

Project One - Exploring the Edge

City of Houston

Phase One – Due February 6, 9am Friday

Phase Two - Due March 6, 9am – Progress deadlines each week.

<http://www.arch.ttu.edu/courses/2009/spring/5202/>

Project One provides you with the ability to explore the definition of “edge” as it relates to the urban condition. It asks that you explore this with open eyes and an open mind. It is divided into Two Phases.

The first Phase includes a site analysis. The second, a detailed study of one particular area of the project site – identified in Site Aerial Image Two on the studio website. Additional details for Phase Two will be provided on February 6.

See Project Site Area Phase One on studio website. At this point, you have a clearer understanding of the impact and role of Houston’s watershed which includes its bayou system. You will now engage the portion that establishes an ‘edge’ along with the state and federal highway system. Phase One focuses on analysis, while Phase Two involves exploration and expression.

Project One Description:

Lynch defines ‘edge’ as “the boundaries between two phases, linear breaks in continuity, lateral references rather than coordinate axes, may be barriers, could be penetrable, could be seams – lines along two regions”.¹

Christopher Alexander in A New Theory of Urban Design notes that “Every increment of construction must be made in such a way as to heal the city”.² (heal – meaning to make whole) and with this overriding rule, he also notes: “Every new act of construction has just one basic obligation: it must create a continuous structure of wholes around itself.”³

Chinese architectural firm, Edge Architects explores in their essay “Edge of Hong Kong” this: “The edge of something is, in a sense, dependent upon the perception of oneself. By closing oneself off to the possibility that beyond the edge there are other perspectives, one’s viewpoint may be shuttered by narrow-mindedness and inertia. The edge, in some cases, can be a place of danger. However, it can be a place of potential and possibilities.”⁴

In phase one you are asked to study the general project area. In phase two you are asked to take on the task of exploring the edge. What does this mean? You must consider and define the bayou as an edge condition which you will redefine as an expression of the city. What will you do with it? You will expose, explore and explain it through graphic representation. How can the bayou introduce itself to the city? With a 35 foot elevation difference, vertical edge must be re-explored - how can this be done? How can one re-connect the bayou to the city? How does the bayou interact with the interstate? Is there a relationship that must be explored? Can this be redefined? How do we create places of expression that allow the downtown user to become engaged and ‘moved’ by the experience of the bayou? You will consider the bayou as a seam – is it one sided? Two sided? Multi-sided? How do you communicate this? What happens as you consider a continuous ‘context’ around the bayou? What opportunities exist?

The initial study work will address the entire designated site area identified on Project Site Area Phase One. You will study this area until February 6 through site analysis and mapping.

¹ Lynch, Kevin, The Image of the City, Center for Urban Studies, MIT/Harvard, Cambridge, Ma., 1960, p. 47.

² Alexander, Christopher, A New Theory of Urban Design, Oxford University Press, 1987, p.22.

³ Alexander, Christopher, A New Theory of Urban Design, Oxford University Press, 1987, p.22.

⁴ Edge Architects, Hong Kong, <http://www.edge-architects.com/edge%20of%20hong%20kong.html>, January 10, 2009.

Then you will move to selecting a specific site area of focus along the bayou and within the boundaries of this larger site area.

Phase I: Due February 6 @ 9am - Study the project area through site images and analysis. Develop a complete site analysis of the project area. Pay particular attention to grade changes. Develop one drawing for each analysis topic. Develop one drawing which brings all topics together.

Analysis includes:

- 1) Topographic understanding
- 2) Climatic Issues
- 3) Sun Angles
- 4) Existing Vegetation
- 5) Existing Roadway/Infrastructure Impacts
- 6) Existing Building Context
- 7) Flooding Patterns
- 8) Traffic Patterns

PROJECT ONE _ PHASE ONE:

WHAT YOU WILL TURN IN:

Print out Drawings for in Studio review (Lubbock)
Site Model – Computer generated
Site Analysis Drawings
Context Images which help to understand Site
Mapping Diagrams to support analysis

PRELIMINARY DUE DATES: WED / FRIDAY, February 3(6pm) & 5 (in studio in Lubbock)

Each Wednesday and Friday class will require that each student show their progress to instructor.

The preliminary deadlines are intended to serve as a work in progress crit. You must have your work minimized on your screen and prepared for an electronic desk crit. You will have 10 minutes to discuss your work followed by 10 minutes of discussion, then I will move on to the next student.