

71 Meaning Perception and Sign ■

76 Place Making ■

79 Building as Organism ■

Design Discourse

Review of Design Considerations identified in Preceding Sections

Both the historical and current context, as well as the precedent studies clearly indicate the need for a facility which carries weight within the urban and community consciousness. The Facility plays an important role in establishing the community as well as providing hope and support. Like the historic church, the facility becomes a place of refuge. Its presence should therefore be both visible and inspiring. Location plays an important role, as does scale and verticality.

Communication is paramount to establishing this connection with the community. The architectural language used becomes the interface between the users and the facility. This language must be easily legible without using cultural and religious signs which might alienate users of different persuasions and background. The language must be able to express the complex, such as emotion, as well as the simple. Understanding the inherent meaning and emotional value contained within building elements helps in formulating a language which communicates on the sub-conscious level to people of different cultures, economic standings and religions, as required by inclusive design. Utilizing this understanding creates a sensory and emotional experience rich in meaning. This language includes scale, hierarchy, entry, light, procession and repetition as well as the more intangible emotional value created through the use of these elements.

Diversity and flexibility are closely related and connected. Both are vital in establishing a facility with value to the local community as well as increasing the facilities ability to adapt.

The connections between the facility and its environment is integral to the vitality of the centre, as well as in creating pleasant places with meaning and significance. These connections include those of the facility and the community, other community facilities within the area, the natural environment, and the history. It has been demonstrated that nothing exists in isolation and no project designed in such a manner has a hope of surviving. Understanding the links and different dynamics and processes will result in a facility able to interact and contribute to the community. The connection with the natural environment helps in establishing a sense of place and well-being. This interaction, when provided for in design increases the emotional and sensory experience as well as the health of the places created.



Fig. 63: Definition of southern entry point. The colonnade defines the journey inwards, as well as providing a visual boundary to the inside space

Creating meaning in architecture is achieved through using the building as a communication medium. Michael Graves divided this architectural language in the common, which is pragmatic and construction orientated, and the poetic, which express myths and ritual (Hale 2000, p. 152). The common language uses methods such as hierarchy, scale and grain to define spaces and volumes. Generally larger scales denote the public realm, while the private is individual in scale. In order to regulate the functioning of the building the common language is used to signify points of entry, circulation routes, connections and public and private space.

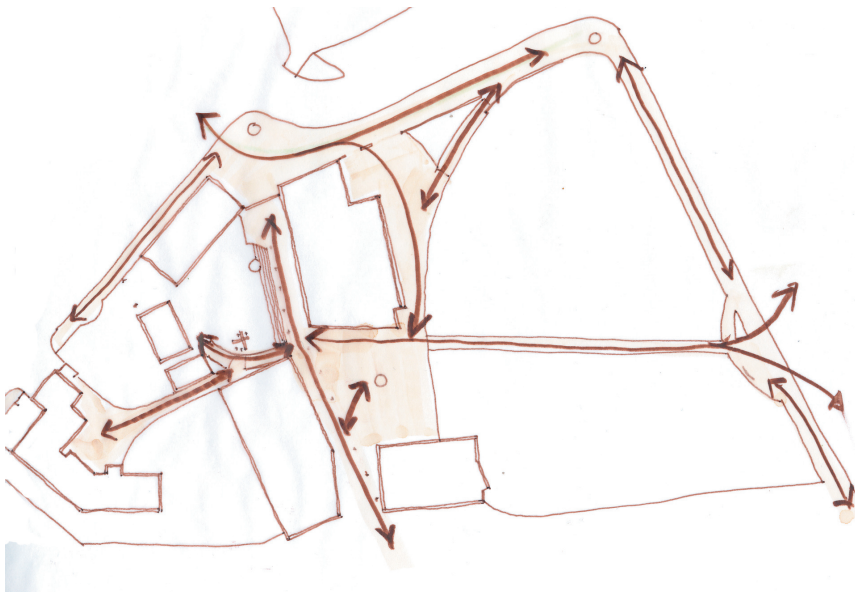


Fig 64: Articulation of circulation routes. Definition of entry points

Meaning in architecture can also be established by recognizing the intrinsic meaning incorporated in an element. A number of architectural elements, which are perceived as decorative, were the results of construction methods. Through the years these elements became imbued with meaning and symbolism (Hale 2000, p 93-94) Robert Venturi considers the exclusion of historic depth as the main contributor to the rift which exists between modern architecture and its user (Hale 2000, p. 145-146). The aim is to clearly communicate the construction systems and dynamics within the building. Clearly indicating elements such as column, beam and stairwell demystify the building, allowing for easy legibility. This understanding is based on a historic background. While it would be inappropriate to use a Doric column, a colonnade comprised of slender steel columns defines a public front and provides a feeling of significance and civic interaction.

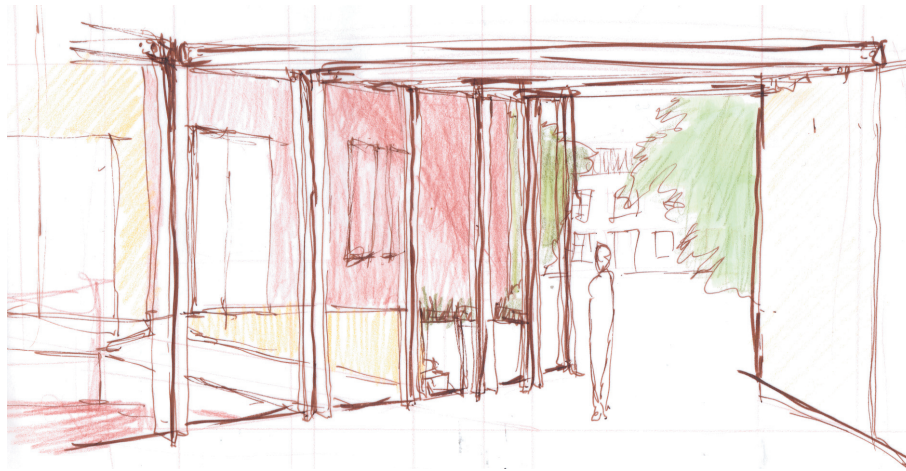


Fig 65: Colonnade as boundary between open public space and entrance to support centre