

Syncopate

Syncopating the Urban Landscape

More People, More Programs, More Geographies

In music, to syncopate means to take the stronger, more dominant musical notes and make them weaker, and at the same time to take the weaker notes and make them stronger.

University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture

Detroit Collaborative Design Center **DCDC**

Syncopate

Syncopating the Urban Landscape

More People, More Programs, More Geographies

In music, to syncopate means to take the stronger, more dominant musical notes and make them weaker, and at the same time to take the weaker notes and make them stronger.

University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture

Detroit Collaborative Design Center **DCDC**

Jazz, Motown, Pop, Rock, Techno, Hip Hop... It goes without saying that Detroit has a rich music history. People from around the world listen to the beats that vibrate through our streets. Our music has always reflected our great City. Perhaps now our great City can reflect a piece of our music. We need a little syncopation. In music, to syncopate means to take the stronger, more dominant musical notes and make them weaker, and at the same time to take the weaker notes and make them stronger. In Detroit, something akin to this process has been happening organically, over decades. The vibrant economy of the mid-20th century has been weakening. Though it will continue to be a force in the city, new forces are emerging. The status quo is shifting and has been for many, many years. We should work to direct this shift, and not let it simply happen. In the eyes of the Detroit Collaborative Design Center, the goal of a Syncopated Detroit is to amplify the weaker notes—give them room to grow and to reinforce a new dynamically balanced city that builds upon our greatest asset, the people of Detroit. This will ultimately create a more equitable, ecological and beautiful city.

Great design brings purpose to people and their activities.

- Book Design:** Dan Pitera; Detroit Collaborative Design Center; University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture
All drawings and photos were provided by the Detroit Collaborative Design Center unless otherwise noted.
- Book Content:** The content of this book is the synthesis of 20 years of searching and re-searching as an office made up of dedicated and inspired individuals and is presented here to provoke a conversation. Though it is not a 20th anniversary retrospective book. With this in mind, only a small number of projects are illustrated. They are presented here to point to the current trends and attitudes in the office at this time. Most recently, the positions and viewpoints within this book have been developed by Charles Cross, Christina Heximer, Ceara O'Leary, Dan Pitera, Virginia Stanard and Krista Wilson and the many committed University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture students.

ISBN: 978-0-9904595-1-4

© 2014 Detroit Collaborative Design Center, University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture



Thank You

...to the many people and organizations who have worked toward a better future for Detroiters.

US



Urban Scratches

Revealing Hidden Histories & Instigating Future Traditions
Dan Pitera, 22 June 2013

Contents

AV



Amplifying the Diminished Voice

Dan Pitera, 04 April 2013

NS



Neighborhood Spaces

Projects in this category refer to architecture and landscape architecture that connect with the urban context but are at the scale of a single property or project. They create the spaces where stories are made and told.

MT



Mosaics & Tapestries

Christina Heximer & Dan Pitera, 02 March 2014

Tiles in a mosaic have both individual identity while connecting with other tiles to make a bigger picture. The day-to-day of civic engagement and design.



Neighborhood Strategies

Projects in this category refer to urban design and neighborhood planning. They create the framework that connect the Neighborhood Spaces in a meaningful way.



Impact Detroit as a Catalytic Converter

Virginia Stanard & Monica Chadha, 16 April 2014
Impact Detroit—a network started by the DCDC—develops an interdisciplinary approach to improving the built environment.



Neighborhood Catalysts

Projects in this category are intended to inspire action in communities through unique and unconventional methods. Each action is designed with community stakeholders and is local and specific to each neighborhood.



Leading from the Side

Leadership, Civic Engagement and the Built Environment
Dan Pitera, 12 October 2013

We Scratch

People do things. People make things. People destroy things. We scratch.
Our cities are a record of our scratches.



Dan Pitera

Urban Scratches

Revealing Hidden Histories & Instigating Future Traditions

22 June 2013

Scratching the Surface: Revealing

When I was a child I used to draw pictures by scratching the surface to reveal colors below. I first prepared the surface of the paper by coloring with many crayons. I would then cover this collage of color with a single color. Each time I would choose a different color for the one color that would cover the rest. The texture of the paper was covered with the texture of the many crayons, which in turn were covered by the texture of a single crayon. I would then draw a picture by scratching the surface of the single color revealing the colors below. I know this is not a unique exercise. Many kids in many places do the exact same thing. In fact my 10-year old daughter did the same thing a couple of years ago. When I did it I certainly did not think about it. Now I find myself looking at these activities through a different lens. The opaque surface of the color is removed revealing the guarded space behind. What was once invisible

becomes visible but in a different form—the form of the new scratched drawing. By taking something away, something is made. This all happens by the activity of a child. Our world is structured and revealed through verbs (activities) not nouns (things).^{1.1} People do things. People make things. People destroy things. We scratch. The texture of a city is the texture of our scratches. Our cities are a record of our activities. Reading the traces left behind is like hearing an oral history of a culture. Many of our buildings, public spaces and public parks were constructed as monuments celebrating a past way of life. These are only a partial record of our activities. There are also traces remaining all around our cities standing as evidence of the social, racial and economic inequities of the past—a freeway built to barricade the central business district from an adjacent neighborhood; streets blocked by concrete barriers preventing them from trespassing into surrounding suburban towns; urban renewal projects decimating vibrant African-American communities; a six-foot high concrete wall built to separate racially different neighborhoods.^{1.2} The list goes on. If one travels the City of Detroit and reads these signs and traces, they may understand the story of a hidden city—a story that would fit comfortably as one of Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*. Perhaps it would be called “Cities and Lines.” Detroit is a city where distinct lines have been deeply scratched between people, places and things—houses, neighborhoods and cities. The form of the City like the form of the drawing etched by the child is the residue^{1.3} of our activities. But it is also the layer waiting to be etched revealing another form—perhaps one more equitable and environmental.

Transparency

Many arrive in Detroit thinking it is barren of activities; barren of scratches. When it is actually the scratches that have created the image they now see. People come from all over to behold the vacant image of Detroit. But if they *scratch below the surface* of this image of vacancy and abandonment, they find a unique place of social activities and urban responses. The remainder of this essay investigates these opportunities and responses.

First let's discuss the scale of the urban geography of Detroit. Detroit was a city of 1,850,000 people in 1950. It was also a city that housed these people in predominately single-family homes within a city limit totaling 138.77 square land miles—this is more than the land area of Boston, San Francisco, and Manhattan combined (Figure 1.1). Detroit was the quintessential American Dream city—private home, white picket fence and a

^{1.1} See Chapter 4: Mosaics & Tapestries, page 72.

^{1.2} The examples listed exist within the City of Detroit, though all cities have similar traces to those described here.

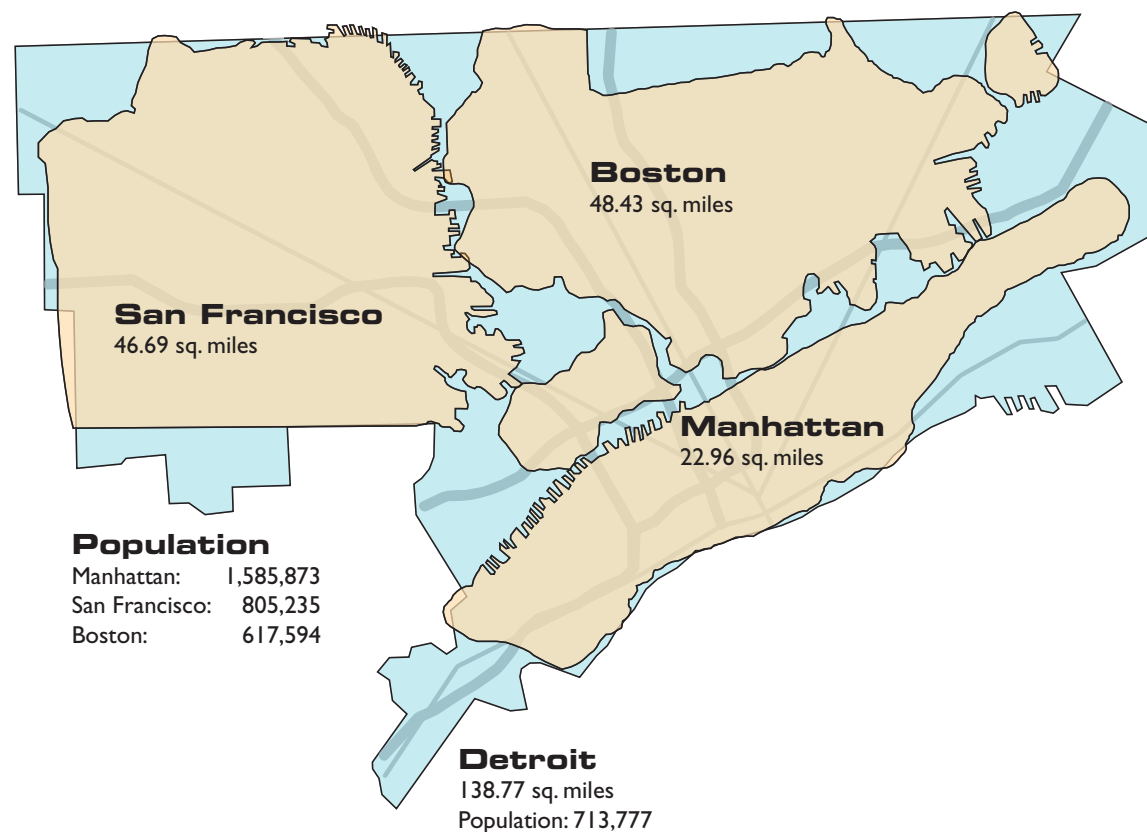
^{1.3} Residue is defined here as the outcome of people and their activities. It may not be end-product people expected, but still the by-product of an action.

car—for all working people. Henry Ford's \$5.00 a day wage made it possible at that time for the everyday American working person to own both a house and a car. This led to an urban form that is approximately 80% detached dwellings, which may appear fine during times of prosperity, but if that changes, a neighborhood's density that consists mostly, if not entirely of individual houses lacks the *portfolio diversity* needed to withstand small changes. For example, if four families leave an apartment or condominium block, the overall living experience may still feel dense. In fact, multifamily housing has an expected and accepted vacancy rate as part of doing business. Though, if four families leave a block of detached houses, it may begin

Figure 1.1

Scale of Detroit's Urban Geography. Research and Design: Dan Pitera.

Source: US Census Bureau; 2010 Demographic Profile. (<http://factfinder2.census.gov/>); (Accessed 25 May 2014)



to appear that something is going wrong in the neighborhood. This block type has a harder time self-correcting and may even accelerate the abandonment process. Vacancy rates are not part of the urban fabric comprised of single-family homes. Not being able to self-correct, Detroit is now $\pm 715,000$ people living in the same 138.77 square land miles. As a person moves through the city (usually by car), she or he sees vacant and underused space as the primary visual landscape. Several estimates suggest that there are 20 square miles of undesignated open space (i.e., vacant land and buildings) within the city limits of Detroit. At the same time, we can see cities like Atlanta (132 square land miles) with a population of 420,003 and Portland, Oregon (134 square land miles) with a population of 583,776.^{1.4} How can this be? What this shows is that the issues are far greater than merely bringing the population back and filling the space with buildings once again. While this essay will not delve into why this discrepancy between cities size, population and vacant land exists, it will illustrate that this is exactly why Detroit is in a unique position to offer another model for cities to follow.

The USA has built its history on the expansiveness of its landscape—settling, taming and homesteading our seemingly endless space.

SPACE, not history, not time, is (still) the totalizing force in the American experience... It has always been the case. The most American of novels—Moby Dick and Huckleberry Finn—are about SPACE. It is the landscape of the American imagination; not time-filled, humanist space of Europe, defined and limited by objects, but the opposite: space unlimited, empty, space as QUANTITY. (Segrest's emphasis)

Robert Segrest^{1.5}

If this is the case, then why does this quantity of space when it occurs in a city, give us the feeling that something is wrong? There are 20 square miles of undesignated open space in the City of Detroit. If we use Segrest's assessment, wouldn't this openness of space make Detroit the most American of cities—the city of open space, the open range? Landscape runs free in Detroit, not relegated to a planter or bounded by a park or rooftop garden. What is it that makes the physical experience of Detroit uncanny?^{1.6} I believe that it is more than the standard response of the buildings being deteriorated or abandoned. We have heard this argument before. My wife and I arrived in Detroit in 1999. We had lived in three locations across the USA

^{1.4} US Census Bureau; 2010 Demographic Profile; <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>; (Accessed 25 May 2014)

^{1.5} pg 555, "The Perimeter Projects: Notes for Design"; Robert Segrest; *Architecture Theory, Since 1968*; edited by K. Michael Hays; The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA; 1998.

^{1.6} Though I am only making a loose connection here, to see a full discussion of the "uncanny" in architecture and space, refer to: Vidler, Anthony; *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*; The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA; 1992.

over three years and thought that we would probably not be in Detroit long. We are still here with no sign of leaving any time soon. The City still has an uncanny effect as I move around its streets, buildings and parks. Though the feeling has dulled and we begin to forget that we even feel it. What I mean is, this openness of space, a landscape that runs free is the City to us. It is not until we go and visit other places like San Francisco, New York City or Boston, that we remember how unusual this urban experience really is. It was after a few years of moving through the City that it became somewhat apparent the nature of this uncanny feeling. It is more than just saying that Detroit is not urban or that it has large numbers of vacant buildings and vacant land. Something is missing. And this is where it begins to make some sense. Detroit is a city that has a very different method of moving through it. Its street wall—the line of buildings that typically border each side of an urban street—is missing. The buildings and boundaries that make up the street wall have begun to disappear through time and demolition. There are more than just gaps between the buildings. City blocks have become transparent. Instead of the partial glimpses offered into the center of a block, tantalizing incomplete views into the private parts of a city, we are provided not just full view into the block, but full access into the typically closed or off-limit parts of a city. We are not used to being able to walk through city block after block. Whether conscious or unconscious, we feel misplaced, disconnected, uncomfortable and perhaps even a bit embarrassed—like catching the city with its pants down. However, we do not see this as a bad thing, this is one of the conditions that makes Detroit a unique place.

Coloring Outside of the Lines: Interference

The physical line, the boundary lines between things have disappeared. You can now move through blocks in a way that most cities do not allow. This has established another layer of infrastructure to the City—desiring lines. Desiring lines are the routes we take to cut across or bypass the formal circulation path—interference in the established way of moving through the city. They are the lines that take us to where we desire to go. Since we no longer have to walk along the street and be confined to sidewalks, our movement through this potentially transparent city has created trails connecting or pointing us to neighbors or neighborhood assets. We do not walk along the sidewalk as we turn the corner; we cut the corner by following the trail through the empty lot. If a trail does not exist, we make one. Again, this is not the way we traditionally move through cities. This movement was not defined as an outcome of a system of planned development. It was not

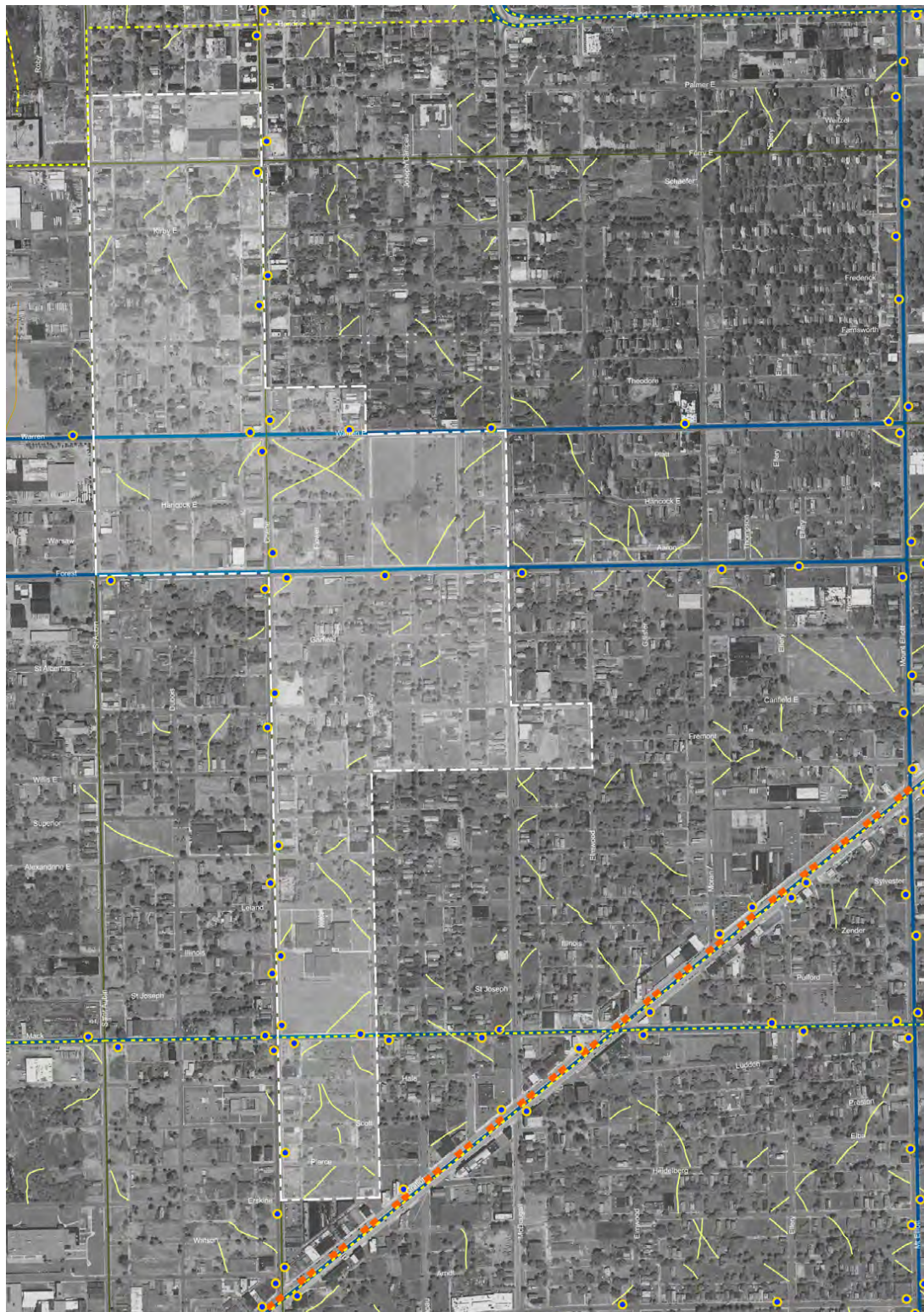


Figure 1.2
 Mapping the Desiring Lines in the Near East Side of Detroit for RecoveryPark (Chapter 5: *Neighborhood Strategies*). (The first phase of RecoveryPark designated by the white shaded area) Yellow lines show current trails or walking paths outside of the typical sidewalk structure. Many times stakeholder input comes from not only documenting what people say, but acknowledging and documenting what people do everyday.

designed by architects, urban designers or landscape architects. We do not see these lines on Detroit's master plan. They are made by people's everyday actions. Like the scratched color drawing created by my daughter or a younger version of me, they are the scratches on the surface of the city revealing a new form or potential opportunity. They are the positive outcome or residue of the City's vacancy and abandonment. They are a person's active navigation through the changing urban landscape. These newly developed lines of circulation etched by our feet into the ground may be viewed as another layer of infrastructure—an alternative to existing sidewalks. (Figure 1.2) But they are also another way of thinking about a city. In this city a different kind of movement occurs by its people and density is defined as the *complexity and intensity of human interactions* and not only as the quantity of people or things in an area or space.

To Scratch One's Head: Final Thought

As I think about how I began this short essay, I was scratching the surface of a drawing to try to find something below—a single child scratching a single surface. I acknowledged there are actually many children past and present scratching many surfaces and revealing many different drawings. It is here where I would like to leave the final thought. The repetition of an activity further embeds that activity in the larger social context of a place. The work discussed in this essay and illustrated throughout this book is not made from scratch. It amplifies (through design thinking and design making) the repetitive activities already happening throughout Detroit. We seek to find a more meaningful definition for what it means to have a sustainable place that centers on the people of that place and their activities—their scratches. In other words, what if Detroit (like other cities) is not in decline like the common explanation? What if Detroit is going through a necessary evolution or transformation from a city scratched with dividing lines of inequity into a city that can be more equitable and ecological? Through this ability to see Detroit's open space as having opportunity, it is now possible to perhaps define or reveal another kind of urbanism—a Transparent City that thinks about transparency as more than just what it looks like, but also in how we communicate and engage with each other and the world around us.

...by amplifying diminished voices,

other voices are not excluded; they are simply not the only ones heard.

We work hard to widen the process to include more people, more programs and more geographies.

Amplifying the Diminished Voice



Dan Pitera

Amplifying the Diminished Voice

04 April 2013

When we at the Detroit Collaborative Design Center view the ecology of the design profession, we see three glaring inconsistencies. First, too many architects are working for the few people at the top of the economic pyramid and only few are working for the many people at the bottom. Second the student of architecture and the recent graduates have a diminishing number of opportunities to gain experience in quality professional offices particularly ones that work with a wider range of people. Finally, there are too few firms working in the City of Detroit who are thinking critically about the opportunities in the City, and at the same time celebrating the citizens of the City. The structure and mission of the Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC) at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture is designed to address these three inconsistencies—as well as a few others. To do this, the DCDC has modeled itself after a teaching hospital—a place

for learning by doing, exclusively for nonprofit organizations. Students work along side professionals, similar to how students work along side doctors in a teaching hospital. With this in mind, it is the first of the three inconsistencies that will be the focus of this short essay. Also as a disclaimer, I understand that there are many underlying and subtle discussions hidden in the lines that follow. They are presented to provoke conversation and provide context to the work in this book.

We do not believe that architects are intentionally or maliciously working for the few and not the many; but we do think that perhaps in general, practice has strayed afar from its professional roots. *They do not have the money to pay for our services. If we include more people in the process, it will weaken the final product. There are so many other more important things they need before good design.* This kind of thinking restricts us to a certain way of working because it limits us to a certain way of seeing. The Detroit Collaborative Design Center attempts to alter this way of seeing and working.

In a conversation with a client who directs a free clinic for drug abuse counseling, she passionately made the point that if someone paid for their services, she or he would expect certain design quality in their physical surroundings. She also proceeded to explain that these surroundings are important in the counseling process. If that same person did not have enough money to pay for services and had to seek their free clinic, should she or he expect less quality service or less quality space?^{2.1} Our client's point was that design is really an issue of social justice. (For reference, the DCDC defines social justice as the distribution of both advantages and disadvantages across the full cross section of society.) Her example of her own free clinic could easily translate to a recreation center, service center, nonprofit office, public street, square, plaza, etc... Let's think about a walk north on Dearborn Street in Chicago. After we cross Jackson Boulevard, we see a large public space in front of the Post Office. This is Federal Plaza and in it stands a large red modern sculpture by Alexander Calder. Pausing in this space, we see many people moving in many directions on foot, bike, skateboard, wheelchair and shopping cart. There are people standing and talking as others pass by them with just inches to spare. The ground of the plaza accepts all who enter. There are no steps, no fences and no bollards. Continuing our walk north, we see another *public space* that has a barrier along the sidewalk. This plaza also has a modern work of art, a mosaic by Marc Chagall. Where the barrier stops, there are steps leading down to the *usable* space. Except for the visitors at the mosaic, the plaza is primarily empty. It is a

^{2.1} We would like to clarify that for the purposes of this book, high quality design does not equal expensive construction. Thoughtful, meaningful design includes creativity with lower budgets.

visual urban ornament. It looks like public space, but it does not act like public space. It does not accept the public. One might say that there are building codes that provide ramps and other amenities to help give access to more people. This is true. But they are only technical improvements. Visual clues can be designed to make people feel unwelcome even if the appropriate code elements are in place. Let's also be honest here, some of the people that these places are trying to keep out are those who push shopping carts.²² There are no code provisions for shopping carts used in this manner. This is an issue of social justice. True public space is to be enjoyed by the public at large—that includes people who use skateboards and push shopping carts, or those who want to have a picnic and/or want to have a protest. The surroundings of our activities contribute to not only the activities themselves, but to a person's physical and psychological development. This is true whether the surroundings are a home, school, recreation center, neighborhood, or landscape. A place may appear to be open to the public, but subtle and sometimes not so subtle design cues can keep people out. The question then becomes: Who is left out of the decision making process? Where is their voice in this process? The DCDC works to answer these questions.

In a socially engaged practice, it is common to hear someone say that they are giving this person or this marginalized group a voice. At the DCDC, we submit that everyone has a voice. It is our society's power structure and cultural heritage that allow some voices to speak louder than others—in some cases much louder than others. The DCDC attempts to establish processes to amplify the diminished voice. With respect to the built environment, the DCDC works to bring this *diminished voice* into an equitable dialogue with previously more dominant voices. The DCDC engages the people who are often marginalized or underrepresented and bridges the gaps between people rather than further separating them. By *amplifying diminished voices*, other voices are not excluded; they are simply not the only ones heard. We work hard to widen the process to include *more people, more programs and more geographies*.

²² The DCDC understands the limitations of privatized public space and seeks to expand them in some way. Currently, many of these spaces look like a public asset, but they have strict limitations on who can physically enjoy them.

The Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC)

is modeled after a teaching hospital.

It is a place for learning by doing. Students work along side professionals/faculty,



similar to how students work along side doctors/faculty in a teaching hospital.

We work hand-in-hand with students every day on complex architectural, landscape and urban issues particularly in Detroit. Though we have also worked on projects across the United States including Dallas, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York City. In medical schools, teaching hospitals are common. This is not the same for schools of architecture. Though there are nearly 130 accredited schools of architecture around the country, there are only around 10-15 centers like the DCDC.

Creative Amnesia

We try to enter every project with our partners with as little preconception as possible.
We use our creative process to provoke engagement and instigate locally driven responses.

Neighborhood Spaces



Neighborhood Spaces

Projects in this category refer to architecture and landscape architecture that connect with the urban context but are at the scale of a single property or project. They create the spaces where stories are made and told.

Spaces



New Orleans

The St. Joseph Rebuild Center is a unique collaboration between four independent nonprofit service providers. Their post-Katrina union establishes a more comprehensive approach for providing care and support to the homeless population of New Orleans. The project provides an example of another more humane way of using trailers in disaster situations not specified by FEMA plans.

New Orleans

St. Joseph Rebuild Center

2008

Partners

Catholic Charities Hispanic Apostolate
 Harry Tompson Center
 Lantern Light / Presentation Sisters
 St. Joseph Church
 BuildingDetail
 Wayne Troyer Architect


The DCDC designed the master plan for the campus which includes six trailers connected by an outdoor gathering space. New construction weaves around the trailers incorporating them as integral parts of the design. Wayne Troyer Architect of New Orleans collaborated on the final design and followed the process through construction. The four spaces on the campus not housed in trailers are a food distribution center, a meeting space for 200-300 people, an information kiosk, and a small freestanding office. These four project elements were designed and constructed by the DCDC and students.

Students from


University of Detroit Mercy and Lawrence Technological University

built 20% of the entire project.

View of construction process with students



Horizontal Gray line on the above column shows the "high water line" of the 2005 flood in this area of the city.



Three entry panels that pivot in the center.

This project offers an example in disaster situations
of a more humane way of using “trailers” not specified by FEMA plans.

Every
Wednesday
a band plays
here for the
community.

Urban Reconnaissance

Though most of our work is in Detroit, we have also worked in other cities such as Dallas, Los Angeles and New Orleans. We see this as an opportunity to work in another context to help us understand our own context. This does not mean that we look to transplant other models to Detroit from elsewhere. Instead, our understanding of how other cities operate help keep us focused on the uniqueness of Detroit.

Spaces



Los Angeles

Los Angeles

Homeboy Industries

2001

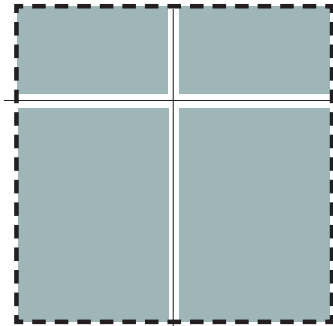
Partners

Homeboy Industries
Jobs for a Future
Sander Architects
Ruiz Construction

Homeboy Industries is a nonprofit religious sponsored organization with a mission to offer young adults an alternative to gang life. As part of this mission, they provide job and life skills, and employment opportunities. This new facility is an adaptive reuse of a 4,600 sq. ft. former printing facility in East Los Angeles into their main office and training center. Spaces include: Job and Life Training, Small Retail of Products (made by program participants), Offices, Counseling, Job Placement, and Employer Introductions.



A Shadow and Light Intervention



Homeboy Industries is a faith-based organization who did not want visible images of the Cross or Crucifixion. The design took the proportions of the Cross and recreated it out of translucent fabric. It becomes a canopy that occupies the center of the main space where the youth have life skills training. Lighting is placed above the canopy, which cast a shadow of the cross over the youth as they engage in the day-to-day activities.

The Canopy

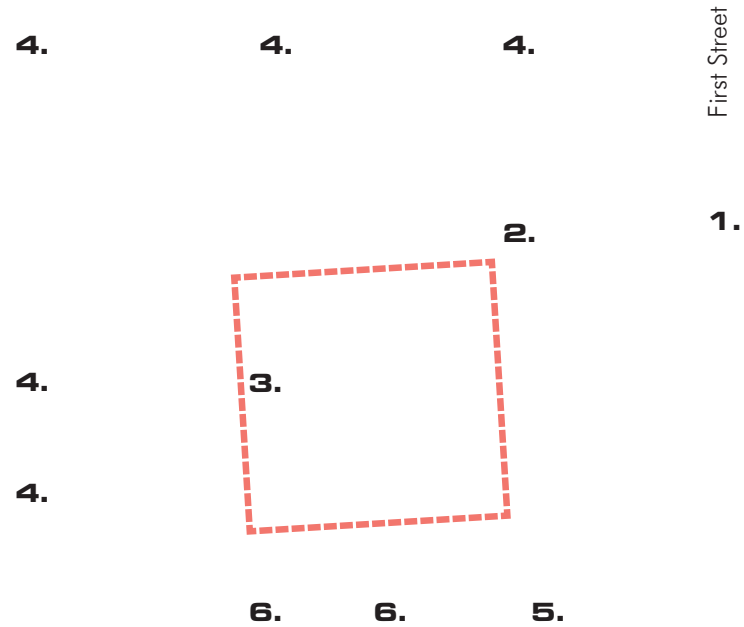
The Cross translated into a canopy through the gaps between the canvas panels.

The design collects all of the central work and support functions (mailing, filing, copying, etc...) along a central spine (#2 in plan on the right). As part of their job training, the program participants are the ones fulfilling these tasks. Thus, this move celebrates their presence as opposed to diminishing them in a back room.

The Ramp Spine

Key

- 1. Entry
- 2. Spine
- 3. Training Area
- 4. Offices
- 5. Retail
- 6. Restrooms



Floor Plan Process Sketch (Red Outline: Canopy Above)

As part of the construction process, the general contractor employed some of the ex-gang male and female member's to assist in the project. These young adults were given competitive wages and job specific training. This is one example of how the process of design and the process of construction engaged Homeboy Industries as much as possible.

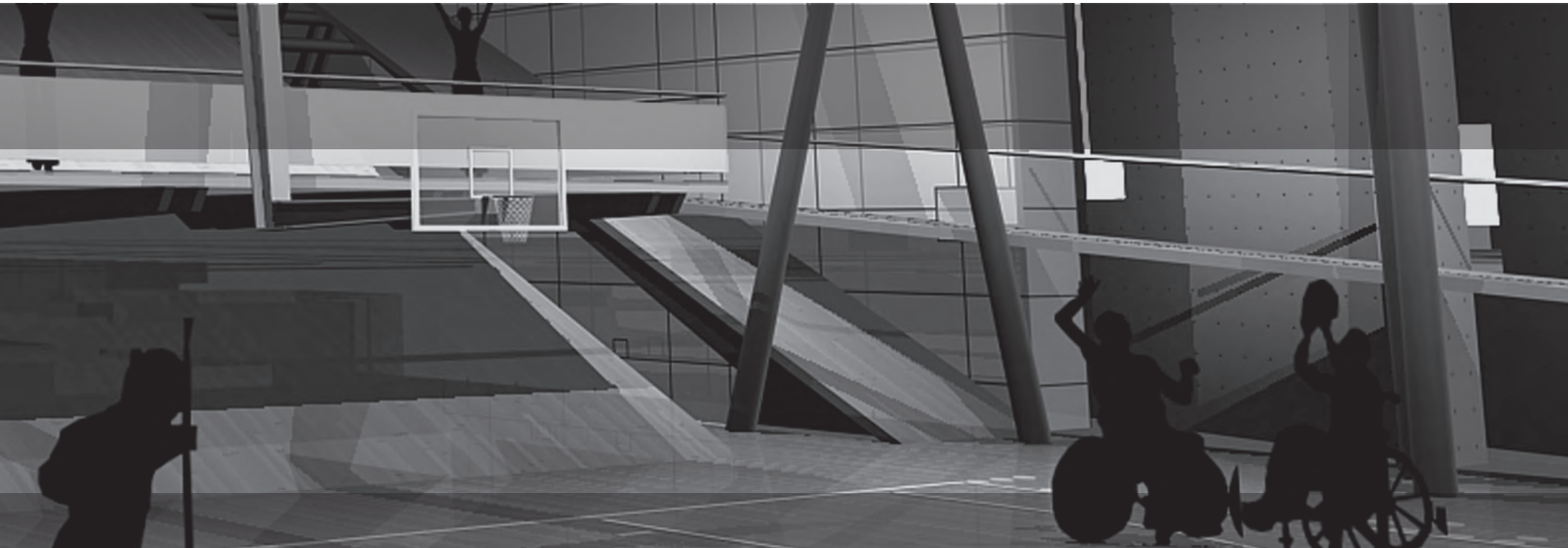
Reflected Ceiling Plan Process Sketch (With Suspended Canopy)

Many of the youth and young adults are in wheel chairs due to gang related events. They see ramps as an element that segregates and separates them from others, as well as from their own previous abilities. The design of their new offices includes a ramp as part of the main spine. It is the central element of circulation that everyone uses in the space. Soon after the opening of their offices, the ramp was used as a raceway, which signifies their change in attitude.



Density is the complexity and intensity of human interactions.

Detailed interior view of Friends School Gymnasium; Detroit



Spaces



Detroit

The Mercy Education Project is an after-school tutoring and GED preparation solely directed to female students who are children, young adults, and seniors. This design/build tenant improvement transforms 1,500 square feet of their 8,000 square feet facility into 2 new classrooms and a snack area. The rest of the facility houses their administrative offices, tutoring “pods,” library, and digital technology center.

Detroit

Mercy Education Project

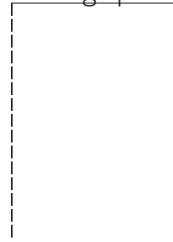
2003

Partners

Mercy Education Project

Many of the participants are intimidated by the typical school environment. The space of the conventional school is not perceived by the Mercy Education user as a place where they feel comfortable learning. With this in mind, the starting point for the design process was the activities of the child, as well as the scale and size of the child. In other words, the space in which a child feels comfortable has a finer grain and is more intimate than the space of a room. A child’s space includes the space under a dining room table, or perhaps the space under a stairway. The final design borrowed from these spaces to create the classrooms as playful places to learn.

Child's entry into the interactive learning space



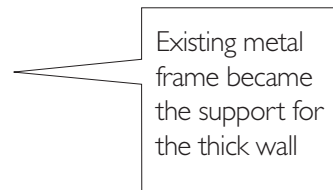
The children used the inside of the wall so much for reading that they installed mini wall mounted reading lights.

The space of the

A child's space includes the space under a dining room table, or perhaps the space under a stairway.

The final design borrowed from these spaces to create the classrooms as playful places to learn.

Section Through Entry Canopy at the Interactive Learning Space



Existing metal frame became the support for the thick wall

Inhabitable Wall: 3-foot thick wall allows children to play and learn in the wall



Child's entrance into interactive learning space



Existing metal frame became the support for the thick wall

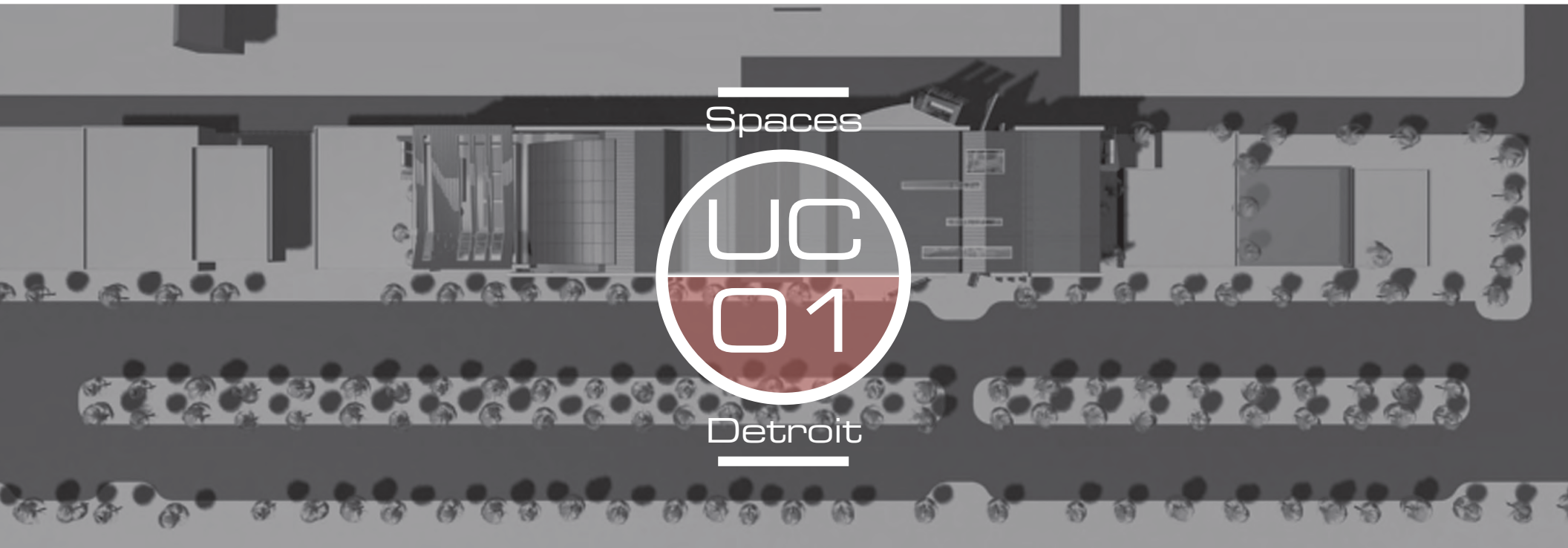




creative designs = creative listening + creative thinking

It is our responsibility at the DCDC to work through the exchange of information (creative listening), synthesize it and find connections (creative thinking), and develop a series of recommendations (creative designing).

Our engagement processes are not methods to achieve specific and particular responses. They are not intended to validate what we already think. They *provide* the content for our designs with the community. Our workshops are a series of designed activities that are active and meaningful ways to encourage dialogue that potentially reveal hidden intentions, agendas, desires, and needs. They do not attempt to put words into the stakeholders' mouths. Their aim is to listen to the words of each stakeholder and find connections and relationships that reveal other possibilities. Case in point: In the process of designing a public recreational park in Southwest Detroit, the stakeholders requested to surround the perimeter of the park with a six-foot iron fence. We did not take this specific directive at face value. When we along with the community questioned a bit more, we learned that the fence was *their design solution* to handle a larger and very specific issue. The park currently exists as a large dirt and grassy area about two-thirds of a city block. Drivers jump the curb in their vehicles and do "donuts" ripping up the grass. To the stakeholders, the only solution was to surround the park with a fence. We shared with them through design drawings and precedent images that changing the park with varied grade changes particularly at the perimeter of the park would cause the vehicles to "bottom out." The result of this learning exchange is a design for the park environment that feels open and inviting, while not being susceptible to vehicle trespassing, which is ultimately what the residents were trying to achieve with the fence. It is our responsibility at the DCDC to work through the exchange of information (creative listening), synthesize it and find connections (creative thinking), and develop a series of recommendations (creative designing).



Spaces



Detroit

Detroit

UDM Community University Center

2001

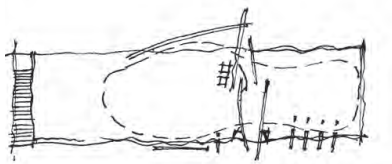
Partners

University of Detroit Mercy
Marygrove College
Local Businesses
Local Community Organizations
University Commons

The Northwest Detroit district surrounding the University of Detroit Mercy is home to two higher educational institutions. This area contains no large industrial or commercial entities. It is comprised primarily of small businesses and retail. Its residential fabric is made up of mostly single family homes. The purpose of the Community/University Center is to be a signature flagship project born out of the institutional, business, and resident collaboration. It would 1) enable people to seek and engage healthy lifestyles, 2) create an environment that would evoke excitement about health and wellness issues, 3) motivate residents to seek educational and self-improvement related information and programming, and 4) become a catalyst for continued improvement and revitalization of the surrounding area.



Third Level

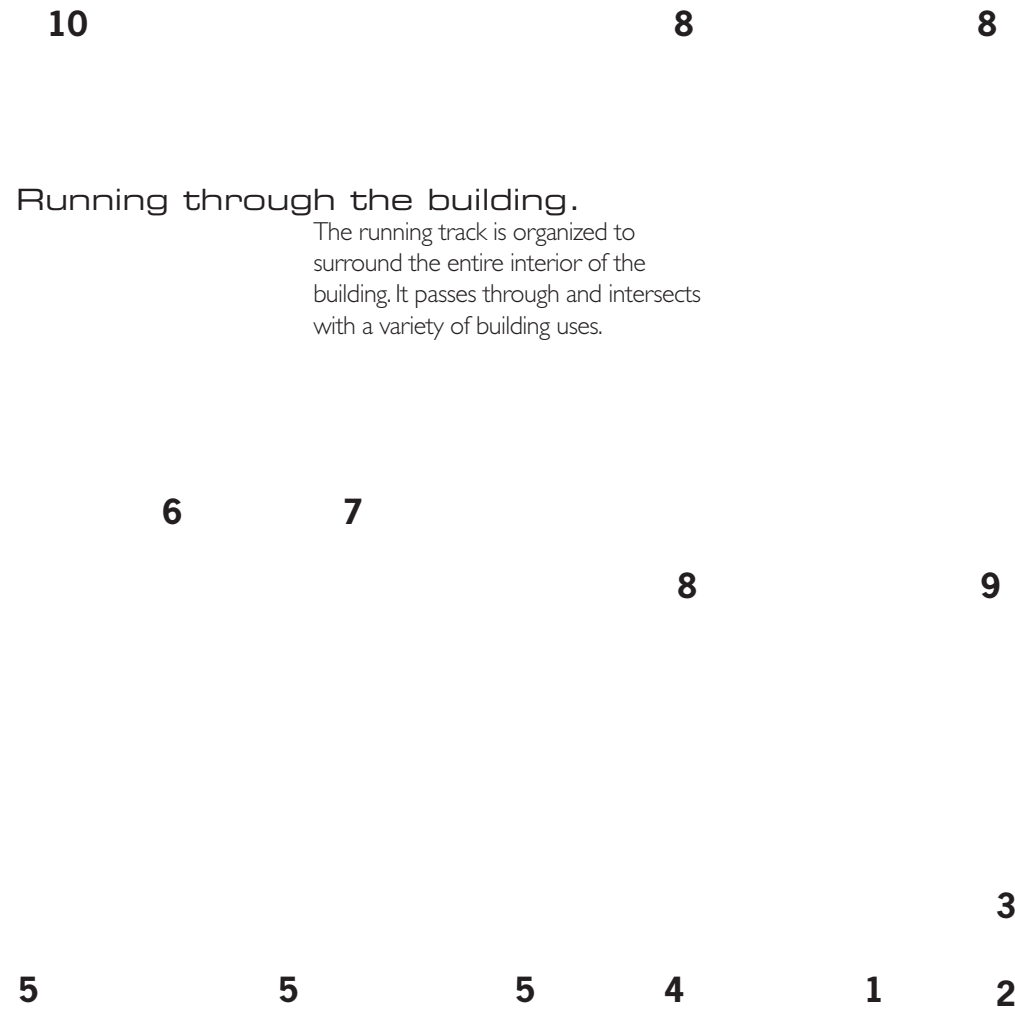


Key to Major Spaces

- 1. Entry Lobby
- 2. University Outreach
- 3. Health Care
- 4. Educational & Adult Literacy
- 5. Retail
- 6. Performance Space
- 7. Gymnasium
- 8. Fitness Center
- 9. Day Care
- 10. Outdoor Play Area

Second Level

Street Level



Running through the building.

The running track is organized to surround the entire interior of the building. It passes through and intersects with a variety of building uses.

Windows are aligned with the top of the running track to capture the view of people's feet.

Centerline of half-court 1

Centerline of half-court 2

Windows are centered on the halfcourt baskets and can be seen from Livernois Avenue.

Roof Section

Architectural Treehouse (Child Care)

Sound elements facing the street project the sound of people playing in the gym.

Centerline of half-court 1

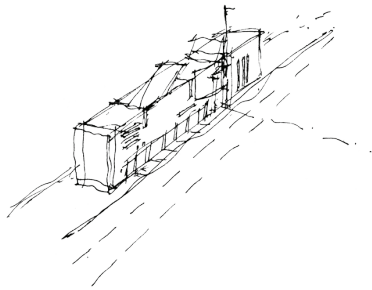
Windows are aligned with the top of the running track to capture the view of people's feet

Centerline of half-court 2

Projection Screens

Select panels in the skylights will be replaced with aluminum to celebrate the sound of the rain.

- Windows are centered on the halfcourt baskets and can be seen from Livernois Avenue.



The DCDC believes...



People are the most important part of the sustainability and

regeneration of any neighborhood.

If residents are not actively
visioning, implementing and maintaining
a community, **it will not thrive.**

People laugh, cry and live in the spaces we design.



Detail of Mercy Education Project, Detroit

Spaces



Detroit

Detroit

Friends' School Gymnasium & Community Space

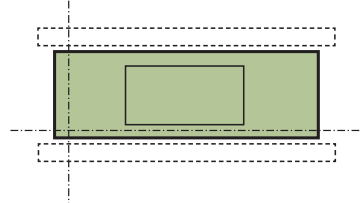
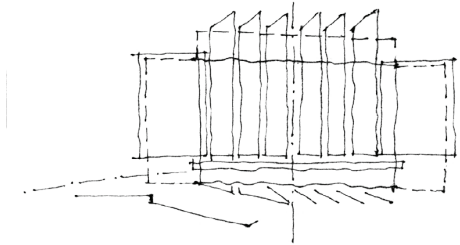
2003

Partners

Friends' School of Detroit
Detroit Institute for Children

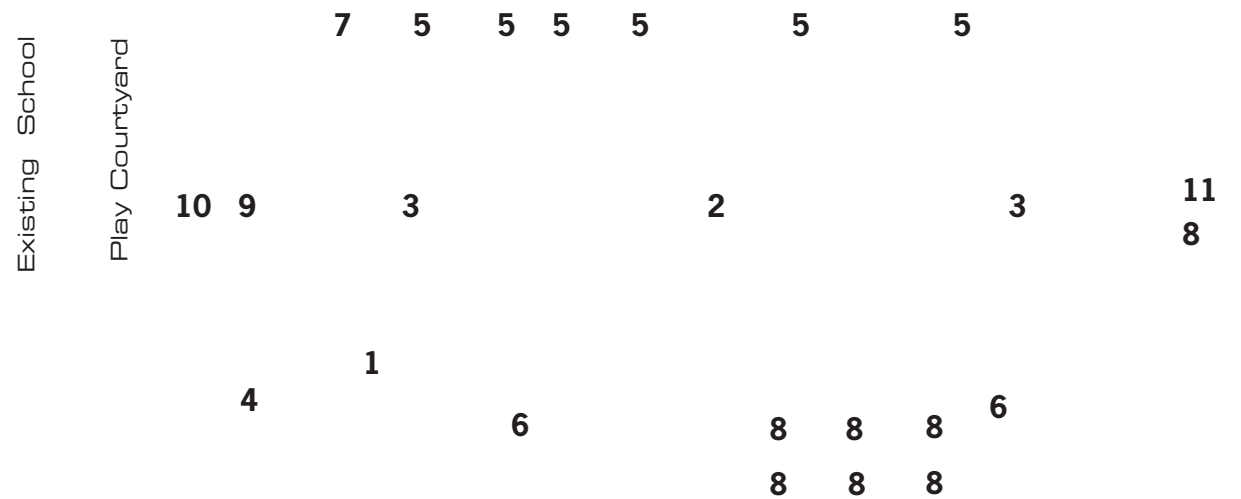
The residents of the area surrounding Friends School are diverse in age, race, and economic resources. However, a larger population is developing on either end of the **age bracket**. In other words, there is a growing elderly and youthful population.

Friends School has a need for a gymnasium that accommodates its K-8 students and engages the neighborhood's desires and needs. Because of the School's outreach programs, it has become aware of the inadequate services available within city limits for the physically limited urban dweller. This project is a design for a facility that encourages and supports all ranges of physical abilities playing and interacting together.



Key To Major Spaces

1. Entry Lobby
2. Gymnasium
3. Physical Therapy (Mezzanine Above)
4. Bridge to Existing School (Above)
5. Education/Seminar/Counseling Rooms (under bleachers)
6. Ramp
7. Entry from Community Side
8. Climbing Walls
9. Swings
10. Sand
11. Skateboard Ramp



The space of the child....

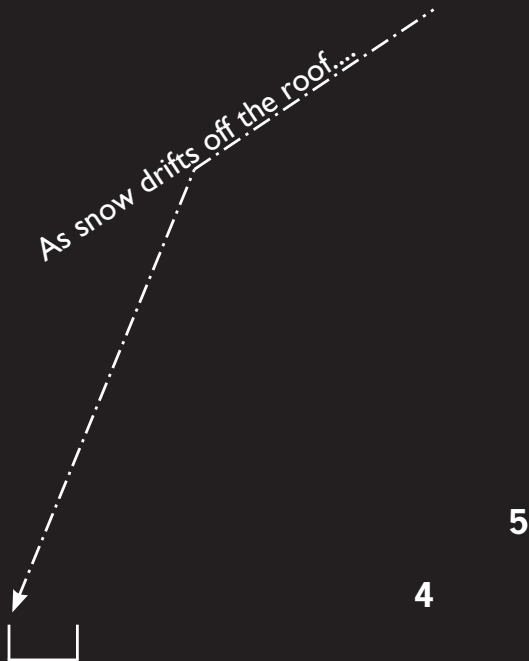
The space in which a child feels comfortable has a finer grain and is more intimate than the space of a room. It includes the space under a dining room table, or perhaps the space under a chair or a stairway. As in the Mercy Education Project, this project, which is attached to an existing elementary school, looks to these spaces as a way to understand spaces as more than single-use large rooms.

Key To Spaces

1. Main Gymnasium Floor
2. Climbing Walls
3. Physical Therapy
4. Education/Seminar/Counseling
5. Translucent Resin Bleachers

Braille is embedded in the floors of the side-lines of the gym, the main lobby, as well as the built-in benches. The participant in this architecture could conceivably read the surfaces of the building.

Climbing Walls on the interior and the exterior. Viewports connect the interior climber with the exterior climber. These walls allow someone with lower body mobility to compete with someone with little or no lower body mobility.



Space of the Child (Snow Fort...)

The building is designed so that snow will collect leaving a space between it and the building (a snow fort...)

Play with the building...not solely in the building...

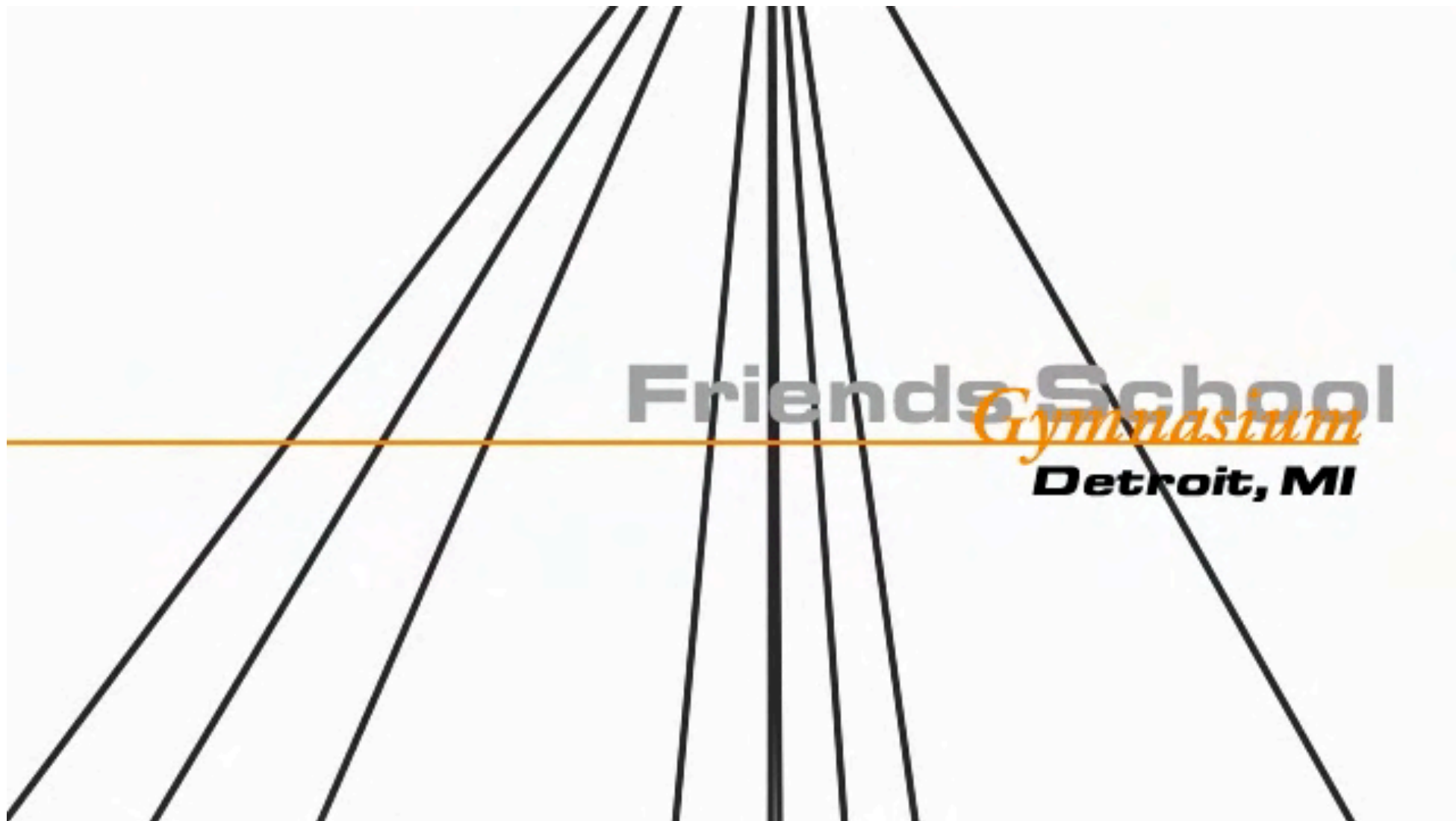
The site of the building now serves as the playground for Friends' School Elementary. In response to this site condition, the building becomes something "you can play with," as opposed to solely being a building "you play in." It becomes a place where swings are apart of its structure, the ground becomes a sandbox, a portion of the exterior becomes a climbing wall or a skateboard ramp, etc....

Skateboard ramps

Swings hung from the building with sandbox below.

The site of the building now serves as the playground for the elementary school. The building becomes something "you can play with," rather than a building "you play in."

Existing Playground



Friends School Gymnasium & Community Space
Video by: Detroit Collaborative Design Center

We are guided and governed by the question:

“How can people be key operators in inspiring and creating new ecological, equitable and beautiful urban environments and spaces?”



Civic engagement activates everyone's own creativity and expertise whether it is connecting with neighbors or understanding the cultural identity of the community for it to face and direct its future.



Spaces



Detroit

Detroit

UDM McNichols Entry Plaza

2003

Partners

University of Detroit Mercy

As part of the University of Detroit Mercy's campus wide improvements, it explored transforming the McNichols Road entrance into a public green space. The project acknowledges the residential communities north across McNichols Road, and creates a landscaped edge to the campus, This would be a complement to Livernois Avenue, which could be seen as having potentially more buildings than landscape. The ground of the Entry Plaza shifts and changes to accommodate and encourage different activities.

View from Northeast

Aerial View of Design

Tiles in a mosaic have both individual identity while connecting with other tiles to make a bigger picture.

Like the tiles in a mosaic...

each person in a community influences and connects with other people to create a bigger picture of the community. Each person still retains their individual identity while creating larger community impact.

Mosaics & Tapestries



SESSION 03

SESSION 02

SESSION 01

DETROIT STORIES

View of the Home Page of DetroitStoriesProject.com. An oral histories project initiated by the DCDC with Spirit of Space for the Detroit Works Project Long Term Planning.

Christina Heximer & Dan Pitera

Mosaics & Tapestries

02 March 2014

^{4.1} This topic of leadership will be discuss in greater length in Chapter 8: *Leading from the Side*.

There are a few key operating principles behind our work at the DCDC. First, we define *leaders* as people who synthesize the values and desires of many people to articulate a dynamic vision forward rather than dictate their own personal values and desires. Leaders should influence communities to face their future versus influencing communities to follow the leader's vision.^{4.1} Second, we define civic engagement as the open and ongoing two-way dialogue between all stakeholders—essentially, **people talking together and working together to move forward together**. The third principle centers on the consistently unresolved debate on whether great design and/or grand citywide urban visions and the ideas of an individual citizen can coexist. We often hear that civic engagement means we have to abandon the tools that make great architecture, landscape and urban design and accept mediocre products. Our work is grounded in the position that people in the

city are the primary catalysts for urban innovation. We are guided and governed by the question: “How can people be key operators in inspiring and creating new ecological, equitable and beautiful urban environments and spaces?”

With this position, we develop meaningful and productive methods of community participation, where community expertise is blended with discipline expertise—where communities and designers work as partners. Many people enter our design and engagement process in many different ways. The DCDC looks for ways to make everyone’s participation meaningful—from the business leader to the nonprofit leader, and from the pastor to the resident down the street (the list continues). We try to enter the process with little preconceived knowledge of what the final response should look like. Authentic civic engagement processes are not methods to achieve predetermined specific responses. They are not intended to validate what we already think. These processes provide the content for our design process. Workshops are a series of designed activities that are active and meaningful ways to encourage dialogue that potentially reveal hidden intentions, agendas, desires, and needs. They should not attempt to put words into the stakeholders’ mouths. The aim of each workshop is to listen to the words of each stakeholder and find connections and relationships with other stakeholders that reveal unique and community-specific possibilities. We call this **creative amnesia**—where we try to enter every project with our partners with as little preconception as possible and use our creative processes to provoke engagement and instigate locally driven responses.

A successful civic engagement process lies in the many opportunities to engage a broad range of communities, to work across silos and boundaries, and to increase the capacity of all community sectors to more effectively engage and partner. It activates everyone’s own creativity and expertise whether it is connecting with neighbors or understanding the cultural identity of the community for it to face and direct its future. We look for ways for people and organizations to see beyond *me* and *my* to move toward *we* and *our*. Using broad-based community participation and knowledge sharing in conjunction with design strategies and thinking, neighborhood and project results occur that respond to locally defined concerns while energizing the power of residents and stakeholders to facilitate their own process of community planning, development, and building design.

What you do not know (especially in the beginning of a project) is a good thing. Let the process guide the thinking. Dive in and be willing to move and adjust. Allow the process to engage authentic knowledge exchange.

The DCDC defines three modes of knowledge sharing:

- Inform:** Where the “technical/design team” informs the “community” of their work or visa versa. This keeps the power in the hands of the informer.
- Feedback:** Where the “community” provides response to information presented to them or visa versa. This still keeps the power in the hands of the informer.
- Exchange:** Where knowledge is exchanged by all parties/stakeholders (including technical/design team members).

When a process starts at a place of knowledge exchange, there will be times when people will need to do more work on something—for example: research past models or planning efforts; design and/or develop alternative responses—and come back and inform the community of the results, which will generate feedback. Inform, feedback and exchange are all forms of sharing knowledge. But when inform and feedback have grown out of a process of exchange, it is a more effective way to build trust, accountability and transparency. As leaders in this particular type of process, it is our responsibility to synthesize this knowledge exchange versus dictating specific knowledge or ideas.

We work to be clear about the purpose of the engagement tactics and whom they reach. We define two general groupings of tactics: 1. The methods we use to open the process to a wide variety of people. —and— 2. The methods we use to make their participation meaningful. In other words, it is one thing to get a variety of people together; but what do you do once everyone is there? We work to make the process authentic, transparent and meaningful. The diagram on page 84 illustrates the mosaic of tactics used from November 2011 to November 2012 to open the process for a variety of people to engage in a citywide planning process known as the Detroit Works Project Long Term Planning. It engaged people 163,000 times with 30,700 one-on-one conversations resulting in a report titled: Detroit Future City (released: 09 January 2013). Many people do not have the ability or do not want to attend traditional community planning meetings or town hall events. For example, evening meetings do not work for the people who work in the evening or have long commutes to/from the suburbs. Also, you will rarely find youth or young adults attending community meetings. The list of reasons continues... A mosaic or people require a mosaic of tactics.

We think carefully about the methods we use..



To bring a variety of people into the process

—and—

To make their participation meaningful

In other words, it is one thing to get a variety of people together; but what do you do once everyone is there? We work to make the process authentic, transparent and meaningful.

View of Asset Workshop at Medical Center Courts, Detroit

A Mosaic of Tactics for a Mosaic of People

Become a part of people's lives; become a part of their agenda.
Do not expect people to become part of your agenda.

We should design the *verbs* of the world around us, not the *nouns*.



Nouns & Verbs...



To think in terms of nouns and verbs
is the difference between thinking of a...

noun

stair or ascending/descending.

verb

If you ask a group of people to think about a *stair*, everyone's stair will be different but they will still be stairs. If you ask them to think about *ascending and descending*, someone may think of mountain climbing; another person may think of an elevator; while another person may think of a ramp. The options are more varied and the opportunity for creativity expands.

...to bring a variety of people into the process.



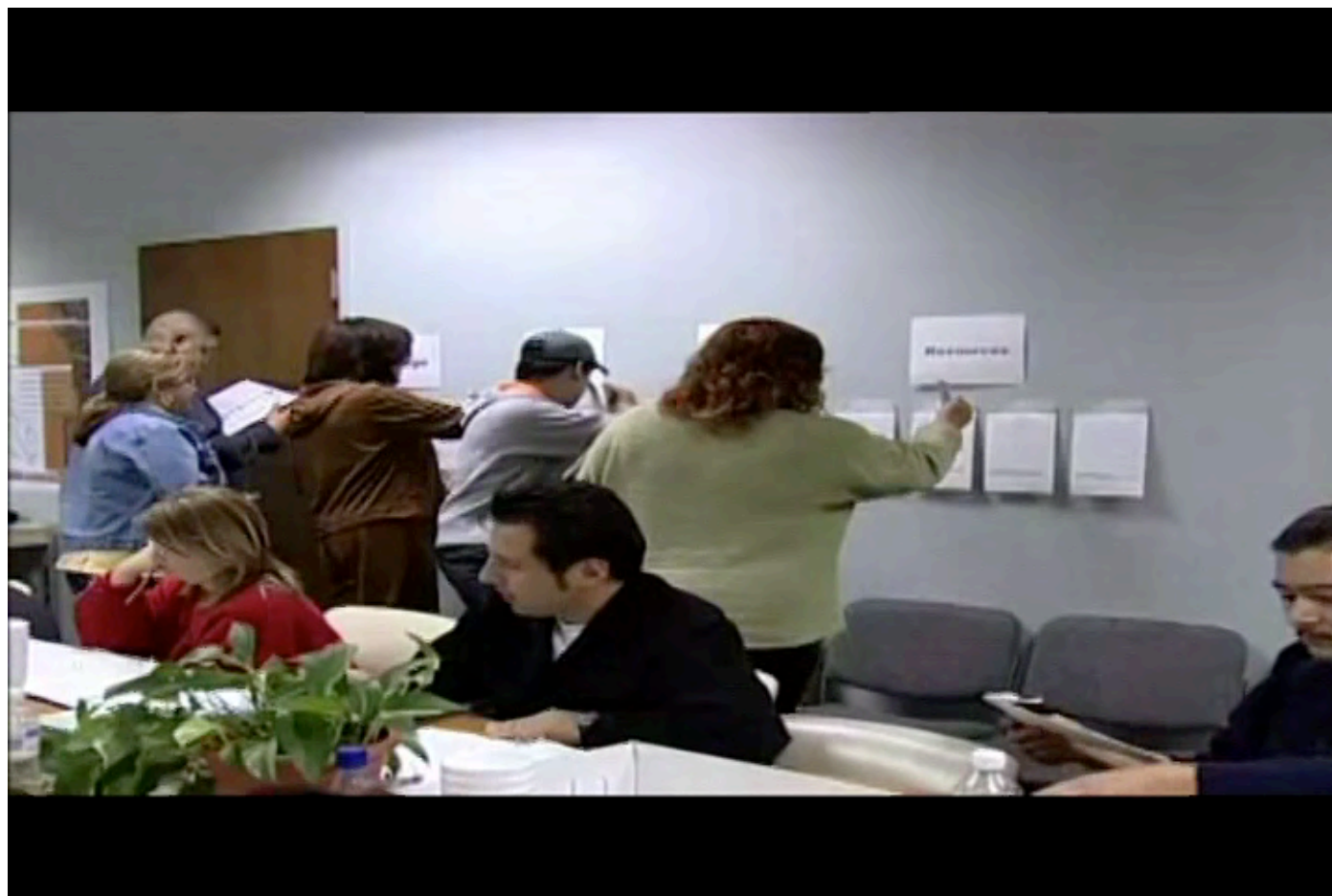
The Roaming Table was a tactic used by the DCDC to broaden engagement for the Detroit Works Project Long Term Planning. The DCDC team constructed a mobile wooden table to take around to public places or meetings throughout the city 3-4 times a week for 3-4 hours. It was in front of schools, libraries, businesses, bus stops, etc...

...to make their participation meaningful.



Video sample of the Neighborhood Engagement Workshop *Playdoh* exercise, which was used with our partner, the Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation. (Video courtesy of Sou International)

...to make their participation meaningful.



Video sample of the Neighborhood Engagement Workshop *Shopping Trip* exercise, which was used with our partner; the Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation. (Video courtesy of Sou International)

...to make their participation meaningful.



Video sample of the Neighborhood Engagement Workshop *Scavenger Hunt* exercise, which was used with our partner, the Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation. (Video courtesy of Sou International)

The future of a neighborhood lies in the hands of its residents.

Neighborhood Strategies



NS



Neighborhood Strategies

Projects in this category refer to urban design and neighborhood planning. They create the framework that connect the neighborhood spaces in a meaningful way.



Strategies



Detroit

The product of the Detroit Works Project Long Term Planning, Detroit Future City (DFC) is a framework for decision-making, which will guide Detroit—residents, businesses, nonprofits, and government—into the next 50+ years. The DCDC, along with Detroit-based Michigan Community Resources, directed the civic engagement for DFC. We set out to implement a working process that deeply engaged and blended community expertise with discipline expertise. Through this collaborative

Detroit

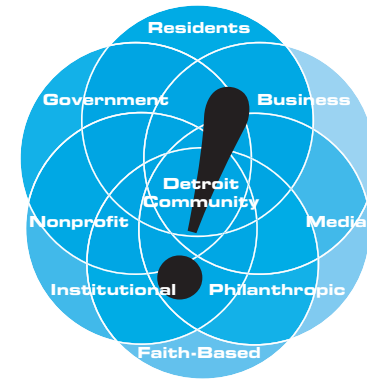
Detroit Future City

2011-2013

Partners

Canning Communications
 Center for Community Progress
 Detroiters (everywhere)
 Ford Foundation
 Toni Griffin
 Hamilton Anderson Associates
 Initiative for a Competitive Inner City
 Kellogg Foundation
 Kresge Foundation
 Lovio George Communications
 Michigan Community Resources
 Pitch Black Media
 Process Leaders
 STOSS Landscape Urbanism

process, DFC lays out a flexible framework for decision-making, which can adapt to change. Much of urban design and planning history has been defined by thinking about cities with growing populations. The past 20 years have shown us attempts to design the future of a city with a shrinking population. Neither approach is sufficient. Detroit Future City defines methods and processes that can alter and transform while keeping the integrity of its vision. To do this, DFC does not define a single future for the block, neighborhood, district or the entire city. It establishes criteria pointing to multiple futures, which can be adjusted and refined. Detroit Future City is also built upon Detroit's many assets. Though DFC does not rely on them alone, it does celebrate and align these assets to uniquely leverage them and prepare the city for a transformed future.



There are many valuable definitions and forms of civic engagement. This prompted the Detroit Works Project Long Term Planning process to adopt a broad understanding of community,

including...

residents, businesses, government, nonprofit, civic, institutional, members of the media, philanthropic, and faith-based groups.

The broad concept of 'community' also includes but is not limited to communities based on race, age, culture, ethnicity, and gender.

Tactic Timeline from November 2011-November 2012 (This diagram was reviewed and updated monthly using the participant demographic data from the previous months to ensure that we were reaching a range of people.)



A successful civic engagement process lies in the many opportunities to engage a broad range of communities, to work across silos and boundaries, and to increase the capacity of all community sectors to more effectively engage and partner.

163,000 Interactions; 30,700 Conversations

DetroitStoriesProject.com

Detroit 24/7 & Roaming iPad Station

Community Conversations

Process Leaders

Open Houses

HomeBase

Youth Engagement

Traveling Road Show

Eight of the over 20 tactics used to bring a variety of people into the conversation.

Civic engagement is the
open and ongoing two-way dialogue between all stakeholders.
essentially...

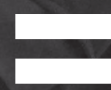


People:

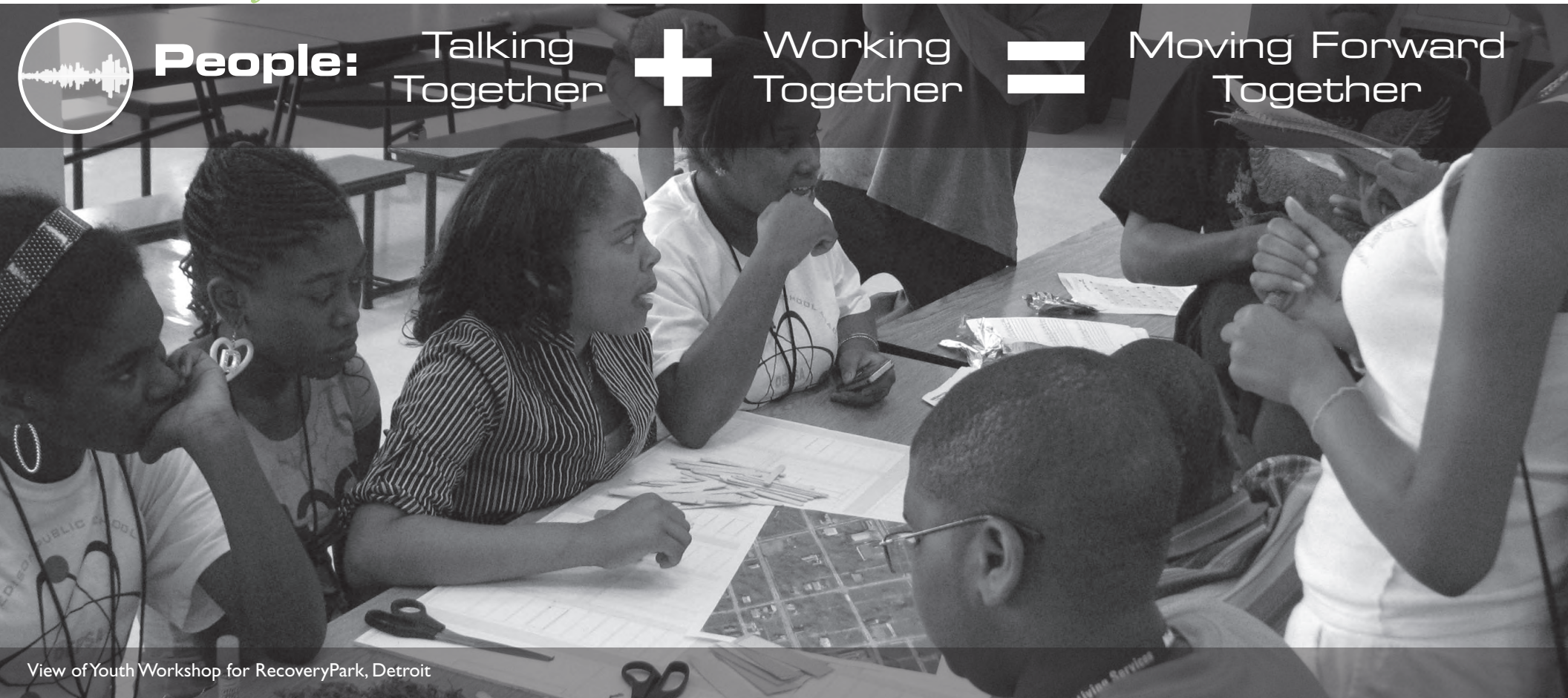
Talking
Together



Working
Together



Moving Forward
Together



View of Youth Workshop for RecoveryPark, Detroit

A successful civic engagement process lies in the many opportunities to engage a broad range of communities, to work across silos and boundaries, and to increase the capacity of all community sectors to more effectively engage and partner. We look for ways for people and organizations to see beyond *me* and *my* to move toward *we* and *our*. This work is less motivated by merely doing good engagement; instead, we are inspired by the tendency for people to thirst for the opportunity to be included in getting things done—whether the things are planning and designing or on-the-ground actions and policy change. Though not every person will want to engage in every facet of the work, they will have a different opinion or desire of where they would like to be included within the range of opportunities.

21st Century Barn Raising

Strategies



Detroit

The Bloody Run Creek Greenway Redevelopment Project is a neighborhood revitalization project driven by blue-green infrastructure strategies and daylighting the historic Bloody Run Creek. Located east of Detroit’s Central Business District and Midtown, the greenway is envisioned as a new kind of public ecological landscape that offers a beautiful large-scale environment for recreational, cultural, and ecological production and serves as a catalyst for economic and physical

Detroit

Bloody Run Creek Greenway

2013-Present

Partners

The Kresge Foundation
 McCormack Baron Salazar
 NTH Consultants, Ltd.
 Adi Shamir
 The Mannik & Smith Group, Inc.
 Urban Resource Alliance
 Zachary & Associates, Inc.

development. The greenway system serves as a driver for innovative and sustainable private development through the renovation, rehabilitation, and redevelopment of the 3000-acre area. The greenway’s filtration and retention process reduces the amount of storm water runoff reaching the wastewater treatment plant and combined sewer overflow system by an estimated three billion gallons per year. The overarching goals of the greenway system are: 1) comprehensive environmental remediation; 2) improvement of public health; and 3) strengthening of underserved communities by re-activating and transforming under utilized land into an asset and destination for local residents, businesses, and visitors.

View of Dequindre Cut Vision for Bloody Run Creek Greenway,

Page 1

Conceptual Productive Landscape Plan

Conceptual Hydrological Diagram

Aerial View of Bloody Run Creek Greenway, Detroit

View of Fitness Green at the Farnsworth Neighborhood

View of Potential Urban Agriculture Research Fields

Storytelling...

We design the opportunity for traditions to be made.

With this in mind...

We strive to design spaces,
which inspire people to make stories and tell them.



We try not to ask the question:

What does it mean?

Instead, we ask:

Is it meaningful?



Strategies



Detroit

Detroit

Mexicantown: Vernor/Bagley Vista

2010

Partners

555 Gallery
 City of Detroit
 City of Windsor
 Continental Rail Gateway
 Corktown Business (Salon) Owner
 Corktown Residence Council
 Donavon's Pub
 Hacienda Mexican Foods
 Matrix Theater
 Michigan Hispanic Chamber of
 Commerce
 Southwest Detroit Development
 Collaborative
 Southwest Solutions

Mexicantown: Vernor/Bagley Vista is a community-based project that focuses on a 20-block area surrounding the I-75 and Vernor intersection in Southwest Detroit. The project brought together over 75 individuals representing various interests, organizations, and cultures of the neighborhood in a collaborative effort to brainstorm what could happen along Vernor and Bagley to better serve the residents, regional visitors, and international visitors of Mexicantown.

The main intentions of the project that were voiced by the stakeholders, which became the center point for the design, were: 1) link Mexicantown to surrounding systems and neighborhoods, 2) promote a multi-cultural neighborhood, and 3) encourage the triple bottom line (including walkability and sustainability).

Plan Diagram of Noun & Verb Workshop
Two of the 15 community-based neighborhood mappings.

Plan Diagram of Collections & Connections



Engagement Workshop at Connant Mt Elliott, Detroit

Amplifying the Diminished Voice

In a socially engaged practice, it is common to hear someone say that they are giving this person or this marginalized group a voice. At the DCDC, we submit that everyone has a voice. It is our society's power structure and cultural heritage that allow some voices to speak louder than others—in some cases much, much louder than others. The DCDC has developed methods to establish processes to amplify the diminished voice. With respect to the built environment, the DCDC works alongside its community partners to bring the diminished voice into an equitable dialogue with previously more dominant voices. By amplifying diminished voices, other voices are not excluded; they are simply not the only ones heard. The DCDC works hard to widen the design process to include more people, more programs and more places.



Strategies

48
07

Detroit

48217 is a vibrant, established community positioned at the southwestern-most tip of Detroit. It is bounded by the Rouge River to the north, Interstate 75 (I-75) to the west, Outer Drive to the south, and Basset Street to the east. Historically, the residential areas of the neighborhood have been referred to as “Boynton” to the south of I-75

Detroit

48217 Neighborhood Strategy

2007

Partners

Bridging Communities

and “Oakwood Heights” to the northwest. Currently, the neighborhood as a whole is referred to by its residents as: “48217”—its zip code number.

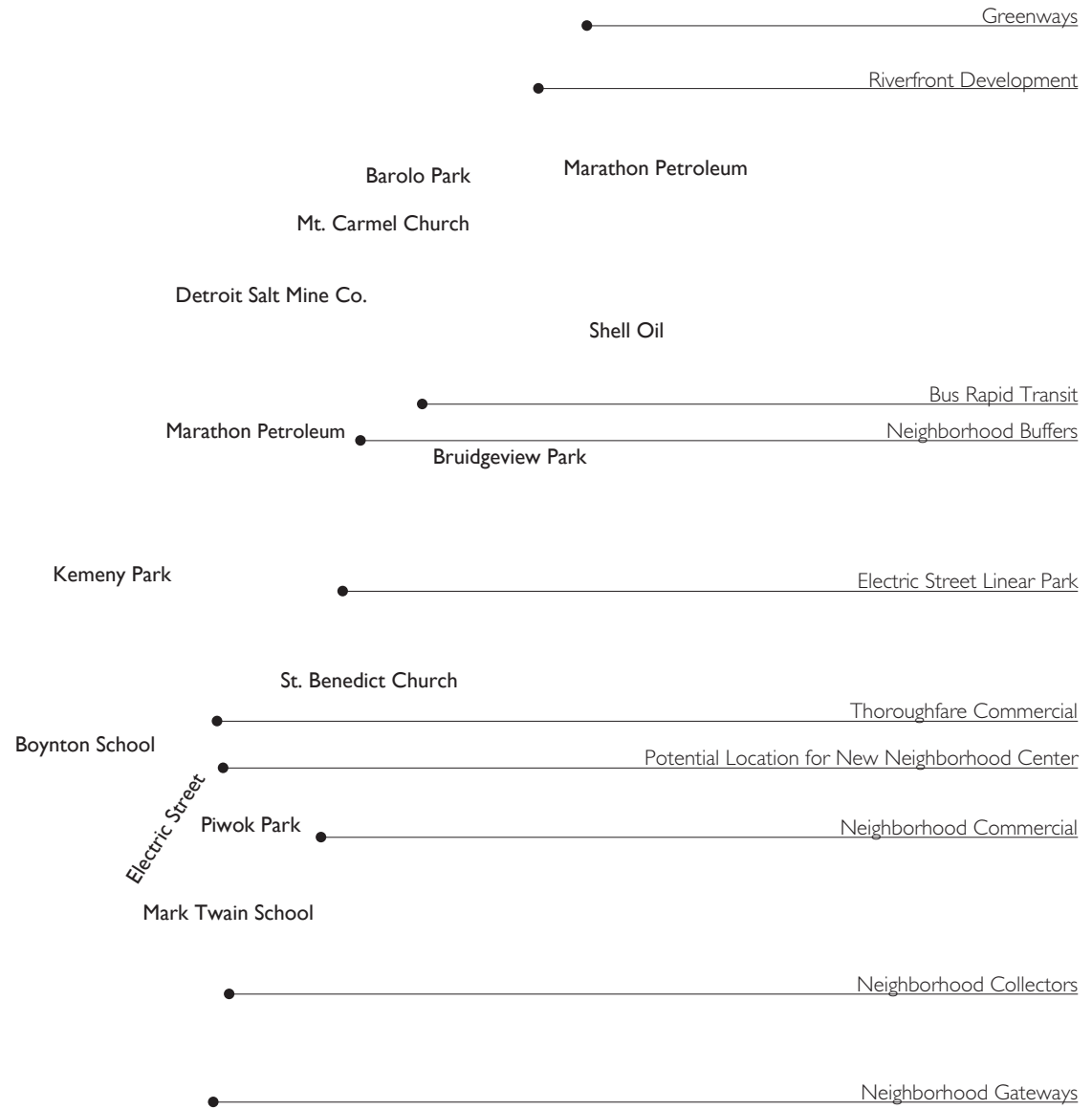
The design process balanced the community needs of the neighborhood, their current assets, and their future vision. The result of the process is a design for a dynamic development strategy that builds on: 1.) the rich existing assets of the neighborhood and its people [parks, schools, commercial, etc.]; 2.) the existing or proposed regional tactics [transportation, greenways, etc...] that potentially impact the 48217 area; and 3.) the available land due to vacancy and abandonment.

Greenway System

Neighborhood Collectors

Neighborhood Buffers

Three of the 12 community-based neighborhood mappings.

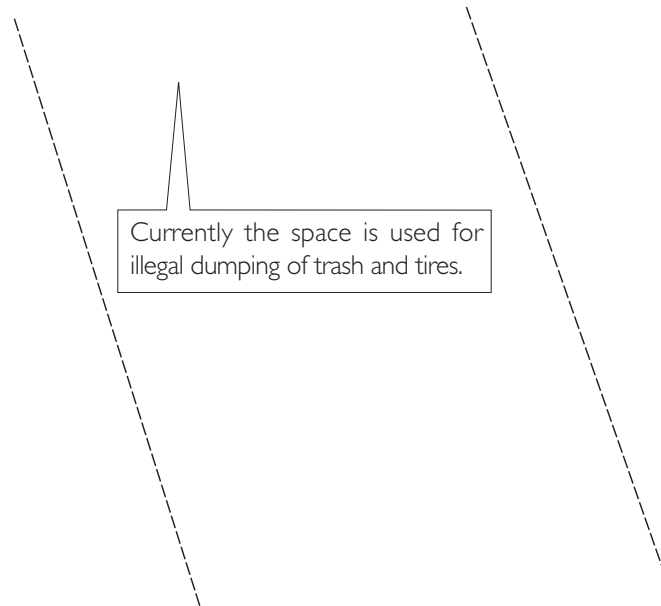


Final Composite Plan Diagram

The intent behind the idea of neighborhood collectors developed from the notion that many centers for community interaction should exist throughout 48217. This is in addition to a new central neighborhood center. These collectors include a library annex [shown below], cafes, the “corner store”, etc....

Before

After





Adapting to...

Much of urban design and planning history has been defined by thinking about cities with growing populations. The past 20 years have shown us attempts to design the future of a city with a shrinking population. Neither approach is sufficient. For the past 20 years, the DCDC has investigated methods of designing urban strategies that can adapt to change.



...Change.

Nouns & Verbs Workshop with The Alley Project Community—Tagging the community with verbs.

Strategies



Detroit

Detroit

RecoveryPark

2011

Partners

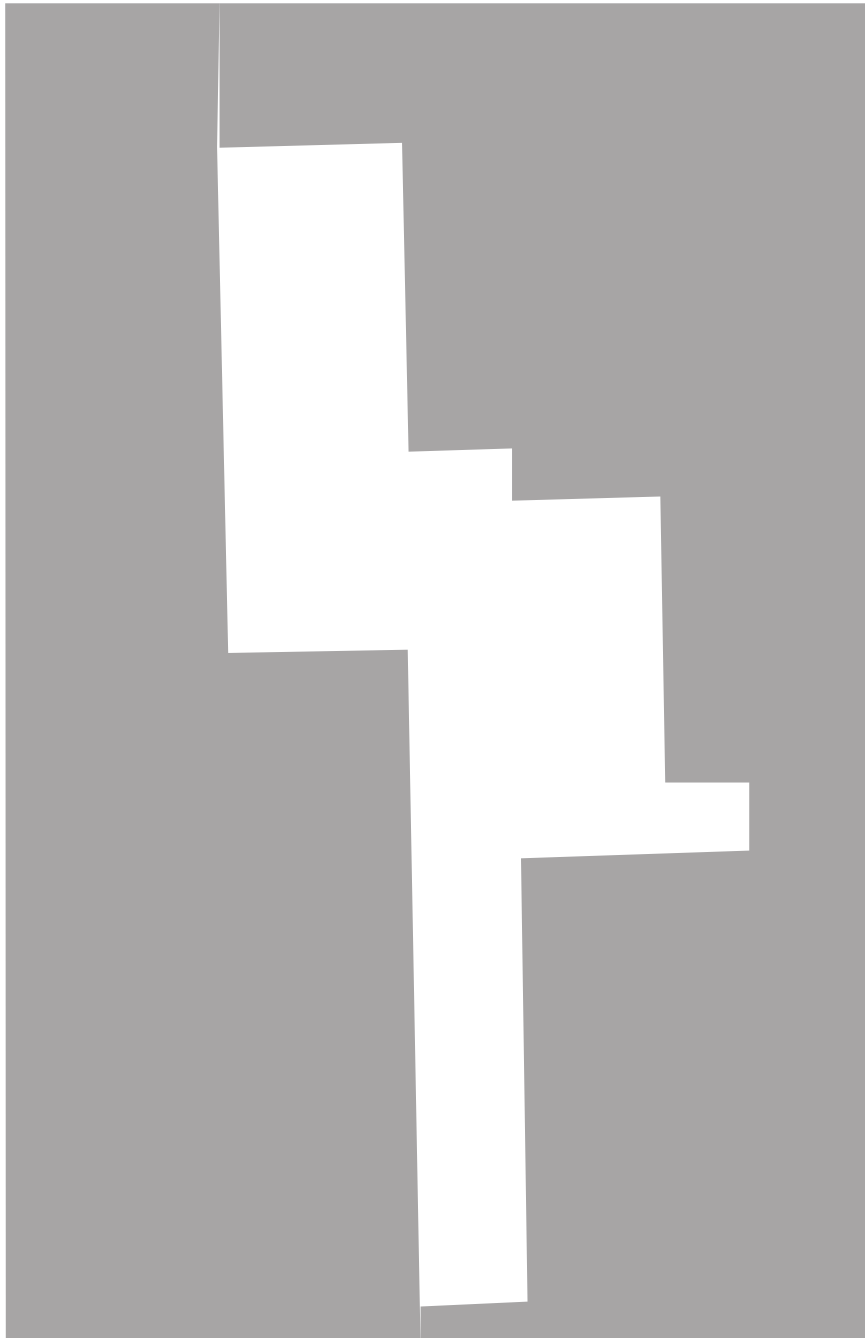
SHAR
 473I Consulting
 Detroiters Working for
 Environmental Justice
 Eastern Market Corporation
 Gratiot McDougall United
 Michigan State University
 McDougall Hunt
 Citizens District Council
 Southeast Gratiot Business District
 University of Michigan Dearborn
 Wayne State University

RecoveryPark is a project instigated by SHAR (Self-Help Addiction Rehabilitation) in collaboration with local stakeholders, businesses, residents, and nonprofit organizations to define and implement a holistic district plan. The process involved deep community participation to design the components of a regenerative city district. One of the components of the planning is urban farming. The design of RecoveryPark suggests a network of productive landscapes—spaces that engage the public while also enabling a diverse economy of products, services, and local jobs.

Diagram illustrating the geology of the site and the surrounding area.

Annual Climatology

Program and Development Units



Existing Site
01

02

03

04

05

Conceptual Plan Diagram

Series illustrating the deliberate and gradual transition from existing site condition to full site build-out. Every phase is usable along the way—Urban Progression.

A black and white photograph of two young children sitting on a floor covered with a large-scale street map. The map features various street names and business logos, such as 'bp heritage optical', 'america bank', 'pharmacy', 'Tressenius medical care', 'while learners academy', 'detroit fire department', and 'city of change'. The child on the left is wearing a dark shirt and light shorts, while the child on the right is wearing a striped shirt and shorts. They appear to be playing with small toy cars on the map. A semi-transparent dark banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title text and a logo.

Impact Detroit as a Catalytic Converter



View of children playing with toy cars on the Livernois Avenue Installation at the Livernois Community Storefront, Detroit

Virginia Stanard & Monica Chadha

Impact Detroit as a Catalytic Converter

16 April 2014

Impact Detroit—a new interdisciplinary initiative realized through the Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC) at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture—comes out of the fact that architects and designers cannot address community needs in isolation. In 2011, we had the unique opportunity to create Impact Detroit as an organization that could develop an interdisciplinary approach to improving the built environment.

Through the current evolution of public interest design as discussed in the recent AIA Latrobe Report, “Wisdom from the Field: Public Interest Architecture in Practice,” the practice of architecture is broadening. Architects are looking to address the needs of the general public, particularly in under-served neighborhoods, and see their work as part of a holistic approach to community development. Impact Detroit partners

with community organizations, design experts, civic leaders, and residents to pursue the goals of public interest design—a human-centered approach to design that considers social, economic, and environmental realities and is fueled by the active participation of the public. Additionally, we seek to formalize these relationships by bringing together people and organizations from different disciplines early on in community-driven initiatives and for a longer period of time. This approach develops a continuum of experiences that builds local capacity and contrasts the practice of hiring consultants to work intermittently on projects. Another challenge with long-term community initiatives is precisely that—they are long term. When these initiatives are planning-driven, they tend to look towards two, five, and ten-year goals. Through our research and feedback from the community, we have found that there needs to be implementable strategies early on and often. In other words, robust planning and immediate change do not stand at odds with each other. People want to see results and progress throughout the process, and proper planning that is also open to community involvement makes room for these visual milestones. This is very much in line with the *lighter, quicker, cheaper* approach to placemaking that is taking place all over the country.

One of the many forms of placemaking is the emergence of “pop-ups.” Recently, Detroit has become a hub for these temporary activations of space. Pop-ups provide the opportunity for existing and emerging enterprises to test new markets in neighborhoods, where the storefronts would otherwise remain vacant. In Detroit, these efforts have spanned the city and can last anywhere from a week to several months. Organizations such as the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation have been fostering business and social enterprises by utilizing these pop-ups to cultivate the community’s vision and goals and to learn more about its economic potential.

Livernois Community Storefront

Impact Detroit’s most recent project has been facilitating and implementing initiatives along the Livernois Avenue Corridor and has explored the spirit of pop-ups. Through its Livernois Community Storefront project, Impact Detroit has developed and utilized strategies to promote a sense of community and a connection to place by activating a vacant retail space along a historic, yet struggling commercial Corridor. Livernois Avenue boasts a rich musical legacy dating back to 1933, with the opening of Baker’s Keyboard Lounge, America’s oldest operating jazz club, anchoring the northern end of the Avenue. Historically known

as the Avenue of Fashion, from the 1950s to the 1970s, Livernois Avenue was one of the top regional destinations for shopping. However, since the 1970s, the area's decline has contributed to high vacancy along the Corridor and retail leakage into the surrounding suburbs. To address these concerns, local leaders partnered with the Urban Land Institute in 2011 to develop "Reviving Livernois Avenue as a Thriving Urban Main Street," a study that inspired the formation of the Livernois Working Group, which serves to coordinate efforts and connect projects to partners.

The Livernois Community Storefront pop-up beckons passersby with its bold, yellow invitation: "LIVERNOIS COMMUNITY STOREFRONT." The Storefront is a pop-up, but the difference here, at least for now, is that nothing is for sale. Instead, this vacant storefront serves as a community hub showcasing local business and culture. On any given day in the Storefront, one might encounter a neighborhood association meeting, an event hosted by the Extra Mile Playwrights Group to collect oral histories of the area, or a Livernois SOUP fundraiser for a local neighborhood project.

Plug-in & Pop-up

Catalytic projects such as the Livernois Community Storefront represent a layered and collaborative approach by partners and investments that is essential to placemaking efforts in Detroit today. A myriad of people, projects, and plans have led to the Storefront project. Many have also had ideas about what should happen in the space, both short and long term. Thoughtful arts and culture-related programming that appeals to a range of age groups has been critical to the Storefront's success. Following the "Light Up Livernois" event, the Storefront has become a place for the community to meet, to host events, and to plan for the Corridor's future.

By opening up the pop-up process and weaving arts and culture into the effort, Impact Detroit has reached more people in more varied and meaningful ways. The Livernois Community Storefront project has become a means for civic engagement, sparking residents to imagine possibilities for the space and Corridor that reflect their concerns and values, as well as a catalyst for action in a city where many have planning fatigue. The Livernois Community Storefront disrupts a pattern of inaction and is a manifestation of change people can see immediately. It offers motivation and provides hope.



If you hear nothing, then you think everything...

For authentic and effective engagement to occur, project partners should connect with stakeholders beyond "Milestones."



Drawing Upon our Assets Workshop for the Mexicantown Vernor/Bagley Vista, Detroit

Transparency is essential in any form of participatory engagement process.

The DCDC defines three modes of knowledge sharing. An effective engagement process works through all three of the modes explained below.

Inform: Where the “technical/design team” informs the “community” of their work or visa versa. This keeps the power in the hands of the informer.

Feedback: Where the “community” provides response to information presented to them or visa versa. This still keeps the power in the hands of the informer.

Exchange: Where knowledge is exchanged by all parties/ stakeholders (including technical/design team members).

When a process starts at a place of *knowledge exchange*, there will be times when people will need to do more work on something—for example: research past models or planning efforts; design and/or develop alternative responses—and come back and *inform* the community of the results, which will generate *feedback*. Inform, feedback and exchange are all forms of sharing knowledge. But when inform and feedback have grown out of a process of exchange, it is a more effective way to build trust, accountability and transparency. As *leaders* in this particular type of process, it is our responsibility to synthesize this knowledge exchange versus dictating specific knowledge or ideas.



Neighborhood Catalysts



Neighborhood Catalysts

Projects in this category are intended to inspire action in communities through unique and unconventional methods. Each action is designed with community stakeholders and is local and specific to each neighborhood.

Catalysts



Detroit

- (1) the alley
- (2) the lot
- (3) the studio garage.

TAP, The Alley Project, transforms a Southwest Detroit neighborhood alley into an inspirational graffiti art gallery for making, viewing and displaying art. The project has three main focus areas 1) the alley 2) the lot, and 3) the studio garage. The alley has become a walking gallery where the garages facing the

Detroit

The Alley Project (TAP)

2011

Partners

Young Nation
community+public arts : Detroit
(CPAD)
Urban Neighborhood Initiatives
(UNI)
Graig Donnelly

alley are the canvas for art. The vacant lots are transformed to allow additional art surfaces, places to gather and places to play. The main garage is redesigned to accommodate youth as they learn graffiti art, socialize, and have a place to make their own.

TAP seeks to be a place for youth to grow in a positive environment that is further linked to surrounding neighborhood assets such as community centers, bike paths, and parks. Most importantly, TAP provides the immediate need for a safe, secure, and inspirational place for the community centered on youth, art, and culture.

The Alley Project, transforms a Southwest Detroit neighborhood alley into an inspirational graffiti art gallery. TAP does not create a place for viewing art alone (a typical gallery experience). It allows the opportunity to make, view and display art.

The Lot

View of exterior training space panels

Each garage participating in the gallery are tagged using the initials "TAP" and the house address "640".

View of entry panels all in Gravier Street.

Transform + Engage + Display = Cultivate

The Alley Project's Mission

The Alley

View of Alley Garage Door Graffiti "Exhibits". **Photos:** Will Wittig

Altering a typical alley in to public space & community asset.

The DCDC engaged the community of youth and neighbors to develop a strategy to transform the alley with a focus to cultivate the roadway and surrounding vacant lots into a public asset.

View of Existing Alley

Blackboards fold down to make additional working spaces.

Salvaged and re-purposed materials deconstructed from two Detroit Public Schools prior to their demolition were used in design and construction

Salvaged and re-purposed materials deconstructed from two Detroit Public Schools prior to their demolition were used in design and construction

Students & Faculty from

University of Detroit Mercy alongside community youth

built the garage classroom and exterior training area.

The Garage

Construction Photos: Erik Howard

As spray cans are emptied, their lids are dropped in the door. Sunlight passes through them creating a colorful collage.

Project Photos: Will Wittig

It is OK to sing and talk to yourself...



As Dan Pitera was walking down the hall of his house, He heard his 10 year old daughter singing loudly. It was not to a friend but to herself. Another day he heard her having a conversation. He did not know she had a friend over and stepped in to say hello. Her conversation was with herself. It was pleasant, funny and serious at the same time.

This is a wonderful place to be in your mind.

A place where it is OK to talk and sing out loud with passion.

We like to put ourselves in the place of childlike imagination,
where it is OK to sing loudly to yourself.

View of Community Construction process of FireBreak: PublishingHouse, Detroit. Photo: Chris Muskopf



Catalysts



Detroit

The Livernois Community Storefront project celebrates local culture and showcases businesses on Detroit's Avenue of Fashion through the creation of a pop-up community hub. The Storefront emphasizes a sense of community and a connection to place by activating a vacant retail space along a historic, yet struggling commercial corridor. The rich history and strong building stock contribute to the success of recent community development efforts on Livernois Avenue,

Detroit

Livernois Community Storefront

2013

Partners

- Challenge Detroit
- Detroit Design Festival
- Impact Detroit
- Livernois Avenue Businesses
- Livernois Working Group
- REVOLVE Detroit
- The SURDNA Foundation
- University Commons Organization

to which the Storefront contributes. The Storefront has several goals: 1) create a much-needed local community space; 2) highlight service needs in the area such as inadequate lighting; 3) support existing businesses by attracting customers; 4) promote local artists and emerging entrepreneurs; and 5) show off the potential of vacant spaces.

Various events have taken place in the space since it opened in spring of 2013 including the Light Up Livernois community event and Light Up Livernois II: Detroit Design Festival. On any given day in the Storefront, one might encounter a neighborhood association meeting, an event hosted by the Extra Mile Playwrights Group to collect oral histories of the area, or a Livernois SOUP fundraiser for a local neighborhood project.

The Storefront is a project of DCDC's Impact Detroit initiative and represents a layered and collaborative approach through partnerships and investments to promote a sense of community and a connection to place on the Livernois Corridor. Overall, the Livernois Community Storefront creates a new type of pop-up focusing on community activities and supporting additional attention and investment along the Avenue.

Pottery Workshop

Fashion Workshop

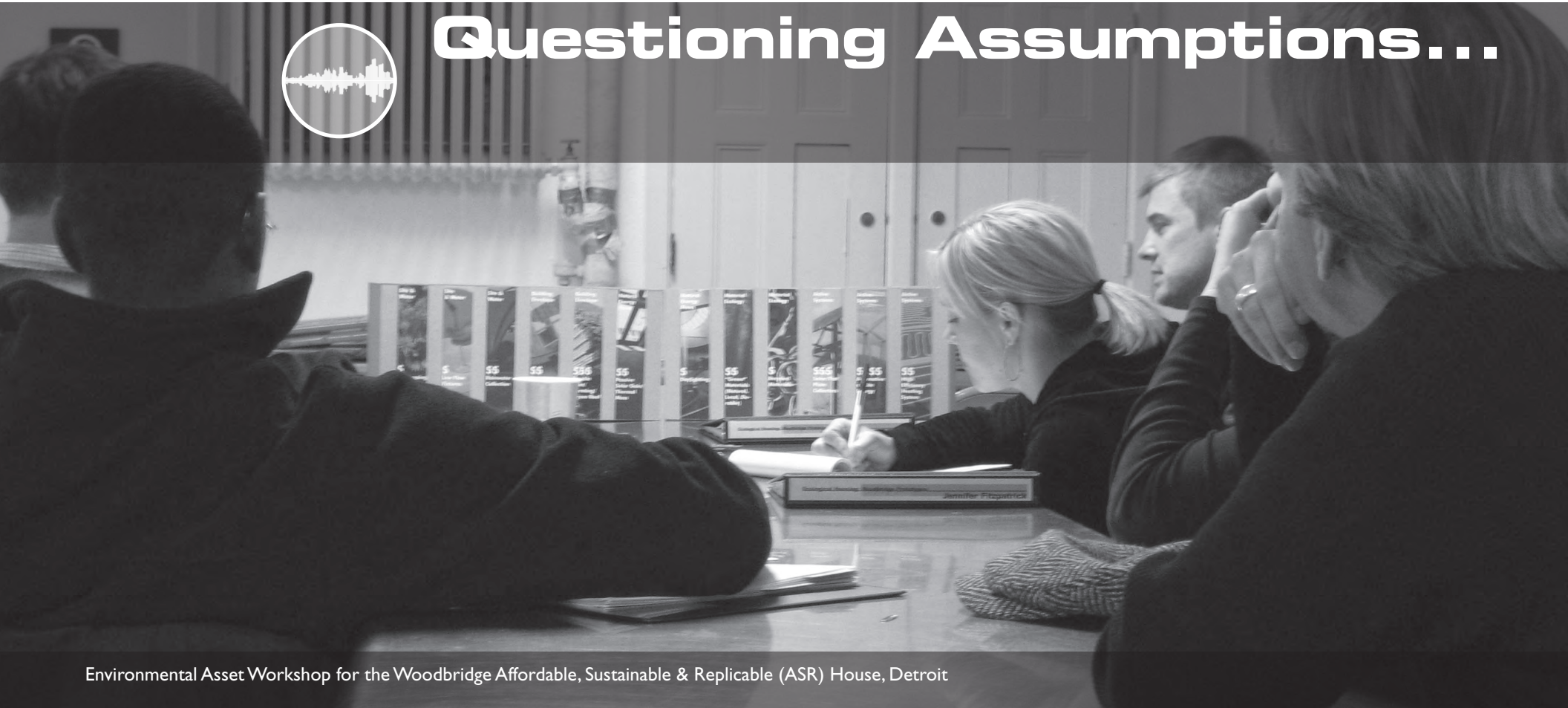
Felting Workshop

Photos: Revolve Detroit

Photo: Revolve Detroit



Questioning Assumptions...



We try to challenge the things that we take for granted.

These are the things that make our stomachs feel a little uncomfortable when we decide to do them. But, they are also the things that help us move beyond the status quo and the conventional power structures. If we are feeling too comfortable in what we are doing then we are not pushing ourselves enough.



Catalysts



Detroit, USA—Orléans, France

The single family house is the most common housing type in Detroit. In fact, it covers approximately 80% of the housing options in the city. It is also common across the USA. However, the single family house built from lumber—such as 2x4s, 2x6s, 2x8s, etc...—is extremely uncommon in

Detroit, USA—Orléans, France

24620: House Abducted

2001

Partners

Kyong Park
 Archilab (Orléans, France)
 German Cultural Foundation
 Institute for Urban Ecology
 Shrinking Cities (Berlin)

other parts of the world particularly in Europe. Kyong Park and the DCDC were invited to present investigations in housing with respect to Detroit. Exhibited in Archilab 2001, 24620: House Abducted proposed to not only exhibit our investigations, but to also send the **exhibit space** as well—since this is such an uncommon method of construction. In conjunction with eight UDM School of Architecture students, a single family house from Detroit was deconstructed and shipped to Orléans, France, It was then reconstructed as the exhibit space for the work of Kyong Park and the DCDC. The exhibit opening included a three-day conference, where all participants participated in a variety of round table discussions and presentations on the crisis of housing in the world context.

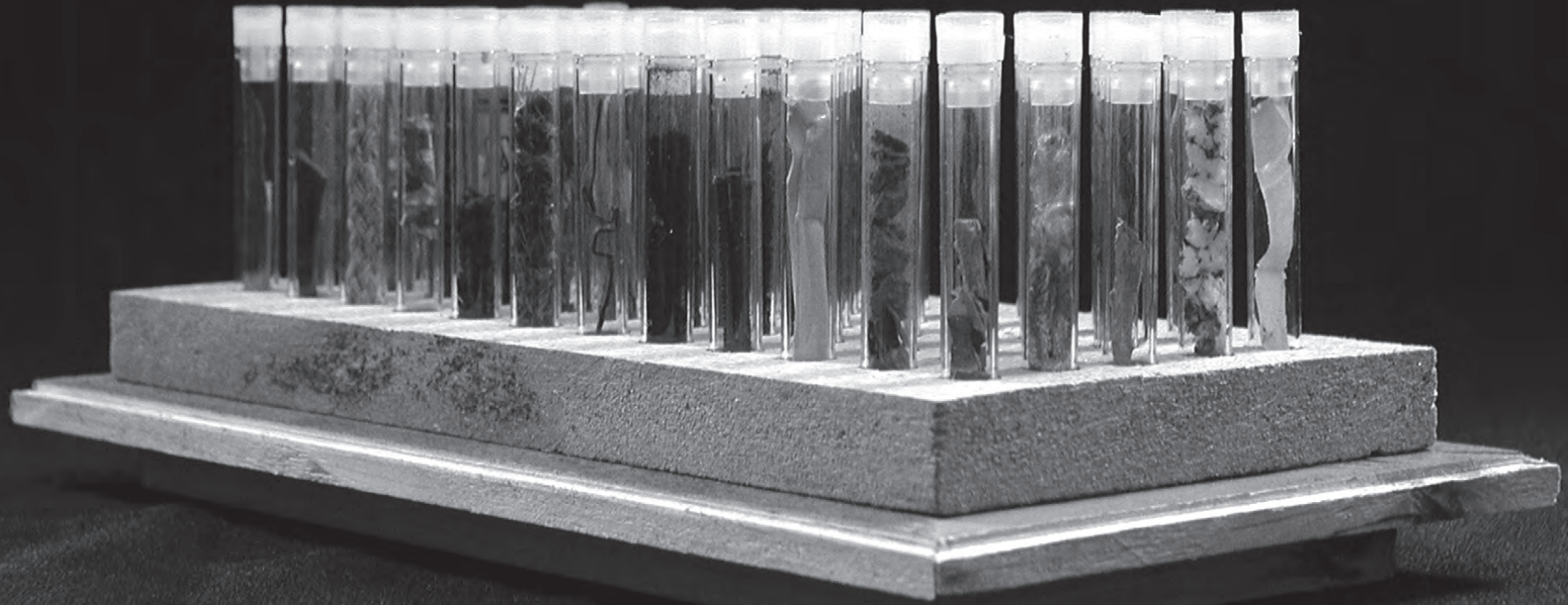
Eight Students from
University of Detroit Mercy
deconstructed the house in Detroit and reconstructed it in France.



24620: House Abducted—Part I: Detroit, USA & PartII: Orleans, France
Video by: TimeBase Media—Allegra Pitera



Alternative Practice versus Altering Practice...



The DCDC attempts to alter the ways of seeing and working as designers

of the built world around us. This has led to the label that we are an alternative practice. We do not think of ourselves in this way, we do not believe we are doing alternative work. Instead, we are altering how we work as architects, landscape architects and urban designers. Or perhaps, we are not an alternative practice; we seek to alter how we practice.

Catalysts



Detroit

Detroit

Living Ecologies : Living Communities

2006

Partners

AIA Detroit

AIA Michigan

As part of the Superbowl celebrations, many of the Woodward Avenue storefronts were activated by architects who designed a series of installations celebrating Detroit. The DCDC was invited to design and install one of the storefronts at 1520 Woodward Avenue.

Living Ecologies : Living Communities was inspired by many Detroiters work on urban agriculture and other blue/green infrastructural projects. The installation was made entirely from salvaged materials. It used a solar powered irrigation system to water a series of terraced grass sections. The watering system and grow lights turned on when a passing spectator touched a windowed mounted sensor.

All material used for the installation was salvaged through deconstructing Detroit buildings.

A solar powered irrigation system distributed water throughout the grass installation.

When a passing person touched the window mounted sensor; the system turned on and watered the terraced grass sections.

Failure is an option...



As a community, we have to be prepared..

...to make mistakes and to fail.

New innovative ways for solving a problem rarely, if ever, happen on the first try. The path to success is found by making many failed turn offs, or by missing an exit or two. But these mistakes provide or reveal unexpected opportunities. With this in mind, the people working together through these intense and dynamic issues must be prepared to adapt to change.

We must be willing to admit mistakes and adjust to the new potential and unexpected opportunity.

Catalysts



Detroit

To complete the final stages of renovation, the DIA closed its doors for the summer of 2007. On the same day they opened a mini-golf course on their front lawn at Woodward Avenue and Kirby Street. Each hole was designed and built by artists and architects selected through a competition. The Design Center was selected to design and build the Caddy Shack.

Detroit

DIA ForeFun Caddy Shack

2007

Partners

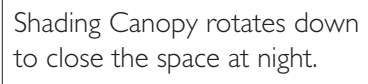
Detroit Institute of Art (DIA)
 Architectural Salvage Warehouse
 of Detroit (ASWD)
 BuildingDetail

The design of the Caddy Shack celebrates the act of opening and closing of the space each day. The panels that close the shack at night become a shading canopy during the day. Also, the design was inspired by the salvaged materials available at the time. For example, the horizontal slatted walls were made from reused oak flooring. Finally, the image of the Caddy Shack changes from day to night. This is done through a light within the space that glows at night revealing through the horizontal slats the interior shape.

Horizontal Slats were made from reused salvaged oak flooring.

Students from the University of Detroit Mercy
built & installed the Caddy Shack.

Shading Canopy rotates down
to close the space at night.





We teach in the Center. We teach in the classroom.



We teach in the studio. We teach in the public square...

We think about two basic types of teaching: a *guide on the side* and a *sage on the stage*. This is done not to suggest that an educator should be one or the other. Instead, both forms of teaching are important and necessary. But it often feels like our culture celebrates and acknowledges the *sage* significantly more than the *guide*. We look for the relationship between both the *guide* and the *sage*. We do not want to separate them or exclude one at the expense of the other. One professor can operate as both *guide* and *sage*.



Catalysts

FB
01

Detroit

FireBreak is a series of temporary installations, which serve as unique examples of community organizing through architecture, art and design. The DCDC, alongside community artists and residents, have transformed the urban blight of the abandoned house into a public asset. FireBreak is centered on the position that everyone—the next-door neighbor or the person down the street—can shape her or his world.

Detroit

FireBreak: Architecture + Community Organizing

2001-2009

Partners

Archilab 2001 & 2004
 Boggs Center
 Bridging Communities
 Chadsey High School
 Contemporary Art Institute
 of Detroit [CAID]
 Ronit Eisenbach
 Gerald Hairston
 Heidelberg Project
 National Endowment for the Arts
 Safe Routes to School
 Venice Biennale: US Pavilion 2008
 Volterra, Italy Municipality
 Woodbridge Neighborhood
 Development Corporation

This project was developed out of a community meeting in which the DCDC presented a master plan for an area on the east side of Detroit. One of the participants asked the simple but difficult question:

“We are very happy and excited with this master plan, but what can I do tomorrow? What can I do to the burned house that is next to my home? There are several more down the street. How can I change my neighborhood tomorrow?”

The DCDC suggested that we could work together and transform the house with neighborhood artists and draw upon other local assets. Two weekends later the house was completely altered by 100 local community participants. Though this first action originated on the near-east side of Detroit, there have been twelve houses completed in collaboration with community residents, organizations, and artists throughout the city.

Reclaiming vacant and abandoned land is integral to the success of any community development initiative in Detroit. If it is reclaimed, redeveloped, and returned to productive use, vacant and abandoned property is one of the city's greatest assets.

FireBreak: HayHouse

2001

The east side within the city limits of Detroit has become noted for its attempt to fill in the vacant land with agricultural crops. For example; alfalfa has been planted due to its ability to partially detoxify the contaminated soil. Detroit residents have transformed vacant houses into *hay houses* (bundles of hay are stored inside of these houses). Acknowledging this recent history, the Design Center and neighborhood participants made 3,000 miniature bundles of hay. Some 3,000 nails were evenly spaced on all exterior faces of the house. The event attracted more than 100 surrounding residents ritualistically placing the hay on the house—Urban Field.

Burned Lumber: 0'

Blue Plastic Screw 0'

Green Nerf Football: 0'

House is being Watched: 1'

Brick Fragments: 0'

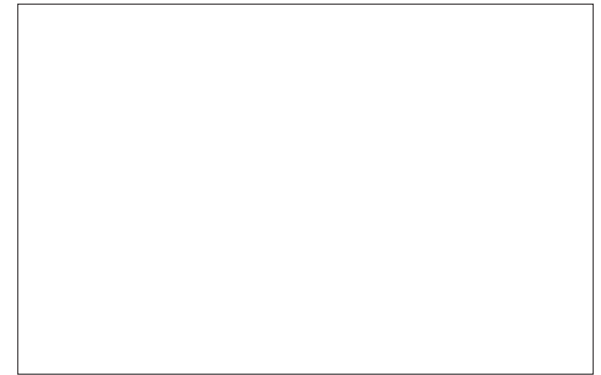
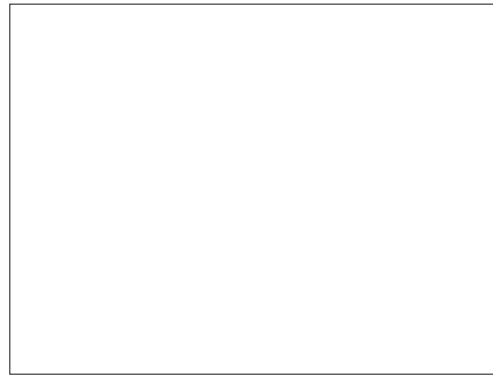
Sofa Fabric: 2'

Fragment from Rug: 3'

Orange Ball: 5'

The Box with Vials will be given to the new owner by the community.

...like a cake is given when someone new moves into a neighborhood.



FireBreak: HouseWarming

2004



Filling the vials

A burned house on the west side of Detroit was surveyed and a grid of stakes were placed throughout the site from property line to property line. The grid included both the interior and exterior of the house. At each point on the grid an artifact from the house was catalogued (location, description, height above/below ground line) and collected into vials (1/4" cylinder x 2.5" in height). The vials were placed in a box made from the wood of the burned house. The box was sized to proportions of the property dimensions. The vials were placed in the box corresponding to their location on the site. The house was demolished by the Woodbridge Neighborhood Development Corporation and a new house is being built. The Box with Vials will be given to the new owner as a house warming gift.

FireBreak: HouseWrap

2005

The entire exterior of a burned house in the Woodbridge neighborhood of Detroit was wrapped in clear plastic. The event of wrapping the house was a collaboration between the DCDC and the Woodbridge Neighborhood Development Corporation. It marked the dedication of new affordable housing on the site by the development organization.

-40° C

Staying warm by the fire.

FireBreak: VeiledHouse

2005

VeiledHouse is an example of an installation on the west side of Detroit. Vertical strips of fabric were connected solely on the top and bottom of all exterior walls. The autumn wind passed through the cracks in the house and caused the fabric to flutter.

“What I have learned, I learned from you.”

“I don’t need you to die for me. Live for me.”

FireBreak: PublishingHouse

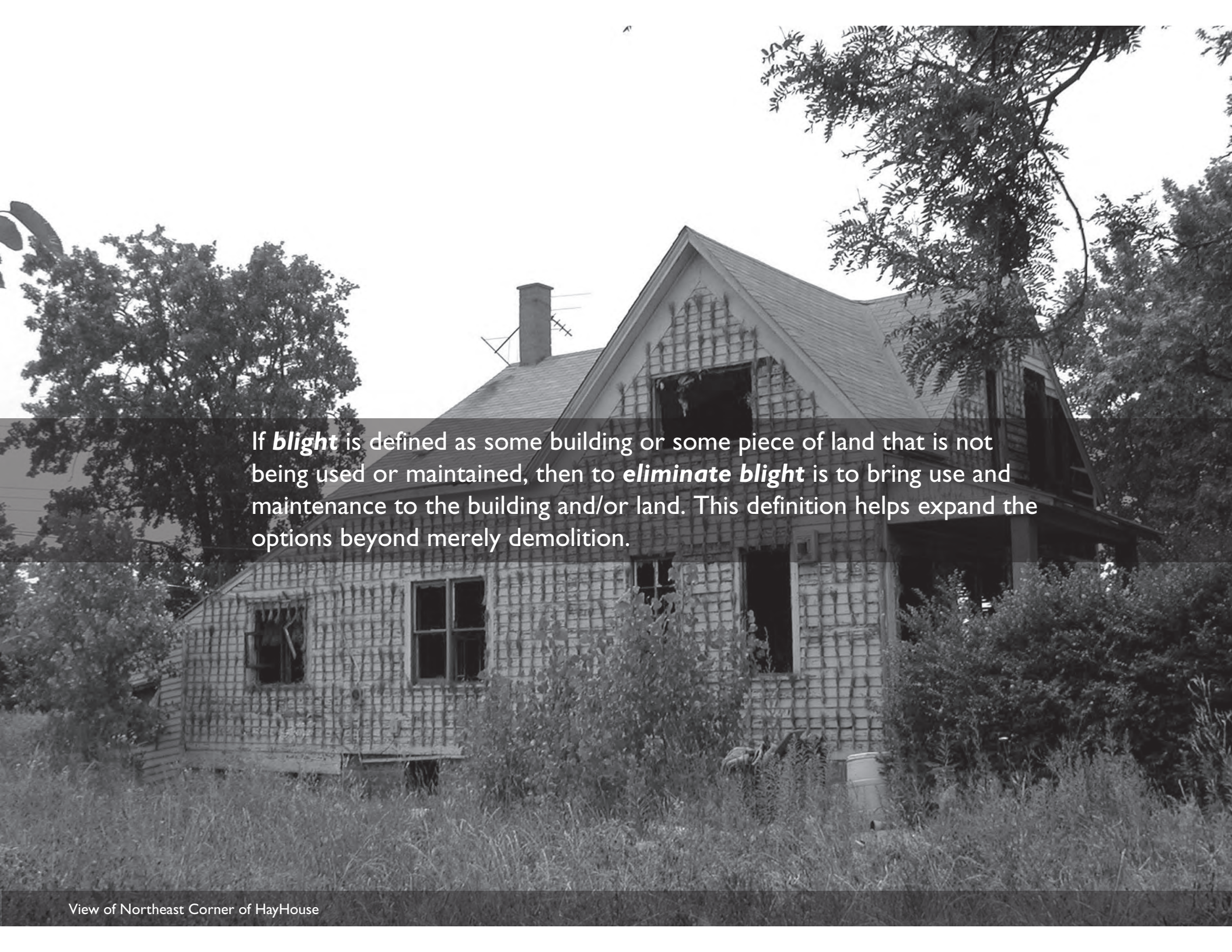
2008

“What I have learned, I learned from you.” “I don’t need you to die for me. Live for me.” “Are you fighting for me or against me?” Several quotes by Southwest Detroit young people were enlarged to 16-foot-long vertical banners. They were mounted and hung on a burned house situated directly across the street from a local high school—Urban Echo.

“Are you fighting for me or against me?”



Blight Elimination...

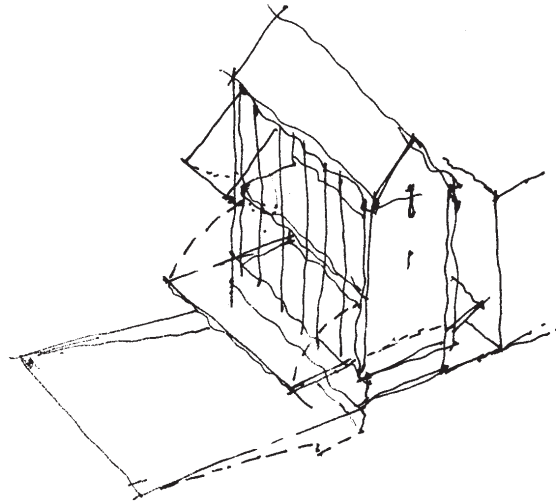


If *blight* is defined as some building or some piece of land that is not being used or maintained, then to *eliminate blight* is to bring use and maintenance to the building and/or land. This definition helps expand the options beyond merely demolition.

Catalysts



Detroit



One of the primary concerns of Detroiters is the number of abandoned homes throughout the city. These homes remain abandoned and are not renovated—often due to costs. In time, perhaps most will be demolished. There appears to be no middle ground between full renovation and full demolition. Many have been and will also be left standing in limbo slowly deteriorating. They are blight on both the physical and the psychological landscape. PlayHouse is a prototype of an alternative strategy for their reuse and for blight elimination.

Detroit

PlayHouse: An Exterior Performance Space

2009

Partners

Architectural Salvage Warehouse
of Detroit (ASWD)
Heidelberg Project
National Endowment for the Arts

PlayHouse offers a long-term reuse that is neither full renovation nor complete demolition. The project is designed to completely remove a two-story sidewall of an abandoned house so that the interior will be visible to the exterior side yard, which currently exists as three under utilized properties. Exterior seating will then face the interior of the house making it a two-story stage. A new exterior wall will be composed of rotating and sliding panels. They will open to reveal all or only a portion of the stage. The rotating and sliding panels will be constructed using the original material from the sidewall that was deconstructed and removed.

Students will work

along side the community residents

to build the final PlayHouse.

Rotating and sliding panels are made using the original material from the sidewall that was deconstructed and removed.

“Back of House”

Stage

Landscaped Amphitheater

View of PlayHouse with existing house (band shell) transparent revealing the interior layout.

Who Wants to Play Kickball?

Civic Engagement is at the core of effective leadership,
which mobilizes communities to shape the built environment.

WELCOME

to the Rosa Parks
Transit Center!

Your Hosts today
are: DAN
PONSELLA
THERESA
BEARE

Leading from the Side



View of Roaming Table at the Rosa Parks Transit Center for Detroit Future City planning process.

Dan Pitera

Leading from the Side

Leadership, Civic Engagement and the Built Environment

12 October 2013

“If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses.”

Henry Ford.

^{8,1} Harvard Business Review post 29 August 2011. (<http://blogs.hbr.org/2011/08/henry-ford-never-said-the-fast/>) (Accessed: 25 May 2014.)

Though there seems to be growing evidence to show that Henry Ford may have never said this quote,^{8,1} we hear things like this statement a lot in our work. “*Why are we asking the community? It will only slow the process down. They will not be able to tell us anything we don’t already know.*” Starting with this position an obvious inequity in the collaborative process. Perhaps we are asking the wrong questions and in the wrong way. Or maybe we should not be asking questions at all and move toward a process of knowledge exchange—where questions are formed and asked together as a group and not directed toward each other...

It does not matter if Henry Ford said the prior statement or not. What matters is that we expect leaders to think and speak this way. As we end this book, perhaps we should start again by asking a few seemingly simple questions: What does it mean to be a leader today. What did it mean? Is a leader a person who tells other people what to do? What do leaders look like? We have all heard people say: *Leaders have clear vision. They think outside of the box. She was a born leader. They see things and opportunities others cannot. They take people where they did not know they wanted to go.* **Or do they...?** There are many books and articles (online and off) defining leaders and leadership. This Closing is not going to restate them here or going to provide a new or alternative definition. Instead, I intend to connect leadership and the value it holds in our society to civic engagement. Sometimes our vision of what a leader is and what a leader does is in direct contrast to what we want and expect from civic engagement. There are all kinds of leaders and leadership styles. I admittedly selected the example statements above, which celebrate the leader as a person in a position of authority—and *who stands out above the rest*. These statements also center on the leader as a person with unique traits. We want to know these traits so we can be better leaders ourselves or perhaps build other leaders in the future. It may be true that a leader does have some unique characteristics, but what if we look at leadership as an activity and not a series of personal traits?^{8.2} This vantage point turns the attention away from the person and moves it to the way the person works with a community—whether the community is defined as a neighborhood, a business or a group of friends. This closing to the book will amplify the ideas and thoughts on leadership, which are celebrated through civic engagement. The DCDC submits that civic engagement is at the core of effective leadership, which mobilizes communities to move toward the future.

Guide on the Side Versus Sage on the Stage

Leader, leader of the house, world leader, leader of the pack, leader of the band, uncontested leader, leader board, leader dog, lead, lead shots, lead the way, lead someone on, lead someone up the garden path, lead someone astray, mislead, lead someone by the nose, lead up to, lead someone to the altar, lead someone up the aisle, lead the field, lead the way, leading edge, leading article, leading lady, leading man, leading question, leadership, leadership skills, leadership qualities, leadership styles, blind leadership, leaden, leaderless...

There is a fine line between having an effective leader and being leaderless.

^{8.2} Ronald Heifetz in his book Leadership Without Easy Answers explores this position in more detail. Heifetz, Ronald; Leadership Without Easy Answers; Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA; 1994.

Let's begin by thinking of a story about a group of friends playing a kickball game. We enter the story in the middle of the game. The score is very close until one person kicks the ball so hard that several runs come home. This same player does this two more times. The team wins by many runs. Who is the leader in this story? Is it the person who kicked the ball the hardest and scored so many runs? Or perhaps, it is the person—I have not mentioned yet—who was on the other team and asked the simple question earlier in the day: "*Who wants to play kickball?*" Before this question, no body had kickball on their minds. She merely asked the question and would have been happy if the group decided not to play. Her question helped guide everyone toward what to do next as a group—play or not to play. Without her question, there would have been no game for the person to score so many runs. She did not even need to play to be an important person in the decision-making process. (This story was adopted/adapted from a speech I heard in the late 1990s by the national student president of the American Institute of Architecture Students, [AIAS].) I do not want to suggest that there is no place for the person who kicked the ball so hard. But, this story illustrates a model where the leader influences the community to face its future (*Who wants to play kickball?*) versus influences the community to follow the leader's vision (*Okay everyone, we will now play kickball.*). There are many leaders for each situation and their roles are connected and dependent on each other. Some leaders guide people while not directing and dictating to them.

I would like to set up a perhaps oversimplified correlation between two types of leading: a guide on the side and a sage on the stage. This does not suggest that a leader should be one or the other. Instead, both forms of leadership are important and necessary. But our society celebrates and acknowledges the sage significantly more than the guide. What is important is the relationship between the two and not the separation of them. One leader can operate as both. Though it is important to note that the work outlined in this book relies heavily on the guide. Any engagement process should start by establishing relationships. Healthy relationships are formed by mutual trust and sharing. In other words, a leader who leads as a guide would not enter an engagement process by telling the community what questions it should ask. She would help the community formulate the questions together and *guide* them through a process of answering them. Effective civic engagement—where communities are mobilized into lasting sustainable action—depends on the guide more than the sage. "*Who want to play kickball?*"

Synthesizing versus Dictating

The DCDC defines leaders as people who synthesize the values, desires, knowledge and ideas of many people to articulate a dynamic vision forward rather than dictate their own personal values, desires knowledge and solutions. Or as Christina Heximer and I have already stated in the chapter titles *Mosaics & Tapestries: Leaders should influence communities to face their future versus influence communities to follow the leader's vision*. If we accept this as a premise for how we work, then civic engagement is a crucial component in building relationships and knowledge exchange to move us to a place where communities can face their future. We also defined civic engagement earlier in this book as *the open and ongoing two-way dialogue between all stakeholders—essentially, people working together and talking together to move forward together. Civic engagement assists people and organizations to see beyond me and my to move toward we and our—without losing the identity of me.*^{8.3} The DCDC work is not motivated by merely doing good engagement; instead, we are inspired by the tendency for people to thirst for the opportunity to be included in getting things done—whether the things are planning and designing or on-the-ground actions and policy change. Though not every person will want to engage in every facet of the work, they will have a different opinion or desire of where they would like to be included within the range of opportunities.

This perspective begins to align the value of a leader as someone who works with and along side the community. This type of leader brings an expertise that *works with* and *along side* the varied expertise of the community. This more intimate relationship in turn provides room for mutual learning and growth. In other words, the community influences the leader and the leader influences the community. Like the tiles in a mosaic, each person influences and connects with the other to create a bigger picture. This picture still retains the identity of the individual while creating larger community impact. (See *Section 4: Mosaics and Tapestries* for a discussion on knowledge exchange.) With this in mind, civic engagement is not something that occurs as a transactional activity—when it is needed. Instead, it is something that occurs as an integral part of people's day-to-day lives transforming how they live, negotiate and design/plan with one another.

^{8.3} See Section 4: *Mosaics and Tapestries*.

Failure is an Option

Before this essay closes we need to step back and ask one more question: “*What is the goal of effective leadership?*” We have already stated that effective leadership mobilizes communities...But to do what? Ron Heifetz suggests that the end game for effective leadership is to mobilize communities to tackle tough problems, as opposed to avoiding them or developing systems to obscure or ignore them. We already know that if the problems are tough and they have been around a while, then the answers will be tougher. In other words, the easy answers have most likely already been tested. This means, as a community, we have to be prepared to make mistakes and to fail. New innovative ways for solving a problem rarely, if ever, happen on the first try. The path to success is found by making many failed turn offs, or by missing an exit or two. But these mistakes provide or reveal unexpected opportunities. With this in mind, the people working together through these intense and dynamic issues must be prepared to adapt to change. We must be willing to admit mistakes and adjust to the new potential and unexpected opportunity revealed by the mistakes. This requires leaders who do not see their vision as the end goal. Many or most of us have probably seen at least one of the endless number of movies and stories written about leaders who have convinced a community, town or institution to follow their vision. When the vision does not quite work out as planned, the leader then skips town escaping the angry mob. As a way to escape this fate, the end goal is for the community to work through and find the yet-to-be-found solution to the very tough question. The processes and work outlined in this book builds the condition where more people have a stake and ownership in finding and implementing the answers. So failing is perhaps easier to swallow when we (*the community*) have joint ownership and authorship in the process to find innovative solutions (*for the community*).

To conclude, spaces and places designed through effective engagement can reveal hidden histories and instigate future traditions. In other words, as we design the community spaces, which people will make into their familiar and special places, the DCDC tries to celebrate the things and activities that are often overlooked or perhaps seen as deficits and not assets. Designers and planners do not design and plan future traditions. We design the opportunities for traditions to be made. This is all connected through the power of storytelling. We strive to design spaces, which inspire people to make stories and tell them.



Dreams of the future need to be big...



...if the reality of the present is going to change.
We dream of Detroit as an equitable, ecological and beautiful city.



Roundtable Discussion—20th Anniversary Video
Video by: TimeBase Media—Allegra Pitera