The Design Competition; Journaled and Documented

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

Ben McGhee

Thesis Advisor

Andrea Swartz

Ball State University

Muncie, Indiana

May 2011

Expected Date of Graduation

May 2011
Abstract

This is the final studio project of my undergraduate architectural career. I chose to document the process extensively through written journals and various graphic representations. The journal offers an in-depth look at my process as a designer, while also offering a sampling of what it is like to be an architecture student. The graphic images portray the entire design process from initial sketch to final rendering. The compilation and juxtaposition of this information offers a unique view of the typical architectural design competition.

Acknowledgements

I would like to offer my foremost amounts of thanks to my studio professor and thesis advisor, Andrea Swartz. She played a crucial role in supporting the development of this project.

Olon Dotson and Sam Carson must also be acknowledged for all the work they put in to developing the competition program.

I would also like to acknowledge several peers who offered critiques and assistance along the way, mainly: Justin Gross, Taylor Metcalf, Caleb Wild, Zach Grajewski, Dru Furbee, and Andrew Anderson.

Finally I would like to thank Lauren Schmidt for the copious amounts of moral support and meals she gave me along the way. This project would’ve been much more difficult to complete without her helping me through. I would also like to thank her for all the scale figures that appear on my boards; she was brave enough to take pictures of random people in the mall so that I could populate those perspectives.
Author's Statement

As an architecture student I believe that I went through an entirely different experience than the majority of my college peers. I often found it difficult to relate to other students who had copious amounts of time on their hands to take part in any number of non-educational activities. I have always felt that the entirety of my time spent at Ball State was devoted to obtaining my architectural degree. For my thesis project, I wanted to attempt to give at least some amount of insight into what school is like for a typical architecture student.

The bulk of the architecture program is centered on the design studio, and thus the bulk of my life has always been centered on whatever project I happen to be working on at the moment. Studio was always on my mind, and I believed that the best way to document this was to keep a diary. I began the diary on the first day of my final studio project, and continued it all the way through to the completion of the awards ceremony. Along the way, it allowed me to routinely keep track of my progress while reflecting on my design decisions.

Along with the diary, I also included all of the graphic imagery I produced while working on this project. While the diary and the images do relate to one another, they are meant to be experienced separately. The diary gives a glimpse into my thoughts and processes. The sketchbook is an extremely thorough account of how my design progressed from its infancy to its completion. The process sketches show a more refined account of the how the design progressed without as many of the failed attempts that show up in the sketchbook.
I have also included several sections that will explain the full breadth of the project much more than just my words and images. Each section is meant to add further layers of understanding on top of what has been laid down before it. These sections are then internally organized in chronological in order to best illustrate the progression. The competition's program offers a detailed breakdown of exactly what the competition required. Following that is a selection of photographs that I took while visiting the site over the course of two site visits to Indianapolis. The final section then lists every architectural project that directly influenced me as I progressed with my design.

Apart from sharing the typical experience of competing in an architectural design competition, I was able to gain personal insight. Taking time to step back from the constant flow of work has allowed me to better assess myself as a designer.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract and Acknowledgements</td>
<td>A.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author’s Statement</td>
<td>B.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>1.1  - 1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sketchbook</td>
<td>2.1  - 2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Sketches and Models</td>
<td>3.1  - 3.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>4.1  - 4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site and Context Photographs</td>
<td>5.1  - 5.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational Works Cited</td>
<td>6.1  - 6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compact Disc Digital Copy</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Monday 2-28-11

Today was the first day of our final project of the year. We were told to gather in Room 100 at one o’ clock on Monday afternoon. Room 100 has been the heart of the architecture building for all of us since our first day of class almost four years ago. It is a cavernous room that seats around 100 students. All large gatherings occur almost exclusively in this room. Thus, it was very fitting that we were brought here for our final project introduction.

We had all settled in about five minutes after class had started. There was an air of excitement in the room; everyone was well rested today, after recovering from last week’s all-nighters. As usual, we talked amongst ourselves for a good ten to fifteen minutes before we realized that our professors were close to outdoing their normal level of tardiness. We all speculated that they were off frantically trying to piece together some basic details, which we would then slave over for the next two months.

About twenty minutes later, Olon Dotson, one of the professors, finally walked in and took to the small stage at the front of the room. We immediately calmed down and silenced, we were eager to hear all he had to say. After a few minutes struggling with the microphone system he finally addressed us. From this point on, all I can recall are the facts he conveyed to us about the project. After years of completing projects in this school I knew that every bit of information is crucial to the eventual development of a successful project.

We would be designing a community center for the Julia Carson Legacy of Love Foundation. The project would be based in downtown Indianapolis, at the intersection of
Fall Creek Parkway and Central. The neighborhood was described to us as being a blighted area that can be defined as an Urban Prairie. An Urban Prairie is an urban area that is composed of mostly abandoned buildings and vacant lots. Nature has been allowed to slowly start returning the land to its original condition. We would be visiting the site during our following studio session. This would give us a chance to form our own opinions about the site, along with some initial design ideas.

**Tuesday 3-15-11**

Sometimes it is difficult in the beginning of a project to get a good flow going. You have so many design possibilities brewing that it is very difficult to put any of them down on paper. All the ideas are just floating around mixing with one another. On any given project there are literally countless designs you could come up with, and having to choose one makes it quite difficult.

In these beginning stages of any project I don't choose to freak out and attempt to instantly nail down the most perfect design. As designs come to mind I will sketch them down but I mainly focus on other things, such as site models and context images. These don't take much thought but they allow you to stay involved with the project. This allows all those ideas to flow around unhindered in your mind, and though a focus hasn't yet been chosen, you're still working.

For some reason I was rocking this state of mind today. I had lots of random ideas floating around and I felt like putting in some solid hours. I wanted to get documents and models ready so I could lay down my ideas as they became more developed. I needed
to put together satellite imagery in order to create a base to trace my initial site plans. I also chose to create a 3d model of the site along with a physical model. I made laser cut files for a physical model of the site so that it would be accurate and professional enough to be used in future reviews.

By the time I was done with all that it was 6 am. But I had developed a great base for hashing out my ideas.

**Thursday 3-17-11**

You could ask most any architecture student where they look to come up with ideas and I bet that almost every single one of them would say “the internet”. Of those I bet almost all of them would say that they go to ArchDaily. ArchDaily is an architecture blog that posts a new project every single day, or at least that’s what it was originally. Now ArchDaily has turned into a sort of news feed dedicate to solely Architecture related items. Every day there are upwards of ten to twenty posts, many of which are a complete analysis of an architectural design. It also has a great search feature that allows you to access all the projects that have been previously posted. The site has been around so long that some of the better projects will have several posts, from the initial renderings to the completed project photographs. It is a great place to turn to for inspiration.

Today I spent hours and hours searching through Arch Daily before moving on to several architecture firms’ websites. I came across quite a few good examples, and I was able to develop a number of novel ideas myself.

**Friday 3-18-11**
Today I sketched down about eight different ideas, and modeled a few of them. One of my crazier designs intrigued quite a few people as they walked by. Perhaps crazy is good. By the time Andrea, my studio professor, came to me I was starting to favor a few of my ideas. Andrea didn’t end up liking the crazy one very much, but she thought a few of the others had promise.

**Monday 3-21-11**

Today during studio we were scheduled to have pin-ups of our site analysis and site plan. Up until today I’ve had lots of different design ideas, but none of them were any more prominent than any other. So this morning I had to choose which of my designs I was going to focus on so I could proceed with making a drawing and model to share with my studio.

Something that has been drilled into my mind over the past few years is that you must always have a big idea. Every time you come up with a new design it must be driven by one big idea. This big idea must be more than just what you wish your design to look like- that would be superficial. The big idea is often something partially unattainable; your design will strive to achieve it, but there is no right way of doing so.

My big idea for this project has developed into creating presence and place. I want to show a strong visual presence to the greater community while creating a welcoming environment that creates a place for the local community. The location of the site along Fall Creek Parkway lends itself to maintaining a strong visual presence along this main corridor. The rest of the site should then be brought down to a more welcoming and residential scale.
I presented two main ideas: "boulders" and "ribbons." The ribbons idea was a little further developed, but both seemed equally valid in my mind. The ribbons scheme was composed of two ribbons that danced across the site to create the presence and place. The building ribbon and the greenery ribbon where allowed to twist and dive and intertwine in order to fit the program and accomplish the big idea.

“Boulders” was a little less refined but it was the bolder of the two designs. I know the community wants to be noticed, so I decided that a bold, strong face could achieve this. The program would be split into three separate buildings that would each sit as intimidating entities on the site. The language of each boulder would relate to one another through their angular concrete forms. The aesthetics of this plan were developed from a project I saw online at, http://www.anotherarchitectureoffice.com/. The project was the US Terror Tribune, and as quoted by the architects, it is “based on an opposition to the dominance of orthogonal and vertical forms.” This seemed like a great design scheme for me to follow, as I’m attempting to break away from my usually orthogonal ways with this project.

My pin up went well. Feeling empowered, I chose to dive into my ribbons scheme and really start hashing out the details. Hopefully the design purity survives; often, later in the process, once an idea addresses reality it loses a lot of its purity.

Friday 3-25-11

This week was a rather slow one for me. I felt really good about starting to fit some program into my scheme. But once I started, I realized it was going to be a lot more difficult than I had originally guessed. I am used to working with relatively simple forms
that can easily be manipulated to fit in the programmatic spaces required. This design is so different from what I normally do that I’m having a hard time figuring out how to handle it.

I had to figure out how I was going to treat the building’s main form. Would it be hard and angular or rolling and sinewy? My first instinct was to let the design be smooth and gestural. But I was having all sorts of troubles figuring out how people would inhabit such a space. First off, it would create lots of strange angles with the ground plane. Spaces, as Rod Underwood would put it, “that a kid could get wedged in”. The interiors would be just as difficult; I wasn’t sure how the floor plates would meet with the sloping ceiling planes, more awkward space.

One solution I came up with was to make the floor plates and the exterior shell into different systems, that way the floor plates would simply hover within the volume created by the flowing exterior shell. Unfortunately, this solution still left awkward space on the exterior and a roof that would be difficult to occupy. So I needed an alternative.

The alternative was more along the lines of something I would normally design, a hard angular interpretation of my ribbon form. This would allow the main form to be more easily manipulated without losing its purity. The angular form makes the weird angles a little more manageable as well.

I also decided that Zaha Hadid would be my muse for this project. I view every one of her projects to be rather bizarre but also very appealing. They are distantly removed from anything I would normally design. They also seem to often take on a linear form, very similar to my ribbon idea.
After receiving some encouragement from Andrea, I need to hit it hard this weekend and actually start forcing in some program. As I said before, I hope it works out well.

Sunday 3-27-11

I spent a good ten hours working on studio today, sadly the finished product looks like it could have been done in one. I have had strokes of inspiration throughout the day but they always seem to end up melting away as I delve deeper. It is always so difficult for me to turn my formal ideas into a functional design. This is why I often approach projects from a more analytical view. I normally put together the general spatial layouts first; from there I begin to tweak the design to turn it into something formally exciting or pure. It has turning out to be much more difficult than I expected to get things working.

By the end of the night I have ended up with a pretty functional design for the JCCC portion of the program. However the connection to the rest of the facility is severely lacking. I haven’t had to worry about designing the other portions but I still need them to be intelligently present in my master plan, and so far I don’t see that readily happening.

Monday 3-28-11

Well my critique with Andrea didn’t go as I expected. She seemed to be much more impressed with things than I was. Despite how well she seemed to think I was doing, I feel very very far from a design with which I can be happy. The biggest issue for me is trying to maintain my original design concept while still creating a highly functional space.

Tuesday 3-29-11
Today, so far, has been another terrible day of trying to reconcile the jumble of ideas in my head. The more I look online for inspiration, the more polluted my ideas become. I keep coming up with new ways of handling the design but then I ultimately decide they aren’t good enough. Even now, as I write this up my mind is swimming with all the possible solutions I have created. I think it is time to just pick something and force it to work for me. So far, every time I try to start working with something I end up tossing it out after a few sketches. I think that what I need to do is just stick with one idea and take it to a point of completion. All of my half-finished sketches are getting me nowhere.

It is strange to think this but I’m not too worried yet. The project is due in exactly 4 weeks from tomorrow, but I know what I’m capable of doing. I usually consider a project to take about 3 weeks to finalize. All the work done in the beginning is simply figuring out what the project will be. All the stuff that matters, like final drawings and models, can be thrown together in no time, so long as you work like a machine on a 24 hour shift. My biggest push right now is for the upcoming mid-reviews next Monday. For those I want to have some clearly represented ideas and images so that I can get good enough feedback to blast me into the final stretch. It can be done.

**Wednesday 3-30-11**

Well today has been a long day, its approaching 3 am on Thursday. However it has been a great day for progress. I’m finally on my way.

I had probably the worst critique of the project today from Andrea. She pretty much told me that I needed to get going. It was what I deserved; even I was getting sick and tired of my own dismal progress. I was actually slightly embarrassed to come in to studio
today. I wasn’t pleased with what I had come up with and things seemed to be going backwards just as much as forwards. Thankfully, in the time before my critique, I was able to get down a sketch that finally looked like something that could work.

Andrea encouraged me to stop dawdling about with small sketches and get some bigger drawings going. She also deemed that I wasn’t ready to be putting anything in the computer yet. Her advice: just start pumping out some one to twenty scale drawings. This was definitely the most helpful advice I’ve received on this project.

I printed out six 11 x 17s that when pieced together gave me a Google Earth satellite image to trace over at the correct scale of one to twenty. Once assembled, the sheet was massive; it took up a majority of my desk. Some people joked that I must print it out bigger, as that clearly wasn’t really possible.

I then covered the site plan with a huge piece of trace and began sketching. I used a dull charcoal pencil so that I could be broad and gestural in my line work. I didn’t want to have to worry about being precise, as that often holds me back and this stage of the design. I felt liberated and invigorated as I scrawled across the desk-sized piece of trace. All of the chicken scratch ideas I had accumulated over the past few weeks were finally able to mesh together and turn into a realistic design.

I’m quite certain that with all of my smaller scale sketches I just simply couldn’t solve the issues. I would draw out an idea, and as soon as a design problem developed there just wasn’t enough space or detail in the drawing to work things out. The large scale and the blunt pencil allowed me to draw and redraw lines and spaces until they fit together just as I wanted them to.
By the end of the night I have ended up with a pretty solid looking site plan. I was even told that it looked like a Zaha building, which is excellent, since I was using her designs as my inspiration. For tomorrow, I'm really looking forward to getting into the third dimension a bit more. I plan on putting together some sections as well as a number of interior plans. I bet that by tomorrow night I'll have a full set of drawings that finally describe what this crazy project is all about. It took awhile, but I'm extremely pleased with where I am at. It feels good to have finally designed something that I could deem good enough.

**Friday 4-1-11**

I ended up with a good set of drawings that can accurately describe the majority of my project. I'm starting to realize that the building skin and formal language will be hard to nail down. But I'm still happy with the building layout and the overall design, the smaller details now are what might cause some issues.

My critique went much better today than my last one did. Andrea was able to recognize that I had put in many hours of meaningful work, as opposed to all the meaningless hours I put in last weekend. We talked a bit about the skin and my concerns with the long stretches of façade. There are two long elevations that I believe may be a bit problematic, one faces the main entry and one faces the traffic on Fall Creek Parkway. Andrea had an idea for the façade facing the road; she thought that I should capitalize on the perspectival aspect of the elevation. This part of the building will never really be viewed from a straight on approach; it will only ever be seen as you’re zooming by on Fall Creek. So how can I address this motion? Andrea suggested a sort of giant
I assessed that would change as you drove past. It could be signage or imagery that called attention to the community. I’ll give it a shot.

Sunday 4-3-11

Ugh. This was another weekend of faltered designing. I was feeling so good about everything last week, and now everything seems to be in turmoil again. I’m still happy with the overall design, but figuring out a successful way to skin this thing is becoming quite difficult.

From the very start of this project I have been contemplating using a very organic form for my building, and since I was struggling greatly trying to get anything to work, I figured I’d give organic forms another shot. My only truly native program is Rhinoceros; so I needed to work in it if I wanted to have any shot of succeeding with my new form. Rhino on the other hand, makes it very difficult to manipulate organic forms. You can create them easily enough, but editing them pretty much means going back to the start, not exactly something you want to do when experimenting with formal ideas. However, after a bit of Googling I found a plug-in for Rhino that made organic forms very simple to work with.

The program is called Tsplines, and I’m pretty sure that if I watched a few tutorials I could master it relatively quickly. After messing around with it for a few hours I decided that although I could make something look pretty cool, making a physical model would be impossible, at least in the traditional manner. If I wanted to spend a bunch of time figuring out the router and the 3d printer then maybe I could have made it, but it wouldn’t be worth the time or money.
So it was back to orthogonal forms. By the end of the weekend all I have to show is a few pages of experiential sketches, but nothing too profound. I had planned on entirely finishing my deliverables for the mid-review, but since they were moved back to Wednesday it was pretty hard to force myself to get things done. I hope that my crit tomorrow can get me moving in the right direction again.

Monday 4-4-11

It was another long day today. But by the end of it I've come up with a pretty solid idea of where I'm going to head with my project.

In studio I worked mostly on turning my random sketches into a cohesive whole that could be adapted into my Rhino model. By the time Andrea got around to me, I had been able to get together a decent representative model. She liked a few things about it and hated a few others. She offered a few ideas in relation to the portions she didn't like, and I feel like I'm back on track again. I was finally able to come up with a good idea for the façade that faces the main entrance. My solar fins that are located on the top of the atrium could fold over onto the sides of the atrium. This will help bring down the scale as well as highlight the continuity of the atrium space.

I ended up going back up to studio around 12:30 am because I realized that I would rather be working on a physical model than my Rhino one. So I abandoned my desktop and headed up to my studio desk. My usual group of studio buddies were up there, which made things enjoyable. In the beginning I was a bit deterred, as I realized that this model would be mostly obsolete in about a day and a half after mid-reviews, which reminded me of a fairly sad story that I should share.
Last semester we had a very similar design competition for our studio project. I had really struggled coming up with a design I liked. I had finally come up with something about a week or so before mid-reviews, and I was feeling pretty good about my design at that point in time. However, during reviews I got torn to bits. One of the reviewers was nice about it, the other one was a complete jerk. I ended up having to entirely scrap my original design in favor of coming up with a brand new one. Point of the story being, that even if you like what you have, it may be terrible. Now I don’t feel like I can entirely embrace a project until I have received my final working review, after that point it is full production mode until the end.

I ended up being much more pleased with my model than I expected to be. It really came together quite nicely. The level of craft is still a bit lacking, but the ideas are all there, and it looks like a solid design. I’ll have to work it back into the computer to hash out some of the details, but barring major revisions at Wednesday’s reviews I should be good to go until the end.

**Wednesday 4-6-11**

Today marks the beginning of the end. I received my mid-review critique from Professor Josh Coggeshall and graduate student Jared Burt. I received a review from Josh on my last project and it was excellent, every single one of his ideas was brilliant, so I was looking forward to hearing what he had to say about my community center design. I had never had a review from Jared but I had seen him critique other students and I knew he was usually pretty tough.
My review ended up going really well. Last night I had gone over all of my drawings and made sure they read clearly and supported my design ideas. I drew five different diagrams that related to my basic design intents. My intents were: each building material is part of a continuous unit, allow the building and landscape to be continuously integrated, give the building a bold face while still welcoming in the community, the atrium should be the axis that holds together the program, and finally that the site should address the different levels of pedestrian scale. I made these intents clear in the beginning of my presentation but then we ended up not really talking about them very much.

Whenever you have a generally good project, one that has a good “big idea” and that is executed fairly well, you end up getting reviewed on rather picky things. This is what happened today. Most of my review ended up being focused on my plans, which were sadly the least developed part of my presentation. I had put a decent amount of planning into the overall planning but the finer details hadn’t been addressed very well. Josh felt that they really needed a lot of work, and I definitely agreed. They also took issue with the fact that my more public spaces were located on the second floor. I explained that it was my idea that the first and second floors were both given equal amounts of importance as they were both equally accessible via my ribbons of green space. After speaking on this in more depth they agreed with my location of program.

I mentioned to them that I was currently struggling with the materiality of the building and how I wanted it to express itself. They had some good ideas relating to that as well. Josh noticed that there were hardly any parallel lines to the project and he felt that this should be a key design driver as I continued to refine the form. I shouldn’t make walls
straight up and down just for the sake of regularity. I should allow the forms to stretch and shrink where they necessitated it. This idea sounds rather exciting and will lead to some interesting manipulations of space. I think that breaking down the main volumes into smaller more expressive pieces would start to give the forms a more exciting presence. The building is currently very easily assessed; breaking down some of the volumes might begin to give the design more depth.

After the formal crit, I left my deliverables up on the wall so that Andrea could give me a short crit afterwards. She was pleased with my work and felt that my crit had gone well. We talked about some of the different ideas that had been brought up and both agreed that many of them would be good steps to take. I feel prepared to really dive in now and barrel through to the end. The only thing holding me back is the obscene amount of work that has to be done for my other classes; mainly build tech. By this coming Monday I should be clear to start really hammering stuff out. I’d love to finish strong; hopefully I can stay motivated.

Monday 4-11-11

Last night I spent quite a few hours sketching down some ideas and then attempting to duplicate those ideas in my Rhino model. I was pretty pleased with what I came up with; my design is starting to lend itself to an intelligent plan. Instead of sticking with approximately three large forms I decided to break down the volumes so that they can begin to inform interior layouts. It is been a good start to the week.

My alarm woke me up from a studio dream this morning; I had been dreaming that I was receiving another mid-review. It was interesting because my mind was coming up with
critical comments that I hadn’t been told or ever consciously thought of. I’ve always
known that studio permeates my entire conscious; apparently my subconscious is
focused on my work as well.

In the beginning of studio I asked Justin Gross, a fellow classmate, for a few critical
comments to start off the day. He didn’t have too much to say, but I had definitely found
a more critical eye since last night. I was no longer entirely pleased with what I had
come up with. I thought my new façade looked tacky and arbitrary. When it comes to
studio I am definitely my own worst critic, which in turn makes me my own worst enemy.
Studio projects would be beyond easy if I didn’t really mind what I came up with. Striving
to come up with my own best solution is what makes designing so difficult. Every design
problem has a billion possible design solutions; it’s too bad I make myself fight through
so many of them.

By the time Andrea came around to crit me I was rolling and feeling pretty good with my
latest iteration. Unfortunately, Andrea preferred my design from last night, which I had
begun to move away from. She argued why that one was better, and I tried to prove to
myself, as much as her, that my new adaptation had more promise; the battles of
design.

Now, almost 12 hours later, there are several new adaptations slugging it out. My goal
to choose one and get going with it by the end of the day, has proven to be rather
difficult. Currently, my main issue is that whenever I attempt to start modeling my
design-sketches I get discouraged. I don’t think it’s so much that I start doubting the
design, I think it’s more so that I feel hindered by the computer. As much as computers
are supposed to be helpful, mine sure has given me issues with this project. I would love to just break out some clay and start carving out my design; unfortunately that isn’t quite how things are supposed to be done.

Recently, I heard a fellow student criticize clay models, saying “Clay models are for when you don’t have time to make a real model,” and in most regards this is true. Clay models are great for really exploring the spaces and volumes of your formal design, but in our age of high-tech design, more technically specific models are needed. Models and drawings are generally expected to directly relate to one another. A clay model paired with hand drawn images denotes an incomplete project, to truly complete a project you are expected to reconcile all issues so that the final product is entirely refined. If all you have is a clay model, then you have not truly finished designing.

**Thursday 4-14-11**

This week has been extremely busy. Though I haven’t really had to do anything much besides work on studio. I’ve been working on studio at least 16 hours out of every day. Sleeping only four hours a night with a few hours thrown in for eating and a class or two. It has been quite difficult to model the smooth forms that I’m going for, it’s looking very nice but it’s taking forever. I had hoped to be done with what I’m currently working on by Tuesday night, clearly that wasn’t very realistic.

I’m trying to stay motivated; I’ve been putting in tons of hours of work. For some reason, I just don’t seem to be as productive as I have sometimes been in the past. I think one thing that’s dragging me down is how worried I am about the coming future. In just three short weeks I will be graduating and moving on with my life. I had hoped to be moving...
on to a job in the architectural field but that is proving to be rather difficult. I have spent many hours hunting for jobs and applying at every firm I can. It is really just an added thing in the back of my mind that keeps me from working at my highest level.

My design has always given importance to the linear atrium space but I'm starting to question its formal language. My design has formed into a more cohesive piece and I believe that a single formal language may be better for the design. The building is doing an excellent job of rising up out of the landscape on three of its sides. The atrium side is the only piece that is sticking out at the moment. On one hand, I want it to stick out because of its importance, but on the other hand, I don't want it to be opposed to my buildings established formal language.

My goals for the rest of today include: developing my conceptual design statement, sketch versions of all diagrams, exploring my board layout, and finally finish modeling my building's exterior.

Monday 4-18-11

It's really turning into Tuesday, as it's currently 5am, but I'll still count this as Monday. I'm currently experiencing a bit of a lull so I thought it would be a good time to share what has been going on with me and my crazy school of architecture. Today started out pretty easy as I had a job interview in Indianapolis. Interviews are exciting on their own, as they are extremely hard to get, but this one was extra special as it gave me a legitimate excuse to head to Indy and not work for a while. I'm currently at the stage where I should be working non-stop, but I will gladly accept any reasonable excuse to take a break.
The requirements for graduating from this school just keep piling up and adding to my list of excused work breaks. Unfortunately, Wednesday looks like it may have a few too many breaks built in. Every year we have an awards ceremony in CAP. Students from all three departments are recognized for various scholarships and achievements accrued throughout the year. Over the years I have only occasionally stopped by for a few moments to watch the proceedings. Strangely enough, it is scheduled right in the middle of “hell week.” So as all of us are spending every last minute of our lives working, they expect us to willingly go and sit through some awards ceremony. We are in such a state of exhaustion that sitting down without a glowing computer in front of us is a dangerously soporific endeavor. Anyways, I was told today that I will be receiving the Henry Adams Medal for graduating at the top of my class. Great award but terrible timing, hopefully I won’t fall asleep in the front row.

Wednesday is also the day for some Honors banquet to receive our cords for graduation. I’m planning on going, but mainly for the free meal. Free prepared food is highly valued at this stage of a project. If it takes me more than ten minutes to prepare or acquire my food it has become a waste of time. Thankfully, my amazing girlfriend (who is luckily not in school this semester), spent the weekend making me several batches worth of leftovers. I should be set through most of the week. Frozen food is also coming to my rescue. It is a good thing I don’t live like this all the time or I would surely die of malnutrition and exhaustion.

As far as my actual project goes, it has been a pretty good day. I’ve been working on my floor plans most of the day. They have finally come together pretty well and are quite close to being board ready. My crit with Andrea was rather uneventful and slightly
comedic. We were discussing some board layout possibilities and a few other issues. She didn’t really give much of any response and then simply left saying I was good and I would get it done. It’s nice knowing that my professor has such blind faith in me; it could generally be assumed that she has a better idea of whether or not I am capable of successfully finishing.

Speaking of finishing, I’m not so sure about the progress of many of my classmates. I saw someone’s project today that consisted entirely of something that could have been modeled in four minutes. I’m not sure what they have been doing, but they seem to be in serious trouble. They aren’t the only ones; strangely enough, the majority of the weak projects seem to be coming from the teams. We were allowed to do the project as either a team or an individual, and so far I wish I were competing against the teams. It is clearly thought of as an advantage, but I think all it does is sever a bit of the ownership over the project. If a partner can’t work, then the other partner doesn’t feel bad taking the night off either. It is unfortunate, as it seems that working in a team would be a great opportunity to really blast out a solid project.

Now I’ll get back to work, with loud levels of musical Mash-Up and caffeine keeping me going.

**Wednesday 4-20-11**

Tonight I’m attempting the impossible and trying to turn my building into a set of laser cut files. It isn’t going so well. I’m not sure that it will even come together in the end. This project has been very difficult. I’m not very happy with it right now.
Wednesday 5-4-11

Well a tumultuous two weeks has passed since I last wrote about my horrifyingly complicated studio project. It was actually due last Wednesday, and it was quite the finish. I had never had so much work to complete in such a short amount of time. Despite my efforts to put in tons of time on the project early on, I was still left with an insurmountable task list several days from the project's deadline.

In the wee hours of Monday night I realized that there was no possible way I could spend time sleeping or doing anything at all between then and my deadline other than work at a frenzied pace. I was pushing towards a plot time at 12:40 pm on Tuesday and then at 5 pm on Tuesday and then 9 am on Wednesday and then 10 am on Wednesday. With the project being due at 11 am on Wednesday I had missed a total of 3 plot times before I was finally ready to print my boards.

I had to spend most of Tuesday night working on my model. I chose to work in studio, as I knew that it would be the last night I would ever spend slaving away on a project. Despite the pressure, it was a rather precious moment and I wanted to experience the true studio environment as it is for one final night. It was indeed a crazy night. Many of us had turned on the “steadily working zombie mood” and had been stuck in it for several days; the final night always brings out the strangest behavior in all of us. Many times throughout the night there would be strange exclamations, hollers or screams. I remember one time in particular when my friend Sean Morrissey shouted out loud repeatedly, “BACK IN THE GAME!” After talking with him later, I found out that Sean was struggling to come anywhere close to completing his project. He had been
frantically working for hours when his Rhino file suddenly crashed, eliminating most of the work he had done that night. After some finagling, another student had been able to recover most of the file, causing Sean to let lose his exclamation. Sadly, in the end, Sean was unable to get sufficiently ‘in the game’ and ended up not meeting the requirements for an acceptable submission.

My physical model was unsurprisingly just the same as the rest of my project, extremely difficult to handle. As I diligently worked through the night I watched the hours slip away from me. I ended up having to abandon the model at around 7am, but with plans to come back to it after I plotted. I went back to my house to finish up my boards and that is when the most unfortunate event of the night occurred. I sat down to work and actually blacked out; an hour or so passed before I came to. The only way I noticed that I had lost consciousness was that the album I had started listening to was over. Other than that it just seemed as if I had blinked. On the bright side, at least I did come to; it would have been terrible if I had passed out straight through the deadline. With the short time I had remaining I quickly threw together some sub-par diagrams and slapped them in their spot on my board. I then saved my board and ran over to the Architecture Building to meet my 10am plot time.

When I got to my assigned plotter I fortunately came across some good friends, Caleb Wild and Taylor Metcalf. I asked if they could plot my board for me, as they were entirely done with their project, and they kindly obliged. This left me roughly one hour to quickly throw together the rest of my model. I have always looked down upon hot glue guns and their use in model making (they are most often used to make sub-par models), but it was what saved me on this project. Utilizing the super-fast dry time of hot
glue I was able to get some semblance of a model completed by the time I reached the deadline of 11am. It was definitely the worst model I had ever put together but it still gave an excellent idea of what my project was trying to be. It actually looked pretty cool, despite its less than stellar craftsmanship.

My project passed inspection and I was able to hang it up as one of the last submittals, entry 67, at the end of the lengthy 3rd floor corridor. I wandered about with Andrew Anderson, a friend and classmate, for a while, examining the other projects before stumbling back to my home and collapsing into bed for essentially the next 25 hours. I had finished.

The next day I found out my project had been selected as a finalist in the competition, something I was quite pleased about, but had more or less expected. Thursday evening we had the awards ceremony and I sadly wasn’t an award winner, but that was expected as well. If I had perhaps had another week to more sufficiently wrap things up and finish my model I believe I could have been a winner. I was pleased with my project, and the competition was stiff, so not winning wasn’t that much of a heartbreaker. My biggest regret was that it was my last competition of my undergraduate career and that I had never won one. Though one peer told me, “maybe next year Ben,” I ignored him.

Afterword

This journal was a tough task to stay on top of. Part of the trouble with studio projects is that they monopolize the entire life of an architecture student. Some of the most interesting times to document were the times when I didn’t have time for sleeping,
eating, or showering; let alone sitting down to write about how things were going. Several times when I considered putting some time into journaling I would eventual switch over to doing something else related to furthering my design. I suppose it is good that this journal is strictly paired with the completion of my studio project, as that is where the majority of the work ended up going. I wished I had tallied how many hours I spent on this project; I wouldn’t be surprised if it ended up in the 400 range.

Attempting to design in a different style than I usually do proved to be extremely difficult. I came across many issues that I never had before. It was definitely an excellent learning experience in all areas of the design process. By the end of it all I am solidly convinced that my typical style of gridded and precise is the way to go. On the other hand, I will be much more open to trying something less conventional if the situation calls for a decidedly unique and imaginative solution.

I would also like to say that I was very pleased with my end product. Despite all the turmoil and doubt along the way, things all worked out in the end. I was proud to call my design my own, award winner or not.

As far as my project not being an award winner, I received complements from several peers and professors. Two of my professors actually expressed that they had hoped it would have been a winner. That’s good enough for me; I value the opinion of my professors over the opinions of unknown and indecisive judges. There is always grad school- I’ll save my competition winning for then.
Physical model @ 1/16" scale. The base should be 24" wide (E-W direction) and 30" long (N-S direction) on a 4" high base. Teams, who are developing both major programmatic components, can submit a 24" x 60" model or two separate 24" x 30" models.

Two boards (for individuals) or three boards (for teams) 30" (w) x 24" (h) arranged vertically (i.e., total height for individual submission is 48", total height for team is 72").

A Title Block including the following:
Julia Carson Community Center, Indianapolis IN
2011 Gresham Smith Design Competition
Submission title, conceptual statement and explanatory text.
(no names should be included besides those mentioned above)

Drawings identified below can be influenced by your intent to COMMUNICATE YOUR IDEAS AND DESIGN AS EFFECTIVELY AS POSSIBLE.

- **Site location plan** to show the community center within the context of Indianapolis (5" x 5" +/-)
- **Site "Master" Plan at 1"=50'** showing three components of the community center and site development ideas. Include adjacent street and immediate context (10% +/- in each direction).
- **Site section/elevation** at 1"=50, oriented North/South. Again, show three components.
- **Floor plans** at 1/20"=1'-0" of the ground floor (including immediately adjacent site info). Additional floors may be at 1/20th or smaller. Orient plans such that north is up.
- **Building section(s)** minimum of one at 1/10"=1'-0" communicating issues such as spatial relationships and tectonic attributes. Teams should show a minimum of two sections at same scale.
- **Building elevation** (one) at 1/10" = 1'-0" showing materiality, texture, depth. This requirement is waived if you chose to do a minimum of two exterior perspectives (three for team) AND the wall section/detail requirement is made into a 3D depiction of the building skin communicating materiality, texture and depth of elevation.
- **Exterior Perspectives**, minimum of one, two for teams, communicating issues such as scale, site/contextual relationships, fenestration, materiality, building skin tectonics.
- **Interior Perspective(s)** (minimum of one or two for teams) communicating a primary public space(s) within the Julia Carson Community Center.
FINAL STUDIO PROJECT 2-11

- Julia Carson Red from Indiana
- Son Andrew Carson is now the rep
- Son Sam Carson is now CEO Comm. Center
- J.C. LeCant of Love
- Paul Carey Neighborhood
- Comments: Love, I am like-space
- Cross housing
- Lead silver
- Sam Carson produced
- Look like the white house last better
- People can be found of
- DEF KIMI AND I am
- A BMW in the middle like a poll
- Armor around edge like stories
- Open the levels in this house
- Wall inside for future allow a "mother's wall"
- Something about his mother really wanted
- Mr. Acker
- "Do you know" annoyed
- Peace and love later please
FIRM'S March 7, 2011

☐ ALTAMAN TODD 317-840-3896
- left a few weeks ago at job fair
- send him an email in a couple weeks reminding him I called when they were really busy. They should have a better idea then.

☐ BLACKLINE
Scott Perkins left a voice mail 714-71-3608

☐ SEC DESIGN CALL BACK LATER ANDREW
9:00 Weekday Morning

☐ RADIO BRIAN left a voicemail.

☐ THE 10 STUDIO IS MY FAVORITE STOP IN TOWN
- could only higher someone ready to work in
- can't really take on anyone right now.

☐ SCHMITT STEVE CALL BACK LATER

☐ ATROGNA CALLED TO LEFT A V-MAIL

☐ BLACKLINE 4 PM TUESDAY
Scott Perkins + Craig Vondelzen
- Sarah Shelby
- Alayko Arambulo
- Maria Novak

Young people at AKDesign I could
contact all from Ball State
Top of the Alumni there.
He appreciated my assertiveness.
Contact in 10 days or "harass" me.

Keep in touch in RATIO
Brooks
Handed off resume & portfolio
Other people to cloud Tracy times

The sun
MUNIE 101

VILLAGE TOUR DAY

EAST SITE ROOM

HOUSE THICK CHIP CHIPS BLOCKS TAPED ONE IN BLOCK CUT OUT LIGHT GREEN
BAST / RIVER CARD - BOARDS

- Teacher Community Center Washington
- HTML Architect
- 22,000 SQ FT
- CAVE ruin C.C. 3500 Years Chicago
- Park Hillside Lookout But Inviting
- PINT HY Australia Sirty Hills
- HY Favesite
- Bond Center 75,000
- C. M. Quesit Community Center Van's BC
- Batau Architect
- IDEA ICON

GRESHAM USES SILHOUETTE SCALPE FIGS

EXPRESSION

- CEREBAL "FALL"
- PROGRAM IN DIFF. HOURS PUTS OUT TO PRESENT ITSELF
- GRASS SLOPPES UP TO CANYON
- IDEA ONE

LIKE DRAGGING A STICK THROUGH DRY CRACKED SOIL BREAK UPS CHunks CREATES "CANYON" IN THE MARBLE

COMMUNITY MEET HELPS THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER.
SITE SHOULD HAVE A STRONG FACADE TO F. CREEK. APPEAR FULL.

"LIVING" "A BUILDING OPPOSED TO BEING ORTHOGONAL"

"TRELLIS"

"REACH OUT - PULL IN - HOLD STEADY"

"POSITIVE NEGATIVE SPACE" WELCOMES VISITORS TOWARDS BUILDINGS.

HIERARCHY

COULD DEPOLARICIZEcroppinginfocroppinginfocroppinginfolippo to be used to

Sketchbook 27
GUIDE PROGRAM
- AMPHITHEATER
- BASKETBALL COURT
- LIVING MACHINERY GARDEN
- RAW GARDEN
- FOUNTAIN / POOL-INTERACTIVE
- HILLS / TOPOGRAPHY
- FIELD SPACE

RIBBON - GREENERY
- HEAVY
- TRANSPARENT
- PEDONKIAN CURVE

- CANVAS WALL - STONE IN METAL TRAY
- TELL FLOW ABOUT PARK BUILDING

- EXPLORE SPATIAL LAYOUT IN PLAN + SECTION
- BUILDING PATTERN DEVELOPMENT
- ANGULAR
- SQUARE
- CURVE
- LAYER LAYOUT OPTIONS
- PLANTS OR INTERACTIVE
- FRONT ENTRY OPTIONS

MARCH 25-26 2021
LEEP NO - NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT
- HOW CAN EXISTING BUILDING MATERIALS BE INTEGRATED - COMPLETE ASSEMBLY
- STOPS KEYED TO FACE A FEATURE
- XERISCAPING - NATIVE PLANTS
- NETLAND?
- GEOTHERMAL - NO BRAKES
- SHARE RIVER SPORTS SOURCE SHIP
- GREEN SCIENCE OCEAN
- PORTLAND CRANES FOR SUSTAINABILITY
- BUS OUT / PARKED PARKING ALLOWED
- POSSIBLE LIGHT WELLS?
**Build Tech Notes**

**April 1, 2011**

- **Drawing Site Plan:** Left foot plan shown.

**Floor Plan:***

- **Note:**
  -左右 cancelling.

- **Measurements:**
  - 0.417 ft.

**Detail:***

- **Hole in Building:**
  - Do not have to dimension structure.
  - Floor plan.

- **Elevations need note different statement.**
  - Note warehouse.

**Tasks:***

- **Architects:**
  - Review of Margaret.
  - Studio Gang Margaret.
  - First floor.

- **Structural:**
  - Automatic report of repetitiveness.
  - Cost of kale an email.

- **Yet to do:**
  - Make complete app.
  - Send it to John.
  - Review.
  - Send an email.

- **Conditions:**
  - Krrip.
  - Fireplace.
  - Radiator.
  - Future.

- **Structural Notes:**
  - Introduction.
  - Level.
  - Review.

- **Alfredo Gonzalez:**
  - Note.
  - Wright responsible.

**UNLV**
- MAME: Add an exterior space. It may also continue inward. It goes inward.
- FOR: Put light wells. Let light in. That way, room could be used, and windows to make project appealing.
POSSIBLE HOMES

511 S. COUNCIL ST. -- TOP OF A HILL (Y
524 N. ADAMS ST. -- PEACEFUL
203 E. JACKSON ST. -- BUSY

- SCRAP MATERIAL AS CANVAS
- LAMINATING PAPER
- SELLING TO NICE HOUSE OR
  REAPPROVED AND
  FIXED UP.

- ALTERNATIVE IDEA
  A PEACEFUL DESIGN FOR GAS STATION
  AT 415 N. PROCTOR ST.
Sketchbook 2.21

JIA BETSI - BAUMSCHLAGER EBERLE

- Pain Office in Austria.
- MINIHOUSE.COM
- Very nice solar housing.
- Open plan without building code
- Adap to subcontract walls
- Does site plans as if figures ground. Does label buildling want to fit in.
- Identify themselves in area of the "bulding trade."
- Long lasting building
- "200 years. Eberle"- Factory of long lasting building to good building lower energy. to flexible building to economy.

1. Locality - embrace existing quality of place
   - High craftsmanship
   - Better than context
   - Beauty of the architecture.
   - Public space, poem, core, structure.
   - Place is very important.
   - Core/staircase public space is very important: a beautiful sculpture.

2. Flexibility: Structural neutrality
   - Core/ sheels are separate.
   - These layers of structure..
**Design Statement Stuff**

**Words**
- Sketchbook 2.24
- 3-2-3 sentences

**Icon**
- Integrated
- Approachable
- Accessible
- Filter
- Collect
- Interact
- Welcome
- Site gathers

**Fall Creek**
- Forgotten
- Decline
- Urban prairie
- Eclipted
- Decayed
- Overlooked

**Approach Network**

**Future E.C.**
- Resurgence
- Pride
- Recognition
- Feature community
- Model neighborhood
- Sustainable
- Future follows
- Repeat
- MS get only

**Site Plan**

**Board Community**
- Highly detailed site plan A
  - 550 x 850
  - 25 x 475 (1:20)
  - 12 x 75 (1:25)

**Site Plan B**
- 250 x 250
- 50 x 50 (1:10)

**Site Plan C**
- 125 x 250
- 25 x 50 (1:10)

**Notes:**
- Materials
- How to get readings
- Scale technology
- Prove I know what I'm doing

**Julia**
- Garden Collective

**Collage Board**
- MILK or FLEXIBLE ACRYLIC PAINT, BRUSH
- SCREEN/TEXTURE
- 1/4 in BOLTS, 9 MT. 9 NAILS

- FLAT BOARD
  - GREEN
  - FLAT BLACK OR PLYWOOD CORE
  - FLAT BLACK OR PLYWOOD CORE

- FINE WIRE
  - GREEN SPRAY PAINT / 2 COLORS.
  - WHITE FLAT
  - BLACK GLOSS

- MODEL PAINTS
  - GLOSSY BLACK
  - FLAT WHITE

- FLUOR FOR GAPS
- MODEL GREENERY

- MILK, CLAYS
- DAMACO, COR RABEN MOUNT

- CONCRETE
- FOAM

- DENSE AREA
- TEXTURED CONCRETE HOUSE
- LUMBER HOUSE
- POTTERY RIMMED
- MARMOC RADZINER

- CONCRETE
- STAIR RAIL
- ZIP PLASTER

- FLUSH MOLD

- COAT SKELETON

- BLACK MTL\GREN
- YELLOW?
RFID PRESENTATION
RFID FREQUENCY IDENTIFICATION

HOW MUCH DOES AN AVERAGE RFID COST?
$0.15 CENT.

RFID, WHAT IS THE PRIMARY
MATERIAL COMPONENT?
CALCIUM PHOSPHATE

GREATEST ADVANTAGE
ECONOMICAL OUT OF STOCK
SITUATION

NUCLEAR MAGNETIC RESONANCE
COMPETITION

AWARDS CEREMONY

- 15 MINUTE LONG IN STARTING, AS USUAL.
- DARRIN EGAN - RUSHING
- CRAIG MULHALL - V OR M
- ISAAC BROADCAST - IQ
- MICHAEL HESTER

- FAT CARSON TAKED ALL NUMBERS, YOU WERE
ALL ON THE FIELD.

NUMBERS
- DEV PURCELL + BRADLEY LEATHER
- TROY WOOD + CORY'S BAR BQYS.

NOW:
- DARRIN CROSBY - ICONIC MASTER
- CRAIG MANIERE + HEADWAT
- JOSH GOOD BUILDING THAT TITI - TITI'S
- KEVIN TEMPLAR - MUST TRY (LIE)

AND SO ON... IT ON THEIR LIST
DON'T Come BACK ON
- MICHAEL MURRAY - PERMANENCY
- ANDREW ANDREWS - MUIT TO SELF IN
CONSIST.

I DIDN'T WIN ANYTHING
3 – Process Sketches and Models
Process 3.3

[Diagram of architectural plans and elevations with annotations such as 'Cafe', 'Backstage', 'Library', and 'Service'.]

LAPPED BASEMENT
CONCRETE

FORMS + PROGRAM

[Additional notes and sketches related to architectural planning and layout.]