DS5 P5 DESIGNPROJECT *Speculative office*

Until this point we have been concentrating on an individual office – but now we must consider the office building as a system of connected workers. Individual and communal spaces connected by seen and unseen networks.

http://www.skyscrapernews.com/wharfmap.jpg

Things to decide:

1: Who will use it?
2: Landmark?
3: Connections?
4: Technology of the office?
5: Generic/Bespoke?
6: Site?
7: Scale?

Old paradigms and new processes

Media and the process of media creation have advanced much faster than built form, allowing architects to enter a new era where function and technology follow form and narrative. Instead of generating freedom, this shift has generated a new kind of conformity, a new orthodox where media

and process are swapped and modified and re-swapped and de-modified. Architecture has become fascinated by its skin, its image. Architectures current quest for a future requires no thought, only mimicry and conformity.

Architecture (or at least the architecture many of us aspire to) no longer needs to concern itself with rules; it has no need to – no rules exist that cannot be synthesised as part of a project. We believe: No material can be imagined that cannot be approximated. No structure can exist that isn't calculable. No dweller can be born that can't be simulated.

The new showcase for architecture may not be the street or the city, but maybe the website or the lecture. Its merit exists in conversations between academics or comments on a YouTube page. It negates weather and time. It exists before it exists.

What should we be challenging? What should we be changing? – it is hard to know when we have the potential and tools to challenge everything.
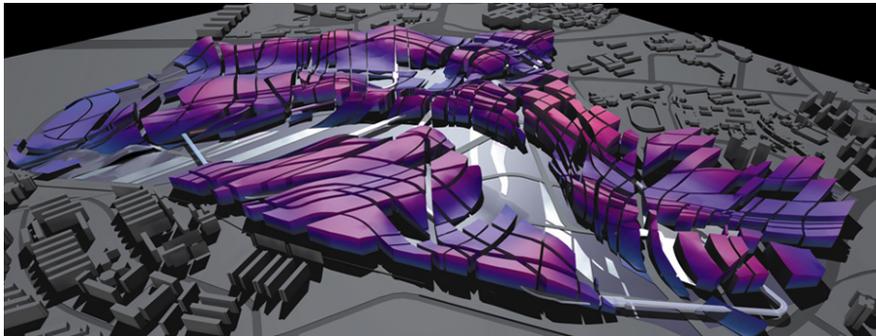

When you propose a building in the city does your act changes the way the city operates? We like to believe that for better or for worse, architectural change has implication – but our cities are saturated; saturated by people, ideas, colours, advertising, office space, unseen networks of data and communications, movement, gridlock, uncertainty and certainty. Is change possible?

Consider GPS and the smartphone and their ability to shift the fabric and time of the city. The ability to Google an address and to receive instantly its location, what it looks like, who works there, and if there is a Starbucks nearby. And then to plan your route to that location - avoiding all contact with people or landmarks enabling your arrival at your now familiar destination in the shortest time possible. The landmark is becoming invisible; re-used. Maps are becoming linear moving from two dimensions to one dimension.

Transport planners have been working with these unseen networks for decades in a much more physical way – the London underground is a camouflaged network, only emerging at nodal points in the urban fabric. These nodes are planned entrances to an underworld of time, advertising and journey – a way of filtering the time-consuming elements from the city. Board at Marble Arch alight at Hoxton. A friend told me once "before you go underground check to see which way the clouds are moving, that way you can orient yourself at the other end"

We need to consider what is "visible" and what is "invisible" in architecture – but in order to do so, we need to be sure of the concepts and what plane they operate in. Is a wireless network invisible now we all carry technology to detect it? Is the BT tower visible if our journey is spent looking at a
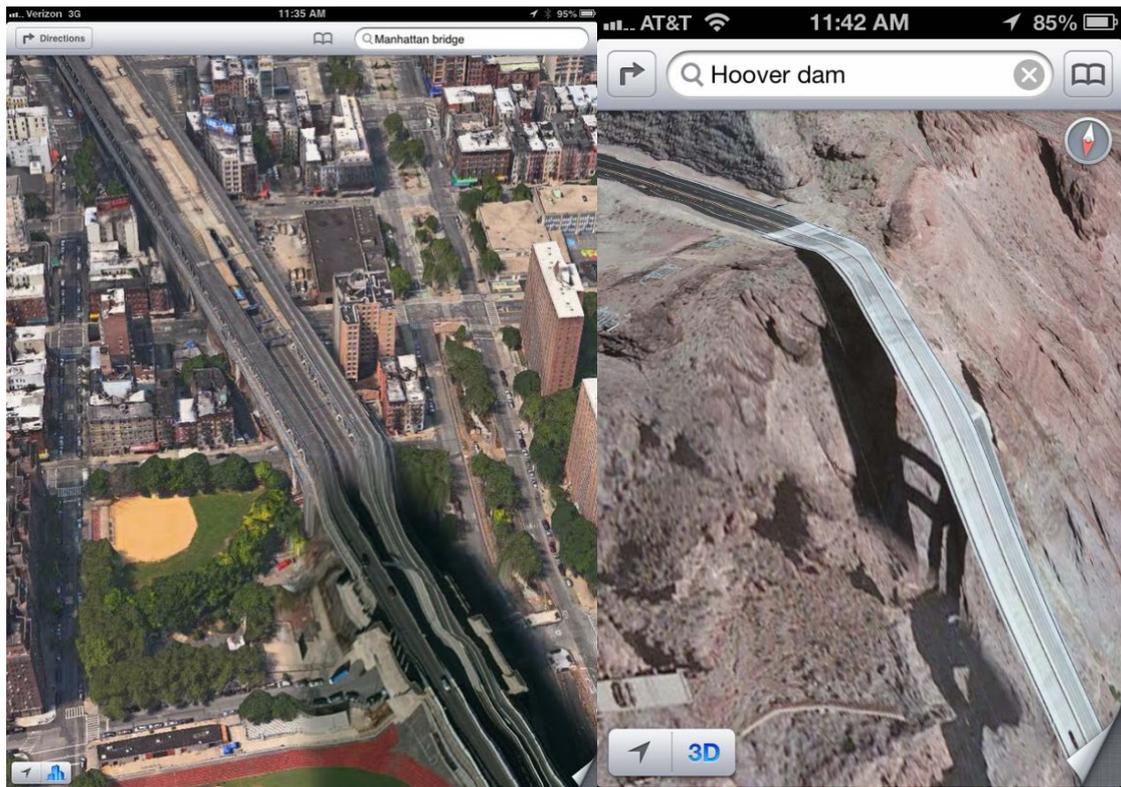
GPS? What is the difference between unseen and invisible? Camouflaged and highlighted? Landmark and streetscape? Importantly – can we as architects control and understand the line between the visible and invisible?

Yesterday's industrial cities were defined by their purpose but in the 21st century many of our industries could be considered (at least to our senses) invisible. We are told our economy is based upon knowledge and computerised transactions – office space. The office has become the new fabric of the city – architects must question how this manifests itself in cities of the 21st century.
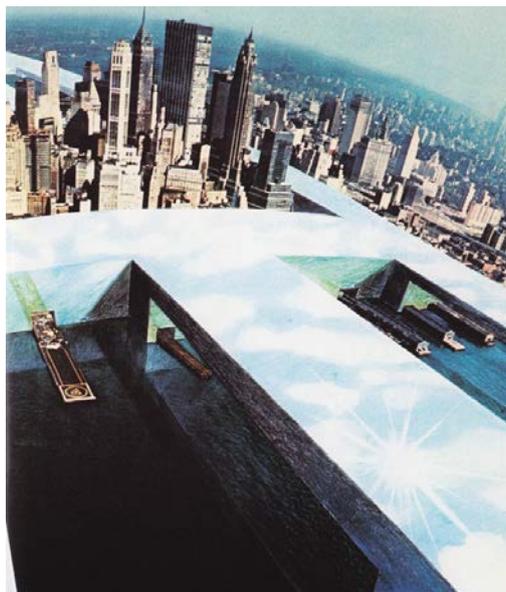
There are two constants in architecture: use and technology; people and their relationship with matter. Mary Douglas said that "dirt is matter out of place" in today's digital, ecological cities is the landmark building the new dirt? or do we need architecture to express what is missing – the new industrial heart of the city?

Themes for the year:

New media technologies and their relationship with architectural production: moving drawings/movies/3D models/using media to map the invisible.

Visibility/invisibility/camouflage

Question the orthodox, resist dogma

New industrial workspaces and their relationship with the infrastructure of the city

Timescale: 20+ Weeks
Production format: Digital Portfolio + Printed Sheets/ Blog Posts