

# Landscape & Narrative

Designs for 130 Pine Street,  
The BOMBYX Center for Arts & Equity

Landscape Studies Studio (LSS 250)  
Smith College  
Fall 2025





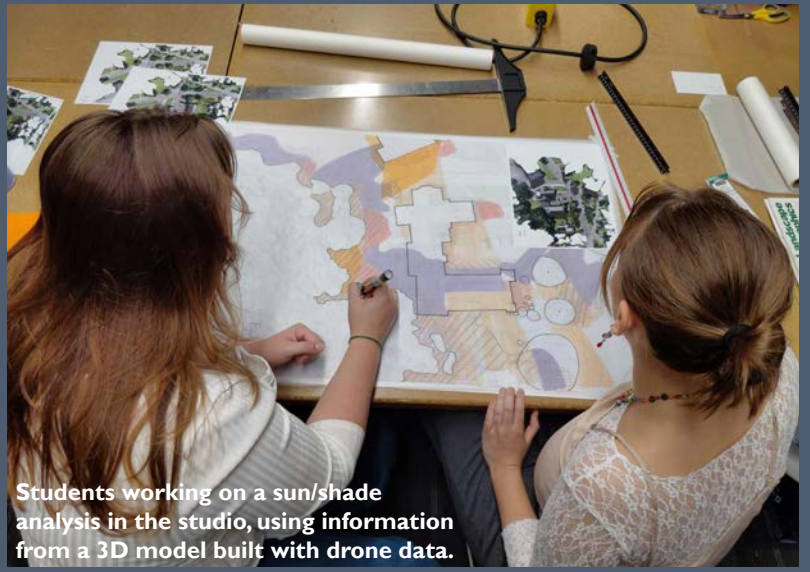
Above: students hearing from Cassandra Holden (BOMBYX Executive Director) and Marc Sternick (Architect) about plans for the site.



Students talking with Kevin McQuillan at the David Ruggles Center in Florence.



Students exploring the steep slope on the site.



Students working on a sun/shade analysis in the studio, using information from a 3D model built with drone data.



Students sharing in-process work with studio guests Rachel Loeffler and Rachel Lindsay.



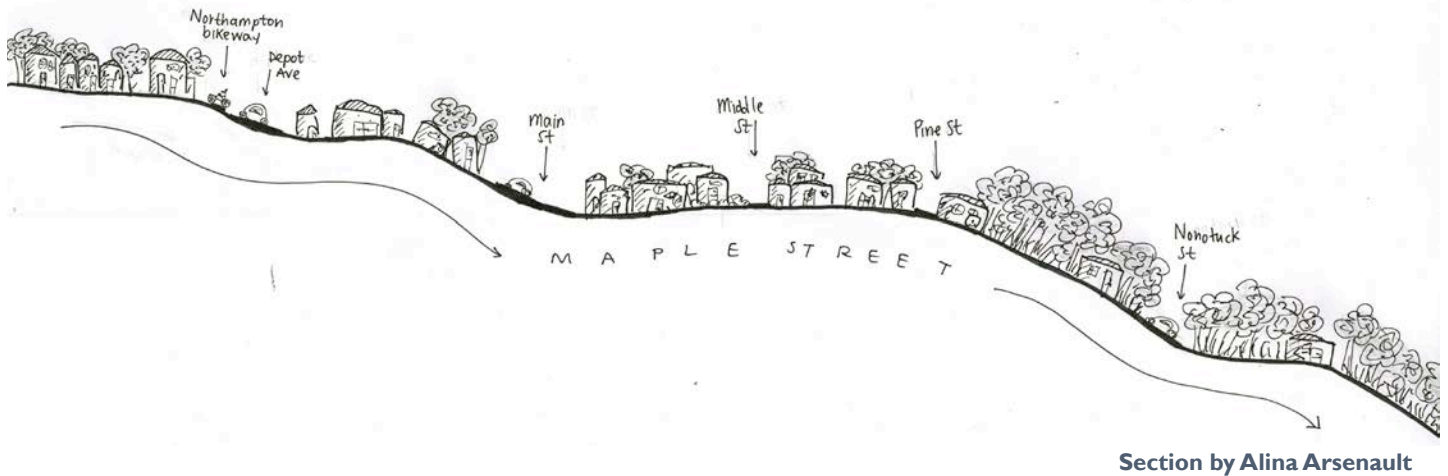
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## Students

- Jane Jian '29 (Undeclared)
- Lia Kuzmova (Five College Interchange Non-Degree)
- Cola Shi '28 (Undeclared)
- Alina Arsenault '27 (Government Major, Landscape Studies Minor)
- Una Keller '27 (Architecture & Urbanism Major, Landscape Studies Minor)
- Tabitha Kibwaa '27 (Education & Child Study Major, Landscape Studies Minor)
- Anh-Thu Phan '27 (Architecture & Urbanism Major, Landscape Studies Minor)
- Athena Spencer '27 (Architecture & Urbanism Major)
- Ella Peerenboom '26 (Government and Spanish Major, Community Engagement and Social Change Concentration)
- Laura Latre '26 (Interdisciplinary Studies)
- Olivia DeTraglia '26 (Architecture & Urbanism Major, Engineering Science Minor)



# Introduction

**Landscapes guide their use and reveal their past.** Landscape designers are frequently charged with telling the story of a particular landscape through design and interpretation. *LSS 250: Landscape & Narrative* is an introductory undergraduate design studio course through which students majoring in a variety of disciplines aim to understand the ways we are all shaped by the landscapes in which we live, and explore how to help others “read” the landscapes that surround us.

During the fall 2025 semester, we began with an exercise in which we identified a landscape that is significant to us, learned how to draft that landscape in plan and section, and built a three-dimensional representation of it. We then ventured to Florence Village in Northampton and conducted mapping to analyze the many stories it holds. A presentation by guest speaker Professor Samantha Solano of UMass Amherst inspired the group to identify critical questions for mapping. This process informed our final exercise, analyzing and designing ideas for the slope between 130 Pine Street (home of the BOMBYX Center for Arts & Equity, two congregations [Beit Ahavah and the Florence Congregational Church] and a preschool [Cloverdale Cooperative]) and Nonotuck Street. The students presented their in-progress work to guest reviewers in November, and produced posters shared with the public in December.

Many thanks to the clients, who met with the students during visits to the site and were an engaged, supportive team throughout the semester:

- Cassandra Holden, Executive Director, Bombyx Center for Arts & Equity
- John Losito, Facility Manager at Bombyx Center for Arts & Equity
- Marc Sternick, Architect

Thanks also to the designers, faculty, and others who provided support on this journey:

- Reid Bertone-Johnson, Lecturer in Landscape Studies, Smith College
- Kala'i Ellis Spatial Data Specialist, Spatial Analysis Lab, Smith College
- Rachel Loeffler, RLA, Principal, Berkshire Design Group
- Rachel Lindsay, Senior Designer and Head of Site Design, Regenerative Design Group
- Samantha Solano, RLA, Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture, UMass Amherst
- Kevin McQuillan, David Ruggles Center

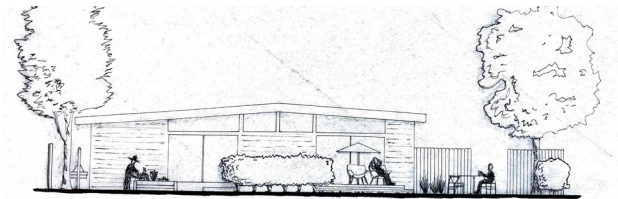
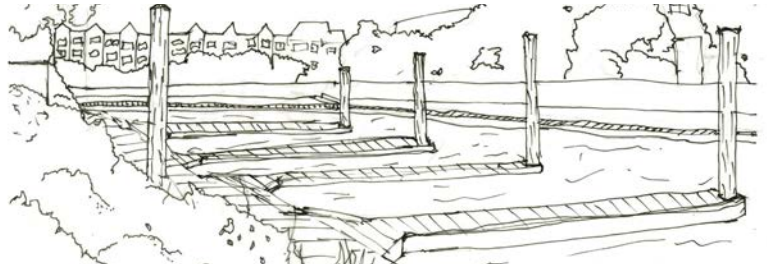
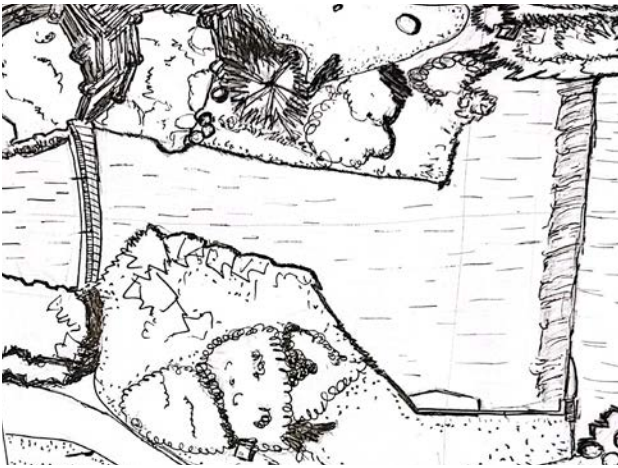
**Course:** LSS 250: Landscape & Narrative (Fall 2025)

**Professor:** Kate Cholakis-Kolysko

# Project One Landscapes of Significance

## Prompt:

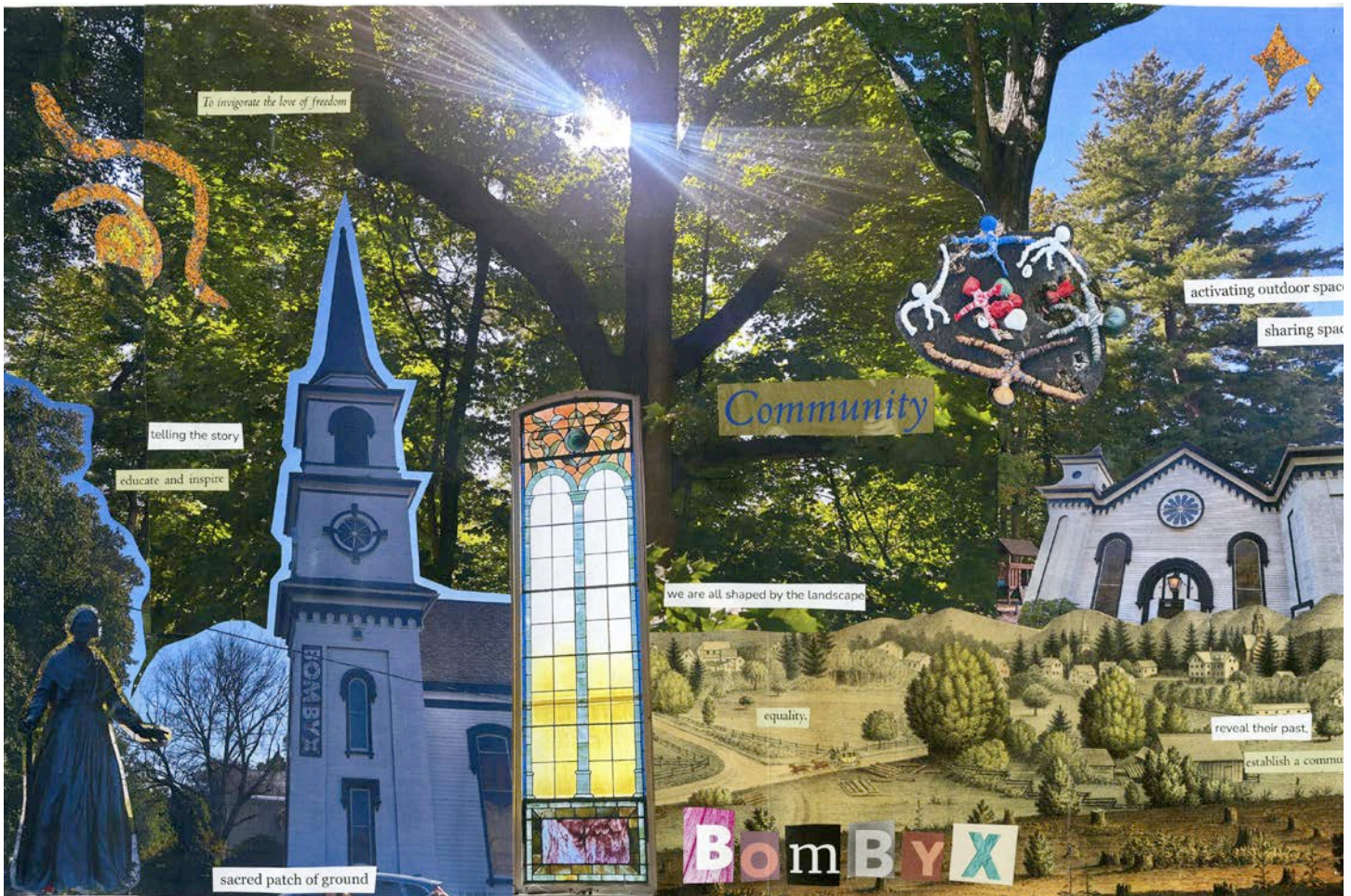
Identify a landscape that is in some way significant to you. Choose a landscape that will tell us something about you and your connection to the place. This could be a backyard, a front porch, a stoop, a particular tree, a park, a garden, a mountain, a region, a favorite place to read, or a place to rest. Your landscape could be broad, open, expansive, secret, intimate, public, private, built, wilderness, relic, historic, contemporary. Depict this landscape using paper, pencils, and pens however you see fit. Model this landscape using chipboard, foam-core, clay, or any other modeling materials you find.



# Project Two, Part I First Impressions

## Prompt:

Represent your first impressions of site (130 Pine Street) and neighborhood (Florence Village) through collage. Document what you observed with your senses. Include aspects of what you heard from the people we spoke with. You may include hand-drawn sketches, photographs, and other media.

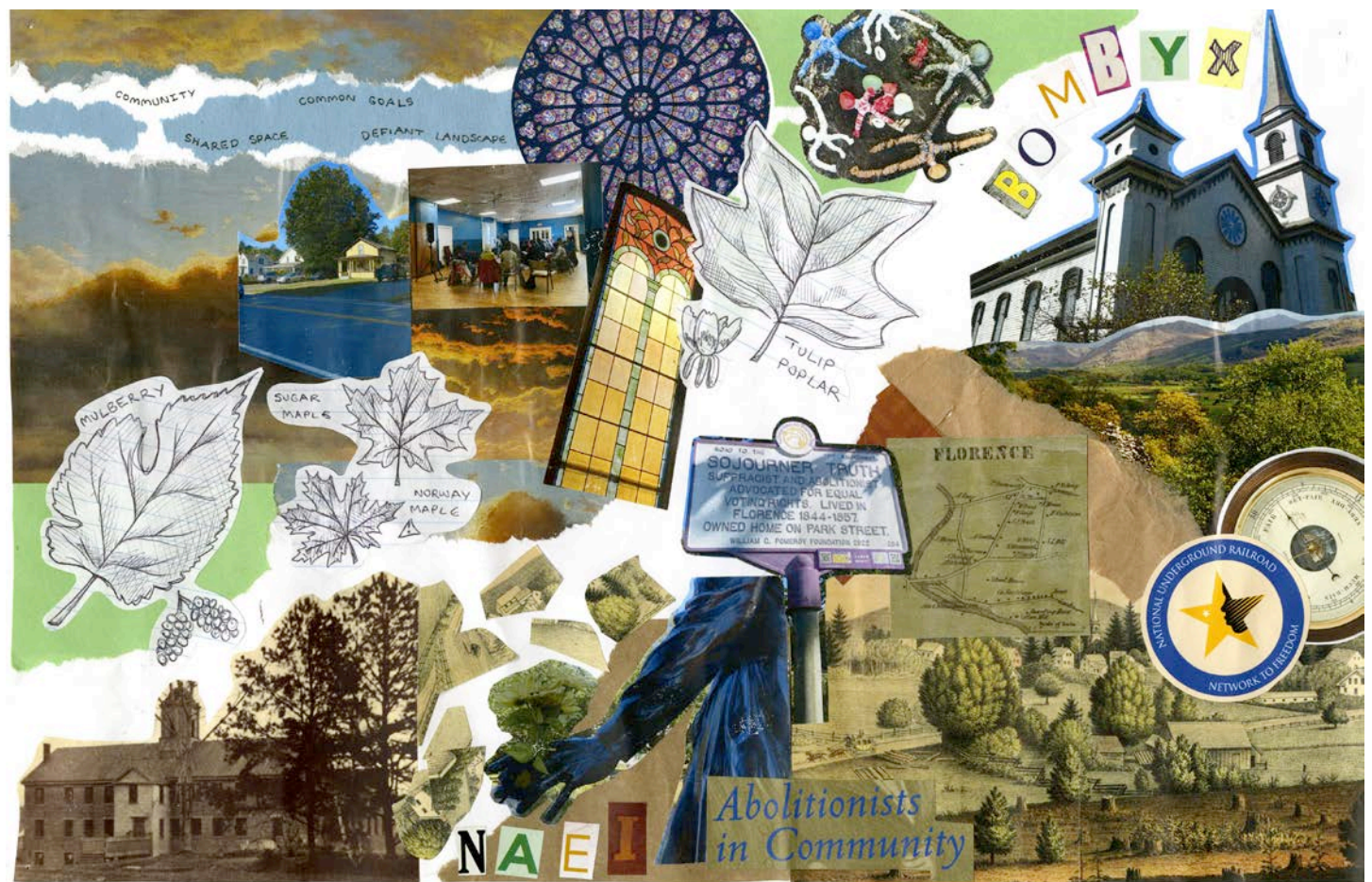


"How do we continue her work + facilitate that through a space?"

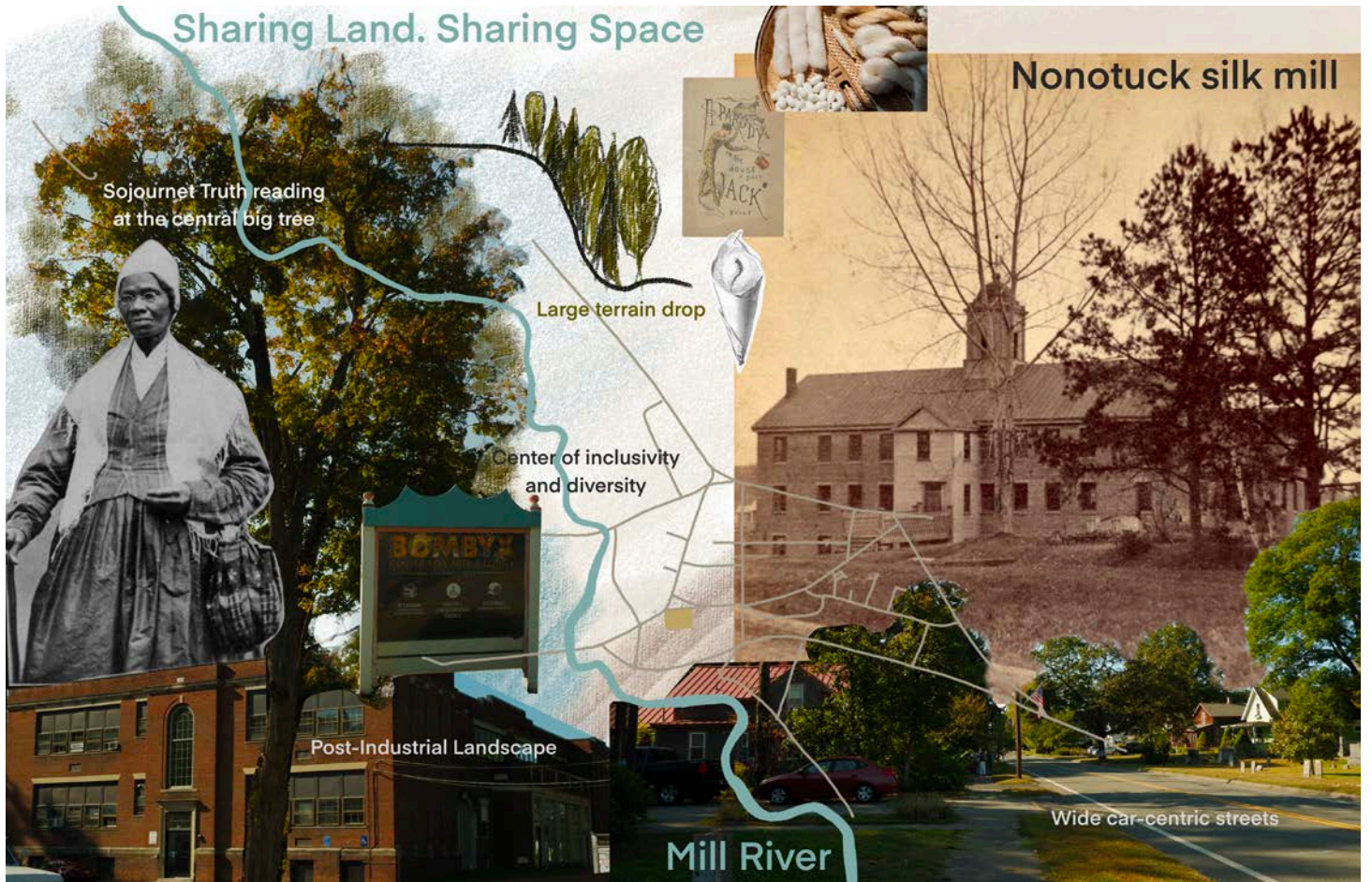


even as a student I feel like an intruder here





# Sharing Land. Sharing Space



Sojourner Truth reading at the central big tree

Nonotuck silk mill

Large terrain drop

Center of inclusivity and diversity

Post-Industrial Landscape

Mill River

Wide car-centric streets



"They built me a house in Florence. I was there about seven years ago, and they still call it by my name." Sojourner Truth (1879)

Suspended between past and





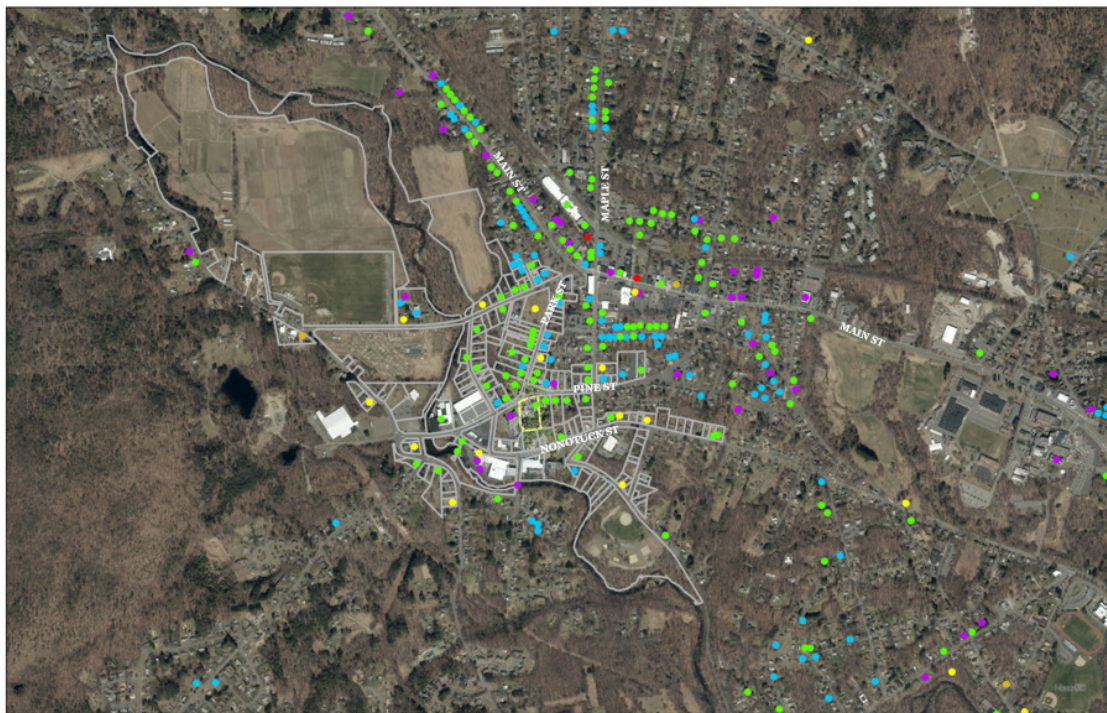
# Project Two, Part II Context Analysis

After experiencing Florence Village on foot, the students conducted analysis utilizing ArcGIS Pro, MassMapper, and other mapping programs and resources.

## Prompt:

Create a presentation (digital slides & verbal narrative) that tells a story (or multiple stories) about Florence. Presentation slides should include a series of maps and at least one contextual section (not-to-scale). Pair each map with written observations of patterns, questions that you have about this information, and implications of this information for our project.

## Excerpts from students' contextual analysis presentations:



- built before 1800
- built before 1825
- built before 1850
- built before 1875
- built before 1900
- built after 1900

### Observations:

- Large increases of buildings between 1850-1900
- Buildings concentrated around one area

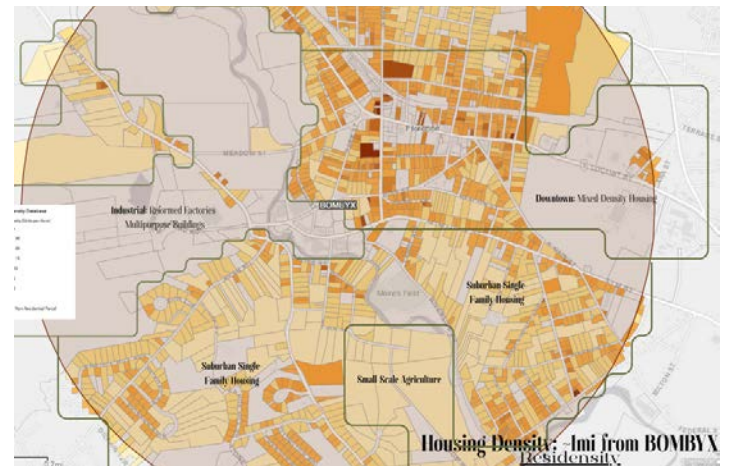
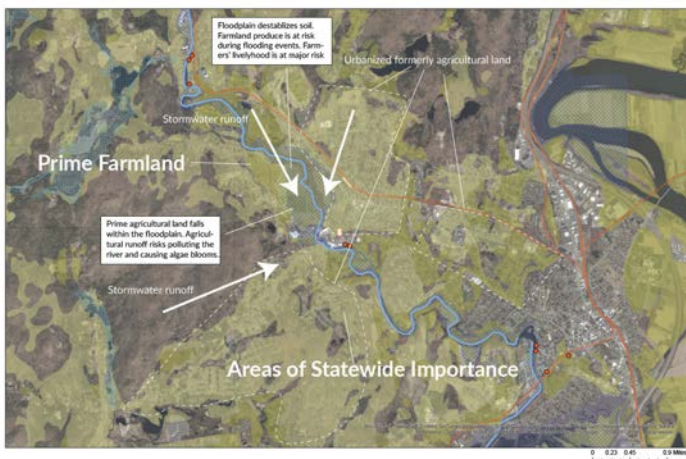
### Questions:

- How does the limited data set skew our perception of the development here?
- What factors led to the rapid growth of the area?
- What did the area look like before 1800?

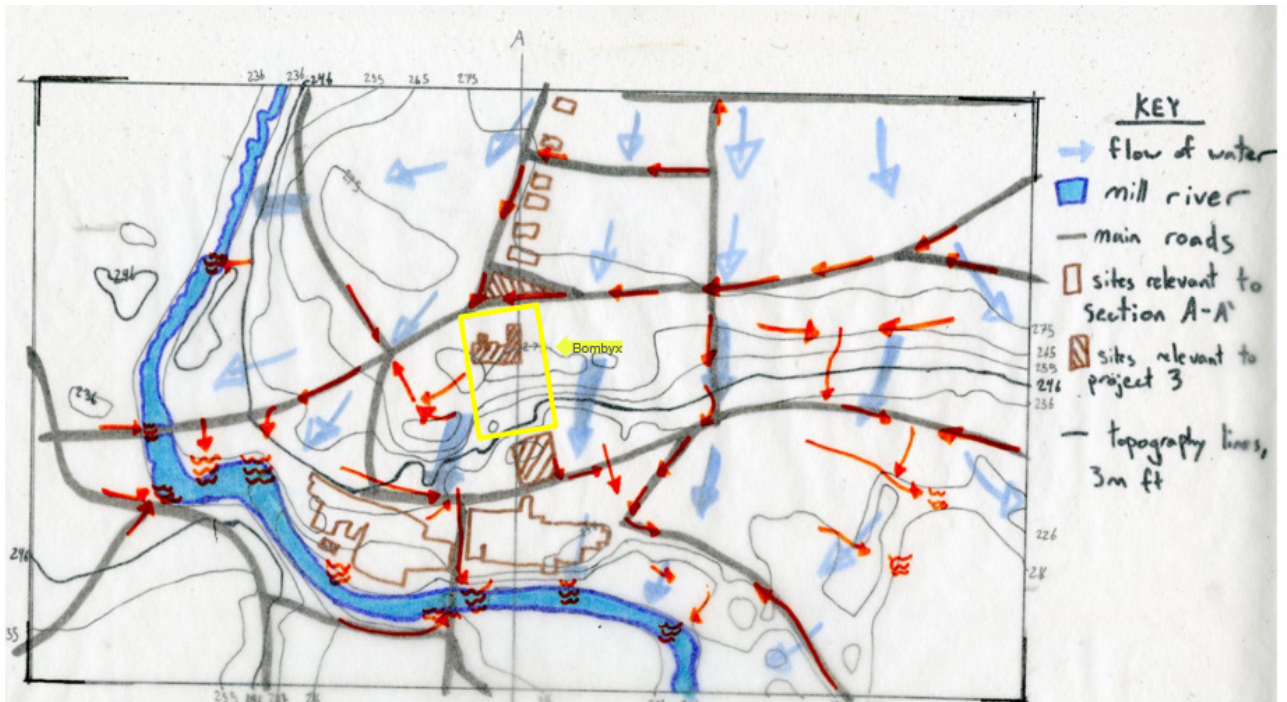
0 1,400 2,800 5,600 Feet

Alina Arsenault

Data Source: MACRIS

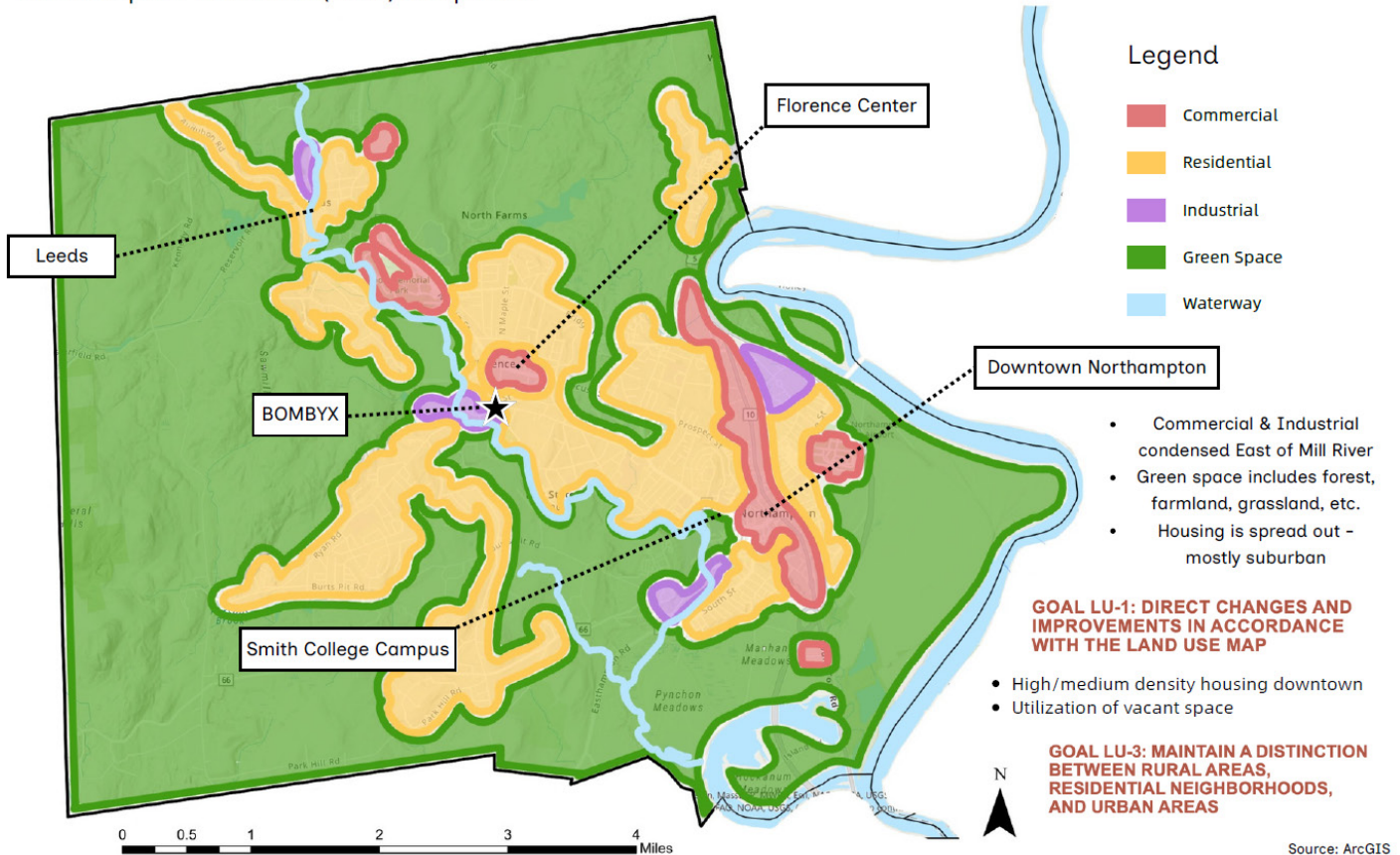


Excerpts from students' contextual analysis presentations:

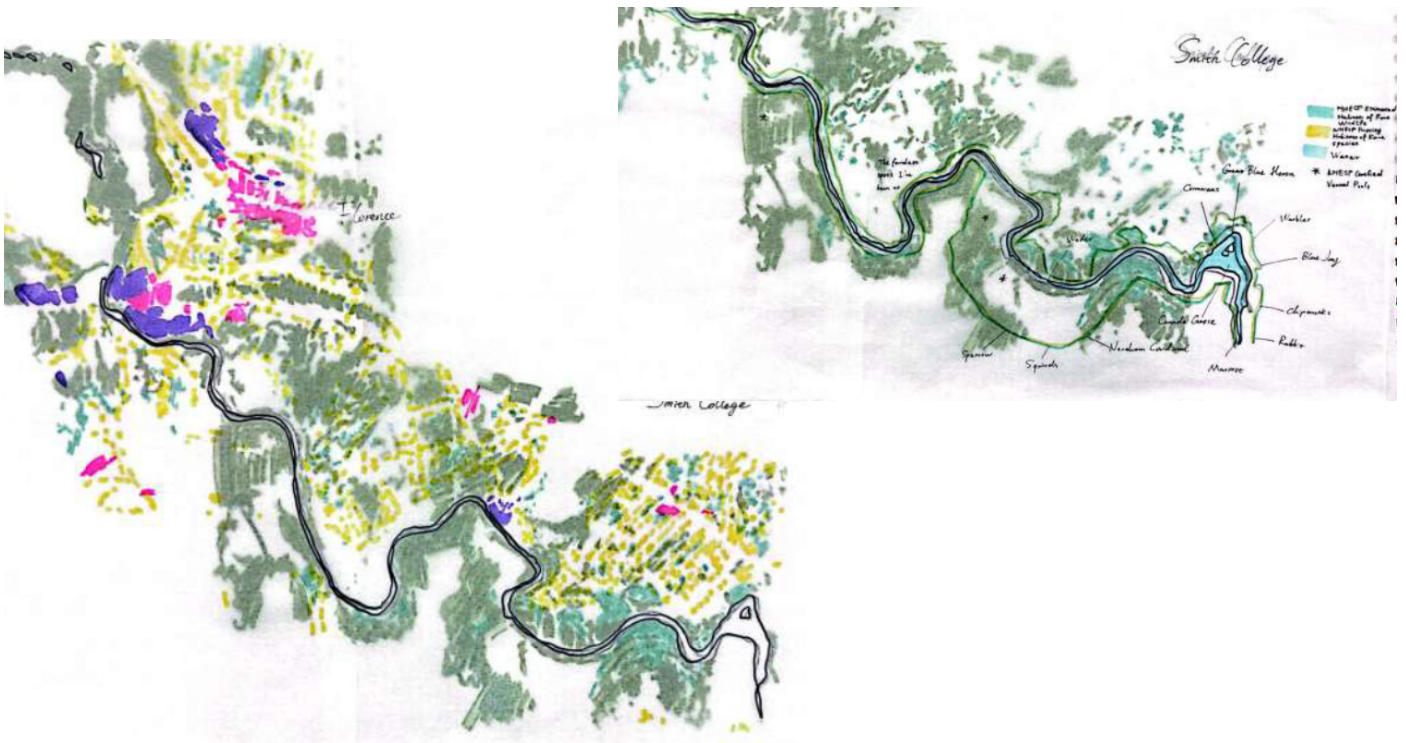


Source: [Mass-Mapper Digital, mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/mass-mapper-digital), Northampton Public Works City Map

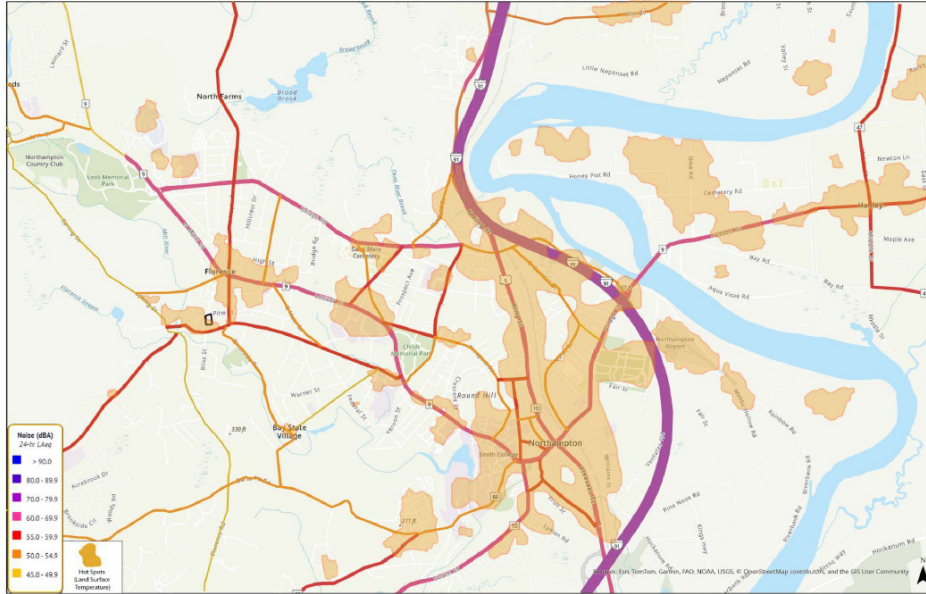
Northampton Land Use (2016) Simplified



Source: ArcGIS



# Transportation Noise + Hot Spots: Northampton and Florence



Map information from ArcGIS & National Transportation Noise Map

- Correlation between downtowns of Northampton & Florence and hot spots
- Hot spots seem to follow major transportation routes
- When leaving Florence & Northampton to the West and North, transportation noise levels and hot spots are lower
- Hotter weather: less comfortable for people
- In what months do these hot spots occur? Are they mostly present in the summer months?
- Think about temperature and heat when considering the site
- shade structures, trees, etc.

- Routine pavement maintenance —
- Preventative pavement maintenance —
- Protected Open Space ■
- 3m Contour Lines —
- Hiking Trails - - -
- Flood zones ■
- Bike Trails //



## Walkability Risk of Safety

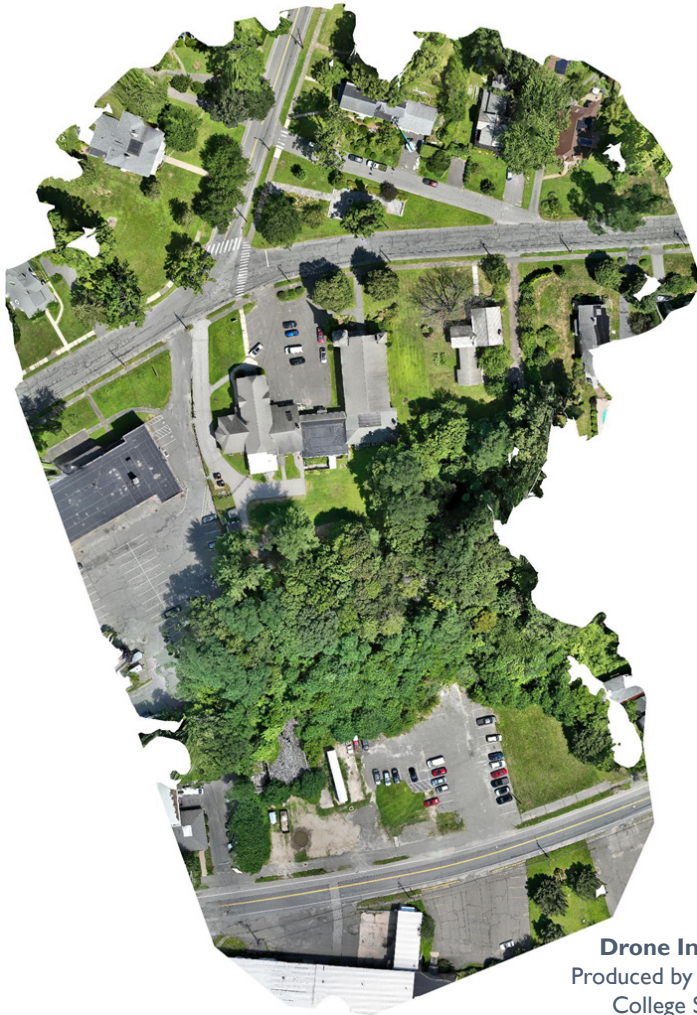
# Project Three Site Design

## Prompt:

You've learned a great deal about how to read and understand a landscape. Now we have a chance to go further with opportunities to apply your skills and creativity to a new challenge. Your design should include an accessible connection between the space behind (south of) Bombyx and the parking lot parcel below. You can choose to focus on the hillside, but should show how the design connects to the yard space behind Bombyx.



**Existing Conditions of 130 Pine Street in Florence.**  
Map produced in ArcGIS Pro & AutoCAD by Kate Cholakis-Kolysko with drone imagery. All linework is approximate. This is not an official survey.



**Drone Imagery of the Site**  
Produced by Kala'i Ellis of the Smith  
College Spatial Analysis Lab.



**Hillside between BOMBYX and Nonotuck Street.**

# Site History & Goals

## Site History

The building at 130 Pine Street was constructed around 1860 by Underground Railroad agent Moses Breck using plans produced by William Fenno Pratt. Prior to this time, a church congregation met beneath the pine trees on the site. The pine trees were also a meeting place for abolition leaders including Sojourner Truth, William Lloyd Garrison, and Frederick Douglass, along with members of the Northampton Association of Education and Industry (NAEI). A 150-foot tall old growth pine marked the meeting location, and stood next to the building through 1885. NAEI, founded in 1842 and disbanded in 1846, consisted of activists, educators, farmers, and industry workers and was committed to abolition, gender equality, and religious tolerance. This utopian community established a silk mill along the Mill River just downslope from 130 Pine Street and owned 100 acres of land (including the pine grove). After NAEI disbanded, the values of the community persisted in the neighborhood.



The parking lot in front (north) of the building, which may be converted into a pedestrian plaza.

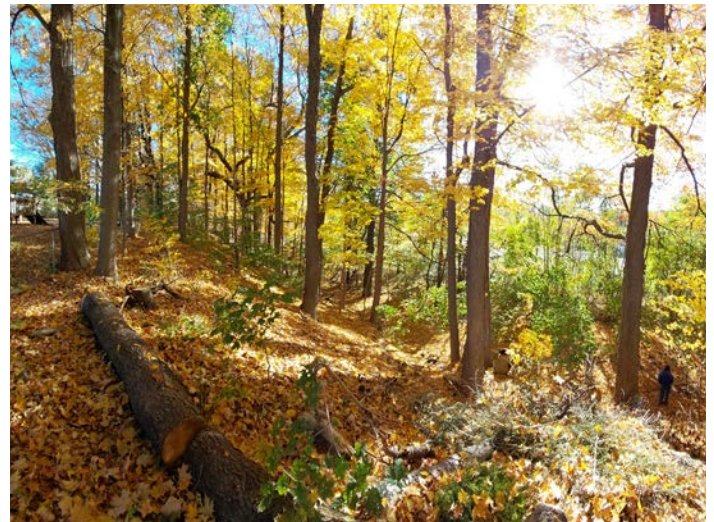
## Site Goals Today

BOMBYX seeks a **pedestrian connection from the BOMBYX backyard to Nonotuck Street**. A steep slope separates these destinations, and students should consider accessibility.

There are tentative plans to **convert the parking lot** in front of the building (along Pine Street) into a pedestrian-only plaza. During events, visitors would park in nearby lots (former Northampton Community Center lot next door and Northampton Elks Lodge down Park Street). An atrium would be constructed in a portion of the former parking lot (along the building's north facade) to serve as the new, primary building entrance.

There are also tentative plans to build an **outdoor performance stage** off the back (south facade) of the building.

The clients would also like to expand use of the **green space east of the building** for play and other informal gatherings.



The steep slope between BOMBYX and Nonotuck Street.

# Site Analysis (Field Work)

In teams, students conducted analysis in the field. After documenting their findings, they presented to the clients for feedback about what they missed.

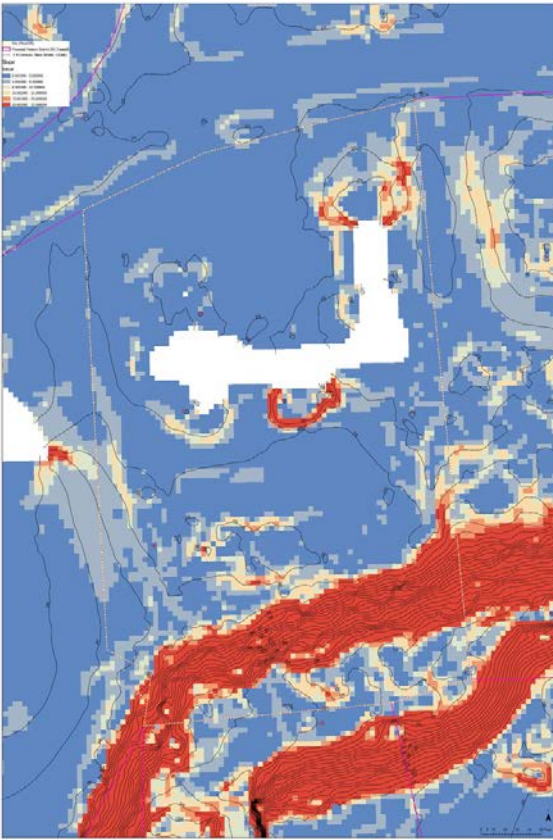
## Sun & Shade



## Circulation



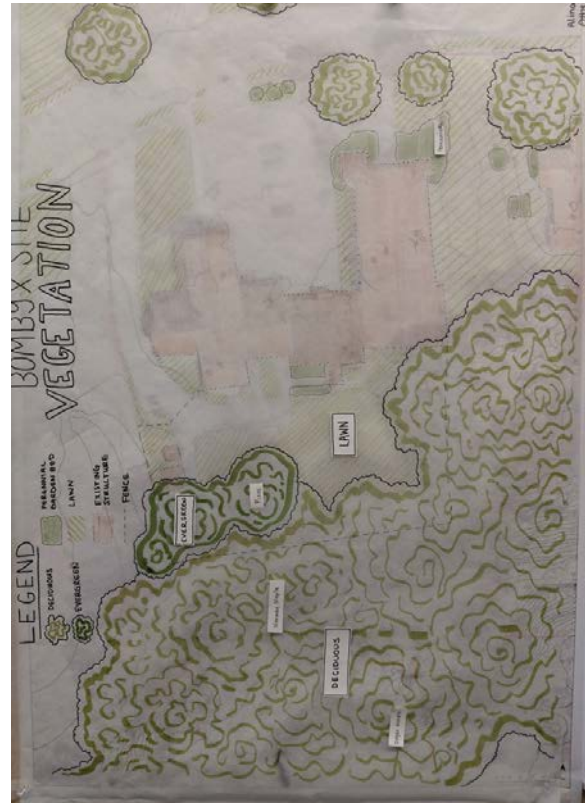
## Topography



## Land Cover and Perviousness

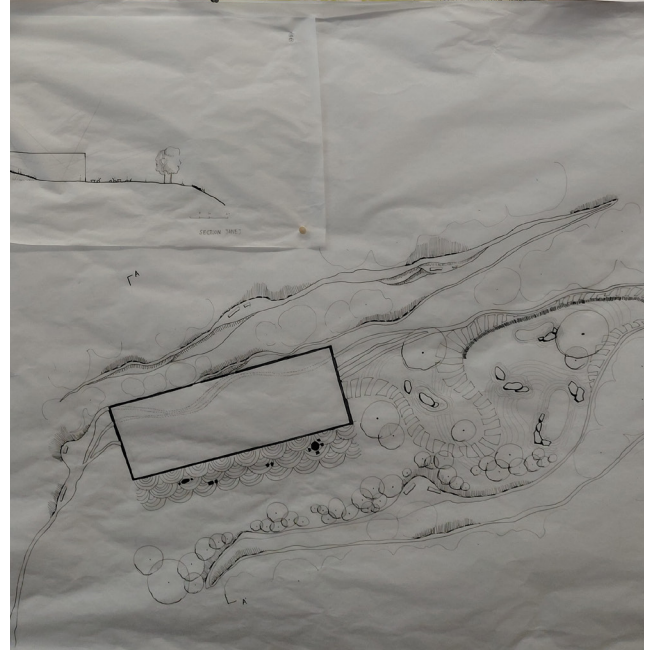


## Vegetation



## Progress Presentations

Students presented working ideas to a panel of external professionals in November. Panelists included Rachel Lindsay of Regenerative Design Group and Rachel Loeffler of Berkshire Design Group.



# Final Designs

Students presented their final ideas via a poster session held at BOMBYX and open to the public. In addition to the posters, they produced physical models showing an element of their design.



# Fostering Community at BOMBYX

ALINA ARSENAULT

LSS250: Landscape and Narrative, Fall 2025

My proposed design develops upon the deep-rooted communities that intertwine through Bombyx, activating its outdoor spaces. This plan removes the fence and moves the main parking west of the building instead of in front. The space in front of the building will feature an art installation, sourced from a local artist and ties to historical work of the Sojourner Truth Memorial Statue and the David Ruggles Center. The secondary paths and seating areas among the direct paths to the building's entrances encourage patrons to meander and reflect upon the space and its history.

On the east side of the building, garden beds, a barrier of small trees, and a winding, stepping stone path create an intimate educational and interactive space. The Bombyx backyard is subdivided into multiple flexible spaces that can be adapted for various events and uses. The hedges serve as a separation from the parking lot while also creating a sense of enclosure for the children's playground and grass mound play areas. The other side of the yard is a performance and gathering space that features a raised stage, bench seating areas, fire pits, and a versatile lawn space.

The Bombyx-side entrance to the boardwalk leads through an arched gap in the hedge. My plan includes planting many more evergreen and filter trees in order to create a sense of enclosure around the boardwalk, which eventually leads to the parking lot. The winding, raised boardwalk path through the forested slope behind the property serves as its own experience, giving community members further space to gather and reflect.

**Precedents:**



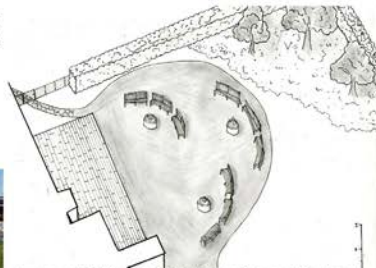
grass mounds, Chicago Botanic Garden; Regenstein Learning Campus



landscaping/planting example, thespruce.com



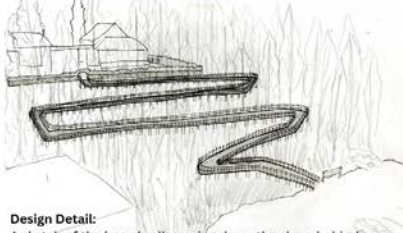
decomposed granite path, nimbuslandscapematerials.com



**Axonometric Drawing of the backyard space:** the stage, benches, fire pits, and decomposed granite paths



**Design Detail:** A view of the arched hedge entrance from the Bombyx backyard onto the boardwalk



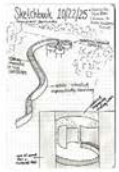
**Design Detail:** A sketch of the boardwalk moving down the slope behind Bombyx into the parking lot

**Section A - A':**

A section taken from East to West showing the seating and statue at the front of the property



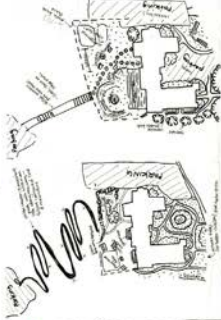
**Proposed Design: Plan View**



**Precedent Sketches:** Looking at different interactive ways to move down a slope



**Summary Analysis:** Understanding what spaces actually get used and analyzing the intentionality of each aspect of the property



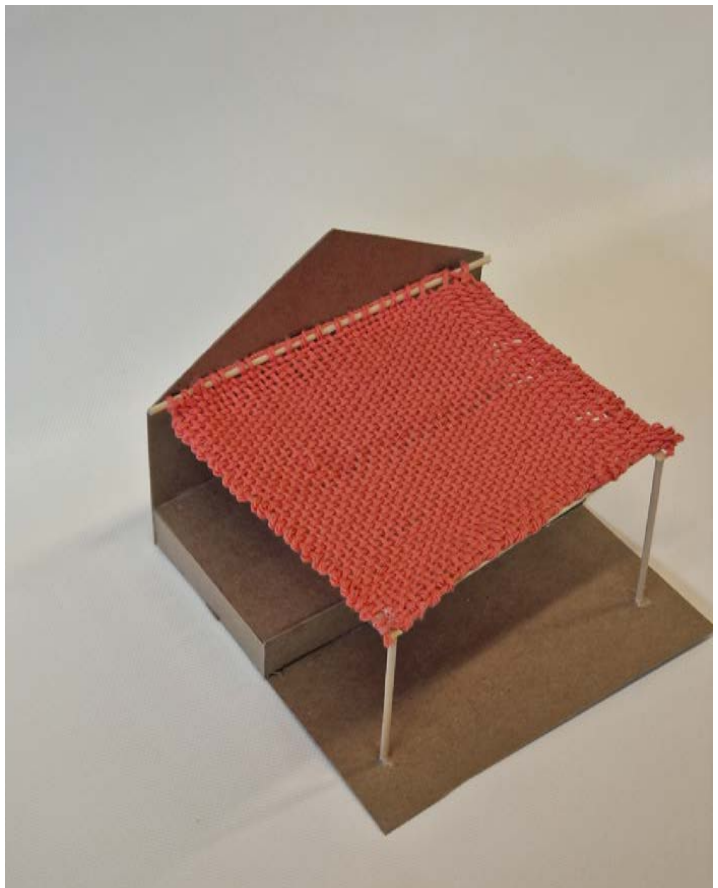
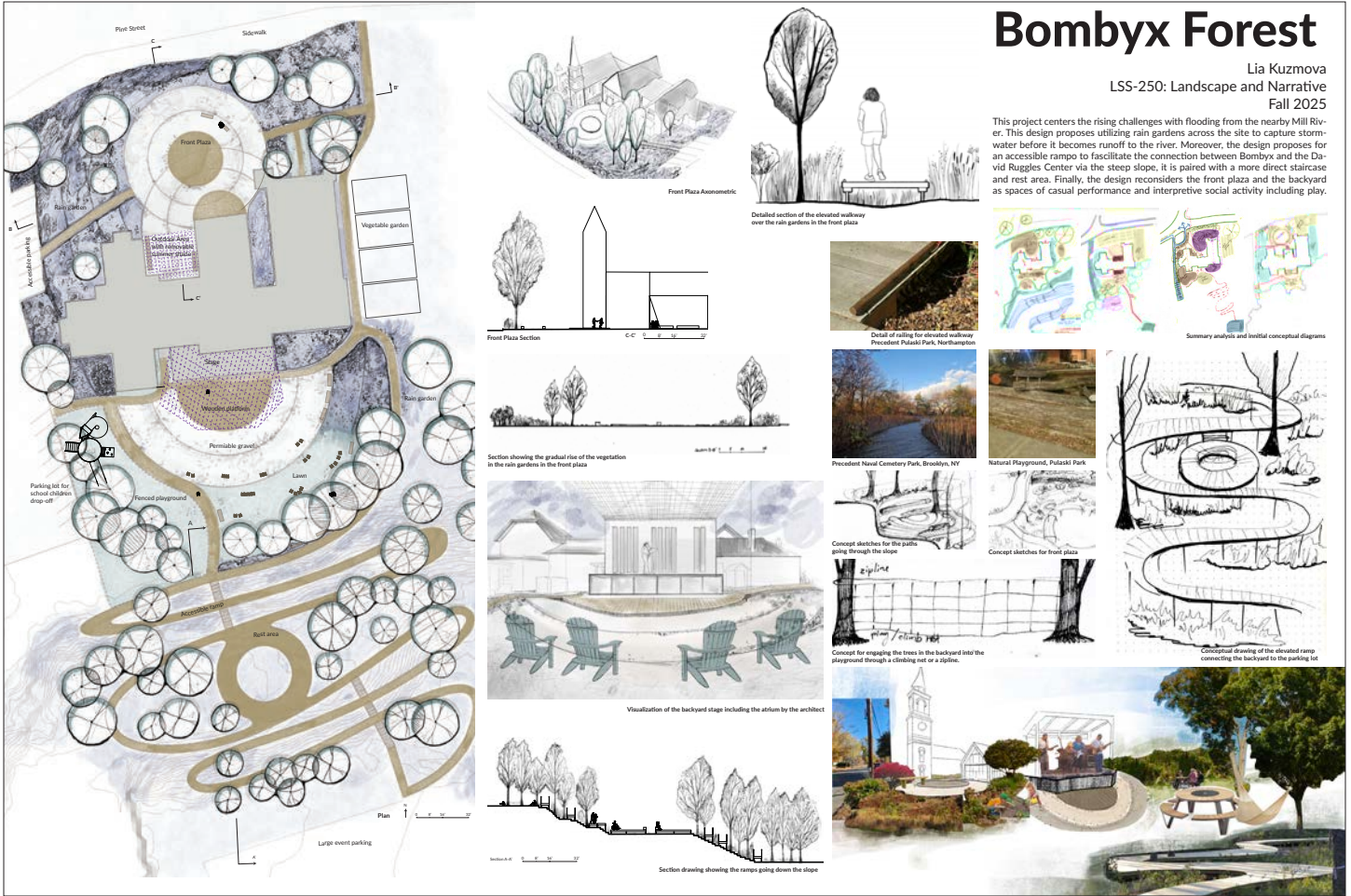
**Conceptual Process Sketches:** Focusing on making the space more inviting for community members and fostering comfortable, fun, and intentional gathering spaces



# Bombyx Forest

Lia Kuzmova  
LSS-250: Landscape and Narrative  
Fall 2025

This project centers the rising challenges with flooding from the nearby Mill River. This design proposes utilizing rain gardens across the site to capture stormwater before it becomes runoff to the river. Moreover, the design proposes for an accessible ramp to facilitate the connection between Bombyx and the David Ruggles Center via the steep slope. It is paired with a more direct staircase and rest area. Finally, the design reconsiders the front plaza and the backyard as spaces of casual performance and interpretive social activity including play.



# Waterline Garden at Bombyx

Cola

LSS 250: Landscape & Narrative, Fall 2025

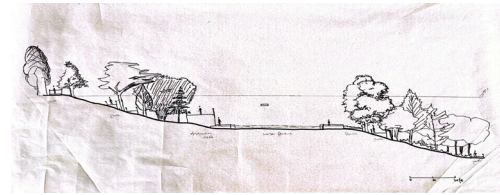
## Design Overview

My aim is to turn the Bombyx back slope into a public green that reads the Mill River story while inviting everyday use. A half-open rill slips from the overlook at the top of the hill—fed by roof runoff and a small recirculating pump—passing a series of artist-made inserts telling story of the ancient lake and abolition history of mill river before emptying into a circular mirror pool set on the mid-slope bench. The pool's perimeter drain is a "time ring" etched with brief lines of history; by day it reflects sky and trees, by night it glows softly to align with performances on the stage just west of it. Beside the overlook a child-friendly water wheel lets kids "borrow the river" with their hands.

All primary paths are elevated boardwalks, so groundwater and roots can breathe beneath; a 5% accessible promenade winds down through changing plant communities and color palettes, while a central stair gives a quick link to the welcome center. The wettest low pocket becomes a rain garden with a sculptural marker; drier pads on the bench host movable seating and informal gatherings. An open lawn—ringed by the boardwalk for safety—shifts to a small forest-themed play zone, then back to the stage terrace, making a loop where performance, play, and quiet sit within one system. In short: the project seats the terrace, treats the slope, and lets the river's narrative flow in public life.



Model Pictures  
water feature with tube



Section A-A'  
section across the first boardwalk above to the last boardwalk to the welcome center



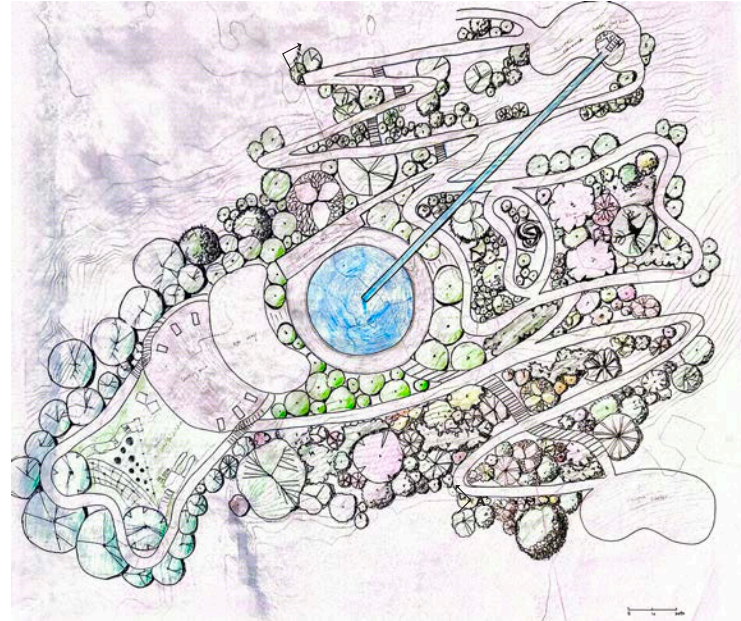
Summary Analysis  
analysis of imperviousness, materials and shade and sunlight



Concept Sketch  
draft of how my idea forms



Concept Sketch  
Insert caption here



Proposed Design



Precedent  
playground for children at open lawn



Precedent  
the long rill slips



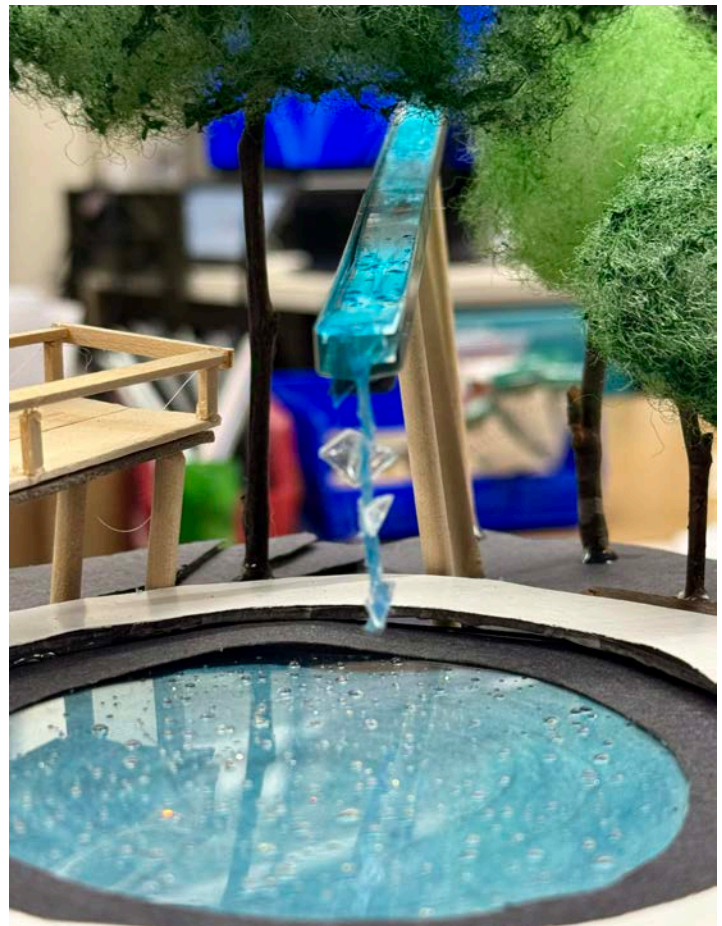
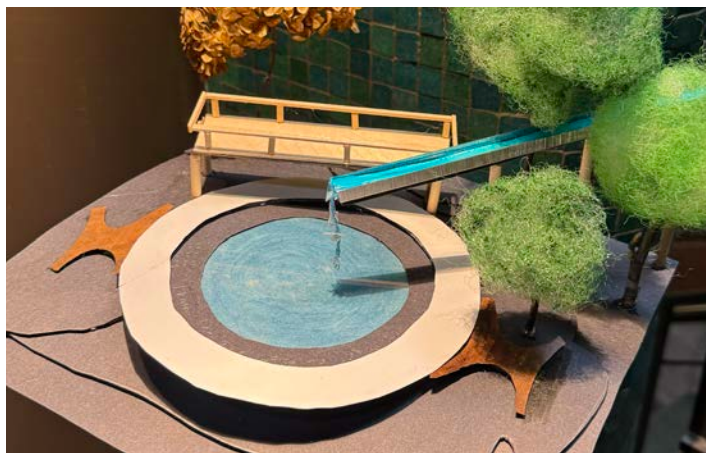
Design Detail  
section across the rain garden and sketch of observation deck



Precedent  
water feature



Precedent  
example of path and little island



# Legacy Slope Park

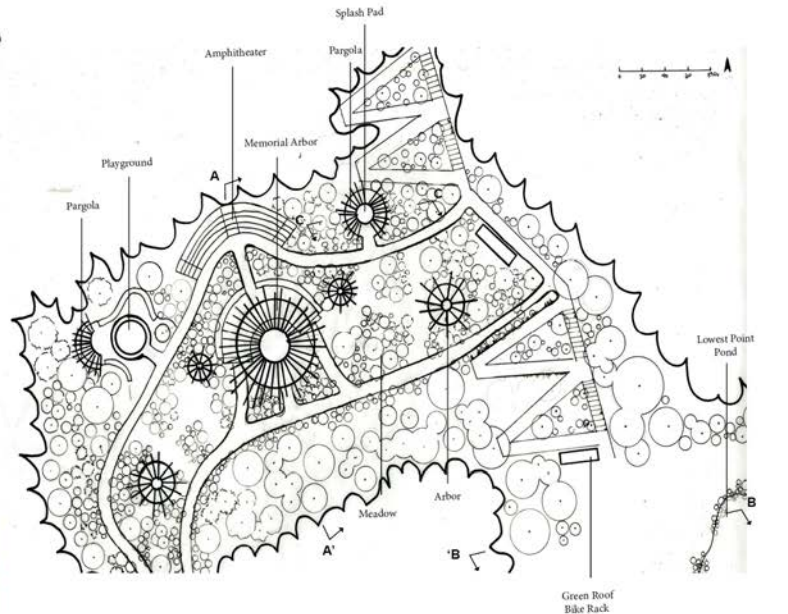
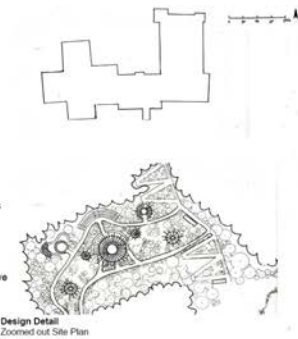
Anh-Thu Phan  
LSS 250: Landscape & Narrative, Fall 2025

## Design Overview

The sloped forest behind Bombyx occupies a uniquely meaningful position between the Sojourner Truth Memorial Park and the David Ruggles Center. The site naturally functions as a connective thread linking all three historically significant destinations. Understanding that each of these sites serve a diverse and multigenerational community, my primary goal for the project was to create a space that offers education and accessibility while preserving the integrity and character of the existing woodland landscape. Although this design was not originally intended to become a park, the design organically evolved into a memorial park dedicated to expanding public understanding of the Underground Railroad and the Northampton Association for Education and Industry.

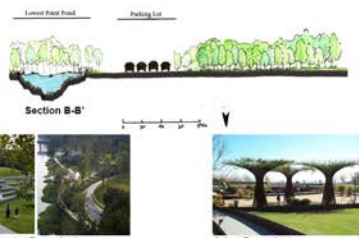
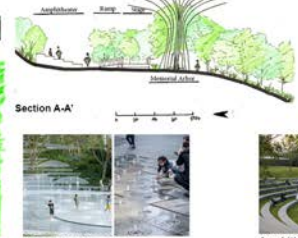
The design embraces the natural 5% slope by pairing accessible pathways with carefully placed stairways. Four floral arbors provide shaded seating and moments of rest throughout the site. A fully wheelchair-accessible playground encourages inclusive play, while a splash pad fountain framed by pergolas offers seasonal recreation. Green roofed bike racks support sustainable transit and blend into the landscape. The heart of the park is two-foot stage, shaded by a large walk-through arbor that houses interpretive plaques and statues highlighting local abolitionist history, adjacent to an amphitheater.

The entire park is nestled within the original forest, complemented by a meadow planted with hydrophilic species that spans over the entire site.



Summary Analysis  
Slope & Rain Drainage

Design Detail  
Axonometric



Concept Sketch 1

Concept Sketch 2

Section A-A'

Section B-B'

Section C-C'



Splash Pad Precedent  
Distributing Park in Chengdu, China



Amphitheater Precedent  
Pazhou South Waterfront Park in Guangzhou, China.



Arbor Precedent  
Central Garden at the Getty Center in Los Angeles



Green Roof Bike Rack Precedent  
Akersbakken Bicycle Hotel in Norway.



# BOMBYX CONNECTION

ATHENA SPENCER

LSS 250: LANDSCAPE & NARRATIVE, FALL 2025



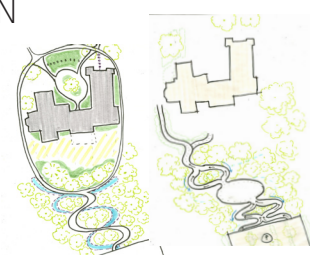
SUMMARY ANALYSIS

## DESIGN OVERVIEW

This design for BOMBYX Center for Arts & Equity proposes a physical and narrative connection between the existing building in Florence, MA and a newly acquired parking lot, located nearby at the bottom of a forested hill. The design must serve the needs of the community center, including accessibility for all patrons. Additionally, the proposed design aims to draw a historical connection between Florence today and its rich history during the abolition era and the Northampton Association of Education and Industry (which formerly sat across the street from the new parking lot).

This accessible raised boardwalk, which traverses through the woods and up the hill, takes a winding, circular path, representing the reciprocal community values in Florence past and present. Each switchback becomes a small outlook landing and a large reflection space sits in the forest, centered around a mulberry tree, paying homage to the NAEI silk mill. The boardwalk is a place to spend time, as well as a method to move between locations.

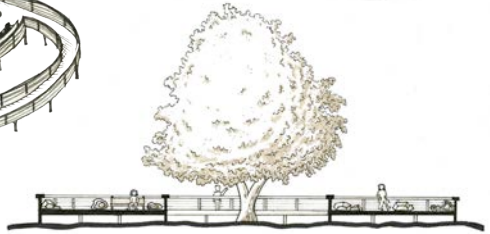
The new BOMBYX backyard is defined by an extension of the circular boardwalk, and secondary pathways encourage wandering and split the space into three sections. The pine grove highlights the historic Eastern White Pines where abolitionists would preach, a play-ground serves the preschool, and seating in front of the proposed stage provides flexible space to view performances and doubles as garden beds for growing food. Various paths converge to form a circular plaza that becomes the centerpiece of the front of the building, and that same path leads visitors to the backyard and side parking lots.



PROCESS SKETCHES



SECTION A - A'



SECTION B - B'



DESIGN PLAN - DRAWN AT 1" = 10' SCALE



AXONOMETRIC SKETCH OF LOWER BOARDWALK

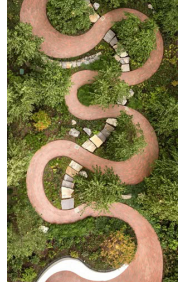


FREEHAND SKETCH OF GARDEN BED SEATING



## PRECEDENT STUDIES

Highlighting raised boardwalks in forested areas, curved paths & gardens, and garden bed seating examples.



# BOMBYX DESIGN: A SPACE FOR COMMUNITY

UNA KELLER

LSS 250: LANDSCAPE & NARRATIVE, FALL 2025

## DESIGN OVERVIEW

BOMBYX Design: A Space for Community connects the BOMBYX Center for Arts & Equity to the lower parking lot while addressing both current accessibility issues and underutilization of space. Two circular gardens guide pedestrians from the sidewalk on Pine Street to two entrances of the building, creating a slow, meditative experience. The central plaza, replacing the current parking lot, creates a community space that promotes interaction with the site and provides shaded seating with its semi-circular pergola design. A large fountain sits in the center, with the water runoff feature surrounding the plaza, depositing into a storm water garden beneath the walking path.

Two compacted gravel paths take visitors around the building to the backyard, where there is a semi-circular stage, both lawn and accessible seating, and a water-play area with a direct connection to the playground. Storm water runoff from the roof is directed through scuppers to a water feature that weaves through the site, paying homage to the history of the Mill River that runs nearby. The silted path down the slope protects the existing topography and vegetation while creating an accessible connection between the building and the lower parking lot, and the stairs provide a quicker, more direct route. The water channel, doubling as a concrete slide during dry seasons, runs alongside the stairs on the slope, and continues through the flat area in between the two sloped areas, separating the amphitheater and the reflection pool. The amphitheater provides a secondary performance area and gives visitors a place to sit, rest, and socialize while the reflection pool allows for quiet contemplation within the forested landscape.

## SUMMARY ANALYSIS

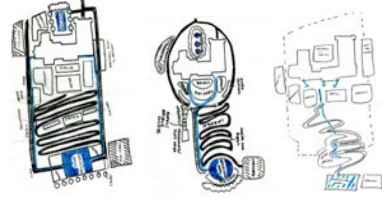


## DESIGN PRECEDENTS

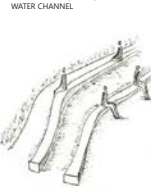
CIRCULAR GARDENS, REFLECTION POOL, WEAVING WATER FEATURE WITH SEATING, FORESTED AMPHITHEATER



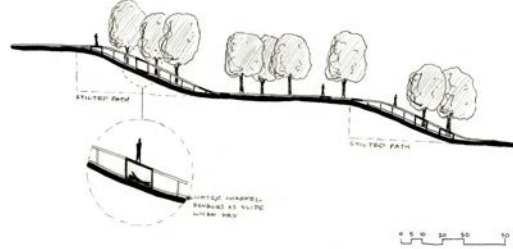
## CONCEPTUAL PROCESS SKETCHES



## FREEHAND SKETCH

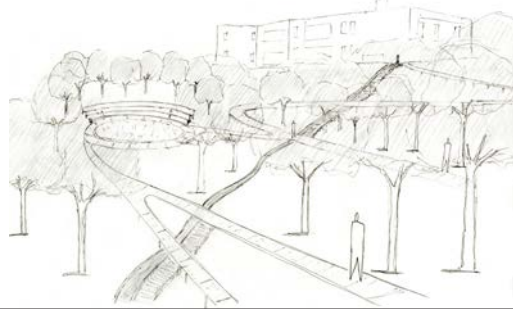


## SECTION A - A'

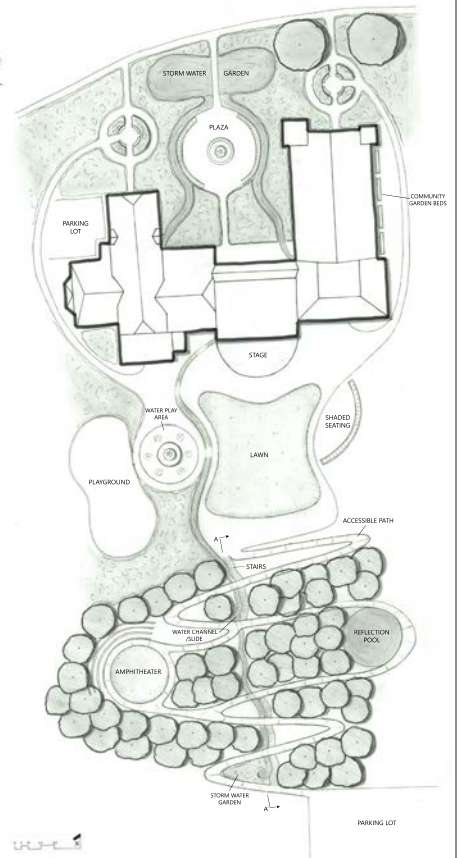


## PERSPECTIVE DRAWING

ON FLAT AREA BETWEEN TWO SLOPES, LOOKING AT AMPHITHEATER



## PROPOSED DESIGN: PLAN VIEW



# BOMBYX LANDSCAPE DESIGN

OLIVIA DETRAGLIA

LSS 250: Landscape & Narrative, Fall 2025

## DESIGN OVERVIEW

The landscape design for BOMBYX carefully integrates the natural topography and circulation patterns to enhance the overall experience of the site while supporting the architect's new building plans. Central to the design is the relationship between the parking areas (at the base of the site) and access to the building, enhancing the transition from arrival to entry. At the base of the site, an existing parking lot is transformed through thoughtful vegetation strategies, visually integrating the lot into the surrounding landscape and guiding visitors naturally along paths up the slope toward BOMBYX. The central terraced common space acts as both an escape and a point of connection, linking the backyard via a lookout and vegetative clearing with the meandering path. This central space encourages exploration and interaction while maintaining clear visual and physical connections to the building and surrounding features.

The stage, as designed by the architect, is a focal point of the backyard experience. The lawn subtly slopes upward toward the stage, creating a natural visual cue that draws attention to this key gathering area. At the far end, an 18-inch divot functions as integrated seating and seamlessly connects to the perimeter path, which leads to the lookout, enhancing circulation and encouraging engagement with the landscape. The children's play area is situated in proximity to separate pick-up parking, providing safe and convenient access for families while maintaining clear sightlines and ease of movement.

Paths throughout the site are elevated rather than inset, protecting existing slope, drainage patterns, and vegetation while reducing construction costs. This strategy allows visitors to move through the landscape comfortably without compromising the site's natural character.

Overall, the design transforms the parking and circulation experience into a carefully choreographed journey that introduces visitors to the landscape, creates strong connections to the building and backyard spaces, and enhances engagement with all areas of the site.

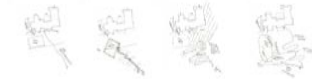
## SITE SUMMARY ANALYSIS

CLIENT GOALS, EXISTING CONDITIONS, CIRCULATION, SLOPE



## CONCEPT DESIGN SKETCHES

PLAY AREA, INTEGRATION OF TOPOGRAPHY AND VEGETATION, CIRCULATION



## DESIGN PRECEDENT IMAGES

TERRACED COMMON SPACE, PATH ALONG SLOPE, INTEGRATION OF VEGETATION  
STUDIO - HOSHINOYA FUJII (Asama Architects & Associates) AND PARK OF MEMORIES (SOA Architects)



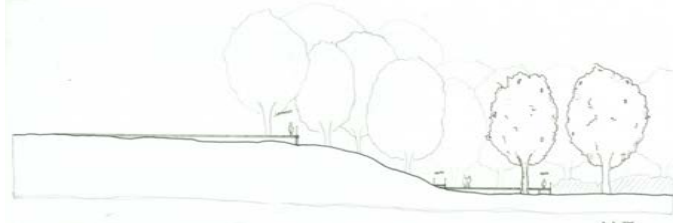
## PROPOSED DESIGN PLAN



## PROPOSED DESIGN SECTION B-B'



## PROPOSED DESIGN SECTION A-A'



## MARC STERNICK ARCHITECT

PLANS FOR THE BUILDING REVISION



## PARKING LOT DESIGN

SKETCH AND PRECEDENT IMAGE



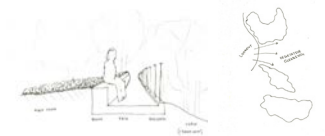
## PRECEDENT IMAGES

DRAINAGE, LIGHTING, MATERIALITY



## MAIN LAWN + LOOKOUT SCHEMATICS

STAGE, REVERSED SLOPE, BENCH, PATH, LOOKOUT



# Florence Historical Connections

Ella Peerenboom  
LSS 250 F25

## Design Overview

Florence Historical Connections, developed for the course LSS 250: Landscape and Narrative, is a site-responsive landscape proposal centered on the BOMBYX Center for Arts and Equity at 130 Pine Street in Florence, Massachusetts. The design strengthens both physical and cultural connectivity by establishing an accessible link between Nonotuck Street, the David Ruggles Center, and Sojourner Truth Memorial Park, while foregrounding the area's abolitionist and educational history. A symbolic front plaza anchored by a mulberry tree and silk moth sculpture introduces the experience, complemented by noise-buffering garden walls and generous seating. A single, ADA-compliant, stilted boardwalk acts as the primary circulation spine, weaving through the forested hillside and incorporating a mid-point loop that allows users to bypass the hillside amphitheater. Along this route, interpretive signage highlights historically significant features, including a prominent white pine. The sequence continues through a terraced community amphitheater, welcome pergola, and corten steel wall installations, terminating in a shared-use parking area and flexible grassy pavilion for rotating, community-curated art. The proposal minimizes site disturbance by working within existing topography, addressing steep slopes and noise while creating an inclusive, intergenerational landscape that is both educational and experiential.



## Summary Analysis



**Process Sketch:** Working through different types of circulation. How will the people respond to the change in traffic pattern? How do we prevent noise and provide ample gathering space in the narrow side yard corridor? Looking at ideas for re-working the backyard that eventually decided to leave alone.



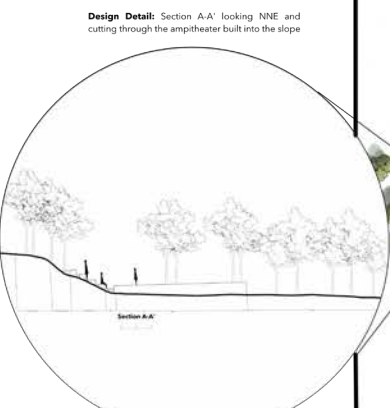
**Process Sketch:** Alternate idea for the front courtyard. Playing with the ideas of including vehicular movement or restricting it to just human circulation. First addition of noise buffers added after a site visit with lots of traffic noise.



**Design Detail:** Perspective sketch of re-designed front plaza featuring a central mulberry tree and Bombyx Silk Moth statue.



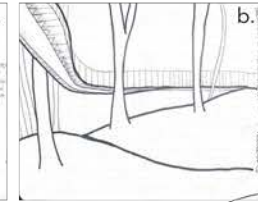
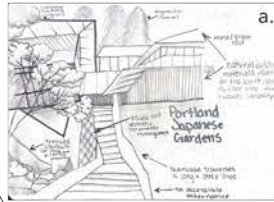
**Process Sketch:** Early design of the silk moth sculpture. To prevent harm to the tree, the body will be supported through criss-crossing beams that will appear as the legs.



**Design Detail:** Section A-A' looking NNE and cutting through the amphitheater built into the slope.

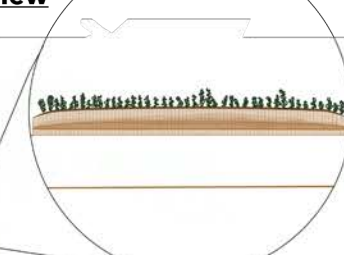
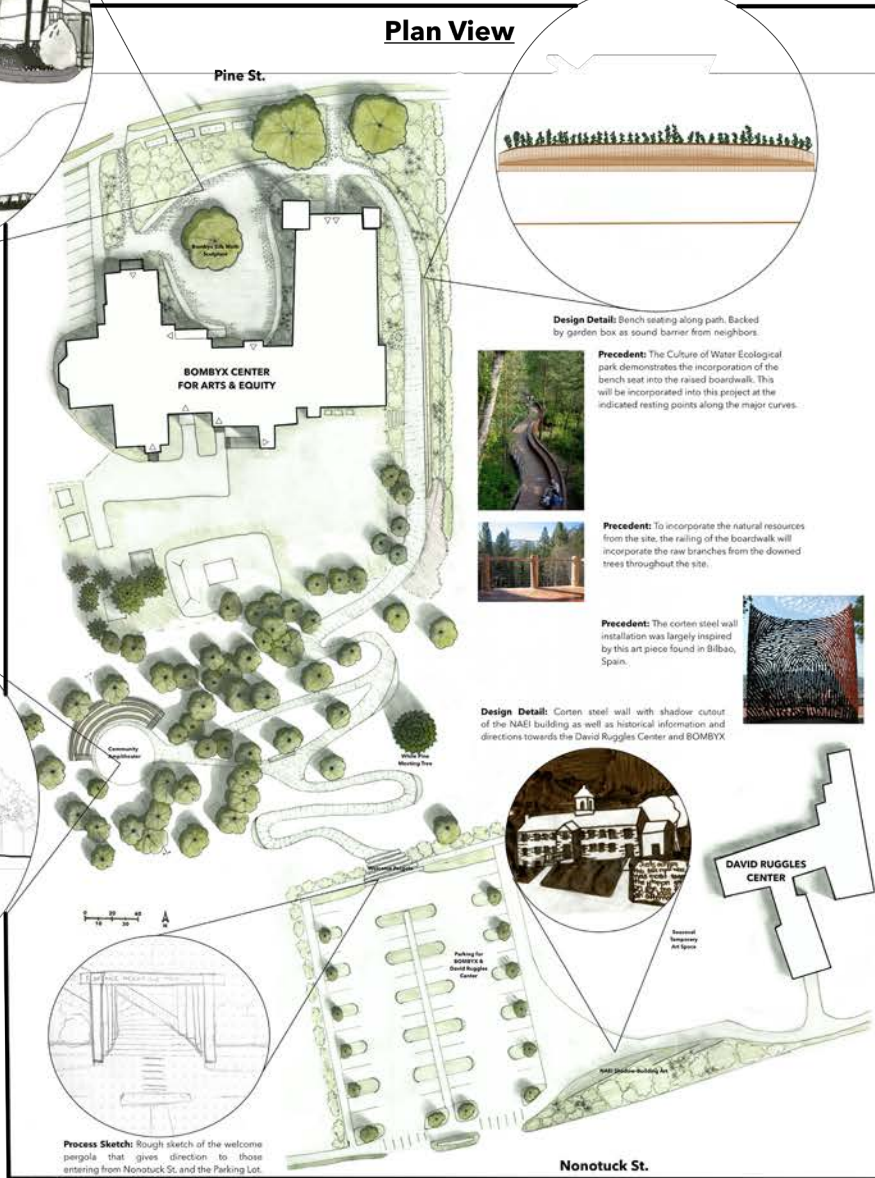


**Precedent:** The amphitheater seating closely resembles this precedent from the gardens of UC Berkeley in California. Going along the natural topography, the seating will form a curved semi-circle with a circular stage complementing it.



**Precedent Sketches:** The Portland Japanese garden (a.) had the elements of preservation of the natural landscape with the incorporation of cultural heritage elements but it failed to have a universally accessible entrance. The Park of Memories (b.) walkway was the basis for the design of the stilted walkway in my design.

## Plan View



**Design Detail:** Bench seating along path. Backed by garden box as sound barrier from neighbors.



**Precedent:** The Culture of Water Ecological park demonstrates the incorporation of the bench seat into the raised boardwalk. This will be incorporated into this project at the indicated resting points along the major curves.



**Precedent:** To incorporate the natural resources from the site, the railing of the boardwalk will incorporate the raw branches from the downed trees throughout the site.

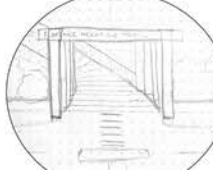


**Precedent:** The corten steel wall installation was largely inspired by this art piece found in Bilbao, Spain.

**Design Detail:** Corten steel wall with shadow cast of the NAEI building as well as historical information and directions towards the David Ruggles Center and BOMBYX



Precedent Temporary Art Space



**Process Sketch:** Rough sketch of the welcome pergola that gives direction to those entering from Nonotuck St. and the Parking Lot.

Nonotuck St.



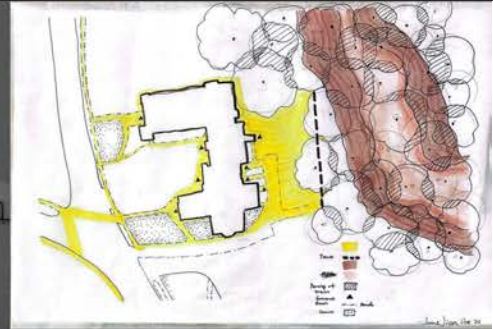
**INTRODUCTION** This design proposal focuses on the slope behind Bombyx and frames it in relation to the location of the David Ruggles Center. By linking the changes in elevation with the passage of time, the area at a higher level symbolizes the future, while the area at a lower level represents the past. Visitors may choose to walk downhill from Bombyx to the David Ruggles Center—moving symbolically from the future into history or ascend from the David Ruggles Center toward Bombyx: from past to present.

## SLOPE GARDEN LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Jane Jian  
LSS 250: Landscape and Narrative, Fall 2025

### SITE ANALYSIS

The bright yellow area indicates the primary zone of human activity. Within the sloped area, there is a flat zone marked in light brown. The design aims to guide people toward this flat area within the slope for activities.



Site analysis image, on tracing paper

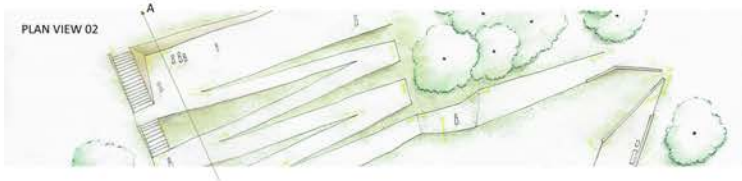
### FUTURE: INTERACTIVE VIEWING PLATFORM

This circular viewing deck extends from the highest point of the slope. Photography artists can be invited to capture a panoramic photograph of Florence from this location, which will then be installed on the platform with markers indicating the directions of meaningful sites in town, such as cemeteries, memorial parks, and other landmarks. A layer of transparent paper can be placed over the panoramic image, inviting residents and visitors to collaboratively "construct" the future of Florence by drawing or adding their visions onto it.

PLAN VIEW 01



PLAN VIEW 02

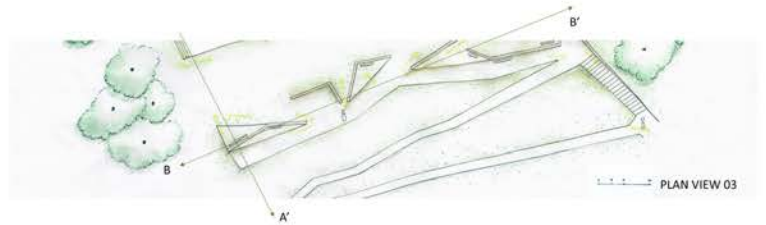


### PRESENT: SCENIC PATHWAY

Directly facing the viewing platform is a scenic pathway. Its initial part is a sunken platform that slopes downward at approximately a forty-five-degree angle for about five feet. The cut slope is stabilized using a wattle fence constructed from fallen branches collected on the hillside. The rest of the pathway transitions into an elevated boardwalk that continues downhill, eventually connecting to the Mill River Garden.

### PAST: THE MILL RIVER GARDEN

Historically, the Mill River played a significant role in Florence's industrial development. A relatively flat portion of the slope is designed into a sunken rain garden, where vegetation and water channels trace the shape of the Mill River bank as it passes through Florence. Artists and historians may be invited to install sculptures or architectural models within the garden to narrate the town's history. One side of the garden has an open viewing deck, while the opposite side offers a semi-enclosed viewing corridor formed by well-designed walls, providing shelter and a place for visitors to rest.



PRECEDENT IMAGE: Maya Lin, Vietnam Veterans Memorial



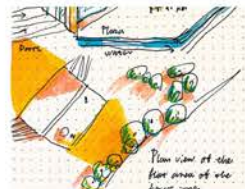
PRECEDENT IMAGE: Alvaro Siza, Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art



SECTION B-B'

SECTION A-A'

MODEL VIEW



DESIGN CONCEPTS: Flat zone, Semi-outdoor corridor, Garden

**INTRODUCTION** This design proposal focuses on the slope between Bunkys and Hanes. It is related to the location of the Great Rugged Center. By taking the changes in elevation with the passage of time, the area at a higher level, symbolizing the future, while the area at a lower level represents the past. The design is a multi-layered approach, from Bunkys to the Great Rugged Center, symbolizing the future, and the area of lower elevation, symbolizing the past. The design is a multi-layered approach, from Bunkys to the Great Rugged Center, symbolizing the future, and the area of lower elevation, symbolizing the past.

**SLOPE GARDEN LANDSCAPE DESIGN**  
 Jane Jan  
 ESS 250 Landscape and Narrative Fall 2025

**SITE ANALYSIS**  
 The bright yellow area indicates the primary zone of human activity within the proposed area. The design will guide people toward this flat area within the slope for activities.

**FUTURE: INTERACTIVE VIEWING PLATFORM**  
 This interactive viewing platform extends from the highest point of the slope. It is designed to provide a unique perspective on the landscape, allowing visitors to view the area from a higher vantage point. The platform is designed to be a multi-layered approach, from Bunkys to the Great Rugged Center, symbolizing the future, and the area of lower elevation, symbolizing the past.

**PLAN VIEW II**

**PLAN VIEW I**

**PRESENT: SCENIC PATHWAY**  
 This scenic pathway is a multi-layered approach, from Bunkys to the Great Rugged Center, symbolizing the future, and the area of lower elevation, symbolizing the past. The pathway is designed to provide a unique perspective on the landscape, allowing visitors to view the area from a higher vantage point.

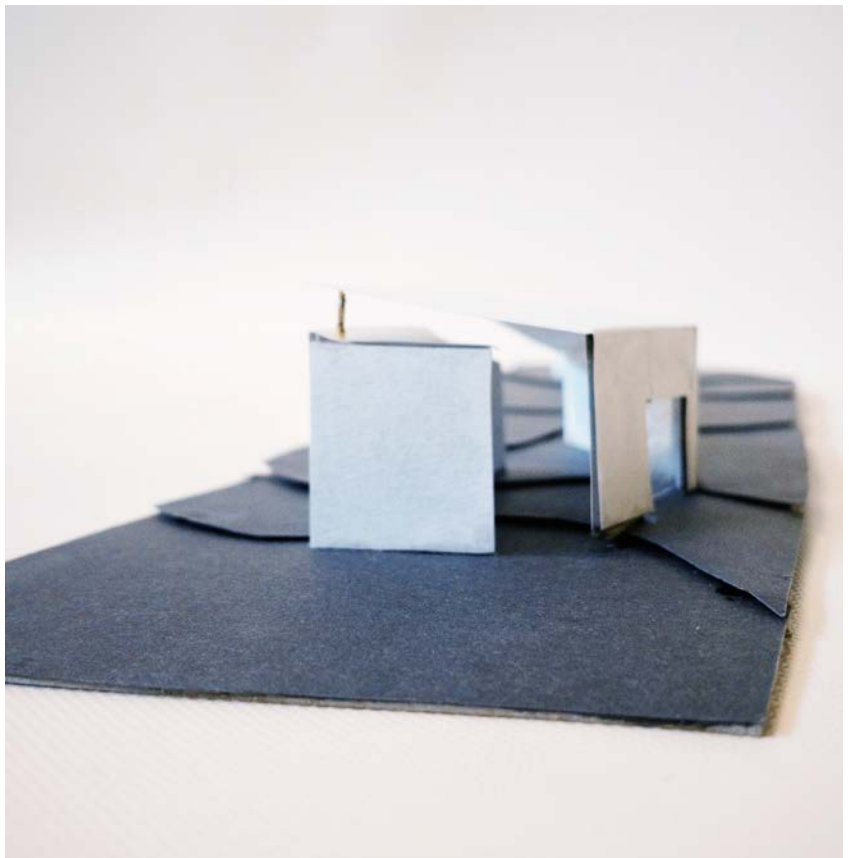
**PAST: THE MILL RIVER GARDEN**  
 This garden is a multi-layered approach, from Bunkys to the Great Rugged Center, symbolizing the future, and the area of lower elevation, symbolizing the past. The garden is designed to provide a unique perspective on the landscape, allowing visitors to view the area from a higher vantage point.

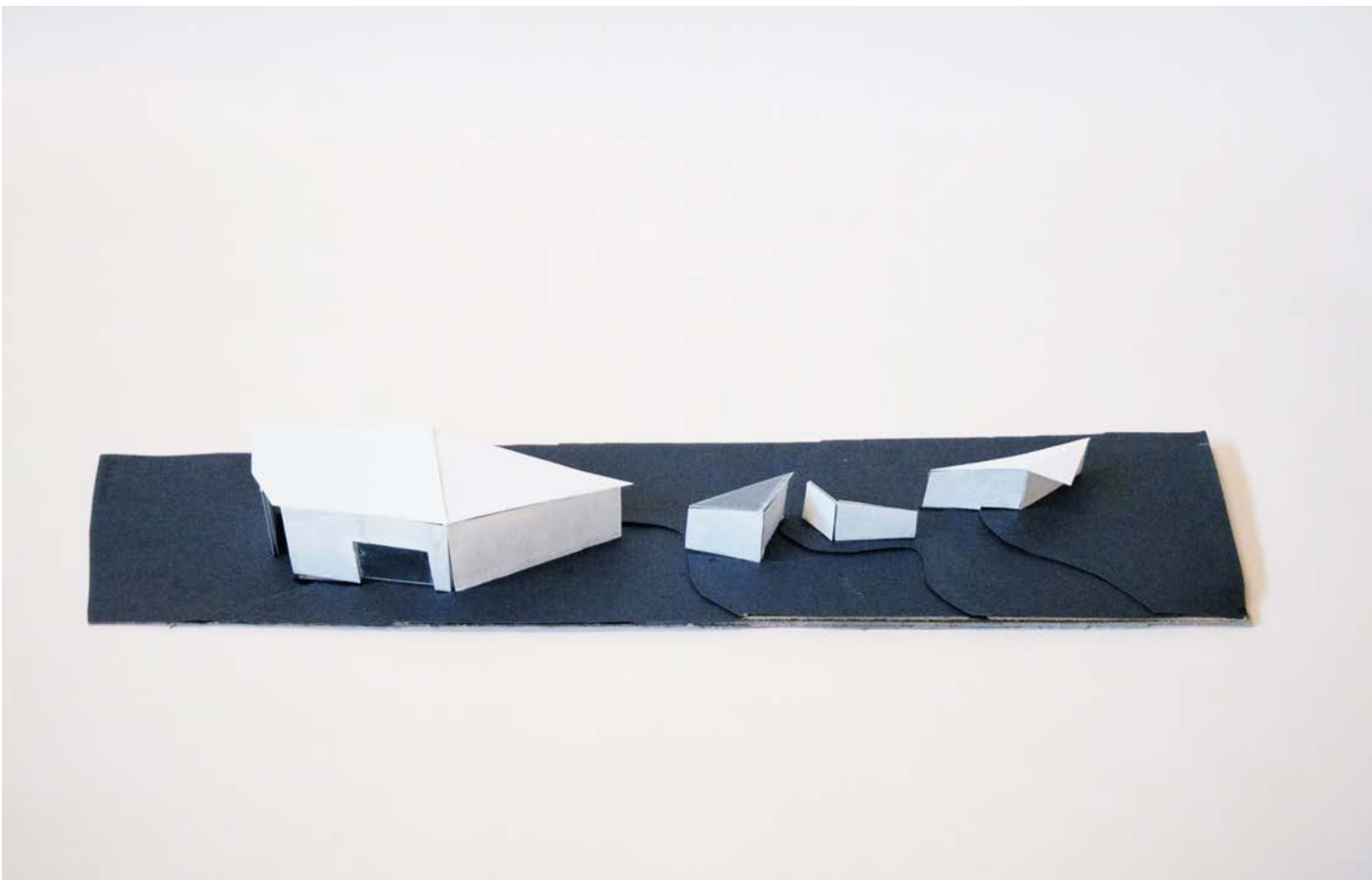
**SECTION B-B**

**SECTION A-A**

**MODEL VIEW**

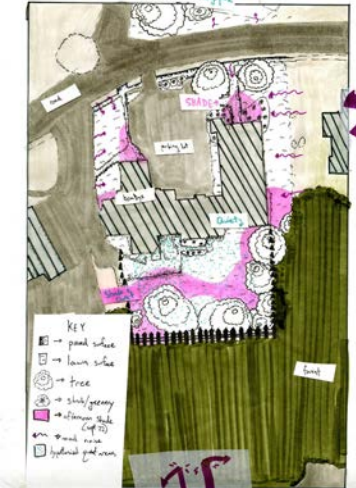
**DESIGN CONCEPTS** Plan view, Section A-A, Section B-B, Model view.



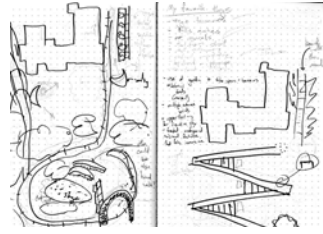


# Initial Thoughts and Design Planning

## COMFORT/SAFETY/ACCESSIBILITY of SITE



My initial summative analysis looked at areas of comfort at the site. I found that Bombyx yard had relatively few outdoor spaces that were shaded and quiet. From this analysis, I saw an opportunity in the forest to create more cozy, comfortable spaces for members of the community.



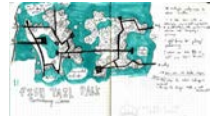
My initial concept designs focused heavily on creating these cozy spaces that were also accessible and practical. Above and to the left are three examples of this. While varying in priorities, a throughline between all of these designs are the maintained tree presence and adding additional flora.



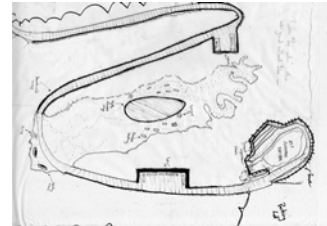
This is what led to my first iteration of a plan, shown here.



Source: <http://www.atscs.net/daley-plaza>

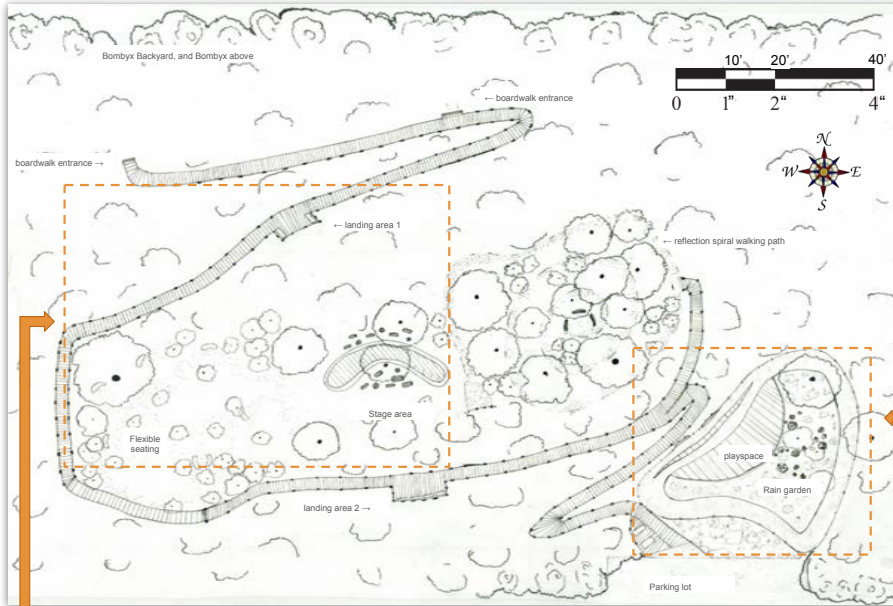


I was also inspired by landscapes such as Daley Plaza (TX) and Fish Tail Park (Nanchang, China) that use boardwalks with multiple entrances and exits in their designs. I like these because boardwalks have a minimal impact on the environment, and multiple points of entry/exit reduce traffic.



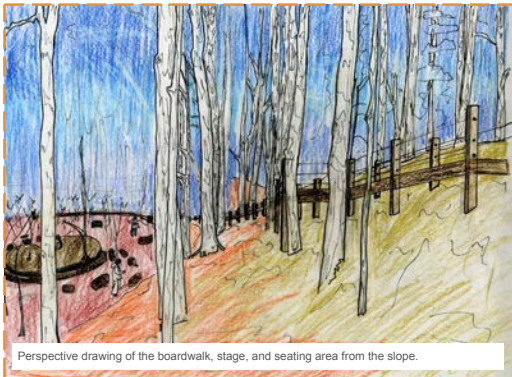
Which over the course of many weeks, became this:

## Paths to Peace: a Bombyx Backyard Design

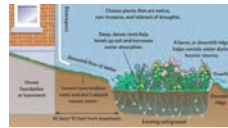


What would it look like to create a quiet, enclosed, accessible green space in the business of downtown Florence?

This was the question I started with when working on this design of Bombyx backyard. A key feature of the final plan is an accessible boardwalk that begins in the lawn, and then curves down the slope of the forest all the way to the parking lot on Nonotuck Street. In the middle of the slope is a flat area with less mature vegetation. I've designed this zone to have three main areas. The first - accessed right as you leave the boardwalk - is good for resting and enjoying nature. Comfortable benches are tucked between trees; open space in the middle leaves room for saplings to grow. The second area features a small boardwalk stage and flexible seating made of repurposed logs. This space for performance and gathering is conveniently nestled in the forest, creating a natural sound barrier. Just past the stage is the third area - a spiral reflection path. This path takes visitors on a journey through the life of Sojourner Truth, which is portrayed by an immersive art piece installed by local artists. Adjacent to the parking lot and boardwalk is a playground with integrated stormwater drainage infrastructure. Through the low-impact construction and natural aesthetics, I've aimed to honor the legacy of Florence as a progressive center explicitly (through art) and implicitly (through method).



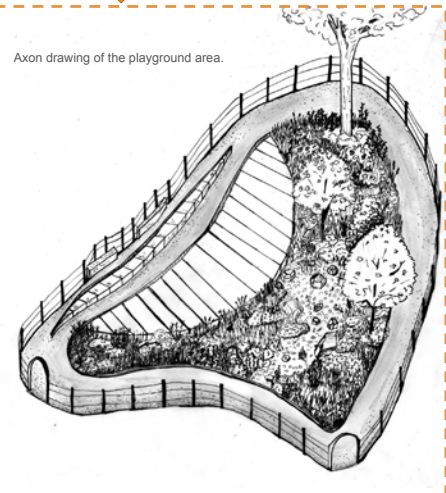
Perspective drawing of the boardwalk, stage, and seating area from the slope.



Inspiration for my water garden in the play area. Source: <https://water.phila.gov/gsi/tools/rain-garden/>



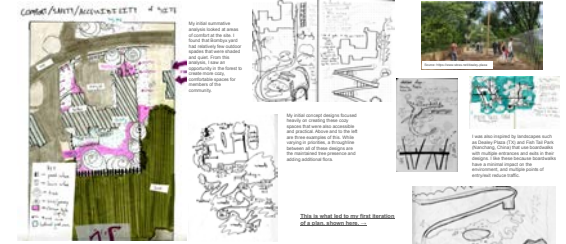
Kara Walker's work with silhouettes inspired my ideas for art in the reflection spiral.



Axon drawing of the playground area.

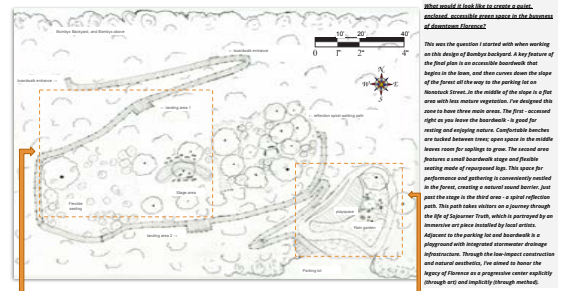
## Design Features - In Focus

**Initial Thoughts and Design Planning**



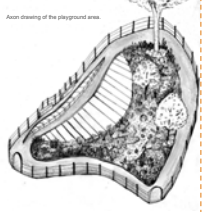
Which over the course of many weeks, became this:

**Paths to Peace: a Bombyx Backyard Design**



**What would a look like to create a sense of enclosure, a sense of peace, and a sense of connection to the site?**

This was the question I started with when working on this design of Bombyx backyard. A key feature of the final plan is an accessible boardwalk that begins at the barn, and then curves down the slope of the parcel all the way to the parking lot on the eastern border. In the middle of the slope is a flat area with less mature vegetation. I've designed this area to have three main sections. The first is a small right on you near the boardwalk. It is good for meeting and enjoying visitors. Carefully chosen, low-maintenance trees, grass cover, and a small water feature are used to create a sense of enclosure and connection to the site. The second area features a small boardwalk edge and a small water feature. This area is good for performance and gathering. It is connected to the first area, creating a sense of enclosure. Just past the edge is the third area - a small reflection pool. This pool also creates a sense of enclosure through the use of Japanese Zen, which is portrayed by an minimalist sculpture created by local artist. Adjacent to the parking lot and boardwalk is a playground with integrated stormwater drainage infrastructure. Through the low-impact construction and natural materials, I've aimed to honor the legacy of Bombyx as a progressive water rapidly through art and explicitly through methods.



**Design Features - In Focus**

Tasha Wilson, LSS 200



# Between Bombyx and History The Heritage Path

LAURA LATRE  
Landscape & Narrative, Fall 2025

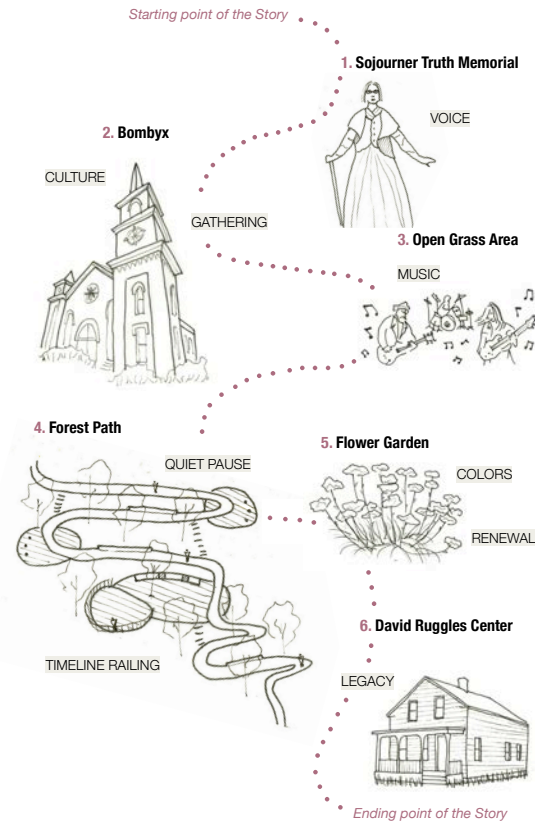
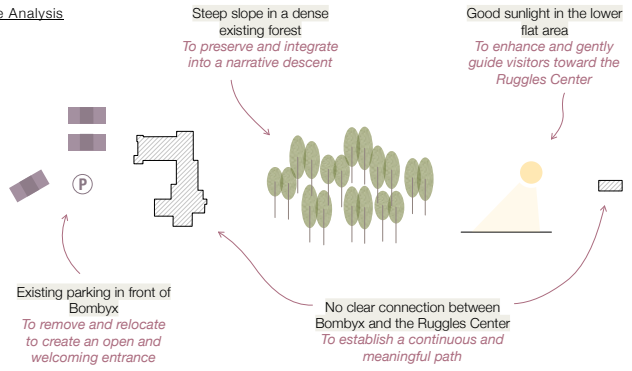
The Heritage Path is a project that creates a narrative route connecting three important places in Florence: the Sojourner Truth statue, Bombyx, and the David Ruggles Center. The goal is to design a calm and intuitive path that reveals the African-American heritage of the neighborhood through a sequence of outdoor spaces.

The project works with the future renovation of Bombyx. I removed the few parking spaces that were planned in front of the building and relocated them to the bottom of the slope. This opens the upper area and makes it more welcoming for visitors. Behind Bombyx, the existing grassy space becomes a community lawn facing the new stage, creating a simple and flexible outdoor area for small events.

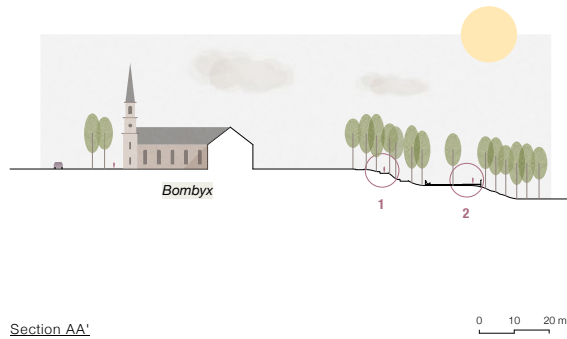
From there, the path enters the forest. A passage carved into the slope guides visitors downward, while small wooden platforms along the way create moments of pause and reflection. At the center of the descent, two larger terraces form a place to slow down: one works as a lookout with a timeline integrated into the railing, and the other offers seating and small elements to read or listen to.

At the bottom, the path reaches a colorful flower garden before ending at the David Ruggles Center, a meaningful final point of the journey.

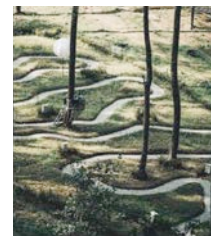
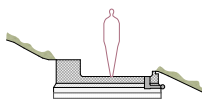
## Site Analysis



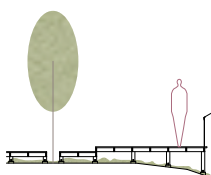
Narrative Diagram



## 1. Carved Path Through the Slope



## 2. Two-Level Wooden Platforms



Detail sections

0 1 m

# Between Bombyx and History The Heritage Path

LAURA LATR  
Landscape & Narrative, Fall 2021

The Heritage Path is a project that creates a narrative route connecting three important places in Florence: the Soperman Truth statue, Bombyx, and the David Ruggles Center. The goal is to design a calm and intuitive path that weaves the African-American heritage of the neighborhood through a sequence of outdoor spaces.

The project works with the future renovation of Bombyx. I removed the few planting species that were planned in front of the building and relocated them to the bottom of the slope. This opens the upper area and makes it more welcoming for visitors. Behind Bombyx, the existing grassy space becomes a community lawn facing the new stage, creating a simple and flexible outdoor area for small events.

As the path enters the forest, a passage carved into the slope places visitors downward, while small wooden platforms along the way help moments of pause and reflection. At the center of the descent, two per terraces form a place to slow down: one works as a lookout with a railing integrated into the railing, and the other offers seating and small terraces to read or listen to.

At the bottom, the path reaches a colorful flower garden before ending at the David Ruggles Center, a meaningful final point of the journey.

