



Columbia University / GSAPP
A4105 Advanced Studio V
CIEE E.426o Urban Ecology Studio
Urban Ecology Studio, Fall 2013

QUESTION

Our topic engages the New York City region and the ecological considerations related to urban development in relationship to the water edge. For the past four decades, the normative urban expansion in the region has been landward; and planning preoccupations have typically been focused on the so-called "edge-city" phenomenon (Garreau); that is the continued sprawl into the suburbs and exurbs. The next "Edge City" preoccupation has now shifted from exurb to water edges; with the rising seas and climate extremes pointing the way toward acute awareness of both hazards and potential of this new urban "frontier." The outcome is new realization that we must now treat our urban waterfronts differently than in the past, but the question is "How?". The studio test case for this question is the Long Island Sound and the waterfront of New Rochelle along its most urbanized edge.

SCOPE

Increased urbanization, climate change, coastal erosion and sea level rise require architects, planners and engineers to re-envision coastal cities. Fifty percent of the world's population lives in coastal regions, most of which were initially developed due to their advantageous connection to water-borne transportation systems and rich coastal ecologies. Coastal cities and their communities benefit greatly from their proximity to these ecosystems, due to connections to food, employment, transportation, recreation and energy. Out of the thirty-two largest cities in the world, twenty-two are located on estuaries, including London, New York, Shanghai and Buenos Aires.

The studio's regional scope will include the Long Island Sound, an Atlantic Ocean estuary and an extremely productive coastal ecosystem that is home to 400 species of birds, 1300 species of invertebrates and finfish, and 21,000 acres of wetlands. Like many coastal regions, the Sound is being affected by climate change and inappropriate urban development, issues that will drive the studio participants' lines of inquiry. The Long Island Sound is unique in North America as a large quasi self-contained saltwater body (LIS Report). The studio introduction will analyze and develop an ecologically based critique of the Long Island Sound development options for the future.

The studio primary focus will then begin on the water edge of the City of New Rochelle, (population) located just over the Bronx border of New York City. The water edge of New Rochelle, although seemingly local, connects to 600 contiguous miles of urbanized shoreline, joining New Rochelle to other urban thriving economies and ecologies. Specifically, within the New Rochelle shoreline the studio will be interested in the fate of David's Island, which is located just off the coast and is presently unoccupied and recently devoid of building. The City New Rochelle - one of the many coastal cities that are located within the Long Island Sound – is looking to redefine its relationship to the water and the region, in order to benefit more from its coastal resources.

CLIENT

Unlike many academic studios, the Urban Ecology Studio has a real client with needs for visionary ideas and innovation through design. This year the studio is working with the municipal government of New Rochelle, analyzing their needs, isolating potential problems, and proposing designed solutions. Through contact with the Commissioner of Development, Luiz Aragon, the Department of Development (DOD) is sponsoring the studio. The DOD will act as a client in all aspects of the evolution of the project proposals, in addition to organizing site visits, participating in reviews, and facilitating the presentation of the studio's final work in New Rochelle. Through the DOD, other governmental agencies, active community groups, and additional stakeholders in the city, the studio will develop a set of proposals that will assist in defining the city's mission and future goals for sustainable waterfront development. By working closely with actual clients, the projects resulting from this studio will propose innovative design combined with an element of realism and practicality.

Ultimately, the product of the studio will be edited and published by Columbia through the Urban Design Lab (UDL), a joint laboratory of the Earth Institute and GSAPP. As a source document for the vision of New Rochelle's "edge" as well as a broader view of the Long Island Sound, the studio's designs will be a useful tool in strategies that consider the future of the world's coastal cities. This publication will join others from the UDL, adding to a collection of robust academic conceptualizations with a strong anchor in the reality of design within the contemporary development climate.

EMPHASIS

This "place-based" studio is oriented toward architecture students who wish to engage real clients with real-world expectations. It will emphasize development of individual architectural scale projects as critical commentary on the larger-scale environmental settings, with substantial resources from "hard" and "soft" science. In the past, student's final work added project diversity within their portfolio and could be seen as a "capstone," providing a competitive edge in terms of opening post-graduate study or employment opportunities.

LOGISTICS

In addition to collaboration with a client, this studio also mirrors the profession with its student composition. Both the advanced architecture students and five PhD students from Urban Planning and Engineering will jointly follow research issues and possible programmatic approaches; such that the architects' design projects can be hyper-enriched, and the PhD's gain insights into the design process.* A second important resource will be the engagement of the MSAUD (Architecture and Urban Design) Fall Studio in some of the other pressing issues in New Rochelle including the downtown redevelopment. So again, the architect design projects can be enriched by this parallel studio work. In all, these crossover connections provide invaluable experience with the kind of "real world" engagements that architects typically face.

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

*coordinated with CIEE 4260 Urban Ecology Studio, Patricia Culligan, Critic

The semester is composed of studio desk critiques, pin-ups, and a short lecture series, including invited guests with expertise on pertinent studio topics. (Schedule attached on page 3.)

WEEK 1	Sept. 4	W	MUDD	MEETING: First class meeting with Planning and Engineering PhD students
			AVERY 113	Architecture studio presentations and lottery
	Sept. 6	F	AVERY 408	MEETING: First class meeting with architecture students
WEEK 2	Sept. 9	M	AVERY 408	MEETING: "Pecha Kucha"-style student introductions
				DISCUSSION: Introduction of Long Island Sound & New Rochelle
	Sept. 11	W	AVERY 408	PIN UP: Assignment 1
	Sept. 13	F	SITE	SITE VISIT: 8:00AM New Rochelle Dept. of Development David's Island and City Tour
WEEK 3	Sept. 16	M	AVERY 408	PIN UP: Assignment 2
	Sept. 18	W		LECTURE 1
	Sept. 20	F	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
WEEK 4	Sept. 23	M	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
			SITE	OPTIONAL SITE VISIT 2: In conjunction with Urban Design Studio
	Sept. 25	W		LECTURE 2
	Sept. 27	F	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
WEEK 5	Sept. 30	M	AVERY 408	PIN UP: Assignment 3
	Oct. 2	W		LECTURE 3
	Oct. 4	F	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
WEEK 6	Oct. 7	M	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
	Oct. 9	W		LECTURE 4
	Oct. 11	F	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
WEEK 7	Oct. 14	M	AVERY 408	MIDTERM REVIEW
	Oct. 16	W	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
	Oct. 18	F	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
WEEK 8	Oct. 21	M	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
	Oct. 23	W	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
	Oct. 25	F	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
WEEK 9	Oct. 28	M	AVERY 408	PIN UP: Assignment 4
	Oct. 30	W	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
	Nov. 1	F	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
WEEK 10	Nov. 4	M	NO CLASS	ELECTION DAY HOLIDAY
	Nov. 6	W	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
	Nov. 8	F	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
WEEK 11	Nov. 11	M	AVERY 408	PIN UP
	Nov. 13	W	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
	Nov. 15	F	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
WEEK 12	Nov. 18	M	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
	Nov. 20	W	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
	Nov. 22	F	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
WEEK 13	Nov. 25	M	AVERY 408	PIN UP
	Nov. 27	W	STUDIO	DESK CRIT
	Nov. 29	F	NO CLASS	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

WEEK 14 Dec. 2 M STUDIO DESK CRIT
Dec. 4 W STUDIO DESK CRIT
Dec. 6 F Avery 408 FINAL REVIEW

WEEK 15 Dec. 9 M STUDIO ARCHIVE TURN-IN

Dec. 18 W NO CLASS GRADES DUE