

Department of Urban Planning
UCLA School of Public Affairs

UP 273 Physical Planning Studio: City of Bell

Fall 2010, SPAB Room 4320B

Thursday 2:00-4:50 PM

Prof. Vinit Mukhija, vmukhija@ucla.edu

Office: SPAB Room 5268, Phone: 310.794-4478

Office Hours: 5:00-7:00PM Mondays and Thursdays, and by appointment

This is a field-based urban design course organized in the studio format. The primary purpose of the course is to help students develop the knowledge and skills required to analyze, propose and present urban design plans and interventions. The key deliverable for the studio is a series of strategic action plans for the study area. Each plan will include a physical planning proposal, design actions, and institutional and policy guidelines for implementation. This year we will focus on the City of Bell, one of the “Hub Cities” in Southern California. At a little under 2.5 square miles, Bell with a population of almost 37,000 (2000 Census), is a relatively small but dense city. Its population density of around 15,000 persons per square mile makes it denser than Boston, Chicago and Philadelphia. Its neighboring cities of Maywood, Cudahy, Huntington Park and Bell Gardens, however, are even denser than Bell.

Bell is almost at the spatial center of the County of Los Angeles and has easy access to the 710 freeway. Like most of the main streets in Southern California it has important commercial corridors, including Atlantic Boulevard, Florence Avenue and Gage Avenue, which have significant potential for revitalization and more intense activity. Its primary residential neighborhood just northeast of the intersection of Atlantic and Florence, with its Spanish Revival Bungalows, is particularly charming. But Bell is not a rich city. The median household income is around \$30,000, and a little more than a quarter of its population lives under the federal poverty line. In the context of its limited wealth, the city’s recent corruption scandal is particular galling. In July 2010, the *Los Angeles Times* reported extraordinarily high salaries being earned by Bell’s city officials, including the City Manager and most of the elected City Council Members. Many of these officials are now facing charges and lawsuits from both the State Attorney General and the County District Attorney. As a consequence the city finds itself in tremendous political turmoil and its institutions of governance face unprecedented pressure. This is a demanding context for an urban design studio. Course participants will face the challenge of proposing planning action in a city in which there is little or no confidence in planners and government. At the same time, there is a mobilized electorate in the city and new political actors and social movements are emerging. These stakeholders are likely to be interested in more effective planning and governance ideas and might be receptive to our design proposals.

The pedagogic strategy of this studio-based course is to provide students with a grounded, hands-on, physical planning experience through individual and group assignments. The studio aims to help students recognize and appreciate how various elements of physical planning -- location and accessibility; topography; land uses; street networks; block sizes, configurations and plot layouts; set-backs and build-to-lines; built form and massing; density and floor area ratio; identity and architectural character; historical heritage; landmarks; open spaces; pedestrian circulation; parking; street furniture; signage; etc. -- perform. The course readings

will emphasize the qualities of a well-designed public realm, design strategies for successful placemaking, housing and employment opportunities in mixed-use developments, and physical strategies for urban revitalization and higher density living. The studio will also be a laboratory to examine urban design's claim that unlike most other planning approaches, innovative design interventions can help policymakers avoid typical tradeoffs.

The class will collectively prepare strategic action plans for the study area. The aim of these plans is to help Bell residents and policymakers visualize, discuss and determine the future of their community. The strategic action plans will be prepared on a group basis, and each group will focus on an assigned neighborhood of about half-mile by half-mile within the larger study area. We will aim to present the proposals at a public meeting in Bell as a mid-term exercise, and at UCLA during the finals week to an invited audience, including guests from Bell. We will attempt to collaborate with Bell residents, local community groups and policy entrepreneurs to understand the needs and preferences of the main stakeholders in the city. Potential resources include the city administration of Bell (<http://www.bellcityclerk.org/>), BASTA – Bell Association to Stop the Abuse (<http://basta4bell.com/>), the field office of State Assembly member Hector De La Torre, the office of LAUSD Board Member Yolie Flores, the office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina, the East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice (<http://eycej.org/>), Union De Vecinos (<http://www.uniondevecinos.org/>), Communities for a Better Environment (<http://www.cbecal.org/>), and Barrio Planners in East LA (<http://www.barrioplanners.com/main.html>). We will discuss strategies to develop contacts and access stakeholders within these organizations in class.

Organization and Grading

The studio will meet once a week. Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Classes will be a combination of lectures, discussions, video presentations, studio sessions, and student presentations. I also plan to invite guest speakers and studio critics. Students must complete the assigned readings in advance of the class, and be prepared to contribute to the discussion. The primary text for the course is a reader, which needs to be assembled. Links to some of the readings are provided in the course description. Other readings can be accessed electronically from the password protected, class web-site. In addition, a list of useful references is noted in the course description. I might also distribute additional readings and handouts in the class.

Design proposals will be prepared on a group basis, and the groups will have the autonomy to define and select their site-areas within the City of Bell. In the studio, we will discuss how large these site-areas should be (but in the past I have encouraged groups to limit themselves to about 160 acres, or around a half-mile by half-mile area), and how efforts can be coordinated between the groups. The final grade will be based on five assignments, two individual and three group-based, with pin-up and PowerPoint presentations, and a final report-

Assignment 1, individual research brief:	10%
Assignment 2, individual neighborhood review:	10%
Assignment 3, group site analysis, concept and case study:	15%
Assignment 4, group preliminary strategic action plan (mid-term):	30%
Assignment 5, group strategic action plan and report (final):	35%

Assignment 1: Each class member will prepare a research brief of two pages on a topic relevant to the studio. We will discuss the potential topics in class. Please upload your research note to the “Discussion Forum” on the class website.

Assignment 2: The individual neighborhood review is a preliminary site analysis exercise that identifies your primary area (or issue) of interest in the City of Bell. Your presentation should also explain why you consider the identified area (or issue) as an appropriate focus for the studio assignments. Please plan to pin-up and present this assignment. Please limit your presentation to four minutes. Along with other considerations, such as design-work experience, I will use similarity of interests as the key basis for forming groups for the next phase of the studio.

Assignment 3: The groups will define their site-areas and present their analysis. In addition to site-area analysis, groups will analyze some aspect of the entire city. We will collectively decide what aspects to assign to each group. In this manner, the work of the different groups will be complementary, and the design proposals in the next stage can be based on the collective analysis of the class. Groups should also present the conceptual directions for their sites, and include one or two case studies that can guide design and planning in the next stage. Please plan to pin-up your presentation or use PowerPoint to present. Please limit your presentation to twenty minutes.

Assignment 4: The groups will present the preliminary strategic action plans for their sites. The plans will include a physical planning vision and proposal, design interventions, and policy guidelines. Please be prepared to use PowerPoint to present. We will try to have these mid-term presentations in the neighborhood. Please limit your presentation to twenty minutes.

Assignment 5: The groups will present their final strategic action plans. The fifth assignment includes a PowerPoint presentation and a final report in hard copy and electronic format. The final presentation, in finals week, will be at UCLA but we will also invite some guest-critics from Bell. Please limit your presentation to twenty minutes.

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Course introduction

September 30, 2010

No assigned readings

Site visit

October 2, 2010 (Instead of 10/7)

9:00AM meet at Epoca Restaurant & Hall, 6626 Atlantic Blvd., Bell CA 90201

Chiang, John (2010). *City of Bell Audit Report: Administrative and Internal Accounting Controls*. Sacramento: California State Controller.

http://sco.ca.gov/Press-Releases/2010/sco_bell_audit_2010.pdf

BASTA (Bell Association to Stop the Abuse): <http://basta4bell.com/>

Rodino, Robert (1999). "Urban Revitalization in an Ethnic Enclave: Huntington Park CA 1965-1998," *Critical Planning*, 92-103.

<http://www.spsr.ucla.edu/critplan/past/volume006/17%20Rodino.pdf>

First assignment

October 7, 2010

No class, but please post Assignment 1: Bell Research Briefs (10%)
(Research Brief: 2-pages, single spaced. Additional pages allowed for images, etc.)

Second assignment

October 14, 2010

Present Assignment 2: Individual Neighborhood Review (10%)

Site analysis and history

October 21, 2010

Fulton, William (2001). "Suburbs of Extraction," in *The Reluctant Metropolis: The Politics of Urban Growth in Los Angeles* (pp. 67-97). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Spreiregen, Paul (1965). "Making a Visual Survey," in *Urban Design: The Architecture of Towns and Cities* (pp. 49-66). New York: McGraw-Hill, American Institute of Architects.

Jacobs, Allan (1985). "Clues," in *Looking at Cities* (pp. 30-83). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Zeisel, John (1981). "Observing Physical Traces," and "Observing Environmental Behavior," in *Inquiry by Design: Tools for Environment-Behavior Research* (pp. 89-136). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing.

Lynch, Kevin and Gary Hack (2000). "A Site and Impact Checklist," in *Site Planning* (pp. 420-425). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Third assignment

October 28, 2010

Present Assignment 3: Site Analysis, Concept and Case Study (15%)

Placemaking

November 4, 2010

Whyte, William (1988). "The Design of Spaces," in *City: Rediscovering the Center* (pp. 103-131). New York: Doubleday.

Jacobs, Allan (1996). "Requirements for Great Streets," and "Qualities that Contribute," in *Great Streets* (pp. 270-308). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Marcus, Clare Cooper (2003). "Shared Outdoor Space and Community Life," *Places* 15(2), 32-41. Also, Andres Duany (2003). "To Rally Discussion," *Places* 16(1), 78-79.

Solomon, Daniel (2000). "A primary task of all urban architecture and landscape design is the physical definition of streets and public spaces as places of shared use." in *Charter of the New Urbanism*, ed. Michael Leccese and Kathleen McCormick (pp.123-126). New York: McGraw-Hill, Congress for the New Urbanism.

Pyatok, Michael (2000). "Martha Stewart vs. Studs Terkel," *Places* 13(1), 40-43.

Loomis, John (1997). "Manufacturing Communities," *Places* 10(1), 48-57.

To be announced

November 6, 2010 (Saturday, 9:00AM-12:00PM, tentatively)

Readings to be assigned

Urban development and revitalization

November 11, 2010 (Additional class on Veterans Day)

Garvin, Alexander (1996). "Revitalizing neighborhoods," in *The American City: What Works, What Doesn't* (pp. 229-250). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Attoe, Wayne and Donn Logan (1989). "The Concept of Urban Catalysts," in *American Urban Architecture: Catalysts in the Design of Cities* (pp. 44-73). Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Hopkins, Elwood and Daniel Tellalian (2006). Place Matters: How Community Development Departments are Rediscovering Communities. *Community Investments* (Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco Economic Letter), 17(4), 14-18.

<http://www.frbsf.org/publications/community/investments/0602/place.pdf>

Chung, Connie (2002). Using Public Schools as Community-Development Tools."

http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/communitydevelopment/W02-9_Chung.pdf

Robinson, Lisa (2005). Market Creek Plaza: Toward Resident Ownership of Neighborhood Change. Oakland, CA: PolicyLink.

<http://www.policylink.org/pdfs/MarketCreekPlaza.pdf>

Mid-term presentation: Fourth Assignment

November 18, 2010

Present and submit Assignment 4: Preliminary Strategic Action Plans (30%)

November 25, 2010

Thanksgiving Day

Desk crits

December 2, 2010

No assigned readings

Final presentation and submission

Week 11: December 5, 2010

Present and submit Assignment 5: Strategic Action Plans and Report (35%)