



THE MILL

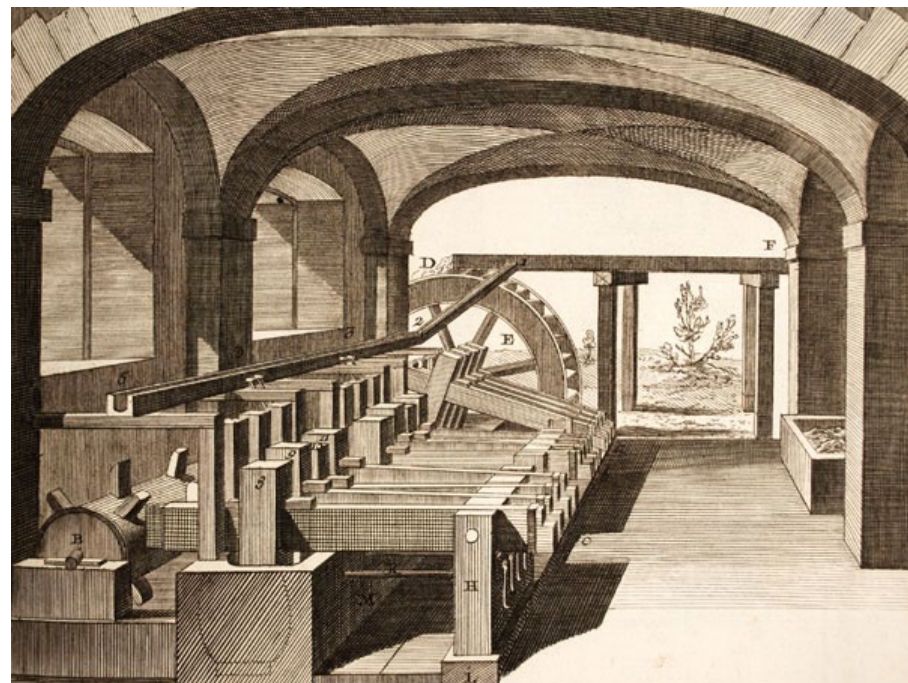
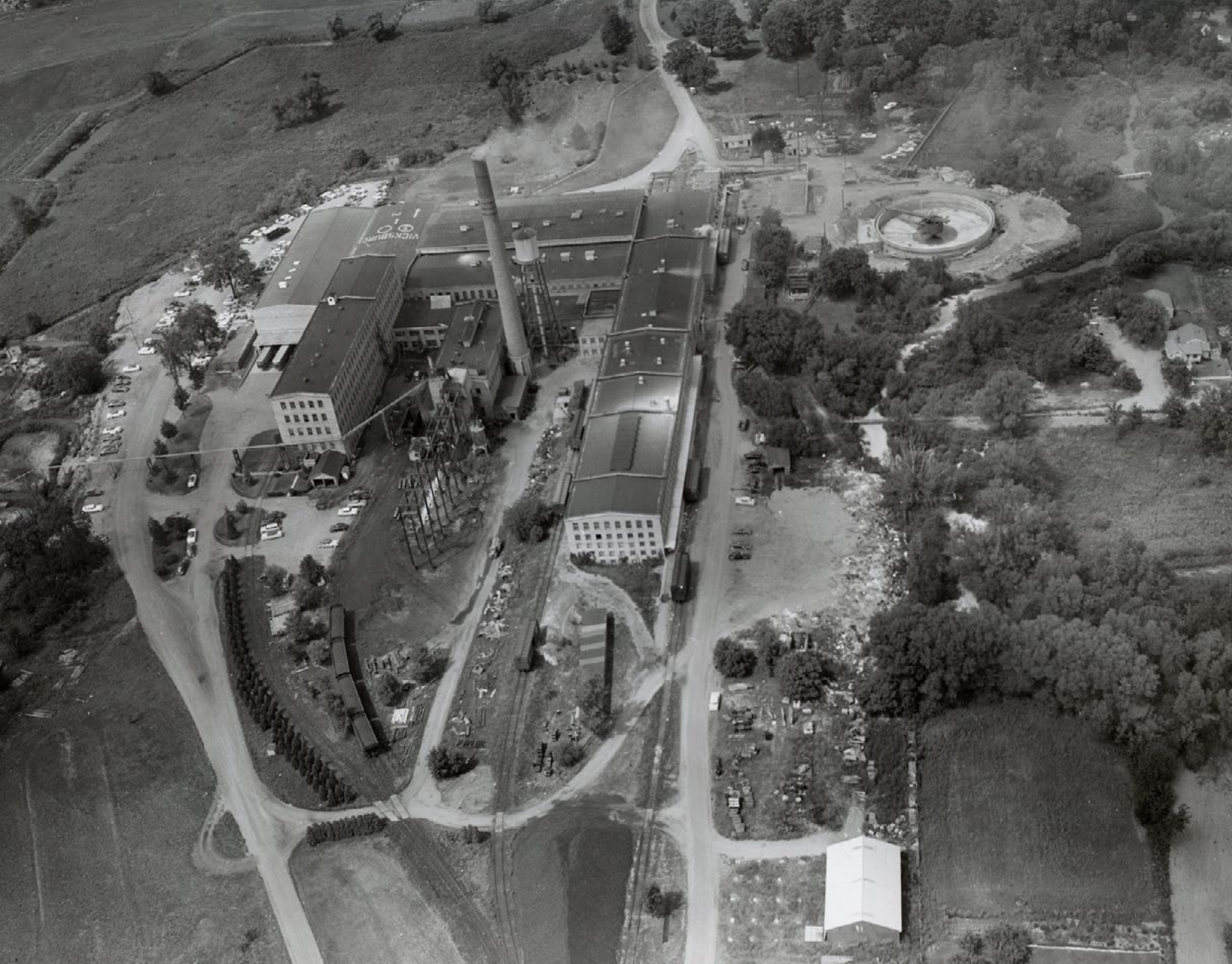
AT
VICKSBURG

ART CONCEPTS & CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES

BUSTER SIMPSON, ARTIST

JUNE 2019

Point cloud rendering of
existing Mill by Steve Adams
at HopkinsBurns.



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Buster Simpson
Artist

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"To determine the best mushroom for the base style, we tested three different varieties: oysters, morels, and porcini. We made separate infusions, using about 3 grams of dried ground mushrooms steeped in 1 cup of boiling water. We then dosed 4 ml of the infusion into the Platonic ideal of a California Common: Anchor Steam Beer. The oyster mushrooms (*Pleurotus ostreatus*) imparted a subtle earthy richness but were a little too restrained. The morels (*Morchella esculenta*) came off almost smoky and spicy. They would have been fun to use, but none of us wanted to cash in our retirement to pay for the pounds of dried morels we would need. The porcini (*Boletus edulis*, colloquially called boletes) were the perfect complement to the beer, lending a healthy amount of rich, earthy brightness that paired perfectly with the Anchor Steam. It smelled and tasted as if we were walking through a deciduous forest just after a light rain."

Excerpt from "Brewing with Mushrooms" by Eric Reinsvold

Morel mushrooms are highly desired and highly unusual. They evolved from a yeast so recently that they have not acquired a high degree of structural complexity, and they have not yet evolved the ability to measure gravity to determine vertical direction. Whatever direction they start growing in is the direction they continue in.

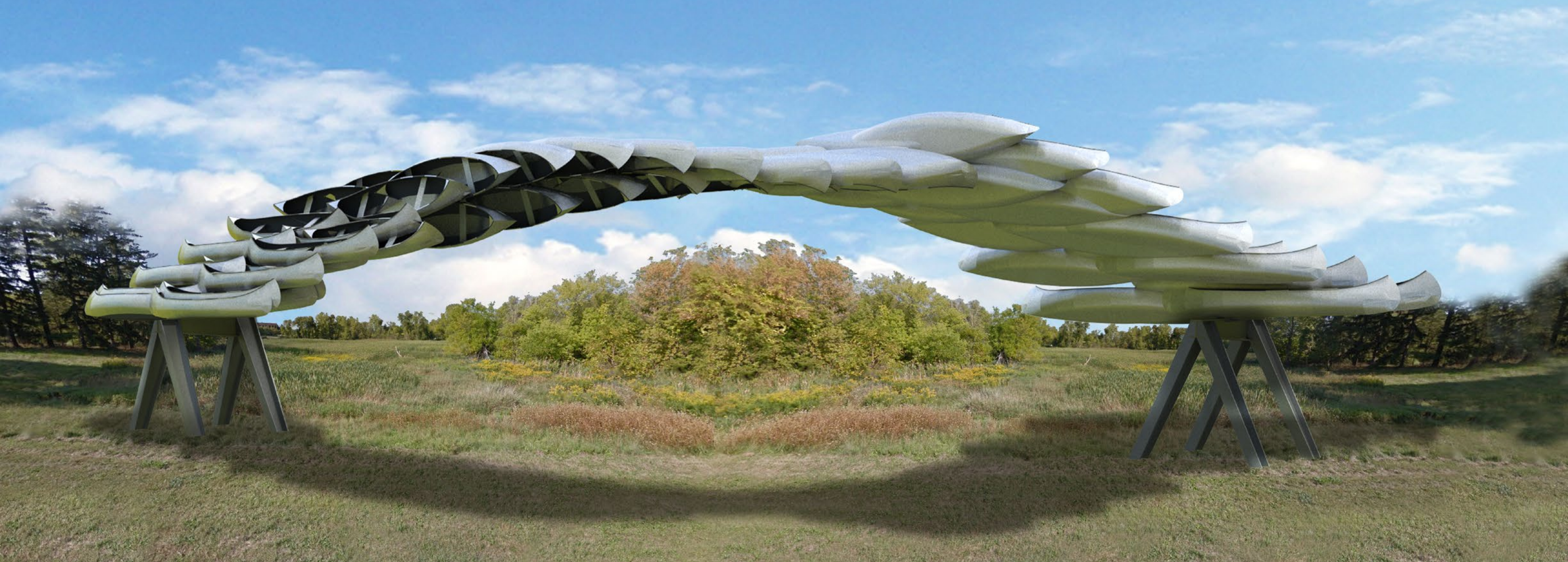


Such extreme evolution, occurring so recently, creates a biology lesson unlike anything else. It shows how rapid change occurs. The physiology is somewhat scrambled and chaotic, and the morphology is unstable.

Morel Mushroom beer being poured into *Tipping Point*.

YEAST CONSTRUCT

Chris Moore suggested the idea of a sculpture based on the white Morel Mushroom which is known to grow on the Mill Site's natural areas. During my research, in trying to discover the logic of the mushrooms structural form, I found that there was a common connection between the morel and beer and that was yeast. Perhaps this was Chris' sly way for me to make a connection. This is a work in progress.



PORTAGE PORTAL

Just north of Vicksburg is the divide between two watersheds, the Kalamazoo River and the St. Joseph River basins. Because of this divide, there is a need to portage boats between waterways. There are two creeks called Portage, one Portage River and one Portage Lake. All of these waterways serve as portals to one another. The Portage Creek that flows past Vicksburg and The Mill continues south to join the St. Joseph River and flows on to Lake Michigan. The sculptural gateway, Portage Portal, conveys a continuous system, with a canoe traversing a loop from water to land to water, likened to the hydrological cycle, as a never ending mobius flow.

The Sculptural Portal Concept

The sculpture intends to capture a physical manifestation of the act of portaging, through the assemblage of aluminum canoes into a sculptural loop that represents gliding through water, approaching shore, and canoes being lifted up onto voyagers' shoulders for the overland journey to the next waterway. Each canoe becomes like a frame in a stop-action film. study, as if a Muybridge film.

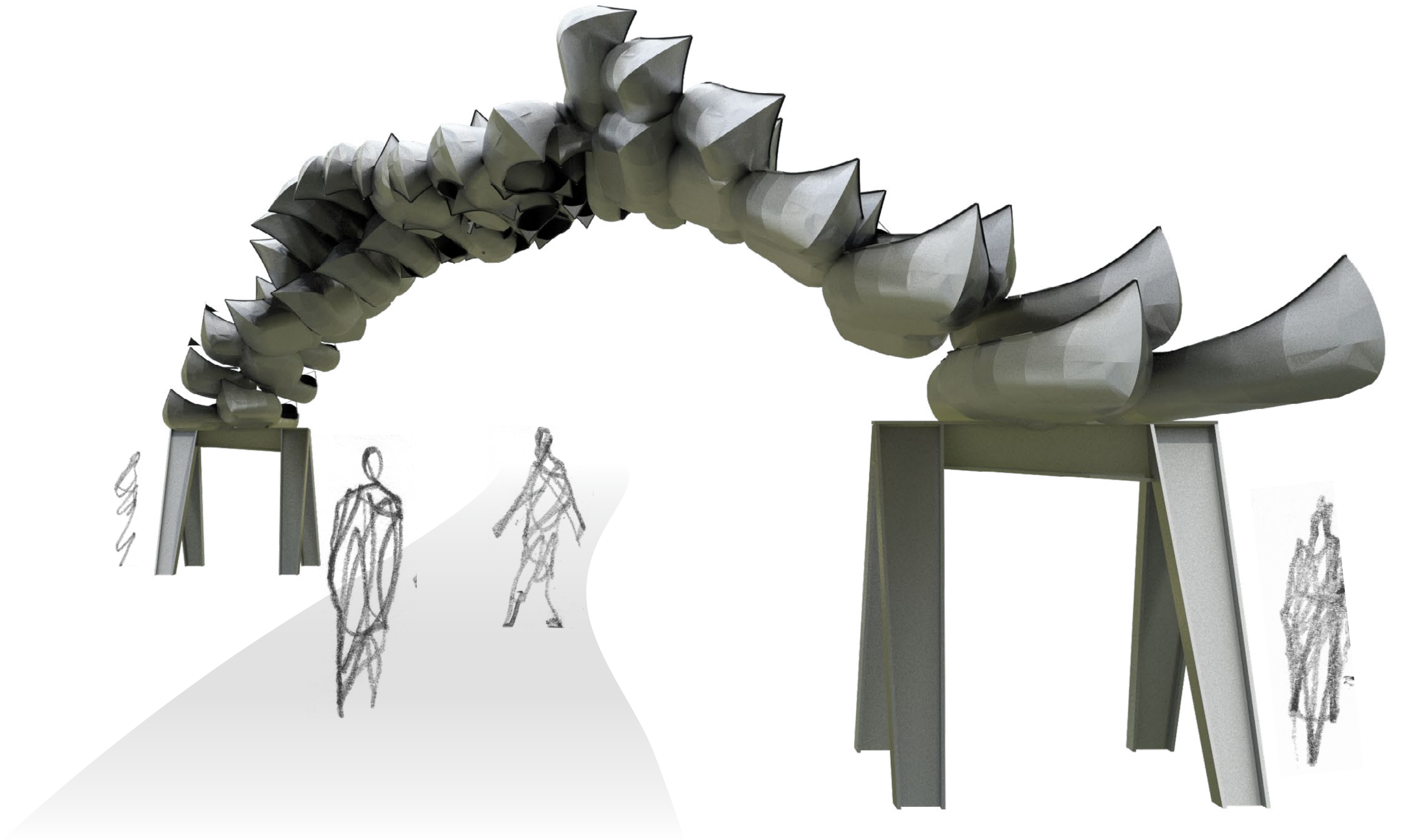
The Portage Portal should be sited in an area where a convenient portage from Sunset lake to Portage Creek exists, perhaps near the Mill Dam on Washington street. The sculpture would serve as an "aid to navigation"

by signifying the portage, as a community "way finder" along the pedestrian trail to the mill, and as a regional iconic waterway landmark (especially if it also serves both as a waterway and roadway gateway).

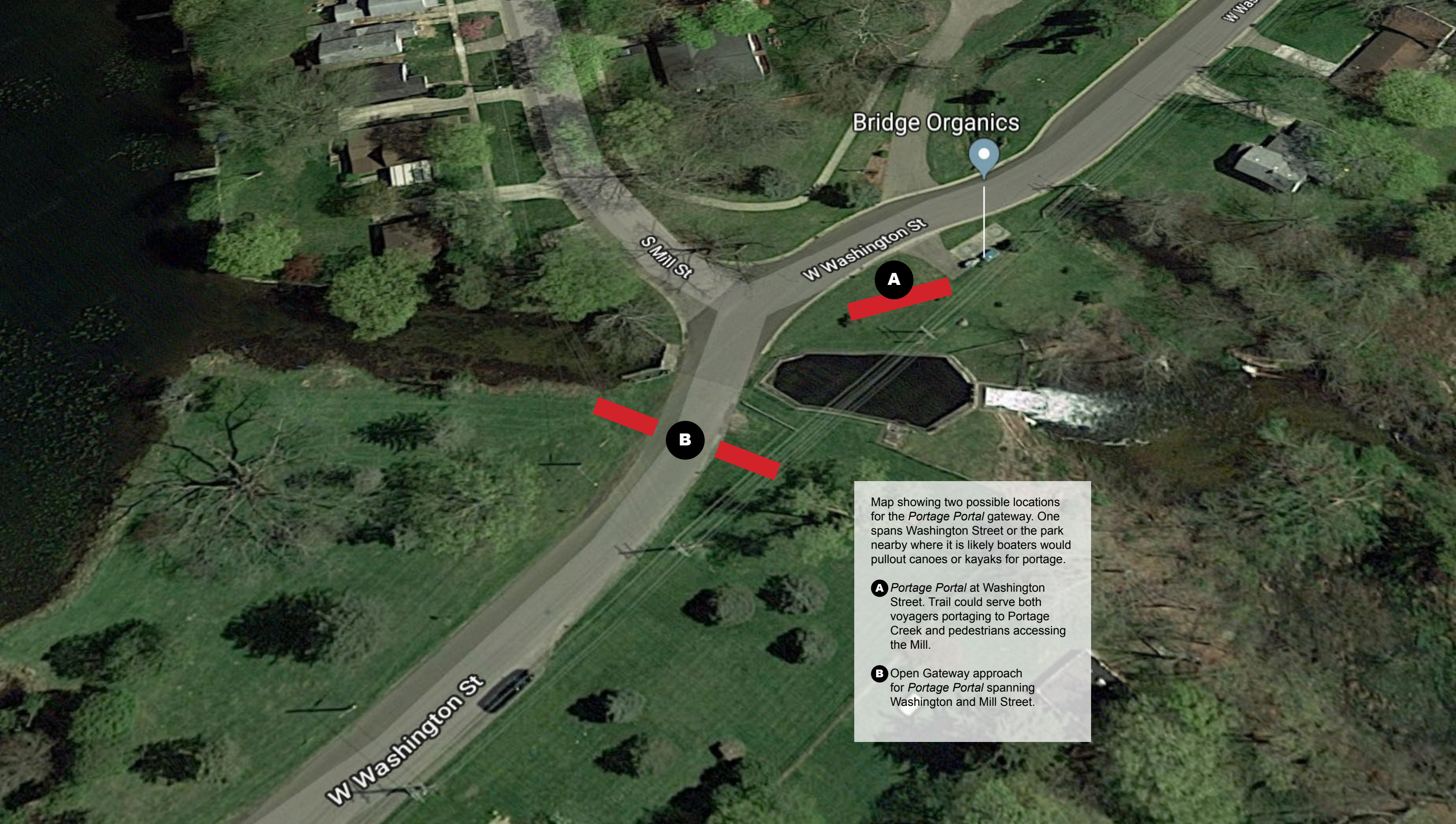
There is one location where the clearance from power lines and the width of Washington Street might allow for an actual drive-through gateway experience, providing the City and The Mill project with an iconic structure and possibly encouraging water recreation.

Eco Tourism in Vicksburg

Consider enhancing the outdoor recreational opportunities in the region by supporting kayak/canoe/bicycle rental programs and proposing campsites along Portage Creek as part of a future Portage Creek recreational waterway plan. Adding new walking/hiking trails, increasing the existing bicycle trail system, and encouraging the development of camping areas and bed and breakfast locations will add to quality of life in the area and become draws to bring in visitors from other places. Develop a map of bike and walking trails and a guide to kayaking or canoeing from Vicksburg to the three rivers and beyond.







Bridge Organics

S Mill St

W Washington St

W Washington St

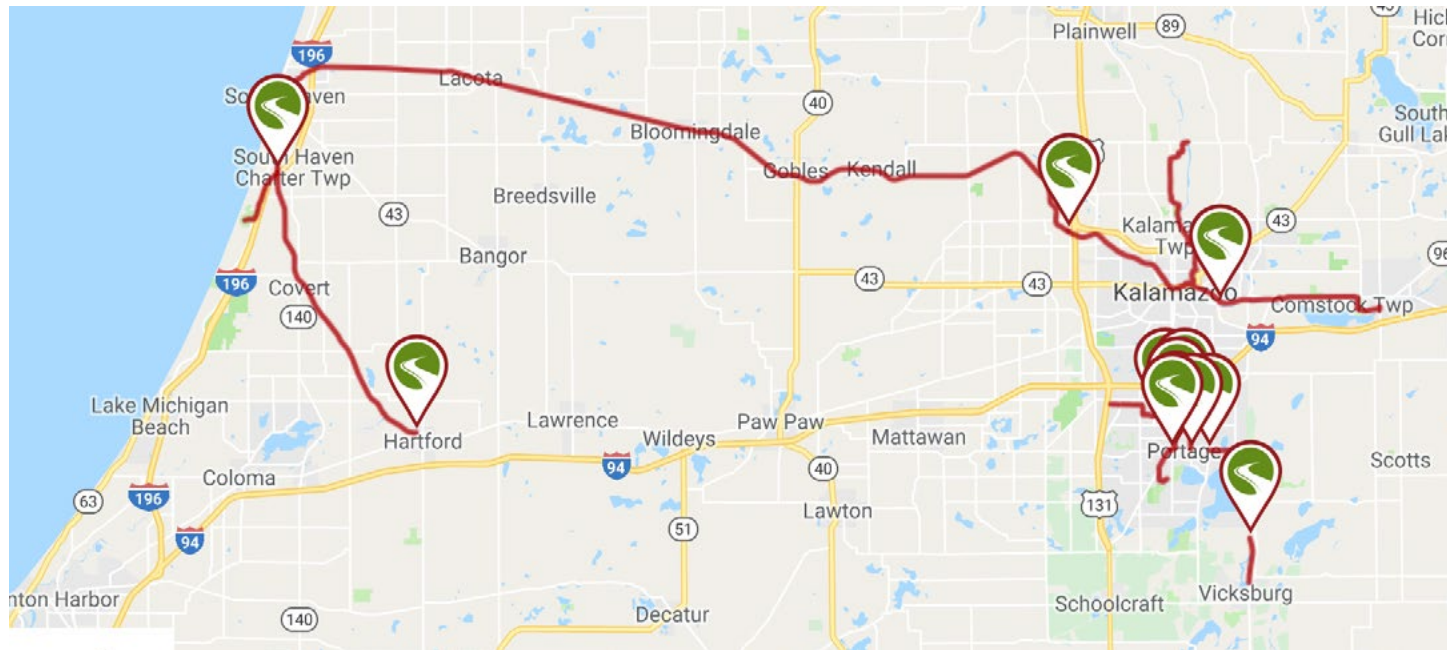
A

B

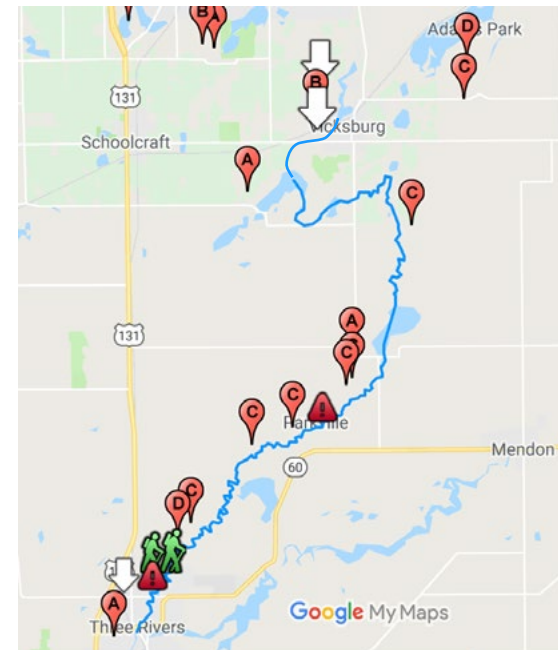
Map showing two possible locations for the *Portage Portal* gateway. One spans Washington Street or the park nearby where it is likely boaters would pullout canoes or kayaks for portage.

A *Portage Portal* at Washington Street. Trail could serve both voyagers portaging to Portage Creek and pedestrians accessing the Mill.

B Open Gateway approach for *Portage Portal* spanning Washington and Mill Street.



South West Michigan bike trail system following old RR beds.



Portage Creek canoe and kayak waterway from Vicksburg to Three Rivers.... from there on to Lake Michigan.



Signage redesign to talk about protecting ecological habitat as well as noting that this is (not a drain but) Portage Creek and serves as a canoe and Kayak waterway.

T-17
Price: **\$1,252**

Specifications

Weight	80 lbs.
Centerline Length	17'
Beam	36"
Depth	-
Transom Width	N/A
Transom Height	-
Persons	5
Max. Capacity	695/770 lbs.
Max. Horsepower	5
Hull Thickness	0.05
Number of Ribs	5
Stern Type	Double-Ended

Typical technical information on aluminum canoe (manufactured in Michigan).



A historical image of a birch bark canoe turned on its side to be a shelter during portage.



Image supporting the structural possibilities of the proposed Portage to Portage sculpture. This composition under construction by engineer/artist Christopher Fennel suggests a wave. *Canoe Wave*, by Christopher Fennel



JOE FREEMAN / PHOTOGRAPHY

www.joefreemanjunior.com

Joe Freeman is a photographer based out of Tacoma, WA.

He earned a BFA in Photography from the Rhode Island School of Design and a MFA in Photomedia from the University of Washington. Joe has been nominated for PDN's 30 in NYC, the Henry Art Gallery Brink Award and New Fellows grant through the New Foundation, both in Seattle, has twice been a finalist for the Hariban Award in Japan, and was a finalist for Critical Mass in Portland. His photographs have been featured by National Geographic, the Huffington Post, and PDN Pulse, and are included in the King County Public Art Collection as well as the UBS Banking collection.

Joe spent 19 days photographing the Mill, from March 23rd until April 10th, 2019.

"The Mill dominated the landscape as a castle might. Inside was labyrinthine in places and wandering throughout often brought to mind the Parisian Catacombs. There were moments when I would find myself standing in awe, struck by the enormity of some of the halls which swallowed the light and seemed to be as ornately decorated (by time's effect) as cathedrals. While looking for densely complicated spaces and open, silent, spaces I photographed the Mill while holding these medieval impressions in mind, ultimately defining the mood of the images."

In order to reproduce the complex range of tones and extremely fine details the Mill offered a high-resolution camera was used and multiple frames were often stitched together to complete an image. This enables the production of very large high-fidelity prints.

If you're interested in seeing more of this work, please visit his [gallery of Mill images](#).



Jackie Koney talks to students about the Mill's future during their field trip to the Mill.



Lisa Phillips teaches about environmental remediation of industrial pollutants at the Mill site.



In class, students working on poems collaboratively.



Peg Butler and students paint poems onto silt fencing.



Poems shown in bottom photos are installed along fence at The Mill in Vicksburg.

PEG BUTLER / MILL WRITES PROJECT

www.pegbutler.net

Peg Butler from Portland, Oregon, spent two weeks in Vicksburg leading the **Mill Writes** Project with Schoolcraft High School students. Peg is an artist and environmental designer whose work often responds to social and ecological issues. The idea for the **Mill Writes** Project grew out of a previous public art project called **Orange Lining** that Peg and Buster Simpson created along a seven mile light rail line in Portland, Oregon.

For the **Mill Writes** Project, Peg and John Kern from Paper City LLC worked closely with two educators from Schoolcraft High School, teacher Doug Martin and curriculum developer Matt McCullogh, to create a place-based community engagement process which included: a Mill site visit; five days of in-class poetry development; and a hands-on field trip where students painted short poems onto silt fencing.

Silt fencing as an artistic canvas adds a utilitarian and conceptual element to the creative writing and public art project. It connects physically and metaphorically to environmental remediation and community

development processes. On field trip day to the Mill, students learned about the past, present and future of the Mill site. John Kern talked to them about the days of the paper mill and told stories of the people who had worked there. Lisa Phillips, an environmental scientist, talked about the environmental toxins that remain from the industrial processes and the mitigation techniques being used to clean up the site. Jackie Koney talked about the redevelopment of the Mill site to be a thriving complex of businesses and activities that will include a brewery, event center, hotel, walking trails and wildlife habitat.

Students collected words, ideas and images during the Mill visit, and over the course of a week honed their thoughts into short poems. Twenty eight poems were then painted onto silt fencing, some becoming as long as a hundred feet. They will be installed along the fence at the Mill on a rotating basis. For the weekend of the Old Car Festival in Vicksburg this year, all of the poems that were not yet installed at the Mill were displayed inside the vacant pharmacy building in the Village to create a visual spectacle, activate the pharmacy space and inform about the **Mill Writes** Project.



Corner of south east corner of brick building to be restored.



Displaced south east corner of brick building in pile awaiting reprocessing and repurposing.



Image of future rubble consisting of glazed tile, CMU "cinder block" and cast concrete block each of these building texture will provide a variety of surface texture and color when added to another project rubble.



Large existing "cultured conglomerates" to be reprocessed creating smaller pits of conglomerate rubble.



Example of processed rubble into "cultured gravel" showing bits and pieces of a variety of building material suitable as aggregate for a variety of uses.



Conical piles of processed "urban rubble mix" treated as an art installation until repurposed.

HISTORICAL RUBBLE AGGREGATE

Piles of rubble, old concrete, brick, tile, and fragments of other materials will be processed on site. The aggregate "product" would be stock piled in typical conical piles as temporary sculptural waiting repurposing.

The repurposed aggregate size material would provide material ranging from simple construction base, to various aesthetic treatments such as Terrazzo bar and table tops, ballast for the railroad alignment between the rails, as aggregate concrete mix to create walkways where the historic mix of mill matter would be exposed and celebrated either by sugar concrete release, sand blasting, or honing the surface.



Ballast for railroad rails and allow a landscape of “volunteers” to grow between the track over time suggesting the abandonment of the rail line. Shown here are paper birch trees on the Highline in NYC.



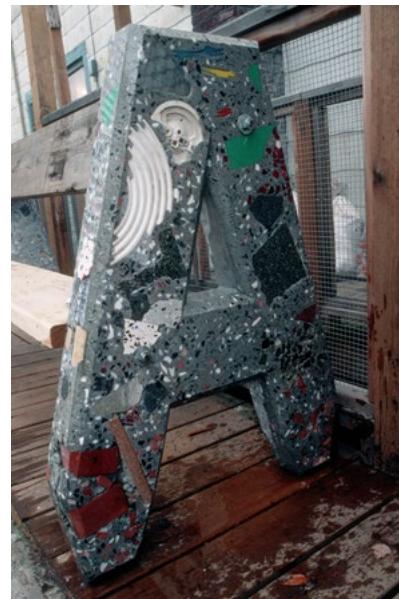
Large concrete footing, ready-made relic.



Existing Mill concrete conglomerate with embedded rubble and bottles.



Rorschach Brick Blot.



Terrazzo benches “conglomerate” consisting of Anaheim urban renewal rubble. Mill rubble used could be used as decorative bar counter tops tables and plaza paving.

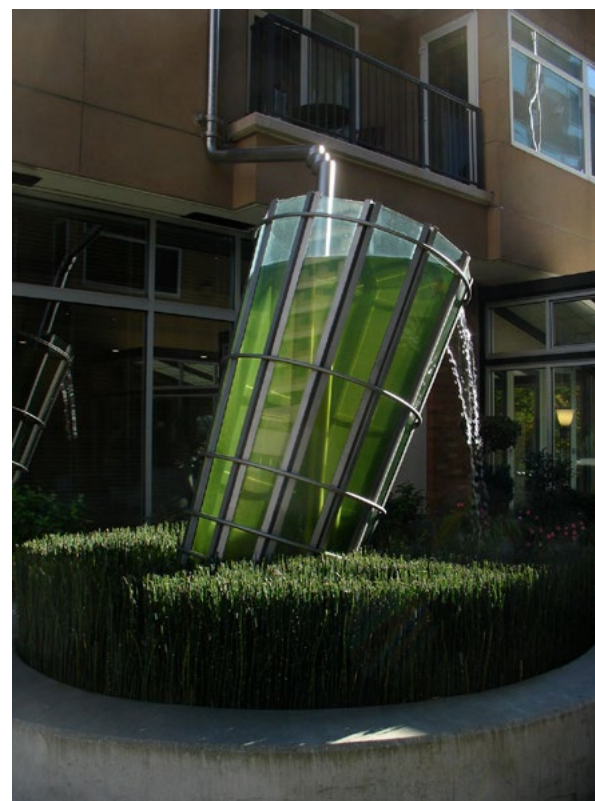


Public seating, as seen in the film *Moonlighting*, located on an elevated people-mover in Miami. Benches were cast using a terrazzo mix incorporating rubble from hurricane Andrew (1992) into the surface composition. The intent was bring the curb cut (the street) to the elevated transit system.

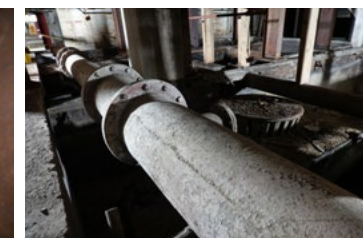
RUBBLE AGGREGATION

The haul road into The Mill construction site is made up of a crushed gravel matrix of post-industrial rubble, consisting of broken brick, concrete, rock, tile, asphalt and other materials. The Mill project will be producing its own inventory of rubble that will eventually be reduced in size similar to that of the haul road. Does this

‘historical’ material have a place in or around the new Mill as a base substrate or for a visible use such as for rip rap, railroad ballast or as an additive embellishment for exposed aggregate surfaces, terrazzo pavers and counter tops?



Top row: Simpson projects – repurposable artworks.

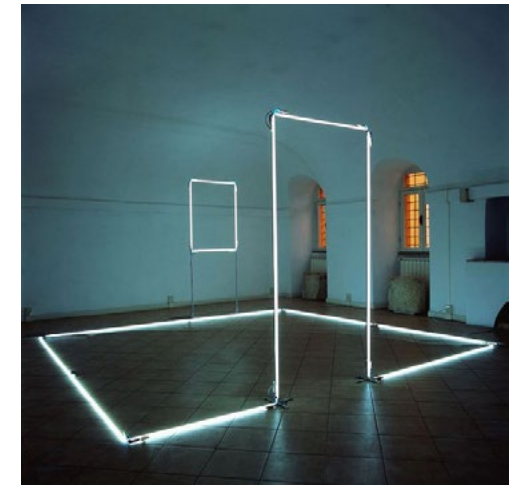
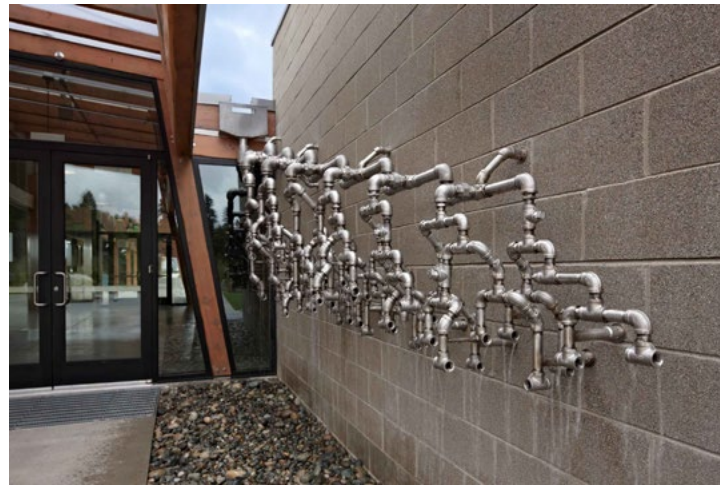
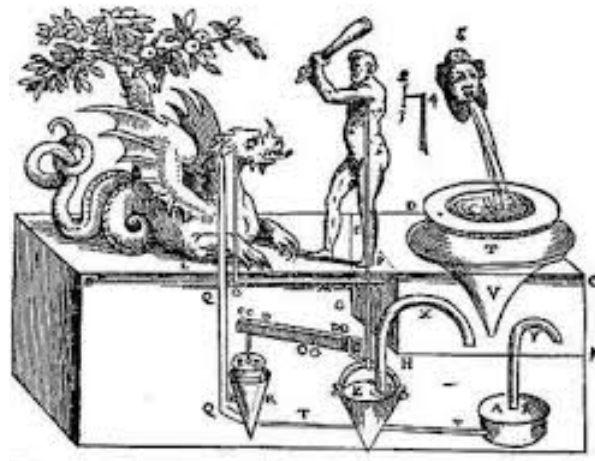


Bottom row: Pre-existing assets and readymades at The Mill.

THE MILL WATER FEATURE A STORIED ARMATURE WATERWAY

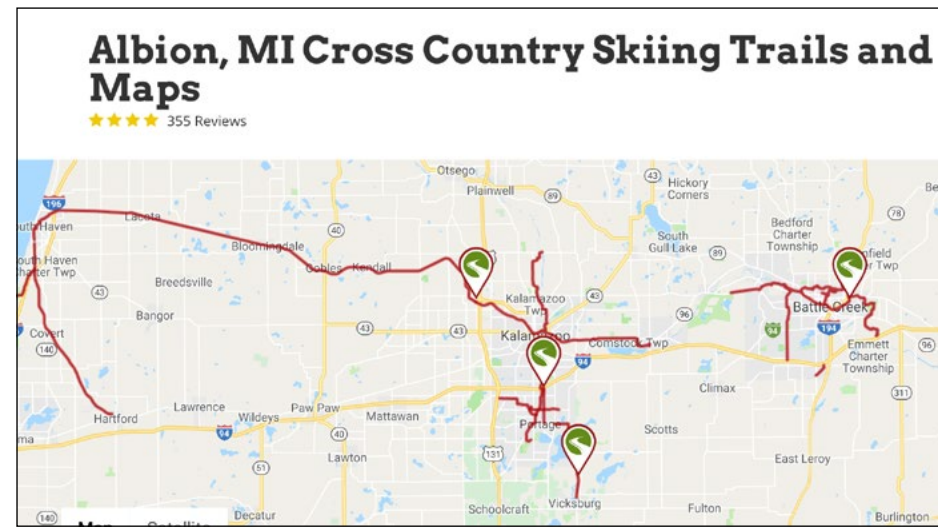
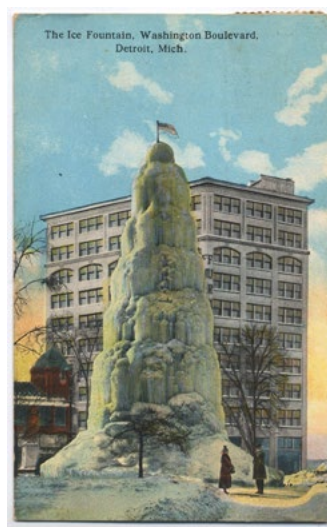
The Mill project is physically positioned in such a way that allows for the development of a unique walking water journey that could lead the visitor through a series of water feature expressions and hydraulic events. The armature for the journey would be the path from downtown: W. Prairie Street to Clark Park; taking journeyers past the dam, to the head of the grist mill stone, and on to the inlet for the Mill waterway. They could encounter the large sand filter and then move on to the area presently proposed as a “water feature” which ceremoniously offers water back to Portage Creek in better condition, Sonic water ambiance greets the ear and provides historical references to the workings of agriculture (the old grist mill) and industry (the paper mill). Water-related plumbing elements salvaged from the paper mill would be repurposed to create wonder and be examples of the site’s new mitigation and reuse efforts. At the end of the journey, visitors would be witness to the restoration and mitigation of land and water by ceremoniously returning Portage Creek to Portage Creek in better condition than received. In a sense, portage is a portal on multiple levels. The fountain function, from dam inlet to sand filter structure, to expression and on to aeration (sparge mitigation) could address water quality and be a take home learning moment.

The proposal on the next page, *Dialogue Along the Danube*, illustrates one approach to using natural hydraulic water pressure that avoids using pumps. The Mill project is unique in that it strives to improve the quality of the water that leaves its property, unlike past industrial practices that would discharge problems to the next down-river community. The fountain would address the civic responsibilities we all share in a way that is both intriguing and informative. Creating the storied armature could be accomplished in a phased approach by installing a series of “stubbed out” plumbing locations, ready to dispense water as commissions are created or ideas and funding allow. An added element of the fountain could be a solar powered water pump whereby the extent/magnitude of expression would be in direct relationship to the solar power produced, water pressure would depend on the photovoltaic delivery. Finally, consideration should be given to how the water feature might take on new forms during cold season events, as we saw in our winter Mill walk through.



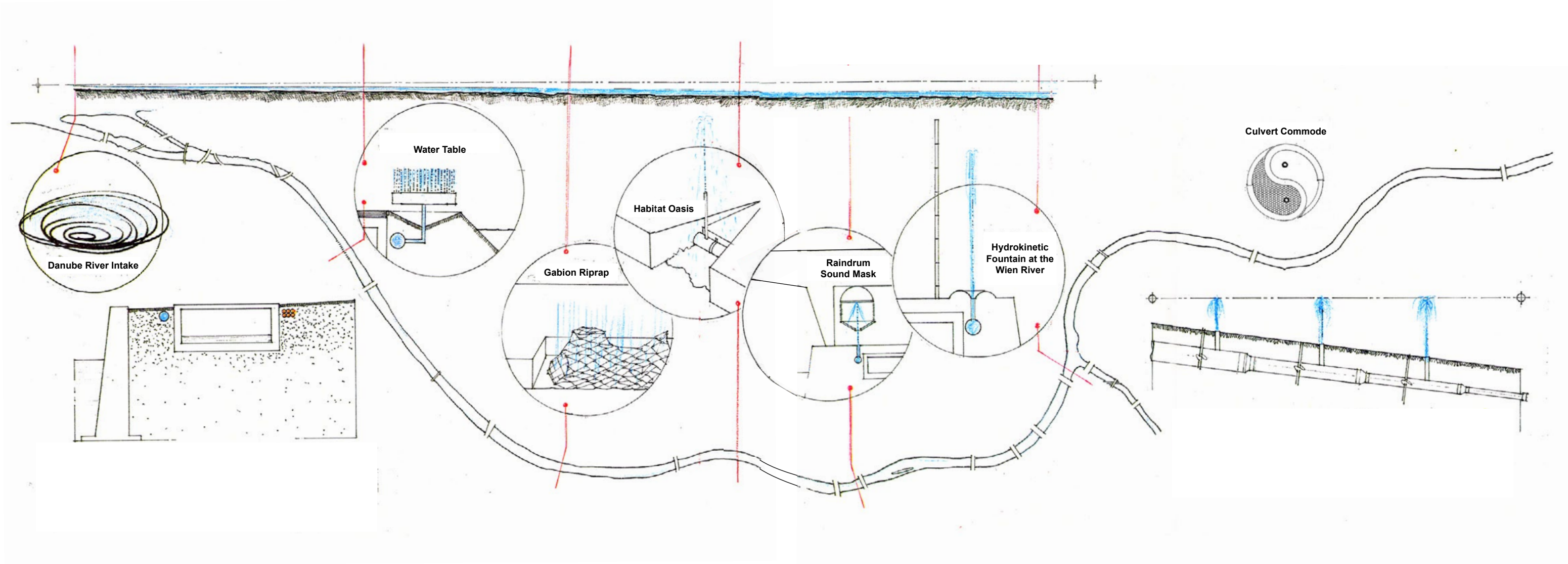
FOUNTAIN ARMATURE PALETTE

A palette for fountain armatures and expressions drawing from both The Mill's plumbing and the common vernacular. In anticipation of the discussion on the water garden/water feature area at The Mill.



WINTER PALETTE

A palette of examples for events and phenomena during winter months at The Mill.



THE DANUBE PIPELINE: A SERIES OF HYDROKINETIC EVENTS

A PREVIOUS ART MASTER PLAN ILLUSTRATES USING HYDRAULIC WATER PRESSURE FOR WATER FEATURES

Excerpt from *Dialogue Along the Danube* by Buster Simpson, 1994

A water pipeline laid along the side of the culvert would span the length of the Danube Canal from the Danube Canal inlet to the Wien River. This would directly tie together the sequence of hydrokinetic events. These events would share in a dialogue in order to give an episodic linear cohesiveness to the promenade experience.

The elevation at the Pipeline intake is between 15' and 20' higher than its eastern terminus at the confluence of the Danube Canal and the Wien River. This drop creates a water pressure which can be expressed at various locations along the walkway and can be utilized to propel the hydrokinetic events independent of the city's electricity. These hydrokinetic events are outlined here – some more developed than others. The intent is to display the surging energy of the Danube through events downstream. It is not my intent to design all the fountains, but rather to establish a premise. This premise would require all future fountains to display their maximum potential head (the river elevation at the inlet) plus to enhance the water quality.

A discussion needs to occur regarding attitudes toward concealing or exposing the sanitary box culvert. As stated by Hermann Bahr, "We don't want costumes anymore, neither do our homes..." (or infrastructure?) Can the culvert be revealed from time to time to expose the city's plumbing? Can the top of the concrete box be the promenade surface?

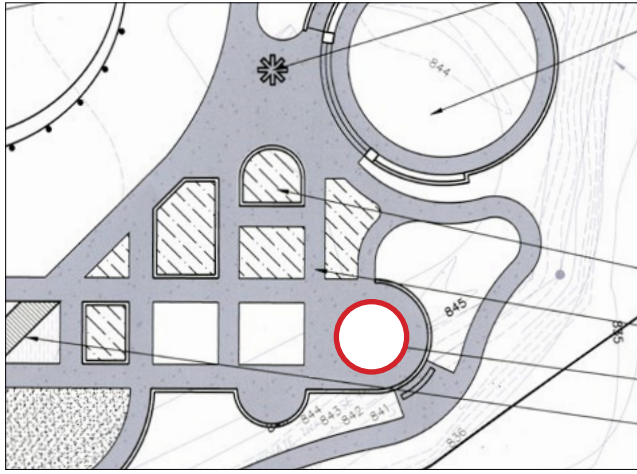
In my proposals, I take advantage of the installation of the sanitary pipeline for its intrinsic qualities and I keep in mind a cost-effective approach. An additional recommendation would be to install a media conduit along the length of the culvert which, at a later date, could provide needed technology for artists, performers, and others to join in the dialogue.



BIO DIGESTER

Images from the Lloyd Blocks in Portland, Oregon, where black and gray water is being treated in a visible and educational way to demonstrate integrated sustainability. At the Mill, both black and gray water, including waste water and solids from beer production, could be used for secondary uses such as for flushing toilets, irrigating landscapes and it could be processed to be landscape mulch or become part of a wetlands “water feature.”

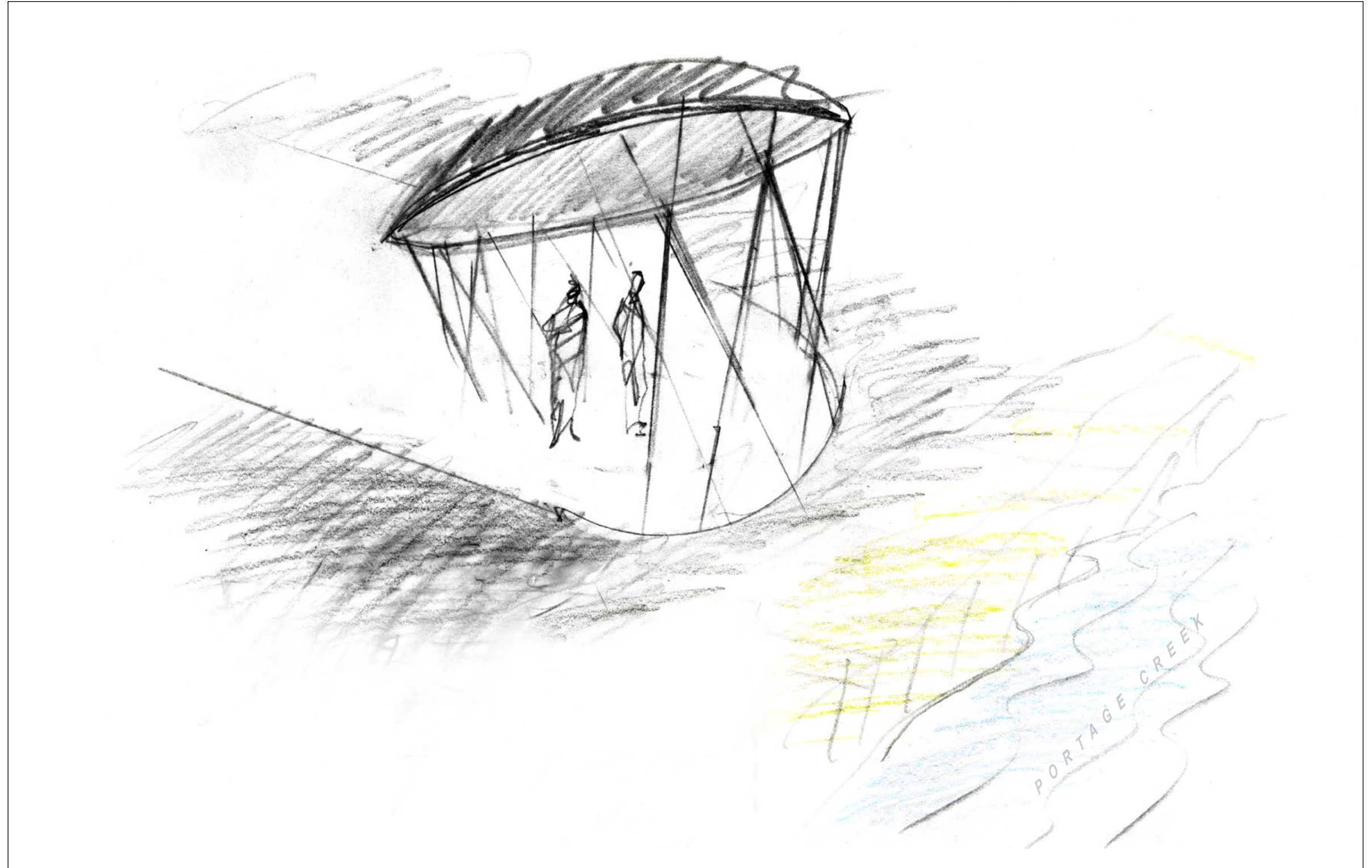
American Assets Trust developed this mixed-use, three-building project that spans four blocks as part of Portland’s Lloyd EcoDistrict. The three buildings share one of the largest natural organic recycling treatment systems in the US, which treats all the buildings’ wastewater (including human waste from toilets) for reuse for toilet flushing, mechanical cooling and below surface landscape irrigation in an urban setting. It was permitted as a Water Pollution Control Facility with two on-site injection dry wells. The project showcases the economic and ecological benefits of district scale onsite wastewater treatment and reuse. Lloyd Blocks project abstract available here: <https://www.ecobuilding.org/code-innovations/case-studies/human-waste-treatment-and-water-reuse-at-hassalo-on-eighth>



A parabolic satellite reflector could serve the purpose to amplify the Portage Creek sound up and onto the pathway thus offering visitors on the bridge a bankside "babbling sonic brook" experience. Design considerations could embrace either the half or full round parabolic reflector.

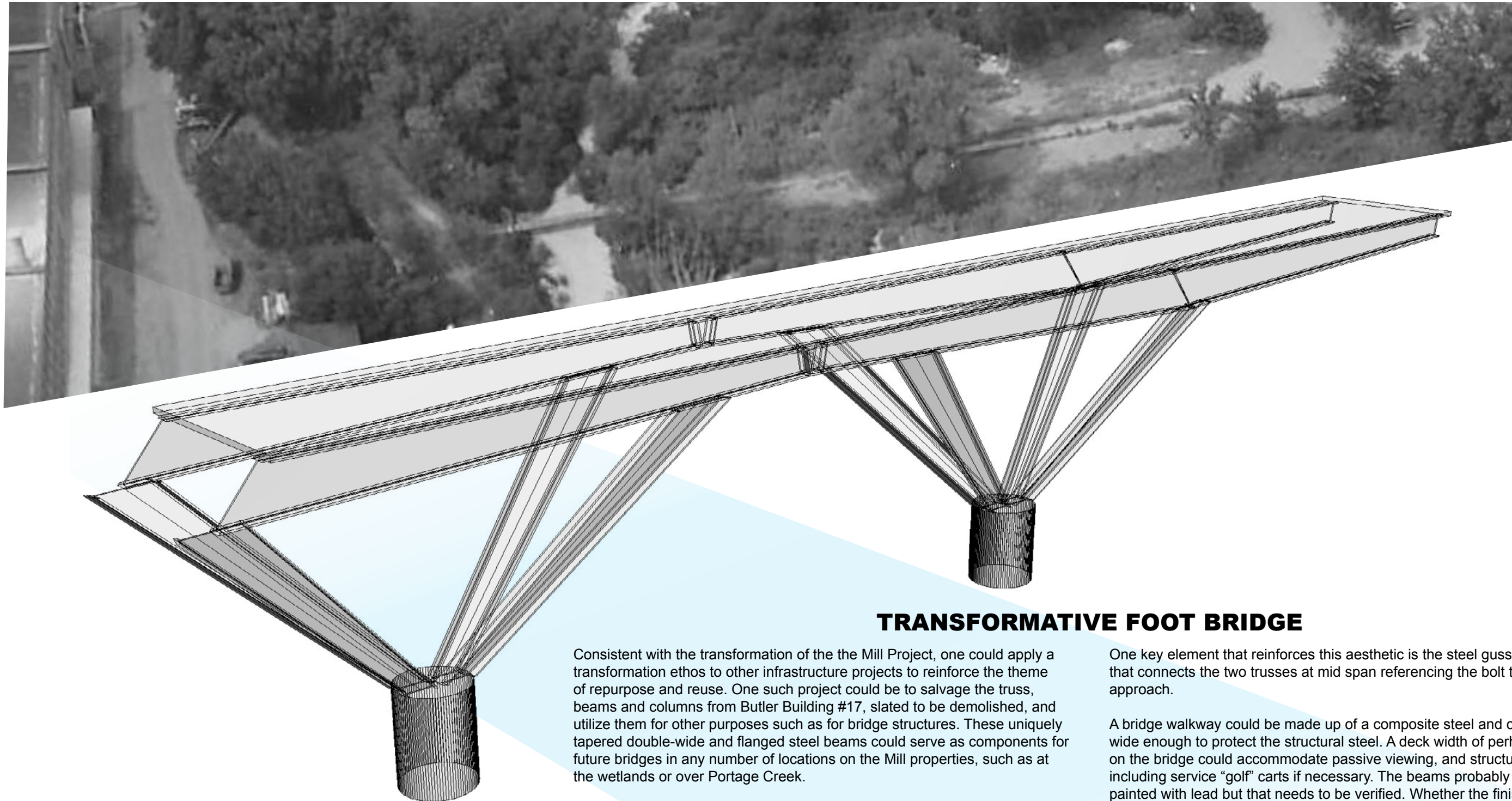


Here, a structure on Sinclair Inlet in Bremerton, WA, is an unintentional sonic listening pergola. When a visitor stands within the roof structure the wave action is reflected up and into the pergola. A parabolic reflector would have been more effective at capturing the phenomena.



PORTAGE CREEK SONIC PAVILION OVERLOOK

A sculptural parabolic roof structure serves to focus the sounds emanating from Portage Creek to the water garden pavilion. In addition, the pavilion overlook provides a sun and rain shelter to serve as a contemplative gathering area focusing on Portage Creek and wetlands. The design of circular parabola shape would be driven by acoustical considerations as well as responding to existing circular landscape patterns shown in the water garden.



TRANSFORMATIVE FOOT BRIDGE

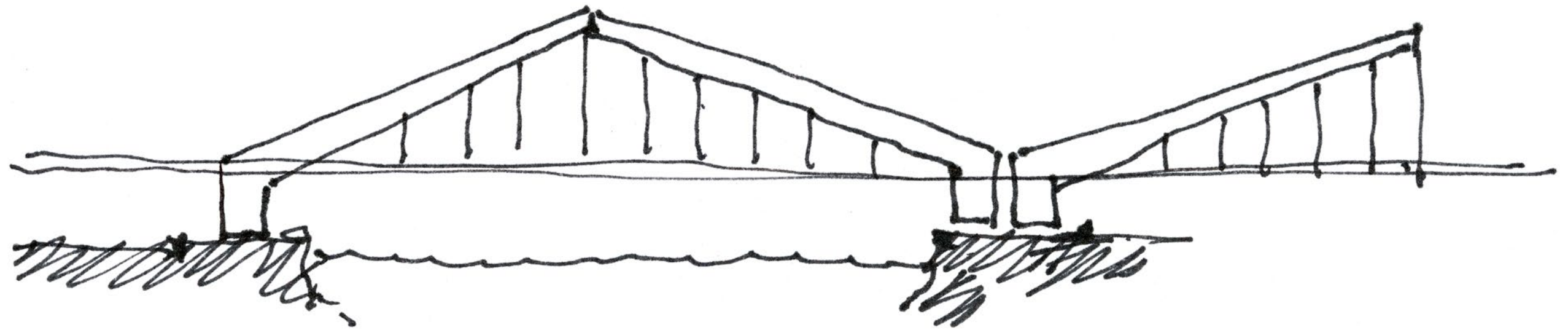
Consistent with the transformation of the the Mill Project, one could apply a transformation ethos to other infrastructure projects to reinforce the theme of repurpose and reuse. One such project could be to salvage the truss, beams and columns from Butler Building #17, slated to be demolished, and utilize them for other purposes such as for bridge structures. These uniquely tapered double-wide and flanged steel beams could serve as components for future bridges in any number of locations on the Mill properties, such as at the wetlands or over Portage Creek.

Perhaps one immediate consideration for reuse of salvaged beams or columns is for a bridge entry into the Mill properties from the town of Vicksburg via either W. Park or W. Maple Street, re-establishing historic linkages of paths once taken by paper mill workers. The truss span is longer than the width of Portage Creek enabling concrete footings to be on land. Mobilization of construction ideally would occur during the Portage Creek mitigation process. It is possible that some aspect of bridge construction could adopt the traditional Butler Building truss erection approach as a prefab kit of parts, thus acknowledging the source of the repurposed approach.

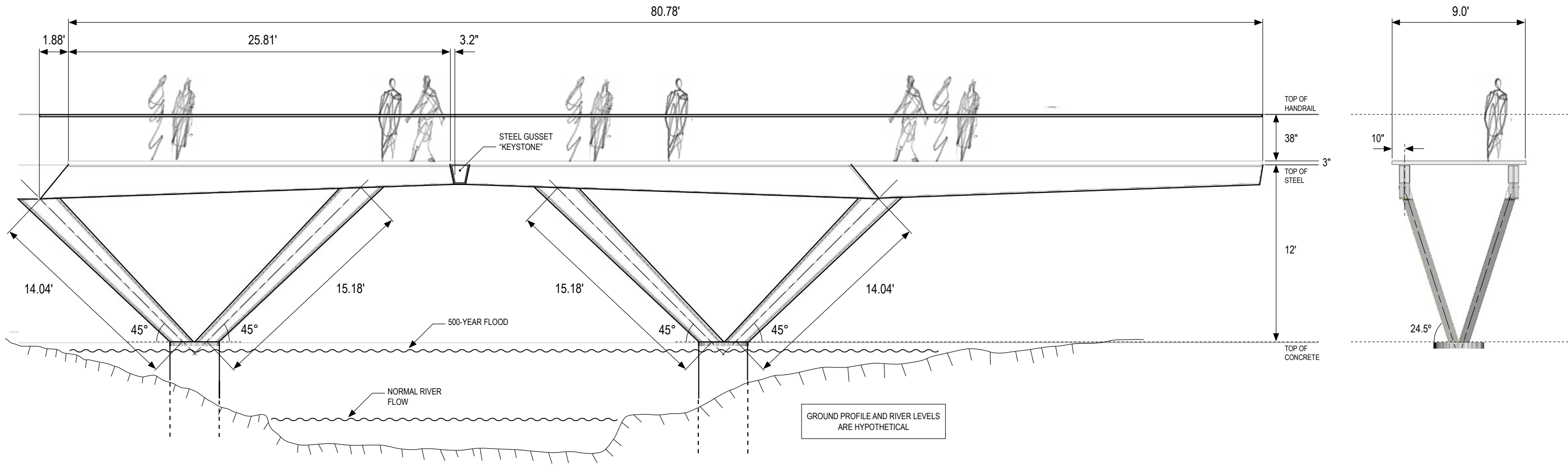
One key element that reinforces this aesthetic is the steel gusset “key stone” that connects the two trusses at mid span referencing the bolt together kit approach.

A bridge walkway could be made up of a composite steel and concrete deck wide enough to protect the structural steel. A deck width of perhaps 8-10 feet on the bridge could accommodate passive viewing, and structurally live loads including service “golf” carts if necessary. The beams probably were not painted with lead but that needs to be verified. Whether the finish on a bridge would be painted or weathered steel is to be determined. In order for the community and neighborhood to enjoy the amenities at the Mill, I wonder if the porosity of discrete entries into the mill site could read more like they are part of the community. The location suggested for this bridge is not intended as a major entry but rather could become one that town folk know about, with its location becoming an imitate discovery over time.

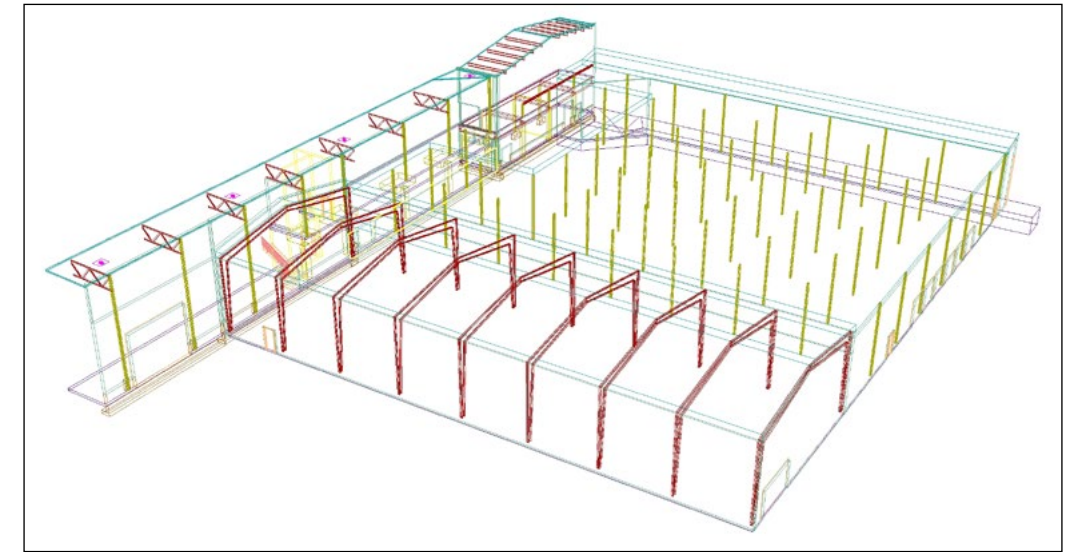
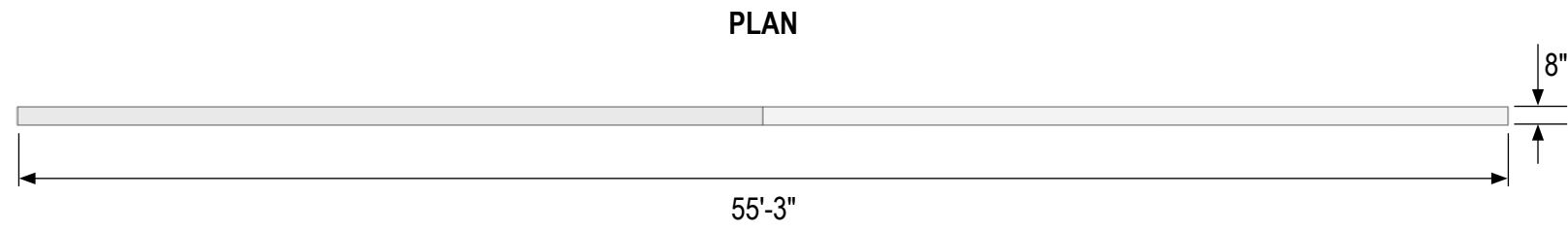
Design #1, by Paul Diedrich at Grid Engineering in Seattle, was something he did concurrent to #2, but recently sent to me. This design addresses comments raised during review of design #1 such as the desire to show the Butler Truss structure above the deck rather than below and has the added advantage of keeping the structure intact including existing connections. By simply cutting off the vertical column where needed, the bridge truss is finished. This design may be much more cost effective. The cable supports could be placed in an attractive pattern.



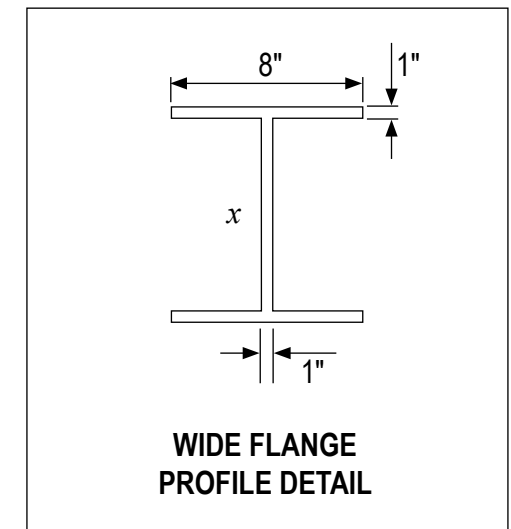
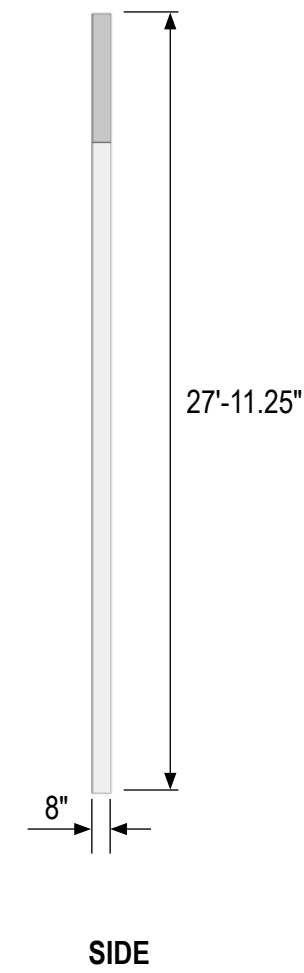
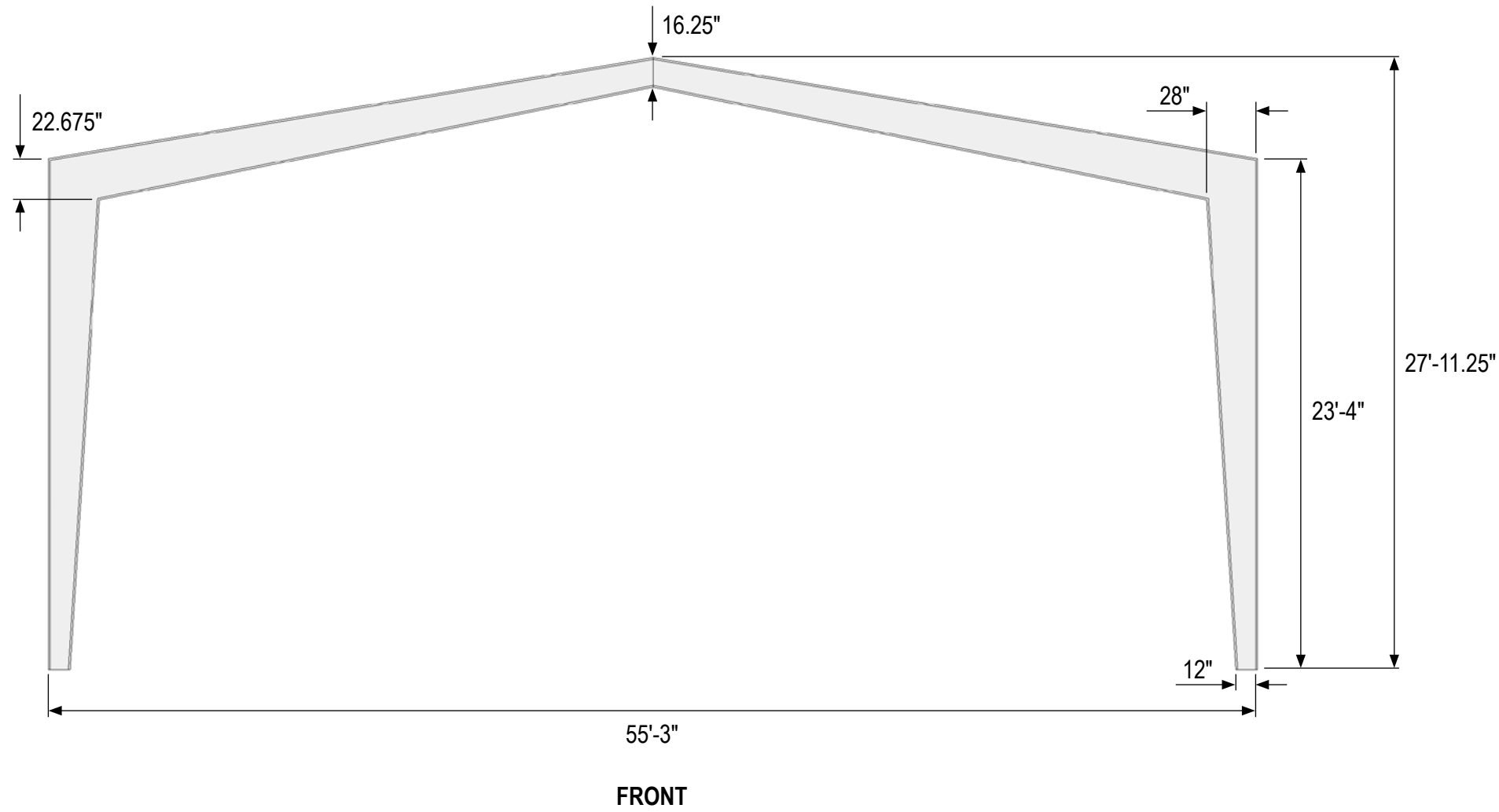
1 SUSPENDED DECK DESIGN CONCEPT



2 PIER SUPPORTED DECK DESIGN CONCEPT
 SCALE: 3/16" = 1'
 0' 5' 10'



EXISTING TRUSS DIMENSIONS ARE BASED ON POINT CLOUD MODEL REFERENCE.
ALL DIMENSIONS NEED TO BE VERIFIED.





View from the beer garden.



View from the entry.



GANTRY PORTAL

The Gantry Portal provides a gateway and framing device when viewed from either the Mill's W. Avenue (Highway street) entry or from the beer garden to the north of the gantry. The gantry, a relic of early loading dock days, becomes a time and metaphor-rich portal for Mill events and art.

The Gantry Portal could function in many ways, including: as a large welcoming 'reader board; a large LED screen with rear projection screens (visible from both directions); as venues for electronic media artists; or as a theatrical scrim that projects the shadow plays of passing visitors.

The "canvas" of the Portal would hang high enough to provide necessary clearance, still commanding a generous visible surface. A first step toward pursuing this option would be to assess the concept's value as a repurposed industrial artifact and its ability to function as a useful and intriguing element in this capacity.

The very first of Marcel Duchamp's *readymades* — ordinary manufactured objects that became art through a minimal artistic process — was called *Bottle Rack*. This is a replica housed at the Philadelphia Museum of Art:



Marcel Duchamp "ready-made" bottle rack. Modified chandelier augmented with LED lights inside Pint Glasses for illumination. Glass drying rack as armature drawing from the Duchamp "ready-made". In this case using pint glass with an armature to provide chandeliers in the tap room and where appropriate.



Artist-painted pint glasses, as a social benefit fundraiser or as artist commissions.



Mobius Band saw blade with poem. A hanging piece, possibly modified to be a chandelier, could draw the connection between the Simpson Timber Company and The Mill. 12-gauge steel saw blade, paint, charcoal. 6' x 4' x 14'. Great Hall at the Puget Sound Environmental Learning Center, Bainbridge Island, WA.



Frankenhuth Lager Beer crate. Gift of artist to the collection of The Mill at Vicksburg.



Glass beer bottle chandelier Tempe, AZ. Suggest augmenting with LED lights inside bottles.



Extensive collection of beer cans as decor. Collector, Seattle, WA.

INTERIOR EMBELLISHMENTS AT THE MILL

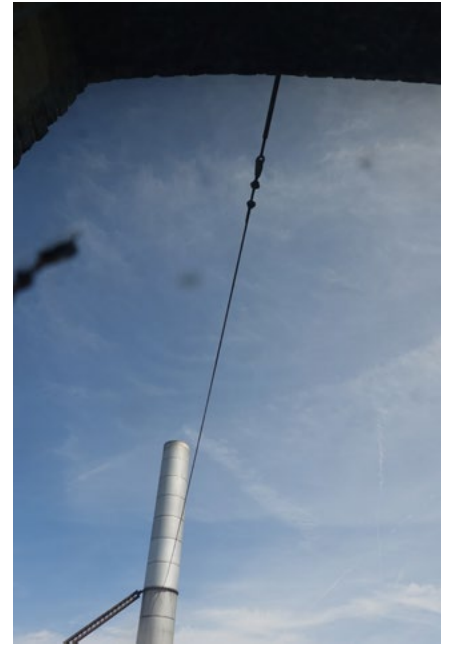


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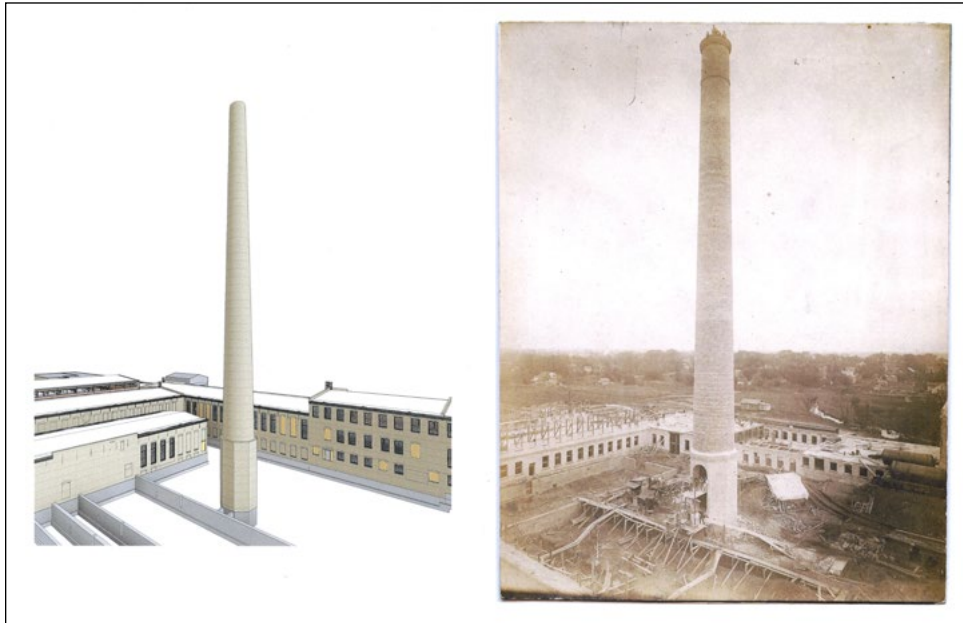
Three views of Tribute in Light.



Exterior of existing stainless stack.



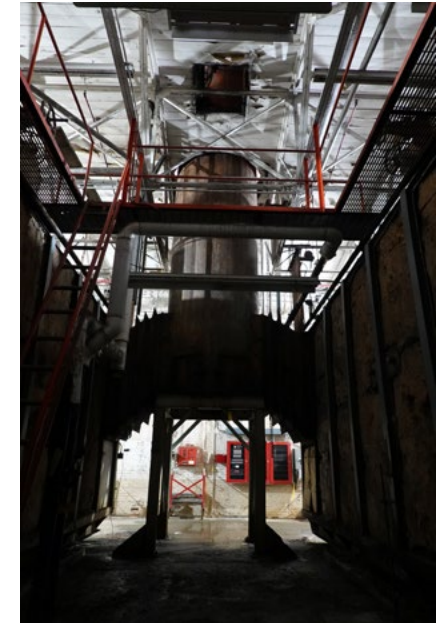
Exterior of existing stainless stack showing cable connection



Original brick factory smoke stack.



Historical image and model of original coal plant smoke stack.



Existing stack, interior and exterior image.



Chimney swift sanctuary in a decommissioned Farmington, MI stack with swallow swarm.

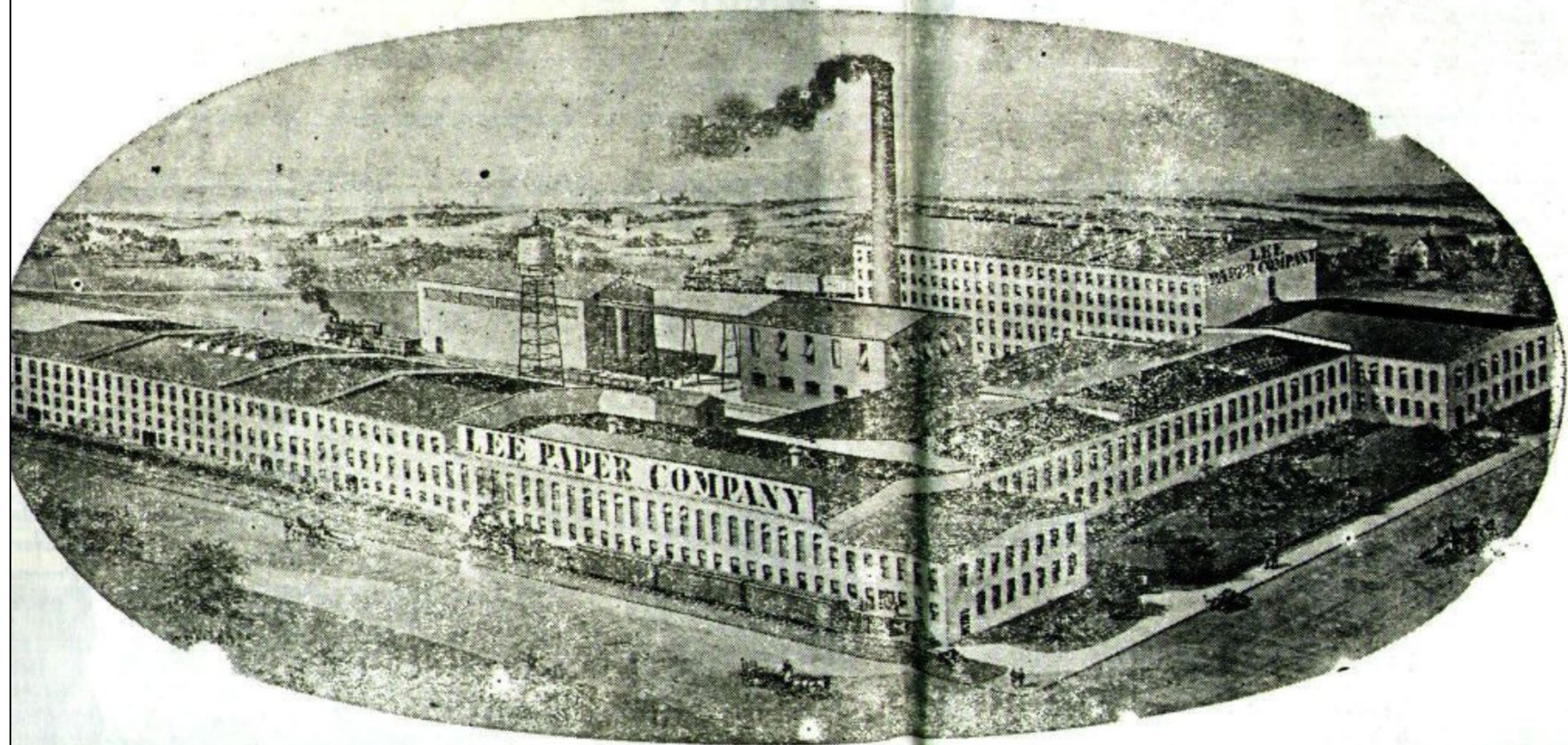
ILLUMINAIR STACK

The image of the no longer existing, but once iconic, 19th century, 250-foot-tall carbon emitting smoke stack could be transformed to become an illuminated column, called *Illuminair Stack*. The memory of the old brick and mortar stack is transformed into an ephemeral contemporary beacon serving as a wayfinding device during special events and as a symbol of The Mill's current transformative mission. The suggested approach of the *Illuminair Stack* is one possibility to consider. Another consideration would be to repurpose the existing stainless-steel, much shorter stack mentioned below. *Illuminair Stack* metaphorically reinforces the idea of the decline of carbon based energy sources. The large shipping and receiving building could support a solar array to add to the sustainability mission and complement *Illuminair Stack*. This could happen during some future phase when solar panel efficiency and affordability allow.

Illuminair Stack could be illuminated to full intensity during events, and in some lesser mode during nonevents or not be engaged at all. Light pollution, dark sky ordinances, and nocturnal bird flight patterns are issues to be aware of. Recently the 911 "Tribute in Light" has found a way to resolve the nocturnal bird population issues. Costs of illumination using powerful LED lights could be efficient and effective.

Utilizing the existing stainless-steel stack provides a host of opportunities. It could be used as bat habitat, a light pipe, a wind directed periscope/camera obscura and/or as a sonic sound work. In the case of the sound piece, turning the two stack cables into an aeolian (wind) harp would use the stack as a resonating chamber. These ideas would bring sight or sound events into the interior of the large furnace space for visitors to enjoy. There are a lot of unknowns about the structure and this would require some investigation. It does present an interesting opportunity.

THE LEE PAPER COMPANY



MICHIGAN'S LARGEST PAPER MILL