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**Overview**

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**Architecture / Meaningful Places & Spaces**

Architecture in context is neither a cursory attention nor a radical innovation, it is a strong and eloquent visual relationship to the surrounding. Individual building is always seen first as a part of the whole.

Creating Places and Spaces that enrich the lives of the people who use them is the foundation of Architects work. Every building can and should engage in a dialog with the history, beliefs and needs of a particular place and time.

Identification of place lies as a generative core of architecture. Place is to architecture as meaning is to language. Recognition, memory, choice, sharing with others, the acquisition of significance; all these contribute to the process of architecture.

Excerpts from Analysing Architecture, Simon Unwin.

**Architecture & Urban Context**

Architecture is the physical language of city-and community-building. The city is a living organism- with a unique culture and a past called a “contextual history” and a future in which new buildings act as the threads that weave the cities living traditions into new and whole fabric. Architecture projects need to be perceived as part of implementing an urban design project which entails gathering insights into urban fabric and how people use urban spaces.

The role of a Designer is to work on many scales, thoughtfully designing public places and spaces, to build on the unique local character and the best qualities of the forms inherent in that geographic region.

Excerpts from Urban Design, UD Associates.
However reluctantly, it must be admitted that many large American cities are somewhat hostile to humanity. Due to a seeming revival of interest in the ‘quality of living’ these cities are becoming better places to live in and spend time. We continue to look towards the ‘world cities’ and their architecture for good examples, souvenir cities and buildings of royalty and gracious places – urban plazas, squares and arcades, water-fountains, glimpses of history preserved, cafes open to promenades and urban parks, visual surprises and contrived delights. Our cities should have these pedestrian urban spaces where the quality of life in a particular city clearly perceives the tangible and intangible elements – the power of anticipation and surprise, the mystery, the pull of waterfront, the excitement of arcades, the appeal of people-watching in plazas, the surfaces and objects of the city.

Excerpts from Urban Spaces, David Specter

**Architecture as Process**

Architecture is a synthetic phenomenon encompassing all fields of human activity. It is, of course, a multidimensional, comprehensive discipline, an art and a profession, and it is a state of mind. To be an imaginative and creative architect, therefore, you have to perform at many levels, some purely artistic and intellectual, others scientific – technology, structure, materials, systems – and also professional – process, ethics, business. The very nature of the art of architecture is to serve humanity, it is a utilitarian art, even in its most spiritual form.

Excerpt / Alvar Alto

Architecturally speaking, our physical environment is being increasingly designed without substantial content. The ancient notion of the unity of idea, unity of approach and unity of faith has ceased to be our premise for our thoughts and actions. The values of the truth, the good and the beautiful are ignored. Without this how can one ever create lasting quality of architecture, since architecture is neither purely a physical, a purely intellectual, nor a purely psychic phenomenon but a comprehensive manifestation of all three, capable of influencing the lives of individuals and communities. Not often in an architectural creation are all these aspects understood and translated into a design concept and the built -form conceived accordingly.

Excerpt / Balkrishna Doshi

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**Vision & Reality**

Architects continue to be the catalyst in materializing building projects and the practice of architecture continues to be a teamwork of professionals and consultants in fields ranging from planning, urban design, landscape architecture, engineering, building science, financing, law, real estate developers. Today, the profession is very diversified and includes architectural services that are comprehensive and that expand beyond the traditional services offered by architects. These include services such as multi disciplinary teamwork, collaborative developments, turn-key projects, partnership, venturing and design-build.

The National Council of Architectural Registration Board (NCARB) has endorsed the concept of integrating **Design and Practice as Comprehensive Architectural Service** and has recommended that design projects in a an academic studio address not only the traditional content of formal, theoretic and technical concerns but also address issues, with more detail, in areas such as Practice, Design Development, Materials & Building Process, Construction Technology, Sustainability, and other related aspects in the building industry.

This Studio views architectural design as a form of creative and comprehensive investigation demonstrated through a rigorous process and production of architectural graphic documentation - informed by contextual, formal, cultural, theoretical, technological, practical and historical issues and is heavily underscored by the various phases of architectural process. This pedagogical approach is the thrust of this studio.

The studio also addresses the needs of the profession by acknowledging the dual role of architects as ‘designers’ and ‘professional practitioners’ involved in creation and execution of buildings in various settings. It recognizes that in reality there is really no separation of these two activities and they are integrated at all times.
Design Process - Self-disciplined and rigorous approach that encompasses a wide spectrum of creative activities emphasizing architectural design.

Comprehensive Design, - Scope and Scale of projects varies depending upon the complexity; buildings with any typology preferably in an urban context, urban design projects that involve a small section of the city; to include planning and urban design study, site-feasibility study, programming, synthesis, design schematics and development, material and construction technology.

Collaboration – A Collaborative Team Approach; with planners, urban designers, landscape architects, structural engineers, building science experts, contractors, developers, etc. as necessary.

Integration of knowledge and critical thinking that has been acquired cumulatively over previous four years in subjects such as practice, building science structures, etc. into a holistic design process.

Intern Program: Students who have prior experience in an architect's office or have participated in the S.F. Urban program are encouraged to select a topic they are already familiar with.

Off Campus Programs: Students studying abroad may select a project in their host country with a unique cultural/historic context and bring their insight and academic experience to this studio.

Thesis study, conducted as a seminar + activity, will be the background and the foundation of design project. A study of ideological, theoretical and technical basis will be used to formulate design-precepts and will include an expanded narrative on the topic and the subject matter. It will result in a formal presentation with a thesis book supported with graphics, models and other digital media as necessary.

Investigation and analysis of the project topic, background information, analysis of the city, urban setting, site study and program.

Analysis and Exploration of various design concepts, and alternatives indicating relationships between architectural form and program, site, context, and environment. Various applicable case studies of the similar building typology also will be investigated.

The design process will be documented with sketches, drawings, parti / concept models and will be organized for presentation at the end of the quarter.

Synthesize selected, applicable concepts into a preliminary design – schemes, alternates, etc. - - that will demonstrate the Architectural Form & Meaning and its relationship to context, site, program, environment, technology, structure, light, acoustics, legal constraints, energy conservation, materials, and other issues relevant to the proposed building. Also Preliminary study of the construction technology may be undertaken.

The preliminary design and schematic design development will be supported with drawings, various study models and will be completed for presentation.
Spring Integration / Form Development
Tectonics & Graphic Communication

This quarter students will continue to refine the - building envelope - in detail and look closely into critical aspects such as systems integration, materials and technology and building assembly. Also an exploration of a specific program-area w.r.t. topics such as material, lighting, acoustics, structure, interior design, systems, etc. is required. Students are encouraged to study building technology & construction related topics such as scheduling, preliminary specification and cost estimates. Also, students will put together their final graphic documents resulting in a presentation that will consist of a revised thesis book, design-book, presentation drawings, models, perspectives, 3D modeling and animation and other pertinent media graphics. The exhibition of the design work and the entire process will take place at the end of the year. The organized process documentation and presentation will demonstrates how ideological and aesthetic concepts have evolved into a refined design solution.

5 Procedure

Selection of Topic

Prior to the beginning of Fall quarter, students enrolled in this studio are required to have selection made for the thesis topic and the project, building typology, location, possible site alternatives, and a possible client and have it approved by the studio instructor. Please, contact the instructor to discuss proposals, approval of the project or if you have any questions during Spring quarter.

Bibliography, recommended reading list and other resources should be determined by each student prior to the beginning of the project.

Students will be required to conduct field trips to the project sites, project- consultants, mentor architects and to various case-study projects as necessary throughout the year.

6 Preplanning

Students who are further along in their preplanning during Summer will find themselves much better off in starting the thesis and project in Fall. Therefore, students are recommended to conduct significant preparation for the design-project and thesis during the Summer.

> Collect and review background information for the city, site and vicinity where the project is located. Information such as the following will be valuable - various scale city maps from the city planning offices, aerial photograph of the area, drawings of the surrounding buildings, digital photos, planning reports.

> Compile bibliography and review pertinent books, or magazines for support information.

> Visit and document the site and the context and visit projects of similar type, collect information on case studies that are relevant to the selected topic.

> Consult the client and seek out a practicing architect as a consultants who is willing to assist you throughout the year with the project during its development.

7 Expectations

Most graduating students enter architectural firms as interns and have plans to become Professional Architects. Therefore, it is assumed that students will possess the necessary qualities that exhibit willingness to take on professional responsibilities, express initiative, have self motivation, professional standard and are willing to work towards better solutions.

With this in mind, this studio is organized to provide a stimulating place - a place with creative environment, a nurturing place for exploration, a place with friendly atmosphere and high energy - where one can self-direct his or her work and carry it to excellence.