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## LA 389 NEW GRAD STUDIO

DEPARTMENT OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

**FALL 1999-00**

JEROME DIETHELM, PROFESSOR

# The NEW GRAD STUDIO

*The New Grad Studio is the first of two introductory design studios coordinated with instruction in media for second degree students entering the landscape program.*

*This term's class consists of two projects, the first being a short one week warm-up experience entitled, **Your Home Place**, and the second, a design for a new urban square in downtown Eugene to be known as **Library Square**.*

*There are four stages for this second and central project of the term, each phase building upon the last, and running through the end of the quarter.*

*The NGS meets M-W-F from 1-3pm and is closely integrated with a required offering in Landscape Media.*

*The Media class, taught by Rebecca Chance, will be held in the studio from 4-6 pm on T- U. Assignments are intended to both help develop overall visual thinking, media understanding and personal skill and will often, but not always, relate directly to your ongoing studio project.*

*This entry studio experience is especially designed to immerse students quickly in the study of*

*design and designing. As such, it tends to be fast paced, maieutic and requires regular attendance. A commitment to working in the studio on class assignments, both during and after hours, is important to the educational experience.*

*Students with special needs or circumstances should make their instructor aware of them at the beginning of the term.*

*Materials needed for the first day of studio include a drawing board to cover your desk, an 11" x 17" sketch book, a 314 soft pencil(s), and a 12"-14" role of 'yellow' tracing paper. In general, the materials required for media will be the same as those for design.*

*You are encouraged not to overbuy before your classes and until your design and media instructors have had a chance to show you what you'll really need.*

*You'll save considerably if you buy what your projects require as you*



**"Your Home Place"**  
go along.

## **Course objectives include:**

1. An introduction to the department and to the wonderful world of design and designing.
2. Emphasis on building visual thinking, representation, proposal and presentation skills.
3. Design theory, process, methods, tools, materials and techniques.
4. Generating possibilities, and developing, evaluating and presenting proposals to groups.

DEPARTMENT of LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
 School of Architecture & Allied Arts  
 LA 389 New Grad Studio  
 Fall 1999-00 Jerome Diethelm

## FALL CLASS SCHEDULE

	M.	W.	F.
WEEK 1.	27 Sept.	29	1 Oct.
	<u>Proj. No.1:</u>	"Your Home Place"	
2.	4 R&D #1	6 <u>Proj. No.2.1</u>	8
		"Library Square"	
3.	11	13	15 R&D #2
4.	18 <u>Proj.No.2.2</u>	20	22
	"Conceptual Model"		
5.	25 R&D #3	27 <u>Proj.No.2.3</u>	29
		"Mid-term Square Proposal"	
6.	1 Nov.	3	5 <b>MTR&amp;D</b>
7.	8 <u>Proj.No.2.4</u>	10	12
	"Square Development"		
8.	15	17	19
	"Design Development Drawings"		
9.	22	24 Thanksgiving	26
	"Final Model & Drawings"		
10. Review Week:	29	Dec. 1 <b>FR</b>	3
	Attend all reviews including your own!		
EXAMS	6 - 10 Dec.		
HOLIDAYS	13 - 3 Jan. 2000!		

\*NOTES:

R&D #1 & #2 = Review and discussion. #1 in studio; #2 and 3 review room tba  
 MTR&D = Mid-term review and discussion (Review Rm. tba + Design Faculty)

FR = Final Review (Design Faculty) Nov. 30th or Dec. 1st. Date to be determined.

# *“Your Home Place”*

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*Everyone is from somewhere...  
Has a place they remember best  
An influential environment,  
A shaping place.*

*Why do some environments make such a difference?  
Why are some so potent?  
Is it them or us or both and...?*

*Each place is a part of other places and  
they in turn  
are only parts themselves  
of other wholes and other times...  
We call these contexts.*

*Is not a home “a society of rooms?”  
What cove along what beach?  
What district in what town?  
And when?*

*Each place has a remembered order and arrangement  
patterns of relative importance  
centered in experience.  
An unusual kind of structure.*

*Do we not go back and stand in certain places in our mind  
And let the other places gather round?*

*And the things that happened there...  
And the people , light, colors, smells,  
I recall your funny hat.  
Bright images  
and epiphanies;*

*Especially the rituals, ceremonies and events,  
The memorable occasions.*

*Each place means something...  
something which seems to last,  
something fresh with each new time.*

*Do places full of meaning ever empty out?  
And how does the meaning come and go?  
And where?  
And how is it that they mean?*

cont.

*It seems that places co-evolve in time,  
Our time and their own,  
Frozen in minds and memories,  
Yet always moving on.*

## ***Why Home Place?***

1. *To introduce ourselves to one another on a first-name, first-place basis.*
2. *to examine our memories of a special place in order to more fully understand our relationships with it.*
3. *To become more conscious of the ways we remember a place and try to take advantage of this insight as designers in the process of designing.*
4. *To explore means for graphically recording these memories and insights in order to communicate them to others.*
5. *To take personal stock of graphic language and visual thinking skills.*
6. *To raise and ponder important questions about the relationships between people and the places of their lives.*

## ***Some Questions:***

How much of who we are is related to the places we grew up in or lived in for significant periods of time?

How much influence does (did) environment have on us? do we have on it? should we have? Are we a part of environment? What is environment anyway?

## ***Recording your Home Place:***

Ideas, the times, special people and “home places” all have played a powerful role in who we are. Briefly describe with images the significant places that make up your unique odyssey. Make a simple diagram to visually explain your journey.

Look back in your mind and more closely explore a most memorable “home place”. Sort back through the images, sensations and feelings, the experiences stored in mind and body. Try to capture and record your chosen place with quick notes, sketches, squiggles, diagrams, maps, patterns, colors, things...whatever seems helpful and feels comfortable. Generate as much material as rapidly as you can and then go back and to select and improve.

Now take a few pages in your sketch book large enough (9x12 or 11x17) for others to see and develop and arrange your visual materials to help you communicate with the class. **Stay visual.** You can add your verbal explanation in the **15 minutes or so that everyone gets to be famous in class on Mon. Oct. 4 at 2-4 PM**, in studio.

# *“Library Square”*

## **2.0 Round One**

### Square Thoughts

Montgomery Square in Savannah is the setting for the novel, *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* and the movie of the same name produced by Clint Eastwood. The square itself isn't particularly large, but it is lush with vegetation and light filters down through the Live Oak canopy that roofs the space, lights up the horse statue in the center and bounces greenly off the surrounding enclosure of 19th century homes and vine-covered wrought iron fences.

General Sherman didn't burn Savannah on his march to the sea we all recall from our US History. He had partied there as a young officer, fallen for its unique charm and beauty, and decided to give it to Lincoln as a Christmas present in the last year of the war. The 18th century gridded pattern of 24 squares, placed in every other block as they step back from the Savannah River, is a present to this day, reminding us of the civic foresight and imagination of such as Oglethorpe and Penn. For those today who deplore the Enlightenment cum Roman Camp repetition of the grid, this a good lesson: it isn't necessarily the



***Montgomery Square, Savannah Georgia.***

checked pattern itself that's at fault but more a matter of how it's squared.

Squares such as the 21 still remaining in Savannah, Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia, Louisburg Square in Boston, Jackson Square in New Orleans, Pershing Square in Los Angeles, Times Square in New York, Pioneer Square in Seattle and the more recent Pioneer Courthouse Square in Portland (to name just a few), are all expressions of an evolving American urban public life that dates back to the late 1700s.

And these in turn are connected back in time and across the Atlantic to the civic spaces, cul-

tures and customs of our European origins. Library Square in Eugene will never be and is not intended to be a Trafalgar Square, a Piazza San Marco, a Piazza Navona or a Campo dei Fiori. It isn't a monument to British imperialism, isn't the place of the cathedral, wasn't once a Roman circus, and hasn't the lingering resonance of a site where heliocentric heresy was purged for a time by burning. But it is the place of the library and potentially a new Eugene city hall. And such a place can draw on the achievements and lessons of the near and distant past and attempt to translate a broadened understanding of what makes such places civic - and civic centers - into our own Western culture.

### ***The Problem/Opportunity***

#### The Situation

Eugene is about to build a new public library at 10th Ave. between Olive and Charnelton downtown after many years of struggling to make do at its present site. This is a great leap forward for local library lovers and a major urban design opportunity for the downtown - especially if the event of a memorable new library building can become the catalyst for further civic transformation in the surrounding area.

Across the street to the north of the library site is the old Sears Building, owned by the city. A parking lot sits between it, the Bradford's store on the north and the Atrium Building on the east at the corner of 10th and Olive. The Atrium is already home to a number of city offices including Eugene's Planning and Development Department.

There is a possibility that another downtown project, the building of a new federal courthouse, will displace the current city hall at 7th and Pearl and that the Sears Building will be the location of a new city hall complex. At the heart of this complex where the parking

lot now stands, unifying and giving identity to the library, Atrium, and imaginative new city structures to the north and west, lives the potential for a great public square: Library Square.

This project is built around the assumptions that a number of powerful forces *will* converge in the vicinity of 10th and Olive and in so doing *will* create the possibility of a brilliant new civic center for the downtown. The fall '99 New Grad Studio is being asked to help the city study and rehearse this possibility.

An Open Space System for the Downtown?

Downtown Eugene has its important open space elements. Skinner Butte is probably the most dominant, and the town's gridded street pattern is next. If one turns around and faces south on Willamette St., the city's central N/S street, it becomes clear that Eugene is a town between two buttes: Skinner and Spencer. The Park Blocks, known as Hitchingpost Square when they were donated for a courthouse site by Eugene Skinner and Charnel Mulligan in 1853, have long been a principal center



***The Site***

## *“Library Square cont.”*

of urban public life. The County Courthouse is located here at 8th and Oak as is the Wayne Morris Free Speech Platform, the ever popular popular “Fish Fountain” and on seasonal weekends, the Saturday Market.

The most recent open space addition is the new plaza at Broadway and Willamette. It sits within the Broadway pedestrian street, left over from the now officially deceased Downtown Mall, where Broadway (9th Ave.) crosses Eugene’s main street.



Further north along Willamette is the Hult, Hilton, Conference Center plaza area and to the east the River, Alton Baker Park, the new suspension bridge and memory traces of a Millrace past. The 5th St. Public Market with its wonderful central courtyard and fountain creates a hub for northeast downtown activity.

The present Downtown Plan, now overdue for revision, also records the civic hope for a restored lower Millrace and a stair climbing from a renewed train station area at the north end of Willamette St. to the top of Skinner Butte.

Rock in the Pond?

The addition of a Library Square and a new southwest public center to the downtown raises fresh ripples about the roles, relationships and connections of open space elements.

It calls into question the need for a more systematic and comprehensive framework of downtown civic spaces, and it alerts us to the unique opportunity for some overall urban design planning in the downtown that major new construction brings.

Could Library Square turn out to be the rocky catalyst for the eventual development of a new comprehensive open space framework in a revised Downtown

Plan? It is not yet clear and “predictions are difficult,” as Yogi Berra opined, “especially when they’re about the future.”

In any event, thoughts about the open space structure of Downtown Eugene will be an important context for the New Grad. Studio’s work on Library Square.

In the above photo, Jerry is reading over the shoulder of a permanent resident of a downtown bench. They have been hotly discussing Betsy Wolfson’s and David Thompson’s “The Four Seasons” at Broadway Plaza and the need to greatly expand the presence and variety of sculpture in the new civic square.



## Process, Schedule and Requirements

### 2.1 Immersion in the Problem and the Place.

Assigned Friday Oct. 6 at 1:00pm.  
Due for review on Friday Oct. 15  
from 2-4pm, in the studio.

Working in two and three person teams, gather together, investigate, probe, construct and present the information assigned to your group. Create the base drawings, class model, collections, reports, images... and preliminary evaluations as needed to jump-start the process of Library Square design thinking.

### Description/Evaluation

#### Team 1: Site Structure

- using existing class drawings and site visits, construct 1" = 400', 1" = 20' and 1/8" = 1' - 0" base maps of the existing site on vellum for the class. Collaborate on basic overall dimensions with the Site Model team so that they can proceed as quickly as possible with their work. Please do not disturb or upset existing residents of the downtown site or make them feel like endangered species!
- evaluate for the class ( very preliminarily) the existing structure's potential to support a projected Library Square program as you presently understand it.

**Describe the opportunities you see as well as some of the more obvious problems and restrictions of the site.**

#### Team 2: Precedent Places

- survey the available literature on urban squares and open spaces for the class (a week's worth, not all known utterances.) Check the current and back issues of Landscape Architecture for examples, photos and plans.
- Enlarge a selection of square plans **to a common scale** so that we can compare (hold them up against, place them on) their size to the Library Square site.
- xerox and present the materials to the class on 20x30 and/or 30x40 illustration boards and/or so that this material can be posted in the classroom in some way as a permanent reference for the term and for our outside reviewers.
- evaluate the material collected for your classmates, pointing out what you believe to be most pertinent to the Library Square project.

#### Team 3: Site Reconnaissance

- survey and identify site elements and materials, including existing trees, shrubs and ground covers of the area surrounding the site.
- survey and identify existing site qualities, including those of individual elements and those that have to do with relationships, light, mood, pattern, texture... and overall character, character, defined in this context as the general atmosphere which is the most comprehensive property of any place.
- create a photographic essay of the site which helps to explain and convey this qualitative site evaluation.
- translate the visual mosaic essay back into a linear, verbal narrative about the qualitative dimensions of the site for the rest of the class.

#### Team 4: Construction of Issues<sup>2</sup>

- identify the critical issues related to the creation of a contemporary civic space in downtown Eugene. (See for example the essays in Urban Open Space: "Open

Space: Freedom and Control," by Stephen Carr and Kevin Lynch, and "Dreaming of Urban Plazas," by Robert Jensen.)

- create an idealized master program for the new square as a guide to the its social, physical, ecological and aesthetic development and expression.
- draw from the literature, but also survey your classmates and collect the varying insights and opinions that make up the group's collective experience and intelligence.
- be inclusive, but also present your considered evaluation of the projects programmatic priorities.
- remember that this is just a beginning, something to build on and for each person to interpret and develop from their own point of view. It's important to begin from a broad base of important considerations in order to end up with a rich, significant place.

#### Team 5: Site Model

- build a 1/8" = 1' - 0" scale model of the site showing surrounding streets, buildings (at least one building deep) as context for the proposed square.
- construct it so that each student's proposal for Library Square may be placed into the class model for study and for evaluation at the mid-term and final reviews.
- estimate building heights from photographs and use the latest available plans to create a to-scale volume of the proposed new library.
- make the existing Sears and Bradfords buildings removable so that the class can add in their projections for desirable changes in the spatial enclosure.
- see images of last fall's park model for model building suggestions. (class web)

On Wednesday Oct. 6., we'll meet in class and then take the bus together downtown for a site visit.

We'll meet with Jan Childs, Eugene Planning Director, and others familiar with the new library project and then tour some of Eugene's open space highlights.

Note: Eugene buses are accessible. Please let your instructor know if you have special needs.

## 2.2 Your Conceptual Model\*\*

Individual square proposals in study model at 1" = 20', sketch and diagrammatic form.

Requirements to be discussed in class.

## 2.3 Mid-term Proposal\*\*

Study model and drawings. Coordination with Media. Outside review of class work to date by department faculty.

## 2.4 Park Development & Final Proposals\*\*

Final proposals for park development. Final model and required drawings. Outside review of class work to date by department faculty and invited guests.

\*\*Additional materials related to each phase to be handed out in class and developed through class discussion.



**The Muses**

In the fountain sculpture by Carl Milles (Swedish sculptor 1875-1955) at Brookgreen Gardens in South Carolina, the artist figuratively portrays his muses and an image of his creative process. Note that the ideas literally dance from his fingertips. Once you get the hang of it you just have to hold up your hands. I don't claim that you'll also be able to walk on water.





“Foundation Patterns”

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| 20. <i>Landscape Architecture Magazine</i> (recent public squares)                               |                         |

### Class Library:

*We'll establish a locked in-studio library of resource materials and a local check out system to manage their use. (Note: some of Jerry's personal reference books are regularly lost or stolen during the term when everyone gets preoccupied (as they always do) and forgets to protect these resources. Will this be the second class in a row to not have to share the costs of their replacement?)*