GO.
Detroit

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Detroiters have had a long-time love affair with transportation. Known for the birthplace of the mass produced automobile, the city sits on a network of roads, rails, rivers, and paths. This holds true at any scale within Detroit, as proven by the site of the Globe Building which straddles the Detroit River, Atwater and Orleans St., the Dequindre Cut and Detroit Riverwalk. Immediately surrounding the Globe are parks, marinas, and concert venues. Pan out further and the site becomes a part of a larger network of riverfront bars, biking and walking trails, inner city clubs, and open fields. In its current state, the Globe has become an abandoned legacy to the industrial might Detroit possessed well into the 20th century. Its future however is bright with a new purpose, one which ties the mobility of Detroiters into a single point of convergence regardless of season or mode of transportation.
Why The Globe?

Downtown Proximity

Interior Flexibility

Infrastructural Connectivity

Recreational Activity
Part of a larger network

The Globe will seek to draw in users from a number of directions. Paths will be built up from entrances on the Dequindre Cut, St. Aubin Transient Marina, Franklin St., and the Tercentennial State Park which ultimately links up to the Detroit River Walk. Paths are initially arranged in a manner to accommodate marine, motorized, and pedestrian traffic. Beyond that, users will ultimately determine the best trail for specific modes of transport. What is initially deemed suitable for a bike path may become more enjoyable for joggers based on the initial approach, grades throughout the path, material, length, and the final exodus from the structure. Paths are also meant to be transcended from one another, so that users looking for lower slopes or shorter paths may ‘jump’ from one trail to another via ramps and stairs throughout the building. Uses within the Globe will also change with each season, as bicycles give way to snow boards, joggers to cross country skis, motorcyclists to snowmobiles, and kayakers to ice skating. The facility is meant to adapt to changing programmatic conditions regardless of what Detroiters use to get around town.
Metered Appropriation of Circulation
Phase 0: Current Site Context

The building is shown in its current site context (courtesy of Google Maps). St. Aubin Transient Marina is visible to the East, while the historic harbor and Detroit River are directly South East of the Globe. The Dequindre Cut bike and pedestrian path is located against the East side of the building, with Atwater St. running perpendicular to the southern termination point of the Cut. The entry to the Detroit River Walk is just visible in the bottom left corner of the map, which currently dead-ends into a sidewalk that jogs up to Atwater Street. Chene Park lies just beyond the Marina North East of the Globe.
Phase 1: Excavation and Demolition

Demolition of the existing roof, interior walls, and remaining glass would be the first steps taken in the revitalization of the Globe. The harbor would be extended into the building in order to provide access for jet skis and kayaks. A kayak practice pond/ice rink would be excavated to a depth of 3 feet North of the building, yielding a total cut of 372,827 cubic feet. Trenches for new circulation path footings would be dug as well as those for added underground plumbing and electrical conduit. The brick facade of the Globe would be removed at points of intersection with the circulation paths and temporarily shored up. Structural steel columns would be sand blasted of rust and repaired as needed.
Phase 2: Circulation Preparation

Once excavation was complete, footings for exterior circulation paths would be reinforced and poured. Circulation paths within the Globe would have reinforcing drilled and epoxied in place assuming the existing slab is able to accommodate the added forces placed upon it by the path retaining walls. The harbor extension would have its retaining walls formed and poured and the kayak pond would be outfitted with a slurry liner. Modular 'Reinforced Concrete Tunnels' (RCT's), which would be ordered from a precast company much the same way reinforced concrete pipe is, could be moved into place at all facade penetrations allowing temporary shoring to be removed and steel columns to be cut and welded onto embeds cast into the RCT's. All underground electrical and plumbing would be installed and site wide backfilling would commence. The fill requirements for the paths would be 365,287 cubic feet of soil, which balances out the dirt excavated from the harbor and kayak pond during phase 1.
Phase 3: Circulation + Site Improvements

All structural steel would now be coated to resist further weathering. CMU retaining walls would be built along circulation paths and dirt placed and compacted between them. Paths would be constructed to a minimum width of twelve feet to ensure equipment can maintain access throughout all locations inside the building. At this point, Atwater St. and Orleans St. would be removed around the Globe and sod would be installed to extend the park area to the entrance of the Riverwalk. Paths built up on the South end of the Dequindre Cut would provide a buffer for pedestrian users against motorized traffic while allowing safe access up and down the Detroit River. As paths are backfilled and compacted, final ground finishes such as concrete, rubberized flooring, wood decking, grass, and dirt could be installed throughout site.
Phase 4: Programmatic Build-out

With circulation finalized, construction would begin on kiosks and warming huts. These units consist of wood framing and translucent plastic panels which allow them to be ‘hung’ from the existing steel columns. Though they match the vernacular of the RCT’s, they have no structural ability and instead serve as places of gathering and retail. All kiosks would be outfitted with plumbing and electrical, as well as roll-down security grills so that localized merchandise can be locked up while the main building stays open. Divided into districts throughout the Globe, kiosks would be available for recreation businesses such as kayak and bicycle shops to lease in 6 month increments. This leaves the kiosks open for seasonal changes that occur in recreational activities, such as selling running shoes in the summer, and renting cross country skis in the winter. Likewise, the kiosks adjacent to the front pond may rent kayaks during the summer and ice skates in winter. These units would be heated and vacant kiosks would serve as warming huts for general public use. In this way a small targeted area would be efficiently heated instead of the entire Globe Building.
Phase 5: Final Assembly

At this time Orleans St. would be repaved to enter the North-West corner of the Globe and pass through under the pedestrian circulation paths onto Atwater St. The Detroit Riverwalk would also be extended to the paths terminating on the West side of the site. The Riverwalk, Dequindre Cut, and St. Aubin Marina would now be linked continuously without having to cross Atwater St. or any other major roads. To maximize sunlight within the building, a corrugated plastic roof would be installed over the entire span of the Globe, providing 24 hour shelter from rain and snow for users who are moving throughout Detroit.
Harbor Extension in Winter

Kayak Pond/Ice Rink in Winter
Dequindre Cut in Summer

Kayak Pond at Night
3/64" scale model
List of Source Materials

Flexible Living (pages 3-39)

Re(Industrial)mediation (pages 41-83)

Social Production (pages 85-129)

Social Production (pages 85-129)


Black Sheep Detroit (pages 131-165)


Writing Detroit (pages 397-443)


5. Photograph, James Bevilacqua, April 28, 2011.