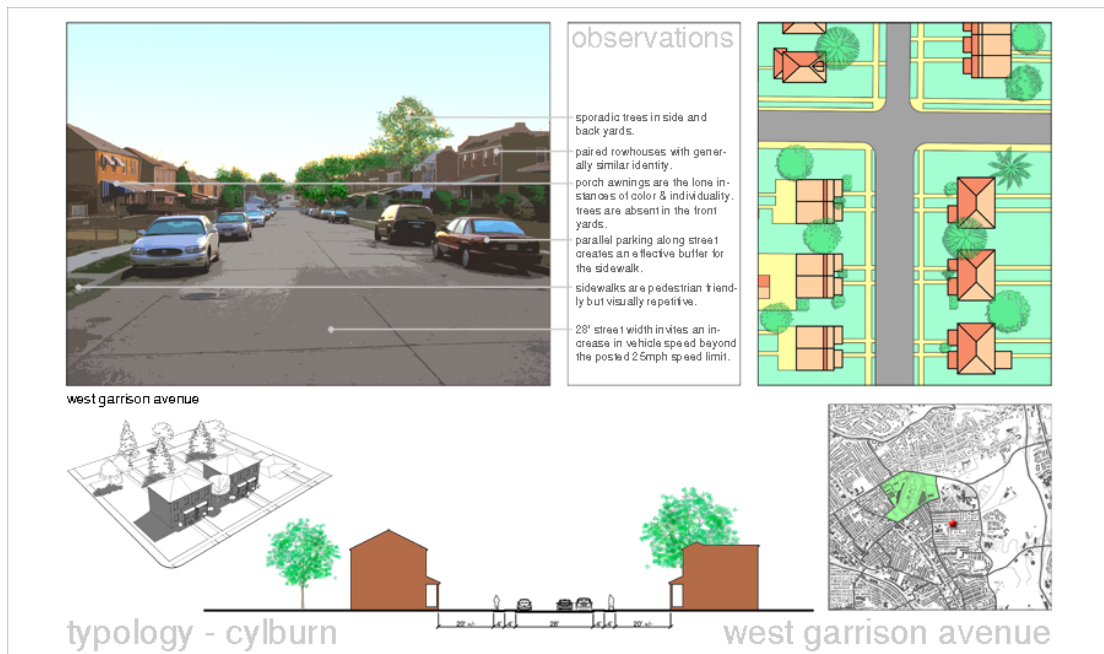


Figure 062: Neighborhood Conditions – Cylburn Community [author]



Figure 063: Neighborhood Conditions – Central Park Heights Community [author]



Figure 064: Neighborhood Conditions – Mount Washington [author]

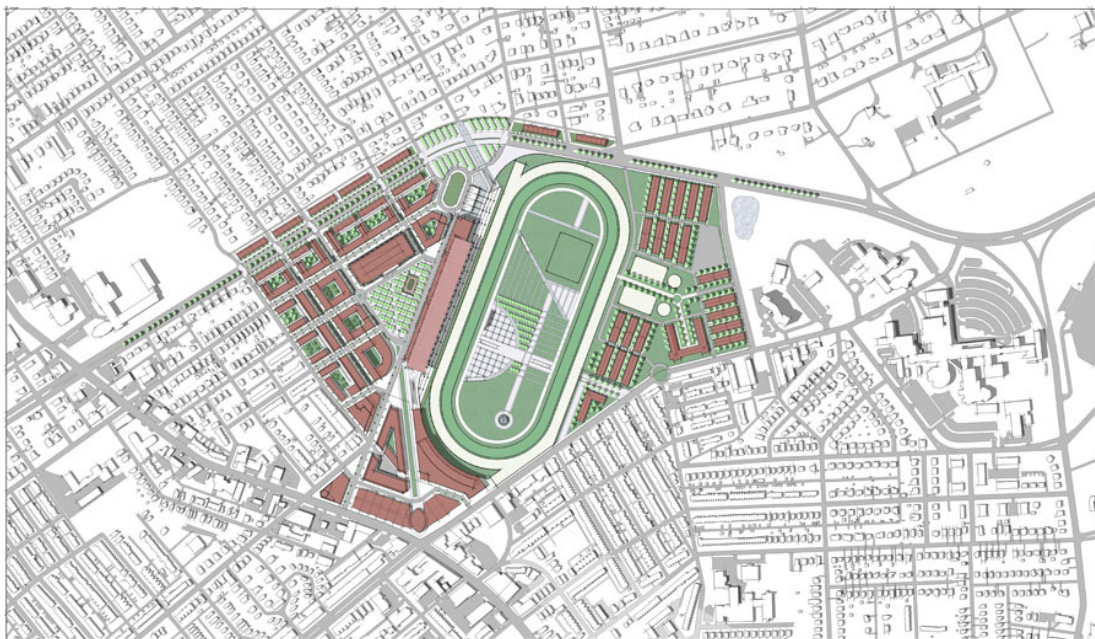


Figure 065: Site Plan [author]



Figure 066: Aerial Perspective [author]



Figure 067: Site Section [author]

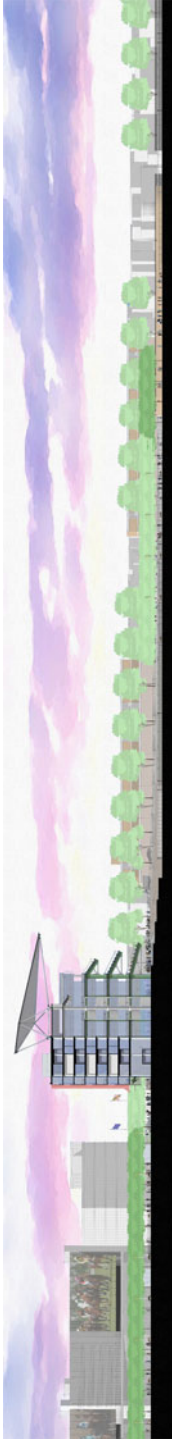


Figure 068: Site Section [author]

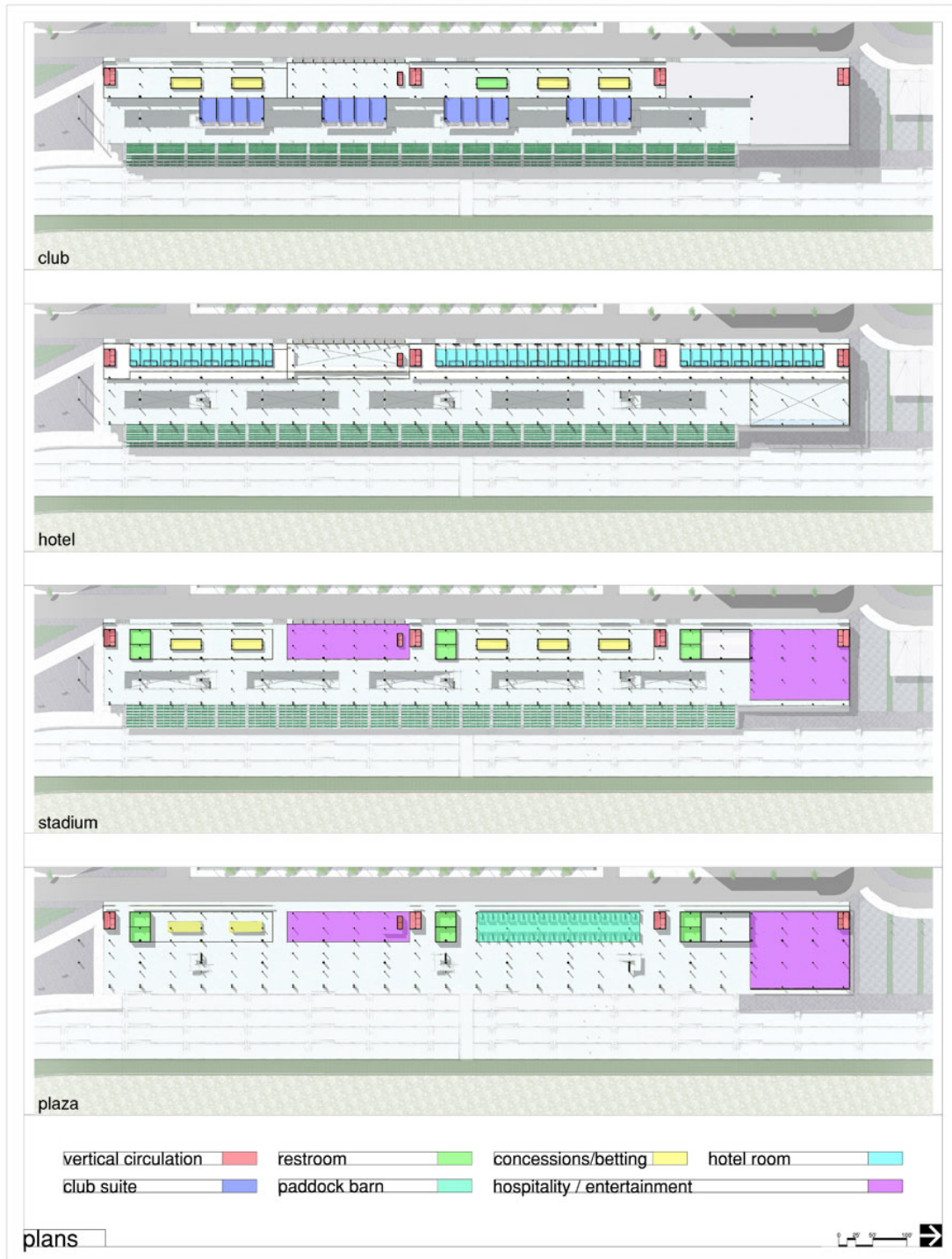


Figure 069: Hotel/Conference/Grandstands - Plans [author]

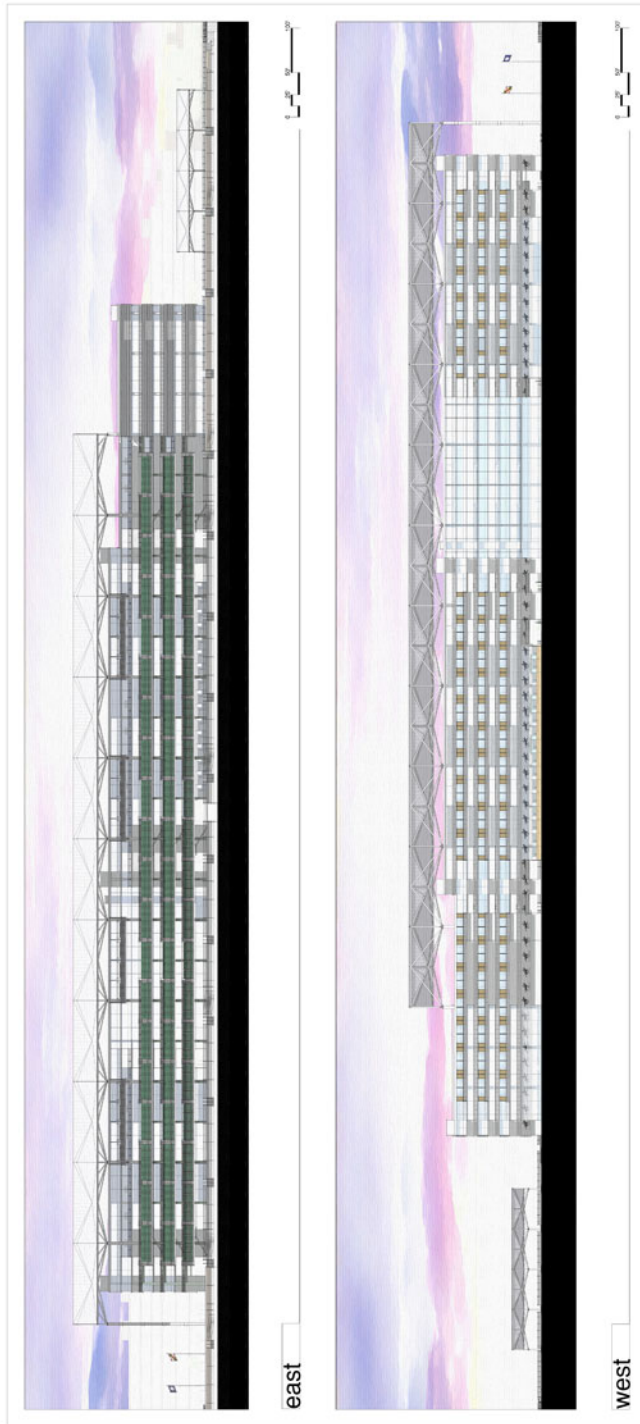


Figure 070: Hotel/Conference/Grandstands – Elevations [author]

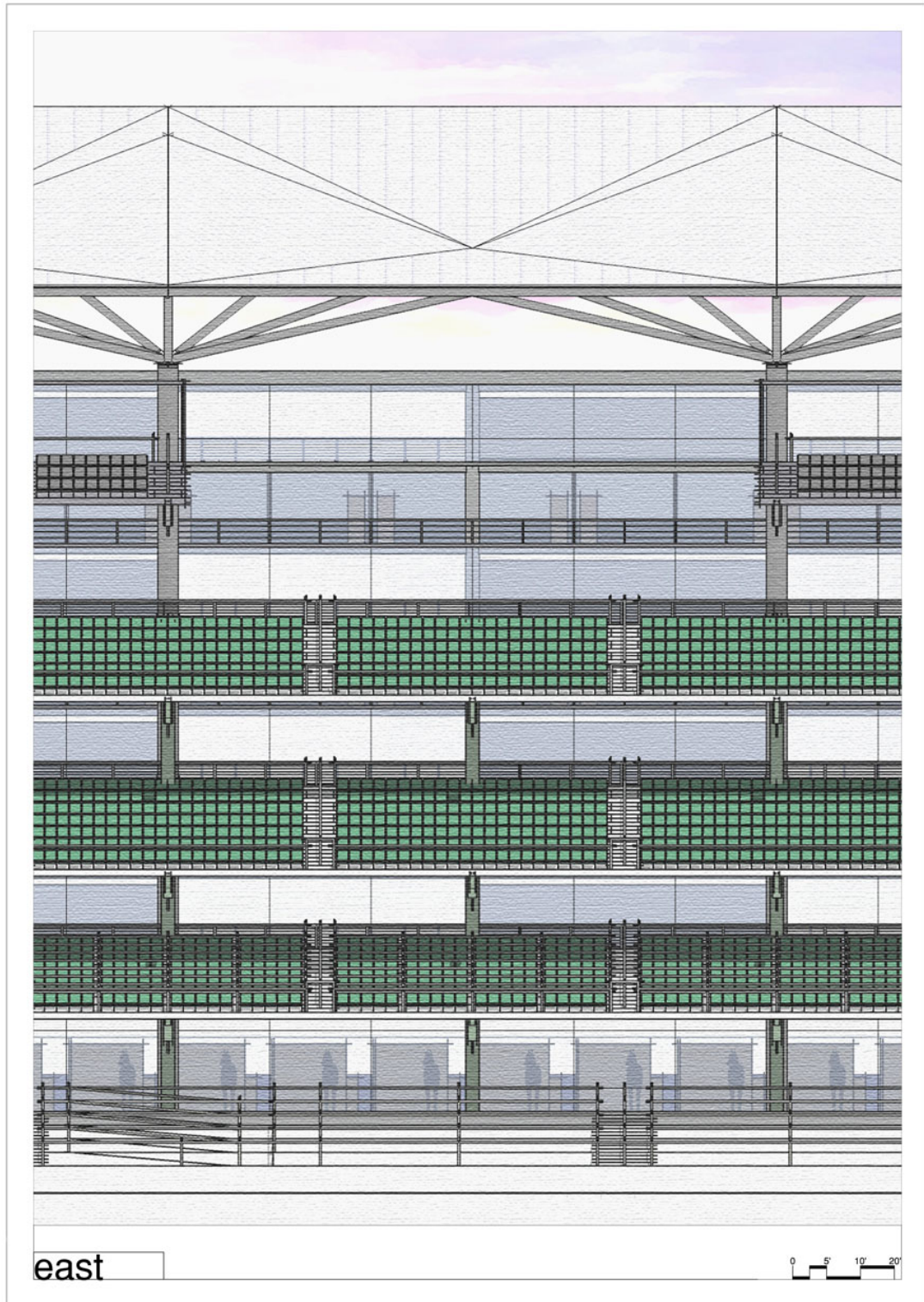


Figure 071: Hotel/Conference/Grandstands – East Elevation [author]

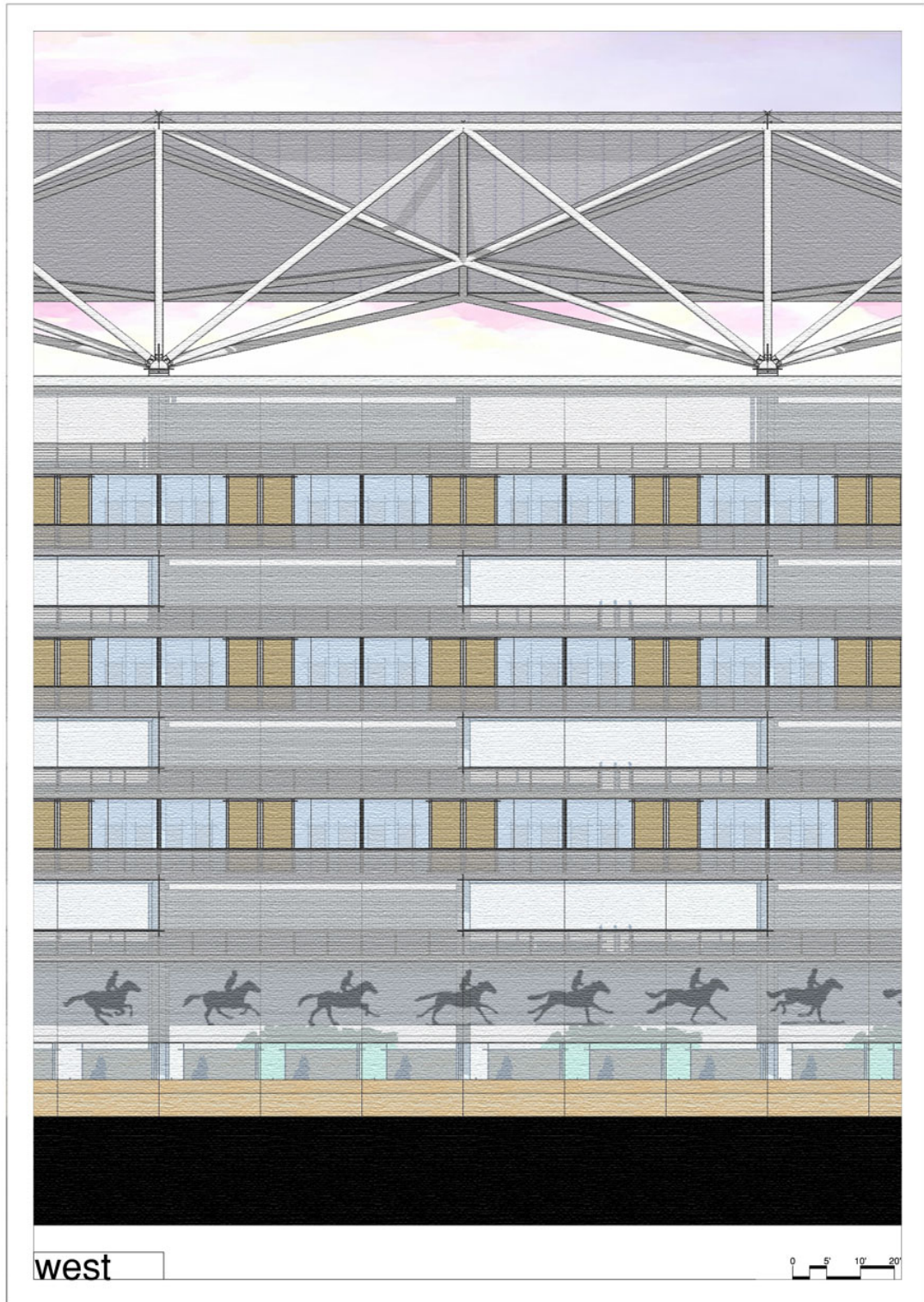


Figure 072: Hotel/Conference/Grandstands – West Elevation [author]

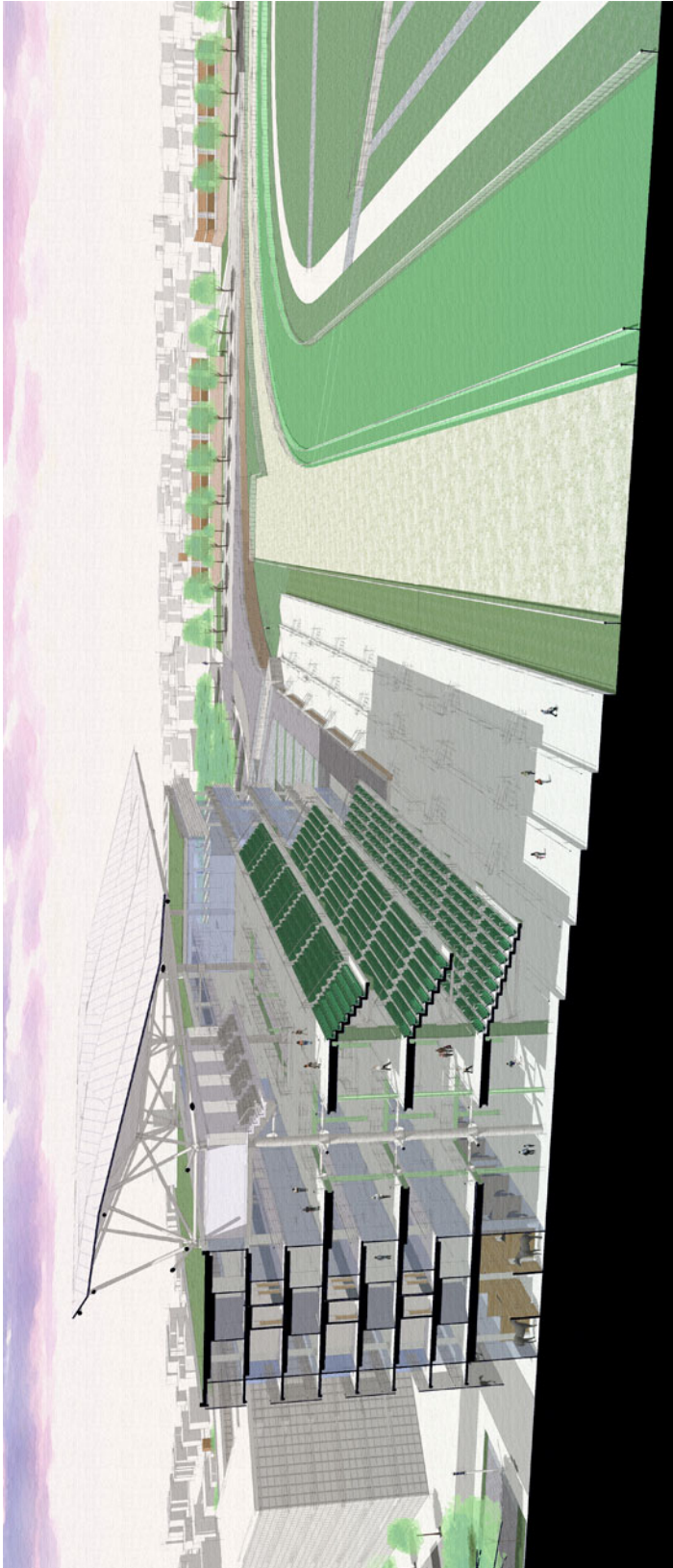


Figure 073: Hotel/Conference/Grandstands - Section [author]

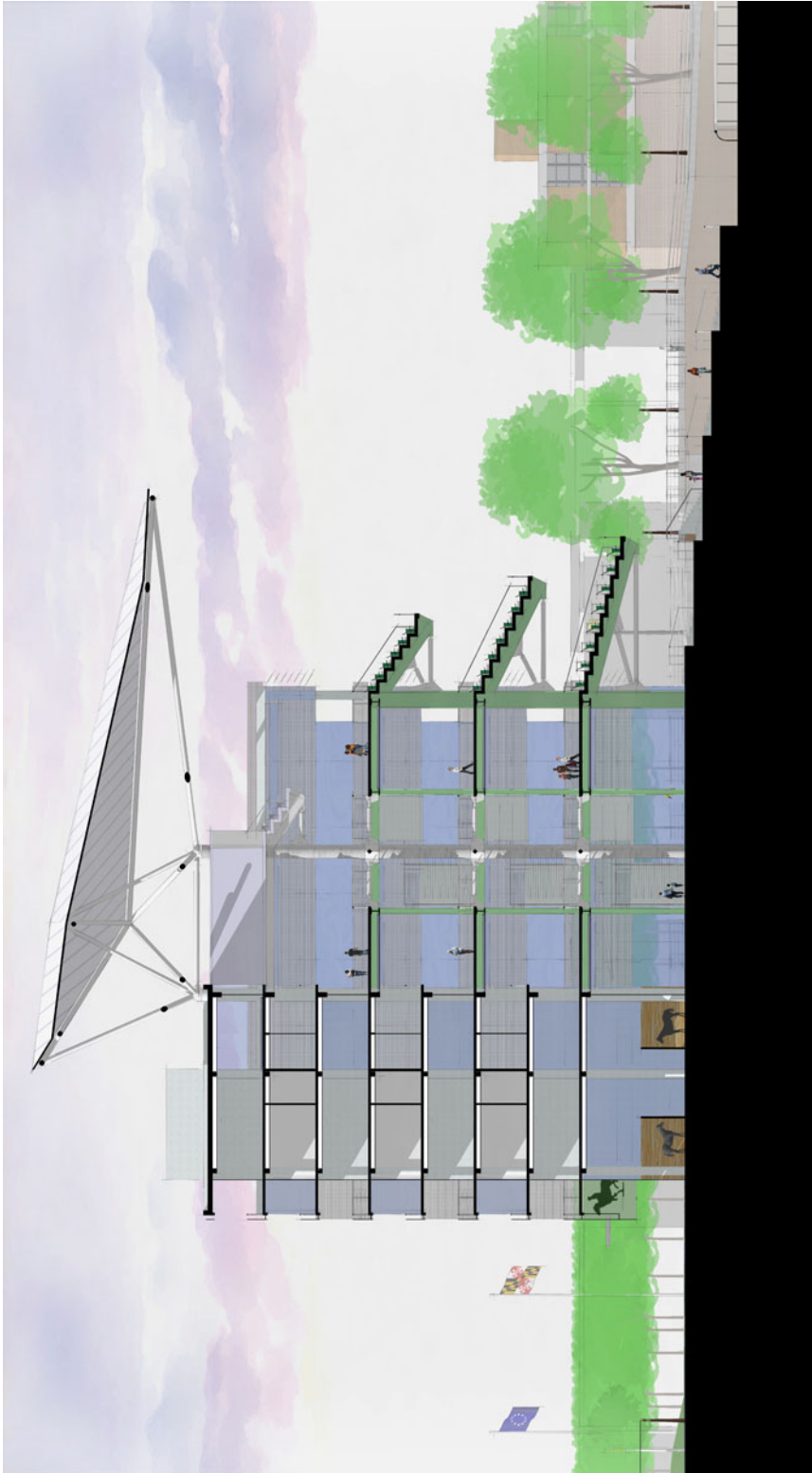


Figure 074: Hotel/Conference/Grandstands - Section [author]

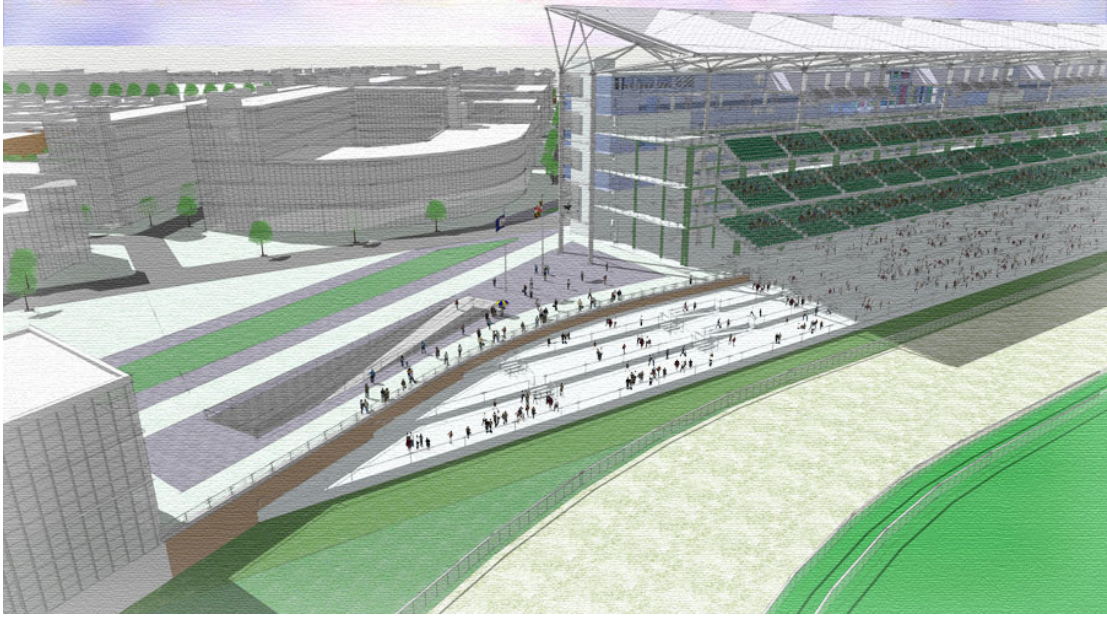


Figure 075: Perspective – Dixie Plaza [author]

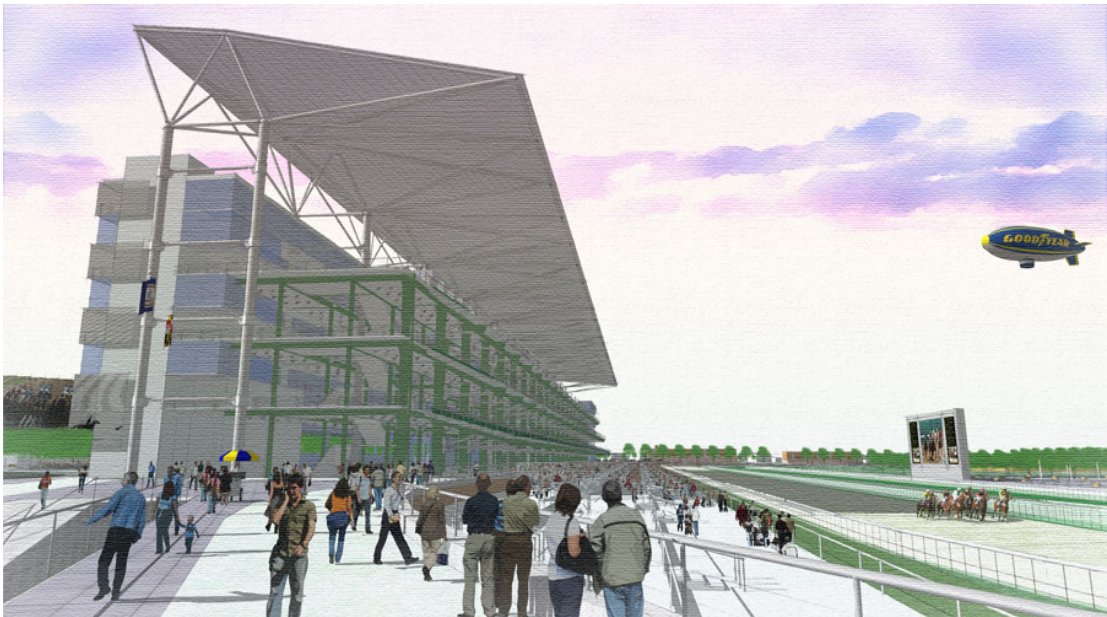


Figure 076: Perspective – Dixie Plaza [author]



Figure 077: Perspective – Bowie Plaza [author]

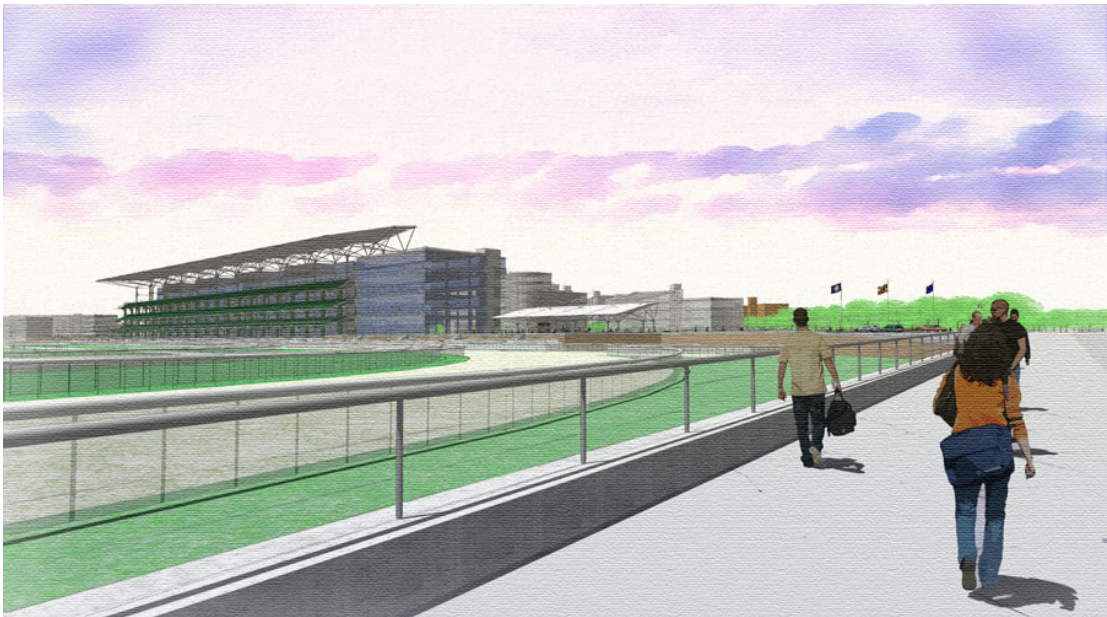


Figure 078: Perspective – Bowie Plaza [author]

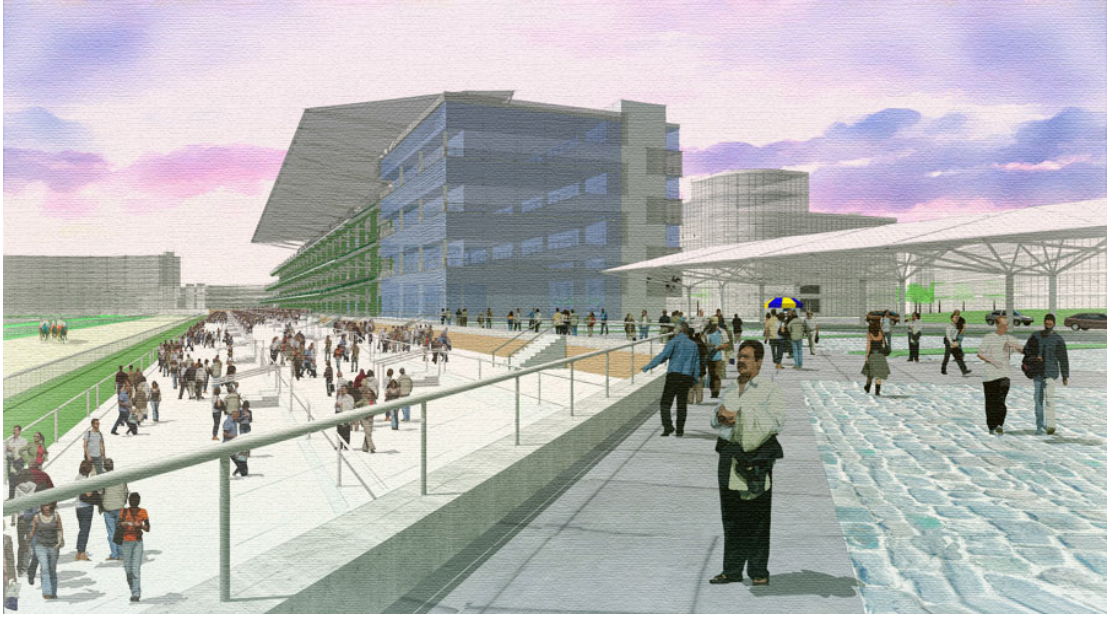


Figure 079: Perspective – Bowie Plaza [author]



Figure 080: Perspective – Final Stretch [author]



Figure 081: Perspective – Pimlico Plaza [author]

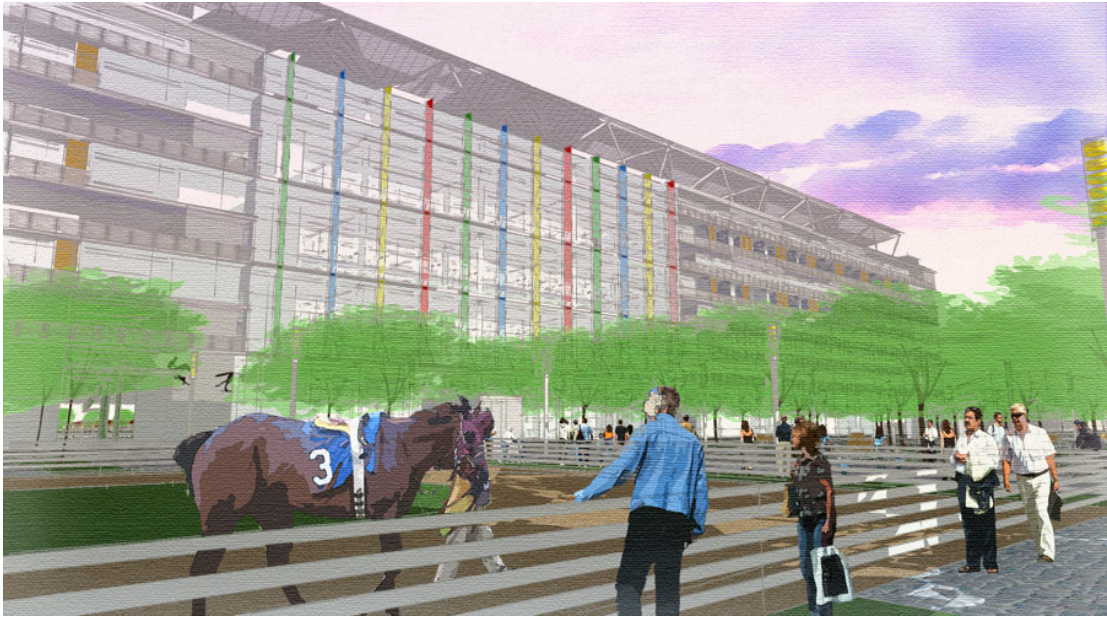


Figure 082: Perspective – Pimlico Plaza Paddock View [author]



Figure 083: Perspective – Infield Park [author]

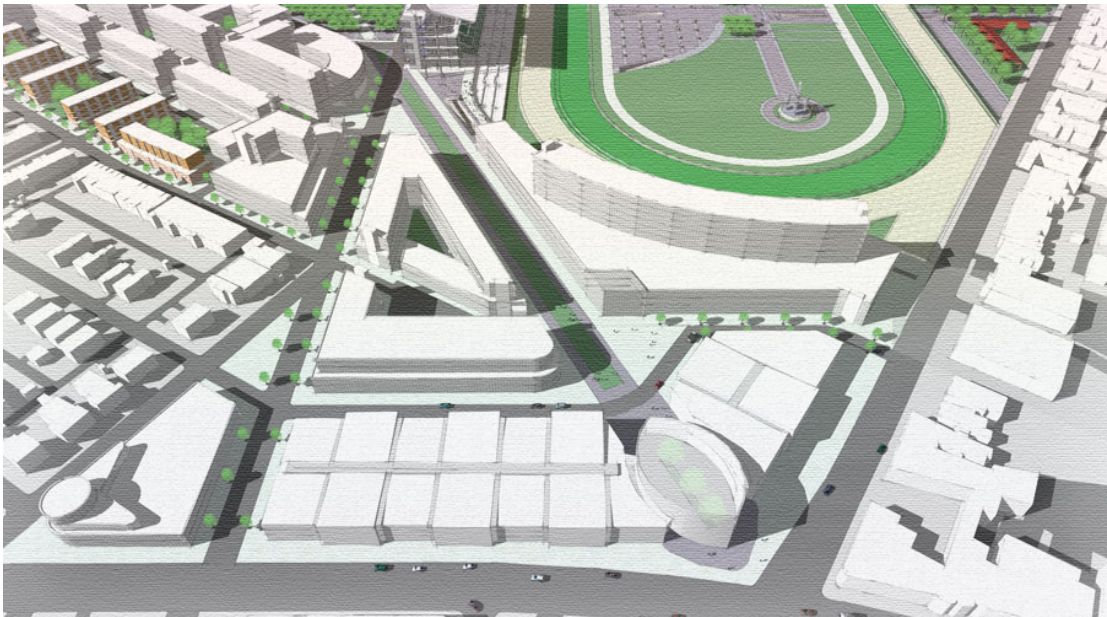


Figure 084: Perspective – Park Heights Center [author]

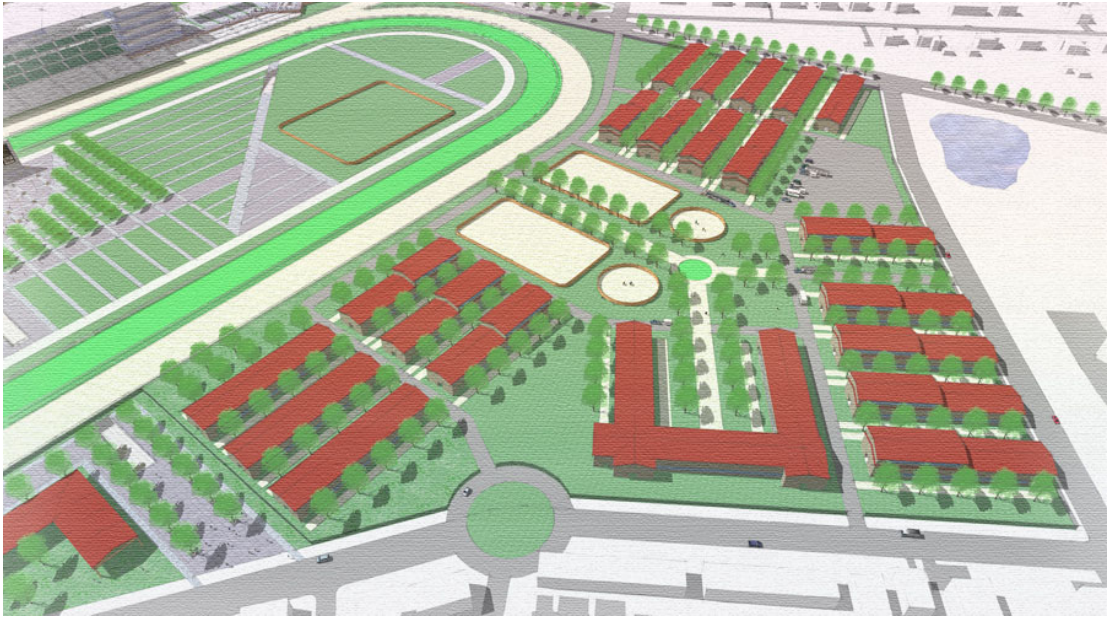


Figure 085: Perspective – Equestrian Center [author]



Figure 086: Perspective – Grandstand Concourse Level Three [author]

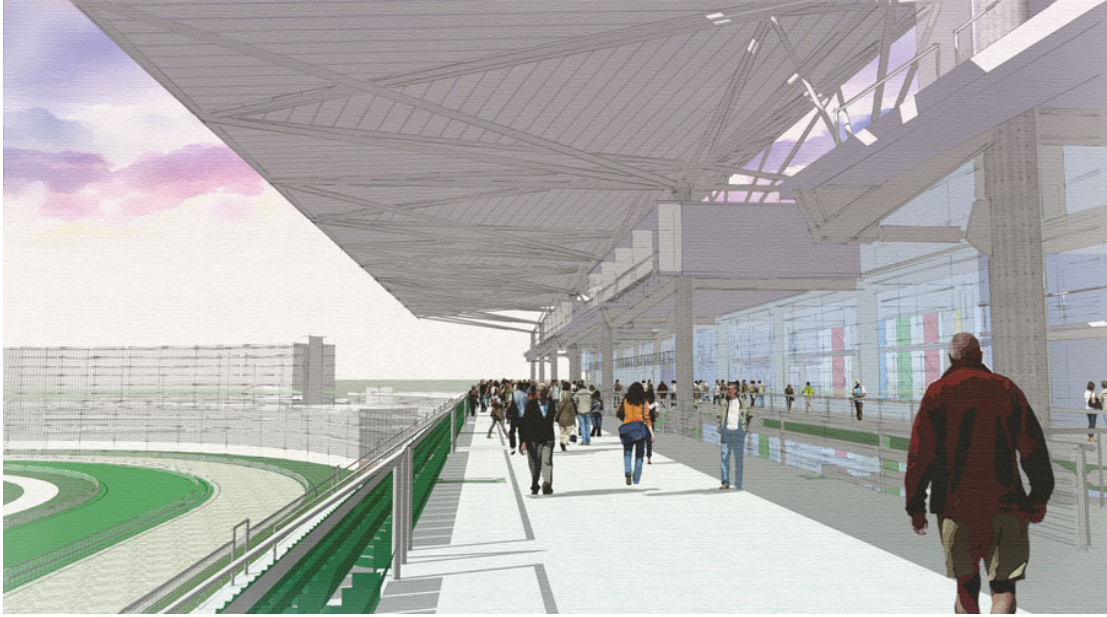


Figure 087: Perspective – Grandstand Concourse Level Four [author]

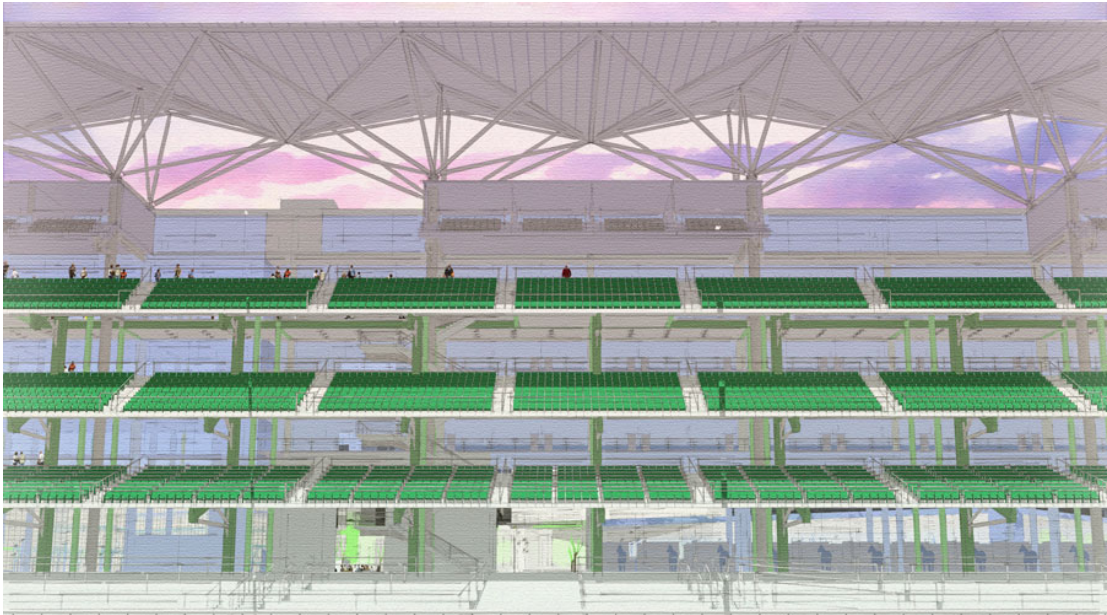


Figure 088: Perspective – Grandstand View [author]



Figure 089: Perspective – Northern Parkway Street Character [author]

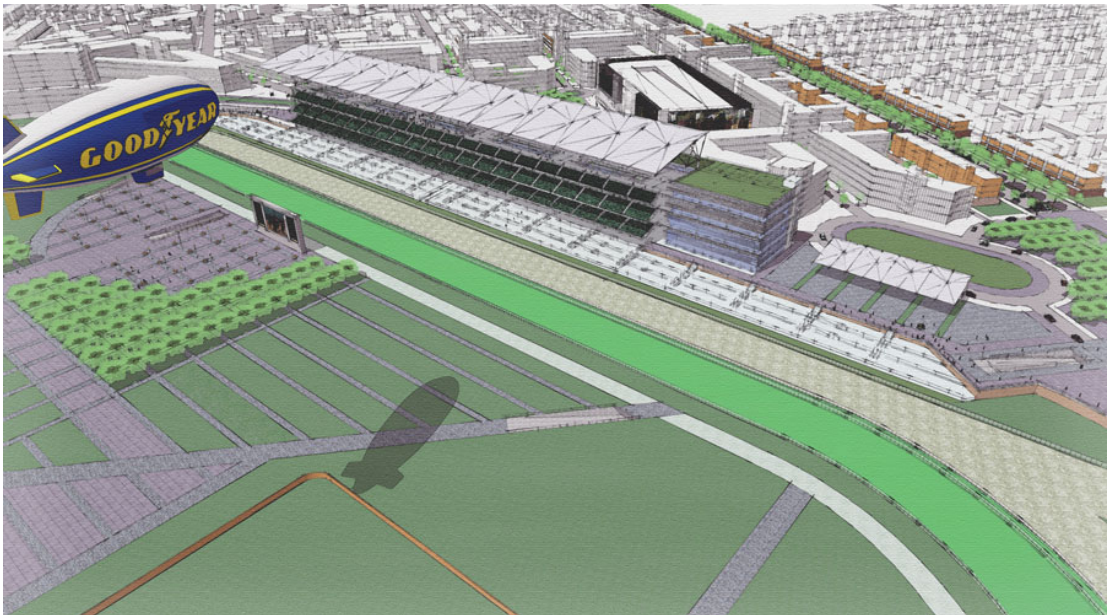


Figure 090: Perspective – Hotel/Conference/Grandstands [author]

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