Arch453/Larc 453 Community Planning and Design Studio

Department of Architecture + Interior Design and Department of Landscape Architecture
University of Idaho Fall 2012 Marshall/Austin

Site and Context - Inventory and Analysis

Provide background information on the urban or rural environment in which you plan design. Information to include:

Physical:
Climate (including solar and wind potential), topography, geology, soils, vegetation, seismic activity, etc.

Social/ Cultural/Economic:
Who lives here? Include demographic information. What are the primary employment opportunities? What is unique about this place? Why do people choose to live here? Do particular buildings, open spaces, or streets hold particular meaning? What are the strengths of the site (physical, social)? Does the site have unmet potential? What are the issues and challenges of the site and adjacent neighborhoods? How might planning, streetscape design, and architectural and landscape design enhance what is there? Are there particular facilities that the town or neighborhood need? Are there concerns about the future? Note any viable businesses near the site.

Urban analysis:
Be able to diagram edges, landmarks, nodes, districts, and paths according Kevin Lynch in *Image of the City*. How does the site interconnect to other sites or neighborhoods? What are the most significant transportation links (by car, public transit, bike, on foot)? Are there significant view corridors to water, mountains, or other landmarks?

Site analysis:
Identify pedestrian circulation and open spaces within and adjacent to your site.
Map vehicular circulation (including transit) and parking within and adjacent to your site.
Streetscape elements such as seating, landscape, trashcans, transit stops, signage, lighting, paving materials.
Measure and draw sidewalk/street sections along primary streets (see *Greet Streets* by Allan Jacobs).
Topography/soils/vegetation.
Drainage (swales, ditches, wetlands, etc.)
Solar/wind opportunities
Existing buildings on and near your site-Use? Materials? Condition? Size and massing? Age & history? Significance?
Views to and from your site.
Unique attributes.

Multi-function
Why is this an appropriate site for what you intend to design? What are the particular opportunities and challenges of this site?
Where are there opportunities for multiple uses (urban biodiversity enhancement, food production, recreation, education, water treatment, etc.)?
What adverse impacts would occur as the result of development? What impacts would be difficult or impossible to mitigate on-site or replace off-site in the short and long term. Are there ecological corridors to habitat patches off-site or on-site?

Spend time at and around your site, observing at different times of day. Look at your site and the surrounding area. Observe people. Sketch. Take notes or use a voice recorder to document your thoughts while at your site. Use a plan drawing or aerial photo as a base to create a graphic inventory and analysis. Check what you see against plan information. Annotate your plan to show corrections and map trees, habitat areas and other elements. (This is how we create fairly accurate as-built drawings.)
Get everything you need to build a model of your area (as it is now) in 3-D.
Draw a plan (1"=100'?) showing site analysis graphically.

Take photos:
Toward adjacent buildings noting materials and details
Toward the site, a series of shots in elevation
Elevation photos along primary streets.
Measure a few building widths where you take elevation photos (to scale the photos).
Diagonal photos toward your site (into which you can insert your digital renderings).
Photos showing significant views *from* your site.
Identify and photograph significant buildings, signs, trees, murals, water features, etc.

Begin to envision what your area could be. Consider redesigning the streetscape. Imagine the interaction of transportation, architecture and landscape elements. Consider the interaction between the built and natural environment for optimal relationships.