AUBURN CULTURAL CENTER
BY: WENDY L. DAPP
THESIS CHAIRMAN: ALFREDO MISSAIR
THESIS MENTOR: DAVID HERMANNSEN
Thesis Statement: Vernacular architecture, which I define as architecture that is native to a region and has evolved slowly over time to respond gracefully to its environment has been diluted, if not lost, since the advent of the technological explosion that started in the early 1900's. Architecture no longer has the time to "evolve slowly", integrating the technologies that are being developed. Thus, the crux of the problem seems to be that architects are designing buildings without complete knowledge of the technology or materials they have at their disposal, as well as without intimate knowledge of the environment they are designing for, which means that no tie to the vernacular ideal exists. My intention is to design a project in an environment that I am extremely familiar with, with materials that I will come to know implicitly, in an attempt to create a contemporary vernacular that responds optimally to its environment and the resources at hand.

Objectives:
**Become extremely familiar with my chosen materials by learning how they have been used in the past and how they are being used presently so that I can stretch their limits with the latest technologies.
**Concentrate on reacting sensitively to the physical and cultural environment, achieved primarily by knowing the features of the setting so well that it becomes second nature.
Art Gallery: This is located on the second floor above the Retail Gallery. This is an area where local collections can be displayed on a permanent or rotating basis so that these too can be shared with the community. There is a need for this since the only museum in town is the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum, which is limited to artwork related to the automobile.

Restaurant: Positioned on third floor above the Gallery, it overlooks the Courthouse Square. Auburn is currently searching for a fine dining restaurant and has gone so far as to announce it in the local newspaper. They are looking for someplace that has some character that serves something besides hamburgers. The closest nice restaurant is thirty minutes away in Fort Wayne.

Stage Two: The next step in this program would be the inclusion of an arts and music center in the existing corner building. This would possibly include a theater for local actors, and classes in arts, crafts, music, and acting.
An In Process Conclusion

As the title indicates, this is not an end but a checking point in my process of exploring the potentials hidden in my thesis statements. It has become extremely obvious that the lessons to be learned from vernacular architecture are limitless and of utmost importance in my acquisition of architectural knowledge.

Attention to detail is one quality that vernacular architecture has inherently developed to a fine art. I suspect this is true because it is building for the people by the people and the easiest element for humans to relate to is the small one. The one that is at their scale and at their eye level. The one that they can feel and remember. The ones that change an ordinary building into a great one.

Vernacular architecture also emphasizes the necessity of honesty in materials. Usually built on a low budget with low technology, vernacular tends to use materials to the best of their potential, which is ultimately an honest approach. This brings up the question of how high technology fits into the picture. My personal conviction is that high technology can play the same role as low technology, as long as it makes full use of the potential latent in the material.

Vernacular architecture is built due to a need in the environment. A farmer needs a barn so he builds one. He builds it to his specifications, so that it meets his demands. The barn will be successful because it is functional and needed. It is important to make sure that a building will be used; therefore it must be a function that is required. For this reason I only included functions that were in demand in the Auburn area, not some functions that they may need.
Areas I would like to pursue next in this inquiry are details and materials. I would ideally like to design this project down to the last detail--both interior and exterior, structural and ornamental. I feel this is important because if I do not design it, someone else will, and that is not what I want. My goal is not to control everything; however, the building must stand as a whole, yet allow a degree of flexibility so that people can adapt it to their own very specific needs.

Concerning the issue of materials, my ambition is to become much more familiar with the materials that I am dealing with. At this point I have only basic knowledge of what I worked with. What I want is to know the material so well that I can exploit them to their fullest potential, which I do not feel that I have done thus far. I would like to get to know my materials as well as Frank Lloyd Wright and Alvar Aalto.

Along with this, I have learned that buildings also have a life cycle, continually changing to accommodate the current user and conditions. This is important, especially in vernacular architecture since it is built for the people and their needs--not the needs of the architect or his ego. Of course the goal is to design something that is so good, so sensitive to the needs of the people that change is not an immediate requirement. Something that will function as desired for a long time before the function needs to change--changes that can not be forecasted by the architect.
Appendix

Pictures of site
Map of context and site
Context analysis
Original program
Architectural precedents
Annotated bibliography
Sketches in process
Final drawings
Slides of presentation
Picture of site. View from west (from Courthouse Square)

View from east.
Context Analysis

Physical:
Location: Between 100 S. Cedar and 112 S. Cedar, on the courthouse square, in Auburn, Indiana. It is currently an empty lot where a theater once stood. The building to the north is a two-story commercial building dating from 1876. The style was originally Victorian Functional, but major alterations have occurred over the years. To the south is another two-story commercial building, currently occupied by lawyer's offices. It is 20th Century Eclectic, 1917, and is in good condition.
Population: The city of Auburn has 8,122 people and DeKalb county has 34,615 according to the 1980 Census.
Elevation: The city of Auburn is located 860-880 feet above sea level.

Climate Averages:                      Average Monthly Temperatures:
Annual temperature- 49.8°F           Jan 25.5°F            Jul 72.0°F
Summer temperature-70.5              Feb 28.5               Aug 70.0
Winter temperature-27.8              Mar 36.5               Sep 63.0
Annual rainfall-34.3 inches          Apr 49.5               Oct 54.0
Annual snowfall- 31.8 inches         May 59.5               Nov 40.0
                                          Jun 69.0               Dec 29.5

Cultural:
Auburn is a small, rural community comprised primarily of white anglo-saxons. There is a heavy concentration of agriculturally related jobs, factory jobs, and small scale retail. It is the county seat for DeKalb County and attracts people from throughout the area for business and pleasure. It also has a strong history in the automobile industry and still maintains part of that heritage through the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum and its annual festival, as well as through the number of factories in the area that produce parts for automobiles.
Program

Cultural Center: The town of Auburn has only one museum, the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum, which is located on the south side of town and does not relate to the downtown area. I intend to create a Cultural Center in the heart of town that will not only display the art of local artists, but will give them a retail outlet for their products.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Requirements</th>
<th>Approx. Square Footage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*permanent displays</td>
<td>1000 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*travelling displays</td>
<td>600 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*retail gallery</td>
<td>500 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*cash register area</td>
<td>50 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*storage</td>
<td>250 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*restrooms</td>
<td>2@100 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*offices</td>
<td>3@200 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*multi-functional space</td>
<td>800 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*storage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*wet bar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*serving area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*mechanical systems</td>
<td>10-15% of total s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4500 s.f. total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Auburn's only library, Eckhart Public Library, has been searching for options to expand for several years now. Thus an alternative project may be the inclusion of a Branch Library as part of the Cultural Center. The Library portion would house the Children's Section and Special Services. This would contain the Children's books, play area, educational devices, computer terminals for public use, videos and music selections that can be used in there or checked out, and several other similar services. If this project is chosen, the parcel of land to the northeast of my current site will be used as well so that the building does not exceed the two-story height that occurs throughout downtown and it will have another entrance on the street.
Program

Library: Auburn's only library, Eckhart Public Library, has been searching for options to expand for the last decade. I am proposing opening a separate branch that houses the Children's Section and the rapidly growing Special Services Section, which includes video rentals, computer terminals, and the like.

Basic Requirements:
* stacks
* reading areas
* circulation desk
* video rentals
* computer terminals
* offices
* card catalog
* restrooms
* play area
* mechanical systems
* storage
* vertical circulation
* viewing room (video)
*
Program

Restaurant/Night Club: The downtown area of Auburn is lacking in night time entertainment and needs urgently to be given this life so that the west end "strip" does not become the heart of the city. After 6:00 pm, downtown has nothing to offer and the nearest night club is 30 miles away in Ft. Wayne.

Basic Requirements:
*kitchen
*dining room(20-30 tables)
*bar
*dance floor
*sound system
*vertical circulation
*restrooms
*storage
*mechanical systems
Architectural Precedents

The examples I have focused on are primarily known for their sensitivity to the environment and their innovative use of resources:

**Vernacular architecture has provided a considerable amount of general information. I have looked at several examples, both here in Muncie and in Auburn, in order to better understand how the vernacular responds in the region I will be working with. By this I mean very specific formal solutions to each unique situation, for instance- the location of entry from the street and how it is transitioned and where the car goes and so on. To a lesser degree, I have looked at how materials have been used- whether it is traditional application or progressive in nature. The main problem here is that non-architect designed buildings tend to be extremely conservative in the handling of materials.

**Greene and Greene Architects have done several outstanding residences that exploit the potential technology of wood. A prime example is the Gamble House, 1908, located in Pasadena, California. The staircase is composed entirely of interlocking wood pieces that are obviously stretching the properties of wood further than average construction does, since a second or third material was not necessary to fasten the parts together. This illustrates my opinion that a material should be pushed to its limits within the known technologies before introducing outside intervention. Also admirable of the Greene and Greene house is the logical and sensitive manner in which it responds to the environment.

**Renzo Piano’s IBM Travelling Pavilion is an important example of using materials in new and refreshing combinations that show the potential latent in ordinary materials. He has assembled wood and aluminum to create a high-tech vocabulary, even though they are very common materials and not generally thought of as "high-tech". He has also taken advantage of a new item, polycarbonate,thus he is juxtaposing the old and the new in an innovative fashion.
Below: Construction detail of porch.
Below: Construction detail of porch.
The IBM Travelling Pavilion by Renzo Piano (Biennale de Paris, Architecture, 1985)
Annotated Bibliography


Fitch, James Marston. Shelter: Models of Native Ingenuity. Katonah, N.Y.: The Katonah Gallery, 1982. **An excellent compilation of essays that focus on the importance of vernacular architecture from several different and enlightening viewpoints.


Neutra, Richard J. Survival Through Design. New York: Oxford Press, 1954. **Neutra's philosophies on technology and its lack of integration in architecture are very similar to my own and may prove to be a valuable set of clues to my study.

Pawley, Martin. "Technology Transfer." *Architectural Review*, September 1987, pp. 30-39. **Argues that architects need to transfer advanced technologies from other fields to architecture in order to regain the positive aspects of design that create good architecture.**

Wilson, Forrest. "A Time of Relentless Technological Change." *Architecture*, December 1987, pp. 115-119. **A chronological description of the major advances in technologies that have had an impact on the history of architecture since the beginning of the century.**
"GOOD DESIGN"

"These principles have a profound relevance for our over-populated, ill-housed, and energy-starved world." — J.M. Fitch
Having the art display area close to the children's library affords the kids an opportunity to experience art on a frequent basis - another part of education and culture that kids often miss out on. They can learn to appreciate art at an early age so it won't seem so foreign or removed to them.

The lecture hall is a multi-function space that can be rented out by the public. Ideally it will be used for guest lectures, group meetings, receptions, social functions, parties... Therefore it needs to be very flexible.

The cafe will serve light meals and drinks (kids).

The Art Gallery will have areas for permanent & travelling displays.

What if the Art Gallery is combined w/ the Library or the Cafe?
Hanging lamp for over each table in cafe.

REFINE! WHAT ARE THE DETAILS?!

- each a wooden frame w/ glass panels

Make use of edge of glass stained glass?

Outside lights of Courthouse

dowel rocks
- Grand staircase
- Tunnel
- Partial levels
- Entry lobby
- Upper dining-view over courthouse & downtown
- Lamp proportions
- Open interior feeling able to overlook other spaces
- Textural with play of light
- LAMP PROPS.
RESTAURANT - an entire level @ 4000 sq ft total

- ENOUGH DINING AREA FOR (15-20) TABLES. EACH TABLE SIZED AT ___.
  [Probaby 2 or 3 diff. cases.] View over downtown / Courthouse Square are important, as well as a view over Lobby / Staircase to lower level.
  Ample natural light of a diffused / reflected nature. Feeling of connectedness to Art Gallery - Perhaps only separated by a partial wall or level change or both... Each table has own lamp for evening dining - hanging from ceiling - possibility of wall fixtures on outer edges.
  *Is it a problem having food served/fixed open to an art gallery?
  If so perhaps a glass barrier so that it is still visually connected.
  which should be on upper level - eating or art?
  probably eating so diners don't feel their being watched, as food vapors/humidity rises away from art.

- KITCHEN - ALONG SIDE WALL SO NOT WASTING VIEWS.

- RESTROOMS - NEXT TO KITCHEN (if not just on 1st floor).

- CASH REGISTER AREA - located close to head of stairs along w/ a coat check/hanging area.
  - STORAGE
  - MECHANICAL
  - OUTDOOR DINING AREA?
BAR/LOUNGE - [Part of restaurant/not on separate level] (@ 2007)

- **BAR** - wet bar similar to Mugly's - seating on one side - 
  very textural, solid feel - materials of wood, tile?, leather, 
  brass, ...

- **BOOTHES/TABLES** - booths along the walls & tables at the windows.
  Each booth/table has own lamp. Overall a dark atmosphere—“pubbish”.
  Try to establish nooks & crannies - private nooks, as well as open area
  around bar. Ideal place to sit & read a book or write, etc. Aware of
  staircase & gift shop. Not an isolated event.

- **SMALL KITCHEN?** - for pout & sandwiches. Feas seems to inconvenient
  to bring those down from upstairs. Especially since I see the bar
  being open many more hours a week than the restaurant.

GIFT SHOP - 1st floor (@ 400?)+

- **CASH REGISTER** - bar w/ jewelry counter, small sculpture, etc.
- **ITEMS FOR SALE** - books on art, art history, caro, Auburn heritage,
  art cards & calendars, pottery, posters, Rent-o-Art
ART GALLERY -
- PERMANENT DISPLAY - Mostly Aukum heritage, regional, donated works of art,
- TRAVELLING DISPLAY -
- SALE GALLERY - retail sale of local artists work,

BRANCH LIBRARY -
- STACKS
- CIRCULATION DECK
- READING AREA -
- CARD CATALOG (COMPUTERIZED)
- MISC. AREA - old viewMasters, Aquariums, building blocks,
- MUSIC - records to check out
- COMPUTERS - games, ed. programs,

ENTRANCE LOBBY - FRONT MAIN ENTRANCE -
- HIGH CEILING
- EXTRA DETAILING
- OPEN STAIRCACE, BAR, GIFT SHOP

BACK ENTRANCE -
- handicapped accessible
MISCELLANEOUS -
- LECTURE/MEETING HALL - multi-functional space for meetings,
- BATHROOMS - 2 downstairs, 2 upstairs
- CIRCULATION - grand entries, elevators, firetanks
- 2 Stories
- Stairs? Why not?
- Scale down everything or no?
- Open plan? Or too loud?
- Blinds on windows (between glass)

Be sure to leave spaces like this - kids love hooks & crannies

Materials - Brick, Limestone or Concrete (split face blocks!), steel bow trusses [could be wooden trusses like at Eves Hall-Oso]

[Int]
Needs to be soft to absorb sound - carpet, wood, plants, aquariums (white noise), soft furniture, brick
- Instead of tower, a **void**.
- Mostly exterior, yet partial covering.
- Atrium idea.

**SITE PLAN - SCHEMATIC**

- Existing bldg. - stage 2 -
  - Fine arts educational facility
  - Entry

- Atrium
- Library
- Statue, fountain, ....
- Hard plaza?
- Entry

- What happens in this atrium?
  - Stairs
  - Seating
  - Plants
  - Sculpture
  - Is it 2 stories - cafe on upper level?
  - Can you go from library to art gallery without going outside?
  - Perhaps elevator in center that connects 2.
NEWELL POST

- Not sure about joints

- Elevation of newell post

- what material is the floor?

- oak

- tile

- Maybe it steps up w/the stairs

- how do these 3 meet?

- Design PLANTER!
- I. limestone
- concrete

- Do I want all floor like yours?
- Maybe only entries
- hardwood/wood elsewhere
- use in atrium
Shades too much - use just one walkway - ooh - asymmetrical!

Wood planks w/ slats to let pattern of light into atrium
how does it terminate?
CEILING TREATMENT ON LOWER LEVELS:

section

elevation/plan
Basic layout in relationship to diagonal.

- Could be a real problem—in the big scheme, what does the diagonal connect? Need to contain w/in big larger gesture isn't made.
- Does diagonal skip from upper level to lower level? Summer, how does it continue (or does it) on upper level?
- Where locate stairs & damn elevator?

- Don't like. Maybe, diagonal terminates [somehow] at gallery. If not, how does it meet existing wall?
- I think I need an elevator in both sections?!
CENTER FLOOR PATTERN
Masonry tile
**NOTES:**

- Ceiling a series of coppered units - very segmented
  [yet playing directly off geometry of building plan]

- About 1'-0 deep w/ heavy mouldings - all plaster/concrete
  painted to look like diff materials

- Main stairs - 7-8" rising 12" runs

- Octagonal central dome area

- Several diff. lighting fixtures

- Doors w/ panels at

*Section thru courthouse east entrance/stairs*
perhaps continue the outdoor walkway along the brick wall
Questions:

- What kinds of balconies overlook the walk-thru?
- Where do the stairs go now?
  - Do they remain on axis?
  - Off to side of entrance?
  - On diagonal?
- Where does lecture hall go?
- What happens over the entrance?

Art gallery on lower level w/ sculpture in walk-thru.
Restaurant on 2nd w/ balconies over walk-thru.
Possibility of extending library on to 2nd floor? Reading area? Classrooms?
Probably better to put art gallery on 2nd w/ gift shop/retail on lower level.
Lecture hall a separate entity?
ATRIUM:

- play ground for children's library
- wind mobile / chimes
- sculptures to climb on / sit on
- border - stage

SITE PLAN:
LIBRARY - STACKS

- level changes
- stairs
- tunnels
- low windows
- places to sit & lay down

- wheelbarrow
- camel
- standing nose to knee
Alvar Aalto, Modern Architects
- Space, Time, & Architecture - Gideon

Expand Library & put all on lower level. Children's Gallery on 2nd.

Trusses clear back to plaza +
cut down or elim. RR in library
Pull stairs back - landing bad
Library to children's scale
Filter west sun light
elim. redundancy of horizontal band under trusses
Truss work on North 1/2 of elevation
Create X 2nd diag. at back as major entrance
lower balconies - separation / view for those inside
larger service elevator - perhaps w/ other elev.
Create diff. areas in dining room - some intimate scale

TAKE ADVANTAGE
OF TRUSSES!