

Context Horton Plaza is located in the heart of downtown San Diego, making it significantly accessible. It is located on the edge between the historic Gaslamp District and the city's Civic Core.



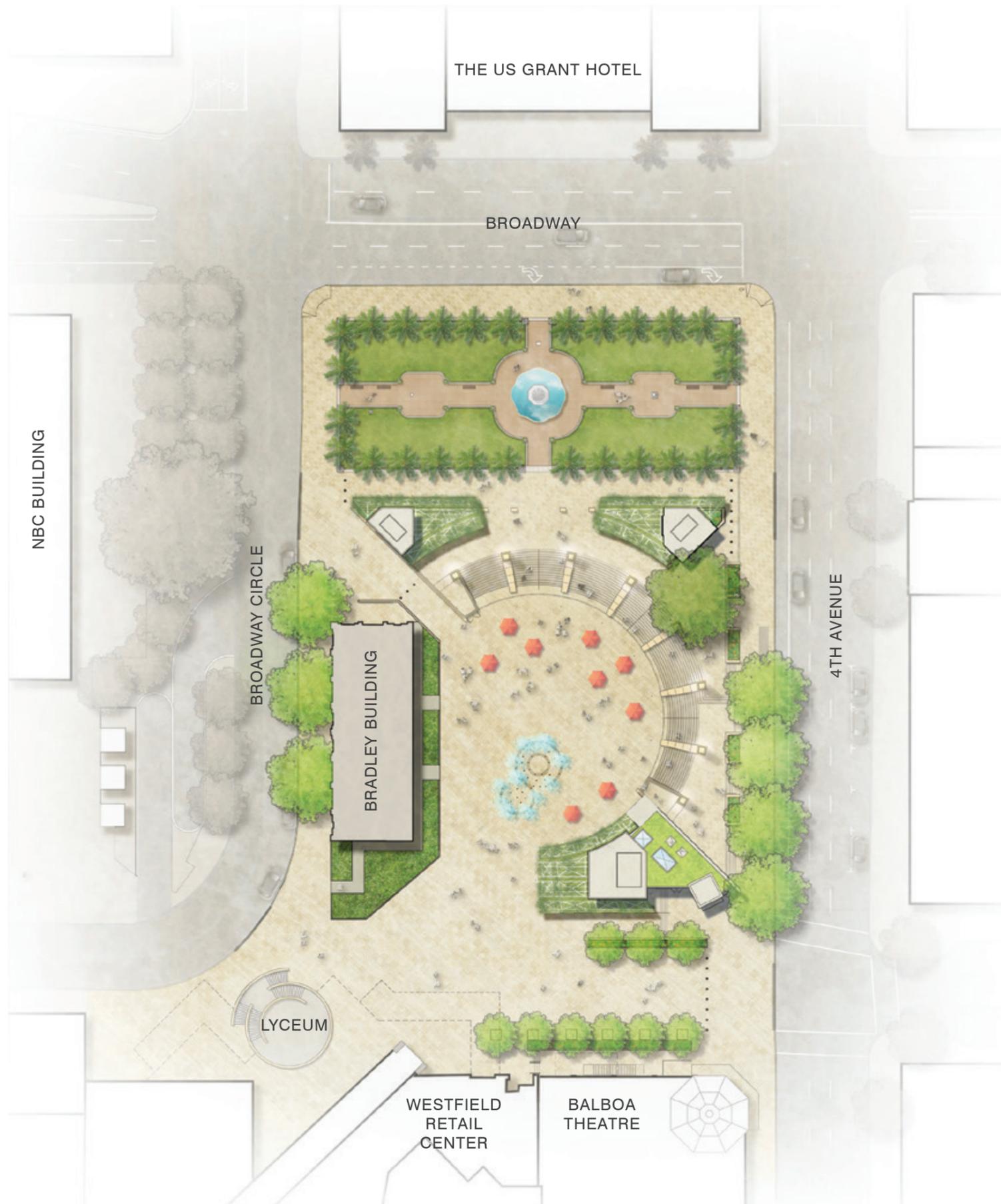
Christmas – Horton Plaza – Circa 1917



Origins Roughly a quarter of this important new open space consists of the existing historic Horton Plaza Park, site of the first electric fountain in the United States.

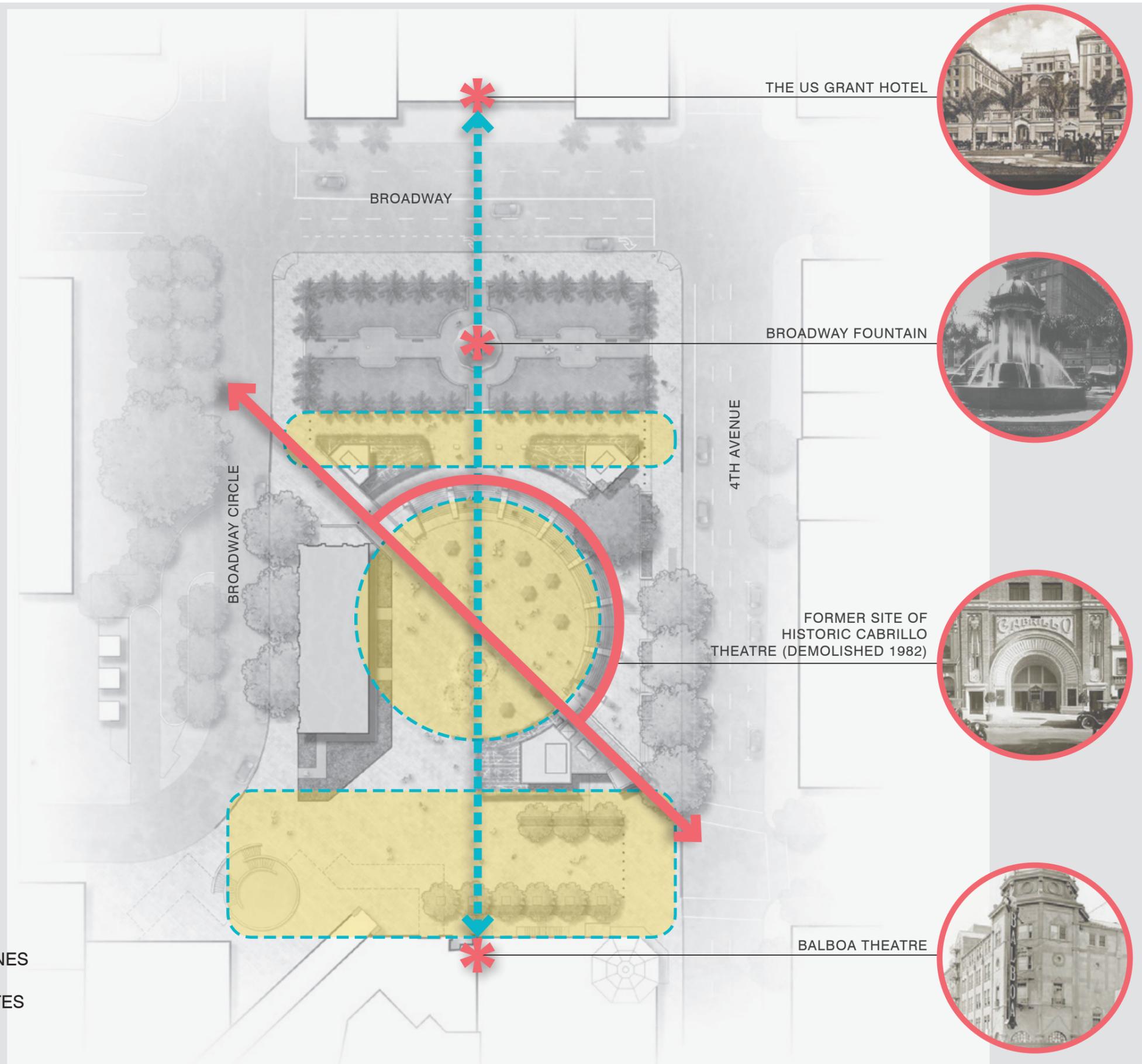


Existing Conditions The project site was previously occupied by a department store building, that sat vacant for some time. The historic park had been severely modified in the 1980s, and its fountain in disrepair.

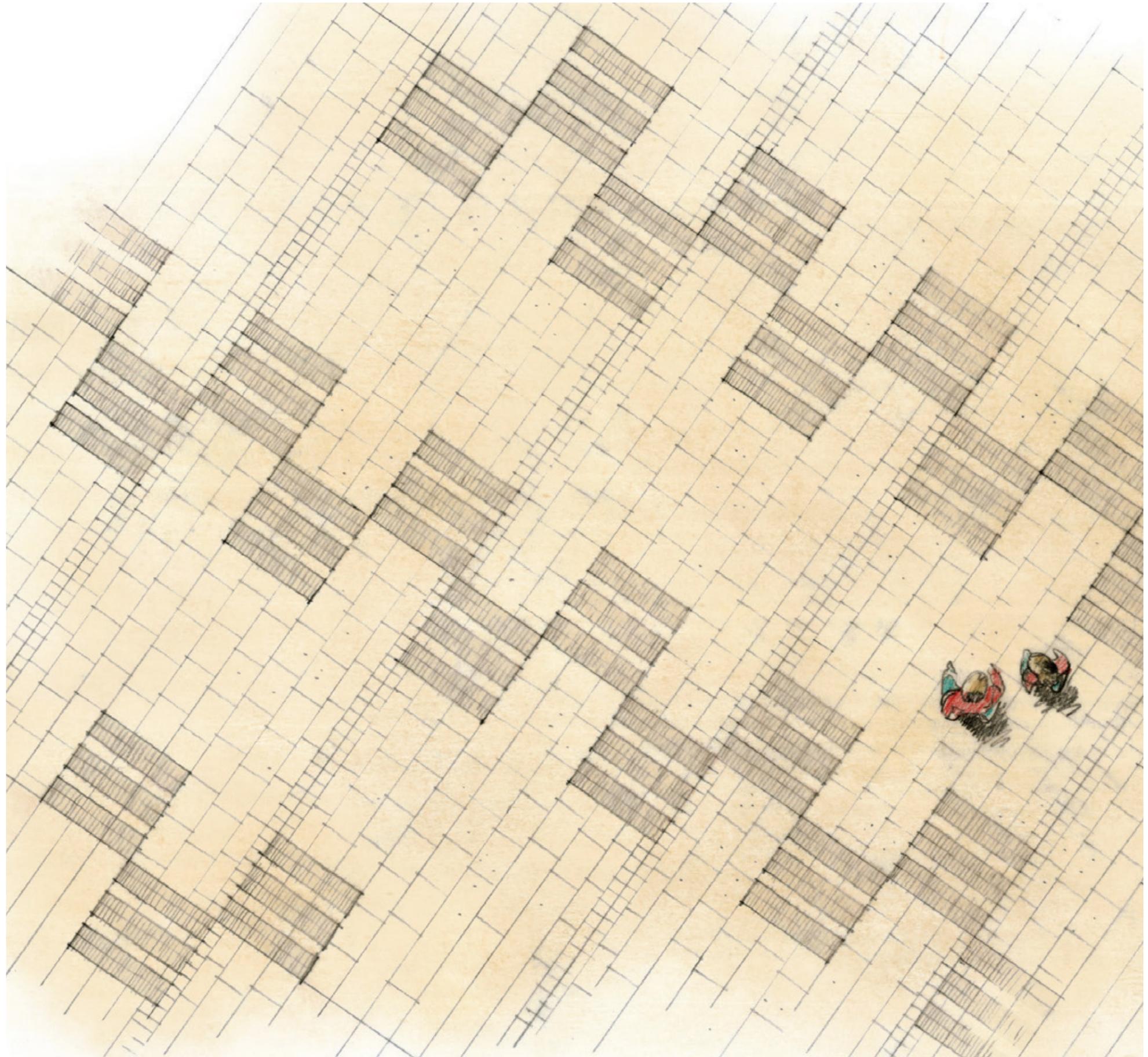


Site Plan The simple and elegant form of the park was established to transition between the upper and lower terraces and to flexibly accommodate all types of activities, from large events to daily uses.

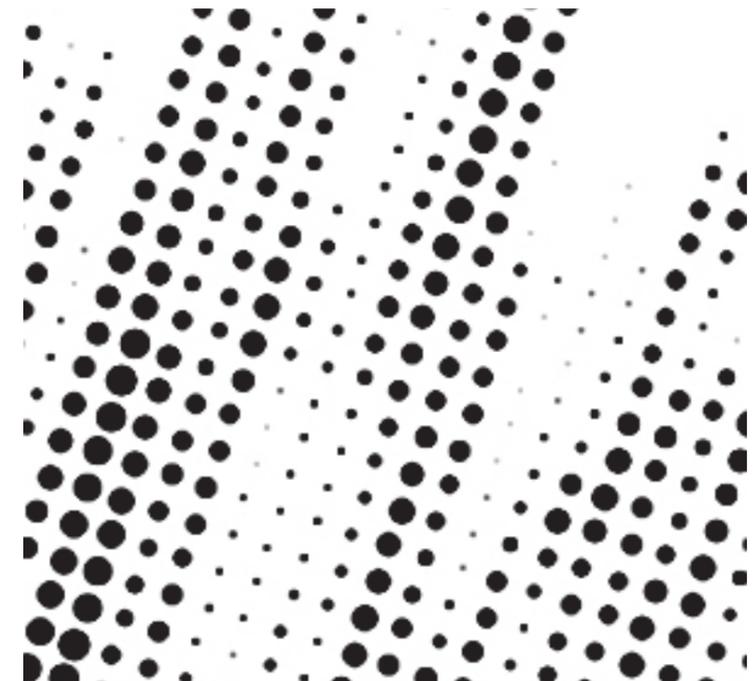
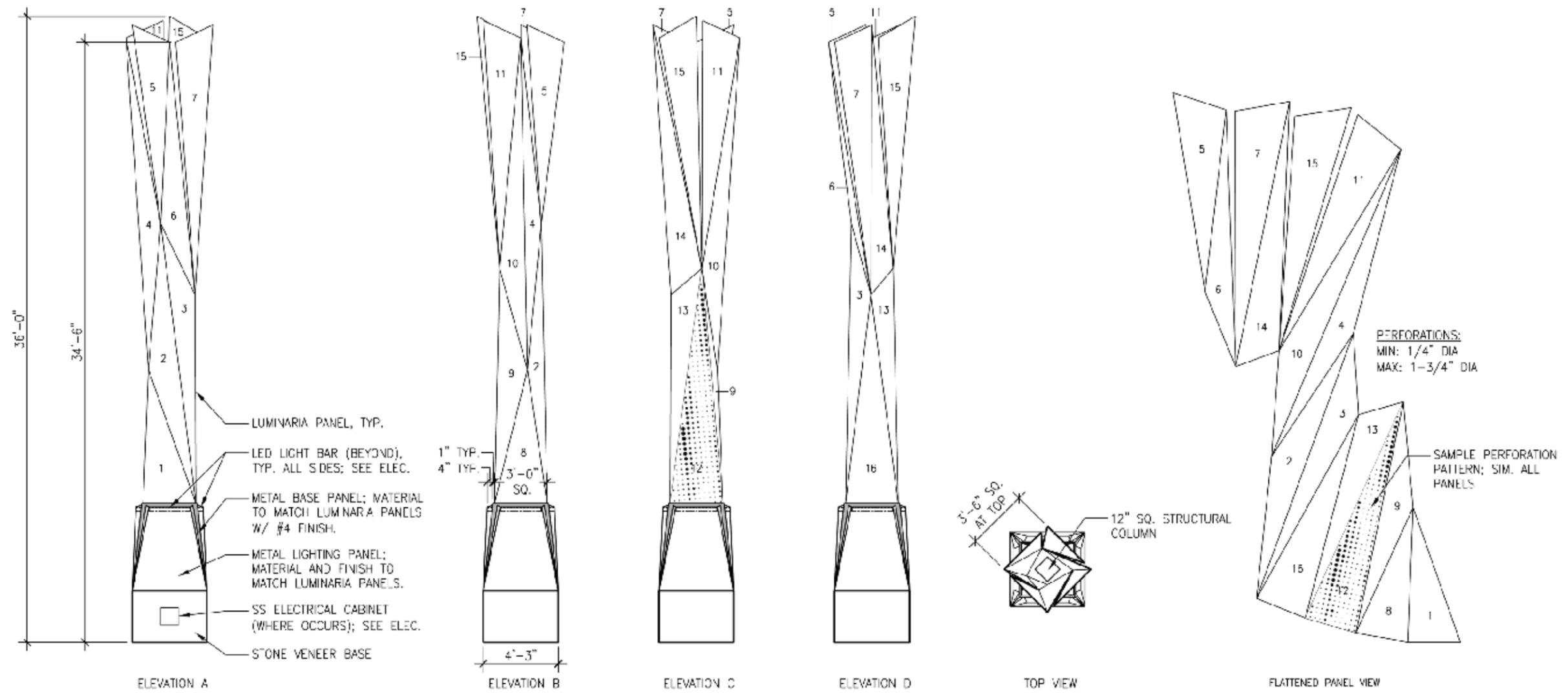
- LEGEND
-  ACTIVITY ZONES
 -  HISTORIC SITES



Influences the plaza is the linking element between three major historic landmarks. This north/south axis became an organizing feature for the plaza while the park's arching form is inspired by the Cabrillo arch that once occupied the space.



Patterns and Color The paving pattern and color were influenced by the geology of San Diego's phenomenal coastal hillsides, and by the weaving traditions of the area's Native American Tribes.



Luminaria Eight luminaria ring the performance space, providing both spectacular light displays and theatrical infrastructure. Their form and perforations were influenced as well by the traditional weavings.



Vision The public was engaged throughout the process to provide feedback on alternatives and to build constituency for the space, which will host more than 200 events annually.



Flexibility A major challenge of the design was to create a space that felt intimate and activated even during non-event times. A splash play fountain, pavilions, and cafe seating create spaces for more intimate experiences and daily use.



Designing for Events The Plaza is intended to accommodate a broad variety of events from small, free community shows to ticketed events with thousands of attendees. The design team embedded events infrastructure throughout the space to accommodate all uses.



Revitalizing the Historic Park The team returned historic Horton Plaza Park to its original design intent, with subtle modernizations that ensure it is accessible and maintainable. The electric fountain, a local icon, was restored to full lighting and operation.



Vitality With its open configuration and inviting setting, Horton Plaza is ideally situated for interactive events that directly engage the audience in participatory activities.



Water The interactive water feature activates the center of Horton Plaza during non-event times with evocative sound, light, and movement.



Light The Luminaria, interactive fountain, and historic fountain all provide evolving, spectacular displays of color and light, making Horton Plaza an attraction for night-time activities and events.



A New Icon for Downtown San Diego Open for nearly one year, Horton Plaza has already become an iconic community gathering space that reflects and embodies San Diego's community and culture.