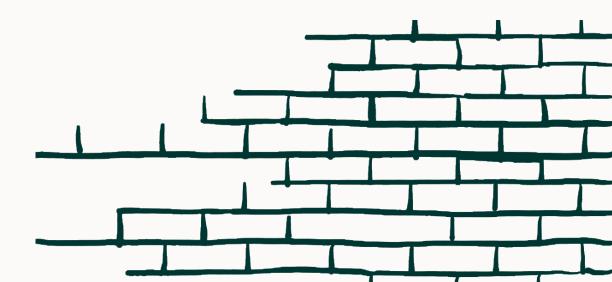


# Finding Our Way Home

Establishing Community, Enhancing Belonging

HADIYA BYNOE-SEABRON | THESIS 2021 | ADVISER: HELEN JOO





a neighborhood community

Hadiya Bynoe-Seabron

M.S. Interior Architecture & Design | Thesis 2021

Department of Architecture, Design & Urbanism | Drexel University

Adviser: Helen Joo

Mom & Dad, thank you for your endless love and support.

Grandpa Jack & Grandma Nazee, you are the reason.

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"...as I travel around I am stunned by how many citizens in our nation feel lost, feel bereft of a sense of direction, feel as though they cannot see where our journeys lead, that they cannot know where they are going. Many folks feel no sense of place."

- bell hooks, Belonging: A Culture of Place

### Introduction

Through understanding and defining the multifaceted idea of home, this thesis explores designing living spaces that connect people to place. In this case, connection to place is established through two methods – enhancing a sense of community and allowing for user autonomy. Focusing on a group of nineteenth century rowhouses in Philadelphia's Sharswood neighborhood, this project aims to emphasize the importance of home, community, and belonging in an area where there has been a history of displacement.

## Research

### Literature Review

"If you would find yourself, look to the land you came from and to which you go."

- Stewart Udall. The Quiet Crisis and the Next Generation

#### Introduction

Home – it is at the core of our human existence, yet precisely defining this place, notion, concept, remains somewhat impalpable. Perhaps this can be attributed to the fact that the ideas surrounding home vary so greatly depending on the individual. Despite these variances, there are still common threads that can be uncovered to better understand the importance of our connections to home and place. In an era of mobility and globalization, questions of home and belonging have become increasingly prevalent. Throughout the course of this thesis project, I will examine two questions: (1) What is the nature of home, when it is not in one clearly defined place? (2) What can designers, as a central figure in this discourse, do to create a sense of home for diverse groups of people? To highlight the ways in which we 'make ourselves at home,' this literature review will focus on the intersecting ideas of dwelling, home, belonging, and place as it relates to the built environment.

#### Belonging through Dwelling and Building

As humans, we dwell. It is in our nature – according to Martin Heidegger<sup>1</sup>, a philosopher who many might consider the foremost authority on the concept of dwelling: humans exist in dwellings and the relation between man and space *is* dwelling.<sup>2</sup> How we dwell has evolved with every new generation, yet the fact remains that dwelling provides us with a sense of place. Woven into that sense of place are cultural identity and belonging; and Heidegger and others argue that a sense of rootedness and belonging are an irreplaceable part of our humanity.<sup>3</sup>

Others have built on or contrasted Heidegger's ideas in the context of technological change and global mobility. In Paul Harrison's "The Space Between Us: Opening Remarks on the Concept of Dwelling," he focuses on the interpretations of dwelling from both Heidegger and Emmanuel Levinas (a colleague of Heidegger's), arguing that Levinas proposes a more outward understanding of dwelling, while Heidegger's remains inward and fixed.<sup>4</sup>

According to Harrison, "...there is something immobile within Heidegger's thought of dwelling, something that is

It is important to call attention to Heidegger's association with the Nazi Party from 1933 onwards. Despite pleas from friends and colleagues to repudiate his past views, he never did so publicly. However, his philosophical works regarding dwelling and placemaking remain relevant today and a source worth examining for this topic.

Wolin, Richard. "Martin Heidegger: Later Philosophy." (Encyclopedia Britannica. Dec. 12, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Hofstadter, Albert, translator. Poetry, Language, Thought. By Martin Heidegger (Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1971).

Brislin, Paul. "Identity, Place and Human Experience" (Architectural Design, vol. 82, no.6, Dec., Nov. 2012, pp. 8–13).

<sup>4</sup> Harrison, Paul. "The Space Between Us: Opening Remarks on the Concept of Dwelling." (Environment and Planning, Society & Space, vol. 25, no. 4, SAGE Publications, Aug. 2007, pp. 625–47).

always in place, of place..." - there is an element of "the return" and the "promise of repetition." In this era of globalization, it is important to note that there may never be "a return" - people often settle in a place and make a 'new' home. Levinas offers a different view of dwelling: "dwelling as a place from, by, and within which I am free to act and within which everything is at my disposal: 'a site where I can.' A site from within which 'everything is comprehended.'" In Levinas' definition, there seems to be a clearer focus on the individual's relation to dwelling - "a site where I can," may be interpreted as a site where there is choice and autonomy.

Building is fundamentally linked to dwelling: Heidegger argues that building is part of dwelling and inherent to the human condition.<sup>7</sup> According to Tim Ingold, in response to Heidegger's text, "Building, then, cannot be understood as a simple process of transcription, of a pre-existing design of the final product onto a raw material substrate."<sup>8</sup> Since in modern, urban society, it is no longer the individual dweller who constructs his or her dwelling, the designers responsible should gain an understanding of the people who will dwell within the structures. Furthermore, if people are at the center of dwelling and building, then concepts of dwelling and building must evolve with changing human conditions. As Ingold mentions in a chapter on people making themselves at home in the world, "The most fundamental thing about life is that it does not begin here, or end there, but it is always *going on*. And for the same reason...environments are never complete but are continually under construction" – our environments should have the ability to transform in order to fit our needs at any stage of life.

Dwelling is a relevant and important area of study, as it coincides with changing contemporary concepts of home and belonging in a global society. Worldwide, people continue to create homes away from their original birth homes; perhaps this is most prevalent in the United States, where there are 44.8 million foreign-born members of the population as of 2018 – accounting for one fifth of the world's migrants. Those who have been born internationally, as well as those who have been born in the U.S. but move domestically, bring their customs, culture, and ultimately their homes with them, creating a unique blend, or hybrid, of dwelling.

#### A Sense of Place

Lucy Lippard's *The Lure of the Local* touches on many aspects of our sense of place and searching for home within a "multicentered" society.<sup>11</sup> She defines place as a portion of land, town, or cityscape which is familiar or seen from the inside.<sup>12</sup> For Lippard, "landscape" defines the opposite of place: "Place is where we stand to look around at landscape or look out to the less familiar 'view.'"<sup>13</sup> Place gives us a comfortable space from which we can observe the vast and unfamiliar landscape – it is a place of refuge.

Exploring place from another angle, through the lens of memory, according to bell hooks in *Belonging: A Culture* of *Place*, "We are born and have our being in a place of memory. We chart our lives by everything we remember from the mundane moment to the majestic. We know ourselves through the act of remembering." From a similar angle but examined through surveying students as oppose to personal discovery, Clare Cooper Marcus investigates place through memory in her essay "Environmental Memories." Marcus examines issues of control over, manipulation of, and re-creation of space, as well as significant places of the past. She notes, "Memories serve to anchor us in time and space...Reflecting on who and where we once were helps us become clearer about who we may want to be...Self-identity is inextricably tied to the people and settings of our past..." As we move between places, it is memory of past homes, dwellings, and environments, that ground us and help to define unique identities.

In "Between Fixities and Flows: Navigating Place Attachments in an Increasingly Mobile World," Andrés Di Masso, et al. draw from Marcus' explorations of place and accurately conclude that "...people's stories of special places [are] ultimately about change, adaptation, and finding creative ways to maintain or recreate attachments over time across various places in their lives." If in this rootless age, we are no longer physically bound to one place, perhaps it is the memory and experience which we carry with us that help ground us in meaning and identity. As Di Masso et al. explain "...developing attachments to multiple places is a common way for people to maintain meaningful connections with family, local traditions, nature, and one's self-identity." 17

133), 127

<sup>5</sup> Harrison, 2007, 634.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 635.

Ingold, Tim. The Perception of the Environment: Essays on livelihood, dwelling and skill (London, Routledge, 2000), 186.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 186.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>10</sup> Budiman, Abby. "Key Findings about U.S. Immigrants" (Pew Research Center, 22 Sept. 2020).

Lippard, Lucy R. The Lure of the Local: Sense of Place in a Multicentered Society (New York, The New Press, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

hooks, bell. Belonging: A Culture of Place (New York, Routledge, 2009), 3.

Marcus, Clare C. "Environmental Memories" (Human Behavior and Environment (Advances in Theory and Research), vol 12. Springer, Boston, 1992).

Di Masso, Andrés et al. "Between Fixities and Flows: Navigating Place Attachments in an Increasingly Mobile World" (Journal of Environmental Psychology, vol. 61, 2019, pp. 125-

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 127.

In "Place Attachment in an Age of Mobility," Per Gustafson examines place through the lens of place attachment, which can be defined as the emotional bonds that form between people and their physical surroundings. Gustafson points out that in much of the available research, there is an underlying assumption "...that there exists an opposition between mobility and attachment – that place and territorial bonds lose their importance to mobile persons and/or persons with strong attachments to place are unwilling to move." However Gustafson also notes that the two do not necessarily have to be at odds, and offers the idea of "place as roots" and "place as routes." He defines "place as roots" as a traditional understanding of attachment to a home place, based upon long-time residence, strong community bonds, and local knowledge. "Place as routes" suggests that places may also be important to less rooted, more mobile persons, and "...in that case, places may be meaningful expressions of a person's individual trajectory and identity, by representing personal development, personal achievement, and personal choice, rather than roots and continuity." It is also important to note that "...conceptions of "roots" and "routes" should be understood as ideal types and a person's attitudes to place may incorporate aspects of both." In other words, people are capable of having strong place attachments while also being mobile.

Today, there exists a longing for home in this multicentered society – with rapid advancements in science and technology, an issue of homogenization has become prevalent.<sup>24</sup> This has resulted in a general feeling of lost identity, as urban landscapes begin to look the same globally.<sup>25</sup> Returning to Lippard, the author argues, "North Americans are famous for wanting to know what lies over the next hill. From the spiritual journey or mythic quest to the more mundane search for land, job, or peace and quiet, mobility has been more American than stability."<sup>26</sup> Lippard posits the necessity of a sense of place, a sense of home, as the antidote to feelings of placelessness.

### Home and Identity

According to Paul Brislin in "Identity, Place and Human Experience," our understanding of the world is closely linked to the space around us<sup>27</sup> - the way we perceive the world is dependent on the way in which we define our homes. Similarly,

in "Home: Territory and Identity," J. Macgregor Wise suggests that home is made by both the objects that we place in it and the people that surround us.<sup>28</sup> Home is an establishment of space and comfort, and the various ways in which that space and comfort are established can be linked to culture, which as defined by Wise, is a certain way of behaving or territorializing.<sup>29</sup> Making oneself at home involves "...drawing around oneself in an expressive space from a variety of markers and milieus,"<sup>30</sup> or in other words, creating *place*.

Further defining home, Lippard explains that dwelling and home are not necessarily synonymous: "A dwelling is at least 'a roof over your head' – a room, usually an apartment or house. Sometimes this place is a home, assumed to be the focus of one's own landscape..."<sup>31</sup> She expands upon this distinction between home and dwelling by stating that perhaps it is possible to live a confined existence within the home, but "...eventually the peripheries enter, and any 'house' expands into place, which may be the highway that goes past and the view beyond it...in every case, the surroundings seep into lived experience..."<sup>32</sup> Drawing from Lippard's definitions, the dwelling is the built structure, while the home is the lived experience and surrounding place.

In Renee Y. Chow's "House Form and Choice," she studies two migrant families living in the San Francisco area (one urban and one suburban) and observes what their living spaces reveal about personal choice, claim, capacity, access, and programming.<sup>33</sup> Her findings also uncover links between culture and identity. According to Chow, the task (of the designer) is to "design dwelling environments with the capacity to provide residents with choices in the use of a place."<sup>34</sup> Choices allow for the practice of culture, <sup>35</sup> and arguably, based on the text, the practice of culture is a crucial aspect in retaining a sense of belonging in a multicentered and global society.

In aiming to understand what the physical space that allows us to establish home (and express identity) should look like, Chow defines three attributes of housing design: access, dimension, and claim.<sup>36</sup> Summarizing these terms: **Access** is a way of moving between, into, and through spaces, or connections between activities.<sup>37</sup> Access organizes a space:

Manzo, Lynne and Patrick Devine Wright. Place Attachment: Advances in Theory, Methods, and Applications (New York: Routledge, 2014).

<sup>19</sup> Gustafson, Per. "Place Attachment in an Age of Mobility." (Place Attachment: Advances in Theory, Methods, and Applications. New York: Routledge, 2014, pp. 38-46), 38.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.23 Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Brislin, 2012.

<sup>24</sup> Drisiii, 2012

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Lippard, 1997, 40.

<sup>27</sup> Brislin, 2012.

Wise, J. Macgregor. "Home: Territory and Identity." (Cultural Studies, vol. 14, no. 2, 2000, pp. 176-180).

Ibid.

Wise, 2000, 177.

Lippard, 1997, 26.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 27.

Chow, Renee Y. "House Form and Choice" (Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review, vol. 9, no. 2, International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments (IASTE),

Apr. 1998, pp. 51–61).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 55.

"The position and dimension of the access changes capacity of a room or house." Dimension refers to the sizing allotment within the space. Referring to the suburban home study, Chow argues that when "efficiency through minimal sizes is the goal, configurations are inherently limited" and "When dimension is tied solely to program, a resident's choices are limited, at best, to furniture and its arrangements." Claim involves territory; how people claim their territory is informed by cultural experiences. With these attributes in mind, Chow argues that home design should maximize the capacity for choice.

Similarly, Marcus' "Environmental Memories" highlights control as a necessary aspect of self-identification, stating that it is "...clear that control over some portion of the physical environment is a critical component of positive self-identity." Decorating or personalizing space is a way of claiming, differentiating, or expressing oneself – anything that diminishes this (i.e. design that does not adequately meet the needs of the user or allow for enough autonomy), can diminish a positive sense of self-identity. Bell hooks illustrates this idea of autonomy and choice when writing about her Kentucky mountain home and the people that reside there: "One might live with less, live in a makeshift shack and yet feel empowered because the habits of being informing daily life were made according to one's own values and beliefs."

#### Conclusion

Though each term is distinctive, the concepts of home, belonging, place, and dwelling are fundamentally linked.

Home, an establishment of space and comfort, 45 exists within the dwelling. The dwelling, as Lippard has noted, is the physical, constructed building, 46 within which we are to be at peace and away from danger. 47 Creating home, as Wise has suggested, involves creating place; 48 and as Lippard has suggested, place inevitably "seeps" into the "lived experience" that is the home. 49 Belonging involves establishing roots and being connected to place, which in a rootless or multicentered age, can become challenging. However, as Gustafson explains, it is clear that the defining factors of rootedness are shifting, as it

is possible for people to become attached to multiple places throughout life.<sup>50</sup>

By understanding the connections between these concepts surrounding the home and place, the goal of my thesis is to develop interiors that can better foster autonomy, choice, and the creation of a place defined by the user. A place that is comfortable, adaptable, and has capacity. Chow defines capacity as: "...the ability of the spatial form of the house – through its configuration, dimension, and position – to contain or suggest a variety of uses without having to undergo architectural changes." Based on this approach, my project aims to create spaces that have the capacity to foster a sense of belonging and home for diverse identities.

<sup>38</sup> Chow, 1998, 55.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> See Literature Review Appendix.

<sup>42</sup> Marcus, 1992, 88.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> hooks, 2009, 8.

Wise, 2000.

<sup>46</sup> Lippard, 1997, 26.

<sup>47</sup> Hofstadter/Heidegger, 1971.

<sup>48</sup> Wise, 2000.

<sup>49</sup> Lippard, 1997, 27.

Gustafson, 2014.

<sup>51</sup> Chow, 1998, 55.

#### **Literature Review Appendix**

Chow provides key takeaways for understanding what it means to design to maximize the capacity for choice (Chow 59):

- 1. "A house designed with the capacity to accommodate choice still fulfills a given program, but it also holds the potential to extend, change and hold alternative program as well."
- 2. "Choice requires more than flexibility it requires that the form of a space be able to evoke different meanings, associations, and actions for residents over time or for different households."
- 3. The design of flexible spaces can often be interpreted as plain, neutral, empty shells, thus removing all "character and intensity" from the space however this is not the goal of design; neutral empty spaces may cause occupants to shy away from a space rather than embrace it.
- 4. Perhaps spaces should be designed as "experiential rather than programmatic."

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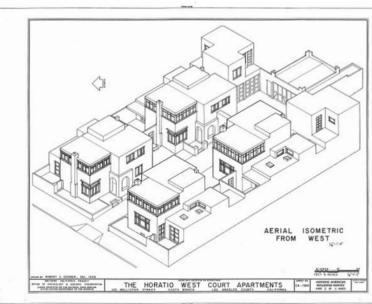
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Design Precedents







Horatio West Court Apartments | Santa Monica, CA Architect: Irving Gill

Completed in 1919, the Horatio West Court Apartments are a series of attached houses that feature both shared pedestrian and vehicle access. The shared walkway allows for social interaction while the houses' window orientation and surrounding greenery provide adequate privacy.







Jystrup Savvaerket Cooperative Community | Jystrup, Denmark Architect: Vandkunsten Architects

Completed in 1984, the Jystrup Savvaerket Cooperative Community consists of 21 private residential units that share an indoor pedestrian "street." This space can be used year round and is a place for neighbors to interact, thus enhancing the communal living aspect of the homes.

## Case Study

### St. Albans Place



ST. ALBANS PLACE - PRESENT DAY



ST. ALBANS PLACE - 1969

**Site:** 23-2400 Block of St. Albans Place, intersecting Grays Ferry Avenue - Philadelphia, PA

**Users:** Private single family home owners and renters

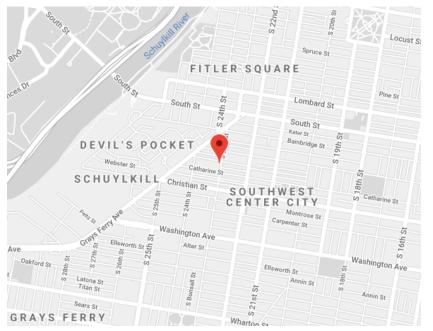
Number of Houses: 52

Stories: 3, with basement

Style: Second Empire

Features: Red brick, mansard roof, interior pine

flooring



SITE LOCATION



This block of rowhouses along St. Albans place was built in the 1870s, primarily to house naval officers who worked at the nearby Naval Square. Streets with a pedestrian walkway like St. Albans place were rare, and remain so today. Most working and middle class families that would have lived in these houses in the late 19th and early 20th centuries preferred a standard rowhouse with a garden in the rear of the home. As such, development of pedestrian streets was limited.

### **General Observations**

- · Central garden is enclosed and typically locked.
- Walkway is considerably more quiet than neighboring streets.
- Alleys behind the houses are narrow not designed for modern vehicles.

The Neighborhood: Sharswood

SITE AERIAL VIEW

### A Brief History

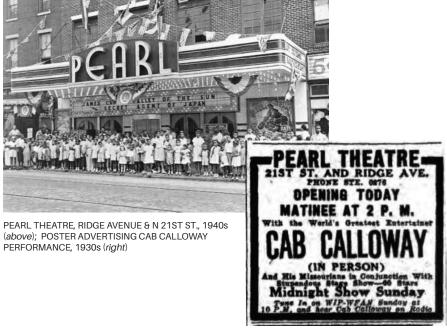


LITHOGRAPH OF GIRARD COLLEGE, 1838



ILLUSTRATION OF BERGNER & ENGEL BREWING CO., 1890

In 1848 Girard College opened in a Philadelphia farmland area known as the Penn District, which would become Sharswood. In the 1850s, German immigrants arrived and began constructing breweries along the Schuylkill River. Blocks of modest homes for brewery workers were built nearby in the following years.



In the early 20th century, Black people fleeing the Jim Crow South began settling into what had become a largely German, Irish, and Jewish neighborhood. By the mid-1930s, the Sharswood neighborhood was predominantly Black. Cecil B. Moore Avenue, then known as Columbia Avenue, was called "The Golden Strip" due to its high profile jazz clubs and nightlife. The area was frequented by popular musicians such as Charlie "Bird" Parker, John Coltrane, and Odean Pope.



CECIL B. MOORE, 1963



RIDGE AVENUE, 1960

Civil Rights leader and lawyer, Cecil B. Moore lived in Sharswood and organized sit-ins to protest 100 years of Black exclusion from the nearby Girard College. He was later elected to the Philadelphia City Council. Following years of police oppression and brutality within North Philadelphia, the Columbia Avenue riots erupted in 1964. After the riots, the once thriving neighborhood steadily declined, as many of its prosperous residents and business owners moved to other areas.

Since the 1970s Sharswood has experienced some new development, particularly along its southern edges, however the area remains economically challenged.



RIDGE ON THE RISE MURAL, 2004 PHILADELPHIA MURAL ARTS PROGRAM/ERIC OKDEH

Site

Site: Location Site: Mapping



SITE AERIAL VIEW



**Location:** N 25th Street, encompassing Master, Harlan, and Sharswood Streets - Philadelphia, PA

Neighborhood: Northwest Philadelphia - Sharswood

**Total Site Square Footage:** ~55,500

**Average Home Square Footage:** 1,200-1,600

**Typical Style of Home:** 2 Story Workingman's

Date: Mid to Late 19th Century





SITE IN RELATION TO CITY OF PHILADELPHIA



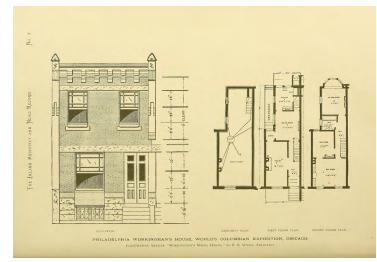


PROXIMITY TO NEIGHBORING AREAS

SITE LOCATION 35

Philadelphia Vernacular: The Rowhouse

### Additional Site Photos





TYPICAL PLAN AND EXTERIOR ELEVATION OF THE WORKINGMAN'S HOUSE

SHARSWOOD STREET FACING WEST

Rowhouses are ubiquitous in Philadelphia - the modern rowhouse that has become familiar in urban landscapes across the country were first constructed in Philadelphia. They were popular due to their space efficiency and cost effectiveness; by 1800, rowhouses were dominant forms of housing in most American cities.

The Workingman's house is a modest two story rowhouse, common in Sharswood and found throughout Philadelphia. Preserving most of the facades and main attributes of these structures was fundamental in maintaining the existing vernacular of the neighborhood.



25TH STREET FACING SOUTH









HARLAN STREET FACING SOUTH



MASTER STREET FACING WEST



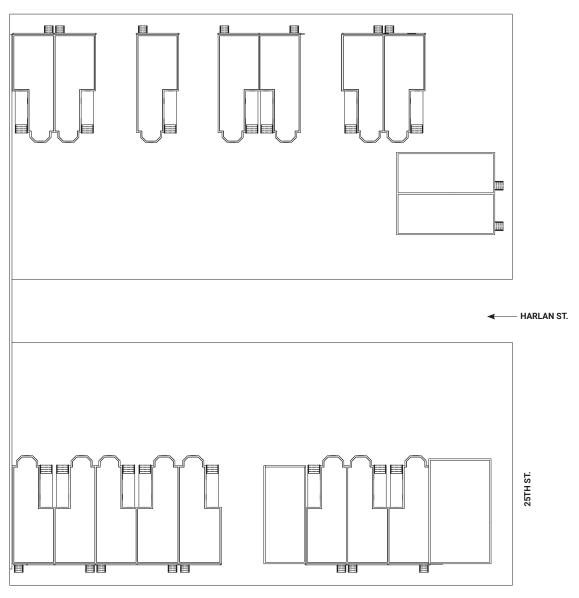




VACANCY, SHARSWOOD STREET

37

#### SHARSWOOD ST.



MASTER ST.

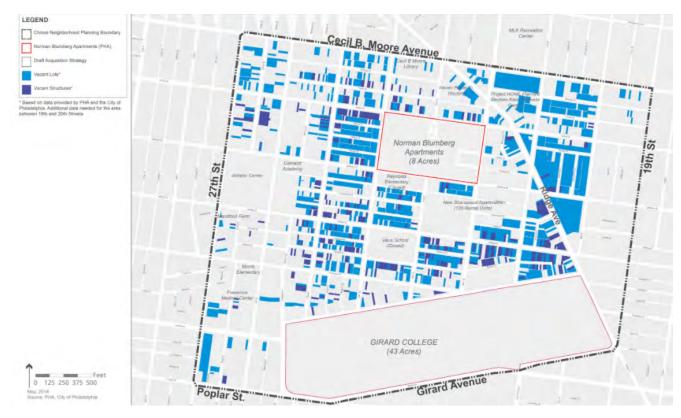
EXISTING SITE PLAN

NOT TO SCALE



Design Development

### Design Intent



SHARSWOOD-BLUMBERG VACANCIES
PHILADELPHIA HOUSING AUTHORITY

In Sharswood, over 26% of housing units are vacant, and there are an estimated 1,282 vacant lots - equivalent to 35 acres of land. These vacancies provide an opportunity for thoughtful revitalization, with the history of the neighborhood and its residents at the forefront. Through research and communication, this design project offers a responsible way to enhance community, without stripping the neighborhood it of its rich history and roots.

Sustainability Concept



EXPOSURE TO NATURAL LIGHT

Maximize exposure to natural light in all living and communal spaces.

Operable skylights are used to increase both light and air circulation. The apartment building solarium will provide enough sunlight and fresh air to circulate through the residences' garden-facing rooms.



NATIVE PLANT SPECIES

Use of native plant species within the community's shared green space to restore ecological integrity and improve biodiversity.

Native plant species help in limiting climate change by storing carbon dioxide, and also provide financial benefits as they require less maintenance than non-native species.



PRESERVATION OF ORIGINAL MATERIAL

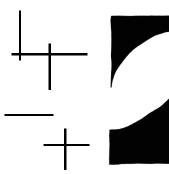
Preserve existing rowhouse bricks.

Restoring and preserving the existing brick facades not only maintains the neighborhood's vernacular and character, but also reduces cost of purchasing new materials.



CONCEPTUAL COLLAGE

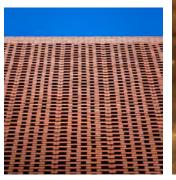
The above collage aims to evoke a sense of warmth while emphasizing the permanence and structural quality of brick. Perforations, light filtration, and reflective qualities were also important areas of conceptual focus.



PARTI SKETCHES





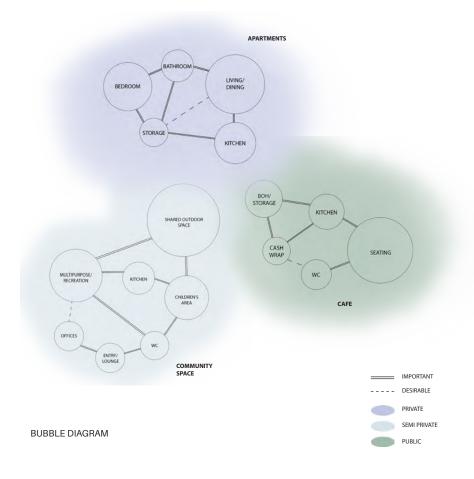






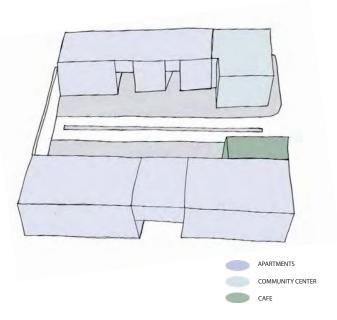


### Preliminary Design Process

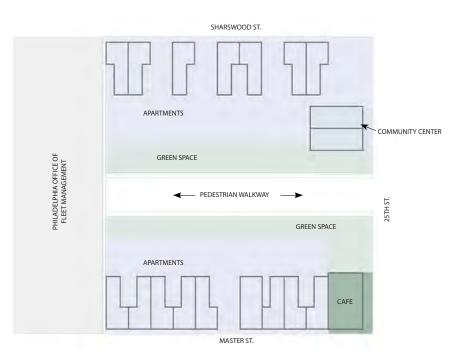


A cafe or dining establishment was part of the original design, but was converted to a market and community space to better fit the needs of the neighborhood.

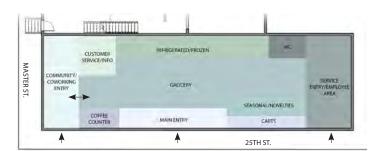
Early in the design process, the intention was to convert all rowhouses on the site to apartment units. However, to keep potential displacement at a minimum as well as keep the rowhouse facades in tact, it was later decided that transforming the southern half of the site into apartments and keeping the northern half as single family rowhouses, would be most effective.

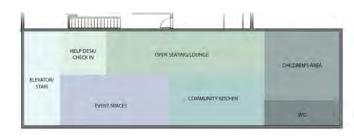


3D BLOCKING DIAGRAM



BLOCKING DIAGRAM







MARKET & COMMUNITY SPACE BLOCKING DIAGRAMS



CONCEPTUAL GREEN SPACE RENDERING

### Program

### PLANNED SQUARE FOOTAGE

SPACE	SQUARE FOOTAGE
TYPICAL 1 BEDROOM APARTMENT	940
TYPICAL 2 BEDROOM APARTMENT	1,700
SINGLE FAMILY ROWHOUSE	1,740
CO-OP BUILDING	6,385
COMMUNAL GARDEN & SHARED SPACES	20,200

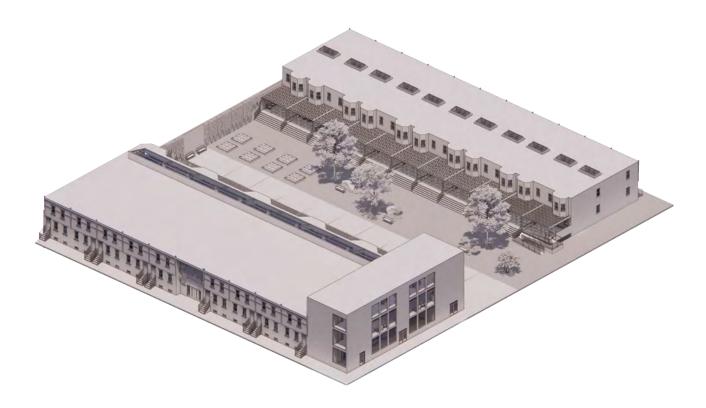
### TOTAL UNITS

UNIT	NUMBER
1 BEDROOM APARTMENT	10
2 BEDROOM APARTMENT	4
SINGLE FAMILY ROWHOUSE	11

By limiting the number of apartment units and maximizing square footage, residential spaces allow for user flexibility and enough room for storage. The communal and green spaces account for a little over a third of the existing site, as this is a central aspect of the design and a space intended to be shared by both residents of The Beacon and the surrounding community.

Note: The above square footage amounts do not include the existing basements, as they are not within the scope of this project.

Final Design: The Beacon

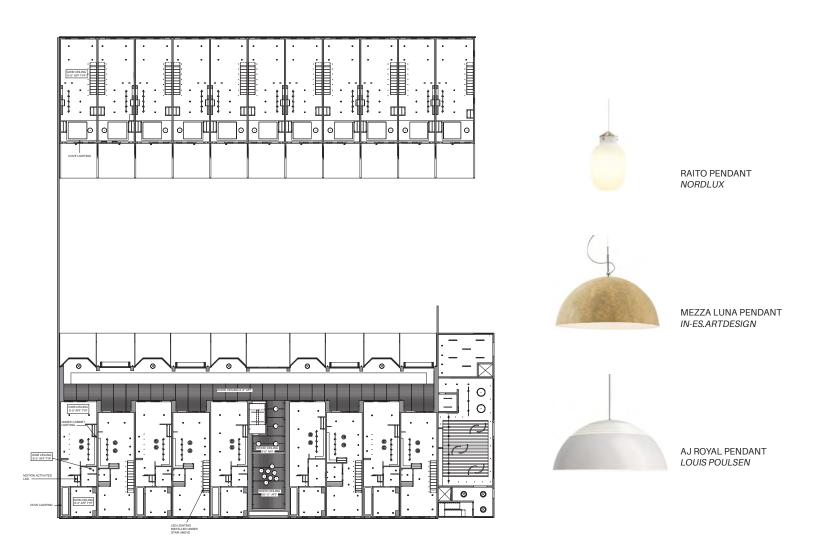


THE BEACON 3D VIEW

### **Apartments**



The apartments have primarily been designed within the original footprint of the existing rowhouses, and the building as a whole has been designed to maintain the scale of the neighborhood. The apartment's main entry on Master Street has replaced a vacant lot between two rowhouses. Harlan street (including the vacant lots facing Harlan St.), originally a dead end with minimal to no traffic, has been reimagined as a pedestrian walkway and green space.









APARTMENT MAIN ENTRY



ELEVATION A - MASTER STREET NOT TO SCALE

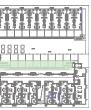


Although there is a shared entry into the apartments, the original rowhouse front doors were kept in place to limit disruption to the streetscape. The larger grey structure is the Sharswood Co-op building - grey brick was chosen instead of red to differentiate this structure from the residences and transition to a contemporary facade.

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APARTMENT PORCH & SOLARIUM - EXTERIOR VIEW



A space for socialization and community gathering, the apartment solarium and porch provide light, shelter, and fresh air. Folding glass doors connect the solarium to the green space and provide residents with a comfortable, semi-private space from which to observe. Stadium style seating on either side of the stairs provide a place for rest and casual conversation.





- 1. BITTA CLUB ARMCHAIR KETTAL
- 2. PROIEZIONI TABLE SALVATORI
- 3. JAZZ WALL MURAL

SOLARIUM







SECTION A - APARTMENT SECTION PERSPECTIVE

Single Family Rowhouses



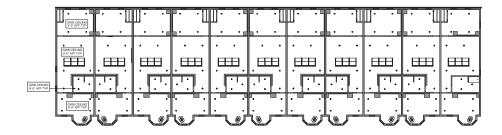


ROWHOUSE PORCH & GREEN SPACE



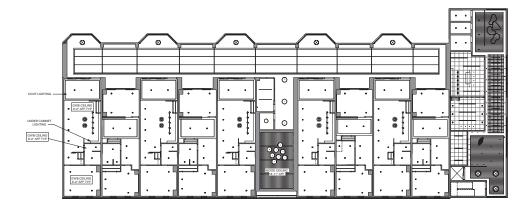
The Beacon's green space is a multifunctional area that enhances community and serves as a central meeting space, linking the apartments and single family rowhouses. The rowhouses share an attached, rear porch with sliding frosted glass dividers which allow residents to choose their desired level of privacy.

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CIRQUE PENDANT LOUIS POULSEN



SECOND FLOOR REFLECTED CEILING PLAN

NOT TO SCALE







SLIM ROUND SUSPENDED PENDANT LOUIS POULSEN







- 1. BAILLY TABLE *MINOTTI*
- 2. KALOS ARMCHAIR & STOOL B&B ITALIA
- 3. CHOREOGRAPHY POLLACK





ELEVATION B - SHARSWOOD STREET NOT TO SCALE



The Sharwsood Street elevation closely resembles the Master Street elevation, keeping the both blocks cohesive. Since there are two styles of homes within this community - the single family homes and the apartments - it was important to ensure that both parts of the design were harmonious and that neither half of the block overshadowed the other.





- 1. CARRIAGE CAR SAGE POLLACK
- 2. CARRIAGE CAR DEEP SEA POLLACK
- 3. KNOT TONIGHT POLLACK
- 4. ANGIE DINING CHAIR MINOTTI
- 5. FUNDA STOOL *VICCARBE*
- 6. LAX TABLE *MORE*

KITCHEN









The rowhouses were expanded to maximize living space and provide a more modern, open layout, however this eliminated three of the existing windows. Addressing this issue, each roof was designed to include an oversized, operable skylight.



LIVING AREA





BY DOX THRASH:







PORTRAIT OF A MAN



CATS UNDER TREE



SCULPTURE:

YORUBA BRONZE HEAD OF IFE

Dox Thrash was an artist well-known for his printmaking skills and contributions to Black American art. He was a resident of Sharswood from 1925 until his death in 1965.

Thrash's work, along with photographs related to Philadelphia and Sharswood, are included throughout the project to give the designed spaces a sense of place.



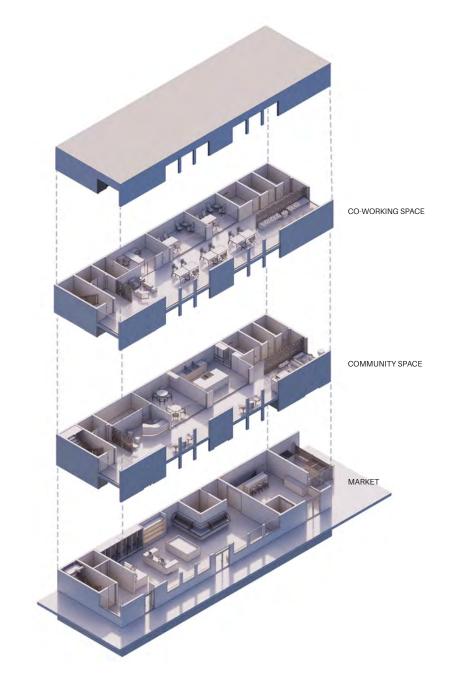
4. AMAZEMENT POLLACK

1. J.J. CHAIR B&B ITALIA

- 5. FREEMAN SOFA *MINOTTI*
- 6. TOBI-ISHI B&B ITALIA
- 7. ANNIE RUG LOLOI
- 8. FYNN CHAIR *MINOTTI*
- 9. CARRIAGE CAR DRIFTWOOD POLLACK

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Sharswood Co-op



The Sharswood Co-op is comprised of a market on the ground level, a community space on the second level, and a coworking space on the third level. The community space includes a kitchen which offers classes and utilizes ingredients from the community garden.

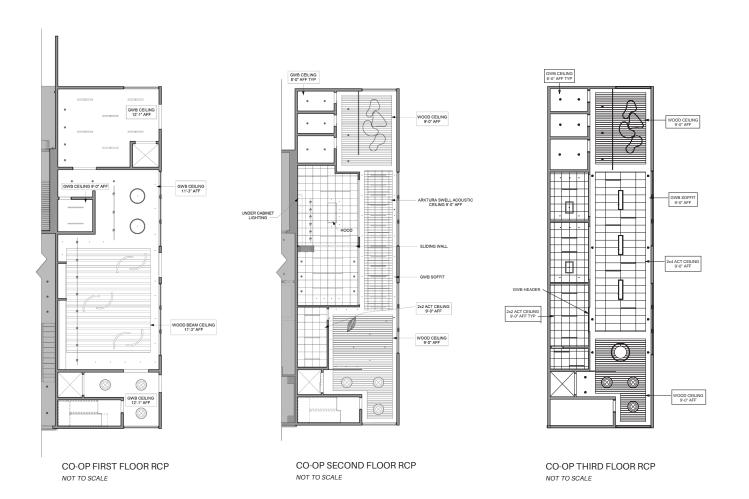
The Sharswood Co-op is owned and operated by members of the Sharswood community, with the help of the Brewerytown Sharswood Community Civic Association and a Philadelphia City Government grant. This grant is shared by developers and communities and is aimed at restoring and revitalizing neighborhoods in overlooked areas of Philadelphia. One of the terms of this grant is to actively engage existing residents either through work or community initiatives.

CO-OP EXPLODED AXONOMETRIC



CO-OP MARKET







PUZZLE SURFACE MOUNTED BETA CALCO



KURL PENDANT BETA CALCO



NAVICULA PENDANT DAVID TRUBRIDGE



GRAND SURFACE MOUNTED LOUIS POULSEN

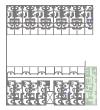


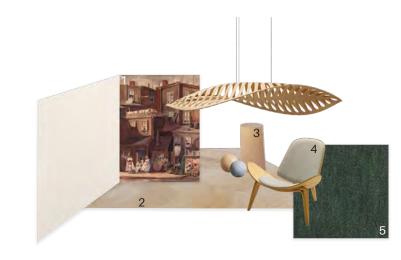
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SILENZIO PENDANT LUCEPLAN



CO-OP SECOND FLOOR COMMUNITY SPACE

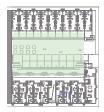




- 1. CITY PLEVINS DOX THRASH
- 2. SOCHI MARFIL PORCELAIN TILE PORCELANOSA
- 3. DIEKMAN TABLE COALESSE
- 4. SHELL CHAIR COALESSE
- 5. SOHO PLUSH POLLACK

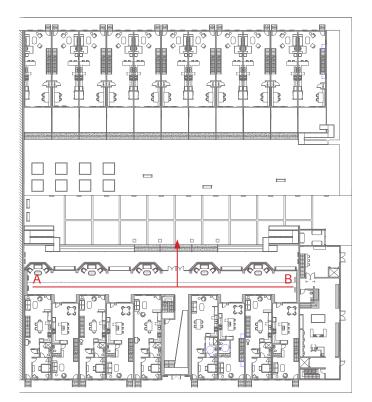






# Appendix

### Egress & Code Analysis



FIRST FLOOR APARTMENT EGRESS PLAN

#### **SQUARE FOOTAGE**

**APARTMENTS** 

1 BEDROOM = 940

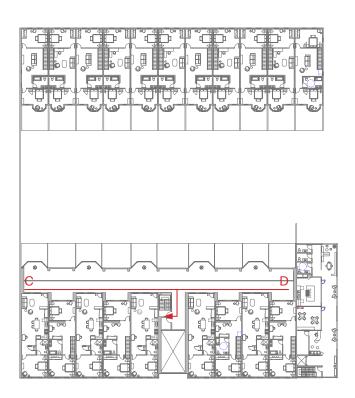
2 BEDROOM = 1.700

SOLARIUM & SHARED ENTRY = 4,200

SINGLE FAMILY ROWHOUSES = 1,740

COMMUNITY GREEN SPACE & PORCHES = 16,000

CO-OP = 6,385



SECOND FLOOR APARTMENT EGRESS PLAN

#### RESIDENTIAL EXIT PATH DISTANCE

A: 128'

B: 109'

C: 126'

D: 101'

#### CO-OP BUILDING EGRESS PLANS



#### **CODE ANALYSIS**

#### COMMERICAL

MARKET (FLOOR 1): USE GROUP M; OCCUPANT LOAD = 38

COMMUNITY SPACES (FLOORS 2 & 3): USE GROUP B;

OCCUPANT LOAD PER FLOOR = 31

#### PUBLIC RESTROOMS:

GROUP M: Requires 1 per 500; 1 provided
GROUP B: Requires 1 per 25 for first 50 occupants;
3 provided

1 ADA compliant restroom per floor provided

#### EXIT ACCESS TRAVEL DISTANCE

GROUP M: MAX. 250' WITH SPRINKLER SYSTEM GROUP B: MAX. 300' WITH SPRINKLER SYSTEM ACCESSIBLE MEANS OF EGRESS PROVIDED

#### RESIDENTIAL

EXIT ACCESS COMMON PATH OF TRAVEL DISTANCE - GROUP R-2: MAX. 125' WITH SPRINKLER SYSTEM

ADJOINING ROOMS: Openings required for light or ventilation shall be permitted to open into a sunroom with thermal isolation or patio cover.

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CODES OBSERVED: IBC 2021, 2018 PHILADELPHIA RESIDENTIAL CODE

#### COMMERCIAL EXIT PATH DISTANCE

A: 29'

B: 40'

C: 52'

D: 16'

E: 96'

F: 99'

### Case Study Interview

Key Informant: Murray Spencer St. Albans Place resident. 1974-76

#### 1. Could you please tell me a bit about yourself?

My family is from this [St. Albans Place and surrounding area] neighborhood; I'm the 5th generation living here. My great-grandfather came to this area first from Virginia after the Spanish-American war, and my grandfather was born here. My father's generation moved to [the] 35th & Powelton area near the zoo and Drexel University. Then, I found out when I went to visit my grandfather in the hospital, and told him where I lived, he said "Oh, I was born down there" - that's when I found out where my family was [located] after the Spanish-American war.

I moved here when I was a student at [University of Pennsylvania] School of Architecture, so that's how I [ended up] down here.

# 2. Do you know about the background of St. Albans Place, and the surrounding neighborhood? Who were these homes built for primarily?

I found out while I was living on St. Albans place that those houses were at one time occupied by officers from the Naval Academy which was right across the street on Grays Ferry Avenue.

When the Naval Academy moved from Philadelphia to Annapolis, [MD] that facility became the naval home for retired naval officers. So when I moved [to St. Albans Place], that's what is was. In fact, when I lived there, it closed and I remember the day that it closed, they were moving the retired naval personnel out of the facility. I'm not sure where they moved them to, but I remember it being shut down while I lived there – I think it closed in 1975, possibly 1976.

# 3. When you were living there, what kinds of people lived on your block or in your neighborhood primarily? Age, race, family dynamics, etc.?

When I lived there, this was a black neighborhood – near the end of it being a [predominantly] black neighborhood. I lived in a house where the owner was a mixed race person, his father was Japanese and his mother was black – he also went to University of Pennsylvania. He rented the house, he was living in San Francisco at the time and I heard about the house through my roommates – [the owner] was still alive then; his preference was the house be rented to students in the architecture program at UPenn, specifically if they were black students.

#### 4. When you left, were you starting to see the neighborhood changing then, or has it been more of a recent change?

More of a recent change [from the early 2000s, onward] – when I left, I moved to Christian Street, which is still in same neighborhood and it was still a black neighborhood back then. In fact, it was the oldest black neighborhood in the city at the time. W.E.B. Du Bois lived [in this neighborhood]; the first black professor at the University of Pennsylvania lived here and was from here. This was the original black neighborhood after black people moved from the downtown area; it [had been] a black neighborhood for about 100 years.

# 5. How would you describe the culture surrounding these homes, specifically on St. Albans Place? Given that these homes were facing each other and there was a pedestrian walkway, do you think that had any impact on the wider culture of your block and your community?

No, not really – while I was living there, I learned that people who didn't live there thought it was special, and they didn't necessarily traverse from one side [of St. Albans Place] to the other to get somewhere. I'm not sure why, but people just avoided St. Albans Place and maybe [nearby] Madison Square Garden as well. It certainly wasn't because it didn't seem friendly, because there were nice people that were living on the block when I lived there.

#### 6. I wonder if that's because it felt more private?

Probably, between St. Albans and Madison square, I've only seen one other street like that in Philadelphia.

#### 7. The garden area that's along the center of the walkway, did people typically use that?

People used it as a garden - there were several gates that had access to the garden when I lived there. And several of the women, and a few men, would go into the garden to maintain it and plant different plants during the spring, and there was a garden club when I was there too.

#### 8. Did you ever spend any time in the garden?

No, and it's not as if people actually took time to sit in the garden, at least when I was living there. It was just a place that was maintained and people planted flowers there.

#### 9. Did people normally have vehicles that lived on St. Albans Place?

Yes, I had a car when I was a student – but there weren't as many cars in the neighborhood back then. So I always found a parking spot pretty much in front of the garden entry, on the 23rd street side. Finding a parking spot was easy back then. And when I lived there, a lot of the residents were older, so they may have given up their cars if they had any. When I was growing up living in the city in the 60s, everybody didn't have a car, so parking was relatively easy.

#### 10. Do you have any knowledge about what restrictions are in place for people who want to make improvements to these homes?

Yes, St. Albans Place and Madison Square Garden are historically significant blocks. So, you won't find them being torn down for instance. And don't think there has even been a fire on the blocks. People who want to for instance, change windows, at least nowadays, I'm not sure about back then, have to go through the Historical Commission to get permission to do any kind of restoration in regard to the front of the house.

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#### 11. And what about the interiors? Do you know of people making changes to their interiors, and if so what might those have been?

I've only been in a few houses on the block, very few. So I don't know what people did on the inside. Our house was a 5 bedroom, 2 bathroom house, and I'm sure a lot of the houses were similar.

#### 12. How did you feel about the size of the home? Did you feel that it was spacious enough?

It was fine – we had 5 bedrooms, and when I first moved in, there were 3 of us so 2 of the bedrooms were empty. But at one point we had all 5 bedrooms occupied.

#### 13. Were there any issues with acoustics, and could you hear neighbors through the walls?

No, you'd hear them [from] the outside if you could hear them at all.

#### 14. How were the private areas in the back of the home typically used?

When I lived there, it was pretty rare that anyone used the back yard. They mostly used the front yard. The [back] yards are small, and I remember when we lived there, the trash trucks (because you couldn't drive down the street), came down the alley to pick up trash twice a week.

#### 15. How was the neighborhood in terms of safety?

I certainly believed it was safe back then; my roommates thought it was a dangerous neighborhood, I'm not sure why. They were from a different part of Philadelphia than I was. I thought the neighborhood was pretty nice, there were bars that were black owned, there were stores that were black owned, and there were churches, and pretty much everything was occupied – there were not that many vacancies back in the mid 1970s. It was pretty much a thriving, but declining, black neighborhood, but certainly thriving.

#### 16. Do you find that people who owned homes on St. Albans Place or Madison Square try to keep theses homes in the family?

Yes. In fact, some of the people that owned homes then, [when I lived there] they still own them now.

#### 17. How were the private areas in the back of the home typically used?

When I lived there, it was pretty rare that anyone used the back yard. They mostly used the front yard. The [back] yards are small, and I remember when we lived there, the trash trucks (because you couldn't drive down the street), came down the alley to pick up trash twice a week.

# 18. Do you think that people feel a sense of connection to this neighborhood and the street itself? And if so, why do you think that may be the case?

At least on my block (St. Albans), and even when I lived in a different part of Philadelphia, you find (back then anyway) that there were a lot of families nearby. I grew up in an area near the airport, and my grandfather lived around the corner, and my mother's sister lived around the other corner – all my mother's siblings lived in the neighborhood within walking distance. And it was the same thing when I lived on St. Albans Place – a lot of people that I knew grew up and lived there. A lot of family members lived in the neighborhood within walking distance or on the same street.

#### 19. Between the time that you've lived on St. Albans Place and now, what are some of the major changes that you have noticed?

Well, this neighborhood has gone from black to white – it became a majority white neighborhood back at the turn of the millennium. And that's pretty much it. I think I remember some of the first white people that moved down here were next door to us, on St. Albans. There was a program from one of the housing agencies (that I eventually worked at once I got out of school), where the city would buy a house which, I guess through tax default or some other reason, wasn't in too bad of shape, and would rehab it and sell it to low income homeowners. And to our surprise, there were two white women who bought the house, I think they were the first white people, at least in our neighborhood, at the time.

# 20. You said the neighborhood was kind of stating to decline when you were leaving. So by the time white people started to move in, had the neighborhood started to decline more?

A lot of people whose parents owned houses, the houses became available through death. And if there were multiple siblings in the family, they either fought over who got it or nobody wanted it. Or they wanted to take the money and move somewhere else, which a lot of people did to their regret. So that certainly helped the neighborhood change. I know people who said "I don't want to live down here no more," but 10 years later, after the neighborhood started to go the other way, people said "Oh, I wish I still lived there."

## Design Probes





#### **OBJECT**

"The Homing Device"

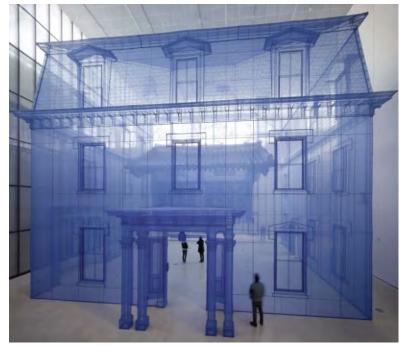
- Multiple sizes: 2x3', 3x5', 5x8'
- Used to store: photos, trinkets, heirlooms, jewelry, anything special/valuable
- Partitions are movable
- · Soft interior, hard exterior
- Light weight and travel friendly

#### **MATERIAL**

Collage of Found Objects

- This collage/palette aims to represent a sense of home through the use of common, found materials and objects.
- Objects and materials that seem simple, can often stimulate the most vivid memories of home.
- The palette is intentionally 'disorganized,' referencing the unsystematic nature of memory.

## Additional Design Precedents





**Project:** Home Within Home Within Home Within Home (large scale fabric installation)

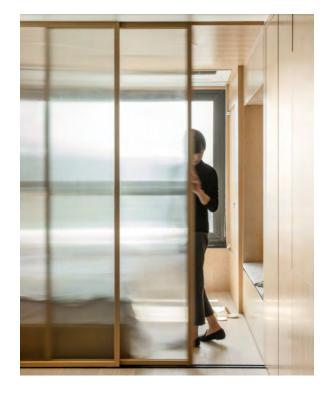
Artist: Do Ho Suh

Location: Seoul, Korea

**Year:** 2013-2014

#### **Key Elements**

- Representation of home through material and scale
- Addresses questions of longing/belonging, identity, and memory
- A physical layering of place and space





**Project:** LIFE micro-apartments

Interior Designer: lan Lee

Location: Seoul, Korea

**Year:** 2020

#### **Key Elements**

- Streamlined and simple giving tenants the opportunity to personalize
- Co-living space that offers community and enhances sense of belonging
- The space is designed to feel like home

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