

Studio 1

Los Angeles Fashion District

Fall 2007

The Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles (CRA/LA)—the largest redevelopment agency in California—challenged our studio to show how the commercial life of the district can be enhanced while adding a substantial number of residential units. The two student and faculty trips to Los Angeles were funded by a generous gift from Champion Enterprises, Inc.

TWELVE NOTRE DAME STUDENTS PARTICIPATED in this studio, directed by Sallie Hood and Ron Sakal, in collaboration with Visiting Associate Professional Specialist Paula Bodnar in the Department of Art, Art History, and Design and Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies Yahya C. Kurama in Civil Engineering and Geological Sciences.

Besides its flourishing economy, the district benefits from being easily accessible by bus, train, foot, or car. Drawing on the region's architectural heritage, especially Southern California traditions of urbanity and permeable blocks and buildings, the students laid out an overall concept plan for the area, and then divided into teams to develop design proposals for three specific locations: the Flower Market at the north end, the centrally located City Market, and a disused area near the south end where a new headquarters for BCBG might hypothetically be built.

The studio emphasized modular and hybrid building systems, as well as passive solar and landscape designs. Students in graphic and industrial design collaborated, among other things contributing new signage and a new color palette for the district, and a proposal for a versatile, multifunctional overnight shop security system.

The students recommended that the district's 35 acres of surface parking be turned into green areas—intimate neighborhood parks of which LA has very few, and which are known to increase nearby real estate values. The district's long narrow blocks can benefit from being made more permeable. Mid-block pedestrian mews (walkways) are one way to do this, providing additional short cuts through the neighborhood. Street landscaping should feature drought-resistant turf and trees. Hardscaping should include permeable pavers to reduce runoff, and bulb-outs at corners to calm traffic and make streets easier to cross.



Fashion District Logo Proposals
Graphic Studio



Mural Proposals
L. Rose



Locator Patterns
E. Sarb



Roof Mural Proposal
T. Heyer



Business Paper Proposal
K. Gronli



Brochure Proposal
Graphic Studio



Signage Proposal
L. Rose



Fashion District Map Proposal
T. Heyer



BCBG Headquarters Proposal
J. Buechler, Y. Fanardy, & A. Lorenz



BCBG Headquarters Proposal
J. Buechler, Y. Fanardy, & A. Lorenz



BCBG Headquarters ID Tower Proposal
F. Carvalho & M. Swoboda

As a rule, throughout the district, ground floors would be devoted to retail, and upper floors to light industry or residential units. Residential opportunities should be available in a variety of sizes and prices, in order to attract people who now commute one or two hours to work in the district. Placement of residences is key. They should be convenient to neighborhood stores supplying daily needs, which themselves should be located on 2nd floors or on small streets and mews. And insofar as possible, residences should be added near existing bus stops. That allows residents the option of not owning cars or using them less, and it encourages more people to walk, keeping the streets lively after business hours.

Graduate industrial design student Fernando Carvalho and graduate graphic design student Michael Swoboda constructed a

versatile, multifunctional overnight shop security system. These roll-out guard screens can be hinged and perforated so that they accomplish four purposes: they're graffiti- and vandal-proof, allow pedestrians to window-shop after hours, can be backlit to share light with the street, and can be flipped for use as merchandise racks during the day (see p. 27). Carvalho and Swoboda also proposed sculptured tower landmarks to identify specific areas in downtown Los Angeles and infuse a sense of vibrancy to the cityscape (see pp. 19, 27, 29).

After defining an appealing typographic, color, and pattern palette for the district, the graphic designers then developed a fresh identity for the LAFD including maps and brochures (see pp. 14, 31). The new system de-emphasizes illustration and icons, and



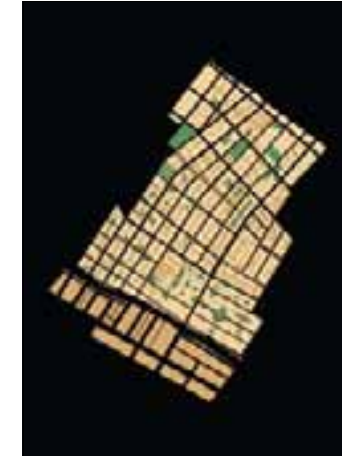
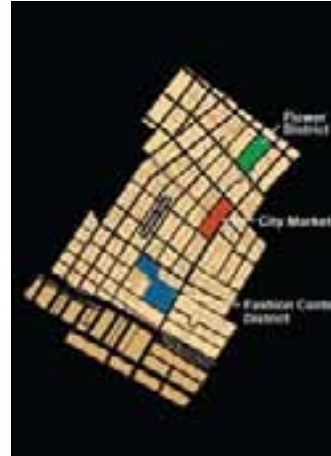
Mixed-Use Modular Building Proposal
R. Hahn



BCBG Existing Site Conditions
J. Buechler, Y. Fanardy, & A. Lorenz



BCBG Headquarters Proposal
J. Buechler, Y. Fanardy, & A. Lorenz



MIDDLE
LAFD Project Area
Studio

RIGHT
Proposal to Replace Parking Lots with Parks
Studio

focuses instead on industry-related colors, patterns, and textures. Fonts used would be Bodoni (headlines and signage) and Interstate (body copy). Primary forms of signage would be 24"-by-48" banners and graphic towers, similar to the historic Bendix tower, to serve as identifying landmarks throughout the district. Building murals and backlit modular tiles would also be encouraged.

Illumination policy would seek to avoid high-contrast situations, where some spots are brilliantly lit while others are pitch-dark. Instead, students recommended an emphasis on ambient light. Efficient low-energy sources would be preferred, as well as fiber optic cable (a sustainable form of neon). To avoid contributing to light pollution, no fixtures would cast light above a plane parallel with the ground (see p. 27).

To maintain a pleasing hierarchy among

buildings in the Fashion District, there should be none under 30 feet high, and none over 300. Along the main boulevards—7th, Main, Olympic, San Julian, Maple, Santee, and Pico—the minimum building height should be raised to 70 feet. Big-box-style single-roof massing should be avoided.

New construction should be a precast post-tensioned concrete structural frame that has seismic durability, per the December 2006 Structural Engineering Research Report by Kurama et al. A combination of precast post-tensioned columns and beams can provide a framework into which Champion steel modular residential units can be craned and inserted—a system that minimizes on-site construction and allows faster occupancy. Cables holding the columns and beams together would allow buildings to “flex” and survive a major earthquake relatively unscathed.

Flower Market

The big block between 7th, 8th, Wall, and San Julian is currently low-rise and auto-oriented, and the market's business is most active between 4 am and noon. Three different student proposals all aim to keep activity going after noon by adding mixed-use multi-story units and arranging the area to have between 40 and 50 percent open space. They would place residential and mercantile spaces at opposite ends of the block, separated by a conservatory (see pp. 20, 29–30).

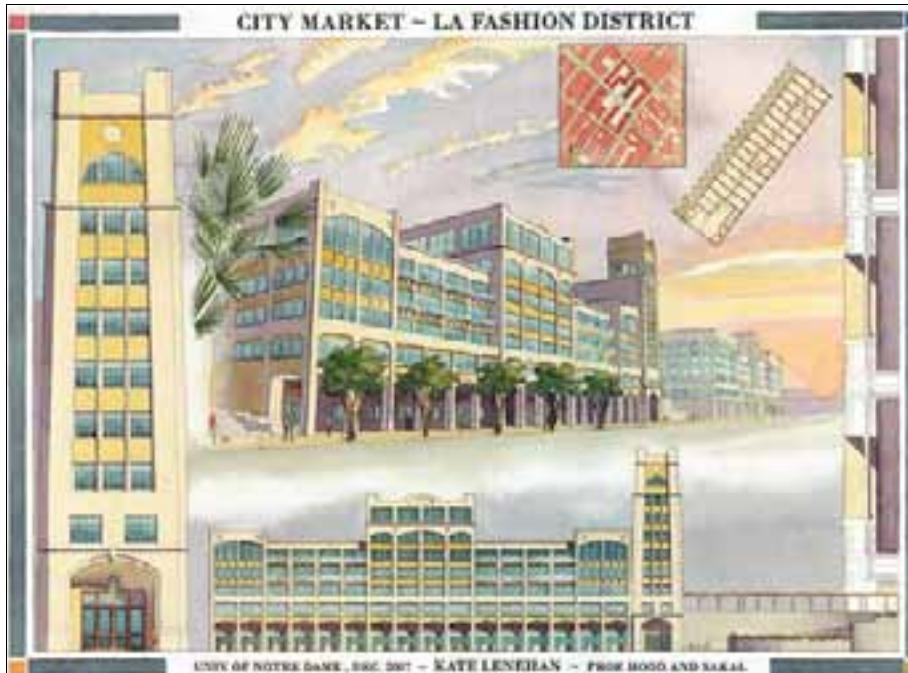
In the first proposal, the flower market would occupy 92,290 square feet, and a mixed-use tower would contain 388 one- and two-bedroom apartments.

The second proposal would have the smallest flower market (73,500 square feet) and the largest number of residences (430 loft and one-bedroom units). It would use backlit translucent panels at street level, and equip the apartments with “Persiana” blinds to control sunlight and sound.

The third proposal, distinguished by its use of glass geometric solids in the conservatory area, would have the largest flower market (130,000 square feet) and 405 apartments. These would vary from studios to 3 bedrooms, some rectangular and some in a double-module trapezoidal layout. Landscaped terraces would be used to dampen the sound impacts on residences.



Flower Market Conservatory Plaza
C. Larson



TOP
City Market Building Section
 K. Lenehan

BOTTOM
City Market Proposal
 A. Raynal

City Market

In its current layout, the wholesale market between San Julian, San Pedro, 9th, and 11th turns its back on the street. All three student proposals would reverse this and give it a public face of multiple storefronts, allowing pedestrians access to fresh produce at ground-floor shops. All or part of the block would be raised 20 feet above grade, which would add space for shops, while allowing truck deliveries to the market itself to be made below, at street level. All proposals call for between 45 and 51 percent open space on the block, but they arrange it differently. The first two proposals retain most of the existing market footprint (see pp. 26–27).

The first proposal, distinguished by a tall, iconic “City Market” wayfinding tower, would include 380 apartments.

The second proposal arranges four mixed-use buildings around the edge of the block, enclosing a courtyard space.

They would contain 513 apartments. A monumental entryway would be created where Olympic Boulevard terminates at San Julian in mid-block.

The third proposal would reorient the buildings and curve them for maximum solar exposure. It would also turn San Julian into a pedestrian park and market on Saturdays, with Olympic Boulevard being permanently closed to traffic. In this proposal, the raised area would be devoted to a pedestrian plaza, market, and gardens, above the wholesale market. Glass block panels in the paving of the pedestrian plaza would allow daylight to penetrate the market from above by day, and market lighting to shine up from below by night.





TOP LEFT
City Market Proposal
K. Lenehan

TOP RIGHT
City Market Sign Proposal
F. Carvalho & M. Swoboda



City Market Olympic Blvd. Terminus
B. Grissinger, T. Gulick



City Market Plaza at Night
B. Grissinger, T. Gulick



Flower Market Courtyard Proposal
E. Morin, T. Stablein

Fashion Center

The area between Pico Boulevard, San Pedro, Maple Street, and 15th—now largely surface parking—was redesigned in two segments, with the ambitious goal of combining residences, street life, and a major corporate headquarters. An additional ambition was to make the pedestrian way more attractive from the Blue Line rail stop at San Pedro and Washington into the district (see pp. 28–29).

Off Pico and Maple, a six-story mixed-used building was proposed, with 169 one- and two-bedroom units, and commercial space on the ground floor. The building would enclose a private residents' garden. The larger area between Myrtle and San Pedro above



Flower Market Mixed-Use Modular Building
K. Fulmer

15th would be residential in the western one-quarter facing Myrtle, including a plaza at midblock. The eastern three-quarters would be the BCBG corporate headquarters—relocated to the Fashion District from multiple suburban locations—a monumental series of buildings with landscaped terraces, ranging from 7 to 13 stories. The main entrance plaza would be on San Pedro. An outdoor fashion park would be located half a block southeast of

that. The building would be easily accessible by car (employee or resident), bike, foot, and distribution trucks. Green technologies, possibly including wind turbines, would be employed as feasible. The building would be topped with a another unique iconic tower.

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa wants Los Angeles to remain a manufacturing center. The Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles would like zoning to allow more residences in wholesale and industrial areas. This studio and forthcoming ones, under the name “industrial land use case study program,” will show how these goals are compatible, and indeed mutually reinforcing.

Los Angeles Studio Participants

Clients

The Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles (CRA/LA)

Donald R. Spivack
Deputy Chief of Operations and Policy

Edward T. Huang, Ph.D., AICP
Senior Planner, Downtown Region

Borzou Rahimi, AIA
Construction Supervisor,
Downtown and Eastside Regions

The LA Fashion District Business Improvement District

John van den Akker
Chairman, LA Fashion District
Board of Directors

Kent Smith
Executive Director, LA Fashion District

Lynn Myers
Managing Director, LA Fashion District

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Jessica Buechler

Yacintha Fanardy

Kathryn Fulmer

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Tyng Gulick

Richard Hahn

Colleen Larson

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Graduate Design Students, Department of Art, Art History, and Design

Fernando Carvalho
Industrial Design

Michael E. Swoboda
Graphic Design

Notre Dame Faculty:

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Sallie Hood
Director of Design, CBC
Associate Professor,
School of Architecture;

Yahya Kurama
Associate Professor and Director of
Graduate Studies, Department of Civil
Engineering and Geological Sciences

Ron Sakal
Executive Director, CBC;
Professional Specialist,
School of Architecture

Professional Consultants and Studio Reviewers

**Personnel of the Community
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Dennis Doordan
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Former Publisher and CEO,
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Pat Cross

Vice President Champion Western Region

Members of the Champion team at the Silvercrest Plant in Corona, California

Personnel of the City of Los Angeles Departments of City Planning and Public Works

Members of the School of Architecture Faculty, University of Notre Dame

Dear Sallie and Ron,

As the CRA/LA Project Planner for Fashion District and neighboring areas in Downtown LA, I am pleased to write this letter per your request. The letter aims to capture the process and outcome of working with you and the UND students for the 5th year architectural design studio under the sponsorship of CBC, UND School of Architecture... ¶ In September 2007, you both and 17 of your students with various majors including architecture, graphic design and industrial design visited Downtown Los Angeles and the Fashion District with the purpose of getting a hands-on experience and understanding of the area. We all met at CRA/LA and made presentations to the faculty & students about current conditions, issues and expectations for the Fashion District. ¶ The students selected their projects and sites, including LAUSD and City Market sites. In the following months, while students worked on their projects, we communicated with faculty and students, responded to students' questions and guided them to reference sources. ¶ On Friday October 19 Borzou and I flew from LA to Chicago then drove to UND campus. In the afternoon we participated in a design review and critique sessions in which we received presentations from students and we provided our comments and suggestions. In response to Mayor's office interest, I also introduced a thought of LA Fashion Park for students to take on. In general, we were impressed with the students' progress within such short period of time. ¶ We later decided the presentation of the final projects to us would be Tuesday January 8, 2008, and reserved the CRA's Board Room on the 6th floor of the CRA's Central Office at 354 S. Spring Street for the presentation. We then developed and compiled a list of invitees to participate in the presentation. The list includes stakeholders such as FDBID board members and staff, and staff from various city departments and agencies, particularly those working for the Fashion District. City staff representatives include those from City Planning, Public Works and CRA. ¶ ... We were very happy with the fact most of the invitees joined us at the presentation and that we had a good presentation from the students and an active discussion among the participants, UND faculty, and students. The presentations were well received and various planning and architectural and signage issues in Fashion District were well addressed. ¶ ... Both BID and CRA/LA staff are happy with the products delivered. We are currently working on a study of alley uses in the Fashion District, meanwhile a Request for Proposal to prepare a Master Plan for the District is scheduled to start. Both the current alley study and the Master Plan RFP have taken into account the ideas that the students developed. ¶ We enjoyed the process of working with you and the students. ... We are looking forward to continuing to serve as CBC's partners in future activities of your LA Studio Program.

Sincerely,

EDWARD HUANG, PHD, AICP, CGBP, CEI
Senior Planner—Downtown Region
CRA/LA

Dear Mr. Sakal and Ms. Hood,

The LA Fashion District Business Improvement District (BID) was honored to have been selected by the Community Redevelopment Agency/LA (CRA) and the Center for Building Communities (CBC) at the University of Notre Dame School of Architecture as the site for a graduate student research project in 2007. ¶ The LA Fashion District is a 90-block district in downtown Los Angeles and is the hub of the apparel industry on the West Coast. Creative trends that start here influence the world. The Fashion District caters to the wholesale and retail communities with apparel, accessories, textiles, flowers, home decor and most recently live/work loft housing. The LA Fashion District BID is a nonprofit organization, funded by over 800 property owners, dedicated to making the community a clean, safe and friendly place to work, shop, do business and live through maintenance, security, advocacy, and marketing programs. As the district diversifies the property owners are looking for ways to develop their holdings to maximize profitability while meeting the needs of the community. ¶ Since the BID started in 1996 the Community Redevelopment Agency/LA has supported the growth of the LA Fashion District BID. When CRA representatives approached us for participation in a research project with the University of Notre Dame School of Architecture and the Center for Building Communities we welcomed the opportunity. ¶ On September 6, 2007, we met with the graduate students to talk about the district and help develop a focus for their work that would fulfill their study requirements and benefit the Fashion District. They were asked to address circulation, parking, new development, and graphic design concepts. The students were also asked to apply CRA's new downtown design guidelines to four sites in the Fashion District and propose zone variances for merging transit-oriented development with a mixed use district. ¶ The studies were presented on January 2007 and the results far surpassed our expectations. The students' designs and planning concepts combined with problem solving efforts and recommendations for future developments were forward thinking while grounded in the realistic context of the district. ¶ They brought a fresh approach to imagining the future of the LA Fashion District. Fresh ideas and innovative solutions are what drive the apparel industry. Our community should look as creative as its products. Through this research project the Center for Building Communities succeeded in providing an inspiration to our constituents for the future development of the district. ¶ We would welcome the opportunity to work with The Center for Building Communities again as a resource for groups of owners, individual owners, and potential owners who are interested in developing projects in the LA Fashion District.

KENT SMITH
Executive Director
LA Fashion District Business Improvement District

Dear Sallie,

Your team definitely made us feel that yes, even in our BID area with its compromised infrastructure, beauty is a choice. Working to make people realize the importance of well-planned beautiful architecture in the Fashion District must be a goal of ours.

A million thanks again,

JOHN VAN DEN AKKER
Chairman,
LA Fashion District Board of Directors

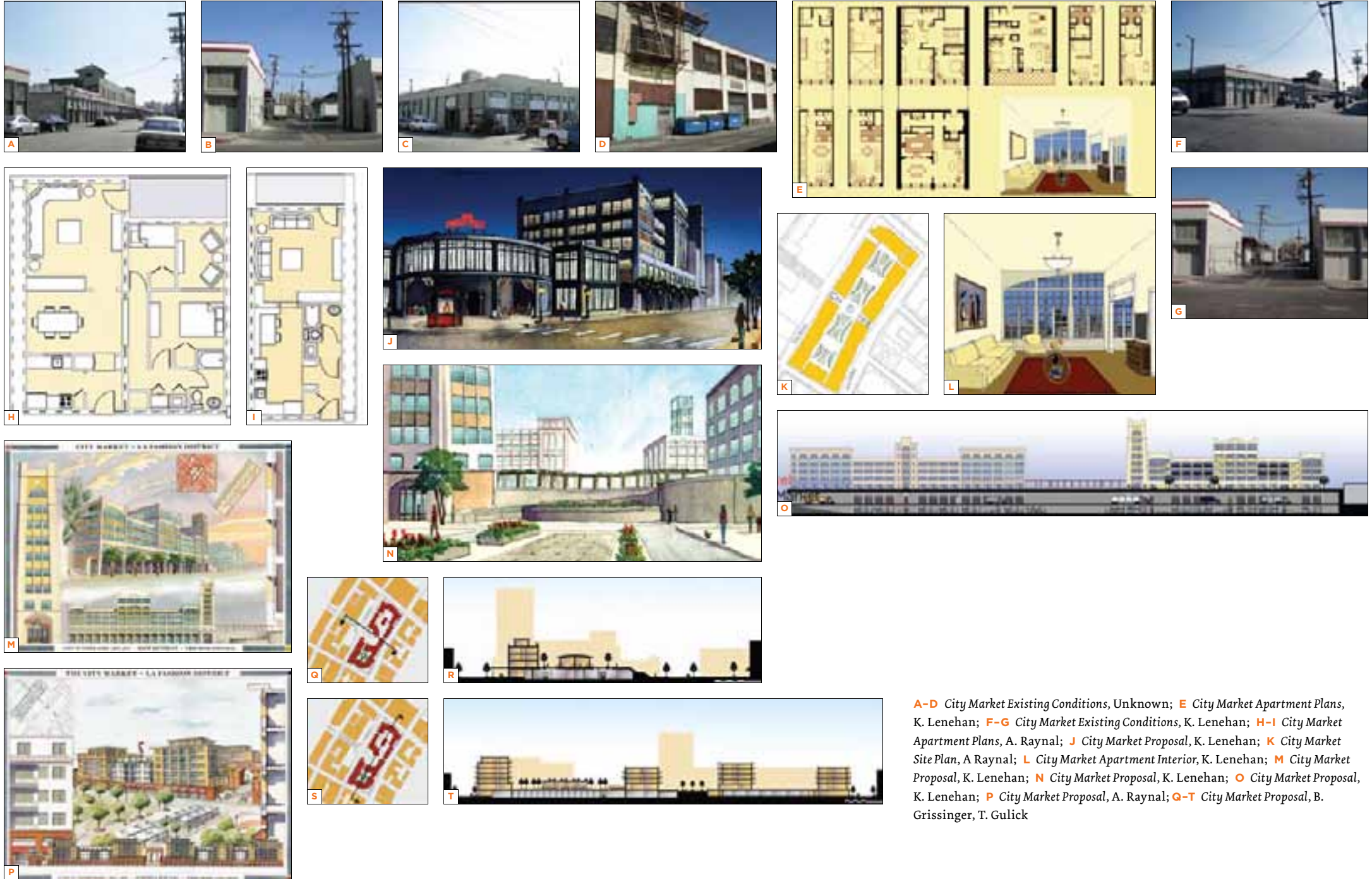
Student Reflections

WEEK 1: *We all arrive late, only to find out we have a meeting. A meeting? We sit around the table while Ron and Sallie explain to us that we are now part of an office. We, the twelve of us, are the boss. There are many skeptical faces. A twelve-headed beast? We haven't even seen the full extent of the project yet! We soon find out we're headed for Los Angeles in one week to see the project. By the time we've figured out who is brave enough to sign up for driving through the urban jungle, Ron and Sallie quickly put LA out of our minds. We have a project to finish before we go: prepare a fifteen-minute presentation on the history/climate/culture of the 13th biggest city in the world. Go!*

WEEK 2: *We finish that project just in time to get on the 5 am plane for LA. It's perfect timing to start a full day of soaking up the Southern California culture and sunshine. We pack every minute of the five-day trip. After meeting with the City Redevelopment Agency and documenting the site, we tour everything from modular housing factories to Greene and Greene's Gamble House to In and Out Burger. We're ready to set up shop in LA, but alas, we board the plane back to South Bend.*

WEEKS 3–12: *Back in studio the ideas start flying. We have 12 people looking at 90 blocks of downtown LA. Each block, like each person, has tremendous potential, and brings different opportunities to the table. We're also working with 5 graphic design students and 2 graduate graphic and industrial design students. After two days of scribbling and discussing, we settle on a unifying theme of neighborhood parks, block permeability, and overall walkability. With these goals in mind, we set out in teams of 4 to develop options for 3 marquee blocks in the project: the flower district, the city market, and the BCBG headquarters. (Come to think of it, that last one came later, when the client changed the program halfway through!) After weeks of coordination, independent work, talking to the graphics students, starting over, and meetings, we tied it all together: the Urban Plan, the Block Plans, and the Graphic Recommendations. We were able to send five architecture students, two graphic design students and three faculty to LA to successfully explain the final product to the City Redevelopment Agency, along with others from the City of Los Angeles. The work was well received and we hope to see fragments of its essence as we return to the City of Angels.*

City Market



A-D City Market Existing Conditions, Unknown; **E** City Market Apartment Plans, K. Lenehan; **F-G** City Market Existing Conditions, K. Lenehan; **H-I** City Market Apartment Plans, A. Raynal; **J** City Market Proposal, K. Lenehan; **K** City Market Site Plan, A. Raynal; **L** City Market Apartment Interior, K. Lenehan; **M** City Market Proposal, K. Lenehan; **N** City Market Proposal, K. Lenehan; **O** City Market Proposal, K. Lenehan; **P** City Market Proposal, A. Raynal; **Q-T** City Market Proposal, B. Grissinger, T. Gulick

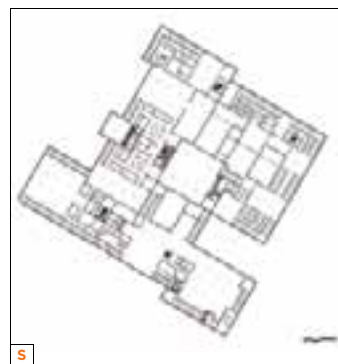
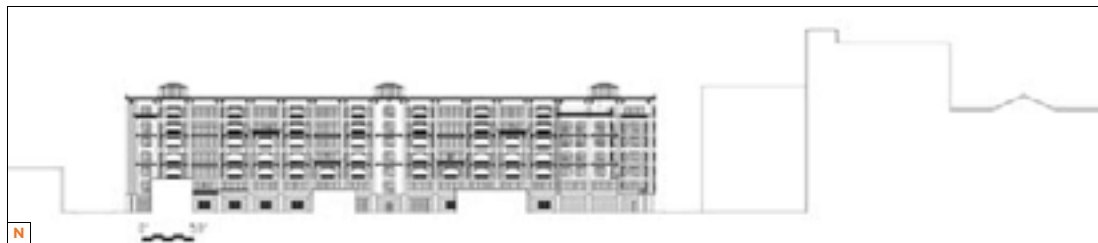


A City Market Signage, F. Carvalho & M. Swoboda; **B** City Market Sign Proposal, F. Carvalho & M. Swoboda; **C** City Market Existing Condition **D** City Market Plaza, F. Carvalho; **E** City Market Proposal, B. Grissinger, T. Gulick; **F** City Market Shop Security Gates, M. Swoboda, F. Carvalho; **H-H** City Market Proposal, B. Grissinger, T. Gulick; **I** City Market Plaza at Night, B. Grissinger, T. Gulick; **J** City Market Proposal Section, K. Leenhan; **K-N** City Market Proposal, B. Grissinger, T. Gulick; **O** City Market Site Plan, K. Leenhan; **P** City Market Security Gate/Display System, F. Carvalho & M. Swoboda; **Q** City Market Street Lights, F. Carvalho & M. Swoboda

Fashion Center

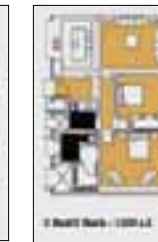
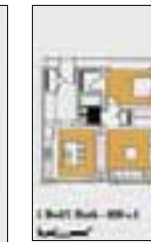
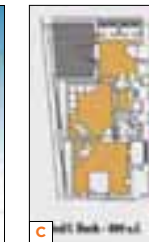


A BCBG Existing Site Conditions, J. Buechler, Y. Fanardy, A. Lorenz; **B** BCBG Existing Site Conditions, Unknown; **C** BCBG Headquarters, J. Buechler, Y. Fanardy, A. Lorenz; **D** BCBG Headquarters Proposal, J. Buechler, Y. Fanardy, A. Lorenz; **E** BCBG Existing Site Conditions, Unknown; **F** BCBG Myrtle Plaza, J. Buechler, Y. Fanardy, A. Lorenz; **G** Myrtle Plaza Existing Site Conditions, Unknown; **H-I** BCBG Headquarters, J. Buechler, Y. Fanardy, A. Lorenz; **J** BCBG Headquarters—Myrtle Plaza, J. Buechler, Y. Fanardy, A. Lorenz; **K** BCBG Headquarters, J. Buechler, Y. Fanardy, A. Lorenz



L BCBG Headquarters Proposal, J. Buechler, Y. Fanardy, A. Lorenz; **M-N** Mixed-Use Modular Loft Building, R. Hahn; **O** BCBG Headquarters Proposal, J. Buechler, Y. Fanardy, A. Lorenz; **P** Mixed-Use Modular Building Proposal, R. Hahn; **Q** BCBG Headquarters ID Tower Proposal, F. Carvalho & M. Swoboda; **R** BCBG Tower, F. Carvalho, M. Swoboda; **S** BCBG Headquarters, J. Buechler, Y. Fanardy, A. Lorenz

Flower Market



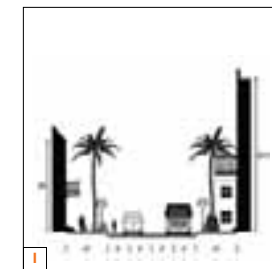
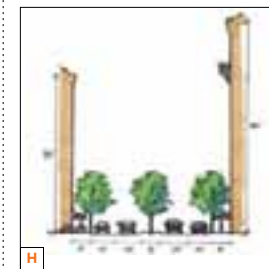
A Flower Market Existing Conditions, Unknown; **B** Flower Market Proposal, C. Larson; **C** Flower Market Proposal Typical Plans, C. Larson; **D** Flower Market Mixed-Use Modular Building, K. Fulmer; **E** Flower Market Conservatory Plaza, C. Larson; **F** Flower Market Proposal, C. Larson; **G** Flower Market Proposal Section, C. Larson; **H** Flower Market Proposal Site Plan, C. Larson

Flower Market



I Flower Market Existing Conditions, E. Morin, T. Steblein; **J-K** Flower Market Proposal, E. Morin, T. Steblein; **L** Flower Market Courtyard Proposal, E. Morin, T. Steblein; **M-N** Flower Market Proposal, E. Morin, T. Steblein; **O** Flower Market Proposal Section, K. Fulmer; **P** Flower Market Proposal Site Plan, K. Fulmer; **Q** Flower Market Proposal Section, E. Morin, T. Steblein; **R-S** Flower Market Proposal Site Plan, E. Morin, T. Steblein

Los Angeles Fashion District Overview



A Steel Frame Module, Champion Enterprises; **B** Proposal to replace parking lots with parks, Studio; **C** Los Angeles Fashion District Project Area, Studio; **D-E** Los Angeles Structural Frame Precedent, Live Maps; **F** Notre Dame Team Members, M. Swoboda; **G** Members of the Notre Dame CBC Studio, P. Bodnar; **H** Fashion District Street with Median, Studio; **I** Fashion District Street with wider sidewalk, Studio

