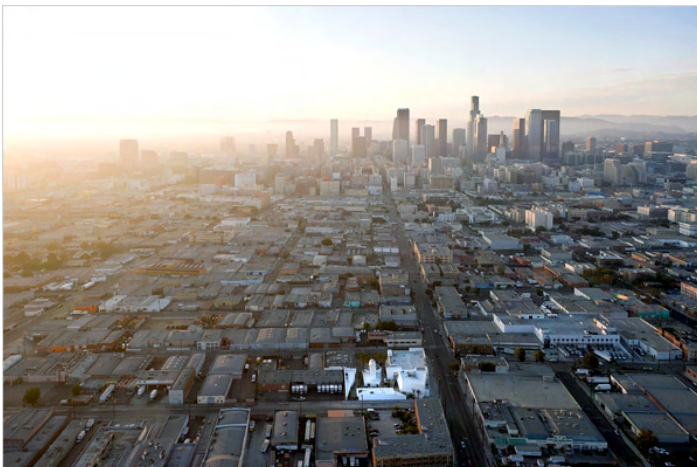


Charles and Ray Eames 'Think', exhibition design for IBM, 1964 World's Fair, New York

M1 studio fall 2010 Design at the scale of the urban block draft

The M1 graduate studio provides a framework for developing thesis design work, considered at the scale of the urban block. Students select sites and programmes, prepared to begin design development on the content and outline of a design thesis. This M1 studio makes the subject of location a significant aspect of the process of architectural design. In the initial phase of the studio, we will look at recent discussions in the field of urbanism and landscape. This could be taken to be analogous to the process of defining a site and programme in a traditional architecture studio. Students will be able to introduce their individual selections of site and programme into this context. A translation of Christian Devillers' lecture, entitled The Urban Project, is available as a key course reading. Students choose to direct seminars about the influence of the issues addressed in the text on the thesis topic.

While making site selection and analysis, an array of issues clamor to be considered, such as: what cities and settlements are growing (in Canada: Ontario, BC and Alberta), where would be good places for growth, etc. One criterion would be the location – existing and proposed – of energy sources: the geo-spatial implications for energy futures. Below is a map of existing energy locations (source: Hydro Québec, its detail does not extend to the 123 new windmills built west of Shelburne, Ontario, the province's highest point.) Other issues: correcting dispersed cities by densifying, and inserting missing elements such as social programmes into a block structure, as in the Los Angeles Inner City Arts School by architect Michael Maltzan and landscape architect Nancy Goslee Power; addressing the urban problems of shrinking or expanding cities with specific architectural and landscape prototypical solutions, or in another register, as in the case of the Large Hadron Collider in Geneva, encircling an entire city with a research tool for theoretical physics.

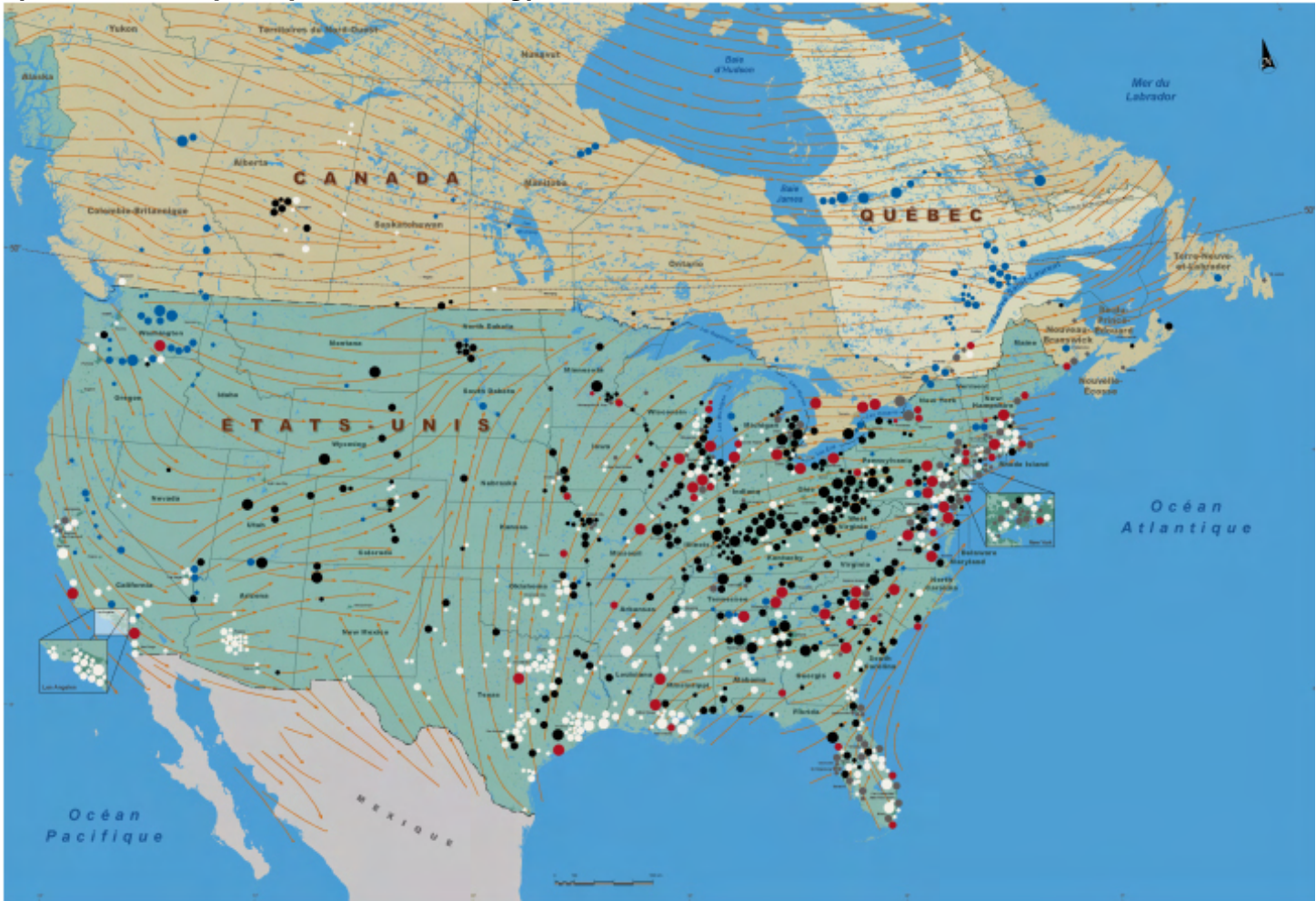


Michael Maltzan, Inner City Arts School, Los Angeles



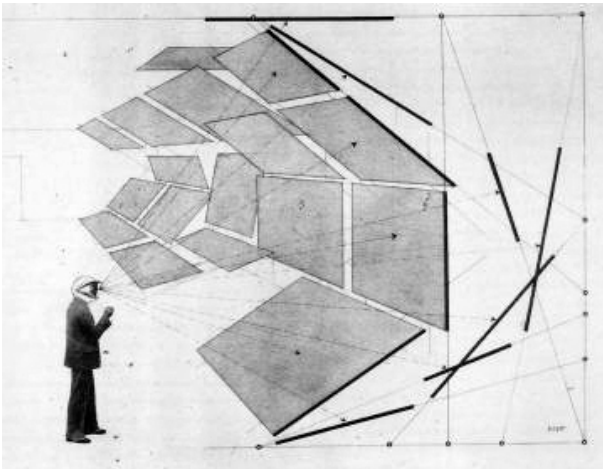
Large Hadron Collider, Geneva

Hydro-Québec map: the production of energy in North America

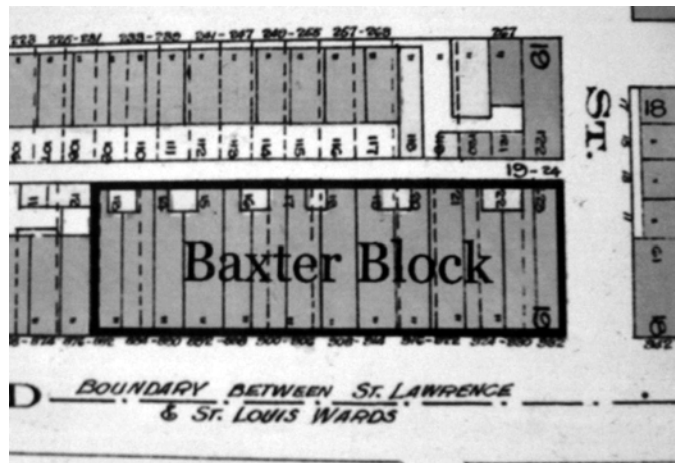


Blue: hydro-electric Red: nuclear White: natural gas Grey: petroleum Black: coal

Working at the scale of the block retains the advantages of considerations such as architectural materiality, community, and human scaled networks. Block scales go beyond the limits of a single owner and private property that are characteristic of singular architectural projects, and can address collective concerns, public space, urban landscape and elements of infrastructural issues.



Herbert Bayer, Field of Vision diagramme, 1932



Montreal, Baxter Block, 19th century urban development

Locations and Sequences



Seth, Town cartoons



Montreal mural, Patati Patata corner restaurant



Cities, Towns and Neighborhoods

Urban issues influence all aspects of contemporary architecture and art, including the graphic novel. Cartoonists' refined drawings not only depict contemporary cities, they have the advantage of portraying the thoughts of characters as they experience daily urban life- even to the self-reflexive invention of a comic strip out of a regular, repetitive urban walk. The Canadian publisher of graphic novels, Drawn and Quarterly, has issued a remarkable series of cartoon publications that not only portray urban living and social issues, they document the architecture and urban form of traditional city centers and towns. Cartoonists such as Julie Doucet and Michel Rabagliato catalogue the streetscapes, stores and apartments of central Montréal as backgrounds to their narratives. Unpretentious hybrid urban neighborhoods in Ontario are fondly documented in the graphic novels of the cartoonist Seth, (the pen name of Gregory Gallant). Specific places in central Toronto are recognizable, for example, in his curiously titled graphic novel, *It's a Good Life, If You Don't Weaken*. His own home office is the subject of a comic strip, and he illustrated the repeated walk that fuels his imagination. Seth's imagery of a town leads into the topic of the analysis of existing urban form – of a neighborhood, of a town – that captures the imagination, in a time when cities should be destined to revert to liveable, walkable, sustainable places. The most efficient form of recycling, the reusing of existing urban form, happens according to self-organizing principles in a manner described with economic detail in Jane Jacobs' texts such as *The Death and Life of American Cities* and *The Nature of Economies*. Ideally the principles will be simple: for example, Jacobs favors the porous, small-sized block. In this vein, aren't the guidelines to workable cities embedded in cities and towns? How can designers use the empirical – that is, the existing, continuously reused patterns blocks, sidewalks, streets, alleys and built form of traditional towns and city neighborhoods as the dictionaries of urban form that provide methods for contemporary urban design?

Sources are drawn from main street architecture such as small-scale urban retail axes in Central Toronto, Bloor Street West and Queen Street West. Urbanist Kees Christiaanse claimed similarities between Toronto's Queen Street West and Greenwich Village. These districts provide methods for combining disparate building types, amalgamated in contemporary urban form that blends programs, integrating dwelling, leisure, commerce, daily working and night life. In an exercise parallel to Seth's abstraction of the town of Guelph, depicting with humor the narrative of the graphic novel of *Dominion City*, so in an abstracting process, the material components of a successful neighborhood depicted with urban drawing, documentation and photography, contribute to the maintenance of existing and formulation of new urban quarters. Analysis of a series of examples of unassuming, middle density, mixed use building types and their urban contexts will set out some basic urban qualities, adding to the formulation of useful, effective, applicable town design principles.



Johannes Duiker, Cineac, 1932 Chicago Sears Tower lookoff

Cultural Superblocks Early Twentieth century modern architecture inserted the modern into the single lot in a streetscape, as in Duiker's constructivist cinema, Cineac, squeezed into an Amsterdam site. Edwin Lutyen's Midland bank is an example of the monumental full block building, where architecture takes mastery possession of the format of Manchester's block structure. By mid-century designers prized the superblock or megablock, often erasing out urban history by demolishing and either building on the entire surface or introducing some open space at grade, while the below-grade is fully built out with parking or the underground city. Recent interventions on the buildings and public spaces of Lincoln Center in New York, by Diller Scofidio Renfro, or the Place des Arts in Montreal, by DSA for the Opera House and MSHDL architects for the public circulation areas, are interesting examples of a hybrid of modern and contemporary mash-up. Another approach to insertion can be seen on the University of Waterloo campus and surroundings, where prestige buildings such as the Quantum Nano building by KPMB or the addition to the Perimeter Institute by Teeple Architects densify a modern campus site plan.



Lutyens, Midland Bank, 1925-35; Kahn, Yale U. Art Center, renovated by Polshek Partnership, Lincoln Centre Renovations by DSR

Potential Reactivations and Insertions Despite intense new construction in city centers in the last few years, numerous urban vacant lots persist. The phenomenon of empty lots that remain unbuilt constitutes a puzzle of contemporary urban development: why surface parking lots stay that way, when the possibilities for building are obvious. Another mystery of urban inefficiency is the long-term vacancy of scattered, intact but deteriorating existing buildings. Mapping of un-built, under-occupied areas that could easily accommodate new construction or renovation pinpoints the potential for intensification, prompting consideration of the range of heights that would be appropriate. The question of how tall should a densely built fabric can sustain is one that deserves additional study. Some of the nineteenth-century insertions reach twelve storeys without intruding on the character of the neighborhood : the fabric of the Queen and Spadina neighbourhood is an example. Even a thirty-storey stepped tower ensemble such as La Cité, Montreal, from the 1970s, is reasonably well integrated. Some of the most successfully integrated towers are tall point towers with small building footprints such as La Colisée lining Sherbrooke Street, Montreal. Typically this kind of taller tower is located at the peripheries of the neighborhood. Dwellings that are in the four to eight storey range have a major advantage if the residents are willing to make regular use of the staircases. In

considering the principle of urban substitution proposed by urbanist Christian Devillers, that is, the judicious accumulating, replacing and adding to the urban block in a regular manner, and considering the importance of maintaining the character of small lot divisions, and the average height of surrounding building, a working hypothesis is that new construction of smaller scale, and of less than ten-storey height might be preferable in an era of energy scarcity.

The objective of the studio is to produce several significant components contributing to the overall course of thesis study, that is, for example, a draft document, abstract, outline, data bank of images, base drawings, maps, etc., and a preliminary design of a built form that indicates the design approach and direction that would be taken in the later development of the thesis. Student may use competitions due in mid-October as a springboard for design development.

The studio will use online material posted on UW Ace site, such as articles and excerpts. An important reference is an unpublished translation of an influential text by architect and urbanist, Christian Devillers: *The Urban Project*, available from files. Additional bibliographic elements include the transcript of a lecture by Kees Christiaanse, 'Limited Access or the open city?' a 2007 London School of Economics Lecture PDF.

ELEVATION



London, Stephen Taylor Architect

Significant reference material can be found in online exhibitions archives of the Canadian Centre for Architecture, in particular the summer 2008 series, 'Some Ideas on Living in London and Tokyo, Stephen Taylor and Ryue Nishizawa'.

Fall 2010 Competition sites updates are in process see <http://bustler.net/> or www.thearchitectureroom.com/ for current competitions:



Chicago: view of Mies Lakeshore tower



Amsterdam Peerlings Mertins



Turbourbanism Exhibition, Arkitekturmuseum, Basel

Mid Term and End of Term Over the course of the term, students will initiate and develop the following: Thesis abstract, Thesis outline, Site Documentation, List of Drawings, Bibliography, Web Site References; as well as a preliminary design project which may be primarily related to the design competition and should also relate to the design topic selected for the Thesis.

Evaluation: Students will be evaluated based upon the following criteria: Effective planning and follow-through of Thesis Outline, Quality of conception, Quality of execution, Thoroughness of development, Completeness of work, Innovation, consistency and coherence of design ideas, Quality of graphic and verbal presentation, Participation.

University of Waterloo web site contains rules and regulations that pertain to this course outline. See:

<http://www.grad.uwaterloo.ca/> Grievance Policy: <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.pdf>

Discipline Policy: <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.pdf>

Brief Course description will be posted: <http://www.urbarc.wordpress.com>





Panorama of downtown Toronto displays the crude insertion of a large scale building into the block structure, with vacant lots ready for new architectural insertions. Some call recent accelerated development 'turbo-urbanism'.

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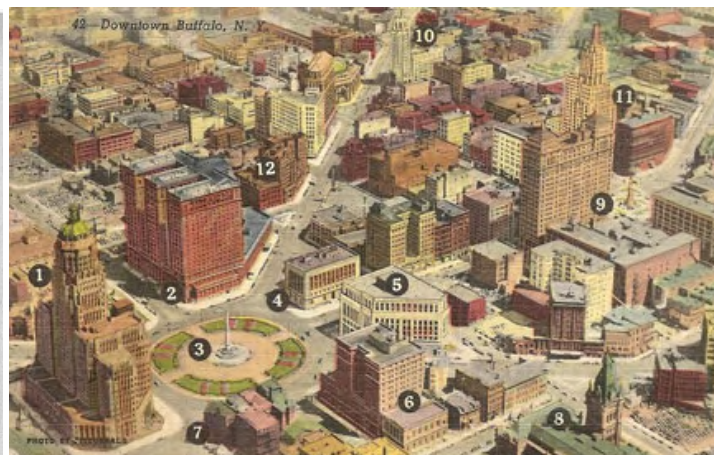
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Toronto Exhibition Grounds, historic photos

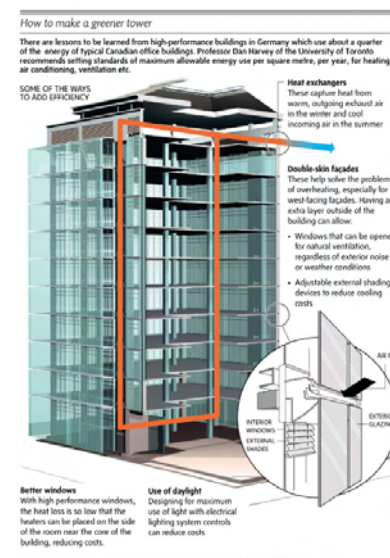


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Eco-tower