

## **Hand of Hearts**

### **5 New Public Gardens Nested in Penn Center**

Penn Center is re-envisioned as an urban promenade with 5 new public gardens; 5 new hearts for the 30+ story tin men set between JFK Boulevard and Market Street.

Built from discarded wood 2x4's, 2x10's, 4'x8' sheets of plywood, cargo palettes, and dead street trees the gardens take life from the re-use, re-cycling, re-working, and re-imagination of trash-bound material. Each garden becomes a catchment for a conceptual heart that reveals warmth and rhythms through sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. The project is at once a critique of the stasis that currently exists, a conversation with simple materials at the scale of the hand, and a promotion of extended growth.

### **Hand**

The hand references connectivity. The five gardens of Penn Center serve as spatial organizers nested within a path that begins at City Hall and runs West to the Schuylkill River, down to the newly constructed river walk, and North into Fairmount Park. Although the focus of the design is on Penn Center, its connection to Fairmount Park is imperative as an extended pedestrian route promoting a new "City Sustainable" experience. The gardens operate simultaneously as individual destinations or as links in a larger urban stroll. The textures employed are ones we know; 2x4's, plywood, and other discarded or under-utilized wood materials. Combined with the growth and texture of living plants and trees maintained by people they create a physical complexity that wears and lives by the hand.

### **Heart**

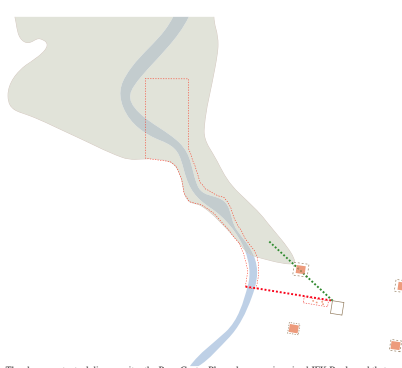
A heart suggests rhythm, life, and center. The five new hearts for the re-imagined Penn Center bring energy to the center of Philadelphia. Rhythms are created by material choices, program, and site context. Whether through changing seasonal colors of the leaves, the movement of the chestnut vendor with the sun, or larger cycles like the rebuilding of the gardens based on tree harvest schedules, the proposal encourages change and narrative history.

### **Public**

The sectional extension of the gardens promotes a breakdown of the existing public/private division between public ground and private buildings. These are public gardens in private buildings where the lives of office workers, lunch goers, tourists, and travelers overlap.

### **Nested**

A spectral analysis of the site reveals an unwelcoming color palette of concrete, aluminum, steel, and glass. In response to this study, plant material and wood were considered to infuse rhythm, color, and texture. These materials are nested within the existing framework. Just as a bird might re-use found material for its nest I am proposing a sustainable re-use and recycling of wood engaged with conceptually thoughtful and carefully detailed design. I am further considering how the gardens are constructed and how that process promotes a continued relationship with built and natural materials. The life cycle of the gardens are celebrated rather than their non-existent completion.



The above contextual diagram sites the Penn Center Plaza along a re-imagined JFK Boulevard that connects the proposed gardens to the Schuylkill River and North into Fairmount Park. This atmosphere of pedestrian occupation seeks to balance the "City Beautiful" construction of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway (in green) with a new "City Sustainable" route. Replanting the riverbanks, sustainable wood harvesting in Fairmount Park, south-facing photovoltaics, and a more tactile walk along JFK speak to the larger ethical design strategy.

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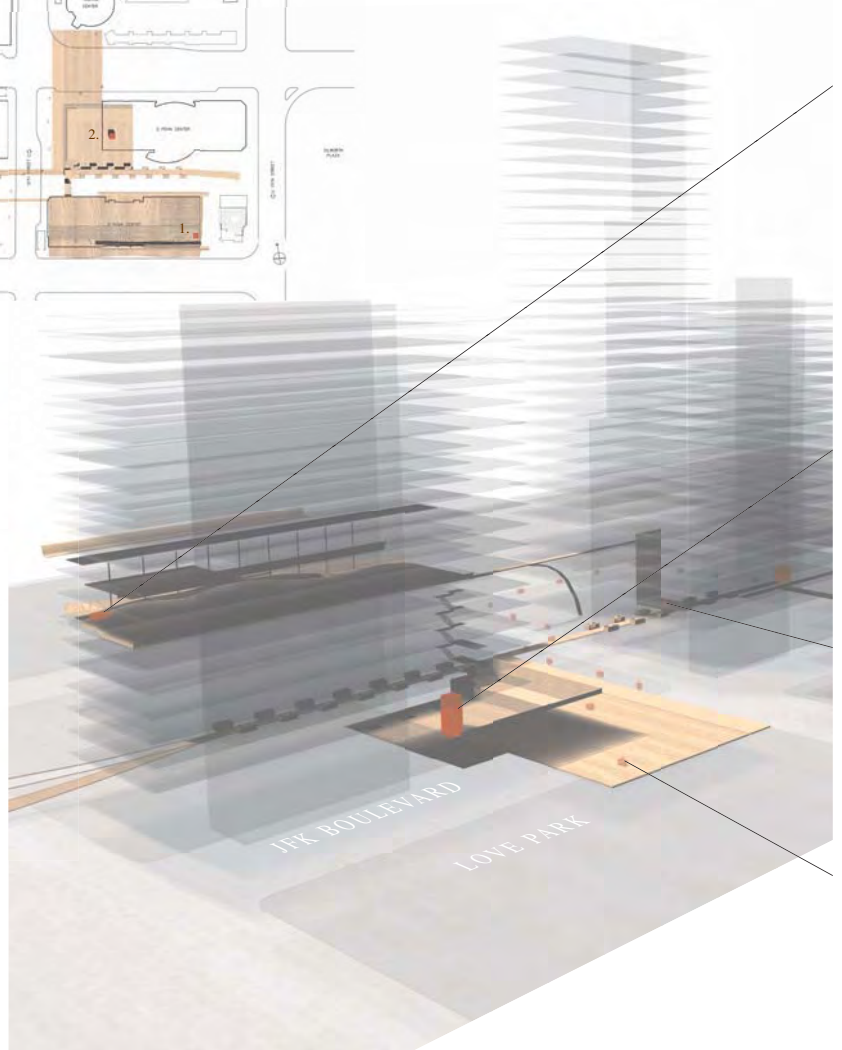
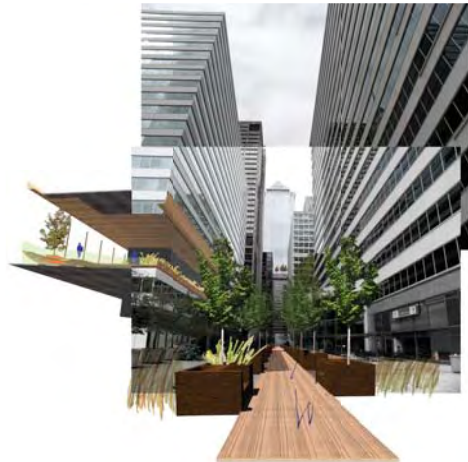
Built from discarded wood 2x4's, 2x10's, 4'x8' sheets of plywood, cargo palettes, and dead street trees the gardens take life from the re-use, re-cycling, re-working, and re-imagining of trash-bound material. Each garden becomes a catchment for a conceptual heart that reveals warmth and rhythms through site, sound, smell, taste, and touch. The project is at once a critique of the stasis that currently exists, a conversation with simple materials at the scale of the hand, and a promotion of extended growth. The proposed gardens, walks, and stories owe debt to the sectional richness of Love Park, the texture and color of the Suburban Station entrance, the magnetism of the PSFS sign at night (like a fire in a forest), and the writings of Edmund Bacon on places as far away as the Forbidden City.



*Here are the joy of ascent and descent, the recession planes and the penetration in depth. In the roofs and the columns are concavity and convexity. This is architecture that connects with the ground by multiple platforms and that cuts the sky in a never ending series of undulating lines and curving shapes as the points in space move across one another in the view of the participant progressing up the central way.*

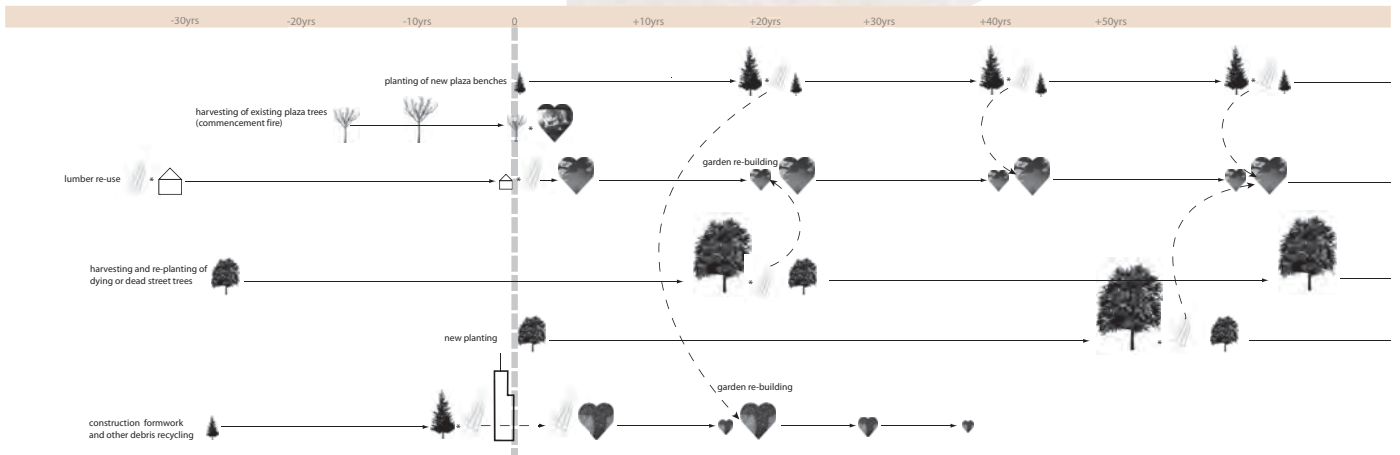
*The power of the experience lies in the utilization of anticipation and fulfillment, in the setting up a rhythm of experiences in time, a sequence of sensation that keeps mounting in intensity. Space and color are the major modulators...*

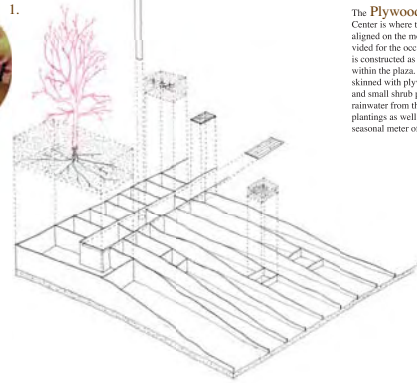
Edmund Bacon, from *Design of Cities*



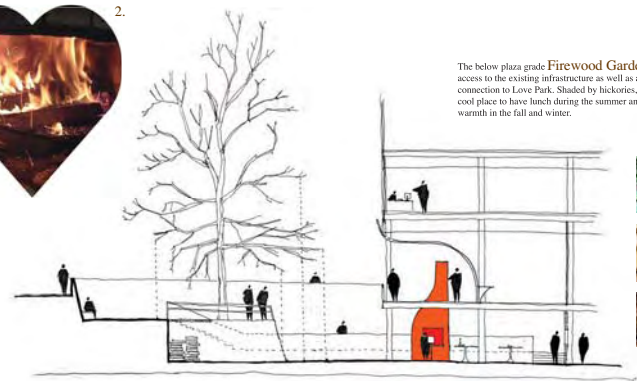
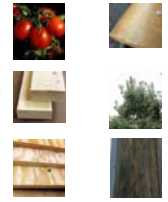
# Hand of Hearts

## 5 public gardens nested in Penn Center

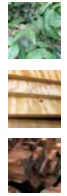




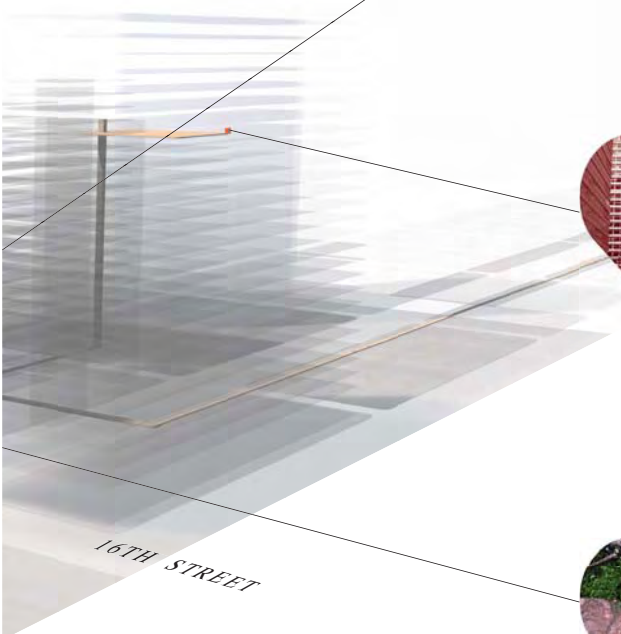
1. The **Plywood Garden** on the fourth floor of 3 Penn Center is where the tomatoes grow. Individual garden plots aligned on the module of the removed curtain wall are provided for the occupants of the building. The rest of the floor is constructed as a public park accessed by an exposed stair within the plaza. The topography of the park is framed and skinned with plywood allowing for cut outs of various grass and small shrub planting. Bent plywood gutters capture rainwater from the glass facade and channel it to the smaller plantings as well as a symbolic red maple, the most visible seasonal meter of the garden.



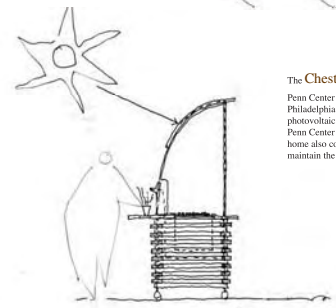
2. The below plaza grade **Firewood Garden** provides access to the existing infrastructure as well as a ground connection to Love Park. Shaded by hickories, it provides a cool place to have lunch during the summer and a hearth of warmth in the fall and winter.



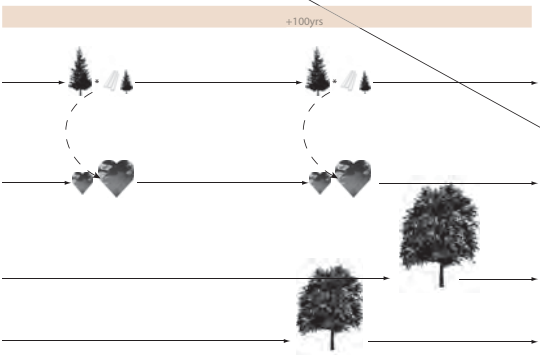
3. The roof garden at the top of 6 Penn Center provides a viewing platform to look East towards City Hall and West down JFK Boulevard (as sketched). It's siting promotes a visual understanding of the overall promenade stretching to the Schuylkill River, moving along its edge and ultimately into Fairmount Park. Although Penn Center is the focus of the project it is intended that the 5 proposed gardens mark the focus of a larger system that represents a sustainable relationship between trees, water, sun, and people. The space along JFK between the street and the train tracks is currently planted but unfortunately disengaged from the pedestrian. It is proposed as a new **Oxygen Alley**.



4. **2x4 Garden.** The darkest part of the plaza provides the opportunity to design a textural green and yellow garden of mosses and lichens. The North facing wall and adjacent ground of 7 Penn Center is transformed with 2x4's and water collected from the roof. An exterior elevator entrance provides access to the third floor and a connection to the plywood garden.



5. The **Chestnut man** follows the sun. The entirety of Penn Center is his **Garden** and he serves the citizens of Philadelphia from wherever the sun hits the ground. His photovoltaic equipped cart tracks the day and is stored in 7 Penn Center at the end of the evening. His cart's humble home also contains the tools and information necessary to maintain the newly planted trees of the 4 other gardens.



water  
winter = heat source  
summer = cold storage  
biomass  
winter = roasted chestnuts  
summer = produce