

Direct Urbanism: fixed or flexible?

As we experience the city, we mediate physical and social structures that include ever-changing combinations of fixed and flexible variables.

AIM FOR THE TECHNICAL STUDY

We will define and specify the technical role that fixed and flexible 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.

AIM

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

The city's reality is not made up of physical structures with fixed reference points, it is a complex reality, which is constantly articulated and activated by the live realm. Without the live realm and without situations, there is no city. The variables that govern situations and those that generate physical structures are undoubtedly different, we will question, challenge and build-on this difference.

We will devise salient ways to act within this spatial complexity.

We will concentrate on the role that fixed and flexible variables play in the making of architectural and urban space and devise methods of working with them in order to generate interventions at different scales.

We will reconfigure physical and social structures to generate composite interventions that focus on the spatial overlap between the architectural and the urban scales.

We will use the urban themes of conflict, control, exchange, fiction, groups, life, power, space, structures and time – identified in the “London +10” book – to reveal new potentials for urban change.

We will devise ways to generate alternative catalysts for urban change.

We will question the role that the urban themes play in the making of architectural space and speculate on their direct relevance to the ‘live’ city.

We will work in London and test our ideas on the unit trip.

We will work with direct action, video, physical models, computer models, working drawings, text, animations, primary evidence and strategic documents.

PART 1 - COMPOSITE SPACE.

First experiment with the relationship between physical and social structures.

At the architectural scale, we will prepare preliminary proposals for an architectural construct, a public building, of minimum dimensions of 10 x 10 x 10 metres.

At the non-scale or direct scale, we will identify the fixed and flexible variables that make up the reality of urban space. We will also use the urban themes of conflict, control, exchange, fiction, groups, life, power, space, structures and time to reveal new potentials for urban change. We will generate new catalysts for change. We will propose a preliminary constructed situation, as an immersion into an urban condition, which will include from 1 to 10 people.

TERM 1: TECHNICAL STUDIES - PART 1

- As a starting point, investigate and analyse the space and curtilage (surrounding territory) of three specific existing buildings.
- Define the perimeter of one of the buildings and speculate on the possible overlaps that may exist between the architectural and the urban scales.
- Speculate on the fixed and flexible variables that make up the chosen architectural and urban space.
- Choose or identify an existing urban condition. This can be anything from a current development strategy to any form of current event that directly influences the city.
- Choose a potential site.
- Prepare preliminary physical proposals for an architectural construct, a public building, of minimum dimensions 10 x 10 x 10 metres.

- PHYSICAL MODEL 1: Construct a physical working model.
 - Build a 3D computer model of the surrounding territory and investigate different ways of transforming it into a potential territory of action.
 - Devise appropriate methods of representation and communication.
- **Technical Studies Workshop.**
 - For the TS we will concentrate on the technical role that fixed and flexible variables play in the making of architectural and urban space. Using a composite language of structure, enclosure, components and interactive elements, we will develop a technical thesis that articulates the relationship between physical and social structures.
 - Propose a preliminary strategy for the Technical Thesis.

PART 2 - THE PERIMETER.

Second experiment with the relationship between physical and social structures.

At the architectural scale, we will develop a composite spatial language of structure, enclosure, components and interactive elements to support the design of an architectural construct, a public building, of minimum dimensions 10 x 10 x 10 metres at the scale of 1:50.

At the non-scale or direct scale and directly related to the architectural construct, we will propose a construct that should include from 1 to 10 people.

TERM 2: TECHNICAL STUDIES - PART 2

- Question the role that the urban themes of conflict, control, exchange, fiction, groups, life, power, space, structures and time play in the making of architectural space and speculate on their direct relevance to the 'live' city.
 - Define the role that fixed and flexible variables play in the making of architectural space.
 - Reassess the configuration of architectural construct.
 - Define the perimeter of the architectural construct.
 - Design the perimeter space of the architectural construct.
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- If appropriate, analyse a chosen brief and adapt it as necessary.
 - Define and propose the key components of the architectural construct, a public building.
 - PHYSICAL MODEL 2: Construct a physical working model.
 - Identify and make use of relevant agents and initiatives.
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- **Technical workshop.**
 - TS5.
 - We will define and specify the technical role that fixed and flexible 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.
 - Possible technical topics at the architectural scale:
 - Production.
 - Materials and construction of building elements.
 - Economics of building.

- Foundations, walls and piers, framed structures, roof structures, floor structures, flues / shafts / ducts, and temporary works.
- Contract planning and site organisation.
- Mechanical plants.
- Multi-storey structures.
- Fire protection.
- Movement control.
- Component design: joinery, doors, windows, glazing, roof lights, ironmongery, balustrades, demountable partitions, suspended ceilings and industrialised systems.
- Environment: moisture, air movement, daylighting, heat, thermal installations and electric lighting.
- Utility services: water, sanitary appliances, pipes, drainage installations, sewage disposal, refuse disposal, electricity and telecommunications, gas, mechanical conveyors, fire fighting equipment and ducted distribution services.
- Materials.
- Finishes.
- and more.....

- Possible contexts at the urban scale:

- Land.
- Buildings.
- Construction materials.
- Water.
- Energy.
- Waste management.
- Environmental performance.
- Information technology.
- Housing.
- Transport - stations, airports, etc.
- Education - schools, universities, etc.
- Public services - hospitals, health centres, police, emergency, etc.
- Manufacturing.
- Wholesale distribution.
- Sub-regions.
- Communities.

- Town centres - focal points.
- Cultural institutions.
- Sports.
- Open spaces.
- Recycling.
- Air quality.
- Density.
- High-rise buildings.
- Historic buildings.
- Views and panoramas.
- Waterways - Blue Ribbon Network.
- Flooding.
- Social inclusion.
- Systems of control.
- and more.....

- Design the key elements of structure and enclosure at 1:50.
- Design the interactive perimeter as an interface at 1:500.
- Design the interactive elements, rules, situations, conditions of the architectural construct and the interactive perimeter.
- Finalise the design of the architectural construct and the interactive perimeter.
- Devise appropriate methods of representation and communication.