



URBAN ARTS INC.

PORTFOLIO
of SERVICES

WINTER 2019



BACKGROUND

Urban Arts Inc. was founded by architect and urbanist, **Michael Huston**. His background includes a decade of designing educational facilities followed by a number of years devoted to downtown revitalization in Louisville, KY, working first with city government in urban design, historic preservation and neighborhood planning, and subsequently in partnership with a developer specializing in adaptive re-use and urban mixed-use projects.

In 2012, Huston joined the nationally recognized firm of **DPZ CoDesign** (Duany Plater-Zyberk) as a senior designer and project manager. While at DPZ he participated in over 50 urban design projects including master plans for downtown revitalization, transit-oriented development, neighborhood planning, sprawl repair, building type studies and form-based-codes.

Huston is a licensed architect in the states of Florida and Kentucky and a member of the **American Institute of Architects**. He is also a **LEED** Accredited Professional and member of the **Congress for the New Urbanism**.

PHILOSOPHY

Our urban design services are guided by the following principles:

- The primary objective of good planning is to **enhance quality of life**. Once this is established, all other aspects of planning fall into place: economic development, social impact, education, health, transportation, recreation, and so on.
- Good urban design **adds value** and gives well-designed projects a competitive advantage over conventionally planned projects. Private sector projects must be profitable, otherwise they will never be realized.
- Design for **all modes of transportation**, perhaps most importantly, for the often overlooked pedestrian.
- Enhance the **beauty** of the built environment.

SERVICES

The following drawings, models and plans illustrate projects in which Huston had a primary hand in the approach and design. They illustrate the range of services which may be provided by Urban Arts.

COLLABORATIONS

Planning is a multi-disciplinary endeavor. Urban Arts provides urban design support for planners, architects, landscape architects, economists and engineers.

CONTACT

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MASTER PLANNING

The master plan is the two-dimensional representation of the overall vision for the site. The plan shows the street hierarchy, open space network commercial centers and locations of important civic buildings. Typically, this is the primary deliverable of the conceptual design phase, and guides further development of the project as it proceeds into engineering.

Example project: Hendrick Farm, Quebec, Canada (with DPZ)

The plan illustrates the vision for a walkable neighborhood neighborhood that is anchored by an organic farm high acts as the social center and heart of the community. A cluster of commercial buildings at the north creates a village atmosphere. Greenways in the neighborhood zone connect to a system of trails along the stream.

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URBAN DESIGN

While architecture is the design of individual buildings, urban design is the design of the space between the buildings. The urban designer uses buildings as architects use walls to shape the open space of the street, plaza and square. This is a skill which had largely been forgotten over the years, but has been resurrected, in part, by the efforts of the New Urbanism movement.

With good urban design, buildings can be designed more simply and efficiently. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.



Example project: South Shore, Hamburg, NY (with DPZ)

This plaza, at the heart of a larger development, is situated behind a more conventional commercial development. The plaza is anchored by a recreation center and grocery store and can accommodate concerts, a farmers' market and other community events.



Example project: Town Madison, Huntsville, AL (with DPZ)

A massing model was created to test the 3-dimensional scale of the master plan. The model highlights buildings, or portions of buildings, that merit special design attention. This will be valuable information to pass along to the architect in later phases of the project.

AREA PLANS - PUBLIC SECTOR

At the scale of regional planning, illustrative plans can be used to communicate the vision for large areas that cross multiple property lines. By looking at topography, regional storm water, transportation, and other factors of the existing context, cities can make better decisions about capital improvements, land acquisition, ahead of development that may constrain future planning efforts. The plan also becomes an important tool of economic development.



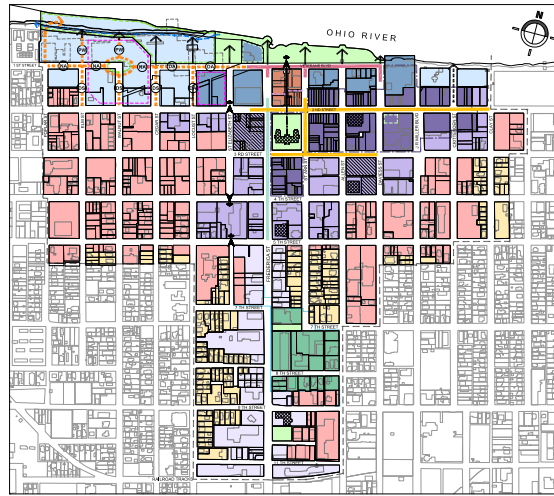
Example project: Lake Bardwell Area Plan, Ennis, TX (with Livable Plans & Codes)

Urban Arts was retained by Livable Plans & Codes to assist in the development of an illustrative plan for a 650 acre area located between Highway 287 and Lake Bardwell - just west of Ennis. LP&C used the illustrative plan prepared by Urban Arts to create a Framework Plan that will inform decisions about future zoning and capital improvements.

Above: Aerial rendering of the plan by Depiction Illustration
Lower right: Illustrative Plan
Lower left: Zoning Framework Plan

DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT

In the past decade there has been a resurgence of interest in America's downtowns. However, there have been many economic and lifestyle changes in the past five decades since Main Street was the commercial/retail heart of the city. For this reason, downtowns must adapt. Using the tools of urban design, including regulating plans, design standards, preservation, and complete streets, Urban Arts can clarify the vision and leverage current assets so that downtowns reach their full economic and social potential.



CHARACTER DISTRICTS	
Historic Core	Historic Passes
Downtown Core	Downtown Campus
Franklin Boulevard	Downtown Transition
Waterfront Core	Highlandtown
Waterfront Edge	

TYPE 'A' STREET DESIGNATIONS	
Protected Public Street	
Downtown Core Street	
Downtown Boulevard	
Special Street	

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS	
Designated C&B Park/Bike	Recommended C&B Open Space
Recommended C&B Park/Bike	Recommended pedestrian connection
Recommended C&B Street	Recommended pedestrian path
Recommended C&B Open Space	Recommended street
Designated park	REC. STREET TYPES
Public park	Downtown Street
Open to River	Downtown Avenue
Open to River	Highlandtown Ave.
Transportation	Protected Way

REFERENCE	
North/South	North/South
East/West	East/West
Downtown Overlay	District Boundary

Downtown Overlay District Regulating Plan
Not to scale
Adopted October 20, 2009



Example project: Owensboro Downtown Master Plan & Code (with Gateway Planning)

In 2009, Huston had the pleasure of collaborating on the downtown master plan for the town in which he grew up. The plan led to a form-based code and design standards to guide new development. It also jump-started a TIF district which was used to fund streetscape improvements. These efforts have led to millions in private investment within the downtown core.

Most importantly, the downtown has once again become the cen-

ter of the community's civic life.

Top left: Illustrative Plan

Top right: Regulating Plan

Lower left: A resurgent 2nd Street

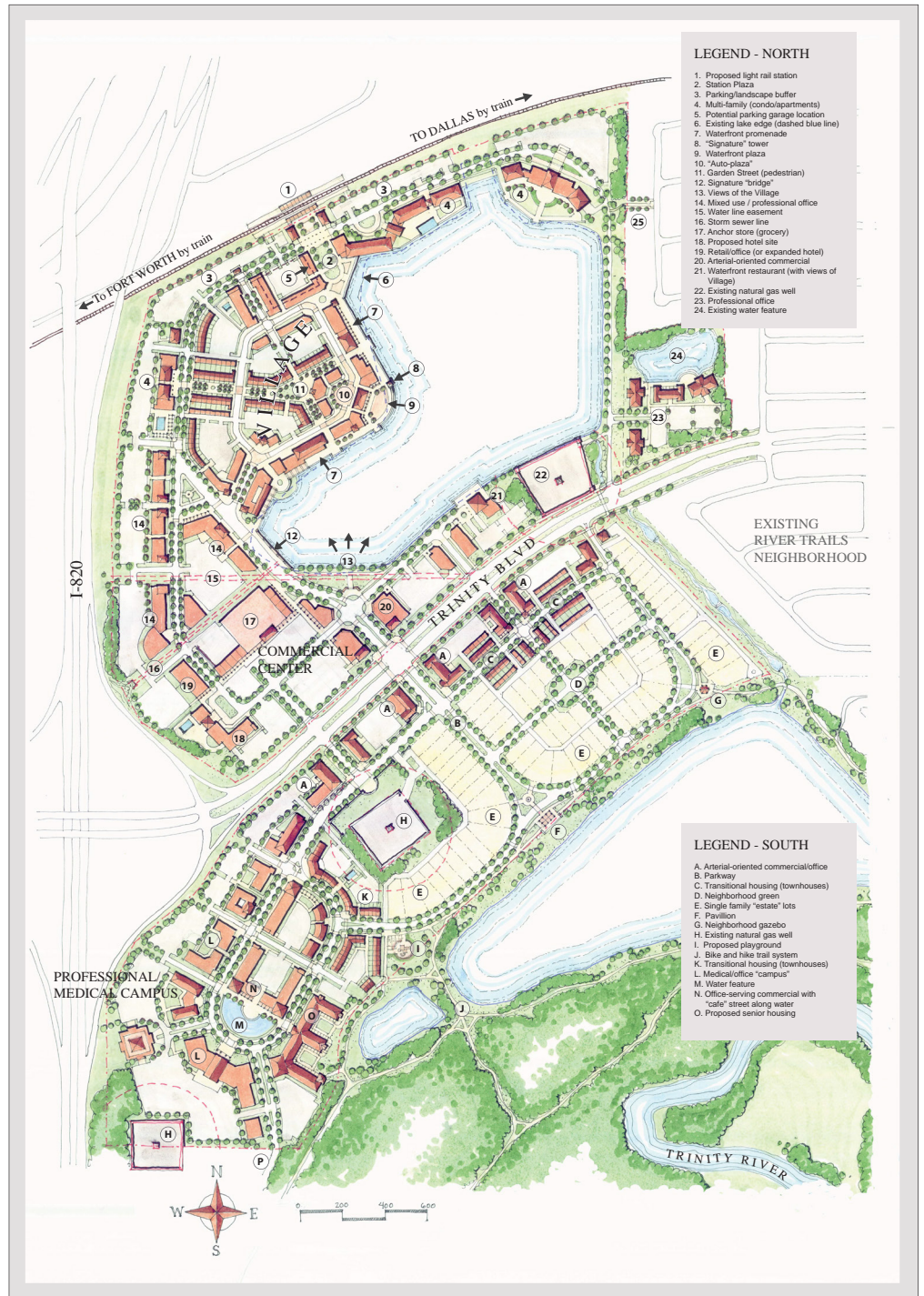
Lower right: Local paper highlights public investments

TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (T.O.D.)

A Transit Oriented Development is a type of development that leverages investments in rapid transit - typically in the form of light rail or commuter rail. A proposed or existing transit station acts as the anchor of the development with higher density uses located closest to the station. Huston has participated in the planning of numerous TOD developments for both the private and public sector.

Example project: Trinity Lakes Master Plan, Fort Worth, TX (with Gateway Planning)

The master plan takes advantage of a proposed light rail stop at the north end of the site, along with a man-made lake created from a gravel quarry to create a mixed-use waterfront entertainment destination. The southern area of the site is proposed as a medical campus which transitions into a single family neighborhood.



INFILL SITE STUDIES

Urban Arts provides site design studies for the public and private sector for potential development sites. These can be in the form of quick hand-draw sketches, or more developed designs such as the one shown below. These illustrations are invaluable when seeking investor and public support.

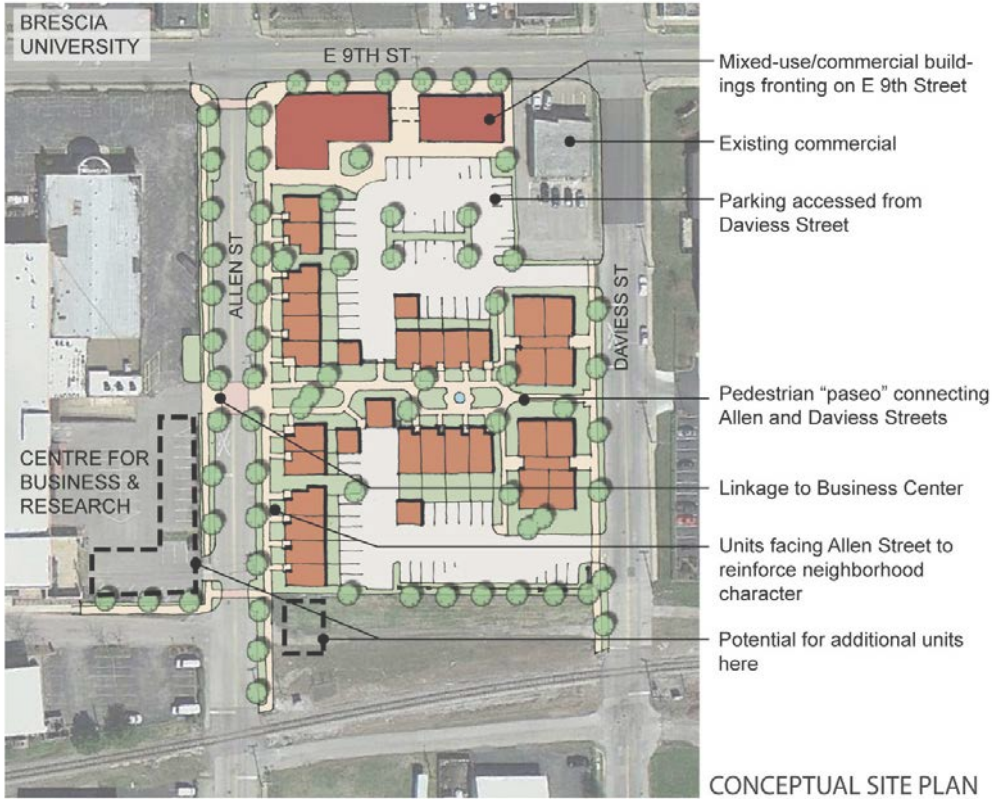


Example project: Innovation Academy Lot, Owensboro, KY

The office of Economic Development asked Huston to provide a development concept for a city-owned vacant lot next to their Innovation Academy.

Left: The rendering, by Huston, shows two mixed-use buildings facing 9th Street, with live/work townhouses facing Allen Street. Parking is located behind the buildings. A mid-block pedestrian passage breaks up the long block into two, smaller blocks.

Below left: Illustrative Plan



CAMPUS PLANNING

There are very few places of higher education that do not plan to grow. Therefore, it is imperative to have a well thought out master plan to guide that growth. The master plan can also be a tool for fundraising, giving potential donors assurance that their investments are part of a larger vision. In addition, a more functional and beautiful campus is more attractive to prospective students.



Example project: Brescia University, Owensboro, KY

Following work on the downtown Master Plan, Huston was engaged to develop a master plan for Brescia University which is located within walking distance of the downtown. Thus far, the master plan has helped the administration raise over 13 million in donations. The first phase of the plan, which consisted of the expansion and new "front door" of the campus has been completed, and construction has begun on the new "Signature Building" which will act as a gateway to the downtown.

Above top: A 3D model of the campus plan

Above: Before and after images of the completed first phase

PLACEMAKING

Many places that we encounter in our daily life, especially in more suburban areas, are rather generic and “could be anywhere.” By contrast, placemaking is the term used to denote the design of a place (whether a city, a neighborhood, or a district) that is unique, memorable, and recognizable. As such, it is not likely to be confused with any other place. Generally, these types of places are created by using the tools of urban design (how the buildings are assembled) and some consistency in the architectural character. Landscaping can also add to the unique character of a place.

Example project: Skipjack (with DPZ)

The rendering illustrates the proposed design for a waterfront marketplace in South Padre Island, TX. The design proposes a picturesque cluster of shop-cottages around a waterfront green that would accommodate outdoor music and other community activities. The vernacular architecture reinforces the concept of a waterfront destination and creates a “sense of place”.



Rendering by Michael Huston

Example project: Hendrick Farm, Chelsea, Quebec, Canada (with DPZ)

Another gathering space, similar in scale to the one above, but with an entirely different character that speaks to its location in rural Canada. In this project, an organic farm and barn becomes the central focus of community life, creating a unique and memorable place.



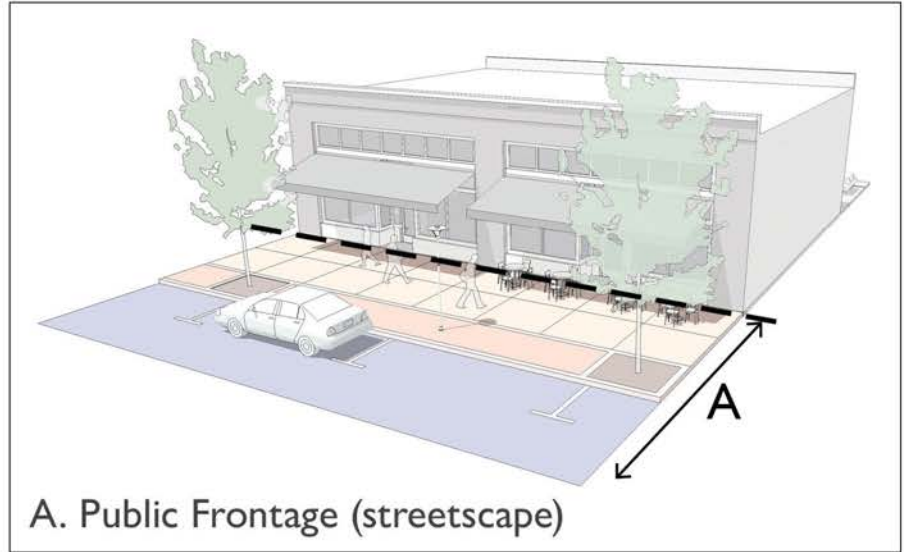
Rendering by Chris Ritter

CODE ILLUSTRATIONS

Often, the users of form-based codes are being introduced to planning and urban design concepts that they have not encountered in conventional zoning codes. Urban Arts can produce drawings and models to illustrate these concepts in a clear and informative way.

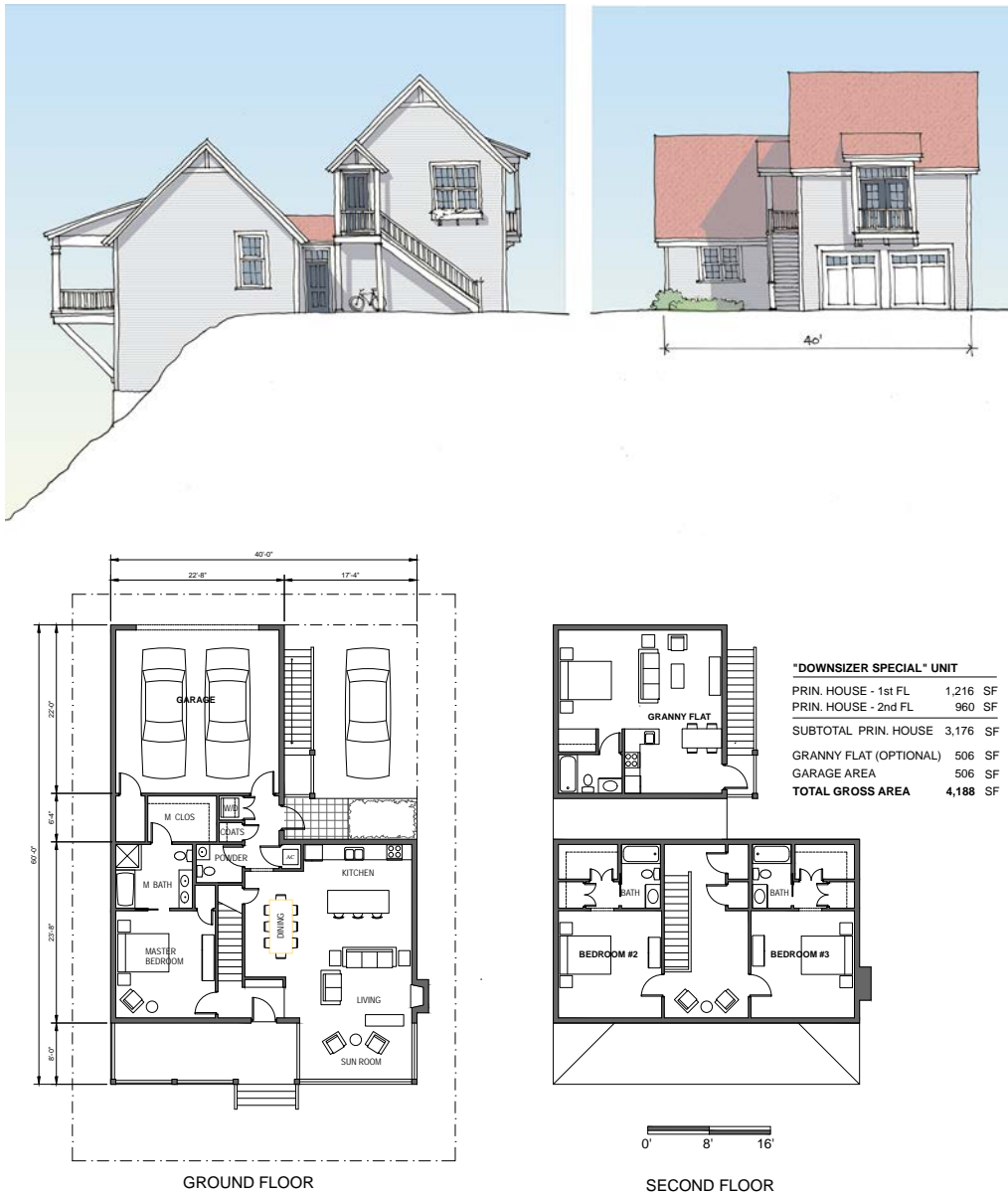
Example project: Frontage Diagrams (with DPZ)

A series of models were created to help explain the two primary components of the pedestrian environment. Frequently, we find in cities that one or the other exists, i.e., a good building stock with inadequate sidewalks, or good sidewalks with a missing street wall. The diagrams illustrate that communities must focus on both to achieve a more desirable pedestrian environment.



BUILDING TYPE DEVELOPMENT

Urban designers must think in two scales, the scale of the open space (streets, plazas, etc.) and the scale of the individual buildings. The building type determines the lot size, which in turn impacts the block dimensions and the street layout. It is therefore beneficial to get to at least a schematic level of design for typical building types during the development of the master plan. As a licensed architect, Huston provides schematic drawings for typical buildings that are supported by the local market.

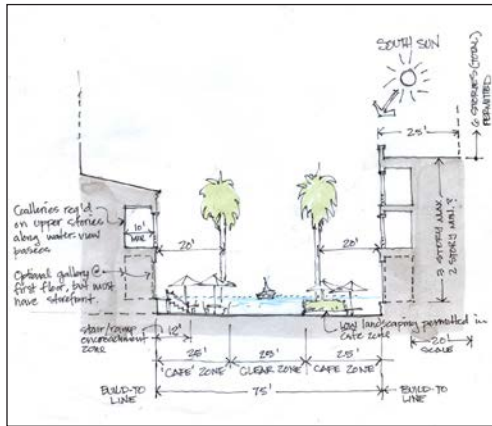


Example project: Windward Point, Muskegon, MI (with DPZ)

The master plan for this project included a cluster of units arranged in a picturesque village that will cater to the retired empty-nester. Huston developed the "Down-sizer" specifically for this market. The unit features a first floor master suite with guest bedrooms on the second floor. An additional guest suite is located above the garage.

CHARRETTE PARTICIPATION

A charrette is an intensive design/brain-storming session, usually extending over a period of days, and ideally conducted near the project site. The goal of the charrette is to bring all stakeholders and experts together, in the presence of the client, to design in real time in order to condense the process and produce the best results. Huston has participated in over 50 charrettes, the majority of which occurred during his time at DPZ. His broad range of abilities in both hand drawing and computer programs, and his ability to work from the scale of the region to the scale of the building make him particularly well suited to the charrette process.



Example charrette process

Far left: A proposed street section for Rockport, TX

Near left: A pencil sketch from the downtown plan for Aubrey, TX

LECTURES

Huston has created several lectures on subjects of interest - which is always expanding.

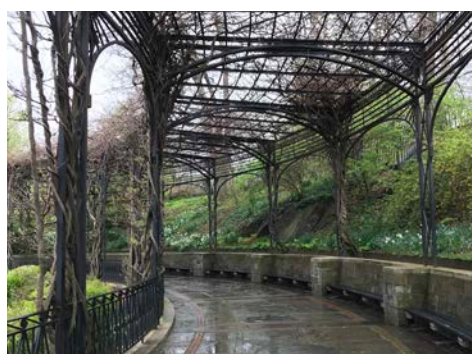


It's a balance

<p>3" - Entry Orientation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building entrance orientation • Home Museum "degrees" setting for Form-Based Code 	<p>4" - Building Frontage Type</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frontage types E.g., shop front, arcade, gallery, etc.
<p>6" - Solid and Void Ratios</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of glass/mirror • % of solid material 	<p>10" - Architectural Details - Style</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stylistic standards • Fabricates "branding" • Implements a more specific vision

"The Form-o-stat"

The Form-o-stat uses the metaphor of a thermostat to illustrate the varying "degrees" of a form-based code. Thus, FBC's can be calibrated to correspond to the community's comfort level.



Natural Aesthetics

(a.k.a., Beauty without the B.S.)

The lecture proposes that beauty is not as subjective as most of us think. There are fundamental attributes that create beauty, and these tools can be utilized to create beauty in the man-made built environment.



“The key to a fresh architectural image of the city as a whole lies in working toward an organic unit of urban order which will hold together its component parts through successive changes in function and purpose from generation to generation.”

- Lewis Mumford