square roots

fundamental design concepts for successful urban squares

kyle l. campbell
architect, leed ap bd+c
champlin architecture
the city’s meaningful voids
the american experiment

manifest destiny by john gast, courtesy: jared farmer
suburbia, courtesy: jovis verlag
rugged individualism
cincinnati 1949, courtesy: usgs
cincinnati 1980, courtesy: usgs
the american experiment

beef stew, courtesy: the spice house

microwave dinner, courtesy: flickr/senseialan

growing isolation
growing urban population
squares as paths to community identity

architecture

enclosure

inclusion

observation

utility
architecture - beauty

stripping of expression

standardization of parts and pieces

global ubiquity
architecture - surroundings

35 mph  5 mph  0 mph

scale of speed

framing the square with trees

response, or lack thereof, to context

renovate rather than raze

castelvecchio museum by carlo scarpa, courtesy: luca onniboni

kolumba museum by peter zumthor, courtesy: teraform
architecture – building on the square

existing context, Cincinnati, Ohio

we don't live in 1850

no character = placeless

unless you live in Barcelona

thoughtful response to context

City Hall Plaza in Boston, courtesy: Google

Paley Park in NYC, courtesy: Google
enclosure – separation

monument circle in indianapolis, courtesy: urban indy

public square in cleveland, courtesy: green city blue lake

place de la concorde in paris, courtesy: google

elevation changes provide prospect and refuge

trees provide a filtered buffer zone

seat walls provide hard edges
enclosure – climate

importance of solar orientation

understanding prevailing winds

providing cover from weather

the value of trees

choosing appropriate materials
enclosure – putting together a place

enclosure tools together

putting together a place

putting together a place

logan circle in philadelphia, courtesy: google

pioneer plaza in portland, author image
inclusion – public/private relationship

chase plaza in chicago, author image

privatized public space

chiquita center plaza in cincinnati, courtesy: google

different materials and layout

activated space

response to context
inclusion – universal design

education plaza in washington d.c., courtesy: google

poor design, courtesy: reddit

poor design, courtesy: pinterest

accessible ramp, courtesy: portawalk

basic services everyone needs

providing places for all
inclusion – local economic development

Procter and Gamble in Cincinnati, courtesy: Google

Washington Park in Cincinnati, courtesy: Google
observation – human interaction

providing the stage and the audience

adapted from edward hall, proxemics

designing for interaction zones

zone-defined interaction space

interaction within the circulation matrix

overlapping interaction opportunity
observation – public safety

night and weekend vacancy

unwelcoming surveillance

security and off-putting signage

commercial + residential = eyes on the street

designing for round-the-clock activity
observation – design approach

size matters

location, location, location

foreground or background

obelisk square in indianapolis, courtesy: google

rockefeller center in nyc, courtesy: google
utility – functional efficacy

place

purpose

program

the open void

the cluttered chaos
utility – *utilitas, decorum* and *genius loci*

firmitas, utilitas, venustas

utilitas inspires the classical orders

utility

empire state plaza in albany, courtesy: google

piazza di spagna in rome, courtesy: civitavecchia

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champlin architecture
conclusion
questions?

thank you

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