

# LOCATION ANALYSIS

Social Learnex is a new community outreach facility that deals, in an unconventional way, with the humanitarian crisis of refugees coming to Canada from war-torn countries around the world. Located in the heart of the city of Toronto, Canada, it is an initiative of the Interior Design Department of the local Ryerson University. The centre customizes interior design solutions by targeting specific refugee communities, taking into account their cultural and social backgrounds and needs. The interior design community is curious and empathetic by designing solutions to relate to people and making design accessible. (Radford, 2015b).

As an example, a Syrian family's expression of home is having a water fountain in the center of the main room, with a birdcage and a plant next to it; they sit by the fountain and drink tea. Syrian families in refugee camps, stripped naked of any sense of identity and self-value, have managed to put together rudimentary interpretations of this setting, even in times of extreme desperation. This specific spatial arrangement is essential for their wellbeing (Radford, 2015a). At Social Learnex, it is about empowering people in need by integrating them in the collaborative development of their habitat while enriching the local design community through partnership and diversity. Affordable, efficient and culturally relevant spaces are designed applying sustainable materials and processes.

Canada is expected to welcome 25,000 refugees by the first half of 2016 (Government of Canada, 2015); Toronto alone is receiving about a third of them (Hager, 2015). Joint efforts with several departments of the city, the Arab Community Centre of Toronto, Lifeline Syria, the Furniture Bank and members of the interior design industry such as contractors and millworkers, are essential to facilitate a resourceful and thriving design hub that results in a successful settlement for all refugees (City of Toronto, 2015).

References:  
 Hager, M. (2015, November 27). News: British Columbia. Retrieved from The Globe and Mail Web Site: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/montreal-and-toronto-to-get-the-most-refugees/article27520237/> • Government of Canada (2015, November 24). News: Canada Offers Leadership on the Syrian Refugee Crisis. Retrieved from Government of Canada Web Site: <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1021919&ga=1.42131301.1151124489.1449331767> • Radford, T. (2015a, November 23). Architecture: Refugee Camps Are the Cities of Tomorrow. Retrieved from Dezeen Magazine: <http://www.dezeen.com/2015/11/23/refugee-camps-cities-of-tomorrow-killian-kleinschmidt-interview-humanitarian-aid-expert/> • Radford, T. (2015b, September 8). Design is About People, Including Refugees. Retrieved from Dezeen Magazine : <http://www.dezeen.com/2015/09/08/italia-radford-opinion-design-is-about-people-including-refugees-syria-crisis-austria-response/> • City of Toronto (2015). Refugee Resettlement Program. Retrieved from The City of Toronto Web Site: [http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portalcontentonly/vgnnextoid-f016fac28bcf0510vgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD&WT\\_r\\_id-refugees](http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portalcontentonly/vgnnextoid-f016fac28bcf0510vgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD&WT_r_id-refugees)



# SOCIAL LEARNEX



STUDIO



ENTRY

# CONCEPT STATEMENT

The mathematical beauty of the Mobius strip with its continuous surface, and its flexible and dynamic movement are the inspiration for the spatial design of Social Learnex and for the activities within the space. The strip has a single side and edge. It is one continuous curve with a twist and no end of surface or boundary. If a line is drawn along the strip, it will eventually connect with the beginning of that same line (Thulaseedas & Krawczyk).

The questioning of boundaries and the concept of continuity is foundational for the design solution. An open concept provides a flexible environment for diverse uses and allows for smooth transitions, eliminating hard edges and corners (Shiraishi, 2010). The overall seamlessness streamlines the space, reducing visual clutter. Echoing the intriguing Mobius strip, the sculptural spiral in the entrance lobby, sinuously peels from the ceiling and twists its way down, mutates into the reception desk, and finally melts into the ground.

The pleasing and comforting organic circular shape of the Mobius communicates a sense of protection, safety, connection and community, but also depicts constant dynamism and evolution (Ching & Binggeli, 2012). Yellow hues with graded intensities and values are introduced through the modular furniture imparting a sense of optimism, cheerfulness and self-esteem. Reclaimed local white oak on the ceiling adds warmth while matching vinyl tile grounds the space (Reed, 2010). Mobile furniture allows for flexible configurations to facilitate collaboration or individual study. Modular and technology-integrated furniture assists in the active learning environment and promotes engagement (Steelcase, 2015a). Transitions inside the space develop organically and continuously allowing for evolving spaces that promote a higher level of proficiency (Steelcase, 2015b). The juxtaposition of the building's heritage exterior enveloping a sleek new interior is symbolic of North America's culture and history of compassionate people welcoming newcomers as their own.

References:

Ching, F. D., & Binggeli, C. (2012). Interior Design Illustrated. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. • Jolly Thulaseedas, J., & Krawczyk, R. J. (2015, October 21). Mobius Concepts in Architecture Retrieved from Illinois Institute of Technology Web Site : <http://mypages.iit.edu/~krawczyk/jtbrdg03.pdf> • Reed, R. (2010). Color + Design. Transforming Interior Space. New York, NY: Bloomsbury • Shiraishi, R. (2010, March 1). Know No Bounds: Norisada Maeda Designs A Mobius-Strip-Inspired House And Studio. Retrieved from Interior Design Web Site: <http://www.interiordesign.net/projects/detail/1112-know-no-bounds/> • Steelcase. (2015a). Articles: Class Can I have Your Attention? Retrieved from Steelcase Web Site: <http://www.steelcase.com/insights/articles/flipping-classroom/> • Steelcase. (2015b). Articles: Teaching the Teachers. Retrieved from Steelcase Web Site: <http://www.steelcase.com/insights/articles/teaching-the-teachers/>



MEET





### WAITING LOUNGE

Seating area with partial height millwork displaying a library for interior design enthusiasts

### BAR/KITCHENETTE

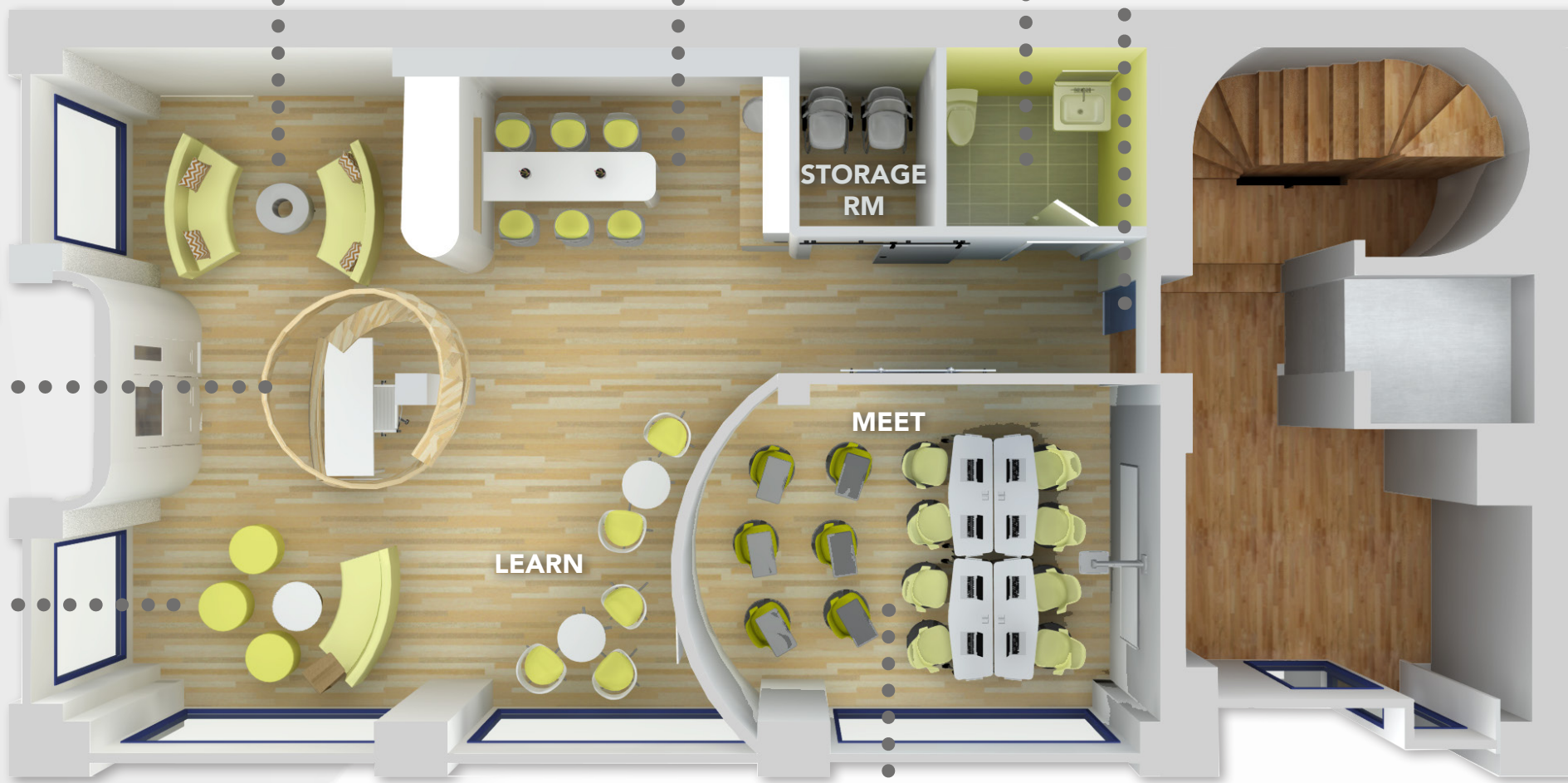
A flexible worksurface at counter height, providing additional space to lounge, learn or meet for staff + guests

### RESTROOM

Universally designed

### GLAZED SLIDING DOOR

Automatic sliding door to exit facility + enter building lobby. A translucent door helps to create a more seamless transition to the studio space upstairs.



## 1ST FLOOR PLAN

### SPIRAL SCULPTURE

Focal point at entry around the reception desk spanning two floors + can be seen from the upper mezzanine

### LEARN SPACE

A public, open + interactive area throughout for informal meetings + collaborations

### STORAGE RM

### MEET

### LEARN

### MEET

Room for formal presentations, design charrettes or closed meetings with glazed sliding door + partition to help connect the room to the facility



### VERB TABLE

Mobile, on castors for versatile configurations, holds whiteboards for collaborative learning



### NODE CHAIR

Mobile personal worksurface to facilitate collaboration, cupholder + tripod base for storage + space saving



### MEDIA:SCAPE + GESTURE CHAIRS

Integrated technology enables users to easily project images from laptop to large monitor, standing height table + adjustable height chairs for ergonomic flexibility



### CAMPFIRE TABLE

Paper work surface for quick + easy brainstorming



### EXPONENTS WHITEBOARD

Mobile for flexibility, can act as partition in open areas



### HOSU LOUNGER

Individual workstation + relaxation area

### FLOORS

Mohawk White Noise Vinyl Tile 12% Pre-Consumer, 18% Post-Consumer Recycled, Adhesive-Free, Low-VOC Installation

### WALL PAINT

Benjamin Moore Cloud White with Eggshell Finish Zero-VOC

### LOUNGE CHAIRS

DesignTex Canary 100% Polyester, Post-Consumer Recycled

### STUDIO CHAIRS

DesignTex Chromatic 100% Polyester (Post-Consumer Recycled), Gold Level Certified to NSF/ANSI 336 Standard

### MILLWORK

Formica ColorCore Plastic Laminate White Matte Finish

### CEILING + COUNTERTOPS

Reclaimed White Oak Local to Ontario Region

### SCULPTURE

ApplePly Plywood with White Oak Veneer Light-weight with No Added Urea Formaldehyde (Low Emission), FSC Certified

### LEARN CHAIRS

DesignTex Circa 100% Polyester, Solution Dyed, Ships Carbon Neutral

### STUDIO CARPET TILE

Interface Heather Grey Concrete Collection Post-Consumer Nylon

## ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS

### MEZZANINE

Glazed railing continues the open concept + integrates the studio space with the sculpture

### INDIVIDUAL STATION

Casual area for working, napping or studying

### INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY

For seamless transitions among team members to facilitate communication within a collaborative environment

### MILLWORK

Additional studio storage + worksurface



## 2ND FLOOR PLAN

### GLAZED SLIDING DOOR

Automatic sliding door to enter/exit studio space

### MOBILE WHITEBOARD

Allows for interactive technology + additional pin-up space + can serve as a partition for optional privacy

### LOCKERS

Additional storage space for faculty

### STUDIO

### RESTROOM

### INDIVIDUAL STATION

Focused study area

### OPEN STUDIO

Benching system that allows a range of workstyles with large worksurfaces for students + designers

### FACULTY OFFICE

Open to studio to promote vertical learning + engagement

## FURNITURE BY STEELCASE