

Final Project Review – Things to Consider

In thinking about the culmination of this project and in anticipation for your review, (and reflecting on the previous review), I decided to give you some things to consider. I've spoken with you all about these before, but perhaps having it in this format will help you to think more intently about it. And, as today is the 80% deadline, this will give you something to consider as you complete the work for Monday's 6pm deadline. What I find is that at this point, you become so engrossed in completing the drawings that you sometimes forget the intention in your work.

If you cannot get your work posted, you must create a website and post the work there. Posting is essential. Submit your drawings online in a compressed format to save time posting and opening.

NOTE: Remember, you are providing cd's with ALL of your final drawings in 300dpi at 4x6 (roughly) size. This allows for flexibility with publications.

CD: - Label your cd with your Name, Course, Semester, Year and "High Rez Drawings" on it. Give these to me at the end of the studio review on Tuesday.

For next week's final review, the booklet is optional. For some of you, having it to supplement your pin up work will be one way you can more fully express your ideas.

As a presentation, I will be looking at the following:

- 1) Students verbal presentation skills
- 2) Drawing organization within the larger pin up format (how does the student decide where drawings should be placed and does this help in understanding the design and the presentation)
- 3) Drawing selection – how does the student decide which drawings are needed to convey the relevance of their design concept (in addition to the required drawings)?
- 4) Drawing readability – this includes basic things, such as: is the size of the drawing appropriate for its purpose of understanding the design; is line weight appropriate for the type of drawing and for the communication of the drawing's intention; do character sketches communicate the experience of place?
- 5) North arrow and scale where appropriate

Remember, you need to show that you have:

- considered the city as context in your concept, and that you
- understand the programmatic requirements and have responded to these in a way that expresses functionality, creativity of your ideas, and a response to the iconic architectural context surrounding the site

We all know what magnificent structures surround the plaza site. We don't have to make any judgments about the quality of these structures. Their place in Houston architecture is already defined. So, how does your design respond or relate to this?

While in practical terms, you have a defined site regulated by property lines, as a designer-- you do not, your site extends across the street, to the surrounding area and includes the context of the City of Houston. Remember this and make sure that your solution expresses this in a way that represents a high level of design capability.

Urban parks/plazas are not just about the structures – they are about the spaces in between. This is probably the most difficult thing for an architecture student to grasp. You are so used to designing buildings that you forget about the spaces in between. The plaza experience is about place. In order to create an enriched sense of place, you must think carefully about every square inch of this site. Everything you do is with intention. Not only do structures need to stand, meet programmatic requirements, meet code and ADA, but the spaces that tie these together in your plaza must also be designed to meet these requirements. And, just as we want our buildings to be experiences of place, so must our open spaces. There should be no 'left over' space on your site. Each piece becomes a fragment of the larger whole. This doesn't mean that every space is occupied by something, rather, that it serves a purpose, is designed with intention, and done so in a sensitive and expressive manner that represents a high level of design capability.

Consider adjacencies in terms of function (programmatically) and in relation to basic design principles you have learned in undergraduate design (scale, form, balance, hierarchy, placement, etc...)

Consider what it means to be on the street, along the street, versus on the site. The approach is important to the project.

Remember that limitations are placed on the park space as a result of an existing garage beneath. How does one get from below to above? What is that experience like? Are the stairs the same as originally placed, or have you reconsidered that experience? Does that experience have any relationship to your design?

How does one approach the site? Walk around (the perimeter) the site? Walk inside the site – about it? What is the intention of that experience? What is its relationship to the context?

Have you thought about the functionality of the design? Safety and access?

What about lighting – evening events?

Another little reminder:

Know your dimensions. There is nothing more annoying to a reviewer to ask a student how the size of a space or the distance of something and the student doesn't know the answer. It reflects a student's lack of understanding about their design. You should be able to answer questions such as, how many people will that hold? How big is that space? How far is it from here to there? How wide is that sidewalk? That patio? You get the picture.