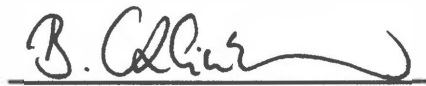


TO THE GRADUATE COUNCIL:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Beth Ann Fry entitled "Body & Context In The Discovery of Place." I have examined the final paper copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture, with a major in Architecture.


Richard M. Kelso
Major Professor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance:

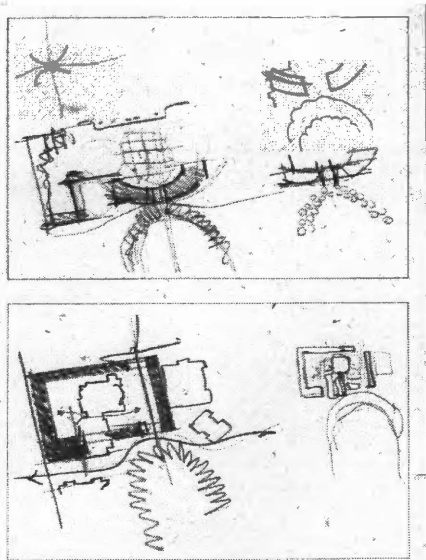

Barbara Klinkhammer
Max Robinson

Accepted for the Council:


Vice Chancellor and Dean of
Graduate Studies

Thesis
2006
.F79

Body & Context In The Discovery of Place



A Thesis Presented for the
Master of Architecture Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Beth Ann Fry
August 2006

Acknowledgements

Thank you Mom and Dad for your endless support and constant enthusiasum.

love and admiration always,

Beth.

Thesis Statement

"Sensations of experience become a kind of reasoning distinct to the making of architecture. Whether reflecting on the unity of concept and sensation, or the intertwining of idea and phenomena, the hope is to unite intellect and feeling, precision with soul."

-Anonymous

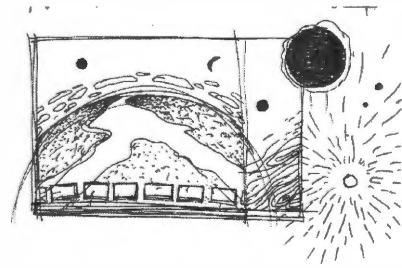


Figure 1. Experience, Observe, and Understand

This thesis investigates a methodology of using ones senses to experience, observe, and understand a place as a layered system with the intent of discovering the essence in order to create successful urban design that is connected to place. The layers Nature, Infrastructure, Built Structure and Culture, will be observed and considered through multiple journeys of experience via various modes of movement. After mapping the multiple past and present characteristics for each layer further analysis will occur through the overlay process in order to conceptualize the complete layered system. Experiencing through multiple modes of movement, taking the opportunity to pause, and creating graphic representations of what the senses inform me of will reveal a complete and comprehensive understanding of the place. Utilizing the described methodology will initially inform my decision making processes related to site and program selection. Information gained throughout the continued use of the methodology will further influence my decisions related to site and building design. As a result I will produce a conceptual design that is connected to the place its deeper meaning and intended users.

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I. Proposition

Thesis Intent

Every day the world expands its level of sophistication associated with technological advancements. In response to this or perhaps in direct contradiction we are finding ourselves increasingly adapting to an almost sterile environment of homogenous nothingness. Our built environments are no longer imbedded within the character of the place from which they come. The primary goal of this thesis is to present an alternative methodology for discovering ,through sensory awareness, the essence of a place.

The methodology explained later, in more specific detail, will describe how the senses combined and intensified through various modes of movement can become a comprehensive format from which to create graphic representations of what the senses inform the observer they have experienced and observed. Historical combined with present conditions of aspects related to four primary context layers, (Nature, Infrastructure, Built Structure, and Culture), will be mapped, overlaid deciphered and distilled to present valuable information extracted from the place which will be utilized to inform the designer throughout the design process.

The development of this methodology has provided me the opportunity to construct a personalized framework for how I intend to pursue my work in the future. Through implementation of the methodology I will be able to document through experience, sketching, and diagraming my personal mode of production. In time reflection upon this will offer myself a deeper understanding of the way in which I work and learn. Lastly, the development and utilization of this methodology will assist me in becoming a better steward of the land.

"We reveal our presence in the world by creating places building, towns, farms, and cities. They are set either directly or indirectly into the world of nature, and they serve us as a kind of artificial nature, or second nature."

-Norman Crowe

"A site is not empty of meaning, but is embedded with possibility. Respect for a setting does not preclude the necessity of radical change or modification, but rather invites it. Restructuring a site does not necessarily suppress its inherent qualities, but rather can reveal and enhance them"

-Marion Weiss

Using this methodology in a way to recognize specifics associated with the way I learn and work will assist me in sharing this method with others. I believe this will help to elevate the fields of landscape architecture and architecture and thus improve the quality of our built constructs placed within the environment.

Presumably thousands of methods exist to assist one in developing a reading of a place. The methodology I am proposing, I believe is a much more encompassing alternative than those which have been investigated here and have been associated with in the past. Encompassing in that through its order it provides one the opportunity to experience observe and understand the attributes of a site in a much more holistic manner than the typical charting and mapping of orthographic and superficial data that is often passed off as a site analysis.

In order to educate myself beyond my own practical experiences I chose to consider and analyze four specific variations to extracting information from a place for the purpose of understanding in order to inform design decisions. The selected four represent common trends in the production of the built environment today, they are controversial, they are extremes in relation to one another and above all have allowed me to contemplate and thoroughly evaluate the alternative method I am proposing.

Endless possibilities exist for the implementation of this methodology. In the particular case of this thesis I will be testing it by developing a conceptual urban master plan with specific attention designated to the development of a center for interdisciplinary advanced environmental studies in Columbus, Ohio more specifically on the site locally known as the Whittier Peninsula. Additional possibilities for the utilization of this method may be but are not limited to: capital improvement projects among government agencies, revitalization efforts, master plan development, re-evaluation/assessment of

existing and possibly out of date master plans, competition work among private firms and individuals, adaptive re-use environments/building projects, typical designer/builders devoted to creating a place, etc.

It should also be brought to attention that this methodology can be used in a flexible manner where it can be utilized to inform owners/clients on possibilities related to site selection, program, and design goals. More specifically the method could conceivably be used in a way to inform the owner/client, with a particular site already available, what the potential programs may be for that specific site. Likewise given an owner/client with a particular program in mind a designer may use the method to inform the owner/client on ideal site locations.

Conceivably this method may be applied to a wide range of scales. There is no reason why given the economic resources, time, and energy this method could not be applied to the scales of the region, district, neighborhood, block, building and room.

Taken into consideration all of the above mentioned flexible opportunities it should also be known that no two people will have the same experience in applying this method. Each of us brings to a project our own unique characteristic traits and experiences which makes us individuals. This individuality alone mandates that we will connect with and interpret things differently. Although this may seem to be a disadvantage it actually supports the argument for something very positive. This individuality and uniqueness among designers is what allows us to create designs that are personal and hopefully grounded in issues shared among the strength of a community. It is not important that individuals will utilize the method and arrive at various possibilities. What is important is that more and more of our built works are derived from thorough investigations connected to revealing the characteristics of the place. This is, I believe, the only way we can expect

"In every series of real terms, not only do the terms themselves and their associations and environments change, but we change, and their meaning for us changes, so that new kinds of sameness and types of causations continually come into view and appeal to our interest."

-William James

to return our cities, neighborhoods, and buildings to the people they are designed for.

Typical Site Analysis Process

It is an absolute certainty that presumably thousands of methods exist among designers to understand a place. Around the world designers of all sorts participate in a variety of strict to loosely defined parameters for conducting a typical site analysis in the attempt to understand a place and capture its essence. My personal experience with typical American landscape architecture and architecture firms allows me to suggest that the current trends practiced in conducting a site analysis among designers is loose, fragmentary and inconclusive at best.

Sadly, the majority of design firms are in the business for production purposes only. They have “bread-and-butter” clients for whom they churn out project after project. As a result these projects become standardized within the workings of the office and begin to blend into one conglomerate collection of non specific and meaningless constructs placed into the built environment. The principles and project managers of these firms have fallen into the trap of no longer recognizing that these expressionless constructs are completely devoid of place. These types of offices through collaborations between today's builders and developers are largely responsible for the majority of our built environment which surrounds us today.

In contrast some firms do see the value and need in preparing a site analysis at the start of each new project. While they may have typical “bread-and-butter” clients also for whom they do not perform this preparatory step, they may also have the occasional project that comes into the office which is something unique and in addition to the ordinary. In this case the designers made responsible will prepare a site analysis consisting of

ordinary information helpful in determining which direction is north, what the climatic patterns are, relative information concerning the surrounding infrastructure, the existence and location of utilities which will need to be taken into consideration, etc. This type of site analysis is more similar to a site inventory than a true analysis of the place which produces valuable and comprehensive information to help the designers understand a place from which the design concepts and decisions may be based.

A third type of office are those fortunate enough to only participate in unique and highly interesting high profile projects. Presumably these offices have the luxury of investing more in the analysis process prior to the start of the design development stages. My experience in evaluating the work generated from these particular offices is that the work often boils down to a single sheet of drawings placed within a set or even worse is reduced to a single drawing labeled existing "conditions." This work and whatever energies have been devoted to creating this single incomplete, non-informative diagram, which is rarely found to be connected to the following stages of the project, is more a reflection of the actual process conducted than a representation of the essence of the place.

In typical American landscape architecture and architecture offices the majority of site analysis are conducted in some variation of the following description:

The principal of a firm or the project manager may or may not make a site visit. If a site visit is part of the process they typically photograph the site attempting to pay particular attention to any and all potential positive and negative site characteristics. They walk the site and gather pre generated maps or digital data offered to them by the owner/client or other agencies or consultants involved. Sadly, this information, in the case of when the principal is responsible for all site visits, is handed off to the project manager or sometimes the team of

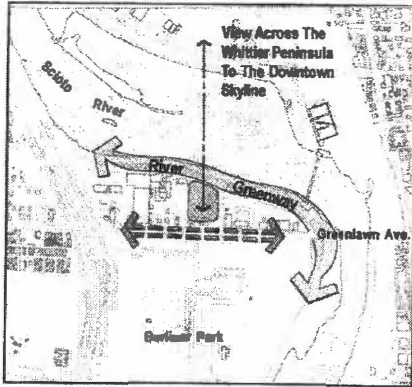


Figure 2. Typical Site Analysis Example A

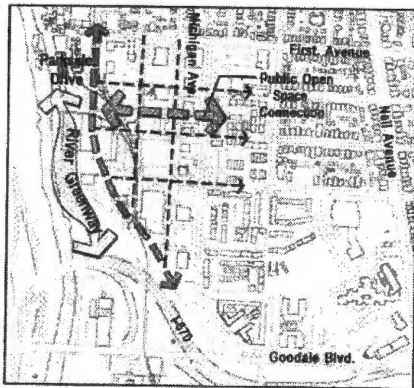


Figure 3. Typical Site Analysis Example B

individuals who will be responsible for deciphering the information. From this point the people involved will work from within climate controlled windowless offices to understand the essence of the place which they themselves have not even had the opportunity to experience. At best these designers will generate two and three dimensional drawings that will inform one another of information such as the orientation, site boundaries, existing utilities, opportunities for existing views, the slope of the land, miscellaneous incomplete information about surrounding sites, the dates and conditions of any existing structure on site to be dealt with, etc. (See Figure 2-3)

While this attempt at understanding a place may be better than no attempt at all it is hardly a thorough investigation of a place. It may assist one in the development of a design that is functional but it will not become a valuable tool produced to help a designer draw from and arrive at the deeper meaning of the place. It will not produce information that the designer can then use to extract from and eventually integrated a design that will become an additional embedded layer of the place.

Importance of The Alternative Methodology

In the past ten years I have taken advantage of the opportunity to learn from and work with individuals participating in the fields of landscape architecture, architecture, and planning. This association has helped me to recognize that each discipline approaches the process of generating a site analysis in a somewhat different yet occasionally overlapping manner. Unfortunately I have also had the opportunity to witness that many projects are also conceptualized, designed and built without any attention at all given to the initial analysis process. My recognition of this and my desire to devote my work in the future to that of bridging the gap between the professions of landscape architecture and architecture has lead me to devoting my time and energies to the understanding and further

development of a particular methodology for experiencing, recognizing and understanding the essence of a place. My desire to see well developed designs integrated and placed within the built environment continues to drive my desire when confronted with the irresponsible reasons for why so few practitioners today see the true meaning and value behind such a methodology.

II. Collective Sensory Awareness

Body Experiencing Context

The uniqueness of the particular method I am proposing which sets this method apart from the many existing currently practiced methods can be attributed to one main component: the opportunity it fosters for connectiveness with the bodies senses.

Buildings and cities help us to recognize, understand and remember who we are. Architecture enables us to perceive and understand the dialectics of permanence and change, to settle ourselves in the world, and to place ourselves in the continuum of culture and time. Architecture can give us this if we open ourselves to the opportunity of recognizing what our senses are telling us. We are capable of creating an architecture that can do this if we allow ourselves to connect with the characteristics that make us human. Architecture is the art of reconciliation between ourselves and the world, and this mediation takes place through the senses.

Architectural meaning derives from responses and reactions remembered by the body and the senses. A meaningful architectural experience is not simply a series of retinal images. The elements of architecture are not visual units they are encounters, confrontations that interact with memory. Our senses are connected to our memory or our memory is connected to our senses. What we remember from a place has been placed in our memory because our senses were open enough to recognize them and create the memories.

The hierarchical order and established value of mans five senses has changed over time. Initially primary importance was given to the sense of hearing. Hearing was responsible for mans ability to hunt and capture food and thus survive. The private senses of touch, smell and taste contributed to a collective importance related to the production

and stability of behavior, communication and thus community. Vision at one time was categorized beneath all other senses in terms of mans need for survival. It has been a gradual progression in the growth of man that has created the shift in hierarchy between the sense of hearing and that of vision.

Various historical advancements can be held responsible for the shift from the dominance of hearing replaced by that of vision. For example, the shift from oral to written speech, the development of perspectival representation and the concept of the self, the advent of the printing press and the ability to reproduce photographic images. Today's highly sophisticated world of digital imagery and visual connectedness around the world only further intensifies the extreme dominance given to mans sense of vision over all other senses.

Regardless of our current prioritization of the eye and the assumed value of visual observation I feel in order to truly see the eyes must be informed by all of our five other senses. I believe the skin feels what the eyes see, the ears hear what the eyes see, the nose smells what the eyes see and the tongue tastes what the eyes see. It takes all of mans five senses contributing and working together to inform the eyes on what they see.

The method I am presenting in this thesis is one that provides people the opportunity to use the senses in a way to gain a much deeper understanding of place. At the root of the methodology are the journeys which correlate with one moving the body through a particular place via various modes of transportation and therefore speeds in order to gain a more conscious awareness and understanding of place. This awareness is made possible not only through the act of physical movement but more importantly by keeping oneself open to experiencing and recognizing the sensory involvement and exchange which takes place between the body and a place.

III. Methodologies of Reference: Case Studies

New Urbanism Methodology

The New Urbanism Movement was selected as a methodology of reference because for more than the last decade it has become the most discussed architectural response to the plight of our cities. No discussion on understanding place through the use of context would be complete without incorporating this controversial and often criticized approach to neighborhood development. (See Figure 4)

The beliefs and philosophies of the New Urbanists have been borrowed heavily from the work of Patrick Geddes (1915), Ebenezer Howard (1898), Raymond Unwin (1909), and German town planners of the 1920's. The primary philosophy which binds these designers is the belief in the scale and spatial organization of the traditional town as the basic building block for human settlement.

Elaborating on this primary notion New Urbanists claim to be committed to the poetics of small town life, the virtues of sustainable communities, the appeal of environments that emphasize the pedestrian over the automobile, density and compactness (in contrast to sprawl), active streets with mixed use, and neighborhood coherence.

A recognizable strength in the philosophies pursued among the New Urbanists is that they claim to attempt to work with the local community through the implementation of community fostered design oriented charrettes to develop a contextual solution, grounded in local circumstances and attitudes. Whether this is a marketing strategy or a genuine attempt to include locals in developing the developmental practices (or a bit of both) is open to question. (See Figure 5)

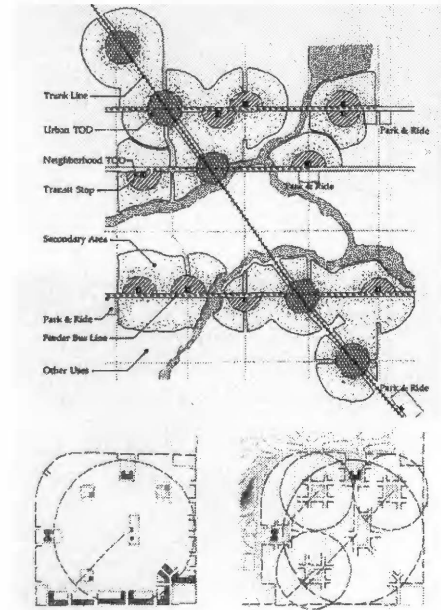


Figure 4. New Urbanism Example of Analysis

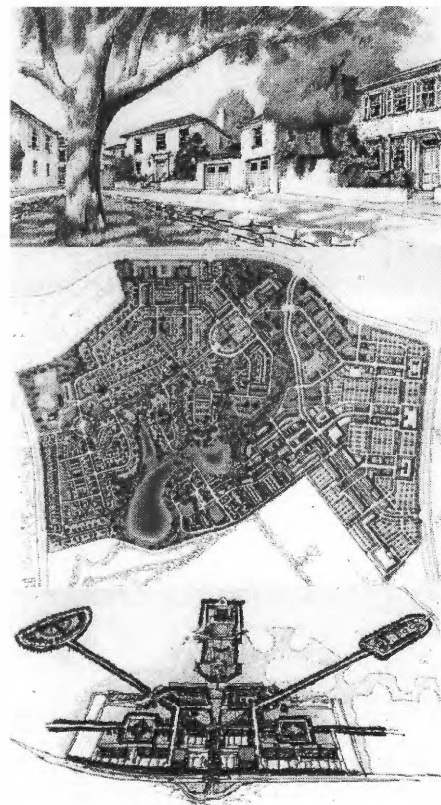


Figure 5. New Urbanism Proposal

The primary criticisms of the philosophies of the New Urbanists range from various esthetic related issues to serious criticism related to the functioning and validity of the very principles proposed. These more serious criticisms have recently been based on detailed studies conducted on existing New Urbanism communities which simply do not support what they initially were said to have been designed to do.

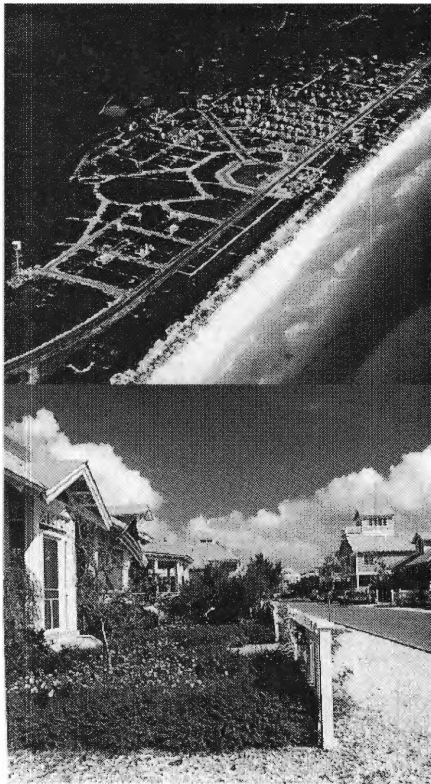


Figure 6. New Urbanism Community

Related to the more serious allegations, studies conducted on the famous New Urbanism town of Seaside in Walton County, Florida (1981) revealed that the “mandatory to all small-town neighborhood development” the town center- is finally in place but is dependent on tourism based on the automobile. In addition on the way to Seaside, the highway is littered with poor copies of Seaside that increase, not decrease, sprawl. Additional investigations of The Kentlands in Gaithersburg, Maryland, (1988) and Laguna West in Sacramento County, California (1990) revealed that the New Urbanists have as yet been able to deliver the kind of regional plans they promise. They are yet to integrate the proliferation of small, pedestrian-based places in a way that does not also produce sprawl, fragmentation, and the domination of the automobile. (See Figure 6)

The primary concern I have with the principles applied by New Urbanists is that I find them only to be successful at producing a nostalgic vision of small town America which trivializes the complex and sensitive mix of social and cultural practices and attitudes that go into making a community. The New Urbanists simply enforce a set of principles upon the land without considering what makes that place unique and claim that its result will foster community and identity.

After considering the particulars associated with the goals, motives and process of the New Urbanists I am able to conclude that this would not be a beneficial approach for the site that I will be working with in Columbus Ohio. Because of the Whittier Peninsula’s proximity to the urban center

of the city and the potential it has to draw support from the city for its large scale commercial, retail, and entertainment needs I feel the integration of New Urbanist design principles and strategies would only create an additional form of urban sprawl.

Transect Methodology

Andrés Duany is a New Urbanist who has developed a specific methodology for analyzing a place which assists him in the process of working in a manner to implement the design strategies and philosophies of the New Urbanists.

Duany's method, known as the Transect, enforces a categorization system that organizes all elements of the built environment on a scale from urban center to rural wilderness. The categorization of the study area is based on the existing conditions given to land use and visual appearance. Taken into consideration is how a place is functioning regardless of what it is zoned for. After categorizing the various Transects Duany uses this information to advise the community on the way in which he feels the city should be re-zoned to foster positive economic growth and development for the future. The Transect is a categorization system that organizes all elements of the built environment on a scale from rural to urban. It is both a descriptive theory and a system of land use. The central notion is of a gradient of habitats, from wilderness to urban core. As one moves along the gradient, differences in design, ecology and social structure are apparent. The goal in re-zoning the area upon recognition of its current conditions is to hopefully put an end to conventional urban sprawl. Duany believes that his Transect method identifies the character of the place because the method is organized primarily around the "qualitative experience," of observing the current use of the land. (See Figure 7)

First Delineation Step: Draw Regional Sector Boundaries

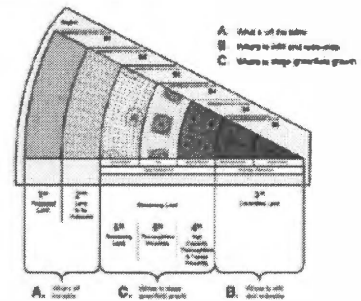


Figure 7. Transect Methodology

The concept of the transect is actually rooted in

environmental studies. The Transect is a standard tool used by ecologists to make sense of different ecosystems and natural habitats. It is a way of understanding nature by taking a slice of the landscape and examining how it changes, along a continuum. The fields of the environmental sciences have traditionally ignored humans and their activities. An early understanding of the Transect as applied to the built environment is found in the work of Ian McHarg and his influential book, *Design With Nature*. However, McHarg focused almost exclusively on determining areas of environmental quality to be preserved, not on the form or function of the built environment. The innovation of New Urbanism is to extend the Transect and continue it into the human environment. Applying the Transect to human environments suggests that New Urbanists think not of human and natural environments in conflict with each other, but rather of ecosystems that are affected by humans, to a greater or lesser degree. The irony in this is recognized when one looks into the environmental ramifications that occur through the assumption that Duany will work to promote his Transect method to further implement the New Urbanist principles he believes in.

Each of the six transect zones has distinctive unifying characteristics that are reflected in street patterns and designs, building forms, urban design, relationships to the natural world, and public infrastructure. The Transect serves to locate any given place within a context in which all of the parts fit together harmoniously. Each Transect zoning category has detailed provisions for each neighborhood, for density, thoroughfare dimensions and design, block dimensions, the design of parks, appropriate building frontages, the mix of uses, building design, parking, and other aspects of the human environment.

The six Transects are described as follows:

T-1 Rural Preserve: land protected in perpetuity

T-2 Rural Reserve: areas of high environmental or scenic quality that are not currently preserved, but

perhaps should be.

T-3 Neighborhood Edge Zone: encompasses the most rural part of the neighborhood, and the countryside just beyond.

T-4 Neighborhood General: typically the largest zone, primarily residential, but more urban in character, having somewhat higher density with a mix of housing types and a slightly greater mix of uses allowed.

T-5 Neighborhood Center: this can be a neighborhood center or a larger town center, the latter serving more than one neighborhood.

T-6 The Core or Downtown: serves the region, not only adjacent neighborhoods, and is typically understood as a central business district. (See Figure 8)

I believe Duany's Transect method is lead primarily through economic demand. By assessing the qualities and characteristics of a place based purely on there current existing land use you are completely negating what that place may have once been and what its future potential may be. Simply re-zoning these areas does not insure that they will ever develop into form of responsibly designed environment for the people of the area.

The Transect method would not work if applied to the Whittier Peninsula. The site is bound on the West by the existing flood plain, and the Scioto River. On the East it is bound by the cities urban core. According to the Transect method and even gradation would need to occur between the core and the natural space (T-1 through T-6) the site simply isn't large enough for this type of development.

Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team Methodology

The RUDAT is the title given to a public service offered to communities by the AIA. The methodology they practice is a highly exercised strategy currently being implemented

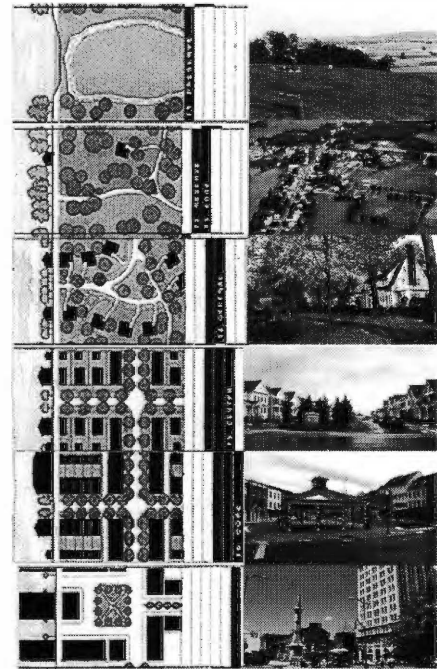


Figure 8. Transect Methodology Diagram

all over the country. A multi-disciplinary team of 6-10 professionals arrive in the city, town or neighborhood to conduct an open-forum community wide charrette-style meeting. The goal of this method is to understand the complexities of a place through the participation and involvement of local citizens. The R/UDAT approach attempts to address social, economic, political, and physical issues. (See Figure 9)

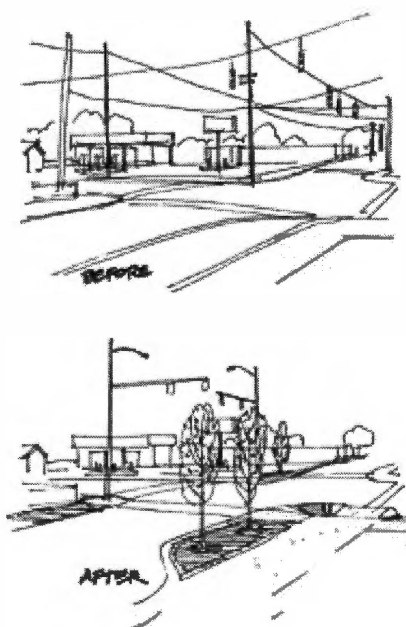


Figure 9. R/UDAT Example

After listening to the concerns and ideas of residents, community leaders, and interested groups and viewing both the study area and the surrounding community, the team prepares a report that is presented in a public meeting on the last day. Typically the community analyzes the team recommendations, identifies priorities, undertakes immediate objectives, and prepares an action plan. Some team members return a year later to evaluate any progress and further advise on implementation.

A positive side to this method and the reason it is working in so many towns and cities in America is that it levels the playing field and gives all persons in the community the opportunity to be heard. When people are able to voice their opinions on a particular matter they feel a part of something. This type of investment in the understanding of a place prior to development also spreads the knowledge throughout the community so that all interested parties are aware of potential development.

Politically speaking this approach could potentially be misused. Political figures could conceivably go through the motions of such a method simply to offer people the illusion that something positive was being considered for the future of the community.

The charrette method, attempts to successfully involve the voices of the community, but does not and could not alone offer a sensitive and comprehensive understanding of the place. It may function in serving the community in creating

potential urban infill projects but it can not alone produce public places embedded in the history and character of the place. This can only be revealed by investing the time and energy into a proper and thorough site analysis.

What I recognize at this point when considering the method I am proposing in relation to the method practiced by R/UDAT is that there are only limited possibilities within my alternative methodology for community involvement and for the public voice to be heard. This only happens through by chance meetings while participating in the journeys and through any meeting the designer would arrange in addition to the described method.

The Cleared Site & The Constructed Site

Architectural Preoccupation, Carol Burns describes the “cleared site” and the “constructed site” and offers valuable information to be interpreted and utilized to create works of architecture that are embedded in the history, culture, and physical forces operating on a given site. The cleared, undeveloped land, is devoid of any architectural context but rather contain “natural constructions”: vegetation, drainage systems, wind patterns, animal habitats, and so forth”. The constructed site, in opposition is defined as that “which emphasized the visible physicality, morphological qualities, and existing conditions of the land and architecture.”

Burns explains that to fully understand the characteristics of a constructed site one must understand the site as a “sectional composite.” Achieving this level of understanding is difficult. The layers of a constructed site consist of physical material that over time may lose distinctive characteristics. The complexity and individuality of the many layers potentially become blurred and begin to co-exist with one another.

To understand both the cleared and the constructed site would be to understand both the tangible and the intangible of the particular place. The most

“Natural constructions are considered secondary to human constructions by architecture and planning disciplines; only landscape architecture recognizes their status insofar as the disciplinary means and methods are developed around them.”

-Carol Burns

difficult and perhaps the most crucial layers to unravel are those related to historical aspects which may no longer exist in a clear and recognizable manner. It is crucial to be able to employ these absent characteristics in the new built environment. For Burns this becomes the connection to the past and an additional embedded layer in the development of place.

This concept of identifying the “cleared site” and the “constructed site” is the methodology that is most closely related to the alternative methodology I am proposing. As in the alternative methodology Burns describes the importance of understanding the embedded historical, natural and built layers of a place. Because Burns is not an architectural practitioner herself I would need to look at the work of those people who employ her method to realize how they investigate issues related to infrastructure and culture. Also what is not clear at this point is how the recognition process is carried out. Is it through drawing, photographs, videos? I am also curious at this point to investigate how this information is then utilized to inform and become a part of the decision making process of the design development.

IV. Alternative Methodology

Strategy of Methodology

In addition to the previously mentioned informations concerning the details of the Alternative Methodology I am proposing below is a somewhat summarized description of the major components. Each of these components will be expanded upon through the process of testing the method in the proposed project to be designed for Columbus, Ohio.

In the beginning the Methodology is executed by working between two predetermined scales. The first is given the title of Outside-In the second is titled Inside-Out. Outside-In can be understood by thinking of it in terms of reaching beyond the scope of the project or determined project area in order to collect, interpret and decipher information with the intent of discovering characteristics that can then inform one on future design possibilities. The Inside-Out strategy therefore is characterized by devoting specific recognition and understanding to the characteristics within the designated site boundaries. In this portion one is challenged to recognize how the context of the site relates to specifics beyond the project area.

Once working with the Outside-In Strategy and the Inside-Out Strategy independent from one another the designer should begin to work back and forth between the two. Each scale is investigated for components related to the context layers Nature, Infrastructure, Built Structure, and Culture. Each is understood in terms of historical data as well as current conditions so that well informed responsible suggestions may be made for the future. It is extremely important to work back and forth between the two scales once something is discovered in one. This allows the designer to continually test what they are discovering and further expand their understanding of the place. Testing for example a particular site characteristic

discovered at the Inside-Out scale in the Outside-In scale informs the designer of how if at all the site characteristic evolves, changes, continues to persist and manifest itself.

Journeys

"I confront the city with my body; my legs measure the length of the arcade and the width of the square; my gaze unconsciously projects my body onto the facade of the cathedral, where it roams over the mouldings and contours, sensing the size of recesses and projections; my body weight meets the mass of the cathedral door; and my hand grasps the door pull as I enter the dark void behind. I experience myself in the city, and the city exists through my embodied experience. The city and my body supplement and define each other. I dwell in the city and the city dwells in me."

-Merleau-Ponty

Understanding the history of a place is the first step to understanding a place. Developing a thorough understanding for the way a place once existed helps us to recognize characteristics which may still be apparent or exist in some way today. This becomes the goal of the initial journeys to rediscover the past by attempting to find any semblance or recognition of a prior time which may exist in some current altered state.

The Journeys are best described as the act of moving through a place with the intent of developing a sense of clarity and understanding of the place that is not yet apparent. In the initial stages of the investigation it may be necessary to have a clear and precise method or order to the journeys. Giving the journey a theme or a particular focus will help clarify the purpose and create an organized structure. As the familiarity and awareness of the place grows and develops the themes may become increasingly loose to allow for spontaneous recognition of the many unique characteristics to be discovered within the study area.

During the journeys it is critically important to be conscious of the information the senses are trying to present. This may be easier in some areas of the study area than another. This type of openness and awareness will also become easier with practice. Once more is understood about the study area, and the journeys become more loose it also becomes easier to allow the senses to guide and direct the movement. When creating drawings from memory after a particular journey the memories created through the openness to the senses will reveal additional things that were not

necessarily recognized during the journey.

Potential Modes of Travel

Public Transportation: Utilization of the available public transportation system(s) offers the unique experience of physically recognizing the rhythm of movement put into place by the people of the area based on necessity and surrounding context. Through this mode of travel we are able to pause at predetermined nodes of importance. These moments of pause offer insight to related issues such as density and maneuverability within and around the study area. The additional opportunity to communicate with the users of this mode of transportation offers further insight to understanding the efficiency, usability, and effectiveness of the current system in place. Special attention should be given to areas utilizing multiple forms of public transportation. In this case it is important to make use of them in relation to one another to further understand the system in place.

While using the public transportation of a particular place you are temporarily given the opportunity to maneuver through the study area as a local permanent resident would. In this situation it becomes beneficial to consider issues such as circulation related to how a person coming from various areas may arrive at the site you will be working with. What process do they have to go through to arrive? What do they pass along the way? Is it an efficient system?

Automobile: The experience of moving through the study area in an automobile provides flexibility as well as the opportunity to make decisions related to the journey in an independent manner. Unlike the previously described method of travel through the use of the automobile we have the freedom to quickly make the decision to react to something which may have surprisingly been brought to our attention.

While maneuvering through the study area in an automobile one is also confronted with unique aspect related only to this mode of transportation-parking-. Sad but true the designs of most American cities are somewhat driven by the unrealistic parking requirements. Attention directed to issues such as parking will further inform the designer on related issues of circulation and accessibility to, through, and beyond the site.

Bicycle: In addition to what was stated above in support of the use of the automobile and its flexibility a bicycle provides the opportunity for additional information to be recognized by our senses. Traveling at a slower speed and using the body to physically propel ones self through the study area becomes a very personal way to experience a place. Our senses become heightened when we feel strength of connection. The physical recognition of the existing topography will place within the memory an added layer that is not recognized through simply viewing a contour map. The smells and sounds that one is confronted with while utilizing a bicycle to inhabit a place will offer a unique understanding of the place that can not be captured through photographs or written documentation.

Pedestrian: Inhabiting the study area as a pedestrian can further our understanding of a place on a much more detailed level. The act of walking over a crushed surface to an adjoining smooth surface and recognizing the change in sound of the materials used to build the study area under investigation is a unique and valuable way to understand the character of a place. Building upon these sometimes subtle secrets of a place can help us to create a richness belonging only to that place.

Combination: The most informative method of travel through a study area may be derived from the combination of all or perhaps a few of the described techniques. The act of combining the various modes of travel further reinforces the

opportunity for discovery by the individual. When the designer allows himself to be open to his own intuition about a place he will be free to recognize specific details and points of interest that may otherwise go unnoticed.

Pause: Taking the opportunity to pause and allowing oneself to feel, hear, smell, taste, and thus see can bring to attention enormous amounts of valuable information. Taking time to pause can occur at predetermined locations and times but is most often more memorable if it happens in response to something that has just been discovered. However it happens whenever it happens it presents the opportunity for the designer to make a conscious effort to recognize what the senses are telling him.

Experiencing, Observing, and Understanding Context Layers

Components of Nature: topography, geology, plant material, water, sun, wind, seasonal variations

Components of Infrastructure: water, rail roads, roads, utilities

Components of Built Structure: fields, points, lines, surface conditions, vertical and horizontal conditions, materiality

Components of Culture: commercial, residential, enrichment, political, religion, essence

“Rail and subway lines, distribution grids, communications right-of-way, and highways, with their knotted tendrils of on ramps and off ramps, have become real, physical measure of our cultural landscape. Like earlier elements that gave form to public life, these have an immediate presence; they shape our public architecture and our urban life in a vital and authentic way. These bits of highway, subway, or utility lines can sever or reconnect communities, reformulate the urban condition into a static set of objects or a fluid landscape, and unravel or restitch the increasingly fragmented fabric of our metropolitan world.”

-Marion Weiss

V. Precedents

The University of Virginia

Charlottesville, Virginia (1817-26) Thomas Jefferson: Village Scale (An exploration of a built work which coincides with aspects of the Outside-In Strategy and the Inside-Out Strategy) (See Figure 10)

The University of Virginia was selected as a case study to investigate because of the modern manner in which Jefferson was capable of considering and executing his philosophies associated with the context of Nature, Built Structure, and Culture. Exploring this project has helped me to consider the various ways a belief can be expressed in the built world.

Jefferson's plan for the University of Virginia expresses his views on social structure, history, education and the landscape. Jefferson situated the most important building, the library, on the highest ground. Modeled on the Pantheon, the library Rotunda commanded an axial view across a manicured green lawn to the wilderness of the valley and the hills beyond. Flanking the Pantheonic central pavilion were two ranges of five discrete, Neo-Classical pavilions engaged on a colonnaded cellular bar of dormitory rooms. The lay-out is simple but incorporates many levels of hierarchical stratification. And can be recognized as an expression of cultural norms characteristic of the time.

The Pantheonic configuration of the library, as well as its central location, reveal a shift in values. The Pantheon was a sanctuary for all the gods; the library was the repository of all knowledge. Reason, scientific inquiry, and scholarship had replaced faith as the center of meaning for the Enlightenment community of the University of Virginia. Each professor's house is an isolated pavilion, although it takes part in the overall assemblage of forms.

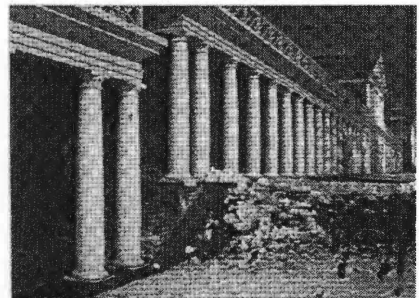
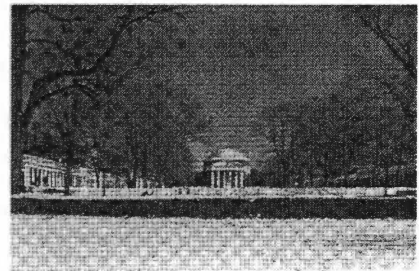
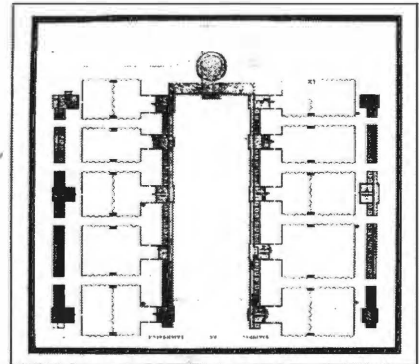


Figure 10. The University of Virginia

No two pavilions are alike. Jefferson did not try to invent a particularly “American” style of architecture. Instead, he self-consciously provided an example of great historical buildings.

The systematic structure of the plan hierarchically links all built forms in the complex, from the Rotunda, to the professors’ houses, to the students’ houses. In a like fashion, a structured relationship is put into play among different conditions of landscape. The central lawn is a well-groomed rectangle: nature subjected to and transformed by culture. Behind the ranges of buildings, symmetrically disposed around the central axis, are small pleasure gardens and kitchen gardens: nature subjected to cultivation. Terminating the central axis, on par in stature with the Rotunda itself, is the distant wilderness: nature in its pure, unaltered state. The form of the University is created by the reciprocal tension between nature and culture. The power of the wilderness is emphasized by the uneven rhythm of the pavilions. Nearest the Rotunda, they are closest together, but as they move farther away from it, the space between them increases, as if they are accelerating outwards, pulled into the valley by the force of the infinite, open landscape.

The Wexner Center For The Visual Arts

Columbus, Ohio Peter Eisenman (1989): Building Scale (An exploration of a built work which coincides with aspects of the Outside-In Strategy)

This case study was selected for investigation because of its elaborate contextual expression and because of its locations. Located in Columbus, Ohio this project offers me the opportunity to consider how one designer elected to integrate the contextual characteristics of the place.

The Wexner Center For The Visual Arts is arguably, to date, the most important work in Eisenman’s career. Eisenman discovered that his work in the

“Generically, a diagram is a graphic shorthand. Though it is an ideogram, it is not necessarily an abstraction; it is a representation of something in that it is not the thing itself.” “The diagram is not only an explanation, as something that comes after, but it also acts as an intermediary in the process of generation of real space and time.”

-Peter Eisenman

seventies could be applied to the local schemes and multiple grids of the city of Columbus to create a built environment rich in complexity while rooted in the local history and culture of the place.

Eisenman brings together two design strategies: the internal manipulations of an objective construct, the grid; and the evocation of subjective memory. Through analyzing the site Eisenman realizes the essentials of the design are clearly imbedded within the context. Eisenman strives to reveal the layers and the multiplicity of disjunctions and overlaps afforded by their simultaneous presence.

Eisenman began with a grid; but his grid is not a purely abstract Cartesian device. Instead, it is specific to the meeting of the city grid and the campus grid in Columbus. The 12 1/4 degree displacement between the grids sponsors a disturbance of the ideal Cartesian condition. Moreover, Eisenman recognized that the city grid of a Midwestern town is simply a condensation of the surrounding Jeffersonian grid which structures the agricultural landscape. Hence, the intrinsic ability of a grid to reiterate its own systematic larger and smaller scales is explored. (See Figure 11)

The grid of the Wexner Center exists at twelve foot, twenty-four foot, forty eight foot, and ninety six foot modules. The surrounding ground plane further reinforces the abstraction of context. Plinths of disturbed earth heave upwards around the building and knit the order of the building firmly to the site. Prairie grass planted on the plinths suggests the landscape before settlement of girding occurred.

Round towers recalling the demolished armory which once stood on site and battered brick walls are as insistent in their specificity as the overlaid, rotating grids are in their generality. The result of the simultaneous presence of two grids contaminates both, fragmenting the object and dispersing the system. Contradictions abound in the relations among architectural elements: columns pierce through stairs; beams shoot through panes of

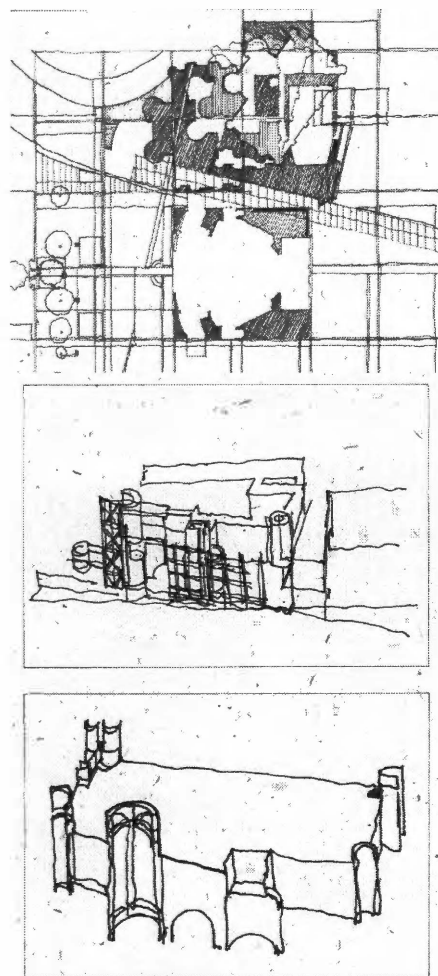


Figure 11. The Wexner Center For The Visual Arts Diagrams

"For Peter Eisenman the process one goes through to generate the form of the architecture is the architecture, anything that lies outside of the formal process has no real value for architecture. Eisenman's process is about revealing the history and the theory of a site. Acts such as superposing, shifting, utilizing symmetries and asymmetries, cuts, and distinguishing between solid and void become the tools of his architecture. From these tools Eisenman develops the form to express the history and theory of a particular place."

glass. At the same time, material changes and the differing scales of the multiple grid lines register each overlap and deformity.

The Kaufmann House (Falling Water)

Bear Run, Pennsylvania (1936-37) Frank Lloyd Wright: Site, Building, Room, and Detail Scale
(An exploration of a built work which coincides with aspects of the Outside-In strategy and the Inside-Out strategy)

"...now you are released by way of glass and the cantilever and the sense of space which becomes operative. Now you are related to the landscape...You are as much part of it as the trees, the flowers, the ground...You are now free to become a natural feature of your environment..."

-Frank Lloyd Wright

This project was also selected primarily because of its contextual response at numerous scales of the design. With particular attention given to architectural form and materiality Falling Water becomes a vehicle for understanding the Outside-In Strategy as well as the Inside-Out strategy. Culturally Falling Water celebrated the specifically American obsession with the free life lived in nature (an idea rich in pioneer mythology and ennobled by the transcendentalist writings of Thoreau and Emerson). In addition Falling Water expresses the shift in culture occurring at the time.

At Falling Water, the entry vestibule, living room, dining room, kitchen, and terrace all flow together in a spatial continuum. While not unusual today, this was a radical proposition in 1936. Furniture is built-in or of Wright's design. Zones are differentiated not with walled enclosures, but through subtle sectional changes and the modulation of light. Evening activities consulate in the darker part of the room, around the solid vertical upward shaft, the chimney. Daytime activities consulate around the light vertical downward shaft, the stairwell, which houses a thin metal stair to the river. Bedrooms are almost oppressively small. Wright believed that collective spaces were the heart of the home, and bedrooms should be used as quiet, private spaces of retreat.

Formed from cantilevered concrete trays rooted to a core embedded in the rocks its horizontal layers of shifted slabs mimic the outcropping of

the bedrock and soared free of apparent support over the cascades and pools of the stream. Walls were avoided almost entirely, the sense of shelter being provided by the overhangs and by screen-like windows detailed to enhance the vertical and horizontal rhythms. The chimney core was made from local stone laid rough, in contrast to the smooth finish of the concrete. While the slabs respond to the rock, these roughly faced vertical elements pick up the rhythm of the surrounding tree trunks. The abstraction of architectural language into horizontal and vertical lanes is not done for geometry's sake, but as an identification and restatement of the natural landscape.

A major part of the interior space was given over to a large living room, suitable to the function of a weekend house. The effects of dappled light, surrounding foliage, and tumbling water, and the feeling of horizontal expansion in all directions, gave an exact image of Wright's well-known maxims concerning the integration of architecture and nature. There was the sense of a vital, ever-changing order as elements and context slid into new relationships. The spaces around the waterfall and the screens of the trees were drawn into the building; nature and art were made to reinforce one another.

"When Wright came to the site he appreciated the powerful sound of the falls, the vitality of the young forest, the dramatic rock ledges and boulders; these were elements to be interwoven with the serenely soaring spaces of his structure. But Wright's insight penetrated more deeply. He understood that people were creatures of nature, hence an architecture which conformed to nature would conform to what was basic in people. For example, although all of Fallingwater is opened by broad bands of windows, people inside are sheltered as in a deep cave, secure in the sense of the hill behind them. Their attention is directed toward the outside by low ceilings; no lordly hall sets the tone but, instead, the luminous textures of the woodland rhythmically enframed. The materials of the structure blend with the colorings of the rocks and trees... The paths within the house, stairs and passages, meander without formality or urgency... Sociability and privacy are both available, as are the comforts of home and the adventures of the seasons. So people are cosseted into relaxing, into exploring the enjoyment of life refreshed in nature."

-Edgar Kaufmann

VI Site Description

Proposed Program (by competition organizers)

Urban Metropolitan Park: 80 acres:

- Multi-Use Trails
- Environmental Education Center
- Constructed Wetlands
- Thematic Gardens
- Active and Passive Recreation
- Recreation Rental/Repair Shop

Neighborhood Scale Office and Commercial
150,000-200,000 SF

Neighborhood Scale Retail
8,000-10,000 SF
Market(s)
Coffee Shop
Bakery
Deli
Pharmacy
Specialty Shops

Mixed Residential
Live Work Studios
High Density Apartments
Medium Density Townhouses
Necessary Parking

Lazars Lofts 3.5 ac.
50 Units

Agricultural Plots 5 ac.

Public School (kindergarten-fifth grade)
Recreational Fields

Adult and Child Day Care
Therapy Garden
Sensory/Learning Garden

Public Utilities
10 ac.

Location

The Whittier Peninsula Columbus, Ohio:

Area of the city currently under study for future development. The Whittier Street Peninsula, also called the Oxbow, comprises all of the area west of Short Street to the Scioto River, from I-70 to Greenlawn Avenue. A large portion of the 190 acre site is under public ownership. Historically an industrial site, existing land uses include local government offices and facilities, manufacturing and warehousing industries, and parkland.

Brief Land-Use History

Historically, land uses on the Whittier Street Peninsula revolved around transportation and transportation-dependent industries. In 1872, the Columbus and Hocking Valley Railroad operated a roundhouse and several tracks. By 1920, the railroad, then called the Columbus, Hocking Valley and Toledo Railroad, greatly expanded its operations to include a large railroad yard with various maintenance buildings and well over 25 tracks. In addition, the Columbus feeder of the Ohio Canal, located immediately east of Short Street, provided water transportation. The Franklin Iron Works (approximate site of the existing Lazarus warehouse) is one of the industries that took advantage of the transportation linkages and operated on the peninsula for a number of years. Other types of industries included brickyards, stone works, lumber yards, and on short street, the city's garbage disposal barns and a dog pound.

The southern portion of the peninsula remained largely vacant in the early years. After the 1913 flood, the Scioto River channel through the downtown was widened to increase the capacity of the river. As a result, a large portion of the peninsula's southern section became submerged. Access to the area of the peninsula west of the railroad was through Furnace and Mound Streets.

Current Land-Use Conditions

The Whittier Street peninsula is zoned M (Manufacturing), allowing for virtually every type of industrial use. Existing land uses include the CSX and Conrail railroads, City of Columbus offices, warehousing, stone and concrete yards, utility substations and parkland. Some of the land is currently vacant, and more is expected to be vacant in the near future.

Property Ownership

Of the 190 acres on the Whittier Street peninsula, slightly more than one third is owned by the City of Columbus, slightly less than a third is owned by the railroads. The remaining land is privately owned by independent land holders.

Two railroad companies, CSX and Conrail, control 61.5 acres on the peninsula. Conrail operates two main lines that run along the eastern edge of the railroad corridor. CSX has operated a number of lines in the past and has already retired a significant number located between their main tracks and the Conrail tracks. By mid 1992, CSX had plans to further consolidate its lines by retiring most of the tracks west of the main lines. Ultimately, CSX plans to maintain two main lines and two sidetracks through the peninsula. The CSX property to the west of these lines, approximately 30 acres, will be vacant and potentially available for redevelopment.

The City of Columbus is the largest landholder on the peninsula. The offices of the Department of Recreation and Parks (12.95 acres) and the impound lot (14.8) are located on Whittier Street. The Divisions of Fleet Management and Traffic Engineering maintain facilities on 9.84 acres on the west side of Short Street. The impound lot has outgrown its existing facilities and has been searching for a new site to relocate its operations. The Division of Traffic Engineering would like to

relocate its Short Street facility to property recently acquired on 17th Avenue, east of Joyce Avenue. A design for the new facility has been completed. The Division is awaiting funding to build its new facilities and relocate its operations. At this time, the Department of Recreation and Parks does not have plans to relocate.

In addition, the city owns 21.45 acres of parkland along the eastern bank of the Scioto River. Part of a larger regional bikeway system, the Lower Scioto Bikeway connects downtown and Berliner Park. Picnic facilities and boat ramps are available in the southern portion of the park (south of Whittier Street), however; the shallow water at this location limits boating activity to flat bottom boats.

The remaining 32% of the Scioto Peninsula property is under the private ownership of five entities. The largest land holder is Universal Concrete with 22.5 ac. the company has ceased operation and has expressed the desire to capitalize on the land they own. Other major property owners include F&R Lazarus (Lazarus warehouse), Maier Foundation (trucking company, vacant), and Lang Stone (Stone yard). The current land owners are all in the process of relocating their operations and the City of Columbus is optimistic about the potential for of acquiring all private holdings on the peninsula.

Circulation

Originally, Whittier Street was connected on the north to Mound Street by bridges over Interstate 70 and the railroad tracks. When an inspection in early 1989 found the Mound Street bridge to be unstable, the Division of Engineering and Construction declared the bridge a hazard to the public and closed it to traffic. A decision to replace the bridge has not been finalized. A traffic study conducted before the bridge's closure indicated that the level of use at that time did not warrant the replacement of the bridge. It was determined

that the removal of the bridge would not inhibit its future replacement if circumstances on the peninsula were to change. In January of 1992, bids were sent out for the removal of the bridge with both an option for its ultimate replacement and an option for its removal.

Prior to the opening of 1-70, west of SR 315, an exit ramp from eastbound 1-70 and an entrance ramp to westbound 1-70 provided additional access to the Whittier Street peninsula. With the opening of the freeway section in the early 1970s and the resulting substantial increase in traffic volume, these access ramps were removed due to safety reasons.

Short Street, a two-lane road provides access to the portion of the peninsula east of the railroad tracks, with connectors to the downtown on the north at Mound Street and at Fulton Street and to the Brewery District on the south at Sycamore. This southern connection is proposed to be closed with the development of the RJSolve & Associates shopping center. The planned extension of Liberty Street westward to Short Street will provide additional connections.

Recent Development

Since the 1990's, the Peninsula east of the railroad and the surrounding areas have seen major development. North of the Peninsula on the other side of the freeways, the high-rise Miranova condominiums and office building became a significant part of the downtown landscape. An area of abandoned 19th century breweries and under used industrial buildings were converted to offices, restaurants and condominiums. The area was dubbed the Brewery District. Since 2000, several hundred new apartments and condominiums have been constructed in the Brewery District, which also has several new office complexes.

Thesis Program (See Table 1)

Center For Interdisciplinary Advanced
Environmental Studies

The Ohio State University

School of Natural Resources

College of Engineering

School of Architecture

School of Landscape Architecture

School of City and Regional Planning

Visiting Faculty

City of Columbus

City Engineering Department

City Planning Department

City Mapping Department

Columbus Metropolitan Park District

Natural Resources Department

Design and Planning Department

Elected Board, Staff, and Maintenance

National Audubon Society

Naturalists, Researchers, and Staff Support

Visiting Researchers

Alternative Organizations

Researchers and Staff Support

Community Representation

Elected Members and Staff Support

Table 1: Building Program

Type of Space	Quantity	Sq. Feet	Total
Archive Center	1	5,000	5,000
Bookstore	1	3,000	3,000
Supply Store	1	2,000	2,000
Office Space		16,000	16,000
Library	1	10,000	10,000
Cafeteria/Café		6,000	6,000
Studio Spaces	3	1,000	3,000
Information		4,500	4,500
Exhibition		5,000	5,000
Gallery	1	3,000	3,000
Workshop	1	2,400	2,400
Observation Deck		3,600	3,600
Assembly	1	5,400	5,400
Laboratory	1	2,400	2,400
Meeting Rooms		1,800	1,800
Soils Museum	1	800	800
Auditorium	1	2,000	2,000
Total:			75,900

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Appendix

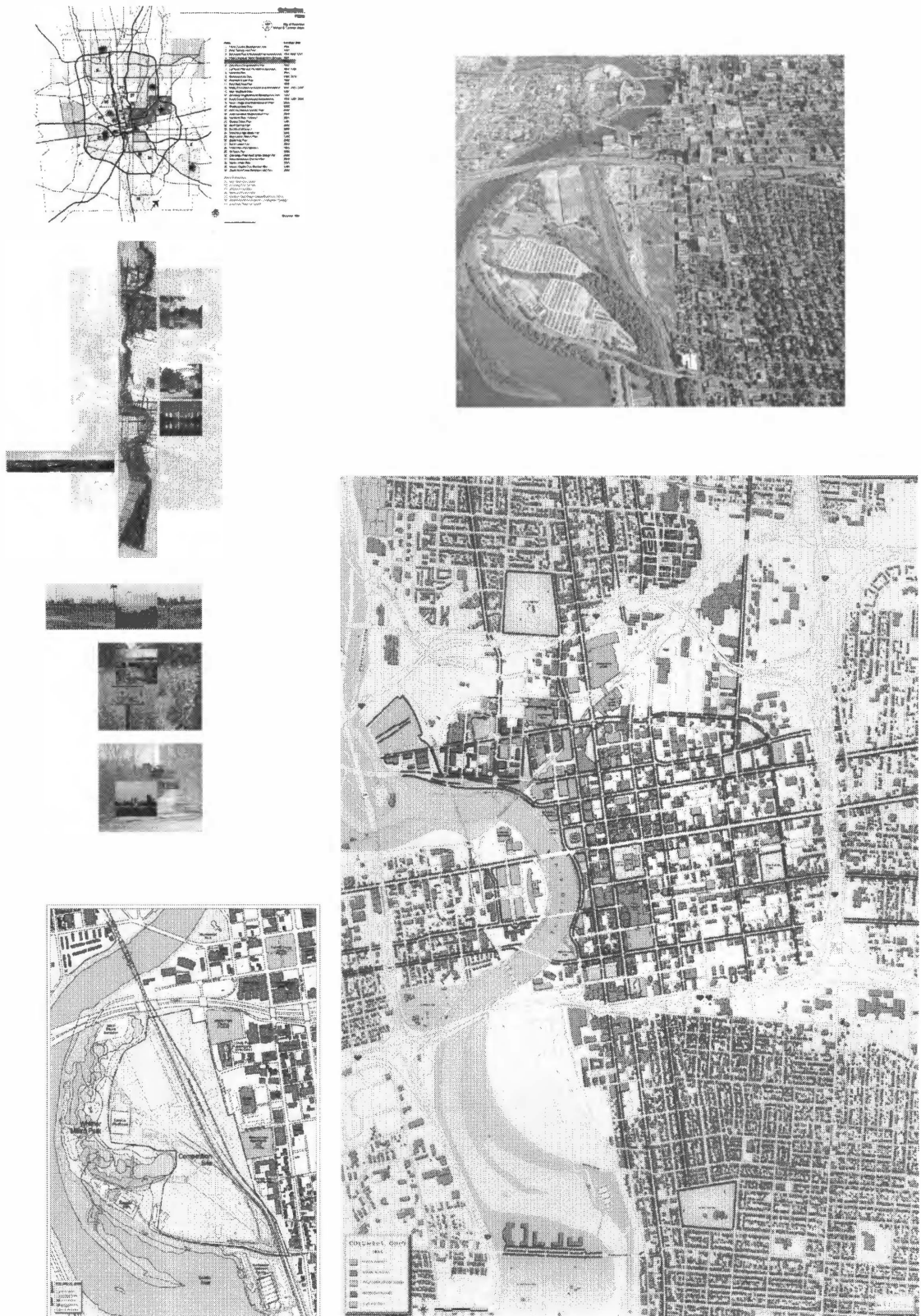


Figure 12 Information, Proposals, and Methodology

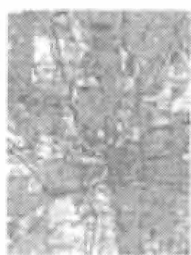


Figure 13 Journeys and Diagrams

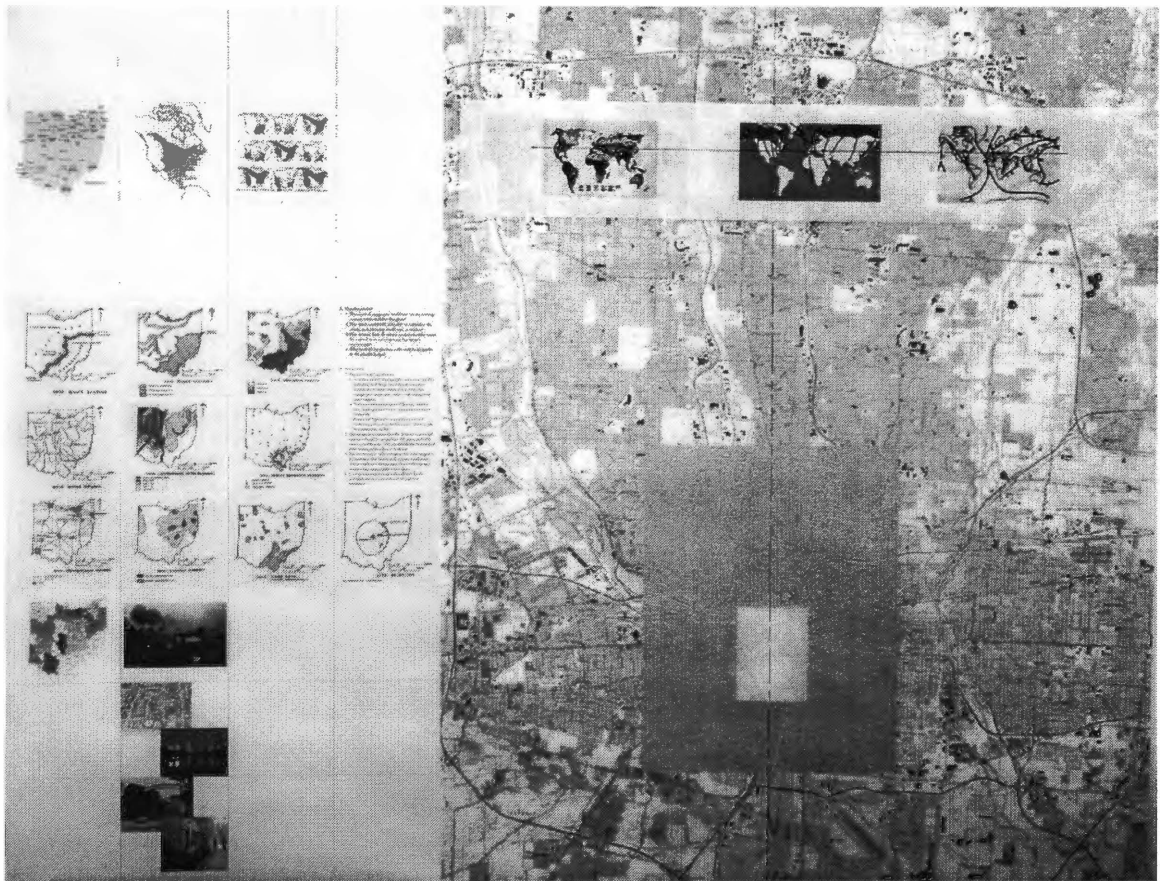


Figure 15 Composite Diagram

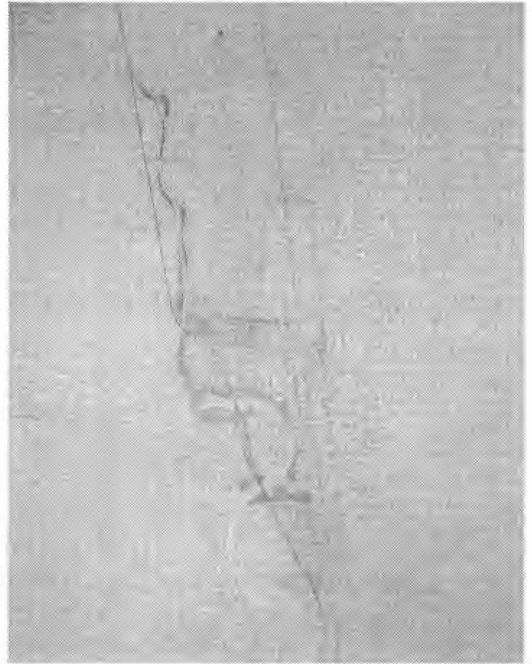
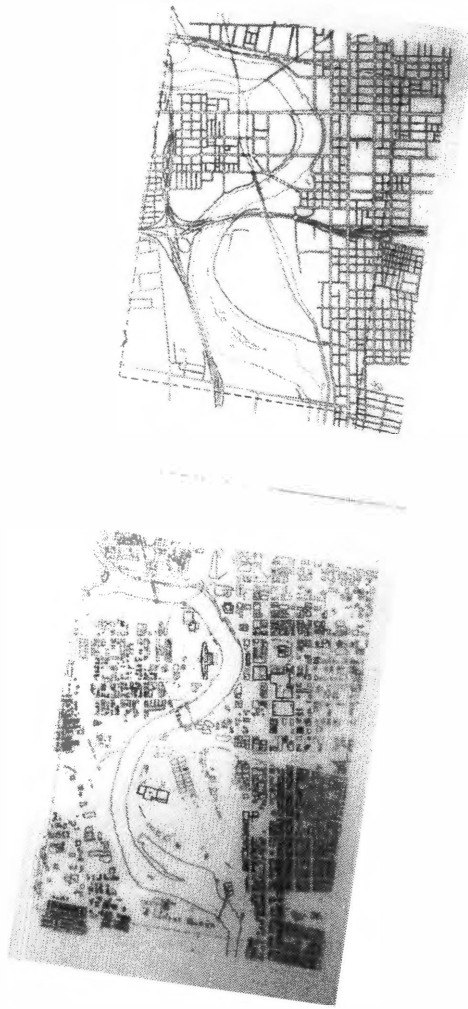


Figure 16 City and Its Neighborhoods



Figure 17 Site and Its Neighborhoods



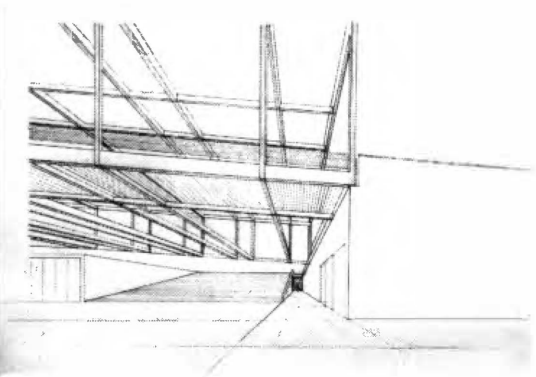
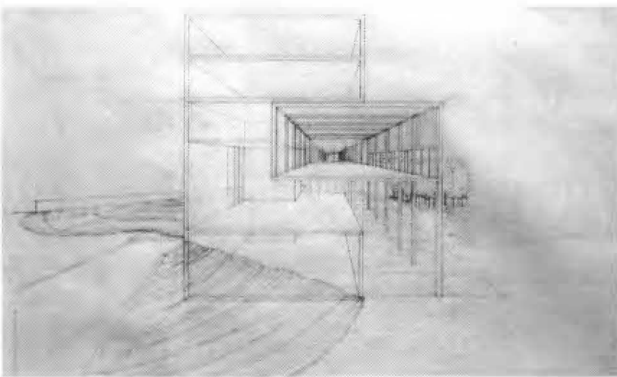
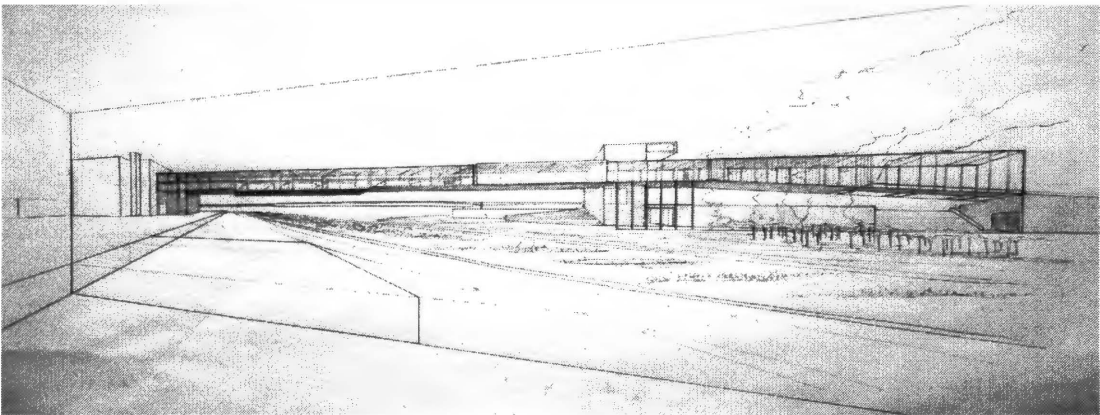
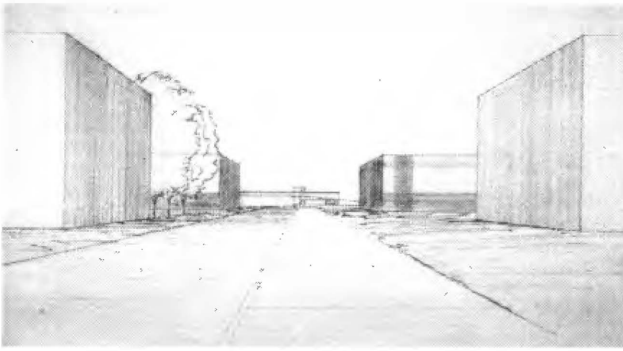


Figure 19 Perspectives, Axons, and 1/32 Aerial

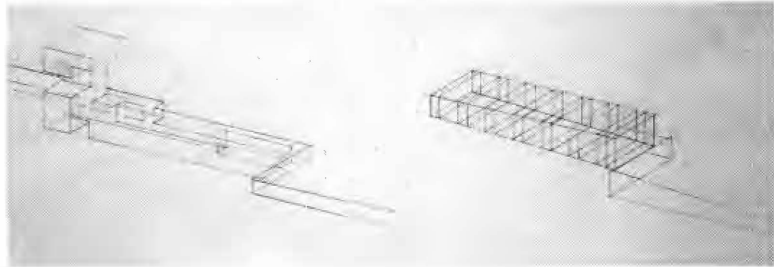
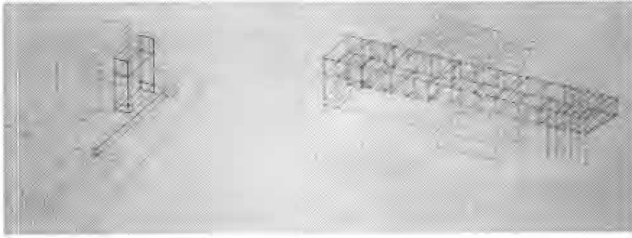


Figure 20 Perspectives, Axons, and 1/32 Aerial

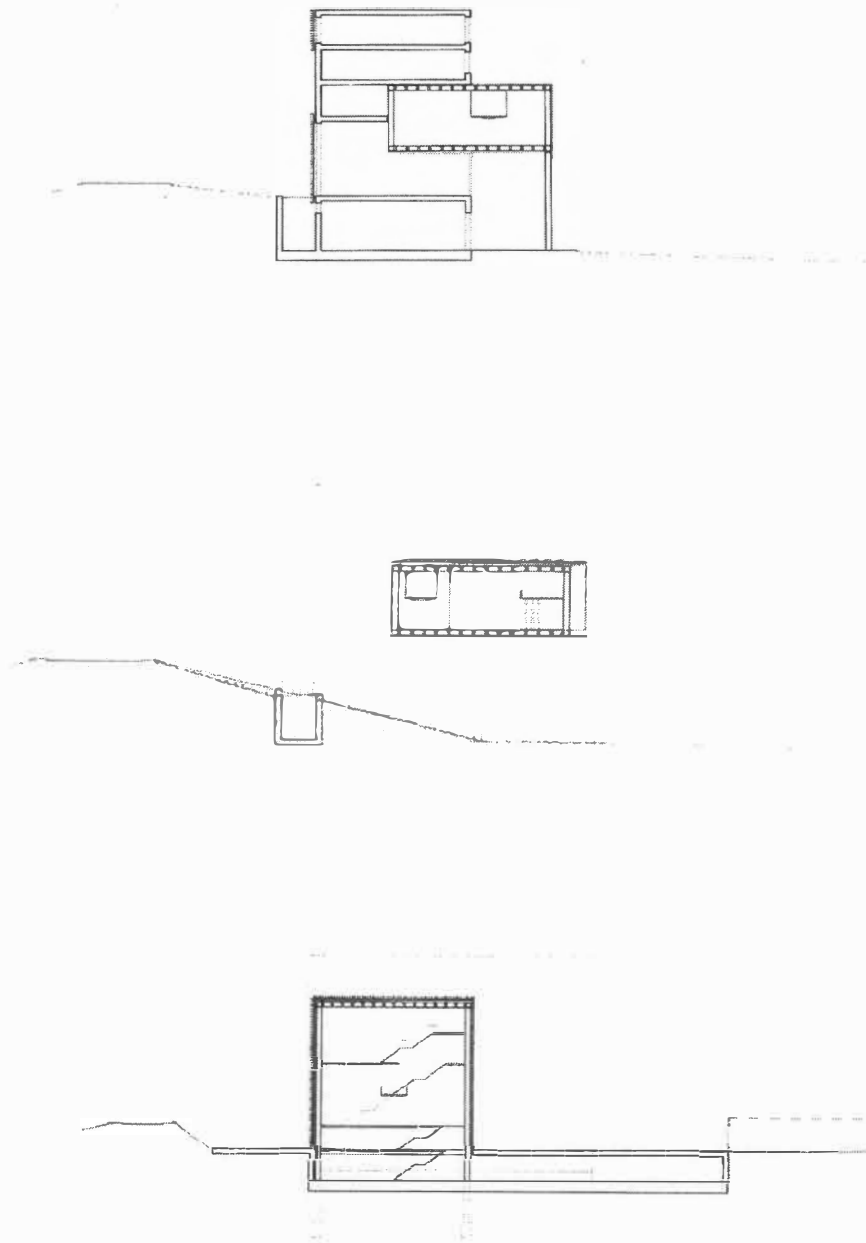


Figure 21 Building Design A

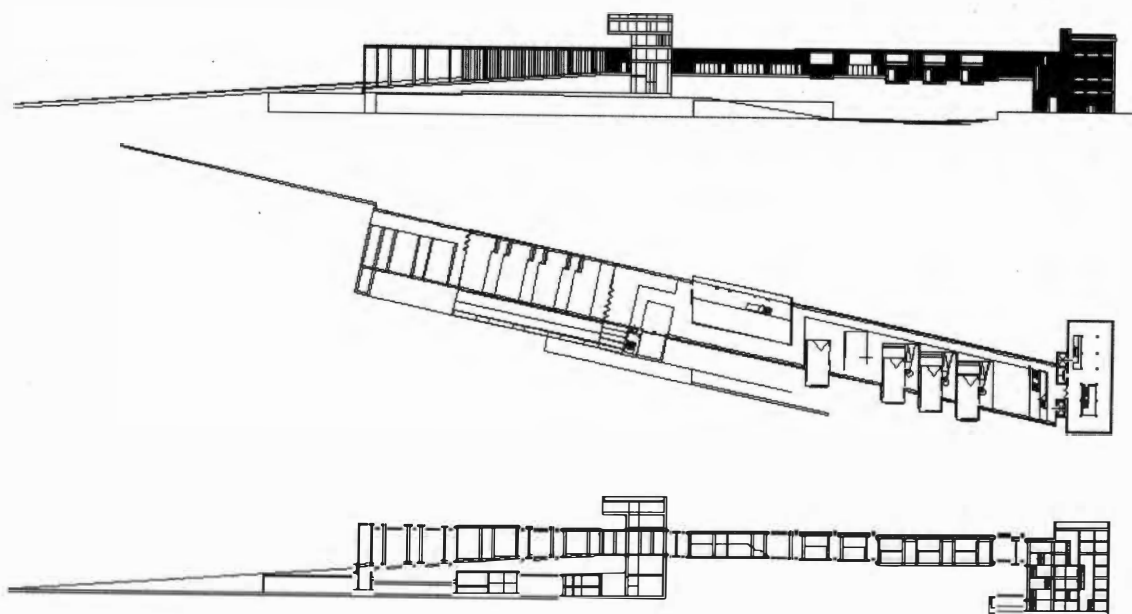


Figure 22 Building Design B

Vita

Beth Fry was born in Marietta, Ohio. She graduated from Marietta Senior High School in 1992. From there, she attended The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architecture with a minor in City and Regional Planning. Upon graduation she remained in Columbus and worked as a Landscape Architect Intern for a traditional Landscape Architecture firm and then an Architecture firm. Beth entered the graduate program for architecture at The University of Tennessee where she earned her Master of Architecture degree in 2006.

