

Indigenous Design

MAY 2022

Project:

320 St-Joseph, Québec

Space solution: 3 130 m²

Target occupancy: 219 FTE

Years of planning: 2019-2021

Years of construction: 2021-2022

Indigenous Design



Integrating Indigenous design principles in workplace design projects serves to honor First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation communities of Canada, while also contributing to visual awareness and education around Indigenous history and cultures. Drawing inspiration from Indigenous cultures in planning and design of the workplace and including references and artwork contribute to a more inclusive and enriching environment. For example, incorporating elements of biophilia can be a way to reinforce the strong Indigenous relationship with nature while adding health and wellness benefits for all occupants of the space. Certain forms and motifs also carry significance in Indigenous cultures and can be incorporated into the design. For example, organic forms such as circles or spirals are seen as a symbol of equality among participants, strength, unity, balance, and timelessness as well as a representation of the natural and spiritual world. Therefore, planning spaces using circular furniture or architectural features, whether in team areas, meeting rooms or lounges can refer to this symbolism.

Space planning: The layout of spaces could feature non-rectilinear forms or circular shapes.

Room configuration: Collaborative zones and other spaces could be equipped with organically-shaped furniture, circular layouts or flexible furniture that can be easily reconfigured in a circular manner as appropriate.

Furniture selection: Individual enclosed room can include some low-seated furniture or create steps with cushions that allows occupants to sit comfortably on the floor.

Schematic design: Colour scheme can incorporate the colours included within First Nations cultures.

Design focal point: Visually open spaces such as public area, common spaces or meeting spaces can include prominent displays of artwork.

Incorporate natural elements: Follow biophilic design principles by maximizing natural light and views to outdoors, using natural materials such as wood or stone, and including plants or greenery where possible.



GCworkplace Indigenous Design Guidelines

The GCworkplace Indigenous Design Guidelines was published in May 2022. It provides high level direction to departments and project teams with strategies that include, respect, and honour First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities in Canada.

Each project is unique, and it is up to project teams to determine the goals of their project and to integrate Indigenous engagement and design element considerations in early project planning phases. There is no such thing as an “Indigenous aesthetic” and this process is about much more than applying surface treatments or adding Indigenous art, although these could be part of the design solution. Rather, it is about establishing meaningful dialogue, opportunities and benefits through partnerships and relationships with Indigenous Peoples. This process requires the departments and project teams to commit to educating themselves to respectfully represent Indigenous cultures and values in the context of the workplace thereby achieving these objectives;

- Allowing for Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous public servants to see themselves and their cultures reflected in Government of Canada workplaces and project guidance materials;
- Providing opportunities for non-Indigenous employees and visitors to be exposed to and learn about Indigenous cultures, art/design and ways of knowing;
- Improving the health and wellness of all by embracing a holistic, natural and sustainable design approaches, which celebrates interconnectedness;
- Providing opportunities for Indigenous businesses and workforce to participate in the planning, design and/or execution of work through federal procurements of Indigenous services, goods and materials.

For more information, consult the [GCworkplace Indigenous Design Guidelines](#).



ABOUT THE INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA PROJECT

The planning of the Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) project began in 2019, a few years before the GCworkplace Indigenous Design Guidelines were published. However, several strategies mentioned in the guidelines were used, thanks to the excellent research work carried out by the project team.

The project team consulted an internal committee at ISC that included Indigenous employees who have shared their vision of the workplace and their recommendations. The employees forming this internal committee came from several communities, including the Huron-Wendat Nation. The project team also worked with the association Tourisme Autochtone Québec to obtain the logos of the First Nations. In addition, the main designer on the project already had experience in Indigenous design since she had previously worked for the Innu of Ekuanitshit. Finally, the project team also used the existing knowledge from the client department to develop the workplace design.

Thus, the 320 St-Joseph project in Québec is innovative since it has implemented some engagement strategies suggested in the GCworkplace Indigenous Design Guidelines, whether through their consultations or by providing access to spaces within the GCworkplace. You will discover in the next few pages how some Indigenous design strategies have been integrated into the project, whether using colors, shapes, textures or patterns.

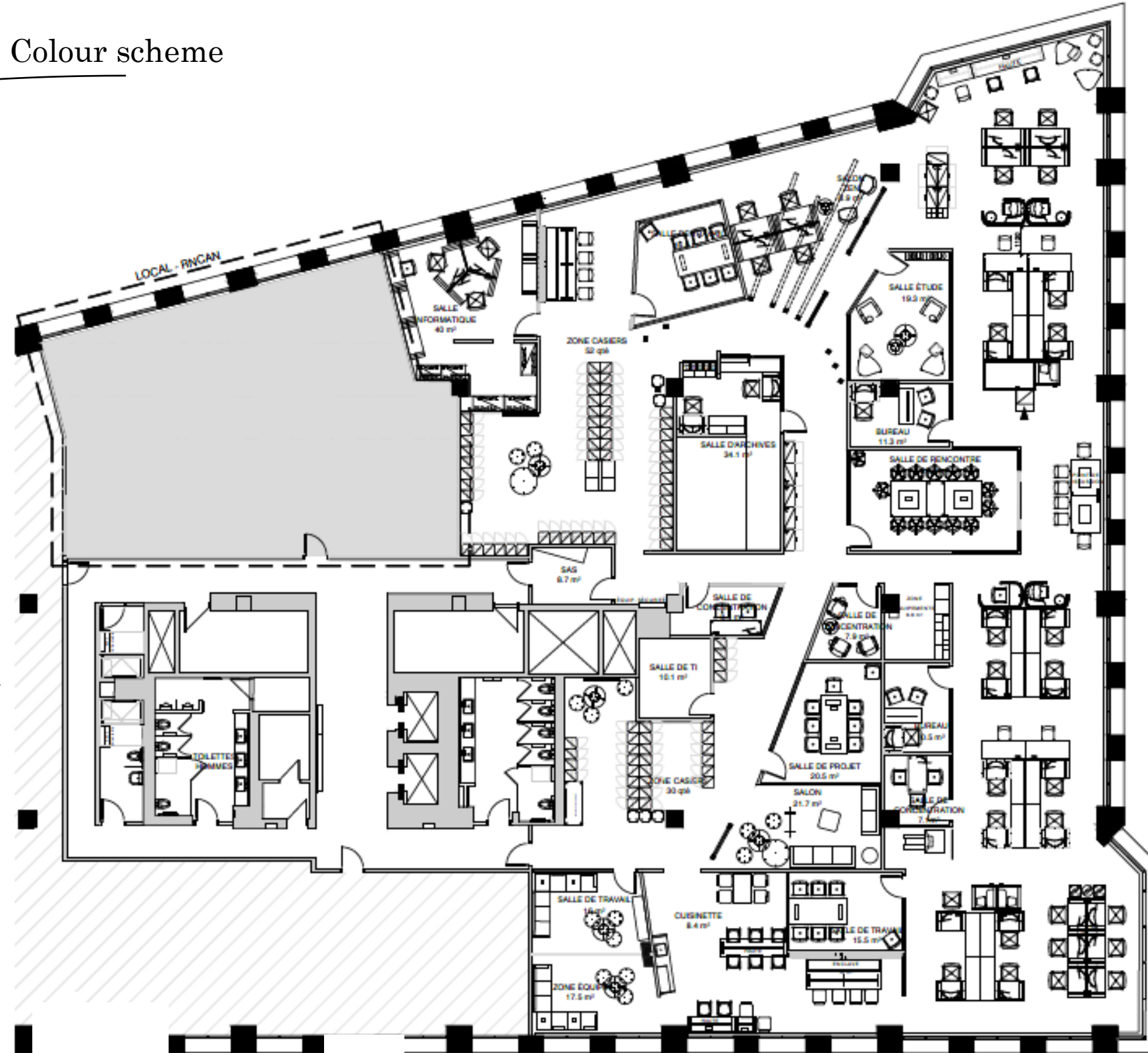
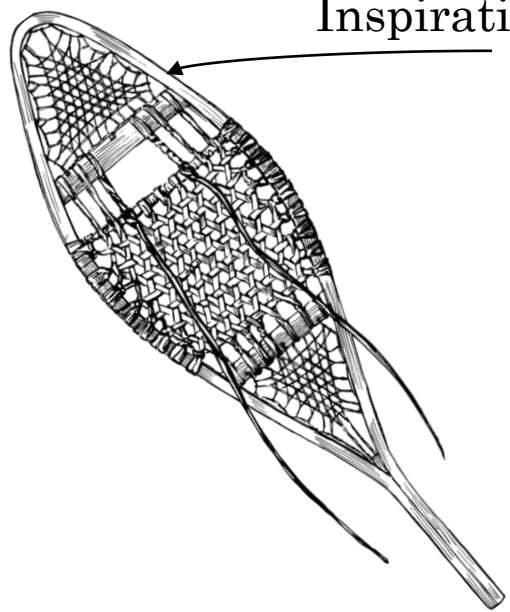
Indigenous Design

320 St-Joseph, Québec by PSPC Québec team

Colour scheme



Inspiration



This project features a space for Indigenous Services Canada to deliver their services to the community. The design concept is inspired by the Indigenous heritage circle and the art of weaving. Linework representative of traditional weaving patterns can be found throughout.

Many elements of Indigenous design are expressed in the concept of the workspace through the application of colours and materials, to convey a subtle reference to First Nations motifs. For example, the architectural elements create a circular pathway, and linear elements evoke traditional weaving.

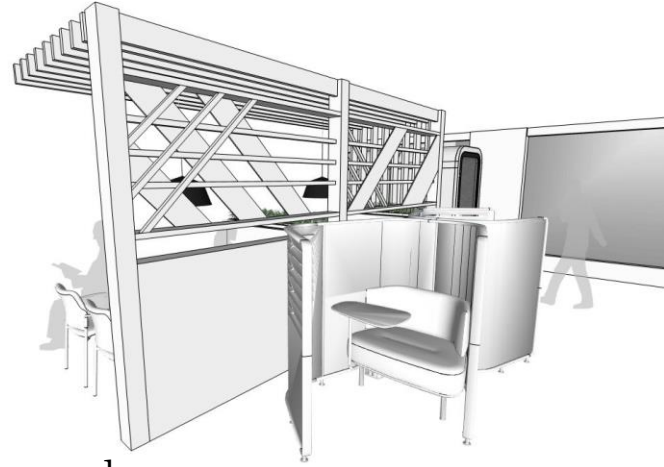
Finish selection is based on natural and raw materials to create contrasting textures. The colour scheme is inspired by the cultural significance of cardinal points. These are expressed through the flooring design, fabric selection and paint.

Other elements are integrated in high traffic area such as artwork and murals that represent the geography and evoke the cultural link with the land. Integrating plants and greenery is also a strategy to recall the link to Mother Nature.

* This is a schematic plan for example only

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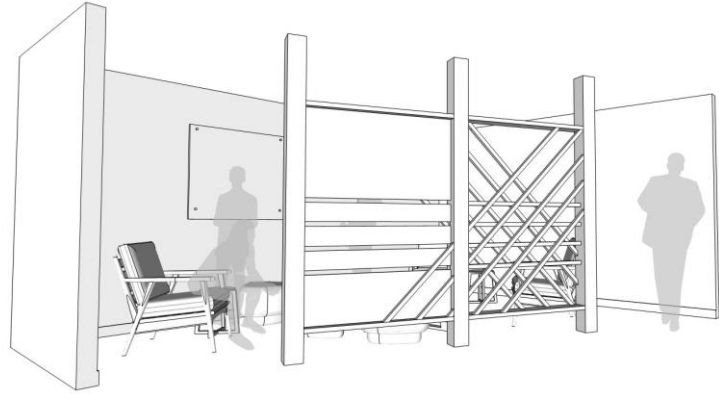
320 St-Joseph, Québec by PSPC Québec team



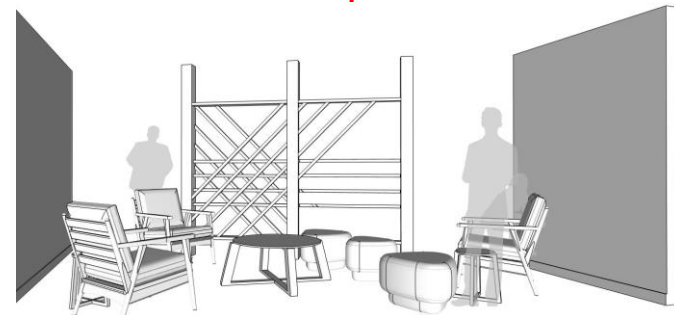
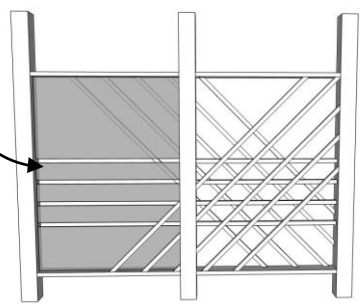
Focus pods



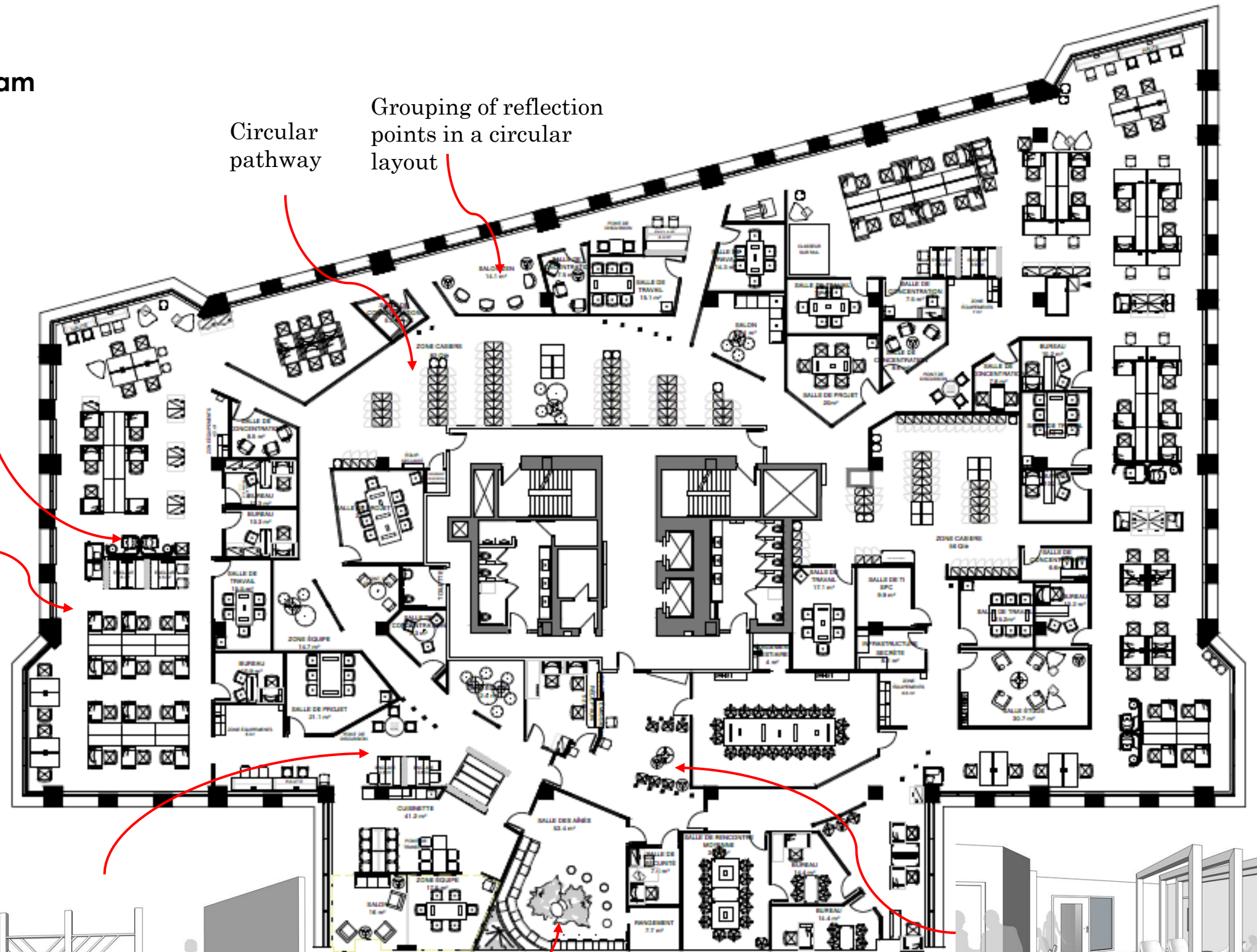
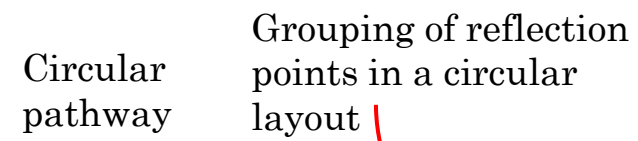
Huddles



Weaving
details on the
visual
separations
between
collaborative
workpoints



Informal
chat point



Reception area with a mural representing the different Indigenous nations of Canada with the possibility of having animation in projection

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