

Beijing Urban Design Studio
Tsinghua University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
June/July 2004

Assignment #1

Site Observations, Clues and Criteria

The first assignment is to understand the site as thoroughly as possible in a short time. The intention is to know the site as well as you might know your own back yard at home. In order to do this we have selected six topics to use as a way of experiencing the site.

Each team is to study one of these topics.

1. Circulation and Texture of Streets

This includes all types of movement on both the site and the larger surrounding area, which should include pedestrian, automobile, bus and bike. It should include both the existing condition and any projected designs. Topics might include, but are not limited to the following:

- A. Automobile streets and intensities
- B. Texture of street patterns
- C. Parking issues
- D. People movement
- E. Bike movement

2. Housing and Living Patterns

This includes an understanding of all the types of housing on the site and the surrounding area. This is the living community of the site. Material needed to understand this issue would include:

- A. Types of housing and locations
 - 1. History
 - 2. Heights
- B. Conditions
- C. Densities
- D. Income groups

3. Commercial / Office / and Working

This is to record and understand the different types of shopping and work uses on the site. Areas to understand the site would include:

- A. Types of shopping and locations
- B. Work areas
- C. Types of major facilities in surrounding areas.

4. Public Facilities / Places / Landmarks and Experience

This includes all parks, public buildings, and historic structures that make up the public world. It is everything that does not have a private use such as housing, commercial or industrial buildings.

Issues might include the following:

- A. Major meeting places
- B. Nearby major public buildings, historic structures or monuments
- C. Sounds, sights, smells, water, trees....

5. History / Story and People

This topic includes the history of the site, the story of why this place is the way it is. Who lived here and what did they do? How does this site relate to other areas around? And finally, try to understand the people who live on and use the site. What are their needs and dreams? Questions might include:

- A. What do they think of the area?
- B. What changes would they like?
- C. Does the existing housing fit their needs?

- D. How long have they worked or lived in the site?
- E. Districts of the site
- F. History of form on the site

6. Site Map, Sections and Form

This is an updated base map at a larger scale that we can use for the next part of project. It should include sections through the site and plans:

- A. Building form and use
- B. Roads
- C. Sizes of vacant land
- D. Cross Sections / Elevations

Presentation

For each of the above topics the following should be presented on boards in a complete presentation:

1. Plans of site to illustrate issues
2. Architectural plans of housing, shopping, streets as needed to explain issues
3. Photographs or sketches
4. Statistics to support information (if possible)
5. Diagrams to illustrate information
6. One typed page of findings
7. One typed page of six criteria that will influence and guide the design at the next stage.

This assignment is due for presentation and discussion on Day 13 at 2:00 PM. Each team should make a concise 15-minute presentation ending with conclusions/criteria for the next design stage.