ARCHITECTURE OF THE IN-BETWEEN

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IN-BETWEEN:

Situated somewhere between two extremes or recognized categories; intermediate.

picted below: “shoeless” J oe j ackson’s home and adjacent mixed-use multi-family development near the project site.
ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to codify the physical in-between condition to understand how space is perceived in moments of time. The relationship between two dimensional vision and three dimensional space is utilized to direct orientation and give spacial identity to urban outdoor conditions and the architecture that inhabits it.

The site is located in Greenville, South Carolina between a single family residential neighborhood and a dense multi-use downtown condition. The land was once used for a sanatorium and then Greenville General Hospital. What remains is a large plot of land amongst small residential plots searching for a sense of identity and orientation. As the neighborhood turns to multi-family housing and commercial development draws near, there is awareness of a fleeting sense of place that will be lost if a firm foundation in historical and contextual identity is not established.
COMMITTEE APPROVALS

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INTRODUCTION

The thesis aims to foster the progression of the mind through spacial embrace, and a sense of place. To achieve this the primary design element is a courtyard full of trees with lined pathways which guide the occupant from one building to the next.

The in-between, when considered physically, can exist in many ways. This thesis presents four types of the physical in-between which may be perceived to exist in the built environment. These in-between conditions are the methods used to choreograph views intended to evoke emotional perception. An occupant’s space in time determines the location and nature of the in-between through two dimensional vision. The in-between may invite movement through space at varying speed, or may invite stillness to absorb a two dimensional moment. It is only through change in perspective that the in-between may be fully understood. The in-between may be constrained and more specifically defined, or it may be more arbitrary and indicate an open more natural spatial condition.
TYPOLOGY OF THE IN-BETWEEN

iconography

DIRECTIONAL

OBJECT

APERTURE

FIGURE-GROUND
DIRECTIONAL

The nearest perceivable (opaque) boundary defines the spatial extent of the in-between. The direction of the in-between may change as an observer progresses through space. When the directional in-between converges, it creates a spatial embrace.
OBJECT

The in-between space can become the object itself when viewed against a spacial boundary. The in-between may be occupied and physically accessible. The in-between may also be viewed but not physically accessed from a certain viewpoint. Architecture may position the viewer with intention in order to create a desired emotional response.
The building envelope is the layer of in-between separating indoors from outdoors. The envelope may become more opaque to remove the occupant from the outdoors or become more transparent to blur the boundary between indoor and out, creating a thin line within the in-between. The envelope may selectively allow light to create a space between light and dark. A space with little transparency in the envelope may create a sense of confinement.
FIGURE-GROUND

The in-between may be defined by a long physical and visual connection along an axis. The in-between may have visual layers along a linear plane which hints at the third dimension and invites the occupant to progress through space.
SITE CONTEXT

The site is a large plot of land amongst much smaller residential lots. Downtown development is pushing down Pendleton Street, seizing large swaths of land with dense development lacking an architectural language. There is tension between what was, what is, and what will be that will be present when this period of rapid growth comes to a close.

Pedestrians may approach the site from any direction. Mallard Street connects the neighborhood to main street and is highly trafficked daily. Vehicles will likely use Dunbar Street but also may come from the north. To keep traffic out of the single lane neighborhood streets, vehicular traffic will be concentrated on the south end of the site.
Greenville is full of beautiful historic masonry buildings which occupy much of Main Street. The new Bank of America tower is an example of the large developments that are eroding the sense of place that Greenville has to offer.

The immediate surroundings to the site mostly resemble the image above, taken from Mallard Street. Tree lined streets frame front elevations of single family homes. There is a sense of quiet, though the buzz of Main street is just a block away.
The scale of the immediate surroundings to the site is primarily single family homes and townhouses on Mallard Street, increasing to three story multi-family apartments on Memminger Street. There is a 16’ grade change on the site, the highest point being on the north western side and the lowest on the south east corner (elevations are shown from lowest point on site).
Several mature trees line the existing sidewalk on Memminger Street creating dense shade and a perceivable boundary. These trees have value and played a key part in the development of the site plan. In the design, the existing grade is maintained around these trees through planned retaining walls between the buildings and the street. There is a group of mature trees on the south western portion of the site which are preserved and featured in a lightly forested park which can be viewed from the new art building.
ADDRESSING THE SITE

The master plan for the site aims to break it down into more manageable sections each with a clear identity. The residential condition has been extended further South creating a shared backyard mirroring the existing condition on the northern portion of the block which fosters community gathering amongst neighbors. The middle of the block is occupied by the planned community and mental health facilities which are organized around a courtyard. The southern portion supports parking and a natural, lightly forested park adjacent to the public way, inviting the community while serving as natural progression across the block towards downtown.
FRAMED COURTYARD

The courtyard provides structured orientation amongst the campus of buildings. Each building has a dedicated program: a place for council of the mind, a place for connection with the earth, a place for exercise of the body, a place for group connection, and a place for creative exploration. These places mingle in the in-between, physically merging in the courtyard.

The main pathway is lined with trees which frame the view and reveal themselves as the occupant moves along the path. The path opens up to reveal the art gallery entrance which showcases any current exhibitions or happenings and invites public interaction.
The trees guide the view through the courtyard, inviting physical progression to discover what lies next around the curve. The buildings provide directional framing, bounding the extents of the in between. The buildings themselves make up the background of the courtyard experience.
The trees open up at the art gallery entrance, which creates a focal point as the viewer approaches. The building itself transforms from background, to middle ground, while eventually the glazing and mullions become the foreground. The building interior becomes the background as one approaches the window.
IN-BETWEEN AS AN APERTURE

The architectural boundary varies in thickness, materiality, and opacity. Glazing is used to remove that boundary and create an intentional connection to the outdoors. Light of high contrast creates clear separation between the outdoors and the confined interior. The following explorations examine apertures framing the exterior landscape.
FRAMING UNBOUND IN-BETWEEN

The view of the park is not broken up by small windows, but framed by larger structural elements with minimal intermediate mullions. The south facing windows allow natural light to fill the interior. The roof overhang shades and diffuses the light, preventing a harsh line between light and dark and allowing for the view to penetrate deep into the interior.
The roof overhang, continuous floor plane, and heavy structural members frame the view of the park. The window allows for a long horizontal view where the entire park can be observed. The park has no clear end, the background is undefined. It is meant to be further understood through movement within it. When viewed from the inside, a more natural landscape is left to the imagination.
FRAMING BOUND IN-BETWEEN
The semi circle lawn provides a large calm foreground when viewed from within the offices in the northern building. It serves as a physical and visual buffer between pedestrian activity on the site. The trees create a natural middle ground, pushing the other buildings to the background. The buildings in the background define the limit of the in-between and a backdrop for the in-between to be viewed against.
IN-BETWEEN ARCHITECTURE AND EARTH

Changes in grade and the meeting of the architecture with the earth provides an opportunity for the in-between to be perceived. The retaining wall is in-between solid uninhabitable and negative inhabitable space. There is a directional in-between where a building is sunken below grade, then pulled away creating negative space within the section.
The retaining wall serves as a background for the plantings to be viewed in the in-between. Stepping the planters creates a view of vegetation extending from the ground cover to the treetops then fading into sky. The boundary of the in-between is undefined. What lies beyond the trees is not discoverable from the interior.
CONCLUSION

This thesis exploration has resulted in a discovery of the physical qualities of the in-between. The refinement of work throughout the project is synthesized in four distinct types, which may overlap. This understanding may be applied to many projects of different kinds, maintaining relevance in all future work. In this instance, the types were applied to architecture’s relationship with the outdoors, focusing predominantly on landscape perception. A further study into the resultant interior qualities, and the ways interior architecture could be evaluated on this criteria, would supply additional architectural understanding of the in-between.