Urban Design for the Marina Sector:
Mayagüez, Puerto Rico

Winter Term 2020

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Open to Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Historic Preservation and Planning Students
Arch 484; Arch 584
6 credits
M W F 1:00 to 4:50 PM

Goals
This studio will center on Urban Design—the physical and spatial structure of communities as a setting for the lives of its inhabitants and as a means to enhance their lives in the process. Our specific focus is the Marina Sector of Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, already the subject of extensive urban planning studies up to and following the devastating Hurricane Maria in September 2017. The studio is intended as an exploration of urban design ideas for how this community can realize its unique potential through the intelligent design of:

A. Environmental/architectural/urban design strategies that address climate change as it affects weather patterns in this coastal city.
A. Buildings (housing, commercial, work, institutional) interventions that complement natural patterns along the coast and the Parque del Litoral
B. Defined open space (streets, squares, parks)
C. Transportation systems (mass transit, vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians).

The goal is to provide a compelling vision for this important district in the city of Mayagüez, specifically proposing an approach to the Marina Sector at the norther end of the Parque del Litoral for the next 50 years. Urban design should anticipate and guide development in such a way that this urban center
along with its neighborhoods, will respond to the built and natural setting. It should explore ways for the
district to become a vibrant, livable—and walkable—community with a strong visible identity that builds
on its unique culture and place within the broader landscape and cities and towns of Puerto Rico.

History
Mayagüez is an historic city on the west coast of the island, founded by the Spanish in 1760 it became a US
territory along with the rest of Puerto Rico in 1898. It has a population of approximately 100,000
inhabitants (10,000 of which are students at the University of Puerto Rico) making it comparable in size to
that of Eugene. Rich in its cultural heritage coupled with a temperate climate and beautiful coastal
setting has made it an attractive place to live. Severe weather patterns aggravated by climate change
have recently underscored how precarious this setting can be. This studio will attempt to address means
by which its ocean front can be simultaneously restored, reinvigorated and protected for the future.

Overview of the Distrito Costero de la Marina
Image Courtesy: Bonnin Orozco Arquitectos (BO2A), May 2006

Methodology
The studio will explore this challenge in teams of three or four person groups.
Staged investigations along with lectures and focused exercises will take place at regular weekly
intervals during the term. These will include:

A. History of the city of Mayaguez
   Special attention will be paid to the Mater Plan of 2010 by Bonin Orozco Architects 2016 as well
   as subsequent developments up to the 2010 Centro–American and Caribbean Games.
B. Site Analysis including natural and built features; land use, transportation systems
   This will also require a physical model and appropriate figure/ground drawings
C. Precedent studies of American waterfront and other relevant communities such as:
   Seaside Florida       New Orleans       San Juan Puerto Rico
   Bordeaux, France      Barcelona, Old town: moll de la fusta and Olympic Quarter
E. “Urban Anatomy” studies including:
   a. traditional urban block typologies including courtyards, alleys and mid-block gardens
   b. the street and its variations: looking at the idea of “Great Streets”
   c. form-based codes as a means to guide development
F. Housing Typologies
   a. courtyard housing
   b. low-rise, high density solutions

G. Open space strategies:
   a. river front parks, promenades and “vest-pocket parks”
   b. landscape streets

H. Movement systems: pedestrian, mass transit, bicycle paths, automobiles, alternate modes, etc.

Final Project
Each team will be responsible for a final overall plan of the Marina District indicating major design features: building and environmental strategies, street design, parks, movement systems.

Bibliography:
Morini, Mario (1963), Atlante di storia dell’urbanistica (dalla preistoria all’inizio del secolo XX), Hoepli, Milano.
Bonnin, Javier, et. al., Plan Maestro Mayagüez 2010
Rowe, Colin; Koetter, Fred (1978), Collage City, MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass.).
National Association of City Transportation Officials (2013), Urban street design guide, Island Press, Washington