

Redefining Identity in the Altered Rural Landscape

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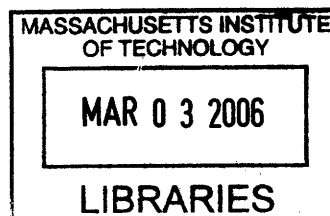
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ABSTRACT

Within a place, there is a fluidity of demographic, a collision and interaction between identities that requires negotiation, both spatially and socially. This project aims to assemble a series of actions toward the design of a space to negotiate that realm of personal and social adaptation within the urban environment that comes with the relocation of self through immigration, or the disruption of a home by the presence of foreignness. The contemporary rural community must negotiate these conditions in a new way, as it is being affected by social changes that, unlike the urban context, it does not have the infrastructure to support.

The architect enters the project as an active observer, her actions of interpretive investigation assembling a set of components of design gathered through strangers and locals that represent the identity of the site. These components will be used to design a public architecture that serves as the container of memory and generator of exchange, mediating between the physical landscape and the constructed landscape of the assembled personal identity of individuals. The project will serve as a vehicle to understand and assemble a rural public space that is inclusive of memory and provides agency for progress. As cultural groups are transferred through contexts, the constructed landscapes of identity and the physical landscapes are altered and derived by the juxtaposition of the two, forming a dynamic relationship that is simultaneously individual and multiple. This reciprocity is especially evident in the selected context of Arcadia, Florida where cultural identity is altered through a particular event, such as a drastic physical alteration (hurricane), instigating mutation in one or both landscapes, forcing a restructuring of the whole and an acknowledgement of not only absence of the lost, but also presence of the new identities.

Thesis Supervisor: Fernando Domeyko

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Aerial Photo of Arcadia, FL, the site chosen for this thesis. The rural community was chosen as a vehicle through which to address issues of identity and change in public space, as this context is less often considered in relation to such issues. With less infrastructure than the urban environment, response to alterations must be considered in a new way.
Image Source: Google Earth

Introduction

“It is up to these newcomers (the immigrants), then, to transform and unbuild the cities by inserting their presence, their performances, and their histories into the collective memories and democratic discourses of the city itself. the city is reconceived with each new immigrant, assuming that an open communication exists between the immigrant and all others.” —Krzysztof Wodiczko

Arcadia, Florida is a rural agricultural town under the strains of alteration brought on by major social and physical forces. A generally homogenous community across numerous generations, the town's image and identity changed little since the early 20th century. However, in recent years it has begun to undergo change, as have similar agricultural regions around the country, as a need for manual labor has brought waves of immigration to suburbia and small towns, rather than solely metropolitan areas.¹ An unfamiliarity with newcomers and an uneasiness in a new home creates a tension among foreigners and locals and must be negotiated in order to bring new exchanges to the forefront. Within the rural community, there is a large quantity of land per person, yet very little public space. Difference is encountered face to face in the urban context through the forced proximities of density in the public realm. In order to negotiate social strains in the rural context, a new infrastructure for communication must be devised. Arcadia's situation has been heightened as a result of the entire area experiencing the major trauma of natural disaster, as Hurricane Charley destroyed much of the town in August 2004. In the climate of rebuilding, this thesis aims to design a public architecture for negotiation and recovery that can become a center for exchange within the community, both during times of disaster, and under the more hidden stresses

¹ A PBS-produced documentary about the issue of this type of wave of immigration represents the struggles among all constituencies to adjust to this sudden alteration in small town community structures. www.pbs.org/pov/pov2004/farmingville.

of the trauma of altered home.

This project is about the relationships between separation and reconciliation, disaster and recovery, the photographer and the subject, a beginning and a destination, a speaker and a listener. These viewpoints are negotiated as a vehicle for establishing a viewpoint for the architect that finds an understanding of the conditions of a place through the population itself. The process is itself a negotiation and a reinscription of histories on the town.

The site of public life and communal interaction is in the space and time that lies between the examined relationships. It is the process of healing, the action of reconstruction, the zone and barriers that foreground the photo, the path of travel, and the breath of conversation. It is by intensifying and enlivening parts of the process of exchange that the project will serve as a tool for recovery and redefinition of place. The resulting architecture will be a programmed public space that is about a profound moment within the process, rather than a perfect conclusion.

Section I

History, Identity and Loss of Home

Landscape of the Site: A brief history of Arcadia, Florida and the Peace River Valley



This thesis began with the examination of the histories that are assembled to form the basis of a city in major transition. A place involved in the redefinition of its identity because of a dramatic physical alteration. There are two durations affecting the alteration of identity within the small city of Arcadia. The force of the hurricane was brief, but severe, transforming the landscape in a period of four hours. This is overlaid with the progressive alteration of the cultural identity of the place over the past decades, due to the continual influx of an immigrant population into a community previously dominated by families whose heritage extends back to the founding of the city. The transient population of immigrant migrant workers has begun to become rooted as a group of permanent residents of the community; however, despite the gradual establishment of a cultural identity reflecting the Mexican and Central American roots of most of the immigrant families, there is still a great deal of separation between cultures in the projection of the city's image by its residents. Integration between locals and immigrants in the city has mostly existed as a condition of boundaries with brief moments of overlap. Identity is split, and valuable community members are disregarded when the image of the place is projected. This thesis does not aim to unify a diverse place into a homogenous group, but rather to create a site for exchange that gives a dispersed landscape an anchor from which public events can extend, or return to in times of uncertainty and socialization. In the wake of natural disasters, while protection from a storm is often considered, a space for post-storm action

has not been a part of community development. This crucial moment of trauma is more easily managed if there is a site of commonality. This thesis aims to determine a method and design for a rural infrastructure that establishes a framework for the acknowledgement of the whole, in order for it to function as a public space with multiple levels of exchange.

The state of Florida is a unique land formation in the United States, a low-lying peninsula discovered by Western society early in the history of the Americas (in 1513 by Ponce De Leon), but it was developed by Westerners much later. Originally, Florida was a name that defined the entire area north of the Caribbean and east of Mexico, extending as far North as Nova Scotia. Probably due to the Spanish explorers' southern approach from the Caribbean, the peninsular land now known as the state of Florida was initially defined geographically and politically by its relationship to the Gulf of Mexico as one of the lands that define its boundaries¹. As the 27th state in the United States of America, in contemporary map representations it appears as a tail, hanging from the land mass of the continental United States, weakening its association with the southern context, despite the fact that its land is much more integral in the formation of the spatial geographic zone of the Gulf. These perceived relationships from mapping affect the understanding of a place, defining relationships through visual representation and, therefore, becoming a direct reflection of the perception of physical and social relations within the place in its historical lineage. Similar to this brief examination of redefinition of spatial relationships, as affected by politically and

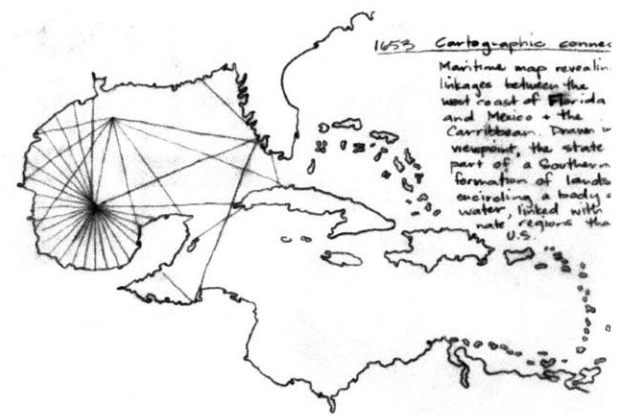
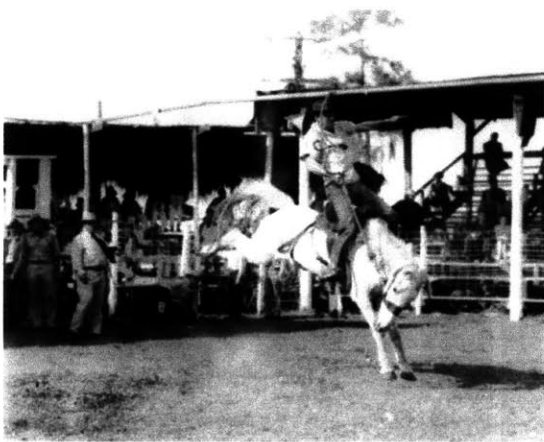
¹ A 16th century map of Florida reveals the primary routes of transport that connected the land to other regions was the water, as opposed to land, making the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean its most directly related spatial context, as opposed to the land mass to the North. Ste. Claire, Dana.



Aerial Photo of the Peace River, from Arcadia to Charlotte Harbor and the Gulf of Mexico.
source: Terraserver, 1999



The following images (below and on p. 14) were taken along the route highlighted in red, a selection representing Arcadia and De Soto County presently.



The De Soto County Rodeo and the downtown area are two elements of the town that continue to be integral to the town identity. (left and middle, image source: The Florida Memory Project). 16th century representations of Florida show the peninsula as a link in the network of landmasses enclosing the Gulf of Mexico. (right, sketch by Katice Helinski, source for information: Ste. Claire, Dana.)

culturally influenced perceptions, the city of Arcadia was remapped in this thesis. Through the utilization of personal accounts made by residents in the media of photography and brief writing. This exercise brought a historically effective method of representing relations into a contemporary condition.

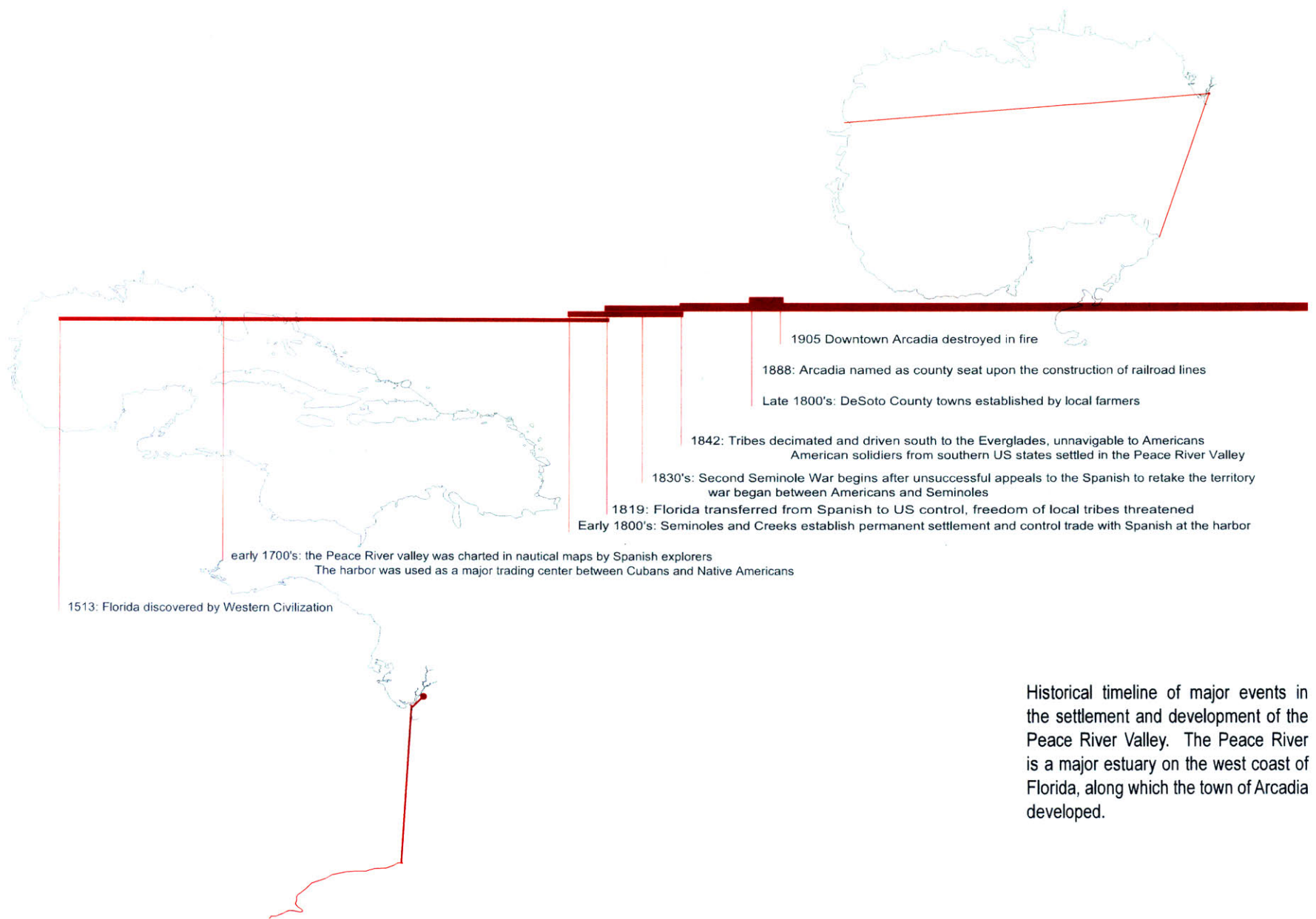
Arcadia, Florida, the economic and social center of De Soto County formed inland on the southwestern portion of the Florida peninsula, along the Peace River, which flows south to Charlotte Harbor and the Gulf of Mexico. Early migrations to the Peace River Valley began around the first half of the 19th Century, with Creek and Seminole Indians coming from the north, and Cuban fishermen coming from the south to set up “ranchos” for fishing, and trading². The first full time residents of the region were the Red Stick Creeks, and the chief Peter McQueen was a wealthy landowner, controlling Charlotte Harbor, and thereby controlling trade. In addition to the Native American tribes, former African slaves set up plantations in the area, where they were able to live freely, as the region was still highly unregulated, and officially under Spanish control³. However, this freedom for the Creeks and blacks of the area came under threat after Spain agreed to transfer Florida to US rule in 1819, when they appointed Andrew Jackson as governor, whom the Indians knew well as their opponent from the first Seminole War. Five parties of Indians traveled to Havana to protest this transfer, and also appealed to the British in Nassau for aid, but with no avail, making their land ownership and secure life vulnerable to the forceful advances of the new government. Americans began sending expeditions to the Southern portion of the state in the 1820's, because despite the fact that the land was

² Brown, Canter. p. 3,4.

³ These slaves were previously owned by the Native American tribes, and escaped to form their own community. Brown, Canter. p. 9-14.

17th c. map demarcating the perceived formation of land and water in Southwest Florida. The area highlighted in red is the region that is now the Peace River Valley and Charlotte Harbor (the point where it meets the Gulf).
Image source: Ste. Claire, Dana.





Historical timeline of major events in the settlement and development of the Peace River Valley. The Peace River is a major estuary on the west coast of Florida, along which the town of Arcadia developed.



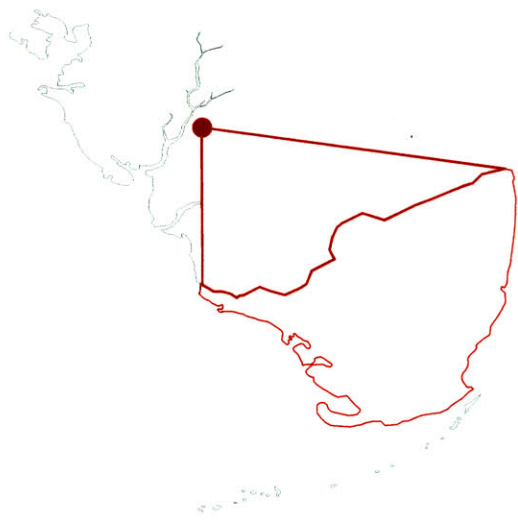
1970's: Mexican immigrants join agricultural labor force
workers send much of earnings to family in Mexico

1990's: Major rise in immigration: Southwest Florida becomes "Hpergrowth Destination"

Late 1980's: immigrant workers begin to make permanent establishment
through small commercial establishments

2004: Hurricane Charley destroys much of county
reconstruction begins

Late 2005: Charity-funded migrant worker housing and
social services plan rejected by community



thoroughly explored by the Seminoles, Creeks and African Americans, the United States knew very little of the area. As Governor Jackson increased pressure on the Indians to emigrate in the 1830's, the tribes prepared for a second war with the Americans by trading with the Cuban fishermen in the harbor for weapons, and soon thereafter they began the Second Seminole War. Many of the white Americans who fought in this war later became the settlers of the region and it is their establishment that is used by many present-day Florida towns to historically mark their beginning. In 1842 the war decimated the tribes' lands, pushing the remaining Indians south, deep against the swampy lands of the Everglades, a mysterious region to the Americans, and so the Peace River changed from a symbol of life and freedom (as it was for the tribes) to a dividing line that separated white frontiersmen from surviving Indians, symbolizing generations of conflict⁴.

⁴ At that point in history, the Everglades swamps were as far north as Lake Okeechobee, nearer to the Peace River Valley than they are today. Brown, Canter. p. 21-40.

Section I

History, Identity and Loss of Home

Community: Struggles With “Localness” in the Rural Town

The conflict ridden past of the Peace River valley, led to the settlement of De Soto County and its towns, of which Arcadia became the county seat in 1888. The county's formation was defined by white settlers, many of whom fought the Indians in the years prior⁵. They were mostly from the Southern states to the north, and some were from the Midwest. Each of the towns defining the county were settled and named by families who came to the region in the mid to late 1800's. Most were self-sufficient towns in the periods of early pioneering development of Florida, each containing a post office, general store and church, as well as some with schools, restaurants and hotels. Before the introduction of the railroad, the towns were accessed by boat traffic from the harbor and further transport with oxen and carts. Pine Level, Owens, Hull, Nocatee, Ft. Ogden, Bunker, Joshua Creek, and Brownville still make up the county, though most of the town centers deteriorated over the years, leaving Arcadia as the social and governmental center of the city⁶. As commonly occurs in agricultural areas, many of the families who settled the De Soto County towns have remained there for generations, their inherited farmland continuing to be worked for economic production. Consequently, in the area where the town centers no longer exist to give the places identity, their demarcation is persevered through the residences of the families, their names recognizable

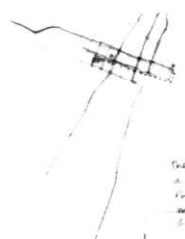
⁵ Brown, Canter. p. 38.

⁶ Melton, Howard. p. 17-33.

to most who are long term members of the community. Their presence provides the defining historical characteristic that distinguishes these towns beyond solely geographical boundaries. This heritage of ownership, established through the town's preservation of historical identity based on the presence of certain residents, creates a condition of "localness," that promotes a notion of inherited belonging that contributes to the resistance to alteration of a town's social structure. The names significantly mentioned in the only history book of De Soto County—Treadwell, Parker, Turner, Sorrells, Hollingsworth, Coker, Albritton, Waldron, Mercer, Carlton, and Burtscher—continue to be well-known names within the community⁷. Arcadia is now the county seat and center of commercial development in the county; however, the overall community lacks any particular physical place to serve as a public space of multiple capacities, though its past held a much greater array of community spaces that were frequently used. In the 1920's and '30's, the city's downtown area was the active social core of Arcadia and the surrounding towns, as it was the commercial center, as well as a social space where it was common to take evening walks or sit in parked cars talking with passersby.⁸ This historical downtown, as it is known presently, is now preserved through thriving monthly antique markets and permanent shops that attract tourists, and locals. While the stores

7 Melton, Howard. Footprints and Landmarks. When I attended school in De Soto county, all of these names were prevalent within the school system, and their families had social and political influence on community institutions. Many of my classmates of these families still live in the towns their families founded years ago.

8 As stated by Howard Melton in his book that recounts the history of the people of DeSoto County. He maintains a nostalgic view of the town and its past, based upon the glamorized image of a cowboy frontier settled by strong, hardworking families. The book, while sentimental and commendable for its inclusion of local tales, is highly focused upon the history through the farming and ranching Caucasian families' histories, without a mention of the additional community members who have contributed to the identity of the place over the past century. Melton, Howard.



August 08, 2005
DeSoto County
Public Library

A small brick structure near the downtown district and adjacent to government buildings.


The restaurant on 1st was a hot summer a degree or above in July and the space the people in attendance quite populated mostly white individuals white men + women used the computers. The majority of people in attendance were Hispanic members of the community. Many families worked the tables, browsing + looked at/ read



August 09, 2005

Downtown Center

- Trade Mart
- State of Georgia
- Gas station
- Fish Market (on river bank)
- Post office (on river bank)
- Pharmacy (on 1st or 2nd)



August 09, 2005

Nacooche Elementary School

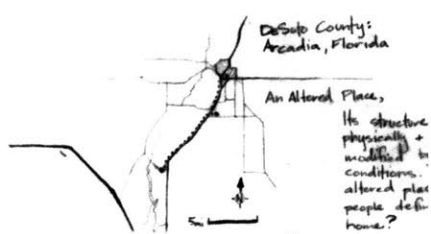
Nacooche Elementary is a school with one of the most diverse student populations in the county and the greatest number of non-English speaking students.

I visited on the first day of school, in a kindergarten classroom. When one student arrived with his mother, he was taken to kindergarten English as a second language. Another student, "Dustin," was unable to speak English yet. His parents, on a school and brought him to them. "Dustin" would be on his own for much of the day though.

⁸ I attended this school as a child, and have volunteered in my Mother's classroom for years.

have proven beneficial to the city, it is currently only a social venue for those who shop for antique furniture, and is only a highly trafficked community place during holiday parades, during which there is a diverse attendance. Entering downtown Arcadia from the east, one passes by another community landmark, to those who are “locals”. The Tree of Knowledge is a large oak tree which shades a small park, known to be the place where town elders sit to talk and exchange; however, in recent years, its use has declined and the shaded area is often unoccupied, showing the decline of a core space. Its presence and historical identity, though, reveals the great amenity that a shaded space with air circulation can be in this hot humid climate. Another social component of the past was the public swimming pool fed by an artesian well. In the southwest Florida climate, there is much need for cooling, and it was a valuable component to serve as a central meeting point, but this public space was not maintained over the years, and there are no longer public swimming facilities in the county, even at the local schools. The local little league baseball fields attract a regular crowd of parents and families of the area, continuing to generate a social sphere that is quite diverse, and while it does bring the community together, it does not satisfy other needs in the city, and is only seasonally occupied. Finally, a naturally occurring public resource, the Peace River, is used for recreational activities such as camping, boating, swimming and canoeing, a venue of water and shade that exists within the community, but flows quietly at the back door, on the western edge of the town.

The river's symbolic presence in the region is highly important to its history of settlement, both before and after the onset of white American settlement. The water body and its flood plains have created fertile land, and a source for transportation through the region, and phosphate mining. This life source



A journal of sketched maps of places of important events and interactions between groups, either formal or informal, was kept during the research phase of this thesis.

has also become a supportive natural element for surrounding coastal regions, as a water pipeline now utilizes the river water as the potable water source for the more populated Charlotte and Sarasota counties. This water source has created the opportunity for the agricultural presence that has made this site a dwelling place for many generations of Americans, and the Native Americans who preceded them.

Section I

History, Identity and Loss of Home

Alterations: Physical and Social Stresses on Identity

The discussion of alterations in the city, begins with the agricultural economy, as it has structured the populations and settlements of the region since the beginning of its civilization. The growth of winter crops, along with cattle ranching, which was employed by the Native Americans on this land and continued by white American settlers, gave this region a market throughout the nation. "During the 1930's and '40's, because of ideal climate and soil conditions, the area was transformed into a principle site for the production of winter crops, especially, tomatoes, cucumbers and watermelon⁹." This production of citrus and other crops became increasingly more valuable to the country throughout the 1960's, thereby increasing the need for laborers. Since the city's origin, there has been a need for field labor, but it was not until the 1970's that an immigrant population became a part of the labor force, prior to which, the laborers were mostly African American¹⁰. These relations between farm owners and laborers have had a significant effect on the social and cultural structure of the town of Arcadia that contributes to economics as well. Despite the fact that many families who began their life in Arcadia as part of the migrant

9 This quote was taken from a paper on the subject of Immokalee, Florida, a city south of Arcadia that has followed a very similar development path over the years, as they are both inland agricultural towns in the southwest region of Florida, an important agricultural region of the state.

Williams, Philip J.

10 Williams, Philip J.



Images taken in 2005 in Arcadia, Florida.



labor force have now become more economically stable through raises in the agricultural field, establishment of produce stands, or establishment of Mexican groceries, there is a pervading line of distrust between the two cultural groups as well as among established immigrants and migrant farm workers¹¹. For instance, when the Catholic Diocese of Venice proposed a multimillion dollar housing project for farm workers and families in Arcadia, including a park, clubhouse, playground, computer rooms and health care, it was rejected by the County Commission due to objections by neighbors whose argument was not against the need for the project, but rather against the placement of it near the residences of “locals”¹². A fear of the unknown pervaded the arguments, and the leaders of the commission chose to allow the project to be halted.

Dominated by an agricultural economy, many Arcadian residents live in a sparsely populated landscape that has no public transportation infrastructure, yielding a different relationship to physical distance than that of many urban communities. This contributes to the divisions and boundaries between locals, and foreigners. The immigrant residents of Arcadia, have arrived under conditions of great need, in search of work and income in order to support families in the US and in their home countries. Their support provided to the agricultural community is invaluable, as picking fruit and vegetables must still be done manually. Due to transportation circumstances, and the remoteness of their place of employment, the social mobility required to integrate

11 The context of Arcadia's immigrant workers and local farm owners has produced a generalized distrust and disdain by locals, as does a fear of the unknown that results from the assertion of a different culture in the community at the Mexican Markets where a congregation of immigrants gathers. In addition, the immigrant population has a high degree of distrust for locals, as they are painted as oppressors, while the more established immigrants feed off of the more established immigrants. (Williams, Philip J.)

12 De Soto Sun Herald, June 9, 2005

Images revealing the present nature of the landscape in Arcadia.

(third image from left taken by Danielle Phiel)



into the community is often not easily accessed. These members of the community retain much of their Mexican identity through transnational ties as well. While direct communication is difficult to impossible, the frequent arrivals of other immigrants and the process of sending earnings to their home both help maintain a continuous flow of information between the locales¹³. So, the question arises, in order to define an identity of a place, and provide social and economical mobility for residents of the community, is it necessary to unify the social identity? How does the foreignness of community members activate the city? This point, as raised by Bonnie Honig reframes the typical viewpoint that makes foreignness the root of problems. The notion of foreignness is often framed through judgment toward ourselves, the nation, or in this case, the town. Questions such as, "What can they do *for* us?" or "What can they do *to* us?"¹⁴ serve as inward turning models that reinforce fear and difference. Yet the foreigner who achieves the American Dream, who establishes a home and economic security, becomes a symbolic representation of the democratic ideals that define American nationalism, consequently making the immigrant a necessary component of symbolic patriotism in a community, as well as a necessary component of the labor force. The migrant farm worker, however, does not fit within this model, as this worker often has little opportunity to move up in employment, and continues in a state of economic instability, due to exploitation and a need to support families in Mexico¹⁵. This results in enclavism, a refusal to transition, leaving the person stranded in a new place, experiencing a loss of homeland¹⁶.

13 Williams, Philip J.

14 Honig, Bonnie. Democracy and the Foreigner.

15 Williams, Philip.

16 Honig, Bonnie. Democracy and the Foreigner.



The mourning of a loss of home, a powerfully affecting experience and a struggle for immigrant laborers is a notion more easily understood in all Arcadians to some degree, since the destruction of Hurricane Charley in August 2004. While a natural destruction of home as compared to a conscious or forced emigration from home is not an identical trauma, it is a loss that, nonetheless, can establish a unified experience that momentarily promotes a stronger communal identity. As stated by Julia Kristeva, foreignness “disappears when we all acknowledge ourselves as foreigners.” To a community of locals, who have never left their homeland, and whose recent ancestors formed that community, alteration of the town has created for the first time in this generation, a memory of a former home, and the need to hold onto an absent physical condition. These feelings that come with foreignness are at this moment a communal sentiment, distinguished only by distance and duration. In other words, the local's feeling of foreignness has a rapid onset, and a brief duration, as there is a quick reassembly of community, post-disaster, that allows the feelings of absence to be suppressed. The lack of inclusion in community assembly is part of what contributes to the extended duration of the immigrants' feelings of foreignness and absence. Consequently, in this moment of entire redefinition, due to a rapid physical alteration, the prolonged trauma of loss should be addressed as well. In a moment of alteration, an examination of place should occur, in order to produce a framework for recovery and continuation of community in the changed climate. Julia Kristeva makes the point that “Those who have never lost the slightest root seem to you (the foreigner) unable to understand any word liable to temper their point of view.” However, she continues to state that people become more receptive to conflicts if the body loses footing¹⁷, as in the case of Arcadia's alteration. The communal response immediately post-disaster did establish a moment of unity where people of all backgrounds

¹⁷ Kristeva, Julia. Strangers to Ourselves.

Hurricane effects on the town
(immediately after hurricane
2004)



came together in aid of each other, as informed by established immigrant Maria Moreno¹⁸. However, as life nears normalcy, so do the traditional social relations within the town.

Current modes of disaster relief in response to physical loss often do not acknowledge experiences beyond immediate relief efforts, and do not provide psychological relief, which is experienced over a duration of time as the affected population searches for a new identity. Architecture can aid in relief beyond the immediate reconstruction of shelter through the incorporation of a re-planning of image, manifested in a community space that expands through public functions.

If the city is an organism, made of interdependent parts of energy (labor), production (economy) and body (environment), then the identity of this organism is split between the foreigner and the local. Upon major physical alteration, the body's structure is destroyed, thereby affecting energy and production. Recovery depends on a change in physical opposition and oppression to a unified ownership of place coping with an absence. The natural

18 Interview, August 9, 2005. Maria is one of the few who bridges between the migrant community and the local community. She works within the school system, and family service center as a translator and activist with the intent to link the immigrant and local communities.



Hurricane recovery efforts in the town continue even a year later. (photos taken in October 2005)

disaster of the hurricane shattered the body, thereby relegating all to foreigners in some way¹⁹. Under this strain of physical loss, typically socially separate groups allowed themselves to become interdependent, the physical trauma in temporary relief of the ongoing separation and isolation that occurs through cultural or political foreignness.

In summation, Arcadia is a place claimed by locals who feel they have an ownership of the place, as many of De Soto County's towns' identities are solely dependent on the names that settled these areas. This small community has changed little in its physical character over the years it has existed, producing a history with very recent roots, but roots that are highly valued, thereby creating an aversion to the establishment of different names and cultures. These issues are currently crucial, as rural areas are on the rise as zones of immigration, and the latinization of the agricultural community has become a national phenomenon, yet these areas usually lack the social service infrastructure that urban cores have in place. As a result, immigrants get blamed for various social problems that result as the population evolves from a previously homogenous culture²⁰. This outcasting is as much a result of locals' fear of these unknown male-dominated groups that speak a foreign language, as the enclavism created by the immigrant populations that remain more socially tied to their homeland than their new home. The struggles of localness and foreignness and the address of their interaction are a reality in the challenge of establishing a site of communal exchange. By relating the struggles of each side, a public space that crosses boundaries can be more easily established.

19 A personal account of experience in Hurricane Charley: With the passing of Hurricane Charley, as the winds and rain calmed, we emerged from the house uncertain of what would be found, as the boarded windows allowed only a small view from the skylight in the roof during the storm. Emergence revealed an entirely different place, barely traversable due to fallen trees and debris from neighboring houses, deafening insect screeches filling the air. The place was foreign, unrecognizable to myself, despite living the first 18 years of my life in the place.

20 discussion on the film *Farmingville* by PBS, www.pbs.org/pov/pov2004/farmingville

Section II

Defining a Community

Six Participants: Reflections on home through Interviews and Photographs

The altered place has an altered identity, yielding an opportunity for reestablishment through communal recovery. Through a process of acknowledging individuals' notions of the city, a production of group identity can begin to be formed, linking the vital components of culture that exist within the town. The project develops a public approach to exchange, establishing a framework that can aid in the softening of boundaries, with the intent to create an environment of assertion that eases the hesitancy that comes with assertion of self within a public context. When one feels a sense of foreignness. The inclusion of residents and their record of use of the spaces within the town provided altered and continuous paths that were used to remap a city through personal markers. Considering everyday spaces through empathetic and therapeutic viewpoints, whose duration and use are an extension of one's past and present connection to a place creates an understanding of how one searches for home.

This project began by asking six community members to create a photographic itinerary of elements in their daily lives that they recognize as important: places of absence, places that are changing, places that resonate as home. The participants also recorded¹ a brief reflection on the reason for choosing each image; however, the main information is in the image itself, the capturing of a space that, though personal, can be connected to

¹ The degree of participation and completion in the recording of thoughts varied throughout participants.



Dear Participant,

August 8, 2005

Hello, I am a student working on my master's thesis project in architecture. Born and raised in DeSoto County, I have been aware of the changes the area has gone through, especially in the past year. As an architect, I have decided to look at the community's need for a place where all residents can gather, in a time when their home has changed so drastically. Some residents are seeing a place they've known their whole lives in a new way, while others are just settling, and already affected by a drastic change. As Arcadia and the rest of DeSoto County recover from Hurricane Charley, when many residents are still in temporary homes, I feel the community is in need of a central place where all residents can go to relax, talk, socialize and remember the events of the past year. In order to design an appropriate place for this type of activity, I would like to learn from the daily lives of people who live here, to make a place that is really reflective of the people who will use it and turn to it when they are feeling disconnected, and in need of a place to be with neighbors. This project is currently just a proposal, but I feel it is important to look at new ways to incorporate a community in the design of a building, especially when they have all experienced a drastic change in the place they live.



This is where my request comes in. I am asking you to participate in this design process, simply by photographing places that you visit in a day, or a week. I'd like to use these to create an assembly of the places you visit or pass by frequently in order to allow your daily activities to become a part of something for the entire place. You could photograph anything or any place that is important to you, but here's a list of ideas about places:



- A place you go that has changed, or is changing
- A place that feels like part of home to you
- A place where you feel like something is missing
- A place where you like to relax
- A place where you like to go for fun
- A place you find beautiful
- A place that you fear
- A place of an important memory (good or bad)



Along with a camera, I've included a blank booklet of 27 pages—one per picture, so you can write down any quick thoughts about where the picture was taken, and why you took it. Don't worry about making it artistic, it's just for me to know a little about the picture. If you prefer to remain anonymous, I will not disclose any personal information publicly, so feel free to speak openly, but just write a little note letting me know what not to share. Write as little or as much as you'd like. I would appreciate any comments, but don't think too hard about it, this is just meant to be about things that are part of everyday life. When you finish, please return the camera and notes to my mother, Cindy Helinski, at Nocatee Elementary, either in person, or mail it to: 8278 SW Reese St. Arcadia, FL 34269

I very much appreciate your participation in my project. Have fun with it! Thanks again.

Katie Helinski
Email: Katicel@mit.edu



12 de Septiembre de 2005

Quando Participante, Hola, soy una estudiante trabajando en mi tesis para una maestría en arquitectura. Siendo originalmente de De Soto County, he estado consciente de los cambios recientes del área, especialmente en el último año. Como arquitecta, he decidido diseñar un lugar donde el pueblo se pueda reunir y recordar eventos importantes que han cambiado la tierra y la comunidad. Para poder lograr un diseño apropiado para este tipo de actividad, quisiera aprender un poco más de la gente y su vida diaria en Arcadia. Aunque esto es solamente un proyecto exploratorio sin planes de construcción, creo que es importante conocer y escuchar al pueblo.



Me gustaría que usted participara en esto proyecto tomando fotografías de lugares que son parte de su vida diaria. Yo usaré estas fotos para crear una historia que exprese lo que es importante de Arcadia para usted. Cualquier sitio y cosa que quiera fotografiar estará bien. He compuesto una lista de ideas por si acaso necesite un poco dirección para empezar.

- Un lugar que a cambiado o esta cambiando
- Un lugar que se sienta como hogar para usted
- Un lugar donde le parezca que algo hace falta
- Un lugar donde le gusta ir a relajarse
- Un lugar donde le gusta ir a gozar
- Un lugar que le parezca precioso
- Un lugar que le de miedo a usted
- Un lugar que tenga una memoria importante (buena o mala)

Además de una cámara, he incluido una libreta de 27 páginas—una foto por página—para que usted pueda escribir donde y por que tomó la foto. Por favor escriba una nota si prefiere permanecer anónimo, y no revelará ninguna información personal. Cuando termine las fotos, por favor devuelva la cámara con la libreta a María Moreno.

Aprecio su participación en mi proyecto. ¡Que se diviertan! Muchísimas gracias.

Katie Helinski

Translated by Jose Miranda



People with diverse relationships to the town of Arcadia were asked to contribute their personal relationship to the town through individual photo essays. Each participant was given the letter below (written in English and Spanish, depending on participant) with a disposable camera of 27 photos and a small notepad with one sheet for each photograph. Their expression of home helped provide understanding of the generic through the specifics of personal narratives.

others, as well. These images reflect the personal city, in its present state. The camera only allows one to capture what currently exists, but it allows the freedom of choice, a conscious framing of a personal idea. The following pages will provide brief personal backgrounds of each of the participants along with their photo essays. All of the participants have an affiliation with Nocatee Elementary School, mainly due to the fact that it is the most diverse of the De Soto County schools, having the greatest ethnic diversity and greatest range of economic status. Many of the students and families associated with this school are still in temporary homes a year after the hurricane, resulting in a continuation of a group trauma. Their awareness of an alteration of place will be the most present. This school is predominately the school of local farmworker's children, adding to the reason why this school is a good point of contact within the city. Besides public schools, the only site of access to multiple community members is through churches, and religious denomination within De Soto County tends to produce a general uniformity within each congregation that this project is attempting to bridge and diversify.

Participant 1

Danielle Phiel,² a teacher's aid at Nocatee Elementary, is a Southern white woman with elementary school age children. She has only lived in Arcadia for a little over a year, but her family has quickly become integrated among locals because of their roots in farming in the South. Her children participate in 4H, an agricultural organization, in which her children show chickens and cows. This organization is a venue for interaction within Arcadia, but she has found that there is a lack of meeting spaces and materials for agricultural education. She also feels a lack of presence for a community space for children in the afternoons. In her previous home they utilized The Boys and Girls Club, but there is no such organization in Arcadia³. Mrs. Pheil lives on a ranch and just months after their move, they were forced out of their home due to hurricane damage. Her home is surrounded by farm workers' trailers, and she recounted their lack of connection with the overall communication networks, as residents of those trailers were not aware of a need to evacuate until a half an hour before the storm hit. Many of these workers are still residing in trailers provided by FEMA in a disaster relief area, until they can get a new home and land to live on⁴.

2 Interviewed at Nocatee Elementary School, August 9, 2005.

3 Arcadia lacks any real infrastructure for public activity. The existing community activities and centers are either member-based or reserved for low-income households.

4 FEMA Village, as it is known, is a field of government-provided disaster relief housing consisting of a grid of hundreds of small trailers, with little circulation and space for personalization or useful outdoor space. Many migrant farm workers are living in worse condition than this, though, as many undocumented workers or residents who do not speak English are afraid or unaware of government aid.



Participant 2

Maria Moreno⁵ is a Puerto Rican woman whose husband is Mexican. They have two children, one who just graduated high school and one who is still in school. They have achieved economic security and she is a very active community member. She serves as a liaison between the immigrant farm worker community and the local community. She teaches Spanish and English classes at the Family Service Center, which provides classes for free. However, she mentioned that these services are only offered during daytime hours, making it a nearly impossible option to local workers. She also worked at Nocatee Elementary as translator for parents and students who do not speak English, while also encouraging them to begin to overcome their apprehensions about participating in an English-speaking environment. She has recently opened a Spanish Services office where she assists people with translation and communication. Maria encourages the Mexican and Central American community to participate more in local events, but says it is a great struggle to get them involved, because of feelings of disconnectedness they feel. Many feel too much like outsiders to feel entitled to a voice or even services within the city. She herself ran for County Commissioner in order to have more power to communicate her ideas about greater community involvement, but did not win. She speaks very enthusiastically about a potential community space for the city where events and activities can reconnect the social unity that happened briefly in the days following the hurricane. She suggested gathering spaces for classes, some of which could be taught by senior residents to the younger residents, encouraging the continuation of cultural traditions and sharing them with the outer community. She spoke of a need for evening English classes and events that encourage male involvement, as she states that fathers who work in the

⁵ Interviewed at Nocatee Elementary School, August 9, 2005.

Maria's notes for images:

a good place for a community center (Turner Road)

our renovated... (DeSoto Plaza)

the jet took some hits, the lake looks very calm now (Lake Katherine)

a place for relaxation (the Library)

a place that feels like home (downtown Arcadia)

our historic district (downtown Arcadia)

our newest project (Wal-Mart Distribution Center)

Our biggest shopping center (Super Wal-Mart)

our newest restaurant (Chili's)

...no longer exists (Arcadia water tower)

...so beautiful (Family Service Center)

open field (Super Wal-Mart)

fields are very uninvolved in creating community support. She also promoted venues for skateboarding and swimming, and performance opportunities like in the famous Spanish television show, Sabado Gigante⁶, in order to keep teenagers of the street. Through all of these ideas, her hopes for a breaking of social boundaries resonated, as she spoke of these boundaries as created through adults' social codes and fears, stating, "children don't see a stranger, they see only other people." She feels the hurricane changed everyone's lives, and they need a place to turn to relieve families in a time of crisis.

6 A Spanish language evening variety show featuring comedy, games, musical performance, and guests.



Participant 3

Karen Neads is a white single mother of three (all under 6 years old) who is a teacher at Nocatee Elementary School. She was not born in Arcadia but has lived there for many years, and her parents also reside in the community. She feels extremely close ties with the local community, mainly due to the fact that she is very active in her church, where she turns for much of her social bonds and emotional support. Her home sustained minor damage during the hurricane, but was strong enough to be a refuge for a coworker during the storm.



Karen's notes for images:

where we buy groceries (Winn Dixie)

missing (recycling station)

church (Calvary Baptist)

where we get everything we could ever want (Wal-Mart)

our first "real" restaurant (Chili's)

where grandma lives (Arcadia Village retirement community)

old Wal-Mart Plaza, new... (Tractor Supply and Price-Cutter's)

everyone needs gas (Circle K)

I'm loving it (McDonald's)

we need a new one (Arcadia Twin Movie Theater)

meeting site for many community and school services (Family Service Center)

parent pick-up is crazy, most kids stand and wait for parents, I was trying to photograph the sign, but I couldn't reach over the fence (middle school)

they had to move to the edge of the downtown district because of the hurricane (Maddy's Antiques)

side lawn is a gathering place for government events (county court house)

provides a pleasant place for events (the tree of knowledge)

one of Arcadia's historical buildings (the Depot)

there is a lot of open space near SFCC many people take that route... (field by South Florida Community College)

Participant 4

Josefina Morales, whom I met through Maria, moved to the United States from Queretaro, Mexico only seven months prior to the beginning of this project. She is a homemaker whose husband works as an agricultural laborer at Macbee Harvesting. Their children are in high school and are learning English in the school system; however, she and her husband still speak only Spanish. Despite the fact that she is somewhat isolated on a daily basis, often confined to the area around her home, in her statements about her photos her interest and excitement about this new home is evident in her plentiful ideas for improvement and expansion. She seems to be hopeful about the progress that can occur in the future.



Josefina's notes for images (translated to English from Spanish by Jose Miranda):

I like this because it is pretty, and I like it as a place to make a small
playground, because there are not many cars on the street

This is a home where a family can make a home life

I like this as a place to set up a shop or a store

The Airport

The Airport: I like it, it would be nice to expand it

I like this lake because it is very beautiful

My house, I like it because it is a pleasant place to live

I like the lake, I would like to make it bigger and add protection so the
ducks don't go out in the street

I'd like to make this place a park for kids

I like this lake because it's tranquil

I like this place for its tranquility and shade the trees provide

This place, I would like to, first of all, clean up

I would like to make this a place for all kinds of events

House: this house I like because it is very spacious

I like this place for a clothing center

this place I like for a beauty center or casinos

I like this place as a park

I like this place to make a basketball court.

I like this place to make a public "bathhouse" (literal translation)

I like this place to make a new movie theater

I like this place to make a "field for homes" (possibly meaning a new
development)

I like this place to put a small pool

I like this church because it is large

I like this place because it is a place where children go to have fun

I like this to spend a day outdoors

I like this place as a place to live, because it is very tranquil

I like this place for social events

Participant 5

Francisca Muñoz is an employee of the ESOL department of the De Soto County School System, a program to assist students who are learning English as their second language. She has been working as a paraprofessional for that program at Nocatee Elementary School for the past seven years. Francisca is originally from Mexico, and moved to Washington State with her family. When she was growing up, her family worked as migrant laborers in agriculture, moving seasonally every year between Michigan and Florida, as crops were ready for picking. She has lived in Arcadia for the past twenty-two years of her adult life, and her daughter is taking classes at the Family Service Center in Arcadia to be a secretary.



Francisca's notes for images:

good food market (Winn-Dixie Supermarket)

a holy place, I feel good after leaving it (San Juan Diego Catholic Church)

post office (Nocatee)

where my daughter is going to get her education to become a secretary (family service center)

you lose weight here, walk away the pounds (West Elementary walking track)

good place for research and homework (DeSoto County Public Library)

I love the sweet tea (BP Gas Station)

church (St. Paul Catholic Church)

a good college, close to home (South Florida Community College)

last few years for some, the beginning for others
(DeSoto County High School)

my place to shop (Wal-Mart Super Center)

good slushies (Sonic Drive-In)

good for the family to spend quality time (The
Ranch House, Bowling Center)

good looking cars to look at, unless you've got the
money (DeSoto Auto Mall)

Participant 6

Von Faison is an African American custodial worker at Nocatee Elementary School. He is a lifelong resident of De Soto County, and has worked at the school for numerous years. He lives in a primarily African American neighborhood that is quite culturally insular. It sits at the edge of the railroad tracks and wetlands, so many of the roads dead end, which makes the area quite separate from the surrounding community.



These participants created the beginning of an infrastructure of connecting residents through individual experiences. By making their version of Arcadia publicly visible, people can identify themselves through the stories of others, unifying the community in an empathetic construction of identity. These captured images were used in an analysis of qualities of the place, in order to establish a direction that was empathetic, but not outside the realm of design. The process of photography and analysis was present throughout the project. The space created will foster familiarization between the foreign and the local all existing within the experience of a traumatic loss through the physical alteration of home. Outcast and Intrusion are fears considered in this process.

Section II

Defining a Community

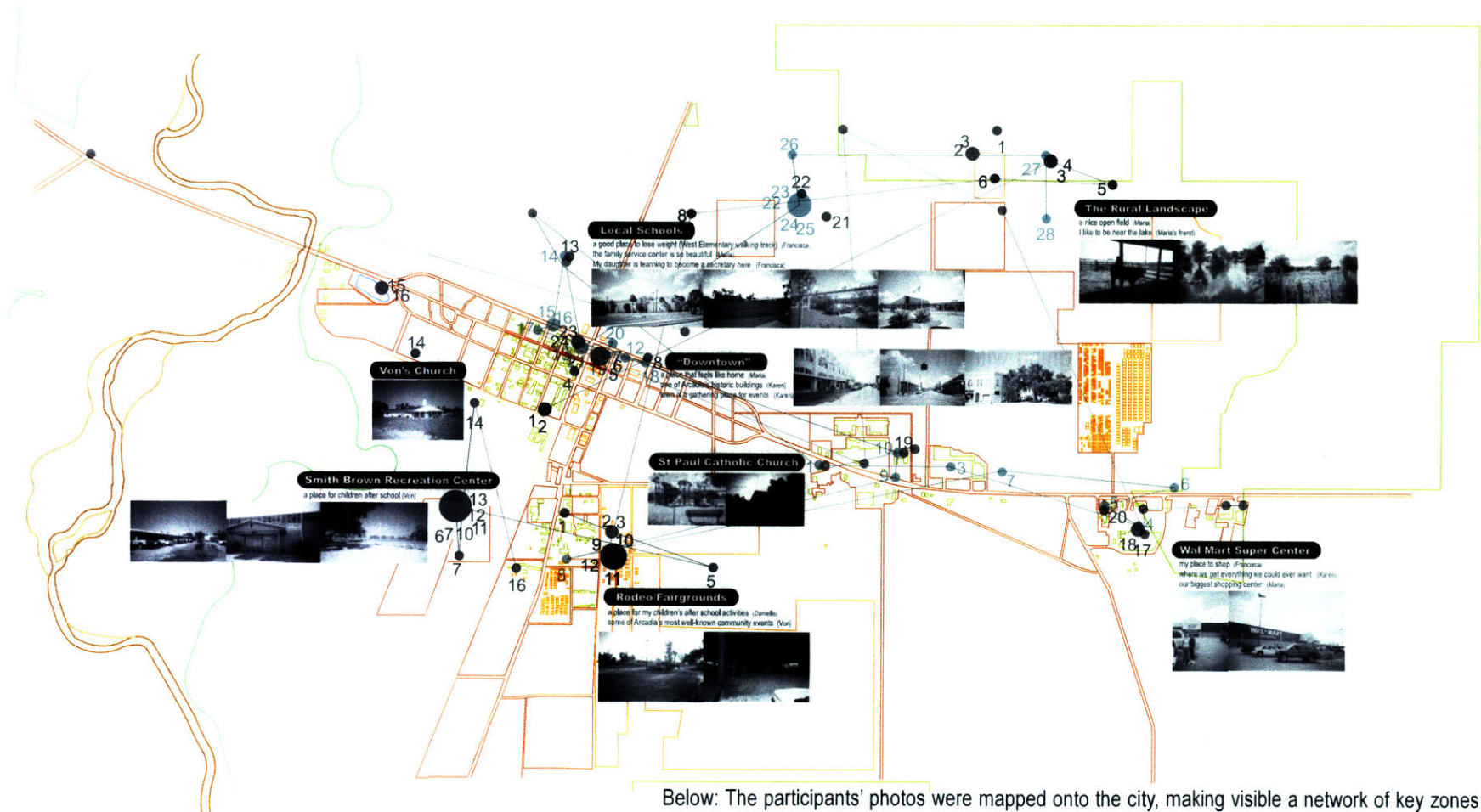
Mapping and Analysis: Reconfiguring an Understanding of the Site

The expression of individuals' sites of importance begins the construction of a statement about the changing city for the architect to use to understand residents' view of their home and find entry to the project.

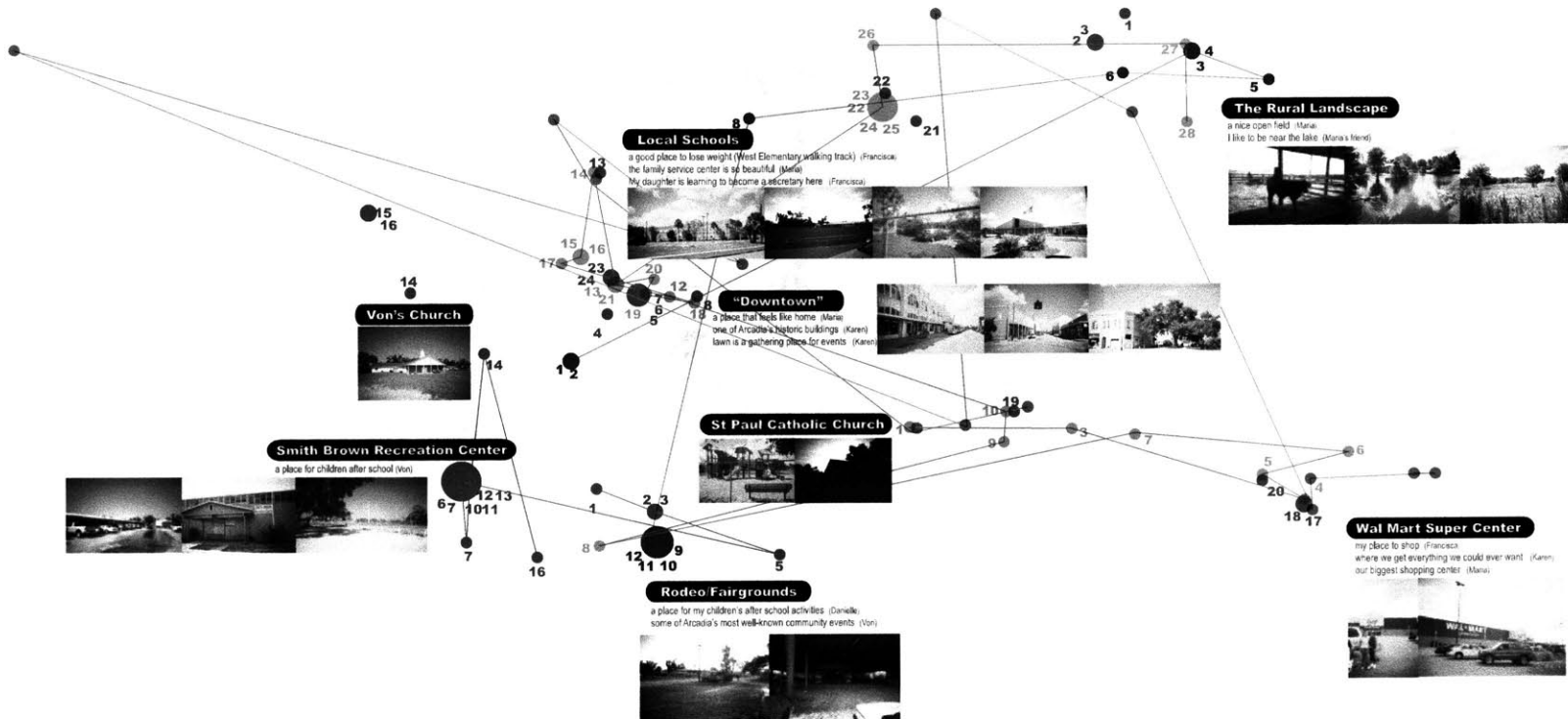
Empathy: the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner¹.

Designing with an awareness of the residents' personalities structures the design approach in such a way that the project can include the point of view of various community members and their traumas. Structuring a viewpoint through the creative image production of others is a method for fieldwork that is not exclusively an interview process, which limits the architect to a single way of viewing relationships to home and risks creating the romanticized impression that the advice of the populous is the best representation of a quality approach. Images can be interpreted on multiple levels in order to construct an outlook that incorporates the community, but does not limit the project to the fulfillment of a set of requests. The use of the images in the establishment of a design approach began with a remapping, creating a new network marking the city based on the perception of the participants, the hints of their stories assembled as some representation of the whole.

¹ Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary



Below: The participants' photos were mapped onto the city, making visible a network of key zones of focus within the city. The map directed a deeper investigation of sites through photography and analysis that manifested an understanding of the nature of public life in the city, as well as a site for the placement of the architecture.



Below: The participants' network through Arcadia. Each shade of gray marks the location of a different participants' photos. The size of the circles marks the number of photos taken in one particular location.



Section II

Defining a Community

Rural Relationships: Proximity, Security and Visibility

Collection and mapping of images creates a network of individuals' relationships to home, revealing concentrations of activities and distances of travel. However, a deeper understanding of can be derived through the analysis of the conditions of the photos themselves. Reading the photos through interrogation of the image, allows new inferences to be made about the social and political conditions of the altered city. This type of research provides the opportunity for a fresh look at a place, a way to determine an attitude toward the design that is not an idealized view of the vernacular culture or overly theorized and abstracted from social realities. The studies shown in the following pages of this section are design statements derived from the analysis of the images. They move beyond pure analysis to the beginnings of an architectural approach that relates to the modes of experiencing the context and community, with the goal of creating a community space that produces a newly relational environment. This sensitivity to spatial relationships provides the framework for a rural infrastructure of public events, as a site for the concentration of activity.

One of the most noticeable conditions within the photos taken by the participants was the manner in which they were taken: from inside their vehicle. The frame of the car window is visible in many of the photos, and some were taken while driving. The vehicle serves as a protective mediating element, a private personal space that

maneuvers through the public realm. The relationship to the vehicle in a rural community is different than the relationship in the city, or even suburbia, as it is a functional component of economics, being used for transportation of goods and work in fields, a tie to the central structure of the community and a necessity in some form, as there is no public transportation in this community. Consequently, the scale of the truck and the effects it has on relationships to space is a crucial consideration in this environment. The scale of the rural landscape, inherently linked to this vehicular dependency, is one of dispersed development, which affects the perception of distance, as greater distances are considered to be nearby, but very small distances are traversed on foot, as the nature of development does not afford easy transport for the pedestrian. Nonetheless, distance is another condition of the rural community evident in many photos. Often the subject of the image was hundreds of feet away from the camera, with nothing but vacancy in the foreground. Individuals seem to carry personal space with them in the public, producing an uneasiness with close proximity or public expression. The project participants rarely photographed details, there was either an entire streetscape, or a single big-box structure from across a vacant parking lot. These horizontal expanses serve as protective barriers in a sense, as they separate constituencies' physical juxtaposition.

Perhaps as a result of these conditions, and the overall nature of the rural community as a place for those who desire greater amounts of private space, there is a different relationship to security, as well. As I photographed sites in response to participants' photographic contributions, the issue of securing the semi-public realm became increasingly evident. All of the public schools, the rodeo and fairgrounds and the civic center, are all secured with high chain-link fences, barriers of security, preventing use in informal or spontaneous ways. Consequently, even semi-formalized activities are not possible



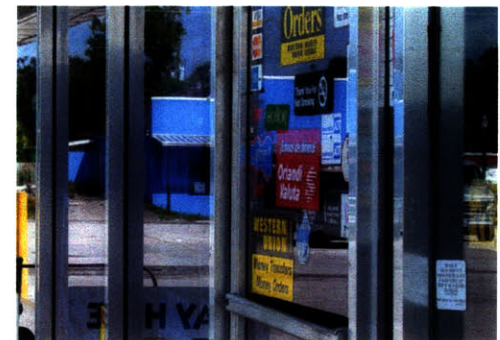
in these spaces without financial or political support and, therefore, there is less opportunity for unplanned contact between locals and foreigners, or simply different cultural or religious identities. The assembly of an understanding of multiple identities that construct the city is not often viewed, and there is a wariness when public space is used more expressively, outside of one's perceived zone of ownership. For instance, as I photographed various elements of the town, walking along the street in the downtown area and the edges of surrounding neighborhoods a police officer confronted me in response to concerned callers who reported my activity as suspicious. My use of public space completely openly in an unbounded area was something of suspicion and concern.

In the flat open landscape, there is a lack of hierarchy, or density, as development occurs with little centrality, or response to its context. Structures are placed almost haphazardly in the landscape, rather than intensified by surrounding structures. There is a banality of the developed landscape, as the sequence of objects lacks visual association or descriptive presence. Each structure is an interiorize typology of four walls, nondescript and nearly identical in form, making view and visibility about looking out, rather than creating a dialogue between the public edge of a structure and the privacy of the interior. Negotiation at the edge is not acknowledged, it is instead suppressed in the nondescript single door. Additionally, abandoned objects are able to remain in spaces, as there is always a plentiful expanse of land for use. This contributes to the non-hierarchical development of the town.



Within this dispersed, non-hierarchical secure context, there are rarely moments of overlap, but this does not occur in the condition of the reflective surface, in which separate zones are overlaid upon each other in a virtual space, visible, but not accessible. The reflection, framed in such a way that it is recognized, allows one to notice that which is not typically visible, and cause a change in direction or position of the body and view within the city. The reflection is especially powerful in this climatic region, as there is often powerful sun and large open areas of glass in storefronts, creating these reflective moments, overlaying disparate zones of the community. Reflection collects images, and within an area lacking visual focus and distinction between the objects (buildings) of the landscape, a reflected image is a moment of emphasis, framing a structure within the structure of the reflective surface itself. "They allow the spectator the visual relief and the ordering principle necessary for comprehension, forming a coherent "picture" of the structure...by isolating and presenting details and particulars."²

2 Furjan, Helene.

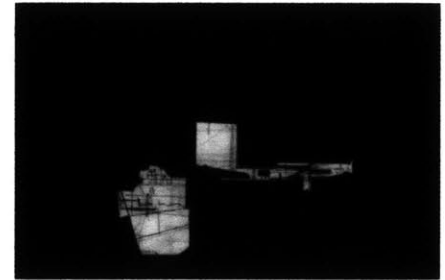
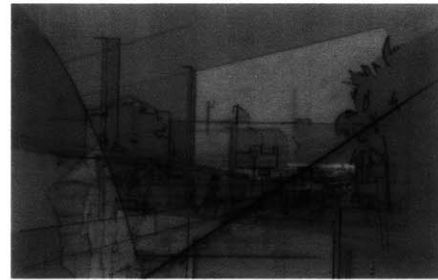
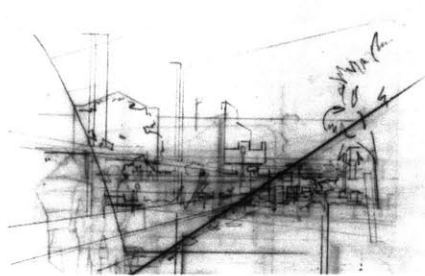




The natural reflection in plate glass produces concentrations of view within the wide panorama of the horizontal landscape (left, previous page). Expression of details and focusing of a landscape are issues present in the reflective effects of the use of multiple mirrors in the house of John Soane. In that case the objects he collects create an interior version of the landscape of the reflected rural town. (this page, image source: Furjan, Helene.)

Distance

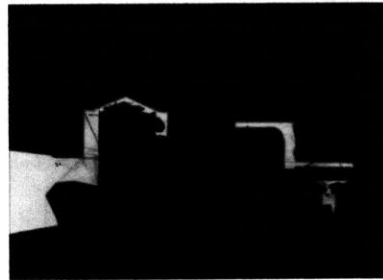
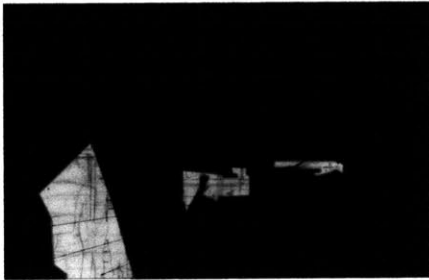
These perspective sketches were drawn to measure the distances from the subject in the photograph and the number of barriers separating the photographer from the subject. A series of interpretive operations were then made on the sketches.



The images to the left, two used in the layered sketches, reveal the protective separation in the place, either self-selected as in Francisca's photograph from the car across the street (right) or a city-created boundary, as in the fence enclosing the middle school property in Karen's photograph (left).

Study 1

Distance, Boundaries and Screens: the elements of obstruction and guardedness in the sprawling landscape

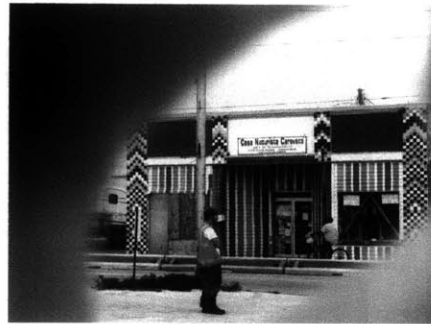


Layered perspective sketches, derived from participants' photos reveal distance and barriers between viewer and subject, expressing the withdrawn uneasiness toward the public realm within this society. The images either contain vacancy or layers of separation, an individual experience, rather than intense interaction. The action taken in drawing is a response to the conditions of the photos, and by compressing the layers of multiple readings, through scanning the translucent paper, a way of approaching or acknowledging the public relationships is expressed. The layering intensifies the complexity and interaction between disparate elements within the city. Then, by blocking out isolated views on multiple layers, the complexities of overlay are tempered, a mediated interaction³. This response to images photographed with physical barriers or from great distances between photographer and subject, a singular interaction, is a study in search of a method for intensifying actions in this context.

³ The project is not solely about the relationships of separation-reconciliation, disaster-recovery, photographer-subject, beginning-destination, speaker-listener. While these are present, the site of public life and communal interaction is in the space and time that lies between these points. It is the process of healing, the action of reconstruction, the zone and barriers that foreground the photo, the path of travel, and the breath of conversation. It is by intensifying and enlivening parts of the process exchange that the project will serve as a tool for recovery and redefinition of place. It is about a profound moment within the process, rather than a perfect conclusion.

Aperture

Apertures frame views constructed through layered elements of edge to construct a spatial framework of protective separation, while also creating a connectivity through the specification of an image of focus in order to distinguish something of mundane banality as something special. Three dimensionality of the frames is produced by hand, arm, torso and neck.



Study 2

Self-Constructed Viewing Apertures: A mediator in a climate of uncertainty



When I was conducting photographic research in response to participants' work, I could not avoid a pervading sense of uncertainty and distrust among people who observed me photographing⁴. Though there were few people in view, I felt a sense of being highly exposed. This condition is more strong in the rural landscape than the urban landscape, as the common feeling of a local is that they know of all activity that occurs in the place. This photographic study of view through apertures was executed in response to that sense. The apertures were created with my own body parts (hands, nook inside elbow, my waist and arm, etc.), as the personally adapted protective barrier for viewing. Experiences photographing, as well as the information derived from the study of residents' images made it apparent that the notion of controlled moments of viewing through protective apertures was an applicable method for achieving mediated interaction among disparate groups within a single community.

⁴ While photographing, I was pulled over by a police officer for suspicious activity. I was reported to have been in several public areas around town taking photographs. The officer, once hearing my intentions, did not pursue the matter.

Reflection & Overlay



Study 3

Reflective Medium: A distortion of proximity within the rural distances

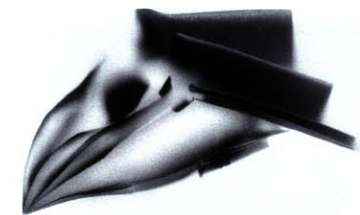
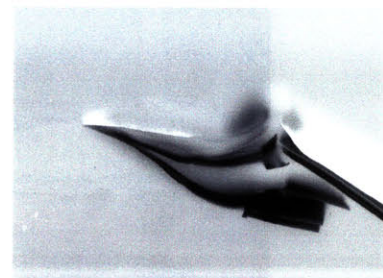


“The English meaning of the word reflection was, in the thirteenth century, simply the action of a speculum and not until the sixteenth century did it include the image itself. But by the seventeenth century, reflection had also come to mean an operation of the mind.” Since the early 19th century, reflection has been considered beyond simply mimetic imagery, as a vehicle of mediation, imagination, and abstraction⁵. Within the flat, dispersed development of banality that dominates the rural community of inland Florida there exists little overlap or density, so these conditions are only created in virtual juxtaposition within the reflection. These new relationships, if recognized, create moments for mental reflection on relationships. Plate glass windows within the glaring sunlight of this region are mirrors of a surrounding environment, which overlay the objects of window displays with surrounding buildings creating an internal spatial interaction between disparate elements.

⁵ Furjan, Helene in *Assemblage 34* in an article on John Soane and the use of mirrors and reflection in his home of collection.

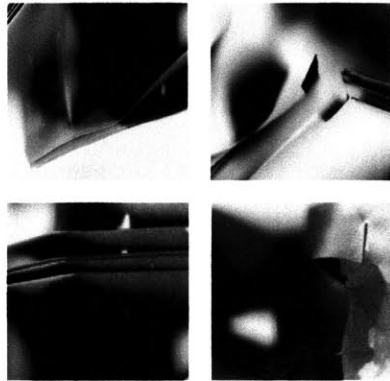
Layered Transition

The image at right is taken at the Hispanic American grocery store window, reflecting an African American church at the edge of a residential neighborhood (original shown below). This store is adjacent to the antique shops of the historical downtown of Arcadia. The image was used in the study of aperture and layered spaces shown to the right. The image's reflection served as the template for creating openings within the layered material used to create a layered opening of varying densities.



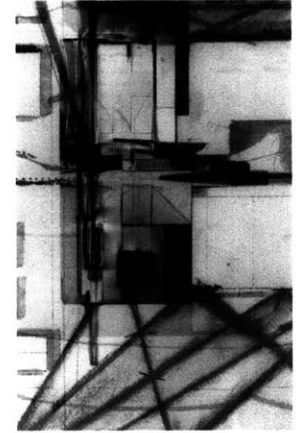
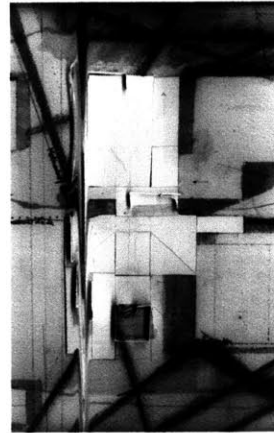
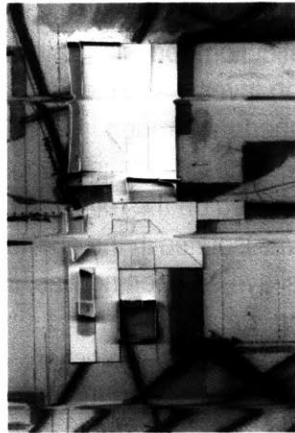
Study 4

Production of changing views in the aperture constructed through the layered edge.



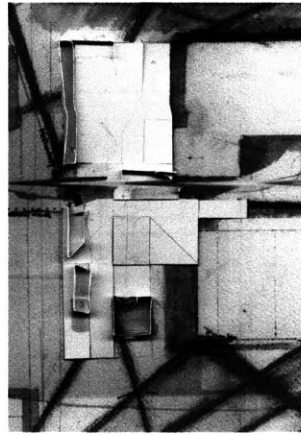
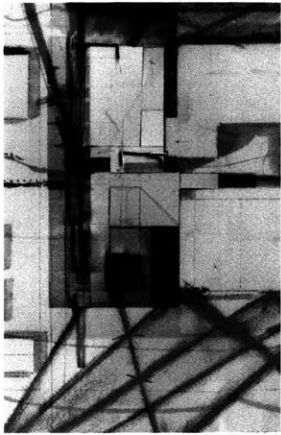
The process of scanning collects the information of an object (place) through light and reflection, focusing it in a storage container of information. This study was an investigation toward a spatial and formal understanding of the screening aperture through layers. The opening began by removing the outline of the reflected image in a photograph from multiple layers. By creating an opening based on the reflected portion, a distant image collapsed through reflection, was isolated in the aperture, focusing view on an otherwise unseen space. This layered opening was, then, scanned in a three-dimensional position, creating a map of light and shadow through the openings, demarcating zones of exposure and protection, visibility and isolation. This study extracted notions in the previous studies and expands them into a further abstracted analysis, taking the investigation away from a direct expression of the image, and into a spatial exploration.

**Linkage +
Movement**



Study 5

Activation and Protection and the integration of the pickup truck



Movement and extension activate a static site and construct a network with areas outside a single locale. This study sets up a scalar investigation of a site and zones of security and active intensity. The first is to create an elevated platform, the raised surface symbolically and pragmatically protective.⁶ This statement of security in a relatively flat, horizontal landscape expressed by raising the surface above typical grade produces a protected zone with an active edge. This surface contains functions which the truck can plug into, thereby extending the functions of the space into the city. In addition, the familiar and protective envelope of the truck can integrate with the public platform, mediating personal and public expression. These studies are plan relief models that negotiated the scale of the truck through a public zone, dimensions based on turning radii and entry points. The static plates were, then made dynamic through movement in the scanning process. The collection of data through the scanner blurs the zones of activity, visually expressing the layered active edge that will be negotiated over time.

⁶ Elevation is important in this climate, as the warm wet season from June to October has sudden downpours and hurricanes, which often causes temporary flooding. Though usually minor floods, the separation from rising water demarcates an area of security.



Plan relief model of the areas of intensity of activity within the city marked by seasonal community events (colored zones) and locations of participants' photos (circles). Orange marks activities in the warm wet season, green marks the cool dry. The roads selected to be represented were determined in relation to the participants' photos.

Section III

Designing the Rural Infrastructure

Selection of Site: Through the use of Mapping and Rural Relationships

Within this thesis of interpretive investigation of conditions of home, the selection of the site was necessarily determined through a series of deductions derived from the studies of local conditions. Under the conditions of a damaged city in recovery and displacement from home, the architecture must acknowledge the nature of loss and the notion that site is vital to the placement of a public architecture within a context of highly privatized development.

A mechanism for preservation in the face of loss, the vehicle of nostalgic re-representation of an image of a place attempts a re-creation of a past. The historical downtown, an image of the quaint American small town, carries with it this potentially problematic condition of sentimentality for an irrecoverable place (nostalgia), thereby stalling progress. As stated by Kathleen Stewart, in nostalgic conditions, "...culture itself becomes reified and fetishistic so that we both play with it in cynic abandon and stand in dread of its power..." However, it can also serve as a productive mechanism in the recovery of a lost home.

Shops for objects of "antiqueness" and "country-ness" are the reconstructive forces that brought the downtown of Arcadia forward as a projected identity of the rural community, as the decoration of homes with country crafts

and collection of antiques is common in the town. Kathleen Stewart discusses the representation of the country-styled house as a nostalgic view of the home evident in the heightened adoption of an antique image of the small downtown. There is the dangerous potential that the “production of the ‘traditional’ country objects with learned techniques...will only enclose the self in a self-conscious image and wrap the ‘folk’ and ‘history’ in a primitivist cloak.” This manifestation could, in that case, lead to the reading of these actions and objects “as examples or manifestations of an already fixed (symbolized) structure or time.” However, these representations of a collected past can prove to be productive in the recovery of loss, if it is used in an active manner. The antique and craft community of Arcadia is one of exchange, collectors and buyers frequently swapping in a social network of buying and selling and trading, sometimes even exchanging services for goods. For instance, the owner of Maddy’s Antiques will often make furniture exchanges, or trade a commodity in exchange for someone refinishing the surface of another piece of her furniture, resulting in a network that is engaging with the present and producing linkages between living rooms that extend beyond the context into a larger, productive system¹. Consequently, in Arcadia, the community has exploited the nostalgic downtown, or perhaps publicized its own nostalgia as a mechanism of regeneration, thereby transforming the downtown into an antique shopping district, and eventually elevating the city as a regional attraction. It brought the degrading zone of the town to the forefront through an active network, which then spurred the growth of a marginalized population into a shared zone of commerce. The upshot of the Hispanic identity within the downtown is currently at the perceived back of the manicured downtown storefronts, but its presence is a step toward an exchange between identities through the assertion of new identities and the interaction between multiple networks.

¹ Stewart, Kathleen. p. 234.

Perhaps, in a contemporary society, a site that does not preference a local community over a foreign community in the rural town is the site of universal usage for consumption of everyday necessities, Wal-Mart. As opposed to its role in suburbia, the Wal-Mart store is nearly the sole shopping venue for many commodities, eliminating any visible disparity in economic status based on selection of stores. However, the intensity of the site of Wal-Mart is inevitably tied to the presence of the Wal-Mart itself, and within a community containing much undeveloped land, the store cannot be relied upon as a central element in the development of identity, because there is a consistent threat of the store moving further out of the city, in order to expand in scale. This occurred in Arcadia recent years, as the site of the original store was abandoned and a larger "Super Wal-Mart" was built at the end of the developed track of the city. This has resulted in the decline of the store's previous location.

In addition to this local nostalgia, the condition is also linked to immigration, and is thereby a seductive force associated with the foreign farm worker and allusions to home. "Immigrants for the most part leave or escape their birthplace because it is unlivable and their lifelong struggle becomes one of home-making in a strange land, while looking with longing at what has been left."² A vehicle for this nostalgic reflection is the small Hispanic convenience store, a common structure in the rural community. These spaces are often multipurpose stores, selling Mexican imports, religious statues, phone cards and serve as locations for sending remittances (earned money) to family remaining in Mexico³. These stores act as portals to the former

² Wiley, Catherine. p. 101.

³ Mexico is the largest repository of remittances sent by family members employed in the United States. Stated in Overview of the film *Farmingville*, www.pbs.org/pov/pov2004/farmingville

home, being sources of informative “talk” from those who have recently moved or traveled. Casa Naturista is one of these small stores, sited near the Hispanic American grocery store at the edge of downtown. On its external surface it is recognizable as a relic of Mexican culture through its exterior painting and tiles. This space in such a prominent location again begins to bring forth a culture struggling to establish home.

Due to the nature of this thesis, and the investigations that generated its approach, the nature of the site must be one that reflects a collection of stories and can foster an exchange between multiple dynamic conditions; consequently, it is more suitably located in a zone of overlapping identities and conflicting inscriptions of history, the historical downtown at the shared alley of Cardena’s Hispanic American Grocery Store. By confronting the conditions of this site, it is not laid bare to the projection of nostalgic reflection, but is instead opportunistically co-opted for negotiation between historical identity and newly established identity. Nostalgia can be used productively toward addressing the absences that result from an alteration of home. The continual re-inscription of histories on a place of emptying meaning serves to resist feelings of loss of a cultural home, toward the creation of “a living world to act in rather than a world of fixed objects to act on.”⁴ Within this zone of preservation, the introduction of a rural infrastructure of program for events becomes the public mechanism for the bricolage (piecing together of encompassing stories) of collective realities into a juxtaposition of hints toward the assembly of a total definition of a place. Programmed tools of public action assist in an institutionalized negotiation with the dominant culture, “providing

4 Stewart, Kathleen. p. 234.

local networking, interacting and intertwining with other...institutions to provide cohesion and stability.”⁵ A multiplicity of uses acts as a vehicle for the extension of the burgeoning identities that incorporate an active interaction with elements of past and present. Insertion of programmatic tools within an existing framework allows the site to feed a network of community activity. The public site, which holds and reflects the active bar of tools, will most likely be primarily empty much of the time due to the low population density, but, it has the potential to become a node in a network of redefinition: a hub placed within the site of continually constructed histories.

5 Quote by Rosales, F. Arturo discussing specifically the Chicano Theater of Colorado towns, in Wiley, Catherine. p. 104.



Below is the main street of the historical downtown, Oak Street, the current site of antique shops, which was the commerce that reinvigorated this area of the town. Above is the area that backs onto the southern alley along Oak street, an area that borders an ethnically diverse neighborhood. This zone has become a site of visible assertion of a new town identity, with Hispanic-American stores as the center.



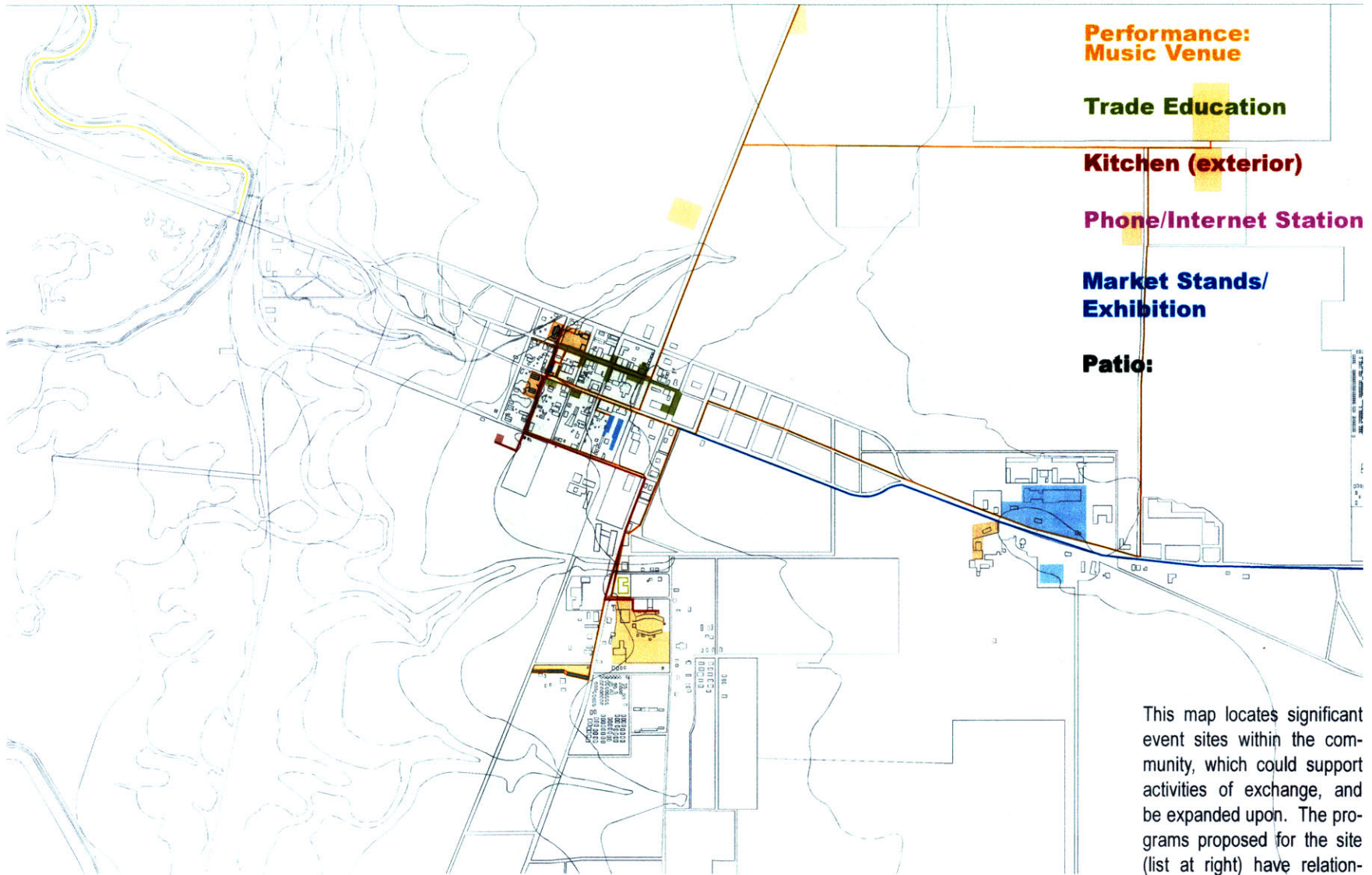


These images reflect the context of the site chosen for the architectural project of this thesis. This location sits at the edge of a "historical downtown" and a newly forming area of shops reflecting a hybrid identity of Hispanic-American culture. This zone also lies at the edge of a residential neighborhood of a cultural minority creating an opportunity within the site to build off of this location of continually reinscribed identities and networks in order to establish a site of human exchange.

Above: Casa Naturista

Below: Wheeler's Cafe a traditionally southern restaurant known for its pies, considered an Arcadian landmark.





This map locates significant event sites within the community, which could support activities of exchange, and be expanded upon. The programs proposed for the site (list at right) have relationships to the zones of corresponding color on the map.

Section III

Designing the Rural Infrastructure

Program Definition: The development of tools for a site of human exchange

Human exchange in public space in a rural community cannot be solely fueled by casual and informal gathering. As opposed to the urban park, a rural public space is activated by event, and expression occurs in these moments of concentration where density and, therefore, interaction occurs. Consequently, this public site is built off of a layering of unique, but potentially supporting programs that can support events of different scales, occurring at different times, and interrelated with programs in the surrounding community. The performance space fills a void in the community, as it has no space for creative expression, the space is intended to provide for the music of different cultures present in the community, as a support for expansion of other local events, such as the Bluegrass Festival and the Mariachi bands that perform for family events in the Mexican community. This space can feed into and be supported by other spaces on site, such as the Internet Cafe, which is scaled and located so that an evening performance could link with the bar of the cafe to produce a site of cultural and social activity. To support performance-related or casual gathering, a kitchen and barbecue space supports a universal expression of identity through food, scents of cooking make public an expression of an integral part of a culture, the exchange in eating. The kitchen facilities can also support the casual setting of the internet cafe, which is derived from the Hispanic shops that supply information and linkage to their former home. The provision of internet access can allow a virtual access to foreign information in an updated, less nostalgic way that is also useful to other demo-

Program

Performance: Music Venue

small scale musical
performance space
Gospel
Manachi
Bluegrass
Blues
Minimum implementation:
Stage

Workshop: Trade Education

woodworking tools
agricultural information:
gardening
auto work

Minimum implementation:
workbench + saw

Kitchen (exterior)

barbecue
fish fry
spit for lechon, caldron
Minimum implementation:
grill+sink

Phone/Internet Station:

Casita Telefonica
sending remittances:
money/packages
International Newsstand
Community need/activity board
Minimum implementation:
computer

Market Stands/ Exhibition

stand for market events, sale
of vegetables, furniture,
crafts

Minimum implementation:
display stall

Patio:

exterior gathering/recreation
water spouts

Existing Related Events

Bluegrass Festival, November
County Fair, March
Fall Festival, September
Holiday Performances at
churches

Antique Fair, monthly
armfest, annual
Rodeo, May

Parade, Rodeo Barbecue
July 4th
County Fair, March
Watermelon Festival
County Fair
Church Events

Flea Market
a venue exists for this, but it is not
evident if the market occurs
Monthly Antique Fair
in the shops and streets of
downtown, primarily Oak Street
Parade Route
Vegetable stands
Watermelon Festival, May

Context+Conditions

neighboring cafe,
"town landmark"
borders downtown parade route,
antique fair location
adjacent to three churches:
one predominately Black, two
predominately White, all
Protestant (does not include
Hispanic population)
Site of Hispanic stores
Low income neighborhood:
Black and Hispanic community
bed and breakfasts, historical
homes, antique shops

nearby auto body shop
workspace opens to street
Ranch and Garden store
supplies household and
commercial goods
(woodworking shops of the
community were destroyed in
hurricane)
Antique and Craft Shops

numerous barbecues
in yards of homes of nearby
neighborhood
Hispanic American Market
located on site
Salons and Taquerias

Casa Naturista across the
street
laundry

cafes nearby
antique and collectable shops
Hispanic-American Market
Workshop (as part of this design)

space will supplement downtown
fair activities
local churches
other programs for this project

Program Matrix: the adjacent categories, existing events in the city, as well as programmatic and social conditions surrounding the site, influenced the derivation of programs to be inserted in the public site of exchange.

graphics. The internet cafe expands up on the function of the Hispanic shop, but does not render it obsolete. In addition, the program of a workshop space can build off the network of antique and craft sales in order to expand upon creative production in a tactile sense. All of these functions, disparate to a degree, relate to a broader network among the community that can produce systems of preservation of and (re)presentation of identity, but perhaps the most unifying and generative of the functions is the market space. Economic forces being the driver of the ultimate production of intensity across societies and cultures, the production of the open-air market, sited to extend the path of the existing monthly street market of collectables in downtown, can be the invigorating component that drives the increase in intensity of other programs on the site. Also, it is common in this agricultural community for small scale farming to be used by immigrants and locals to increase their economic status. Watermelon sales from the bed of a truck, or a small table at the side of the road with vegetables and fruits are common sale structures. This market will allow for an overlay of various types of sale such as those, interlaced with the antique sale network, and perhaps production from the workshop to intensify a system of building economy and building identity. This site of exchange could ultimately be representative of Arcadia to the region, a reinvention of the welcome center, as an active, rather than textual signifier of what the town is.



Left: Roadside vegetable stand operated by an immigrant family, who has developed it into a year-round operation. They live in the home adjacent to the stand, a building that was previously very dilapidated.

Section III

Designing the Rural Infrastructure

Building Strategy: Resistance vs. Non-Resistance, an architecture of response

The physical conditions of the land and environment of De Soto County will guide the form of the architecture of the community space. The structure must be recognizable within the pace of vehicular traffic, as movement within this context is a specific reflection of the nature of living in the place. Just as walking in the city contains very specific connotations for the urban dweller, driving in the rural town contains a different, yet equally identifiable mode of transportation, which molds the way in which one recognizes the city. The act of passing by⁶ is linked to the vehicle, which is used as a social appendage—as people often converse through truck windows, or in parking lots. This also creates an outcast position for the pedestrian, as the social infrastructure does not translate to foot traffic, except in the shopping district of historical downtown. Consequently, speed, scale and pace of the motor vehicle are intricately tied to a study of movement through the city and the duration of time in which one familiarizes oneself with a place.

Beyond pace, sun and water are the defining physical effects within the context of the region. An agriculturally

⁶ In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michael De Certeau writes of walking in the city as a form of spatializing the place, giving shape to and weaving places. The way in which the remote places of De Soto County farms and rural homes are interwoven with each other through the truck and flatbed trailer.



dependent economy is very specifically tuned to the intensity of the sun and the management of water. Dry periods as well as periods of excessive wetness are crucial to the balance of nurturing of the plants. The nurturing of agricultural life constructs the entire formation of the community of Arcadia, as it is the center of the only community spaces (the fairgrounds and Agricenter civic space), and is the reason for the formation of an immigrant population that is now present in Arcadia. The presence of the Peace River and its tides and flood plains are the basis of the settlement of Arcadia. It provides ecological benefits to the region, and flows through many areas of cattle grazing, even beyond the immediate town, yet it also fed the destruction of the community, as its water guided Hurricane Charley inland, providing a slice of movement, along which the storm could traverse and retain its strength.

The shade of the live oak trees of this region defines a space for relief from high temperatures, Due to the extensive damage that hurricanes cause on the shade providers, an architectural creation of shade with intermittent light and air circulation can serve this function in a more stable manner.

Within these physical conditions, the building strategy is basically outlined under the structure of resistance and non-resistance. The spaces of resistance are the protective shells that enclose the areas of program that contain items that cannot withstand weather. They are the more permanently-defined functions, which are concrete and solid, and can be closed down to act as stable rocks in a high wind condition, but opened and used publicly as sites of relief after a hurricane or in a common daily setting. These spaces also frame entry on the southern edge of the site, extending the storefront scale

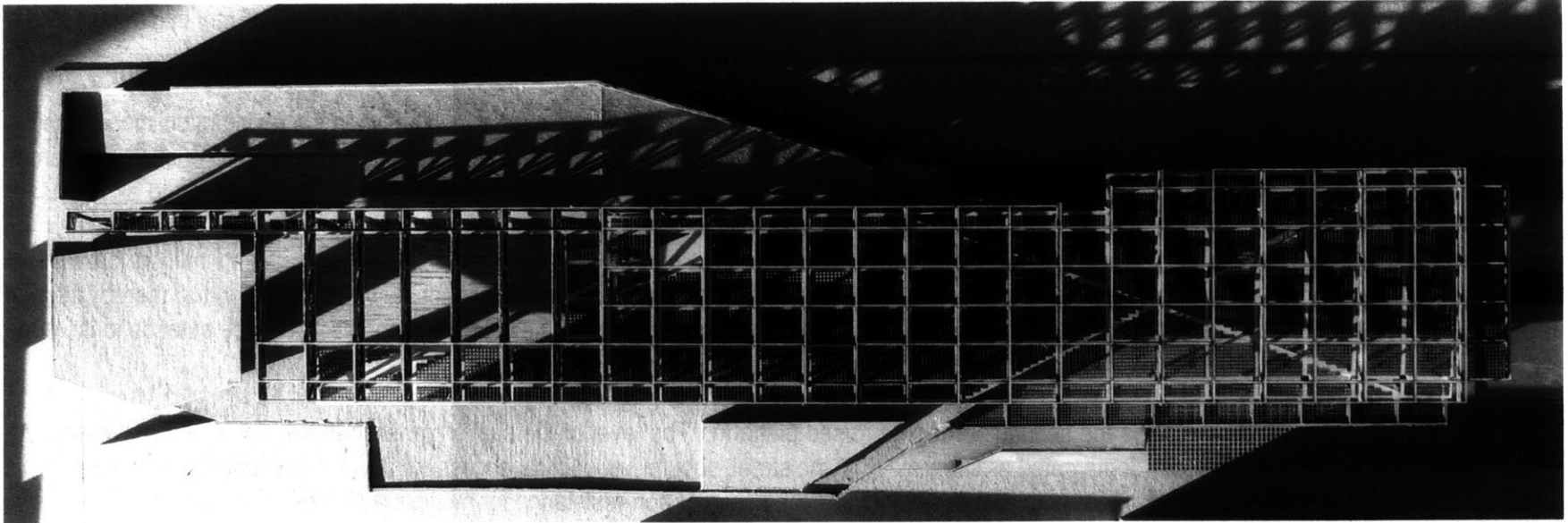


around the street corner, thereby linking the downtown shopping street with the new identity of the Hispanic-American shops. Entry into these spaces is directed through a layering of apertures, constructing view and movement through spaces.

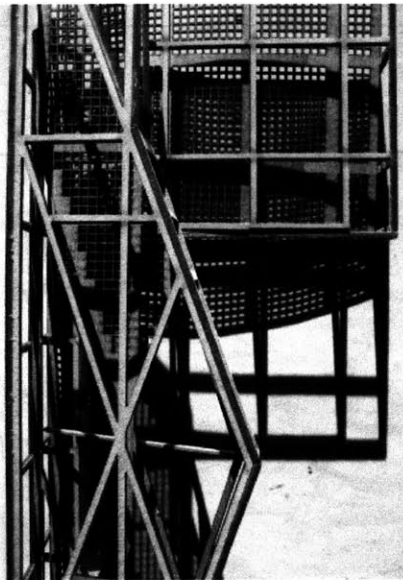
The space of non-resistance is the space of the market, which extends from an open shaded plaza to a space between the resistant buildings creating a long, multi use space that can contain an overlap of activities and use by various constituencies. This space is marked by a roof consisting of frames of perforated metal, which serve as a screen roof, creating sunlight and airflow effects similar to that of the oak trees. Its openness to air allows for increased stability in high winds, as there is less resistance to the forces. On a social level, the structure's great length, allows for occupation by multiple groups without forcing the uneasiness of immediate proximity. However, the relative narrowness of this space creates an intimate breakdown in scale, especially when the space is divided through sliding panels. In addition, the screening material folds down as hinged walls, thereby serving as a protective screen that mediates the interior and the edge, without being solely internalized. The screened roof market space extends to the edge of the main shopping street in order to link up with its planned activities and parade events.

The remaining component of the project is the security through a raised platform. The level of the site is higher than the sidewalk level, creating a distinct zone that is visibly and physically demarcated as separate from the street, secure, yet publicly accessible due to the openness of its edge. This elevated platform contains the functional infrastructure necessary to use the space of non-resistance for multiple activities and events.





Plan view of structure designed. The screened roof area demarcates a public zone of multiple uses. It contains infrastructure for multiple functions. The screen, able to be penetrated by airflow, allows for cooling, while still providing shade. It is the zone of non-resistance, both socially and structurally, as its penetrability by air, creates a more stable structure in high winds, with less resistance to the forces. Solid, enclosed spaces at the edges hold infrastructure for programs that require protection from the elements. They are solid "rocks" which protect through their mass and stability.



Screen

Pronunciation: 'skrEn

Function: noun

1: a protective or ornamental device (as a movable partition) **shielding an area from heat or drafts or from view**

2: something that shelters, protects, or hides: as a : a growth or stand of trees, shrubs, or plants b : a protective formation of troops, ships, or planes c : something that covers or disguises the true nature (as of an activity or feeling)

3a: a perforated plate or cylinder or a meshed wire or cloth fabric usually mounted and used to separate coarser from finer parts b : a system for examining and separating into different groups

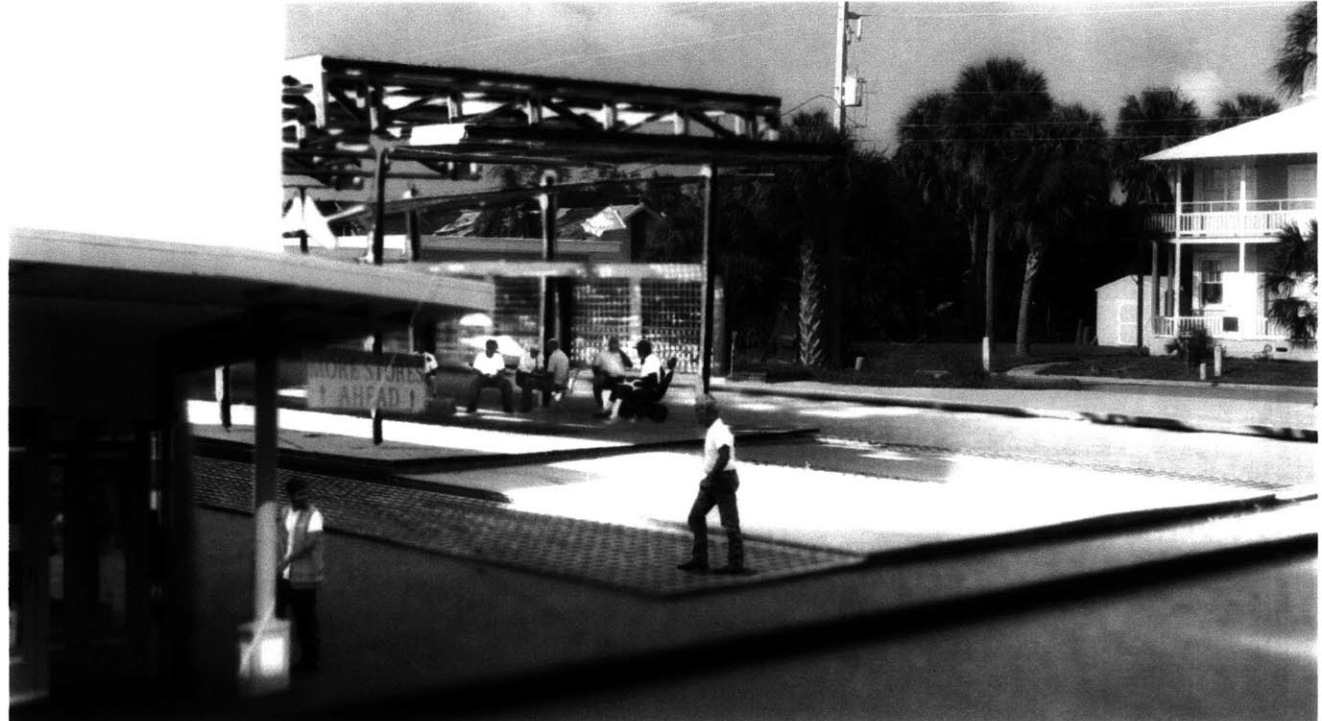
c: **a piece of apparatus designed to prevent agencies in one part from affecting other parts** <an optical screen> <an electric screen> d : a frame holding a usually metallic netting used especially in a window or door to exclude pests (as insects)

4a: a flat surface on which a picture or series of pictures is projected or reflected b : the surface on which the image appears in an electronic display (as in a television set, radar receiver, or computer terminal)

5: a glass plate ruled with crossing opaque lines through which an image is photographed in making a halftone

6: the motion-picture medium or industry

source: Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary

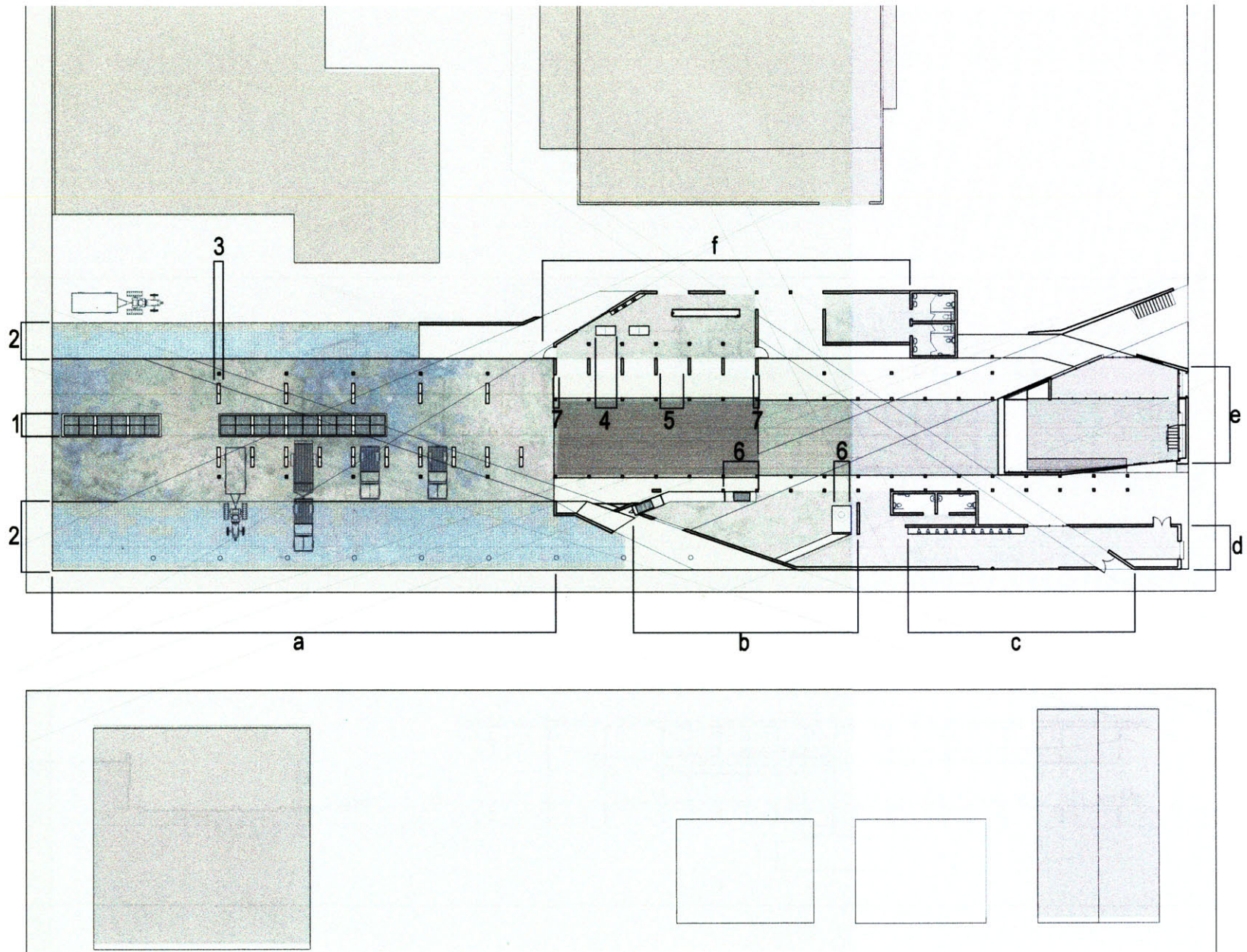


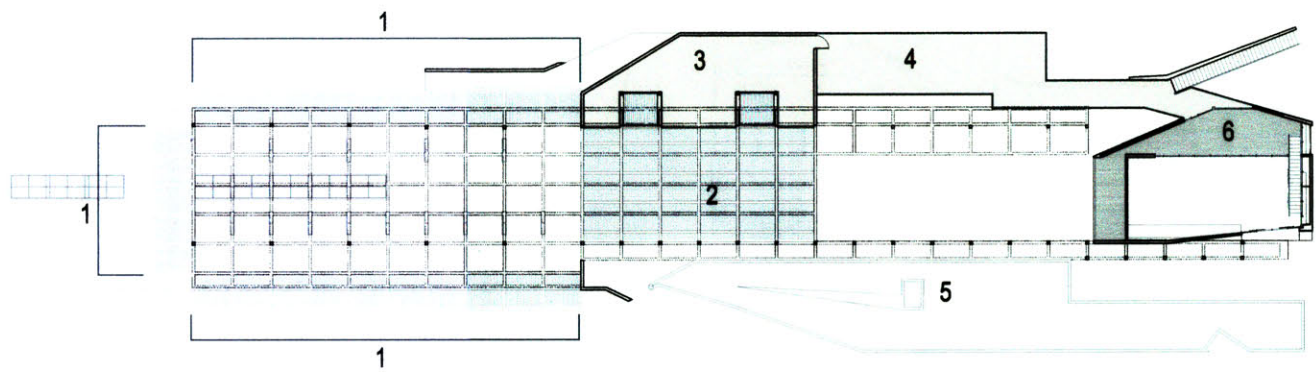
Programs:

- a. Shaded Market Area for sales from truck beds and trailers
- b. Public Kitchen
- c. Internet Cafe
- d. Lunch Counter
- e. Performance Space
- f. Workshop

Components

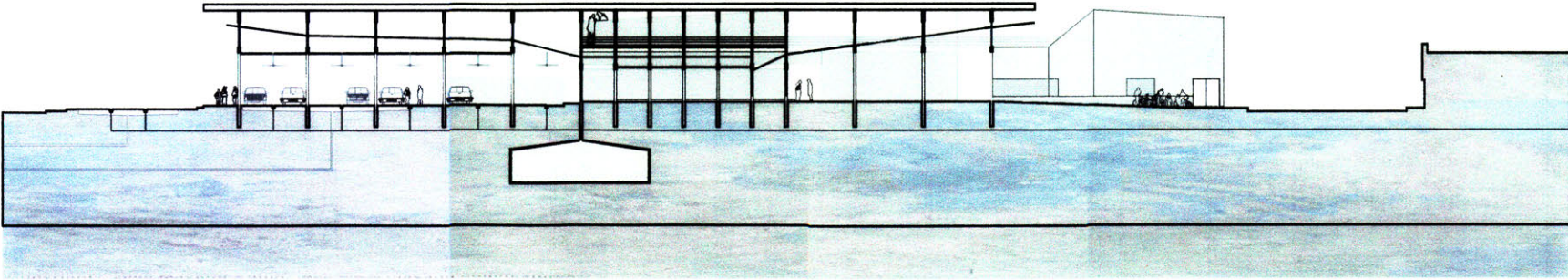
- 1. Water spouts + drainage grate for children's play, the water can also be accessed for cleaning
- 2. Drainage grate for waste from trailers and trucks at market
- 3. Electrical panel for lighting, heat, etc. at bays scaled to truck and trailer
- 4. Moveable workbench and table saw, can be moved into public workspace
- 5. Freight elevator to upper work area
- 6. Barbecue pit and roasting spit, scaled to truck bed for transport to outside events
- 7. Sliding panels for division of large work space (hung from roof structure)



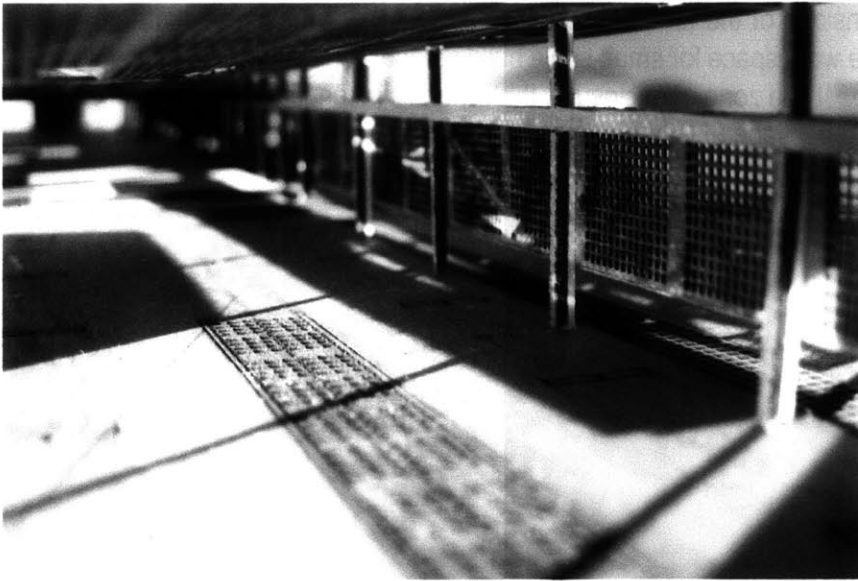


The second level plan delineates the roof shelter in relation to the buildings protecting programmatic elements on the interior.

- 1. Top hinge screen walls that transform to overhead shade
- 2. Upper level screened space
- 3. Upper level workshop space
- 4. Upper level open-air passage
- 5. Kitchen and internet cafe below
- 6. Upper level of performance space



The screened space can serve in multiple capacities: as a market, as extensions of the functions built into the interior structures, such as exterior performances, display of artwork, picnic or barbecue events, extensions of the work space for small-scale building and woodworking. Within this zone, the screens create a sense of security for an otherwise extensive open space. It is a zone of enclosure, that is public in function, but can feel securely private due to the screening of the edge. Apertures in the screen allow for the passage of light and visibility without direct exposure, playing off of the uneasiness with public expression that is pervasive in the community.



Screened wall of market area in closed position. This edge hinges vertically to provide further shade and more openness for large public activities. When closed, the market space becomes a more intimate, semi-private, indoor/outdoor space for larger events. The grate demarcating the water spout zone is in the foreground. When the space is not being used for a formal event the water provides a venue for cooling and play.





Screen as a protective enclosure



Screen as a mediating device



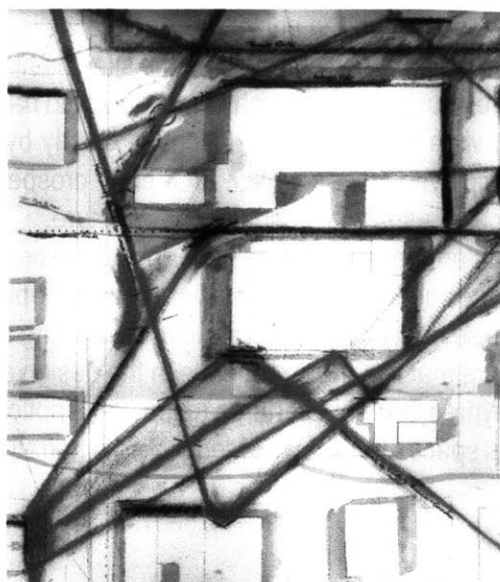
Screen as a shade device



Angled entry spaces reveal views as one moves through the layered edge. Apertures are revealed across the site, framing contextual elements of differing constituencies, marking their presence through view. Some views are direct, while others are revealed as one moves through the space and sequential apertures align.



Entry zones along the enclosed concrete walls of the structure direct views across the site creating linkages between the two zones surrounding the site, the historical downtown and the area beginning to reveal a new identity. The previously discreet areas that lie back to back, are now engaged through this public architecture. Two methods of vista are employed, described clearly by Helene Furjan in her article on the house of John Soane. The first employed is the creation of "a clear prospect, directing a perspectival line toward a culminating point in the landscape, usually a monument or sculpture." This type of view exists as the entries align to buildings outside the site that are perceived to be important to the newly formulated identity of the town. The other vista is achieved as "apertures suddenly come into line as the inhabitant or visitor moves across a room, allowing briefly framed views across several spaces, scenic devices layering the recession." This method is employed through apertures in the structure that line the street edge in the design and their alignment with other interior entry spaces. The creation of a layered edge of apertures responds to notions derived in the studies outlined earlier, and allows relationships across spaces to be acknowledged as a narrative outlined through movement and view.

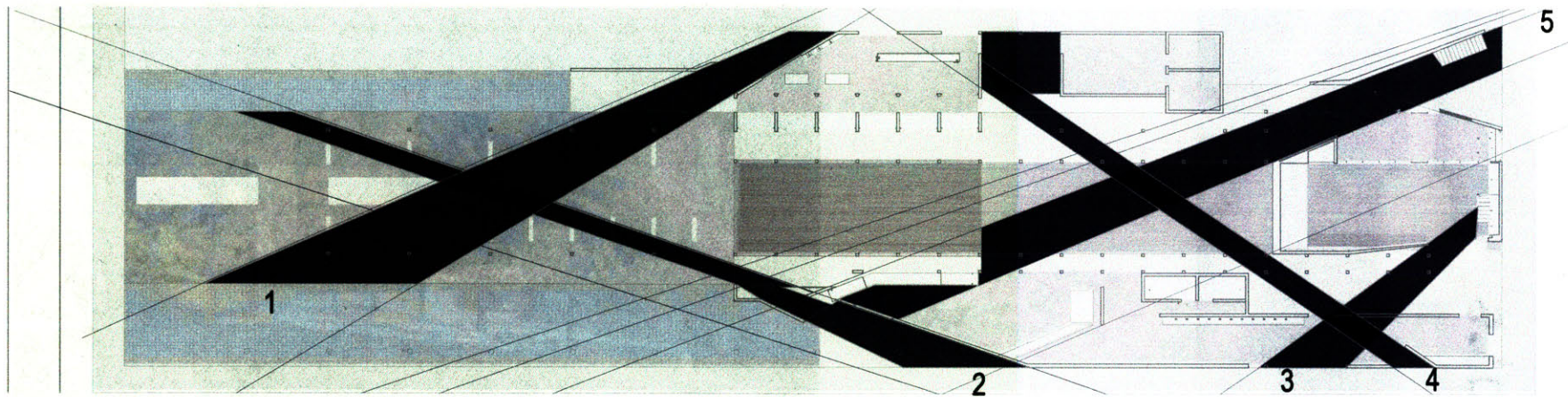


Study of significant views and forces affecting
inhabitation of the site.



View from screened space out the South-
east entry of structure.

Views outlined across the site, linkages made through the alignment of apertures, as well as through direct prospects.

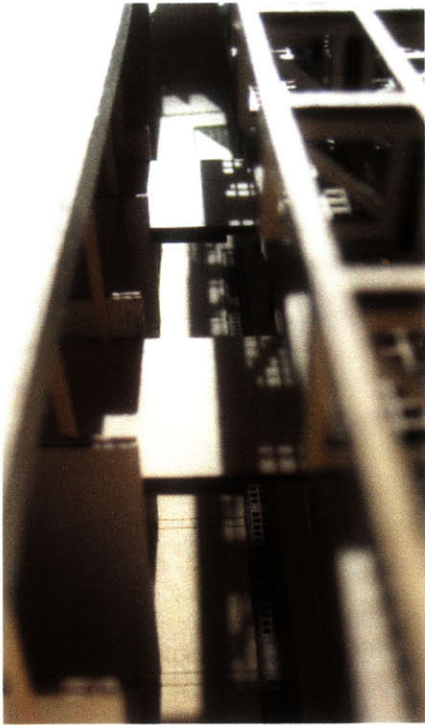


Views:

1. Methodist Church to Laundromat and Hispanic Grocery
2. Antique Shops to the African American Mt. Olive Baptist Church

3. Street to Internet Cafe* to inside of Performance Space*
4. Laundromat to Workshop* to Internet Cafe* to Mt. Olive Baptist Church
5. Entry and Kitchen* to Grocery Parking Lot and Casa Naturista

* indicates spaces added as part of this project.

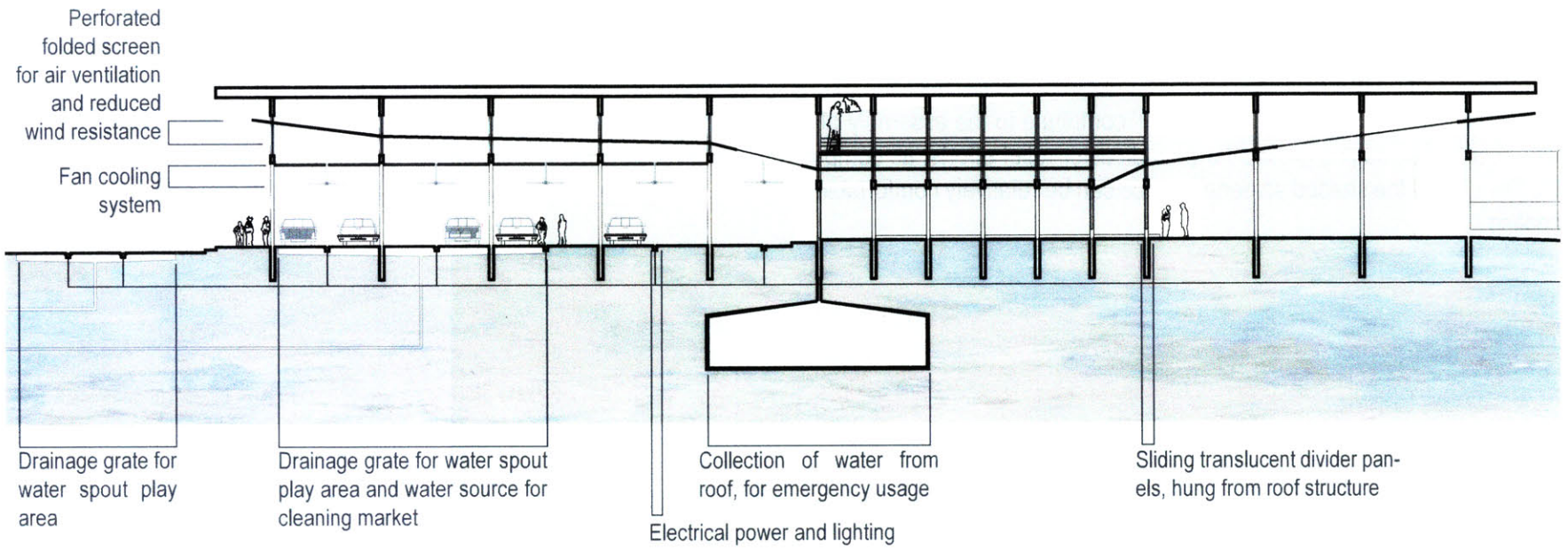


A zone of access between the workshop and screen space. This is a zone of transport (of materials) and overlap (of function).



Dividing panels at the workshop area. The translucent panels are hung from the screen (infra)structure and allow the communal public space to be segmented and adapted for multiple uses, but still preserve a degree of overlap through light and small apertures.

This project was considered as a space of deployment of public events and, therefore, supplies a rural infrastructure for public activities. Functional components of program encased in the structures, utilities built into the raised platform of the ground surface, and the structural support of moveable partitions that the screen roof provides all contribute to the assembly of components necessary for a variety of public activities. The project also creates a potential staging ground for post-disaster relief efforts, as components are protected within the internal spaces of the concrete structure, and the flexibility of the shaded screened space can be relatively comfortable in the hot, humid weather of hurricane season, without mechanically-supplied cooling.





Under the screen in the market space. The bays of the structure are scaled to the dimension of the truck and flatbed trailer, necessary tools to the agricultural community, in order to incorporate the perceived security of the vehicle. The scale breaks down to smaller units where the programmatic tools connect to the space.



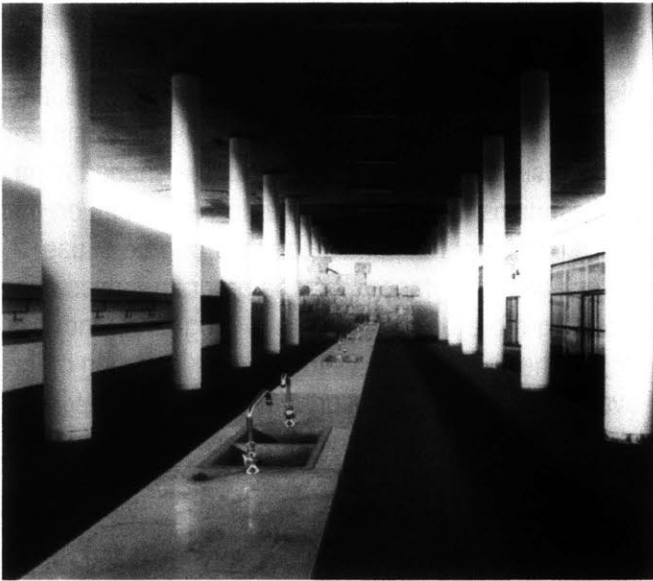


Conclusions and Reflection

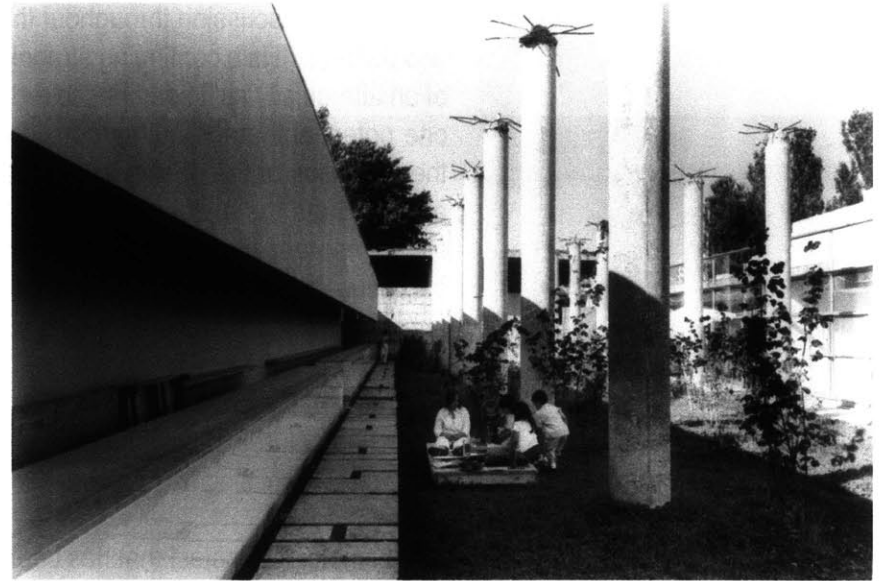
Time and the Establishment of the Site

A prevailing discussion throughout this thesis, was the degree to which the project should be designed, dictated and defined. It is a continuing struggle in the evaluation of inserting community projects, especially in the context of an altered city as it searches to redefine itself. Many levels of manifestation could potentially be executed, and one potential that the author considered and still feels to be relevant in regard to this project is the phasing of the execution of the design. Perhaps the necessary beginning is simply to mark the site with the shaded zone, and integrate the elements of support program as small manifestations of services similar to the utilities on the site, temporary, transportable units that may or may not become permanent depending on their degree of use. A barbecue grill, a table saw and tool bench, a microphone and stage, for instance. As one program thrives over another, the solid structures could continue to be built, expanding more on the successful programs, and less on the ones that became obsolete. The executed design for this thesis is viewed as the full manifestation of the programs, but a project of this nature must be considered over time. The reinscription of identities will inevitably reinscribe natures of use, but if it functions on many levels, the structure can be adapted, intensified or simplified while still expressing its purpose.

An example of a project that has been transformed in response to change in effectiveness over time is the Braga



Braga Municipal Market, construction 1980-1984
Source: Esposito, Antonio and Giovanni Leoni



Braga Municipal Market, reconstruction, 1997-2001
Source: Esposito, Antonio and Giovanni Leoni

Braga Market in Portugal by Eduardo Souto de Moura. The project began as a municipal market in an under-developed area outside the core of the city in the Bairro do Caranda. It was designed with the intent of placing a fragment of the city grid in a non-place as a catalyst for development. However, the structure functionally and physically decayed as the city expanded and built a fabric around the market space, suffocating it. The architect recognized this decay and its functional transformation from a market to a bridge, a passage within the density of the city. The design response to this was to destroy the purity of the form by removing the roof and constructing a garden in its place, but allowing the structure of the columns to remain, creating an inversion of spaces. As you enter the previously interior space, there is a transfer to an exterior condition, a pedestrian garden street with program at its edge, rather than being located in the interior as before.¹ This architectural decision reflects an approach by the architect that addresses design with an empathy for the site and the mindset that the purity of form can be transformed, just as identities transform.

The flexible market zone of the Arcadia project would, if implemented, reflect transformations over time, and could, perhaps require an inversion in experience for it to retain its validity and continue as a site of memory without being incapacitated by nostalgia. A reinvestigation of site at that moment could inform a new study of the nature of the community and further the progress of the alteration of the city.

¹ Reflections by Souto de Moura and Authors: Esposito, Antonio and Giovanni Leoni, p. 58.

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