

Public Bathroom: Site and Precedent Research / Analysis: Three Groups

Logistics:

Everyone will be asked to work on a uniformly formatted presentation. While many of the drawings that will be presented may be of larger dimensions, all the drawings and analysis should be able to be reduced to a 8 1/2" x 11" format for the purpose of easy reproduction and distribution to the class.

Each group, with the assistance of their TA, will decide on a loosely defined graphic format. TA's will coordinate a uniform format between groups.

The Layered analysis group will also have a to present their work on acetate sheets using an overhead projector.

GROUP "A"

A.0 Site Readings:

Historic / Social / Demographic / Use

A.1 History (Physical)

Research the historic development of the Boston Common and its surrounding context. How did its topography evolve? What significant infrastructure developments were critical in shaping the morphology of its adjacent neighborhoods (Beacon Hill, Business and Washington Shopping Districts)? What types of building types were originally built on solid land vs. filled land? How did they change over time? What significant plans have been proposed over the years for this area? Why were they never carried out? How is the Common expected to change in the near future?

History (Social)

Consider the social history of the site and how it developed in parallel with the physical transformation of the Common. What was the role of the Common and how has that changed over time? How did local forces (urban / economic growth, politics etc.) and global conditions (change in markets, labor force, immigration patterns, war etc.) impact the development of the Common and its surrounding neighborhoods? Provide a timeline, which documents the relationship of local and global forces on the community's social history.

Social / Demographics / Use

Provide an overview of the current condition of the adjacent neighborhoods. What are the demographics? What are building types and uses that define the community? How are they projected to change in the near future?

A.2 Environmental Physical Systems

By using overlay drawings provided to you, analyze the environmental and physical systems that operate within the neighborhood. Where drawings are unavailable, generate new images as required to respond to the questions noted below.

Environmental Systems

Geological

Describe the geological history of the neighborhood and its adjacent districts. What are the soil conditions like? How have they impacted construction over the years?

Sun / Light / Shadow

How does the daily, seasonal and yearly movement of the sun impact the environmental quality of the neighborhood? Which sides of the street are sunnier than others and how does this impact building patterns? What is the impact of large-scale development in adjacent neighborhoods on the Common?

Vegetation

What types of vegetation exist in the neighborhood and where are they located? How tall are the trees?

Wind / Precipitation Patterns

Document macro-climatic conditions for the Boston Area. Consider how these conditions may be influenced by micro-climatic conditions. For instance, how are wind patterns influenced by the proximity of tall towers in the Downtown Business District? Which side of the Common is more protected and shielded from harsh winter winds?

Physical Systems

Provide a comprehensive representation of all of the significant man-made systems that operate in the Common and its immediate adjacencies. Dissect the site layer by layer so that each system can be understood independently and in relationship to other systems.

Include the following systems:

Infrastructure (include subways)

Avenues

Streets

Parking (include underground)

Structures

Monuments

Self-standing objects

Building types (Row houses, office structures etc)

Landscape / streetscape elements

Walls

Surfaces (paving, brick, sidewalk etc.)

Misc. objects (lights, parking meters, lamps)

Building systems

Bearing / party walls

Entrances

Stairs (interior / exterior / fire stairs)

Structural systems (beams, joists etc)

Roofs

Group “B”

B.1 Analysis of Historic Precedents: (Public) Toilets / Baths

Describe and analyze the historic precedents, which illustrate critical stages in the development of (public) toilets and baths. Provide a timeline which highlights their evolution. Illustrate your findings with drawings, images and text as required. In particular, be sure to describe the cultural associations and historic circumstances that were central to forms and practices associated with bath and bodily functions. Also consider issues of gender, and their impact on the distinction between public and private spaces.

B.2 Understanding Contemporary Technologies and Research

As a group, your role will be to first document and describe the mechanics and systems associated with contemporary plumbing. How do toilets work, what are their technical constraints, and how do they need to be integrated as part of other building systems.

What are the new advances in bathroom technology? What are manufacturers doing to explore and re-define typical fixtures? How have issues of sustainability and conservation of resources propelled new research efforts into new waste management systems? As an aside, how do toilets in unusual environments such as space, flight, or under ocean conditions work? How might these issues be transferable? How has research in public toilets been addressed in high design? (For instance, an Australian city conducts an annual competition on public toilet designs, and the Germans and Italians among others are treating this topic as a serious design problem)

And finally, how do issues associated with accessibility effect contemporary the design of public toilets? What are ADA regulations and what are the dimensional constraints? Can any of these constraints be re-considered or accommodated through improved design?

GROUP “C”

C.1 Analysis of Contemporary (Public) Toilets / Baths and other related Precedents

Analyze and present examples of noteworthy contemporary baths or related uses both public and private. Include the work of Corbu, Charreau, Superstudio, Ban, Zumthor, Koltan, Stark among others. Discuss and illustrate how their work challenges assumptions about what constitutes a bathroom / toilet and the environment that supports these private acts. What is the role of the architecture, its spaces and materials etc in defining the experience? In addition, be sure to highlight the differences between these precedents in terms of their cultural contexts. Each student within the group should analyze at least one to two precedents.

C.2 3-D Model

Develop a very basic digital 3-d massing model of the site. Your TA will assign each of you a set of buildings to model. These will be superimposed on a topographic site model. Detail would be great, but not required. Trees and major landscape feature should be included.