The Asheville Arts Center
Project Proposal and Pattern Language
Asheville, North Carolina

Alex Jackson
Human Context/Programming: Hajo Neis
For Terminal Studio Project: Gerry Gast
Fall 2011
Table of Contents

1 Project Introduction
2 Description of Context
3 Description of Place
4 Description of People
5 Description of Design Project
6 Summary of the Language
7-16 Pattern Descriptions (Originated from “A Pattern Language”)
17-22 Pattern Descriptions (Original)
23 Conclusion Statement
24-25 Annotated Bibliography
Project Introduction

Asheville, North Carolina is a small city located in the Southern Appalachians with a strong tourist based economy. The city is well known for its visual and performance arts particularly those rooted in the traditions of early mountain settlers. Today these traditions continue in part through nationally recognized institutions located in the region including the Penland School of Craft and the Southern Highlands Craft Guild. Bluegrass and old time folk music has deep roots in the Asheville region but today the city also attracts a wide variety of musical talent. Street fairs which promote both local art and music are also prevalent, most notably Bel Chere which is largest annual free outdoor festival in the Southeastern United States attracting over 350,000 people each year.

In recent decades many of Asheville’s artists have begun to revitalize a long abandoned area of the city located between the downtown and West Asheville neighborhoods along the French Broad River. This district, which was recently labeled the River Arts District, now contains over 20 buildings which have been converted, entirely or in part, to artist workshops and studio. Many of these building have been converted from old factory and mill buildings built primarily in the late 1880s. Well over a hundred artists work in the buildings day to day, occasionally hosting events such as studio strolls and classes. While there are still a number of highly visible abandoned buildings in the district, in recent years the district has started to come back to life. The old abandoned industry center of Asheville is today home to not only these important artist studios but also a local micro brewery, a bio diesel manufacturer, and a popular restaurant. Today many post-industrial cities face questions about their old manufacturing areas particularly those along waterfronts and as architects and urban designers such areas offer unique and exciting opportunities.

While a strong network of artists and traditional craftspeople has developed in the River Arts District, there has not been any significant public or civic development. This proposal calls for an Arts Center located in the heart of the River Arts District between the Riverlink and Smokey Park bridges. The building which is imagined as a partnership between the city and local artists would become a symbol for the district and a public interface for the artists, the local residents, and tourists. Rather than a traditional museum the Arts Center would embrace the approachable do it yourself identity of the district, the artists, and the city. The center will be not only a place for viewing art but also for making art, hands on learning, and potential other types of gathering and performance. The center may also include meeting space for local organizations including the River Arts Artists organization itself (with over 120 members) and Riverlink a well respected which influential non-profit which has been instrumental in improving access to the French Broad and increasing opportunities for recreation along the river. The center’s relationship to the river will highlight the city goal for the area to be a model for sustainable development. Additionally the new Arts Center will be an adaptive reuse of one of the currently abandoned factory sites – either the Ice Plant, the stockyard, or the remaining portion of the cotton mill site.
Context: The River Arts District borders the southwestern edge of downtown Asheville in Western North Carolina. Developed along the Eastern bank of the French Broad River the area began as Asheville’s first industrial area. Cotton mills, tanneries, and various factories, which relied heavily on the French Broad River for transportation and water use, thrived beginning in the 1880's. After the boom times of World War II, the area began a rapid decline as many of the key manufacturers shut down. Until the earlier 1990's the area consisted of abandoned industrial buildings, scrapyards, a heavily polluted river, and little else. Today the urban industrial landscape is being revived as numerous artist's workshops, breweries, and a biodiesel manufacturer have began to adapt and revitalized the long abandoned district. Low rents, close proximity to downtown, and a group of active non-profit organizations have helped fueled growth in what has become a unique and distinct cultural community. However, development has been spotty as the district still contains a number of abandoned buildings, lacks access to community resources, and cohesion. The heart of the district lies between the Riverlink and Smokey Park bridges, which contains the old Asheville Cotton Mill. To the east of the river the area includes the residential Southside and West End/Clingman neighborhoods which were largely decimated by urban renewal projects in the 1970s including the I-240 highway extension.

Top Left: The area between the Smokey Park and Riverlink bridges, a key stretch in the district's redevelopment, the Cotton Mill Studio Building is partially visible as the third structure from the left of the image.

Top Right: A map of Asheville's river districts - District 2 has been branded as the River Arts District and has experienced significant growth over the last 20 years.
Place: The Cotton Mill has been cited as the “key structure in the area’s redevelopment” by the Asheville River Development Commission but was largely destroyed in a 1995 fire along with building’s iconic water tower. The remaining portion of the Cotton Mill is currently housing a number of artist studios with an informal focus on pottery. Tenants range from young artists just beginning their careers to established regional artists with ownership stakes in the current building. Many of these artists have strong ties to regional material suppliers, such as Highland Clays, while others dig their clay from local fields. The brick building was constructed in 1887 and currently stands at roughly one third of its originally size. On many days the studios are opened up to the public for art walks and classes, though they contain no separate retail areas. Such activities have become an attraction for both out of town tourists and local art enthusiasts. Prior to the fire there were schematic plans for a mixed use renovation which included retail areas and a textile museum.
People: Historically the River Arts District was home to Mill Workers and a strong African American community. Today the surrounding neighborhoods contain a mix of low and middle-income housing including a few notable high-density loft projects that were constructed through public and private partnerships. Although the resources of both West Asheville and downtown are easily accessed by private vehicles, walkways and bike paths are difficult and contain steep and heavily trafficked areas. The district itself lacks many walkable conveniences such as a grocery store and library. Bus transportation has been improved in recent years and a major transportation hub is within walking distance. Several strong cultural communities have taken root within the River Arts District including artists, non-profit groups (including Riverlink and Mountain Housing Opportunities), and many long-term residents turned advocates. Artists working within the district range from those practicing well established crafts, such as pottery and furniture making which have long roots in the area, to edgier fields such as installation art. In addition to artists, low rents have attracted a variety of other entrepreneurs including a biodiesel manufacturer and a craft brewery as previously mentioned. Outdoor enthusiasts also utilize the river for kayaking and biking, which is becoming increasingly popular.
Description of Design Project: The building which is imagined as a partnership between the city and local artists would become a symbol for the district and a public interface for the artists, the local residents, and tourists. Rather than a traditional museum the Arts Center would embrace the approachable do it yourself identity of the district, the artists, and the city. The center will be not only a place for viewing art but also for making art, hands on learning, and potential other types of gathering and performance. The center may also include meeting space for local organizations including the River Arts Artists organization itself (with over 120 members) and Riverlink a well respected which influential non-profit which has been instrumental in improving access to the French Broad and increasing opportunities for recreation along the river. The center’s relationship to the river will highlight the city goal for the area to be a model for sustainable development. Additionally the new Arts Center will be an adaptive reuse of one of the currently abandoned factory sites – either the Ice Plant, the stockyard, or the remaining portion of the cotton mill site.
Summary of the Language:

The “Pattern Language” for my thesis project is being driven by two essential elements of the neighborhood. The first is that the River Arts District is an industrial area which is being converted to an artist’s community and a cultural destination. The second is the presence of the French Broad river which offers excellent recreation opportunities and an unique set of planning challenges.

The patterns are arranged according to the scale of their application beginning with those dealing with the entire neighborhood, or even the entire city of Asheville, and working down to a finer scale. The patterns listed below are key to the diagram on the right. An asterisk indicates a pattern which I believe to be of particular importance to the project at this time.

Patterns from “A Pattern Language”
1) Mosaic of Subcultures (8)*
2) Identifiable Neighborhood (14)*
3) Access to Water (25)*
4) Work Community (41)*
5) Network of Paths and Cars (52)
6) Main Gateways (33)
7) Accessible Green (60)*
8) Small Public Squares (61)
9) Self-Governing Workshops and Offices (80)*
10) Gardens Growing Wild (172)

Additional Developed Patterns
11) Building in a Floodplain
12) Living History
13) Raw Space
14) Variety and Quality of Light
15) Center for Creation
16) Generous and Intimate Viewing

The diagram to the right shows many of the key physical and programmatic relationships within the River Arts District. The mix of repurposed historic mill buildings, active industrial and warehouse sites, and an urban waterfront is unique within the City of Asheville.
1) Mosaic of Subcultures (8)

The heterogeneous and undifferentiated character of modern cities kills all variety of life styles and arrests the growth of individual character.

1. In the heterogeneous city, people are mixed together, irrespective of their lifestyle or culture. This works fine. Actually it damps all significant variety, screens most of the possibilities for differentiation, and encourages conformity. It tends to reduce all life styles to a common denominator. What appears heterogeneous turns out to be homogeneous and dull.

2. In a city made up of ghettos, people have the support of their own basic and residual form of differentiation—race or economic status. The ghettos are still heterogeneous internally, and in particular support the continuing development of the River Arts District’s unique culture. Make sure this district is self-sufficient enough to support its own growth and identity.

Therefore:

Do everything possible to enrich the cultures and subcultures of the city, by breaking the city, as far as possible, into a vast mosaic of small and different subcultures, each with its own spatial territory, and each with the power to create its own distinct life style. Make sure that the subcultures are small enough, so that each person has access to the full variety of life styles in the subcultures near his own.

hundreds of different subcultures

Data Gathering/Pattern Language

River Arts District
Asheville, North Carolina

1) Mosaic of Subcultures

October 31 2011
Project 1
Human Context/Programming

Alex Jackson
Arch 540 Fall 2011
Gerry Gast Thesis Project
Asheville, North Carolina
2) Identifiable Neighborhood (14)

The River Arts District in the 1940's

People need an identifiable spatial unit to belong to.

Today's pattern of development destroys neighborhoods.

They want to be able to identify the part of the city where they live as distinct from all others. Available evidence suggests, first, that the neighborhoods which people identify with have extremely small populations; second, that they are small in area; and third, that a major road through a neighborhood destroys it.

The Art Center offers excellent opportunities to help define the neighborhood. Make space within the center for residents to organize and continue to take

Help people to define the neighborhoods they live in, not more than 300 yards across, with no more than 400 or 500 inhabitants. In existing cities, encourage local groups to organize themselves to form such neighborhoods. Give the neighborhoods some degree of autonomy as far as taxes and land controls are concerned. Keep major roads outside these neighborhoods.

Data Gathering/ Pattern Language

2) Identifiable Neighborhood
3) Access to Water (25)

A diagram of potential access points to the French Broad river

People have a fundamental yearning for great bodies of water. But the very movement of the people toward the water can also destroy the water.

Either roads, freeways, and industries destroy the water's edge and make it so dirty or so treacherous that it is virtually inaccessible; or when the water's edge is preserved, it falls into private hands.

But the need that people have for water is vital and profound. (See, for example, C. G. Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, where Jung takes bodies of water which appear in dreams as a consistent representation of the dreamer's unconscious.)

The problem can be solved only if it is understood that people will build places near the water because it is essentially natural, but that the land immediately along the water's edge must be preserved for common use. To this end the roads which can destroy the water's edge must be kept back from it and only allowed near it when they lie at right angles to it.

Life forms around the water's edge.

The width of the belt of land along the water may vary with the type of water, the density of development along it, and the ecological conditions. Along high density development, it may be no more than a simple stone promenade. Along low density development, it may be a common parkland extending hundreds of yards beyond it.

Therefore:

When natural bodies of water occur near human settlements, treat them with great respect. Always preserve a belt of common land immediately beside the water. And allow dense settlements to come right down to the water only at infrequent intervals along the water's edge.

In this particular case, preserve the existing green space along the river, but improve its character. Reconsider the location of Riverside Drive.
4) Work Community (41)

If you spend eight hours of your day at work, and eight hours at home, there is no reason why your workplace should be any less of a community than your home.

When someone tells you where he “lives,” he is always talking about his house or the neighborhood his house is in. It sounds harmless enough. But think what it really means. Why should the people of our culture choose to use the word “live,” which, on the face of it applies to every moment of our waking lives, and apply it only to a special portion of our lives—that part associated with our families and homes. The implication is straightforward. The people of our culture believe that they are less alive when they are working than when they are at home; and we make this distinction subtly clear, by choosing to keep the word “live” only for those places in our lives where we are not working. Anyone who uses the phrase “where do you live” in its everyday sense, accepts as his own the widespread cultural awareness of the fact that no one really “lives” at his place of work—there is no song or music there, no love, no food—that he is not alive while working, not living, only toiling away, and being dead.

As soon as we understand this situation it leads us to outraged. Why should we accept a world in which eight hours of the day are “dead?” why shall we not create a world in which our work is as much part of life, as much alive, as anything we do at home with our family and with our friends?

This problem is discussed in other patterns-scattered work (9), self-governing workshops and offices (86). Here we focus on the implications which this problem has for the physical and social nature of the area in which a workplace sits. If a person spends eight hours a day working in a certain area, and the nature of his work, its social character, and its location, are all chosen to make sure that he is living, not merely earning money, then it is certainly essential that the area immediately around his place of work be a community, just like a neighborhood but oriented to the pace and rhythms of work, instead of the rhythms of the family.

For workplaces to function as communities, five relationships are critical:

1. Workplaces must be near each other, not too isolated from one another, but not so clustered that the circulation of people is made impossible.

We know from scattered work (9) that workplaces should be decentralized, but they should not be so scattered that a single workplace is isolated from others. On the other hand, they should not be so agglomerated that a single workplace is lost in a sea of others. The workplaces should therefore be grouped to form strongly identifiable communities. The communities need to be small enough so that one can know most of the people working in them, at least by sight—and big enough to support as many amenities for the workers as possible—lunch counters, local sports, shops, and so on. We guess the right size may be between 8 and 20 establishments.

2. The workplace community contains a mix of manual jobs, desk jobs, craft jobs, selling, and so forth.

Most people today work in areas which are specialized: medical buildings, car repair, advertising, warehousing, financial, etc. This kind of segregation leads to isolation from other types of work and other types of people, leading in turn to loss of contact, respect, and understanding of them. We believe that a world where people are socially responsible can only come about where there is a value intrinsic to every job, where there is dignity associated with all work. This can hardly come about when we are so segregated from people who do different kinds of work from us.

3. There is a common piece of land within the work community, which ties the individual workshop and offices together.

A shared street does a little to tie individual houses and places together, but a shared piece of common land does a great deal more. If the workplaces are grouped around a common courtyard where people can eat, play volleyball, eat lunch, it will help the contact and community among the workers.

4. The work community is interleaved with the larger community in which it is located.

A work community, though forming a core community by itself, cannot work well in complete isolation from the surrounding community. This is already discussed to some extent in scattered work (9) and men and women (22). In addition, both work community and residential community can gain by sharing facilities and services—restaurants, cafes, libraries. Thus it makes sense for the work community to be open to the larger community with shops and cafes at the seam between them.

5. Finally, it is necessary that the common land, or courtyards, exist at two distinct and separate levels. On the one hand, the courtyards for common table tennis, volleyball, need half-a-dozen workgroups around them at the most—more would swamp them. On the other hand, the lunch counters and laundries and barbershops need more like 20 or 50 workgroups to survive. For this reason the work community needs two levels of clustering.

Therefore:

- Build or encourage the formation of work communities—each one a collection of smaller clusters of workplaces which have their own courtyards, gathered around a larger common square or common courtyard which contains shops and lunch counters. The total work community should have no more than 10 or 20 workplaces in it.

Such a work community is already present in the district but lacks a center. Think of the Art Center in part as the common square or courtyard to gather the community.
5) Network of Paths and Cars (52)

Cars are dangerous to pedestrians; yet activities occur just where cars and pedestrians meet.

It is common practice to separate pedestrians and cars. This makes pedestrian areas more human and safer. However, this practice fails to take account of the fact that cars and pedestrians also need each other: and that, in fact, a great deal of urban life occurs at just the point where these two systems meet. The greatest places in cities, Piccadilly Circus, Times Square, the Champs Elysées, are alive because they are at places where pedestrians and vehicles meet. New towns like Camberasana, in Spain, where there is total separation between the two, seldom have the same sort of liveliness.

The same thing is true at the local residential scale. A great deal of everyday social life occurs where cars and pedestrians meet. In Lima, for example, the car is used as an extension of the home: men, especially, often sit in parked cars, near their houses, drinking beer and talking. And in one way or another, something like this happens everywhere. Conversation and discussion grow naturally around the lots where people wash their cars. Vendors set themselves up where cars and pedestrians meet; they need all the traffic they can get. Children play in parking lots—perhaps because they sense that this is the main point of arrival and departure; and of course because they like the cars. Yet, at the same time, it is essential to keep pedestrians separate from vehicles to protect children and all people; to preserve the tranquility of pedestrian life.

To resolve the conflict, it is necessary to find an arrangement of pedestrian paths and roads, so that the two are separate, but meet frequently, with the points where they meet recognized as focal points. In general, this requires two orthogonal networks, one for roads, one for paths, each connected and continuous, crossing at frequent intervals (our observations suggest that most points on the path network should be within 250 feet of the nearest road, meeting when they meet, at right angles). The paths intersect the roads there are small parking lots with space for kind and shops.

It can be applied to an existing neighborhood—as it is in the following sequence of plans drawn by the People's Architects, Berkeley, California. This shows a beautiful and simple way of creating a path network in an existing grid of streets, by closing off alternate streets, in each direction. As the drawings show, it can be done gradually.

The growth of a path network in a street grid.

Different again is our project for housing in Lima. Here the two orthogonal systems are laid out as follows:

For the River Arts District the issues is a lack of pedestrian paths. Design and locate these paths at right angles to existing roadways.

5) Network of Paths and Cars
6) Main Gateways

Any part of a town—or large or small—which is to be identified by its inhabitants as a precipice of some kind, will be reinforced, helped in its distinctness, marked, and made more vivid, if the paths which enter it are marked by gateways where they cross the boundary.

Many parts of a town have boundaries drawn around them. These boundaries are usually in people’s minds. They mark the end of one kind of activity, one kind of place, and the beginning of another. In many cases, the activities themselves are made more crisp, more vivid, more alive, if the boundary which exists in people’s minds is also present physically in the world.

A boundary around an important precinct, a neighborhood, a building complex, or some other area, is most critical at those points where paths cross the boundary. If the point where the path crosses the boundary is invisible, then to all intents and purposes the boundary is not there. It will be there, it will be felt, only if the crossing is marked. And essentially, the coming of a boundary by a path can only be marked by a gateway. That is why all forms of gateway play such an important role in the environment.

A gateway can have many forms: a literal gate, a bridge, a passage between narrowly spaced buildings, an avenue of trees, a gateway through a building. All of these have the same function: they mark the point where a path crosses a boundary and help maintain the boundary. All of them are “things”—not merely holes or gaps—but solid entities.

In every case, the crucial feeling which this solid thing must create is the feeling of transition.

Therefore:

Mark every boundary in the city which has important human meaning—the boundary of a building cluster, a neighborhood, a precinct—by great gateways where the major entering paths cross the boundary.

Right now the gateway to the neighborhood is a highway overpass. Consider alternative routes through a new gateway or possibly an alternative bridge. Also the entrance to the building and or courtyard may be a gateway.

The River Arts District connects downtown Asheville with the popular West Asheville Neighborhood, as a result right now the area’s main gateways are highway overpasses.
7) Accessible Green (60)

People need green open places to go to; when they are close they use them. But if the greens are more than three minutes away, the distance overwhelms the need.

Parks are meant to satisfy this need. But parks, as they are usually understood, are rather large and widely spread through the city. Very few people live within three minutes of a park.

Our research suggests that even though the need for parks is very important, and even though it is vital for people to be able to nourish themselves by going to walk, and run, and play on open green, this need is very delicate. The only people who make full, daily use of parks are those who live less than three minutes from them. The other people in a city who live more than 3 minutes away, don't need parks any less; but distance dissuades use and so they are unable to nourish themselves, as they need to do.

This problem can only be solved if hundreds of small parks—or greens—are scattered so widely, and so profusely, that every house and every workplace in the city is within three minutes walk of the nearest one.

In the third column, we write the number of people who have come from that division, each person multiplied by the number of trips per week he makes to the park. This gives us a measure of the total number of trips per week, which originate in that ring.

In the fourth column we write the number of trips per week divided by the area of the ring. If we assume that people are distributed throughout the entire area at approximately even density, this gives us a measure of the probability that any one person, in a given ring, will make a trip to the park in a given week.

In the fifth column we write the logarithm (base 10) of this probability measure P.

Simple inspection of these data shows that while the probability measure, P, drops in half between one and two blocks, it drops by a factor of four between two and three blocks. Its rate of decrease diminishes from then on. This indicates that an individual's use of a park changes character radically if he lives more than three blocks away.

For more precision let us examine the relationship between distance and the logarithm of P. Under normal circumstances, the frequency of access to a given center will vary according to some distance decay function, such as \( P = \frac{A}{e^{-r}} \), where A and B are constants, and \( r \) is the radius. This means that if behavior and motivation are constant with respect to distance, and we plot the log of P against the radius, we should get a straight line. Any aberration from the straight line will show us the threshold where one kind of behavior and motivation changes to another. This plot is shown below:

Beyond two or three blocks use of the green drops off drastically.

The Wilma Dykeman master plan calls for a continuous greenway along the river which can provide accessible green for everyone in the district. However, these areas narrow down to well under 150'—sometimes for a significant length along the water. When appropriate extend the greenway across the road to create a more useable green.

An existing area along the greenway in the River Arts District
8) Small Public Squares

A town needs public squares; they are the largest, most public rooms, that the town has. But when they are too large, they look and feel deserted.

It is natural that every public street will swell out at those important nodes where there is the most activity. And it is only those widened, swollen, public squares which can accommodate its public gatherings, small crowds, festivities, bonfires, carnivals, speeches, dancing, shouting, mourning, which must have their place in the life of the town.

But for some reason there is a temptation to make these public squares too large. Time and again in modern cities, architects and planners build plazas that are too large. They look good on drawings but in real life they end up deserted and dead.

Our observations suggest strongly that open places intended as public squares should be very small. As a general rule, we have found that they work best when they have a diameter of about 60 feet—at this diameter people often go to them, they become festive places, and people feel comfortable there. When the diameter gets above 70 feet, the squares begin to seem deserted and unpleasant. The only exceptions we know are places like the Plaza del Mercado and Trafalgar Square, which are great town centers, teeming with people.

What possible functional basis is there for these observations? First, we know from the pattern, pedestrian density (115),

8) Small Public Squares (61)

Pritchard Park in Downtown Asheville

As previously discussed the center should serve as the heart of the working artist community. Therefore a small public square should be prominent and highly accessible within the design of the Arts Center.
9) Self Governing Workshops and Offices (61)

No one enjoys his work if he is a cog in a machine.

A man enjoys his work when he understands the whole and when he is responsible for the quality of the whole. He can only understand the whole and be responsible for the whole when the work which happens is society, all of it, is undertaken by small organizations, groups and enough to give people understanding through face-to-face contact, and autonomy enough to let the workers themselves govern their own efforts.

The evidence for this pattern is built upon specific, fundamental propositions: work is a form of living, with its own incommensurate, any way of augmenting work which is at odds with this idea, which treats work instrumentally, is a means to other ends, is abhuman. Down through the ages, people have desired and proposed ways of working according to this proposition. Recently, E. F. Schumacher, the economist, has made a beautiful statement of this attitude (E. F. Schumacher, “Buddhist Economics”), “Ascent to 27, King Road, Kingston, Surrey, Volume 1, Number 11, January, 1968”.

The Buddhist point of view takes the function of work to be at least divisible to give man a chance to utilize and develop his faculties, to enable him to overcome his self-consciousness by joining with other people in a common task, and to bring forth good and service needed for a inventing existence. Again, the consequence that flows from this viewpoint evolved. To organize work is to answer a matter that is beyond nature, society, economy, culture, or even the object of study. It would involve a greater concern with good ends and good people, an oil lack of aspiration and a used-up-strewn degree of aesthetic, on the other primitives side of this world. Equally, to strive for leisure as an alternative to work would be considered a complete misunderstanding of one of the basic truths of human existence; namely, that work and leisure are complementary parts of the same living process and cannot be separated without destroying the joy of work and the quality of leisure.

From the Buddhist point of view, there are therefore two types of machine work, those clearly distinguished: some that serves the people as a whole and serves the workers in a position of having to serve the slave. How to tell the one from the other? “The craftsman himself,” says Ananda Coomaraswamy, a man equally competent to talk about the Modern West as the Ancient East, “the craftsman himself can always, if allowed, draw the decisive distinction between the machine and the tool. The carpenter is a tool, a contrivance for holding wood threads at a stretch for the beavers round them by the craftmen’s fingers; but the power lines are a machine, and its significance as a destroyer of culture lies in the fact that it does essentially the human part of the work.” It is clear, therefore, that Buddhist economics must be very different from the economics of modern materialism, since the Buddhist does not see the essence of civilization nor in a multiplication of wants but in the purification of human character. However, at the same time, it is formed primarily by a man’s hand, and work, properly conducted, in conditions of human dignity and freedom, brings those who do it and equally its products. The Indian philosopher and economist J. C. Karmakara sums the matter up as follows:

“If the nature of the work is properly appreciated and applied, it will stand in the same relation to the higher faculties as food is to the physical body. It nourishes and elevates the higher man and seems to produce the best he is capable of. It is his food forebearly along the proper course and disciplines the animal in him into proper channels. It furnishes an excellent background for man to display his scale of values and develop his personality.”

In contrast to this form of work stands the style of work that has been created by the technological progress of the past two centuries, which must be clearly distinguished from the work of a machine; they create parts of no consequence, and have no responsibility for the whole. We may fairly say that the alienation of work from the intrinsic premises of the work, has been a primary product of the industrial revolution. The alienation is particularly acute in large organizations, in which workers repeat endlessly mental task to create products and services with which they cannot identify.

In these organizations, with all the power and benefits that the unions have been able to wrest from the hands of the owners, there still is evidence that workers are fundamentally unhappy with their work. In the auto industry, for example, the absentee rate on Mondays and Fridays is approximately 4 to 5 per cent, and there is evidence of “misanthrope alcoholism,” similar to what the Romans are experiencing with their factory workers” (Nicholas von Hoffman, Washington Post, The fact that people cannot find satisfaction in work unless it is performed at a human scale and in a setting where the worker has a say.

Job dissatisfaction has also led to industrial sabotage and a faster turnover of workers in recent years. A new superautomated General Motors plant at Lordstown, Ohio, was unoccupied and shut down for several weeks. Among the three largest automobile manufacturing companies has doubled in the past seven years. The turnover of workers has also doubled. Some industrial engineers believe that “American industry in some cases may have passed technology too far by taking the last few bits of oil out of the oven, and that a point beyond manufacture has been reached” (Aga Sypahji, “The machine building men over the brink?” San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle, April 16, 1972). Perhaps the most dramatic empirical evidence for the connection between work and life is presented in the recent study, “Work in America,” commissioned by Eleanor Richardson, a Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Department, 1973. This study finds that the single best predictor of long life is whether a person smokes or how often he sees a doctor, but the nature of work, is clearly related to his job. The report identifies the two main elements of job dissatisfaction as the unemployment independence of workers, and the increasing simplification, truncation, and isolation of work—all of which are rampant in modern industrial and office life alike.

But far from human dignity, the production of gears and assembly was far a far more personal, self-regulating affair, when each job of work was a matter of creative interest. And there is reason to why work can’t be like that again today.

For instance, Seymour Malman, in Designing Making and Productivity, compared the manufacture of tractors in Detroit and in Covellite, England. He contrasts Detroit’s managerial role with Covellite’s, where a worker’s group produced high quality products and the highest wages in Britain industry. The most characteristic feature of the decision-making process is the lack of mediocrity in decisions making with dual authority residing in the hands of the group workers themselves. Certain pressure and evidence and evidence that indicates that modern work can be organized in this manner and still be compatible with sophisticated technology, have been collected by Harris, Cilmen, and Chase, See Worker Control, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971. And another example comes from the report by E. L. Tria, Organizations’ Choice and P. H. Herken, Autonomistic Group Functioning. These authors describe the organization of work in mining pits in Durham which was put into practice by groups of miners. The coalmining work organization may be described as one in which the group takes complete responsibility for the total style of operations involved in mining the coalface. No member of the group has a fixed work-sector. Instead, the group is organized so that the group is organized on the basis of the characteristics of the group. The group is organized in such a way that the group is responsible for the entire job, to be done. [The experiment demonstrates] the ability of quite large primary work groups of 40 to 50 miners to do self-regulating work, and developing social structure as a way of managing itself in a truly state of high productivity. (Quoted in Colin Waite, “The organization of mining,” Pattern of American, Kleinman and Perry, ed., New York: Anchor Books, 1966, pp. 349-51.)

We believe that small self-governing groups are not only work dục but also the best scale for job satisfaction. They provide the only style of work that is something and dynamically satisfying. Therefore,

Encourage the formation of self-governing workshops and offices of 5 to 20 workers. Make each group autonomous with respect to organization, style, relation to other groups, hiring and firing procedure, work schedule. Where the work is complicated and requires larger organizations, several of these work groups can federate and cooperate to produce complete artifacts and services.

House the workshop in a building of its own—office connections (82), building complex (93); if the workshop is large enough, and if it serves the public, break it down into autonomous departments, easily identifiable, with no more than a dozen people each—small workshops without red tape (81). In any case, divide work into small team work, either directly with the cooperative workshop or under the leadership of people of the each team in common space—matters and apprentices (8) and small workshops (148). . . .
A garden which grows true to its own laws is not a wilderness, yet not entirely artificial either.

Many gardens are formal and artificial. The flower beds are trimmed like table clothes or painted designs. The lawns are clipped like perfect plastic lawns. The ponds are clean, like newly-polished sapphire. The furniture is new and clean, fresh from the department store.

These gardens have none of the quality which brings a garden to life—none of the quality of a wilderness—tamed, still wild, but cultivated enough to be in harmony with the buildings which surround it and the people who move in it. This balance of wilderness and cultivation reached a high point in the older English gardens.

In these gardens things are arranged so that the natural processes which come into being will maintain the condition of the garden and not degrade it. For example, insects and graces will grow between paths and streets. In a sensible and natural garden, the garden is arranged so that this process enhances the garden and does not threaten it. In an unnatural garden, these kinds of small events have constantly to be "ruled out"—the gardener must constantly try to control and eradicate the process of weeding, weed, the spread of roots, the growth of grass.

In the garden growing wild, the plants are chosen, and the boundaries placed, in such a way that the growth of things regulates itself. It does not need to be regulated by control. But it does not grow erratically and undermine the ways in which it is planned. Natural wild plants, for example, are planted among flowers and grass, so that there is no room for so-called weeds to fill the empty spaces and then need weeding. Natural stone edges form the boundaries of grass so that there is no need to chop the turf and clip the edge every few weeks. Rocks and stones are placed where there are changes of level. And there are small rock plants placed between the stones, so that once again there is no room for weeds to grow.

A garden growing wild is healthier, more capable of stable growth, than the more clipped and artificial garden. The garden can be left alone, it will not go to ruin in one or two seasons.

And for the people too, the garden growing wild creates a more profound experience. The gardener is in the position of a good doctor, watching nature take its course, occasionally taking action, pruning, pulling out some species, only to give the garden more room to grow and become itself. By contrast, the gardens that have to be tended obsessively, ensnare a person to them; you cannot learn from them in quite the same way.

Therefore:

Grow grasses, mosses, bushes, flowers, and trees in a way which comes close to the way that they occur in nature: intermingled, without barriers between them, without bare earth, without formal flower beds, and with all the boundaries and edges made in rough stone and brick and wood which become a part of the natural growth.
II) Building in a Floodplain

Problem:
A large portion of the River Arts District lies within a Floodplain. The most desirable locations for public space, which are directly along the river, are also the areas most susceptible to flooding.

Discussion:
All of the proposed sites for the Asheville Arts Center include a sizeable open space which abuts the French Broad River. These areas offer direct access to the river and are highly valuable in terms of their views and potential relationships with the water. Historically there has been development in these areas, which lie within the 20 year floodway, but such development has been destroyed repeatedly by flood activity. Today these low laying areas are almost exclusively vacant lots, though the Wilma Dykeman Master Plan calls for many of these areas to be developed with pedestrian and bike paths as part of a continuous greenway along the river. Although it is not possible to allow for new construction within this floodway, the greenway plan does provide a framework for creating public space and recreation along the river. While none of the sites for the Asheville Arts Center contain existing buildings within the 20 year floodway, all of them include structures intended to be reused that are within the 100 year flood zone. While these buildings have been damaged by flooding, none of them has been destroyed or flooded beyond the first few feet of their first story during the worst floods in the recorded history of the area.

Solution:
Do not build any permanent structures within the 20 year floodway. Instead preserve the floodway as an accessible green according to the Wilma Dykeman Master Plan. Consider this green as an extension of the Art Center and work to weave the two together through public landscape elements and planting. These may include outdoor performance space, recreational access points to the river, and a shared positive outdoor space. The Art Center itself may be located within the 100 year flood zone, but protect the artwork by elevating the display and storage areas well above the historic high water mark.

The Ice Factory building, during the 2004 flood which extensively damaged the River Arts and Biltmore Village Districts in Asheville

Existing Structure →

Art Display & Storage

Historic High Mark
100 year flood zone
20 year floodway

October 31 2011
Project 1
Human Context/Programming

Alex Jackson
Arch 540 Fall 2011
Gerry Gast Thesis Project
Asheville, North Carolina
12) Living History

Problem:
The River Arts District has a rich and unique history. The district has experienced booms and depressions which are written into the district’s buildings. From its heyday as the home of Asheville’s first millionaire to the eventual collapse of its industrial economy, the buildings of the River Arts district present a visual history of the area which has attracted the attention of numerous local photographers and writers. However, the history and character of the district’s built environment is

Solution:
Development in the River Arts District should favor adaptive reuse over new development in order to maintain a link with the area’s past and maintain its unique identity. However, historically accurate restoration should be discouraged. Instead new structural, material, and spatial elements should generally be clearly and distinctly expressed in relation to unadulterated historic elements - heightening one’s of awareness of the district’s development through time.

Discussion:
Many of the buildings in the River Arts district were constructed over a hundred years ago. These structures have survived, to varying degrees, through floods, fires, and most devastating of all changes in technology and manufacturing. These buildings were built not only as functional working environments of their time but also as monuments to industry. While Asheville’s industrial industries are not coming back any time soon, many of these historic buildings offer open floor plans, prime locations, plentiful natural light, and an unique and attractive character which makes them excellent candidates for adaptive reuse. Indeed recycling the existing building may often be more economically feasible than new development. Given our current economic and environment catastrophes adaptive reuse represents a valuable tool for future development nationwide and the River Arts District represents the area of most potential for Asheville.

However, it is not just simple economics which suggests the restoration of such buildings. Asheville’s adopted Wilma Dykeman Master Plan states that “the character of the district should preserve the industrial heritage of the former mills...” in order to create an area “so inviting and exciting and uniquely Asheville that you will want to be there”. Indeed much of the district’s recent branding has been built around its industrial identity, including the gear logo of the River District Artist community. These industrial buildings and the history they preserve are essential to the fundamental identity of the district and Asheville as a whole. Andreas Huyssen, a professor of comparative literature at Columbia, offers a more philosophical argument for keeping such abandoned industrial sites as part of our ‘memory culture’. He argues our attraction to historic industrial buildings is a “reaction to the accelerated speed of modernization... (an) attempt to break out of the swirling of empty space of the everyday present and to claim a sense of time and memory”. Certainly the weathered smoke stacks, grain silos, and massive brick buildings of the River Arts District tell a story of the region’s development through time and space.

Still, if we are to revitalize these building, and many of these structures have already been repurposed for current needs, how should they be restored? In his work The Seven Lamps of Architecture (1849) John Ruskin describes architectural restoration as “the most total destruction which a building can suffer” arguing that the value and poetry of physical weathering is destroyed during restoration.

Indeed a powerful characteristic of these industrial structures is that they remind us, on a deep phenomenological level, of the inevitable march of time. If we accept that culture is a dynamic process which is built slowly and in layers, then we can take a similar value based approach to preservation in the River Arts District and preservation in general. The goal should not be historically accurate restoration but rather a adaptive revitalization which maintains a living sense of each building's history.

Historic buildings offer a spirit and character which goes beyond their original programmatic intentions. Compare the diagram of these two Asheville industrial buildings. Which one is worth saving?

---

River Arts District
Asheville, North Carolina

Data Gathering/ Pattern Language

12) Living History

October 31, 2011
Project 1
Human Context/Programming

Alex Jackson
Arch 540 Fall 2011
Gerry Gast Thesis Project
Asheville, North Carolina
13) Raw Space

Problem:
The River Arts District has a strong do-it-yourself culture. The majority of revitalization efforts in the district today have been carried out by motivated individuals rather than government programs or large developers. These efforts are done on the cheap and often maintain the raw feeling of the old industrial buildings. However, when large civic or commerciral adaptive reuse projects are designed they often call for a complete sterilization of the existing building. Surfaces are cleaned, smoothed, and repaired leaving few traces of the building's gradual transformation over time. By literally whitewashing the building of its history, such efforts threaten the identity of the River Arts District which is heavily tied to both its industrial past and its present artist community.

Solution:
When possible maintain the finish of existing surfaces. Do not sandblast, paint, or plaster these surfaces. Reframe or repurpose the existing industrial equipment, including the existing ductwork when appropriate. Avoid drop ceilings or furring out walls. Rather than attempting to blend modern interventions with existing materials, new work should generally be distinct and of a contemporary nature.

Discussion:
The interior of one of MASS MoCA's gallery spaces, where wall surfaces in suitable shape were left unfinished while the heavily damaged flooring was replaced with modern materials.

The Asheville Art's Center is proposed as a public place for both making and viewing art. As an adaptive reuse of an industrial structure, the project faces many design questions relating to preservation. These decisions will have a strong impact on the way in which art is approached and understood within the center.

Phoebe Crisman a researcher and associate professor at the University of Virginia argues: “The meanings of industrial relics and artworks change with such juxtapositions: the leftovers become elevated by their direct association with objects of higher cultural status or economic value, while artworks become less precious and perhaps more accessible when displayed in an industrial and sometimes decaying environment.”

Such an approach is fitting with the culture of the River Arts Artists which is built around approachability and collaboration, where studio walks often take visitors directly into working artist studio and abandoned buildings are treated as art galleries. In addition much of the local artwork is based on processes and subjects related to traditional regional crafts which, while sometimes highly valuable, often meant portrayed as serving everyday functions. Crisman goes on to say that an architectural approach which respects palimpsest, imperfection, and even ‘dirtiness’ fosters an institution which is open to the “ongoing and open processes of imagination, interpretation and accretion in time, with no end in sight.”

In this case such an approach reinforces the idea of the building as a living, ever changing, historical record of the River Arts District. Such rawness may also encourage artists to pursue less conventional projects being aware of the ‘edgey’ qualities of the space. In addition a study by the Tate Modern during its design found that a majority of contemporary artists preferred to show their work in recycled industrial spaces rather than traditional galleries. Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (Mass MoCA) is a highly successful example of this approach where the exhibits often involve a dialogue between the raw industrial space and the artwork. These projects have garnered worldwide acclaim and have successfully challenged many established ideas of how artwork should be viewed in a contemporary gallery. As Mass MoCA modern materials often clearly contrast with historic surfaces heightening the viewers awareness of changes in technology and culture.
14) Variety and Quality of Light

Problem:
Many contemporary spaces for viewing art are dominated by artificial light. While artificial light offers certain advantages, namely the absence of damaging UV rays, it does not contain the full spectrum of colors found in daylight. The spectrum of a light source directly affects the way an object is perceived and a static limited spectrum sources reduces one’s ability to render color accurately, perceive detail, and understand artwork in relation to time. Still, artificial lighting is required in art galleries and museums in order to hold night events, protect sensitive artwork, and maintain comfortable conditions.

Solution:
The greatest variety and quality of light, for viewing art, can only be provided through natural skylight (indirect daylight). Such light should be primarily delivered through diffused and reflected top lighting. Sloped skylights are generally preferred as is northern light. When artificial light is required, provided multiple sources in order to create an appropriate color spectrum for accurate color rendering.

Discussion:
In order for the human eye to accurately perceive color, the wavelengths associated with that particular color must be present in the light source. Artificial lighting can accurately produce a wide variety of wavelengths but even the most advanced artificial lights cannot produce the full spectrum of visible wavelengths produced by the sun. This means that no single artificial light can render color completely accurately. These inaccuracies may be subtle but unless these effects are carefully accounted for, they can cause distraction and eye fatigue. Of course there are many other lighting concerns outside of color rendering. These include the intensity of light, the period of illumination, the reflectivity of surrounding surfaces, and the direction of the light source. These additional concerns apply to both natural and artificial lighting, though natural lighting solutions generally required additional architectural solutions. Direct sunlight can harm artwork through the presence of ultraviolet radiation. Additionally, direct sunlight can produce distracting shadows, extreme differences in light levels (glare), and glossy veiled reflections.

An art museum or gallery requires that these concerns be carefully addressed. Studies by Mojtaba Navab at the University of Michigan suggest that in order to meet these concerns it is necessary not only scatter light through a diffusive material but to also actively reflect harsh light through a system of louvers or other shading devices. When natural light is not available or possible, a variety of artificial lighting sources with differing spectrums can be grouped in order to partially compensate for the limited spectrum. However, care must be taken to avoid distraction lighting differences from room to room.

The seasonal and daily changes in natural lighting levels is also being increasingly appreciated in the world of art viewing. Top lighting, most commonly provided through skylights, provides the most efficient and even levels of daylight. Sloped skylights are particularly effective at increasing lighting levels during the winter and preventing over-lighting in the summer. Windows facing north will always transmit a consistent blue (often referred to as cool) skylight rather than direct sunlight.
15) A Center for Creation

Discussion:

In the world of classical antiquity, when the first museums were established, museums were primarily created as centers for scholarship and symposia. However, over time the term museum has evolved and today we understand museums primarily as places for viewing, advancing, and preserving precious objects for public display. Such a singular and expensive mission has made museums, and particularly art museums, dependent on large subsidies from either the government or wealthy individuals. In the case of the United States these subsidies have come mostly from the private wealth of major industrial barons. While this issue of funding is concerning, it only one of the problems facing modern art museums.

Another concern is that these institutions tend to place the value of art in the objects, or the products, rather than the processes of their creation. This is perhaps ironic in terms of a modern art museum because as Sharon Zukin notes for “an increasingly production-conscious art and (an) increasingly art-conscious public... Power in the modern market began to derive from a closeness, or the appearance of closeness, to the artist’s studio.” Indeed questions of artistic process and production have become increasingly relevant as new technology continues to create entirely new fields of artistic expression.

In Asheville many artists work within the local craft traditions. While such processes are quite different from those of many modern artists, they place a similar importance on the processes of production. These way of making have been developed through a rich history of making and often passed down through several generations. In this case the issue of production is closely related to the desire for artistic preservation which is often a central goal of art museums.

In the United States some museums have begun to adopt alternative operational models. The New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York maintains no permanent collection while still maintaining many of the amenities of a more typical museum. This Kunsthalle, or exhibit hall, approach fits with its mission to display the work of only living artists. More to the point of this pattern is the programming of the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art. At Mass MoCA there are not only places to view objects but also places for artists to work, perform, and teach. In fact the museum also rents space out to high tech internet companies who have their permanent offices within the museum, helping to support the operational budget and reduce the institutions reliance on private and government donations.
16) Generous and Intimate Viewing

Current studio walks in the district offer a unique intimate way of viewing art and interacting with artists. However, there are very few places in Asheville where artwork can be viewed in a generous space, and even fewer where large works of art can be viewed inside.

Such spatial restriction presents some obvious practical problems. For example it is nearly impossible display large works of art within the City of Asheville. In addition it is very difficult to accommodate large groups of people in the case of an event or opening. However, there are reasons beyond the purely practical for incorporating generous spaces for viewing art. The quality of space can greatly affect the way a work of art is perceived. In fact it is this truth which makes the current studio stroll in the district so powerful. When you get to see a piece of art in the artist's studio it gains a certain power. You know the story behind the piece, where it came from and who it came from. However, generous spaces can provide other benefits. Imagine viewing Georges Seurat's Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte, in a room with eight foot ceilings. It might be interesting, but it would hardly be appropriate not only to the piece's scale but also its importance in art history. Generous viewing spaces can reinforce the importance of not only an individual piece of art but also the institution of visual art. The Art Center should be, at least in part, a sort of holy place and that requires a mix of both generous and intimate viewing spaces.

Provide generous double or triple height spaces for viewing art as well as more intimate galleries. Such spaces may take advantage of the existing structure of the building as well as provide a more dynamic experience.

The Tate Modern in London, an adaptive reuse project on the river Thames, provides an incredible generous entrance gallery as well as more intimate galleries.

![Generous and Intimate Viewing Diagram]
Conclusion:

The process of developing a pattern language for the Asheville Art Center has strengthened a few of my initial intuitive general ideas about working in the district. The importance of the river as a public green space has been made even clearer through this analysis. In addition an adaptive reuse building approach works well with the history and culture of the area. However, this approach has helped me develop a philosophical and physical understanding of why these ideas are important and also how these observations can inform my design decisions at the building scale. The patterns ‘raw space’ and ‘variety and quality of light’ were very much derived from my research and observation rather than a preconceived idea and I think they will be powerful patterns which will help positively shape the tectonic and performative aspects of the building.

While I think all of the patterns have potential within the design project, a few of them will be very difficult to implement - more so that I would have thought before the analysis. The pattern ‘small public squares’ seems incredibly important after this analysis because of all the patterns, it seems to hold the most potential for reinforcing the Arts Center as a public space at the heart of the community. However, the geometry of the ice factory and to some extent the cotton mill makes this pattern very difficult if not impossible to implement because they sit on narrow lots with undevelopable space on either side. I will have to look at this issue in more detail, but has led me to questions a few of the potential adaptive reuse sites.

In general I found the process of working with patterns to be quite productive. I was forced to think critically, and early on in the process, about how the philosophical and site research I was doing will directly affect my design work. Such insights and decisions should put me on solid ground for developing the design.
Bibliography:

Notes & References:


5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.


9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.


15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Crisman.

Annotated Bibliography:


Asheville City Council adopted the Wilma Dykeman Master Plan in 2005. RiverLink a non-profit group dedicated to improving the health and access of the French Broad River was instrumental in the plans commission and development. The Dykeman plan deals both with strategies for the urban section of the river as a whole and more detailed suggests for each distinct section of the river, including the River Arts District.

A. Huysen, Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia (New York, Routledge, 1995), p. 5. Huysen’s book examines various ways in which artists and writers have approached memory in their work. In particular he focusses on the loss of public memory in post modern European culture. I was redirected to this publication by Crisman’s article.

J. Ruskin, The Seven Lamps of Architecture, 4th edition (Orpington, George Allen, 1883), p. 194. This classic architecture text presents Ruskin’s architectural ideals through the notion of ‘lamps’ or principles of good architecture. This essay had a large impact on the arts and crafts movement in America. I came back to this essay because of the strong ties to craft in the River Arts District.


A book which is based on a number of diverse and significant case studies. Wolf not only provides an analysis of the design philosophy of each project but also how each project meets the many functional, often behind the scenes, requirements of art museums. There is also an informative introduction and discussion about the development of the modern museum typology.

A book which provides excellent photos of the MASS MoCA project. This book is rather short on architecture discussion, but does put the project in context.

A small two page brochure with excellent information on three buildings within the River Arts District which present excellent opportunities for adaptive reuse projects - the stockyard, hatchery, and ice factory.