

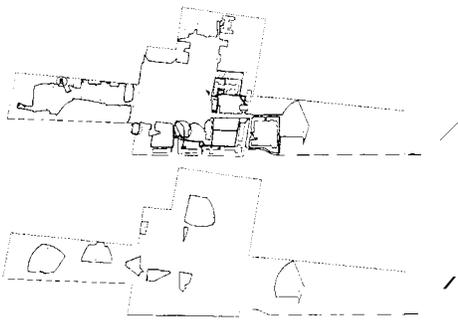
Cognitive Structures:

A First Year Design Studio Introduction to Urbanity

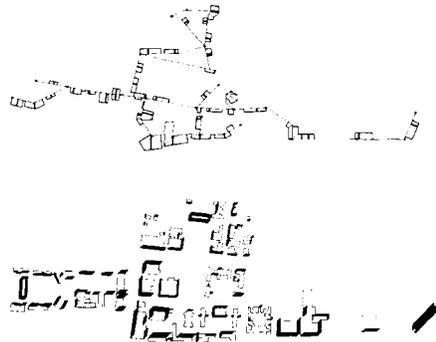
1996 ACSA Design Studio Project Award

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Negative poché and spatial definition



Lineal systems and volumetric definition



Analysis of perceptual and structural conditions

PROJECT SUMMARY

This three week analysis project was incorporated in a revised first year design curriculum as a first and fundamental experience with issues of urban analysis, and large scale systems. Two of the primary characteristics of urbanity stressed in the project were scale and pattern. Since urban systems exist and operate at a scale that is beyond immediate perception, cognition of urban systems is dependent upon the discernment of pattern. While not explicitly using the conceptual or linguistic conventions of urbanism, the assigned readings and project references revealed the urban agenda. The campus of Tulane University was used as an accessible urban district operating at a variety of scales. Various student projects from each of the five first year studios are illustrated.

Excerpts from the project statement:

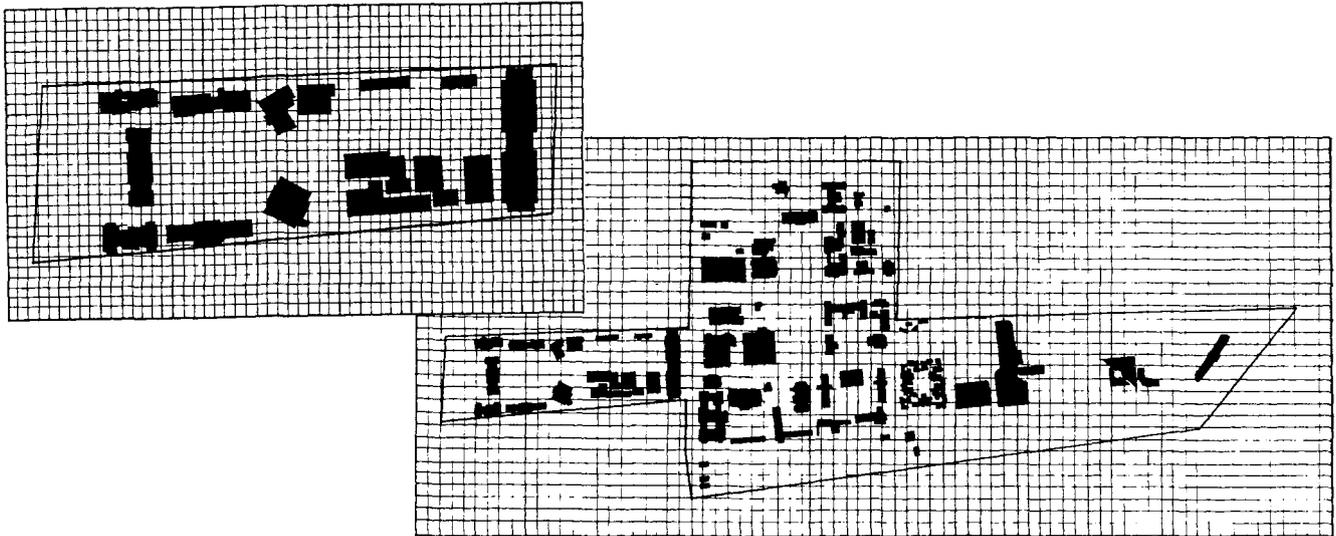
INTRODUCTION

At a fundamental level, architecture involves the organization (systematization) of things (objects, material, events, perception, experience). That such systematization lies at the core is evidenced by the frequency with which certain terms are used in discussing architecture. These include: *relationship, structure, composition, pattern, and typology/topology/morphology*. That architecture is generally recognized as being about order/system/structure is further evidenced by the use of the term and metaphor "architecture" in describing other things *the architecture of a computer system, the architecture of musical composition, the architecture of a philosophical construct, the architecture of social reform*.

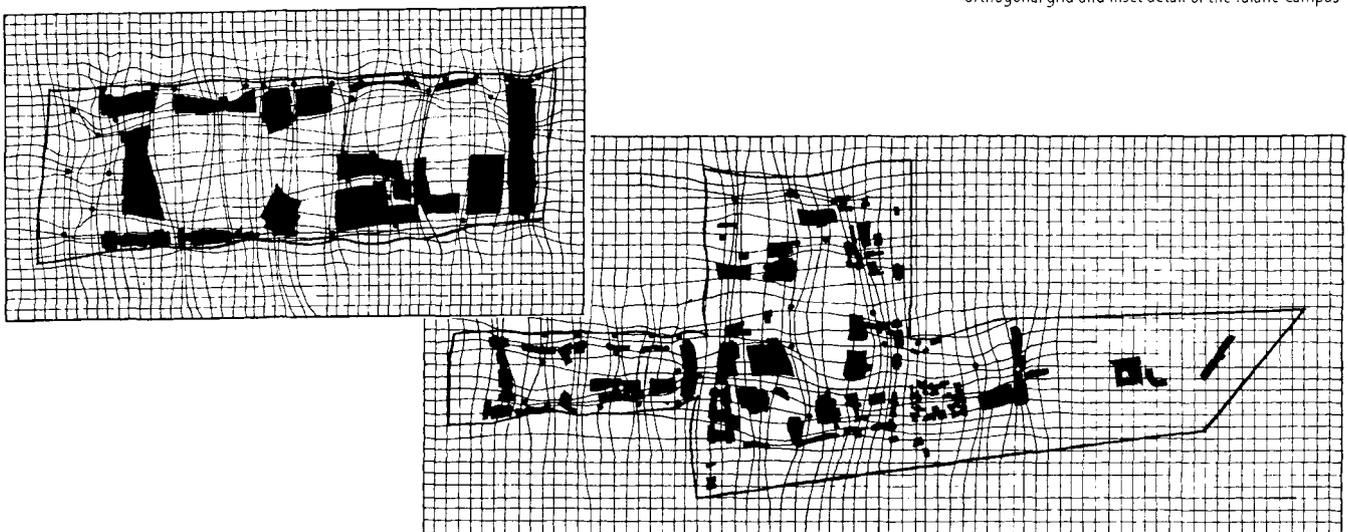
METHODS OF ANALYSIS

Conventionally the term 'system' is applied to a collection of elements organized (structured) that have broad comprehensibility (imageability) across a large group of people, i.e. a bus system. Systems of order are occasionally imposed extrinsically to existing conditions, but are more typically known to emerge intrinsically, and to accrete slowly over time as use and necessity demand. You are asked to analyze the conditions of the campus around us, in an attempt to derive an understanding of its systems and to highlight moments of clarity and obscurity which may form the basis of your proposal.

The focus of this project is to establish such a cognitive system of high imageability. The analysis necessary to achieve this is to include (but is not limited to) objective examinations of: *paths of movement, centers of occupational density/use, spheres of influence, diurnal cycles, environmental compositional relationships: axis, visual fields, gestalt figures, and grids/grains*.



Orthogonal grid and inset detail of the Tulane Campus

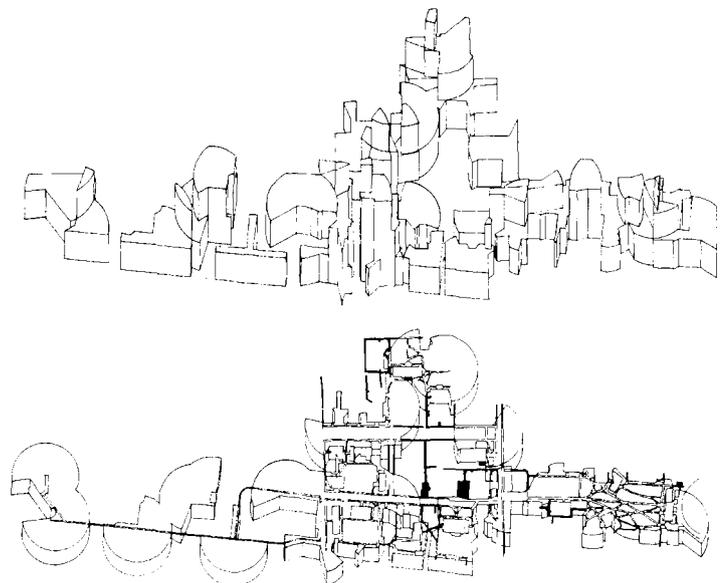


Perceptual distortions of the normative grid

PROGRAM

Currently a set of emergency telephones is distributed across campus as a security measure. They are intended to provide a refuge and means of soliciting help while on campus. They are most easily identified by a small blue light at the top of the pole. While they are generally accessible they do not appear to be placed with any coherency that enables one to confidently predict their location in a moment of panic or distress.

The objective of this project is to analyze the spatial structure of campus and to delineate a cognitive system or structure for placement of the emergency phones which enhances their recognition and potential use.



Spatial hierarchy and spatial/lineal hybrid