Reflection
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My graduation project located in South Chicago. The site is an abandoned industry area which is totally empty now. My design developed from urban idea to building idea to detail idea. For this empty site, it is very important to have a good urban proposal to make everything start to work. Our group’s urban design is based on a large amount of research. In another word, the design started from research.

Group strategy of Urban Development
The spatial quality of the site is quite good. Lakeshore Drive passes through the site, and it takes only 20 minutes from the site to Chicago downtown by car. On the lakefront of Lake Michigan, there is a park recently opened. In the middle of the site there are a canal and the Ore walls, giving strong identity to this area. These are the advantages of our site.

But it also has its negative side, otherwise it wouldn't be abandon for decades of years. Through the research we found out that site is in a so-called "food desert" area, which means it would take more than 20 minutes if people want to buy some fresh fruit and vegetables. The adjacent neighborhood is also problematic. It is suffering from many issues such as unemployment, low education, crime and vacant lots. The bad image of the neighborhood impede the development of the site. It is necessary to give a strong anchor to the site and develop both the empty site and the problematic neighborhood.

Our proposal is to use urban farming as the anchor, covering the whole empty area and some vacant lots in the neighborhood at the very first stage, then gradually infill urban elements to mix with the urban farming area. We have several reasons for doing this: urban farming can solve the food desert problem for the closed neighborhoods; it provides jobs and trainings for the adjacent neighborhood; the urban farming together with landscape can be started very quickly and attract people in Chicago area to visit the site. Actually, urban farming is very realistic in Chicago, the Chicago government is encouraging urban farming in Chicago city and there is an organization named Growing Power establishing increasing number of urban farms in Milwaukee and Chicago.

The developing mode is to spread some “seed project” in the farm lands to activate the urban development around them. The most important part of the master plan is the Central Farming District (CFD), which is in the middle of the site with the canal and Ore walls dividing it into several strips. At the beginning, the CFD is an enclosed farm in between Ore walls.
Personal Project --- Urban Farming Theme Restaurant
As the site is developing, the central urban farming district will transit from an enclosed farm to a theme park, to meet the needs of more and more visitors, the service function become increasing important. For this consideration, my own project is a theme restaurant in the central area, to combine urban farming activity with eating.

The location of the building is at the end of the public strip of the theme park, the meeting point of our urban farming theme park and the lakefront public park. Since the theme park is not merely for production anymore and its aim is open to the public, the theme restaurant can jump out from the Ore walls to the lake front, visible from both parks.

There are mainly two issues the building needs to deal with: the landscape and urban farming theme. My aim is to used the relatively small program gently divided the exterior into spaces of different qualities, to cut a inner courtyard from the park as a vegetable garden, and also create interactions between the two. By study the basic geometry, I found that the circle has the duality of both introverted and extroverted, which can meet my idea of emphasizing both the inner urban farming courtyard and the outer landscape.
The building is a ring-shape building defining a vegetable garden in the centre. By placing two solid walls in the inner and outer walls respectively, people would have contrast feeling inside the building, either focusing the inner court or leading to the outside open landscape. The curved surface induces movement. The space is fluid space in which people circulate together with the flows of different but continuous sceneries, the dynamic experience arouse people's consciousness of the both the farming courtyard and open landscape.

The circular shape has a strong self-enclose character, but the building should be public place that welcome visitors. So the south part of the ring is lifted, opening the courtyard to the outside, letting a public route pass through it. By lifting one part of the ring, the route won't cut the ring into two parts, the continuous inside experience is kept. Because the ring is so strongly define the inner courtyard, even though the building is partly raise, the introverted character of the courtyard is still there and become an more interesting status that have connection with outside.

The architectural concept lead to the structural proposal: two concrete walls combined together as a big cantilever, supporting the floor and roof. I use physical model to research the quality of circular walls and found out it act better than straight wall, so that I can use minimal structural element to support the building. There won't be any structural element on the glass wall side which can give people exciting views to the courtyard and open landscape.