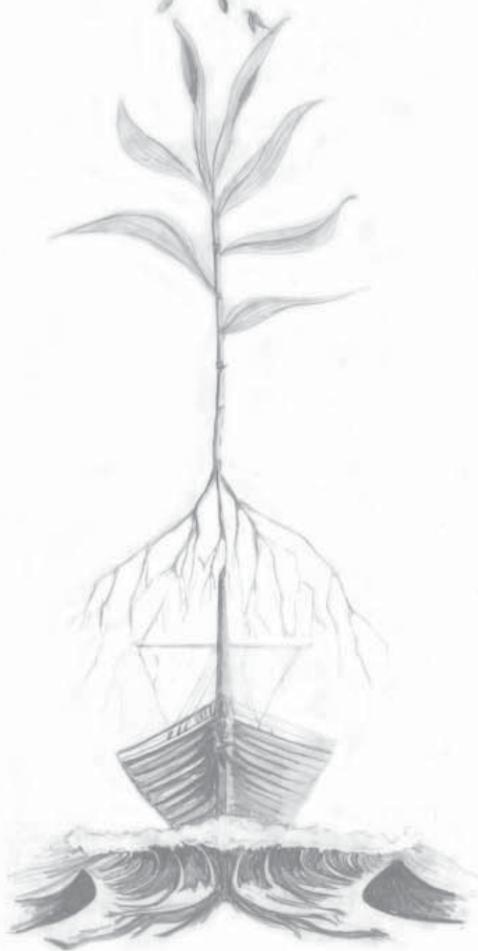


REMEMBERING THE PAST AND PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

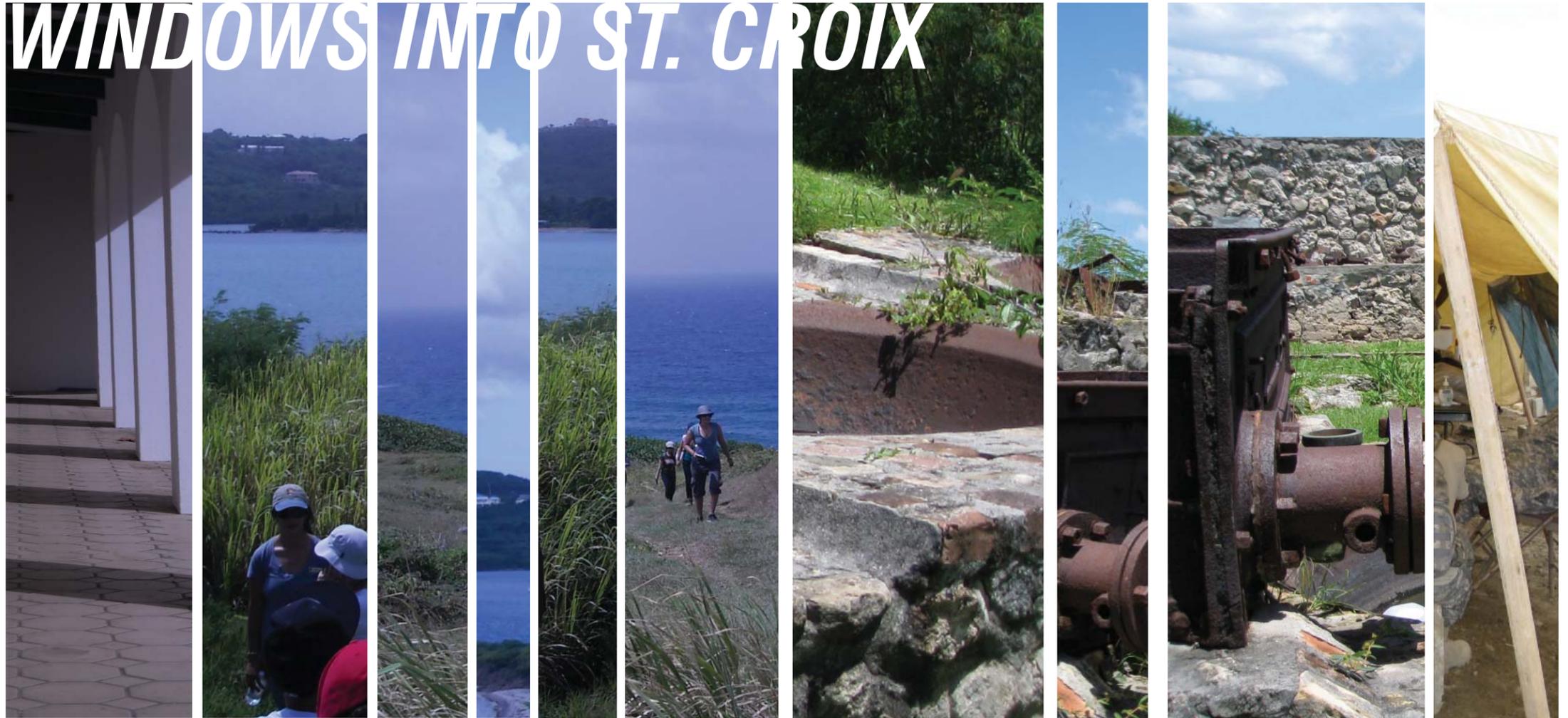
This park is an opportunity to give all inhabitants on the island a place to remember, participate, and learn. When people think about a traditional national park such as Yosemite or the Grand Tetons, its main objective is to preserve the natural landscape and beauty of the land. Salt River Bay is different, the land has been encroached on, developed and re developed, the objective is not so much to restore a landscape to one particular time, but to create a landscape that is reflective to St. Croix's, past, present, and future.

This site has a history that cannot be ignored, and so all important historical aspects on the site must and will be celebrated, highlighted by spaces for observation and gardens for reflection, returning these land marks to the people. Historical sites can be grouped into different periods in the historical timeline of St. Croix. The Taino Village, ball court, and burial ground, will be the pre- Columbian period. The earthen fort, sugar mill, and sugar plantation, will be the trade and slavery period. Both of these periods will be memorialized on the eastern slope of the site with observation decks facing east and west. The western deck is reflection for the Taino and pre-Columbian native period of the island, this deck faces the Taino village, burial ground, and Puerto Rico. The eastern deck is reflection for the colonization of European culture (i.e. Columbus, Trade, Slavery) facing Africa and Europe.

The present and future history proposed of the site will be in the sites marine research and its facilities, which will be separated into multiple programs. The professional aspect includes spaces and facilities to conduct the appropriate research. A student program including dorms and a public program in which visitors are given opportunities to experience the marine and benthic environments on the island, one of the ways the public can participate is through movie screenings of deep canyon benthic dives and coral reef studies. Programs focusing on the future of the island will be rooted in sustainability. Water conservation is a major issue on the island and this facility can be an opportunity to showcase ways to conserve and produce clean water for the island through different creative processes such as extensive bio- swale collection methods using the islands topography. Planting schemes also play an important role in water quality and marine life, for this reason mangrove restoration and planting techniques that improve water quality along slopes and main watershed inlets into the bay must be implemented.



WINDOWS INTO ST. CROIX



My knowledge and understanding of Caribbean culture and the people who live there was limited to images I've seen in movies and on T.V. This education ultimately only explained to me that it's a beautiful landscape with relaxed people, but gave me absolutely no personal understanding of what happens there, the social, economic, and political. What makes this place a place? (Lippard quote.) I knew it was more than a tourist destination for people from the mainland to sit on a beach, listen to Bob Marley, and drink

rum. But there was a wall between me and what actually happened on these islands, because I have never actually been there and experienced this place. Even if I had, it would have been from the perspective of a tourist on vacation with little access to local culture and local social interactions.

I was given preliminary readings on the Caribbean which included, "A Brief History of the Caribbean," by Jan Rogozinski, "A History of the Virgin Islands in the U.S.," by Issac

Dookhan, and "Owning Memory," by Jeanette Allis Bastian. These readings were an excellent foundation to build my understanding of the Caribbean, but ultimately you have to live in that landscape to gain an understanding of that place, to respect it and gain respect from the people who live there.

The Senior Advanced Landscape Architecture studio at Rutgers-the state university of New Jersey was asked by the Department of the In-

terior to create conceptual site plans for the future National Park Service marine biology research center within Salt River Bay on the island of St. Croix. The visit was an opportunity to not only further understand the site, but to understand the place. What is its local culture? Who are the locals? Who are the natives? (This question which is discussed later turned out to be particularly difficult to answer.) How do locals view the NPS? How will locals and visitors utilize this site? Who is affected negatively



Above: Christiansted



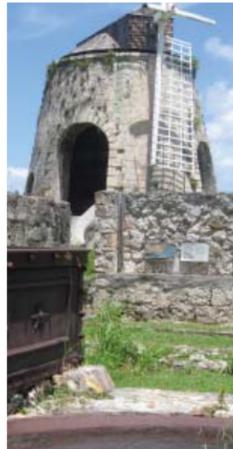
Above: Meredith Hardy



Above: Zandy Hillis-Starr explaining the site



Above: Arawak replica hut at Nate Olives Farm



Above: Sugar Plantation



Above: Student Hike



Above: Nate Olive



Above: Zandy Hillis-Starr and a Lieutenant in the National Guard



Above: Students planting



Left: Panoramic of old slave trail through the coral pools of St. Croix



Above: Students painting



Above: Sugar mill

by this project...and how can we solve this? These questions are simple, but difficult to answer if you don't actually visit the place and take into consideration all sides of the people who live there, the NPS and stakeholders, the locals, the natives (whoever they may be), the seasonal inhabitants, and the tourists. The majority of this paper will talk about how these five groups of people interact with each other, and each of their perspectives on what St. Croix was, is, and can be. In order to continue this discussion it is necessary to have a brief history on the island of

St. Croix.

This brief history of St. Croix was given to me by Meredith Hardy an archeologist we met with, working for the National Park Service on St. Croix. The first signs of people on St. Croix dates back to over 4,500 years ago, but through this time up until 15th century the island was only sporadically inhabited. Speculation ranges that these first inhabitants were from Puerto Rico, Venezuela or both. The western bank of the Salt River Bay was the site of the Taino Indian village. The Caribs

later took control of the island and enslaved the Taino, the Caribs were the same Indians that Columbus encountered on his second landing in the new world in 1493. After Columbus, multiple European nations colonized the island up until 1923 when it was finally bought by the United States. Precisely 6 other nations have occupied the island; these countries include Spain, Great Britain, Netherlands, France, Knights of Malta, and Denmark. The Spanish were in constant conflict with the Caribs and eventually left the island. The Dutch then settled the is-

land, shortly followed by the British, eventually the two came into conflict with one another and the Dutch abandoned their settlement. Eventually the English settlement was destroyed by the Spanish who then took back control of the island; however their control was quickly over taken by the French. Under the French the Island was given to the Knights of Malta under Philippe de Longville's de Pointy governor of St. Kitts, who then sold it to the French West India Company. At this time the island became substantially wealthy when 90 plantations were established

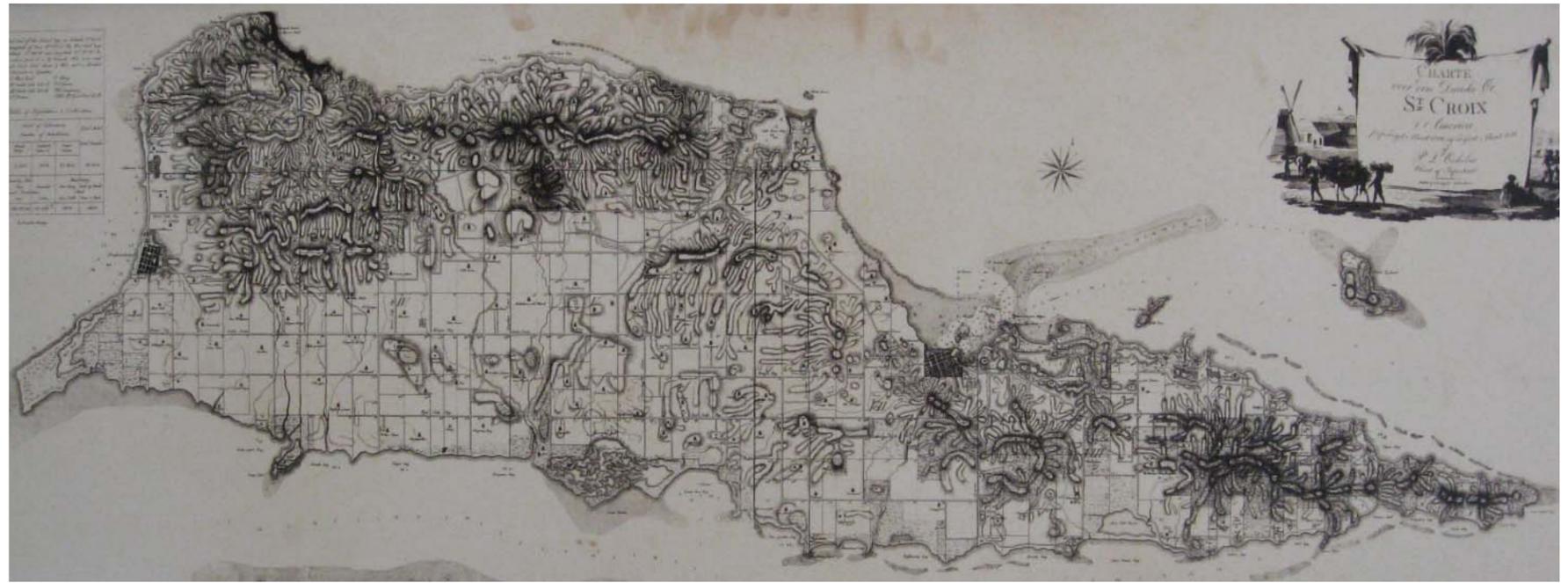
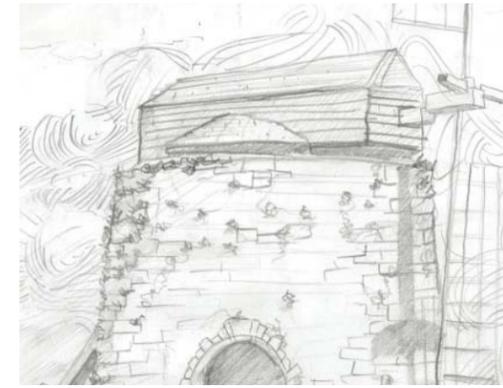
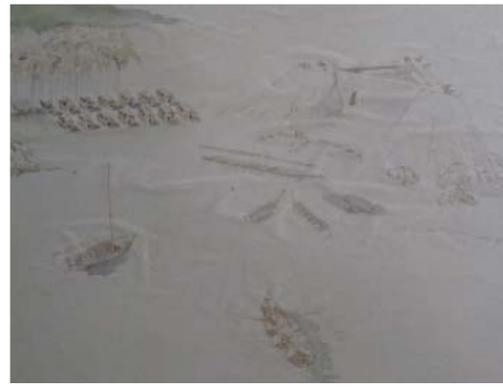
generating tobacco, cotton, indigo, and especially Sugar Cane. Eventually the island went into decline and was abandoned, at which time it was sold to the Danish West India and Guinea Company. Sugar Cane production boomed at this time and all available planting area was devoted to the cash crop.

Along with the production of cash crops the labor was supplied through Slavery. Slavery is deeply rooted in the past of St. Croix; the entire economy was built by it. The island demographic was largely unbalanced with a greater number of slaves than free people. IN 1848 slavery was abolished due to a successful insurrection, however indentured servants continued to be sent to the island. There were a number of labor disputes through the 19th century, but the most notable and ultimately successful revolt took place in 1878. The revolt ended in the burning of Frederiksted, because of this it was given the name "Fireburn." After this the Danish left the island and was later sold to the United States for \$25 million in 1917. Presently most of the population on the island is descendants of the slave population from the Danish occupation. It should also be made clear that it is believed by many, that to be considered a native of the island one is a descendent from inhabitants before the United States 1917 Purchase.

All of these countries and all of the people who came along with them created a melting pot of different cultures and ethnicities that eventually made up the island of St. Croix. In doing so it also created an identity crisis of who is actually the face of St. Croix. No

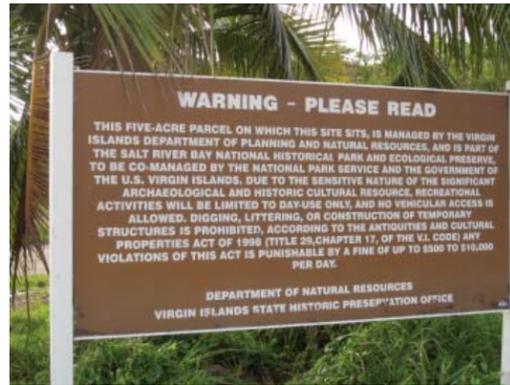
the right to call themselves the faces of St. Croix, seeing as how there has been so many different occupiers. Lippard in his book *The Lure of the Local* explains, "Each time we enter a new place, we become one of the ingredients of an existing hybridity, which is really what all "local places" consist of. By entering that hybrid we change it; and in each situation we may play a different role." Each person that has inhabited the island of St. Croix, back to the Arawak Indians all the way up to the tourists who visit the island today, gives this island its identity. It is Lippard's idea of Multicenteredness an extension of the idea of multiculturalism, basically stating that we as people move around a lot, but when we move we come into contact with those who haven't moved at all creating new ingredients to a place.

This brings us to the question, what point in time should a NPS park at Salt River Bay be preserved at? The answer to this question by some NPS members seems to be to restore it to a pre-Columbian state, which in the mindset of the NPS motto; to preserve land in its pristine state before human development seems to be an obvious answer, but is it this simple? Most NPS parks such as Yellowstone, The Grand Tetons, and Mt. McKinley are simple in their preservation since they had no previous human development. Salt River Bay is a different story; the land has been the site of Indian villages, early European settlements, Colonial Plantations, and a planned community. The answer isn't as obvious, people have used this site for centuries and to change it to something that has no real connection to the "place," then we can



Top Left: Historic drawing of Dutch Plantation
 Top Mid: Arawak hut replica
 Top Right: Dutch fort at Castle Nugent, Christiansted
 Bottom Left: Early Fort at Salt River Bay
 Bottom Mid: Perspective drawing of plantation sugar mill
 Bottom Right: View from east side of Salt River Bay looking down at the Columbus landing site.
 Below: Early colonial map of St. Croix

Right: National guard demolition of hotel on east side of Salt River Bay
 Top Left: East side of Bay
 Top Right: Littering on Columbus landing site
 Bottom Left: Early Fort at Salt River Bay
 Bottom Left: Hiking on Western slope of Salt River Bay
 Bottom Right: Wordy signage at Columbus landing entrance



upset the people who care about it the most. Or we can change it completely designing to make connections to the past, present and future in a culturally and environmentally conscious way. In order to do this as discussed earlier we have to take in consideration all inhabitants of the island, the rest of the reading will be an observation of the people of places that I have met in my time on St. Croix, these experiences and interactions are my personal connection to the island as a 'place.'

Buck Island didn't have the historical layers that Salt River Bay has, and saying you want to restore it to pre-Columbian, Dutch colonial, or even something completely new, all come with their own problems with different groups of people on St. Croix.

I believe a big instigator for Zandy's decision to preserve the bay in a pre-Columbian state has to do with her co-worker Meredith Hardy, an archeologist working for the National Park Service. Meredith's work is centered on ancient Ineri and Taino artifacts in Salt River Bay; on the west side of the bay sat a Taino village which contained a ball court. This ball court was later discovered by a Swiss archeologist Debooy in 1923, who later took most of the archeological findings back to Switzerland where they are now housed. Meredith continues to excavate on the Judith's Fancy community site located on the east end of the park. This housing development sits on top of what once was an active Indian satellite community, pottery, wooden structures, metals, and human remains are regularly found on site. Meredith perceives the site as a window to the past, every single artifact is important, and anything found during development of the site should be archeologically recorded. Her connection to the site is rooted in the past, and rightfully so, she is archeologist who searches for clues from the past, and if one looks at it from the NPS motto of preservation as a pristine environment, going back to a pre-Columbian landscape makes perfect sense.

The first day on St. Croix we visited the visitor center for the National Park at Salt River Bay. The visitor center is situated on the western side of the bay toward the ocean overlooking both the bay and ocean. After 10 minutes of individual exploration of the area, taking photographs and digesting our first impressions, we were met by Zandy Hillis-Starr, Karen Koltes, and Meredith Hardy, Zandy an NPS park ranger and Marine Biologist explained the NPS' history on the island of St. Croix, specifically their work on Buck Island, which from the standpoint of a Marine Biologist was a monumental success. The reef at Buck Island and native vegetation was restored, and from this reef bleaching caused from contaminated runoff was limited.

Zandy sees the future of Salt River Bay in this way, an oasis for marine studies and research. She wants this site to be a mecca on the island of St. Croix and the Virgin Islands for marine biology. However in terms of restoration of the landscape, pin pointing the exact time to restore the landscape is a harder scenario than Buck Island.

On Tuesday August 24, the second day of our trip we met with Meredith

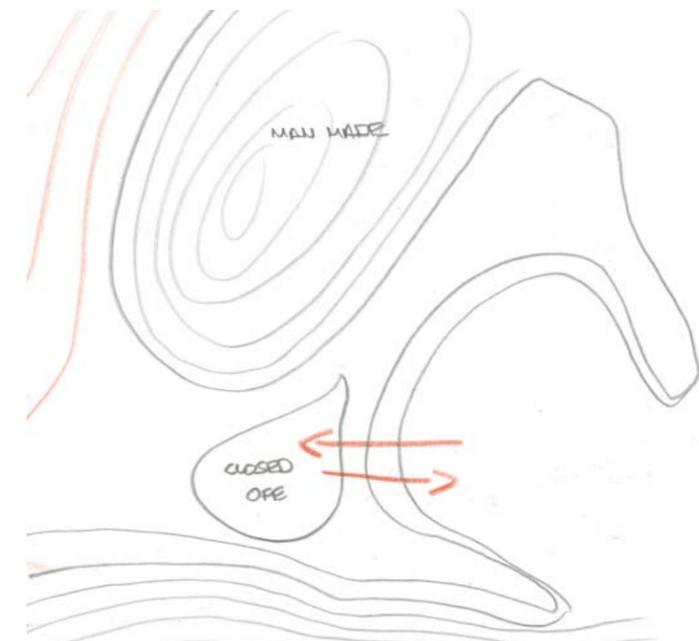
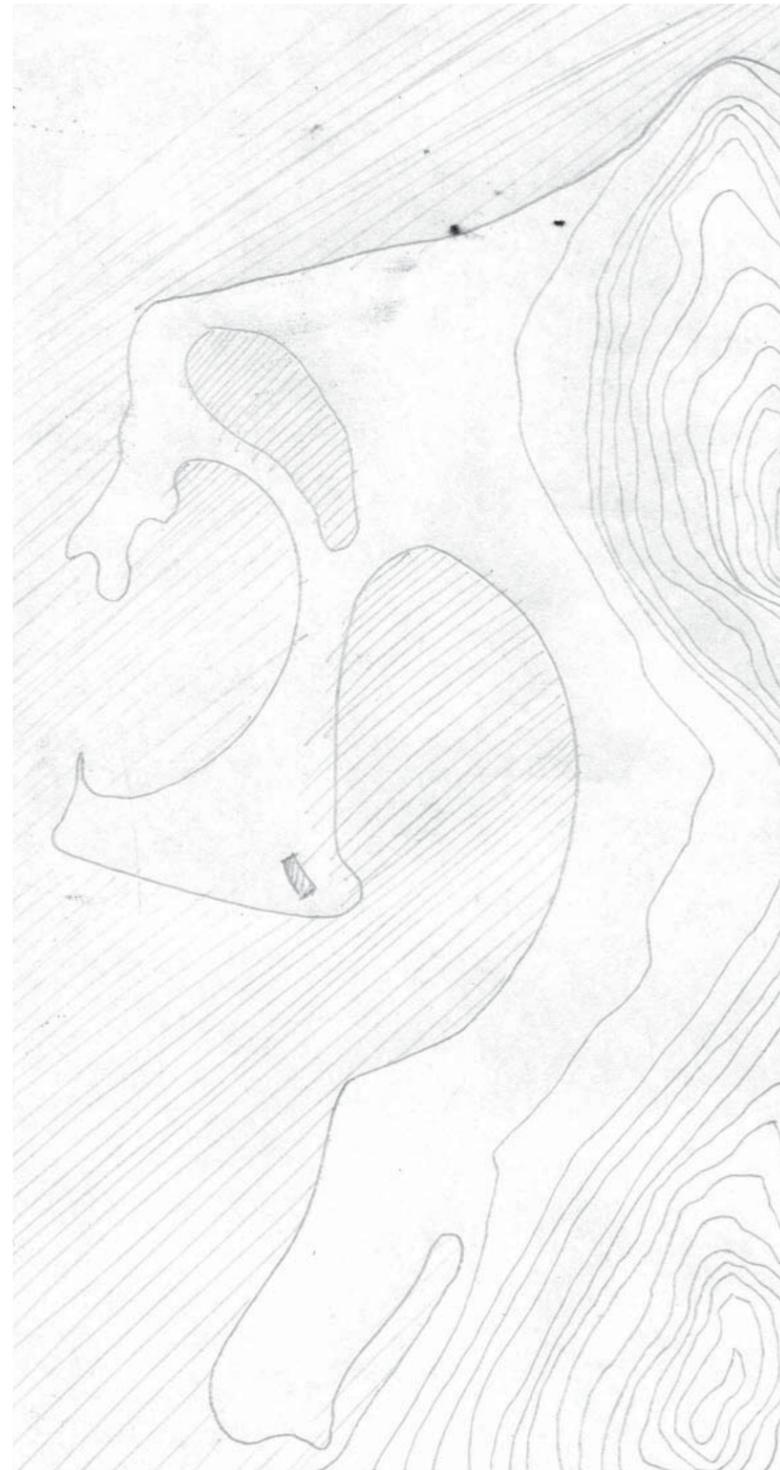


again, she led a tour from the west to east side of the site, where most of her excavations take place. On the west end of the site is the location of the Taino village, where the ancient ball court is located. It is also the site of the Carib village that Columbus encountered on his second voyage of the new world in 1493. The site presently is also the location of an Easter celebration for the locals, where they gather and celebrate every year during lent. This area presently has little connection to any era, one enters immediately into the site by car with little natural interaction, and is quickly welcomed by a wordy lengthy sign and a non-native coconut palm. Walking through the west side litter is evident, candy wrappers, and beer cans. Meredith explained to us this was a way for the locals to mark their territory and to discomfort any tourists. This made it clear to me that the locals have a connection to this beach; it's not just a historic site where Columbus landed, but a daily recreation ground for swimming and socialization. Presently this area is owned by the government of St. Croix and not the NPS, so local interaction with the site is active, furthermore local businesses such as kayak tours use this site as a boat launching point into the bay. This will be discussed later as I participated in said tour. What will happen to these people if the site is made into a National Park? Local businesses will not be able to use the site, locals will have to pay to use the beach, and there will be no consumption of alcohol during their Easter celebration on the beach. It will destroy their sense of this place and what it is to them.

The east end of the site was the location of a hotel constructed in the late 1960's which was halted midway through

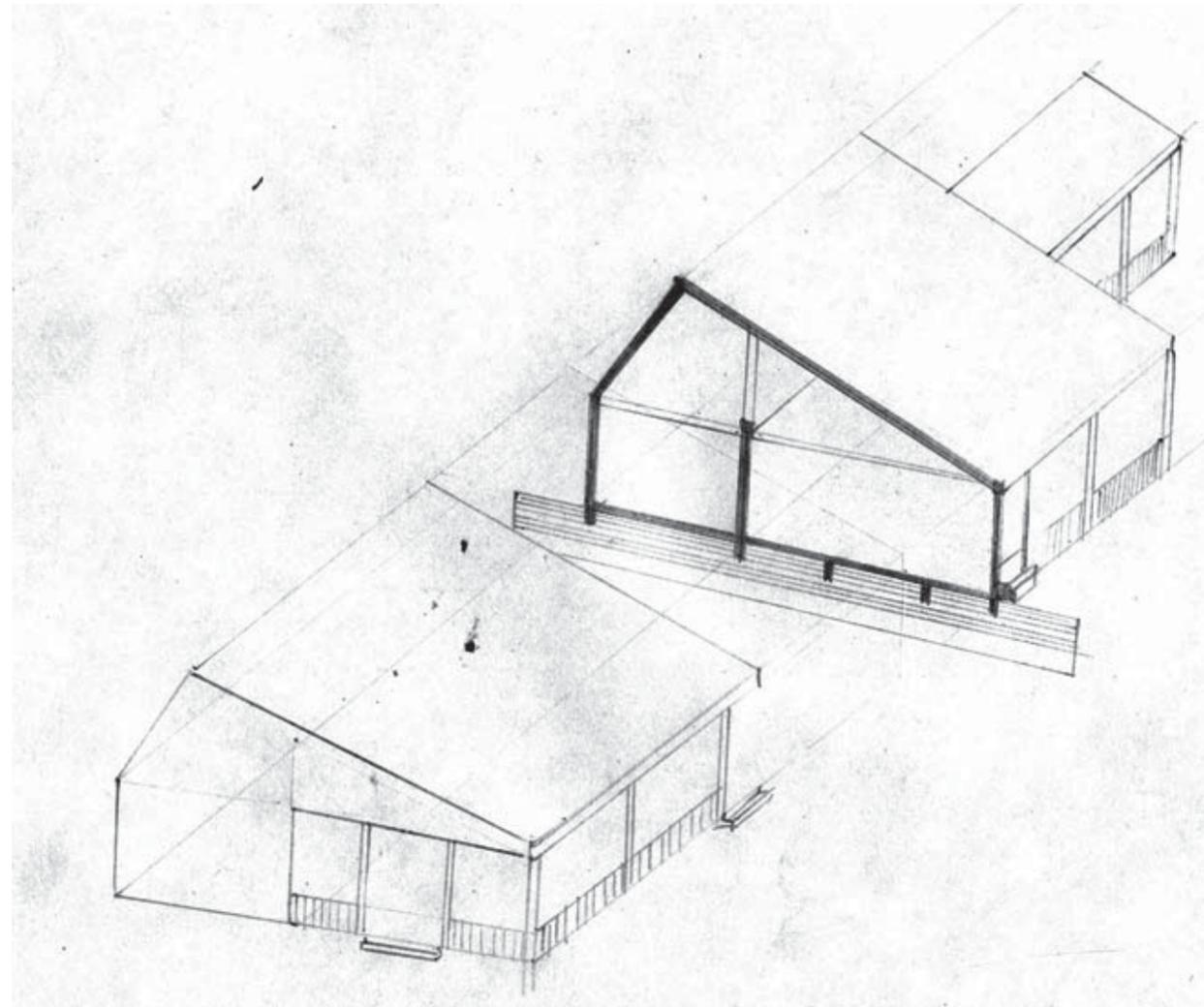
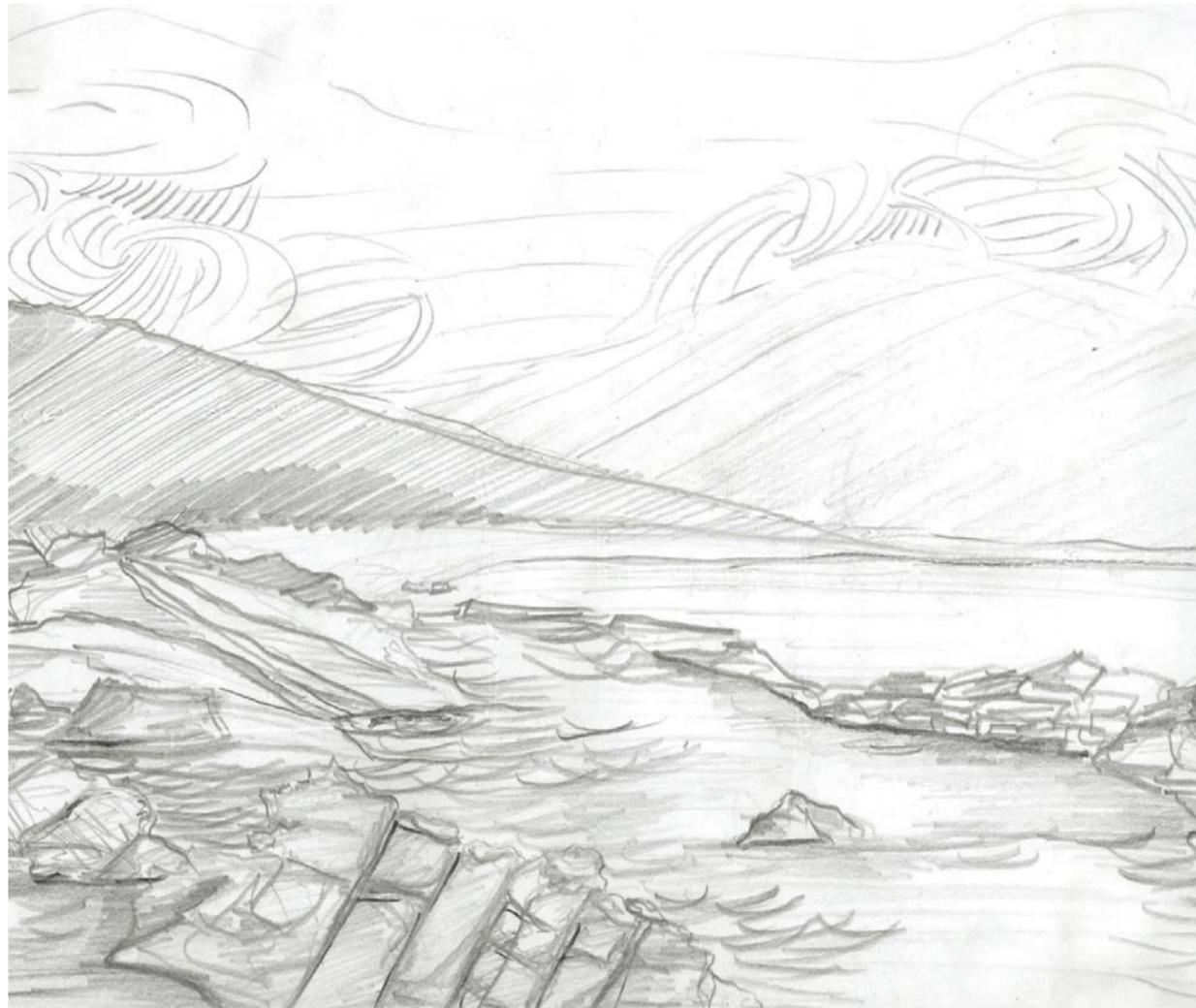
and never completed. During the hotel's construction large amounts of environmental damage took place. The hotel was constructed on the water, below the 20' contour line of the landscape near the shore on the east end of the bay. A man-made inlet was formed and most of the mangroves which filter and block sediment from reaching the bay were destroyed. Because of the large amounts of construction sediment and run-off made its way into the bay and eventually led to coral bleaching within the bay.

On the far east side of the bay is a large hill similar to the hill the visitor center sits on in the west. But this hill has been molded and sculpted by bulldozers for development of the hotel and new houses for the Judith's Fancy community; however construction was halted here when a local woman interrupted a town meeting discussing the archeological significance of this site by throwing down human remains she stumbled on just by walking outside her house. After this a decision was made to stop future development and for archeological excavations to take place. This hill overlooks the entire bay and has spectacular views of the ocean from the eastern slope. This side of the bay seems to be closed off from all local connection, except for the residents at Judith's Fancy. To even enter the site one would have to make their way through three security gates at Judith's Fancy, which unless you have permission or are a resident is impossible. Because of this this side of the bay seems to have a cleaner palate than the western side, the side the government owns. Simply bringing people to the east side of the bay to experience a lost aspect of their island would be an improvement.



Left: Hand drawn plan of east side of salt river Bay
 Top Right: Plan of Salt river Bay from memorization
 Bottom Right: Drawn diagram of man made lake on east side of Salt River Bay
 Below: Various images of Salt River Bay





Left: Perspective drawing of shore on east side of Salt River Bay

Right: Section oblique of the Chicken Shack, take note on the openness of the bar, just a roof.

Bottom Left: Photos while at the chicken shack

Below: Axonometrics of Native Arawak housing. Similar to the commodities of the Chicken Shack; a roof with limited support open to breezes



In between the visit to the west side and east we ate at a local eatery called the Chicken Shack, It's a small, well shack with an outdoor bar, with wooden decking, no walls, and a roof. It was a Tuesday afternoon and it seemed to be a Friday night atmosphere anywhere back home. The whole island seemed to converge on the parking lot by car, to enjoy food, beer, and to socialize. Something as simple as a structure that gives refuge from the tropical

sun and a cool breeze seems to be very important to the atmosphere, it's not inside closed off from the world, but it's not open to the elements of sun and rain. As a visitor it gave me a sense of how the locals operate day to day, most of the younger patrons seemed to be in construction working in the heat all day seeking refuge from the sun, while the older patrons seemed to be after simple conversation with familiar faces, the island is small to mainland standards, one

thing I've noticed is that most people seem to no one another, in some way or another.

My experience at the Chicken Shack was short, but I feel as though it gave me the greatest gateway into the lives of both the natives, and locals to the island. It also gave me ideas for the simple commodities in Caribbean architecture; connectivity between indoor and outdoor, shade, dryness, and tun-

neling breezes. These are the things one can only think about by actually entering a place and experiencing the atmosphere, I could not have learned this at my studio desk.

At the end of the day we met with a local Kayak tour guide, who runs his business out of Salt River Bay, launching Kayaks off the west side of the bay. After a brief discussion with him, something for the first time on the trip was brought to my attention. Some people on the island have negative views on the National Park Service and what they might do to this place. Looking back now in reflection after the trip I think it was naïve of me to think that no one would object to a National Park in St. Croix, but there are a lot of reasons for Natives and locals to object. As mentioned before the Columbus landing site if turned over to the NPS will not be open to local businesses like the Kayak tour, Easter celebration would change, and even locals seeking refuge from the heat will be asked to pay to use the beach. But there is a bigger reason for the untrust in the National Park Service, an old dispute from the past that I was made aware of during a small meeting which took place in our hotel. Edgar Lake a local historian was giving a speech which was supposed to be on the history of the island, but in which quickly turned into a lesson on the mistakes that have been made to the island by people who design with no real connection to the place. His speech was fluffy and filled with multiple analogies and metaphors which all led to the end goal of telling us students, mistakes have been made in the past, make sure your designs are not a reflection of these mistakes.

The mistake he seemed to be channeling from was that of the National Park Services involvement with the town of Christiansted. Before the restoration of Castle Nugent in Christiansted was a large parking lot beside the historic fort. The decision was made to rip up the lot and plant lawn space for a park restoring the Castle to its Dutch period. However the parking lot was the only lot in Christiansted for the locals to park their cars and enter the town, after the lot was removed there was nowhere for the locals to park and the town became somewhat of a ghost town. And to make matters worse to restore a park to a time period reminding people of slavery was no proper reason for the loss of their parking lot. The man who took responsibility for these actions and has called himself "the man who destroyed Christiansted" is Joel Tutein the National Park Service superintendent at St. Croix. Joel is an islander, but not originally from St. Croix, when speaking to him it was evident that he had no problem admitting to his mistake, he saw what it did to the town and admitted that he was wrong. Looking at it though his perspective I can see why he did it. To the NPS parking lots are bad and park space is good, I being a Landscape Architect agree, but what about the public opinion on the site, I'm sure outraged citizens objected to the loss of their parking lot in town meetings. So why wasn't another lot planned. Well a lot of it has to do with an agreement the United States made with the Dutch at the time of the purchase in 1917. The Dutch insisted that all existing architecture be preserved and if a building is torn down, another exact replica must replace it. There is simply no space in

Christiansted for another large parking lot, and to place one outside of the town is too much of an inconvenience for the locals. In the end the wrong decision was made to get rid of the parking lot, they should have found a way to better plan the lot into the overall design. On top of all this adding insult to injury the castle was simply restored to a scaring period in history for most of the natives on the island. To design a better developed parking lot with connectivity away from the castle and into the town center, and choosing a design for the future of the site instead of restoring the past may have been a better solution for this particular problem.

I have talked a lot about the natives and the NPS, and I haven't focused on any newcomers to the island and the tourists on the island. First impressions of Christiansted and Frederiksted were sort of ghost towns, Christiansted partly because of what I just discussed about Castle Nugent, but also because there is no real tourist market on the island. Some of the locals such as Veronica Gordon a local bush woman seem like they would like to keep it that way. They do not want this island to become a Sandals resort where there is no respect for the island and its people. A Sandals also does not greatly profit the locals in any way, instead these resorts only really profit themselves and have no connection back to the community. A newcomer to the island Nate Olive who owns an organic farm in the north western part of the island was a highlight of my trip to St. Croix. Nate is originally from Georgia and studied on the mainland then decided to move to St. Croix with one of his buddies to start



Above: View of Castle Nugent park



Above: Location of old parking lot at Christiansted, now Castle Nugent National Park



Above: Locals utilizing the beach at Columbus landing



Above: Joel Tutein superintendent of the Park Service speaking with Brian owner Virgin Kayak tours, which operates out of Salt River Bay.

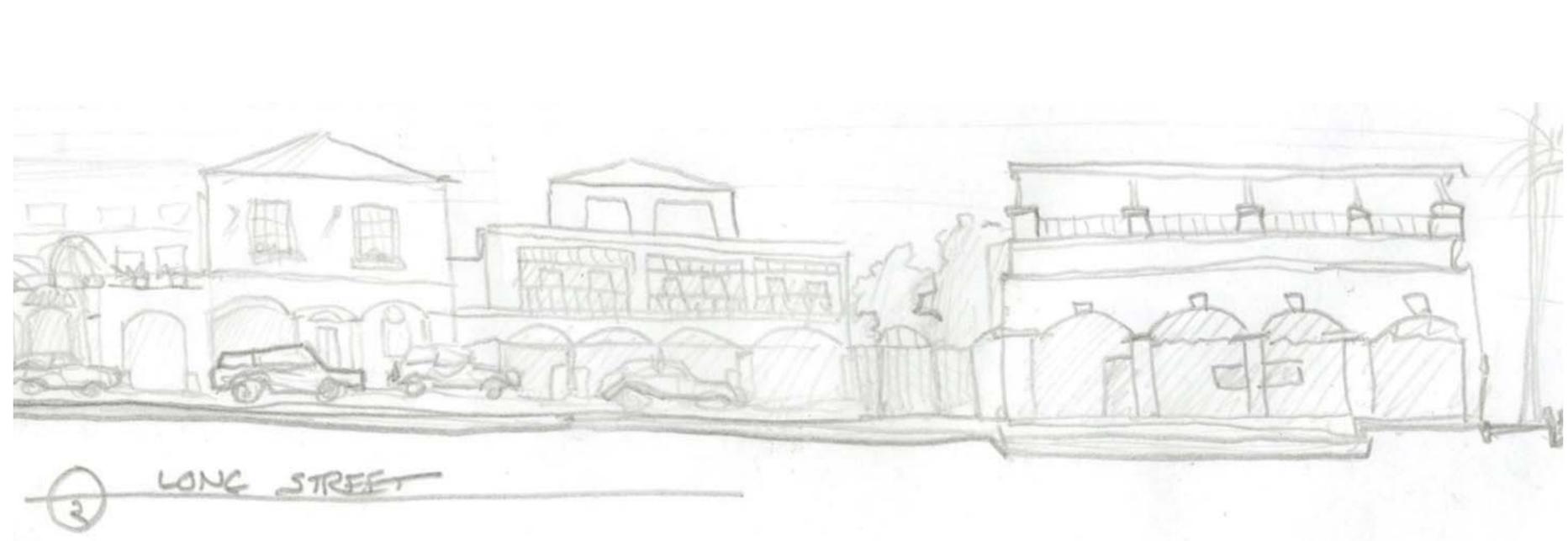
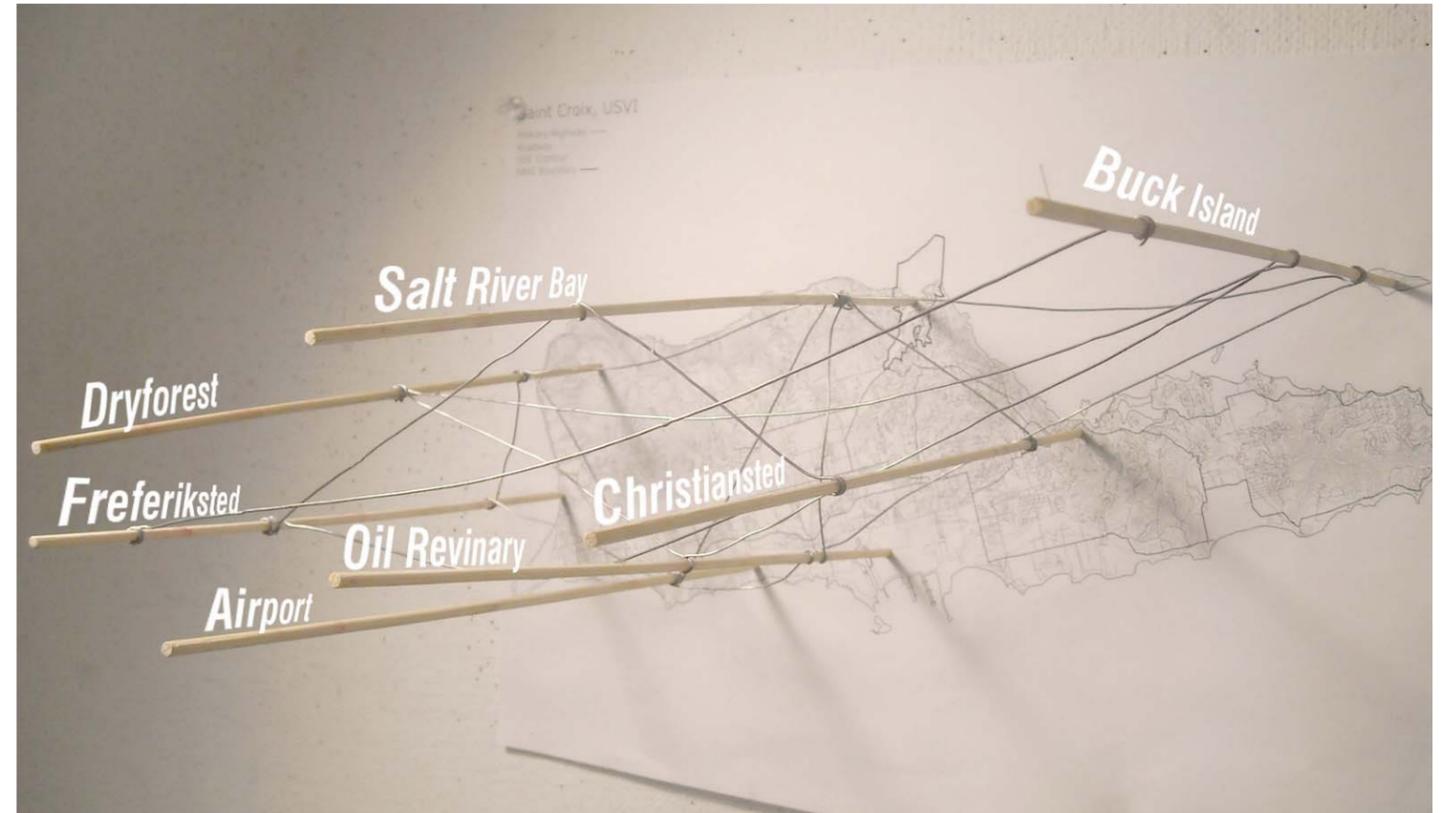
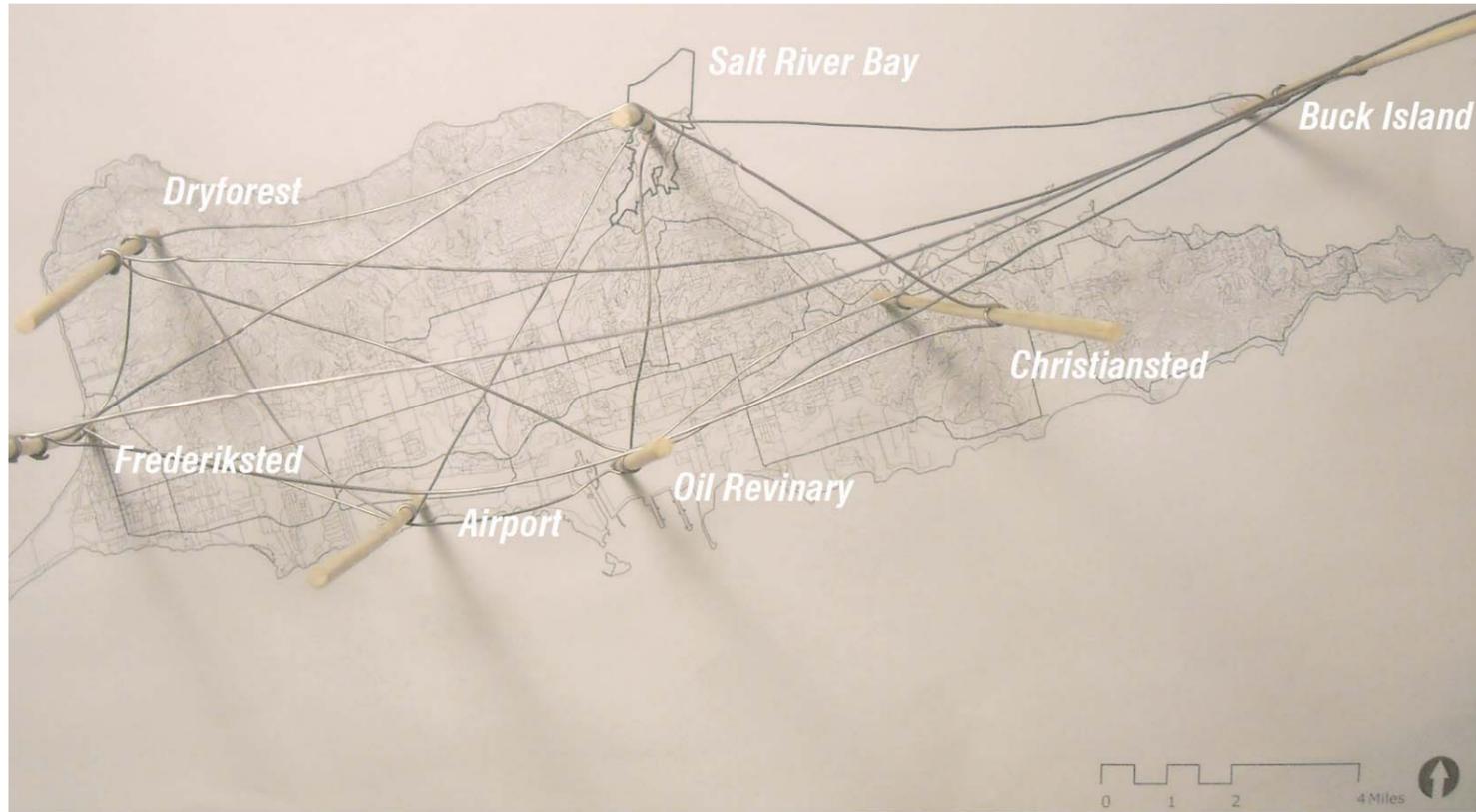


Above: Park space at Castle Nugent



Above: View from within Castle Nugent National Park facing the water

Top: Panoramic view from atop the National Park Service visitor center at Salt River Bay



an organic farm and farmers market. The plot of land that Nate chose in the Rainforest had become invested with Guinea grass and deemed unusable for farming. Nate saw its potential and decided to use the grass in a positive way, by using it to sheet mulches the soil and fertilizes it. Nate's motto was that he does not grow plants, but he grows soil. This was useful to me because most of Salt River Bay is invested with this very same invasive grass, and he just showed us all a way to take something negative and utilize it in a positive way. It is through these simple practices and processes that we as designers can build off of to improve the site by exhibiting the natural processes to the people and showcasing are power to change the land in a positive way. Nate also talked deeply about watershed management and water run-off, with water Nate explains, "you have to slow it spread it and sink it," he achieves this

through sculpting the land to let the water follow the contour and allow time for the land to swallow the water before it reaches the bay. A big problem with Salt River Nate explains, is that there is nowhere for the water to go but into the bay. All the Judith's Fancy run-off which consists of oil from cars, pesticides from lawns, and waste from sewage, is surely draining into the bay. Because of this Nate believes it is not so much the temperature of the water that is bleaching the coral, but it is the contaminated run-off into the bay that is affecting the coral.

Nate is not a native to the site he is a relative newcomer, and has quickly gained respect from most of the islanders that I have encountered on the island. As I stated before this is a small tight community within the island, and word spreads fast. The many things that Nate has accomplished on his

short time on the island have rippled out throughout the island in a positive light. He is changing the land back to a natural state and is doing it in a completely sustainable way that benefits himself, the people, and students, by providing money, food, knowledge, and a beautiful landscape. He is a model for us, he was in a similar position to us a few years back, he had to gain the respect he's earned by doing something positive, and the people took notice, no one seems to reflect badly on what he's doing including the locals. I believe as long as in the end if our designs can benefit everyone on the island in some way by doing something positive, there is no way we can fail as designers.

Everything I do as a designer must have a benefit to both the island and its people, if it does not, I would be disrespecting a place that I have gained respect for over the course of my trip,

and would be intentionally disregarding everything I have learned from the people that I have met on the island. The outline of the program that needs to be implemented at Salt River Bay must have a positive and beneficial outcome. This outcome does not to be immediate, it can take time, it can be a program set up in stages, it may take 10 years or it may take 100 years. Early stages for the site can be local involvement, open events to the public to better understand the site and the operations that take place there. The later stages can be the restoration of native species, improving the ecology of the site, allowing water to properly circulate, giving the bay time to heal. Then maybe in the distant future all the education, and observation of the site as a fragile living entity can promote further stages in design, perhaps in time we don't see the need for a community such as Judith's Fancy and this notion of no housing on site is made

Opposite page

Top Left: Diagram showcasing the connectivity of St. Croix

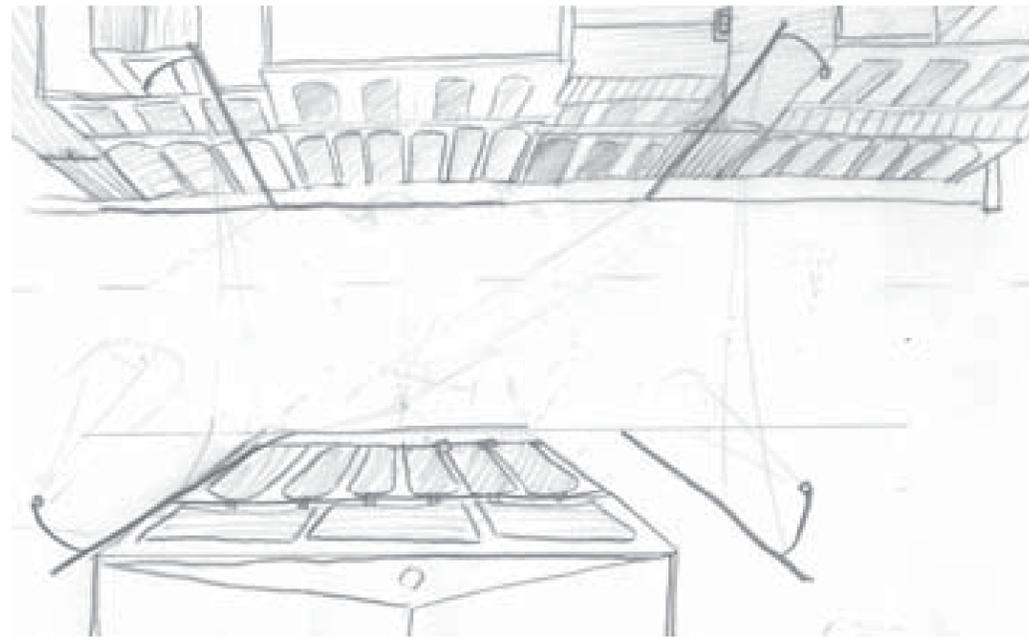
Top Right: Diagram showcasing the multiple layers of connectivity in St. Croix

Bottom Left: Perspective drawing of street in Christiansted

Bottom Right: Elevation of street in Christiansted

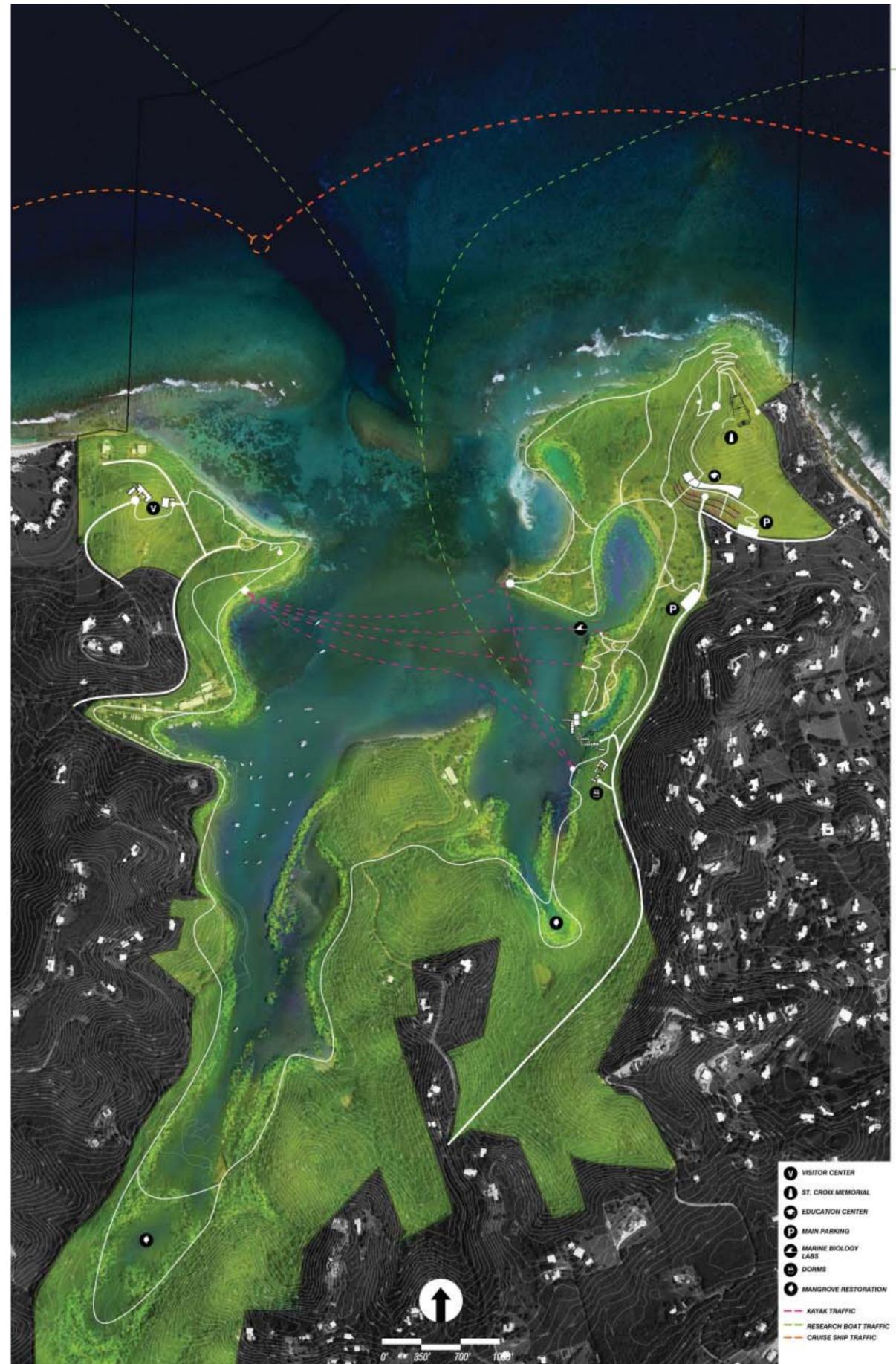
Bottom Left: Aerial perspective of street in Christiansted

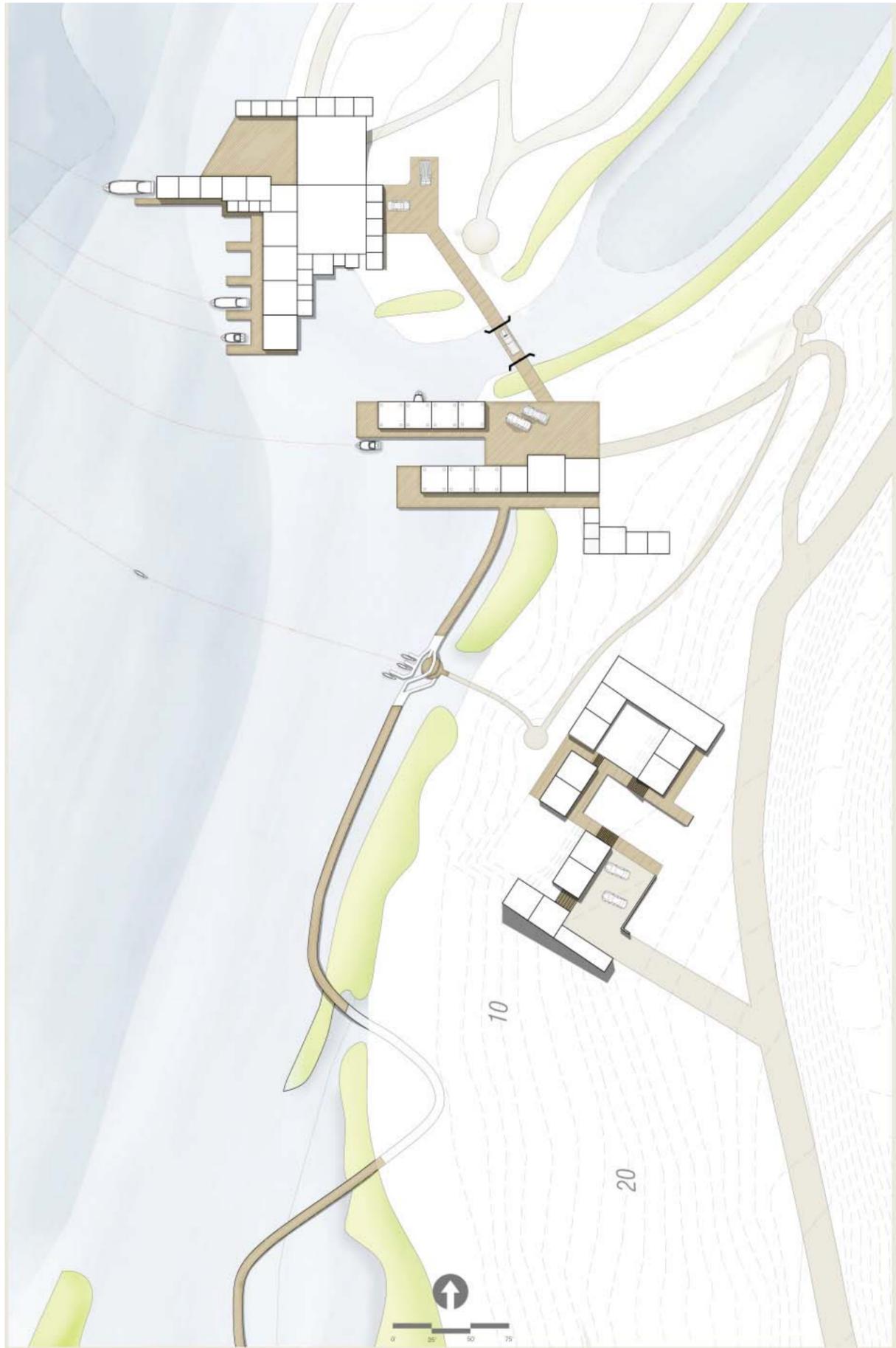
Bottom Right: Section elevation of street in Christiansted



possible by the early progress we make as designers to instill the idea that this 'place' should be left alone and should never of been developed.

In order to get this point across I think it is important to be sustainable in the design process, the facilities on site should have as little impact on the environment as possible, perhaps even the entire marine biology facility can sustain itself through organic farming, watershed management, and solar and wind energy's. Water is an important commodity on St. Croix, and to create a system that collects water in a smart and interesting way to benefit both plant and human life seems to be a very important tool, not just as a beneficiary to the people on the site, but as a learning tool, to teach the islanders new ways to conserve water. In providing a sustainable facility, which allows local involvement and education, I believe the local community will have a positive outlook on Salt River Bay. Similar to their outlook of Nate's organic farm, it is after all hard to hate something that benefits you, and the people around you. This does not simply have to be a marine biology facility for college students and professors, it can also be mecca for the community, a place for local islanders to learn and enjoy.





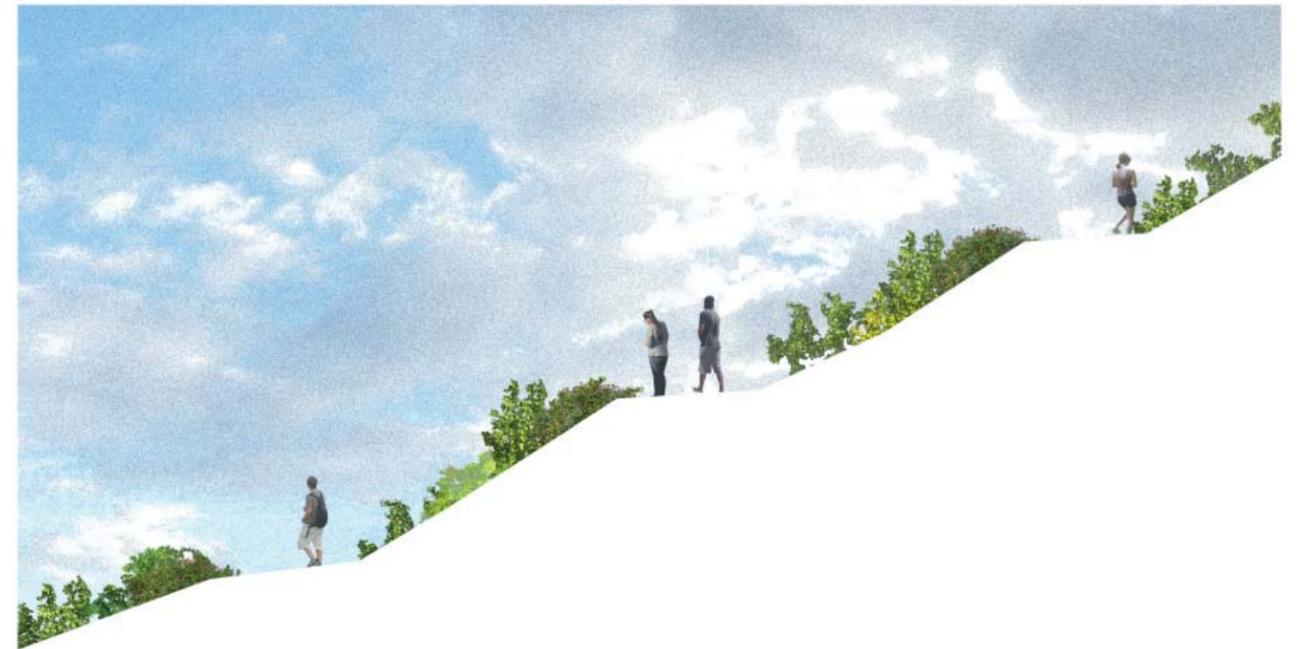




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