"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main." - John Donne

I wish to dedicate this book to:

God, who has given me the ability, health and patience to persevere,

Peaches and Herb, my four-footed children,

my unborn child, well on his/her way into this world,

and especially to Kathleen, my lifelong companion, for teaching me a thing or two after I knew it all.
Department of Architecture  
College of Architecture and Planning  
Ball State University  
Mark A. Beville  
Pendleton Community  
Education Center  
Bachelor of Architecture Degree Thesis Design  

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN THESIS COMMITTEE  

Andy Seager, Architectural Design Studio Professor  

Paul Laseau, Architectural Professor/thesis critic  

Dr. Paul Ranieri, non-architectural faculty/thesis critic
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Introduction

"Architecture is the making of a room; an assembly of rooms. The Light is the light of that room. Thoughts exchanged by one and another are not the same in one room as in another." - Louis I. Kahn

My thesis deals with the issue of interpersonal communication in the setting of today's highly advanced technological word. I am seeking a balance between personal communication and technology. I have chosen a building type of a Continuing Education Center serving as a new type of community center for gathering people within that community making both more productive and meaningful.

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Let us now travel back in the time 100 years. Times were simple. Automobile production had not yet arrived in the United States. Imagine the sound of downtown, the birds having a quiet conversation with horse’s hooves on cobblestone streets. Old men met on the steps of the courthouse discussing the latest news and gossip.

Along with the turn of the century, followed a new world, a turbulent one, the automobile began massive production with the help of Ford Motor Company and General Motors. The Wright Brothers provided the airplane; a fitting metaphor for the lift off of the new century filled with new invention.
People became more mobile with their horseless carriages. War to end all wars. Radio emerged in 1920. The communication age had begun. In 1939, at the New York's World's Fair the first television system was introduced. Although slowed at first by World War II, television emerged "capable of exerting an influence that no other medium of communication can match" (Bergreen).

I, myself, have grown up with television. I can say to my grandkids, "When I was a kid, we only had 3 channels and they were black and white."

Today there are hundreds of channels in living color and many more on the way. "Many educators regard television as a foe of literacy and serious thought" (Bergreen). Even radio was not without its share of criticism. "In 1927, H. G. Wells condemned radio as useful only to 'very sedentary persons living in badly lighted houses or otherwise unable to read... and who have no capacity for thought of conversation'" (Bergreen). Perhaps so, but in 1938, Orson Wells' adaptation of H. G. Wells's classic book, War of the Worlds displayed radio's power of influence and persuasion when it "became a landmark in radio history when his realistic broadcast convinced millions of U. S. listeners that a Martian invasion was actually occurring and precipitated widespread panic" (Bergreen). The power of persuasion through human communication is unavoidably present in everyone's lives.
The past century, when taken in retrospect, would cause anyone to want to go sit under a tree and breathe deeply. The hectic pace of the automobile and communication technologies are unwittingly stranding people. We are becoming alienated from ourselves, caught in an inhumane sequence of birth, life and death. People have been spread out, isolated physically and psychologically between citizens, or should we say residents, and our communities. Frighteningly by these trends are dissolving the very fabric of the American family through long range commutes and high divorce rates.

*People don’t meet downtown on the steps anymore.*

The freedom of mobility, and choice we have in our world today is now a requirement to provide happiness, or so we think perhaps. This isolation, of people from people in a social atmosphere can be psychologically destructive. People are attempting to communicate through television and telephone. There must be a balance created to allow for freedom as well as opportunities for social interaction. People need people. With technology, there is plenty of communication but there is no communication. Communication requires feedback that only a human being can offer. Face to face. Within reach...

*On the downtown steps*
I believe that interpersonal communication is something which must continue throughout one's lifetime, providing a social connection, an orientation to one's place, providing a sense of belonging, of identity.

Architecturally, there must be an effort to regain this community aesthetic of communication, through the creation of a physical social space. This would provide a psychological environment facilitating personal communications of people with people. Both the physical and social realm contain the aspect of progression toward destination. Physically, to create a sequence of movements. The question of what draws the eye, the ear, what comforts the touch as well as the mind. What feels right? Psychologically, to provide an opportunity for self-fulfillment through learning as a lifelong process. Therefore, as long as learning continues there is satisfaction in learning, a means by which people may satisfy anxieties of incompleteness, which may well be the psychological destination, a goal to be continued rather than an endpoint to be reached.

I have chosen to develop a Continuing Education Center as a vehicle for exploring these issues of communication. Located in Pendleton, Indiana, the center will be a link of communication in several ways; a physical community link, providing a town centerpiece and organizer. It will provide a technological link ranging
from within the community to access banks of knowledge from around the world. It will also explore interpersonal communication through tense of architectural forms and creation of spaces and places.

Some questions that arise are: How can architecture encourage interaction, this one-on-one communication, or involvement with groups of people? What are the influences of architectural spaces on issues such as formality, or the discussion of experience? How does architecture respond to the subtle, sometimes subconscious needs of its users? What are the images of communication?
Programme

Overall, the Continuing Education Facility will serve as a collection of gathering opportunities; a place to be alone, to meet a friend, to conduct a meeting or party. It will be a community networking device, organizing the already existing range of public amenities such as churches, schools and other public and private places. In this way, the center will serve to increase the effectiveness of the community and encouraging a higher level of involvement.

The facility will contain a state-of-the-art telecommunications center allowing for the increase of psychological globalism while keeping the community intact physically. High technology in the form of computers and satellite links have become common in today's society. Today they are being used to replace old methods. For example, computers are simply replacements of paper and pen, file cabinets and typewriters. Eventually, they will inspire new ways of communication, new ways of thinking. This facility will educate people how to utilize modern devices, being flexible to accommodate inevitable changes. This facility is not only for adults, but must facilitate all ages to be successful. One of its goals is to reinforce the institution of family and its inter interaction as well as with a community entity.
Physical and Cultural Context

"The city from a simple settlement became the place of the assembled institutions. A mere foothold is confident of the settlement—the first institution."-Louis I. Kahn

Pendleton is on the National Register of Historic Places, therefore has a strong civic pride. It is missing, however, a similarly powerful civic architectural image. There is a hole on one corner of the downtown intersection. The site. A superb park facility is within two blocks from the center of downtown. It contains a river, lakes, waterfalls, trails, ducks, swans, assorted wildlife, a leaning lighthouse, bridge abutment ruins, ball parks, and barbecue grills. A definite place to go.
The "hole" in the downtown provides an excellent space to pursue an architecture of communication. Being in the center of town, which has no government building per se, it is the ideal gathering space, the social destination. There is presently a strong school system including an elementary, a middle school and a high school. The civic groups are evident in Pendleton as well as their faithful support and pride in their town. Flags fly throughout the downtown in the summer, decorations in the winter. The park is continually being reforested. There is a curbside recycling program. There are several community festivals throughout the year including a June Jamboree, Arts and Crafts fair, and a Halloween parade in which my wife was a pumpkin and our dog a skunk.

Because of its geographic location, property in and around Pendleton is becoming increasingly valuable. Many people commute to Indianapolis, which is approximately thirty miles away. Castleton is about twenty miles away. Anderson less than ten. There seems to be a well-balanced mix of age groups in Pendleton.

Because of these characteristics, I would consider Pendleton to be much like the majority of towns throughout the nation. Thus, making it a fine location for a new type of community center. One that may be located, with proper contextual considerations, in nearly any town.
Inspiration: Kahn

One of my strongest inspirations has been the philosophies and architecture of Louis I. Kahn. He stressed the essential importance of "the search for beginnings." He "sought to imbue the present city with the sense of inspiration that prompted its origin." "Kahn treated the urban configuration as a living organism whose vitality was dependent on its full and healthy expression."

"He described the city center as the 'cathedral of the city'" recalling the focal point of the Gothic town, the center of its spiritual presence, around which bursting commercial and cultural activity took place. Such a concentration of all activities into a central area, Kahn believed would strengthen surrounding areas as well as stimulated interest in the city center as a usable place."

"The city is composed of institutions: schools, libraries, churches, and hospitals to name a few. Once Kahn had established the relationship of form to design, he thought in terms of comparing present-day institutions with their form essences. Kahn believed that existing institutions were functioning with no relevance to the true needs of the people. By forgetting for a moment the condition of these institutions, he said the architect could let his mind go back to their beginnings and sense the resourcefulness and energy that determined their original purposes. With a sense of the inspiration of these beginning moments, the architect could create spaces that would more effectively serve the needs of the population."

"Kahn thought a city should be a place where a small boy could sense what he wanted to be when he grew up by just walking along the city's streets. To Kahn, the city's potential for growth was unlimited, provided its institutions were redefined. The school was the institution,...about which Kahn spoke most often. He considered the school of great importance because he saw learning as a process that continued throughout life and was central to it but that did not occur often enough in the existing educational system. In 1960 he described the institution of school as beginning with a man under a tree discussing his realizations with others. Teaching
and learning were at that moment spontaneous, unself-conscious acts. The school as it exists today, Kahn pointed out, does not adequately serve its function because it has strayed so far from the eager, willing exchange that initiated the first school. In order to convey the essence of School in the final design, the architect must translate the required program of square footage into spaces that not only serve their practical function but also recreate the inspiration inherent in the first school. Kahn felt that a variety of classroom shapes and sizes, plenty of natural light, and the transformation of long hallways into rooms with alcoves were important ingredients of his personal form realization of School. Such spaces would better reflect the individuality of each student. They would also inspire a continual reevaluation of the curriculum and the meaning of the institution, leading to better student-teacher relationships “(all Kahn quotes, Tyng).
Inspiration: Isocrates

My research ranged from modern architects such as Louis Kahn and Romaldo Giurgola to the Greek philosopher Isocrates who spoke strongly on the "art of discourse";

"We ought, therefore, to think of the art of discourse just as we think of the other areas, and not to form opposite judgements about similar things, nor show ourselves intolerant toward that power which, of all the faculties which belong to the nature of man, is the source of most of our blessings. For in the other powers which we possess, as I have already said on a former occasion, we are in no respect superior to other living creatures; nay, we are inferior to many in swiftness and in strength and in other resources; but, because there has been implanted in us the power to persuade each other and to make clear to each other whatever we desire, not only have we escaped the life of wild beasts, but we have come together and founded cities and made laws and invented arts; and, generally speaking, there is no institution devised by man which the power of speech has not helped us to establish. For this it is which has laid down laws concerning things just and unjust, and things honorable and base; and if it were not for these ordinances we should not be able to live with one another. It is by this also that we confute the bad and extol the good. Through this we educate the ignorant and appraise the wise; for the power to speak well is taken as the surest index of a sound understanding, and discourse which is true and lawful and just is the outward image of a good and faithful soul. With this faculty we both contend against others on matters which are open to dispute and seek light for ourselves on things that are unknown; for the same arguments which we use in persuading others when we speak in public, we employ also when we deliberate in our own thoughts; and, while we call eloquent those who are able to speak before a crowd, we regard as sage those who most skillfully debated their problems in their own minds. And, if there is need to speak in brief summary of this power, we shall find that none of the things which are done with intelligence take place without the help of speech, but that in all our actions as well as in all our thoughts speech is our guide, and is most employed by those who have the most wisdom" (Norlin).
Inspiration: Giurgola

"A meeting place is dependent upon the convergence of human pleasures, desires, and needs of aesthetic concerns and principles, and of multiple relationships between the built and the natural, or between the land form and architectural form."

"A place is the complex of human presences which includes architecture and the landscape."

"An emphasis on architectural elements produces the true focus of a meeting place: this focus arises from a confluence of light. Variations in the quality of light determine the character created for different meeting places--direct or diffuse, intense of causally dissipated, controlled or open to the influence of the environment outside the walls"(Mitchell, Giurgola).
Contextual Design Elements

There are three major contextual issues I chose to deal with from Pendleton: the wall of downtown, the park and the abandoned railroad line connecting the downtown with the park, or path.

Wall...
Park...
Path...

These three elements became organizing tools employed throughout the site.

Wall

"Architecture comes from the making of a room. The plan--a society of rooms is a place good to live, work, learn." -Louis I. Kahn

The fabric of the downtown wall is, I believe the most characteristic element of nearly all communities in the midwest. This wall contributes strongly to the identity of the place of downtown. The walls of the downtown frame the street. They cradle the traffic flow, the people walking on the sidewalks, the pulse of the city.

I have developed my building to maintain these walls to the street. I created walls in an abstract manner, not duplication, merely presenting a gesture,
a form of wall to the street in its essence. This fills the major hole in the downtown and completes the integrity of the main intersection in town.

Louis Kahn developed the theory of including mechanical systems within wall and ceiling systems. This frees up placing unattractive systems within an otherwise open, pure volume of space. I believe this technique is fitting for a building like this which will be continuously updating technology such as computer systems. The reason it is fitting is that a space may be designed in a style which will not need to be retrofitted, perhaps unsightly, when advanced technological systems come to fruition.

This double wall system also acts to make the appearance of the building wall, both from the interior and the exterior, seem extremely thick at the openings. This enhances the desired psychological quality of solidity and permanence. The solidity will also be emphasized by the texture of the material; reinforced concrete.

The corner of the site is left open as a gesture for several reasons: To emphasize the importance of the corner. Instead of building mass, it is reserved for the cornerstone of the community; that being a place for gathering...

On the downtown steps.
Also, it is left open to recall the absence of the town hall that once stood on this corner.

Park

"A great American poet once asked the architect, What slice of the sun does your building have. What light enters your Room as if to say the sun never knew how great it is until it struck the side of a building."
-Louis I. Kahn

Pendleton is highly fortunate to have a city park with such amenities as it has. The falls of Falls Park are the focal point of the park. The idea of greenspace serving as gathering space is of obvious parallel to my entire concept. In this way, I wish to create a major link between the gathering spaces of the park and the downtown gathering spaces.

And, it just so happens that there is already a link, the abandoned railroad line, the...

Path

"The street is a room; a community room by agreement. Its character from intersection to intersection changes and may be regarded as a number of rooms." -Louis I. Kahn

The path, as an element, is the glue that holds an architectural space together. There are two major types of "path" in this project. Obviously, there is the
physical path. Then there is the psychological path. These two at times are inseparable and interdependent to create their whole experience.

The physical path can take many forms. The abandoned railroad line in Pendleton serves as a major contextual feature on this site. It cuts across the site as well as through the downtown, having prevented construction inside this "path". This presents a unique and highly desirable condition to create a downtown zone, linking the very center of town with open spaces leading into residential areas on the south, and more dramatically to Falls Park on the north. I propose that this path be designated as a green link to the park allowing green space to pour throughout the center of town in a generous gesture of flourishing life, reflecting a positive atmosphere and creating a community spirit. Of all of the town's amenities including its history, location, school system, the park system would be the ideal contiguous link to display the personality of Pendleton.

The street is another form of path. I like to think of the street as the circuitry for the city, and its activity; cars, pedestrians, rhythms, as the electricity of the city, the pulse.

Interior circulation provides another example of path. In this building, the functional portions of the building are arranged in a manner that all circulation patterns are highly visible and highly
accessible to the eye, and to movement; the goal here being that the building will be an open book to the site, to the interior space and to the community as a symbol.

The vertical circulation of the building occurs primarily at the "hinge" of the building. This maximizes the opportunities for meetings between people.

The psychological aspect of "path" is an obvious metaphor for the process of continual learning. This is what is meant by the statement in the introduction that the process is a psychological destination. The goal is at the same time, a path, and a destination.

As far as the term destination in a physical sense, I have tried to provide an endpoint to the paths in different ways. The major destinations would be the atrium and the exterior lawn space between the Center and the large white wall of the police department building which I like to refer to as a "community canvas". This, although not actually part of the site technically, is part of the community of spaces which add up to a greater whole.

This "community canvas" potential could be the backdrop for banners announcing upcoming events, festival performances, movies projected onto the wall for candlelight summer evenings on the downtown lawn.
The police department, by being this good neighbor, providing this "canvas", as well as a new entrance facing into the open space, may increase its favorability in the eyes of the citizens. At the same time, the mere presence of the police department provides a strong sense of security making utilization of this space highly attractive to residents who may be concerned about going downtown after dark.

Besides the concept of providing open gathering spaces as destinations in the community, the actual shape of the building's various parts represents the idea of stasis and stability. The square form of the spaceframe roof, as well as the square modular system employed in the spirit of the vernacular grid, which shows up in windows, cubical building volumes, and entrance ways to name a few, all demonstrate this spirit of destination. "The square represents the pure and the rational. It is a static and neutral figure having no preferred direction" (Ching).
Building Content

"The Room is the place of the mind. In a small room one does not say what one would in a large room. In a room with only one other person could be generative. The vectors of each meet." -Louis I. Kahn

The program of the building is set up for the purpose of attracting people together; whether the congregation be for the purpose of learning, a community gathering, or simply walking through an happening to meet a friend. The street level of the building contains retail spaces open to the street as well as into the atrium space, acting as a magnet to shoppers who would otherwise perhaps not happen into the center. Having retail spaces on the street level allows the building to interact extremely well with the downtown context.

These levels are ordered in different extents of public and private; the retail level being public, the level above being semipublic containing an exhibition gallery and large interior gathering spaces. The third level is more private, as reflected by a minimum number of openings on the facade. It contains individual computer facilities which need a controlled lighting environment. The upper level is group private and contains classroom spaces.
Building Elements

"A room is not a room without natural light; natural light gives the time of day and the mood of the seasons to enter." - Louis I. Kahn

Tower

Inspired by the spirit of the courthouse towers of sixty of ninety two county seats in Indiana, I decided that the tower was a very appropriate symbol of town center. The tower serves many purposes. It provides a landmark from far distances on the horizon providing bearing, orientation.

The tower serves as a focal point from great distances, from the edge of the community, as well as from the streets of downtown. The tower contains stairs which lead to an observation deck which allows for a physical perspective of the community. The tower represents the visual image of the town; a necessary ingredient for a community's identity, personal pride in one's community.

Roof

As I described earlier, the square shape of the spaceframe roof system of the Center provides an image of stability. Other factors which inspired the form of the roof were; that I wanted to purvey an essential gesture of shelter likened to the writings of Kahn of the tree as the quintessential form of meeting place. Its crystalline image borders on
invisibility, placing due emphasis on the meeting spaces underneath, since it needs only four columns to support the entire roof. The high tech look of the space frame is complementary of the programmatic intention of the Education Center. This high tech look, however, is out of character in this turn of the century small town. Therefore, the roof system is concealed from the street except from a few places which poke through to provide a sense of mystery as to what lies behind those contrasting heavy walls.

As you can see from the section of the building, the space frame allows for a modular ceiling panel to allow for any type of lighting desired in any pattern deemed necessary throughout the life of the building. For instance, if one particular part of the building is receiving too much natural light, opaque or diffusing panels may be emplaced to eliminate this problem.

The Education Center will be especially lively at night. The light through the translucent roof will flood the night sky becoming a beacon unashamedly announcing its presence to the world.
Reflections

I come to the destination of a semester, of a school year, of my college career. I have had dreams unrealized, dreams come true. I have worked seemingly endlessly on an incessant amount of projects and I am the better for it. The issues in my thesis project were not chosen arbitrarily. They come from my own personal goals. They are issues about how people interact. Architecture is a wonderful device in which to investigate this interactivity. At times it became difficult to describe accurately the element of human emotion which is inseparable from anything we do. It is this element which is "immeasurable" as Kahn would have said. It is what puts the magic into life. How people meet. How they communicate.

The most valuable quality I believe I have developed while here at school is that of how to interact with others, how to speak to them. Sharing experience and increasing each others. I believe it is blindness to think that organized schools are the sum of education that a person receives. Education is not about books, papers, and class lectures. Education is about life. Whenever we communicate to another person in any way, we are contributing to this process. Think of it a bubble of experience that surrounds you. Everyone has their own bubble. The more these bubbles are allowed to come in contact with each other, the bigger, and stronger they become. Education is about Life. There is no graduation, there will always be the mysteries which will elude our inquiries. Life is about this patient search together.
Bibliography


Chermayeff, Serge and Christopher Alexander.


Mitchell, Ehrman and Romaldo Giurgola.


Level 2
scale 1:20
Level 4
scale 1:20
Double Wall Section
scale 1"=8'