RIVERSIDE APARTMENT BUILDING
[promoting community and communication in a changing social landscape]

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THESIS TOPIC

Humans are social creatures. Communication is a key element of culture, and interaction between people is the basis for everyday existence. As technology advances and communication takes place over larger distances or from more remote locations, mankind will experience a radical shift in social makeup. That shift is in its infancy at the present time, but the initial effects of the Internet and wireless communication are already being felt by almost everyone. Business, entertainment, and socialization can now take place in front of a computer screen, whether at home or "on the road." The capabilities of such technologies are advancing at a rate and in directions that few completely understand, and thus, the future will bring changes that will catch a majority of people unprepared. In time, many people may encounter feelings similar to "culture shock" and become disoriented when much of their previously familiar world of face-to-face interaction is supplanted by impersonal electronic interchanges.

This phenomenon will no doubt not only affect individuals but also groups and could drastically affect the makeup of our cities. Therefore, the designs of the future must recognize and react to this social shift. My contention is that cities of the future will see the development of spaces and places that simultaneously foster new technologies for remote connection and face-to-face interaction. The public/private separation of individuals and groups may begin to blur as interaction on a personal level occurs amidst the flurry of high-tech communication. Moreover, I believe that cities must maintain a strong urban core that groups and individuals can identify with and that "high tech/high touch" facilities should be located in this core.

If such facilities are incorporated into the evolving urban fabric, wireless communication will add another attribute to its growing list. The ability to "e-commute" to work will replace today's traditional workday ceremony. For many, this option is already becoming a reality. However, a majority of these early "e-commuters" still live in the suburbs of major metropolitan areas. If this trend continues, it will play a major part in the
deterioration of interpersonal skills. When a person is able to “log out” of their work mode and still not have to participate in face-to-face interaction, as is possible in today’s suburbs, there is little to prevent many from becoming highly introverted. Instead, if one is immersed in the cultural epicenter of a city, relationships with people and places in close proximity will be maintained along with those distant relationships established on-line.

In my mind, this “downtown” atmosphere will no doubt be the strongest if positioned around the foundations of the past. In most urban environments that foundation is the natural feature around which they were first established. However, in many cities new development turns its back on these natural features, missing the opportunity to take advantage of their unique characteristics. A relatively large number of cities today are making new attempts to revitalize the major water features from which they grew. Urban waterfronts are once again being viewed as prominent elements in high-quality social environments. Nature has always had a positive affect on individuals and culture as a whole. This will continue at an even greater extent in the future high-tech environment, for no matter how “realistic” a virtual interpretation of nature may become, there are innate environmental factors that can not be replicated in the digital realm. With this in mind, today’s attempts by cities and designers to focus back on the waterfront are creating a solid base for the transition into the future.

What is needed in addition to the physical revitalization of such environs, though, is an equal emphasis on the preparation for the impact technology will have on society. As is evident by the struggle many cities are discovering while redesigning their public zones, it is much more effective to implement these ideas the first time. Buildings and urban spaces that take into account the pace at which technologies will continue to evolve in the future are thus better prepared to deal with the necessary changes. In turn, the users of these spaces will adapt more fluidly and will not be surprised by developing technologies.
PROJECT SELECTION

When searching for the building type that most fully embodied the issues I wished to investigate, my thoughts first turned to spaces and places that encouraged group interaction. Public buildings, including museums, theaters, and retail complexes, seemed to offer good opportunities to study the ways in which people come together. Upon further contemplation, though, it became obvious that such amenities were now easily being replaced by virtual equivalents on the Internet. To gain a more complete understanding of the effects these new technologies were having on public life I felt I needed to develop a facility that would allow me to study the private side of the phenomenon as well. As I worked through the issues I decided to focus on aspects of the new communications capabilities that could totally consume one's private life within the digital realm but still allow other areas of life to be best experienced in the "real world."

In the world of modern business, efficiency is the key to success, and wireless/digital communications are the best asset available today to maximize one's capabilities. When the business day comes to a close, however, few can argue that the best release is the ability to leave the workday behind and enjoy the comforts of home or partake of some cultural activity outside the office. With this in mind, I decided to design an apartment building that would provide an effective live/work environment. One that would utilize the most up-to-date technologies for remote communication, but at the same time, would not be located in some remote suburb. Instead, it would be anchored at the heart of the downtown as an integral part of the urban fabric, promoting interaction with all the natural and cultural amenities available in a thriving city.

As precedent studies, I searched for examples of
strong urban design and high-quality architecture. With regards to the integration of an urban waterfront, many of the best examples exist in the United States, including the San Antonio Riverwalk, the recent planning in Portland, Oregon, and Inner Harbor in Baltimore. Each of these places has created engaging public spaces that flourish because of the influence of nature. The three cities focus urban life at the water’s edge and new developments are centered around these positive environments. Another great example of master planning is the Battery Park development in New York City. At Battery Park, high-density residential development lines the waterfront with a public park along the water’s edge integrated into the urban design. Community interaction is encouraged through simple organization of circulation and movement that brings people together to enjoy nature.

An apartment building must not only provide a comfortable, positive atmosphere for its residents, but it should also exist as a strong piece of the overall urban built environment. Once again, precedents of this can be found throughout the world. In both Toronto and Vancouver, Canada recent urban apartment buildings are setting the standard for quality urban design. These new developments provide individuality for residents while at the same time identifying themselves as holistic structures. No matter how tall, attention to human scale creates an environment in which people can feel at home in the midst of the hustle and bustle of the urban realm.
**SITE SELECTION**

Once I knew what type of a building I wished to design, I began establishing criteria that I could use to select a productive site for my project. Obviously, there are hundreds of variations of urban waterfronts, ranging in scale from ocean coastlines to small canal edges. In an effort to prevent site considerations from overwhelming my design process, I decided to choose a location along an urban riverfront of moderate size. I wanted the context of my project to have laid the groundwork for a quality waterfront experience but one that perhaps had not yet taken full advantage of the potential presented by the river. This physical relationship of the city to the river needed to provide opportunities to work with vehicular and pedestrian linkages to the downtown, thus, the site did not necessarily have to be located in the central business district. I also wanted the immediate context to consist of an assortment of building types, functions and scales.

With that said, I chose Grand Rapids, Michigan as the context for my thesis project. Having lived in a suburb of the city for 12 years, I am very familiar with its physical and cultural characteristics. The Grand River, which flows through the city, is in need of stronger utilization as an amenity and offers great possibilities. Established as a logging town in the mid-1800s, Grand Rapids has, in many ways, moved away from its physical roots as it has developed through history. The river is still held in high regard by residents, and a series of bridges spanning the water is one of the icons of the city. Currently, the city is undergoing a boom of new construction along with a relatively large amount of restoration and renovation of existing structures. This is, in large part, the result of the new sports arena built in recent years. Many new buildings have been erected since the arena's construction, including a few along the riverbanks. None of these new
structures have significantly engaged the river itself or drawn large masses to its banks. A large new convention center is in the early phases of construction along the east side of the Grand River, and a downtown campus for Grand Valley State University has just been completed two blocks from the west bank of the river. Other buildings along the river, ranging in function from public museums to offices and hotels, contribute assorted treatments at the water’s edge. A recently constructed Riverwalk on both sides of the river allows for pedestrian access at water level. This pedestrian path consists of a boardwalk hung from the east floodwall and a paved path across the gradual slope of the west bank. The city currently uses open space along the river during festivals and holiday celebrations, and the large crowds attending these functions illustrate that the river is an enjoyable place to be. However, during other times of the year, the Riverwalk is almost totally vacant as most daily activities occur in the main business and entertainment districts located just east of the river. The new convention center will certainly attract more users to the water, but the addition of a residential facility along the waterfront is needed to reengage the river more fully into the urban fabric.
SITE ANALYSIS

Once I chose Grand Rapids as the context for my project, I then had to determine the exact location of my building along the river. Three possibilities presented themselves early on. The first two were in close proximity to the newly planned Convention Center at the northern edge of the downtown. The lot on the east side of the river was soon discarded because it lacked a strong physical connection to the downtown and was barred from the river's edge by an existing floodwall. The lot directly across from the planned Convention Center had promise, but was not as appealing to me as the southern option. The site I finally decided upon provided the best opportunity to create an icon for the city because it was a highly visible location and was closest in proximity to the main areas of activity in the downtown. The following is an inventory of the site characteristics:

Along the south edge of the site runs the Fulton Street artery into the downtown business district across the river. To the north runs Front Avenue, passing by the Public Museum and the Days Inn as well as under the I-131 Expressway. The west edge is formed by the newly constructed foundation walls of the expressway with no access to space below the road. The east edge slopes down to the Grand River, providing ~450' of river frontage. At the northeast corner is a state historical site.
separating the site from the Public Museum lot. The approximate overall size of the site is 168,750 square feet.

Vehicular circulation around the site occurs at two elevations. Even with the site are Fulton Street and Front Avenue. Fulton St. is a two-way, 4 lane street on which cars move at around 35 mph. Front Avenue is a two-way, 2 lane street curving away from the site on which traffic slows to enter the Days Inn/Public Museum parking structure and allow pedestrian crossing to the Public Museum. A majority of vehicular traffic passing the site moves along I-131 which is raised above the site approx. 20 feet. These cars are entering or leaving the "S-curve" and are moving at speeds ranging from 45-65 mph. Vehicular access to the site lies along the Fulton Street edge and on Front Avenue across from the Days Inn/Public Museum parking structure.

Pedestrian circulation around and through the site also occurs at different elevations. Sidewalks run along Fulton Street (across the river and under I-131) and along Front Avenue (under I-131 and around to the Public Museum). The Front Avenue sidewalk provides direct pedestrian access to the GVSU campus and along the north edge of the site to the Pedestrian Bridge at the extreme northeast corner that connects directly across the
river. The Pedestrian Bridge extends across the river to the Plaza Towers site. Pedestrian movement also occurs at the river's edge below the majority of the site. This pathway connects to the Fulton Street Bridge to the south and moves under the Pedestrian Bridge and past the Public Museum to the north. All pedestrian access runs along the north, south, and east edges with main points at the four corners of the site.

The newly constructed GVSU Downtown Campus is located on the opposite side of the I-131 expressway. Comprised of assorted classrooms, laboratories, meeting spaces, and an auditorium, the campus serves a couple thousand students. A small set of apartments lies across Fulton Street from the campus, but a majority of students commute from elsewhere in town. A central plaza space provides for some exterior seating and meeting spaces. The minor axis through the campus extends east-west drawing pedestrian movement to the river under I-131 and down Front Avenue to the Pedestrian Bridge. A majority of students and faculty pass along the site in this location. The clock tower rising above the main campus buildings is also a visual link from the site to the campus over the elevated expressway.

The Public Museum is located immediately adjacent to the site on the north side. Built in fairly recent years, the museum is contemporary in design and an asset to the riverfront. A majority of visitors to the museum arrive by automobile and park either in the parking structure on Front Avenue or along the street. There is a strong pedestrian link to the museum from the site both along the river and Front Avenue. Visual access is also prevalent with a lack of large trees obstructing sight lines. The carousel annex of the Public Museum extends out over the river and is the main focal element of the building. Assorted events and exhibitions throughout the year draw a large number of people of all ages to the Public Museum.

The Days Inn hotel is located across Front Avenue from the Public Museum. It is a rather bland building and adds little character to the area.
Occupants of the hotel arrive by car and park either in the parking structure on Front Avenue or in the ground level parking lot next to the building. Occupancy varies throughout the year but is highest during seminars or festival periods. The parking structure is highly visible to the site and the hotel building itself is within view down Front Avenue.

The Plaza Towers building stands directly across the river from the site. It contains ground level retail space, apartments and condominiums, and a Courtyard by Marriott hotel. The building rises 34 stories and is contemporary in design. It is accessible to the site by both pedestrians and vehicles, either along Fulton Street or across the Pedestrian Bridge. The building is sited away from the river's edge to create a small greenspace and pedestrian access down to the East Riverwalk along the floodwall, however the main parking garage structure for its residents and hotel occupants is located between the river and the main building. This lessens the effectiveness of its interaction with the river. Along the floodwall immediately fronting the Plaza Towers site is a large sculpture/water piece that enhances its visual character. Strong visual links to the site exist along with direct circulation paths.

The main Downtown Entertainment and Business Districts are within 5-10 minutes walking distance from the site. Directly up Fulton Street is the Van Andel Arena housing sports and concerts throughout the year along with a majority of the best bars and clubs in the city. The main commercial buildings are only a couple blocks from this area and have many pedestrian and vehicular pathways to the riverfront. Once the new Convention Center is constructed farther north up the east bank of the river, more of the city's focus will be along the river. The riverfront exposure provides a panoramic view to the north and east of the site.

![Views Diagram](image_url)

![Noise Diagram](image_url)

![Entry/Approach Diagram](image_url)
EARLY CONCEPTS

The first stage of my design process was to establish a program for the building. I needed to establish a balance of public, semi-public, and private functions within the facility. The most difficult part of this stage was choosing public spaces that would achieve my goal of bringing groups of people together and, at the same time, would fit comfortably on the site. After pondering the activities of a typical business day, I determined that a restaurant was a necessity. Not only could a restaurant serve the residents of the building, it would open up the public level to the rest of the city and pull outside visitors in to experience my design. Along this same vein, I decided an Internet café would be another positive public space. The café could attract students from the adjacent campus and would provide a more informal meeting spot for short interaction. With the major public uses established, I went back to my analysis of a typical business day and decided that I would focus the attention of the semi-public areas on face-to-face meetings of both individuals and larger groups. Again wanting to open the building up to more than just the residents, I felt I needed some larger meeting halls that could accommodate seminars or conventions. To make the facility more economically viable I also wanted to provide some traditional office space that could be leased out to residents or outside groups. Finally, I decided to establish meeting zones that would be tied directly to the apartments, creating a shared business zone within each cluster of apartments.
Programming the exterior spaces developed from my site analysis early on. To engage the river and the existing river walk at the water's edge, I knew I would need some large areas of public gathering space along with exterior seating for the restaurant and café. Parking on site would also be needed, although I wanted to try and limit its presence by restricting the number of spaces to just the residents, their visitors, and the employees of the facility. There is a large amount of public parking within walking distance of the site, so I felt most outsiders could approach the building on foot from elsewhere.

After determining the program of public and private spaces, my conceptual designs began by studying how best to identify these zones in form and materials. I worked on some light studies to see how I could use fenestration to create an iconic façade that clearly delineated the balance of extroverted and introverted spaces within the facility. Each of these studies focused on a public base to the building that opened up at ground level and lightened the footprint of the building on the site. Above this base, some sort of rhythm would be created by the fenestration to identify the residential zones. The next stage of conceptual development consisted of studies dealing with the form of the building. I wanted to integrate a grand atrium space that would be visible both in exterior form and from within the structure in an attempt to create a positive atmosphere of community between the residents. These early studies worked to establish the basic organizations of the apartment floors, all of which surrounded the main atrium and provided visual links between residents on each floor.

From this point, I began working in plan and section to organize the spaces using the correct square footage. The lower public levels came together rather easily, utilizing the atrium space as circulation between the major spaces. The apartment levels, however, proved to be much more troublesome. I found it difficult to create a strong relationship between the private apartment
units and the more public meeting spaces with circulation that had to circumvent a central atrium rising through the building. I wanted all the apartments and the meeting spaces to have ample views to the surrounding context, but this created long travel routes between spaces. In an effort to clear up the basic diagram of the floor plates I decided to centralize all vertical elements, including elevators, fire stairs, and major mechanical chases, into a linear arrangement along the buildings east-west axis. This allowed me to stretch the building somewhat and maximize the views from the inhabited spaces up and down the river. In early studies I attempted to separate the apartments and meeting spaces across the central divide so as to allow residents to control how much interaction they had with the business zones and to create a clear separation between public and private. This arrangement also allowed my to identify the residential and business functions on the exterior. Apartments looking to the north created a façade that broke down in scale, while the meeting spaces to the south could be identified by larger fenestration and a more traditional commercial rhythm.

After reanalyzing this solution, I determined that the relationship of public to private was much too abrupt. In addition to this, the arrangement provided little choice for residents with regard to view or daylight exposure. The horizontal separation between the apartments and meeting spaces was not allowing for enough control of the degree of interaction. To solve these problems I decided to reorganize each of the main spaces into a more cohesive unit. The central atrium
became a two-piece element penetrating the entire height of the structure. The apartments became two-stories and moved to both the north and south edges of the building. The meeting space also became two-stories and nestled itself in the center of the plan, emphasizing the need for group gathering, but allowing residents to move past on either level. This new spatial organization created a series of double-story residential clusters that sat on top of a base of larger scale public and commercial spaces. On the exterior, both the north and the south facades could identify the facility as a residential tower, with public spaces flowing out at ground level onto the surrounding site.

Orientation of the building on the site evolved in an effort to address the grid of the city, utilize the northern and southern exposure for daylighting purposes, buffer the building from the noise and activity of the adjacent expressway, and engage the public spaces along the river edge. I investigated many options, trying to create a balance between each of these issues. The key was to place the building in such a way that it anchored itself on the site and enhanced the waterfront.
FINAL DESIGN

My final site design incorporated my building into a proposed master plan for future development on the site. In an effort to most effectively utilize the available space, I decided to plan for a second residential building to be constructed on the northwest corner of the site that would relate more directly to the new GVSU campus. Therefore, my building was then located along the riverbank in close connection with the Riverwalk. The major axis of the building pulls pedestrians through the ground level of the structure from Fulton St. to the Public Museum and Pedestrian Bridge. A large amphitheatre sits in the northeast corner of the site directly adjacent to the Pedestrian Bridge. This amphitheatre funnels pedestrians down to the Riverwalk and could be used during festivals as a sheltered gathering space. The parking lot buffers the building from the expressway and sets up the minor axis of pedestrian traffic through my building to the Riverwalk. Elevated above the Riverwalk on the east side of the site are exterior seating areas for the restaurant and café that frame the grand staircase down to the water’s edge. At the southeast corner of the site, the Riverwalk is terminated by a stair tower element that brings people back up to street level and marks the end of the main axis through the building.

Within the building, users enter at ground level into the main lobby that provides open circulation to the restaurant, café, and building administration offices. The elevator lobby and public restrooms sit directly across the lobby from each other. As one approaches each of these areas, attention is drawn upwards to the atrium spaces rising through the building. These two atriums act to structurally stabilize the building and create zones of vertical visual connection with other users and the outdoor environment. The main lobby is overlooked by balconies used for pre-function activities outside the meeting halls and upper levels of the restaurant and café on the second level. These two floors comprise the major public zone within the building. The third level consists of open plan office space on the north and south sides of the building, with a central office support center located between
the two atriums. This floor acts as a buffer from the public zone for the residential floors.

The next twenty floors consist of double-story apartments, located along the north and south facades, and a central shared meeting space, including open seating areas and an enclosed formal conference room. As residents exit the elevator at each floor, a digital bulletin board is visible on the conference room wall across the west atrium that provides them with all relevant local and regional news. The facility is a fully networked wireless environment so that residents can carry laptops anywhere in the building and immediately connect to the building intranet or the Internet. Each two-story residential zone becomes its own community, provided with public restrooms for visitors and is served by a local mechanical fan room connected to the main building plant room. The lower level of the two-story zone is the more public/business floor, while the upper level provides more privacy to residents who do not wish to interact with the activity below.

A balcony surrounds the shared meeting space to allow visual connection, and if necessary, one can walk down the central staircase to join others in the meeting space. Apartments themselves are presented to new residents as empty shells consisting of assorted square footage of interior space, one or more exterior balconies, stairs positioned along the interior wall, and a small upstairs balcony space creating a double height area along the exterior façade. From this, residents are able to create their own layout to best suit their needs. Entry to the apartments is available on both floors depending on the decided layout. Suggested organizations combine office, living, dining, and kitchen areas on the lower level, with bedroom(s) and bathroom arranged on the upper floor. This layout maintains the vertical separation of public and private activities expressed in the common areas. Ample daylight is let in through full height glazing on the north and south facades. Sun shading is provided on the south side by louvers extending out from the structure above the second floor.

APARTMENT UNIT PLAN VIEW

APARTMENT UNIT AXONOMETRIC
The overall floor plan steps back at the sixteenth floor from ten apartments to only six per double-story unit, creating shared rooftop gardens for residents of this level. The twenty-fourth floor consists of two single level penthouse apartments, each of which extend along the north and south facades to provide panoramic views of the river and city. These two apartments also share a central meeting area and are served by a local mechanical space. The setback at the sixteenth floor also allows glazing to be used to accent the main east-west circulation corridors connecting the apartments to the elevators and fire stairs. When lit at night, this glazing, in combination with the two atriums extending above the roofline makes the building glisten as a lantern marking the beginning of the riverfront district to those driving along the expressway. In the daytime, the use of metal panels and stainless steel detailing helps the building glisten in the sunlight and identify itself in the city skyline.

As a live/work environment the design provides an exciting, active interior environment. Open planning allows for high visibility throughout each floor. This visibility creates instances of incidental contact, key in both successful business and enjoyable personal lives. The design allows a business professional to conduct discussions with distant associates from the comfort of their own home, meet face-to-face with other colleagues in spaces immediately adjacent to their private office, check on employees by simply vertically commuting down to leased office space, or attend seminars and business dinners without having to deal with the usual stress of downtown hustle and bustle. Adding to the quality of daily life, expansive glazing lets in daylight and provides views of the
surrounding natural and urban context. The two atriums connect the residential floors to the public zone at ground level and create areas of great visual interest for everyday residents and visitors. The design also encourages residents to actively interact with the riverfront site and connects them easily to the high-energy districts of the downtown both by car and by foot. This proximity allows residents to quickly and effectively unwind from a busy day by walking along the river, visiting a museum, going to a concert or sporting event, or meeting friends at the bar, all within a few minutes from their home.

As the site develops and the second tower is constructed, I can envision the complex thriving as a healthy and inspiring place to live. Incorporating students from the neighboring university and more families into the complex, the site would continuously be buzzing with activity. Within each building, residents could connect to far away people they may never meet in person, but once they leave their apartment, they could join local friends and neighbors in an environment designed to comfortably connect them to nature and the city. And in the future, other developments along the river could look to this residential complex as the template upon which to build.

On the following pages are a record of my final presentation work for this project. Included are assorted drawings, models, and FormZ renderings.
SITE PLAN
ENTRY LEVEL

SPACES:
1. Main Lobby
2. Receiving/Dock
3. Restaurant
4. Building Administration
5. Cyber Cafe

BASEMENT LEVEL

SPACES:
1. General Storage
2. Cold Storage
3. Dry Storage
4. Kitchen
5. Network Center
6. Mechanical Plant Room
FLR. 3
OFFICE LEVEL

SPACES:
1. Leasable Office Space
2. Office Support Center
3. Open to First Floor

FLR. 2
CONFERENCE LEVEL

SPACES:
1. Meeting Room(s)
2. Restaurant Balcony
3. Open to First Floor
4. Pre-Function Area
5. Cyber Cafe Balcony
FLRS. 5,7,9,11,13,15
APARTMENT FLOORS
UPPER LEVEL

SPACES:
1. Apartment (Upper Floor)
2. Meeting Space Balcony
3. Open to First Floor
4. Mechanical Fan Room

FLRS. 4,6,8,10,12,14
APARTMENT FLOORS
LOWER LEVEL

SPACES:
1. Apartment (Lower Floor)
2. Shared Meeting Space
3. Open to First Floor
FLRS. 17.19.21.23
APARTMENT FLOORS
UPPER LEVEL

SPACES:
1. Apartment (Upper Floor)
2. Meeting Space Balcony
3. Open to First Floor
4. Mechanical Fan Room

FLRS. 16.18.20.22
APARTMENT FLOORS
LOWER LEVEL

SPACES:
1. Apartment (Lower Floor)
2. Shared Meeting Space
3. Open to First Floor
4. Shared Rooftop Garden
POSSIBLE APT. LAYOUTS

UPPER FLOOR:
- Bedroom(s)
- Sitting Area
- Bathroom

LOWER FLOOR:
- Office
- Kitchen
- Living Area
- Dining Area

SPACES:
1. Apartment
2. Shared Meeting Space
3. Open to First Floor
4. Mechanical Fan Room

FLOOR 24
PENTHOUSE LEVEL
MAIN PEDESTRIAN ENTRY

APPROCACH FROM WEST
VIEW ACROSS
MAIN LOBBY
FROM SECOND
FLOOR BALCONY

VIEW UP
WEST ATRIUM
FROM GROUND
LEVEL
VIEW FROM ELEVATOR LOBBY ON UPPER APT. LEVEL

VIEW FROM ELEVATOR LOBBY ON LOWER APT. LEVEL
REFLECTION

In the early stages of my research, I had a rather negative view of the affect new communication technologies and the Internet could have on society. Perhaps it was my own aversion to sitting in front of a computer to “chat” with others in the virtual realm that made me want to solve the “societal problems” that I envisioned could arise in the future. Through readings and more in-depth personal analysis of the issues, though, I have begun to focus more optimistically on the possibilities such advances can provide.

In designing a live/work environment, the blending of public/private boundaries connected with these changing methods of interaction proved to be the most troublesome. Creating an environment that encourages face-to-face interaction is very different than manipulating space and circulation to force people to come together. In my mind, the key is to provide the user with flexibility to interact by allowing visual contact to precede physical interaction and letting the decision be made from there. Incidental contact is much more productive than forced interaction.

Also, maintaining a sense of ownership and personal boundaries within the larger make-up of a space allows one to retreat when necessary. Simultaneously, those established boundaries transform other areas of an environment into an escape that can be very inviting. It is the balance of time spent in each of these areas that creates an enjoyable existence. In many ways, computers are providing an additional layer on this scenario, an escape into the “digital” realm from any physical location. To me, that is a very powerful possibility, one that will continue to evolve and impact most areas of life and design in the future.

I realize I am still in the early stages of truly comprehending the sociological impact of these and other opportunities presented by rapidly developing technology, but I believe my thesis was a positive first step in that understanding. I have learned a lot from this experience in relation to both the theory and practice of architectural design. Having made it past many stumbling blocks in my thought process and design evolution, I hope I am able to revisit many of the ideas I have investigated in the future.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Projects researched include:

Battery Park, New York
Portland, Oregon
San Antonio, Texas
Louisville, Kentucky
Baltimore, Maryland
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And you, the reader, for taking time to learn about my culminating academic project.

It's been emotional...