Entertainment Architecture
Redefining the Nightclub Experience through Architectural Design

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Acknowledgments

To my mother and father: Thanks for always believing in me and allowing me to take my own path to discovery and success. You guys were always there whether it was lending your ear, lending a hand, and lending your heart.

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Thanks
Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

Abstract

Positions and Issues

Defining Elements

The Inspiration of Music

The Inspirational Board

Site
  Location and Photo Archive
  Identity and Documentation
  Analysis and Diagram

In Depth: Club Descriptions

Sketch: Process Drawings

Drawings
  Plan In Thought
  In Section Detail

Models
  Form and Function
  Progression and Entry
  Arial Views and Elements

Details
  Nightclub #1
  Nightclub #3
  The Wall of Senses

Sources Cited
Most nightclubs are very seldom thought of through architectural design in means of progression of space, exterior applications, flexibility, and other sensory issues. By creating a new nightclub identity through architectural expression, progression of space, and flexibility, one can engage in a multitude of experiences that amplify the senses and create memories that will last a lifetime.

The design project is in *Dark of Night*: a series of interconnected nightclub venues and *Light of Day*: a series of flexible spaces open for concerts, fashion shows, auto shows, product launches, filming and other forms of entertainment. The driving portion of my design is the series of nightclub venues. Entry and progression were one of the most important issues in understanding the senses and creating new experiences that allow users to be given a choice as to what path or journey they would like to take to particular clubs. Architectural elements allow club goers to receive samplings of views, sounds, and feelings before ever entering the clubs. However, views are limited and sporadic to gain one's curiosity and draw them into the site. The building, conceptually is a new industrial style with the merging of technology, lighting, and fashion.

The site is located in downtown Indianapolis, IN near 3 other existing clubs and Conseco Fieldhouse to take advantage of the entertainment district. There are four clubs located on-site with one club taking over a portion of an existing building that had an opened up structure to the south end of the building. Site access and viewlines are acquired from 4 major locations to ensure that eye-catching viewlines are revealed. Other main points of interest are the interactive walks, parklike setting that acts as a progressional space to the main gathering corridor, setbacks, facade details, three-dimensional light, and plate tectonics. Architectural lighting also played an important role in the design to help aid in creating a multitude of experiences and amplification of the senses.
One of the most competitive and open-minded industries in the entertainment world is the designing of nightclubs. Nightclubs and similar entertainment venues, for the majority, create a sense of identity through the renovation of existing buildings and focus more on the aspect of interior design. In result, nightclubs and other entertainment facilities tend to be single user-specific in nature and create limitations to its interpretive content. The definition of a nightclub can vary from person to person but in overall aspect, a nightclub is a venue providing an entertainment space for music, dancing, beverage consumption, and social interactions. It is a social gathering place, an experiential and memorable place, and a place of escape and excitement. However, nightclubs during the daytime are far from being social enhancers to its potential users. These facilities usually become non-interactive components or dead spaces during the daytime and therefore, create a diluted meaning of entertainment design. Most nightclubs are very seldom thought of through architectural design in means of progression of space, exterior applications, flexibility, and other sensory issues. By creating a new nightclub identity through architectural expression, progression of space, and flexibility, one can engage in a multitude of experiences that amplify the senses and create memories that will last a lifetime.

I feel that nightclubs should be an experience from not only inside the walls of a building but forming a palette of experiences before entering the main space. When working with a series of clubs, subtle views should be integrated into the façade, floor, or ceilings, to allow for one to sample the experience. This also creates anticipation for visitor. The path to the nightclub should be one of discovery and choice. In return this creates a progression of space or a build up to the energy within the club. This plays along with entrances in that each entrance has its own defining experience and should be separated from one another to create different journeys. One would be able to come to the complex on a given night and upon return, he/she would discover hidden passageways or other passages that were not noticed upon the first visit. This allows the users to keep interest in the facility and to keep coming back to see what will be different upon the next visit.

In order for nightclubs to co-exist with other entertainment functions, the spaces need to be flexible and kinetic. Audio/video and other support systems would be mounted on hydraulic racking systems to tuck away within the membrane of the ceilings. Architectural expressed canopies over the bars would in sense rotate to a vertical position to close off the actual bar and beverage spaces and allow for the main space to be a more unified flexible atmosphere. Hydraulic platforms are visioned as a three-tiered system would allow for elevate, flush, or sunken spaces within a club while allowing for vertical transportation of equipment and supplies during daytime applications. The main point in flexibility is that the more a space is flexible the better chances it has of staying in business. Based on some research the average lifespan of a club is about 3 years before new technology and new trends take over.
A new trend being set in the nightclub business is the additions of VIP rooms and other limited access rooms to create a sense of luxury. I feel that VIP rooms should, if possible, be linked to more than one club and set forth at higher viewing areas. By allowing for interconnections to other clubs, this gives the viewer a choice of view, music, and atmosphere. Being able to have choices is very important in the nightclub industry because it makes people feel more important and more aware of their surroundings. Materials would play an important part in these VIP rooms allocated for the freedom of choice. Enhanced audio/visual systems would allow control of individual users or head bartender of the space. This in return would create custom settings for daytime applications as well. The use of electro-chromic glass would allow for users to block out or bring in views of certain clubs or elements within a club.

Nightclubs can and should break the barrier of tradition and create flexible/kinetic spaces that allows for a diversity of functions to take place during the daytime and nighttime hours. It is a space of continual adaptation to the world around. Nightclubs can and should create new experiences and amplify the senses through the progression of space, architectural expression, architectural trickery, and technological immersion through audio, visual, and thermal systems. By creating spaces for experiential quality, one would be able to attain the sense of drama, excitement, anticipation, energy, motion, mystery, and suspense. A series of spaces can act as a foreground or background element and allows these areas to interact, teach, lead, follow and transform the realms of the social environment.

Building Expression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinetic Spaces</th>
<th>Energy and Vibrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plate Tectonics</td>
<td>Architectural Trickery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Passages</td>
<td>Reflections and Layering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progression of Space</td>
<td>Material Defining Spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forces and Vibrations</td>
<td>Indoor/Outdoor Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choreography of Experience</td>
<td>Contrasting elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama in form and spectacle</td>
<td>Technology Immersion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience and Sensation</td>
<td>Journey and Mystery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excitement and Suspense</td>
<td>Choices and Trend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipation</td>
<td>Hidden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Industrial style with the merging of technology, lighting, and fashion
Defining Elements

**Anticipation:**
- Foreknowledge, intuition, and presentiment
- Pleasurable expectation

**Energy:**
- Vitality and intensity of expression
- Strength of expression; force of utterance; power to impress
  the mind and arouse the feelings; life; spirit; — said of
  speech, language, words, style; as, a style full of energy.
- An exertion of force

**Feel:**
- To undergo the experience of
- To be aware of; sense
- To be emotionally affected by
- To perceive through the sense of touch

**Guiding:**
- One who shows the way by leading, directing, or advising
- Something that serves to direct or indicate

**Illusion:**
- A sensation originated by some external object, but so
  modified as in
  any way to lead to
- An erroneous perception

**Journey:**
- The act of traveling from one place to another
- To travel over or through

**Kinetic:**
- Of, relating to, or produced by motion
- Moving or causing motion; motory; active, as opposed to
  latent

**Music:**
- An aesthetically pleasing or harmonious sound or combina-
  tion of sounds

**Plate Tectonics:**
- The branch of geology studying the folding and faulting of
  the earth’s crust

**Progression:**
- The act of moving forward; a proceeding in a course;
  motion onward.
- Course; passage; lapse or process of time.

**Sound:**
- The sensation stimulated in the organs of hearing by such
  vibrations in
  the air or other medium
- An articulation made by the vocal apparatus

**Suspense:**
- Pleasurable excitement and anticipation regarding an
  outcome.
- Anxiety or apprehension resulting from an uncertain,
  undecided, or mysterious situation.

**Tectonic:**
- Of or pertaining to construction or architecture
- Pertaining to the structure or movement of the earth’s crust;
  “tectonic plates”
“Modern trance is the blend of cinematic soundscapes of ambient melody with the urgency and precision of techno, sprinkled with the uplifting vibe and community of house music. The clichés run wild but the imagery remains the same: it’s the ride, the journey, the way, with a gentle push of the crossfader the DJ injects a harmony, the surprising mix keeping you captivated and elated…trance provides the backdrop to your own imagination…Trance delivers the message to the underground even as it draws newcomers to the fold. But the revelation can come just as easily sitting in a friend’s car, watching streetlights whizz by like tracer bullets as it can at your first big club night, standing up against a bassbin that’s taller than you as clean waves of sound massage the stress right out of your bones. If you get that far and you come to understand the music, there’s no going back. Your life is forever changed, and suddenly the whole span of dance music makes sense in a way it never does if you’ve only ever listened to three minutes worth of one radio hit…It’s the sound of a nation with a collective desire to be raised up, and delivered to the stars. You could call it the Trance Nation. And this is their song.”

-Simon Ramsey
The Inspirational Board

Sensations
- Listen
- Waiting
- Dance
- Suspense
- Texture
- Feel
- Color

Darkness
Illumination
Sound
Movement

Experience
Taste
Smell
Mystery

Excitement
Projection
Fabric

Tilt/Rotation
Expressive

Emotions

Please Note: The images on this page were provided by various websites and research studies and are not works of my own. For citation of sources, see bibliography.
After a review of three proposed locations for the new entertainment complex, the final decision was made on a site located in downtown, Indiana. Currently, the site is adjacent to three existing local nightclubs off of Meridian St. with the site extending one full block to the east to take advantage of the activity from Conseco Fieldhouse and Pennsylvania St. user access. This site currently houses parking space, alleyways, and an existing building with a vacant open structure to the south end of the building. The building of proposed renovation and in connection to, currently houses and operates communication and relay lines for railroad transportation in the Indiana region. The rest of the building, for the most part, is vacant and structurally intact.

Being adjacent to several entertainment facilities and within the downtown area, this site is ideal for entertainment purposes in both daytime and nighttime activity.
The drawings to the right are detailed sketches and measurements of the proposed renovation of the existing building located off of Pennsylvania St. on the north side of the proposed site.

**Downtown Identity**

Circle Center Mall
Loft Apartments
Sports Bar
Jillian’s Sports Bar
Conseco Fieldhouse
Old Spagetti Factory
CSX (part of third floor only)
Have A Nice Day Cafe (club)
Tiki Bob’s (club)
Lotus Nightclub
Parking Lot
Irish Pub
Thai Garden Restaurant
Crackers Comedy Club
Roberts Camera Shop
Parking Garage
Union Station
Railroad Track (inactive)
Railroad Track (active)
Elevated Parking lot (+18'-0" +/)

Site Ownership for proposed facility
**Pedestrian Access:**

The site is accessible from 3 main points; Pennsylvania St. on the east side, Meridian St. on the west side, and the main parking garage located to the south. Because of the large spread in distance from each entry point, the space allocated near the central area of the site is the place of explosion. The main gathering space will be set here for the interaction of the clubs. It will be one of the main focal pieces within the entertainment complex. The location of this explosion piece allows for views to be taken advantage of from various points of the site and its surrounding edges. This space is in equilibrium with all main entry points.

**Entry Points and Club Levels:**

The four different entry/immersion points access each club at different locations on the site. These are connected by a transgressional passage-way that guides one by curiosity. The reasoning for the separation of each entry is to allow for a place of discovery. It is the viewers choice to where they would like to go and provides you with a journey. The entry points also act as equal travel points from various locations of entry. The levels of the club are noted on plan to the right and resemble the majority of the allocated space for the clubs.

**Maximum Capacity:**

The capacities were determined based on my research of existing clubs and daytime entertainment applications. The sizing of these spaces were continually changing throughout the design phase to adapt to the final decisions in what types of functions allocated in each individual space.

- **Purple** - part of the renovation proposal and extension of existing building on-site.
- **Green** - majority of space located underneath the earth’s surface with multiple levels.
- **Blue** - smaller more intimate space located above the green level areas.
- **Yellow** - concert style space with indoor/outdoor relationships.
The Conceptual layout plan (below) shows space relationships, thoughts, and connections that helped aid in the beginning stages of design. The remaining images are a collection of sketches gathered during the process of design.
Section A-1 was created during the mid-way reviews and helped guide me to my final decisions. Section A-2 is similar to Section A-1 in regards to cut relations. Some of the key points demonstrated in section is the interconnection relationships between each nightclub. Some of the systems can become hidden within the service ceilings for space flexibility and kinectivity.

The Existing structure, as noted, comprises of a hydraulic platform system utilized for space flexibility. Show cars can be put on the lift and transported to second level for exhibits while at night, the platforms can be elevated dancing platforms or sunken lounges. The club (#2) on the far right of the section also comprises of hydraulic lifts. This is to accommodate stage settings, indoor/outdoor activities, and a variety of concert style venues.
The existing site shows the space relationships between adjacent buildings and other man-made structures located on the site.
Models: Form and Function

Study III (final)

The Three study models allowed for a study of site relationships, form accents, and materiality for defining the separate but interconnected venues. The third model relates closely to my final design decisions while still taking other elements and ideas from the previous two.
Model: Progression and Entry

Entry/Views from Meridian St. and Georgia St.  
(Pedestrian Passageways)

The main point of entry to the entertainment complex is located off of Meridian St., between Lotus nightclub and Thai Restaurant. Three nightclubs run adjacent to the entry/passageway into the site. While all of the existing nightclubs are located at street edge, my nightclub complex is pushed back into the site. The idea is to create a park-like setting between the two adjacent buildings. This is the progressional space into the site. Individuals and groups can gather in this space during the daytime and nighttime hours. It is a place for escaping the scene before, during, and after the nightclub hours.

The second reason for locating the main gathering entrance in back from the streets facade is to allow for an equal distant access and viewpoints from all surrounding blocks. The main gathering space where groups tend to wait for others before picking a club of their choice is located on the second level. This creates a destination point for those entering on ground level and allows them to fully experience the site by finding their own path.

A third advantage to keeping this space as a park-like setting is to allow for small food-service venues to setup within the area as well as future possibilities of adjacent clubs opening up facade views to the park. The Georgia St. view is primarily for those wanting valet parking. Spaces are allotted in the alleyway for several vehicles and still allows for similar views of the second level gathering space.
Many of the users will approach the entertainment complex through some sort of vehicle transportation. The parking garage to the South of the site is allotted as part of the site access plan. Users will be able to use this parking garage at anytime during day and night. The entrance to the garage is located on the North side of the parking garage. After driving down the small open corridor (the progression space), passengers can be dropped off and the driver can continue on and park. This drive is limited in access in that only those wishing to use the parking garage facilities will be able to enter. The reason for this is to allow for most users to enter the down the main entranceway off of Meridian.

The top view is looking out from the parking garage on level one. To the top left corner of the page, is a subtle view of what one can see when coming out of the second level. Three night shots are shown to the right to demonstrate what one would see when approaching by vehicle, by pedestrian, or just walking by at the Meridian St. edge. Large electro-chromatic glass panels are used on the facade of Club #2 to allow light to project outdoors and to create a variety of lighting effects. Like the Pennsylvania St. facade, this application allows to draw curiosity and explore the complex in more detail.
Model: Progression and Entry

Entry/Views from Pennsylvania St.

Many of the facades will be equipped with state-of-the-art audio/visual devices. As shown in the image to the right, large video screens are mounted flush into the skewed, stainless steel grid. This facade is located along Pennsylvania street and intervenes with the existing structure that is set forth to be renovated as club #1. The idea behind the entry sequence was to allow pedestrians and vehicular to view illuminated and elevated hallways leading into particular clubs. One would be able to hear the subtle beats to the music within the club and by allowing partial views into the clubs, it creates a sense of anticipation and curiosity.

Material choices for the facade would be a waterproof bluish-iridescent fabric to cover the rotated tectonic grid. Stainless steel rods would project from the edges where the video screens would be mounted. The club located underground (not shown) would have a stainless steel band cutting through the limestone on the back central portion of the building. A series of electro-chromic panels would be used to create architectural trickery to enhance the senses.

Below: An aerial shot of the elevated crosswalk. The walk is separated from the wall to allow for light to seep from below and allows the walk to be defined as a specific entrance to club #1.
The Roof of Club #2 (the yellow form in the picture shown to the right) is a corrugated steel membrane that is in color of silver metallic. The exterior of the club’s facade would be a yellow coated steel. This is to resemble the existing structure that houses a stairwell, located in the southeast corner of the site. The entry to the club meets up with the parking garage edge and, like the other club entrances, is separated from the main space. This utilizes space for progression sequences and typical entrance fees, and a variety of other services.

Additional sequence photos on the second row from the bottom, show the accenting of structural elements during the nighttime hours. Views into portions of the clubs can also be accessible from street level.

The lower row of photos show a rotated stainless steel window grid with a sheer see through fabric applied to the facade. This allows for an architectural expression as well a filtering or enhancer of light. The photo in the lower right corner is an example of a pressure-activated lighting acrylic bridge system. The panels are a clear acrylic until stepped on by an individual. Once pressure is applied, a bright luminous colored light guides your way.
In Depth: Club Descriptions

Club #1

The Club is a mixture of new industrial and fashion. This club is a kinetic space in that various systems can adapt to its needed entertainment function. This club is located in the existing structure set forth for renovation. The floor system is a series of hydraulic platforms that can create different settings for a variety of functions. Within the space, the bar areas are equipped with canopies that rotate down and seal off the individual space for a more secure and private use of the main space. The example to the far right shows the effect I have in mind and would consist of translucent acrylic panels that only allow for light to pass through. The Club also extends past its existing facade to catch viewlines for pedestrians down below. Club 1 was the first club to be thought of in that it takes part of an existing building. The third level and up is opened up to the South due to a demolition of a portion of the building in earlier years.

Club #2

This club is set for large concerts and can be opened to the proposed garden on the elevated terrace. The idea is for an indoor/outdoor flex space. The South wall consists of large translucent wall panel systems. VIP rooms, large video wall screens, Recording studio for live performances, technology, and movable stages, are just some of the ideas set forth for this space. This Club would be equipped with a variety of technology components dealing with networking, lighting, audio/visual, and thermal systems. The atmosphere of this club would be more of a high energy dance club. The main stage is on a hydraulic lift that can be adjusted to accommodate the height of indoor use and outdoor use (See section for details). The exterior application is a yellow steel to represent the existing staircase structure on-site. The idea of the translucent panels was also derived from this existing component. A picture is provided above.

Note: The images on this page are the works of others and are only used for idea relationships.
**Club #3**

The majority of the club is located underneath the surface of the earth. The two main themes that drive the design of the club are plate tectonics and a tunnel. The idea of plates shifting due to vibrations from music underneath the earth’s surface push up and the many others forces colliding together within the complex create the progression of space and sensory. While one travels deeper and deeper into the ground, a small opening is discovered and leads into the main club which is in the form of a large underground transportation tunnel that had been sealed off. The tunnel houses 3 levels of bars with open, semiprivate, and private spaces. Video screen walls are applied at the ends of the space as well as a large performance stage. Only small glimpses of the club can be viewed from the east and west entry points. Technology plays a strong part along with lighting systems and kinetic support systems. Access to the club is available for not only pedestrians, but also a hidden freight elevator large enough to hold 2 cars is acts as a transporter for various types of equipment.

**Club #4**

This club is located on the second level of the complex and is nestled between all 3 clubs. The atmosphere for this club is more of a place for social interaction and lounging. This club is more of an upscale club with a focus on the comfort of individuals. The club also allows for views into 2 other clubs and partial views into the third club below. A billiards room is provided along with dining experiences that allow this facility to cater for any type of event. The daytime application would be set for receptions, fine dining, business meetings, etc. The interiors are more focused on fabrics, and other highly expressive materials. VIP rooms connect this club with Club #2 from above to allow for its users to have a diversity of options to choose from. Out of the 4 club designs, this one is set for a more intimate experience and is the smallest club in the entertainment complex. Views to the park are located on the western side of the club in the lounge area.

Note: The images on this page are the works of others and are only used for idea relationships.
This club takes up a portion of the existing building located on-site. The major concern was views into the space from Pennsylvania St. (currently a one-way street). To respond to this notion, I created a notch out effect from the existing building while leaving the top floor level in tact to signify that the building is still one elemental piece. The South facade of the building was left opened on the second, level that is opened up to the 4th level. The existing facade facing Pennsylvania St. shows a setback of brick veneer on the second level. These brick panels were removed and replace with rotated glass cubes. The idea is to have objects of the building extend past its original edge to grab the attention of oncoming traffic and pedestrians. This is also viewable from the Conseco Fieldhouse entry point. The carved out portion allows for more views into the space during the daytime. The club is located on second level and be transformed into spaces utilized for shows and displays.

One of my concepts for kinetic spaces is to integrate a series of hydraulic, triple platforms to create flexibility. These platforms are large enough to bring show cars from first level to second level and can be set at different positions. This is an advantage for the nightclub in that the style of the club can be different from day to day or month to month. For example, one night the platforms create a stage for dancing and energy while another night the platform is sunken to create a more calming and social lounging space.
**Details: Nightclub #3**

This club is the second largest venue in the entertainment complex. It is also, for the majority, hidden below the earth’s surface. The idea is an underground tunnel...a place for discovery. It is a place that seems hidden from the world and although large crowds come here to socialize, listen to the music, and dance, it still feels like a secret place that only a select few would know about. The club has an entry point near the central part of the site where that large indoor gathering space resides. The entry sequence starts out in the outdoor plaza where one can hear the waterfalls and nature. A ramp carves into the ground and in result creates a plate tectonic effect. The built forms and the sense of vibration break the ground showing pieces of light from the thin fracture line cracks in the earth’s surface. The main gathering space is small and tectonic in form, as if you it is a place burrowing into the ground. After going through a series of small corridors, reflections of colored light become within one's sight and the music becomes incredibly louder. The entrance into the tunnel is located on the side and not on end, to create a greater difference in size when approached.

Large video screens and a stage cap off one end while multiple levels of bars create a destination point on the entrance end. The overall height of the club (o.c.) is estimated at 40'-0” with 8'-0” above the earth’s surface. This allows for natural light to define the space during the daytime. Kinetic type systems play a highly important part in this space for applications of various functions.
Details: The Wall of Senses

The designed the wall of senses in thinking of a persons heartbeat...a pulse...a beat of music...a breathe. The idea behind this application is an interplay of light, movement, and sound that interacts with your senses. This system would be located in some of the corridors within my space and would relate to the idea of progression. To the right, a series of pictures represent the changing colors of light. This idea is flexible in that lighting devices could give out slow changes of color, or fast pulsing beams of color. Whichever way, a person coming back to this space would experience something totally different no matter how many times he/she has been to this space.

The second application built into the wall is a series of hydraulic apparatuses that are directly linked to a computer-controlled audio system for pulse interaction. A flexible skin would be adhered to the wall in order to create a heartbeat effect when the hydraulic system is applied. This is the heartbeat or the pulse of the music that creates a unique experience for the viewers. Light would rush out from the edges as it pulses to the beat. This wall would have a more organic effect...as if it was underground and carved out.

Lighting systems could either be applied to the back portions of the wall or the wall could share and edge of the nightclub to allow for the existing light systems to gleam through the translucent acrylic plates.
Sources Cited

This is a collection of the referenced materials used during the duration of thesis. The majority of the research was found via the web due to a limited documentation of nightclubs through other sources. Although the majority of the referenced material is not part of my documented thesis, I felt it was important to acknowledge those who gave me inspiration. The images used on “The Inspiration Board” and “In Depth: Club Descriptions” are referenced on the following pages.

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