

EVALUATION: DIPLOMA PROJECT

Student: Nathan Beer

Project: "European Peace Forum and Centre for Conflict Resolution"

Ústav: Prostoroveho planovani, 15121

Advisor: Henry W. A. Hanson IV

Opponent: Ing. Arch Pavel Sýs

June 11, 2018

Introduction:

Both the topic and the site selection illustrate Nathan's unbridled ambition. His work is very thoughtful and deliberated in both his thoughts on the way things are and ideas on the way they could be. He seems to always seek opportunities for the designer of the built environment to make wholesome, healing and delightful contributions to society and the environment. This diploma is no exception; in fact, it is these compulsions totally unleashed. This passion is not even dampened by the constraints of reality; time and energy.

Portfolio:

The portfolio is well organized and visually inviting to read. There is a shift in character that occurs with the proposal section as it seems to become more sparse and lacking the rich layering of meaning supported by graphic design.

Research & Analysis:

The research preparation for this project looks at some painful memories at the risk of scratching at some of them within the local context. This may be best done by a foreigner searching to understand the subject of conflict in other context to better understand conflict in general as well as in their own world. Give that the author is both a interested in the subject and a foreigner this urge is understandable. The research explored in the portfolio has some reasonable breadth without some of the riskier depths in the details of the conflict. Fundamentally, this project explore what role designed environments can have on supporting conflict resolution and peacemaking. It would be helpful if the conclusion of the research came to some concise statement or definition of design principles associated with making places for resolution and peacemaking prior to leaping into a highly detailed description of an architectural program; to give a clear framework for the design, a 'manifesto' of sorts.

The site selection is as rich with opportunities as it is with challenges. However, the scale of the quarry is daunting. The impulse to fill it up or somehow heal the entire site with the proposed program may be a miss match; to presume that they are somehow spatially equivalent. The organic process of healing the site and the process evolving the program are maybe too closely imagined. Analysis to study this question would offer some valuable constraints and guiderails to the development of a design proposal.

The Design Proposal:

The proposal is both ambitious and visionary. Ambitions in that it is based on a very complex program with a wide range of intentions and visionary in that it imagines dispute and conflict resolution as resolvable under the influence of a designed environment. These ambitious and visionary motivations arguably multiply the complexity of the process to develop a viable proposal. The proposal also has organic, evolutionary intentions in both healing conflicts and the environment. As such, it is unrealistic to expect a complete proposal developed to the same level of detail, rather, carefully selection of the first phase, that which needs to happen setting off the evolutionary process, planting the healing genetic seed. Is this the 'Assembly Arena'?

The architectural drawings and particularly the visualizations demonstrate skill and understanding of computer generated form making. The structural implications are left at a more implicit level. It would be helpful to see at least a diagrammatic structural concept.

Given the healing intentions of the author, it would also be helpful to see some building systems diagrams; for example, heating, cooling and ventilation, daylighting, water management. It would also be more persuasive if the visuali

The design of the Assembly Arena appears to have landed on the site although there are implicit intentions that it is planted in the site. The visualization of the assembly hall patio on page 73 exemplifies this quality where the building sits on a green plinth.

Conclusion:

It has been a pleasure to work with Nathan. He has the personal and intellectual integrity the profession needs. He has also demonstrated both talent and skill throughout the development of this diploma project. Therefore, my evaluation of the Diploma Project of Nathan Beer is C; Good.

