GANDER POINT

A PROJECT OF THE ALBERT & TINA SMALL CENTER FOR COLLABORATIVE DESIGN AND NEW ORLEANS CITY PARK
EXPLORE
PROJECT BACKGROUND
SITE OBSERVATION & ANALYSIS
SKILL BUILDING

DESIGN
SITE STRATEGIES
DESIGN PROPOSALS
FINAL SCHEME

BUILD
PROJECT TIMELINE
SITE PREPARATION
FABRICATION & ASSEMBLY
FINISHING TOUCHES

COVER PHOTO BY NEIL ALEXANDER PHOTOGRAPHY
PROJECT BACKGROUND

Following a series of past projects ranging from a non-profit headquarters at Grow Dat and a shade pavilion and training area at the Louisiana Outdoors Outreach Program (LOOP), the Albert & Tina Small Center for Collaborative Design once again partnered with the leadership and staff of City Park to design and fabricate a project within the beautiful urban park. The project team included the Small Center’s Fall 2017 Design/Build Studio, in collaboration with City Park leadership and staff. Located along one of the park’s lagoon edges, the project aims to provide the public with a place to gather and enjoy the waterfront.
The site, where land and water meet, is enjoyed by a diverse set of user groups including fishermen, families who use neighboring soccer fields and playgrounds, people walking dogs, and others.

City Park recognized the opportunity to provide a space that formalized activities like fishing and family gatherings. In response, the team worked to design and build a project that engaged this diverse set of users with the ecology of the site, including the water’s edge and cypress tree canopy.
City Park was founded in 1854 and is one of the nation’s oldest urban parks. Each year, millions of visitors visit the 1,300-acre park for an outdoor oasis. City Park is home to ancient oaks, modern art, and everything in between, including a Botanical Garden, the Besthoff Sculpture Garden, biking, jogging, and walking paths, tennis courts, and golf courses. The mission of the park is to preserve and improve park services for recreational, educational, cultural and beautification purposes.
The project team’s first step was gathering information to create a complete understanding of the site, located on the lagoon along Marconi Drive in City Park. Together, the class collected both quantitative and qualitative information describing the site and its use. Recording measurements at different points along the lagoon such as distance to the road, depth of the water, and spaces between trees, was helpful in creating a base set of drawings for use in the design phase. The team surveyed along and around the lagoon, then used kayaks to observe and understand the site from the water, allowing a vantage point fundamental to representing and considering all aspects of the project.
SITE | ANALYSIS

In addition to the tactile information gathered, the class conducted several surveys, interviews, and site observations to establish its patterns of use. Their findings of both individual and gathering uses, user demographics, and various activities that took place on the site were recorded: soccer, fishing, bird watching, relaxing by the water’s edge, and more. Resulting diagrams played an important role in designing a space that could serve as many of these users as possible. These interviews allowed the team to set goals and focus on the existing user groups for the site.
City Park provided a general area for the project, but the specific site was chosen based on site observation and analysis. It was important to City Park that the project address the existing soccer fields and Magnolia Street as well as the lagoon edge. The team utilized an existing clearing within the tree canopy to create a pleasant gathering area and access to the waterfront. The range of site conditions allowed the team to create a variety of programmatic conditions between the street and the lagoon.
SKILL BUILDING

The design team began the semester with varying levels of shop and construction experience. Through a series of shop tutorials, skill building exercises, and material explorations, the team was able to develop skills and explore ideas at a variety of scales.

SMALL
Beginning with small scale projects, the team explored interactions between materials, objects, and environments. These projects included a display case for objects found on site, testing strategies for combining existing and new conditions.

MEDIUM
Half scale and full scale material explorations allowed the team to test ideas for potential site objects. Strength, feasibility, and aesthetics were all important in these investigations.

LARGE
Later in the project, full scale on-site mock-ups created the opportunity for the team to envision how the project would come to life.
DESIGN

SITE STRATEGIES
DESIGN PROPOSALS
FINAL SCHEME
DESIGN | SITE STRATEGIES

The team built on their knowledge of the site and its usership by proposing a variety of specific project elements such as docks, sculptures, seating, landscaping, and more. Locating these elements in different locations along the lagoon edge, the team strived towards a design proposal that would engage the public, serve a wide variety of users, and meet the sustainability and maintenance needs of the park.
Early designs were the product of many iterations and accumulated feedback from City Park, park users, and the Tulane School of Architecture community. Individual student designs were combined and expanded upon to present to City Park. Feedback on the six schemes established key focus points for the project: engaging the water, engaging families using the soccer fields, security, and permanence.
PASSAGE THROUGH THREE ECOLOGICAL ZONES

AMONG THE TREES

ecological zone: tree canopy

IN BETWEEN

ecological zone: riparian

WITH THE WATER

ecological zone: aquatic

CARSON HALL + RACHEL ROCKFORD

ORGANIC ORTHOGONALITY

LAYERS OF FRAME FILL

ORTHOGONAL ORDER

DIMENSIONAL SPACE

SUBTRACT

SECTION C

SECTION B

SECTION A

GROUP

GROUP

SOLITARY

GATHERING

ACTIVITY

VOLUMES

OUTLOOK

CROSS GRAIN IS ABOUT VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL CONNECTIONS

CROSS GRAIN
Armed with input from City Park leaders, the students split up into groups to tackle the final three design proposals, which received feedback from Tulane School of Architecture faculty regarding feasibility, material selection, and strength of the ideas.

The team also presented the designs on site in City Park, where they got to hear feedback from the New Orleans community, City Park leaders, and the groundskeepers that would eventually be in charge of maintaining the site and intervention.

**FINAL THREE SCHEMES**

*CUT + PEEL*

*CUTTING THE EDGE*

*NEXUS - SATELLITES*
CUTTING THE EDGE defined by engaging the water’s edge

NEXUS - SATELLITES defined by dispersed interventions
After these final reviews, the students and faculty worked together to incorporate the strengths of each of the three proposals into the final design. This hybridization allowed the team to define the program, user groups, and concepts to focus on moving forward.
The final design is defined by key elements including an axial path that creates a visual connection across the water to a discoverable folly, a permeable screen that defines space and generates feelings of enclosure and release, a gathering space along the path, and a ramp down to a fishing pier at the water’s edge.
Full scale mock-ups both on site and at the Small Center allowed the team to make critical decisions about each aspect of the project.
MATERIAL AXIS

ARCHITECTURALIZING RAGWEED
COMPRESSION VS. RELEASE

SITE LINES
AXIS

ACRYLIC PAINTINGS BY ANTONIA BUTWELL

BUDGET BREAKDOWN

- GRAVEL + FILL 5%
- SITE PREP 4%
- PILES 12%
- HARDWARE / MISC 20%
- CONCRETE 13%
- LUMBER 17%
- STEEL 29%
BUILD

PROJECT TIMELINE
SITE PREPARATION
FABRICATION & ASSEMBLY
FINISHING TOUCHES
PROJECT TIMELINE

WEEK 1
- Classes Begin
- City Park Concept Review
- Research + Speculation

WEEK 3
- Penultimate Review

WEEK 5
- Structural Engineer

WEEK 6
- Structural Engineer

PROJECT PREP
- Students
- Instructor
- Project Manager

HOURS WORKED
- 20
- 40
- 60

34 | BUILD
CITY PARK CONCEPT REVIEW

CLASSES BEGIN
WEEK 1
WEEK 3
WEEK 5
WEEK 6
WEEK 8
WEEK 9
WEEK 12
WEEK 15

PENULTIMATE REVIEW

STUCTURAL ENGINEER

CONCRETE RAILS FINISHED

PILES DRIVEN
FIRST DAY ON SITE
BOX FABRICATION BEGINS
CONCRETE RAILS FINISHED
FINAL REVIEW

RESEARCH + SPECULATION
PROJECT MANAGER
STUDENTS
INSTRUCTOR

hours worked

40
60
20

BUILD

WEEK 8
WEEK 9
WEEK 12
WEEK 15
BUILD | SITE PREPARATION

Building the project began with site surveying and significant excavation. Students spread sand to level the ground and got started building the concrete formwork. Small groups tackled designated areas, building formwork and preparing the ground for the first concrete pour. It was all hands on deck as the group shoveled concrete into the formwork and smoothed the material until it had a clean and finished surface.
Small groups focused on different components of the project such as the screen wall, the pier, and the gathering space. One group worked at the Small Center shop to fabricate corten steel boxes that would make up the permeable screen along the path and water’s edge. After some troubleshooting and building an important jig, the steel group and some extra hands from the site were able to cut, weld, and finish over 40 steel boxes that were then delivered to site for installation. On site, the boxes were arranged, bolted into place, and leveled to ensure a visually clean and consistent wall/screen system.
The cantilevered pier required a continued structural investigation throughout the design and build process. After meeting with a structural engineer, the pier team created a system using stacked 6x6 lumber supported by piles driven into the ground in order to cantilever over the water and suspend a 6-foot platform. A secondary steel structure hidden beneath the deck ensures safety and security. The steel members and wood beams were installed on the pier first, followed by fabrication of a permeable decking surface. Many materials were explored to provide a stable and ADA compliant surface, while also allowing for rain to flow through the surface and allow views of the water below.
The gathering space and entry beacon were comprised of stacked 6x6 lumber to create a permanent and sturdy appearance. The final design created seating areas and a higher table surface that focus views toward the lagoon and encourage interaction between occupants of the space. Material details are consistent at the pier, gathering space, and beacon to create a coherent language throughout the site. The beacon also provides a welcoming visual presence along the street edge.
BUILD | FINISHING TOUCHES

Sand and gravel were laid on the walking surfaces along with finishing touches including painting and installing a sculptural steel alligator as a focal point across the lagoon. The team continued working on details in the final days leading up to the opening celebration. Plantings were placed strategically to alternately obscure and allow views as visitors approach the water’s edge.
## Credits

### SMALL CENTER
Seth Welty (design lead), Nick Jenisch (project manager), Emilie Taylor Welty, Sue Mobley, Donn Peabody, Shoshana Gordon

### STUDIO TEAM
Antonia Butwell, Monica Marrero Ciuro, Carson Hall, Carolyn Issacson, Izabela Lotozo, Magda Magierski, David Maples, Christie Melgar, Rachel Neu, Elliott Peterson, Rachel Rockford, Nicole Saville, Diego Schubb, Jesse Williams

### CITY PARK
Bob Becker, John Hopper, Tyler Havens, Dan Preziosi

### REVIEWERS
Scott Bernhard, Tiffany Lin, Aron Chang, Emilie Taylor Welty, Sarah Satterlee, Kentaro Tsubaki, Dan Etheridge, Eric Lynn, Maya Alexander, Nicholas Perrin, and Daniel Splaingard

### SPECIAL THANKS TO
Jenny Snape, Gaylan Williams, City Park, Neil Alexander Photography