

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

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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 - Site Analysis

ASSIGNMENT 3b: Due. Mon. Mar. 18, 1:30pm

Your charge is to measure, analyze, and discover the patterns and experience of your site so that you understand the various parameters you will need to accommodate in your design process, and can create accurate site documentation.

Site assumptions: Assume the following about your sites:

- Site A: size 25ft x 100ft, slopes down 1'-0" from left to right. Your ground floor should be at least as high as the left edge of the site, and be horizontal. Front doors not at the left will need a stoop, steps, porch or ramp, to get up into the ground floor. A basement is required under the main part of the house (not under porches or decks).
- Site D: size 20ft x 100ft, slopes down 6'-6" from sidewalk to alley level. Assume that you will build a basement/garage on your *entire lot* that can be accessed from the rear alley. You will build your house and your rear garden on top of that plinth-like box.

Site Analysis: We assume you have visited all the sites, but now that a site has been chosen, you are to explore more intensely the surrounding blocks in each direction (walk around a bit). Record in sketches and some words the typical details, and what is striking or stands out. Record both factual information, and qualitative, subjective, and experiential issues you perceive. Document the following aspect of the context in your sketchbook:

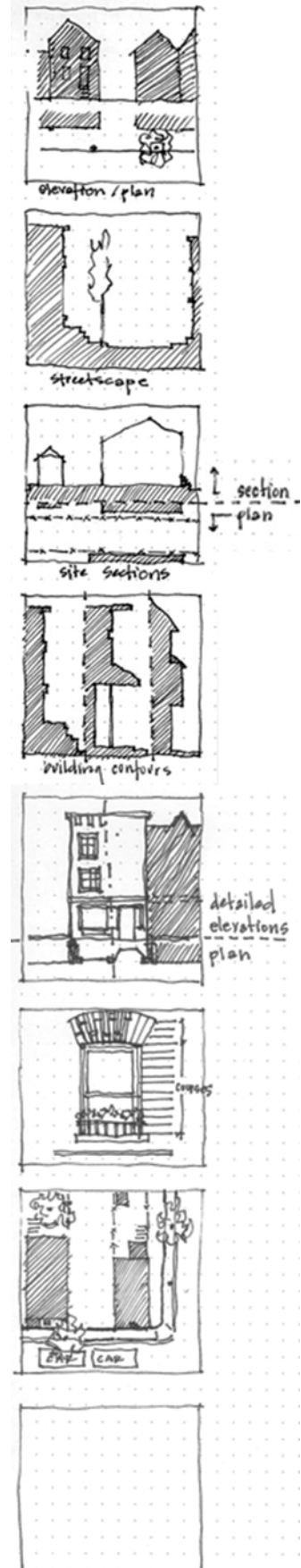
- views in all directions, high and low, including nearby buildings and more distant landmarks and geography; guess what might be seen if you go up 2 or more floors.
- traffic: pedestrian flow, bike riding, bus schedules, trucks, autos, parking around your lot, trains in the distance; find out where things are coming from, and where they are going;
- natural forces, including tree heights & foliage, wind, birds, noise, nearby parks;
- light: sun, shadow, and light patterns over the day on your lot, facade, and neighbors (e.g. sunrise, sunset, solstice, etc., confirm with Ecotect for various parts of the year); street lighting, headlights, lights in the distance...
- societal and commercial context, including some idea of demographics (gender, age, ethnicity, race, income, interests, etc.): who is on the street? who are the neighbors next door? across the street? the next block? are they home during the day? how is the "artsy" feel created? who else lives there? what are the local businesses nearby? where is the nearest grocery? bank? laundromat? pharmacy? coffee shop?
- older architecture: record the "typical" building in your neighborhood, as well as the variations, anomalies, and nearby monuments. Focus on overall massing, facade elements (windows, doors, etc), roof, ornamental details, materials, construction method. How have the buildings changed over time (both through decay and human interventions)? Which nearby buildings are being fixed up? Which are falling down?
- new architecture: what has been newly built or refurbished in your neighborhood recently (a few blocks in all directions)? Height & massing? Approach to materials? How is the entry choreographed? How is the facade composed? How is the rear yard designed? Is there parking on site? What kind of fence is there? Why?

Measure the Site & Make Autocad Site Drawings: Work collaboratively with all the other studio members who are doing the same site to get all the necessary measurements. Think about making a model: what measurements will you need?

Create the following base drawings in Autocad at 1/4"=1'0-0":

- 1 plan of your site with adjacent houses, sidewalk, curb, alley, trees, etc.
- 1 front street elevation, including at least 1.5 houses on either side of your lot
- 1 rear alley elevation, including 0.5 houses on either side of your lot
- 2 long sections through the site, one facing each direction to include the "side elevation" of the houses adjacent to your lot.

Measure from the sidewalk only: use brick, block, and clapboard height to estimate the height dimensions. The drawings that result will be shared and used by everyone and will be deemed factually correct after approval by instructors.



Sketchbooks Hints:

- Work quickly and intensely; try to show energy and conviction
- Capture both factual & measurable info, and perception & experience
- Don't draw everything: edit out, abstract, clarify, get to the essence
- Outline the structure, then fill in only a few details, cherish the incomplete
- Revise and add layers later, including shading, color washes, profiles...
- Don't be afraid to repeat or do over bits & pieces on different drawings
- Work continuously, let the drawings flow into each other, even overlap
- Fill the page; better too much on a page than not enough
- Work at many scales, from overview to detail.
- Use many arch'l drawing types (plan, section, contour, axo).
- Avoid too much perspective or camera-like views. Make drawings!

Focus especially on the following drawing types & content:

Details (of buildings nearby)

- brick patterns
- how things turn a corner
- flashing details
- window sills & mullions
- handrails & stairs
- flower boxes & mailboxes
- thresholds & lintels
- partial height wall caps
- cornice profiles & depth
- ornament, carvings
- materials with measurements
- hardware & connections
- construction techniques
- any patterns or repetitions

Sections (at different scales)

- down the big hill and beyond
- across the whole block
- across the street and alley
- overall site (long & short sect.)
- neighbor bldgs: floor heights, window heights)
- building entries, stoops
- wall sections

Profile/Contour

- of facade fronts on sidewalk
- of buildings against the sky
- of stairs & stoops
- of entries
- of details

Elevations

- of the block; of groups of bldgs.
- of individual buildings
- rhythms, axes and bays
- partial buildings
- trees, signs, posts, fences
- side & back of buildings

Plans

- street, store names,
- stoop
- balconies, decks
- facade

Diagrams

- geometry
- direction of pedestrian traffic
- shadows
- proportions of objects
- relationships of objects
- an apparent order
- chaos, disorder, questions
- to show emphasis/hierarchy

Paralines (perhaps perspectives)

- overall site massing
- details (as noted above)
- to show shadow

Written Notes

- sound, light, texture,
- emotions
- perceptions, senses
- ideas to remember

