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STUDIO 3 PORTFOLIO
INSTRUCTOR: LUCAS ALM
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**SEMESTER SYNOPSIS**

Studio 3 was a great learning experience as we began to tackle practical issues of architecture. The previous two studios focused on more conceptual approaches to architecture as design. I feel that I grew stronger in my approach to architecture and more aware of what it means to design a building.

The first exercise we did this studio, “Provocation”, was a challenge for my group. We were asked to document a site, the Light Rail, in an unconventional fashion. Unfortunately, we got wrapped up in a fascination with altering the data we recorded instead of analyzing our findings. I did voice to my group that we might be going in the wrong direction, but the majority ruled we were too far along to start over. It was helpful to observe other groups’ approaches and results as part of the review.

In terms of observing a site, we took a rather dramatic shift when we visited UMORE Park. Its scale was overwhelming, especially on a road bicycle. However, the way in which we broke down site conditions into groups was helpful because we were able to dig deeper into our categories than we would have working alone. It was a beneficial exercise, yet unfortunate that so few people carried it into their redesign of the districts.

Getting into the University’s Concept Master Plan was fun. I found it interesting, when we started looking at the master plan, most people mocked it and thought it was a terrible concept. Then, after an in depth precedent study, many began to admire the plan and felt it was well thought out. Having grown up in a nearby suburb, I thought it was a good plan because it fits the surrounding built environment yet begins moving toward sustainable communities. I believe it has the opportunity to challenge and change the “typical suburb”.

The district-focused precedent study was, for me, a turning point in the semester. Studying Florence was initially pretty overwhelming because of its history and numerous plazas. Once I was able to focus on a few plazas, I made discoveries that drove my design for the remainder of the semester. From this, I have a new curiosity with how this dense, characteristic form we see in Europe could merge with American culture. Obviously, we could not spend all semester on this study and there is much one could dive into with Florence. I am considering continuing this research after graduation and possibly carrying it into my thesis project in graduate school.
After the midterm review, we began to look at dwelling types. Before we started this, I felt the row house was the dwelling type that would best fit my district redesign concepts. Early on, I made the connection with San Francisco because of my experiences from visiting my sister and brother-in-law in this city. However, I have never been inside a traditional row house, which made the dwelling-focused precedent study all the more needed. I found it challenging to think of who would be my client, which made diagramming their needs difficult as well. The precedent study helped me find general needs that a row house community could offer, yet defining what it is about UMORE that makes this the perfect place for my client is something I could still make stronger.

The precedent study also helped me tone down my initial designs for a row house. My parti diagrams and models were huge for a row house; I was trying to make three thousand square foot row houses while less than two thousand would do. I was also introduced to the difficulty of allowing quality day light access in a long narrow space. Another issue that became apparent is vertical circulation in this size of dwelling.

After a few less than practical schemes, I began to play with a split level unit. I believe breaking the floors in half and shifting one side up is an effective way to bring light into the deeper spaces and create an overall flow and connection of space. As brought up in my final review, I could push my design further by using the day lighting lab or computer programs to study the limitations and allowances of a split level. In doing this, I could determine a dwelling unit dimension that works best with my design, instead of simple use of the golden ratio.

It was also a great experience to figure out the structural system with which I would build my row house. As I mentioned, in previous studios, we were not given the opportunity to attempt such an exercise. I was surprised to find it an energizing and fun task. I feel that, while architects create spaces, they must figure out how what is creating the space will stand. It was great to take what I learned in “Materials and Methods” and “Structures 1” and apply it to my design.

The overall end of this studio was a rather triumphant finish juxtaposed to how I started. I found things that I want to pursue beyond this studio. I used what I learned in past classes to fine tune my design and render it in a unique manner. After all, I designed a structure that could actually stand and be inhabited.
SITE: VISIT, RESEARCH & MODEL

Explore the UMORE Park site and document your experience and impressions. Create a model from this exploration.

As a group, conduct research of the geologic and hydrologic conditions of this site.

Select a district and model the University’s Concept Master Plan for this district.
I hoped to include the hydrologic systems maps but, after several attempts, I have been unable to retrieve the files from the group member who has them.
Conduct a precedent study of a city that relates to your initial district redesign intentions. Draw sections to show site conditions. Diagram your study. Create a model of a key location to your site.
Drawing from the discoveries made in your precedent study, redesign your district. Create a district plan and perspective drawing to show your concepts. Build a district model and zoom into a key location with another model.
Diagram your concepts for a dwelling type that you envision in your district redesign. Draw six parti diagrams of dwelling-plan schemes and select two diagrams to model.
Parti Diagrams

Process Parti Diagrams
Conduct a precedent study to investigate a dwelling type that manifests the intentions from your parti diagrams. Diagram the concepts behind your study. Draw site and floor plans and sections while also showing light quality of the spaces. Model the dwelling unit you study.
Refine your site plan and design a dwelling that builds on your parti diagrams and precedent study. Create a site plan, elevations, floor plans, sections and a model of your final design.
UNIT BIRD’S-EYE AND ELEVATION VIEWS