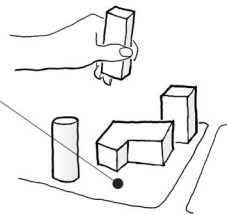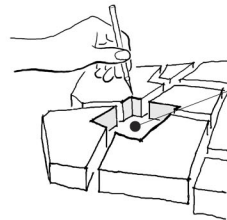Negative space
- leftover, unshaped
- bleeds or oozes
- promotes movement
- imparts civic detachment

Positive space
- clear shape
- mostly enclosed
- promotes lingering
- facilitates civic engagement

Object prioritization   Space prioritization

Invert your thinking.

Our culture predisposes us to see and understand reality as an arrangement of objects. To our modern eyes, space is a void within which we create or place objects. We tend not to give space a shape but to treat it as a leftover, or residual, from the placement of objects.

The opposite understanding applies to the making of urban places. Just as one ordinarily gives shape to buildings, the urban designer gives shape to outdoor spaces. Buildings are often the leftover; they are typically sited, configured, formed, and even *de*formed so that public streets and plazas can have clear, meaningful shape.

building face to
building face

avg. building
height

VP   HL

1, 2, 3, 4

5

6
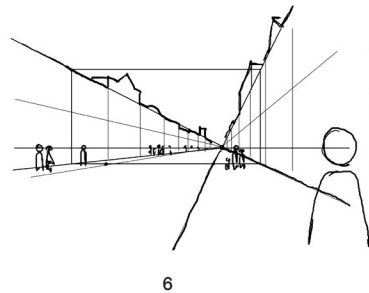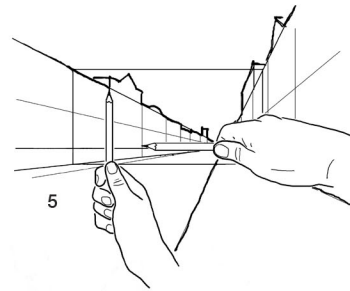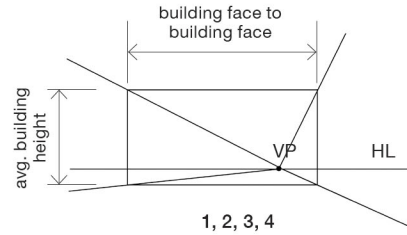
How to draw a one-point perspective of a street

1   **Draw a rectangle in proportion to the street's cross section.** If it is 60' from building face to building face and the average building height is 30', draw a rectangle with a 60:30 (i.e., 2:1) horizontal proportion.

2   **Locate the horizon line (HL).** This is the height of your eye above the ground. If you are 5'6" tall, your eye height is about 5', or 1/6 up the 30' high rectangle.

3   **Establish a vanishing point (VP) on the HL.** As the view will be from the right-hand sidewalk, the VP is placed near the right edge of the rectangle. If the view were from the center of the street, it would be placed on the HL's left-right midpoint.

4   **Draw guidelines from the VP through the corners of the rectangle.** These will become the tops and bottoms of the typical buildings.

5   **Locate curbs, buildings, and other major elements.** If you are drawing a street as you view it in real life, hold your pencil at arm's length and determine the relative sizes of all elements in "pencil units."

6   **To include a person of your height,** draw a head any size centered on the HL, then draw the body in proportion. An average person is about 7½ heads tall.
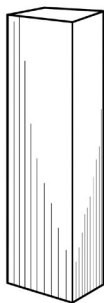
**One 40-story building
600,000 sq. ft.**

one out-of-town owner
one out-of-town "starchitect"
architectural singularity
big, out-of-town contractor
corporate tenants
maintenance by one large company
supports regional and global culture
most profits leave locality
supports the 1%
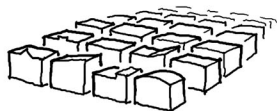
**Forty 4-story buildings
600,000 sq. ft.**

many local owners
many local architects
architectural variety
many local contractors
mom-and-pop tenants
maintenance by many small companies
supports local culture
most profits remain in locality
supports the 99%

What is the desired social order?

A social order is an interwoven system of social, economic, cultural, and governmental practices and behaviors. It exists both explicitly (e.g., in constitutional standards or official economic policies) and implicitly (e.g., the subconscious or default assumptions and practices of institutions and individuals). A social order tends to remain in place for decades or centuries. Change can occur through evolution or revolution. The built environment unavoidably embodies and furthers a social order—either the prevailing order or a potential new order.
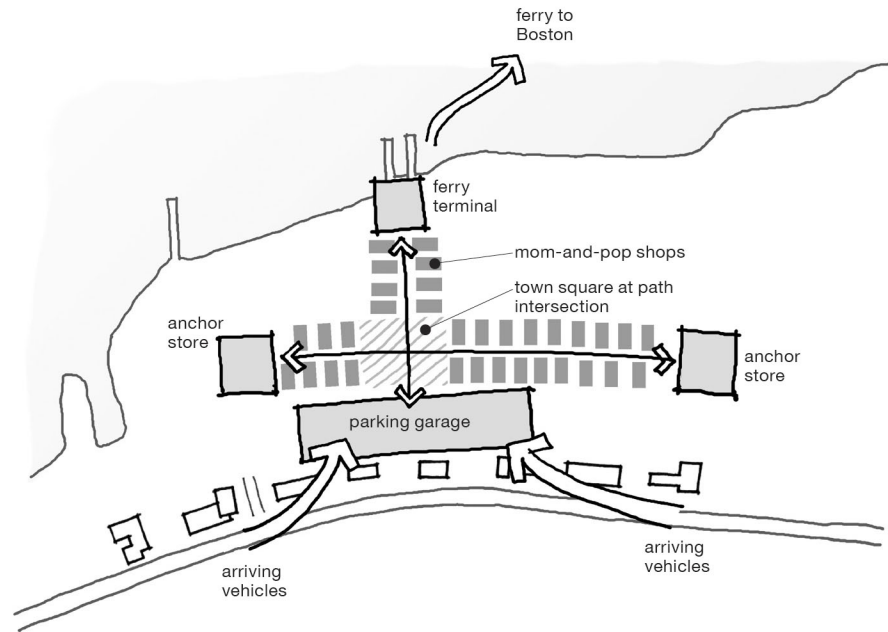
Anchor diagram, Hingham Shipyard Village proposal

Activate, activate, activate.

A suburban shopping mall is made active by the placement of **anchors**—large department stores—at each end. An anchor inherently attracts a lot of shoppers, many of whom walk to another anchor. As they do so, they enliven the mall's common space and may patronize the smaller stores located along the way.

Anchors can be used to activate many urban spaces. For example, an office building and garage located on the same site will produce a single locus of activity. But if they are sited a block or two apart, pedestrian activity will occur between them at least twice each weekday. This will drive demand for dry cleaners, coffee shops, restaurants, drugstores, and banks, bringing benefit to buildings, businesses, and people beyond those invested in the primary project.

Almost any two large, related uses can be deployed as anchors: a housing project and supermarket, a hotel and shopping area, an event arena and transit stop. Anchors have limited gravitational pull, however. If they are placed too far apart, the space between them will not be sufficiently activated.
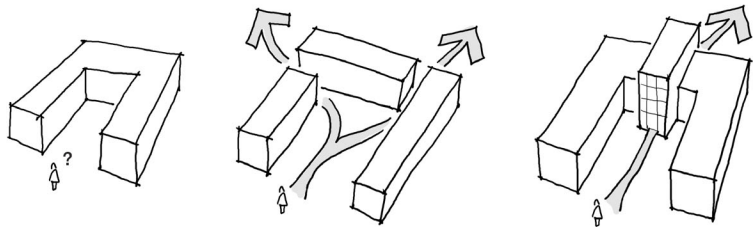
As we enter, we look for the exit.

A public space lacking an apparent exit at the end opposite from where one enters will dissuade many people from using it—even if they do not intend to pass all the way through the space. A dead end subconsciously invokes our defensive instincts: if we are pursued from behind, we will lack an escape route. A street, alley, public mall, or interior corridor lacking a through-connection will have fewer people, fewer things of interest, and less vitality than one with a through-passage. A physical dead end is an experiential dead end is a social dead end is a cultural dead end is an economic dead end.
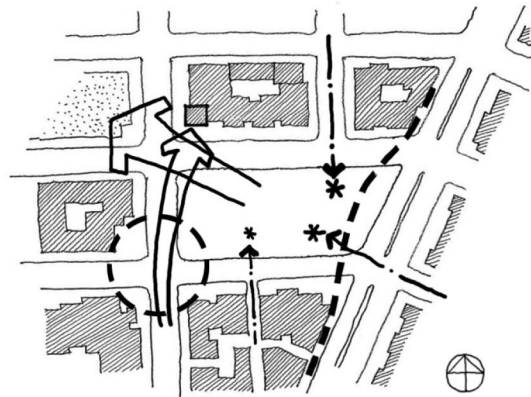
Don't just design; *respond*.

By documenting and analyzing the existing context, you can frame the conditions within which you design and discover opportunities that otherwise would remain hidden to you. Many or most points of analysis will be similar to those of other students. However, any point of analysis can be met with numerous responses. One designer might respond to an important axis by placing a monument; another might create an outdoor space to receive those walking toward it; a third might place an angled wall to catch the sun and visually deflect pedestrians onto a new path.

Common points of analysis include:

Pedestrian activity: pathways, desire lines, congregation (intensity, time)

Sight lines: views to and from the site, as well as nearby view corridors that should be preserved or enhanced

Buildings and built elements: ground floor and upper floor uses, front/rear relationships, scale, materials, style, building massing, etc.

Natural elements: sun path, shadows, wind, air quality, drainage, topography, subterranean conditions

Streets: quality, hierarchy, spatial characteristics, pedestrian prioritization