

PROPOSAL

Over the last 60 years much of St. Louis has been erased by an accumulation of social, political and economic forces. Elements of urban resilience are at times overshadowed by these absences of what once was.

Site six, on the corner of Montgomery and N. 13th Street, is a former parking lot that has been vacated and left to decay. Devoid of function and maintenance, this lot is a blight on the adjacent neighborhood improvements.

Our proposal responds to St. Louis' history of urban erasure and to the site's existing pattern of decay with a series of intentional cuts into the site's asphalt cover. These ground incisions will redefine site six as a social and environmental asset. The cuts will allow a recolonization of the site by plant life and new opportunities for its occupation by people while performing a much needed environmental function as a filter for storm water.

Currently, much of the block's storm water runoff drains to the storm sewer grate located in the Southeast corner of the site. Given 1 inch of rain, this can result in a volume of approximately 16,000 gallons of water streaming over asphalt paving and picking up contamination before falling into the municipal storm sewer. Over the course of a year, with average rainfall, the volume of water increases to around 609,000 gallons - enough water to fill an Olympic sized pool! This deluge puts a strain on the aging sewer system and increases the risk of flash floods and raw sewage being washed into the Mississippi River.

The asphalt incisions, patterned against existing water flows and planted with groupings of native, flood-tolerant plant species, will slow the speed that water travels to the storm sewer and increase the absorptive capacity of the site. This will help ease the current burden placed on the metropolitan sewer system and prevent the puddles and sediment piles that currently litter the site. New native plant areas will increase the neighborhood's ecological diversity by providing food and shelter for desired pollinators and wildlife.

The resulting visual complexity created by the plant palette and ground relief will activate the site, drawing in visitors to explore the landscape. A collection of benches will be installed to provide a new outdoor gathering space for the community and signage will educate visitors about the replicable components of the design. These alterations will transform unused space into public space.

Over the next two years our project will assume the economic responsibility of maintaining this vacant lot. The seed money will cover the majority of capital needed to implement the project. Ground Incision will transform this blighted lot into a neighborhood amenity and destination for those interested in landscape design and environmental, public art. It is an ecological place-making demonstration project with the capacity to inspire better urban spaces in Old North, St. Louis, and beyond.

Our team is capable and committed to continue developing "Ground Incision". We have the technical knowledge to implement our design and are sensitive to the complexity of community based design work. We have pursued public works projects in various parts of the city (Pagedale, Wellston, The Ville, The Grove, and Cherokee Street) and are excited to extend our practice to Old North. We are looking forward to collaborating with the residents and institutions of the city and Old North on this proposal.



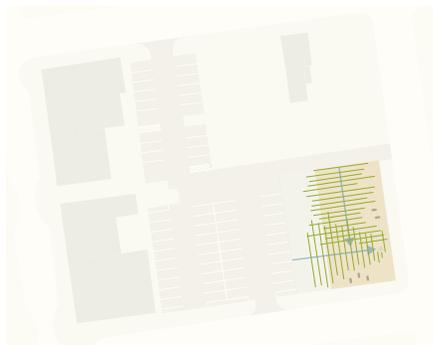
Proposed Intervention



Drain Inlets + Storm-Water Drainage Paths



Drain Inlet + Area That Drains Into Site



Drainage Paths + Proposed Cut Patterns

TEAM QUALIFICATIONS

Albie Mitchell, LEED AP

Albie Mitchell has been working and designing in the St. Louis Metropolitan area for over eight years. He is trained in architecture and sculpture, holding a Master of Architecture from Washington University and a Bachelor of Arts in Studio Art from the College of Wooster. He was a founding member of Confluence Design Fabrication and has since gone on to found his own studio, Collab, focusing on interior design and product design exploring wood and digital fabrication in small scale functional objects. Albie is also a lecturer at the Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts teaching courses on entrepreneurship in design and community development.

Albie has worked with several non-profit organizations such as the Mildred Lane Kemper Museum, KETC, Washington University Medical School Community Development Corporation, Park Central Development, as well as the City of Pagedale and the Maplewood-Richmond Heights School District. Relevant project experience includes: the design and installation of custom planters in Forest Park South East; the design and installation of a custom play structure at an Early Childhood Development Center in Maplewood; the design of a public art installation at the intersection of Vandeventer and Tower Grove Avenue (un-built); and serving as the coordinating faculty member for a student designed monument sign for the City of Pagedale (in progress).

Irene Compadre

Irene Compadre is an artist and designer who has worked in St. Louis for almost 10 years. She originally came to St. Louis to study architecture and sculpture at Washington University and chose to stay in the city first to serve as the Scenic Charge Artist at the Black Repertory Theater and then completing a project residency at the Community Arts and Movement Project. She was also fellow of the Community Arts Training Institute run by the Regional Arts Council. Irene completed a Master of Landscape Architecture degree with Honors from Washington University and now works as a designer with [dtls] landscape studio and is a faculty assistant at the Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts.

Irene has been involved in several community design and public art partnerships in St. Louis. Her experience includes designing and co-founding the Cherokee Real Community Garden and Gathering Space; leading the landscape design component of the City Studio STL design/build work with artist Theaster Gates Jr. and the Rebuild Foundation; participating in exhibitions and public events as a member of Pig Slop Studios, organizing public programs, events, and building projects at CAMP, and participating in the design and development of the Ville Marketplace Project (unbuilt).

[dtls] landscape studio

[dtls] is a Saint Louis based landscape architecture design firm focused on delivering innovative, creative and environmentally sustainable projects. The partner's Sue Wiest, Julia Montroy, and Rick Kacenski have agreed to support the Ground Incision team by providing technical support and acting as mentors throughout this project.

GROUND INCISION

ENVIRONMENTAL PLACE-MAKING | SITE 6
Irene Compadre + Albie Mitchell

