BUILDING A PAVILION
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made it easier for us to explain our ideas and for the board to make decisions and express opinions. For weeks, which turned into months, we showed them models, drawings, and mock-ups of our proposals. Each step of the way they appeared to have complete confidence in us, always cheering us on.

We began our research by exploring every acre of the site. We hiked. We canoed the Cahaba River and the oxbow lake. We camped. We numbered and tagged the 109 trees in the old picnic area, then transferred the data into drawings and site models. We collected specimens or objects we found on the site that interested us and placed them into mason jars. This exercise was extremely helpful at the beginning of the project, because the site and the scope of work seemed vast and overwhelming. Along with exploring and collecting, we invited local birdwatchers, entomologists, and biologists to help us as we learned about the site. We made it a priority to be at the site every day, twenty-five miles away from Newbern, regardless of the weather. We immersed ourselves in the place.

Once we became familiar with the site and had met with our clients many times, we retreated to our studio in Newbern to begin drawing. We sketched in our individual sketchbooks, making photocopies for each team member, and then sat down and talked about our ideas. We would take the copies, sketch over them, and discuss what they meant. We called it "getting our dreams out." We did this exercise every day for two weeks. We made a series of study models and site models.