

Community Mourning Practices in Historic Building Demolition

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A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Urban Planning

University of Washington

2026

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Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Urban Design and Planning

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Abstract

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As the National Historic Preservation Act approaches its 60th anniversary, the field of historic preservation faces a critical gap: regulatory tools have been developed to protect buildings yet no framework exists for responding to their loss once demolition becomes unavoidable. This qualitative study documents community-based mourning practices surrounding historic building demolition in Seattle, Washington. The work argues that acts of mourning are a legitimate and undertheorized form of preservation practice. Drawing on a repository of eleven case studies and five semi-structured interviews with artists, architects, community organizers, and preservation professionals, this research demonstrates that communities actively develop remembrance practices to reminisce and let go when formal preservation pathways are unavailable.

Recent Washington State legislation reducing community standing in the landmark designation process makes these findings especially timely. This study argues that preservation practice must expand beyond saving structures and work to support communities through building demolition. This work is currently carried out by individuals and small organizations that exist without institutional recognition or support. By folding this work into historic preservation practice, we are able to better meet the foundational goals of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to say thank you to my wonderful thesis committee, Manish Chalana and Dan Abramson. Their guiding assistance and support on this work was instrumental in its success.

Secondly, I would like to thank all those who participate in, grieve for and mourn the changes in the environment around us. Acts of remembrance matter. Those I interviewed: Amber and Raymond of Lucile House, Cynthia Brothers of Vanishing Seattle, Stephanie Johnson-Toliver, president of the Black Heritage Society of Washington State, DK Pan local artist, and Jim Nicholls practicing architect. Your voices were instrumental in my understanding of this work and conceptualizing what it means to mourn buildings in our built environment.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends. Stacy, Andy, Ada, and Ursula, thank you for letting me crash into your world and discuss urban planning or pilfer your fridge on late work nights. To my friends and housemates: Sally, Day, Gray, Kate, Bridger and Mikka, thanks for letting me be messy as I pushed through this body of work. To my rugby team, the Emerald City Mudhens, thank you for being outlets, and rocks, and my cheerleaders, and my support system over the last two years. MHL.

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Article I. Introduction

Section 1.01 Overview

This year, 2026, marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern preservation movement. We should use this anniversary as an opportunity to expand the conceptual parameters of the preservation field. My thesis, *Community Mourning Practices in Historic Building Demolition*, seeks to demonstrate that ongoing community practices of mourning buildings suggest that, even in the absence of preservation protections, communities engage in mourning rituals to let go and remember sites which are awaiting demolition or already demolished.

My work seeks to expand the field of historic preservation beyond its traditional emphasis on protection. I am hoping to show that rituals surrounding collective loss can strengthen the preservation movement and better serve our communities. Through this work, I am not testing a hypothesis; I describe this phenomenon occurring in Seattle, Washington. I show that communities' intentional interaction with the demolition process offers a strategy for planners to meaningfully engage with the impact the loss of buildings has on people. Ideally, this thesis will help planners and preservationists acknowledge and integrate community grieving to strengthen practice.

“Many of the problems with contemporary U.S. preservation practice concern what to save, how to expand the listings, and who benefits. But a very different problem also plagues it—letting go. The preservation movement, like all of us, has a problem with death. Preservation by definition stands against the wanton destruction of the past. But by building an image of itself as a movement against destruction and in favor of keeping the past present, the preservation movement has failed to reckon with how and when to let things go.”

– Max Page, *Why Preservation Matters*

Three central strategies address Max Page's call to action about how and when to let things go. First, I build a literature base focusing on: why preservation's legal and historical formation left it unequipped to address loss, how demolition operates as a process the field has left largely unexamined, how buildings are understood to have life cycles that ritual marks, and

what grief scholarship establishes about the function of public mourning. Second, I use a repository of Seattle case studies and five interviews to show that building demolition produces collective grief, and that communities given the opportunity will gather to mourn together. Third, I read the gaps in that literature against the cases and interviews to argue that the interval between a building's last use and its demolition is a critical and largely overlooked opportunity for preservation practice. It is a threshold in which community mourning and letting go can be carried forward through remembrance practice even when the physical structure cannot be saved.

My thesis is focused on understanding how people deal with the loss of their familiar context through ritualized remembrance practices. The work acknowledges that demolition is not inherently bad, but it is our responsibility as practitioners to aid transitions in the built environment and help city residents come to terms with the change they see in front of them.

Section 1.02 Objectives of Work

In documenting mourning practices across Seattle through case studies and interviews with individuals engaged in remembrance work, this research contributes to the field by expanding how preservation is conceptualized and practiced. Specifically, it aims to demonstrate that preservation should not end when a building cannot be saved, and that intentional acts of reminiscing are a legitimate and necessary extension of preservation practice. This thesis lays the groundwork for future research, theory-building, and professional experimentation within historic preservation and urban planning.

Remembrance rituals have been ongoing around building/context loss and transformation, but those have not been considered as part of the broader historic preservation practice, nor have they informed discourses around changing practice. Through this work focused primarily in Seattle, I argue that integrating remembrance practice within the folds of historic preservation practice has the potential to support communities that are struggling with change. I primarily seek to explore the following set of questions to clarify the remembrance practices themselves, but also understand their interconnectedness with abroad, preservation approach, inclusive of mourning and letting go **How have the residents of Seattle who have to deal with losses of historic buildings mobilize collective, grieving practices? And what do**

these reminiscing practices or rituals reveal about the role of historic preservation beyond formal protection frameworks?

Section 1.03 Significance to the Preservation Field

The 1966 National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) established a partnership between the federal government and state, tribal, and local governments for preservation activities with the goal to preserve our past so that we can understand it and use it to provide direction to the future (National Park Service, 1966). This established the Section 106 review process, which requires a federal or federally funded project to assess their impact on historic resources that are already on the national register or eligible for it (National Park Service, 1966). If the cultural resource has to face relocation or demolition in the absence of feasible alternatives then the federal regulations state that a survey of record must occur before that. In Seattle, we have many examples of federally listed buildings being torn down without the required survey (West, 2020).

Locally, demolition of buildings, even those of cultural and architectural significance, is likely to increase. Recent legislative developments in Washington state have curbed the role of the community as well as the preservation groups in nominating landmarks without owners consent, which is likely to impact the retention of historic stock. Substitute House Bill 1576, passed in 2025, and now requires property owner consent before a building under 125 years old can be designated as a local historic landmark (HB 1576 Washington State Legislature, 2025). This change effectively reduces community standing in the formal preservation process and shifts authority away from the broader public who attach meaning to historic buildings (Momin, 2025).

Other than owner consent requirements, other hindrances to local designation are costs associated with putting a nomination together, which often require hiring a preservation consultant to build a case and submit a landmarking dossier . This can come at a cost that communities or individuals cannot or choose not to bear.

Despite this gap in legal preservation pathways, communities do not stop wanting to protect or acknowledge their significant spaces. This thesis demonstrates that when formal

preservation tools are absent or ineffective, ritualized remembrance of lost buildings should be acknowledged as an important practice for the field of preservation and planning.

Section 1.04 Informing Literature

The literature review is organized into themed areas: history and critique of modern preservation policy, scholarship on demolition and building life cycles, and how theories of grief and mourning can be forms of remembrance. Through this literature review, I have identified very few written research studies that integrate demolition, memory, and mourning into preservation policy itself. While preservationists have been increasingly advocating for community-based approaches in building preservation; there is still a gap in the literature about our responsibility as practitioners to address when buildings are slated for demolition

Modern preservation policy focuses primarily on the preservation of buildings that demonstrate architectural significance to a time or history, rather than what types of significance those may have accrued through time. Often buildings that have lower architectural integrity yet high community significance by use and association are disqualified from the landmarking process. At a time when regulatory tools frequently remain insufficient to protect buildings valued by communities, this literature highlights an alternative framework for understanding how preservation can include within its folds what it can't or does not want to hold.

Scholars across planning and preservation have increasingly argued that community resilience is strengthened by creating processes that allow people to collectively adapt to transformation (Vale & Campanella, 2005). Public mourning has been shown to provide space for grief, foster shared identity, and help communities integrate loss into broader narratives of place (Doss, 2012). This thesis exists within the idea that when official channels for preservation narrow or have high barriers to entry, communities do not simply stop wanting to protect their special places. They instead find other ways to acknowledge the building's past and their association with it through time, even while the demolition may be ongoing. Barnett's *Mourning in the Anthropocene* reminds us, "The more we grieve, the more openly we acknowledge the ways our lives and our worlds are populated and enriched by others" (Barnett, 2022). **This project addresses a critical gap in preservation scholarship by recognizing that letting go of**

historic building stock (recognized or not) deserves a place in preservation practice to better serve the communities we work in.

Literature by Neil Harris discusses how buildings are not just physical structures but things that are laced with community meaning. The literature highlights how everyday buildings anchor collective memory. Neil Harris points out that only through ritualized remembrance practice, similar to human mourning rituals, do we acknowledge the life cycles of the built environment. He discusses how seeing buildings as objects with a life cycle underpins the emotional responses to demolition and motivates mourning practices. The sparse literature surrounding building life cycle and ritualled remembrance is a clear gap that Harris explores and ultimately calls the field of preservation to action to address. Through this literature, we see that mourning surrounding building loss is rarely acknowledged or facilitated by planners even as the fields of planning and preservation attempt at recognizing and valuing the social worlds associated with the built fabric. Harris demonstrates that community-based mourning practices are often focused on the social worlds that the building held. I connect through literature that it is our responsibility as practitioners to respond to this realization and act to support communities, particularly those impacted by long-standing urban redevelopment efforts, as they face ongoing challenges regarding building demolition.

It is important to note that demolition is not a neutral topic. Intentional building demolition is closely aligned with gentrification and displacement practices in the United States. The Urban Renewal movement cleared so-called “blighted” neighborhoods, often targeting communities of color. In the book *Root Shock*, Mindy Thompson Fullilove discusses how the destruction of neighborhoods disabled powerful mechanisms of community functioning and severed emotional ties to place (Fullilove, 2004). Demolition has been weaponized both in Seattle and countrywide to further agendas and harm communities. Over the past six decades, preservation practice has largely centered on architectural significance, integrity, and regulatory frameworks. The field of modern preservation emerged from the Urban Renewal movement. Max Page in *Bending the Future: Fifty Ideas for the Next Fifty Years of Historic Preservation in the United States* writes that “as urban renewal efforts re-shaped communities everywhere, cities and towns across the country witnessed their own tragedies ... For many then and since, this sense of loss was the foundation of modern preservation work” (Page & Miller, 2016). Page

asserts that loss is the foundation of preservation. As such, I assert that preservation is a reactionary practice that comes from grief and ritualized remembrances are important to the communities.

Literature from the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States inform, “[at the time of the 1966 passing of NHPA] almost half of the twelve thousand structures listed in the Historic American Buildings Survey of the National Park had been destroyed” (National Trust, 1983). This statistic references demolition trends of eligible national landmark buildings during the government-sponsored urban renewal movement. Literature tells us that in the present day, historic buildings, even those not eligible, are still at a higher risk for demolition compared to their recently built counterparts. Since the 1966 passing of the NHPA, the loss of buildings are still going unacknowledged, even if that building is culturally significant.

Section 1.05 Definitions

Historic Preservation: A set of practices and policies through which communities honor the stories, materials, and memories that shape our communities.

Using official policy and practice standards from the NHPA to define what “Historic Preservation” is does not work for this thesis. Instead, I assert a new definition for historic preservation based on the National Building Museum’s work, which says, preservation work is not about stopping time, but instead about creatively including history in our built environment as it continues to evolve and change with us (Craig, 2025).” The goal of this thesis is to help historic preservation adapt to modern realities surrounding urban transformation despite the challenging regulatory environment in which it exists. This is a broad definition of historic preservation, but for this thesis, it is important to look beyond the traditional understanding that preservation should focus on maintaining and restoring historic buildings. This definition does not require that a building be formally designated or architecturally significant. By defining historic preservation as a communal act, it excludes private grief. What I am documenting is the public dimension of that grief recognized as mourning and arguing that these open spaces for ritualized remembrances that need to be engaged as part of historic preservation.

Demolition: the controlled destruction of a building or other structure (DEMOLITION Definition & Meaning - Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

In the preservation field, what qualifies as demolition is determined at the local level. Historic Preservation Review Boards often have a clearly defined list of points published as to what counts as demolition. This includes things such as: facade razing, destruction of the roof, anything using a partial demolition permit (Significant Demolition | Op, n.d.). In the case of this thesis, I am choosing to define historic building demolition by the Merriam-Webster definition of demolition. The emphasis of this definition is on the word “controlled,” meaning an intentional and planned act, not an act of god. This is important in the scope of my thesis as I am only looking at and discussing mourning practices based on intentional building demolitions, instead of looking at buildings that have been lost through unanticipated ways, such as fire or flooding.

Community Mourning practices: intentional public expressions of grief carried out by a group of individuals who are unified by a shared interest or experience of loss associated with the demolition of a building.

Defining community mourning practices allows me to emphasize that I am looking at collective actions that are based on loss through this work. This is based on the individual definitions of each word in the phrase. Community, as defined by the American Psychological Association, is “a collection of individuals who are not socially connected but do have common interests or shared qualities and are therefore perceived by others or by themselves as distinctive in some way.” In this case, I am assuming the community shares a common interest in feeling grief or loss over a building demolition. Mourning can be defined as the public display of grief. Practice can be defined as “something that is done often or regularly” (Practice Definition & Meaning | Britannica Dictionary, n.d.). Defining community mourning practice is important as it identifies that these practices are intentional public acts.

Section 1.06 Methodology

This is a qualitative thesis that includes a repository of Seattle-based case studies where community mourning practice occurred, combined with semi-structured interviews. The methods

of this work are based on community-centered research. Patterns across cases and from interview data will be identified. I am not trying to determine what mourning practices reveal about the mourners' connection to place so interview questions were developed accordingly.

This research involves semi-structured interviews with organizers, preservationists, artists, and planners, and was approved by the University of Washington Institutional Review Board (IRB) before data collection. Participants were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling, informed of the voluntary nature of their participation, and allowed to review and withdraw their contributions. Because this research touches on experiences of loss, grief, and in some cases, displacement and community harm, interviews were conducted with care for participants' emotional well-being. All data has been stored securely and identifying information has been handled in accordance with IRB protocol.

Section 1.07 Limitations

Historic preservation in the United States has a well-documented history of exclusion. Landmark protections have disproportionately celebrated the histories of wealthy, white communities while urban renewal and demolition have disproportionately devastated communities of color. As someone who benefits from the structural advantages that have historically made preservation more accessible to people like me, through education, professional networks, and community support. I enter this research with a particular set of ingrained assumptions about what buildings matter, whose stories are worth preserving, and what "loss" looks like. I have worked to challenge those assumptions throughout this project, but I cannot claim to have fully escaped them.

As a Seattleite embedded in planning and preservation circles, I have proximity to the institutions that support this research. I have a risk of over-representing perspectives of those already centered in formal preservation practice. The communities whose buildings have been most aggressively demolished, Black, Indigenous, and low-income communities in Seattle, may be underrepresented in my case studies and interview pool, not because their experiences are less central to this thesis, but because preservation has underrepresented these communities in their

practice. Additionally, documenting the forms of private grief practices are beyond the scope of this work.

Article II. Preservation, Demolition, and Grief in Literature

Section 2.01 Why Preservation Needs a Theory of Loss

“I have been encouraged in my task, if sobered, by the fact that so little secondary literature has been devoted to the subject of this text: the building life cycle and its attendant rituals, occupations, and representations,” - Neil Harris, Building Lives

Neil Harris’s observation underscores a central problem in historic preservation scholarship: while the field has developed legislative tools to save buildings, it has paid less attention to understanding what its role is when historic buildings go through demolition. Critics within the preservation field have begun to question whether the framework of preservation, and if its predominant focus on architecturally significant buildings, is sufficient. Architect Rem Koolhaas argues that “the march of preservation necessitates the development of a theory of its opposite: not what to keep, but what to give up, what to erase and abandon” (Page, 2016, p 54). I use this quote to reframe the role of preservation from a practice of keeping things from changing to a practice that is entangled with demolition and change. I am using the below literature to consider the idea that extending preservation past the keeping of the built form and into the mourning of space can help sustain social memory and benefit both communities and historic preservation practice.

Scholars such as Max Page, Randy Mason, Na Li, Tiya Miles, Rachel Miller, Liz Ševčenko, and others call for approaches that connect preservation to storytelling, community values, and dialogue (Bradley, 2001; King, 2016; Li, 2016; Mason, 2006; Miles and Miller, 2016; Page, 2016; Ševčenko, 2023). Published research in grief studies, from Joshua Trey Barnett’s work on ecological mourning (Barnett, 2022) to Judith Butler’s writing on relationality (Butler, 2004), suggests that the emotion of loss is a tool that shapes community and is beneficial to acknowledge. This thesis is a record of a regional practice of building memorials in Seattle and is a call to action for the preservation and planning field to investigate practices of mourning for demolished or at-risk buildings. By analyzing literature regarding the historical context of preservation, theories of building life cycles, and grief and mourning literature, this thesis creates a knowledge foundation that supports calls to action to professionals on what to think about when equipping communities to navigate the changing built environment.

Section 2.02 Why Historic Preservation Has Not Equipped Us to Cope with Loss

(a) Historical Context

During the Urban Renewal period of the 1960s, large-scale redevelopment often led to the destruction of under-resourced neighborhoods. These redevelopment projects led to the demolition of historically significant properties. The modern preservation movement in the United States was, at its core, a reaction to this era of extreme change. Legally, the movement began in 1966 with the passing of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and was inspired by a seminal text titled, *With Heritage so Rich* (Special Committee on Historic Preservation, United States Conference of Mayors, 1966). This text called for policy practices that provide a “sense of orientation to our society using structures and objects of the past to establish values of time and place” (Special Committee on Historic Preservation, 1966, p. XX). This language is not incidental. Entire districts were being cleared, residents were watching familiar landscapes disappear, and genuine grief due to this practice in the communities was documented (Fried, 1963). Preservation was born as a response to loss. What the field has struggled to develop since, and what this thesis takes up, is a practice for the losses it cannot prevent. The history of Urban Renewal in Seattle shows the scale of that loss firsthand.

Locally, Washington State's Urban Renewal Law was passed in March 1957. The law enabled municipalities in the state to participate in the federal urban renewal program (Urban Renewal Law, 1957). The law defines blight as, “a densely populated area with structures that were deemed dilapidated; inappropriate mixed uses of land or buildings; "diversity of ownership"; or other "insanitary or unsafe conditions" contributing to an area that "substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the city” (Urban Renewal Law, 1957). By July 1968, over 1,000 structures in Seattle’s “blighted districts” had been demolished (*The Work of “Renewal”* - *CityArchives* | *Seattle.Gov*, n.d.). Over the course of 10 years, targeted demolition through the guise of code enforcement led to significant numbers of poor, immigrant, and BIPOC Seattleites being displaced from their neighborhoods. To prepare for potential community reaction against the demolitions, a citizen’s advisory committee was created to build community support for

urban renewal projects, the group was named Seattle Urban Renewal Enterprise (SURE), and published a report in which they stated, “all groups, with the single exception of racial minorities, reacted favorably to both national and local [Urban Renewal] programs” (Seattle Municipal Archives Digital Collections [Doc_4833], 1966). This inequity matters for this thesis. The losses of Urban Renewal, and the grief that came with them, were shaped by power.

Traditionally, preservationists have been primarily focused on the preservation of buildings to which they attribute historic and aesthetic value. Regulations implementing the section of the NHPA related to the National Register of Historic Places (36 CFR Part 60) include a list of criteria for a building or other historic resource to be considered eligible for listing. This criteria includes a property that is associated with a significant event, with a significant person, significant architecture, or has yielded a piece of significant history (National Park Service, 1995). Often, it is easiest to get a building on the national register due to architectural features. As of 2010, over half of the buildings in the national register reference Criteria C (architectural significance) as a reason for listing (Sprinkle, 2014). Criterion C rewards building integrity often qualities that require a building to have been architect-designed, well-built, and well-maintained. Buildings valued primarily through use and association, a bowling alley or a bathhouse or a neighborhood chapel, rarely clear that bar. And buildings valued through use and association are disproportionately demolished. These are buildings of communities that could not commission an architect, cannot fund a consultant to prepare a nomination, and do not find their attachments legible to a landmarks board. The buildings most likely to come down without protection are therefore frequently the buildings whose loss is felt most sharply by the people around them. If demolition falls unevenly, grief falls unevenly, and the question of our responsibility as practitioners aiding grief through demolition is also asking us to respond to this understanding of power..

Preservationists have been pushing for tools and theoretical frameworks to help expand beyond the modern preservation movement set up by the NHPA. Widening the range of tools and theoretical frameworks the field draws on widens the range of things those programs might accomplish (Bradley, 2001). I take Bradley’s writing as the background for the theoretical review that follows.

The National Register's emphasis on the built environment, combined with the expertise required to navigate it, has skewed what the country saves, an argument King makes under the deliberately provocative title "Repeal the National Historic Preservation Act" (King, 2016). King writes, "Let the federal government help each community, neighborhood, tribe, or other group define its own sacred structure ... use it as a key element in its local planning system, and require federal agencies to respect it." My thesis furthers this idea of the need for a "sacred" structure that can aid communities in the demolition of their historic properties. The scholarship below critiques traditional preservation for its focus on physical building protection and regulatory frameworks. In referencing preservation's connection to the Urban Renewal movement, practitioners in the field ask, "Could preservationists be too attached to tools designed to fight the last war?" (National Trust for Historic Preservation, n.d.). The literature is acting as a call to action, mentioning the work of King and other scholars, to extend discussions of preservation beyond the traditional limitations of the NHPA.

The first publicly accepted push to revise the 1966 policy guidance appears in a report from the NHPA 25th anniversary conference in 1991. A section of the report titled, "Future Needs" identified room for improvement, including the need to "develop new preservation techniques and technologies and disseminate them to the practicing professionals", and to "Recognize the role of cultural diversity in historic preservation" (National Park Service, 1991).

Additional pushes to revise the NHPA came from the Preserve America Summit's 2006 meeting, which observed the 40th anniversary of the NHPA. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation issued a summary of recommendations from the summit. Recommendations include, "Appreciate that history has many different voices" and "Expand the definition of heritage and cultural resources and communicate their critical importance to the public, clearly demonstrating their economic value but, more importantly, their educational and moral value" ("NATIONAL PRESERVE AMERICA SUMMIT SUCCESS IN NEW ORLEANS," 2006). We should continue the tradition from past anniversaries and use this anniversary as an opportunity to challenge NHPA standards to ultimately expand modern preservation.

(b) Critiques of Historic Preservation's Guiding Principles

Preservation has been critiqued on many grounds: its economic incentives, its integrity standards, and its professional gatekeeping. The following authors critique the existing guiding theories of preservation and propose alternative frameworks for the field. I have relied on these critiques to adapt my own critiques of the field. Public historian and urban planning scholar, Dr. Na Li asserts in her article, "Whose History, Whose Memory?" that a culturally sensitive narrative approach (CSNA) can help address the challenge between programmed agenda and community values. Li claims that at the heart of the CSNA process lies a shared authority in the public space. Li argues that preservationists should move preservation policy emphasis toward a "... format of storytelling and oral history, to elicit the insiders' views, emotions, and above all collective memories of the place (Li, 2016, p. 45)." She continues, " residents should be encouraged to record their memories of their neighborhoods. Our task is to ... expand their individual perspectives to become collective ones, and ultimately, to preserve a past to which the public is emotionally committed" (Li, 2016, p.46). Preservationists and historians Tiya Miles and Rachel Miller have applied the concept of Critical Place-Based Storytelling to the field; they have found the technique valuable when no existing built environment survives.

Critical Place-Based Storytelling is a strategy in which selected stories are grounded in historical research and explore layered meanings to a single site (Miles and Miller, 2016). Professor Randy Mason, in his article, "Theoretical and Practical Arguments for Values-Centered Preservation," suggests that there are two forms of preservationists. The first is a pragmatic/technical preservationist who focuses on architectural qualities or historical events, rooting the building in place. The other preservationist "...looks outward, seeking to connect historic preservation to the work of other fields and disciplines, such as planning, design, and education, in pursuit of solutions that address broader social goals." Mason argues that both identities must exist in strong preservation practice, that "perhaps the greatest imperative for the preservation field today is to re-connect core preservation goals ... sustaining social memory through preservation of the built environment, to the pressing social and cultural issues of the day and to re-assert the relevance of preservation" (Mason, 2006).

King, Mason, and Li each identify that community concepts of place do not fit the legal framework traditional historic preservation relies on. Each proposes to close that gap by widening what preservation attends to. If what makes a place significant is the web of memory

and use it holds rather than the material it is made of, then the loss of the material does not extinguish the significance. The practices documented in this thesis take up exactly that unclaimed ground.

(c) Call to Action

As demonstrated above, some preservation practitioners in the United States are beginning to develop new methods and discussions surrounding the expansion of the preservationist movement. Outside of the United States, a recent grassroots preservation movement has been widely successful, but rarely recognized by “traditional” preservationists. Liz Ševčenko in her book, *Public history for a post-truth era: Fighting Denial Through Memory Movements*, describes the growing populist global effort to mark difficult places. Ševčenko encourages us not only to help document and mark such sites but also to seek out those emotionally charged spaces and learn how to engage in those sensitive dialogues. She writes how in 1990’s Argentina, thousands took to the streets to mark and preserve places of state terrorism so they would be remembered by future generations (Ševčenko, 2023). Ševčenko asserts that remembering and preserving sites and stories of struggle is historic preservation at its best, but Ševčenko argues we mostly see that work happening outside of traditional preservation approaches. Ševčenko sees a path to expand this work by uniting traditional preservation and community movements, a similar path to Mason and his belief in combining pragmatic/technical and the urbanistic impulse for best preservation practice in the modern era. Ševčenko has outlined three specific new areas of preservation that the United States should adopt to unite the field: research and develop memorial policies and the structures to support it, deliberately look for fault lines, and train in dialogue (Ševčenko, 2023).

Reading the work of preservation practitioners who are already critiquing the framework of the NHPA allows me to engage in ideas of how to best expand preservation policy. Tools such as a CSNA, critical place-based storytelling, and values-centered preservation practices can and should be applied to better the preservation field. Preservation has not used these tools in moments of loss, because it has not treated demolition as part of its field. The next section examines how little of it the field examines demolitions.

Section 2.03 Demolition is Preservation's Blind Spot

To fill out a demolition permit, you are expected to gather property information (such as address and lot number) and check if your building is a designated landmark or in a historic or special district. If so, you would be required to gain a certificate of approval for demolition. If your building is nationally listed, then the expectation is for an architectural survey to be conducted, yet no overseeing body tracks information regarding the depth or quality of the survey before demolition. If locally landmarked, it is likely that the building would undergo SEPA review and recording before a demolition permit is issued. In the city of Seattle, if the building you are planning to demolish is not locally landmarked, all you need to do is fill out the permit and get approval (*Demolition Permit - Building - SDCI* | *Seattle.Gov*, n.d.).

Recent legislative developments in Washington State illustrate the narrowing scope of formal historic preservation protections and the growing tension between preservation frameworks and other policy priorities. Substitute House Bill 1576, signed into law in 2025, now requires property owner consent before a building under 125 years old can be designated as a local historic landmark (*HB 1576 Washington State Legislature*, n.d.). Proponents argued that landmark designation could be used to obstruct new housing development under the state's missing middle housing legislation. Between 2019 and 2024, Seattle designated 46 buildings as local landmarks, and only nine proceeded without owner consent, three of which were city-owned properties (Momin, 2025).

What SHB 1576 effectively does is reduce community standing in the formal preservation process, shifting authority toward individual property owners and away from the broader publics who attach meaning to historic buildings. This legislative shift is significant for this thesis not because it forecloses preservation entirely, but because it makes visible what preservation scholars have long argued: that formal protection frameworks were never designed to capture the full range of community relationships to place. The practices examined in this thesis are, in part, a response to exactly these kinds of structural gaps.

Max Page writes that the field of preservation often treats demolition as separate from preservation (Page, 2016). I assert that the separation of fields between preservation and

demolition is a disservice to the field of preservation. This focus on only “what is preserved” limits the field's capacity for critical reflection on what has been lost.

Section 2.04 Building Life Cycle and Mourning Practices

The articles below discuss how buildings are not just physical structures but things that are laced with meaning, memory, and identity. The literature highlights how everyday buildings anchor collective memory and foster a sense of belonging. Due to the limitation of the literature on the emotions of building demolition, I give significant weight to Neil Harris's book *Building Lives*. *Building Lives* by Neil Harris discusses how seeing buildings as objects with a life cycle underpins the emotional responses to demolition and motivates mourning practices. In response, I also discuss strategies of ritualized remembrance practices that we see through the life cycles of built environment and their connection to human mourning rituals.

Harris does not define the building as a body, nor does he examine buildings as a natural object. Harris instead argues that we, as a Western society, demonstrate that our buildings have lives through rituals. He argues that as such, these buildings should be shown care through the completion of the ritualization process. Harris writes that we as a civilization, give buildings lives by having elaborate rituals around building birth: ribbon cutting, cornerstone laying, opening ceremonies, etc. What we are missing is common rituals around building death. Harris in this work, studies buildings as a species and applies the notions of rites of passage to buildings. He states, “By analyzing some forms of representation and ritualization, we may learn more about why we value some structures above others.” Max Page reminds us that in NHPA guidance, one of the centering ideas is that buildings are alive, they have souls, and can communicate with us so the best of them must be saved so that future generations might experience them (Page, 2016). I am using the above literature to guide a simpler assumption that older buildings have significant value to the place they help to form, and when they no longer exist in the space, there is a loss of sense of place that occurs.

Harris argues that nothing reveals the connection between building and human life cycles more than the emotions that accompany building demolition. Harris's framework of building life cycles gains additional theoretical grounding from anthropologist Victor Turner's concept of liminality. Turner, writing in *The Ritual Process* (1969), describes the period between the end of

one social condition and the beginning of another as liminal. Turner developed this concept in the context of human rites of passage: the interval between death and burial, to Turner, this is a time of creative potential.

Applied to the built environment, Turner's framework illuminates what happens in the period between a building's last use and its demolition. This interval, referred to as the pre-demolition period, is a liminal space in which the building exists outside its ordinary social function, stripped of its former use but not yet demolished. Cases examined in this thesis operate within this period. Turner's framework discusses why rituals around this period are effective. These rituals give communities a structured form for navigating the threshold between loss and what comes next.

Even the book *Notes from Made to Last - Historic Preservation in Seattle and King County*, which was written for the 1985 National Trust for Historic Preservation and Development Authority conference, has its first appendix be titled, "Appendix A - Obituaries." This section states, "it would take many pages to list significant local buildings that have been lost ... This section simply acknowledges some losses over the past few decades, which, because they are recent, may jog the memories of local residents." The appendix conflates the loss of a physical building with death and memorializes them through a written obituary. It is important to note that even in these obituaries, the focus remains on the architectural significance. Harris speaks to this; he writes that buildings have not gained the attention of many biographers and points out that if a building receives interest from biographers, they focus on structural and stylistic evolution. If that is the case, I must ask why we record to-be-demolished buildings only in architectural standards and survey photographs instead of by how the buildings neighbors and occupants felt about it.

Harris provides a call to action; he argues that we need more effective rituals for when a building is taken down. Historic preservationists as a profession have skill in documenting structure and appearance, but we have no skill in preparing funerary services. Harris even writes that, "the opportunity to eulogize a structure in its last days may be more significant than the need to pay promotional tribute to it in its first hours." Harris discusses how rites of passage are how we have organized our built environment world. He states that these rituals are tools that acknowledge the importance of the built environment in citizens' lives. Examples of funerary events that translate

to mourning practices include parties, wakes, art projects, built archives, story collections, and films. The existence of different forms of practice demonstrates the need for ritualized remembrance that is dependent on the type of loss that the community is experiencing.

As planners have increasing ability to use tools, like place-based storytelling, we should think about the call to action from the authors above to record the memory of buildings that have been demolished. Michel-Rolph Trouillot continues on this and writes in *Silencing the Past*, that we must look for the silences. He compares the built environment to an archive and reminds us that all archives are shaped by time and power. Trouillot states, “Indeed, it may be even more important to tell the stories of those buildings that were demolished because they were no longer of value, speak directly of change over time” (Trouillot, 1995). By developing a case study repository, I hope to fill some of the silence in the archives of demolished buildings in Seattle by discussing how they were mourned as a demonstration of community care.

Section 2.05 Grief, Mourning and Remembrance

Judith Butler, in *Precarious Life* writes that grief displays how deeply we are bound to other people. She asserts that our identities, our routines, and even our sense of the world are shaped through those relationships. The more we allow ourselves to grieve, the more we openly recognize that our lives are not self-contained. Sigmund Freud writes in *Mourning and Melancholia* that once the “work of mourning” is complete, the ego becomes free and uninhibited again. In this view, mourning is healing because it releases us (Freud et al., 1917). It lightens the emotional weight we carry and allows us, gradually, to move forward in the aftermath of loss. He writes, “by withdrawing from our attachments to the dead and disappeared, we become free to establish new bonds with the living and with what remains.”

The book, *Mourning in the Anthropocene: Ecological Grief and Earthly Coexistence* written by Joshua Trey Barnett, discusses that grief and mourning are often separated. Grief can be considered an inward emotional experience, while mourning is a public expression of one’s inner feelings. He argues that grief is the first response; it comes from an individual’s subjective experience of loss. By acknowledging grief, we can recognize that a loss occurred. Mourning refers to specific practices that we use to adjust to the new conditions created by the loss (Barnett, 2022). Barnett continues that “before we mourn, we must experience grief.” Barnett

argues that mourning is not something that happens on its own; it is a choice we make. He asserts that we tend to grieve what has been made meaningful to us and that grief is something that gets shaped through language, stories, images, rituals, and public acknowledgment (Barnett, 2022). Barnett proposes using practices like naming, archiving, and making things visible to care for the more-than-human world. The American Psychiatric Association (APA), when thinking about loss, published a piece titled, *Beyond Storms and Droughts: The Psychological Impacts of Climate Change* in which they discuss the idea that grief and a sense of loss have a strong impact on health. One of their listed tips for dealing with environmental losses, such as in the built environment, is to “publicly recognize the role that emotions play in our responses.” Similar to Barnett, the APA is saying that a strategy to help with your grief is to mourn.

The book *Root Shock* by Mindy Thompson Fullilove informs the reader that the demolition of buildings can be considered a moment of rupture, an action that erases tangible links to the past (Fullilove, 2004). Fullilove calls this root shock, and defines it as “the loss or destruction of all or part of one's emotional ecosystem.” Fullilove primarily applies root shock to the Black neighborhood and studies how the neighborhoods were affected by urban renewal and resulting demolitions/displacement/gentrification. She writes that root shock undermines trust, destabilizes relationships, destroys social, emotional, and financial resources, and can increase risk for every kind of stress-related disease (Fullilove, 2004). In Fullilove's book, she writes that a possible aid to assist with root shock is the concept that communities could seek ways to grieve the loss of their built environment.

Fullilove's concept of root shock finds its similarities to Marc Fried's landmark 1963 study, "Grieving for a Lost Home: Psychological Costs of Relocation," which offers evidence that community grief over the loss of home and neighborhood is not metaphorical but clinically observable. Fried interviewed hundreds of residents of Boston's West End after they were forcibly relocated by Urban Renewal, and documented that the majority experienced grief responses. This included persistent sadness, somatic distress, and difficulty re-establishing social bonds. Fried writes that this closely mirrored the mourning of a death. He wrote that the affective reaction to the loss of the West End could be "quite precisely described as a grief response showing most of the characteristics of grief and mourning for a lost person" (Fried, 1963, p. 167). Fried also found that what residents mourned was the social world those buildings

contained. Cohesive neighborhoods, Fried argued, provided residents with a sense of "rootedness" essential to maintaining identity, and when that rootedness was severed by demolition and forced relocation, the grief was real (Fried, 1963).

The act of mourning demolished buildings reflects a desire to honor shared history and resist the erasure of local identity (Fullilove, 2004). The literature above discusses how communities already use storytelling, commemorative events, and digital archives to preserve memory. These mourning practices help maintain a sense of place and continuity, even after physical structures are gone. As such, the literature asserts that the loss of buildings can be experienced as a form of bereavement, disrupting community life and weakening social bonds, but community mourning practice is a tool to help "root shock".

In reference to the Historic Preservation movement, Neil Harris writes that anxiety and resistance to change have found a place to land in the architectural preservation movement. He says, "In a world dominated by growth and change, anxiety about and resistance to many tides of change have found a common platform in the architectural preservation movement." Yet I assert that some of this anxiety and acknowledgement of growth and change can be aided by acknowledging grief and mourning for what we have lost. Barnett writes, "Precisely because it is painful and unpredictable, the dominant culture often greets grief with suspicion, treating it as an impediment to—rather than as a precondition for—ethical and political action." Instead of treating grief with suspicion, bestowing those who react to change negatively with titles such as "NIMBY" (not in my backyard), I think we as planners and preservationists would be better served to see that these people who are anxious about change and resistant to it, are just griever. They are people who would benefit from the chance to mourn.

The authors above remind us that when change happens, mourning is an option we should look to. The feeling of loss should not be considered as something that distracts from the work of living in community. Instead, loss can be used as a form of connection and care. Grieving and mourning are shaped by cultural and political conditions, and we have a responsibility as planners and preservationists to make our own and others' grief a part of the conversation in a rapidly changing city.

Article III. Methodology

Section 3.01 Research Design

Through this thesis, I employed a qualitative, inductive research design. The goal of the methodology is to record community mourning practices associated with the demolition of historic buildings in Seattle. This research aims to document and discuss an emerging set of social practices that remain underexamined within the field of historic preservation. An inductive approach is appropriate given the exploratory nature of the subject matter. The study design has been guided by my interest in how communities generate meaning with buildings in the absence of formal protection frameworks, and what those practices might reveal about the evolving role of preservation beyond the existing policy framework.

The methodological framework draws on a qualitative research practice. Because public mourning is grounded in an individual's complex lived experience, I believe that a qualitative method is best suited to capture the cases' complexities. This study did not seek to produce findings that were statistically generalizable across geographic locations; rather, I aim to generate theoretically transferable insights that can inform both future scholarship and professional practice in the field of historic preservation and planning.

Section 3.02 Repository of Cases

The first component of this work is the construction of a repository of case studies documenting instances of building mourning. Each case study draws on a range of primary and secondary source materials, including photographs, social media posts, event descriptions, news coverage, and participant-produced materials. I believe that due to my broad scope of what building mourning looks like, a multimodal approach to data collection is appropriate to represent the varied ways in which communities publicly mark and respond to the loss of historic buildings.

By analyzing several instances of building mourning rather than focusing on a single site, I can identify recurring themes and uniqueness across practices. I aim to reflect on motivating factors for the memorializing practice, such as personal memory, architectural or historical significance, concerns about displacement pressure, or a broader response to rapid urban change

in each case study. From there, themes will be identified and will serve as the scaffolding for the discussion section of the work. This inductive approach allows patterns to emerge from the data rather than being assumed. I do not come from a psychology background; as such, it is important to my research that I do not assume motivation or mourning experiences when identifying case studies.

(a) Methodology for Finding Case Studies

Initial review included Seattle Times and the Stranger archives through the UW library system. Key phrase search tools were used. Phrases to search were: Say goodbye, mourn, demolish, requiem, building funeral, and torn down. Often, I would search with more than one keyword in the search function, such as: Demolish + mourn. Additionally, using the search function on the Vanishing Seattle and Vintage Seattle Facebook page, I used the keyword list from above and followed the same process. Another method of gathering case studies is through discussion with Seattleites. When discussing my thesis with community members and colleagues, people would recommend practices or building memorials that they have been a part of. Interestingly, although not applicable for this work, people would also share with me a building that they miss and that they, in some form, are grieving for still.

Once I identified a possible case study, I went through my definitions (See Introduction) to ensure that the case study met my criteria for a community mourning practice surrounding intentional building demolition. There were challenges in trying to separate out the mourning of loss of business/community space vs. loss of building form. My strategy to overcome this complication was to write about what the event was and why it happened. If it were for a private business in memory of the business, then I determined it was not eligible. Often, the case study frequently did not match the criteria and was eliminated from consideration. I do not think it is possible to mark all mourning practices in the city, but I would like to have a range of applicable practices in a diverse variety of neighborhoods in the city.

(b) Case Studies

Seattle provides a particularly intriguing site for studying mourning practices during demolition, given the visibility of grassroots responses to demolition, including high-visibility

mourning projects such as Vanishing Seattle and Ghosts of Seattle Past. Case study materials have been gathered through archival research, review of local news and preservation organization records, and word of mouth. Seattle was selected as the primary geographic focus because of its well-documented history of rapid development, displacement, and community-led preservation advocacy, and is the location of the University of Washington, where this degree is being completed. Additionally, the current challenges to traditional preservation methods in Washington State act as a call to action for preservationists to think creatively about the field.

The case study repository is intended not only to serve this thesis but to be an archival resource for future researchers and practitioners interested in community mourning practices in the built environment. The case studies will each be listed by date of occurrence, summarized, and then placed into conversation with each other when appropriate.

I acknowledge that with the above sampling technique, the case study repository is not representative of all possible cases or mourning practices. The list below represents a range of rituals across the City. I followed the definitions as outlined in the introduction to identify a clear scope and boundaries of what practices and buildings I analyzed. Three criteria from the introduction set the boundary. The demolition had to be controlled and intentional rather than the result of fire, flood, etc.. The response had to be public and collective rather than privately held. And the gathering had to mark the loss of the building and the social world it contained.

Mourning Practices:

Table 1. Case Study Repository

Case	Year	Location	Practice type	Organizer	Concept illustrated
Eulogies for Place	2023	Georgetown gallery	Memorial service / spoken eulogy	Psychopomp	Community gathering to share about grief
Lucile House	2023–25	Georgetown	Activation + public farewell	Equinox Studios + Watershed	Hospice care for a soon-to-be demolished block

A Memorial to Tubs	2009	Roosevelt / University District	Mural project	Free Sheep Foundation	Graffiti as mourning
Bridge Motel Wake	2009	Fremont	Wake	D.K. Pan	Mourning the social world that the buildings contain
A Final Farewell to Sunset Bowl	2010	Ballard	Walk-through	Former employees, regulars	Failed landmarking
UW Nuclear Reactor Building	2016	University of Washington campus	Funeral + procession	Preservation advocates	Failed landmarking
The Viaduct's Last Night	2019	Waterfront	Spontaneous gathering and civic festival	Public, City of Seattle	Mourning across the city
Ghosts of Seattle Past	2017	Citywide	Story collection / anthology	Jaimee Garbacik	Archive as resistance to demolitions
The People's Wall	1971–ongoing	Central District	Mural / site marking	Dion Henderson + community	Mourning as organizing
Where the House Was	2018	Capitol Hill	Documentary + poetry	Frances McCue / Hugo House	Film as elegy
Even the Walls	2015	Yesler Terrace	Documentary	Saman Maydani & Sarah Kuck	Documentary captures what exists in the present before demolition

Section 3.03 Interviews

The second component of this research consists of semi-structured, open-ended interviews with individuals involved in building mourning practices. Interview participants include community organizers, artists, architects, planners, and historic preservation professionals.

The interview strategy is grounded in the methodological framework developed by Hammer and Wildavsky's article, "The Open-Ended, Semistructured Interview: An (Almost) Operational Guide: On the Organization of Scholarly Work" (1983), in which they describe the open-ended, semi-structured interview as a tool for inductive research. They write that a semi-structured interview is recommended for producing claims about practice and experience that are grounded in participants' own accounts rather than imposed by the researcher. In keeping with this approach, interviews were conducted as guided conversations rather than rigid surveys. This format is particularly important given the subject matter: discussions of grief, loss, and attachment to place require a flexible, responsive interview structure that allows participants to guide the conversation toward what is most meaningful to them.

Interview questions were developed in accordance with three question types outlined by Hammer and Wildavsky (1983): grand tour questions, which invite participants to describe events or processes in their own words; structural questions, which probe for categories and variations within memorial practices; and evaluative questions, which draw out the emotional and ethical dimensions of participants' engagement with the work. A question set was developed aimed at practitioners and leaders within individual building mourning practices that were identified in the case study repository. By focusing on individuals who were involved in the organization or leadership of the practice, we can hear from them about how and why they felt the need to fill the gap within existing preservation practice.

All interviewers were informed prior to the interview the subject of the thesis, which case study the interview was about, and they were asked for permission to record their responses. Once interviews were completed, transcripts were then generated using the transcribing function on Microsoft Word. From there, I reviewed the transcripts for issues and inconsistencies.

(a) Interview Questions

When writing the questions, I wanted to focus on the idea that preservation has been built around saving things, but communities do the work of grieving the buildings that can't be saved, without institutional support or recognition.

Often, those leading the event were themselves mourners. I hope that with the questions, there was an opportunity to allow them to talk more about the process of feeling loss and if/how

the action of mourning helped them with that process. As discussed in the literature review, Barnett sees grief as an inward practice and mourning as a public choice. I tried to have the interview process expand on this idea and engage with the idea of public mourning being an intentionally developed tool.

Grand Tour Questions

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your work?
2. When did you first start noticing that people were responding to demolition in creative ways?

If a general practitioner:

3. Have you ever been part of, or witnessed, a community coming together to mark the loss of a building? Can you walk me through what that looked like?

If a specific organizer:

4. I'd love to start by just hearing about the building, what was it, and what did it mean to you or the people around you?
5. Can you walk me through the mourning itself? what happened, who was there, what it felt like to be part of it?
6. Was there a moment when this loss shifted from something private into something you wanted to do together with other people?

Structural Questions

1. How would you describe the difference between public mourning and other kinds of community responses to demolition, like protest or advocacy? do you think there's a meaningful distinction?

2. How do you see the more formal tools of preservation, like landmark designation or advocacy campaigns connect to buildings that have been demolished?

Evaluative Questions

If general practitioner:

1. Do you think there's a place for mourning within historic preservation as a professional field? (optional)
2. What do you think is lost when a building comes down that can't really be captured in any official record or designation?
3. If you could say one thing to the preservation field about why community mourning

If a specific organizer:

4. Do the words "grief" or "mourning" feel right for what you experienced? or would you describe it differently?
5. If the building had been saved, do you think the community would have come together in the same way? What does that make you think about the role of loss in community?

Section 3.04 Interview Methods

Interviews are focused primarily on local experts in Seattle. By narrowing the geographic scope of the interview process to Seattle, I can ask about the specific conditions that have shaped grief ritual practices in Seattle. I hope this, in turn, can be applied to broader conversations about non-traditional preservation approaches in the preservation field.

All interviews are audio-recorded with participant consent, transcribed in full, and included in the appendix of this thesis. Throughout the interview process, I tried to maintain a neutral stance, refrain from affirming or rejecting participants' views, and hold care when discussions touch on potentially sensitive topics related to grief.

Determining who should be interviewed involved reviewing case studies, identifying those involved in leading or participating in the case study, and then reaching out via email to applicable contacts. Additionally, I found some interviewees through word of mouth when I discussed my thesis with those in the preservation field.

Interviews are with:

- Jim Nicholls, architect and University of Washington adjunct professor
- Amber and Raymond, stewards of the Lucile House through Equinox Studios
- Cynthia Brothers, founder of Vanishing Seattle
- Stephanie Johnson Toliver, president of the Black Heritage Society of Washington State
- DK Pan, member of Free Sheep Foundation and artist behind TUBS and Bridge Motel

Section 3.05 Thematic Sorting and Analysis

Each interview transcript and case study record were read multiple times to develop familiarity with the material. During initial readings, my individual observations were flagged. These observations were then organized into thematic clusters, which have been refined through comparison across cases and interview transcripts. The goal of this process is not to impose a predetermined framework but to allow the central themes of ritualized building grief and practice in Seattle to emerge from the data itself.

The analysis is organized around answering the central questions of this thesis: How do communities mourn and what do these practices suggest for the fields of planning and preservation? Findings from both the case study repository and the interview series are analyzed together, with each informing the other in the discussion section of the work

Section 3.06 Ethical Considerations and IRB Review

This research involves human subjects and has been submitted for review through the University of Washington's Institutional Review Board (IRB) process before the completion of

data collection. Participants are provided with full information about the purpose of the research and their right to withdraw at any time, and all identifying information is handled in accordance with IRB guidelines. Informed consent is obtained before all interviews. Interview waiver and IRB approval can be found in Appendix B.

Section 3.07 Limitations

Several limitations of this methodological approach warrant acknowledgment. First, because the research relies on self-reported data gathered through interviews, findings are shaped by participants' own recollections. While this is a recognized feature of qualitative inquiry, it does mean that the findings reflect participants' perspectives rather than an objective account of events. Second, the geographic concentration of both the case study repository and the interview pool is in Seattle, which limits the extent to which findings can be directly applied to other cities or preservation contexts. However, the goal of the thesis is to look at an existing practice that is happening in Seattle, so the limited scope still fits the goals of the project. Third, my own interests and positionality may introduce bias, despite efforts to maintain a neutral stance throughout data collection. Importantly, not every relevant case study or potential interviewee could be included within the scope of this project.

Despite these limitations, I believe the chosen methodology is well-suited to the goals of this research. A qualitative, inductive design allows for the documentation and interpretation of a phenomenon that is currently underrecognized within the discipline and creates the foundation for a deeper inquiry in the future. By prioritizing the voices of community members and practitioners, this research also works toward the community-centered approach to preservation that scholars such as Max Page and Randall Mason have called for, and that I argue is essential to the field's continued relevance.

Article IV. Case Study Repository

Section 4.01 Introduction

The cases in this chapter are grouped into three categories: wakes and gatherings, which are time-bound collective events held in or around a building before or during its demolition; story and archive collections, which are longer-term efforts to gather and preserve community memory of lost places; and documentary/film, which use video to record reactions to demolition and proposed loss. These categories are not perfectly siloed, but the categories reveal patterns in how and why we gather to mourn around demolishing in the built environment.

Initially, I organized the cases by who organized them: individuals, community organizations, or institutions. As the cases accumulated, I decided to organize by the strategy of loss acknowledgment. Examples include parties, wakes, art projects, built archives, story collections, and films. A wake does something different than a documentary. An archive operates differently from a funeral. Organizing the cases by practice type allows those differences to surface and to be examined on their own terms.

Not every case in this chapter focuses on a single specific building. *Eulogies for Place*, which opens the first section, mourns a collection of places rather than one structure. I have chosen to begin there as it is the initial event that inspired this work.

Section 4.02 Wakes and Gatherings

Wakes and Gatherings are events that share a common structure: people coming together to mark the end of a building's life. Some events were explicitly framed as funerals or wakes. Others were parties, art openings, or gatherings at a demolition site. All of these were time-bound and collective. They asked people to show up and to be present at a moment of transition between a living building and what comes next. Neil Harris, writing about the absence of building death rituals in Western culture, argues that "the opportunity to eulogize a structure in its last days may be more significant than the need to pay promotional tribute to it in its first hours." The cases below suggest that communities without institutional support, and often

without any formal connection to the preservation field, want to pay tribute to the buildings that exist in this City's built form.

(a) Eulogies for Place – Psychopomp – November 2023



On Saturday, November 4th, 2023, community members gathered at an art gallery in Georgetown for “a funeral and celebration for the places that deserve to be remembered.” Attendees were asked to dress in black and, if possible, to bring a memento or photograph of a place that once mattered to them but now exists only in memory (*Eulogies for Place*, n.d.). Eulogists for the evening included Cynthia Brothers of Vanishing Seattle, author Rebecca Brown, Stephanie Johnson-Toliver of the Black Heritage Society, UW architecture professor Jim Nicholls, Seattle Times arts economy reporter Margo Vansyngel, author and designer Johan Liedgren, and artist Kate Clark of Parkeology. The event was the first in Psychopomp's art series titled "Time & Place," which centers on architecture as an art form. The series is framed around places that have "passed into memory and become a part of the collective fabric" and chose to eulogize those places as though they were people.

Eulogies for Place was a memorial service and wake. Eulogists delivered spoken tributes to specific lost places: Walker Chapel, Hilltop Service Station, Gilmore's Market, and Hardwick's Hardware. Attendees brought photographs and mementos. Cynthia Brothers, who both attended

and eulogized, described the evening as including "laughter, tears, and a lovely collective remembrance of just a few of the meaningful places that have shaped our lives and our city." The event was developed out of a series of dinners with architects, designers, and artists who were already in conversation about Seattle's built environment and its rapid transformation.

As discussed in the literature review, Joshua Trey Barnett argues that grief is an inward emotional experience, while mourning is a public expression that allows others to participate in and be shaped by that loss. Nicholls's eulogy began as private grief, focused on his attachment to a particular building, and became mourning when it was discussed aloud in a room full of people who had their own relationship to the same place. Barnett writes that grief "gets shaped through language, stories, images, rituals, and public acknowledgment." Eulogies for Place offered all four of those at once. It also demonstrates what Fullilove describes as a possible aid to root shock: that communities can seek structured ways to grieve the loss of their built environment. By gathering people together and giving them a form, Psychopomp created conditions under which private loss could become communal, and communal loss could become healing.

(b) Lucile House – Equinox Studios, 2023



Figure 1: Luciele house block party (left), Luciele house t-shirt handed out at the big goodbye (right)

The Lucile House was a 120-year-old craftsman-style home located between 4th and 5th Avenue South on Lucile Street in Georgetown, situated within the Watershed Community Development site slated for new mixed-use housing. Built around 1905, the house had sheltered generations of residents across Georgetown's working industrial neighborhood. When Watershed Community Development confirmed that the site would be redeveloped, the house faced demolition. Rather than boarding it up immediately, Watershed partnered with Equinox Studios and artists Amber and Raymond, offering them stewardship of the house during the interval before construction began. What followed was an eighteen-month process of community activation, collective art-making, and intentional grief that culminated in a public farewell event called The Big Goodbye, held on April 11, 2025.

Artists behind the project, Amber and Raymond, described the project's ethos as emerging directly from the idea that buildings, like people, deserve the presence of those who love them at the end of their lives. Artists, musicians, after-school groups, punk bands, palm readers, and neighbors all moved through the space. Markers and paint were left out for anyone to use. Rooms were transformed and re-transformed as one installation layered over another, turning the house into what Raymond described as a palimpsest.

One room was designated the Wall of Souls, where visitors wrote the names of people they had lost: parents, siblings, friends, pets. The dining room became a space where grief that had no ordinary social outlet could be named without consequence. Raymond described taking visitors on tours in which he would say, "This place is an open grave. If you have something to throw in, this is the place to do it." Amber reflected that many people had never been given proximity to an open grave, and that the house offered that rare permission. The Lucile House, in this framing, was practicing what the artists came to call hospice care for a building. It was a sustained, intentional tending of a structure in its final months.

The public farewell, The Big Goodbye, was held on the evening of April 11, 2025, from 5 to 9 p.m. at Lucile Street and 5th Avenue South. The event was free and open to the public, organized jointly by Watershed Community Development and Equinox Studios, and advertised by the Georgetown Community Council as an opportunity to "experience immersive art, live music, food and learn about the upcoming projects to add housing on 4th Ave S" (Georgetown Community Council, 2025). All three houses on the Watershed site were open that evening,

connected by a path through the shared backyard. Watershed staff were present to discuss the development plans; Amber and Raymond stewarded the Lucile House itself. A marching band played in the yard. Custom t-shirts were made on site. Community members who had never entered the house came in off the street, following the sound of music from blocks away. Vanishing Seattle documented the event, drawing attention from Seattle residents across the city who had followed the Lucile House's story online.

When asked whether, without an organized remembrance, people would have shown up to mourn the building, Raymond's answer was immediate: "I don't think so. I think people need to be ritualized. People would just shake their head and be like, another one? This is the relevance of ritual. We need to just be shown when it is time to think about or deal with that — to get in that headspace" (Raymond, personal interview, 2025). His answer is consistent with Harris's argument that rites of passage are the tools through which communities acknowledge the importance of the built environment in citizens' lives. Without ritualization, the loss of a building is absorbed into the background noise of urban change. With it, the loss becomes an event that can be witnessed, felt, and processed together.

Watershed provided the space without charging rent, assisted with permits and safety upgrades, and participated in the final public event as a genuine community partner rather than a token presence. This structural support made the eighteen-month activation possible. Amber and Raymond were explicit that without it, none of what followed could have happened at the scale it did. If mourning is to become an integrated element of preservation and planning practice, the Lucile House suggests that the conditions for it must be built into the development process from the beginning.

(c) A Memorial to Tubs – Free Sheep Foundation, April 2009



Figure 2: Images from Tubs before demolition

Located at 4750 Roosevelt Way NE, the 1905 structure held housing, a grocery store, a car dealership, the District Tavern, a Fotomat Drive-thru, and most memorably, TUBS, a hot tubbing destination that operated from 1982 to 2007 (Graves, 2009). A demolition permit issued in 2009 prompted artist group Free Sheep Foundation (FSF) to respond with a pitch for a community goodbye to the building. Co-founder of FSF NKO Rey articulated their original vision as opening the space for two weeks as a gallery and concluding with "a festival, a wake if you will." What followed became the TUBS Memorial Mural Project (Graves, 2011).

In March 2009, FSF invited artists to treat the building as a transitory canvas, using the space however they wished. FSF was clear that this was not a graffiti event; it was permission-based mural work conducted in partnership with the property owners, a distinction that news sources frequently failed to make (Vega, 2009). Over the course of the project, the building's surfaces became layered with intentional installations, one on top of another, accumulating into a dense visual record of community engagement with a structure on the edge of demolition. On a Flickr group page created for the project, over 1,500 photographs were posted documenting the work (DawnOfTheRead, 2009). One installation that warrants particular attention is a window piece by artist OvO, titled "As I Enter, So Will I Leave," accompanied by the statement: "On rare occasion the Bird Wraith, in her element, materializes to serve as harbinger of urban transformation, whether for the better or for the worse (Ovo,2009)."

FSF asked the public to view the intervention "with the same heart as viewing cherry blossoms in spring," describing it as "a temporary project meant to serve as a beautiful display of color in the waning days of a building's demise." With this artist statement, FSF wanted to give the building a visible ending. Whether the planned wake event ultimately took place is unclear from available records, but the mural project itself functioned as a memorial. It produced a visual indicator that a transition was occurring, and it gave the building an acknowledgement of existence and an audience in its final days that it might not otherwise have had. Author Barnett in the literature review, speaks to the practice of "making things visible" as a form of mourning care. FSF writes that the building had been "an otherwise forgotten yet beloved structure," and the mural project was a call to remember and bring light to the transition of demolition. By developing this mural project, FSF visually signified to the community and neighborhood that Tubs was a building that existed, was transitioning into the non-built realm, and that it should be thought of through this transition.

(d) Bridge Motel Wake – D.K. Pan, 2009



Figure 3: Bridge Motel at its final closing party (left), historic Bridge Motel sign (right)

The Bridge Motel was located at 3605 Bridge Way N, located right after Aurora Ave. Signified by a neon sign that read, "sleep off the highway" the building was built in 1954 and known for being a motel that held illicit activity in the Aurora Corridor. In 2009 the building was demolished to make way for townhouses. D.K. Pan, a member of Seattle-based artist group PDL, became the motel's manager partly because he had envisioned the structure as a woman and

wanted to make a film about it. When demolition became imminent, Pan asked if artists could take over the space before demolition. His current artist statement describes his practice as investigating "the intersection of place and memory ... exploring the interstices and histories of site; the personal and collective body." In an interview with Pan, he states that The Bridge Motel was not just a building to be documented but a site to be inhabited, remembered, and released from its built form.

The event titled "Bridge Motel wake/conflagration" was reported to have been so packed and so intensely felt that at least one attendee worried the building might collapse under the weight of the crowd. Pan's own contribution to the space was a room painted red, covered in salt, with letters from former residents buried beneath. Although not a traditional memorial, it is a documentation that the building had significance and that it lived a life, although not a very glamorous one. Although it is unlikely that grief was felt over the demolition of the specific building, it was still important to Pan to document the life that the building lived and to acknowledge its loss. The practice of a wake led and held by non-residents of the motel suggests a mourning practice oriented toward acknowledgement of the human relationships the building had housed rather than the building itself. This is consistent with what Fullilove describes in *Root Shock*: that the destruction of buildings disrupts emotional ecosystems, severing ties not just to physical structures but to the social worlds those structures contained. The wake reminded the attendee that the building deserved to be acknowledged before it disappeared. Harris writes that "nothing reveals the connection between building and human life cycles more than the emotions that accompany building demolition." The wake produced a collective acknowledgment that this building did matter to some, and in doing so, it insisted that the building's end was worth acknowledging.

(e) A Final Farewell to Sunset Bowl – Former Employees and Community, 2010



Figure 4: Employees hug during final walkthrough (left), onlookers watch building demolition (right)

The building located at 1420 NW Market St spent its entire existence as a bowling alley. Sunset Bowl opened in 1951, and in 2010, the building was sold to a private developer and demolished, despite a community effort to save it. The Seattle PI's coverage of the demolition began with a paragraph that reads, "Sunset Bowl, a symbol of bygone Ballard and home to thousands of bowlers over five decades, died at 1 a.m. Monday, the victim of a sale to a developer. Family and friends surrounded it until the end. It was 51."

Sunset Bowl underwent a community campaign to landmark the building. In the year before its sale, former employees and neighborhood residents petitioned for it to be recognized due to its significance as an anchor of Ballard's working-class identity. Unfortunately, the effort did not succeed. In part, this is because the significance to the property came from the business that operated inside. The physical building structure did not meet the threshold for local landmark designation, and the private sale to a developer proceeded without a formal preservation review. When official channels closed, what remained was the community's own need to acknowledge the loss.

Mourning the Sunset Bowl included both a final walk-through for former employees, who were allowed to tour the building to say their final goodbyes, and on the night of the demolition, onlookers gathered to watch the building be demolished. As the Seattle PI article

indicated, the building was a valued community member in itself. Through the demolition process, mourning practices were not formally organized, but the employees, regulars, and neighbors showed up to mark the ending. During demolition, community members interviewed by local news described the experience as "It was a final goodbye to a Seattle landmark." This is consistent with Harris's observation that building death rituals tend to emerge organically, without institutional scaffolding, because no such scaffolding exists. Although there was an effort to locally landmark the building, the Save Sunset Bowl effort failed; and formalized preservation channels closed. What remained was the community's own need to acknowledge the loss. Judith Butler's framework is useful here: Butler argues that grief reveals how deeply we are bound to others, and that allowing ourselves to grieve is a recognition that our lives are not self-contained. The grief at Sunset Bowl was a showcase of the relationship between employees and a workplace and between a neighborhood and a building that had been part of its identity for half a century.

(f) UW Nuclear Reactor Building Celebration of Life – Preservation Advocates, 2016



Figure 5: Mourners gather to say goodbye to the Nuclear Reactor Building during demolition

The Nuclear Reactor Building on the University of Washington campus was built in 1961 as a site of nuclear engineering education and research. It was also a significant example of Brutalist architecture.

The fight to save the Nuclear Reactor Building occurred across nearly a decade and engaged every major tool available to the formal preservation field. The first wave of advocacy began in 2008, when architecture graduate student Abby Inpanbutr made saving the building a research focus after the university applied for a demolition permit (The Seattle Times, 2015). The Department of Planning and Development received numerous comments from concerned citizens attesting to the building's architectural and historical significance, and the Western Washington Chapter of Docomomo worked with other preservation organizations and the Friends of the Nuclear Reactor to urge the University to review alternatives to demolition (Landscape and Architecture Foundation, n.d.). The building was nominated to the Washington Heritage Register in 2008 and to the National Register of Historic Places in 2009 (Washington Trust for Historic Preservation, 2017). Despite being listed on both the National and State Registers of Historic Places, a city ordinance rendered the building ineligible for local landmark designation.

In 2014, plans for demolition were filed, and by 2015 the building appeared on the Washington Trust's Most Endangered Properties list for the second time (Docomomo US, n.d.). This prompted a second, more coordinated campaign. Historic Seattle, the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation, and Docomomo WEWA joined forces under a formal advocacy effort called Save the Reactor, launching a dedicated website and mobilizing public comment (Historic Seattle, 2015). The University had released a draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement whose preferred alternative called for demolition to make way for a new Computer Science and Engineering building. Advocates submitted public comments, organized events, and pushed the University to consider alternative sites (Seattle Magazine, 2015). In December 2015, Docomomo WEWA nominated the structure for landmark designation under the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (The Urbanist, 2017). The University's response was to sue, maintaining that as a state institution of higher learning it was not subject to the city's ordinance (The Seattle Times, 2016a). In April 2016, King County Superior Court Judge Suzanne Parisien ruled in the University's favor, finding that the landmarks-preservation ordinance did not apply to state-owned property (The Seattle Times, 2016b). Although advocates continued to try to slow the demolition process, the University moved forward, and the Nuclear Reactor Building was demolished on July 19, 2016 (Washington Trust for Historic Preservation, 2017).

Before demolition, preservationists involved in the process gathered to hold a funeral for the building. Attendees included Chris Moore from the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation, original architect Daniel Streissguth, and UW architects who had worked on the structure. Words of remembrance were shared. Then four pallbearers hoisted a mock coffin onto their shoulders, and the assembled crowd processed across campus to a pub on The Ave to finish the ceremony with a drink. Organizers, through the funerary form, gave the building a ritualized remembrance.

This case is significant as the people who organized the wake were preservationists. They were people embedded in the formal preservation field who had exhausted its official tools and found them insufficient. The building had federal and state historic designations. It had advocates with institutional standing. It was demolished anyway. The wake was a recognition that the preservation field had no existing language or practice for this moment, and that something needed to fill that gap. Harris's call for "more effective rituals for when a building is taken down" was answered by preservationists hosting a building funeral.

The UW Nuclear Reactor Building wake also raises the question of what the relationship is between the failure of formal preservation methods and the emergence of mourning practice. This case study suggests that mourning tends to arise precisely where official channels have closed. The wake at UW emerged because of the failure of the advocacy effort. This is consistent with Barnett's argument that mourning is a precondition for ethical and political action rather than an impediment to it.

(g) The Viaduct's Last Night - Community and City of Seattle, January 2019



Figure 6: Images from the Seattle Times showing the day for the final walk on the viaduct

The Alaskan Way Viaduct was built in 1953 as a double-decker elevated highway running 2.2 miles along Seattle's Elliott Bay waterfront, carrying what would become up to 110,000 vehicles per day (Congress for the New Urbanism, n.d.). From its upper deck, drivers saw unobstructed views of the Olympic Mountains, Puget Sound, and the downtown skyline. The Alaskan Way Viaduct was a seismically vulnerable and imposing form on the city's waterfront. After the 2001 Nisqually Earthquake exposed the structure's seismic vulnerabilities, the City of Seattle and the State of Washington began the long process of planning its replacement, ultimately settling on a deep-bore tunnel (Congress for the New Urbanism, n.d.). When that tunnel was complete, the viaduct's end was imminent. After years of planning, the structure was demolished.

On January 11, 2019, the viaduct closed permanently to traffic. At 9:30 p.m. residents of the City of Seattle descended on the viaduct for an informal final drive. Those who came said

they expected the road to be empty. It was not. As the expected 10 p.m. closing time passed, drivers and their cars filled the north- and southbound decks in a boisterous celebration that observers compared to New Year's Eve or Mardi Gras. Hundreds of drivers stopped on the roadway to take pictures while a few danced between the cars (KUOW, 2019). From an overlook at Pike Place Market, cheers arose for fireworks, convertibles, a wayward Metro bus, and loud trucks. Walkers and pedestrians filled the upper deck alongside the cars. Businesses along the waterfront posted signs in their windows reading "Goodbye old friend" and "Farewell viaduct." KUOW described the scene: "Ten p.m., the official closure time, came and went, with the party well underway. Where was traffic enforcement? Where were the cops? It was controlled anarchy, several noted (KUOW, 2019)." The scale and spontaneity of the gathering was not anticipated by city officials. People came because they felt the need to mark the final moment. The viaduct's last night became a spontaneous collective act of mourning.

Two weeks after the roadway closure, the City of Seattle formalized the end of the structure. The Office of the Waterfront and the Seattle Office of Arts and Culture hosted a city-organized run through the new tunnel and across the old overpass, drawing 29,000 participants and making it the largest walk/run event in the city's history (Seattle Office of Arts and Culture, 2019). This was followed by the Hello | Goodbye Viaduct Arts Festival on February 2, 2019, which filled the upper deck of the viaduct with local artists and performances in a celebration of both the structure's passing and the waterfront's future (Seattle Office of Arts and Culture, 2019). The demand for physical connection to the structure extended even to its rubble: there were so many requests from people who wanted a piece of the demolished viaduct that the Friends of Waterfront Seattle began offering free commemorative concrete fragments from their office (KING5, 2019).

Both Seattleites and the City hosted mourning practices for the roadway. The existence of this suggests that there is an institutional desire for this kind of practice. During a King 5 News broadcast, they interviewed a passerby on the viaduct's last night open to the public, "I think it's hard to see cities change. Growth is exciting and also kind of sad (KING5, 2019)." The Viaduct demolition is one of the most widely shared and explicitly acknowledged by the City government that people need the chance to say goodbye. DK Pan, interviewed for this thesis, described the Viaduct as one of the landmarks that defined his Seattle. The Viaduct was a fixed point in the

cognitive map of the city. When fixed points disappear without acknowledgment, what Fullilove calls root shock follows: not grief for a specific structure, but disorientation in the deeper sense of no longer knowing where you are.

Section 4.03 Story and Archive Collections

Story and archive collections are separated from wakes and gatherings as they are not time-bound. They are a record of existence for mourners to remember. Both wakes and archives are mourning practices, but they operate differently in time scale. Story and archive collections extend the work of mourning beyond the moment of demolition, creating records that can be returned to, added to, and shared with people who were not present for the loss itself. This aligns with Na Li's call for preservation to move toward "a format of storytelling and oral history, to elicit the insiders' views, emotions, and above all collective memories of the place" (Li, 2016). This section is also informed by Trouillot's reminder that archives are shaped by time and power, and that it may be most important to record the stories of buildings that were demolished precisely because those are the stories most at risk of being lost (Trouillot, 1995). The archive is an act of resistance against forgetting.

(a) Ghosts of Seattle Past – Jamie Garbacik, 2017



Figure 7: Onlooker reviewing the book “Ghosts of Seattle Past”

The book “Ghosts of Seattle Past” began with a vigil. In 2015, when the last video store in Capitol Hill closed, a group of people gathered outside. Jamie Garbacik, who was among them, described the atmosphere to the *Seattle Times*: “It was more like someone had died than a business had closed,” she said. “It sort of turned a key in my head ... people are really mourning, they don't have an outlet for this, there's nothing to actually preserve people's memories of these places.” That observation became the premise of the project that followed. Garbacik developed a website where people could pin the places they missed. The response was so immediate and so intense that it became clear a larger project was needed. The result was *Ghosts of Seattle Past*: an anthology of stories, essays, photographs, and art submitted by Seattleites about the lost places of the city, published by Chin Music Press in 2017 (Garbacik, 2017).

At the time of publishing, Seattle had the country's steepest rent hikes in 2015, making it a national focal point for issues of development. What Garbacik recognized, and what the book's reception confirmed, was that the loss people were experiencing was not about aesthetics and

instead about a changing city. Garbacik noted that Seattle has always been a boom-and-bust city that doesn't look backward (Garbacik, 2017). The city has always been about innovation and the next big thing. Due to this, communities have experienced displacement and erasure over and over again, with the current moment happening faster than ever before. The anthology addressed that the city speaks not only to the current tech boom, but also to longer-brewing problems of segregation, queer erasure, and colonization. By including the voices of Native community members, Black Seattleites, queer residents, and immigrant communities alongside those of longtime white residents, the archive made a political argument that the city's losses are not evenly distributed, and that the places most at risk of being forgotten are often those that served communities and were demolished.

The mourning practice is both the act of collecting stories and the desire for ongoing communal engagement that the book generated after its publication. Seattleites were invited to submit stories, essays, photographs, and art featuring their experiences in lost places. A beta version of the atlas also traveled to festivals and galleries as an interactive art exhibit, to receive in-person submissions (Smith, 2016). Additional interviews were conducted with community members, organizers, historians, artists, and those who stewarded or remembered culturally significant spaces. Once published, the book traveled through the city via a series of events, most notably The Irish Wake, which had two stated goals: commemoration of the loved and lost, and a raucous celebration of life. The book was also exhibited at Bumbershoot and the Short Run Comix Festival, bringing the archive into settings where it could reach new audiences and generate new conversations (Smith, 2016). After the book's release, Garbacik and co-creator Josh Powell toured with the book and a slideshow of its art to Washington D.C., Portland, Philadelphia, and New York City, collaborating with activist spaces and bookstores to discuss the impact of rapid development and gentrification on each city's own culturally significant places, projecting digital maps and demonstrating how they could be pinned with memories of disappeared spaces (Macdonald, 2017).

A reviewer described it as "part eulogy, part cultural cautionary tale ... Seattle's collective conscience reminding us of who we used to be (Goodreads, 2017)." The goal, as Garbacik articulated it, was to capture an image of Seattle before it changed into a place that was unrecognizable "a record, a memorialization that reminds the reader: this is who was here, for a

certain span of time. These are the places that mattered to them (Garbacik, 2017).” Unlike a wake or a last-night gathering, this archive persists. It can be returned to by people who lived through the losses it records, and encountered for the first time by people who arrived after the fact. In this sense it answers Trouillot's challenge by centering the stories of places that were lost, many of them places that served communities already subject to historic erasure, the project actively works against the tendency of power to determine what gets remembered. The book is also a record of who was losing.

(b) The People's Wall - Dion Henderson and Community, Ongoing

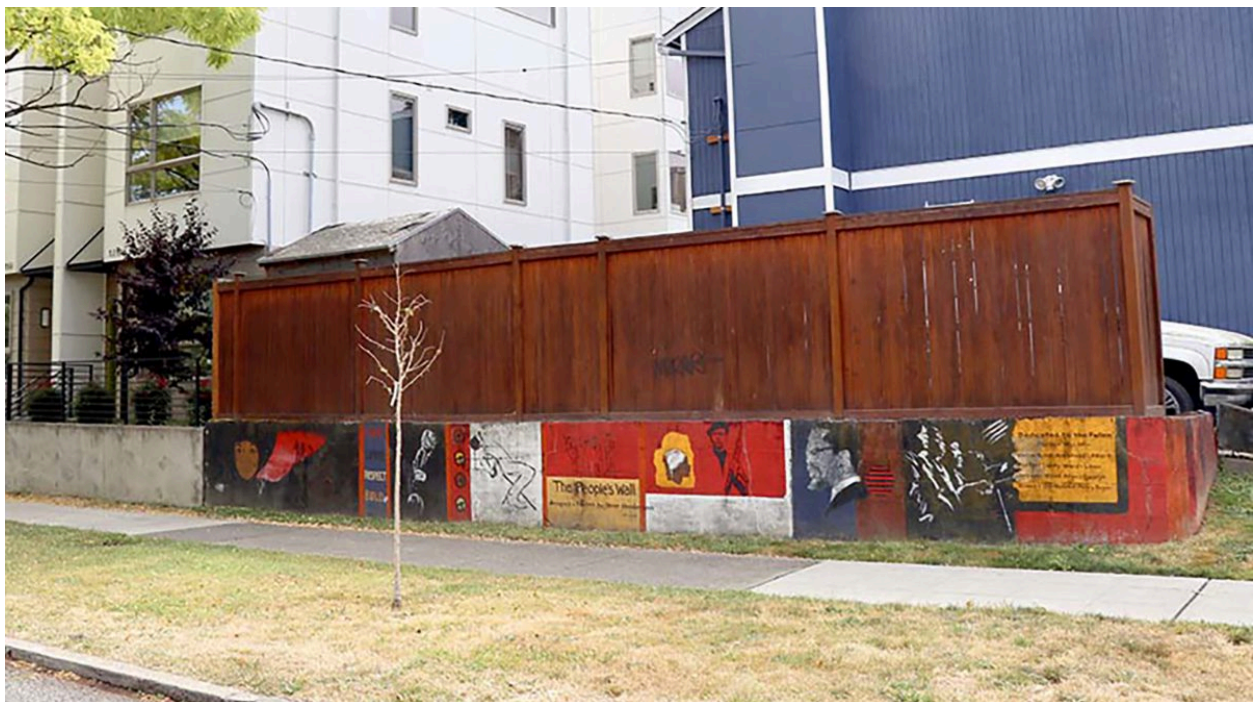


Figure 8: Image of the People's Wall provided by the Dept. of Neighborhoods

The People's Wall is a portion of a retaining wall that remained after the second headquarters of the Seattle Chapter of the Black Panther Party (SCBPP) was intentionally destroyed. The building occupied 20th Ave and E. Spruce Street from 1969 to 1971. During that time, the SCBPP commissioned artist Dion Henderson to create a mural on the exterior wall (Revisiting Washington, n.d.). When the party consolidated operations in Oakland, the building was deliberately demolished. The address was subsequently erased from King County property records, with the new building constructed on the site assigned a different address entirely. What

survived the demolition was the wall. Over the last 40 years, The People's Wall has been a site of community murals and is now in the process of being landmarked. Even in this effort, Stephanie Johnson-Toliver, President of the Black Heritage Society of Washington State, has written and talked about how saving the wall is a true community effort. In this case, the desire to preserve what exists after intentional demolition is in itself a practice of community organizing. The demolition was used as a tool to reduce community capacity, and through building loss, the community has worked together to rebuild what was socially lost when the building was lost physically.

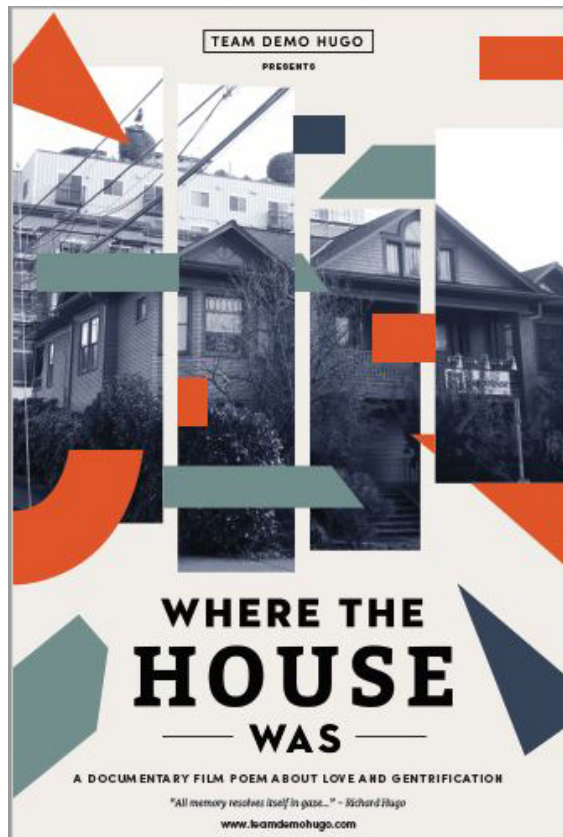
Over the following decades, the People's Wall became a site of ongoing community care. The mural was retouched in 2008 (Revisiting Washington, n.d.). Landmark preservation efforts are currently underway through the City of Seattle. Elmer Dixon, one of the founders of the Seattle chapter, returned to the site years later, and recorded his experience in terms that capture both the loss and what remained: "Gone was the massive fortress that we had built to protect us ... Only the People's Wall remained (Dixon, 2005)." The wall, in this context, is the headstone of a building that was taken down specifically to eliminate its symbolic power.

Through grief practices, we see that finding ways to mourn or remember demolition practices can be an act of resistance against total historical erasure. It is important to highlight times locally where intentional demolition has been used to further harm. In a discussion between Geographer Anisa Jackson and Seattle resident Elmer Dixon on Dixon's memories of place within the Black Panther Movement in Seattle, Dixon recounts the fate of the second headquarters of the Black Panther Movement during party consolidation to Oakland: "The building was immediately torn down. The police did not want our headquarters to stand as a symbol of our defiance ... Though the building was torn down, a piece of the People's Wall, a mural that surrounded the headquarters, remains (Dixon, 2005)." This practice of mourning and remembrance through mural work is ongoing and cumulative. This is what Fullilove describes when she writes about root shock and its aftermath, that communities can seek ways to grieve the loss of their built environment, and that the act of memorializing demolished buildings "reflects a desire to honor shared history and resist the erasure of local identity (Fullilove, 2004)." The People's Wall is an ongoing resistance to erasure. The landmark preservation effort now underway is a formalization of that refusal. It is mourning that has become organizing.

Section 4.04 Documentary and Film

I assert that documentary film operates differently from a wake or an archive. Both films discussed here were produced in close relationship to demolition, one to the loss of a single beloved building, one to the destruction of an entire housing community. Both chose film as it was the form best suited to capturing the texture of a life lived inside a particular structure. This captures the human relationship to the built environment at a particular moment in a city's history. The act of making the films is itself an organized community response to loss. Frances McCue chose to make *Where the House Was* because she believed the demolition of Hugo House deserved a witness. The filmmakers of *Even the Walls* chose to record Yesler Terrace residents because they believed those residents' grief deserved to be seen. Both films argue that demolition should not go unrecorded and that the social worlds buildings contain should not disappear without testimony. That argument is historic preservation as defined by this thesis. Tiya Miles and Rachel Miller's concept of critical place-based storytelling is relevant as both films use the analysis of a site to explore layered meanings that architectural surveys cannot capture.

(a) *Where the House Was* - Frances McCue / Hugo House, 2018



The original Richard Hugo House occupied a 1902 Colonial Revival frame house at the corner of 11th Avenue and East Olive Street on Capitol Hill. The building had originally housed a mortuary and funeral home, and later the New City Theater, before Hugo House was founded there in 1996 by writers Linda Breneman, Frances McCue, and Andrea Lewis to provide support and resources for writers and readers (Hugo House, 2019). Over the twenty years that followed, it became one of Seattle's most significant cultural institutions. In 2016 it was demolished. Hugo House relocated to the ground floor of a new

apartment building on the same site in 2018, continuing its programming.

When the demolition was announced, Frances McCue, who had co-founded Hugo House and lived above the café in its early years, and who had held her husband's memorial service in that building felt called to mourn the building (Seattle Met, 2018). Her visceral reaction developed into a desire to somehow capture what the Richard Hugo House had been. That desire became two works: a poetry collection titled *Timber Curtain* and a documentary film titled *Where the House Was*.

The two works were developed together, *Timber Curtain* served as a shooting script for *Where the House Was* which was an exploration of lost places in fast-developing cities. The poems, written alongside the documentary, transform the windows of old houses and the patterns of new apartment buildings into a vision that occupies a space between existence and demolition. One blurb for the collection describes McCue's poems as calling "the gone world back into being, insisting on memory, and yet doing the harder thing too, embracing violent erasures until the few surviving words take root, forming the seeds of a new life, the sound of a new music" (Hugo House, 2017). The film, meanwhile, chronicles the demolition of the old Richard Hugo House as a look into larger issues: the arts in civic life, the erasure of old Seattle, gentrification, and the human need to attach dreams to places. It weaves archival footage from Hugo House history, anecdotes from the building's past as a funeral home and theater, and demolition footage to create what McCue called a docu-poem.

At a private screening for friends and sponsors of the film, McCue said: "What began as a little tiny idea to film the teardown of the Hugo House turned into the history of the gentrification of Seattle." The film used the demolition of the building as the triggering event for bringing together poets, writers, local historians, and geographers to talk about the city in the twenty-first century (Simpson Center for the Humanities, 2018). A review of the documentary describes it not as a record of the loss of Hugo House, but as "a record of the loss of the building fabric that holds this city together." The mourning is not for the institution but for the significance of building and what it means for the city. McCue writes that the building's passing deserved to be witnessed.

(b) Even the Walls - Saman Maydani and Sarah Kuck, 2015



Even the Walls (Maydani & Kuck, 2015) is a documentary about the residents of Yesler Terrace, Seattle's first public housing development. Developed by the Seattle Housing Authority in the early 1940s as the city's first publicly subsidized housing community, Yesler Terrace occupies a 30-acre site near downtown Seattle. It is known as the first racially integrated public housing project in the United States, setting a nationwide tone for the future of public housing. Over the decades that followed its construction, Yesler Terrace became a safe harbor for waves of people. For more than 70 years, Yesler Terrace was home to thousands of Seattle's low-income residents and international refugees, conceived as the nation's first racially integrated public housing development.

The physical design of the original development was inseparable from its social function. The film highlights how the spatial conditions of Yesler Terrace: porches to watch the sidewalk, low backyard fences, pedestrian-only walkways were what allowed community ties to form. These were the architecture behind social life in the community. The design made it possible for neighbors to know each other, for children to move freely between households, and for communities from vastly different backgrounds to build relationships across cultural lines.

In 2006, when it had become evident that Yesler's infrastructure and 561 aging housing units needed to be replaced, the Seattle Housing Authority began a conversation with residents, surrounding neighbors, city officials, and the citizens of Seattle. After six years of public meetings, hearings, and debate, the Seattle City Council unanimously approved legislation in 2012 authorizing the redevelopment of Yesler Terrace, calling for demolition of most existing housing and its replacement with a dense mixed-use neighborhood. To pay for the rebuild, public lands were sold to private developers. The only major private investor in the initial phase was Paul Allen's Vulcan Real Estate, which had indicated its intention to transform the area along the lines of its South Lake Union redevelopment (Kuck & Maydani, 2015). The Seattle

Housing Authority committed to offering comparable housing and moving expenses to all residents being displaced, along with a priority right to return to new housing at Yesler. When completed, the redevelopment would feature nearly 5,000 apartments, the majority at market rate (Seattle Housing Authority, n.d.).

In response to the SHA's actions, various forms of media began emerging to commemorate the tight-knit community that was being broken up. *Even the Walls*, which won the Seattle International Film Festival's coveted Golden Space Needle Award, is an elegy to the old Yesler Terrace told through interviews with both longtime and newer residents. The 28-minute documentary takes viewers on an intimate journey inside the homes and memories of nine Yesler Terrace residents, and through interviews to document the history of Yesler's residents and their neighborhood before they are lost.

Even the Walls captures the lives that buildings hold. The documentary records residents mourning the social world of those structures made possible once demolition was announced. The documentary follows residents who had lived at Yesler for decades. One resident, who had lived at Yesler for over forty years, told the filmmakers there was "no amenity to replace" the community life that came with the development. The film's director noted that though it is set in Yesler, "it's not about Yesler. It's a film about these people" (Real Change, 2015). What is lost when a neighborhood is demolished is not primarily the buildings. It is the social world the buildings organized.

This aligns directly with Marc Fried's findings from the forced relocation of Boston's West End. Fried documented that residents grieved not their physical apartments but the social infrastructure that the neighborhood had sustained, a grief he described as exhibiting the classic features of mourning: a sense of painful loss, continued longing, and a generalized loss of identity (Fried, 1963). The grief expressed by Yesler Terrace residents in *Even the Walls* is structurally identical.

Yesler Terrace's redevelopment was publicly framed by the Seattle Housing Authority as a housing expansion and modernization which was a narrative that treated community grief and resistance as obstacles to a public good. At a public hearing on the redevelopment, many of Yesler's immigrant residents did not even attend. Some, like a refugee from Vietnam who had

lived at Yesler for three years, spent the time tending the gardens in their townhouse yards oblivious to the hearing. The planning process was legible only to those already involved in civic participation. *Even the Walls* legitimized the loss for Yesler Terrace residents and the film form allows that legitimization to be visible to anyone who watches it, long after the buildings have been demolished.

Article V. Interviews

Section 5.01 Introduction

The following chapter presents findings from five semi-structured interviews. All transcripts can be found in Appendix A. The interviewees were: architect and University of Washington adjunct professor Jim Nicholls; artists Amber and Raymond, stewards of the Lucile House through Equinox Studios; Cynthia Brothers, founder of Vanishing Seattle; Stephanie Johnson-Toliver, president of the Black Heritage Society of Washington State; and DK Pan, member of Free Sheep Foundation and artist behind TUBS and Bridge Motel.

Through these discussions, a central theme emerged that remembering the building is inseparable from mourning the histories of the people those buildings served. Jim Nicholls from the *Eulogies for Place* event, focused on the relationship between memory and the built environment. Amber and Raymond are artists who talk about the transformation of a to-be-demolished Georgetown house into a site of collective art and grieving. Cynthia Brothers approaches loss in the built environment through documentation by curating a digital archive of demolition records that functions as perpetual public mourning. Stephanie Johnson-Toliver thinks about racial justice and building memory through community memory work. DK Pan discusses how art and expression are a way to navigate the present realm and our connections to it. Taken together, these five interviews demonstrate how individual practitioners and community members are filling the gap where the field of historic preservation has failed. These interviews show that the stewardship of grief is preservation work.

Section 5.02 Jim Nicholls -- Architect, Educator, Participant in Eulogies for Place

Jim Nicholls practiced architecture in Vancouver, BC for a decade before joining the University of Washington's College of Built Environments as an adjunct professor, where he leads design studios focused on community outreach and historic Main Street projects. He was also a participant in *Eulogies for Place*, a Seattle-based public mourning event organized by Psychopomp Projects in which attendees were invited to write and read eulogies for buildings and places they had lost. He spoke to building loss from the professional perspective as someone

who understands building lifecycles and structural decision-making, and the personal perspective of someone who showed up to publicly grieve.

Nicholls came to *Eulogies for Place* through his memories of Hardwick's Hardware in Seattle's Roosevelt neighborhood, a store he had frequented for years before its closure and demolition. When asked about the experience of writing and reading his eulogy, he immediately shifted the conversation away from the written piece itself and toward what happened afterward:

"Afterwards, everybody came up and told me their Hardwick story. Every single person that spoke to me, you know, didn't say, 'oh, that was a neat piece of writing.' It was all, 'oh, I went to Hardwick's and,' or 'I remember going to Hardwick's for,' -- and they were all personal memories triggered by what I had said." (J. Nicholls, personal interview, 2025)

Nicholls's observation is that the act of publicly narrating one's own memory triggers collective memory. I assert that this is part of mourning. Nicholls activated a community memory. His sharing of his experience with the building's demolition allowed others to remember and grieve alongside him. This is consistent with Na Li's argument that preservationists should create formats of storytelling and oral history to elicit the emotions and collective memories of a place, and to expand individual perspectives into collective ones (Li, 2016). *Eulogies for Place* demonstrates that mourning practice creates the conditions under which grief that already exists can be communally held and expressed

Nicholls's other reflections on the importance of building memory are based in the spatial and temporal realm. He describes an exercise he does with students that involves drawing childhood spaces from memory, without reference to photographs. What consistently emerges, he explains, are distortions of scale:

"People carry those visual memories... like the backyard is so big, you imagine the curvature of the earth... a woman once drew her and her sister's favorite hiding place as this pantry -- and the drawing was them looking up at these shelves like skyscrapers." (J. Nicholls, personal interview, 2025)

Nicholls uses this observation to think about what is lost when buildings are demolished. He asks, what happens when the scaffold on which personal and intergenerational memories are organized are lost? He connects this to what he calls cognitive maps:

"We used to be able to rely on a cognitive map... it was a really powerful community tool. And kids develop it from car seat being driven around -- they have a cognitive map. It's not street signs -- it's the pink house or whatever. And then that just radically changes. And so there's huge disorientation." (J. Nicholls, personal interview, 2025)

This observation resonates directly with Fullilove's concept of root shock. Community-wide disorientation that happens after experiencing loss in the built environment as it is loss of a tether point that one's emotional and spatial identity is attached (Fullilove, 2004). Rapid demolition and redevelopment change the cognitive maps that residents have been building since childhood. In Seattle, where the rate of change has been exceptionally fast over the past decade, this disorientation is underacknowledged. Nicholls discusses the role that practitioners should have in acknowledging the lived memory in the community he works in.

"We've gone, as architects have gone from embalming historic buildings to adaptive reuse... How could we look at memory -- not as this precious thing, but as a resource? Why waste it?" (J. Nicholls, personal interview, 2025)

In discussion on whether we have control over people's mourning over buildings, it was clear that Nicholls is skeptical of the idea that designers can engineer emotional responses to space. He asserts that what planners and preservationists can do is have a professional and civic willingness to slow down and to create space for communities to do the same. As seen in the case studies the slower space can exist in the time period before demolition or through archival or memory work. Nicholls uses this line of thinking to suggest that cities need eddies. An eddy in a river is a place where water circles back, where the current slows, where debris collects. This push for spatial and temporal moments allows for reflection on a changing place. He discusses that mourning events such as wakes, eulogies, and building farewell's function as eddies. They interrupt the forward momentum of development and create space for communities to circle back to before re-entering the stream.

"If you're planning a thing in the city, I think of the city as a flow. Maybe we need these pockets of eddy. That have enough presence on their own that we don't have to fill it with something." (J. Nicholls, personal interview, 2025)

In addition to eddies, Nicholls argues that practitioners should design for disassembly, which is the practice of constructing buildings so that their materials can be reused rather than landfilled, Nicholls asserts, is the architectural profession's most recent engagement with building death. To design for disassembly is to acknowledge from the beginning that the building will die and to take responsibility for what it leaves behind.

"Now we would ask about design for disassembly. So just like when you die and you don't donate your heart, my daughter gets to benefit from your heart. The idea now is that all buildings would disassemble and then be recycled or repurposed." (J. Nicholls, personal interview, 2025)

Through this interview, rather than treating community grief as a private matter, designers can foster this by creating eddies for reflection and pause, and by advocating for the continual use of the building materials into the next life cycle of a new building.

Section 5.03 Amber & Raymond -- Artists, Equinox Studios, Lucile House

Amber and Raymond are Seattle-based artists affiliated with Equinox Studios in Georgetown. In 2023, they became stewards of the Lucile House. The Lucile house is a 120-year-old craftsman-style home on the Watershed development site in Georgetown. Over a year and a half, they transformed it into a site of community gathering, art-making, and collective grief. Their project culminated in a public event called *The Big Goodbye*.

Through the interview, we discussed how the idea for the Lucile house came to be. Amber shared that she had recently lost her mother and her sister in close succession. The different experiences of those two shaped her thinking about what it means to properly say goodbye. She described the contrast:

"They took my mother away when her body was still warm. And we were all just -- the next time we saw her was at the funeral home, and it was a person that I didn't recognize. Whereas with my sister, they didn't pick her up. She died on a Friday,

and they came and got her on Monday. So we did all of her after-death care... And the experience of those two things was so drastically different." (Amber, personal interview, 2025)

This experience became the conceptual foundation of the entire project. The Lucile House was an attempt to give communities what her mother was denied: time and space to be present with change before it was gone. Raymond describes this goal by framing the Lucile House as a shoreline. The artists saw it as a liminal zone between the loss already happened and development not yet arrived.

"The physical space is between development and this old life. It's a 120-year-old house in this middle place, And that's why we called it 'on the shoreline of the development'. It's a place that's between these two very different kind of things. Development often has all these big larger system considerations. And like, death is a lot of this loss. And loss is something that's already happened." (Raymond, personal interview, 2025)

This concept resonates with Victor Turner's concept of liminality as a threshold state in which ordinary social structures are suspended and new meanings can be generated (Turner, 1969). The house exists between preservation and development. In that space, community processing becomes possible.

Through the interview, the word hospice emerged naturally. Hospice care, in medical context, is based on the idea that death is not a failure but a transition that can be eased with care, presence, and ritual. Applied to buildings, it implies that demolition need not be treated as a sudden rupture but instead can be accompanied by a period of intentional tending. A time in which the building is honored and its community given space to grieve.

Amber and Raymond discussed how the Lucile House was given hospice care through a series of overlapping events. First, Amber and Raymond removed the house's stained carpets to reveal its original old-growth fir floors. Socially, they opened the house to artists, musicians, bands, and after-school groups, hosting events ranging from punk shows to palm readings to birthday celebrations. Raymond explains the cumulative effect:

"People would come and be like, I was never allowed to draw on the wall. And we would let people draw on the wall. We had markers everywhere. Art supplies. Any extra art supplies we brought there. Encouraged people to draw and paint. So we had tunnels and places. And then once a room got filled up, we might turn it into something else." (Raymond, personal interview, 2025)

The house became a palimpsest. It was full of layers of community expression. In this sense, the project reversed the usual logic of preservation. Rather than protecting the building's integrity, Amber and Raymond invited alteration as a form of care, allowing the house to absorb the community's presence before it was gone. The building was lived in and loved one last time.

One of the most significant spatial acts of hospice care in the Lucile House project was the Wall of Souls. It was a room dedicated to the names of people who had died, pets that had passed, and memories of loss. Amber describes it:

"In the dining room area was the Wall of Souls. And it was just kind of cool being in there. Because people would write names, RIP, and then numbers. Or some people would write like a little narrative and stuff." (Amber, personal interview, 2025)

To Amber and Raymond, The Wall of Souls functioned as a safe space for grief. A place where visitors could name their losses without the social pressure to suppress or perform them appropriately. Artists saw that the house's impending demolition fostered permission to begin conversations about death, loss, and grief that would have been more difficult in ordinary social settings. Raymond reflects on this:

"Part of the tour, I would say, hey, this place is an open grave. So if you have something to throw in, this is the place to do it... I realize lots of people don't get to see an open grave very much. They're very isolated from death." (Raymond, personal interview, 2025)

This observation connects to a broader cultural condition that this thesis identifies as a driving force behind community mourning practice. Contemporary urban life offers very few sanctioned opportunities to be present with loss. By providing communities a structured

opportunity to be present with building loss, people brought not only their grief for the building but their grief for everything else the building's death has activated in them. Butler's argument that grief reveals our fundamental dependency on others, and thus builds community, happened at the Lucile House (Butler, 2004).

Our final question focused on if there was no organized remembrance for the Lucile house, would people remember or mourn the building? Raymond's answer was direct:

"I don't think so. I think people need to be ritualized. People would just shake their head and be like, another one? This is the relevance of ritual. We need to just be shown when it is time to think about or deal with that -- to get in that headspace." (Raymond, personal interview, 2025)

As described by Raymond, grief over demolished buildings is widespread, but it is largely unexpressed because no container exists for it. Without ritualization, the loss of a building is absorbed into the general background noise of urban change. This aligns with Harris's argument that rites of passage are tools that acknowledge the importance of the built environment in citizens' lives (Harris, 1999). Ritual creates the conditions under which grief can be expressed and witnessed. With it, the loss becomes an event, something that can be acknowledged and processed communally.

Amber and Raymond also clearly saw the importance of structural support in this work. The project worked because Watershed Development did not charge rent for the space. Permits and safety were navigated with institutional support, so they were able to activate the house safely over an extended period. If preservation through mourning is to become a recognized practice, it will require the kinds of structural support, like what Watershed provided, that our current development landscape is not ready to provide.

Section 5.04 Cynthia Brothers -- Founder, Vanishing Seattle

Cynthia Brothers founded Vanishing Seattle in 2016 as a social media archive documenting the loss of Seattle's buildings, businesses, signs, and cultural landmarks. Her work began as a personal practice of noticing and recording. Now, it has grown into one of the most widely followed preservation-adjacent accounts in the city. Her accounts are a place where

Seattleites go to grieve publicly and to share memories. Brothers did not set out to build a mourning practice, she was experiencing a feeling of isolation in the face of rapid change, and wanted to know if anyone else noticed or cared:

"When I first started it, I was maybe -- I think it's easy when you see these places disappearing and these losses and all this rapid change happening so quickly, you can feel pretty isolating. Like, does anyone else care about this? Because I don't feel like the city gives a shit about what's happening here." (C. Brothers, personal interview, 2025)

Quickly, Cynthia discovered that people did care. The comments sections of her posts became memorial spaces. People shared first memories, last visits, stories of what happened at a particular corner, and expressions of grief. Brothers' is one of the only people in Seattle maintaining public spaces for grief and change.

"I will have people fairly frequently messaging me or come up to me and be like, are you okay?... I'll be honest. It's like, yeah, like I do feel it." (C. Brothers, personal interview, 2025)

The emotional labor embedded in Brothers's work is hidden. She is often the only record these buildings have. When demolition permits are filed and the building comes down in a week, Vanishing Seattle is frequently the only place where that loss is acknowledged. In our interview, I observed that "in many ways, you have been the soul keeper of these stories and of this mourning practice." Brothers did not dispute this framing. Her labor exists in a significant structural gap: the work of community memory-keeping is currently falling to individuals and small organizations without formal recognition or compensation.

Part of the labor work is that Brother sees how building grief is rarely just about the building.

"With buildings, I also feel like there's a thing about -- it's about the building, but it's also more than that. It's not necessarily about the brick and mortar or the structure, but it's about like what that structure held and what it facilitated and allowed for." (C. Brothers, personal interview, 2025)

Brothers gives the example of Bush Garden, a Japanese-American restaurant in the International District whose closure generated significant public grief. She describes it as the place with "layers and layers of history and the built-in hand-carved bamboo features and shoji screens" as physically unique features. But the physical features and the social world they enclosed are inseparable. You cannot miss the bamboo without missing the people who gathered beneath it. This is consistent with Fullilove's argument that what demolition destroys is not primarily a structure but an emotional ecosystem. This is a web of relationships that a place has organized over time (Fullilove, 2004). Brothers makes this connection explicit when she reflects on what is at stake in the rapid loss of Seattle's informal cultural spaces:

"A lot of times when these places close, it's like, where are people going to go to be able to like create and organize and like build community? And I think that's an aspect sometimes that like detractors don't understand or intentionally want to not acknowledge -- and just kind of reduce it and minimize it to like, oh, you just like are whining about this like funky ass building." (C. Brothers, personal interview, 2025)

The dismissal of reducing building grief to aesthetic attachment to an old structure is a failure of modern day preservation. The field has not demonstrated that buildings matter even if not architecturally significant. They are places where people organized, created, performed, gathered, and built informal social infrastructure. Brothers is often the only record these buildings have.

When demolition occurs without acknowledgment, communities lose not only the building, but the evidence that it mattered. Vanishing Seattle is an archive and a space for remembrance like a memorial site. Brothers has, in effect, become a grief counselor for the Seattle built environment. Vanishing Seattle is doing work that the field of preservation has not yet formalized. If practitioners are serious about preservation, they must find ways to support the individuals and organizations like Vanishing Seattle.

Section 5.05 Stephanie Johnson-Toliver-- Black Heritage Society of Washington State, Walker Chapel

Stephanie Johnson-Toliver is the president of the Black Heritage Society of Washington State, a fourth-generation Seattleite, and a community advocate for the preservation of Black historic and cultural spaces in Seattle. I began working with Stephanie due to her involvement with *Eulogies for Place* and her eulogy for Walker Chapel, an AME church that was the neighborhood anchor of her Central District block. It was sold and demolished. Toliver frames her own response to the demolition as following the classic stages of grief: "Shocked, pissed off!... to, like, what am I gonna do about it? How do I release this stuff?" And then, finding an outlet in *Eulogies for Place*:

"When PsychoPomp, then, the project, the salon, contacted me about eulogies, then I thought, okay, this is my opportunity to eulogize Walker Chapel." (S. Johnson Toliver, personal interview, 2025)

Walker Chapel was a building of significant community value but was not architecturally significant. It was also a church, which does not typically qualify for local controls and incentives during historic designation. Despite its ineligibility for formal preservation, the building was a significant feature in the community. Johnson-Toliver describes the patterns it gave to her block:

"There were days, Saturdays and Sundays when the congregation just took up the whole neighborhood. The cars were around the block. You didn't have to be a member to participate in any of their, you know, their dinners, their barbecues, their whatever it was, function they had at the church. Everyone in the community was invited to participate." (S. Johnson-Toliver, personal interview, 2025)

Walker Chapel organized the neighborhood's time. When it was sold the loss was not just of a building but of a set of rituals:

"My neighbor Jerry, right? He would have choir practice at his apartment. And the choir would all be over there, he'd get on his organ, his piano, electric piano, and they'd be singing across the street. But yet, it was part of the community. It was the joy. And sometimes we don't realize how much we're affected or influenced by it until it's gone." (S. Johnson-Toliver, personal interview, 2025)

Currently, preservation cannot survey for the sound of a choir through an open window. There is no designation criterion for joy. This gap is not accidental, and instead is a product of what the preservation field has historically valued, and who has been excluded from shaping those values. But utilizing community response to demolished buildings is an opportunity for the field to acknowledge the emotional connection to place which is what current formalized pathways are unable to.

The buildings disappearing from the Central District are anchors of Black community life in Seattle, and their loss extends a longer pattern of displacement that began with urban renewal and continues through contemporary gentrification. The grief she carries for Walker Chapel is inseparable from the grief of watching a neighborhood become unrecognizable. In discussion, we began to talk about the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA site, a building with a permit sign for demolition that has remained standing for over a year:

Wright: "You go by these buildings just to make sure they're still there... it feels like you're waiting with -- like it's the hospice side of -- you're sitting with the building." Toliver: "Yes! Exactly! You got it!" Wright: "You're walking by, you're checking in." Toliver: "And every time, too, that I get close, I'm just -- I'm almost praying, like, please let it still be there. Please, please, please let it be there." (S. Johnson Toliver, personal interview, 2025)

There is no framework in planning or preservation literature for the feeling of walking by a building every day and praying that it still stands. I argue that the absence of that framework is itself a problem. As Johnson-Toliver herself says, the work she does is a form of hospice care to her neighborhood and is a form of community preservation. Johnson-Toliver also connects her work to the SHARP Project, a reminiscence program for Black elders experiencing early dementia that uses archival photographs to activate memory during neighborhood walks:

"It becomes this whole camaraderie type feeling and support, you know, for one another. So there is memory, good memory, in sharing, and releasing, and being an advocate." (S. Johnson Toliver, personal interview, 2025)

Memory work, in Toliver's practice, is a form of present community-building. This practice creates and sustains the social bonds that demolition and displacement have frayed. This

is the argument of both Barnett and Butler: that grief, openly acknowledged and collectively held, strengthens rather than weakens community (Barnett, 2022; Butler, 2004).

"I think the releasing part of it, like, the sharing part -- it's something that helps to heal yourself, in it, in loss. And so I, I guess, we'll always be an advocate -- an advocate for, you know, preservation and memory." (S. Johnson Toliver, personal interview, 2025)

When asked about how she would like to see Walker Chapel mourned, Johnson-Toliver speaks directly to the inadequacy of the standard commemorative responses available within the development process.

"A plaque, or a something on the wall inside the building -- I don't know if it's enough... Naming a room after that person or that building that was lost -- that's not it." (S. Johnson-Toliver, personal interview, 2025)

She offers the Liberty Bank Building redevelopment as a counterexample. To her, this was a project in which the developer worked with the community over the full span of the process. They repurposed physical elements of the original bank, and created something that genuinely carried the building's memory forward. If demolition occurs, Johnson-Toliver asks us to think about designing a building so that it carries the material, social, and narrative history of what stood before it. Through this, it allows the community to have through-line objects to mourn and it can make mourning part of the new built environment's ongoing life.

Section 5.06 DK Pan — Artist, Free Sheep Foundation

DK Pan is a Seattle-based artist working within experimental and collaborative spaces, including the Free Sheep Foundation. His practice investigates what he describes as "the intersection of place and memory." He organized both the Bridge Motel Wake in 2009 and the Memorial to TUBS, both of which are examined as case studies in Chapter IV. His interview illuminates how artist-led mourning practices function from the inside, and argues that artists and developers are not inherently adversarial, and that the pre-demolition interval is a resource both can use.

Pan came to the Bridge Motel through a long-standing friendship with a developer whose family business had acquired the property. His arrangement was that he would manage the motel for the year before demolition on the condition that, when the time came, he could use it as an art space. He described the thinking behind his art space as "It was kind of like an Irish wake, this idea of dressing up a corpse, really celebrating the life of this place" (DK Pan, personal interview, 2026). The event that followed drew thousands of people. Pan's own installation placed approximately 4,000 pounds of salt in one room and buried letters collected from former residents beneath the floor. This was a memorial to the human relationships the building had contained.

Where the Bridge Motel event was an event-based farewell, TUBS was an extended intervention in visible public space. Artists utilized the exterior of a vacant building which developed into a shifting canvas of community expression. In his work, Pan discusses the role that artists can have to support and work with developers. When talking about TUBS, Pan says that,

"Everybody was getting all these letters from the city being like, 'This is a nuisance.' But my buddy said, 'Oh no, this is a project by the Free Sheep Foundation — this is an art thing.' And they left us alone after that. And I think that is kind of an interesting angle in terms of the relationship between artists and development, because oftentimes it is framed as being disconnected. Artists are in that marginalized class where you often get forced to be displaced. But I think there are opportunities where people are really getting more integrated into development projects." (DK Pan, personal interview, 2026)

When developers are willing to create space for artistic intervention in the pre-demolition interval the result can be something that serves both the development timeline and signifies to the surrounding community that a transition is occurring, that it is time to say goodbye. Pan also spoke to the disorienting effect of rapid urban change on spatial identity. We discussed the loss of knowing the landmarks of your city around you.

"When I go to Capitol Hill, I'm like, 'what am I?' Because all of the landmarks I used to see are gone. A sense of place, a sense of belonging, a sense of community — all of that is

diminished with these kind of generic templates. So in some ways, creating these kind of public gestures is really important. It's a weird cycle" (DK Pan, personal interview, 2026).

This observation connects Pan's practice to Fullilove's concept of root shock. By allowing pauses in the pace of development where communities can collect themselves, we can help mitigate some of these concerns. Pan's art projects function as temporary, place-based interventions that slow the pace of loss enough to allow acknowledgment.

Pan's work also touches on the longer timescale of place memory. His current work in the Duwamish Valley, developing visual and cartographic overlays that mark the history of the river and its communities, extends the importance of acknowledging our memories into active planning practice. For Pan, place-based art and recognizing loss are related acts. He uses art to highlight that what existed in place should be acknowledged and is necessary to adapt to a changing city.

Section 5.07 Conclusion

Across these five interviews, several themes emerge. These themes collectively argue for a more intentional, community-centered approach to building loss. The acknowledgment of loss in the built environment creates a container for grief that planning and preservation practices do not fully acknowledge or facilitate. . Through mourning events, the above practitioners turned loss into an event that can be acknowledged and witnessed communally. This is memory work and the interviews remind us that memory is a resource that we should utilize for planning and preservation work.

Mourning a building is mourning the social structure the building holds. All interviewees discuss that what demolition destroys is not primarily a structure but an emotional ecosystem. When demolition happens, we lose a web of relationships and routines that a place has organized over time. We lose the connection to the place that we had. That loss is not thought about in current planning and preservation frameworks. The period before demolition is an opportunity to open up spaces for ritualized remembrances. DK Pan, Amber and Raymond each worked in the space between a building's last use and its demolition. Both found this threshold as a liminal zone where ordinary rules are suspended. Lucile House's eighteen months as a gathering site demonstrated that the time period before demolition can be generative when a property owner

permits it. Pan's account of the Bridge Motel and TUBS describes a similar arrangement where: a longtime friend whose family business was in development approached him to manage a motel in the year before its demolition, and Pan's condition for accepting was that once the building was permitted for demolition, he could use it as an art space. The relationship between artists and developers, in these cases, was not adversarial.

Johnson-Toliver's work with the Black Heritage Society frames memory work explicitly as racial justice work. The buildings disappearing in her neighborhood are anchors of Black community life, and their loss extends a longer pattern of displacement. Brothers made the same point about Bush Garden: you cannot miss the bamboo without missing the people who gathered beneath it. Ritualized remembrance needs institutional support. The labor of memory-keeping, building activation, and community grieving is currently carried out by individuals and small organizations, Amber and Raymond, Cynthia Brothers, Stephanie Johnson-Toliver all do the work without much support from planning or preservation.

Taken together, these five interviews are an argument toward the importance of mourning buildings and the need for institutional support. The practices described here are preservation practices. These practitioners suggest that the measure of preservation's relevance is not how many buildings it saves, but how meaningfully it accompanies communities through the losses it cannot prevent.

Article VI. Discussion

This chapter discusses themes from the case study repository and semi-structured interviews to examine how community mourning practices expand the conceptual boundaries of historic preservation. This discussion includes an analysis of limitations and a call to action for practitioners in the field. I am situating this discussion within broader debates in preservation theory and planning practice as demonstrated in the literature review.

My work clarifies that in the absence of formal preservation tools, communities do not disengage in ritualized remembrance to process the changing built environment.

The discussion is organized around three central themes that emerged from the data.

- Building loss produces real and collective grief
- Loss is uneven and shaped by power
- The interval before demolition is a critical planning opportunity to help people adjust to the changing built environment

From these themes, calls to action for the field of preservation and planning have been determined.

Section 6.01 What Mourning Practices Reveal

(a) Building Loss Produces Real and Collective Grief

Demolition is a marker of urban change. Literature, interviews, and case studies demonstrate that when a building is lost, it becomes a rupture in our connections to people and place. This thesis demonstrates that when given an opportunity, individuals readily share stories, memories, and emotional connections to buildings. Through these rituals, grief is collectively held and socially expressed. The collective dimension of building grief is not always legible until it is given a container. Through rituals of mourning, grief is collectively held and socially expressed. In expression through mourning, grief becomes the foundation for the kind of memory stewardship that preservation (at its best) has always tried to do. In literature, Max Page suggests that preservation practice emerges from loss, looking at case studies like the *UW*

Nuclear Reactor Building Celebration of Life and the *Final Farewell to Sunset Bowl*, show strategies that communities have developed to deal with their grief when formal preservation did not offer a path forward. Projects like *The People's Wall* and *Ghosts of Seattle Past* demonstrate that these practices can be ongoing and cumulative representations of change in a community.

Neil Harris's concept of "building lives" is particularly useful here. Harris suggests that we already treat buildings as if they have life cycles. Yet we lack equivalent rituals for their death in formal practice, and in that, we do not have an existing communal capacity for mourning buildings. *Eulogies for Place* was structured as a funeral, explicitly borrowing from human mourning rituals. The event functioned as a release point for shared memory, something Jim Nicholls observed directly when he gave his eulogy for Hardwick's Hardware: "Every single person that spoke to me didn't say, oh, that was a neat piece of writing... It was all, oh, I went to Hardwick's and... they were all personal memories triggered by what I had said." Nicholls described the act of writing and reading aloud as producing new acknowledgment of loss in others. This aligns with Barnett's distinction between grief and mourning: mourning is an intentional, public act. The practice of public storytelling widens the circle of who is permitted to grieve. Cynthia Brothers, who has documented hundreds of lost Seattle buildings through *Vanishing Seattle*, observed that when people are given an invitation to remember together, "People in Seattle, there's still this sense of like wanting to fight for the things and the places that they love. Or people just wanting to come together and like talk about, like share stories and talk about the places that are important to them and like connect in that way." Brothers noted that this desire extends even to people who had no prior knowledge of a specific building, hearing someone else's account of a lost place can produce its own form of grief, a mourning for something you never personally knew.

Current building preservation systems are largely oriented toward retaining select sites through preventing loss but offer few tools for responding to it once it occurs or becomes unavoidable. The practices documented in this research demonstrate that communities are addressing this gap. I argue that the cases highlighted in this thesis push the idea that grief is what continues to enrich the work of memory stewardship and that preservation should also extend to non-extant sites lost to demolition. As Stephanie Johnson-Toliver reflected on her eulogy for Walker Chapel: "That was the important piece that I think not only me, but other

people who were touched by Walker Chapel in this community, were missing. And so we did have to have a moment to mourn it... sometimes we don't realize how much we're affected or influenced by it until it's gone. Maybe some of the intangibles that... stick with us, and... we want to make sure that we find a way to be able to, to preserve that."

(b) Loss Is Uneven and Shaped by Power

Building loss is not experienced equally. For some communities, particularly historically marginalized groups, demolition is not an isolated activity. As a result, mourning practices often function as acts of recognition in addition to remembrance. They show the value of places that formal systems have overlooked. Johnson-Toliver's work with Walker Chapel illustrates this. Walker Chapel, a historically Black church in Seattle's Central District, was sold and demolished without a formal preservation process. The community was largely excluded from deliberation: "It was pretty much on the down-low. The people in the community weren't aware of, really, what was going on until it actually happened, until the sign went up, you know, on the church." For Johnson-Toliver, it was not simply the loss of a building but the loss of a community anchor that had organized the spiritual and social life of Black Seattle for generations. Her account ties into what Fullilove describes as root shock: the disruption of an emotional ecosystem. The demolition of the Walker chapel was a severing of ties not just to a structure but to the social world of the Black Central District.

To mourn a demolished building, as shown in the cases documented in this thesis, is always also to mourn the social worlds that buildings contain. Walker Chapel was mourned as an architectural object and as the form that Black Seattle's spiritual and social life had taken for generations. Cynthia Brothers of Vanishing Seattle describes this: "I think people do love... the physical aspects of it. You know, like for me, like Bush Garden... there's something that's so unique in like the layers and layers of history... I think people do mourn the physical space. But I don't think it's necessarily divorced from all those other aspects of what the space meant to people." The Yesler Terrace townhouses were mourned as housing units and they were mourned as the structures through which a multiethnic, multigenerational community of low-income families had known itself. Their absence from landmark systems reflects longstanding biases in what is considered worthy of preservation. They are community anchors, such as cultural institutions and gathering spaces. When formal preservation systems fail to capture these values

through the landmarking process, by centering architectural significance over social significance, they are participating in uneven distribution of loss across communities.

Marc Fried's research in *Grieving for a Lost Home* offers the historical and empirical grounding for observation in Seattle. Fried found that Boston residents' grief was not for their buildings but for the social worlds those buildings had organized, which is something that current preservation structure has limited ability to address. "The more we grieve," Barnett writes, "the more openly we acknowledge the ways our lives and our worlds are populated and enriched by others." **This thesis agrees with Fried and argues that the building and the community it served are not separable objects of grief.** The literature review and interviews highlighted that many of the spaces being mourned are not those traditionally recognized within formal preservation frameworks.

One strategy we see through the cases and interviews to work with the grief demolition brings is through practices in memory stewardship. Memory stewardship is the ongoing, relational work of holding community history in the absence of institutional support. Johnson-Toliver's work both at the Black Heritage Society and her connection to building mourning is grounded in emotional commitment to place. Her work operates almost entirely outside the mechanisms of formalized preservation networks. Johnson-Toliver described memory stewardship as, "The releasing part of it, like, the sharing part. It's something that helps to heal yourself. In loss. And so, I, I guess, we'll always be an advocate. An advocate for, you know, preservation and memory." Both archives and documentaries in the Case Study section are forms of memory stewardship. These forms of memorial practice capture the human relationship to the built environment at a particular moment in a city's history through the recording and preservation of record.

Johnson-Toliver's perspective informs our work and shows us that the communities most consistently excluded from formal preservation frameworks are the same communities most actively engaged in informal mourning and memory practice. We see this happening with the Peoples Wall, in our interview, Johnson-Toliver states that there has been "Total respect for this mural wall... And, you know, what does that say about, you know, community, how we respect and acknowledge, you know, history?" The case studies reinforce calls for preservation

scholarship to be more inclusive. **If preservation is to remain relevant, it must account not only for what is saved, but also what is lost.**

Grassroots memory stewardship has been a path to help communities deal with building loss when formal frameworks fail. These failures are more likely to occur to communities that have experienced systemic demolition in their communities. If the field is serious about relevance, it cannot continue to treat the labor of these grassroots stewards as lesser-than formalized work. We must find ways to integrate practices of memory stewardship and remembrance into formal practice. These cases and interviews suggest that mourning practices are not only emotional responses but also indicators of structural gaps. The absence of institutional support for community memory work points to the limitations of existing frameworks in capturing the full range of what community values.

(c) The Interval Before Demolition Is a Critical Preservation Opportunity

As demonstrated through case studies and interviews, when there is time to acknowledge the incoming demolition of a structure, the community wants to respond. This is valuable as case studies have shown that activities before demolition generate social value and produce records that extend beyond traditional architectural surveys. Current planning frameworks largely overlook this opportunity. This suggests that preservation and planning should expand beyond the traditional emphasis on protection and long-range visioning to include ritualized remembrance. While regulatory tools remain important, they are insufficient to address the full spectrum of community relationships to place.

Neil Harris's framing of buildings as having life cycles demonstrates this opportunity. If buildings have lives, then their "death" is not instantaneous. This period of time was particularly visible in the Lucile House project, where Amber and Raymond created a space that invited strangers into collective acknowledgment of loss. Raymond described the effect on people who came through: "Everybody who entered Lucile House left differently. That was something that I can say with certainty." He attributed this not to the art alone but to the building's role as what he called a "middle place," a space between what has been and what is coming, where people could access grief they had been carrying for other losses as well. At the Lucile House, Amber additionally talked about how the time period before demolition allowed people to deal with

existing losses around them, “But when it was kind of presented to people that would come in as being this middle place, people responded a little bit differently than they would if we just said, Hey, this is a cool free room. Let's hang out here. But, hey, this is a cool free room. It's going to be destroyed. And that changed people's perception Between something that's already happened and something that is going to happen. It's like they had a chance to say goodbye to a lot of things that they were waiting for.”

We can define the “middle space” or “liminal space” as the time period between the end of planned building use, the issuing of the demolition permit and final demolition. Many of the practices documented here operate within this space: *The Viaduct's Last Night* transforms infrastructure into a site of farewell; murals at TUBS activate the building as it approaches demolition. Documentary works such as *Even the Walls* and *Where the House Was* capture the stages of grief before demolition as communities prepare to say goodbye. Brothers pointed to similar work by Jill Friedberg, including photo projections on building facades and the Hello-Goodbye Viaduct installation, as examples of how the pre-demolition interval can be treated as a public opportunity for recognition and memory-making.

When change occurs without space for recognition or mourning, communities are left without tools to process it. As mentioned in *Mourning in the Anthropocene*, a tip for “helping individuals and communities to grapple with environmental losses is to publicly recognize the role that emotions play in our responses.” Through these case studies we see how grief about built environment change is expected. Amber and Raymond described the harm caused by abrupt demolition as a “sudden jerk” of loss: “That sudden jerk is like a big source of trauma for lots of people.” Amber connected this directly to her personal grief: “They literally pulled her out of my hands. Like I couldn't even say goodbye. That was messed up.” The parallel she drew between human death without ritual and building demolition without acknowledgment was the founding logic of the Lucile House project. Raymond put it plainly: “I think people need to be ritualized... We need the ritual. We need to just be shown when it is time to think about or deal with that to get in that headspace.” Johnson-Toliver described the particular grief of watching change happen incrementally in the neighborhood she has lived in for decades: “The suddenness of something being demoed. For me, has been really interesting, too, to turn a corner and then see a sign, or a fence, and then be like, what the heck?”

When demolition occurs without time for preparation, opportunities for processing grief are limited. DK Pan, who worked on the Bridge Motel and TUBS projects, described the disorientation that follows when landmarks disappear suddenly: "And you know, when I go to Capitol Hill, I'm like, 'what am I?' Because all of the landmarks I used to see are gone." In the Lucile House, Amber described how the building became a container for grief that extended far beyond its own walls: "People had houses that they were thinking about, or that this was just like a house I grew up in." The building's impending demolition gave visitors permission to mourn other losses alongside it. Including people, neighborhoods, and phases of life. Raymond articulated why this matters: "If you lose your points of reference, whether they be a parent or a sister or a house, then you're lost."

This work reminds us that disruptions to people-place relationships challenge our expectations of the world being knowable and predictable. We as practitioners should understand that rapid change causes grief and that grief should be supported. One of the strategies to support this grief is by utilizing the time period between permit issuance and building demolition. The following passage from *Mourning in the Anthropocene* highlights why this is an opportunity for our profession, "Precisely because it is painful and unpredictable, the dominant culture often greets grief with suspicion, treating it as an impediment to—rather than as a precondition for—ethical and political action." I would even assert that those who are considered Not-In-My-Backyarders (NIMBY) are sometimes just people that are dealing with grief. Perhaps NIMBY is a term we should use more sparingly, it is tossed around with suspicion, it is used without knowing why someone would oppose urban planning policy. It does not make someone inherently against progressive development to be wary of your attachment to place changing without acknowledgment. The dismissal of building grief as mere nostalgia or Not-In-My-Backyard (NIMBY) resistance is one of the obstacles this thesis addresses. Reducing community grief to individual place attachment is politically convenient for those who benefit from rapid development.

Section 6.02 Calls to Action

The findings point toward three key directions for practice:

1. Create an opportunity for community grief before demolition.

Preservationists, planners, and developers should treat the pre-demolition period as an opportunity to open up spaces for ritualized remembrances to mourn and adjust to change. Many of the case studies offer an example of strategy in the repository. These activities have drawn community members from across the city and have given hundreds of people the chance to grieve a changing city together before demolition of their important building occurs.

2. Recognize and support informal mourning practitioners.

Community groups are already doing preservation work through mourning practices. This labor is often unsupported and unrecognized. Institutional partnerships, funding, and archival support could strengthen and sustain this work. Cynthia Brothers has maintained the only sustained public archive of Seattle's demolition record for nearly a decade. Outside of her advocacy work, Stephanie Johnson-Toliver walks by buildings under demolition permit to check that they are still standing. DK Pan has negotiated with private developers to secure temporary use of buildings before demolition, activating them as cultural spaces that serve both the community and the development process without any formal framework that would allow this to be replicated or scaled. The preservation field has a responsibility to identify these practitioners, document their methodologies, and find ways to resource and legitimize their work. This could take many forms: artist residency programs within development projects, archival partnerships between preservation organizations and community memory-keepers, or funding streams within city arts and historic preservation offices specifically designated for memory work for demolished or soon-to-be demolished buildings.

3. Treat memory as an active preservation and planning resource.

Stories, memory work, and documentation are tools that can support communities navigating change. Planning and preservation practice should treat these outputs as valuable and usable resources. As demolition occurs, people's connection to place and memory is also changing. By recognizing this and acknowledging memory and connection to place, practitioners can help communities reconnect to their changing built environment context.

This research demonstrates that ritualized remembrance in the form of mourning, archiving and documentary is already occurring in Seattle, albeit largely unacknowledged or supported. By recognizing and learning from these practices, the field of historic preservation has an opportunity to evolve. **If preservation is to remain relevant in a context of ongoing urban change, it must develop tools not only for saving buildings, but for letting them go.** Remembrance offers one such tool. It allows communities to acknowledge loss and carry meaning forward, even when the physical structure is gone.

Section 6.03 Future Work and Limitations

This thesis is intentionally exploratory and its scope is bounded by geography. Several avenues for future research emerge directly from limitations. First, the case study repository is specific to Seattle and weighted toward mourning practices that were documented in English-language media or surfaced through preservation networks. Practices conducted in languages other than English or in the private registers of family and neighborhood life remain largely invisible here. Future research should develop methods for identifying and engaging with mourning practices that do not have public documentation.

Second, this thesis focuses on the documentation of practice rather than on outcomes. It does not measure whether mourning practices produce measurable benefits for community well-being. These are important questions for future inquiry. The SHARP Project that Johnson-Toliver described offers one model for how place-based memory work can be evaluated in terms of community health outcomes. Partnerships between preservation scholars and public health researchers could generate evidence that would support institutional adoption of mourning-informed planning practices.

Third, the relationship between mourning practices and formal planning processes warrants closer examination. Several interviewees with DK Pan, Cynthia Brothers, and Stephanie Johnson-Toliver in particular have focused on engagement directly with developers and city agencies. The conditions under which those collaborations succeed, and what distinguishes meaningful engagement, are not fully answered here. Future research might examine specific cases where pre-demolition mourning practices influenced design outcomes,

contributed to archival records that entered planning documents, or generated the kind of community trust that enabled genuine co-production of what came next.

Article VII. Conclusion

This thesis began with the observation that communities in Seattle are mourning demolished buildings, and the preservation field has not yet developed language or practice for that work. Through a repository of case studies and a series of semi-structured interviews, this research has documented the range of remembrance practices that communities develop in the absence of formal institutional support. Mourning practices that support the field of preservation. They are practiced outside the institutional planning and preservation frameworks that the field traditionally recognizes as legitimate.

Seattleites mourn the demolition of historic buildings through many practices such as: wakes and gatherings (time-bound collective events at moments of transition), story and archive collections (ongoing records that extend mourning beyond the demolition moment), and documentary film (which captures the human relationship to the built world). These practices reveal that the role of historic preservation must expand to recognize and support communities experiencing grief and should recognize that the communities most excluded from formal preservation frameworks are often the same communities that practice informal mourning. Finally, the practices inform us as practitioners that the pre-demolition interval is an underused resource.

Through this thesis, we see that community-based mourning practices are often focused on the social worlds that the building held. It is our responsibility as practitioners to respond to this realization and act to support communities, particularly those impacted by longstanding urban renewal efforts, as they face ongoing challenges regarding building demolition.

Three central findings emerge from this work. First, building loss produces real and collective grief. Ritual practice creates the conditions under which grief that already exists can be communally held and socially expressed. When given a structured opportunity through remembrance practice, individuals readily share memories, and emotional connections to buildings. Secondly, building loss is not experienced equally. This is a product of a longstanding preservation policy. Third, the interval before demolition is a critical and largely overlooked

planning opportunity. When communities are given time and support to acknowledge incoming loss, they remember in ways that extend beyond what traditional architectural surveys capture.

The 60th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act is an appropriate moment to ask what the field has failed to reckon with. Max Page writes that preservation has a problem with death, that its self-image as a movement against destruction has prevented it from developing tools for when buildings cannot be saved. This thesis argues that communities have been developing those tools on their own, without institutional recognition or support. The mourning practices documented here are not a supplement to preservation practice. They are a demonstration of what formal preservation could be if it expanded its frame to include the full life cycle of buildings and the full range of communities that attach meaning to them.

Practitioners must hold space for grief, resource the people who do memory work, and recognize that mourning buildings is itself a form of historic preservation practice.

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Appendix A – Interview Transcripts

Section 8.01 Jim Nicholls — Interview Transcript

[Harriet Wright] Okay. how how's your day going? I guess we should start there.

[Jim Nicholls] Good.

[Harriet Wright] Good.

[Jim Nicholls] The interesting thing was that I got your e-mail on like the second anniversary to the day that the eulogy was. Did you know that?

[Harriet Wright] I didn't know that. I know it was... I...

[Jim Nicholls] Well, it was the day after because I posted something on Facebook.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. Yeah. Well, I came across your contact information from the research I've been doing for my thesis. And I'm happy to give you more of a description just to start us off.

[Jim Nicholls] I guess I would-- the only thing I'm curious-- well, I'm curious how you-- where you found it. where you found the psychopomp?

[Harriet Wright] Yeah, I'm hoping to categorize different building memorialization practices that have been happening in Seattle. And so in my research, using the Vanishing Seattle website is, because I feel like that's a pretty good, at least place to start, to start to get to know people. And so Cynthia had posted about it on there because she was a part of it. And so that's kind of where I found it. But the concept of like eulogies for place just was fascinating. And thank you for sending your paper that you that you sent this morning. I had the chance to read it. And I grew up in Roosevelt and I remember that hardware store. Like I remember going there and like being a part of it. And yeah, that was beautifully beautifully written.

[Jim Nicholls] No, that was the neatest part about doing that. Well, you know, at the reading, there was, I don't know how many people were there, but there were a few, and it was kind of nice and dark. And then afterwards, everybody came up and told me their Hardwick story. Every single person that spoke to me, you know, didn't say, oh, that was a neat piece of writing. I like the way you did this, or, you know, or something like that. It was all, oh, I went to Hardwick's and, or I remember going to Hardwick's for, or, and they were all personal memories triggered by what I had said. you know, that was about every conversation started. It was really neat. I hadn't, I hadn't anticipated that, and yet it turned out to be the most remarkable part. The act of

remembering and then writing down what you're remembering and trying to hone, I thought was the big thing. Just sort of remembering and then writing. And then the reading is part of the end point to the writing, I think. But then I had this other life, which was the trigger for for other people to respond. Yeah, which was the really cool bit. I guess probably Vanishing Seattle lives in that world. Which I don't want to live there. There's a there's a guy who was doing stuff before she was doing that. It was Paul Dorpat and and Seattle then and there. So have you seen that?

[Harriet Wright] I have through Historic Seattle. I think they took it over.

[Jim Nicholls] He's a character. I don't know if he died yet. I mean, he was, he would be older. I think he would be somebody to talk to, to be honest, if he's still running.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] Oh yeah. And really, I think there's a, this is my big thought of stuff before I, coming here, I think there's a project in looking at this, and he published, and it's extensively online and stuff. and it was always the then and now before and after. But you know all of that is, you could do Seattle then and then and now. And I think that's the point is that it's like Then and now, well, one and done.

[Harriet Wright] Right.

[Jim Nicholls] You don't know. So, but he's seen that now, I said then. And we're probably at the place where most of Paul's now is then for us.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah, I think one of the things that really drew me to the concept of building funerals or like building memorialization is that it's really the only time in a building's life cycle that you get to look back and think about like the layers and what the building's seen and almost this like eulogy or obituary or something along those lines. But that is, I think, a really powerful thing about this work that you were a part of is that it gives you a chance to look at then and then and then and how you feel now. Jim Nicholls I think key things that sort of tie to that are the idea of ghost signs and their sort of trace histories and when one building gets torn down and exposes really fresh, really old ghosts. So that's so amazing. And then the idea of when a building was maybe residential gets turned down and the imprint of the stair and all the different colors of interiors is left on that wall as a sort of literal.

[Harriet Wright] That's the layers of paint and the wallpaper.

[Jim Nicholls] Yeah, that's an incredible thing when you think about it. And of course now there's whole, practically whole, well, yes, whole countries that look like that because of the wars.

[Harriet Wright] Well, a lot of my questions today are about, I'm a planner, I'm from the urban planning department, is in architecture. I've worked with architects before, but it's a lot of my

questions have to do with like, how do you think about building death in the design, like the birth of these buildings that you work on or this built environment that you're on? But even before we get there, I think I just wanted to hear a little bit about your professional background and your relationship with both being an educator and being a designer in many ways and kind of how those backgrounds brought you to eulogies of place?

[Jim Nicholls] I don't think I came to it through mourning. I came to it through a sort of fond memory of something and wanting to describe that and really a memory that it wasn't. When I think of mourning people, it's more, there's a greater part of sadness in that. For some reason, it was more of a celebration, I think. And I guess they call things celebrations in life. To me, that always is such a lip service to somebody. Like, fuck that, or excuse me.

[Harriet Wright] No, you can swear, that's okay.

[Jim Nicholls] It's fine. We're here to bury some, you know. Yeah. The sort of fondness of the things that I was trying to capture and loss, but I think there, you know, there's just, there's an overwhelming amount of loss in the world if you're opening your bucket around. I think. **[Harriet Wright]** I think so as well.

[Jim Nicholls] Perhaps every generation in their own little way thinks they're at the center of loss, but man, it feels like it here. So I'm interested in, I'm not interested in longevity, but I'm interested in the traces of decay.. Yeah. And the way that that sort of tells stories that you don't really know, I think it can get too explicit. The thing that's nice about the sort of ruinous or the kind of decay and the palimpsest and all those things are this sort of ambiguity. And even that's what I like about the memory, I think, really, is the ambiguity or the kind of distortions that happen that make it more real for me. Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] And I do an exercise with students that surround memory and trying to draw something in their lives from a childhood memory perspective. So like the idea that you're looking up all the time or that, you know, the backyard is so big, you imagine the curvature of the earth or let us plug in for electricity is big enough to hold in two hands. You know, like people carry those visual memories and it's very interesting to try and draw it in. Like if you ask someone to draw their, you know, in a suburban North American context, their backyard growing up without thinking or looking at a photograph, that's when the sort of distortions of reality come in.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. Of scale, yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] Scale, like just the vastness of it all and the heights of things. And, you know, a woman once drew She and her sister's favorite hiding place was this pantry that because they would steal some snacks and hide in the floor of the pantry and eat too. And the drawing was

them looking up at these shells like of, you know, skyscrapers, this beautiful thing. I don't know. I don't know. There's, yeah, people, You know, architecture does kind of want to think that it lasts forever, that they're the eternal arch or something like that. That's pretty ridiculous. The only way that happens is by eternal maintenance. We, as a profession, we choose certain buildings and enshrine them in sort of divine presence. And then we maintain that. We just maintain and maintain that. But they, they don't last on their own. So it's interesting to sort of imagine that sort of real memory and kind of a false memory of keeping something alive.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. Is that when you were writing your piece for Eulogies for Place, is that something that you were thinking about with these memories that you have of Hardwick's?

[Jim Nicholls] Well, for sure, because You know, it was an intense place, like a really old hardware store often is intense because it's just full of stuff. And they're all stuff that has kind of associations and smells and hand-based memory. Like they're full of body memory, actually. It's kind of interesting and other kinds of things than just visual. And this one was a great one. I mean, been on that since 1930 or whatever. And it had passed through hands and it had quirkiness to it. And there were problems with it too. Some women really found it misogynist. And I knew that it was really patriotic American stuff. Like if you bought something made in the USA, they practically sort of hold it up and celebrate at the front. So that made me uncomfortable as a Canadian. But it was more the material thing. And the way that you walked down the hallways was you didn't just walk down a aisle like a grocery store because you actually were meandering a bit from the drifts of stuff that were all coming off the shelves. You get to kind of pick your way along. And, you know, at some point I sort of wonder, what's about a fire accident? I'll tell you what is if the fire inspectors and the fire fighters weren't such hardware store geeks to begin with, that place would have been shut down. It's really true. They must have got some kind of pass.

[Harriet Wright] A back deal, back door handshake. Yeah. That's funny.

[Jim Nicholls] Oh, yeah. You know, and that guy having a nap out front, I mean, he really was regular, well, for surrounding this, you know, and he had that half hour window. He'd be there for sure. What a glorious thing to have like, and that one chair was like this old office chair. It was kind of, I'm going to say greasy, you know, kind of hanging out and you'd never buy it, but they always would drag it out with everything else. Like, what's that? That's the nap chair. How many businesses have a nap chair? How many businesses should have a nap chair? Every single one.

[Right.Jim Nicholls] One of the-- Lost values.

[Harriet Wright] Lost values. Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] I think it's never the thing that's what the value of the thing represents. And I think we all, and particularly in this time, came upon it. Like the visual image of the walls of Hardwick's is diametrically opposed to my visual image of Trump's White House.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] Those gold things. There were no gold things in Hardwick's.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. One of the things that brought me to Eulogies for Place was that big question on their website. I don't know if you've seen it, but it's, place versus space? And the text below is talking about how it's very intentionally eulogies for place instead of place.

[Jim Nicholls] Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] Because the space has been lost.

[Jim Nicholls] Yeah. Yes, place is what we're trying to recall. And that's it, you know, it's kind of architecture 101. It's like, well, if you start some students talking about spaces being nice spaces, Then the wise old mentor goes, well, don't you really mean places? And then they immediately shrink and think they really kind of-- they might be clever, but they'll never be wise, you know, sort of thing. And so I see that as kind of an easy shot. But I think we remember place for sure. But I think a very memorable space actually does make place. Like, you know, we've probably, anybody's traveled to have a memory of a big train station space, which is very, you know, it really is, it's a place, but it's a place because it's a space, you know, a space that you can hear your footsteps echoing, that's a memorable space and that's that one too. So I think it's sort of, Do you miss your house or do you miss your home? Yeah. I miss my home, of course, when you say that, but forgive me for calling it a house.

[Harriet Wright] Right.

[Jim Nicholls] Sorry.

[Harriet Wright] Do you miss the hardware store because you can get your goods or do you miss the community that you can see?

[Jim Nicholls] Oh, yeah, and just the community that it represents, represented and the time basis of that.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] And the alt, like there was no empirical method for them to do an inventory. They would, if they saw something, if a customer found something was out, they would order more because they had no comprehensive inventory. Right. And towards the end, when they were moving out, they would kept discovering things in their warehouse. God, you know, they had a warehouse. Right. Tell me that probably wasn't the place of places. And they go, yeah, we found this in the warehouse. It's, you know, it's pretty good. Yeah. But I think it's sort of getting lost in in labels a little bit. That's what it is. You know, the kind of the where, the where of the now where we are.

[Jim Nicholls] And now where we are is what we're after. And Right now, this now has us being somewhat nostalgic, I think.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. Jim NichollsBecause maybe the new now is not so great.

[Harriet Wright] Right.

[Jim Nicholls] This moment's now is maybe not the moment we want to. Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah, I think that is when you talk about change. There's like two sides to it. There's like this change is good and there's this grief about what you are losing in the change. And most of what I'm focusing on is the grief of the equation. And I didn't even think about this, but now I'm wondering if it is, I'm so focused on the grief as a reflection of like where we are now in the world.

[Jim Nicholls] I would go against this, I am not and would never pretend.

[Harriet Wright] Feel free.

[Jim Nicholls] Just started looping internal thing and being and becoming, you know, I think the idea of, you know, there is no change because it's, this is, this is it, you know?

[Harriet Wright] Right.

[Jim Nicholls] As, you know, I think maybe architecture plays a trick on us making us think it's temporary, I mean, permanent. It's just much, the it's just everything is degrees of temporary. Yeah. I think that's probably true. Yeah, I I think the idea of making a memorial more about creating a ritual. There's there's one temple in Japan that gets rebuilt all continuously. You know about that?

[Harriet Wright] No. Jim NichollsOh, that's kind of that's an example for you. And yeah. I don't know the name of the temple. I'm sorry.

[Harriet Wright] It's okay.

[Jim Nicholls] There are two lots and they build the temple on one and periodically they build an identical building on the other lot and tear down the first one and then just cycle through them. And I don't know whether, I don't know how they overlap. That'd be worth finding it. Like I think it's sort of okay to stand for a while and then We know it's going to start decay, so we'll just start this one now. And then when it's done, then we'll tear that one down. And the goal, the thing of it is, and I don't know how many, I'm going to say hundreds if not thousands of years that's been going on, that continuous rebuilding. And now I'd throw it, that's different than, you know, building the cathedral that's supposed to last forever, really. Right. Gaudi's Cathedral, I understand, which has been under construction for forever, just got to its highest point. And now it's the highest cathedral, maybe in the world.

[Harriet Wright] Right, right. I guess my question for you as an architect is like, how do you design or how do you teach students who ask about the inevitable death of the buildings that they're designing?

[Jim Nicholls] Well, you know, now we would ask about design for disassembly. So, you know, just like when you die and you don't donate your heart, my daughter gets to benefit from your heart. The idea now is that all buildings would disassemble. and then be recycled or repurposed. So the thing now is this mass timber, heavy timber stuff, unbolted and rebolted in another place. Steel, all the rebar in this region is made out of recycled steel, for instance. So I think the idea now is more reuse and then And the sort of, and this I think is, is very telling because it, we had, you know, we built cities, especially in North America on this really fast timeframe, built all these cities and then that generation of buildings, we tore them down and built in another one. And then we realized, wait a minute, we just tore down Penn Station. Wasn't that kind of a nice building, that big room I was talking about? And so the heritage movement started and people said, well, let's save that old building. And they were very, very precious about that. And it was, it was, it was like embalming. Yeah. And now it's really adaptive reuse. We've gone, as architects have gone from embalming historic buildings to adapt and reuse. It's a much more radical position. It's just saying, Look, we're just putting this building out for recycling. It doesn't have to be this anymore. It can be a whole new thing. But it's not landfilling either. And I think the fact that we've let go of some of the preciousness of that history and now just see it as a resource, why would you waste it? And so, you know, how could we look at memory? Not as this precious thing, but as a resource, why waste it? You know, like, why not look at, you know, the Indigenous? I got to learn a little bit from Indigenous colleagues once or twice. And one of the things that I thought was really great and relevant to everybody was the seventh generation. and and it's different takes them. But the one is, we're here. and we have to think of the last 3 generations and respect what they did and bring it forward for the next 3 generations. So we're in the middle of 7 generations of continuity forward. 3 and about 3, and that just moves along like a caterpillar. and I mean You know, that radically shifts things.

[Harriet Wright] It does. I mean, that does. Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] So I would propose the seventh generation idea of memorialization, which makes the forward three as important as the back three.

[Harriet Wright] That's, yeah, that is a really interesting perspective. I think, I guess playing off of that in the seventh generation, what do you think are some ways that you can, through architecture, through the built form, you know, memorialize or plan for a building, like in the seven generations, when you're thinking about the life cycle and this reuse, Do you see like a eulogy or, you know, like a treasure box of mementos that a building left behind, you know, to pass along, to remember it by? What do you see?

[Jim Nicholls] Kind of the whole building. I mean, I, people have, you know, architects have played with the idea of ruins. We imagine what the building would look like as a ruin while the hearth would still be there, the foundation cornerstones would still be there. So you kind of have in some ways the bounds of the space, whatever. And sometimes that's interesting to figure out what's the primal part of it. Like what's when you take away the trappings of sort of surface in this moment, what might be enduring fundamentally. all the time. So things like prospect and refuge, like where is that hunkered down sheltered space versus where is that scan the horizon for food or danger? And that becomes more important than, you know, whether it's this color or that color, this theory or that thing.[Harriet Wright But that goes back to the feeling almost that you have, yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] Well, I think the childhood memory is always a good place to begin, to be honest. If you can make architecture as good as you can make a blanket for it, you're in good shape.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. Well, I know you were talking about childhood memory, but I wonder about like elder memory or like what it's like in that perspective. Like if you, you know, you're going through the world with this legacy of life behind you. you see things very differently and how you understand architecture, I imagine, would be very different. I wonder if that would change or if you have any thoughts about how that would change the design or those memories that you have or the memories that you, even if you don't get the next 40 years, you know, if you did, how would you be seeing the world around you? How would you be memorializing it and remembering it?

[Jim Nicholls] Well, That's a bunch of good questions. Note here: I should have spaced these out more.

[Harriet Wright] Sorry, there's a lot of extra.

[Jim Nicholls] I suspect the, my sort of evasive analysis, I suspect that, you know, if you designed a space that worked for people with Alzheimer's, you might be doing something significant, like the idea of designing for people that had no memories. I'd be sort of interested to imagine there's, you know, a kind of place that they felt comfortable and safe and at ease in without all the association. I don't know. I think, I guess I would be an advocate for slowness, like if, if I think the the thing of memorialization suggests that something's gone, or is there's at least there's been change. And if if we so, so you're so the change is the given. maybe we could think about either slower rates of change or faster rates of change. And Maybe the opportunity of age is that we see things at a very slow rate of change. Like even like someone else would see the same thing at a fast rate of change. We just say, oh, that was like that before, and then it changed, and then it changed, and now it's like that again. So I don't know that. [Harriet Wright Well, I immediately thought of Childhood scale, childhood memories is scale of things, distorted scale of things, but maybe elder or older memories. When we think about the end of

this life cycle is what is distorted is the change, is that rate or like, it's like how things are going instead of scale.

[Jim Nicholls] I think one thing that I always have sort of, you know, as, you know, talking about this and that with different groups. groups. And I would say, Oh, okay, you know, and we think about childhood going to school. Okay, now, it's like, think about recess. Yeah, recess. You you get to go outside and do. Okay, you're you or you and your friends. You organize a soccer game, play a game of soccer scores 4 to 5. You come in after recess. How long was recess? It's like 15 min. You got yourselves out the door, organized, on the field, played some kind of sport, battles were won and lost, people were chased, and you're back. And it's not been like an hour or two days or an afternoon. It was like 15 minutes, I think. And yet it was this expansive experience. Like I swear I remember, like baseball tournaments occurring over recess. And now it's like, oh, I'll go get a coffee. And it, or back in the day, a cigarette or something. Oh, okay. It's time to go back, you know. Let's go back. Yeah. Like a minute goes back. Right. And so like that, that's really such an interesting thing to, Wonder elasticity of time, I guess.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. And I I think part of my hope in my work is. I'm a Seattleite. I'm from here. I have a I I'm a big proponent that the city needs many of the things that we're doing like we need more housing. We need all these changes. And I think the way I feel like and my my parents live here as well. When I talk to my family about this, you know, we we talk about the rate of change being really fast. And that is actually something that I haven't experienced in the same way. Like their understanding of how fast and their grieving process over how much the city has changed and how quickly is different than my understanding of how fast the city has changed and how quickly. And I think our emotional processing looks different because of that in many ways.

[Jim Nicholls] Cognitive maps.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. Jim Nicholls You know, we used to be able to rely on a cognitive map and you don't know a lot of ways. It was, well, certainly the first mapping and, you know, really powerful community tool and, you know, and kids develop it like absolutely from car seat being driven around, you know, they, they have a cognitive map. It's not street signs or it's, it's the pink house or, you know, whatever. And then that just, radically changes. And so there's huge disorientation. And so I guess the thing that I do talk about in class is empathy and legibility. Legibility is a really interesting one and empathy. So I want to be able to read my environment and understand it. And if I can, then there's a possibility that I can have empathy with it. And then there's a possibility that I can have less alienation and more connection. So I think by sort of making, you know, life visible, then we can make it sort of comprehensible and legible. And you can do that. You said you were a civil engineer. You can do that structurally. Oh, I get how that building is held out. Or the architecture device of some silly hidden cantilever. All cantilevers are not godly. That's just . But, you know, so some architects and civils got this big cantilever, and I get it, kind of disorienting, kind of weird, maybe different. but no empathy for me, except for me,

oh, that's a big gaping entry or something. But like, I, you know, I like to feel the transfer of mass, for example. I also enjoy magic transfers. But, you know, if I can have empathy with my, the built environment around us, you're in the college of built environments, if I, as an individual, can have empathy with the built environment around me in all kinds of ways. Even just find the bathrooms. What's the best reason to get an architecture degree? You'll always be able to find the bathrooms.

[Harriet Wright] That's a good one. And it's true, I think. I was like, it's really true.

[Jim Nicholls] They mess these ones up by switching them from where they intended. But Anyway, yeah, no, I mean, you do. It's probably around the core, and I guess it's there. There's the cafeteria. We're getting warmer. Oh, there, there. You know, anyway. So if you could design a city for accessibility, that's been a slogan in the past. But if you can design a city to have legibility, empathy, for people to feel connected and rooted there, even as a change and just transforms, it still could be legible. So I would say that I'm about messy erasures.

[Harriet Wright] Messy erasures, okay.

[Jim Nicholls] That you leave behind as much as possible at all times as you push forward.
[Harriet Wright] Love that, yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] And it could be all kinds of big and little things.

[Harriet Wright] Do you feel like that was a sentiment that was shared when you were at Eulogy's for Place?

[Jim Nicholls] Think they were all first person narratives would be the most common I once read a Interiors magazine it was it's called it Nest. Nest but and it was somebody's little darling project some you know I don't call them trust fund thing and it it came out monthly and every issue was like a graphic design exercise and they'd be sometimes packaged in different things but one of the one of the issues That took me, every single article began with I. Like I was doing this or I remember that or I saw this or whatever. And when you read it, it was sort of cohesively, I, you know, it was a very subtle thing and there were different points of view and everything, but it just all began as a first person narrative. And that would be what I would say about this, that the differences were from maybe from where the experience was a really good one about hanging out at a corner, like a 7-Eleven. And there was there was a sort of thing that was next to where it must have been Georgetown. And people who would quit smoking would go there to bomb a smoke from somebody that was outside having a smoke kind of thing. And It was almost like people sort of bought packs of smokes for the, for the people.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] Like you, you didn't, you weren't going to own a pack of smokes, but you bought one and it became passed around or something like that. So it's sort of about this bond of not smoking, but sneaking a smoke.

[Harriet Wright] Right. Jim NichollsUm, and then I would have to actually, and that one I really kind of remember because it was so, sort of tangible, this kind of exchange. Yeah, you can sort of visualize the lighting for it and everything. But I think the thing that struck me was everybody giving a first person narrative about something that had personally moved them. And then the triggering aspect of it Either you, you were kind of listening to, to get triggered yourself into something that in that story they were telling that related to you, or afterward I triggered all these people. It was quite neat.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. There is something that is interesting, I think, in that about the like bumming of smoke, but as a community act.

[Jim Nicholls] Yes.

[Harriet Wright] And like, the nap chair as a community act. And even like, you know, in when I think of traditional funeral services, like for a person, there is, it's an I, it's like this person was, did all these things and they were important to me because, and I experienced this with them. And then the, the people listening are then reminded of their own memories with the newly deceased. And I, I find that oddly like comforting, that that is still true with buildings. I don't know why or if that resonates with you at all, but there is something nice about that.

[Jim Nicholls] Right. I think that you could, I think there's a chapter in your book called The Accidental Memo, where it's the thing that is, you design somebody's gravestone, or you notice their, you know, this famous, John Lennon's blood spatter glasses, you know. You couldn't make anything more powerful than than that. And that's and there's many other more sort of less dramatic examples of like the chair up front where the idea of sharing because he actually indigenous do it tobacco ceremonies. That's really interesting. If you told that story about bumming a smoke to Indigenous elders, they might reply with a tobacco smoke story of their own. Yeah. As one of the sort of sacred, like a sage thing. Yeah. As to Indigenous, for example, we were trying to do some housing for Indigenous students. and I asked an indigenous person, what would be a sacred place? What would be that? And maybe picking blueberries with my grandmother. So of course. how do I do that? Well, okay, you know, I can plant a blueberry bush there. But that's not really what it's about. I I guess that I'm finding the idea that the most powerful memorial might be an accident.[Harriet Wright Yeah. yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] You know, it goes back to that idea of the ghost side. Nobody designed that. Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] It gives me like a whole new thing to look, because right now I'm looking at formalized memorials, but I have a feeling there are probably many an accidental building memorial in this city.

[Jim Nicholls] Well, and what's, you know, what's one of the most formalized memorials? in the United States, not for building, but let's say the Vietnam War.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] And it's super interesting to me because, you know, as a piece of public art, there's the George Washington Monument, which is like, it's just this big white thing sticking in the sky. And then there's this scar that's cut into the ground and all the names of it and everything, what makes it the real, it's the things people leave behind. Like there's always something left behind under that row of names that is a gesture. There is a warehouse, I know, in Washington, DC of all of these things that have been left behind. So there needs to, and I'm sure they've got some kind of display of that. But there's kind of a memorial in the making for the memorial artifacts from the Vietnam Memorial. Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] Well, it's back to the seven generations. It's the, you know, the three generations past is still, you know, it's still alive in that model in that space. Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] People always talk about seeing their reflection. They find the name and they hit the name and then they see their face in there, which is like unbelievable. Like, if that's so poetically brilliant that it has to be accidental. You know, Spark is a slam around. Oh, it's polishing. That would show that up. But then the reflection part, would you really think about that in advance? You could have. It was always there. But the idea that you would have to hunt for a name because of the way they were saying, no. And then when he found it, you would be reflected in a vat. That's pretty good.

[Harriet Wright] And it's a, you know, shows that it's a space that people are coming to to search for meaning and then they find it. And I think that is like that, the design of that area, that space. It is what allowed them to do so anyways.

[Jim Nicholls] And it is added. So maybe as the world gets faster and faster and more and more full stuff, we really are using these as the other moments that allow us to collect ourselves and pause. And then enter back into the stream.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] Maybe they're the eddies in the flow.

[Harriet Wright] Do you mean like the remembering or the memorialization of the eddies in the flow?

[Jim Nicholls] Yeah, like if you think of, if you're planning a thing in the city, I think of the city as a flow. Maybe we need these pockets of eddy.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] That have enough presence on their own that we don't have to fill it with something.

[Harriet Wright] Accidental.

[Jim Nicholls] And it's personal. **[Harriet Wright]** Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] Usually it's probably something that's universal that causes a personal reaction, which by itself is an interesting thing. You get to the most intensely personal through the most broadly universal. I think that's probably the only way to do it and convey it to somebody else.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] Because otherwise it's just my intensely personal vision of what that should be. And then you look at it and go.

[Harriet Wright] I don't think this at all. Yeah. This is not my memorialization.

[Jim Nicholls] Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] This is not how I saw change. I saw my grief. Yeah. Yeah. And then I feel like that's even a question of like, like getting away from the built environment. It's like fostered by the built environment, but it's not. It's not prescribed. It's just, it's very, and it's like how, how do you, it's, how do you, by designing buildings, create the temporal space to have eddies for this?

[Jim Nicholls] Yeah. You just have to hope.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] No, well, that's true. I don't know because the old, the old guys used to think it was deterministic. That you could, you could, Pavlov's dog or something, you could ring the bell and they'd salivate, or you could, make a thing and they would hush. They have a map, like there's a Yahanni Palace now, is the name, Swedish architecture theory and architect, really good, wrote a book called The Thinking Hand, some other stuff. And he will talk about like the hush that falls on you when you go into a Gothic cathedral. For that space. And it is, it uplifts the soul. It is a sacred space and you sort of involuntarily react to it. You have a body reaction. And they can, they have done the experiments. They've, I guess it's what, EKG or some kind of brainwave mapping. They can get physical mapping of your body's reaction to going like endorphins released or whatever. Yeah. The registerable empirical, you know, reaction your body has to spaces that either by accident or purpose were set up to be sacred. Yeah. Or we sort of

were, gee, you know, I feel this way. Maybe the next thing I'll build will be like even bigger. You know, I don't know, but how we got there, there's a physical reaction there that's certain. a universal thing.

[Harriet Wright] That feels to me, and please correct me if even a different understanding, it's almost in some ways like the opposite of a it's that feels so intentionally personal, like that hush that you feel like I can close my eyes and picture that feeling of like walking into a sacred space and feeling that and that feels so like And I'm not, I'm like not saying this as a religious person. It's like that's like a moment between you and the holy or like whatever is present in that space. But that I think it's something like that. But it's like you with your community or with these people or with these people that have also experienced this. And those feel very separate to me in some ways.

[Jim Nicholls] Yeah, no, that's an interesting point too. I'm not a sports fan in any way, shape, or form, but I know that people really are into that crowd of sports.

[Harriet Wright] I think that's actually, those feel like perfect examples, actually. And I, as I'm a sports person like that, that is that feeling is, is that, yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] That's yeah. Oh. it is this intensely personal reaction. But in this sort of very public place. Well, I think there's a need for people. I don't think there's a more of a need for memorialization, even though there's a greater rate of change and more drastic or transformational change. But I do think that there's a continued need to nurture empathy. I disagree with Elon Musk. [Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] I think that's essentially what makes us humans are not realists. Or whatever.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] And I think that for me, It was about putting stuff out there for people to engage with as a kind of idea about vegetability, but also just no invitations. Yeah. you know, there's there's a thing in well, there's a couple of things in Japanese gardens which are super, super, super place based things. and all really codified and ritualized and set up as places for you to experience the broad world when you can't enclose. And there's one thing called sometimes, I think it's called a deer scare. What happens is there'll be a little stream and there's a thing, a bamboo on a pivot, and it'll be up and it'll fill with water and then fall. and dump the water and then it'll come back and when it comes back it hits a rock and it comes up back up and that and that's to just put you in the moment yeah the the the thing that I just that we have everybody it's kind of changed now but a few years back you'd be at a QFC or something just like in your zone and drifting along doing your thing and the cashier of paper or plastic. And suddenly you were like, oh, wait a minute. Right. I'm here. I have to decide. It was a thing that put you in your place. Suddenly you were focused on that spot and you responded in some way. And I'm interested in things like there's this Zen poem that's sort of about enlightenment or something. It's a haiku and

it's something about, you know, what is enlightenment? It's the sound of a frog jumping in the pond. And it never really made any sense to me, really. But I was in my space backyard, I guess, and I have a plum tree there. I was sitting on the chair. It was a nice warm, and I was sort of slowed down for a minute. And I was just maybe just kind of soaking in the sun. And an overripe plum fell from this tree and went like the best The noise.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] It just, you know, like it just was so good. And I was just, oh, I get that naturally.

[Wow.Jim Nicholls] That's true. That's a real life.

[Harriet Wright] No, I feel like whenever, when you have a plum or when you see the plums, do you think of that moment?

[Jim Nicholls] I've recalled it and I've told it, it's never been as like, oh. Like, it was a revelation. Yeah. You know, it was like, I connected into the big, the big wires. Yeah. Briefly there. And, yeah. Yeah, I can't, you know, I think the thing, and again, this is something I said before, but I think at that moment, I was in the right place at the right time. you know that you sort of know that there's these moments where you were just in the right place at the right time, and you found that you you got that Valentine, or whatever it was that happened. You know you heard that song. and I kind of I want to give thanks whenever I you know, I think you were in the right place at the right time. Gee, that was great, because it's sort of like You know, your life strays and wanders and changes and stuff. But there, that was an accident. You were there.

[Harriet Wright] Yes.

[Jim Nicholls] And you'll, you'll drift around. Oh, there's another one. Yes. You know, you're there. And that's, I think you just have to, I don't think, know that you can find those actually.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] But I think that you can be aware when you're there.

[Harriet Wright] Open to it.

[Jim Nicholls] Open to, yeah, that's probably what you're saying. And then I guess, you know, being grateful, you know, or at least acknowledge it.**[Harriet Wright]** Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] And know that like, I find it reassuring to know that in my life of sort of trial and error and false starts and everything else, that I know I was in the right place and at the right time a couple of times.

[Harriet Wright] That is very reassuring.

[Jim Nicholls] It might not have been like at that moment that I graduated with my degree, which I thought was what it was. No, it's when you're sitting on that bench.

[Harriet Wright] You just have to let life live sometimes.

[Jim Nicholls] Right. You know, it's not going to get you your academic paper, but I kind of think that's sort of the truth somehow is very close to that. The idea of designing memorials is false.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] It's jousting at windmills, but a worthwhile pursuit. Because that's what we do. Just hang out windows is that's what I do. Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] I agree with that, I think, in many ways. And I think the worst out, the worst, though the other side of that, which is what's happening now, is the like lack of acknowledgement for these places and things. Not even lack, but like the lack of acknowledgment that people have loved these places and these communities.

[Jim Nicholls] Yes, that these places were loved by people, and that people are still here. **[Harriet Wright]** And these people are still here.

[Jim Nicholls] Or they were here and they still deserve our respect, or they're still to come.

[Harriet Wright] Exactly.

[Jim Nicholls] And they deserve our contribution.

[Harriet Wright] And I'm hoping this is one of the ways we can think about that. even though in some ways it is.

[Jim Nicholls] I would, I would, I guess the, you know, I could talk forever.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] Maybe get the idea, but I think the thing that I would, my going away from it, would be to try and track down some indigenous elders through the bird or the intellectual parts and talk to them about the idea of a seventh generation memorial.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] And they said, well, that's not even the same. We would never put those two things together. Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] Because it's not, because it wouldn't be a memorial in that place. Jim Nicholls Or just like, oh, I can see how that idea might come to you. Here's how I, you know, I, because that's what you want to try and do, I think.

[Harriet Wright] Yes.

[Jim Nicholls] Is a seventh generation memorial. And I would be very interested to know whether that is something that, well, philosophically is possible. Or if they have a kind of anything like that. Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] We are coming up on our hours. I wanted to leave it open. If yeah, is there anything else you wanted to talk about, or is that it's a pretty good one to leave it on?

[Jim Nicholls] It was an interesting experience for me to write that thing, and part of that was to use my memory to create vivid as I could get imagery. I could really well. and then to try and communicate that image, that mental image. strongly. And I think I got there a couple of times and then I got sort of in love with writing words down there.

[Harriet Wright] Only an academic.

[Jim Nicholls] I really want, I really want to write a particular way that isn't epidemic, but I want it to be respected by academics. I liked Kurt Vonnegut's writing and I still do for, it's sort of populist. It's like a newspaper. If you read a newspaper, you can read Vonnegut. Anyway, that's it.

[Harriet Wright] No, I really liked your piece and I think I feel really lucky that I got to read it before we talked.

[Jim Nicholls] Well, it was often about the coincidence because I'd lost track of that I didn't have a copy of it. **[Harriet Wright]** Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] And then it, but it turns out I posted it to this Facebook post to me. And so in my, like, recall your memories, Facebook feature popped up with that. It's perfect. Just when we talk about, that's coincidence. Of course, it's probably not. It's probably my algorithm.

[Harriet Wright] No.

[Jim Nicholls] Our text messages are my e-mail.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. Yeah, well, then it's like, you know, manufactured moments of being at the right place, the right time.

[Jim Nicholls] You're getting all my saying, you know, I'm not sure I believe in God, but I do believe in coincidences.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] And so now maybe I'm not sure I believe in coincidences, but I do believe in the algorithm.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah, no, I am. It is designed to make you think that. So yeah, yeah.

[Jim Nicholls] Anyway.

[Harriet Wright] Well, thank you so much. I really, I would love to chat again once I get a little farther.

[Jim Nicholls] Yeah, I'd like to know more about how this is going. Who are you working with?
[Harriet Wright] I'm Manish is my chair, and then Dan Abramson is on my committee.

[Jim Nicholls] I would enjoy a conversation.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah, yeah.

Section 8.02 Lucile House — Interview Transcript

[Amber] Yeah, we had some great events there, and just looking through these and reminiscing has been really fun.

[Harriet Wright] Oh, good. Well, yeah, I can start by just telling you a little bit about what I'm studying. Okay. If that would be a great place. Yeah, please. Yeah. So, like I mentioned, my name is [Harriet]. I am a master's student at the University of Washington, and my thesis is really looking at the different ways that community shows up to grieve and mourn buildings that are being demolished in the city. And I specialize in historic preservation, and I mostly focus on older historic buildings that are not formally formalized historic, so kind of the more everyday buildings that have been around that meet a lot to people, but there's no, like, record or experience of, like, a formal designation process for them. And so part of the, like, inspiration came from the big goodbye at the Lucile House, which I didn't go to, but I have, like, heard a lot about. And it was, like, presented to me kind of as this, like, idea, like, no one really knew how it was going to go, and it was just wildly successful, and it was really helpful for people to be able to come into this space and to say goodbye. And so the whole theme is basically a pitch that we're failing communities by not providing structural support or structural funding to let people say goodbye to the buildings as we demolish them. And it's this response that, like, demolishing is needed in this housing, but there's good reasons to demolish, and there's also a loss when that happens. And so thinking about even having a temporary acknowledgement of that loss is important, and people like yourselves are doing it without support.

[Amber] That is exactly our philosophy when we were doing Living Goodbye, is that, like, people just don't get a chance when, you know, you're driving, you drive by these trees every day, and then all of a sudden they're just gone. Yeah. And, you know, that's a big kick to people,

especially when, you know, like, industrial Georgetown, it's dirty and gritty, and it's, like, there's shit everywhere, and then, oh, look at these beautiful cherry trees. That's, like, a one little, like, flicker of something else, and then just have it gone one day. It's painful. It is. Yeah. You know, it's hard. Our conversation and kind of, like, what we worked on with that was my experience with my mother's death versus my sister's death. And, like, they took my mother away when her body was still warm. And we were all just, like, the next time we saw her was at the funeral home, and it was a person that I didn't recognize. Whereas with my sister, they didn't pick her up. She died on a Friday, and they came and got her on Monday. Mm-hmm. So we did all of her after-death care. Like, we physically did it.

[Raymond] Mm-hmm. Washed her and dressed her.

[Amber] Dressed her, dressed her, put on her makeup. I'm sorry, I'm getting a little emotional.

[Speaker 4] That's right. That's so cool.

[Amber] To go through that process and let everyone in the family, she had six kids and, like, foster kids and a huge family, and let everyone come in at their own time to remember her and say goodbye to the person that they remembered seeing. Mm-hmm. And not just, like, this random, cold-dead person at the funeral home.

[Speaker 4] On a pedestal.

[Amber] Yeah. And, like, not in her own surroundings. And just, like...

[Raymond] Or her own clothes.

[Amber] Her own clothes. And her, like, I do makeup. Like, fuck. That's crazy. Yeah. Who does that? But the experience of those two things was so drastically different. And using that narrative when I was talking to Watershed and Kath Bruner, if you get a chance to talk to her, she's awesome. Yeah. And, you know, that really stuck with her, too. And talking about all these trees and all this, like, this just little swath of nature amidst all this gritty dirtiness. And to just know it's going away is so rough. Mm-hmm. And, I mean, obviously, people are curious. They want to know what's going on. So they want to come and check it out. But, like, the opportunity to talk about death and dying and letting go in the space was really good for me just, like, personally, as far as, like, a human journey. But I kind of like to think that I was able to bring that to people in the community who may not even know that they needed that. Mm-hmm. I guess.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. Yeah. I love the ethos that people haven't had the chance to say goodbye to buildings.

[Amber] Yeah. Sure. And, you know, that's what's happening in Seattle. It's happening everywhere. It's like all of these old, you know, all these old neighborhoods are just getting mowed down for whatever. Whatever. Right. Right.

[Raymond] Yeah. Yeah. In the beginning, it was kind of just done as, like, a place activation. Like, they have this thing. And we're artists that have done events, all sorts of weird situations. Mm-hmm. And this stuff was going on personally. And it ended up being a nice narrative. But the physical space being between potentially development and this old generation. It's a 120-year-old house. People that used to live there. And all the issues that go into old houses. But because it was kind of in this middle place, it's like a third place. And that's what we put it on the shoreline of the development. Is it's a place that's between these two very different kind of things. Development often has all these big, larger system considerations. And, like, death is a lot of this loss. And loss is something that's already happened. You know, so there's these two, like, future and past, like, mixing in the same place. But when it was kind of presented to people that would come in as being this middle place, people responded a little bit differently than they would if we just said, Hey, this is a cool free room. Let's hang out here. But, hey, this is a cool free room. It's going to be destroyed. And that changed people's perception. They could do something that they weren't proud of, that they just felt. And it was on the wall. And we'd have people that would come and be like, I was never allowed to draw on the wall. And we would let people draw on the wall. We had markers everywhere. Art supplies. Art supplies. Any extra art supplies we brought there. And encouraged people to draw and paint. So we had tunnels and places. And then once a room got filled up, we might turn it into something else. And then have another place. But how people looked at what they do in that middle space. Between something that's already happened and something that is going to happen. It's like they had a chance to say goodbye to a lot of things that they were waiting for. So we had like a wall called the Wall of Souls. And it was all of the people that had died recently. Or pets that had died recently. Or people who had memories.

[Amber] Or maybe not so recently. It was just talking to people about their experience with dying and death and loss and grief. And it was kind of interesting. You know, like a safe space for grief. But allowing people to have those conversations. Kind of like doing art without the fear of anything. Because it's getting torn down. They could have those conversations without the fear of, like, you know, anything. Because it's the space for it. And it really did have kind of, you know, like the whole... The living room was done as like a stage. And then the dining room area was the Wall of Souls. And it was just kind of cool being in there. Because, like, you know, people would write names, rip, and then numbers. Or some people would write like a little narrative and stuff. And my goal was to go through. I had a bunch of photos and eventually make like a book. Or an artifact. Like a coffee table summary. With those kinds of things.

[Harriet Wright] Oh, that would be amazing.

[Amber] Yeah, it was just... Yeah. One of the girls that came... There was a band that came to play. And one of the girls that came to sing had mentioned she had just... The day before, been in a karaoke competition with the karaoke DJ. And his name was Barbando. And she said he just belted out his song in the most amazing way that they'd ever heard it. And he just dropped dead on stage.

[Raymond] Aneurysm.

[Amber] Aneurysm. Right then and there. And she was so shook by it. But just giving her the opportunity to talk about it and write his name on the wall was like so beautiful.

[Raymond] And that sudden jerk, that's a lot of... Especially like abandonment or grief is that sudden sharp jerk. I mean, that's what... I think that's the technical term of jerk where it goes like... Whip crack. Whip crack. Is emotionally difficult. And a place like a location has like its own rhythm. It had its own kind of narrative arc. And it got towards the end. I mean, all the people that came in there and we toured them around were very appreciative of the house. The house became its own character. And people would say, thank you house.

[Amber] Yeah, thank you house is written down the door and everything.

[Raymond] It's like the last time this house is going to be filled with the warmth of human beings buzzing around and living in it. And it was nice to have that kind of warmth in that place. And a lot of people have those homes that they grew up in that they can't go back to. So this is another way to say goodbye to a memory or that house that you can't go back to. You can never go home. Some people are like, man, I wish I had a house. And this place had like that nice neutral ground where we weren't like the boss. I mean, we had the keys. We let people in. But the place was not in like a condition to be livable. And this is one of the things that I've learned about old legacy buildings is they can't be made out of toxic materials. If they're made out of things like asbestos and lead paint and all these types of things, those are all stumbling blocks for being like traditional or legacy houses. It might not be like the end all be all, but it's definitely to be considered if you want to make new buildings. So anyway, it kind of started out as like we did a birthday party. We did this event called Skin the Beast. And it was to rip the carpet out of the house. There's a bunch of places. The carpet is just, it was stinky. It was all gross. And we just ripped it out.

[Amber] Skin the Beast. Skin the Beast. Based off Jason the Argonauts.

[Raymond] Like the golden fleece. So we put it all in the back shed. But underneath the skin was old growth 2x4s. Like full on like real 2x4s. And the beautiful wood. And so having the floorboards be like more of that natural kind of oak. Totally changes the vibe from it being like in anything, anywhere house. To having this like, oh the wood's right there. The roots are right there.

[Harriet Wright] And this is like Pacific Northwest. Yeah. Yeah. Washington State. Our wood. Our house.

[Raymond] So of course all the things. How do we reclaim this?

[Amber] Yeah, this is a beautiful place. And they're long. They're like 16, 24 feet long through the whole length of the house. I think this was one of the three houses that they were going to try

and salvage from because it was, I mean we had done through and we'd taken the carpet out and like did what we could to make it, you know, remove it. It was beautiful. This is the stage that we built for them. Yep.

[Raymond] And the people that, the watershed group, they were very supportive. And like they helped us make sure that the fuse box works. We had an update on the fuse box. It was, there was no way you could plug in anything.

[Amber] It was held together with a roach clip. Two wires were held together.

[Raymond] So it was not going to be. But they fixed it all. They updated it. They got a new one with all the new things. But it had like the old glass fuses. It had the old like pipe and tube wiring. It was all exposed. It had this beautiful, what's called a Bertha style furnace in the basement, which looks like a giant octopus. So it had this own, its own like, like it's holding up the house in the basement. And it still worked. It was a waste oil furnace. So we learned about, we learned about all these things, mostly because we got to like tour people through the house and say, hey, this is what's going on. But the basement had its own character things. Some artists came over and they would do art and they, we didn't charge anybody. We didn't pay anybody. They didn't ask for payment. It was all volunteer.

[Amber] Yeah, there was no money exchange for anything in the house.

[Raymond] Yeah, it was all meant to pay.

[Amber] None of the events we did had any money exchange. Except for us paying musicians.

[Raymond] And the food itself.

[Amber] That's the furnace in the basement. Wow. The food itself. Amazing.

[Raymond] Beautiful thing.

[Harriet Wright] It is like an octopus holding out of the house.

[Amber] It's huge.

[Raymond] So it became like its own creature. And going down in the basement was its own kind of thing.

[Amber] These stairs would go upstairs and they had like the big heavy trap door. The big boy trap door. It was very, very cool. Just before, shortly after we got the place, we went through and like cleaned up the smash upstairs, the basement was full of shit. So we had a company come in and just move everything out.

[Raymond] And hopefully shortly after it flayed.

[Amber] Shortly after the sewer backed up and, oh my God.

[Raymond] Yeah, there's a door that's still in the shed.

[Amber] It would have been a very different story, I think, if that we would have been in that toxic environment.

[Speaker 4] I mean, I have so many questions for you guys.

[Harriet Wright] I think, really, I guess to go back to start, I would love to hear from both of you about, I mean, I know you mentioned that you had this private grief process of your own family. And like when you realized that this could be like a public grief process or like a grief process for like more than just you as the stewards or more than just Watershed as the people that are assisting with it. How did that transition happen?

[Raymond] Some of it comes from just giving tours. Like you talk about it and that conversation grows with each person you talk to because they have their own opinions, they have their own history, they tell you something new about the environment or the people, like who used to live there or anything like that. You learn all sorts of stuff. But it comes from just...

[Amber] It's a really privileged position to be able to have the time to do that.

[Raymond] But it's emergent from those kind of conversations. And we originally didn't do public events. It's all just within Watershed by artists that were around because it's not necessarily built for the public. The Big Goodbye was the public event. Oh yeah. I gave away all the shirts to Cal.

[Amber] I can't do it.

[Harriet Wright] No, no. That's perfect.

[Raymond] And so the Watershed group used the other buildings and they opened those up and used them for different types of things during the Big Goodbye. But the main Lucile house was in... I think we did it for a year and a half of people that would come to these events. They would come to the parties or be part of a band that would have band practice. And they'd be like, hey, I'm really interested. And then they would... If they were serious, they'd send us an email and maybe we would meet up and talk about it and walk around in the space. And they're like, I would really like to have my band come and practice here. This is awesome. Or I want to do a photo shoot or something like that. Or film a video. Or film a video. We've had a couple videos filmed there. And it's awesome. Like going through that, you can tell who really wants to do it and who's just maybe says it at the moment because they're inspired versus being able to do it. And that's just, I would say, from our experiences with artists, knowing who's genuinely interested in kind of nurturing what is actually going to happen. That just takes, I don't know, like nurture what grows. So what is growing, you can see that people are responsive.

[Amber] What do you call it? Emergent? Emergent. It was very... When we first started, we had this image of doing some kind of a...

[Raymond] You called it Casa Malvada.

[Amber] And we were going to do like, you know, this like...

[Raymond] Borderline creepy house.

[Amber] Yeah, like kind of a creepy...

[Raymond] And it had a lot of creepy vibes when it first showed up. It was lots of...

[Amber] Capital 2 kind of vibe. But, you know, more time we spent in the house, it wasn't that. It's not a... Way more wholesome. It's way more wholesome. This was a home where families lived and kids grew up and, you know, people canned in the kitchen. Like, just the way that the pantry was so beautifully laid out, it was such, like, you know... Like, would you say wholesome? Wholesome, yeah. This space was so wholesome. It had a life. It had a life. Yeah.

[Raymond] And so with the trees and the birds and the things of that, we got to see all the birds. And that was really nice. So part of, like, being involved on both the death and development is that middle place doesn't... Like, when you're in... Especially when you're in that place, you're not worried about development. Like, that's the far future. Like, you can't control that. Yeah. We're not part of that. We're not part of that conversation. We're just there. It's like, we have this place that's open without, like, the typical, I guess, capitalist or opportunistic mindset that everything has to be monetized. It doesn't matter. We did it because we enjoyed being there. We bought the food and did the things and that kind of stuff because we liked the people. We liked having that spot. It was weird. It was like having two houses, two homes. Yeah.

[Amber] Not just houses. We had one house. Like, you know, my garden and stuff I had to take care of and be between two lovers kind of thing. It was a very interesting concept.

[Harriet Wright] I feel like there's also this, and what's coming to mind is, like, the idea of care and how, like, even in life, like, so many people are sandwiched between, like, care, like, their young and their parents and, like, that role of being, like, torn to being caregivers to two different people and spaces. Like, I feel like that is a role that you guys found in this built environment in some ways.

[Amber] Yeah, I would totally agree with that. For sure.

[Raymond] And it reflected in lots of people. Lots of people had all sorts of stories. They had houses that they were thinking about or that this was just like a house I grew up in.

[Amber] Well, I lost my family house, too, kind of thing. Yeah.

[Raymond] But we had a friend of ours, his name was Brian, and he runs a music studio here. And he was the other, he was, like, the third person that was involved in a lot of making the Lucile House happen. And he was, he's also connected to multiple marching bands. So we had, like, the Goblin Dance Party, which we had, like, two and a half, two and a half marching bands. Because we had that, and a big event with, you know, hot dogs and hamburgers and stuff like that. But having a marching band outside in the, in the yard, completely different vibe than the inside of the house. So, like, the whole space itself, because of people that were involved in it, they brought their own kind of warmth. And, like, Brian, he's a super warm, loving person, and he's a big, like, cornerstone with music and bands and stuff like that. Because he's just like, hey, let's do something cool, let's have a cool music event. And with marching bands, you can't really pay marching bands, because they're super expensive. Because there's so many of them. Because there's so many of them, there's 15 of them. So a lot of it is you have to be hospitable to them. They have to want to do it. You have to feed them. Yeah, we fed them. Yeah.

[Amber] And people, you know, that was so awesome. People came in off the street, they, like, heard it from blocks away and followed the music. And we just ended up having random people from Georgetown coming to the Goblin Dance Party. Yeah. And the beautiful thing about it is it's not like it was super advertised. Right. So you only know about it if you're there in the moment. Or, like, one of the bands, like, one of the things where the location was Ask a Puck. So it's basically just word of mouth. Right. Yeah. And that's how most of them were. And they were really incredible. To have people just, like, one of the neighbors, a couple of houses down, came over for that one, too. And it was not his, it was completely not his scene. But he ended up hanging out, having a great time, went back home and got his camera and did a bunch of pictures.

[Raymond] And kids, the other one is kids. We've had kids come over and do painting on their walls or do spray paint or do things they wouldn't normally be able to do without, like, the consequence. Like, so what if they spray paint over something? Like, no big deal. We had an after-school group. They just needed a place to hang out. So their chaperone came over with them. And we would just open the place up and then we'd come back when they were done. Like, we were pretty much just, like, a lot of just the lock and key to make sure everything was cool.

[Amber] She was so excited. Oh, that's great. Yeah, she was so excited to be able to spray paint.

[Raymond] On the wall.

[Amber] On the wall. Oh, this is the best ever. Girl, hopefully this is just the first of many sprays. They're saying, you know, experiences for you. Yeah, that's one of my favorite pictures. And then, yeah, it was really fun.

[Raymond] And everybody was really respectful of the place. When we gave them a tour, we'd be like, please be careful. Like, this is an old house. It has poisonous bones. You don't want to necessarily disturb it. So just because it's being destroyed doesn't mean you should destroy it.

[Amber] Yeah, they wouldn't let us kick any walls in because we couldn't verify. They were at low bearing. Yeah. We don't know.

[Raymond] And we didn't want to get into that. We're artists. We're not necessarily deconstruction people. And then the other thing is that there's a mystery.

[Amber] That little triangle window.

[Raymond] This triangle window is only viewable from the outside. There's no door. There's no room. It's empty behind it because you can... Further back, there's a break in it. And you can put your cell phone up there and kind of like...

[Amber] Like, in the attic, you can kind of look the length of the building from the back of it. But yeah, we never did look out that window. We could never find access to it.

[Raymond] You can only look in that window.

[Amber] So it's kind of cool. I had kind of hoped that before they forwarded it up, we could keep the wall down and kind of like explore. But it's fine. It didn't work out that way.

[Raymond] Yeah. After the big goodbye, it got broken into a couple of times.

[Amber] Oh, of course. That declaration of it being closed and nobody living there. All of the houses have been broken into. There's three houses in a row in the vacuum shop. The two houses next to us were both broken into. Lucile was broken into, but they didn't do any damage.

[Raymond] They just took all the art supplies.

[Amber] They took all the art supplies, but they didn't take the copper. They didn't do any... They weren't malicious like they were in the other two houses.

[Raymond] There's a bunch of things that say, I'm sorry. Yeah, they're like, I'm sorry on the wall and everything.

[Amber] It's really funny. You know, it's like, the space was... When you go into the dining room and you see the wall of souls and all of these R.I.P. R.I.P. mom, you know, all of these things, excuse me. It really sets the tone. I think they were freaked out.

[Speaker 4] They freaked out and didn't want to like, you know.

[Harriet Wright] One of the questions I have for you all really is about like the idea of creating your own sacred, like with this building. And I was just, I was wondering if that was like a word that came up or something that you guys were thinking about.

[Amber] Not initially. Yeah. It's another one of those emergent things as we were in the space and as we were like letting whatever we were doing unfold. Like I said, we kind of had an idea about the Casa Mabada, but like being in the space, it really just didn't... It changed. It didn't feel that way.

[Raymond] I think the act of saying goodbye and that kind of farewell is that some of what's important to you or sacred is kind of you let it sit outside of you. You let it sit in a place that is going away. So you kind of get a little bit of removal from it and that removal, that act of having it come outside of you. Yeah, I definitely think it reminds me of like a river. Yeah. And that river, or that's why the shoreline works, is that there's a lot of movement. And there's a lot of people going through their heart or their brain or their memories. And these things are coming up because they're in a place that is maybe similar. Also, there was a ghost there. And I mean a ghost as we brought him. There's this guy named Paul Stedman. Yeah. And he was an artist that was very plurific, that fell in love with a girl that was 30 years younger than him. And she didn't like him, but they were friends for his life. And when he died, he left all of his artwork to her. And she had given it. Crates and crates.

[Amber] Crates of artwork.

[Raymond] And had given all of it away and tried to sell some and gave some to the thrift store and did this. And she had like three crates left and gave it to us and said, do whatever you want with it. So we brought a bunch of it. We brought almost all of it. There's some of it. There's some of it.

[Amber] That's just like a tiny bit of it.

[Raymond] This is one corner up in the upstairs room. There's probably like 100 pieces total in the house. Maybe a little bit. At least. But we invited people, if they saw a piece of artwork, to take it. And if not, that it would travel with the house. As a ghost that's going in. It has plenty of time to at least put around and is never going to be leaving.

[Amber] And some people really did. There were images that really spoke to people. And I'm like, oh, let's take it off the wall for you right now. Yeah.

[Raymond] So people could take a piece of it with them. And this was a person that had done his big bloom of art and his being laid to rest. Like literally being laid to rest with a bunch of other artistic stuff that's going into the grave eventually. But that was awesome. That, I would say, people definitely respected that. And the lady, we had her come back. Her name is Sarah. She was a palm reader. And so we had her upstairs. And she read palms during one of the events.

Anyway. And that was really cool. People liked that. They get some insight or some conversation. And have her connection.

[Amber] Before people would even go up to the room to get their palms read, we kind of gave the story about, you know, the art and the muse. The muse of the art. The muse is reading palms of the air. Yeah.

[Raymond] That was cool. That was a good time. Yeah. I'm trying to think of other things. I had this. I'm trying to, like, going through all of the memories all at once.

[Harriet Wright] I know there's so much.

[Raymond] But yeah, when we first walked in, we would go and try to tour. What would we see in this house? What is this house? What could we do with it? You know, kind of the imagination type of game. And some people were like, why don't we put, like, a big hole through it and have it be, like, this big art type of thing.

[Amber] And that was an architect. It was really funny. Where the ideas come from different types of artists.

[Raymond] Different types of artists. We could just put a big tube right through this hole.

[Amber] Yeah. Yes. We totally could. Because, like, you know, we were inspired by Meow Wolf. Right? Yeah. And thinking, like, wow, we could just totally make this whole place an installation. Yeah. And then when I got to thinking about it, it was just the two of us. It's like, well. We're not going to be doing giant holes through it. Let's see what the community can support. Yeah. Yeah. We didn't have anyone interested in making Meow Wolf installation. But we did have, we did hook up with Brian, who, he's got his pulse on a bunch of bands and musicians and stuff. So we always had a wonderful variety of musicians practicing, doing shows, whatever.

[Raymond] And people doing loopers and dancers. And people doing loopers and dancers. I got playing a weird harp.

[Amber] Remember that? A cora.

[Raymond] A cora. A cora. It's like an African guitar loop. Gord thing. Gord thing. Yeah. It was pretty cool.

[Amber] We had a punk band. Like a whole punk show with five different folk punk bands.

[Raymond] They put the bands on and they did all that stuff. And we provided the space and paid for a couple of the bands.

[Amber] Again, we're enough and then random people coming up off the street hearing the music and being like, what's going on here? So then we can have a chance to talk, you know, and then when we could engage with people and talk to them about what was going on, who we were, what the house was all about, and what's going to happen. And, you know, a lot of what is going to happen was we don't know. Yeah. We really saw our, we're, we're, we're just at the grave. We're not looking at the future here. So we're artists.

[Raymond] And we came to Equinox because there was lots of other artists. And like a lot of that interaction is while we're here. And we get to learn about all sorts of stuff going around in the larger neighborhood. And so it's awesome to, from that position, to see all of that. And I like working with Watershed as far as like, they have places and they are willing to do it, you know, as far as what's available. Take a gamble of like what we're going to do in the space. Like the big goodbye, we went and Kath is the art director or feature art director for the space. And she wanted us to just do the big goodbye. And we're like, we'll do the big goodbye if the watershed is there to talk about the future. Because we're not doing the future part. You guys are making the decisions. You can be there to answer for yourself. Like we're doing this thing. Anyway, and that worked out great. They did all that stuff. And they had a place and they could be there at the event and participate in a genuine like community event where it had been part of the community for, you know, some time.

[Amber] All three houses were open. And so people could go. There was like a little trail between all three houses in the backyard. And it was wonderful because, yeah, they could see what's going on in Lucile House, have a DJ in the middle house, and then go to Watershed where it's a little more, you know, it's like looking at the future kind of thing. They had their whole, everything was set up. And I mean, I think that they had some really good community engagement. Watershed did. Yeah. And that was the goal of the big goodbye for Watershed is to have the community engagement and to talk to people about what's going to happen. Yeah. When we got to be, we got to be like, yeah, we need to let these people say goodbye to these trees. Yeah.

[Raymond] Yeah, we could, we could note to, so like part of the big goodbye is like, what happens to the trees? Where are the trees going? That kind of thing. And yeah, trees are a big consideration. Like that's like, I don't know what the easy way to do it is. My preference is always, I would consider it the elving way, which is you build around trees. Right. I mean, we're human beings. We have a great imagination. We can build things in different shapes. Trees are very important, at least in my perception of community. Whenever I do an outdoor event that has like, or I have to present, I've had to do it in the past. I don't have to do it right now. But I would always say, thank the trees for fighting shade.

[Amber] Thank the city for this. Thank the local blind. Thank you for the trees for fighting shade.

[Raymond] Yeah. Yeah. Trees are super important in all of that type of thing. Because like, I'm not a fan of realist architecture. It's just straight concrete. It's not very inspiring. And I just don't like it. I like nature. So like, that's my personal preference. And I will always choose to be around places. I have like nature and water and trees and stuff like that if I can. So I'm very sad to see if the trees are going to get cut down or what happens to them. But development has its own rhythm. So maybe it never happens. Right? That's fine to me.

[Amber] The way that development happens, it's really interesting. We live in the Burien area. And seeing these like monolithic, massive eight-story buildings just pop up in the middle of the downtown corridor where everything is two stories.

[Raymond] And then be empty for 10 years.

[Amber] Yeah, and then be emptier or... Jesus.

[Raymond] Yeah, we have abandoned development in our city.

[Amber] Everyone just gets so used to it. Like, it's like it just blurs into the background because you got to get your coffee. And you don't, you know, like, yeah, you might notice it at first. But all of those little, those are like, it's like death by a thousand cuts to me. Yeah. To just see everything.

[Raymond] First of the trees are a place of concrete.

[Amber] Yeah, everything just goes away. So, yeah, but they put that new thing in there. Isn't that great? I mean, I guess, but like, it's everywhere. There's no legacy... Buildings. Buildings. There's nothing that we can like orient ourselves around as part of being a...

[Raymond] Human being.

[Amber] A member of the community that you're looking at. Yeah. You know?

[Raymond] Yeah, humans require, this is my opinion, humans require points of reference. And whether it be a zeitgeist or whether it be a cultural point, you need those points of reference to orient yourself. And if you lose your points of reference, whether they be a parent or a sister or a house, like, then you're lost. And that takes away, you're like static. It's like you have a sense of like mental fuzz, disorientation. It can be very hard, especially when you're also feeling the physical effects of grief or loss. And existentially, I consider loss to be one of those things that tells you what's real. Like, you wonder what's real. Well, when you grieve over something, it means that you probably loved it. And so while we had this house, we wanted to kind of practice some of that intentionality, which is saying thank you to the house and reflecting on those warm, wholesome moments that we have there or have had in our life. And because it's great to focus on that because there's not a lot. Like, I have found that in doing that, I was a lot more appreciative of my own home. Like, it definitely increased my appreciation from going through

that exercise of saying goodbye to a house or a place that means something to lots of people, not just from our experience.

[Harriet Wright] I would love to keep talking about the Lucile House, but I also, I just, I'd like there's something, like, I do, I would love to talk to you all about how you see the role of, like, a more, like, a framework or, like, more support for events like this. I think hearing you talk about the, like, feeling lost in this touch, loss of touchpoint, the ability to say goodbye and to mourn, like, like, a funeral for a building or, like, a big goodbye. That is, like, a temporal touchpoint that people can refer back to as, like, a time of change. I would hope so.

[Amber] Yeah. The people who came and experienced that would keep that with them. Yeah. Yeah. And know that, you know, it's happening everywhere.

[Speaker 4] Yeah.

[Raymond] It's, it's, development is one of those things, at least conceptually, that claims to care about people. Mm-hmm. But a lot of the forces that do those things are economic or capitalistic, like, they're not necessarily human considerations. Human considerations are, like, fresh water and clean air. And I think that once you are a certain shadow from skyscrapers, it becomes harder and harder. A distance from skyscraper. Urban development is always up. So you lose a lot of that other, other human things. Yeah.

[Amber] Sometimes they throw you a bone and give you an arts district or something like that.

[Raymond] Or a museum. Yeah.

[Amber] I mean, that sounds kind of cynical, but no.

[Raymond] But museums would be the next step. The next, so as a place becomes more useful in that way. The museum that is by our house.

[Amber] Yeah, the Highland Heroes Museum and Burien.

[Raymond] That is an example of that kind of space that is open to people that's more community oriented. So the director there is very much a lot of this kind of philosophy of nurture what grows rather than, like, trying to force a vision, explicit vision. But have it be a part of that inclusivity of people who have stories there or people who have done things there or artifacts that come from places that will never be seen again. So the museum consideration, I think, would be the next, like, tier of organizational structure. This structure is more opportunistic because it's in that little space that can't be, too much authority can't be put on it or it becomes on the shore. It becomes stable. Or if it's too wet or less, it goes in the water. And, like, if we weren't there, you can't just have an open place that's run by nobody. It just turns into chaos.

[Amber] Which is what happened after the big goodbye. Because of the... People knew that they were no longer being used. So that's when the break-in started happening.

[Raymond] Like, I mean, my imagination would say that if you're going to tear down a place, you have, like, an interim period that can be used or can be, like, different in terms of permits or safety. Or anything like that. Because that's the big barrier. We can't have public places and something that can't even... That has, like, a tiny little fuse box issue. Right. So we have to address those things if we want anybody going in there. Like, because I don't want to invite people to a place that's dangerous. Like, even as a... It doesn't matter how cool it is.

[Harriet Wright] The word hospice is coming to mind.

[Speaker 4] Yeah. Like, it's like a...

[Raymond] Hospitality. Yeah. Big on hospitality. You're welcoming them to a place.

[Amber] But hospice, specifically, it's like... Hospice, yeah, yeah. That's a really cool idea. I wish I would have thought of that in the moment. Hospice for a place. Because that's exactly, I feel like, what we were doing.

[Raymond] Urban hospice.

[Harriet Wright] Urban built environment hospice. Yeah. One of the things I'm struggling with in my own work as an urban planner, like, eventually in the field of urban planning and also as a preservationist, is I... So much planning and so much of preservation... Like, so much planning is long range. So you have those, like, questions about what comes next. And, like, that's, like, the development and how tall the building's going to be. And then preservation is you have this world of, like, trying to almost, like, keep things in amber of, like, what it looks like in the past. Yeah. And I think what we don't have... My personal opinion is, like, what we don't have is the transition between those two. And, like, the hospice, the, like... That I would keep... My, like, call to action is that preservation should be... A role of preservation should also be the role of a death doula for building.

[Raymond] Oh, absolutely. Yeah. Continual line through with the transition. Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] The transition, the hospice, the assisting to the other side. Yeah. And it really feels like some of the things that you guys are talking about is... And, like, the transitions, you know, for different buildings are different timescales and they mean different things to different people, but...

[Amber] Yeah. Oh, totally. I think it's...

[Harriet Wright] It just feels like that is what occurred here.

[Amber] Yeah. I would agree with that statement. Are you familiar with the Dead Baby Bike Club? No. They're just, like, a punk rock bike club and they do their... With bicycles. First of the month rides tonight, they do bike josting. And, like, they do the downhill, just, like, a surprise bike rally from somewhere to some bar or something like that. They're great.

[Raymond] Yeah. Non-mechanical bikes. It's all, like, just gear bikes. Cool. So they're...

[Amber] Double-decker bikes and all kinds of crazy stuff. They were in the vacuum shop. So we were neighbors during the time that we were at Lucile House. And it was really great. We had a nice little relationship with them. And part of their... Part of their narrative was they wanted to be there when they burnt the house down. Like, they wanted to, like... They were trying to work into, like, you know, fire department training kind of thing, opportunity. And they wanted to be part of that, like, throw a molotov in it or be part of that destruction of the place. Which I think is really cool. And I hope that we can actually do something like that when the time comes. When the time comes. Because the parking lot across the street is a perfect place to have, like, you know, music bands and a festival, basically. Yeah.

[Raymond] But the, yeah, the two organisms I would kind of think of on that way, like creatures, besides the trees, was the Dead Baby Bite Club and the chaotic nose marching band. They kind of exist in this area loosely. And this place, like, they were able to park their big bus there.

[Amber] And we let them park bus in the backyard because, you know, they need a place to park their tour bus. And it's just, it's an ugly old blue school bus. Nobody wants that in their yard. And I'm like, bring it on. This is the place for it. You know, they had access.

[Raymond] But the big thing allowing us to do that is that Watershed didn't charge us. We didn't have to pay anything. And we didn't charge anybody anything. So not having money be something that's considered was very helpful in those kind of, like, relationship building. Or, like, you're going to invest in people.

[Amber] It's not about us getting our payment or, like, getting bands to, you know, like, anything like that. Yeah. It was even part of the conversation.

[Raymond] The marching band and the bike club, well, there are, like, the things you cannot purchase. You can't replace those. You can't just suddenly make another one. Like, those happen over many years with all sorts of little relationships that blossom into this marching band that's wonderful. And those types of things were, those are, like, living things. They're alive. They're, like, living organisms. They don't fit in civilized society. And they don't have a place. There's no, like, room you can put in there.

[Amber] There's no place for them to, like, practice or beat you. Because they're just, like, a bunch of dirty punks or whatever. You know, whatever. Yeah. Whatever the normies would call them.

[Raymond] It requires a lot. It requires that transition. Yeah. Yeah. They are in that transition space. Yes. They are. Yes. They were like, we're going down, too. We're like, well, we're going to be there with you. You know, that kind of thing. And having someone else to be there with you when you're facing that grief is really helpful. Uh-huh. You have some adventuring companions.

Mm-hmm. Because life is full of all sorts of crazy shit. But it's great to face them with the people you love or the people that, you know, your adventuring group.

[Amber] Stand shoulder to shoulder. Yeah. Yeah.

[Raymond] All that stuff happens. But so those, they're still around. And they're still intact. And they found a new place nearby. The watershed did find a place for them outside of the vacuum repair shop. So they have been successfully transplanted. But there's an artist friend that is there that we, our neighbor, her name is Helena Rogers. She's an awesome artist and bandmate. But she used to own a record store that was in a similar type of third space that's between this.

[Amber] And she was always talking about developing the place.

[Raymond] She was there for 40 years. So, like, a lot of development is not certain. And that people can thrive in those spaces, it just requires, you know, risk. The terror of being able to be told that you could have to leave at any second. But that's part of what makes it awesome is that you're just, this is a great deal right now. Mm-hmm. Right, yeah. But if development doesn't happen, then the trees stay around.

[Amber] Yeah, I've been at the end of the place getting broken into like that. Yeah. Especially when you were... That was too stressful for me. So, we were like, okay, I can't, I can't live in a state of grief. Yeah. Because that's what, that's kind of like, that's the thing. That's really illuminating. Mm-hmm. Because, yeah, that's what it was.

[Raymond] It's intense to be there all the time. In that hidden space. Yeah.

[Amber] It was about the same year as my house that I grew up in. As a kid that, like, you can never go home. Yeah. But I can say goodbye in my own way in this space. So... So... Hmm. Yeah.

[Raymond] And it just worked out really good, the whole thing. Yeah.

[Speaker 4] Is there, um... Do you have plans to do this again? Or are you thinking about, um...

[Harriet Wright] Do you, actually, I guess, do you see an event like this having another role or a resurgence? Are there places that you would want to do this again? Or is this kind of like a one and done? You said your goodbyes?

[Amber] So that's a very interesting concept. Usually when we do something, we don't... Motive... Like, we're not doing it with the intent of doing it again. Mm-hmm. But if it does happen again, we work with CAF and with Watershed. It's been helpful. Specifically to help them set up the process for something like this. Mm-hmm. What does it mean from an artist's point of view? Not somebody who's motivated by profits or motivated by whatever. We are simply motivated by supporting the artist community. Mm-hmm. Like, I can't really put it any more clear for anyone than that. But it makes a big difference. But working with CAF, we were

able to, like, you know, give her the opportunity to pay musicians either with W-9 or have us pay them by cash and then they reimburse us as a whole. So all these different ways of doing an event like this, we kind of, like, help them get a framework for what it would mean.

[Speaker 4] Mm-hmm.

[Amber] So I guess, yes, I think that it certainly could be done again. But the intimacy that I had with Lucile, I'm not sure if I could replicate that in another space.

[Raymond] Part of what makes it sacred is that it's unique. It's unique enough for its time and place that attempting to redo it would often mean being blind to what is actually there. Mm-hmm. So, yeah. Pay more attention to what's actually going on and then you grow whatever's there and it emerges or people interact with it or something happens and you kind of go with it.

[Amber] Yeah, like, all of these myths that I've experienced at that time, I mean, my sister can only die so many times. You know what I mean? So, like, being in that space for me personally, in Lucile, I don't think I can replicate that intimacy. But the event, you know, maybe.

[Raymond] Yeah, she had both her sisters and her dad die within, like, a year and a half of each other. And that's, I mean, it's just, it's a rough time, especially dealing with property. Like, the thing about dying for humans is what happens to their stuff. And that's a huge secondary type of thing, whether it be a mother and all of their kids having to pick up the stuff or a house that has to be shared by siblings. There's a huge drama that unfolds in the wake of, kind of like, the turbulence of that future dying. The family movement or the family relationships or interactions. But as far as doing anything like that, yeah, we do that kind of stuff all the time.

[Amber] We're very opportunistic. If there's a crack that looks like it could be filled with something cool, we'll take it.

[Raymond] Or we're, like, we're interacting with the people. I mean, a big part of it is interacting with Brian.

[Amber] Yeah, Brian's Brad. Like, I don't know if I didn't come and be a part of this because Brian's amazing. He's just...

[Raymond] And the people we worked at with Watershed, those individuals we have great relationships with.

[Amber] I can't speak highly enough of Kath.

[Raymond] Yeah, Kath was great.

[Amber] She's wonderful.

[Raymond] She had a really good attitude and good experience. And stuff like that. She was able to handle it professionally.

[Amber] She cares about trees.

[Raymond] She cares about trees.

[Harriet Wright] Cares about the in-between. Yeah.

[Amber] Yeah. And taking pieces of the house to put in the new development. Like, for example, the Bertha. Like, that's a cool piece of equipment. And it's, like, if they're looking for art installations and want to be art-centric and stuff and having these things, having artifacts from the house in the new development, using some of the trees for things in the new development, whatever that would be.

[Raymond] And that's all, like, borderline museum work. Yeah. You can have a museum room or things with plaques and narratives and things and talk about where it came from. Because my thing has always been, like, you can't make Main Street. Main Street is one of those things that happens because of all this stuff. So, if you want to be part of Main Street, you have to show how you were part of Main Street. So, you need the history. And this might just be from doing museum stuff that you need that narrative. That narrative is so, it's more important almost than the artifact.

[Amber] And it's such a slow-moving project to do that stuff. Yeah. It takes time and it takes passion. And oftentimes, I don't think people can be paid enough to do it. Yeah.

[Raymond] So, individuals are how we generally operate, not with groups or meetings or flags or people.

[Amber] We don't do meetings. Like, Ray and I do.

[Raymond] Just one-on-one is great.

[Amber] Like, one-on-one. That's why I said, oh, we've got to go see you get some coffee. Yeah. Yeah.

[Raymond] Coffee and meetings are great.

[Amber] Like, casual and more intimate. Yeah. Because then you get, like, we have that, we have that ability to take the time and not be motivated by, like, the dollar signs. Right. Which is really nice for us, but...

[Raymond] Dollar signs are so important. You still have to be respectful of money. And you have to make sure that you, if you're using somebody else's money, like, in a granting process, that you are respectful and diligent and that kind of stuff. And I've, we both have experience

doing art commission work. We've done some, like, civil stuff. And working with the municipality is its own set of rules. Mm-hmm. So, sometimes dealing with an art group or an art organization is a lot more freeing. Mm-hmm. And just because city has to worry about city stuff. And they have their, and that's okay. Yeah. That's why they're there for it. And some of it's absurd and some of it makes sense. Yeah. And that's not for me to, I don't like to be involved in that. I'd be happy to just do the art stuff. Yeah. But, uh, city is good. But, yeah, that's, money is still something to be considerate of. It's not, it's not flippant. Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] I think also going back to the idea of, like, we used to my path wanting to use parts of the Lucile House into the new development. Yeah. Do you, do you feel like there's, like, an almost memorialization narrative role for, like, the pieces that are there? Yes. Yeah.

[Amber] Yeah. And that, that was, I think that was the point of it. Yeah. Yeah. They went into, like, on the new building, on the corner of 5th and Lucile, where Lucile House is, that's where they have the cafe plan. Then they want to call it Lucile's, which I think is really sweet. Yeah. I thought that was really sweet. Yeah.

[Raymond] I'm just trying to. I'm just trying to.

[Amber] Yeah, they were talking about, yeah, they were talking about repurposing the floor, all of those big timbers.

[Raymond] Naming. It was naming the place. I think they already have a name for it. But my thing is to have, if you were going to do a new spot, is to have a naming ceremony or something that could be either tentative or, like, part of the, I like the idea of trying out names. So, like, just like with cats or anything like that. Names stick. Naming things is not easy. You can't just do a name for something you don't even know about. So, I was like, why are we naming the building? Why don't you just name the building? Once it gets up, it'll develop its own character, the people that live there and what happens and all that stuff will have its own vibe. And then you name it.

[Amber] I don't think your armory works that way. No, no, no. I think when you're getting plans and permits, I think you actually have to have more of it. It'll just get a name later.

[Raymond] Like, somebody they'll call it, like, the big blue soul or something.

[Amber] Big, those names.

[Raymond] I feel weird. My name's stick. But, yeah, meetings. I'm not a fan of meetings. I like working with individuals. And I have found that being more loyal and being more sincere with individuals, you get way more done. Because people trust you and you trust them. When you're in a group, other people de-individuate and your responsibility is spread out. And you get those movers and shakers are trying to be considerate of other people. And then you get less moving and shaking. Anyway, but that's just personal opinion about that stuff. And it just, we flow better that way. And that's just how we work.

[Harriet Wright] Well, I imagine it was nice to have a physical location. To do not do your meetings, but to, like, talk about this. Like, you had enough space to...

[Raymond] All of it.

[Amber] We should be talking, at least. Yeah, right. We should be talking.

[Raymond] That's what we would do.

[Amber] I drove by the other day, and it's, they got, it's fence off, and it's boarded up pretty, pretty good. James says, no one's getting in there.

[Raymond] No one's done. But if we were in Lucile, we would have pens out, and I could show you stuff on the wall. Like, this came first, and that came second. And people have poetry. Some of the poetry is to the house. Like, they, people love the house. Like, the house is a character that they write love poetry to. It's amazing. And that, that was something I did not expect. I did not expect such warmth for the house by other people. I thought people would be like, oh, it was kind of a cool art thing. But it really got into the narrative, which was awesome.

[Harriet Wright] But it's, it's for the house.

[Raymond] Yeah, yeah. They're like, we're decorating the house for it in its funeral clothes.

[Amber] It's like something random on the wall.

[Raymond] And the t-shirts, yeah, the t-shirts were made at the Biggibye. But, so people got their own t-shirts made there. They made their own. That was cool.

[Harriet Wright] Do you see, because I, I know Lucile House, it's, it's boarded up. Yeah. It's, all of them are still standing. Do you see one more event, one final moment?

[Amber] Hopefully it would be the, the burning. Yeah.

[Raymond] Yeah. Like, if there was an event.

[Amber] If there was, if there was a fire training event.

[Raymond] There would probably be a, Reposado, I think was the thing.

[Amber] Yeah, they wanted a Reposado.

[Raymond] They wanted to play while it was burning.

[Amber] New Orleans funeral music. Yeah. Yeah, they were really good. Yeah, they were so good.

[Raymond] They play at Folklife and a couple of other things.

[Amber] They play a lot for the murders. Yeah. They're really good.

[Raymond] And they brought their own power. So they knew that we had power issues with the food. The food, so they brought their own power. It was awesome.

[Amber] That was, I, I do, I do wish I would have gotten a picture of that power box when we first got there.

[Raymond] Because it was, it was, it was dangerous. But sometimes people would be like, hey, can I take this thing? And it would be some object in the house. And we're like, sure. So a lot of, and this is what I've noticed in seeing the death of Amber's sisters, is that how things are given away and in what manner, just like saying goodbye, that sacredness or importance goes back. There's also another step, which is the handing off of dead things to the living. And that process can be very intentional and very impactful to the person receiving it. Because they're receiving something that they see a line of or a connection point to. And what you, you, the person giving it, you can see it as an opportunity to be generous or to be open. Because like people, this is just what I've seen. When they go through the death process, they get real greedy and real clingy about objects that they have memories for. And there's some people, multiple people can have memories with the same object. And you get conflict, especially with siblings or that kind of stuff. And to have somebody give you something freely that's dead or from a dead house or something like that, that, that, that, that has an impact on people. And that's part of that, like giving back and forth. And, uh, I, I use this analogy in tarot cards for the two of cups. And it's just two cups that pour back and forth into each other. You have a cup that's too big or too small. You lose all the water or a hole in it or something like that. Some people are really thirsty. And when your cup is overflowing, it's so much easier to just be like, here you go. Here's some, you can give it freely, I guess. And I guess I was just kind of dabbling there. No, no, I, I, I think what, like really what I'm hearing is part of this, part of this experience,

[Harriet Wright] it wasn't just the, like, you know, like you're the caretakers, the hospice caretakers of this house, but you're also like the people that are ensuring that the Lucile house is a legacy and like is remembered and is memorialized. Like you did kind of have this wealth of, of space and resource and support from watershed. Like it's definitely, and you were able to share like the Lucile house as like a physical, a physical place and as like an emotional, meaningful place. You could share both aspects of that out into the world. Like a way more of an impact than Lucile house probably ever had.

[Raymond] Just being a place.

[Amber] Just being a place. Everybody who entered Lucile house left differently. That, that was something that I can say with certainty. Yeah. Because, you know, even Erica, she's the community development person here. And she was awesome too, working with us. She was great. I love working with her. She was very ill at ease when she first showed up. But by the time we left, she was quite comfortable.

[Raymond] Yeah.

[Amber] She was like, okay, I get it. I get it. Yeah. Because it's like, you know, it's, it's a house and it's like, ooh. There's art everywhere. There's waves and there's like scary art everywhere. And ooh, it's all over me. We had mannequins.

[Raymond] We had, we had brought mannequins in there. So some of the mannequins were half man and woman. Some of the mannequins were in weird positions. And some of them were painted. Some of them were not. So like, you go upstairs and there's like a person there that's all painted. Oh my God.

[Amber] Okay. Here's a little, just a little side story. Brian was telling me that, or one of the caretaker here guys was telling me that there was somebody in the house and they had called the police to go and check it out. When they came out, one of the cops was like really upset. And the guy's like, why didn't you tell us there was a mannequin in there? Until I freaked that out. So I thought that was kind of a funny little story. Why didn't you tell us there was a mannequin in there? One of the guys was cool. One of the cops was like very upset. I didn't know.

[Raymond] Chill out, dude. Yeah. There was no haunted vibes. It was, it was, it was, at first it was like, you don't know what place, all the weird corners and stuff. But the longer you're in there.

[Amber] That's the freezer in the basement. So we did do a couple of those. We went through a couple of Halloweens. Yeah, a couple of Halloweens there was really fun. But, you know, it was just a silly.

[Raymond] Our friend Dennis, he was our giant robot. Like a cardboard robot for Equinox, one of these times. But it got rained on. And we let it, we hung it, put it in a specific room in the.

[Amber] In the beautifully laid out pantry room.

[Raymond] Beautiful pantry. But it became the robot room. Because you walk in and you see this robot in there.

[Amber] I don't want to see the picture of him. I have no robot pictures.

[Raymond] I might have a robot picture. But we went through lots of.

[Amber] But we did have, we did have a goblin, at the goblin dance party. We did have a barricade. That's it. It was really fun. Trying to look at it.

[Harriet Wright] Is that the Lucile house in the back? Yeah. Wow. I mean, it is a beautiful home.

[Amber] It's the backyard going up to the kitchen.

[Raymond] This is one of the rooms.

[Harriet Wright] Wow.

[Raymond] So one of the rooms were done. Oh, yeah. In the dazzle room. Done in the dazzle style of the World War I ships. Right. The Navy ships. So anyway, the dazzle room is just a full room of that. You get lost. All the doors closed and everything.

[Amber] The two bedrooms upstairs had a Jack and Jill closet. So you go in, each bedroom has its own door. And another door in the back of each room that had that shared closet. And that was that cedar room that I showed you with all the artwork. Yeah. It was beautiful. All of those cedar planks were just like full, tight cedar.

[Raymond] This was the, this is a black tree. This is a plastic black tree that was just used for prop for one of the Halloweens. But it's covered in mirrors. Those little handheld mirrors. You can kind of see them. But there's somebody who had an event that read from their diary that they do every year. It's his birthday. It's his birthday. And he reads from his diary to strangers, but they don't look at him. They, in fact, look away from him and look at him only with mirrors. So he put a bunch of mirrors in the room and gave handheld mirrors. So he's behind you and everybody's facing away. And you only can look at him with the mirror. It's very, very cool. But the mirrors hung out and we just kept them there. And so they get added to the thing.

[Amber] So badly organized. I have pictures of him doing that.

[Raymond] It looks like going up into one of the hallways. We had some street artists stop by after an event. And they gave us all their extra stuff. And they put it up in there. And it's fantastic. They brought their kids. There's Arthur.

[Amber] This is Arthur giving his birthday thing. He goes through every year. He was turning 29, I think. So he had 29 entries that he read. And then we all sat and looked at him in the mirror. It was pretty cool. Yeah. I'm trying to get a good stage picture.

[Raymond] Oh, of the red?

[Harriet Wright] It's so special how this house became.

[Raymond] Yeah, here's the stage.

[Harriet Wright] It's so, wow.

[Raymond] So it was all red. There's red flames and everything on the top.

[Amber] There were green flames on the top.

[Raymond] I had a big double picture that I put up for a while.

[Amber] Some of the other rooms. We had the green room, which was really beautiful.

[Raymond] That's where the... I think I have a picture of the green room.

[Amber] Well, that's the window of the green room. Here is the green room. This was a bedroom that was right off of the dining room area. And it just... This little piece is still there. They left that in there. It's fine. Whatever. I didn't have room for it anyways.

[Raymond] Yeah. So here... You've seen that picture before. This is going up the stairs. And then there's up on the stairs. Let me see some more of this stuff. These are just... This is just the other stairs.

[Amber] This is just the big dump.

[Raymond] Yeah, this is one of the half of the mannequins just got totally annihilated. And there's some more vagina.

[Amber] These kids are crazy.

[Raymond] Oh, man. These kids. They had some weird... They had... They had nuts. They had issues.

[Amber] We told them, yeah, do whatever you want. And boy, they sure did. It's cool. It's not about the Mary. They spray painted everything. So Cree, she's an artist here. She did a beautiful painting up there.

[Raymond] Called The Murder Garden?

[Amber] The Murder Garden. And it was about a bunch of...

[Raymond] All of the people who have died do a war and capitalism. Yeah. Yeah, here it is.

[Harriet Wright] I think that what's so interesting about that, too, is it feels like the space... Like, it is. It's a space. It's like through... Because it lives in this in-between, it's a space for people to engage in the in-between. And engage in the loss and the hardship and the bad art and all of it.

[Amber] This is what's the punk show. It was just packed with the punks. And everybody just... And everybody just... Just a little snippet of that event. It was just so beautiful.

[Raymond] And here's a picture that is not really... Would you like to see a picture of her sister? I'd like to. After we dressed her up with her... So here she is in her bed.

[Amber] Oh, wow. Yeah, that's... And I had that picture on the wall with that narrative as well. And a picture of my mother and everything. I mean, I... Yeah.

[Speaker 4] What was her name?

[Amber] Daniel. Daniel. Yeah.

[Raymond] We called her Toots. Toots.

[Amber] Daniel. I remember at the Big Goodbye because I was... You know, I had it set up for the Big Goodbye and that was my narrative. And I remember this one was like, he was really moved by it. It was very... Yeah. He was very moved.

[Raymond] But we didn't... So one of the things we found in her makeup case was a vial of glitter. So as the kids came in, they could go and throw glitter on her. It was really... It was really sweet. Yeah. Yeah. Instead of the dirt.

[Amber] And this is probably my favorite picture of us from the house. That was us at the punk show. Oh, that punk show was great. It was an amazing show. Kitchen. The kitchen was really fun. I asked people not to do the cabinets because we were going to repurpose them, but whatever. It didn't. It didn't hold her long. It didn't hold her long.

[Raymond] We tried. I mean, we tried to do cool art everywhere.

[Harriet Wright] Cool art everywhere.

[Amber] People singing. Man. It was so good.

[Raymond] Let's see if I can find one.

[Amber] This is the wall of soul. So this whole room had just like people's names and stories. And you can see like, you know, this is another one of my favorite pictures of the house. Because it shows the house is being activated and there's people out there. And this is a shopping cart, a rolling fire pit that the dead babies brought over. It's because they just want to bring the party wherever they go. They just roll it. It was amazing. Yeah, it was really, really cool. There's one of the mannequins in the bathrooms. I mean, you can see how shitty the bathroom was. It was in terrible disrepair. Yeah.

[Raymond] I mean, we had a porta potty. We just had a porta potty.

[Amber] We did have a porta potty for the events. Yeah. But like, you know, the bathroom was first stop only. The basement was just like the ivy was growing to the cracks and the whip of wood and everything.

[Raymond] Oh yeah, I'm trying to find that one of the growing out of the basement.

[Amber] I just showed her. Okay. Royal art. Beginning stuff. This is Paul Stedman, his self-portrait. This is the guy who got the art there. Yeah.

[Speaker 4] Wow.

[Amber] This was early on. We had an altar from...

[Raymond] A floor, a stage. We made it out of scrap wood from Equinox.

[Amber] The stage was made out of scrap wood. But this altar came from a place called Mudlark Oddities. It's a little curiosity shop.

[Raymond] It was a...

[Amber] Some descriptions in the house. Good place. Find home. A list of vessel function applications. Okay. Oh, no. Uh-oh. These are work at the house in the beginning. Nice. I mean, it's... It's a little bit different. We had some wall paint up. I think this is a tour. It's a tour. Nothing. This is all fresh. This is it. No, none of that. All of that is covered with art and paintings and...

[Harriet Wright] God. Wow. It is.

[Amber] This would have been the living room. I'm pretty sure that's the living room.

[Harriet Wright] It's just... It is. Like, it's a beautiful house. And I'm so grateful people got to say goodbye to it.

[Amber] It really was. It was such a lovely place. And I could just, you know, imagine all the family meals and all of the different things. And you can hear everything from the upstairs to the basement. Yeah. Like, that was... I wrote that on the wall. There are no secrets here because you can hear everything. Oh, yeah. Everywhere.

[Raymond] You could blow a didgeridoo or play music from the top one and hear it throughout the whole house.

[Amber] And you can hear people talking in the basement quite clearly. Yeah. And then on the second floor. It was cool. Like, there are no secrets here. Yeah. The big old tree. That's his painting for the walls of souls. That's Brian. Cool dude. I feel like there are no secrets here. And there's no... In the in-between, there is no river secrets anyway. Yeah, there really isn't. There's nowhere to hide there.

[Raymond] There's nowhere to hide. I feel like so much of this art that I'm looking at and I'm just... There is no place to hide. Through it and in it.

[Amber] I think this one... This one's like us through the whole house. Wow. That was an ofrenda that I made for my mother.

[Raymond] And then Melissa did that...

[Amber] Yeah, Melissa did a video here and it's...

[Raymond] She would cover herself in paint and roll around on a wall and did some cool stuff to some music based on different rooms that she went into. So it's very impressive, somatic stuff.

[Amber] Oh, I used to hear listening to Pima and Nicolás.

[Raymond] Oh yeah. That's... Yeah.

[Amber] That's awesome. No, I feel like that's like... You were like in the room of souls. That's inappropriate, you know? Yeah, this was before any of the art had gone up and any of the... Like this wall was eventually painted black as well.

[Speaker 4] Mm-hmm.

[Amber] All of... Most of that art up there had gone. People had taken most of that art.

[Raymond] Yeah, D-Lin Nicolás was perfect for the beginning.

[Amber] It was so clean that the kitchen was. It was so clean. Wow. Here's that pantry. Here's the robot.

[Harriet Wright] Oh yeah. Wow.

[Amber] Yeah, the pantry was beautiful. I think... Focus on the closing shot. Yeah. Like the drawers were... You know, like they have the flower drawers lying in the tin.

[Raymond] They're kind of... Yeah, you don't see that sort of much anymore.

[Amber] Yeah, good things. More of the house.

[Raymond] Yeah, the development doesn't have a lot of middle spaces. And we've had... We've done middle space stuff before. Like the... We did this one called Out of the Shadows. And it was an art gallery that was going out of business. And they had one month left on their lease. And they're like, Would you help me... Please help me do an awesome farewell party. And we're like, alright. And we did this... It was a goth. Graffiti and industrial show. Yeah. And we had 120... Hip-hop, golf. 120, 130 pieces of art over like 30 different artists. And it was so good. We had a bar. And it was just like a vanilla shell. 1200 square foot too. You know, nothing exceptional. But we turned it into this thing. Because we had a whole week. We had a whole week to do whatever we wanted with this place. It was awesome. And when you get into a space, you can start with the best of intentions. But once you've been there for even just a couple days, it changes significantly.

[Amber] Like Casamabarra, it was not a bad place. It was not a bad house. It's a good house.

[Raymond] It was a great house. Yeah. That house was a nice warm place for lots of people.

[Amber] Yeah. But I think that there are a lot of people like me who had those issues. And were able to like, maybe not talk about them as much as I do. But were able to talk about them. So.

[Harriet Wright] I guess I have kind of one like final question. And I'm doing these interviews with different people that are doing work like this across the city. So it's almost none of it is quite at this scale. But I think if the building hadn't been saved, if you hadn't had the opportunity to preserve it, to help ease this transition, do you think communities still would have shown up to say goodbye? Do you think people would have said, we'll miss this place, given it a nod as it walked by when the signs went up, that it's for demolition?

[Raymond] I don't think so. I think people need to be ritualized.

[Amber] People would just shake their head and be like, another one?

[Raymond] Yeah, this is kind of the relevance of ritual. Why George Brown? Is that we need the ritual. We need to just be shown when it is time to think about or deal with that to get in that headspace. And that's part of just space making or ritual work in general. It's just you get, this is what the group of thought is going to be for this moment. Like playing Dungeons and Dragons or a game or anything like that where what is important is just what's here in this moment with this kind of group of things. And yeah, people need that ritual. Especially those kids needed that ritual for their mom. And you needed that for your mom, or for Toots. And you can see the difference between your mother and your sister and how that can affect. That sudden jerk is like a big part of source of trauma for lots of people. Car accidents, death, all sorts of things.

[Amber] They literally pulled her out of my hands. Yeah. Like I couldn't even say goodbye. Yeah. That was messed up. Yeah. After the experience that we had with my sister and I could see the difference, it's like, wow, that was really messed up. Why couldn't we say goodbye?

[Harriet Wright] I mean, we do this on a scale across the city, right? Like it is changing. It has been changing and it will continue to change fast.

[Amber] It's not going to slow down. It's not going to slow down. The machine is in motion. It's not slowing down.

[Harriet Wright] And that's, but yeah, the question is, I think is like how we can show up and fill that in between and to ease the jerks that people have. You know, the chance to throw glitter on the table. Of course. You know, I like, I'm feeling so attached to the story of the artist who has left his like life. Yeah. Ethos. Like his life work. And it's, it's like he gets to be buried in a sense in this home, like in this art home. Yeah.

[Amber] Sarah, she was a little taking it back, but I was just going to leave the art there. And after we talked to her about that, she's like, wow. Okay. Okay. I'm okay with that. Okay. Okay. I'm sorry. Okay. Okay. Okay with that.

[Raymond] Yeah. Death is a funny thing. And people who are materialistic or have materialistic stuff, it shows. I mean, that's why the pyramids were raided. Just because you're buried with stuff and people find out about it.

[Amber] And we don't, you know, what do we have to orient ourselves around anymore? I say in 1980, 1988, I went to a party here in Georgetown in the basement of one of those houses. I remember going to a house party there.

[Raymond] Where it is. Who knows? All the landmarks. They're all gone.

[Amber] Right. Yeah.

[Raymond] It's like a developmental amnesia. Yeah. It's an amnesia. Once you lose those points of reference or that kind of stuff, the people leave.

[Amber] So what can you orient yourself around as a community when you don't have those historical like vantage points or those like connection points?

[Raymond] A tree that you've seen.

[Harriet Wright] Or a community. A member.

[Amber] Yeah. Where can you like, for example, in Miriam, when Miriam was first, people were first settling there. Somebody, one of the settlers built something called Gunther's Wash Tower on the beach. And it was literally just a spiral staircase that went up that you could go up and look at the landscape with. And that's a, that's such a cool like iconic image for Birian that like, I don't know what I'm trying to say about this. It's like, everybody knows Gunther's Wash Tower. Like the story is about it. It doesn't exist anymore or anything, but like everybody knows the story is about it. And that's a unifying thing for people who are old school Birianites who've lived in Miriam for their whole lives or whatever. And I don't know, the people moving into these new eight story like apartments with walks, walkable space, workspace on the bottom or whatever. Do they have any connection to that? And like what that, the Gunther family in the, um, Birian starting up as a, as a place, as a town, as a settlement kind of thing. No. Right. I just thought, I don't know what that even means. I guess I was just rambling. Like the, the point, the point is like having that, that thing. Currently, I guess the Birian clock on 152nd is something that like everyone is, looks at this quintessential Birian image kind of thing.

[Raymond] Yeah, looking for like a distinction or, yeah, some sort of.

[Amber] Like what is it that makes this community, what is it that binds us all together as these community members?

[Harriet Wright] A knowing of place. And it's, I think I, I, to me what I, it goes back to is this idea of like, I want my neighbors to be, to grieve with me. Standing shoulder by shoulder. Like you're talking about the Dead Baby Bite Club and like the band. Like you guys came together

and you, you were, you found each other through this process. Oh yes. And I think when they're, what you lose when you have only future development is, is you lose the ability, the understanding that you could stand side by side to like process the change or grieve the change. Even if you're new to a space, you can still acknowledge that like it's changing and that you're a part of it. And like, that's so, it's not inherently that bad thing, but it is like, you have to be willing to, you should, I would hope people find a way to be willing to stand side by side and acknowledge the change. Yeah.

[Amber] Yeah. I would think so too. That would be nice. I mean, in my perfect world. In my perfect world. Also in my perfect world, I wouldn't be cutting up trees, but you know, whatever. They have their end of life. They're stressed. It's, I get it, but it's still difficult to see because it's like, oh, it's whatever. It's just a tree, but it's not just a tree. It's everything that that tree provides and all the systems that like live in and around that tree. All the animals, all the birds, all the, the shade, the drop in temperature, like.

[Raymond] The chemical exchanges. Yeah. Whatever.

[Amber] Clear the water.

[Harriet Wright] And I know we've been talking for a while and I want you guys to, to go on with your day. I was wondering just to close this out, could you each be willing to share just like a, and I know you share a lot of stories and memories, but a story or memory about either the seal house or about even your own sister, about what, what this process has been like for you.

[Raymond] You want to go first?

[Amber] No, I'm going to go first.

[Raymond] All right. Um, a story from the seal house that I would, that, hmm. I think that as far as like a personal story for me at the seal house is I really liked, I really enjoyed all the conversations I had. So the skin, the beast event was my birthday. I decided to host my birthday. And one of the things I did for this is I brought like five or six of my favorite books that I wanted to share with whoever would come. Like, I want to tell you all about these books. Like, there's a bunch of different books that I like, sort of graphic novels, there's technical ones, there's all sorts of weird stuff. I just want to talk to people. Game theory. Yeah, yeah. It was a system theory book. It was a system theory book at that time. But, and being able to do that, the conversational space, it was like, I have my notebook all the time. This is my, like, my secondary brain right here. But having it inside of a house was like being inside of my ideas and head and talking to people where they can write it and I can see their ideas. It was fantastic. I love that. I think that if I would do that again, having a larger space where you would have types or even subtypes of conversations for certain rooms would be awesome. But being able to talk to people, I think, was my favorite thing about there is I had probably some great conversations about all sorts of stuff. And that was, it's not something I normally get. I usually only get it at, like, bonfires or

campfires. People get into that headspace where they're willing to talk about stuff like that. But in this place.

[Amber] Yeah, you can't jump into a conversation cold about that. Yeah. You got to ease your way a little bit. There's a long night ahead of you. Yeah, yeah.

[Raymond] But this place, this was awesome. I felt surrounded by it. And then as time went on, I also wrote poetry. And then other people wrote poetry. Or I do a picture and other people do a picture. And being able to participate in it, I was surrounded by things that were familiar and I could access a lot of those emotions very easily. And that's what I like about my home. Like, I'm surrounded by things in my home that make me feel that way. So going through that, it wasn't the same type of, like, homemaking, like, you need to make it cozy. No, this was about making it, like, comfortable conceptually for people to... Comfortable in here. Yeah, yeah.

[Amber] You can be comfortable physically, but not comfortable inside. But I think that, yeah, the Lucile house was comfortable inside for people to talk about. Because there was no... There's no authority. It's not our house.

[Raymond] Yeah, absolutely.

[Amber] It's... The house is itself. And we're just... We just have the key. And it's dying.

[Raymond] Yeah, it's dying.

[Amber] And it's dying. It's going away.

[Raymond] We're going to give you some pretty funeral clothes.

[Amber] And it's like, oh, this place is so beautiful. Wow, they're just going to rip it down. They're just... What? Did you hear this place down?

[Raymond] And the better you make something look, it's harder to accept that it's going to be ripped down. Because they're like, why don't you preserve this? Like, well, we made it under the assumption that it wouldn't be preserved. Which, it's kind of hard to, like, I don't know, salvage that. Because I feel like I would be betraying the artist. Yeah. No.

[Amber] Tell them that, yeah, Cree's like... Somebody wanted to cut Cree's painting out of the wall and use it at the new building as, you know, an artifact. And Cree said, yeah. Take a picture, maybe. Take a picture, that's fine, but I made it to go with the house. Yes. So, like, that, you know, that's pretty cool.

[Raymond] Yeah, so I think that's probably, like, my top-of-the-foam impression of Lucile House is, like, that particular interaction was unique and not something I interact with normally anywhere. I mean, there's whiteboards around, but rarely do you have a whiteboard in that kind of artistic situation with people that are like, I'm going to do the same thing. Yeah.

[Amber] Like, I feel like there should be a comic of somebody out there. And we look back to say, I love Lucile House. We look like a little flow chart over here.

[Raymond] Lucile House that goes in the beginning. That goes over here. That's probably what we would do. That's what we do. Yeah. For me, the experience was extremely personal.

[Amber] Because, like, I just lost three-quarters of my family. Like, they all just, like, died all in this time period. And, you know, losing my family and then losing the house that I grew up in because, you know, of situations and circumstances. So the loss was really, really strong for me. And being in Lucile in the house that was built the same year as the house I grew up in, I had this really nice connection with being able to actually say goodbye and let go of my childhood home. Because how many children have let go of this house? How many people have let go of the family gatherings here? So I'm just another one of those drops in the ocean of tears kind of thing. And I don't think that that's a bad thing. It doesn't, I don't feel like it's invidiating or anything. But, you know, I'm not alone in those feelings. There's a lot of people who feel that way. Who just have, how do you deal with loss? What does that mean? Who am I now? Oh my God. How do I, how do I orient myself now that I don't have these things to orient around? These touch points. Yeah. That's kind of what I, Lucile was for me. And I will be forever grateful to Kay and Melissa for taking the chance on us to use the house. Because we were pretty new in the, we've been here for a year or so.

[Raymond] We had been like one little minor little swap meet event. Yeah, we did swap meeting.

[Amber] We like, we like to do goofy things. You know, we had a swap meet at one of the outposts and it was really fun. But like, you know, whatever. They, they're like, you guys want to do something here? Okay. Okay. We'll do it. We'll do it. Because otherwise we were just going to board it up. And none of this would have happened. Like people wouldn't have been able to do, to say goodbye.

[Raymond] And they did have us look at another space, but it didn't have the same, like we weren't in the same headspace. And we're like, no, not right now. Yeah. And a lot of it is just when the iron is hot, that's when you strike. And you can't necessarily force those things. You just have to get ready.

[Amber] And the house itself, you know, just like being in the house itself was something that very wholesome, very, very welcoming and warm vibe in the house. Because that's it's going to be taking out of it. That's how I like them.

[Raymond] Yeah, that's how things, that's how things go.

[Amber] Change happens. The machine's moving through.

[Speaker 4] I'm about to take a bag. Yeah.

[Amber] Buildings, buildings can't last forever. Like you were saying, they build the toxic stuff. There's asbestos wrapped around the, some of the pipes in the.

[Raymond] Don't want to disturb it. Leave it alone. Yeah.

[Amber] Can we do that work down here? The basement was pretty much untouched because it was kind of toxic. But.

[Raymond] Because of the, the, the, the. Asbestos tape. No, the exposed wire wiring. We don't want people bumping around in there. So we took, just, you get tall people, you know. All of a sudden, now you have, oh man.

[Amber] A tall person that's been electrocuted on the floor. Okay. Well, new challenge. We did have the door that this is a dangerous place and that we're not liable or anything. So don't go anywhere where you're not supposed to go. But still.

[Raymond] You can't invite the public to a place like that. It has to be by invitation. Right. That kind of thing. And then we're great. No, we have no issues. Nothing happened.

[Amber] There was a couple of broken windows.

[Raymond] There was a broken window when they did the music video. But that was fine.

[Amber] Yes. Chaotic Noise. The Tectonic Wins of Satan is all filmed at the Seal House.

[Raymond] The music video.

[Harriet Wright] And it's really good. It's all. All full of those. Yeah. That's really cool. Yes.

[Amber] Chaotic Noise. They're fantastic.

[Raymond] They also did a big performance at the Seahawks. Whatever other thing. So they do a lot of other stuff besides just around Georgetown. But they play for all sorts of different things. They tried to. They played around.

[Amber] They grounded out the street creature down. Yeah. There's street creatures right now. They're always grounded in the street creature. Because everybody complains about that guy. They're like, we'll just go make more noise.

[Raymond] Yeah. They have saxophones and tuba is. Yeah. Yeah. They're great.

[Amber] This was one of my favorite rips. Rips to all the kids who have had their lives cut short at schools. That's just one of the things that was on the wall.

[Speaker 4] Yeah. And that's in the. The wall of souls. The wall of souls.

[Amber] Yeah. Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] Pretty cool. Very cool. And I just really appreciate you guys taking the time to talk with me and to come here and to share your photos. If you'd be willing to go through and select, I don't know, five to ten photos that I could include, I would love to be able to include some of these photos. I will.

[Amber] Okay. Oh my God. I would love to.

[Raymond] Amber, I can send you what I got and then you can.

[Amber] Hold my hand. Man, I wish I would have got better pictures.

[Harriet Wright] Okay. It's not meant to last forever.

[Amber] I know. Yeah. It was really wonderful. It was a beautiful experience. Cospic nephoids. What the heck. Oh. Yeah. This is really nice. Some of those. Some of that. Like just. A lot of this. True. Like expression. Mm-hmm. It's really cool. It's really cool. Yeah.

[Raymond] Yeah. Part of the tour, I would say, hey, this place is an open grave. So if you have something to throw in, this is the place to do it. Mm-hmm.

[Amber] Oh, maybe some of my pain will be destroyed with this house.

[Raymond] That's what somebody said here. But lots of people, I realize lots of people don't get to see an open grave very much. They're very isolated from death.

[Speaker 4] Very isolated from death.

[Harriet Wright] And I think that is like a huge part of my, part of like why I wanted to take on this work is like, is the idea that people are so isolated from it. And it's both in our interpersonal life and also like in our built environment. Like we're so, change happens and we, there's, you have to kind of accept it. But you can also grieve and mourn and acknowledge that the change is going to come. And I think it can help. I hope it can help.

[Raymond] Well, mourning is an act of love. You mourn because you feel that connection. You feel that, that, that, that, that presence. And when it's gone, it's like the love remains and it's like a, let's say tears are a tribute to the love type of thing. So feeling and exploring grief is a big part of like that inner landscape of humans that is very emotional and doesn't need a lot of language. You don't need to describe all that stuff with institutionalized words or whatever. Poetry works good.

[Harriet Wright] Poetry works good.

[Amber] Somebody had, one of the artists who came in to do some wheat pasting, his sister is a graffiti tagger in New York and she was going to Nevada and he had her come to Seattle so he could bring her to the house before she went to.

[Raymond] And she brought her kids? Yeah. She brought her kids.

[Amber] And they all, they have, they have names like, what is it? What is it? Poo poo cat?

[Raymond] They had like some really, duty cat. Duty cat. That's what it was. Thank you. Duty cat. They had their own duty cat.

[Amber] More of the cabinet things. Like, look at that. That was so fun. Oh my God. It's so right on the cabinets. I even put that thing up there. Nope. Oh well. I'm going to slide here. The more you talk about death, the less she talks about you. You know me? That's cool. Yeah. There's some, there's some wonderful, I mean, right. You know, it's all over the place. It's great.

[Raymond] It is nice.

[Amber] This is the, this is the, the bagno of Diablo, the toilet in the basement. It was crazy. Like around this little corner thing and then up elevated.

[Raymond] So it's like, it's on its own, like stage.

[Amber] The pedestal thing, yeah.

[Raymond] So we call it the devil's dumper.

[Amber] Devil's dumper.

[Raymond] There were some stories about that, about me having it being backed up and having to clean it. We didn't experience any of that. That was before our time, but it had a notorious reputation.

[Amber] Some of these are really nice. I wonder, I wonder who wrote them. Oh yeah. I wonder who made them.

[Raymond] The musicians. There's a bunch of musicians. Yeah.

[Amber] Because the green room is literally for the musicians. All their stuff. They can have a stash of stuff.

[Raymond] But none of this poetry always works well. We've also done this thing. Like you do like word, we have a word salad bar, where it's just a bunch of words that are cut out with magnetic strips. So you can make poems out of random words. So some of the word salad bars are like from somebody else's poetry. And that was really fun. What we did an artist that just had all of their descriptions for their artwork was put into the word salad. That's cool. Because they had a really cool vocabulary variety.

[Amber] Here's a nice shot of the backyard from the kitchen window. A little garage and everything. Just a little scan of the backyard party. One of the marching bands. It's really cool.

Oh, let's see what I got from the big goodbye event. No, that's just the posters and stuff. And then I got a little bit of historic info from the King County records about the house itself. Apparently, it had originally had different windows in the front. The peak had three arched Gothic peak windows in the top.

[Harriet Wright] But now it's a mysterious triangle.

[Amber] Mysterious triangle. The slope to the left was not original. Other side. Yeah, that's all built on. The stairways were removed. And the basement was added in 1920. So the basement was added afterwards.

[Raymond] So they lifted it, added the basement.

[Amber] And they dug out. They just dug out the basement.

[Raymond] And they had old stuff in there like crates from the 70s.

[Amber] Yeah, the walls were made out of shipping crates.

[Raymond] In the 70s.

[Amber] The basement really. I'm kind of bummed that I didn't get to get one of those crates. But it's cool. It's toxic. Taking anything from that place is probably not an idea.

[Raymond] Yeah, all of the fabric we took, we had to either dry out or throw away or something.

[Amber] I'm still working to get the smell out of some of them.

[Raymond] As the writer, how about you? Do you have any issues with grief that you've been facing or loss or anything like that? That compelled you to investigate such things?

[Harriet Wright] Well, that's such a good question.

[Raymond] You don't have to.

[Harriet Wright] No, I would actually love to answer that. I'm from Seattle. I grew up here. I grew up in the Roosevelt neighborhood.

[Amber] Oh, that's nice. We're not very coming.

[Harriet Wright] No, I'm like, I'm a Seattle. My parents are from Seattle. I'm like a Seattle person. And part of why I wanted to do this is I was in high school in the 2012, 2016 era. Kind of coming into my own sense of self through some of the really significant changes in Seattle.

[Amber] That's about when I remember it starting. A lot of things started in around 2012. Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] And I remember I went to Roosevelt High School and I did a tour of the Amazon Towers and the spheres while they were being built.

[Amber] Okay, that's kind of cool to be able to see that.

[Harriet Wright] It's really cool to be able to see that. And I think I, on like a built environment, grief scale, I went to the East Coast for college. I went to Smith College. And then I came back and the city looked really different. And I felt like I didn't have the chance to say goodbye to what the city felt like. And so a lot of this, like a lot of this work comes. And I, I talked to my, my mom, especially like I talked to her all the time about like how hard it is for her and how unfamiliar sometimes like her neighborhood feels. Especially like what it felt as a neighborhood has changed so much.

[Amber] Yeah. Oh yeah. Oh my gosh.

[Harriet Wright] And so thinking about, oh, this work actually came from talking to my mom about her grief in the neighborhood and how she, she feels so far away from it. And so it feels so unfamiliar and she's like, she doesn't use the word grieving, but I like recognized it as like a grief feeling of like a loss. It's a loss of, of what was known. And so thinking about what are the ways that like my mom is not unique. I am not unique for experiencing this grief and this loss. And so I realized that there's probably people that are saying goodbye and dealing with the change in grief. And I have like, I can even share with you guys, I have this list of, and basically I'm not, I'm not really trying. And so, so that's my experience of grief in the context of this project. And I've like growing up here, I've lost friends and I have so many memories that I like drive by. I'm like, oh, like my, like one of my very good friends like passed away and this is her house. And now it's in Capitol Hill and it doesn't exist anymore. And I never, you know, it's like these things all happen.

[Amber] Yeah, that's a big deal.

[Harriet Wright] You're not able to say goodbye to people when they do.

[Raymond] Yeah, social memory or like urban memory is super important. Yeah. It's very important. Memory is like a big part of humanity. Yeah. We have so much stuff we need to pay attention to.

[Amber] Sometimes I think that's the purpose of the fast development. Yeah. To remove it from a memory. Memory. So it's an easier transition for people like your mom who doesn't recognize her or leave her bed anymore. Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] And it's, I think it's like in the case of Roosevelt, it's so interesting because I actually don't think it's a bad thing to have development there. There's a light rail station. Yeah. It's important for change to happen. But it's, this work comes from this idea that like it's

important for change to happen and it is important to give people a chance to say goodbye to what they need. Yeah.

[Amber] That's what I told Kath too. You know, it's important for this to happen. But it's also important to let people like be kind about it. To be kind to people.

[Harriet Wright] And to be okay with the change that's coming. And I, some of the things on my list, I'm basically what I'm doing is I'm just, I'm creating a record of all of the different ways that people have come to grieve a changing city over the last like 10 years. Okay. And then I'm, I'm interviewing just a handful of people. So I'm trying to do around five. Okay. Kind of like a more in-depth case to like deep dive about like what this experience was. And the Lucile house is really the first one that I was like, wow, this is, this is a, this is a, this is a project that you, you are, this, this is a hospice for this house.

[Amber] You're like, you were acting as the, I wish I knew we would have known you when we were doing things. I was like, I mean, you being part of it would have been really cool.

[Harriet Wright] And I, I like hope that I will be able to spend some more of my personal time. I mean, with school and work, I'm too busy to actually engage in any, to do anything else. But I like, this is, I think a lifelong thing for me, like to be engaged in helping people say goodbye to their spaces I'm interested in. But there's, um, one of my favorite case studies is that Alkyl Elementary PTA wrote a musical called The Claw. And it's about the demolition of the old Alkyl Elementary.

[Raymond] Oh, that's awesome. That's a good one.

[Harriet Wright] So like to help the kids. Yeah. Come and like learn about things. It's like say goodbye to the building. It's being demolished. Here's a children's musical called The Claw.

[Amber] Oh, that's such a lovely, gentle way to do that. Right. And it gives all of those kids, they all have that experience now and will take that with them.

[Harriet Wright] Right. Right. And there's, there's, and, um, I mean like one of the other like major case studies I'm working on is the viaduct takeover. And then the viaduct is being demolished. Yeah. Yeah. And then like closed down the street and it turned into this like big experience for people to like drive on the viaduct for the last time and like get out and take their photos. Take the pictures. Yeah.

[Amber] And the people that were there for that, they took that with them and they'll be with them now forever.

[Harriet Wright] And like that is the touch point. Like that's your chance to say goodbye. And now when you're in the waterfront, like the viaduct.

[Amber] You know. You were there.

[Harriet Wright] You were there. You know what it felt like. You know, you know, you were there for the change. Yeah.

[Amber] That's a good one. That's great.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. So that's kind of the, the stuff I'm working on.

[Raymond] That's awesome. Yeah. Who knows what the future will hold? Like we could be involved in something and are you finding out something and we.

[Harriet Wright] I would love to. I'll keep you guys.

[Speaker 4] Okay. Yeah.

[Amber] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And vice versa. Yeah. If we run into any opportunities, who knows what this crazy place is going to do. Right. Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] It is an awesome, awesome place.

[Amber] It is very cool. It's for people who can take the opportunities when they're like available. Yeah. It's really cool. So I'm happy to be here and I, like I said, I will forever be grateful to Melissa and Kay for giving us the opportunity to, to be a Lucile for what we did. Yeah. Extremely healing, just for me on a personal level, but hopefully, you know, the people that came in and could take that with them and know they can be forever changed too.

[Speaker 4] Have a touch point of this neighborhood, really. Yeah. Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] And I'll, um, yeah, I'll, I'll, um, create a transcript, send it to you guys. And if you're comfortable with it, the, for the university of Washington, all master's species are publicly available. So they get published. Cool. And so if you're comfortable, I would love to have like an appendix with just the straight transcript and then I'll be writing about Lucile House and kind of some of the, kind of like work that went into it. Yeah.

[Amber] I'm totally fine with sharing. Yeah. I'm comfortable with that. Yeah.

[Raymond] I'd like hanging out and talking with you. Yeah. Yeah. I would love to talk more about this or if you find something else, I would love to hear about it or maybe be involved and you never know.

[Amber] I would, I will pick over the bones. Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. I, I think when it is time to say goodbye to Lucile, I am planning on.

[Raymond] Yeah. It'll be, hopefully be a fun thing. I hope so. Yeah.

[Amber] When the demolition actually happens. Cause yeah, the dead babies are very, they're motivated. They're very motivated for that destruction. They sound awesome. Yeah. Yeah. They're super cool. Bike chowsting.

[Raymond] But they're facing getting older too.

[Amber] Yeah. They have mortgages and kids now. So. Changes along. Changes who goes on their monthly bike rides. So they're kind of, you know, like the babies are looking at their sundown in the distance.

[Speaker 4] Yeah.

[Amber] So working with them there was really cool too.

[Speaker 4] Mm-hmm.

[Amber] A living group that's facing their sundown.

[Harriet Wright] That's so, all of them. It's like, it's a, this is about buildings, but it is about so much more. Yeah.

[Amber] There's so much more involved. It's like.

[Raymond] There's lots of things that can be alive that are not biologically living. Yes. Yeah.

[Amber] And if you do a disservice in planning, we focus so much on lawn range. Yeah. Built. Yeah. And I mean, yeah, that makes sense from a certain point of view. But in the same case, it's super, it's mean. It's hard.

[Raymond] It's mean.

[Amber] It's forceful. It's forceful.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Amber] Built a lot with somebody's home. Yeah. How many people, how many homes, how many families, how many kids had their, you know, first. Yeah. Just like every house you drive by. Mm-hmm. Yeah. Very cool. This is wonderful.

[Raymond] It is awesome to meet you and chat with you. Yes. I would do it again or any other time. I would love to do it again. Yeah. I was prepared for you to get. And then I emerged from the fog when it was really good to my history. I really hope to be more involved, especially in a lot of this work. I think. There's definitely an eat for it. Oh, yeah. Yeah. People are excited about it.

[Amber] I'm really glad that Watershed agreed with us when we got this narrative when it came to the big pie. Yeah. I'm really glad that they agreed because, like, you know, that's a big chance take. And then, like, the big pie was public because so many of the other events were private.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. It really created, like, a connection to space and place. Yeah.

[Raymond] And it also just makes it easier to deal with any sort of public interfacing issues that can happen. And it was great. It was well handled. And the space is small. It's not like you can have 100 people there. You can have, like, 20 people, 30 people there.

[Amber] You can have about 50 pumps there. Yeah.

[Raymond] They're both going around. They're standing shoulder to shoulder. Yeah. Yeah. You can buy a few bucks anywhere. So what does your master's thesis do? Like, how much more do you have to go? That's a great question.

[Harriet Wright] It is to, my first final draft is the second one in May. And then I defend. Oh, boy. So defending is that you go in and talk to others. You hear the criticism. You hear the criticism. And you basically just defend. Defend your... I'm just saying that I'm creating a record of practice that I've never seen before. How is any of you going to argue with your experience about it? You can't argue with a thing that hasn't been written about and don't exist. You're like, hmm. Right. We're going to be setting up here to the art box for Saturday. Because I did a photo of this. I'll start a photo of the movie. Maybe I should talk while the night. We're going to be around all sun. Yeah, there's going to be a yard sale over there in the main yard.

[Amber] Some music and... I love the stairs. Totally beer. Yeah, I like it.

[Raymond] All right. Pretty soon, Pete's going to be here, right? Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] Well, [Harriet], it was awesome. It was great to chat with you. Thank you so much. Thank you for everything. See you around. Thank you for doing the work that you guys do. I think I'm just so glad that someone's... I'm just so glad you guys are just like... Yeah. It's nice to verse that. I'm not enjoying to talk to you about this. Like, that's a cool thing to do here.

[Raymond] Yeah, I haven't really, like, thought about that. What kind of spaces are available? Like, how would this be just a weakness of capitalism and, you know, Western culture to just not have those things?

[Harriet Wright] Could I take a photo of your shirt? I think it'd be really nice to have, um, this, like, idea of, like, the Lucile as a... Yeah. As a character. As a character and as, like, the place between death and the show. Like, the open grave. Yeah, the open grave. And the transition space. Such a good idea. I can't... Awesome. Yay! I'm so happy that you're inspired. That's amazing. Bye, guys. Have a great day. Bye, guys.

Section 8.03 Cynthia Brothers, Vanishing Seattle — Interview Transcript

[Harriet Wright] Awesome. Well, I have a whole bunch of questions for you, but I was going to start with giving you context about what I'm working on, if that sounds good.

[Cynthia Brothers] Yeah, sounds great.

[Harriet Wright] I said this in my email, but I'm a second year Masters of Urban Planning student at UW. I specialize in historic preservation. So I'm one of two students that are doing historic preservation in the program.

[Cynthia Brothers] I'm excited, but thank you for doing that.

[Harriet Wright] And the idea of my thesis, the title is Community Memorialization Practices and Historic Building Demolition. And I'm looking at exploring how communities grieve, commemorate and process change when buildings are lost. And so this is specifically around buildings that are not, well, it includes all buildings, but I'm particularly interested in kind of normal buildings, buildings that have just been around for a long time. I think traditionally people have used the word vernacular, but I'm trying to stay away from using that as a description. And so I'm pretty interested in creating a repository or a list of Seattle-based memorialization practices, basically saying like, this is what has been happening almost accidentally. So these are things that I, even I can think of examples. These are things that have been happening and how can we as planners or myself as a planner, serve as, I've been using the phrase death doula, but someone that can help bridge this gap between life and death for buildings that are facing demolition. It's kind of a greater, don't want to use the word negative. It's kind of a greater response to modern day historic preservation and this kind of acknowledgement that there isn't a lot of preservation, traditional preservation work that can be done right now. And thinking about how we can be creative in helping the transition of buildings that we know are going to be lost. Yeah. So I think that the work that you do is, is this exact topic, but I also, I know that you do a lot of things. Yeah. I, do you have any questions about kind of what I'm working on or my focus?

[Cynthia Brothers] Well, yeah, I really appreciate the context and I think it's super fascinating. And also just like, yeah, as you're explaining it, I'm kind of like, oh yeah, I guess I do do that. Even though like maybe it hadn't occurred to me in that way or it wasn't like necessarily thought out in such a way. I mean, it's cool that it like resonates in that respect and I can definitely see how it, yeah, like overlaps and fits in. And so, um, yeah, I'm just super interested and also like, uh, happy that you're doing this work. Um, and yeah, maybe kind of also like broadening the conversation around like what historic preservation is or can be. I mean, I feel like, uh, uh, even the word preservation itself has become like kind of misunderstood and maligned. Um, when it's really, I think just about like, it's what people care about. And a lot of, you know, that's a whole

nother conversation, but a lot of times I think we can't even have the space to. Like, um, memorialize or grieve places without, um, I don't know, people like, uh, uh, thinking that in itself is like a, a bad thing. Yeah. No, I, you know, I think it's capitalism. I think there's money to interest behind it. I think, you know, there's, I think there's a lot of reasons for that we don't have to get into, but it's like, yeah. So I'm glad that, you know, any work around, like, I don't, you know, just preservation in and of itself because I feel like that's not like, I don't know. I can, I think it can be a little bit of a hard, a hard road sometimes.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah, definitely. I also like, this isn't really meant to be a conversation. I don't have any like specific goals or agendas about like the time that we have to meet. I just, I think it's nice. It's nice to talk preservation without feeling that you have to defend yourself and the work that you're doing. And I think, um, I'm also, I'm from Seattle. So this is like a space that I know really well and that I've seen, seen change over the last, you know, 25 years. Um, so I, this is like a project that I like have in starting and also I'm a part of because it affects me and it has affected me while I've lived here. Yeah, not. So I guess like kind of to start off when you think, I was just wondering, like when you think or hear the words building memorialization, what do you think of? And I'm going to be taking notes as well. Um, just don't, don't mind me and my little pen.

[Cynthia Brothers] Yeah. Yeah. I mean, that's interesting. I don't know if I've actually heard that particular phrase before, like building memorialization as, I don't know, as like an action or a practice, but I mean, I guess it like, um, yeah, has broad enough to encompass a lot of things. I mean, I guess like, you know, I kind of do that on social media. I think the people that leave comments do that. I mean, I feel like it's any, um, anything that people do or share or remember about a place that is gone or is going to be gone. Um, yeah. And with buildings, I mean, I also feel like there's thing about, it's about the building, but it's also more than that. You know, it's not necessarily about the brick and mortar or the structure, but it's about like what that structure held and what it facilitated and allowed for. Whether that was like a bar or a restaurant or like a punk house or, you know, like the activity and then the like community that was kind of housed inside that building, you know? So it's kind of like the, the, I guess the social fabric, like within and around it that maybe would not have happened or happened in a different way were it not for that place or that building or that structure. Um, I think a lot of times people will kind of push back on building memorialization or preservation by being like, why you care about this funky old building or, you know, you, you just, you know, are against change and want to like throw a tarp over everything or keep it in amber. And it's really like, and it's really like not about necessarily, I think the building in like the physical or literal sense itself. I mean, sometimes there's really cool buildings that have awesome features that, yeah. And I think in traditional preservation, sometimes there's more of a focus on, on that, you know, like the cornices and stuff like that. And maybe has been one of the few leverage points to actually like advocate for something being designated as a landmark, as limited protections as that provides. Um, so yeah, that's one aspect of it, but I think it's, it can be a very small and limited aspect. Um, so yeah, that was a long-winded way of saying like, I think it's about a building, but it's really much more than the

building. It's about like the people and activities and the social, uh, networks. Sorry, that was like really meandering.

[Harriet Wright] No, no, that I like, that is like the whole point. Like, I think that is work. When I started my planning degree, I was like, oh my God, this is so broad. And also everything is urban planning. And then when I started my historic preservation work, I was like, wait a second. Actually, everything is historic preservation. That's like, like, yeah, people, it's when you think about buildings, when I think about, I'll use I statements. When I think about buildings, um, like preservation is not like I, I could care honestly less about keeping a building in amber. And it's, it's mostly about having diverse and creative spaces for people to exist and be in. Um, and we, a lot of that and a lot of the affordable spaces are in historic building stock. And so when we lose buildings, when they're getting demolished, it's often this reaction to losing, um, like a, a viable, like a, like a punk house, like a venue that like, you don't necessarily have to pay to, to be at or like have like guaranteed booking numbers. Or there you lose access to an affordable Seattle, which I think is something that, um, really ties in with like this, like death doula approach of like, you're like grieving both the building and grieving the loss of access to this resource that you had. Yeah. Um, totally. Yeah, that's, that's totally, that's like, it was meandering. It wasn't meandering in the first place. And I was right there with you.

[Cynthia Brothers] Yeah. And I think there is something like people do love, I think, I think they get kind of intertwined to like maybe in the way that people love, say like the, where they grew up, like their childhood home. Or they love the dive bar they've been going to for 20 years. Like they love the physical aspects of it. You know, like for me, my cheers is like bush garden. Mm-hmm. And there's something that's so unique in like the layers and layers of history and the built-in hand-carved like bamboo features and shoji screens. Like that is a very special aspect. And there's a physical aspect that I think really ties in with like the whole vibe and persona of the place and ties in with like the people who hung out there. So I think those things can all be intertwined. And I think people do more in the physical space. But I don't think it's necessarily divorced from all those other aspects of like what the space meant to people. And I do think it would be maybe not as devastating if when these places were closed, torn down, priced out, whatever, there was something replacing them. A lot of times there's not. Or there's something that is unaffordable and inaccessible. And so, like you said, people are mourning the loss of just that space like entirely, you know. So it's pretty rare that it's like. And when it does happen, you know, like for example, it's like the old crocodile. A new venue down the street in Belltown. And people are like, yay! You know, people are like, oh, we miss the old croc. It's not going to be the same, but that's awesome. We have another music venue in Belltown. Of course, two of those three venues are closing this month. But yeah, a lot of times I'm just like, when these places close, it's like, where are people going to go to be able to like create and organize and like build community? And I think that's an aspect sometimes that like detractors don't understand or intentionally want to not acknowledge, I think. And just kind of reduce it and minimize it to like, oh, you just like are whining about this like funky ass building. Which at the same time, I think

can be really dismissive and like elitist when it's like, it doesn't have to be a freaking, you know, architectural marvel. Or like a mansion in order for it to have value. Like sometimes people value it because it's dumpy and unpretentious and not fancy. In fact, I think that's very much like a Seattle kind of thing. Part of like Seattle history or aesthetic or whatever, like coming from like a, you know, more kind of working class blue collar town. Yeah. Then we are now, like pre tech takeover, that was kind of like more of the norm. I think those type of places that are seen as like undesirable, especially if we're looking from like a real estate or upscale or like capitalist perspective. Those are the places that cool shit happened. They were low rent. Because they were like in the shadow of the viaduct or something like that's where you had really subversive creative art and organizing happen. And then it becomes desirable and there's a gold rush and all that shit gets pushed out. So, yeah. So I guess, yeah, kind of coming back to your point about, it's like about these individual places, but as a whole, it's like, what is the social and cultural impact it has when we just like, it's like death by a thousand cuts. Yeah. Well, it's like, well, where the fuck are artists and like organizers and service workers and industry people and just like regular, regular folks supposed to like, where is their refuge?

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. I actually started this work based out of Georgetown when they had the big goodbye for the Lucile block, which was part of the watershed development happening down there.

[Cynthia Brothers] I was there.

[Harriet Wright] It was awesome. And I was like, wow, I actually didn't know. That was the first time I had really been exposed to building memorialization practice. And it's, you know, like funeral adjacent. Like it really reminded me of like the New Orleans style, like parade down the street version of morning. And, and think that's like what got me going thinking about, you know, my thesis is somewhat based on a neighborhood scale. So I'm taking the buildings and these memorialization practices in the context of the neighborhood that they're sitting in. And so for Georgetown, the, this like funeral practice that was really involved with like local art and these like local houses that have been a big part of the community. But I think my, my, the, the hypothesis I'm having that I may or may not be able to back up with data, depending on how the year goes, is that having a practice, like some kind of ritualized practice, a memorial or a street party or a piece of art or something. That we can use when it's time to demolish a building helps people deal with the loss. And I think in Georgetown, I really saw that happen. But part of the reason why I think it was so celebratory was because the houses that were being demolished were being demolished for housing for the community and studio space for the community.

[Cynthia Brothers] Yeah, totally. Like if that was, I don't know, kind of like your privately, private developer market driven development that you see, I very much doubt they would have done something like that. And I think it also would have felt insulting. Like what's to celebrate really from the point of view, people who are being displaced. And I have, you know, I've been in organizing groups like the CID coalition and stuff. Yeah. Done like cultural preservation,

anti-displacement organizing in the international district. And, you know, we were in conversations and like kind of working on campaigns around sites that developers were trying to, for example, tear down Bush Garden for one. Yeah. Where it's like they try to do stuff that it was like art washing, green washing, trying to check boxes about like, oh, we're here for the benefit of the neighborhood. And we're going to like, you know, honor the history of this place, honor Bush Garden by like taking some artifacts and like putting them in the lobby or fancy new development. You know, stuff like that that you see all the time. Or like the new, like the mini flats where like the mini's diner, mini's cafe used to be. Like they name it after the place that was there, but it's really like, and I think that space isn't sitting empty forever anyway. But it's just like when the replacement is totally misaligned with what was there before, it seems like kind of like a slap in the face. And I think a lot of times those developers are really like not, I mean, they're not, it's not community driven. So they really have no interest and like, it's just a box to check for maybe a design review board or just try to like smooth it over. And it's like, they don't, you know, they want to spend as little money on it as possible as well or resources. It's just something to get out of the way so they can like plow forward with their project. So, yeah, I think that's why with Watershed, so different. And, you know, it was the people who were, you know, working in Watershed are artists and are in the Georgetown community and are like part of that community. And it's like in their self-interest to create something that's going to, yeah, serve the arts community. So, yeah.

[Harriet Wright] Are there things, things that either you've seen or that you would like to see that would, that would help this like process or this demolition process, like a way to honor a building or think about how to keep part of the building alive through demolition?

[Cynthia Brothers] Yeah, I mean, I do admire how like Watershed approached it. And they did, it seemed like they did take a process to be like, to assess like, oh, can we retain like this tree, for example? Or, you know, it's like, it seemed like they were thoughtful about it. And, you know, utilizing the houses as a place for art up until, you know, they're going to have to tear it down or if there's ways to like, I don't know, maybe like also salvaging. But, you know, parts of the previous structure in a meaningful way or trying to carry forward. Whether it's like physically or otherwise through programming or building in the new space, like carrying forward, you know, some of the kind of like functions or like, yeah, aspects of like the previous structure that was important to people. Love City Love also kind of comes to mind. I mean, it's not the exact same thing, but, you know, they're in there like, I don't know if you're probably familiar with them, right?

[Harriet Wright] But I don't actually don't think I am.

[Cynthia Brothers] Oh, yeah. So Love City Love, they, gosh, I think they've been around for at least 10 or 15 years. And they kind of occupy these places that are due for demo. A few places in Capitol Hill, like where the artificial limb company was. Then they're in this like, I think, former dentist office, another place in Capitol Hill. Now they're on the old ShopRite on 15th Avenue.

Yeah, where they have like an art gallery and space and like open mics and punk shows and stuff. And I think so Lucien is the guy that started it. And I don't I think he maybe just got I'm not sure exactly how he does it. But I think maybe he's gotten good at like negotiating with developers or something about like, we'll keep the space activated and like make it less likely that like it's going to get squatted in or whatever. But yeah, I mean, I think it's like every time it closes, it's kind of a bummer he's had to like, you know, it's like he loses the space has to create a new one every couple of years. You know, I feel like he's he's like found a way to kind of work within what the parameters of the existing like systems are. And at least that space isn't like sitting empty. Nemoto is another one that did that in the old. Lusty Lady building and then in like a old, I think, big tires shop and like Stoneway over in Wallingford. Yeah. And I think that's kind of a way to like, you know, and I think they talk about like, oh, this is what the space was or like the punk rock flea market and quality flea center is another. Example where it's like you're going to have community based folks and artists, creatives that are like making use of the space up until they're like, you know, completely like displaced. Out of there. And I think it gives people more time to kind of reimagine and recreate like what can be done here, you know, instead of it sitting empty and then becoming, you know, market rate apartments or whatever.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah, I that's those are all that. And thank you for the names. I really appreciate it. I think one of the things I've come across in my research and like making this list is lots of people have their own opinion about it, about like ways that are like, like, quote unquote, tasteful to memorialize versus not. And I think like in funeral practices, like there's different traditions that different people have. One of the people that I've interviewed so far is working works with for for culture. She's on the historic preservation team, Dana. She's awesome. And she was saying that she was invited her like biggest example of a practice that she did not like that did not resonate was a neighbor. And her neighbors had bought the house next to her and then were doing a complete tear down and a rebuild of the house and had just moved into the community and invited everyone in to come and draw on the walls of this like house that they'd all live next to for so long. But the new owners were completely new to the neighborhood and her feelings of like what we were talking about was this this feeling that like, you know, you're just like drawing on this like tomb site or like this like thing that is actually really sad of this. And that's like a normal building that has been a normal building that has been on the corner for a long time that's being torn down and rebuilt into the like a modern era, which is okay. And totally people can do what they want their property. But she, you know, she was just saying how much harder it was for her to watch the demolition after being invited to go inside and draw on the walls because there's this like disconnect with what it actually means to lose, lose buildings. So I was wondering if you've, if you've seen any practices like that or anything that you've been a part of that hasn't gone the way that you've expected.

[Cynthia Brothers] Um, I mean, nothing like, nothing like that is coming to mind. I think more kind of like what I referenced earlier about, yeah, a lot of times how like developers might try to like the neighborhood in a way that seems really, uh, tacky and disingenuous, disrespectful. Um,

yeah, I mean, I kind of, I mean, it reminded me a bit of like, that big goodbye and like you went in the house and one of them was just like, there was art and writing and graffiti like all over the place. Inside of the walls. But that felt different. Right. It had already been kind of used as like this punk house. They've been having punk shows and they brought an artist to do it. You know, it just kind of seemed like.

[Harriet Wright] This house was meant to get drawn on, you know, like. Yeah. Yeah.

[Cynthia Brothers] And I wasn't like, oh, this is where like, you know, our, these like elderly neighbors live forever. And let's come in and like, I don't know, maybe like deface it apart, you know? So I can understand how that would be like a weird thing. Um, yeah. So I don't have other ones that are coming to mind, but there's, um, a few other examples of like, I mean, I was thinking that like the way that people grieve like buildings is like, you know, seems pretty similar. Like how people will grieve humans, you know, like with a wake or like having their own kind of practices. And I don't know if you're familiar with ghosts of Seattle past, but they did an Irish wake for lost Seattle places at love city love. When it was at, um, the artificial limb company. And, um, that was really awesome and beautiful. They had like poetry readings. They, and, you know, it went along with that, that book, which is amazing. Um, if you don't have it, um, yeah. Poetry readings, musical performances, drag. Um, and I think that's an idea that really resonates and I see, I see cropping up from time to time. There was another project, psychopomp projects. Um, they did a thing at Equinox studios one or two years ago that I was a part of where they also had like a wake and they like, I think they, like, they had some artists create, um, no, they had an altar. So people bring in like candles or offerings or pictures of places. People got up and read stories and poems about, uh, places that were important to them. I think some artists like sculpted something that they brought in. There was kind of like this funeral procession. I don't like this ritualistic thing as well. Um, I gave them a slideshow of a bunch of, uh, places from vanishing Seattle that had been on vanishing Seattle that they projected. Um, so yeah, I think it was kind of like an invite to the community and to like artists and writers and stuff to, you know, pay their respects to various places. And it was like definitely grieving and mourning, but it was also funny. It was a celebration, you know, I mean, and I think like, yeah, when I think about these things that I've seen or participated in, it's like, yeah, this could have been for like a person. Cause I think a lot of these places are that near and dear to people's hearts that they are like, it's like losing a loved one.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. Do you, for the people that were like in the audience, did they, did you notice anything or like, can you think back to those events that like things that you see happening to the people that get to attend these events that might not be the creatives, but are the people that have investment in their own buildings and built environment?

[Cynthia Brothers] Yeah. I mean, I think there's a range of things like, uh, I think generally people, I mean, maybe it's a bit of a self-selecting audience.

[Harriet Wright] I know what it's going to be about. This whole project is a self-selecting audience. So that's allowed.

[Cynthia Brothers] I mean, I like to think this type of thing has universal appeal, you know, you'd be like, who cares? I'm like, well, isn't there a place that was important to you growing up or is important to you now? Like, I don't know if this whole idea of third places, I feel like culturally is maybe I fear that I, or I have a fear that it's like, yeah, maybe.

[Harriet Wright] It's a buzzword. I can say it.

[Cynthia Brothers] It's endangered with AI and apps and blah, blah, blah. Anyway. Um, but yeah, I mean, there are people there who myself included, who heard about like a tribute to a place where it's like, didn't really know about it before or like, wasn't as familiar with it. And it was like, oh, that place sounds awesome. Like, I love hearing that story. It's like hearing a story about like a person, like a friend of a friend or maybe like a public figure and like, yeah, just like, you know, some great, storytelling. Um, so like, yeah, learning a bit more about these places. Uh, I think there are quite a few people there who, um, and I get this fairly often who maybe are newer to Seattle, which gives me hope that they're like, oh, I, you know, really appreciate, um, learning about what was here before learning about like his history of the city. You know, I wish that a lot of stuff was still around because like, I would have liked to go there or like, you know, bring my kids there, whatever. Um, so I like to think it makes people more interested and invested in just a sense of place in general. Um, and I mean, yeah, I don't know if, again, this is just like a self-selecting thing, but like, I mean, I'm always interested in like the history of the city and like, what was there before, like what shaped it, who shaped it, why is it the way it is? Like, why is New York? Like, why does it have its own particular feel, vibe and culture? What about Detroit? Like, what are like the things that are particular and local to there? Like, I've always had a kind of a reverence for that stuff. And I feel like with Seattle, especially with like a lot of the really rapid and like severe pace of change, sometimes it feels like a whiteboard that's been erased or like just people don't know, they don't care. Like they think there's, it was a cultural or something before tech. And, um, so it is heartening. I think when people are like, no, there's stories to share and there's people who want to listen and understand the place where they are. And I feel like there's so many layers, especially the pace of change is so quick. People can forget. Stuff gets buried very quickly and people can forget. Um, yeah, really quickly. So I would hope. That just like, I don't know, someone gets interested in history or music or a particular scene that this can kind of function like that. But people are like, oh, well, let me, I'm curious about what's going on in my neighborhood then, you know, just like having that kind of framework or being like attuned to that. And doing it in a way that's like fun and creative and interesting and not just like a history lecture. I mean, I like that shit too, but there's so many ways to, to approach it.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. I think you're really getting after like my, these, I'm thinking about these things constantly and all the time. I think from the Seattle is this like whiteboard that's been

erased. I'm sure you have heard this, or maybe I guess I should ask, have you heard this? I think that's the idea that Seattle doesn't have history and that there isn't this legacy of built environment that like Seattle's a newer city in whatever way. But in reality is actually not that new of a city. We just don't preserve a lot of the buildings that, that have been a part of the city. Um, do you, well, I, yes, I, I think it's, it does sometimes feel like it is a whiteboard that has been erased. Um, but I, one of my hopes when we've been thinking about memorialization is that it gets people thinking that this is a place, these are building, we've lost buildings like these before. What are the other buildings that we have lost? So I guess, I don't know if that is a thing that you hear in your work, but like the idea that Seattle doesn't have a longstanding history, that there aren't enough things to preserve or memorialize or mourn that are left.

[Cynthia Brothers] Yeah. I mean, I do. Um, yeah. And I think there's a lot to unpack there. I mean, I think Seattle has always been a boom and bust town. Yeah. So I think that lends itself to a particular continual, like tearing down and rebuilding of itself and not knowing or learning about the history that was here before. Um, or maybe just knowing about what's happened in the last 10 or 15 years. So it's like, oh, Starbucks and Amazon. That's like, well, what's like, well, what about all the stuff that was here before that? Um, you know, the ways in which we were a world-class city before any of that stuff, like how we've had global impact culturally and musically and, um, economically. And it's, yeah, it kind of like is frustrating in that it can be like the self-fulfilling prophecy where it's like, well, we keep tearing down, you know, this history and just placing people and communities and culture and then being like, oh, there's like nothing good here. Well, it's like, yeah, because we're not valuing it and prioritizing it and protecting it. Um, and then people are like, it's not, you know, it's not worth staying or there's nothing left here. This place is lame. It's like, well, what do we, what kind of city do we want to be? Like, what do we value? Like if we want it, you know, if people are like, oh, it's, you know, not like New York or San Francisco and blah, blah, blah. And it's like, I mean, yeah, obviously it's like, from the beginning, like when the settlers came here, they try to have it be like little New York. And so people just don't understand that there is like any other place, a very unique cultural history, cultural and cultural and history and identity here. Um, and if we want to have the type of like vibrant, like scenes and communities and stuff here that other people point to in other cities, it's like, well, that's something that like has to be.

[Harriet Wright] And so I think, um, I think just going off of that quickly, like I hear that a lot. I think mostly like people that I hear that from are also people that are not necessarily the ones producing the art. So it's like, there's always this, like, okay, okay. Make a show. Like you think it's lame. Like invite people to your house and play music. Like you can do it. Yeah. Yeah. I, but then I, you know, you, when you lose the venues, when you lose, um, even like the, the things that, that, um, like I'm thinking, you know, there's spaces in the U district that are like these amazing restaurants that have little corners that have places for people to play or gather, read their poetry. Um, when you lose those, it does, it makes, it's a higher barrier of entry, um, to create casual community culture and casual community.

[Cynthia Brothers] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. It's just like the playbook, you know, like the, that you see over and over for like how gentrification works. Like, you know, like, you know, like, Oh, like these village or Soho used to be like these places that are like the poster children for like, Oh my God, this was like such a hotbed. Like art and music. Like art and music and like cool stuff. And like, yeah, creative movements. And then now it's just like a luxury wasteland. It's just like, we, like, we know what happens. Like, cause can we like not do that? Like you end up just like, yeah. Like strangling your own. Yeah. Or, you know, like Pike Place Market. It's like, people are still like, whoa, really? When I tell them it's like, yeah, back in the day, they wanted to tear it down and turn it into like this office complex of like high rise hotels and apartments and parking lots. And, um, it was only just like a grassroots movement that prevented that. And now it's like, can you imagine if we didn't have Pike Place and like how many other Pike Places there could be if there was, it's kind of this like short-term gain mentality. Um, but again, that's capitalism for you.

[Harriet Wright] My hot take is as like a Seattleite is that I still love going to Pike Place. I like, I love it.

[Cynthia Brothers] No, Pike Place is the best. And it's like, have that historic, I mean, you know, I know there's gripes with the PDA and stuff, but it's like, if there wasn't, I mean, there, they have a structure that's intentionally keeping it local, keeping the rents below market.

[Harriet Wright] Supporting the rents even, like they have a whole internal financing structure. Like it's, they do really, it's really progressive for people that don't view themselves as progressive, which I think is.

[Cynthia Brothers] Yeah. Yeah. They're not operating in like the, you know, free market system or whatever. If they were, we probably wouldn't have anymore. And I mean, it's still like one of the cool, you know, there's so many things that I'll go there. I'm like, oh shit, I didn't know this place was here or I forgot it. You know, there's so many nooks and crannies and there's like awesome nightlife there. Daytime farmer's market stuff. So I, it's still like one of my favorite places to go. Yeah. I feel like you want that.

[Harriet Wright] All right. Um, well, I like, I, I, like, I guess I, in some ways I kind of want to go back into like the built environment and into buildings. Um, I guess. So much of your work is on the internet. Like it's a lot of like, like internet, Facebook, Instagram posting, and then people commenting their feelings and their, um, reactions. Is that ever hard for you? Like, I like you live in this sometimes in some, in some of the work it's, it's some feels like it could be sometimes demoralizing. Is that like a thing that you think about in your work or how do you navigate? Like kind of running vanishing Seattle and like running this. You're like, you're running in many ways a repository, like a, those like condolence pages that like people post their loved ones on and you're like the moderator for it.

[Cynthia Brothers] You know? Yeah. That's a great question. I mean, I will have people fairly frequently messaging me or come up to me and be like, are you okay? And which I appreciate that they're like thinking about kind of the psychic and emotional load that they can take, which I'll be honest. It's like, yeah, like I do feel it. Like, I think I wouldn't be running this account if I didn't care and have some personal and emotional investment in Seattle. And just to clean a lot of these places. I mean, being here most of my life and just like, yeah, liking to, you know, be a part of and enjoy my city. Like there's a lot of these places where I've been to, where I, you know, have a personal connection to. So some of these do like, you know, cut pretty deep. Um, and I find that I will like, you know, get pretty invested in like, you know, what can I do to try and like get the word out to like, try and help, uh, you know, save this place or get out of, you know, go fund me or whatever. I'll spend a fair amount of time. Sometimes I actually feel like I can be a bit of a like therapist sometimes when I'm talking to business owners, you know, about like what they're going through emotionally or like maybe trying to strategize with them about like, okay, like, is there something that can be done? Um, and it's, it's tough because a lot of times it's like, it's the same thing about like, oh, the rent went up. Shady landlord, you're getting displaced. Costs are too high. Um, I mean, there's things too that are like, not as devastating or just displacing like, oh, just wanting to retire. Chapter or, you know, go on their own terms, which is why I like to balance it with like, not vanishings and like the unvanishings when they do happen. Um, and I feel like over time, there's had to be like a fair amount of compartmentalization I have to do just to kind of like, not get overwhelmed by it. Um, and there's some places where it's like, so yeah, I think some places it's like, I will, generally, I try not to editorialize too much about stuff. Cause I'm just like, here's some things I know, or I've researched about it that were unique about it. Here's why they're disappearing. Um, here might, might be coming next if we know that. And people can kind of make up their own, come to their own conclusions about it. I, you know, try not to necessarily say this is bad or this is good, but I might be like, this is why this place was important to people. They're maybe important to me. And then invite people to kind of share their own memories of their own takes on it. Um, so yeah, but the thing that does keep me going, I think, because it's like, I mean, I'll joke a lot of times. I'm like, you know, people be like, Oh, you, you run vanishing Seattle. You know, I'll be like, Oh yeah, sorry. It's like such a bum out. Yeah. And you know, so, cause sometimes people are like, I can't follow you anymore. It's like too much. Other times people are like, Oh, I don't find it, you know, depressing at all. It's like, I think it's actually, you know, it's, it's more like kind of celebratory. And other times people will be like, Oh, my favorites are the not vanishing. Cause I'm like, yeah, I, me too. And so I'll get like a different, you know, it's interesting kind of reactions that I get. But I think the thing that does keep me going is that people are still very invested in these places. Like if nobody was responding or commenting. Cause when I first, I think it's like, I probably wouldn't have, you know, kept running it. I think when I was first starting it, I was maybe, I think it's easy when you see these places disappearing and these like losses and all this like rapid that happening so quickly, you can feel pretty isolating.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. Cause you're like the only one seeing it, you know, canary in a coal mine style. Yeah.

[Cynthia Brothers] I can't feel like that. I was kind of, when I first started, I was like, does anyone else care about this? Cause I don't feel like the city gives a shit about what it's, what's happening here. But then I was like, Oh, people actually really do care. And people in Seattle, there's still this sense of like wanting to fight for the things and the places that they love. Um, or people just wanting to come together and like talk about, like share stories and talk about the places that are important to them and like connect in that way, which is why I've also, you know, done a lot of, um, like in real life events and things. I think that's really important to couple with the online piece. Cause I just, yeah, I'm a believer in, you know, I'm old school. I like to face to face. Yeah. I'm like getting human bodies in a space together. Um, so I think that's the thing that's really kept me going. It was just like kind of the connectivity, um, that I just didn't really anticipate that happens. I think online and offline and that people are still interested and excited to have these conversations. And so hopefully it's not all about loss, but it's also about like, well, what have we gained from these places and what is important for us to like carry with us and carry forward and try to replicate. Like what does it say about us as a community community and as a city? I don't want people to feel defeated or hopeless. Like that kind of bums me out. People are like, that's the last straw I'm leaving Seattle. This place sucks. It's like, yeah, I feel like that too sometimes, but it's like, that's not the point of it. It is to keep being like, Hey, pay attention to this place, this place. What is all this saying? Like, does it seem right to you? But it's kind of like, yeah, hopefully to inspire people to action or just like a sense of, I don't know. What, what do we want to, what is, what, what lessons are we learning from this and how do we want to carry that into like what we're creating? Yeah. In the future as a, as a city and as a community.

[Harriet Wright] I'm sure you know this because your work has such a big impact on so many people. And, but many, many of the time. And that I like, when I look at them, I'm like doing a lot of work in like demolition permit land and like in like looking up the address of the buildings being demolished to see if anyone is talking about the loss of these buildings. And that's like how I'm finding some of these funerary practices. Oh, like in the comments. Yeah. But often you are the only record that these buildings have, like the, it is like not, I hope that isn't like, I'm sure you maybe you have realized that or know that, but like, it's, it's kind of like, it's like you just did. And like, in many ways, it's just like this electronic record of these buildings. And the comments that people leave sharing their condolences or their memories. Like that's, that's like what we have really in a lot of cases. And that's, I mean, that's pretty cool. I mean, it's amazing that you're able to do the work, but I, I just want to acknowledge that, that like, like in many ways, like you were the, you have been the, the soul keeper of, of these stories and of this memorialization practice.

[Cynthia Brothers] Yeah. I feel like people just, I don't even know if people really bother to submit public records. You feel like it goes into a black hole and like nobody cares, but I'm glad you're looking at those. I used to look at those more and then I'm, yeah. It is a black hole. Yeah. I

don't think anyone in the city really cares about it. So yeah. And also it's like how many people are going to navigate into the page or know how to do that. And I'm hoping this is a more, yeah, accessible way. Although I am kind of like, I mean, social media can be so like fleeting and it's like getting bumped down in the feed. So it's been interesting practice for me trying to see like, are there other ways to kind of pull stuff out of the comments or encourage people to share stuff and like engage in this. Yeah. Like storytelling or kind of collective grief or celebration in like other ways. So I've done like in my art exhibits, you know, have interactive elements where people can respond to like the signage or the art and have conversations with each other, share about places they missed on like post-its. I've done some like performances and presentations where all like talk about a place like the turf or the doghouse or rebar. And then at the end, usually like share and read some like comments that I've picked out that people have left because some of them are like, and most of them, I mean, have pretty much all of them. I try to have a comedic element because like the stuff is funny. These places are like, they're ridiculous.

[Harriet Wright] Ridiculous. All of them. Every single place is ridiculous. Yeah.

[Cynthia Brothers] And, you know, it's like, I mean, some of my favorites are like the old McDonald's across from Seattle Center or like recently I posted on the Jack in the Box on the Ave.

[Harriet Wright] Oh, yeah. It was like called a crack in the box when I was in high school.

[Cynthia Brothers] And, you know, there's like other again, like rebar doghouse, which was like, yeah, obviously, these are like really culturally unique, important places. That people have hilarious stories about. But there's also these places like these chains or it's like kind of like if you know, you know, type of thing where it's like, yeah, obviously. And I'm almost like I feel like trolling a little bit because I'm like there's people who like, you know, take it so seriously where they're like, I can't believe you're posting. Why are we celebrating and waxing poetic about like this chain? It's like because it's a place that like almost every person who grew up in Seattle has like a weird story about. Yeah. And it was like. Yeah, it's like. Yeah, it was a McDonald's, but because it was located where it was and it was open late and it was cheap and you had. Kids, skaters, punks, people going to the all ages shows, people coming from like Memorial Stadium, high school kids, bumper shoot, like just like this like nexus of all these different types of people in Seattle at all hours. Like there was some really weird and funny shit that went down. And it's like, this is, you know, something that I think is juicy and, you know, people that have like, and those have been some of my most popular posts. Not because like, oh, we love a McDonald's, but it's like, yeah, that one, that one was like special. It's in a way and everybody has something to say about it. And so kind of these unexpected things sometimes too, it's like a way to kind of, I don't know, flip the script a little bit in a fun way. People are like, damn, I do miss that McDonald's.

[Harriet Wright] It's like, you know, like all of this is, I'm trying to like, it's so easy to fall into like the human example. Like there's so many parallels, but that like idea that like from religion that like all people are worthy, all people have dignity, all people deserve to be, have a, you know, that's like a common belief. Like all people deserve to have a funeral or a procession or a headstone or like eat, like the unidentified grave. Like that's, that's like a thing buildings, like it's like these buildings, all of these buildings, no matter if they are just the, you know, the McDonald's and Seattle center, like they have their worth and their dignity. And there's still this like loss that happens when we lose them. Yeah.

[Cynthia Brothers] They matter to someone, you know.

[Harriet Wright] And a lot of the time they matter to a lot of people, even if that isn't the initial understanding of the space. I think that's a really cool example that like, you probably, I don't know if you expected that post to be one of your most popular, but.

[Cynthia Brothers] I had a feeling. I still get surprised. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And you know, I'll post about places too that it's like people just like are not into it at all. And they'll have all these bad memories to share, which is like, that's great. Like I'm into that too. Right.

[Harriet Wright] That's the point. Yeah. And they'll probably still drive by that corner and be like, remember when that awful thing happened here? Yeah.

[Cynthia Brothers] Yeah. What are we supposed to do? Just stay in our, you know, apartments all day? Like these are. Yeah. It's humans. We're supposed to go outside and these are the places that like color our lives, you know? So yeah. We're good or bad.

[Harriet Wright] Well, we're coming up on time to, I guess I have two questions left that I want to cover. I guess the first one is, is there a building that you wish you had the chance to memorialize or have a building that no longer exists that you wish you had the chance to say goodbye to?

[Cynthia Brothers] Oh, that's a great question. I mean, I feel like there are so many places that I wanted to cover on Vanishing Seattle. I just don't have the capacity or the time to get to it. You know, I have this running list that's probably like a couple hundred places where it's like I wanted to post on it. And it's just like. It didn't. It just hadn't come to pass. So. And yeah. And I can't cover it all, obviously. So I think that's one thing I just have to accept and try not to feel too guilty about. Although I do. Oh. That's a hard one. I'm trying to think. Because it started in 2016. So there's definitely a lot of places since I started it that I haven't covered that I wish I had. And then there's all these places before that. And I'll try. Sometimes I'll try to do like a throwback Thursday as a way to kind of like. Do ones that were like prior to Vanishing Seattle's time or even going way back. That's kind of like this is just really interesting history or an interesting person or place. This is hard. It's really hard to pick a single one.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. And also you don't feel like you can answer that at all. I can.

[Cynthia Brothers] But yes. I can say yes.

[Harriet Wright] And I think like that point about there's this like list of buildings you can't post. Like I think that, you know, that's okay. Like that is the reality of this city. I think it's a pretty Herculean task to try and even cover the amount that's already covered. There's a lot of demolishments and changes and building closures that happen. Yeah.

[Cynthia Brothers] And sometimes there's places where it's like you would think. I mean, there's just really not. Unless I maybe went and did some deep research in the Seattle room or something. Like a lot of my stuff just, I mean, I'll just do what I can. Like getting stuff online. But like there's a lot of stuff that pre-smartphone or whatever. Or it's like a place that was like, God, I went through dozens of times or hundreds of times. Or everyone knows this place. And you just cannot find pictures. Yeah. It's a really like scant amount of documentation to be found online. So even I'd say, yeah, kind of like pre-2010s in some places. Or like, I don't know, like the Velvet Elvis. I'm trying to think about some of the all ages venues I went to in like high school and college. Like Velvet Elvis or Paradox or something. And it's just like, and you know, I know the stranger did write-ups on them. I know they probably had some pictures back in the day or the rocket. But it's like, that stuff's not really digitized. And so it's like, how could this place that had like hundreds of thousands of shows just like have? I can't find anything online. Normally if I can't, because you know, I will try to share visuals with the caption. If I can't find a decent visual, it's just like, it just makes it hard due to whatever the limitations of like me posting most of my content on social media. So yeah, which is where, you know, other creative ways of storytelling, I think, come to play and are really important. Yeah. All right.

[Harriet Wright] And this is, you know, my last one is just pretty general. Like, just if, is there anything that you haven't had the chance to bring up that when you think about, you know, communities remembering or building memorialization, anything else you want to quickly bring up? Or do you think that's enough of the sad building funeral talk for the day?

[Cynthia Brothers] Um, I mean, some other ones that come to mind that, I mean, you may already know about or talk to folks, um, from is, uh, shelf life stories. Um, that started as like a project, um, oral history podcast. Um, I think also some visual projection connected to the red apple on 23rd and Jackson. Uh, that was torn down as Jill Friedberg. She also, um, helped with, uh, yeah. I started Wanawari and they just came out with a book and she's done some like film projection, uh, photo projections, like in the CD on the sides of buildings, which is the aspect that I'm just like obsessed about. Um, and I got to work with her for, um, another project when the viaduct was getting torn down, the hello, goodbye viaduct, where we were inside the battery street tunnel and we projected, um, images and poems and comments and memories about the viaduct that folks had shared. And also historical, like archival, like what did the waterfront look like, like before, um, settlement and stuff like that. So that was a cool, I think that whole, like,

yeah, hello, goodbye viaduct was an awesome kind of send off. And, um, yeah, also kind of cool to see. And I'm glad that the city and props to Jenny Koo, who had it up at that time. She's now at Seattle Public Library, like invested in having that big, uh, farewell. And a lot of people were just like, you know, like the viaduct was kind of a contentious, I don't know, structure, if you will. And it's like, everyone's got, it's very polarizing, you know, but I think people recognizing that it's like love it or hate it. It was like a big part of the city. And I think also, you know, people who are local and anticipating that it's like, yeah, people actually do care about this. It was a big part of their upbringing. Um, also the role that it played again in like local arts and culture and venues, um, just around that area. Uh, and just like the way that people, this is also hilarious to me, just like the last night that people were allowed to publicly drive on the viaduct. And like, they just, it was like mayhem and people wouldn't get off and they were like, you know, doing wheelies and like, you know, hanging out topless out of the window. It was like, yeah, I mean, this is how people feel about it. It's like, you may try to minimize it and be like, it sucks. It's ugly. Like, but it's like, well, you know, people obviously care about it and want to commemorate it, um, in some way. And people sent me so many videos and pictures of like their last drive on the viaduct or like, this is a view that I grew up with or that I remember. Um, this is who is living under the viaduct. This is like the places that are in its shadow. Um, yeah, so things like that, I think may be surprising to some people, even to me sometimes that are kind of like, I don't know. I feel like people don't feel like they should be celebrated, but people are going to do it regardless. Um, and yeah, so that just reminded me of another example that was like a big kind of community. Um, yeah. Send off of a very big structure. Yep.

[Harriet Wright] And a structure that was both loved and hated and mostly hated, but still celebrated. Yeah.

[Cynthia Brothers] Yeah. Yeah. I'd say there's, yeah, a good dose of love in there.

[Harriet Wright] Good dose of love.

[Cynthia Brothers] Yeah. Um, yeah. I mean, other forms that like stuff that I've done has taken that have been, uh, yeah, kind of fun and like, uh, yeah, pretty edifying in terms of just like different ways to express, um, to like commemorate places have been like documentary films, um, books. So, yeah, I think it's just kind of speaking to, there's like a lot of different ways for people to, yeah, kind of connect to or just like, yeah, just, just speak to the places that, um, were important to people. And yeah, I think people just kind of like have responded to them in different ways. Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] They, they find ways to hopefully, I hope people find ways to talk about the buildings that they've lost. And yeah, I, the end goal is that like, hopefully there are takeaways from like this list that I'm compiling that people can look to, to do in their own work or when they're a building owner, a city planner, that's hoping to demolish a building, thinking about what

are some ways we can ease that transition. Awesome. Thank you for your time and your thoughts. I, I really, really appreciate it.

[Cynthia Brothers] Yeah. Thank you. I hope you, yeah, gleaned something useful out of this and I can kind of ramble on and talk about this obviously.

[Harriet Wright] I can literally, I am always like, when people are like, so what's your thesis? I'm like, okay, I'm going to start talking. But once I start, it's really hard for me to stop. So yeah, I totally, you're, you're, you, it wasn't happening. And even if it was, I am in the exact same boat and shoes. So.

[Cynthia Brothers] Right on. Yeah. Well, please keep me updated. Again, I'm like so stoked that you're doing this work. I think it's, yeah, really important. And I'm glad that you're. Yeah. Documenting the documentation.

[Harriet Wright] I can, I can send it to you when it's done. If you ever want to list that just so you can look up here, you'll be like, wow, I had a hand in a lot of these. Yeah.

[Cynthia Brothers] And if you're doing, if there's something that comes out of this that I don't know if you're going to, I don't know, try to share some aspect out more publicly or do some sort of event or something like that. Just let me know. Cause I may be happy to, you know, we can always talk about me like sharing that out on vanishing Seattle or, you know, reporting things that might, you know, come out of this. So yeah. Excited to see. Yeah. Where it all goes.

[Harriet Wright] Thank you so much. Have a good day out there. Yeah.

[Cynthia Brothers] You too. It's so good to meet you.

[Harriet Wright] Really good to meet you.

[Cynthia Brothers] Thanks.

Section 8.04 Stephanie Johnson-Toliver — Interview Transcript

[Harriet Wright] Okay. It's helpful, I think, for me. I... so much of this is about personal experience. I don't want to assume, I don't want, like, to wrongly transcribe anything, so it's easier often just to have.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Yes, I hear you, yeah. Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] Great! Well, I can... I can just get started with a little bit of background about myself and this work, and then I might have some questions for you, but also this is meant to be a pretty informal discussion, just kind of about our ideas about building grief and memorialization and all kinds of stuff. But like I mentioned, my name is [Harriet]. I am a born and raised Seattleite, so I'm from here. I love Seattle, this is my place. And I'm a Master's of Urban Planning student at UW. I grew up in Roosevelt, so just up in North Seattle.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Hmm?

[Harriet Wright] And my thesis is basically thinking about how and why communities mourn buildings that are being demolished. buildings that are important, although not necessarily, like, extravagant or, you know, like, landmarkable... landmarkable in any... in any way. I actually, I read some of the articles that you had sent over earlier in the year. You sent one by, Felix Bannell, if I'm pronouncing his name. buildings that are important, although not necessarily, like, extravagant or, you know, like, landmarkable... landmarkable in any... in any way. I actually, I read some of the articles that you had sent over earlier in the year. You sent one by, Felix Bannell, if I'm pronouncing his name.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Oh, yeah, Bunell.

[Harriet Wright] But no, yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Yes.

[Harriet Wright] But what about lesser-known neighborhood places that might not go... that might not officially qualify as landmarks? The buildings and institutions only mean something to people who live within a few blocks. And so, my work is thinking about the loss of those buildings and all the different ways that people in Seattle have come together to acknowledge that loss.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Yeah, that's, that's very cool, because that is, like, right up my alley. you know, in the preservation and memory work that I do, a large part of it is, Reconciling with the loss, and loss of... People, sites, and then, you know, how do we preserve those? And share, you know, for future, I don't know, valuation, future consideration, how it influences what we do. So, I'm all about it, and finding the opportunities to do it over these last few years has been really important for me as I release it. 2? So, yeah, thank you for reaching out to me.

[Harriet Wright] Of course, and I... and also, I should mention that I'm on the... I specialize in historic preservation, so I'm receiving the graduate certificate in historic preservation, and really, Preservation, from a Seattle context, is kind of my passion in a lot of ways. I think there's a lot of informal preservation that people like yourself are already doing, and so thinking about Really, my work is a critique on modern, formalized historic preservation, and an encouragement for people to extend what preservation could and should look like.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Yes, exactly that, right? I think you... you hit it on the head, you know, with that, in that, when we look at the criterias today, too. And I've been part of King County in changing up those criteria, which is really important. That's... Holly and I were both together on that. on that advisory. So, seeing things move forward, my influence from the National Trust, you know, being there for, a couple of years as a diversity scholar, and... which really inspired me, too. on that advisory. So, seeing things move forward, my influence from the National Trust, you know, being there for, a couple of years as a diversity scholar, and... which really inspired me, too. And then, most recently, the success with the Preservation Board and presenting a nomination to move forward as a designation, so I'm... In the mix of it. And, two, I'm a fourth-generation Seattleite, so... I'm... I'm rooted and grounded here, too.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. Yeah, well, if... just to get us started, would you want to tell me a little bit about your connection to, like, I know particularly you work in a lot of Black church preservation, but I... I would be curious just to hear how you even got involved in that. Was the Walker Chapel or Walker Church kind of your first introduction to that work?

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Well, my interest in, you know, history of Black churches, goes back quite a ways, but I... I see my... my work, well beyond Black churches, and that, the, the collections that I manage and help to supervise, or manage and supervise with you know, volunteer team, is a really deep and rich archive at the Black Heritage Society. It's probably the largest public collection in the state. you know, volunteer team, is a really deep and rich archive at the Black Heritage Society. It's probably the largest public collection in the state. Really deep photographs, albums, documents, ephemera, all of it is there. shared space with, the Museum of History and Industry in Georgetown. It is public access there by appointment, so we invite people to come in, and we're just working really hard to digitize some of those assets, too, to be able to share much broader than actually coming and down physically. But the... I'm inspired by the preservation work. I think, Even as a kid, you know, when someone asked what I wanted to do, I wanted to be an archaeologist. You know, I wanted to dig, I wanted to look for stuff, you know, find stuff. And so, over the years, just... that has influenced my path. I came to the Black Heritage Society probably pretty honestly, in that I, you know, with my fourth generation rootedness, just, knowing some of the work that they did. I was a member there for a number of years, but then started leading, as the president, Gosh, 6 years? No term limits, I'm just shaking my head. But happy for it. And the passionate work of documenting people's lives. And to Walker Chapel, that was more of a personal, really, experience for me, in that I live nearby. I live just within, 3 blocks of Walker Chapel. And so, I... Purchased my house in this neighborhood about 40 years ago. And the church was active then. I mean, there were days, Saturdays and Sundays when the congregation just took up the whole neighborhood. The cars were...

[Harriet Wright] Hmm.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Around the block, right? And I found myself, like, going, ugh, you know, trying to get through it, and now I'm like, oh no... Right. A little more Walker Chapel. So,

the Walker Chapel was really instrumental in the community. They did a lot of outreach in the community. You didn't have to be a member to participate in any of their, you know, their dinners, their barbecues, their... whatever it was, function they had at the church. Everyone in the community was invited to Right. A little more Walker Chapel. So, the Walker Chapel was really instrumental in the community. They did a lot of outreach in the community. You didn't have to be a member to participate in any of their, you know, their dinners, their barbecues, their... whatever it was, function they had at the church. Everyone in the community was invited to participate. My... I have some old photos of my sons, and and me walking around the block with litter sticks with their group, because they had a, you know, a neighborhood cleanup. So, it was a really vibrant space in church, and then over the years, you know, the congregation grew smaller and smaller as The residents in the community, were either... Passing on, or the neighborhood became so gentrified that you know, they weren't able to keep their homes, people were selling their homes, homes were being demolished, and townhouses were going up, and then eventually, at Walker Chapel, that was owned by AME Church.

[Harriet Wright] Hmm.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] fame. Decided that they would sell the building, and relocate. It was pretty much on the down-low, too. The people in the community weren't aware of, really, what was going on until it actually happened, until the sign went up, you know, on the church, that it had been sold, and there was a permit sign that went up, and... A really interesting, Me finding out some of the backstory, too, because my... my sister and my brother-in-law are, very instrumental at Fame Church. And so I was getting some insight from them about why, you know, kind of all the whys. And, and then... The development team. The developers that bought the property... I think they probably saw the article with Felix, or... somehow, they connected to me, and wanted me to come to the Landmarks Board with them and support their effort. Which I thought was really interesting, because what we know is that they really don't... they really didn't want to have to do anything there, you know, they didn't want any, pushback from the community about what they were gonna do there on the property, so it was really suspicious to me, and I talked with some folks about it, and I... I... I couldn't do that.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] I couldn't accompany them to the Landmarks Board. So, once I said no to them on that, I lost contact with what was happening at the chapel. The building was demolished. There's still a big hole there.

[Harriet Wright] Right.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] It's very sad. So, when, CyclePomp, then, the project, the salon, contacted me about eulogies, then I thought, okay, this is my opportunity to eulogize Walker Chapel.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. And I, I've... in reading your eulogy, that you, you know, like, I think... it's like this lovely goodbye, but the piece that really stuck with me is you invited the music, the lingering music, to come into your front door. And I, like, I just, I think... it's like this lovely goodbye, but the piece that really stuck with me is you invited the music, the lingering music, to come into your front door. And I, like, I just, I think... One of the things I've been working about trying to figure out how to... how to bring into more academic writing is this idea that the... what's so important about these buildings and this grief process is that the... the buildings have so much more of a connection to the community, despite the architectural significance that they... prominence that they had. And I think what's such a great example about the chapel is that it's... you have, you know, you have the sound of the cars parked in the neighborhood, you have the music that flows through the area.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] Those are those, like, non-tangible... feelings of grief that you miss almost more than seeing the church. I don't know if that resonates with you at all, but I've been thinking a lot about that in my work.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] No, it does, and in this particular situation, yeah, I'm feeling a little emotional about it, just as you describe it, because, that was the important piece that I think not only me, but other people who were touched by Walker Chapel in this community, were missing. And so we did have to have a moment to mourn it. And, and then again, my neighbor Jerry, right? I talked a little bit about Jerry, who lived right across the street from me, and he would have choir practice at his apartment. And the choir would all... be over there, he'd get on his organ, his piano, electric piano, and they'd be singing across the street, and I'd be like, you know... But yet, you know, it was part of the community. It was the joy. And, sometimes we don't realize, how much we're affected or influenced by it until it's gone. And so, I absolutely agree with what you say in terms of, Maybe some of the intangibles that... You know, stick with us, and... We want to make sure that we find a way to be able to, to preserve that.

[Harriet Wright] I know this is... can be a, like, there's, like, a lot of emotion when we talk about these buildings, so also, you never have to answer any questions, or only share what you're comfortable with. I will go wherever you go, so there's no... no pressure on that.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Hmm? .

[Harriet Wright] I was... I do have a question for you, kind of, about the... Like, this, like, the demolition and this loss, and as you've seen, like, the intangible change, has that been a relatively private experience for you, or is that something that you've noticed other people talking with you about in the neighborhood?

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Well, other folks have talked to me about it in the neighborhood, in that, It seemed they were more worried about the 20 units that were gonna go up.

[Harriet Wright] Oh,

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] In... in that space, and trying to wrap your head around, how do you fit 20 units into that space successfully when we already live in this very dense neighborhood. And so it got people thinking and talking about zoning, and zoning in the Central District, and upzoning, and what our corridors look like right now, you know, losing our canopy, our trees. So there was a lot of conversation about that. With... with some neighbors. It had gotten to the point, where most of my neighbors, by the time things were being demoed at the chapel, were people who didn't have direct experiences like mine. It had gotten to the point, where most of my neighbors, by the time things were being demoed at the chapel, were people who didn't have direct experiences like mine. You know. So they didn't know the Walker Chapel that I knew.

[Harriet Wright] Bye.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] So, again, when Eulogies for Place came up, it gave me the opportunity to just sort of release some of the stuff that I had been thinking and wanted to say. So, the timing was perfect for me. How's that? And, so memorializing places, I think it goes well beyond the preservation board bringing our nominations forward that we would love to bring forward and have landmarked and saved. It's about us talking about it just like this. You know, opening the door or opportunities for people to express that. So, what does that look like? Maybe more eulogies for place, maybe?

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] And, you know, I've talked to them, CyclePomp about that just a little bit, and, and then, of course, you know, we have others like Vanishing Seattle, where there's opportunities as well.

[Harriet Wright] Hmm.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] And different neighborhood, tours where, we talk about places that have vanished or have been demolished, and, you know, kind of the then and now of it. So, I think there's ways for people and community to get involved and have conversations about it, and particularly if you live in a neighborhood and you want to be invested in that neighborhood, why not know its past and its history?

[Harriet Wright] Yes. Do you find people in your neighborhood are interested in knowing its past and history, or has that been a disconnect?

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Well, no, the more, you know, I talk about it out loud.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] people are interested. And so, I have done something that started during COVID, where I go to the sidewalk. in front of my house, and in chalk, I write something on the walk. So if I know I'm gonna have at least 2 or 3 consecutive days of sun. I'll write something there. And it's a way for me to, as people stop. and read, for me to have an opportunity to talk about that.

[Harriet Wright] Oh.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] So, I do some of that, that's kind of my own thing. And, and then, being sure that I accept invitations, I... I do prioritize my time, and... but if there's, opportunity, a few weeks ago, the Leshai Community Council, which is in my neighborhood, I... they reached out to see if I would come and talk to, the Council, and... I said, yeah, sure, even though I was like, oh god, 7 o'clock at night, and I'm just like... you know, but yes. And I was shocked. They had to... I thought maybe 10 people, maybe? And I was shocked. They had to... I thought maybe 10 people, maybe?

[Harriet Wright] Huh?

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] But they had to line out chairs, like, standing room only in the community to... Standing room only? to hear about community-preserving places and our community history. So, that tells me that people want to know. They're excited about it. So I will take opportunities, as many as I can, to... to do that. And I will, take and be part of a tour with, Cynthia Brothers and Taha Ibrahim, this summer on Jackson Street as they, do some remembrance of what was on, Jackson Street between King Street and 12th Avenue.

[Harriet Wright] That's... Do you... I mean, the... the remembrance... Especially, if anything, it also kind of feels like a grief practice, or like a... a morning practice of some kind. Just... there's something about that line of looking back, and... don't know if you have any thoughts on that.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Yeah, it is. Well, for instance, with a property like... like Walker Chapel, for me, it went through all of those stages of being like. Yeah, it is. Well, for instance, with a property like... like Walker Chapel, for me, it went through all of those stages of being like.

[Harriet Wright] Hmm.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Shocked, Pissed off!

[Harriet Wright] Mad!

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] to, like, what am I gonna do about it? you know... you know, what can I say about it? How do I release this stuff? So I went through all of those. stages of it. And then the coming to terms part is still... kind of, you know, there for me, kind of hanging out for

me. Because I don't know what's gonna pop up in that place, right? Right. And how I'm gonna feel about what that End goal is gonna look like in that. You know, down 3 blocks from me. Yeah. The stages of mourning. Definitely comes into play with places and not just people.

[Harriet Wright] - Do you... the... One of the things I've been hearing about in talking with other experiences is the rapid rate of change, and it's like the sudden death of buildings, I think, has been, Something that's been pretty shocking to hear the community reactions to.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] And I...

[Harriet Wright] I wonder about if you feel like your process with Walker Chapel would have been different if you had had more time to say goodbye.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Definitely with the congregation that was there. And it was an aging congregation, too, that I knew there. Miss Ruth. Who... who lived down the street from me, too. That was her church. She had the most beautiful hat, she had a beautiful hat collection. And so not being able to... to really talk to her in depth about it. I would see her occasionally. She didn't get out much.

[Harriet Wright] And she will.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Later years, she, yeah. And she passed away just a couple years ago. But, But talking to her about it, that was her church, that was her home church. And, You know, I... I don't know, I'm still... I'm... yeah, clearly I'm still processing it.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] But, but the suddenness... Of something being demoed. for me, has been really interesting, too, to turn a corner and then see a sign, or a fence, and then be like, what the heck? What... you know, and shaking my head, like, how can they... like, one more, high-rise... something?

[Harriet Wright] On that.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] corner, and it just saddens me that way, even though, you know, I know things... Evolve. things move. I mean, our history doesn't sit still, and why should our neighborhoods and our communities? So... the right thing to do, in my head, is that we would have a strong design development. And we know that, in Seattle. that design review process has been... there was a bit of a moratorium on it for a while. Developers were only required to have only one meeting. Where in the past, I can remember, like, even with the Liberty Bank building. and the loss of the Liberty Bank building, but involving the developers there, involving the community over the entire process, from the very beginning to the end. And then what we have today is this, you know, beautiful space, that the community helped to give input and insight to. Instead of, you know, a one-off, maybe, with a developer, to talk about interests of the

community and the people who reside in the community over what they plan to do. So, Yeah, I've got my eyes open on design review. In fact, I just received some mail a couple of days ago about, some folks who were Meeting regularly to, to try and help direct the next steps with the Central District Design Review.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. I think I read in one of the articles you sent a call to action, almost, that was about naming whatever gets built after Walker Chapel. Is that... would that be part of that process, or do you see that being a separate, just kind of honorarium, remembering of what was there?

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Yeah, see, that, too, just... With the development of... of buildings, those that are being demolished. A plaque, or a... Something on the wall, inside the building, I don't know if it's enough.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah, I don't either.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] I don't. And so, again, referencing Liberty Bank and the way that they, were able to maintain some of the history of the building they demoed. They used... repurposed some of the bank building, you know, the vault.

[Harriet Wright] Right.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] the safe deposit boxes, and just... just the way they were intentional about it. So it wasn't just, you know, yeah, this... something on the wall, that said there seems to be...

[Harriet Wright] that.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Or, naming a room after. You know, that person or that. That building that was lost. And so... I think what was driving me most recently with the People's Wall Seattle Chapter Black Panther Party at their second headquarters. Yes, the building is gone. The building has been gone since about 1973. But, that retaining wall that is still there, never been defaced.

[Harriet Wright] Right.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Total respect for this mural wall that was, you know, at the headquarters there. And, you know, what does that say about, you know, community, how we respect and acknowledge, you know, history?

[Harriet Wright] Beautiful.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] So, I'm excited for that. There will be some sort of signage interpretation there, because now there's not, and people do pass it. You know, and wonder what it's all about. So, we will do something there. But, so yeah, naming, something just as kind of this one-off thing to say, I did that.

[Harriet Wright] Right, a box to be checked is not the point of a memorialization. It's to... I mean, it is to mourn, it's to remember, it's to uplift, it's to... Right, a box to be checked is not the point of a memorialization. It's to... I mean, it is to mourn, it's to remember, it's to uplift, it's to... Think about the joy and the sounds and all of that.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] joy of it. Another big one for me, recently, too, within the last year, was the site of the original Phyllis Wheatley YWCA.

[Harriet Wright] Mmm,

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] off of Madison Street in about, let's think it's like 22nd. The street, they've changed just a little bit since... Yeah, since about 1930 or 40. But it's sitting right off Madison Street, and so the developer wanting to take it down, and me saying, well, you know, okay, I understand, affordable housing and wanting to do something in this space, but what can you do to acknowledge the fact that this was the house of... you know, the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA that was founded because black women and children couldn't go to the downtown Y. It was this community that, that founded... that place here on this spot, that was hugely instrumental in the community. And it stayed there until about 1960-something now, I have to do the fact check on that, when they moved to Cherry Street. So, they're off of MLK and Cherry, the Y is there now. But that was the original site of... you know, the YWCA. So there's a lot of, of history, there was some harm. With how it came together, but it turned out to be, you know, this really rich space. And the developer pushed back a little bit on it, The building's still standing, the sign is still there for the demo, but it's been at least a year. So, I pass it often to see if it's still there. And, he heard from me, and knows how I feel about it, and how several other people in the community feel about it, but he's not giving us any... clues about... what he might do to recognize the building. And for me, it would be more than just a plaque. It would be something that looked more along the lines of Liberty Bank, of where you're really being intentional with space.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. I... I'm just... I'm thinking about... that, you know, you go by these buildings just to make sure they're still there, that... I'm doing, like, a... I... part of my, like, my work is... is this idea that, like, buildings have this life cycle, and, like, the demolition is kind of the end, but it feels like you're, like, waiting with beta... like, it's like the hospice side of... you're sitting with the building.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Thank you.

[Harriet Wright] You're walking by, you're checking in.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Yes! Exactly! You got it! And... and every time, too, that I get close, I'm just... I'm almost praying, like, please let it still be there. Please, please, please let it be there.

[Harriet Wright] It needs to be there, let it be.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] I do, I mean, I'm, like, talking to myself, and then when I see it, I'm like, oh! Yeah. You know, it's still there.

[Harriet Wright] But it's also, I mean, to me, it's... that's, like, some... it's, like, hidden work that you are doing in this community, right? Like, you are... you live... you live here, you live around here, you've seen the neighborhood change, and, like, this is... this is, like, a Black organization, and you're just... you're, like, the... you're sitting with this building in its last... phase. And it's... it's hopefully not its last phase, but it is its last...

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Well, it is, yeah.

[Harriet Wright] It is its last phase, and that is... That is, like, an unbelievably emotional thing to, like, to hold and to do, even... I... I think that's what this... I am thinking about this work all the time, is it's... it is, like, Ritual and repetitive and work to just... Walk by and pray that it's still there.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] I know, and just to your point, too, now, I'm just thinking, like, it is a form of hospice care. Yeah. So, so yeah, so that, that building is one, and, you know... There's others, too, where I'm just, like, holding my breath.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] But, but again, knowing that the train has left the station.

[Harriet Wright] Right?

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] You know, we're, we're building for the future. But, again, with intention, I hope.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. And it's... yeah, I think there's this idea that neighborhoods have to change. We live in a city. whatnot. And there is, like, I think there is a call for preservation to help be an ease into the next life, and, like, an ease into the next iteration, and we don't... in my understanding, I don't know if you've done any work in this, but I... I don't really know what preservation's role is to help the transition from Existing building, to demolished building, to help this, like, hospice, or this end-of-life care. I think we get so focused on, like, the Amber, like, these, like, long-time projects, keeping them the same for extending into the future, which is a valiant effort, and there's, like, a lot of people like yourself that are holding... holding the space, holding the hospice for these buildings. I just... I'm very curious, like, if you have any ideas about what preservation Could, or should, or might want to think about doing.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Yeah, I don't think that, that, you know, sometimes when we say preservation, preservation work, or landmarking, that people immediately go to, oh, no, there's gonna be these huge restrictions, there's like, oh, what could we possibly do? But that isn't the total gist of it. there's a lot... That, you know, people can, interject into a process of, you know, saving places, and... you know, even in just a couple weeks, I'll be talking about, you know, Types of incentives and controls. for the people's Wall, and talking with owners about what that looks like, and so, when people learn to understand what the process is about, I think, opens their minds and their eyes and... about What it is. Yeah, and guiding the process, too. My... my work. I was on the board at Historic Seattle. for several years, and so working alongside people like Eugenia Wu.

[Harriet Wright] Huh?

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Who do the good work and have the vision. or, preservation work and what it looks like. you know, others at the Washington Trust who do the same work. Are people who are like-minded. for me.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] So, I think sometimes, being able to be in the room with People, like-minded people, it helps to fuel the fire. And kind of keep you going on, What matters in terms of how we... we see ourselves, in the future with historic preservation. I think the National Trust... it's gonna be really interesting to hear from them as... as Brent Leggs moves in as their new president and CEO. who's led the African American Action Fund for years. So, I'm excited to hear what Brent Leggs is gonna say coming out of the National Trust, as well.

[Harriet Wright] Yep. That is... that is gonna be really interesting, and I... I'm very curious on a local level, as the new, like, bills come in, start in July, and how that changes even, like, our relationship with what preservation's role is.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] That, and you couple it with a comp plan?

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] I tell everyone, too, and just when I was here at Leshai Community Council a month ago, saying, please pay attention to the comp plan. Every opportunity you have to interject, to give your opinion or feedback, please do it. If it doesn't feel right, then speak up and say it. And I know we all have different ways of, being able to address situations that distress us, or we want to mourn something. We have different, different ways. Our paths might be different, but our end goal is the same. And whatever that path is, you know, follow it. If it means a phone call, if it means writing something on your sidewalk.

[Harriet Wright] Or chocolate.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] You know? Or whatever it is. Be a part of it in your community as you, you know, protect the historic assets within your community. You know, our communities define us in a way. You know, and I find it really curious, too. Another thing that I've done is I'll look in the little library boxes, okay, this is weird, but around my neighborhood, just to see what the neighbors are reading, like, what's on their mind? And it's a good way to see, you know, with the books that are there of Kind of get a feel for your community.

[Harriet Wright] That's such an interesting point. I... my mom's a librarian, and I grew up with a little library box in my front yard, and I... that is, like... that... I... I'm gonna have to pay much more attention to the little library books.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Yeah, you know, it was really interesting. So, all of that coupled with, you know, I think... over the years when, my community, I'd say maybe the 5 to 6 block radius, they were all, you know, single-family residences that are now... You know, townhomes, a large majority of them are. My house is the only one on my block that's still a house.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] but... I... I don't know. Just, just finding ways to, to talk to people, and, and share the history of this neighborhood is important to me, so, finding myself, too, as the... kind of the matriarch of the neighborhood, I'm just like.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Because, there was somebody, a young man, a teenager, that came, saw me out front one day, and he said, my mom said to talk to you about the legends at the grocery store that used to be down the street. And I'm like, oh yeah, okay, what do you want to know? So, finding myself in that position. So... Yep. I'm... I'm in the here and now, so... while I am... you know, still, keeping up with all this memory work, and, really, you know, enjoying it. Yeah. Actually. So...

[Harriet Wright] And I... one thing that I've been thinking a lot about, too, is I'm, like, using the words grief and mourning in... in this, like, memory work, or in this... like, thinking about how people process change in the city. And it's... I... I want to clarify as well, like, it's not necessarily, like, a sad grief, but it can be, like, a joyful grief. It can be a joyful loss that you can... it can bring a lot of these emotions. I also, well, part of it, too, which I would be curious your thoughts on, is using advocacy as an outlet for mourning or for grief, and I think the People's Wall is an example... it is an example that I'm using in my case study section of my thesis, talking about like, the... I mean, both, like, the legacy of urban renewal, but also, like, the headquarters was very intentionally demolished. It was an act of violence against the building and also against the community, and the people's wall is, in many ways, the outward expression of grief and loss of the demolition of that building. At least that's what I'm thinking about

Writing about. I don't know if you have any thoughts on that, or just about advocacy in general, but I do think there's some kind of through-line that connects them.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Yeah, the, and finding your way to... to advocacy work, I think, there are probably people who don't realize that they're doing the work.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] You know, and you do the work and advocacy just in your day-to-day conversations, your, with people. You're... you're... Somehow, advocating for what was there, or what's to come, or, You know, as neighbors talk. and then... You hope that, you know, maybe at some point you, you catch the ear or eye of someone who has some, maybe, pull or influence over what might happen there.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] But, again, I think the releasing part of it, like, the sharing part. It's something that helps to... to heal yourself. In it, in loss. And so, I, I guess, we'll always... Be an advocate. An advocate for, you know, preservation and... and memory. And one of the things that I've been doing, too, with... that's near me is the Central Area Senior Center, right? I'm just a couple blocks from there. And one of the things that I've been doing, too, with... that's near me is the Central Area Senior Center, right? I'm just a couple blocks from there. On the ridge, and on 34th. Between Leshi and Mount Baker, right in the middle there. So... they have a new project called the SHARP Project, which is where they're looking at images. It's a reminiscence project for, Black people who are experiencing early onset dementia. So, they look at the photographs, they do a tour. There's about 20 different walking tours, short tours around the neighborhood, and they're looking at photos. In place, and reminiscing. about those places. that's, for the last couple years, I've been working to provide images through the archive for them, but, I did join a group last year to take a couple of the walks and the tours. And it's so much more than just looking at the photographs. It becomes this whole camaraderie type. Feeling and support, you know, for one another.

[Harriet Wright] Mmm.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] So, there is, memory, good memory. In sharing, and releasing, and being an advocate.

[Harriet Wright] Yep. Do you... do you wish that you had the opportunity, or maybe in some ways you still do. But to... to have a... a public goodbye to the Walker Chapel, more so than just eulogies for place.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] I know, I would love... you know what? There's a little bit of a... Drama Dynamic... in the Black church. So, when I... even when I talk about Walker Chapel to my sister and my brother-in-law, who are at Fame Church, and I'm going. why sell it? And

they're like, well, Stephanie, because A, B, C, and D! You know, and then... and so it gets, you know, a little tangled. when I talk to them about it. And I've even had a moment with Pastor Anderson about it. So... You know, I don't know.

[Harriet Wright] Ew.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] I don't know. Yeah. I have thought, not so much at Walker Chapel, but maybe other places of projection, of doing projection art, and I've talked to a couple of artists about that. Is that we project the original building or image onto the existing building, and have that be an evening, a moment. Right. So, that's something that, you know, I've been talking about with a couple of artists recently. It would be interesting to project at Walker Chapel, that space right there.

[Harriet Wright] Hmm.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Yeah.

[Harriet Wright] That's, yeah, a really interesting... idea, and... Yeah, it's this thing that's, like, funny about buildings and people, is that everybody has a different connection to it, and they are always complicated. And those connections are always complicated.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Yeah, and the Black church is, really interesting in that, just because it's the hub of so many communities, and had been.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Since, you know, the first and second migrations to Seattle, turn of the century. I mean, that's where everyone went to, was the church.

[Harriet Wright] Right?

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] And, we have, you know, births, deaths, weddings, graduations, all of it, you know, happens to the church, and the church records it all. So, there's a wealth... of, information in our churches. And, You know, a lot of deep history there, from one person to the next. From one pastor to the next. How, you know, All of that interaction. at the Black Heritage Society, we have, hundreds of funeral programs that date back to the 1940s Seattle Black people. Yeah. And so, we've decided and recently got a grant where we're gonna digitize and create a library of those funeral programs.

[Harriet Wright] Mmm.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Because it tells the life story of some... a funeral program, right? It's your bio.

[Harriet Wright] Right?

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] your history. So, we've decided to, yeah. To do something digitally with those files, and make those available publicly.

[Harriet Wright] That's really cool. I'm... I'm thinking back to... You know, the idea of, like, buildings on hospice, and, like, the idea of, like, a funeral... a funeral card, a funeral program for the buildings that we still have, that we can see.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Hmm.

[Harriet Wright] That are, helping them transition Having a card for their life story. there's... That's...

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Don't give me one more idea.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah, no, I never dare to.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] I'm like, yes!

[Harriet Wright] No, you got your hands full, I said.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] No! Well, the city has their new, right, Black Legacy Project, and the Sanctuary Project, so I am talking to Michael Delange about that, and, you know, how to move intentionally with that, because I feel like they're... they started something, but they hadn't really engaged with the Black community. So, how do you tell our story? If you're not talking directly to us. To, and the people who do the archival work, and, You know, the collective in community.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] So, but I think we're on the same page now. But, yeah.

[Harriet Wright] It is. I also... I've always been shocked about how far away the city stays away from churches. It feels like this, like, kind of hidden... I mean. churches, especially Black churches, but our churches across the city have been conveners for a long time, and they...

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Hmm.

[Harriet Wright] are generally left out of... of community narratives.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Yeah, I think that it, I don't know, shying away from it because, you know, I don't know, politics in the church, I don't know, but, there are definitely, Community, again, community hubs.

[Harriet Wright] And...

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] when you see, especially in Seattle Central District, where there were synagogues that are now black churches. or there's some other form of Black cultural experience, like Langston, right? So, you know, those are stories to be told, and I know we have You know, walking and guided tours where we can share that information, which is great. And it's the same with, the Seattle, the Jazz Trail. We talk about, you know, that corridor. and Japanese, Chinese, and Black Americans, how everybody came together to make that possible and happen, that scene. The Green Book. I don't... I... you know, people, the Negro Motorist Green Book, and people not knowing that there were actual stops here in Seattle, right, and Washington State, they're like, no, really? I'm like, yeah. you know, we got sundown towns in Washington state, so the ability to be able to share, you know, the stories, you know, our history, our true history, is what I'm interested in, so... So by, you know, releasing You know, some of this grief around the loss of place just helps Me. And move through it.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah. And I know we're coming up on our hour together, But I... I would love to end if you wanted to share another story about Well, first off, feel free to share any... continue to share anything you would like, I'm in a rush. Second off, I would love to just, like. whenever you feel ready to end, if you have any last stories or place... memories, or people like Miss Ruth down the street, like, I would... I would love to hear, and this is... I think one of the nice things about this being recorded is it goes into the public library of UW, so it's a thing that people can go back to and read and look at if there's anything you want. To say, like, on record for people to look.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] You know, I... I don't know, I... there's so many people and places in my life that, you know, growing up in Seattle particularly. I'm a kid of the 1950s.

[Harriet Wright] In 19... yeah, 1950s... were you in the.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] They can even wrap your head around night... I mean, it was like, you know, you left your door unlocked, right? you'd... I'd say to my mom, okay, mom, see you later. She'd say, yeah, I'll be back by dark. Yeah, we're running through people's yards, we're, you know, doing all kinds of crazy stuff around the neighborhood, where today, you know, run through somebody's yard, you might not make it home, so... It's a lot different. So, growing up and, And feeling really comfortable in community, embraced by community, and then seeing it sort of fall apart as, our world turns into more, a self-centered space than it does sometimes feel like community space. But I do believe that people are finding their way back in community.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Which... Yeah, it's very cool. So, yeah, I've seen a lot of places vanish, and people, and so... just yesterday. It was yesterday, Sunday.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] I'm here, and, a guy drives up and says, my friend Sharon said that you were, involved with the Black Heritage Society. I have this, box of photos that my friend found that was... this woman was one of the first Black nurses in Seattle, she passed away, that these are all of her photos and her Bible.

[Harriet Wright] Mmm. I said.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] can I leave them with you? And I'm like, here I am out working in the yard? Yeah? So.

[Harriet Wright] And people, like, this is your house, like, this is where you live, this, I'll come to you.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] So I'm like, okay, yeah, and then why do I start looking through it? Oh my gosh, it is just this woman's life, her story in photos is just amazing. So, those are the kinds of things that we cherish at the Black Heritage Society, and to be able to, You know, to care for and steward those stories.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] and I can't wait to get it down to the collections team so they can dig a little deeper into her history, find out more about her, and be able to share it back, so...

[Harriet Wright] I'm sure they get just as excited as you get, and I... I also... I get so excited to... get into those projects that... what a... what a gift they've given, like, in many ways.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Yeah. It is definitely a gift, and... and, you said your mother was a librarian, that's another thing for me, too, is literacy, and and the Little Free Libraries. We... we just put one on the corner of 25th and Union. It's been there for several years. It was redone, we just had it re... redone, and so when I look at the books that people are exchanging there. in that traditional, black neighborhood, and seeing people, you know, what it looks like today and how they're exchanging books is really interesting to me. Douglas Truth Library, down the street, so... Those are things I think we have in common, too, are, literacy and the advocacy for preservation and preserving, Places and people.

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Thank you.

[Harriet Wright] Thank you, and, I... Yeah, again, I just... I thank you so much for taking the time, and even for, like, for... in the first place, writing about Walker Chapel, and... and again, I... like, I can't emphasize enough how much your piece has stuck with me in the... the way that you describe Just the... the presence and the life that that place gave to your neighborhood was...

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Yeah...

[Harriet Wright] Very well done.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Yeah, it truly was, and then when you look at the history of how that building got there, too, I mean, it used to be the old... why?

[Harriet Wright] Yeah.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] the YMCA building that moved there.

[Harriet Wright] Right.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] to be the church, so... Okay. Yeah, so keep in touch. If there's anything else I can give you to clarify whatever I said today, let me know, and...

[Harriet Wright] Yeah, and I'll, I'll formalize the transcript over the next few days, and then send it over to you to look at, and you can feel free to get rid of anything that you would so wish. And also, if you change your mind about having it included, absolutely no pressure to have it. So, yes, thank you, thank you so much.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Chariot.

[Harriet Wright] I'll stay.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] Totally, totally.

[Harriet Wright] Hi, good to talk.

[Stephanie Johnson Toliver] You too. Bye.

Section 8.05 DK Pan, Free Sheep Foundation Interview - Transcript

[Harriet] Hi, how are you? It's nice to meet you.

I know I briefly mentioned it in my email, but I'm a master's student in urban planning, but I focus in historic preservation in, like, the loosest sense you could imagine. But I'm basically developing a record of practice in my thesis about all the different ways — I'm trying to get as many as I can — of different ways that people have mourned or remembered buildings that are about to be or have been demolished in the city of Seattle, which is how I came across your work.

And because my background's in the built environment, I'm focusing mostly on connection to building in place — a longer timescale compared to, like, a shorter timescale that a business

would occupy a space.

Really my goal today is just, like, to get some of your ideas about what you think about when you're thinking about remembering and art.

[DK Pan]

Yeah, I really love that platform.

I feel like there's a lot to be able to explore here. Love it.

[Harriet]

All of it. And I... actually, if you wanted to start — one of the case studies I'm talking about is the Bridge Motel on Aurora, or right off of Aurora.

I was curious about that because I know you played a pretty significant role in the organization of that.

[DK Pan]

So we did the Bridge Motel, and then afterwards we did TUBS.

One of my oldest and dearest friends — his family business was in development, so he became a developer to build his family business. They owned a bunch of properties in the U-District, and then he reached out to me, being like, "Hey, I'm starting this new project, and would you want to be involved? I'm looking for somebody to basically manage this motel for, like, the next year before we demolish it."

So, my caveat with him was, I'm happy to manage this for the next year, but my caveat is that once it's ready for deconstruction, you get to allow me to use it as an art space.

And the thinking behind it was, I think, really aligned with maybe your framing — it was kind of like an Irish wake, this idea of, like, dressing up a corpse, really celebrating the life of this place.

There's a fair amount of research into the history of the structure. And then just the understanding of the periods of disuse — it basically became a magnet for drugs, prostitution, and all those things. Got to see pretty extreme stuff.

So the initial Bridge Motel idea was kind of the first of two iterations. Once the motel became permitted for demolition, I began reaching out to artists, being like, "Hey, do you want to fill a room for this art event?"

[Harriet]

Did you feel like the art itself touched on change, or about built environment change at all, or was it kind of just, like, a space that people could move their installations into?

[DK Pan]

I think people focused on the building and the legacy.

So, an artist named Jack — his project basically cut out the ceiling and created a fire, hosting a bonfire right there in the room. And then he also had a poster adjacent to the installation that said

"Indian Land for Sale." He was thinking about campfires being the original motel — bringing the building back to its original intention.

[Harriet]

I really love that kind of integration, and kind of reframing it. That's really cool. And it is, like, that's part of the history of the building, right?

[DK Pan]

I had, like, a series of installations. One of which — in the red room — contained like 4,000 pounds of salt. And through my time managing the hotel, I collected ephemera from past tenants. In this work, I then buried the letters under the salt.

[Harriet]

That's really cool. Did you notice anyone, like, saying goodbye to the building through the event?

[DK Pan]

That this is kind of like, you know, again, the last era for this stuff. People said goodbye and engaged in art. But really, it was a last celebration of life.

Thousands of people came. We didn't really have, like, a lot of control.

[Harriet]

Was that, like, the first time you'd engaged in, like, a building celebration, or a building goodbye?

[DK Pan]

It wasn't necessarily...

[Harriet]

Was it torn down? It must have been.

[Harriet]

Do you feel like there is room for a free-for-all at the end of a building's life? Like, it doesn't have to be a curated event — it can be wild?

[DK Pan]

Yeah, I was thinking about how we see a lot of that. During the Bridge Motel, some guy had a sledgehammer and was just knocking down a wall. At the end of the night at these events, people go wild. Maybe in the knowledge that demolishing is happening, they feel like they have the ability to participate.

[Harriet]

Very cool. With the Lucile House — that was an extended art exhibit that happened for a long time — we talked about, like, the role of the artist really being a part of, like, hospice for the

house. Transitioning the house from its life into its next phase.

I mean, you were around the Bridge Motel for a year — just waiting for its end. I don't know if those feelings came up?

[DK Pan]

We did always talk about it as a person — describing the building as a woman, what was happening to her. And then, yeah, she made it more of a celebration of this person's life over many years.

[Harriet]

I think about the role of an individual — like an artist, or in my own life, like a city planner. What is our responsibility in easing that transition?

Maybe it doesn't feel like it's an overt theme of your work, but it does seem like you've helped a lot of buildings in their transition.

[DK Pan]

The idea of place is certainly an important thing — working with companies, both private public space as well as cooperative use of space.

I have to think about just the disorientation that happens when the city rapidly changes. What's interesting is, I remember somebody told me that men tend to find their way through maps, while women find their way through landmarks.

And you know, when I go to Capitol Hill, I'm like, "what am I?" Because all of the landmarks I used to see are gone.

Yeah, so a sense of place, a sense of belonging, a sense of community — all of that is, I think, diminished with these kind of generic templates. So in some ways, creating these kind of public gestures is really important. It's a weird cycle.

[Harriet]

TUBS is also another one of my case studies. I have a lot of case studies, but TUBS is one I spent a lot of time working on. My pitch in my writing — and please push back if you have different ideas — is that the act of transforming the physical outside of TUBS was, like, a signifier that the building is undergoing a change. And for people in the community who aren't involved in the work, seeing that physical transformation helped them come to terms with this pretty landmark building. I mean, I remember it from growing up. I'm curious your thoughts on that.

[DK Pan]

That was interesting, because I often think about that as part of, like, a cultural ecosystem. Driving down the street, driving through the city — which buildings are vacant — because I feel like they're the first wave. When you see a vacant building,

[Harriet]

The vultures come? Yeah. I mean, as a part of this whole ecosystem...

[DK Pan]

TUBS was the same kind of partnership. My brother used to work at the house. I kind of lament the fact that it's no longer there.

There was one room that was kind of semi-intact — like an office area — but the initial thinking was myself and Nico, with the idea that the building was going to be torn down within the next year.

The timing was kind of the beginning, and we decided to start with window installations in the wall. So everybody was getting all these letters from the city being like, "This is a nuisance." But my buddy said, "Oh no, this is a project by the Free Sheep Foundation — this is an art thing." And they left us alone after that.

And I think that is kind of an interesting angle in terms of the relationship between artists and development, because oftentimes it is framed as being disconnected. Artists are in that marginalized class where you often get forced to be displaced.

But I think there are opportunities where people are really getting more integrated into development projects.

So the reframing of it — that this is an exercise in democracy in public space, that anybody could write whatever they want.

The really fascinating thing was to see how public opinion changed, because I think there was initially some pushback from the neighbors that this was something bad, but then the free wall just became a changing canvas, and we saw the neighborhood kind of rally towards it.

A friend of mine, his tag was "Kill Cops." One day he was there by himself and just sprayed a big "Kill Cops" on the side of the building. And then all of a sudden, cops came by and asked, "Did you do this?" And he's like, sitting on a skateboard, "No, I don't know what you're talking about." They start walking around, pick up the cans — there's still wet paint — and there are photos of cops basically covering the "Kill Cops" and writing "Cops Rock." Which I thought was, like, the best articulation of democracy in public. Right.

[Harriet]

Yeah. It's public, it's space, it's for the community.

[DK Pan]

Yes, and graffiti artists don't have a place at the table.

Part of what we were trying to work on was creating low, no-barrier forms of entry for art — because people feel like they don't have formal training. Like, some say graffiti is not aesthetically pleasing, but if you don't give places to make bad art, we will never have good, interesting art.

[Harriet]

The visual memory I have of TUBS is so strong still, and I think it's because of the art that was on the building.

I really like the TUBS example. When I think in my own work about memory and mourning and

what a change in Seattle means to me, that is a part of that. And I grew up in Roosevelt, so I grew up not too far from it — I would pass it all the time.

[DK Pan]

Really cool, really interesting. Yeah, it started as kind of a one-and-done thing, but it did kind of evolve into a community resource, a community asset — in addition to the memorialization of the specific space.

[Harriet]

Are there — and you don't have to answer this at all — but are there buildings in your own mind that you find yourself missing, or that you wish you had the chance to say goodbye to?

[DK Pan]

That's good, I'll consider it.

[Harriet]

Buildings that you might be missing in your own time.

[DK Pan]

From an art perspective — I have stenciled "Time is Memory" on all the places I've been living in Seattle. That's kind of just a memento to the places I miss.

[Harriet]

Yeah, yeah, totally — sounds good.

[DK Pan]

Like, I miss the city I grew up in, in Seattle — or a certain area of Seattle. Probably more like 90s Seattle, where it seemed like things were more affordable.

Radical things were happening. It could also be me just growing up, and it's hard to tell. But it does seem like we had a lot of different scenes in different communities that were very active. It's a lot easier to make art if you're not working two, three jobs.

[Harriet]

Yeah.

[DK Pan]

Actually, I miss the Viaduct. Because it reminds me of, like, gritty Seattle — and all the stuff that happened over the years in those hidden spaces underneath.

[Harriet]

Totally. Actually, the Viaduct is another one of my case studies. I split my case studies into two realms — informal, which is community-based and community-sponsored, and formal, which is run by a city government or a department associated with the city. The Viaduct had a goodbye festival run by the city for people to say their last goodbye before demolition, but it also had a

community street takeover on its last public night. And I find that example as such a good example of what it means to miss a place, or to prepare to miss a place.

[DK Pan]

I lived in Pioneer Square for, like, 7 years one time, and then 4 years another time. The most recent place I was, we actually had a pretty explicit view of when it was demolished. But when I lived there in the 90s, yeah, it was always just kind of there.

Yeah, it was very memorable for all — and it was memorable for almost everyone in the city. And so it is this, like, unifying signifier of change, and this loss that we've experienced.

[DK Pan]

That's a fascinating thing about city infrastructure — having that kind of collective memory.

[Harriet]

Do you do longer-lasting installations ever, or is it usually on the, like, kind of day or week basis?

[DK Pan]

In terms of memorialization things, I think those are probably — you know, we did take over a building in downtown. We kind of did a whole storefronts thing. Similar thinking — taking vacant spaces, trying to create cultural and creative spaces.

I am thinking of the Kingdome.

[DK Pan]

It got blown up, you know, and just the memories of, like, wow.

[Harriet]

Did you watch it happen live?

[DK Pan]

Yeah, stayed up all night. We had a couple of watching parties. And then once the implosion happened, there was this big cloud coming towards us.

[Harriet]

Do you feel like an experience like that helped you say goodbye to the Kingdome in a way?

[DK Pan]

I think that satisfies some of that, you know?

[Harriet]

Would you say that's true for your other work — the art that you've been involved in?

[DK Pan]

I've actually worked on this idea of "time is memory" for many years, just doing kind of different iterations of that. That's kind of a summary of how memory works, and there are some

place-based aspects to that.

Within the Duwamish Valley community, there are virtual histories, podcasts — we've also been doing a commemoration of things. We're working on a mapping project, basically overlaying physical markers of the Duwamish River — maybe painting different rooftops blue or something.

Stuff like that is really vital to me — the idea of making reference to, analyzing, and recognizing the change.

[Harriet]

It's really cool. Are you involved in, like, the design of any of that, or is it just kind of conceptual?

[DK Pan]

There have been a lot of conversations on our side. We're a group of artists doing community-based development, and that's part of it — yeah, we really want to honor the place as part of the development process. I don't know that we necessarily have a framework for how to do that, but there is a lot of interest in capturing that.

[Harriet]

All of this work feels so connected to, like, this question about what's our responsibility in change — is place-based development the way to do it? It seems like you've worked with developers for a long time, thinking and talking about this, even, like, with TUBS. Living in place.

[DK Pan]

Yeah, I guess in some ways, like, there's a little bit of privilege in that — because we're such a newish city, we can basically trace back colonialist development like 3 or 4 generations. And we know a lot of the people who were involved who are still here.

My work in "Time is Memory" is kind of a pushback against the idea that time is money — a reframing to live outside capitalist society.

And also in reference to layers of cellular memory, geologic memory, and so forth. How memory is formed — the idea of permanence and impermanence.

And then, like, skywriting — these sort of timeless memories, this idea of a shared experience that dissipates over time.

[Harriet]

Yeah, when you're even talking about marking the places that you've lived before with "time is memory" — to me, in my work, that's just speaking to the self-mourning of these places that you have connections to that are changing.

It makes me want to do that to all the places that I have lived.

[DK Pan]

Yeah, and I think there is something beautiful about public marking. There's a creative form in

that.

It does feel really important to think about mourning as a way forward — the commemoration idea of working back in order to look forward. I like paying respects to different places.

I guess I do think about the absence of that — like, what happens if the community is not allowed to, or doesn't want to, mourn?

We see different iterations of it, like anytown USA — it is a sad thing to be traveling and going to Starbucks or McDonald's or whatever. It's the specificity, the specialness of that place — that layer of there-ness. Right.

Yeah, that is the benefit. And we become accustomed to that idea. Yeah, there are things worth preserving.

[Harriet]

It's always nerve-racking thinking about planning and development as a one-size-fits-all approach — in Seattle specifically, there's so much density that we need, and it's...

There are very few people doing the work of remembering the places that we've lived, especially in Seattle. I think it's very cool that that is some of the work you have found yourself doing. I think it is important.

[DK Pan]

I appreciate that. And I love that you're doing this. Thank you.

Appendix B – IRB Approval and Consent Form

Information About Community Mourning Practices in Historic Building Demolition

What is this study about?

You are being asked to participate in a research study about the existence of community-based mourning practices surrounding historic building demolition. This research study is run by

Harriet Wright, a Master of Urban Planning Student at the University of Washington. It is to provide supporting information for her master's Thesis, *Community Mourning Practices in Historic Building Demolition*. It is up to you to decide whether you want to participate. If you decide to enroll, you can stop participation at any time.

I am asking you to be in the study because you have either participated in a morning practice surrounding a demolished building or you work in the field of preservation, urban planning, and/or community organizing. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in this study.

What will you be asked to do?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to participate in a 45-minute to 1-hour interview about community organizing surrounding building demolishment, important buildings in your own life, and what you think the role of saying goodbye to buildings should be in personal and/or professional practice.

What will happen to the information you provide?

If you consent, a transcript of the interview will be included in the appendix of my thesis document. During the interview, I will record our conversation. Afterwards, I will transcribe the interview, review it, and then provide the transcription back to you for review. From there, please let me know anything that you would like redacted (Name, profession, certain parts of the conversation) and I will only include in the thesis record what you provide consent for.

If you are uncomfortable with the interview being recorded but would still like to be included in the thesis document, I will take notes during our conversation and write a short blurb about the themes we discussed. It is completely optional if you would like to be anonymized during this process. I will provide that blurb back to you for consent to include in the document. If you would rather have no written record of our conversation, please let me know. Any information you provide is helpful for me in this process.

If you would like to be anonymous, the information you provide will be kept confidential. I will store the data with a code instead of your name.

What can you do if you want more information?

Manish Chalana is the chair of my thesis committee at the University of Washington for this study, and can be contacted at chalana@uw.edu or at (206) 616-6501

Talk to someone else. If you want to talk with someone who is not part of the study team about the study, your rights as a research subject, or to report problems or complaints about the study, contact the UW Human Subjects Division at hsdinfo@uw.edu or 206-543-0098.

