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[ N O D O ] Creating Destination at the Pedestrian Scale

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CREATING DESTINATION
AT THE PEDESTRIAN SCALE

by

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A Terminal Project
Presented To The Faculty Of
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The trend of development in the United States, since the advancement of the automobile, has been away from the city core. It is no longer necessary to live and work in close proximity to one another. Shopping is done less frequently and entertainment is not confined to a one-mile walking radius. Suburbia has replaced the historic downtown districts. Four lane highways have replaced bike lanes, and sidewalks are developed more to follow code than to produce a mode of transportation. Cities are experienced at forty miles per hour; shops and restaurants gain notoriety and exposure by large signs and advertising not by architectural identity and character. Now the automobile is getting larger, and the reflection is apparent in the production of our societies. Markets have transformed from corner stores, to grocery stores, to Wal-Marts, and now Super Wal-Marts. Fridges are being complimented by deep freezes and people are running out of room to store their junk in their three-car garages. Consumption is blindly driving our society. Density is experienced at intersections during rush hour, or in check-out lines on Sunday afternoons.

Now that American cities are sprawling out of control, a reinvestment has been made to the redevelopment of historic districts and downtown urban environments. Downtown living units have become attractive and popular areas to live and are marketed in such a way. Small plot sizes represent high property value, which drive up the cost of living in these environments. Affordable housing is replaced by flats and condos and the local community is forced to change and relocate in order to revitalize the area. Redevelopment leads to gentrification which leads to displacement. Downtown living is being marketed as the newest fad for American culture to get drawn into. Even with this push to an urban setting, automobiles still shape the downtown environment. Parking garages exist on every major block and the pedestrian right of way is merely a legal term used to determine fault in an accident. A pedestrian can not walk six blocks without stopping at least four times at cross walks. The most common method to solve this problem is to invest money into benches and trees to make the urban streetscape more pedestrian orientated.

It is my intention, with the guidance of my mentor, to analyze the American trend of urban development in comparison to that of European cities in an effort to create a new form of urban living in downtown Omaha. The focus of the study will be on the pedestrian and how one engages environment at that urban scale. Mixed-use urban development has become a term associated with placing a shop or restaurant on the ground level and residential units above them, and has become the trend for urban development. This, however, fails to mix uses; it merely stacks program vertically as opposed to horizontally with little room for interaction between uses. A new understanding of the term must be realized to create an environment that is focused not on commercial and economic gain, but rather on that of perceptual and experiential growth. The creation of place, not real-estate, must be the main objective when reforming our cities.
It was in the early 1960's when Omaha started to make its return to downtown, when old meat packing plants were saved from demolition and over time were converted into lofts and restaurants. The “Old Market” has since become one of the state’s largest tourist destinations and has driven Omaha's attempts at getting back to the river. Since then Gene Leahy Mall has been developed, ConAgra has reinvested in the community, and now further growth is being generated in the downtown core; the First National Bank tower, Omaha World Herald Freedom Center, and the Qwest Center are all buildings that now characterize the streetscape of Omaha’s downtown core.

District: North Downtown

The next phase of redevelopment that Omaha is pursuing is the North Downtown Redevelopment Plan [NODO] (Plate 1). The plan, drafted by the City of Omaha, Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, S.B. Friedman and Company, and HDR describes North Downtown as evolving into one of Omaha’s most exciting and active neighborhoods. The eighty block study area is located on both sides of the Cumming Street / Abbott Drive corridor, between the new riverfront and Creighton’s expanded campus.

Land-Use: Mixed-Use Planning

Land-use for the plan (Plate 2) focuses its attention on creating pedestrian activated spaces that reconnect the pedestrian with the streetscape. The plan will develop along two main corridors: 16th Street mixed use development, and Webster Street linking the riverfront with Creighton’s campus. The focus of this study will be in developing the mixed use corridor that runs along 16th Street in this plan.

The final building location will be a product of the process of research and analysis of the site along with the plan developed by the City of Omaha. It is my intention to work with the City of Omaha’s plan as a framework for my project, but not as a restrictor.
Methodology

Precedents_A Global influence

My renewed interest in this subject matter stems from the life-style change that has occurred in me since spending the past semester in London. Three months without an automobile has allowed me to refocus my attention on the urban environment. London uses mass-transit as a means of moving people throughout the city in a quick and affordable way. However, the benefits of the system do not stop there. My experience in London has been from the sidewalk perspective. Program is developed along the streetscape with the understanding that the mode of entrance does not include the process of drive-park-enter, but rather a slow deliberate entrance created with the pedestrian in mind. Public transportation re-routes the flow of automobiles away from pedestrian orientated areas which allows for less vehicular lanes and more room for pedestrian infrastructure: sidewalks, bike paths, and public courtyards.

Fragmentation of city blocks occurs because visibility to inward courts can be accessed at the pedestrian speed, where the speed of the automobile would bypass the site completely. My opportunity in London has allowed me to analyze spatial and infrastructural relationships created with the pedestrian scale at the forefront. Travel throughout the British Isles has also allowed me to experience dense urban landscapes at different scales. I have visited Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Dublin, Salisbury, Manchester, Dover, Windsor, and the Village of Sheer to compare and contrast urban conditions as they relate to the pedestrian scale.

Process_Blender

Our second studio project in London (Soho: Ham yard) has allowed for the beginning research to be done on redefining the term “mixed-use”. My partner, Alex Jack, and I have developed a system of analysis that takes programmatic influences from the site and enters it into an algorithm of site conditions. By taking all the adjacent programs we set them in a matrix to compare and contrast. In Soho, there is a mixture of everything from Sex clubs to primary schools. We set them all up against each other and extracted the information in a periodic table way. From here we have let programmatic relationships develop and let urban development occur. It is my intent that further research of this kind can occur on site in Omaha to produce the best programmatic relationships for the site selected to create an urban environment at the pedestrian scale.
1. Speaking and Writing Skills: It is my intent to work with the City of Omaha in developing schemes for the North Downtown plan. Therefore clarity of communication will dictate the extent my opinion can be expressed on the local and community scale.

2. Critical Thinking Skills: The basis for this proposal is to challenge ideals and principles that have been ingrained in our culture. Critical thinking and rationale development will be necessary in formulating alternatives to the norm that spur social significance.

3. Graphic Skills: Architecture presentation should be able to be understood without words, as buildings are experienced in such a way. Buildings do not come with manuals, so it is imperative that my designs and concepts are able to be understood void of text, so that the general public can engage in debate on alternatives reached. Public forum is a method of review that I wish to bring into this architectural project to get diversity in feedback for a diverse site.

4. Research Skills: The majority of my research thus far has been through personal experience of spatial organization within London and other European cities. It is my intent to contrast what I have learned with that of American society in a organized process of research. Using text, video, and experience will dictate the success of the research done for this project.

5. Formal Ordering Systems: Ordering systems are of the highest importance when designing an urban environment. Relating the fundamentals of visual perception and the systems of order to three dimension form must be realized when designing civic places.

6. Fundamental Design Skills: Incorporating basic architectural principles into the design process will ground me as a designer and allow for connection to be made between architect, client and user.

11. Use of Precedents: Precedents serve as the foundation for thought and ideas formulated in the process of research and design for my terminal project. Understanding how different cultures, societies, and densities have handled the principles of urban design will help to influence the process of design.

12. Human Behavior: The pedestrian scale will be guiding the development of the project. Human interaction with the site will be looked at first before any other external influences.

14. Accessibility: Pedestrian scale should include all individuals that may encounter the site. Accessibility will be study as it applies physically, but also social and economical accessibility will be a major focus of the research involved with deriving program and designing structure.
16. **Program Preparation**: The process of research will yield programmatic relationships that will be used to design a building that redefines the idea of “mixed-use” development.

17. **Site Conditions**: The success of this project will be a direct correlation of site interaction by my research and analysis. The proximity of my site will allow for maximum interaction and extraction of contextual forces that will shape the process of research and design.

23. **Building Systems Integration**: The development will be designed and researched under the framework of the LEED rating system, but the design will not attempt to achieve any certain classifications. New technologies, however, will be researched to promote sustainable design rather than follow it.

28. **Comprehensive Design**: The end result of this proposal will look at integrating all applied systems from the macro scale of the Omaha Metropolitan Area to the micro scale of human perception on site within a building. The flow of process and production should be inherent in the design and research of this mixed use district.
The two plates above are from Omaha’s master plan for North Downtown study area. Plate 1 represents the contextual influences on the site, while Plate 2 represents the conceptual orientation and districts for the North Downtown study area.
Over the next 10-15 years North Downtown Omaha [NODO], will evolve into one of the city’s most thriving and exciting neighborhoods. Buildings and the uses contained within them will acknowledge and represent the pedestrian, in a way to activate the sidewalk and create a streetscape that encourages human movement and interaction. Building uses will be stretched vertically and horizontally to create a variety of spaces unique to the downtown environment.

Omaha’s newest urban district is the result of a year and a half study commissioned by the City of Omaha and the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce. The North Downtown Conceptual Redevelopment Study, was enacted to establish a redevelopment plan for Omaha’s “front door.” The 80-block Study Area planning process began in November 2003 and concluded in April 2005 with the production of a final document outlining the direction of NODO and the character of development that will occur. It is my intention to use this document as a tool for design that encourages real development but does not restrict the design process.

Architecture is about creating a desired ATMOSPHERE not a desired structure. It must be analyzed and understood as a singular event in time where emotions and moods are understood and perceived through material production. Material focus should not be the direction of this project, rather atmosphere produced through material construction as a result of a proper part:whole ratio. The goal of this project is to explore and research architecture as a means of producing EMOTION based on environmental ques.
MISSION STATEMENT

It is my intention to analyze the American trend of urban development in comparison to that of European cities in an effort to create a new form of urban living in downtown Omaha. The focus of the study will be on the pedestrian and how one engages environment at the urban scale. Mixed-use urban development has become a term associated with placing shops/restaurants on surface level and residential units above them, becoming the trend for urban development. This, however, fails to mix uses; it merely stacks program vertically as opposed to horizontally. A new understanding of the term must be realized to create an environment that is focused not on commercial and economic gain, but rather on that of perceptual and experiential growth. The creation of place, not real-estate, must be the main objective when reforming our cities.

PEDESTRIAN SCALE

The pedestrian scale represents the way humans move in their environments. The human body is made up of many joints and muscles that allow for contortion and adaptability other objects cannot perform. An automobile will always have its limitations: turning radius, acceleration, and deceleration. Where as the human can maneuver in patterns that cannot be controlled by physical parameters, but rather guided by emotional cues their environment signals to them. Architecture at the urban scale should not reflect the patterns etched in the earth by the automobile, but follow the same fluid, sensual motion that our bodies permit and allow.

OVERALL CONCEPT

Create a new urban environment unique to its contextual influences that focuses attention on the pedestrian and an active lifestyle.
Historically Omaha has been developed as a river city growing north and south along the Missouri River. During the early to mid 1900's, the city developed in a westward direction pulling its roots from the core. Currently the city has developed 17 miles west of the banks of the Missouri River to 204th Street. Although the city has developed this direction, it has always maintained focus in preserving the downtown area as the central hub of activity for the Omaha-metropolitan area.

Many factors have been involved in this preservation: the Old Market in the 60's, Gene Leahy Mall in the 70's, ConAgra Foods anchoring itself in the 80's and 90's, and recently the construction of the FNB Tower. Further projects have been established to bring excitement and entrainment to the area; the Qwest Center anchors downtown and is nationally ranked in ticket revenue, and the Holland Performing Arts Center brings a new blend of venue and production to the Metro area.

Back to the River symbolizes the effort to celebrate the city’s rich heritage and past. Greenways, trails and open spaces line both sides of the river and a pedestrian bridge is proposed to serve as a visual landmark for all future development along the Missouri River.
By understanding the adjacent redevelopment, one can visualize the external influences on the site and urgency for attention. The study area becomes the proverbial “hole in the donut,” surrounded by active redevelopment on all sides. To the east is riverfront development and Qwest Center, south is downtown and the Old Market, and to the west Creighton University continues to expand and recreate its campus in its urban neighborhood. To the north is Eppley Airfield which gives the site further prominence as Omaha’s “front door” and foreground to the already developed downtown skyline.

The challenge of the site is to blur the boundaries established and recreate and atmosphere that embodies the characteristics previously mentioned. I-480 has served not only as a physical barrier to the NODO development but as a social barrier as well. All of these external influences must work cohesively together in an attempt to fill the void left in the developmental pattern.
My site for research will be at the intersection of the proposed 16th street and Webster street corridors. This intersection is considered in the city's plan as the “100% corner.” At this intersection will be the neighborhood's land-use anchor, a neighborhood ballpark. To reflect the importance of this site the surrounding context will have to nurture, grow and adapt to make the anchor a success. More important than the design of the anchor, the mixed-use development that makes up the other three quarters of the corner will have to adapt to and enhance the atmosphere created by the land-use anchor.

This is the cornerstone for Omaha's newest and most exciting neighborhood. Pedestrian orientation and influence, along with human movement and emotion will guide the design process and shape the masterplanning of this site.

Through the research phase it will be determined how the main corridors (Webster Street and 16th Street) will assist the movement of pedestrians to and through the site. Other corridors will be explored as a part of this process, secondary corridors on the site include 15th Street and California Street.
1-Community Ballpark (Anchor)
2-Creighton Soccer Complex
3-Interstate 480
4-Wall Street Towers
5-Creighton University
6-Qwest Center
7-Tip Top Apartments
8-Civic Auditorium
9-OWH Freedom Center
10-Double Tree Hotel
11-FNB of Omaha Tower
12-Union Pacific Headquarters
13-Holland Performing Arts Center
14-Central High School
15-Joslyn Art Museum
16-Woodman Tower
17-Gene Leahy Mall
18-Orpheum Theater
19-Old Market
20-Lewis & Clark Landing (Rick's Boatyard)
21-Gallup Office Park
22-Con Agra Headquarters/Heartland of America Park
23-Hilton Hotel
PHOTOS: CONTEXTUAL IMAGES FROM ADJACENT STRUCTURES
[CONTEXTUAL DEMOGRAPHICS]

ANCHOR: NEIGHBORHOOD BALLPARK

The Omaha Planning team recommends a community ballpark as the downtown’s most appropriate anchor for development. The ballpark would be designed as a neighborhood park, as opposed to a stand-alone park which is surrounded by acres of surface parking. The facility would be designed to mesh with its surrounding context, using similar scale, texture, and massing of the adjacent buildings. The skin of the field would incorporate seating for spectators along with the potential of adding retail, residential or office/commercial space to blend in with the mixed use development.

Demographics

The ballpark encourages attendance from all ages, races, sexes, and income level creating a diverse environment for exciting development. Providing a home for a semi-professional team, collegiate team, and local high school teams the ballpark could be in use 100-150 days of the year, bringing the most pedestrian and vehicular traffic for the area.

Adjacent Program Recommendation

Retail, Restaurant, Bar/Club, Office, Residential, Parking Structure, Public Space/Park

Other Precedents:
-Bricktown Ballpark in Oklahoma City, OK
-Durham Athletic Park in Durham, NC
-Grizzlies Stadium in Fresno, CA
-Principal Park in Des Moines, IA
-Fifth Third Field in Toledo, OH
-Louisville Slugger Field in Louisville, KY
-Oldsmobile Park in Lansing, MI
MICHAEL G. MORRISON, S.J., STADIUM

The stadium is home to both Creighton Men’s and Women’s soccer teams and is located off Cass Street between 17th and 19th Street. The newly designed stadium was completed in 2003 and is an essential component to the Creighton experience. A premier facility in the nation, the stadium is the initial step in plans for a campus athletics and recreation district. The Bluejays’ new home underscores their national soccer reputation and provides Omaha with a major new sports venue within walking distance for students and fans who live and work downtown.

Demographics

The soccer stadium boasts a 4,384 (2,200 fixed) seat capacity and is open to fans of all backgrounds. The majority of the spectators are Creighton students or friends/family of players. Soccer is an outdoor sport occurring year round with the exception of winter. College athletics bring strong local support along with traveling spectators to the area.

Adjacent Program Recommendation

Sports/Retail (Shops), Restaurant, Bar/Club, Office, Residential (Student), Parking Structure
Although I-480 only runs a length of 4.15 miles in Nebraska and .75 miles in Iowa the link is more important. The bridge links Omaha’s and Council Bluff’s metropolitan areas with several key exits into Omaha’s downtown. The strongest feature of I-480 is the view a patron receives of the Qwest Center from the interstate. Another important negative feature of the raised interstate is the boundary effect that the interstate has had on development north of its route. The current state of downtown development has been squeezed to the south of the interstate and choked off social and physical interaction between the two sides of downtown. A social dichotomy has been created due to the power of I-480.

**Demographics**

Over 55,000 vehicles/day travel through the strip of interstate adjacent to the site, creating unique opportunities to capture different audiences as they travel between states. Speed of vehicle changes the scale of design along 480.

**Adjacent Program Recommendation**

Interactive Billboards, Advertising, Noise barriers, Screening, Showcase dealerships
The final design has been specified and construction of the 32 story tower will be under way in the spring of 2008. At the site of the old Union Pacific building at the intersection of 14th and Dodge Streets, Wall Street Towers Omaha will feature retail at its base, office suites, and 30 levels of luxury living. Amenities include full height glazing to get picture perfect views of downtown Omaha and the riverfront, close proximity to both the Old Market and future [NODO] development, balconies, and roof decks. This structure will become a prominent player in Omaha’s skyline, as it will become the third largest building in Omaha.

Demographics

Unfortunately the minimum of $200,000 price tag for condos does limit the demographics of this building. Expect middle aged empty nesters to be the prominent clients of the new Tower. With 30 stories of residential the population should reach 600 residents.

Adjacent Program Recommendation

Retail (shops), Fresh food markets, Fast-food options, Fine dining, music venues, entertainment venues, Art galleries, Small business offices, Open space, Work-out facility
Creighton University is a Jesuit-Catholic college with its 108 acre campus located just on the outside of Omaha’s business district. Creighton is a private institution that boasts a strong tradition that is nationally renown as one of the Midwest’s best Masters Degree programs. Focusing in medical fields and law, it is consistently ranked first and sends many students to graduate study in the Ivy League.

Demographics

The current enrollment at the university is about 6,700 with 3,888 of that being undergraduate students. The enrollment is about 54% female and 46% male. Over half (56%) of the students come from outside of Nebraska. Of the student body 83% is Caucasian, 7% is Asian American, 3% African American, 3% Hispanic/Latino, and 1% Native American. All residents from outside Omaha are required to live on campus for two full academic years.

Adjacent Program Recommendation

Large Group (2-4) Housing, Fast food, Dining, Bars/Clubs, Fresh food markets, Gas Station, Convenient Stores, Discount Retail, Theaters, Study locations, Social Halls.
The Qwest Center is a 1.1 million square ft. arena and convention center which opened its doors in 2003. The main tenants of the arena are the Creighton Bluejay basketball team and the UNO Maverick hockey team, but various concert events are also held at the arena. In 2005, the Qwest Center ranked eighth nationally in arena ticket sales. Due to this high ranking many of the world’s greatest artists/bands enjoy touring to Omaha, and the Qwest has already featured a strong list of performers. Omaha’s continued support has allowed for future events to claim rights to the arena: 2006 NCAA Women’s Final Four, and 1st and 2nd Round of the 2008 NCAA Tournament.

Demographics

The arena recently expanded to hold 18,300 for concerts, 17,560 for basketball games, and 16,680 for hockey matches. The schedule allows for annual participation and capacity is now seasonally met.

Adjacent Program Recommendation

Restaurants, Bars/Clubs, Hotel, Residential, Marketing Display, Fresh food market, Souvenir Retail, Improved Nightlife, Shops/Retail, Office
Located at 15th and Cumming Street, Tip Top Apartments have become the first tenant in the NODO area plan. Tip Top represents the new direction of downtown living. Amenities include large 14’ foot ceilings, open plans, field turf balconies, large windows, and sliding doors all created to enhance the spaces personality. Connected to the apartment building is a 35,000 sq. foot restaurant/arcade that encourages social interaction among the tenants. Also a large roof deck allows for multiple parties to occur all while enjoying barbecue, hot tubs, and views of the downtown skyline.

Demographics

Tip Top is marketed towards Creighton students and young professionals. A variety of floorplans are available but are limited to two bedrooms. Four stories of loft-style apartments increase the population in the area, and provide for a youthful market base to develop program around.

Adjacent Program Recommendation

Retail (Shops), Fresh food markets, Fast-food options, Bars/Clubs, Small Business Offices, Residential (Student), Parking Structure, Park
The North Downtown Study Area is overrun with vacant land, vacant buildings, and surface parking lots. When starting from a vacant slate it is important to analyze the trend of growth in the surrounding areas to understand the future development that will occur. This table shows the majority of residents in the downtown area to be students, young professionals, and empty nesters. A wide range of income levels are associated with the age groups, and living environments must respond to this.

**Employment Growth**

Employment has increased 30% between 1990 and 2002, adding over 100,000 jobs to the increasing market. With the addition of the Qwest Center Omaha, Union Pacific Center, and other development, Downtown Omaha has seen a similar spike in employment, currently employing over 40,000 individuals. An increase must be factored into the development to provide residents to live/work in their community instead of commuting to suburban employers.
The proposed 100% corner has the potential for exciting development. By analyzing the current and future conditions, development can occur with the focus being on how people live, play, survive, and thrive in an urban environment. The cycle of life can be studied for those who live in the environment. How does one eat, learn, entertain, sleep, and work on a daily basis? Or program can be set up on a temporary daily basis that balances contextual restraints. If one was to attend a concert at night, then that person could go through shops in the afternoon. With the trend of current development south of 480 continuing, more possibilities for mixing program occur and the diversity of individuals also occur. The success of the development does not prohibit or remove any key demographics from enjoying the urban environment. Many downtown businesses exist within the 1/2 mile radius which solidifies the need for adding residents the opportunity to conveniently live and work in close proximity. Entertainment is also key to a revitalized district. Development has ensured performance based program to exist, but this can be expensive and reserved for special occasions. Daily entertainment must be examined for a healthy environment to be produced.

Demographics

The demographics for the NODO area can be separated into permanent and temporary based on space usage and contextual programs. A permanent base of residents and workers must be satisfied through program selection. The key demographics to work with are young professionals and empty nesters. A temporary and unpredictable, base is established through events produced by three strong contextual event anchors: the Qwest Center, the Neighborhood Ballpark, and Creighton Soccer Stadium. Anyone from a college student or professor to a family of eight can be entertained at these venues. The diversity of people (age, race, income and sex) should be equally represented with a diverse program.
Omaha has a rich history of utilizing streetcars for transportation. Starting in the late 1800’s with horse-drawn models, streetcars have provided Omahans with dependable, efficient transportation until their retirement in 1955. At its peak, Omaha had the largest per-capita streetcar system in the nation.

The $55 million plan calls for a 3.5-mile loop connecting Creighton, the Qwest Center Omaha, downtown and the Old Market area. The plan would connect Creighton to downtown Omaha by traveling along Webster Street from their campus until reaching 10th Street. The route along 10th Street would eventually loop around the Old Market extending out to 16th Street on the edge of the CBD for downtown Omaha. The potential for development along these routes and especially as the streetcar route travels through my site, could be the spearhead for activity in North Downtown. Other studies show the economic impact of streetcar lines to have a three block radius of economic growth.

Omaha’s mayor Mike Fahey is very supportive and proactive for the construction of the streetcar system:

“To make the transition from a somewhat moribund downtown to a lively one, or from low-density, auto-oriented development to true city-building, rail transit is not a frill, It has proven to be a necessity - a powerful force for making it happen.”

In the first year of operation, the study conducted estimates there would be 6,800 daily passengers, if the rides are free, and 3,300 daily passengers with a $2 fee. Fahey says he prefers a free service.
ARTS DISTRICT - 16
FLUXION GALLERY
IMAGES OF NATURE GALLERY
BELLA’S PLACE
AT THE LOFT GALLERY
EVERYTHING THEM
JACKSON ARTWORKS
OMAHA CLAYWORKS
BEMIS CENTER FOR CONT. ARTS
ARTISTS’ COOPERATIVE GALLERY
GARDEN OF THE ZODIAC
WHITE CRANE GALLERY
THE PASSAGeway GALLERY
GOLDSMITH/SILVERSMITH
darkROOM GALLERY
P.A.G.E. GALLERY
BLUE BARN THEATRE

DINING DISTRICT - 43
AHMAD’S
AROMA’S
ASIAN MONGOLIANS BBQ
BILLY FROGG’S BAR AND GRILLE
BUTSY’S LE DOUX’S
CACTUS CAFE
CAPPUGINO’S
CUBBY’S OLD MARKET
DAS RHEINLAND
DELICE EUROPEAN BAKERY
DOG SPOT CATERING
FAMOUS DAVE’S
INDIAN OVEN
JULIOS OLD MARKET
LA BUVETTE WINE & GROCERY
LITTLE KING
M’S PUB
MAGGIE MOOS
MATSU SUSHI
MICHAELS AT THE MARKET
MJ JAVA LANDMARK CENTER
NICK & TONY’S
NICOLA’S IN THE MARKET
OCONNORS IRISH PUB
OLD CHICAGO
OLD MARKET CANDY SHOP
OLD MARKET SPAGHETTI WORKS
OMAHA PRIME
PASSPORT RESTAURANT
SOUL DESIRES
SUBWAY SUBS
TED AND WALLY’S ICE CREAM
THE BRASS GRILLE
THE DINER
THE FLATIRON CAFE
THE FRENCH CAFE
THE MEETING PLACE
TRINIS MEXICAN RESTAURANT
UPSTREAM BREWERY
V. MERTZ
VINCENZO’S
VIVACE
ZIO’S PIZZERIA
[OLD MARKET : ANALYSIS]

**NIGHTLIFE - 15**
- T HENRY’S PUB
- DUBLINER PUB
- BAR 415
- BILLY FROGG’S BAR & GRILLE
- OLD CHICAGO
- M’S PUB
- JD. TUCKER’S
- BARRY O’S OLD MARKET TAVERN
- MR. TOAD
- THE UNDERGROUND
- THE FRENCH CAFE
- UPSTREAM BREWING COMPANY
- O’CONNORS IRISH PUB
- JOKER’S COMEDY CLUB
- BLUE BARN THEATER

**RETAIL DISTRICT - 43**
- SUSIE’S BASKETS
- ANTIQUARIUM
- ASHLEY COLLECTIBLES
- OMAHA HEALING ARTS CENTER
- DSR POWER SPORTS
- IT FLYS
- ANARCHY COMICS & GAMES
- J.P. COOKE RUBBER STAMP CO.
- ANTIQUES & FINE ART
- THE LOTUS
- DRASTIC PLASTIC
- EYEBEADS & GEMSTONES
- 13TH STREET COFFEE CO.
- FAIRMONT ANTIQUE MALL
- RETRO CYCLE
- CITY LIMITS
- CRAWDAD’S SOFAS & GIFTS
- HOMER’S RECORDS, TAPES & CDs
- NOUVELLE EVE
- OLD MARKET HABITAT
- EVERYTHING THEM
- MAIZRY DOATS
- NICHE
- IRON DECOR AND MORE
- SECOND CHANCE ANTIQUES
- VISIONS CUSTOM FRAMING
- JACKSON ST. BOOKSELLERS
- JOE’S COLLECTIBLES
- DENIZ - SHOE’S AND HANDBAGS
- NEW REALITIES BOOKS & GIFTS
- SOUQ LTD.
- NAMASTE
- CHAMELEON
- RED SQUARE
- TOY CHEST
- ROOM
- NEBRASKA CLOTHING CO.
- GARDEN FLOWERS
- CIBOLA OF OMAHA
- ETC. GIFTS
- SG ROI TOBACCONIST
- OVERLAND OUTFITTERS
- OLD MARKET SUNDRIES
To create an environment that is complimentary to, and unique from the Old Market, research steps must be taken to understand the market in which the “Old Market” exists and what lifestyle / activity level the destination is trying to draw.

In order for Omaha’s downtown to continue its success, measures must be taken to ensure preservation of its most historical districts, when creating a polycentric downtown environment.

The success of the “Old Market” stems from the restoration and preservation of Omaha’s urban fabric: brick pattered streets and large overhangs shelter the pedestrians as they explore the market for desired gifts or unwanted treasures. Restaurants and shops spill into the wide sidewalks to create a unique experience unlike anywhere in the metropolitan area.

One of the striking features of the Old Market is its vertical advertising left over from previous tenant’s space.

The success of the Old Market stems from the contradiction to the sub-urban mall. Retail stores focus their product on “niche” goods rather than brand named goods. The old market has cornered the specialty shopper demographic: with the majority of their retail stores categorized into art, antiques, books, clothing, gifts, home furnishings, jewelry, and music.

The success of the Nodo development must focus its retail stores on entertainment and brand awareness to become a leisure destination. The Nodo development and Old Market must work together by acknowledging their strengths and not competing with them.
My interest in this project originated from the time I spent studying and living in London. I spent nearly three months in the United Kingdom and another month traveling the European continent. This experience changed my life for the soul reason that I lived in these places for four months not having to rely on a personal vehicle. I explored each of these cities with the convenience of public transportation and the power of my own two feet. Living at the pedestrian scale became a lifestyle for me and shaped the way I now look at urban environments.

I learned many lessons during my study abroad program, but none were more important than the appreciation I gained for my own two feet. The next few pages will outline some of, but not all of, the urban conditions that I encountered while studying in London and traveling in Europe.
Trafalgar Square in London is truly one of those must see locations in Europe. The large plaza is bordered by many historical anchor buildings, the most prominent being the National Art Gallery. As the aerial photograph to the left exaggerates, this site is constantly flowing with people through the site to see the Gallery and experience the great urban space. When I visited this site there was actually very little interaction between patrons, it was mainly a place to photograph and be photographed in.

The plaza is not bordered by any place to grab food, so it does not take on that character as a slow relaxing space. On the other hand the two large fountains and large statues allow for interaction with the site, as at any given time you can find children and adults climbing over these artifacts to capture the moment. London is generally dense in its layout so this site allows for sunlight to reach the ground and bathe its visitors.
The urban space created by Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano at the Pompidou Centre in Paris is very simple and subtle in its design, but very powerful in its presence on the site. The large cobblestone plaza sits adjacent to a development anchor (museum) which feeds thousands of visitors daily to the site. The site is left completely unprogrammed except for the gradual grade change down towards the museum. This allows for an arena affect to be created for street performers and their audiences. The mood through the space is one of activity and movement, so leaving it open allows for the dense urban fabric to breathe around it.

Another key to the plaza’s success is the surrounding cafes and restaurants have seating that looks onto the activity, giving another scale of interaction. The only negative for a tourist however, is that if you want to sit, you have to pay.
Potsdamer Platz could very well have been my favorite urban space that I encountered in Europe. Designated as the new urban center in Berlin, Potsdamer Platz is a hot spot for contemporary architecture and progressive ideas. The design is not sterile or mundane, but unique from every vantage point, allowing visitors or locals to experience social interaction at many different physical and intimate scales. Whether you are sunbathing on the angular grass berms, or interacting with the buildings’ facades, Potsdamer Platz is a place of activity and life.

The centerpiece to Potsdamer Platz is the Sony Center shown in the photos below. The Sony Center is an interior courtyard by its design, but an extremely powerful urban space. On grade the interior plaza has cafes, restaurants and even interactive gaming stations, while above the plaza there are movie theaters, office space, and living units to sustain activity for the site.
Sometimes designated as Europe’s living room, the Piazza San Marco was just that for me. As the aerial photo on the left shows, Venice is so dense and compact that the value of sunlight and open space is very critical to the power of this urban space. From any entry point pedestrians are suffocated by the narrow street section. Arrival however, serves as a euphoric celebration as the wide open plaza allows one to relax from the rat race that is moving through Venice’s streets.

The layout is simple in its design, no real grade change, but different zones of activity are created. Along the outside of the plaza, restaurants and cafes line the walls with their tables acting as the gallery or grandstand for interaction to be viewed. At the heart of the plaza is where social and physical interaction occur between different pedestrians. The strangest and most interesting interaction occurs between pedestrian and pigeon.
While in Amsterdam, I was lucky enough to stumble onto this unique environment adjacent to Amsterdam’s dense urban core. This precedent study does not represent a great public space, like the previous four I have shown, but represents an fascinating model for residential development at a dense scale. Each “block”, designated by canals though the island, represent a rich variety of design through the manipulation of facade treatment and scale. Rowhouses line the canals, and are each individually designed to insert their personal identity onto the landscape.

At the heart of each block is a luscious green space, where bordering apartment buildings and townhomes have the opportunity to experience open park space in a dense environment. This small neighborhood is representative of the possibilities that American suburbs ignore by mass producing an image of home.
The Mixed-Use development in the North Downtown Redevelopment Plan is zoned for DS (Downtown Service).

Downtown Service District
City of Omaha, Municipal Code (Article VII, Sec. 55-442)

Sec. 55-442. Purpose.
The DS downtown service district applies to area on the periphery of the central business district. These areas characteristically display a mixture of residential, commercial, office and light industrial uses. These uses require close proximity to downtown Omaha and occasionally have operating characteristics intended to respond to the continued growth of downtown Omaha and accommodate development which supports this growth. (Code 1980, § 55-542)

Sec. 55-443. Qualification for designation.
(a) Minimum area. Each DS district must include a contiguous area of at least ten acres, including intervening streets, alleys and private ways.

(b) Location. Each DS district must include a contiguous area of at least 1,000 feet of the CBD district.

(c) Land use. A DS district must have a minimum of 20 percent of its land area in industrial or transportation uses, and a minimum of 20 percent of its land area in commercial, office, or civic or residential uses at the time of application of the district. (Code 1980, § 55-443)
Sec. 55-444. Permitted Uses.

The following use types are permitted:
(a) Residential uses.
   Single-family residential (detached)
   Single-family residential (attached)
   Duplex residential
   Two-family residential
   Townhouse residential
   Multiple-family residential
   Group residential
(b) Civic uses.
   Administrative services
   College and university facilities
   Community recreation
   Cultural services
   Day care (limited)
   Day care (general)
   Emergency residential care
   Group home
   Guidance services
   Hospital services (limited)
   Hospital services (general)
   Local utility services
   Park and recreation services
   Postal facilities
   Public assembly
   Recreational clubs
   Religious assembly
   Secondary educational facilities
   Social clubs
(c) Office uses.
   Financial services
   General office
   Medical offices
   (d) Commercial uses.
   Agricultural sales and service
   Auto rentals
   Auto repair services
   Auto sales
   Automotive washing
   Building maintenance services
   Business support services
   Business or trade school
   Cocktail lounge
   Communications services
   Consumer convenience services
   Consumer repair services
   Equipment rental and sales
   Exterminating services
   Food sales (limited)
   Food sales (general)
   Food sales (convenience)
   Funeral services
   General retail sales
   Hotel/motel
   Indoor entertainment
   Indoor sports and recreation
   Laundry services
   Liquor sales
   Pawnshop services
   Personal improvement services
   Personal services
   Pet services
   Research services
   Restaurant (drive-in)
   Restaurant (limited)
   Restaurant (general)
   Service station
   Veterinary services
   (e) Industrial uses.
   Custom manufacturing
   Light industry
   Warehousing and distribution (limited)
   (f) Transportation uses.
   Railroad facilities
   Dock facilities
   Transportation terminal
   (g) Parking uses.
   Parking structure
   Surface parking

(Code 1980, § 55-444; Ord. No. 33545, § 18, 5-2-95)
The following uses are permitted, subject to approval of a conditional use permit, as set forth in section 55-883:

(a) Civic uses.
  Convalescent services
  Group care facility
  Maintenance and service facilities
  Noncommercial day shelters
  Primary educational facilities
  Safety services
(b) Commercial uses.
  Body and fender repair services
  Construction sales and services
  Outdoor entertainment
  Outdoor sports and recreation
  Surplus sales
(c) Industrial uses.
  Warehousing and distribution (general)
  Truck terminal
(d) Transportation uses.
  (Code 1980, § 55-445; Ord. No. 33545, § 19, 5-2-95)

Sec. 55-446. Special Permit Uses.
The following uses are permitted subject to approval of a special use permit by the city council, as set forth in section 55-884:

(a) Civic uses.
  Detention facility
(b) Commercial uses.
  Convenience storage
(c) Industrial uses.
  Construction yards
  General industry
  Scrap and salvage services
(d) Miscellaneous uses.
  Broadcasting tower
  (Code 1980, § 55-446)

Sec. 55-447. Site Development Regulations.
Each site in the DS downtown service district shall be subject to the following site development regulations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulator</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Regulator</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lot area</td>
<td>No requirement</td>
<td>Interior side yard</td>
<td>No requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot width</td>
<td>No requirement</td>
<td>Height</td>
<td>No requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site area/dwelling unit</td>
<td>200 square feet minimum</td>
<td>Building coverage</td>
<td>100 percent permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor area ratio</td>
<td>5.0 maximum</td>
<td>Impervious coverage</td>
<td>100 percent permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front yard</td>
<td>No requirement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street side yard</td>
<td>No requirement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The structure of the program is derived by looking at what contextually the area needs, and also producing a life sustaining environment for the inhabiting pedestrians. The two main types of people are permanent residents and temporary visitors to the area. The permanent residents must have enough program developed to sustain healthy living and active lifestyle within the urban environment with the exception in some cases of providing education services. The temporary visitors (tourists) exist in the environment as a product of the large amount of event centers contextually influencing the site. A blend of program must be met that satisfies both of these pedestrian types.

The life cycle places human activity into categories of consumption, but does not represent order or priority. Equal program weight should be balanced throughout all four main categories. Flexibility can be maintained with mixing categories creating unique environments that capture the vision of contemporary living. The categories are:

```
EAT  WORK  SLEEP  ENTERTAIN
```

**EAT - RESTAURANT / CAFE**  
-coffee house, fast food, fine dining, chain restaurant, specialty cuisine, fresh food market, grocery store, convenient mart, small specialty vendor, sports bar

**WORK - OFFICE SPACE / RETAIL (SMALL BUSINESS)**  
-souvenir, clothes retail, specialty shop, display dealerships, general office space, gas station

**SLEEP - RESIDENTIAL**  
-apartment, condos, hotel, townhouse

**ENTERTAIN - BARS / CLUBS / THEATER**  
-bars, clubs, movie theaters, urban plaza, street performers

*All program areas will start out at a range of 80,000-110,000 SQ. FT. per block, fluctuation can and will occur. Further research will be done to determine the exact unit size per floor to better determine tenant size and variation. Parking square footage will be determined off each unit and subtracted from the total.

*Final Program figures can be found in the FINAL DESIGN section on page number [65].
The difference between traditional retail environments and Urban Entertainment Centers (UEC) is the ability to function as destination.

1 [DISTINCTIVENESS OF PRODUCT]
   + Analysis of market region
   + Achieve dominance within a region

   POSSESS -
   1. Signature dining
   2. Icon retails
   3. New entertainment offerings

2 [DRAWING POWER]
   + Act as “must see” for tourists
   + Unique to region
   + Must capture extended regional market
   + 90 Minute driving radius

3 [DEPTH OF PENETRATION]
   + Offer balance and strive for repeat visitors

4 [DURATION OF VISIT]
   + Maximum spending occur at 3-4 hour visitation periods
   + Balance of daytime/nighttime activities

5 [DEMAND PERIODS]
[**Destination: UEC**]

Synergetic leisure destination focused on pleasure, indulgence, relaxation, and stimulation = entertainment zone.

- Retailers focused on particular type of “consumer” rather than “product” (i.e. Starbucks does not sell coffee but sells “coffee drinker” lifestyle products)

- Successful model is to put entertainment oriented activities within stores (i.e. Play before you pay, try before you buy)

- Consumers crave the functionality of the city: dense, eclectic, spontaneous pedestrian environments: where retail, entertainment, and dining are in close proximity.

[**UEC: Design Issues**]

**Entertainment [Activity Generator]** Ephemeral consumption
- Suburban mall = 5% of G.L.A.
- Urban Entertainment Center = 30-50% of G.L.A.
- #1 Activity generator = Theater/megaplex
- Retail = 34% of G.L.A., but because of Entertainment it becomes 55% of sales

**Dining [Activity Extender]** Literal consumption
- Suburban mall = 10% of G.L.A.
- Urban Entertainment Center = 20-30% of G.L.A.
- Primary goal to extend length of stay / visitor itinerary

**Icon Retailing [Activity Inducer]** Acquisition consumption
- Second nighttime draw, primary daytime draw
- Focus on tenant identity
[AMBIENT ENTERTAINMENT]
+Sets the mood for leisure destination
  - Street performers
  - Environmental design theme

+Add depth to experience
+Designed to exude excitement, energy, and creativity
  - Materials, composition, scale, thematic architecture, and bold signage
  - Unique lighting, “street” fixtures (interactive)

[IMPULSE ENTERTAINMENT]
+Spontaneous experience
+Whim consumption on immediate desires
  - Carousels, rock-climbing walls, bungee-trampolines, human gyroscopes, and virtual reality, portrait artists

+Exist in common areas, and can be integrated with ambient entertainment

[DESTINATION ENTERTAINMENT]
+Primary goal is to draw the traffic to urban entertainment center
+Important to multi-anchor destination program to allow for movement through the site
+Community ballpark serves as primary anchor for site
  - Dinner theater, educational facilities, night clubs, theater megaplex, live performances
[DINING: DESIGN ISSUES]

[FUNCTIONAL DINING]
+ Promotes / capitalizes on the extended length of visitation
  - Food courts (fast food options)
  - Specialty foods (smoothies, coffee, pretzels)
+ Meets hunger needs

[IMPULSE DINING]
+ Compact: carts, counters, in-store cafe
+ Human eating behavior is affected by context

[ENTERTAINMENT DINING]
+ Eatertainment, dinnertainment
+ Provide a unifying motif, derived from a pop-culture genre, medium, or intellectual property
+ Theme expressed through elaborate interior design features
+ Urban tourist location
+ Logo merchandise--------retail!

[RETAIL: DESIGN ISSUES]
+ Unlike malls which attract more dedicated shoppers, Urban Entertainment Centers attract leisurely patrons

[RETAIL TYPES]
+ Brand name souvenir boutique
+ Specialty store
+ Brand extension stores
+ Brand license stores
+ Product showcase stores
+ Leisure-oriented category killers
One of the most important components of an Urban Entertainment Center is the sense of pedestrian scale. Urban Plazas allow for unplanned-unprogramed social interaction to occur among patrons to the UEC. Below are positive and negative design issues when laying out an Urban Plaza.

- Visible access for security
- Accessible to many groups
- Outdoor dining
- Formal/informal seating
- Eye catching visual landmarks
- Central open area that accommodates crowds: rallies, concerts, winter activities
- Stage for concerts
- Street vendors and entertainers fully integrated
- Allowance for informal use (unplanned/programmed) activity
- Ped. Scale achieved by breaking up vast scale of hard surface
- Wide variety of food options
- Articulated edges to circulation spaces
- Variety of seating for size of group
- Lots of sun access during lunch time hours

- Plan for visual stimulus and activity during low-peak usage
- Fountains can be perceived as ugly/cold during off season
- Afternoon sun blocks plaza by tall buildings to the west
- More flexible sizes of benches
- Lack of public facilities
- Horizontal scale limits use by cyclists, roller bladers
- Gates give negative image
- Warm seating materials i.e.. Wood not concrete
- Bollards not comfortable seating options

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Infrastructural Infill

Interstate i-480 has served as a physical and psychological barrier between north downtown and the thriving downtown. Currently surface parking exists, but the area is treated as a no-zone, as in do not occupy this space after dark. This problem exists in many of our major cities as the raised freeway prohibits movement on site.

Precedent: London
Underneath the existing viaducts, program was inserted to make a once undesirable place, one of activity and full daily use. The bridge above is full functioning while the restaurants and clubs inserted in the negative space create a new destination for pedestrians.

Omaha Site:
By infilling program underneath the structure two things are accomplished, the unused space now has identity and a passageway is created that links the two districts rather than dividing them. The current use of parking can be facilitated one level lower while large anchor program can infill the existing space to create an unique environment in the Omaha metro area.
The selected text highlighted on the left is from the compressive plan for North Downtown put together by a team headed by HDR. This initial phrase is what drew the majority of interest into this project, because I could relate that phrase directly with the experiences that I had overseas last year. Their intentions are the same that I have for the project, but there are several key issues that I have with their visual representation of those initial ideas:

I think there is a disconnect between the phrase “newest and most exciting” and the renderings shown in the design proposal. The images shown represent a vision of past accomplishments and reflects closely the nature of the existing Old Market.

The plan does little to relate to the existing context of Downtown Omaha, and the surrounding area. The rendered masterplan goes as far as to put a boundary around its design, further signifying the lost opportunity to make great connections on the site.

In the compressive plan a “100% corner” is implied by the intersection of two dominant corridors, but the designation of “place” at this specific site was another lost opportunity. The corner designation of creating a place misses an opportunity for interaction to occur between the four blocks and the programs that they hold.

I agree with the placement location of the land use anchor, but in this plan it really does not seem to be fully integrated into the neighborhood. The edges are to hard and with the amount of people that will be entering and exiting the ballpark a larger plaza should be incorporated into the design to encourage pedestrian interaction at a larger scale.
As stated towards the beginning of the book, it is my intention to use the foundations set by the North Downtown comprehensive plan to start my own design process.

I will be taking a MACRO to MICRO approach to this design solution, starting with redeveloping the entire masterplan for the NODO site. Then I will move into 8 block study area to develop site concepts. After that design is finalized, the four block area (16th-14th and Webster-Cass Streets) will be where the primary design focus will exist. From the four block study area I will finish the project by focusing on one of the four blocks (16th and Webster) to further develop the plans and sections for that area.

Although this is a linear process, at each step reinvestments will be made to the previous scale as to allow for unity through each level of design.
My first attempt at the masterplan focused on re-rendering the existing plan to create more visual connect between the contextual forces. This plan failed to make bold movements in actually making those connections. New construction is shown in red. The diagrams above show the flow and land use on the site. The blue arrows represent vehicular flow and the red represents pedestrian flow.
This diagram shows the addition of the streetcar line in orange as part of the design. Also, the attempt is being made to make a strong pedestrian link between North Downtown and Downtown Omaha.
In my second attempt I focused on creating the pedestrian link along 15th Street which terminates at the community ballpark. The connection is made rather literally and the connection is extremely formal. The attempt was to exaggerate the formal nature of the link to enforce the connection.
This scheme really tried to create a linear destination between NODO and downtown Omaha. The pedestrian sequence starts at the new Wall Street Tower and terminates at the community ballpark. The character of the pedestrian link would be reflective of a Urban Entertainment Center (UEC) as detailed in the program. Underneath I-480 is infilled with retail/restaurant program to make use of the dead space and help unify the two developments. This plan does establish a strong connection between NODO and downtown Omaha, but fails to create destination at the pedestrian scale and it also ignores the Webster street corridor.
The initial sections through the site line the street with retail and have living units above to give the site population. Webster Street as shown on the left has the street car route running through the site. One of the initial site concepts is to have parking towards the interior of the blocks with a park located on top of the parking lots to give the residents of the site a private open space to retreat to. This scheme has clustered living units to the west and office space to the east. The pedestrian plaza/link along 15th street has access to public parking below and retail along grade. Above retail is a level of restaurants which is all tied together with entertainment program.
My original schemes admittedly were done from a bird’s eye view, with no real connection with the site. I was making moves on the plan that I assumed would establish connections but they were general and not well thought out. At this point in the semester, I revisited the site with the idea in my head that this scheme needed to return to the pedestrian scale. The panorama below is taken while standing at the intersection of 16th and California Streets (the mid block of my four block scheme). Here I realized the visual prominence that the Qwest Center and Creighton Soccer Complex had at the cross roads of my schemes. My early schemes completely ignored this site condition and failed to acknowledge what the site was telling me.

The diagram on the left shows my intent to treat both corridors equally as opposed to having a dominant, formal and classical connection along 15th Street. The red line shows the streetcar route and the red bubble around it shows the developmental impact of the route. As a walking diagram the 15th Street link would mainly serve those living in the new Wall Street tower, while the majority of the traffic from downtown will be dropped off of Webster Street using the streetcar. This establishes a strong node at the intersection of 15th and Webster.
Abstract:
For years the “American Dream” has consisted of moving to the suburbs in an effort to separate one’s self from the problems in the core of our cities. This has transformed our cities and lifestyle after the production of the automobile. Recently there has been a migration of certain groups back to the urban centers where people can live, work, and entertain themselves at a pedestrian scale without exclusively relying on the automobile.

Overview:
This trend is manifesting itself in recently in Omaha’s downtown core. Several key projects have begun this process including: the Missouri River waterfront development; a new Creighton University master plan; Gene Leahy Mall rejuvenation; and the North Downtown (NODO) master plan. These singular projects improve their current sites, but have failed to make important connections that will unify the downtown neighborhoods and promote growth in the undeveloped areas.

My project seeks to enhance the city’s plan for North downtown by creating a mixed-use urban pedestrian scale mini-neighborhood. It will be essentially self contained and permit an individual to live, work, and entertain one’s self within a several block urbanized core. The success of the concept will be dependent on these design objectives:

• The design must capitalize on the proposed streetcar system to improve linkages to other downtown land-use anchors and reduce the impact of the automobile on the urban environment. Visual corridors enhance opportunities for interaction with the surrounding built and natural environment.

• The plan should activate the sidewalk by creating a vibrant pedestrian oriented streetscape and allowing programmed uses to mix both vertically and horizontally. Two pedestrian corridors reinforce the plan at its central crossing. Webster Street forms the major east-west corridor connecting Creighton with the waterfront and 15th Street links the pedestrian environment south to downtowns business core.

• The neighborhood must create a unique destination from that of the Old Market and shift from consumption of physical goods to the experience of place. The program must focus on how mixing entertainment, dining, and retail will produce a rich and exciting street life while permitting a secure and comfortable living environment above the street that sustains life and promotes community interaction.
This scheme and diagram shows the strong corridors developed by the new scheme. The shift in the block formation along California Street emphasizes the visual connection that one has on site between the Qwest Center and Creighton University Soccer Complex. The Plaza off the Webster Street corridor is geared toward capturing Creighton University traffic as it heads towards the Qwest Center and the waterfront development. The 15th Street pedestrian link is aimed at having residents from the new Wall Street Tower walk through Pioneers Park and under the new Infrastructural Infill to satisfy their retail and entertainment needs. The route is also satisfied by the public parking located in the southeast quadrant of the site which forces visitors to park and walk through the site.
Street level plan objectives:

(a) Create pedestrian oriented routes through the site as well as create an entertainment [Node] for interaction to occur.

(b) Reorientate block formation to celebrate views from the site and slow down vehicular traffic through the site.

(c) Bring in Wild Oats Market grocer to sustain life on site as well as provide an urban grocer for surrounding projects. The location will help draw patrons under I-480 overpass from the Wallstreet Tower condominium project as well as bring people through the site from the street car stop.

(d) Establish anchor retailers at key locations on site. Anchor retailers establish permanence to the development as well as attracts other prominent retailers to the Omaha area.

(e) Attract key demographic groups [Creighton students & young professionals] with site orientation and retail identity.
Office level plan objectives:

(a) Use office space to bring a different type of activity and lifestyle to site. Brings in a strong population during key retail hours during the day [lunch & after work].

(b) Establish connection with adjacent downtown business district, generating more flow and activity through the site.

(c) Create buffer zone between retail program and residential units. Hours of occupation provide for a quiet neighbor for residents of the development.

(d) Provide residents with the opportunity to live/work in close proximity to one another while still maintaining a separation between home and work.

(e) Flexibility of unit size allows for a variety of businesses to be a part of the development. Small business is encouraged to bring variety and eclecticism to the neighborhood.
Residential level plan objectives:

(a) Use skywalks to connect residential units to share apartment facilities and provide for interior circulation during cold weather.

(b) Use roof and parking structures to create neighborhood parks to encourage social interaction or release from the dense urban.

(c) Provide balconies to residential units to capture perfect views of downtown Omaha as well as to connect to the excitement at street level.

(d) Provide entertainment program on upper levels of development [roof deck] to encourage vertical growth as well as to capture views of downtown Omaha and the waterfront development.

(e) Orientate buildings / parks to receive natural sunlight, providing warm & efficient spaces.
RESULT: PASS

REVIEW PANEL:
Chris Ford
Sharon Kuska
Patricia Morgado

COMMENTS:
The Review Panel felt there was a slight disconnect with the presentation and the statement of design intent for the project. The focus of the criticism was on the direction my project was heading at the ground (pedestrian) scale. Other comments were made on alternate parking methods and presentation graphic issues.

PERSONAL REVIEW:
After taking time to step back and review the progress that I had made, I was excited for the potential of the project. I agree with the review panel that the focus of my project should shift down to the street level more and invest effort in producing a pedestrian experience as opposed to developing real estate. One major negative that I found from this process was the residential level of the project. In this scheme at the semester I was aiming to create a separate environment for the residential community by giving them covered walkways to go between buildings. What this essentially does is take the street traffic that I am trying to generate and hide it from the urban experience. This makes the urban space seem unpopulated and abandoned.

The second semester will be spent redefining the block structure (figuring out how traffic flows), and an extreme effort to produce a pedestrian experience unlike anywhere in Omaha.
This contextual diagram shows the effort to focus on connecting six main destination anchors currently or proposed on the site. The terminating points for the Webster Street corridor are the proposed new Creighton Student Center and the waterfront pedestrian bridge. The Community Ballpark and the Wallstreet Tower anchor the pedestrian link along 15th Street.
This diagram shows the creation of destination by the adjacency to site anchors. The plaza is constantly populated due to the anchors that draw in high rates of pedestrians to the site. The Blue Jay Bookstore draws pedestrians in from the corner of 16th and Webster while the ESPN Zone terminates the axis at the corner of 15th and Webster. The major anchor on the site is the Community Ballpark which during peak occupancy can yield crowds of over 8,000 to the site.
THE MAJOR CHANGE FROM THE SEMESTER REVIEW TO THE CURRENT STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT IS THE TREATMENT OF CALIFORNIA STREET IN THIS SCHEME. CALIFORNIA STREET BECOMES A SINUOUS PATH THAT LINKS THE TWO VISUAL ANCHORS ON THE SITE, BUT BECOMES SOFTER IN ITS DESIGN THAN THE MORE AGGRESSIVE PEDESTRIAN LINK AT 15TH STREET. THE JUXTAPOSITION OF THE TWO PATHS CREATES DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCE ON THE SITE. IN THE FLOOR PLAN TO THE LEFT BLUE REPRESENTS RETAIL, BROWN REPRESENTS CIRCULATION, AND GOLD REPRESENTS CIRCULATION (VERTICAL ON THE STREET LEVEL).
[CONTEXT CONNECTIONS]

- Downtown Omaha
- Community Ballpark
- Qwest Center
- Creighton Soccer Complex
- Creighton University
- Waterfront
- Neighborhood Parks
REVIEW PANEL:
Tom Laging
Keith Sawyers
Bill Borner

COMMENTS:
The schematic review pin-up gave me one last opportunity to receive criticism before producing the final design. My review panel was very excited with the development of the scheme. They felt that I could push the distinction between 15th Street and California Street even more. They enjoyed the sinuous nature of California Street but felt that it could become more intimate and residential in nature. We all agreed that the design of the plaza needed to be revisited and simply having an unprogrammed space without edges or character would be under-utilized and a missed opportunity.

PERSONAL REVIEW:
This scheme was starting to force interaction on the street level more than previous ones, but the subtleties of the design had not been pushed far enough. For my final design I wanted to focus even more on the pedestrian sequences and how these environments would feel at the pedestrian level. The skywalk links needed to be removed from the design to maximize interaction on the ground level. Also bringing some residential units to the ground would be a way to get more pedestrian circulation.

Also in this scheme the Webster street corridor bisects the urban space, so thought should be given into ways that the design can seamlessly unite all four blocks in a pedestrian friendly zone.
The final masterplan shows the distinct form created from the contextual forces acting on the site. Destination is achieved by the management of these forces and creating program anchors on site that respond to the urban anchors.
[CONTEXTUAL DESTINATION]
STREET LEVEL PLAN:
The final scheme represents a complete pedestrian environment. Located around the plaza is restaurant/cafe program. 15th street will bring in ICON retailers and California street will have townhomes line the street at or right above grade. The anchors on the site include: to the south Wild Oats market and around the plaza Blue Jay bookstore, a micro brewery, 5 screen movie theater, and ESPN Zone.

OFFICE/MIXED USE LEVEL PLAN:
The only remnants of the early skywalks remains on the office level connecting the two west blocks. This provides a great social space for the offices as well as create an entry threshold for California street.
The residential units add year-round life to the site. The blocks build up in mass to the corner of 16th and Webster (100% corner) where the units are at their highest point. The build up marks entry into the plaza and rises above the surrounding context as a visual cue for the neighborhood. Each residential block has a unique neighborhood park where community structure can begin to develop.
NODO’S URBAN PLAZA HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE ONE OF OMAHA’S MOST EXCITING AND VIBRANT PLACES. THE MAIN GOAL WHEN DESIGNING THIS PLAZA WAS TO ENCOURAGE ACTIVITY AND PROMOTE INTERACTION BOTH VISUALLY AND PHYSICALLY BETWEEN RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO THE SITE. FULL POTENTIAL OF THE SITE CAN BE REALIZED ON HIGH VOLUME DAYS (BASEBALL GAMES, NEIGHBORHOOD MARKETS, STREET FESTIVALS, ETC.) WHEN REMOVABLE BOLLARDS PROHIBIT AUTOMOBILE TRAFFIC FROM ENTERING THE AREA ALLOWING PEDESTRIANS TO MOVE FREELY THROUGH THE SPACE WITHOUT ANY EDGE RESTRICTIONS.

THE TWO FOCAL POINTS FOR THE PLAZA OCCUR AT ITS CENTER: A GRASSY BERM AND AN INTERACTIVE WATER FEATURE. THE WATER FEATURE ENCOURAGES CURIOSITY AS A RANDOMIZED DISPLAY OF WATER SPURTS SHOOTS UP IN THE AIR AND VARYING HEIGHTS. THE BERM IS A FUNCTIONALLY OPEN SPACE THAT CAN HAVE LIVE EVENTS TAKE PLACE OR FACILITATE THE NEED FOR SUN BATHING.
WILDOATS NATURAL FOOD MARKET IS THE NEIGHBORHOOD ANCHOR THAT WILL HELP TO SUSTAIN DAILY LIFE FOR THE SURROUNDING DEVELOPMENTS. IT ALSO MARKS THE ENTRY SEQUENCE TO THE URBAN PLAZA.

AS ONE MOVES THROUGH THE SITE CANOPIES OVER THE RETAIL ON THE STREET LOWER THE SCALE OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND ALSO FOCUSES THE VIEW FORWARD DIRECTING THE FLOW OF TRAFFIC TO THE URBAN PLAZA.

AS ONE APPROACHES THE PLAZA TREES LINE THE STREET TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON THE ICON RETAIL TO THE RIGHT AS WELL AS TO BLOCK DIRECT VIEWS INTO THE PLAZA. THE SOUNDS AND SMELLS CREEP INTO THE PEDESTRIAN’S SENSES GUIDING MOVEMENT FORWARD.

THE FINAL APPROACH IS FRAMED BY LARGE TREES THAT PROVIDE A CANOPY OVER THE PEDESTRIAN TO UNVEIL THE URBAN PLAZA. THE TREE CANOPY STILL BLOCKS DIRECT VIEW, SHRINKING THE SPACE BEFORE ONE IS RELEASED INTO THE OPEN PLAZA.

THE CALIFORNIA STREET WOONERF'S UNIQUE CHARACTER WILL NOT END AT THE INFRASTRUCTURAL IMPROVEMENTS, BUT ARCHITECTURALLY THIS STREET WILL BECOME A SHOWCASE FOR OUR GREAT COMMUNITY'S FINEST DESIGNERS. INSTEAD OF BEING MASS PRODUCED BY A DEVELOPER, INDIVIDUAL LOTS WILL BE SOLD AND DESIGNED INDEPENDENTLY TO PROMOTE A DIVERSE AND AESTHETICALLY INTOXICATING ENVIRONMENT.

THE WOONERF ALLOWS FOR A STREET LIFE THAT IS NOT AFRAID OF VEHICLE INTRUSION. KIDS CAN PLAY IN THE STREET AND ADULTS CAN SOCIALIZE WITHOUT INTERRUPTION. JAVA EILAND IS THE PRECEDENT FOR THIS DEVELOPMENT WHERE INDIVIDUALITY WAS REPRESENTED THROUGH TOWNHOME DESIGN. ARCHITECTS WERE LEADING THE CHARGE IN SHAPING THE ENVIRONMENT, NOT DEVELOPERS.
THE LINK BETWEEN OFFICE SPACES ACTS AS A THRESHOLD OR ARCHWAY TO SIGNIFY ENTRY INTO THIS UNIQUE PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT. THE LARGE CORNERS WITH RETAIL ANCHOR THE SITE AND SQUEEZE THE PEDESTRIAN INTO THIS URBAN SEQUENCE.

THE GRADUAL AND SINUOUS CURVE TO THE STREET ALLOWS FOR ANTICIPATION AND CURIOSITY IN THE SENSES TO TAKE OVER AS YOU ARE BLINDLY LED DOWN THIS STREET. LANDSCAPING READJUSTS VEHICULAR TRAFFIC TO FURTHER SLOW THE VEHICLE THROUGH THE SITE.

AT THE INTERSECTION OF 15th AND CALIFORNIA STREETS IS A CAFE/BAKERY. THIS ACTS AS A DESTINATION FOR THE RESIDENTS OF THE STREET. IT IS A PLACE FOR INTERACTION AND SERVES AS THE SECONDARY NODE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT.

FROM 16TH AND WEBSTER ONE CAN EITHER ENTER INTO THE PLAZA OR TRAVEL THROUGH THE BLUEJAY BOOKSTORE. THE BOOKSTORE ACTS AS A JEWEL ON THE SITE WITH A TRANSLUCENT VOLUME ATTACHING TO ITS PROGRAM ALLOWING FOR AN OPEN AND COVERED PUBLIC SPACE WHERE INTERACTION CAN OCCUR IN A CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING. A GRASS BERM SEPARATES THE PLAZA TRAFFIC FROM THE RESTAURANT RAISED SEATING AREA. THE BERM ALLOWS USERS TO LAY OUT ON THE SOFT SURFACE AND OBSERVE THE PASSING ACTIVITY. THE PLAZA PLAN MAXIMIZES SEATING VARIETY AND OPPORTUNITY. ENTRY TO THE 5 SCREEN THEATER IS ALSO LOCATED ON THE RESTAURANT LEVEL, AS ONE GOES UP ESCALATORS TO REACH THE THEATERS.
The second level of this plan is dominated by either social activity or business function. The 5 screen theater provides destination draw, while a party room exists in the brewery and internet cafe is situated on the upper level of the bookstore.
VARIETY OF THE LIVING UNIT IS THE GOAL FOR THE RESIDENTIAL PLANNING OF THE SITE. LOCATED ON THIS BLOCK IS EIGHT TOWNHOME LOTS, AND EIGHT LOFTS ABOVE THE RETAIL ALONG 15TH STREET TO GO ALONG WITH THE APARTMENTS THAT WRAP THE NORTH WEST PORTION OF THE BLOCK. THE NEIGHBORHOOD PARK FEATURES A GRASS BERM FOR SUNBATHING, A BASKETBALL COURT, LAP POOL, TWO HOT TUBS, AND BARBECUE PITS FOR GRILLING OUT.
RESIDENTIAL PLAN + 5

1/32" = 1'-0"

EL = 89'-0"
The cantilevered residential units as well as the blue-jay bookstore grab the pedestrians attention and visually mark arrival to the destination.

Loft style apartments sit on top of the retail located along 15th street. The height is restricted to allow south sunlight into the neighborhood park and into the residential units.

A skylight is introduced to the residential units to allow for south light penetrate the building as well as provide a place for social and visual interaction to occur.

Three levels of private parking are buried at the interior of the block. Residential units sit at a height above the parking deck and overlook the neighborhood park.

Residential units are split into two zones. Closer to the corridor is the functional spaces (kitchen, bath) and living spaces exist on the exterior wall.

Outdoor decks are part of the loft apartments. This along with attached decks give these units a connection with the urban scheme and allow for interaction to occur between pedestrian and resident.
The schematic layout of the ballpark has a sunken field which allows for pedestrians in the plaza to visually see through the grandstands and into the volume of the field.

The north face of the living units is lined with outdoor balconies that act as miniature stages suggesting interaction from above with the plaza.

The program of the ESPN Zone pushes through the facade of the restaurant and into the plaza as a dual layer screen gives visual stimulus to the urban setting.

The combination of movie theater plus restaurant provides the perfect balance of program in section as dinner and a movie can be experienced in close proximity.

The exit sequence for the movie theater extends over the restaurants to provide shade as well as the opportunity for social interaction after a film is over.

The three levels of parking are well ventilated by the staggered design. The parking structure is extended up to catch the extra load of the green roof and swimming pool.

Over exaggerated by the elevation ghosted in behind the section, the Qwest Center anchors the terminus of the California St. corridor. The intimate scale of the street section is well balanced with the anchor that awaits.

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This approach perspective along 16th Street heading north shows the visual dominance the cantilevered living units have on the site. This extension of space encourages entry into the plaza and engages pedestrians to turn the corner.

The extension of mass also signals an extension of space for the living units as large balconies connect the resident with the exterior environment. The lower left translucent volume is the Bluejay bookstore.
This rendering shows the neighborhood park with the maneuverable facade in the background. The park offers a private urban outdoor space where other urban developments fall short.

The environment controls the facade of these residential units as the screening devices are removed from the interior and placed on tracks on the facade. The facade adapts daily with the weather creating a palette of materials that is in constant conversation with the environment around it.
RESULT: PASS

REVIEW PANEL:
Bill Borner
Sharon Kuska

GUEST PANEL:
Martin Houge
Noel Brady
Keith Sawyers
Ted Ertl
Gary Nielsen

COMMENTS:
Many of the final comments were made by the members of the review panel that were seeing the project for the first time and their comments were not negative but of clarification. There was a lot of positive insight for areas of the plan that would be exciting to develop in future iterations. Comments were made on investing efforts on the residential component of the design; to integrate a more defined entry sequence into the buildings [street-parking-park-unit].

PERSONAL REVIEW:
I was very pleased with how the review went and the format for which it was carried out. I was excited by the comments many of the jury made, because it showed the depth and potential for the urban scheme I proposed. There are a lot of components of the scheme that could use re-tooling or further development, but perfection was not the goal for this design or the presentation. The goal was to produce a design and appropriate documentation that would stir debate and provide a platform for ideas to be shared that would eventually lead to the possibility for change in Omaha’s downtown urban environment.

TAKING A STEP BACK
The scale of this project was very large and almost intimidating at points during the semester. Over my six years here I have spent the majority of my time investing in the specifics of my projects (which is what drives my passion for design), but this project allowed me to develop the ability to manage multiple programs in an urban setting, and focus on the flow of a city as opposed to the flow of an individual space. Many times in the process I just wanted to accept what I had previously produced so I could change to a more intimate scale, but there was an extreme uneasiness with that approach. My initial plans for right after semester were to spend time developing the anchor bookstore at the corner of 16th and Webster. That, however, was not what this project was all about. My passion, effort and final design showed a dedicated effort on the negative urban space of the four block scheme. The purpose of this book was not to fulfill a final requirement, but to produce a document that can be taken to the city of Omaha as a real alternative solution to the plan they have for the new [NODO] neighborhood.


These past six years are finally over, and it seems just like yesterday I was sitting in Visual Literacy making a cardboard mask of my face, or in second year making a physical model of a song (“Burning Heart” by Survivor). After too many all nighters to count, I feel that I am ready to move on and get paid not to sleep. The list of people I have to thank is endless, and the stories I have to tell could fill a document twice this size.

I would first like to thank my family for the endless support: my father for showing me the path but not telling me how to walk down it, my mother keeping my life organized and together at many points, and my brother for teaching me the importance of singing Garth Brooks at the top of my lungs in the middle of lake! To my girlfriend who has made the past three years of school fly by, your love and support for my education has kept me on the right path throughout it all.

I would like to thank all the faculty of the University that has helped me mature along the way: Tom Laging for mentoring me during this final year, and having sympathy during my second year when the day of a final review someone knocked my final model off my desk destroying it; Rumiko Handa for teaching me to think problems through and not be satisfied with surface observations; Keith Sawyers for guiding me through London and providing the foundation for one my most memorable experiences; Gordon Scholz, Bill Borner, as well as Keith Sawyers for dedicating themselves to seeing my final project through this year and being positive contributors to the success of the project.

I would like to thank all of my peers and classmates that I have spent the past six years of my life getting to know at all hours of the day. To everyone I was lucky enough to spend the 06’ spring semester in London with: we will always have 70 paces. To all the my college buddies that knew nothing about architecture and knew everything about having a good time, thanks for helping me keep my sanity and social skills throughout my time here in Lincoln.