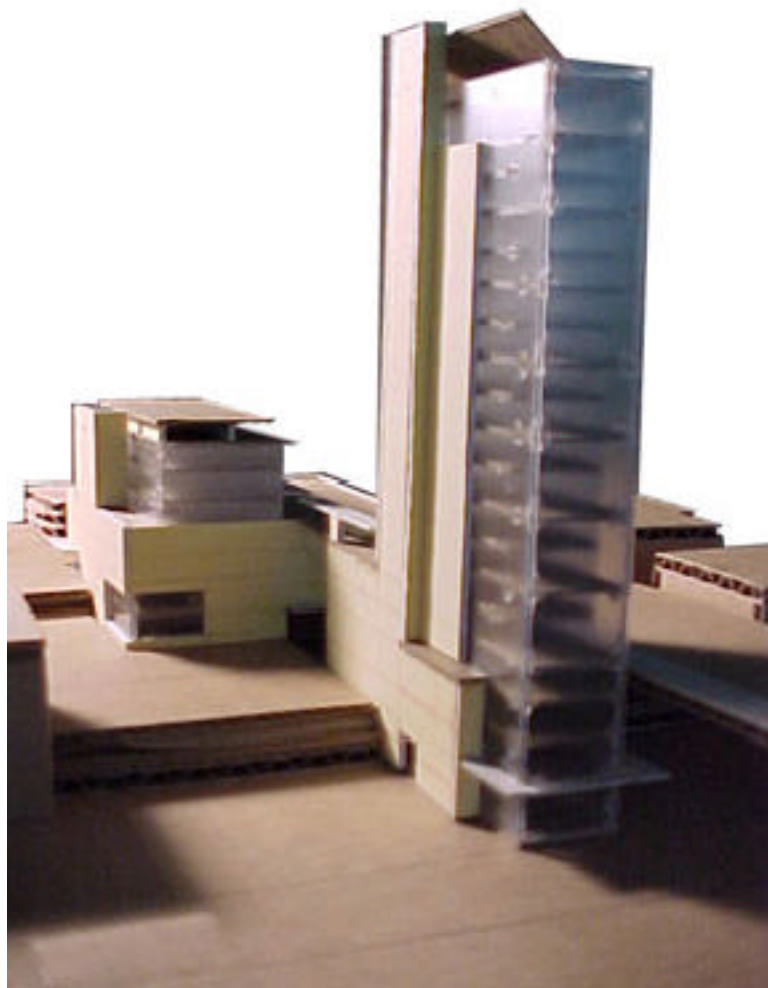


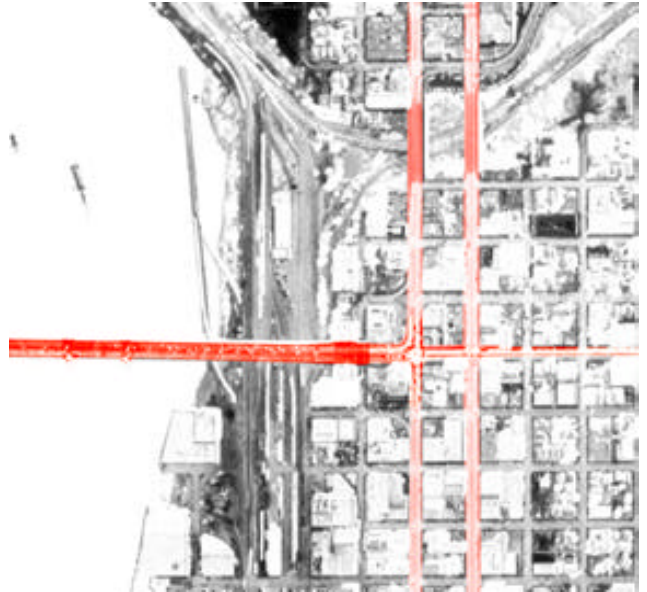
## Advocating Urban Culture through Design: Charette 2002 “...under DEVELOPMENT”

by Fredrick H. Zal, Atelier Z

In the early 1990s, the level of design discussion was at a fervent high. With the slim amount of construction engaging the economy, a series of lectures and built design competitions pervaded the architectural scene of Portland, Oregon. As business stabilized and moved towards its currently explosive trend of urban renewal and redevelopment, paper architecture succumbed to the mediocrity of typical praxis. But, behind the scenes of these projects were the emerging talented designers burdened by the doldrums of blocks and wall types. Motivated by this angst and need for self-expression, a small group of young turks organized a body of theoretical design competitions focusing upon contemporary urban issues and sites. The momentum of this theoretical pedagogy has been exponentially growing, especially since new management in 1999, coupled renowned jurors with a drive towards creating design competitions for ‘built’ works within the Urban Growth Boundary.

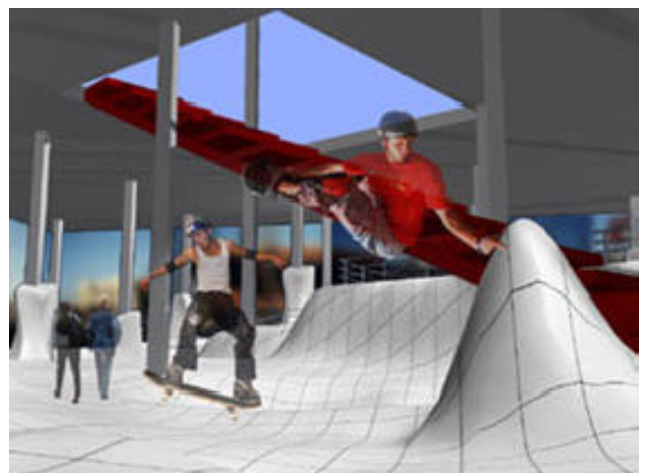


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The purpose of these competitions has been to establish a critical dialogue amongst differing individuals in the fine and applied arts by allowing students, interns and artists a venue to express their ideas around current issues in the City of Portland. This has been an exceptional opportunity for young vibrant minds to cast their ideas into the mix and see what we could stir up. <<http://www.atelierz.org/competitions>>

Endeavoring towards the goal of implementing built over theoretical design competitions, Atelier Z ran the vanguard City sanctioned design competition for a publicly-owned block at the crux of Portland’s urban core and at the midpoint of the City’s largest speculative street enhancement project: Burnside. The totality of the project was operated as a collaboration between Atelier Z, the Mayor’s Office, the Portland Development Commission [PDC], AIA/PDX and Portland State University. Since it was theoretical in nature, the winning design[s] shall not be constructed per this milieu, but the submissions to this Charette shall help in the design orientation and formation of a future construction program by the PDC.



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“...under DEVELOPMENT” was a fast paced Charette for a ‘Mixed-Use Urban Gateway Mid-Rise’ on Block 76. The site is the eastern base of the Burnside Bridge at N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, the confluence of two primary traffic corridors for downtown Portland and just a few blocks from both the new Eastbank Esplanade and the Rose Garden Arena. This northwest corner lot contains 30,495 square feet of land with 180’ of frontage on E. Burnside Street, 170’ on NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard sloping down 14’-4” to NE Third Avenue and the notorious Burnside Skatepark. The area’s Central Employment zoning allows mixed-uses and is intended for areas in the center of the City that have predominantly industrial type development. The redevelopment of the block by PDC is therefore being considered for a 6-10 story building composed of the mixed-uses of a luxury penthouse, office, retail and manufacture, all with a light industrial leaning.

The Charette had 17,603 web inquiries from places such as: Canada, Mexico, France, Belgium, Portugal, United Kingdom, Denmark, Germany, Yugoslavia, Taiwan, China, Korea, and Singapore, along with the United States. From these inquiries, 46 teams register from Portland, Seattle, Atlanta, Syracuse, Baltimore, Los Angeles, Boston, Dallas and Medford. As the Charette transitions into built competitions and the prize purse grows, we expect the number of entries to explode.

The jury for the Charette was Peter Pran: NBBJ; Vera Katz: Mayor, City of Portland; Thomas Hacker: Thomas Hacker Associates; Sarah Lynn Garrett: Portland State University; Mark Engberg: Colab; Lauren Beacham-Cho: Bolighus, and John Cava: University of Oregon with Denyse C. McGriff, PDC and Fredrick H. Zal, Atelier Z as moderators and Lloyd D. Lindley and Ernest Joyner as community advocates.

Competitors for Charette 2002 were given the following charges: How can the mixed-use program and site section augment the inter-relationships of building, adjacent roadways and views? How may pedestrian movement be structured from the Eastbank Esplanade, Skatepark and street crossings? How may the building address issues of mixed-income occupation and alleviate potential gentrification? How may current / future mass-transit systems evolve? How does this building establish rhythms that relate to the Central Eastside’s historic past while creating an identity for its future? How may architecture operate as a social condenser?

The following awarded designs embody an inventive and civically responsible approach to both building and urban design. They did not create iconic forms, but rather embraced larger design issues that address the fabric of our City. Each of these designs may serve as a catalyst for future visions of Portland.

**First Prize**

Team 02.124: Richard Grace / Edward Running / Ian Z Gelbrich / Gabriela Quiñones;

**Honorable Mentions (3)**

Team 02.008: Markus Byron / Brian Ray;

Team 02.107: Zach Emmingham / Joseph Huang;

Team 02.111: Robert Esau / Mark Raggett;

**Finalists (2)**

Team 02.113: Matt Janssen / John Schupp / Matt Loosemore;

Team 02.202: Stephen Weeks / Cynthia Mosby / David Gabriel.

The heated debate over the diversity of entries served as an excellent educational venue for all involved, especially for Mayor Vera Katz. She was greatly impressed with the variety of design potentialities and rigorous attention to creative solutions. The Mayor’s City Design Initiative Team [CDIT] is now exploring how such theoretical speculations might serve as a model for and evolve into a constructed design process.



© Team 02.202: Stephen Weeks, Cynthia Mosby, David Gabriel



*“Inspire quality design of all buildings constructed in the City of Portland, especially its own facilities and signature developments in which it has a significant investment. Demonstrate design excellence is good business and beneficial to the life of the community by producing innovative and enduring works of architecture that will stand the test of time and be deemed remarkable examples of excellent design for years to come.” - Mayor Vera Katz’s Design Initiative, Vision Statement*

As with the formation of the GSA design standards, the City of Portland is progressively looking to advocate for integral Architectural design [with a capitol ‘A’] in all of its public works. A proposed Request for Design [RFD] process would center upon open two-stage design competitions for a concise series of venues, of which the most visible shall be the Mayor’s “signature sites”. [The first of these competitions, Mt. Tabor Reservoir, is tentatively scheduled for 2003. The project’s Public Advisory Committee is currently forming the programmatic information for the competition, and the process has much support across the professional community.] The CDIT is also evaluating methods for augmenting public education and facilitating design / construction processes similar to the carpool lanes on highways. “If you have ‘design’, get in this lane. You still have to abide by the speed limits / etc, but the drive should be much less staccato.”

With this progressive charge and the latent talent of Portland’s designers and planners, the City shall continue to emerge as an international model for contemporary urbanity.

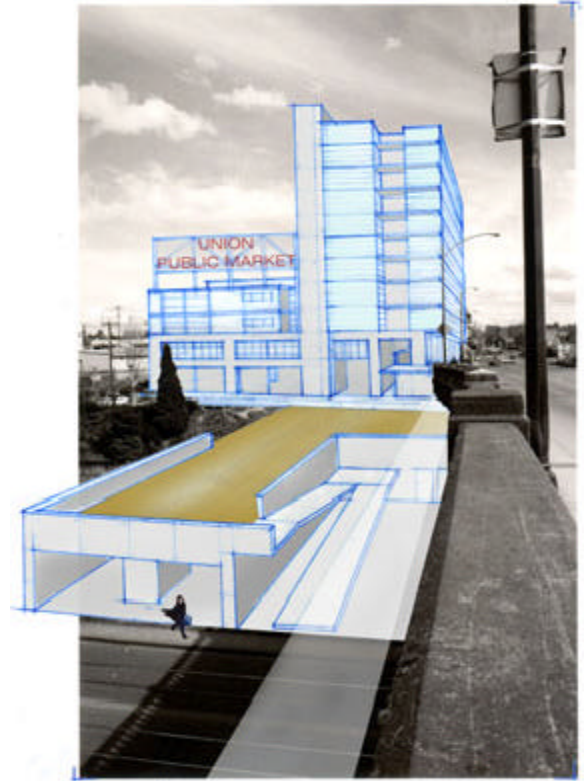
*Fredrick H. Zal, NCARB is the principal of Atelier Z, adj.asst. professor of design at Portland State University and an advocating member of the Mayor’s City Design Initiative Team.*

IMAGES [clockwise]:

© Team 02.006: Jesse Graden

© Team 02.116: Jill Enomoto, Brandon Sanchez

© Team 02.124: Richard Grace, Edward Running, Ian Gelbrich, Gabriela Quiñones



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