

Architecture and Context: *a collaboration in time and place*

discussion

Architecture has become environmental sculpture. Encouraged by the architectural press, buildings are objects within ill-defined spaces, to be looked at only, not relating to the space or true to the internal functions or purpose which brought their need about.

The best thing since sliced bread. White bread to be sure. Just as ingredients are over processed to produce a better look and smoother texture, architecture must also be enriched these days or it provides only spatial filler. Internally, architects are slowly giving away their practices to interior designers, illumination consultants, urban planners, space planners, etc. Externally, the public is forced to look at copy after copy of irresponsible, but highly "artistic," expression.

In terms of dealing with the latter, Gordon Cullen, in his book *THE CONCISE TOWNSCAPE*, points out when talking about context that "most towns are of old foundations, their fabric will show evidence of differing periods in its architectural styles and also in the various accidents of layout." In many cases it just may be the accident of layout that aids in enriching the environment (or our experiences), and in the same vain our senses and experiences are enriched as buildings show evidence of differing periods of architectural styles.

However, to leave the development of our environments to accidents and the whim of stylistic design seems to be a very shaky approach. Fritz Steele tells us that, "the desire to define (a place) gives a role to architecture... the success to define, gives the environment its meaning (definition)... connections between give rise to context, experience, and urban form." Certain places (settings), however, take on an importance; a spirit that evokes similar experiential feelings from many different people. And it is the creation of these special places that can and should become lessons for us to understand and learn from. Basic to this process is to understand the role that architecture plays. Too often context to an architect becomes only a design tool in shaping the building at hand. Matching setbacks and window lines are well intended exercises but one must reverse the table and look upon building, architecture, as a tool in developing the context; a tool in creating places, *collaboration in time and place*.



BUILDINGS AS PLACE: *object*



BUILDINGS WITHIN A PLACE: *focal point*



BUILDINGS AS AN EXTENSION OF PLACE: *participation*



BUILDINGS FORMING PLACE: *boarders, framers, containers*



the task

The studio will:

- Undertake the effort to uncover, explore, and understand the role architecture plays in creating "place." Jan 09th through Jan 13th.
- Document existing contextual precedents. Jan 16th through Jan 20st.
- Determine programmatic briefs and corresponding massing / building studies germane to the specifics of site. Jan 23rd through Feb 17th.
- Design an ARCHITECTURE to exemplify contextual fit and create place. Feb 20st through April 27th.

the studio

Vertically integrated 5th and 6th year studio. Studio goals and objectives have been established in five major educational arenas:

PROFESSIONAL:

- Be able to interact, cooperate, and share opinions and attitudes with fellow students.
- Be to formulate professional goals in harmony with abilities, interests, and beliefs.
- Be able to demonstrate an attitude of leadership.
- Be able to value levels of artistic care and an appreciation of finely crafted and well designed objects.

CRITICAL THINKING:

- Be able to clearly and specifically state project goals and objectives from a wide range of community input and opinion.
- Be able to evaluate existing urban environments and their spatial and behavioral characteristics through careful direct observation and systematic analysis as a prelude to development intervention.
- Be able to synthesize a wide range of design issues, critical to complex buildings and their contextual framework.

INFLUENCES:

- Be able to include and commit to theoretical positions and professional interest areas (including courses of study)
- Be able to demonstrate leadership in addressing the critical issues presented by a project and make independent observations directly relevant to advancing the design.
- Be able to use historical and contemporary precedents.
- Be able to synthesize the functional and cultural demands placed upon a building with the building's varied technology.
- Understand how the major codes and life safety issues affect building design.
- Be aware of the implication of culture and territoriality on environmental space.

ECONOMY/MEANS:

- Be able to manipulate infrastructure, land use, and landscape in reference to large scale environments and buildings.
- Demonstrate the value, performance criteria, environmental friendliness and constructability of various materials and building systems.

REPRESENTATION:

- Demonstrate the mastery of using drawings and abstractions as a way of achieving design insights.
- Use drawings and color in the clarification of design issues.
- Be able to execute complex architectural presentations at an appropriate level of craft.
- Be able to describe complex ideas in well-organized graphic, verbal, and written arguments defending approach to design.

naab criteria

- 1 speaking and writing skills
- 2 critical thinking skills
- 3 graphic skills
- 4 research skills
- 5 formal ordering systems
- 6 fundamental design skills
- 11 use of precedents
- 17 site conditions
- 28 comprehensive design
- 34 ethics and professional judgment