

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: MISSING LANDMARKS: LONGING FOR A
PLACE THAT KNOWS YOU

Byron De La Cruz, Master of Architecture, 2025

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Through an exploration of cultural memory and place-making, this thesis investigates how architecture can preserve the communal cultures and spatial structures that sustain collective identity within immigrant communities. Set within the suburban fabric, the proposed cultural landmark becomes a sanctuary where food, agriculture, and artistic expression safeguard cultural memory, carrying forward the wisdom and practices immigrants bring from their motherlands. This thesis creates a space rooted in heritage that nurtures the continuity of cultural knowledge while offering educational support and economic opportunity through a community kitchen for emerging food entrepreneurs and small, accessible vendor stalls. An adjacent service wing provides daily meals for community members in need, extending the center's commitment to community care. By uniting cultural preservation with social and economic resilience, the cultural center honors the memories of the past while embracing the possibilities of a new place, fostering a balanced and enduring sense of belonging.

MISSING LANDMARKS: LONGING FOR A PLACE THAT KNOWS YOU

by

Byron De La Cruz

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this body of work to my parents, who have sacrificed their lives to give me opportunities they never had and who instilled in me the hunger, work ethic, and patience to build a better life. And to my wife, Karen, who always believes in me and taught me that it is okay to relax and take breaks sometimes.

Table of Contents

Dedication	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Figures	v
Chapter 1: The Illusion of The American Dream	1
The American Dream.....	1
Hierarchy of Needs	2
Barriers to Belonging.....	3
Architectural Opportunity	3
Chapter 2: The Immigrant Experience.....	5
The Experience & Longing for Home	9
Culture Yes, People No.....	12
Health Risks and Living in Limbo.....	15
Memory, Place, Identity.....	19
Summary and Relevance of Arguments	22
Chapter 3: Methodology	25
Initial Inquiry	25
Research Methods.....	28
Chapter 4: Precedent Studies	33
Introduction.....	33
Municipal Food Market	34
Essex Market.....	36
Santa Caterina Market.....	38
Cooking School for Migrants.....	40
Museum of African American History and Culture	44
Summary	46
Chapter 5: Zones and Program	48
Introduction.....	48
Food	51
Community	52
Safe	53
Summary	54
.....	55
Chapter 6: Site Selection and Analysis.....	56
Introduction.....	56
Existing Conditions.....	59
Summary	62
Chapter 7: Conceptual Testing of the Thesis	63
Early Exploration.....	63
Conceptual Program.....	66
Further Exploration.....	68
Summary	73
Chapter 8: Towards Possible Futures	74
Introduction.....	74

Tools To Claim Space.....	75
Negotiation of Space.....	79
Site Design.....	83
Conclusion	84
Bibliography	86

List of Figures

Figure 1: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (McLeod 2025).....	2
Figure 2: Immigrant Share of U.S. Population (Passel 2024).....	6
Figure 3: “Group of Immigrants” Charcoal and Watercolor 1890	6
Figure 4: Shared Consumer Experiencing of Home (Kreuzer, Mühlbacher, and Von Wallpach 2018)	11
Figure 5: (Falconier, Huerta, and Hendrickson 2016)	17
Figure 6: (Chavoshi et al. 2024)	22
Figure 7: Thesis Idea Brainstorm (De La Cruz 2025)	26
Figure 8: Mind Mapping (De La Cruz 2025).....	27
Figure 9: Context Aerial (De La Cruz 2025)	34
Figure 10: Building Axon (De La Cruz 2025).....	34
Figure 11: Building Form (De La Cruz 2025)	35
Figure 12: Interior Spaces (De La Cruz 2025).....	36
Figure 13: Context Aerial (De La Cruz 2025)	37
Figure 14: Sections (De La Cruz 2025)	38
Figure 15: Aerial Context (De La Cruz 2025)	38
Figure 16: Elevation and Section (De La Cruz 2025).....	39
Figure 17: Ground Plan (De La Cruz 2025)	40
Figure 18: Axon and Program (De La Cruz 2025)	40
Figure 19: Interior Perspectives (De La Cruz 2025).....	42
Figure 20: Second Floor Plan (De La Cruz 2025)	43
Figure 21: Context Aerial (De La Cruz 2025)	44
Figure 22: Cultural Inspiration (De La Cruz 2025)	44
Figure 23: Space for Reflection (De La Cruz 2025).....	46
Figure 24: Abstract Program (De La Cruz 2025)	51
Figure 25: Food Zones (De La Cruz 2025).....	52
Figure 26: Support Zones (De La Cruz 2025)	53
Figure 27: Safe Zones (De La Cruz 2025).....	55
Figure 28: Cultural Collaboration (De La Cruz 2025).....	56
Figure 29: Site Zero Location (De La Cruz 2025).....	60
Figure 30: On Site Pictures (De La Cruz 2025).....	61
Figure 31: Street Elevation (De La Cruz 2025)	61
Figure 32: Street Sections (De La Cruz 2025).....	62
Figure 33: Massing Concept 1 (De La Cruz 2025).....	63
Figure 34: Massing Concept 2 (De La Cruz 2025).....	64
Figure 35: Massing Concept 3 (De La Cruz 2025).....	65
Figure 36: Program Matrix (De La Cruz 2025)	66
Figure 37: Conceptual Plan 1 (De La Cruz 2025)	68
Figure 38: Conceptual Aerial 1 (De La Cruz 2025)	69
Figure 39: Conceptual Plan 2 (De La Cruz 2025)	70
Figure 40: Conceptual Aerial 2 (De La Cruz 2025)	71
Figure 41: Conceptual Plan 3 (De La Cruz 2025)	72
Figure 42: Conceptual Aerial 3 (De La Cruz 2025)	73

Figure 43: U.S. Intervention Causes Displacement (De La Cruz 2025).....	74
Figure 44: Cultural Memories (De La Cruz 2025)	76
Figure 45: Food Garden Perspective (De La Cruz 2025)	77
Figure 46: Food Vendor Plaza (De La Cruz 2025).....	78
Figure 47: Community Seed Library (De La Cruz 2025).....	79
Figure 48: Existing Building Anatomy (De La Cruz 2025)	80
Figure 49: New Building Anatomy (De La Cruz 2025)	80
Figure 50: Ground Floor Plan (De La Cruz 2025).....	81
Figure 51: Second Floor Plan (De La Cruz 2025)	82
Figure 52: New Building Sections (De La Cruz 2025).....	83
Figure 53: Site Aerial (De La Cruz 2025)	84
Figure 54: Section Perspective (De La Cruz 2025)	85

Chapter 1: The Illusion of The American Dream

The American Dream

The United States of America, or better known as the land of opportunity, has successfully developed a global image of itself that sells the idea of freedom and a better quality of life. It is an attractive proposition that seems promising for many around the world who live in undesired living conditions. This idea has been sold and can be considered as the American Dream in which, “each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.”¹ Many around the world have bought this idea and have traveled in millions to the United States to find a place to establish themselves and prosper. The issue with the American Dream lies in the events after arriving. Often, immigrants find themselves building their life from the ground up which is a challenging task as they many must find a place to live and work to survive in a country they are unfamiliar with in terms of language, social norms, and the built environment. This challenge can be addressed by establishing spaces that allow immigrant communities to anchor themselves and preserve cultural memory. These environments serve as essential foundations for those seeking stability and opportunity while maintaining their cultural roots.

¹ James Truslow Adams. 1931. *The Epic of America*. Little, Brown, and Co., <http://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.262385>

Hierarchy of Needs

There is an interesting link between James Truslow Adams' idea of the American dream and Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs in the sense that both



Figure 1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

believe that the “dream” or “purpose” of life is to reach one’s fullest potential. If that is to be the goal of the American Dream, then there is work to be done as there are many obstacles, which will be

elaborated on in chapter 2, that prevents individuals from doing so. Maslow claims that physiological needs such as food, sleep, and clothing need to be prioritized before safety needs related to employment, resources, and health can be fully addressed.² This pattern continues in the hierarchy of needs that are much higher including love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization as demonstrated in Figure 1. The hierarchy of needs in the context of immigrants in the United States can be related to the cycle of life that immigrants have daily. Often, immigrants find work, usually laborious and low paying, and seek to live as cheaply as possible by renting to expand their income. Although physiological and safety needs are somewhat met, achieving the need of belonging is still a challenge for many immigrants in the United States.

² McLeod. 2025. “Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.” ResearchGate. March 14, 2025. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/383241976_Maslow's_Hierarchy_of_Needs

Barriers to Belonging

Policies, discrimination, and cultural barriers prevent many immigrants from achieving the need of belonging in communities throughout the U.S. In the context of this thesis, culture is to be understood as a fluid human construct that is subject to constant change from historical, present, and future forces. It can be observed that many incoming immigrants carry a culture full of traditions revolving around the idea of family, community, and collaboration. These ideas and cultural habits are challenged when they arrive in the U.S. as it is apparent that the U.S. carries an individualist mindset which goes against many family-oriented beliefs. On one hand, ideas revolving around policies, discrimination, and cultural norms are factors that challenge the need for love and belonging, and on the other hand, there is a lack of places in marginalized communities that address this need on a communal scale. For immigrant individuals to achieve their “fullest stature,” as Adams defines the American Dream, there must be a place in marginalized communities that allows individuals to reach the highest level of personal development and success. Once such a place exists, especially in countries such as the U.S. where it is difficult for immigrant communities to break out of the cycle of isolation, then individuals can begin to address higher needs related to belonging, esteem, and self-actualization to make the American Dream a reality.

Architectural Opportunity

When thinking of space in terms of urban organization and architectural expression, the question becomes, how can architecture facilitate the immigrant

integration process by supporting cultural practices, empowering individuals through educational and financial opportunities, and commemorating immigrant communities through place-making in the United States? This question seeks to address issues related to how easily immigrants integrate into a new culture, how space dedicated to knowledge and skill building can empower individuals, how space can facilitate cultural negotiation and create dialogues of learning as opposed to rejection, and how communities can be honored for bringing unique cultural knowledge for all to experience. This question also seeks to make the American Dream a reality by empowering immigrants and providing an opportunity to meet the highest need of self-actualization to reach the highest level of success that many immigrants dream of when deciding to come to the U.S. for a better life.

Chapter 2: The Immigrant Experience

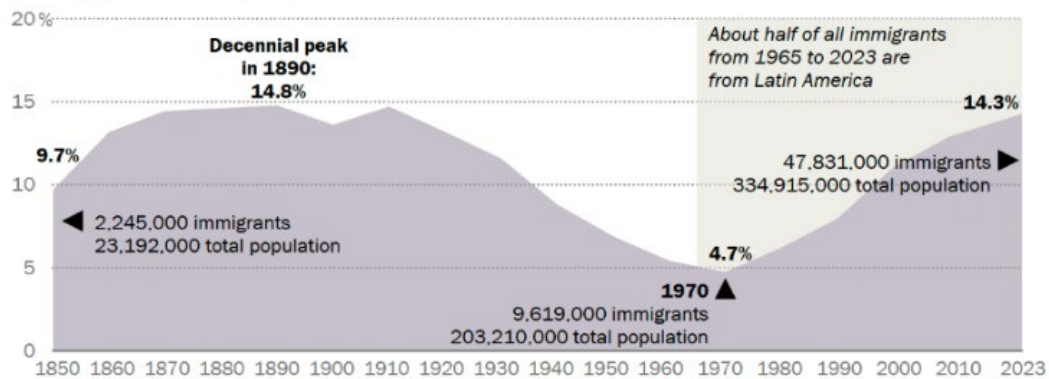
Immigration has long been a topic of debate across the world, especially in the United States. The United States has a long history with immigrants and is a melting pot of diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds. The U.S. population is a dynamic mix between natives and non-native individuals which creates a unique blend of people and culture. As of 2023, Immigrants in the U.S. account for 14.3% of the population, which is the highest since 1910.³ It is evident in Figure 1 that the peak incoming of immigrants occurred around the year 1890 where many people across the world decided to leave home and immigrate to the United States. Many immigrants were fleeing crop failure, job shortages, rising taxes, and famine. The United States was perceived to be the land of economic opportunity and freedom.⁴ The United States has historically been the land in which populations across the world seek freedom and new opportunities. As the U.S. developed over time, immigrant children became natives and were no longer considered immigrants, and the United States nationality began to grow.

³ Passel, Mohamad Moslimani and Jeffrey S. 2024. "What the Data Says about Immigrants in the U.S." *Pew Research Center* (blog). September 27, 2024. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/09/27/key-findings-about-us-immigrants/>.

⁴ "Immigration to the United States, 1851-1900 | Rise of Industrial America, 1876-1900 | U.S. History Primary Source Timeline | Classroom Materials at the Library of Congress | Library of Congress." n.d. Web page. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540 USA. Accessed March 29, 2025. <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/united-states-history-primary-source-timeline/rise-of-industrial-america-1876-1900/immigration-to-united-states-1851-1900/>.

Immigrant share of the U.S. population, 1850-2023

% of U.S. population that is foreign born



Note: Populations are rounded to the nearest 1,000. Shares are calculated using unrounded population numbers.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850-2000"; and Pew Research Center tabulations of 2010 and 2023 American Community Surveys.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 2 Immigrant Share of U.S. Population (left)



Figure 3 Immigrants.

Although there is a history of people immigrating to the U.S., the perception of immigrants today and in recent history has been altered and whether the country and its native-born citizens embrace immigrants is up for debate. It is apparent, especially in the U.S., that immigration is an issue when it comes to the people that

are coming in. Americans perceive immigrants as a threat to the economy, culture, crime, and national security.⁵ The negative perception Americans have on immigrants could be caused by many reasons including their personal experience with immigrants, their personal bias and beliefs, or experiences they hear about from other people and in the media.

The American perception of immigrants can be shaped by what they hear and what they see, however, what one hears and sees may not be true and can lead to generalizing and stereotyping a group of people. For example, in a study that examined the impact of group cues in immigration discourse on perceptions of threat and emotions, it was discovered that news emphasizing the cost of immigration boosts the perception that immigration is harmful. When Latino populations were highlighted in news media, white citizens believe that immigrants pose a greater problem than if white European immigrants were highlighted in the news.⁶ Group cues, such as negative stereotypes about Latinos, begin to form an image in the American mind and begins to form associations between problems in society with immigrant populations. When news outlets begin to paint immigration as a burden to a country, native-born individuals begin to form a negative connotation on immigrant groups and communities within the country. With enough reinforcement and reminders of the “burden” immigrants cause, native-born individuals begin to feel

⁵ Qi, Dan, and James C. Garand. 2024. “Perceptions of Threat, American National Identity, and Americans’ Attitudes Toward Documented and Undocumented Immigrants.” *Political Research Quarterly* 77 (3): 931–49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10659129241252660>.

⁶ Brader, Ted, Nicholas A. Valentino, and Elizabeth Suhay. 2008. “What Triggers Public Opposition to Immigration? Anxiety, Group Cues, and Immigration Threat.” *American Journal of Political Science* 52 (4): 959–78. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2008.00353.x>.

anxiety and start to believe that this claim of immigrants being a burden on American society is true.

Immigrants as individuals are often perceived as negative, however, the culture immigrants bring are often separated from the people and perceived differently. Diversity, culture, and ethnic foods have become amenities that attract affluent individuals to a neighborhood, which has led to rapid gentrification across the U.S. Gentrification. The phenomenon of gentrification is defined by Merriam-Webster as, “a process in which a poor area (as of a city) experiences an influx of middle-class or wealthy people who renovate and rebuild homes and businesses and which often results in an increase in property values and the displacement of earlier, usually poorer residents.”⁷ Many neighborhoods that have gone through this process tend to have restaurants of various ethnic groups that offer authentic meals; however, the individuals who once lived in that same neighborhood cannot afford to live there anymore. Ironically, “authenticity” is emphasized in restaurants grocers while ethnic, street food, and working-class dishes have been elevated to cater to affluent newcomers during the gentrification of a neighborhood.⁸ Culture diversity and authentic foods are desired and exist in gentrified neighborhoods, however, the people, who embody their culture and are the vessel to the creation of their authentic food and cultural expression, live outside of higher quality neighborhoods.

⁷ “Definition of GENTRIFICATION.” 2025. March 28, 2025. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/gentrification>.

⁸ Cohen, Nevin. 2018. “Feeding or Starving Gentrification: The Role of Food Policy.” Policy Brief. CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute. <https://cunyurbanfoodpolicy.org/resources/report/feeding-or-starving-gentrification/>.

As the United States stands as the land of opportunity with a long history of immigrants contributing to the richness of the country, it can be observed that food and culture are tied to people and place. Immigrants bring rich cultural knowledge and contribute to the uniqueness of a place, however, there lacks a place in which immigrant communities can solidify their presence without facing constant displacement and marginalization from high quality neighborhoods and spaces.

The Experience & Longing for Home

Immigrants who come to the United States are individuals who often seek better financial opportunities and living conditions than those in their home country. The desire to seek a better life embarks on a true odyssey that encompasses many struggles with a risk of losing their life along the way. Those who make it to the “land of opportunity” usually face a new world that is unfamiliar and difficult to navigate. Spatial organization amongst urban and suburban environments are not familiar to them, and to end a journey with the hope of finding light at the end of the tunnel with a land that is cold and desolate, begins to chip away at the cultural identity of a person. Early literature on intercultural adaptation assumes that immigrants would adapt their new culture by the process of deculturating, unlearn their original culture, and acculturating, acquire their new culture, which leads to a process of complete assimilation.⁹ The process of assimilation has been viewed as the ideal strategy for

⁹ Christmas, Christine N., and Gina G. and Barker. 2014. “The Immigrant Experience: Differences in Acculturation, Intercultural Sensitivity, and Cognitive Flexibility Between the First and Second Generation of Latino Immigrants.” *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication* 7 (3): 238–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17513057.2014.929202>

immigrants who seek to be part of the host society. Doing so can lead to the erasure of cultural knowledge and practice as one can imagine that, in order to fully assimilate; an individual will stop their practices and habits associated with their original culture and begin to participate in processes that are aligned with the host society's cultural practices instead.

Furthermore, culture, tradition, identity, sense of belonging, and knowledge brought by immigrant communities begins to dissipate without a place that embraces their arrival. Many immigrants hold strong ties to their home country and the culture that shaped who they are. Memories of past experiences can shape what home means to an individual. Sensorial experiences related to accents, smells, tastes, and sounds shape an individual's first experiences of home. As immigrants leave their country of origin, the act of reflecting can magnify those experiences of home, "with home taking on a utopian-nostalgic character."¹⁰ Immigrants face a challenge seeking 'home' in a new country and often find relating back to their past experiences as ways to maintain identity. Many immigrants go through the same experience in which they find themselves in a new environment that lacks familiarity, however, there are ways in which immigrants from various cultures share the same lived experiences of being immigrants and find connections across various cultures through cultural acts themselves. For example, traditional foods, the process of making them, and eating rituals have strong symbolic value in a new cultural environment. To continue tradition in food preparation the necessary ingredients must be sourced, and

¹⁰ Kreuzer, Maria, Hans Mühlbacher, and Sylvia Von Wallpach. 2018. "Home in the Re-Making: Immigrants' Transcultural Experiencing of Home." *Journal of Business Research* 91 (October):334–41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.10.047>.

“immigrants neither spare expense nor efforts to obtain ingredients and spices from their native country via online purchase or relatives.”¹¹ Many immigrants find food as a means of communication to their home country and seek out ways to experience, in the host country, what was once experienced back home as a strategy to relive a past experience.

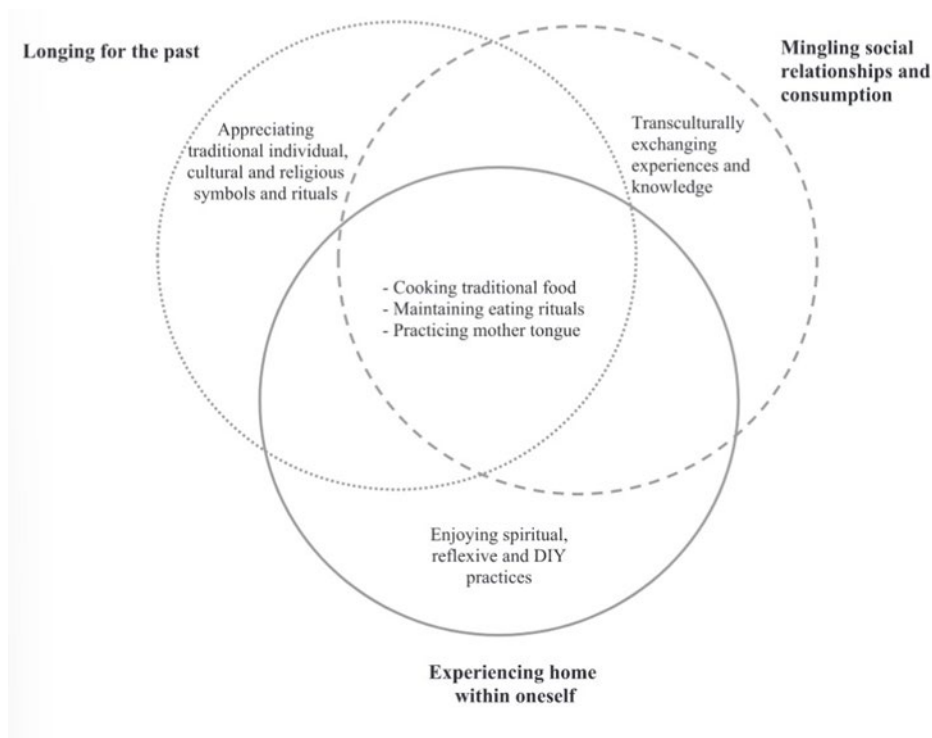


Figure 4 Shared Consumer Experiencing of Home

As highlighted in Figure 4, experiencing home is done in many ways; however, food, language, and faith are shared processes that get them close to experience ‘home’. Each process becomes a means of communication with their home country and serves as a way of preserving identity through physical action and engagement. The practice of their language, through all the senses, speaking their

¹¹ Kreuzer, Mühlbacher, and Von Wallpach, “Home in the Re-Making,” 334.

mother tongue, reading books, watching television, listening to traditional music, performing traditional rituals, and teaching their language to others allow immigrants to experience the longed-for uniqueness of their culture.¹² The act of doing is a process which allows cultural practices and traditions to be preserved and present in the memories of individuals. Through the repetition of action and processes, culture and tradition are preserved and passed down to the younger generation as well. Cultural knowledge begins to fade when cultural traditions are no longer performed, which can lead to the erasure of communities and histories of people.

Culture Yes, People No

Cultural diversity is welcomed in most neighborhoods, districts, and cities across the United States. For example, authentic food from almost any country is highly sought after by individuals who seek to get a taste of that culture. However, when it comes to long-term residents, usually low-income and foreign-born, they are marginalized and displaced. Affluent individuals highly value the culture of a place and, “favor the walkability, amenities, historic character, and “diversity” of urban living and working environments.”¹³ Culture derives from the people who embody it, and it would not exist if it weren’t for the people who practice that culture. The desire to experience a culture through food puts vulnerable communities at risk as this process can lead to affluent individuals deciding on settling in neighborhoods that offer cultural amenities such as authentic food and pricing out long-term residents.

¹² Kreuzer, Mühlbacher, and Von Wallpach, “Home in the Re-Making,” 334.

¹³ “Gentrification & the Future of Food Justice (2000–2020).” n.d. *World Food Policy Center* (blog). Accessed March 29, 2025. <https://wfpc.sanford.duke.edu/north-carolina/durham-food-history/gentrification-the-future-of-food-justice-2000-2020/>.

Food availability and diversity are one of the many aspects that create the image and character of a neighborhood. There are layers of food which make it preferable and attractive. For example, individual cultures have their own processes of making food and the “authenticity” of each culture’s food enriches the experience of eating. The uniqueness and authentic experience many cultures offer through food is often desired in many neighborhoods throughout the United States. Brandi Thompson Summers looks at a mainly Black neighborhood experiencing gentrification in Washington, D.C. and reveals in her study that, “the gentrification process in this Black cultural space exploits a concept of authenticity in which people attach meaning to things (instead of the experiences of people), leading in turn to racialized gentrification as young, upper income whites settle into the neighborhood.”¹⁴ The process of gentrification often values the attachment to culture as the “what” of a place often overshadowing “who” or original residents that are the cultural contributors that enrich the lived experiences of a neighborhood.

The accessibility to food and healthy food options can also play a role in the perception or “aesthetic” of a neighborhood. Access to fresh produce, especially in an urban environment, can be extremely desirable and beneficial to residents. However, providing such amenities to communities in need can unintentionally displace them as the perception of the neighborhood becomes attractive to affluent individuals. Food justice organizations such as Phat Beets based in North Oakland, California, work to provide affordable access to fresh produce. Max Cadji, in a response to realtor video

¹⁴ Lindner, Christoph, and Gerard F. Sandoval. 2021. *Aesthetics of Gentrification: Seductive Spaces and Exclusive Communities in the Neoliberal City*. Amsterdam University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/9789048551170>

showcasing amenities found in cities in the San Francisco Bay area, states, “Our work wasn’t the cause of gentrification, but our programs and our aesthetics were being used to sell land and help displace people.”¹⁵ Although this organization emphasizes the cultivation and distribution of local organic produce, their gardens are used to attract affluent newcomers and dispossessed land inhabited by low-income communities of color. Valuable spaces that are considered resources for a vulnerable community are often used as a selling point for affluent buyers for their visual value.

The visual characteristics of a place or neighborhood tell a visual narrative of who occupies them and how they interact with the built environment. In “Satellite Dishes, a Creative Incubator, and the Displacement of Aesthetics in Amsterdam,” Daan Wesselman analyzes and compares the aesthetic value given to the non-white part of a neighborhood with satellite dishes attached to social housing and the aesthetic value given to the part of the same neighborhood without immigrants. Wesselman states, “The dishes indicated that the migrants aren’t watching Dutch television, which was often taken as a symbol of “failing multiculturalism.”¹⁶ The perception of satellite dishes is opposed by the Dutch public as they are considered “ugly,” which becomes an aesthetic judgement that enacts xenophobia. Just as one may be attracted to a community garden for its visual appeal, one can also find distaste in other elements that are characteristic of a neighborhood. The difference here is that there is bias and judgement fueling the logic behind finding the satellite

¹⁵ Alkon, Alison Hope, and Josh Cadji. 2020. “Sowing Seeds of Displacement: Gentrification and Food Justice in Oakland, CA.” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 44 (1): 108–23. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12684>.

¹⁶ Lindner and Sandoval. “Satellite Dishes,” 175.

dishes ‘ugly.’ The perception of the neighborhood is altered by those who occupy it and how they use their space. The cultural disagreement between immigrants and non-immigrants changes how places are perceived and judging a place to be ‘ugly’ is highly subjective and does not define the quality of a place.

Health Risks and Living in Limbo

The challenges that immigrants face along their journeys including limited access to food and water, long walks in high temperatures, injury, and violence, which are all life altering have long effects even after they reach their desired destination. The stress inducing experience of migration continues upon arrival in the United States as many policies and regulations are working against immigrants. The constant fear of being deported is a reality that many immigrant’s live daily and impacts their engagement with society as the fear alone leads to them being less likely to access health services and comply with health providers’ recommendations.¹⁷ Ultimately, the health of immigrants worsens as they try to settle into their new environment due to policies that work against them. The policies not only worsen health conditions for immigrants, but they also impact the children of immigrants. Immigrant policies can disrupt social and family networks by supporting immigrant enforcement which results in the separation of parents and children. The disruption of family networks has deep emotional impact especially for immigrant communities that have strong family-oriented ways of living.

¹⁷ Ornelas, India J., Thespina J. Yamanis, and Raymond A. Ruiz. 2020. “The Health of Undocumented Latinx Immigrants: What We Know and Future Directions.” *Annual Review of Public Health* 41 (Volume 41, 2020): 289–308. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-040119-094211>.

Children who go through the experience of having their family separated often have high levels of distress, depression, and anxiety.¹⁸ Uncertainty becomes a never-ending cycle engrained in the daily life of an immigrant and their children in the United States. Immigrants face a range of stress types that are related to setting into a new host society such as acculturation stress that deals with adapting to cultural and language norms. Immigration stress encompasses acculturation stress and on top of that includes the stress related to discrimination, not feeling at home, and experiencing a sense of loss.¹⁹ There are negative outcomes due to the various levels of stress immigrants face that impact their health. Exposure to traumatic life experiences can lead to coping mechanisms including drinking to suppress negative emotions associated with stress which is common amongst individuals who feel a situation is out of their control. Latino male immigrants are much more likely than women to turn to drinking as a coping mechanism for traumatic life experiences to suppress negative emotions. However, Latino female immigrants are also likely to turn to drinking as a coping mechanism because of feeling stress from not feeling at home.²⁰ The health of immigrants is risked further and becomes a result of the lack of acceptance from the host country.

¹⁸ (Ornelas, Yamanis, and Ruiz 2020)

¹⁹ Falconier, Mariana K., Monica Huerta, and Ed Hendrickson. 2016. "Immigration Stress, Exposure to Traumatic Life Experiences, and Problem Drinking among First-Generation Immigrant Latino Couples." *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 33 (4): 469–92.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407515578825>.

²⁰ (Falconier, Huerta, and Hendrickson 2016)

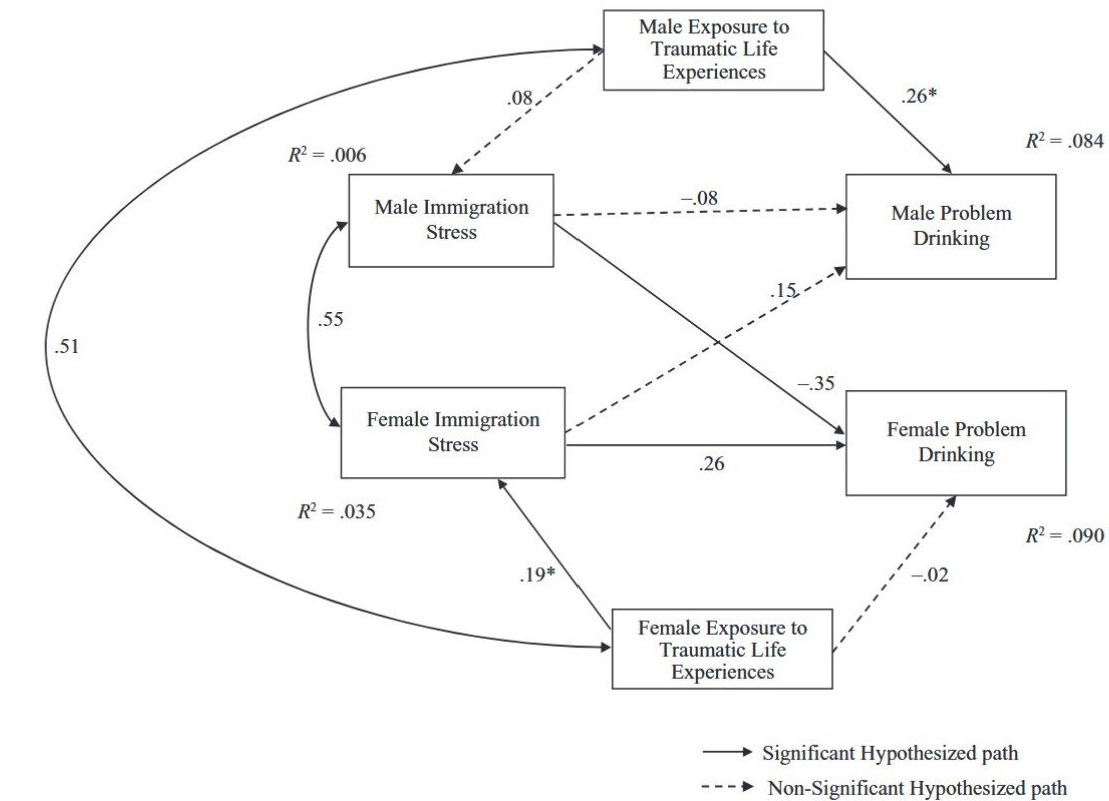


Figure 5 Effect of Individual Stress on Problem Drinking

Figure 5 highlights the effect of individual stress on problem drinking in Latino immigrant couples. Although the reasons for turning to drinking as a solution to stressful situations may vary between genders, it is evident that feelings of stress that stem from acculturating and navigating a new country can lead to feelings of not being in control. The cycle of stress now becomes a cycle of bad habits which in turn has negative impacts on immigrants physical and mental health. Without a sense of belonging and places that embrace immigrant communities, the cycle of uncertainty and stress will continue. Forming a sense of identity and a sense of belonging

empowers individuals which can break the cycle and alleviate the souls of first-generation immigrants and their children.

The stress cycle continues in search of a place to call home. Often immigrants become part of the working class who barely earn enough to survive. With the lack of economic resources, immigrants tend to rent places to live in and are constantly subject to displacement. It can be observed in Little Portugal, a historic site of Toronto's Portuguese community, that low-income Portuguese residents identified the loss of affordable housing as the most negative impact of gentrification.²¹ Immigrants face the challenge of finding a place to live that fits within their budget especially when gentrification occurs in neighborhoods that were once considered poor to now be attractive for affluent individuals. Immigrants who find ways to remain in the neighborhoods usually become much more vulnerable as they begin to lack the financial resources to maintain their homes which can add to the cycle of stress they carry. Settlement patterns are affected by gentrification as many immigrants initially settle in dense urban areas which become attractive for its many amenities. Robert Murdie and Carlos Teixeira compare the resettlement patterns of Portuguese immigrants with Jewish and Italian immigrants who resettled from West Central Toronto to the suburbs. The key distinction between the two patterns is that Jewish and Italian immigrants relocated prior to gentrification that began in 1980 while Portuguese immigrants were directly impacted by gentrification. This process

²¹ Teixeira, Carlos, and Wei Li. 2015. *The Housing and Economic Experiences of Immigrants in U.S. And Canadian Cities*. University of Toronto Press; first edition.
<https://web.p.ebscohost.com/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/bmxlYmtfXzk2MTgzNV9fQU41?sid=920519df-e426-4135-85be-75b4c3d5e060@redis&vid=0&format=EB&rid=1>

accelerated their relocation to the suburbs and continues to impact many Portuguese immigrants who still live in West Central Toronto.²² Relocating where one lives can have many disruptions in life and daily routines. Usually, immigrants do not have the luxury of time and are constantly working to make needs meet. When their work life is interrupted, so is their income. Income is critical for immigrants and is one of their priorities when arriving to a new country. The cycle of stress and anxiety is amplified when their living conditions are swept underneath their feet, adding to feelings of uncertainty they experience in other aspects of their lives already.

Memory, Place, Identity

It is critical for a culture to continue their traditions through action in the physical realm to reinforce the individual memory, identity, and knowledge that is shared through observation and execution. One's identity is tied to how we physically express ourselves and culture is expressed through action. The act of preparing a meal is a symbolic process in which, "food is central to both forming and communicating identity, even after other cultural markers of that identity such as language have disappeared."²³ Food is inherited from past knowledge and is tied to places of origin which carries through as people continue to eat familiar foods. The process of preparing and eating familiar foods begins to shape who people are and gives them a sense of identity unique to them and to their place of origin. Mothers and their identity within a culture are closely tied to food and the preparation of food for their

²² (Teixeira and Li 2015)

²³ *Moving Meals and Migrating Mothers: Culinary Cultures, Diasporic Dishes and Familial Foodways*. 2021. Demeter Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1tgwzz4>.

family. Migrant mothers often control the preparation of food and are essential for managing food shifts when settling in new environments, which gives them an important role in their culture. Mothers use cooking to provide comfort and keep memories of tradition alive, however, when negotiating with changes in culture, adapting can lead towards feelings of alienation within their own culture.²⁴

Negotiating between cultural practices in a new environment becomes a challenge especially for migrant mothers. Negotiating what foods to feed their family is not only a dilemma of providing comfort through familiarity, but also one that questions their identity and sense of belonging within the larger society.

The relationship between a place and a person is also vital to forming an identity as memories with a place can hold deep emotional connections with the experience one may have. For example, a grocery store may have significant connections with individuals as it is the place where food is bought to ensure essential needs are met for survival. Other places that are deeply rooted in memory not only for individuals but also the larger society, are memorial and monument spaces.

Significant events that impact large numbers of a population can be remembered through spaces dedicated to reflection. Memorials serve as vessels for memories that shape the community's sense of self and serve as a space where communities construct shared narratives and identities around major events such as disasters.²⁵

²⁴ (*Moving Meals and Migrating Mothers: Culinary Cultures, Diasporic Dishes and Familial Foodways* 2021)

²⁵ Alfi, Rahman, Nazaruddin Muzayin, Penmellen Boret Sébastien, Ayuning Anjar Yuva, Rosemary Rizanna, Indah Rosaria, Ridha Syahrul, and Ghaisani Masturah Siti. 2023. "Memory, Meaning, and Monuments: An Ethnographic Study of Tsunami Memorialization in Aceh." *E3S Web of Conferences* 447 (January):04003. <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202344704003>

Memorials hold strong emotional value for individuals that are directly impacted by historical events. There are other places through the built environment that may not be evident to hold a communal value or memory, however, there are many places that are closely tied to individual experience. The culmination of individual memories with places can begin to form significant value and attachment to a place.

Human activity always occurs in all places and regardless of the activity, there is an impact witnessing experiences has on the memory a person may have of a place. Studies have shown that positive emotional experiences with a place and accessibility to a place are important to the formation of a collective memory of a place.²⁶ Collective memory is formed through the connection between human experience with a place or multiple places which could be specific to the local community or encompass the larger society. Collective memory also forms a sense of place that feels familiar which also shapes the identity of communities and individuals. Figure 6 shows how collective memory is influenced by emotional and cultural experiences. There are many effective parameters and influence on collective memory including sense of place, accessibility, feelings of danger, peace, and happiness, identity, and place attachment.

²⁶ Chavoshi, By Nayer, Marjan Ilbeigi, Mozghan Karimi, Ali Asgharzadeh, and Emad Behrouzifard. 2024. "Investigating the Relation between Emotional and Cultural Mapping" (Case Study: Tehran, Iran)." *City, Territory and Architecture* 11 (1): 14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40410-024-00234-8>.

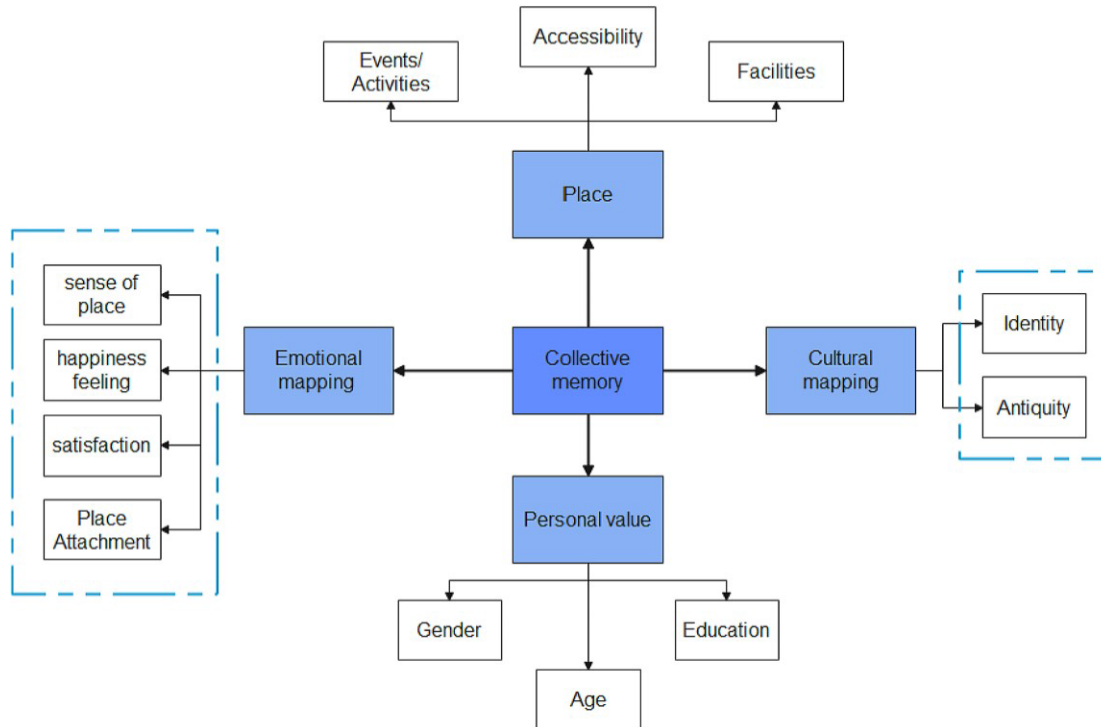


Figure 6 Effective Parameters on Collective Memory

Summary and Relevance of Arguments

It is apparent that the United States is a melting pot of cultures which creates a unique, dynamic, and complex mix of people. It can be argued that the diversity of people and culture is a good thing as it can enable cultural tolerance and sharing of knowledge. However, it can also be argued that there are many complicated issues that arise with the mix of people and cultures such as strain on the economy or tension between cultures. Regardless of which argument is ‘correct,’ diversity and recognition of the various cultures found throughout the U.S. is a strength and can benefit everyone. Without diversity, there is a lack of understanding and empathy towards cultures that are different from the cultures individuals grew up in. Cultural

tolerance is formed through firsthand experiences with cultures that are different from yours, and this contact between cultures begins to form relationships and understanding. Cultures may not agree with every aspect of life or how to go about life, however, contact between cultures can form relationships that help the greater society to at least get along.

There is an opportunity for the United States to facilitate harmony amongst cultures. Unfortunately, the U.S. has policies in place that work to put a strain on incoming immigrants who seek better life opportunities. Immigrants have long impacted the formation of the United States; however, immigrant populations are constantly marginalized, exploited, and are subject to a cycle of stress even after traumatic experiences upon arrival to the U.S. This is not to say the U.S. should feed them with a silver spoon, instead the argument is that there must be support spaces for immigrant communities that facilitate the integration process and enables opportunities that allow immigrants to become independent such as entrepreneurial paths. Often, immigrant communities get stuck in the cycle of finding a job and believing that working hard will get them out of poverty, when access to spaces that allow for basic skill and academic growth will far exceed the potential working minimum wage jobs will ever offer. Places that empower immigrant communities can serve to facilitate the integration process and serve as a transition space for immigrants as they negotiate the culture, they bring along with the new American culture they are in now.

Finding balance between two cultures can benefit immigrant and American culture as bicultural experiences begin to form. Knowledge exchange can also occur as many immigrants bring exceptional knowledge in culinary, art, and agricultural practice. The exchange of knowledge between cultures increases cultural tolerance on all ends, but first there must be a place where this can occur. A place where cultures negotiate, exchange knowledge, and aspire to live in harmony with one another is ideal. Although there are many barriers between cultures, one being language, food can be used as a medium in which cultures communicate and begin to dialogue in search of cultural harmony. Food is essential to life and various cultures bring their own perspectives and techniques to the process of making and sharing food. Food is the language that does not speak but nourishes life, and it can serve as a resource for building harmony in a society that continues to have cultural tension.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Initial Inquiry

The methodology for this thesis begins with the curiosity about architecture in terms of space or lack thereof that supports human activity. More specifically, the initial step seeks to question the role architecture plays in human experience.

Architecture is always present, and it is an integral part of one's perception of the world, so it is important to question how it supports human experience. The second step includes asking an array of questions with this framework to allow for the exploration of the relationship between humans, the built environment, and the issues that are ongoing. This thesis utilizes this framework to understand how architecture supports human activity and ensures the preservation of cultural knowledge. The inquiry of this thesis revolves around spaces that support activity directly tied with culture such as culinary art.

Potential Thesis Ideas								
Big Ideas/Topics	Why?/Focus Area	Expand	Notes	Partner Feedback From Andrew	Pursue?	Their Topic/ Question V2	Issues Attempting to Address	Notes
Adaptive Reuse	1. Preserving culture and community "memory" tied to a place.	Preserving culture in a community can give importance to a community and pride to its members. The existing architecture can reflect this importance and hold memories of lived experiences.		How do you determine who's memory is "important"? Is preserving a building the best way to assist in strengthening a community? If you are reusing the building for a new purpose are you changing the memory? Does the person with the most money determine who's memory is preserved or HOW that memory is framed?	Yes	How can community memories uncover rich culture and serve as a bridge between cultures?	Cultural Tension, Cultural Erasure (in communities being developed and gentrified without considering the cultures that once made up a community), Displacement, Loss of Cultural Diversity	Areas of study would include: 1) Neighborhoods who lost cultural diversity due to development/gentrification 2) How adaptive reuse can serve to preserve culture while progressing with income of new cultures in a community 3) community "memory" and what that means symbolically and physically 4) outcomes of preserving community memories vs not. What are the cultural and historical benefits? 5)
Environmental Psychology	4. Enhancing Perception/Experience of built environment through building form (sculptural) and material patterns.	Designing buildings that "feel" sculptural and inspired by natural forms found in nature can enhance user experience and possibly help feel integrated with the built environment. Patterns on Facades can create "Artistic" and "Calming" effects to viewers on urban streets. How can architecture form and facade patterns create a calming and therapeutic effect?	Could be a way to critique architecture and its appearance to the public; research if this is already being done and how to build upon it.	How important is it that people walking by are calmed? Why would someone pay to have a positive effect on someone not actively using the building? Can this ever be more effective than just planting greenery? How much of an effect can a single building have when it is but a fraction of someone's daily experience?	Yes	How can architectural form and facade patterns create a calming and therapeutic effect for urban commuters?	Mental Wellbeing	Areas of study would include: 1) Analyzing how urban commuters process and perceive buildings. Where do the eyes go? What effects do facades and building forms have on commuters? How does facade and form affect the mental well-being of commuters? 2) Analyzing current patterns in urban fabrics at eye level. 3) Analyze the effects patterns have on the brain. (What patterns are calming vs stressful) 4) May be worth looking at the characters of significant cities and neighborhoods and what makes them unique and pleasing.
Environmental Psychology	3. Inclusive design for marginalized groups (neurological disabilities)	Designing spaces for individuals with neurological disabilities to promote inclusion in the built environment. How can neuroarchitecture create a more inclusive society in public spaces?	Inclusion in schools, employment, society (isolation from society due to their disabilities), public transportation.	Will you be designing to one specific condition? How can you get funding for these changes for a potentially tiny percentage of the population? Is design that does not include these people considered discriminatory?	Yes	How can neuroarchitecture create an inclusive society in public spaces?	Equity, Mental Wellbeing, Lack of inclusion	Areas of study would include: 1) researching unique ways neurodivergent individuals process information. 2) What groups are currently struggling to integrate into society. 3) Identify what challenges they face and how architecture can be a tool to solve integration issues. 4) What setting would focus on? Public parks, schools, workforce, transportation, where is the integration happening?
Environmental Psychology	5. Impacts on a person's life outcome based on the environment they grew up in.	Can architecture play a role in a person's life trajectory? If we are products of our environment, can we design spaces to promote positive habits, ambition, and perception of life in a person who is less fortunate? How can the built environment impact a person's life outcome?		Seems nearly impossible to gauge because there are so many other factors that play into a person's life. Just because their home was "perfect" does not mean their family will be Environment can only influence behavior, not determine it What is considered a desirable result? Income? Happiness? How would you begin to track this? Where does a specific "project" or "life" come into play? likely needs to be ultra focused	Maybe	How can the built environment impact a person's life outcome?	Lack of individual Motivation?	Habits and Architecture. Is there a link between a person's habits and the built environment surrounding them? Can this environment form bad habits in their early years? If so, how can architecture combat those bad habits? Is Habitus Architecture a thing?
Adaptive Reuse	3. Revitalizing DC through vacant office buildings.	Utilizing vacant office buildings can be a way to provide housing or other programs the local community can benefit from. Maybe ties to economic aspects like bringing more business to a local community for economic stability in Ward 7. Developing spaces for artists such as studios, or maker spaces for trade job training, or spaces that can benefit local communities. How can revitalization of vacant buildings in a community aid in lowering crime and increasing community productivity?	Explore and clarify the economic aspect (who will be for conversions), what community members are interested and who will this space benefit?, how does this help DC as a city and how can you retain culture with these spaces through adaptive reuse? Tie into community wellbeing and affects of vacant buildings in view of crime? Less vacant buildings leads to less crime?	How do you prevent the tragedy of the commons? It is easy to hope that everyone who may share something like a communal kitchen will take care of it, but how do you prevent people from doing wrong in these places while not charging high prices or making them inaccessible to the people who you are targeting to use them in the first place? These seem like community oriented "opportunities" giving people workshops, studios, or kitchens. How can you make something like an office building into a welcoming community centre of sorts? How do you determine what an area needs?	Maybe	How can vacant buildings in DC serve as community hubs to provide local amenities communities need?	Community resource accessibility, equity.	Areas of study would include: 1) identifying vacant buildings and their proximity to communities with minimal communal amenities 2) identify what a community hub, its components, its goals/outcomes, cost and benefits. 3) Identify density, urban vs rural? Can community hubs link rural and urban neighborhoods / communities? 4) research who will pay for community hubs? why would someone pay to develop this? What do investors get back? How to navigate the complicated systems in place?

Figure 7 Thesis Idea Brainstorm developed by Author.

The initial inquiry phase welcomed all interests related to architecture and were organized into a chart as shown in figure 7. This process allows ideas to temporarily exist and have a sense of focus. The chart format allows for a quick comparison between each interest and ensures ideas are unique enough to define their own research areas. In addition, ideas and areas of interest were challenged by both the author and feedback received from an academic colleague to develop a rich inquiry. Issues and concerns were expressed as well to establish research paths that aid in addressing the issues embedded in the research question.

Once the initial inquiry phase is exhausted, one begins to realize which research topic is more interesting than the others. This is an opportunity to select an area of interest that can fuel motivation throughout the entire thesis and research process. The interest in a research topic can be furthered through the process of diagramming and visualizing the link between ideas.



Figure 8 Mind Mapping Diagram developed by Author.

Associative thinking can help further understand the length and reach a research topic can potentially have. Figure 8 highlights a thinking process that seeks to connect ideas and topics that may seem unrelated when thought of in isolation. Architecture is related to every aspect of life, and with a selected topic to focus on, it is helpful to highlight areas that are relevant. Like the initial inquiry chart, the mind mapping process helped to further understand the extent of the selected research

topic. It is important to note that this initial stage subconsciously begins to formulate and give focus to the thesis research question.

Research Methods

Once the initial ideas are explored and a focus area of research is established, the research process begins to have high importance. The methodology in terms of research practice for this thesis involves both quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research involves objective studies that are related to topics explored in Figure 8. This research method was implemented to cast a wide net in studies related to identity, culture, demographics, and other topics to get a general understanding of each as it relates to the thesis question. Objective studies such as population and demographic analysis help orient ones understanding of past and current settlement and work patterns. Understanding where an immigrant populations live and work further inform the research question and shapes the outcome of site selection. Objective studies can provide insightful information on current research and can potentially highlight areas within the research that can be improved upon. This process can serve as an opportunity to plug into to further build on existing research.

Qualitative research is just as important in this process as the thesis question relates to immigrant communities. Understanding culture and what it means both in the general sense as well as in respective cultures is critical for design interventions. Having insight and knowledge on traditions and habits of individual cultures leads to a better understanding of how they perceive the world. It is also important to consider how others in the research world perceive culture and their understanding can also

provide insights that challenge one's thinking process and understanding of people and culture. Simply understanding how others think and perceive the world can begin to inform one's knowledge and potentially form a stronger stance on the topic. This research method is critical to architecture as it relates directly to human experience and perception which architectural directly influences.

Ethnographic research is an important research method that furthers the understanding of people. This thesis utilizes this research method to further understand immigrant communities globally and focuses in on immigrant communities in the United States. Through studies that highlight the experience of immigrants away from home, one can begin to understand qualities related to perception, emotion, identity, and coping strategies. As part of the ethnographic research process, phenomenology can be used as a research method that furthers the understanding of people and their experience. Phenomenology relates to lived experiences, perception, and significant life events. This approach was utilized to further understand the impact space and architecture has on the collective memory of place for a community. Understanding what a significant place is whether it is a plot of land, or a building further defines how individuals within a community interact with a space and provides insights into what that community values. Memory and place are tied with the formation of a person's identity, so this method further develops one's understanding of the impact architecture has on people and cultural habits.

Additional research methods such as precedent analysis will also deepen the knowledge related to the thesis question. Analysis through drawing, diagramming, and extracting are part of this process as a form of learning through doing and close observation. Being selective of past and existing architectural projects leads to the extraction of knowledge that is specific to the potential architectural intervention that aims to address the thesis question. Projects directly related to the expression of culture are valuable in understanding how space can be 'true' to a culture and provide a physical expression. The design of space allows for specific activities and processes to occur, and a study on spatial qualities begins to dig into details that are not easily noticed. The details may relate to the expression of culture through form or patterns, and the influence of a design can be traced back to cultural traditions and forms of expression. It can be argued that buildings carry memory as they build upon past knowledge and interpreted in a new way. Architectural projects focused on culture are a great example of buildings that contain cultural expression in the DNA of the building. This reveals the importance buildings have on perception and identity for communities.

Site selection and analysis is another method that will inform future design interventions. Understanding the place and its surrounding context reveals information that can help integrate design solutions that are harmonious with both the people and the natural environment. Site analysis will encompass numerous site visits to understand how space is being utilized. An analysis of past and present forms of spatial interactions will make it evident how surrounding residents interact with the site. Through sketching and observation, one can begin to dissect the spatial

organization and qualities of a site. Understanding the relationship between human, site, and urban scale reveals current problems with walkability and accessibility. Through observation one can find an opportunity for design to improve the current situation. How people use space and how they perceive the space, in terms of a site being welcoming, enjoyable, or accessible can be another method of research. On site interviews will be performed to get an understanding of the daily life surrounding a site. This insight can reveal what current residents believe is missing in their community.

Overall, the methodologies for this thesis encompass various strategies to establish a holistic understanding of the research topic at hand. The initial inquiry is a process that seeks to explore areas of interest within architecture. This process begins to formulate a thesis question but does not define it to allow for flexibility as research informs one's understanding of the topic. Research methods include both qualitative and quantitative methods to establish balance between measurable and non-measurable studies. This balance helps understand objective studies surrounding people and external factors that may influence how people perceive the built environment. Ethnographic research also helps in understanding people and their form of cultural expression. Analyzing architecture through precedent analysis is a form that engages both the hand and the mind. This process helps decode a building, its intentions, and the spirit carries and expresses to the physical world. Similarly, site visits and analysis engage the mind and body which serve to provide firsthand experience with a place. The experience of being in a place can reveal realities that are not found in research or detached analysis. The combination of these processes

establishes a methodology that seeks to understand people and place to propose a design intervention that is appropriate for the selected site while addressing the thesis question.

Chapter 4: Precedent Studies

Introduction

The word precedent can be thought of as something done that can serve as an example. In the context of an architectural thesis, it is vital to study various precedents to learn and extract from those key strategies that can apply to one's design proposals. An individual may never have all the answers to solve a design problem; however, precedents can help build a set of strategies that get them close to a solution. This thesis focuses on themes within architecture such as perception of place, preservation of culture in terms of people and the built environment, and empowerment of people through space. It is important that the precedent studies conducted throughout this thesis focuses on the themes to get close to a design solution that empowers and symbolizes a community through architecture. A set of five precedents were carefully selected that reflects the values of this thesis research. Precedent 1, Municipal Food Market in Baza, Spain, is an example of architecture that reactivates an urban space while preserving the historic perception of a building form. Precedent 2, Essex Market in Manhattan, New York, is a market that attempts to weave together a culturally dynamic neighborhood. Precedent 3, Santa Caterina Market in Barcelona, Spain, is a project that balances a historical structure with an innovative roof structure that seeks to dialogue between old and new architecture to continue memory of place. Precedent 4, Cooking School for Migrants in Montreuil, France, is an adaptive reuse project whose main goal is to provide space that empower migrants through culinary education. Finally, precedent 5, the National Museum for African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., is

exemplary for its architecture that expresses culture, dialogues with its context on a societal and political scale and embodies the people it represents and provides spaces that allow for reflection and growth.

Municipal Food Market

One important theme for this thesis is maintaining the perception of space to retain collective memory and history of place. The Municipal Food Market in Baza, Spain successfully retains the historic perception of a building with a reinterpretation of contemporary societal needs. Figure 9 highlights the project's (red) proximity to historical context and the importance of retaining formal qualities of urban space. This project aims to reactivate this urban corridor with a food hall and by opening the site making it accessible from any direction as highlighted in Figure 10.

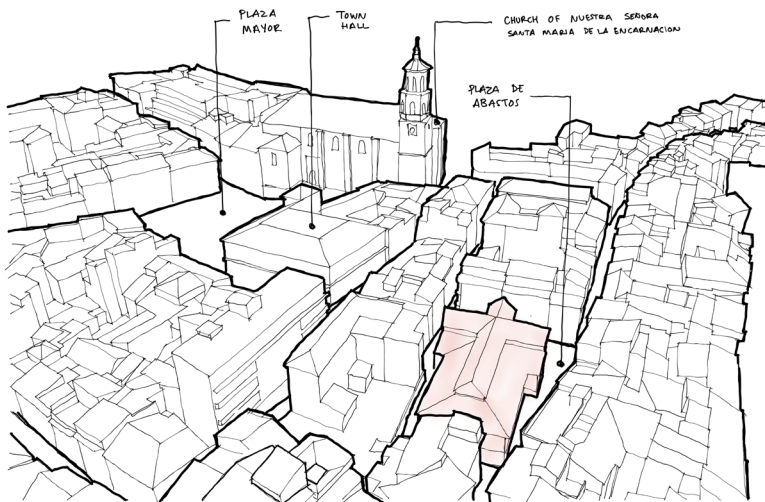


Figure 9 Context Aerial (developed by author)

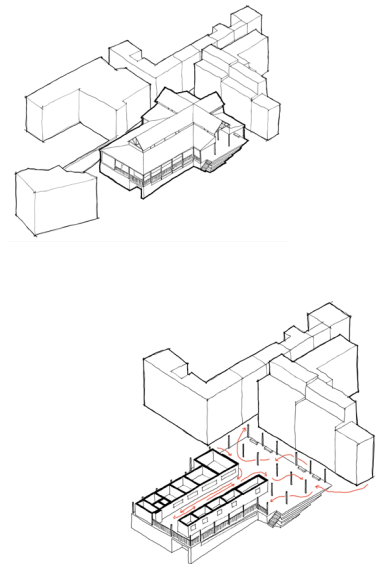


Figure 10 Building Axon (developed by author)

Reinterpreting what it means to work with an existing structure is essential to the understanding of this project. The architects decided on form as an element that preserves the original building, and form is kept through columns as opposed to walls. When perceiving the space, the mind can “fill in the gaps” and understand the form although it is not fully enclosed. For example, Figure 11 shows how the new design maintains the “boundaries” of the old building form while creating a much more porous urban block.

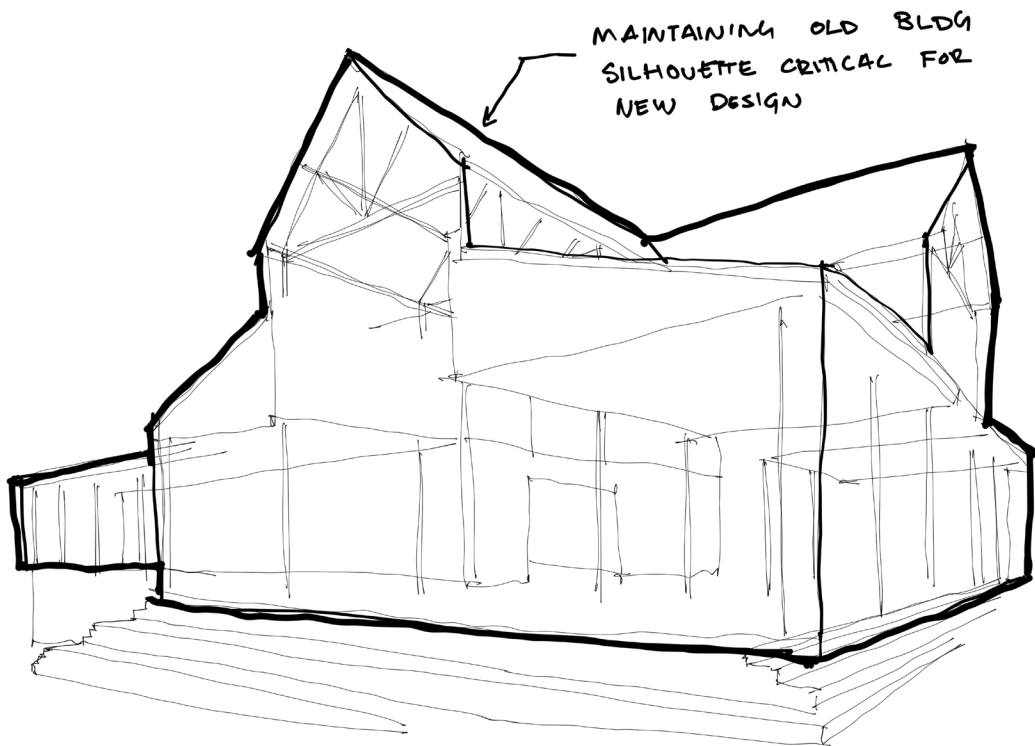


Figure 11 Building Form (developed by author)

The experience of this once dense urban block is now altered while retaining historic perception the space. This technique is essential for design as it seeks to utilize the past to design for contemporary time. Figure 12 showcases the “interior” of the new design which offers ample space to explore. The lightweight structure that is highlighted in red stand where the previous structure once had enclosed walls. This idea of utilizing past design as a reference is essential for preserving the identity of

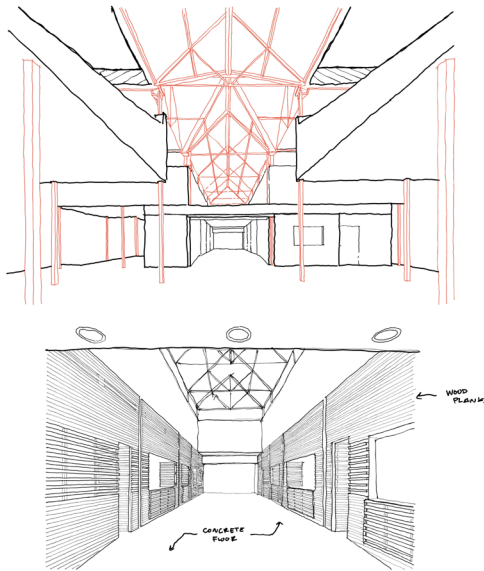


Figure 12 Interior Spaces (developed by author)

place. This approach does not demolish the sight a design something “new” as most developers would prefer. Instead, this approach seeks to understand the perception of space, the historic meaning behind building form, and how retaining form can find harmony between long term residents and the new generation. It is especially important for this project to retain its historic form given the context it is in, but it is

equally important for other places with structures that are important for the local community. Preserving community through buildings can be an effective way to maintain the identity people form with place.

Essex Market

The second precedent studied in this thesis is the Essex Market in Manhattan, New York. This project aims to preserve the spirit of the lower east side where the

Essex Street Municipal Market was shaped by immigrants who served as both vendors and customers. This market was essential in the formation of identity and connections that created the local community. Figure 13 highlights the dense urban context this project is in which leads to the expansion of the market below grade. The

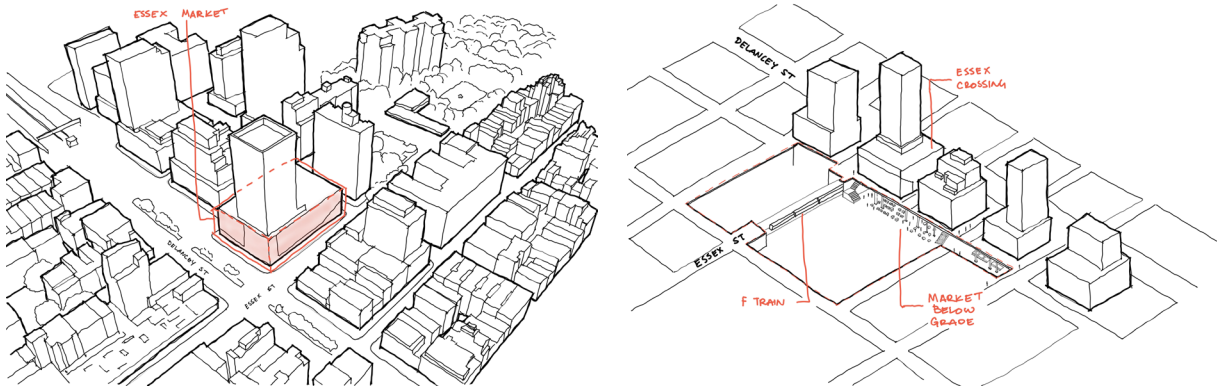


Figure 13 Context Aerial (developed by author)

location of this project is across the street from the old site where the original market was which further preserves the collective memory the community may have of this space. The new design incorporates various market spaces and expands this program further by including spaces for the public and the residential tower that sits above as a way of building upon the original program. This leads to a place that is shared between residents and visitors further amplifying interaction and communal activities such as food sharing. Figure 14 shows the variation in floor heights and levels, which creates a large interior space with micro-spaces where activities can take place replicating the hub like experience the historic market once had. The architecture and

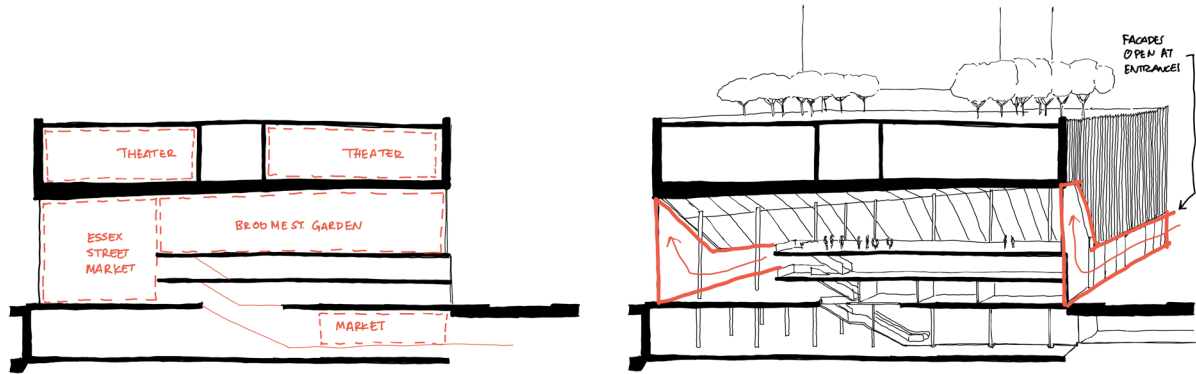


Figure 14 Sections Highlighting Interior Spaces (developed by author)

spatial configuration allow for this new location to serve as a hub that continues the legacy the historic market had established. Weekly activities are held that further strengthen the sense of community such as taste & talk presentations and walk-in classes teach people how to cook. Having a place for the community to consume and learn about what they are consuming further enriches the experience, and memories tied to this place. Preserving history through action not only preserves tradition, but it also preserves the people themselves who retain culinary knowledge.

Santa Caterina Market

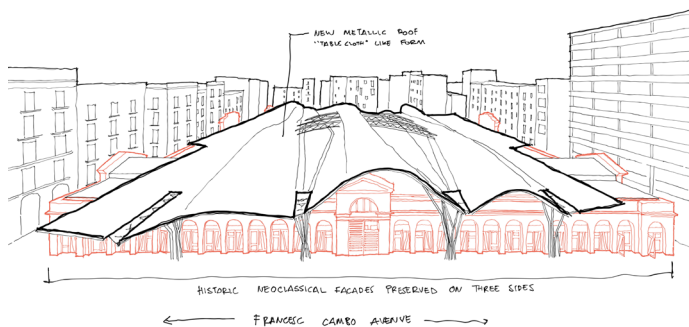
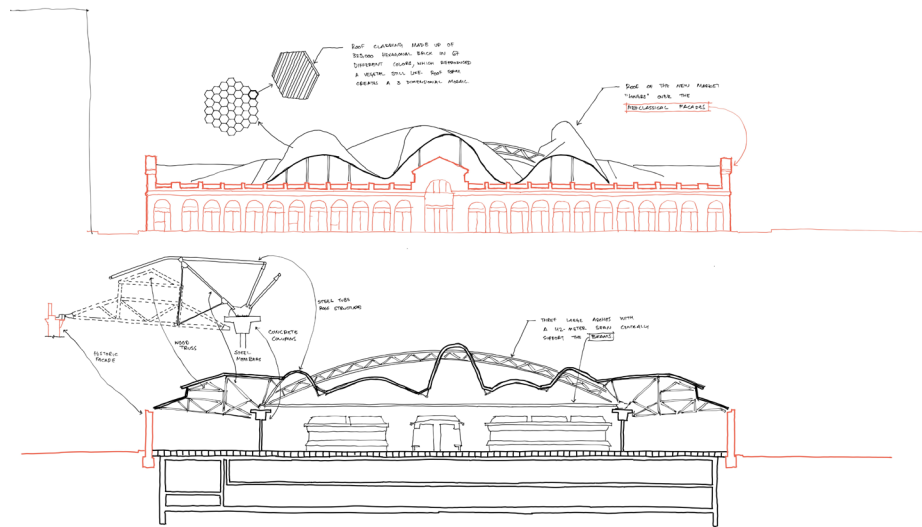


Figure 15 Aerial Context (developed by author)

The third precedent is Santa Caterina Market in Barcelona, Spain. Like Essex Market, this projects aims to reactivity activity in an urban environment. One of the main differences is that this project



and it is up to the architect to decide. Both structures will end up coexisting, regardless of how old and new structures engage with one another.

The floor plan in figure 17 begins to show how the existing structure dictates the boundaries on the ground plane. The street edge is kept on three sides and serves as a threshold between the exterior streets and interior market. The interior shaped by various geometric food stalls is bounded by the rigid historic façade, but it still takes on its own language expressing a much more fluid design. Like the roof being fluid and contrasting with the rigid façade, the floor plan also continues this dialogue between old and new.

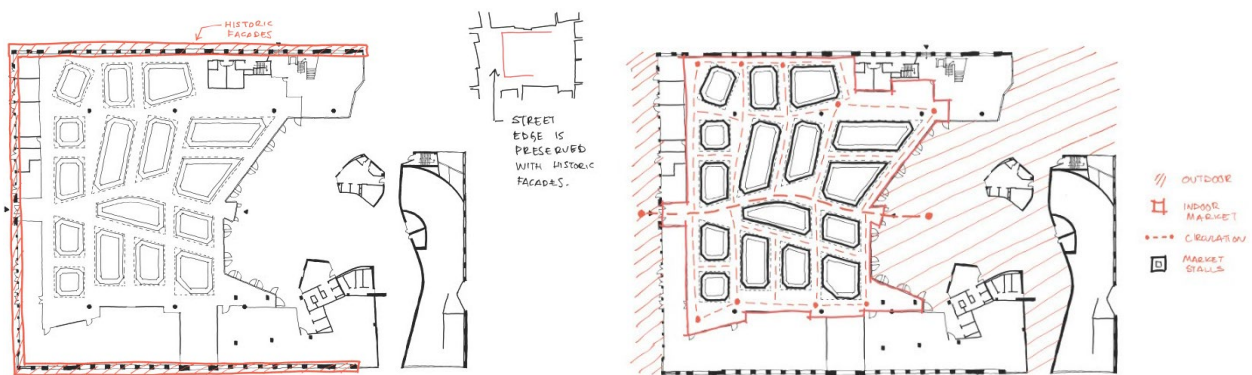
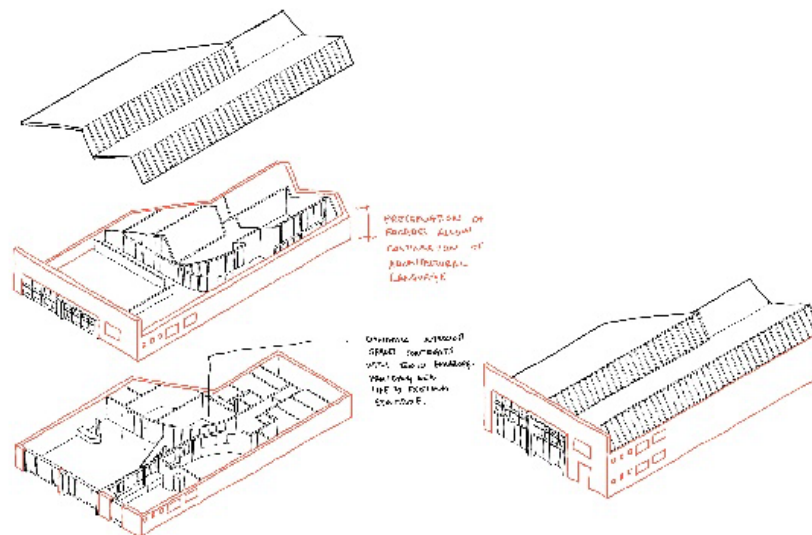
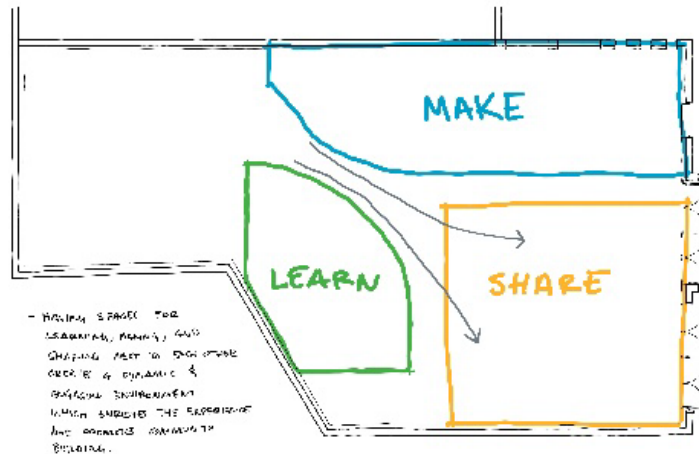


Figure 17 Ground Plan (developed by author)

Cooking School for Migrants

The fourth precedent is the cooking school for migrants in Montreuil, France. This design aims to establish a place where migrants can learn how to cook and offer theoretical and practical courses. This program is extremely powerful as it begins to empower the users of space through the actions of practice and learning. Figure 18

breaks down the relationship between the existing structure and the new interior. Like the previous precedent, the interior takes on new life, and the exterior structure also gets reinterpreted by the new activities. The ground plan works to bring together three main components that enrich the experience for migrants. Through a combination of



spaces that facilitate learning, making, and sharing, a sense of community can rise.

Proximity of space is important for this project to succeed. The learning and making space are both directly in front of the sharing space which uncovers the

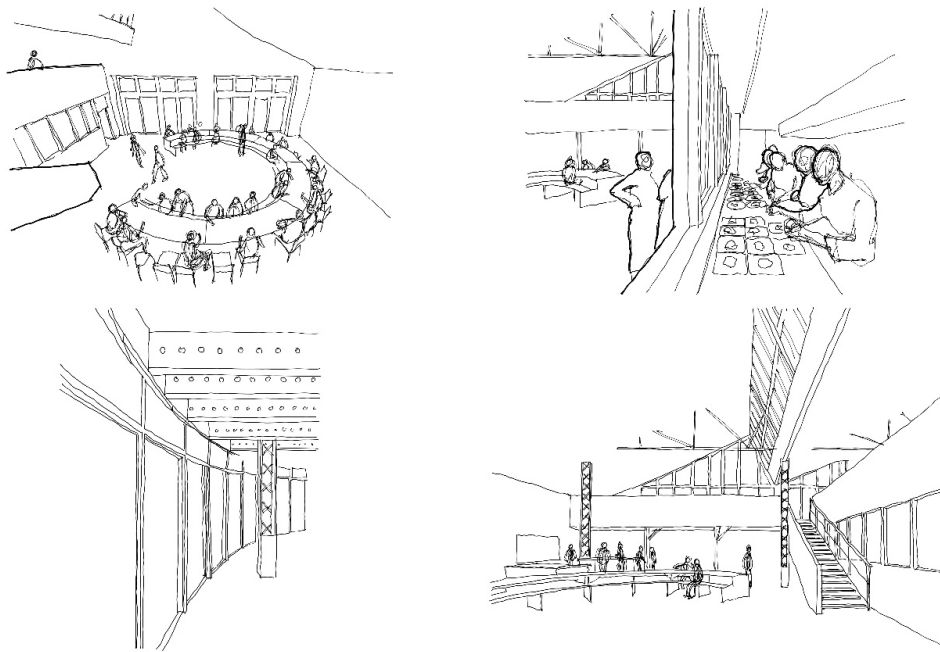


Figure 19 Interior Perspectives (developed by author)

importance of visual connection. The sharing space is the largest of the three which prioritizes socialization and community building and serves as a core function for the

Figure 18 Axon and Program (developed by author)

growth of the occupants. It is important for space to enable such activities as it begins

to for confidence in migrants as they develop their skill sets in the culinary world. As highlighted in Figure 19, there can be a variety of experiences which proximity

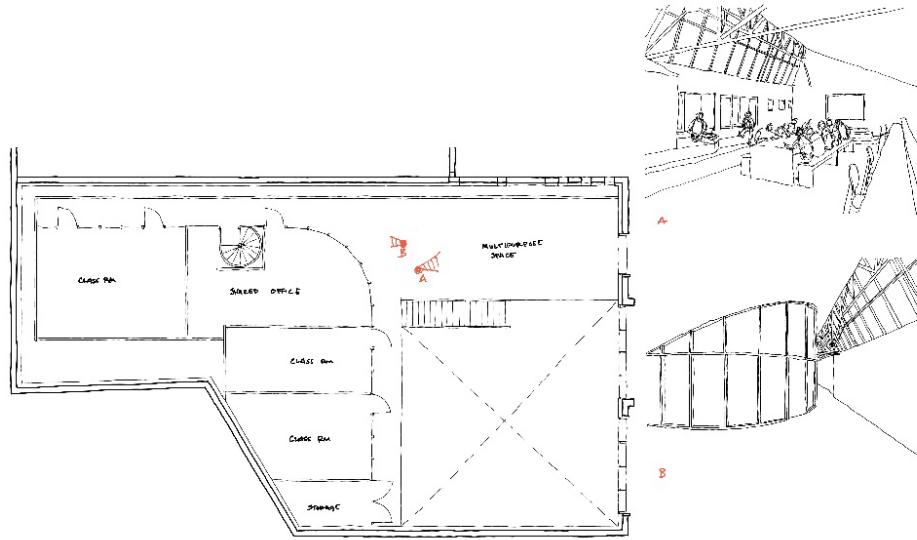


Figure 20 Second Floor Plan (developed by author)

between programs enables. Visual connections can increase social engagement and learning through observation. These types of spaces are extremely important for migrant communities as they can serve to provide new opportunities towards improving quality of life through the skills they build. Through the action of preparing a meal and practicing technique, individuals begin to retain their own identity as it can be argued that food is an element of a person's identity and culture. The second floor in figure 20 is dedicated to classrooms, offices, and a small gathering space. Smaller spaces for migrants are important as well as this giving them an opportunity to find spaces to relax and reflect. It is important to keep in mind that learning is a demanding task, and skills take time to develop, so spaces that can reduce stress help balance the experience.

Museum of African American History and Culture

The fifth precedent studied is the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. The themes related to culture, architectural

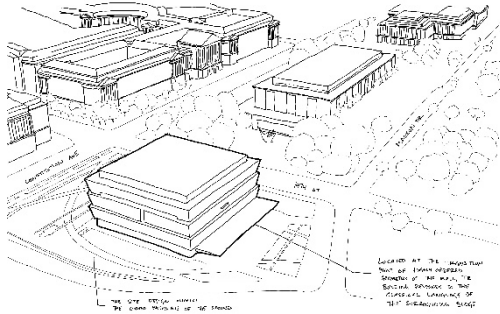


Figure 221 Context Aerial (developed by author)

expression, and symbolism were explored throughout this study. The location and site of this building establish a conversation with history, societal beliefs, and politics of the United States. Federal buildings are loaded with meaning, and this project is no

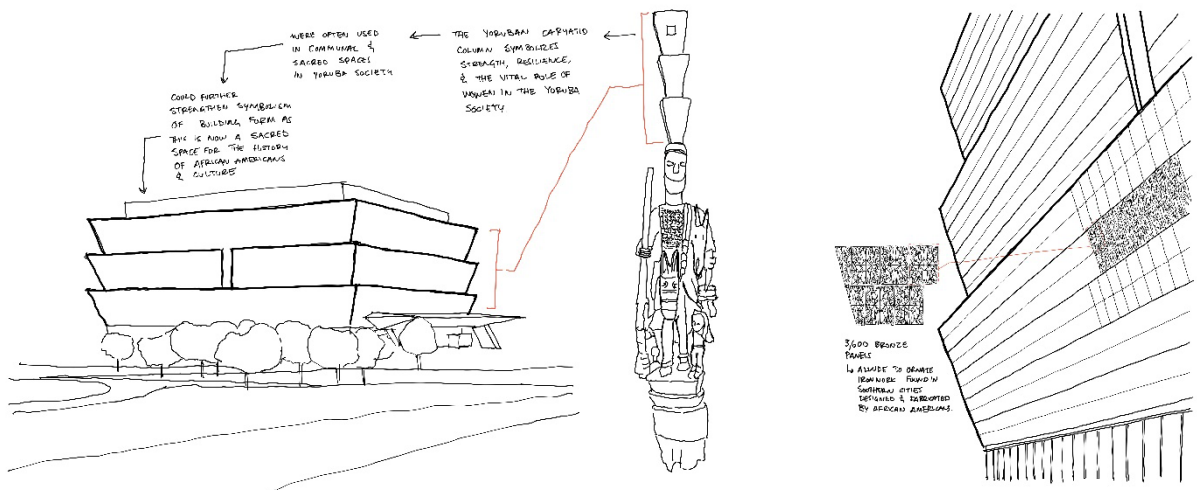


Figure 212 Cultural Inspiration (developed by author)

different. However, the opportunity of this building is that it represents a culture of people with a long and dark history. It is at the intersection of human experiences and reflects the past, present, and future of African Americans. Figure 21 compares the National Museum of African Americans with the surrounding context. In general, its form follows the monumental architecture of other federal buildings and museums along Constitution Avenue. However, when analyzed closely, the form is charged

with cultural meaning and representative of lived experiences. The façade is wrapped in metal panels that take on a crown shape that draws inspiration from the Yoruba veranda post found in West Africa as show in figure 22. In addition, the pattern on the crown shape façade is also layered by culture and lived experiences. The patterns were inspired by ornate ironwork found in southern US cities further fueling this design with cultural significance. This precedent offers many examples of how architecture can symbolize people and their cultural history which begins to establish a place that educates the greater society of their unique culture. The interior is also reflective of its people in the present day and creates spaces that are both educational and reflective. For example, Figure 23 shows a dedicated space below grade that is large and showered in water with benches to sit on. This space is a sacred space and is meant to be a space of reflection for all the community to be a part of. It is a space meant to be safe where emotions and traumas can be processed in hopes of healing and overcoming hardships. It can be argued that this space is the most impactful for the current people of this culture who continue to experience difficult moments. It is responsive to current society, and this architecture understands that it needs safe places for communities.

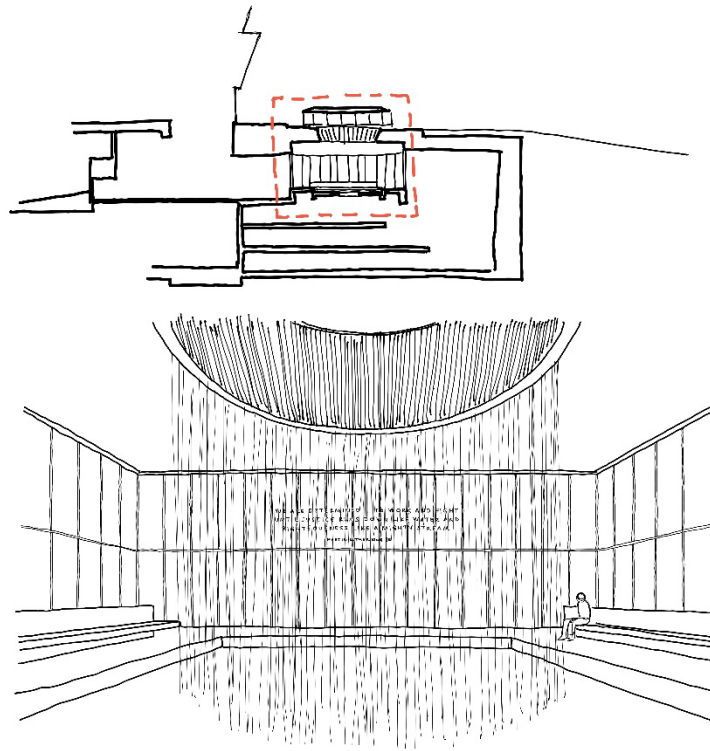


Figure 23 Space for Reflection (developed by author)

Summary

The ideas and themes related to perception of space, collective memory, preservation of people and culture, architectural expression, and many more are analyzed through the process of precedent studies. Observing and learning from other work can begin to plant seeds for design solutions specific to this thesis. Understanding how the municipal market in Baza preserves the perception of space can provide ideas on how to link past and present community members through collective memory and blend historic and new understandings of space. Similarly, Essex Market teaches a lesson on preserving activity found in spaces such as food

markets. Activity involves people and begins to define who people are through the process of doing. The Santa Caterina Market in Barcelona is a great example of architecture that creates a dialogue between historic and contemporary methods of construction and architectural expression. By engaging with historic structures architects carry forward the history and identity of place with a new interpretation layered on. This in turn preserves history and projects it into the future for occupants to experience. The cooking school for migrants in Montreuil sets an example for a place dedicated to a group of people that are vulnerable and serve as a place to empower individuals through education. This thesis can take lessons learned from this example as it is also focused on empowering immigrant communities through culinary arts. Finally, the National Museum of African American History and Culture set an example for architecture that symbolizes culture and provides spaces for learning, assembly, and reflection. It is the embodiment of the culture and directly reflects aspects of the culture without hesitation. It stands for its people regardless of any challenges it faces. This impacts the thought process of this thesis in a positive way as this thesis seeks to empower communities and create spaces that are symbolic of the community it is serving. Each precedent study conducted highlights the strengths that can be reinterpreted for this thesis. People, food, and culture are at the core of this thesis, and each precedent offers strategies to incorporate one or more of these aspects in a meaningful way.

Chapter 5: Zones and Program

Introduction

Food plays a central role in this thesis as both a way to preserve culture through action (culinary and agricultural) and in designing spaces that are socially accessible to all. Therefore, Food Halls/Markets serve as the baseline typology to utilize and manipulate the program associated with them. Food and the process of food making plays a major role in defining space in food halls and food markets, however, this thesis is incorporating aspects of immigrant culture in the United States such as identity, sense of belonging, integration into a new host country and society, and empowerment through entrepreneurial opportunities. With this in mind, food halls and markets offer a great way to develop spaces that are food centric while expanding upon the program to embrace and promote the aforementioned aspects of immigrant culture in the U.S. Incorporating design strategies that empower immigrants and give them a sense of identity and belonging can begin to solidify their presence in neighborhood fabrics and facilitate the process of integrating into a new society. This not only benefits their health and mental wellbeing but also utilizes food as a medium in which cultures communicate and begin to create harmony and unity within a divided society.

Typically, food related spaces have programs that reflect the function of the food making and sharing process. Restaurants are designed to facilitate the process of purchasing food for consumers in an efficient manner. Seating areas are provided and

regardless of the level of service a restaurant provides, customers usually interact with a person who takes their order. This program does not focus on the customers experiencing the food making process and only focuses on providing the result. The disconnect between customers and the process of making food removes the opportunity to understand how food is prepared, which is essential for understanding cultural traditions. This thesis aims to improve upon existing food programs that are commonly found in immigrant communities to engage people with the food making process. This approach seeks to increase exposure to cultural traditions and establish a relationship that educates people about culture through food.

Within the context of this thesis, the proposed program must utilize food as a tool that informs spatial qualities and dictate the level of engagement people have with food preparation. Enforcing exposure to food as a form of passive form of learning can begin to change how people interact and understand food processes. To further push the boundaries of common food programs such as restaurants, this thesis also focuses on incorporating cultural traditions and practices as aspects that define new programs. Blending architecture, its program, and culture that people embody begins to give architecture and structures identity. This identity is extracted from the people themselves, and architecture becomes part of who they are. It can be argued that architecture that reflects culture begins to develop the identity of place and a sense of belonging. Food and architecture become vessels in which culture is expressed, and it all depends on the program and spaces that architecture can begin to allow to occur.

When thinking about the fusion between food, people, and architecture, programs define activities and elements necessary to facilitate activity related to food. Reshaping the food hall typology to incorporate daily routines of individuals begins to shift the priority food has in a program. For example, Figure 24 illustrates zones that house activities within a greater zone that represents place. Food is an important aspect of cultural identity, however, other aspects such as the preservation of culture, community support, educational and safe spaces begin to play a role as they are part of immigrant communities. These are examples of spaces that both preserve cultural and provide opportunities for individuals to prosper.

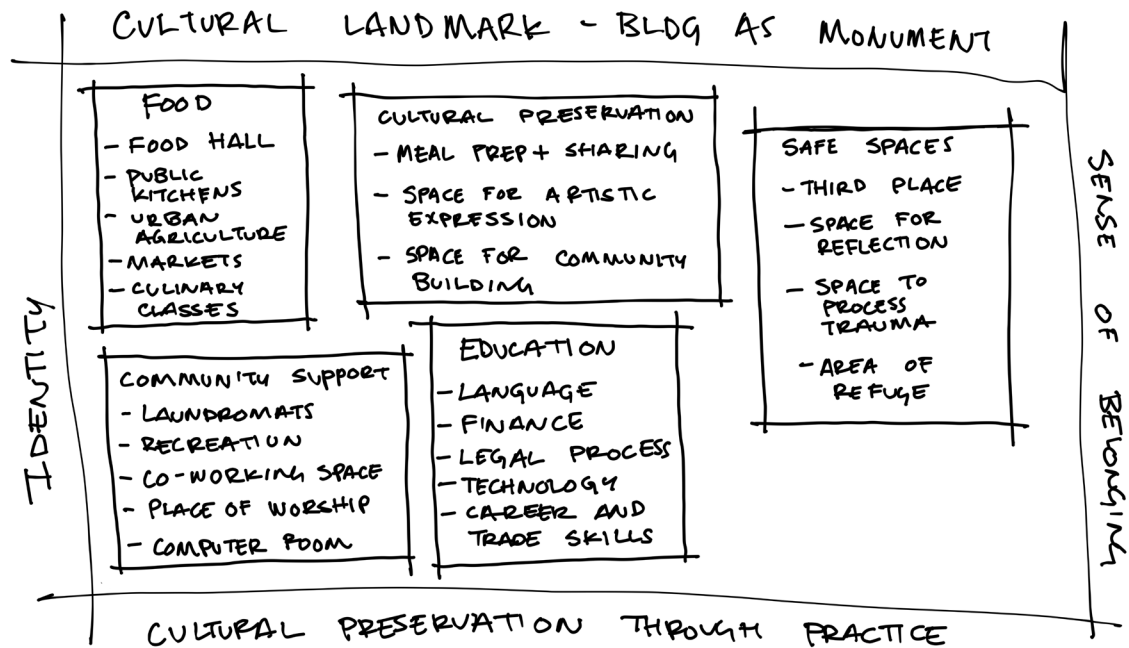


Figure 24 Abstract Program Diagram (developed by author)

Food

In terms of food, program spaces that allow for educational opportunities are important for knowledge exchange. Traditional educational spaces like classrooms can serve this purpose, however, having knowledge on display can be a much more effective and casual approach to learning. Outdoor classrooms, as shown in Figure 25, serve to display knowledge to those directly involved and passerbys simultaneously. It is a form of education that is inviting and doesn't force involvement like a traditional classroom that is enclosed on four sides. A sequence of spaces that can begin to form around food and the education of food culture can begin to shape to have outdoor classrooms, grow space and market stalls. This sequence can be layout in a logical manner as well to show where food comes from, how it prepared, and finally how it is consumed highlighting the cycle of food and human engagement.

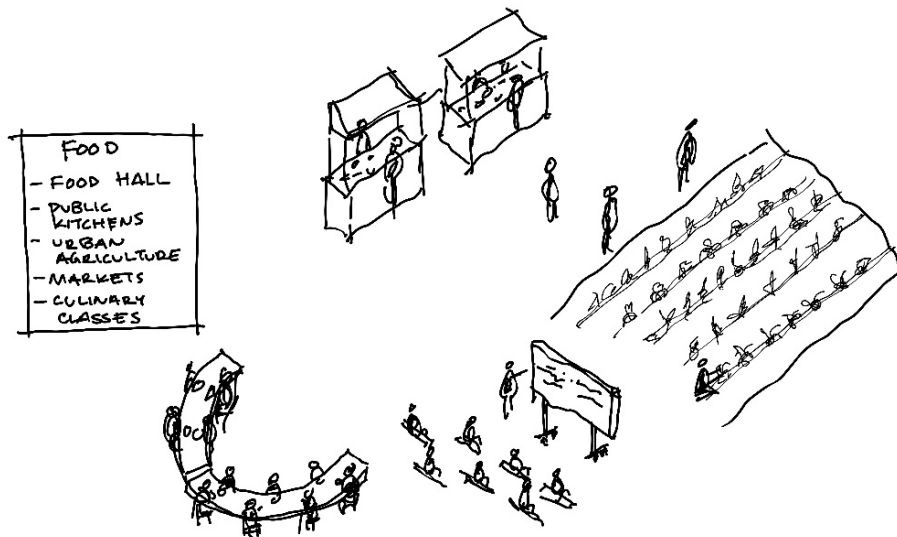


Figure 25 Food Zones (developed by author)

Community

In addition to food, immigrant communities have daily routines and require space to execute activities that support their lives. Support spaces are essential to immigrant communities as they serve as both functional and social. Public laundromats for example are known to serve as a support space for immigrant communities who do not have laundromats in their residence. Public laundromats transform into social hubs as residents begin to see each other frequently, usually on a weekly basis. It is essential to incorporate these spaces along with others highlighted in Figure 26 to ensure identity and sense of belonging develops. Understanding the places and spaces that immigrant communities use on a daily and weekly basis can inform support spaces and potentially be hybridized with food as well if possible. Religious spaces are also a space where residents begin to form the community and become integral to the formation of identity. Religious spaces not only form community and identity, but they also provide spaces to heal and reflect.

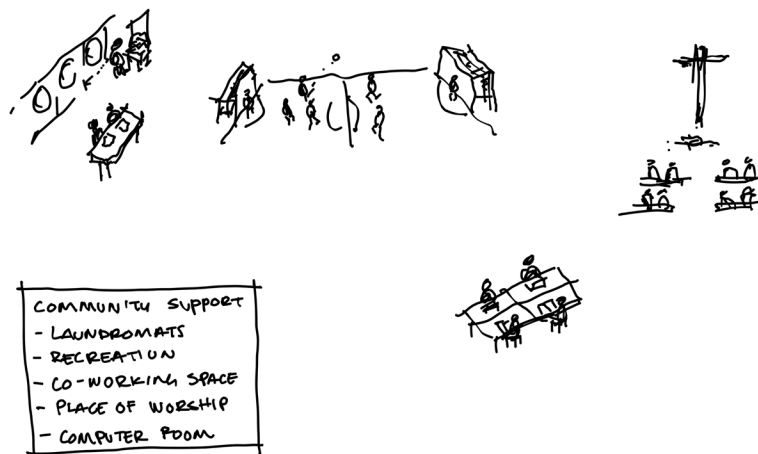


Figure 26 Support Zones (developed by author)

Safe

Another important program zone to consider is reflective spaces that prioritize the process of processing trauma and stress. Many immigrants face stressful moments while living in the U.S. and it is important that their neighborhood offers a place to relieve some of the stress they carry. Figure 27 highlights spaces that are surrounded by nature away from daily life to provide an escape and relief. Religious spaces offer a form of meditation, however, the safe zone in this program is much more focused on individual reflection to heal as well. A place of peace and reflection can benefit the physical and mental well-being of individuals. Elements such as water can offer therapeutic effects and calm the mind. In addition, safe spaces can also come in the form of monuments where memories and identities can exist. A monument to the people that represents their resiliency can serve to motivate and uplift individuals. A physical structure can serve to remind them of their strengths and allow them to reflect on themselves and their future.

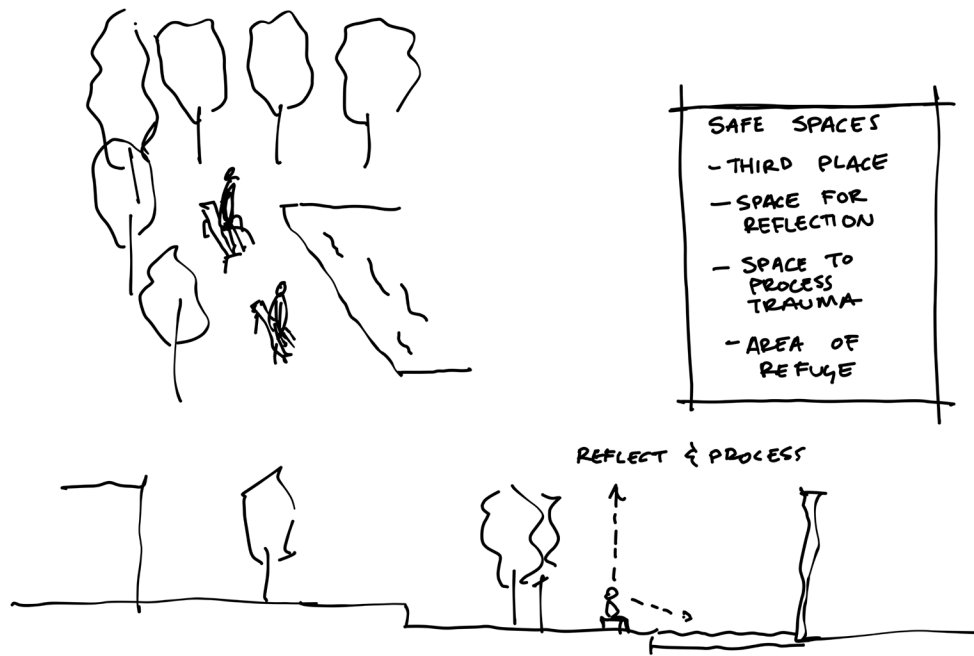


Figure 27 Safe Zones (developed by author)

Summary

A combination or hybrid between the mentioned program zones begins to shape a place where immigrant communities have a sense of belonging, preserve cultural practices through action, and exchange knowledge. The exchange of knowledge is an important aspect that allows cultures to understand one another. The exchange of knowledge can also lead to new methods and hybridization of a process. This is collaboration between cultures through social relationships. Figure 28 outlines this process where individuals can collaborate, socialize, and share their knowledge around central spaces. For this gathering to occur, there must be an element that draws people together. Like fire that brought early humans together, food can bring people together and begin the collaboration and knowledge exchange process. Food is

the tool that cultures use to communicate their practices, beliefs, and understanding of the world. This thesis argues that food can serve as a vessel for cultural preservation and cultural coexistence.

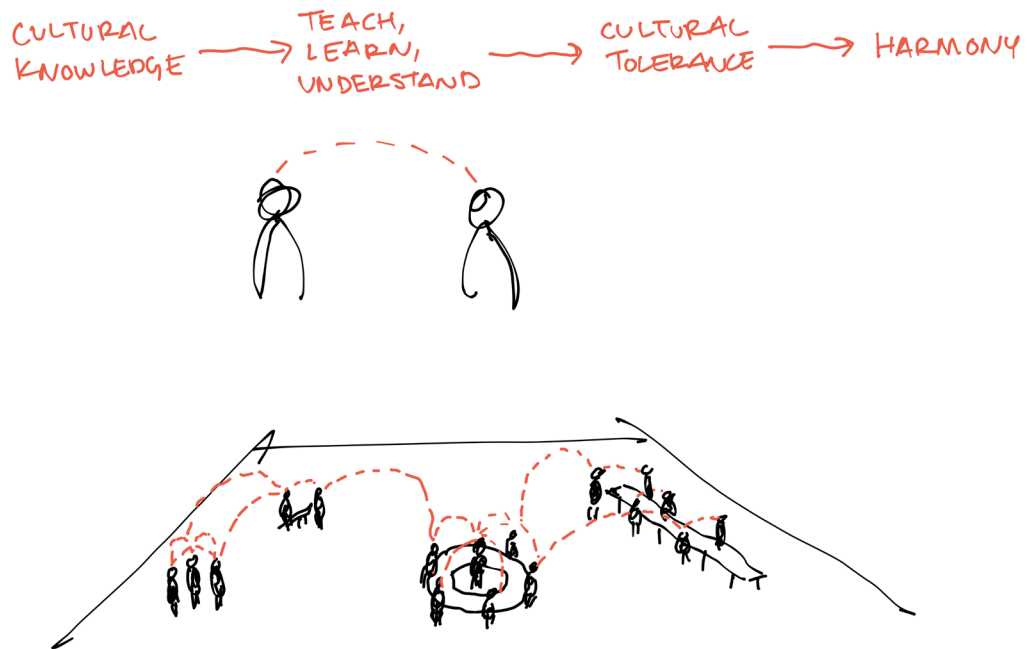


Figure 28 Cultural Collaboration Diagram (developed by author)

Chapter 6: Site Selection and Analysis

Introduction

Site is integral to this thesis for reasons related to people, culture, and the exchange of knowledge and experiences. People and the experiences they encounter form who they are and how they perceive the physical world they inhabit. Inevitably, the human experience is tied with space regardless of whether humans are sheltered or not. Space is defined by landscapes or structural enclosures and either configuration has its own identity and characteristics that are unique. Site is critical to the identity of a place and begins to alter the perception of space by its characteristics both architecturally and environmentally, and by the human activity that occurs in that place. This thesis is tied to place as it focuses on solidifying cultural presence and creating a sense of belonging through architecture and human activity. The site will help extract the characteristics and cultural activities that local communities embody. For example, food serves as a medium to communicate between cultures and creates a relationship that seeks to establish harmony amongst cultural differences. The site can bring to life the culture around it and provide a safe space that encourages cultural expression and negotiation. The selected site candidate for this thesis once served as a place to acquire groceries and the atmosphere was social and lively. Reviving the once lively atmosphere through this thesis project can have a significant impact while recovering the collective memory of place and preserving local culture.

Extracting and displaying culture can be a way a site serves as a platform for cultural activities. Identity and place are critical to developing a thesis that seeks to develop a sense of belonging for immigrant communities that are not 'home.' Creating a sense of belonging through familiarity and cultural memories can transcend a person from the site to their homeland without boarding a plane. Experiencing home can occur away from home, and a site can be configured in such a way that characteristics of 'home' can be emulated. More importantly, people are who shape space, and their habits and cultural practices define how spaces are used. Providing space for cultural traditions and practices begin to form identity. Culture and space interact and through this relationship, character, identity, and familiarity is formed. Like the way people are the vessel in which culture is interpreted and expressed, the site is the platform that reveals human activity and facilitates cultural negotiations.

Layers of historical events can be found on a site which provides insight into the activities that occurred on it. Revealing the events that occurred on sight begin to inform the identity of place. This can influence placement of activities on the site to strengthen its perceived value. If a portion of a site was once dedicated to agriculture or religious practice, there is a dialogue between past and present that can be established when proposing similar programs. Whether the new program occurs in the same location as the past activity is a question that the design needs to address. If a design engages with historical activity, the site builds upon its previous identity to form a new and current identity that reflects the beliefs of contemporary society and

individuals. In general, the site candidate for this thesis must be accessible in terms of walkability and public transportation for the local community and visitors. Sites with accessibility increase community engagement and are important for forming collective memories that are associated with identity and personal experiences. Lot size is important as this thesis seeks to house various programs that range in scale to address spatial needs for different activities. Some degree of natural environment in the surrounding area is welcomed as nature can serve as a design element that works with the built environment.

More specifically, site candidates must have historical ties with immigrant communities to strengthen the narrative of providing a sense of identity. Historical context can provide insights into spatial needs of past and present occupants. The layers of experience with and around the site can be tied into design proposals that make it unique to the site. Proximity of the site to residents is also important as the site must serve as a resource for the local community and prioritize their needs. It is critical that the site serves the local community to support their needs and aid in finding harmony between their culture and the host society culture. Ample space for potential agricultural practices is important as well, as this thesis seeks to preserve culture through activity and physical acts of doing such as cooking and cultivation. It is also important that the site is situated where current immigrant communities are settled as a strategy to strengthen their community.

Existing Conditions

When selecting a site candidate for this thesis, all the elements mentioned were considered. The selected site, which can be referred to as site zero, is located where the borders of Adelphi, Langley Park, and Chillum neighborhoods meet (figure 6). The surrounding neighborhoods currently consist of a mostly Latino population. This site also holds historic value to the Latino immigrant community as there is a building



Figure 29 Site Zero Location (developed by author)

currently that is underutilized and has been around for more than 30 years. History of a place is important to consider and understand the character of a place. A site visit was conducted to understand the current conditions in terms of building locations, local activity, quality of spaces, and a sense of scale. Research methodologies included taking pictures on site along with sketches as a form of interpreting and translating the site experience.

It can be observed from the site pictures in figure 30 that the ground plane is mostly asphalt and dedicated to on grade parking. There are not sufficient seating areas or public spaces for activities. The large parking lot contributes to the heat island effect which is not beneficial for the environment or residents around the site. University Blvd is directly in front of the site which is a major traffic corridor with future development of the purple line. The site has many of the elements mentioned in chapter 5 such as existing structures and accessibility to the site. Many of the

surrounding buildings and structures are gas stations, fast food and authentic restaurants, a grocery store, and retail spaces that continue towards the east of the site.



Figure 30 On Site Pictures (developed by author)

The street elevation collage (figure 31) is another method that visualizes how the site presents itself to the public realm. Currently this presentation is underwhelming and uninviting as individuals passing by are greeted with power lines, gas stations, fast food restaurants, and a parking lot. The site does not represent the local community and presents an opportunity to improve its current state with the



Figure 31 Street Elevation Collage (developed by author)

introduction of spaces that increase comfort and a sense of belonging. Green spaces can begin to reduce the heat island effect while providing safe spaces that are surrounded by

nature in which self-reflection can occur as mentioned in chapter 5. The existing infrastructure can be reutilized and brought back to life by reinterpreting the form to adapt a program revolving around food. This structure originally housed a grocery market where residents were able to purchase food products from their home country. Revitalizing this space with a program that celebrates food continues the identity of the place in a new way and builds upon the memories of long-term residents.

Street sections were also developed (figure 9) to understand the relationship between buildings and various vertical elements found in and around the site. There are few trees on the site, however, there is an opportunity at the north end of the site to connect with a small grove of trees and extend vegetation into the site. The existing structure is currently the focal point of the site with very little support spaces around it. With a vast amount of parking the site is exposed and feels empty when visiting the site. The human scale must be considered and defining boundaries through

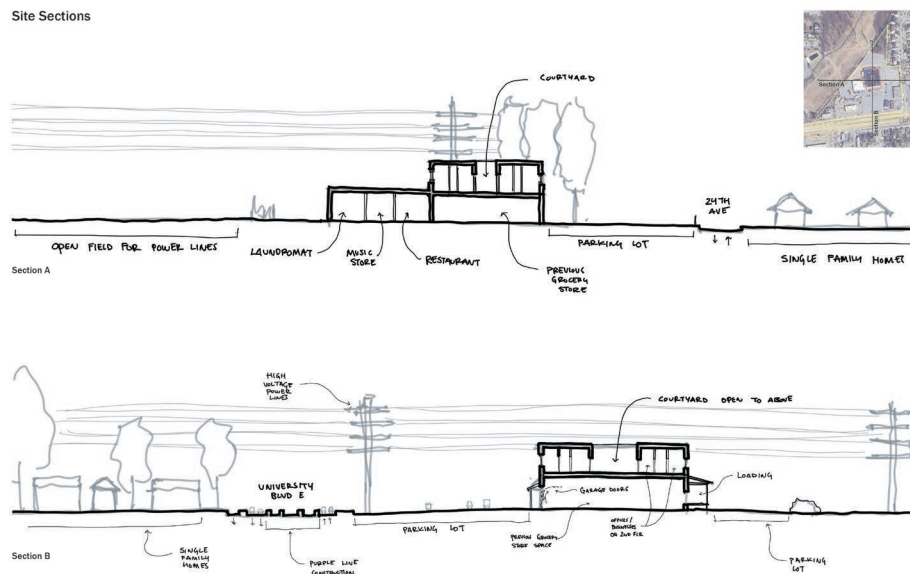


Figure 32 Street Sections (developed by author)

structure and vegetation can help reduce openness of the site to create a comfortable environment.

Summary

This site offers many opportunities to develop a design proposal that not only serves the community but also represents them and their culture. Food and architecture are tools that translate culture into tangible and digestible elements. Currently this site does not provide a welcoming environment and can benefit from programs that reflect what the community needs. There are many street vendors, and this site can provide support spaces that reinforce micro business. For example, the support spaces can include a community kitchen that can be used for those who do not have adequate space at home. With the development of the purple line, foot traffic will increase on this site. Visibility will also increase, and this site can be utilized as a place where people of many cultures come to socialize and learn from one another.

Chapter 7: Conceptual Testing of the Thesis

Early Exploration

The initial exploration of the thesis on site zero consists of freehand sketches that explore potential concepts of massing and organization. At this stage there are many questions left unanswered about the site, however, visualizing potential concepts helps flush out ideas to get closer to the strategy that reflects the purpose of

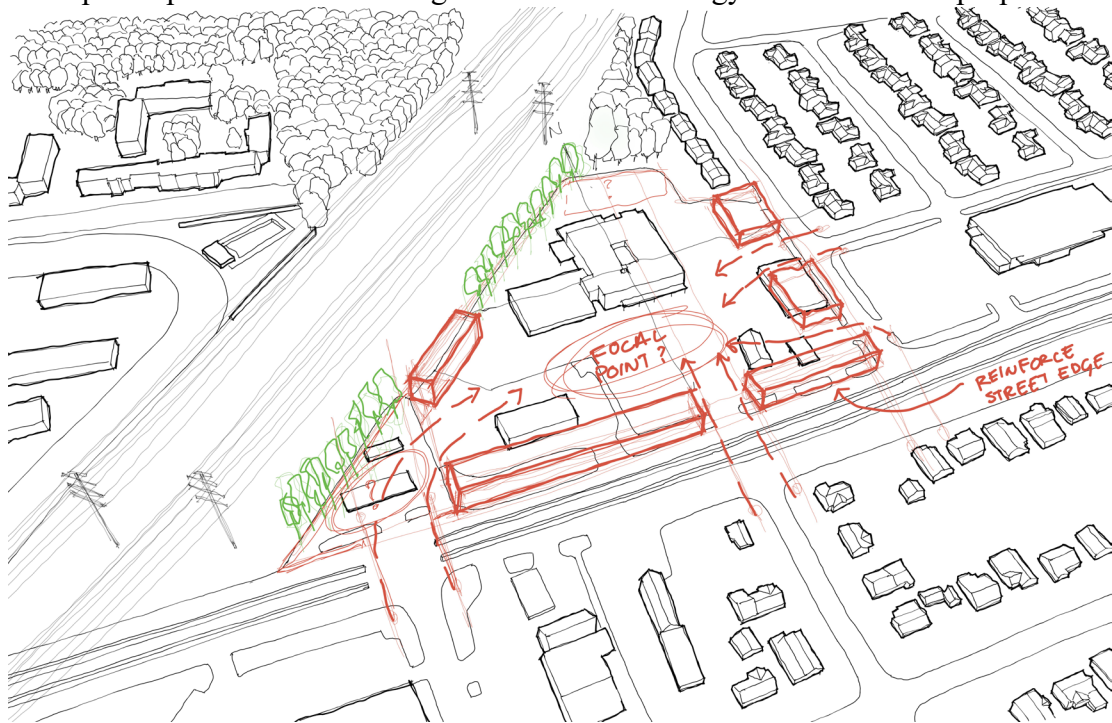


Figure 33 Massing Concept 1 (developed by author)

the thesis. Figure 33 highlights early ideas to bring massing closer to the street edge. This approach realizes that the site has large open spaces that do not have a sense of enclosure and feels out of touch with the human body. Beginning to densify can provide a sense of safety and security.

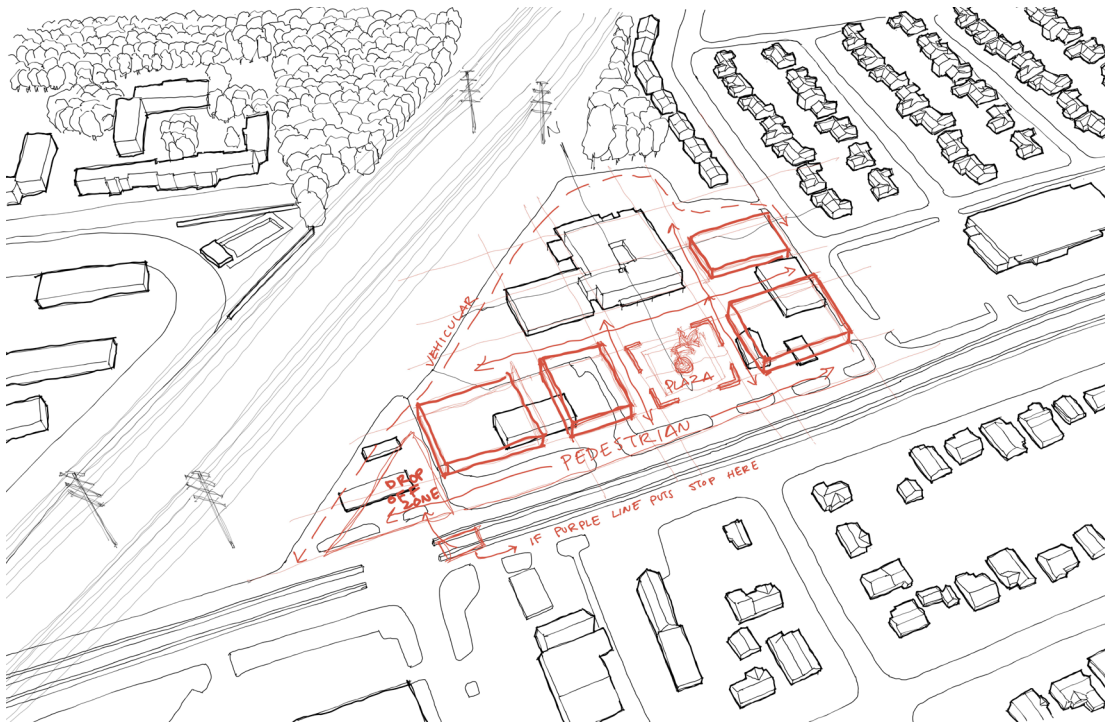


Figure 34 Massing Concept 2 (developed by author)

The second iteration, figure 34, is still exploring how to define the street edge while considering open space. A central plaza can begin to orient the site and develop ways of finding devices. Pedestrianizing this block is a priority to increase walkability and balance vehicular traffic and potential parking. The accessibility to this site from the neighborhoods on the south side of the purple line is not the safest due to the wide streets. Potentially proposing a purple line stop near the site can serve as a safe way to cross the wide street into the site.

Figure 35 highlights an approach that begins to question the form of the central structure on the site. Manipulating the existing form can create an interesting architectural expression. Open spaces and their various scales are essential for this thesis as outdoor spaces where one can sit and rest are necessary to increase comfortability on the site. This approach also brings in important programs that can

serve as space of opportunity. Educational and religious spaces are important to promote the preservation of the community's culture and tradition. Potential grow space for urban farming can occur towards the north of the site. This location on the site is near an existing tree grove and working in this area with landscape can be a

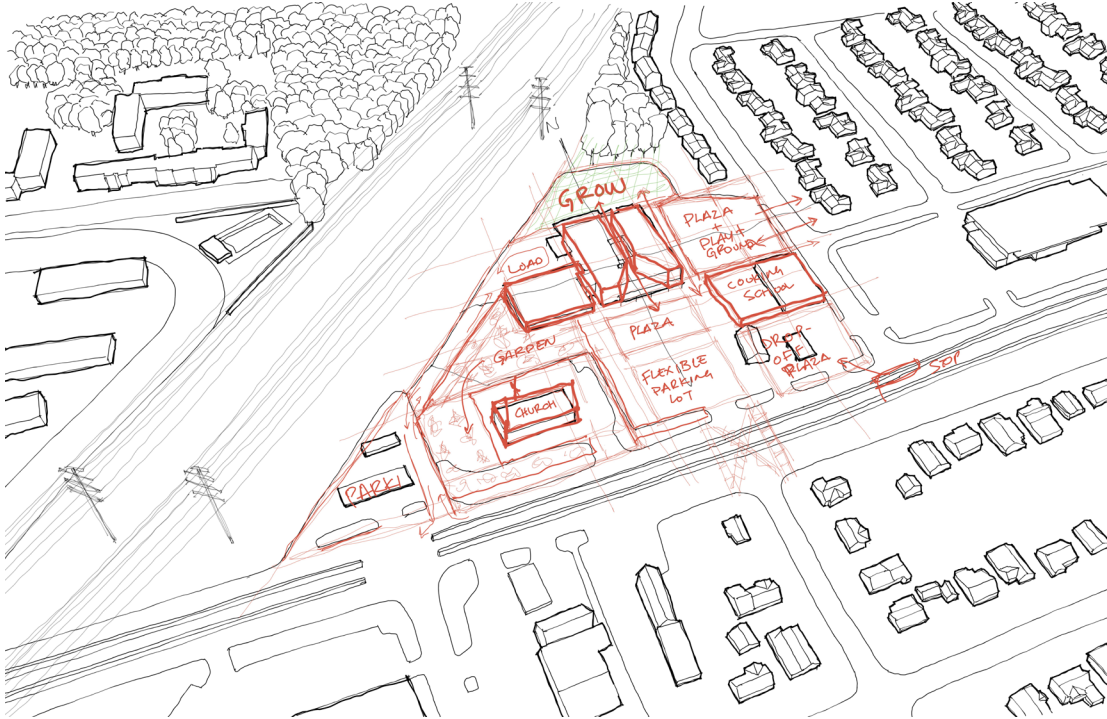


Figure 35 Massing Concept 3 (developed by author)

great way to extend the grove into the site and help with shading.

Precedent studies mentioned in chapter 4 help apply concepts that relate to the thesis goal. For example, the Municipal Market in Spain found ways to maintain the form of the building. This allowed a range of generations to feel a sense of familiarity with the place. This technique can be interesting to apply as it balances past experiences with current ones. The idea of cultural memory relies heavily on the identity of place, and the characteristics of spatial configurations help create

memories. Massing Concept 3 can be an interesting approach to execute as it interacts with the existing structure in the center of the site.

Conceptual Program

Program is a blend between the overall goal of the thesis and a response to the site and its context. This thesis attempts to provide a sense of belonging to immigrant

ZONE 1: NOURISH NODE (food zone)			ZONE 2: COMMUNITY NEST (support zone)			ZONE 3: SOUL STATIONS (safe zone)			ZONE 4: EMPOWERMENT HUB (education zone)			ZONE 5: MEMORY CONTINUUM (cultural preservation zone)		
Central food hall space that is mainly commercial space. Houses vendor spaces that are rentable for local small business owners. Business incubator that provides opportunity for small businesses to sell their food products to the public. The primary purpose of this hub is to house program that support entrepreneurial activity in the neighborhood.			Spaces that support community needs such as spaces to practice religion and encourage the youth in the community to engage in safe activities.			Spaces where the spirit can pause, recharge, and heal.			Spaces that support community needs such as spaces to practice religion and encourage the youth in the community to engage in safe activities.			Spaces that celebrate cultural traditions, artistic expression, and community building.		
PRIMARY INTERIOR SPACES	Auxiliary Spaces	SQ. FT. (approx.)	PRIMARY INTERIOR SPACES	Auxiliary Spaces	SQ. FT. (approx.)	PRIMARY EXTERIOR SPACES	Auxiliary Spaces	SQ. FT. (approx.)	PRIMARY INTERIOR SPACES	Auxiliary Spaces	SQ. FT. (approx.)	PRIMARY INTERIOR SPACES	Auxiliary Spaces	SQ. FT. (approx.)
Food Hall		10,000	Religious Worship Space		2,000	Immigrant Memorial		2,000	Local Orientation Center		2,000	Art Gallery & Exhibition Space		1,500
Space where local food vendors can sell their products and share their culture through authentic meals.	Seating Areas	3,000	Space where religious community can congregates practice their religion	Restrooms	300	Quiet spaces		500	Space where immigrant individuals can learn about immigration rights, asylum processes, and software to.	Lobby	500	Space where local artists can showcase their work and network with other artists	Storage and Conservation Rooms	1,000
	Vendor Stalls	2,000		Breakout Rooms	400	Gathering Spaces		1,000	Private Consultation Rooms		300	Admin and Staff Offices		1,000
	Lobby	1,000		Study Rooms	300	Restrooms		300	Workshop & Training Rooms		1,000	Lecture Hall		2,000
	MFP Restrooms	800		Visual Arts	200	Restroom Areas		400	Storage		800	Studio / Workshop Space		1,000
	Storage Rooms	600		Coat Room	100	Performance Space		800	Flexible classrooms		300	Lobby / Info Desk		300
	Kitchen/Cooking Spaces	2,500		Art	300	Total		5,000	Restrooms		200	Gift Shop		800
	Loading	400		Storage / Prep rooms	200				Resource Library		800	Cafe		1,500
	Self-Serve Room	400		Total	4,400	The Immigrant's Park		2,500	Family Room (children's)		600	Reading		600
	Admin Office	300				Seating area		400	Community Lounge		400	Art Prep Room		700
	Janitor's Closet	100				Shade Structures		200	Office		400	Storage Room		300
	Waste Mgmt Area (separated)	300				quiet nook		300	Translation & Interpretation Booth		300	Autism Hall		400
	Family Restroom	300				Total		4,500	Total		7,800	Family HR		100
Total		21,600										ADUX Hall		150
												Total		13,550
Public Kitchens		3,000	Youth Club		1,000				Prosperity Hall		2,000	Performance Space		1,000
Publicly accessible kitchens that can be utilized by street vendors and residents who cook and sell food as a hobby	Cooking Stations	2,500	A space that provides safe, structured, and engaging environments for young people.	Multipurpose activity room	1,000				Space where immigrant adults can continue their education with topics on language, communication and financial literacy.	Lobby	500	Space where public performances will occur showcasing traditional dances and spokenword.	Dressing Rooms	250
	Food Preparation Areas	1,500		Learning Labs	1,000				Restrooms		500		Green Room	400
	Storage (Fridge + Dry)	600		Art Studios	800				Classrooms		1,000		Rehearsal Rooms	1,000
	Refrigeration Units	500		Computer Lab	800				Storage		500		Wardrobe/Makeup Rooms	300
	Dishwashing Area	500		Recreation Area	1,000				Room Play Rooms		800		Storage	1,000
	Self-Serve Room	200		Lobby	400				Cafe		400		Landscaped Courtyard Room	500
	Admin Office	200		Restrooms	300				Family Room		500		Lobby	500
	Janitor's closet	100		Storage	200				Resource Library		800		Restrooms	800
	Waste Mgmt Area	200		Office Space	100				Loading		500		Food Prep	500
	Family Restroom	100		Reading / Library Area	500				Total		16,500		Offices	1,000
Total		11,600			6,000								Media Rooms	500
												Total		7,650
Food Pantry		3,000										Knowledge Lounge		800
A space where donated food can be distributed to individuals and families in need.	Check-In Area	500										Space where the community can sit, eat, discuss, collaborate, and network.	Reception	150
	Storage Room (Dry Goods)	1,000										Restrooms		200
	Cold Storage Room	800										Community Room		400
	Volunteer Workroom (packing food)	600										Children Play Space		300
	Loading Dock	400										Staff Office		150
	Admin Offices	300										Total		2,000
	Rest Rooms	200												
	Multipurpose room (Community Meetings)	1,200												
Total		8,000												
PRIMARY EXTERIOR SPACES	Auxiliary Spaces	SQ. FT. (approx.)	PRIMARY EXTERIOR SPACES	Auxiliary Spaces	SQ. FT. (approx.)							Community Cafeteria		800
Food Growing Garden		2,000	Worship Garden		1,000							Space where residents can buy local bread and enjoy a cup of coffee.	Bakery Area	600
This is a garden that grows food + seasonal ornamental plants for the community to use. This place also offers composted soil for the community.	Raised bed gardens	2,000	Space adjacent to religious space for reflection	Seating	600							Kitchen		400
	Green house	1,000		Shaded Pavilion	300							Storage		300
	Sitting areas (ie carports)	500		Gathering Space	500							Seating Area		600
	Access to the main building Lobby	300		Storage Shed	200							Restrooms		200
	Soil Compost area	400		Total	3,100							Staff Office		150
Total		4,300										Service Counters		250
												Total		3,200
Edible Public Landscapes		3,000 <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <th>PRIMARY EXTERIOR SPACES</th> <th>Auxiliary Spaces</th> <th>SQ. FT. (approx.)</th>										PRIMARY EXTERIOR SPACES	Auxiliary Spaces	SQ. FT. (approx.)
Courtyards or corridors lined with:	Fruit Tree Groves	3,000	Pickup Soccer Field		3,000				Lawrence Garden		5,000	Outdoor Seating		500
	Herb Gardens	1,500	Small pocket spaces for pickup.	Benches	200				Space where outdoor lessons can occur	Seating	400	Seating to sit outside of bakery	Chairs w/ Table	200
	Berry Patches	1,500		Restrooms	400					Shaded Pavilion	800	Bench Seating		400
	Seating Areas	800		Seated Seating	1,000					Gathering Space	1,200	Standing Café Tables		200
	Composting Zones	400		Access Paths	500					Storage Shed	300	Total		1,300
Total		6,900		Storage Shed	200					Total	7,700	Outdoor Seating (Performance Based)		1,000
				Total	11,300							Spaces to sit outside to view performances	Chairs w/ Table	750
												Concentrated Seating		350
												Standing Room		200
												Total		2,300

Figure 36 Program Matrix (developed by author)

neighborhoods in the U.S. and aims to prioritize a bottom-up design approach to understand the needs of the residents and visitors of the site zero. Through site analysis and research on this topic a range of programs can be extracted to be relevant. Chapter 5 begins to explore potential program zones that the thesis research alludes to. From the initial concepts of programming, a much more refined understanding is developed using a matrix.

This thesis can break down into five major program zones with each focused on supporting the existing community in site zero. At this stage, the process of developing a program matrix allows for scale of various spaces to formulate. The matrix provides a great way to visualize and track the spaces required for this thesis to function as well as the amount of space each zone requires. Figure 36 shows how the zones are organized and the spaces within them are laid out in a ‘primary’ vs ‘auxiliary’ spaces. This reveals the additional spaces that a primary space requires to function in a safe and comfortable manner. It is important to note that through this process, it is apparent that there are many outdoor spaces tied to indoor programs. The outdoor spaces are an opportunity to explore hybrid programming and begin to blend the indoor and outdoor experience to create opportunities for casual interactions.

Further Exploration

After developing a program matrix and researching the site further, additional variables came into play on site-zero. For example, the site is directly in front of the development of the purple line which will run through the Langley Park neighborhood. The site reacts in different ways to question whether a stop can be proposed directly in front of site zero. The current plan for the purple line is to run past the site zero location which limits the potential frequency in which people visit the site. Figure 37 is another approach to the site that begins to understand the importance of the space in front of the central structure. This structure can begin to anchor and organize the site.

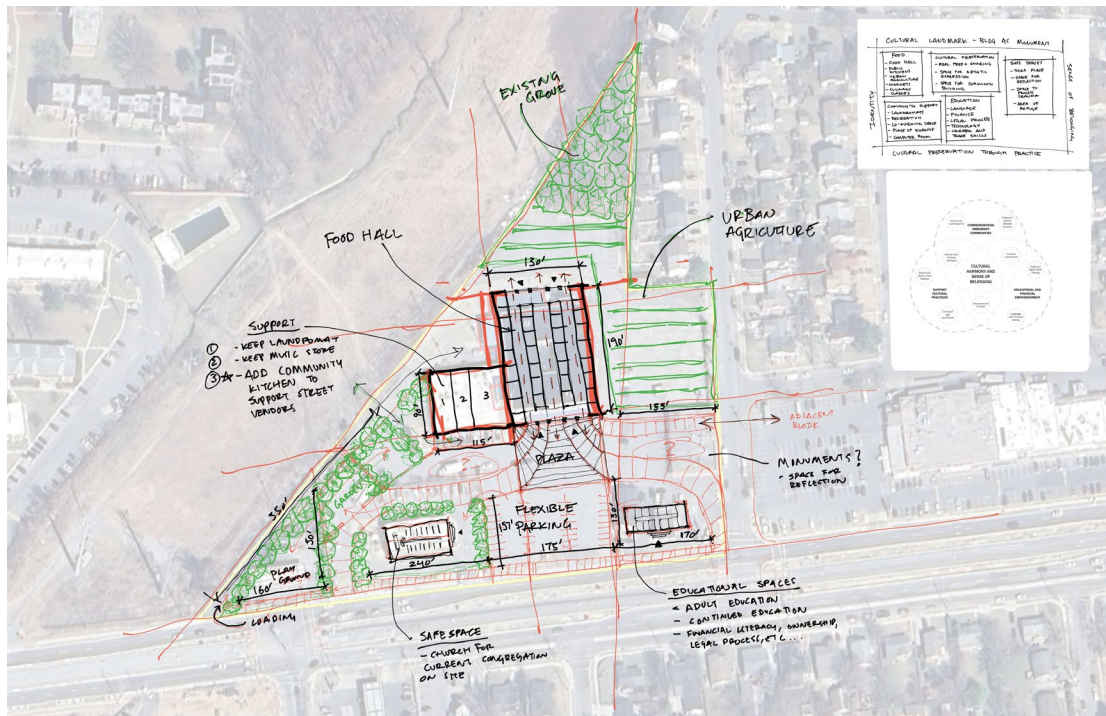


Figure 37 Conceptual Plan 1 Testing of Thesis (developed by author)

Figure 38 begins to show potential heights and proportion of massing. In plan this first concept begins to look dense, however, in an aerial perspective view, the proposed massing feels isolated. There is still a lack of enclosure around the site

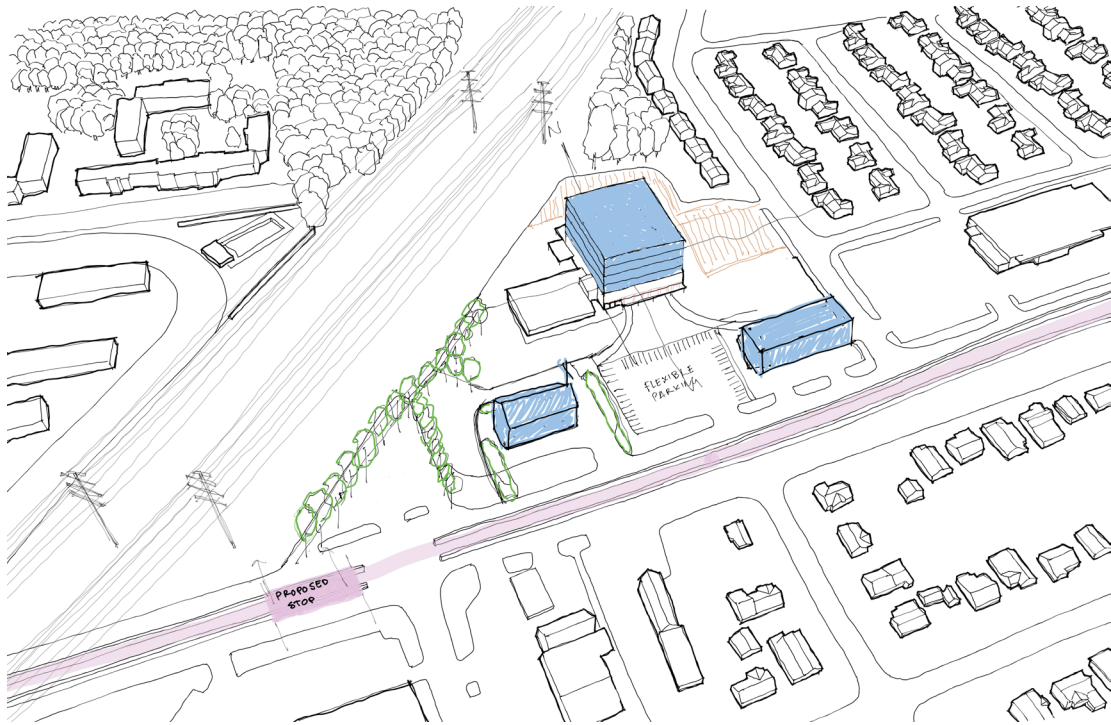


Figure 38 Conceptual Aerial 1 Testing of Thesis (developed by author)

which is a response to my site visit. Reducing this open-air feeling will help bring the scale down to a human and comfortable scale.

Further analysis of the site realizes that there are many paths that lead to the site from the north-west edge of the site. Beneath the high voltage powerline, a set of footpaths can be observed. This implies that residents from the neighborhood on the west travel to the site. Figure 39 engages and commits to the footpaths as a form of acknowledgment. Facilitating the existing conditions of the site is a core element of the thesis. Observing the site and strategically using architecture and placemaking can result in a design that bolsters the communities and how it is currently functioning.

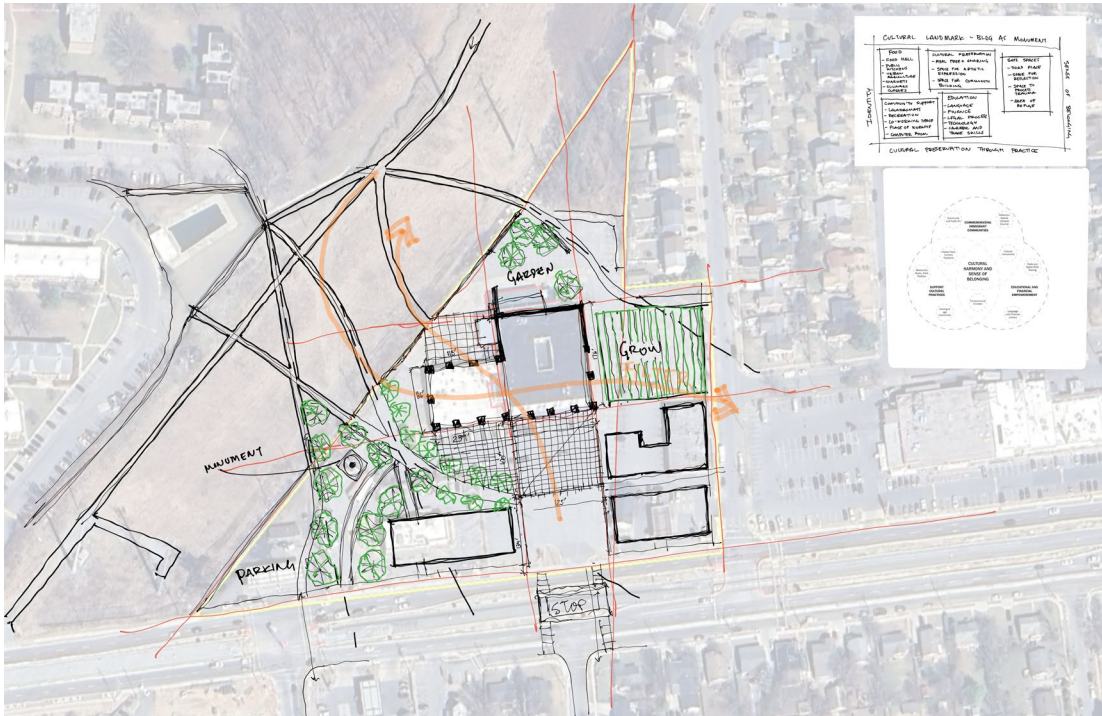


Figure 39 Conceptual Plan 2 Testing of Thesis (developed by author)

Grow space and green spaces are still prioritized and the plan is attempting to solve the various scales of green spaces. Ensuring plenty of green space not only serves to provide third places for the neighborhood but also seeks to reduce the heat island effect that occurs on site due to the asphalt parking lot.

The aerial sketch in figure 40 shows how the existing foot paths can begin to take on a stronger definition to encourage community connection that they seek. This observation can potentially offer an additional layer that prioritizes walkability. The site itself can serve as a transition space for commuters and provide a unique experience of the local culture through food and open spaces that are proposed in the program matrix. The central building begins to explore the potential of being open and walkable on the ground to continue to play into the on-foot commuter aspect.

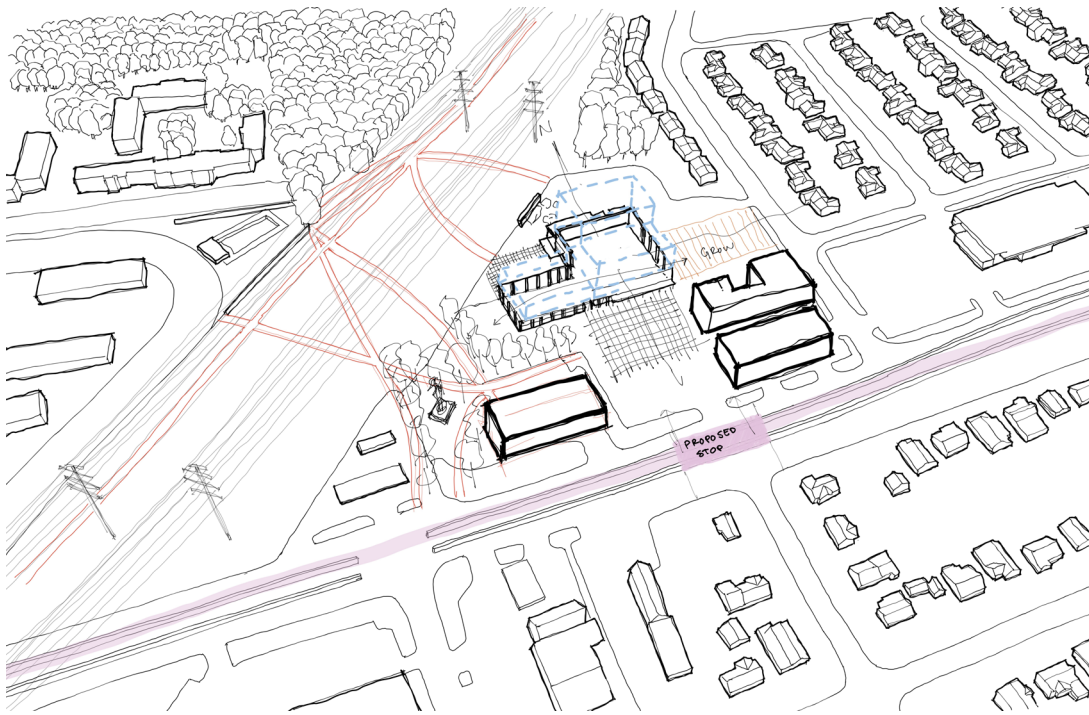


Figure 40 Conceptual Aerial 2 Testing of Thesis (developed by author)

The third exploration begins to synthesize the ideas of concept 1 and 2 in a way that balances green/open space as well as building massing. Figure 41 is observing how to further refine the walk paths and potentially integrating a memorial experience. Landscape and outdoor spaces begin to negotiate and begin to blend and create a series of open spaces to experience throughout the site. Massing is being questioned by the existing structures on site closer to the street edge. It may be worth exploring a concept where no buildings are touched but instead worked around. This approach can potentially support the idea that this thesis seeks to strengthen the existing conditions of the neighborhood.

The Aerial highlighted in figure 42 begins to further define the program on the site. The outdoor green spaces begin to take shape and form which provides a sense

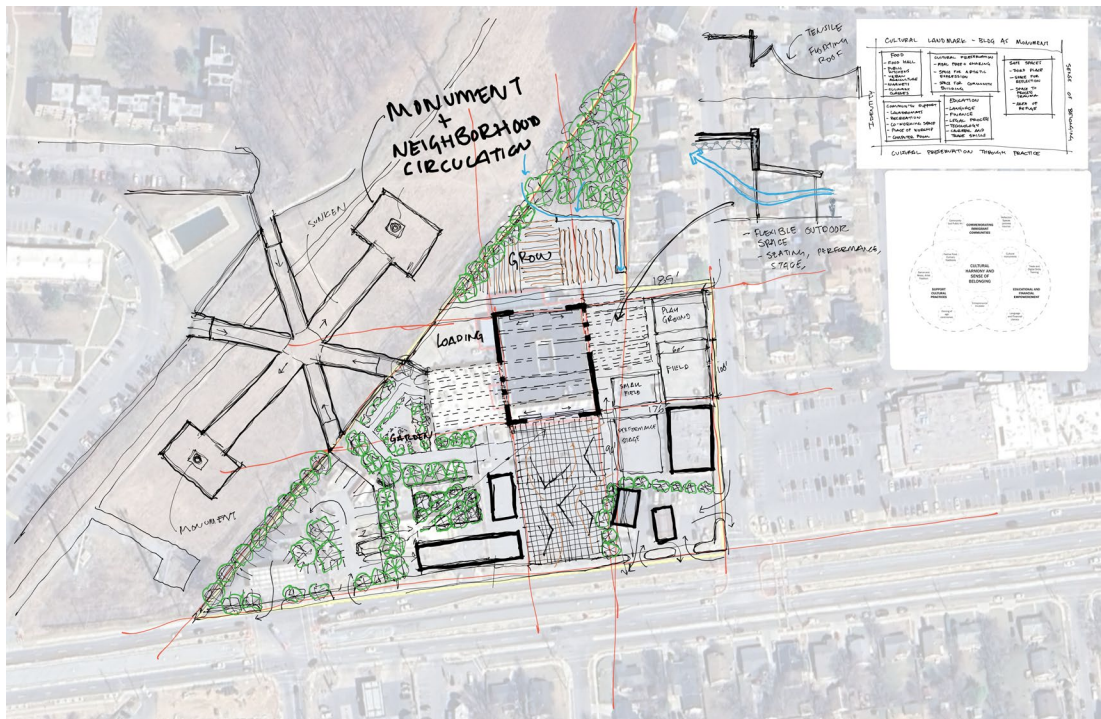


Figure 41 Conceptual Plan 3 Testing of Thesis (developed by author)

of enclosure without having to build walls or roofs. Outdoor rooms can begin to blend and create seamless transition between spaces. The central building form also begins to explore ideas of shading structures that are attached to the building and seek to serve as transitional space between indoor and outdoor. The foot paths are further defined, and the paths are slightly sunken into the ground. The focus on the footpaths can serve as an opportunity to provide a monumental experience that both commemorates immigrant communities and facilitates circulation on foot through the greater neighborhood.

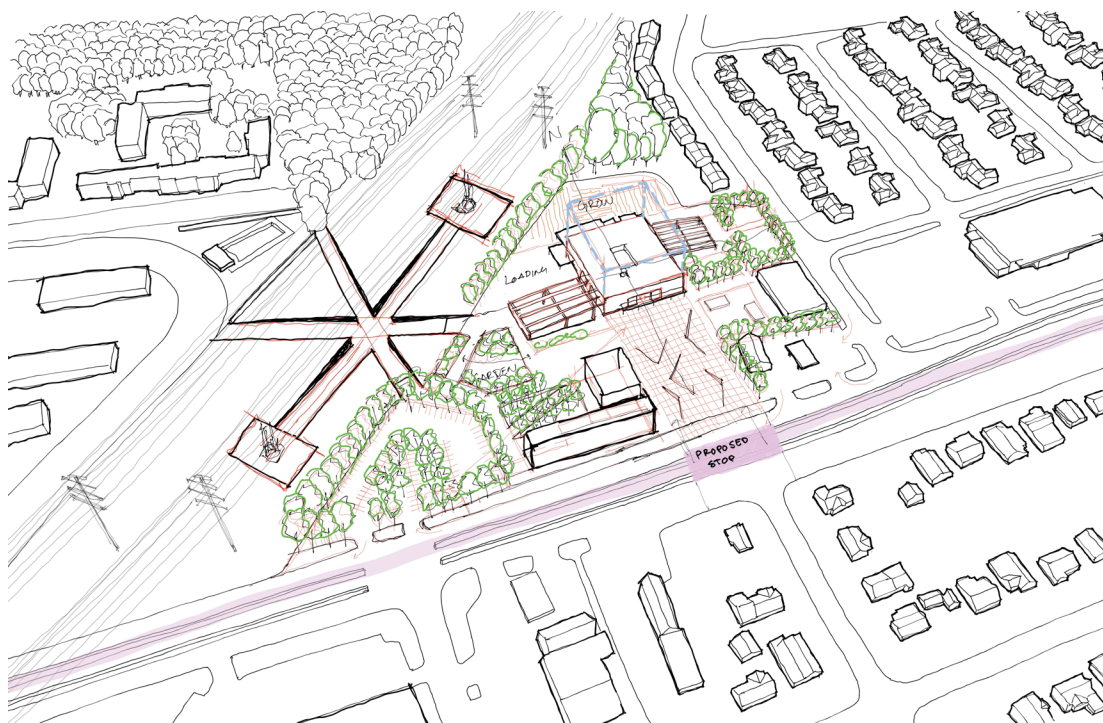


Figure 42 Conceptual Aerial 3 Testing of Thesis (developed by author)

Summary

In conclusion, the initial explorations begin to question scale, lack of human spaces, walkability, and other factors found throughout the site. There is an opportunity for landscape and the built environment to negotiate space and the blend of boundaries between programs. Hybridizing the indoor and outdoor function creates opportunities for visitors and residents to interact. The abstract program began to plant seeds for the site's organization and types of spaces. Although the presented iterations provide great paths to explore further, an in-depth research of the site, the people that use it daily, and the larger neighborhood must be conducted to truly understand how the neighborhood functions and to what degree can support existing systems.

Chapter 8: Towards Possible Futures

Introduction

Historically, the Latinx community has experienced persistent cycles of displacement. In many cases, this displacement originates in their home countries, driven by constrained economic opportunities, diminished by constrained economic opportunities, diminished quality of life, political turbulence, and widespread violence. However, these conditions are frequently shaped by foreign policy decisions and military interventions that contribute to creating environments that become increasingly difficult to live in.

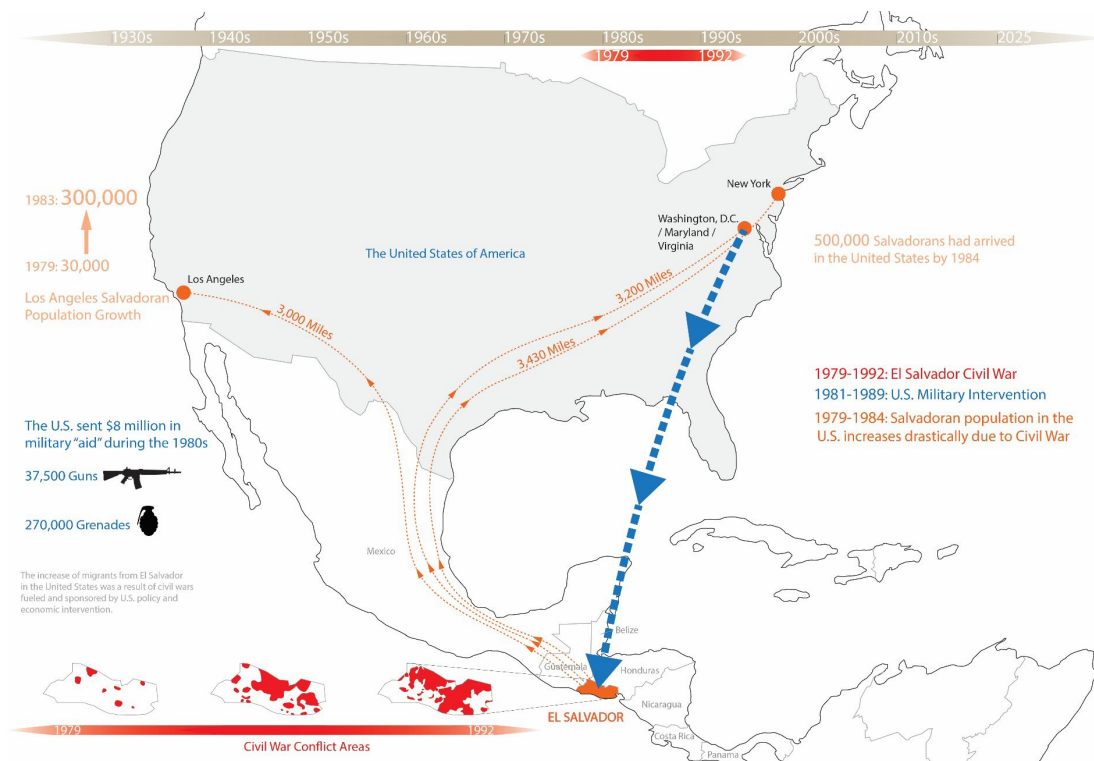


Figure 43 U.S. Intervention Causes Displacement (developed by author)

For example, El Salvador's civil war of 1979 resulted in many Salvadorans fleeing north to the United States increasing the presence of Latinx individuals in

many major cities. Although it was perceived as an internal conflict to the external world, the Civil War was sponsored by U.S. political intervention which further fueled the fire and affected millions of family and children. We can observe in figure 43, that there is a direct correlation between the U.S. military “aid” (in blue), the increase of area affected by the civil war (in red), and the mass amount of people that traveled north seeking a safer environment. As a result of the displacement of Salvadorans and many Central Americans, the United States become the new home of many immigrants. This thesis is looking towards ways in which Latinx immigrants from Central America can claim space in the neighborhoods they live in to break the cycle of displacement and establish landmarks that symbolize resistance, culture, and growth.

Tools To Claim Space

Immigrant often leave with little more than what they can carry, bringing with them the memories of the homes they were forced to leave behind. Many of those

memories, shown in figure 44, are related to food in terms of planting, growing, making, and exchanging.



Figure 44 Cultural Memories (developed by author)

As architects, we can use food and architecture to create familiar landmarks for Central American immigrants, spaces that help keep their food memories alive. Food spaces like community gardens allow people to use their agricultural knowledge and exchange skills with others interested in the process of planting and growing food. Figure 45 envisions a food garden where people of the local community gather to build a space rooted in cultural knowledge, claiming space that represents and nourishes them.



Figure 45 Food Garden Perspective (developed by author)

In addition to growing food, spaces such as a plaza where food vendors can come out and sell their products are also important. This thesis emphasizes food as the glue between an immigrant's true home in Central America and their new home in the United States. By creating spaces where immigrants can sell food in their own way, we can celebrate food and culture while providing economic opportunities that help them prosper. The existing building on site can begin to engage the public realm with vendor spaces that face a large plaza as shown in figure 46. This in turn creates a social space and activates the outdoor space where the community can come together.

In addition to growing and making food, it is also important to have spaces where the community can come to learn about food and its history. The community



Figure 46 Food Vendor Plaza (developed by author)

seed library shown in figure 47 is a space within the food hub located on the second floor. This is a safe space for families, and anyone interested in learning about the early steps of planting seeds. In addition, it is multifunction space that provides access to computers, books, study rooms, and indoor vertical gardens that grow food. This space is focused on addressing the current issue of the lack of spaces where families and children can go to on the weekends and after school.



Figure 47 Community Seed Library

Negotiation of Space

The idea of claiming space in thesis is important and it begins to ask how the existing built environment can be negotiated between users. The site on which this thesis is situated contains an existing building that is underutilized and finds an opportunity to create a sense of belonging within the existing infrastructure. The existing building is made up of steel columns and beams wrapped with a brick façade as shown in figure 48. This thesis begins to question whether the existing building reflects the culture of the community it serves.

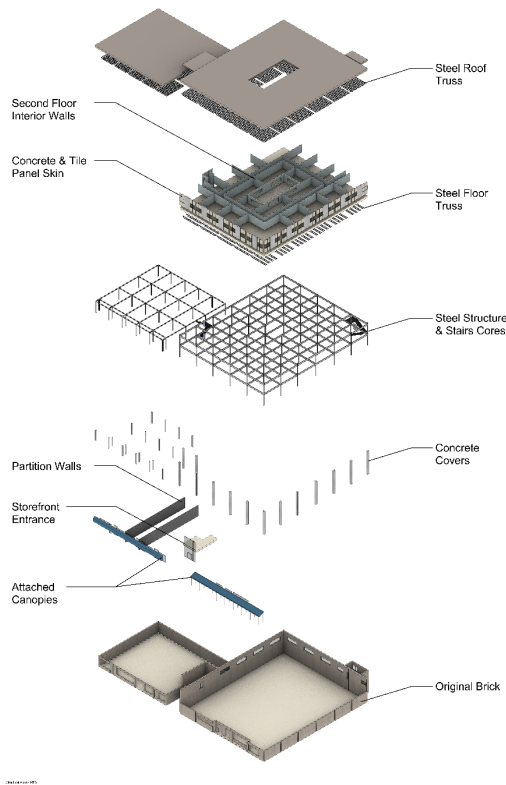


Figure 49 Existing Building Anatomy (developed by author)

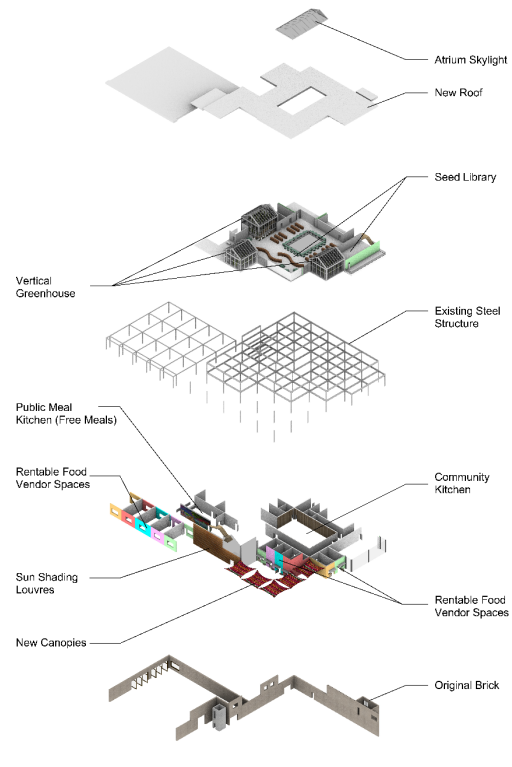


Figure 48 New Building Anatomy (developed by author)

One way in which this thesis begins to negotiate space is by carving away at the existing building to create new spaces where food and culture are allowed to be expressed. The introduction of color and texture also begins to become a method in which a sense of belonging and memory of place can be preserved. Figure 49 highlights how an existing structure can become porous and begin to serve the cultural practices of Central American immigrants.

The ground floor plan shown in figure 50 consists of spaces that serve both the local food entrepreneurs of the surrounding community and address the unhoused community near the site through the public meal kitchen which will serve free meals daily. The community kitchen is a resource for local food entrepreneurs who need

access to kitchen space and commercial equipment. Additionally, rentable vendor spaces along the façade are available to local entrepreneurs as an opportunity to scale up their business and take advantage of public exposure. The Public Meal Kitchen is oriented towards the east to engage with the unhoused community under the power lines and invites them into the site to integrate with the larger community.



Figure 50 Ground Floor Plan (developed by author)

The second floor shown in figure 51 consists of the seed library which serves as an extension of the main library on the site. This is a space where visitors can learn about the seed planting process and can act as an introduction to food growth. In addition, indoor vertical farm towers make an appearance as a feature of the space to highlight an alternative way of farming that could occur yearly especially during the

winter months. This ensures continued food production when the outdoor garden is less productive, giving kitchens and vendors access to fresh ingredients year-round.



Figure 51 Second Floor Plan (developed by author)

Similarly, the building sections in figure 52 begin to break away from the existing roof form and create a roof line that makes it distinguishable to establish a recognizable landmark for the community. The vertical farm towers begin to shape the roof and establish itself as an important element that puts the food growing process on display.



Figure 52 New Building Sections (developed by author)

Site Design

The site strategy also stems from the idea of negotiating space. Understanding that the site lacks public life and spaces that allow the local community to express themselves, many of the design decisions are focused on creating a pedestrian oriented space within the context of the suburbs. In addition, a balance of walkability and vehicular parking is important to consider finding a middle ground that allows for multimodal access to the site. Furthermore, the site strategy aims to address missing civic spaces in the neighborhood such as a library. A church is proposed to provide for a proper religious space for the religious congregation that currently occupies the

second floor of the existing building on site. This begins to organize the site overall and begins to frame the central plaza. The proposed site design features a pedestrian path that leads you through the food truck plaza, the vendor plaza, a family park, and a food garden at the end of the path north of the site.



Figure 53 Site Aerial (developed by author)

Conclusion

This thesis is rooted in creating a landmark for Central American immigrants through the preservation of food culture and the adapting the existing built environment to meet the needs of its community. Establishing a landmark for Central American immigrants creates a space where their culinary and cultural knowledge

can thrive, empowering communities to share, preserve, and build upon the traditions they bring to the United. It is essential that people have opportunities to use and share their knowledge, as this can create economic pathways and offer teaching moments for younger generations, helping preserve the memories and traditions immigrants carry from their homeland.

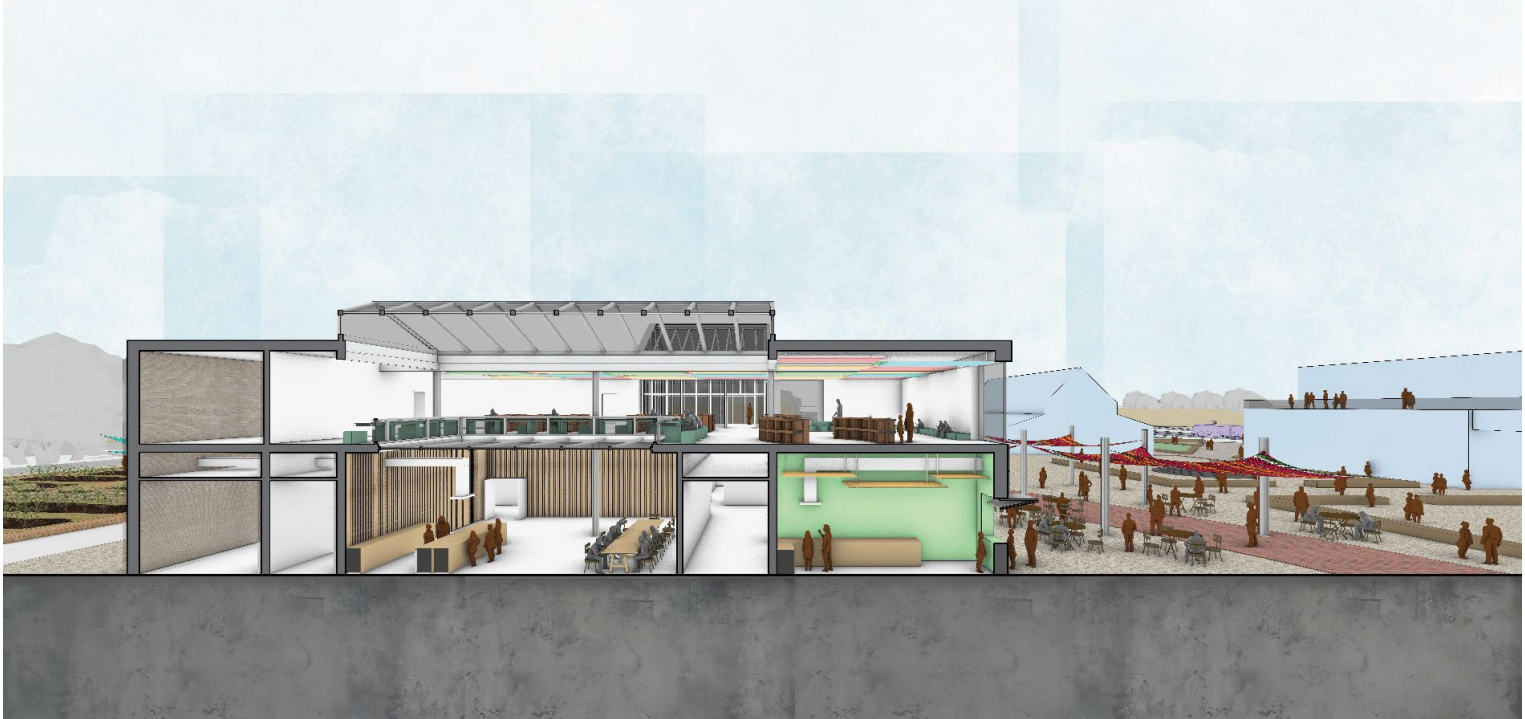


Figure 54 Section Perspective (developed by author)

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