

EMPTY SPACES: REVITALIZATION OF THE INNER-RING SUBURBS
THROUGH THE REHOUSING OF VACANT LOTS

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By

Jordan Neff-Estle

Miami University

Oxford, Ohio

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Advisor _____
(John Reynolds)

Reader _____
(Tom Dutton)

Consultant _____
(John D. Becker)

Consultant _____
(Gulen Cevik)

Empty Spaces: Revitalization of Inner-Ring Suburbs through the Re-housing of Vacant Lots

JORDAN NEFF-ESTLE

Miami University

“Close your eyes, let your hands and nerve-ends drop, stop breathing for 3 seconds, listen to the silence inside the illusion of the world, and you will remember the lesson you forgot... It’s a dream already ended. There’s nothing to be afraid of and nothing to be glad about. I know this from staring at mountains months on end. They never show any expression, they are like empty space. Do you think the emptiness of space will ever crumble away? Mountains will crumble, but the emptiness of space... will never crumble away because it was never born.

Jack Kerouac, *The Portable Jack Kerouac*ⁱ

Empty spaces fill blighted communities on the outer fringe of city centers. Standing silent, yet telling stories of what once was. Scars left from a dream, bookended by ambitions of home ownership. Illustrious ideas and successful disguises, masking a reality. A truth crippled by the idea of uncertainty. Vacant lots, no longer occupied by dreamers, are blemishes, sprinkled through neighborhoods, bearing a heavy burden. Places where crime, fire risks, and public health and safety concerns flourish. The liability of vacant lots is enormous on a governmental body, but the weight of these properties lie most on the community. They are not simply rests in the cadence of the street but open wounds, symbolizing the demise of place. How can a community scarred by reminders of what no longer exists, utilize the empty spaces to begin again? Inserting promise in the literal in-between, to foster community growth. The emptiness no longer a reminder of past mistakes, but an opportunity to awaken the dreamer. Spaces which can breathe new life into a neighborhood. Beacons of hope, home.

Through investigation of inner-ring suburbs, defined by City and Regional Planning Professor Bernadette Hanlon as, “the oldest suburbs closest to the city core of a metropolitan area”ⁱⁱ, this paper will explore the opportunity of these areas of socio-economic decline and the numerous vacant, city owned, properties that mark the landscape, as places of repopulation. Can the addition of affordable small and tiny homes on these vacant lots provide the necessary inhabitants and economic impact to revitalize a community often overlooked?

Through the analysis of precedents and by critically examining the implementation of architecture as a means to address societal problems, the successes and pitfalls of each precedent will be applied to a design proposal to be implemented in Franklinton, Ohio. By applying lessons learned from these studies and translating them, my approach toward the revitalization those communities that are historically disinvested, will be strengthened and applied in a thoughtful manner. The work of Rural Studio, Marianne Cusato, Steve Mouzon and Bruce Tolar’s Katrina Cottages, and Gregory Kloehn’s *Homeless Homes Project*, will serve as

precedents for architecture's impact in cultivating change in communities. I will analyze each of these works and use their methods and approaches as case studies for my own application. Utilizing precedents will inform how the implementation of tiny homes on vacant lots, specifically situated in the inner suburb of Franklinton, Ohio, can support the planning initiatives already in place and serve as a way to repopulate and revitalize the changing landscape.

INNER-RING SUBURBS

Inner-ring suburbs prove to be an enigma, both demographically and geographically. Typically - and historically- the suburbs are identified by a homogeneity of white middle-class families. Suburban communities are marked by the cul-de-sac, beautifully manicured lawns, and large lovely homes. Studies of inner-ring suburbs in the 1960s and 70's however, determined that such a consistency does not exist. The demographic of inner-ring suburbs has seen a shift in both race and income, moving from a white middle-class oasis to a melting pot. First, with the surge of immigrants, ethnic and racial minorities choosing the suburbs over the cities, then with the decline of the average income of these suburbs.ⁱⁱⁱ The theoretical model of suburban change of Hoover and Vernon (1962), the *Suburban Life Cycle Model*^{iv}, is the model that I believe most subscribes to the inner-ring suburbs. This model follows the belief that the age of the housing stock greatly determines the decline of the neighborhood, in a pseudo life cycle (Figure 1). As the high status households that helped create the suburb initially, move

further from the city in search of newer homes, they leave the existing housing stock, obsolescent and even abandoned. The migration of wealthier families to the suburbs further from city centers leaves the inner-ring suburbs, "the oldest and cheapest housing, eventually occupied by the poorest families"^v. Leaving the fringe-suburbs unaffordable and unattainable. These inner-ring cities, although geographically a suburb, carry more of the economic and visual traits of a struggling inner-city community.

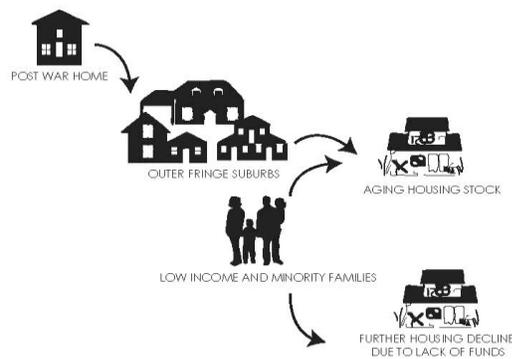


Figure 1: Suburban Life Cycle Model

Inner-ring suburbs face numerous obstacles when it comes to being competitive with suburbs further from city center. The age and size of the homes in the inner-ring suburbs - typically of post war era- are barely competitive when compared to the housing stock of fringe communities. The new suburban homes boast large open floor plans, high-end finishes, and numerous amenities and rooms that the existing housing stock of inner-ring suburbs lack. The draw of the new and improved overshadow the character of the older homes, and leave them undesirable to those looking to move from the city. Those who are able to look past the shininess of new suburban developments in search of a home with more

charm are lured by the promise of downtown views are soon turned off by the renovation cost associated with older homes and the stereotype that comes along with living in struggling inner-ring communities.

The changing demographic of these communities also prime them for decline. Immigrant and minorities looking for housing, unable to afford the glitz of the outer fringe suburbs or the high rents of central city living, are pushed to live in one of the only affordable places remaining. The clustering of these groups in a particular place has great effect on population growth and the rebuilding of the community. Discrimination of minorities in gaining home loans and credit prevents the building of new homes, and even the renovation of existing home, no matter how necessary the repairs.^{vi} This, paired with the resistance of higher income populations to settle those neighborhoods, further pushes inner-ring suburbs towards degeneration. Where the demographic is that of lower income and minority populations, the chances of growth and more importantly revitalization is limited greatly by finances. Communities become stuck. The demographic necessary to rejuvenate are choosing other locations, and the current population is unable to afford the necessary changes. Thus, the ability of inner-ring suburbs to be revitalized often depends on help from governmental agencies. The lack of population, low income levels, and weak and deteriorating housing market, limits the ability of the neighborhood to grow without the involvement of governmental agencies or aid.

Little resources for reinvestment, are given to the communities that need it most, allowing deterioration to endure and the disinvestment prolonged. Incentives to remodel or even rebuild in these areas are almost nonexistent, as the profit for investors and cities is in the development of untouched land. "Realtors, developers, and lenders prefer greenfield development, because the risks are more predictable and manageable than those associated with redeveloping existing neighborhoods"^{vii}. The monetary award is ultimately more powerful than the renewed hope of a community.

The possibilities of these areas however are countless. Magnificent city views and metropolitan services provide the inner-ring suburbs much of the amenities of city living without the price tag. If people and cities are willing to make the initial investment necessary to give a push toward revitalization, these communities house the people with dreams, desires, and drive to make it happen. Once the initial hurdle is surpassed, the decline can be reversed and growth can begin again. The potential in these communities is enormous and their reinvestment can combat their further decline and eventual demise. Cultivating neighborhoods rich with spirit and full of dreamers, all willing to invest in what could be and should be, is ensured through this potential.

Franklinton, Ohio

The picture painted of an inner-ring suburb is one that is all too common, and one that transported me back to a neighborhood just west of Columbus, Ohio, a neighborhood that I worked in as part of Columbus' partnership with The Neighborhood Design Center, a non-profit architecture design firm. A commercial district,



Figure 2: Franklinton Artwork at 400 West Rich

part of the City's Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization program, which provides grants to business on City identified underprivileged commercial corridors. Described by John Tierney as, "the most deprived and destitute part of town, a neighborhood known as Franklinton... an interesting (but not all that uncommon) geographic paradox: the poorest part of the city has the best, close-up views of its imposing skyline"^{viii}. "The Bottoms", coined by its location well below the flood plains of the Scioto and Olentangy Rivers, as well as for its reputation as community plagued by crime and decay.

With the renewed interest of artists and young professionals, a tight grid of single family homes

– many unoccupied - and experiencing high numbers of vacant and city owned properties. Franklinton provides unlimited prospect for the rehousing of vacant lots. Filling of the empty spaces with tiny homes, serving as a way to repopulate and revitalize the area, serving as a facilitator for societal change.

Franklinton was the first settlement in Central-Ohio, established in 1769. Its location on the banks of two major rivers, created major flood problems. The first of which in 1913, displaced 20,000 people, damaged 4,000 homes and destroyed 500 buildings^{ix}. Then again in 1959 which left 10,000 people homeless. Due to the potential for additional disastrous flooding, the area in the floodplain was deemed undevelopable in 1983 by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. This halted all future development and redevelopment efforts in the area and pushed the displaced to other communities. The installation of the flood wall, completed in 2004, allowed the area to once again be developed^x. However, the redevelopment of Franklinton never really took off and the area remained basically untouched.

Beyond the halting of development by FEMA, the creation of the Interstate Highway system in the 1960's, the inner belt (SR 315), removed more buildings and changed many of the zoning designations and divided the community into 2 distinct parts. The floods, undevelopable designation, and the creation of the highway led to low property values, isolated the community by surrounding it by natural and build barriers, and drove many residents in search of a more stable community. Like the *Suburban Life Cycle*

Model of Hoover and Vernon (1962)^{xi}, the outflow of people to more stable areas and the deteriorating housing stock led to the influx of lower income families to Franklinton and greatly impacted the demographic.

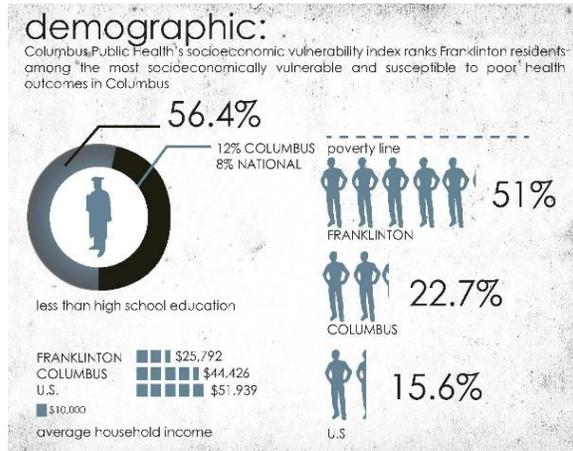


Figure 3: Franklinton Demographics

Franklinton is a community in despair. Especially when directly compared with that of the large and thriving city just to the west, Columbus (Figure 3). Franklinton's average income is \$25,792, is just over half of Columbus' average^{xii} and a mere 48% of the US average income^{xiii}. The population of West Franklinton (those west of 315, and where most of the homes are located) is said to have an average income of just \$10,000 is less than 25% of the citywide median^{xiv}. Beyond the low income levels, the attainment of higher education also paints a picture of neighborhood in need. Of all Franklinton's residents, 56%^{xv} of them do not have a high school diploma, almost 5 times more than that of Columbus. The combined low income level and lack of a high school diploma leaves 51%^{xvi} of the occupants at or below the poverty line. As compared to the national average of 15.6%, and Columbus' 22.7%^{xvii}, the need for the community can be seen through the numbers alone. Columbus

Public Health's socioeconomic vulnerability index ranks Franklinton residents among the most socioeconomically vulnerable and susceptible to poor health outcomes in Columbus^{xviii}. Though discouraging, the numbers have raised awareness of the impoverished demographic of the community and has opened the eyes of the City of Columbus. Making them take a look into ways to revitalize the neighborhood, help the community, and change the numbers.

City of Columbus's former Mayor, Michael B Colman, in the State of the City address of 2011 claimed "And it is in Franklinton, where our forefathers put a stake in the ground 199 years ago and said, "Let us begin. 'And it is here where we must begin again 199 years later"^{xix}. Franklinton was to be the central focus for redevelopment efforts for that year. With the partnership of The City of Columbus, Franklinton Development Association, the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority and a private developer called the Urban Smart Growth Company, planning studies and development plans have been put in place for Franklinton to address land use and zoning, housing, infrastructure and commercial revitalization.

Planning Initiatives

For all intensive planning purposes, Franklinton was divided into 2 sections, East and West Franklinton, with State Route 315 the datum between the two. Each planning sector was looked at for a phased development, through the creation of "neighborhood zones" or a block

by block approach, respectively. The East Franklinton Plan, now the East Franklinton Creative Community District Plan - completed by Goody Clancy - was adopted in 2014. The plan's initiative is to create a mixed-use creative community, adaptably reusing the existing industrial buildings, maintaining an affordable housing model, and introducing new commercial centers, as a way to invite a "creative class" of people to rejuvenate the area.^{xx} The plan does a fantastic job at dividing the area into distinct planning zones which have individual goals and land use categories. Through intensive research the plan has clearly outlined goals and given strong backing as to why planning decisions were made. I however feel they forgot to take in the overall character of the neighborhood and the opportunity to work alongside what is existing rather than demolishing neighborhood in favor of medium and high density residential developments. In an area with largely single family homes and a failed housing project, it seems unlikely that the mass number of residents necessary to occupy the many large scale housing blocks will relocate to the area. The effects the changing landscape would be set to destroy existing community. Much like the Short North (opposite Downtown to Franklinton) and over the Rhine in Cincinnati, the mass of large development will limit affordable options for displaced people. Pushing them further out, ultimately gentrifying the community.

The West Franklinton plan was completed by the City of Columbus in partnerships with, The EDGE Group, Side Street Planning, DDA, and UDG. The plan was established through a 9-month community outreach agenda. It looks to address the

neighborhoods high volume of vacant lots and structures as well as the creation of a commercial redevelopment strategy along the Broad Street corridor^{xxi}. The plan was adopted in draft form on 2014, but was far less developed than the East Franklinton Plan, and stirred up some questions for the City. The area of West Franklinton is much larger and is much harder to grasp under one large planning effort like that of East Franklinton. "For a West Franklinton plan to be impactful, it has to have some specific focused enhancement areas or corridors where public or private investment would be most strategically placed, and general guidelines to overlay the rest"^{xxii}. With such a large area of improvement, one wonders why a more prestigious firm, one capable of large planning efforts, was not asked to take part in West Franklinton's plan. Others were especially sensitive to the boundaries of the two plans. They felt that Franklinton was not, and should not, be divided into East and West despite the infrastructure boundary SR 315 creates. As I was personally part of the community planning process, as well as the timing of community meeting, being held after the first draft of the Goody Clancy plan was revealed, the sting was palpable. Despite the communities feelings of angst, they banded together to ensure that they were garnering the attention, and input, necessary to create a plan just as successful.^{xxiii}

Community Engagement

Something happened when neighbors in West Franklinton decided that, despite what some would call unfair treatment, they would have a louder voice if they worked together to decide on *their* vision of West Franklinton. The people of the community were able to set aside

differences, organize, and envision a future of change. To remove the stigma of “The Bottoms”, and take part in revitalizing their community, neighborhood members took charge and participated in the revitalization efforts, through any way possible. The roots of community still exist in Franklinton, they just need to be tended to and cultivated, to allow them to blossom into something beautiful. If people have a literal hand in the betterment of the space they live in, they foster connections between themselves and the work, the community, and each other. By participating in the planning process, it is likely that additional care will be taken in preserving, maintaining, and bettering those things in which one has an attachment to.

“The activity of community architecture is based on the simple principle that the environment works better if the people who live, work, and play in it are actively involved in its creation and management instead of being treated as passive consumers”^{xxiv}. Franklinton’s revitalization can be met with great success if the action that ruffled feathers in the beginning becomes the strong backbone for all projects. The community is incapable of the undertaking of the mass planning necessary to revitalize a community that has been overlooked for numerous years on their own. However, with the implementation of an urban plan, the aid of planning and architecture professionals, as well as the effort of a community as strong as Franklinton, efforts will be successful. Professionals need to be willing to work alongside communities rather than on their behalf. United States President and Architect Thomas Jefferson idealized this view with the

quote, “I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion.”^{xxv} Often the stigma associated with those involved in the planning, housing, and improvement of underprivileged neighborhoods is one given by those who are directly affected by the efforts. They often believe that architects, designers, and planners have no true desire for the betterment of the neighborhood. They are uninterested in who those in these areas are as a community and more importantly as people, ultimately returning to their big city lifestyle at the end of the work day. Removed from the areas they are affecting, designers become blind to the true needs of the people they are charged with helping, and ignorant to the effects the work ultimately has on those neighborhoods.

If we are to be inspired by Jefferson’s words, perhaps a realization on the community’s part that those architects and planners can be very effective as these professionals hold the knowledge and expertise to guide neighborhoods to make informed decisions. As authors and planning advocated Nick Wates and Charles Knevitt note, “Local people must assume responsibility, while the role of experts is one of giving advice not making decisions”^{xxvi} Community members need to open themselves up to the advice of those same professionals that should be advising not dictating. It is not until there is a true partnership between the public and private sector that true change can happen. “The two

groups that benefit the most from the input of architects are the social classes at the two ends of the class system: the rich who hire them... and the lower social groups^{xxvii}. If the architect encourages the client to have an active role in the design process, it better informs the architects of the realities of life for the 98% that largely do not have access to architects. The creation of an active relationship between the client and architect celebrates home and place creation, as well as gives value to the ideas of those who are often silenced through traditional housing models, especially those geared toward low-income housing solutions.

Proposal

"A place belongs forever to whoever claims it hardest, remembers it most obsessively, wrenches it from itself, shapes it, renders it, loves it so radically that he remakes it in his own image^{xxviii}. Franklinton and its residents can take an active part in the revitalization of their neighborhood. Removing the stigma first in their minds then infecting others with change, making lasting impressions for other forgotten communities that change is possible. Franklinton houses the people and the spirit to rebirth community, revitalize, and begin again.

Vacant lots are primed for the beginnings of community engagement and charged with dreams of revitalization. Beginning with the blank canvas that they provide and creating place within them, the neighborhoods can repopulate and rebirth. With the planning initiatives in place already addressing the commercial corridor and renewal of large city owned parcels, the empty spaces sprinkled within the tight neighborhood grid of single

family homes would be most complimentary to the proposed changes. Utilizing the existing stock of Landbank¹ lots in the area, the *Mow to Own Program*^{xxix} (a city program which allows an applicant to apply to provide maintenance and improvements on the lot equal to the fair market value, and upon completion gain ownership) and other city incentives for the development of Franklinton, building tiny homes on these lots serves as a way to repopulate and invigorate the area. The resurgence of population in Franklinton, through its rehousing, can serve as a catalyst to boost the success of the proposed development plans. Beyond that, the redevelopment of the vacant land will help to improve overall property values and the outlook for the neighborhood as a whole.

Tiny houses provide potential for these lots because the lots are often small, and many are of peculiar shape. The size of the home allows for implementation on lots unbuildable for the traditional sized home, but are the perfect landing place for a tiny house². These home sizes are around 6 times smaller than the average American home of 2,506 SF^{xxx}. There are often size regulations for a home imposed through zoning laws, but despite minimum house sizes imposed by the Columbus Zoning code, the building of tiny homes - especially for those that would buy and improve vacant Landbank lots - would be likely to gain a variance for the size of the residence as well as the imposed setbacks and lot coverage.

The tiny house serves as a way to encourage participation in community. The size limitations, push for its inhabitants to go out in the neighborhood for coffee, laundry, and

entertainment, making the home a small part of a larger whole.

“The home is not a self-contained world but a toehold in the larger world...we live in houses and apartments on streets in neighborhoods in communities in towns and in cities. The porch, the front stoop, the sidewalk, the street, the square, and the park expand the home beyond the enclosed space of the house and into the space of the public realm. The private home is just the smallest in a series of concentric units...how large does it need to be?”^{xxxix}

The home is no longer a refuge for the recluse, but becomes a node in the workings of a strong community.

With the existing fabric of homes that front a street and abut an alley and the smaller footprint required for a tiny home, the opportunities for urban farming and community gardening on the remainder of the lot are boundless. The success of the Franklinton Gardens, a community garden put on by a neighborhood group, and the weekly summer farmers market at the restored 400 West Rich Artist’s Studios show the potential of horticulture for the remaining land. Gardening and sustenance farming will add another facet to the potential of the tiny home. With the proven success of community gatherings like Urban scrawl – where artists gather to paint art on plywood sheets to board vacant properties – many trash pickups and ongoing involvement in community organizations, urban farming not only provides food for a mild food desert but also brings the neighborhood together for a single cause and boosts moral.

The East Franklinton Plan’s market study identifies the profile of households most likely to move to Franklinton as “predominantly of younger singles, younger childless couples, and empty nesters and retirees^{xxxix}. “Creative

class workers tend to be younger (a higher percentage of 25 to 34-year-olds) and are typically characterized as hip, urban, diverse, and politically progressive”^{xxxix}. Interestingly, this is the typical demographic of people that would be making choices to live in a tiny home. Those retirees and empty nesters looking to downsize, and those young professionals and couples looking for affordable starter homes with eccentric qualities. This characteristic, as identified by the plan, gives backing to the tiny house movement in Franklinton in conjunction with the other factors of affordability and size. The demographic identified for Franklinton, gives these tiny homes the additional prospective of being self-built and unique to the individual as the lifestyle that comes along with building and making smaller choices attracts a similar demographic.

Tiny homes (and small homes), can also provide housing for people looking to move from the high rents areas of city living to a more affordable location. Without losing the grit of the city or the prestigious views, a family can choose Franklinton - and one of its tiny homes - as a solution for rising urban rents. The revitalization that is planned for the neighborhood will provide the amenities within close proximity, just as the city center offers, without the financial impact that city living can have. It also presents an interesting opportunity for these families which the city does not offer, yards. The benefits of city living merge with some of the pleasures of suburban living. Allowing families to have a best of both worlds, skyline views with yards for the children to play.

My proposal to bring tiny homes to Franklinton is way to bring people back to, and

entice a new population toward the existing community. The addition of affordable tiny homes to the neighborhood will not only prove beneficial to the neighborhood and its existing residents, but will also merge seamlessly with the revitalization efforts already adopted by the City of Columbus. The regeneration of homes in Landbank lots, will repopulate a community, revitalize the area, and ultimately support the growth of place. Franklinton is already primed to experience immense changes through planning programs, and the addition of tiny homes can be a vital part of the renewal efforts. Proving that Franklinton can experience a rebirth, and become a place no longer carrying the stigma of despair and decline.

Case studies: Rural Studio

The application of housing in impoverished neighborhoods as a method to bring about change has occurred over numerous places in the world. One of the most successful practices of this idea can be seen in the work of Rural Studio, Auburn University's design build studio for 2nd and 5th year students. They work in Rural Alabama's Hale County, in one of the poorest neighborhoods, Newbern^{xxxiv}. In a town of only 186 people^{xxxv}, it is estimated that 29.9%, or 55 of these people live below the poverty level^{xxxvi}. Rural Studio and the students work within this community and with its residents to build low cost houses for the many people who lack adequate shelter. The students work with the person chosen to receive the home from the very beginning allowing the whole process to be participatory and the new home owner to have their very own hand in the final outcome.

The Rural Studio's process is where they are most successful. It is not about simply giving people homes who need them, but it is about allowing the new homeowner to take part in the process along with the students. This results in a home that not only gives the students a tremendous learning opportunity, but gives the homeowner pride of place, knowing they had a heavy hand in the design. The Rural Studio's impact goes beyond the person they are helping. Seeing the pride and joy that the students and the new homeowners have with these projects, gives a boost to the moral of the community as a whole. Visible change through the creation of the homes in communities like Newbern, can be the catalyst to bring about a whirlwind of change and revitalization necessary to bring vibrancy and viability back to impoverished neighborhoods, similar to Franklinton.

Though the size of Rural Studio's projects are not tiny and implemented in a rural setting, the success of Rural Studio can be used as inspiration and proof of the immense impact housing can have in the revitalization of a community, and, most importantly, in generating social change. Much like Rural studio the community involvement in creating one home can again join people together for one cause. Like the West Franklinton plan, tiny homes can bring a divided group together to stake a claim in their neighborhood and reclaim it. Eliminating the risk of Franklinton being overlooked by making strides as neighborhood for the improvement in their own backyards.



Case studies: Katrina Cottages

Natural disasters, often necessitate mass rehousing efforts, backed by governmental response agencies like FEMA. The need for immediate housing in these areas prompts the caravan of FEMA trailers to those areas devastated. Hurricane Katrina in 2005, demanded the mass transit of 145,000 trailers, amounting to 2.7 billion dollars, to the gulf

Figure 4 – Typical Katrina Cottage Plan

coast in order to provide housing for nearly 770,000 newly-homeless victims.^{xxxvii} These trailers were supposed to be a temporary means to house the devastated population until the flood waters receded, and the rebuilding efforts could begin. Amongst problems of, toxic formaldehyde emission and lack of suitability for deployment, temporary shelters become not so temporary. As communities struggle to rebuild, their lives uprooted and forever changed, the 18 month impermanent nature of the trailers turned into a more permanent option. "But five years after Katrina hit the Gulf coast, 860 Louisiana and 176 Mississippi families still live in FEMA-owned shelters"^{xxxviii}. The last trailer did not depart Louisiana until February 12, 2012, nearly 7 years post Katrina.^{xxxix}

The rehousing efforts in the form of temporary shelters provides a necessary option when the effect of homelessness is suddenly dispersed over large areas. However, the long

term permanence that these shelters have taken on necessitates a better solution. The work of Marianne Cusato, Steve Mouzon and Bruce Tolar's Katrina Cottages, is a more viable option to sheltering disaster ridden areas. The homes are not images of disaster, but begin to look like true homes, and not reminders of horrific events.

The Katrina Cottages, are pseudo Sears and Roebuck homes. Presented as a series of plans which range from 308-1807 square feet (Figure 4), the plans can be bought and then built by a contractor. In congressional efforts to provide alternative housing post disaster, the Katrina Cottages were appropriated for 400 million dollars. This pilot project created 2800

Katrina Cottage inspired homes in Mississippi and another 500 from the Katrina Cottage series.^{xl} Their success and the rise of the small house movement further pushed the idea of small semi-custom homes deployed in disaster situations from one of necessity to one of choice. The homes provide housing options for communities and people who are wanting the character of a traditional home, yet at a scale that increases ease of construction and greatly reduces cost. These factors allow homes, like in the cases of Katrina, to be built and implemented in multiples. The ease of multiplicity helped post Katrina and can be utilized as a pivotal method to quickly fill the vacant lots and bring people to the neighborhood in masses.

Case studies: Homeless Homes Project

When faced in his own home town, Oakland, California, with a large homeless population, Gregory Kloehn decided to move from sculpting to building micro shelters to

house those currently living on the street. What began as a pseudo art project, “built from the discarded fruits of the urban jungle.”^{xli}, has become a shelter project, not only helping the homeless but also cleaning up illegal dumping sites. Utilizing illegally dumped material, the shelters are built very inexpensively, “[Kloehn] only purchases nails, screws, glue, paint brushes and saw blades”^{xlii}. With beginnings rooted to designing shipping container homes, dumpsters, and other small environmentally friendly homes he began designing homes for the homeless not much bigger than the size of a couch. “Kloehn never made the connection that his tiny houses could help the homeless until a homeless couple came by his house last year and asked him for a tarp...‘I had this home sitting right here,” Kloehn said. “I thought, ‘Why am I keeping it?’^{xliii}

Much like the use of vacant lots as places of rebirth, Kloehn and the *Homeless Homes Project* takes issues that plague his own community, illegal dumping and homelessness, and address them simultaneously through micro shelters. Kloehn adopts the idea that everyone deserves a shelter, and if the method to do so also improves another issue symbiotically then

it’s a win win. The issue of mass vacancy, the crime, and maintenance associated with the lots can be looked at in the same manner as Kloehn. Not only are the removing existing issues afflicting the community but are also providing housing for a community that lacks.

Conclusion

Sprinkled along streetscapes, in places left abandoned and vacant, tiny homes can be the facilitator for the revitalization efforts in Franklinton. Not only will they fill the vacant lots, reducing the opportunity for crime, tiny homes will be representative of growth in an area that desires so much for change. The repopulation of the Franklinton through the tiny house movement and the planning proposals already in place will prove to be essential in reclaiming it as a place of dreams. Removing the vilification associated with “The Bottoms”, and regenerating it as the next big thing, the empty spaces will be born again of the dreamer. Given new life as symbols of change, evidence of resilience. Empty spaces, now filled with homes are no longer reminders of what was, but outward indications of what is, and beacons of what is to come.

Endnotes:

- i Kerouac, Jack, and Ann Charters. *The Portable Jack Kerouac*. New York, NY, U.S.A.: Viking, 1995.
- ii Hanlon, Bernadette. *Once the American Dream: Inner-ring Suburbs of the Metropolitan United States*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010. p. 8.
- iii Ibid., p. 39
- iv Ibid., p. 42
- v Ibid., p. 44
- vi Ibid
- vii Ibid, 48
- viii Tierney, John. "Remaking Columbus's Most Downtrodden Neighborhood." *The Atlantic*, October 1, 2014. Accessed March 10, 2016. <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/10/remaking-columbus-most-downtrodden-neighborhood/380860/>.
- ix The EDGE Group, Side Street Planning, DDA, and UDG. "West Franklinton Plan". City of Columbus: 2012.
- x Ibid.
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- xxx Ibid.
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xiii Nellemann, Christina. "Gregory's Homeless Homes Project." Tiny House Blog. February 17, 2014. Accessed April 04, 2016. <http://tinyhouseblog.com/humanitarian/gregorys-homeless-homes-project/>.

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Figure 1 -Hanlon, Bernadette. *Once the American Dream: Inner-ring Suburbs of the Metropolitan United States*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010. p. 42.

Figure 2 - Monroe, Jennifer. *Untitled*. May 27, 2015. *Wonderfilled Volume Two*, Franklinton, Ohio. In *Wonderfilled Magazine*. May 27, 2015. Accessed August 1, 2016. <http://www.wonderfilledmag.com/dailywonder/2015/5/26/franklinton>.

Figure 3 - "Franklinton Detailed Profile." City Data. Accessed March 13, 2016. <http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Franklinton-Columbus-OH.html>.

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Figure 4 - *The Katrina Cottages*." Marianne Cusato. Accessed April 01, 2016. <http://www.mariannekusato.com/#!cart/cg3r>

Notes:

1. The City of Columbus has a Landbank of vacant lots, city owned parcels, and city owned homes which were procured by the Landbank after tax foreclosure or sheriffs auction. Currently in West Franklinton alone, 98 properties are controlled by the Landbank with another 67 with pending tax foreclosure^{xiii}. There are a total of 61 vacant properties listed for sale on the Columbus Landbank website ranging from \$630.00- \$9,900.00, many with the vacant structures included.
2. For a home to gain the tiny designation it ranges anywhere from 100-400 SF, with the next range being small homes, those 400-900 SF.

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Addendum

JORDAN NEFF-ESTLE

Miami University

INTRODUCTION

The journey that I have been on during this thesis process has been valuable to me as a designer and contributed immensely to the outcome presented as part of the Miami University's Graduate Thesis Presentations. Typically, in academia a project statement is given outlining the problem to be solved or outlining the programmatic requirements of the project, followed by a specific set of deliverables which should be reached for final presentation. The thesis process, however, is fully immersive and requires one to delve into a passion, determine a path and issue, research both the problem and potential solutions, and then decide the best the built outcome to which will solve the identified problem. You are not handed a project statement but are largely self-guided, taking your own investigation and research, with the help of your committee, to determine deliverables. Deliverables which, when presented show the depth and breadth of research as well as a viable solution. It is in this process that I believe I have developed as an emerging architect.

PROCESS

My thesis process began as a critique on the American way of living, considering why we are

choosing to live in large homes and the impact that making smaller choices would have.

That would have been a fine paper, however I wanted upon completing a draft I wanted to make a project that had more impact, one that went beyond giving a critique and an alternate solution. I wanted to design something that held the potential to enact change. The new social agenda moved me to look for a community which my design, if realized, would be impactful and become a catalyst for change.

This idea brought me to choose Franklinton, because of the work I had seen done in the commercial corridor while at The Neighborhood Design Center. I felt that the success of my project would be found in helping a community that I had once been a part of, yet was still in need today. Alongside my personal experience the in-depth research utilized in my paper allowed me to become more than a mere pedestrian in the project but gave me a full idea of what Franklinton needed and how I believe the solution would need to be framed. My research allowed me to cater my design in a way which had the potential to solve multiple issues within the neighborhood; high vacancy, lack of affordable/quality housing, and poor economic vitality. Thus, the small house situated on vacant lots was the solution I believed would address the issues on multiple levels.

Beginning with the initial criteria of Tiny home, under 400 SF, I began my design by asking *"how the implementation of tiny homes on vacant lots, specifically situated in the inner suburb of Franklinton, Ohio, can support the planning initiatives already in place and serve as a way to repopulate and revitalize the changing landscape?"*

This thesis statement shifted with deeper investigation of site, landscape and building form to become *"Through the implementation of intimate housing structures and cooperative landscapes the existing cadence of the street and vacant urban fabric will be re-densified and revitalized, bringing life and economic viability into a neighborhood once in despair."* The shift from tiny houses to intimate housing structures came with the formulation of conceptual plans.

Pushing myself to stay under 400 square feet was a criterion that with reflection was a hindrance to the overall outcome of the project. The quality of the space and interaction from one programmatic element to another was more important to me in the creation of great spaces than a strict square footage requirement. Maintaining a small footprint was still essential to my project, and the houses remained under 500 SF, but special quality and interaction was now a stronger driving force.

The freedom from the size limitation allowed me to focus on the interrelationships of elements and suggested the secondary change to my thesis statement, cooperative landscapes. The relationship from inside to outside and from one house to another became extremely important

to the viability of the solution. It was no longer enough to have a small space but it became critical that that space extend into the landscape and landscape elements to inform the relationship of inside to outside. This connection removed the visual boundaries of a small footprint and further extended the square footage, at least visually. If people were to live in the smaller homes there needed to be the added visual connection from inside to outside, making the spaces expand and garnering feelings of living in a much larger space.

The outcome was greatly affected by the shift in my thesis statement and created houses that were stitched within the landscape and became vital to one another rather than being placed as an object on the landscape. The strength of the relationship of elements both programmatic within the house and in the landscape, is where I feel my project had its most strength. Without the shift in the thesis agenda I feel the project wouldn't have grown to the quality it is but remained stagnant hung up on a square footage requirement.

FEEDBACK

The presentation garnered feedback and suggestions which I believe would enhance the project immensely. The main take away and next steps for the project would to incorporate the existing homes and neighborhood fabric into the project, including opportunities for them to have urban gardens and small muse houses as well. Though the initial criteria were to occupy the vacant lots the addition to the existing fabric would greatly increase the community goals I

had and truly be the catalyst I hoped the few houses would be. It would also help to stitch the neighborhood back together, where my solution as it stands would be insertions. The collective prospect of the street block as part of the whole social agenda is valuable for a further solution.

THANK YOU

This project and its successful completion would not have been possible without the guidance of my committee. I have immense gratitude for their support in my journey. The feedback was vital to the trajectory of my project and essential to the final outcome. In the interim of pin-ups and formal presentations, the critique of both studio professors, John Becker and Dick Overton, as well as that of Diane Fellows with the research paper helped to motivate progress and add depth and quality to the process which has allowed me to produce and present my final thesis.

I would also like to thank my classmates, friends, and family for the support and moral provided when stress set in and as the end drew near. Their advice and listening ear eased the growing pains of a year and a half process and pushed me toward the finish line.

A final thanks to the reviewers and thesis respondent Robert Church for the valuable feedback and care as I presented a project I was truly passionate about.

Thank you!

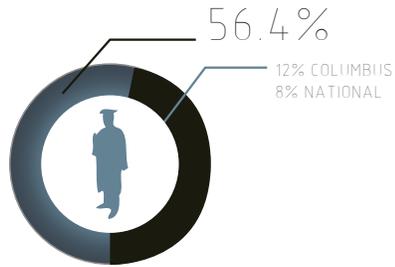
Site Analysis

Overview



KEY MAP

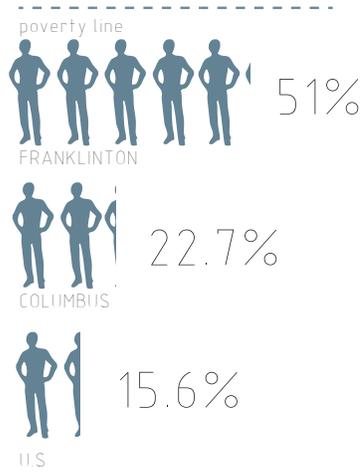
Columbus Public Health's socioeconomic vulnerability index ranks Franklinton residents among the most socioeconomically vulnerable and susceptible to poor health outcomes in Columbus



less than high school education



average household income



DEMOGRAPHICS

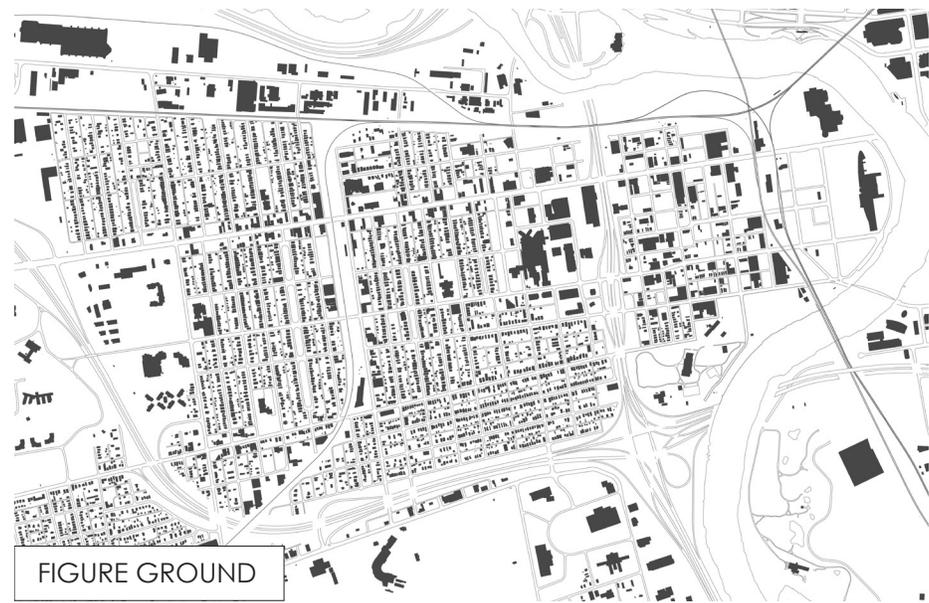


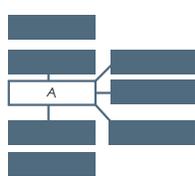
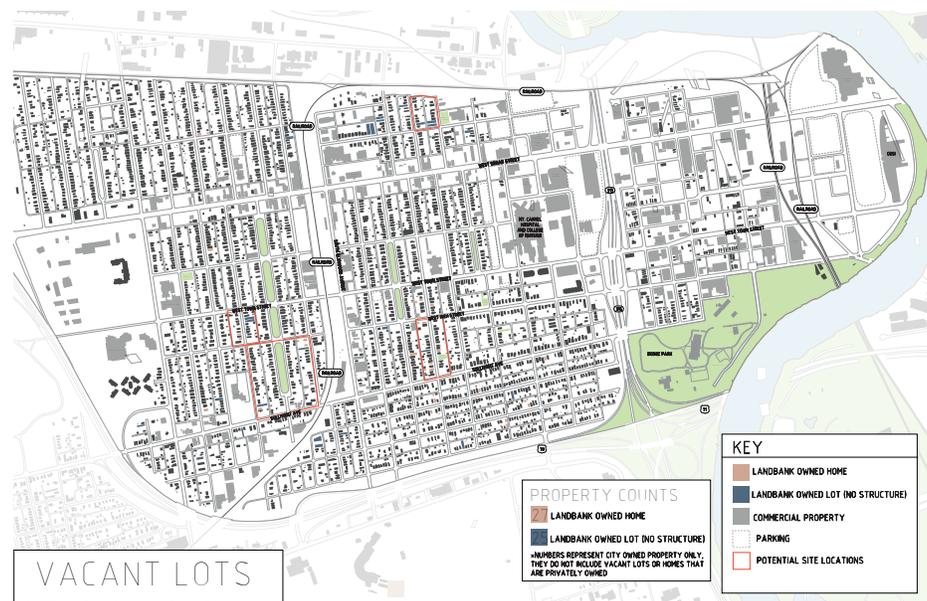
West Franklinton Plan



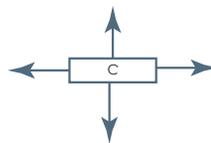
East Franklinton Plan

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT





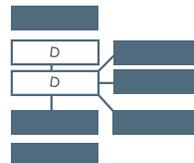
TYPE A - VACANT LOT SURROUNDED BY OCCUPIED BUILDINGS



TYPE C - VACANT LOT REMOVED FROM OCCUPIED BUILDINGS

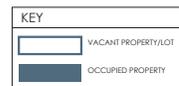


TYPE B - VACANT LOT ADJACENT TO SINGLE OCCUPIED BUILDING



TYPE D - VACANT LOTS SURROUNDED BY OCCUPIED BUILDINGS

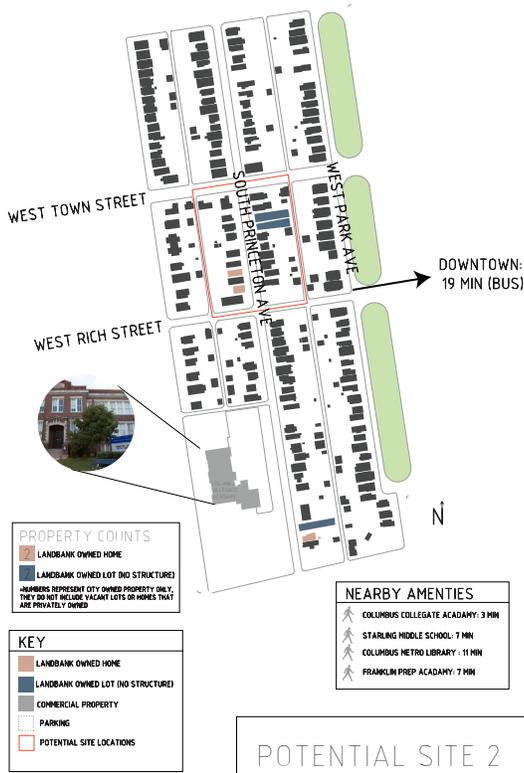
VACANT LOT TYPOLOGIES



Site Analysis

Potential Sites

Site 2



POTENTIAL SITE 2

176-223 S. PRINCETON AVE.



NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

1910'S AVERAGE YEAR BUILT

1,358 SF AVERAGE SIZE

3 AVERAGE BED

1 AVERAGE BATH

\$29,305 AVERAGE MARKET VALUE

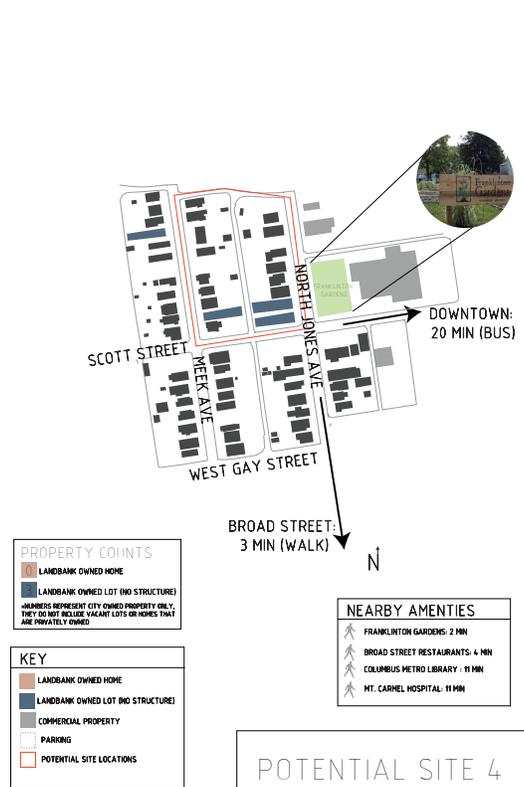
PROPERTY COUNTS

- LANDBANK OWNED HOME
- LANDBANK OWNED LOT (NO STRUCTURE)

*NUMBERS REPRESENT CITY OWNED PROPERTY ONLY; THEY DO NOT INCLUDE VACANT LOTS OR HOMES THAT ARE PRIVATELY OWNED.

POTENTIAL SITE 2

Site 3



POTENTIAL SITE 4

69-107 N. JONES AVE. /
72-118 N. JONES AVE.

NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

1900'S AVERAGE YEAR BUILT

1,063 SF AVERAGE SIZE

2 AVERAGE BED

1 AVERAGE BATH

\$23,952 AVERAGE MARKET VALUE

PROPERTY COUNTS

- LANDBANK OWNED HOME
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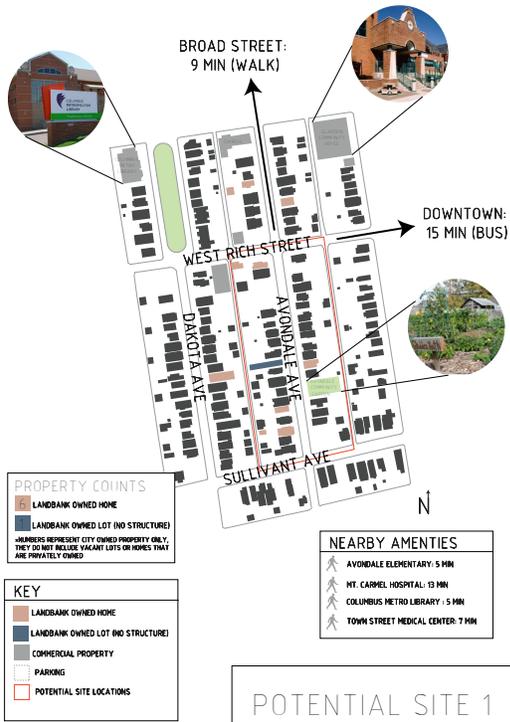


POTENTIAL SITE 4

Site Analysis

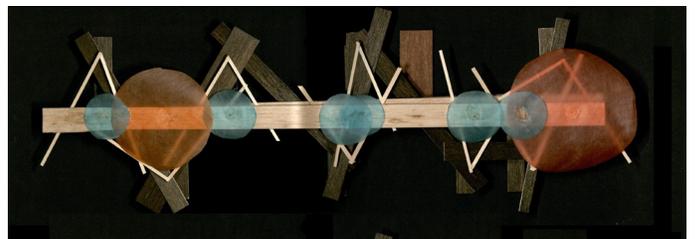
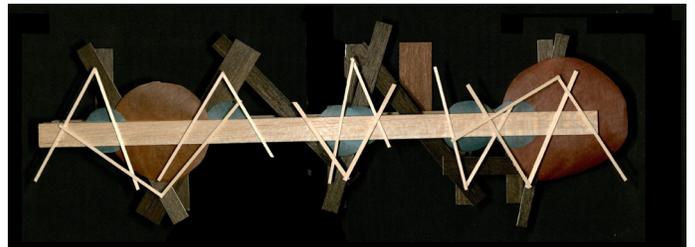
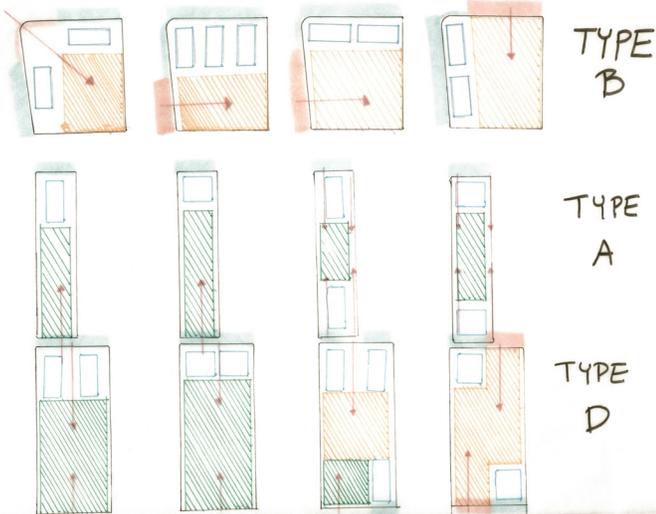
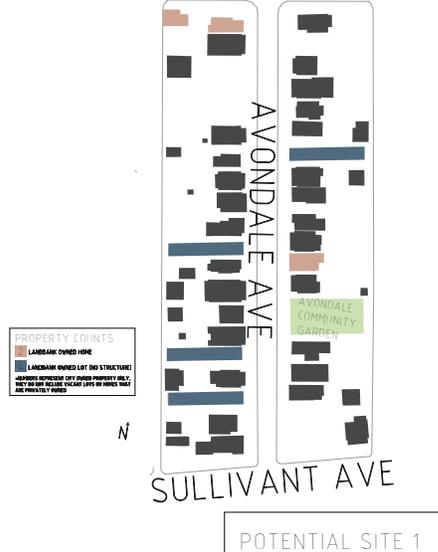
Chosen Site

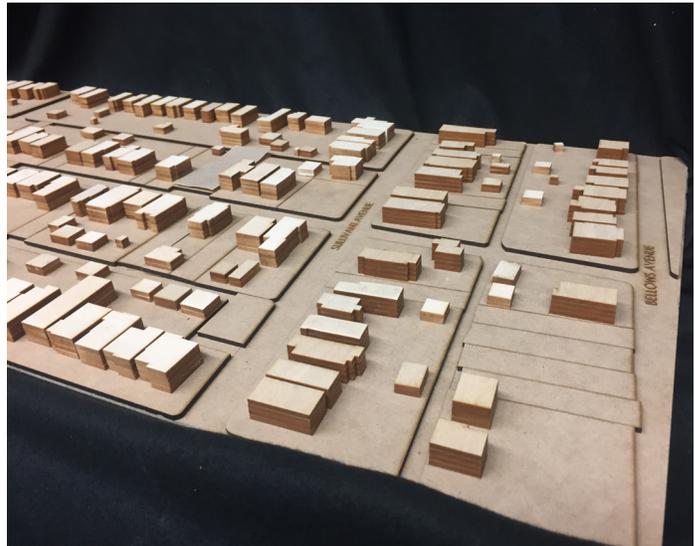
Site 1



240-313 AVONDALE AVE.

WEST RICH STREET

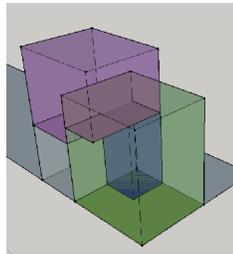
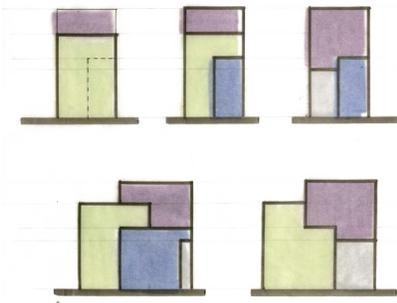




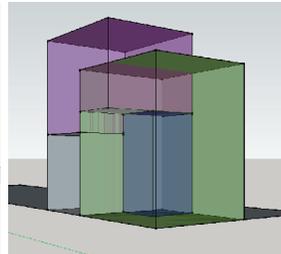
Process

Houses

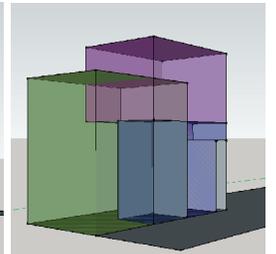
Program



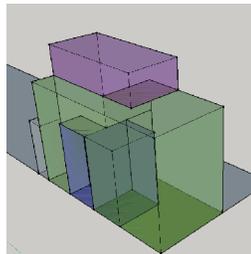
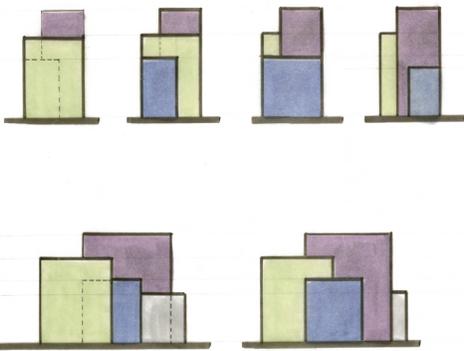
PERSPECTIVE (BIRDS EYE)



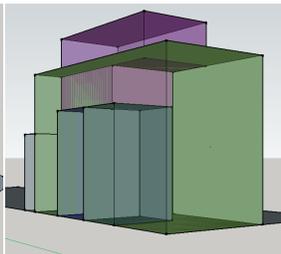
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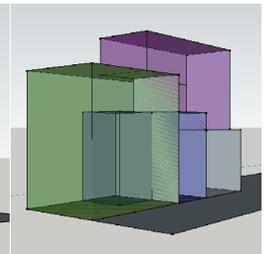
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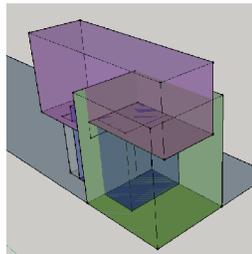
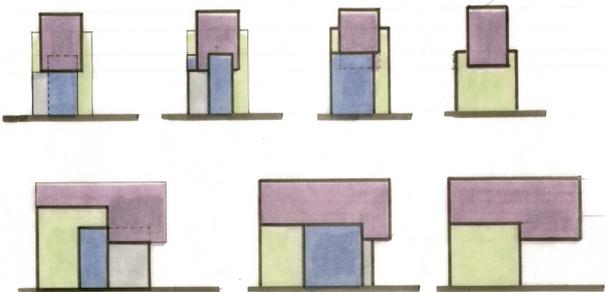
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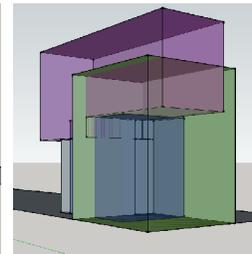
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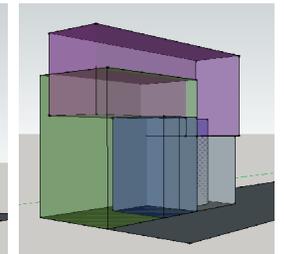
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PERSPECTIVE (BIRDS EYE)

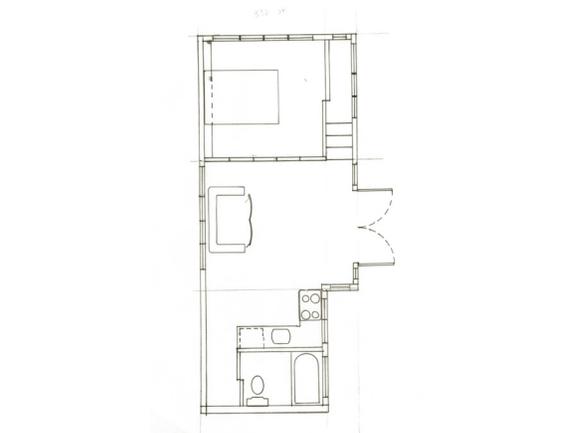
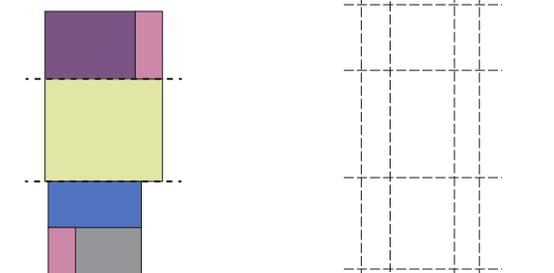
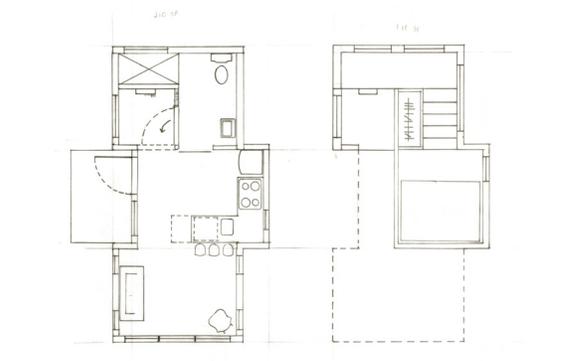
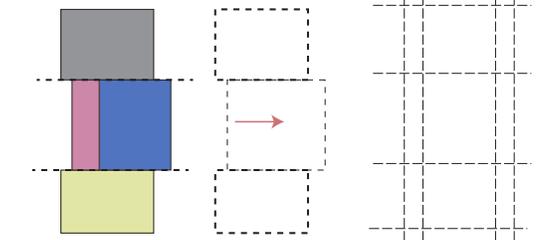
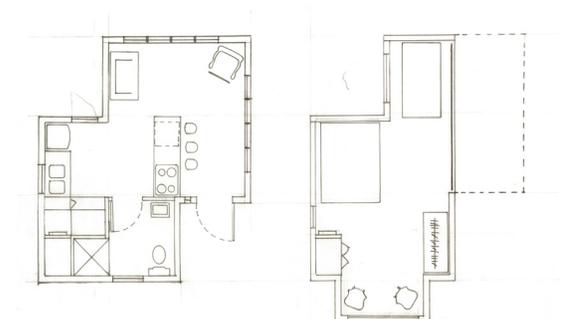
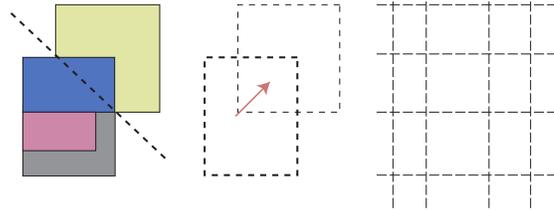
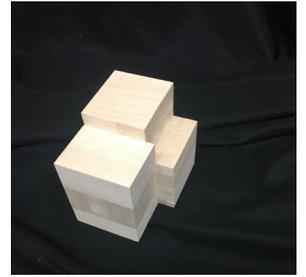
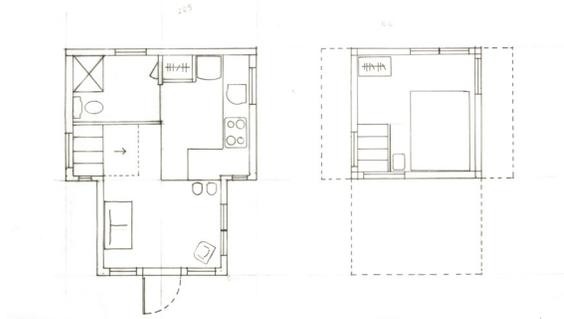
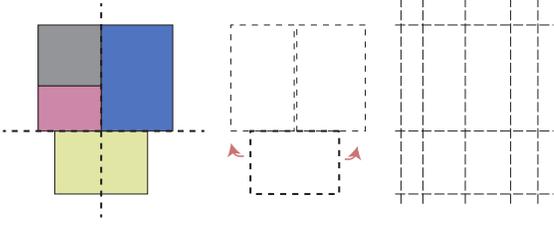


PERSPECTIVE (EYE LEVEL)

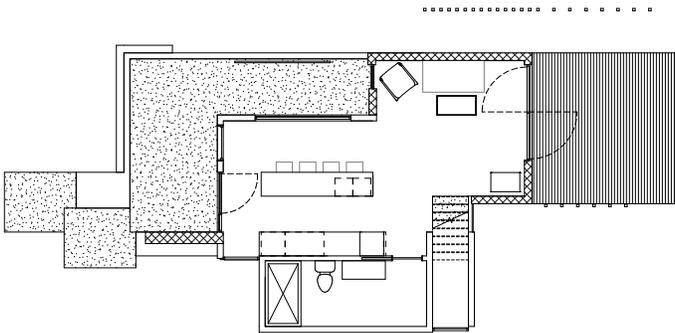


PERSPECTIVE (EYE LEVEL)

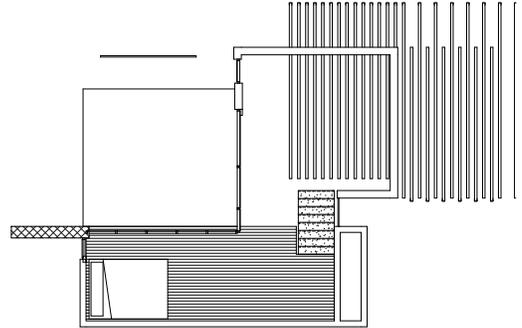
Concept



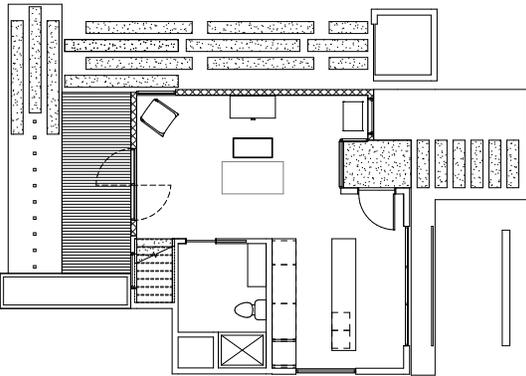
Lot A



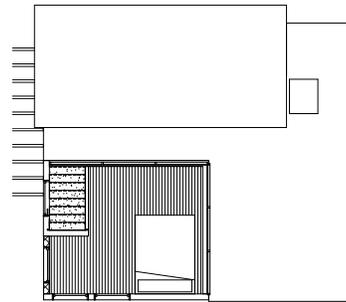
1 Street House Ground Floor
1/4" = 1'-0"



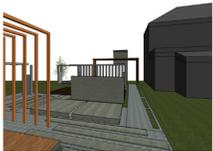
1 Street House Loft
1/4" = 1'-0"



1 Alley House Ground Floor
1/4" = 1'-0"



1 Alley House Loft
1/4" = 1'-0"



1 alley view from deck



1 view from garden toward alley



1 alley view from gravel garden



1 Street House View from Gravel garden

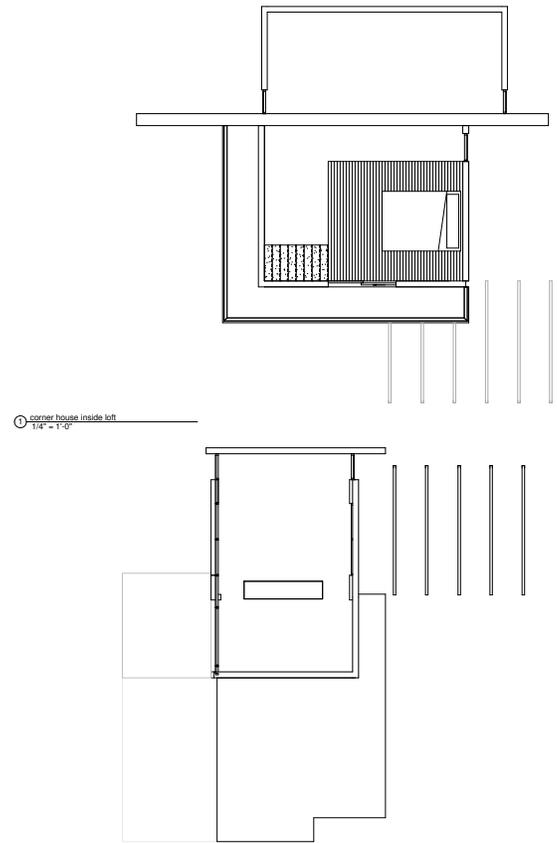
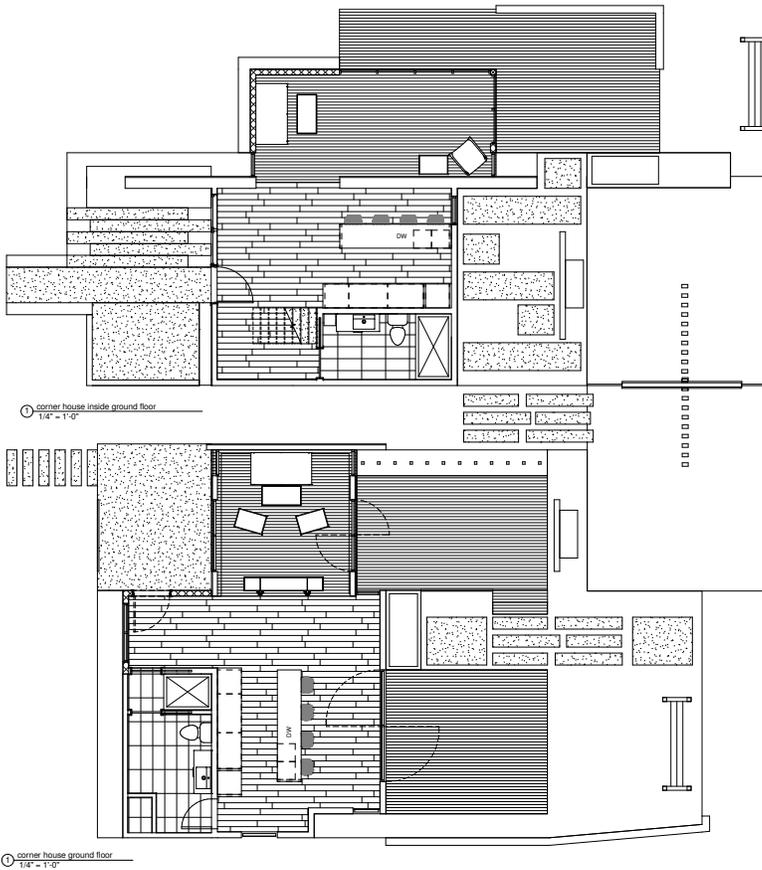
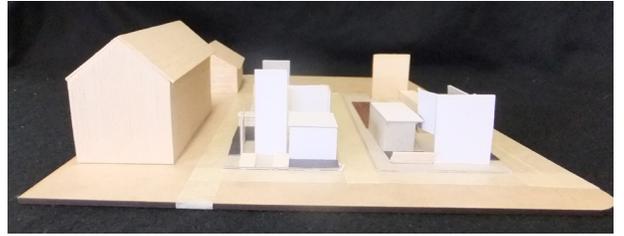


1 Street House View from deck



1 view from garden toward street

Lot B

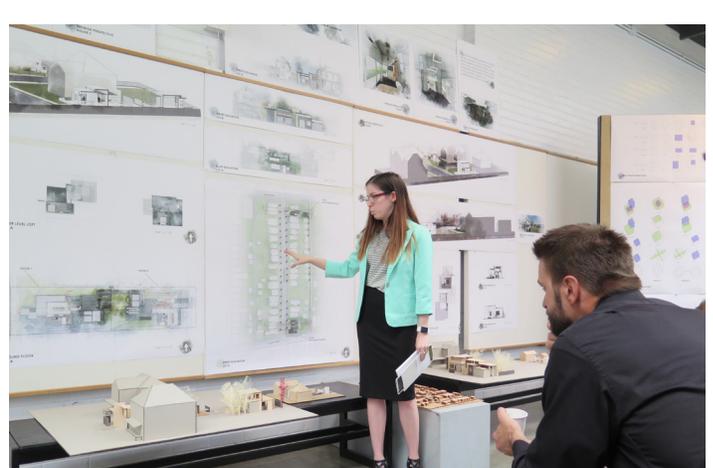


EMPTY SPACES:

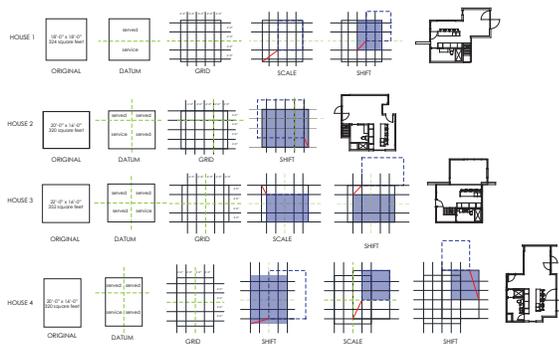


**THE REVITALIZATION OF INNER-RING SUBURBS
THROUGH THE REHOUSING OF VACANT LOTS**

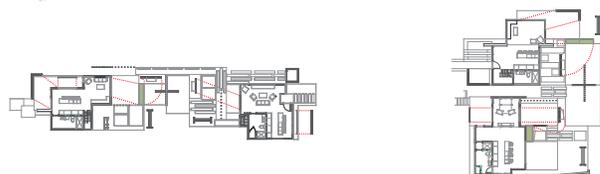
“Through the implementation of intimate housing structures and cooperative landscapes the existing cadence of the street and vacant urban fabric will be re-densified and revitalized, bringing life and economic viability into a neighborhood once in despair.”



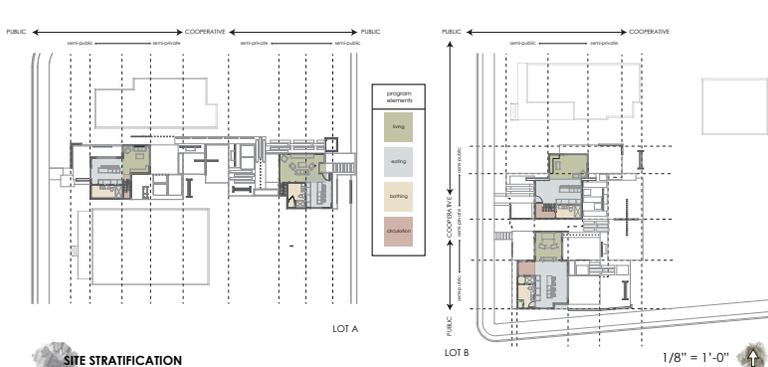
Diagrams



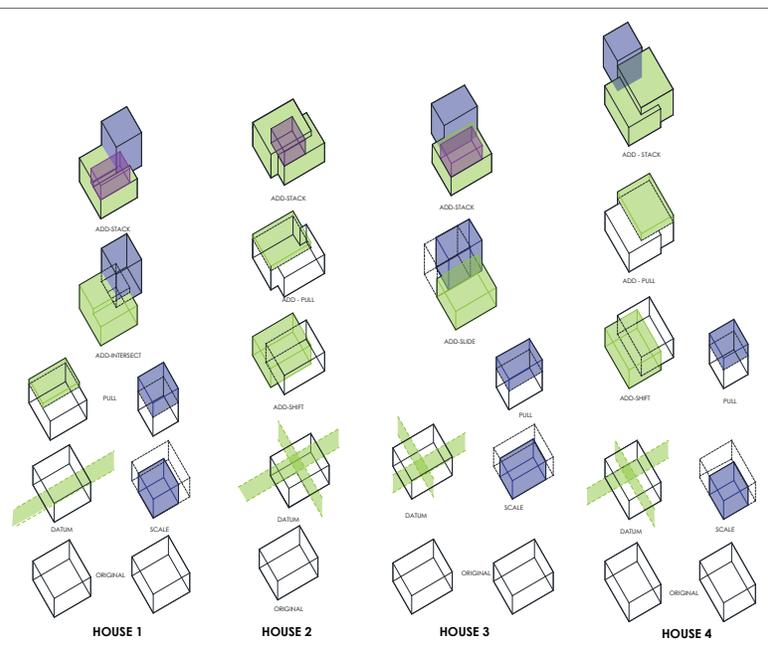
PLAN TRANSFORMATIONS 1/8" = 1'-0"



SITE ELEMENT TRANSFORMATIONS 1/8" = 1'-0"



SITE STRATIFICATION 1/8" = 1'-0"



CONCEPTUAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Site



**STREET ELEVATION
LOT B**

1/4" = 1' -0"



**STREET PERSPECTIVE
LOT B**



**ALLEY ELEVATION
LOT A**

1/4" = 1' -0"



**ALLEY PERSPECTIVE
LOT A**



**STREET ELEVATION
LOT A**

1/4" = 1' -0"



**STREET PERSPECTIVE
LOT A**



**STREET ELEVATION
LOT B**

1" = 20' -0"



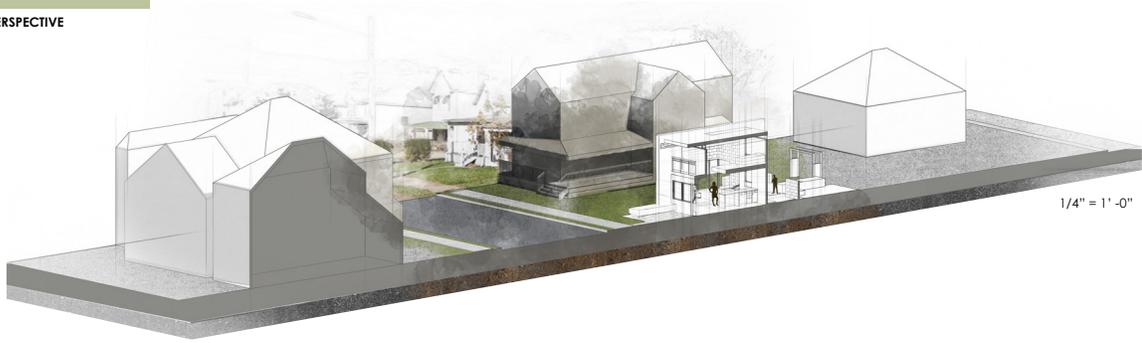
**EXISTING CONDITIONS
LOT A**



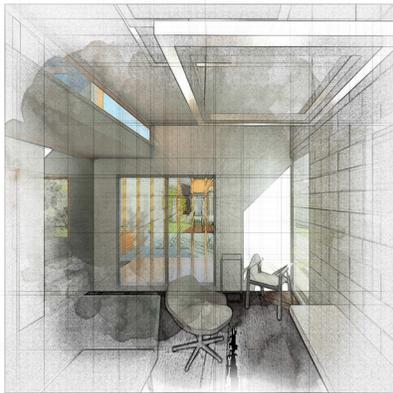
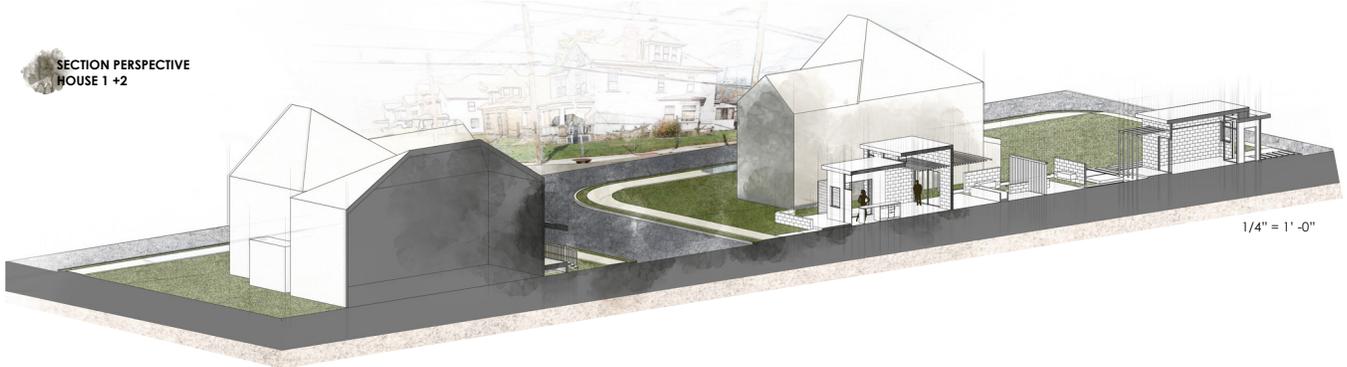
**EXISTING CONDITIONS
LOT B**

Lot A

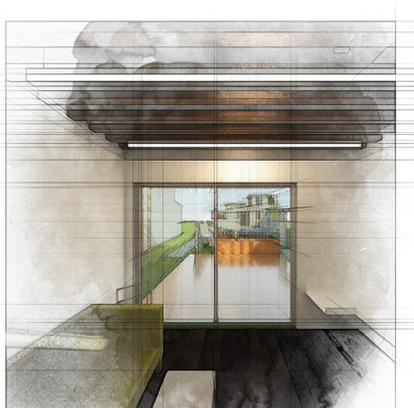
SECTION PERSPECTIVE
HOUSE 3



SECTION PERSPECTIVE
HOUSE 1 + 2



INTERIOR PERSPECTIVE
HOUSE 2



INTERIOR PERSPECTIVE
HOUSE 1

SECTION PERSPECTIVE
HOUSE 1



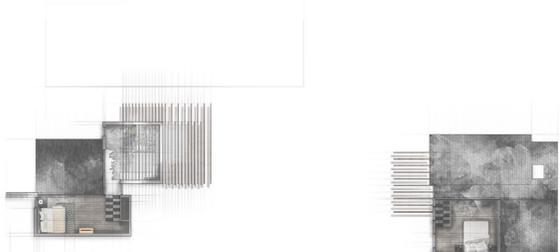
1/4" = 1'-0"

SECTION PERSPECTIVE
HOUSE 2



1/4" = 1'-0"

UPPER LEVEL LOFT
LOT A



1/4" = 1'-0"

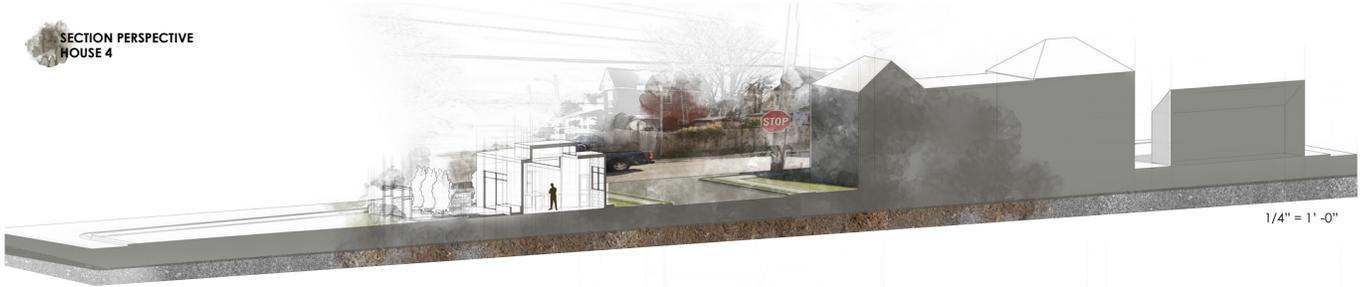
GROUND FLOOR
LOT A



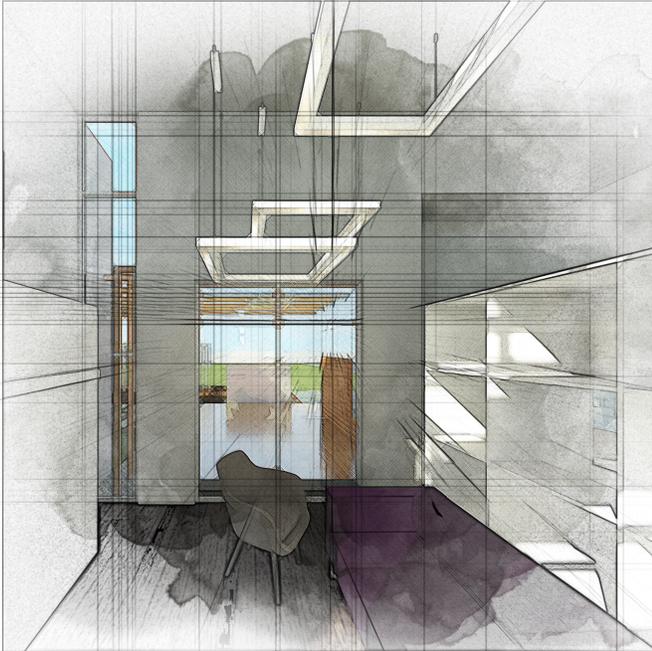
1/4" = 1'-0"

Lot B

SECTION PERSPECTIVE
HOUSE 4



1/4" = 1' - 0"



INTERIOR PERSPECTIVE
HOUSE 4



INTERIOR PERSPECTIVE
HOUSE 3



SECTION PERSPECTIVE
HOUSE

1/4" = 1' - 0"



SECTION PERSPECTIVE
HOUSE 4

1/4" = 1' - 0"



GROUND FLOOR
LOT B

1/4" = 1' - 0"



UPPER LEVEL LOFT
LOT B

1/4" = 1' - 0"

Model

