



MILWAUKEE STORIES

BUILDINGS-LANDSCAPES-CULTURES
UW MILWAUKEE AND MADISON

2011 BLC STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

MAY 12, 2011

10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

ARCHITECTURE RESOURCE CENTER
AUP 146 SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN
PLANNING, UW MILWAUKEE

THIS EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

blc

Reinterpreting Milwaukee: The 2011 Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures Student Symposium

10:00-11:30

Meaningful Places: Reinterpreting Building Types and Places

Reviewers: Richard Leson, Anna Andrzejewski

Gus Reed, "Libations, Labors and Lamentations: a Building Based Human Ecology of 1850 North Water Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin"

Ashley Lonsdale Cook, "Riots and Ritual: Performance at St. Hedwig's Church, Milwaukee, WI"

Syedeh Ladan Zarabadi, "Astor Theater and Its Influence on Public Life of Brady Street Neighborhood"

11:30-12:00 - Installed Geography (2011), Mixed Media Installation, Gallery talk by Joshua Weissbach

Reviewer: Jennifer Johung

12:00-1:30 - Lunch

1:30-3:00

Invisible Landscapes: Explaining Scenes and Settings

Reviewers: Amanda Seligman, Deborah Wilk

Benjamin Antonio Barbera, "Urban Renewal, from Pop to Bourgeois: Jazz in Milwaukee Goes Small-Time"

Alexandra Schultz, "Livery Stables in Early Twentieth-Century Milwaukee: Sanitation, Transportation and Visibility in City Life"

Sahar Hosseini, "Brady Street as Zone of Emergence"

3:15-4:45

Landscapes of Control: Uncovering the Politics of Power and Order

Reviewers: Sam Dennis, Janet Gilmore

Andrea Truitt, "Modified Suburbia: Cass Street Park and Milwaukee's Urban Renewal Plans"

Deepika Srinivasan, "Smallpox Landscapes"

Sarah Keogh, "The Milwaukee River: Conflating landscapes of Health, Gender, and Industry"

4:45-5:00 Summary and Conclusions

ABSTRACTS

Gus Reed, “Libations, Labors and Lamentations: a Building Based Human Ecology of 1850 North Water Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin”

In 1880 in Milwaukee, WI two houses were built on North Water St. Within thirty years one of them had been turned into a saloon and expanded over the footprint of the other, which had been torn down. Using evidence from field based building study, period newspaper and government records, contemporary records on working and saloon culture, I look at the human and building history of a site that has specific and unique characteristics defined by its physical geography and human ecology, as well as characteristics that relate to larger themes in the development of Milwaukee. The paper draws on the work of social histories of saloon culture by Powers, Noel, Duis, Rosenzweig, sociopolitical work on period specific city building, by Simon Foklore approaches to vernacular architecture by Herman, geographical approach to topography and its implications for social resistance as typified by Scott and the study of architectural phenomenology of Norberg-Schulz. In this paper I find that while larger economic, cultural and social factors are all important to building viability, the idiosyncratic - the specific individual historical actor whose personal actions and attitudes may not necessarily fit into easily defined larger thematic categories – is also an important consideration in what building stay and what buildings go.

Ashley Lonsdale Cook, “Riots and Ritual: Performance at St. Hedwig’s Church, Milwaukee, WI”

St. Hedwig’s Church, located on Brady Street in Milwaukee’s First Ward, is an austere building that visually dominates the landscape and daily life of this neighborhood. Originally built in 1871 to accommodate the growing Polish Catholic community of the First Ward, the site itself has undergone several physical changes, most importantly the expansion and replacement of the original church in 1886. This paper posits that the riots which broke out within the parish community actually caused the construction of the new building. In 1885, a large faction of the community revolted against the priest and a disagreement over the music of the liturgy flared into a violent upheaval. The first church, built to seat 200 families was demolished and replaced by a new structure that more than doubled in its size. I will juxtapose the riotous behavior of 1885 with the consecration liturgy for the new church building in 1886 to examine issues of space, movement and identity. I will consider the ways in which these two opposing types of performances regulated and dictated access to the building itself. This paper examines how movement, liturgy, architecture and memory combine in the mind of the viewer to create an embodied experience at St. Hedwig’s Church.

Seyedeh Ladan Zarabadi, “Astor Theater and Its Influence on Public Life of Brady Street Neighborhood”

Vaudeville theaters were often a place for inexpensive leisure activities. During the first half of the Twentieth Century, Astor Theater on Brady Street, Milwaukee became a neighborhood center for social gatherings in addition to regular theatrical programming. Events such as charity socials encouraged people, specifically youths, to come together and participate in activities and entertainment. This research looks at the Astor Theater at the time it was active as vaudeville and photoplay and thereafter a movie hall from 1915 to 1955 and investigates its role as a social contact zone. This research focuses on the one hand, on the building itself as material culture and on the other hand, on social meanings of the vaudeville theater and its symbolic relevance to the local community. Drawing evidence from newspapers and periodical articles, advertisements, architectural drawing data from City Records Center, permit documents, archival images and Astor Theater website information this presentation examines the symbolic relevance of this building to the burgeoning working classes living in the neighboring area. x

Josh Weissbach, “Installed Geography (2011),” Mixed Media Installation

Installed Geography (2011) is a mixed-media installation presenting a narrative of place that considers erasure, inscription, and intervention. Starting with the plot of land where the recently demolished Melanec’s Wheelhouse Dinner Theater stood at 2178 N. Riverboat Rd., Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and moving across the street to the RiverCrest Townhomes placed between N. Riverboat Rd. and N. Commerce St., this installation explores this shared landscape and the manner in which the spatial proximity of these two locations speaks to the linked relationship each site has with the geographical performance between the built and the (un)built form, or rather, between the figure and the ground. Using an intersection of static, archival, and embodied representations from these two adjacent sites, the shift in how cartographic experiences are communicated is additionally questioned. This is illuminated by the unknown consequences of a cryptic phone call and how it simultaneously complicates this exhibited narrative of place and instigates a phenomenological intervention upon Google Earth’s digital landscape.

Benjamin Antonio Barbera, “Urban Renewal, from Pop to Bourgeois: Jazz in Milwaukee Goes Small-Time”

The Bronzeville neighborhood of Milwaukee, roughly bounded by North Avenue, State Street, Third Street, and Twelfth Street, lay in the heart of the African American district of the city. This area just north of downtown was the center of jazz performance and consumption during the first half of the twentieth century. In 1950 there were sixteen venues that offered live jazz in a 0.6 by 0.6 mile square that made up the cultural and entertainment district of Bronzeville. However, beginning in the 1950s urban renewal and highway building projects dramatically altered the physical and cultural landscape of this neighborhood. Social and economic class played a large role in both the eradication of Bronzeville, and the change in the jazz audience that occurred in the middle part of the century. Reflecting national trends, but spurred by the destruction of the landscape, jazz went from popular music to bourgeois music in a single generation. The result was that in Milwaukee, the acts of playing and hearing live jazz moved from a democratized landscape with accessible spaces in a predominately African American neighborhood, to discreet, interiorized spaces in predominately white neighborhoods. In the end, as the music shifted from popular culture to art music, from music for the masses to music for the middle and upper classes, it found its prime Milwaukee venue in the single space embodied by the Jazz Estate.

Alexandra Schultz, “Livery Stables in Early Twentieth-Century Milwaukee: Sanitation, Transportation and Visibility in City Life”

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, stables and horses were an indispensable fixture of city life, including in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Some stables housed horses and carriages for hire, often termed livery stables in Sanborn maps, city directories and census data. One such stable was built at 331 Pulaski in December, 1898 by John Weiher and remained a livery until at least 1910. Weiher built his stable in a working class immigrant neighborhood, made up of mostly Polish and German families working in factories, shops or as general laborers. The stable at Pulaski did not serve the people of this neighborhood, however, but rather the wealthier families to the east in the North Prospect and Farwell neighborhood. Thus the day-to-day affairs of maintaining a stable were displaced from the eyes of the customer. The function of this building within its neighborhood—both as business and a nuisance—raises larger questions about the history of transportation and sanitation in Milwaukee. Horses were an indispensable part of city life, but raised serious questions about safety and control, including regulating sanitary conditions in the stable and on the street. This paper will look at the history of stables and horses in Milwaukee and how they interacted with their local environment, using the building on Pulaski as a case study. Set back from Brady Street and other commercial areas, the stable did not rely on

visibility for its success. Rather, I suggest that its location set apart from its primary customer was important for its success, suggesting a strained relationship between (in)visibility to the wealthy, and access for the working class.

Sahar Hosseini, “Brady Street as Zone of Emergence”

After the completion of Milwaukee’s transformation from a trade center to a manufacturing economy in the 1860s and 1870s, Brady Street was shaped as a center of Polish immigrant community. Its location immediately between the old city and newly emerging suburbs framed it as a border zone with its own significance and appeal. Influenced by changing economy and growing transportation, the paper examines the transformation of Brady Street and its inhabitants as part of the fast changing nature of the city in the first half of the 20th century. This paper uses Milwaukee census data and city directories, to investigate the transition of Brady Street from a local community center to a busy street that houses companies, corporations, offices, and various newly emerged businesses. Comparing Sanborn maps and archival images in parallel with newspaper articles and ads, this paper further illustrates remodeling and rebuilding projects which started in the early 20th century Brady Street as part of people’s attempts to gain financial benefit, and display their desired class status.

Andrea Truitt, “Modified Suburbia: Cass Street Park and Milwaukee’s Urban Renewal Plans”

In this paper, I argue that Cass Street Park is a product of Milwaukee’s urban renewal agenda. The park, created in 1938 as a response to the lack of neighborhood green spaces in the city, it follows national park design trends, as stated in *The Politics of Park Design*. As the city continually recommended improvements in the 1951, 1961, and 1979 playground programs, the space continually received these improvements over the years. The attention paid to parks during the period of the 1930s through 1960s coincides with discussions and plans for urban renewal, seen as a health risk and “blight” on Milwaukee. In the rhetoric of urban renewal, green spaces play an integral role in improving and maintaining a neighborhood. I will give a history of the park, followed by a discussion of Milwaukee’s urban renewal plans, concluding by connecting urban renewal tactics to the style characteristics desired in suburban living.

Deepika Srinivasan, “Smallpox Landscapes”

The later part of 1894 was characterized by the small pox epidemic and riots in Milwaukee. The immigrant neighborhoods galvanized over the issues of forcible vaccination and removal to ad-hoc isolation hospitals. The spatial locations of the riots followed the occurrences of outbreak. The immediate visible result of these unrests was the impeachment of the Health Commissioner. This paper conjectures that the events marked a shift in the methods of Public Health Initiatives. This paper will illustrate through maps the temporary spaces created during the epidemic and the new health related spaces created in the following decade.

Sarah Keogh, “The Milwaukee River: Conflating landscapes of Health, Gender, and Industry”

The Milwaukee River at the turn of the last century was known as a site of both industry and public health and recreation. While these two uses usually took place on different zones of the river, there is one area where these two realms came into contact. This paper will explore this unique zone of the river and how this overlap provided a unique opportunity for placemaking. It will address the swimming schools (the recreational focus of this part of the river) as a new place type and suggest that these schools created a landscape in which immigrant women could break from the traditional Victorian female gender roles of this era.