

FROM SEPARATION
TO AMBIGUITY

New Orleans and the Mississippi River exist in a state of perpetual liminality—neither fully land nor water, neither defined by a single culture or race. But over time, levees rose, drawing harder lines between water and land. Social and environmental divides converged, pushing many underserved communities into the city's most flood-prone areas. What was once fluid—ecologically and socially—began to harden into separation. The site, located at the threshold between racially diverse neighborhoods, was once envisioned as a civic common. Over time, it became a stage for political symbolism, reinforcing a singular and exclusionary narrative.

This project proposes a shift—from separation to ambiguity. Socially, it does not seek resolution through a single narrative of unity but instead holds space for tension to be seen and shared. The design creates a platform for multiple stories to coexist, using materials with distinct cultural references to reflect the layered identities of the New Orlean. Fragments of the removed monument are redistributed—not as objects of reverence, but as participatory surfaces for community expression, as reflections of evolving social temperament. As James Baldwin reminds us, "Not everything that

is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced." Our proposal invites multiplicity, dialogue and confrontation.

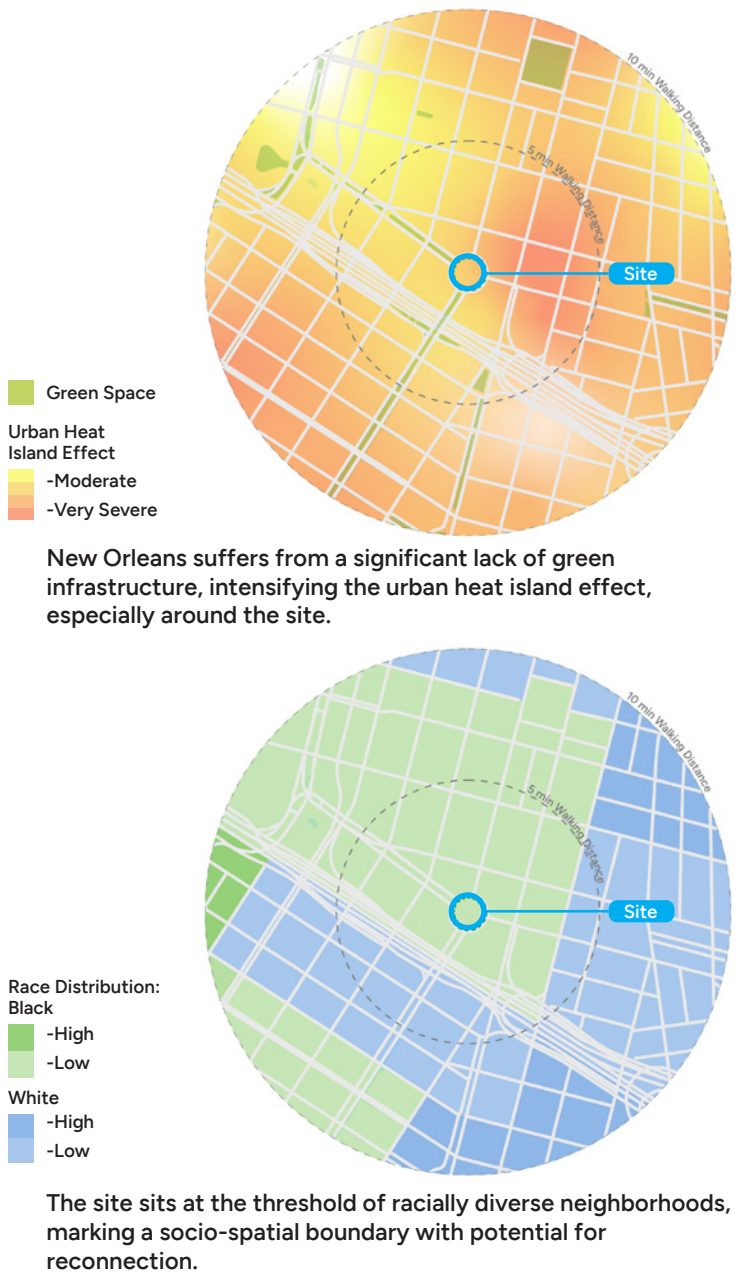
Environmentally, the project treats land and water not as opposites, but as varying degrees of wetness. Subtle topographic modulation allows the site to hold water during rain and release it during dry periods. Materials are chosen for their capacity to absorb, retain, or repel moisture, creating gradients of wet and dry that shift with the weather. Rather than a hard edge, the threshold between land and water is felt bodily—through pooled water, filtered mist, and softened ground. Visitors encounter the site through the skin, through atmospheric change. Amid heat, water connects across age, race, and background with moments of shared bodily relief.

By revealing tension rather than erasing it, the site becomes a space where information is exchanged, contradictions emerge, and meanings are continually deposited. Here, ambiguity becomes the medium through which memory, climate, and culture coalesce—unfinished, alive, and open to encounter.

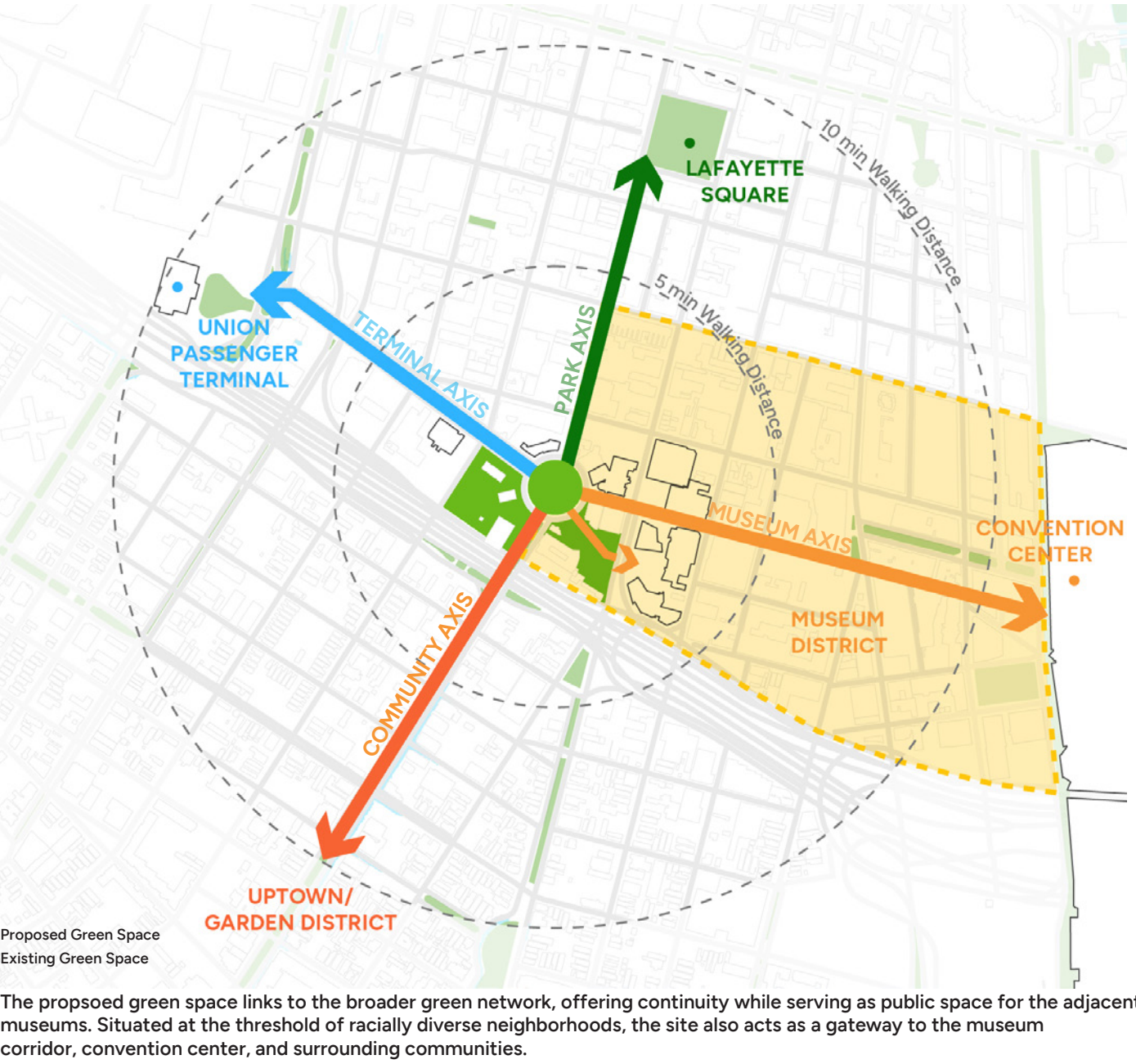


Water gathers people—children play, parents linger, conversations unfold across differences. Water level rises with rain, recedes in drought, revealing a shifting plaza. Scattered remnants of a former statue invite improvisation, becoming a mirror for social temperament. Terraced edges are inscribed with the word "water" in Indigenous, French, Spanish, and other languages—echoes of New Orleans' layered histories.

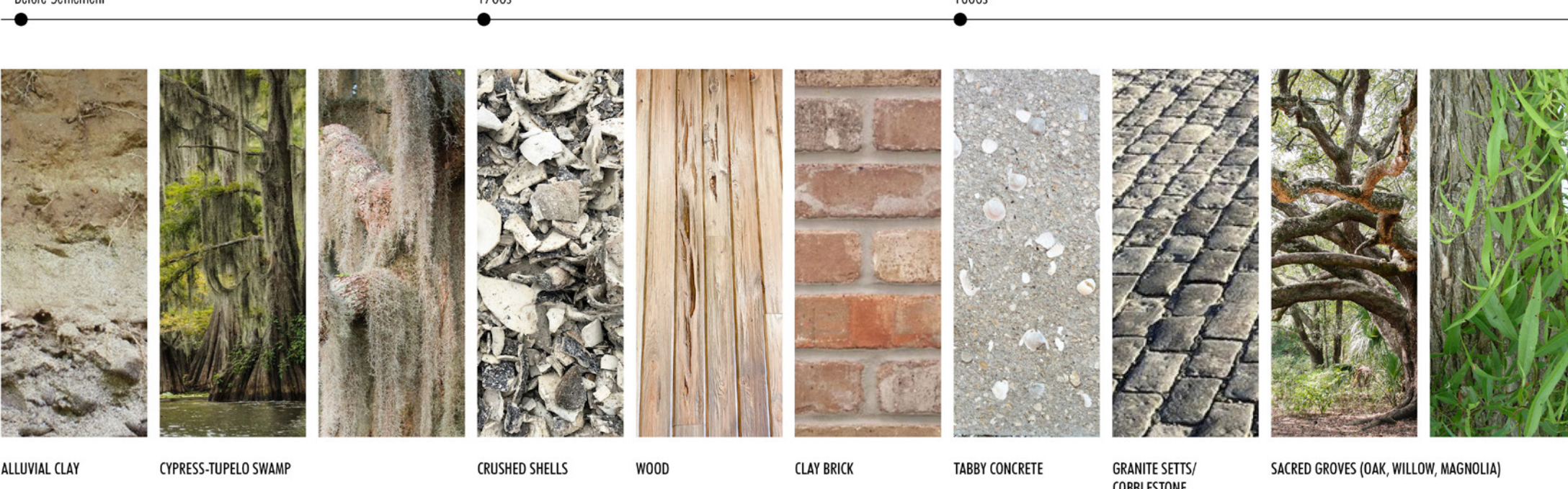
ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL TENSION
AROUND THE SITE



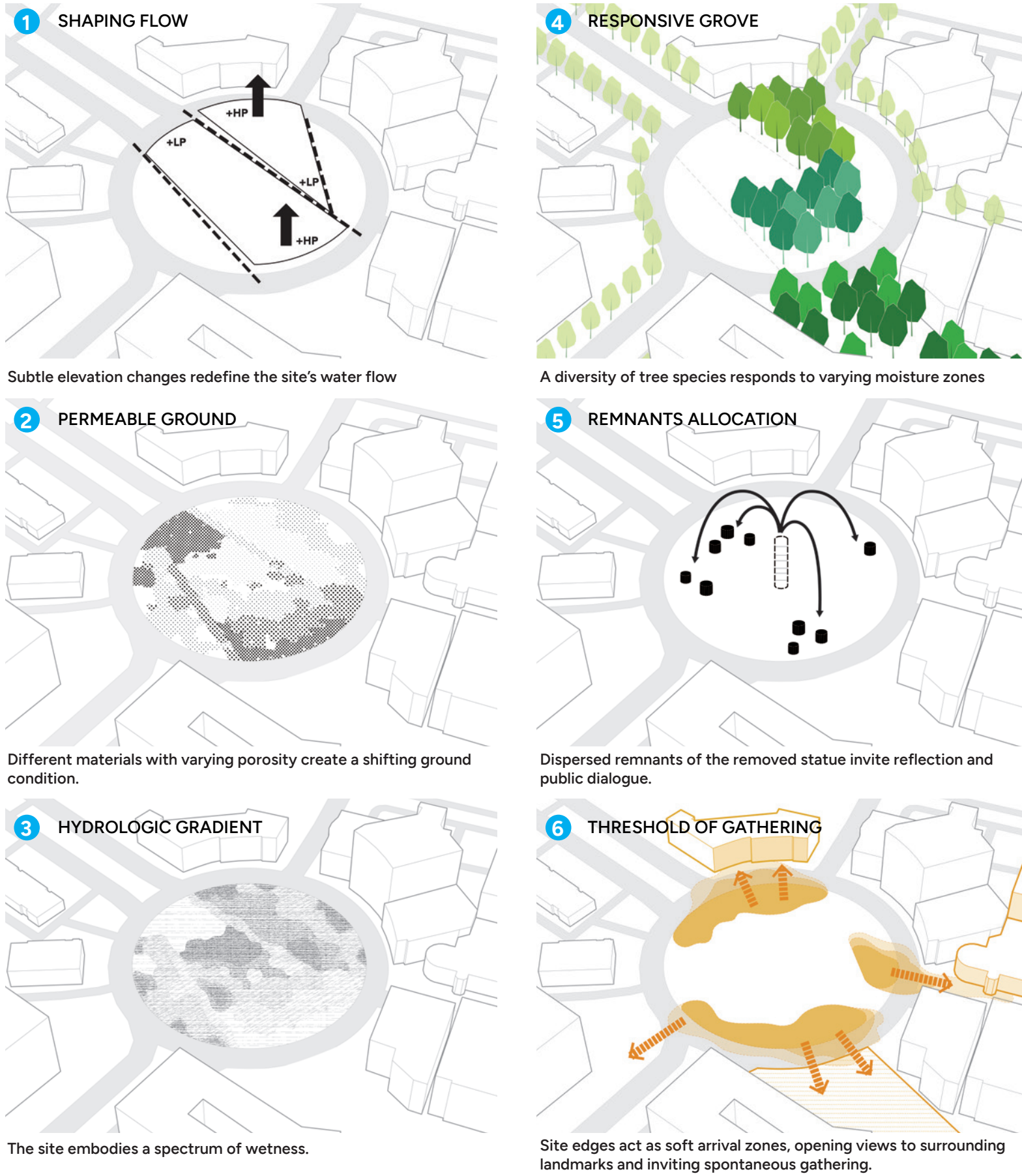
BEYOND CIRCLE: REGIONAL NETWORK



TRACING THE MATERIAL PALIMPSEST OF NEW ORLEANS



REASSEMBLING NEW ORLEANS THROUGH MATERIAL NARRATIVES



A canopy hovers above the terrace, providing shade and comfort. The raised terrace, constructed from rammed earth—a technique rooted in West African traditions and carried through the slave trade—serves as both a gathering platform and a seat wall. Native plantings deepen its cultural resonance: oak groves recall "sacred" Black cemeteries, while Society Garlic, common in Creole gardens, blends ornamental beauty with culinary heritage.



The plaza offers a generous space for large-scale gatherings, evoking a more urban atmosphere. As one of several social platforms along the site's edge, it serves both the project and the surrounding cultural institutions. A feature drain runs across the pavement, subtly inscribed into the surface—guiding water as it slowly flows. Nearby, a cluster of rocks with misting features invites children to play, adding movement and sensory engagement to the space.



The raised platform also serves as a stage for the Mardi Gras parade schedule. Outside of parade season, it becomes a place to relax and overlook the vacant lot across the street—imagined as a future green space. Made of rammed earth, the platform is juxtaposed with contrasting materials, enriching its tactile and visual character.