INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.
The aberration of the inappropriate: Inhabiting Police Headquarters, Houston, Texas

Carpenter, Mary Heath, M.Arch.

Rice University, 1991
RICE UNIVERSITY

THE ABERRATION OF THE INAPPROPRIATE:
INHABITING POLICE HEADQUARTERS, HOUSTON TEXAS

by
MARY HEATH CARPENTER

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

APPROVED, THESIS COMMITTEE

Alan Balfour, Dean, School of Architecture
Director

William Sherman, Assistant Professor of Architecture

Elyzabeth Yates-Burns Mckee, Assistant Professor of Architecture

Houston, Texas
April, 1991
The Aberration of the Inappropriate:
Inhabiting Police Headquarters, Houston Texas
Mary Heath Carpenter

Abstract

This thesis was based on the belief that architecture can comment on social and institutional structures. As a vehicle for this investigation, an event was chosen which informed the making of the architecture. The event was the death of a woman at the hands of off-duty Policemen. The proposed structure makes a mark on Police Headquarters in downtown Houston and provides a space for the community and the police to interact. The project explored architecture as a metaphor of society and this institution specifically, using such words as stable, static, heavy and opaque to define both the image of the institution, and the appearance of the headquarters building. To affect this building, such words as fragmented, light, unstable and warped were used to develop the architecture of the additions. The additions, as aberrations, use the true structure of the building to reveal the inappropriateness of the image of Police Headquarters.
Table of Contents

I. Introduction 1

II. The New Space of Architecture - The City of Houston 5
   The Language of the New City
   Houston as the New City
   The Literature of the New City
   The Space of the New City

III. Architecture as Social Critique 16
   The Work of Gordon Matta-Clark

IV. Breaking the Rules 20
   The Paintings of Ida Applebroog

V. The Site(s) 24
   The Path
   The Place

VI. The Program 28

VII. The Process 29

Bibliography 36

Source Illustrations 38

Thesis Presentation 46

VIII. Conclusion 72
I. Introduction

What characterizes Hellenistic skepticism, according to David Sedley in his article, The Motivation of Greek Skepticism, is the "...conviction that to suspend assent and to resign oneself to ignorance is not a bleak expedient, but, on the contrary, a highly desirable intellectual activity." *Epoché*, suspension of assent, was first championed by Arcesilaus in the second century B.C. who believed that the true wise man held no opinions and that this was not only possible, but essential for the wise man to be wise. Epoché then in fact is a suspension of all belief. What could this possibly mean to architecture?

I am skeptical of architecture in the 1990's. I wonder what sort of significant effect architects can have in a country where only 20% of all buildings constructed are designed by architects. To me there has developed an incredible gulf between architecture (as an intellectual endeavor) and the rest/the leftover of most American cities and I think that the future of the profession (a future of a contribution to the built environment) depends on some sort of resolve between building and...
architecture. The development of this gulf is coincidental with the development of a Modern ideology (significantly influenced by the philosophies of Kant and Hegel) where the artist became the hero-man (female excluded) whose purpose it was to help the world progress on to the ultimate culmination of History. The position of the artist was such that his works became separated from the environment around him (as the artist thought himself to be) and therefore precious as objects. Although this object-worship was not as pronounced in architecture as it was in art, the hero-man image permeated the architecture world. Throughout the 20th century, artists and writers have sought to oppose the modernist ideology and to make art speak to [the tragedy of] reality and what it means to be human living in the world within the modern city, rather than to proclaim a glorious future in a fictitious Eden.

It seems to me that the Modernist ideology of architecture has never truly been opposed. In 1990 we are still confronted with hero-men who seek to build their own fictitious Eden in which the meaning it is imbued with is their own meaning proposing to speak for a collective. I question whether an architecture of a collective meaning (as
defined in the past) is even possible today. Our new American Cities were built essentially without architects (the in between dominates) - by people unconcerned with the cosmic/existential meaning of that which they created (whether it was 'the sell,' comfort, security etc.). What can we learn from these places that mean so many different things (and nothing at the same time) and how can a designed architecture capture the qualities of these leftover things?

Our cities, (specifically Houston for my purposes) in their fragmentation and separateness are now filled with a personal meaning - each person on his own path through the city forms a memory and an understanding of the city that is his own, that no one else shares. The language of architecture within our cities has become indecipherable. We now have the city of metonomy vs. the past city of metaphor where things simply stand for something - they do not allude to a higher state. Is it possible to create an architecture that does not allude to a higher state (that does not aspire to having an aura as defined by Walter Benjamin) but which is about the state of living? It would contain and display fear/rage/joy/despair/lust/death/injustice etc. - all those parts of human life which have been hidden.

This architecture may contain and display these aspects of life by not containing anything - it can mean anything and everything (or nothing) that is applied to it.
by the protective cover of the forms of our public institutions and embodied in the architecture we have made. Those protective covers of order, reason, and allusion no longer protect us anymore - everything may not be alright!

If the initial concern of Postmodern criticism is to "de-naturalize some of the dominant features of our way of life" according to Linda Hutcheon, what does a postmodernist culture (as we live in today) mean for architecture? In the past and in the present, architecture has portrayed and upheld those 'dominant features'. Architecture is for and about the moneyed and powerful in our society. What if architecture was freed from its reliance on the dominant features to reflect the forgotten part of our society. Does this mean that architecture, like current art, becomes political in itself to reflect the views/concerns of that forgotten part; or does it mean that architects concern themselves with programs pertinent to that sector of society?

The freedom of language in architecture now allows architecture an opportunity to perform social criticism. In the past, architecture was trapped in a particular view of itself and of the world. Today, if it is unreadable or has a multiplicity of readings,
hidden within the many readings could be one of critique/protest - something it has never been able to portray because its obvious meaning was dominant.

Through a discussion of the urban form of Houston Texas, the writings of James Joyce and Thomas Pynchon concerning the city, and an analysis of the work of Gordon Matta-Clark and Ida Applebroog, this thesis will argue how architecture might comment on the social and institutional structures of our society.

The site for the investigation is the Police Headquarters building in Houston Texas. I propose an addition of a space for the interaction of the community and the police force. To arrive at the formal language for such a space, I constructed and narrated a single persons path through the city in one day - from the south side up on to the freeway and through the city where the path ended in the death of this person.

II. The New Space of Architecture - The City of Houston

The Language of the New City
There has developed in the 20th century, a new city. The American city is no longer the 'closed container', as described by Lewis Mumford, that through its built form (i.e. institutions) represented the common beliefs of its citizens. The common beliefs were those put forth by Plato in the quest of absolute truth through the aspiration of an ideal, by Augustine through his 'City of God', and by the philosophers of the Enlightenment who believed in truth through reason. These truths were defined by a political (often economic) power structure of the city through its institutions, and were unquestioned - the institutions stood for what was best for its citizens. The 'truth' lay in the stability of a controlling order - whoever is in control is adverse to change. Formally, this city was structured to allow the clearest reading of the existence/location of public institutions and monuments. There was a very clear hierarchy between the civic structures and the private structures - the fabric of the city. The language of architecture was extremely legible to all who inhabited it. As a discipline, architecture reinforced this language, and therefore, helped to promote the stability of the systems of the city.

The new city portrays something very different from what the great philosophers of reason

"The ability to transmit in symbolic form and human patterns a representative portion of a culture is the great mark of a city..." Mumford p.93.

"God is the source of the Good only...the state of God and the Divine is perfect; and therefore God is least liable of all things to be changed into other forms...God is as good as possible and remains in his own form without variation forever." Plato as quoted in Kearney, p.98.

Washington D.C. as a product of the Enlightenment, is a good example of such a city.

George Bataille presents an extreme view of this relationship between architecture and the power structure.
intended it to portray. There is no longer a singular idea governing the form of the city that a language of hierarchy supports. Our cites now are formed by fragments that do not relate to each other in form or content, nor do they tell us what they are. This fragmentation was caused by the technological advances in communication and transportation that now allow city dwellers (and earth dwellers) to interact without proximity. There is no longer need for central places for physical interaction. There is no longer a cohesive form or containing structure which tie the city of fragments together; these bits are now tied together by telephone/telefax lines, highways, mail service, messengers etc; all predominantly modes of communicating verbal language - our one remaining commonality. Between the discrete parts of the city - shopping malls, office parks, residential enclaves (the majority of which were developed by private interests) - is an other kind of space. This is the in between spaces of repetition indistinguishability, and to many it is completely forgettable. This space constitutes the major area of the new city. The city has been developed by the private realm, each sector dealing with its own concerns on its own piece of ground. There is no concept of a larger
public interest where the construction of private enterprise is concerned.

Because there is no longer a singular shared attitude towards city making [as dictated by the political/civic institutions], the language of the city has become unreadable. We no longer know what a public institution should look like because its form, as used in the past, has been coopted by so many other uses - sacred, commercial, residential etc. In the past, the form of the public realm, which defined the city was represented in the facade or in the object, or in the defined space - all describe a position in space, a place. The new city must be read along the path, through one's motion through the city. It is a cycle with no beginning or ending. It has a rhythm that must be experienced to be understood. The discrete elements do not define the city, but the rhythm of these pieces and of the parts in between them all weave together to produce a pattern. The pattern however is not only made up of the physical form of the city, it is as well the addition of the reader onto the city - the personal interpretations, experiences, emotions and desires that we place on/into the city create a perception of the city which starts to represent it - not the built form alone. It is, in a sense, a personal narrative

Perfecto Cleaners

"...Rome presents one with a continual conflict between the functional necessities of modern life and the semantic charge that comes from its history."
Barthes p.155

"you had a vision of the street
As the street hardly understands."
Eliot, "Preludes"

Particularly applicable is the picture post card scene of Houston which does not come close to the representation of Houston.
which defines the city. The lack of information in the forms leaves the interpretation open to the individual - held within the city are my hopes, my fears, my desires and yours. The emotions of the city are not covered up by the face of complete legibility - all is displayed through the multitude of readings; all memories are allowed to dwell there.

Houston as the New City

Houston Texas is this new city. The village on the banks of Buffalo Bayou was founded in 1836 but it did not fully develop as a city until the 20th century, allowing it to escape from any past idea about city making - it was developed purely on an idea of economics. In 1836, the Alan Brothers of New York City placed an advertisement in all the major papers of America and Europe in order to promote enterprise and investment in new town in Texas that they were developing. There is a tradition of city-founding in the western world that dictates the placement of a town. Primary concerns being accessibility, beauty of site, abundance of building materials and healthy climate. The site of Houston had none of these attributes. The Alan Brothers developed the town out of a swamp solely as a business venture, hoping to induce shipping up the branch-choaked bayou. The organizational form

"There is no place in Texas more healthy, having an abundance of excellent spring water, and enjoying the sea breeze in all its freshness...Nature appears to have designated this place for future seat of government. It is handsome and beautifully elevated, salubrious and well watered..." Advertisement for Houston 1836.
of Houston was also dictated by economics: the first grid was laid in relationship to access to the Bayou (soon, through feats of the Army Corps of Engineers, to become a coastal port), and the width of Main street was determined by the measure of a cattle drive. As Houston continued to be developed the atmosphere of economic speculation continued to allow any form of building or planning in order to promote growth. There was never (nor is there now) any cohesive planning or zoning restrictions.

The results of this laissez faire attitude towards planning are incredible juxtapositions between extremely disparate elements (disparate in that they are not found together in the traditional city). These elements are programmatic - a used car dealership in the front yard of a single family brick house - and as well, formal - my two story wood-framed house sits in the shadows of the downtown towers the columns of the highway meet the ground in the yard of a garage apartment. There is as well a unique relationship between global order and local order. Within, breaking on to the outside of, a rigidly structured form is another notion of space making that responds to the movements of the bodies inside the space. A gable form is distorted by the new structure to allow for a body
to stand upright. A window splits the division between wall and roof to allow light onto a child's bed. These multiple orders, and strange juxtapositions create an incredible thinness of urban form. Economics as well dictated an economic idea of urbanism. The street edge is now held by the smallest, slightest structures - wires, fences, sign posts, mail boxes, bushes etc. There exists a reflexive space between the implied street edge, and the built edge which is relatively hard. In 'good urban form', the street edge is always a hard built edge - denying this space.

In contrast to this soft, undulating urban edges are tightly defined areas of strong order. The absolute opposite of the rest of Houston, these areas define a strict precinct that 'undesirables', people and architecture are not allowed to enter. The office towers of private corporate headquarters and the tunnels below them which were financed by the towers, are such structures where nothing from the street can enter or is allowed to attach to the outside - the building walls and side walks are sandblasted to remove the signs of age/existence. The walled residential neighborhoods define a very strict notion of dwelling. The streets are wide, extremely clean and free of pedestrians. The houses
sit far back from the road and look remarkably similar despite their varying styles. In River Oaks, yard sales may not take place. In suburban developments such as the Woodlands there are street signs dictating "Deed restrictions strictly enforced." Enclosed malls are accessible only from the parking garages and once inside, the homogeneity of the space would quickly erase the word erotic from Roland Barthe's definition of the experience of shopping. As a result of these increasing desires to keep the uncontrolled city at bay, zoning is now proposed for the city of Houston. It is ironic that the 'fore fathers' of those that propose zoning determined the existing form of Houston. Lack of zoning and planning allows profitable construction and development, but those who benefit from it most don't want to live there. Public institutions occur within the shadows of these private places: City Hall architecturally is an imposing structure but its size relative to the skyscrapers of downtown, make it seem powerless. Libraries and post offices sit within the field of the rest of Houston with no particular 'markings' to define them as public.

What resulted from the initiating ideas of built form in Houston was not designed by architects [who
went on to house the power structure in office
towers] but piecemeal by those who came to inhabit
the city from elsewhere - the country, Mexico etc.
For the most part, Houston (and therefore the new
American city) has been shunned by the
establishment of architecture or only discussed in
terms of how to repair, reconstruct or construct the
'good city' despite it. The discussion/portrayal of
the new city, therefore is not found in architecture
books but in other disciplines. Writers and artists
have been examining the new city for over a
century so it is there that we must turn to continue
our discussion of the city and to continue to explore
Houston. The necessity to turn to other disciplines
to discuss the city also refers to the discussion
above of the loss of common language - instead of a
language of building to describe the city, we must
turn to verbal and figural language.

The Literature of the New City
The 'Wandering Rocks' chapter of James Joyce's
_Ulysses_ of 1922 describes a city in which
meaningless images appear again and again in
different time and space joining the narrative of the
city together (literally like the telephone). A
"generous white arm" throws a coin from windows
throughout the city; The "clinging twig" is detached
from several "light Skirts"; "stickumbrelladustcoat" dangles throughout the city. The incidents describe a rhythm of repeating images that start to define a whole. The living sign "H.E.L.Y.'S." is a literal representation of the language of the city. The letters move throughout the city - appearing at near O'Connell bridge, at Monypeny's corner and at Ponsonby's corner all in the course of what appear to be moments in the narrative. The sign at times is unreadable, the 'Y' lagging behind, the 'H' turning a corner first. One must pass by the sandwhichmen, or have them pass by you in order to get the complete reading - through movement. The individual piece says nothing. Thomas Pynchon's \textit{The Crying of Lot 49} of 196 as well describes the city as a repetition of unreadable symbols that are defined by each individual: Oedipa describes the city she looks down on as a circuit - its appearance has nothing to do with the information it gives out. In both books, it is the language itself which best represents the new city. The narrative of Ulysses flows goes back and forth between the events of the day at hand and the spaces being experienced and the memories and emotions which inhabit the mind as the day progresses. As in the city, these occurrences take place on the same page and in the same sentence - this is the real perception of the

"He crossed Westmoreland street
when apostrophe S had plodded by. Rover cycleshop. Those races are on today. How long ago is that? Year Phil Gilligan died. We were in Lombard street west. Wait: was in Thom's. Got job in Wisdom Hely's year we married. Six years. Ten years ago:ninetyfour he died yes that's right the big fire at Arnot's." Joyce p. 127
new city - all these things overlap to define it, it is a mosaic of built form, experience, emotion and memory.

The Space of the New City

The modern city has finally allowed this overlapping of the unconscious and space to take place. The artists and writers of the surrealist movement desired this perception of space that they felt was not adequately represented by architecture. Tours were conducted to the unknown spaces of Paris in order to 'put in unison the unconscious city with the unconscious of men. The modern city promotes this richness of reading, as discussed above, because of the neutrality of language but as well because of a new space created by the city. It is the space of the path along the street that undulates and modulates itself. The space is supple, pliable, undulating space that is receptive not hard. The space along the street created between the street edge and the built edge has the possibility of being inhabited - by the mind and the body - there is space, not a hard facade which perceptions and emotions bounce off of. It is this new space of the city that is continuous and fragmented at the same time, defined by a variety of edges - formally as well as programmatically,
and makes the leftover space of no intended reading or use. The space is defined by the discrete pieces of the city and the forms of the in between - signs, fences, garages, gas pumps, drive-throughs etc. - which constitute a heterogeneous fabric. If the objects of the built form are neutral, the eye moves to the space in front of it and places within it a personal memory or emotion. In such a way, the spaces of the city create a personal narrative, but not of traditional format of beginning, middle and end, but a continuous narrative of daily experience, specific memories, and as well specific occurrences that modulate (stop start) the narrative - tragic events etc. Each persons life can be contained within the city. In this way, the city does speak to a collective.

III. Architecture as Social Critique

Today, because of the neutrality of language of the new city, and the space that it has created, architecture has a stronger potential to critique the political and social systems that exist. Architects of the past (most notably modernists) attempted to use architecture as a critique of society but the pleasure of fur-lined walls and the pain of a corner hit in the dark; the echo of a hall - space is not simply the three dimensional projection of a mental representation, but it is something that is heard, and is acted upon. And it is the eye that frames - the window, the door, the vanishing ritual of passage...Spaces of movement - corridors, staircases, ramps, passages, thresholds; here begins the articulation between the space of the senses and the space of society, the dances and gestures that combine the representation of space and its representation. Bodies not only move in, but generate spaces produced by and through their movements. Movements - of dance, sport, war - are the intrusion of events into architectural spaces." Tschumi, Artforum article.

The most descriptive word for describing the new city is 'erotic'. Georges Bataille used this word as early as 1936 and many (Roland Barthes for one) use it now.
methodology was very different than the possibilities allowable today. The manifestos of criticism and proposals of the modernist movement (1910 - 1940) were explicit in their view of architecture as the 'custodian' of civilization and the source of all progress. The architecture itself was explicit in its use of technology as a panacea for the ills of society, and functionalism and formalism as a criticism of the iconography and decoration of the past. Immediately readable in the stripped down rationalism of the forms and the restructuring of the city is the manifesto they proposed - a rational, clean and good future - the reading was not subtle.

It soon became apparent that the vision of the modernists could not be realized, that architecture alone does not have the power to change the world. The modernists' vision was a heroic vision that postured the ability of one man (the architect) to inform the will of many. The vision of a "polite and well-ordered society" seemed ridiculous in the face of a disordered world in which industrialization was more a source of oppression than liberation (factories, sweatshops etc.).

In the late 20th century, some continue to view architecture as a vehicle for criticism of society - not necessarily a solution - but it was through the
the discipline of architecture that these criticisms were carried out, not through a restructuring of society as fulfilled by architecture itself. This new methodology emphasizes the belief that architecture represents the controlling forces in society. Robert Venturi in 1966 attacked architecture in his "gentle manifesto" for letting the world pass it by - architecture was not responding to conditions of the modern city and the lives that inhabit it. In *Learning from Las Vegas* of 1977, Venturi proposed that architects look to the landscape that was built without them in order to find an architecture to respond to the needs of those who would inhabit it.

The Work of Gordon Matta-Clark
Gordon Matta-Clark was more verbally explicit than Venturi in his criticism of society, but like Venturi, the work (1960's and 1970's) itself did not contain the explicit language of criticism or protest - it was quietly subversive and the intended meaning was not necessarily readable to all. Matta-Clark used a chain saw to cut holes into and through abandoned buildings. By cutting these voids, he sought to display the unknown and the underside of what actually

"...in an inclusive rather than an exclusive kind of architecture there is room for the fragment, for the contradiction, for the improvisation, and for the tensions these produce." *Complexity and Contradiction*, p.17

"Probably the reason for going to abandoned buildings in the first place was some kind of deep-rooted preoccupation with that condition, maybe not so much because I think I can do anything about it, but because of its predominance in the 'urbanscape'. At some point you have to leave the 'accepted environment to do certain things...'" Matta-Clark, p.108
which to place his art as a way of altering those edges and proclaiming there existence. The cuttings commented on the imprisonment, abandonment and isolation of the working class and sought to disrupt and disfigure the systems that contribute to and cover up these aspects of modern life. His works threatened preconceived notions of the systems of society, as well as preconceived notions of space; he confronted society through his confrontation of architecture Gordon Matta-Clark's works were dangerous - conceptually and literally. He [and the viewer] walked through the structures on the edge of collapse. The notion of the tragedy of modern life was always present resulting from the cuttings and inherent in the cuttings themselves.

The cuttings were additive and subtractive in the sense that they added entrances and unknown vistas to the buildings, and subtractive in that they resulted in voids which exposed the structure that had been covered up. Matta-Clark called the volumes that he cut into the buildings 'dynamic volumes' because they were always changing from one vantage point to the next - they could never be perceived as a whole. The volumes he cut were figures - circles, spheres, cones, cubes, but as they entered the building, they dissolved into the

"The reason for the void is so that the ingredients can be seen in a moving way-in a dynamic way. You have to see them by moving through them; they imply a kind of kinetic, internal dynamism of some sort." Matta-Clark, p.104.
ground of the structure always disrupting the existing context. These voids created continuous spaces that deny measure and open up views to a new perception of what actually exists. Most of the cuttings were developed along a narrative - at the lowest level the work begins as localized cuttings, in the center of the building, views through the building connect previously unconnected parts, and at the roof views to the city beyond describe patterns and give perceptions before unseen. Matta-Clark's work criticized society by using the devices of the modern city - fragmentation, continuous space, rough edges etc. The language of Matta-Clark's work is unknown in architectural history but it is the language of the modern city - narrative, continuous space, rough edges, fragmentation, perception etc.; all of which combine to create a subversive statement. He tried to provoke a different reading of the existing through exposing reality - a reality of tragedy that has always been there. To see what is really there even though you don't want to.

IV. Breaking the Rules

"You read through the negative spaces to the edges of the building...the edge is what I work through, try to preserve, spend this energy to complete...the difference between my kind of edges and a lot of other people's edges is the majority of edges are finished, manicured, this is a raw edge which people seem to find different in some way." Matta-Clark, p.103.
Implicit within the idea of a structured society is the possibility of breaking the rules of that society - the stronger the structure, the greater the possibility. Foucault defines the body politic as "a set of material elements and techniques that serve as weapons, relays, communication routes and 'supports' for the power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them into objects of knowledge." (Foucault p.28). Today, there is an even stronger inclination to subjugate people into objects of knowledge. Statistics and polls have placed every American into one group or another - there is no column for 'deviants'. This notion of a controlling 'body politic' as well implies the punishment of those that seek to oppose the systems. Foucault describes those subjected to punishment as marked by a lack of power - they are the "inverted figure of the king" (Foucault p.24). If structure implies stability and control, the inversion to this is movement and instability. The word 'hysteria' comes from the Greek word meaning uterus. Plato in "Timeaus" describes the problems incurred by woman who do not bear children. The 'wandering womb' was the explanation by Plato and by physicians and writers up into the 19th century for women's hysteria. The womb was thought to wander throughout the body

"Whence in the male the privy member is mutinous and self-willed, like a beast deaf to the voice of discourse, and fain to carry all before it in frenzied passion, while in women, for the same reason, the so-called matrix or womb, a living creature within them passioning for procreation, if left long unfructified beyond the proper season, chafes furiously, straying about the body, occcluding the conduits of breath and inflicting extreme distress by impeding respiration, besides causing manifold other disorders;" Plato, p.99
causing physical problems and hysteria. Motion was
the act of the culprit (to release itself from its
position) the womb [read woman] should stay put
and be the receptacle of a child. Miriam, the sister
of Moses frees the Israelites from the oppression of
the pharaoh, she does so through movement: it is
her body which creates the division in the Red Sea
not the word of Moses. It is the notion of freeing
oneself from the structures of control that I am
interested and it is through the dynamic spaces of
the city that this will be explored.

The Work of Ida Applebroog
The painter Ida Applebroog explores the notion of
stepping outside of the norms of socially acceptable
behavior and the power that is used to curtail that
action. She exposes the violations to the human
spirit by a culture that is dominated by
materialism, deception and self-deception. In most
cases, her victims are female or children - to her,
the most vulnerable in a society dominated by male
power. In her work, this idea inhabits a very
particular kind of space. She uses the historical
device of the predella (which told of the life of the
saint portrayed in the central image through
narrative episodes) but not in an historical sense.
The predellas - which often configure a post and

From an article on the
forthcoming book by Janet
Beizer: Ventriloquizing the
Body: The Narrative Uses of
Hysteria in Franc. 1850 -
1900.

Nina Hoffer discussed
Miriam's path through the Red
Sea at a lecture she gave at the
University of Florida in 1988.
lintel composition - do not necessarily refer to the main image but instead create a contradiction or tension to the work: in *Chronic Hollow* (1987) a grandmother sits on a chair with a shotgun across her lap; a girl and boy (boy in front) hold the American flag. Often times, the predella sections represent the controlling systems that seem to observe the central figure. This reading of the predella structure is not a consistent one in her work: the oppressed and the oppressor occupy the same spatial configurations in different paintings, denying a consistent structure. Usually the predella is a repeating image such as in cartoons and film format. The only break in the repetition comes in words which often times confuse or direct the message of the image. In *Boboli Gardens* of 1987, a man and a woman sit on a bench looking very pleasantly towards the viewer. At the bottom of the third segment are the words "You dumb bitch". It is the contradiction between language and image that Applebroog explores.

The space created by the combinations of the predellas and the main canvas is overlapping/singular, contained/infinite, shallow/deep, opaque/transparent. In *Noble Fields* of 1987 the space sets up a background for the
'portrait' section as in traditional painting, but this background becomes transparent to allow figures to emerge out of it. In the central section, the child eats water melon in the foreground while the space recedes behind him into a wasteland of middleground while the background remains the same. The diversity of spaces she creates in this painting (as in most of her paintings) is the space of the narrative but a peculiar flow of narrative: it shifts in time and space between different episodes - not necessarily of one persons life. Do these people have any connection at all? No one story is told but many parts of lives are displayed that either add up to something or don't. In Noble Fields the predellas around the main panels do not necessarily apply to either person - a man rolls on the ground (is he laughing or dying?), a woman checks her watch, can can girls dance, a woman eats spaghetti etc. Do these figure into the life of the child eating watermelon or the life of the masked woman who stairs back at the viewer? This woman is Applebroog's most explicit transmitter of criticism. The monster/woman returns the traditional male gaze such that he will never want to look again. She is trapped within the portrait format of the painting (society which emphasizes feminine beauty) and reacts the only way she will be heard - image.
Clearly this painting is political but its meaning is embedded - in a surround of pleasant images that could mean many different things, in the traditional painting format and the language of painting - flat surfaces, rich layered surfaces etc. Through this notion of a subversive message embedded within a standard format, (so powerful in the work of Ida Applebroog) I hope to explore the possibilities for architecture the new city.

IV. The Site(s)

For this exploration I have chosen two sites: one is a path - it contains the site of a murder and follows the victim through the city; the other is a place - it is the site of Police Headquarters in downtown Houston.

The Path
The journey begins south of the 610 loop down Almeda road in a suburban development of the 1950's. The house is a split level ranch house with a front stoop and side driveway. All the houses within this development fit this description, the only diversity being the state they are in. Most are in very good shape while others suffer from neglect,
showing signs in the accumulation of debris in the front yard. The streets are extra wide and are articulated by a curb and a side walk 12 feet off the curb. There are no street signs or few fences at the street edge and the power lines run behind the house; there are quite a few trees here. The streets are organized in an elongated grid (longitudinally). The group of houses that make up the variously named developments (distinguishable by name only - Townwood, Meridith Village etc) sit a full block off the main road that organizes this area of town. An undeveloped strip of land is left on both sides of the divided road. Every so often a church, gas station or store sits within these uninhabited strips facing the non-pedestrian road. [What a sad place] This main road has power lines running down the middle of it bringing electricity for the city which has just left a huge generating station very close by. The road runs out to Almeda where a turn to the north puts the Houston skyline in full view. Almeda is a strange road - where in the hell are you? If not for the skyline, you would be out in the country in the middle of nowhere. The road and the train tracks running along side the road give you a sense of purpose. You pass cattle barns and oil refineries before leaving Almeda onto Old Spanish Trail. This is a very similar landscape accept for the vestiges of Monday am to Tuesday am - Halloween 1989

She left her house on Heatherbrook at 5:30 in the afternoon. She had gotten off work at the Post building and had to stop by the church before heading down to her boyfriend's house in Clearlake. It was the day before Halloween and the streets were empty. There were two pumpkins on the porch of a house next to hers but other than that, there was no way of knowing what month it was. The sun of Houston has a strange way of replicating its effect on the city from season to season. She drove out the wide street lined with small houses not completely unlike her own, not in a dissimilar condition: yards were strewn with the garbage that a dog had got into, porch overhangs sagged towards the ground, household machines in the process of rebuilding sat in driveways. There were a lot of cars parked out front of the one story Health and Human Services building on the corner of Orem Drive, as usual. They continued to go there day after day, year after year. Across the 4 lane divided drive that was Orem, was nothing. The houses over there, not unlike her own, could not be seen from the road - only flat empty fields and electrical towers. The railroad runs parallel to Almeda road all the way to the loop. The skyline of downtown Houston sits at the convergence of the two lines
the road's past as a motel strip. The 'Alamo' is one of the few left with its white stucco walls and turquoise shutters and its sign that indicates an hour lodging is $10. Past Mcgregor Park is the Gulf freeway (145). Up on the the freeway the landscape changes. The Houston skyline is in the distance but signs, not scrubby trees, become the dominant element. Tops of buildings visible over the guardrail indicate that ground exists below. Towards the skyline the highway lowers to the ground as if to pass into the city but it only turns to meet the Southwest freeway (59). The freeway moves up and down under and over other highways as it bypasses the city. Moving west the traffic gets faster as it passes the Summit and Greenway plaza on the right. It continues to glide over and then touch down on the ground. The 610 Loop looms in the distance. At this point it looks as if you are unable to proceed. The loop appears as a wall with more of the same on the other side.

The Place
The Police Headquarters for the city of Houston Texas sits across the Bayou, under Memorial Drive and under I45 from the rest of downtown and City Hall. It is next to the Municipal Court building. This sitting creates triangle describing a rule of law - City on the horizon and it appears that they would take you right into the lobby of one of those buildings. The parralel lines are surrounded by scrub, the occasional mini shopping center, small singular houses and industrial developments. At Holmes road is a horse stable. she drove down Almeda as the skyline increased.

He left his house at 5:45 pm. He used his security card to open the door of the gate of the entrance to his condominium complex and drove out onto the wide white road. The complex was one of many built in the mid 1980's by the Seba Coorporation, and although each was built in a different traditional architectural style, they looked pretty much the same sitting out in the middle of open land next to the 610 loop. He drove down Almeda road as the scenery changed from isolated condominum settlements and industrial plants to small commercial buildings and houses that sit up almost close to the road and finally turning on to Main and in to downtown where the buildings, where they occur, grow directly out of the grid up into the sky. He drove the city hall complex and under Memorial Drive to reach Police Headquaters. He had to drop off some reports before heading on the his substation in Magnolia, and on to the birthday party for a fellow officer.

She drove down the gulf freeway at 5 o'clock in the morning. It was dark out and no shadows interrupted the
Hall is downtown across the barriers I have mentioned, where the laws are made, the Municipal Court where the laws are interpreted, and the Police station where the laws are enforced. The Police station complex sits in its own order however (the triangle is a fictitious line drawn above the ground). It responds to neither the grid of downtown, nor the grid of the neighborhood it occupies, nor the bayou which runs in front of it. In plan and three dimensional scale as well, the building has no relationship to the houses adjacent to it but rather to the office blocks across the way. The complex is extremely inaccessible by foot or by car from downtown. The radio tower of the building can be seen from a distance. The building appears as a load bearing building. It is a composition of rectangular blocks of heavy limestone. It appears heavy, stable, static, fixed, opaque and bounded. The front facade is dominated by the tower which has a pattern of openings which relate to the mass of the tower. The actual openings which correspond to the spaces of the tower is behind the limestone.

Upon entering the building, one is confronted with a 8' long by 4' high steel desk behind which sit two Police officers to greet you. You must check in with the officers before proceeding. The tower holds all black surface of the asphalt pavement. She was in her boyfriends pickup truck - her car had given her some trouble and her boyfriend was going to look at it today. She liked how high up she was above the pavement in the truck cab. She swerved out of the right hand lane - it had turned into an 'Exit Only' lane without her noticing and she did not want to exit at Telephone road. Right lanes end mysteriously on this stretch of the Gulf Freeway. She hadn't looked in her rear view mirror. If she had, she would have seen the blue car coming up quickly behind in the lane she was moving in to. The driver quickly swerved to the left. He leaned on his horn and flashed his lights - he had to act quickly to avoid the pickup truck. The blue cougar slowed and maneuvered into the lane behind the pickup. It continued to sound its horn and flash its high beams. It accelerated quickly, moving up to the back of the pickup. She reached into her purse. With her right hand, she reached the gun out the window and fired it behind her.

The two automobiles approached the split in the highway for the Southwest Freeway. The blue cougar continued to follow the pickup truck at a close distance. She sped up and changed lanes. The car followed as if attached to the rear end of truck. She was almost at the exit to get to the Post building. She slowed when she saw a highway repair truck and swerved in front of it in to the emergency lane. The blue
the circulation for the building and is the only area in which the public may move freely. It is in the tower that the thesis unfolds.

V. The Program

The problems exiting between the police force and the citizens of Houston are well known. Tragic events involving the wrongful deaths of both citizens and police officers occur frequently within the city creating and exacerbating an atmosphere of tension at best, fear and hatred at worst. The relationship between the community and the police exists only sporadically and then with extreme discomfort on both sides.

The program I propose would be a space where the Police and the community could interact. A room will be constructed which would hold a table around which open dialogue could occur. It is outside of the presence of the police building allowing all inhabiting it speak freely. Alterations throughout the building provide a constant reminder of the presence of the room and the reason for its existence.
The Process

The following are selected pages from the sketchbook I kept over the course of the design semester. I have included them because I feel these pages reveal more than anything else, the essence of this project. The fact that it went through many different stages, and developments are evidence of the possibilities opened up by the urban form of the American city [as I have discussed above]. The project could have proceeded along many different directions, none any more fruitful than the others. One direction and one way of thinking was chosen for this stage of completion; another could now be chosen for further development, and then another - the process could continue indefinitely.
At space can

obliquely of space

side to side

pressure on space

implies a given

space but can

be freed

color

cold

1.28 NH

+9 (crossing over

compression of space

pushing of space

impression of space, heavy

on to light

both still movement

next week (thus)

mant photos

final typeset

re-do maps (can/fin)

1/29

cultural background
Scheme 2

occupying the wall
a space where
incredible things happen

more along the wall - structure is altered!

becomes an acceptable space that
leads to the rear
becoming the room? (like #1)

cut through - floor, no
not

make a path, make a space?
some hanging structure

still, the structure is the tce across the wall
something on one side crosses to support the other

or

in this scheme, the wall structure is forced
to change to support the new
- focus to support the in between stud
at the new room
3.20.91

the new open up - it is

nothing of interior and exterior

3.3.71 oppositions

Pourke Building
stable solid balanced
static controlled
heavy - load bearing
compression
opacity
orthogonal planes
planes
enclosed volumes
three layered thickness
distribution of load through
structure

dense
thick
punched holes

Houston Building:
wire
extension: ladders for proper
telephon: flaxing
water
lighting
unstable - cantilever
frame structure - membrane
thin
transparent
flowing space
pt. defined space
soft permeable
collapsed layers
broken falling - hanging
precarious
concrete
plaster
granite
terrazzo

build
looming, resting
no stair!

of another space
...what is this space.
When it breaks
box through the wall
...it is independent

how is it made?

at the space
of pressure
...for etc. of ...

stair
3.4.91 m

cutting through is hard,
thin, sticky

resulting space is
soft and squishy
...so think about this now—
1) it opens up out of the closed structure of the building
2) it's like LH's living room

- Just
- Vacation
- Fire
- Hinge
- Hahn

What happens if the front wall? Is that in diff fun code?
The two side walls are the facade building walls
So what are the end walls?
Bibliography:

Architectural Criticism:

Postmodern Theory:
Baudrillard, America
Owens, Craig, The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism; article in The Anti-aesthetic.

**Literature:**

**Art:**
Schor, Mira, "Medusa Redux", *Artforum*

**Philosophy:**
Source Illustrations

1) Gordon Matta-Clark, Splitting: Four Corners, 1974
2) Gordon Matta-Clark, Splitting: Four Corners, 1974
3) Gordon Matta-Clark, Conical Intersects, 1975
4) Gordon Matta-Clark, Circus or the Caribbean Orange, 1978.
Thesis  Presentation

1) - 5) Path overlays
6)  Path sections - sequence
7)  Path sections - reverse
8)  Leaving the house
9)  Moving through the neighborhood
10) Approaching the overpass on Almeda Road
11) Getting on the freeway
12) Cutting in front
13) Being tailgated at half a cars length
14) Firing a shot behind
15) Being run off the road
16) The path - photographs
17) The path - map
18) Overlay - the structuring of the narrative
19) Police Headquaters - photographs
20) Police Headquaters - site plan
21) Section North
22) Plan of Fifth Floor
23) Elevation North
24) Section East
25) Section South
26) Section West
27) Canopy Detail
28) Room Interior Details
29) Room Exterior Details
30) Padded Cell
31) Study Models - Tower
32) Study Models - Room
33) Studies of Room South Facade
34) New Handrail on Existing
35) The Wall
36) The Cell
37)-38) 1/8" Model
39)-40) Canopy
41)-44) Room
VIII. Conclusion

Final Review: Saturday April 20, 1991
Participants: Alan Balfour
Elysabeth Yates Burns Mckee
Mark Linder
William Sherman
Peter Waldman
Mark Wamble
James Williamson
Judith Wolin

The following is a summary of the final review beginning with my presentation.

"For the past two years I have implicitly been exploring the idea that architecture can be used to comment on social and institutional structures. For this thesis I have explored this notion explicitly. I chose a specific incident to use as a vehicle for my exploration. It is a true event that occurred in Houston in 1989 in which a woman cut off an unmarked police car while driving on the highway to work at 5 in the morning. The off-duty policemen pursued her, honking their horn and running up on the back of her car. She shot at them out of fear and they continued to try to run her off the road. Finally, she pulled off the highway to where a repair
truck was stopped. One of the policemen approached her car, struck her in the face, she shot once at him, he fired back at her unloading his gun into her................My desire with this thesis was to somehow make a mark on the Police headquarters building that would call into question the institution through questioning its architecture, and as well provide a now unprovided for function within the building which is a meeting room specifically for the police and the community.

In the written the thesis I discussed the urban form of Houston as a way to try to make an architecture that contrasts with the seemingly rigid, homogeneous, static, solid, opaque and stable form of the police station. The actuality of the nature of Houston urbanism is nowhere present in the image of this building. I was taught that urbanistically, Houston was all wrong - the lack of zoning, the drastic change of scales, the sprawling/edgeless edges, the fragmented parts that never seem to really hang together, the streets that aren't rigidly defined as the space bleeds out from them, the highways that go cutting through juxtaposing scales, materials if not just speed - this city is not legible in the way cities were in the past, the forms of the city do tell you about the functions that they perform in the city. I also looked at the work of the painter Ida Applebroog in the way she uses a traditional painting format and the language of painting to embed within it a subversive message. She creates a very particular kind of space where the predellas form a frame around a central image but unlike the traditional predella, these do not necessarily relate to the main canvas, sometimes they contrast etc. - the message is not completely legible. The space of the paintings shift between shallow/deep,
opaque/transparent, overlapping/ singular - much like the space of Houston. I also looked at the work of Gordon Matta Clark in the way he subtracts and adds to an existing structure in such a way as to read the structure and the city beyond in a different way.

As a way of exploring Houston, I constructed the path through the city of the victim. I chose points along the path where specific events happened. This diagram shows an early idea to organize these constructions not in a linear sequence but in a random sequence. In the sections I depicted the actuality of the place in the photograph but then overlayed a body image as a way of implying the presence of thoughts because this is a specific path - the place receives the images of the mind. Included as well is information from her life and etc. which try to give a notion of the specific journey. These sections each explore notions of architecture you find in Houston: Juxtaposition of scale, change of vision, etc.

My early proposal was to actually intersect the extruded sections with the building. It became apparent that through these investigations where my architecture takes over the space of the building that this was working within the same language as the existing building, it was controlling, strong, and essentially eliminated any dialogue that was possible. I decided that how I should really be working is with tactics vs. strategy (I have been thinking all semester about what makes a stronger statement, the shout in the face, or the quiet whisper in the ear). Strategy being a well laid out, comprehensive plan; tactics being small scale actions at specific points.
Using tactics I concentrated specifically on the building exploring its materiality and structure and then acted upon it. I became interested in two words used in the newspaper concerning this event: aberration and inappropriate. Inappropriate being that which is not suitable, or not proper but still within a given order - the action of the police was described as inappropriate. Aberration is abnormal, immoral and outside of the given order: a woman going to work at 5 am is an aberration. The word inappropriate can be used to describe the image of the headquarters building. It appears heavy and loadbearing but it is in fact a concrete frame structure with 4" limestone veneer. The structure is inappropriate to the image of the building but it still reinforces the dominant reading - it accommodates the image. I developed my additions to work in two ways: 1) they would reveal the inappropriateness of the image and subvert the dominant reading, and 2) they would be aberrations which work according to their own order. They are light, warped, fragile and they use the buildings structure - using the inappropriate to construct the aberration.

The entry canopy breaks the facade revealing the structure of the building. The canopy passes through the facade of the building implying a transparency of the entry which in reality is not there - the glass doors reflect back at you. The canopy is warped. It hangs off the building from the existing limestone hangers, and it is pulled down at its corners. The handrail which runs throughout the building attaches to the exiting but then deflects to account for the new wall of the room above, and the change in orientation on the stair.
The room above is the inversion of the padded cell, and the opening up of the layered wall of the building. It opens around the line to the dead woman’s house. It is also the inversion of the frame structure - it is made of wood frame panels that have their own structural integrity - it does not depend on a frame. The entry is somewhat tortuous. It is not like entry in the rest of the building - room to room, but you must pass outside, which occurs inside the building, before entering the room. The plywood interior is pulled back from the corns to reveal the wood structure. The end facade was the most difficult. It is a picture window in a wall panel free from the side walls. There is a door out to a balcony for one person.

The drawings themselves were conceived in a similar way as the additions. On the existing drawings, the addition details take what room they can. The details are immediate, there is no larger format which they fit in to. It was important to me to be able draw details for all the additions - I wanted this to be able to be built."

Jury Comments:
The jury was generally very positive about the thesis. They all agreed with the way I was thinking about the project and the process that I went through. The consensus seemed to be that the canopy is more successful than the room above, the reasons centering on the idea of opposition. Mark Wamble was concerned that this project only opposed instead of working through and he asked how I saw it. I said that my first inclination was to oppose the building but that once I began to reveal the structure you see
that it has the opposition within it - the frame structure vs. the heavy appearance. Judy Wolin did not think opposition was the right word but rather conversation or contradiction because the additions work with the building. Mark Linder proposed another word - accident to discuss the project - within the frame accidents happen.

Jim Williamson agreed about the success of the canopy because of the way it works with the structure and thought the room was too autonomous - almost vault-like. Judy Wolin thought that the room was too concentric and that it was "fighting its identity" and that maybe it wanted to be two systems - interior and exterior (the roofs at the larger scale) and maybe that would help be deal with the end facade. The interior would have been fragile. The fragility could have turned up in the joints and Jim Williamson suggested I should have made a model [of the cell] that really could be turned inside out - to make it less conventional.

Mark Wamble thought the 'expressionistic' language of the building was a problem because it is too personal and that reduces its power. He wanted more of a parallel structure. Judy Wolin disagreed. She felt its power was in its size - that is does not expect resources from the building or mimic the power of the building. Maybe I could have brought out another piece to begin the conversation outside the building.

Wamble asked why I did not disrupt or dismantle the building. I discussed my belief that a whisper was much more powerful than a shout. Jim Williamson thought that the handrail was the whisper I was after. The
drawings could be more like the handrail model - affect them - draw the padded cell black etc.

Bill Canady from the back of the room asked what the purpose of my building "or whatever it is that you call it" was for the clients. I answered that there was no public space in the building and it would be a place for the police to meet the public for activities that they hold regularly. He asked what the character of the room was and I said that it was very light and open unlike the rest of the building and would be a space that is conducive to dialogue - it is neutral ground. He asked about the materials and I told him it was plywood and that it would reverberate unlike the concrete floors of the existing building and that it was important to me to have the tactile quality of the plywood.

The jury comments made me enthusiastic about continuing to think about the thesis, and I felt that despite some unpleasant moments, it was very positive.