



## **the alleys:** a proposal for new urban spaces

THE ALLEY IS THE CITY.

THE ALLEY WASN'T BASED ON HUMAN NEEDS, THE STATIONARY ACCESSWAY. IT HAS A CALIBER & COHESIVE PERSONAL QUALITY DUE TO ITS INTIMATE SETTING AND SPATIAL QUALITIES. IT IS NOT FUNCTIONAL @ NIGHT IN THE CONTEXT UNDER QUESTION.

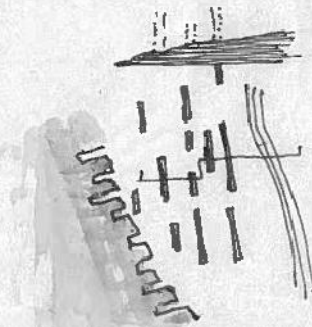
THE ALLEYS ARE ENJOYABLE AS THEY ALLOW ONE TO FEEL MORE IN THE CITY. THEY ARE LIVED BUT CENTRIFUGAL IN THEIR GRAVITATIONAL FORCE. TO SIT NEAR THE END OF THE VOLUME, IT BECOMES A 2-WAY OBSERVATION POST FOR STREET ACTIVITY. DUE TO THE LIGHT QUALITY, THE FOREGROUND IS ALWAYS DARK AND COOL. THEY ARE AN UNLIT LANYON. THEY WORK TOGETHER LIKE A CABLE SYSTEM OR ANOTHER SERVICE NETWORK LIKE SEWAGE AND ELECTRICITY UNDER THE SURFACE.

THEY CAN BE GASTED WITHIN. EXPLOITING THEIR POSITIVE QUALITIES WILL EVENTUALLY RENDER THEM VALUED FOR TEMPORARY/PERMANENT WHOBITING.

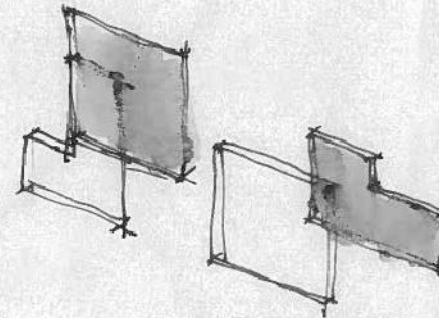
#### ANALYSIS:

THE NETWORK. A NETWORK OF PERSPECTIVAL AND PLAN RELATIONSHIPS SHOULD BE DOCUMENTED AS A BASIS FOR GEOMETRIC AND FORMAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE THING AT HAND.

WHAT IS HERE?



PLAN ALLOWS MINIMAL VISUAL INFORMATION BUT FULL UNDERSTANDING.



AXONOMETRIC: AFFORDS MULTIPLE INFORMATION'S LAYERED ATOE ONE ANOTHER

THE ATTRACTS WILL BEEN TO TEST THE ALGORITHMS OF THE INFORMATION/FORMAL CHANGES WITHIN THE SPACES/NETWORK. THE MIND AND THE EYE DETECTED AND ORIENTED TOWARDS THE ALLEY. THE ALLEY MUST BE MANIPULATED/VALUED THROUGH SIMILAR MEANS, HOWEVER RADICALIZED.



## Topic

I propose studying the future of our downtown alleyways as new public spaces.

## Relationship to local design issues

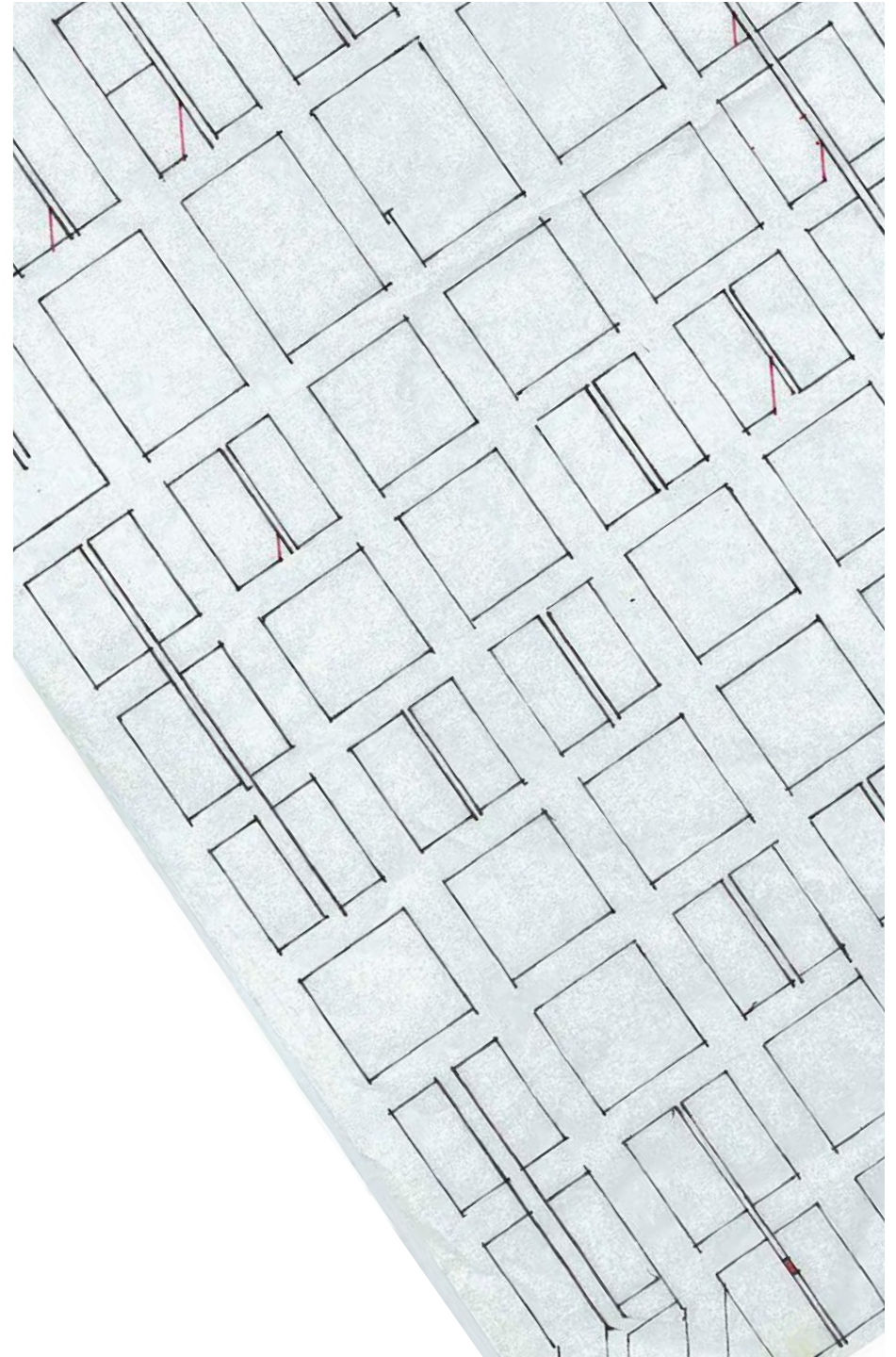
Seattle has a serious lack of public space downtown, and a poor pedestrian experience. Building projects have slowed down while the talk of infrastructural adjustments is national. Our alleys are infrastructural, but could be more. We must consider them as an intensely over-looked asset. Imagine every alleyway in the CBD as a part of a model begun by Post Alley.

As a regional topic, alleys are present in Vancouver BC as well. The alleys there have begun to garner attention (FrontierSpace Design Competition, 2005), as ours have (NBBJ's Alley 24 and recently the Nord Alley Parties in Pioneer Square). Little design attention has been paid in either cities. These are unique to our cities and have so much latent potential to become powerful and sustainable networks of new urban spaces and landscapes in the Pacific Northwest.

There are nearly 30 remaining alleys in the downtown grid between Yesler and Pine and they will not last forever. Superblock developments will continue to maximize profits and property build-outs unless there is impetus to preserve our north-south porosity. A preservation and reinterpretation program must be initiated.

## Proposed methodology

Through sketching, photographing, interviewing, blogging, and recording, I propose visiting a set of cities with, or soon to be with vibrant alleys. I will keep a rigorous and thorough travel log digitally and physically documenting my findings and experiences. Through the use of new social media (including facebook, twitter, etc.) the city and all interested will be able to follow the unfolding of this rediscovery of the modern alleyway. I will visit the cities listed and explore their alleys by way of the architects, landscape architects, politicians, clients, developers, and community organizations responsible for them.



*proposed alley system diagram*

## Proposed outcomes and products

The reevaluation of alley space as

- **SUSTAINABLE** by creating: microclimates, vertical and horizontal storm water treatment areas, planting configurations that treat air and replenish urban flora/fauna, permeable and heat-reflective paving systems, recycling centers for biofuel, air treatment for existing buildings' alley-oriented intakes, green walls, waste disposal containers that replace dumpsters and work with the new clear alleys program
- **FEASIBLE** by creating: new zoning laws that require new construction to address alley life and transformation, preservation organizations that transform existing worth-keeping alley environments while maintaining their qualities, subsidy/bonus incentive programs that entice developers to take part in the alley revitalization by adding their property to the new network of pedestrian-oriented Seattle infrastructure
- **URBAN** by creating: temporary or permanent coverings (i.e. suspended glass canopies to shield rain, temporary and permanent architectural interventions that hang, roll, fold up, and open to new programs and uses, recognizable parks and places for gathering that will add a north-south grain to the existing poor pedestrian hill climb street-scape network
- **ECONOMICAL** by creating: profit through remodeling abandoned back rooms on the alleys into small shops, restaurants, galleries, etc. that add to property value, adding new jobs for artists, craftsmen, builders, architects, and landscape architects
- **SAFE** by the introduction of more people and thus less fear and potential for crime
- **PLACE** through the synthesis of all of these qualities into a recognizable series of new urban spaces that become a positive addition to the identity of downtown Seattle

## Impact on the local design community

Seeing the alleys as a valuable part of the pedestrian experience of Seattle downtown core will affect everyone working in any proximity to the alleys. This new energy found in what has for the longest time been a form of parking and waste infrastructure will add to the successes of Post Alley and will catalyze an entirely new context for future developments. It will inspire more to take on projects without clients and come together to adapt our city to maximize its potential.

I am sure I can get space(s) donated for this project's display and information dissemination. I am already speaking with individuals at 4Culture, International Sustainable Solutions, Tom Gannon and others at DPD and Public Utilities, Space.City, the University of Washington School of Architecture and Urban Planning and Seattle city councilmember Nick Lacata's Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPOS) program. I will be contacting other organizations including ASLA, the Urban Land Institute, and of course local business groups/representatives that own or organize developments abutting the alleys.

I propose a number of programs to happen in 2011 that will display my research to the city including:

- An alley party with interactive comment areas for public input on what they think of the alleys
- A first Thursday kick-off exhibit of the findings, videos, drawings, sketches, renderings, and models of the other cities
- A concise set of principals and mission statement for the revitalizing of our alleys here
- A proposed set of zoning variances for better quality alley spaces
- A display at the public library
- A small publication to be distributed throughout the city and perhaps throughout the region as part of a larger sustainable infrastructure example that Seattle can begin to set
- A repeat of the display at the AIA gallery
- As the final product, I would like to remodel and redesign an entire alley in the CBD as a catalyst for the new program, At the moment, I am studying the three that run northwest of Benaroya Hall from Union to Stewart between 3rd and 2nd as a continuous park with micro-plazas and new buildings that engage the alleys to replace the crumbling parking structures along them.



## Itinerary and proposed destinations

May 31-June 5th 2010:

Melbourne, Australia

- will tour, sketch, and record experiences in the new alleys (laneways) that through implementation of city policies, have become vibrant incredible models for alley redevelopment in the last 20 years
- will meet with officials from Melbourne's City Council, Laneway Commission Program, and local artists/designers/business owners to discuss issues faced in Seattle
- contacts: William Feuerman of Office Feuerman (New York City and Melbourne, Australia) and the University of Pennsylvania who was my professor at Columbia University and practices in Melbourne

June 6th - June 12th:

San Francisco

- will tour, sketch, and record experiences in the Union Square, Mission, Chinatown, and other alley-rich neighborhoods documenting daytime, night time, and weekend programs and successful qualities
- will meet with officials responsible for the Chinatown Alley Way Masterplan, local alley-based business alliances, as well as designers having worked in the alleyways including the new Jack Kerouac alley in Chinatown
- contacts: Professor Gerald Gast of Stanford's Urban Studies program and the University of Oregon's Urban Architecture program in Portland as well as others at the University of California Berkeley's School of Architecture



*Degraaf alleyway, Melbourne*

## Budget Outline

### Melbourne

- roundtrip ticket: \$1000
- hostel: 5 nights at \$30/night
- food/expenses: \$40/day x 6 days
- city total: \$1500

### San Francisco

- roundtrip ticket: \$250
- hostel: 5 nights at \$30/night
- food/expenses: \$40/day x 6 days
- city total: \$620

### Final presentation

- materials cost for potential model, drawings, etc: \$500
- Current total budget: \$2,620.

\* I plan to add a couple more stops on this trip (i.e. Chicago, Fort Collins, Colorado, Copenhagen) after more research is done into which would be the most beneficial location to visit. This addendum will be issued upon request in January.

### Potential adds to itinerary:

#### Fort Collins, Colorado

<http://www.downtownfortcollins.org/alleys.html>

#### Chicago

<http://www.streetsblog.org/2007/06/07/chicago-seeks-to-green-its-alley-ways/>  
[http://brandavenue.typepad.com/brand\\_avenue/files/greenalleyhandbook.pdf](http://brandavenue.typepad.com/brand_avenue/files/greenalleyhandbook.pdf)

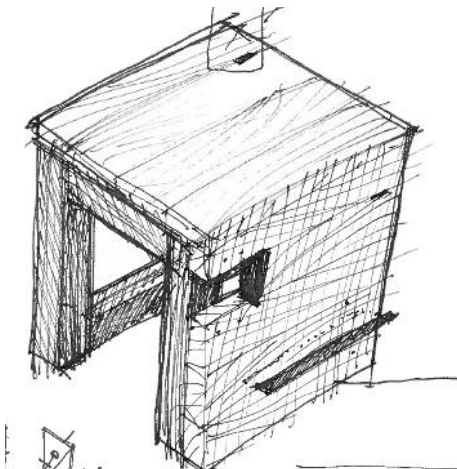


*Centre Place, Melbourne*

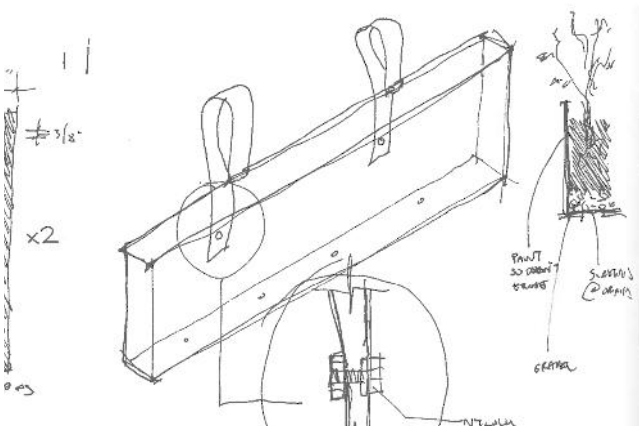
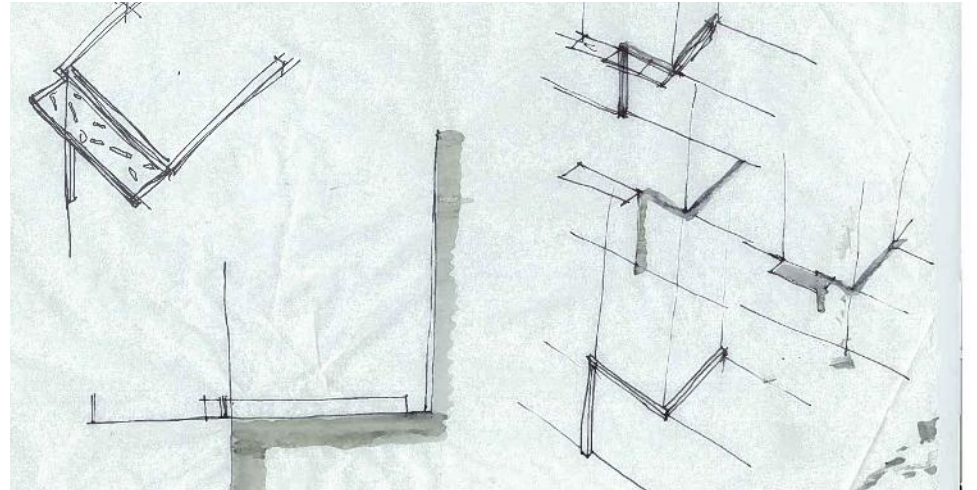
## Personal Work

Since moving to Seattle from Portland in summer 2008, I have fallen in love with the alleys. The first month I moved here, I begun photographing them individually on my way down to the office every day from First Hill. I was so excited about the alleys that the Federal Bureau of Investigation got after me. While walking behind their building I nonchalantly snapped some photos of their alley, then proceeded over to the alley between Spring, Seneca, 4th, and 5th. While beginning to take some photos of the Central Library from halfway down the alley, I saw a group of men in matching black and white suits approaching from Seneca, then all of the sudden, I hear “FBI! Don’t move!”. This is where my exploration of the alleys took a hiatus. After being questioned and having my license run through the federal warrants database, I was told to delete my pictures as I had accidentally snapped all their security camera locations in their alley, oops.

Another exciting thing that’s happened to me in Seattle has been my exploration of craft. After finishing up at the University of Oregon’s Portland studios, I came up to work for Perkins and Will. I had planned to move to the east coast, but with the realization of better stability and work experience, I promised myself I’d better one of my biggest areas of insecurity: craft. I always felt quite unsure of myself around the woodshop, and had never even made a wood model. I decided that if I was to be a true northwest designer, I’d need to understand craft. I took a series of woodworking courses in Ballard and made my first table, then took an introductory welding class at Pratt where I began to look at alleys again through a series of fabricated objects to be placed around the city. I constructed a planter and a moveable ashtray for window frames. Both are going through finishing before installation. I also made a pact with myself to begin designing by hand again and got a drafting table off craigslist to do this stuff. I hope to continue this intimate connection of the hands, craft, and materials through the beautification of our alleys.











2009 alley sketchbook: I have begun a site analysis through sketching each alley in the CBD since October

