Virtual / Reality: Designing permeable spaces for social well-being in the digital age

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Virtual / Reality

Designing permeable spaces for social well-being in the digital age

Thomas Kennedy
Virginia Commonwealth University
MFA / Interior Environments / 2016
The digital age has pushed people closer together than ever before. A device that fits in the palm of your hand allows instantaneous communication with billions of other human beings. People share everyday experiences, passing thoughts, personal photos, sometimes privately, often publicly. Distances between people and places feel reduced. Never has it been so easy to be so emotionally close to so many people.

But as digital experiences become routine, our collective perceptions of closeness and distance shift. As virtual communities become larger and more pervasive, so does our awareness of the actual distance between things. Even though humans can be genuinely close to one another on the internet, fragments of meaning, tone, and tangibility are lost in distance. Over-dependence on digital connection can erode local communities and generate apathy towards the real systems we depend on for survival.

This project aims to investigate strategies designers may employ to regenerate and recontextualize local communities in the digital age. Research draws from Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker’s writings on contemporary cultural theory, Ali Madanipour’s studies of public and private urban spaces, Rem Koolhaas’ essays on decontextualized architecture, and other texts that explore contemporary conditions of modernity and digitization.

Research suggests that today’s cities benefit from a softening of the barrier between public and private spaces. Porous and permeable boundaries between interior and exterior can allow dialogues to open and communities to grow, resulting in more enriched urban societies. These results are supported by a series of case studies that investigate how existing spaces of various types have successfully used forms of permeability to elicit community growth and positive social engagement.

This project seeks to explore how literal and symbolic permeability may be used to create community-generating interior spaces better suited to the digital age. Lessons learned from research are used to generate programming for two hypothetical clients in a mixed use building: a digital coworking space and a cooperative grocery market. Emphasis is placed on providing a suitable workspace for both clients, while maximizing opportunities for positive social engagement inside and outside the building. A layering of programmatic needs allows for a collapsing of the distance between office, grocery, interior, exterior, public, private, digital, and physical.
I open my phone while eating dinner with friends. An old neighbor of mine is stuck in a traffic jam.

He lives 200 miles away. We haven't heard each other's voices in more than five years. A writer I admire had his car stolen last night. He lives on the other side of the country and doesn't know I exist. I care that his car was stolen. An hour later, I probably won't. A livestream of a police chase in San Bernardino. I've never been to California. I'm in Dongying, Beirut, Ferguson. I've never been to Dongying, or Beirut, or Ferguson. A former student of mine just got a haircut in Shanghai. I don't know if I'll ever be back in Shanghai. Cable news reporters root through a suspect's apartment on the livestream. I know them. I don't know them. Nodes on a network. Distances between nodes. False intimacy. Virtual closeness.

The digital age has pushed people closer together than ever before. A device that fits in your pocket allows instantaneous communication with billions of other human beings. People share everyday experiences, passing thoughts, personal photos, sometimes privately, often publicly. Thoughts of strangers, celebrities, and politicians, are...
displayed alongside those of close friends and family. Distances between people and places feel reduced. Never has it been so easy to be so emotionally close to so many people.

But as digital experiences become routine, our collective perceptions of closeness and distance shift. As virtual communities become larger and more pervasive, so does our awareness of the actual distance between things. Even though humans can be genuinely close to one another on the internet, fragments of meaning, tone, and tangibility are lost in distance. Virtual closeness has the potential to breed false intimacy. As cultural theorists Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker (2010) suggest, “we are at once here and there and nowhere.” We are distant, but close; detached, but immediate; empathetic, but apathetic. Our culture “is constituted by the tension, no the double-bind, of a modern desire for sens and a postmodern doubt about the sense of it all” (p. 6).

Through its ability to connect, the internet facilitates a modulation of identity, and often a detachment from context. Our online personas are curated, moulded by a combination of how we want others to see us and how others see themselves. We are shaped by a closeness to people we’ve never met, tragedies we didn’t experience, places we’ve never been, and spaces we’ve never occupied. From a slippery distance, we are inspired, frightened, comforted, amused. We experience a placeless intimacy, without the context or distraction of local conditions. Instead, we thrive in non-local closeness and collective detachment.

For designers and architects, this detachment from context can be liberating. Without context, we can generate new experiences and new programs freed from the baggage of history. As Rem Koolhaas (1995) explains, architecture without context, “does not take its inspiration from givens too often squeezed for the last drop of meaning; it gravitates opportunistically to locations of maximum infrastructural promise; it is, finally, its own raison d’etre” (p. 515).
A lack of context allows for potential conceptual breakthroughs and programation better suited to disparate contemporary conditions.

However, as liberating as that lack of context may be, designers must still try to understand how spaces can respond to the growing gaps between digital and physical states of being. People are after all physical beings who occupy physical spaces and participate in physical systems, despite our increasing reliance on the intangible and virtual. If we completely disregard local context in favor of the digital, we become emotionally detached and apathetic towards the real systems we rely on for survival. How can physical spaces adapt to account for the retreat into the self caused by computers on our desks and phones in our pockets?

The answer to this question requires a renewed understanding of public and private spaces in contemporary cities. Urban design scholar Ali Madanipour (2003) argues that “technological advances have despatialized and fragmented urban space.” The emotional ties people once held towards public spaces have faded and been replaced by the financial interests of non-local investors and large scale developers. “Rather than a multi-dimensional, open-ended part of social life, public space is being used as an instrument to achieve a certain end” (p. 238). As a solution, Madanipour suggests creating a renewed dialogue between public and private realms to promote a more enriched society that is engaged in civic space.

Spaces, and the boundaries between them, must encourage a collapsing of distance between public and private domains that preserves the presence of both, but allows for a reconstruction of social wholeness. Wholeness is achieved by imbuing space with permeability, a porosity that allows for public and private, digital and physical, individual and collective to overlap in unexpected and ever-changing ways. Permeable space creates civic engagement, while allowing for a more reciprocal recontextualization of the digital and physical.
For interior designers, the heart of the matter lies in office design. Workplaces have always been the hubs through which modern society seeps forward, the messy intersection of social, commercial, physical, and now digital networks. But the defining characteristics of today's offices are just as fragmented as the digitized societies they operate within. The internet makes it possible to work for anyone from anywhere. Work is often placeless and without context, so the workplace has begun to steadily retreat from local conditions.

Contemporary offices are withdrawing into themselves, responding to the phenomenon of cultural distance by becoming self-contained spaces for serenity, security, and wellness. Koolhaas (2002) writes, “now that you can work from home, the office aspires to be domestic; because you still need a life, it simulates the city” (p. 186). Instead of engaging in civic space, offices are often detached and insular, emulating the sort of closeness an urban experience used to provide. Offices rely more on internal homogeneity and digital networks of capital than upon the local communities they physically sit within.

Despite this isolation, today’s decontextualized office spaces leave designers with several opportunities. Opportunities to work towards a layering of programmatic needs that redefine workspaces within the context of the digital age. Opportunities to find common ground between virtual closeness and physical community. Opportunities to identify new nodes on the network and to erode the distances between them.
In Jacques Tati’s *Playtime* (1967), there is a scene where a man on the street leans toward a security guard.

The man needs a light for his cigarette. The guard brusquely waves the man away. We think the guard is being rude, until the camera pans out to reveal that the men are standing on opposite sides of a large plate glass wall. The guard is waving the man toward a glass door, which he cracks open just wide enough to fit a lit match through.

The scene is comical, but it illustrates a frustrating contradiction caused by a material Le Corbusier once described as the fundamental material of modern architecture. In modern buildings, clear plate glass is often associated with honesty, transparency, openness, and connection. It allows architects to blur the boundaries between interior and exterior environments, giving outsiders an honest view of a building’s inner workings. In commercial settings, designers often expand upon these connotations by using glass to signify feelings of corporate responsibility, transparent politics, and morality. In theory, glass is a utopian material that reduces barriers and fosters connection.
However, as illustrated by the security guard in *Playtime*, glass is deceptive. A plate glass wall is present, but invisible. It allows sight, but not movement. It implies connection, but functions as a boundary. Despite its transparency, a glass wall is still a wall. There is a disconnect between the reality of glass and the feelings of openness the material is often used to convey. Within this context, glass is dishonest. The material allows surface transparency, but fails to provide a truly open exchange between interior and exterior.

Despite this failure, glass is not a material to be avoided. As noted by Le Corbusier (1935), “Glass is the most miraculous means of restoring the law of the sun” (p. 292). Plate glass walls allow natural light to flow into workspace interiors, bolstering wellness and productivity, while keeping humans in tune with rhythms of the natural world. This relationship is inverted at night, when glass becomes a medium through which buildings may glow like lanterns, filling the skyline with rhythms of the contemporary urban experience.
Glass is a vital tool for architects and interior designers, but it will often function with dishonesty if it is used as the sole or even primary method of establishing spatial connotations of connection. To create truly connected spaces, designers must develop strategies for eroding and redefining the boundaries between interior and exterior. Permeability must be layered upon a space to allow for a diversity of spatial readings, as well as potential interactions, via sight, sound, smell and touch. Once made permeable, glass ceases to confuse and obscure. Instead, it invites. It conveys openness and a desire for dialogue between space and place, public and private.

This conception of permeability is an extension of Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky’s (1968) definitions of spatial transparency. They explain, “Transparency may be an inherent quality of substance, as in a glass curtain wall; or it may be an inherent quality of [structural] organization” (p. 23). Permeability implies a layering of transparency (visual and organizational) with interactivity; a system of organizing space that uses transparency and opacity to invite, but not impose, serendipitous and meaningful exchanges between people, strangers, neighbors.

Permeability requires literal or symbolic movement across the boundaries that typically separate public and private spaces. But as Ali Madanipour (2003) suggests, “urbanism can be threatened both by those who undermine the public realm and by those who do not acknowledge the necessity of the private realm, as the two are interdependent and not mutually exclusive.” The key to a successful and sophisticated space is therefore “a porous and highly elaborate boundary which acknowledges and protects individual and collective interests and rights” (p. 241). For a permeable space to be successful, the designer must provide a continuum of individual and collective experiences, each offering varying shades of privacy and connection. This requires a diligent management of transparency and interactivity, and a masterful understanding of the potential poetics of opacity.
At the heart of permeable space is a careful, and perhaps tenuous, balancing of public and private needs. Separation between the two is condensed, blurred, and softened, allowing for shades of dialogue between interior and exterior.

By introducing permeability to a space, a shared experience of the world becomes possible. Links are made between the people who flow through the same physical reality. In our age of digital distance and virtual intimacy, permeability can allow for positive recontextualizations of communities, and reconstructions of personal and collectivity identities through serendipitous social exchanges. The invisible glass barriers obscuring our world become open windows, through which people and ideas may flow.
Herman Hertzberger
Apeldoorn, Netherlands
(1972)

The Centraal Beheer office building is an example of space that achieves permeability through form, structure, and materiality. As users move through the building’s interior, they are exposed to a series of semi-private and public structures that combine to create a sense of social wholeness within the workplace. Throughout the office, stacks of balconies rise vertically above a central public atrium. The balconies are open to the atrium void, providing semi-private spaces for working that enable employees to maintain a comfortable connection to each other, and to the public domain below.

The primary effect of these permeable structures is an increase in contact between users. Many of the thresholds that typically inhibit workplace interaction have been cut away, allowing for a significant softening of the division between public and private space.
Raw materials and ‘unfinished’ structures also provide employees an opportunity to imbue the workplace with their own personality in ways that liven public areas and generate potential connections with others. Open concrete blocks, transparent shelving, and other fittings allow users to publicly display plants, artwork, and personal trinkets.

The Centraal Beheer building is often described as a sort of office settlement or workers' village. Walking through the interior is more like taking a stroll through a city than moving within an insulated office space. Soft and hard materials, low and high ceilings, and narrow and wide pathways are used to give spaces a street-like public atmosphere, a private interior atmosphere, or an intermediary feeling that encourages permeability and movement throughout.
Teatro Oficina

Lina Bo Bardi
São Paulo, Brazil
(1984)

São Paulo’s Teatro Oficina is an example of space that achieves permeability through an overlapping of interior, exterior, and programmatic elements. The space is a people’s theatre that has historically sought to provide locals with a critical awareness of political and social issues. When the theatre was renovated by Lina Bo Bardi in the early 1980’s, its narrow brick shell was imagined as a single open area that could simultaneously serve as a stage, backstage, seating area, lobby, community space, and street. Programmatic needs have been layered such that the boundaries between users are totally collapsed. Scaffolding provides seats for spectators and mounts for stage lights. A concrete floor provides a stage for actors and a public walkway for pedestrians. The theatre does not have wings or curtains. Instead, actors, technicians, spectators, and architecture occupy a single stage upon which life is on display.
The renovated space was conceived as a street theatre that would serve as a connecting element between important pedestrian areas of the surrounding neighborhoods. The theatre’s interior is designed as an extension of the surrounding urban fabric. Large glazed surfaces emphasize this connection, while signaling the structure’s permeability to pedestrians. Trees have been planted on both sides of the glazed wall, which further softens the boundary between outside and inside.

The building erodes borderlines such that built form and exterior space complement and penetrate each other to create an environment of structural reciprocation. The theatre’s permeability encourages a strengthening of bonds between stage performances and the neighborhoods around the theatre.
Puesto en Construcción
Madrid, Spain
(2012)

The Puesto en Construcción coworking space is an example of permeability achieved through flexibility and interactive surfaces. The office sits within Madrid’s Mercado de San Fernando, occupying a rentable stall previously used as a fish market. The space provides a collaborative work environment for socially or politically active professionals who are dedicated to design, architecture, archeology, communication, and citizen empowerment.

Permeability is achieved through a folding glass wall that runs along the border between workspace and grocery market. The wall invites interaction and allows workers to create environments of openness and privacy as needed. When the wall is open, the workspace is directly connected to the sights, sounds, and smells of the grocery market. When it is closed, that connection is diminished in favor of a more insulated interior atmosphere.
A display counter runs along both sides of the glass wall, allowing employees to exhibit projects, documents, artwork, and plants, not unlike the seafood that was put on display during the space’s previous life. This subtle gesture strengthens the bond between the office interior and the marketplace in which it resides. It signals permeability, invites interaction, and allows employees to spontaneously connect with the community around them.

Through a single interactive partition, the coworking space allows for a continuum of private and public experiences, without imposing upon employees or market patrons. If workers find they need additional privacy, a loft within the workspace provides a secluded area that is entirely separated from the distractions that can occasionally be caused by a busy city market.
Motoelastico
Gwangju, Korea
(2009)

Motoelastico’s Signboard Hub business center is an example of space that achieves permeability through symbolic ornament. The installation was conceived in response to signboards that are hung from commercial buildings in Korean cities, often illegally. Entire facades are frequently covered by the colorful signs, obscuring architecture in favor of ‘subtitles’ that offer clues about the services available within each space.

Over time, thousands of illegal signboards have been removed and confiscated by city officials. Motoelastico recovered, cleaned, repaired, and reassembled the confiscated signs to create a business center that evokes the feelings a user would experience while strolling along the sidewalks of metropolitan Gwangju.
The signboards achieve a symbolic permeability by creating an interior space that is visually analogous to the exterior violation of the architect’s original blueprint. The human activity that leaked from the interior onto the building facade is now projected back inwards. Human serendipity brings a sense of wholeness to the building, interior and exterior.

The signs have been repurposed as desks, tables, walls, and partitions, but they are still reminders of other businesses that have called Gwangju home. When users work in the business center, the signs establish a symbolic connection between their activity and the collective urban experience. The office is a private space that has been shaped entirely by the surrounding public fabric. Ideas, rather than people, cross the physical boundaries between public and private space, and instill an interior sense of place unique to contemporary Gwangju.
The Seattle Central Library is an example of space that achieves permeability through programming. The project recognizes a common perception of libraries being under threat from a shrinking public domain and a growing virtual realm. The architects’ solution was to envision the contemporary library as a space in which information stored in all forms of media can be experienced simultaneously and under the curatorship of experienced librarians. New relations between typical programmatic needs are fostered to create a space that is at once flexible, logical, elegant, and in tune with 21st-century information culture.
Two sets of programmatic clusters, ‘stable’ and ‘unstable,’ were identified and distributed intuitively throughout the building. The five stable programmatic needs occupy five primary overlapping platforms, while the four unstable clusters flow through ‘in between’ planes and interstitial zones. The result is a space that embraces the ambiguity and complexity of the digital age while providing a robust environment for exploring and acquiring knowledge.

The interior redefines the library as an institution dedicated to all forms of information, new and old. Books, videos, digital content, and library-patron interactions are presented equally and lucidly. The permeability of the program allows for an intuitive and interdisciplinary layering of experiences that may evolve relative to each other, without forcing ruptures that would strangle the entire operation. Permeable civic space is allowed to emerge naturally around the program.
The site for this project is a modernist office building that sits in downtown Richmond, on the edges of Jackson Ward and Monroe Ward. The building is at the city's nexus of residential and commercial activity, and on the edge of neighborhoods that have long histories of racial friction and economic hardship. The site formerly housed banking and United Way offices, but is now the target of a new headquarters for the Virginia Commonwealth University police.

The site is particularly relevant to this project because it is in many ways distant from its surroundings and nearby communities, but it has the potential to become permeable. The building's placeless modern style, dark tinted windows, and large scale separate it from the historic architecture that occupies the rest of the block. However, the site's first floor is recessed and clad entirely in clear storefront windows, providing an opportunity to blur the boundary between private interior space and public sidewalk space.
Site
Parking
Ann’s Soul Food
Pants Plus
Vacant
New York Fashions
New Fish Market
Clay Convenience Market
Vacant
Vacant
Vacant
Cunningham’s Beauty Center
Henderson Bail Bonding
Big Herm’s Kitchen
The Cultured Swine
Shakoor’s Merchandise
Bodillaz To-go
J KOGI
The primary goal of this program is to achieve spatial and programmatic permeability throughout the building. The program was developed according to the business needs of two hypothetical clients: a digital coworking space and a cooperative grocery market. Emphasis is placed on providing a suitable workspace for both clients, while maximizing opportunities for positive social engagement inside and outside the building. A layering of programmatic needs allows for a softening of the boundaries between office, grocery, interior, exterior, public, and private.

A cluster of programmed spaces are identified as areas to be shared between office and grocery employees. These shared spaces provide opportunities for social engagement between workers that would not be possible if the two clients were treated as strictly separate operations.

Another cluster of programmed spaces are identified as areas that should be publicly permeable. These areas provide opportunities for the program to generate community engagement by making the building more open to public activity.
Client Profiles

Digital Coworking Space
- Employees: 40 - 80 (grouped in firms of 1-16 people)
- Services: App design and development, Web design and development, Digital marketing, Digital consulting
- Clients: Primarily non-local, Small businesses, Corporations

Cooperative Grocery Market
- Employees: 10 - 20
- Services: Grocery retail, Prepared food service, Community outreach
- Clients: Primarily local, Individuals, Neighbors, Communities
Office Program

Coworking Stations
B, 4800 sq ft
Max. Occupancy = 80
Open and semi-private spaces for individual and collaborative work, designed to accommodate firms of 1 - 16 people.

Breakout Spaces
B, 1000 sq ft
Max. Occupancy = 16
Open and semi-private spaces for quiet working, design pinups, small meetings, and spontaneous collaboration.

Meeting Spaces
B, 1200 sq ft
Max. Occupancy = 20
Flexible spaces for private meetings, collaborative activities, and individual working.

Reception
B, 500 sq ft
Max. Occupancy = 8
A reception desk and waiting area for greeting, engaging, and connecting.

Office Support
B, 500 sq ft
Max. Occupancy = 8
Spaces for mail, supplies, copying, and printing.

Filing + Storage
130 sq ft
A space for important document filing and other storage.
Grocery Retail

M, 4000 sq ft
Max. Occupancy = 110
A large space for selling and storing grocery products. Refrigerated and non-refrigerated areas are required. The space should consist of aisles and islands, and should provide appropriate circulation for shoppers.

Prepared Foods

F-1, 1000 sq ft
Max. Occupancy = 8
Small kitchens and retail counters for freshly prepared baked goods, deli selections, and soups.

Checkout

M, 400 sq ft
Max. Occupancy = 10
Areas for cashiers and customer checkout queues.

Private Office

B, 180 sq ft
Max. Occupancy = 3
A shared private office for grocery management and staff. The office will accommodate administrative, accounting, and other managerial duties. It will be adjacent to a customer service counter that is near the store entrance and open to the main retail space.

Office Support

B, 120 sq ft
Max. Occupancy = 2
Space for mail, supplies, copying, printing, and cash safe.
Shared Program

Break Room
B, 600 sq ft
Max. Occupancy = 10
A semi-private space for employees to rest, relax, gather, and converse. Lockers will be available for storage of small personal belongings.

Kitchenette
B, 400 sq ft
Max. Occupancy = 6
A space for food storage, light cooking, and eating.

Restrooms
1000 sq ft
Female, male, and gender neutral restrooms.

Security Kiosk
B, 60 sq ft
Max. Occupancy = 1
A small desk for security guards.

Janitorial
125 sq ft
A space to store cleaning supplies and janitorial equipment.

Utility
80 sq ft
A utility closet.
Lobby Amphitheatre
A-3, 4000 sq ft
Max. Occupancy = 250
A space that mediates between grocery, office, interior, exterior, public, and private. The lobby should extend to the exterior and overlap with the sidewalk outside. A portion of the lobby will be designed as a publicly permeable gathering, dining, and conference space.

Free Coffee Bar
M, 400 sq ft
Max. Occupancy = 10
A space for self-service coffee and tea, located adjacent to the lobby and grocery entrance. The coffee bar is intended to be a magnet to which activity is drawn, so it must be centrally located, open to the public, and easily accessible by office workers.

Roof Garden
A-5, 6000 sq ft
Max. Occupancy = 350
The roof garden will be designed as a privately owned public space. The area should provide opportunities for social engagement that fosters connections between grocery, office, interior, exterior, public, and private. This activity may be manifested through performative spaces, or areas for gathering, resting, dining, and exchanging.
**Construction Type**
Type II
Non-combustible concrete structure with unprotected steel beams and rubber roof membrane

**Project Type**
Mixed Use (Business, Mercantile, and Assembly)

**Areas (ft²)**

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<th>Level</th>
<th>Gross</th>
<th>Net*</th>
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<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
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<td>4,137</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>11,375</td>
<td>6,825</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>11,375</td>
<td>6,825</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roof</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41,020</td>
<td>24,612</td>
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*60% efficiency

**Sink Fixtures**

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<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>1 lavatory + 1 service sink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>2 lavatories + 1 service sink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>2 lavatories + 1 service sink</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roof</td>
<td>2 lavatories + 1 service sink</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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**Max. Occupancy**

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<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roof</td>
<td>350</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>850</td>
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**Accessibility**
All spaces except janitorial room, utility closets, server room, and filing room will provide ADA accessibility.

**Drinking Fountains**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>1 drinking fountain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>2 drinking fountains</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>2 drinking fountains</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roof</td>
<td>1 drinking fountain</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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**Toilet Fixtures**

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>2 gender neutral</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>2 female / 2 male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>2 female / 2 male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roof</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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**Egress Stairs**

70 inches (2 stairways per floor)

**Considerations**
Storage for the grocery store will be in the basement level. This is not included in the project scope. However, the grocery retail space will need easy access to storage areas. The space plan should account for loading and delivery areas.
Permeable systems/pink flamingos.
Networked structures/helping hands.
Malleable forms/tangible identities.
Open windows/ fresh air.
Bubble Diagram Concepts
Spatial Metaphors

- Train Car
- Watermelon Seeds
OVERLAPS
garden brings public and all
break room brings guests and office staff
meeting areas for all

A PEACEFUL FLOOR
FOR GATHERINGS

OVERLAPS-
break room brings group staff
no meeting rooms - these are
on other floors to encourage movement

A QUIET FLOOR
FOR WORK

OVERLAPS
coffee bar brings office staff
grocery brings public and all
atrium connection

A PUBLIC FLOOR
FOR COMMERCIAL

OVERLAPS (for all)
meeting spaces bring office + grocery staff/potlucks bring public and all
areas use of atrium

AN ENERGIZED FLOOR
FOR PERMEABILITY
Lobby
Invitation and wholeness

The lobby is a unifying space that brings wholeness to the building. A large atrium is central to the space, providing natural light and vertical connections between users. The atrium is cut between the site's four central columns. Structures for meeting, working, shopping, and circulating ebb and flow into the atrium as terraced blocks. Design elements emphasize feelings of connection, rhythm, energy, and humanity. The lobby will invite Broad Street pedestrians, grocery customers, and office workers to move through the space and engage with each other.
A hub of movement and activity

Grocery
Overlap and connection

The grocery market occupies the middle floor of the building. It is a magnet to which activity is drawn. The market serves as a nexus between interior, exterior, neighborhood, office, public, and private. The store brings local activity into the space, and creates opportunities for softening the separation between office space and public space. The grocery store will provide plentiful connection to interstitial zones that generate positive collisions between office workers and local community members.
The office is the most private space in the building, but that privacy is softened by permeability. Workspaces are positioned and designed to provide a continuum of individual and collective experiences, each offering varying shades of privacy and connection. Some workstations press against the atrium to generate visual and sensory connections to the public activity below. Others retreat towards the perimeter to provide spaces for solace and quiet working. Workers are able to move between a variety of workspace structures depending on individual needs. Emphasis will be placed on maintaining some form of community connection throughout the office, even in private spaces.
Stair Studies
Intersection and movement
H Reception
I Workstations
J Public Workspace
K Semi-Private Workspace
L Private Workspace
M Break Room
N Performance Area
A public space for relaxing, gathering, performing, and farming.

A coworking space for small businesses in the digital sector.
A cooperative grocery market that grows fresh produce and organizes community outreach projects.

Spaces for community gathering, large meetings, and individual solace.
Lobby
Gathering Spaces

Greywater lakes recessed into the lobby floor encourage exploration, discovery, and connection. Water is harvested from rain and planter runoff. Seating is arranged to provide a continuum of public and private experiences – from serendipitous conversations with neighbors to moments of quiet, private solace.
Grocery
Community Coffee Bar

Free coffee provides a natural point of gathering, so it has been programmed as a focal point of the layered atrium space. Smells of fresh coffee may waft from grocery to office to lobby, drawing users to a central point of collision and connection.
Edible Plants

a watermelon on a hot day

The atrium skylight provides plentiful light for growing shade-tolerant crops throughout the building. Businesses renting coworking space are encouraged to participate in growing and harvesting fresh herbs and vegetables. The care of plants provides moments that require users to look up from their digital work to engage with physical systems. Periodic harvests bring together office, grocery, and community.
Poetics of Opacity
a train car on a rainy day

A continuum of transparent, opaque, open, closed, and layered structures provides users with moments of energetic agitation and quiet solace throughout the space. Users are able to engage in activity or work independently as needed, without totally severing connection to each other.
Section
looking Northwest
Section
looking Northeast
A building that is more connected to the city and to itself.

Three-dimensional model as diagram

Staggered terraces for generating connection
A thesis exhibition on my 28th birthday.
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**Junkspace.**  
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**Notes on Metamodernism.**  
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Further Reading

Bo Bardi, L. (2012).  
**Stones Against Diamonds.**  

**Hippie Modernism: The Struggle for Utopia.**  
Minneapolis, MN: Walker Art Center.

**Lessons for Students in Architecture.**  

**Delirious New York: a retroactive manifesto for Manhattan.**  

**Complexity and contradiction in architecture.**  


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Thank You
Chelsea Caumont Camden
Whitehead Roberto Ventura
Christiana Lafazani Rob Smith
Sara Reed Rab McClure Shari
Perago Chris Arias Eleanor
Barton Eline Warren Sarah Webb
Merian O’Neil Ashley Whitehead
Leah Embrey Nilufar Makham-
atova Jessie Walton John Ma-
linoski Kristen Caskey Kevin
Haley Potato Jasio Stefanski
Tyler King Ryan Rinn Wasim Sal-
man Tim Rogers Prince Lauren
Kennedy David Kennedy Barbara
Naef Fred Naef Derick Naef Robert
E Simon Erin Wallace Andy
Eames Glenn Canning Norman
Nogales Jake Nahorniak Peter
Choi Teddy Schmitz Young Thug
Miranda Leung Kerrie Harlow
Denzel Boyd Julia Rubert Kasha
Killingsworth Caroline Norton
David Bowie Samuel Jason
Adkins Stephanie Schapowal
Michael Walker Katerina Check
Catherine Cozzi Shia LaBeouf
Alex Teschel Aprille Zammit
Michelle Owusu Olivia Walthall
Evita Giebeler Kanye West Ji
Jeong Soyun Kang Kevin Ball
Anisa Kannan Jordan Greene
Ren Hoëk Stimpson Cat Matt
Cheadle Ardilla Deneys Bo Peng
Francisco Jose Besa Vial Cas-
sandra Ellison Sirah Yoo Sledge
I want to bring the outside in.
The 'outside', in this case, not meaning nature or light or air.'outside' meaning people, community, society, humanity, individuality.

no-stop city imagined a world where placeless, imperceptible, catastatic design expands outward to infinity. The place becomes placeless.

I want to imagine a world where local, expressive, humanizing design expands inward. The placeless becomes place.

no-stop city argues that blankness and featurelessness are liberating. "Allowing us to be anyone, anywhere."

I argue that blankness and featurelessness are oppressive. "Allowing us to be no-one, nowhere."

Koolhaas calls the phenomenon Junkspace. Materialism ends in a meltdown.

To Koolhaas, I ask: Let's say you're right... We still have to live, don't we? To try to be happy? Try to create? Try to be part of a community?

I want to bring the outside in.
I want to collapse isolation.
To collapse distance.
Between objects, ideas, people.
So much is lost in distance.
Memory, tone, body language, community.

Collapsing distance restores wholeness.
It is a reconstructive process.
Admittedly, a sometimes problematic process.
But it allows us to reconstruct a sense of self and a sense of community.

At a time when isolation and distance create a feeling of culture and self coming apart at the seams.

(scateboarders and graffiti bombers are the great liberators)

(is my brain junkspace?)

(oscillation)

(an imperfect reconstruction)

(identity)