

Inviting Urban Play: Public Spaces | Public Life | Seattle's University District

ScanIDesign Master Studio, Autumn 2013, Larch 501/Arch504

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"You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation." - Plato

STUDIO FOCUS

Our studio focus is to imagine and propose a University district that is shaped by physical invitations for urban play, demonstrating strategies of resilience, inclusiveness, and authenticity. Infrastructure and infill projects and programs will activate public space, streets and sites within the district, with the goal of contributing to a high-functioning, socially responsive and environmentally regenerative city. We will apply lessons learned from our summer travels and from our interactions with Gehl Architects as inspiration to plan and design an artful, walkable, bikable, and playful public realm, a livable and lovable community.

During the term, our Master Studio will benefit from the involvement of Bianca Hermansen from Gehl Architects, who has interacted with our ScanIDesign studios as the Master Teacher for the past four years. Throughout the quarter, we'll build on the Copenhagen study tour by employing and expanding on Gehl's 15 Quality Criteria as we develop our planning and design proposals for the urban public realm. You will also be encouraged to creatively engage ecological considerations and such challenges and opportunities as urban intensification, affordability, habitat protection and climate change mitigation and adaptation. We'll interact with professionals and stakeholders who are involved in the visioning, planning and design for the district and consider the voices of diverse current and future users.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The University District Neighborhood "West of 15th" is poised to undergo rapid and long-term transformation, brought on by new housing, a light rail station, an expanded waterfront park along Lake Union, planned greenstreets and a "neighborhood greenway," and a diverse group of stakeholders passionate about the quality of their neighborhood. Several linked efforts are ongoing:

- a University District Commercial Revitalization initiative (funded by the Seattle Office of Economic Development); including alleyway activation
- crafting of a University District Urban Design Framework, sponsored by Seattle Department of Planning and Development (DPD);
- UW's interest in bicycle and pedestrian transportation innovations in the district;
- public open space planning and design initiatives, including the new Link Light Rail station at Brooklyn and 44th; and the expanded Christie Park
- new waterfront park by the Seattle Parks Department, as mitigation for the 520 bridge;
- creation of a permanent farmer's market at University Heights Community Center;
- workforce housing projects, including apartments projects by UW and Children's Hospital;
- multiple grassroots efforts by diverse community groups, such as Roots Young Adult Shelter

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- to explore site analysis, site research and temporary site activation methods
- to become familiar with exemplary urban planning and design projects
- to explore strategies for creating a democratic public realm that is engaging, ecological, resilient, regenerative, and economically and socio-culturally viable;
- to explore, implement and expand on Gehl Architects' urban design concepts and methods to promote a lively urban realm;
- to develop and apply ecological infrastructural planning and design to foster vibrant and green urbanism, addressing challenges such as habitat degradation, human health and climate change ;
- to apply objective and subjective evaluation metrics to anticipate actual social, environmental and/or economic performance of design interventions;
- to develop clear and compelling graphic and verbal communication skills;
- to practice working effectively in interdisciplinary teams;
- to practice working between scales, using both large and small scales simultaneously to each inform the other.
- to understand design as both art and science.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the culmination of the studio, students will:

- understand key issues and potential design approaches for lively, high-performance neighborhoods
- be facile with implementing recognized public space planning principles and design criteria
- have advanced personal planning, design and design communication skills
- have gained an appreciation for and ease with language used by related disciplines
- 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 desk critiques*. Occasionally we'll go beyond these times for special events and work times. This term you will primarily work in groups on analysis/interpretation and conceptual planning/design level endeavors, with options to work in groups, pairs or individually at the detailed design scale. Each participant is expected to be in class during the scheduled class time, and to participate as a full member in your teamwork. When Bianca Hermansen 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 Gehl Architects' time (recognizing conflicting work and school commitments). This may require some planning, such as Tuesdays and Thursday desk crit times.

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 *Cities for People*, which has been ordered by the UW Bookstore. Two optional texts, *Urban Design* (Waterman and Wall) and *Ecological Design* (Rottle and Yocom) have been ordered at the Bookstore for you. We have developed an extensive list of Resources, many of which are 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.washington.edu/gehlstud/>

Course Share Space LARCH501a:

The share space for our course is listed under [larch501a](#). This is not a case sensitive login. This space is only accessible to students who are officially registered for L ARCH 501A and ARCH 504B. If you are registered for the course and are having issues connecting please let Vera know. You will be able to access the space from all lab computers; you can also connect with your personal computer following the steps below. When you log into a CBE computer, you will see a networked drive that is accessible to everyone in this course. Please log out when using lab computers to prevent the deletion of course information.

To access the share from Windows:

Map a drive (right-click "Computer") to:
[\\vader.be.washington.edu](http://vader.be.washington.edu)\Larch501A

Username: NETID\Password: your UW NetID password

To access the share from a Mac:

Use the menu item /Go/Connect to Server/ from the finder and enter
smb://vader.be.washington.edu

Username: your UW NetID
Password: your UW NetID password
Then select Larch501A.

This volume will be mounted on your desktop. For the macs in BE labs, there is an application on the dock and in the Applications folder called "Mount Vader" that automates this.

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:

- **Your final printed posters**
- **Printouts of your book pages**
- **Your complete In-Design files including all links, for book pages and posters.**
- **Uploading of files to the Landscape Architecture and Architecture digital archive.**

Resources:**ScanIDesign/GFL/Gehl Interns blog:**

<http://parklets.wordpress.com/>

University District Urban Design Framework (2013)

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/cs/groups/pan/@pan/documents/web_informational/dpds022256.pdf
and website:

<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/cityplanning/completeprojectslist/universitydistrict/whatwhy/>

University District Urban Design Framework Existing Conditions Report (2012):

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/cs/groups/pan/@pan/documents/web_informational/dpdd016671.pdf

West of 15th / University Livability Partnership web resources

<http://www.udistrictlivabilitypartnership.org/>

Other Resources:

<http://www.8-80cities.org/>

<http://www.gehlarchitects.com/>

Waterlines website, Burke Museum: <http://www.burkemuseum.org/waterlines/>

Site-specific resources available on our course share space:**UW Site Plans (containing site analysis and proposals):**

Architectural Commission Meeting, North Campus Housing Master Plan Framework
Campus Wide Bicycle Shelters
Burke Gilman Trail Visioning Study, Design Concept Presentation
Maple and Terry Halls Schematic Design
Architectural Commission, CURVE Project (Family Housing)
UW Police Department Facility Pre-Design Progress Presentation
Washington State Bicycle Facilities and Pedestrian Walkway Plan

Stakeholder/Neighborhood Concerns:

Parking in the U District-Top Recommendations; March 14, 2001

Site Maps & Analysis:

University District Bike Map
Quality Survey 1 & Quality Survey 2
Walking Distance Map
Kayvon Complete Pedestrian Counts & Pedestrian Count Map
University District Urban Design Framework Existing Conditions Report
Individual GIS data layers clipped to study area. Layers include:
Street edge
Parcel
Building
Park
Bike Routes
U District border
Contour
Water Edge

GIS Map of Study area showing all previous layers except for 2 foot contour.

Additional GIS Data can be found at: <http://wagda.lib.washington.edu/> and
https://wagda.lib.washington.edu/data/geography/wa_cities/seattle/index.html