

# **Mourning Small Spaces**

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# Mourning Small Spaces

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## **Abstract**

Urban areas have been experiencing rapid change and growth for many years now. The city of Seattle is not an exception to this trend and its current population boom has seen many neighborhoods rapidly become more dense. While there are many good things that come with urban growth, there are casualties as well—rapid growth can cause disruptions to local businesses as well as re-shape public spaces. While many gather to mourn (or rally to save) local landmarks that are affected by this change, these gatherings are not always extended to smaller, private spaces. However, these smaller spaces add up to whole neighborhoods that begin to look very different once demolition and building cycles take place. This project examines the rapid development in two neighborhoods of Seattle— southwest Capitol Hill and north Beacon Hill—and provides a platform for resident input in regards to the way neighborhoods’ small spaces are changing. This temporary platform asks residents to engage with the loss of small spaces by mourning them—or asking them to contemplate the changes through a situational futuristic experience and by documenting through both visual and written means the aspects of these spaces they will miss. Making this platform a place where submissions are shared ensures that these mourning exercises aren’t solitary and that residents create collective knowledge with their input.

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## Introduction

I was initially drawn to the “bleed points” (Galloway, 2004) that occur when the virtual—or the layer of digital devices and systems that we have created—and the physical overlap. One project that incorporated these bleed points was PAN Studio’s “Hello Lamp Post.” The project uses the city’s utility code system (which gives each piece of street furniture a number) and created a texting chatbot that allows residents to talk to lamp posts, mailboxes, etc. The street furniture then reveals other conversations it has had with other people—making users more aware of system and objects as well as their fellow residents. (Nijholt, 2015) By designing for more interaction with everyday objects in a city, the project called attention to objects and systems that tend to blur into the background of an urban environment. This intersection between calling attention to objects and the thoughts of your fellow residents became the basis of my design solution for mourning small spaces as this thesis progressed.

In my own urban neighborhood of Capitol Hill, I noticed large signs in front of beautiful (and some not so beautiful) buildings that signaled upcoming demolition. The dates (if any) on their comment period to the city would have long since passed without my noticing because they—like the urban furniture used in “Hello Lamp Post”—had faded into the background. After realizing these buildings were going to be gone, I started to sketch them as a way of recording what these spaces looked like in the present. It saddened me to know that these spaces would disappear and I was curious if other people felt the same way. I made postcards out of these sketches and invited neighbors to fill them out. They expressed their frustrations and listed things they will miss about the spaces.

I began to compare how these small spaces were being mourned with other larger, public spaces. The small spaces had graffitied construction signs that expressed sadness at their upcoming destruction or criticized what was to replace them, but larger spaces sometimes had large gatherings that would mourn their passing. One such gathering that I examined was the Seattle Viaduct Arts Festival. Not originally from Seattle, I didn’t realize the nostalgia that a road could generate. Even though the city had voted to demolish this piece of highway for safety reasons years earlier, residents reacted strongly when the demolition day got closer. “Twenty plus years of driving the Viaduct and it never got old. Sure, it sucked when it was gridlocked, but the view was something you’d otherwise be paying millions for. To be closer to the Elliott Bay, with that view - for free more or less - it was one of those intangibles that made (pre-Amazon) Seattle very special to me,” (syngltrkmnd, 2019) wrote a commenter on the Vanishing Seattle’s instagram post featuring the Viaduct. In a city where elevated views of the waterfront and Elliot Bay are often out of grasp for the average citizen, the Viaduct of-

ferred a surprisingly egalitarian way (for those with cars) of admiring the beauty of this area. It is this quality that was revered the most when it came time to mourn this space and it seemed fitting that it was given a festival where people could walk along it and admire that view for the last time. When people gathered to mourn this space, they remembered and called out the quality they most admired (the free view) and were less vocal about the reasons they voted to demolish the Viaduct in the first place (the poor traffic flow and potential earthquake disaster). The qualities that communities have come to admire hold a mirror to what they value the most. When mourning spaces, this can also be true in what qualities communities admire in the physical spaces of their neighborhoods.

These events are more rare for smaller, private spaces. The spaces in this project are not always single-family homes—many are multi-family houses or apartment buildings. This project defines “small” in terms of scale and examines how rapid growth might double or triple the occupancy, increase the space it takes up on the lot, decrease the private space proximity to the sidewalk, or increase the height compared to other buildings around it. This rapid shift in scale can completely change what a neighborhood looks or feels like as more of these small spaces experience this change. As demand for housing grows, we can recognize that some of these space changes are necessary. I argue that it is still important to mourn and reflect on the qualities neighborhoods lose and gain with these changes. By creating a platform for this mourning and reflection to take place, I wanted to know if residents would stop to contemplate and name these qualities to think about the potential qualities they want their future neighborhoods to have.

## **Background**

I noticed that the Viaduct Arts Festival seemed to be what people needed to part with this space and accept the changes that take place. However, not every space can have a funeral-like gathering like the Viaduct. In my research, I’ve found that documentation can be an important aspect to mourning. Gathering—while important—need not be celebratory or in person. It can be virtual, in protest, formal or informal—all of these ways provide a way to mourn space.

## **Documenting as Contemplation**

Documenting a space can be not only about remembering, but contemplating. There are many times we take pictures of things in order to remember something—this act alone might not facilitate contemplation, but the reason behind it might. In Smyth and Helgason’s workshop on contemplation in the urban environment, they handed cameras to participants and asked them to take photographs as they crossed a bridge (part of a familiar route for many of them)(Smyth

and Helgason, 2013). Contemplation occurred as a result of what they considered important, beautiful, intriguing, etc. What photos they took were just as important as deciding what to take—it helped them look at the space with fresh eyes.

For myself, documentation as contemplation comes in the form of sketching. As I began to sketch the homes that were set to be demolished, I noticed the amount of time it took to draw the details. Comparing that to the experience of drawing the renderings of future buildings that will replace it, I appreciated the time it took for someone to create those details as I took more time to draw them.

I've focused on taking an image (either as a photograph or a drawing) as documentation so far, but this is not the only way. When mourning, it is often sharing stories of memories that become a form of documentation. Vanishing Seattle, the instagram account mentioned earlier, documents images of disappearing places but also provides a place for memories, grievances, or information to be shared. Vanishing Seattle is an interesting case to study because it both documents and gives people a forum to see others' opinions—in this way, it creates a virtual gathering space.

### **Celebration and Protest**

The idea of a virtual gathering place doesn't have to be regulated to the internet—anywhere a message board exists might be considered a virtual gathering. These gatherings can be a mourning of celebration or of protest.

An example of a formal celebration (but still of mourning) could be the Viaduct Arts Festival mentioned earlier. It's considered formal because it was put on by the entity in charge of the change and celebratory in nature. An example of an informal gathering of mourning can be that of the White Horse Tavern, reported by the blog Vanishing New York (Moss, 2019). After it was announced that the bar would have new ownership, the regular patrons realized that some of the social norms that the place promoted—certain drinks, a certain crowd, low prices—might change. They informally organized and held a traditional Irish wake in mourning for a place that might not physically change but would still feel very different to them. To call this celebratory is not completely correct—people were gathering and most likely having fun, but the act of recognizing dying spatial norms could be considered protestful in nature.

Another informal protest can be political graffiti—especially when it comes in the form of public authoring. Public authoring, or "...the alteration of the physical environment to call attention to a greater movement or idea that exist in

the digital space” (Angus, et. al, 2018) is not always graffiti—it can be stickers, yarn-bombing, etc. This concept is a key component of the project “Urban Tapes-tries,” a “location-based wireless app that allows people to see and author content about their neighborhood” (Lane, 2003). This project uses public authoring less to protest something and more to grow the collective or social knowledge of the neighborhood. The idea of having a platform to increase social knowledge re-minded me of the comment section of Vanishing Seattle’s posts—posters’ memories, grievances, and other information becomes part of the social knowledge of the city, even if the spaces that knowledge applies to is changing.

The ideas I explored in this section formed the basis for this thesis project and the project’s experience. Asking residents to mourn in a certain way was how I incorporated documentation as contemplation. Examining how defamiliariza-tion encouraged people to think about their relationship to a space later became situated overlays of sketches depicting future buildings in small spaces. The ideas that were explored with public authoring inspired me to create an experience with physical identifiers to announce the existence of the experience. Virtual gatherings for social knowledge made me realize that asking people to mourn wasn’t enough—I needed to provide a way for the residents to see others concerns and grow the social knowledge of their neighborhood.

## **Process**

In the introduction I mentioned the “Hello Lamp Post” project making things—objects, systems, resident thoughts or opinions—more visible. I gravitated toward this idea as a newcomer to living in a more dense urban neighborhood—there were a lot of things I found novel when I first moved there that had already begun to fade from my notice. I felt the same desire to make things in my neighbor-hood more visible with this thesis project. I knew I first needed to find things I felt needed to be more visible. To do this, I analyzed what I was most surprised or fascinated by when I observed parts of my Capitol Hill neighborhood. I then interviewed friends in my neighborhood about the things that surprised or fasci-nated them.

## **Neighborhood Observations**

Observing my neighborhood came in the form of sketching. These initial sketch-es focused on smaller areas of public space—these were often pocket parks or gardens and places where three to four businesses clustered together in more residential areas (such as the block of Summit and Mercer). The purpose of this exercise soon evolved to not only sketch what I saw, but to sit and observe the way the space made me feel, the way other people interacted in it, and to notice

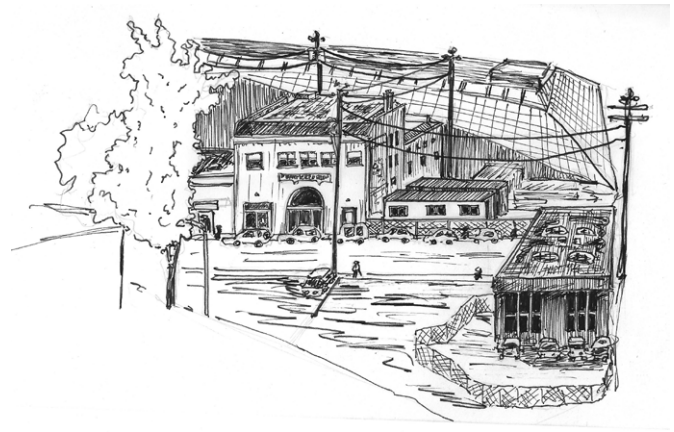
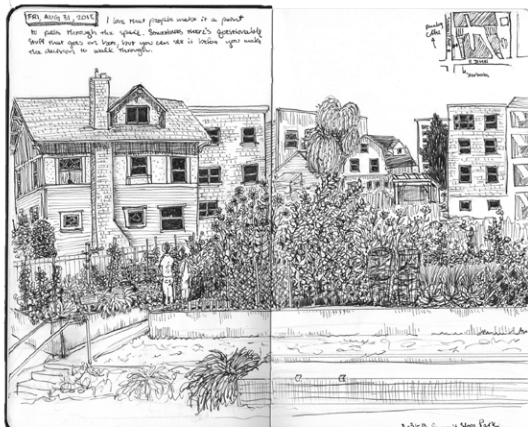


Figure 1: (from top left) Sketches of Summit Slope Park, Thomas Street Park, Summit and Mercer intersection, Feathered Friends building.

the systems of a city that the space contained (trolleybus wires, mailboxes, parking spaces, trash cans, etc.) Looking back, I see that one of the first sketches I made documented a historic building that was set to be demolished. (Figure 1)

While this observational sketching was helping me to see the less visible, I wasn't getting a lot of insight from this exercise alone. I wanted to know what other people were intrigued by in Capitol Hill, so I asked my friends to go on a walk with me and point out things that caught their eye.

### Walk and Talks

I wanted to be physically there when we talked about things they observed in their environment. When I first brought this exercise up with future participants, they would immediately start talking about a park they enjoy. On further questioning, they would admit to visiting that park infrequently. This doesn't make their enjoyment of that space invalid, but I wanted them to observe and point to things they notice in new light on more frequented routes or destinations. This

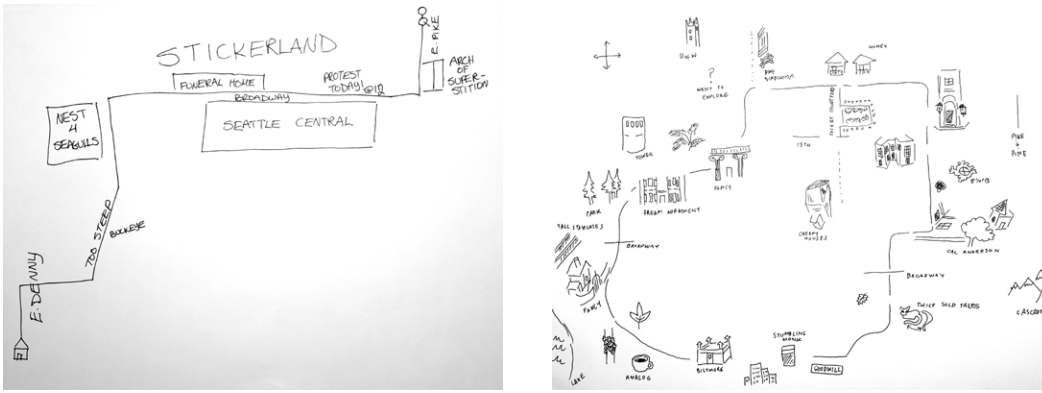


Figure 2: Cognitive Maps



Figure 3: Emotion Wheel



Figure 4: Public Authoring

research method was partly inspired by Stals et. al's Walk and Talk method which included a paper wheel of emotion. They asked participants to take a picture with an emotion on the wheel pointing to a space that described how this place made them feel (Stals et. al, 2014). I also asked participants to draw a cognitive map at the end of each walk to help give me an idea of what they felt was most important on our walks versus just what they were observing in real time (Figure 2).

I tested the method on myself first. I took a twenty minute walk on a familiar route where I used the emotion wheel and took pictures of things I noticed or had always stood out to me. The emotion wheel was quickly abandoned after my first participant—it became tedious to take out and interrupted the flow of the participants' observations (Figure 3). I had three participants (not including myself) in total and the walks ranged from fifteen to seventy minutes. They consisted of both wanderings and commutes—the commute routes were not necessarily chosen based on efficiency as there were multiple routes that the participants could have taken to their destinations and arrived at the same time.

One finding from this experiment was that participants paid attention to the ways that others were manipulating public space. This was in the form of decorating

lamp posts, yarn bombing, or even stickering. The stickers were often in places that fliers were not seen and had messages that connected to bigger ideas or movements that could be found online—a prime example of public authoring. Later, I would recall seeing examples of public authoring on construction notices in front of buildings. One pointed to Vanishing Seattle, the instagram account mentioned earlier that posted spaces that were set to be closed or demolished (Figure 4).

Another finding was that the knowledge you bring to your neighborhood helps you recognize and appreciate the subtle or hidden things in the environment. Sharing this with others grows that appreciation and creates a richer experience of the neighborhood space. For instance, one participant has knowledge of many plant species and pointed out the California Buckeye plant out to me (Figure 5). He told me how native people would use the neurotoxic qualities of the Buckeye nut to stun fish. This is an important part of the way this participant chooses what route to take (he likes to walk by a street with an abundance of plants) but it is now part of the way I think of that particular street. This sharing of knowledge reminded me of the Capitol Hill Blog's flickr account—people post photos of the things they notice or value in this neighborhood (Figure 6). This sharing builds up a collective knowledge of what the neighborhood looks and feels like.

Throughout this, I was still sketching for parts of my neighborhood when I noticed a construction sign had gone up on an early 1900's Craftsman house close to my apartment. I started to draw it as a way to document it as I had done for the Feathered Friends building. At the time, this action was just part of the many sketches I had made of my neighborhood. While I had felt sad to know this incredible building would be gone, it made me feel better to capture this house as it was. This led to me going around the rest of my neighborhood and sketching other buildings that had construction notices in front of them (Figure 7). I began to feel this urgency in documenting these spaces that would soon be gone.

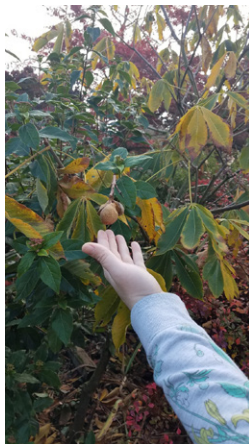


Figure 5: California Buckeye

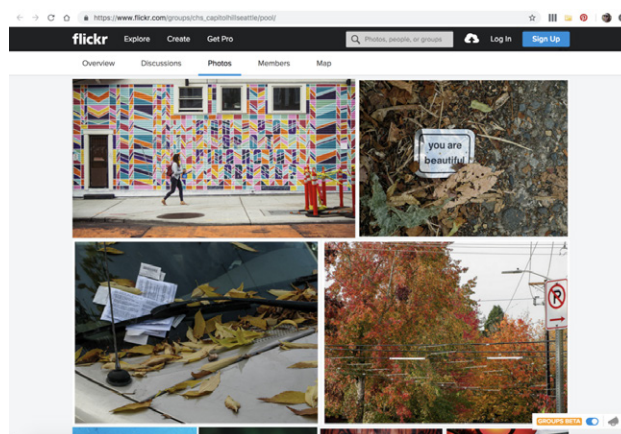


Figure 6: Capitol Hill Blog's flickr account

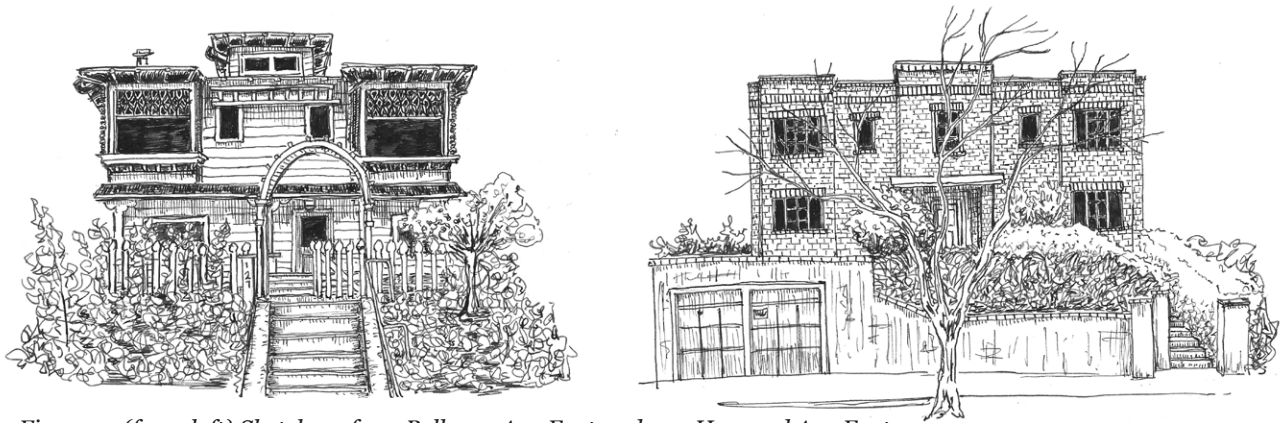


Figure 7: (from left) Sketches of 127 Bellevue Ave East and 720 Harvard Ave East

Both of these research methods—neighborhood sketching and Walk and Talks—helped me to narrow down my research area and affected the way this project was formed. Once I stopped sketching observationally and started to sketch in order to preserve or document, my motivations for this project became more clear. Seeing what others noticed the most in their neighborhood helped give me an idea of how my design intervention might best grab attention when put into an urban environment.

### Postcards

After I had finished sketching buildings that were scheduled for demolition, I wanted to know what other people thought about these spaces and what they will miss about them. I used my sketches to make postcards for two of the sites. This method is partially inspired by a project I found using postcards as urban probes. They used pre-stamped postcards that were dumped in a public square (Paulos, Jenkins 2005). They were looking at how much people paid attention to their trash by measuring how many postcards they got back in the mail. I was looking at how many people might pay attention to these construction signs, so I made a neon sign that featured two plastic bags—one that had blank postcards with pencils in them and another where they could leave their filled out postcards for me to pick up (Figure 8).



Figure 8: Postcards on the construction signs

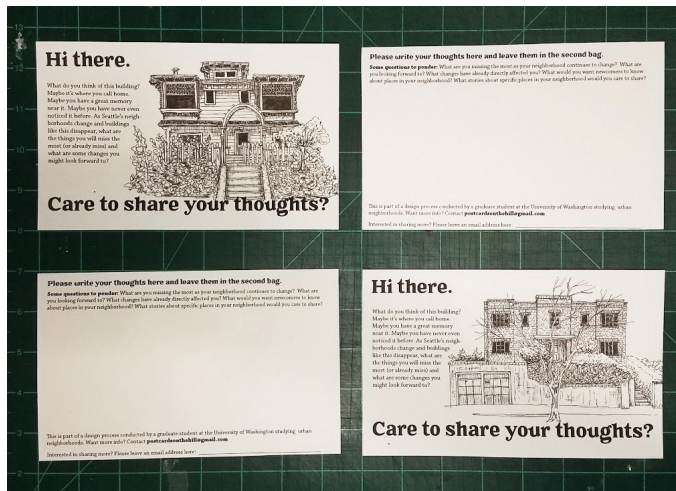


Figure 9: Blank postcard design

I chose two sites: 127 Bellevue Ave East and 740 Harvard Avenue East (Figure 9). Both were historical, multi-family homes. This also happened to be the week that an unusual amount of snow hit Seattle so I didn't quite get the results I was hoping for. Three postcards were filled out and my signage started to fail in the elements. One postcard talked about the need for rent control in the neighborhood while others discussed the green space and the interior details they will miss of the buildings. Unfortunately, they left no further details on how to contact them.

### Time Travel

Despite the lackluster turnout for the postcards, I was eager to put out another urban probe. I knew I wanted to test if an online probe would be more successful in gathering data from people than the physical postcards, but I wasn't sure how to do this until I came across a construction site in progress. I realized I couldn't remember what had been there a few months before and decided to look on Google Street View. I decided to draw the house that had been there before as well as the future apartment building that was proposed.

I knew I wanted be able to view the past, present, and future of this site quickly (Figure 10) through an online portal and ask people what their thoughts on this change were. To do that, I made a poster with instructions to go to a web address and asked users to point their mobile device at the construction site. The webpage uses a mobile device's camera stream to situate you near the site. If you stand at a certain spot, a filter of a playful gif on top of the camera stream lines up with the construction site. Pressing the "time travel" button shows the rise of a zombie-like apartment building that eats unsuspecting people passing by. Scrolling down the page takes users to an embedded Google survey that asks questions about change of space (Figure 11).



Figure 10: past, present, and future of the site

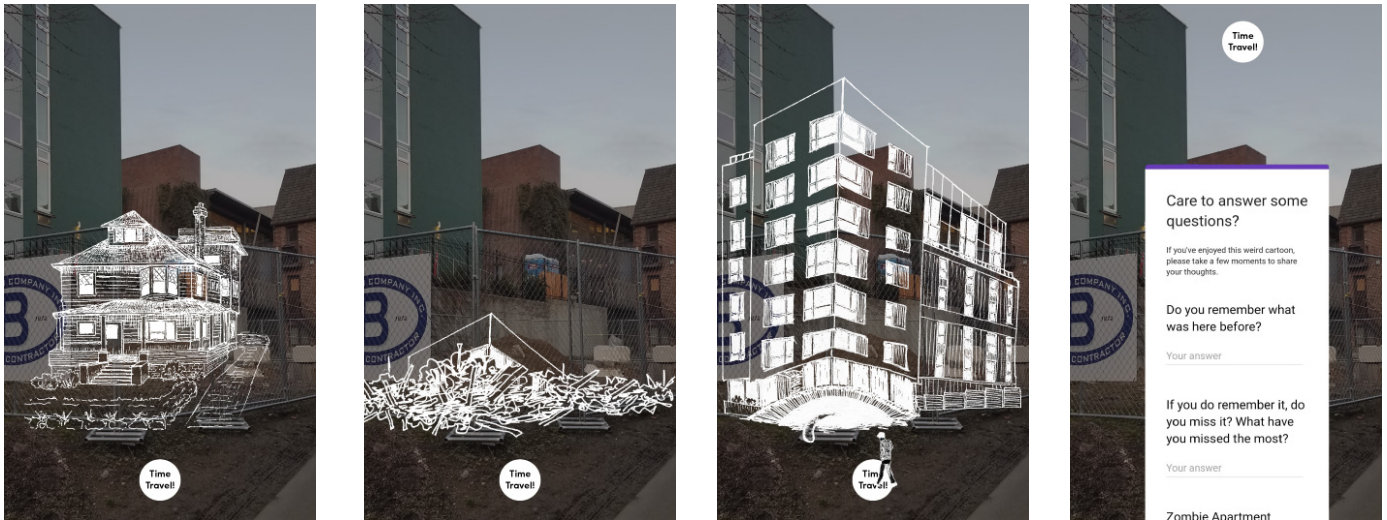


Figure 11: (from left) past site, apartment building rising, new apartment eats unsuspecting people, and survey at the end.

I ended up incorporating this prototype into my final design because I felt it was important to showcase the memorial side of mourning. The method of situated camera streaming and using an overlay to show a sketch of the future became the basis for my final documentation portal. However, I regret not using some of the humor that I created with the gifs in the documentation portal due to time constraints. I won't know for sure, but I think the humor made this prototype less earnest and more approachable than some of my other final work. This might have contributed to its higher reply rate (sixteen replies as I write this).

### Designing the Documentation Experience

When designing the experience, I thought about what environmental prompt would motivate people enough to use their mobile device to go to a website. The Capitol Hill neighborhood has a variety of tile work seen on the steps of apartment buildings and various tile markers and sidewalk art on Broadway that give precedence to something adorning the pavement. I decided on a combination of tiles on the ground and signage (detailed later) that would act as discovery tools for this experience.

I thought about all the ways you can document a space—you can talk about it, take pictures of it, sketch it, share memories of it, etc.—and what I thought would be an acceptable ask of people who came upon this experience in their neighborhood. I also wanted to promote contemplation of the change, so I decided to ask people to submit images (the amount was optional as were any extra comments they wanted to submit). This idea of promoting contemplation or de-familiarization through taking images hearkened back Smyth and Helgason's work (Smyth and Helgason, 2013) that asked people to re-consider the familiar.

Part of the inspiration of this documentation portal came from the instagram account Vanishing Seattle. I admired the way that the account was more than just alerting people to vanishing spaces but provided a forum for people to share their thoughts. By seeing these thoughts, it created more ideas for others to react to. After my earlier research about collective knowledge, I wanted the final design to include a space where all this information can be accessed by anyone. I saw this collective knowledge as a way to virtualize a gathering and an important component of mourning spaces.

### **Adding a Neighborhood**

Before I started the final version of this platform for mourning, I looked at how other neighborhoods were dealing with rapid space turnover. After visiting a few sites in north Beacon Hill, I decided to add sites in this neighborhood to the final.

This addition changed how this final version looked because experiencing this neighborhood's changes was very different than experiencing Capitol Hill's. An important part of project was discovery and opportunity—I had planned to make the experience markers revolve around the construction notices, but Beacon Hill presented a challenge. The signs were in yards (versus on the sidewalks in Capitol Hill) and it felt more intrusive to put signage up in people's yards without permission.

When I started to visit sites that I was considering to use in the project, I saw that it wasn't just a few lots that were changing—whole blocks were going to look different in one to two years. There was a massive shift in scale that this neighborhood would be experiencing that was felt more acutely here than in Capitol Hill. I wanted to capture more than one site with an experience, so I decided to set the markers up across the street. This had the added bonus of solving the issues of intrusive markers (Figure 12).



*Figure 12: Stepping back to capture more of the changes in Beacon Hill*

Adding this neighborhood affected this project in a variety of ways. I saw how mourning a space was as important as ever—whole blocks were changing rapidly, and it was important to let people grieve and document what their neighborhood looked like in the present. One way to do this was to give them a glimpse of what a block might look like a year from now. This led to me sketching futuristic overlays and making them into filters (similar to the time traveling prototype). This was not something I had been planning to do with the documentation experience, but it soon became a component of every site's experience. This took more work, but I saw it as an important introduction to situating and a shift in realizing that the way things look now is not what they will look like forever.

## **Results**

For the final iteration of this project, I created a documentation experience for four sites and used my time traveling prototype for a fifth site.

In Capitol Hill, I used sites that had been part of my postcard probe. The Beacon Hill locations were less familiar and it felt more uncomfortable to put up signage or markers in that neighborhood. I often felt exposed because of the lack of density there and from the close proximity that the houses had to the street.

### **Markers**

An important part of this experience was the discovery of the markers that gave residents a site address to type in on their mobile devices. I wanted this sense of discovery to feel special, so I made plaque-like tiles with drawings of the houses that would be demolished on them to mark where you should begin the documentation experience. I experimented with various ways to stick this to the ground—in the end, I decided on putting a thick layer of hot glue on the backs of the tiles and re-heating it with a very large lighter when I got to the site's sidewalk. I was worried about affixing something permanently to the sidewalk (and I wanted to collect them later) (Figure 13). I left the area and started watching the analytics of the website show only hits from Ashburn, Virginia as visitors. A quick Google search told me that these were bots and that I was getting no human visitors. The next morning I went to the sites, saw the tiles had been taken, and put up signage in roughly the same area (Figure 14). It wasn't ideal, but I was still hopeful that residents would use the experience.

I had been thinking of making some tiles for the Capitol Hill sites, but decided against it after the failed attempt in Beacon Hill. The Capitol Hill sites had signage that I was able to staple or attach to the construction signs (Figure 15). I have occasionally had to go by and re-staple things, but there hasn't been any other issues.



Figure 13: Examples of tile markers in Beacon Hill



Figure 14: Replacement markers in Beacon Hill



Figure 15: Markers in Capitol Hill

### Documentation Experience

When someone walking by uses their mobile device to go to the website, they land on the homepage with a pop-up that lets them find their location for their experience. Each location page starts with instructions on how to go through the documentation experience and starts with a futuristic sketch overlay of what that space will look like.

I had worried that if I instructed people to only take pictures of the things they will miss most about the spaces, they would only take one that featured the front of the building and move on. After they see the sketch of the future, they are asked to document what their favorite part of this space is, the details they will miss the most, and to take a photo that represents the way that the loss of this space might change their routine. When they press the “Document!” button, a small frame appears at the top right corner above the filter and is filled with the most recent snapshot. They can download the snapshot and save it to upload to the Google survey later. For each ask (favorite part, details, routine) there is an instructional slide followed by a slide with a playful frame that lets the camera stream be seen more clearly (Figures 16, 17, 18).

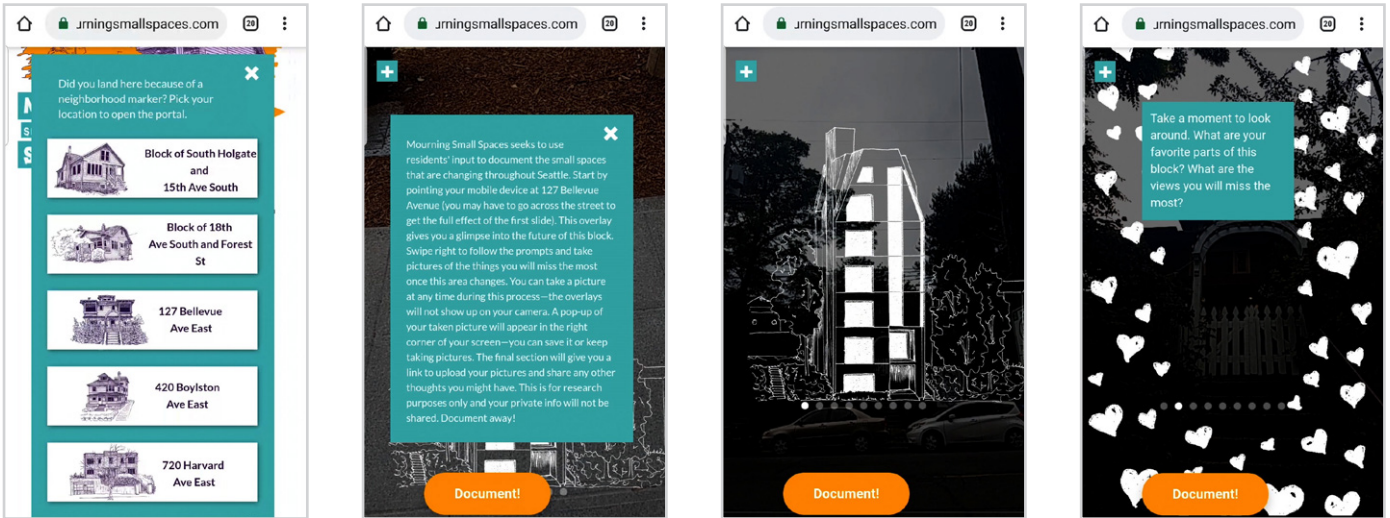


Figure 16: Homepage pop-up, experience directions, futuristic overlay, and documentation directions

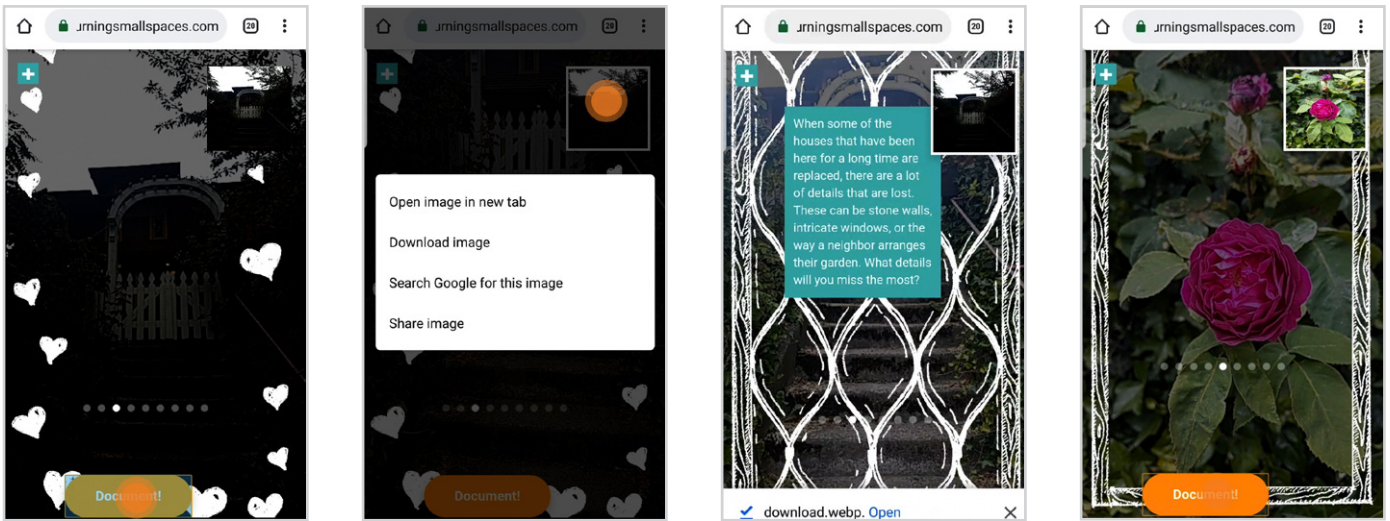


Figure 17: Documentation frame, downloading an image, documentation directions, documentation frame

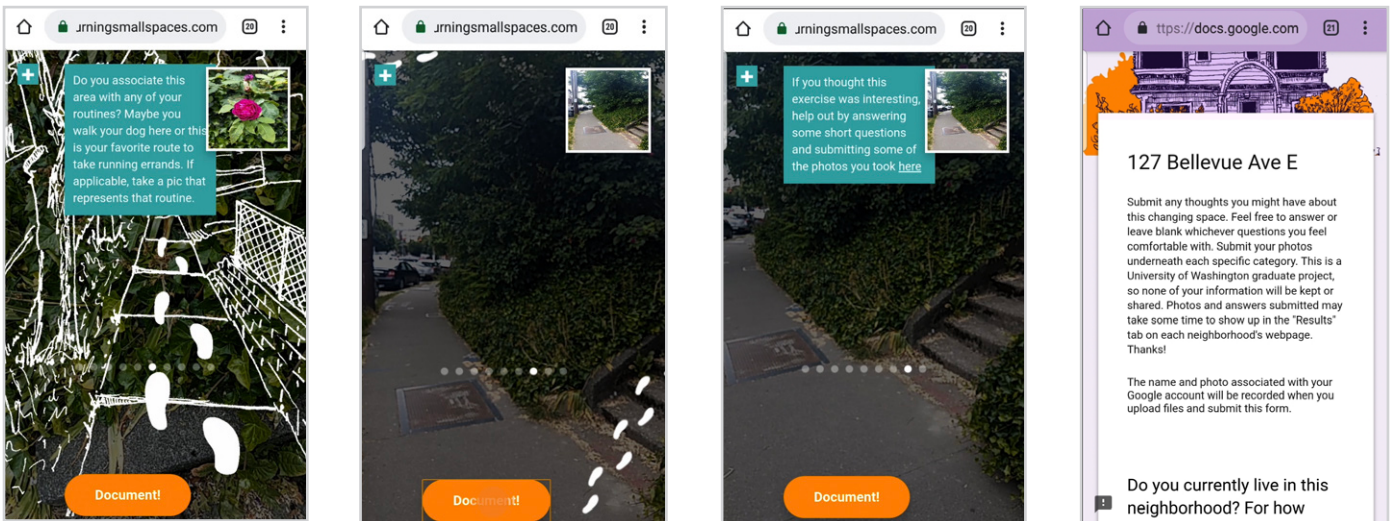


Figure 18: Documentation directions, documentation frame, link to survey, Google survey

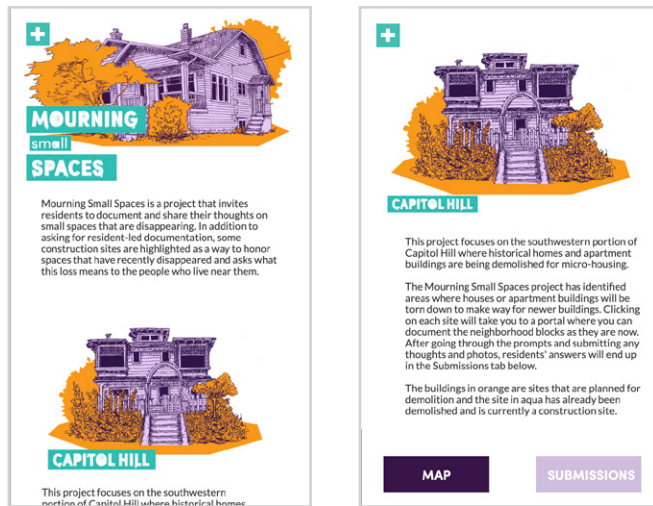


Figure 19: Mobile homepage, Capitol Hill neighborhood page

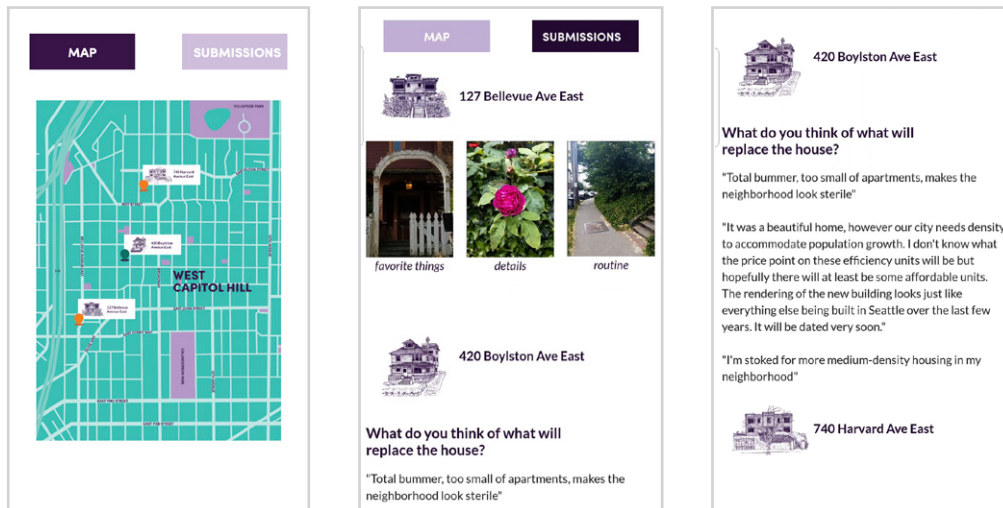


Figure 20: Capitol Hill map, submission tab for Bellevue Avenue and Boylston Avenue

### Website as a Whole

Throughout the experience, there are options to go to the homepage where there is an overview of the project as well as the neighborhood pages (Figure 19). Each neighborhood page has tabs that displays the map where the sites are (each site marker linked to that site's experience) and another tab that displays the submissions for each site.

### Submissions

An important aspect of this project was the shared knowledge that residents could view. As more and more people submitted what they would miss and the qualities they were sad to see go, I had hoped to see a trend that could point out what these communities wanted to see in their neighborhoods.

Sadly, that did not happen. The Submissions tab under each neighborhood's page was created to display this information from the Google survey (there are instructions on where to find this in the documentation experience). However, the reactions to the time travel prototype were incorporated into the Submission tab for the Capitol Hill page (Figure 20).

### **Technical Issues**

A lot of time was spent trying to create a Snap Chat-like filter that would be captured on top of the picture when it was taken (the final one is only an overlay on the screen—it doesn't get captured when you press the "Document!" button). The snap feature would have made it more playful and possibly attractive to use, but I realized the design didn't have to have this—not having it might create for a better submission. Because I could not figure out how to do this anyway (after months of trying), I decided to focus on the experience of documenting and not what was being produced when you document. There could be an argument for either approach and this might be something I explore in the future.

In my time travel prototype, I had a sign that pointed users to the domain "time-turn.com." This was short and easy to type in on a mobile device. I had thought about how much longer "mourningsmallspaces.com" would be, but I also had more than one webpage for this final project. I looked at a lot of domain names that were shorter that mobile users could have used that to point them to the specific documentation webpages, but I worried it was going to make things more confusing.

Another issue is that roughly only one third of the mobile visitors to "mourningsmallspaces.com" made it from the homepage to the documentation portal of their choice. For "time-turn.com," the time travel experience was immediate. I struggled to design the landing experience this way because I knew that it would be already asking a lot to have people go to "mourningsmallspaces.com" and "mourningsmallspaces.com/bellevue" or /location was getting extreme. I expected to lose visitors doing it this way, but I didn't think it would be two thirds.

### **Reflection**

My goal for this thesis was to provide a platform for expression about the way a neighborhood's small spaces are changing. I specifically made it about mourning, but with the idea that mourning something takes many forms. I was successful in creating a platform, but unsuccessful in having people using it. A lot of work went into this, but there were a lot of rushed decisions (some detailed above) that I had to make at the end because I was short on time. Those decisions might have cost me the opportunity to receive more feedback from the public. In this section I will discuss some ideas I have on where I went wrong and where some of the value still lies in this project.

One issue I discovered was that relying on the virtual experience to explain everything might not be as effective as allowing physical signifiers to do more heavy lifting. It might even have the added bonus of creating more intrigue for those who come upon it. For my time travel prototype, I had a bright poster that I thought looked terrible but did its job. It had more instructions on it and was a bit more playful even if it wasn't well-designed. Maybe something less polished intrigued people more? Maybe something about this unrefined poster was less threatening? It's also worth noting that I've had more instances where people have tried to take down the newer posters, but this could also be a factor of the weather and more people being outside at night.

The documentation experience could have done with more refinement but also lacked the playfulness that the gifs of the time travel prototype had. I mentioned this before in the Process section, but I regret that this was not one of the qualities that was used from this prototype (mostly due to time restraints). Because I was happy with the time travel prototype, I used a lot of design decisions from it to make my final documentation experience. I thought that the instructions on the pop-up when you first open the site webpage were enough, but maybe more instructions on the signage would have been more clear. I assumed that because users were willing to click once to see another gif meant that they would swipe through eight times, take pictures, then click to save those pictures. A last minute discovery that I couldn't embed Google surveys that asked for file uploads into a webpage meant that the user now had to click out of the experience (whereas they just scrolled down to see it in the time travel prototype). The experience had become more complicated and further away from the spirit of the original prototype.

Creating a platform that asks people to mourn doesn't mean anyone will take you up on it. It's possible that I should have only revealed that this was a mourning platform to those I was presenting my thesis to—maybe asking someone walking along the street to mourn rather than to just document or remember was not as effective.

Despite all this, there are things about this project that I think still have value. The first is that I still think there is a need for residents to share their thoughts about the demolition of small spaces. This first point allows residents to question what they want progress in their neighborhoods to look and feel like. It is also important for everyone to see each other's thoughts, memories, documentation, and viewpoints. Much like a comment section on the internet, seeing and participating in this shared knowledge is essential to getting more people involved to share their own knowledge of these spaces. It was important for me to include a place where everyone could see this documentation in my project.

I also think there is value creating situated experiences that allow people to contemplate the future of a space. Even though my sketch overlays are simple, they give residents an idea of how the scale, amount of greenspace, and the ways the sidewalk experience of that space will change. Glancing at the rendering on a construction sign doesn't exhibit the same magnitude of the change that will occur.

Taking the time to stop and think about how these changing environments affects us and our day-to-day routines is also important. This gets at the goal I originally had for this project: to make things visible. These small spaces add up to very large chunks of neighborhoods and it is important to make these small changes visible now. My hope is that this project might help others to create platforms or probes in the urban environment that help make issues facing neighborhood and urban growth more visible.

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