



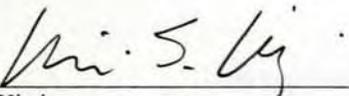
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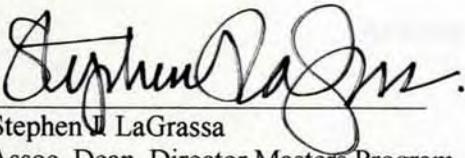
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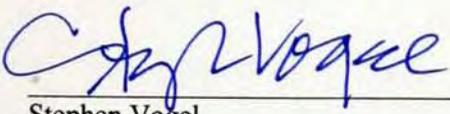
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The Amnesia of Place



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Abstract

The intended thesis examines the relationship of how architecture can define place. Place can be identified as the common willingness of individuals of a community to engage within their space. The intent of the project is to discover, through an intervention based on a kind of archeology, what aspects of a neighborhood perceived to be “dead”, could be layered and built upon to re-identify place? In the case of the thesis a specific unique setting is investigated.

Can agriculture be one of the foundations for the evolution of architecture through the communal growth of a place? These elements are definable by the territories they attempt to create for the individual person to occupy and evolve. Only then can place become evident, only then can the rebirth and re-creation of community begin to re-identify a forgotten place.

The evolution of place begins within the identification of a lost element, and grows based upon the individuals that occupy particular zones. The uses for the spaces will engage the idea of “place” for a future development. Care must be taken to re-identify place, not reestablish place, which services the growth of community. The fundamental basis to living can reappear as an analogy to the re-creation of a place. Agriculture, architecture and community evolve as the fundamental foundation to this idea.

I propose that the goal is to make a new place, not re-create what was once there. I will repeat this comment many times throughout the thesis. I would like to define place through an extensive process of interventions through architecture.

Project Summary

“And in the case of restless, multitrade people, even as the power of place is diminished and often lost, it continues – as an absence – to define culture and identity. It also continues – as a presence – to change the way we live” (Lucy R. Lippard 20).

Detroit, like many other post-industrial cities has seen the effects of deterioration and urban decay. Areas surrounding Detroit were thriving blue-collar districts that dominated Detroit urban life. At that time people felt as if home was their “place”. To define “place” one could say that it is that intangible feeling of familiarity, not simply nostalgic, but rather “as a longing for home”. Why? What gives people that natural perception of their ideal and picturesque neighborhood? At the turn of the century Detroit was portrayed as a successful and iconic American city, however, time has taken its toll on Detroit and its neighborhoods have seen the effects. Neighborhoods of yesterday lie vacant and abandoned today. As a direct result the intangible sense of community was lost. People left behind their “place” and their community to reestablish themselves in what was perceived to be better neighborhoods. But what distinguishes one neighborhood from another as better? What makes one neighborhood more successful than another? How can architecture define “place”?

Certain architectural institutions have attempted to redefine modern day ideas of place such as the Congress for New Urbanism. The Congress for New Urbanism has created a set of guidelines that is known as the Lexicon, these guidelines define (distinguish) everything there is to know supposedly about urban redevelopment and reestablishment. Some of these guidelines veer towards codes and rules rather than

revolutionary techniques. Urban redevelopment and reestablishment needs to take into account direct relationships to “place”. “Place” addresses the issues of both the tangible and the intangible. What aspects of a neighborhood define it as being either successful or unsuccessful? How can predetermined design of modern redevelopment possibly address the direct needs of redefining “community” within a neighborhood? Basically how can a vacant and deteriorated neighborhood be addressed through redevelopment and reuse while completely reflecting the idea of “place”?

New urban fabric can be built specifically pertaining to place, through remembrance and reuse. Simply following the predetermined guidelines of a model like the lexicon will not make a neighborhood better. Needs of neighborhoods are as important to the final design as the appearance of the new fabric. Redevelopment in a vacant and deteriorated land will need to address areas of green space and building typologies. Hopefully through investigations one can find that just a single new building will not produce an entirely reestablished neighborhood. Neighborhoods are as important to themselves for inspirations of design as the design of a neighborhood should be on newer concepts of redevelopment (i.e. New Urbanism). A neighborhood itself will hopefully be a way to demonstrate fully what “place” is. To begin, “place” will need to be defined.

Circumstance

My investigation will be located in a specific “district” neighborhood within the city of Detroit. The ideal neighborhood will confront the challenge of a neighborhood that requires attention to both vacated open territory and parcels of occupied and

abandoned residential sites. The neighborhood will address both the issues of deterioration and revitalization. The neighborhood will also explore concepts of the conditions of urban, suburban and rural while conscientiously remembering the importance of "place".

The hypothesis is that the proposed product will require a seeking out and articulation of the idea of "place". This idea will happen through a process of investigations and stories told by the existing conditions and the local residents. The idea being that real occurrences and real people can invoke critical substance that can be folded into the design process. The people of the particular neighborhood are those that constitute "community", which is the key element of defining "place".

The new urban fabric can only be determined through investigations into the needs of that place. The design project will incorporate new and re-developed buildings of various types while on a larger scale will involve streetscape and green space.

Thesis Paper

History

There was a time in Detroit when it was the fourth-largest city in America. Single-family homes were the most prevalent building type in Detroit, which eventually led to what would soon become the epitome of the post-industrial American city. The fabric of Detroit was made up of neighborhoods that evoked community and place, wherein architecture was the foundation. Detroit's history is as much of its success as its downfall. The beauties of Detroit's neighborhoods were damaged throughout the years of expansion and abandonment.

Detroit was fat in 1955 – the Census Bureau estimated 2 million people crowded the nearly 140 square miles. But the decline already had begun. The most severe decline in population occurred between 1955 and 1960 when the number dropped by nearly 25 percent. From 1960 to 1980, the drop was about 25 percent. And from 1955 to 2000, the drop has been about 50 percent (Gavrilovich 294).

The issues that followed the disaster of this emigration centered around the loss of tax revenue and the condition of vacancy that plagued Detroit. Today there are about 40,000 vacant homes throughout Detroit, something that no other city has ever seen in America. The problem that current strategies try to engage with is reestablishing city life and housing, but the problem becomes where do the residents then eat, shop and entertain themselves. Historically Detroit neighborhoods were dense, and somewhat overcrowded through the era of expansive growth of worker housing. Ford paid a never before seen five dollars a day around the turn of the century. Also at that time, Ford sought non-union workers, which invited many southern African American workers to take

advantage of the pay and the cheap housing. Ford was known for his affluence in creating an image for Detroit. He paid the city for certain programs that maintained executive's neighborhoods and allowed for less wealthy workers to afford decent housing within city limits. Overcrowding led to a lack of housing, this plus the federal highway commission and G.I. Bill eventually led to the flight from urban life. This federal subsidized housing program that followed World War II, along with the new highway construction program, whose purpose was to decentralize American cities in case of a nuclear attack, only led to further abandonment of the city. Areas of Detroit began to be influenced by racism. Redlining, which is a known racist practice wherein mortgage companies would "redline" neighborhoods due to demographics, led to lower cost housing in certain city sections. Due to the increasing number of African American workers, and the intense suburban push, Detroit became overwhelmed with racism problems and white flight, which was supposedly blamed for the riots of 1947 and 1967.

Philosophically there is meaning behind why certain actions, events and occurrences have happened within certain areas of Detroit. These occurrences need to be remembered not only as memorials but also through place, architecture and greenscape. Historically Detroit has created so much. Today these elements of history are celebrated with simple statues and ruins of what was. The remnants of this city are seen as waste, not as building blocks for design. This historical presence is a reflection of people and place. Through architecture the design challenge of the recreation of presence is possible.

A great example of the richness of history of Detroit neighborhoods is seen in Detroit's Brush Park.

One of the city's oldest neighborhoods features mammoth Victorian – style mansions, many with former storefronts. Among the more notable former owners were lumber baron David Whitney Jr., realtor Joseph Weber, retailer J.L. Hudson, philanthropist Grace Whitney Huff, and Charles Freer, a major art collector who rented rooms in Brush park and then built a home on East Ferry that's now the location of the Merrill – Palmer Institute, a childhood and family development research institute (Gavrilovich 292).

The irony that seems to have encompassed many areas of Detroit is the loss of community. A place that was so rich with energy, social relationships, life and people has turned to nothing but empty ruins. It is not beauty of place or money that sustains life within the city, but rather it becomes the community and neighborhood that creates pride and sustainability for itself.

The grand houses continued to decay in the 1980s, though about a dozen ambitious people dumped substantial money into preservation attempts. That includes University of Windsor art professor Michael Farrell, who helped restore a 20 room Victorian mansion and turned it into the home of a non-profit organization. Ground was broken in 1999 for the Woodward Place at Brush Park, a \$75-million development of condominiums selling for up to \$200,000 (Gavrilovich 292).

The question raised through this investigation becomes, what makes a new development of condominiums unique and relevant to existing conditions and the people that were there?

Detroit has grown into what is known as the great post-industrial city. The question that grows from this currently is, what is Detroit attempting to do in resolving this problem? Urban redevelopment and infill housing involves more non-profit organizations than public or private builders. Non-profit organizations are more concerned with the current residents; rather than a developer whose key goal is monetary gain. The relevance of this fact is that urban redevelopment denies relationships to renew a sense of history and place; it rather places an emphasis on reestablishment. Historically Detroit was the largest, densest, single-family city in America. The reasoning behind why Detroit was established in this way was based on the Ford era. An even earlier notion of Detroit's density is connected to the idea of the ribbon farms. The ribbon farms were parcels of land that were divided between the earliest French settlers. Each parcel of land was about 350 feet wide, starting at the river and reaching about a mile deep. The farms ran from southwest Detroit to present day Grosse Pointe. (Presently Detroit maintains the names of the early families that settled on the farms. The names of the perpendicular roads extending North from the Detroit River crossing Jefferson Avenue are the names of most settlers around the turn of the 18th century). During the period of rapid expansion in the early 20th century, most of Detroit was settled in a continuous low-density pattern with few definable edges. Much of Detroit's 20th century growth established a new residential grid that erased most historical implications of the ribbon farms. In the 1950s this idea began to change as the city began expanding and the highway commission began tearing down and segregating parts of the city.

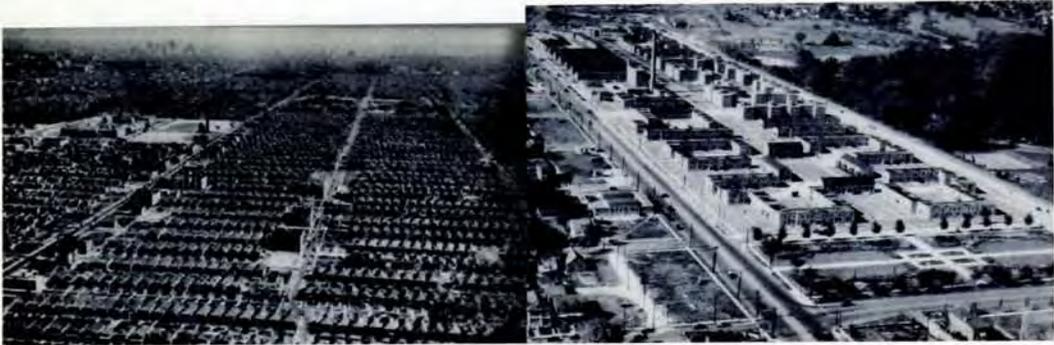
First the Lodge, then the Ford, Chrysler, Fisher and Jeffries acted like pneumatic tubes hurtling workers from central city venues to myriad suburbs. Once

commuting from downtown became a snap, more people moved to greener space beyond Detroit (Gavrilovich 294).

Within this new mobile Detroit came the renaming of Detroit neighborhoods; Palmer Woods, North Rosedale Park, Boston-Edison Historic District, Hubbard-Richard, Corktown, Brush Park, the Riverfront, Conant Gardens and Victoria Park. Detroit became a city of abandoned nodes. There were destinations within the city, but no permanency. Detroit today begins to mimic the macro scale of a larger city. The entire city is made up of smaller portions that are large enough to sustain and react to a large number of people. The fabric was cut apart and only small areas or nodes of what was once continuous remained. The city of Detroit was unknowingly planned as a completely automotive, inhabited city. There soon was great loss of community and individual interaction within the city limits. Pedestrians dwindled and neighborhoods began to break apart, losing connection to the world. How can this ordeal be repaired? How can this loss of rich life promote renewal?

When does history stop being history? The idea of history and time as a relationship to a theme can simply be made into the interaction that people hope to gain through art, music, theater, etc. There can be heterotopias that people can commonly connect with and through programmatically. There needs to be a basis for the idea that history is created now. This idea promotes sustainability and perpetual architecture that can be experienced presently and in the future. Historically Detroit has set no boundaries, the city size has dwindled in numbers and in square footage, but the importance of what is buried within time and space becomes the foundation to the neighborhoods. The dream of Detroit is like a smoke cloud that is beginning to vanish,

rebuilding with fresh air. The history, the architecture, and the people as a whole become a guide to refocus on the basis for living. A basis for living in these neighborhoods had encompassed entertainment, food, sleep, worship and business; which today, are still as necessary for sustained living. With the vast vacancy that has flattened the city lies space for renewal, producing a new layer to be uncovered for the future.



Linwood-Clairmont section

Parkside Housing Project

Defining Place

Place, what is it? The physicality of human existence suggests that we have somewhere to be, somewhere that can be called ours. But theoretically how can “ours” be defined? The difficulty and reality concerning this is the abstract value that is given to the word “place”. As a means of defining the conditions that we set for ourselves in the world of architecture today, we define common movements that attempt to express why things are the way they are.

To begin to define the idea of place, several key elements must be evaluated. Place is a notion as intangible as it is tangible. There are places that are destinations and there are places that can be seen and abstracted mentally to engage us as the human further into the realm of nostalgia. The term nostalgic is not used here in the sense of a

longing for a non-existent long ago and far away, but as a genuine longing for home or place. But what physical and metaphysical characteristics make up place?

We all live embedded in the passage of time – a matrix marked by all possible standards of judgment: by immanent things that do not appear to change; by cosmic recurrences of days and seasons; by unique events of battles and natural disasters; by an apparent directionality of life from birth and growth to decrepitude, death, and decay (Gould 10).

Time and history are the world; they are permanently embedded in place, intangible and tangible. Through the metaphysical and abstract there exists a known entity that defines place in time and space. These concepts define place as a whole. As much as place is a physical idea in the human mind it is equally dependant upon time. We all become engulfed in an interaction of events in time and space. These events, these timeline demarcations, set standards of living in the future, and they begin to define place. It is as important for people to remember what sort of things happened in a particular area, as much as how and why something happened in an area. These events make that area definable geographically, but also emotionally, spiritually, culturally, socially and intellectually. Historically, Detroit was built upon the idea of community and tight-knit conditions. Early settlers occupied specific areas of land – the fort, ribbon farms, etc. These areas not only specifically defined religion, race and interests, but they also unknowingly instigated the first know elements of diversity within Detroit. Those elements are remembered today through sculpture, namesake, etc. But how can those issues of historic remembrance continue through architecture as it pertains to contemporary Detroit?

Place seems to be interchangeable with the idea of community as it pertains to humans and living conditions. Investigating the idea and definition of community only begins to tell us that there is no set definition; it is inherently an intangible idea that nevertheless may define a group of people. Webster defines community as, “the people with common interests living in a particular area”. This definition contradicts the fact that community is not defined as a universal element. Community is a more intangible word that describes an area according to geographic location. If this is the case then what is neighborhood? “Community is one of the most nebulous and mystified of sociological concepts. As a result, the very clear functions performed by the community tend to be obscured” (London 45). Community is defined as that which makes up schools, institutions, customs and values. Raising the issues of customs and values suggests that communities are more heterogeneous than homogeneous, especially within an urban infill/redevelopment situation. The term community speaks of the people in a particular place. Community today is becoming a commonality defining the idea of the people that live in a given context. The reality is, people do not consider themselves as being in a community without common interest and surroundings. So then what can be said of a neighborhood that only has two houses on it, can that be considered a community? The problem that arises within the search for the definition of the word community is the fact that it is an intangible element, just as place. But only in the definition of community can you define place. Only in the definition of community can neighborhood be defined and separated from the conceptual idea of what a neighborhood is, wherein, community has a physical relationship to place. “The underlying principles we used to shape our world are social and cultural, whether we work at the scale of architecture or landscape” (Wrede

118). Based upon a pragmatic starting point, defining place needs to include issues that reflect cultural backgrounds and cultural identities. Inclusion of social aspects of neighborhoods, the importance is not a “redefinition, but an emphasis based simply on the residents of the neighborhood, their needs shedding off of that to build upon form and function to define the place as ‘their own’” (Wrede 118). Place becomes simply that which relates people directly to their community. Place is as intangible as it is tangible.

This concept moves into the realm of a more tangible, yet still, quite abstract idea of the neighborhood. Neighborhood is that physical, geographical location that is a divide of place, person, community and area, which is not dissimilar to what makes up community and place.

It is important to differentiate between community and neighborhood. While the community is both a social and material entity, the neighborhood is a purely material (spatial) product of the land and housing markets. The neighborhood is a collection of houses and other physical structures in an area defined by the land and housing market. As such it is certainly closely related to the community, particularly in the case of working – class communities (London 45).

Associations with the intangibility of neighborhood create conditions that connect these three ideas together. Neighborhood is first the physicality of place; which ties to community, which is the intangible, which then directly relates to the personal, humanized idea of place. As a means of investigation there is a literal terminology that is given in reference to defining a neighborhood. Because the definition can be used and defined in such broad terms there are concerns that relate to the intangible, abstract and physical reaction to defining neighborhood. Warren states:

Defining Neighborhood. The first problem encountered in any effort to synthesize present knowledge about the urban neighborhood is the existence of varied and inconsistent definitions of the term 'neighborhood.' At times it refers to an area with commonly recognized physical properties, or again it refers to a set of comparatively intimate and permanent human activities and relationships defined by such terms as 'primary group' and 'neighborliness.' This confounding spatial and social dimension has obscured important ways to distinguish one neighborhood process from another. A major problem arising from the spatial referent concerns the precise delimiting of neighborhood boundaries. In some studies, high school districts are said to be neighborhoods. In other studies, an acknowledged subcommunity such as Greenwich Village is thought of as a neighborhood. Caplow and Foreman employed as a working definition of neighborhood in Minneapolis-St. Paul 'a family dwelling unit and the ten family dwelling units most accessible to it.' Judith Shuval, in a study of Israeli ethnic groups, defined a 'micro-neighborhood' as one composed of three families, the respondent's and those of his two closest neighbors. Shimon Spiro utilized the same definition in speaking of the 'nuclear neighborhood.' Scott Greer, in studying the problem of the size of neighborhood units, defines four different levels: (1) the household; (2) the neighborhood; (3) the local area of residence; and (4) the municipality (51).

This clear understanding of the definition of neighborhood touches upon the definition of physical place. There is a concern about the delineation of community, neighborhood and place. But the realization through investigations is not what

necessarily separates these ideas, but that these ideas work hand in hand. For instance, without a community, there could be no definable neighborhood. Without a definable, abstracted neighborhood, there can be no definable idea of place in human scale. The idea of place stretches from many sources as a definable point, overall stretching to that nostalgia which makes someone the most comfortable and most anxious. Place is the time of day, season, smell and sound of community, and the neighborhood is where that lies. The next step is deciding what makes this place or neighborhood a success or not.

New Urbanism

New Urbanism is a movement in architecture that relates to the definition of place. It is intended as an example that contrasts with the spirit of the investigation of the thesis. To begin to breakdown New Urbanism there are several key components. First of all this movement relies on redevelopment as a means of forgetting about the past, events, place and community. This new development attempts to recreate community through non-diversified, amnesic type architecture, only relating purely to the human scale. Although the ideals of New Urbanism hope to foster a sense of community, place or neighborhood, it fails on several levels. Rather than building on a pre-existing sense of place, it completely redefines these typologies for the existing area.

The New Urbanism is a movement that I feel will be of great relevance to future planning efforts in this country. It addresses many of the ills of our current sprawl development pattern while returning to a cherished American icon: that of a compact, close knit community (Katz ix).

How is “ills” defined, can they be determined as analogous to an unsuccessful neighborhood? What is the ideal “American Icon”, how does that idea fit into the context

of “place”? How would Katz define community since New Urbanism seems to be an origin and product of less diversified and more communal living? Is this a means of human segregation? How does architecture communicate community living through diversity on a more abstracted level? The intention of this statement is that there must be definability in place; place must be connected to the human scale, natural scale and physical scale.

In what way does a conclusion to New Urbanism draw for architecture as the means of defining a place? “The New Urbanism is a welcome step forward, but it is only a step. At best, the movement has refocused the public’s attention more strongly on how the design of our communities has a very real impact on our lives” (Katz xiii). What is community in this sense? It is a newly relocated, rebuilt place for middle to high-income families. These new constructs are a basis for redefining and reestablishing where people live, erasing nostalgia of home. This example addresses the scale of building type and design, a predetermined idea for an unknown stranger.

When should the size of the development expansion stop before the city de-centers itself from the initial idea in the first place? The Congress for New Urbanism has created a set of predetermined guidelines that are known as the Lexicon. The Lexicon engages architecture as a guideline; exactly what, where, how many, how big, etc. The idea of the New Urbanist society is one where shops and retail are within walking distance from a certain point, which is made up of so much retail, so much commercial space, so much housing, and so on. In the case of New Urbanism, the fact that one needs to drive from downtown to the outskirts of the city defies the original concept. This journey results in a loss of the sense of “neighborhood”. New Urbanism expresses the

sense that everyone is so dissimilar that there cannot physically or literally be a definable sense of community. An idea pulled from certain typologies of New Urbanism is so definable that the question no longer is an issue of finding out what type of store people would like in their semi-utopian, vacation town; because anything will work anywhere according to the attitude of New Urbanists. What type of retention would there be within a "neighborhood" that was disregarded, down to the street grids, in order to introduce New Urbanism as a means of redevelopment? According to New Urbanism there must not be much of a difference, since each project pertained equally to the idea that this typology of architecture could be built anywhere as a means to redefine place. New Urbanism is a means of redevelopment. It has been proposed that it will work entirely anywhere and will be the "New America" according to the Congress of New Urbanism. The practices of New Urbanism are so pragmatic and predetermined that any vacant land is ideal for urban redevelopment. The drawback to this idea is the reality that the occupant is on vacation, completely erasing the sense of being home.

Whether or not the idea of redevelopment is a positive aspect of architecture, people are the subject, and place is the definable aspect of design that is rejected by New Urbanism. The idea of New Urbanism that is so widely viewed and followed is beginning to expand as the modern solution to what had been and what is, an individual's place. The idea that New Urbanism is manufactured addresses the predetermination of the Lexicon and the insignificance it reflects and expresses upon finding and defining place. New Urbanism does not grow organically over time, which is one of the real characteristics of the very urban conditions it aspires to re-create. The overall importance that should be given to "place" is lost. There is a precise disconnection of the

manufactured world to the architectural world. People do not obtain newfound relationships with architecture through false facades and equally defined tree spaces. Nature is not man made, and so why should design not reflect this given nature? Humans need a relationship to themselves so architecture can interact with them. Interaction is not a financial transaction, but rather is a personal scale that reflects natural human interests, music, art, etc. The previous writings regarding place, community, and neighborhood suggest that because of New Urbanism tendencies: to over-expand; its lack of adaptability to particularities; its ignoring of regional differences; its erasure and amnesia of local history; and its attempt to simulate a process of growth by manufacturing artificial urbanity - it fails to create place, community or neighborhood.

Elizabeth Moule, one of the founders of New Urbanism has said that two buildings next to each other are an architectural project, but two buildings across from each other are an urban project, for it begins to define the public space of the street (Dutton 97).

This idea is successful in that it reaches into the context of site and purposes for redeveloping. Every aspect of the streetscape, from existing to new, becomes engulfed into the urban fabric, a necessity of urban redevelopment.

One can say that New Urbanism is not the downfall of urban redevelopment, but it does exhibit inconsistency and forgetfulness, it ignores memory. New Urbanism is a key to the New America but without further investigation on a personally engaging level there can be no advance. Neighborhoods and community reflect the people that live, work and play within the given area, but without them there is nothing. For the purposes of urban redevelopment, New Urbanism is included into current redeveloping conditions,

but there are vast pieces missing that need to become as humanized as possible. New urban uses are not the same as they may have been in the past, and they are definitely not the same as what is given in suburbia. To live within an urban context means to interact and participate within an urban context. It is through this process of interacting – growing and adapting like an organism rather than a machine – design, at a monotonous, uniform scale, can truly hope to be re-developed.

Successful neighborhoods

The best way to obtain knowledge of how a neighborhood could be considered successful would be through the individual neighborhood itself. The importance of place reflects directly on how the people feel about that place, this intangibility is exactly the nostalgic feeling that creates value and yearning for a physical place or neighborhood. People make their place.

Webster defines neighborhood as “the people living near one another; a section lived in by neighbors and usually having distinguishing characteristics.” Then what defines a block with two houses? The idea becomes intangible, it is not simply a collection of neighbors, but it is the characteristics of that neighborhood. What makes a characteristic then? It is what is left behind; the objects that continue to express the physicalities of that neighborhood. The block becomes a reliquary for what is there, what was there, and what it can become.

Walking through possible sites one may encounter people who are not afraid. There are people that care but make the difference in and of themselves. For example, the amount of farming and gardening in the city neighborhoods of Detroit is astonishing.

People grow food for themselves as a means of everyday life, but also as a means to be outside and involved within the neighborhood, willing to strike up conversation with a neighbor or stranger. I walked through a city block with two houses on it, and then an empty field of green overgrown vegetation. Only there was a teenager mowing the field. He mowed for no one but himself and his neighborhood. That is pride and willingness, which is the basis for successful neighborhoods. But then the issue becomes, where can a willing neighborhood go from there? The idea of success through architecture relates to the definition of place, it is as tangible as a building, but as intangible as the desire to build.

The initial idea that creates success within a revitalized neighborhood is the retention of existing residents. Lucy Lippard states that, "...concerned not with the history of nature and the landscape but with the historical narrative as it is written in the landscape or place by the people who live or lived there" (7). These ideas are cyclical in that they are identified as the history of place, and community self-definition, which is so crucial when understanding why a neighborhood is successful. Is this not the importance of why people long for and are attached to their home and place? It is a way to compare; most new redevelopment sites are purely based on the number of new occupants and relocating occupants. If a neighborhood is hoping to redefine itself does it require distant geographic relocating to do so? No, as a means of defining place the community is the basis for growth and renewal. The key element in redefining a neighborhood is not left up to the relocation and re-definement of a district, street, community, neighborhood or persons. The important foundation for new urban life is building upon what exists.

Current redevelopment may be key in motivating new construction within the city, but it in no way begins to reconnect or define neighborhood and place, therefore, redevelopment needs to begin with the “existing”. Current redevelopment tends to emphasize compliance with ordinances rather than redefining neighborhoods. Areas of the city like Northwest Detroit and Corktown attempt to rebuild, but do not take into account the sense of what existed and defined place through architecture. Certain urban redevelopment institutions such as non-profit organizations attempt to meet the needs of a new urban growth through architecture. One poor example of this attempt is Habitat for Humanity. What does building low cost housing in a neighborhood that was once beautiful Victorians say about where the future is leading? The nuance of these new developments is leading the city of Detroit backwards in the future. Detroit’s population may rise, but the condition of current redevelopments may again become dilapidated, countering this condition. Perhaps doing anything rather than nothing is usually not better in the long term than holding out for and demanding high quality. “And in the case of a restless, multitrade people, even as the power of place is diminished and often lost, it continues – as an absence – to define culture and identity. It also continues – as a presence – to change the way we live” (Lippard 20). This statement, although a little indifferent to “community”, shares importance that should be expressed through architecture in representing what is there and why, as a way to celebrate this idea. The success of a neighborhood is what people can make of the fact that they show themselves through their neighborhood, their community, as a way to begin defining architecture.

A successful neighborhood is made up of many key elements, but the significant factors are those that have become intangible. Without the idea of a loving relationship

with place then there cannot be a loving relationship for community. The love of a homestead comes from the idea of happiness to those that occupy their place. Family, in a broad sense, is as important to the success of place as drugs and violence is to the idea of lost place.

The performance of labor is what produces wealth in any society and capitalist society is no exception. To ensure the continued production of wealth therefore, requires the continual reproduction of a working class, and this is achieved through a variety of social relationships and institutions. In the first place, and most directly, there is the family (London 41).

There are two key ideas to see in this example, first, the family, home, and second, social relationships and institutions. These two elements make up physicalities that anyone could see in what they might consider a successful neighborhood. But the corollary to that is the idea that sometimes this can be found in an unsuccessful neighborhood. If that is the case, and the idea of the family and institution is useful and thriving, then there cannot possibly be failure within that community. Success depends on involvement and desire. Family, institutions and social relationships depend on human interaction, as much as a neighborhood depends on it for survival.

Architecture is a form of art, like music, dance, etc., but then how can this be introduced into factors that begin to make up a successful neighborhood. For example, compare the idea of Heidelberg in Detroit. This is an art based community gallery that is minimally thought of as unsuccessful. The desire and needs of a community depend and are motivated purely based upon this project. Children walk home through this display; Empty lots are safe and mowed. Visitors interact and involve themselves within this

given community as a way to help make that “place” more definable and livable, overall making that neighborhood more successful. Communication with strangers and passers-bys create a sensation that reconnects the community with the rest of the world. Programs such as community based art institute human involvement through motivation and pride in a neighborhood.

Let us suppose that the idea of art can be expanded to embrace the whole range of man-made things, including all tools and writing in addition to the useless, beautiful, and poetic things of the world. By this view the universe of man-made things simply coincides with the history of art. It then becomes an urgent requirement to devise better ways of considering everything men have made.

This we may achieve sooner by proceeding from art rather than from use for if we take the desirableness of things as our point of departure, then useful objects are properly seen as things we value more or less dearly” (Kubler 1).

This idea is comparable to Rick Lowe, founder of Project Row houses, and Tracy Hicks, an artist concerned with urban revitalization, in their attempt to use art and relics from neighborhood redevelopment projects as a basis for defining architecture. Architecture becomes the mode for use, function and form. Art is the basis for the program that develops through architecture, wherein beauty creates the history of place and sense of space and time. Traditional architecture seen in a modern context pushes us to be intrigued and graced. A vision of contemporary architecture is a strong correlation that suggests a relationship from earth to human to shelter. “The composition of elements usually depends on a comprehensive ‘vision’, that is, on an imagined figure which

determines the solution” (Norberg-Schulz 118). But the idea within infill architecture is the idea of place as being a “comprehensive vision”.

The idea behind success in neighborhoods and urban redevelopment is the relevance and reflectiveness of the community, which is a major expression of a community’s self-image. A new neighborhood tries to connect to the rest of the world socially, culturally, spiritually and ethnically. A successful place should be a place that expresses and celebrates ideas and themes to outside cultures, an inter-connected hub with a non-specific fabric. Community and neighborhood involvement is the key motivation to successful urban renewal and redevelopment.

Neighborhood participation may: (1) serve as a parallel to participation in wider circles of the community; (2) it may compete with other social units in the community; or (3) it may link with or facilitate participation in the larger community. Participation in the local community may serve as a basis for moving up and out of a neighborhood, and voluntary associations are often used to speed the integration of individuals into the local neighborhood (Warren 56).

Taking this idea and applying it to tangible applications begins to contain truth.

Community and outside participation is the highest form of success within a neighborhood. The reality is that the existing residents’ one concern is how can they help themselves in order to better the community. When asked, the key issue to them is simply having services that could be obtained through volunteering. Rick Lowe stated, “...people that do not have opportunity to call the world their place, their neighbor becomes their nourishment. That creates history, looking backwards...people still have the need and desire to know the world.” There is a calling for self-opportunistic needs.

Successful neighborhoods are based on the idea of defining place for themselves, and by any means possible. Once community and place are found, then art and architecture can be used as a means of re-definement to help neighborhoods reassociate themselves and their history back into their world successfully.

What begins to exchange the thought of intangibility into something more physical and real?

The 'Chicago School' sociologists of the 1920s spoke of neighborhoods as 'natural areas' marked off by differences in social class and ethnicity and by physical barriers. Recent studies have cast doubt on this approach and suggest the wide range of ways neighborhoods are perceived and the role they play in the lives of individual urban dwellers. In this perspective there is no point in trying to define the boundaries of such units since social and physical groupings do not necessarily nor often coincide. In the words of one sociologist, it may be more important to 'consider the social relationships themselves than to worry about where neighborhoods begin and end'" (Warren 49).

Neighborhoods can begin to lose touch with the idea of boundary and edge. The entrance to a neighborhood is through its architecture. Buildings become the definable aspect of place, expressively through the people and memory of the site and conditions.

Detroit has created some problems through overcrowding and forgetfulness of agriculture and greenspace. Ironically Detroit's vacated neighborhoods have again become jungles of memory, recreating the edges that previously existed. "Each time we enter a new place, we become one of the ingredients of an existing hybridity, which is really what all 'local places consist of'" (Lippard 6). The physical makeup of new

streetscape and architecture begins with a connection, a relationship to existing and a relationship to its intangible self. The memory of a neighborhood describes a sensation that could begin to rebuild itself.

A neighborhood could be thought of as being “successful” because the houses are occupied and maintained. What then creates the effect of why these so called, “successful neighborhoods” are not so successful. What is the relationship of each neighbor? Is there a connection between habitants, or is this their private vessel for living? Neighborhoods’ physical features are built by the pride that is communicated within each occupant in relation to another on a personal evolutionary level. Same signage or same housing footprint does not relate the overall idea of neighborhood connection to the visual expression of care and desire people exert through their house, business or building.

Expanding through the idea of pride is the idea of diversity. Diversity of place within a neighborhood speaks of all types, from age, economics, race, religion, ethnicity, etc. Stylistically a neighborhood begins to evolve similarly conceptually; a neighborhood mends, the diversity grows out of time and individuality. Detroit’s cultural diversity opens opportunities for architecture.

We believe that the factor that can be most readily used in this way is the diversity of socioeconomic levels within a given neighborhood. This factor of neighborhood heterogeneity is a crucial one, partly because our conventional notions of group cohesion seem to require a high degree of homogeneity to work. It is this commonality of neighbors that appears to be the major factor in defining an area as a true neighborhood or not. Numerous studies have indicated the

elements which need to be looked at in deterring whether such commonality exists (Warren 65).

Without some type of commonality within the immediate neighborhood then that neighborhood becomes unsuccessful. This commonality creates the issue of race and ethnicity; cultural indifferences must create unsuccessful neighborhoods. But in reality that is erroneous. Certain people find themselves in situations not because of the consequence of their will, but of other factors. In most of the unsuccessful neighborhoods throughout Detroit the problem that contains these areas branch into economy, drugs, crime, etc. This is saying that without some type of commonality and willingness then people lose all motivation for self-communal help.

The physicalities of architecture in Detroit require a dense, rich neighborhood that reflects existence of people, materials and place. There is a need to recreate a new Detroit, not trying to replicate an old Detroit with a traditional idea of what urban residential living is. The architecture of this specific neighborhood needs to express agriculture as a connection, and it needs to redefine the traditional idea of urban living. Recreation of place architecturally can enrich the idea of creating place individually. Traditional neighborhoods still exist only through the expanding expressive changes new urban residential living offers.

Precedent Studies

Introduction:

As a means of determining referencing neighborhood conditions I have chosen three such precedent studies. Two of the studies illustrate positive conditions, and the final one is more of a negative analysis; all three have influenced the preceding thesis. The first two precedent studies focus on specific aspects of defining place through neighborhoods, but more importantly through means of remembrance and renewal rather than reestablishment. The precedents begin to define hope through a series of thoughts about what it means to be a part of something and how that intangible feeling can then relate back to the notion of how architecture can begin to express this idea.

Project Row houses:

In the first precedent there is a unique relationship of project to product. The first precedent is known as Project Row houses, which is located in the inner city of Houston's Third Ward. This is an extremely impoverished and vacated area of Houston. The community still exists largely because of their love and need for renewal, and because of their need to rid the neighborhood of crime and vandalism. The founder of this project is an artist by the name of Rick Lowe. What is the importance in looking, searching for meaning in neighborhoods? Is there a fear of diversity; is there unwillingness for difference? I feel that architecture is a cornerstone to portray the efforts, feelings and attitudes of neighborhood. Fostering community involvement is not a question of if they would help; I feel it is purely a matter of motivation and funding that is the problem. In a conversation with Rick Lowe, I asked him how he would define place. Rick's attitude was surprising towards defining the idea of place in reference to

project Row houses. “We live in a time where the notion of community is no longer place space – physical – community is not, - we are citizens of the world...people that do not have [the] opportunity to call the world their place, their neighborhood becomes their nourishment. That creates history, looking backwards, people still have need and desire to know the world.”

Historically the Third Ward in Houston is made up of what are known as shotgun houses. These houses usually have three bedrooms that are lined up in a row on one side of the house, and the kitchen, bath and living lined up on the other side. The name comes from the idea that a shotgun could be shot through the house and would go out the backdoor without hitting anything within. This style of architecture is known to come from the southern United States around the time before the civil war. The vernacular of the houses is known to be primarily African relating to a basic hut design. The porches of shotgun houses define, through architecture, the memory of their creation.

Architecture reestablishes memory through history, through culture and through time.

Rick Lowe is an artist that had begun this project as a type of urban redevelopment, wherein he completely took into account the aspects of what the houses were, and the people that lived within that community. Rick’s intention was to renew the attitudes of the people that live within that neighborhood without the intention of moving them out.

The only way that Rick could help to develop a definition, was to make certain that there were programs that could communicate with the neighborhood. The people of the neighborhood not only needed a cleaner and newer place to live, but they also needed an infill of houses and programs that would entertain, intrigue and educate the children and adults. The focus of this neighborhood is the means by which this was done, mainly

through self-help community involvement and the desire to make a change for themselves.

In addition to this idea there was an artist by the name of Tracy Hicks who took interest in what Project Row houses stood for as a means of redefining a neighborhood. His interest led him to purchase four houses that he began to restore to their original state. Upon completion he began to open the individual houses as art galleries for his work. Tracy focused mainly on his idea of encapsulating the idea of neighborhood. One of the ways he did this was to collect objects of the deserted neighborhood and place them in pickle jars. The pickle jars acted as containers in which he placed pieces of vegetation from around the neighborhood. He would orient the gallery to reshape the interior conditions of the houses in order to display the pickle jars on shelves, floor to ceiling, backlighting them with natural light. The idea then went a step further where he began to place photographs of the community, taken by the community as a means of literally representing the conditions that are set by the community. I spoke with both Tracy Hicks and Rick Lowe as a means to encapsulate the idea that Tracy was trying to portray with photos in the pickle jars. How does that idea begin to define community and place? Rick Lowe exclaimed that there was no intention on Tracy's part for that project to happen, simply, the neighborhood created the process themselves. "He allowed the community to let the world know who they are – letting the community tell the broader world." This idea is repetitive; let the neighborhoods express themselves, which is what I am trying to express, the need for the expression of individuality for each person and each area. In order for community involvement to take place from the start their needs to be a welcoming willingness for improvement. The neighborhood of the Third Ward improved

simply by motivating the existing residents. From this, the neighborhood [as I am told] has completely responded and grown into a crime free, drug free, neighborhood in which there are art programs, after school programs and education programs.

The people who developed Project Row houses defined place in their own rite through themselves, self-expression. The idea that they can encapsulate the meaning behind who their community is, creates edges from their street to the next. The relative scale of neighborhood and community can be vast or as this precedent exemplifies, it can operate on a more personal level. The orientation of the pickle jars expresses in Tracy's galleries the specific shape and layout of the exhibit space, a direct reflection of the shotgun house. Architecture as a whole encompasses the idea of the jar, the people are contained through photographs, but the architecture acts as the container for their place.



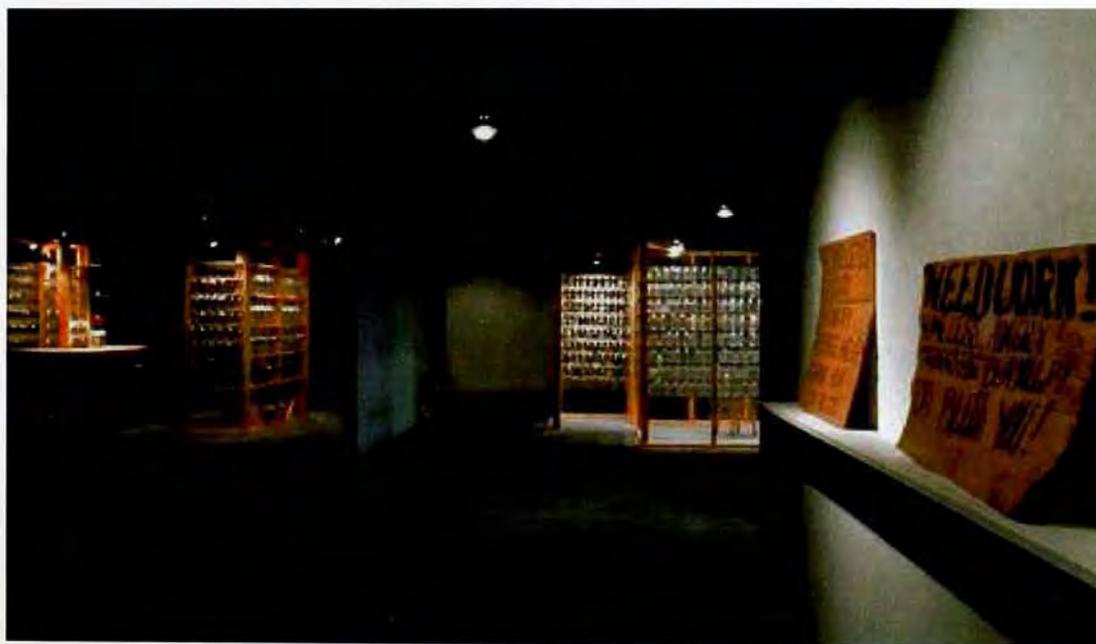
Example of shotgun housing



Project Row houses in the Third Ward, Houston



Tracy Hicks' Project Row houses exhibit, below



Tracy Hicks' "Exchange" gallery



The "Exchange" gallery



The "Exchange" gallery



Tracy Hicks' display of objects with vegetables



Project Row house gallery, photo encapsulation



The photographs taken by the community

Mason's Bend Alabama:

Mason's Bend is a study in architecture founded by Samuel Mockbee, a professor at Auburn University School of Architecture. Professor Mockbee began a studio known as the Rural Studio, wherein students studied form and function by focusing on materiality and budget. Rural Studio is an architectural design studio that works to design and build projects for an impoverished rural community. Mason's Bend began to uncover important factors concerning the idea of intangibility within place.

Each precedent reflects their own style of architecture. The reason why the Rural Studio is such a strong precedent is its connection to remembrance. The units reflect family and home, in which that family's needs produce the conceptual forms. All the while, from an architectural standpoint they address specific issues of earth and sky with the emphasis on reuse of existing materials. There is a need to be precise within an urban redevelopment project. Developing is key in the inner city, but without architectural specifics and analysis, the structure loses its relationship qualities, therefore, it loses its connection with the occupants. Mason's Bend has a relationship that stands out because of the conceptual forms that are created through what these students feel is relevant pertaining to the occupant. Some of the relationships that I begin to see through this particular study are definitions of specific types of new architecture relating to urban redevelopment. As in Project Row houses there is a development that I would call *abstract redevelopment*. The idea behind this precedent is that abstractly there are defining features and functions that express refocus and communicate the life of the resident to the outside world. Through the artistic media of architecture, the story of what has happened to this place and why, and how the people of that place see

themselves, begins to be told. The second type of redevelopment I would call *architectural redevelopment*. This project uses the expression of how each family functions and focuses on their place to define the form. There is a need for conceptual redevelopment. There is a need to redefine units and dwellings even in an urban setting. As a contrast, the commonly found townhouses that fit into the context of rural to urban to suburban begin to degrade the community and displace a relationship of uniqueness that can be found throughout a community.



Celebration, Florida:

The final type of redevelopment illustrated in the precedent studies comes from my third and contrasting study, Celebration, Florida, otherwise known as *manufactured redevelopment*. Celebration, Florida is the epitome of New Urbanism. New Urbanism is a recent movement in architecture that claims to act as a redevelopment that meets the needs and desires of occupants. But in reality it meets the needs of relocating occupants, dislocating a historical base of occupants. The whole intention for the users of this type of architecture is that they should feel as if they are on vacation. The architecture is completely manufactured, taking into context nothing about the personal needs and wants of the occupant. This type of redevelopment to me is known as manufactured because it could be inserted anywhere at anytime. The real downfall of this approach is that it begins to put on false fronts for the occupant, which in turn relates something about their identity. If everyone on earth desires a place, whether it be their home, apartment or condo, there needs to be some type of connection to that place, a connection to attitude, happiness, and material. There is a subjective intangible connection of user to residence that can be defined as their place. But without an address to the people themselves, then what type of community can be formed from this idea? Characterization comes from the architectural style of the house and neighborhood, but in reference to a manufactured neighborhood then what type of connection does that begin to portray?





Images from the city of Celebration, Florida

Conclusion:

In order to tie the analysis of these precedents together, one might consider the architectural metaphor of the fence. The idea of the fence can be seen as a cultural construct that relates to a house, a neighborhood or a place. Fences can be used to keep things out, or fences can be used to keep things in. Although the fence varies in color and style, it expresses directly what activities take place functionally as seen lot by lot. From garden to farm to security, a fence is the edge of a house and the door (gateway) to one's place. Within this edge lies the identity of a person and place, a very individual and private world that mimics the occupant's identity. In reference to the three precedent studies the fences become analogous to the place as seen through these architectural examples. The people of the Third Ward create fences that portray who they are and what is contained within themselves and within their own homes. A fence's style, architecture, color, purpose, etc. all reflect the intention that the occupant has for its usage. But the direct reflection is that each fence of any particular neighborhood is as important to being different and separate as should be. The idea of personal architectural

identity is analogous to the conceptual forms that create Mason's Bend. Simply, the individuality of the fence, to house, to user, is analogous of the conceptual forms of Mason's Bend. The idea that each unit represents each family, which is seen as a fence, in no way makes these fences false, but they make the people a point of expression through art and architecture. Unknowingly the fences of Celebration could surely be seen as ambiguous and similar. The repetitive, manufactured nature that this redevelopment screams becomes monotonous and impersonal. In reference to place the fence can be seen metaphorically as a container for that individual. It becomes a container for a house, a uniqueness that defines what it is and what it speaks. This is what needs to be present in neighborhoods; this is what allows design to create beauty and definition.



Images of fences in Corktown, Detroit



Images of fences on the eastside of Detroit



Images of fences on Heidelberg Street, Detroit

Program Precedents

Introduction:

In choosing two program precedents the design and scope of the project can be exemplified. One goal of the project is that the neighborhood should incorporate several elements including greenspace, agriculture, architecture, pedestrian friendly conditions, and a relationship that begins to mold these elements together. Through investigations into an agriculture/architecture blend (an eco-village), elements that pertain to the pedestrian and place/space need to be identified. In two such precedent studies there are similarities in the pursuit of this thesis, first, Greenwich Millennium Village, and second, A Natural Image.

Greenwich Millennium Village:

Greenwich Millennium Village is a proposal that incorporates both New Urbanism and green urbanism. The suggested intention of the project is to incorporate the human into a new urban/agricultural context. Greenwich Millennium Village acts as the general basis for layout and ideals that occur throughout this thesis. "...[The] proposal sought to demonstrate ways of creating an organic incremental approach to the provision of homes and communities that replicates the gradual processes of the past in a contemporary fashion" (Edwards 90). How does one actually allow for "organic" growth rather than designing the final conclusions – and then showing how that might happen in an incremental way? The idea of the Village is intriguing because it incorporates the ideas of sustainable living and open space. "...Richard Rogers partnership (incorporating into the competition brief) was to introduce the concept of 'external rooms'" (91). The basic premise for this type of project was to reach into the condition of defining place

through greenspace and architecture. There is a need to create a holistic community that thrives internally, but still reflects itself externally. The Village is surrounded by two major roads, similar to this thesis' project, which creates a visual impact of vehicular traffic. To remedy this situation the Village has implemented a means of "locating them [cars] wherever possible in secure podium spaces under the landscaped courtyards" (92). Using public courtyards the Village adapts these to connections from public space to private space, from occupant to vehicle to pedestrian. This idea of adapting public and private space creates a visual of agriculture as a connection to architecture. The connection to agriculture used in Greenwich Millennium Village contains itself within buildings and outside of buildings. The garden spaces become a focal point of this project, spilling through streets and through buildings. "The physical master plan is of fundamental importance to creating a sense of place..." (93). This precedent creates an interaction that attempts to define place through agricultural connections to the home and to the user. Similar to what this thesis is attempting, "...[this] entry attempted a very broad response to the issues that confront us in revitalizing cities, tackling social exclusion, developing brownfield sites, innovating in construction and improving choice in housing. This wide range of measures has a common purpose – to create sustainable places where people want to live. Place making needs to embrace all of these issues if we are to reverse the trend towards depopulation of our city centers" (94).

One could see the connection of agriculture to architecture, which includes the notion of new adaptability to defining an urban context that changes and moves with modern ideas. Representation of the idea of new urban living can be found within the precedent example of greenspace incorporated into urbanity.



A Natural Image, “Hollow Spruce”:

“Hollow Spruce” is an architectural exploration investigating a vessel that articulates a modern concept of the idea of natural imagery. The structure seems to grow both with and from nature, and cyclically dies and decays into nature. The premise for this precedent is; when has nature overtaken the idea of “urban context”? When is it

possible to let architecture adapt with movements, rather than attempting to redefine and represent the idea of the typical American house? “In the Natural Image, the key to architectural sustainability is to work with, not against, nature; to understand, sensitively exploit and simultaneously avoid damaging natural systems” (Bennetts 27). This precedent veers towards the micro scale of this thesis. The single-family homes that this neighborhood can begin to produce will grow from the earth and from the existence of the neighborhood. The idea is not to completely design with nature, but instead to begin to understand the “nature” that exists, and to produce conceptual architecture that reflects the conditions that are stated in this thesis. “The Natural Image of architectural sustainability, then, mirrors a view that it is necessary to position human activities as a non-damaging part of the ongoing ecological landscape, with a belief that ‘nature knows best’” (27). The new neighborhood tends to address the issues of design, a thoughtful manifestation to existing structures is important. The new architecture of this program should extend its conceptual implications into the realm of dealing with natural agricultural living. “The symbolic and ‘eco-aesthetic’ manifestations of this image reinforce identification with nature and natural system.” (29). The artistic value that has previously been placed on this project, in earlier writings, can now be seen as possible environmental art projects, in that, the agriculture/architecture becomes the artistic expression that is needed in this neighborhood. The place that people create for themselves is the vine that they plant, or the wheat that they harvest. The Natural Image of revitalizing urbanity could lead to the pursuit that the place can be defined through a change in vernacular, in that the Natural Image will confirm non-traditional construction. The Natural Image precedent pertains specifically to the analogy of house to street, tree

to nature. One could ask the question, when does revitalization require a new script?

How can the image of the typical grid change, not erase itself, through new construction,

houses, buildings, paths, orchards, activities, community and growth?



"Hollow Spruce" Hut

[Re] looking

Days begin with the thought of time

Years grow with the thought of when

Society is driven

People depend

History

Events

People

Places

Looking from behind

See this as being an individual

How is time perceived subconsciously

How do we think of a date abstractly

Artistically time is expressed how

Is the thought of a date linear

Does it loop

Is it cyclical

Are there numbers

Blocks

Columns or rows

Do pictures relate

Do jokes recite

Experience reflects visuals

Seen continually

What is thought of as September 8th

Where does it fall mentally

What does January 15th look like

How can it be expressed

How can it be seen

Are dates physical

But only thought abstractly

How does it related to the sun

Are stars involved is that what makes us unique

We are individuals

How can this be seen

Like a fingerprint

Like a tree

Like a human

It's always different

Individual

What makes us that

The idea that this sketch study relates to my thesis generally is a little more abstracted than some previous ideas. First off, this poem states the idea of finding, like a child, looking back into the importance of what is meaning to you. The significant objects in our lives seem to stick with us throughout everything, something subconscious that cannot exactly be expressed or explained. The idea of childhood continued. The

study poem above is a calendar. The relevance of a calendar has everything to do with time and day. The calendar is a physical object that records data and times, it more or less charts them physically so that it is a tangible way for us as humans to relate and express time. But what is time mentally? It is not a chart, or is it? The process that is worked through in this example is the idea of how humans relate their inner thoughts about time and space to other people. The difficult question is what sort of specifics do people want to share with each other; some things seem to be more private than others. Everyone has uniqueness to themselves, something that is special to each individual, like a fingerprint. So how can this idea relate to the idea of place, and how people relate to their own space.

In reference to a calendar, everyone imagines this very physical object mentally. There is not a mental image that others can see that contains how your day is planned and how you manage your time physically in an abstract world. The idea can be referenced back into this idea of place. People relate to specific areas and ideas that they call their own. There is an anxious, "longing for home" that is associated with that sensation. But the key idea that I have hoped to gain through this paper is to define that there is a sensible way that can be related back to architecture. The idea of place and space is abstract and intangible, it is unique and mental, but realistically it is architecture that creates that image, depiction, feeling and desire. That is the direct connection to the thing, the "place". The question that then begins to create issues for myself is how can that place then define community, and then through community define neighborhood. Then making that idea three dimensional and real. Place can become architecture, and architecture can create and represent "place".

Beyond the Box



sign up go
in the com
e of us be
ys be a team layer
a company man get
board keep in s
follow the crowd r
the pack conf
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Reliquary

Hey!...come here!...I'm not going to bite you!

Do you know what this is?

Take a guess what this is

That's right its cotton

I just wanted to know if you knew what it is

Put it under a light...

It opens up

We got pheasants

The squirrels ate my corn

I give it away as souvenirs

I'm cleaning out that pile

Over there

Nobody takes my goods; they don't know when to cut them

People don't know when they are right

I have many kinfolk

The kinfolk will take it

I do it for the kids

All the way to the school...that lot...that lot...down the street

I don't mind it

It gives me something to do

It don't bother me

It keeps the neighborhood clean...

It don't bother me none

Oh yes lots of cars...

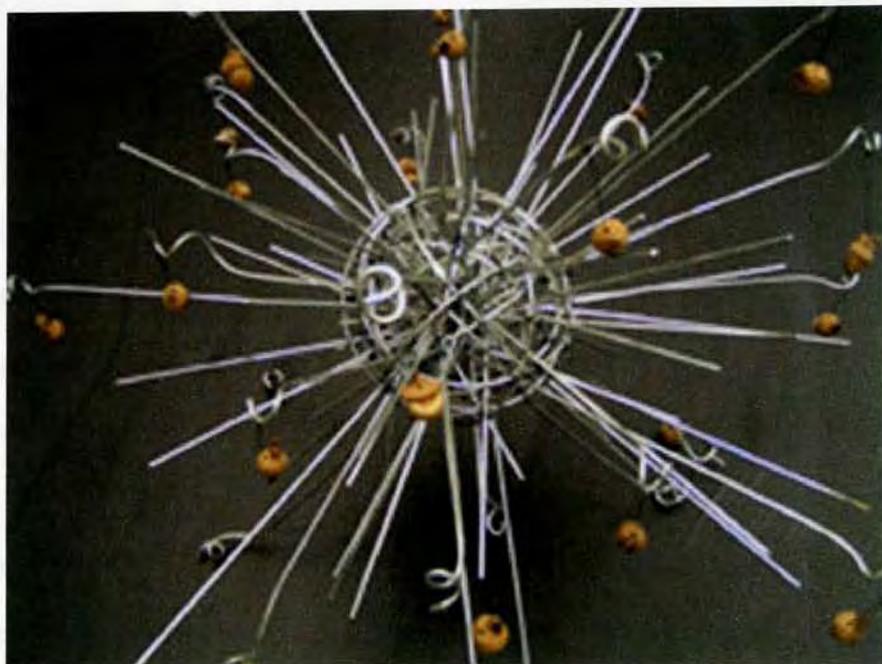
Lots of buses

Thought he was putting them on

I don't want to take up any more of your day.

How can I capture the essence of a person through their monologue? What is so important about people and their stories that relates to the idea that people have needs and wants. In the sketch problem entitled reliquary a study was made to create a metaphor, a physical metaphor, one that could represent the idea behind a man, through the representation of the object of cotton. The importance of a story is not necessarily the story itself, but the pieces that make up that story. There are underlying factors that represent each human and what they represent.

I met a man in the middle of the street on the east side of Detroit and this was his story. I took that and attempted to break it down into several pieces, but there was one overall theme, the cotton. There was no other need to talk to me besides the fact that this man wanted to let me know about his cotton, and the importance that came with it. The process, the opening, the distributing all relate to him as a person and the neighborhood as a whole. The relationship that he made with the community is through his story and his farm. Without the willingness to reach out and share a part of yourself with the community, then there is no need for a community at all. Like the cotton this man offered parts of himself as stories to pull and take. He opened up in the light of his garden, and he flourished with the expression of himself.



Site Analysis

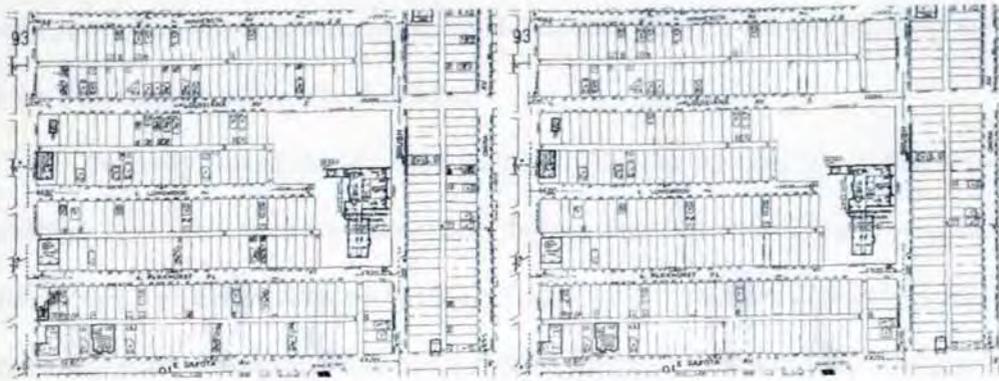
The site is located just north of Six Mile Road and just east of John R. Road; it incorporates exactly two and a half blocks moving north, and a block and half moving east. The site is used as an initial determination of exploring a foundation for design. Although this site is somewhat large, uncovering the site archeologically will allow discovery of what is there, was there, and why. Detroit's typical residential grid was constructed in a manner that did not include large highways or ramps; therefore the type of grid grew from larger streets, which led to smaller streets, which led to even smaller streets. Initially alleys were the entrance to the house, mainly entering in the rear of the yard and house, and the municipal sidewalks were public entrances that brought visitors and users through the front entrance of the homes. In recent years Detroit has erased this idea of public and private, street and alley, leaving us today with the notion of brownfields and abandonment.



1984

1987

1990



2000

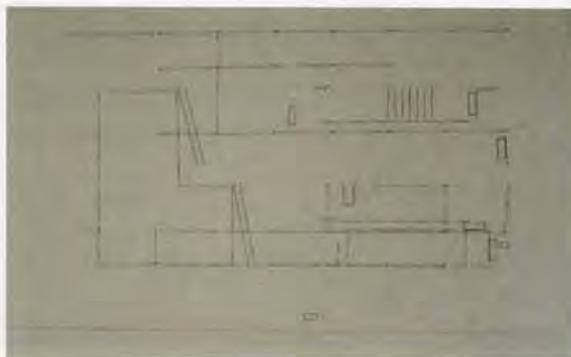
2004

First, to explore the site one could ask, what exists now and why? Typically, the vacant houses of the neighborhood have been demolished leaving only the remnants of space in between, and the yards that no longer physically exist. This abandonment is related to the notion of white flight, the after affects of World War II, and the unwillingness of the city to attract new residents. Today there are fewer than ten houses left on the site, although there still remains small elements that begin to explain uses, patterns, textures, age, memory and occupants of the site. For instance, the alleys have been completely covered and forgotten, The roads no longer are an axis for automotive traffic, the vacant green land has only become emptied and useless, not even graded for recreational activity. Besides the several homes that are occupied, there remains one resident with a small farm/garden, John Gruchala. Signs on the occupied school read, “No ball playing”, and the sidewalks have been worn and broken. The richest activity that exists today on the site is the daily walking to and from school by the school children and their parents, and/or siblings. An additional two houses that are just north of the site have expanded into large greenhouses and outdoor spaces, due to the abandonment of adjacent properties. Telephone poles remain burned and charred, but not replaced, new number tags have been hung, but the nearly dead telephone poles remained used. One-

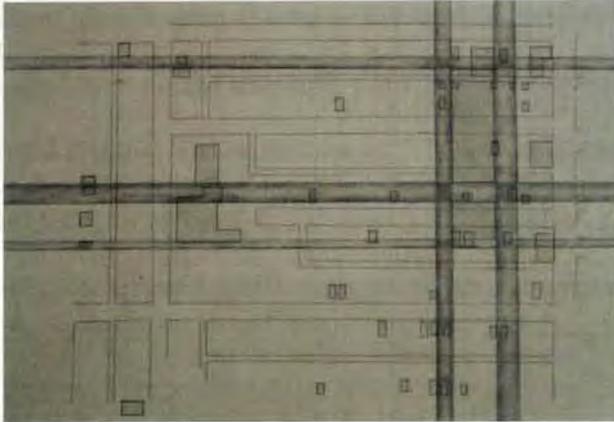
way streets and street signs are ignored and unusable. There is not much internal activity with the exception of the school children.

Secondly, one might ask, what elements of the site can suggest a foundation for design? Noticeably there are some spaces that are abstractly created due to vacancy. Identifying the elements that speak of the memory of the place, the activity of place, and the use of place, creates the condition that site analysis can begin to define through discovery.

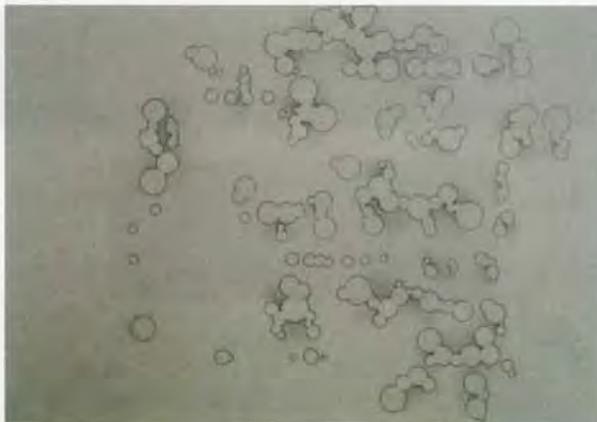
What layers can be seen through what exists? How can architecture begin to interact and initiate design through newly discovered layers? The telephone poles communicate the notion of access, use and grid. Looking closer at the telephone poles one could see more of the manufactured world that created the neighborhood: the telephone poles, the abandoned vehicles, the fences, the manholes, the utility lines, garbage piles, compost piles, etc. All of which, begin to communicate an existence that could possibly begin to express the uses and the functions of the grid and the neighborhood. The notion of man-made, man-placed objects identifies a world that creates energies of use and life. These areas of energy needed something more crucial to communicate a reason for design, and a reason for exploration. The following drawing begins to show planned space that is created from the above ideas of memory.



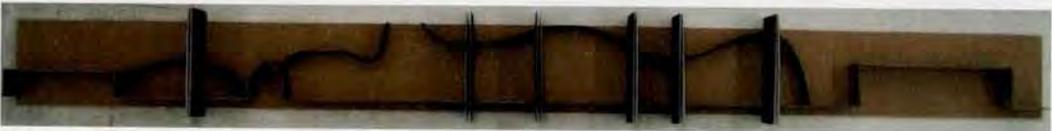
Another means of uncovering relationships from house to house, space to space is through extending construction lines from existing structures. Several nodes were created using the idea of extending axes. These nodes were located purely based on the density of lines, creating a potential for density patterns, traffic patterns, volumetric studies, or literal layout.



As time has past and abandonment has grown, nature too has become a new layer in this neighborhood. The idea of returning to roots and the act of remembering initiated a program of urban farming; it has also begun to mark specific edges that no longer exist physically, but naturally. In the following drawing there is a pattern of trees in plan that begins to identify grids, housing, paths, nodes, greenspace, vacancy and occupation.



One could see the value in natural exploration, since typically, now, there is a vastness of greenspace to be explored. Thinking in section, the voids of the treelines, and since forgotten property lines, begins to create space that identifies place. Through a series of exploratory models one could identify space, created through memory, a reminiscence of amnesia. The purpose for the following models is to identify areas of occupation and areas of identification of nature. The vertical divisions in the models are the memory of the neighborhood, the telephone poles, the treelines that followed the property lines, the yard dividing bushes, and fences. The brown is simply the horizon line that incorporates the existing housing and street grid. The black is patterned after the existing treelines in the background, which suggests spaces that were created by pre-existing housing, only now expressing the voids. These models can become a diagram for a new layer, in section, that communicates the idea of place space, and community.





Nature has since become the focus of exploration that seems most fitting in this pursuit. As urban life begins to grow, so do the city and its neighborhoods. But as for Detroit, the typical urban city is no longer typical. One of the residents of the neighborhood, whose son attends the school on site, Dana, has shared comments about what she sees as the emerging condition of the neighborhood. It is understood that the residents of this neighborhood are long-term residents that share a common love for this neighborhood and their community, their place. Without the crime, violence, and drugs Dana feels that the neighborhood can grow into something that retells the story of a smaller town life. She sees a community that cares and reacts to where they live, and works with and for the community in which they live. But then where can this need for reclamation begin? What elements of the built world can be incorporated into revitalization?



Existing farm owned by John Gruchala

Agriculture is beginning to play a significant part in Detroit's ever growing pursuit for rebirth. John Gruchala stated, "Growing vegetables is just a vehicle for other kinds of change". Some feel that agriculture and urbanity are two completely separate elements whose functions operate on different spectrums. In the case of Detroit, urban farming and agriculture seem to be a key element in reclaiming the memory of

greenspace and revitalization. In the case of analyzing this site, agriculture is going to be a means of uncovering the connection to neighborhood, and redefining community. This site has potential to begin to explore the options of paths, branches, agriculture, architecture, community, and social interaction as a blend implementing new options in architecture. Urban life does not exist continuously through tradition, but rather, urbanity thrives through change and growth into the people that participate through it and with it. Agriculture is one means of vitalization, the question then is; how can architecture incorporate agriculture in an urban setting? Cultivation is a form of man and nature that bridges between wilderness and civilization that is very relevant to urban life. Cities as one understands them did not exist prior to farming, but in fact were not possible without large-scale food production. Urban farming could be described as a way of re-inventing the town square – rather than being a symbol of man/nature as the 19th century town square was, it can be the actuality of man/nature. How can agriculture and architecture suggest a participation and interaction to a neighborhood as a means of revitalizing communal living? And finally where and how does this all begin? The answer to these questions will be solved through explorative schematic design, the next step in this ever-unfolding process of defining place.



1. Main Street, Grady, Iowa
2. Main Street, Grady, Iowa
3. Main Street, Grady, Iowa
4. Main Street, Grady, Iowa
5. Main Street, Grady, Iowa
6. Main Street, Grady, Iowa
7. Main Street, Grady, Iowa
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10. Main Street, Grady, Iowa
11. Main Street, Grady, Iowa
12. Main Street, Grady, Iowa
13. Main Street, Grady, Iowa
14. Main Street, Grady, Iowa
15. Main Street, Grady, Iowa

Reliquary II

Person I

What are those pictures for
You know the neighborhood
My gram lived there thirty years
She still there
They took six years
That house needed to go
That's my sister
We have to take her son to the older school
Small town would be nice
Shops, stores, places to eat
Barber would be nice
There's so much garbage
These kids need to be here
I don't like them up there
There's nowhere for them to run
There's nowhere for them to play
Yeah, no ball playing-
They trip and fall over there
The farm is nice
Kids need to have something to learn

Something to know

Every neighborhood needs a dollar store

Gotta have one

Person II

Where are you looking

Oh my God

How strange

You are the third person this week

I grew up there

It was so nice

There was a barn

It was red

We would run around

I had a birthday party

Lots of children

I went there

It was different then

In November

I haven't seen it

I try to drive by

I had an old picture

I may have misplaced it

Whose got the brightest lawn

Different values

An individual creates the energy

That does not make a community

Share and interact with neighbors

Gardening in history

Students want to be involved

Family trees

Program Statement

Project Identification:

My project begins to identify place through architecture. Simply the neighborhood off John R. and Six Mile is defined through the direct relationships between the people, the events and the place. Diagrammatically I hope to show that the natural and social characteristics of the neighborhood begin to express what the neighborhood should become. My program will also consist of revitalizing the existing neighborhood, which will incorporate infill housing, new housing, commercial and retail functions, agriculture and open/recreation spaces.

Articulation of Intent:

The overall goals of my intervention associate the direct relationship of architecture to place, as described in my thesis. The intention, through architecture, is that people define their place, which may be contained in the architecture. This neighborhood will become a definable node of population, agriculture and self-sustainability. The neighborhood communicates to the world that it is a self-livable, self-workable, self-entertaining community that acts as a community. More specifically the neighborhood can begin to re-create itself by analyzing particular aspects of nature and the residents. Common historical features and functions have sustained life, and continue to sustain life. Barbershops, restaurants, gardens, general stores, hardware stores, markets, shoe repair stores, etc. communicate nostalgia, "a longing for home", with the commonality and regularity (in the sense that all livable functions can be found within a newly developed neighborhood) for living. The goal of the project is to construct a neighborhood, not through redevelopment, but rather, through the process of

investigating revitalization and memory. This neighborhood is in a “suburban context”, but thought of as urban. Yesterday’s view of Detroit urban life is not synonymous with today’s view of urban life. The way Detroit is changing has resulted in a new hybrid condition of “neighborhood”. Today neighborhoods found in this urban setting need to create a new vision for urban/suburban living.

Enumeration of Actions:

Service - through and in the people, working together to revitalize themselves through their community and neighborhood. The community growth comes from the service and cooperation each could partake in improving growth in a communal neighborhood.

Play – the actions of the neighborhoods will involve childhood play and adult play – to occupy time. The notion of play spawns from the “no ball playing” signs that are posted around Greenfield Elementary School. The opportunity for play is now important to express open space.

Work – Creates a relationship to typologies, a reflection on that individual neighborhood and community.

Live – this is their place; the entirety is what they call their home.

Educate – the existing school found within the neighborhood will also ask the question of relationship to the neighborhood.

Grow – The goal, and process of greenscape will be the mediator that becomes a part of everyday living, as a focus of revitalized urban living.

Tend – There are people that will not call building their work, but rather, the state of the neighborhood becomes their building.

Encapsulate – The nature of the neighborhood is to contain a life for themselves, who they are; quite the same way the fence speaks of individuality.

Ownership – People take care of their community because they feel more responsible for the things they own rather than the things that are provided for them. If they are developing and cultivating their own land and infrastructure, they are more likely to respect and care for it.

Communicating – In a non-utopian, yet heterotopian, semi-communal neighborhood, where interaction is a part of the architecture, and addresses each person externally.

Defining – Not physically, but intangibly creating an edge that speaks of crossing into a defined place, and that is expandable.

Individuality – Becomes a notion that communicates community from the micro scape of the individual.

Enumeration of Actions (micro):

Barber – displaying – as a verb that begins to introduce the idea of work on display. The barber's function is to cut hair, where the occupants can view the person getting their hair cut, the same as the person that is getting their hair cut can see themselves in the mirror – on display. This is a more descriptive word for the commercial typology.

Art Gallery – browsing – the goal for this begins to create a setting for the individual browser. Exterior/Interior is a focus as a relationship to the commonality of pursuing...creating a newer typology that reflects art as a means of self-communal identification. There will be one designated area for this type of gallery, but the idea that this will be confined is incorrect. The opportunity of exterior activity, entertainment, and gallery space can hopefully emerge throughout the site.

Parks – relax – a common, private, public, playful, relaxing place. This can be the focus point for greenscape, which can act as a tie between occupants, adults and children, and buildings.

Single family home – entertaining – this acts as a container for the individual's place.

Housing in this context can begin to break the plane of traditional housing. But as a means of revitalization, housing typologies will begin to express exterior functions, self-characteristic functions, and pedestrian friendly interaction. The site will incorporate around 20 single-family homes, about 1200sqft each. The homes will be arranged in a communal pattern to promote non-edged properties and give the notion of place through physical community and neighborhood. Each home will be a basis for the site and consists of living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, and two to three bedrooms.

Farmer's market – cooperating – This can become a very literal function of what the interaction of the community can produce. A farmer's market can invite outsiders into the neighborhood, but in doing so, the neighborhood becomes a more definable place acting on the activities the neighborhood creates. The site will include a farmers market that is located in the commercial area of the site and incorporates the adjacent building.

Streetscape – organic – Using "the Natural Image" to connect man-made with nature.

The idea that greenspace and greenscape interact with the occupants, it also begins to define layout through natural grids and natural pedestrian community spaces. The community's goal is to adapt, grow, live, work, entertain, etc. as a whole. The idea of streetscape acts as a holistic society that has a cornerstone of agriculture.

Site Data:

The quantitative size of the site has no set property size or volume. The project incorporates the idea that this strategy may expand beyond the borders of this site, growing into neighboring areas. The topography is level on all sections of the site. The site is relatively open with abundant sunlight; agriculture should have sufficient sunlight to thrive. Soil conditions tend to be relatively unaffected by industrial toxins, the land has previously been occupied by residential uses. The climate and conditions pertaining to weather are normal for Michigan and the Detroit area weather.

Program Quantitative Summary:**Housing:**

The “architecture” of this project includes the paths, parks, and open space as well as the physical built architecture. The housing will incorporate public and private spaces, which includes parking, pedestrian paths, and municipal paths. The commercial strip will include pedestrian paths, public parking and public access, and exterior spaces for dining, shopping, entertainment, gallery space and recreation. The overall major section of the project concerns the housing. The housing on this site will be identified as single-family housing. In addition to what exists there will be an additional sixty homes built. The housing types will incorporate an internal volume that contains three bedrooms, bathroom, living room, dining room, kitchen, hall and porch. The housing will involve some type of exterior porch and/or canopy or pergola type covering. The other components of my site will include several rehab commercial and retail projects. Originally on the approximately 378,000 sqft. (8.7 acre) site, there were approximately 239 houses, typically small shotgun houses that included a similar program as previously

stated. Today within the same square footage there are approximately 26 houses (about 15 occupied).

Commercial:

The two existing commercial buildings will be reused internally, and, externally, will involve some new construction. The first abandoned existing building is 4,096 sqft. and includes an existing restroom and one small 225sqft. office. Attached to this building will be an exterior gallery space of about 4,100sqft. This gallery includes about 300sqft. of elevated paved surfaces with a structural frame acting as a back stop to an adjacent garden. Also fixed to the rear of this building is a seasonal exterior barbershop and tool shed. The barbershop consists of four barber stools and tables, about 384sqft. The tool shed is approximately 294sqft. The existing building will remain and be used as a younger adult community/recreation center. The center includes a half-court basketball court, day classes, tutoring and other after school activities. There is a second commercial building that exists adjacent to this building. The second building is an occupied two-story space that is used as a community center. The space is approximately 770sqft. per floor, with an attached proposed farmer's market. The farmer's market will incorporate exterior gallery space, while using the interior of the existing commercial building as a community hall. The exterior market totals 1,920sqft., with approximately 640sqft. being covered on the rear of the building by a canopy.

Recreation:

On the East side of the site the school will have additions of two half-court basketball courts, a softball field and planned open spaces. Some of the other planned open spaces include park/green space and spaces for exercise and daily youth outdoor

activities. This project is thought of as a large revitalized eco-village type design. In addition to buildings, a large value is being placed on greenspace as well. The “open” public space incorporates approximately 110,000sqft.

Agriculture:

The orchards contain 96,000sqft. (2.2 acres), and farming is approximately 3,900sqft. (.09 acres). Also incorporated into this are larger areas of wildflower, corn and vineyards. These programs will each include approximately 6,500 sqft. (.15 acres). These programs will be mixed throughout the larger context of the site.

Technical Systems Analysis:

The technical aspects of this project will definitely be kept light. The housing types will involve smaller mechanical systems and can be kept within code requirements for building heights and area limitations. The commercial spaces are simply incorporating existing buildings while including new additions that may not require any form of HVAC systems.

General Area Relationship Diagram:

Relationships to buildings will be a key element in the design of the project. The overlapping of building-to-building will happen through the agriculture that grows externally. The programmatic aspect of this part of the project is as simple as knowing landscaping techniques and basic construction that will incorporate walls, rails, fences and paths. Relationships of the buildings are completely separate from each other, in that each building functions as its own entity, containing its own character. The criteria for this section of the program tends to remain quite schematic. The general relationships of

buildings and housing can be seen through the existing structures and street grids, as described in the schematic design section.

Bubble diagram of program:

The red is marking the commercial areas of the site, which include the gallery, community recreation center, farmer's market and community center. The green distinguishes the possibility for residential growth. The pink marks the area of park. The farm, wildflower, corn and vineyard are marked by purple. The blue marks the areas of planned activities, basketball courts, softball fields and open spaces. The yellow marks the existing school zone, and the brown is marking the areas of orchard.



Bubble diagram of intended site

Schematic Design

The program extends into physically making a new condition for this neighborhood. The neighborhood attempts to grow with paths, houses, community centers, a gallery, a farmer's market, farms, alleys and orchards. The design of this site grows over time, a growth that is intended to continue to adapt and expand as the site develops. The site develops through a progression of dialog that relates user to "place", and defines "place" to a community.

How can place begin to define a "real" architectural experience? There are several elements that are defined through the intervention of discovery, through architecture, as it pertains to place; the place of the person, their events, their history, their discovery, their actions, their play, their archeology. Investigations in an experience or place tends to open new views about digging, tearing, fraying, and scratching the surface that thrives for an opportunity for growth and re-growth. Historically the neighborhood in which this "place" happens, offers the opportunity for discovery and investigation.

The precept of architecture happens within the surface of the existing, an archeology to uncover the past through the present. How can architecture begin to relate to itself in brownfields? How can dead space be reversed and seen as living? How can the communication of the natural world extend the opportunity of growth into architecture and through architecture?

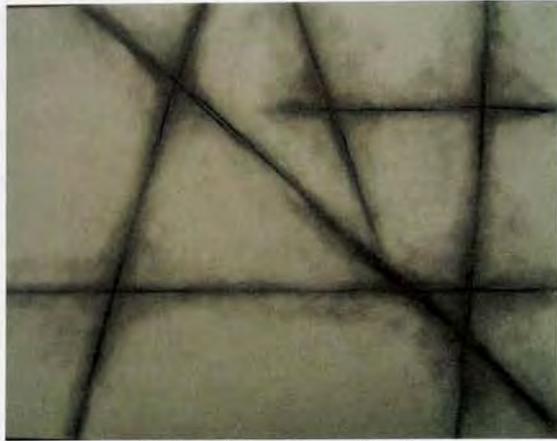
The basic concept begins within the movement of people and time. Paths are present throughout the site. There are manufactured paths, municipal paths, and unnatural paths; unintentional paths of the people that occupy and interact with the site.

These are the people that integrate their energy through a field, or house, or alley. How does the idea of path begin to exaggerate the unintentional happenings that exist within the site? How can a designer represent their ideas for a place in a physical representation, if part of the idea is to let the neighborhood – re – grow itself over time? As a child walks with their parent from school, the child's concentration is focused elsewhere from their parents. The child wonders what it is like to be older, wiser, taller, stronger, faster, and more responsible. The communication of the child and the parent to the earth differs in size, weight, motion, repetition, etc. How can an exaggeration play into the notion that child and parent interact within the same space, in the same direction differently?

Typology, edges and territory affect the role people have within the path. How can human interaction be manipulated through the role of architecture? As a path extends through an undulation of time and space, the parent's path could become more worn and deepen, while the child's path wears less. The opportunity of grade change lies within the extension of path as it moves over the site; the child's perception can participate at a different level with the parent. The parents and child can share the same spectacle, they can move together within a similar perspective of a common place.



Abstraction of the path in intersection



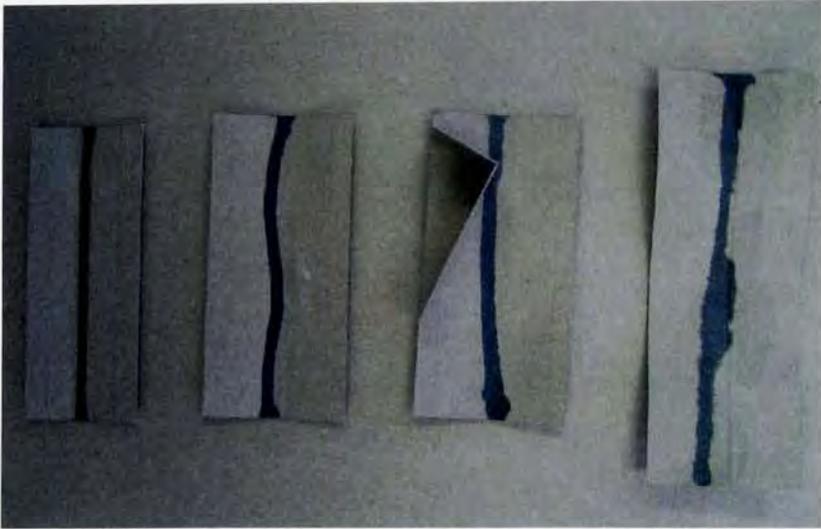
Abstract drawing of paths



Plan of interactive path model



Perspective of path



Path study: ink interventions on movement and flow



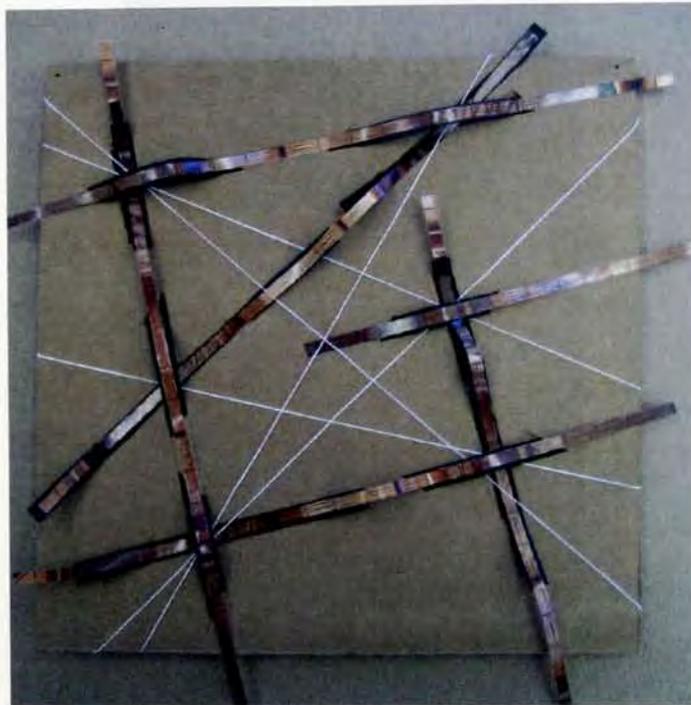
Metaphor of child/adult visibility



Hierarchical map of neighborhood zones and open spaces



Study of cuts in landscape



Paths with intersection relationships

How then does the path connect architecture within the physical structures? The opportunity of growth and pattern lie within agriculture: the extension of the earth through human interaction, nature seems to grow out of the footprints. As the path

continues along a certain route the vegetation can extend upwards and attach itself to housing, gardens or fences. The boundary is disconnected from a pre-conception of overgrowth and path. Humans have created a new layer that exists only because of a previous one. These new layers will continue to grow through the archeology of present existence and use. The layers will continue to build upon themselves creating a new archeology for the future. This idea is not meant as a reestablishment or erasure, but the idea of layering upon existing is intended as an opportunity for redefining and reconstituting of new life.



The path condition next to existing housing condition



Overall zones, paths and orchards



Study of existing open spaces to paths



Study of intersection and path

The streets of the site have become dead and unused; the vacant land has become open and free territory. How does this effect of oppositions tell a new story of what could happen? The idea of growth can be formulated through examining the farming that takes place on the site presently. The farm is an opportunity for the “dead” land to grow; when in reality the land is “alive”. The “dead” belongs to the municipalities and streets.

The streets have become the haven for lifeless activity. The decay of the street has created new life for the land. As a reaction to this effect, orchards can be planted in the place of the streets. The layout and orientation of the streets can be remembered while again creating an evolution. The orchards extend to add a new layer over the paths as both a connection and passage through the site. The orchards extend the farm and stitch the neighborhood together through agriculture.

Agriculture through the site is intended abstractly as an idea of re-growth and interaction. The aim of extending paths and new skins of nature is not to deter people or even to direct people, but invites people to create for themselves a new layer of growth and continual change.

There are subtle layers that occur throughout and within the site as seen in previous analysis. The layers that exist, and are intended to be exaggerated as a celebration of what exists; they are the paths, electrical lines, the tree lines, the zones of business, residential and school, the habitable houses, the inhabitable houses, the removed houses, the streets, the sidewalks, the farms, the open space, the empty space, the living space and the dead space. These layers will begin defining new architecture and agriculture as a connection.

The zones that exist in the neighborhood no longer define themselves through the structures that exist, but rather by the density, energy and activity level in and around the site. The western portion of the site contains the commercial, the central portion of the site contains the residential and farming, and the eastern portion of the site contains the school. How do new layers relate and weave into these dissimilar zones, and how can a

new layer connect that weave? Therein lies the chance for architectural connections. The paths only exaggerate the existing conditions; the zones define real, new conditions.

School:

The zone that is associated with the school communicates a new layer of younger activity levels and energy. The school itself does not become an impedance on the neighborhood, but acts as a funnel for young life. The areas surrounding the school are contained within the orchards and streets. The new areas invite new routes of travel to progress and grow throughout. To interact with the idea of impeding on the proposed intangible paths as a layer, one could simply manipulate that intention and propose planned spaces. Basketball courts, softball fields and canopies for outdoor classrooms extrude from the paths and the topography. The school zone communicates a new condition of internal knowledge and exterior play.



Plan of Eastside of site, school, fields and courts



House:

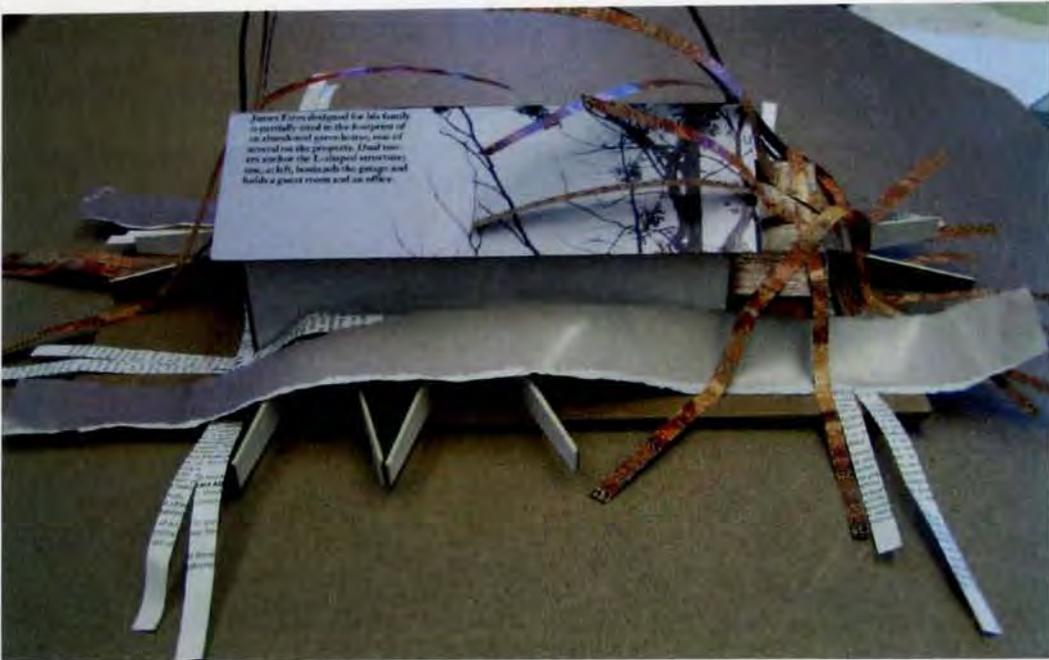
How does the house, as it exists now, tell a story? A house that was built in the 1940s lies abandoned and alone. The house contains personality and interacts as if there were fifty houses stacked against it. How people move in and around the space that

surrounds a house, whether occupied or not, is as natural as the weathering of the house. People react to architecture differently. But people react to a house similarly, unintentionally. The approach of the house expresses the opportunity to study the house; the stare of the eye connects with the porch and moves upward towards the ridge. Then as a person closes in on the house the door becomes the focus. The front door of the house acts as a magnet for the user and passerby. How often do people observe their house from the sides? How often do people maintain their house from the side yard or backyard first, to front? The public focus of the house is the front. If this is the case, then the private focus of the house is the back. Why does the back of the house then seem so impersonal and unoriginal? In a neighborhood where the back door is the public focus, what happens to the houses orientation, design, and intention? The sides of the house are meant as purely unseen elements in this typical Detroit neighborhood. What if there were no houses to the left or right? How does that affect the house's orientation, design, and intention? The portals of the house are the windows, but not every window is considered a portal. Just as from the outside the private rooms' windows remain private, but the public rooms' windows become public. The people inside the house become a show of their own. The only connection that the roof makes to the human is none but a simple extension of the horizon of tree to house to tree to house.



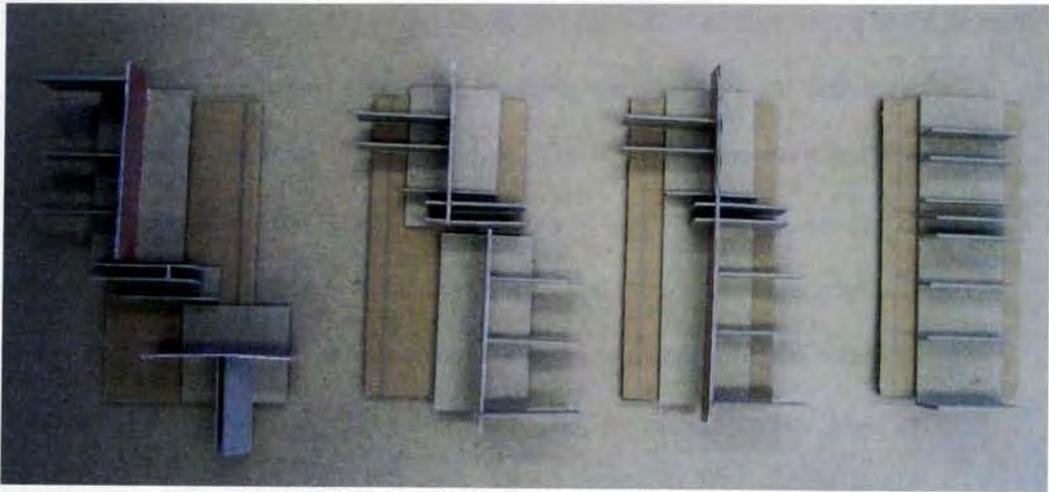
Study of human relationships with exterior of existing house



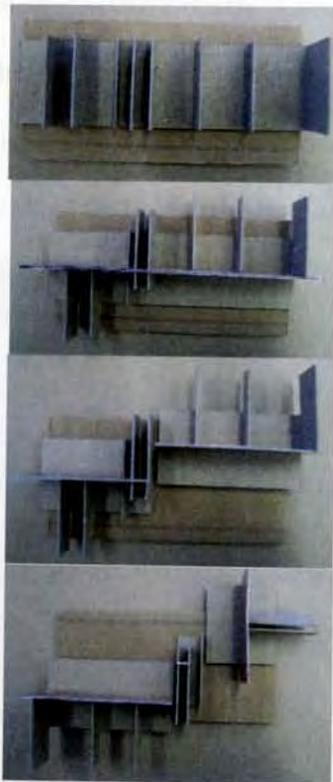


Ideally, the new house would need to accept new functions in order to relate the form. Through a series of investigations the house can be seen as being reviewed from several different arrangements. Taking a prototypical house and breaking it down into its simplest programmatic forms one could begin to understand how an existing house can arrange itself to take on a new idea. The house can be manipulated through a division into public and private spaces, in addition to the spaces that are shared. The spaces are broken into equal shares and are then elevated to exaggerate the division between public and private. The space can be thought of as separate extending planes in which containment happens. The containments can be pulled apart and again exaggerated through scale and height, wherein the private containment is pushed back into the rear of the home and the public is kept in the public realm, agreeing with the exterior. The spaces can further be manipulated by varying the orientation of the containments to begin to extend the notion of interconnection of one unit to the next. The entire breakdown can

exists within the same programmatic definitions of the typical house, and further be manipulated to adapt into a form.



Public vs. private programmatic studies



Architecture searches for a means to connect itself with the earth and the sky.

Nature plays a large role in the communication of man-made/manufactured to the natural world. A forest can be thought of as chaotic and random, therefore nature could be said to be the same. Grass grows erratically, branches spread at will, but then does that necessarily constitute them as being random. The branch can be cut in half to reveal rings that are very orderly. The rings tell a story of age, weathering, life and death. Microscopically the branch is extremely orderly and programmatic, it grows, it eats, it drinks, and it reproduces new branches. The order to nature reverses, wherein nature articulates the architecture. At random nature happens around the new layer of architecture. The random layer can of course be manipulated to happen on the architecture. It too can then be used metaphorically as a means to create the architecture. The basic forms that exist within the building envelope can be seen as the rings in the branches of the trees. The form can anticipate that idea and begin to exaggerate it through rethinking the connection of the roof to the structure.



Study of roof relationship to house



Housing type that incorporates internal framing support structure



Study of agriculture as is tends to grow on roof structure

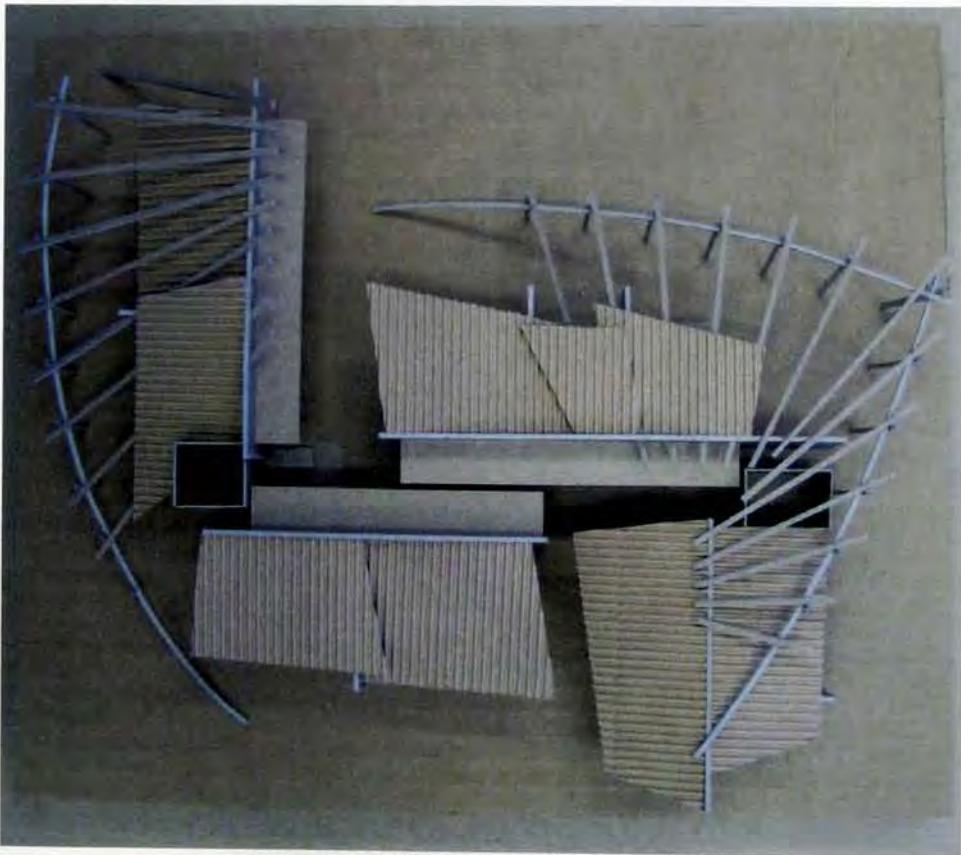


Branching roof frame, with typical programmatic form beneath



The new layer of housing can begin to take literal shape through a series of manipulations that introduce a structure. Growing from the earth and extending upwards at random introduces an idea of materiality and form. The materiality of the form mimics the natural idea of growth and chaotic growth patterns. The structure of timbers grows to meet a corresponding timber that connects back to the rigor of the program beneath. How can chaos in structure interact with the site? How are people affected by

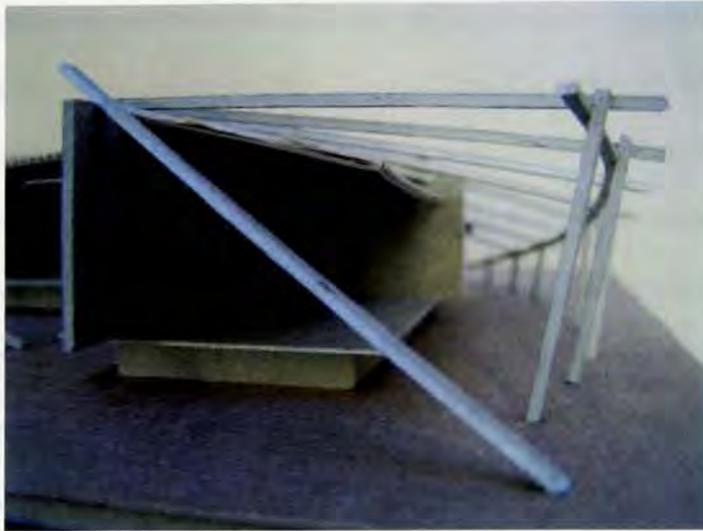
manipulating space, which can be interactive? One could say that the typical house has barriers of dead zones immediately surrounding it that people tend to veer away from. What if the architecture forces people to veer into those zones? How do people redefine a space when they are manipulated to enter? The intention of the chaotic timber frame is to follow the path of the dead zone buffer and reacts to the notion of nature vs. randomness. The random frame mimics the form of the house and acts as a new layer that defines shelter and outdoor private space. These private spaces become apart of the holistic reality that these new typical layers of communal housing exist within an edge free zone. People again are given the opportunity to create paths of their own in an attempt to react to new boundaries and edges created by housing and orchards.



Plan of initially proposed housing type







Anticipating a new variation in housing, one could relate the search for place to a prototypical housing base type. Beginning with similar ideas, a study of the prototypical housing type (the shotgun house) can begin to communicate new housing conditions that relate public vs. private spatial layouts. The new housing types identify the idea of entrance in respect to the orchard being in the preexisting “front” of the house. The entrance can be thought of as neutral to the new housing types and located on the side of the house. This element creates a relationship of user to landscape, entrance to garden. The new housing type exaggerates the public spaces by metaphorically and physically exploding that portion of the house. This move creates a reach for the exterior space of the house, and creates elements of manipulation in material, texture and space. The house is thought of as an identification of user to site, intending the willingness of the user to create their own place, and create an expansion of themselves to site to house. Formally the houses communicate a disconnection for the typical housing type existing on the site, allowing for a new pragmatic deconstruction of the house. The new housing model repeats many preexisting ideas about the language of the house. The model

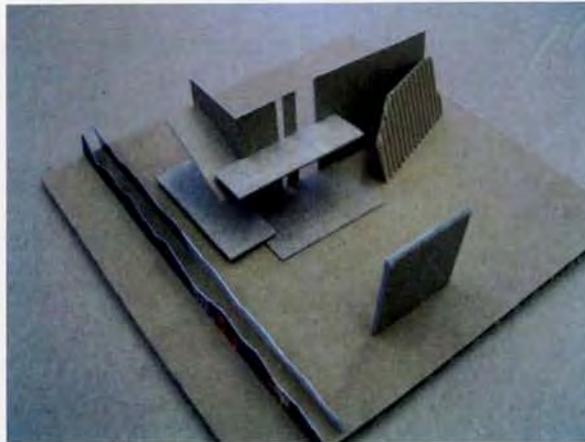
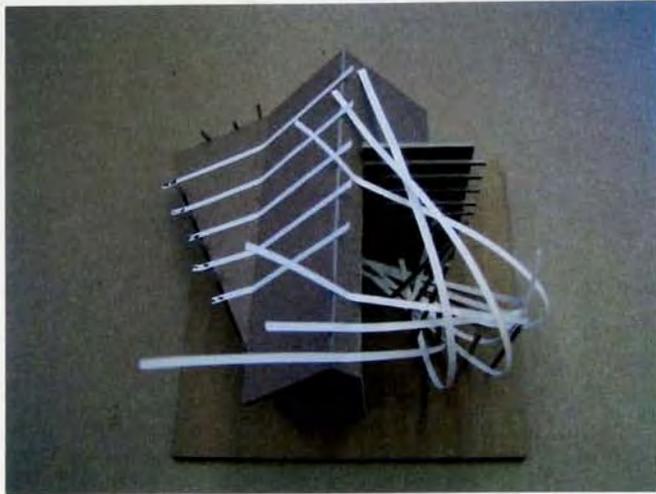
extends from floors that extrude from the voids that the house creates. Walls do not begin or end within the boundary of the floor. The roof acts as a shelter not an outline of the walls. The visibility of the house allows for light and air conditions that are otherwise unknown in most housing types. Overall the house becomes its own new entity for the user to define personally. The variation of the house only repeats itself within the base; overall the house varies per site, and per location. If surrounding conditions allow for a different prototypical housing type, then the variation on the new house will mimic itself to that base form.



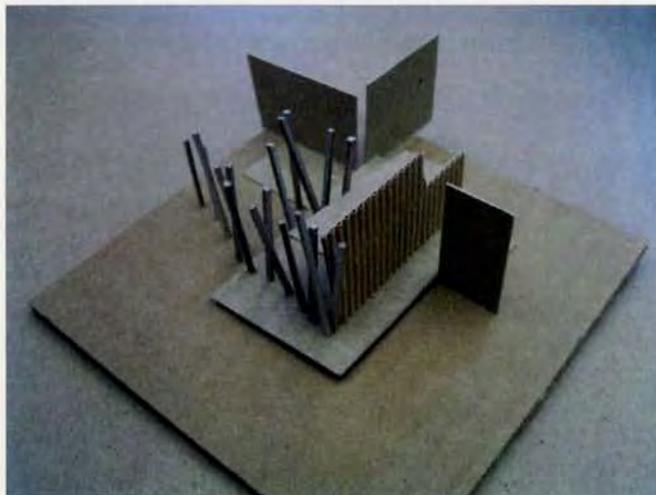
Abstraction of new housing condition



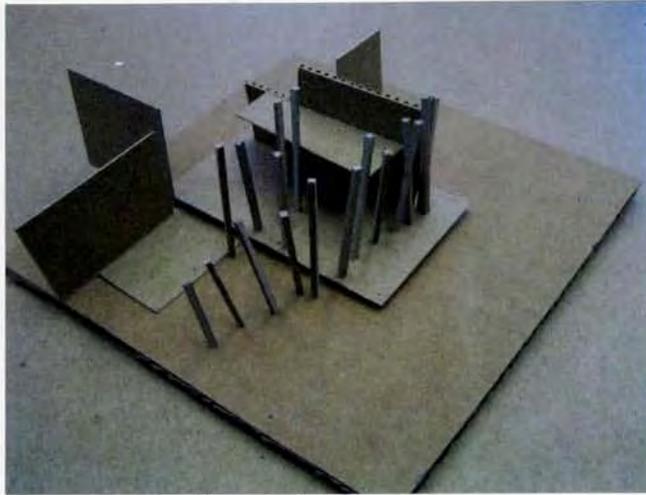
Metaphorical explosion of public space



Detail of new entrance condition



Detail, variation of public space



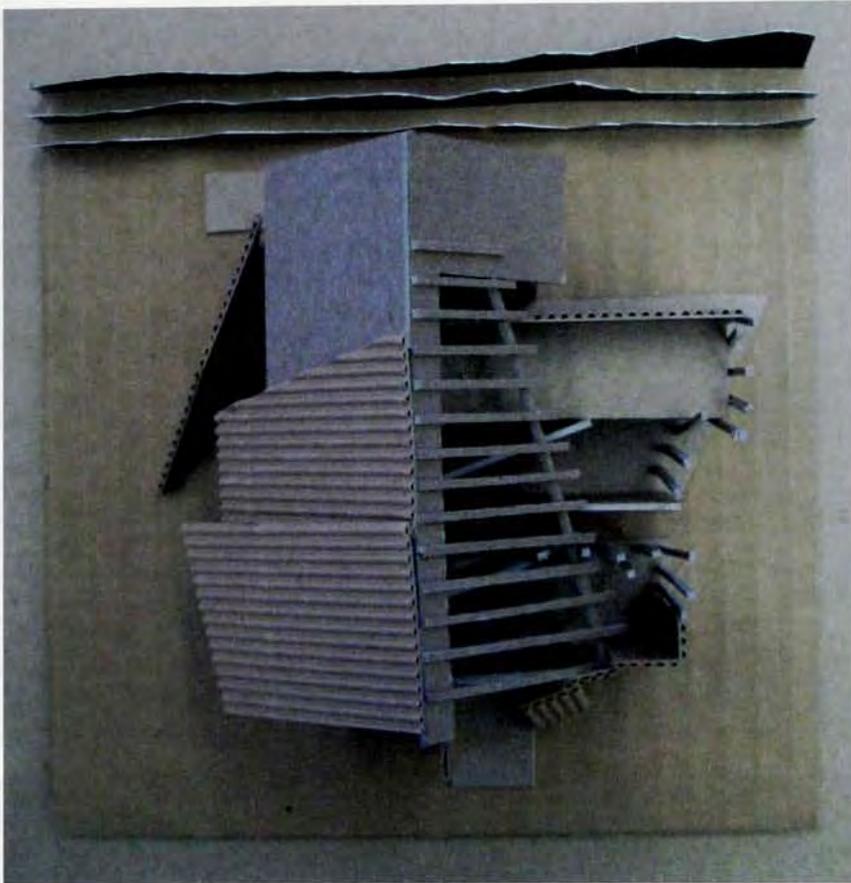
Detail, variation of public space



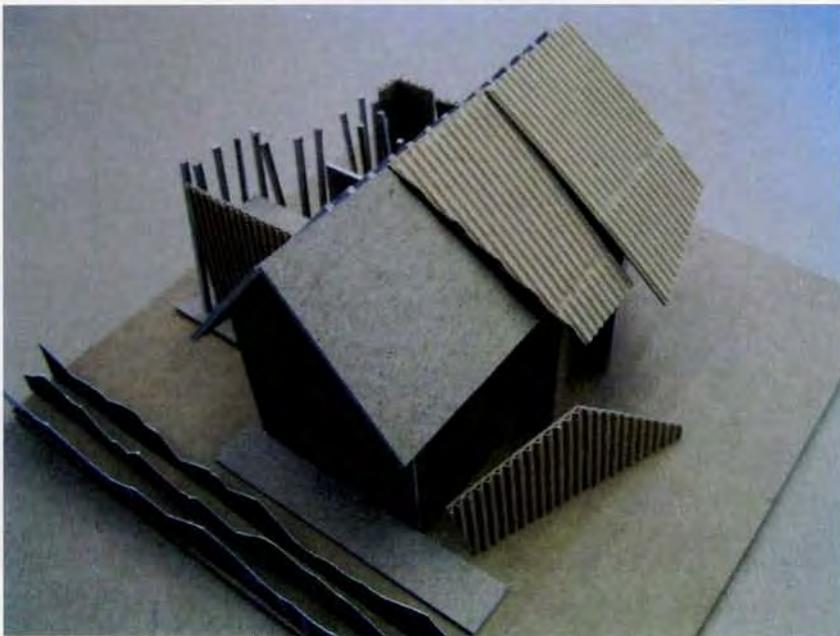
Detail, variation of public space

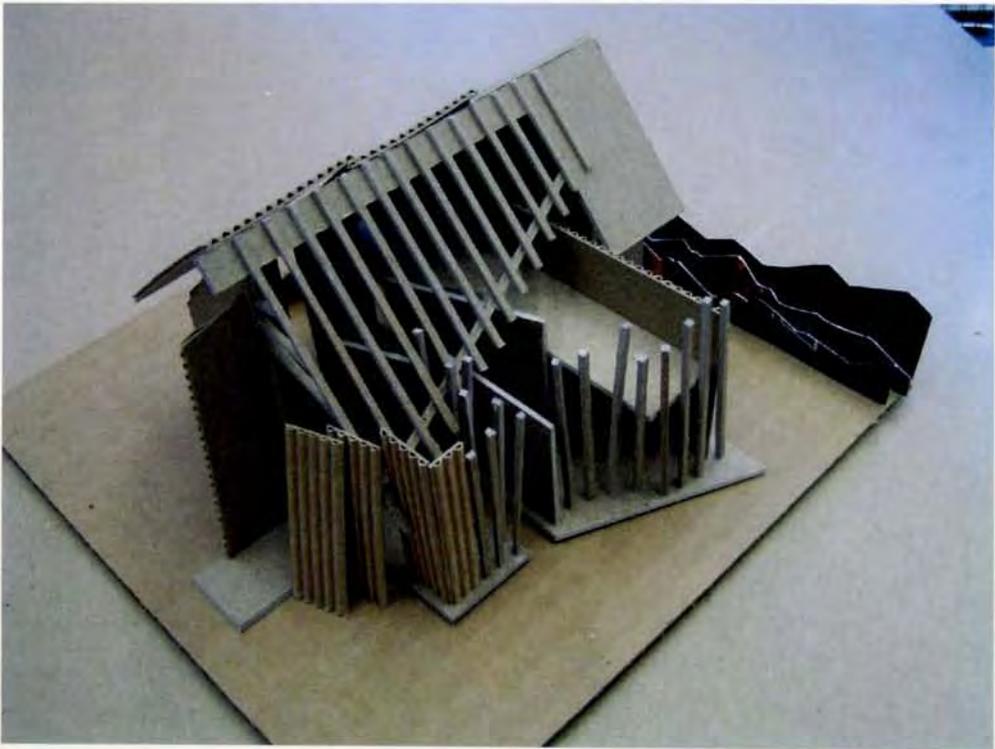
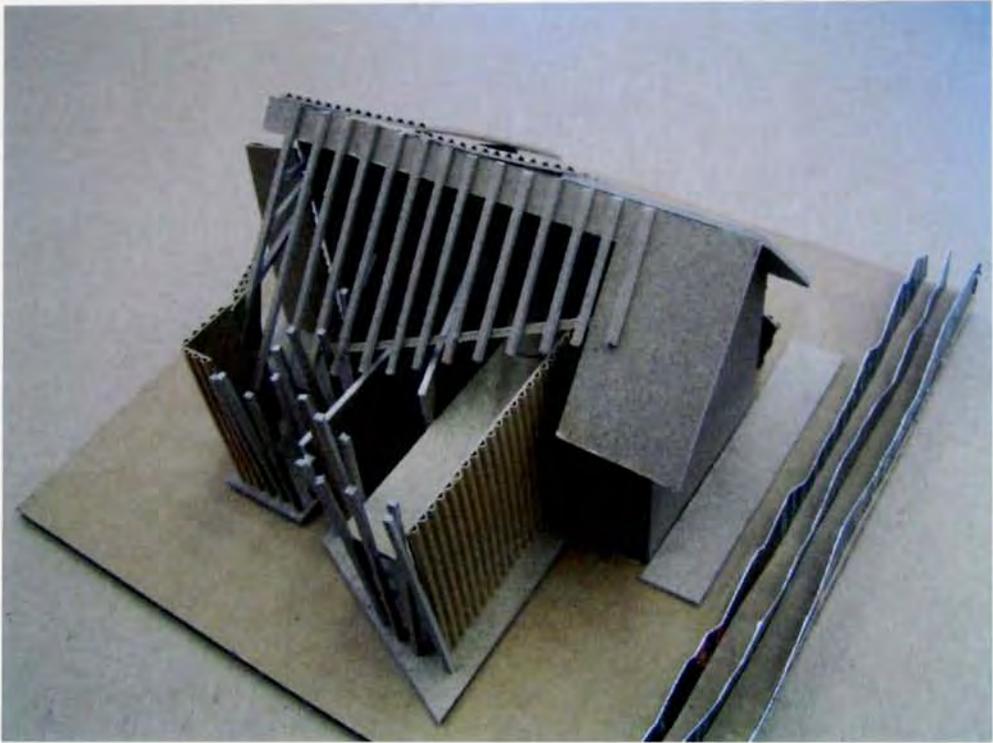


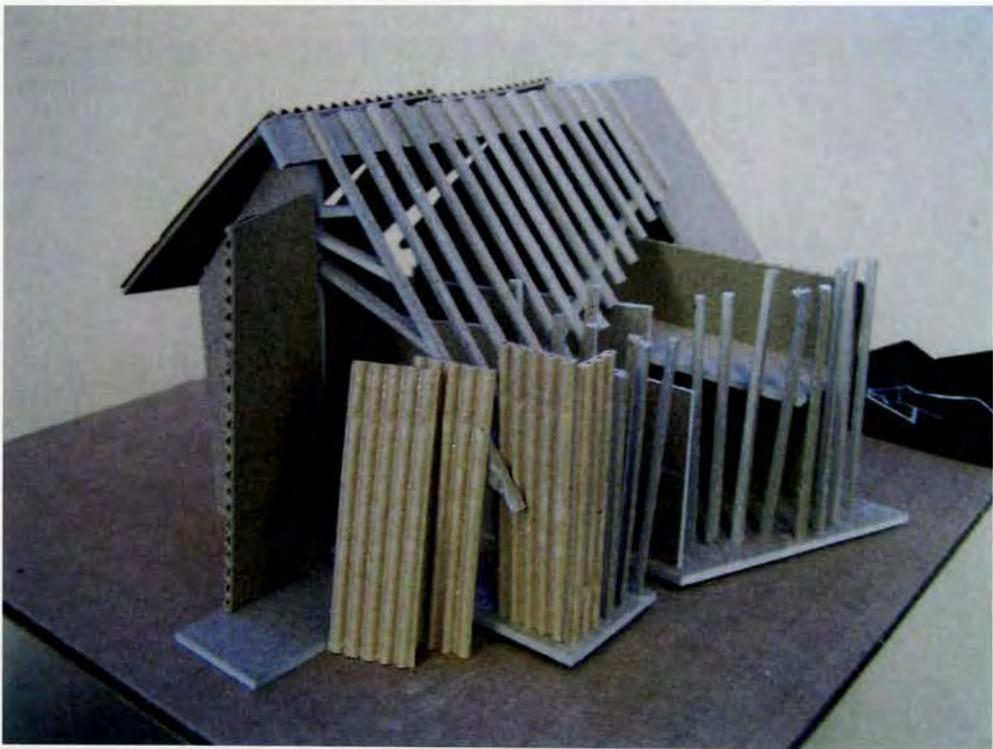
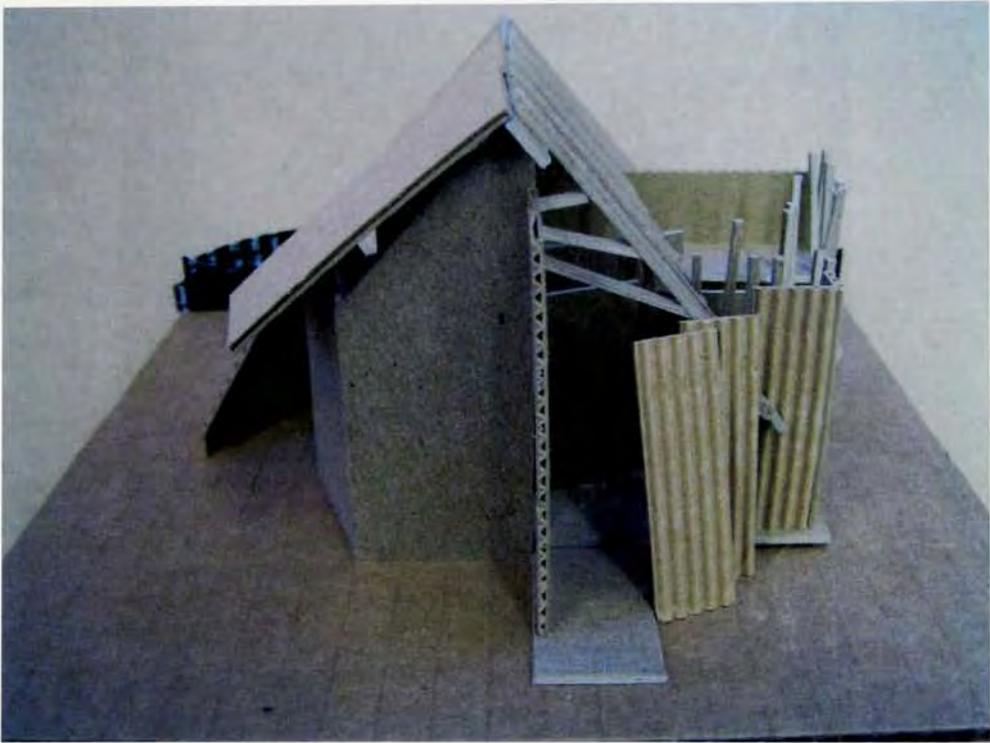
Detail, variation of public space



Plan view of new housing type

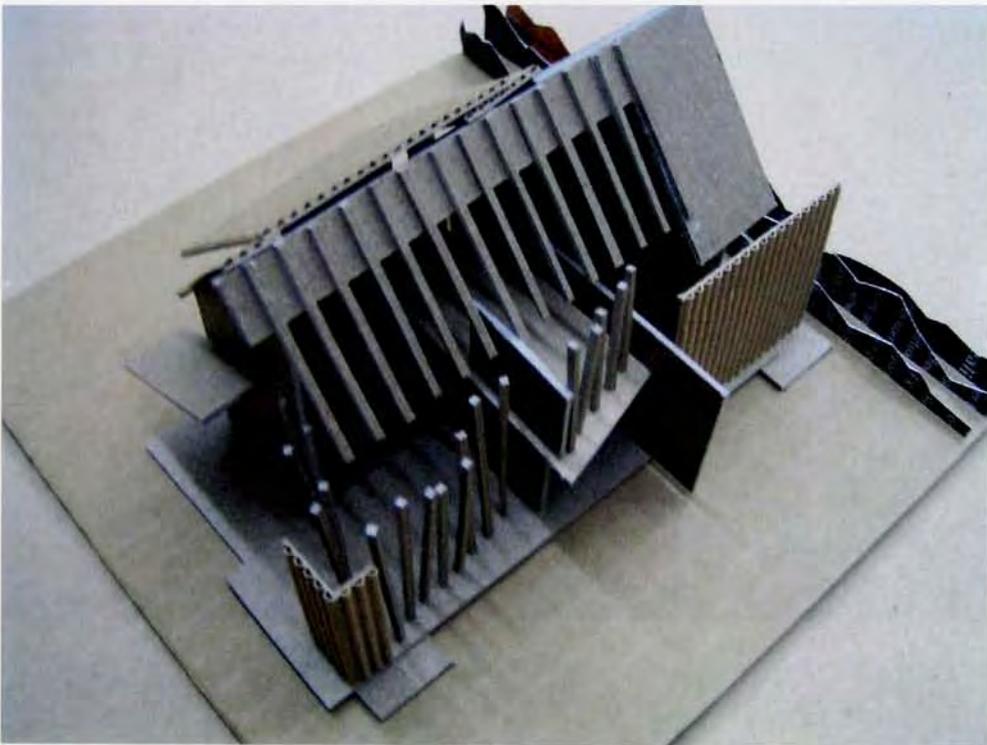








Second variation of new housing type



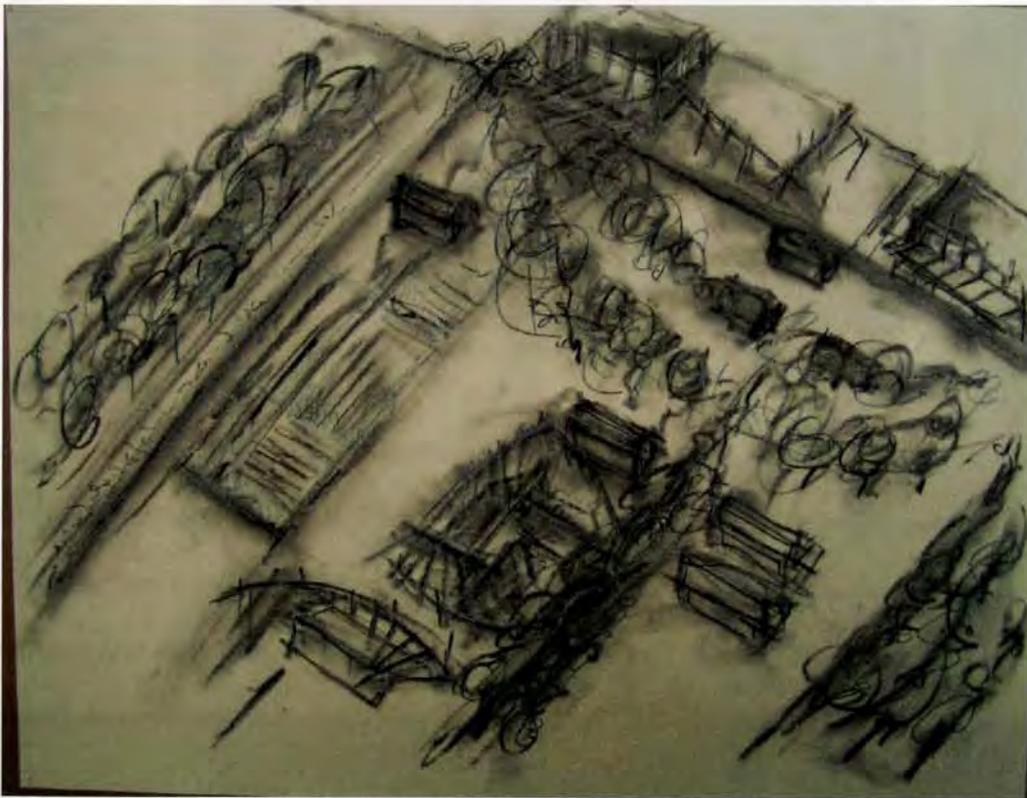


Partial site plan incorporating new housing types on left



Farm:

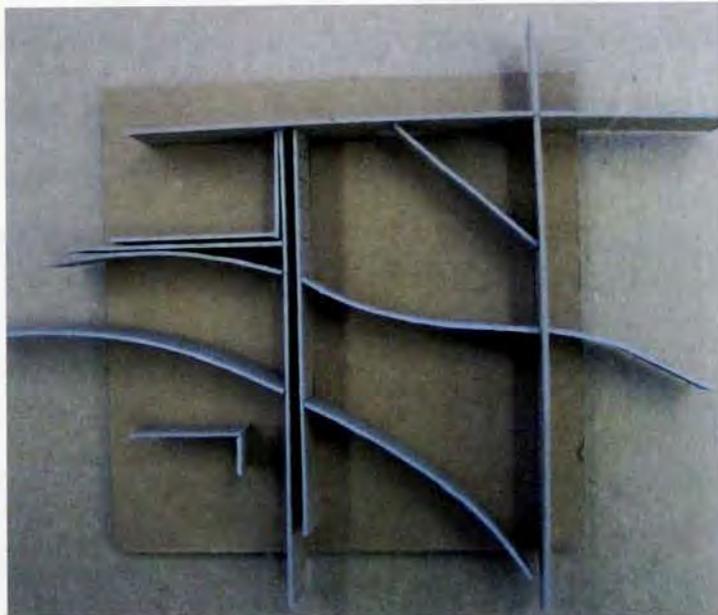
How then does agriculture and architecture blend to create a public space that extends the neighborhood outwards, yet pulls the focus inwards? Farming within the site produces a quality that the people of the neighborhood themselves share and express. The farming is the place that defines the people that live within the neighborhood. Like the new layers, which begin to suggest new adaptability of people to place, creating an unintentional definition for the people within the site. The farmer's market emits the values and qualities of the neighborhood to the common passer-by; it becomes a reaction of the neighborhood. Farming can be said to be the root of the neighborhood. The current residents reside because they are farmers at heart. The community expresses itself to the outside through its experience.



Sketch of partial area including farm, market, gallery and housing



First attempts incorporating café on gallery site

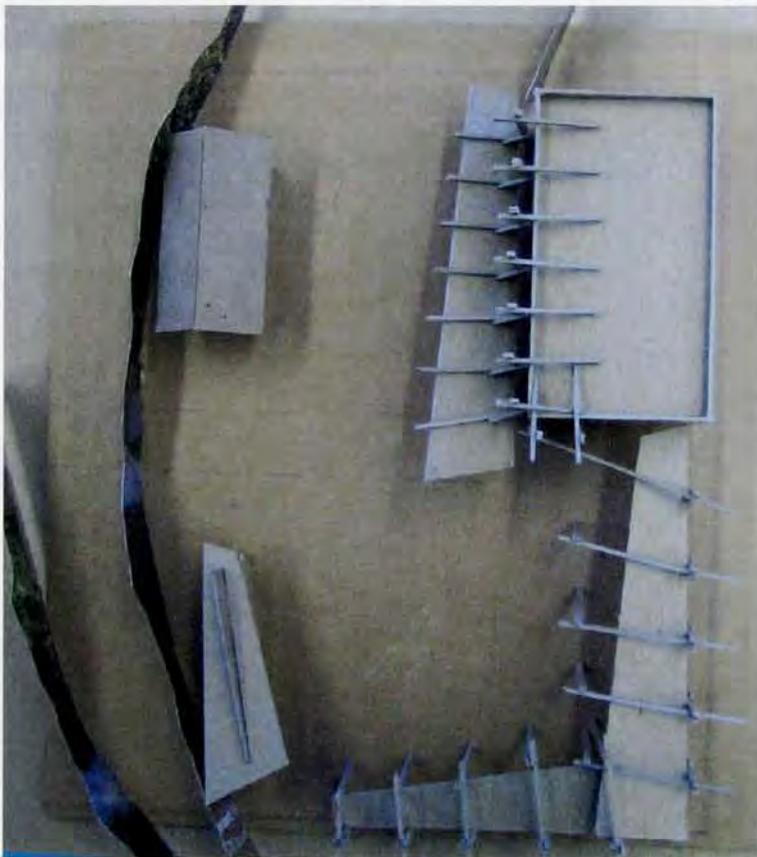


Pedestrian traffic analysis as it exists on open site

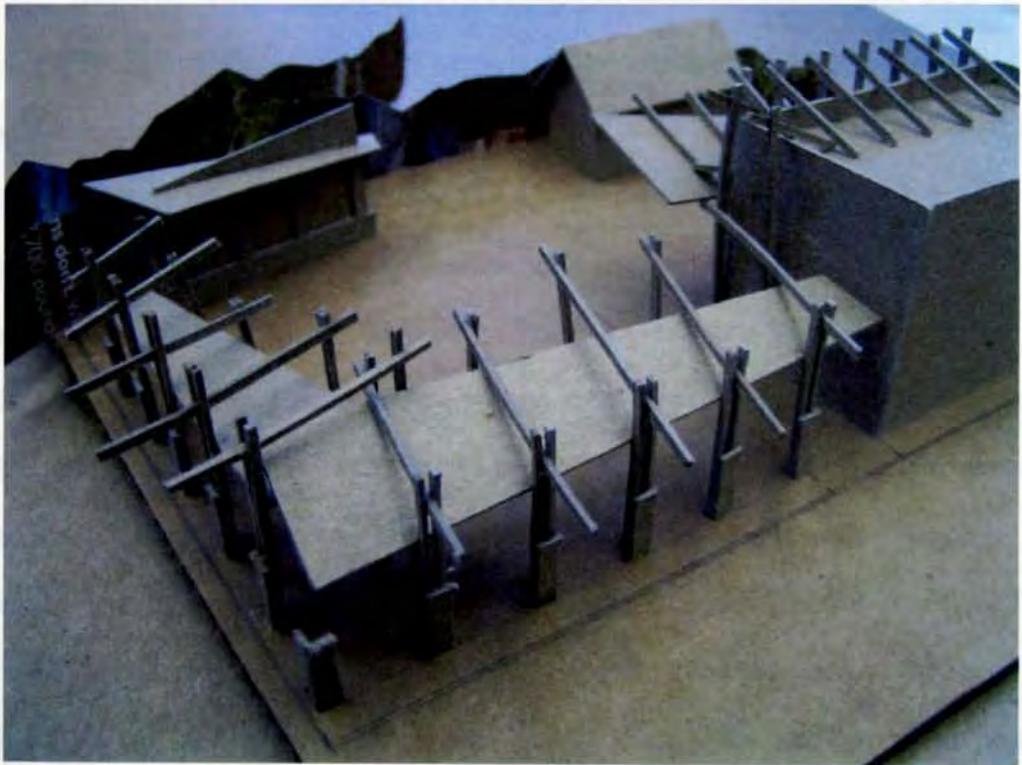
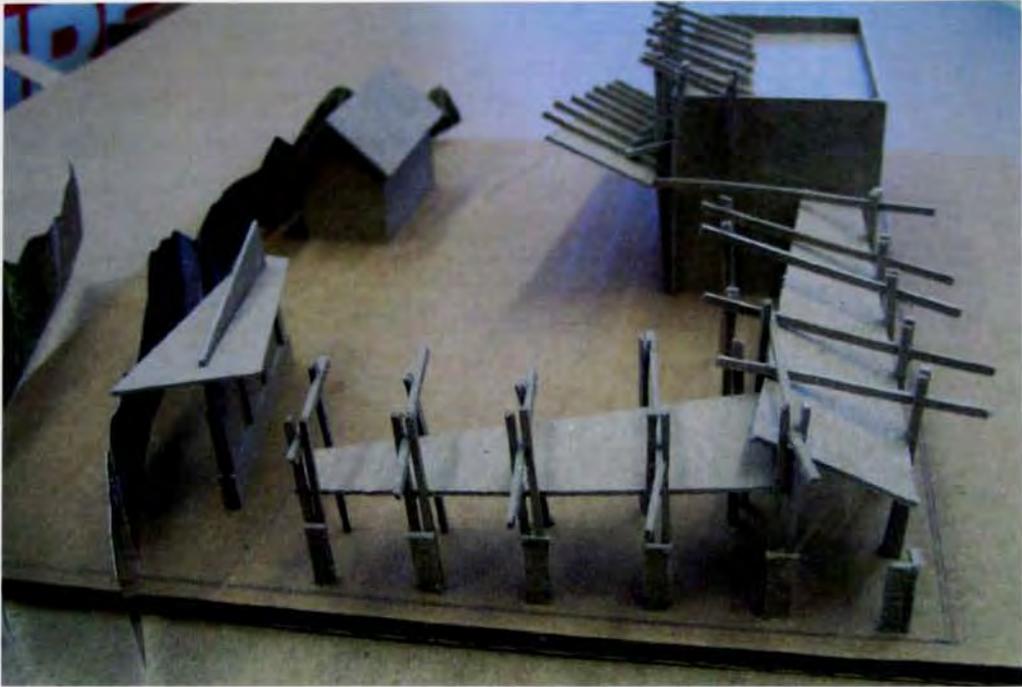
Commercial:

The farmer's market begins to address the idea of skins and extensions. How can the existing buildings be unaffected by new layers? How can these buildings become a part of the new layers, without being defined? The market on this site is located on John R. Street next to an existing community hall. The market wraps the buildings through extensions extruding from the ground. Adding a new skin covers the old skin, which produces vertical layering. The market then extends from the new skin as it wraps the

corner of the site. The market is traditionally seen as having a foundation that mimics and remembers the existing building, while keeping in context the idea of lightweight structural systems that do not cover the person, but instead interacts with the person through a natural chaotic energy growth. How does the market adapt to the existing structure? How can architecture produce a new condition as it pertains to inward focus? The intention of the market is to attract a traditional centralized area that contains the user, and then invites the user further onto the site. The market addresses the concern of space movements around the building and vacant lot. The movement can begin to translate into structural layout, layering the buildings while continuing wrapping the corner, wherein the user is then encompassed within the market.

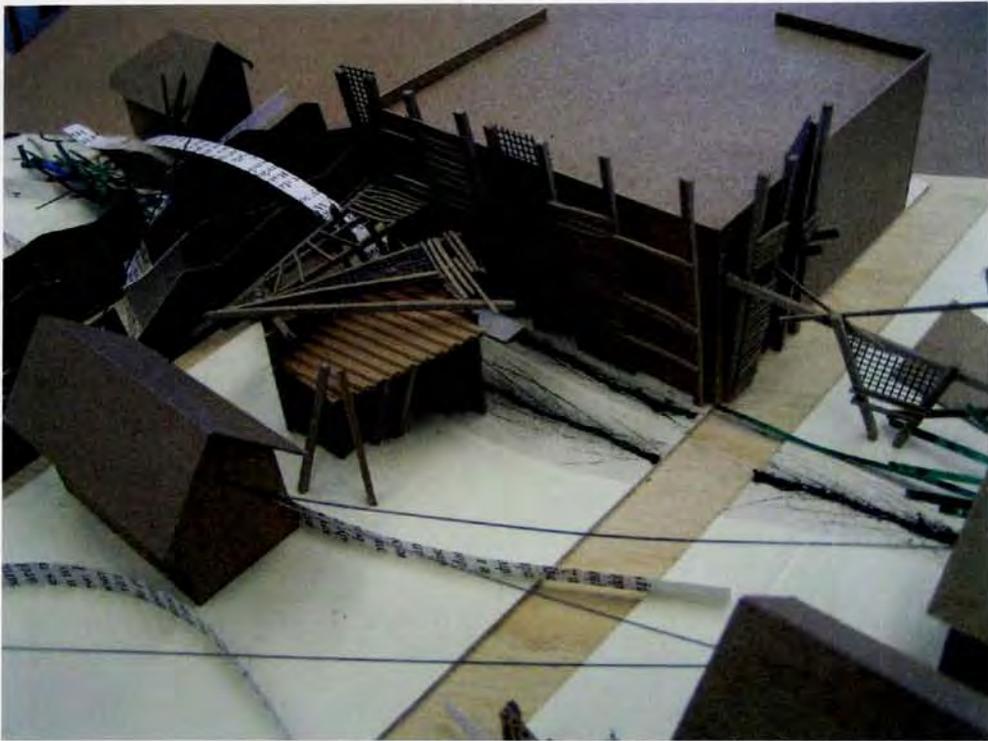


Farmer's market site





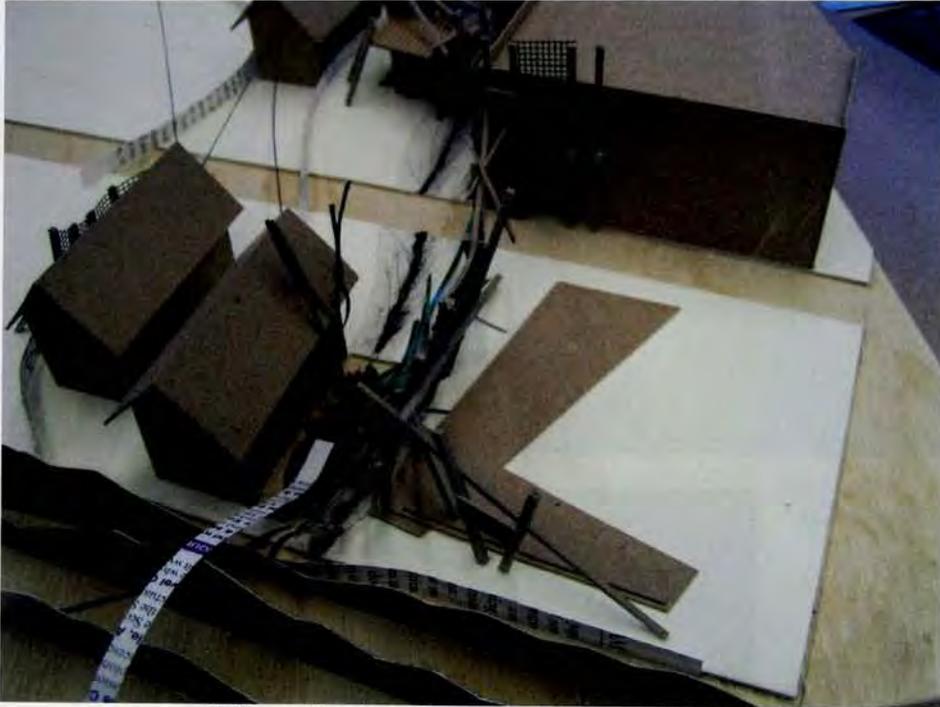
How does architecture define itself through the intersection of the path to public space? The gallery space that creates a new layer and opportunity of commercial life extends its circumstance into the path. The gallery is indented to address the forms of chaos as timbers fall randomly from the side of the building into a path as it pierces the landscape. The pierce becomes an extension of the path into a garden form, which can grow out onto an earthen form. The earthen form reacts as a foundation for a public “backstop” which creates an edge to the gallery, and balances the space from the adjacent skin wall. The skin that is wrapped on the existing recreation hall again falls opposite to the orchard. The timbers extend at random to form the exterior barbershop. The shop reacts to the notion of fraying from the building as it extends into the earth. The skin of the roof is clad with metal lath and horizontal wood lath. The lath acts as a lattice to control the light and the plant growth through the structure. The entire skin unfolds as a means of extension of growth through agriculture on and throughout the buildings.



Barbershop and tool shed



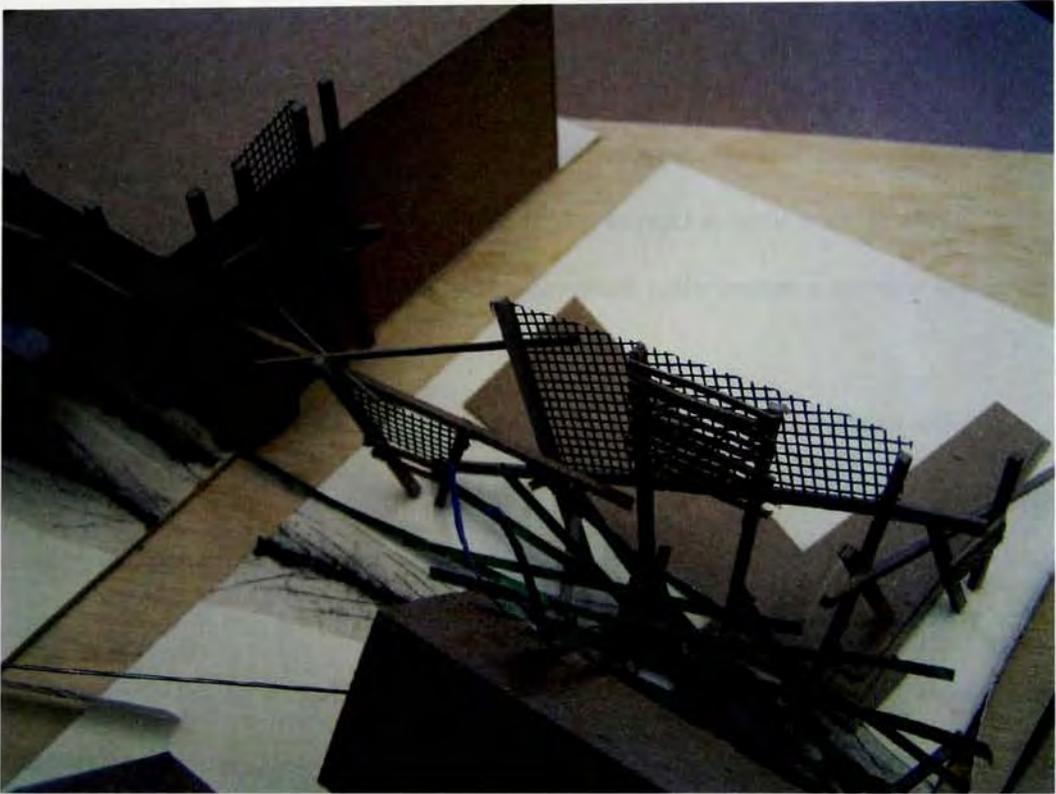
The path creates circumstances where it may extend vertically in the case of grade change and topology differences. The vertical extension creates random, rigid tentacles that are fastened with horizontal wood lath. The “backstops” create spaces that are intended to function for meditation and multiple purposes. How does this path manipulate the site? How can architecture literally grow from the newly formed layers?



Gallery, “backstop”, and exterior garden path

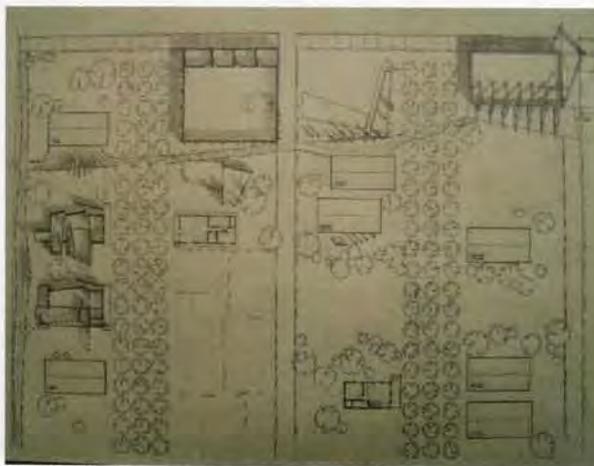


Gallery space with extruded “backstop”

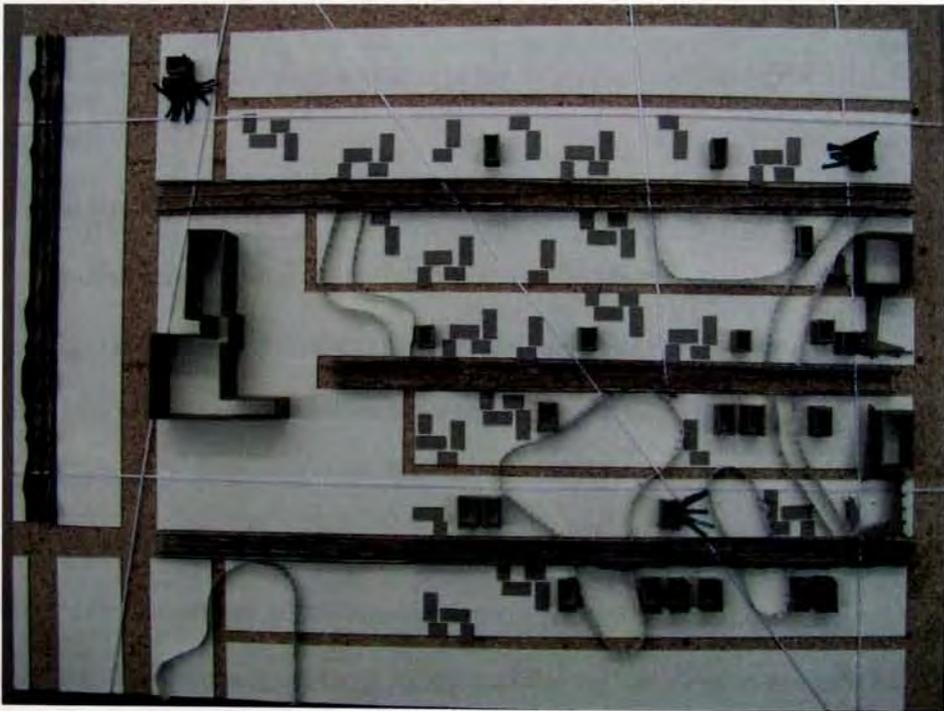
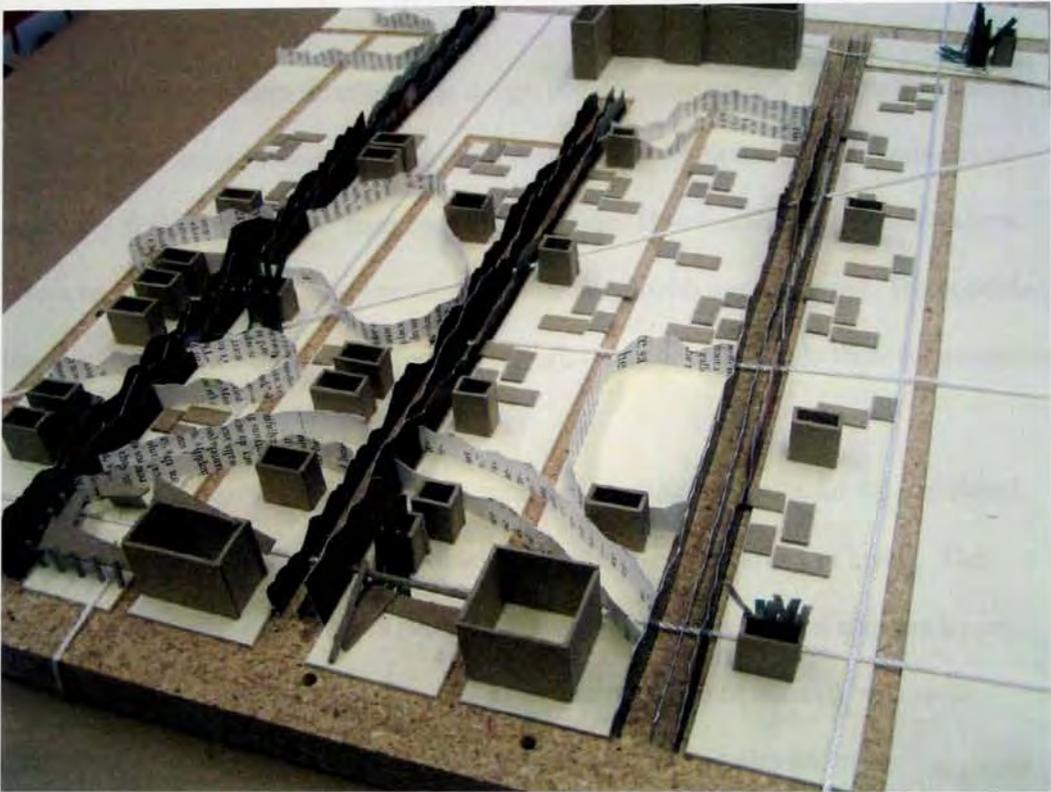


As a path grows it begins to take on the form of layering. The centrally used layer becomes most permanent. The edges are undefined and opportunity lies for future expansion. The residue of paths begins to fade where it become less used and deepens where it becomes more used. The path then begins to react to itself with the aid of persons and weathering. The proximity of many small paths creates a stronger center but more diffuse edges.

The concept that unfolds is a repetitive natural growth that influences self-communal maintenance and growth. The people within this site create their place through the existence and reminiscence they will leave. Architecture is just a vessel that shelters the people that are on the site. Without any current residents the site would diminish, only left for reestablishment of more micro layers. The people that live on the site contain their own idea of where their place is, and what it begins to communicate. The influence of architecture only further pushes the people to adapt and grow into and with their place. Programmatically the site becomes a functional place. Schematically the site becomes a reality. The design of the place reacts to and from the people that exists and have existed. Their place creates new layers, cyclically creating new place.



Partial drawn plan including, farm, commercial zone, housing, orchards and path



Overall site plan

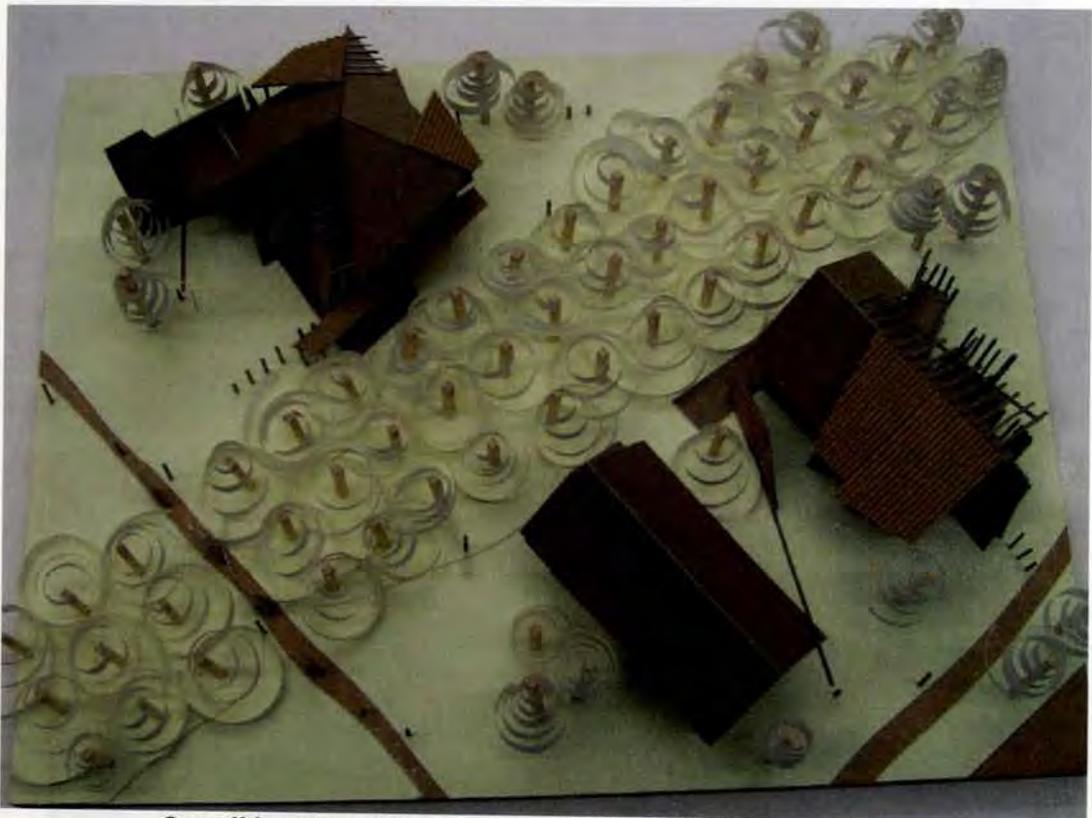
Design Development

The process from schematics to design development intends to drive the idea of defining place into a clearer, more physical reality. The continuation of the process of discovery defines place, searching for new questions. How can these new architectural layers be manipulated to anticipate an evolution and growth through time? The condition the neighborhood invites can be created in a variety of ways. What do these interventions become?

The housing type is based on the notion of creating territories for the individual occupant, which connects to the way it addresses the site on a variety of levels. The housing types that are existing on the site are more than just the typical shotgun house, but include larger two story housing, and more specific types of housing with more detailed differences in porch design, floor plan layout, roof pitches and entry particularities. So how then, can a new housing type stylistically relate to the new schematics, while understanding concepts of housing programs and territorial designation?

The new housing type varies at a number of levels as it can be spread across the site, but in this particular case the variety is exemplified in one specific general condition. The housing type is created on the predetermined notion of the explosion of programmatic elements contained within a prototypical base. The base concept for the new housing type is developed through a larger example of a two-story home that contains three bedrooms on upper levels and the public levels on the lower level. This condition shifts the idea of public verses private, to be separate vertically rather than horizontally. The verticality of the separation allows for decisions to be made on three to

four sides of the newly re-identified house. The back portion of the house is examined as creating a disconnection with the public realm, where an inner space can create a territory more specific to the occupant. The new variation of the hybrid can unfold into the yard, extending itself to follow the path, while concentrating the view on the orchard. The front element of the house begins to wrap the house, encapsulating the private, while inviting the public to curiously wonder, what is around the corner? The house can deconstruct itself to anticipate a condition of living that invites the outside in, and brings the inside viewer out. The relevance of this particular condition is that a variation of housing type can be created through a more site-specific application.



Overall housing with orchard, path, alley and existing housing

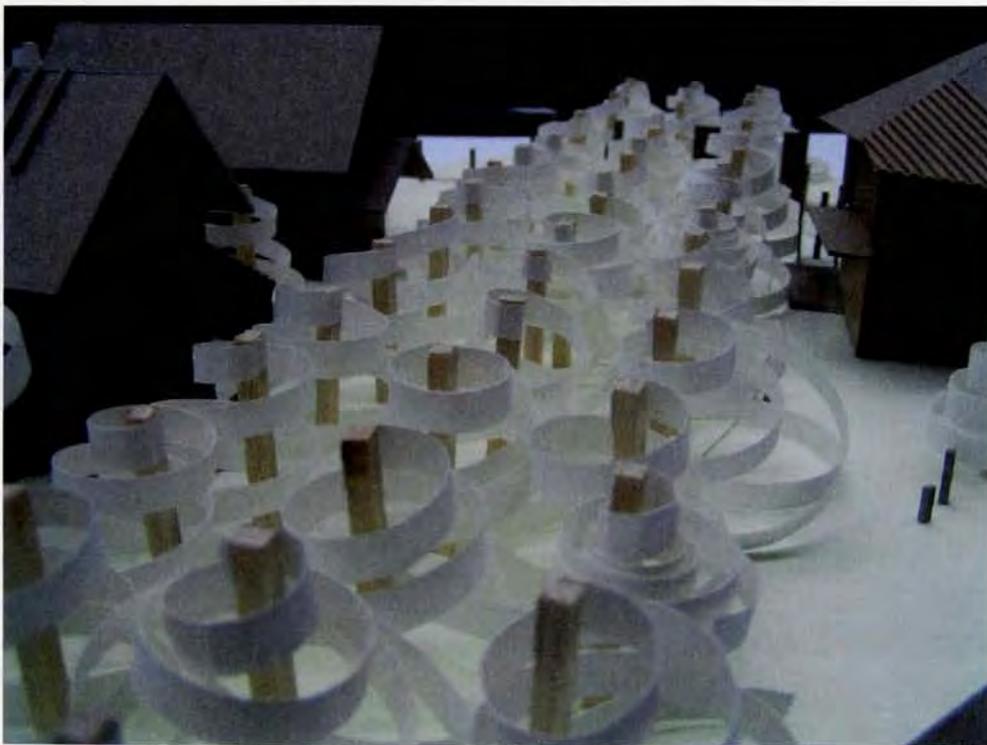


New housing type



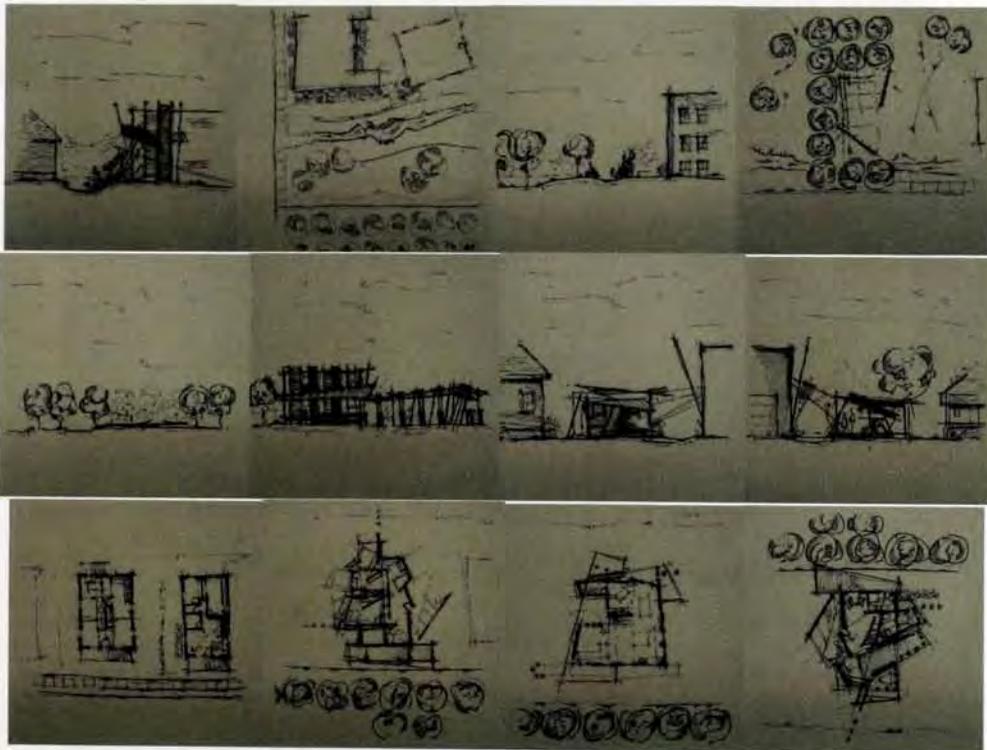


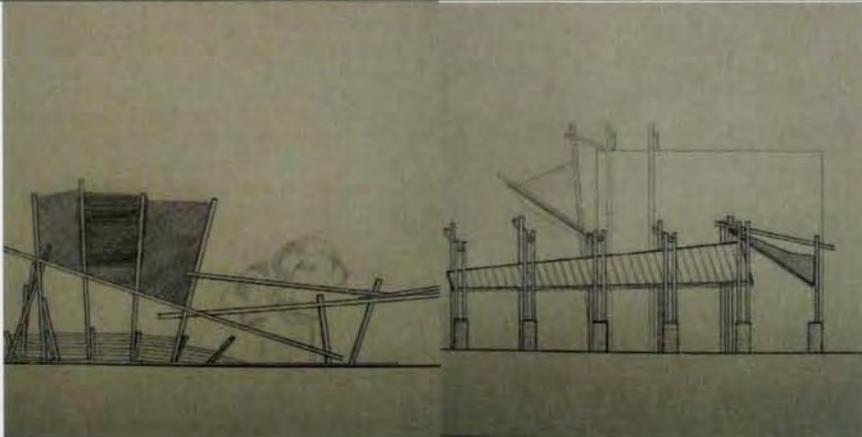
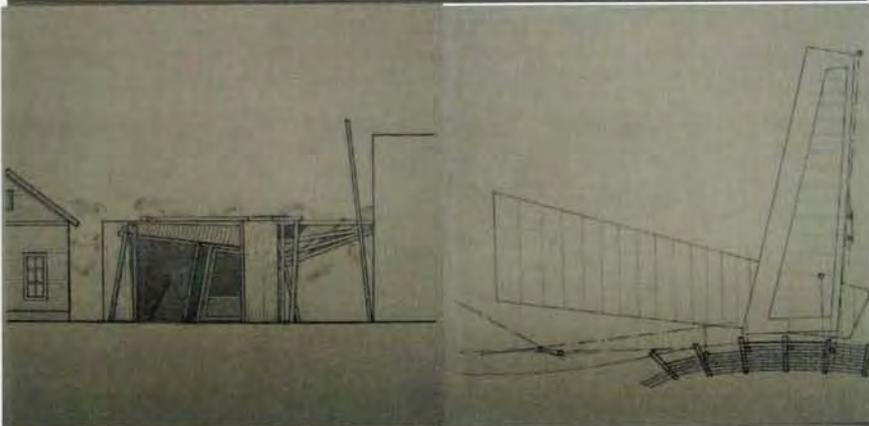
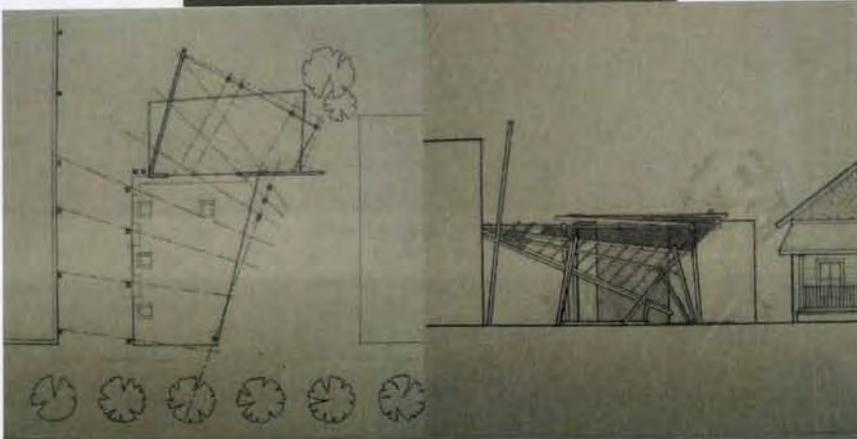
New housing type with orchard

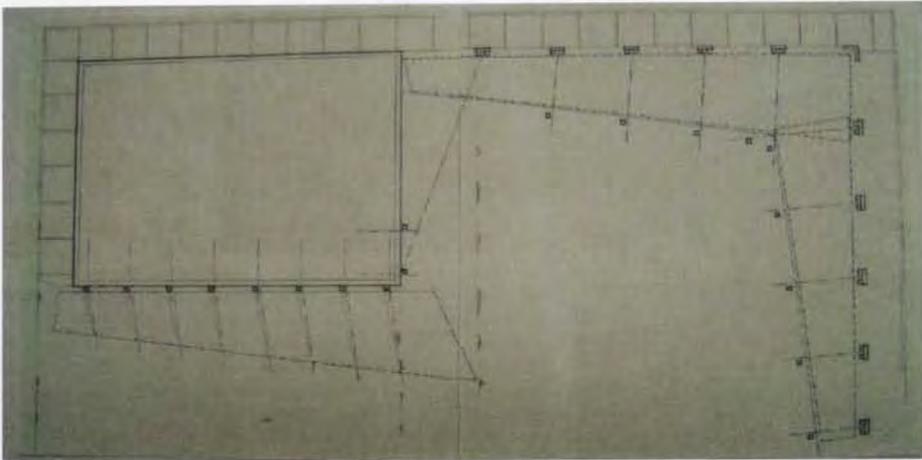


Orchard occupying existing road

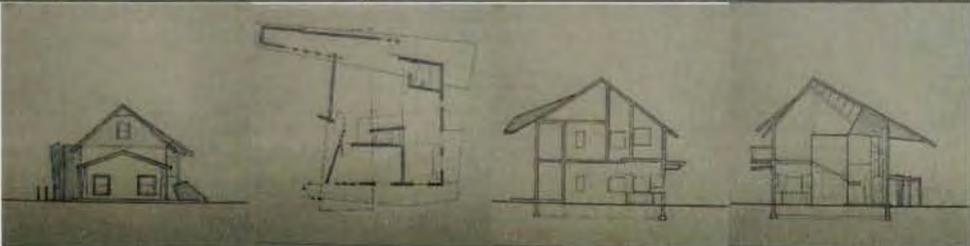
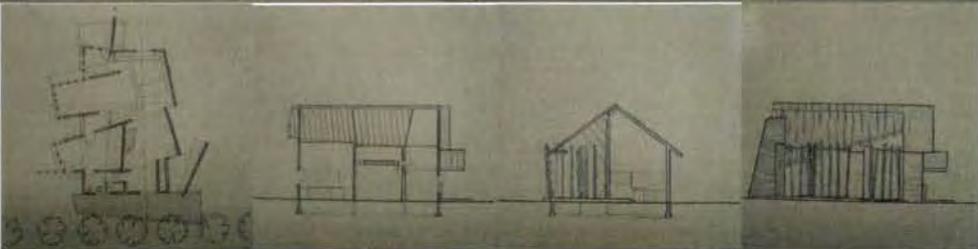
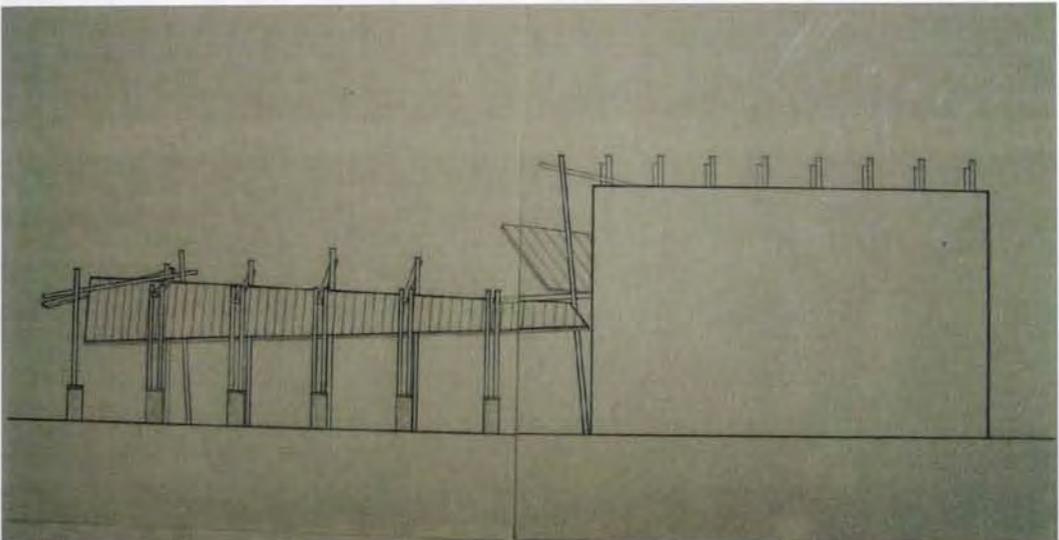
As the site begins to develop into a larger area, the anticipation of community growth can begin to become evident through sketches. The sketches expressed what one might physically expect within the new condition. Orchards begin to cut the landscape, while housing addresses the orchard. The path follows the access of pedestrian, while pedestrian follows the access of alley. The intentions of the separate layers begin to work together in harmony. But still certain questions remain unanswered. How does the agriculture affect the housing? How does the new landscape address the housing? How do the layers affect each other, not just grow next to each other? Where does the architecture and landscape blur? And how can the open spaces become assigned to create a significance through which they also affect the housing, orchards and agriculture?

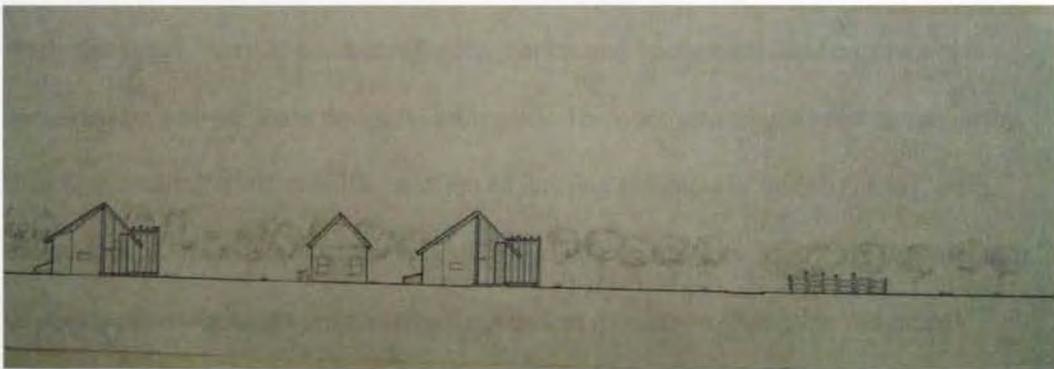
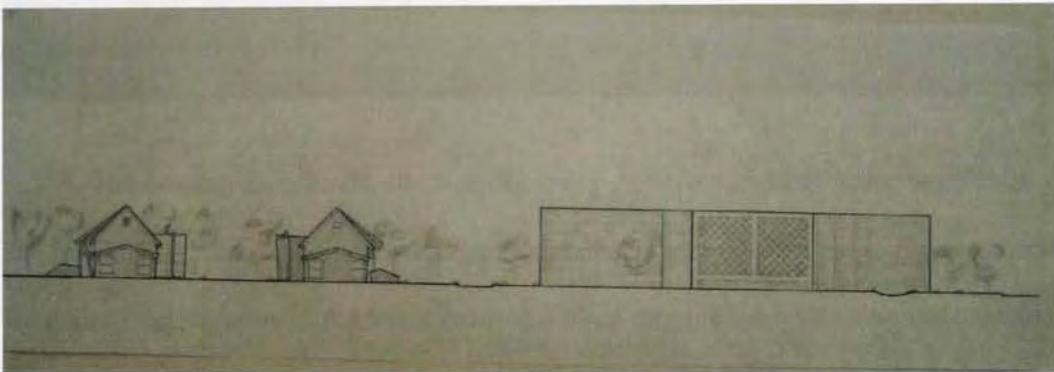
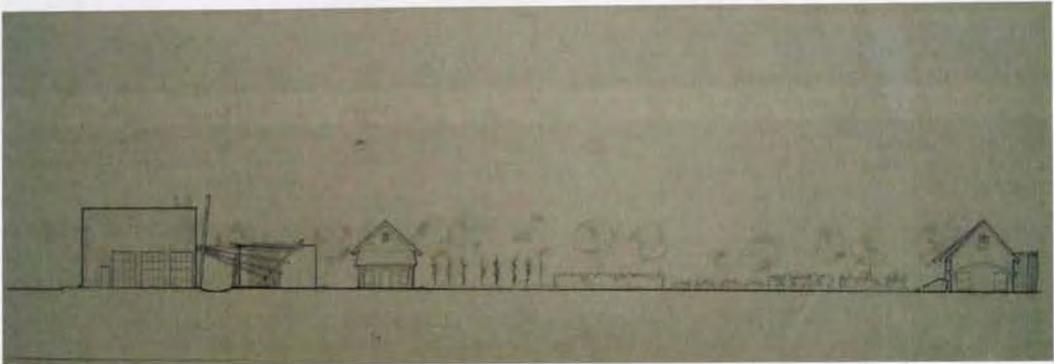
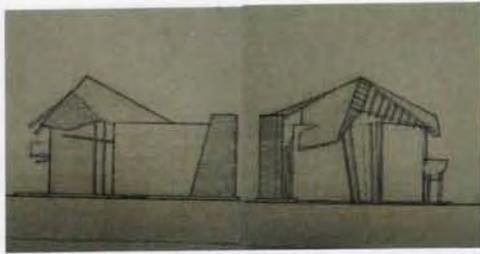




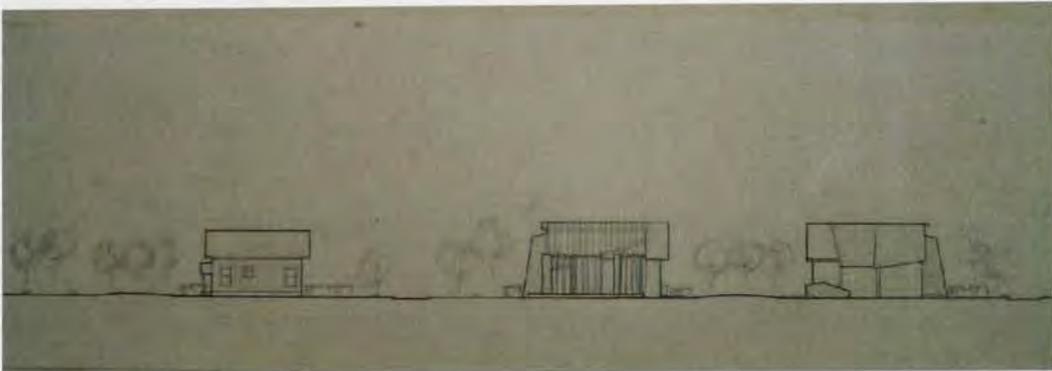
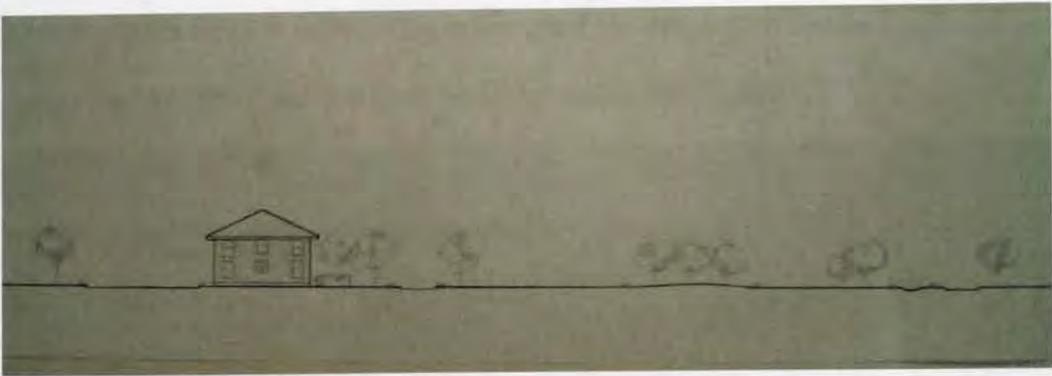


The farmer's market



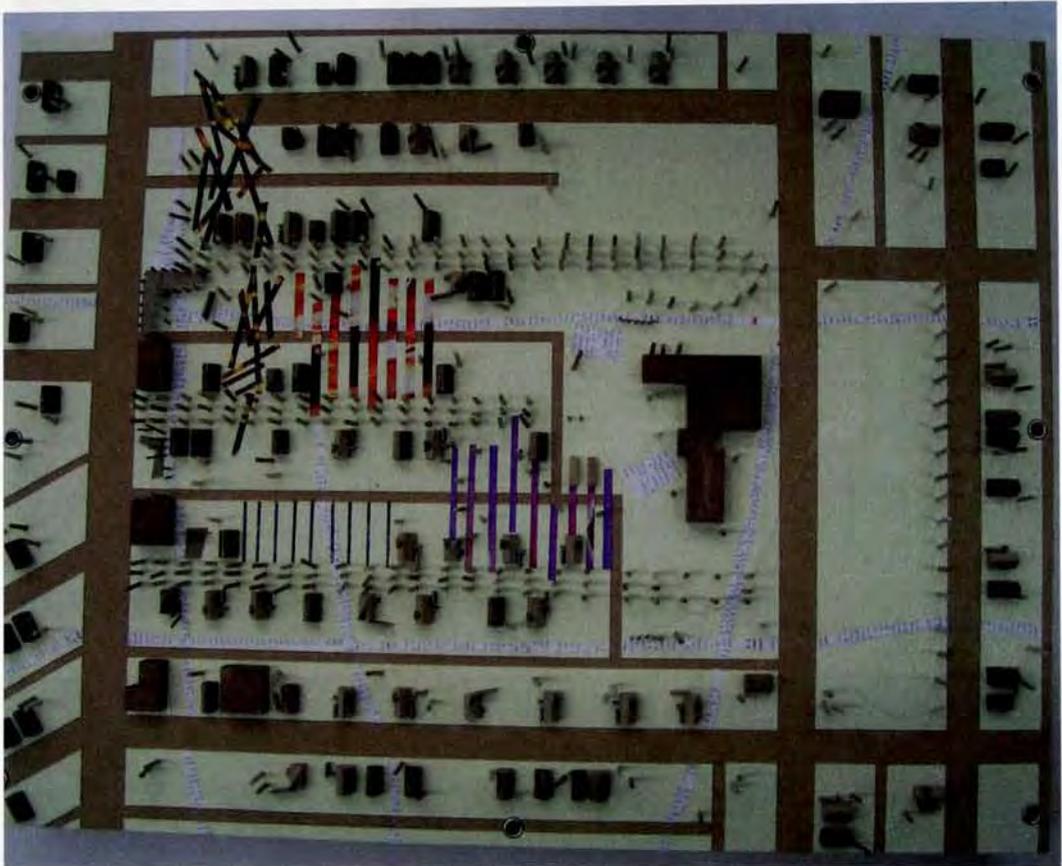


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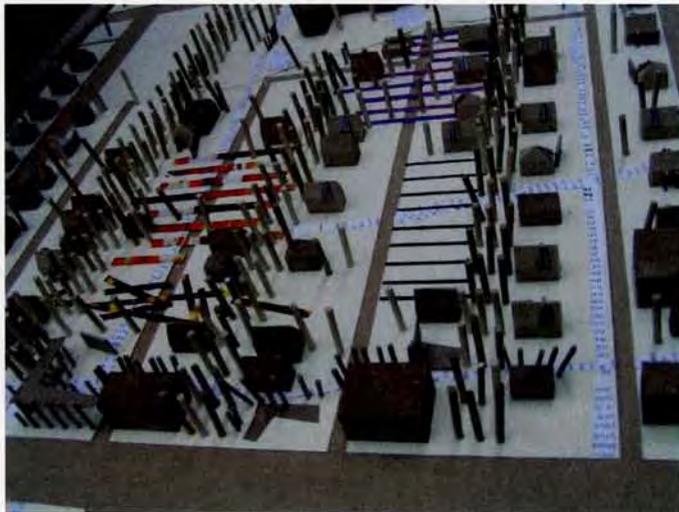


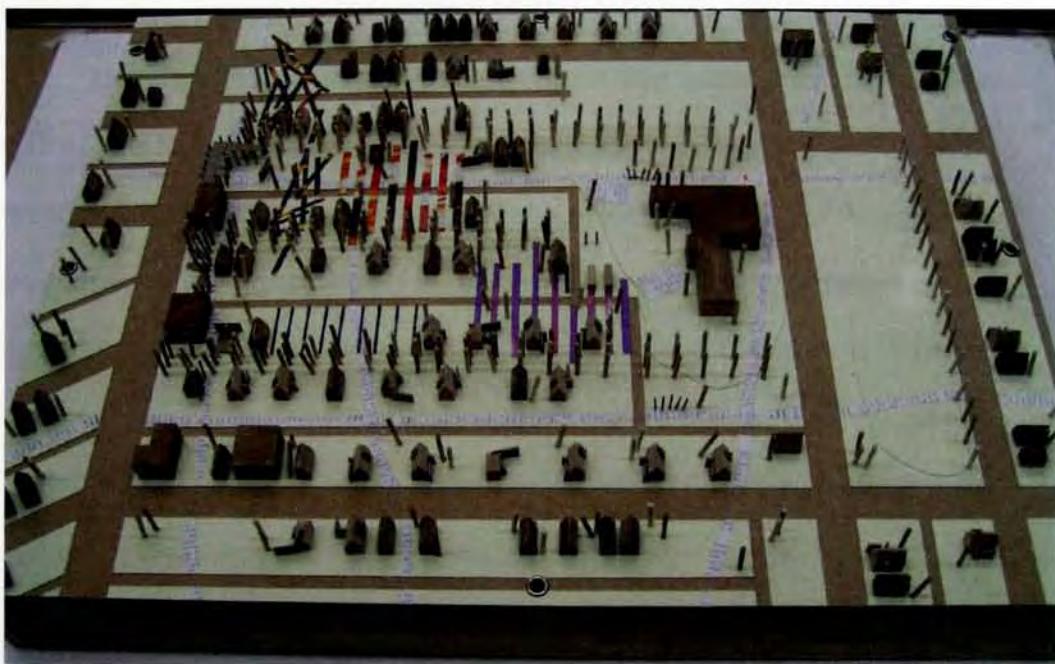
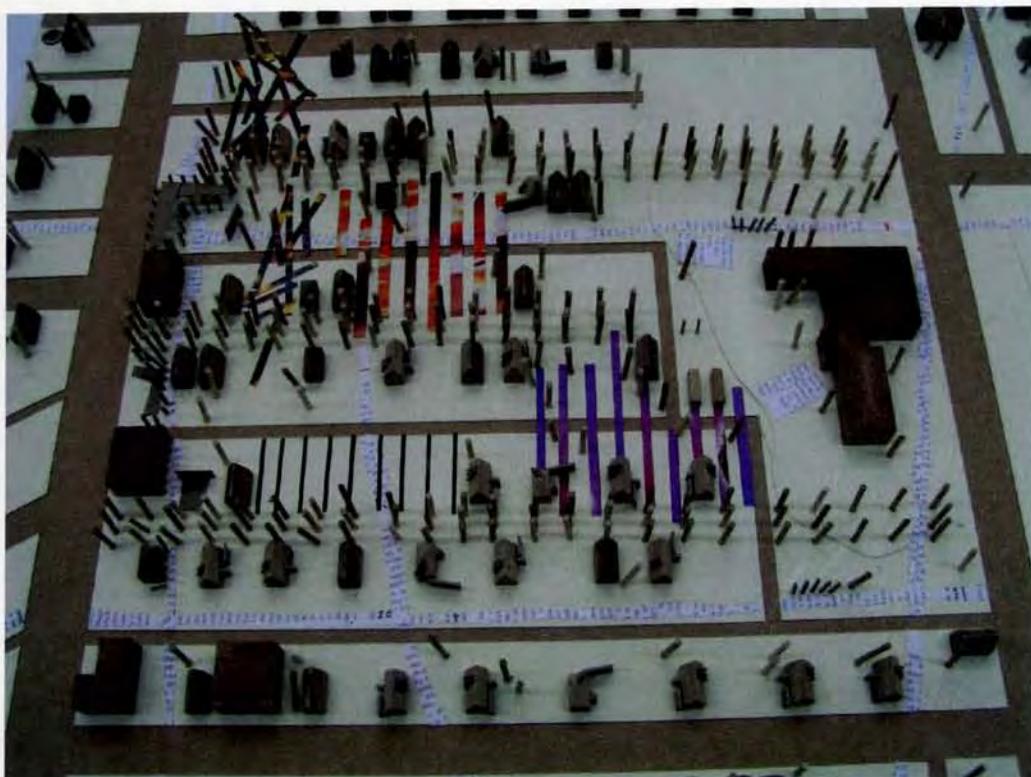
The existing farm on the site is small, and it grows a variety of fruits, vegetables and herbs. How can the farm have a bigger relationship and significance to the site, since the underlying intention of the site is creating a place through the intervention of an urban farming middle-landscape? The farm could be assigned to grow smaller crops and plants, while the larger, useable products (for the market and occupants) can be grown and harvested on a larger scale throughout the site. The open spaces can react to the farm, therefore creating a site-specific reaction of farming products to housing, alley, path, orchard, etc. The memory of the neighborhood can reintroduce itself with the intention of re-growth, creating an opportunity for physical growth on intangible municipal property lines. The preexisting property lines of the housing lots can become exaggerated to relate the idea of leftover growth along a fence to the property line. The

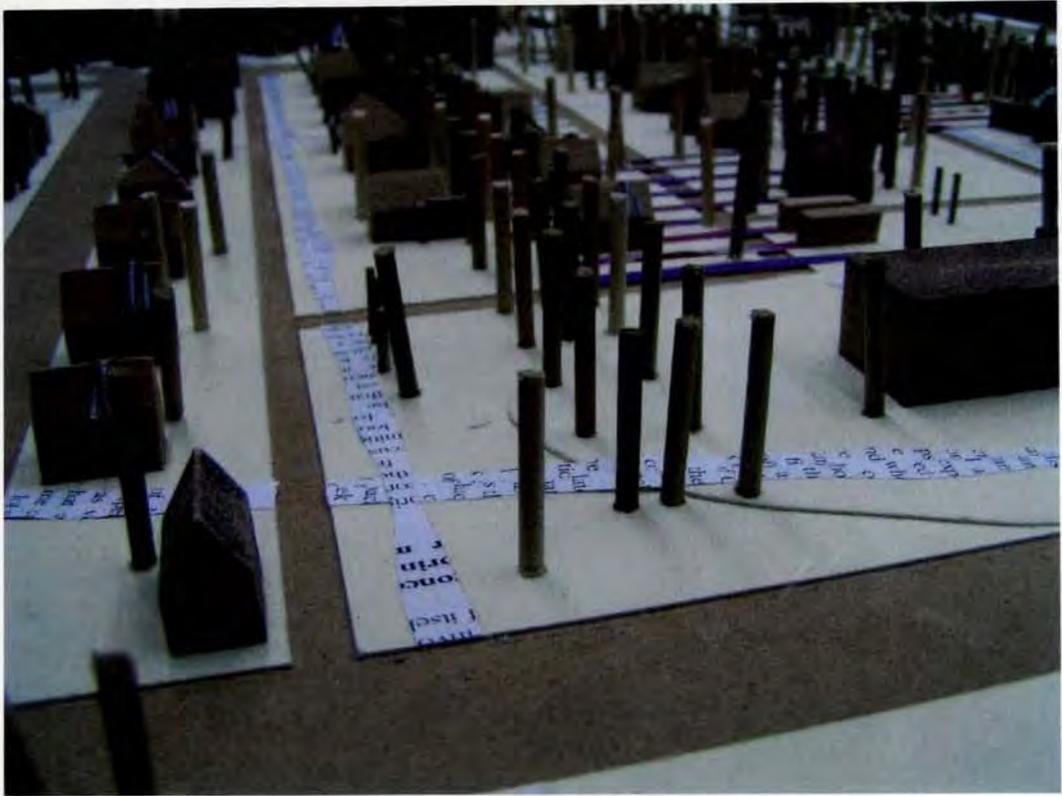
growth extends freely to any position nature takes, but the property lines are rigid and exaggerated to create workable planting for harvesting and storage.



Final site model

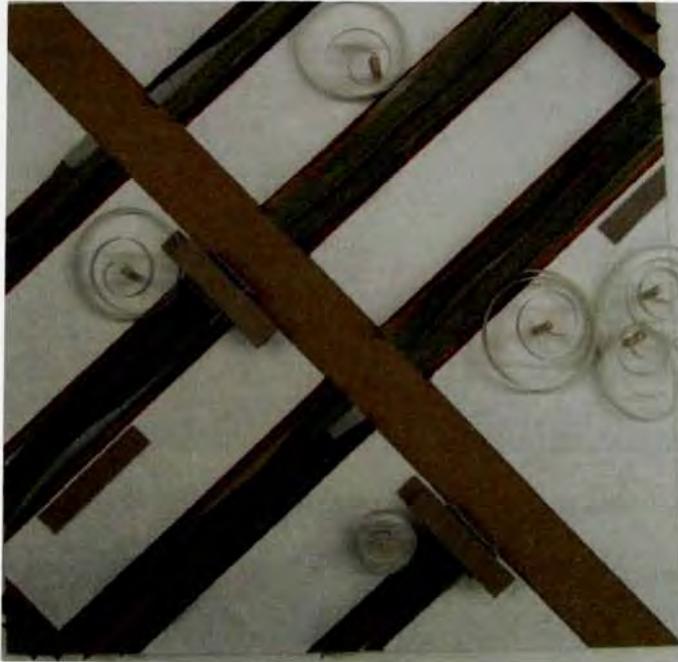




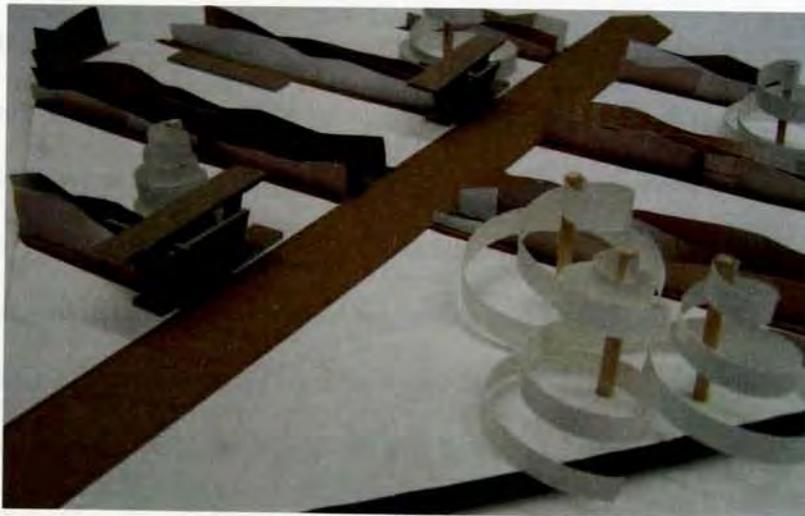


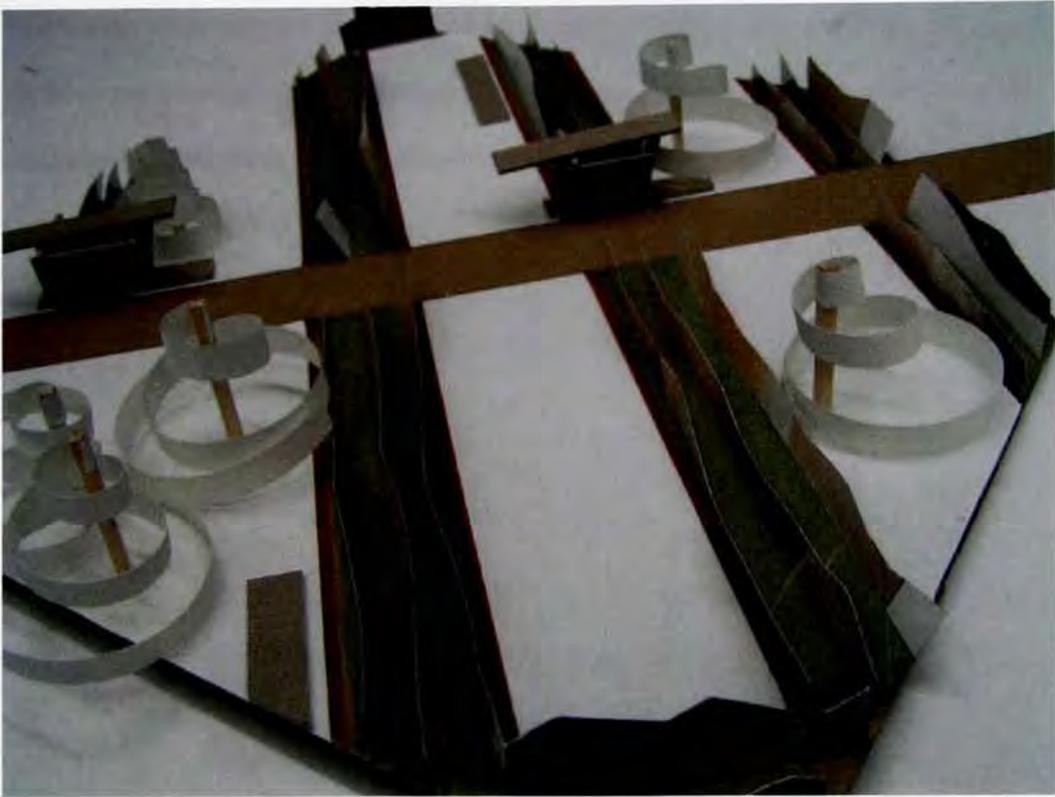
One could propose three larger insertions of crop spaces. First, the space directly East of John R., behind the commercial buildings, can become a free space, where wildflowers grow, with the intention of relating to the opposite side of the site. The wildflowers create the opportunity for the children to roam freely, participating in activities that can involve wild growth, not purely ordinarily trimmed and maintained fields and parks. The connection of wildflower meadow to house is seen as simple as the growth process itself. The houses become magnets for the wildflowers, inviting the approach of the planting to connect with the house by protruding through the boundaries between earth to plant, and plant to house. Directly East of the wildflower meadow a large area can be designated as corn crops. The corn crops follow the newly created exaggerated property lines, which are spaced so that park can still happen in between

crops. On the alley sides of the corn crops are storage cribs for pickup and harvest removal. The third crop area is closer to the school, and is proposed to contain a vineyard. The intention of the vineyard is to produce wine and grapes. The vineyard is more heavily condensed to fit within a residential area. Included at the ends of the vineyard strips would be storage facilities and a winery, which has not been designed.



The cornfield

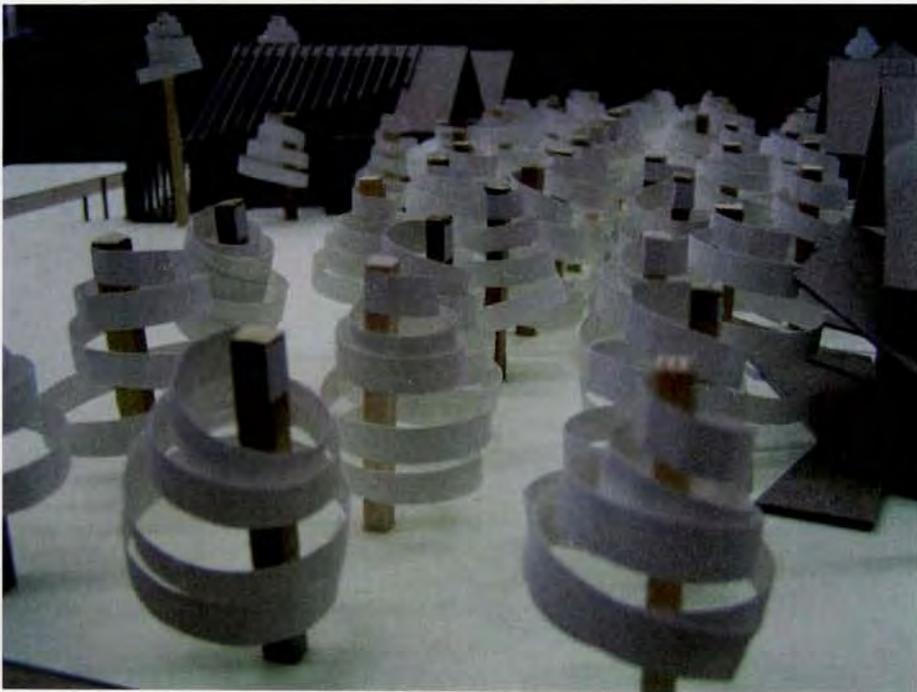




The newly assigned portions of the open spaces create an intervention within itself. The vineyards in particular offer the opportunity to address the question of how the landscape begins to affect its surroundings. The house, the alley, the orchard and the path all become an entanglement that need to be blurred in order to better understand the less rigid intention of the site. The vineyard creates a response to hierarchy and architecture. When the vineyard pattern intersects with the orchard, the orchard pattern is pushed aside. When the vineyard pattern intersects with the territory of the house, the vineyard is dominant and slices the house. At times the house breaks and occupies the space of the vineyard. The house is further broken into a public explosion that identifies a more unique play on individual community ownership within certain territories. The cuts physically sever the house into pieces that in return, float into the space, whether



The vineyard intersecting with house and alley



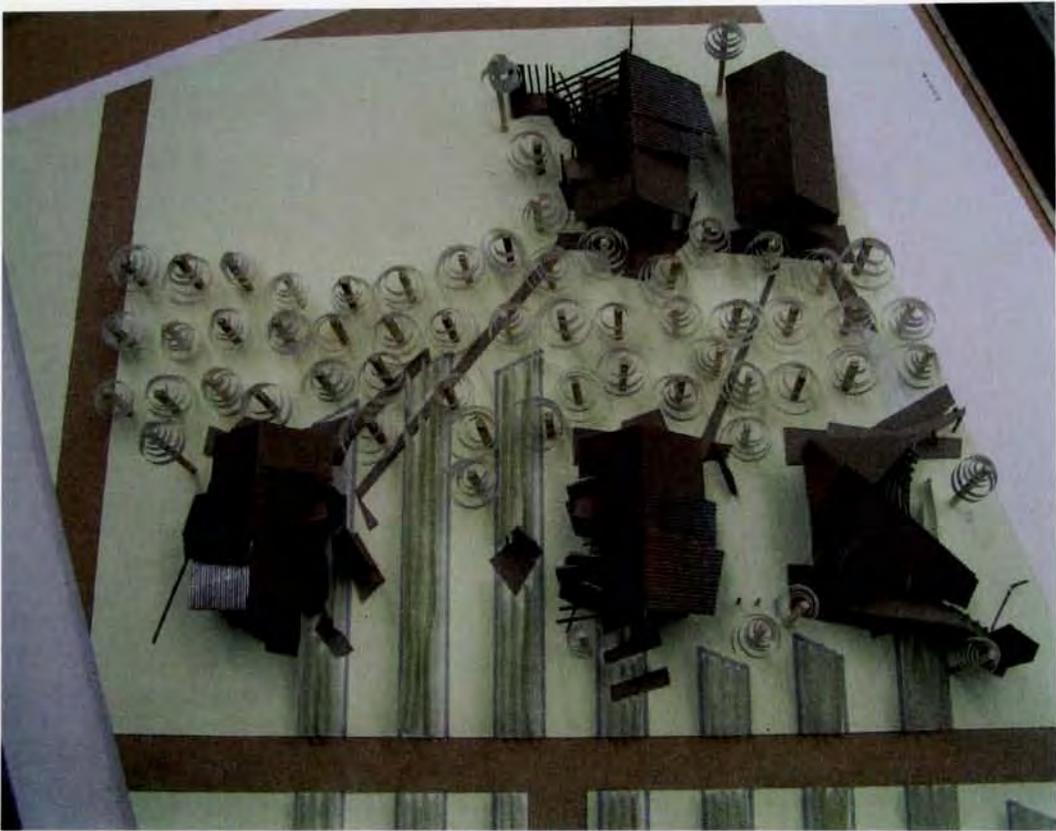
The orchard



Collision of vineyard with house



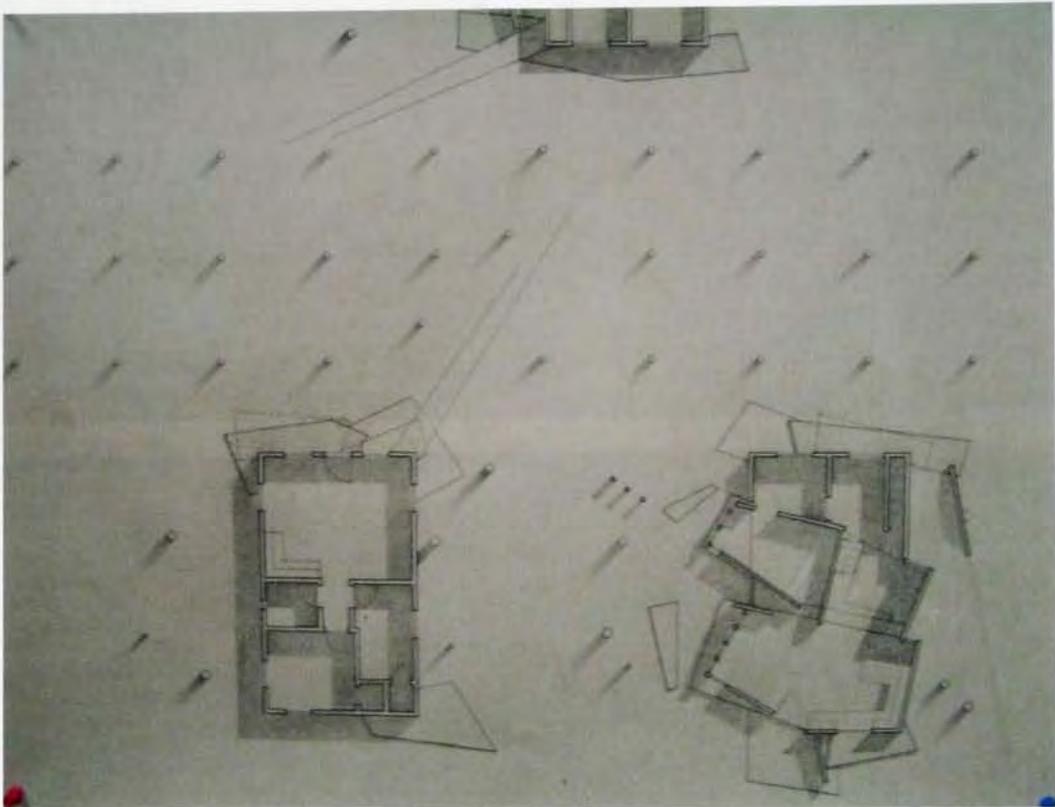
Partial overall site plan



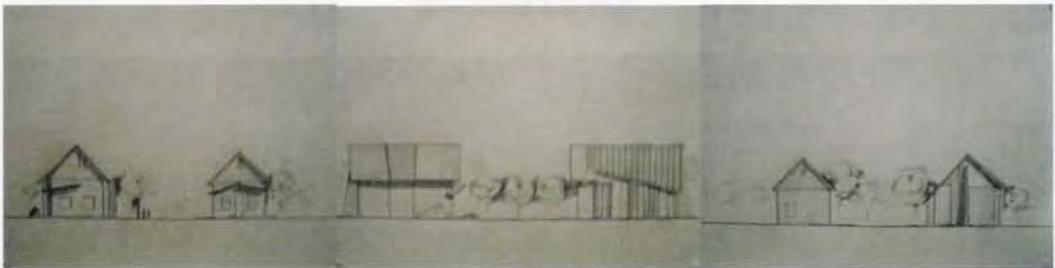
Partial overall site plan



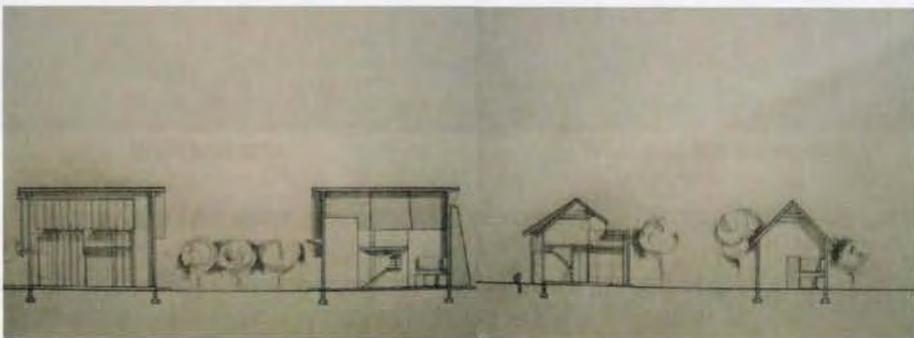
The house intersecting with open space



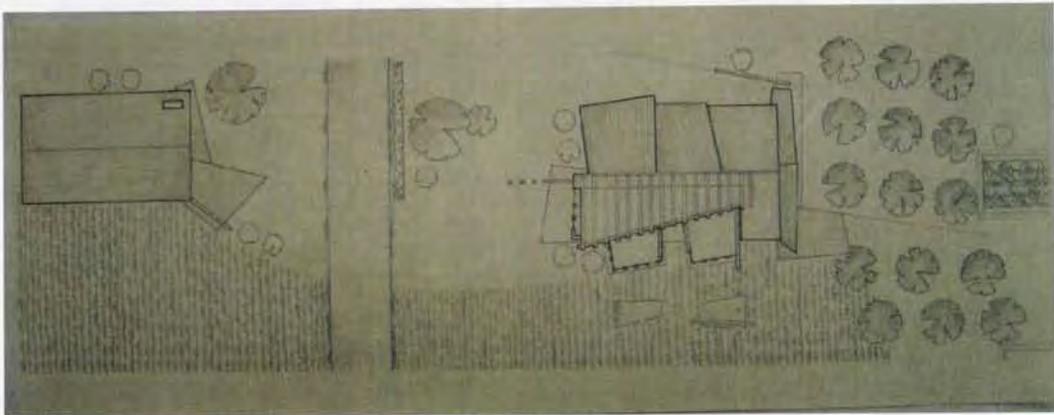
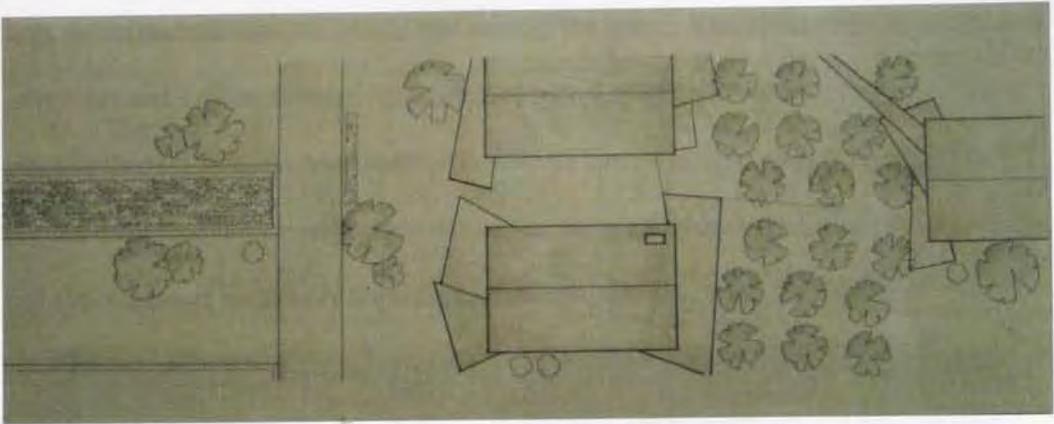
Partial site plan drawing



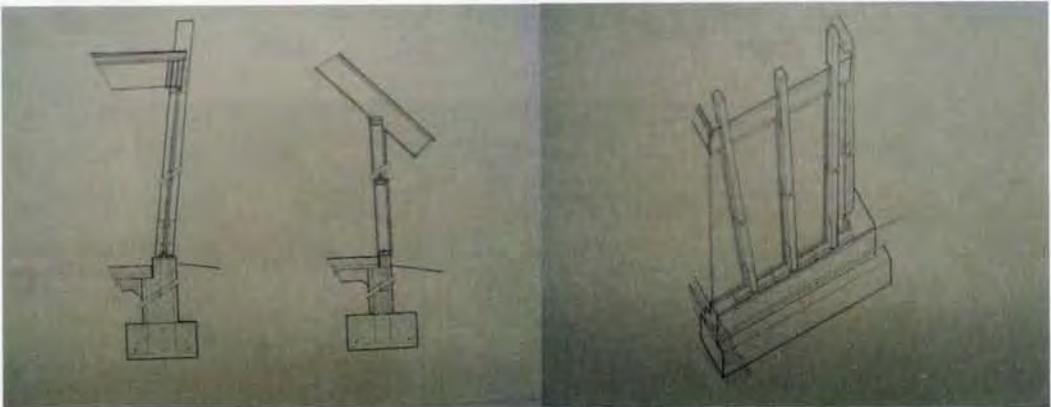
Site elevations



Site sections



Rendered site plan

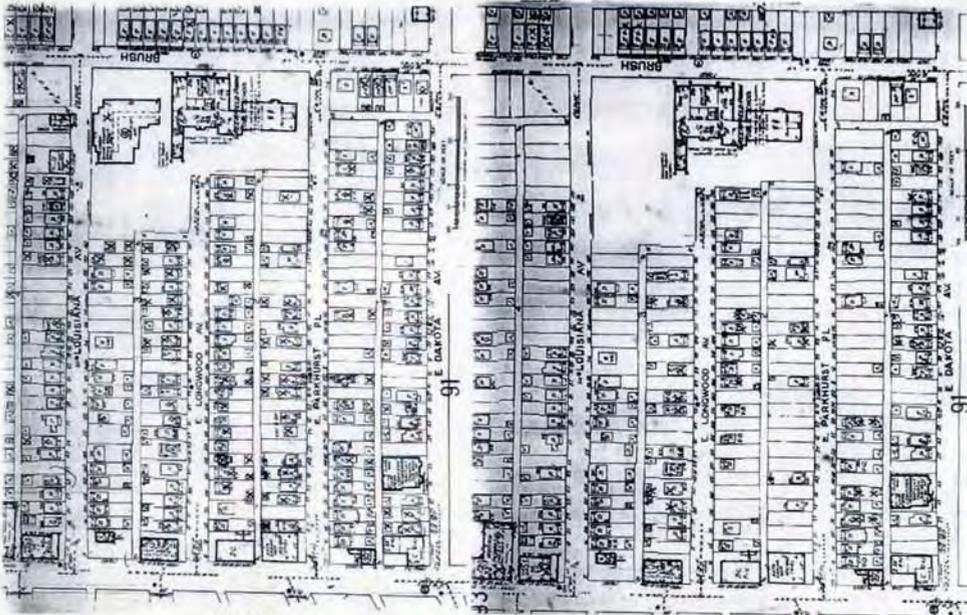


Wall sections

Wall section axonometric

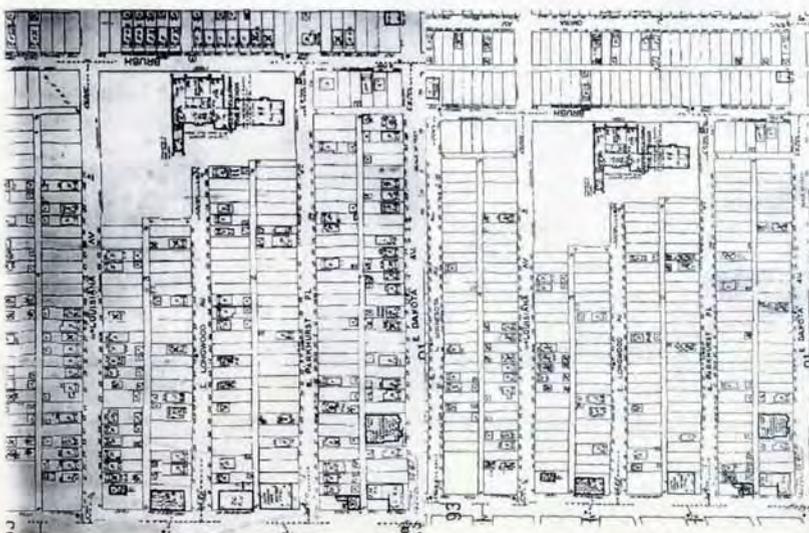
The site becomes more of a condition of responsive layers. This condition acts as a foundation for a future human condition that allows a growth or evolution within and throughout the site. This evolution and self-identification allows the concept of place to

only be defined through the people that occupy the space. The community's willingness to involve and express themselves in their opportunity of architecture can only define place to them. Place is a personal relationship of human to earth, this concept offers a fundamental idea for human growth and existence as a foundation. Evolution of the site and the occupants is the only hope for extension of growth.



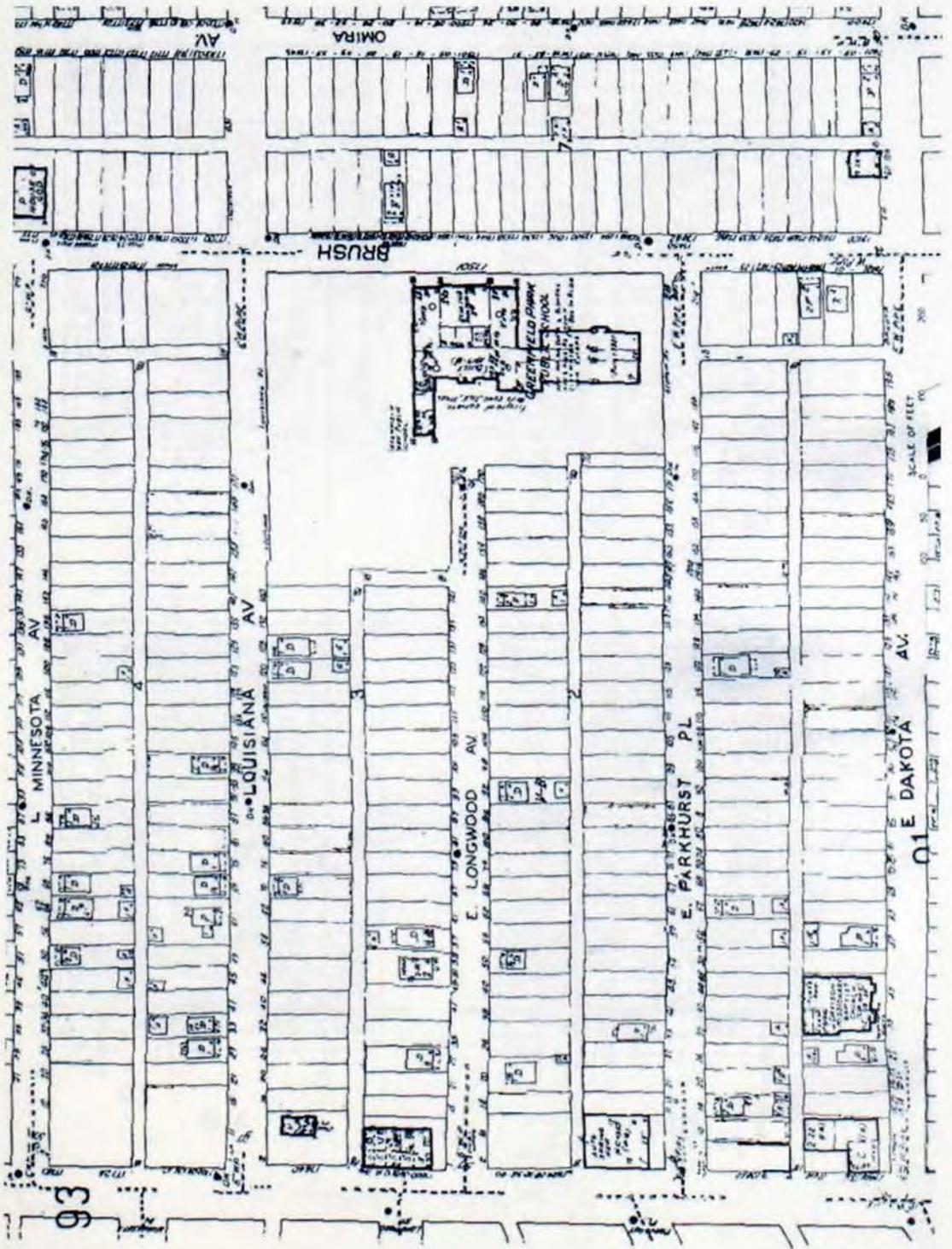
1984

1987



1990

2000





2008



2012



2016



2018



2020

This is the point of complete build, from this point on the growth pattern becomes cyclical, in which one asks, what happens to the agriculture when it evolves into a new generation? Does the agriculture become erased also?



2025

This is the point where the housing stock overwhelms the agriculture.



2030

When does place become cyclical?

Conclusion

The project began with intentions that seemed unreachable. The idea of attempting to create an opportunity, wherein, "...in the case of restless, multitradeational people, even as the power of place is diminished and often lost, it continues – as an absence – to define culture and identity. It also continues – as a presence – to change the way we live" (Lucy R. Lippard 20), an opportunity, that one could create an idea to alternative development options for the city of Detroit. If this proposal were to be explored further, it would involve and require quite a few people that are so intimately willing to create a place of this nature for themselves. Place is found through the people that need and want to live it. The average person most likely paints their house, and decorates the front yard, but the opportunity for a much more significant intervention is rarely presented to them. This project hopes to react to conditions that are normally unseen in a way that might inspire others to offer their own interpretation of evolution. The site of the project demands the love and the action of so many individuals just to keep the farm in order and working, but there are other aspects of this site that are now forgotten, another of which is presented in this thesis, one of memory. The site is not dead in reality, even though the idle passer-by may have this impression. The site is very much alive in the people that have lived their lives here, and the people that continue to live their lives here in memory.

The intentions of this project were met from this one point of view; that it hopes in time to invoke a hope of renewal. There is a dire need for a rethinking of future and contemporary developments. This effort should begin by remembering how important it is to discover and recover the conditions that present themselves, even on a microscopic

level. Statues are raised as a monument for remembrance, but neighborhoods do not require statues, they are their own form of monument. Rather, a new rethinking is necessary for further growth and intentions that can create new ideas and new hope for willing individuals. Place-making is not a forgotten act, rather place-making is a perpetual subconscious act of remembering and replacing, recovering, rediscovering and retelling.

In some ways the project is one-dimensional. Issues of edge and boundary are still unresolved. Real world conditions of crime, violence and drugs are still unresolved. Are orchards and cornfields going to change the crime rate in Detroit? No, but perhaps this kind of proposal offers the opportunity to rethink how money and time is spent. Questions are raised about the application of this project, and the question will remain open ended, since the opportunity for this paper was not necessarily for definitions, rather, it offered the opportunity for discovery. This particular discovery happened to become one of asking anyone..."how does architecture define place"? There is no one answer, only sought after investigations and implications.



Annotated Bibliography

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My program precedent is taken from this book; it contains the precedent of the natural image, organic hut.

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This is the direct article relating to Tracy Hick’s gallery within the shotgun houses of Project Row houses.

Quaife, M. M. This is Detroit Two Hundred and Fifty Years in Pictures. Detroit: Wayne University Press. 1951.

This is simply a historical depiction of Detroit, from the founding of Detroit by Cadillac in 1701 to the construction of the Lodge Freeway in 1951.

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This is a more general example of the debates that took place concerning New Urbanism construction within America, but particularly Seaside, Florida.

“The Exchange Project”. <<http://www.tracyhicks.com/exch.html>> 9 September, 2003.

This project was a gallery of the recreated Project Row houses gallery set up, also including an exhibition of salamanders and vagrant signs.

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