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Negotiable architecture: A place for the homeless

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NEGOTIABLE ARCHITECTURE:
A PLACE FOR THE HOMELESS

by

JANET ZEITLER

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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ABSTRACT

Negotiable Architecture: A Place for the Homeless

by

Janet Zeitler

A study of form and composition in the work of artists and the connection of art to architecture resulted in the conclusion that formal concerns alone cannot create an expressive architecture. The forms and their interactive relationships require an overall intention that will inform the nature of the forms and the program. This intention is based upon meeting the diverse needs of individuals. The critical elements required for a unified expression of ideas in the creation of architecture are a concern for the diverse needs of individuals, the composition and interaction of form and space, and the interpretation of the program with regard to diversity and flexibility to reflect the needs of the individual. Each of these three concerns and their interaction with each other and in combination with the physical elements of architecture (light, color, texture) can together form a methodology for architecture.
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PREFACE

Architecture is made up of physical forms that combine together with light, color, and texture to create space and express ideas about architecture, site, city, and society. Shape, form, their interaction, and their interaction with the other physical elements of architecture can form the basis for creating an expressive architecture. A connection between art and architecture can be made that will allow architecture to become more informed about composition and the nature of form through the study of artists and their methods, which can then be used in the composition of architectural forms. These were my initial assumptions and formed the basis of the thesis research, however, in working through the architectural project, I found that form and composition could not function as the underlying idea that allows for project development. The forms and their interactive relationships require an overall intention or attitude towards architecture that will inform the nature of the forms and the architectural program.

This overall approach to architecture is based upon meeting the diverse needs of individuals. The intention in meeting this diversity of needs is to prevent the exclusion of groups able to use the spaces of architecture. Instead of narrowly defining the users and specifically designing spaces to be used in very specific ways, one can interpret a given program with the intention of creating a loose framework of services and spaces that can be used in many individualized ways. Because one cannot presume to know all of the various needs of the individual, an inherent flexibility in the framework of the architecture is critical. By allowing for the flexibility of uses in the formation
of a program, many unanticipated needs and uses can be accommodated without presuming one particular way of using the architecture and imposing that way upon other individuals with different needs. With this idea of meeting the needs of the individual, the architectural program can be rethought to allow for diversity. This overall approach towards individual diversity can then be focused upon the physical elements of architecture (form, light, texture, and color) to outline their functions and the nature of their interactions within the interpretation of the architectural program. The compositional and formal qualities of architecture, enriched by formal and spatial connections to art, can work with the program interpretation and the focus on the needs of the individual to make up a system of interacting intentions that create the work. These critical elements of architecture: the diverse needs of individuals, the interpretation of the program with regard to diversity and flexibility to reflect those needs, and the composition and interaction of forms with these two concerns as well as with the physical properties of light, texture, and color, can inform and enrich each other and, through an interaction between them, form a methodology for the architectural project.
Negotiable Architecture: A Place for the Homeless

Like any discipline, architecture can be viewed in many different ways. One way to look at architecture is in terms of its physical properties: form, light, color, line, and texture. These are the basic elements that create spaces and architecture. The process of design, no matter how it may vary among architects, results in an occupiable three-dimensional object or building made up of these physical elements. The ideas of the architect are eventually transformed into these physical elements, and these elements are the means by which the architect is able to communicate ideas to the viewer. One of the aims of architecture is to create an object or building that transcends its function to become an expression of the architect's view of the program, of architecture, of the built form in the city, of the client, and of the relationship of the program to the site and the surroundings. How the architect expresses these ideas about the project depends on his ability to work with the physical elements to create spaces and communicate the ideas through built forms. The ideas can often be communicated through the relationships between the different elements, the relationships between the spaces created by the elements, or the qualities of the spaces themselves. Qualities of space are created by the different combinations of the physical elements and require an understanding of form in combination with the other elements. Qualities of space can be defined as how the viewer sees the space and includes perceptions of solids or voids, transparencies, intersecting or overlapping spaces, open or continuous flow of space, sequential spaces, open space versus enclosed space, implied spaces, layering of planes or thresholds, dynamic
versus static spaces, and ordered versus disordered spaces. When the elements of architecture create specific qualities of space and relationships, the architecture can communicate ideas about the architectural program or the city through those specific qualities of the space. If the combinations of these physical elements suggest specific qualities of space and relationships between various spaces; the combinations of elements may then express the idea that originated the physical form. Expressing ideas with physical form is a matter of understanding form in combination with the other elements and the potential of the relationships between the elements for expression.

The physical properties of architecture make up its basic elements. The elements must communicate the solutions to the viewer through their inherent qualities and through their relationships to each other in forming various qualities of space. All of the relevant ideas, processes, solutions, and attitudes relating to the project are transformed into the elements that make up the built form. In order to communicate the various ideas, one must learn about the elements, understand them, and learn to use them in combination with each other for expression. Without a knowledge and understanding of the elements, one cannot use them to full advantage for communication and expression. One must also understand the effects of the combinations of the elements since these combinations create different qualities of space. These qualities of space suggest and express attitudes about the architectural spaces, the relationships between the spaces, and the relationship of the building itself to its site, context, and its city or region. These attitudes can then allow the expression of more ethereal ideas or
perceptions about the project, -- public versus private, light versus heavy, collective versus individual, formal versus informal, among others. For example, a transparent relationship between the interior and the exterior of a building might suggest an interaction or connection between the two. It may be seen as a relationship of an open flow of space from interior to exterior, depending on the articulation, or it may be seen as a layering of transparencies between the two spaces and be perceived as a filtering of space from interior to exterior -- separated but linked. The possibilities for expression and perception are vast, but depend upon the use of the basic elements. Finding methods outside of the traditional architectural process for communicating abstract ideas through the basic elements, the qualities of space, and the relationships between the spaces can provide a different way of seeing and creating architecture. Understanding the elements of form, light, color, line, and texture and their combinations is critical for creating architecture, while expanding the interpretation and use of these elements can enhance the possibilities for architectural expression.

One way to investigate methods for working with form and the other elements is to look at methods used by artists. Artists are also trying to convey meaning and ideas through the same physical elements. Art and architecture share the process of conveying ideas through visual compositions made up of form, color, light, line, and texture. Architecture uses the elements to create particular spatial effects that will in turn suggest ideas about the relationships between public and private, interior and exterior, the building and the site or context, and the building and the city.
The result of the architectural process is an occupiable three-dimensional object composed of various combinations of spaces. The relationships of these spaces to each other and the qualities of these spaces are the means of expression. Each piece of the building can be considered as a separate part that must be used in combination with the other parts to form a unified composition of three-dimensional objects. The assembly of these objects can be seen as a huge collage of materials that are combined to create solids and voids of spaces and materials. Architecture can be seen as relationships of many varied parts that must be combined together to not only form spaces and shelter, but also to express ideas. These ideas include attitudes about architecture, culture, the city, or the site, but may extend to other issues as well.

In some ways, architecture is very similar to art. Artists use shape, form, color, light, line, and texture to express ideas and images. Artists' methods of combining elements and their ways of seeing these elements can be applied to the architectural composition of materials and space and give architects more effective ways to express abstract ideas with physical elements. Artists use the same basic elements to create two and three dimensional compositions or objects that express their views about aesthetics, social or political concerns, culture, etc. Though art is not necessarily occupiable, it still shares the visual and spatial qualities of architecture. In art, the manipulation of positive and negative space and the composition of the whole in two-dimensions can be applied to architectural elevations or planning. In sculpture, the concern for positive and negative space in three-dimensions can be applied to the
formation of architectural spaces and the building form itself. Both disciplines must communicate through visual elements and depend upon the relationships between the elements and the perception of the viewer to communicate the idea behind the work. There is a concern for each individual element and its relationship to the whole as well as the perception created by these relationships. In addition to composition, the thought processes of artists can provide more unusual starting points for the idea generation of architects and can expand the vocabulary of more traditional architectural expression. By looking at how artists understand and use the elements for expression, architects can enrich their means, methods, and sources of expression.

The artists critical to this investigation are those that have abandoned traditional representational art. The artists at the beginning of the 20th century began breaking away from recreating images seen around them in order to search for the minimal essential forms and compositions that would express their ideas without the associations of real world images that may interfere with the meaning intended by the artist. These artists were no longer satisfied with representing images, but were looking for expressions of movement, space, or ideas within the two-dimensional plane that would be free of the associations of represented objects.\(^1\) Specific artists have been chosen based on their emphasis on form, color, and content; these include Henri Matisse, Constantin Brancusi, Mark Rothko, Henry Moore, and Marcel Duchamp.

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Architects' use of forms and their understanding of form can be expanded and enhanced by understanding how artists look at and use form and accumulating a large number of images. With a vocabulary of images and the ideas these images suggest, an intuitive feeling for expression and form can develop and more analytical approaches to design can be generated through studies of artists and their work. Artists' conceptions of form can influence and expand the way architects think about form. Duchamp, Matisse, Rothko, Moore, and Brancusi all sought to find the essence of objects so that they could express their ideas clearly. Reduction of an object to its essence through its inherent qualities is an important factor in the clear communication of meaning. To best express his intention, Matisse felt that there could be no "superfluous details" that would "encroach upon the essential elements".² Matisse tried to find the particular characteristics of an object necessary to reference the object itself by separating the object from its actual image, because "there is an inherent truth which must be disengaged from the outward appearance of the object to be represented. This is the only truth that matters."³ Matisse described his process of thought for representing objects:

One must study an object for a long time to learn what its symbolic meaning is. And once again, in a composition the object becomes a new symbol taking part in the whole through restraining its own power. In short, each work is a combination of symbols invented

³ Chipp. Henri Matisse, "Exactitude is not Truth" (1947), p.137.
during the execution as they are needed in the particular spot. Removed from the composition for which they were created, these symbols have no more function.\textsuperscript{4}

In his work, Matisse expresses a sense of movement and moving space in two-dimensions by his use of forms and color. The compositions are dynamic and demonstrate a combination of sharp color and seemingly simple forms that describe more complex actions. The layering of color and form in his series of cutouts suggest possibilities for layering, positive and negative space equalization, color contrasts and its effects, and the essence of forms expressed with simple shapes.

Rothko described shapes as having their own mind and objectives. His concern was for leaving behind the past associations of objects. The strength of color and simple shapes in Rothko’s work express emotion without the representation of immediately recognizable forms.

Rothko on abstraction:

The familiar identity of things has to be pulverized in order to destroy the finite associations with which our society increasingly enshrouds every aspect of our environment.\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., p.549.
Figure 1. Henri Matisse, “The Codomas,” Jazz, Plate XI, 1947.
Figure 2. Mark Rothko, "Huile sur Toile," 1960.
Rothko on shapes:

They are unique elements in a unique situation. They are organisms with volition and a passion for self assertion. They move with internal freedom, and without need to conform with or to violate what is probable in the familiar world. They have no direct association with any particular visible experience, but in them one recognizes the principle and passion of organisms. The presentation of this drama in the familiar world was never possible, unless everyday acts belonged to a ritual accepted as referring to a transcendent realm.6

Henry Moore offers ways to think of three-dimensional objects in space that include the space around the object as well as the space taken by the object:

He must continually strive to think of and use, form in its full spatial completeness. He gets the solid shape, as it were, inside his head -- he thinks of it, whatever its size, as if he were holding it completely enclosed in the hollow of his hand. He mentally visualizes a complex form from all round itself; he knows while he looks at one side what the other side is like; he identifies himself with its center of gravity, its mass, its weight; he realizes its volume, as the space that the shape displaces in the air.7

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6 Chipp. Mark Rothko, “The Romantics were Prompted” (1947), p.549.
Figure 3. Constantin Brancusi, "Sleeping Muse," 1909-10.
Moore stresses the importance of seeing a shape for its physical qualities removed from its function and associations in the world. The ability to see shape objectively will then allow one to build a vocabulary of shape and enhance his ability to analyze more complex shapes. His description of Brancusi's sculpture projects new directions beyond absolute minimalism:

Since the Gothic, European sculpture had become overgrown with moss, weeds -- all sorts of surface excrescences which completely concealed shape. It has been Brancusi's special mission to get rid of this overgrowth, and to make us once more shape-conscious. To do this he has had to concentrate on very simple direct shape, to keep his sculpture, as it were, one-cylindereed, to refine and polish a single shape to a degree almost too precious. Brancusi's work, apart from its individual value, has been of historical importance in the development of contemporary sculpture. But it may now be no longer necessary to close down and restrict sculpture to the single (static) form unit. We can now begin to open out. To relate and combine together several forms of varied sizes, sections, and directions into one organic whole.  

Like the other artists, Duchamp was concerned with expression through abstracted forms, but he differs from them in his methods and thought processes. While Moore, Brancusi, Rothko, and Matisse searched for the essence of form and expression through discovering the inherent qualities of

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8 Ibid., p.595.
objects and separating objects from their environment and context, Duchamp used context and the object itself to sharpen ideas and perceptions. Duchamp often made art from simple objects and invested complex ideas in them. The Readymades are familiar objects, but when renamed, reoriented, combined with other things, or given a new context, the familiar object is transformed and perceived in a different way. The idea is expressed in the mind when the object is conceptually connected to its caption or new context. Duchamp's appeal is in his twisting or changing the meaning or associations of objects with descriptive text or a new environment that removes the traditional reading of the object. One of his ways of using forms involved the change of perception of form by making the viewer look at familiar forms in unfamiliar situations. This would then give the viewer a completely new way of seeing a familiar object as a form by disconnecting it from its traditional associations. In architecture, this idea of "defamiliarizing" forms can be adapted to make the viewer more aware of the forms used to express an idea. New orientations or contexts for familiar architectural forms will heighten the use of the form by making the form be seen from an unusual viewpoint that will allow the viewer to disconnect or alter earlier associations of the form that may obscure or confuse its specific role in a new composition. Duchamp described several objectives in an essay on painting:

The basis of my own work during the years just before coming to America in 1915 was a desire to break up forms -- to "decompose" them

9 Ibid., p. 36.
11 Ibid., p. 313-317.
much along the lines the cubists had done. But I wanted to go further — much further — in fact quite another direction altogether.12

My aim (Nude Descending A Staircase) was a static representation of movement — a static composition of indications of various positions taken by a form in movement — with no attempt to give cinema effects through painting.13

The reduction of a head in movement to a base line seemed to me defensible. A form passing through space would traverse a line; and as the form moved the line it traversed could be replaced by another line and another and another. Therefore I felt justified in reducing a figure in movement to a line rather than to a skeleton. Reduce, reduce, reduce was my thought, -- but at the same time my aim was turning inward, rather than toward externals. And later, following this view, I came to feel an artist might use anything -- a dot, a line, the most conventional or unconventional symbol -- to say what he wanted to say.14

13 Ibid., p.393.
14 Ibid., p.393.
Figure 4. Marcel Duchamp, "Nude Descending A Staircase," 1912.
Figure 5. Marcel Duchamp, "Fountain," 1917.
Figure 6. Marcel Duchamp, "Trap," 1917.
Figure 7. Marcel Duchamp, "Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries," 1913.
Figure 8. Marcel Duchamp, "The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even," (The Large Glass), 1915-23.

The reduction of forms to simpler versions of the original form or object allows for an easier reading of the forms and makes a less confusing environment in which to communicate the intended meaning; however,
looking at the work of Marcel Duchamp, one realizes that the perception of form can be altered and skewed depending upon the context in which the form is placed. Duchamp's ideas about redefining the meanings of forms through the surrounding environment and combinations with the other elements are applicable to architectural form as well. This would allow for the reinterpretation of familiar architectural forms in new contexts and could disassociate traditional meanings attached to those forms. In this way, an architecture may be possible where the readings of the forms is not dependent upon a historical background or specific cultural knowledge. The reading of form may then be taken from the shapes of the forms themselves and their relationships to surrounding forms.

Visual perception of form is dependent upon context, memory or experience, and the basic inherent quality of the form itself. Visual perception of a complex image results in the simplification of the image into recognizable larger shapes that can be viewed in relationship to each other more easily. There are several categories of simplification all involving the grouping of elements together to simplify the number of different elements to be understood: size, shape, brightness or color, location (nearness), spatial orientation, speed, direction, similar units, form patterns. There are consistent ways in which people perceive shapes, groups of shapes, and

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16 Ibid., p. 31.
17 Ibid., p. 54-61.
Images. These qualities are based upon the particular geometry of the shape and its relation to elements in nature and the connections these relations create between an abstract geometrical shape and a corresponding meaning in nature. Other factors affecting the perception of a single shape are the memory of past experiences, color, and orientation. The memory of the past is an individual factor that cannot be anticipated with consistency. On the other hand, color affects the perception of depth, warmth, density, and movement. The orientation affects the appearance of stability as opposed to movement. The combination of all of these creates a perception of an individual shape as receding or advancing, warm or cold, light or dark, balanced or in motion, aggressive or passive. When shapes are grouped together or made more complex, the inherent qualities of each shape remain, but are complicated by their surrounding elements. Tensions form between the adjacent shapes, shapes cluster together to form larger separate groups within the composition perhaps unbalancing the other shapes, the differences in color can emphasize one shape over another regardless of size or position, the positioning of shapes can elevate

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18 Ibid., p. 31-32.
20 Arnheim, p. 32.
22 Klee, p. 111.
23 Kepes, p. 53.
24 Kepes, p. 17-20.
importance and dominance of certain parts of the composition or particular shapes over the others, there are endless variations on the effects of size, shape, position, color, proximity, direction, value, and texture. These perceptions of composition are what will make the qualities of space and communicate the attitudes and ideas of the architect.

Form in Architecture

Form may be the most critical element in architecture. Form can be defined as any physical, material part of the building seen as one entity. It can be composed of several shapes that are then perceived as one object or it can be one shape perceived as a separate entity or many objects. The building, being made up of various forms, can be perceived as one fairly simple form, for example -- a shoebox shape, or as a combination of fairly simple shapes that are perceived as a more complex form or as a combination too complex to be perceived as one form. The building is more often composed of many different forms that make up the spaces that define the building. The perception of these forms is based on the relationships of the forms to each other and the inherent qualities of the individual forms themselves.

Form creates architecture. It combines with light to create shadows both inside and outside. Shadows can define space and give it a quality of expression, but they require form for their creation. Light can define space and provide a quality of expression, but requires forms to reflect from or illuminate. Form gives definition to spaces. It can enclose space and thereby
define space exactly, as in a room, or form can imply spaces by creating a tension or connection between planes, vertical or horizontal. Two parallel planes, either horizontal or vertical, claim a space between them as different and separate from surrounding space. The shape and overlap of each plane in relation to each other determines the specific nature of the space implied. If both planes are exactly the same in shape and orientation, a very exact space between them is defined by the surfaces and edges of the planes.

Figure 9. Space Defined Between Identical Parallel Planes.

If the planes are different sizes or have differing orientations, the areas in common to both planes becomes the strongly defined space apart from the surrounding space. The parts of the planes that are outside of the shared space of the two planes becomes an intermediate space between the surrounding space and the shared space. This intermediate space seems more loosely defined since only one plane defines it and the surrounding space is more loosely differentiated from it than the shared space between the two planes.
Figure 10. Space Defined Between Parallel Planes.

Several vertical planes placed close together or connected to each other can also imply spaces separate from the surroundings.

Figure 11. Space Defined Between Vertical Planes.

One plane can define space through its own surface as a ground plane or by its shadow when used vertically.

Figure 12. Space Defined Around a Single Plane.

Form occupies space and alters the space surrounding it as well as the space it displaces. Forms claim ground and create a new set of spaces with their outer configuration. The edges of the forms create a background or limit for the
ground space and can stop or extend the continuous flow of space of exterior space. Forms that stand out in spaces as discreet objects can function as points of reference in the space and can clarify the location of the viewer within complex spaces. In this way, form can act as an orientation device for people moving through spaces. Form can also provide directional cues by suggesting areas for entry and exit or access to other spaces. The combination of form with other elements can suggest uses for space, such as spaces conducive to gathering or meeting, public space or private space, etc. Form implies use by its configuration or the quality of the space created by form's combination with the other elements. Form creates the means by which light enters space, spaces are created and defined, and provides the surfaces upon which color can act. Form joins the other physical elements together and provides the surfaces for them to act upon. The nature of the forms can also express qualities through configuration. Slender, narrow, vertical forms imply movement, while the same forms in a horizontal orientation imply stability.25

![Diagram of dynamic and static forms]

Figure 13. Dynamic Form Versus Static Form.

Solid/Void

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25 Klee, p. 163-178.
Instead of thinking only of the object or building created in terms of its form, independent of its effect on the surroundings, one can consider the effect of the building upon its site and surrounding space in terms of what shapes it displaces out of the environment. Looking at space and volume in a diagram analogous to the figure-ground study may reveal much about the interpenetration of voids with solids. One could take this diagram further and use it to look at enclosed space as solids and circulation space as voids. This will show more clearly the organization of the spaces and will help in determining the clarity of spatial organization. One could also examine solids and voids at the scale of single spaces as well. This would show the proportions of opaque to transparent, openings to solids, and space to enclosure.

Form as Reference

Orientation within a series of spaces can be made clear to the viewer by the use of form combined with light and color. By itself, forms that are distinct shapes easily read by the viewer can become landmarks within spaces and provide points of reference to mark their progress through the space. In combination with light and color, form can guide the viewer toward public space and away from private space. The size, shape, and location of access to spaces can be clues to the degree of private or public communicated.

Building as Collage/Form as Elements
One can think of the building as a collage of forms, each represented by the different materials required to assemble the structure and walls. To communicate the building process, one can try to show each separate part of the detailing process as individual forms combined together into a composition that makes up the wall, window, door, frame, floor, stair, etc. The more one can show these different pieces of the building as separate materials and forms, the more one can inform the viewer about the assembly of buildings. To visualize this, one may think of the building and all its parts as an exploded axonometric of materials that come together to form the whole composition. The key to communicating the assembly is clarity of the separate pieces in their combination and in their relationship to each other. Thinking of materials as forms and as elements that make up the building keeps them from becoming background for the space enclosed.

Conclusion

Architecture is made up of physical forms that combine together with light, color, and texture to create space and express ideas about architecture, site, city, and society. Shape, form, their interaction, and their interaction with the other physical elements of architecture can form the basis for creating an expressive architecture. A connection between art and architecture can be made that will allow architecture to become more informed about composition and the nature of form through the study of artists and their methods, which can then be used in the composition of architectural forms. From the study of the various artists, most importantly Marcel Duchamp, one
gains an appreciation for lightness, thinness, suspension, transparency, the connection of objects to conceptual ideas, and the critical affects of context upon perception. The initial assumptions about form and composition formed the basis of the thesis research; however, in the architectural project, form and composition could not function as the underlying idea that allows for project development. The forms and their interactive relationships required an overall intention or attitude towards architecture that will inform the nature of the forms and the architectural program.

This overall approach to architecture is based upon meeting the diverse needs of individuals. The intention in meeting this diversity of needs is to prevent the exclusion of groups able to use the spaces of architecture. Instead of narrowly defining the users and specifically designing spaces to be used in very specific ways, one can interpret a given program with the intention of creating a loose framework of services and spaces that can be used in many individualized ways. Because one cannot presume to know all of the various needs of the individual, an inherent flexibility in the framework of the architecture is critical. By allowing for the flexibility of uses in the formation of a program, many unanticipated needs and uses can be accommodated without presuming one particular way of using the architecture and imposing that way upon other individuals with different needs. With this idea of meeting the needs of the individual, the architectural program can be rethought to allow for diversity. This overall approach towards individual diversity can then be focused upon the physical elements of architecture (form, light, texture, and color) to outline their functions and the nature of
their interactions within the interpretation of the architectural program. The compositional and formal qualities of architecture, enriched by formal and spatial connections to art, can work with the program interpretation and the focus on the needs of the individual to make up a system of interacting intentions that create architecture. These critical elements of architecture: the diverse needs of individuals, the interpretation of the program with regard to diversity and flexibility to reflect those needs, and the composition and interaction of forms with these two concerns as well as with the physical properties of light, texture, and color, can inform and enrich each other and, through an interaction between them, form a methodology for the architectural project.

The Project

The idea for the project developed from new legislation concerning the homeless in Florida and the designation of a "free zone". This designation made it possible for people to legally spend the night in particular areas without being arrested. Further discussion developed the idea of using existing structures for shelter and adding basic services for the homeless, such as restrooms, showers, kitchens, and storage.

The project is a homeless shelter located just north of downtown Houston in an industrial area close to the city jail, storage and parking for the jail, artists' loft and studio spaces, and commercial office and retail spaces. The site was chosen for its existing building -- a vacated freight warehouse, and is located
within walking distance of several different areas populated by the homeless. The building is constructed of poured in place reinforced concrete frame with brick infill walls closing in the entire second floor and the San Jacinto Street section of the first floor. The larger portion of the first floor faces Wood Street and is an open colonnaded space that visually connects the two sites on either side of the building. The appeal of the open first floor is the free roof space that will allow for individuals to construct their own place and the feeling of connection between the two sides of the site. The building separates the site into two portions. One portion of the site is a triangular shaped plaza that faces the main downtown access, San Jacinto Street, and a smaller side street, Wood Street; this triangular piece is the most public part of the site. The building bends around the other portion of the site, protecting it from public view on the north and west sides, while a large warehouse to the south protects the other side of the site from downtown views.

The homeless shelter is meant to be an alternative to existing shelters. Its aim is to provide a place for the homeless to keep their belongings and make their own place within the site. Most shelters open in the evening, provide shelter for one night, and then turn the homeless back into the city for the day. This shelter is to provide a transitional place for people to make their home. They would not be turned out on a daily basis, but are meant to have a place within the community as long as they desire. There are to be several options open, each allowing the individual to decide their own involvement in the project. The protected portion of the site and the open first floor are
considered the free zone, where individuals can find shelter and construct their own home. The enclosed second floor is the more conventional type of shelter where individuals are given rooms with controlled access, shared restrooms, showers, kitchens, and living space. The shelter is meant to be run by an administrator acting as an organizer for the residents, who are expected to contribute services to the community in return for a place in the shelter system.

The shelter is to form part of a community on the site that would also include a community garden, a recycling collection area, work space, a public kitchen and dining room, public restrooms and showers, and places for shelter—both inside and outside. Along the San Jacinto facade the building is to remain as it is to retain its urban face. The first floor of this part of the building will be a public kitchen and dining room with access to public restrooms and showers; while the remaining first floor will be used as open shelter space. This open first floor connects the public plaza with the “free zone”. The “free zone” consists of freestanding metal shed roofs on steel structure with freestanding kitchen, restroom and shower, and lockable storage facilities between them. The sheds will provide roofs and slabs raised off the ground where the residents are encouraged to adapt their own shelter. This area resists too much control and must be left to function as a more chaotic place, much like the spaces currently inhabited under bridges, under awnings, or in vacant lots. The residents of the “free zone” must form their own rules for interaction with the shelter administrator as a balance. The second floor of the building is accessed by stairs leading from the public plaza
into each of the separate sections. The residents of the second floor have controlled access to their section, each of which contains restrooms, showers, kitchen and living space. The residential units are basic cells buffered from the corridor by storage space. The second floor areas are intended for those people that want more security and structure. These areas would most likely be filled by families or single parents. All space within the community would be given in exchange for work within different portions of the shelter community.

The goals of the project are to provide a flexible and adaptable architecture that will allow for a variety of users and invite interventions and changes to the light framework and create new contexts for the existing vacated building, for the site as part of the city, for the homeless in the community, and for the architectural programs of both the homeless shelter and the institution. These changes in context for the various elements of program, inhabitant, site, and building are to create new perceptions of each within the community. These changes in context are made by the structure of the architectural program and the structure and form of the architecture itself. Physically, the second floor of the building has two types of construction for the infill walls: the residential units themselves are standard metal studs and sheet rock construction, separated from the communal spaces by concrete masonry walls, while the communal areas are primarily steel construction. The communal areas and stair access express the change in the building’s use by the change in materials and form. The “intervention” is of light steel construction and expresses the movement through the building between the
“free zone” and the public plaza as well as movement into the second floor. The separation of different functional areas into different construction materials and spatial configurations physically express the changes in the building use. The relationships of the new stair and canopy to the existing building and canopy are critical. The new stair projects from the building at an acute angle and rests upon the second floor with just a portion of its landing. It is connected to the existing concrete frame of the building by two cantilever supports underneath the landing. The stair is supported completely by these two supports. The canopy above the stair is supported by angled columns that connect to the stair at each of the landings. The angled steel members holding the canopy and the stair railing are not completely vertical in order to express a feeling of movement, transience, flexibility, and lightness. The canopy, stair, and rail carry through these same qualities with thin steel sections making up the construction. The “free zone” contains metal shed roofs on thin steel columns over concrete slabs, but most of the physical structure of the “free zone” is left open for the residents to infill with their own constructions. Overall, the main attitude of the architectural interventions is to project a sense of lightness, transparency, movement, suspension of elements, flexibility and change.
Jury Comments

Sanford Kwinter
The program is extraordinary. It is sensitive to the needs of the homeless and allows for them to retain their own sense of living while giving them a place without being paternalistic. God is not in the details, but one could say that God is in the program. The program and project have a robustness that will increase even after the project is finished. The project will maintain itself through the inhabitants and the program and will maintain a liveliness even as the residents change. I see Duchamp's "Large Glass" in the forms of the stair and canopy.

Geoffrey Innaba
The appendages to the building are rhetorical. Duchamp would examine each of the details very carefully and invest great meaning in each of them. The thresholds of the building have been very carefully considered.

Elysabeth McKee
This is an architecture of negotiation, where the inhabitants are incited to add their own constructions to the new and existing architecture. This is not architecture with a capital "A", but an architecture that allows for the individual. The gap between the existing structure and the new interventions must be carefully investigated and that space allows for flexibility.
Figure 14. Photographs of Existing Building and Site.
Floor Plan
Level 1

Figure 16. Level 1 Plan.
Figure 29. Photographs of Models.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


