FOSTERING ABERRATIONS:

amplifying architecture through an entreprenurial spirit

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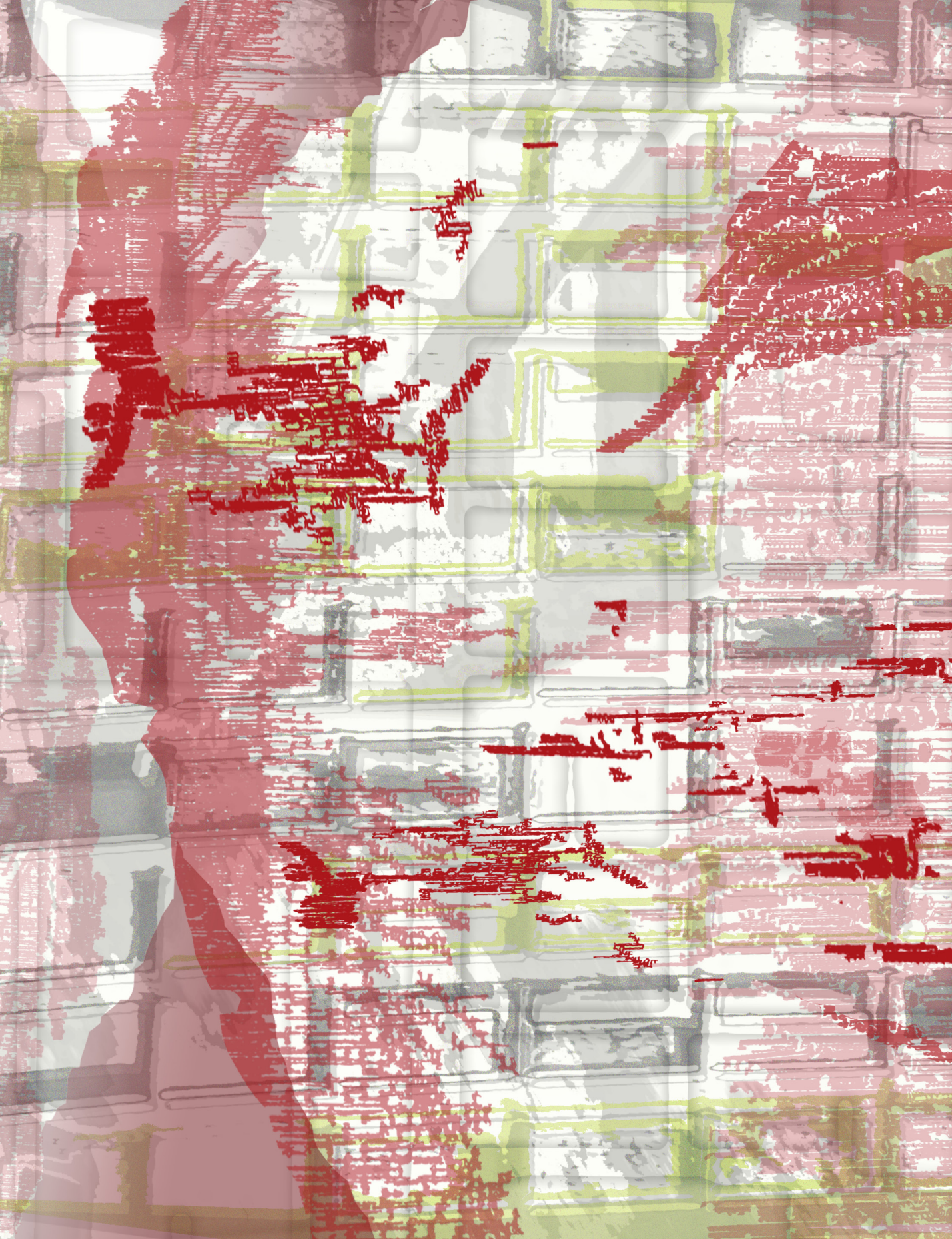
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Content

The economy is suffering. The job market is in a lull. Qualified college graduates are not able to find jobs. Many homes are in foreclosure, the largest individual investment for the average North American family. During an economic lull, entrepreneurial spirit is rekindled and many new business pursuits develop. Individuals explore means to realize a vision, often after losing a job, or simply an opportunity of last resort. Traditionally, the city square was where one would take his goods to sell. The public urban space was a place to try new pursuits and test ideas.

The North American city lacks public space. The city square of European cities served as a connection between the public and the private realms of an urban condition. The public space was stage set for the performance of individuals and business owners. During the week, an ephemeral market engaged the public space where merchants brought their product and the public purchased goods. In addition to economic trade, it was a place of daily life for the public, and a networking interface for business owners.

The public space which dominates this realm in North American cities is the street. The multifunctional nature of an urban streetscape, serving as a transitional space, inhibits the blurring of the public | private which traditionally was a symbiotic relationship. Therefore, fostering aberrations between the public and private using architecture as a medium, would benefit the urban palimpsest of interaction and strengthen the economic foundation for individual business owners.

Aldo Rossi The Architecture of the City. (Cambridge MA 1982)

'In the urban composition, everything must express as faithfully as possible the particular life of the collective organism.'

Due to the limited resources available to entrepreneurs, in the twenty first century, the internet has become the new public space. With technological advancement, having limited resources has inspired many entrepreneurs to rely on the internet to develop networks and do business.

The role of the architect should amplify and extend beyond its traditional place. By using the internet as a tool and developing a networking interface in the direct local area, the programmatic needs would grow from within rather than relying on clients to make a contact when they find it necessary. Architects must develop an interface locally, while simultaneously working at a global level to enhance the practice. The local presence will establish credibility and help the architect survive economic downturns. In a market where the pulse of the entrepreneurial spirit is becoming an important source of economic growth, architecture which responds to entrepreneurial needs can not only serve as a catalyst for economic development, but is an opportunity to create architectural and urban growth. Mediating between the micro and macro and exploring architectural design through an urban and entrepreneurial lens, the architect has a more stable foundation while cultivating an urban landscape, creating a more viable condition for growth.

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NARRATIVE :

A young law school graduate has an excellent GPA and a vision for the future. The economy is suffering and he cannot even land a job interview with his excellent credentials. However, with his idealistic attitude and knowledge, he goes out and sets up a stand in the street offering free legal services. He has no references and no experience, but in desperation due to the arduous economic conditions some will have something versus nothing. People walking by at first look at him strangely, but then some stop and take his card. Then some start asking questions. Overtime, people seem to accept his presence and even begin to rely on his advice. Soon he begins to charge minimal but optional fees. People trust him now and feel obligated to help him survive by paying what they can. Eventually, he has an established clientele.

Now, he needs space, although his stand has created place. In an urban condition there are more than one individual who are doing the same thing. They may not be offering legal services – maybe building furniture or creating web sites. There are small pulses spread out, each one being at a different phase of development. What if these pulses knew the others existed, and could begin to feed off of each other? The young man soon rents out a small storefront and office space, near his place. Though he has lost his place he has gained space; and with an established clientele, he has the ability to establish new place. As time goes on, soon the area grows and the real estate value rises. He can no longer afford the rent and is forced to leave his space and abandon his new place. The very people, who make place, lose their stake in this model.

Can architecture respond to this condition? Can this exploration create a model or an opportunity for architects to maintain clientele by creating an architecture which addresses the needs of the entrepreneur, fostering growth and cultivating opportunity? Can an architectural intervention establish a means for the entrepreneur to have stake in their place?

FOSTERING ABERRATIONS
INTRODUCTION:

The state of the economy today has affected every realm of society, regardless of status, place or circumstance. The large global corporations of the 21st century have become large debt carriers. There are a record number of home foreclosures, the largest investment for most North American families. Young graduates, the future of today's culture, are not able to use the skills in the traditional manner, which they have developed due to the lack of jobs and the high unemployment. Large corporations have had to turn to public support for loans they could not pay, and consequently have had to lay off many of their employees. Individuals have made irresponsible financial decisions and banks have given irresponsible mortgages to people incapable of making payments.

Local economies have suffered from the economic crisis as well, but because of their credibility with the local people, they still have a future. People still need basic goods and services, and in an urban condition, turn to the established, trustworthy local economy.

"The recession has also injected life into a slew of small businesses that are thriving either in spite of or because of the economic downturn, giving new relevance to the old adage that one man's misfortune is another's opportunity." [2]

http://www.businessweek.com/amallbiz/content/feb2009/sb2009025_083042.htm [2]

The architectural profession suffers from the lull in the construction industry. As throughout history, dramatic changes in the cultural conditions create an opportunity for architecture to reassert itself. The economic downturn of 2008 has affected culture at a global level. Suddenly, people are spending less and using less. Many are losing their jobs and are turning to other skills, rethinking their future. There is a sudden reliance on the local economy for goods and services. In a dense urban condition the local economy is especially important because it supports the livelihoods of the city dwellers directly. The urban fabric offers an opportunity for entrepreneurs to integrate themselves, to establish their place. The private space is limited and shared public space becomes a valued commodity.

The concept of shared space could be adopted in the private realm, in the entrepreneurial context. In order to effectively share resources between entrepreneurs of a local economy, a networking interface must be established as a catalyst for the sharing of information, resources and needs. The architecture must simultaneously respond to urban condition and it is important to foster aberrations in the threshold which divides the public and private. The architecture can inform the entrepreneur of the benefits of such a relationship and cultivate a connection between the entrepreneur and the urban fabric.

The thesis explores using the energy of entrepreneurs as a catalyst for architectural intervention in an urban context by continuously mediating between the micro and the macro and looking through an entrepreneurial, urban and architectural lens. The role of the architect must extend and be amplified beyond the current expectations which are established in the profession today, adapting to the complexity of the urban condition which includes a non physical layer of public space in the technological realm, and the adaptive and ever changing nature of the entrepreneurial culture.

THE ROLE OF THE ARCHITECT

The role of the architect has morphed throughout time, dependent on the advancement of technology, method and material: from builder, construction manager, engineer, designer and urban designer. The changes in the profession are the results of technological advancements which have forced the profession of architecture to deviate and divide itself into several different realms. The complexity of technological advancements has created several types of engineers and other consultants which

were traditionally a part of the role of the architect.

The architect of medieval England for example, was considered the 'Master builder' and this position included several roles. Each village or town would have a single or a few master builders that ran the builders' guild and oversaw the development of the village. The architect mediated between what is seen in contemporary times as architect, construction manager, urban designer, and political activist. Often if the architect had design innovations that were beyond the traditional built environments, they had to negotiate with the bishop, or campaign with the public to sell their vision. The responsibility of the architect was great, but they generally held a lot of clout in the village and were able to see their visions manifested, even in difficult economic conditions. They had political power and served as an advisor to the political leaders with economic power; the leaders in the Catholic Church.

The thesis does not suggest averting back to the tradition of a master builder. This is not feasible with the advancement of technology. The architect could not hold all the positions of the historical master builder; today, it requires numerous consultants and the construction process is conducted much faster allowing the architect to concentrate on the design process. However, through the examination of a historical reference, the role of the contemporary architect could be amplified and extend beyond the property lines. The historical role of the architect encompassed a wide range of skills: design, build, advocate, negotiate and compromise. These were skills developed under the guide of a master builder in the apprenticeship. The architects in training acquired skills they would have to use, directly in the field. There was a direct connection between designing, making and doing.

The skills that are developed in academia today are not being used to their fullest potential in the profession. 'Architectural education, when not obsessed with the production of visual imagery, exposes students to an extraordinarily broad range of intellectual activity.' This he explains 'provides the potential for the development of exactly the kind of flexible thinking that is required to cope with the contingencies of architectural practice.'

Architecture students are envisioning the future and developing program for sites. There is little exposure to the actual client, but this detachment allows students to re-imagine the context in which they develop their design. In the profession, the architect typically is given a program for which to administer a design. Authorship of design often overwhelms the design process, and the client and the ultimate users of the space are forgotten or become secondary to the design considerations. The obsession in academia with visual imagery has created an importance of authorship in the profession. Developing a 'style' is not necessarily harmful, but can prove to creating an architecture which is devoid of social consideration.

Displaced from the artifice into the artificial, architecture became a technological extension of the body that is neither natural nor cultural. [3]

Jeremy Till, Architecture Depends (Cambridge, MIT Press, 2009..)

Wigley, Mark. Prosthetic Theory: The Disciplining of Architecture. Assemblage. (Cambridge MA, The MIT Press, 1991.) [3]

The architect has a duty and privilege as a design professional in society to envision built environment which ameliorates human interaction and cultural conditions. Architecture is often considered a physical manifestation of the cultural condition. This is a great responsibility and privilege. Architecture is the art of creating spaces making places. Phenomenologist Kimberly Dove explains,

'Places develop over time through Human environment interaction: they grow, are infused with life maybe healthy or unhealthy, and may die.'
The architect has the duty to create place and should assist the client in understanding the future growth and contextual considerations which can affect the design process.

Kimberly Dovey. Putting Geometry in its Place: Toward a Phenomenology of the Design Process. (Albany, SUNY Press, 1993)

By fostering aberrations in the threshold of a typical contemporary architect's role, the client and society will benefit. The architect is too often disconnected from the community it operates in and this has resulted in a lack of credibility for the profession as a whole. Overtime, the architecture profession has disassociated the practice from the context of the community in which it exists. This is not to suggest that architects cannot practice in the global community and respond to new technological interface which has developed a new means of communication and networking. The new layer of public space is an opportunity of architecture to expand beyond physical space. However, the profession itself must gain credibility and be rooted in a local context.

Architecture should empower architects, designers, and, more important, citizens to build their own future. This requires that designers ground themselves in our diverse communities and be prepared to collaborate. The goal is to transform design from a reactive process to a proactive one, working through collaborative and dialectical relationships with citizens to imagine new possibilities, processes, and implementation strategies that challenge traditional methods and market norms.'

Jose L. S. Gamez and Susan Rogers, Expanding Architecture Design as Activism (New York, Metropolis Books, 2008)

As a foundation, the local economy can allow the profession to survive economic downturns such as the condition of the current economy. Using the new technological interface, the architect has another tool to access the local economy.

The forces that influence the ideas, knowledge bases, and practices of our discipline are in constant flux. If our political engagement is to move beyond "tiny empowerments" and toward systematically change, we must find a way to move out of the cacophony of a million voices and toward the harmony of a choir that obtains its power from collectivity'.

Jose L. S. Gamez and Susan Rogers, Expanding Architecture Design as Activism (New York, Metropolis Books, 2008)

Architects have the ability to envision how the urban fabric will respond to architecture and the making of place. This ability could extend beyond the physical realm and into the technological realm, developing a system which can evolve with changing program. Not only should the physical built environment be adaptable, but the ease of transition could be manifested through a networking interface in the technological realm.

Jose L. S. Gamez and Susan Rogers, Expanding Architecture Design as Activism (New York, Metropolis Books, 2008)

What is needed is an architecture of change - an architecture that moves the field beyond the design of buildings and toward the design of new processes of engagement with the political forces that shape theories, practices, academies, policies and communities. Through the engagement of the public and development of a local network, the architect connects itself to the local economy. This position encourages the architect to emerge as a leader, creating a means of greater accountability for the designer in the long term affects of the design. The architect that has an established place in society and the local economy will ultimately benefit the professional practice of architecture. The practice can engage globally thereafter, with a local presence as a foundation. As a profession, the architect has a responsibility to the public, yet so often architects have little engagement in the local public realm in which they practice. Activist architecture, as suggested by Roberta Feldman, involves 'the act of architects leaving the office, engaging a community and seeking a need for design in that community, rather than passively waiting for clients to come to them.'

Roberta Felman, Expanding Architecture Design as Activism (New York, Metropolis Books, 2008)

The connection to the community in which it serves, is a manifestation of the global world where people do not root themselves to their community. The technological advancements allow people to interact with one another through an intangible interface. This creates a lack of responsibility or ownership for a person's identity and place in society.

Wigley, Mark. Prosthetic Theory: The Disciplining of Architecture. Assemblage. (Cambridge MA, The MIT Press, 1991.)

Such a blurring of identity is produced by all prostheses. They do more than simply extend the body. Rather, they are introduced because the body is in some way "deficient" or "defective," in Freud's terms, or "insufficient. "

Challenging the role of the architect, exploring ways of amplifying or extending the profession can allow the architect to have foundation on which to develop a practice that is able to withstand economic changes.

Jose L. S. Gamez and Susan Rogers, Expanding Architecture Design as Activism (New York, Metropolis Books, 2008)

Along with the family doctor, dentist, local shopkeeper, and mail carrier, everyone would know a local architect, and they would know how she or he contributes to the greater good.

ARCHITECTURE IS POLITICAL

If architecture can embrace the idea that architecture is political, design can become a means of activism to promote or address life issues. Jeremy Till, the Dean of Architecture and the Built Environment at the University of Westminster, writes 'Architecture is political. Not political in the party political sense of the term, but political in the original sense of the word in that it affects the lives of citizens." Often the public view architecture as an aesthetic exercise, rather than place making.

Jeremy Till, Architecture Depends (Cambridge, MIT Press, 2009.,)

In a traditional model, the architect waits for a client to approach him or her with a design problem to solve. This method deems the architect not as a leader, but rather a problem solver. '

John Forester, a urban designer believes that design cannot be understood solely as

problem solving. Forsester refers to the process of design as sense-making. Forester observes that 'sense-making is not simply a matter of instrumental problem solving, it is a matter of altering, respecting, acknowledging and shaping peoples lived worlds.'

Jeremy Till, Architecture Depends (Cambridge, MIT Press, 2009..)

Jeremy Till, refers to Forester's term of sense-making as a more holistic way to understand the development of architectural design.   The depth of issues that architecture has the potential to acknowledge as an important cultural implication. The before mentioned traditional model does not consider socio political issues as catalyst for architectural intervention. Rather, if these issues are considered in the development of design, it is more of a side affect or afterthought. As architects and designers, there is opportunity to consider these issues when designing the built environment.

Where problem solving, predicated as it is on positivist thinking, tends to either abstract or exclude the social and the political, sense-making inevitably engages them and, in doing, accords with a model of architectural agency in which social and political issues are brought to the fore and then negotiated through spatial discussions.' As architects, there is still an obligation to the client and the user, and although the sense-making approach considers socio political issues at a closer level, the process cannot overlook the client needs. The socio- political issues should be considered in the design process, but presented to the client as an important way to improve the effectiveness of the architectural manifestation.

Jeremy Till, Architecture Depends (Cambridge, MIT Press, 2009..)

STATE OF THE ECONOMY

As we are experiencing today first hand, the architectural profession is dependent on the economy. The examination of the position of the architectural practice's ability to respond and inform urban environments could help to develop a more sustainable economic model which creates a vision for the future. A process which engages the public will inherently respond to their needs more effectively and engaging with a private client should consider the surrounding businesses as a critical part of the initial analysis. The technological advancements have allowed some people to limit their need for space. Others have eliminated the need for space completely and use live space as work space. The architect could foster an aberration of this concept, by showing the opportunity of having little space but establishing place in connection with other entrepreneurs. The architect must see beyond the built environment and educate the client of the importance of networking and showing how a small space, if strategically placed will foster growth and cultivate opportunity for the business.

The economy is volatile and business development is becoming more unpredictable. A traditional business model expected continual growth in not only profit, but also the physical needs. As a business grew, it typically required more space. A law practice would hire more staff as it gained clients.   A coffee shop would open more locations as it establishes the brand. A furniture builder would expand its production workshop as it increased the production volume. Some contemporary business models may

still have similar needs. However, due to the advancement of technology and the development of the new technological interface, many businesses are more flexible and have evolving programmatic needs. Therefore, the architectural manifestations should also respond to the evolving program.

URBAN LENS

Architecture must respond to the urban context from which it grows. Architecture as a medium can mediate the relationship between the private and public realms: the entrepreneur and the public space which in this case is the city street. The architectural intervention must be a part of the greater urban system. This consideration works to benefit the entrepreneur, extending their networking interface into the urban public realm, while responding to the urban condition responsibly.

Gehl, Jan. Life Between Buildings, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1987.

The street is the democratic metric against which the urban populace is measured and defined. "Public life in good quality public spaces is an important part of a democratic life and a full life." Many North American cities lack in sufficient public space. The street becomes the primary public space. The dual functionality of the urban street serving a transitory space and public space suggests individualism and does not promote interaction. However, the hybrid program is an efficient use of space. This condition exists in most North American cities and provides an opportunity to rethink the street. In European cities such as Venice or Barcelona, the public square or piazza is part of everyday life. It is a place to gather and exchange information. The public square tradition is a physical manifestation of the cultural condition.

Aldo Rossi. The Architecture of the City. (Cambridge, MA. MIT Presss, 1982)

'In the urban composition, everything must express as faithfully as possible the particular life of the collective organism.'

Architecture must react to the urban context, but not necessarily conform to the existing urban form. It creates an opportunity to inform the collective organism and design proactive architecture. Although the urban condition may serve the life it contains, an architectural intervention is an opportunity to inform a condition with a new model.

Steven Holl, Urbanisms: Working with Doubt (New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 2009)

Architecture, by unifying foreground, middle ground, and distant views ties perspective to detail and material space. Artist Vito Acconci and architect Steven Holl collaborated on the design of the temporary façade for the Storefront for Art and Architecture in New York City. The site was a significant crossroads of three distinct neighborhoods in southern Manhattan. The building was a small wedge that was dominated by long façade. The designers used the architecture as a means to challenge the symbolic border which exists in the art world, where only those on the inside belong. Holl and Acconci inserted a series of hinged panels arranged in a puzzle-like configuration. When the panels are locked in their open position, the facade dissolves and the interior space of the gallery expands out on to the sidewalk. The architecture unfolds to create an urban place, while addressing the functional

needs. The architecture challenges not only the boundary of the art world, but the threshold of public and private space. It is an activist architectural intervention which rethinks the impact of architecture of the urban street and fosters an aberration of the private and public using the architecture as a medium.

If the function of a façade is to create a division separating the inside and the outside space, this new façade, in the words of former director Kyong Park, is 'No wall, no barrier, no inside, no outside, no space, no building, no place, no institution, no art, no architecture, no Acconci, no Holl, no Storefront.'"

Steven Holl, Urbanisms: Working with Doubt (New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 2009)

The intervention also serves as a catalyst for interaction in the transitory public space of an urban sidewalk.

"In a Society becoming steadily more privatized with private homes, cars, computers, offices and shopping centers, the public component of our lives is disappearing. It is more and more important to make the cities inviting, so we can meet our fellow citizens face to face and experience directly through our senses. Public life in good quality public spaces is an important part of a democratic life and a full life."

Gehl, Jan. Life Between Buildings, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1987.

NEW PUBLIC SPACE – SPACE TIME.

In 'The Overexposed City,' Paul Virilio explains how 'in the new perspective devoid of horizon, the city was entered not through a gate nor through an arc de triomph, but rather through an electronic audience system. Users of the road were no longer understood to be inhabitants or privileged residents.'

Paul Virilio. The Overexposed City. (London. Routledge, 1997.)

The deteriorating human connections which Virilio discusses, in security driven airports and the design of a new 'gateway' to the city, are manifestations of the direction of human interaction.   Society has moved away from the traditional city, with gates and monumental symbols which are designed for the pedestrian culture. This deterioration is an opportunity to develop a new layer of human interaction.

Space time is a phenomenon which changes the perception in which people understand and experience space. The development of technology and the decrease in direct human interaction to obtain information has changed the way in which space is perceived. No longer does a person need to go to the city square to be informed of the day's events; the world's events can be obtained through a technological interface which does not require direct human interaction. There are many implications of this advancement: decrease in direct human contact can be detrimental in its affects on human behavior and society. However, interface with a diverse and extensive network of information allows access to the 'bigger picture,' creating an informed society and world view. Architecture should embrace this new layer of public space as an asset to the profession. Space time is a place that is devoid of space. There is an absence of physical space which architecture traditionally manifests itself. This creates an opportunity for amplification of the architect's traditional role. If the new 'non-space'

develops as an asset for the profession, the architect can extend beyond its traditional boundaries.

ENTREPRENEURIAL LENS

The lull of the economy is a catalyst for entrepreneurial innovation and development. Many of the young people are unemployed having no experience. Many experienced people with diverse talents are laid off and rendered jobless. Perhaps out of desperation or optimistic idealism, individuals seek to fulfill a vision in an entrepreneurial pursuit. Often a skill that a person has that is beyond their education is realized in a business pursuit. Sometimes being laid off in a certain field inspires a person to strike out on their own, using the skills they have. They have several things in common even if the programmatic development of the business is completely different. They have limited resources, the willingness to take risk and innovative mind set.
Limited resources may

Dana Bredemeyer. The Role of the Architect.

Architects 'need to understand both the business and personal objectives of key players, and get them personally committed to the success of the architecture. This means listening, networking, articulating and selling a vision, and doing all this continuously over the life of the project.'

Entrepreneurs and artists come into an area and take risks to realize a vision. The vision is often at an individual level and although it is part of the urban fabric, if it was part of a more cohesive system it could benefit the user, the client, the society and inherently the architect.

Heather McLean. UTOpia: Towards a New Toronto. (Toronto, Coach House Books, 2005)

'Ironically, these people [artists and entrepreneurs] who contribute to making the neighborhood culturally appealing in the first place are at risk of being displaced by higher-income earners and the services and amenities that aim to serve them.'

Often as the vision is being realized the real estate value of space rises, and the newly established entrepreneurs can no longer afford the rent and are adversely forced to leave a space, which they played a part in making a place.
If the vision could be understood at a macro level and developed, the impact on an urban scale could be better understood and could benefit the society and the individual by creating a more complex urban environment with more layers while benefiting the entrepreneur by creating a more viable and potent business environment.

Steven Holl, Questions of Perception. (William K Stout Publishing, San Francisco CA, 2007

In the modern city, phenomenal and experiential complexities develop only partially through intent. More frequently, they result accidentally from semi-ordered, yet unpredictable, overlapping of individual intentions.

The architecture cannot address the complexity of the needs of the entrepreneur completely by any means. It is impossible to predict the ever changing programmatic needs. The architecture can however react to the urban environment and predict

needs by understanding the spatial needs of program. However, by developing a network of entrepreneurs who can develop symbiotic relationships with one another, allowing them to share space and resources. This creates a method of development which counters the displacement of entrepreneurs who can no longer afford rent. They develop as a network of individuals rather than separate pulses spread out, which inhibits growth.

IS THIS ARCHITECTURE?

Considering the nature of the thesis, developing a network of people as a premise for developing architecture seems non architectural. Part of the challenge of a design project in the conventional design process is discovering the design solution for the client procured project. Jeremy Till, questions the basis of the architectural design as a problem solving process. He argues that the architect is usually introduced into the process when the 'brief,' or programmatic needs has been established by the client, which rationalizes the functional requirements of a project. The architect's role, therefore, becomes creating an 'object' which responds to the conditions of the brief. This process, he suggests, eliminates the social content of a brief. According to Till, the architect's role could extend beyond to the manifestation of the brief itself. The 'creative brief is about negotiating a new set of social relations, it is about juxtapostions of action and activities, it is about the possibility to think outside the norm, in order to project a new spatial, and hence social, conditions.'

Jeremy Till. Architecture Depends (Cambridge MA, The MIT Press, 2009)

This process of evolving a brief may not provide the immediate rush of visual stimulation that is associated with the creative design of an object- a rush which has proved addictive to architects over the ages- but it does have a much longer-term and profound effect.

If an architect would act with an entrepreneurial spirit, designing a condition and acting as an advocate to create the brief as Till suggests, the architect is held more accountable for responding to social conditions. This is not to suggest architects are simply social advocates: architects have a responsibility of making place, and therefore a consideration of human needs. Since architecture is responding to the human condition and physical spatial needs, architects should understand the human environment interaction. Using an advocate approach, the architect has more influence on the design as it responds to the social condition. If architects begin to adopt this attitude toward design, overtime society will begin to understand the impact of architectural design as beyond the aesthetic making of an object. Too often investment in design is neglected. During an economic lull, for example, the aesthetic value is lowest on the priority list. If however, the design implications emphasize their socio political value and how it can benefit the client in the long term, the value of design increases. Designers should not apologize for the value of design. As a profession, architects must advocate for good design. If the designer invests in the design of place, the client will recognize

ARCHITECTURAL LENS

The built environment is the physical manifestation of the programmatic needs. As a part of the local economy, and as a future to the potential economic growth, these programmatic needs of entrepreneurs must be considered in the design process. The entrepreneur is a risk taker and a visionary. Therefore, the program of their space morphs and adapts according to the development of their vision. Entrepreneurs are not static, and their needs are dynamic and have different functions and spatial requirements over time. Certain needs appear and disappear during the development continuum of the business needs. This is the condition to which the architecture must respond.

Steven Holl, Urbanisms: Working with Doubt (New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 2009)

Today, working with doubt is unavoidable; the absolute is suspended by the relative and the interactive. Instead of stable systems we must work with dynamic systems. Instead of simple and clear programs we engage contingent and diverse programs. Instead of precision and perfection we work with intermittent, crossbred systems, and combined methods.

As previously stated, the entrepreneurial pulses in a city are not singular. They exist in many different locations, of different forms and phases of progression. Many share similar programmatic needs, and if they were aware of each other, could benefit from shared space and resources. Beyond the physical environment, their proximity and network of customers could benefit each other. Not only could they benefit from shared space, but one entrepreneur's establishment of place and clientele could benefit another entrepreneur by sharing customers and credibility.

The architectural intervention which responds to the needs of the entrepreneur is an opportunity to foster aberrations between the threshold of public and private space. It creates a means to develop a networking interface that benefits the entrepreneurs. An entrepreneur is often focused on their own business development and may not see the benefit of networking beyond the technological interface. The architecture can create an interface that occurs in the physical space which creates an opportunity to share space and resources. The needs of an entrepreneur change and morph in the life of the business; therefore the architecture must have the flexibility and adaptability to conform to their needs. However, it cannot be the physical space only; rather the network of entrepreneurs must help each other through a technological interface, to organize the changes in growth and development. The architect can take a proactive role in establishing a system that assists the entrepreneurs.

Chris Krager. Archepreneurs. Expanding Architecture: Design as Activism.(New York, Bellerophon Publications, 2008)

'The creative abilities that allow architects and designers to deliver successful built solutions should also allow the discipline (or individuals within it) to formulate strategies for renewed relevance. This is not to suggest that marquee architects should stop designing museums and start working on tract homes; but if we must to make a lasting impact on society and culture at large, we must begin to transform the mediocre built environment. To accomplish this architects and building designers

must act as businesspeople, civic leaders, and activists. Our obligation is simple: our built environment must be improved, and we must lead the way.'

CONCLUSION

The thesis examines the role of the architect, and explores the means of technological advancement and responding to local urban needs to deal with the poor economic conditions. The understanding of how the power of architecture can be amplified if it is well established in a local economy is essential for the future of the profession. It does not suggest that the role of the architect has to completely change. Rather, it investigates a method or process which uses the technological advancements which have perhaps disconnected direct human interaction, as a means to connect entrepreneurs, the future of the economic growth. The role of the architect in the process encompasses direct interaction and a technological interface to develop a foundation in the society. By examining the role of the architect and the architecture through urban and entrepreneurial lenses, a networking interface as an extension to the design process could create a means to counter the economic hardships which the profession is experiencing today. It is important to foster a local presence, but the global society of today must be considered. It cannot be local versus global; it must be local plus global. The method of mediating between the micro and the macro fosters aberrations between the architectural, urban and entrepreneurial lenses, amplifying the role of the architect beyond the traditional.
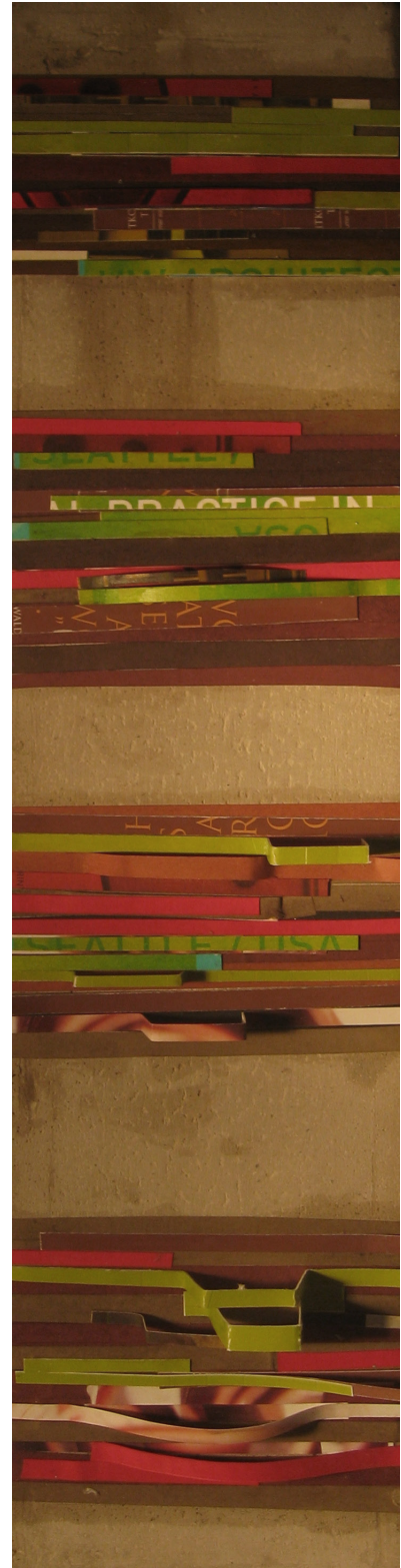
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INITIAL SKETCH PROBLEM

An initial sketch problem was done as a catalyst for the design process. The process developed an attitude for the thesis and developed a flexibility for the process. The experimental nature of the thesis is expressed in the simple installation.

The intention was to alter the experience of an existing condition in a way which allows the user to manipulate the space, and through this engagement create place. An exploration of the creation of place through an interactive process with the user is an important architectural implication which manifests itself in the thesis process. Architecture is the art of creating spaces, making places. The human interaction which creates place is as important if not more important than the built environment. If an architectural intervention can influence or engage the user, the built environment becomes a dynamic interface, rather than a static condition,

In this sketch problem, the rotating movable table in a student lounge area as an existing condition becomes the catalyst for engagement. A simple dual tension structure made of string enfolds to create a place when activated through human interaction; the movement of the table.
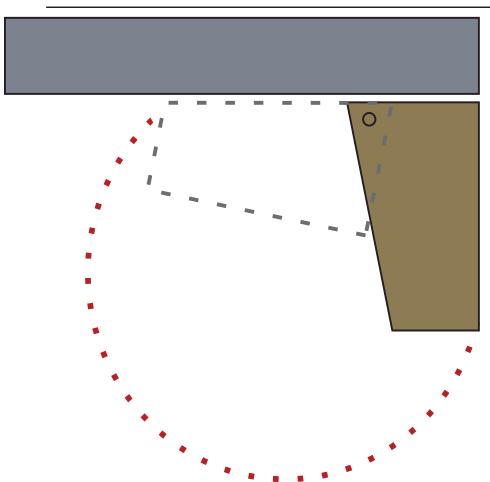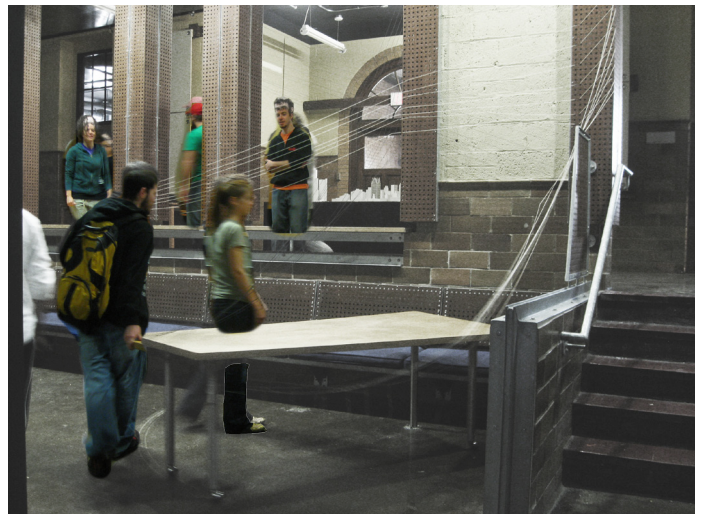
The precedent analysis for the growth of the thesis was explored in two categories: Ideological and architectural. Due to the multifaceted nature of the thesis, in addition to architectural precedents, a search for ideological studies, shaped the process of the thesis development.   Examining the role of the architect required a precedent analysis that not only included architectural studies, but almost more importantly, an examination of the ideology of organizations which can influence the practice of architecture.

The ideological precedent studies support the exploration the non traditional role of the architect. They examine the system of abstract thought on which an organization or project is manifested in the design process. With an examination of the architect's role throughout history, it was apparent that amplifying the role of the architect would require an examination of the ideology of design, not limited to architectural practice. They acknowledge the strength of networking and the importance of multidisciplinary practice.

0 1 IMPROV EVERYWHERE
      New York City, NY | Charlie Todd
0 2 ROOSEVELT PARK
      Detroit, MI | uRban detail and other Detroit entrepreneurs
0 3 LOCAL ARCHITECTURAL NETWORK
      Paris, France | Benoit Jallon + Umberto Napolitano
0 4 WIKIPEDIA
      Internet based | Larry Sanger + Jimmy Wales

The architectural precedent studies focus on the built environment. The examination of how the architecture which manifests itself in a design process affects the making of place is important. The precedent studies show the architectural attitude of the thesis.

0 1   STOREFRONT FOR ART AND ARCHITECTURE
       New York City, NY | Vito Ancionci + Steven Holl

0 2   KARL KOCH HOUSE
       Long Island, NY | Karl Koch

Opposite : Architect, Steven Holl. Image source : http://www.storefront-news.org/exhib_dete.php?exID=151

TICKET MACHINES   TRACKS 31 TO 42

PASSAGE   WAITING ROOM

Improv Everywhere
Charlie Todd, New York City

Improv everywhere is a New York City based group created by Charlie Todd in August of 2001. The group was created to have 'organized fun,' by causing scenes of 'chaos and joy.' Their mission is to create events for their own enjoyment and for the people experience the events live. The group has also reached a wide range of viewers through its web site, and posting videos and photos on information sharing sites such as youtube and flickr.

The group was created by Mr. Todd after creating a scene in one of New York City's West Village bars with a few friends. Todd had recently moved to New York City, trained as an actor. As stated by Mr. Todd,

'In August of 2001, I went out to a West Village bar with my college buddies Brandon Arnold and Jon Karpinos. On a whim we decided to pull a prank where I would pose as musician Ben Folds. Three hours later, "Ben Folds" was drinking on the house surrounded by women and his "two big fans" were thrown out of the bar for "stealing Ben Folds' wallet". I had always been a prankster, but this experience enlightened me as to how far a prank could be taken. As an actor new to the city, I discovered I could create my own theatre rather than waiting around for someone to give me stage time. Bored at my temp job the next Monday morning, I wrote the story down and put it on the web. Improv Everywhere was born.'

We get satisfaction from coming up with an awesome idea and making it come to life. In the process we bring excitement to otherwise unexciting locales and give strangers a story they can tell for the rest of their lives.'

The group began with Mr. Todd's friends and today those are the one's considered 'senior agents.' Depending on the scale of the mission, the group expands and contracts through a network of 'agents.' Anyone can sign up to be an agent on the group's web site. They have completed over 100 missions which have involved thousands of undercover agents, recruited by a network developed by Todd, an extending to the internet over time.

FROZEN GRAND CENTRAL STATION

The event occurred in the world's largest train station, Grand Central, in New York City. In a place where 500,000 people transition from modes of transit to the city street, over 200 undercover agents froze in place for five minutes. Some dropped papers or paused in mid air when about eat a spoon full of yogurt. Tourists and daily commuters began to notice that people where frozen all around them- some in awe or confusion, others in frustration. The mission was generally harmless, but created a scene and created a memorable moment for those who witnessed it. The youtube post has gained over 20 million views around the world. The participant do not know each other necessarily, but are connected solely through being an agent of the mission.
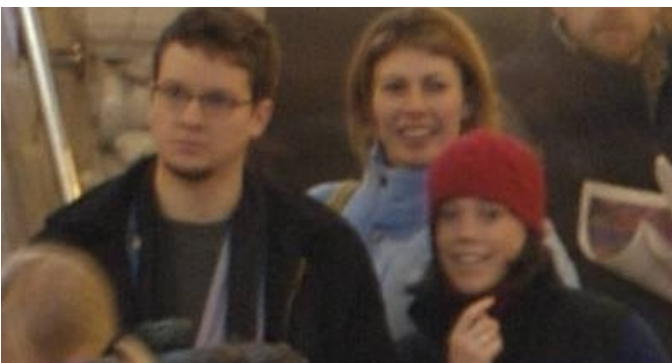
Causing a Scene :Extraordinary Pranks in Ordinary Places with
Improv Everywhere
By Charlie Todd, Alex Scordelis
improveverywhere.com

LOOK UP MORE, UNION SQUARE

The mission was inspired by a impromptu performance witnessed by Mr. Todd in Union Square. He saw a girl dancing in the window several stories above street level in a window of a new building, in the retail store, Forever 21, which overlooks the city square. Soon after the girl finished her dance, her friend ran up and they fled away laughing, presumably having accomplished a dare. Mr. Todd saw an opportunity for a larger scale performance with a dancer in every window. There is a constant ready audience in the popular city square across the street.

Mr. Todd consults his network, to prepare for the event. Agent Kula was able to print the four foot tall letters at his engineering firm, which spell out "Look Up More," a phrase created by Agent Mason. The performers themselves where recruited through an online invitation, and instructed to wear black clothing and meet at the north end of the park at a specific time to receive instructions. The choreographed performance was led by Mr. Todd who remained in the square and used a simple hand gesture to communicate to his agents the instruction to move to the next phase. Certain agents were instructed to hold up the letter signs during a dictated phase, which were legible from the park.

The performance was witnessed by many in the park. The performers themselves did not know what they looked like, but knew they were entertaining when even freestyle bikers were ignored by the crowd and eventually joined in watching the performance.

The power of networking to accomplish a mission is exemplified through the example of Improv Everywhere. Mr. Todd, the founder of the group, had been waiting for a 'big break' as an actor; the performance which inspired the group's creation was done only with a few friends. This network grew, and by engaging a new interface in the public realm, the internet, the group was able to enter the world stage. It was not through Mr. Todd's great talent of performance which credit is given, but it is his tremendous ability to see a vision and gain access to people with the talents he needs for each mission.

The ideology of the group and its entrepreneurial spirit informed the process of the thesis. It serves as an example of how a performance of architecture can be inspired by one individual but its growth is fostered by a network of people who do not necessarily know each other, but are connected by their mission.

Causing a Scene :Extraordinary Pranks in Ordinary Places with Improv Everywhere
By Charlie Todd, Alex Scordelis
improveverywhere.com

BASEMENT

LOOK·UP·MORE

DSW

OODSMARKET

FOREVER

ROOSEVELT PARK REDEVELOPMENT

Roosevelt Park is an important green space in western Detroit, situated in front of a historical building, Central Michigan Depot. The building itself has been abandoned for several decades. The iconic building is massive in scale in comparison to the surrounding buildings. The adjacent park is under used and minimally maintained by the city.

CELEBRATING AN ICONIC BUILDING

Michigan Central Station was built in 1913, designed by hotel architects Warren and Wetmore, the same designers of the internationally known Grand Central Station in New York City. Detroit's previous train station burned down on December 26, 1913. At the time Michigan Central Station was still under construction but had to open early to begin to serve the needs of the city.

The freeway development was a catalyst to the decline of passengers using the rail route between Detroit and Chicago. The building then started its quiet decay. Interior shops and restaurants began closing in 1967. Finally, the last train departed in 1988, and the building closed only 8 decades after its opening.

A group of designers, academics and entrepreneurs took the initiative to develop a design to rethink Roosevelt Park. The initiative was intended to develop a public green space which is currently under used. Through this process the group will also benefit local entrepreneurs who are directly involved in the collaborative effort. Although the design fee is essentially done pro bono, the effort is intended to be a catalyst for development which will ideally create more work for the architects involved if this initial effort is deemed successful by the user and the city. The land is currently owned by the city and although the city accepted the design effort, it does not support the redevelopment with funds.

The group saw the opportunity for amelioration of the built environment and an asset development for the urban condition. The first effort was to create a master plan for the site and implement the interventions as funding becomes available. The initial effort was a landscape space which was constructed through volunteers and donated material and machinery. This initial intervention also had a political intention. Michigan Central Station was under threat of demolition and the design was intended to reflect the proportions of the facade and act as a memorial.

image credits: Noah Resnick
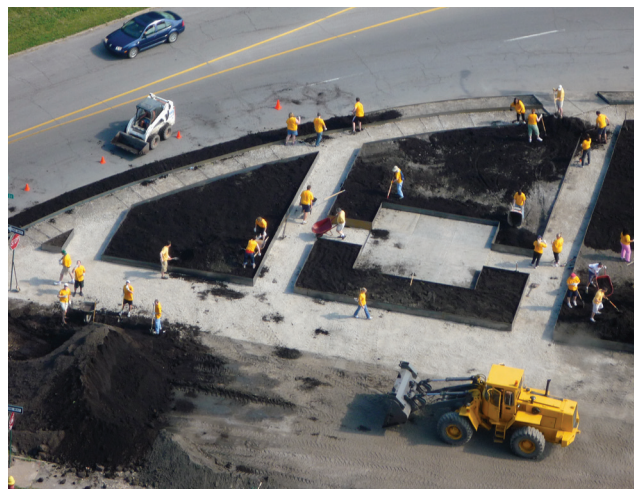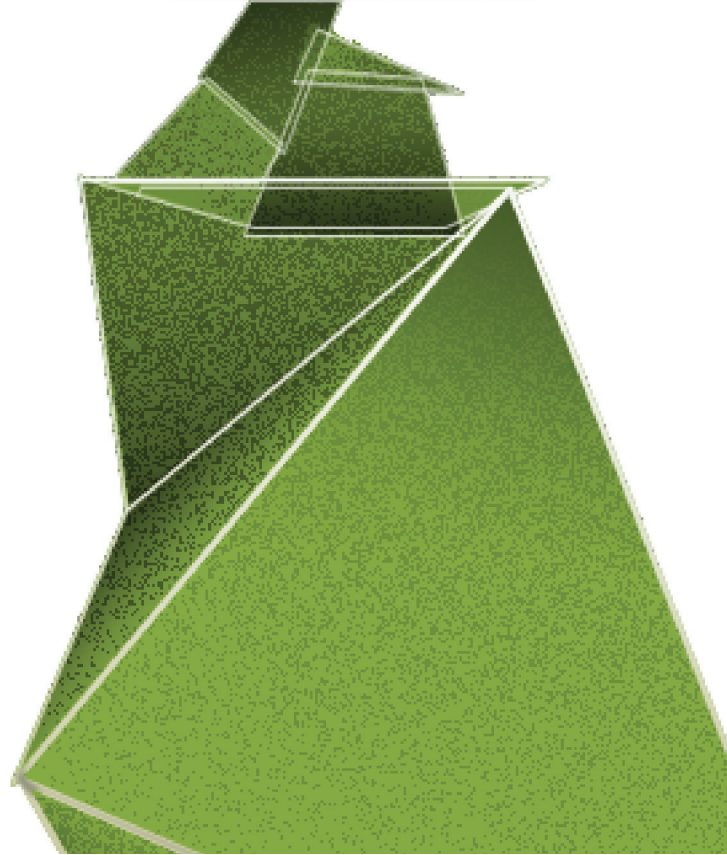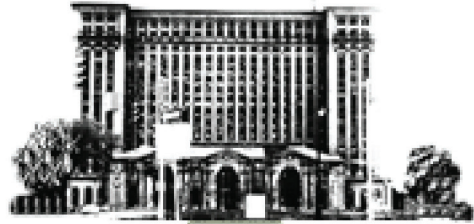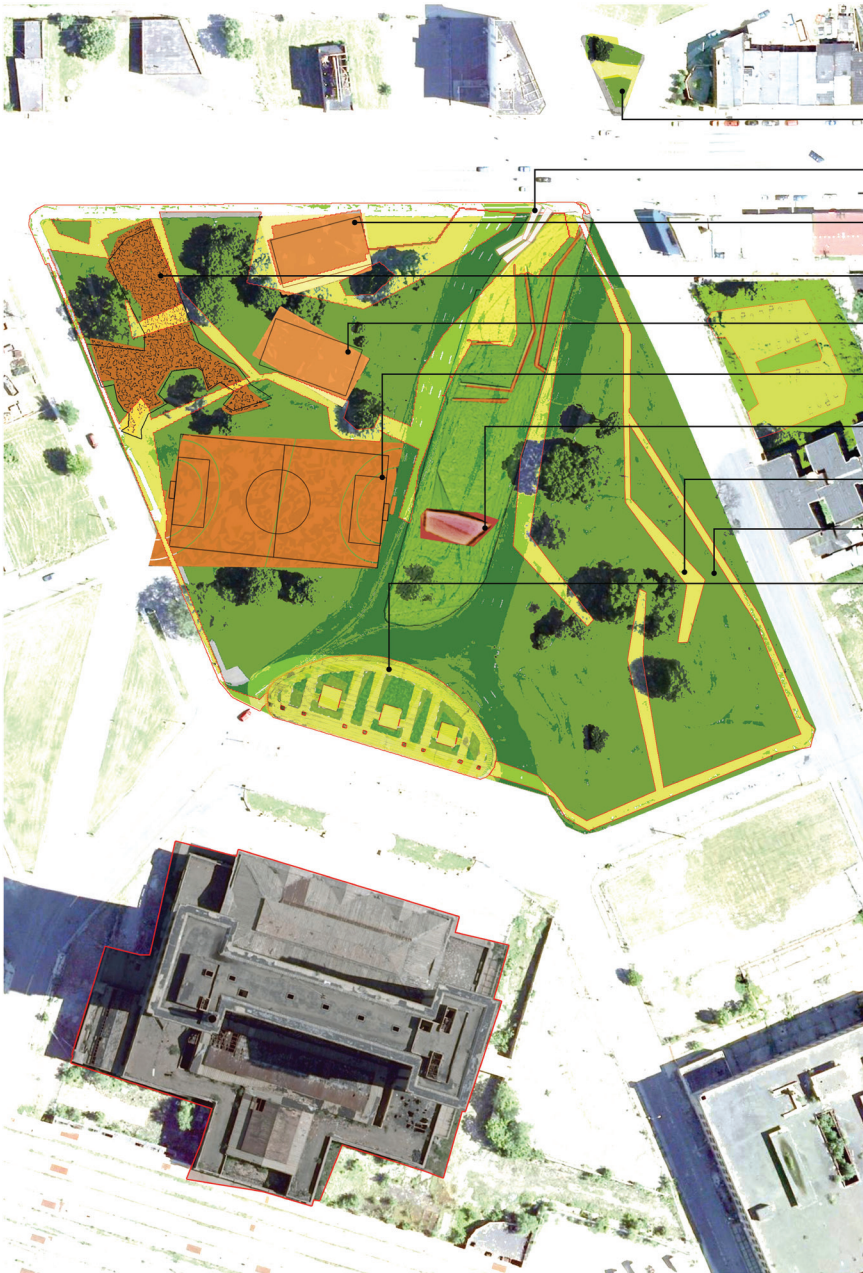
MASTER PLAN

- ▭ LANDSCAPE ISLAND CROSSING
- ▭ LIGHT SCULPTURE
- ▬ SKATE PARK
- ▬ BOCCE COURTS
- ▬ TENNIS COURTS
- ▬ SOCCER/FOOTBALL
- ▬ AMPHITHEATER
- ▬ WALKING PATH
- ▬ NATURAL LANDSCAPE
- ▬ REFLECTION GARDEN

image credits: Noah Resnick

Fortunately, building was not torn down, but the intervention nevertheless celebrated the iconic structure and engaged the community with its presence. The volunteer effort was supported by corporations and local community members. The plants were donated by local suppliers and a lot of material was recycled or given as donation to the cause.

Although the initial phase has been completed, there are several more phases of the master plan. These phases will be implemented as funding is collected and volunteers are organized. The intention is to gain support with each phase and allow the redevelopment of Roosevelt Park as a community engaging project to be an example for redevelopment in the city.

Today, the city of Detroit is a shrinking post industrial city, suffering from the economic repercussions of the struggling automobile industry. The source of its growth and development has also been the source of the city's demise. The entrepreneurial spirit which exists in the city in small pulses, manifests itself in this redevelopment project. This precedent serves as an example of leadership and entrepreneurial catalyst inspired through a design pursuit. The effort not only ameliorates the built environment, but more importantly, inspires community development. Investment in the public spaces of an urban context is beneficial to future development and the quality of life. The designer cannot understand the repercussions of design completely, but through visionary design development hope and inspiration can be implemented in the community.

The redevelopment effort may also benefit the designers. The city has taken a passive role in the initial phases of the project. However, if proven successful after the implementation a few of the phases, the designers' credibility may help future development. In the event that the city obtains funding for similar projects, the hope is that consideration would be given to the group that initiated the Roosevelt Park project. They have developed a local portfolio and community support. They have also shown their dedication to the improvement of the Detroit urban condition.

This approach to design a response to both the urban and economic conditions, It also has taken a political stand with the hope of developing a community with a collaborative effort to ameliorate the built environment.

Local Architectural Network
Paris, France

LAN architecture in Paris which stands for Local Architectural Network is a practice in Paris France, founded on the.   A quote which explains the ideology of their practice:

http://www.lan-paris.com/

"For us, it is important to express the idea of network that represents the architecture interdisciplinarity. Local, refers to the importance of context and environment in each project. Our work is away from a formalist discourse and from an aesthetical approach which too often refers to a stylistic mode, desperately searching for a signature."

In order maintain the firm's amount of work, the studio periodically hosts a gathering which they call a 'Salon,' for their network of clients and other relevant parties.   These networking events are designed in hopes that they can stimulate some growth or opportunity for the practice.

Wikipedia

Wikipedia is a free web based information interface created through a collaborative effort. It is supported by the non-profit Wikimedia Foundation.   The encyclopedia is multilingual and written by volunteers from around the world.

The use of the public space on the internet and the use of a collaborative effort are examples of how an organization can be developed. An interface for the sharing of information which reaches people of many cultures begins to dissolve the barrier which has historically restricted the universal access to knowledge. As one its founder's Jimmy Wales, explains Wikipedia as "an effort to create and distribute a free encyclopedia of the highest possible quality to every single person on the planet in their own language"

Wikipedia is hosted and funded by the Wikimedia Foundation, a non-profit organization. The intention of the foundation is to gather information and allow as many people as possible to contribute and access it. The information is checked for its credibility, and although there are misinformed postings, there is a great effort to filter these sort of postings. Wikipedia is widely used as a quick overview of a topic by people around the world.

image opposite http://www.lan-paris.com/

The storefront for art and architecture in New York City is a project done through a collaborative effort between artist Vito Acconci and architect Steven Holl.. The building was a small wedge that was dominated by long façade. Acconci and Holl challenged the symbolic border which exist between those on the inside and those on the outside of the art world. Using a hybrid material comprised of concrete mixed with recycled fibers, Holl and Acconci inserted a series of hinged panels into the facade arranged in a puzzle-like configuration.   When the panels are locked in their open position, the facade dissolves and the interior space of the gallery expands out on to the sidewalk. The architecture unfolds to create place.

The architecture is a manifestation of the organization's mission. The intention of the organization is stated as "generating dialogue and collaboration across geographic, ideological and disciplinary boundaries." The architecture not only responds to the needs of the client, but in doing so also recognizes the urban context.

The site serves as a hinge point between three surrounding neighborhoods: Chinatown, Little Italy and SoHo. The architecture creates a place which all neighborhoods can relate to, acting as a catalyst for urban interaction.

The storefront project was intended to be a temporary installation in 1993, but because of its success, was restored to the original condition in 2008.

Karl Koch House
Long Island Sound, NY

Designed by architect Karl Koch in 1952, the Techbuilt house was a "prefabricated" house using ordinary wood framing for the exterior wall and an interior post and beam structure supporting prefabricated floor panels. The houses were sold in 'kits' and produced entirely in a factory. They were brought on site by truck delivery.

The prefabrication process itself is not the essential aspect of the precedent study as it relates to the thesis. Rather, it is the design concept used by the designer. The house was designed to change as the needs of the user changed. The living spaces and master bedroom are in one section of the house. The additional bedrooms and supplemental rooms are designed in a way which can be closed off when the family consists of parents only without children. The architecture grows and retracts according to the needs of the occupants.

The concept of allowing the user to have control also is apparent in the interior details of the house. The built in bookshelves are adaptable, unfolding as supplemental seating or a table according to the needs of the occupant.

Adaptive and changeable architecture is a concept which relates directly to the thesis. The programmatic needs will presumably change and morph for the entrepreneur and a study of how architecture can respond to that condition is an important concept in a number of Karl Koch projects.

ISOMETRIC

0 1/2 1 2

PLAN OF DOOR —CLOSED
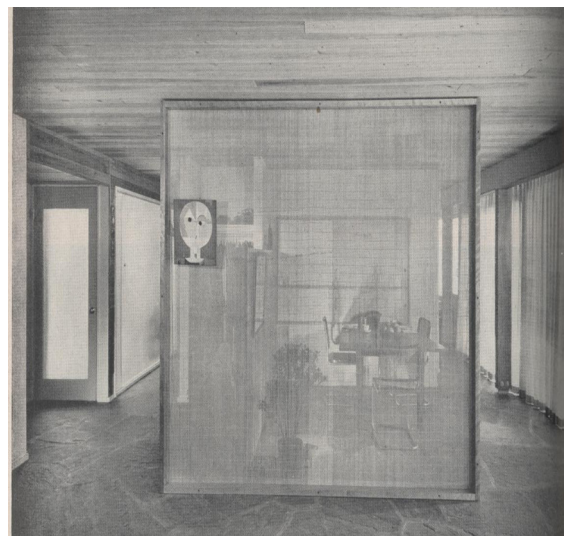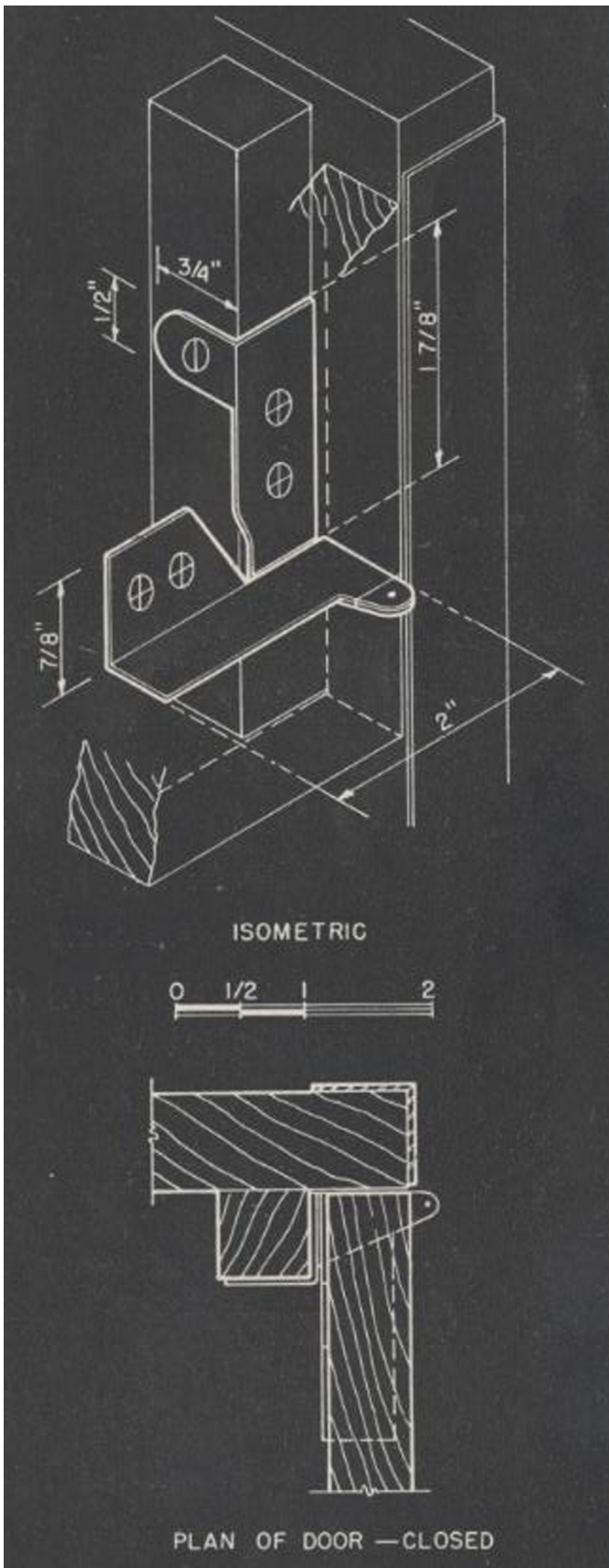
A site needed to be selected to test the thesis. To initiate the process site criterion were developed initially at an urban scale. The site was to be in a viable urban condition with room for potential growth and development. To understand how the role of the architect can be amplified, a foundation of the urban condition would serve as an anchoring foundation for the architecture. A functional transportation system should be in place to act as a support system for the project development.

The urban condition which exists in one of the most diverse cities in the world, Toronto, Canada, seemed appropriate for the testing of the thesis. The city boast of a strong architectural and arts culture. It serves as Canada's capital for immigrant population. In comparison to other cities, such as Chicago, the people do not assimilate to local Canadian culture, but rather maintain their home culture, while still identifying themselves as Torontonians. They view themselves as a 'tossed salad' rather than a 'melting pot.'

The thesis could be deemed siteless; the concept of an examination of the role of the architect and the search for an amplification of that role could be tested in many urban conditions. As the site selection develops, it becomes more significant in the design process. The intention however, is to test the thesis in one condition which would develop a strategy for other North American cities, or possibly cities around the world.

Several sites were examined along Queen Street West, one of the major east west arteries of the city of Toronto. Historically speaking this artery has served as a catalyst for the city's entrepreneurial growth. This is an area in which many small businesses, especially stemming from the art and design disciplines have developed. There is a desire for further densification and development further west, and the entrepreneurial spirt is intensified.

The urban form consists of a commercial and retail density which is supported by a heavily used street car line along Queen Street West. The commercial spine supports neighborhood development situated directly south and north of Queen Street. The scale and density lessens in the westerly direction.

Historically, a subway line was supposed to be implemented underneath Queen Street, from the Yonge Street line. The construction was stopped due to lack of funds. This line could be implemented, if growth and development increased and additional public transportation was needed.
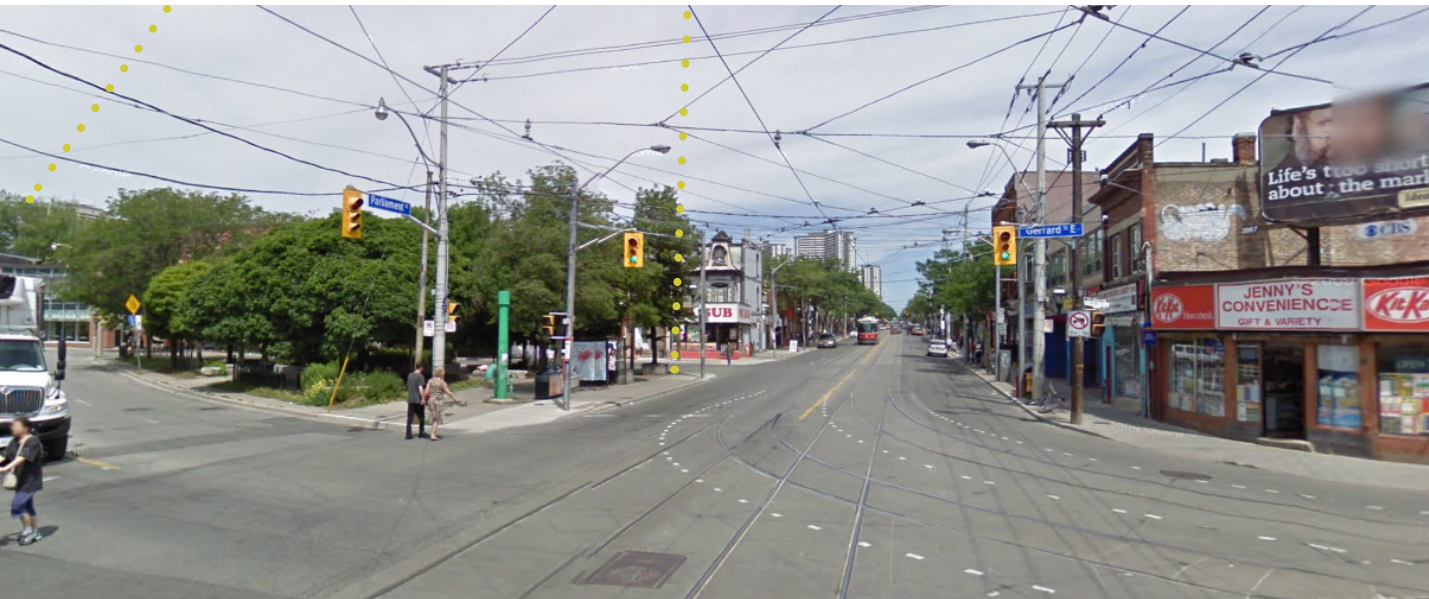
TORONTO, CANADA

⭕ potential sites

—— Queen St W

PARLIMENT STREET

GERARD STREET E

HISTORY OF TORONTO'S URBAN STRUCTURE

The city of Toronto was historically made up several villages that eventually became one municipality. The street grid that developed overtime is based on the villages, and as they began to connect to each other the grid developed with abnormalities where the connections developed. As a result, the interstitial space have created interesting urban spaces.

The structural development of each district is similar; however as each municipality developed differently, the interstitial spaces between the developing areas tended to create interesting spaces.

As shown, a condition exists at Gerard Street and Parliament Street, where the street grid shifts and the interstitial space becomes a green space in the midst of a dense urban condition. This serves as a case study of how changing the urban structure can create interesting spaces. The area around the site has an absence green space, and the interstitial space fulfills that need for the community.

SITE ACTIVITY ANALYSIS
- ———— vehicular traffic
- ———— street car traffic
- ———— pedestrian walking traffic
- pedestrian standing
- pedestiran sitting

The eastern most site identified on Queen Street West is an existing parking lot surrounded by moderately dense urban development. The retail and commercial entities surrounding the site primarily consist of corporate chain stores such as The Gap, Club Manaco, and H & M. There is a high pedestrian traffic volume, and due to the increase in the building set back which begins a block east of the site, sidewalks adjacent to the site are very wide, accommodating high pedestrian traffic. Congregating and lingering pedestrian groups and individuals along with an occasional street performer are a part of the urban street condition adjacent to the site. The Queen Street streetcar line has stops very near the site, both to the east and west of the site, and across the street. Bicycles are similarly common, regardless of season and climate condition.

In the sidewalk directly south of the parking lot, an urban street market occurs daily, where many entrepreneurs assemble to sell their wares. This slows the pedestrian traffic and creates an ephemeral urban space which occurs for a few hours every day. There is often an influx of street performers or artists, causing pedestrians to linger and socialize. The event dissolves in the late evening, and the entrepreneurs disappear.

This condition is in contrast with the surrounding area. Although there are similar street and side walk conditions for a block in both directions, there is a concentration of activity in front of and directly adjacent to the site. The ephemeral urban marketplace invites pedestrian movement to slow down and encourages interaction. In contrast, the corporate chain establishments do not stimulate this type of activity. Some retailers are enclosed in the architecture and do not try to blur the threshold between the public and private which inherently occurs in the ephemeral urban market. An urban condition creates an opportunity to connect to the street and create a place with unique identity.

The site became a case study for the thesis, as an exploration of an urban condition which is not defined solely by the architecture or spaces. The site condition displayed that is the human environment interaction which creates place. In an urban condition such as this, the ephemeral allows the entrepreneur to make place without requiring space. The study of an ephemeral place making condition informs the attitude of the thesis. There is not an existing programmatic need; rather the sense-making approach of the site and culture, in tandem with entrepreneurial pursuit, creates a means to develop an architectural intervention.

site of ephemeral market
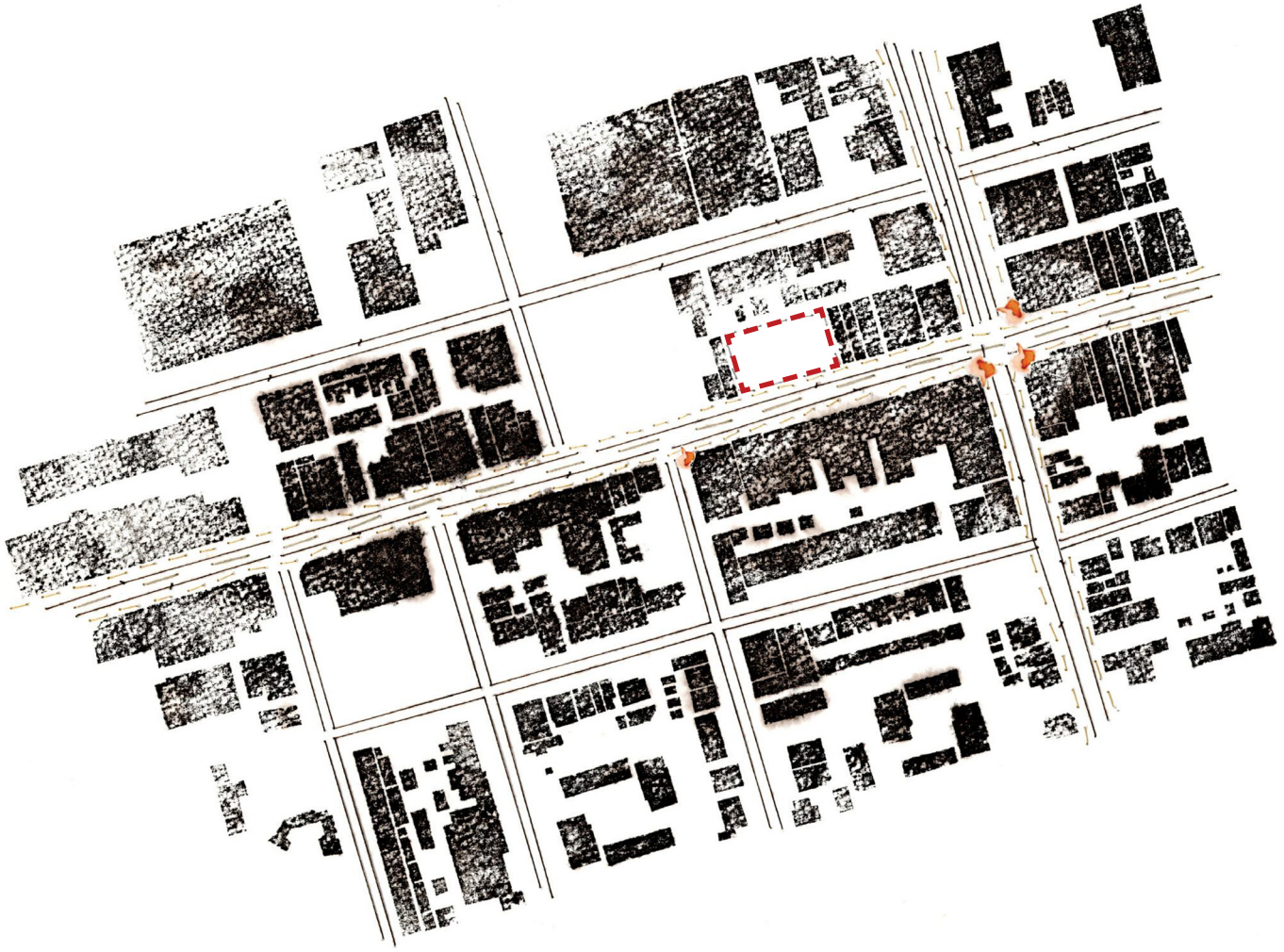
SITE ACTIVITY ANALYSIS
- - - - SITE ACTIVITY ANALYSIS

———————— vehicular traffic

- - - - street car traffic

- - - - pedestrian walking traffic

🔸 pedestrian standing

🔴 pedestiran sitting

The second site is located on the north side of Queen Street West, just east of Ryerson Avenue. In April of 2008 a fire destroyed eight buildings in the site, displacing business owners and apartment tenants. Nearly two years after the fire, the site remains vacant. The site itself is fit for the entrepreneurial spirit, but lacks development, due partly to the arduous economic conditions and partly to the controversial fire. It has alienated the site, left the community wondering whether the fire was related to insurance or arson. Though the fire occurred in almost 2 years ago, no development has occurred in the site aside from ads on the fence and graffiti on the existing walls.

SITE CONDITIONS

There is less pedestrian movement than the previous site, and even less lingering or social interaction. The sidewalks are standard width, and although seemingly narrow for lots of pedestrian movement, there is still bicycle traffic and bicycle racks. The sidewalk has become a transition space rather than a place to linger. There is an isolated neighborhood to the north which is disconnected from the arterial street.

SITE CULTURE

The fire has resulted in controversy and mistrust. In a condition where everyone is trying to blame everyone else, the architect can emerge as a leader to bring together a community. There is an entrepreneurial spirit in the area and the site could serve as a connecting point between an important arterial street the isolated neighborhood. The site provides an opportunity to develop an alternative architectural model for entrepreneurs, responding to the issues which business owners are currently experiencing in the area. Many entrepreneurs come to an area with low cost rent to start their first business. However, as more of these people come, the rents increase, and those people who made an area place, become displaced due to higher business cost. If entrepreneurs had a stake in their place as an owner of property has, they could experience the benefits of real estate value increase, rather than forcing an exit because of it.

INTENTION

The the urban condition of the site does not encourage pedestrian lingering. An architectural intervention could extend the street and expand the public space. Investing in space for lingering and potentially networking is important to the growth of entrepreneurial pursuit. More often than not however, the entrepreneur cannot afford to invest in more than what they view as the absolute essentials. However, if the effort was more collaborative, the investment would be more affordable. Similar to the idea of community barn raising of pioneers, collaboration in the making of place could ultimately contribute to the collaborative using of place.

INTERVENTION

Fostering aberrations in the threshold of the private space and the public sidewalk allows the dynamic public urban condition to filter into the private realm using architecture as a medium. Movable facades could create semi public spaces for ephemeral events, while still allowing the business owner a means of control. It also fosters an aberration between the adjacent business owners, creating a flexibility that could allow entrepreneurs to share space and re-sources.

The site model on the lower right displays the rigidity of the current condition and shows how the new intervention could potentially inform the urban condition using architecture as a medium. The collage below)displays the importance of a facade on a city street. This is often the face of the building which people identify as the face of a business. However, this does not mean it has to be rigid. Establishing a facade first may be the means to create identity. Perhaps the architecture grows and develops from the initial fa-cade. The model on the upper right is a study of different facade possibilities.
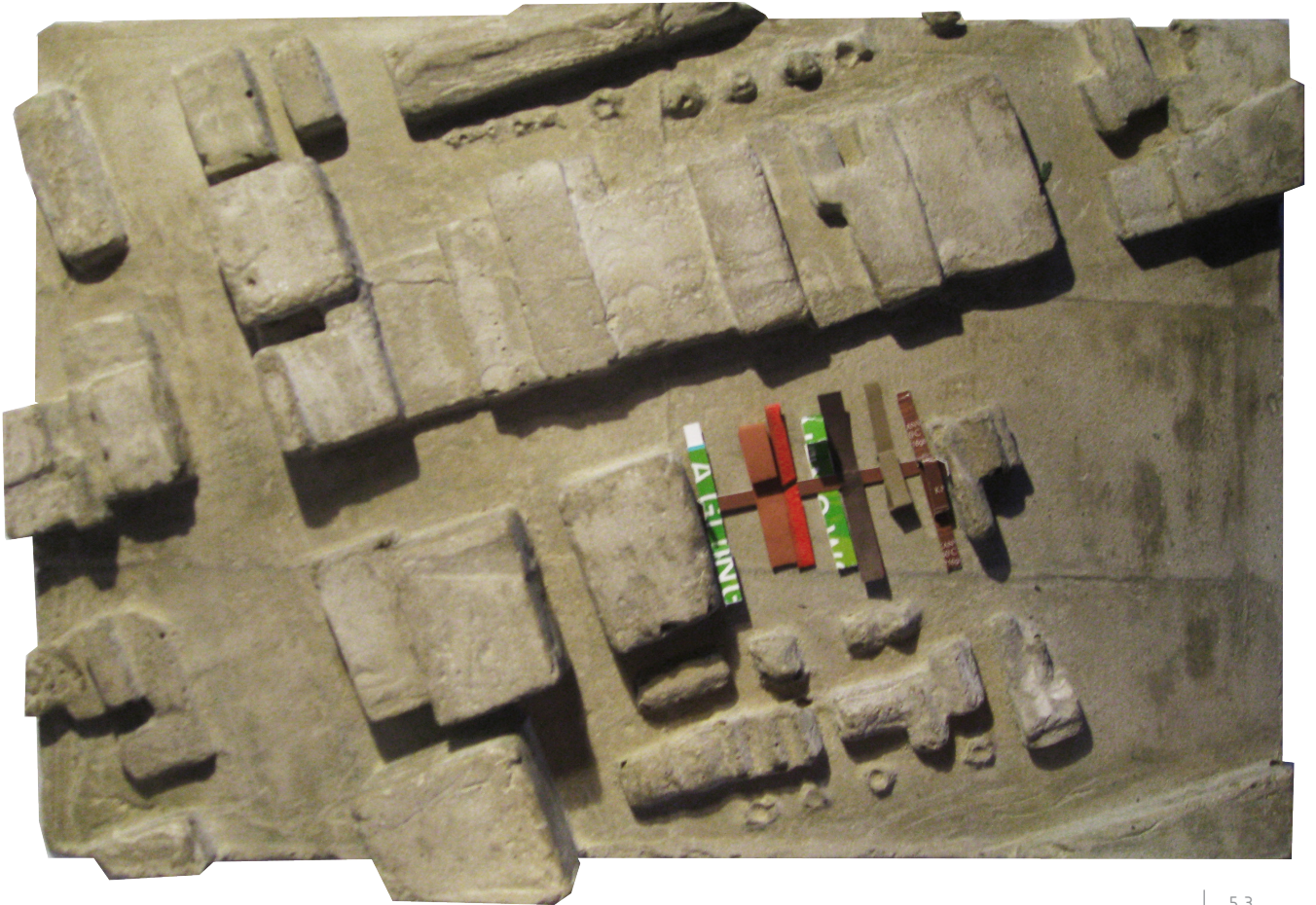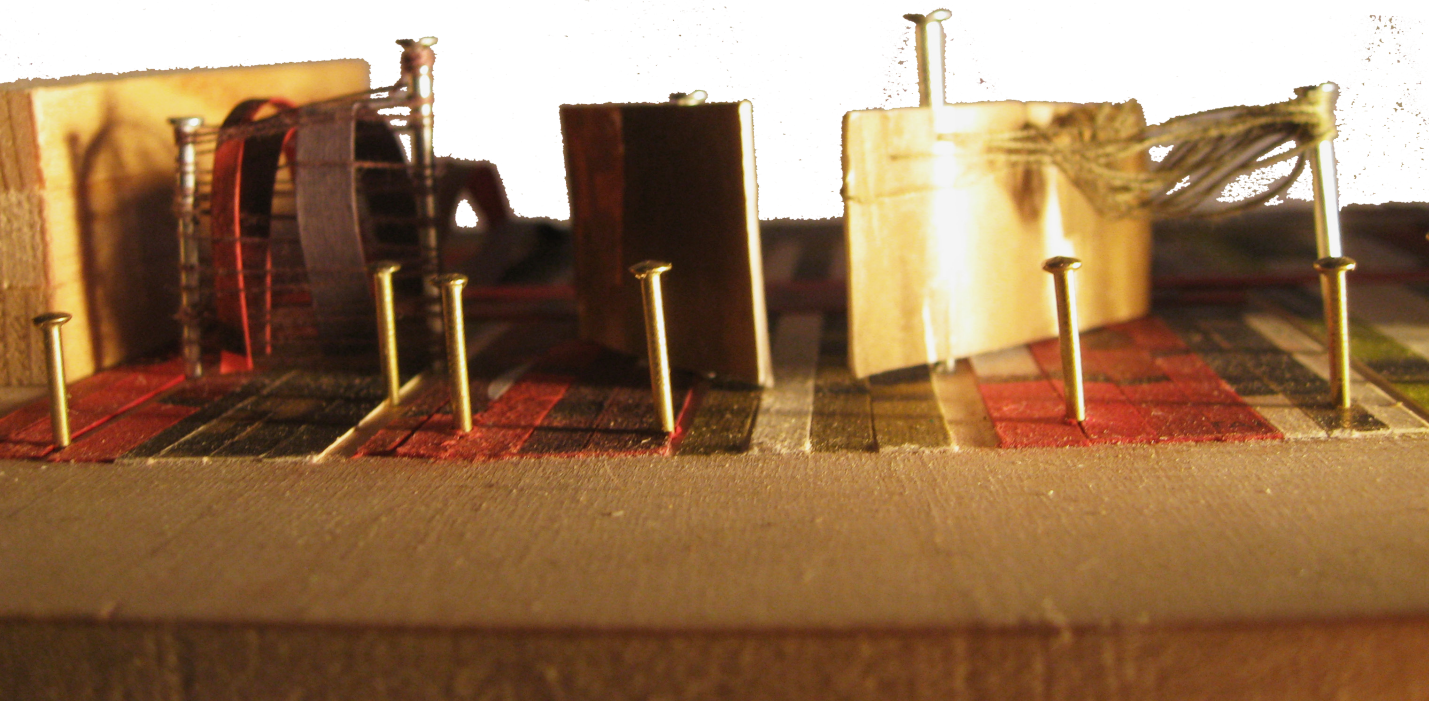
INITIAL REACTION

The site provided an opportunity for an architectural intervention to inform the existing condition. The map shows the monotony of urban form of the surrounding existing buildings. Although there are many small businesses in the surrounding area, the urban form does not promote interaction between them.

PROGRAMMATIC EXPLORATION

An initial exploration of programmatic needs was explored not through nouns; rather the understanding of the actions to occur were expressed through verbs. The needs of entrepreneurs are often dependent on the actual business enterprise. However, the verbs which create the nouns often overlap. This suggests that although the architecture may be designed for a certain program, incremental development and flexibility could allow the architecture to be shared, and also accommodating change of needs or perhaps co-owned by different people with similar needs. The entrepreneur could have a stake of ownership in their making of place.
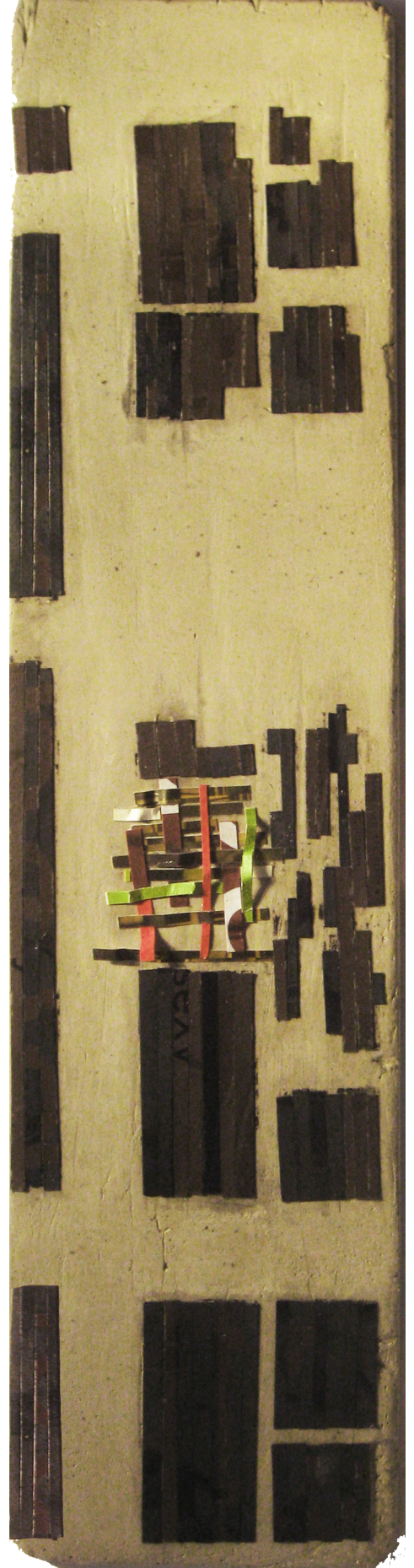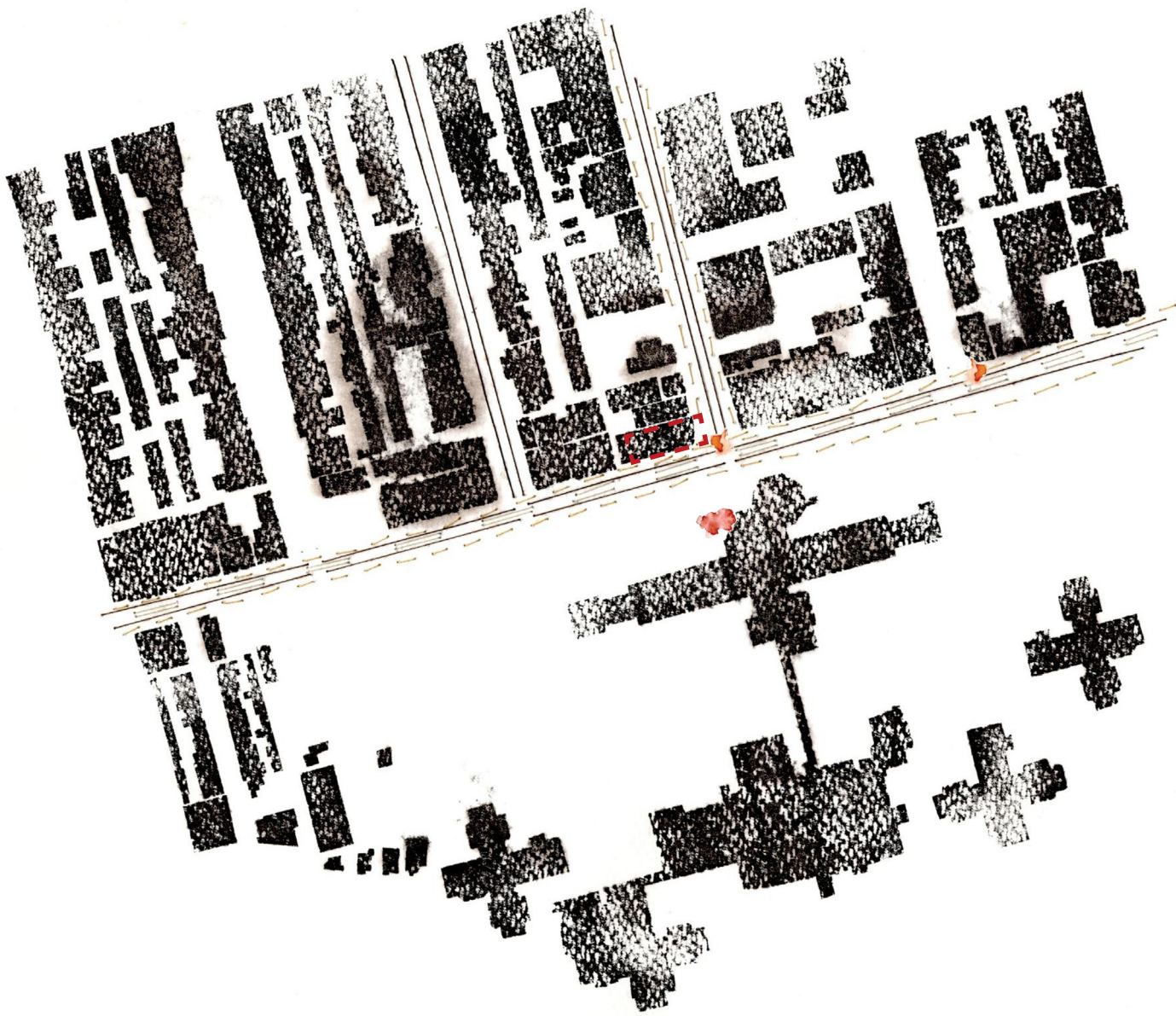
SITE ACTIVITY ANALYSIS
- - - - - vehicular traffic
———————— street car traffic
- - - - - - pedestrian walking traffic
🔸 pedestrian standing
🔴 pedestrian sitting

The third site is located on the north side of Queen Street West, at the intersection with Ossington Avenue. It is an existing abandoned building which may possibly be torn down. This is a condition that exists in many cities, and therefore being a relevant urban condition in which to test the thesis. The building faces a mental health clinic on the south side of Queen Street West. The clinic is surrounded by green space which is privately owned and rarely used. In terms of the urban lens for this site, the intention is activate the unused green space with ephemeral events which would spread into the adjacent site and ameliorate the urban condition.

SITE CONDITIONS

There is less pedestrian movement than the previous site, and even less lingering or social interaction. The sidewalks are standard width, but bicycle traffic is minimal. Ossington Avenue is a growing part of the city, with many new restaurants and bars. There an active night life north of the site, with a need for family friendly entites. There is pedestrian traffic which could be spread south to the site, with the activation of the intervention.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The building historically has had different programmatic conditions. It is situated between Trinity Bellwood park, one western Toronto's largest, and Parkdale, a thriving development of businesses anchored by popular neighborhoods. This stretch of West Queen Street West, as it is referred, has suffered in the past but has made some progress of development in the past few years. Still, it lacks the pulse that exists to the east and to the west. It has not been a thriving pulse in the urban fabric for several decades. During the 1980's the building was a Toronto Transfer Lounge, or TTC themed bar, used by streetcar riders and drivers. A decade later it had become a metal bar, where many young music groups started with their first performances. A few years later it became a half-way house for recovering addicts. It is currently abandoned and being cleared out for potential demolition.

The Mental Health Clinic which is situated directly south of the site, breaks the urban structure and its presence as a private entity creates a tension in the community. The existing building in the site could create a link between the development on Ossington Avenue to the North and the Clinic to the south.
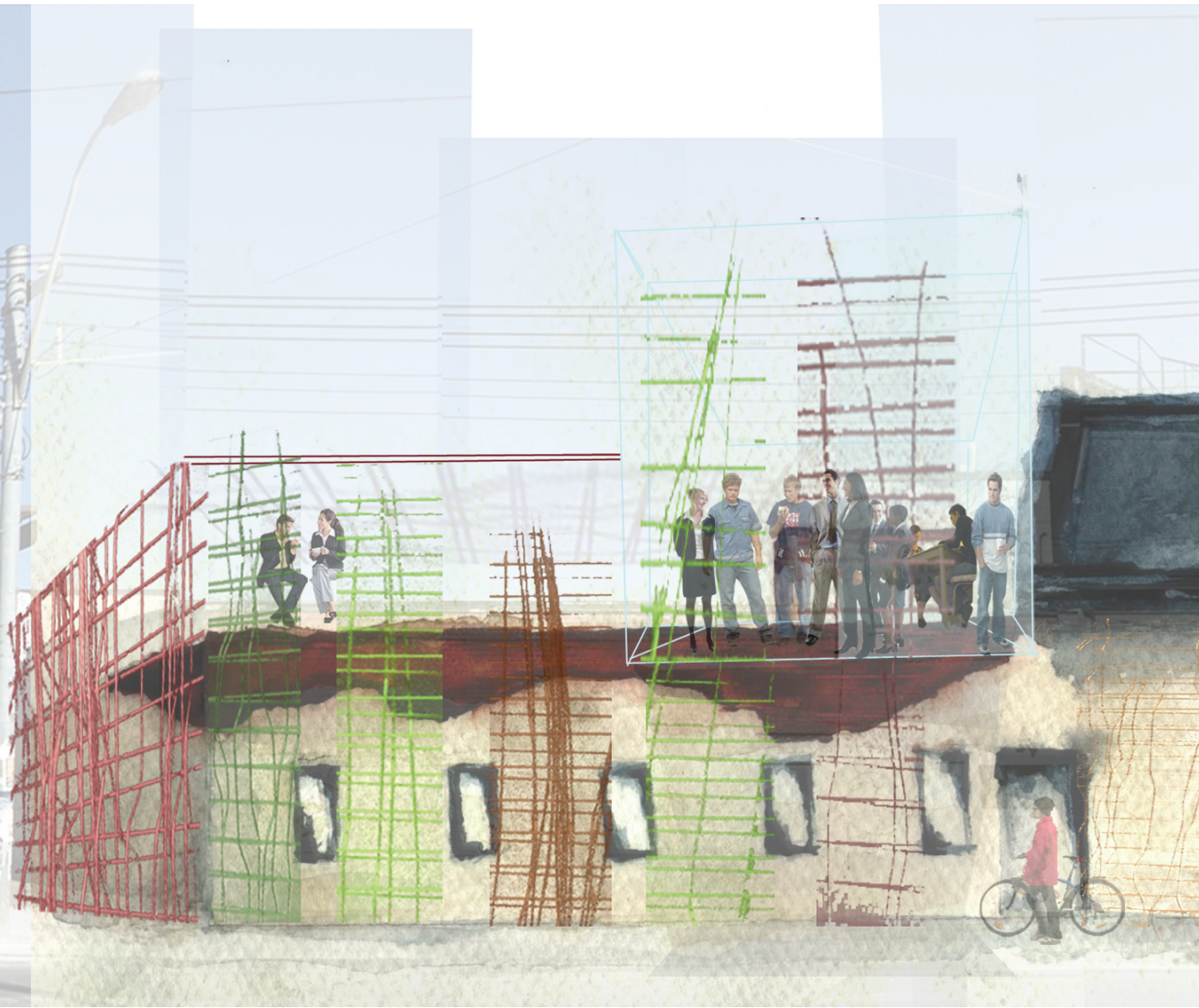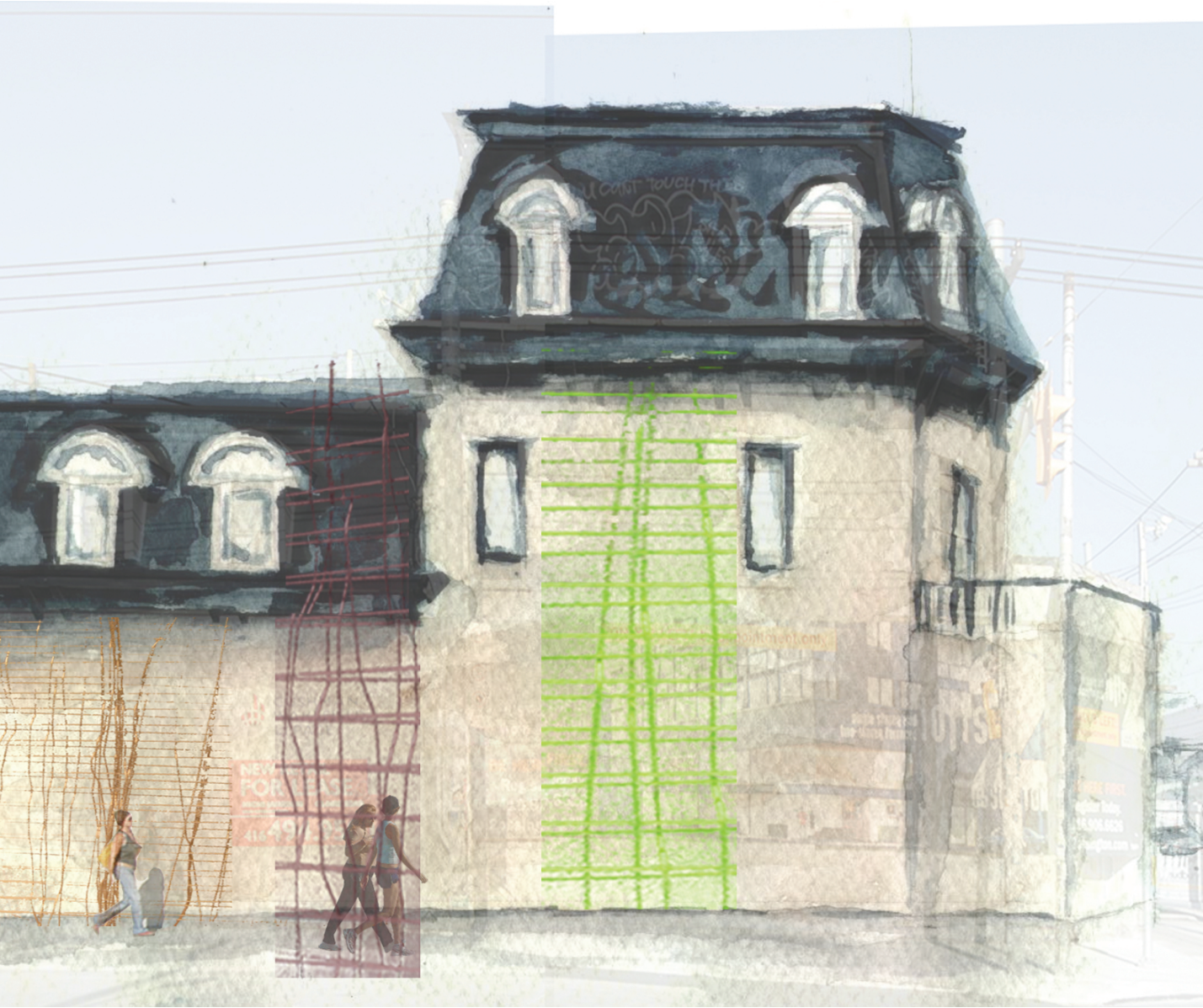
INTERVENTION

The collage expresses the attitude of the architectural intervention. The structure of the building would remain intact with some alterations which show that the building is being activated with program. The fragmented structural system could be integrated in the program development using an incremental approach, implementing program as it becomes necessary. If the facade begins to dissolve the building becomes a hinge point in the community.
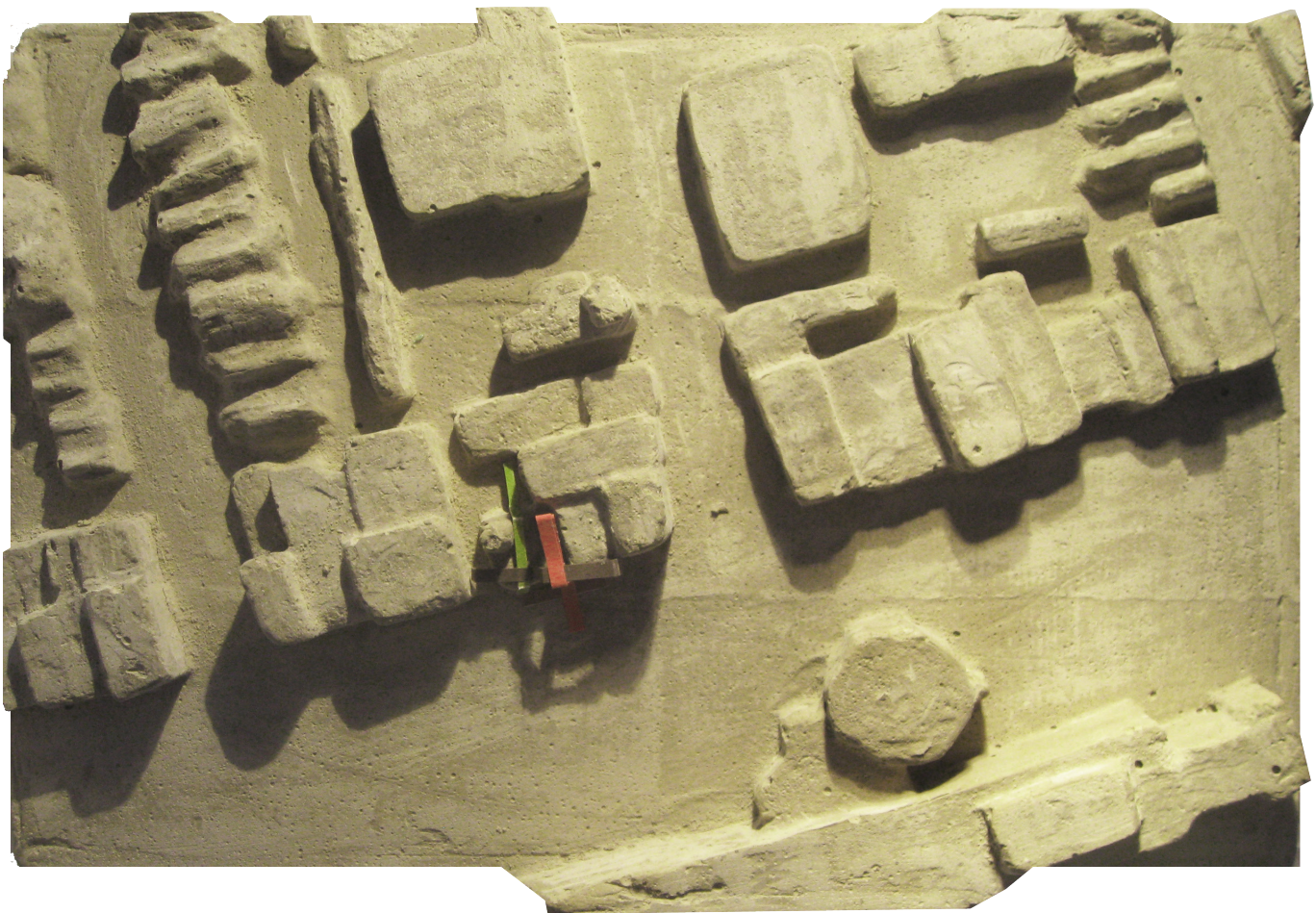
EPHEMERAL ACTIVATION

Ephemeral events create place for a moment in time. The power of the temporary making of place in an urban environment is greatly dependant not only on the event itself, but its very absence. When something that an urban dweller experiences, which is different from the norm, dissolves - it gains recognition in that person's life.

Using an ephemeral event such as a gathering of people, and amplifying the event through an architectural intervention, can enhance the affect on the urban environment. The collage [FIGURE] is an exploration of how an ephemeral architecture can make place. To inform the street of the activation of the abandoned building with program, the collage suggests a simple movable structure which would be activated by the user, using the architecture to foster an aberration in the threshold of the public sidewalk and the private entity. The intervention is temporal in nature, a catalyst for permanent design.

INITIAL REACTION

The site provided an opportunity for an architectural intervention to inform the existing condition. If the traditional urban barrier, or the walls of the structure can begin to dissolve and the program begins to spread beyond the site lines to the street. Fostering aberrations in the threshold of the structure is important in an urban condition, If a condition exists where there is an disconnection in the urban structure such as the site condition suggests, it cannot be viewed as a problem. Rather, it should be viewed as an opportunity to inform the urban form. The Mental Health Clinic is not only a place for patients to visit; it is a place where patients live and their loved ones visit. Currently, the neighborhood does not have places for the pedestrian to congregate, nor does it have a place for the people visiting the clinic to linger. The site offers an opportunity to ameliorate the urban condition and a place for the entrepreneurial spirit to thrive.

PROGRAMMATIC EXPLORATION

An initial exploration of programmatic needs was similarly explored as previously, expressed through verbs. This suggests that although the architecture may be designed for a certain program, incremental development and flexibility could allow the architecture to be shared, and also accommodating change of needs or perhaps co-owned by different people with similar needs. The entrepreneur could have a stake of ownership in their making of place.
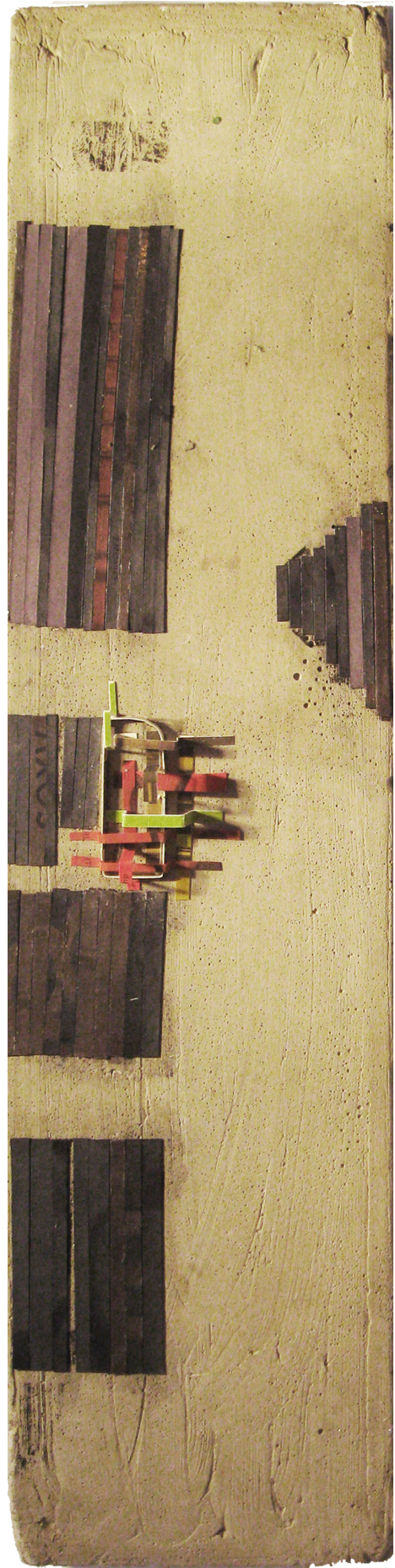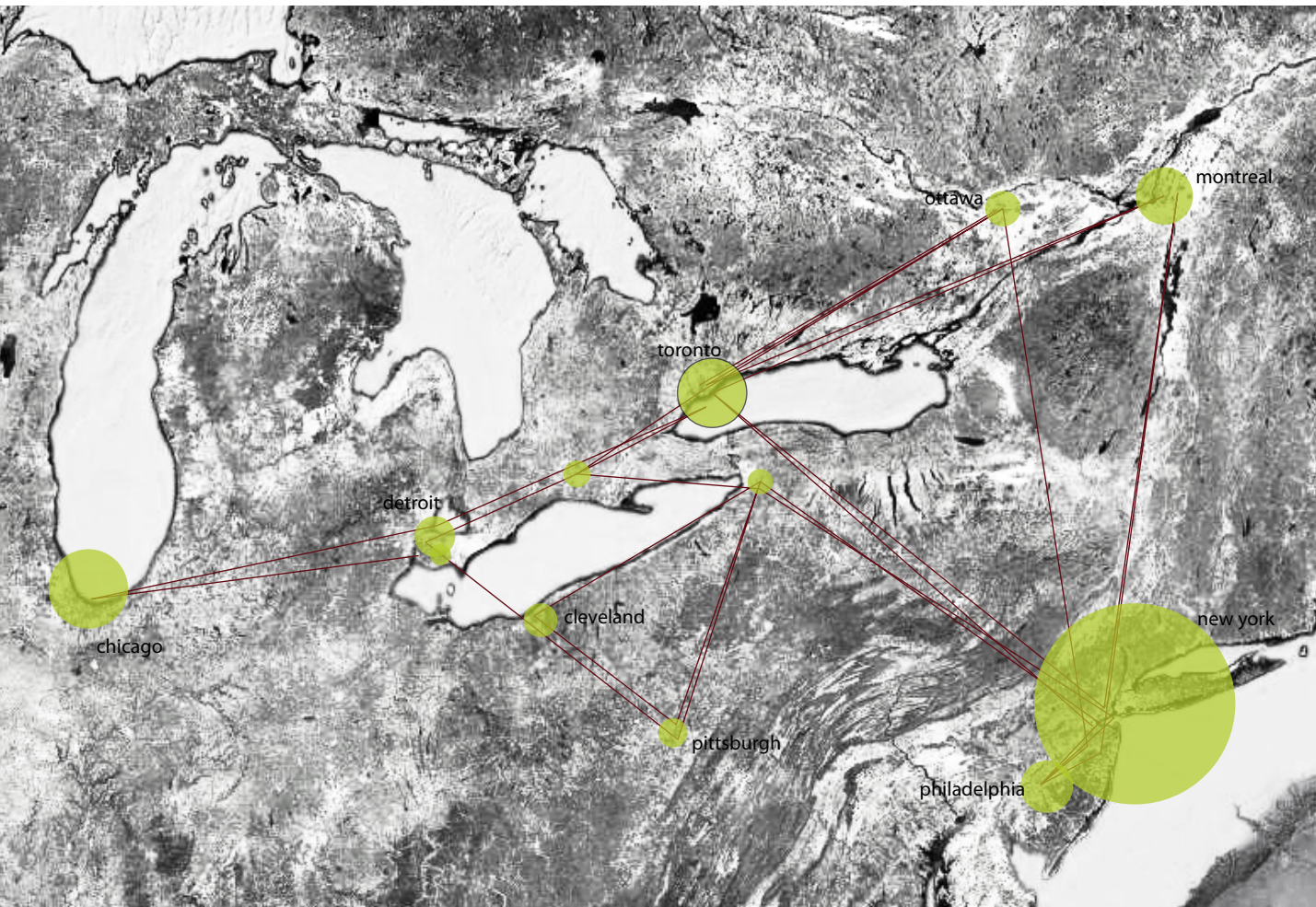
REGIONAL CONNECTION

The pulses that exist in the urban context would benefit if they could be corroboratively connected. This approach could also be considered as beneficial at a larger scale. Toronto is physically connected to large cities in Canada and the United States. Each city has certain strengths and characteristics. A collaborative effort of shared resources could be beneficial at a regional scale.

Although the thesis does not explore this opportunity to greater detail, the entrepreneurial spirit suggests that could be the next step in the process.
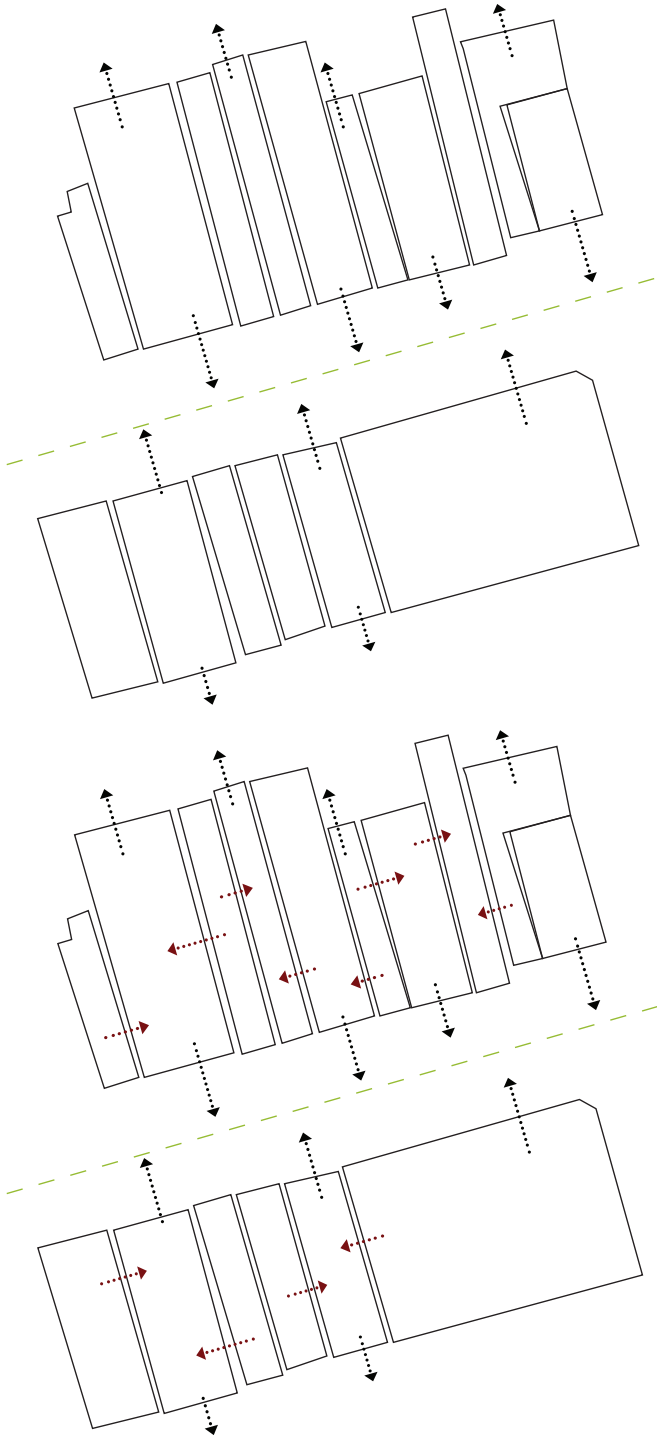
TRADITIONAL URBAN FORM

The traditional urban form consists of a street with a commercial strip typically supported by an arterial street with transportation. The private commercial establishments have a symbiotic relationship with the public street. The site should attempt to create an alternative form as shown in the lower figure. Connecting spatially between entities can develop collaborative relationships, shared spaces, and cultivate networking opportunities. These are all conditions that develop social relationships in an urban condition, which is essential for kindling the entrepreneurial spirit. When resources are limited, collaboration can counter economic hardship and spur development.
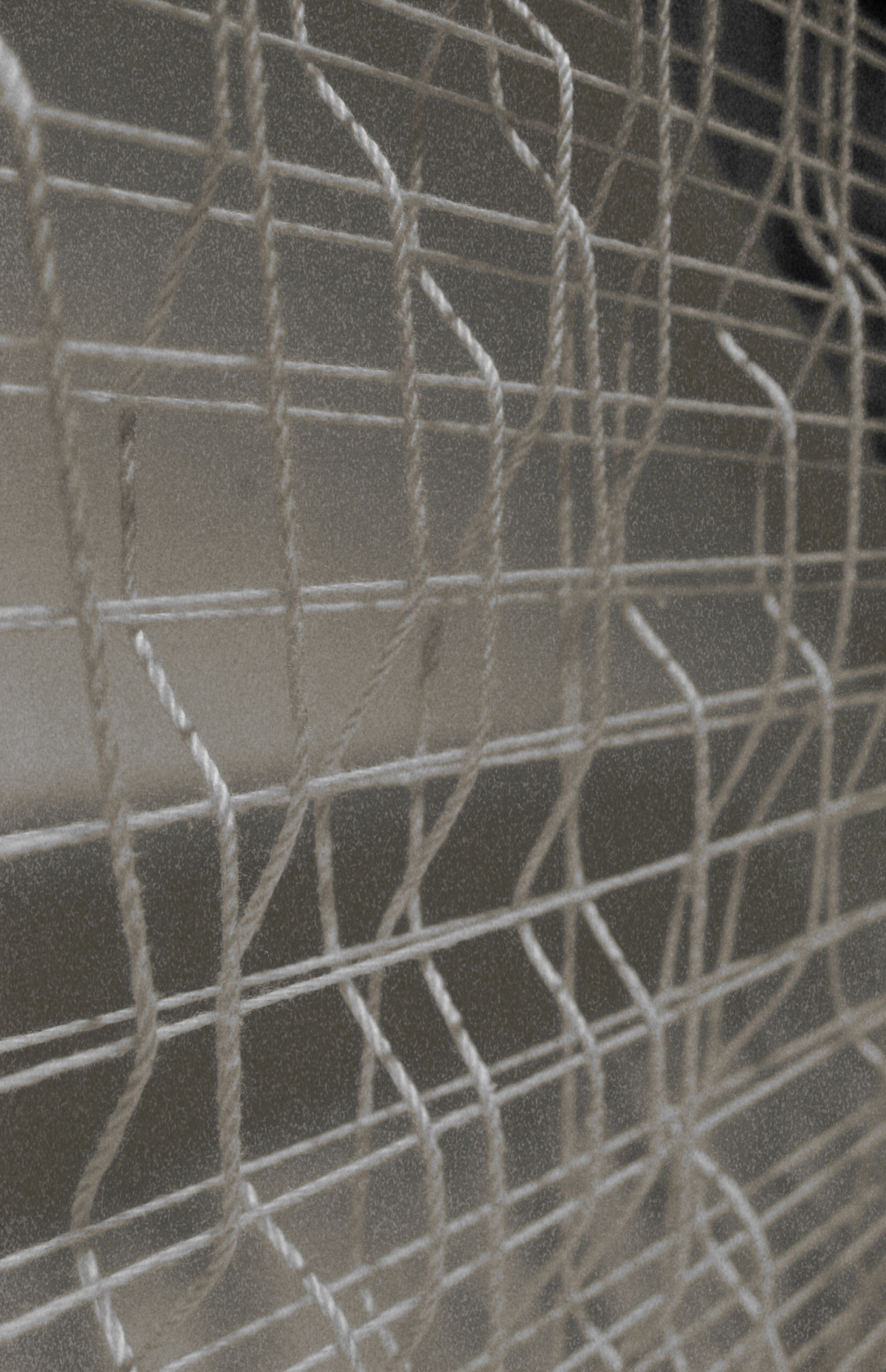
A NETWORKING INTERFACE

Based on the idea of a bulletin board which exists in most coffee houses for an exchange of information, this study was built to explore how such an interface to be designed and constructed, becoming a part of the architectural intervention, rather than simply a board to post information. Exploring how the facade or wall partition could become an interface for the exchange of information could allow the pedestrian to become engaged directly with the architecture. This would also establish place, through the human interaction it would stimulate.

Bringing the interface the urban public space, predominately the street in North American cities, could act as a catalyst for public interaction. Not only would people interact with the facade itself, but being in an urban environment, people would interact with each other while interacting with the interface. The interaction which takes place could also act as networking for entrepreneurs. They can request services or advertise the availability of material. The services rendered could be traded or bartered for something that another entrepreneur has available. The interface serves as a means to connect the needs and availability of services.

entre network

by location
by need
create new post
view recent

West Queen St W
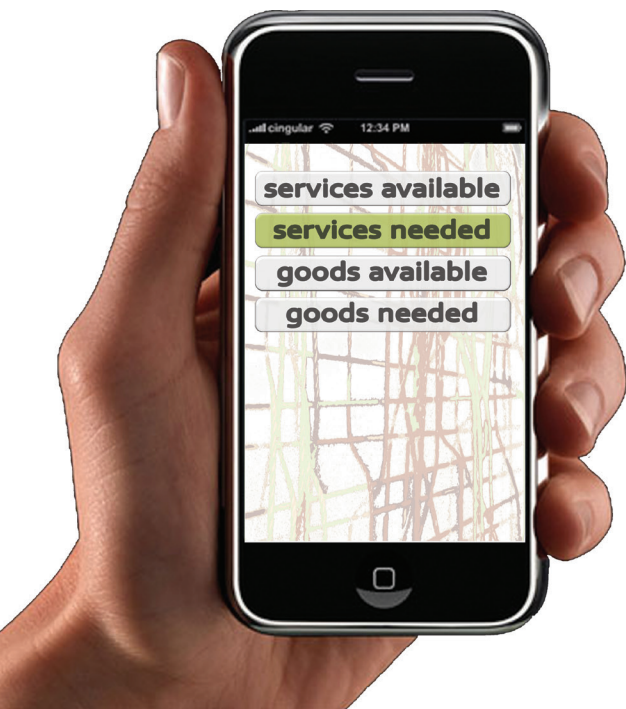search
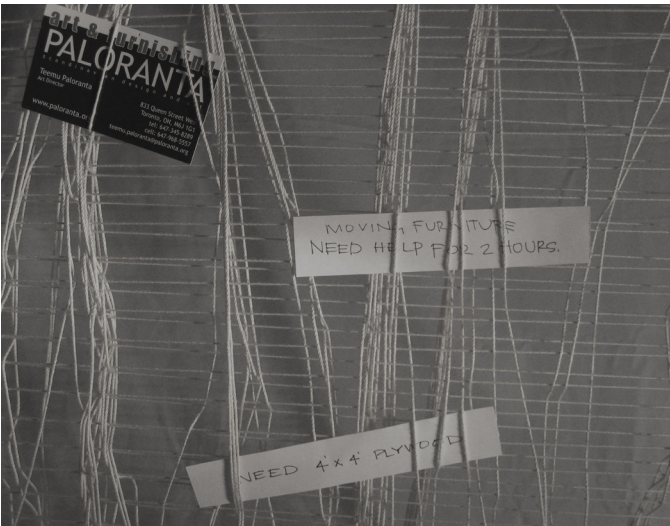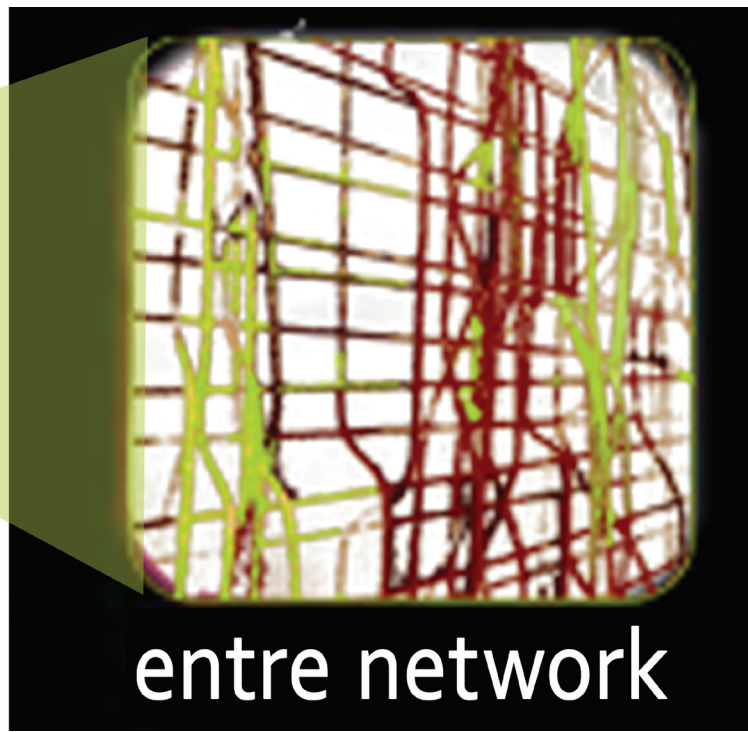
SPACE TIME NETWORKING

In the 21st century, connecting with other people is done in an intangible space, which here will be referred to as space time. In 'The Overexposed City,' Paul Virilio explains how 'in the new perspective devoid of horizon, the city was entered not through a gate nor through an arc de triomph, but rather through an electronic audience system. Users of the road were no longer understood to be inhabitants or privileged residents.'

Paul Virilio, The Overexposed City. (New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 2009)

The deteriorating human connections which Virilio discusses, in security driven airports and the design of a new 'gateway' to the city, are manifestations of the direction of human interaction. Society has moved away from the traditional city, with gates and monumental symbols which are designed for the pedestrian culture. This deterioration is an opportunity to develop a new layer of human interaction.
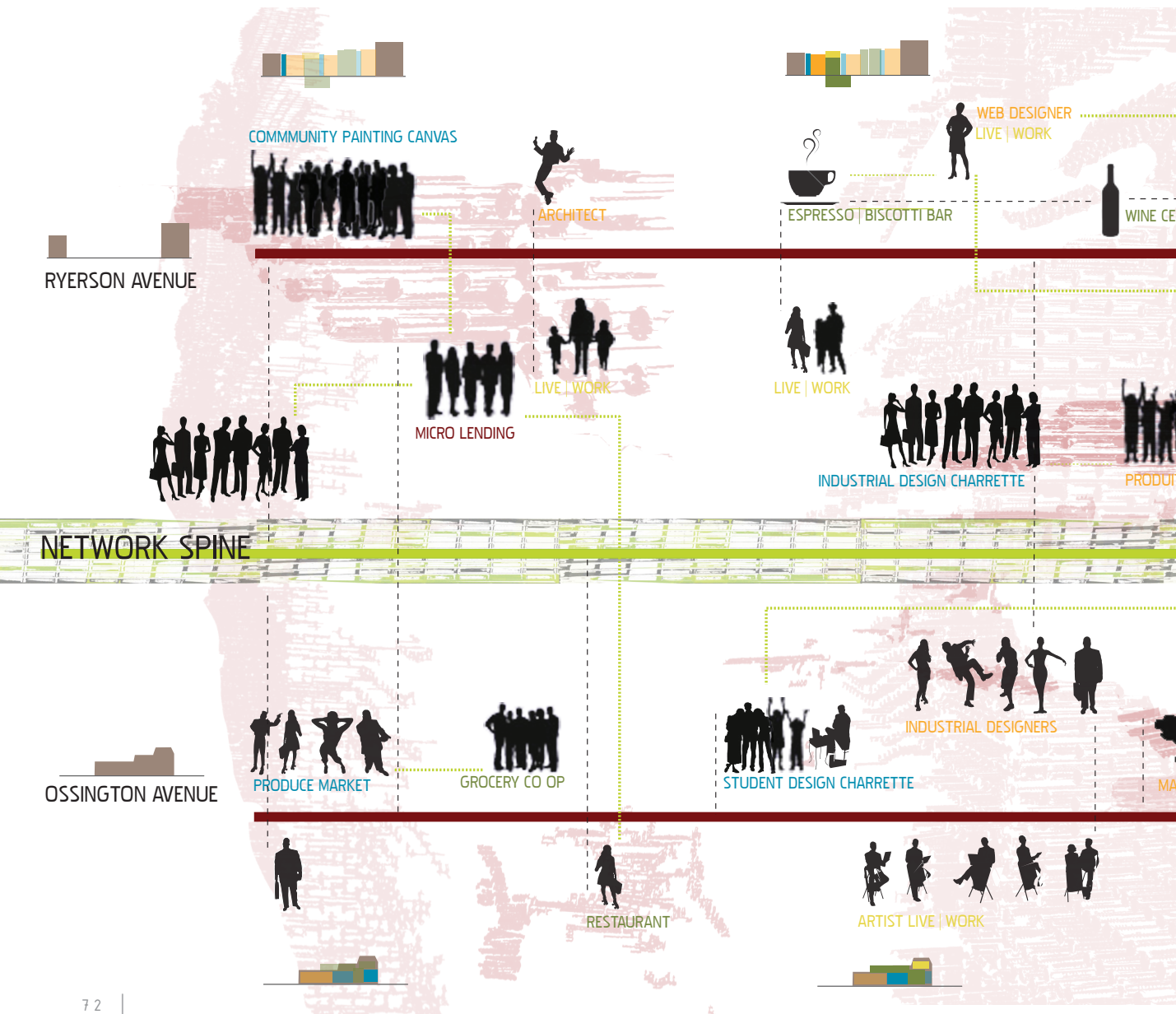
Space time is a phenomena which changes the perception in which people understand and experience space. The development of technology and the decrease in direct human interaction to obtain information has changed the way in which space is perceived. No longer does a person need to go to the city square to be informed of the day's events; the world's events can be obtained through a technological interface which does not require direct human interaction. There are many implications of this advancement: decrease in direct human contact can be detrimental in its affects on human behavior and society. However, interface with a diverse and extensive network of information allows access to the 'bigger picture,' creating an informed society and world view.
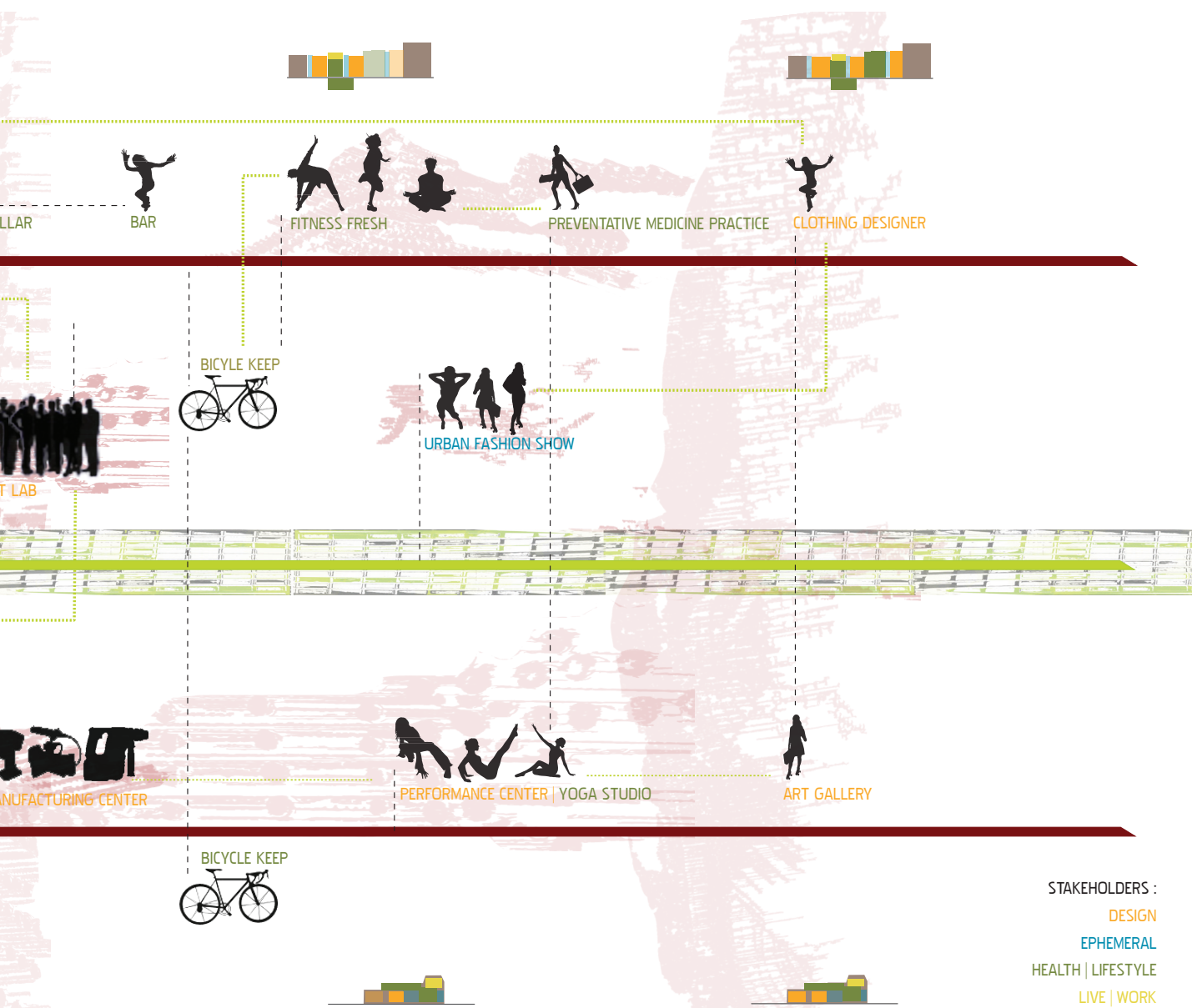
The intangible space can serve as a powerful networking device. This is an exploration of how creating a iphone application can begin to connect people together who do not necessarily know each other, as the agents of Improve Everywhere are connected, by their mission. Entrepreneurs could begin developing connections through an smart phone application which allows them to post needs or respond to requests. The concept is similar to the coffee house bulletin board, but goes beyond the traditional means of communication. It creates an instantaneous connection for the user to interact with people in nearby locations. Today, instantaneous connections can help individuals share resources.

NARRATIVE

To examine the role of the architect in the development of the
thesis, a hypothetical narrative was developed. The intent of the
narrative approach is to develop architecture with the consideration
of time and the network which potentially acts as a catalyst
for future development. This initial study created a connection
between the two sites. Developing all of the program involved
was not feasible. Focusing on the Ryerson site initially, with the
Ossington site as and opportunity for expansion, became a more
reasonable approach.

COMMMUNITY PAINTING CANVAS

ARCHITECT

WEB DESIGNER
LIVE | WORK

ESPRESSO | BISCOTTI BAR

WINE CE

RYERSON AVENUE

LIVE | WORK

LIVE | WORK

MICRO LENDING

INDUSTRIAL DESIGN CHARRETTE

PRODU

NETWORK SPINE

INDUSTRIAL DESIGNERS

PRODUCE MARKET

GROCERY CO OP

STUDENT DESIGN CHARRETTE

MA

OSSINGTON AVENUE

RESTAURANT

ARTIST LIVE | WORK

LLAR   BAR   FITNESS FRESH   PREVENTATIVE MEDICINE PRACTICE   CLOTHING DESIGNER

BICYLE KEEP

URBAN FASHION SHOW

LAB

MANUFACTURING CENTER   PERFORMANCE CENTER | YOGA STUDIO   ART GALLERY

BICYCLE KEEP

STAKEHOLDERS :
DESIGN
EPHEMERAL
HEALTH | LIFESTYLE
LIVE | WORK

GRAFFITI WALL PROPOSAL

The site conditions suggest that the site should be activated by the community. It is important to establish a sense of identity in an urban community to create place. An ephemeral event can establish an identity while creating awareness for future development. The first proposal of using the existing wall for a community paint canvas stimulates a sense of identity and ownership of the site. Vertical circulation would be built for the event, but later used to access a rooftop greenspace. The painting would be sponsored by local businesses to raise capital for future development.

REACTION

There were a few issues with the initial proposal. The intervention requires gaining ownership of the existing wall.   An alternative approach would be to use the wall in a less evasive way, and use it as a canvas for ephemeral events, but not in a single event. The sponsorship could be more long term, and establishing a dedicated public space which becomes more permanent could create a better connection to the community.

INTERACTIVE WALL

The urban square is historically considered a place of information exchange. Today, the exchange of information is primarily done through an interface such as television or the internet. Information is instantaneous availability.

The intention is to create an interactive interface for the exchange of information as a means ameliorate an urban condition using the advancement of technology as an asset rather than a problem. Many people believe that technology has alienated human interaction. Perhaps this is the case; however, technological advancement is here to stay. Therefore we should consider the new urban space time as another layer of communication.

REACTION

Creating a craiglist type of interface on an urban wall could stimulate pedestrian interaction. Connecting the interface globally through an smart phone application would reach a larger audience. The information which is exchanged therefore, should reach beyond goods and services needed or wanted.
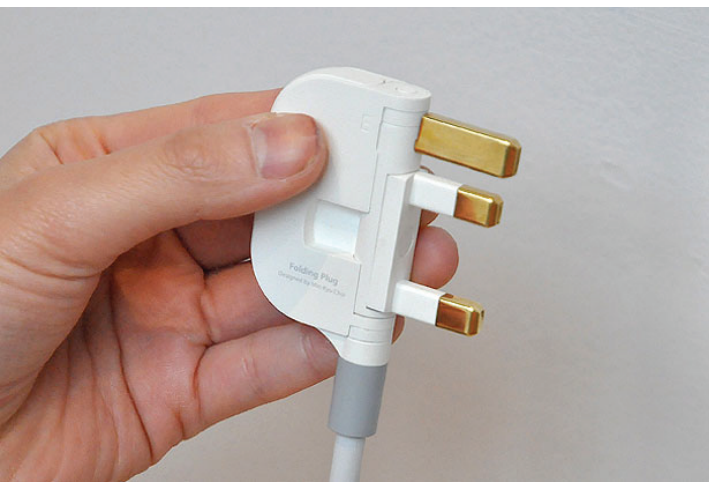
PRODUIT LAB

The produit lab concept creates an interactive consumer platform for the development of product. Often a consumer will recognize a need which is not addressed in the design and their feedback could improve the chances for product success. There is also potential for the development of new product spin off pursuits inspired by consumer feedback.

The urban condition could benefit from the interactive nature of a produit lab. Pedestrians would engage with each other and create a platform for innovation through interactive   The spatial needs are limited; a place for display and flexible open space which is connected to the street to increase pedestrian interaction.

An example of consumer inspired innovation is shown in the image on the opposite page. Min-Kyu Choi's redesign of the Mac book air power adapter was inspired from frustration of its size. In comparison to the product it powered, a slim laptop computer, which fits inside a legal envelope, it was too large and incompatible. Mr. Choi was a consumer who developed a solution for product innovation. This type of innovative thought could become an urban exchange of information experience, as well as an interesting place to discover new things.

Production innovation through a collaborative effort could generate ideas for improving products as well as inspiring new ones. There also could be events hosted such as industrial design charettes in the produit lab to develop new spin off products. The lab could provide shared resources for building prototypes and performing tests.

SERVICE INFRASTRUCTURE
Waste
Electrical
Gas
Water
Vent

PLUG IN SERVICE INFRASTRUCTURE
Celebrating service infrastructure by painting infrastructure in glass incased plumbing walls. Strategically placed for plug in infrastructure that allows flexible occupancy and adaptive use providing services to users as needs change. As site grows vertically, the plug in plumbing walls grow vertically as well.

BICYCLE KEEP

The intention is to promote bicycle culture and through a public bicycle keep and create place for employee bicycle safekeeping. Providing showers which can be shared by tenants promotes employee bicycle use. Bicycle keep has several bikes which are painted green and can be check out with TTC transport card for minimal fee per hour, similar to checking out books from a library. Several more bicycle keeps would be developed around the city for expansion of the bike
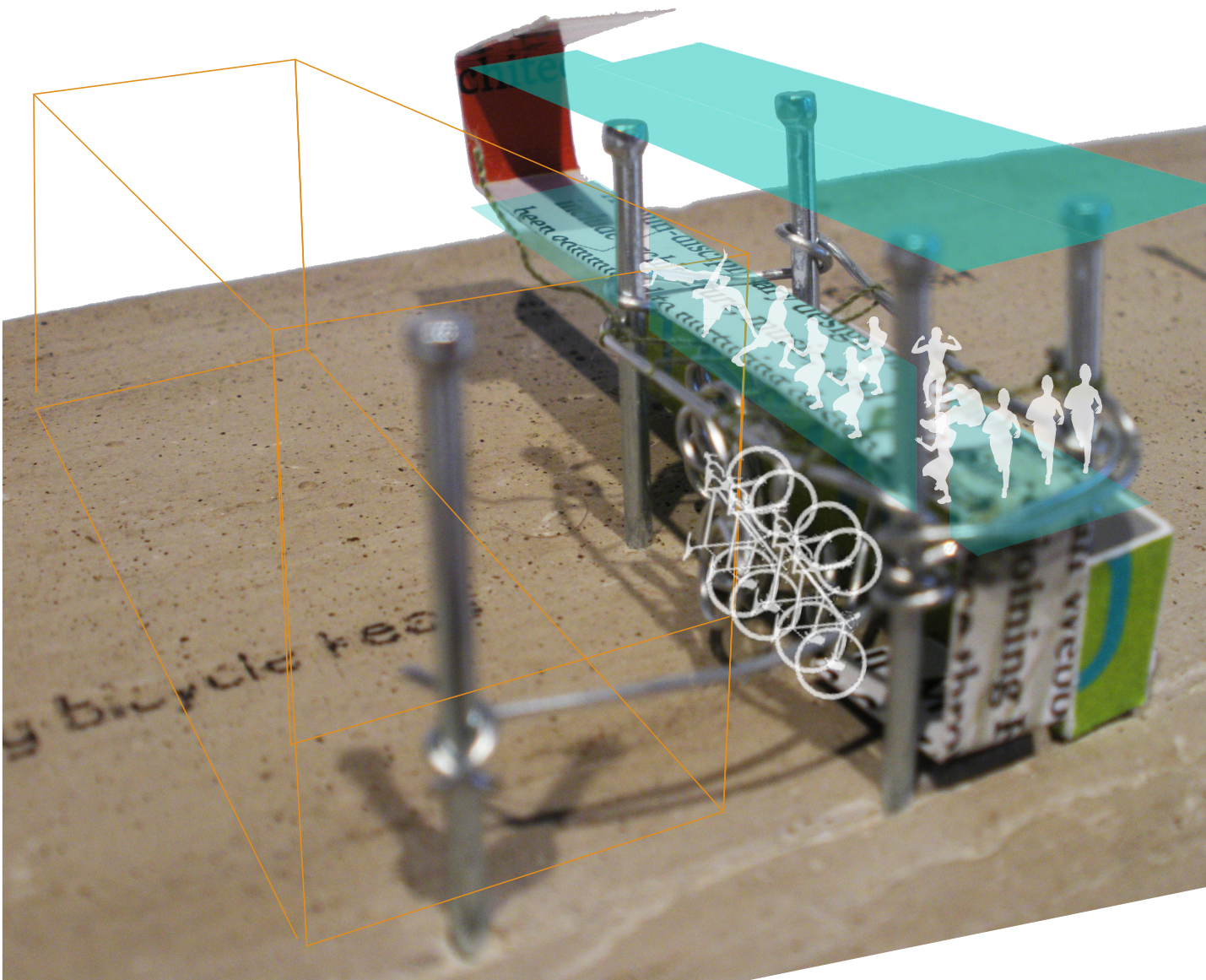
3 MIN
IDLE LIMIT

FROZE

TRES FEBRUARY 5TH

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SNOW
ROUTE

Metropolitan

OFFICE
LEASE

GORD

SALE
30-80%

OLD TIMES AN
BUY & SELL
WE DELIVER

The narrative begins with an architect who discovers the site and sees an opportunity for sense-making as a means to create design work during difficult economic conditions. He recognizes a need for public space in the area and an opportunity to bring together a community by establishing a sense of identity. Without the capital to invest in purchasing the vacant land, he partners with an entrepreneur to begin building capital.

One day he sees an advertisement being projected from the top of a car onto a blank wall. This seems curious: using an interface in the physical world as a means to create revenue, while not having ownership of the wall itself. What if to stimulate awareness of the site, film projections were displayed on the exist adjacent wall to the site, with intermittent advertisements to generate revenue? An urban canvas for an ephemeral interface.

With his partner, who has a dream to open an espresso bar, he explains the initial investment for a public pocket. If they can borrow enough money along with the initial revenue from the urban canvas advertisements, they can build a public pocket green space, which would continue to generate revenue with the urban canvas project and eventually pay for itself. Meanwhile, the espresso bar could be in a design development phase, and by the time the construction documents are finished, the public pocket has paid for itself and the loan money is back on the table for construction of the espresso bar. The architect would develop a small work studio with live space above in the back of the cafe with an opportunity to expand. As the studio grows, he would move to live at another location.

The existing site is larger than the needs of these programmatic conditions. The architect wonders how to stimulate more growth and development. He realizes there are many other entrepreneurs like himself and decides to create a Landbank initiative. Starting with a web site, he works with a web designer to create an collaborative database of vacant land or buildings around the city. He creates a blog interface with the data, where community members can contribute to possible ideas for development. This develops a network and generates discourse through urban space time, imagining the future of the city's voids. He posts a proposal for the area next to the espresso bar- a service market place and incubator for entrepreneurs. An investor who recognizes the opportunity for investment, contacts the architect to create an initial programmatic exploration of this idea.

service core

F FLOOR PLAN
ALE 3/32" = 1'
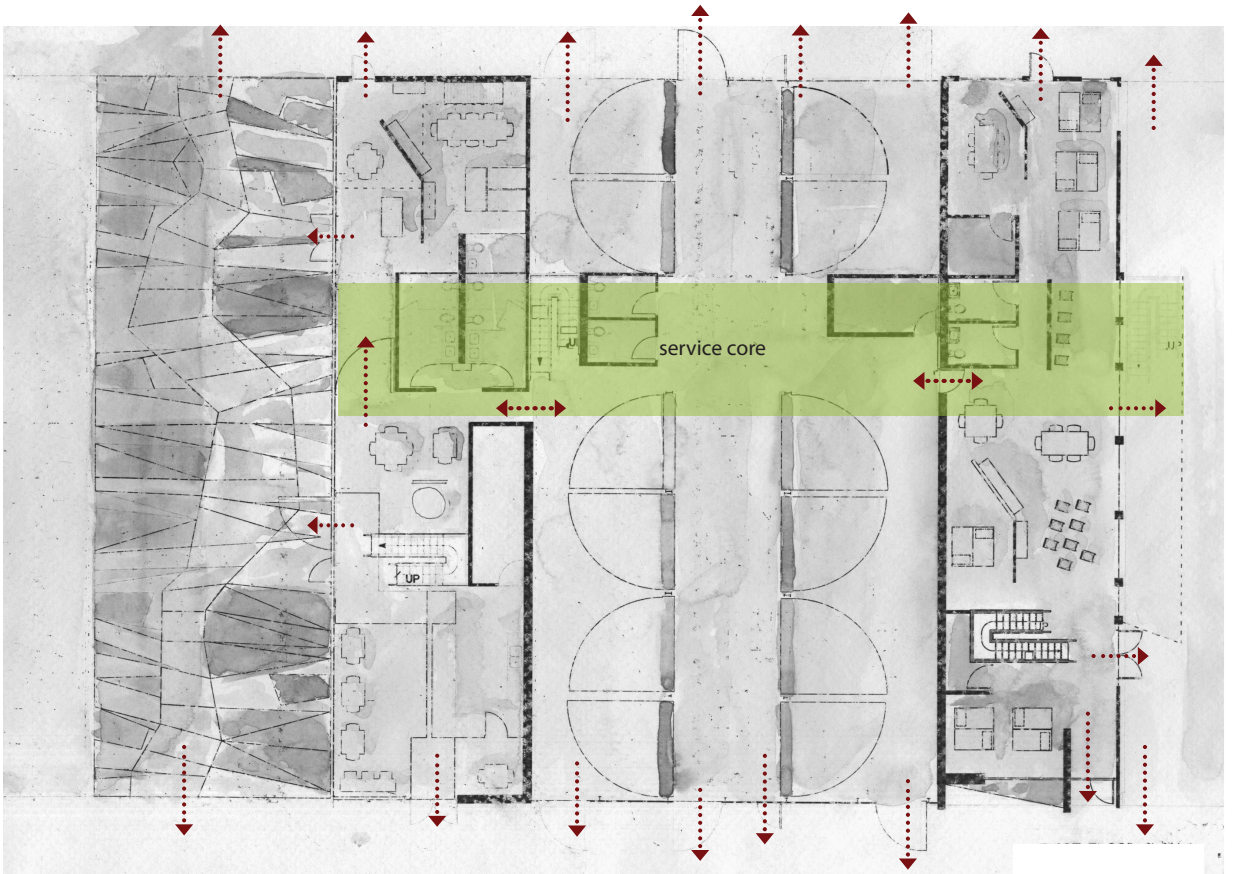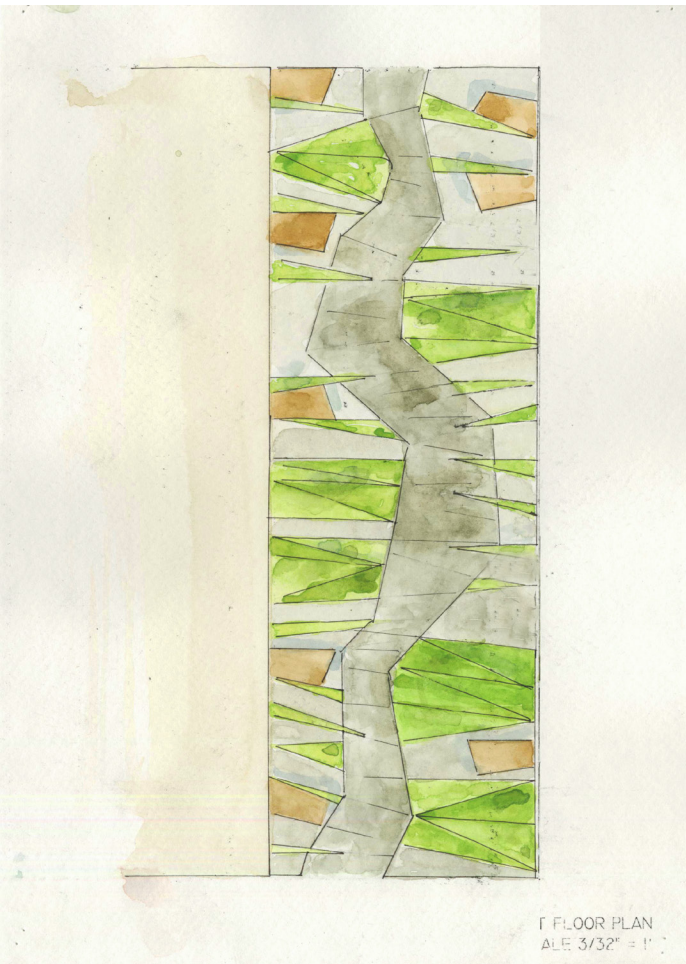
PHASE 01

Public space 2880 Square feet

INCREMENTAL PHASING

The narrative approach suggests that the development of the project needs to understood through a phasing process. Each phase affects the development for the following phase. During the initial site process, films and advertisements would be projected on the existing wall to raise revenue for the initial site investment. After the development of the public pocket as phase one of the process, three additional phases are explored.

The spatial exploration between the programmatic needs explores how the division of space can begin to dissolve and shared space can develop symbiotic relationships between each stakeholder. Each program has access to the public space or city street as found in the traditional urban model. However, there is also a connection that develops between the programs. Each entity has access to the service core, where washrooms and fire stairs are located and shared by the different programs. The core is parallel to the street and also is the location of mechanical and service spaces. This approach allows greater flexibility in spatial consideration and a use of moveable partitions which can be adjusted as the needs change.

Shared program also creates a social connection between stakeholders. In the traditional model, adjacent business owners would meet each other while sweeping their front sidewalk or when taking out waste through the back to the alleyway. The alternative method is to begin to connect the programs to each other spatially and over time, as well as through the collaborative effort to invest in public space. This incremental approach means that there must be an initial vision which extends beyond the property line and is spatially developed by the architect. This does not mean that in every situation the future development can be anticipated, but consideration should be made for shared programmatic exploration.

Collaborative thinking is the next industrial revolution. The advancement of technology has allowed individuals to gain access to a tremendous amount of information and created a means for instantaneous networking. If architecture can begin to adopt this type of thinking and extend beyond physical spatial conditions, it can benefit and even flourish.
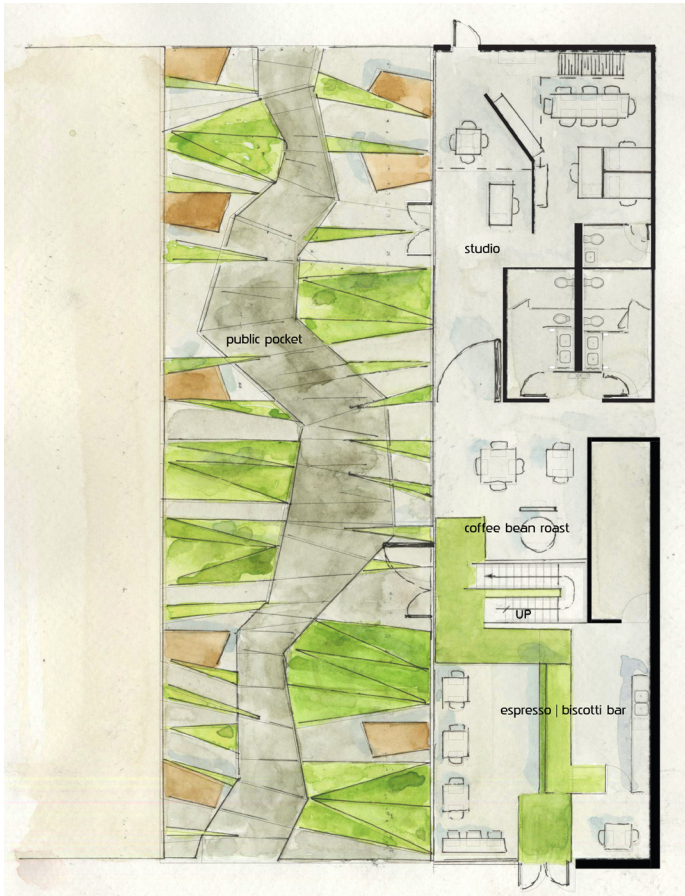
PHASE 02

Public Space
       Street level 2880 Square feet
       Rooftop 780 Square feet
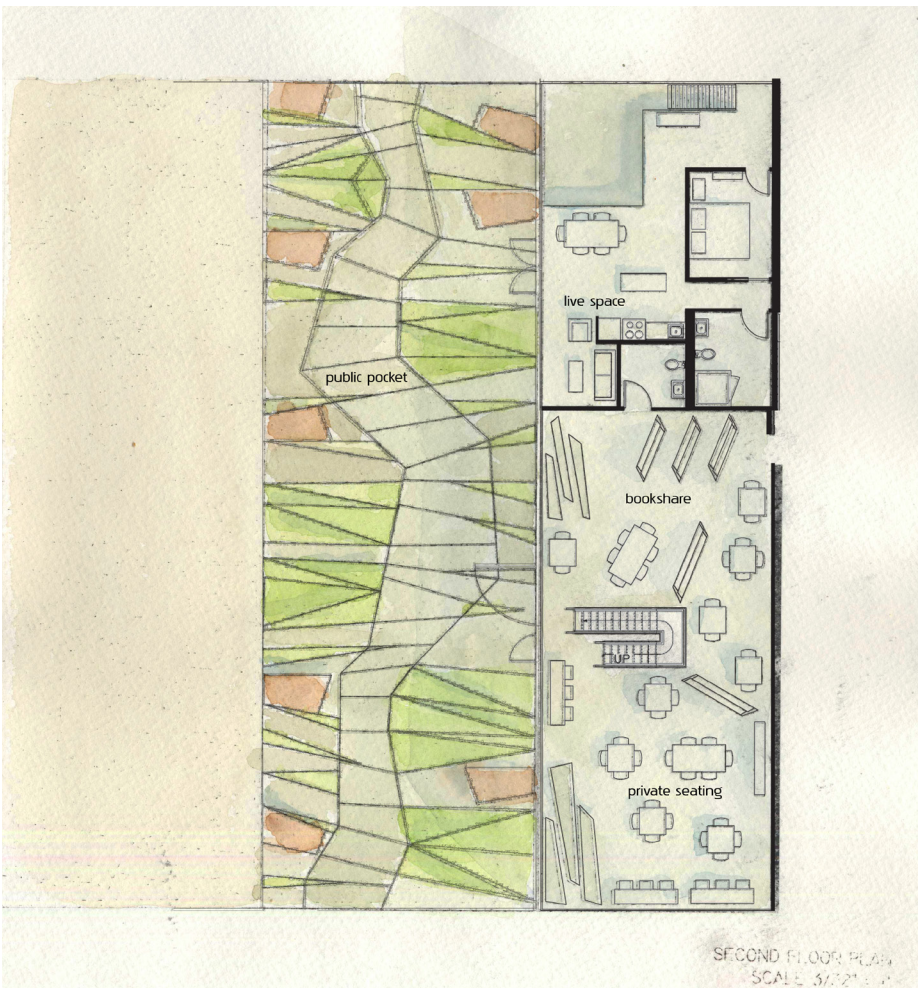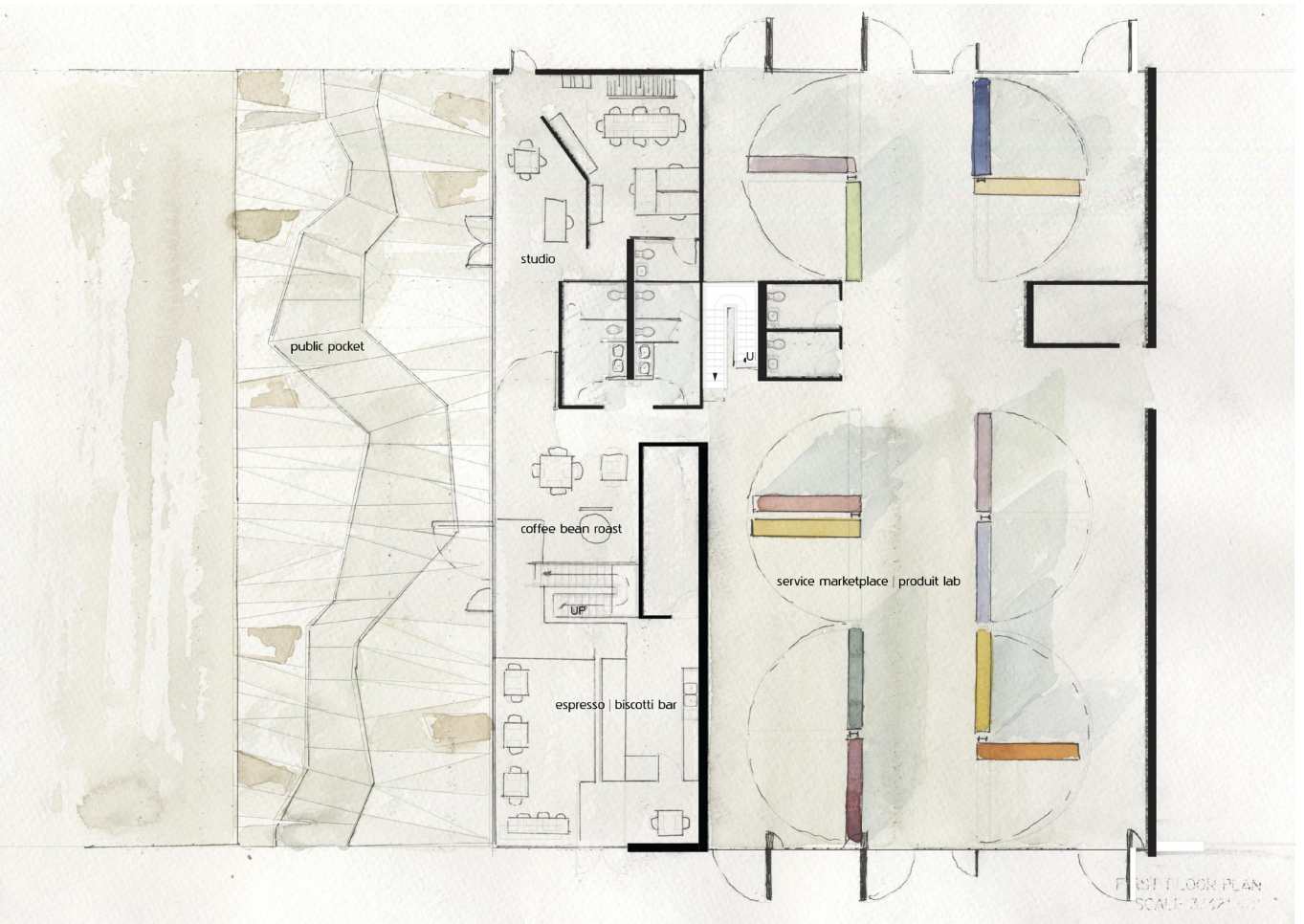Espresso | Biscotti Bar
       First floor 1360 Square feet
Studio
       First floor 820 Square feet
Washrooms
       First floor 250 Square feet
Circulation | Services
       First floor 90 Square feet

SECOND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 3/32" = 1'

Labels on plan: live space, public pocket, bookshare, UP, private seating

PHASE 02

Public Space
     Street level 2880 Square feet
     Rooftop 780 Square feet
Espresso | Biscotti Bar | Book share
     Second floor 1260 Square feet
Live space
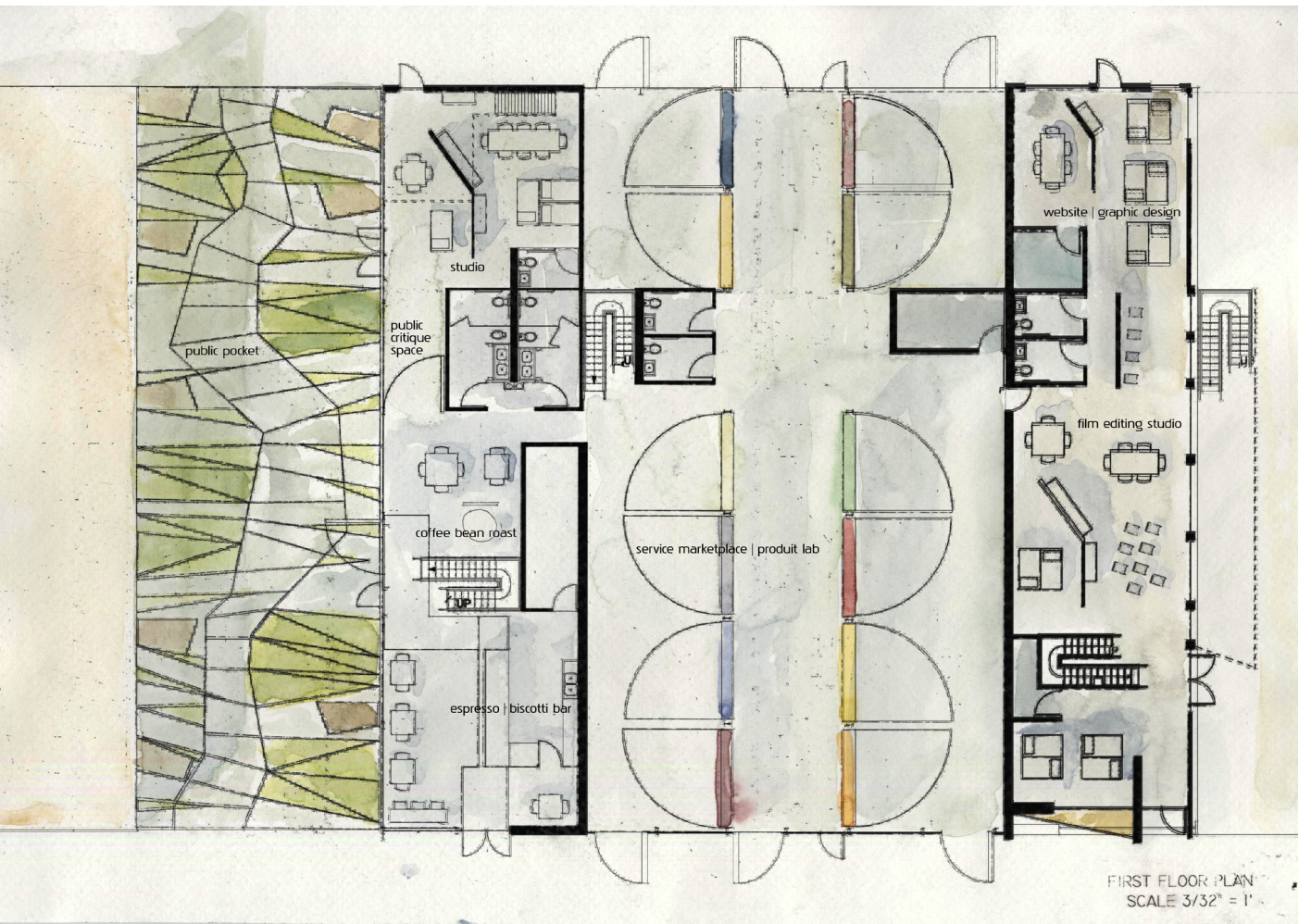   Second floor 640 Square feet
Washrooms
     Second floor 180 Square feet
Circulation | Service
     Second floor 200 Square feet

studio

public pocket

coffee bean roast

service marketplace | produit lab

espresso | biscotti bar

UP

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 3/32" = 1'

PHASE 03

Public Space
        Street level 2880 Square feet
        Rooftop 780 Square feet
Espresso | Biscotti Bar
        First floor 1350 Square feet
Studio
        First floor 820 Square feet
Live space
        Second floor 650 Square feet

Marketplace | Produit lab
        First floor 3800 Square feet
Washrooms
        First floor 400 Square feet
Circulation | Services
        First floor 500 Square feet

live space

public pocket

bookshare

charette space

live pod

incubator pod

private seating

UP

PHASE 03

Public Space
    Street level 2880 Square feet
    Rooftop 780 Square feet
Espresso | Biscotti Bar
    Second floor 1260 Square feet
Live space
    Second floor 640 Square feet

Housing | Incubator Pods
    Second floor 3000 Square feet
    Third floor 1500 Square feet
Charette Space
    Second floor 1260 Square feet
    Third floor 1260 Square feet
Washrooms
    Second floor 180 Square feet
Circulation | Services
    Second floor 1150 Square feet

**FIRST FLOOR PLAN**
SCALE 3/32" = 1'

Labels within plan:
- public pocket
- public critique space
- studio
- coffee bean roast
- espresso | biscotti bar
- service marketplace | produit lab
- website | graphic design
- film editing studio

PHASE 04

Public Space
        Street level 2880 Square feet
        Rooftop 780 Square feet
Espresso | Biscotti Bar
        First floor 1350 Square feet
Studio
        First floor 820 Square feet
Marketplace | Produit lab
        First floor 3800 Square feet

Film editing studio
        First floor 1800 Square feet
Web | Graphic Design
        First floor 400 Square feet
Shared Viewing space
        First floor 400 Square feet
Washrooms
        First floor 600 Square feet
Circulation | Services
        First floor 700 Square feet

public pocket

live space

bookshare

UP

private seating

live pod

charette space

incubator pod

film preview space

UP

UP

PHASE 04

Public Space
    Street level 2880 Square feet
    Rooftop 780 Square feet
    Bicycle keep 400 Square feet
Espresso | Biscotti Bar
    Second floor 1260 Square feet
Live space - becomes Studio space
    Second floor 640 Square feet
Housing | Incubator Pods
    Second floor 3000 Square feet
Charette Space
    Second floor 1260 Square feet

Film editing studio
    Second floor 1700 Square feet
Web | Graphic Design
    Second floor 600 Square feet
Shared Viewing space
    Second floor 600 Square feet
Washrooms
    Second floor 850 Square feet
Circulation | Services
    Second floor 1450 Square feet

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT
purchase land from city to create PUBLIC POCKET

ARCHITECT + ESPRESSO BAR OWNER PARTNERSHIP

public pocket

COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT

ARCHITECT creates smart phone app to ease sponsorship process

community contributes to fund of PUBLIC POCKET for city to purchase and maintain with local sponsorships
and global advertisement sponsorship

PUBLIC POCKET borrows existing wall for film projection + advertisements
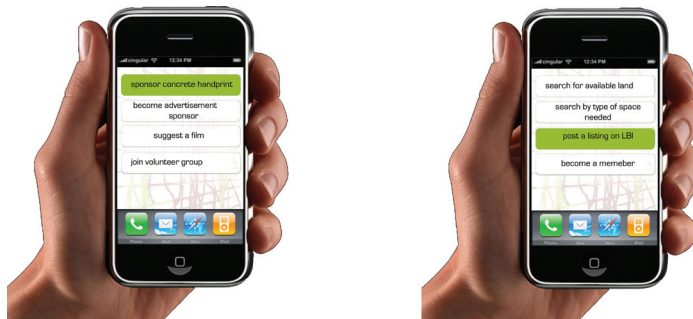
NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

ARCHITECT creates smart phone app and website for LANDBANK DATABASE INITIATIVE
community contributes to fund of LANDBANK through purchase of app

community contributes to database

Landbank develops network and draws entreprenuers to development of SERVICE MARKETPLACE + PRODUIT LAB

local support
MAKE YOUR MARK

FOSTERING LOCAL SUPPORT

It is important to gain support through the local community and to understand user needs in the urban context. When the concrete is poured for the path connecting the Queen Street West to the adjacent neighborhood, local sponsors in the community can make their mark by sponsoring a concrete handprint. The intention is to stimulate a sense of identity through a community event, while raising capital to pay for the public pocket.

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

The funding from the local community is not enough to fund the development of the public pocket. Additional support could be obtained through corporate advertisement projected on the urban canvas.
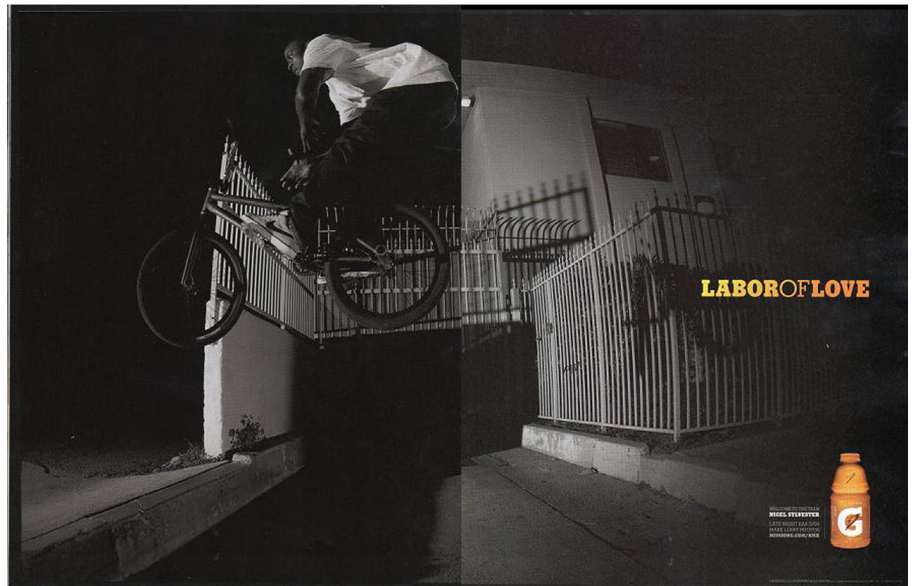
ESPRESSO BAR | BOOK SHARE | ROOFTOP VIEW PLATFORM
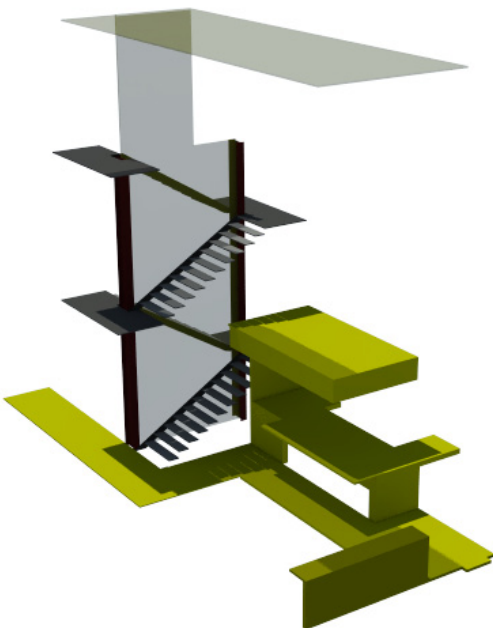
The espresso bar would open up to the public pocket, providing additional seating and pedestrian foot traffic. The facade facing the urban canvas is a glass curtain wall to provide indoor viewing space. A green folding ribbon begins at the doors of both entrances on the floor, folding upwards for counter and seating space. A cable trellis with green vines growing, pulls one up towards the public roof top viewing space. Open to the elements, the public space is covered with a vine covered trellis for shade in the summer, but allows sunlight for warmth during the winter. Although at some point the view may be obstructed, at 30 feet there is a direct view to the east of the downtown skyline. The second floor would provide seating for more quiet needs such as studying or reading. There is a book share space for community books to checkout for a nominal fee. At street level, a large door opens up to the public pocket, remaining open for summer cross breezes.

The urban canvas would be a source of entertainment during the evening hours. Once a week, students from University of Toronto, Ontario College of Art and Design and other schools would be given the opportunity to showcase their work on the urban canvas. Students could potentially gain recognition and see their work projected in an urban setting. During events, such as the Toronto International Film festival and Nuit Blanche, special films would be shown.

The architectural design studio has a semi public critique space which is visible from the public pocket. Work being done in the community would be on display for community viewing. Workshops which required more space could be held in the adjacent cafe or outside in the public pocket.

SERVICE MARKETPLACE | PRODUIT LAB

The marketplace unfolds into the street, extending the public space by creating an open space for public to gather. As previously developed, the produit lab would create an opportunity for consumer feedback for new products. The service market would provide a place for entrepreneurs to sell their services. The marketplace would be open daily, but most active on Thursdays and Saturdays. People could rent space to provide services and display products in the movable walls with have shelving built in. They can be moved to create smaller spaces or divide larger spaces. There is a technology and light machinery area to be shared by the entrepreneurs in the incubators and those renting space in the service market. The center core is covered with metal grate under which advertisement space can be purchased. Above the center core, is charette space on the second floor, also grate flooring to allow light to filter into market place.
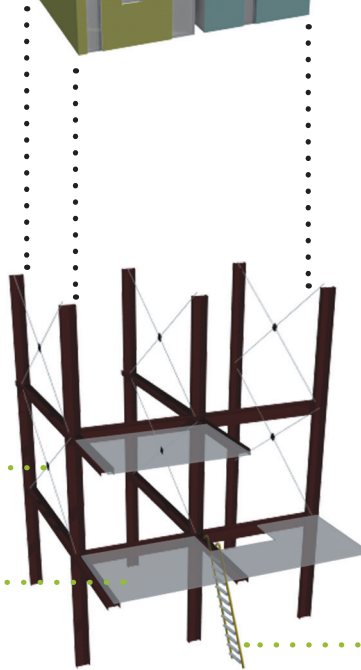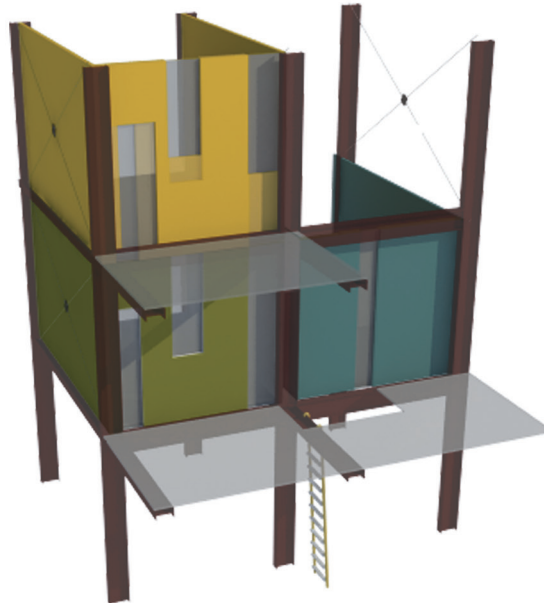
interchangeable panels
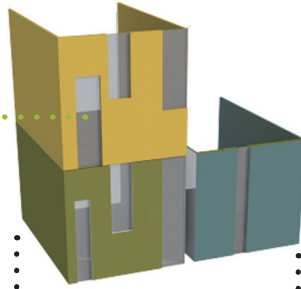
tension cables tie pods back to structure

grate flooring in charette space emits
light to marketplace below

removable ladder to access pods

HOUSING | INCUBATOR PODS

The second and third floor consist of charette space in the center with housing or incubator pods facing inward. These are spaces for entrepreneurs, who may have started offering services in the marketplace but now need more space. The pods can be used for dorm like housing with shared services in the service core. Each pod has interchangeable face panels, colorful to establish identity. They are hinged on to a shared charette space where people can meet and have collaborative efforts or display work. If the need for incubator space increases, additional pods can be built vertically. Although there is a stairway to access the second floor, the grate flooring would have removable panels with ladders to access the pods from the marketplace. During charette events or workshops, people could move around easily and quickly. The ladders would be attached to the grate ceiling for storage purposes when the marketplace was open.

LANDBANK INITIATIVE

One of the challenges of entrepreneurial pursuits is finding an affordable and viable site to expand a business. Sometimes a space maybe affordable and compatible to the space needs, but the location in a community does not help the business grow. Sometimes an entrepreneur has a vision but does not have a defined business plan. The site where this type of pursuit would begin could potentially be informed by the surrounding conditions and the community needs. For example, if a person wanted to start a restaurant, without a particular type of cuisine, finding a site in a community with a need for a restaurant as a first step would allow the viability of the site inform the program. This would be followed by research of the community for the appropriate type of restaurant. In short, the information which would allow this type of process to occur is best received from the communities directly.

The landbank initiative, started in the initial phase by the architect in an internet web site could be expanded to other forms of communication. In today's society, where people communicate through a interface where identity is often not know to others, people may state their needs in a community more openly than if they had to stand in front of a city council. Therefore, entrepreneurs who could access this type of information, could more closely understand and address the needs of the community. The blog portion of the initiative which works in tandem with the database, would allow members to comment on needs of their respective community which the sites that the landbank shows as vacant or available, could fulfill. Then, an entrepreneur looking to expand their pursuit, can access the blog and seek an appropriate site for their programmatic needs. The landbank would list property value, history and zoning ordinances. This information could also be collected from the community leaders, who would understand that investing time into sharing available space could draw more people to help increase their tax base.

This initiative would benefit the architect,; being aware of available sites would allow the architecture studio to target their marketing tactics on those sites and with the entrepreneurs looking for land. Advertisement space on the web site could also generate revenue. Creating an smart phone application could expand use. The revenue generated would fund an interactive wall installed in the service marketplace, acting as a physical urban experience, and potentially acting as a catalyst for interaction among market goers and those renting space to market product or services.
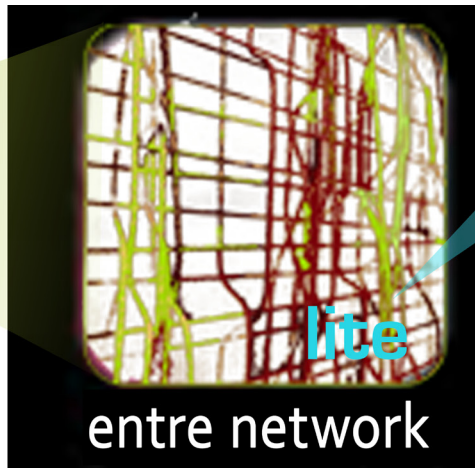
view available property
view contact information
search by landuse
receive alerts on specific properties
become member of network group

lite version - FREE
full version $2.99

FILM EDITING STUDIO

The narrative continues, and with the resources available, another entrepreneur lives a dream. A film editor who had been developing her business in one of the incubators, showing an occasional film on the urban canvas, found the available land through the landbank initiative to start her own studio. She had built enough capital in her incubation phase, and forming a partnership up with a graphic designer from another incubator, hires the architect to design a studio. Being a bicycle enthusiast, she decides to invest in some public space for bicycle storage and a rooftop green space. In order to pay for these investments, the rooftop green space is leased to a yoga studio.
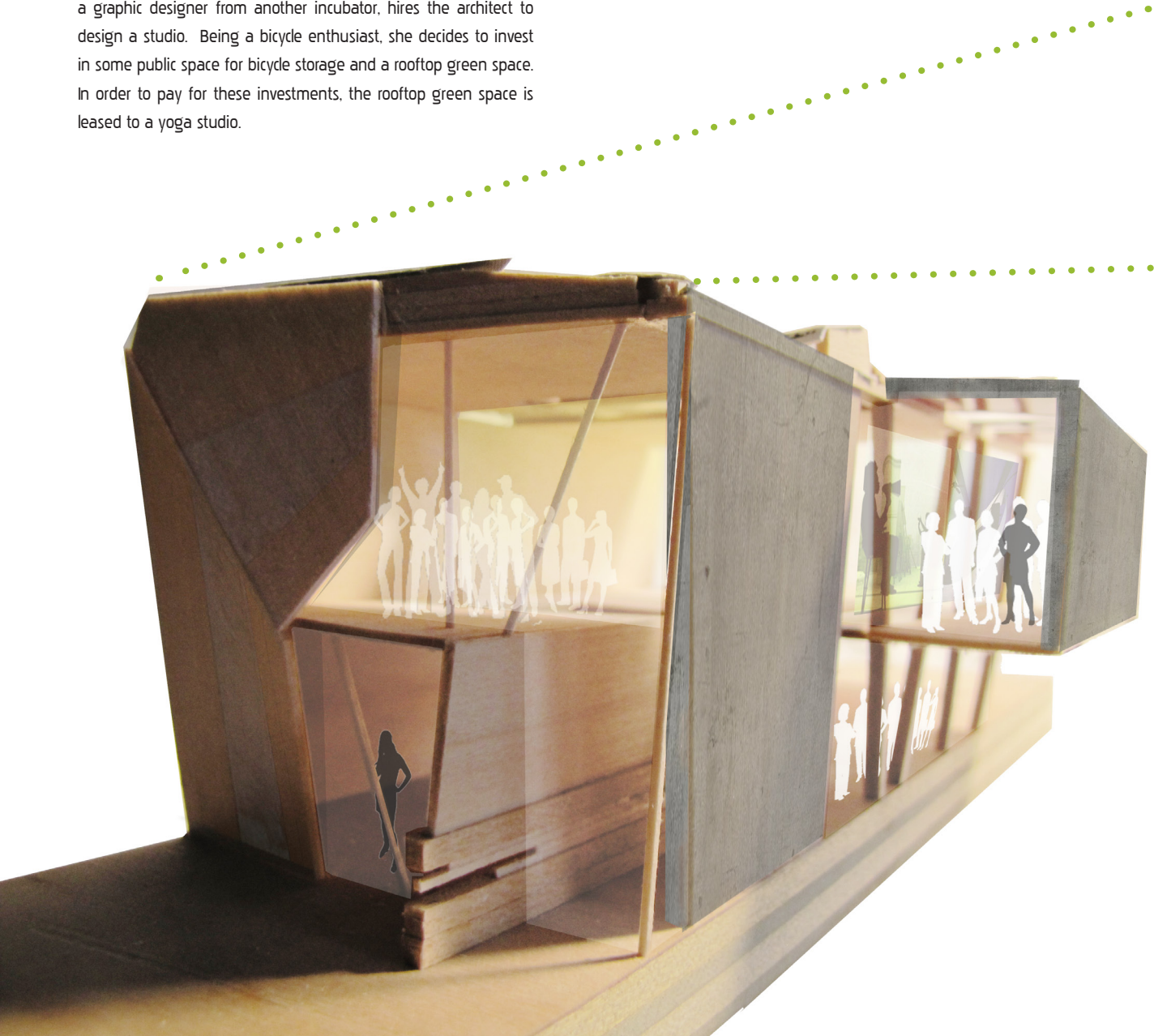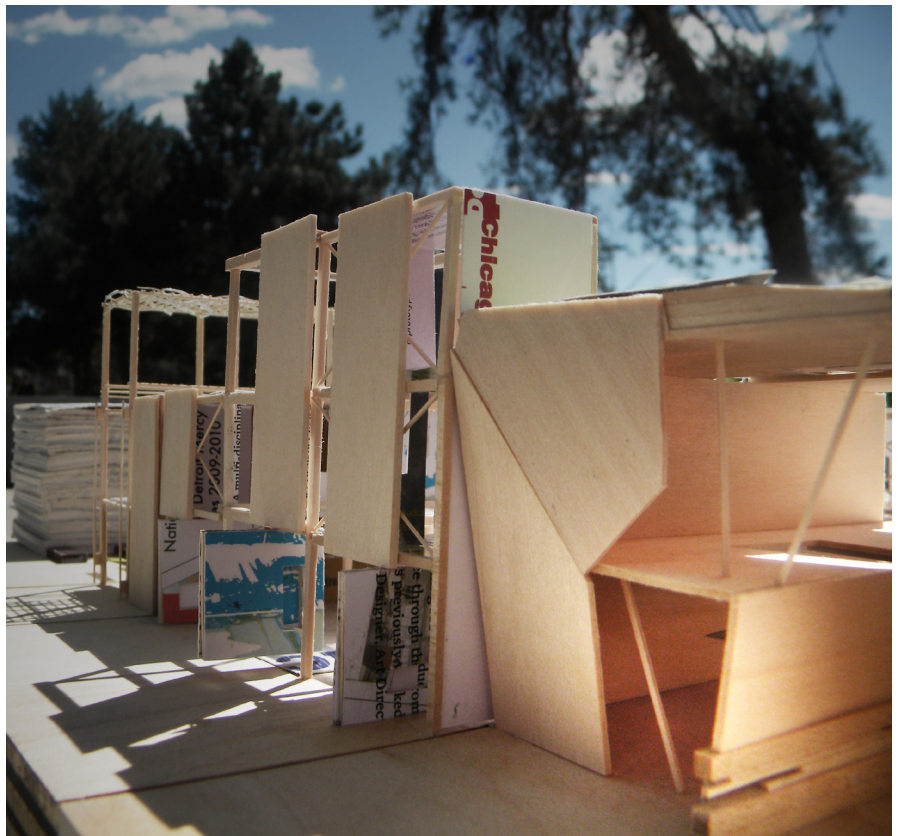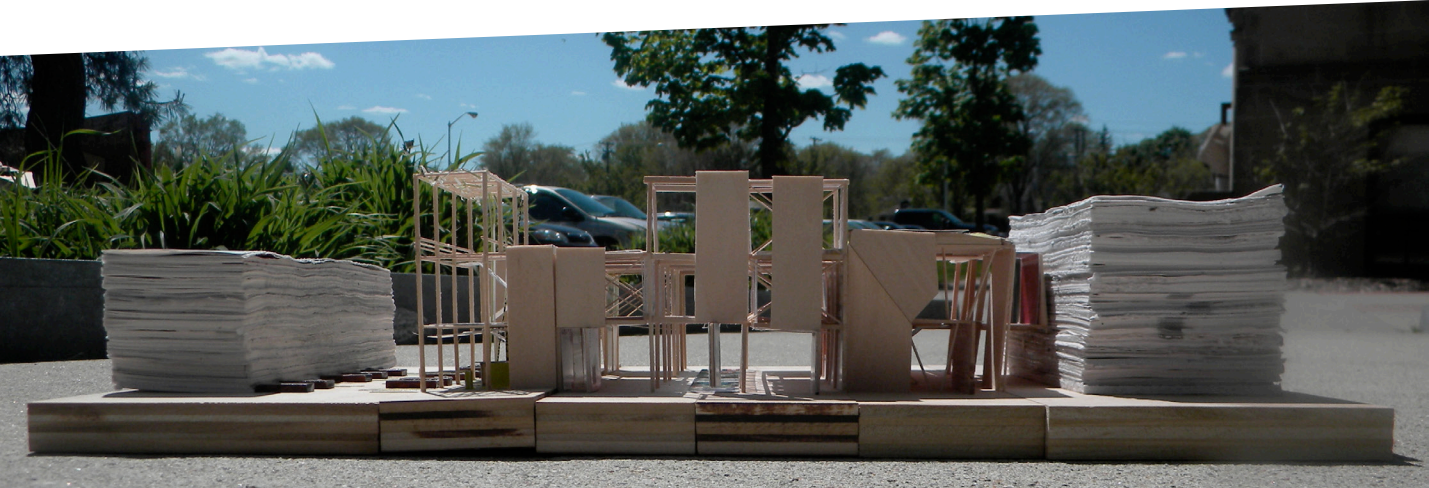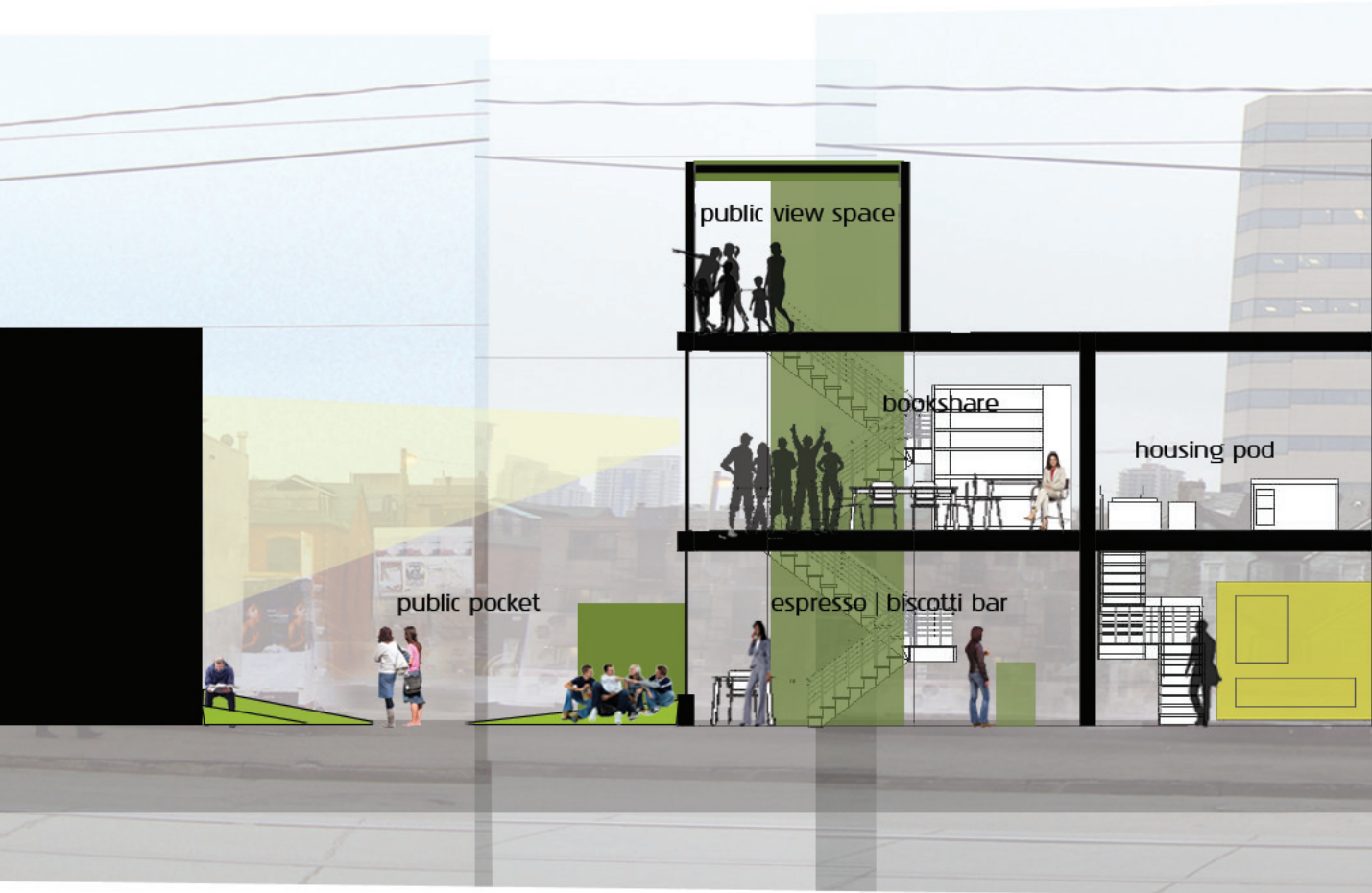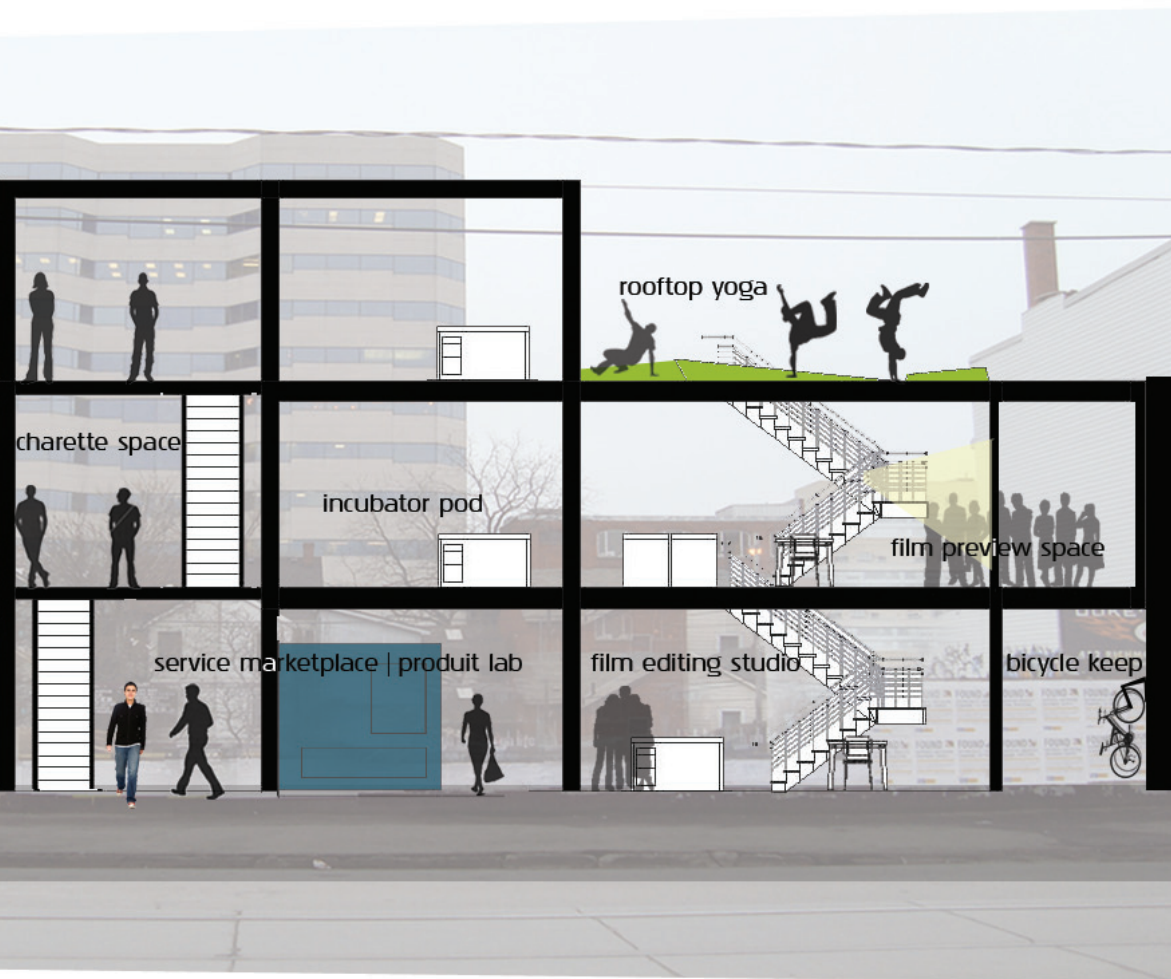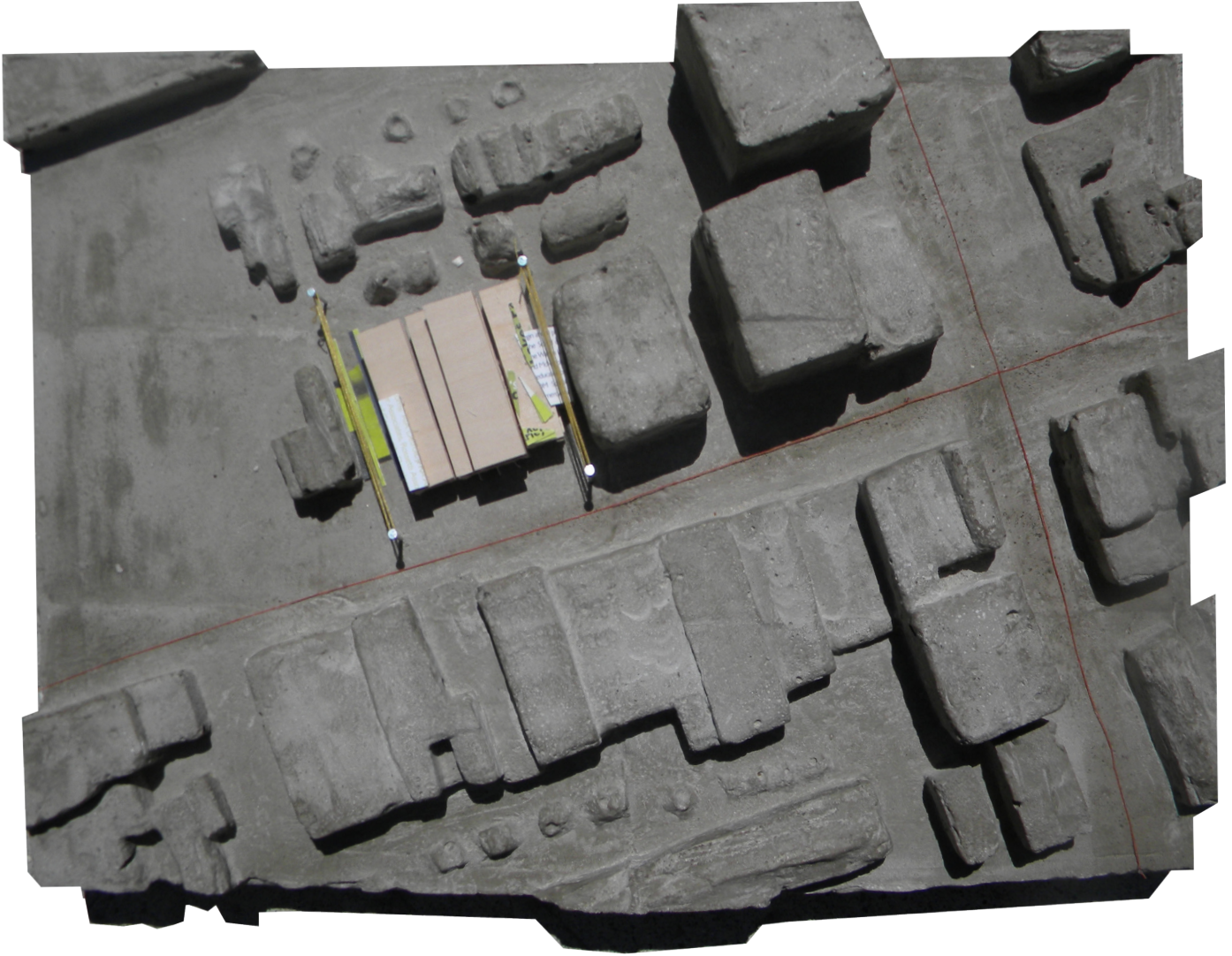
SOWING THE SEED

The architect is not necessarily commissioned to do every project whose seed is planted in the incubator or film projected on the urban screen. Rather, by cultivating opportunity, the architect has ameliorated the urban condition and kindled the entrepreneurial spirit, emerging as a leader in this community. The ability to envision architectural implications for future development in the context of an urban condition, is developed in architectural education, and should be adopted in the professional practice.

public view space

bookshare

housing pod

public pocket

espresso | biscotti bar

rooftop yoga

charette space

incubator pod

film preview space

service marketplace | produit lab

film editing studio

bicycle keep

SITE CONNECTION

The site creates a connection between the adjacent neighborhood and Queen Street west through the pedestrian movement in the public pocket and through the bicycle keep. The architecture of the surrounding area heavy and dense, mostly brick and concrete. The lightness of the intervention creates a more permeable urban facade which opens up to the sidewalk and extends the street and fosters aberrations in the threshold of the sidewalk. The lack of public space and the absence of pedestrian lingering is ameliorated with the nature of the architectural intervention. Although the urban wall is still physically maintained, the permeability of the structure allows the public space to extend into the building. It is privately owned and maintained, with the exception of the public pocket, but the space planning allows the intervention to seem more public and accessible. The vision includes increasing pedestrian traffic and creating moments to stop and linger. As one of the initial case studies revealed, the moment when the pedestrian stops to linger, the urban experience begins.
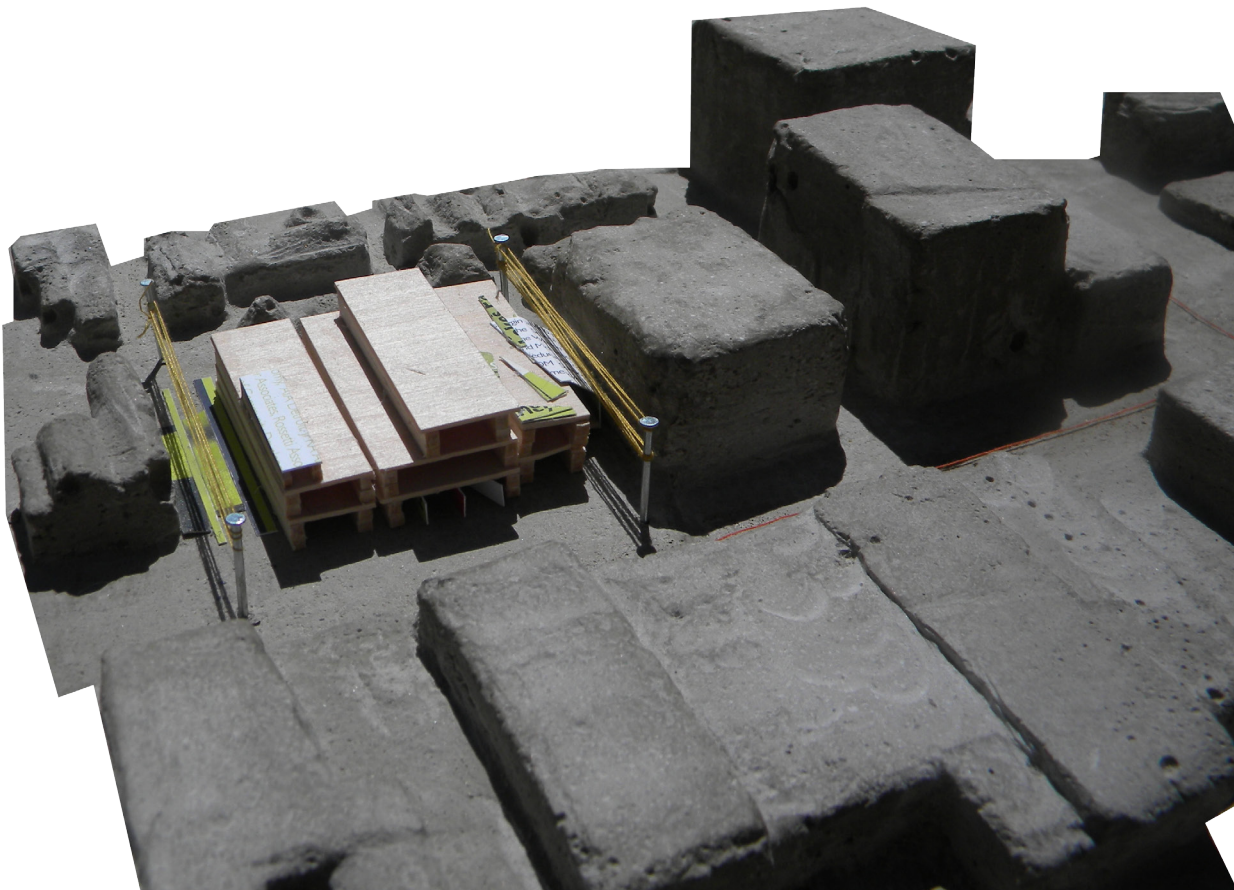
LANDBANK INITIATIVE + INCUBATOR

Through the landbank initiative interface, an aspiring entrepreneur discovers the abandoned building on Queen Street West at Ossington Avenue. Originally one of the site explorations, this becomes a part of the narrative as a result of collaborative networking. This entrepreneur partnership creates a coop produce marketplace and restaurant, considering the need for fresh produce in the community, and a need for a family restaurant to offset the bar culture which has developed north of the site on Ossington Avenue. A comment of a community member, such as one listed on the internet version of the Toronto Observer notes 'neighbours express concern that there are too many bars in an area.' The community members posting information expressing their concerns could inspire entrepreneurial pursuits.

http://www.torontoobserver.ca/2009/11/23/city-staff-seeks-to-amend-by-laws-on-ossington-ave/
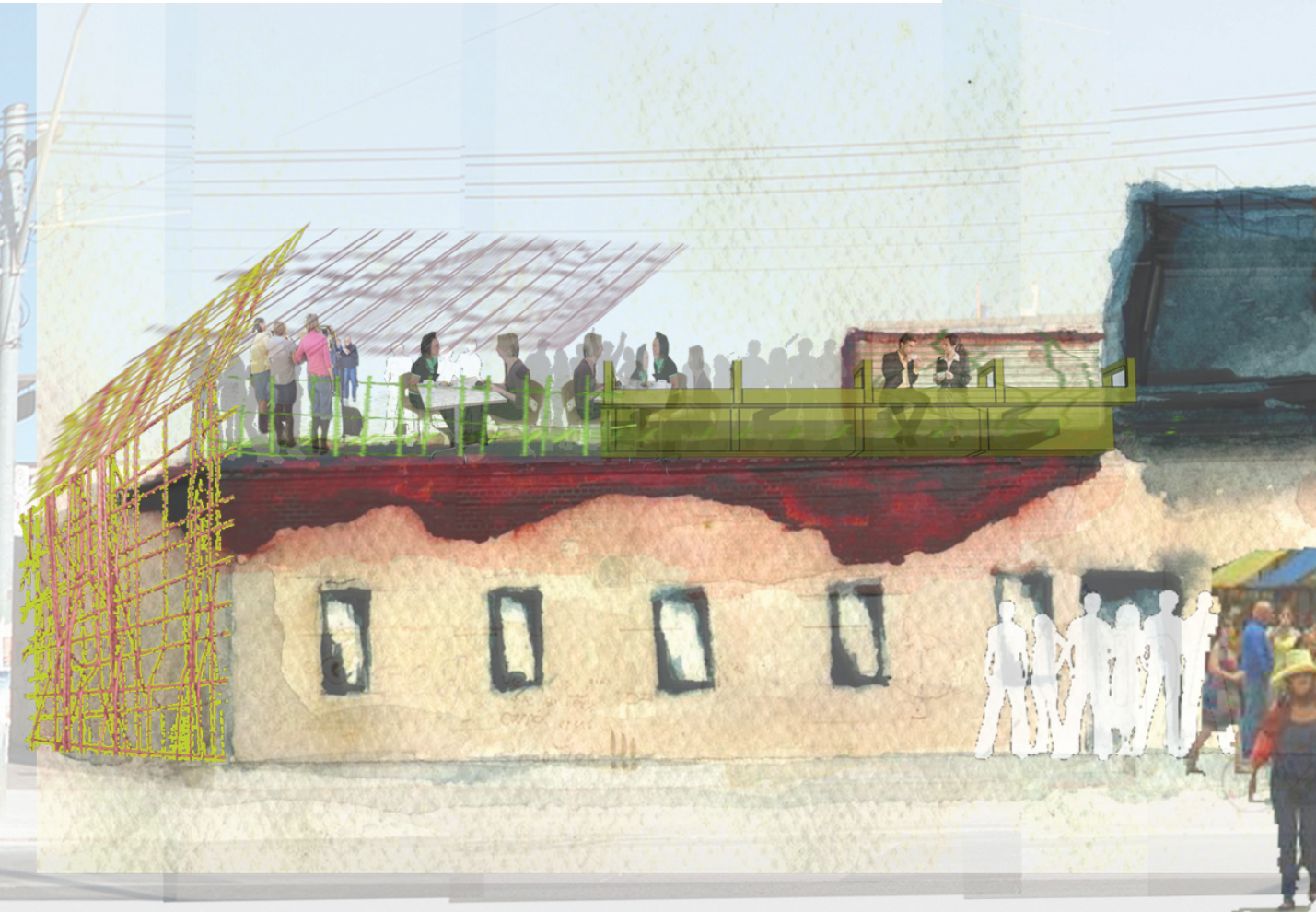
The information obtained through the landbank, inspired the market owner to create a place which can begin to foster aberrations in the public and private realms, and begin to dissolve the building facade. An open marketplace is cut into the facade on the corner to open up the building and extend the street inside. The restaurant is housed above and purchases its produce from the market. There is outdoor seating for patrons, building on the urban facade without tearing down a historic building.

The thesis began with the frustration with the profession and its inability to adjust to poor economic conditions. This inspired the question: Why are architects losing their jobs, not finding jobs, when there so much out there to design? As designers, the question really became WHAT ARE WE DOING? WHAT ARE WE BEING? Is there a way that the role of the architect could extend or be amplified to address these conditions?

Adopting an entrepreneurial spirit is a personal trait, perhaps a family gene which is cultivated in an entrepreneurial family. This seemed to be the obvious route to address arduous economic conditions and to cultivate opportunity for the amplification of the architect's role. The thesis became, almost unknowingly, a personal pursuit of how to practice architecture.

In academia, students are trained to envision the future development of a site, creating programmatic needs and developing architectural interventions to respond to certain conditions. In the profession, however, the architect is no longer their own client. They no longer have the ability to create their own 'design problem.' No longer are they 'sense-making' but they have become problem solvers. The thesis explored the idea of a master builder, in a more contemporary context than that of medieval times. Rather than the master of building the built environment, a builder of conditions which address the economic and urban needs by adopting an entrepreneurial spirit. In a sense, the architect becomes their own client. As John F Kennedy said, 'with great privilege comes great responsibility.' As architects, we have an influence on culture and history. With this great privilege, we should feel great responsibility.

Testing the thesis required finding a site and eventually developing program. More important than the architectural outcome was establishing an attitude toward the practice of architecture. As a result, the architecture was not fully developed. There are many structural and code considerations which would need to be further explored. The narrative which was developed and explored is in many ways a reflection of my own personal method of practice. Rather than waiting for the phone to ring, a proactive attitude not only seeks a vision for what the architecture will be: it seeks a method of how the architecture will become.

In many ways, attending university and living in Detroit has influenced my attitude towards architecture. In a shrinking city, the impact of design is much more noticeable than in a dense urban condition. Testing the thesis in a city other than Detroit was important because it allowed me to apply what I have learned working in Detroit to another context.

The thesis is not the end of a chapter; it is the beginning. It is my hope that I can further develop this thesis throughout my architectural career. It has given me the courage to take on something that is seemingly impossible. In many ways, the thesis was impossible to resolve, but worthy to explore.

This thesis could not have been possible without support and dedication of many people. A thesis is not simply a design project.; it is a process which uses many resources and support of many people which are impossible to list here. My architectural education has been shaped and influenced by many people, some of which I would like to acknowledge here.

Special thanks to:

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