

Sac Community Incubator

“How might we increase pedestrian traffic to Winn Park?” was the question that started my design thinking. Pedestrian traffic is essential to the success of any business that is going to occupy the vacant building in the park. In order to attract crowd there need to be activities and amenities that people seek throughout the day. My goal is to find the balance that enables both the community and the business to thrive. Winn Park compares to other busy parks in the city it doesn't have the concentration of businesses or commercials that bring people to the surrounding area. “How might we bring unique business to the park?”

Design Innovation

For designers or makers who want to start their own business but don't have capital it is hard to find a visible yet affordable place to rent like in the midtown. What if Winn Park offers some small spaces that local designer and makers can rent temporary as studio or shop to sell their creations? It will create an unique market place to draw in visitors. On the 2nd level of the elevated structure there are eleven 20' shipping containers and two 10' containers that can be re-purposed as shops. With interior modular furniture and display shelving systems the use of the space can change throughout the day. To make the inside of the shipping containers more attractive window openings can be strategically placed according to the sun exposure to let in the natural light. With long term operation cost in mind there are solar panels on the roof and the Living Machine system that utilize nature plants to treat waste water on-site for reuse. Both strategies will save renters utility cost continually.

The 2nd level in addition to serve as incubator for the upcoming new businesses it can also serves as an emergency flood shelter if the levees break. With the ability to generate power and clean water on-site Winn Park can help the community to be more resilient.

To access the second level there is a continuous ramp wraps around the existing building. The ramp serves as accessible route to the first level and second level as well as viewing platform to overlook the park and two courtyards from different perspectives and elevations. Two other ramps on the ground level lead visitors from the North-West and South-West park access directly to the lower level sunken courtyard. Previously the lower level was only accessibly by two small stairs which makes the integration of the lower level with the rest of the park difficult. By creating the sunken courtyard it allows the outdoor space to be a continuation of the interior space and the 5' elevation difference shelled the sound and light from the neighbors across the street. The kitchen on the lower level can directly serve the birthday party or wedding celebration in the courtyard.

Due to the construction type of the existing building the walls are harder to modify especially without structure information. Based on preliminary analysis given by a structure engineer two non-bearing walls running North-South on the south side were removed to create one large entrance space to house an ordering counter and some seating. Three exterior doors with full height glazing make the interior feels more spatial.

I envision a board game café will work well with the existing building layout and doesn't require a lot of staffs to go up and down the stairs serving foods. Restaurants do better when there are activities for people to do after their meals. The lower level can be set up for casual get together and allow for activities that are louder in nature such as music performance and playing board games. First level can be configure as a quieter space for people to remote work with variety of seating types, reliable WiFi, killer coffee, and access to power. There are currently several small rooms on both levels and they can be converting to private focus rooms or meeting rooms. With solid concrete walls on four sides, acoustic privacy is not going to be an issue. This café will attract working professionals throughout the day, other users such as students and friends meeting each other after work will trickle in and out. With the variety of user types there will be a steady flow of pedestrian traffic to the park.

Community Impact

How might Winn Park contribute to healthy and livable communities? Winn Park has the ideal location, convenient public transportation and open space to offer urban amenities to the community. An outdoor fitness park underneath the large existing shade trees with magical solar lit bike path that leads to habitat gardens filled with wildlife such as butterflies will encourage people to move. A jungle gym takes advantage of the elevated structures with a zip line will be the dream playground for every kid. Looking for a place to cool off in a hot summer day? How about soaking your feet in the reflecting pool fed by the clean water filtered by the living plants on-site? For kids who love to read can visit the book sharing shipping container on the 2nd level to browse through a selection of free children's books. In the hub of all these activities is a café that serves amazing food especially freshly made apple pie to go with huge selections of board games that guarantee a good time with friends when hours can easily gone by without notice. Winn Park will be the place that allows comfortable physical movement and build positive social interactions to create a sense of belonging, a sense of community.

Feasibility

Shipping containers are being repurposed to houses, offices, schools, retails, restaurants and many other uses quite commonly in recent years. With the structure integrity the shipping containers already have it should be a fairly simple process to erect the steel frames and anchor all the pieces together. Everything that were proposed above already been done elsewhere so it is feasible to make the environment described above a reality.

Historic Appropriateness

Historically the fire alarm building was design to serve the community in emergency situation. Even though its function is tightly connected to the community, the physical building was totally isolated in the heart of a wonderful community space. With the proposed design the building can finally open up to the community and together with the rest of the Winn Park it will become a functional and vibrant space for the residents of Sacramento to enjoy.