Unbuilding Long Branch

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UNBUILDING LONG BRANCH

Long Branch, New Jersey | 2012 - in progress
This adaptive re-use project transforms a vacant 14,500 s.f. warehouse complex into a new community arts center located in coastal New Jersey.

Amidst ongoing efforts to “rebuild” the Jersey Shore in the wake of Hurricane Sandy’s destruction, the project offers an alternative to this context’s post-crisis approach to redevelopment and resilience which reckons with existential questions of adaptation to a “new normal” future in short-sighted ways. As such, the project asks, what if we considered demolition - a building subtraction, a construction in reverse - as a productive activity, rather than a destructive one?

Located in Long Branch, New Jersey, one block from the Atlantic Ocean, within both a local urban redevelopment zone and a FEMA flood zone overlay, the project takes on the challenge of delivering economic growth in an environmentally at-risk location. It is conceived as a catalyst for change within a no-man’s-land located between an abandoned downtown core and an active waterfront. This new center offers a flexible mix of community, arts, and entertainment uses. The adaptive reuse strategy proposes a phased design intervention involving major demolition, disassembly, and salvage, along with minor repairs and alterations. The existing buildings are reconfigured as a series of new spatial and material figures that include the integration of existing, partially deconstructed, and new structures, the extensive reuse of salvaged materials, and creation of a new public space network. The reduction of the existing building’s footprint produces a material surplus- 68,166 bricks, and 243 heavy timber beams- which is recycled and redistributed into a new patchworked whole.

This radical adaptation trades in the binary conceptual framework of “old” and “new” for an expanded repertoire of creative resourcefulness in which the act of unbuilding is used to reimagine architecture’s role in the processes of urban growth and change.
COASTAL CONTEXT, AFTER SANDY
GHOST TOWN

ABANDONED MAIN STREET

DIAGRAM OF VACANT URBAN FABRIC + SITE LOCATION
SUBTRACTION: A COUNTER-TACTIC TO URBAN REDEVELOPMENT

EXISTING CONDITION

RE - EXISTING CONDITION PROPOSED REMOVAL

- paired
- imagined elevator shaft
- paired
- used 7,000 S.F. 1-story warehouse
- moved
- cycled 5,000 S.F. 3-story warehouse
- tained
- repaired 2,500 S.F. 3-story warehouse

- 5,000 S.F. ABANDONED INTERIOR

+ 2,500 S.F. PUBLIC EXTERIOR

PROCESS OF SPATIAL REDISTRIBUTION
RUIN AS A RESOURCE: REMOVE + RECYCLE

BUILDING DIS-ASSEMBLY IN URBAN CONTEXT

PROCESS OF MATERIAL REMOVAL + RECONSTRUCTION

+ 68,166
RECLAIMED BRICKS

+ 243
RECLAIMED TIMBER BEAMS
PATTERNS OF (MIXED) USE

PROGRAM: MULTI-, MIXED, + PHASED USES
AN OPEN SPACE NETWORK

LANDSCAPE:
PEDESTRIAN ACCESS, PUBLIC ROOFTOP + LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION

CROSS SECTION

LONGITUDINAL SECTION

LONGITUDINAL SECTION
CONSTRUCTION IN REVERSE

2012 BEFORE DEMOLITION

2015 DURING CONSTRUCTION

2017 PROPOSED
INSIDE, TURNED OUT

2012 BEFORE DEMOLITION

2016 DURING CONSTRUCTION

2017 PROPOSED
RAISED + SALVAGED GROUND

2013 COURTYARD, AFTER DEMOLITION

2015 COURTYARD, DURING CONSTRUCTION

2016 COURTYARD, DURING CONSTRUCTION
DIS- / RE-ASSEMBLY

2013 AFTER DEMOLITION

2014 DURING RECONSTRUCTION

2015 AFTER RECONSTRUCTION
TECTONIC “SCRAPE” + “ANTI-SCRAPE”

SECTION 2nd AVE. FACADE

2015 DETAIL, IN CONSTRUCTION

2016 DETAIL, IN CONSTRUCTION
RE-MAKING A BLANK FACE

SEQUENCE OF DISASSEMBLY + RECONSTRUCTION

1. NEW PARAPET DATUM
2. FLOOD ZONE DATUM

DIAGRAM OF MATERIAL REDISTRIBUTIONS

RE-ASSEMBLY

DIS-ASSEMBLY

ADDITIONS

SUBTRACTIONS
BRICK PARALLAX: RUSTICATION + ABSTRACTION
ALMOST NOTHING: MINOR REPAIRS + MAJOR WHITEWASH

CONCEPT DIAGRAM - PARTIAL WHITEWASH

REPAIR SCOPE - TRUSS REPAIR DETAILS

2013 AFTER DEMOLITION

2014 DURING RECONSTRUCTION

2015 DURING RECONSTRUCTION

2016 PROPOSED EVENT/ART SPACE
A LEFTOVER MONUMENT

SECTION
OF FORMER ELEVATOR SHAFT / ENTRY TOWER

2012 EXISTING ELEVATOR SHAFT

2017 PROPOSED ENTRY / ART INSTALLATION SPACE
NIGHT LIGHT

2017 - DOWNTOWN LONG BRANCH