

Primal Adaptation: Natural Selection in Construction

1996 Design Studio Project Award

WOODBURY UNIVERSITY

4th year design studio - Winter 1995

JENNIFER RUTH SIEGAL

Arizona State University

TODD A. ERLANDSON

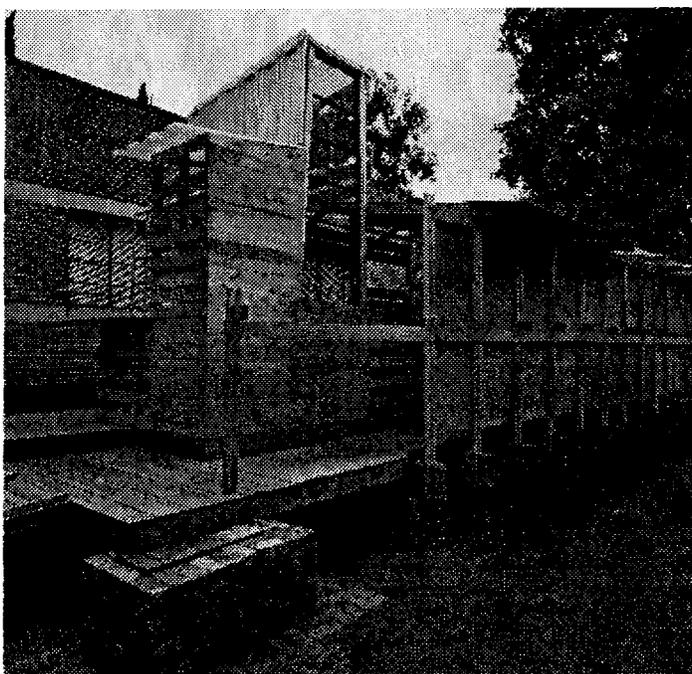
Woodbury University

The intention of the studio was to develop an alternative design methodology that incorporates both students' innate understanding of buildings and observed examples of the built environment. By relying on initial, subconscious responses in the design process, primary solutions were set up, analyzed, criticized and revised. Students discussed basic materials within the headings of *footing*, *frame*, *skin* and *aperture*. By composing these elements, they developed a simplified architecture tied directly to specified materials and conditions of technology. The emphasis was on understanding these relative limitations and the opportunities for invention they presented.

The process began with case study of the vernacular, reinterpreting conventional relationships between architectural components and construction materials. A program was provided and initial solutions were explored, evaluated and expanded through an accumulative process. A proposed final product was developed in model form through the synthesis of hybrid programmatic elements designed by the students, focusing on the integration of these designs aesthetically and spatially, and in the resolution of their parts in common.

As the studio evolved into full-scale construction, a process of simplification and condensation within the design, and a true understanding of limited abilities, schedule and budget were stressed. Working within a defined palette, specifically, donated cast-offs from dismantled movie sets, fostered experimentation and invention. The final product was a cumulative, imaginative structure, which grew from set parameters of time, resources, ability, as well as from the special dynamic which developed within the group.

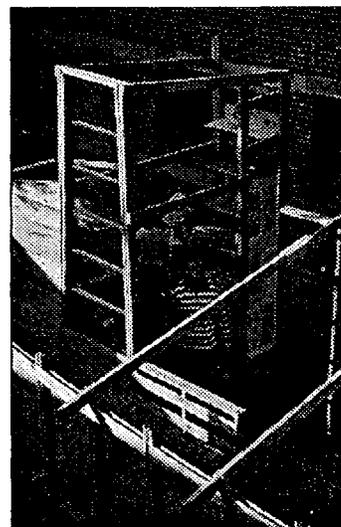
Through innovation and reinterpretation, new life was injected into existing architectural doctrine. Provided with skills and sensibilities necessary to see architecture in the world around them, students realized that the familiar elements of architecture can be reexamined, revised and reconstructed. The initial premise of limitations, experimentation and grounded invention captured the imagination and fostered a unique, refreshing design methodology and studio experience.



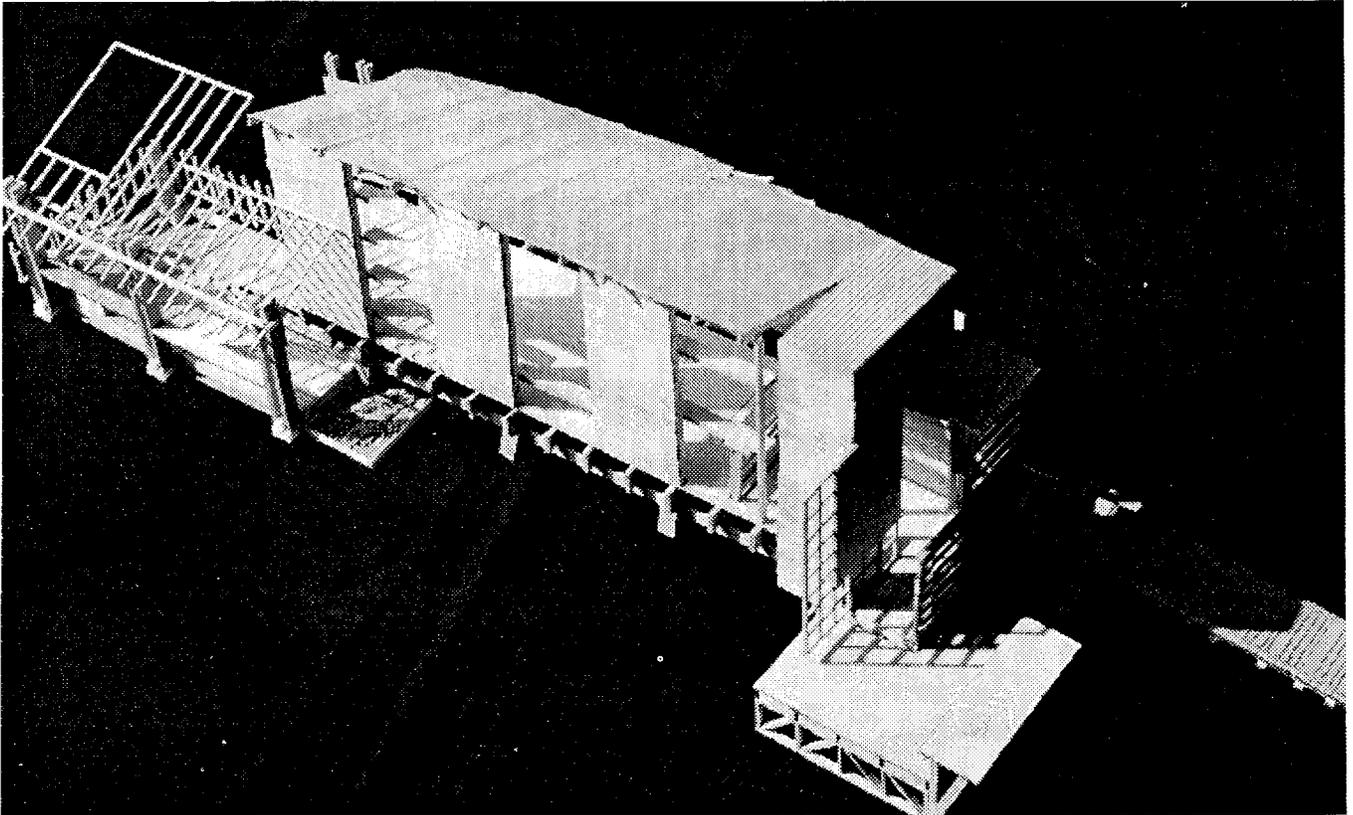
Full-scale construction



Footing



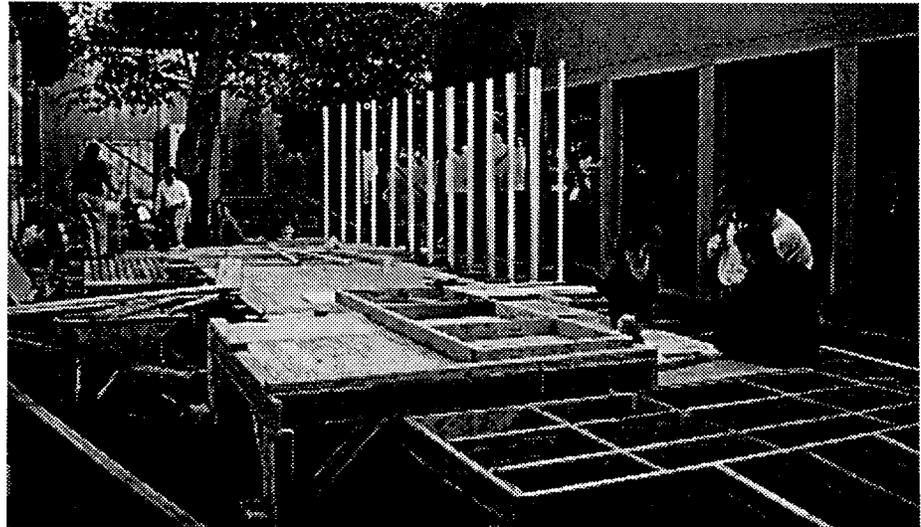
Bar framing



Final model: garden, gallery, bar, threshold



Ramp framing detail



Vertical framing members