EXPERIENCES IN ARCHITECTURE
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24 APRIL 2009
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In today's modern culture, architecture is not normally thought of as an applied art by most people. This is because architecture is often viewed merely as a structure instead of being thought of as something with a broader range of benefits. “Buildings” exist out of necessity whereas “art” exists out of desires. Architecture should not be limited to a simple response to necessity, but instead it should combine these two attributes to actively create a conscious involvement in people’s lives. Architecture is for the human inhabitant, and therefore it should create an increased self awareness of the body, as well as a greater understanding of one’s surroundings. People have become too detached from these places that allow human activity, creating a situation where architecture is only a setting for events to take place. Rather, architecture should actively be a part of the experience and not just a space in which things happen. A particular aspect of art, along with architecture, is that it has the opportunity to appeal to the senses. According to Lisa Heschong in Thermal Delight in Architecture, “The most vivid, most powerful experiences are those involving all of the senses at once.” Architecture has a rare and unique opportunity to appeal to all of the senses simultaneously. In order to relate to the senses, one must consider designing with the user in mind, focusing on how the environment, through the senses, will affect the human body. Perceptions, formed from the senses, are the basis for the experience of place.

It is important to experience the architecture through the medium of the senses, which is influenced by space, light and the material palette. What the building is made from, and how it comes together is crucial to how the building is actually experienced. It is the materials themselves that help define the experience. Architecture, through the use of materials, space, and light, must actively engage the user to create a truly experiential space. This thesis will study the effects that architecture and the human figure have upon one another in an effort to enhance the overall experience perceived by the body. The interaction between architecture and body will allow for dynamic relationships with the surrounding environment.
As a practice and as a product, architecture has always been a way of creating a building or structure. Buildings provide shelter for human life and the events that unfold as a part of it. Whether it is residential housing, commercial storefronts, industrial parks or any place in between, architecture has been utilized in various ways to solve the problem of housing different activities. In an effort to take care of these common situations, the structure or aesthetic design of a building has often been forgotten about. This may be due to a variety of reasons, including a lack of time, money, or even a lack of interest. This is unacceptable and needs to change. Architecture is an integral part of people’s lives and need not be forgotten about. Well designed architecture is crucial to man’s contribution to society, his character, and his development. Those who produce architecture should strive to go beyond the mundane aspect of mass produced buildings and attempt to create unique, memorable experiences.

First and foremost, architecture needs to be functional. It needs to effectively shelter people and the activities that make up their lives in addition to being able to stand up. While the functionality of architecture is always important, architects should be able to focus on other, more relevant or holistic aspects of architecture that might make a building unique. Architecture needs to be considered in a multifaceted view so as to include the structure, the overall function of the building, and also the form. Architecture has been viewed as a combination of three elements; philosophy, science, and art. In common practice, there has been a movement away from the philosophy and art in order to concentrate on the more rational aspects of architecture. These other aspects need to be brought back in an effort to create buildings for the people that actually use and inhabit the space, and not just an arbitrary faceless user. Buildings need to be designed for particular types of persons, in a demographic sense, and for particular events that unfold as a result of the building. “We have believed that until we can begin to understand how buildings affect individuals and communities emotionally, how they provide people with a sense of joy, identity, and place, there is no way to distinguish architecture from any everyday act of construction.”

Buildings need to be more than just a skeleton of structural materials designed to enclose a space. Buildings
need to become a place and thus architecture, in the true sense of the word. There must be specific qualities to a structure that separate it from an ordinary space and transform it into a place. These places are more than just the purely functional elements of a building, but rather, they are somehow unique and memorable. By viewing architecture as more than a structure, it is capable of being thought of as a form of art. One definition of art is “the quality, production, expression, or realm, according to aesthetic principles, of what is beautiful, appealing, or of more than ordinary significance.” When a building is of more than ordinary significance, it becomes art and successfully goes beyond being a functional structure that merely houses activities. Not only should architecture house activities, it should also promote them. True architecture should be a work of art that contributes to the society in which it was created.

Architecture as art is something that has been forgotten about by the masses. Art and architecture are not that dissimilar in the fact that they both involve a very thoughtful design. There is also an anticipation of human involvement with the work. The role of personal interaction is an important one in the sense that without any reaction, art is a meaningless gesture. It is this interaction that architecture seeks to provoke. Architecture can and should draw out responses and emotions from people in an effort to help people experience architecture in terms of it being a piece of art. “What is missing from our dwellings today are the potential transactions between body, imagination, and environment.”

Buildings, as art and as architecture, need to draw upon interactions to create an involving atmosphere. Creating a quality piece of architecture should contribute to people becoming more aware of their surroundings. People are generally unaware of the specific aspects that contribute, often positively, to their own daily lives. Architecture can create an environment that allows people to become more aware of their surroundings. People would benefit from becoming conscious of the architecture and the environment surrounding them. They will develop a richer experience of their surroundings and a deeper understanding of a sense of place.

In an effort to create a deeper understanding
of place, there needs to be interaction with the built environment. These interactions with a building will help it become more than just a functional piece and allow it to become something that is experienced by the individual. In order for there to be an appreciation and understanding of a building, there ought to be an opportunity to act and to interact with it. There should be opportunities for the human body to have a direct connection with the building as it stands as a finished product. The individual should be able to be directly affected by what the architecture does. The architecture should also be able to respond to the inhabitant in order to allow for the optimal interaction between the person and the architecture. However, there does not need to be a chain of events that are dependent on each other for something to be considered an interaction with the building. There can simply be an action and a reaction between the person and the architect. Action and opportunity present a situation for the individual to experience the space. The architecture, being designed to be expressive, should be more than just the background in which people exist without any relation to the space. Architecture should be an active part in people’s lives, especially because it is involved in just about everything that people do. Instead of being forgotten about as a backdrop, architecture should be a more prominent figure. This does not necessarily mean that it should take priority over everything in everyone’s lives but instead, it should at least play a conscious role in our day to day lives. People should be conscious of architecture’s presence and importance to everyday human life.

"The interplay between the world of our bodies and the world of our dwelling places is always in flux. We make places that are an expression of our haptic experiences even as these experiences are generated by the places we have already created. Whether we are conscious or innocent of this process, our bodies and our movements are in constant dialogue with our buildings... This critical interaction of body form and movement with architecture deserves careful attention."

In terms of the interaction between the architecture and the person, there is a desire for the building to be not
only a stage but also a stimulus for movement as well as for it to be a partner in the dialogue with the person. The building should provide opportunities to the individual user to fully utilize and experience the architecture. It should promote its own interaction and demand the attention of the person. The architecture should be available for interaction with the user, as well as promoting the awareness of one’s environments. Architecture can provide opportunities for interaction by simply providing a place to sit, for example. Instead of adding a chair to the space, there could be an incorporation of this action into the design. The “chair” can become part of the space so that it is fully integrated with the design of the environment. So instead of sitting on a chair in the space, the individual would be sitting on the building itself and experiencing the architecture directly.

An interaction with the building and its environment will allow the individual user to create meaningful experiences. Architecture creates experiences through perceptions and it is these experiences that make up people’s lives. In order to create a truly memorable experience, architecture should seek to develop a space that inspires. An inspirational space would be one that creates an experience for the person to remember, but also gets the individual to think about architecture in a new way. These spaces, in an effort to define a place, need to be creative and unique spaces that everyone is capable of experiencing.

In order to experience the space in this qualitative way, it needs to be designed with the proper amount of stimuli. Too much will create an overwhelming amount that cannot be fully comprehended where it may be seen as distracting or appear as being too theatrical. If there is not enough stimuli, the space will be perceived as dull, much like everyday common buildings. Designing for the specific users allows for an architecture that is actually intended for the inhabitants, and not just a shell that houses bodies. There needs to be thought in the design process to analyze what the people will do and how they will experience the space. “A good architecture design is sensuous. A good architectural design is intelligent.” The design of a space or an environment needs to be analyzed in an attempt to demonstrate what would be perceived and how that perception translates into different experiences. This can be done by looking at each of the senses independently of
one another. The breakdown of the senses will provide insight to the different observable elements, both intentional and unintentional, that make up the experience. Even just becoming aware of the individual senses can prove to be a rewarding experience. Picking up on both the subtleties and the noticeable aspects of a design can allow a space to become memorable and inspirational in the mind of the individual.

“Since each sense contributes a slightly different perception of the world, the more senses involved in a particular experience, the fuller, the rounder, the experience becomes. If sight allows for a three-dimensional world, then each of the other senses contributes at least one, if not more, additional dimensions. The most vivid, most powerful experiences are those involving all of the senses at once.”

These issues of experience, along with place and interaction, are often times intangible, yet make up important aspects of architecture. While a building is constructed of various materials, it is the meta-physical aspects of a space that turn a building into architecture. In a sense, the architecture is more than just the sum of its parts. It goes beyond that to create a memorable experience in the form of architecture.

Sometimes in architecture, it is necessary to design specific elements where people physically interact with a building. “The door handle is the hand shake of the building.” It is good practice to incorporate the human interaction with the design of such things as a door handle. However, it is also good to step back from designing the individual elements and look at a specific experience that needs to be explored.

“A building is not an end in itself; it frames, articulates, structures, gives significance, relates, separates and unites, facilitates and prohibits. Consequently, basic architectural experiences have a verb form rather than being nouns. Authentic architectural experiences consist then, for instance, of approaching or confronting a building, rather
than the formal apprehension of a façade; of the act of entering and not simply the visual design of the door; of looking in or out through a window, rather than the window itself as a material object; or of occupying the sphere of warmth, rather than the fireplace as an object of visual design. Architectural space is lived space rather than physical space, and lived space always transcends geometry and measurability.”

This is a crucial point because it puts the emphasis on designing the entire space and not simply an object. When designing a building it needs to be designed in a manner in which it will be experienced. Here, the emphasis is placed upon the action and the experience rather than the element itself. A building should focus on the interactions that it presents to the individual user. However, there should still be a degree of concern regarding the details. While secondary to the overall experience, the details are still important because they help to create the experiences. These details can dramatically alter the perception of the building. A space covered in wood, will have a completely different feel than if it were to be covered in concrete. Materials, how they are used, and how they are used in combination with other materials are some of the details within a building that can create subtle differences in the experiences of the architectural space.

Another relevant aspect of designing an experiential space is the relationship between the space and the human figure. Here, there is more emphasis placed upon the scale and motions of a human figure within a particular environment. While much of architecture is based upon the size of a human figure, it is possible to improve on the observable projection of the human scale within the building. The environment should allow for a more fluid motion of people within the building. One proposition would be to have a pathway with no specific end. A path would allow people to meander about without having to head towards a particular destination. This would promote movement and it would also demonstrate the smaller, more individual scale. This relation of the architecture to the human body should provide a reflection of the individual user onto themselves and the architecture. This opportunity for reflection permits the individual to gain from the building and contribute their
own reaction to the building. “Good architecture should receive the human visitor, should enable him to expand it and live in it, but it should not constantly talk at him.”

In order to truly communicate with the body to create a memorable experience, the body must be able to perceive the space and the environment for it to have any relevance. The architecture must be able to appeal to the human body through the medium of the senses; for it is the senses that create the perceptions that, in turn, contribute to the experience of a space and of an event. In particular, they are the systems that provide sight, sound, smell, taste and haptic information to the brain. It is through these receptors that architecture needs to connect with in order to create a truly experiential building. The dialogue between architecture and person will create a deeply involving sensual experience. Individuals will identify with their senses and become more devoted to the exploration of them. An architectural sensual experience will help people to further their experience with the environment, both with the immediate architecture as well as the rest of their environment. People’s experiences are not solely based upon the current architecture; they have baggage that they carry with them wherever they go. A person’s experiences are in part based upon their own past experiences and influences.

Experiential architecture works best with the incorporation of the human body in the design of a space. Architecture has a rare and unique opportunity to work with the senses. Architecture seeks to improve upon the way people are able to experience a building through the perception of the senses. Architectural environments can demonstrate how the senses are able to influence the body in terms of its emotional and physical reaction to a given space. The senses can be viewed as mechanisms for which the body receives perceptions. The systems translate what would be otherwise useless information of one’s surroundings into observations that benefit the individual. The senses are relevant to architecture because it allows for experiences to happen. “The senses do not only mediate information for the judgment of the intellect; they are also a means of articulating sensory thought.”

The senses each relate to architecture in their own way. The visual system relates in an obvious way. People
can simply see the space that surrounds them. They can get a sense of scale and distance. They are capable of seeing materials, finishes, colors, light, shadow and many other visual effects that may be used to enhance a space. However, most people think that is where it ends, but that is not the case, in terms of architecture. “A meaningful architectural experience is not simply a series of retinal images.”13 This implies that vision, while important, is not the only sense. In architecture it is often forgotten that the building is able to have qualities applicable to the other senses. The sense of vision was not always considered the best; this is a more recent realization.14

Another one of the senses that makes connections to architecture is the auditory system; however, it may be hard for the non visual senses to compete with the visual system just because sight is such a powerful tool. The perception of sound not only allows the individual to hear direct interactions with a building, but sound can also give the individual a sense of volume. Through sound, it is possible to determine the size, proportion and materiality of a particular space. The size and texture of a space determines how that space will sound based on principals of acoustics. A larger space made out of concrete will produce a different reverberation pattern than that of a small carpeted room. These differences in the sound itself will produce alternative perceptions of an architecturally sensual experience.

A sensory perception mechanism that greatly contributes to the overall architectural sensual experience is the haptic system which relates to the sensation of touch. As it relates to architecture, physically touching an object is a personal interaction with that object. With direct contact, the individual is able to determine a good deal of information about an object. It is possible to determine texture, temperature, size, weight, and even a sense of the identity of an object, all without the use of sight. It is also possible for the haptic system to sense movement and direction. People are capable of identifying movement both externally as well as when they themselves are moving. This allows an individual to know where they are within a space.15 The haptic system delivers a substantial amount of qualitative information about an object. All of this input provides people with information to evaluate the characteristics of a space.
An additional sensory method needed to perceive a space is the olfactory and taste systems. These are combined because the information provided by each is very similar to the other. \(^{16}\) “The most persistent memory of any space is often its smell.” \(^{17}\) While the smell of a space may not be the most prominent, it is the longest lasting. An aroma can reignite experiences from long ago. It has special connotations and meaning behind it that are specific to each individual. Smell and, if applicable, taste, are important because they allow an intimate and personal interaction with the space.

The experience of an architectural space must be addressed through the use of all of the senses. “To experience architecture in a concrete way means to touch, see, hear, and smell it.” \(^{18}\) It is the senses and their perceptions of the surrounding environment that allows them to fully experience an architectural sensual space based on their own desires. The senses are rarely experienced individually, but work best when there is a combination of all of them; sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. “The most vivid, most powerful experiences are those involving all of the senses at once.” \(^{19}\)

An awareness of the senses in architecture can be experienced through the utilization of the architectural details. The details are elements in architecture that are often overlooked during design, but can alter experiences dramatically. Where the overall form of the building may not be particularly relevant to the perceptual understanding of a place, the specifics may be. The influence of details in the architecture can be subtle or theatrical. If they are subtle, the effects are less noticeable but will create a more meaningful experience. If the details are more predominate, the effects may be less powerful; however, the experiences will be more apparent. Even the specific materials that are used have an effect on the overall experience. A space incased in concrete has an entirely different feel to it than one incased in wood. Materials bring with them various connotations and expectations. People expect concrete to be cold and wood to be warm, even though the materials can exist at any temperature. Different variations within the material itself, such as texture, can produce different reactions from different people. The ways of manipulating architecture in the details, like color, shape, light and shadow, have an infinite amount of variations, which can
diminish or enhance the overall experience. The way in which the building is assembled also has an impact on the experience. The details contribute to the architecture; however, they do not define the architecture in its entirety. The assembly of a building inherits qualities that allow it to become more than just a building and become architecture. "Construction is the art of making a meaningful whole out of many parts."21

Architecture is a building that is, simply put, more than an accumulation of its individual pieces. While the parts collectively assemble the building, the combination of resources brings an additional element that makes the building seem whole. It gives the architecture a sense of being. This architecture produces a sense of place as opposed to being a generic space. This concept of place is created by an architecture that is unique and unlike common everyday buildings. Much like every other building, architecture must still be functional in the sense that it provides shelter and is structurally secure. The thing that makes architecture distinct from mundane buildings is the fact that it can be viewed as art. "I think architecture attains its highest quality as an applied art."22

In being a form of art, architecture involves the individual person and engages them to interact with it. Architecture creates lasting, memorable, experiences for the individual person through the medium of the senses. These senses are appealed to by the usage of the details along with the other larger issues whether tangible or not, that make up a building. Architecture, being a product of the environment, shall contribute functionally and artistically in an effort to create experiences by means of the senses and the perceptions that they generate.
People have become too far removed from the architecture that contains them. This has led to a tendency that people become oblivious to the world around them. Architecture needs to promote involvement and interaction with one’s surroundings. It needs to recapture the attention of the people. In order for a building to be perceived it needs to communicate with the individual through the medium of the senses. In order to create architecture for the senses, on some level the building must be separate and unique; it cannot blend in with everyday buildings. It cannot be part of the everyday mundane part of life. In this case, the building must allow the user to set aside their own personal distractions and become immersed in the architecture as a place as well as the event. The architecture must be allowed an opportunity to engage the individual. The function of this building will provide a setting for an individual to become more aware of the individual’s self and their surroundings. This program will only suggest what should happen at this place rather than demand a particular response. The programmatic function of the architecture will be to create a calming effect for the individual users. It should be a peaceful experience that helps an individual to relax. This reflection is good for the body and the mind. There would also be an opportunity for the individual to focus on one’s existence. People will be offered spaces to meditate and to reflect. Meditation is often associated with religious connotations; however, it can take many forms. It can include free though, daydreaming, and contemplation. These spaces may be public, if people wish to contemplate with others. A series of meditation spaces will provide a wide variety of environments and will provide ample space for strolling, pausing, observing and reflecting. While these spaces may provoke human interactions, there will also be a more direct means of communication with the body. Another available space within this building will be a series of thermally specific conditions. This applies to the haptic sense, not of physically touching, but to feel. A space that is outside of its normal thermal range cannot be ignored; instead it demands the attention of the user and forces them to embrace it in some form. This response is a direct interaction with one’s surroundings as experienced through the senses. Another way that this program will be suggestive of kinesthetic experiences involves a more direct form of contact. These experiences will be offered in the form of massage. The massages relate to the body.
through the use of touch, pressure, and even warmth. This separation between body and mind will promote the differing experiences within the building. It will provide numerous opportunities to engage the senses. The perceptions of these spaces through the varied use of the senses can help a person experience a building in the ways that it was intended to be experienced.

Experiences created by architecture can be influenced by their location just as they can by their interiors. Location brings with it a tone and atmosphere. It is influenced by its environment and similarly affects its own surroundings. The site needs to be in proximity to people so as to have a positive effect on a multitude of people. By locating the building in a suburban area, it avoids the issue of the external surroundings becoming the source of relaxation and allows the architecture a chance to speak. The place that will contain these interactions is located at North Troy Street and East Eleven Mile Road in Royal Oak, Michigan. The location is in a semi-urban context with a cultural downtown district that has residential areas surrounding it. This will promote people walking by to stop in and it will also allow for people that are going specifically to the site to walk or park. While it is part of downtown, it is still quiet and peaceful. These conditions allow the building to be involved within its context, but not dominated by it either. This site will properly contribute to the senses and their experiences. People’s experiences should not be limited to one particular building, but the experiences should continue beyond the confines of the site. Architecture is experienced through the medium of the senses, to create an understanding of place. Place is a specific characteristic defined by the individual building in combination with the location of the building and its surrounding environment. It is only fitting that the building program and the site are crucial aspects of creating architecture.
The Rock Garden at Kyoto Temple of Ryoan-ji
Set in Kyoto, Japan this familiar temple exhibits a traditional Zen garden. The rock garden is a specific place within the Ryoan-ji Temple of Kyoto, which promotes Zen meditation. The garden is believed to have been built in 1499, although there is some uncertainty as to when it was actually constructed and by whom.\textsuperscript{1} The practice of Zen acquires understanding through applying intellect and knowledge.\textsuperscript{2} It is this understanding that gives the seemingly arbitrary stones a sense of meaning. The actually significance of the stones is unknown, however there are several speculations. The composition of the rocks themselves is called “Tora-no-ko Watashi”\textsuperscript{3} which translates to “tiger carrying her cubs across the water”.\textsuperscript{4} Another interpretation of the stones is one of mountain peaks emerging above the clouds\textsuperscript{5} or even as islands in an ocean\textsuperscript{6}. Whatever the case may be, it is up to the individual to create their own interpretation.\textsuperscript{7}

The garden that creates this imagery consists of fifteen stones, all varying in size and shape, with none of the rocks dominating over any other. These stones, although in an arbitrary arrangement, are set in what is referred to as a 7-5-3 style.\textsuperscript{8} They are broken up into five groups: a group of five stones, two stones, three stones, two stones and three stones. In between these groups of stones, sand and gravel fill the void space. The white gravel rests on top of the sand and is neatly raked to unify the entire space.\textsuperscript{9} Surrounding this rock garden on three sides are small monochromatic walls. These walls are durable and protected from the glare off of the white gravel. The wall heights are not the same throughout but rather are designed with the use of optical illusions to create a splendid effect of revealing
the remaining gardens to the individual. Another effect is the perspective of the stones. “From whatever place in the Abbot’s Hall you may look at the stones, one of them is always hidden behind others and only fourteen are to be seen.”

The stone garden is very dramatic. “This is the most representative stone garden among many of its kind.” The rock garden demonstrates that a powerful environment can be created with a minimal use of materials. This minimal design has allowed the garden to have the name mutei, which means “garden of emptiness.”

There is no prominent stone, yet they all work together to create a sense of serenity. There is an apparent peacefulness and tranquility to the rock garden at the Temple of Ryoan-ji. This allows the user to become aware of the space and become equally calm for meditation. This space promotes a quieting of the mind for focusing on thoughts. The garden has gone so far to create a sense of being undisturbed that it suggests that it must not be disturbed. With the gravel being raked into perfectly straight lines, it gives a feeling that one cannot enter it. It generates a sense of sacredness that one should not come in contact with it for fear that they may disrupt the peace. It is important for the user to feel welcome in a space, especially if they are to relax and meditate within it. Spaces should be inviting and should promote human interaction within them. In this case, it is the meditation of the person that is of the utmost importance.
Diller + Scofidio
The Blur Building
Yverdon-les-bains, Switzerland,
1998-2002
The Blur building was located in Yverdon-les-bains, Switzerland. It was a temporary exhibit as part of Expo.02 that was held in 2002 in various sites in Switzerland. The Expo, as a whole, was intended to become a laboratory for ideas as well as becoming a festival of the imagination and emotion.¹ The Blur building was designed to be a media pavilion for the Expo. The spaces were built for people to meander about through the fog. There was also an Angel Deck atop of the mist. This level provided access to the Water Bar, a bar which only served various types of water. The Water Bar strengthened the proposal for the exposition because it was one that was water based. With the site being located on the edge of a lake, there would be a deep incorporation of water throughout the project. This use of water became essential to the project and provided a chance for the architecture to become minimal and even nonexistent.²

Through the use of minimal structure and creative application of water, Blur became an experiential piece of architecture. The primary and most apparent material is water. The water was not used in a simple way in which it merely rests or even used as a waterfall, but rather, the water is utilized as a mist. This fog is created by diffusing the lake water into superfine particles and spraying it into the air. The cloud like mist is the thing that makes up the essence of the Blur building. The water is pumped from the lake, through various filters and purifiers, and finally through tens of thousands of nozzles to create the atmosphere of Blur. The structural scheme for the building is a tensegrity system for the roof structure.
and a space frame for the platforms that people walk on. The tensegrity system utilizes members that are in direct tension or compression. The platforms, although they are visually floating above the water, are supported by piles driven deep into the seabed.  

The appearance of the mist floating above the water is intended to contribute to the overall experience of the Blur building. The experience of Blur is a primary focus instead of how functional or efficient the building can be, especially because it is for a limited amount of time with a minimal program. People go to the Expo to experience it as part of the culture rather than out of necessity. The sensory perception is part of the experience of the Blur building. 

“The public can approach Blur from shore via a pedestrian ramp. Along the 140m journey, visual and acoustical references are slowly erased until only an optical white-out and the white noise of pulsing fog nozzles remain. Sensory deprivation stimulates a sensory heightening: the density of the air inhaled with every breath, the lowered temperature, the delicate and pervasive sound of water spray, and the scent of atomized lake water all engage the senses.”

This engagement with the senses allows the user to fully experience the building and all of its nuances. The project originally included the design of “braincoats” that were never fully implemented for financial reasons. These so called braincoats were
raincoats that significantly contributed to the experience of blur. They would have promoted the guests to interact with one another based upon a series of questions related to the individual’s personality. The braincoats would have glowed different colors in the fog in response to other people’s similarity in personality. The braincoats would have been a crucial aspect to the experience of Blur; however, it is a shame that something like money can prohibit the full engagement of the person with the building. The people not only would have a more influential experience of the space, but it would also allow for people to become part of the exhibit for others to see and interact with.

This building is designed with the experience in mind. It focuses on how the space will be perceived instead of what it is made of and how it is put together. While there is ample attention to the building and the characteristics of the fog itself, it is the perception and experience of the blur that is the most important. The Blur project creates a sensory suppression and a sensory heightening at the same time. The building noticeably blurs out sound and vision from the individual’s experience. In doing this it not only allows the user to focus on the other senses, but also makes them more aware of sound and vision. Because these senses are not as clear, it makes people focus more on them in an effort to improve their perception. People work harder to make out what they can from these two distorted senses. The distortion from the fog is an element that is unique to the fog itself. This use of water as a material creates an ambiguity as to whether or not the project is a
Flat exit ramp of prefabricated FVK sections

Sloped entrance ramp of prefabricated FVK sections

FVK landing

boardwalk (opt.)
building. It blurs the line between solid and void, and interior and exterior. This confusion allows people to create their own perception of the space, with no predefined connotations of what the project should be or do. The perception of information from the senses will allow guests to form their own opinions of the space and their experience within it. While all of the senses are involved in the experience of the space, they are all involved with nothing. There is the experience of water in the space, but water is essentially nothing. Water should have no odor or taste, and it is also colorless and formless. It is important for the body to experience more than just water. There should be an entire palette of choices for the body to interact with. However, the full sensory event with the water creates a pure transient experience with it.
Peter Zumthor
Thermal Bath Vals
Vals, Graubünden,
1990-1996
Located in Vals, Switzerland, the thermal baths by Peter Zumthor was designed with the intent of reviving tourism within the area. Situated in the mountains, the town of Vals exploits the natural hot springs that flow from it. The building is placed next to an existing hotel, with an underground tunnel connecting the two. This project, with its stone structure, gives the impression that it is of the mountains and perhaps just as old, with the remainder of the town being built up around it.¹ The building itself is a concrete reinforced structure, which also utilizes stone work from a nearby quarry. The stone is not used as cladding, but rather it is used in layers that are stacked upon each other to create a building that is monolithically constructed. These laminated layers of stone are used throughout the entirety of the building and the concept of layering stone on top of stone is applied to the relation between the walls and the floor as well as the walls and the ceiling. Even the small construction details contribute to the monolithic appearance, making it seem like one continuous space that is emerging from the earth. Growing from the darkness and into the light, the thermal baths inherit a cavernous quality about the space. The spaces increase in size as one processes from the underground entrance towards the glimpse of shining daylight that then opens up to the outside world.²

In addition to creating a cavernous space, the thermal baths deal with several other valuable issues. Zumthor works with such concepts as that of light and dark and the integration between the two, the characteristics of light being reflected off of the water as well as how it penetrates through
the water vapors. He also works with the sound that is reflected off of the stone from the water, as well as the human elements such as the contact between skin and stone. Perhaps the most important aspect of the project is celebrating the ritual of bathing; focusing on the relaxation, the cleansing and the emphasis on the experience of bathing in and of itself. The true beauty of the architecture lies in the subtleness of design and not the flashiness of the building or fixtures. However, the building itself does offer some spatial experiences for the bather to enjoy. These spatial qualities relate back to the idea of the building being carved out of the mountain. There is a procession through the building, but people are still free to wander about and experience the building on their own. When they first emerge, the changing rooms are dark and small. From there, the spaces open up to larger ones and the building reveals itself gradually throughout the process. Doors and window are exposed and spaces are revealed. In the revealing of these spaces there is also the exposure to perspectives of the building and of the landscape. These viewpoints are precisely controlled in an effort to maintain the quality of the space and the characteristics that it holds.

The quality and characteristics of the space contribute to the building in a different way as well. “Zumthor’s architecture helps us to experience our own experiences.” He clearly works with the experiences within his buildings, but not just in the moment, he also incorporates the experiences of the past. People base their perceptions on past events. He realizes that experiencing is a process of relating the old with the new
and that people’s own individual history of experiences effects how they view a particular circumstance. It is because of this that Zumthor believes in creating a design that people will remember. One way he addresses this idea is with materials. He uses materials to create relationships; relationships within the building as well as between the building and the user. He also uses materials to show how buildings are constructed, and what the process is for making such a structure.\(^5\) His use of materials in the thermal baths does two things. It uses stone in a new way by layering it in strips and not using it as a cladding or as an entire wall section. Also it treats the wall as its own design element and not as a given. The wall becomes a crucial part in the design of the building and not merely an element to support the roof or define a space. The walls promote a strong yet quiet space that allows people to focus on the experience of bathing. The design of the building itself is subtle yet encourages the user to think about the experiences created by the building. These subtle movements are innate within the body of architecture. The experiential elements are what make up the structure. There are no additive features that create contrived emotions, only slight building gestures. These gestures give way to powerful experiences within the spaces. They can create a strong response to the building in a minimal way. In the thermal baths, there is a sense of mystery, perhaps created by the fact that the building is not entirely obvious at first. Its secrets are revealed slowly as the user moves around within the space. The building does not interfere with the ritual of bathing but only seeks to improve it. It seeks to improve bathing by allowing
the building to speak. The design allows building to speak by enhancing the bathing ritual and incorporating the building to become intertwined with the common act of relaxing, cleansing, and bathing. The sharp rectilinear form allows for a certain calmness to be exhibited by people. If it were a more dynamic form, it would make it harder for people to relax because they would be too excited from the overwhelming shape. Because of its simplicity it allows people to relax and appreciate the ritual of bathing.

It is apparent that people go to the thermal baths to take part in the bathing in the pools of water of varying temperature, however it may not be evident that the people are able to further their experience through the incorporation of the baths with the building itself. It is another experience that people may be missing out on, simply because they are not aware of their surroundings. Most of the experiential qualities are subtle, however there are some instances that are hard to ignore. There are windows that are designed to be viewed from the specific spot of the lounge chairs. This design decision demonstrates that Zumthor was thinking about how people actually interact with and perceive a space. Although he creates experiences in the architecture, it is not clear if there is a relation to the senses. The sense of vision is incorporated, based on how the building is seen. The building is not viewed all at once. It slowly reveals itself and different viewpoints within the building. The sense of sound is incorporated with the sound of the water against the stones. The sound of water within an enclosed stone structure could create some interesting effects that could only be experienced at
the thermal baths. It would be appealing to feel the walls in combination with the other senses. The temperature of the water and other function elements are fundamental to the sense of touch within the building. For a project like this, it is crucial to involve the sense of touch in order to further the experience. This building also hints at the other senses of taste and smell, being that of stone and water. The senses would be beneficial to look at in terms of furthering the ability to experience the building. With regards to the building, there was a good amount of planning that went into the building, like the layered stone walls. However, many of the other elements were not designed and they were merely taken for granted, such as doors and handrails. Due to the fact that it is a minimal design to begin with, many of the elements may come off as not being designed. One thing in particular that has been designed with great intensity is the relation between inside and outside. When deep inside the thermal baths, it appears to the user that they are completely inside, however, the space opens up to the mountains outside. The building continues to relate to the existing mountainside through the use of the stones harvested just further down the mountain. As the baths unearth themselves from the ground, it fully embraces the site and all of its characteristics.
SITE SELECTION
I-75 and Grand River Ave.

While the site is a series of vacant lots in downtown Detroit, it is not in the best location. It is still several blocks away from anything that is actively being used in any direction.

Woodward Ave. between East Grand River Ave. and Gratiot Ave.

It is a site in a good location, in the heart of downtown Detroit, however, it is in too dense of an area. The site is also across the street from an existing day spa.

Gratiot Ave. and St. Antoine St.

This site is not within an easily walkable distance to the other cultural aspects to the city. It is also a bit large for the proposed program.

From left to right, I-75 and Grand River Ave.; Woodward Ave. between East Grand River Ave. and Gratiot Ave.; and Gratiot Ave. and St. Antoine St.
Grand River Ave. and West Forest Ave.

This site is too desolate and too large to support a building of this type. The proposed program would not fit into this context.

Atwater St. and St. Aubin St.

While this is still in Detroit, it is not close enough to downtown to promote any foot traffic. This site is also in the midst of abandoned warehouses.
West Lafayette Bvd. and Sixth St.

This site is of ample size, however, being located west of the Lodge puts it at a distance from the rest of the city that makes it undesirable.

West Jefferson Ave. and Eighth St.

Although it is located on the river, this site is isolated from the rest of the city. It is also too large of a site and situated directly across from a major post office, which has large trucks moving through it constantly.

From top to bottom, West Lafayette Bvd. and Sixth St.; West Jefferson Ave. and Eighth St.
South Main St. and East Lincoln Ave.

Located in Royal Oak, this site is just a few blocks from the downtown district. The lot size is too small for the desired program.

East Lincoln Ave. and South Troy St.

The site is actively being used as a parking lot, although unpaved. It is also across the street from an electrical station.

From left to right, South Main St. and East Lincoln Ave.; East Lincoln Ave. and South Troy St.
The selected areas show some small retail shops.

The selected areas show a small residential neighborhood.
Maxwell Ave. and West Eleven Mile Rd.

This site is located between downtown Royal Oak and Woodward Ave. There is a small commercial area in proximity to the site. There is also a spread out residential area surrounding the site. These situations bring little foot traffic and light vehicular traffic to the site. While the small amount of cars driving by is not a problem, the foot traffic is. The site is not close enough to downtown Royal Oak to promote people that are walking by to stop in.

The ability to stop in randomly is a desired characteristic of the site. This site is in a semi-urban area and therefore it is close by for many people. Because it is not directly in downtown Royal Oak, it promotes a more planned usage as opposed to a spontaneous one.

This site would be suitable for a confined building type or an open complex, allowing various design possibilities. There is a YMCA center that is right next to the site, which may be in direct competition with the intended program. Overall, it is a good site except for that fact that it is too far removed from the small downtown of Royal Oak.
The highlighted buildings show some businesses in the area.

The highlighted areas show different modes of transportation.
Michigan Ave. and First Ave.

Located in downtown Detroit, this site is situated between the freeways, in the business district. Being in such a corporate setting will promote a usage that is an escape from reality.

It will allow business employees to slip out during a break. In addition to being surrounded by offices, there are also various forms of entertainment nearby. There are sports venues, casinos, and nightlife available to support the proposed program, just to name a few.

There are a variety of modes of transportation to the selected site. This includes the people mover, vehicular traffic and foot traffic. While it is accessible by walking, it is several blocks away from anything of interest to the average person.

The foot traffic alone would not be enough to support a program like this, but there would be moderate vehicular traffic to sustain it. This site is clearly in an urban area and that would make it convenient for people to stop by without it having to become a destination. People from outside the city could go to the site as a destination specifically for the proposed program. Since the site is in a dense area, it is more suitable for a confined building type, instead of a sprawling complex. It is a good site in terms of size and relative location, however at a human scale it is too far removed from the remainder of the city.
The selected object shows the people mover as a mode of transportation.

The selected areas show some entertainment places nearby.
Bagley St. and Park Ave.

This site is situated in the heart of Detroit, just off of Woodward Ave. and south of I-75. Located in downtown Detroit, it is right next to the entertainment district.

There are sports venues, theaters and an assortment of nightlife within a few minutes walk from the site. This proximity to the entertaining places of the city allow for a moderate amount of foot traffic on and around the site.

There is also a substantial amount of vehicular traffic, which can easily be supported by the vast amounts of parking nearby. This site, also located in an urban area, could promote a more spontaneous usage of the program than one that is planned.

The location allows for more people to randomly stop by. It is still perfectly acceptable for the planned program to be an outing in and of itself. While the site is in a culturally busy part of the city, there may not be enough people to support a program of this nature in this location. The demand for the proposed program is not high in this location, not to mention, there is currently a day spa already on Woodward Ave. This site would be better suited for a design proposal that is more of a confined nature, especially because it is in a dense area. This site, in general, is one that could provide a unique opportunity for the proposed program, if the city could sustain a building with that intent.
SITE ANALYSIS
The selected areas indicate the neighborhoods around the site.

The selected areas show some commercial places nearby.
East Eleven Mile Rd. and North Troy St.

The site is located in downtown Royal Oak, just east of Main St. This is a very busy entertainment area of Royal Oak, with most of it being located downtown on Main St.

There is a lot of pedestrian traffic and vehicles driving up and down this main drag. This city is smaller, but still promotes a rich cultural atmosphere. Royal Oak is a semi-urban city that has a downtown full of things to do.

There is ample space for living, whether in apartment complexes or individual homes. This dense population provides plenty of support for the proposed program. Its location allows people to randomly stop by while visiting the downtown.

The site is also easily accessible to the vehicular traffic that makes this their specific destination. Location makes it a convenient place for the wide range of visitors that may interact with the site. The site is suitable for a confined building type or an open complex. The density of the city will allow for either. This is an ideal location for the proposed program. It is near enough to a downtown environment without being in too crowded of a space. The lot size is desirable given the program. There is also a park that is part of the site that will contribute to the overall enhancement of the project.
The site is located

In the metro Detroit area in southeast Michigan

North of I-696, West of I-75, East of Woodward Ave., in the city of Royal Oak

East of Main St., North of Eleven Mile Rd., in the downtown area

Northeast corner of East Eleven Mile Rd. and North Troy St.
This is an abstract site model that demonstrates various panoramic views from the point at which they can be seen. These allow for a complete perspective of the site. Based on the individual's perspective, certain views are visible while others are not.

This set of four images represent the piece with the top two pictures showing a view from the north west side of the site. The bottom left photo in the set is an all encompassing aerial image while the bottom right is a view from the northeast.

This is a site model that illustrates the concept of three dimensional shadows. These shadows are seen as volumes and not just planes on the ground. If an object falls within this volume it is in shadow, even if it is off of the ground.

This model demonstrates where these volumetric shadows would be in the summer time. The photo at the top left of this set would be looking north while the photo next to it is a detail. The bottom right is looking southwest with an overall picture to the left.
There is a certain smell to the autumn air, of trees and leaves. The ground is uneven along with the leaves and sticks interrupting the path. The sun is warm. The breeze is strong but gentle and can be heard in the rustling of the leaves high above, the shade is noticeably cooler than the sunlight. There is an old, weathered picnic table. It is worn and run down. The metal bolts are cold in contrast to the soft wood and the grain running in it. The sun is in the southeast and shines on the arm and back. It is both calming and soothing. The intensity comes and goes with the clouds. The ground under the table has been beaten down and compacted over the years. The sun is out again. This place is peaceful and relaxing while asking for nothing in return. The autumn air is quiet but not silent. The breeze comes from the west and signifies its arrival with a rustling of leaves on the ground. The smell of the foliage is brought with it.

There is a stop sign nearby where the drone of a car slows down only to speed back up again. Once aware of its presence, it is anxiously awaited. The sunlight is back and it is warm and friendly. The place is soothing for it is not overwhelmed but still there are the sounds of people going to and from. There is the sound of the wind in the trees. The cool breeze is pleasant and anticipated, knowing that it brings with it the sweet smell of autumn. The sun comes back and is warm again. The cool breeze ruffles clothing around and the autumn air is refreshing. A stranger shuffles through the leaves on the ground. Now, sitting atop a concrete partition, it is rough and uncomfortable. It is busier with more traffic.

The wind comes back but there is an absence of pleasant aura. The wind comes alone. The cool breeze feels empty without its friend. The sun still comes and goes but it is not as pronounced. It is possible to detect the traffic signals by the cars that slow down and speed up accordingly. The light cycle changes often. There are cars, but it is not congested. The air is refreshing as it should be but it is without any particular aromas. There is the scuffling of shoes on the sidewalk. Again, the sun returns with its warmth. It brings contentment.
One approach to analyzing the site was to view it specifically through the senses. This allowed for a more in depth look at the site and its surrounding environments. It produced a result that dug deeper into the site rather than just looking at where it is and the topographical features. The analysis allowed the site to come alive and become a character in the story and more than just a plot of land.

The top image is a mapping of sounds encountered on the site. These sounds were noted during a blind site visit to understand the site through the medium of the senses. The sound waves are representational of the sound itself. The sound waves show the direction and intensity of the sound. Some of the various sounds included traffic, wind, and even people. While blindfolded it was also possible to identify the direction of the wind. A stop sign was made apparent based on the sound of a car slowing down only to accelerate again. The sounds slowly faded into and out of perception, based on the relation between the source and the individual. The single lane of traffic that had the stop sign had a very different sound than the multiple lanes of traffic at the south end of the site. In a similar way the sound is different from someone walking on the sidewalk to someone walking through the leaves on the ground.

There was also the perception of other senses at the site. With sight being blocked out, there was an emphasis on the other senses; sound, touch, smell and taste. The image of text on the bottom is a narrative description of the site as experienced from the park at the north end of the site. The sense of taste was not ignored, but instead, no perceptions of the site made by the tongue were recorded. There are strong perceptions of touch and of smell. There are instances of a bench that provided opportunities for touch. There is also the wind which appeals to many senses. The wind can be heard, felt and even smelled. The wind, being heard in the distance, can be felt cooling the skin and it can bring with it various aromas from nearby things. The sensory perception creates experiences for the user to enjoy. This demonstrates various experiences that may take place at the site.

Providing qualitative information, the analyses suggest locations for program attributes as they relate to the entire site in order to enhance the experiential space.
This field exploration began as a study of a human activity. Individual still frames from the video have been selected to fully illustrate the intent of the study. This study explored different ways in which the human body perceives space.

The first introductory segment of the video, in the upper left corner, shows someone walking. As the video progresses, it is apparent that the audio and the visual cues do not match. The video documents someone walking while the audio is the sound of someone running. The audio captures the runner’s footsteps and heavy breathing. At the end of the short segment, the runner is seen cutting across the screen. This clip of walking with running sounds illustrates that people are more likely to notice the senses when there is conflicting information. People notice when something is not right. The point is not to show that there is a need for conflicting information, but rather, there must be an attention to the senses. Senses must be appealed to directly without the assumption that they will automatically be noticed. Appealing to the senses will create a stronger architecture in the sense that it will actively involve the user with the building itself.

The main section of the video is a series of clips showing interactions with a building. Each clip is only a small view of the interaction with a building, but combined the clips emphasize the manual involvement that is possible with the architecture. There is a concentration on the physical touching of the building and the elements that make up the architectural experience. Each individual clip focus on the connection between the architecture and the user. The remaining image is blurred out to de-emphasize the other elements in the scene and to highlight the important interactions. The sound in the video also highlights the interaction by eliminating the noise that distracts from the experiences and accentuating the sound that is produced directly. The clips illustrated interactions between people and doors, railings, windows, drinking fountains, and various other things that may be considered part of the building. These clips demonstrate different ways people interact with a building. It does not show hypothetical or idealistic situations, instead it demonstrates how people actually use a building. Mundane involvements with a building are currently a few of the ways to interact with a
ROUGH PLASTIC
WARM TEMPERATURE
LIGHT WEIGHT
LITTLE RANGE OF MOTION
MINIMAL EFFORT
DOWNWARD MOVEMENT
DELIBERATE
FAIRLY REWARDING

COARSE WOOD
COOL TEMPERATURE
WEATHERED GRAIN PATTERN
JERKY MOVEMENTS
NO EFFORT
DIAGONAL MOVEMENT
MINIMAL INVOLVEMENT
NOT REWARDING

SMOOTH METAL
COLD TEMPERATURE
HEAVY
SMALL DEGREE OF MOTION
SUBSTANTIAL EFFORT
UPWARD MOVEMENT
INTENTIONAL
VERY REWARDING

SMOOTH METAL
WARM TEMPERATURE
DECENT WEIGHT
LARGE RANGE OF MOTION
SOME EFFORT
OUTWARD MOVEMENT
NECESSITY
SOMewhat REWARDING
building. Unfortunately, these mundane interactions are the most common involvements with a building that people have. These experiences, as mundane as they may be, are experienced first hand. They are not told by someone else or seen at a distance but understood directly. People are able to fully experience the architecture by being actively involved with it. Noticing everyday activities in architecture makes people aware of and perhaps celebrate the common interaction with a building. This illustrates how a common involvement with a building is easily forgotten.

Following up the video is an analysis that looks at the video in more depth. It points out information that is not necessarily visible in the video. It helps to show that the other senses are need to fully experience the building. The information is picked up by the senses when the action is done first hand. The analysis demonstrates that there are communication gaps within the senses. All of the senses should be used at once to fully comprehend the situation. The analysis looks at four distinct situations in which there is interaction with the building. Those four instances are a drinking fountain, a railing, a window and a door. In each case, it goes on to describe different characteristics of the individual object. It points out what the object feels like, such as the materiality, temperature, and weight. It also makes apparent the involvement with the architecture, including the range and direction of motion, the amount of effort involved as well as how worthwhile it is. These characteristics determine how engaging an object of architecture can be. These pieces of information combined with the images and even the sounds help to produce an architectural sensual experience. This allows people to gain an understanding of the elements that make up the architecture. This helps people to become more aware of their surrounding and the architecture that makes up their lives.
In addition to the “hand” video, there was a second study done to look at other interactions within buildings. This exploration looked at the lower half of the body and its interactions with the environment. The video was done in a similar way to the first one, with a series of clips combined to create an effect of experiencing architecture. Unlike the first video, there was an assortment of interactions. Not all of the interactions involved motion, like the first. While some contained no movement, others were filled with a wide range of motions. Some of the interactions, both active and static, involved walking, climbing stairs, sitting, standing and sometimes a combination of multiple activities. This second study looked at additional direct interactions with the architecture. Some of the involvements are typical mundane interactions and some are completely out of the ordinary. The videos looked beyond just the images and sounds and allowed the viewer to focus on the elements themselves and not the graphic composition. This video demonstrates alternate ways people interact with a building. It shows that interactions with a building can be as simple as a floor texture. It also explores the possibility of other interactions that may or may not happen with a building, such as being barefoot or using the building in a unique way. It is not possible to describe all the ways in which one may interact with a building. But rather it is possible to design and create the potential for interactions amongst the architecture. As an architect, all that can be done is to simply provide the environment for people to make it their own; what they do with it is up to them.
CONCEPTUAL DESIGN
Conceptual design is important to the overall design process. It allows for a continuation of previous ideas which may not have been fully explored. It also provides opportunity to test out other conceptual ideas. These ideas may or may not be of a particular context. The phase of conceptual design is intended to take abstract concepts and turn them into realistic architectural elements. These concepts deal with site, program, and other design issues relating to the overall project. These issues not only follow, but also explore various elements in the design process. The in-depth investigation will enhance the project as a whole by contributing multiple aspects of design in the various forms that it may take.
The way in which a building is perceived by people is important, especially when considering that the first experience of the building is seen from a distance. It is important to understand what direction people are coming from when they encounter the architecture.

Assuming that most people will be driving to the site, it is worth knowing where they will be coming from. This is a map that shows access to the site via major roads. It shows the probable and likely approach that people will take.

Being able to see the site is an important quality, however, it is necessary to be able to look out of the site to the remaining context. It is important to have views from within the building looking out.

The experiences should not be limited to the building itself, but should extend out into the environment that it is a part of. This model demonstrates these views. By looking from the building to the environment, it is able to make connecting experiences with it.
Experiences of a building should not be limited to only those people who actually enter it. The experiences should be available to everyone. Architecture should embrace its outward projection into the environment by analyzing where the building can be seen from.

Various points of view are selected to show what can be seen of the site. These vantage points show a field of view, terminating where objects intercept the sight line between individual and site. These views show how much of the site that can be seen from any of the points.

With the building itself, it is important to understand how the building is perceived. Because it is witnessed from a distance it is worth noting how imposing the structure may be. It is imperative to do a massing study to analyze the size and form of the building.

The heaviness or lightness of a building has different effects on people and this is done with what is considered solid, void or any combination in between. There are various configurations that may constitute as massing. These include various levels, up to three stories tall, sections cut through the building, differing amounts of transparency, and various spacial arrangements.
From the macro scale of the surrounding environment to the micro scale of a building detail, sensory information is driving the experience of the building. This is a detail of a hand rail. Instead of being stuck in the middle of the floor, this railing is carved out of the wall. There is a piece of glass covering the strip allowing light to pass through it in order to be felt by the hand as it runs along the surface.

Not all experiences are created with small details. It is possible to create experiences based on architectural elements and how they come together. Experiences can also be formed off of the absence of materials.

This experience is meant to directly and immediately effect the individual. The concept of the pause allows the individual to fully embrace what is forthcoming. In this case it is designed to allow an individual to pause before entering a space for meditation.

The pause helps to distinguish spaces from one another. It allows each place to be its own separate entity without being part of the other spaces. This works for both the physical space as well as the mind set within each space.
An architectural element that creates an experience is a bench that would be a part of a steam room. The benches reflect a feeling of hot, moist air through a tactile sense. Wooden strips that make up the bench appear to slide off of the wall and onto the floor.

It looks and feels as if the steamy environment caused the wood to melt right off of the wall and create the benches in the process. The wood would also provide a soft smooth feeling that would belong in a steam room.

Continuing on with the steam room, there is another element that is worth experiencing. It is working with light, not as a bright source but as a material. Directional holes in the roof are punched out to allow beams of light in throughout the day.

The holes are angled in such a way that certain rays are visible only at certain times of the day. The beams appear and disappear as the sun moves across the sky. The steam in the space makes the piercing light a beam and more than just a spot on the floor. This appeals to the visual sense and serves as a vague time keeper.
A door knob is a very direct and immediate interaction with a building, especially if the door knob is one that is unconventional. This door knob design conceals the standard handle and forces the user to interact with the new interface.

Pushing down on the box operates the door handle so that the door can open. A unique handle actively involves the user to think about their surrounding environment and engages them to physically respond to a given condition.

A space that actively involves the environment is one that is designed to react specifically to it. The space is designed to have direct sunlight at all times of the day and all days of the year without being constructed entirely out of glass.

This allows an individual to experience the warmth of the sun at any time when the sun can be seen. The idealistic design originated from the path the sun takes as it moves across the sky. The sun would be visible from a single point on the interior of the space.
This charcoal sketch is a light study at night taken from the exterior of the daylight room. It shows the windows that are used for taking in the light in the daytime illuminated from the interior with artificial lights. The space would glow at night giving off a peaceful ambient light.
This light study, also done in charcoal, is looking at the hand railing where the warmth of the sun can be felt. The glass would also allow light to escape at night. The result would be a line of light wrapping around the building. This quiet strip would also indicate the activities occurring within the space, but only what would be visible through this small strip.
This sketch done in charcoal looks at another light scenario. Here, there is a glass cube sitting on the corner of a building. The result is of an idealistic glowing cube, floating in its minimally visual context of the remaining building. This cube would provide a sharp contrast to the surrounding night sky.
This is another analysis of the steam room, in charcoal. Instead of the interior, this is of the exterior. From the same holes that let the light in, the light would now be idealistically piercing out into the night sky. Casting off into different directions, the beams of light could portray an interesting visual effect on the nearby people. The beams could act as searchlights, drawing people to the site and to the experience.
These are preliminary design proposals that are all illustrated with charcoal. The first floor plan shows, in a counterclockwise movement, an open exterior courtyard, meditation spaces, locker rooms, and massage rooms.
The second floor shows, in a counterclockwise movement, additional massage rooms, the steam room, and an additional space that transitions between the interior and exterior. This overlooks many of the different levels that occur within the building.
The elevations illustrate a proposed form for the building. There is a distinction between what is solid and what is transparent. The elevations show what is experienced from the exterior of the building. The north elevation is the view from the small park at the north end of the site. The south elevation is the façade that is along Eleven Mile Rd.
These elevations illustrate the longer axis of the building, running from north to south. The east elevation is the façade running along Troy St. The west elevation is the one that is serving as the main entrance to the building, addressing the parking lot as the primary point of entry.
These sections are cut through the building to show how the spaces will be perceived in reality. Section A shows, from left to right, an elevator, the steam room, and a space for hot tubs, with open spaces in the background. Section B shows, from left to right, the locker rooms and the massage spaces.
These sections are cut perpendicular to the others. Section 1 shows, from left to right, the open exterior courtyard, and some of the circulation spaces. This section also shows the various change in levels occurring within the building. Section 2 cuts through, from left to right, a ramp, meditation spaces, a locker room and the steam room.
This is a three dimensional model of the plans and sections illustrated. This model demonstrates the overall form of the building. It shows the various spaces as well as their relation to each other. The model demonstrates a form that is without texture. This allows it to focus on the massing of the building as a whole. This view in particular show the building in its entirety. Looking south east, this view accentuates the large void in the middle that is the courtyard. This courtyard opens up to and becomes integrated with the small park at the north end of the site.
Running along the long edge of the courtyard are the interior meditation spaces. On the upper level, towards the right in this photo, there is the space for the steam room. Corridors connect the steam room to the massage areas and the main circulation space. The roof top terrace allows for addition meditation spaces. These external meditation spaces would be open to the elements and the surrounding semi-urban atmosphere.

The additional, unpredictable outside elements could possibly help some meditators who are capable of meditating in distracting elements. There is also a second roof top terrace at the north end of the building. This one is accessible only by a ramp that is adjacent to the exterior wall of a meditation space. The platform also serves as a gateway between the park space and courtyard, which would flow into each other. The courtyard has a single wall separating it from Troy St.

The entrance to the exterior courtyard, from the building, is in between the two story massage space and the long interior meditation, as seen in this bottom image. This images helps to show the different levels of the building. The courtyard, while being outside, is still incorporated with and a part of the building structure. This image helps to give the building a sense of scale, which is essential for experiencing the architecture.
Doors and their use within a building are a simple way to interact with the building. They are generally all of the same design. It is expected that a door will have hinges on one side and a handle of some sort on the other. Occasionally, there will be a laterally moving door that slides from side to side. This door is meant to appeal to human interaction with a building. When people encounter something new, they are often times forced to involve themselves with it. People must engage it and learn about it. This is a door that may not be intuitive, and as such requires a higher degree of interaction and involvement in order to understand it. However, the door design does not go so far as to confuse the individual, after all, the building must still be functional. This door is designed with human motion in mind. Normal doors often require a shift in direction as the user passes through as opposed to this door which embraces the forward motion of an individual and incorporates that motion into the design. The door is on a set of tracks that support the door. As the individual walks through and presses on the door, it glides away and off to the right, regardless of what direction they are going. There is a small cube on the surface of the door for people to push on and open as they pass through. The door is also designed with two people in mind. Often times when two people walking together approach a door, one person must go before the other, single file. In this scenario, the same two people can remain side by side while passing through the door. This allows both people to simultaneously experience the door and the entry into a new space.
Details are a small, yet critical aspect of a building. Here is a stair detail that involves the senses. It consists simply of water flowing down some stairs. It is a small portion of the stairs that is sectioned off from the rest. The water would fall from one tread to the next, slowly working its way down. Because it overlaps itself, it is designed to have some water drip from different treads, falling onto the flowing water below. The water may not necessarily fall from one tread to the next but sometimes one floor level to the next. There would be a catch basin at the bottom to recover all of the water from the stairs. The element of water appeals to the various senses. Even though sight is the furthest reaching sense, it does not necessarily have to be the first. It is possible to hear the falling water, even if it cannot be seen. This can be useful to fill the corridors with the soothing sound of water. The water flowing throughout the stairwell, not only can be seen and heard, but also it can be felt. It is likely that people on the stairs will reach out and catch the water and interact with it. They may even decide to taste the water that they have caught, heightening their experience of the space. Water, especially water that is kept clean for a feature like this, would have a smell. When on the stairs, the aroma would be noticeable, but not overwhelming. The experience of water is one that is fundamental. Everyone can relate to it with just about every sense. Water has the potential to create powerful experiences in architecture.
Here is a space that is designed for different types of meditation. This space in particular is for meditation with an emphasis on sound. While the space would have an inherent sound to it, the space itself would not be about sound. People would merely be made aware of the sound without demanding their full attention. The tubes are directly connected to the outside. On the roof, the pipes stick out above the surface at various heights. As the wind drags across the surface of the roof, it reacts with the tubes. The tubes would sing as the wind carries across them. Not a loud obnoxious sound but one that is gentle and quiet. This would provide an ambient sound to fill the space. This creation of sound by the building is a direct involvement with the building and the individual. It is the structure itself producing the sound. The sound is not artificially produced by electronic speakers. There is a certain characteristic about the natural sounds of a building that cannot be replicated with speakers. This characteristic is one that would be soothing and calming. This would allow people to relax within this meditative space. The quality of sound produced by the building would be a specific involvement with the architecture and the human body and thus would further the architectural sensual experience.
This is another space for meditation. Instead of working with sound, this space attempts to accomplish nothing. It moves towards an absence in all of the senses. While it is almost impossible to completely eradicate all sensory perception. In this meditative space, nothing is appealed to. There is nothing spectacular to look at, only the simple room with a level change can be seen. There are no sounds being emitted, whether real or artificial. There is nothing in the space that rewards the sense of touch. There are only planes to stand upon and planes to enclose the space. Also there is nothing to smell or to taste. This space attempts to become void of any and all sensual elements. This provides an interesting experience. Instead of there being particular elements to enjoy, there is nothing. The individual is left with nothing. In terms of meditation, this is a good thing. With nothing to distract the meditator, the space becomes an ideal location for relaxing and thinking. The experience of nothing can also be one that is overwhelming. With nothing to focus on, an individual may become confused and unsure. Even though this space strives for nothing, there is still a material presence that cannot be erased. This presence keeps the building in reality and allows the user an opportunity for a minimal experience.
There is hissing, steam is being released.

It is dark with subtle beams of light sporadically and dimly illuminating the damp space.

A crack of light appears only to birth a newcomer.

The light recesses.

The seat is hard and rigid, but you do not mind. You feel the cracks in between the soft wood. The room smells of pine.

A bead of sweat rolls down your back and you rejoice in the much needed chilling of the spine.

The darkness is calming.

The wood is warm against the skin.

Your head falls back and gently rests upon the giving wall.

You hear the slow drip of condensed water from a pipe.

Finally, you are at ease.
The spaces set aside for massage are designed to primarily incorporate the sense of touch. The architecture can play a large role in the relaxation of the human body. Instead of there being a piece of furniture inserted into the space, the building itself provides and becomes the table on which people lay. Slabs may be considered crude but here it allows for small pipes of heated or cooled water to pass through them and create ambient temperatures. The slab as part of the building not only appeals to feeling the pressure of the slab but also the temperature of it. The lighting of the space is a soft ambient light that dimly illuminates the space in order to set the scene for the massage. There are also the oils and lotions that can be felt on the skin as well as being smelt from a distance. It is possible for there to be incense to produce pleasant aromas for the individual to enjoy. A bed of hot rocks sits in the corner so that the rocks can be placed on the body. In addition to feeling these rocks, it is likely that they will be heard. As they heat up, they will click and fall off of each other. The quiet sound will comfort the individual. While these experiences are not produced by the architecture directly, they do help the overall experience of the massage. In an effort to relax the individual, the sensory input is subdued. Things are clam and quiet. Nothing is overpowering. The architecture does not want to be overpowering and in doing so, subtract from the sensual experience.
The space in between each of the individual spaces cannot be ignored. In fact, it is an opportunity to do more in terms of the architecture. It is sometimes easier to accomplish architectural sensual experiences when there is no function that must be achieved. This circulation space is looking down the hall towards the different levels. It is possible to see the various levels of the building. There are levels that are half a story off, either sunken down a half of a story or sitting on top of that story. This view also shows the large atrium in the middle of the building. It illustrates the various stairs and ramps moving about in the space, creating a dynamic environment for the individual to enjoy. The glass not only allows light to flood the space but also promotes a visual connection to the people outside on the roof decks that may be used for various forms of meditation. This type of circulation space may create an experience of a vast open space, especially with the small hallway. When a space goes from being confined to being very open, it is almost always perceived and often times it is perceived of in a good way. It is this change in scale that produces the effects. These perceptions in turn, allow people to fully experience and engage in a space.
Out in the courtyard, it is dark and you hold your robe shut.

The moist air leaves your mouth.

There is a path neatly shoveled away, but you are curious, you stray from the path, creating your own, creating fresh footprints in the newly fallen snow.

You hear the slow crunch beneath your feet.

You breathe slowly and deeply, letting the moment linger.

The snow is cold on your bare feet, you decide to head in, following in your own footsteps.

Once you are inside, you shake off the damp snow from your fuzzy robe.

Your hands and feet feel sharp pains as the blood returns.

You look back to see what once was.
These diagrams show the approximate zoning for each type of space within the building.

This diagram illustrates the defined meditation areas. While it is possible and encouraged to meditate throughout the site, these are the spaces specifically set aside for doing so.

Here are the spaces that are part of the thermal experience. They are located on the second floor, above some of the mechanical spaces.

This area is for the massage rooms and corridor. It has access to stairwells at either end of it. It also rests above part of the meditation garden.
This area consists of spaces for changing as well as a place to store one's personal belongings. It also sets up the corridor for a procession into the kinesthetic spaces.

These are the circulation spaces that connect the spaces to each other.

This space is designed for staff use including a lounge and office area.

There are two mechanical rooms, located in each wing of the building to facilitate proper heating and cooling of the surrounding spaces.
Dynamic Meditation Space

Quantities Required

10-15 People Capacity
1 Space
1,200 Square Feet

Purposes/Function

This is a dynamic meditation space which will allow for a more open and public meditation.

Activities

Meditation, Daydreaming, Contemplation, Free thought

Spatial Relationships

The short entryway would be of normal height and then open up to a double story space. There would also be a section of single height space adjacent to the entry. The space would be a large open area. Located next to the parking and the lobby, the overall space will capture some of the action encircling it.

Qualitative Considerations

The floors and ceiling consist of wood planking, running the long dimension in the space, to help create a soft environment. There would be glass walls, but not in the conventional sense. The glass panes would be stacked next to each other, all standing vertically. The individual would see through the length of the glass, perpendicular to the way glass is normally viewed through. Looking through the glass would allow a transmitting of light and of murky forms. The people outside would move about and create a dynamic relation with the people on the interior of the space. These glass walls would be facing the parking lot as well as the lobby. The other walls that are not glass would be made of concrete. These walls would create a dichotomy between the materials and allow for a more dynamic space. In addition to the various visual elements, the other senses are also incorporated. The space would be a louder one with all of the commotion occurring within and surrounding the space. This sound is more noticeable with the particular volume of the space and the reverberations of the sound in the space. The volume of a
space is something that can also be perceived through the haptic senses. The volume would be noticeable as well as the feeling of the wood, either in the softness of the wood or in the joints between the planks. The wood planking within the space would provide a pleasant smell of pine.

Equipment/Furnishings

There is opportunity for some bench like pieces that would be part of the building; otherwise it would be an empty room.

Behavioral Considerations

The space would be next to the parking lot and lobby to allow for these spaces to create interesting interactions with the building.

Structural Systems

The space would use the typical concrete post and beam system in combination with wall panels and the stacked glass.

Mechanical/Electrical Systems

This space would utilize the standard air handling system and radiant floor heating system.

Site/Exterior Environment Considerations

The space would be next to the parking lot and lobby to allow for these spaces to create interesting interactions with the building.

Changing Space

Quantities Required

1-2 People Capacity for Each Space
6 Spaces
210 Square Feet Each
1260 Square Feet Total

Purposes/Function

These rooms provide a space that allows an individual to ceremoniously disrobe and prepare for the experiences to
come.

Activities

Changing, Showering

Spatial Relationships

The space would be of a normal height with an open space in the center to allow for changing.

Qualitative Considerations

The space is encased in wood on all of the surfaces. The planking snakes back and forth across the surfaces, creating a continual path that is meanders about the space. There is a band of planks that circles the walls and runs perpendicular to the wood grain behind them. There is a bench that forms from the band and connects it to the floor. In addition there is a piece of wood that unravels from the ceiling to the floor and showcases a slow dripping of water. The other, more functional water fixtures are made of concrete, which consist of a water closet, sink, and a shower stall. The show stall consists solely of the slab with a ledge and a hole in the wood for the water to rain down on the individual. The cold, hard concrete would provide a nice contrast to the soft, warm wood that is felt by the body. The wood is complimented by a soft direct light in the dimly lit space, illuminating the body from above as they ceremonious disrobe. These elements, which showcase the visual aspect, also highlight the other senses. In the space is it possible to hear the faint hissing of the thermal spaces above. There is also a slow dripping in the space that brings the attention of the individual back to the present. The space is enriched by the warmth of the wood and the light shining down on the individual. The smell of pine would be a prominent one, considering that the space is almost entirely wood. It would also be possible to smell the water in the air from the thermal areas.

Equipment/Furnishings

There would be a water closet, sink, shower stall and a bench available in each changing space. There would be lockers available on the other side of the corridor outside the space.

Behavioral Considerations
The changing spaces are set up in a linear fashion, all along one side of the corridor. On the other side of the corridor there are lockers for personal storage. The spaces for changing are at the beginning of a long corridor which sets up a procession to the haptic spaces above.

Structural Systems

There would be wood framing construction on the interior partition walls.

Mechanical/Electrical Systems

This space would utilize the standard air handling system and radiant floor heating system.

Site/Exterior Environment Considerations

These spaces are adjacent to the courtyard; however there is no access or visibility between the two in an effort to maintain privacy.

Massage Space

Quantities Required

2 People Capacity for Each Space
9 Spaces
270 Square Feet Each
2430 Square Feet Total

Purposes/Function

This is a space where an individual can get a full body massage or a hot stone massage.

Activities

Massage, Disrobing

Spatial Relationships

The massage spaces are located on the second floor, above the meditative garden. The main entrance is off of the stairwell near the changing spaces. There is also a stairwell at the other end of the corridor that connects it to some meditation spaces. The massage rooms line both sides of the corridor while wall partitions with a water
feature lines the hall. These wall partitions would have a curved concrete piece with water slowly dripping from it into a basin below. The entrance into the massage rooms is recessed back into the space, creating niches into the doorways. Once inside the space, there is a step down to the level that the table is at.

Qualitative Considerations

This space utilizes the full palette of materials with the majority of the space in wood, some walls and surfaces in concrete and a touch of glass. The wood provides a soft warm tone used to fill the space. The concrete creates a tension in the room by being the hard contrasting element. This dichotomy helps to break up the space and not allow it to be overwhelming with wood or concrete. It allows the materials to work well together. As an accent to both of these materials, there is a strip of glass that wraps around the room. The strip first emerges from a light well that, not only is hidden from the hallway, but also makes up the recessed doorways. The strip runs up that wall, across the ceiling and aligning with the placement of the spine on the massage table and back down on the opposite wall. The glass lets in daylight along the walls and artificial light along the ceiling to create one even strip of light that illuminates the space. There is also soft ambient lighting to add additional, non direct lighting to the space. The light well, while being obscured from vision in the corridor helps to define the space in the corridor. The well appears as solid masses covered in wood. The planking on the floors and ceiling of the corridor run perpendicular to the path of travel so that it is possible to feel the grooves between the planks on ones feet as they traverse the space. Continuing with the haptic sense, the massage table itself would be heated or cooled according to personal preference. While lying on the table, one would hear the clicking and cracking of the hot stones and smell the concrete slab, being that they are right on it. There would also be a faint smell of pine as well as the water in the air from the water fixture in the corridor and the thermal space.

Equipment/Furnishings

The massage room would have the table, wooden base with a concrete slab for lying upon. There would also be a small storage cabinet, a stand for hot rocks, and a changing
screen. In the corridor, there would be the water feature wall partition, which would be covered in wood.

Behavioral Considerations

The massage space has a step down so that one descends to the massage table.

Structural Systems

There would be wood framing construction as well as concrete wall panels on the interior partition walls. The entire space is supported on the hollow core slabs that span the distance of the overhang.

Mechanical/Electrical Systems

This space would utilize the standard air handling system and radiant floor heating system. The radiant floor heating system would also be used to within the massage table to help create an enjoyable experience.

Site/Exterior Environment Considerations

These spaces are above the courtyard. While there is glass to let light in, it would not provide any views into or out of the courtyard.

Thermal Spaces

Quantities Required

6 People Capacity for Each Space
5 Spaces
210 Square Feet Each
4215 Square Feet Total

Purposes/Function

This is a space where an individual can witness a wide range of thermal experiences. These spaces focus on the temperature aspect of the haptic realm.

Activities

Bathing, Soaking, Sweating, Chilling, Relaxing.

Spatial Relationships
The thermal spaces are located on the second floor, above the mechanical room. The space sits at the top of the stairs where the individual chooses between the thermal experiences or a massage. The overall space for the thermal experiences has a higher ceiling which will be good for the acoustics of the space, allowing the sounds to resonate throughout the space. The individual spaces are not as tall as the main space, but still help to define the space by penetrating the curving wall and cantilevering out over the space below on the exterior. On the other side of the space, there is a wall which is made up of panes of glass that are stacked next to each other. This defines the double story space of the procession below with the ability to see murky figures milling about.

Qualitative Considerations

The main thermal space which connects all of the smaller spaces, utilizes the concrete on all surfaces, with accents of glass strewn about. The hard surfaces, in combination with the volume of the space help to echo back the sounds of the hot tubs and the users of them. In addition to the stacked glass adjacent to the procession corridor, glass is used in combination with concrete to separate the specific climate controlled spaces from the main space. The individual spaces consist of two saunas, two steam rooms, and a single space that, by contrast, is kept unnaturally cold. The partition walls that separate these spaces are made up of horizontal bars of concrete stacked vertically with vertical pieces of glass in between each bar. The sacked concrete and glass would create partial views of what is happening on the other side of the wall. Surfaces on the interior of the sauna or steam room are made of wood and would add an additional feeling of warmth, aside from the very apparent temperature differential. It would also help to soften the space, in comparison to the hard concrete in the main space. The wood that makes up the benches appears to be melting off of the walls and into their curvilinear forms. The saunas and steam rooms take advantage of a unique lighting condition. In the ceiling slabs, there are numerous holes punched in the ceiling at various angles and directions. This allows light to enter into the space at different angles throughout the day. The steam in the rooms make the light appear as beams of light and not just a general ambient light source. These beams of light would not only appear, but also disappear throughout
the day as the sun moves across the sky. In the thermal spaces, the hissing of the steam can both be heard as well as tasted in the air.

Equipment/Furnishings

The main thermal space would have hot tubs and a thermally neutral bath, all of which would be made of concrete with wood planking running vertically on the exterior of the tub. The benches on the interior of the saunas and steam rooms consist of bent wood.

Behavioral Considerations

These spaces are designed to be one continuous space, and not a series of completely separate spaces and experiences. They are all part of the same experience.

Structural Systems

The space is supported by a combination of load bearing walls and post and beam construction with hollow core slabs.

Mechanical/Electrical Systems

This space would utilize the standard air handling system and radiant floor heating system with additional air handling to control the specific thermal qualities of each individual space.

Site/Exterior Environment Considerations

These spaces are along the exterior façade; however there are no views to the exterior in order to maintain privacy and to control the characteristics of the space.

2x4 Meditational Space

Quantities Required

2-3 People Capacity
1 Space
210 Square Feet

Purposes/Function

This meditation space will allow for a quiet meditation with
nature in the background.

Activities

Meditation, Daydreaming, Contemplation, Free thought, Pondering

Spatial Relationships

This space is a standalone pavilion located in the middle of the meditation garden. Paths that meander around the garden lead to this isolated meditation space. The path does not lead directly into the space but rather, runs next to it with the pavilion engulfing the path on the sides and above. There is a large opening in the middle of the wall to enter into the space.

Qualitative Considerations

This space, constructed solely out of 2x4s and glass emphasizes the imperfections in the wood and the quality of light that emerges from it. From within the space, the end grain would be made visible on the walls, floor, and ceiling. The wood, being separated by glass, would accentuate the quality of light that is illuminating the space. The light, entering from the gaps between the wood, give the space its defining characteristic. There would be a variety of shadows cast as well as a multitude of tones on the wall pieces as well, creating a vibrant meditation space. While it may be a visually strong piece, it is not the only sense. An individual in the space would reach out and touch the end grain on the walls and floor in an effort to better understand the space. The space is still open to the elements and because of this the wind can gently pass through the space bringing fresh air, from outside and from the pine that makes up the space, as well as the sound of the wind. These experiences combined will result in a fully experiential space.

Equipment/Furnishings

The space would be equipped with nothing.

Behavioral Considerations

The space being in the middle garden provides interest relationships to the other people and the surrounding environment.
Structural Systems

The space is made entirely out of 2x4s and glass. There are grooves carved into the 2x4s to join with the glass. The glass exists in two layers, one with strips running vertically, and the other strips running horizontally. The vertical pieces would be on the interior and the horizontal pieces would be on the exterior.

Mechanical/Electrical Systems

The pavilion, being open to the elements, does not have any air handling system, however it does have the radiant floor heating being pumped out to the space.

Site/Exterior Environment Considerations

The pavilion sits in the middle of the meditation garden in a way that presents itself to the users of the space. From this space it would be possible to view the rest of the garden.

Overhang Meditation Space

Quantities Required

6-12 People Capacity
1 Space
2 Floors
375 Square Feet Each
750 Square Feet Total

Purposes/Function

This is meditation space will allow for a more open and public meditation.

Activities

Meditation, Daydreaming, Contemplation, Free thought

Spatial Relationships

This meditation space is positioned along the meditation corridor. This space is accessible on two levels. The level exists right next to the windows which provide a view to the meditation garden. The second floor has the same area but is only above half of the first floor, and not right next to the windows. It is shifted over one structural bay. The
space is open to above where the second floor is not.

Qualitative Considerations

This meditation space utilizes the whole palette of materials, concrete, wood, and glass. Concrete is used for the columns and mullions as well as for the space that is beneath the second floor. That space is meant to feel heavy and secluded. This privatized area is hidden from view from the second floor. By contrast, wood planking was used to create a softness about the space and to bring a warmth to it. Up on the second level of the space, concrete panels are used on the back wall to help unify the space as a whole. This space appeals to the other senses as well. There is the smell of pine from within the space, but there also is the sound from the garden. It would be possible to hear, and see, some of the various activities happening within the garden.

Equipment/Furnishings

The space would be equipped with nothing.

Behavioral Considerations

This space plays off of the relationship between the people within the space. It is possible to be underneath the overhang on the first floor and not be aware of someone on the second level. The inverse is also true with the second level person being unaware of the person under the overhang of the second floor. The overall space looks out towards the mediation garden, the 2x4 meditation space, and even the other wings of the building.

Structural Systems

The space would use the typical concrete post and beam system in combination with wall panels and partition walls.

Mechanical/Electrical Systems

This space would utilize the standard air handling system and radiant floor heating system.

Site/Exterior Environment Considerations

This space looks out at the rest of the site. It would be possible to watch all the people move about in all of the spaces.
## Quantitative Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Square Feet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meditation</td>
<td>3,940 s.f.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dynamic Meditation</td>
<td>1,220</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overhang Meditation</td>
<td>750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nothing Meditation</td>
<td>210</td>
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<tr>
<td>Claustrophobic Meditation</td>
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<td>Meditation</td>
<td>480</td>
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<td>Meditation</td>
<td>570</td>
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<td>Meditation</td>
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<td>Meditation</td>
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<td>Touch</td>
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<td>Locker Space</td>
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<td>Thermal Main Space</td>
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<td>Sauna</td>
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<td>Freezing Space</td>
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<td>Massage</td>
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<td>Front Plaza</td>
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<td>Parking</td>
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<td>Gross Total</td>
<td>82,920 s.f.</td>
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The structural system utilizes a concrete post and beam construction method on the interior of the building. There are also load bearing walls that make up the curvilinear façade walls. The posts are spaced 8’ apart on center so that they correlate with the slab system. There are hollow core slabs used to support the second floor as well as the roof, with a slab on grade on the first floor. Wall panels are utilized when concrete is used as a wall material. The remaining walls are non-load bearing partition walls constructed with a standard wood framing system.
The mechanical system takes advantage of radiant floor heating. Not only is the system used to control the thermal conditions of the space, but it also provides opportunities for individuals to feel the warmth emanating from the floor. There is also a forced air system which contributes to the thermal aspect of the space. It is also used for cooling and improving the air quality. The forced air system is heavily used in the thermally specific spaces of the saunas where radiant floor heating alone is not enough.
You approach the space from the parking lot outside. From there you can make out some figures. There are people in the dynamic meditation space.

Once inside you see the people that were previously eluded to.

You walk on the floor boards towards a darker corner of the space.

From there you sit and watch. People move about the space. Some present themselves on the other side of the stacked glass.

Their ambiguous forms fade into the distance.

You listen to footsteps echoing throughout the space. They too fade into the distance as the individual leave the room.

The small sounds put you at ease. It is a gentle white noise that allows you to meditate.
You enter into the meditation space at the lower level and sit by yourself in the corner.

Staring out into the garden, you hear footsteps. You look but see no one.

It is just another person meditating in the same space.

Looking back at the meditation garden, you see the trees sway in the breeze.

You hear the wind blowing through the trees and wrapping around the building.

You lean back against the wall and catch an aroma of pine, calming your nerves once again.
This is a space that emphasizes nothing-ness. There are no scents incorporated into the design of the space. There are no additional sounds or anything to taste or smell. Even the visual sense is deprived. The space is defined by a concrete cube and nothing more. This space was designed to provide a pure space for meditation, one that is not distracting from the meditation itself. This space also provides a break from most of the senses, so that the individual may enjoy the other perceptions more thoroughly in the other spaces. The reveals at the top of the space are only for artificial lighting and air handling requirements. The lighting would be a soft diffused light to gently illuminate the space.
This space relies on its form to create an experience. The space is one that is small in area and overly large volume. The space feels like it is closing in on the individual. The tall space could be unnerving to some, however people do not have to use it. It is designed for only person at a time. There is a sense of hope within the space. That is provided by a skylight at the top of the space which will let light down into the well. This space still appeals to the material palette through the use of concrete, wood, and glass. The wood on the floor softens the otherwise hard feeling of the space. Upon entering the space, one would notice that the volume of the space is different. They would eventually look up and gain the full experience of the space.
Once in the courtyard, there are some reflecting pools. There is a canopy above, laced with ivy. It provides a cool shady place in the summer months.

You proceed from the courtyard to the meditative garden, but stop to admire the light wells above.

In the garden, you walk along the path with large reflecting pools on either side.

You feel the wood planks under your feet and the sun at your back.

You hear the breeze in the distance. It is pleasantly cool and brings with it the smell of flowers planted on the roof.

Invigorated, you enter into the isolated meditation space. It is constructed of 2x4s and glass.

Upon entering, you witness the end grain of each piece and admire the quality of light shining from in between the blocks.

You sit down in the space and run your hand along the wood on the floor and feel the rhythm of the individual members.

The light shines upon your face from in between the 2x4s. You accept the warmth and continue with your meditation.
The procession into the thermal area begins in the east corridor. Encased in concrete, there are small reveals that show the changing room doors.

Upon entering, you see and feel the warmth of the wood. It is soft against your skin.

The light above provides warm tones which celebrate the ceremony of disrobing and preparing for the experiences to come.

The added fixtures of concrete provide a nice contrast to the wood.

You hear the faint hissing of steam in the distance.

You notice that the wood grain wraps around the space. You follow it around with your eyes.

A slow drip brings your attention back to the present.

You take your clothes and put them in one of the lockers that are available across the hall.

You process down the hall. You hear the echo of your footsteps in the hard space. The hissing of the steam rooms becomes more prominent.

You sense that the corridor is taller now. You look up to see the shadowy figures milling about through the stacked glass.
You continue on your journey. You reach the stairwell and ascend up into the space.

The space is darker, but still active.

The air is warm and moist.

The concrete is pleasant to the touch.

The space is filled with the sounds of steam and footsteps off in the distance.

You proceed through the dimly lit space to the sauna.

Upon entering, you sit down on the warm wood. It anticipates you.

The hissing from the steam is relaxing.

It is darker and comfortably hot.

A bead of sweat rolls down your back. You rejoice in the much needed cooling.

Water collects on a pipe and drips into a small basin.

You are at ease.
Upon entering the corridor, you notice that it is encased in wood. The doors are recessed into their own spaces.

There are partitions running the length of the hall, each with water dripping from the upper section down to the bottom.

You enter into one of the massage rooms and observe a strip of light encompassing the space. The light enters from a light well that is hidden from the corridor.

You follow the light with your eyes and notice that the axis aligns with where your spine will be.

You ceremoniously step down to the table.

After disrobing, you lay comfortably on the warm slab.

You hear the clicks and cracks from the heated stones.

You relax as your muscles melt away.
The goal of this thesis was to create experiential architecture as it is perceived by the senses. This was successful because there is a piece of experiential architecture and it was accomplished by utilizing the perception of the senses. The architecture worked with the senses, but perhaps too much. There were many instances within the project where the issue of the senses may have been forced or contrived. Also, one can question if all of the senses need to be appealed to all of the time. Once the senses have been designed for, there is little regard for how the senses will be perceived much later on in their life. Smells fade, sights have been seen, and the building fades away, but it is the experiences that will last. This project did in fact create experiences in architecture, even beyond what is on paper. Narratives read out loud helped to create the experience for the viewer. There were also tangible items to help define the experiences, such as the door knob and having freshly cut wood to pass around for a presentation.

Looking back, there are some definite shortcomings which did not necessarily help the project. The site and the program were both too large for what was trying to be accomplished. There was a lack of site development, which only restricted the experiences. This resulted in a less than desirable amount of work that was relating to the details and the experience as a whole. These issues contributed to a multitude of missed opportunities, on topics that were and were not known about. A big issue was that there was no distinguishing between the experiences themselves. What makes one experience better or worse than another? If the project were to continue on, there would be a hierarchy of experiences, breaking down which ones are better, why, and what makes them so. The project would also want to continue on looking at the details and the small scale issues that make up the experiences in architecture.
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Circumstance


Precedents

Kyoto Temple of Ryoan-ji

Blur

Thermal baths
For an Architecture of Reality discusses the realness of the architecture. Architecture is about the materiality and how the pieces come together and how it is important. There is also the realness and the meaning behind the realness.

This includes overall ideas and concepts for the Thermal baths as well as some pictures.

The role of the human body in architecture is an important one. In discussion, it brings up issues of architecture being more than a building.

The book gave an insightful view on the Blur building. It provided concepts and ideas, even on the ones that were not actually completed. It also supplied numerous pictures.

Meditative spaces gave insight to numerous spaces that were used for meditation. It also discussed meditation in general and with the rock garden.

Thermal Delight provided insight as to the influences that a building can have on a person. It discussed some of the experiential qualities that a building can have.

This book goes on about the senses, and experiences in architecture. Architecture is for the perception of the senses.
http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/art 12/17/08
This web site provided a definition of art.

http://www.ryoanji.jp/index.html 12/29/08
This web site provided information about the entire Ryoan-ji Temple as well as the rock garden in particular. It also supplied some photographs.

This book provided specific information and pictures about the Ryoan-ji temple.

Pallasmaa, Juhani. The Eyes of the Skin. West Sussex, England: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2005
This book served as a foundation for the thesis. It discussed not only experiencing architecture, but how to design for it. It involved the senses with design.

The book is about the different ways to perceive and experience a space. There is also discussion on what elements are more important.

The book discussed some of the different ways buildings are perceived and how the functions relate to the environment.

This provided an overall understanding of the Thermal Baths.

This article provided insight into the sensual relations with the Thermal Baths.

Tschumi, Bernard. The Manhattan Transcripts. London:
Academy Editions, 1994
This book brought up issues of reality and events in architecture.

This was used to study the Thermal Baths. It helped to get an understanding of the project concepts.

This gave a wide range of insight to architecture. Such topics include the reality of architecture and how it is perceived. There is also a sense of importance placed on the architecture itself.