

PART IV

Permeability as a Concept for Planning

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The Lens of Permeability

A prism through which to design holistically

View external and internal aspects of the design in combination. Transparency is a critical aspect of permeable space allowing one to see from the outside in and the inside out – expanding the scope of ones' vision. Think of the entirety of the design space as being viewed through a series of transparent sheaths – each layer of space as a window into the next.

From this viewpoint, consider the whole spectrum of applicable attributes: functional, architectural, structural, and cultural, and also geographic, topographic, scenic, and biological. Within these contexts, remember to think about the humanness of the space and its context, and how, in combination, these elements will shape social connectivity and creative encounters.

Within this design and knowledge context, envision the functional purposes to be realized by the design, be it for a single building or for an entire campus, and characterize architectural and structural features enhancing the quality and effectiveness of the user experience. In this planning, be imaginative and creative, permeable design is a means to stimulate ongoing innovation. Think of furnishings, technologies, and cultural imagery that will contribute to community-building and enrich the common experience.

Think not of permanence and how long this building or plan can serve current purposes. Think of how buildings can be constructed in a manner facilitating their being shaped and reshaped by new users and uses, some of which will arise even before current construction is completed. If truly permeable, design should be able to evolve incrementally to realize goals we have not yet imagined, and throughout this evolution, the features of permeability will stimulate partnership in achieving ongoing educational, research, and technological innovation on campus and beyond.

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