ARCH 572 - Spring 2014
Design: Behavior & Environment
Professor Joy Monice Malnar, AIA
Email: malnar@illinois.edu
Office: Architecture Building room 409A
Cell: 773 531-5952

A New Chicago Museum
Displaying Replicas of Traditional Native American Architecture

Site Chicago’s Museum Campus & Northerly Island

“We will be known forever by the tracks we leave.” – Native American Proverb

“We remember “that a noble logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting with growing intensity.”

– Daniel Burnham, 1909 Chicago Plan

When the 1909 Plan of Chicago “presented a grand blueprint of transportation for the entire region” the Native American trails served as the roots of its arrangement. These trails can still be seen in the modern maps of the Chicago region although the presence of Native Americans in Chicago has been almost entirely erased. Few people know that Chicago has one of the largest urban American Indian populations in the country. This was due to a 1952 urbanization of American Indians policy enacted by the United States government that moved thousands of American Indians from rural areas and reservations to Chicago.

Course Description: The task is to design a new museum that supports two traditions; that of Chicago known for its innovative architecture while presenting the knowledge of the original inhabitants of this land. The new museum will house replicas of Native American architecture representing the commonly accepted nine cultural regions of North America. The studio will approach Native American architecture as the foundational component of critical regionalism. This will require you to research and study Native American architecture to extract the knowledge imbedded within it. The design challenge is to bring back the presence of, and celebrate Native Americans’ diverse and unique identity, and their knowledge of the climatic regions, but not by engaging in stereotypes or icon specific images. The evaluation of your building design will be based on how successfully it supports the forwarding looking approach of Native Americans, and its ability to re-establish tribal connections to the land by assisting people to perceive and appreciate seasonal changes, and attracting tourists.

Ojibwe Birch Bark Summer and Winter Houses
Native American buildings embody a rich traditional knowledge of a local region. This historic information is valuable, yet regrettfully neglected. Your rigorous inquiry will include information on the use of local materials, building processes, social organization, and cultural identity. The raw materials are both raw and organic. The structural types are bent frame, post and beam, and compression, and the building forms are domical, conical, and rectilinear. As you select nine buildings for exhibit, what should be revealed is how the original inhabitants’ understanding of the land and climatic zones drove construction techniques that provided structures that demonstrated passive sustainable strategies. This information will become a part of the exhibit display. Your new museum must meet the expectations of today’s audiences while giving the Native American architecture a place amongst the acknowledged masterpieces of Chicago.

Site: The building will become a part of the existing Chicago’s Museum Campus, and take advantage of the prairie grasses of Northerly Island. Research of the site will require a review of the new plans proposed by JJR Landscape Architects with Studio Gang Architects and the City of Chicago Cultural Plan 2012. One physical site model will be built as a team project.

Building Size: This will be a medium size building. The exact size will be determined by the size of the nine exhibit buildings and their location within the building, along with a gallery for the display of new architecture currently being designed for indigenous populations throughout the world.

Each student will:
1. **Individually select** a specific site from the designated area;
2. **Individually identify** nine historic Native American buildings from the commonly accepted culture areas of North American Indians and explain the factors that determined their design; and
3. **Individually design** a new museum building.

Field Trips: The studio will require one or two field trips to Chicago to visit the site and the Field Museum of Natural History. Within the museum we will focus on the Bunky Echo-Hawk: Modern Warrior exhibit, and the Native American collection that includes a full-size replica of a Pawnee Earth Lodge. Currently there are questions being asked about the appropriateness of exhibits such as these being located within a natural history museum.

Presentation Requirements: The mid-term presentation will require the selection of a specific site, scaled illustrations of nine Native American replicas with regional accommodations explained and their location within the museum, a full set of schematic drawings of the building, and a physical model. The final review will require development of all mid-term requirements with a detail of the most significant building material(s). The reviews will be digitally presented using PowerPoint or pdf with a printed 11 x 17 handout of each slide and a physical model.

Required Texts:

The site for a new museum would be located in or adjacent to Chicago’s Museum campus. The Field Museum, Shedd Aquarium and Adler Planetarium are all within walking distance of each other. Review and evaluate the proposal prepared by JJR Landscape Architects and Studio Gang Architects for Northerly Island, Chicago’s newest coastal park. The Northerly Island Framework Plan prepared with the Chicago Park District can be downloaded at: http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/assets/1/23/Northerly_Island_Framework_Plan.pdf

Also, recently Chicago unveiled a new plan that provides a vision for future development in Chicago. In this plan, “Vision is defined as the act or power of anticipating that which will or may come to be….Chicago is a city that has never lacked for visionary thinkers with big ideas.” Your new museum must take into consideration the City of Chicago Cultural Plan 2012. This proposal can be downloaded at: http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/cultural_plan.html

Examples of three recent Native American Museums and Cultural Centers are seen below. Information on their cultural relevance along with other recent architectural examples can be found in the required book, New Architecture on Indigenous Lands.

Southern Ute Tribal Museum and Cultural Center – Ignacio, Colorado, 2011
Johnpaul Jones (Cherokee-Choctaw), Jones & Jones Architects and Landscape Architects

Nk’Mip Desert Cultural Centre – Osoyoos, British Columbia (Osoyoos Band), 2006
Bruce Haden, Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden architects + urbanistes

Huhugam Heritage Center, Gila River Indian Community – Chandler, Arizona (Pima), 1998/2004
Donald J. Stastny, StastnyBrun Architects Inc. with David N. Sloan (Navajo), D. Sloan Architects, and Brian McCormack (Nez Perce), McCormack Landscape Architecture