

Next Life 2020: Repurposed by Design

The Repurposed by Design project is a prototype for reusing materials from temporary installations, for the specific benefit of urban community-based spaces. We proposed to take an annual, temporary public space installation in NYC, originally created by students in a Parsons School of Design / School of Constructed Environments (SCE) design/build class, and, upon its deconstruction, find a way to reuse the materials. Since 2016, Parsons SCE has collaborated with the NYC Dept of Transportation Street Seats Program to design and build a temporary public space. The New School's Tishman Environment and Design Center Faculty Grant provided support for the Repurposed by Design 2020 project as a case study, the processes of which could be documented for replication.

Repurposed by Design endeavors to provide public space amenities to underserved communities, implementing sustainable practices such as material re-use and participatory design processes. It is predicated on identifying both (post-consumer) materials and an appropriate location in an effort to give the materials another useful life and to provide infrastructure that is responsive to the space and its stakeholders. We design the installation with and for the community that it will serve, to integrate into an existing space, observing fixed elements, sight lines, passage, solar orientation, and other inherent features. We hope that the installation will attract additional members of the community, make it easier to host events and gatherings, and support the farmers and gardeners for whom the space is an essential part of urban life.

As the first prototype, the Repurposed by Design 2020 project reconceived the Parsons SCE 2019 temporary Street Seats installation-for the Moore-Jackson Community Garden in Queens. Situated on a half-acre next to high-rise residential buildings in the low-to-middle income neighborhood of Woodside, Queens, the site includes the landmarked, colonial-era Moore-Jackson Cemetery. The garden features raised beds and a greenhouse for vegetable production, composting, a little free library and space for community gathering. The garden group includes students from local schools.

Repurposed by Design reconstitutes the elements of the original, contiguous Street Seats installation to create individual zones of seating that respond to the new context as well as to the Covid-19 pandemic. In collaboration with community members, we determined the location, optimal heights, and other critical details of the installation. Due to lumber production deficits caused by the pandemic and in keeping with the recycling focus of the project, lumber scraps left from elements too derelict to reuse were salvaged and applied.

We placed the project near the main garden entry so that it would invite the public into the garden. The scheme provides an opportunity for people to sit 6' apart, in direct response to the pandemic, and for people in wheelchairs to comfortably engage with the seating. In keeping with the overall sustainable tenets of the project, we avoided using chemically treated lumber or applied finishes. The installation will last as long as the cedar in contact with the ground lasts.

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TEDC Faculty Grant: \$3500. Fall 19 - Spring 20

Project costs:

Moving/Storage of Existing Materials: \$600.

Research Assistants (Gianna Robertson, BFA ID and Namra Khalid, BFA AD): \$333 +\$500 = \$833.

Carpenter (Domenic Rizzotti, BFA PD): \$1200.

PTF Pay: \$400.

Materials: \$467.