

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/W 12:30-1:30pm & by appt. in MM202

(9/7/07)

PROJECT 3 -- BUILDING ANALYSIS

MINDSET

This project is concerned with the HOW and WHY of architecture, leading to discussions on "WHAT is architecture?" It builds on your summer building study, firm in the conviction that the single most important source, and tool, for learning about architecture, is architecture. The goal is to discover a building's systems & principles, to expose the architectural intent, concept, and language used by the architect to shape that vision, to understand how architecture can express ideas and create experiences at many levels. Architects design and communicate with drawings & models; you should do the same in your analysis: create a way of understanding your building. *This is an architecture project.*

WORK PROCESS:

0) Depending on your studio instructor, each student will choose or be assigned one building to study over the course of the semester. The best links to the studio projects will be a 20th-century house, or a museum.

1) The first step is to gather as much documentary evidence of the architecture of your building as possible, from the original design process to the life of the building since then, from the overall context to the detail level. Go to the library more than once: thorough research takes time. Check internet, books, journals, and especially foreign language sources. Check for reviews of the building after it was built, and see what theoreticians have written about the building since then. Find the graphic and visual analysis that already exists on the building, including those made by the architect during or after the design process. Write a letter to the building owner. Your instructor may send you back several times to look for images or drawings of relevant parts of the building, or ask you to draft to-scale plans from photos if unavailable.

2) Based on the evidence you collect, compose a large poster-sized exhibit documenting your building so that your whole studio can learn from it.

3) Then ask yourself, and discuss with your peers and instructor: "Why does the building look and feel the way it does?" Or: "What makes this building a great piece of architecture? What makes this a work of art?" Or: "What is creative and innovative about this architecture, what makes it extra-ordinary?" Try to be as specific as you can, on many levels. Work to go beyond the formal & spatial analysis you did last year. Consider looking at details more closely. Find the concepts or ideas behind the building's conception. Try to understand the experience beyond just traditional architectural drawings or photos.

4) In consultation with your instructor, choose one or a few related aspects of your building that intrigue YOU, and begin to address these questions. Attempt to communicate your ideas effectively through multiple and varied drawings and models. Drawings should become modes of research & inquiry. Much as in your design projects, this exploration MUST at first be done in multiple media: using the computer, the sharpened pencil, charcoal or watercolors, will each reveal different insights. A chipboard model will lead to different results than one in resin, wireframe, or hardwood. Investigate the basic orthographic projections (plan, section, elevation & axo): re-creating those can reveal volumes about how an architect worked, the intent they made visible.

5) After exploring several drawings and media, pick ONE, or combine several to create ONE drawing that most profoundly "captures" the insights you want people to understand about your building. This drawing must be on one large piece of paper. It can combine several types of drawings through overlays or collage, but it must be "one drawing," as defined by you and your instructor. Although this drawing will not represent your whole building, you should prepare many drafts and revise your drawing several times to be sure it has many layers of information and represents as much as possible. One drawing CAN communicate what makes a piece of architecture great! Try it.

6) Create a single model or 3D analysis according to the same principles.

7) The drawing and model are due to your instructor, and a scan of your drawing are to be submitted to Blackboard on Mon. Nov. 19. A 2pp. "Documentation" of the final work and the whole process using the 2nd year template must be submitted by Dec. 10.

