

reclaim. rethink. resuscitate.

a proposal for “self-healing” industry in the city of St. Louis, MO



Many Midwestern cities grew up around rail corridors and industrial land. Though this land was once a source of life and energy in these cities, it is now mostly devoid of people because of abandonment or automation. Because of the missing human interface with industrial land, we are left with large tracts of seemingly “dead” land in parts of the city that are otherwise relatively stable or healthy. This land turns its back on the surrounding neighborhoods, creating unnatural edges and impervious boundaries within the urban fabric. The task, then, is to **reclaim** this land for the public by **rethinking** industrial architecture, both programmatically and tectonically, so that it is a stimulus of life and joy in the community rather than a source of decay.



dilemma

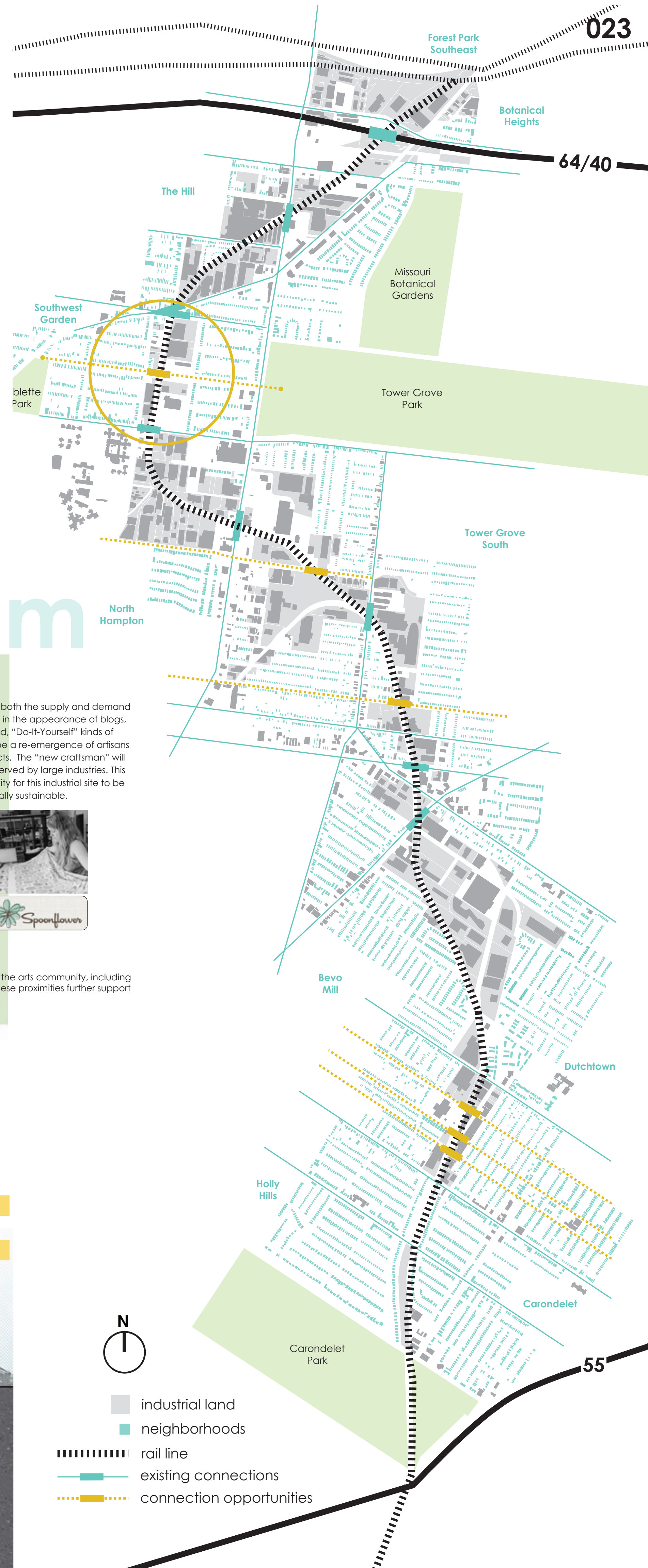
industrial land
vacant land

Many swaths of industrial land in St. Louis are too large to be transformed by a single architectural intervention. However, the former Oak Hill and Carondelet rail corridor offers a number of sites on which a smaller-scale project holds the potential to make a big improvement. The intersection of Reber Place is one such site: a tree-lined boulevard that runs from Sublette Park to Tower Grove Park is interrupted by a swath of now-underutilized industrial land.

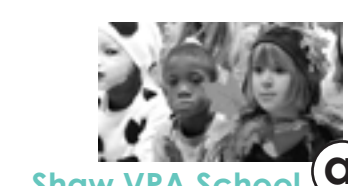
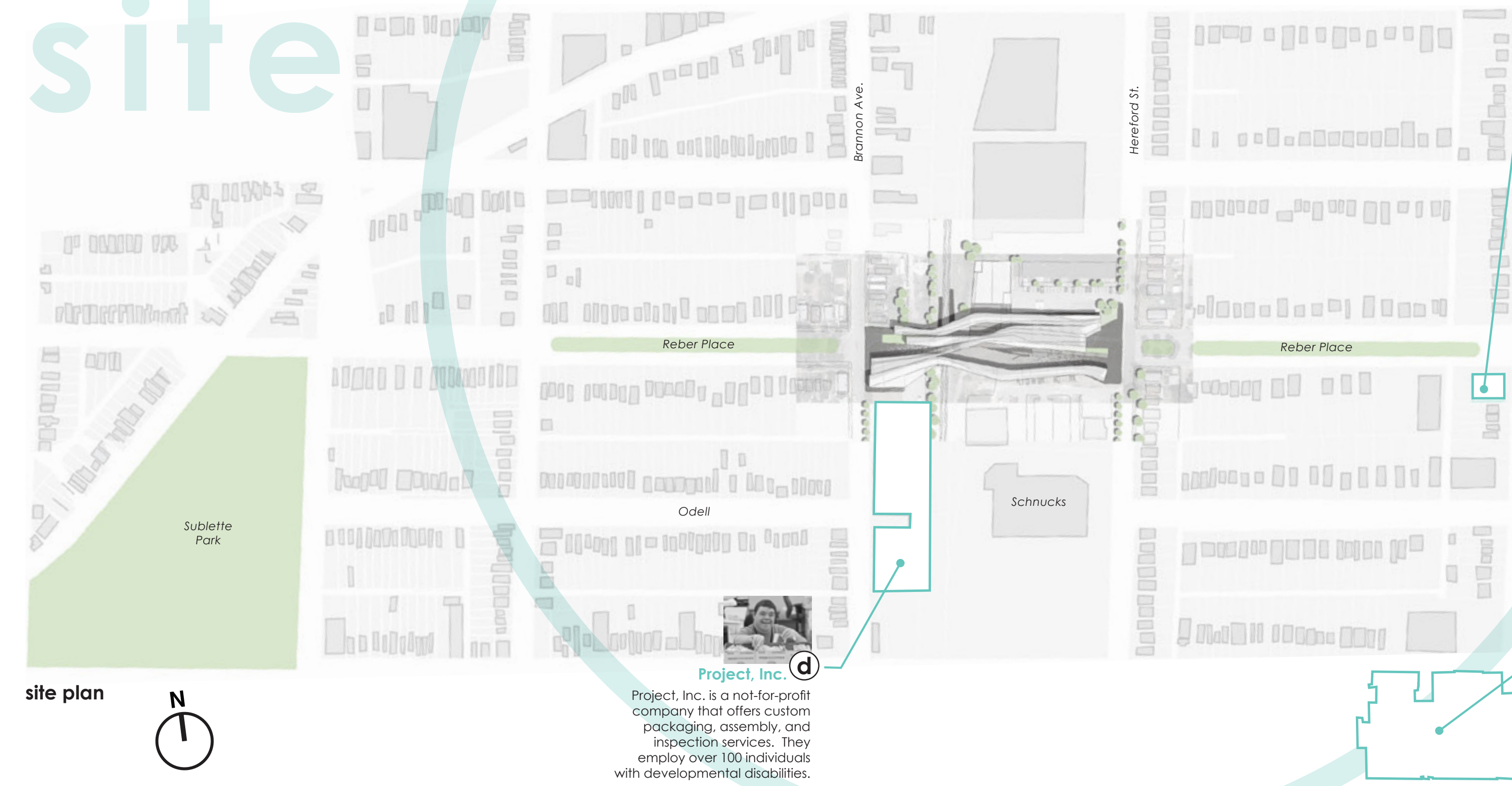


site: 1906

Reber Place



site



Shaw VPA School

Shaw Visual and Performing Arts School is an elementary school in the St. Louis Public Schools system. They currently enroll 350 students from preschool through 5th grade. The school also partners with the Pulitzer Foundation to create links between their students and the greater arts community.



Columbia Foundation for the Arts

Located in the former Columbia Theater, the Columbia Foundation for the Arts is a museum, archive, and event space. They seek to offer educational opportunities and access to exhibition and performance space to the community.



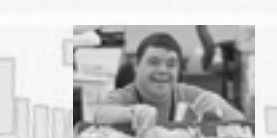
The Luminary Center for the Arts

The Luminary Center for the Arts was founded in 2007 as a nonprofit artists' resourcing institution. It operates a 9,000 s.f. gallery, studio, and event space in the former Holy Angels Convent. In addition, they run a residency program for local artists, allowing them access to studio space, a small woodshop, and audio-visual equipment.



Central VPA High School

Central Visual and Performing Arts High School enrolls 425 students in grades 9-12. It is a part of the St. Louis Public School system, offering an alternative education that combines arts and academics.



Project, Inc.

Project, Inc. is a not-for-profit company that offers custom packaging, assembly, and inspection services. They employ over 100 individuals with developmental disabilities.

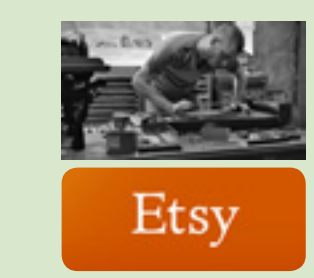
program

the “new craftsman”

Despite the proliferation of mass produced goods today, there is a resurgence in both the supply and demand for handmade, customized products. The accessibility of technology has resulted in the appearance of blogs, websites, magazines, and television shows that promote and enable hand-crafted, “Do-It-Yourself” kinds of projects. A report from *Institute for the Future* states that “The next ten years will see a re-emergence of artisans as an economic force”, owing to their flexibility and targeted, customized products. The “new craftsman” will work more directly with consumers, filling niche markets not currently able to be served by large industries. This resurgence in craft and handmade products provides a programmatic opportunity for this industrial site to be both “self-healing”...industry healing the wounds of past industry...and economically sustainable.



Ponoko



Etsy

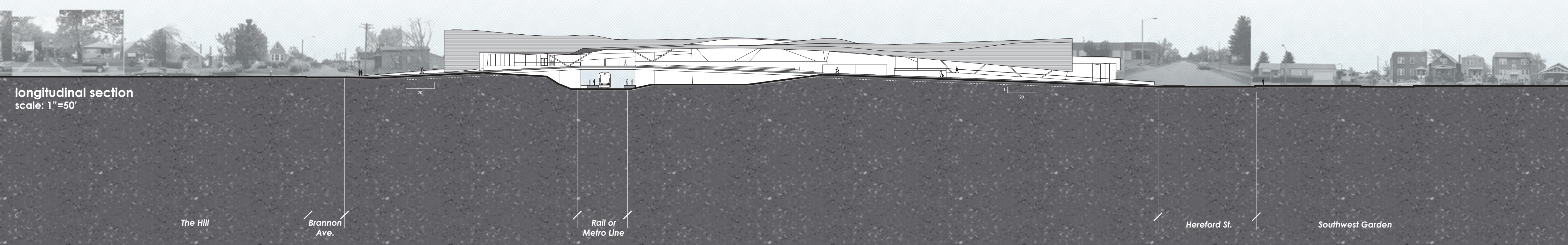


Spoonflower

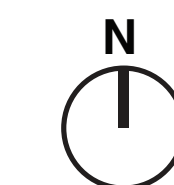
partnership opportunities

The Reber Place site is centrally located relative to a number of establishments in the arts community, including both the high school and elementary school for the visual and performing arts. These proximities further support the feasibility of a center for craft industry.

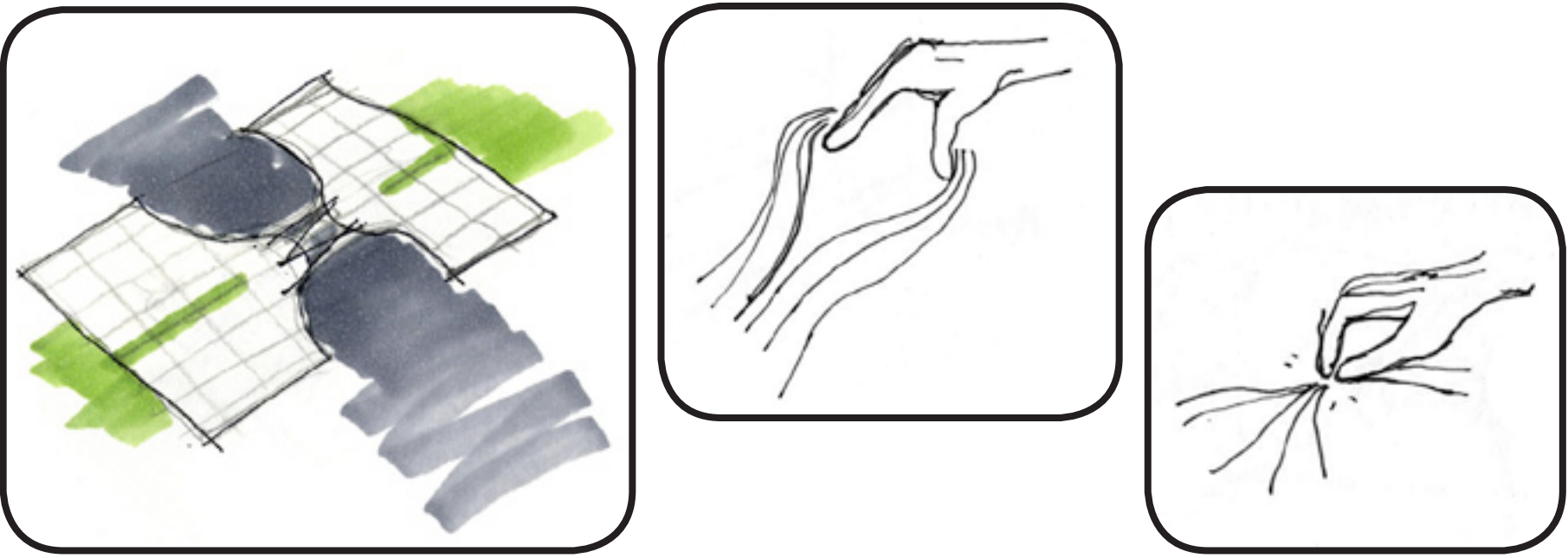
existing condition	The Hill Neighborhood	industry	Southwest Garden Neighborhood
proposed condition	The Hill Neighborhood	center for craft industry	Southwest Garden Neighborhood



longitudinal section
scale: 1"=50'

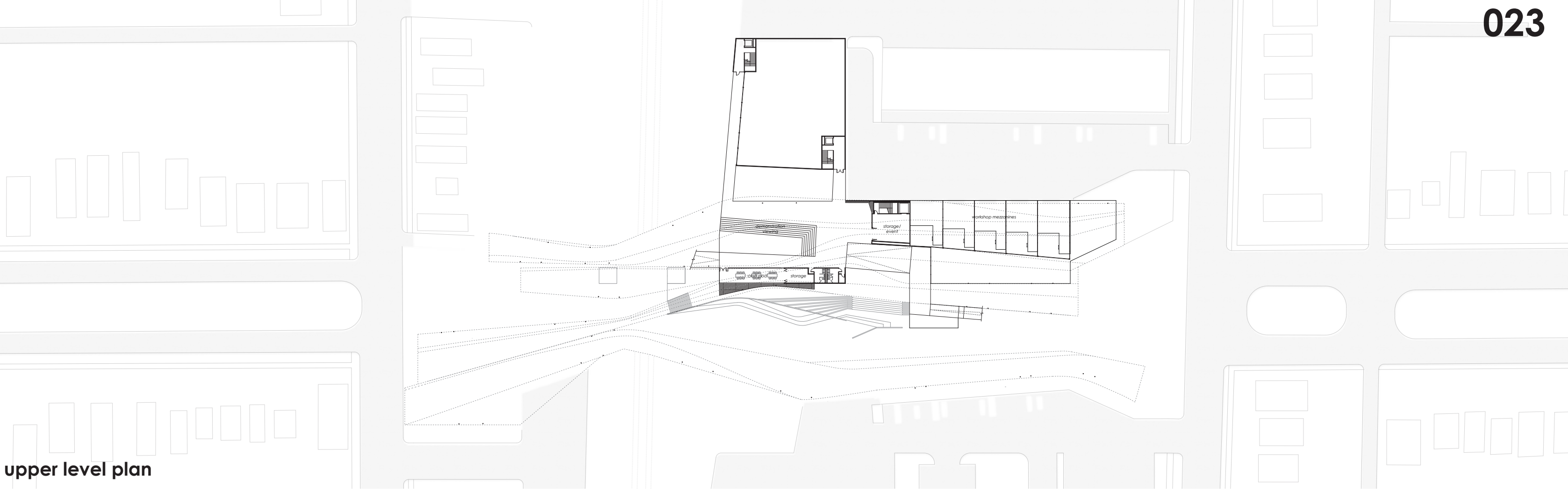
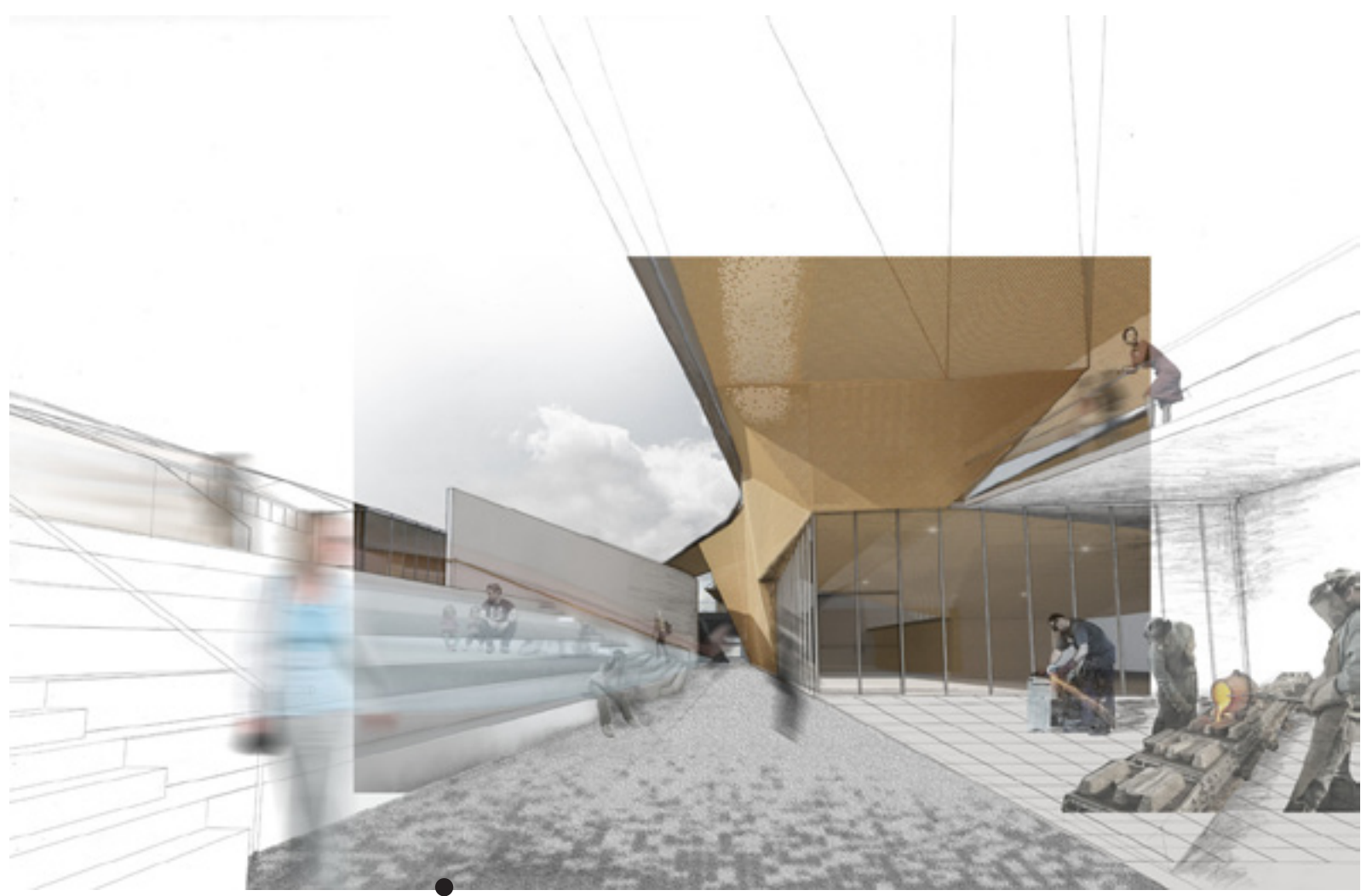
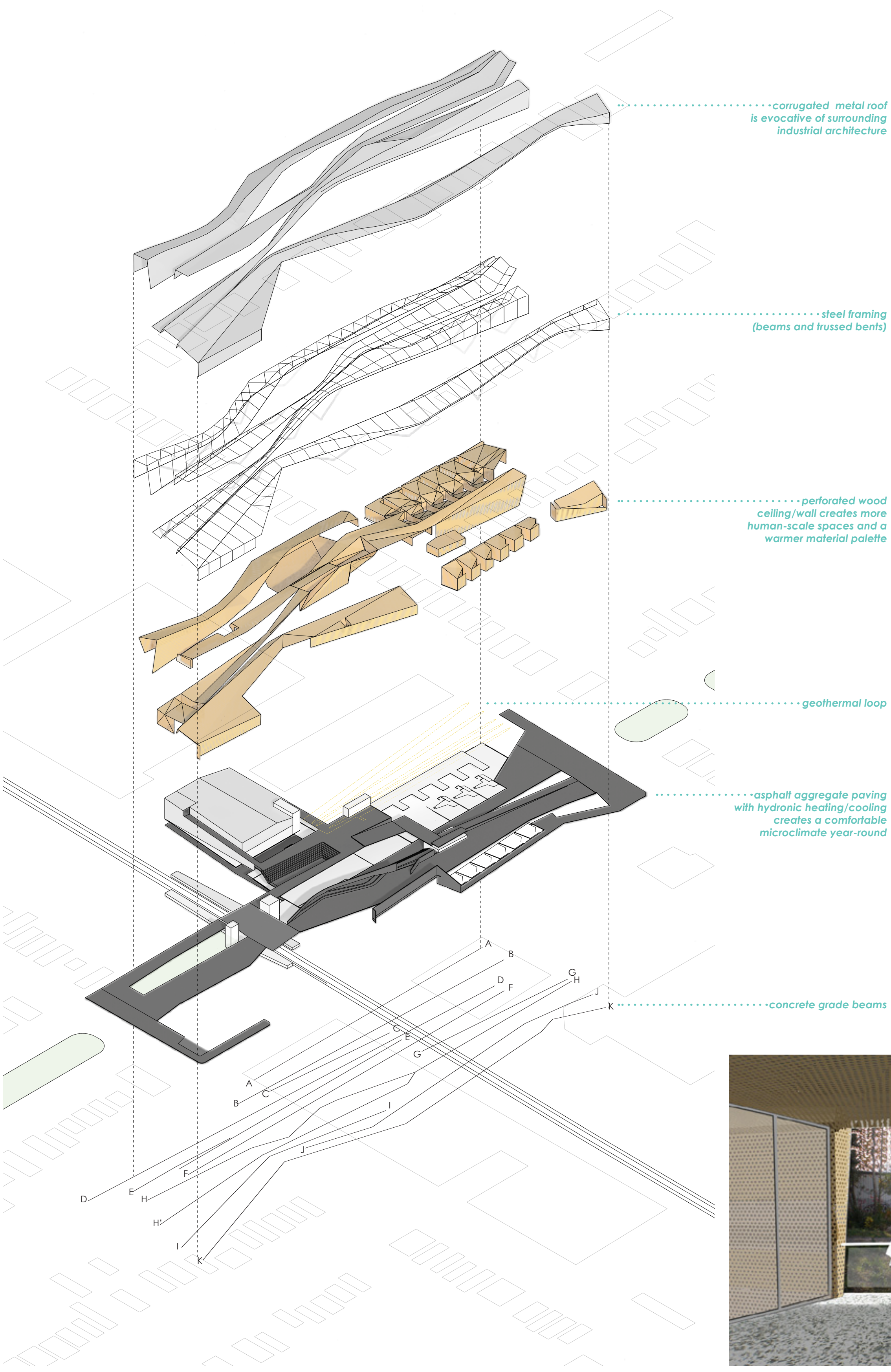


industrial land
neighborhoods
rail line
existing connections
connection opportunities

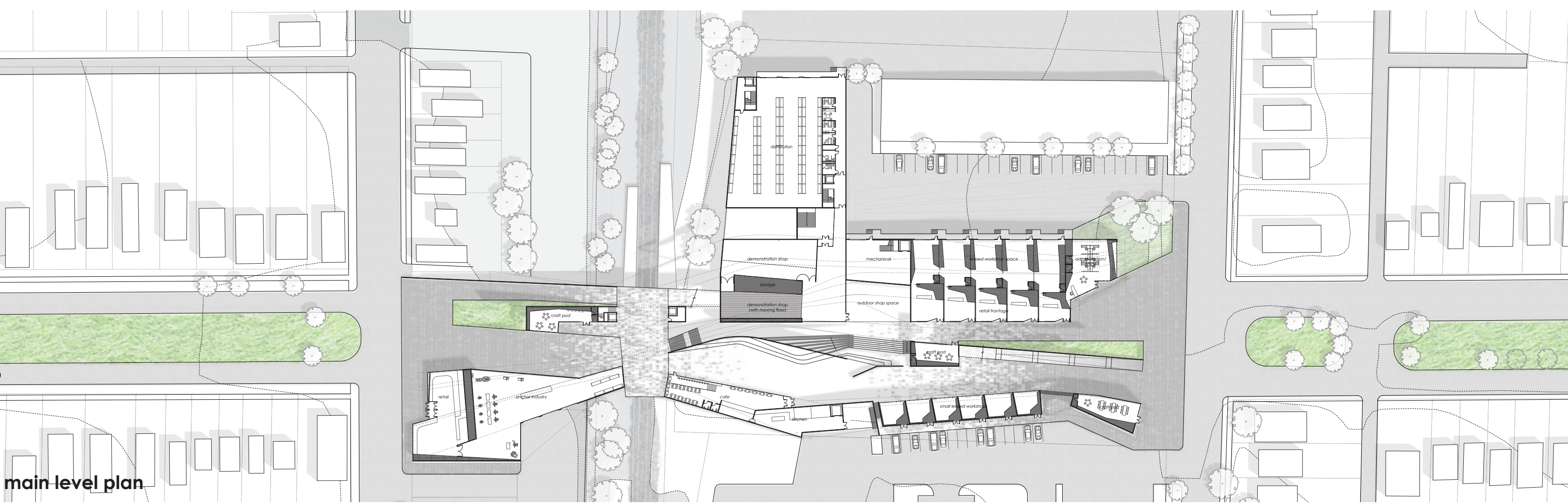


design

This design is inspired by the idea of using "new industry" to stitch the urban fabric back together where industrial land has cut through it. The architecture consists of two main gestures. First, an extension of the public way across industrial land and the railroad line connects both neighborhoods and park systems. Then, a folding roof structure creates spaces—both indoor and outdoor—for workshops, classrooms, presentation areas, retail, display, and a cafe. This roof form is pinched and spread at strategic points in order to direct circulation, provide daylighting and air flow, and to adapt to the different structural spanning requirements of the various types of spaces in the complex. The underside of the roof is a perforated wood ceiling that brings down the scale of the industrial spaces while housing mechanical equipment and still allowing daylight penetration.



upper level plan



main level plan

why?

1 continuity
Industry played a large part in the success of many U.S. cities. Unfortunately, its disappearance is now becoming the downfall of those same cities. Instead of repurposing industrial land, this project aims to rethink the type of industry that is viable. By harnessing the burgeoning interest in small-scale, craft operations, there is an opportunity for continuity between a city's industrial past, present, and future.

2 economic sustainability
While environmentally-responsible design is important in any architectural proposal, the real challenge with any project dealing with blight is to propose an economically feasible masterplan. This project proposes flexible leased workshop spaces anchored by a larger, more established craft industry. There is also a distribution center on site to aid craftsmen in shipping their products to consumers.

3 social capital
The internet has become a major marketplace for craft goods. Yet "buy local" movements are also gaining momentum in cities across the country. By combining pedestrian access with goods production, this proposal seeks to connect makers with their potential customers and to foster the public's fascination with the making process.

4 adaptability
There are many vacant industrial sites that could benefit from being rethought in a vein similar to this particular project. Yet a single city cannot necessarily support multiple craft industrial complexes. However, depending on the specific resources and proximities of a given site, other programs—such as an athletic complex or a culinary center—may lend themselves to a similar architectural solution.

before



after

