

OFFICE | PARK

What is an office for the 21st century? What does an office even mean in our age of giant companies like Google, Facebook and Apple? These are companies who are trying to utilize capital-a “Architecture” in order to define their corporate culture, while at the same time providing endless free candy, slides, video games and ping-pong tables in supposedly the same search. Offices used to be easy, in the “Mad Men” age of IBM and Seagram and Johnson Wax. It was clear how people worked – there was the private office and there was the secretary. Now there are firms who specialize in office interiors and the expectation is always that the design of an office is still a kind of formula of furniture, acoustic ceilings and coffee. At the same time, there are amazing advances in technology that make working and collaborating more seamless than ever, even across oceans and time, changing the notion of what it means to work “together”. And there are now companies, some of whom invented that technology, who are literally changing the world we live in – and yet still are wondering how best to work together, and what image to project.

And what is a park? Central Park was called the “lungs of the city.” After the industrial revolution at the turn of the last century, urban dwellers were so divorced from nature, the park was sometimes the only green they would ever see. Parks soon abounded in the city, however, taking over as industries moved out along the waterfront, slipped into small lots as “pocket parks” and created as part of massive infrastructural change, such as at Battery Park City. Now parks can even take over abandoned forms of infrastructure, such as the High Line, New York’s newest park. The park is also a program constantly ripe for reinvention.

And lastly what is an Office Park? We know that the office park is bad, and usually located at the periphery or the suburbs. If you say it often enough, however – “office park, office park, office park” – it starts to sound kind of nice, working in a park. In fact, in the 1950’s as the Quickborner Management Consultant group in Germany began to try to apply organizational theory to the office, they invented the Bürolandschaft – the landscape office. Studies of course have shown that people are more productive when in contact with the outside world, as well. And now, of course, in the face of climate change and resiliency issues, all offices should think about how they respond to the natural world. This is however not the classic “office park”...

This summer, however, we want to work on reinventing the office, reinventing the park – and reinventing the office park – as an urban experiment, not a suburban experiment, and as a project that takes seriously both the future of work – and the future of nature. By extension we will be looking at the future of the city. We will question what it means to work in a “CBD” and provide a new model for the global workforce. The site is Roosevelt Island, where NYC has recently created huge subsidies in order to lure Cornell to create a “tech campus” as part of a larger ongoing trend of tech companies relocating to New York. Roosevelt Island is a perfect site. It is at once suburban – you can get there via car and there is a lot of space – and urban, you can get there by subway – and weird, you can get there by tram. It also has one of the

world's first centralized vacuum-tube trash collection systems, where trash travels through tubes at up to 60MPH (100KPH). It has no real park.

We will look at the history of the office – and the office park, from Frank Lloyd Wright to Mies to Saarinen to Roche Dinkeloo to Foster to BIG and Heatherwick. We will look at sustainable infrastructure, nature, climate change, resiliency and landscape in order to create an idealized new form of urban park. And we will create the future OFFICE-PARK.

STUDIO

The OFFICE|PARK studio will be taught jointly Dan Wood and Maurizio Bianchi Mattioli, with assistance from Thiago Maso. Dan Wood is the co-founder of WORKac in New York City, an award-winning practice that operates at the edges of the discipline and in collaboration with other fields to explore and re-invent the many intersections between architecture and the "everything else." Maurizio Bianchi Mattioli is a Senior Associate at WORKac. Thiago Maso is a recent graduate of the GSAPP. On June 10 we will have a special presentation by Chip Lord, a founder of the 1970's architecture and art collective Ant Farm.

Dan Wood will lead the studio and will generally be at school on Mondays and Wednesdays, for reviews and available at all other times via email. Maurizio Mattioli will be in studio on Wednesdays and Fridays.

SCHEDULE

Week 1

June 3, June 5

June 5 Studio introduction

Week 2

June 8 10, 12

Research/Precedent Phase

June 10 Chip Lord Presentation

June 12 Office-Park Visit 1

Week 3

June 15, 17, 19

Concept and Program

June 15 Research/Precedent Review

June 19 Office-Park Visit 2

Week 4

June 22, 24, 26

June 24 Concept and Program Pin-Up

Week 5

June 29, July 1

Concept Design, Midterm Prep

Week 6

Concept Design, Presentation

July 6, 8, 10

July 10 – MIDTERM REVIEW

Week 7

July 13, 15, 17

Design

Week 8

July 20, 22, 24

Final Design

Week 9

July 27, 29, 31,

Final Design, Presentation

Week 10

August 3, 5, 7

August 3 - FINAL REVIEW