

Collaborative Design Studio: The Urban Corridor: Armature for Sustainable Urbanism
Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Community and Regional Planning
Fall Term 2008: **LARC 504**
Instructors: Patrick Condon, Chris Macdonald

Overview

The Studio aims to engage the varied issues associated with sustainable design as they coalesce in the condition of urban corridors. The Vancouver region contains over 1000 kilometres of this urban type, a nexus where ecology, commerce, transportation and social activity come together. In observing existing conditions the studio will seek out future potentials and implications in terms of specific material and social manifestation.

Operationally, the Studio will invite interdisciplinary collaboration while emphasizing core disciplinary concerns. Operating in parallel streams of design activity pitched at specific scales of investigation, the process will be punctuated at key junctures by collective decision making.

The field serving as focus for the Studio will be the environs of Hastings Street through the City of Burnaby from just east of the Trans Canada Highway - at Skeena Street - eastwards to Cliff Avenue. The studio intends to critically probe issues of increased density, movement with in and through the district, sustainability, environmental management and social diversity within this geographic field, observing and designing across a broad range of scale and specificity. In doing so the Studio will suggest the manner in which matters of policy and principle are rendered into the everyday, meaningful realities of material and social culture.

Specifically, the course learning objectives include:

1. To understand the overlap between architectural typology and issues of the sustainable urban landscape
2. To understand how the policy milieu informs the urban landscape and may be reciprocally informed in turn.
3. To understand very fundamental ways of understanding urban landscapes including block and parcel configuration, street network configuration, parcel and building relationships, and building typologies.
4. To understand the role of public infrastructure - and road infrastructure in particular - as a point of intersection of ecological, transportation and social goals.
5. To learn to work collectively and collaboratively with allied professionals as a prelude to later career life.
6. The demonstration of an understanding of these concerns will be observed through the exercise of both individual and collaboratively produced analysis synthesis, large scale urban design proposals and specific design proposals.

While the points of disciplinary demarcation are in practice often blurred and indistinct, some effort is made in the Studio to make explicit those shifts in scale and design 'medium' that have come to distinguish our craft.

The varied interests of each discipline might be schematically described as follows, with a first suggestion of how each cohort of students will proceed through the work of the term.

Architecture: To explore the regard between building type and urban corridor character alongside the regard between building type and inhabited interiors. How do settlement logics of an urban and regional nature find resolution at the scale of domestic life - in our conception of dwelling?

Initially the work of the MARCH students in the Studio will include an inventory and delineation of existing building types along this portion of the Hastings corridor. This work will be set in the context of a consideration of the urban street as a historical construct and the nature of architectural expression and social logic that has accompanied traditional urban patterns.

Following the collaborative depiction of comprehensive urban strategy, MARCH students will work individually to illustrate specific building-scale proposals resolved to a level of interior inhabitation.

Landscape Architecture: To explore the relationship between the urban corridor and its supporting urbanism in the specific context of the regard between residential neighbourhood typologies, natural and constructed urban systems, transportation and movement. With an inherited urban morphology, how might neighbourhoods transform themselves either in revolutionary ways (like Yaletown) or evolutionary ways (like Kits). How do ecological imperatives find expression and meaning in the contemporary city?

Initially the work of LARC students will include an inventory of existing landscape types and amenities in the neighbourhoods surrounding the Hastings corridor and to frame these in broad regional and specific, ecological terms. This work will be set in the context of consideration of the pattern of urbanization and how it both makes demands on and capitalizes on its setting. Particular emphasis is placed on how the overlapping and interlocked systems of road network and drainage network constitute the frame and foundation for the human activities that occur on the parcels and districts thus defined.

Following the collaborative depiction of comprehensive urban strategy, LARC students will work individually to illustrate specific landscape-scale proposals resolved to a level of landform grading, hard materials detailing, and infrastructure function and design

Evaluative Criteria.

Every effort will be made to provide transparent evaluative criteria. Much of the terms work is in teams. Team work will be given a single grade to be shared by all students. Team members have an obligation to participate at the same level as their peers. Failures to meet this principle should be explained to faculty by team members who have been unable to participate.. Team members are encouraged to meet with faculty members when failures of one or more team members are interfering with group production. Final projects are individual and are somewhat more heavily weighted than team projects. On the plus side, strong team leaders will be recognized for their extra effort as shown in the grading distribution below

Grades will be assigned as follows:

- 20% Assignment #1 - Section 1 analysis and synthesis (team)
- 20% Assignment #2 - Section 2 urban design schemes. (team)
- 40% Assignment #3 - Section 3 Final project. (individual)
- 10% Readings quiz
- 10% Team leadership.