

GBBN
architects

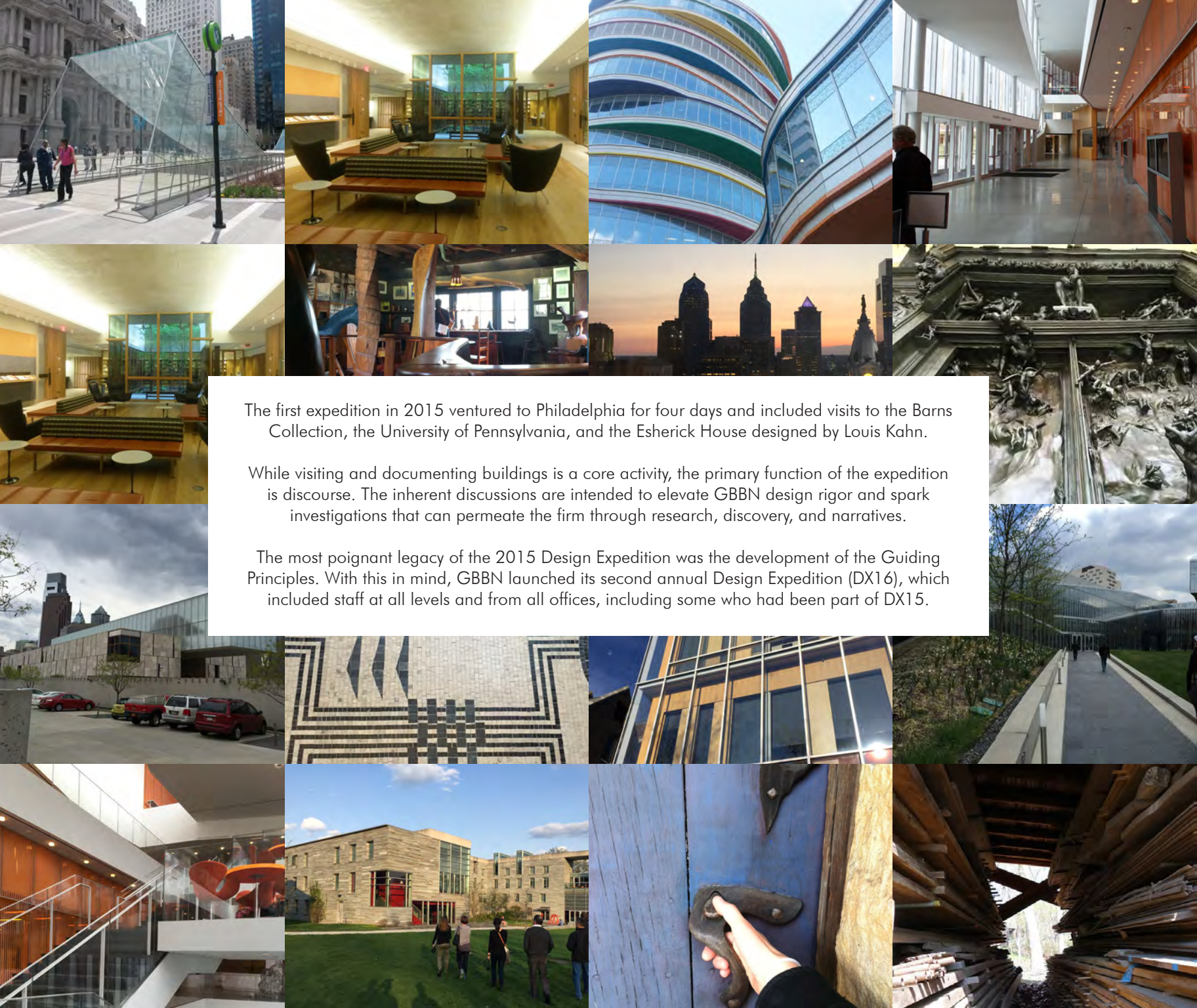
engage.
explore.
discuss.

DX16 TORONTO
GBBN ARCHITECTS



THE DESIGN EXPEDITION

was developed to engage, explore, and discuss design ideas among a diverse cross-section of our employees.



The first expedition in 2015 ventured to Philadelphia for four days and included visits to the Barnes Collection, the University of Pennsylvania, and the Esherick House designed by Louis Kahn.

While visiting and documenting buildings is a core activity, the primary function of the expedition is discourse. The inherent discussions are intended to elevate GBBN design rigor and spark investigations that can permeate the firm through research, discovery, and narratives.

The most poignant legacy of the 2015 Design Expedition was the development of the Guiding Principles. With this in mind, GBBN launched its second annual Design Expedition (DX16), which included staff at all levels and from all offices, including some who had been part of DX15.

- 05 Defining DX16**
- 09 Pre-Expedition**
- 11 Teams**
- 13 Informed Form: Process
- 15 Informed Form: Communication
- 17 Reflection v. Reaction: Process
- 19 Reflection v. Reaction: Communication
- 20 Tackling the Issues
- 21 Making it Happen
- 23 Workshop
- 25 Toronto!**
- 29 Agenda
- 31 Sketching
- 33 Bar Raval
- 35 The Queen-Richmond Centre West
- 37 Before + After
- 39 The Sharpe Centre
- 41 The Donnelly Centre
- 43 Role Playing
- 45 Ryerson Student Centre
- 47 Wave Deck Observation
- 49 Storyboarding
- 51 Branksome Hall Athletics + Wellness Centre
- 53 Bridgepoint Hospital
- 55 Video Documenting
- 57 Take Aways**

DEFINING DX16

At our first team meeting, our group decided to explore two themes:

1. Informed Form:

acknowledge our research-based design practice.

2. Reflection vs. Reaction:

not accepting the same old processes or ideas.

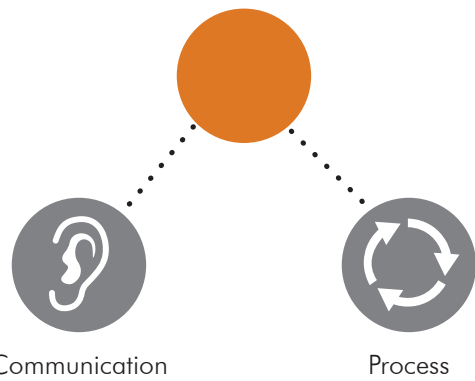
We also realized that both Informed Form and Reflection vs. Reaction involved aspects of our work process and how we communicate. These aspects would become the lenses through which we would explore our two topics.



INFORMED FORM

focuses on our research-based design practice: the “why” behind design. We committed to going beyond aesthetic pursuits and producing work that is both beautiful and meaningful.

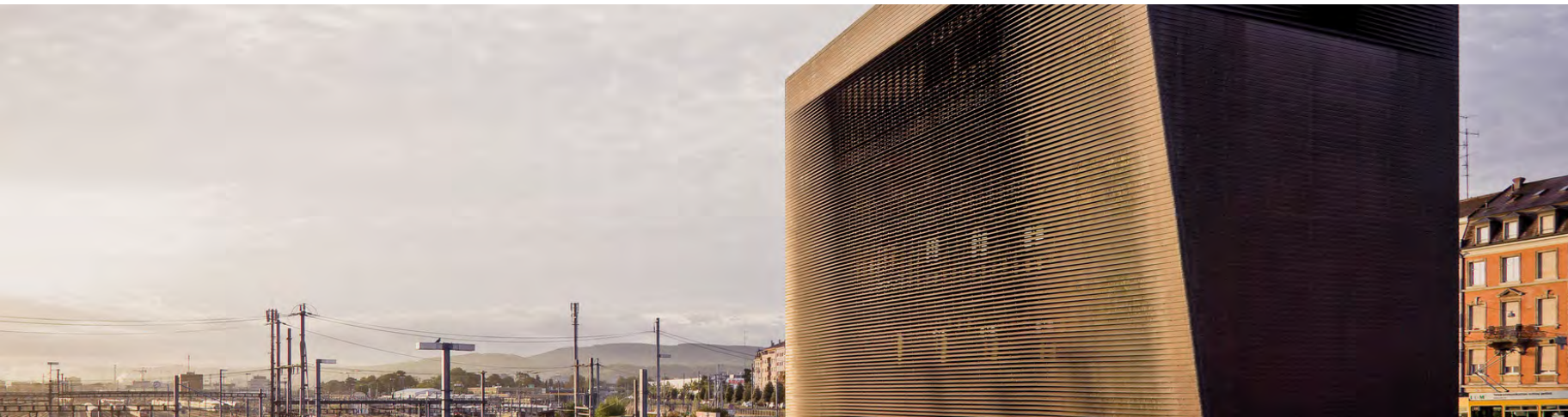
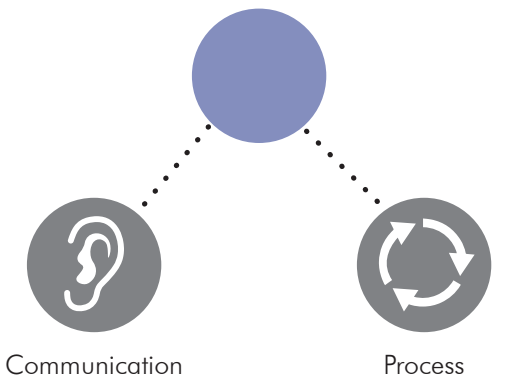
Top: Renzo Piano: High Museum Addition Bottom: Renzo Piano: Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre



REFLECTION VS. REACTION

questions the same old processes or ideas: “that is the way it’s always been done.” Instead, we challenged ourselves to ask more questions and explore possibilities, stretching ourselves and our clients in the process.

Top: Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre Bottom: Herzog + de Meuron: Signal Box



PRE EXPEDITION WORK

In order to explore these topics more fully, we formed four teams. Our teams were charged with meeting on a regular basis to dive deeper into each topic.

Teams



Advisory Board:

Brooke Behnfeldt*, Anne Chen*, Matthew Schottelkotte*

INFORMED FORM

PROCESS

Stefan Cornelis
Ben Earls
Jason Groneck
Matt Manzo
Steve Kenat

COMMUNICATION

Matt Plecity
Marcie Kinney*
Mark Lee*
Phil Rowland

REFLECTION VS. REACTION

PROCESS

Megan Mershman
Daniel Luegering
Dan Shapiro
Chad Burke*

COMMUNICATION

Angela Mazzi
Sean Cottengim
Mike Lied*
Liz Schmidt
Carl Price

Additional Contributors

(Non-Travelers)

Scott Vidourek*
Anne Schwab
Beth Bailey

Aaron Anderson*
Lowell Day
Jennifer Sebranek*
Phil Babinec

Artie Spaw
Greg Pinter*
Mike Rioux
Ted Huster

Renee Martin*
Chris Bowling
Mickey LeRoy

* Design Expedition 2015 Participant

Goals

Things we hoped to accomplish on the expedition:

1. Prepare Expedition'ers for a heightened sensitivity to design issues.
2. Raise the level of discourse inside and outside the office.
3. Advance and synthesize our research, and elevate the profile of our design efforts.

Expected Outcomes

Things we hoped would enhance our firm by:

1. Developing further connectivity between the offices.
2. Expanding GBBN's design narrative.
3. Raising design communication and interaction of the firm.

Informed Form Process

Team: Stefan Cornelis, Ben Earls, Jason Groneck, Matt Manzo, Steve Kenat, Scott Vidourek, Anne Schwab, Beth Bailey

Team 1 focused on the theme of Informed Form through the lens of Design Process.

The team started by looking at the different Design Process diagrams GBBN has used on a variety of proposals and asked when and how does our design become informed? The team concluded "Informing" happens mostly at the beginning of the process during the Investigating and Discovering phases, but continues throughout the process. The team made a list of tools, or ways that "Informing" is happening during the design, to help set the direction of the project and take a point of view.

The team arrived at several main conclusions prior to the Toronto trip:

Trust is a bi-product of experience, reputation, and relationships while allowing the opportunity to take design risks.

Position is a collective vision that is established through trust between the client and design team. Trust helps establish a benchmark to which an ongoing critique of design can occur. This will help generate solutions and strategies not foreseen at the beginning of the project.

Clarity is consistency in design thinking and in design communication. We can achieve design clarity through intuitive design and intuitive space. It is important to maintain a sense of discovery.

Tools help to create and communicate the design process. All tools such as: Revit, Rhino, presentation skills, etc., depend solely on the designer. The designer becomes the craftsman that uses these tools to achieve their vision.

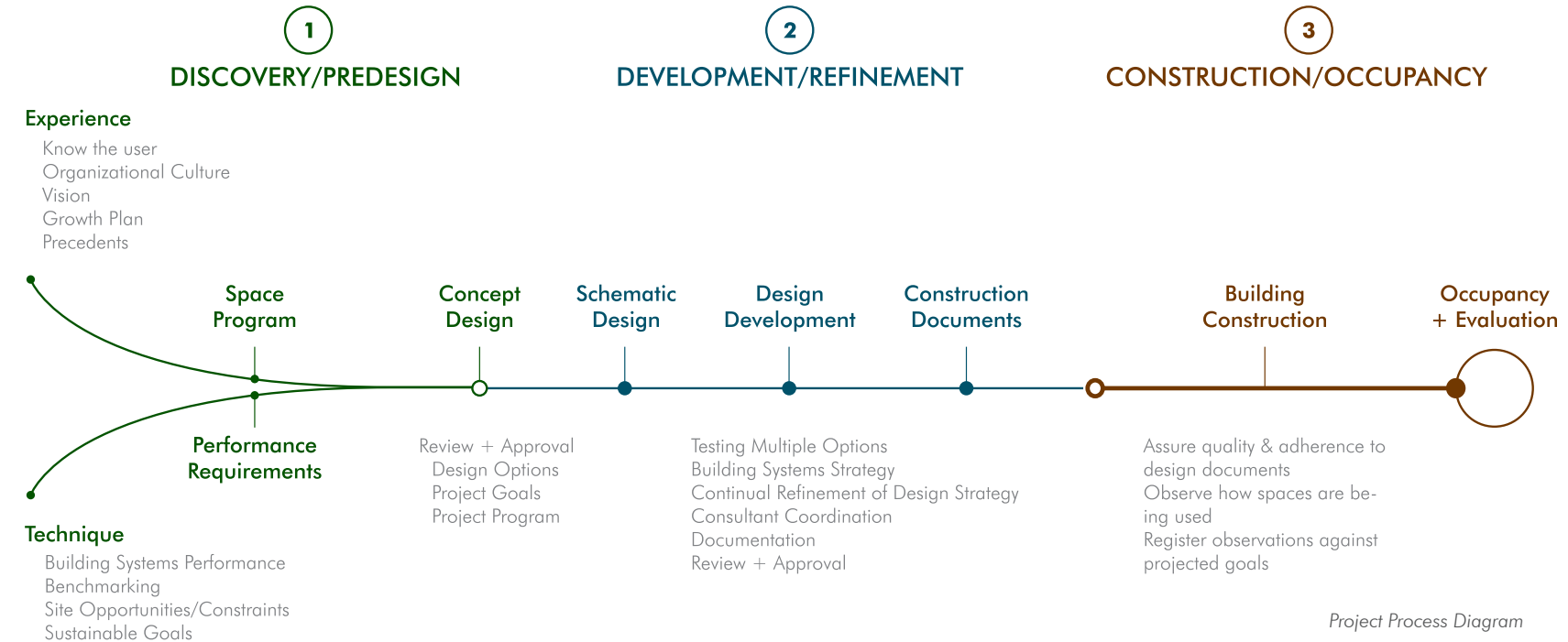
TRUST is a bi-product of experience, reputation, and relationships while allowing the opportunity to take design risks.

DX16 PROPOSED ACTIVITY

The team proposed a before and after perception exercise investigating the concept of a project, re-exploring the joy of sketching as representation and quickly generating ideas, a role play exercise, and a Model Mystery Box, provoking creative thinking with selective materials.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

The team believed change of perception activities coupled with new communication skills would result in more empathetic and creative design iterations.



Project Process Diagram

Informed Form Communication

Team: Mark Lee, Marcie Kinney, Phil Rowland, Matt Plecity, Aaron Anderson, Phil Babinec, Lowell Day, Jennifer Sebranek

As a group, team 2 first examined what Informed Form meant to the participants, particularly through the lens of communication.

We started by studying GBBN work we believed best exemplified this elevated quality of design we called Informed Form. Ultimately, the team found that exploring diagrams, in addition to the buildings, was beneficial to understand the most powerful forms of communication.

The team arrived at several main conclusions prior to the Toronto trip:

Form in buildings is most clearly communicated when the idea is focused and pervasive. For example, the use of light in St. Ignatius Chapel by Steven Holl, or the tectonic detailing of the Centre Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Center by Renzo Piano.

Emotional connections are extremely effective in connecting people to space. While technique can be inspiring in architecture, people connect most deeply through emotional experiences in the space.



St. Ignatius Chapel, Steven Holl Architects



Centre Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Center, Renzo Piano Building Workshop

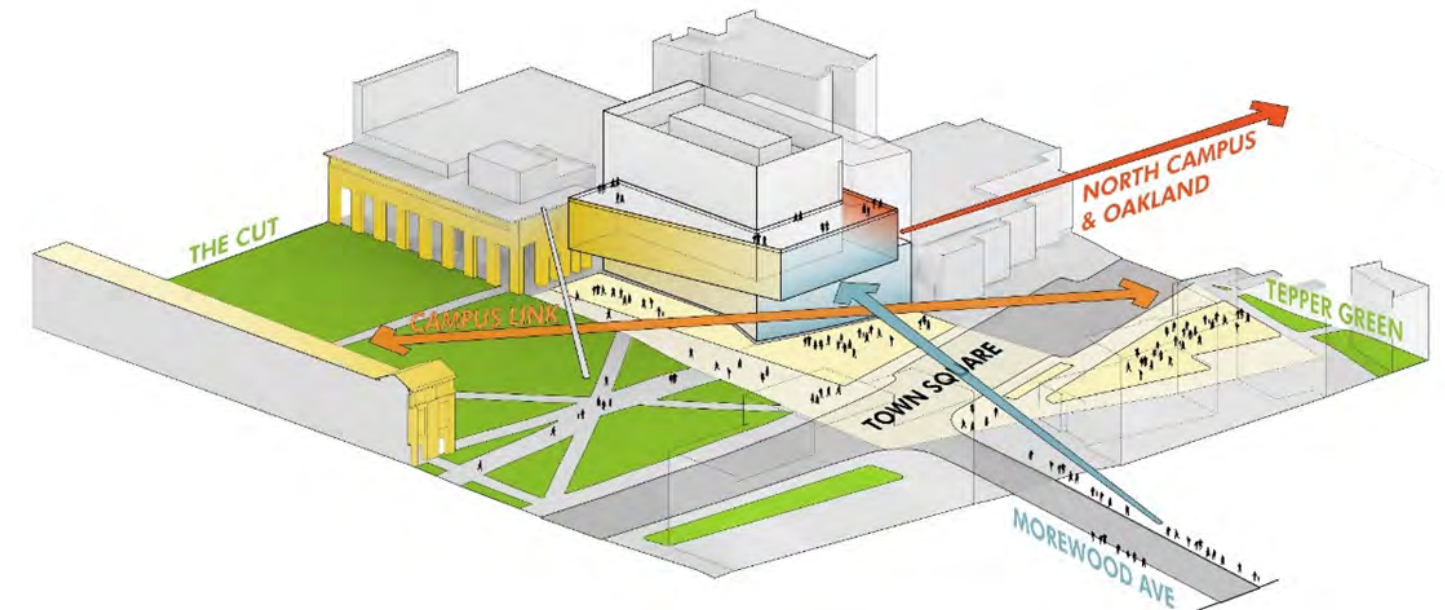
While technique can be inspiring in architecture, people connect most deeply through emotional experiences in space.

DX16 PROPOSED ACTIVITY

The team proposed an observation exercise documenting the use of a public space in line with GBBN's Common Space research – observing how people enter and exit space, move through space, and ultimately occupy and share space. Secondly, the observers are to document the detailing of the space – what makes it unique, comfortable, and/or useful? Lastly, the observers are to document the experience of the space: the daylighting, shadows, and materials.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

The development of the exercise idea was coupled with the notion that the resulting documentation would be presented in a storyboard method. These ideas directly contributed to the Common Space and Storyboarding exercises during DX16.



Reflection vs Reaction Process

Team: Dan Shapiro, Megan Mershman, Danny Leugering, Artie Spaw, Greg Pinter, Ted Huster, Mike Rioux, Chad Burke

Team 3 was inspired by a TED talk by Joshua Prince-Ramus of REX about the Wyly Theater in Dallas, Texas. He spent a lot of time discussing how the success of this highly effective and innovative building was fed by the architectural team 'Taking Agency' over their intellectual property. 'Taking Agency' refers to the ability to cultivate a strong position WITH the client and have both parties 'own' the stance taken by being armed with the knowledge to explain and defend it.

We found 'Taking Agency' to be an impactful concept when it came to eliminating the cycle of reaction that we often find ourselves in during the course of design. We believe establishing core ideas in the beginning with client buy-in gives architectural teams the foundation to present challenging or thought provoking solutions. This foundation works because proposed designs could be traced back to a position mutually agreed upon at the start.



Dee & Charles Wyly Theater, REX | OMA

The idea of agency continued to prevail in discussions. Taking a stance with the client about the project, became the catalyst through which trust and clarity paved the way for presenting thoughtful and innovative designs and achieving client buy-in. Establishing trust and communicating as clearly as possible was going to continue to allow us agency. That often the same deliverable could look different with different end users. Discussion even went as far as if plans were always the best communication tool to explain a design to our clients.

To summarize the great and varied debate at each team meeting, a flow chart to capture the thought process was created (below).

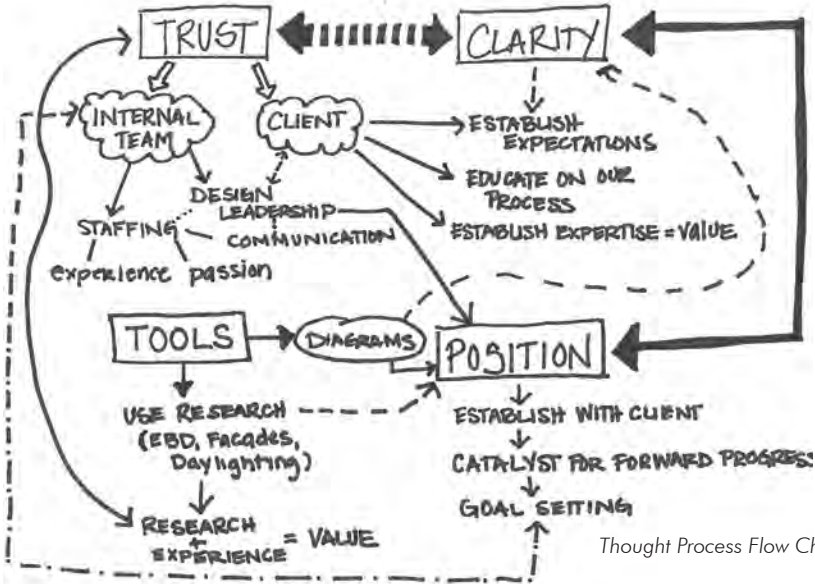
Taking a stance with the client about the project, became the catalyst through which trust and clarity paved the way for presenting thoughtful and innovative designs and achieving client buy-in.

DX16 PROPOSED ACTIVITY

As a way to get everyone to work on their communication of abstract architectural ideas, the team proposed a photographic scavenger hunt of Toronto. Taking images of key projects, elements and moments on the trip that could come together to tell a visual story about the expedition and formulate a narrative to explain them.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

The team believed that one of the best ways to achieve the main aspects of the flow chart was to truly be able to connect with, and explain our ideas to, our clients. One of the most successful ways to connect with people is via storytelling and hoped this activity would demonstrate this.



Thought Process Flow Chart

Reflection vs Reaction Communication

Team: Angela Mazzi, Sean Cottengim, Mike Lied*, Liz Schmidt, Carl Price, Renee Martin*, Chris Bowling, Mickey LeRoy

Communicating with someone, rather than simply reflecting back to them what we think they want to hear, requires a certain conscientious effort as well as empathy. Team 4 initially took on this communication skill by exploring its impact in both external and internal firm communications. We took some time to research how people process information as well as different types of reactions caused by the way information is (or isn't) communicated.

This research was further developed with a field trip to Hubert to talk with their VP of Organizational Development about how they strategically communicate as a global organization both in house and with their customers.

On this field trip, we learned several communication techniques:

- Communicate visually, not just verbally.
- Discovery of your audience is essential to empathy.
- Ask why, up to 5 times when someone makes a statement.
This breaks down assumptions they may be using or a tendency to want to give the "right" answer.
- Create "contracts" to manage expectations.
Review exactly what you plan to talk about and why. When you make a statement, remember to stay open to input, say things like, "this is what I think I know," followed by, "do I have that right?" Then explain what you will do to address that issue or item.

Through this work, we made the following conclusions:

- **Empathy matters.** Architecture is about listening and addressing pain points in order to get someone to see the value of your ideas.
- **Rules prevent authenticity.** You cannot prescribe change to someone and expect them to adopt it. Think of it as providing a compass, or guidelines instead of a map with only one right path.
- **Use your toolbox.** It's important for us to have a variety of communication techniques and to apply them as needed for a particular situation. That way, if something doesn't resonate with your audience, you can pivot to a different communication strategy instead of feeling unheard and frustrated.

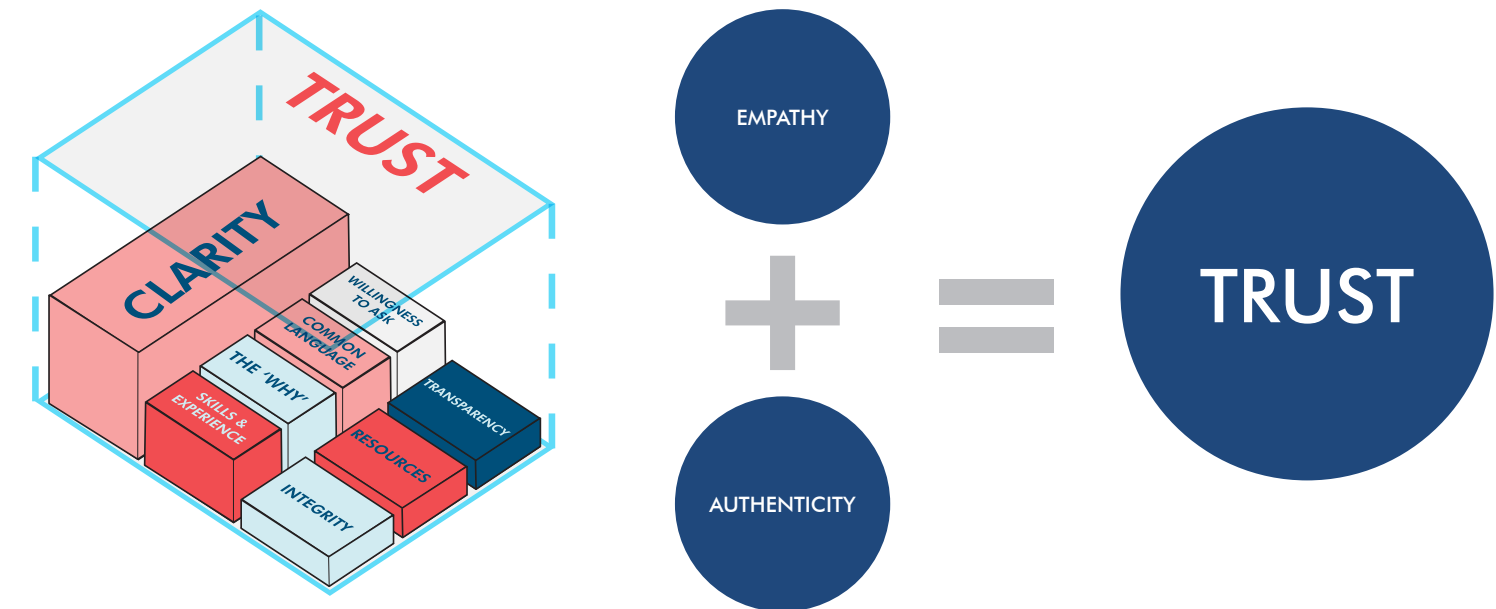
Architecture is about listening and addressing pain points in order to get someone to see the value of your ideas.

DX16 PROPOSED ACTIVITY

Role playing exercise: Simulate a tour of a building with representatives from owner, architect, and user to understand their perspectives. Enact scenarios where Expeditioners could experience and argue a different point of view.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

We hoped to develop moderating and empathy skills by understanding another's point of view, speaking authentically, and building trust.



Tackling the Issues



We had a few all-team meetings to work the topics in which we discussed locations to visit. After considering seven cities, the architecture and cultural experiences available, and travel costs, Toronto, Canada was selected by the team.

In March, each team presented their ideas based on their work on their theme and channel. Keeping track of the words that were used as each presented, we created a word cloud to capture emerging convergences of ideas. Four words rose to the top: tools, trust, clarity, and position. The four teams went back to work to refine their materials in terms of these four words.

Additionally, each team was tasked with adding three new people, one of which, had to have been on DX15. The idea was to include more of our GBBN staff, even if they couldn't join us on the expedition.

Making it Happen

After the teams advanced their work through the spring, our May meeting was used to translate this work into activities that could take place during the expedition and beyond.

Each team presented their work to date as well as suggested activities/locations to visit that would help make their work come to life. Teams were also asked to suggest a deliverable process or product that could be brought back to GBBN as a whole.

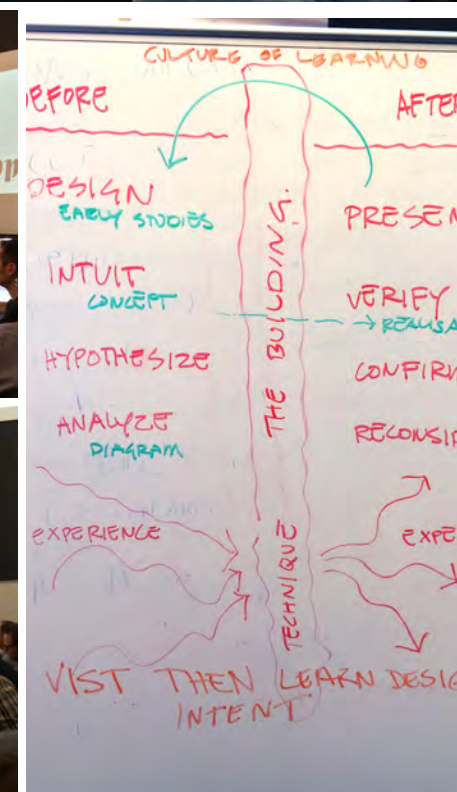
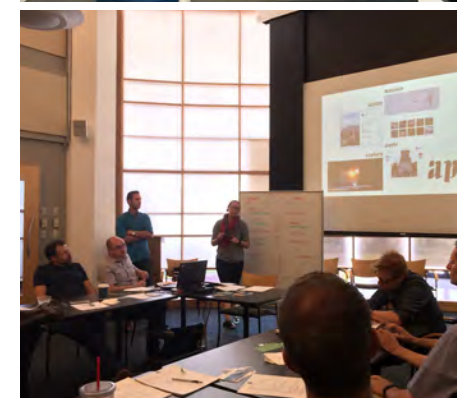
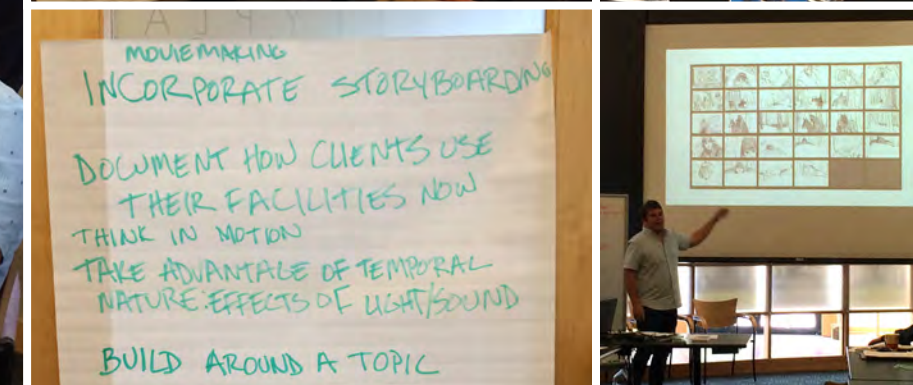


THE WORKSHOP

We held an all day workshop in June, just a few weeks before we set off on our journey to refine and finalize activities, as well as the locations in Toronto that would be the best settings for our journey.

Finalized activities for the trip included:

- Sketching: *Bar Raval*
- Before + After: *The Sharpe Centre/Donnelly Centre*
- Role Play: *Ryerson University Student Centre*
- Common Space: *Toronto Wave Decks*
- Storyboarding: *Board Room*





TORONTO

“Toronto is a new, brash, rag-tag place — a big mix of periods and styles.”

Lawrence Richards, a member of the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Toronto, has said “Toronto is a new, brash, rag-tag place—a big mix of periods and styles.” Toronto buildings vary in design and age with many structures dating back to the mid-19th-century, while other prominent buildings were just newly built in the first decade of the 21st century.

Toronto, with a population of 2.79 million people, is heralded as one of the most multicultural cities in the world and is ranked as the safest large metropolitan area in North America by *Places Rated Almanac*.

As of 2011, the downtown population was 199,495 people. Since then, 26,220 residential units have been completed, which includes over 21 million square feet of residential space. The completed units have the potential to represent an additional population living downtown ranging between 40,000 to 45,000 people.

According to city reports there are 76,687 additional residential units in the pipeline as of June 30, 2015.

Since the 2000’s, Toronto has experienced a period of architectural revival, with several buildings by world-renowned architects having opened during the late 2000’s. Daniel Libeskind’s Royal Ontario Museum addition, Frank Gehry’s remake of the Art Gallery of Ontario, and Will Alsop’s distinctive Ontario College of Art & Design expansion are among the city’s new showpieces. The historic Distillery District, located on the eastern edge of downtown, has been redeveloped into a pedestrian-oriented arts, culture, and entertainment neighborhood.



TORONTO, 1998



TORONTO, 2015

Agenda

DAY 1 - Thursday, July 14th

5:00a.....Depart from GBBN Cincinnati for airport

5:30a.....Meet in airport lobby for flight

9:00a.....Cincinnati group arrives at Pearson International Airport

- Baggage claim
- Transit pass purchase
- Travel to Bond Hotel 65 Dundas Street East

11:00a.....Depart hotel for CN tower

- Walk around CN Tower neighborhood and lunch- residential and financial districts: depart at 2:40

3:30p.....Cincinnati group arrives at Bar Raval 505 College Street, others join as they arrive

4:30p..... Sketch activity begins at Bar Raval led by “Sketchy” Ben Earls

5:45p.....Depart Bar Raval from Sharp Centre 100 McCaul Street

6:00p.....Arrive at Sharp Centre for self-guided tour

7:00p.....Day’s recap and dinner with your group

8:00p.....Enjoy the city!

DAY 2 - Friday, July 15th

8:00a.....Breakfast in hotel conference room and start of the day

- Intro to Expedition
- Review of previous day group recap
- Intro to Before/After exercise by Dan Shapiro and Mark Lee

9:40 a.....Depart for Donnelly Centre for Before/After site visit and tour

10:00a.....Tour of Donnelly Centre begins

11:00a.....Lunch on your own and free time

1:00p.....Meet in hotel conference room

- Intro to Role Play by Carl Price and Chad Burke

2:15p.....Depart hotel and walk to Ryerson Student Centre

2:30p.....Guided tour of Ryerson Student Centre

3:30p.....Interview with owner and student

4:30p.....Walk Ryerson Campus

5:00p.....Small group recap

6:00p.....Dinner and night life on your own

DAY 3 - Saturday, July 16th

8:00a.....Breakfast in hotel conference room and start of the day

- Review of previous day group recap
- Process and Communication discussion

10:00a.....Before/After Exercise by Dan Shapiro and Mark Lee

12:00p.....Lunch on your own

2:00p.....Role Play exercise by Carl Price and Chad Burke

4:00p.....Discuss: How does this impact our office culture small group activity?

6:00p.....Meet in hotel to depart for Beaches International Jazz Festival at Woodbine

DAY 4 - Sunday, July 17th

8:00a.....Breakfast in hotel conference room and start of the day: Review of previous day group recap

9:00a.....Common Space Prep Activity by Marcie Kinney

11:00a.....Depart for Simcoe and Spadina Wave Decks Toronto Waterfront 401 Queen’s Quay W

11:30a.....Common Space observations

12:30p.....Lunch on your own

1:00p.....Meet in hotel conference room recap of research and technique impacts to our culture

6:00p.....Toronto Islands/St. Lawrence Market/Distillery District

DAY 5 – Monday, July 18th

8:00a.....Breakfast in hotel conference room and start of the day

- Review of previous day group recap
- Storyboarding Introduction by Sean Cottengim and Phil Rowland

9:45a.....Leave for storyboarding tour - Bridgepoint Hospital + Branksome Hall

10:00a.....Storyboarding tour begins

12:00p.....Lunch on your own

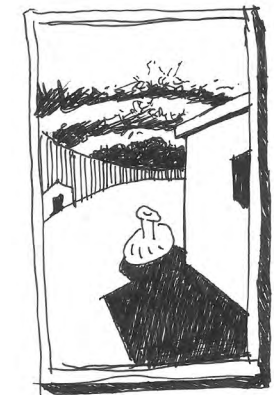
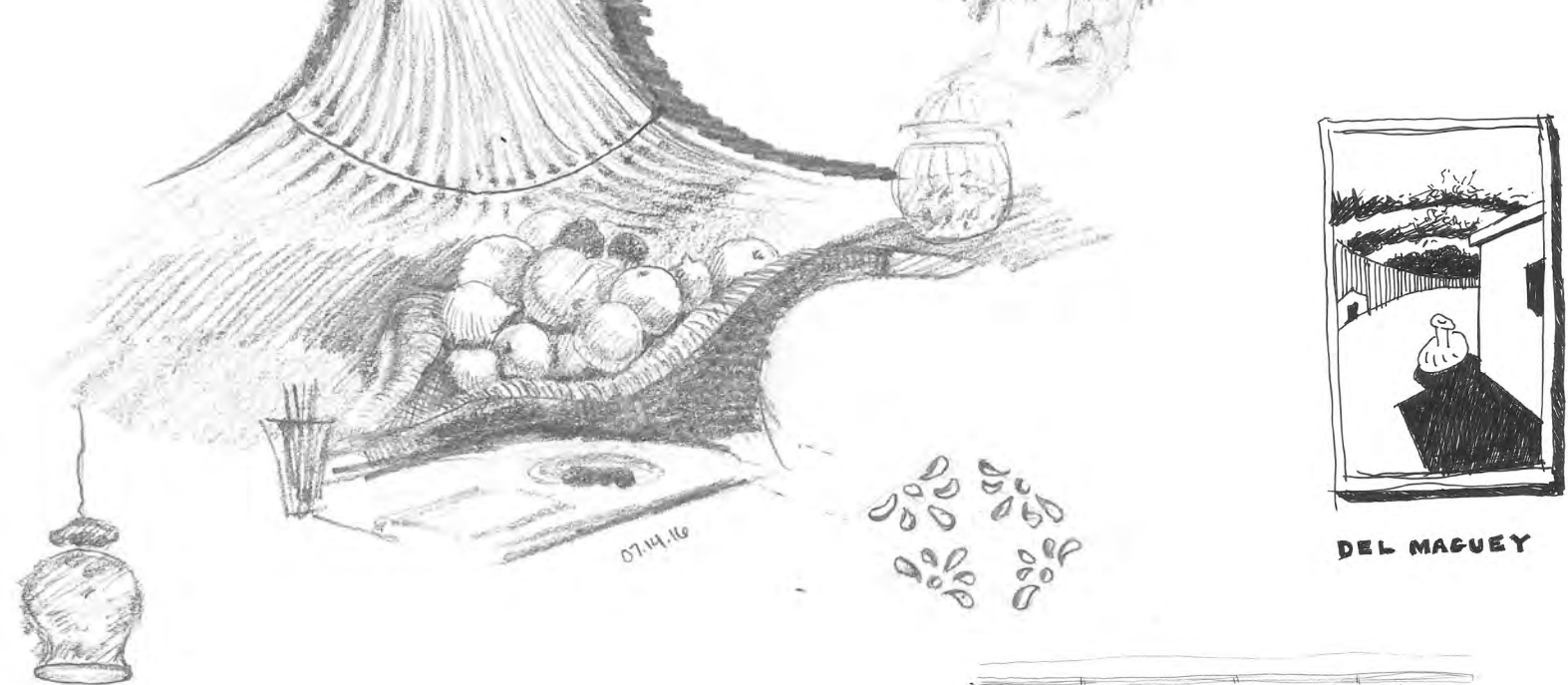
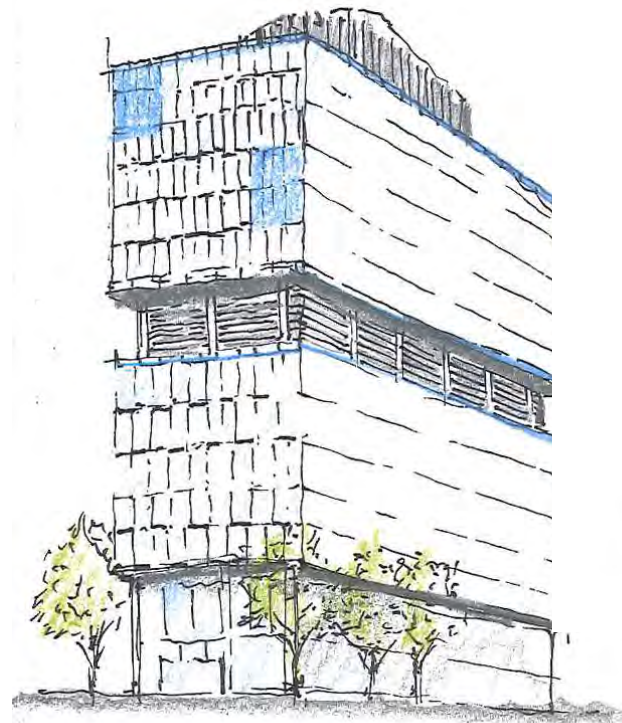
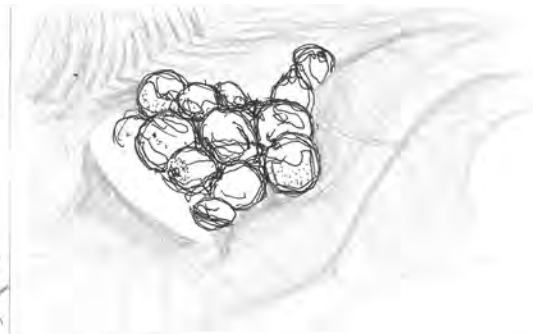
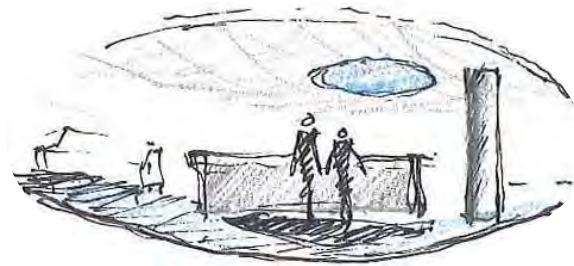
2:00p.....Meet in hotel conference room. Storyboarding wrap-up. What does this mean for Process and Communication?

3:30p.....Wrap up of expedition in hotel conference room

6:00p.....GBBN dinner with everyone

DAY 6 - Tuesday, July 19th

6:30a.....Depart from hotel to airport

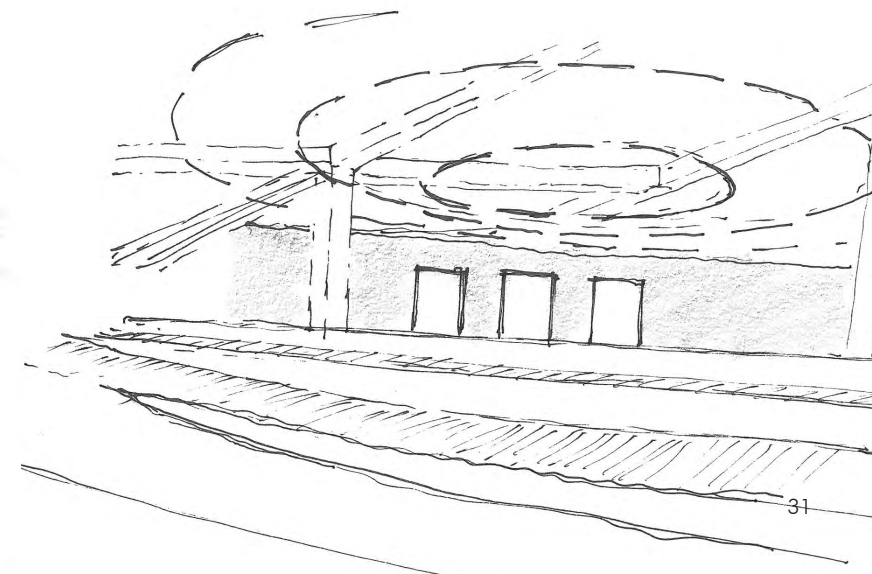
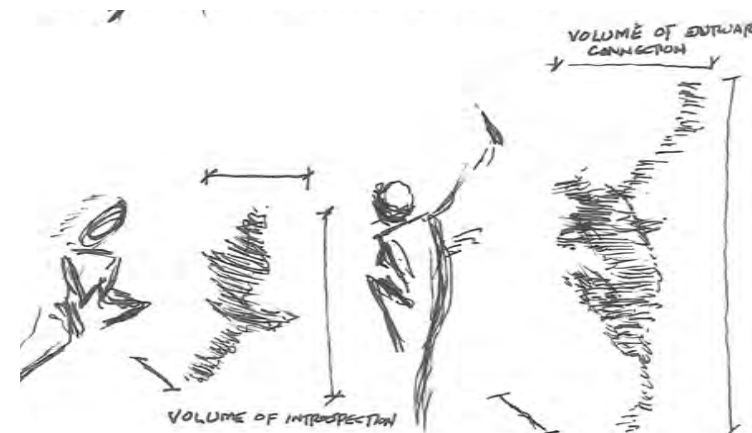
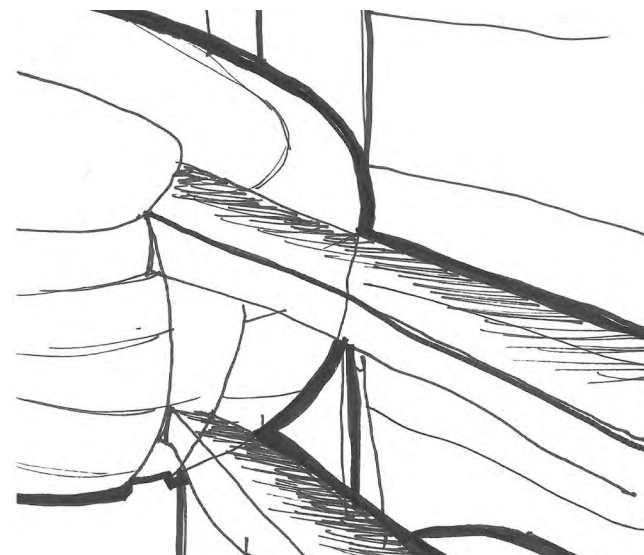
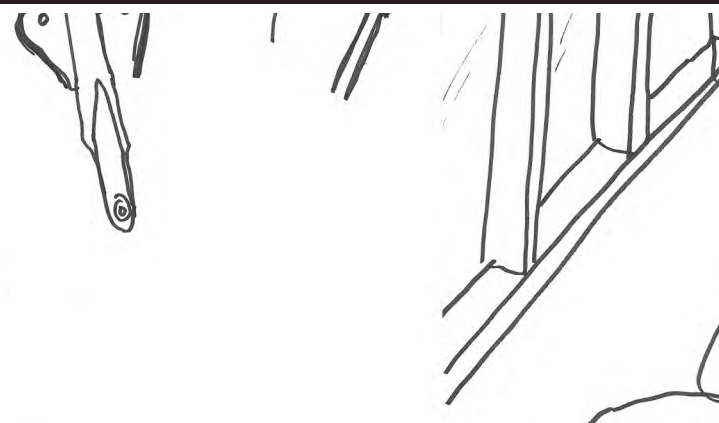
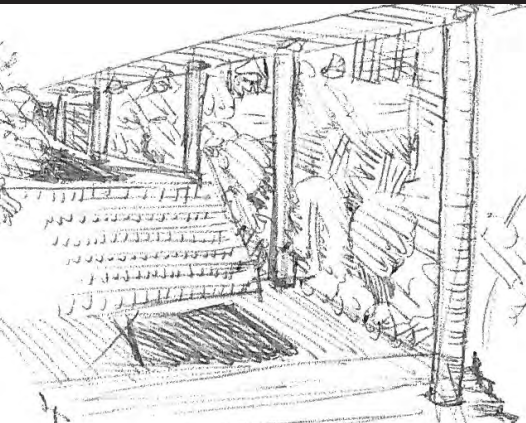
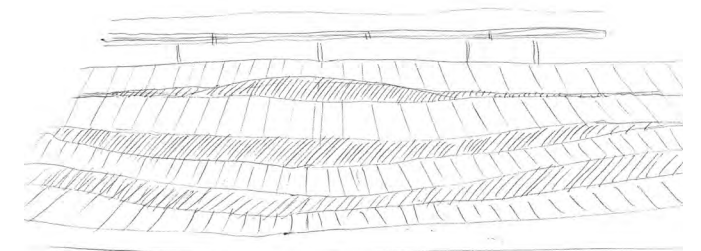


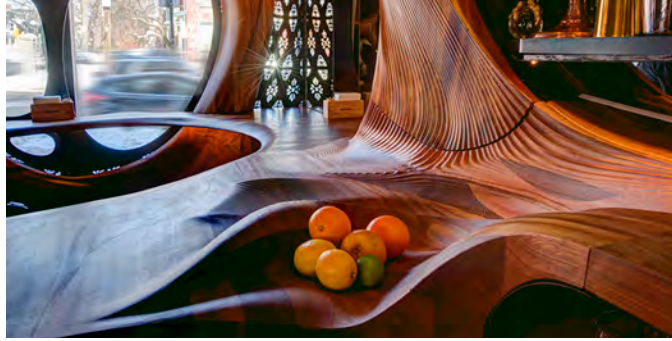
DEL MAGUEY

Sketching

The idea behind the sketching activity was to explore and exercise the skill-set of hand drawing to quickly communicate the essence of a building, detail, or specific experience. The exercise was kicked off during the team's initial visit to 'Bar Raval' on Day 1 of the expedition. Following this visit, the team was challenged with continuing to sketch through the remainder of the trip as we visited more buildings and urban spaces.

Take Away - The biggest success of this exercise was the reminder to practice our skills of observation. Sketching an existing space forces the observer to look closer, acknowledge, and understand intimate details and then decide how to visually communicate the essence of the form or experience.





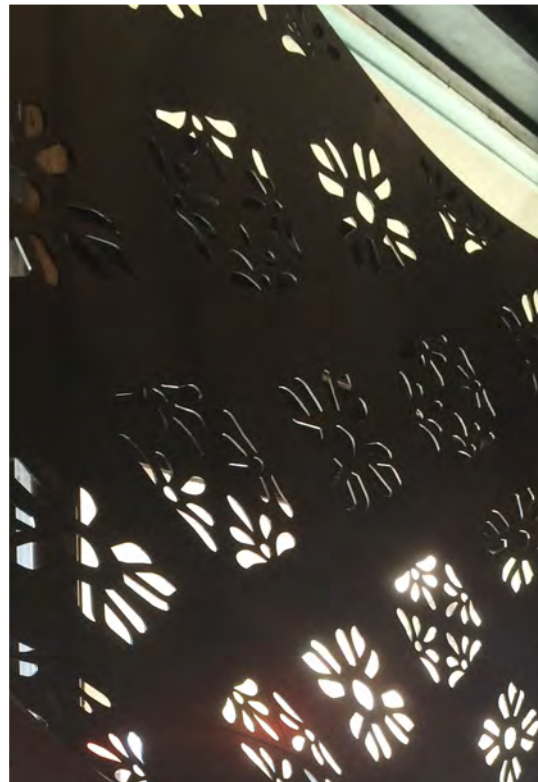
“Metallic Lingerie” is expressed through the windows while the mahogany panels are sculpted into voluptuous shapes...

Bar Raval

Partisan Architects

Inspired by the pinxto bar of the Basque culture in Spain, “Bar Raval” brings some of the Spanish Art Nouveau style bar to Toronto. It is owned and operated by Grant van Gameren and Mike Webster. The name comes from a place “El Raval” a once seedy district in Barcelona. The design references the plethora of cured slabs of meat and the anatomy of the chefs themselves: a tattooed muscle bound group of intellectuals.

“Metallic Lingerie” is expressed through the windows while the mahogany panels are sculpted into voluptuous shapes by the newest CNC technology. Lighting adds even more drama to it, accentuating the line work and bas-relief in the woodwork.



Take Away - In reality, seeing it in daytime, the panels, looked much flatter than anticipated from the images we saw online. However, the detailing of the materials was impressive for such complex shapes and a great scene for our sketching exercise.



The Queen-Richmond Centre West

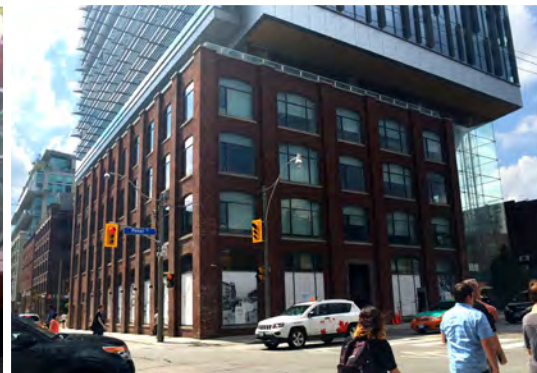
Sweeny & Co.

The Queen Richmond Centre West (QRC-West), developed by Allied Properties REIT, is a 302,000 sf 17-story office building. As Sweeny & Co. explored the siting of the building, they were very intrigued by how to maintain the existing brick industrial buildings that already occupied portions of the site. The final result was a modern glass office tower positioned above the existing context with a five-story atrium created by the voids left between the structures.

The project received a great deal of attention for the innovative approach to structure that was required to achieve this concept. The team devised a “Mega Delta Frame Structure” located at three key locations to support the 12-story tower above. The columns look reminiscent of “jacks” and are legible through the atrium’s curtain wall from the street.

The atrium boasts several other unique features including large scale metal tubes along the brick facade that deliver thermal control as well as lighting to the space.

Take Away - The old (existing building) and the new (overbuild addition) collide in a clean and experiential way that some of the other overbuild projects we visited weren't able to capture. Additionally, the creation of the atrium space and the feature “jack” columns work to amplify the awareness of the overbuild in a wonderfully unique way.



Before + After

This exercise had DX16 participants compare and contrast the photos + written descriptions (as seen in publications) of a building to the actual experience had by actually visiting the project. The discussion focused on all the buildings we had visited up to that point in Toronto. The following are the remarks on these comparisons.

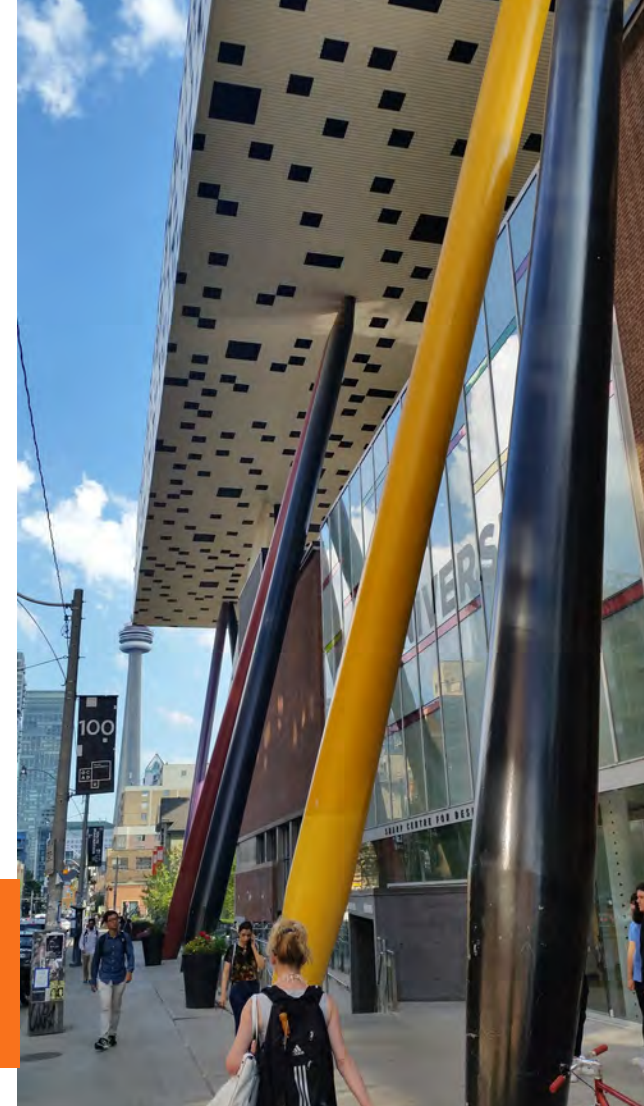
Sharp Centre was described as a “statement building,” having an impact of renewal to the campus, but we found the exterior concepts were not explored in the interior space.

Bar Raval also had high expectations based on its published photos, showing a space activated by curvilinear wood panels, but in reality, the panels showed much flatter than they were in the photos.

The Donnelly Centre and **the Ryerson Student Learning Centre** resonated as the most successful buildings to the team, fulfilling the expectations of a quality building with explorations of materials and textures with a thoroughness in its architectural detailing that met up to the published material.

After touring the building, we asked each member of the Expedition to describe the project in a single word. We then broke the group up into teams to write a few sentences about the project using these key words.

Take Away - We realized through this exercise that our words tended to focus less on architectural elements and more on what it felt like to inhabit the space (emotions, functions). Paragraphs composed using these words created a much more compelling and relatable message about the building. We learned to think more about the needs of the user as well as a technique to simplify the way we talk about our work.



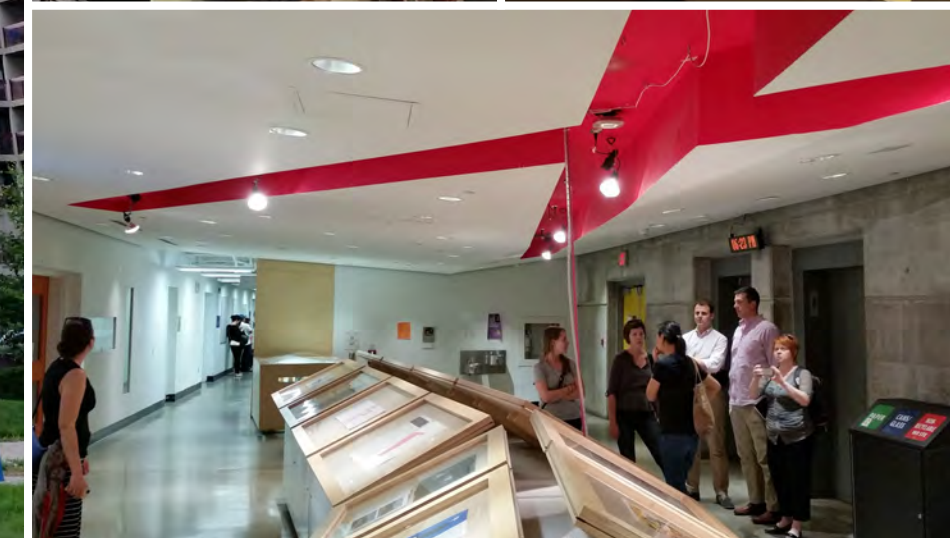
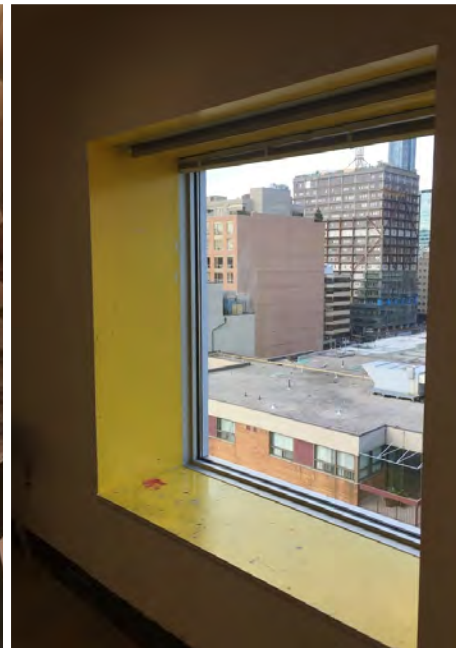
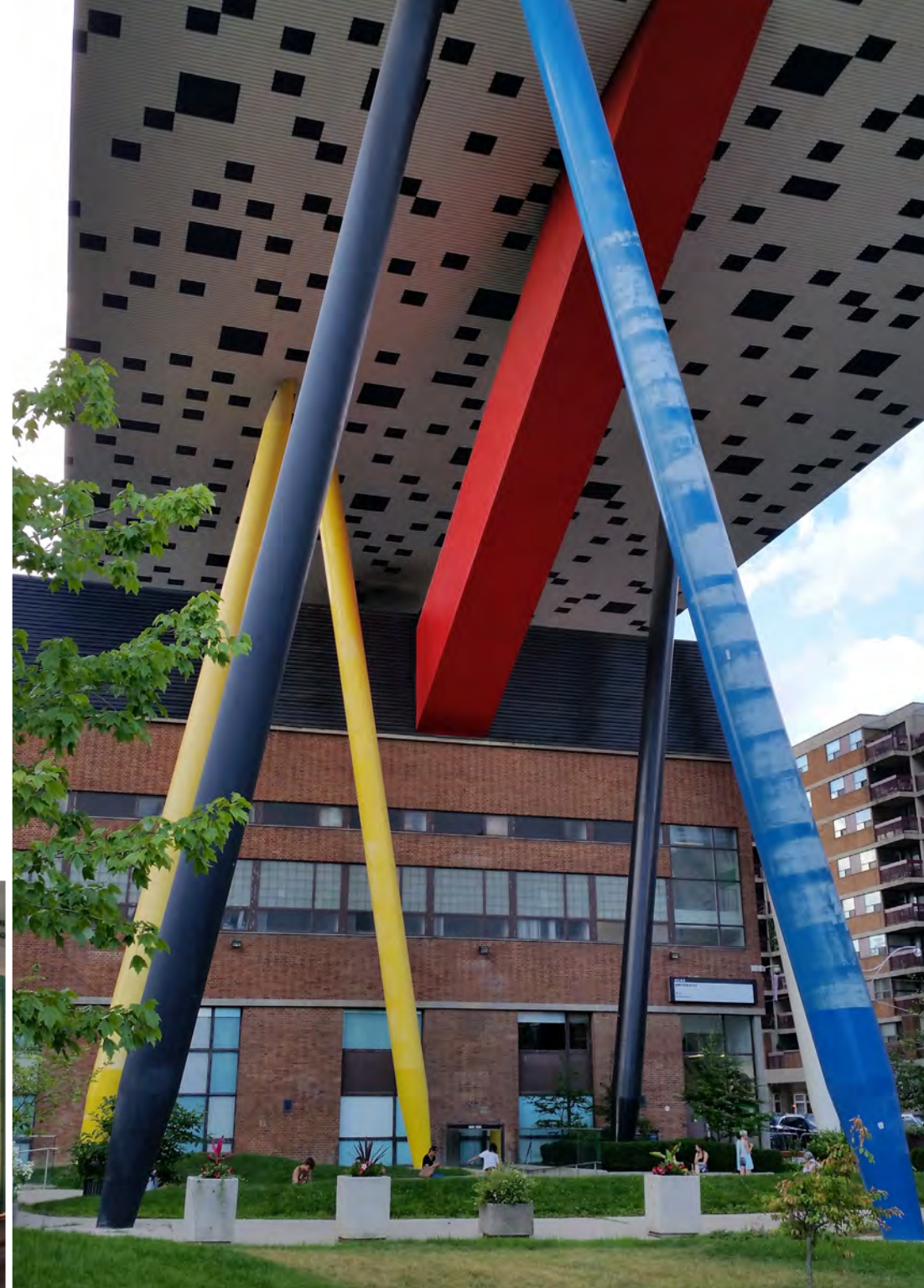
The Sharp Centre

Will Alsop

The Sharp Centre for Design is located on the campus of the OCAD University (formerly the Ontario College of Art and Design). The building houses classrooms, studios, and offices and was designed by the British architect Will Alsop. The "Table-Top" building was constructed as a cantilever over the main building with recycled pipe-line legs acting as supports on top of the school's original structure in 2004.

The elevated placement of the building gives a unique response to its presence on the street. It also provides recognition and an anchor point on campus while creating a covered outdoor public space.

Take Away - Despite the successful and unique implementation on the campus, the building seems to under deliver from the inside. It provides basic spaces that don't seem to invest enough in the opportunities of relating to the campus through the exterior envelope. Opening up the walls and/or the floor to connect to the public space below seem to be missed opportunities.



The Donnelly Centre



Behnisch Architekten

The Donnelly Centre is a 225,000 sf 11-story multi-disciplinary laboratory on the main campus of the University of Toronto designed by Behnisch Architekten.

The project was a competition won by Behnisch with the atrium space being a defining characteristic. The building adjoins an adjacent historical building capturing the public atrium against the façade. This atrium affords public indoor garden spaces meant to allow researchers to step away from the lab and enjoy a public natural environment.

Vertical circulation up through the spaces is encouraged with a series of monumental stairs that flank the skylight filled vertical atrium. A distinctive primary color pallet is visible through the double skin glass wall system that highlights the different lab and support spaces. In the upper levels, single and double story garden spaces characterize the layout, providing alternative workstations and reinforcing the indoor garden environment.

The project was completed in 2005 and has won the *Architectural Record* Award of Excellence, the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada's Governor General's Medal in Architecture, and the RIBA International Award. It is regularly referenced as one of the best early examples of high performance sustainability implementation in a higher education laboratory.

Take Away - The building was found to be a humane laboratory, encouraging interaction and collaboration outside of the programmed spaces. Light and color are artfully crafted to highlight specific spaces within the overall composition. While many of the sustainability features were cutting edge at the time the project was built, these features are less ground breaking in 2016. The public gardens, generous public spaces, and circulation are the defining characteristics of the building.





Role Playing

Prior to visiting the Ryerson University Student Learning Centre, the group was broken into 5 role playing teams:

1. Contractor 2. Facilities 3. Owner 4. Student 5. Users

Each team then toured the Student Learning Centre, keeping in mind their role (as mentioned above), to look for problems they might have with the design of the project.

After the tour, each group met to determine their top two issues with the design of the Student Learning Centre. These issues were then submitted for the next day's activity.



The next day, the activity facilitators assigned each team a set of 'issues' (generated from another role playing group). Each team prepared to defend and discuss the 'issues' they were given as the 'design architects' of the Student Learning Centre.

The 'design architects' were given 20 minutes to try and persuade/convince/resolve each team's (*Contractor, Facilities, Owner, Student, User*) issue they had with the building design - trying to get them to a "yes."

After each session, the teams and audience were asked what went well and what could be improved upon. The "Design Architect" role would then rotate to a new group and the arguments/discussions would begin again.

Take Away - This activity was a success because we were able to witness a variety of approaches, tactics, and styles as to how to move the owner/contractor's opinion to "yes." Many of the arguments discussed were very real and ones we see at many meetings.

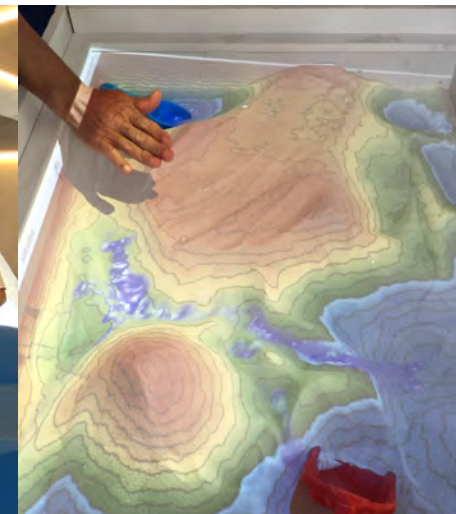
Ryerson University Student Learning Centre

Zeidler Partnership Architects + Snohetta

The urban, eight-story building features an all glass façade and an articulated elevated plaza. The sky level is open, bright, and relaxed; the garden level provides enclosed study rooms for individuals and group; the sun level provides large group study rooms - each floor has its own personality and theme. This creates a comprehensive range of environments that can accommodate every student's needs.

Each unique floor provides a variety of furniture types for students to use; whether open and interpretive with flexible furniture and terraces, or densely filled with enclosed study rooms for groups of four to eight people. The quality of the building design and interior matches the quality of the student spaces.

Take Away - There is no lack of passion in the detailing of the building. A few examples include the integration of the mechanical duct system with the structural concrete slab system, the frit pattern on the exterior curtainwall, and the playfulness of the bluff level with the large foam mountain for students to climb on. The Learning Center is a very successful design that provides the campus a home for each and every student to study, socialize, or just relax.





Wave Deck Observation

West8 + DTAH

The award winning wave decks on Toronto's water front were the perfect spot to test our observation and research skills as well as further our Common Space Research. Groups were split up among the three different wave decks to observe the patterns of the public using the space. From these observations, we hoped to glean the way people used the space and discern ways for improvement.

After the observations, the team took the time to have a discussion on research, its means and methods, and how we integrate it in our work. Findings from our research can drive design approaches, while projects themselves can raise new questions to drive separate research further.

Take Away - The team pointed out that anything worthy of being called research should be completed outside the project work, as it takes significant time, effort, and thoroughness to conduct real research well and objectively. On the other hand, our projects are ways to apply our research.

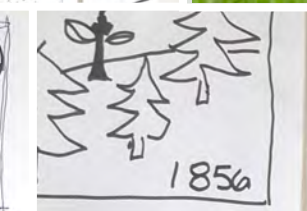
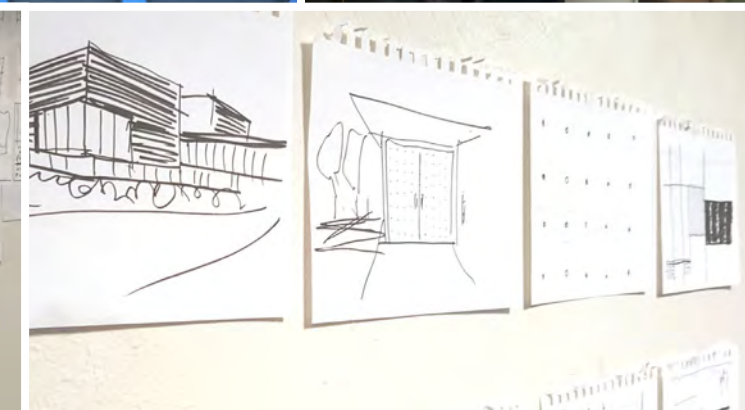
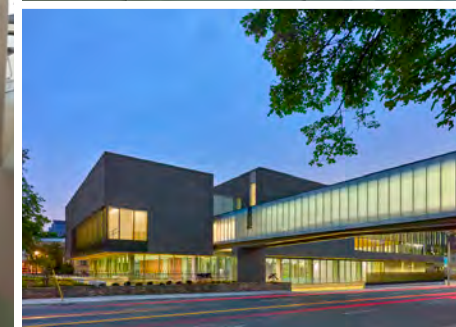
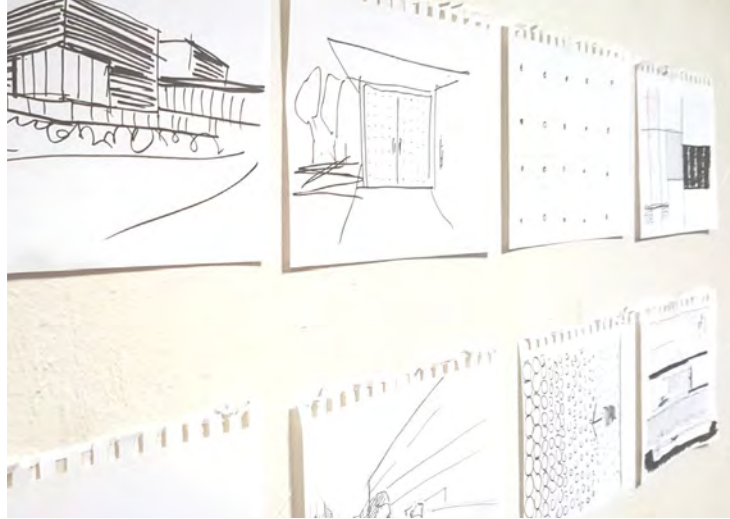


Storyboarding

The storyboarding exercise was introduced by taking a look at the Family Pet Center designed by GBBN for the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center campus. The story was from the viewpoint of the dog, excited to see its owner as well as from the child, excited to see her dog. The idea of storyboarding was to introduce and encourage this form of communication when thinking of design and the way in which we deliver concepts and design ideas to clients and users.

Expeditioners were split into separate groups. One group visited the Branksome Hall Athletics + Wellness Centre, while the other took a trip to the Bridgepoint Hospital. The groups were tasked with developing a storyboard of the building they visited. Stories could take on any angle they wished, whether it is a story of a user or an explanation of the design.

Take Away - Teams came back with a variety of results going from very diagrammatic to sketches of the building and specific experiences. The most successful ones were simple, straightforward, and had a clear story/message embedded that triggered an emotional response.



Branksome Hall Athletics + Wellness Centre

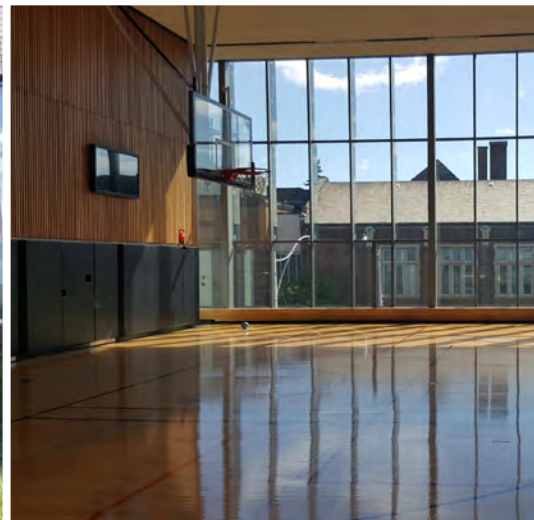
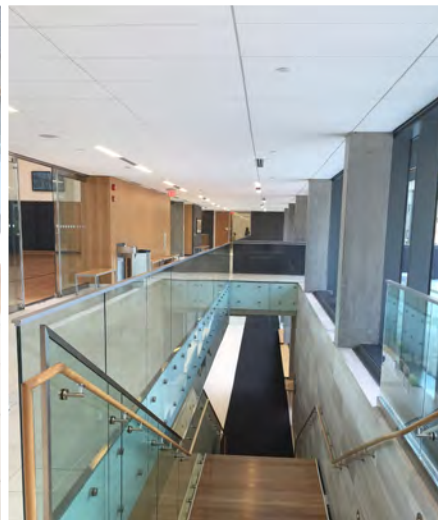
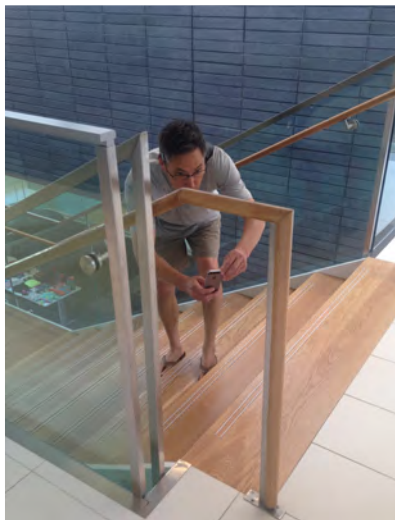
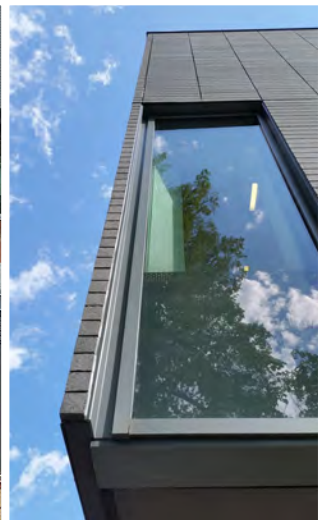
MacLennan Jaunkalns Miller Architects

Take Away - The team appreciated the attention to detail and the richness on the exposed materials, natural textures, and colors. Transparency and openness were key strategies to bring light into the space while connecting to the adjacent outdoor areas.



The athletics and wellness building facilitates Branksome Hall, a leading international Baccalaureate Work School. The building connects with a pedestrian bridge to the school's campus, that is characterized by lush streets and open green spaces.

A double-height space provides connectivity and views between the floors and the different spaces. Material and form have been extremely well coordinated to match up details and align textures and material dimensions. The building serves as a highly qualitative gathering place for the students where they can meet to play a variety of sports in one of the halls, eat in the grand dining hall, or relax in one of the green outdoor spaces.





Bridgepoint Hospital

Stantec, KPMB, HDR, and Diamond Schmitt

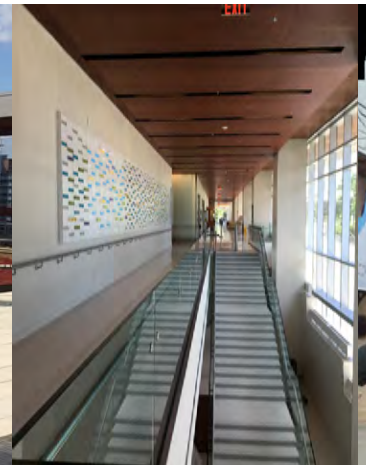
Bridgepoint Hospital is a physical therapy hospital designed to be a radically different approach to healthcare architecture, with a focus on access to natural light and access to the landscape, including an adjacent public park. The goal was to make patients feel integrated into everyday life. The hospital has won many design awards including an AIA Healthcare award.

Interesting design elements included the massing featuring window alcoves in the patient rooms articulated as a random exterior forms, and the connection with a historic prison that was converted into the hospital's administrative space.

We found the design of the rehab units themselves to be unremarkable, and a fairly basic approach to inpatient care (compared to the US). Canada still does not mandate private rooms. The semi-private rooms had two beds facing each other to ensure that every patient had a bed next to a window. This may result in other unintended consequences in the future.

We were impressed by the attention to landscape, visible in healing gardens on the entry level as well as several roof gardens. The hospital's engagement with the park was particularly well executed, and gives patients a vista to contemplate. The project ensured that patients have multiple quality spaces and that those spaces are associated with empowerment and increasing physical capabilities, such as gardening, a therapy pool, and a walking labyrinth. We also appreciated the attempt to connect the hospital with the community instead of closing off from it.

Take Away - The biggest lesson we took from touring this project was that the experience of landscape and nature is essential to healing, especially patients with long stays such as physical therapy patients that can stay on average of 90 days.



Video Documenting

The video exercise came out of an interest of the group to explore the capabilities of video to help with documentation, research, presentations, as well as using it to present our ideas or project concepts in a compelling way.

The exercise was set up similar to the "Sketching" exercise where a dedicated team of 5-6 people would make recordings throughout the expedition experience, gather all the video material in the end, and explore ways of compiling it into a single video.

The team worked with their phones to get the basic, rough material. Sound recording proved to be a challenge with these basic recording techniques. The team came up with creative solutions by using music and voice-over to come to a compelling video result.

Showing the "experience of space" through movement as well as determining the theme and story of the video were important drivers to the final product.

Take Away - We found that if a picture was worth a thousand words, a video was worth millions more. There were some aspects of a building or an experience that a static image simply fell short in describing. We believe this will be a vital communication tool going forward in discussing ideas internally and externally.



DESIGN EXPEDITION 2016 TAKE AWAYS:

Design Experiences

GBBN wants to establish a project vision for each project prior to starting the actual design of the building.

Informed by Research

Design goes from good to great by being responsible AND unexpected AND supporting the project vision AND evoking an emotional response.

...and have fun doing it.





DESIGN EXPEDITION 2016

ENGAGE, EXPLORE, DISCUSS.