

TSA

**Ready to continue
exploring Toronto's
Central Waterfront?**

TSA

**Today's tour – part of
our summer long series
exploring Toronto's
waterside structures and
landscapes – is the
second part of our
Central Waterfront tour**

TSA

If you missed the first part go check it out in our Stories Highlights right on our profile.

Don't worry, we'll wait for you!

Meridian Hall



Today's tour picks up where we last left off, as we cross over the Simcoe Wavedeck into York Quay — the heart of Harbourfront Centre...

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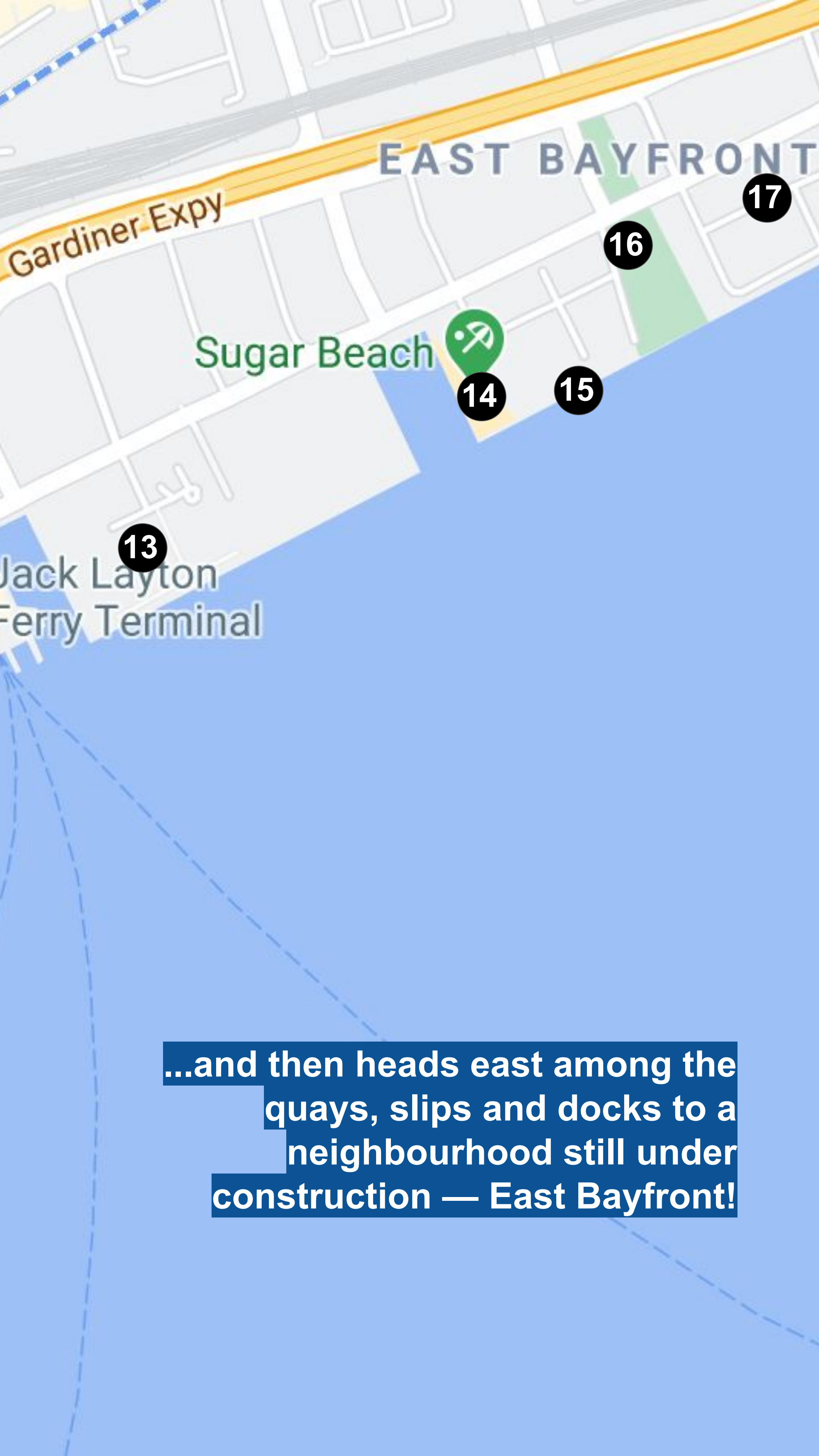
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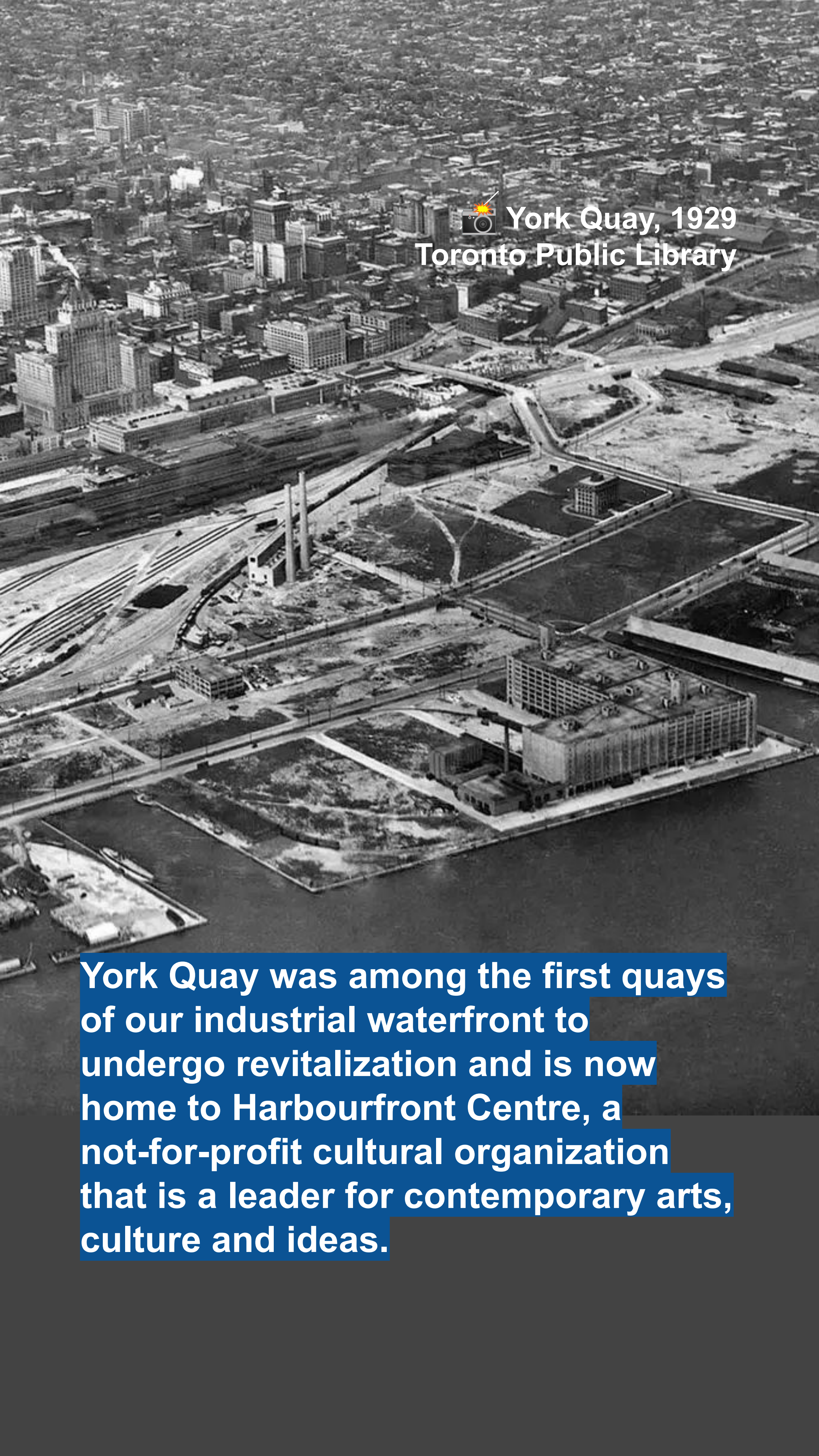



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...and then heads east among the quays, slips and docks to a neighbourhood still under construction — East Bayfront!




 York Quay, 1929
Toronto Public Library

York Quay was among the first quays of our industrial waterfront to undergo revitalization and is now home to Harbourfront Centre, a not-for-profit cultural organization that is a leader for contemporary arts, culture and ideas.


It all started back in 1972 when, as part of an election promise, the federal government purchased 100 acres of derelict waterfront property (everything we have walked in this tour so far!) with the aim of establishing a new recreational and cultural park along the water's edge.



 **York Quay, 1980s,
City of Toronto Archives**

Harbourfront Corporation, the predecessor of Harbourfront Centre, was established in 1976 to fulfill this mandate — a slow and gradual process that started with some planters, paint and temporary artist spaces and grew into the vibrant cultural campus we see today



 **York Quay, 1980s,
City of Toronto Archives**

A unique feature of this cultural campus is the adaptive reuse of many of its former industrial buildings including...





...the 1926-27 Moores & Dunford designed power plant and ice house, two service buildings that were converted into a contemporary art gallery and 400-seat theatre in 1987 by Lett/Smith Architects...



...and the gigantic 1927 Queens Quay Terminal (also by Moores & Dunford), once Canada's largest warehouse, transformed in 1987 by the Zeidler Roberts Partnership into a mixed-use complex including cultural spaces, residences, offices and retail



Pro-tip: We recommend throwing on your mask and checking out the inner atrium space of the terminal building — they opened three atria by removing floors and leaving the concrete “mushroom” columns and beams intact

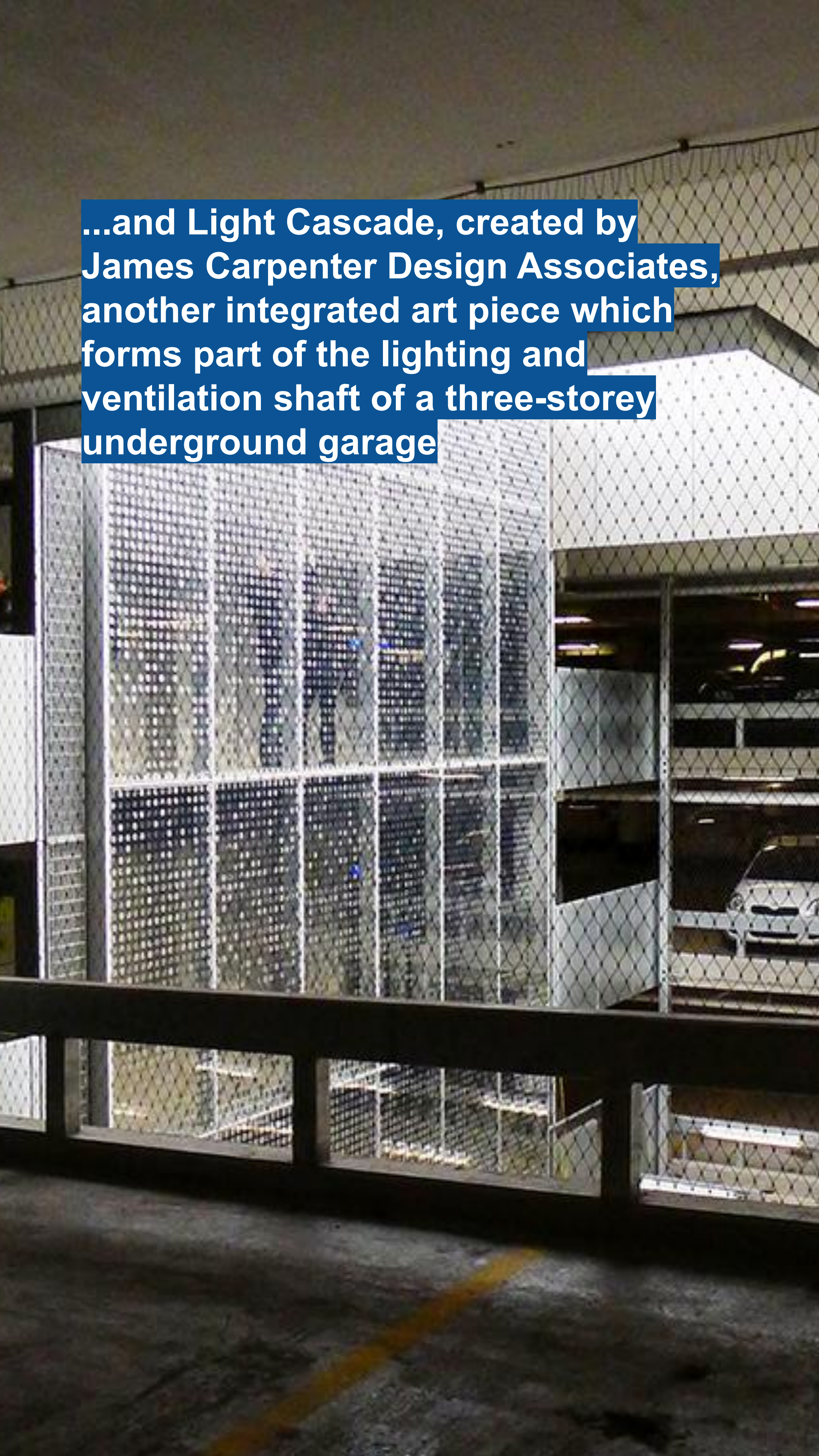
Art, whether permanent or temporary, is also an ever-present component at the Harbourfront Centre. Some highlights include...



...Waterglass by Canadian artist Sarah Hall, a large scale permanent installation integrated into the Harbourfront Centre Theatre's glass roof and curtain walls featuring 119 art glass panels that generate solar energy through photovoltaic cells that light the theatre's lobby...



...and Light Cascade, created by James Carpenter Design Associates, another integrated art piece which forms part of the lighting and ventilation shaft of a three-storey underground garage





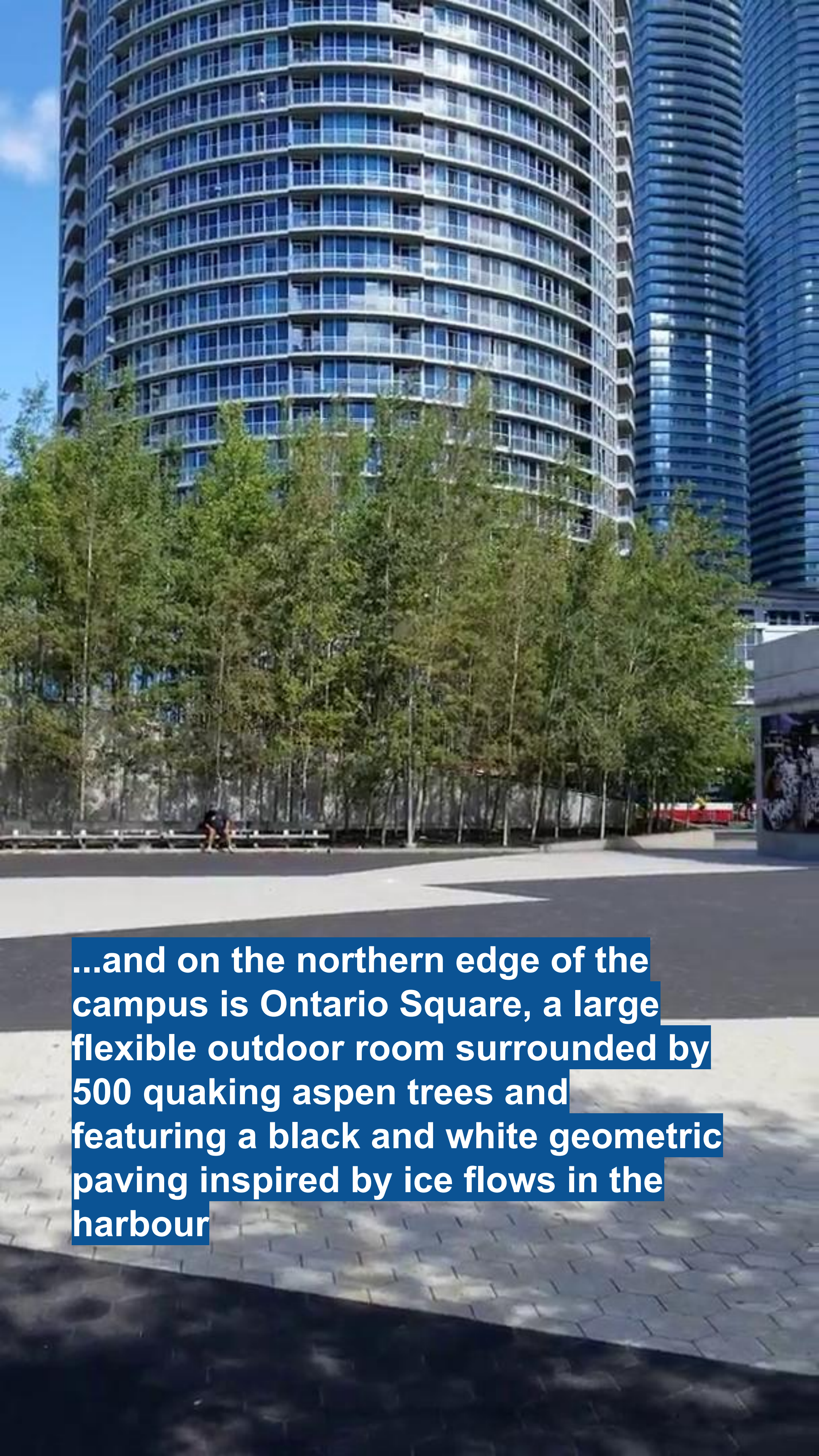
At grade, the parking garage's pedestrian entrance also makes room for temporary art displays complete with integrated lighting creating a unique outdoor gallery space

Stitching everything together is a series of flexible landscapes and open spaces (and lots of seating!) designed to host numerous events throughout the year. Highlights include...





...the intimate Canada Square, completed in 2013 and designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates, it replaced a parking lot with a contemplative space surrounded by 41 Metasequoia (dawn redwood) trees...



...and on the northern edge of the campus is Ontario Square, a large flexible outdoor room surrounded by 500 quaking aspen trees and featuring a black and white geometric paving inspired by ice flows in the harbour

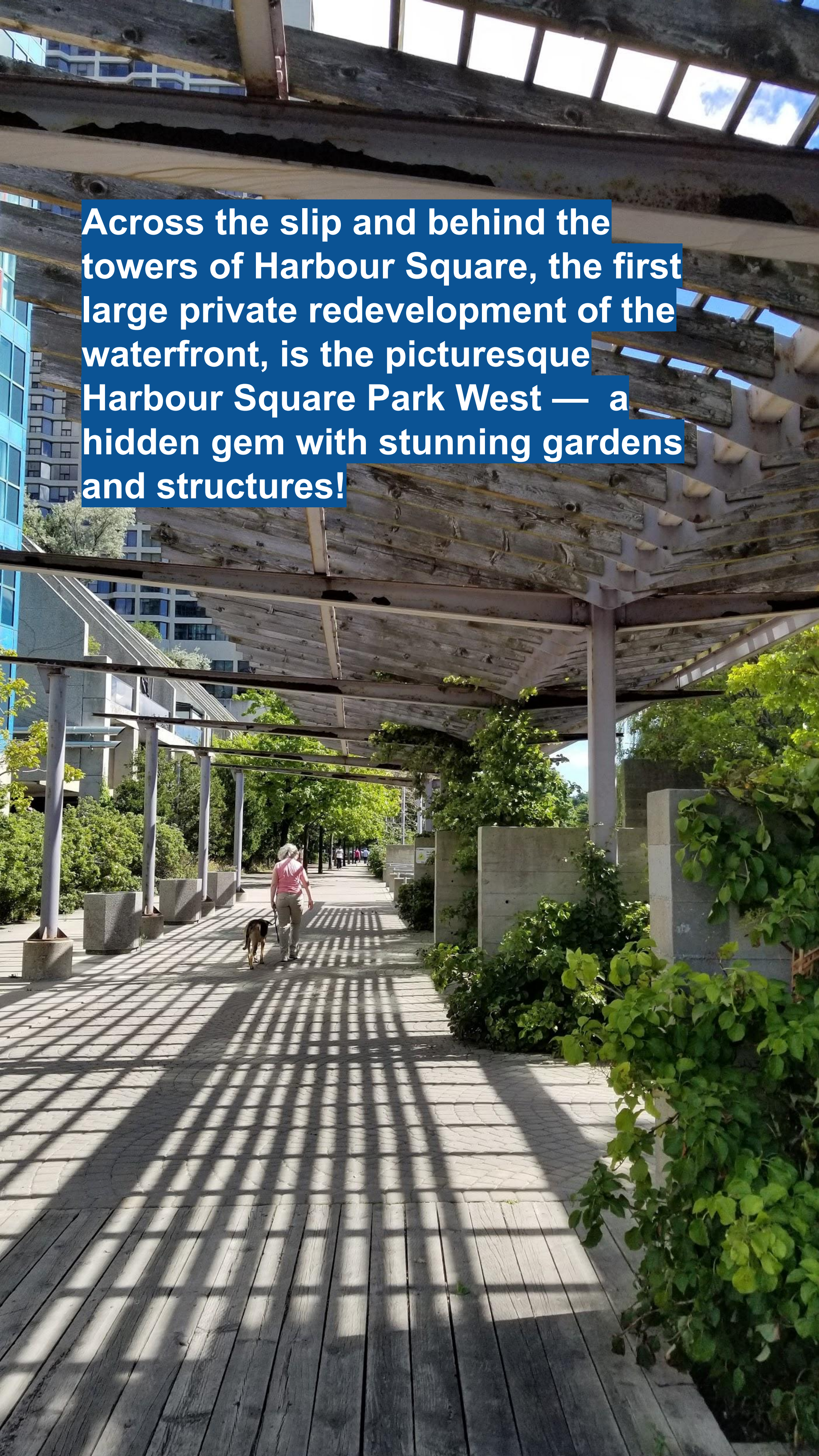
With so much to see and do we could spend all day at Harbourfront Centre, but now it's time to continue our walk east along the water's edge and onto our next stop.



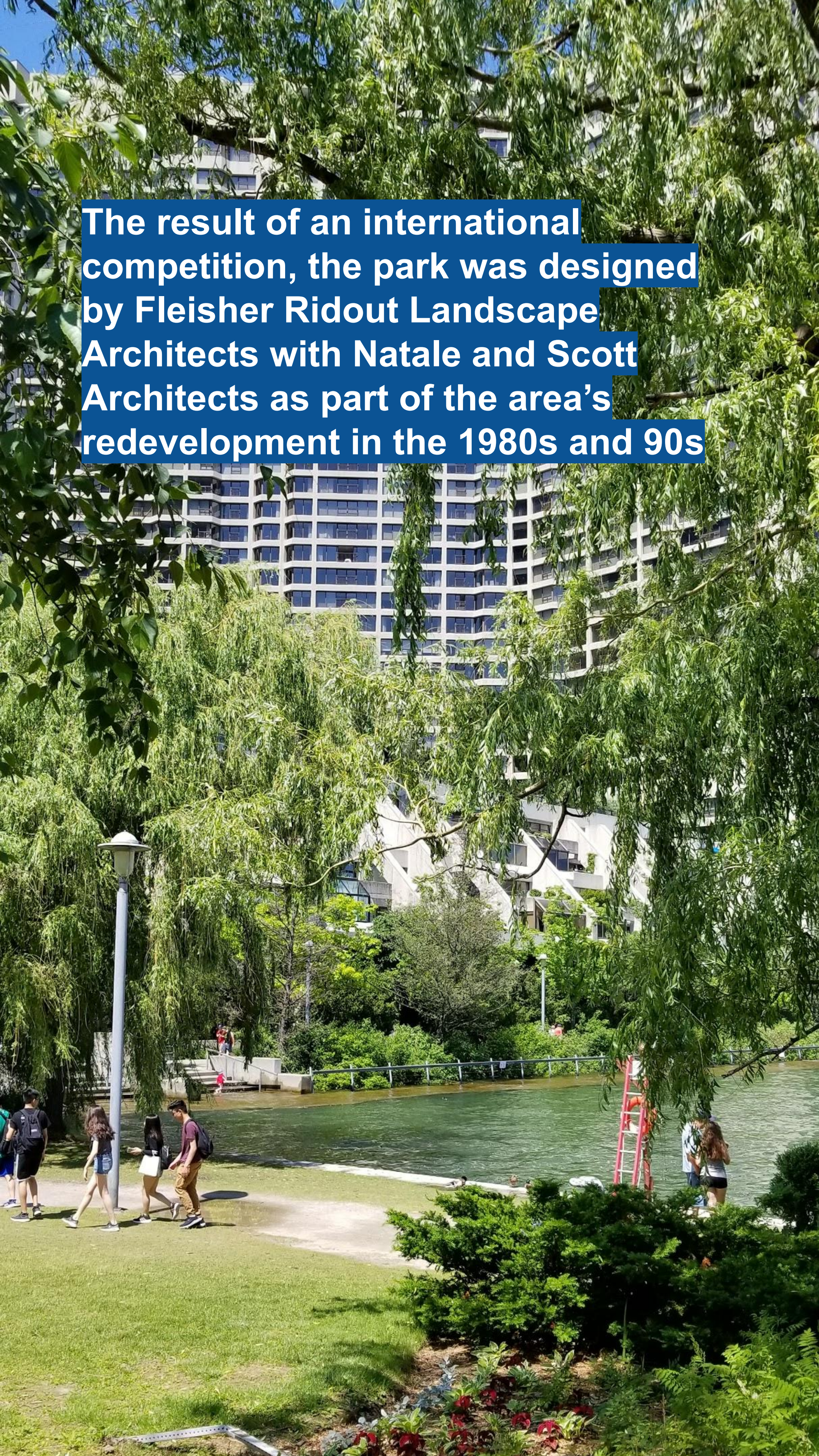
Along the way, at the head of the slip, make sure to look down and you'll catch the school of 42 bronze fish sculptures created by local artist Stephen Radmacher. They were all carefully removed and reinstalled when the sidewalk was replaced!

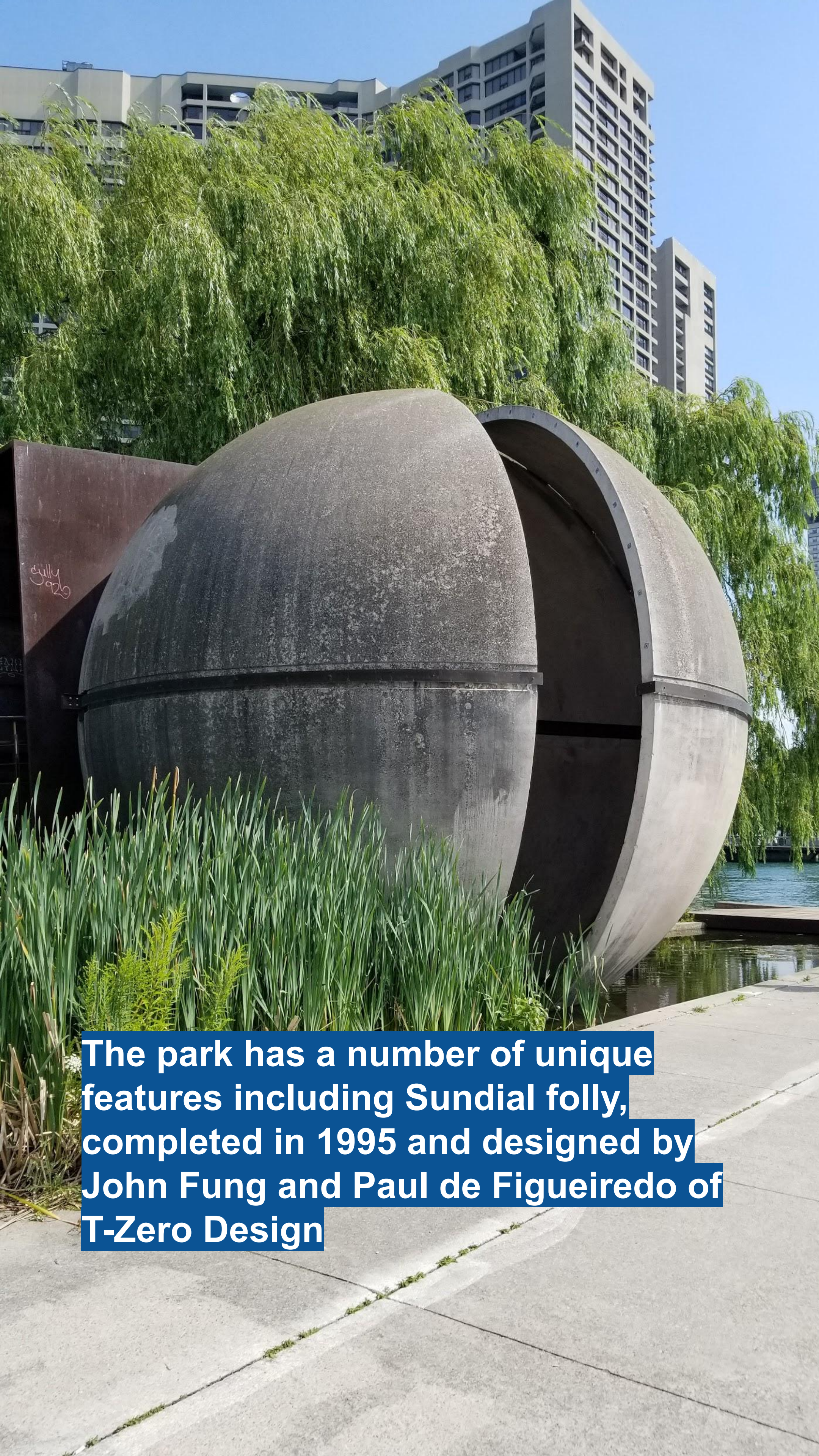


Across the slip and behind the towers of Harbour Square, the first large private redevelopment of the waterfront, is the picturesque Harbour Square Park West — a hidden gem with stunning gardens and structures!

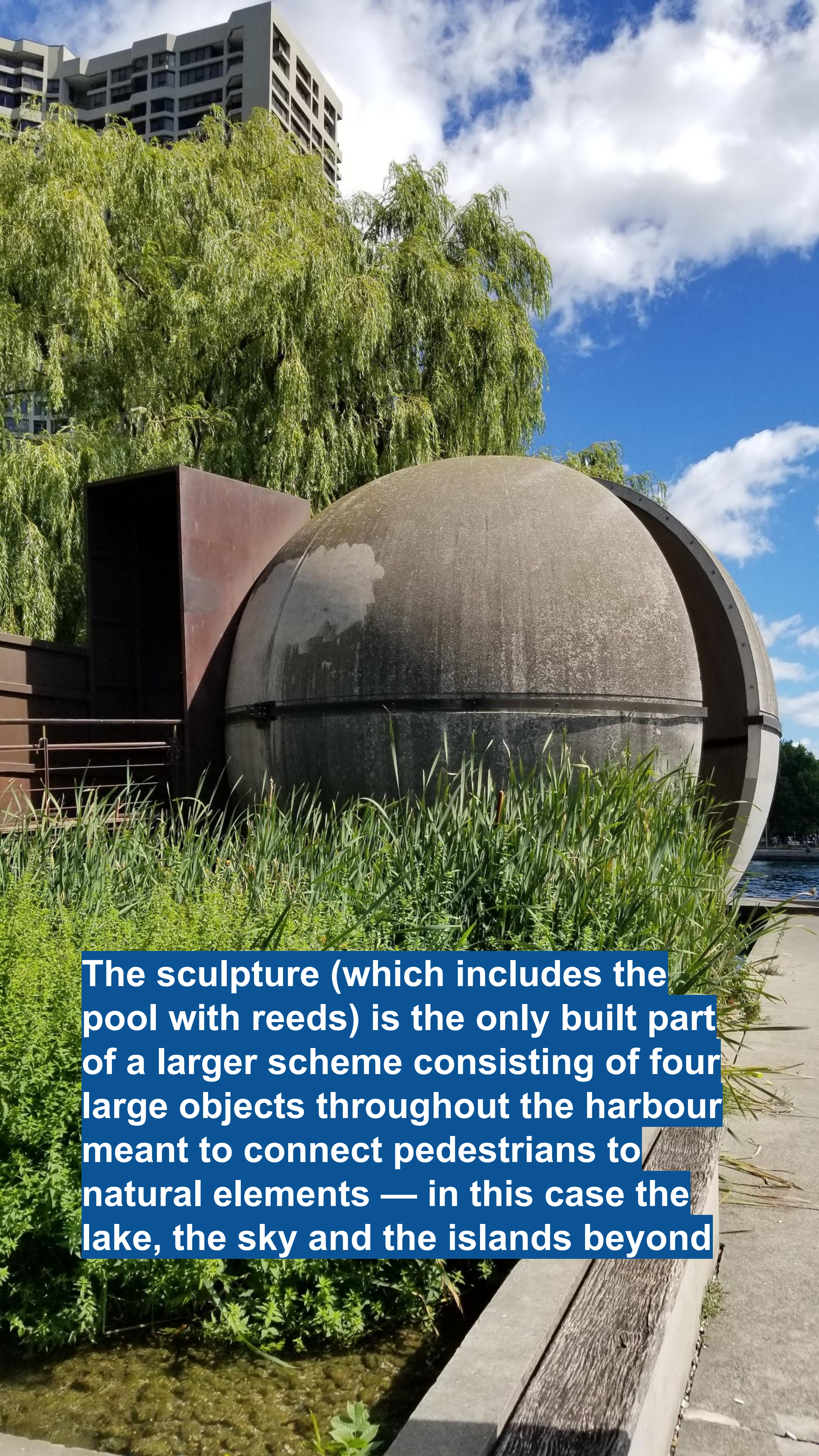


The result of an international competition, the park was designed by Fleisher Ridout Landscape Architects with Natale and Scott Architects as part of the area's redevelopment in the 1980s and 90s





The park has a number of unique features including Sundial folly, completed in 1995 and designed by John Fung and Paul de Figueiredo of T-Zero Design



The sculpture (which includes the pool with reeds) is the only built part of a larger scheme consisting of four large objects throughout the harbour meant to connect pedestrians to natural elements — in this case the lake, the sky and the islands beyond

Now make your way east along the boardwalk to our next destination...



As you cross check out the innovative bio-engineered, erosion resistant shoreline built with branches of native species. It is the only place in the central waterfront where you can hear the waves lapping against a natural shore



Once you've crossed over the boardwalk you will be in Harbour Square Park East, home of the ferry terminal and gateway to the Toronto islands






The ferry terminal has changed location several times since 1890, but the current one dates back to 1972 when architect Walter Agius designed a new terminal as part of the Brutalist redevelopment project that included the neighbouring hotel

In 2014, looking to improve the ferry facilities and provide continuous access to the waterfront, Waterfront Toronto held an international competition for its redevelopment along with the adjacent public spaces




An architectural rendering of a modern urban park. The scene is set at dusk or dawn, with a city skyline of tall skyscrapers in the background. In the foreground, a large, undulating walkable roof structure is covered in green grass and native plants. The roof is illuminated from within, creating a warm glow. People are seen walking on the roof and on a wooden deck area. A small boat is visible in a body of water in the lower left. The overall atmosphere is one of a seamless integration between nature and urban architecture.

The winning proposal, designed by KPMB Architects, West 8 and Greenberg Consultants Inc, envisions a seamless integration between landscape and architecture featuring an undulating walkable roof with native plants and a matching landscape with heavily planted hills



Underneath, the undulating roof will feature a unique wood structure and provide framed views of the lake as you approach the terminal all the way from Queens Quay

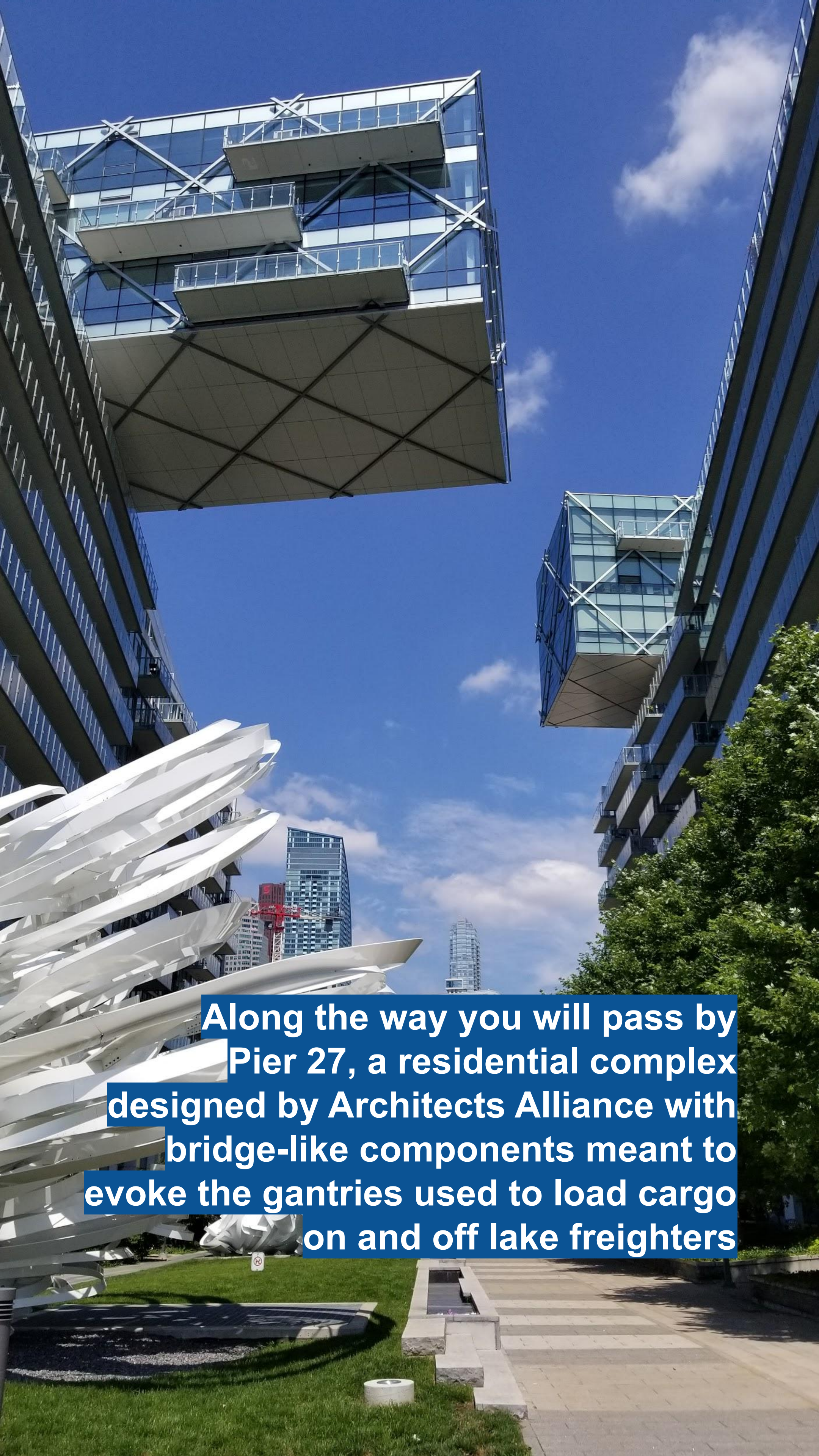
A photograph of a public space, likely a waterfront promenade. In the foreground, a brick-paved path is lined with silver metal crowd control barriers. A tall, grey lamppost stands on the left. The path leads towards a large, leafy green tree. In the background, a multi-story building with many windows is visible. A sign for 'COME FROM AWA' is partially visible on the building. The sky is blue with some clouds.

A phased project, the first part of the scheme has already been completed, extending the iconic waterfront public realm and adding new trees on the path connecting Queens Quay to the ferry terminal

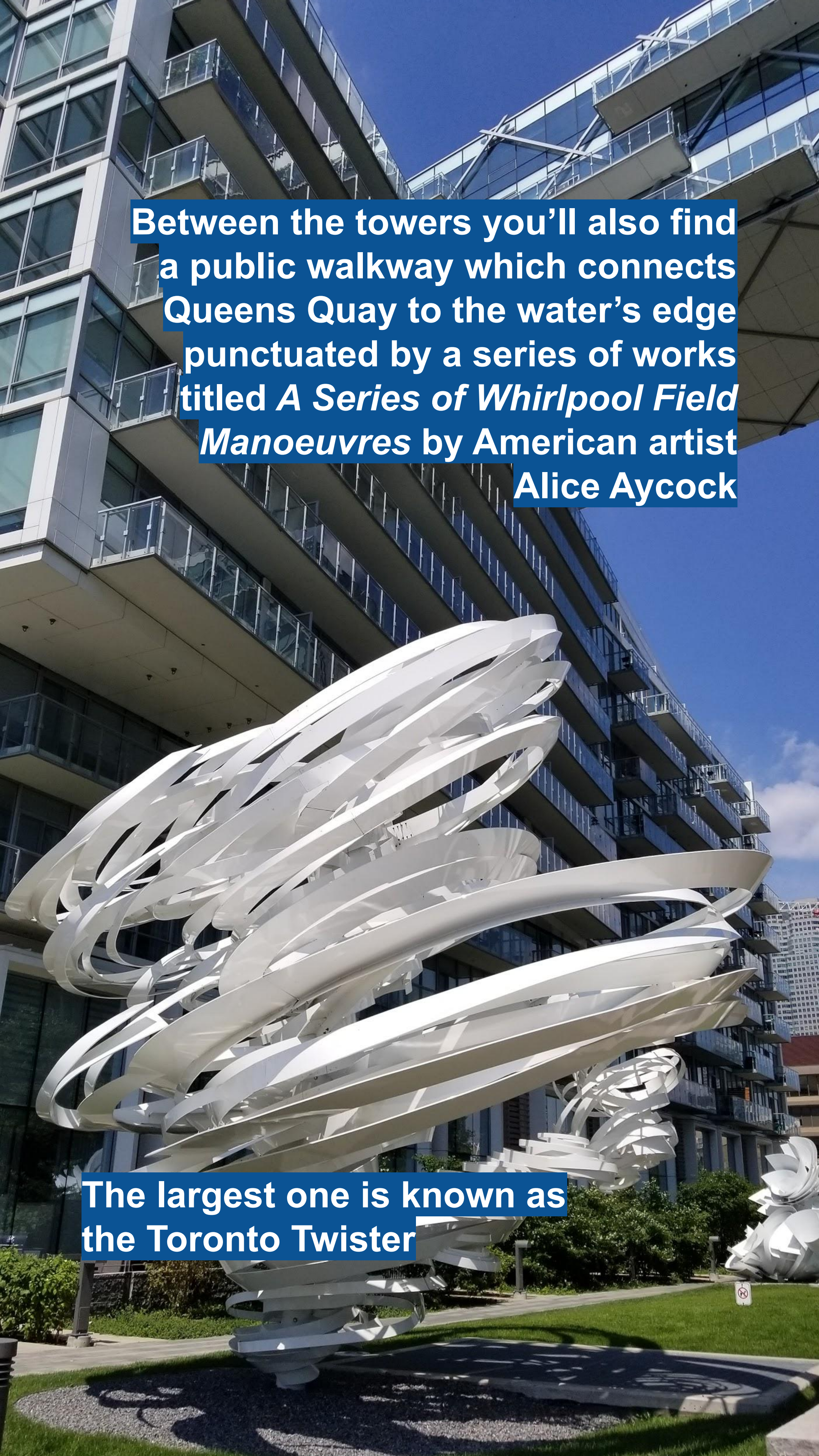
...and this is the path to follow for our next stop!



...to get to the next stop you'll need to walk east along a yet-to-be-redeveloped eastern portion Queens Quay where new buildings are quickly rising on either side — think about it as this season's under construction TSA tour!

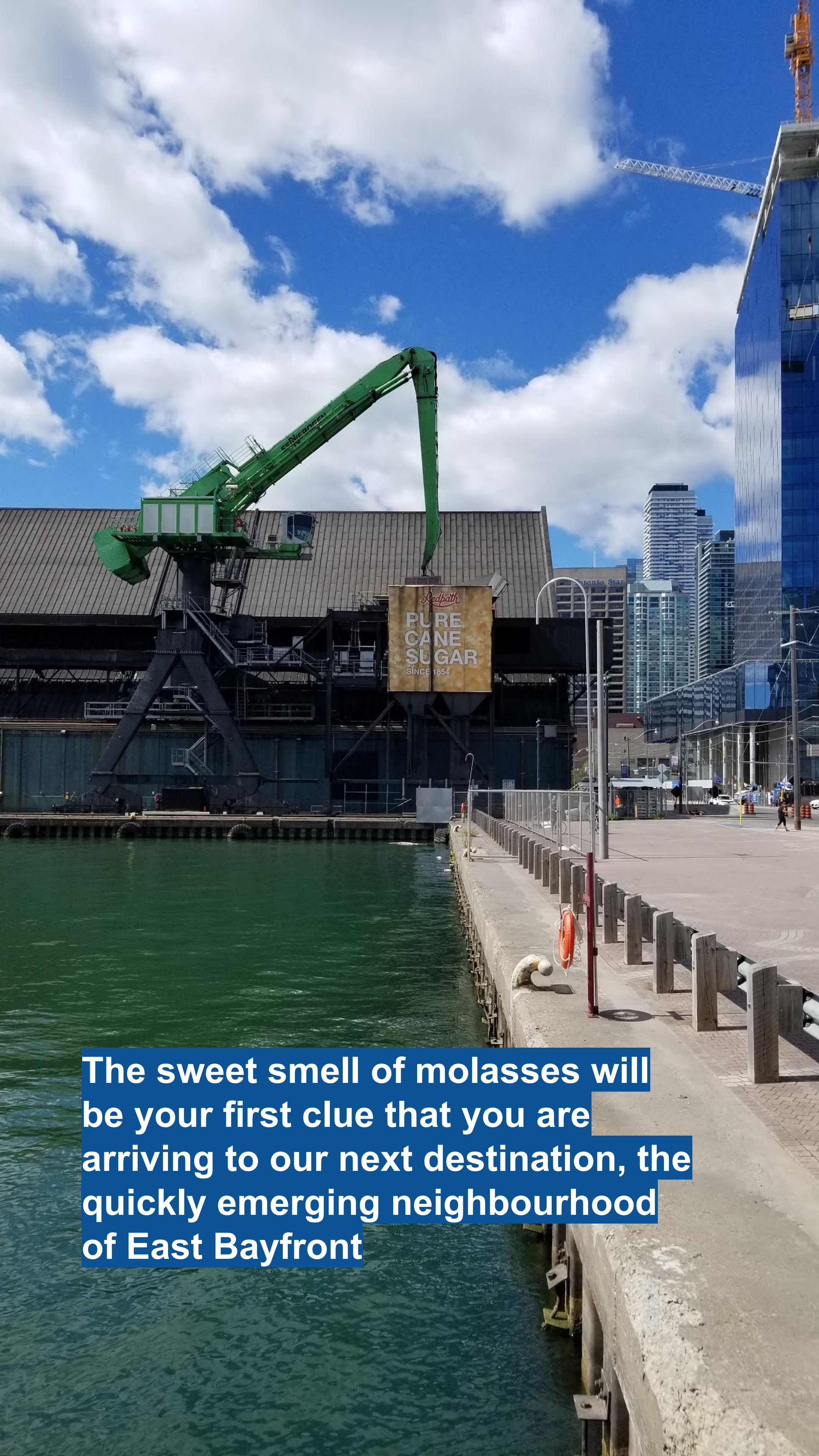


Along the way you will pass by Pier 27, a residential complex designed by Architects Alliance with bridge-like components meant to evoke the gantries used to load cargo on and off lake freighters



Between the towers you'll also find a public walkway which connects Queens Quay to the water's edge punctuated by a series of works titled *A Series of Whirlpool Field Manoeuvres* by American artist Alice Aycock

The largest one is known as the Toronto Twister



The sweet smell of molasses will be your first clue that you are arriving to our next destination, the quickly emerging neighbourhood of East Bayfront

The first neighbourhood planned entirely by Waterfront Toronto, East Bayfront sits on what was formerly known as the Queen Elizabeth Docks



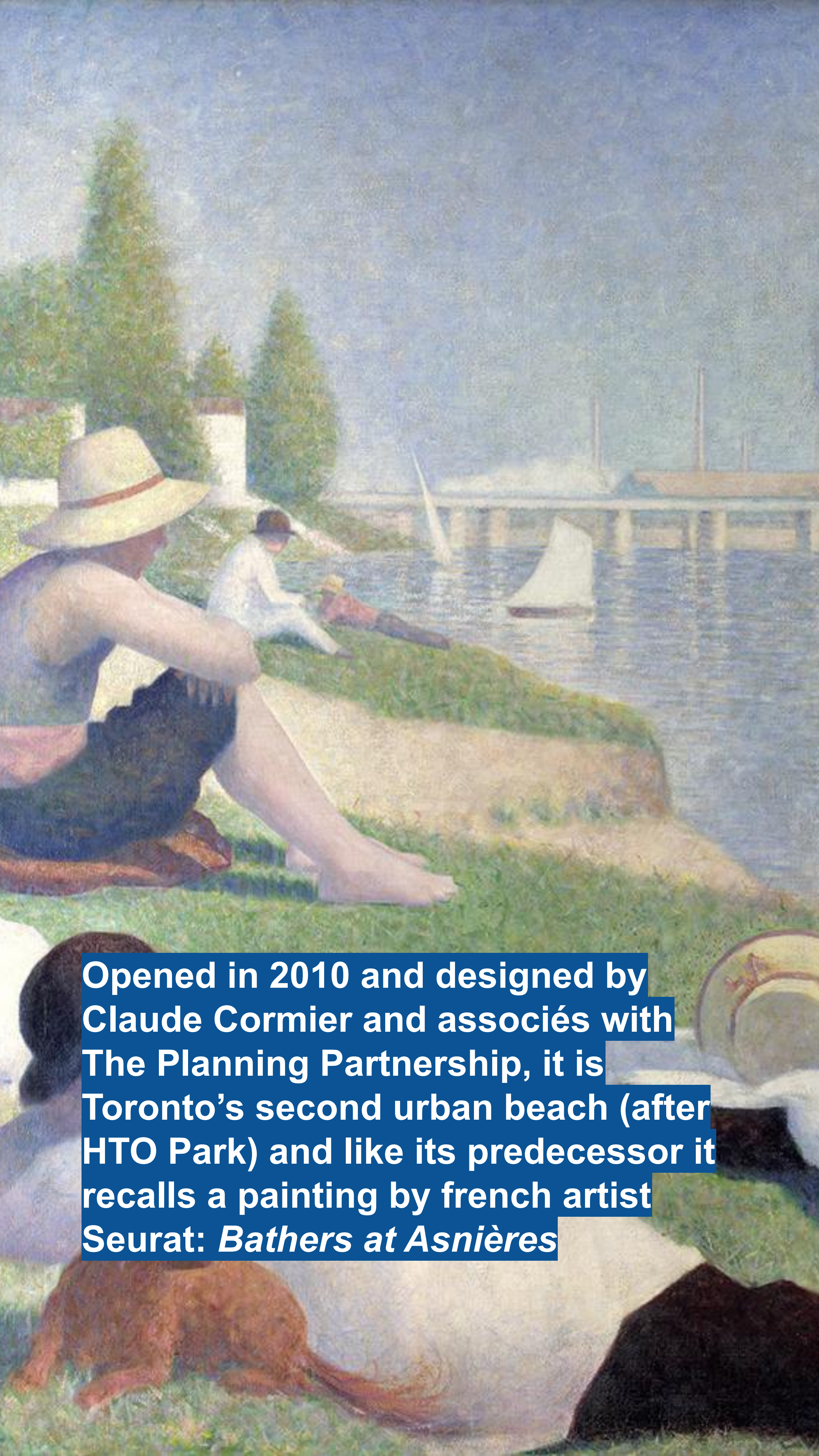
Built in the 1950s, the docks are much larger than the quays earlier in this tour reflecting the larger ships and buildings they were designed to accommodate



The neighbourhood is also home to the last remaining industrial building still active on the northern shore of the harbour — the 1957 Redpath Sugar Refinery designed by Gordon S. Adamson Associates with H.G. Acres & Co. Ltd., Engineers

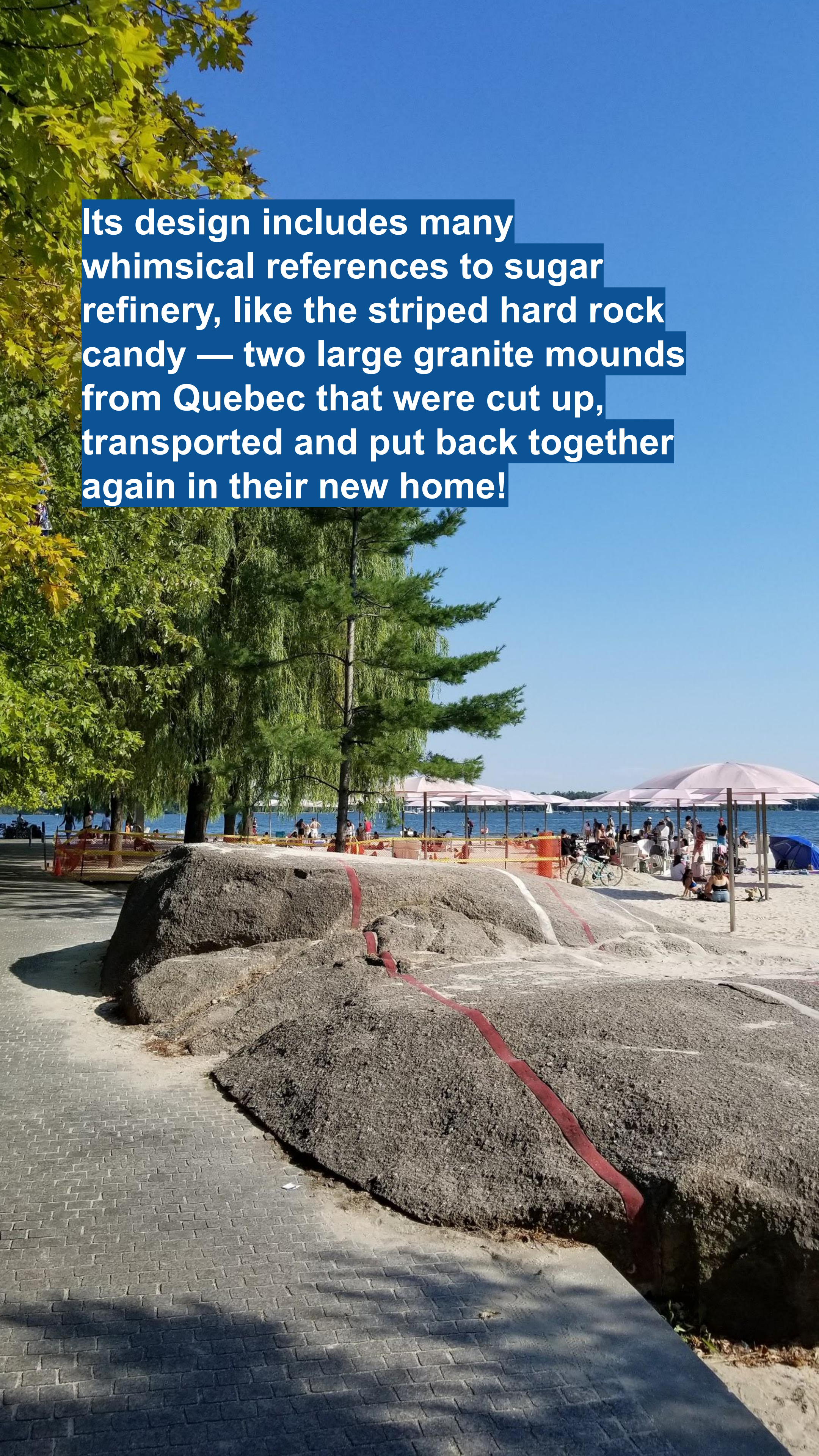
The refinery and its sweet product were the inspiration behind our next stop located just across Jarvis Slip, the very aptly named Sugar Beach!





Opened in 2010 and designed by Claude Cormier and associés with The Planning Partnership, it is Toronto's second urban beach (after HTO Park) and like its predecessor it recalls a painting by french artist Seurat: *Bathers at Asnières*

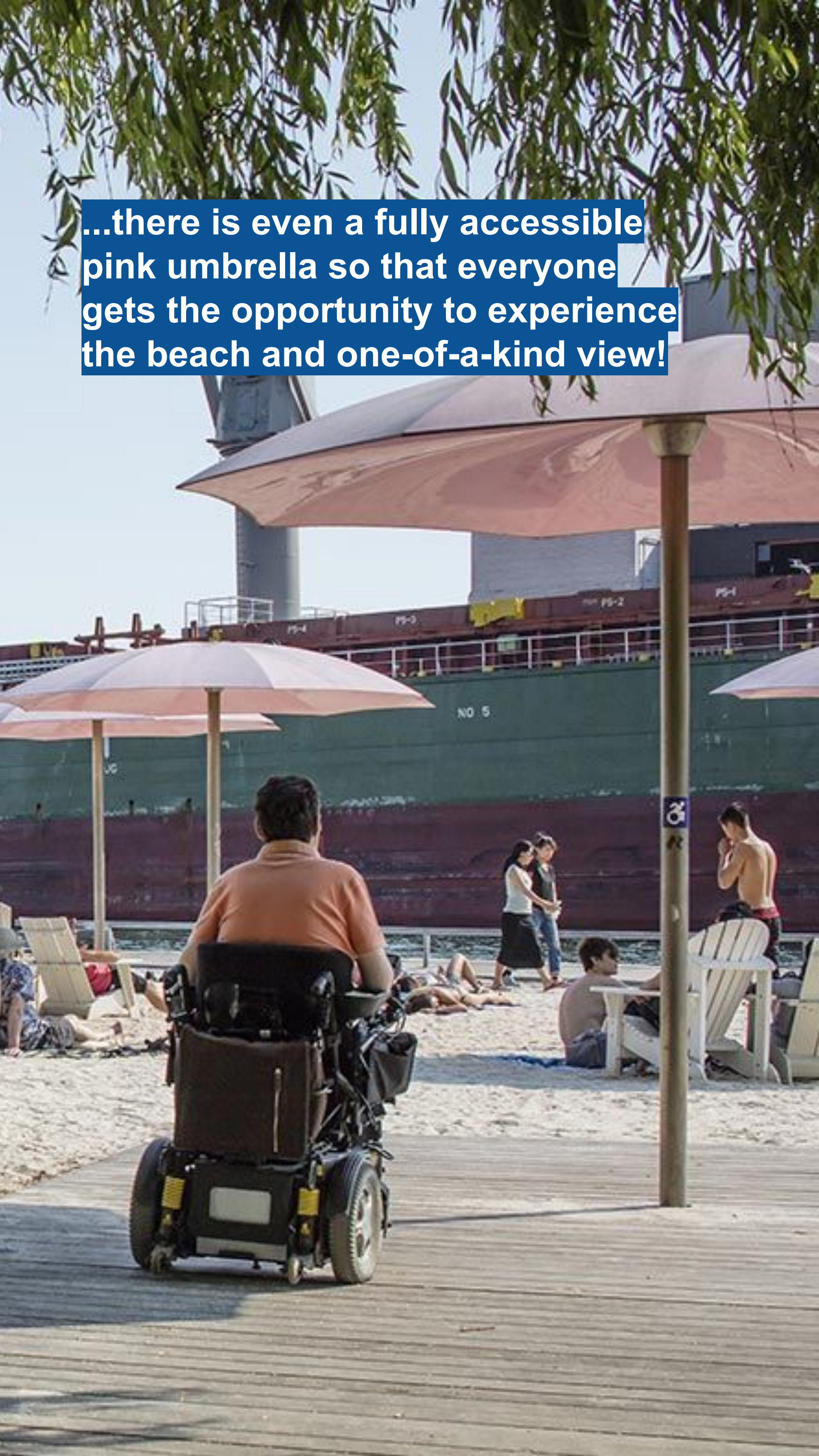
Its design includes many whimsical references to sugar refinery, like the striped hard rock candy — two large granite mounds from Quebec that were cut up, transported and put back together again in their new home!



...and the 36 cotton candy pink umbrellas, a perfect spot to watch the sugar ships as they unload their cargo...



...there is even a fully accessible pink umbrella so that everyone gets the opportunity to experience the beach and one-of-a-kind view!

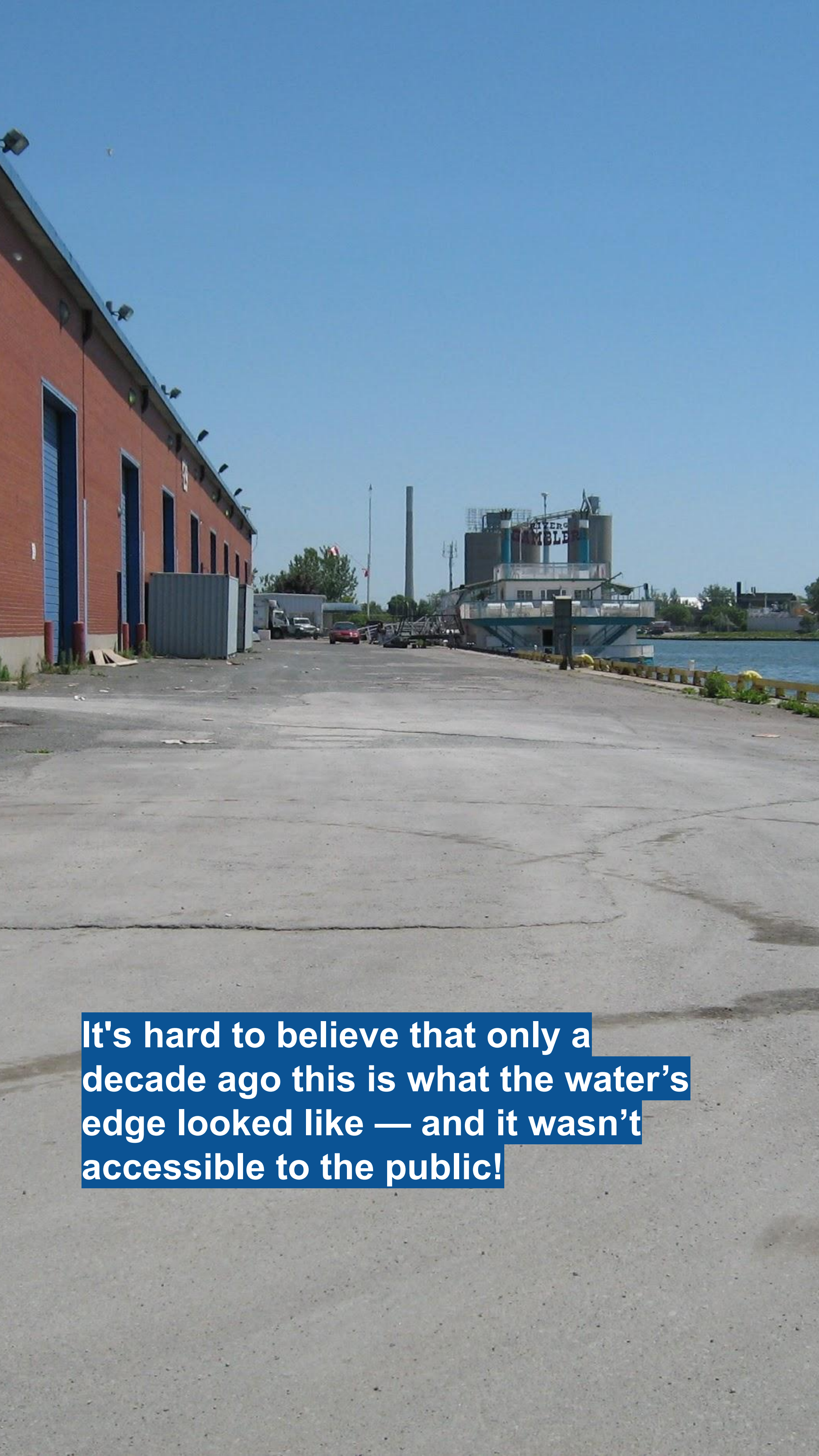


...even the trees fit the theme!
The main walking path is lined
with some very quickly maturing
maples 🍁 — it's quite the sight in
the fall!



...Speaking of trees, continue heading east along the water's edge promenade, another part of the award-winning public realm plan designed by West 8 and DTAH.





It's hard to believe that only a decade ago this is what the water's edge looked like — and it wasn't accessible to the public!

As you walk east you'll head into newer and newer portions of the promenade with younger trees that give you a glimpse of how quickly they grow — like walking through a time tunnel!

10 years



5 years



Brand new!

Connecting to the promenade and extending two blocks north is Sherbourne Common, another new waterfront park which was completed in 2011

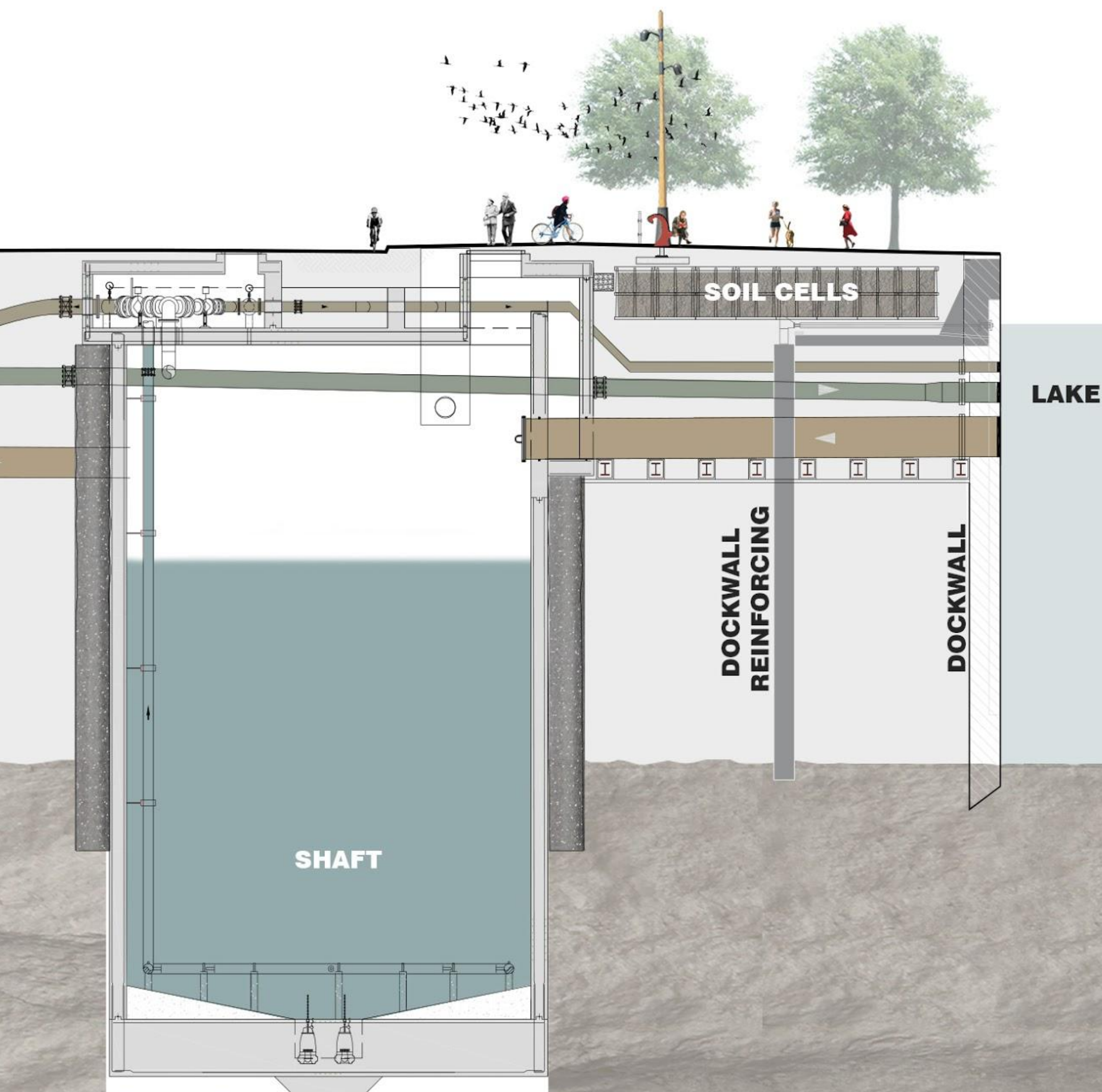




Designed by a team including PFS Studio, The Planning Partnership, Teeple Architects, Jill Anholt & the Municipal Infrastructure Group, Sherbourne Common is more than just a great park — it is also a stormwater treatment facility which celebrates water in unique ways!

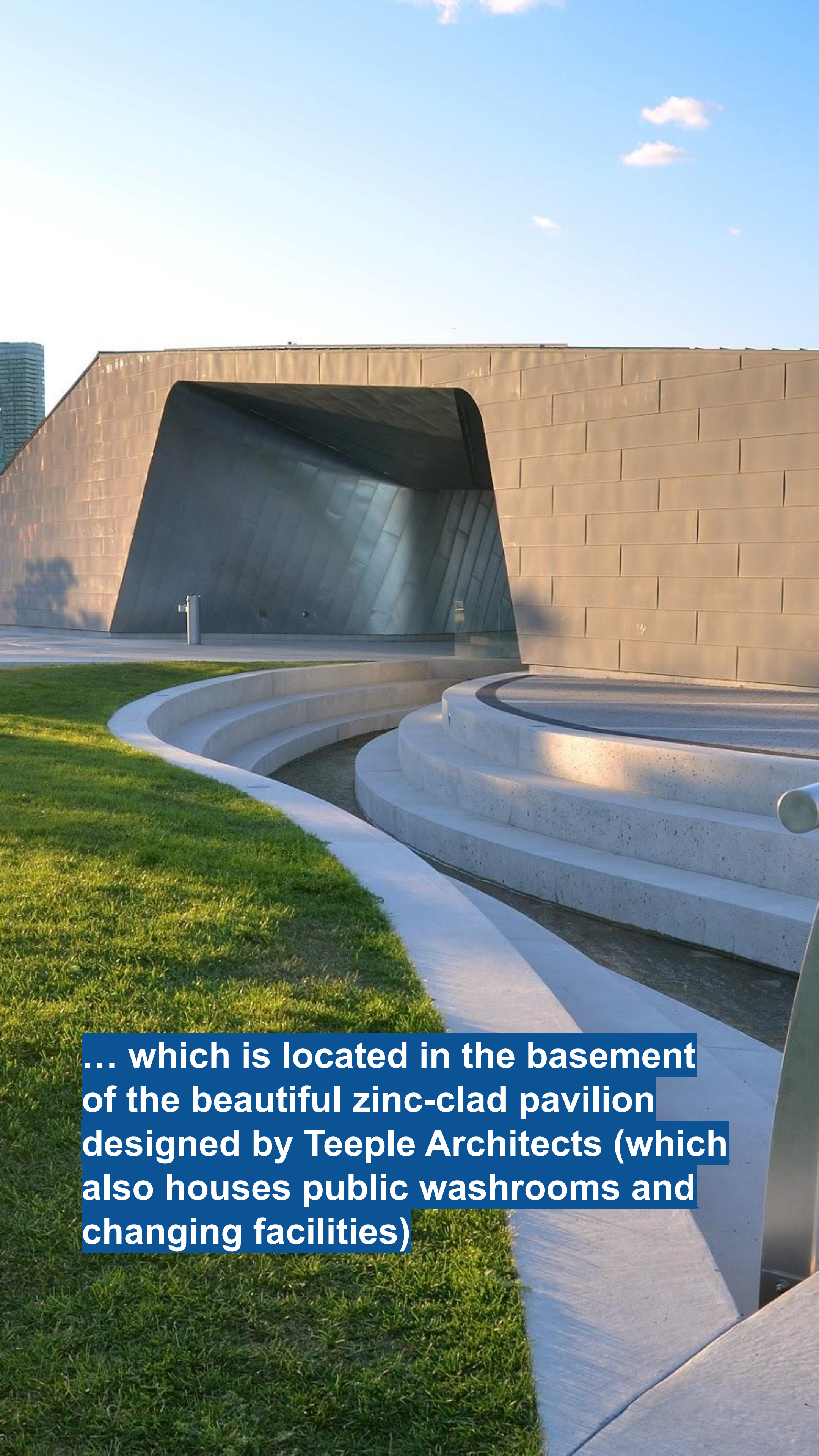
This is how it works.

After a storm, runoff from the neighbourhood will be collected in a 20 meters tall, 12 metres wide stormwater shaft concealed under the public realm.





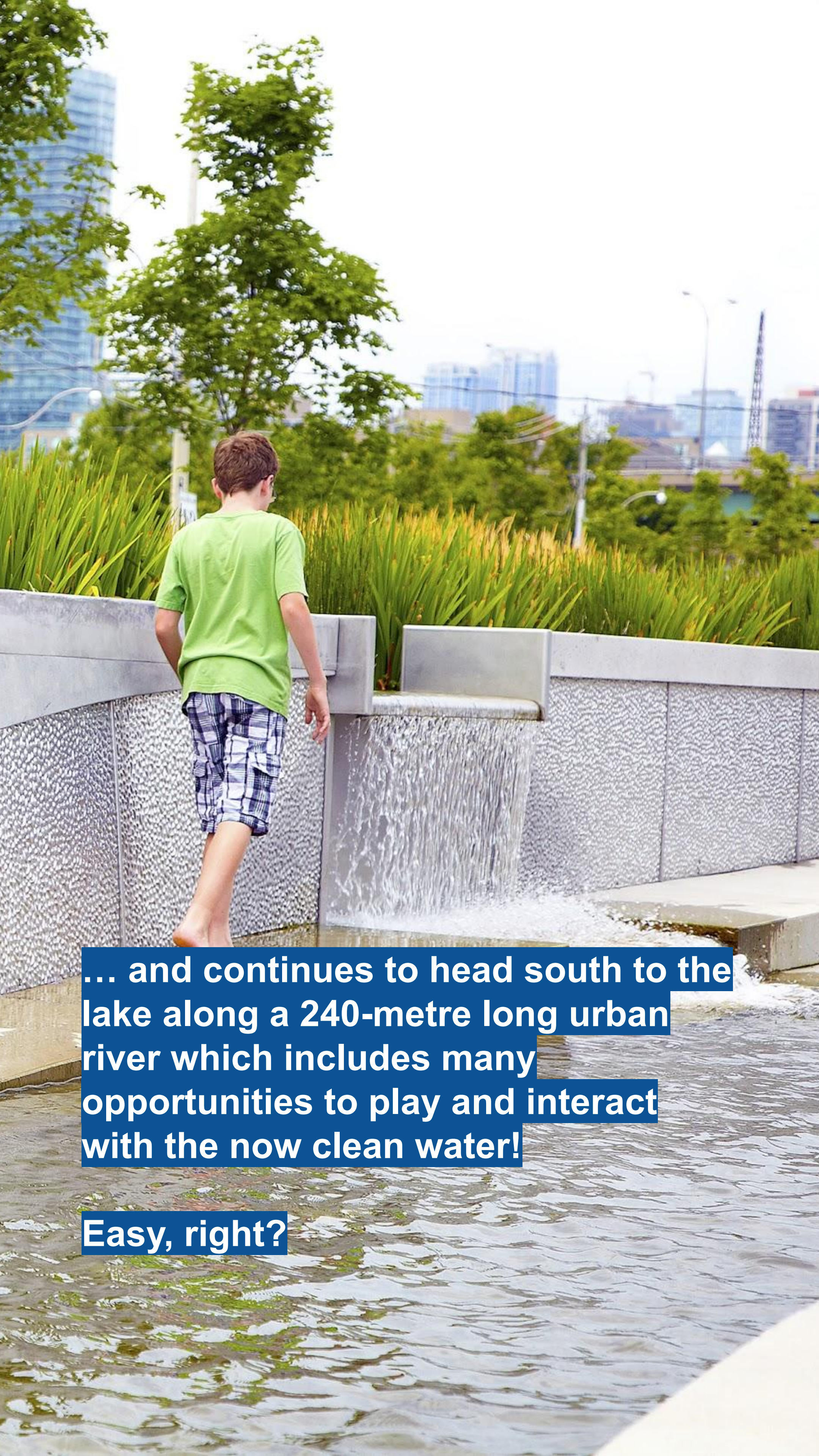
Once there, water will be pumped to the new stormwater facility in the West Don Lands for initial treatment, with a portion of the treated flows returning to the East Bayfront for final treatment at the Sherbourne Common UV treatment facility...



... which is located in the basement of the beautiful zinc-clad pavilion designed by Teeple Architects (which also houses public washrooms and changing facilities)



..once UV treated, the water flows to the north end of the park where it cascades down Light Showers, functional sculptures designed by Jill Anholt Studio...



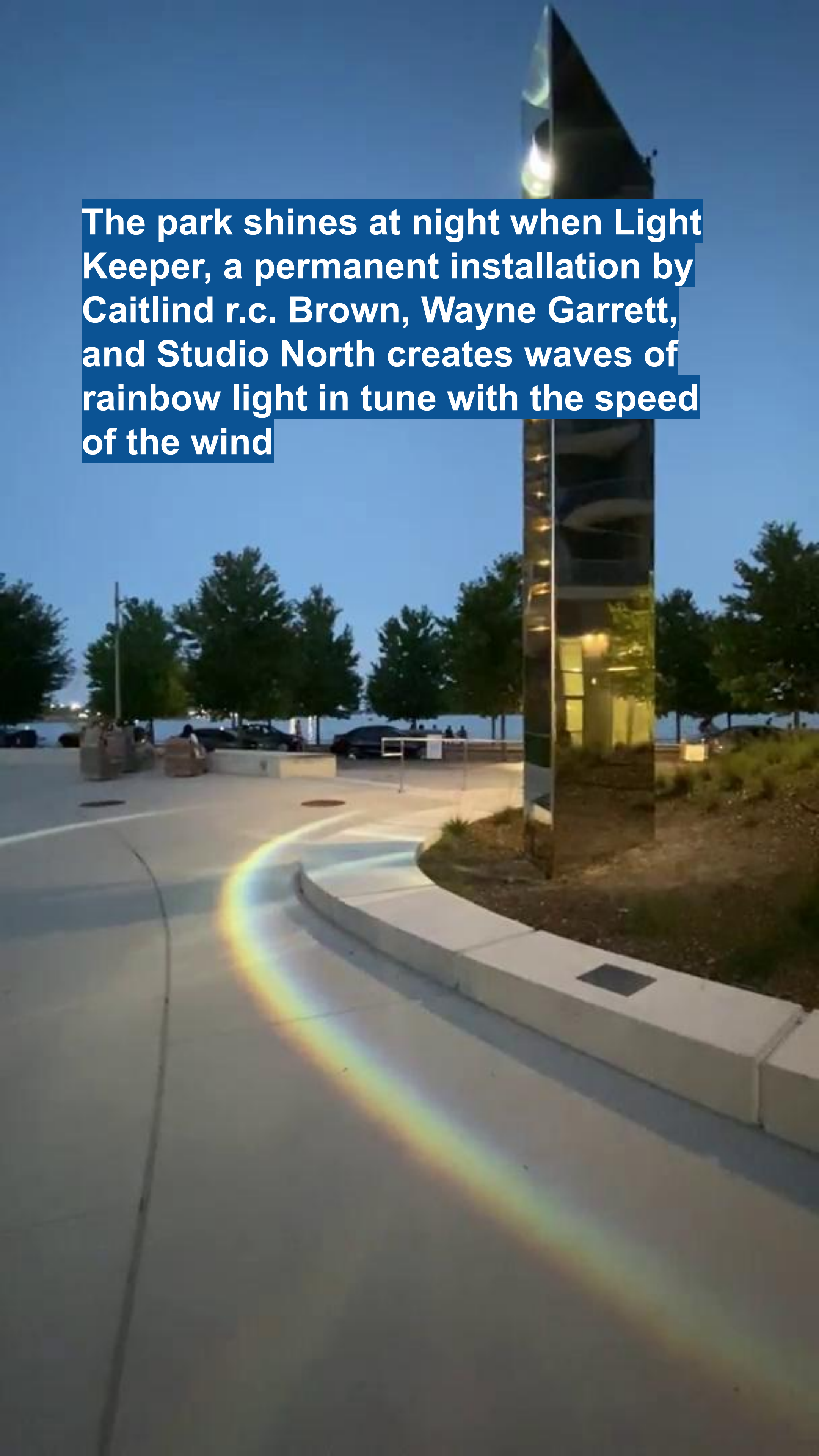
... and continues to head south to the lake along a 240-metre long urban river which includes many opportunities to play and interact with the now clean water!

Easy, right?

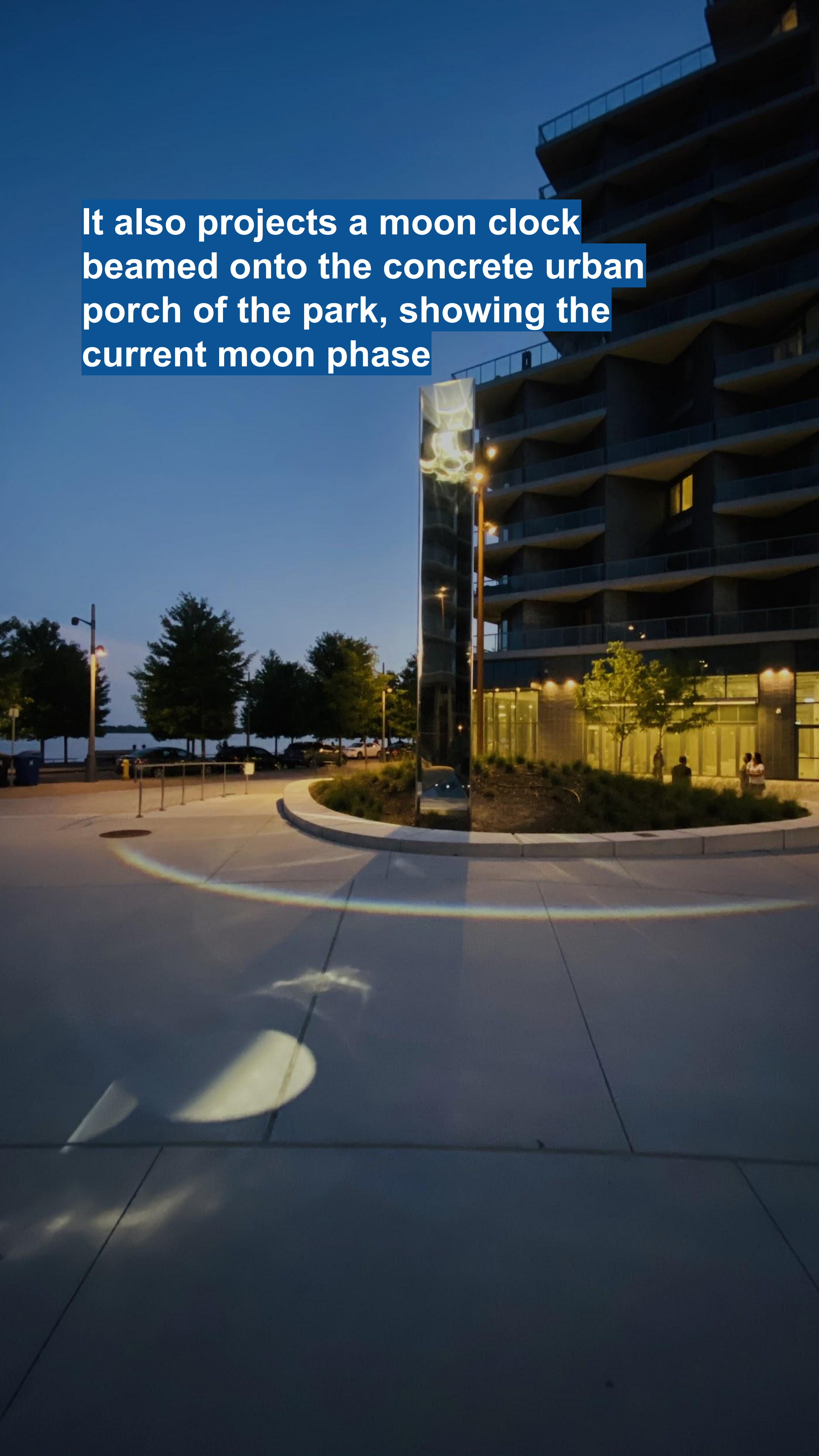
Once you are done soaking it all in, keep walking east until you reach the newest waterfront park and our last official stop in the tour — Aitken Place Park, opened in 2019 and designed by Forrec Ltd. with SWA/Balsley Associates



The park shines at night when Light Keeper, a permanent installation by Caitlind r.c. Brown, Wayne Garrett, and Studio North creates waves of rainbow light in tune with the speed of the wind



**It also projects a moon clock
beamed onto the concrete urban
porch of the park, showing the
current moon phase**



From here walking east means going into a construction site, but take a look out over the harbour towards the port lands and you'll catch a glimpse of one of the most ambitious projects in Toronto's recent history




Over there Waterfront Toronto is hard at work reshaping the mouth of the Don River, a project scheduled to be completed by 2024 which will reduce flood risk, clean polluted land, restore long lost habitat and create a new publicly accessible parkland - oh, and create a brand new island!



...but that's a story for another time
(and another tour!) as the waterfront
continues its decades-long
transformation process





**And that's a wrap for
our virtual #TSA tour of
Central Waterfront
(at least for now)**

**Now it's your
turn to go out
and explore!**

Thanks for joining us!

TSA

...and remember, when exploring bring some water, wear some sun screen and make sure to practice physical distancing!

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**...and don't forget to
share your explorations
with us!**

**@tosoarch
#TSATour**