

Project One - Exploring the Edge – Exploration and Expression

City of Houston

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 included a site analysis. The second, is 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 are now provided – Exploration and Expression.

In Phase One, you were asked to 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 were 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?

OK, this was what you received thus far. Now reread that paragraph and really think about how you see the bayou redeveloped. You must accomplish the following:

Express through design, a new way of experiencing the bayou – but do so as a connection to the city – exploring the edge. Remember this – the bayou is the reason Houston was settled. Now, you design with this intent – how does the bayou re-inspire the city? You will design your immediate site area, but you will also

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.

develop a model which shows how this solution would fit into the entire site context previously noted. Remember this – you have to celebrate the intrinsic qualities of the site in order to develop your ideas. A site is never static – rather always dynamic, continually impacted by the environment, the built context, economics/growth/development, culture and even technology. Grow your solution from your exploration.

You will produce:

- Two Computer Models – Overall Bayou Site and Immediate Bayou Site. Models must be complete. They must fully express your final design solution.
- Existing Aerial of larger site context labeled with relevant context.
- Overall Site Analysis Diagrams that support your design intention – remember, when we analyze a site, we do so to learn from the information so that it informs our design – make certain the drawings you use (if previously done) or develop convey this clearly.
- Existing Site Plan Immediate – this must be detailed and must represent all existing conditions which currently impact the site.
- Proposed Site Plan Immediate – this is the representation of your ideas in plan.
- Two Site Sections – You decide which are the best two areas to cut to best represent your design.
- Character Sketches – these are the 3-d drawings you do which bring life to your design. They can be done by hand or on computer. (a minimum of four, but more will indicate a more committed intention in your design work). Note: Sketches can be taken from your model – but remember, they must be fully developed. We want a sense of place. What's it like to experience the bayou through your design solution?
- Context Study – you need to show how the context of downtown (what is above that 35 foot incline) influences the design work and in doing so, you must show this in drawn form. You decide how to best accomplish this.
- 8 ½ x 11 booklet expressing the full process of your work (this will largely include select drawings you have developed to this point and then include your final work) – use pdf a series graphic sheets.
- CD with all project work, including – all final drawings at 300 dpi in 5x7 rough size. (This allows me to use the work in future publications where possible). Your drawings need to have your name in the title when you save them and should also describe clearly what the drawing is. (Ex. JudyBlume_ExteriorSiteSection1)

You are all graduate students. As such, I leave it to you to decide how the drawings are developed and which additional drawings are needed to express a well thought out, expressive and connected solution. Your research on the bayou and the city were not intended to end at this point. They should be integrated into the thinking process – the design process – and the solution. If not, why do research? Why analyze?

Make this fun. You should be able to explore without worry. What if you could develop this however you wished based on the research and analysis you have done? No budget – this is about thinking big and exploring big – Just imagine the possibilities.

An “A” solution is one that: is clearly represented and clearly supported by drawings that indicate where it began, how it developed and what it became – Process matters. It expresses your ideas thoroughly. It goes beyond the normal standard and makes us rethink the city. Your final work represents the design process as well as the design solution. You develop drawings beyond what is required because you understand that in order to fully develop your ideas and then express these graphically, you must have the freedom to explore other ways of expression. Your design is innovative and expressive, yet it finds its basis in real world issues which impact the site and context.

PRELIMINARY DUE DATES: Every WED / FRIDAY, until final due date of March 6. (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. On Wednesdays, you will have 10 minutes to discuss your work followed by 10 minutes of discussion, then I will move on to the next student. On Friday's we will take more time to review and work in studio.