

TURNING CLOCKWISE TO LAMBETH

What role will the 32 London Boroughs play in the future of London?

After ten successful spatial insertions in Tower Hamlets and ten in Southwark, Diploma 10 will turn its attention to Lambeth where, working with situations, space, territory, abstraction, politics and the direct, we will create new types of civic insertions.

But, before we insert anything into the city, we need to establish what the context for this insertion might be. Although we tend to culturally acknowledge and accept the complexity of the city's context, we rarely apply the same reasoning when we set out to transform it. We, as users, recognise the effects that, let's say, groups, trends, religion, terrorism and crime have on our experience of the city, but architects and city-makers rarely include these factors into their design equations. This raises the question: why not? If these types of factors truly affect our experience of space, we need to find ways of incorporating them into our designs.

Learning from the city, we will experiment with the representation and inclusion of the city's more imponderable factors; we will reassess, redefine context and then find ways to work with it. To do this we will deploy a random approach to the city, one that focuses on an arbitrary territory centered on a city block or on an urban condition. The arbitrariness of this approach will allow us to speculate on alternative forms of urban transformation and to experiment with new spatial configurations that include physical structures, situations and strategies.

Through a scanning process, a spatial construct, situations, architectural insertions and direct strategies, we will apply the multilayered and hybrid nature of the city to the making of architectural space and develop appropriate methods for designing complex spatial interventions that directly affect the live realm of the city and transform Lambeth's urban fabric.

AIM:

To experiment with the relationship that exists between physical and social structures and develop appropriate methods for designing complex spatial interventions that directly affect the live realm of the city and transform the urban fabric.

GENERALLY:

Why are we turning clockwise from Southwark to Lambeth? We are again concentrating on a London Borough to continue our exploration of how municipal power, which has a continuing responsibility over its territory, could or should influence the transformation of the city.

Why redefine context? By scanning context in a random area, identifying the variables that make up its space and putting together a spatial construct, we will set out to establish and define the very make-up of space in order to generate salient spatial insertions at the architectural and urban scales.

Why look at situations? Because situations form an integral, but underexploited, part of the composition of space.

Why use sections? By cutting sections through the city, through situations and through our insertions, we will be able to interpret, propose and represent how physical and social structures interact in space.

PART 1:

We will start by changing our understanding of what makes up the context of the city. Adopting a random approach to the city, we will focus on an arbitrary territory centered on a city block and on another centered on an urban condition.

Using the 'scan', a process developed over the last few years, we will identify the urban, architectural and live variables that make up the reality of the city's spatial experience. Once identified, variables such as structures, mechanisms of control, instances of conflict amongst others, will be used to generate a digital construct that will form, in parallel to the real site, the revised context for our 'insertions'. This duality of context will enable us to juggle between the abstract and the real and to experiment more freely with the production of space. We will use the 'construct' (an interactive, live, 3D computer model) to experiment with the making of space, 'situations' to isolate the live realm and 'sections' to articulate the interrelationships that exist between physical structures and social situations.

We will propose the following:

- Scan and Construct.
- Situations 1 (Situations Workshop 1).
- Sections 1.

PART 1A:

Avoiding the limitations of current, commodity-led, development strategies, we will focus on the idea of random 'insertions' as an alternative form of development.

Using the redefined variables that make up context, we will make preliminary and experimental spatial proposals that will aim to have a transformational influence on the random, individual, scanned areas of the city.

We will propose:

- Insertion 1 (Spatial Insertion).

We will devise composite methods of representation and communication that include working drawings, constructs, video, animations, presentations and text.

PART 2:

Experienced city space, with its formal, social, cultural, economic and political factors (variables), undoubtedly, encompasses physical and social structures, built forms and situations, but can these qualities be adopted in the making of architectural space? We will try. At the architectural scale, we will develop and refine a composite spatial language of hybrid structures, layered enclosures, components and interactive elements.

Responding to context and exploiting the complex nature of city space, we will design an architecture that addresses the civic and the political, delineates the territories of architectural space, creates spatial configurations that combine physical and social structures and develops an architectural language that embraces spatial complexity and encompasses multiple structures, materials, layers, geometries and components. We will then insert our detailed spatial, architectural, design into the city's context in a manner that experiments with and proposes ways of blurring the boundary that separates the city's space from that of architecture.

We will aim to generate an architecture that matches the complexity of the city.

We will propose the following:

- Insertion 2 (Detailed Design).
- Situations 2 (Situations Workshop 2).
- Sections 2.

We will devise composite methods of representation and communication that include working drawings, constructs, video, animations, presentations and text.

TECHNICAL WORKSHOP:

Using a composite architectural language that integrates combinations of spaces, situations and strategies, we will develop a technical thesis that focuses on hybrid structures, layered enclosures and interactive components. We will define and specify the technical role that physical and social variables play in the making of architectural and urban space. The technical thesis, TS5, will concentrate on structure, enclosure, components and interactive elements at the architectural scale, but will also aim to contextualise this spatial scale within the technical topics that govern the urban realm.

- TS Workshop.
- TS5.

PART 2A:

Unit Trip to Tokyo (TBC).

Workshop with Geidai, Tokyo University of the Arts.

PART 3:

After the spatial experiments of Insertion 1 and the architectural experiments of Insertion 2, we will expand our focus to the scale of the contextual scan and the scale of the borough. Can spatial interventions influence their surrounding area or form an integral part of it? Is there a perimeter, a curtilage, to a spatial intervention that is part-and-parcel of an architectural insertion? Responding to the redefinition of context, the emphasis will be on the civic, on the political and, particularly on the 'direct', which acknowledges and exploits the fact that the city's space is of the fabric of the city and the situations that take place within it.

We will continue to speculate on the future of London, its physical and social transformation. At the urban scale, we will delineate and propose an expanded perimeter, an interactive curtilage around our architectural proposal/s and transform it into a propositional territory of action by designing spatial and strategic interventions at the scales of 1:500 and 1:1000. By tweaking the digital construct and reconfiguring the variables, we will reassess the city's mechanisms of transformation and generate, at various scales, new transformative structures, situations and strategies.

We will propose the following:

- Insertion 3 (Urban Insertion).
- Situations 3.
- Sections 3.

- Insertion 3 (Urban Insertion) - Conclusion.

We will devise composite methods of representation and communication that include working drawings, constructs, video, animations, presentations and text.

BOOK LIST:

1. London +10, Edited by Carlos Villanueva Brandt, AA Publications.
2. Occupying Architecture, Edited by Jonathan Hill, Routledge - (Chapter 6, Space Within by Carlos Villanueva Brandt).
3. NATØ: Narrative Architecture in Postmodern London, Claire Jameson, Routledge.
4. The Discourse of Events, Architectural Association.
5. The Manhattan Transcripts, Bernard Tschumi, Academy Editions.
6. The Production of Space, Henri Lefebvre, Blackwell.
7. Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment, Henri Lefebvre, University of Minnesota Press.
8. Rethinking Architecture, Edited by Neil Leach, Routledge.
9. Ground Control, Anna Minton, Penguin.
10. Slow Burn City, London in the Twenty-First Century, Rowan Moore, Picador.
11. Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture, Robert Venturi, The Architectural Press.
12. Restless Cities, Edited by Matthew Beaumont and Gregory Dart, Verso.
13. Life: A User's Manual, Georges Perec.
14. The Sellout, Paul Beatty, Oneworld Publications.
15. Ulysses, James Joyce, Penguin.
16. Royal Festival Hall - London County Council, Leslie Martin and Peter Moro, Architecture in Detail, Phaidon
17. New National Gallery, Berlin, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Maritz Vandenberg, Architecture in Detail, Phaidon.
18. Igualada Cemetery – Enric Miralles and Carmen Pinós, Anatxu Zabalbeascoa, Architecture in Detail, Phaidon.
19. Mitchell's Building Series, Routledge.