Discovery
Heritage
Water
Garden
Health
Intervention
Discovery
"Let's not forget the University's position in redevelopment. Look at the history. They owe us."

"After getting up, I'd turn the bedroom light on and walk barefoot to go to the bathroom and I'd try to make sure that I didn't step on a worm. They were everywhere. You could stand there and watch them wiggle through the door."

"It's funny because in the learning process, there might be something you don't wanna do, but it sticks. And so I started planting flowers in my yard and everybody liked it."

"Ms. Connie on living with the sinkhole"

"Ms. Joy on growing up in Jamaica"

"Holly Edwards: HOW IS THIS THESIS A PIECE OF YOU?"

"Walking through the sinkhole + drain pipe problems with Brandon. Met Dees, Tiffany and Richard Snackleford."

"Conversations with Shantell Bingham about Westhaven + redevelopment"

"NOMA conference and design competition in New Orleans Lectures and workshops on public housing in the U.S. and critical public interest design in new waves of redevelopment"

"Research about co-design and history of Westhaven and public housing in CVille."

"Co-designing for a garden with the Tibbs family begins."

"Interviewed Joy about life in Westhaven and gardens."

"Walking Neighborhood Development Services at City Hall for aerial photos of Vinegar Hill demolition."

"Conversations about redevelopment politics with Pam Murray, Mary Joy Scala, and Kathy Mchugh."

"Interviewed Joy about life in Westhaven and gardens."

"PHAR Intern Graduation. Met Dr. Harris, the co-author of "Public Housing in Charlottesville: The Black Experience in a Small Southern City" and former faculty member of the Urban Planning Department."

"PHAR board meeting at the Legal Aid Justice Center Brandon Collins introduces bill for Plan for Redevelopment."

"My first Monday night PHAR board meeting at City Hall. Attended to find Ms. Joy."

"Painted vertical garden with Growing for Change Grow!"

"Visited Neighborhood Housing Authority meeting at City Hall. Attended to find Ms. Joy."

"Public grievances voices in audience of fellow residents and CRHA board and city council members."

"Fendia, Nana, and Rae. The Tibbs kids: Shafik, Femila, Nana, and Rae."

"My first pitch of thesis project. Introduction to the sinkhole narrative."
Key Moments

July 2015

November 2015

Photo by S. Bingham

Redevelopment

About Westhaven + Bingham Conversations with Met

Door to door. Community day in summertime in Westhaven.

Joy Johnson.

The Tibbs family.

NOMAS gets matched with Orleans design competition in New NOMA conference and redevelopment design in new waves of critical public interest in public housing in the U.S. and City of Promise

Met Sarad Davenport Sketching the site.

Public housing in Cville. and history of Westhaven and the history. They owe us.

“Let’s not forget the University’s garden with the Co-designing for a Aid Justice Center board meeting at the Legal My first Monday night PHAR

Brandon Collins

A PIECE OF YOU?

HOW IS THIS THESIS

Met Holly Edwards

Growing For Change

Shantell Bingham

Founder of initiative aiming to bridge the gap between UVA students and residents of Westhaven. It combines Architecture and Global Development students with families in Westhaven to co-design gardens.

Westhaven Nursing Clinic

Holly Edwards

Holly formerly served on city council. She currently serves as an advisor for PHAR and also runs the Westhaven Nursing Clinic. Her perspective is crucial in any matters of development in Westhaven

Public Housing Association of Residents [PHAR]

Joy Johnson

Director, Joy is also a resident of Westhaven in the units most affected by the drainage issues. Joy introduced me to the urgent issue of the sinkhole, and PHAR’s long past with CRHA

Brandon Collins

Organizer. Brandon is a writer on PHAR’s bill for Redevelopment which is a proactive idea for the city’s plans for public housing. He also gave me a walk-through of the site itself, and remains a main contact for site data

City of Promise

Sarad Davenport

Head of City of Promise. Promise Neighborhoods is a Department of Education-funded program designed to create networks of support services for kids in underserved communities.

Board of Commissioners

Julie Jones

Chair of the Board of Commissioners. The Board is appointed by city council to govern the Charlottesville Housing Authority. I first encountered her at a public meeting with the board of City Hall.

Holly Edwards

A Piece of You?

How is this thesis

Holly Edwards

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Heritage
Since the 1920’s, Vinegar Hill is the city’s principal black business district and vibrant center for community life. The story of the demolition of this neighborhood is deeply embedded in the story of public housing in the city today.

**1963**

The Neighborhood was named after an ex-slave named John West who was born into slavery and later amassed a fortune in real estate.

**Westhaven is planned.**
1. Expand the Downtown Business District.
2. Improve traffic.
3. Provide housing for displaced families.

**Vinegar Hill is evaluated.**
CRHA is authorized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Their application to City Council for the clearing of substandard housing is complete.
By March 1965, the following were **wiped out**:

1 church
30 businesses
158 families (140 black families)

The building that housed **George Inge's grocery store** still remains at an entrance point between West Main Street and Vinegar Hill.
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The Southeast underpass emerges as a critical threshold between past + present.

1964 DEMOLITION

15.5% Non-White Population
12.7% Non-White Occupancy in Public Housing

1970

126 units are completed in Westhaven, becoming the first public housing development in Charlottesville.

The Southeast underpass emerges as a critical threshold between past + present.

1970 Census

Vinegar Hill was an “image of blacks in business...blacks in decision-making positions.”
-Sherman R. White, former black newspaper editor
Cultural Threshold
Heritage Trail Connection
Water
The topography of Westhaven is a critical factor to the wellbeing of residents. The parking lots and rooftops of business located on the top of the hill at the south end of the neighborhood accumulate water that is then dumped into the footprint of the units.

**Summer Storm**

Average rainfall per month

**4,546,177 gallons total**
Consequences

Due to bureaucratic issues in the Charlottesville Housing Authority, the consequences of issues of topography and water have not been met with resolution. Therefore residents are forced to accommodate the conditions of water invading their space.

*Unusable* Land:
Excess moisture from sinkhole and water from underground stream pour into swale on corner site.

Poor Air Quality
Excess moisture from sinkhole and water from underground stream pour into swale on corner site.

Transportation Barrier
The sinkhole barricades foot traffic from the nearest bus stop in front of Republic Plaza on West Main Street.

Safety Concerns
The sinkhole is located adjacent to the playground and basketball court, places that kids inevitably run to.

Units most affected by moisture serve as housing for the elderly + disabled.
Ms. Connie adapts to the moisture seepage by jamming the bottom crack of her backdoor with a towel.

Stormwater runoff seeps through the crack of Ms. Connie’s back door during a summer storm. She wakes up with worms and moisture spread across her floor.

Moisture seeps up through the ground and into the concrete foundation. It settles and creates mold spores in the air.

Ms. Connie keeps the windows shut to ward off additional mold that coats the screens and back patio.

Pipes for units intersect in Ms. Connie’s bedroom. The rush of water tells her what her neighbors are up to.
Gardens
Ms. Joy lives on 802 Hardy Drive. A native of Kingston, Jamaica, Ms. Joy says her love of growing was instigated by visits to her family in the countryside when she was a small girl. Her garden serves as a landmark and source of planting inspiration for the neighborhood.
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Garden Bug

Food Access + Spread of Garden Space

- **Kroger on Barracks Rd.** 40 mins.
- **Food Lion** 26 mins.
- **Timber Creek Market** 5 mins.
- **Reid’s Super-Save Market** 10 mins.
- **Market Street Market** 20 mins. *Does not accept food stamps!

Contagiousness of Growing

Interest in gardening based on family and individual engagement with Growing for Change

- **Lavender Tree**
- **Banana Trees**
- **Iris**
- **Rooster Cone**
- **Elephant Ear**
- **Bird Feeder**
- **Drainge Intervention**
- **Moss**
- **Azalea**

Food Lion 26 mins.
Garden Production
Co-designing the Tibbs Family Garden

Growing for Change is a student organization at UVA that organizes students with families at Westhaven in order to design and build gardens that promote healthier living and growing in the neighborhood. The work done by these students has been referenced by both PHAR and CRHA as critical to raising wellness in the community as well as forming a lively relationship between UVA students and residents. The process below serves as a model for this.
Growing for Change is a student organization at UVA that organizes students with families at Westhaven in order to design and build gardens that promote healthier living and growing in the neighborhood. The work done by these students has been referenced by both PHAR and CRHA as critical to raising wellness in the community as well as forming a lively relationship between UVA students and residents. The process below serves as a model for this.

1. Match

After door-to-door assessments that determined which families expressed interest in engaging in the co-designing process, we were matched with the Tibbs family.

2. Imagine

Using methods similar to Deanna Van Buren’s co-designing workshops, we diagrammed and sketched possibilities for gardens with Fendia, Shafik and their cousins using popsicle sticks, pipe cleaners, paper, and markers.

3. Synthesize

We used the kids’ visions for their garden and applied them to the constraints of their mom’s desires and the physical constraints of their yard. Some of the guidelines for our consideration were:

- space in the yard to leave bikes
- elevated beds for ease of use
- storage
- puppy-proofed beds

4. Fabricate

Using funding from Growing for Change, we purchased materials and built a vertical shelf component as our garden.

5. Christen

With the help of Shafik, Fendia, Nana and Ray, we installed and painted the garden shelf on site in the Tibbs’ backyard.

6. Populate

Shafik, Ms. Frances & Fendia
Health
Holly Edwards is a former member of the Charlottesville City Council (2008-2011). She also has served as a member of the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority. She was elected to serve as vice mayor in 2006. She is working to get her PhD in Nursing at the UVA School of Nursing, she teaches and she runs the Westhaven Nursing Clinic in its many layers.
Parish Nursing/Faith Community Model
Nursing care delivery system based not religious, but spiritual care:
“There have been times of complexity or sadness when the only thing I had to offer was a prayer.” - Holly Edwards

Preventative Care
The clinic serves as a bridge to other community resources that increases the overall wellness of its users, not just as a center for treatment.

(CARES: Consultation, Advocacy, Resources, Education, Support, Spiritual)

Chronic Disease Self Management
connecting women in Cape Town and Westhaven through Skype meetings
2014-16
Intervention
Westhaven is isolated from the rest of the city by clear spatial demarcations: topography, water, and physical barriers such as planting and fencing that deliberately prevent residents from accessing certain spaces. The identification of these boundaries permit a dialog on how to create more permeably between the neighborhood and the rest of Charlottesville.

**Identified Barriers**

- **Isolation**
  - Topography
  - Water
  - Physical barriers such as planting and fencing

- **Excessive Fencing**
  - CRHA Management has taped off the adjacent staircase, cutting residents off from a major path to West Main St.

- **Sinkhole**
  - Because of the hazards of open earth, CRHA Management has taped off the adjacent staircase, cutting residents off from a major path to West Main St.

- **Railway**
  - The Amtrak line is a barrier with high visible and audible prominence on the east edge of Westhaven.

- **Thru Traffic**
  - Residents have expressed concerns on the amount and speed of traffic passing through the underpass at the 3-way intersection, especially as visibility is compromised by the bridge condition.

- **Schenk’s Branch**
  - A pipeline that runs underground the north side of Westhaven.

- **Excessive Fencing**
  - Even with full access to staircases, Westhaven is still barricaded from the programs and business on West Main by various fence types across the entire southern ridge.
Adapted Edge

The southern ridge of Westhaven can be adapted in order to first meet the needs of residents to the North, but to also blur the edges, inviting people from territory around West Main street to populate the edge of this community. Though abstract, this diagram invites discussion on how the landscape may do this.
**Intervention**

*Possibilities*

Using diagrammatic spatial elements, these sketches propose possible solutions that address the already existent vibrancy in Westhaven. The narratives of Westhaven provide unnegotiable demands for a landscape design that penetrates the boundaries of the site.

**Strategy**

- **Variation I**
- **Variation II**
- **Variation III**

The strategy here is to create a mysterious, but approachable entry from the side of West Main Street for people to knock on "back door" of Westhaven.

**Main Entrances**

The southern ridge suggests possible entry points from three different points. These are populated with existing and created programs amplified by landscape. The fourth entrance occurs at the opening of the underpass.

**Variation III**
Using diagrammatic spatial elements, these sketches propose possible solutions that address the already existent vibrancy in Westhaven. The narratives of Westhaven provide unnegotiable demands for a landscape design that penetrates the boundaries of the site.

Variation I

Variation III

Variation II

Strategy

Possibilities

Intervention

Using diagrammatic spatial elements, these sketches propose possible solutions that address the already existent vibrancy in Westhaven. The narratives of Westhaven provide unnegotiable demands for a landscape design that penetrates the boundaries of the site.

Variation I

Variation III

Variation II

Strategy

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Intervention