

CONCEPT STATEMENT Kyle Thornley 'HAVEN'

Haven - a safe place that offers favourable opportunities and conditions (*Merriam-Webster*), a lovely metaphor for the haven provided by the Kirkendall community.

This sculpture depicts the roosting of butterflies on a tree trunk. Just as these butterflies choose a collaborative grouping for protection, warmth, and to preserve resources for flight, the Locke Street area provides hospitality, inclusion, and opportunities for discovery and fun.

The wonder of butterflies inspires reflection on adaptability, cooperation, and diversity - key elements of this neighbourhood. Butterflies have long been symbols of beauty and hope, the efforts of the caterpillar to emerge from its cocoon exemplifying struggle, tenacity, and resilience - values that underpin Locke Street's evolution. This transformation of oneself, or one's haven, is captured in the words of Maya Angelou, "*we delight in the beauty of the butterfly but rarely admit the struggles it has gone through to achieve that beauty*".

Just as the community is known for its collaboration and innovation, butterflies reveal the same qualities through flight - gliding on favourable currents but gathering closely together to deflect the power of strong winds. This sculpture portrays nature's lessons of reciprocity and interdependence with each element valuable to the community and each element's well-being dependent on the community. In this instance, every butterfly is unique and diverse, while still contributing to the common good - an inspiring and relevant wisdom for Locke Street. And as are the people in this haven, each of the 2000 butterflies on this sculpture is distinct and one-of-a kind.

The butterfly colours mirror a temperature gradient reflecting a butterfly's need for warmth before flight. The colours are also gently associated with those of the LGBTQ+ community symbolizing life, healing, sunlight, intimacy, nature, art, harmony, and spirit. Each colour results from a tempering process; the stainless steel butterflies are exposed to high heat with different temperatures producing the variety of colours. Not only will *Haven* and its colours add interest and joy but will also enthusiastically represent the diversity of the neighbourhood and will serve as an attractive beacon and a welcoming, iconic landmark.

With over 100 species of butterflies in the Niagara Escarpment and Hamilton habitats, our understanding of butterflies can make a significant difference to their status. There is a sense of optimism associated with both the strength of this seemingly ephemeral life and the feeling that we can make a difference. This hopeful sentiment connects to the Kirkendall vision - a welcoming haven for gathering safely, with the provisions and support to help us 'take flight' when ready. The Locke Street residents and visitors mirror the butterfly's principles of cooperation, respecting rights to exist and thrive, needing and welcoming multiplicity, and the ensuing joyful sharing of beauty and well-being.

In the spirit of this cooperation, several storefronts surrounding the intersection have keenly confirmed the hosting, on their walls, of a clump of butterflies who have symbolically left the roost, an engaging element of surprise and pleasure extending beyond the footprint of the

sculpture. Should the public and/or committee have other suggestions for these butterflies (eg. dispersed along Locke Street), I am very happy to work with alternate ideas.