

Narratives for research phases:

Phase I – Urban-Rural Living: Albion, Nebraska

From my personal experience of Albion, what strikes me most is the people who lives there. They are warm, kind, and so pleasant to be around. I brought my little daughter with me that day, and she connected with Paul's family instantly. After the trip, I started to think about the way we are living: cities offer the excitement and diversity, but not family friendly; country has natural environment, but not convenient; the concept of urban-rural living was brought up almost a century ago, but we are still struggling with the way we should live. Albion, a small American town, has the country charm, and at the same time, has potential downtown urban area. The question is: what could we do to make Albion an ideal place for people to live, work, and raise family?

Phase II – Pioneering Past: Country School

Before big county schools emerge, country school was the main way people who live in Albion educate their children. These charming little schools created a personal and intricate space for kids to learn and grow; and because of these schools, a seven-year old boy could write fluently. The main reason that country schools were closed is the money, due to limited students, building maintenance, and so on. Now, the pioneering past can only be found in Albion museum.

Phase III – Continuing Legacy: Public Library

A solid brick building holds the public library, where the Albion community enjoys always. The way bricks laid out to form the building indicates the way people come together to form the whole community. The strength and dedication are the most precious value of Albion. Though a hundred years old, public library still serves the people functionally, as continuing legacy in Albion.

Phase IV – Infilling Future: Live/Work Studio

Same as library, downtown used to be a vibrant place for people to gather, entertain, enjoy and celebrate life in Albion. However, with lots of business were gone, the downtown is dying. How do we revitalize this potential magnet of community? One way of doing it is simply to bring people living in downtown area again. A small studio in-fills the open slot, carrying on the charm of neighborhood with modern touches, serves families to live and work at the same place. The simple gesture could lead to big changes.