

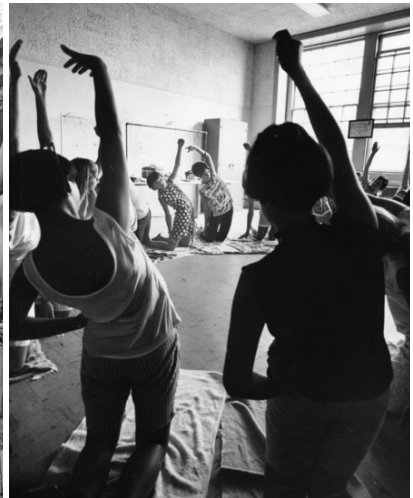
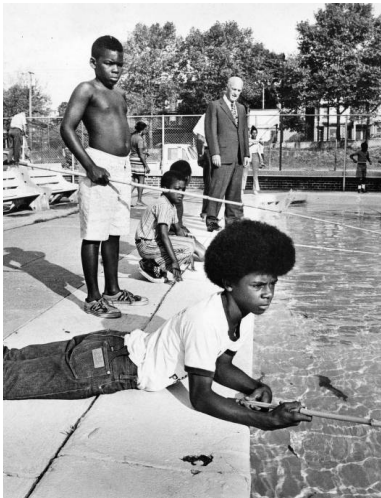
HSPV 7210: PRESERVATION AND PUBLIC SPACE CAPSTONE STUDIO

Spring 2023 • University of Pennsylvania Weitzman School of Design

LECTURER: Ashley Hahn, MSHP + MCP • hahnaj@design.upenn.edu • ajaxworks@gmail.com • 267.442.8148

SCHEDULE: Mon/Fri 8:30am-11:30am (2CU) // Mon 8:30am-11:30am (1CU)

LOCATION: Meyerson Hall 412 studio



OVERVIEW:

This capstone studio will examine preservation opportunities for historic public spaces in Philadelphia, challenging existing building-centric historic designation and regulatory frameworks to develop more expansive and inclusive forms of preservation appropriate for a set of dynamic civic assets. Students will analyze the intersecting local public policies and ongoing programs that are actively reshaping these sites and develop tailored preservation approaches that can enrich and expand this work to more deliberately encompass cultural and heritage values. Students will study the daily life of study sites, learning from the lived experience of site users and staff (past and present) to develop recommendations for incorporating aspects of historic and contemporary cultural significance into site adaptation, management, and care. Students will explore public history and community engagement opportunities embedded within public space projects at study sites, developed through oral history, ethnography, archival research, interviews, and survey – and communicate this work back through a site-specific public expression of their own design.

Philadelphia's network of historic public facilities – its parks, recreation centers, and libraries – represent a layered landscape of social reform, bearing the promise of equitable access to a rich public life that includes recreation, leisure, learning, information, and connection. Built on this foundation are legacy programs and relationships that have helped build community and tie social memory to place. These facilities serve the public in critical ways, but also symbolize the public. In recent years, Philadelphia has aspired to be a national leader in public space reinvestment, including adaptation of older civic assets to serve a new social mission.

This studio's work occurs in the broader critical context of ongoing efforts to equitably reinvest in Philadelphia's aging civic infrastructure and calls for more honest and just representation of history in the city's public realm. This studio dovetails with several initiatives currently underway in Philadelphia: (a) the Kenney administration's Rebuild initiative to

repair and revitalize aging parks, recreation centers, and libraries through a half-billion reinvestment program; and (b) a pilot effort led by the Department of Planning and Development to survey sites of cultural significance. It will build upon recent Civic Infrastructure research by PennPraxis, and the Reimagining the Civic Commons projects jointly funded by the Knight and William Penn foundations.

OBJECTIVES:

- Exploration and critique of what traditional preservation policies/systems capture/overlook regarding public space and public life and envision solutions for addressing gaps therein.
- Immersion in ongoing initiatives that aim to alter these sites and recast the ways Philadelphia addresses forms of cultural heritage, (which includes encountering all of the related “real-world” challenges of local politics, financial constraints, and diverse user demands);
- Interaction with city staff understand the public policies and programs influencing the futures of these historic sites, and explore the preservation opportunities presented by reinvestment in these public spaces;
- Engagement with site staff, advisory groups, program staff, users, and neighbors to include their expertise in developing conservation strategies that are responsive to the site’s historic and contemporary values;
- Gaining experience in applying research methods (ethnography, survey, archival, etc.) to formulate practical and community-centered preservation recommendations for capturing and communicating public history, and to inform ongoing site management and care;
- Creating professional grade reports, publications, presentations, interpretive materials, that usefully and effectively communicate the studio’s work (collective and individual) to a public audience

OUTLINE / ORGANIZATION:

This capstone studio will have three distinct phases:

RESEARCH:

- Background research on Rebuild and recent public and philanthropic reinvestment programs
- Archival research on study sites
- Policy-related interviews
- Review and analyze case studies

ANALYSIS / STRATEGY:

- Field Work: Observational research, community and site-based interviews, documentation
- Develop and execute individual project

SYNTHESIS / COMMUNICATION:

- Development and delivery of public history project
- Finalize preservation recommendations
- Final report and presentation

The work of this Capstone Studio is collective and individual. Collectively, students will research site histories; review and critique recent/current public policies, reinvestment initiatives, and their stated goals; and interview key stakeholders. Together, students will evaluate Rebuild projects in terms of its own metrics and the city’s pilot cultural heritage survey tools as applied to this class of historic public spaces. And, finally, students will develop a set of recommendations for preservation strategies to enrich and expand ongoing work at this group of historic public spaces, with an eye toward site management and care.

Students will develop an individual project that will involve a deep dive into a topic of their choosing. This work may include aspects of public engagement, the application of public space and public life research tools filtered through a preservation lens, and the critical exploration of cultural heritage management approaches to the public realm as represented by these historic sites. Individual projects shall be informed by engagement with public policy, observational on-site research, community conversations and stakeholder interviews.

Clear public communication is a key aspect of all preservation work, and this studio is no exception. Students will be asked to write research summaries and prepare an article for Hidden City presenting an aspect of their research for a non-professional audience. Students will also be expected to create a site-specific work of public history for delivery to / installation at their study site, such as a community archive, oral history, or exhibit.

The total work of the studio – summarized research, site documentation and reports, individual projects, and recommendations – will be synthesized in an initial summary report, final report and presentations.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

Readings may be found on Canvas site

RESEARCH				
1	1/11	Discussion: Course introduction, public space + preservation	1/13	Discussion: Civic assets <u>Guest: Patrick Morgan</u> , Parks & Rec (10am-11am)
READINGS			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rec for All report• Philadelphia Recreation History• Common Goals, Different Approaches report• Skim: other Civic Commons reports	
2	1/16	<i>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service</i> https://volunteer.globalcitizen365.org/ NO CLASS –ATTEND FRIDAY CLASS >>>	1/20	Discussion: Rebuild Philadelphia <u>Guests: Kira Strong + Amanda Colon-Smith</u> , Rebuild (8:30am-9:45am)
READINGS			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rebuild By the Numbers reports (2019, 2020)• Review Rebuild Maps: https://bit.ly/3IAUQaF• Site Files• Skim: other Rebuild reports	
3	1/23	Walk: site visits <u>Guest: Andrew Goodman</u> , Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier’s office	1/27	Discussion: Public Libraries
DUE			*Program Summaries*	
READINGS			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mill Creek stories: https://bit.ly/3vNKb4L• Mill Creek video: https://vimeo.com/105794704• Site Files (see week 2)• Green 2015 report• Public Parks in Philadelphia	
4	1/30	Discussion: Civic Infrastructure + Community Engagement Report back on research in progress	2/3	Discussion: Studying Public Life Films: <i>Social Life of Small Urban Spaces</i> ; <i>Urbanized</i> (selection)
DUE			*History/Context Summaries*	
READINGS			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Civic Infrastructure report• Less In Common report• Civic Assets, Equitable Cities report• Urban Public Spaces report	
ANALYSIS / STRATEGY				
5	2/6	Discussion: Studying Public Spaces/Life Case study discussion Report back on research in progress	2/10	Discussion: Cultural heritage and civic assets <u>Guest: Michael Bixler, Hidden City</u>
DUE			Site Dossiers	
READINGS			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HiddenCityPhila.org• City of Philadelphia Cultural Heritage Survey docs	
6	2/13	Discussion: Communicating Research and Creating Publicly-Oriented Work <u>Guest: Michael Bixler, Hidden City</u>	2/17	Research / field work / interviews (DC firm crawl)
DUE				
READINGS			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HiddenCityPhila.org	

7	2/20	Consultation about Individual Projects, Mid-Review presentation and report	2/24	Mid-review prep / desk crits
	DUE	Individual project proposals		
8	2/27	Mid-Review Presentation	3/3	Interim report
SPRING BREAK: March 6-10				
SYNTHESIS/COMMUNICATION				
9	3/13	Research / field work / interviews	3/17	Workshopping individual projects
	DUE			*Hidden City draft article
10	3/20	Research / field work / interviews	3/24	Research / field work / interviews
	DUE			*Policy critique or cultural heritage memo
11	3/27	Research / field work / interviews	3/31	Research / field work / interviews
12	4/ 3	Team/individual meetings /desk crit	4/7	Research / field work / interviews
	DUE	Interview Reviews		
13	4/10	Team/individual meetings / desk crit	4/14	Team/individual meetings / desk crit
14	4/17	Production Day Project consultation, as needed	4/21	On-site install / delivery for individual projects
	DUE	Rebuild Briefing Memo		
15	4/24	Pre-final pin-up/share-back: Individual projects for in-class review	4/28	[last day of classes 4/26]
	5/ 1	Final Review	5/5	Final team + individual project reports

** = assignment for 2cu students*

DELIVERABLES:

Written assignments are due via email the night before class by 5pm. Email subject should contain "STUDIO"
Detailed instructions to follow for each, to be posted on Canvas site.

*** = assignment for 2cu students only**

1. ***Program Summaries** of related recent programs, policies, philanthropic and funding initiatives
2. ***History/Context Summary:** Background summary on history of parks and recreation, and library systems in Philadelphia *group deliverable*
3. **Site Dossiers** (1-2 pages, each), as assigned
4. **Pinup** of site and program research to-date
5. **Case Studies:** in-class presentation + written summary (1-2 pages, each)
6. **Interim Report + Presentation** (group)
7. **Individual Project Proposal** (1 page)
8. *** Article** for Hidden City on aspect of individual research
9. *** Evaluation**, critique of policies or programs influencing study sites (2-page memo) **OR** proposal for preservation strategies to address cultural heritage (2-page memo)
10. **Interview Reviews** summarizing discussions with professional and citizen expert(s) relevant to individual project
11. **Briefing** for Rebuild team of recommendations (group)
12. **On-site public project** (such as small exhibition, oral history, community archive)
13. **Final Report + Presentation** (group)

PARTICIPATION:

Due to the small size of this studio group and the nature of interdependent research, attendance and preparedness for full participation in each class are essential. Frequent site visits are expected, both during and outside of class time. Due to site hours or stage of construction, some site access may be limited, making advance planning essential.

Each student will also be asked to help lead class discussion on readings, as assigned, during class sessions. Students will also make brief presentations that represent individual work and synthesize group work.

We will cultivate an atmosphere of mutual respect and work toward a common purpose. As such, mobile devices are not to be used during class sessions.

PROJECT SITE(S):

This studio will focus on a set of historic public sites in West and Southwest Philadelphia that have been selected for the Rebuild program.

Francis J. Myers Recreation Center



Francis J. Myers Recreation Center is a 7.6-acre site located at South 58th and Kingsessing Avenue, which was originally the location of the Presbyterian Orphanage campus, established in the 1870s. The orphanage's handsome granite administrative building, designed by Wilson Brothers, was completed in 1885 and was converted into a recreation center by the City of Philadelphia in 1964.

The first phase of Rebuild projects at Myers was recently completed, with the installation of a new playground, redone basketball courts, and a mini-soccer pitch. Myers recreation center also has a pool, splash pad, and sports fields. The historic building has a gymnasium, computer center and community rooms. DIGSAU is completing design work this winter to renovate the historic building. Myers Rec has an energetic

recreation leader and engaged advisory council and supports an array of community programs.

Blanche A. Nixon / Cobbs Creek Library



The Cobbs Creek branch library is located at the junction of Cobbs Creek Parkway, Baltimore Avenue, and South 58th Street. This library, also a Carnegie library, opened on December 30, 1925. At the time, the neighborhood raised \$10,000 toward a book fund for the new library, and its community remains engaged. The building was renovated in 1957 and 1997, and in 1990 it was renamed in honor of Blanche A. Nixon, a neighborhood activist and active library volunteer. Plans to honor her legacy are being developed in a new landscape including a garden and percent for art project.

This library was part of a 2016 Community Design Collaborative design competition to add play spaces to public places. That work went to directly influence a play space program piloted at several libraries in Philadelphia. The Rebuild project, led by Community Ventures, will include major building renovation and site improvements. Community engagement for the project began in early 2022 and the site is expected to close in mid-2023 for construction.

West Mill Creek Playground



West Mill Creek Playground is an unusual 5.2-acre site that includes a basketball court, sprayground, playground, and small recreation building with multi-purpose spaces. The site is early stages of the Rebuild process, with some "first fixes" complete, including new fencing and a new sprayground.

The site cuts like a zipper across neighborhood fabric, tracing the path of Mill Creek, a waterway that was turned into a culverted sewer and topped with landfill in the late 19th Century. In the 20th century, the Mill Creek Sewer experienced dramatic and damaging collapses. This legacy of failed public infrastructure still influences sites like West Mill Creek Playground today and presents continuing ecological, environmental justice, and construction challenges.

Kingsessing Recreation Center and Kingsessing Library



Both Kingsessing Recreation Center and Kingsessing Library were designed by Philadelphia architect Philip H. Johnson, sharing a 9-acre site located between Chester and Kingsessing avenues, South 49th and South 51st streets. They are listed in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Because the library and recreation center are co-located, their Rebuild projects are being co-managed. For political reasons, both were announced as part of the first phase of Rebuild sites.

Kingsessing Recreation Center opened in 1916 and is one of the city's first purpose-built recreation centers, after the city acquired the site of the former Belmont Cricket Club. The recreation facilities include a playground, pool, sports fields, basketball and tennis courts, and a variety of community spaces, including an auditorium, gymnasiums, computer center, weight room, and other multipurpose spaces. It hosts several long-standing youth programs, including boxing, basketball, football, and theater. It has a highly engaged community of volunteers and neighbors. The needs and wishes for this site far outstrip the budget of the Rebuild project.

Kingsessing Library is located south of the recreation center, midblock on South 51st Street between Chester and Kingsessing avenues. It is one of Philadelphia's 25 Carnegie libraries, built in 1919. Kingsessing Library was last renovated in 1999.

East of the library is a community garden operated by Earth Keepers, which has also operated a community food pantry. A new garden area, with a story circle, adjacent to the library is included as part of the new landscape plan. The library closed in fall 2022 and its Rebuild project will involve significant building and site renovation.

Paschalville Library



Paschalville Library, at the corner of South 70th Street and Woodland Avenue, serves the neighborhoods of Elmwood and Paschalville. It opened to the public in April 1915 and was the 17th Carnegie library building to be erected in Philadelphia. The library underwent significant renovations in 1962 and 1995. It was listed in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 2013.

In 2019, the city announced a \$9 million investment for this library, selected in part because it serves a high-need neighborhood. The Rebuild project, led by Diversified Community Services and DiGroup Architecture, includes systems upgrades, replacement/restoration of the historic stained-glass windows, and a new ADA-compliant entrance. The library closed in fall 2022 so work could commence.

KEY PARTNERS / CONTACTS:

- Rebuilding Community Infrastructure staff, City of Philadelphia Managing Director's Office
 - Kira Strong, Executive Director
- City of Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation
 - Patrick Morgan, First Deputy Commissioner, Strategy and Engagement
- City Council Staff
 - Andrew Goodman, Director of Equitable Development for 3rd Councilperson Jamie Gauthier
- Recreation Advisory Councils and Library friends' groups
- Site partner organizations (ex. advocacy groups, community and neighborhood organizations)

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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Hayden, Dolores. *The Power of Place.* MIT Press. (1995)

Klinenberg, Eric. *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life.* Crown Publishing Group. (2018)

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Low, Setha and Neil Smith. *The Politics of Public Space.* Routledge. 2006.

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Pearsall, Hamil and Anneclaire J, De Roos et al. "The Benefits and Costs of Urban Public Spaces" William Penn Foundation, 2020.

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Schuyler, David. *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America.* Johns Hopkins University Press. 1986.

Wiener, Aaron. "Common Goals, Different Approaches, How Five Cities Reimagined their Public Spaces." Knight Foundation. April 2019.

Whyte, William H. *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces.* Project for Public Spaces (2021). [Original, 1980.]

GRADING:

Students will be evaluated on engagement with, and contributions to, the studio process. This includes full attendance; contributions to group discussions, site visits and presentations (graphic and verbal); and the content of individual written and graphic work. It is expected that everyone will bring a constructive attitude toward collective and individual work of this studio, and full engagement with and mastery of the concepts and ideas presented in the course. In all respects, we abide by norms of professionalism, ethical practice, and safety.

These guidelines will be followed in assigning course grades:

- Participation in and contributions to group work (in-class discussion, interviews, research): 20%
- Public-facing practice and deliverables (site visits, article, reports, exhibit/archive/publication): 20%
- Development and execution of individual project: 50%
- Demonstrated leadership in some aspect of the studio: 10%

Final letter grades will be figured on the basis of the assignments and participation. General guidelines for grades are as follows: A+ Exceptional; A Outstanding; A- Excellent; B+ Very good; B Good; B- Competent; C+ Fair; C Acceptable; C- Marginal; F Failure.

Academic Integrity

All students are asked to contribute to a positive learning environment and are expected, at all times, to adhere to the University of Pennsylvania's Code of Academic Integrity, which may be read here:

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/>

#AskMe

In order to ensure a positive, open and respectful learning environment, we invite you all to email us as to how you identify: preferred name to use in class, preferred pronouns, anything that will allow us to create the best classroom environment possible to learn together. You can also use designations after your name id in Zoom, for example: Ashley Hahn (she/her) For more information: <https://lgbtc.vpul.upenn.edu/pronouns/>

The Stuart Weitzman School of Design's Commitment to Diversity (Diversity at Weitzman):

The University of Pennsylvania Stuart Weitzman School of Design is committed to creating an educational setting in which all students, faculty members, and staff members are valued. We strive to create an inclusive culture that celebrates difference and is strengthened by contributions from people of all races, religions, countries of origin, genders, ages, sexual orientations, physical abilities, learning differences, and socioeconomic backgrounds. We aspire to support and retain a student body, faculty and staff who are representative of the multiple communities and publics with which we collaborate and work. A diverse community here enhances our ability to prepare the next generation of artists, architects, landscape architects, planners, and preservationists to become leaders and innovators in a multicultural society. Preservation program faculty believe deeply in this commitment to diversity and welcome conversations about how to sustain it.