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Chapter 4

Precedent Studies



4.1 Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to create a public space, between and under buildings, with the properties of an interior space. The following Precedent studies address some of the issues of public space, interior space as well as structural questions arising in designing space underneath an existing building.

4.1 The Ancient Greek Agora

Function: Public Space

Architect: Various

The Agora was the cultural and educational centre of the Mediterranean, a marketplace that was also the focal point of public

life (Camp, 2003: 3) until 6th century AD. A large open square surrounded by buildings, the Agora served a very specific purpose in all aspects of the everyday life of Athenians. The political system was hosted in several of the buildings including the Bouleuterion (Council Chamber), Royal and South Stoas (public office buildings) and Metroon (archives). Long stoas provided shaded walkways for social interaction while monuments and a Library answered the cultural needs of the citizens and temples met religious needs. The Agora was a well-designed city centre, with a broad street passing diagonally through the site (Dromos or Panathenaic way). (Camp, 2003)

The Agora is evidently of particular relevance when designing a

social space for the University. The interactions between users are important to relay information and ultimately create new memory. As with the Agora, the current movement of users through the site could potentially expose information to them. Another aspect of the ancient Agora is the availability of supporting structures, with the Dromos leading directly past the Peristyle Court (a colonnaded open space), the other buildings are within sight for a large part of the journey. The Dromos is as much a part of the design of the ancient Agora as any of the buildings. Creating a similar space on campus involves firstly the route of movement of the users, secondly an anchor space (such as the Peristyle Court), and lastly supporting spaces.



Figure 4.2: Interior of Apple Retail Store New York

4.2 Apple Retail Store, (Fifth Ave, New York)

Function: Retail Store

Architect: Bohlin Cywinski
Jackson

This precedent is included for the creative reaction to very definite limitations similar to those experienced on my site. General Motors' building in Fifth Ave, New York, was given as the context. A historic building, alterations by way of expanding the skin of the building would not answer appropriately. The basic brief was an existing retail building that needed more space; the extra space had

to be "splendid architecture" that would create a "retail presence". Due to inherent space restrictions, the architect decided to go underground creating the opportunity to have an even more celebrated entry. This was resolved in the form of a cube. This entrance on the ground level constructed of glass is the feature element of the project, and activates subterranean retail space. This is an

interior space without exterior walls or peripheral elements, such as windows and doors. Climatically, this concept as a direct application would not work on my site, but the idea of an interior outside the scope of a building will be addressed through the new Agora under the Merensky Library, excavating the space below ground level.



Figure 4.3: Interior of Apple Retail Store New York, the ceiling becomes the shopfront



Figure 4.4: Exterior of Apple Retail Store New York, the main aesthetic feature is the glass entrance