

Architecture, Design & Materials Studio

Spring 2007, CMU, Arch #48-205, M/W/F 1:30-4:20
Class Website: www.andrew.cmu.edu/course/48-205

Coordinator: Kai Gutschow

Email: gutschow@cmu.edu

Off. Hr: M/W 12:30-1:30pm & by appt. in MM307

(1/11/07)

PROJECT 1: A TEMPORARY LIBRARY

MINDSET: This is the beginning of a semester-long research and creative process to design a neighborhood library. Building on our investigation of composition, concept, and spatial experience last semester, we will undertake a more intensive exploration of the role that materials and assembly methods can play in creating a small piece of architecture. We will focus on the scale of the human body encountering the physical presence of building and books. We seek to explore how we can elevate ordinary construction to poetic expression, how real materials, structure, enclosure, joinery, craft, and building techniques can lead to the creation of significant architecture.

PROJECT: The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP) has commissioned you to design a new library to serve Pittsburgh's Southside neighborhood. To inspire the research and exploration necessary to create any great piece of architecture, the CLP is first commissioning you to design a small, temporary library unit nearby, using a very limited palette of materials and simple assembly methods.

The temporary library will allow the CLP to serve its clients until the larger, permanent library is finished. A significant challenge will be to decide in what way a building--often thought of as permanent--can be "temporary", perhaps in how it is made, in its life-cycle, or in its subsequent reuse. This design should also allow you to do preliminary research into the urban context, the definition of a library, the place of books and information in our society, and how a careful choreography of materials & assembly methods can achieve these goals.

PROGRAM: Create a temporary library unit to display and circulate books and magazines. Although you should define your library's program, it must include computer terminals, space for reading, and a librarian's desk or workspace.

- Your library should include no more than 500sq.ft. of floor area
- Your library must sit on or above the ground (thus requiring minimal excavation or foundation work), and should be no more than 14ft tall (one main floor, though not necessarily all at one grade).
- The only site-service will be electricity. No water or bathrooms allowed.
- The main space of your library must be ADA accessible.

PROCESS: Work with your instructor and peers to plan a rigorous design process and schedule before you start the 5-week design. Create a process that will allow you to address in an integrated, iterative, and progressively more detailed manner, issues of identity and meaning, context and site, materiality and assembly, space and experience, openings and construction.

- In order to get quickly to the fundamental issues of how materials influence design, choose either a very limited palette of materials (1-2 main materials), OR a simple, well-established assembly method (e.g. masonry, post-and-beam with infill or cladding, panel construction, stud-frame construction, or tensile systems).

- Be sure the your choice of materials and assembly techniques are integrally related to the structure and spatial system for the main space in your library.

Consider both the surface experience of the materials, and the structural principles implied, particularly in the spanning systems (no chipboard roofs!).

- You should develop a common sense understanding of the component parts, details, and assembly methods of your library. Consider purchasing or creating near full-scale models of your building materials to understand them.

SITE: The site of the temporary library will be on the empty lot at the NE corner of Carson Street and 11th Street on the Southside. The future neighborhood library will likely be built at the SE corner of Carson and 12th Street. Both are accessible by bus 54C from Craig Street.

