Architecture Studio: 2nd Year
Fall 2007, CMU, Arch #48-200, M/W/F 1:30-4:20
Class Website: www.andrew.cmu.edu/course/48-200

Coordinator: Kai Gutschow
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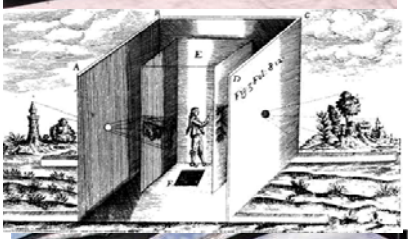
Off. Hr: M/F 12:00-1:00pm & by appt. in MM202
(9/11/07)

PROJECT 2 – OBSERVATION / STRUCTURE







MINDSET:
In the first individual studio project we will build on the idea of "observation" and interacting with the environment around us. Here the focus will be on the primary "elements of architecture" and their potential to create rich experiences on many levels. The small scale and natural context of the project will allow you to work at several different scales, and to develop each architectural element fully both in itself, and as part of an integrated whole.

PROJECT
Your charge is to design a small observation structure along Outlook Drive at the top of Schenley Park to help users observe and engage nature, the surrounding landscape, and the views of Pittsburgh in multiple ways. Your project should operate on several levels: as a platform to celebrate views out into the landscape; as a modulating device to frame and filter the light, air, sounds, and water coming into your structure; as an instrument to study the concept of "observation"; as a dispenser of water, maps, information, and shade to the park visitor; as an armature to choreograph motion and experience through your spaces and into nature; as a fun and engaging place to be, for kids and adults. Although electricity and water will be available, this is to be a simple park structure, with minimal impact on the site, bound closely to the ecology of its context(s).

PROGRAM
The structure must contain three distinct spaces, each 80-100sf, plus minimal space for circulation. These can be arranged in any relationship to each other, and to the site, though they must be physically connected, either vertically or horizontally. The overall maximum height for the structure is 30ft, plus a roof. In order to minimize impact on the site, all spaces must be on or above ground level.

The programmatic requirements of the spaces are as follows:
1) one space must dispense water and information about the park and city;
2) one space must be enclosed and carefully modulate the elements of nature (light, air, water, sound) flowing through its walls in both directions to create a rich experience and enhance an understanding of the context, and about the nature of observation and how we observe;
3) one space must be a viewing platform open on at least three sides, with a place to sit;
4) there must be a roof or canopy covering the top of your structure.
5) one space must be accessible to a wheelchair from Overlook Drive.

THE SITE
The site of your observation structure can be anywhere on or near the large field alongside Overlook Drive at the top of Schenley Park (see the dotted line of the aerial view), and must be approved by your instructor. Pick your site carefully, including relationships to the slope, to views, to trees, to the street, and to the ice-rink, such that it reinforces your ideas on observation and how you want visitors to use your structure.
- The entire 2nd year should collaborate to agree on and create a long site section and/or an accurate topographic plan of the area.
- Each individual studio should document the site through photos, environmental data obtained through library and computer research, as well as studio-specific, "working models" of the site at the instructor's discretion
- Each student will be required to include an appropriate amount of the site in every drawing and every model that includes accurate dimensions for all slopes, trees, roads, buildings and other parts of the context.

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PROCESS

A major goal of the 2nd year studio is to keep developing a robust design process in each student. Over the course of the year we will work towards having longer design projects, less regulation of the design process, fewer imposed requirements, and a greater chance to explore the particular intent of your design. We will work towards this goal in several ways:

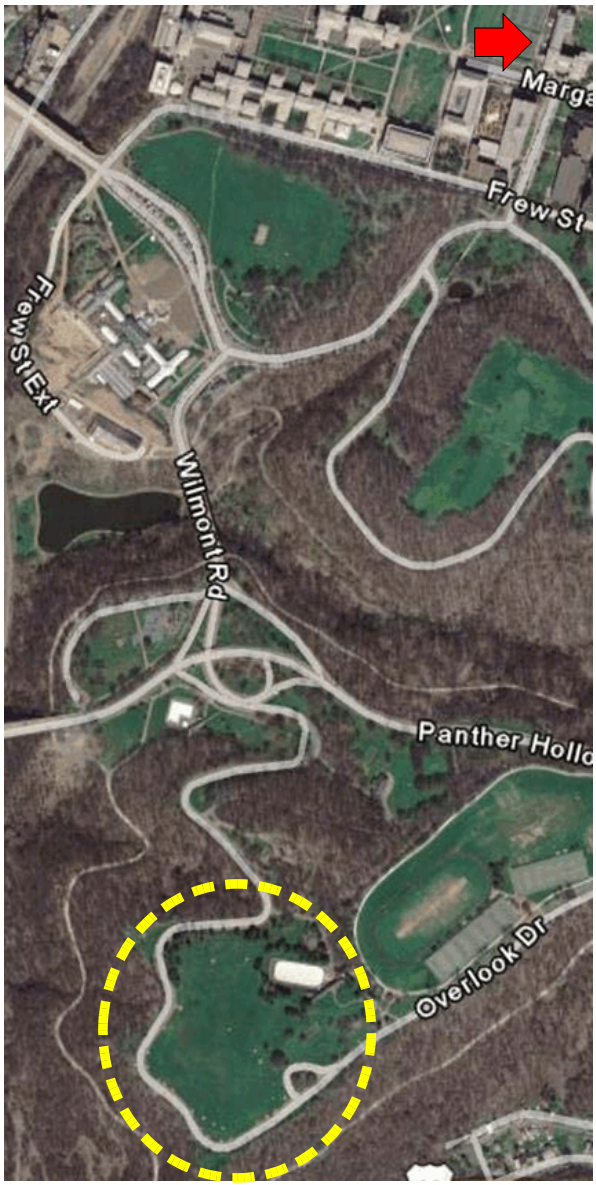
1) integrated research: you should integrate design and research, both in the form of smaller, exploratory design exercises, and through the parallel analysis of other buildings and related ideas, both by yourself and in groups

2) iterative design: your design process should be iterative, working to find alternate and multiple solutions at all points of the process, rarely bound to a single aspect, and always able to move forward with the ideas at hand, rather than needing to "start over."

3) synthesized elements: you should work simultaneously on the design of the whole, and the design of individual elements, at several different scales, and in different media, moving back and forth between the elements

4) quality process: your design process should include multiple drawing types, a variety of media, and a range of speeds, and all drawings should be done with intensity to achieve high quality results. At any point in the design process, you should have a "complete set" of high quality drawings available for feedback on your desk, rather than many incomplete fragments of process work, layers of poorly drawn plans, or lackluster sketches. Create drafts of all drawings earlier in the process; don't ever wait for the final presentation to draw something for the first time. Each drawing requires drafts.

5) effective communication: "deliverables" at mid-reviews and at the final review will be kept to a minimum, fewer than might ordinarily be needed to explain the full extent of your design, thus demanding that you maximize the content and impact of each presentation piece.



DELIVERABLES & FINAL REVIEW

Each instructor will have slightly different pedagogical methods regarding the design process. In order to share results from studio to studio, and to encourage a more robust design process, higher quality, and more comprehensive "process work," all students will be required to submit several pre-determined process drawings in the course of the project.

The primary tool for presenting your process work in this project will be building sections and plans. These will allow you to communicate clearly the horizontal layout and vertical composition of your building in relation to the landscape, as well as details about how the walls and roof allow the flow of light, air, and water in and out of your building.

The final review will likely be limited to ONE INTEGRATED DRAWING, and ONE MODEL, requiring careful coordination of your idea with the specific drawing type: details to be announced at mid-review.