Evolutionary Infrastructure
Adaptive reuse of a parking structure for cultural activities, San Francisco, CA, USA

Main authors
Mark Turibius Jongman-Sereno, student, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, Mira Irawan, student, New York University, New York, NY, USA and David O’Brien, student, Iowa State University, Ames, IA, USA

Summary by the jury
This project by a team of young designers explores the concept and potential of adaptive post-occupation of unused infrastructure in San Francisco. Using a parking garage to create a scenario, the scheme proposes to convert the “found” structure – an “objet trouvé” in the city, so to speak – into a public building hosting a range of cultural activities. The stacked floors of the garage and its circulation ramp are literally reused to accommodate new functions. Additionally, new architectural elements are introduced, such as a performance hall which acts as cultural beacon on top of the garage, and an open air atrium cut through the slabs as public space. Adaptive reuse is here perceived as a strategy to reduce material flows in the city, using its material stock as opportunity for further development.

Appraisal by the jury
The jury applauds the intrinsic ideological stance and ethical posture underlying the design proposal. Rather than view the garage as obsolete, the authors recognize its inherent qualities in order to create a spatial and social interface between the city and its inhabitants. Specifically valued is the team’s intention to rehabilitate an abandoned structure with minimal means and to revitalize a neighborhood through the provision of new activities – transforming technical infrastructure into social infrastructure.

Project data
Context Landscape, urban design and infrastructure
Client SFJazz
Background Research project

Further authors
Image 3: A view from a neighboring building shows the open air atrium and the garden spaces provided.

Image 4: Public gardens are located on the upper levels to alleviate the hardscaped urban environment.

Image 5: Wind currents off the water are used in stack ventilation. The program blocks are seen in elevation.

Image 6: The entry lobby to the music hall shows the use of existing structure as architectural detail.

Image 7: New openings throughout the structure connect programs like the art gallery and restaurant seen here.

Image 8: Vertical adjacencies create immediate connections while distributing programs along a continuous path.

Image 9: The back of house stacks vertically, connecting green room, backstage and more via private elevator.

Image 10: The music hall takes advantage of the existing floor levels to create balcony seating.

More at www.holcimawards.org/projects/evolutionary-infrastructure