

The P.I.G. (Philmont Icarian Guild)

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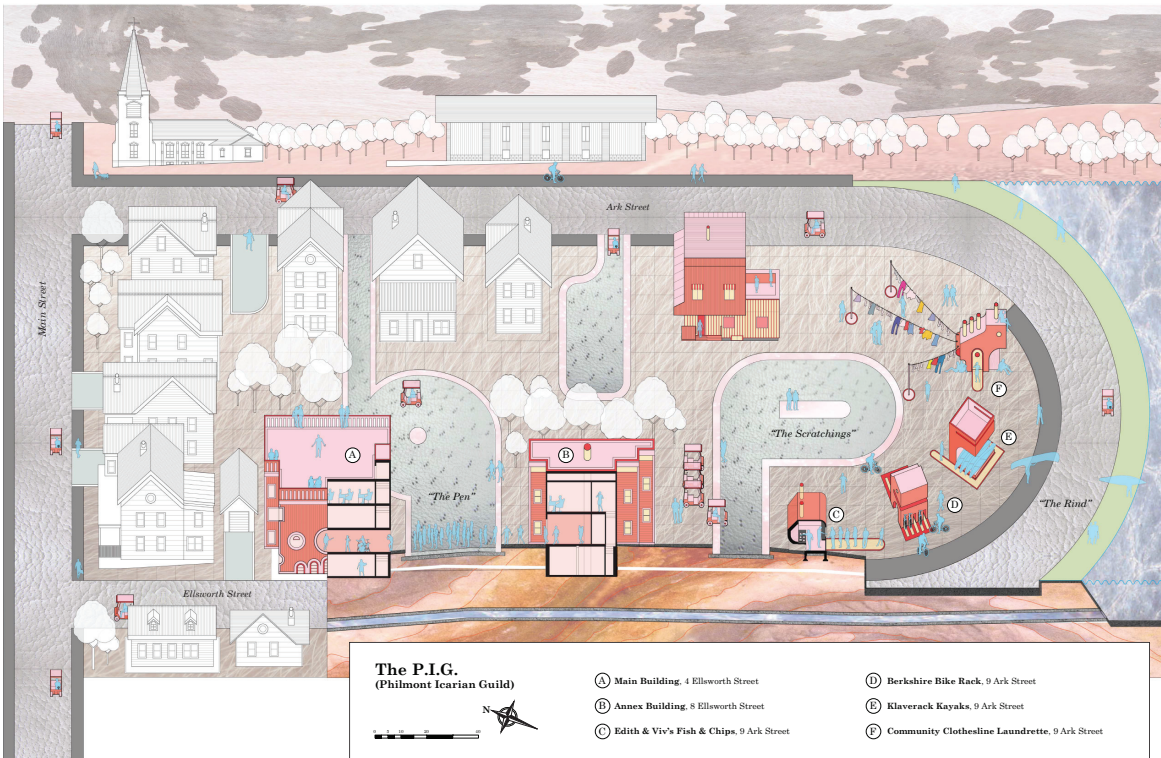
Like many small towns in post-industrial America, Philmont, NY is a collection of subsidized housing, empty storefronts and residents dependent on welfare benefits, burdened by drug addiction and rapt in nostalgic longing to be great again. And like similar towns, the flipside of Philmont's darkness bares a hidden magic -- underground sluices, secret passages, a labyrinth, ruins, a waterfall, a manmade lake with a vortex, bald eagles, and snapping turtles -- in a network of abandoned industrial infrastructure and an ecosystem of creatures that have claimed it as their own.

Located two hours north of New York City, Philmont is at the heart of a rapidly gentrifying agricultural community that benefits from city dwellers who retreat here to enjoy a simpler life of farmer's markets and butcher's shops. Despite proximity to resources and investors, the visibility of its poverty has prolonged Philmont's economic recovery, preventing the kind of gentrification that alienates and displaces the most vulnerable of residents. In the meantime, a local grassroots organization, has worked to establish Philmont as a Brownfield Opportunity Area (B.O.A.), funding a comprehensive economic redevelopment plan that will open up future opportunities for projects within the village, including the restoration of its 50 acre reservoir that once powered 15 knitting mills within the village.

Our proposal for the Philmont Icarian Guild (The P.I.G.) is a radically inclusive ideas incubator that will serve as one of several major nodes in the B.O.A. redevelopment plan. In the context of the village plan, the P.I.G. will exist as a dispersed campus of various sized buildings that plugs into the existing framework of historic industrial infrastructure. The largest is a 4000 square foot structure that will house workshops, gallery, retail units and affordable housing units. A neighboring building will provide additional office space and housing. Smaller kiosks will be located on a nearby lake-front property for programming such as a fish and chips shack, a golf cart and boat rental, and a laundry station. The purpose of these smaller kiosks in the context of the P.I.G.'s larger mission is to provide recreational

amenities at a scale that can be supported by the existing village economy, as well as flexible job opportunities for local residents in the process of re-entry following rehabilitation and incarceration.

The P.I.G. experiments with a new model of business development and job training, where the group absorbs risks and shares rewards typically associated with individual innovation and entrepreneurship. Linked to existing initiatives within the village and around the country, the P.I.G. is a new form of community institution, operating with a zero-barrier entry policy, open to anybody with an idea and the ambition to make it real. By providing judgment-free workspace, technical support, mentorship and skills training, the P.I.G. offers its members agency and opportunity in a rural community where both are scarce. To behave like Icarus might appear rash or foolhardy, but the willingness to fly too close to the sun without fear of failure is priceless.



The P.I.G.
(Philmont Icarian Guild)

- (A) Main Building, 4 Ellsworth Street
- (B) Annex Building, 8 Ellsworth Street
- (C) Edith & Vir's Fish & Chips, 9 Ark Street
- (D) Berkshire Bike Rack, 9 Ark Street
- (E) Klaverack Kayaks, 9 Ark Street
- (F) Community Clothesline Laundrette, 9 Ark Street

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