Ruth Ellis Clairmount Center for at-risk LGBTQ+ youth, Detroit MI
Source: Landon Bone Baker Architects

Equity + Success of Space

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Exclusionary Design Tactics

- Law has addressed explicit restrictive ordinances
  - ex. Racial segregation by law
- Law has NOT addressed less obvious exclusionary design tactics. [1]

Benches with internal armrests to prevent sleeping
Source: Denna Jones via Flickr

Low overpasses that public transit cannot pass through on Long Island
Source: Doug Kerr via Flickr

1. Schindler, Sarah. *Architectural Exclusion: Discrimination and Segregation Through Physical Design of the Built Environment.* The Yale Law Journal, 2015

Popular Press

AIA FEATURE

A Seat at the Table

To design affordable housing in African American neighborhoods, architects navigate class, race, identity, and community in a privatized system. But can things get better?

The Guardian

Why aren't we designing cities that work for women, not just men?

Bad town planning can impact women's safety, movement and even income. Research led by the people most affected should inform a new approach

Racism and inequity are products of design. They can be redesigned.

equityXdesign   Follow
Nov 15, 2016 · 19 min read

PROPUBLICA

VISUAL EVIDENCE

Discrimination by Design

The many ways design decisions treat people unequally.

by Lena V. Groeger, Sept. 1, 2016, 1 p.m. EDT

SLATE

POLITICS

America's Unfair Rules of the Road

How our transportation system discriminates against the most vulnerable.

By CORINNE RAMEY   FEB 27, 2015 · 3:33 AM

"The exclusionary built environment- the architecture of a place- functions as a form of **REGULATION**; it constrains the behavior of those who interact with it, often without even realizing it." [1]

1. Schindler, Sarah. *Architectural Exclusion: Discrimination and Segregation Through Physical Design of the Built Environment.* The Yale Law Journal, 2015

Discussion

What are some ways the built environment regulates?

Are these regulations equitable? Are they needed?

Definition: Equity

- Equity is both a decision-making factor and the result of the decisions made.

- Designing with equity in mind means that inclusive design is considered from the beginning to the end of the design process.

- Assessing equity in a built environment means that it is accessible, attractive, and interactive to as large a subset of people as possible.

The Value Case of Equity

Inclusivity of users is directly related to the success of a space because the users themselves determine success.
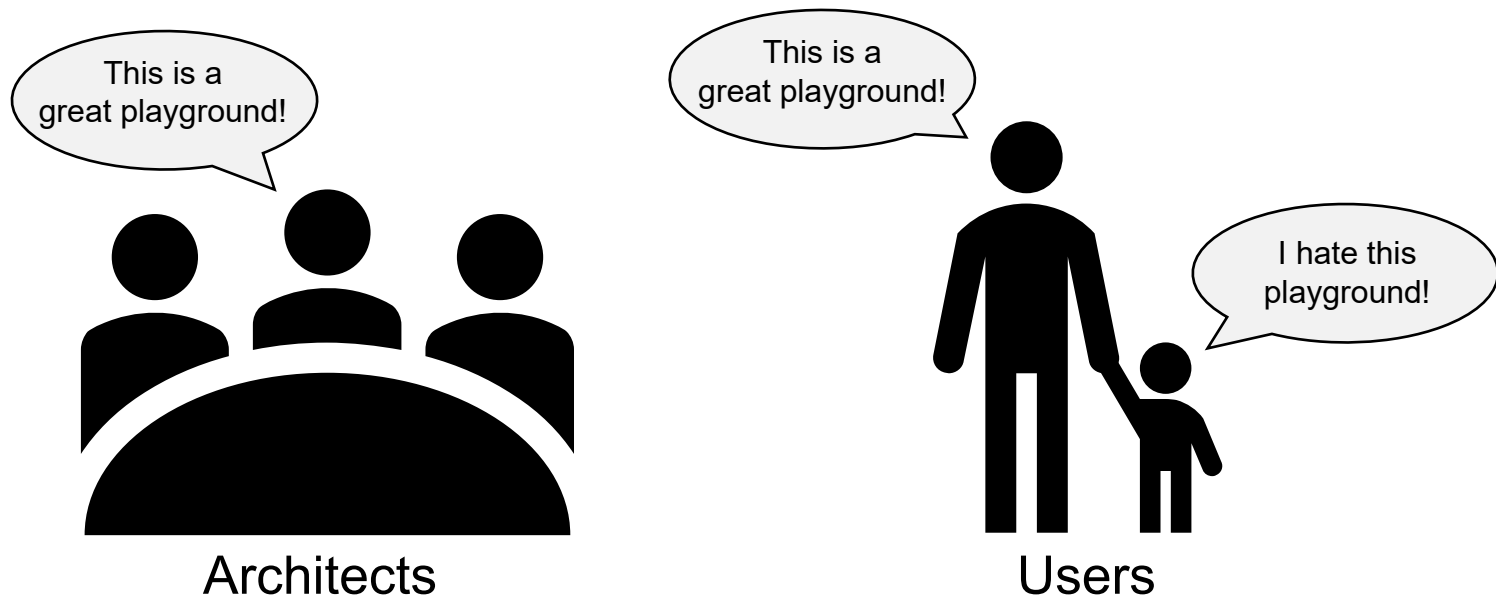
What makes a successful space?

- All aspects of space are user-determined

- Users determine success metrics of space

- Self perpetuating spaces

  - Popular spaces attract people

  - Presence of people attracts more people

SOCIABILITY

USES & ACTIVITIES

PLACE

ACCESS & LINKAGES

COMFORT & IMAGE

PROJECT FOR PUBLIC SPACES

Source: Project for Public Spaces, pps.org

Equity Value Cases:

A decision-making factor and the result of decisions made

| Ownership and Belonging | Attraction and Interaction |

Value Case: Ownership and Belonging

- Inclusion of citizens during the design process **acknowledges the citizen's point of view and values it alongside that of the professional.**[2]

- This gives the community agency and increases their feelings of **ownership, belonging, and satisfaction** in a space.[3]

- Including marginalized groups previously excluded from design processes can help build **diverse, resilient, and engaged communities.**[4, 5]

2. Heylighen, Ann & Bianchin, Matteo. *How does inclusive design relate to good design? Designing as deliberative enterprise.* Design Research Society, 2012
3. Jurkovic, Natasa Bratina. *Perception, experience and the use of public urban spaces by residents of urban neighborhoods.* Urbanistični inštitut Republike Slovenije, 2014.
4. Mehta, Vikas. *Evaluating Public Space.* Journal of Urban Design, 2014.
5. Kelkar, Nikita Prakash & Spinelli, Gabriella. *Building social capital through creative placemaking.* Strategic Design Research Journal, 2016.

Value Case: Ownership and Belonging

Local engagement:

- City of Seattle Community Outreach Guidelines[6]
  - Requires applicants to use a minimum of one "high-impact" method or two multi-pronged methods to engage community
    - High impact: Door to door flyers, direct mailings, posters on local businesses
    - Multi-pronged: Project webpage, email to distribution lists
- Special considerations for "Equity Areas" with limited English proficiency, people of color, and/or low income households
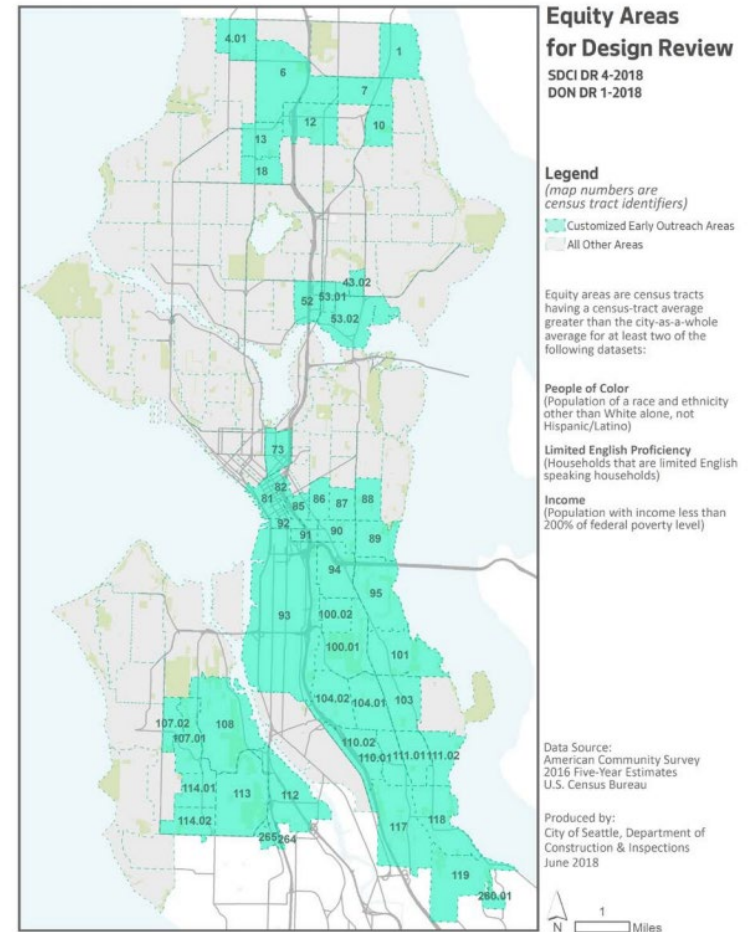
Source: City of Seattle

6. City of Seattle, *Early Community Outreach for Design Review,* SDCI Director's Rule 4-2018 / DON Director's Rule 1-2018

Value Case: Attraction and Interaction

- Successful spaces provide environments that are **open, accessible, and responsive** that facilitate different uses and satisfy user requirements (comfort, discovery, socialization, etc.)[3]

- People from marginalized communities will gather in spaces they feel are **safe and accepting of them.**[7]

- Commodification of diversity and urban cultural diversity are becoming more widely known as an incentive to business investors.*[8]

Seattle's International District
Source: @rsseattle on Flickr

7. Alex Bitterman and Daniel Baldwin Hess, *Gay Ghettoes Growing Gray: Transformation of Gay Urban Districts across North America Reflects Generational Change.* Journal of American Culture, 2016.
8. Jan Rath, *The Transformation of Ethnic Neighborhoods into Places of Leisure and Consumption.* UC San Diego, working papers. 2017.
*Rath's research does not guarantee that the commodification of diversity leads to the acceptance of diverse people.
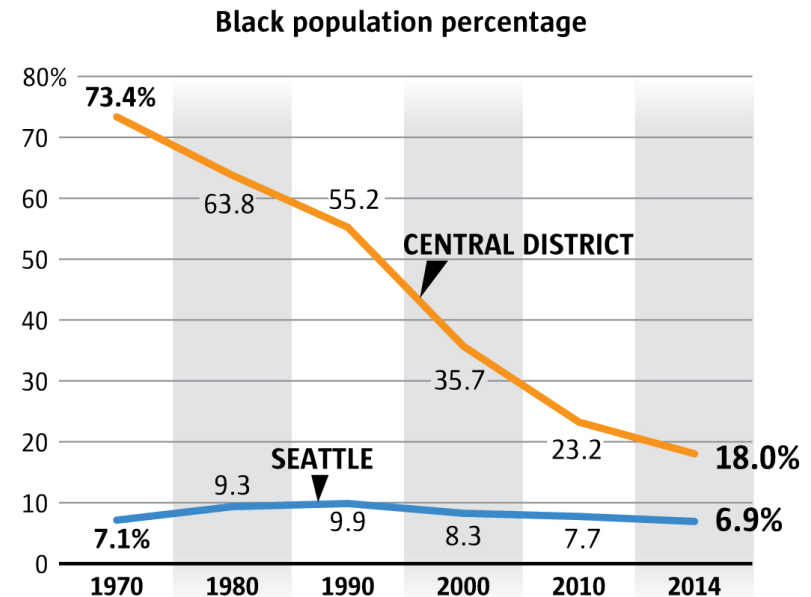
Ownership and Belonging

- Seattle's Central District

- Liberty Bank: First black owned bank in PNW

- Commercial & low-income housing

- Multi-party collaboration:
  - Capitol Hill Housing (developer)
  - Africatown (community group)
  - Mithun Architects

Source: Alex Garland, Capitol Hill Housing Blog

The changing face of Seattle's Central District

The vibrant Central District was more than 70 percent black in the early 1970s. Today, African Americans represent less than a fifth of the neighborhood's population.

Black population percentage

CENTRAL DISTRICT
73.4%
63.8
55.2
35.7
23.2
18.0%

SEATTLE
7.1%
9.3
9.9
8.3
7.7
6.9%

| 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | 2014 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

GARLAND POTTS / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Case Studies: Liberty Bank Building

Liberty Bank Building Memorandum of Understanding's 8 Elements

1. Secure long-term African-American ownership of the building

2. Provide affordable commercial space

3. Develop and support Black-owned businesses

4. Design a building that connects with the history of the community

5. Prioritize local and minority hiring

6. Reaffirm the Central District as a hub of the pan-African community

7. Explore further policy changes

8. Diversify Capitol Hill Housing

Source: Capitol Hill Housing Blog

Case Studies: Liberty Bank Building

Attraction and Interaction

- Black owned businesses on ground floor

- Exterior design reflects history of Central District's community with African-American inspired designs and patterns

Source: Alex Garland, Capitol Hill Housing Blog

Sources: thatbrowngirl.com, earlscutsandstyles.com

Case Studies: Grant High School

- Portland, OR

- $138 million, 1800-student modernization of a 1920's historically significant school

- Extensive engagement with students and faculty process found social injustice pervasive in existing architecture

- Redesigned to intentionally address disadvantage through design

Source: Mahlum Architects

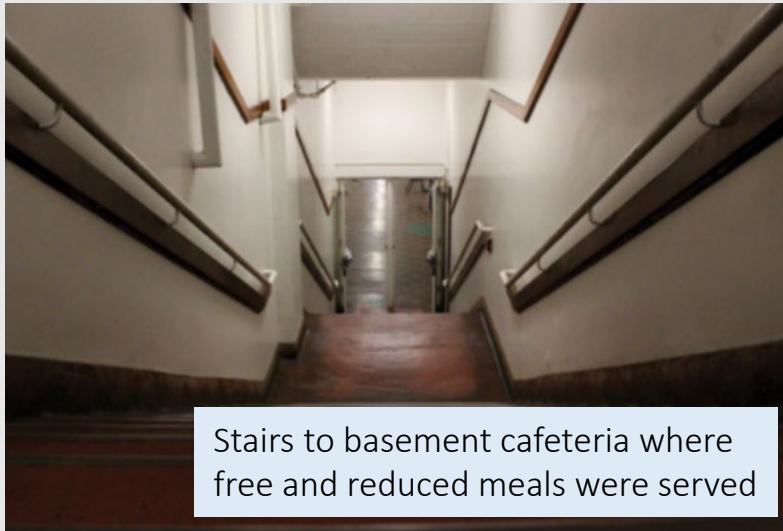# Case Studies: Grant High School

Ownership and Belonging

- Year-long community participation

- 100+ user group meetings and student outreach sessions

- Uncovered socioeconomic rift in school's layout and other inequitable design features

"I did not drink liquids from the hours of 6:00am and 3:30pm...**I would rather feel kind of unpleasant than terrified in the mens bathroom.**"
-Anonymous student on bathrooms before modernization

Community outreach meetings

Stairs to basement cafeteria where free and reduced meals were served
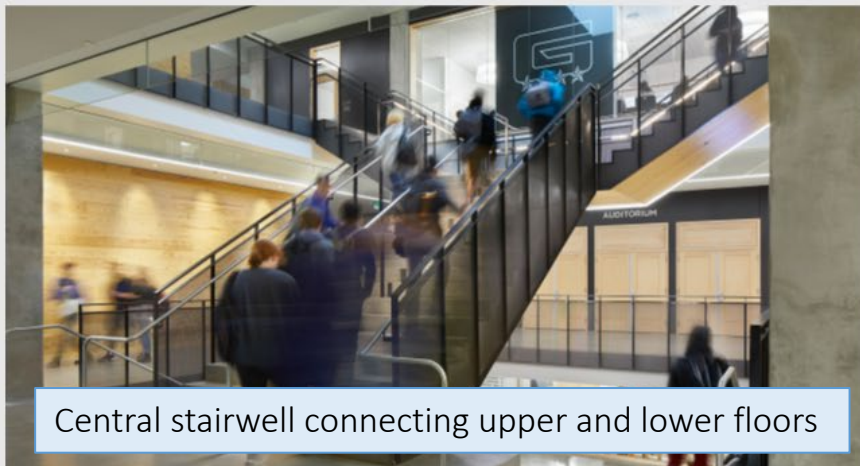
Source: Mahlum Architects

Attraction and Interaction: New Design Features

Open, daylit common areas

Central stairwell connecting upper and lower floors

Gender neutral bathrooms

Source: Mahlum Architects

Discussion

How might we design more equitable spaces in the future?

Strategies for convincing stakeholders that this equitable design is valuable?

- Architecture is a form of regulation, controlling the behavior of those who interact with it.

- Consider equity and user experience from the beginning of the design process.

- Inclusive design will result in a more successful space because success of space is determined by the user.

- Design for:
  - Ownership and belonging
    - Give users agency over their own environment
  - Attraction and interaction
    - Inclusive design→ More users → A more popular, successful space

Special thanks to:

Elijah Coley

Anne Schopf

mahlum

Marijana Misic

- Shared valuable insight on Mahlum's equitable designs in practice and current community engagement processes

- Assisted with narrowing search criteria for literature review and provided popular press sources

- Provided information on both case studies

Citations

1. Schindler, S. (2015). Architectural Exclusion: Discrimination and Segregation Through Physical Design of the Built Environment. *The Yale Law Journal*.

2. Heylighen, A., & Bianchin, M. (2013). How does inclusive design relate to good design? Designing as a deliberative enterprise. *Design Studies*, *34*(1), 93–110.

3. Jurkovič, N. B. (2014). Perception, experience and the use of public urban spaces by residents of urban neighbourhoods. *Urbani Izziv*, *25*(1), 107–125.

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5. Kelkar, N. P. & Spinelli, G. (2016). Building social capital through creative placemaking. *Strategic Design Research Journal*, *9*(2), 54–66.

6. City of Seattle, *Early Community Outreach for Design Review,* SDCI Director's Rule 4-2018 / DON Director's Rule 1-2018

7. Rath, J. (2017). *The Transformation of Ethnic Neighborhoods into Places of Leisure and Consumption*. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5x63z3bn

8. Bitterman, A. & Hess, D. B. (2016). Gay Ghettoes Growing Gray: Transformation of Gay Urban Districts across North America Reflects Generational Change. *Journal of American Culture*.

Thank You!

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