

P4 Reflection

Graduation studio for Complex Projects located in Chicago

Name: Xuefei LI Student No.: 4255402

Email: lixuefei2012@gmail.com

Relationship between theme of the studio and my project:

The theme of the studio is to develop the South Chicago that used to be the location of South Works steel (Fig.1 South Work location). The main issue of this area is that since the South Works of the US Steel shut down in 1992, the economical mainstay had gone. This area declined not from the economical aspect but also from the social aspect - high housing vacancy, bad housing environment and unsafe social environment. Not only the South Chicago is facing problems, problem are also challenged Chicago. Chicago is the center city of Midwest of U.S., but it is said, "Chicago is the capital of nothing". In the national level, the economy and population share of Midwest in America decreased dramatically in the last few decades. So did the city ranking of Chicago.

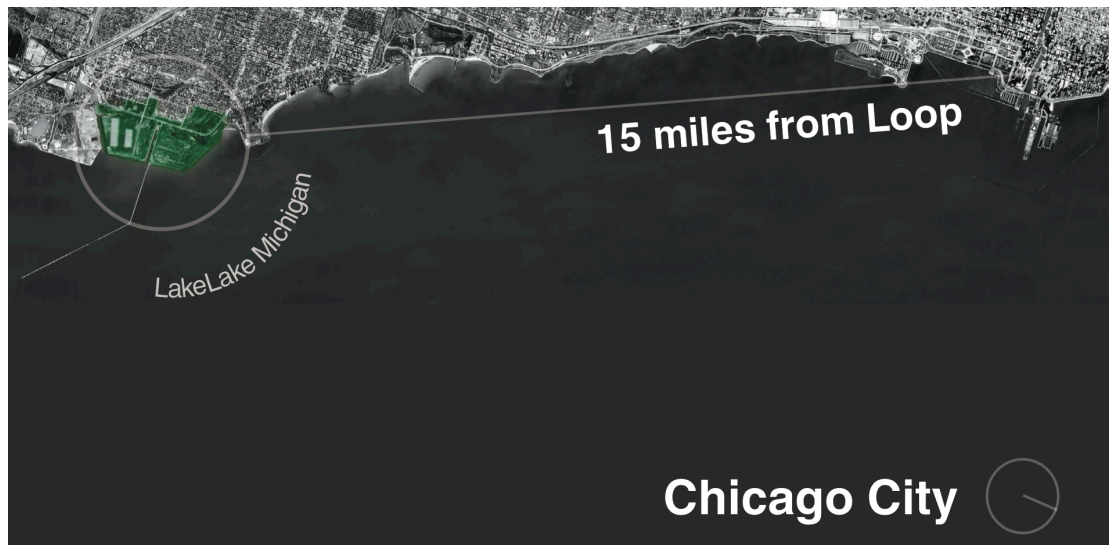


Fig.1 South Work location

Under these circumstances, firstly, we analyzed economical development of different industries in America and found that the form of industry clusters works better than the single industry. Among them, the biomedical or biotechnical cluster is the second largest industry cluster in terms of employment, and it offers a competitive wage. Through recent years, it has grown.

Secondly, we analyzed the research ability in Chicago and Midwest. The region is home to six medical research and technology schools, world-renowned research hospitals, as well as medical and pharmaceutical companies.

Thirdly, the unemployment rate in the south Chicago community is quite high. According to the labor force in the metropolitan region of Chicago, the workforce boards of Metropolitan Chicago highlighted the growing need for trained nurses and medical technicians as part of an approach to workforce development. In the end, we found that the career as CNA or nurses does not require a high educational background or strict training process. Also, the salary of CNA or nurses is really attractive when comparing to other professions.

Thus, when combining all the analysis in different scales, we make a decision that the south Chicago community should be developed into a new biomedical and biotechnical cluster.

With all the potentials on site, it is very likely to build a biomedical/ biotechnical cluster on site that will bring in new industries and also could benefit to the locals with new workforce supply. The programs of anchors on this site are to be decided when the advantages and disadvantages of the site are revealed. Due to the growing need and the lack of high quality healthcare service in Chicago, the site with the last and gorgeous lakeside view is definitely one of the best places for a rehabilitation and long-term care center that could attract patients, physicians and nurses with mix- income from Metropolitan Chicago Area.

We decided to make use of the main advantages of the site, which are the view of the canal and the remaining of the ore wall. In addition, the newly built Lakeshore drive provides a good transportation convenience. By combining these advantages, we propose a first phase development alongside the canal to form a central area. For the ore walls, we decided to transform them into an ornament park. By this way, the adjacent outdoor public space is improved. The buildings are mainly focus on the other side of the ore wall, including a rehabilitation center, nursing school, civic center and corresponding residential units and public infrastructure. As a result, these new construction of rehabilitation and long-term care center will attract mix-income people to the

site. At the same time, the nursing school will improve the educational ability of the whole south Chicago that will speed up the educational and professional development of local people. Last but not least, the construction of a civic center will not only enrich the public life of the neighborhood, but also serve as a district anchor with big entertaining facilities to attract regional or even people from downtown to visit.

As for my own architectural design, I mainly focus on the design of the civic center. Due to the scarcity of cultural and entertainment resources of this region, the architecture will serve as a important development to enrich the life quality of the local residents. In addition, the civic center will also serve as space of interaction for the community and host regular community activities. Lastly, the convenience of transportation and high quality surrounding environment will attract other people from the city to visit, create a positive advertisement effect for the neighborhood and the new south works area. This will further help to attract more investment in this particular part of the city.

Relationship between research and design:

The key point from research to design is the discovery of key issues that will become deciding elements for the design. During the research, I studied previous projects of biomedical research cluster in the US, Germany and Sweden and the conclusion is obvious that these facilities will fit very well into the site. After that, the next step is to translate research to design. The most important thing is to focus on the advantages of the site and resources in order to maximize the outcome and minimize the cost. This will also increase the chance of success for the project. Firstly, the empty buildings on the adjacent can be use for early promotion and education. This will increase the participation of residents and also increase the efficiency of the development. Then, the convenience brought by the lake shore drive, the good environmental quality of the canal and beautiful scenery of the Michigan lake become my major concerns to focus my design on the central bar area. By doing so, these advantages of the site will become the selling point of the branding for the site, at the same time reserve opportunities for future development. Furthermore, as for the ore wall park, the transformation into a park will keep the cultural significance of the wall. The minimum intervention also

allows for sustainable development of the park. Last but not least, for the rest of the empty plots, they can be used to build research facilities and factories. The luxury of having such huge empty lots close to the downtown, airport and railway connection should be highly valuable.

For the design of my architecture, I studied a lot of precedent projects of civic center. The focus is on the usage of the building and how they can be truly part of residents' life. The hybrid of the program is a major issue. The result of my case study is to develop architecture with the hybrid programs: 1. Cinema, swimming pool, bath facilities, gym, squash club and other public facilities which will attract both local and regional people. 2. Community library, dancing club, studios and multifunctional rooms mainly will host community activities and provide education and space of assembly to facilitate positive development. 3. Office space, which will provide working space for insurance and medical company. This is an addition to the adjacent function of rehabilitation center and nursing school. Together they form a good anchor for research cluster. The office space would also serve as exhibition area through the first phase development.

In addition, I study the development of the connection between interior and exterior public space. This will help to develop spatial quality that creates better interaction between exterior urban space and interior architecture space.

Furthermore, I studied the area of architecture as a way of urban intervention and focus on the interaction aspect of architecture within urban environment. The result is the choice of media façade to create a responsive façade with surrounding activities.

Finally, sustainable technology is integrated in the design of the building. These include PV module to collect solar energy, green roof to help to cool down the space during summer and aquifer to reduce the energy consumption of the interior space, etc.

Relationship between methodical line of approach of the studio and the method chosen by me:

The methodical line of approach of the studio is as followed: First, to do research and analysis in L, M, S scales, which is from the U.S. to Chicago and then to the site. Second, to study the SOM's

master plan on the same site. Third, to define strategies and ambitions for the entire site and neighborhood. Four, to make masterplan and urban design by group. Finally, to design a specific building to develop deeply.

I follow the major direction of the studio by studying the site, criticizing the existing master plan by SOM, conclude the pros and cons and extract the valuable aspects.

By combining the analysis from the scale of L, M and S, I propose a new feasible development strategy that combining virtual and physical approach. All of these proposals are backed up by careful research of reference project and propose own strategy by learning from the best. We decide to develop a 'magnet', which consist of a central bar that attracts new investment. Finally, I focus my architectural design on the civic center. The process start with the conceptual design, then further analyze program, circulation, form, space, material, structure and climate, and finally come out with a design that take care of different aspects of architecture.

Relationship between the project and the wider social context:

There are a few aspect of the design that is highly relevant to the wider social context. First of all, the proposal of a certain industry to help revitalize the inferiority of the declining neighborhood is very useful also in the urban development and study of developing countries. In addition, the mass development of an industry serving as a catalyst for the city is very important in urban studies. Furthermore, the sustainability design of the architecture is a highly relevant issue in the design of nowadays building. Finally, the interactive façade of the building façade will become a trend in creating a new responsive architectural proposal.