

University of Southern California School of Architecture

Architecture 561
Elements of the Urban Landscape: Projects and Places

Fall 2007, Monday & Wednesday 8:00-9:50
Harris Hall 102

Instructor: Robert Harris

Intentions:

This seminar is one of four graduate seminars on architecture and urbanism. The focus of this, the first seminar, is the power of individual projects to contribute to the making of the City. The first part of the course will be about projects as opportunities for urban repair and development. That is, it will emphasize projects as catalysts in the creation of urban places. The second part of the course will focus on the strategies and means for effective incremental urban development.

Method:

Lectures, discussions, and case-study presentations will be engaged throughout the eight weeks of the course. Reading and other analytical assignments will be made each week. A course project will require diagrammatic proposals for incremental place making at sites in Los Angeles.

Grading:

Grading will be based on the following: each of two quizzes, 25%; course project, 40%; participation, 10%, as follows:

For every reading, one question or statement is to be submitted at the beginning of class:

1. Something that seems important but is not clear to you; or,
2. Something that you think deserves a different perspective or conclusion than the author has written; or,
3. A "quiz" question, that is, a question that addresses a primary point of the reading.

Course Calendar:

<i>date</i>	<i>theory focus: lecture & discussion</i>	<i>reading</i>	<i>graded assignments</i>
<i>August-September-October</i>			
27	Introduction to basic issues: <i>Places in cities develop project-by-project over time as a continuous process of urban remodeling. Given the complexity of urban social, cultural, and economic conditions, is it likely in our time that projects will form positive urban environments? Can projects be excellent themselves and also generate excellent urban space, or is that beyond the power of individual projects? How does project size matter?</i>	<i>Harris, "Any whole has parts . . ." paper</i> <i>Harris, "Remodeling Theory" paper</i> <i>Bacon, "Principle of the Second Man"</i>	

29	<p>Current urban conditions – how discouraging is the discontinuity of contemporary urban space?</p> <p>1. The current discontinuity of urban places – lost space – is both a problem and an opportunity. To some degree, virtually every project is in a location of some degree of lost (or found) space</p> <p>2. Places are continuously remodeled. What is the meaning then of “master plans,” and what are the alternatives?</p>	<p>Trancik, pp. 1-20 Berger pp. 236-241</p>	
3	<p>Labor Day Holiday</p>		
5	<p>Assessing Urban Place: common interests or separate objectives?</p> <p>Despite cultural diversity, are there norms that unite us?</p>	<p>Lynch, pp. 99-120 Ellin, pp. 9-15 “Quotes” (collected)</p>	
10	<p>Assessing Urban Space</p> <p>At the beginning of every project, it is necessary to discover local conditions and issues. What are the fundamental dimensions of sites/places?</p>	<p>Corner ,”Terra Fluxus” in Waldheim, pp.21-33 Trancik, pp. 97-124</p>	
12	<p>Project definition: parts & wholes</p> <p>How are the limits of projects to be understood within the inevitable spatial continuity of every site and place?</p>	<p>Harris, “Parts and Wholes”; Alexander, Chapters 1, 2, pp. 9-30</p>	
17	<p>Place development: growth and change</p> <p>If every project takes its place in the continuous and uncertain process of place development, what are the responsibilities of projects in relation to what already is present, and in relation to what may occur in the future</p>	<p>Alexander, Chapter 3, pp. 31-99</p>	
19	<p>course project workshop</p>		Quiz One 25%
24	<p>The catalytic imperative</p> <p>What are the opportunities for projects to actively generate positive urban settings?</p>	<p>Attoe/Logan, pp. 44-73</p>	
26			
1	<p>Prospects for good outcomes: Manifestoes and Charters, Codes and Guidelines</p> <p>How does public policy work to support urban well-being while attending to the interests of private investment and the values of a diverse society? What does this have to do with designers and projects?</p>	<p>Los Angeles Downtown Strategic Plan (excerpts) Los Angeles Downtown Adaptive Re-Use Ordinance New Urbanism Publications pp. 10-2 to 10-19</p>	
3			quiz two 25%
8/10	<p>Course Project Workshop</p>		
15/17	<p>Project Presentations</p>		

Bibliography:

Alexander, Christopher, A New Theory of Urban Design, Oxford University Press, 1987; ISBN 0-19-503753-7.

Attoe, Wayne and Logan, Donn, American Urban Architecture, University of California Press, 1989; ISBN 0-520-06152-7

Bacon, Ed, Design of Cities, Penguin Books, 1976; ISBN

Berger, Alan, Drosscape: Wasting Land in Urban America, Princeton Architectural Press, 2006; ISBN-1-56898-572

Ellin, Nan; Integral Urbanism, Routledge, 2006; ISBN 0-415-95228

Lynch, Kevin; A Theory of Good City Form, MIT Press, 1981, ISBN 0-262-12085-2.

New Urbanism: Comprehensive Report & Best Practices Guide, New Urban Publications, Inc., Third Edition, 2003; ISBN 0-9745021-0-3

Trancik, Roger, Finding Lost Space, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1986; ISBN 0-442-28399-7

Waldheim, Charles, The Landscape Urbanism Reader, Princeton Architectural Press, 2006; ISBN-13: 978-1-56898-439-1

Case Studies: Student Team Projects:

Team projects will test ideas about incremental development of urban places, and the power of architecture in making the city. Each team will prepare two scenarios for a place in the city. These scenarios will include a minimum of four phases of development, or as many as six.

The first scenario will begin with minor projects followed by others sufficient to generate a rather complete urban "place." The second scenario will begin with a more ambitious first phase, again followed by a variety of projects intended to complete the making of an urban place.

The project documents will be in the format illustrated (see following page) and will include: (1) a location diagram and photographs that characterize the primary qualities of the existing place, (2) plan diagrams for each scenario illustrating development by phases; (3) other graphic materials and text considered important by the team as a means to clarify ideas for each scenario; and (4) a summary of the strategies used by the team with reference to theories from the reading or from class discussion.

Teams will make PowerPoint presentations in class on October 15, 17.

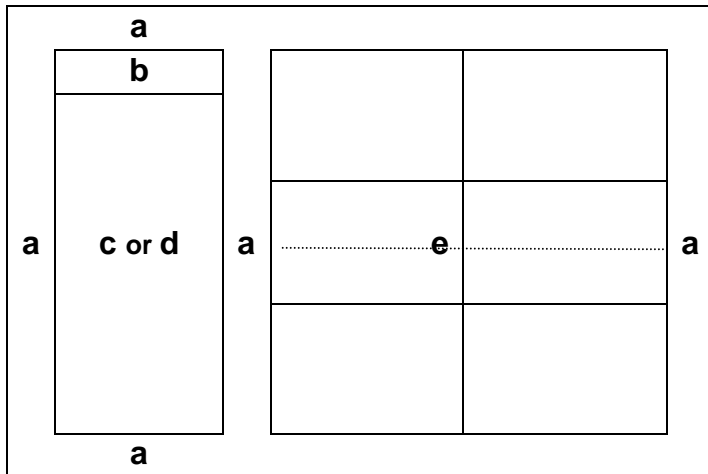
Evaluation Criteria:

<i>Vision Statement:</i>	<i>Vividness; Succinctness; Appropriateness</i>
<i>Scenarios:</i>	<i>Distinctness as alternatives; clarity of sequence strategy; wholeness at each interval; catalytic effectiveness</i>
<i>Theory:</i>	<i>Inclusiveness; appropriate reference</i>
<i>Class Presentation:</i>	<i>Clarity; emphasis; effective response to questions and suggestions</i>
<i>Document:</i>	<i>Clarity re: location and "place;" vision; scenario phases and purposes</i>

Presentation will include 11" x17" sheets mounted on foam core suitable for public display; and a PowerPoint presentation on a CD-Rom must also be submitted. The PowerPoint show will be presented in class and may include images in addition to those on the 11 x 17 boards.

(continued on next page)

Required Format for Printed Presentation



- a** 1" border
- b** 1" x 4-½" text block for course name & names of team members; text in Arial 10pt.
- c** 8" x 4-½" text area: title in Arial 14pt. text in Arial 10pt.
- d** 8" x 4-½" aerial photo
- e** 9" x 9-½" illustration block for 4 or 6 diagrams, photos, or design images

Sheet One:

- b** **ARCH 561 Elements of the Urban Landscape: Projects and Places**
Fall Semester, 2004 Robert S. Harris, Professor
Students: Qwerty Uiopasd, Fghj Klzxcvb, Nmqrw Yuiop, Asdfgh
Jklzxc, Vbnmqwe Rtyuiop, etc.

- d** aerial photo with specific site indicated by overlay screen; title overlay 1" below top border.
- e** group of 4 or 6 site photos

Sheet Two:

- b** (same as sheet one)
- c** title: **VISION** and text paragraph followed by Sub-Title: **Scenario One** and a paragraph for each of 4-6 stages.
- e** 4-6 figure-ground diagrams

Sheet Three:

- b** (same as sheet one)
- c** title: **PLACE** and text and/or diagrams
- e** perspective sketches / photo collages

Sheets Four and Five:

(repeat sheets two and three for **Scenario Two**)

Sheet Six:

- b** (same as sheet one)
- c** title: **THEORY** and an annotated bibliography of primary sources
- e** two columns of text presenting the team's theoretical approaches and strategies for incremental / catalytic place development; text must include reference from the readings.

REHABILITATION ACT (LAB 504) AND THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The University of Southern California is committed to full compliance with the Rehabilitation Act (Lab 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As part of the implementation of this law, the University will continue to provide reasonable accommodation of academically qualified students with disabilities so those student can participate fully in the University's educational programs and activities. Although USC is not required by law to change the "fundamental nature of essential curricular components of its programs in order to accommodate the needs of disabled students," the University will provide reasonable academic accommodations. The specific responsibility of the University administration and all faculty serving in a teaching capacity is to ensure the University's compliance with this policy. The general definition of a student with a disability is any person who has "a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities," and any person who has "a history of, or is regarded as having, such an impairment." Reasonable academic and physical accommodations include but are not limited to: extended time on examinations; substitution of similar or related work for a non-fundamental program requirement; time extensions on papers and projects; special testing procedures; advance notice regarding book list for visually impaired and some learning disabled students; use of academic aides in the classroom such as note takers and sign language interpreters; early advisement and assistance with registration; accessibility for students who use wheelchairs and those with mobility impairments; and need for special classroom furniture or special equipment in the classroom.

Obtaining Accommodations

Physical Accommodations

Students with physical disabilities should contact Disability Services and Programs (DSP) prior to or during the first week of class attendance or as early in the semester as possible. The office will work with classroom scheduling, the course instructors and their departments, and the students to arrange for reasonable accommodations.

Academic Accommodations

Students seeking academic accommodations due to a physical or learning disability should make the request to the course instructor prior to or during the first week of class attendance, as well as registering with DSP as early in the semester as possible. Course instructors should require that a student present verification of documentation when academic accommodations are being requested. For assistance in how to provide reasonable accommodations for a particular disability, course instructors are encouraged to consult with Disability Services and Programs (DSP). Students requesting academic accommodations who do not have DSP documentation should be referred to that office.

Disability Services & Programs contact: (213) 740-0776

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

The University of Southern California recognizes the diversity of our community and the potential for conflicts involving academic activities and personal religious observation. The University provides a guide to such observances for reference and suggests that any concerns about lack of attendance or inability to participate fully in the course activity be fully aired at the start of the term. As a general principle students should be excused from class for these events if properly documented and if provisions can be made to accommodate the absence and make up the lost work. Constraints on participation that conflict with adequate participation in the course and cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the faculty and the student need to be identified prior to the drop/add date for registration. After the drop/add date the University and the School of Architecture shall be the sole arbiter of what constitutes appropriate attendance and participation in a given course.