

Continuity and Change: URBAN TRANSITIONS, PUBLIC LIFE FOR 15TH AVE. E.

Scan I Design Master Studio, Autumn 2018 [Larch 501]

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With Master Teacher Louise Grassov, Schulze + Grassov



"Inviting cities must have carefully designed public space to support the processes that reinforce city life...At eye level the good city provides opportunities for walking staying, meeting and expression, and that means it must provide good scale and good climate." – Jan Gehl, *Cities for People*

"City space must be carefully designed to invite walking, cycling and staying, encouraging people to join in the common life of the city." – Gehl, Gemzøe, Kirknaes & Søndergaard, *New City Life*

"What kind of city do you want? How will your city use climate imperatives to create urbanism, public space and architecture?" – Peter Honneke, Landscape Architect COBE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

How can a neighborhood retain its "soul" while also accommodating growth and change? How can design of a commercial street invite public use and the cultivation of a more vibrant "public life" culture? As a neighborhood in a rapidly-growing city transitions, how can its history, current strengths and beloved qualities be preserved, while also accommodating and promoting the kind of change that will cultivate a more socially just, economically robust and environmentally regenerative urban node?

These are questions we will explore, using the 15th Ave. East commercial node as a case study for our analyses, urban theory-based investigations, planning and design explorations. Our work will be grounded in expressed wishes of the local neighborhood residential and commercial community, garnered through a workshop in Spring of 2018 that was sponsored and documented by the local interdisciplinary planning and design firms of Board and Vellum, and Environmental Works. The workshop asked, "What are your best ideas for the future of 15th Ave. East?" Participants addressed safety, green space, small businesses, job development and thoughtful density, and also drew their ideas on overlays of existing street elevations.

Our studio will explore how we can address these desires, and bring our own sensibilities, research and design talents to propose policies, plans, designs and guidelines for improvements to the street and public realm, and to the possibilities for transitioning sites located along this current commercial stretch. Inspired by our experiences in Copenhagen and Malmo we will consider how to **apply the Gehl and Schulze + Grassov methods for studying public space; to design invitations that build vibrant neighborhood social life** by encouraging staying in the public realm of streets, plazas, parks and leftover spaces; and to **innovate exemplary design that is equitable, ecological, and climate-resilient**. Throughout the term we will work with professionals from Board and Vellum and Environmental Works, as well as residents, business owners, city staff and local architects and landscape architects.

During the term, our Master Studio will benefit from the involvement of Louise Grasso, formerly with Gehl Architects and now with her own firm, Schulze + Grasso. Throughout the quarter, we'll build on the Copenhagen study tour by referencing examples from our travels and employing and expanding on the public life / public space principles we learned about at those firms; from Copenhagen's integrative approach to climate adaptation and structures for affordable housing; and from Malmo's, SLA's, COBE's and other firms' approaches to cultivating urban biodiversity and prosperous and equitable social space.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- to practice site and district analysis methods, including human use and physical characteristics
- to explore strategies for creating a democratic public realm that is ecological, resilient, regenerative, playful and just;
- to explore, implement and expand on Gehl Architects' urban design concepts and methods to promote a lively urban realm and public life culture;
- to develop and apply ecological infrastructural planning and design strategies for urban biodiversity and green infrastructure and that address the challenge of climate change in Seattle;
- to practice the creative act of developing and transforming program ideas into integrated, responsive designed form;
- to apply evaluation metrics to anticipate actual social and environmental performance of design interventions;
- to develop clear and compelling graphic and verbal communication skills;
- to practice working effectively in interdisciplinary teams;
- to practice working at all scales, using both large and small scales simultaneously to each inform the other

At the culmination of the studio, students will:

- be facile with implementing recognized public space planning principles and design criteria
- be aware of urban forces that affect cultural values and attachments, and strategies for preservation while also embracing community-responsive change
- have developed habits to engage larger contextual drivers as well as localized desires, including environmental, climate change impacts, and social justice considerations
- have practiced applying responsive urban design strategies
- have advanced personal planning, design and design communication skills
- have increased insight and skill for working in teams

STUDIO PROCESS AND EXPECTATIONS

We will meet Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 1:30 to 5:20 for *group presentations, discussions, field trips, working time and team desk critiques*. Occasionally we'll go beyond these times for special events and work times. This term you will primarily work in groups on district inventory and analysis, and on conceptual district and schematic site planning/design level endeavors. Each participant is expected to be in class during the scheduled class time, and to participate as a full member in your teamwork. When Louise Grasso is scheduled to be in town, we expect you to be in studio at all times, and plan on slightly longer days and scheduled sessions outside of class time to best make use of her limited time with us (recognizing conflicting work and school commitments). This will likely require meeting on Tuesdays and Thursday for group and individual desk crits.

You are highly encouraged to continue your sketchbook from Copenhagen (or start a new one) that documents your research and design explorations. Consider including your research and design process, notes from readings, class discussions and community meetings, solutions seen, heard, and imagined, and your reflections and conclusions about process and product.

READINGS AND RESOURCES

The required book for the term is Jan Gehl's most recent, *Cities for People*. A list of resources will be provided, many of which will be on Reserve in the CBE Library and on-line. Over the term we'll compile a studio library to support your work, and you are encouraged to share new resources with each other as you discover them.

COURSE WEBSITE

<http://courses.be.uw.edu/SDMasterStudio/>

COURSE SHARE SPACE

The share space for our course is on Google Drive. The course folder is **2018 LArch 501**. Google Drive is very user friendly. For anyone interested in becoming more familiar with how Google Drive works feel free to avail yourselves of the numerous tutorials online or approach Jess with specific questions. Here's a good place to start:

<https://support.google.com/drive/?hl=en#topic=14940>.

You will need to have your own Google Drive account in order to access the class files. UW administers its mail and file sharing through Google so you can access a Drive account that way, or if you already have a Gmail account we can share the files with you there. The 2018 LArch 501 folder was shared with everyone's preferred email addresses from the study tour, but if you prefer another Gmail address simply request an invitation.

The 2018 LArch 501 folder will be shared with all students, with some files editable and others not. Since everything that you share could potentially be edited/removed/otherwise changed by other members of the group, **do not store your original files on the class Drive**. Please share copies (exact duplicates) of your work and store the original files elsewhere for safekeeping. We will happily advise on storage systems if anyone would like help safely and conveniently storing their files. This is very important to note: **once you have added the class Drive folder to your personal Google Drive everything you do in that folder affects the rest of the class** (editing and removing files, etc.).

For photos and imagery, Jess has shared instructions for uploading to the class **Flickr** account. Each individual should upload photos to the **2018_scandesign_masterstudio** Flickr Account (password: **Publicspace2018**) and create an album titled: "<your name>_CPH_2018". Please see the album Jess created as an example. When you select which photos you'd like to upload to Flickr through the "Camera Roll" tool, you can edit each image to add tags. Please refer to "Assignment 02: Photo Bank" for instructions for how to tag your images. Feel free to share scans of sketchbook pages if you like. We will use these photos for publications, presentations as well as precedent imagery for your studio projects.

STUDIO EVALUATION (C/NC)

Evaluation will be both from guest reviewers and faculty throughout the quarter, with written comments provided at the end of the term. We may also elect to conduct peer evaluations for group work.

Required at the end of term:

- Digital upload of your project files and book pages, including scans of your process work
- Your final printed posters
- Printouts of your posters in reduced format (e.g. 11 x 17 or 8.5 x 11 – size TBD)
- Final versions of book pages to be published (precedents, analysis, etc.)
- Final posters and process work uploaded to the Landscape Architecture archives (or course G-drive, TBD)

RESOURCES

Available on the 2018 LArch 501 Google Drive [Study Tour/Resources/Presentations] or online at specified link:

Study Tour/Resources/Presentations (See Google Drive) for Gehl, Gemzøe, Copenhagen Municipality, Schulz + Grassov, SLA, COBE, Copenhagenize, Green Roof Institute etc. as they become available.

To begin, our project partners have supplied base files they developed for the Community Workshop, and products and summaries of the Workshop results, which are in the Google Drive. These include:

“A Summary of your 15th Ave. East Community Workshop” (Environmental Works and Board and Vellum)

(Draft) *15th Ave. East Block Summaries* (Environmental Works and Board and Vellum)

Upcoming Development Poster

15th Ave. East Historical Photos

Street Elevations (several files in indd, idml, psd, and pdf formats)

Visual Preferences File

15th Ave. Workshop Agenda

Workshop Photos

CAD & GIS files [Resources/Base Files]:

- City of Seattle Open Data Portal: <https://data.seattle.gov/>
- Washington State Geospatial Data Archive/ City of Seattle Data: <https://wagda.lib.washington.edu>

Additionally, see separate list of books, articles and websites. We will continue to build the resources and references in the Drive and in hard copy in the studio library – please contribute!