

A Project Of
THE NEW ORLEANS MARDI GRAS INDIAN COUNCIL

THE NEW ORLEANS MARDI GRAS INDIAN
CULTURAL CAMPUS

In Collaboration With
**THE TULANE CITY CENTER & LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY'S
ROBERT REICH SCHOOL OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE**

2608-20 LaSalle Street
Central City, New Orleans





Photograph by Charlie Lockwood from Cyril 'Big Chief Iron Horse' Green's funeral.



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Photograph by Ross McDermott American Festivals Project
Showing Kabrisha Gauthier, 14yrs: Seventh Ward Creole Hunters' First Queen

MARDI GRAS INDIAN CULTURAL CAMPUS

In collaboration with Tulane University's School of Architecture, Louisiana State University's Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture, and the Tulane City Center, The Mardi Gras Indian Council envisions a strong presence along the LaSalle corridor in Central City. This historically significant neighborhood represents an opportune area to preserve an important part of New Orleans culture: the Mardi Gras Indians. Currently, the Mardi Gras Indians use this corridor for important events such as parading on Mardi Gras, Super Sunday and St. Joseph's Night. Throughout the rest of the year, they meet and practice in A.L. Davis Park. A future "campus" including renovated structures and landscape interventions could help the Mardi Gras Indians preserve their culture, host classes and events, raise funds, and plan for future projects. Creating an identifiable landmark for the Indians on the LaSalle corridor would strengthen Central City and wider New Orleans through community and cultural programming.

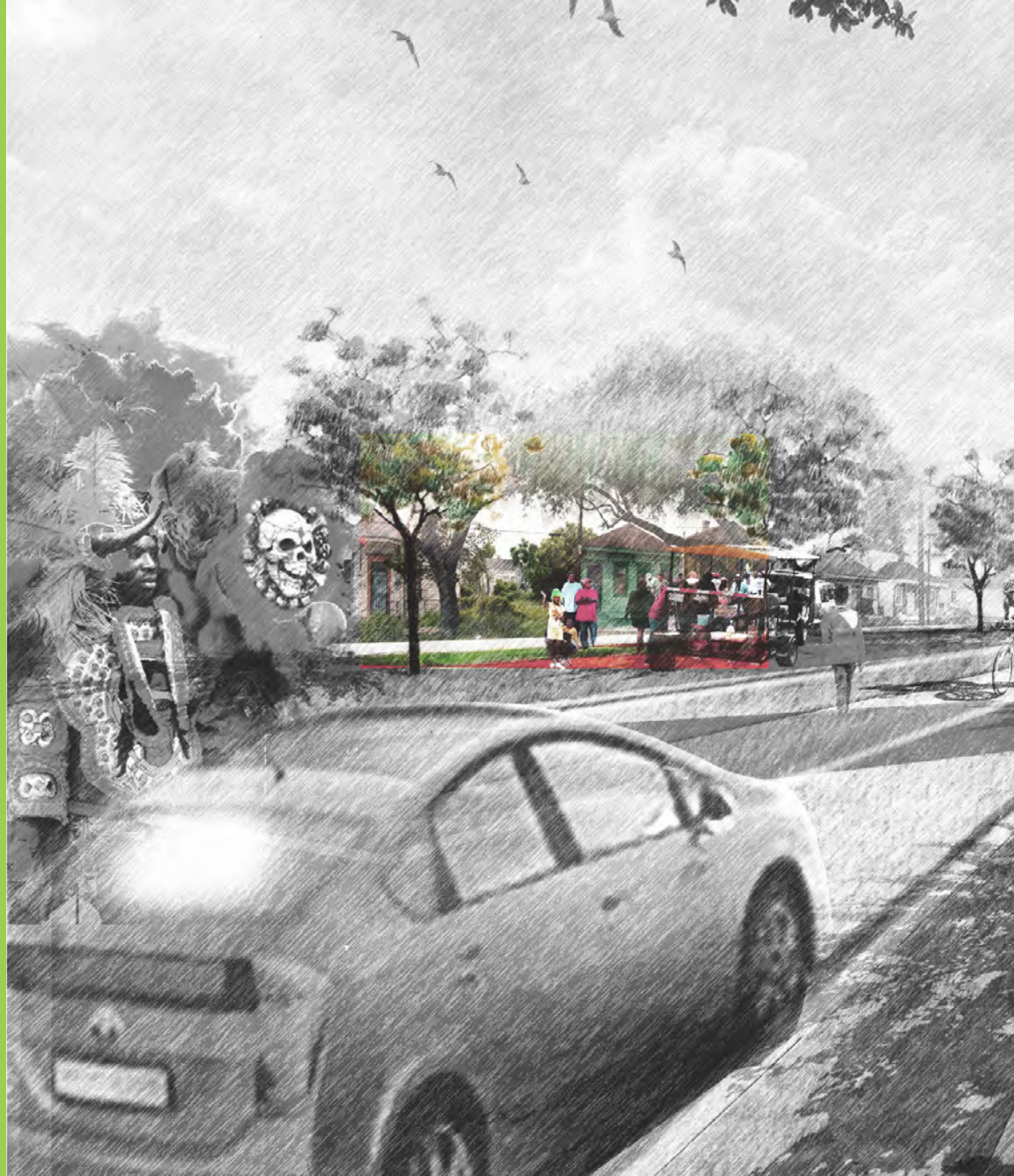


*Photograph by Keely Rizzato
Super Sunday 2014.*

MARDI GRAS INDIAN CULTURAL CAMPUS

EYES ON THE PARK

The proposed campus, highlighted in color on this page, will be located directly across the street from A.L. Davis Park. Establishing a presence here will provide high visibility on LaSalle, create a visual connection with the highly used park, generate additional space for hosting cultural and community events, and ultimately empower the Mardi Gras Indian Council to enhance area safety, improve quality of life, and amplify their influence on community events, experiences and public spaces on LaSalle and in Central City.





A.L. DAVIS PARK
GATEWAY TO CULTURAL CAMPUS

GOALS

Equal access to the redevelopment of New Orleans – a core value of the Foundation for Louisiana – lies at the heart of this project. The proposal to create a cultural campus is a means for the Mardi Gras Indian community, and the neighborhoods in which they live, to solve their own challenges and chart their own future. It enables them to lead a process of civic engagement and economic empowerment focused on LaSalle Street and surrounding Central City. Initial funding has allowed the Council to lead a process of civic engagement and economic empowerment focused on the LaSalle Street corridor.

Upper: (left) Maurice Cox w/ Bertrand Butler, Una Anderson (Harmony Neighborhood Develop.) & LSU professor Austin Allen, (right) Matty Williams directs archival filming
Lower: MGIC Chiefs view design options
Photographs by Jenny Renn Key.



CAPACITY BUILDING

- FOOTAGE REVIEWS
- INCLUSIVE DESIGN MEETINGS
- REV. EDWARDS GROUP MEETINGS



DIGITAL ARCHIVING

- FILMS & INTERVIEWS
- WEBSITE & FOOTAGE CONTROL
- PANEL EXHIBIT IMAGES



DESIGN DIRECTION

- TEMPORARY EXHIBITS
- LANDSCAPE INTERVENTIONS
- MGI CAMPUS OR INSTITUTE

GOALS OF THE MARDI GRAS INDIAN COUNCIL

1.FACILITATE PARTICIPATION

IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2.STAY IN THE COMMUNITY

AND FIGHT GENTRIFICATION

3.PROMOTE POSITIVE ATTENTION

TO THIS IMPORTANT CULTURAL PHENOMENON

4.STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES

WITH CULTURAL PROGRAMMING & OPPORTUNITIES

5.IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE

FOR THOSE RESIDING IN HISTORICALLY
AFRICAN AMERICAN NEIGHBORHOODS OF NEW ORLEANS

6.PRESERVE & PASS ON CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS

TO NEW GENERATIONS



*Photograph by Jenny Renn Key,
Architecture Graduate Student.*

EXISTING PRESENCE

This project marks a specific turn in the Mardi Gras Indian culture – a post Katrina movement to reclaim their presence, rebuild their neighborhoods, and employ their neighbors. Several small scale designs across New Orleans serve as examples that can preserve culture, produce funding, provide space for performance and education, and promote positive attention towards MGI culture.

MGI PRESENCE IN ARCHITECTURE, LITERATURE & LANDSCAPES

- Backstreet Cultural Museum
- House of Dance & Feathers
- Guardians Institute
- Walk of Fame, Washington Ave.
- Claiborne Underpass Columns
- MGI mural on LaSalle Street
- Tootie Montana Tribute, Armstrong Park



Backstreet Cultural Museum, www.backstreetmuseum.org/



Guardians Institute, Photograph by Tulane City Center



Ronald Lewis at House of Dance and Feathers, Photograph from <http://houseofdanceandfeathers.org/>

HOW CAN THE MARDI GRAS INDIANS INCREASE THEIR PRESENCE IN CENTRAL CITY AND THROUGHOUT NEW ORLEANS?

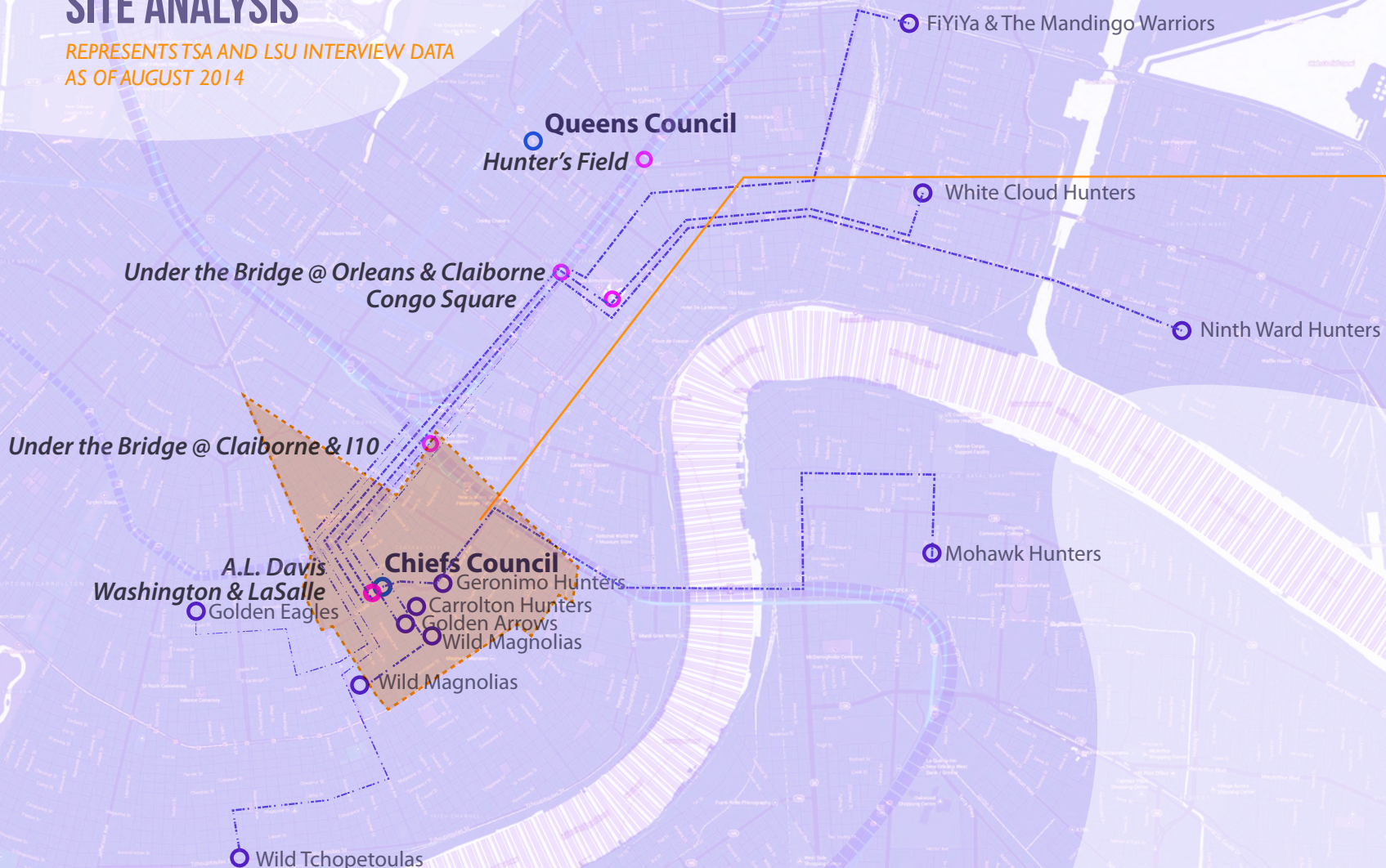




Photograph by Jason Riedy of tribute statue to Tootie Montana
Armstrong Park formerly Congo Square, New Orleans

SITE ANALYSIS

REPRESENTS TSA AND LSU INTERVIEW DATA
AS OF AUGUST 2014



Why Central City?

A strong presence of Mardi Gras Indian activity can already be found in Central City due to the location of some chief's homes, historically sacred grounds, A.L. Davis Park, St. Joseph's Night, and Super Sunday.

Why LaSalle Street?

Redevelopment of this corridor is an on-going process on a particularly unique street that combines cultural, historical, and economic sites among its residential lots. *"As a business and entertainment center, LaSalle Street between Washington and Louisiana Avenues was a gathering place for many renowned African-American entrepreneurs, musicians, and political and social activists in the 1940s and 1950s. The Dew Drop Inn, one of the corridor's focal points, was a premiere music venue that hosted top African-American musicians from around the country."* <http://harmonyola.org>



Photograph by Dinah Rogers, NOLA.com / The Times-Picayune

HISTORIC CENTRAL CITY

MAP by Kossen Miller, 2014

The LaSalle corridor, specifically the area between Jackson, Louisiana, Claiborne and Dryades, is richly layered with historic places and events. These narratives have defined, in part, the African-American story in New Orleans. The area includes the Magnolia Housing Development, and is home to a network of cultural landmarks, essential to telling this story. They bring to light the realities of African American life in post-reconstruction New Orleans, the challenges of the civil rights movement in the Deep South, and the evolution of music from Ray Charles to Juvenile.

Understanding this history as well as making it available to the community is essential in defining the value and potential of the corridor.



*Thomy Lafon
Middle School*



*Thomy Lafon
Elementary School*



Flint-Goodridge Hospital



*Music in A.L.
Davis Park*



Dew Drop Inn

Magnolia Housing Constructed 1941
C.J. Peete Management 1952-1978

Expansion 1955

Demolition Begins 1998

Katrina 2005

Rebranded Harmony Oaks 2011

Belmont Place Neighborhood
Demo for Louisiana Ave Realignment
3 Houses remain today

Native American Burial Ground
Locust Grove Cemeteries #1 & #2 1860-79
Tommy Lafont Middle School
Demolition 2013
Human Remains Discovered

Lincoln Theatre 1928-68

Tillman's Home 1860s

Carter G. Woodson 2012

Creation of Public Square 1868
Shakespeare Park 1900
Remembering A.L. Davis 1979

New Zion Baptist Church 1921
Dr. M.L. King Speaks SCLC formed 1957
Reverend A.L. Davis 1935-1981

Flint Goodrich Hospital 1911
Until 1950's; only AA Hospital in N.O.
Closes 1983

Dew Drop 1945
Decline 1996

Lafayette #2 1847
Brother Tillman Interred

Comparing the building footprints within the LaSalle Cultural Corridor in 1933 with those in 1960 and 2014 allows us to determine the historical intactness of blocks and streets. In particular, this has served as a basis for selection of the Mardi Gras Indian Campus location, and for identifying culturally important locations or structures.

At the scale of the neighborhood, you can see the regular patterns of the Harmony Oaks housing development, and how the central open area (Locust Grove Cemeteries) has remained largely uninhabited. Because this site is a historically Native American and subsequently African American burial ground, it provides as an excellent example of an area deserving treatment as an essential cultural landmark and community anchor.



KEY

- Public Housing Boundary
- Lafont Burial Ground & AL Davis
- Lasalle Structures 1933
- CJ Peete Housing Structures 1960
- Lasalle & Harmony Oaks Structures 2014

Pre Housing Development



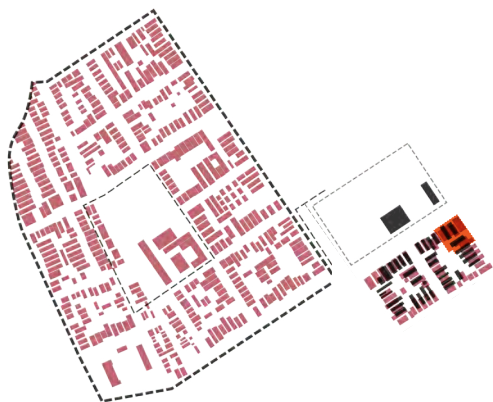
CJ Peete



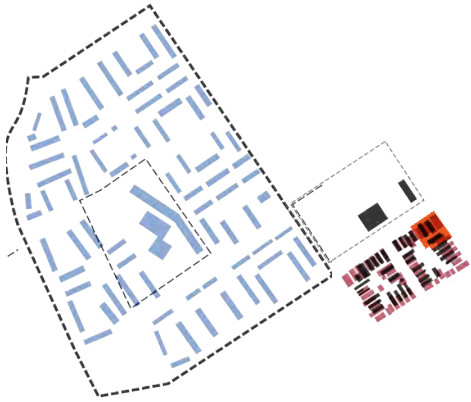
Harmony Oaks



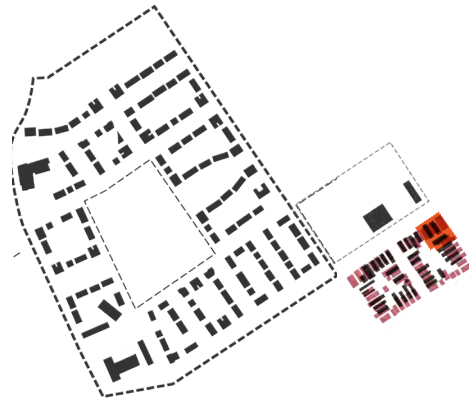
1933



1960



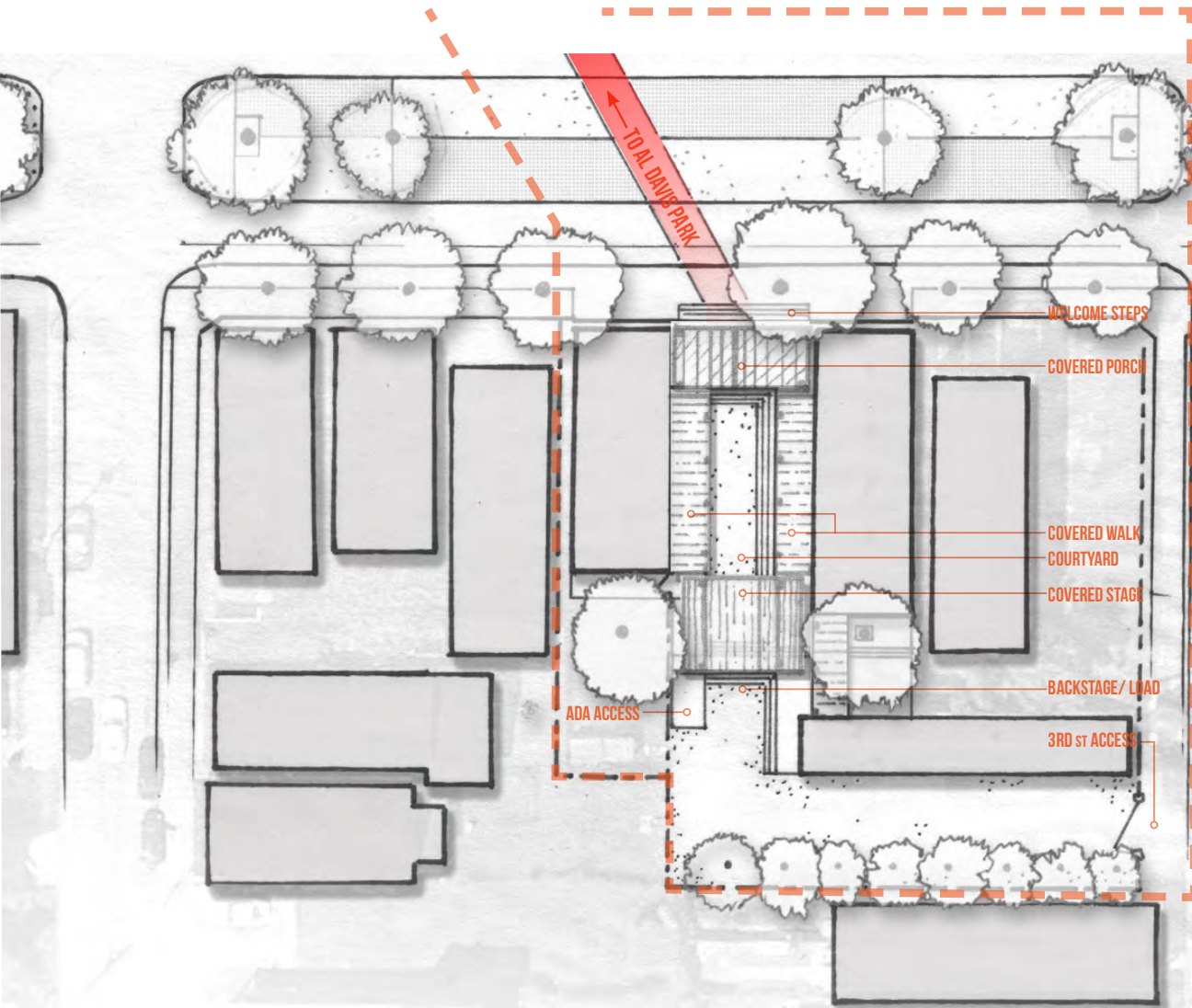
2014



Maintaining the historic character of the LaSalle corridor is extremely important to the Mardi Gras Indian community as products, protectors and players in the culture emergent from the area. In this light, understanding the historic conditions and subsequent changes to the streets, neutral grounds, and open spaces is essential to making culturally and socially appropriate design decisions. The drawing here reveals pre-1933 neutral grounds were three times the size of today's, providing precedent for their enlargement. Additionally, historic street alignments help identify the location of the Locust Grove Cemeteries relative to the current open space at the center of the Harmony Oaks Housing Development. Such research supports its treatment as a sacred space and community anchor.

MAP & ANALYSIS by Kossen Miller, 2014





LASALLE STREET & OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

After an analysis of current uses along the LaSalle corridor, the team located areas of opportunity ideal for design intervention. Recognizing three categories, or typologies, for intervention, the area included commercial properties with large parking lots that could better connect to the street, homes for sale or foreclosed that could be reoccupied or repurposed, and vacant lots that could be filled with new construction or temporary installations while permanent solutions are pursued.

*Map, Renderings & Photographs
by Jenny Renn Key '14*

BEFORE

CONCEPT

STREET CONTINUITY: COMMERCIAL PARKING LOTS



ADAPTIVE REUSE: HOMES FOR SALE OR FORECLOSED



LANDSCAPE: VACANT LOTS

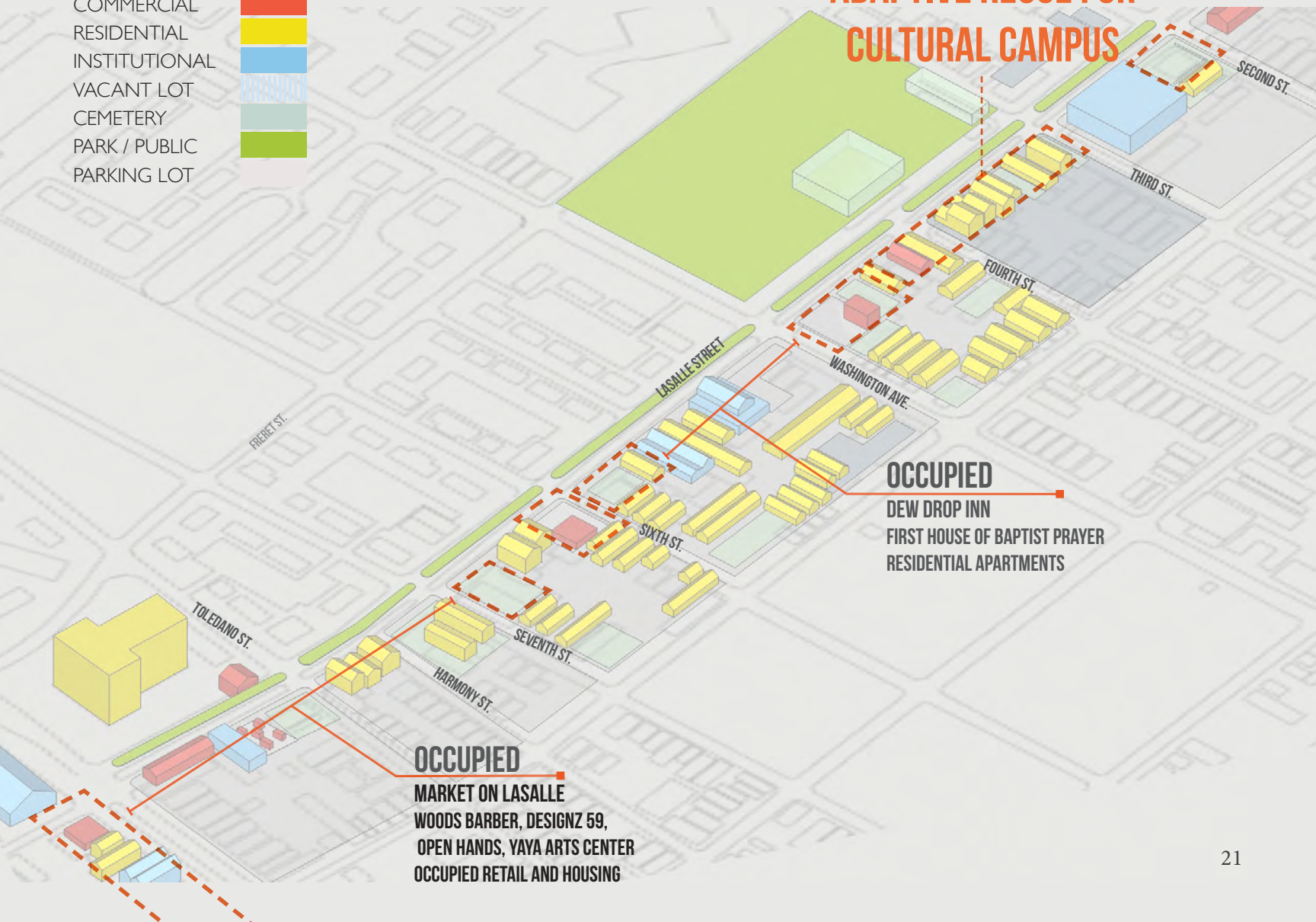


FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

COMMERCIAL
RESIDENTIAL
INSTITUTIONAL
VACANT LOT
CEMETERY
PARK / PUBLIC
PARKING LOT



ADAPTIVE REUSE FOR CULTURAL CAMPUS



OCCUPIED

DEW DROP INN
FIRST HOUSE OF BAPTIST PRAYER
RESIDENTIAL APARTMENTS

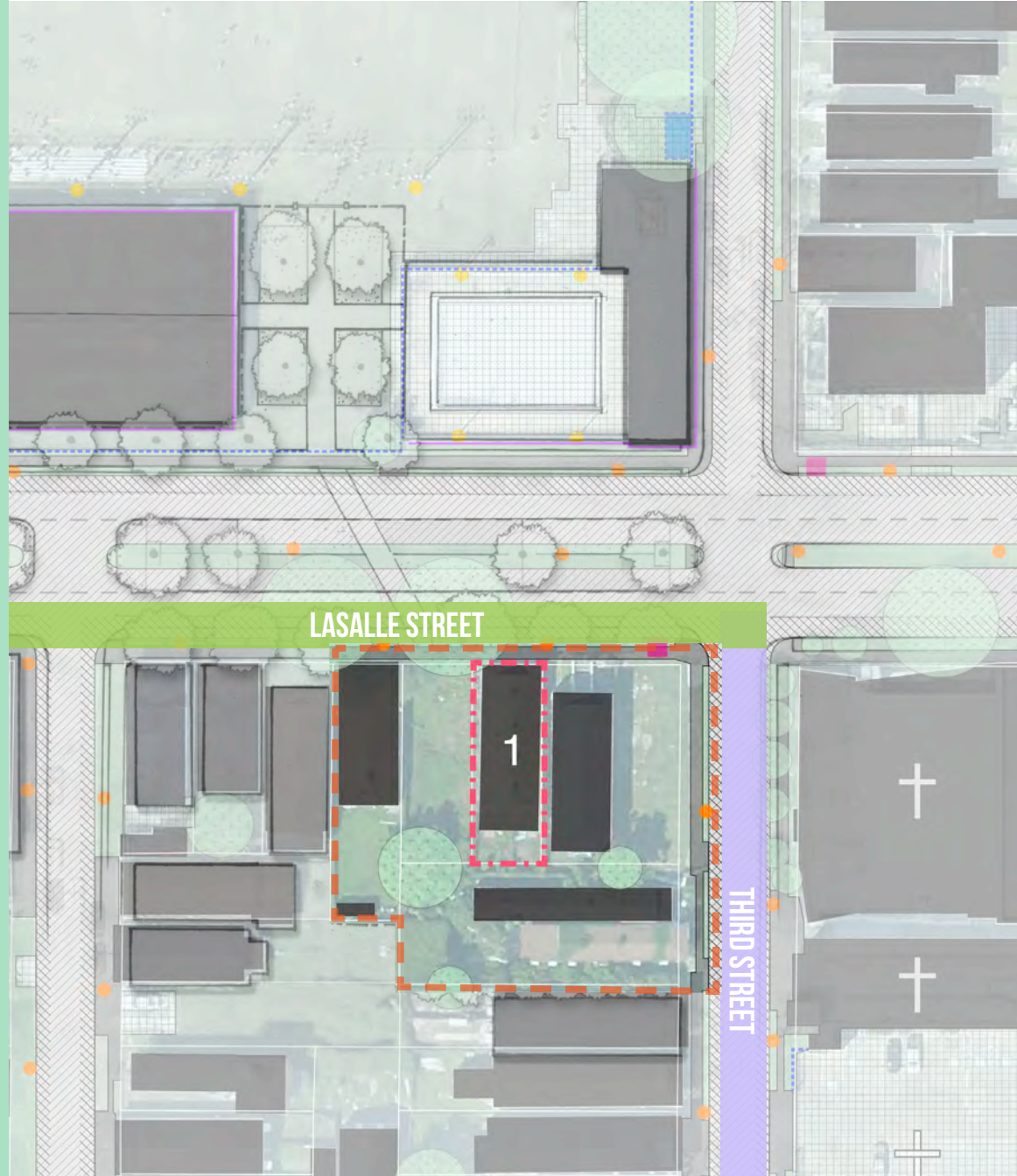
OCCUPIED

MARKET ON LASALLE
WOODS BARBER, DESIGNZ 59,
OPEN HANDS, YAYA ARTS CENTER
OCCUPIED RETAIL AND HOUSING

MARDI GRAS INDIAN CAMPUS ON LASALLE

Following surveying the corridor with Council representatives, the 2600 block of LaSalle Street emerged as the ideal location for the Mardi Gras Indian Cultural Arts Campus. The Council keyed in on the historic intactness of the block and its proximity to their council chambers and A.L. Davis Park. The campus aims to connect the whole neighborhood, provide a feeling of unity, and assume responsibility for strengthening social and cultural practices. It will engage young people directly, and allow Mardi Gras Indians and other elders to stay connected with youth activities within the park. The campus will be founded on respect for the neighborhood, providing programming, along with tangible site amenities such as lighting and security.

Map & Photographs by Kossen Miller, 2014





LASALLE STREET

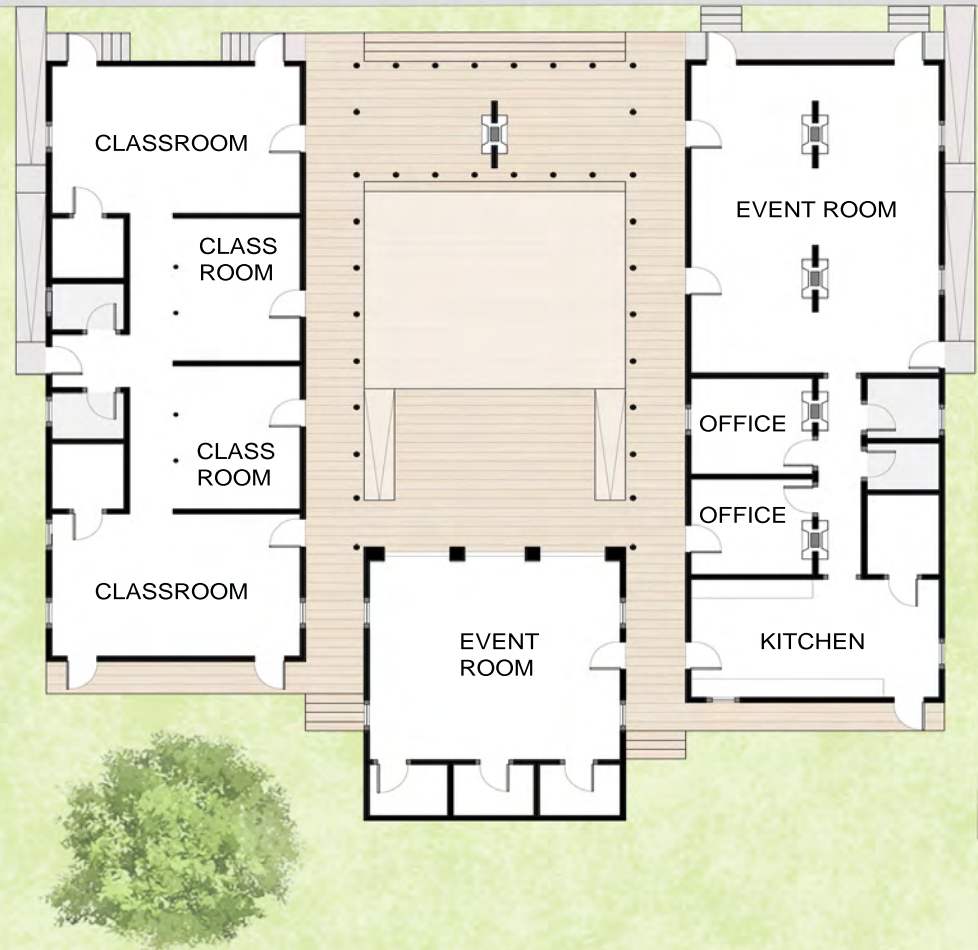


THIRD STREET

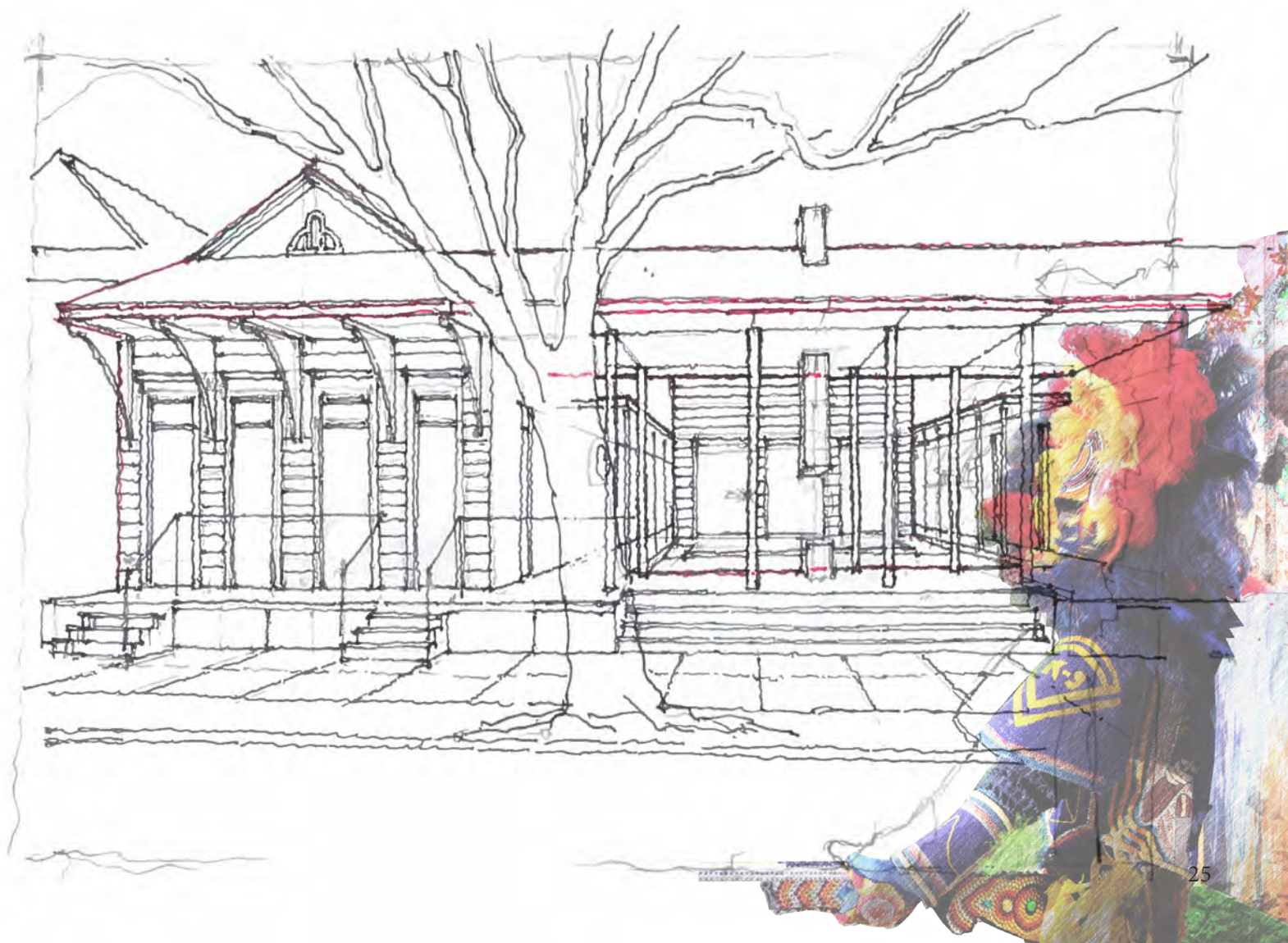


CAMPUS PROGRAM

The campus on LaSalle will form as a network of remodeled shotgun-houses and outdoor space, using signage, art, and landscaping to create a recognizable cultural zone. Ample outdoor space will allow the Council to invite the public in for specific performances and events. Alternately, when festivals and events are occurring in the streets, the space can be used as a staging ground, performance space, or sanctuary for Mardi Gras Indians.



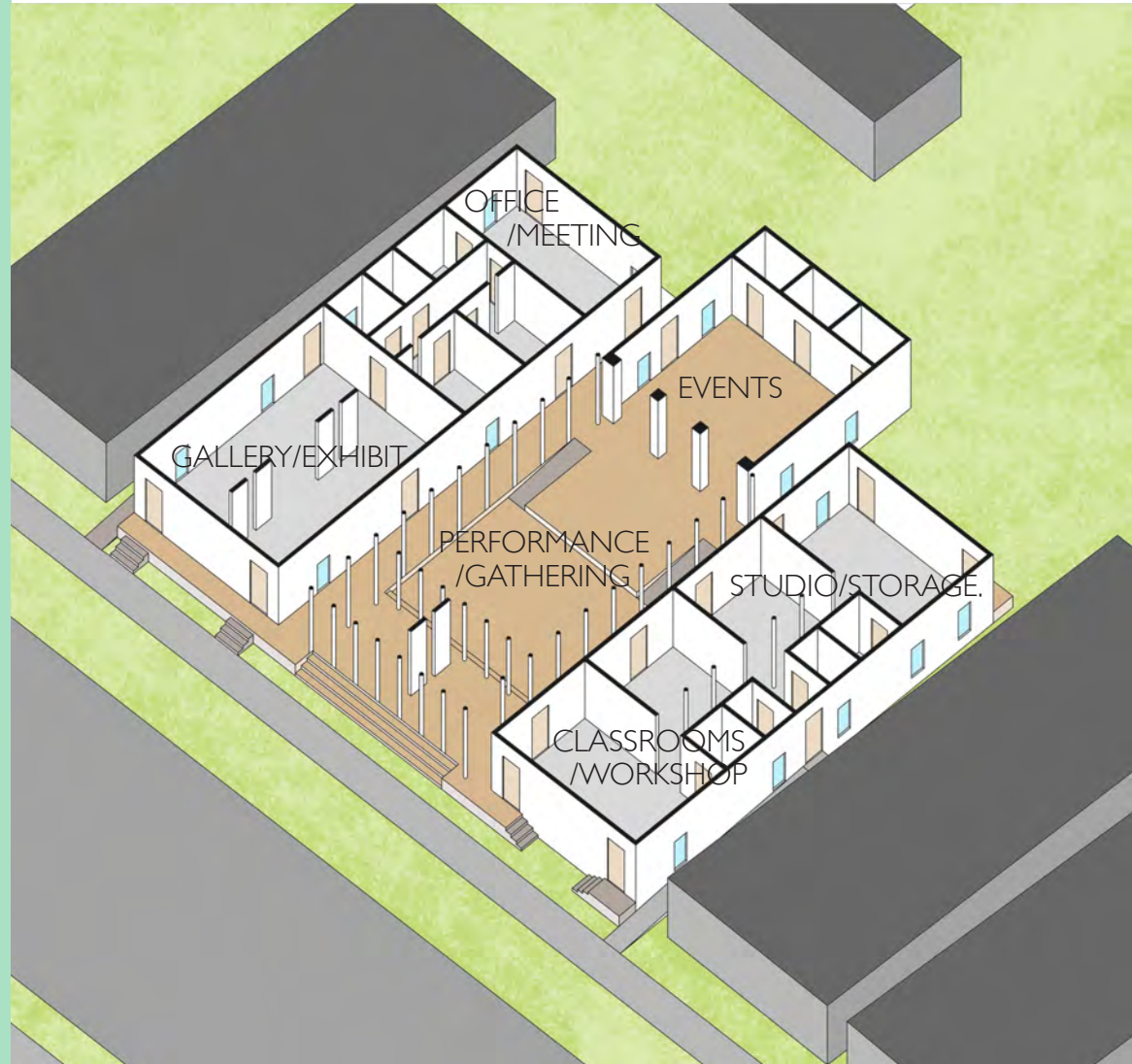
Site Plan & Rendering by Kossen Miller, 2014



CAMPUS PROGRAM

The Campus will maintain three goals: To Educate (the public about MGI & the youth about traditional practices), To Preserve (suits, traditions, materials, information, culture), and To Create (new ideas, suits, practices, etc.).

A gallery would display suits, photographs, or other memorabilia. An Honor Hall would allow visitors and tribe members to reflect upon all those who have masked, a retail area could promote MGI and other local artisans, studios would facilitate all means of craft, and event spaces would allow the MGI Council to invite the public to share in their cultural offerings.





THE CAMPUS INCLUDES SPACES FOR **PRESERVING** MGI CULTURE, **PROVIDING** OPPORTUNITIES, **RAISING FUNDS**, & **EDUCATING** YOUTH & THE PUBLIC.

SPACE TYPE	PRIVACY	AREA
GALLERY & EXHIBIT	semi-public	800 sf
possible retail space		
CLASSROOM & WORKSHOP	semi-private	800 sf
demonstration space		
STUDIO & STORAGE	private	800 sf
material storage		
PERFORMANCE/GATHERING	public	(2000 sf)
audience standing room	(outdoors)	
EVENTS	semi-public	700 sf
OFFICE/MEETING SPACE	private	800 sf

5,200 sf.



A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT OF:



tulane city center



MADE POSSIBLE WITH GENEROUS FUNDING FROM:



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS



Foundation
for Louisiana

At work for resilient communities.

TULANE CITY CENTER

Tulane School of Architecture



The Tulane City Center houses the Tulane School of Architecture's applied urban research and outreach programs. Projects share a focus on improving cities - particularly our home city of New Orleans - through fostering global urban research, the development of flexible and innovative urban strategies, and the provision of environmentally and culturally informed principles to guide the design and revitalization of the contemporary metropolis. An important aspect of our work is to ensure that, where appropriate, our research is activated through design and construction and/or advocacy and education.

Maurice Cox TSA Associate Dean for Community Engagement

Austin Allen LSU Professor of Landscape Architecture

Nick Jenisch TCC Project Manager

Jenny Renn Key TSA Student, TCC Summer Fellow

Kossen Miller LSU Landscape Architecture Graduate

Matty Williams LSU Landscape Architecture Graduate

<http://www.tulanecitycenter.org>