

# Reflection

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## General Information

Chicago as the significant city of Midwest United State is during a decline like other Midwest cities. Although Chicago has the appropriate combination of human resources, manufacturing businesses and word institutions, it still lacks a significant industry like finance in New York, entertainment in Los Angeles and government in Washington. The Lakeside site will become the chance to achieve this goal.

Originally the site of U.S. Steel's South Works, was first opened in 1882 as the North Chicago Railway Mill Company. Since then the site went through several name changes before becoming the U.S. Steel South Works. The neighborhood around the factory, South Chicago, was filled with immigrants of all types who came to the area for the well-paying jobs at the mill. In the 1970s The South Works began a long period of downsizing, before its final closure on 1992. Since then the site has been inactive. Buildings on the site were demolished and there are only some foundations and the ore walls left on the vacant site. Several proposals have been introduced, but the basic idea remains, a mixture of industrial, commercial and residential with new parkland along the lakefront.



Site Image of 1990



Site Image now

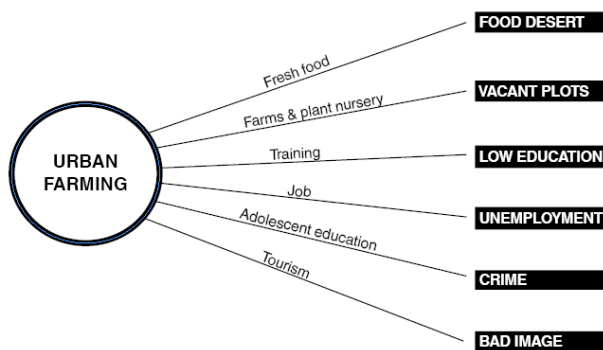
Now South Chicago is one of the worst neighborhoods in Chicago due to the high crime rate, high unemployment and low income. In spite of the potential of good waterfront, it is hard to keep the site away from the bad image of the neighborhood. There need an integrated solution to combine the existing neighborhood and the brand new vacant site, which can treat the problems in the neighborhood at the same time give it a new brand.

## Kick-off Project --- Urban Farming

We propose urban farming as the catalyst to get the development started. In the first place, more than half area of South Chicago is in the food desert, which means the people living here

are lacking access to fresh food. Urban farming can give chances to the people to get fresh food faster and cheaper, which can improve the living standard and bring the neighborhood a healthier life. In addition, urban farming is already promoted by government and organizations in Chicago, that is to say we have enough money and technical support at the initial stage.

Urban farming can provide fresh food and at the same time it will provide opportunity to get education and training which will help people to find a job in the neighborhood. It is also easy to be constructed and removed to save money for the next step. After the large scale of urban farming is placed on the site, it will become a new green brand for South Chicago to attract people.



Advantages of Urban Farming



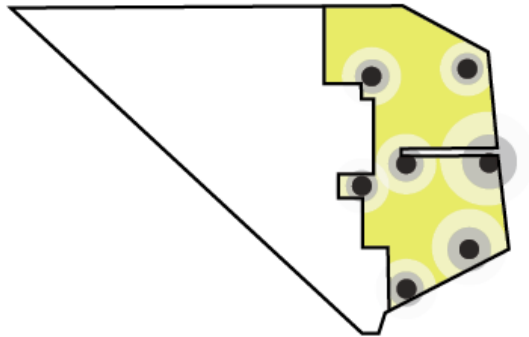
Urban Farming Filler Concept

## Development Concept

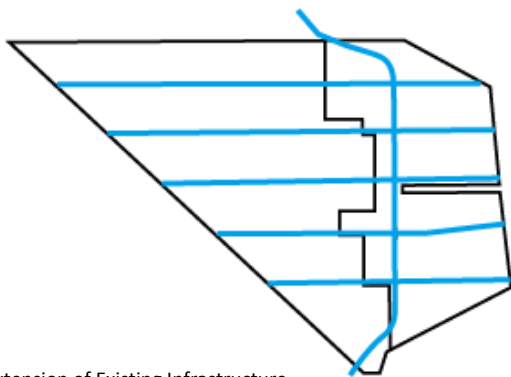
In the proposal of SOM, the urban development will start at one part of the site, including retail, restaurant entertainment venues and residential units. But in fact, the density of this area is reduced a lot during the development because this area is hard to attract commercial company to invest money because the lack of potential customers at the same time it is hard to attract people to settle down because there are not enough public service.

For this reason, we insert a new concept of development , "growing seeds", to ensure the continuous development. The first three seeds are urban farming community center, fresh market and urban farming research center, combining with the urban farming land filled in the vacant site. The community center can provide chance for the people to get training to build urban farming in their house or get jobs on the farmland of market. The research center will attract researchers outside and the market can attract the citizens nearby. These decentralized seeds can be developed independently to ensure they can be supported by different investor to keep the development going and at the same time they can connect each other. After the urban farming brand is established, urban function will grow around these three seeds and new seeds will come in.

In this initial stage, some of the left foundations are used as the foundations of greenhouses and the rest of the site are filled with different plant which can treat the soil polluted by the factory. The existing infrastructure in the neighborhood are extended into the new site to help the development of the seeds. Finally, the programs in the site will grow in to the linear grid and form the different function strips, which will include residential district, industrial and residential district, commercial and residential district, education and residential district and the most outstanding central urban farming district.



Growing Seeds



Extension of Existing Infrastructure



Master Plan

## Central Farming District

The central farming district is the starting point of the whole development of the site. The position of this area concentrates the most valuable conditions. The community center in the neighborhood are easy to gather people and it is near the central farming district, which can make a link between the neighborhood and the lakeside. The lakeshore drive pass through this district so it also can bring people from the north and the south. What's more, there are four ore walls stand near the canal, which are valuable remains of the previous steel factory and easily transformed from industrial elements to landscape elements

We propose to start our first step at this area, using the existing ore walls. First of all, they represent the memory of the old factory and now they are in danger of being demolished in SOM's proposal. We use urban farming as a catalyst to develop and also bring a new concept "Growing" into the site. The ore walls are used to be a container of ore and we replace the ore with urban farming landscape, which is the new identity of the site. The ore wall will be preserved with the memory of the steel factory in the future. At the beginning of the construction, the seed buildings are built around the walls to make it easy to attract people to come and at the same time give the walls a new feature.

## Personal Project---Urban Farming Information Center

The Central Farming District is the start of the whole master plan. The market and the research center are set at the ends of the ore walls as the program seeds. The market and the farmland will attract the people of the old neighborhood into the vacant site to work. The research center will attract the researcher to establish a new research center of urban farming. At this stage, an information center is needed to provide the information of what will happen in this site to attract investors to invest money and attract people come to live.

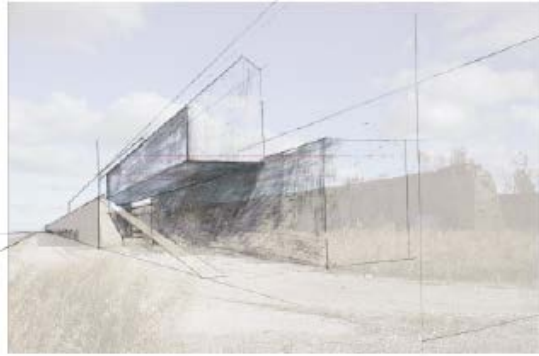
After the whole site is developed, there still remains a lot of farming land in the central farming district. It will become an urban farming theme park, which combines the urban farming field, ore wall landscape and urban farming supporting programs. The information center can change to be a visitor center to provide service for the visitors.



The space between the walls are defined into three different areas: urban farming experimental area, urban farming experience area and supporting program area. The information center is located at the start of the urban farming theme park as one of the supporting program, in between the narrowest space of the ore walls and surrounded by canal and urban farming park. It will act as an introduction of the whole area.

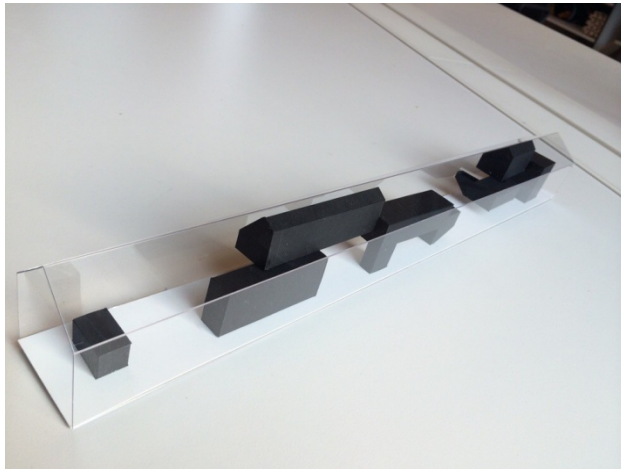


Condition of Ore Walls



Imagination of Ore Walls

The existing walls form a special interesting boundary for people to experience the old memory of the industry factory. In order to create a new complete space, a new roof will cover the existing space. The old and the new facade form a contrastive interior space and they will act as a container of new functions. Different function blocks are filled into the space between the walls, not interrupting the complete waterfront space and the urban farming park. These blocks form a box in box feeling to make the new function distinguished from the boundary. Some blocks will extend out of the wall to tell people something is happening here. A glass cover will make the building more like an exhibition box, which will gradually transit from transparent to translucent to arouse people's curiosities to get in. The glass facade is well designed to combine climate, interior feeling and architectural appearance.



Concept model of inside function block



Concept model of inside function block



Changing Facade



Interior Atmosphere

## Conclusion

The whole project of South works focus on how to bring back the glory of the neighborhood. We found a new identity of urban farming growing city to help the neighborhood solve the social problems and build a new type of city. All the effort can easily be applied in another place and it will become a prototype of urban farming neighborhood. All these are come from the research of the site, the city even the whole Midwest. The conclusion will not come out from only the site scale. It is important to learn how to deal with such a large scale in the complex studio.