AN URBAN WATERFRONT ROOM
IN GEORGETOWN

AN ARCHITECTURE SCHOOL

BY
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(ABSTRACT)

PROPORTIONS
DANGEROUS LIAISONS
ULTIMATELY THIS PROJECT WAS APPROACHED
AS A KIND OF ARCHITECTURAL CHOREOGRAPHY.
AS IN ALL CHOREOGRAPHY MOTION PLAYS A
MAJOR ROLE. THE MOTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS
THROUGH THE SPACES, AND THE PLACEMENT OF
THE PIECES IN RELATION TO EACH OTHER. ON A
SMALLER SCALE A CHOREOGRAPHY OF DUALITY.
MUTE, MUTE, LIGHT
ENCLOSED SPACE, ENCLOSED SPACE, VOLUME
HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL.
THIS PROJECT BEING A VEHICLE FOR DISCOVERY
VARIOUS AMOUNTS OF PLAY AND EXPLORATION
ARE ALLOWED WITHIN THIS CHOREOGRAPHY.
THE AMOUNT OF PLAY ALLOWED IS BOTH THE
STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS OF THIS PROJECT.
WITH SOMETHING OF THIS RANGE AND SCOPE
THERE ARE:
DIRECT HITS,
NEAR HITS,
NEAR MISSES,
DIRECT MISSES,
ALL WITHIN THE WHOLE.
FINALLY AS WITH ANYTHING THAT IS THOROUGHLY
DONE IT IS FUEL FOR BEGINNING AND NOT AN END
IN AND OF ITSELF.
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PROJECT

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**CONCEPT**

**HISTORY**

The site is situated in Georgetown between the Whitehurst Freeway and the Potomac River, near the point where the river turns upstream, across from the Theodore Roosevelt Island. Originally an Indian trading post, from the 1700's on the waterfront was an active port, with tall masted sailing vessels dotting the shoreline. Warehouses, wharfs, and docks dotted the land. The shoreline was dominated by various business ventures. First tobacco shipping and trading, then coal trading and various milling operations used the river as both a source of cheap power and transportation. By the late 1800's, with the advent of the railroad and the exhaustion of the coal supply, the waterfront was no longer a competitive transhipment point. Warehouses became abandoned, and by 1910 the waterfront and much of Georgetown had become an undesired place. 

In 1949 the Whitehurst Freeway was constructed, designed to provide this access from Key Bridge to Central Washington, it in turn created a barrier to the waters edge, which was by this time largely an urban leftover. The freeway delayed any interest in the rejuvenation of the riverside.

**SITE**

At present the ex-site of the powerhouse is flanked to the left by a parking lot that extends to key bridge and to the right by the mixed use commercial building, Washington Harbour, though deemed a park by the national park service it remains largely unused and unoccupied. What had been a thriving port and industrial community had become an urban leftover. In the 1900's Washington harbor rejuvenated the possibility of an urban riverside. 

The site is situated in Georgetown between at present the ex-site of the powerhouse the Architectural School is... 

**RULES AND FORMAL ELEMENTS**

The architectural school is separated into two equal component parts that are interconnected. The educational process is separated into these two entities.

The primary structural system of the language building is reinforced concrete bearing wall, with a secondary column structure, there are pin connected curved steel beams creating a steel and glass vaulted roof structure over most of the building. For the production building the major structural components are precast reinforced concrete columns and beams, the stair towers are reinforced concrete wall/frame.

The entire assemblage is tied together first by a triangular plaza and secondly by an orthogonal grid. 5 feet in plan and 44.42 feet vertically. The perturbations and dislocations within these systems allow for a rich play of shape and volume while providing a strong rigueur to the whole. The interplay of both major building parts create visual, spatial, and temporal dynamics within the whole. Throughout there is an interplay between building, sky and river. The entire complex is horizontal in nature keeping with the overall nature of Washington architecture.

The circulation inside the language building is located on the north side of the building and acts as a screening device(filter) to the interior workings within. Their are a variety of interior atriums throughout that produce spatial complexity and provide a number of vistas to plaza, river and sky. The Library reading room the most contemplative place within sits beyond the waters edge, over the river, framing the river and the view downstream.

The studio component of the complex, though one building, is subdivided into smaller more intimate volumes by concrete frame hall and exit stair towers. These towers roughly relate the site back to its original building and function. These volumes are...
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