

Theory_3

Where nature Starts, and architecture Continues

Architecture is a response to nature, this was discussed in my past essay and it continues to apply. Architecture not only reacts to the human condition, but also more basic nature-related influences such as sunlight, wind, hot, cold, and so on. These concepts are thoroughly explored by Vitruvius, Alberti, and Laugier. However, I do not want to explore ways to apply these principles but in a way that not only responds to nature, but abstracts, and accentuates it.

In Gregotti's "Territory and Architecture" he states that, "The environment is rather composed of the traces of its own history. If geography is therefore the way in which the signs of history solidify and are superimposed in a form, the architectural project has the task of drawing attention to the essence of the environmental context through the transformation of form." This theory runs parallel with an essay by Carol Burns titled "On Site: Architectural Preoccupations" where he talks about the site as a piece of the architecture. The act of designing an architecture and site comes from the study of the relationship between the two. The site, which is generally nature and or other built elements, shapes the architecture constructed upon it, but is also shaped itself by what is designed on it. This prompts the removal of hierarchy of viewing one overwhelming another. The symbiotic relationships between the elements which compose a complete design are crucial in the creation of a successful designed work.

In looking to develop a design that reflects the ideology above, first I need to look at examples that do not. The first example that comes to mind is what I refer to as "copy and paste" construction. This epidemic of horrendous design is most predominantly exhibited in suburban and semi-rural America. A product of Urban Sprawl, these poorly constructed houses resemble boring boxes with windows attached, and boring pitched roofs. However, because of their ease of construction and ability to be built most anywhere flat, these "copy and paste" houses are developed into holistically planned neighborhoods across the USA. Burns expands on his theory and calls out the "international" and "functional modernistic" styles as devoid of considerations for the site and emphasizing standardization. A holistically well designed work is symbiotic with its context and cannot be simply copied from one context to the next.

When approaching my site, it is imperative to consider it as a living element with its own personality formed through its past and present context. A past influence in my site is its history as an industrial district. Also, since my site is in an urban environment, other physical considerations need to be made including power lines, sewage lines, water pipes, and so on. Proximity to the White River largely impacts my site as both an opportunity to capitalize on, but also a natural force to react to. Burns states that "the architecture devised for the spot is conceived as a constructive extension of the conditions of the location itself; it thus provides a further construction of the already constructed site. Though it may mediate between the landscape and the building, such architecture uses the site for its own support and extension".

The location that I plan to place a large transportation hub straddles four veins of movements, two train lines, Michigan st. and a walking path. All four of these veins run East and West, however in my master plan I intend on developing multiple more paths of movement through the area. These developments include set-apart bike/jogging paths running North/South and East/West, a light-rail public transport, and a further expanded bus system. The sheer amount of axis cutting through my hub will prompt it to not only be a place to pass through, but also a destination to go for public transportation. I spoke earlier in an essay about how the placement of this Hub will be a catalyst for further development on the East side of the White River.

The architectural form of the Hub will reflect its function, however it also needs to reflect its context. Looking for precedents I focused on the Munich 1972 Olympic Park by Otto and Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin. These two built forms reflect and react to their site

in different ways, one is literal, and the other symbolic. The Olympic Park by Otto is an intricate cable structure which responds to the undulation in the site as its rises and falls. The Jewish Museum's lighting bolt shape was derived from the multiples axis of Jewish residences in Berlin, along with the placement of several voids to symbolic the oppression of Jewish culture throughout parts of history.

Designed form is derived from function and context. My design for the White River Hub, which will bridge over Michigan st., will abstract and react to multiple elements including multiple circulatory veins, the locations industrial past, and the natural influences of the White River. By implementing the above theory, I intend to design a successful network of paths and nodes not only at the White River Hub, but also throughout Eastern Indianapolis that will further unite the city.