

MEMORIES AS CATALYSTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE



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MEMORIES AS CATALYSTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

Memories of displacement, loss, and discrimination are often present in designed sites. A decline in memory and story sharing has left these memories lingering on sites, open wounds waiting to be unearthed, discussed, and healed. These memories are hidden windows to the cultural identity or spirit of a place, experienced individually and collectively through generations.

This project proposes a new mode of site analysis that recognizes memories of displacement and racial tension as necessary aspects of understanding the agency of design within community context. This method challenges current standards in landscape architecture practice by suggesting that we look beyond the physicality of a site and delve deeper into buried experiences through community and interdisciplinary partnerships to create more inclusive, honest and just places.

Using Mindy Fullilove's analysis of root shock and Pierre Nora's concept of sites of memory as frameworks, a case study was conducted, examining how projects have implemented memory and story collection strategies. The case study informed a proposal for a site analysis memory mapping method, which was piloted at three community gatherings in the Chicago neighborhoods of Pilsen and Little Village. Both are Mexican immigrant neighborhoods facing rapid gentrification and fragmentation. A current proposal for a multi-modal trail would connect both neighborhoods. As a first step in community engagement and design, residents of the two neighborhoods were asked to map their memories - good and bad - and describe any other sentiments about their community. These were then aggregated into an analysis map depicting the untold narratives and collective memories of Pilsen and Little Village. The analysis informed where and how healing strategies could be implemented.

Site analysis and design can reveal histories – even difficult ones- and engage in healing, rather than be complicit in the denial and erasure of people's experiences. Strategies like memory mapping, interviewing, and archival research can move landscape architects beyond traditional site analysis and help foster community responsive design that nurtures connections with those who have been historically disenfranchised.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My dear friend, Alma Zamudio introduced me to the phenomenon of PTSD in immigrant communities, and greatly influenced how this project was framed and executed. This project is all about memories, and I can honestly say that all my personal memories of Pilsen are of conversing, learning, fighting and advocating with my friend. This project is dedicated to her & to all other community organizers who are fighting their own internal battles everyday, and still choose to give their lives to *la causa*. It is my hope that more people begin to see the connections between emotional trauma and designed spaces and that we push for more dialogue and understanding of how we can do better and not leave anyone behind.

Thank you to the community organizers and residents of Pilsen and Little Village who took the time to share their memories and Ideas with me.

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“Citizens surveyed about history will often speak disparagingly of memorized dates, great men, ‘boring stuff from school’ disconnected from their own lives, families, neighborhoods, and work. And certainly there are many people for whom the past is something they want to escape... If Americans were to find their own social history preserved in the public landscapes of their own neighborhoods and cities, then connection to the past might be very different.”

– Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place*, 1995

MOTIVATION

As landscape architects, we do not design in a vacuum. Centuries of violence and greed, loss and erasure, joy and pride, precede us as we start a design project and enter into the history of site development and place making. These memories are not separate from the site, but rather are embedded in the landscape and revealed in the way a site is used, perceived and understood.

The history of property and development in the United States is an exhibition of systemic white supremacy and *settler colonialism*; Land, race, and political agency have always been entangled in our nation. The U.S. was built on a platform of genocide and control of non-white people, as a means to expand territory, exploit native peoples, and control land and structures of property and ownership. As described by Cheryl Harris, “The origins of property rights in the United States are rooted in racial domination. Even in the early years of the country, it was not the concept of race alone that operated to oppress blacks and Indians; rather, it was the interaction between conceptions of race and property, which played a critical role in establishing and maintaining racial and economic subordination... only white possession and occupation of land was validated and therefore privileged as a basis for property rights” (Harris 1993, 277-78), and property ownership from the inception of the U.S., was a condition of full citizenship. Gardner Seawright explored the justification of conquest and the idea of *terra nullis*, “the belief that prospective land for colonizing/settling is in fact empty, was predicated upon an understanding that only so-called civilized societies/peoples can own land” (Seawright 2014, 559). This notion of “empty lands” was essential to supporting white settler colonial projects in the United States (Inwood 2015, 723). Anne Bonds and Joshua Inwood define *settler colonialism*, as the “[focus] on the permanent occupation of a territory and removal of indigenous peoples with the express purpose of building an ethnically distinct national community” (Inwood 2015, 716). Furthermore, “[an] understanding of settler colonialism and white supremacy requires that we move beyond seeing white supremacy as something of the past, and instead moves us to develop an analytics that focuses on how the geography of contemporary settler colonial states is continuously shaped by processes of genocide and forced labor” (Inwood 2015, 723). It is important to understand the history of property and land ownership in the context of settler colonialism because it frames the origins of dark and violent memories of displacement and erasure in the United States.

In 1844, Oregon citizens passed a set of exclusion laws. Although the first section of the

exclusion laws banned slavery, the second section gave slave owners three years to “remove” their slaves, and did not allow for freed slaves to remain in Oregon (McClintock 1995, 122). In 1849, a law enacted by the Oregon Territorial Legislature stated, “situated as the people of Oregon are, in the midst of an Indian population, it would be highly dangerous to allow free negroes and mulattoes to reside in the Territory or to intermix with the Indians, instilling in their minds feelings of hostility against the white race,” (McClintock 1995, 129) and thereby prohibiting “negros,” and “mulattoes” from residing in most parts of Oregon. Although these laws were typically not enforced it is no coincidence that in the 1860 Oregon census there were only 128 African Americans counted and in the last 2010 census only 2.1% of the population was Black or African American (Census 2010). Furthermore, we are living in a society produced from systemic racism that has not seen the end of discrimination, but rather an evolution. For example, many history books cite the Emancipation Proclamation and the official end to slavery as a marker of freedom and the end of racism for African Americans. However, many states continued to pass policies and laws that blatantly discriminated against people of color, including redlining and predatory mortgage loans.

It is difficult to know this history and watch how the current social and economic implications have left people feeling skeptical, angry, and tense – and stand by and do nothing. We are witnesses; to accept things as they are is to be complicit in the continuance of injustice. In the words of a Jackie Katz, a history teacher at Wellesley High School in Wellesley, MA, when asked about student discomfort during lectures about slavery and white supremacy, “When you bring up racism, [white] kids start getting really defensive, thinking that they’re to blame,” says Katz. “To feel comfortable, you need to have a really good classroom climate, where students feel that they’re not being blamed for what happened in the American past, where they don’t feel shame about it. It is 100 percent not their fault that there is racism in this country. It will be their fault if they don’t do anything about it in the next 20 years” (Turner 2018). This lesson can be applied to current designers and developers: It is not our fault that laws, policies and general development practices have been building blocks of white supremacy and settler colonialism, however if we fail to recognize the unjust systems in place and choose to not address or repair them in our designs, that is our fault.

As landscape architects, we often conduct preliminary site analyses to understand the place in which we will design. This will often include topography, soil types, and current demographics of neighborhoods. Rarely do we delve past the immediate history of a site, and even less often do we delve into the dormant memories of the site that are often the most authentic representation of cultural history and identity of a place. By ignoring these memories or choosing not to incorporate them in our site plans and analyses, we as landscape architects choose to be complicit in the erasure memories of how people, especially people of color and lower economic status, have experienced and been excluded from spaces. Instead, we should use our work to engage and empower a broad range of citizens and bring light to those that have been shadowed for so long.

Designers have the skills and agency to make change in how people experience spaces and thereby dismantle deep-rooted issues. By slowly healing deep community wounds, festering in the discriminatory land and property laws and policies, landscape architects can catalyze inclusive and responsible design. It is our responsibility to use our training and privilege to better serve and advocate for those who do not have a seat at the table when development and environmental decisions are made. This type of work is especially important for communities that have faced gentrification, racism and displacement. Through the use of design techniques that extract and honor site memories, I believe landscape architecture can ameliorate community wounds and be a catalyst for social progress.

I

CONTEXT

Root Shock & Sites of Memory

There is a long history of displacing and disenfranchising people of color through policies of building and space. As Randy Hester explained, American city form contributes to racial and economic segregation and cities make some residents “feel like sparrows near a hawk’s nest” (Hester 2010, 78). He shows that freeway construction and “urban renewal” projects, especially in the 1950s and 60s, destroyed neighborhoods and uprooted primarily black and poor people. He wrote, “Urban renewal earned the nickname ‘negro removal’ because it condemned poor neighborhoods and bulldozed homes, forced residents to move, and used the land for development to serve wealthier citizens” (Hester 2010, 78).

When planners, politicians, and developers destroy neighborhoods, they do more than bulldoze corner stores. They dismantle essential community relationships and emotional ecosystems, leaving residents displaced and vulnerable. Mindy Fullilove describes the resulting post-traumatic stress as “Root Shock,” using the analogy of the long-term stunting of potential in transplanted plants due to trauma to their fundamental support system – their roots. She further explains that it may be passed down from generation to generation, perpetuating feelings of distrust between residents and their government or outside developers (Fullilove 2004, 10). Fullilove explains that “places – buildings, neighborhoods, cities, nations – are not simply bricks and mortar that provide us shelter... each of these places becomes imbued with sounds, smells, noises and feelings of moments and how we lived them” (Fullilove 2004, 10). Root shock has lingering effects on residents of a community, leaving memories of erasure hovering over abandoned sites. For example, Shore Drive neighborhood in Greenville, North Carolina was once a thriving African-American community. In the name of “urban renewal,” the neighborhood was razed to make way for a new development project, which would consist of new department stores, private apartments and a park. Homes, a church and a network of safety and emotional support were lost with the demolition of the neighborhood, but the development never came to fruition and remained an empty site for decades. Although this destruction occurred over 50 years ago, affected community members still remember the events vividly and many carry post-traumatic memories of being displaced and forgotten. Through the understanding and analysis of memories of former residents of Shore Drive neighborhood, we can begin to understand the undertow of racism and deception beneath urban renewal projects.

French historian Pierre Nora wrote that a “thin film of current events,” (Nora 1996, 2) or history of sites, has replaced the long-time practice of passing memories and legacy of what people knew intimately. Community institutions through which these memories were transmitted – churches, families, governments, schools - were often destroyed, and with them the ritual of passing down memories was lost. The loss of memory sharing rituals is an important part of “root shock,” which is the loss of authentic heritage of a place, resulting in people feeling isolated and forgotten. Memories and sense of place are essential parts of one’s emotional ecosystem. Without an outlet for memories to be passed on organically or a “setting in which memory is a real part of everyday experience” (Nora 1996, XII), truths about people and communities are forgotten. Without true memories with which we identify, we are left with *lieux de memoire* – sites of memory, which Nora describes as “fundamentally vestiges, the ultimate embodiments of a commemorative consciousness that survives in a history which, having renounced memory, cries out for it. That notion has emerged because society has banished ritual” (Nora 1996, 6). Furthermore, Nora writes that societies no longer value places that honor the ritual of memory passing and provide a “transition from past to future or indicate what the future should retain from the past, whether in the name of reaction, progress or even revolution” (Nora 1996, 2).

However, by examining sites of memory, which Nora describes as “any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community,” (Nora 1996, xviii) designers can begin to recapture lost narratives. Sites of memory can be concretely experienced, like churches or monuments; or be more abstract and intangible within a language or ritual. Nora wrote that unlike recorded history, memories are “absolute” and “take root in spaces, gestures, images and objects” (Nora 1996, 3). Through the examination of space, gesture, images, and objects, designers can begin to extract memories and gain a greater understanding of what happened to a community and the types of healing and repair future development should encompass (Figure 1). Examining *lieux de memoire* allows us to understand both what is remembered by a community, as well as where and how - all significant aspects of communal memory and identity.

By reclaiming memories, designers may be able to create spaces that reinstate emotional ecosystems that were destroyed and lost. Moreover, expressing and exchanging memories can provide cathartic healing for a community, while also informing and helping them to understand the history of their community and learn lessons from the past to prevent future erasure. As written by Dolores Hayden “Both citizens and planner may find that urban landscape history can help to reclaim the identities of deteriorating neighborhoods where generations of working people have spent their lives. . . Understanding the history of urban cultural landscapes offers citizens and public officials some basis for making political and spatial choices about the future. It also offers a context for greater social responsibility to practitioners in the design fields” (Hayden 1995, 43).

Collective memories or traditions give people identity, national narratives and a place in the world. But as Edward Said wrote, this notion of collective memory has been harnessed in the past and used as a tool to manipulate how people feel and make decisions (Said 2002, 255). This manipulation can be seen in geographic examples where memories of a collective identity instigate and justify conquest and domination over space. In other words, memories, especially memories shared by a collective group of people, can be powerful tools and catalysts for how places are made, used and experienced.

For example, in the 2008 presidential election, most of the Southern states voted Republican, based on the majority of votes from those states. A closer analysis, however, reveals a correlation

between counties that voted Democrat and the socio-economic histories of those districts. In the maps shown, the counties that voted majority Republican are in red and counties that voted majority Democrat are in blue. Overlaid are black dots – each representing 2,000 bales of cotton production in 1860 (Figure 2). These areas of high cotton production were heavily populated with black slaves, and their descendants remain today, most voting for the first African-American president. More recently, in the 2017 Alabama Senate (special) election, counties with a historically high slave population had an historic African American and female voter turnout, and typically voted against a candidate who was openly racist and misogynistic (Figure 3). In both cases, the historic conditions of slavery remain as a political palimpsest on the landscape and continue to echo in political activity nearly two centuries later.

After slavery was abolished in 1865, towns where slaves lived became urban centers where African-Americans continued to reside and struggle to create new lives for themselves. Within agricultural counties, cities like Birmingham, Selma, and Montgomery became hotbeds for the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, because of their politically disenfranchised black populations. Memories of injustice and struggle were passed down through generations, and they cannot be separated from their geographical foundations. Rituals of protest, community organizing and even voting are sites of memories, holding narratives of past and current racism and fighting injustice. Voter suppression has been used systematically to maintain power in the hands of those who historically owned slaves and other White people. However, African Americans, notably in counties with a historic Black majority have begun to influence elections toward positive changes for the poor and disenfranchised populations with deep roots in this land. Through the examination of voting ritual, memories of combating centuries of discrimination are extracted and understood. These election results maps are examples of how memories bleed into geographic and sociopolitical conditions. If landscape architects are to understand how a site works socially and culturally, and how it will be used and perceived by residents of the community it is being built for, they must understand how past events play roles in the present spatial composition and seek out those events and memories as vital elements in any site.

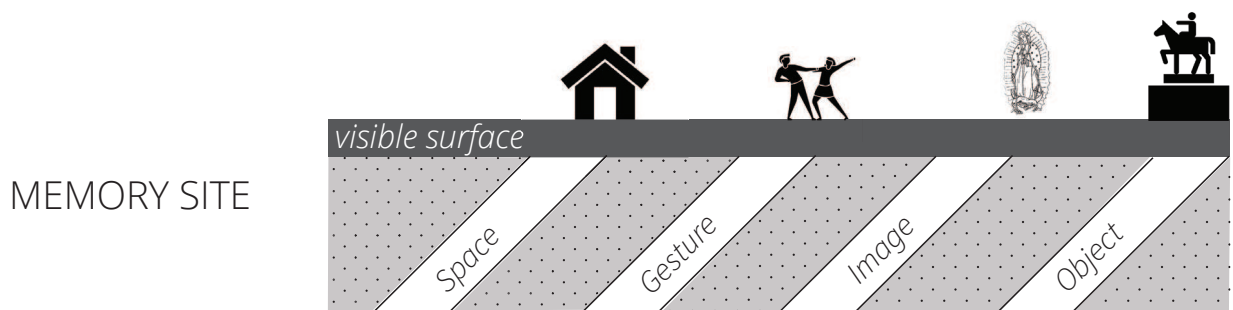


Figure 1: Sites of Memory Diagram

As identified by Pierre Nora, memories are held within four sites: space, gesture, image and object. The memories are below the visible surface of a site.

Figure 2: 2008 Presidential Election Results by County in Southern States

The counties that voted majority Republican are shown in red and counties that voted majority Democrat are shown in blue. Overlaid are black dots, each one representing 2,000 bales of cotton produced in 1860.

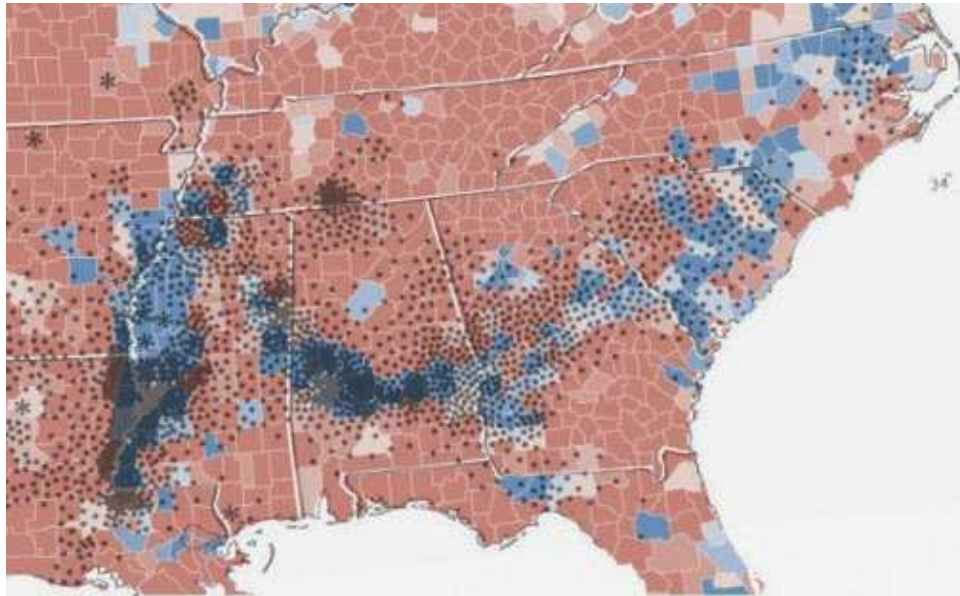
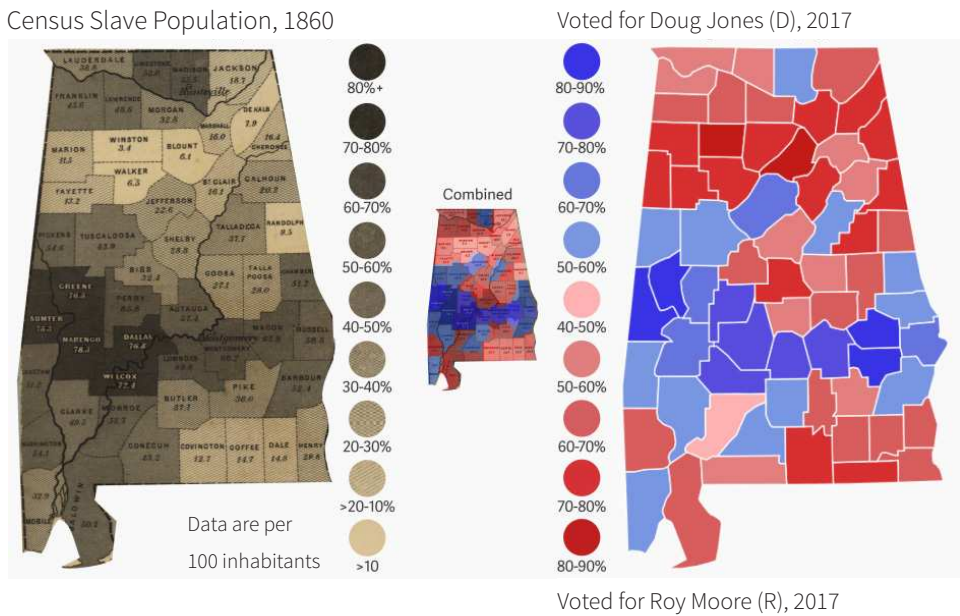


Figure 3: Census slave population in 1860 (left) and Alabama Senate Special Election results in 2017 (right)
When examined side-by-side, it is evident that the areas with a high slave population in 1860, voted majority Democrat in 2017.



II

ESTABLISHING THE FRAMEWORK

Drawing on Nora, I propose a framework of memory analysis as a part of site analysis as a means to determine community values and concerns. By understanding what a community has already experienced, designers are less likely to repeat past mistakes, or erase significant histories, and more likely to address community wounds caused by previous development actions.

The framework has four parts: extracted memories of pride & erasure, sites of memory, techniques of learning, and interventions for healing (Figure 4). The techniques of learning are strategies implemented by designers to extract community memories. While project designers may apply some techniques, others involve partnerships with local experts, including historians, universities and non-profit organizations. There are two types of memories: erasure and pride. Each memory of pride and erasure is categorized in two ways: where it is “rooted” and where it spatially appears on site. Pierre Nora described memories being rooted in space, gesture, image and object. This framework takes Nora’s concept a step further by using it to categorize memories experienced on a personal and community level. The memories are also spatialized on a critical map of the site, which allows designers to pinpoint where events occurred, and thereby where the healing may be needed. In conducting the case study, I saw patterns of sad memories including loss of homes and property, and the erasure of narratives of displacement and grief. There were also different types of erasure: while some erasure was more active, like demolition of buildings, some was passive in disrupting the ritual of sharing memories. However, the interviewees also described how people shared joyful memories of daily activities and pleasures within the community *before* displacement and erasure occurred. In effect, in most cases where there was once community pride, only erasure and pain remained. Instances of catalytic healing come in two forms: intentional and passive. While the intentional cases may be infrastructure or policy, passive are not planned and often unforeseen results of design project efforts.

The goal of the memory analysis framework is to extract and engage the memories of the community being affected by the proposed design project. It is important to understand the history between a community and past developers and government agencies. Communities of color and immigrants, especially in cities, have been through development projects where they were taken advantage of or promised security they did not end up receiving. Distrust and deceit in development and property relations have been capricious for decades and future designers should aim to change

the course and standards of how we listen to and help the public. By exploring community memories, designers may gain a better understanding of community needs, but also what has and has not worked in the past for them. Furthermore, by spatializing the memories, designers can get a sense of the specific places where feelings of distrust and events of displacement are felt most strongly. Likewise, with an understanding of where positive memories of pride and joy are found, designers will know what community spaces and events should be highlighted and celebrated.

Designers should be aware of the timeline of racist development and design practices they are working within. From the colonizers claiming land in the 1400s, to more contemporary redlining practices, people of color and lower economic status have reason to be skeptical and distrusting of new development that has historically not considered their needs or well being. Critical memory mapping is a step towards a more inclusive and holistic approach to design, with its primary goal of bringing historically forgotten and disregarded memories to the surface. By resurfacing memories, designers can help mend emotional ecosystems and the forgotten ritual of sharing memories, and thereby the cultural history of a place.

In the following section, six design projects were analyzed through the memory analysis framework. Each of these sites had a community directly or adjacently effected by inequitable development practices like urban renewal or memorializes a larger era of erasure, violence and pain. Through mapping, correlations were seen between the locations of memory roots and where design interventions were implemented.

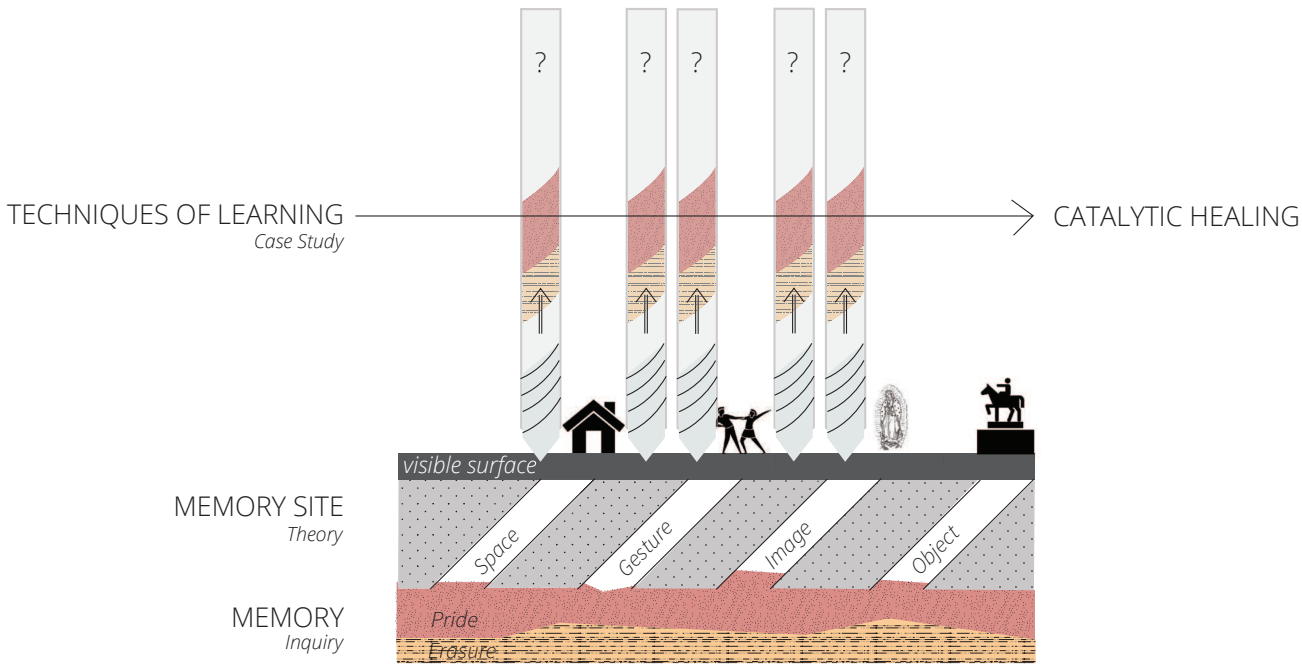


Figure 4: Hypothesized Framework for Memory Gathering

Gathering memories of erasure of pride would require extraction through the 4 sites of memory. Through a case study, techniques of learning will be identified. By using those techniques of learning, catalytic healing could occur.

III

REFINING THE FRAMEWORK

In refining the framework for memory gathering, I turned to experts in the design field who have used such techniques of learning to gain a further understanding of a site. A panel titled “Healing, Reclamation, & Reweaving: Equitable Development in Design,” was featured at the 2017 National ASLA Conference and Expo in Los Angeles. In her intro of the panel discussion, Beth Meyer, FASLA, challenged the audience with the question: “Why do we think of race as something that floats above design rather than embedded in it?” Her question postulated the importance of race being a part of site analysis and a larger sociological reading of the landscape, because spaces are never neutral and always have history inscribed within them. She explained that healing root shock through site analysis and design will not fix trauma, but it can amend community wounds.

Following the introduction, four panelists discussed the contexts of community race relations in design, and presented three projects where historically displaced communities were included in the design process. The panel had a large impact on my project, particularly in how I conducted the case study analysis. I saw patterns between the three projects presented during the panel and sought out three more to further analyze.

The Case Study: Mapping & ID Cards

I conducted a comparative (or synchronic) case study (Demming & Swaffield 2011, 180) in which I examined the similar design and memory collection techniques each design team used. The examined design projects were: 11th Street Bridge Park in Washington, D.C.; Town Commons in Greenville, N.C.; Ajami Landfill Park in Jaffa, Tel Aviv, Israel; Dawson Park in Portland, OR; The National Museum for Peace & Justice in Montgomery, AL; and Curtain Call Garden Passage in Pittsburgh, PA. Using the techniques of learning - like listening sessions and interviews - memories of pride and erasure were collected from each site, leading to catalytic healing.

Through critical mapping, connections could be seen between the location between a memory of the site and project design interventions. I used ID cards to call out key elements of each design project: Techniques of Learning; Memories; and Catalytic Healing.

Techniques of Learning

Each Technique of Learning card shows a single strategy used by one of the design teams to extract memories and gain a deeper understanding of the cultural history of the site. Some of these techniques included oral histories, listening sessions, community meetings, mapping and examining broader contextual history. For example, Lonnie Norcott, who was a former resident of the Shore Drive neighborhood in Greenville, NC was interviewed in December 2016 (Figure 5). He recalled the emotional effects of the redevelopment at Town Common, “it really upset a lot of people, especially land owners... as a matter of fact they had to put some of them in the mental institution it upset them so bad, because, you know that land had been in the family for years... what really got the people is they [the city] didn’t even do anything with the land after they forced them to move. And you know, we had a lot of Black merchants in this part of town – you know candy stores, barbershops – I guess they were lost” (Norcott, 2016). Today, this site is still a large open space with little programming and mostly lawn – a shell of a community or site of memory. To an outsider the park may seem calm and unassuming, through the collection of oral history, one begins to uncover the memories of past residents, the spirit of the site and the narratives of pain and pride.

Figure 5:
Lonnie Norcott,
a former resident
of the Shore Drive
neighborhood

Norcott was interviewed in Town Common Park, Greenville, NC in December 2016. He shared memories about growing up in the neighborhood and attending Sycamore Missionary Baptist Church.



Memories

Each memory card identifies the type of memory (pride or erasure); the site of the memory (space, gesture, object or image); and the memory event itself.

A memory of pride exemplifies moments of community strength & empowerment. On a community scale this could be an annual parade or a main street where people socialized and supported one another. On a personal level, this could be a person's first home or a park they first learned to ride a bike. In this case pride may be synonymous with joy or fulfillment.

A memory of erasure is one related to the dismantling of an emotional ecosystem. This may include the displacement or disregard for a group of people or the destruction of a community gathering space. On a community scale this could be tearing down of a health clinic or a corner store that provide affordable goods and services. On a personal level this could be a home lost to urban renewal.

Both types of memories are held within a site of memory (space, gesture, object and image) as identified by Pierre Nora, and are often found in more than one site. Although Nora does not explicitly delve into the definitions of these sites, they have been interpreted to fit into the framework. In this project, a *space* is the largest scale for a site of memory – it could span from a small park to an entire city. A *gesture* is an action – some examples could be a daily path taken, an annual community parade, or a protest. An *object* is a three-dimensional site that one cannot inhabit – for example a statue or a fountain would be an object, but a home or a school would be a *space*. An finally, an *image* is a two-dimensional representation – like an iconic mural or an image on a billboard (because it is the image that holds the memory, not the billboard itself). The gestures, images and objects are all technically within spaces, but the memory lies stronger in one or the other. These categories are not mutually exclusive, and depending on the extent of the memory collected, one could straddle multiple sites of memory. For example, if the memory is a walk someone took everyday from their home to school, the walk itself is a gesture. However if the memory includes a recollection of the home or school, those are spaces. And if the person describes the murals they would see along their walk, those would be considered images.

Catalytic Healing

There are two types of healing that occur on the sites. First is intended healing, which can include design infrastructure, tax policy, or education. These are often a part of written scope of work with set strategies and goals to execute. For example, the 11th street bridge project in Washington, D.C. has a written goal of physically connecting areas that were historically segregated through the bridge park.

The second type of healing is unforeseen and unplanned, and may occur before construction of a design project begins. These catalytic healing possibilities could include new partnerships between community organizations. For example, the design planning and process of 11th Street Bridge Project, has resulted in collaboration and connection across the historically divided Anacostia River. While this was likely a hope of the design team, it is not necessarily in their scope of work. Hallie Boyce, project leader from Olin, explained that the project was become larger than the site of the bridge park itself. She said the project is “the network of relationships that have been established” and has “become a catalyst for strengthening relationships to ensure that community on both sides are strengthening.” This is not only a testament to gathering memories, but in the types of events and techniques that include multiple community partners, which in turn creates community collaboration, dialogue, and healing.

How to Read the ID Cards

Example cards below are from Dawson Park Case Study

The projects in the case study used techniques of learning to better understand and extract positive and negative memories of a site.



By using the techniques of learning, designers have been able to unearth buried memories.



Pierre Nora wrote that memories take root in spaces, gestures, images and objects. The memories of pride and memories of erasure are lingering within a site - open wounds in need of attention.



Through examination of memories, designers can pinpoint places that need healing and previous practices that caused trauma and distrust in the community.



As a result of the memory work, catalytic healing occurred on or adjacent to the site. Some of these are intentional, while others were passive.

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

solicit community feedback

03

Hold public meeting for feedback on concept designs

— Objective

— Card #

— Strategy

MEMORY OF ERASURE

MEMORY OF PRIDE

space & gesture

00

Sycamore Hill Baptist Church is staple of Black Community

— Site of Memory: Where memory is rooted

— Card #

— Event or Strategy

HEALING

object & space

00

Stained Glass panels reminiscent of Church windows

TOWN COMMON Greensville, NC

Rhodeside & Harwell
2014 - Present

The proposed plans for Sycamore Hill Plaza would memorialize where the Sycamore Hill Baptist Church once stood. The church was the cornerstone of the “downtown” Shore Drive neighborhood, which was once a self-built, close-knit African-American community. The neighborhood was demolished as a part of an “urban renewal” project to make way for the large open space.





oral history

01

Work with local historian at ECU to collect oral histories

Heather White and other students at East Carolina University asked residents to meet at Town Commons and record their accounts of living in Shore Drive neighborhood. They shared stories of joy and struggle and had their photographs taken with any memoirs or relics.

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING



listening session

02

Hold stakeholder focus group session

Community members were asked to share memories and hopes for the park and neighborhood. People recalled difficult memories of having their homes bulldozed or burned down for “fire practice.” As a result, there was resentment and distrust towards the City and their planning practices.

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING



community meeting

03

Hold public meeting for feedback on concept designs

The entire design process was in collaboration with community members. Multiple meetings were held to receive feedback on design iterations for Town Common.

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING



MEMORY OF PRIDE

space & gesture

B 21

Sycamore Hill Baptist Church is staple of Black Community

The church was more than a religious entity; it was a center for social, political, and economic activity for the community. Descendants of the neighborhood described the area as a thriving and vibrant community with a high quality of life



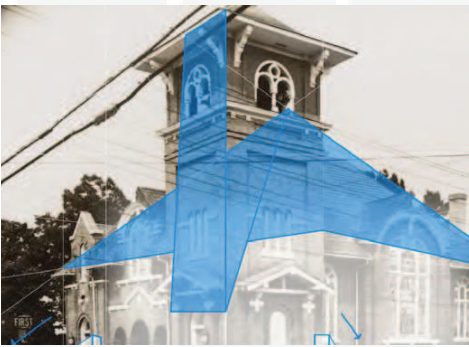
MEMORY OF ERASURE

space & gesture

B 41

Burning of Sycamore Hill Baptist Church

The final building to be demolished was the church. The burning of the church was a traumatic sight for residents of the community, who had fond and important memories within its walls.



HEALING

object & space

B 60

Gateway Structure inspired by Sycamore Baptist Church geometry

A concept design presented to the public for feedback. Ultimately residents felt it was too rigid.



HEALING

object & space

62

Stained Glass panels reminiscent of Church windows

A concept design presented to the public for feedback.



MEMORY OF PRIDE

Shore Drive
"downtown" neighborhood

Before its demolition, Shore Drive was a thriving African American neighborhood with a tight knit community.

space
20



MEMORY OF ERASURE

Destruction of Shore Drive
neighborhood

In the name of "urban renewal," the neighborhood was razed to make way for an open space.

space
40

DAWSON PARK

Portland, OR

2.Ink Studio
2014

The two-acre park lies in the heart of the Eliot neighborhood. The park runs along Williams Street, which was once a bustling commerce center for African- Americans. In 1960, The Emanuel Renewal Project called for the removal of the businesses and homes on Williams St. to make way for an extension of Emanuel Hospital. The expansion was never completed, and three empty lots adjacent to Dawson Park remain today. While most parts of the historic neighborhood are gone, Dawson Park has retained its character as a place for old and new residents to play and socialize.





oral history

05

Work with local historian at History Built & Eliot Oral Histories

Oral histories were collected from local residents. These informal interviews would provide leads for the Document Research

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING



archival research

06

Conduct Historic Document Research

Newspaper clips and historic photographs were used to piece together the narrative of the neighborhood

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING



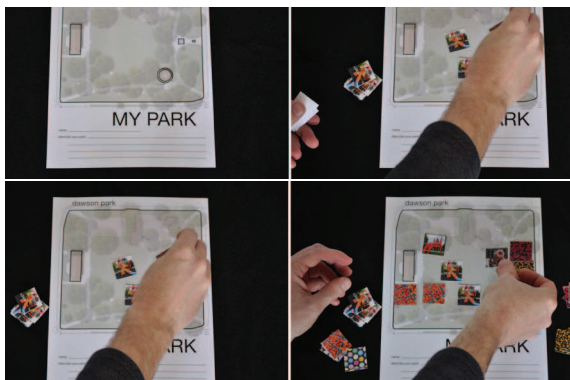
community meeting

07

Outreach at Existing Community & Organization Events

Boards were set up for public comment at the Dawson Park Summer Concert Series. Site maps and timelines from the Document Research were included

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING



community meeting

08

Hold Public Open House and Workshops

Participants used images to map out what they would like to see in their park as well as personal remarks about why

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING



space & gesture

A 64

Ensuring a space for domino players

Almost everyday there is a group of domino players that come play and socialize at Dawson Park. The old tables were replaced with new ones for the domino players to use.

HEALING



space & gesture

A 67

Space for social & political activity

Black Lives Matter Rally was held under the gazebo in response to growing concerns of police brutality.

HEALING



object & space

A 66

Boulders with neighborhood memories

Boulders were engraved with quotes from interviews and placed upon a collage of images from the document research.

HEALING



gesture

A 26

Civil Rights Movement Rally and other protests began in Dawson Park

MEMORY OF PRIDE



B WILLIAMS STREET

LOCATION OF
HILL BLOCK
STORE C

space
B C 25

Williams Street was a thriving commercial center for the African American community

Locally-owned businesses, including markets, made the neighborhood self-sufficient. Residents recall buying food and walking over to Dawson Park to have a picnic. The Hill Block drug store was on the corner of Russell and Williams Avenue for 80 years

MEMORY OF PRIDE

space
B C 43

Emanuel Urban Renewal Project

188 homes and multiple businesses are razed, most of which were owned or occupied by African Americans. Pictured is The Hill Block drug store just before its demolition. These blocks remain vacant today.

MEMORY OF ERASURE

object & space
A 65

Memorializing The Hill Block by saving iconic roof

The iconic roof on the The Hill Block building was placed on the gazebo - a centerpiece of Dawson Park, where concerts, plays and other gatherings occur.

HEALING

11TH ST BRIDGE

Washington, D.C.

Olin & OMA
2014 - Present

The bridge connects the historic Anacostia/ Fairlawn neighborhoods on the east side of the Anacostia River and D.C.'s Capitol Hill/ Navy Yard on the West side. The East wards 7 & 8 faced decades of disinvestment and economic, racial and geographic segregation. Low home ownership, high poverty and unemployment are all issues the 11th Street Bridge Project have made a priority in their design and programming strategies.





archival research

09

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

Work with local historian at Anacostia Watershed

Anacostia Watershed Council compiled a history of the Anacostia Watershed, which the bridge lies within. Much of this information was used for interpretive elements of the design.



listening session

10

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

Work with Building Community Workshop [bc] nonprofit to facilitate working group meetings.

[bc] supported the 11th Street Bridge Project by developing cultural strategies to be included in the Equitable Development Plan. The working groups consisted of local artists, arts organizations, and national leaders.



community meeting

11

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

Equitable Development Task Force

Supporting workforce development, small business enterprise and housing so the bridge park may serve as an anchor for equitable and inclusive economic growth.

↑ CAPITOL HILL, 1 MILE

NAVY YARD NEIGHBORHOOD
WARD 6

A ANACOSTIA RIVER



MEMORY OF FERASURE

space & gesture

A 46

The polluted “forgotten river” causing health risks for fishers

Fishing is a part of culture surrounding the river, especially in the growing Latino community. A quarter of anglers on the river (53% of whom were Spanish Speakers) had never heard about potential risk in each fish from the river. There has been a loss of connection and education with the river.

HEALING

gesture

A B C 71

Environmental education about the Anacostia Watershed

An environmental education center will be built as a part of the project to provide community members with workshops about river health and protection.



MEMORY OF PRIDE

space
C 30

By the 1970s, Ward 7 & 8 were predominantly African-American communities where they felt welcome and safe.



MEMORY OF PRIDE

space
C 29

Town Hall Education Arts Recreation Campus (THEARC) which is home to eleven nonprofit organizations



MEMORY OF ERASURE

object & space

B C 45

11th Street Bridge as a social & economic division

Wards 7 & 8 of the East side of the Anacostia River were historically disenfranchised and faced high rates of unemployment & segregation



HEALING

ritual
B C 68

Establish 11th Street Bridge Mural Project

In partnership with emerging arts district on Good Hope Road & THEARC, teens from both sides of the river collaborated on a mural near the new park.

C ANACOSTIA NEIGHBORHOOD
WARD 8

NATIONAL MEMORIAL FOR PEACE & JUSTICE

Montgomery, AL

EJI & MASS Design Group
2018

Opened in April of 2018, this will be the nation's first memorial dedicated to the legacy of enslaved black people, people terrorized by lynching, African Americans humiliated by racial segregation and Jim Crow, and people of color burdened with contemporary presumptions of guilt and police violence. The memorial draws from a report documenting thousands of racial terror lynchings in twelve states. Although the memorial is only in one location, the collection of soils from sites across the twelve states brings their memories together.





archival research

12

“Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror” Report

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

Equal Justice Initiative used data regarding lynching in American from Tuskegee University, as well as supplemental research and investigation of lynchings in each of the subject states. They reviewed local newspapers, historical archives, and court records; conducted interviews with local historians, survivors, and victims’ descendants; and exhaustively examined contemporaneously published reports in African American newspapers.



memory ritual

13

Community Remembrance Project

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

Soil samples are being collected from each lynching site to memorialize the sites themselves. Each jar has the name of the lynching victim. Over 300 have been collected so far.





MEMORY OF ERASURE

gesture

A 49

Racial terror lynchings in the U.S. and omission of their extent & history

“During the period between the Civil War and World War II, thousands of African Americans were lynched in the United States. Lynchings were violent and public acts of torture that traumatized black people throughout the country and were largely tolerated by state and federal officials. These lynchings were terrorism. ‘Terror lynchings’ peaked between 1880 and 1940 and claimed the lives of African American men, women, and children who were forced to endure the fear, humiliation, and barbarity of this widespread phenomenon unaided.” - From “Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror” By: Equal Justice Initiative, 2013.



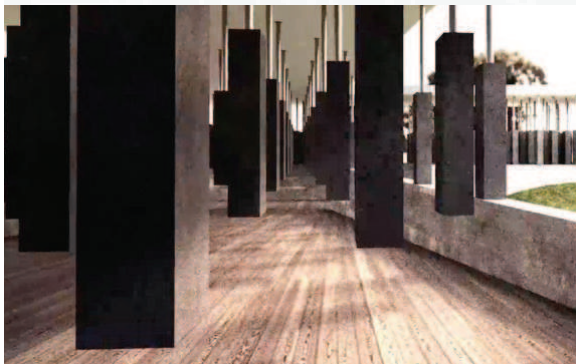
MEMORY OF PRIDE

space & image

31

Montgomery, AL was epicenter for Civil Rights Movement

Rosa Parks Museum, Freedom Rides Museum, & Dexter Parsonage Museum are all within one mile of new memorial.



HEALING

object & space

A B 72

Pillar memorials with the names of lynching victims

The memorial will consist of 800 columns - one for each county where EJI documented racial terror lynchings. The columns appear to be holding up the building, but they are in fact suspended from above.



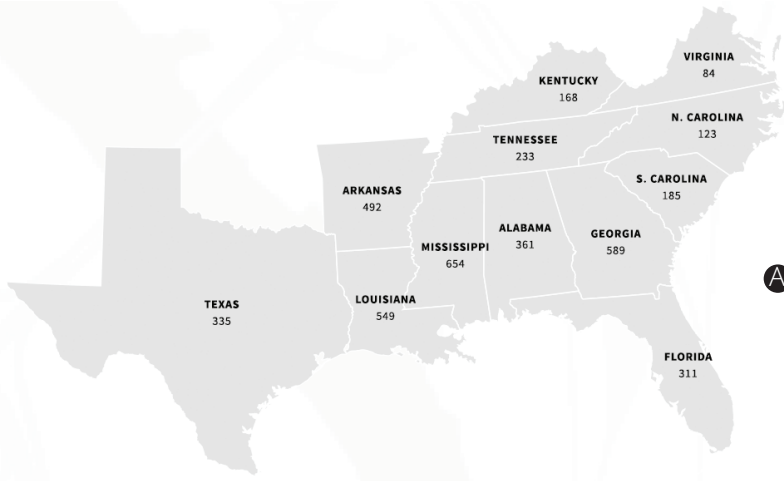
HEALING

object

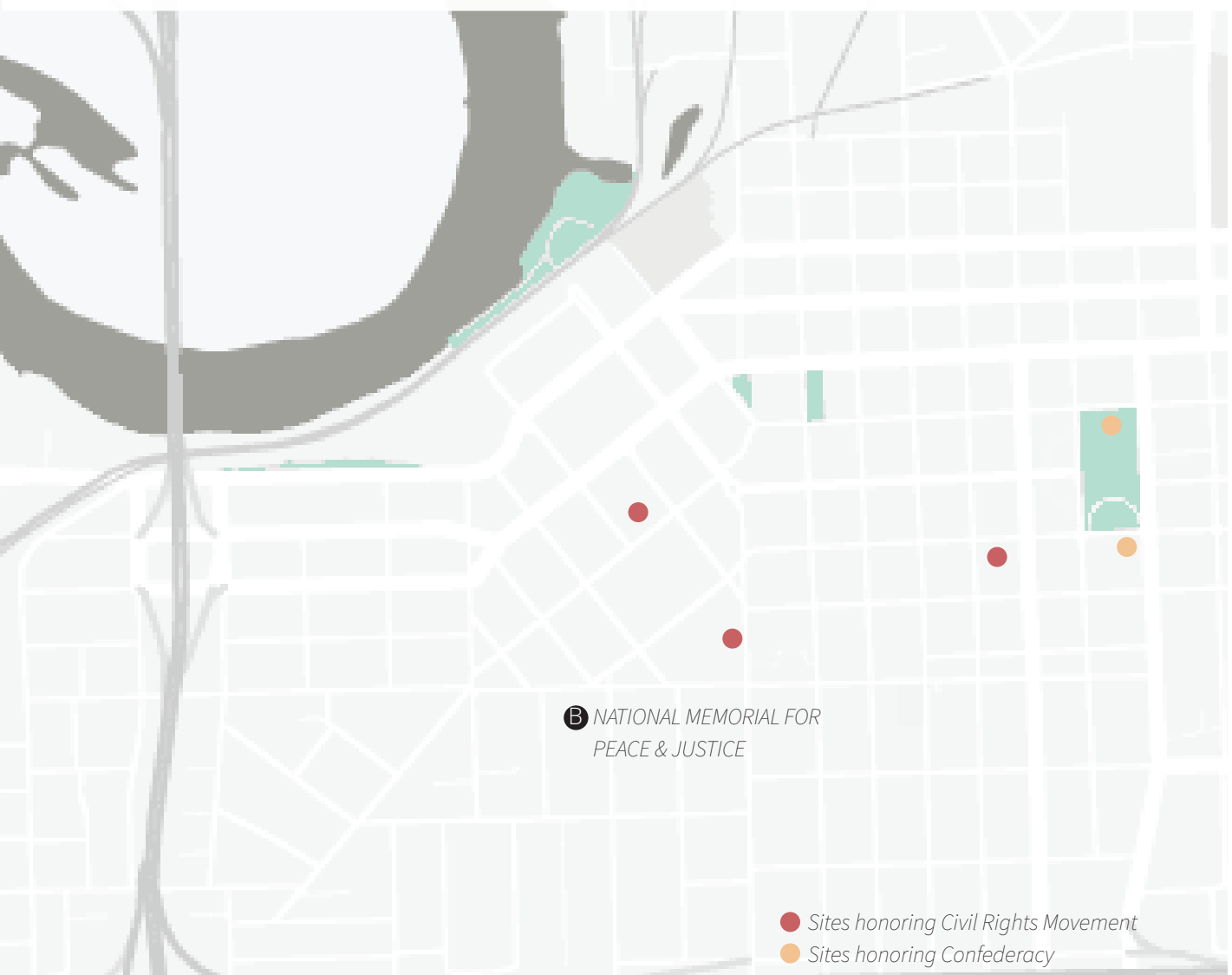
A B 73

Exhibition of soil samples

The collected soil samples will be displayed within the Lynching In America Museum, adjacent to the Memorial pillars.



A African-American Lynching Victims by State, 1877-1950. From “Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror” By: Equal Justice Initiative, 2013.



B NATIONAL MEMORIAL FOR PEACE & JUSTICE

- Sites honoring Civil Rights Movement
- Sites honoring Confederacy

CURTAIN CALL GARDEN PASSAGE

Pittsburgh, PA

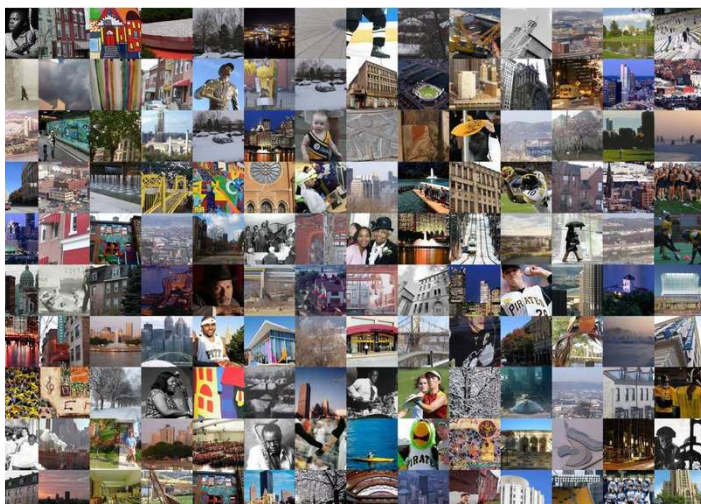
Hood Design Studio
2011

Set adjacent to the Penguins Stadium that once replaced the Lower Hill Community, this installation sets to make the Lower Hill District residents visible through a steel framed curtain covered in tiles with photographs from the community. As visitors walk along the curtain, they are reminded of the culture and history that was once erased.



Scan photographs from the Lower Hill community

An art installation was designed to make the Hill District residents visible. Former residents of Lower Hill were asked to bring photographs to be scanned so they could be incorporated into the piece. The final curtain will be curved frames laced with street tension wires - all covered with tiles with photographs from the community.





space & gesture

A B 32

Reciprocity and Interconnections between members of Lower Hill community

MEMORY OF PRIDE

A tight-knit African-American community, with Centre Avenue as the Main Street where people would stroll and socialize.



space

A B 52

Razing of Lower Hill Neighborhood

MEMORY OF ERASURE

1500 buildings were demolished, 8,000 people and 400 businesses displaced from the Lower Hill neighborhood to make way for Penguins Stadium & Parking Lot.



image & object

C 74

HEALING

Photographs used to line the curtain wall

gesture & space

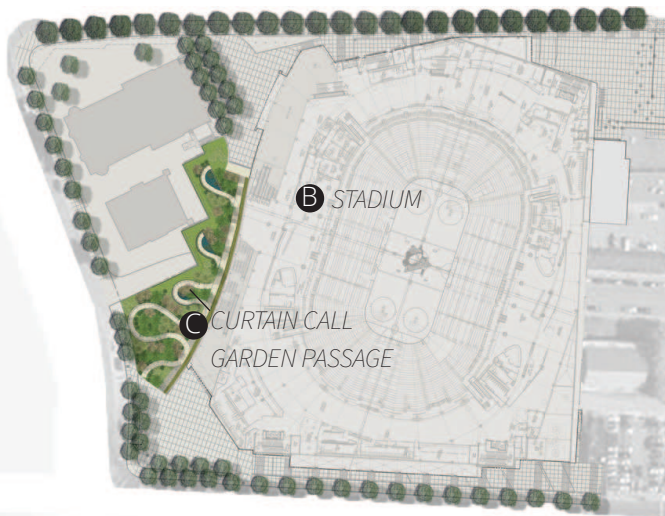
C 75

HEALING

Garden passage music experience
Walking on the path itself, allows people to experience the space and hear jazz music, a celebration of one of many U.S. Black culture contributions.

A HISTORIC LOWER HILL NEIGHBORHOOD
CONVERTED TO STADIUM PARKING LOT

CENTRE AVENUE



B STADIUM

C CURTAIN CALL
GARDEN PASSAGE

AJAMI LANDFILL PARK

Tel Aviv, Israel

Braudo Maoz
2010

Once the site of a landfill holding over 1 million tons of waste, this 8.5 mile-long park was converted from a dump into a seashore park. The park is located just south of Tel-Aviv, at Jaffa Port, a largely contested site after the War of Independence - or Catastrophe, depending who you ask- and as a result much of the rubble was a result of the demolition of vacant homes of Arabs. Some of the key elements include restoring the damaged shoreline, creating a park and promenade and reclaiming the seashore for residents of Jaffa.



Jaffa residents part of a comprehensive process of public involvement

Led by the Tel-Aviv Jaffa Municipality, 10 public participation meetings were held with different groups, representing various groups of residents: youth groups, Muslim women, merchants, Jews, Arabs, etc.





MEMORY OF PRIDE

space
B 35

Jaffa was the largest city in historic Palestine during the years of the British mandate, with a population of more than 80,000 Palestinians.



MEMORY OF ERASURE

object & space
B 54

“Evacuation - construction Project

As many as 1,347 residential buildings in Ajami and Jabaliya are demolished with the support of the Israeli government, displacing 95% of Jaffa’s indigenous Arab Palestinian population



HEALING

object & space
A B C 76

Recycled & Removed Material

A large portion of the 1.3 million tons of rubble was made up of demolished vacant Arab homes. Colorful and patterned tiles and stones from the homes were reclaimed and used as pavers and shoreline barriers. Visitors may still see remnants of former homes.



HEALING

object
A C 78

Seashore Promenade

By tracing the former shoreline, the path creates an opportunity to understand the history of the landfill and why the shoreline is no longer there.

↑ JAFFA PORT, .5 MILE

A RECYCLED/REMOVED MATERIAL

PATHWAY TO SEA

B AJAMI LANDFILL PARK TODAY
FORMER SITE OF AJAMI
NEIGHBORHOOD

C SEASHORE PROMENADE

D NEW BEACH

E AJAMI NEIGHBORHOOD
TODAY



space

A D 79

Rebuilding of sand beach

The beach allows re-institution of public engagement (Arab, Christian, Jew) through recreation.

HEALING

TECHNIQUES OF LEARNING |

town common

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

oral history

01

Work with local historian at ECU to collect oral histories

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

listening session

02

Hold stakeholder focus group session

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

community meeting

03

Hold public meeting for feedback on concept designs

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

community meeting

04

Form a steering committee of community leaders

dawson park

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

oral history

05

Work with local historian at History Built & Eliot Oral Histories

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

archival research

06

Conduct Historic Document Research

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

community meeting

07

Outreach at Existing Community & Organization Events

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

community meeting

08

Hold Public Open House and Workshops

11th street bridge

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

archival research

09

Work with local historian at Anacostia Watershed

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

listening session

10

Work with bc nonprofit to facilitate two working group meetings.

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

community meeting

11

Equitable Development Task Force

national memorial for peace & justice

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

archival research

12

“Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror” Report

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

memory ritual

13

Community Remembrance Project

curtain call

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

archival research

14

Scan photographs from the community

ajami landfill park

TECHNIQUE OF LEARNING

solicit community feedback

15

Jaffa residents part of a comprehensive process of public involvement

MEMORIES | *of pride*

town common

MEMORY OF PRIDE	<i>space</i> 20 Shore Drive “downtown” neighborhood	MEMORY OF PRIDE	<i>space & gesture</i> 21 Sycamore Hill Baptist Church is staple of Black Community	MEMORY OF PRIDE	<i>space & gesture</i> 22 Baptismal path from Sycamore Hill Baptist Church to Tar River	MEMORY OF PRIDE	<i>gesture</i> 23 Annual Christmas parade
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dawson park

MEMORY OF PRIDE	<i>space</i> 24 Dawson park as a place for Black people to play and gather safely	MEMORY OF PRIDE	<i>space</i> 25 Williams Street is a thriving commercial center for the African American community	MEMORY OF PRIDE	<i>gesture</i> 26 Civil Rights Movement Rally and other protests begins in Dawson Park	MEMORY OF PRIDE	<i>gesture</i> 27 Bobby Kennedy gives a speech and visits Albina Child Care Center
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11th street bridge

MEMORY OF PRIDE	<i>space</i> 28 Historic home of abolitionist Frederick Douglass	MEMORY OF PRIDE	<i>space</i> 29 Town Hall Education Arts Recreation Campus (THEARC) which is home to eleven nonprofit organizations	MEMORY OF PRIDE	<i>space</i> 30 By the 1970s, Ward 7 & 8 were predominantly African-American communities.
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national memorial for peace & justice

MEMORY OF PRIDE

space & image

31

Montgomery, AL was epicenter for Civil Rights Movement

curtain call

MEMORY OF PRIDE

space & gesture

32

Reciprocity and Interconnections between members of Lower Hill community

MEMORY OF PRIDE

space & gesture

33

People socializing up and down Centre Ave.

MEMORY OF PRIDE

space & gesture

34

Lower Hill African-American jazz scene is a reflection of the black cultural autonomy

ajami landfill park

MEMORY OF PRIDE

space

35

Jaffa was a wealthy district primarily inhabited by Muslim Arabs.

MEMORY OF PRIDE

space

36

Long history of a port town, and connection to the sea - a place of beauty and economic significance

MEMORIES | *of erasure*

town common

MEMORY OF ERASURE

space

40

Destruction of Shore Drive neighborhood

MEMORY OF ERASURE

space, object, & gesture

41

Burning of Sycamore Hill Baptist Church

MEMORY OF ERASURE

space

42

Closed the pool after it was racially integrated

dawson park

MEMORY OF ERASURE

space & gesture

43

Emmanuel Urban Renewal project

MEMORY OF ERASURE

object & space

44

Building of I-5 highway

11th street bridge

MEMORY OF ERASURE

object & space

45

11th Street Bridge is social & economic division.

MEMORY OF ERASURE

space

46

The polluted “forgotten river” causing health risks for fishers

MEMORY OF ERASURE

space

47

Anacostia Neighborhood was “white-only” for employees of the Navy Yard

MEMORY OF ERASURE

space

48

Homes in Anacostia were leveled to make way for highways and other “urban renewal” projects.

national memorial for peace & justice

MEMORY OF ERASURE

space & gesture

49

Racial terror
lynchings of people
of color in the U.S.

MEMORY OF ERASURE

gesture

50

No documentation
of majority of terror
lynchings; removing
victims' narratives

MEMORY OF ERASURE

space

51

Montgomery, AL
held the White
House of the
Confederacy.

curtain call

MEMORY OF ERASURE

space

52

Razing of Lower Hill
Neighborhood

ajami landfill park

MEMORY OF ERASURE

space

53

1948 War of
Independence led to
the displacement of
many Arabs.

MEMORY OF ERASURE

object & space

54

Vacant homes
of Arabs were
demolished.

MEMORY OF ERASURE

object

55

Landfill created,
cutting Ajami off -
physically, climatically,
and visually - from the
sea

CATALYTIC HEALING |

town common

HEALING	<i>object & space</i> 60 Gateway Structure inspired by Sycamore Baptist Church geometry	HEALING	<i>gesture & space</i> 61 Prominence Path retained	HEALING	<i>object & space</i> 62 Stained Glass panels reminiscent of Church windows	HEALING	<i>object</i> 63 Public online archive of stories collected with photographs
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dawson park

HEALING	<i>gesture & space</i> 64 Ensuring a space for domino players	HEALING	<i>object & space</i> 65 Memorializing The Hill Block by saving iconic roof	HEALING	<i>object & space</i> 66 Boulders with neighborhood memories as part of water feature	HEALING	<i>gesture & space</i> 67 Space for social & political activity
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11th street bridge

HEALING	<i>gesture</i> 68 Establish 11th Street Bridge Mural Project	HEALING	<i>gesture</i> 69 Generate new jobs and economic activity	HEALING	<i>gesture</i> 70 Creation of new community organizations	HEALING	<i>gesture</i> 71 Environmental education about the Anacostia Watershed
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national memorial for peace & justice

object & space

72

HEALING

Pillar memorials with the names of lynching victims

object

73

HEALING

Exhibition of soil samples

curtain call

image & object

74

HEALING

Photographs used to line the curtain wall

gesture & space

75

HEALING

Garden passage music experience

ajami landfill park

object & space

76

HEALING

Recycled & Removed Material

space, object & gesture

77

HEALING

Since the 1990s, efforts have been made to restore Arab & Islamic landmarks.

object

78

HEALING

Path marking former shoreline

space

79

HEALING

Rebuilding of sand beach

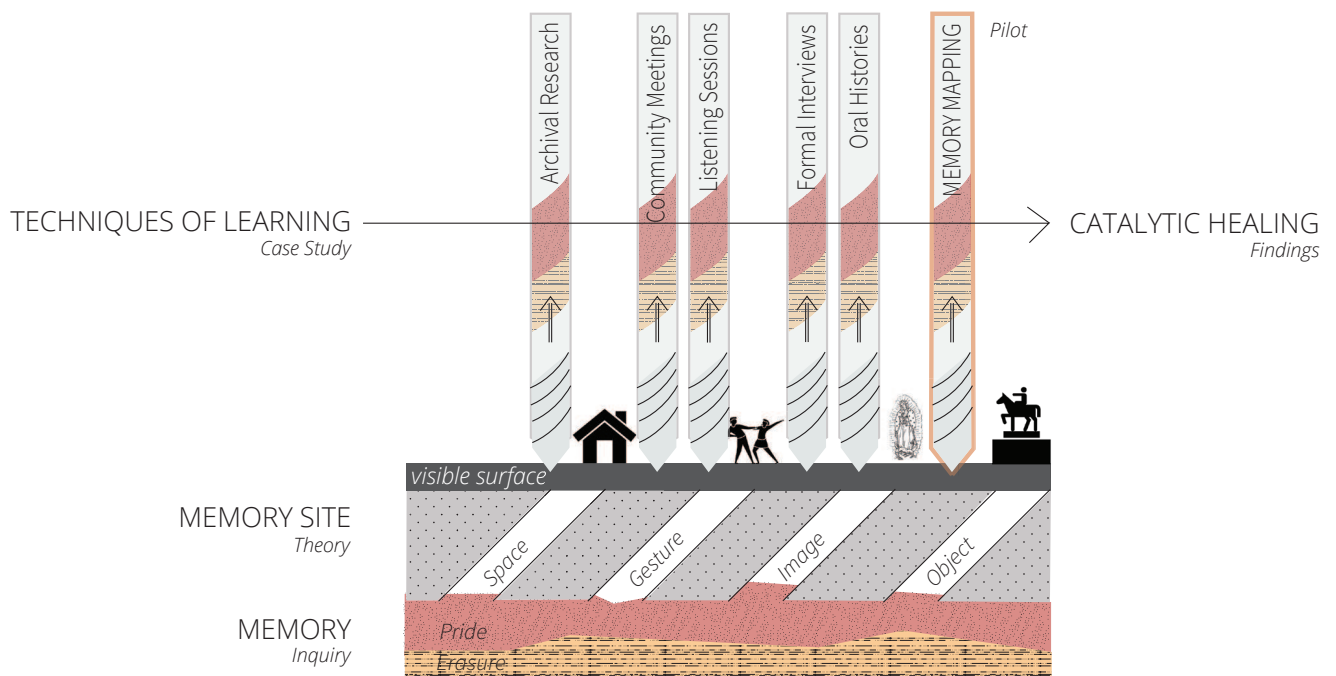


Figure 6: Framework for Memory Gathering

After conducting a case study, techniques of learning were identified that allowed for designers to permeate the visible surface of a site and extract memories of pride and erasure. This process led to instances of healing. In response to those 5 techniques of learning, Memory Mapping was developed and piloted in Chicago.

IV

TESTING THE FRAMEWORK

Extracting Memories in Chicago

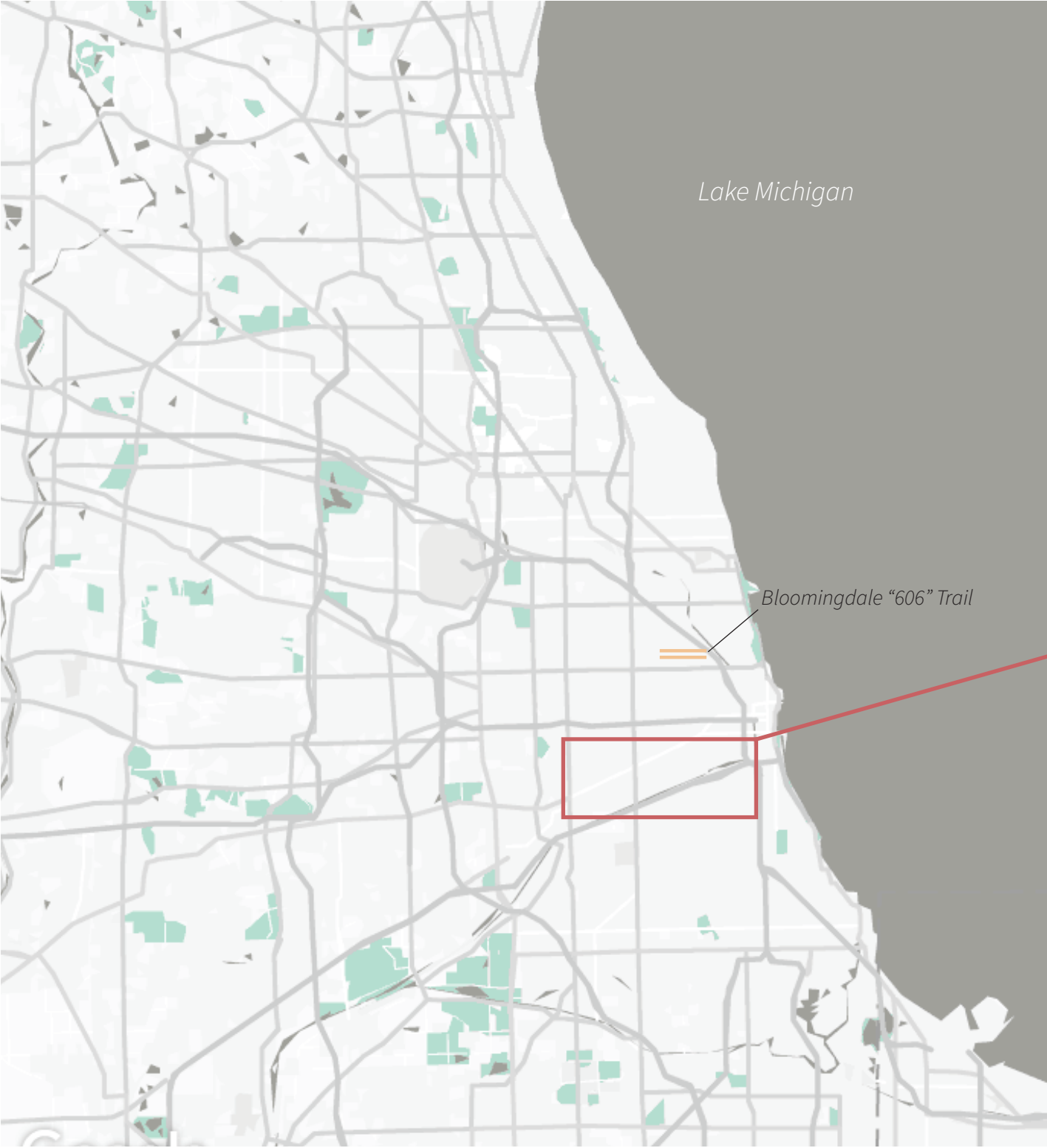
After refining the framework by examining what techniques of learning other designers use, and how, I decided to pilot two techniques in Pilsen and Little Village, two neighborhoods on the west side of Chicago that are at high risk of loss and erasure, as seen in the case study projects, and in other Chicago neighborhoods. I piloted a technique of learning to gather an initial set of memories of the neighborhoods, and to see if memory analysis could provide insight on how to eliminate or mitigate some the risk of erasure that often comes with urban improvement project (Figure 6).

El Paseo & 606

“El Paseo” Trail is a proposed street-level, multi-purpose path that runs about 4 miles along unused BNSF railroad tracks (Chicago Tribune), and would connect Pilsen and Little Village (Figure 7, 8, 9). Pilsen has been experiencing rampant gentrification for the past 10 years, resulting in rising rents, long-standing local businesses being pushed out and displacement of long-time residents, many of whom were Mexican immigrants. Given the patterns witnessed in Pilsen, it is no surprise that there is growing concern that a new linear park project could bring even more negative change for Pilsen, as well as Little Village. Since Little Village has experienced fewer gentrification problems, it is also possible that this new connection between the two neighborhoods could be an epicenter for more expensive homes and businesses that the current community would not benefit from.

The proposed El Paseo Trail builds on the perceived success of The 606 Trail, but after conducting interviews with some community organizers who were involved in the construction of the 606 Trail, it became evident that there was an inconsistent amount of trust and satisfaction with the way development and community engagement had been conducted in that project. The 606 Trail is a 2.7 mile-long elevated greenway, located in the in the Wicker Park, Humboldt Park and Logan Square neighborhoods of Chicago (Figure 10). These three communities were historically inhabited by Mexican and Puerto Rican populations, but have been facing gentrification since the 1990s. The 606 has been called “Chicago’s highline” – and it has had similar effects on adjacent properties as its namesake in new york, with the rise of rent and new condo constructions. I interviewed a local community housing organizer – who I will call Isabel for the sake of anonymity - who was involved in the early planning

Chicago, Illinois



Pilot Study Area

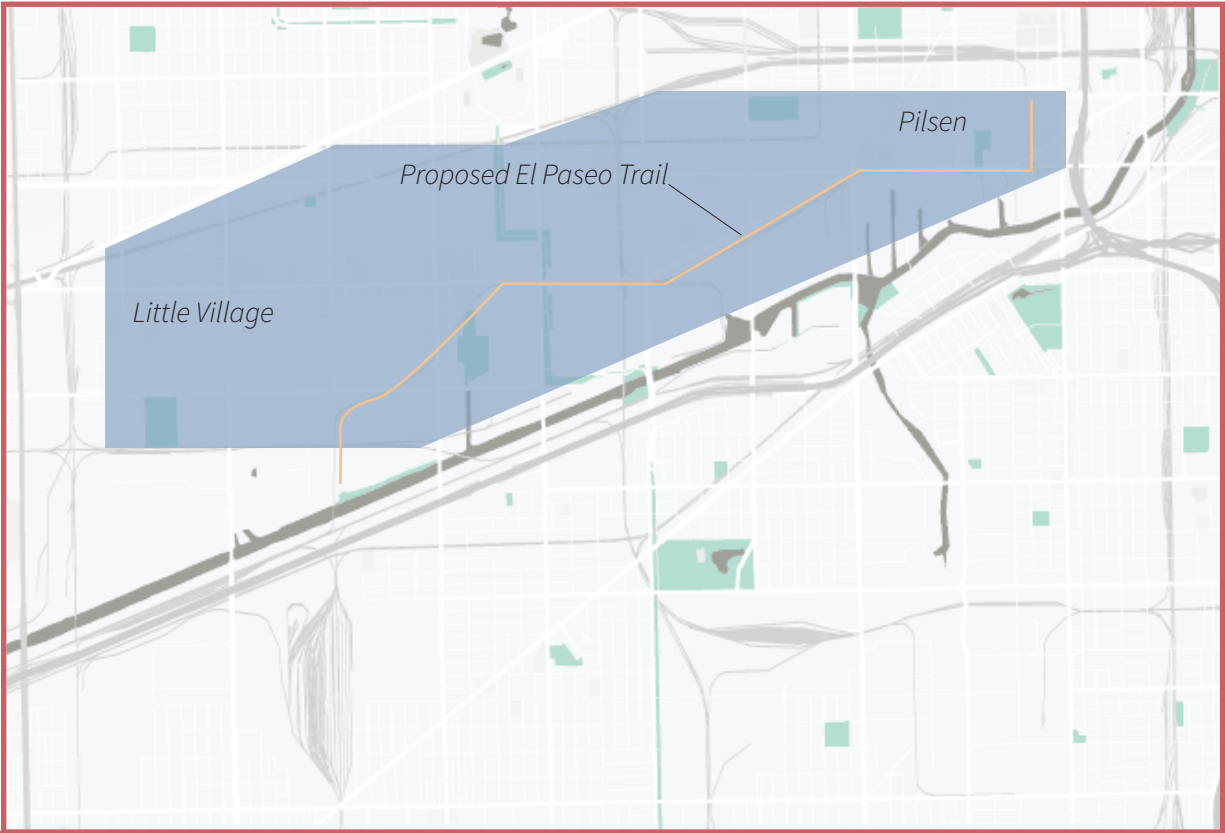


Figure 7: Chicago Pilot Context Maps

The proposed El Paseo Trail would connect Little Village and Pilsen neighborhoods on the lower west side of Chicago. In April, three pilots were conducted in the affected neighborhoods. Just a few miles North, the Bloomingdale “606” Trail was opened in 2013.

stages of the 606 (Isabel, 2018). She said although the goal of the trail was to create a safe trail that connected the communities, it fell short in terms of a holistic planning approach. Isabel explained that in Logan Square – one of the neighborhoods the trail passes through- people are losing their homes every day as a result of rising rent costs and pressure to sell to bigger developers. She said, “ This trail is not for us, its is for the people moving into new condos,” and that it felt like community members and their health statistics regarding obesity and diabetes were “pimped to get more funding,” when in reality most of them will lose their homes within the next 5 years and will not get to enjoy the trail.

Isabel described the community engagement process as one of “checking off a box,” and not resulting in understanding deeper community needs but only superficial wants like where the benches should go. When asked about Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, a park advisory council of community stakeholders for the 606 Trail, Isabel said that they lacked diversity of voices and did not care about the housing issues facing the communities. She described one of the stakeholder meetings in which a community member said that the 606 Trail was not a housing project and the housing crisis was not in their scope. She said that in end the project was fast tracked Mayor Emmanuel, and they broke ground 4 years earlier than planned, which was ultimately at the cost of the most vulnerable communities surrounding the trail. She, along with many other community members fighting for affordable housing, have described trauma and an inability to even look at, much less walk upon the new trail (Figure 11).

When asked what she wishes would have been done differently or how the new “El Paseo” Trail could be different, Isabel had a few ideas. She said the trail has to be “very programmed” and provide spaces for people to facilitate dialogue related to the racism and classism issues at hand in the communities. Through facilitated conversations during the design process and on the finished trail, there would be greater community building and ultimately less division between the old and new residents of these quickly gentrifying neighborhoods. She also cited the 11th Street Bridge Park in Washington, D.C., highlighting how they took the time to truly make community ties and establish an equitable development plan before even breaking ground.

When I interviewed a former president of Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, whom I will refer to as Daniel for sake of anonymity, and he shared a different perspective. He said that the Bloomingdale Trail was actually given extra funding to conduct extra public meetings and have one-on-one meetings with individual groups that could not attend (Daniel, 2018). He said each phase of the project had a strong local group involved to provide design stewardship, but the housing group that Isabel is a part of just did not organize and act quickly enough. He also said the project was always on a 4-year timeline (2010-2013), and that nothing was fast-tracked, especially not the public involvement. When asked about the housing crisis, Daniel pointed out that in 2013 when the trail opened, a “perfect storm” of a rise in the economy, rise in housing market and overall increase in developments along Milwaukee Boulevard led to the rapid gentrification and turn in housing stock. When asked what recommendations he would make for the proposed “El Paseo” Trail, Daniel said there should be a community council that includes members of community organizations and professionals that not only help with the design phases, but also continues to act as a steward to maintain the site.

After these interviews it was evident that different stakeholders held different truths about how the sequence of events occurred and how well the community was engaged and attended to. I heard praise and resentment for the same project, and it was concerning to Isabel and other long-time resident of the neighborhood, that the very people who were supposedly included in the process were feeling disengaged and hurt by the construction of the 606 Trail. There are some lessons to be learned from the 606 Trail, including the importance of taking all economic impact into account, including

housing, even if it is not in the immediate scope of the project. But even before that, there needs to be clear communication, inclusion and listening to the community on a level that goes beyond standard project meetings. Through a slow and thorough process that would include building partnerships across disciplines, listening sessions, and memory collection, there would be a greater chance of ensuring no one gets left behind or out of the process and final implemented design.

Seeing and hearing the grievances from residents who live adjacent to the 606 Trail sparked great concern in the Pilsen and Little Village communities. “It’s going to raise the rents, raise property values, and displace a lot of people,” said 21-year-old, Javier Ruiz at an open discussion called “Development Without Displacement” at La Catrina Café in Pilsen, just down the street from the proposed Paseo. The event was organized by Pilsen Alliance, a social justice organization committed to building grassroots leadership and fighting displacement in Pilsen (Cooper 2018). Further, Winifred Curran, an associate professor of geography at DePaul who has been collaborating with Pilsen Alliance since 2004, says plans for the Paseo are “driven not by community demand, but by what the city and real estate interests think make the city more attractive” (Cooper 2018). When I interviewed Byron Sigcho, community organizer at Pilsen Alliance he said any design will increase development and that it is important to think holistically and plan ahead for the possible negative effects it could have on a community (Sigcho, 2018). He explained that there should be policies in place to make sure the people who currently live in neighborhood will be able to enjoy the design in the future, especially since funds from their tax increment financing districts will be used to fund “El Paseo” Trail. Sigcho went on to suggest that a tax freeze plan could be implemented to prevent rising property taxes, and thereby protect long-time residents who live adjacent to the future trail. He explained there is already a large shortage of housing for families, and that large infrastructure projects should be helping community not replacing it. Without protection, even homeowners are being priced out of Pilsen as property taxes increase. These concerns are important for designers of the proposed El Paseo Trail to understand. By collecting these memories of the neighborhood no longer being affordable as it used to be, designers can recommend protective policies that allow residents to remain in their community, preventing further root shock.

Figure 8:
Abandoned Tracks
at El Paseo Trail
The proposed 4 mile
trail would be built at
street level, alongside
unused BNSF
Railroad tracks.



Figure 9:
Current Conditions
of El Paseo Trail
Much of the proposed
trail runs along alleys
and busy streets.



Figure 10:
**Bloomington (606)
Trail**

The 2.7 mile trail is an elevated multi-modal trail that extends across three neighborhoods in the northwest Chicago.



Figure 11:
Protestors at 606

Hundreds of protesters marched the 606 Trail to urge city officials to support ordinances to protect long-time residents from being priced out of their neighborhood.



Techniques of Learning |

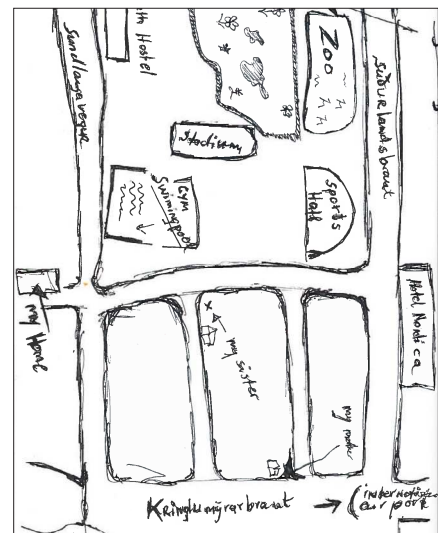
I wanted to explore whether a technique of learning that focuses on extracting site memories could be more effective in engaging, as well as reflecting and empowering a community by allowing their stories to be heard and understood. Given the time and capacity constraints my project, I decided to pilot two techniques: stakeholder interviews with community organizers who work in the two communities or partook in the process of the 606 trail and individual memory mapping at two sites in Pilsen and one in Little Village to elicit memories of the neighborhoods.

Some of the of the case studies included forming steering committees with community stakeholders or holding listening sessions with local organizers. Given the scope of my project, I felt it was more appropriate to conduct stakeholder interviews, since I am not working with the city or a firm to develop the trail itself. Further, interviews gave me the opportunity to have more intimate conversations with individuals, which led to honest answers and understanding of the tension between some community groups. Interviews also gave me the flexibility to conduct them in person or over the phone if needed.

The individual memory maps were inspired by a book called “Reykjavik 64°08N 21° 54W” by Amy Sioux. For her book, Sioux asked residents of Reykjavik, Iceland to make hand-drawn maps to locations important to them (Figure 12). I was intrigued by how unique each map was. The scale, the chosen highlighted locations, and the drawing style, all varied from map to map. Some of the case studies mentioned soliciting community feedback and holding public meetings to brainstorm ideas for design projects. Given that my project was not in a design phase, I did not think a design charrette would be appropriate. I also did not want to hold a public meeting for a project that has not been officially approved, as this could cause more distrust and anxiety for residents who do not wish for the trail to be built. The individuality of the memory maps allowed participants to work alone, and share as much as they wanted to, without fear of judgment or herd mentality. The structure of the memory maps also allowed for participants to visually spatialize their memories and give them a physical location within their neighborhood. Site analysis is meant to understand relations between the memories and their geo-location.

Figure 12: Hand-drawn map example from “Reykjavik 64°08N 21° 54W” by Amy Sioux

The maps drawn by residents of Reykjavic were unique and represented what was important to each participant.



Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews like the ones with Isabel and Ben provided insight on social, political and economic climate of the neighborhoods they lived and worked in. The stakeholders who worked with the 606 were able to speak to successes and shortcomings of the project and describe how they wish it could have been done and how future projects should be executed. Stakeholders in Pilsen and Little Village expressed wishes and concerns for the future project. They also provided insight on problems the residents of the two neighborhoods are facing, for example: rise in rent.

Memory Mapping

Instead of having residents draw their own maps on a blank sheet, a prompt and map were provided for them to draw and write their memories upon. Given the time limitations for participants to draw their maps, they may feel anxious recalling an entire area without guidance. People do not see their neighborhood in plan view regularly, so providing a base map with the streets and landmarks to better orient them would allow them to focus more on drawing memories and less on street names. Blank lines were provided to write any comments or further explanations of their markings.

Pilot 1

Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) & People's Education Movement Forum: Claiming and Building Community Spaces

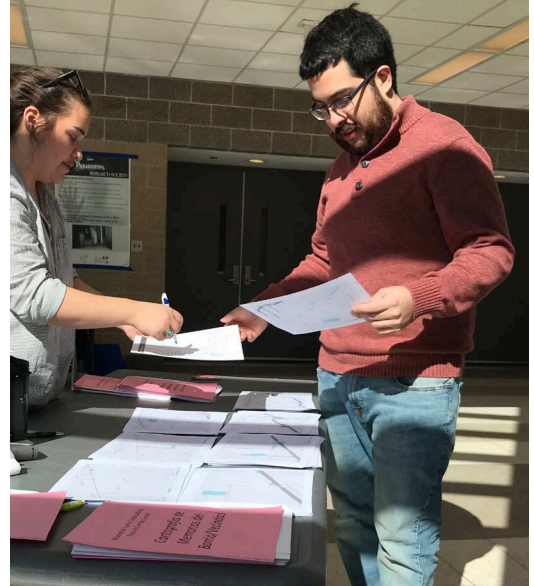
The People's Education Movement, which includes faculty, educators, alumni and community partners is rooted in the struggle against global white supremacy and holds the mission of using a decolonial and liberatory lens which advocates for the freedom of all people (NEIU, 2018). This annual conference was held at Little Village Lawndale High School, and consisted of workshops and panels led by community members and leaders.

I set up a booth at this event because I was informed that most of the attendees would be active community members who lived and worked in Little Village. Furthermore, most of them have witnessed a range of changes in the neighborhood and could provide memories of pride and erasure and perhaps suggestions for community healing. Apart from the official speakers, there was also a fair set up in the hallways of the high school. Local vendors and organizations had the option of setting up a table to sell their wares or share relevant community program information. I reached out to a former college advisor, who connected me to the event in Little Village and secured me a table in the fair portion.

At my booth, I created a large sign and had stacks of blank memory mapping worksheets photocopied for participants to record their memories on (Figure 13). Some people would approach the table and ask about the project, but most of them in passing. Those that did want to participate did not always want to read through the prompt and it was easier to just explain what my project was and the type of data I was collecting (Figure 14). It was also important to my project that all participants were either from, currently living or working in Pilsen or Little Village, which meant not all people interested in the project were qualified to fill out a memory map.

Due to the nature of the event, most people were rushing in to get to the sessions and did not have time to stop and fill out a memory map. Also because of wording of the booth sign, there was skepticism amongst community members who thought I was proposing a design for the El Paseo Trail, and did not want to support any construction (Appendix A). In the five hours I spent at my table station, I only collected four surveys, one of which was scanned and e-mailed to me after the event. Due to the nature of the event and the lack of downtime between educational sessions, this was a challenging venue, and the results were unsatisfactory.

Figure 13 & 14 :
**People’s Education
Movement Forum**
*A booth was set
up at the People’s
Education Movement
Forum at Little
Village Lawndale
High School Campus.
On the table are the
individual memory
map worksheets,
along with consent
forms. Behind the
table is a map of the
neighborhoods with
the proposed trail
highlighted.*



Pilot 2

El Paseo Community Garden Season Opening Day

Immediately after the first event, I drove to Pilsen and met with volunteers and other community members gathered at the opening day of El Paseo Community Garden. El Paseo Community Garden was established in 2009, with the mission of harnessing the skills and talents of neighborhood residents to strengthen environmental stewardship and civic engagement in Pilsen (El Paseo Community Garden, 2008). Their goal is to have the garden act as a teaching space for participants to grow and harvest fresh, healthy food, with educational workshops and events providing opportunities to learn and share knowledge and engage the community around issues of health and sustainability.

I have been in contact with garden leaders, Paula and Antonio Acevedo, since last summer when I interviewed them and they are already well connected to Pilsen residents. On this day, they asked me to arrive towards the end of their 4-hour event to present my project. Unfortunately, due to the length of the event, many people had already left by the time I arrived. When I arrived, I made an announcement to the remaining ~20 volunteers and asked if they would fill out a memory map (Figure 15). We set up around an outdoor picnic table and about 10 of them stayed and filled one out (Figure 16).

I wanted to collect maps at this location because it is the only part of the proposed trail that is already developed and has programming. Although the garden functions as a separate entity from the overall trail plans, any future development of the trail will have implications for it.

Of all the surveys I collected, the population of this location had the highest percentage of participants that were newer residents of the community. Most of them had been living in Pilsen between 1-2 years. It is important to note this because although I went to a place that would be directly affected by the trail, I was not able to reach many people who had an insight or understanding of what the neighborhood had been through before they arrived. Nevertheless, in order to understand the changes occurring in economic and social patterns, memories of current and newer residents are essential. In about 30 minutes, I collected seven memory maps.

Figure 15 & 16:
Opening Volunteer Day at El Paseo Community Garden

The project and memory maps were presented at the opening volunteer day at El Paseo Community Garden. Garden volunteers took a break from their work to fill out the memory maps at a picnic table on site. Most of the residents at this location had only lived in Pilsen for 1-2 years.



Pilot 3

Sunday Gathering at Casa Maravilla

With the help of Paula Acevedo from El Paseo Community Garden, I was able to set up a time to visit Casa Maravilla – a retirement community located just behind the garden. I arrived on a Sunday evening, as a group of Casa Maravilla residents were gathering for a potluck in their common room (Figure 17,18). Upon entering the room, I was urged to serve myself soup and cake. At first I just sat with them at a table and introduced myself and explained my project. Based on past experience with working with elderly Spanish-speaking populations, I knew that handing them the survey and mapping worksheet would not be as effective as me having a conversation with them and taking notes. I decided to talk to them individually, asking them to describe Pilsen and other places they lived before they moved to the retirement home. Most of them showed me on the map where their home was, the walk they took everyday to get to work, and the “cantinas” or bars they would go to during the weekends to socialize and dance. In conversation, they also began to describe the gentrification patterns and how much they used to pay for rent compared to the prices today. As they pointed to the locations on the map, I made marks and annotations of what they were describing. They allowed me to photograph them and even asked me to text them the photos.

Overall, I found this interaction and data set the most valuable. Unlike the other two pilots, this one was less of a survey administration and more of a listening session. Through open conversation, memories flow more easily and it was in this setting that I learned the most about unhappy memories of displacement and negative change. In two hours I collected seven maps, most of which showed memories from 20-30 years ago.

Figure 17 & 18:
Residents at Casa
Maravilla
*The residents at
Casa Maravilla
shared their
memories of the
neighborhood over
coffee and dessert
after we filled out
their memory maps.*



Memories & Healing |

After collecting the 18 memory maps, I went through each one carefully and mapped the memories of each one in a different layer in Adobe Illustrator. Eventually, I had a collage of memories overlapping each other from different eras ranging from 1978 – 2018 (Figure 19). It was interesting to note the differences in the types of memories from newer residents versus older residents. While the newer residents mapped coffee shops, new bars and breweries, and murals, older residents mostly mapped their old homes (often mentioning how little they paid for it), factories or other places they worked, and some bars where they would go dancing on the weekends. Keeping in mind that I did collect more maps in Pilsen than Little Village, it was still interesting to see that more of the recent residents mapped in Pilsen than Little Village.



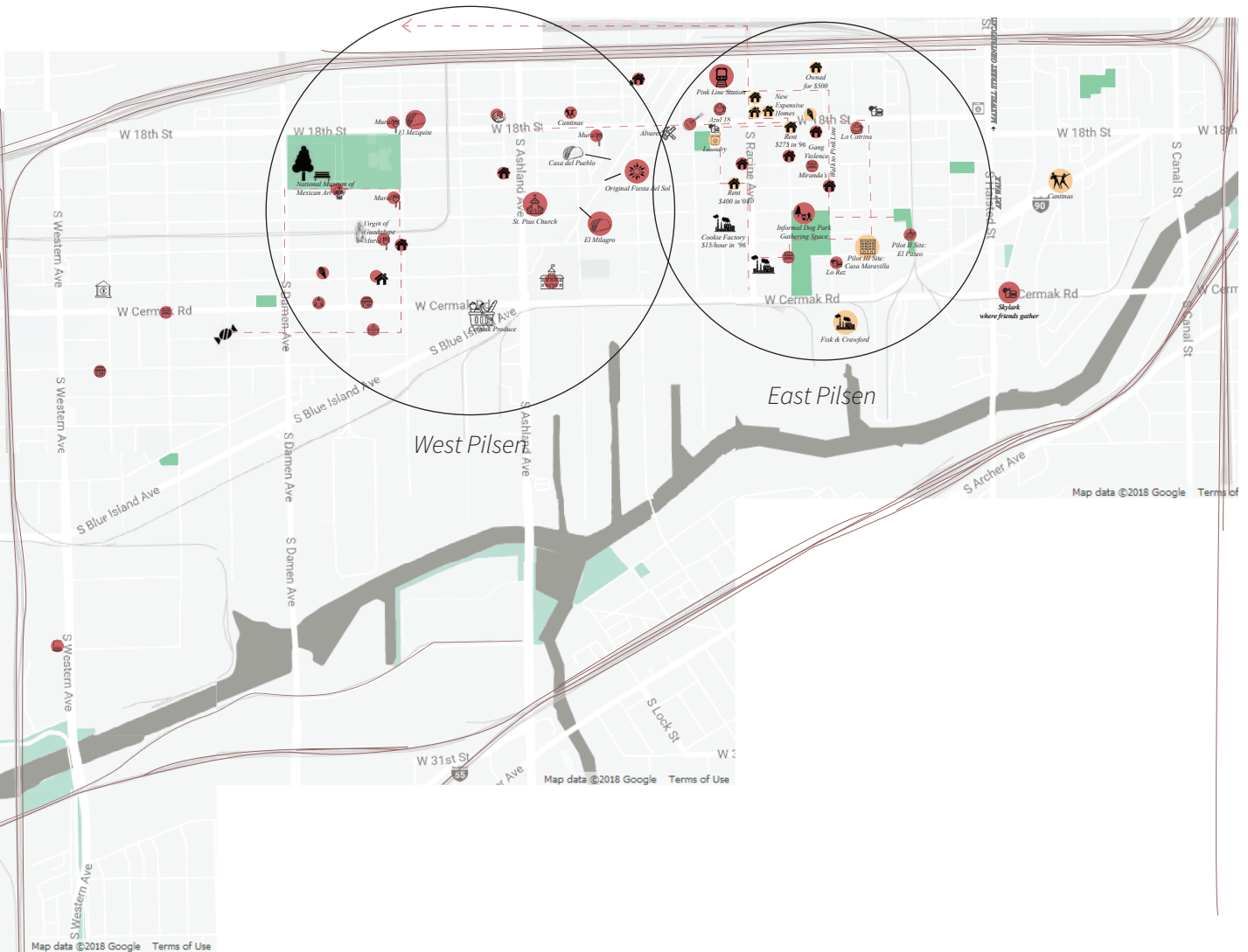
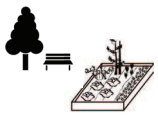


Figure 19: Compiled Memory Map of Little Village & Pilsen
The compiled memory map of full study area through the analysis of individual memory maps filled out in the pilots. In order to zoom in closer, three zones were determined. Each zone is shown in greater detail in the following pages.



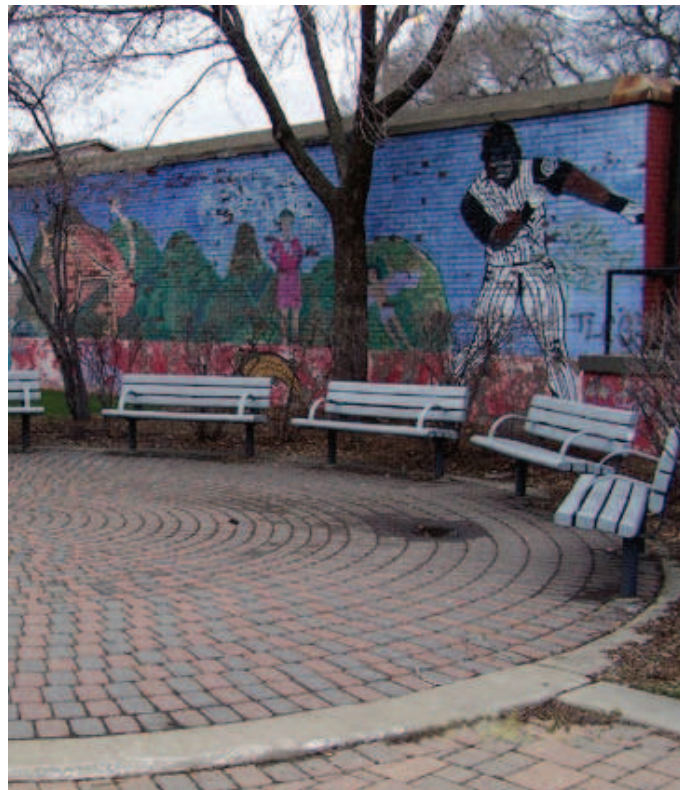
space & gesture
100

Open Spaces for Gathering

Many of the memory maps highlighted El Paseo Community Garden and other open spaces like Dvorak Park. They described spaces where they could walk their dogs and socialize with their neighbors.

El Paseo Garden is located on a former brownfield site. They offer private allotment and collective raised beds. Their mission is not only to grown healthy food, but also provide a place for community members to learn from one another.

MEMORY OF PRIDE



East Pilsen

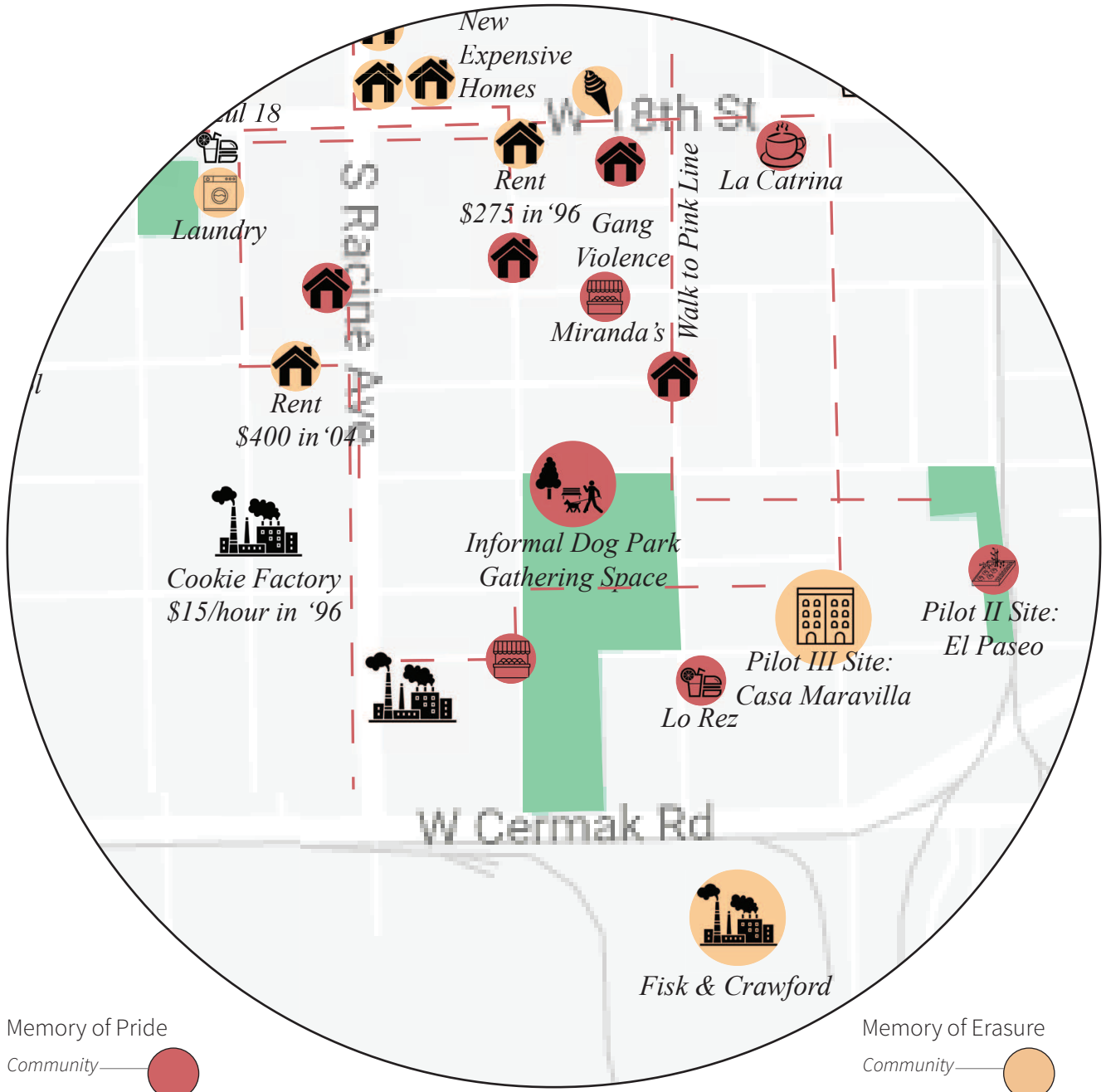




image
101

Affordable Homes

In the 1980s and 90s, Pilsen provided affordable homes for many Mexican immigrant families. One memory map participant noted that he purchased a home his home for \$500 in the 80s, and another recalled only paying \$275/month for rent in 1996.

MEMORY OF PRIDE



space
110



Rise of Housing Prices

Interview with leaders of local organization, Pilsen Alliance revealed the constant and growing concerns of the rise of rent and loss of homes. These concerns were also present in the communities adjacent to the 606 Trail. As of 2017, the average rent for a one-bedroom unit in Pilsen is \$1350.

MEMORY OF ERASURE



space
113

Protection for long-time residents along the trail

A tax-freeze policy for long-time home owners along the trail could provide adjacent homeowners protection from loosing their homes.

HEALING



space
111

Fisk & Crawford Coal-Fired Power Plants

The Fisk & Crawford power plants contributed particulate-forming air pollution to adjacent communities that exceeded federal health standards. In 2003-2044, the two plants combined emitted 230 lbs. of mercury which causes brain damage, 17,765 tons of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide which caused 720 asthma attacks each year. 1 in 4 Chicagoans lived within a 3-mile radius of the smokestacks.

MEMORY OF ERASURE



space
102

Shutting Down Fisk & Crawford

In 2012, Fisk & Crawford plants shut down as a result of a decade-long grassroots campaign led by Pilsen and Little Village organizations.

MEMORY OF PRIDE



space
114

Environmental Justice

Pilsen & Little Village have active environmental justice organizations who have worked hard to achieve victories for the community. Sites and symbols of environmental justice victories can be seen from the trail. Through signage or view-framing, these narratives and symbols should be celebrated.

HEALING



gesture
103

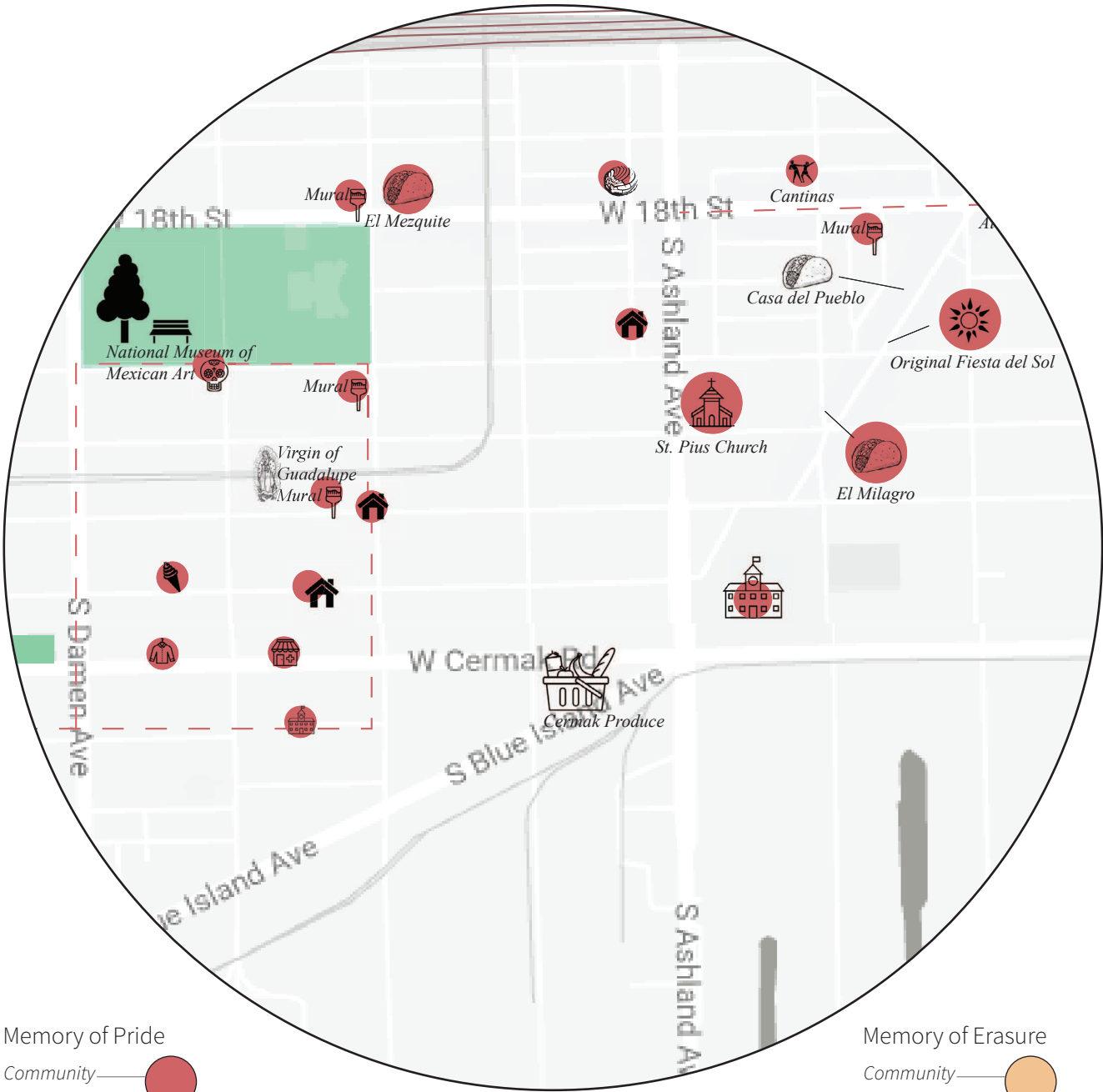
Fiesta del Sol



An annual 4-day fundraising event organized by Pilsen Neighbors Community Council, which draws over 1 million visitors every year. It generates revenue to the Pilsen community, including local businesses, scholarships for youth, and work in education reform, civil rights of immigrants healthcare and workforce development

MEMORY OF PRIDE



West Pilsen



Memory of Pride
 Community — 
 Personal — 



Memory of Erasure
 Community — 
 Personal — 



image
104

Murals

Murals are a staple of the Pilsen neighborhood. In one of the memory maps, a participant described the murals as wayfinding markers on her daily walk. Images of the Virgin Mary and other Mexican political activists are celebrated as a part of the neighborhood culture.

MEMORY OF PRIDE



image
112

Mural at Casa Aztlan

Workers painted over the mural on former Casa Aztlan community center facade, which was created by an artist and Pilsen students over 45 years ago. The mural was meant to reflect the culture of the Latino community and make them feel at home. Community members were outraged and called for the original artist to be brought back to recreate it.

MEMORY OF ERASURE



image
115

Space for Future Murals

Murals have been a staple of the Pilsen community for decades. Historically, they have been used as a means to freely express cultural and political sentiments. Reserving sides of buildings that face the trail for local art would allow for the narratives of the community to be highlighted and integrated in the new project.

HEALING



gesture & space
105

Music & Dancing

Nearly every elderly participant at Casa Maravilla reminisced fondly of the “cantinas” or night clubs where they would go dancing on the weekends. One man recalled a stretch of 18th Street where he would play his guitar every Saturday for people walking by.

MEMORY OF PRIDE



gesture
116

Music & Dancing

Space for a stage to allow for dancing and musicians to play could be a stop along the trail. Annual events like We Are Hip Hop Festival take place in Pilsen in public parks.

HEALING



SPACE
106

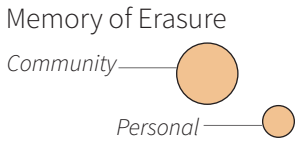
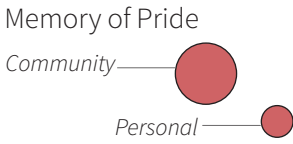
La Villita Park

The 22-acre park was built on a site formally used by an asphalt roofing product company. It was determined that cancer-linked polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons were on the site due to the high amounts of pollution from coal tar. The site was eventually designated a federal Superfund site. Community organizations including Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO) worked for years to bring attention to the urgency of environmental injustice and public health concern. LVEJO executive director, Antonio Lopez commented, “These are environmental justice efforts. This is about equitable community development where community members are involved in every process of the planning, design and naming of it.” The park has since been remediated and is the pride & joy of the community.

MEMORY OF PRIDE



Little Village





GESTURE & SPACE

107

Black Panther Facilities

The youngest memory map participant was a high school student from Little Village. He pointed out that the Walgreens in his neighborhood used to be the headquarters for the Black Panther Party. He said he wished it would be commemorated more publicly. After conducting some research, it seems this is not the correct location. There was a First Chicago Free Breakfast Program & People's Medical Care Center run by Black Panther party members on Pulaski Road, about 10 blocks north of Little Village.

MEMORY OF PRIDE



GESTURE

117

Celebration of Community Activism

Although the Black Panther Party facilities were not technically in Little Village, results from the memory mapping reveal a desire for youth to connect with the history of activism in their community. Community activism can be celebrated by commemorating past victories in the neighborhood and creating space for activist gatherings and protests along El Paseo Trail. Little Village Environmental Justice Association has had a large presence and overall success in bringing the community together around issues of justice.

HEALING



GESTURE & SPACE

108

MEMORY OF PRIDE

Local Vendors & Affordable Shops

Local business owners have cultivated trusting relationships with the community, creating a positive and symbiotic environment.



SPACE

118

HEALING

Support for Local Vendors

Some street vendors, like Fidencio Sanchez who sells paletas, have been a part of the community for decades. They bring joy and a sense of home, beyond the goods they sell. Designated pop-up spaces along the trail for vendors to sell their goods would help keep them a part of community

Lessons Learned |



Limitations of Mapping

It was much easier to hand a person a survey and a map and ask them fill it out themselves quietly, but I found that through dialogue and more casual interactions that involved me asking for specific details and taking notes, more fruitful and compelling memories were shared, especially memories that were more difficult or painful. While memory mapping is effective in spatializing the memories as they are collected, there is a loss of candid storytelling and recall that comes with oral history.

Collecting oral histories is time consuming and challenging, which may afford opportunities to partner with a local historian or university, like the Town Common team did with East Carolina University. The interviews they collected were short, but rich with heartfelt stories and difficult memories of erasure and loss. It is these types of memories that are difficult to capture and engage with through typical forms of community outreach. Town hall meetings, dot boards and even memory mapping have their limitations for expressing more ephemeral and emotional narratives. Collecting oral histories and memories is not a tool to be underestimated.

The venue is also an important factor when deciding to use memory mapping or oral histories. While memory mapping was a useful tool that provided insights to the values of the Pilsen and Little Village neighborhoods, there were venues, like Casa Maravilla, where collecting oral histories was more appropriate and effective because of the population and ambiance of the place. Having more time and being in closer proximity to the site also allows for multiple modes of memory collection.



Time

The most important takeaway from this framework is that it takes time and patience. I only had a few days to collect memory maps, and realistically that process alone should take many days across several months. This process cannot be expedited because it is difficult to predict how successful each memory map collection will be. The success of collecting memories is also heavily reliant on the support and partnership with local community agencies and organizers, who already have the ears of the people and who themselves have memories to share. I was able to collaborate with a few organizations, but I was not able to reach them all, which resulted in gaps in my research from crucial and knowledgeable voices. With regard to building partnerships, it is also important to allocate time for community organizations to meet and bond among themselves. For example, the 11th Street Bridge project has resulted in many organizations coming together on an array of projects related to 11th Street Bridge such as mural painting, educational workshops and community gardening. Building these partnerships takes time, especially if organizations do not have a history of working together.



Venue/ Forum Selection

It is important to be selective of the venue where memory maps will be collected. Tacking on to another event where people are already gathering was successful because many people attended, however it came with drawbacks because of a lack of a description and time slot for the memory mapping activity.

When I set up at the People's Forum in Little Village, attendees of the event were rushing to get to other sessions and most did not have time to stop. In the future, I would make sure to set up a session embedded in the actual program of events rather than being an add-on booth. This would allow time for participants to dedicate more time to thoughtful responses.



Cultural Awareness

In any form of community engagement, there should be a basic level of cultural understanding and familiarity with the community being surveyed. If no one from the immediate design team knows the community or has experience with community engagement, they should seek to partner with and collaborate with those who have that knowledge base.



Memories as a Starting Point

Memories are rarely an end point for a site analysis, but rather primary indicators of what designers should research further to gain a better understanding of a community. Archival research and careful consideration of questions to ask a community and specific stakeholders is key creating a customized community-driven design. For example, in the West Pilsen subarea memory analysis, I used the memory of the murals that I collected through the memory mapping worksheets as an indicator of further research to conduct. Through archival research of articles, I was able to uncover events of mural white washing that caused community pain and erasure. Linking these memories provided the foundation for my recommendation of designating specific building facades for future murals.

V

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Memories hold a key to understanding the history of what a community has experienced, as well as their concerns and desires for the future of their built environment. By extracting and analyzing memories, designers can help to bring light to multiple voices that have historically been silenced by U.S. land policies and practices. The erasure of memories contributes to post-traumatic effects of *root shock*, by further denying and not validating the difficult and painful experiences that residents have faced. Extracting underlying memories of a place within the initial design process may help reduce or eliminate risk of *root shock* in urban development. Furthermore, extracting and addressing memories has and can continue to foster catalytic healing within communities that have faced *root shock*. As Dolores Hayden wrote, “Diverse audiences in American cities today know that stories of bitterness and difficult times have to be told as a part of their urban history. It is the controversial history Americans need to reclaim as our own, in order to give meaning to the contradictory urban landscapes of cities today, where wealth and neglect, success and frustration, often appear side by side” (Hayden 1995, 96). By examining memories, designers can actively engage in preventing erasure and celebrating the pride of a community.

Pierre Nora described 4 sites of memory- Space, Gesture, Image, Object. These are vestiges where memories are held that may be closely examined by designers as they look to extract memories of a place. As shown by the case study and pilot, there are various techniques of learning that may be used to extract such memories from the sites, including gathering oral histories, facilitating community meetings, conducting archival research and memory mapping. It is important to understand the multiple types of memories that may arise. In doing my own research, I developed a classification for memories: pride & joy and erasure & pain. Through the extraction and analysis of site memories we can design spaces that catalyze healing and ameliorate community wounds. Furthermore, in fostering open dialogue and memory sharing, there is greater opportunity for passive healing that designers cannot anticipate and may lead to new community partnerships.

Limitations

In testing the framework in Chicago, I learned that this type of work is challenging and emotionally draining. Since I have personal connections to the neighborhoods in which I was working, it was often difficult to separate my own goals and wishes for the residents from what they were actually sharing on their memory maps. It also quickly became evident that people would not, or could not, readily share difficult memories of erasure. Gathering other peoples' memories is a tremendous responsibility and not one to be taken lightly or as an afterthought.

In order to do memory work well, it is important that there is enough time and money going into the process so that it may be done thoroughly through multiple venues and methods to gather the most comprehensive set of community memories possible. If the site is far away, it may be wise to collaborate with a community liaison, trained in memory collection, who is readily accessible to attend events on short notice and to have a local person that members of the community may contact if they wish to participate during a time frame after the actual event. Working with a community leader is also beneficial because they have the trust of community residents and will be more successful in securing participants' people memories.

Responding to Memories

Responding to collected memories can be challenging for a designer. Memories of pride are ones to be celebrated and can more readily be incorporated into a design, but it is difficult to know how to address memories of erasure and pain. There is a fine line between memorializing and recreating a hurtful memory and emotion. For example, an object or image of erasure is likely not appropriate for replication. It is important to examine each memory individually and to respect the wishes of the community regarding how they would like their memory to be responded to on a site.

The memories of space from a community are more easily transferable to a design intervention, however there are ways that space can be conducive to certain gestures or actions. Design teams like Zink Studio in Portland, Oregon have found a way to harness memories into a positive healing design for Dawson Park. Through techniques of learning, including archival research and community workshops, the design team was able to gather memories of the Eliot neighborhood and use them to create intentional design elements in the park. The most prominent elements are the large boulders set within a water feature, each commemorating an historic event that took place in the Eliot neighborhood. The stones are engraved with quotes from interviews, documents, and other primary sources – authentic voices of the neighborhood. Below each boulder are engraved images depicting the event. Another catalytic healing component of Dawson Park is the set of tables for domino players. In gathering memories, the Zink Studio design team learned that long-time and former residents of the neighborhood had routine domino games in the park. Although the tables they placed were not directly meant for dominoes, they were a passive design intervention that gave those residents – many of whom can no longer afford to live in the Eliot neighborhood- a place in the park.

Some memories may point to issues that need a response that is beyond design interventions. In reference to the previous housing crisis example: Communities facing a housing crisis may not need a new park or trail, but rather stronger policies to protect their homes. In asking people for memories

in Pilsen, some mentioned the rise of rent in their neighborhoods and the importance of providing a tax freeze- or something similar- for homes adjacent to new capital improvement projects to protect long-time residents of the neighborhood from incoming developers. If El Paseo Trail is to truly be for the people of Pilsen and Little Village, then they must be protected so that they may stay in their homes and enjoy and reap its intended health and recreational benefits. Through the use of personal interviews and memory maps it is clearly evident that there needs to be policy in place before breaking ground on the new El Paseo Trail.

While we may not be able to address all identified issues and concerns from a community within a final design, we can acknowledge the narratives, make them known and share them through other venues such as an appendix or online database, in conjunction with the design project. This approach is represented in the oral histories and photographs of former residents of the Shore Drive neighborhood in Greenville, NC – now the site of Town Common Park – that are located on a public online database for others to access. The OLIN and OMA design teams of 11th Street Bridge Project in Washington, D.C. are also planning to have an oral history collection element incorporated into the park's design.

Next Steps for Landscape Architects

Throughout this project, I found myself asking “Is this something landscape architects can do?”, “Is this in our scope of work?”, and “How much can we really do to make these wrongs right?” I do not have a definitive answer for these questions, but I do know what we as landscape architects *can do*:

Be a Part of a Team

Designers need to be able to leave their egos at the door, and seek out collaborations, especially when dealing with problems outside their scope of expertise. For example, many of the communities that were surveyed are facing a housing crisis, where homes are becoming unaffordable and gentrification has become an imminent force. In this regard, designers cannot expect to solve these issues alone. Landscape Architects should turn to professionals in allied fields such as urban planners, community organizers, housing associations, and historians. Almost all of the case study projects that I reviewed sought help from other experts who had already collected invaluable information to gain a better understanding of the history of the community and its needs.

Harness our Holistic Approach

On a team with an engineer, architect, and others, it is us, the landscape architects, who are going to uncover these important aspects of a site because we look at the bigger picture. It is our responsibility to bring those hidden aspects to the surface and make sure others consider and incorporate them in their own job.

Challenge Site Analysis

I believe there is room for us to continue to evolve our profession and the way we traditionally conduct site analysis. Social elements, such as race and class, and ecological elements, like soil type and elevation, should not be considered as separate, but rather at their intersection, because that is where the true indicators of just and equitable landscapes lie.

Take Responsibility

To deny the impact that new infrastructure and capital improvement projects have on a neighborhood is naive and detrimental. We, as creators of the built environment, have a huge impact on economic development. We cannot pretend to be non-complicit in generation of wealth, and often, in the widening of the wealth gap. The biggest and most famous among big parks – such as Central Park and The High Line in New York City - have had historic and monumental effects on not only adjacent properties, but in the way the city is laid out and how it is experienced as a whole. We cannot forget that in most economic development projects there are winners and losers, and we should work to do everything we can to not perpetuate inequitable spaces.

Call To Action

This month, landscape designer, Sara Zewde met with landscape architecture students in the Department of Landscape Architecture at University of Oregon. She said that doing work with a community often results in people asking designers to be planners, community organizers, and to take on other roles outside of their scope. “I always tell clients: ‘I am not a community organizer, I am a designer’” she explained. Zewde emphasized the power of design to make change. She said everything from the larger design concept or narrative, down to the detailing of a paving pattern, should all be conscious and custom decisions.

Similarly, when I interviewed Hallie Boyce from OLIN regarding the 11th Street Bridge Project in Washington, D.C., which will connect two very different neighborhoods on the East and West sides of the Anacostia River, she said “The ‘11th street bridge project’ has become a much broader term. It has become a catalyst for social change, and if we can continue to attract people from both sides of the Anacostia River, that will be a success.”

People experience space in multiple ways and we have the ability to determine the social constructs of a space through our physical designs. Designers should continue to challenge the notion that landscape architecture cannot create social change. Designers may not be community organizers at a base level, but open spaces, especially in a dense urban areas, are expressions of a community and designers should therefore respond to and reflect a community’s values and needs. Designed spaces have the agency to be dynamic, versatile and responsive patches in the diverse fabric of a city. I believe landscape architecture can empower communities and catalyze positive social interactions; it should not be underestimated.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A : Booth Sign for Pilot 3

Memory Mapping

Neighborhood Memories & Plans for El Paseo Trail

Participate in a quick mapping exercise for a Master Student's Thesis about neighborhood memories & El Paseo Trail

Questions? Concerns?
Preguntas? Preocupaciones?

Katya Reyna
Master of Landscape Architecture Student
kreyna2@uoregon.edu

Cartografía de las Memorias del Barrio

Recuerdos del Barrio y Planes para “El Paseo”

Participa en un ejercicio de Cartografía de las Memorias del Barrio y planes para el sendero “El Paseo” para una tesis de maestría en Arquitectura Urbana

Appendix B : Example of completed Memory Map Worksheet

Memory Mapping

Name (optional)

Joanna Maravilla Cano

How old are you?

33 yrs.

What neighborhood do you live in?

Pilsen Little Village Other _____

How long have you lived there?

20+ yrs

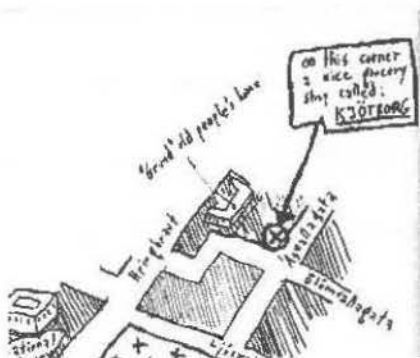
What neighborhood do you work in?

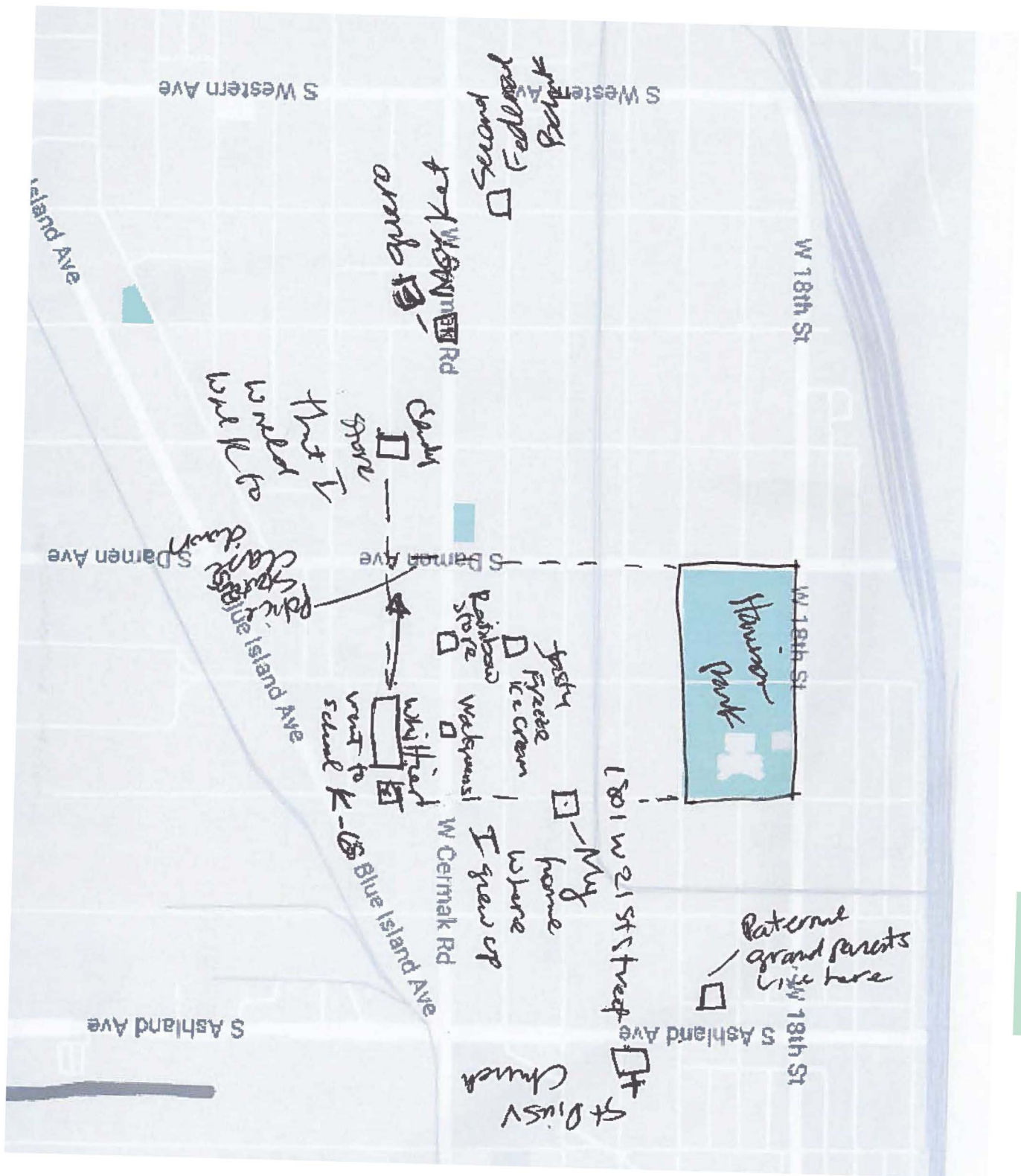
Pilsen Little Village Other University Village

How long have you worked there?

10+ yrs

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