

Our Place: Using Education to Build Community

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My architectural thesis project is currently in the research and development stage. This semester, I will establish the premise and develop the research content of the project. Next semester, I will apply this research into the design of the project in the form of a designed building created based on the research and evidence I have gathered thus far. By March of 2020, the project will be in its final design phase, with a final thesis project book completed by the end of April 2020.

1) The first focuses on "interdisciplinary research" and has a 250-word limit.

On the online form, check either: Sustainable and Safe Communities or Human Development and Well-Being.

Then fill in the text box with a 250-word statement on how your work is interdisciplinary in that theme. Architecture is inherently interdisciplinary, so consider where your resources are coming from or how fields outside of architecture per se are informing your work.

Sustainable and Safe Communities

- My thesis investigates how a low-income urban community can be adapted into a didactic environment using both the community and its elementary school to create a bridge between early childhood learning and community. This will be done by exploring elements of the elementary school, the community and of architecture to develop an approach through which resources of the community are given the chance to become multifaceted. In doing this both funding elements and design tactics will build up a sustainable community model. In the chosen community students walk home more than not and this thesis aims to create environments that allow for safe and educational journeys throughout the neighborhood.

Human Development and Well-Being

- The environment created is meant to be didactic. As many students of the local elementary school must walk home, they are forced to walk through a deteriorating, unsafe environment. Using elements found to be encouraging to the educational development — connections to nature, spatial connection, and development through play — this didactic environment will be explored. To develop deeper understanding for what these elements mean to that of a student I am investigating the work of Maria Montessori on Nature in education, and research from Faculty at the U.Melbourne on school as a socio-spatial assemblage are also being analyzed.

All research for my thesis is to understand what school design is and how that environment can be extended in a low-income community to better the development of children and the well-being of the community.

ABSTRACT

2) The second is for your thesis abstract and has a 300-word count limit.

Thomasville heights is a displacement neighborhood for people pushed out by Atlanta's Urban Renewal projects. Thomasville Heights remains a casualty of a system of economic segregation. Under this system of segregation these neighborhoods are left in detrimental states. It is in places like Thomasville Heights where the phrase "place matters" becomes a call to action. A town of 6000 residents and only one elementary school, Thomasville heights is

bordered by multiple freight yards, a cemetery, landfills, and Atlanta's US penitentiary, just a 5-minute walk from that one elementary school. There remains a vast difference between that of low-income urban, and suburban school facilities that has drawn little attention.

My thesis examines the role of an elementary school in a low-income community. While it is accepted practice to use school facilities for community functions; community and educational design, remain in separate fields. By creating an interdisciplinary approach to community and school design; new strategies can be implemented to use combined educational grant and community development funding. By turning elements of the school inside out and extending the reach of the school into the community, this thesis will create a new strategy for designing educational neighborhoods in low income urban communities.

This calls for planners, administrators, and architects to take an aggressive position on integrating design practices between schools and communities, especially in low-income areas, where financial and familial resources can be low, or otherwise not available. By fostering a relationship at many levels of a school's environment, this project creates a framework for the design of a didactic neighborhood, developing tactics of designing with nature, spatial sequencing, materiality, and playfulness. Architecture can facilitate a learning experience that also happens outside of the school walls, resulting in an approach which promotes education and wellbeing for the students and the community.