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ABSTRACT

A study of public and private space through specific architectural elements: Window, Material and Path. The project is an urban infill that is very narrow and long, and incorporates an alley that connects one side of the block to another. The program combines a small restaurant with a home above for the family that owns it. Questions concerning light and privacy immediately arise, and the thesis begins.

A window is typically an object that opens for light and air. Window is a dining room overlooking a garden or a large sill to sit on. Window is not only part of the façade but also breaks through it, bringing small private spaces beyond the building boundaries and defining the interior spaces of the home. Window is also a small skylight facing east, scooping in soft morning light to a bedroom.

The materials of a building are what it is made of: its cladding, waterproofing, walls and floors. Material makes an emotive space through touch and reflection. Concrete is heavy, rough and protective. Concrete is boundary. Contrastingly, Wood is soft, flexible and changing. Wood is home.

An alley is a narrow walkway, an undesirable secondary access point. How can an alley become Path? Path is an invitation to walk and be. Path is not the same from beginning to end. Path belongs to the city, the restaurant, and the pedestrian.

Inside + Outside studies what makes these public and private places at the human scale, and how architecture appeals to intuition rather than reason.
The CAUS class of 2007
For strengthening my inspiration and love of architecture

The Latino community
For your undying love, unconditional support and instant family

Mi familia
Todo lo que he logrado, ha sido para ustedes.
Los quiero mucho.
The shophouse is a common Southeast Asian typology that combines a small business with a residence for the family that owns it. What makes the shophouse unique is its consideration for public and private entrances. As seen in the section and photograph, the street façade of the shophouse incorporates a portico to cover the sidewalk and begin the entry procession into the business. To enter the upstairs home, there is a rear entrance and private stair. There is also an interior courtyard or garden that ventilates the building and vertically connects the private and public spaces of the shophouse. Yet other than spatial organization, how can these differences between public and private translate into material and aspects of the interior? Where do public and private intersect?
FIRST MODELS
Bringing light into the building was a consideration from the very beginning. The first models show an idea of a screen to filter light in, but the project needed more direct light.

To bring light into the narrow building each opening acts as a light scoop. Concrete panels in the façade angle out to not only bring in light but also to create directed views towards the garden and streets. The window walls appear to “break out” of the rigid, rectangular building, creating Windows.
The Windows also define the interior spaces they bring light into. Some create rooms, some create places to sit and others are similar to skylights.

This preliminary sketch shows how the interior spaces defined by the light scoops, marked in green, define all most of the other interior conditions in the house.
The family that owns the restaurant lives above it on the second floor. Formed by Windows, the bedrooms have directed views and the spaces open out into the courtyard. In the kitchen and dining areas, Windows open out to the public path. One Window creates the intimate breakfast nook, where family members can look out toward the Carroll Creek promenade while drinking morning tea. Another Window creates the space for the dining room table, and during meals the family can watch pedestrians walk through the public garden and the sidewalk of East Patrick Street.
The third floor of the building is partially occupied by a loft apartment that can be rented out by the family that lives below. It has its own entry stair that comes off of the main public sidewalk, and its Windows provide views of both the courtyard and public garden. The rest of this level belongs to the main home on the second floor. The main gathering spaces of the home, such as the kitchen and dining area, are in a skylit, two-story space. The interior stairs behind the kitchen area lead to an uncovered roof terrace for family members to enjoy.
WINDOW MODEL

façade along courtyard

streetfront façade

façade along public path
Material denotes public and private space through texture, warmth and mass. The essence of the shophouse lies in its two shells: an outer shell denoting the exterior boundaries, and an inner shell wrapping around the interior living spaces.

Concrete is austere and protective, and creates the outer shell of the building. The outer walls are soft grey in color contrasting with the mosaics of aging brick that bound the site, yet their rough texture and horizontality make them similar to the old walls. The inner walls of the restaurant are also concrete, so as to show that it is a public space in the same language of the exterior.

Wood exudes warmth and invites human touch and therefore makes the inner shell. The interior wood paneling is thin like a lining, and wraps around the spaces of the home like a cocoon. Wood is also flexible and the inner shell sometimes peels off the concrete to create furniture, such as kitchen cabinets, window sills and stairs. The only places where the wood is visible from the exterior is at Window, where the two shells intersect and the wood breaks through.
A STUDY OF SECTION

Preliminary sections study how the interior and exterior spaces could potentially interact and define one another.
This drawing shows the two story space that houses the kitchen, dining and living areas. The west light coming in through the skylight washes down the smooth wood lining and trickles into the space below. The section also shows how the lining forms certain parts of the interior, such as the stair to the roof terrace.
The first floor restaurant can be opened to both the courtyard and the public path. The wood inner wood layer is only found in the bedroom to create a warm environment for its tenant. The roof terrace is open to the sky.
The three stories of the building finally become evident. The loft has both a window scoop and a roof scoop to form the space below, in contrast to the enclosed first floor office space.
The inner wood lining separates from the concrete in special instances, such as forming kitchen cabinets or a window seat.
The idea of Window breaking out of the concrete translated into the roof as well. Skylight scoops, determined by the same order as Window, face different directions according to the type of light most desired in the spaces they serve. Skylights over the communal spaces face west, whereas the bedroom scoop faces east. Conceptually, the entire building facade reaches for light when it can.
Outside
The city of Frederick, Maryland, is going through what many colonial towns are experiencing: the “rejuvenation” of its historic downtown district. While main streets such as Market and East Patrick have always been predominately commercial and dotted with famous antique shops, the poorer residential areas have been gradually pushed back and replaced with kitsch new boutiques and exotic restaurants. A second downtown area has also been planned and partially constructed, Carroll Creek Promenade. This area is just south of East Patrick Street and runs parallel to it. This new pedestrian “riverwalk” is not only bordered by restaurants and small shops but is also lined with a new residential typology, the overpriced downtown loft.

There is an obvious disconnect between the old and new downtown areas. While there are several small alleys that go through the blocks and directly connect the two commercial districts, pedestrians are more inclined to walk around the blocks to the promenade. How the alley, typically a negative and uninviting space, become a beautiful public path?
SITE PATH
Outside
paths forming due to change in block

creating spaces along the alley

The objective of these block diagrams was to create a long, urban alley that would be desirable to walk through. In order to achieve this, the path would have to change. The diagrams explored changing the width of the alley at the entrances in order to create a sense of direction and purpose. Another idea was to create various spaces that bordered the alley, making it a destination as opposed a space for passing through.
The public procession begins on the sidewalk of busy Patrick Street, where pedestrians are greeted with a three arch arcade, through which a beautiful, sunken, garden alley is revealed. It is spring, and there are already small tables spilling out of the restaurant to take advantage of the warmer weather. The pedestrian turns the corner of the arcade to find a recess in the brick facade that contains the restaurant’s menu and daily specials, followed by stone steps leading down into the public green space where the restaurant entrance is located.
The garden is a moveable one, with a rough stone and paver floor and potted plants and trees everywhere. The long wall between the restaurant and alley is a changing one, with sliding panels of frosted glass and woods; a play of solid and open elements. The restaurant space can be completely opened to both the path and inner courtyard, and only the floor texture defines inside and outside. The garden path goes along the entire length of the shophouse, but the public procession continues past the building and ultimately ends at the new commercial district, the canal promenade.
How is the path home different than the path to the restaurant? What is the procession of spaces and details? Arriving home, an iron gate in a solid brick portal opens to a private garden, the outer foyer, which is partially confined by the older, irregular brick wall of the neighboring building. The chili plants and vines have begun to work their way up the three-story neighbor to reach the open sky. Ten wooden steps lead up to the front door. This opens into a warm wooden box, with a shelf to relieve the full hands of the resident. As the door closes behind the person it reveals a closet for coats and shoes. This procession ends at a window, a view to the small interior courtyard that the restaurant occupies in warm weather. The resident then turns right to proceed to the living spaces of the house.
A HOME’S ENTRY

Sketch details of the wooden box that is the entrance to the house. It also shelters the rear entry of the restaurant.
Inside + Outside was an opportunity to play with the boundary between interior and exterior spaces, an opportunity to reach architecture at the human scale, an opportunity to redefine indirect light and Window and an opportunity to rethink undesirable urban spaces. Architectural discoveries can be made in the smallest of spaces and the tightest of limits. This thesis required me to begin with materials, details and inside conditions opposed to those being afterthoughts. Sometimes we begin a project with the idea of a space, not a diagram, and this can stem from an image, a memory or a sound. We begin with an image of light cascading down a wall, or the echo of floorboards creaking, or the nostalgia of the mossy stones steps leading to a childhood playground. A thesis does not require a groundbreaking discovery in architectural philosophy, or a large scale project with a provocative diagram. Use the thesis to explore the ideas and conditions continue to inspire your fascination with architecture, ask questions that will continue through future projects and do not end with this thesis.
**READINGS**

- Atmospheres, Peter Zumthor
- Nikki S. Lee: Projects, RoseLee Goldberg + Nikki Lee
- Louis Kahn: Essential Texts, Louis I. Kahn + Robert Twombly
- In Praise of Shadows, Jun’ichiro Tanizaki

**PLACES**

- Shopping district, Penang, Malaysia
- Hidden alleys, Venice, Italy
- Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord, Germany
- Streets, Cuzco, Peru
All drawings, images and photographs, with one exception, are original and belong to the author of this thesis.

02.1. street of shophouses in Penang, Malaysia; permission to use granted by photographer, Rosalinda Delgado