

FUTURE OF THE PAST: CONNECTIVE TISSUE IN THE URBAN FABRIC

Arch-541b Landscape Architecture Design

6 units/ WAH 3rd Floor

Spring 2012/ MWF 2:00- 5:50 pm

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Background:

As the density of modern cities compresses more and more on the public open spaces so integral to the well-being of their populations, the role of the landscape architect becomes increasingly vital to the development of viable schemes to maximize and enhance the parks and plazas that constitute the public realm. Additionally, it is arguably within the role of these designers to integrate, within their proposals, elements that will serve as markers or talismans of the history of the sites which, in the 21st century world, are being so rapidly redeveloped that the sense of the past is often irrevocably lost.

This semester's work will focus on the both the weaving of park and plaza space into the urban fabric, and the relevance of history, both local and typological, into these projects.

Projects:

This studio will have three projects: two will be in a sketch format, and a final project which will be more thoroughly developed.

First- The Tongva Sacred Springs in West Los Angeles-

This site, a core population center and sacred spring for the region's pre-columbian population, is embedded in a particularly grim apartment and public High School wasteland in West Los Angeles. One of the few reliable sources of clean water in the area, it was the first village site in the area to be observed by the Portola Expedition in 1769 (Anecdotally it was also the initial water source for the city of Santa Monica). A foundation exists to protect the site, but little has been done to celebrate the historical importance of the place, or to enhance the much needed open space that it occupies. Our 'sketch' project will develop proposals for how such vital elements such as this can be integrated into a developing city fabric.

Second- Beverly Gardens Park, south.

A remnant rail-bed easement running parallel to Santa Monica Boulevard in Beverly Hills, this vacated right-of-way is directly across the street from one of the most successful urban interventions in Los Angeles- Ralph Cornell's Beverly Park, designed in 1928. The long undeveloped strip, fenced from public use for twenty-eight years since the rails were removed, is in a vital thoroughfare which links the two very distinct independent municipalities of West Hollywood and Beverly Hills. The unused strip creates a bifurcation within Beverly Hills, a kind of wall that should come down. We will consider both the history and the possibilities inherent to this 'lost' space, and develop proposals to make it a viable element in the city.

Third- Century City Purple Line Subway Plaza-

As part of the 30/10 plan, Mayor Villaraigosa has successfully jump-started the long awaited western subway expansion into the core of one of the primary satellite civic clusters of Los Angeles, Century City. With its history as part of the Wolfskill ranch, as Studio lot, to city planning experiment, the area is a microcosm of Southern California development history. There is hopeful talk that the line extension could be accomplished in just eight years, but there is a great deal of controversy about which site should be chosen for the station: one on Santa Monica Boulevard, or one on Constellation Boulevard. Students will investigate the relative merits of both options from the point of view of which site, given a bequest of land for public usage, would have a greater landscape presence and benefit for this very urban, but pedestrian unfriendly environment: they will then develop a scheme to illustrate the possibilities inherent in the site they feel should be chosen.

Intentions:

The objective of these three projects in aggregate is to foster an understanding of the various pressures, physical, historical and political, which inform a successfully executed landscape design proposal.

Inherently, all the current topics of our profession will inform the designs: the balance between ecological planning, infrastructural issues, appropriate plantings, and sensitive political compromises should all be carefully addressed. The format of this studio should also facilitate the development of each student's ability to communicate design concepts in a clear, concise, personalized manner.

Program:

Each of the exercises will have a group of site-specific programmatic requirements and a number of additional elements which can be electively deployed. In all cases, habitability, appropriateness and accessibility will be paramount concerns. A prime objective of this studio is to identify and refine the programmatic characteristics of the envisioned projects such that the cultural, functional and pure design attributes are all given their due. Students will be expected to challenge and/or augment the basic parameters of the programs presented, and to be prepared to defend their reasons for doing so. Each project deals directly with dysfunctional urban fabric: a large part of the student's challenge will be to provide proposals which address and rectify these difficult environments.

Location:

All three projects are located within a two mile radius in West Los Angeles/Century City. Maps will be provided to the sites. A class visit is envisioned for the first project: negotiations for access are ongoing.

Studio Structure:

The first exercise will be three weeks, the second two, and the remaining ten weeks will be spent on the final project. Each project will start with a lecture on the historical context of the site and environs, and about technical and typological issues which will be relevant. Throughout the course, brief lectures will be given on precedents and related projects which will be geared to the student's evolving designs. Students will be required to assemble a comprehensive documentation of their work for the semester.

There will be reviews for each section, with different visiting critics as appropriate for each project.

II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES

Course Requirements

- 1. Studio:** students are expected to be in studio during the designated timeframe- MWF (2-6pm)
- 2. Desk Crits:** Individual desk crits are critical in understanding each student's thinking process and providing one-on-one focused critique to guide the students forward. Students are required to be present during studio hours for desk crits.
- 3. Lectures:** Lectures will focus on topics relating to landscape architecture, history and materials . Additionally, technical topics will be introduced to equip students with the skills and knowledge to execute site specific designs.
- 4. Assignments:** assignments are structured to reinforce overall studio goals and objectives and nurture a comprehensive design presentation for the Midterm and Final Reviews.
- 5. Guest Speakers:** Guest speakers will be invited to bring in additional expertise and knowledge to the studio, as well as sitting in the pin-up reviews to offer diverse opinions and perspectives on students' proposals.
- 6. Field Trips:** In order to gain a first-hand experience of the site and its context, one field trip is anticipated during studio hours. Students are encouraged to visit the sites as often as needed on their own time between studio hours.
- 7. Pin-up Reviews:** As a way to check in on the progress of the assignments, pin-up reviews as a group will be held to provide critical feedback and direction.
- 8. Midterm and Final Reviews:** Midterm Review will present their large scale landscape strategies to invited critics that may include City officials, developers and citizens, and design professionals. Final Review presentation will consist of site specific landscape design projects as well as a re- evaluation of the large-scale proposal presented at midterm.
- 9. Deliverables:** All deliverables for pin-up reviews, midterm and final reviews, should be on plotted paper, specific format to be determined per assignment. Submittals of all assignment should be

in digital format, models to be digitally photographed, due dates as noted on the calendar, via email to instructor or posted to USC Blackboard.

Grading

Class Participation/engagement (15%) Assignments and interim project reviews (35%) Assignments and Final project review (45%) Final portfolio (5%)

III. COURSE READINGS

Reading/Reference List (partial)

Banham, Reyner, **The Architecture of Four Ecologies**, Penguin, 1971

Dobyns, Winifred, **California Gardens**, Macmillan, 1931

Eckbo, Garrett, **Landscape for Living**, Architectural Record, 1950

French, Jere, **The California Garden**, Landscape Architecture Foundation, 1993

Graham, Wade, **American Eden**, Harper, 2011

Gutierrez, Ramon and Orsi, Richard, ed., **Contested Eden**, University of California Press, 1998

Hise, Greg and Deverell, William, ed., **Eden by Design**, University of California Press, 2000

Jackson, J.B., **The Necessity of Ruins**, University of Massachusetts Press, 1980

Mann, Charles, 1491, **New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus**, Vintage, 2006

McClung, William, **Landscapes of Desire**, University of California Press, 2000

Moore, Charles, Campbell, Regula and Becker, Peter, **The City Observed- Los Angeles**, Vintage, 1984

Padilla, Victoria, **Southern California Gardens**, University of California Press, 1961

Perry, Robert, **Landscape Plants for California Gardens**, Land Design, 2010

Starr, Kevin, **California, A History**, Modern Library, 2007

Streatfield, David, **California Gardens, Creating a New Eden**, Abbeville, 1994

Trieb, Marc, ed., **Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review**, MIT, 1993

Week #1

Jan. 09 Orientation, discussion of syllabus: introduction to project #1

Jan. 11 Site visit. Work on initial impression diagrams

Jan. 13 Studio work

Week #2

Jan. 16 MLK Day. No class

Jan. 18 Studio work/ desk crit

Jan. 20 Studio work/ desk crit

Week #3

Jan. 23 Studio work/ desk crit

Jan. 25 Studio work/ desk crit

Jan. 27 Studio work/ desk crit

Week #4

Jan. 30 Pin-up assignment #1

Feb. 01 Introduction to project #2, lecture

Feb. 03 Studio work

Week #5

Feb. 06 Studio work/ desk crit

Feb. 08 Studio work/ desk crit

Feb. 10 Studio work/ desk crit

Week #6

- Feb. 13 Pin-up assignment #2
- Feb. 15 Introduction to final project, lecture.
- Feb. 17 Studio work

Week #7

- Feb. 20 Presidents' day. No class
- Feb. 22 Studio work/ desk crit
- Feb. 24 Studio work/ desk crit

Week #8

- Feb. 27 Studio work/ desk crit
- Feb. 29 Studio work/ desk crit
- Mar. 02 Studio work/ desk crit

Week #9

- Mar. 05 Studio work/ desk crit
- Mar. 07 Studio work/ desk crit
- Mar. 09 Pin-up progress on Project #3

Week #10

- Mar. 12 Spring Recess
- Mar. 14 Spring Recess
- Mar. 16 Spring Recess

Week #11

- Mar. 19 Studio work/ desk crit

Mar. 21 Studio work/ desk crit

Mar. 23 Pin-up progress on Project #3

Week #12

Mar. 26 Studio work/ desk crit

Mar. 28 Studio work/ desk crit

Mar. 30 Studio work/ desk crit

Week #13

Apr. 02 Studio work/ desk crit

Apr. 04 Studio work/ desk crit

Apr. 06 Pin-up progress

Week #14

Apr. 09 Studio work/ desk crit

Apr. 11 Studio work/ desk crit

Apr. 13 Studio work/ desk crit

Week #15

Apr. 16 Studio work/ desk crit

Apr. 18 Pin-up progress on Project #3

Apr. 20 Project Finalization

Week #16

Apr. 23 Project Finalization

Apr. 25 Project Finalization

Apr. 27 Last day of class: Final review turn-in date.

Week #17

Apr. 30 Study Days

May 02 -

May 04 -

Week #18

May 07 Blue Tape, final reviews

May 08 Blue Tape, final reviews

May 11 Commencement

VII. REHABILITATION ACT (SECTION 504) AND THE AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The University of Southern California is committed to full compliance with the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) and the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). As part of the implementation of this law, the University will continue to provide reasonable accommodation of academically qualified students with disabilities so those students can participate fully in the University's educational programs and activities. Although USC is not required by law to change the "fundamental nature of essential curricular components of its programs in order to accommodate the needs of disabled students," the University will provide reasonable academic accommodations. The specific responsibility of the University administration and all faculties serving in a teaching capacity is to ensure the University's compliance with this policy.

The general definition of a student with a disability is any person who has "a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities," and any person who has "a history of, or is regarded as having, such an impairment." Reasonable academic and physical accommodations include but are not limited to: extended time on examinations; substitution of similar or related work for a non-fundamental program requirement; time extensions on papers and projects; special testing procedures; advance notice regarding book list for visually impaired and some learning disabled students; use of academic aides in the

classroom such as note takers and sign language interpreters; early advisement and assistance with registration; accessibility for students who use wheelchairs and those with mobility impairments; and need for special classroom furniture or special equipment in the classroom.

Obtaining Accommodations Physical Accommodations

Students with physical disabilities should contact Disability Services and Programs ((DSP) prior to or during the first week of class attendance or as early in the semester as possible. The office will work with classroom scheduling, the course instructors and their departments, and the students to arrange for reasonable accommodations.

Academic Accommodations

Students seeking academic accommodations due to a physical or learning disability should make the request to the course instructor prior to or during the first week of class attendance, as well as registering with DSP as early in the semester as possible. Course instructors should require that the student present verification of documentation when academic accommodations are being requested.

For assistance in how to provide reasonable accommodations for a particular disability, course instructors are encouraged to consult with Disability Services and Programs (DSP). Students requesting academic accommodations who do not have DSP documentation should be referred to that office.

Disability Services & Programs contact (213)740-0776.

VIII. RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

The University of Southern California recognizes the diversity of our community and the potential for conflicts involving academic activities and personal religious observation. The University provides a guide to such observances for reference and suggests that any concerns about lack of attendance or inability to participate fully in the course activity be fully aired at the start of the term. As a general principle students should be excused from class for these events if properly documented and if provisions can be made to accommodate the absence and make up the lost work.

Constraints on participation that conflict with adequate participation in the course and cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the faculty and the student need to be identified prior to the drop/add date for registration.

After the drop/add date the University and the School of Architecture shall be the sole arbiter of what constitutes appropriate attendance and participation in a given course.

IX. ACCREDITATION

The Master of Landscape Architecture degree program includes three curricula. Curriculum +3 for students with no prior design education and Curriculum +2 for students admitted with advanced standing have full accreditation by the Landscape Architecture Accreditation Board. Curriculum +1.5 for students with advanced placement is a post-professional study and is not subject to accreditation. Information about landscape architecture education and accreditation in the United States may be found on-line at <http://www.asla.org/Education.aspx> .