

TRANSITIONS

-- Design a Courthouse

Jun Xu

Blacksburg, VA
December, 1999

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*Thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Architecture*

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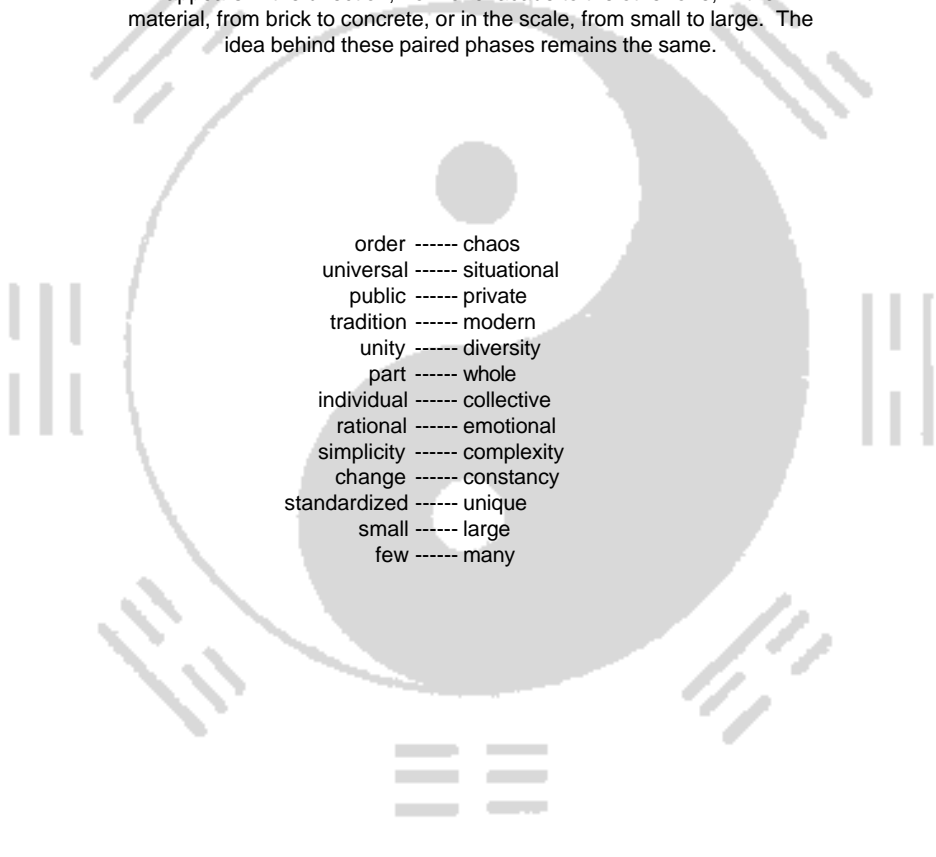
Joseph C. Wang

Transition(*n.*)

1. movement, passage, or change from one position, state, stage, subject, concept, etc., to another. **2.** a period during which such change takes place. **3. a.** a modulation in music; **b.** a modulating passage from one part of a musical composition to another. **4.** a passage that links one scene or topic to another, as in a piece of writing.¹

Obviously, the key point of understanding “transition” is emphasizing the process rather than the result. Transition is different from relation, neither from difference. I think about *Tai Ji*, which symbolizes the spirit of traditional Chinese Taoism. This symbol has much more meanings and layers. *Ying* and *Yang*, two parts in the circle are opposite to each other at one point, they might change the position and quantity at the other point. However, they are all circled around the central part, and the change of one part will cause the relevant adjustment of the other.

The character of transition when interpreting in architecture maybe appears in the direction, from one facade to the other one, in the material, from brick to concrete, or in the scale, from small to large. The idea behind these paired phases remains the same.



order	-----	chaos
universal	-----	situational
public	-----	private
tradition	-----	modern
unity	-----	diversity
part	-----	whole
individual	-----	collective
rational	-----	emotional
simplicity	-----	complexity
change	-----	constancy
standardized	-----	unique
small	-----	large
few	-----	many

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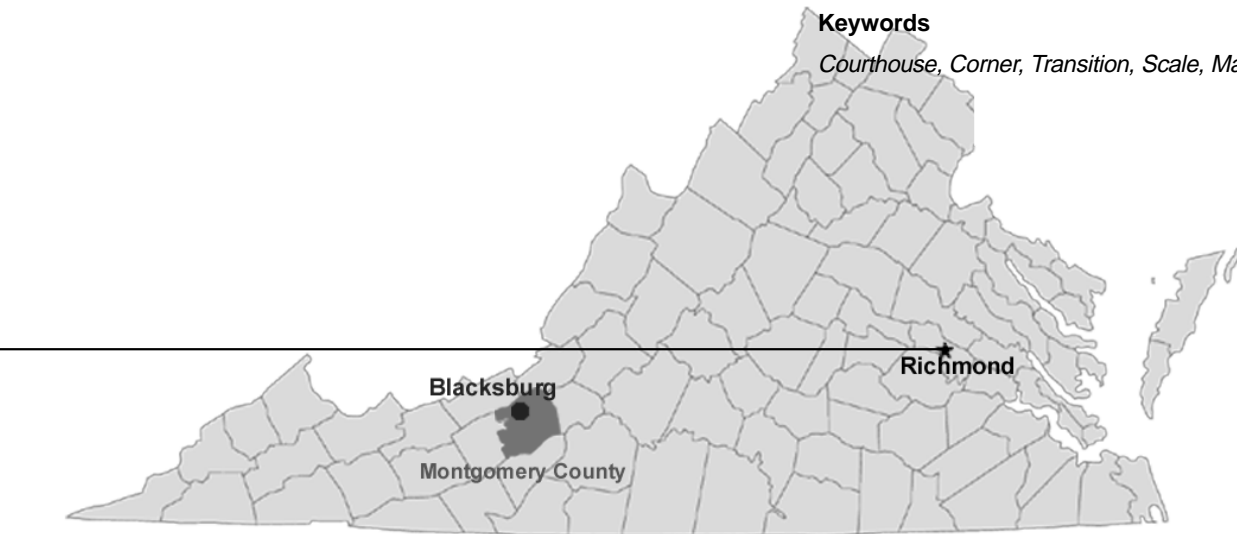
Virginia is one of the oldest states in USA.

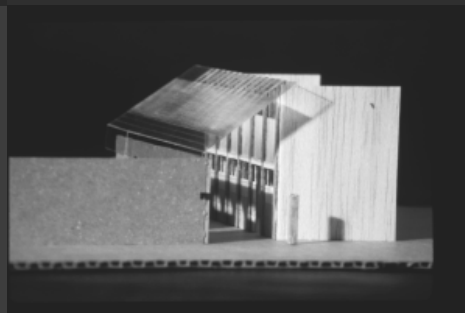
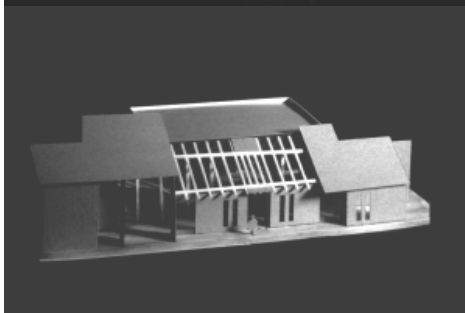
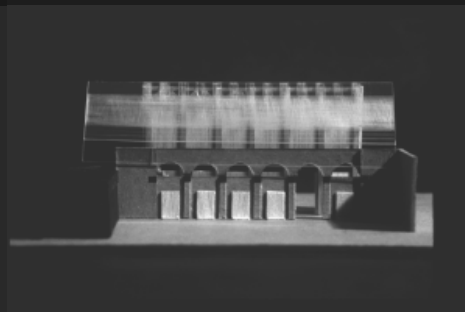
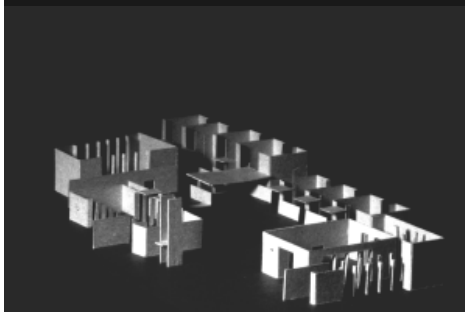
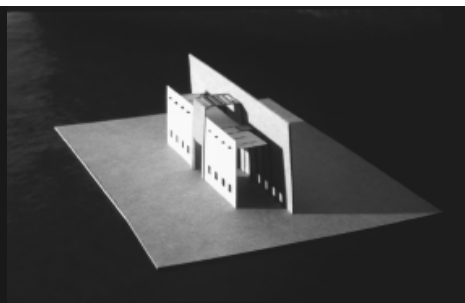
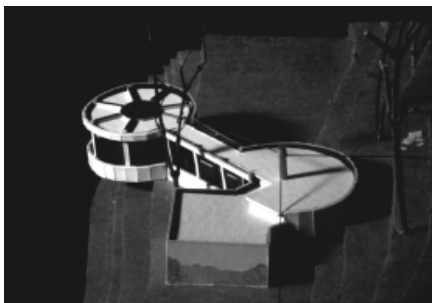
ABSTRACT

The project is a courthouse designed in the town of Blacksburg. It will provide an important and functional public building and also improve the urban situation of the town. The corner condition of the project is the focal point of the design. It will involve interpreting the architectural transition of scale, material, and path. The hierarchy of the civic spirit will also be considered in design of the facade as well as in the courtrooms themselves.

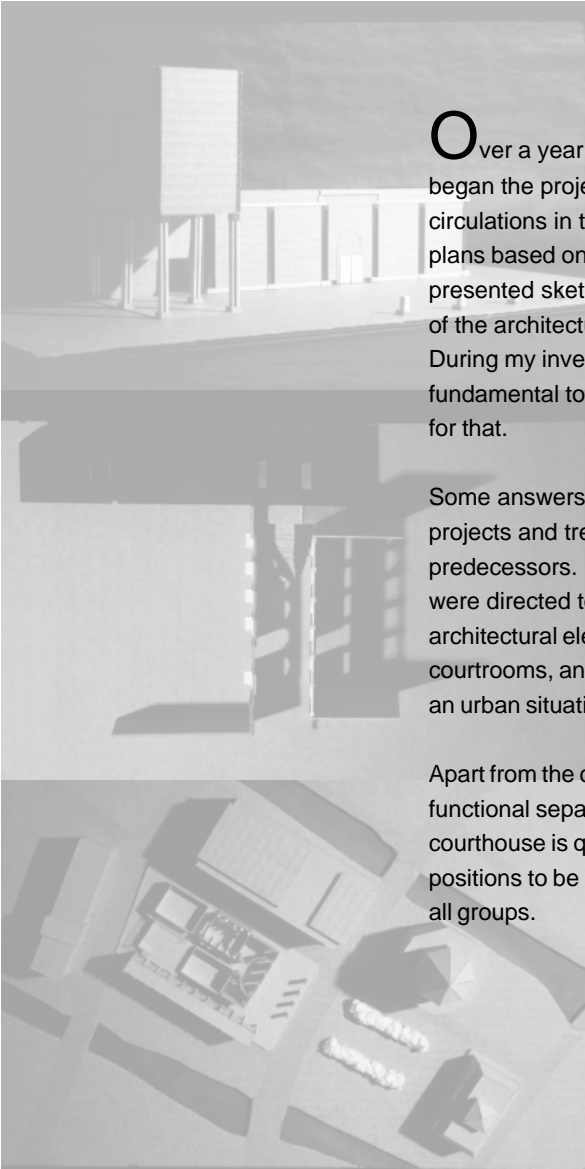
Keywords

Courthouse, Corner, Transition, Scale, Material, Light





INTRODUCTION



Over a year ago, when I presented this thesis project, I began the project by discussing the diagram of three circulations in the courthouse and introduced the major plans based on the functional separations. Although I presented sketches, perspectives, and study models, none of the architectural elements were delicately designed. During my investigation, I tried to find out what could be fundamental to the project and how I could begin to search for that.

Some answers to my questions can be found in the projects and treatises designed and written by my predecessors. After a study of precedence, my questions were directed toward the nature of the courthouse in which architectural elements support the importance of the courtrooms, and the obligation of a public institution toward an urban situation.

Apart from the complex judicial system and various functional separations in the project, the nature of the courthouse is quite simple: a big room that allows differing positions to be presented to achieve a verdict accepted by all groups.

