RESIDUAL SPACE
transforming the leftover landscape
joshua e. inman
The time may soon come when planners, designers, developers, and others will recognize and act on the simple notion that the spaces between buildings are as important to the life of urban man as the buildings themselves.

Serge Chermayeff and Christopher Alexander
Imaging the City from Community and Privacy
RESIDUAL SPACE
transforming the leftover landscape

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Thanks to_
  _My Family.
  _Andy Seager and Jeff Culp for asking the questions I didn't want to ask - that I didn't want to answer; for patience.
  _Olon Dotson for enough confidence to allow me to run with my ideas.
  _My Studiomates for the impromptu brainstorming sessions.
  _Tavin for keeping the fridge stocked.
I had this vision of the impossible building, with no fixed function, totally non-prescriptive, not designed to programme people but to let them thrive.

If one concentrates on the Process of architecture and not on the end product the result takes on a more spiritual significance.

Will Alsop
Will Alsop: Book 1
As architecture so often does, this thesis about residual space start from a single question: what is residual space? Anyone can look up the definitions for residual and space, put them together and “answer” the question: the quantity left over at the end of (in this case) the construction process within the three-dimensional field in which the construction process exists. But, what does that really mean?

One question becomes the starting point. What does the built environment have to tell us about residual space? Armed with a camera, a sketchbook, a tank of gas, and the dog for company (people are always more friendly when you have your dog) I traversed the state for two weeks in search of answers and direction to this and many other questions.

The following excerpts are from the resulting photo essay about residual spaces in various Midwestern communities.
Perhaps one of the most dramatic spaces is created by the juxtaposition of power versus service. While many of the courthouses are imaged as a beautiful piece of architecture representing its citizens, the views through the alleys are often much more dynamic.

Left: Tippecanoe County Courthouse from the Pedestrian Bridge; Lafayette, Indiana
Below: Tippecanoe County Courthouse from an alley axis; Lafayette, Indiana
Opposite: South Street Neighborhood Revealed; Lafayette, Indiana
Among the discoveries is the phenomenon of assumed responsibility. At first glance a vacant lot is a desolate wasteland; upon closer inspection, that vacant lot is someone’s flower garden. Several spaces between neighbors appear to provide opportunities for social interaction. However, use of these spaces is seldom witnessed.

Below Left: Garden in a vacant lot; Muncie, Indiana
Below: Larger perspective of the vacant lot; Muncie, Indiana
Opposite: Neighbors relaxing after work on a fall afternoon; New Castle, Indiana
Once, a city was divided into two parts.

One part became the Good Half, the other part the Bad Half. The inhabitants of the Bad Half began to flock to the good side of the divided city, rapidly swelling into an urban exodus.

After all attempts to interrupt this undesirable migration had failed, the authorities of the bad part made a desperate and savage use of architecture: they built a wall around the good part of the city, making it completely inaccessible to their subjects.

The Wall was a masterpiece.

The Good Half, now glimpsed only over the forbidding obstacle from an agonizing distance, became even more irresistible.

Those trapped, left behind in the gloomy Bad Half, became obsessed with vain plans for escape. Hopelessness reigned supreme on the wrong side of the Wall.

As so often before in this history of mankind, architecture was the guilty instrument of despair.  

REM Koolhaas

The Wall
The daunting task of procuring a site for the thesis was compounded by the ambiguous nature of the subject at hand. Any space can be argued as a residual space whether void or solid, large or small, interior or exterior, etc. The secondary desire of reweaving the urban fabric around the chosen site directed my attention to the Indianapolis Metropolitan Area.

As I explored many potential sites throughout the area I kept returning to the elevated interstate system. There was a potential tied to the interstate as it tore through the fabric of Indianapolis’ urban communities. Further exploration of the potential sites along this corridor revealed the four-block parking swath between Capitol Avenue and Delaware Street and between 11th and 12th streets.

The interstate system had become *The Wall* that disconnected the commercial downtown from the residential communities to the north of Interstate 65. The site provided the opportunity to explore design in a unique residual space within the context of Indianapolis while also exploring design responses to a problem many American cities face. How can our infrastructure systems be integrated into the urban fabric without being destructive or invasive to that fabric?
The greatest design challenge facing the chosen site is how to break the strong linearity of the interstate to reconnect the communities on either side. A second issue involves the space beneath the interstate. Is there a way that space can be enhanced and used for something other than parking? And, even if it could, would anyone want to use that space for anything? The design response has to acknowledge the liabilities and turn them into assets for this site.

Right: 12th St. A second level of disconnection
Lower Right: Uninviting space beneath I-65
Below: Linear Wall of I-65
Opposite: Site Map
The site has a very important asset existing in its present condition. It is easily assessible from several levels, both pedestrian and vehicular. The site also holds the potential to become a major gateway into downtown from the north as Meridian Street passes through its center.

An exploration of solids and voids reveals a pattern that will allow development to occur beyond the immediate site. It is this revelation that allows the vision of the development of this site to extend beyond an immediate response and to instead become only a beginning point for the growth of urban infill and redevelopment spreading in all directions.

Left: Traffic patterns [Vehicular and Pedestrian]
Opposite: Solids massing with development possibilities within “found space”
Pass through a space unaware of arrival or departure.

Will Alsop

Will Alsop: Book I
Every site has innate characteristics that affect its design – some must be closely examined and acted upon; others may simply be left to designers intuition. I approach the design upon this site as an artistic and intuitive response to the challenges of the site. Several design intentions drive from this approach:

- The design should connect the communities north of the interstate to those within the interstate’s ring.
- The depth and importance of the site must be enhanced by its development.
- The interstate must become a vital component of any design; without the presence of the interstate on the site the design would be incomprehensible. As such, the design must find a way to capitalize on the assets presented by the interstate as well as find methods to change the liabilities into assets to be celebrated when possible.
- The pedestrian must be a driving force within the design. In particular, there must be a safe and easy method of crossing the interstate either below, above, or a combination of both.

I am acting upon the assumption that I would be able to remove any structures existing on the site deemed detrimental to the development of the design. I also proceed through the design process with the understanding that the interstate cannot be relocated, but surface streets may be altered as necessary.

The design portion is to become not the solution, but rather, a prototype for future development in Indianapolis. This prototype could also potentially be referenced in cities across America when facing similar situations.
[Architecture] can only be strong if you have the freedom to dream and not to conform to society’s dreams which, by their nature, are already compromised.

Will Alsop

Will Alsop: Book 2
The concepts for this site develop not as site plans or massing models. Rather, the conceptual phase is approached as an intuitive exploration of ideas – connections, envelopment, movement, and interconnectivity.

While the intuitive experimentation continues the programming phase begins to form an experience in and around the site. One possibility being explored is the idea of a technology playground – a series of pavilions used for the research, development, and interactive community testing of advanced technologies. In particular, the possibility of virtual reality and simulation technologies is a step toward the technologically innovative future envisioned by Indianapolis’ development board.

A second possibility being explored is the creation of an artist community. The site lends itself to the heavy, industrial arts and could become a thriving connection between the residential communities and the corporate entities of Indianapolis. An arts plaza for markets and entertainment would create a destination point as well as a gateway into downtown. The experimentation exhibited in art, the artist, and the artist’s studio closely parallels the desired experimentation of the development of the parcels adjacent to the immediate site.
The studies become an exploration of the ideas behind design. Each is only one in infinite possibilities. They explore motion and movement as a linear idea as well as folded and fluid. Connections are explored as both physical and implied. Connections might refer to a physical construct or a social and cultural being. Envelopment begins to organize above and below zones as well as adjacencies. How does each of these inform a design?

Left: Flow and Movement
Lower Left: Connections
Opposite Above: Envelopment
Opposite Lower: Interconnectivity
A building should make an impression on those who see it.

Will Alsop

Will Alsop: Book I
The schematic phase focuses on the connections across and beneath the interstate. People must be comfortable crossing the barrier that currently exists. Each exploration seeks to understand the complexities of moving over, under and upon I-65. The North Structure remains a common tie through the schemes as the gateway and marquee element on the site.

As the designs evolve, concerns about ignoring the existing city grid emerge. The intent is not to turn a back to the existing and replace it with something new and different, but rather, the design should strive to enhance the existing infrastructure.

The space beneath the interstate begins to open - carving twenty feet into the earth to allow more light to penetrate deeper into the space. The infrastructure of Meridian Street and Meridian itself is lowered with the plaza allowing pedestrians to cross the site beneath the interstate but above Meridian. The plaza opens to Meridian as well as ascending toward the south to meet the city’s surface again. The added level provides additional depth to the site as well as a much needed safety buffer for pedestrians.
The initial design schemes function independently from the city’s grid. Traversing the interstate is accomplished below via a retail component at street level. The dynamics of the space carved into the site begins to indicate an additional level of depth within the site.

Upper Left: Plan with connection node on Meridian Street
Left: Plan engaging pedestrians and directing them through the site
Opposite: Schematic Section
As more schemes develop, the importance of the city’s grid and each building’s presence along that grid is heightened. The intent is not to break the grid and introduce additional organizational patterns, but rather, to provide pedestrians the opportunity to traverse the site however their individual journey may require. The plaza is introduced below grade providing needed light to penetrate beneath the interstate as well as to add an additional depth to the site.
The city should take the unique opportunity it has to develop a test bed for a continuing experiment into urban and suburban life, forms and structures.

Functions, and the designation of spaces for them, will change in unpredictable ways.

Will Alsop

*City of Objects*
As the design develops, this project is envisioned as a prototype for the future. This piece becomes just one in several throughout the Indianapolis Metropolitan Area. The Canal Development and White River State Park area might be viewed as the initial installment, creating a museum and educational campus on the Near-West side of Indianapolis. This prototype creates the Circle City Artist District on the Near-North side of town. Similar explorations in residential development may be suitable for the Near-East side. Industrial or Biotechnology explorations could lead to a similar development on the Near-South side, immediately west of the ELI Lilly campus.

All of these pieces will work together to bring Indianapolis to architectural prominence in the Midwest. This systematic development can also serve as a prototype for revitalization in other cities across the nation. Cities such as Atlanta could easily adapt the prototype to address the complexities of a sunken interstate system. Above all, the prototype is expected to encourage designers to explore other areas often written off as liabilities to discover how they might become assets to urban design.
The plaza space is central to the design of the prototype. The plaza transitions from street level to the sunken lower level allowing more light beneath the interstate while creating more options for safely and comfortably crossing Meridian Street and I-65.
The West Structure contains the artists’ studio spaces. This piece is the heart of the project. The public pedestrian path continues into the building providing the public the unique opportunity to engage the artists in their studio setting. The transparency of the structure’s skin provides a glimpse into the studios at all hours. The space becomes the “Studio that Never Sleeps.”

Right: East Facade
Below: Interior Circulation Pattern
The North Structure houses the corporate entities representing the artists and their work. The lower four levels [-1, 0, +1, & +2] are public retail spaces aimed at promoting small starter businesses. Pedestrians can transition vertically throughout the retail portion of the facility.

Left: South Facade
Below: North Facade
The function of the East Structure remains undefined. The structure itself is designed to reflect the nature of heavy metal arts and sculpture. The direct connection to the existing office tower lends itself to take on a corporate function. However, the need for additional office space does not exist at this time.

Right: West Facade
Below: East Facade
There are several important zones of connection across and through the site. The West Structure and Eastern Plaza space serve as the major North-South connectors. The West structure provides this opportunity at both the street level and through several opportunities above I-65. The North Structure’s retail component connects the street level to the plaza level as well as providing a pleasant means of getting from one side of the interstate to the other. The Street level portion of the main plaza provides the opportunity to move across Meridian Street unencumbered by its traffic.

Left: Zones of Connection
Opposite: Layers of depth
More important than the horizontal connections on the site are the vertical transitions. The circulation system of the West Structure provides several opportunities to move up or down while moving across the site. The retail component of the North Building serves the northern portion of the site allowing pedestrians to move between the street and plaza levels east and west of Meridian Street. A set of cascading stairs greets pedestrians entering the plaza from the northwest while a gentle set of terraces descend into the plaza from the southwest.
Above: Traveling Westbound on I-65
Right and Opposite: Traveling Eastbound on I-65
Above: Plaza from the Northwest Entry
Right: Plaza from the Southwest Corner
Opposite: Plaza from the Northeast upon Exiting the Northern Structure
Above: Plaza from Northbound Meridian Street
Right: Traveling Northbound on Meridian Street
Opposite: From Pennsylvania and 10th Street
There is no such thing as a mistake in architecture.

Will Alsop
Will Alsop: Book 1
Several thoughts come out of an exploration such as the journey I have undertaken over the course of these final eight months.

- Make a decision. Though that decision may not appear correct, a decision must be made in order to continue the process and make the subsequent decisions that will arise. Failing to make a decision only diminishes the opportunity to move forward with a project. Likewise, making a decision too late can result in being stuck with its consequences due to time or budget constraints.
- There is no wrong answer in architecture. Architecture is not about being right or wrong; it’s about making something better for the user.
- Some of the most important moments in a project have nothing to do with pen and paper. Casual conversation with those around you will produce more ideas and possibilities than any amount of grinding design work. More importantly, discussing others’ designs often produces additional avenues for your own. Two minds are better than one; three are better than two.
- Have fun. If you don’t like what you’re doing, do something else.


REFERENCES
The city is like a field of clouds. The rubber grid of a networked day.

The builders of the Tower of Babel were missing the material reinforced concrete. We are missing the material of the confusion of languages which we need to complete it.

There is no solution for the city.
The strategies of urban planning operate on the matrix of diverging impossibilities. The architect has to choose one and claim responsibility for it.

Clouds are symbols for conditions that change quickly. They form and transform themselves through the complex interaction of changing situations. Viewed in slow motion, the architecture of urban development could be compared with patches of clouds.

The vocabulary of urban planning should be in an architectural antique shop and replaced by phantasms still to be define, which fluctuate and flicker like the television screen after a broadcast. The white noise of urban strategy, as a digitally networked system without hierarchy, is the play of suburb and periphery which would mould and determine the image of our cities and the quality they have to offer.

The notions of centre, axis and spatial sequence will have to be replaced by tangent, vector and sequence of images. We should not regret the loss of public space, but reinterpret it as a fluctuating, networked mediated event. One which acts more like a semi-conductor than a sequence of spaces.

The development of architecture is also furthered by strategies which are comprised by searching for lines and fields of possibilities tied together by chance, anti-logic, and anti-authority. But the coincidence of systems - both as built space and as media space - becomes the basis for new designs and projects, the rubber grid as the premonition of a dynamic design net for cities like clouds.

Coop Himmelb(l)au
The Architecture of Clouds