

Architecture Studio: 1st Year Spring

Spring 2013, CMU, Arch #48-105, M/W/F 1:30-4:20
Class Website: www.andrew.cmu.edu/course/48-105

Coordinator: Kai Gutschow
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Off. Hr: M/W/F 12:30-1:00pm & by appt. in MM302

(3/18/13)

Project 3: PITTSBURGH ROW HOUSE - Intro

MINDSET: The capstone project for freshman year studio is the design of a new row house in Pittsburgh. It continues the year-long investigation of small residences as a vehicle for understanding the core ideas of architecture; the use of drawing and models as tools to communicate architectural ideas; and the choreography of rich transitions from inside to outside. You're expected to bring together all the lessons of the year in order to structure a sequence of architectural experiences leading from the street into your house, into the main program spaces, and out the back to a garden. In this project we'll also explore a real site, a real Pittsburgh neighborhood, and begin to understand how to construct the project with typical light-weight framing system. Our rigorous design process begins with "research" and "analysis" exercises to understand the parameters and fundamental design issues at stake.

PROJECT: Your charge is to design a modest row house in Pittsburgh. Your client is a middle-aged couple that has just sent their last child off to college, and is ready to "downsize." They will leave their large suburban tract home, sell their cars, and move into one of Pittsburgh's up-and-coming artist neighborhoods, either the Penn Avenue corridor in Garfield, OR Lower Lawrenceville near Butler Ave. The couple both work in downtown Pittsburgh (they look forward to biking to work), but insist on having spaces inside their new home where they can create art on weekends, during inclement weather, and when they retire. One is a photographer, and needs a small darkroom and a computer work station; the other is a painter and needs a studio space that receives plenty of indirect light, ideally through a wall of glass and a skylight facing north. They envision a compact home that feels spacious and full of natural light, in which they can entertain friends comfortably in a living room, in their garden, and on a rooftop terrace. You will get to know more about the clients and the program as the project develops.

ASSIGNMENT 3a: Due Sun. Mar. 3, 10:00pm

Your clients need help finding a good site on which to build. Their realtor has shown them a series of six affordable, small, infill sites in Garfield and Lawrenceville. Your charge for the weekend is to visit all the sites, take photos and extensive notes in the form of sketches and site analysis, as well as jot down some first inspirations on what "belongs" on each site. The clients expect to receive a 1-page letter from you by Sunday night, explaining in words and in sketches *which site* you recommend, *why* you find the site interesting, *what you like* about the context and location, and what potential the site seems to have for creating a great house for them, especially with respect to entry and the front facade. Show both special and typical things you noticed that might influence your design decisions, and perhaps some ideas for the new rowhouse. Submit your client-letter by 10:00pm to your studio blog on Blackboard, both as a blog entry, and as an attached file (**Lastname_clientletter.pdf**). The clients will let you know Monday morning by email what site they have chosen, and expect to meet you on the site by 2:00pm to continue the research & design process. Be prompt!

ADVICE / RESOURCES:

- Travel in groups, during the day. Use common sense. Stay Warm. **Be safe!**
- Respect the neighborhoods; stay off private property & empty lots; act professionally!
- Bring maps, a tape measure, sketching tools, camera, CMU ID, curiosity & a keen eye!
- Bus 54 map & schedule to Garfield & Lawrenceville: www.portauthority.org/rt/54.pdf
- Google Maps, Google Earth, Bing Maps (each with different satellite images)
- CMU Library <http://guides.library.cmu.edu/content.php?pid=117528&sid=1074570>
- City of Pittsburgh map website: <http://pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/gis/gis-map-room>
- Historical info: <http://digital.library.pitt.edu/pittsburgh/> (cf. Hopkins maps)
- Neighborhoods: <http://bloomfield-garfield.org/>; <http://friendship-pgh.org/paai/>; www.lvpgh.com/;

