

Memphis Regional Design Center

Urban Design 101

Creating a More Vibrant, Equitable, and Sustainable Memphis Region through Design

Fall 2009



Krishna Kasi, Design Intern, Memphis Regional Design Center

Course Introduction

Never before have so many people lived in the villages, towns, and cities of our planet's increasingly complex and ever-expanding metropolitan regions! Our approach to the physical design of these communities will fundamentally affect their economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and social stability.

MRDC's Urban Design 101 will examine the transformative impact that innovative physical planning and design of the "public realm" are having upon the quality and success of urban life. The course will introduce a cross section of our region's civic leaders – representing a mix of public, private and non-profit organizations – to the basic concepts, vocabulary, and techniques of urban design as reflected in a variety of contemporary place-making initiatives in Memphis and across the country.

Urban Design 101 has been created to introduce local leaders to emerging design concepts that are guiding our nation's most exciting neighborhood stabilization, downtown development, waterfront revitalization, new town planning, public spaces, historic revitalization, and mass transit projects.

Course Structure

Classes will feature multi-media presentations by local and national faculty, class discussions and small group exercises. Participants will be encouraged to connect the urban design theories, concepts, and techniques being explored in class to current design challenges and opportunities confronting our local region's communities.

Time & Location

Tuesday evenings from 5:00 to 7:00 pm, September 15th through November 3rd. Classes will be held at the Center City Commission, 114 N. Main Street where the MRDC has its office. There is street and garage parking nearby.

Lead Instructor Mr. Chooch Pickard, AIA, MRDC Executive Director and Chief Designer Officer, will serve as Lead Instructor for the third Urban Design 101 course. Chooch is a graduate of the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and has completed several preservation reuse projects in Downtown Memphis including Court Square Center, the renovation of the historic Lincoln American Tower and Lowenstein Building. Chooch is Vice-President of AIA Memphis, serves on Memphis Heritage's Board, and is National Secretary of Alpha Rho Chi, the only national co-ed professional/social fraternity for students in Architecture and the Allied Arts.

Joining Chooch this semester for individual classes will be a combination of Memphis-based lecturers and guest lecturers from outside of our region.

- Course Topics
- Sept. 15** ***Urban Design: What is it? Why is it important?- Part I***
Frank Ricks, AIA, Founding Partner, Looney Ricks Kiss
This session will define urban design, offer a compelling rationale for its importance, and provide several examples of local, national, and international “best practices” of relevance to citizens of the Greater Memphis Region.
- Sept. 22** ***Urban Design: What is it? Why is it important?- Part II***
Frank Ricks, AIA, Founding Partner, Looney Ricks Kiss
This session will continue to explore the basic concepts of urban design.
- Sept. 29** ***Creating and Maintaining Great Streets: Possibilities for the Future of Memphis***
James Collins, PE, Kimley-Horn Engineers
Angie Keesee, AIA, Adjunct Associate Professor, School of Architecture, Montana State University
This class will explore the ingredients for creating and maintaining walkable, functional, and aesthetically uplifting urban streets from the perspectives of an engineer and an architect.
- Oct. 6** ***Neighborhood Based Planning***
Cynthia Wood, Community Planning Division, Nashville-Davidson Metropolitan Planning Commission
This class will examine the promotion of livable neighborhoods through design integrating visioning, zoning and urban design for inspired placemaking. Cynthia will show how urban planners, architects, and landscape architects have been working together to strengthen neighborhoods using design guidelines based on Congress for New Urbanism principles and how they are institutionalizing this process through online tools.
- Oct. 13** ***Implementing Unified Development Code Tools to Create a More Livable Community***
Tommy Pacello and Don Jones, Memphis & Shelby County OPD
This will be a working session using the new UDC Building Envelope Standards, applying them to three Memphis neighborhoods in Midtown and South Memphis.

Oct. 20 *Using Available Tools to Pursue Innovative Urban Design Initiatives*

John Dudas, Vice-President, Belz Enterprises

Mr. Dudas will lead a panel of experts who will introduce local leaders to available organizational, financial, and land use tools that can be used to undertake significant neighborhood, district, citywide, and regional scale urban design initiatives.

Oct. 27 *Using Public Art to Create Memorable and Transformative Places*

John Weeden, Executive Director, UrbanArt Commission

This session will present various examples of successful place-making in which artists, landscape architects, architects, and planners worked with citizens to re-design public squares, plazas, parks, and public buildings as networks of living rooms where the civic life of a healthy democracy can be recalled, pursued, and celebrated. Participants will be encouraged to re-imagine uninspired public spaces in their communities using innovative approaches to public art-making.

Nov. 3 *Utilizing Urban Design Principles in Mixed-Income Developments*

Richard Baron, Co-founder, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of McCormack Baron Salazar

Tom Currell, McCormack Baron Salazar

Rosalyn Willis, McCormack Baron Salazar

Archie W. Willis III, Community Capital

David Schuermann, AIA, Principal, Architecture Incorporated

The final session will discuss McCormack Baron Salazar's Hope VI projects across the country and in Memphis and their efforts to rebuild urban neighborhoods in central cities that have deteriorated through decades of neglect and disinvestment. Mr. Baron will discuss how they strengthen neighborhood social structures in partnership with community organizations and how their emphasis on community building encourages socio-economic and physical revitalization. Mr. Schuermann will present two Memphis Hope VI projects recently completed and under construction.

(Please note that course topics are subject to change)

Costs

Enrollment costs \$200. Tuition for Urban Design 101 helps underwrite the course. A modest number of scholarships for those with limited incomes may become available. Mail or bring your check to Memphis Regional Design Center, 114 N. Main Street, Memphis, TN 38103, Attn: Urban Design 101.

- Participation Community leaders representing a broad cross-section of our region's business, government, labor, non-profit, faith, retiree, and civic groups are being sought to participate in Urban Design 101. Considerable effort is being made to assemble a class that reflects the age, race, ethnicity, gender, and income diversity of our community. If you are interested in participating in the Fall 2009 course, please email Chooch Pickard at cpickard@mrdcinfo.org.
- Optional Texts The New Civic Art: Elements of Town Planning Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Robert Alminana (et al), Princeton Architectural Press (New York) 2004
Available on Amazon.com new or used hardback for \$56.14 or \$35.99. Also available on Half.com from \$43.99.
- City Comforts: How to Build an Urban Village Revised edition, David Sucher, Self Published: City Comforts Inc. (Seattle), 2003
Available on CityComforts.com and Amazon.com as a new or used paperback for \$23.95 or \$18.50.
- The American City: What Works? What Doesn't? Second Edition, Alexander Garvin, McGraw-Hill Publishers (New York) 2002
Available on Amazon.com as a new or used hardback for \$39.66 or \$24.86. Also available on Half.com hardback for \$24.85.
- Readings Brief readings will be periodically distributed.
- Information Memphis Regional Design Center
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Design can set Livable Communities in motion

Image by Goody Clancy