TO ADD / TO ALTER

Thesis booklet
This past year I have been living in Seattle. Living in a new city, country and continent changes you and your perspective of things.

A lot of things is very similar to home, and you often hear people comparing Scandinavia and Seattle. They mention the similarities in climate, a thing that could explain the big amount of settlers from the Scandinavian countries that arrived in Seattle in the late 1800s.

And yes, it is similar in some ways. The nature is similar, even though everything is bigger here. The trees are taller, the mountains are higher. People are friendly, but not over-friendly - Americans call it the "Seattle freeze". As a Swede, I just think they seem normal. People drink a lot of coffee, and the city is trying to promote itself as a bike-city.

The more I live here, the more differences I notice. Things gets done in a different way here. And the city in itself is very different. The urban fabric, with the strict grid and the zoning rules creates a totally different architectural environment, and the city is right now changing in a fast pace.

The more I learn about this city, the more fascinated I get. Even though it's young, it has already transformed itself multiple times and survived both super expansive growth and fire and depression. But it is also a city where the different eras have put its mark, and you can clearly read the layers of development.

But I'm afraid that some things will get lost, some of the things that make Seattle special. This thesis will be about how to deal with growth and altering an existing fabric for new needs and visions.

Matilda Schuman
May 15, 2015
HOW TO DEAL WITH HISTORY
&: ON FAME AND/OR MERIT
LK 08

FINE OLD BUILDING IN "BAD REPAIR"

THE ARCHITECTS' DILEMMA

OBLIVION THROUGH FAITHFUL RESTORATION

NO GLORY IN DOING THE RIGHT THING

INSTANT GLORY THROUGH "SCANDALOUS" RAPE
Seattle is growing rapidly. From being a blue collar worker town, with big factories as Boeing, the city is changing into a tech-town, with big companies that attract people from all over the world. To keep up with the influx of people, the city is in need of creating dense neighborhoods, and when doing that a lot of old buildings gets torn down and new buildings rise to the sky. The scale and the urban fabric of the city is changing in a fast pace and I wonder what is getting lost.

But isn't there any other ways we can think about growth? Other ways of putting value to older structures? Something that is in-between, in the scale between museological preservation and demolition?

I want to explore alternative solutions, something that is in between but still more than keeping a thin outer shell of an old structure. What can we learn from the presence of historic buildings? What do we gain from keeping older structures in our urban fabric?

I want to speculate and experiment with how to engage an existing structure and open it up for new purposes. I want to explore approaches with how to deal with the existing when adding or changing it, and connect theoretical concepts to the physical nature of the architecture.

**To alter**

1. To change or make different; modify.
2. To adjust for a better fit.

**To add**

1. Join (something) to something else so as to increase the size, number, or amount. synonyms: attach, build on, add on, put on, put in, append, adjoin, join, affix, connect, annex;
2. Put in (an additional element, ingredient, etc.)
How can a contemporary and philosophical view on altering historic buildings be?

What ways can we as architects work with history and memories in architecture and urban planning in general?

What strategies are used when working with existing buildings?
What different design approaches can be identified?

How can the historic be defined in a young city?
What role does the presence of collective history and memory play for newcomers to a city?

What values can be identified in historical/older buildings?
What is there more than aesthetics?

What role does history and memory play in a growing, young city as Seattle?

How can a historical narrative be implemented in the future city of Seattle?

Memory and fantasy, recollection and imagination, are related and they have always a situational and specific content. One who cannot remember can hardly imagine because memory is the soil of the imagination.

(Juhani Pallasmaa)
Mapping of different kinds of treatment of historic structures:
Ruins, memorials, adaptive re-use, fragments, facadeism, historic preservation

Memory, to memorize, what happens in the brain, related to place
How historic environments effects us

Questions of authenticity

History as an economic factor
Value

History as an identity factor
Branding, re-use

Old building techniques
Materiality, tactility, craft

History as a symbol
Iconography

Growth, density and history
Urbanism

The aging process - the status of old and aging
In relationship to youth culture, change and future

Formal aspects of architecture when adding/altering

Artistic novelty can move us only provided it touches something that we already possess in our very being. Every profound artistic work surely grows from memory, not from rootless intellectual invention.

(Juhani Pallasmaa)

THEMES TO RESEARCH
1. My thesis will be a personal and visionary work. It will be parts speculative and parts realistic.

2. My project will position itself in a theoretical way, as well as being a specific architectural proposal and I hope that my theoretical studies will feed my spatial investigations.

3. I am going to work in broad range of scales. The theoretic scale to city scale to neighborhood scale to site scale to building scale to interior room scale. I want to spend most of my time in the beginning and the end scales: the theory and the space.

4. My aim is to go into details with questions of light, materiality, texture and the spatial quality of interior space.

5. I want my thesis to be a time for me to experiment and a personal laboratory for methods. I strongly want to incorporate the written word into my project: both to read and to write as a part of the process.

**Vocabulary**

- Experiencing
- Light
- Flow
- Place
- Interiority
- Personal
- Interaction
- In between
- Constancy
- Sensory
- History
- Memory
- Context
- Sharing
- City
- Alteration
- Preservation
- Aesthetics

**David Chipperfield: Model of Altes Museum**
When in Seattle:

Selection of at least three different sites in Seattle. I will collect drawings of existing buildings, take photos and gather materials from the sites. I will also gather photos/eventual drawings of specific examples from Seattle, that I can analyze and use later on in the process.

Research method/process:

Along with reading my selected readings (and readings I will find in the process), I will also do case studies on specific buildings and in the end map the different strategies and their theoretical perspectives. My research will not only include architecture, but also art, philosophy, science and maybe some neurobiology.

After reading most of my text and getting a good base line, I will sort and select what topics that makes most sense to continue to develop. I will not stop the research on a certain time, instead try to have a process that is open for input also late in the project. The research will not follow a common linear path, the research will kick-start in the beginning but then continue on along with the design project. My goal is to integrate the reading and writing with the design project, and to make that happen I will dedicate a specific reading and time period to each week - ideally one day a week.

Design development / architectural proposal process:

My hope is that the theoretical explorations will feed the design, and influence what my hand sketches. I will in the beginning mainly worked with hand sketching, collages and models, but occasionally do work in the digital world: they are both valuable. The project will gradually be more and more computer based, but to continue the link to the craft and the hand I will work with my interior spaces in physical daylighting models and always continue explore in hand sketches.

I see my ideal process as non-linear. I will go in loops, where I work both with the detail and the site at the same time, and hopefully the changes of scales will generate a deeper understanding.
Seattle is located slightly above 47 degrees 30 north latitude. It is almost due north of Portland and San Francisco, and due west of Basel, Switzerland and Budapest, Hungary. It is in the very far north of the US, but the main factor for explaining the climate is not the latitude, it’s the proximity to the Pacific Ocean.

The city is both bounded by, and sprinkled with smaller areas of water. To the west is the Puget Sound, an inland saltwater sea. To the east is Lake Washington, a cool and clean mountain-fed lake. In between these two are Lake Union, and the three are connected by two man-made canals.

It is also said to rain a lot in Seattle. A hundred miles west of Seattle, is the wettest spot in the continental States: Quillayute. Between Seattle and Quillayute, we find the Olympic Mountains, which absorb much of the moisture coming off the ocean, making Seattle less rainy than people think. The city’s annual precipitation is less than that of all the major seaboard cities to the east, but the difference is that Seattle gets very little precipitation in the shape of snow and almost never have any heavy thunderstorm. The rain in Seattle is most likely a steady but light, daylong rains that will make everything seem wet.

The Pacific Ocean is also influencing the temperature, the weather is mild for it’s northern position, and in general the temperature is ranging from low seventies to mid-thirties.

Seattle is almost never flat. From sea level up to the top of Queen Anne Hill is a difference of 457 feet, and the top is less than a mile away from the sound. Seattle is sometimes referred to the city of seven hills, just like Rome, but there are more hills than that.
Seattle as we know it today was founded in 1851, but the earliest settlement in the region predates the Euro-American settlement by several thousand years. It is not known for how the Coast Salish tribe had lived here, but at least nine thousand years and they developed the economic and technological basis of the Northwest Coast culture.

In 1851, a group led by Arthur A Denny established a settlement at Alki Beach, now called West Seattle. The location lacked a protected deep-water anchorage, so the community moved to a nearby site, the east side of Elliot Bay, in March 1852. The initial economic incentive for the community was established on year later, when Henry Yesler agreed on building the first steam sawmill on Puget Sound in Seattle. In 1889, a big fire that destroyed most of the commercial area of Seattle, and years of reconstruction went on afterwards until the panic of 1893 happened, and nothing got built until the next period of growth that came along with the Klondike gold rush. Seattle marketed itself as the "gateway to Alaska", and all that wanted to search for gold needed at least one year of supplies to be able to enter into Canada.

The residential fabric of Seattle boomed, and because of the late development and the availability of streetcars, a lot of single family houses was built instead of row houses that we seen in older American cities. This have had a great impact on Seattle's urban fabric, which is much less dense than most European and Eastern US-cities. In 1903, the Olmsted brothers was invited to propose a strategy for how to integrate more green space into the city and presented their park & boulevard plan that most of it got realized. Even today a lot of the plan survives and Seattle has a good amount of parks and boulevards integrated into the city.

The steel frame construction method came late to Seattle. Even though we see steel skyscrapers in Eastern US already in late 1890s, the first steel frame construction was finished in 1903. Downtown moved north, and the old downtown was left and forgotten, which saved the place from demolition.

Smith tower was built 1910-1914, and was the tallest building in Seattle until 1969. 1920s came the automobile era. The city started to spread out even more, and development started to happen also where the street cars line didn't go.

HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT
In the late 1930s, the architects in the region started to form what’s later been called Northwest Regional Modernism. It’s not the international modernism, but a modernism that is blended with concerns of nature, place, indoor outdoor living, materiality, views etcetera. A lot of wood is used and the expression of the structure as a part of the design was important. In the mid 1940s, a lot of people started to design with these things in mind and it still carries on in contemporary architectural practices.

In 1962, Seattle was home for a World’s Fair, called the Century 21 exposition. The exposition was themed around the future and what the life would be like in the next century. A lot of new buildings was constructed for the fair and most of them still stands today, incorporated in an area now called Seattle Center. The most famous structure of the fair, the Space Needle, also became the symbol of Seattle.

In the 1970s, much of the assumptions made in the post-war period were being challenged. A massive free way building program was proposed, but after the Alaskan Way Viaduct, that runs along the whole waterfront, and the Interstate 5 were constructed, residents of the city started protests and fought the construction of more free way projects. Seattle also created its first designated historic district, in the Pioneer Square area, the city’s historic city center. The historic market - Pike Place Market - was also saved from demolition.

The last two decades of the twentieth century gave a new scale to the downtown of Seattle when a lot of skyscrapers were constructed. Also significant for the period was the construction of downtown housing, supporting a transformation from a pure business district to a multi-use neighborhood. The downtown transit tunnel opened in 1990, providing a route through downtown for buses and later the tunnel was modified to also house the light rail trains.

Text written on basis of Shaping Seattle Architecture, pages 3-31, and lectures in the class Arch 452 - Architecture of Seattle, taught by prof. Jeffrey Ochsner
With an estimate of 652,000 residents in 2013, Seattle is the biggest city in the state of Washington and in the Puget Sound region. The Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue metropolitan region is home to more than 3.5 million residents. In the recent years, the city has seen a steady pace population growth, and planners think that the city will grow by 200,000 more residents until 2040. The city works to increase the number of residents living in downtown, and changed the zoning rules to allow higher buildings for residential use.

The recession in 2008 affected Seattle, but not as much as other American cities. The city continued to have a stable economy and a lot of start up companies found their home in the city. Big companies still dominate the economic landscape, with the headquarters of Starbucks, Amazon and the department store Nordstrom.

The port of Seattle still serves as a major gateway for trade with Alaska and Asia.

The city is served by an extensive bus service system, and there is also several bus companies running express buses to connect to the suburbs. The Light Link rail, a partly underground street car system, is right now only connecting the airport with Downtown. In the forthcoming years, it is going to expand northwards, linking the Capitol Hill area with the University of Washington and further north that is scheduled to open in 2016.

PRESENT STATE OF SEATTLE
My goal is to in the end have a specific building, with a specific program on a specific site, but the decisions what will lead me to that will be a part of my process.

Right now: Seattle is my site. I walk the city everyday and until I come home, I will continue to explore new neighborhoods and possible sites. I will not stop my process of exploration until I really have to.

When starting the project, my plan is to have three potential sites to analyze and select from. The choice of the site will be an important factor of deciding the program.

The different neighborhoods in Seattle are all very different, and that is something everyone is very proud of. The reason for this development is the almost sprawling city that got expanded during the early 1900s, and it is something I think is important when working with this city. I want the program to respond this characteristic, so the site and the program will be developed under the same time.

**General interests**

Public (at least parts) building, interesting program combination, small footprint allows for greater detail

Possible: gallery, museum, school, mixed-use, non-conventional programs

**PROGRAM & SITE IDEAS**
References

Seattle

Shaping Seattle Architecture by Jeffrey Ochsner (ed.)
From past to present by Roger Sale
A guide to architecture in Washington State by Sally B. Woodbridge and Roger Montgomery

Theoretical (books)

Spatial recall by Marc Treib (ed.)
Altering Architecture by Fred Scott
In Praise of Shadows by Junichiro Tanazaki
The eyes of the skin by Juhani Pallasmaa
Constancy and change in Architecture by Bruce Webb and Malcolm Quantrill (ed)
Context. New buildings in historic setting by John Warren, John Worthington, Sue Taylor (ed.)
Losing Site: Architecture, Memory and Place by Shelley Hornstein

Articles

Viewpoint: Vernacular Architecture and Public History by Edward A. Chappel
The Cult of Age in Mass-Society: Alois Riegl’s Theory of Conservation by Thordis Arrhenius
Architecture from Architecture: Encounters between Conservation and Restoration by Manuel J Martin-Hernandez
Going critical: On the Historic Preservation of World’s first nuclear reactor by Paul Williams
Memory without monuments: Vernacular Architecture by Stanford Anderson
Exhibition review: Altered states of Preservation, Preservation by OMA/AMO by Teresa Stoppan
Artists

Filip Dujardin
Ann Hamilton
Sun-Ji
Candida Höfer
Rachel Whiteread
Gordon Matta Clarck
Josef Schultz

Architecture

Carlo Scarpa
David Chipperfield (Altes Museum)
OMA (Prada Fondazione)
Graham Baba (Melrose Market)
Leo von Klenze/Hans Döllgast
Aldo Rossi
Ederer+ Haghirian
Edouard François
Lacaton Vassal
Drawings:
Context plan
Site plan
Building Plans
Sections,
Elevations,
Interior/exterior elevation/section detailed studies

Visual imagery:
Renderings/collages
Diagrams if needed

Process images:
Collages, hand sketches, diagrams
TBD – depending on process evolution – one image every week?

Model:
Site/context model
Process models (many): massing, interior, detail
Final model (scale TBD – can be detail or other)

Text:
A written booklet about my research that will have a with a personal approach about my theme and
the theoretical explorations, and precedent studies
Sketchbook / diary: possibly combined with research booklet

TENTATIVE DELIVERABLES
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

W1 Start up, theoretical readings, quick site workshop
W2 Reading, writing, site decision (latest)
W3 Reading, writing, program decision
W4 Site model, sketching, context
W5 Context and building
W6 Reading, writing, sketching/modeling massing
W7 Reading, writing, quick spatial collages/models
W8 Plans and sections, section model
W9 Writing + drawings
W10 Production

W11 MID REVIEW

W12 Summarize mid-review comments + potential study trip
W13 Reading and writing
W14 Development plans and sections and elevations
W15 Interiors
W16 Development - drawings, images
W17 Development - images, models

W18 FINAL SEMINAR
W19 Development & production
W20 Development & production

W21 FINAL PRESENTATION