

4.104 Intentions in Architectural Design

Public Bathrooms in the Boston Common

Private Acts in Public Spaces

Section / Elevation Development

Premise:

The choice of drawing type and tools employed to develop a design will in some way influence the final product. As the architectural critic Bruno Zevi noted, architects using a french curve instead of a T-Square may create very different designs. Similarly, if you design exclusively in plan versus perspective (as Steven Holl does) your project will take on entirely different spatial qualities.

Aim:

This assignment is aimed at having you develop your design concept by focusing primarily on your structure's section. The section is a well-suited drawing type for this kind of design as it allows one to explore the spatial qualities of a volume in relationship to light and privacy issues. In addition, it allows one to begin to identify appropriate building systems for manifesting your spatial intentions.

Your goal will be to develop a sectional drawing at 1" = 1'-0" through the principle space(s) of your design. You are to show context, i.e. the slope of the grade, change of materials, trees, benches etc. which are in the vicinity of your structure. Be sure to show the principle objects, fixtures, and surfaces of your structure's interior. Consider how the interior space is separated from the exterior and which material and building systems are used to develop this spatial delineation. What are the qualities of these materials, their texture, thickness, transparency etc.? How is the roof supported? How does light enter the space and which surfaces are washed in light?

Process and Product:

1. Select your site. Draw it in section showing grades and context. Define and outline the shapes of the principle spaces (not forms) of your design. Place the objects and fixtures in your design. Consider how these fixtures might alter your previous notions about the shape of the space. If they do, re-configure the space to accommodate the fixtures and the uses they are intended for. Similarly, consider how light enters the space, or how the issue of privacy is dealt with. Through an iterative process, continually re-define the shape of the space so that it satisfies the above noted parameters as well as those implicit in your "design concept."
2. Once the cross sectional space reflects your design intentions, begin to more definitively bound the form of your space with building materials and systems. You may select three of the following systems from which to build your space / structure:
 - Wood (stick lumber, plywood etc)
 - Masonry (brick, concrete, tiles)
 - Concrete (poured in place, pre-cast)
 - Glass (structural, sandblasted, clear, colored etc)
 - Metal - in plate or mesh form- (copper, steel, aluminum, zinc etc.)
3. On a separate layer, speculate on the constructed quality of the your choice of materials and systems. Once you have defined your construction, create a composite drawing which both illustrates the quality of space and the role that the building vocabulary has in creating your space.
4. Render the play of light on your material and construction palette. Be sure to delineate the exterior as well.

For the Ambitious:

Show a partial elevation of the exterior skin next to the section drawing. You may also wish to show a partial plan of the sectional drawing under the section.

Product:

One section (elevation) drawing on large sheet of paper (size is a function of your project size.)