The Shelby Farms Restoration Center: Changing Behavior Through Atmospheric Experience

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The Shelby Farms Restoration Center: Changing Behavior through Atmospheric Experience
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Diana and Kevin Akers. You have always loved and supported me through the highs and lows of my life. You have mentally and spiritually guided me throughout my journey and continue to bless me with everything you have. I have never taken your love and blessings for granted. I would not be where I am in my life without you, and I am forever grateful.

To my little sister, Moriah-Akers: always shoot for the stars and never give up on your dreams, no matter what people say. You have so much potential in your life. Let God guide your path and never lose sight of what is important in life.

To my Grandparents: you have guided me with wisdom, love, and support throughout my life and I can honestly say I would not be where I am today without you. Thank you for always being there for me.
First, I want to give thanks to God for always providing for me and directing my path. I owe everything to Him.

Second, I want to thank my family and friends (you know who you are) for your continuous support and for being part of my life.

I would also like to express much love and gratitude to my thesis chair, Jennifer Barker, for your continuous patience, knowledge, understanding, and encouragement. Your overall expertise and guidance has helped me throughout my architectural journey and will continue to affect me throughout my career. Your time will not be taken for granted.

In addition to my chair, I would like to thank my thesis committee, Professor Jenna Thompson and Professor Tim Michael, for their persistence, patience, and expertise: on diagramming, precedents, and attention to holistic design. I would also like to thank Michael Hagge, Sherry Bryan, Jeanne Myers, Pamela Hurley, James Williamson, Michael Chisamore, and Margaret Cook for their added guidance throughout my time at the university.
At a very young age, I began to realize that I wanted to help and influence people’s lives one way or another. I did not know how I was going to achieve this, but I knew it was something that I wanted to pursue throughout my life.

Though I had many interests, I felt as if architecture was the path I was supposed to take. As I grew older and started to pursue a career in architecture, it finally hit me: architecture changes and influences the lives of everyone, whether they realize it or not.

Through architecture I could help, influence, and even change the lives of everyone that encountered the built environment for the better. For the better soon translated into the general wellness of people.

As I progressed in my master’s degree program, I wanted to explore the idea of atmosphere—how people experience the atmosphere of space and what creates a different type of atmosphere—specifically focusing on the general wellness of people.
ABSTRACT

Architecture has lost focus on the user experience and the influence that it creates on the overall health of society. One solution is an architecture of atmospheric experience, a theory based on the relationship between sensorial perception, cognitive perception, and environmental qualities that seeks to encourage a shift in behavior. This thesis explores how designing with atmospheric experience can create a place of well-being for all users. This is executed through the design of a wellness center that is located in Shelby Farms, Memphis, Tennessee.
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MANIFESTO

I believe architecture is not only a building or design; it is how people experience a space that becomes a place, etched upon their memory. It is impactful, powerful, and emotional; it is the way we live. It evokes our emotions, impacts our senses, and it calls out to us. Architecture influences us; it affects us, and more importantly, it changes us.

As designers, we put so much emphasis on the building as if it is a separate entity that is more important than our culture, the surrounding environment, the site, or the context. If we as designers create places that immediately begin to change the behavior and the mood of people as soon as they turn the corner or begin to approach the site, then we can create specific atmospheres that holistically affect humans.

Designers need to take into consideration the initial user experience from the site leading up to the building and carry that user experience throughout the building for an overall experience that emotionally and physically affects the behavior of the user. We must look back at the past and use the building and the site to create an environment that is meaningful, memorable, enjoyable, and healthy.

Architecture needs to be user driven and user responsive, focusing on spaces that create places that begin to change the overall wellness of all who encounter it. Architecture should relieve stress and anxiety, not cause it. Architecture needs to give hope, be uplifting, and breathe life into all that encompasses it. Architecture needs to focus on the wellness of society.
Figure 1: Atmospheric Experience Diagram. This diagram visually explains the connection between the three major elements of atmospheric experience—sensorial perception, environmental qualities, and cognitive perception. An architecture of atmospheric experience is one that engages environmental qualities (material, light, and nature) to affect the well-being of people through the restoration of physical, psychological, and spiritual health.

The best way to experience a space is through experiencing its atmosphere. Atmospheric experience is the relationship between sensorial perception, environmental qualities, and cognitive perception, which “means acknowledging that buildings should not be conceived of as singular entities, but rather as parts of a larger atmospheric whole” (Figure 1). The principles behind this theory are supported in several ways by architects and authors such as Juhanni Palassma, Christian Borch, Peter Zumthor, and Gernot Bohme.

Through the design of a Restoration Center, this thesis seeks to help people struggling with the issues of well-being (like stress and poor eating habits). This wellness center will be located in Shelby Farms, in Memphis, Tennessee, allowing for the connection of the natural and built environments. The goals and objectives for this thesis are:

1. To achieve an experiential journey through nature to the building.
2. To interact with natural elements (water, earth, and air) through movement and views.
3. To create interaction between people to foster building relationships.
4. To create an atmospheric experience of wellness that encourages physical engagement throughout the building.
5. To create a foundation for a healthier lifestyle.

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.; Palassma, “Space, Place, and Atmosphere.”
DESIGN SOLUTION

SITE SELECTION
Shelby Farms was chosen as the site for the Restoration Center for two reasons. The first reason is that it is located between the city of Memphis and its surrounding metropolitan area, making it more accessible. The Greenline trail allows for a direct connection from downtown and midtown for cyclists and pedestrians (Figure 2). The second reason is the tremendous scale of Shelby Farms, which allows for a multitude of activities to take place within a natural landscape.

One of the main objectives of Shelby Farms is to encourage the wellness of people through physical recreation, connection to nature, and community involvement. This objective is vital to connecting the site with the goals for the thesis. The building is more than a singular entity; it is part of a larger connecting whole.

SHELBY FARMS HISTORY
Shelby Farms originally belonged to the humanist reformer, Frances Wright, and his wife in the mid-nineteenth century. Mrs. Wright conducted a commune on the land, a place for the liberal arts education of slaves in preparation for their future freedom. In 1928, Shelby County obtained 1,600 acres of the land from the Wrights to be used as a penal farm. In 1942, the farm expanded over 5,000 acres, and in the late 1960s the county deemed the farm non-viable and shut it down. In October 1975, Garrett Eckbo submitted a proposal for Shelby Farms that would ultimately lead to the park Master Plan in 2006.

DESIGNED SITE LOCATION
The site chosen within Shelby Farms is located to the west of Pine Lake (Figures 3-4). The site provides a connection to water, multiple views to nature, and allows for a strong connection to be made to the surrounding amenities such as the Woodland Discovery Park, the Go Ape Zipline, the tremendous scale of Shelby Farms, which allows for a multitude of activities to take place within a natural landscape. The site provides a connection to the surrounding amenities such as water, multiple views to nature, and allows for a strong connection to be made to the surrounding amenities such as the Woodland Discovery Park, the Go Ape Zipline, the park Master Plan since 2006. The park currently has 4,500 acres of land, allowing it to diversify its use for the surrounding Shelby Farms community. The park offers a wide range of activities, amenities, and opportunities for the public, to include recreational activities, farming, art, music, festivals of all types of cultures and interests, food production, energy production, education, research, and many others that strive to enhance the current Shelby Farms objective by providing discovery and direct access to the outdoors.

WOODLAND DISCOVERY PARK
The playground was designed by the master plan design firm, James Corner Field Operations. The playground works with its surrounding environment to allow kids to discover different types of play areas surrounded by a wandering path (Figure 5). The surrounding natural environment allows children to engage in community while providing multiple options to learn, play, develop, and live a healthier life. The main focus of the playground is to enhance the wellness of children through discovery and the outdoors. The goals of the park align with the goals and objectives of the thesis by focusing on enhancing the wellness of the users while providing discovery and direct access to the outdoors.

SHELBY FARMS TODAY
Shelby Farms has been developing under an ongoing master plan since 2006. The park currently has 4,500 acres of land, allowing it to diversify its use for the surrounding Shelby Farms community. The park offers a wide range of activities, amenities, and opportunities for the public, to include recreational activities, farming, art, music, festivals of all types of cultures and interests, food production, energy production, education, research, and many others that focus on living a healthier holistic lifestyle. This thesis project strives to enhance the current Shelby Farms objective by connecting with the existing amenities and providing an additional component of a holistic state of wellness.
These concept diagrams (figure 11) explain the existing components of the site and their impact on sifting the building. The overall concept is to focus on different views, which include views to Pine Lake, views of the surrounding natural landscape, and views to the existing amenities across the lake. It is important to visually connect the two areas to support the goals of Shelby Farms.

The overall massing of the building is designed for three specific flows that incorporate a different function and focus, and are connected with an experiential ramp. The Salt Cavern level provides a more relaxed and contemplative environment with a focus on restoring psychological and spiritual health. The Learning Kitchen level provides an educational and social environment with a focus on restoring psychological and physiological health. The Roof Deck level provides a reflective and relaxing environment with a focus on restoring psychological and spiritual health. The ramp provides an energized, reflective, and intriguing experience focused on restoring psychological and spiritual health. The Learning Kitchen level provides an educational and social environment with a focus on restoring psychological and physiological health. The Roof Deck level provides a reflective and relaxing environment with a focus on restoring psychological and spiritual health. The ramp provides an energized, reflective, and intriguing experience focused on restoring psychological and spiritual health.

Diagram 1: Sifting in the Clearing
1. Open space surrounded by nature with views to Pine Lake and beyond
2. Existing road
3. Existing road
4. Woodland Discovery Playground
5. Paddle boat rentals and Go Ape Zipline

Diagram 2: Opening the Building
3. Main building in open area, allows for framing of views to the east and west
4. Views across lake begin to establish a stronger connection to the existing Shelby Farms attributes
5. Outdoor deck for connection to lake and multiple views to the natural environment
6. Views of the natural environment, and creating a multi-sensory experience focusing on smell, sight, and often touch
7. Newly planted pine trees reflect the existing pine trees across the lake, giving back to the natural environment, and creating a multi-sensory experience focused on smell, sight, and touch
8. Seating pockets along the path create moments of rest and relaxation further enhancing the restoration process
THE PATH EXPERIENCE

One of the important attributes for selecting the site is its relationship, access, and proximity to nature. This is important because nature has proven to decrease anxiety and stress levels in people that visually and physically engage with it. This starts from the moment people enter the site and are led to the building by a meandering permeable path (figure 14). The permeable path is surrounded by newly planted pine trees and various regional plants. These were chosen because the pine needles from the trees produce a strong scent and fall throughout the year. Together, the sight, smell, and feel of the needles create a multi-sensorial effect. As atmospheric experience is created through a multi-sensorial process, this would initially engage the user as they approach the building. The trees and plants are also used to hide the Restoration Center from direct view. This idea was influenced by the Blur Building (figures 12-13).7 This precedent shows how a designer can create mystery and discovery through a path by hindering the user’s vision in a specific way. The path for the Restoration Center is designed by observing the grade change of the site for accessibility, which provides an opportunity for vegetation pockets. These pockets allow for people to sit and rest in the environment, and to prepare their body, mind, and soul for the continued journey ahead.

THE MAIN ENTRANCE

The entrance into the building is designed to bring the user directly to the entrance ramp landing that is two feet below the Learning Kitchen. The provider the user with two options. The first option is directly to the left side of the ramp leading to the Salt Cavern below. The second option is on the right side of the ramp, leading to the Learning Kitchen and the roof deck. This design choice is to encourage physical activity through the use of the ramp, instead of directly arriving at the desired destination. It is also to create a sense of exploration, discovery, and mystery within the levels of the building. In addition, it creates intersection points between people.

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2. Falstrom, “Space, Place, and Atmosphere.”
3. Falstrom, “Blur Building Project.”
SAFETY CAVEN

The Salt Cavern (figure 15) was inspired by two precedent studies: Peter Zumthor’s Zinc Mine Museum (figures 16–18) and his Therme Vals (figures 19–21).

As the users leave the entrance space going left on the ramp and descending down, they experience moments through the salt wall portal where they can hear and see a waterfall at the base of the wall. The portals also allow for views to nature. This is designed to evoke mystery, invoking users’ cognitive perception. The waterfall is used in multiple ways: first, it is used by sound to guide the user from the entrance of the Salt Cavern to the first destination of the salt pools. Second, the sound of the waterfall creates a serene and tranquil atmosphere. Finally, the waterfall inside the ramp helps with an ion process (detailed in figures 42 and 44).

As the user turns the corner at the bottom of the ramp, they are greeted by another waterfall and a skylight that filters natural light into the space. The skylights are designed to glow as a prominent object within the Salt Cavern and the surrounding landscape. The view and connection to nature helps psychological health, while the sauna and salt pools help with physiological and spiritual health. The sauna is designed with Himalayan Salt blocks at a specific height to block the view of the last lightwell, creating mystery and inspiring discovery of the spaces beyond.

The sauna is designed to give the users time to reflect and unwind from stress, providing a picturesque view to Pine Lake and the surrounding landscape. The view and connection to nature helps psychological health, while the sauna and salt pools help with physiological and spiritual health. The sauna is designed with Himalayan Salt blocks at a specific height to block the view of the last lightwell, creating mystery and inspiring discovery of the spaces beyond.

2. Therme Vals.
5. Salt Therapy.

Figure 15. Salt Cavern Floor Plan
LEARNING KITCHEN

The design for the Learning Kitchen (figure 22) is heavily influenced by the analysis of three local restaurant precedent studies (figures 23 - 25).

As people enter the main entrance they walk up the ramp to the Learning Kitchen level, where they can immediately go to their right to the reception desk for information and to check in for cooking classes. The reception space is designed conveniently to be on the perimeter of the floor. It is not visible from the exterior of the building so that the main focus when walking towards the building is on the extrusion of the Learning Kitchen. The Learning Kitchen extrudes out of the building to further gain the users’ attention as the heart of the building. Its location provides views to nature to the west, along with allowing visibility to the main path, connecting people before they meet, and establishing an indoor-outdoor connection (figure 27).

The entire floor was designed as an open floor plan to allow the aroma of the food to fill the entire space, targeting the users’ sense of smell. The experiential ramp is also designed specifically to be open and not self-contained to allow for the aroma of the food to filter through the space, also reminding people of the importance of their diet. The open floor plan is also the preferable choice based off the local precedent studies.

The Cafe/Dining Space is adjacent to the Learning Kitchen to encourage learning by observation, establishing interaction between people who are in the cooking class and people who are stopping at the cafe/bar. Centrally locating the cafe and dining also allows for the best possible views to the outdoor deck, Pine Lake, and the surrounding natural landscape. The furniture selected in the space, along with that on the exterior deck, is based on the precedent studies, encouraging socialization among people by providing a variety of seating options.

The exterior deck is designed to allow people to better connect to Pine Lake, with views to nature and views across the lake to Go Ape Zipline and the paddle boats. This reinforces the connection between the two sides of the lake and provides an alternative setting for workout classes. The glass facade between the cafe and the exterior deck is operable to allow fresh air to filter into the space, making the space more open and creating an inside-outside connection between people and nature.
1. Parking
- Easy
- Accessible
- Front glass facade allows for an inside-outside connection to the kitchen and bar

2. Entrance
- Open
- Colorful
- Inviting
- Energizing
- Open

3. Seating
- Comfortable
- Variety of options to choose from
- Colorful
- Spacious
- Inviting
- Open

Key Takeaways
- The space was colorful, inviting, and open.
- The noise of the blender was distracting during conversations, but music was refreshing.
- The space was colorful, inviting, and lively.
- The open kitchen allows for smells to roam freely into the dining space affecting the behavior and choices of people in a positive way.
- The space was open with a variety of seating for groups of people.
- The space was colorful, inviting, and open.
- The live plants incorporated throughout the space had a tranquil and calming presence.
- The space was open with direct views to the kitchen and bar.
- The space was colorful, inviting, and open.
- The smoothie and protein shake selection allowed for a healthier alternative to fast food options in the area.
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THE ROOF DECK

The roof deck (Figure 26) is designed to give users an unique experience with elevated outdoor views to the east and west. The pitch of the roof is designed for the best views in Shelby Farms looking to the east, but specifically focusing on the views to the west. People can recline or sit on the slope and watch the sunset, which is framed by the roof that connects the vertical circulation and the experiential ramp.

The burm seating is created based on information from the local precedent studies, in that having a variety of seating is preferred by people over the same seating throughout the space. The burm is also created for lounging and relaxing, taking in the fresh air, and allowing people to continue to foster new relationships. The pinnacle burm seating element is designed to be the dominate seating element at the highest point of the experiential journey. The flooring for the seating element is designed with the same material from the main entry path to the building in order to tap into the cognitive perception of the users, reminding them of where their journey began (Figures 27-28).

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Figure 28: Building Section Looking West
Josh and Sophie Loiter are stressed from the hustle and bustle of their busy lives and cannot seem to figure out a way to live a healthier, less stress-filled life. Between their kids’ extracurricular activities, Josh’s business, and Sophie’s law practice, they constantly find themselves eating out. They do not seem to find time to relax, reflect, and restore what is important to their lives.

As they arrive to Shelby Farms and begin their journey to the Restoration Center, their mood begins to change. They find that being surrounded by nature, noticing other people engaging in various physical activities, and doing life together, lifts their spirits.

They realize they have an abundance of time and they both decide to journey to the Salt Cavern. As they journey down the ramp, they have moments along the descent where they stop to take in the natural settings surrounding them through the glass walls of the ramp (figure 32). The air feels fresh and rejuvenating; their breathing slows and their energy levels begin to increase. They have moments along the ramp where they can see the water through rectilinear portals, prompting feelings of mystery and discovery, allowing for views to nature and engagement with others (see figures 43-44). The mystery and discovery plays into cognitive perception described in the diagram of atmospheric experience (Figure 1). As they walk down the ramp, they hear the sound of running water, which guides them to their destination.

They pause to take in the surrounding area and the community of people throughout the building. They notice the green accessible roof of the Salt Cavern and start to approach it. Sophie, dressed from the work week, experiences anticipation and mystery as she looks down into the cavern through the lightwells. She decides that they need to go to the Salt Cavern first, to contemplate their lives and relax (figure 31).
The sunlight begins to disappear as they go further down the ramp and the connection to the outside world is taken away, creating mystery. They start to see a glimpse of light peaking out from the corner ahead of them. They turn the corner and discover a waterfall with shining light filtering in from skylights above (figure 33). They are taken back to when they were on the roof gazing down inside the cavern; the waterfall beyond reminds them of their experience with water along the ramp.

Turning the next corner, the light from above draws them forward. They are captured by a warm glowing wall centered at the end of the corridor. The warmth of the wall offsets the cold feeling of the concrete around them. Sophie pauses as she waits for Josh to join her. She continues to relax and de-stress as she fixates on the glowing box (figure 34). She notices that her breathing is enhanced, similar to when she was on the ramp. She is intrigued by, and curious about, the axial skylight above. She begins to wonder what is beyond the wall and cannot wait to explore the entire space. Before they go to the sauna, they enter the locker rooms to change.

As they leave the locker rooms they are guided to the sauna by the skylight above; the wooden floor underneath their feet has a warm presence that also offsets the cold concrete walls. They turn the corner of the corridor and notice the community of people in the salt pools and a picturesque view of the lake and surrounding landscape. They enter the sauna and begin to reflect and restore their psychological and spiritual health by gazing out across the lake, to the pine trees beyond (figure 35). They feel the dry heat of the sauna and continue to de-stress.

They leave the sauna and enter the salt pools, healing their physical body while continuing to soothe their minds. The fresh air filtering into the space from underneath the glass of the lap pool, and the views to nature beyond, rejuvenate them. This helps to mend their minds and restore their attitudes.

They finish relaxing, then head to the locker rooms, before returning up the ramp to the Learning Kitchen for their cooking class.
They walk onto the Learning Kitchen floor and stop to take in the views of the open space and the surrounding natural landscape (figure 36). Their senses are taking in the environmental qualities: they notice the vibrant colors of the furniture giving them energy; they smell the delicious food from the previous class as it fills the entire space; they hear the smoothie machine, and the noise of people gathering together. They see, hear, and feel the materials all around them. The exposed structural steel makes them feel secure and adds to the idea that everyone needs support in their life. The soft pine wood floor is warm and welcoming, putting them at ease. The white floor tiles in the kitchen are calming and differentiate between the kitchen and the cafe space. Having restored their minds from their experience in the Salt Cavern, Josh and Sophie are ready to nourish and fuel their body with healthy food and learning.

Working in the kitchen, they begin to learn how important their diet is for their health and how it can relieve the added stress of their lives. They make some new friends and realize that they are there for the same exact reasons. They learn to cook some quick, healthy meals that they can do at home even with their busy schedule (figure 37).

They prepare their food dishes, and walk into the cafe. They pull the tables together to form a community table and indulge in the delicious food, talking about life, and building new relationships (figure 38).
THE EXTERIOR DECK

Sophie and Josh finish eating, grab a delicious smoothie with their new friends, and head out to the deck to take in the views of the surrounding elements (figure 39). As they begin to choose where to sit they notice several different types of seating spaces. Josh and his new friend decide to sit in the shade underneath the overhang of the roof deck, while Sophie and her new friend venture to the edge of the deck to look over the water. They all notice how the seating is easily moveable and the size of the deck encourages people to utilize it for various activities (yoga, body weight exercises, reading, conversing, sight seeing, reflecting, meetings). They look across the lake and see people on the zipline and in paddle boats.

Sophie and Josh continue to converse with their new friends, asking them if they know anything about the glowing wall inside the ramp. Neither of them know what it is about, but acknowledge their mood changed when they engaged with the ramp. They want to figure out what the wall is about so they decide to leave the deck and stop by the reception desk to find out more information. The receptionist tells them that she has the information and details about the wall but encourages all of them to visit the manager on the roof deck for a more personal explanation.

Together with their new friends, Sophie and Josh leave the reception desk and start up the ramp to the roof deck. They once again feel the change in mood: their energy levels increase and the stress and worry begin to dissipate as they walk up the ramp. They stop at the last landing above to take in the view (figure 40).
THE RAMP EXPERIENCE

When Josh and Sophie arrive at the roof deck, they find the manager and ask him about the wall in between the ramp and why, when they engage with the ramp, their mood immediately begins to change (figure 41).

The manager explains that the feeling they experienced is due to the glowing Himalayan Salt block panels; he continues by breaking down the ion-process (figure 42) that occurs with this material, which can be seen throughout the building. He describes the process in a cooking analogy; he states that the first ingredient needed is moisture. The water that they saw and heard at the bottom of the ramp aids in providing additional moisture in the air. The second ingredient is the Himalayan Salt blocks that naturally soak in as much moisture as possible from the air. The third ingredient is heat, which causes the moisture that the salt has been collecting to evaporate. The sun heats the glass box surrounding the ramp; LED lamps in the wall provide the glowing effect to the Salt blocks and provide additional heat. When combined together these three ingredients create positive ions and evaporation, which puts negative ions into the air providing numerous health benefits (figure 44). The same material and effect is also used in the sauna in the Salt Cavern.

PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The ramp experience promotes a healthier alternative to an elevator and engages the user through a unique multi-sensory experience. It encourages interaction between people while providing various views to nature through rectilinear designed portals. The portals vary inside the salt wall, which is located between both sides of the ramp. The glass facade allows natural light to filter into the space through the portals, creating a different experience throughout the seasons (figure 43).
THE RAMP EXPERIENCE PROMOTES A HEALTHIER ALTERNATIVE TO AN ELEVATOR AND ENGAGES THE USER THROUGH A TRULY UNIQUE MULTI-SENSORIAL EXPERIENCE. IT ENCOURAGES INTERACTION BETWEEN PEOPLE WHILE PROVIDING VARIOUS VIEWS TO NATURE THROUGH RECTILINEAR DESIGNED PORTALS. THE PORTALS VARY INSIDE THE SALT WALL, WHICH IS LOCATED BETWEEN BOTH SIDES OF THE RAMP. THE GLASS FACADE ALLOWS NATURAL LIGHT TO FILTER INTO THE SPACE ALONG WITH THE PORTALS CREATING A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE THROUGHOUT THE SEASONS.

Thin Himalayan Salt block panels made into a central wall that has healing benefits when combined with the ion process.

Waterfall with waterbasin that provides moisture into the air for the ion process and creates a serene and tranquil sound when using the ramp.

LED lights that provides ample heat for the ion process to occur, while the light adds a glowing effect to the architectural element.

Air vent in wall for natural ventilation, which allows for the stack effect to work through the operable windows at the top of the space. It also aids in carrying heat and moisture throughout the salt wall.

Light weight fiber glass shading fins. The fins can be easily removed from the building to allow for additional heat as needed and can be easily attached to the mullions on the glass providing shading during the hot summer months.

Figure 43 Section of Ramp Experience

Figure 44 Section Diagram of Salt Wall at Ramp
As they end their conversation, the manager encourages Josh and Sophie to go to the top of the roof deck for the best possible views of Shelby Farms. They agree and walk over to the edge of the sloped roof deck and take in the breathtaking view (Figure 45).

They turn around to watch the sunset and listen to a guitarist. They notice that the platform they are standing on is made of the same material as the path that they started on, triggering the memories of their experiential journey and where they started. They look at each other and realize that at the beginning of the day, back on that path, they were at their lowest point in life; now they have reached the pinnacle of their journey and they are in a much better, less stressful place. They smile at each other and are at peace from the restoration that they so dearly needed (Figure 46).

The day is ending and they return to their vehicle. As they drive away they notice the soft glow of the salt wall and cannot wait to come back for another experience (Figure 47).
CONCLUSION

This thesis research project has allowed me to better understand how atmosphere is created, as well as how well known architects such as Peter Zumthor and Juhani Pallasmaa. This process has given me a greater desire to understand their philosophies, that is, how they see the experience of a space to be predominantly due to atmosphere. This process has allowed me to dive deeper into the connection between the components that make up atmosphere. It allowed me to understand people's perception on space through the process piece and preceded studies. As a designer, I must focus on how people are able to use space and how their interaction between the user and the environment will ultimately affect the well-being of the user. This project gave me a better understanding of how to create an environment that was focused around well-being. It ultimately gave me a deeper appreciation for the well-being of humanity and how as designers it is our responsibility to create places that can help restore our body, soul, and mind.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY


In this informative blog, the author explores how halotherapy (a therapy incorporating Himalayan salt) may benefit those dealing with asthma. This blog references a study review of 151 articles about salt therapy. The researchers found that there was a lack of evidence as to whether or not halotherapy could help patients with asthma. However, research does indicate that halotherapy is effective with users who do not struggle with asthma. Further explanation is provided about the benefits that halotherapy can have on a user engaged with a salt room or cave. Mirroring a salt mine, the rooms or caves have been proven to enhance oxygen intake and respiratory function creating a stronger tolerance for antibiotics. The author cites scientific analysis done by researchers that proves the benefits of halotherapy on users, which provides support to the design approaches that are shown throughout this thesis.

This information is important to the understanding that halotherapy can effectively change mood and restore one’s physical, mental, and emotional health. During the journey of the ramp experience halotherapy is created by the utilization of the ion process. Halotherapy and the ion process are also used in the salt coven through the salt block wall of the sauna and salt pools.


This book provides the initial statement to understanding atmospheric experience. Bahne is a Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Darmstadt Technical University located in Darmstadt, Germany and he is also the director of the Institute for Practical Philosophy. He has written several other books on architecture and atmosphere including Critique of Aesthetic Capitalism and The Aesthetics of Atmospheres.


Bohme explains how he sees atmosphere, what he calls the New Aesthetic, as “the relationship between environmental qualities and human states. This is atmosphere” (15). One of the overarching points he establishes throughout the book is the understanding of the New Aesthetic: the sensorial perception of experience and the characteristics of the environment work together to create cognitive perception. These three things create a feedback loop creating atmospheric experience.

Atmosphere is a vital key in how people experience space and how designers can manipulate this through understanding a feedback loop process. This book allowed me to understand how atmospheric experience is created and how as designers, who understand this feedback loop, can create specific kinds of atmospheres through sensorial perception, environmental qualities, and cognitive perception.


In this article, the author explores how the architecture of today is shaping the health of society and designers are not paying enough attention to the cognitive affects of this issue on people. The article goes into more detail on psychological studies of the effect of the built environment on people and how society prefers specific environments. It also provides research on how views to the natural environment help well-being.

This article provides information that helps with the understanding of cognition and how as designers we can affect the well-being of society through design, understanding how the everyday cognitive process works for the understanding of perception, and infusing the built environment with the natural environment.

This article provides the problem statement and the main issue this thesis is trying to overcome: it provides information on how to solve some of the issues by connecting users to the natural environment. It also provides information on how views to the natural environment help well-being.
The thoughts agreeing with Pallasmaa and furthering his interests is a multi-sensory experience. Gernot Bohme weighs in on the ambience of a space fuses and heightens the sensory experience or experiencing atmosphere. People's first initial encounter with a space before they are understood intellectually “(12)” and the emotional response. “We innately sense buildings, feel their temperature and smells” (7-8). Zumthor also sees the creation of atmospheres as a holistic approach, allowing for the understanding of cognitive perception, which allows for understanding memory, memory, and discovery, and how they can be employed in design to impact users. This is shown in the design solution of this thesis, which aims to design an environment that is focused on wellness. Field Operations, “Shelby Farms Park Master Plan Executive Summary, July 2008, Accessed September 3, 2015. https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tdot/documents/region-4/Field-Operations/ShelbyFarms-Park-Master-Plan.pdf.” This Master Plan document for Shelby Farms provides the history, goals and objectives, and 130,000 residents. Shelby Farms is promoting in forward development. Field Operations provided the research for this informational document and is a well-known and recognized landscape architecture firm and urban design firm. This document provides the overview in depth information on Shelby Farms from the beginning of ownership to its current state. This document provides the information into why I chose Shelby Farms for my site selection thesis, along with the goals, vision, and principles of Shelby Farms primarily the wellness of society from a holistic standpoint. Furuto, Akira, “Think Space: Look What Charles Renfro of GSH-Rto Has to Say on Our Building Project After a Decade or So’s Competition.” June 4, 2012. https://archdaily.com/238448/think-space-look-what-charles-renfro-of-gsh-rto-has-to-say-on-our-building-project-after-a-decade-or-so-competition. This article provides detailed information on the Blur Building, which was a temporary media pavilion in Yvelines-Le Boms, Switzerland for the 2002 Swiss Expo. Its purpose was to provide an introduction to a new form of interaction and communication with the world. Akira Furuto is an author who writes for ArchDaily. ArchDaily (1) is one of the most well-ranked architecture websites in the world, providing information, inspiration, and knowledge on the most widely known architectural projects in the world. The designers were able to create a journey of mystery, illusion, and discovery, by extending the structure out into the water, connecting the structure to the land through a pedestrian bridge, and encouraging the users to explore the mysterious misty cloud at the end of the bridge. The mist or fog was created by tubes that were submerging into the water, which shoot the water into the air creating a mass of mist around the structure and blocking identity to the approaching people. This article explains how the intent of the building was to create a specific kind of atmospheric experience for its users. It provides knowledge on how these experiences for people and how to create an atmospheric experience of interest to people. This was then used in several opportunities throughout the thesis. The first is in the main approach that people experience when they look at buildings. The second is in the desacralization to the Soil Covenant, the third is in portraits that are in the soil wall of the ramp experience that give brief glimpses of what can be seen on the other side. Homes, Damian. “Woodland Discovery Playground at Shelby Farms Park J. James Cane Field Operations.” April 13, 2011. Accessed August 24, 2018. https://worldlandscapearchitect.org/woodland-discovery-playground-shelby-farms-park-james-cane-field-operations/#.XKjwEvlKiUk. In this blog, the author explains how the Woodland Discovery Playground was designed, its goals and objectives, and the purpose of the playground. World Landscape Architecture was founded by Damian Holmes as an educational and research landscape architecture around the globe. Damian Holmes is the Founder and Editor of World Landscape Architecture. Holmes is a Registered Landscape Architect (ALA) who lives in Melbourne, Australia and has over 17 years experience designing and conducting projects in China, South Korea, Canada and Australia. This blog explains how the playground was designed for promoting the well-being of children in the Shelby County metropolitan area. In the playground, kids learn to explore and discover their surroundings, which helps them to connect with nature, and cultivate new healthy habits. The playground was designed by creating multiple play sections for the kids to engage in, which together to create a journey of mystery and discovery for kids. This source provides reasoning for why the chosen site selection is for the Shelby Farms Woodland Discovery Park. One reason is that the designer focused on understanding users before the design process began. Three reasons are the goals and objectives of the Woodland Discovery Park.
Park sign with this thesis by looking at creating discovery, building new relationships, connecting people to nature, and focusing on the well-being of the users by cultivating new habits. A third reason this information is helpful is that it allows users to feel calm or at peace. Studies also showed that time spent in nature allowed users to mentally rest on their next task. Additional research referenced in the article indicates that nature efficiently connects people. In a study done at the University of Illinois, residents in public housing that were surrounded or in contact with nature had a better connection with their neighbors, lower crime rates, less aggression throughout the day or toward other people, and could handle stressful situations more efficiently than people who did not.

The research above is utilized in the selection of the site, the siting of the building, and in the journey of the user from the parking to and through the building. Users will be engaged with nature throughout this thesis project because it is a leading factor in reducing stress levels and warming the human body, mind, and soul. This also shows why the site was chosen given its context; it is within a large park, near an existing lake, and surrounded by trees. Mark, Jessica. “Peter Zumthor’s shifted Zinc Mine.” Dezeen, June 2, 2017. Accessed November 13, 2018. https://www.dezeen.com/2017/06/02/peter-zumthor-shifted-zinc-mine-museum-bludenz-zinc-mining-architectural-design-architecture/..

In this informative article, the author explains how Zumthor took the site of an abandoned zinc mine and designed a museum that provided the users with a unique atmosphere that reflected the hard lives of the miners that worked there. This article explains how Zumthor creates atmosphere and the site to work together as a whole. Jessica is a freelance architecture journalist. She was Dezeen’s architecture editor from 2012 to 2016. Further explanation is provided in this article through the photographs from the perspective of the photographer. He captures the intricate detail of the three buildings that are separated on the site. He also captures how the Zumthor’s concept and design become reality for him and other users. This article allowed me to understand how Zumthor was trying to create an atmosphere of the everyday drudgery the zinc miners experienced. It showed me how he used materiality, water, light, and views to create an atmosphere of tranquility, mystery, and discovery.

This article gave insight into the process and mindset that Zumthor had at the beginning of the project and how his goals was to establish the connection with site and context and site, and the new building as a whole entity. It provides direct quotes from Zumthor on his inspiration and the goals that he was trying to convey and capture, the strong sense of materiality creating a feeling of existence. “There is a certain aura, a perception that is more important for the users perceivable and mental system from focused perception” (38). Zumthor and Pallasmaa have both discussed the importance of architecture from a neurological standpoint. Zumthor thought of the natural landscape of the site and how he used local materiality, water, light, and views to create an atmosphere of tranquility, mystery, and discovery. Pallasmaa states that “Space, Place, and Atmosphere: The Philosophy of Architecture, edited by Christian Borch, 18-41. Germany: Birkhauser, 2009. Accessed November 13, 2018. https://www.archdaily.com/13358/the-therme-vals.

In this informative article, the author explains how Peter Zumthor designed a unique project and experience for users in Gruyére, Switzerland. This article explains how Zumthor thought of the project and how he used local materiality, water, light, and views to create an atmosphere of tranquility, mystery, and discovery.
that guide the user to the desired destination and remind further explored in the Salt Cavern by using three lightwells on the natural material. This was taken into account and also created slits of light that filtered into the space, casting the feeling of descending into the cold dark earth. Zumthor also showed me how Zumthor used locally quarried valser in an atmosphere of tranquility and serenity. This article also evidences, through quotes and photography, to the design of the Salt Cavern by focusing on mystery portions of the building that led to discovery. This led me to give moments of mystery through the meandering serenity, and how he focused on certain areas of the building to capture. This idea was explored and then slightly altered with the Salt context and to give the feeling of descending into the earth. This article allowed me to understand how Zumthor created the atmospheric experience that Zumthor was trying to capture.

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**Figure 3** Location of Chosen Site in Shelby Farms. Image by Field Operations. Retrieved from: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tdot/documents/region-4-documents/ proposed-kirby-parkway/Shelby-Farms- Master-Plan.pdf.

**Figure 4** Site Location Adjacent to Pine Lake. Image by Field Operations. Retrieved from: https://www.google.com/maps/place/Shelby+Farms+Park/@35.1455094,-89.833837.3m4!1s0x887f9c987f988c630xca99d6d67a489.8310983,671mdata=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x887f9c987f988c630xca99d6d67a489.8310983,671mdata=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x887f9c987f988c630xca99d6d67a489.8310983,671mdata=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x887f9c987f988c630xca99d6d67a489.8310983,671mdata=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x887f9c987f988c630xca99d6d67a489.8310983,671mdata=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x887f9c987f988c630xca99d6d67a489.8310983,671mdata=!3m1!1e3!4m5!


**Figure 6** Path to the Blur Building. Image by Field Operations. Retrieved from: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tdot/documents/region-4-documents/ proposed-kirby-parkway/Shelby-Farms- Master-Plan.pdf.

**Figure 7** Building Section Looking West. Image by Field Operations. Retrieved from: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tdot/documents/region-4-documents/ proposed-kirby-parkway/Shelby-Farms- Master-Plan.pdf.

**Figure 8** Site Plan.

**Figure 9** Existing Site with View Key. Image by Google maps. Adapted by author. Retrieved from: https://www.google.com/maps/place/Shelby+Farms+Park/@35.145094,-89.8310983,671mdata=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x887f9c987f988c630xca99d6d67a489.8310983,671mdata=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x887f9c987f988c630xca99d6d67a489.8310983,671mdata=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x887f9c987f988c630xca99d6d67a489.8310983,671mdata=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x887f9c987f988c630xca99d6d67a489.8310983,671mdata=!3m1!1e3!4m5!

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**Figure 14** Site Plan.

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Presentation Board—Section and Diagrams

Presentation Board—Ramp Sections with Photos

Presentation Board—Site Plan with Site Analysis

Presentation Board—Existing Site Context—Analysis

Presentation Board—Concept with Site Analysis

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Presentation Board—Highest Point for Views

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Presentation Board—Physical Model 1

Presentation Board—Physical Model 2

Figure 80—Final Defense Photograph 1

Figure 81—Final Defense Photograph 2

Figure 82—Final Defense Photograph 3

Figure 83—Final Defense Photograph 4

Research Summary Board

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: PRESENTATION BOARDS

Figures 48-84 are the final presentation materials used at the time of the thesis defense.

Problem Statement

Designers are creating places that are not user driven or responsive, lacking both physical and psychological effects that begin to change the overall wellness of all who encounter it. Architecture should relieve stress and anxiety, not cause it.

Thesis Statement

An atmosphere of atmospheric experience creates a distinct energetic or emotional charge that elicits different psychological and physiological responses, altering the human consciousness.

I believe architecture is not only a building or design; it is how people experience a space. Architecture is more than just a building, it is an experience. Impacts people physically and emotionally. It is the way we come to terms with emotions, hopes, fears, wants, and our innate human desire to achieve things we are not yet capable of achieving as a society or as individuals.

As designers we put so much emphasis on the building itself. It is separate from the actual experience. A context has been created for a notion, but the notion is not placed in the context. This is a recipe for failure. The notion fails to engage the user to create a memorable, emotionally charged, and healthy environment.

Designers need to make the notion an integral component of the actual experience but not the building itself. This is how contexts are made, not the buildings. By making the buildings in tandem with experiences that only exist after the notion is created, the notion begins to change the overall wellness of all who encounter it. Architecture should relieve stress and anxiety, not cause it.

Designers are creating places that are not user driven or responsive, lacking both physical and psychological effects that begin to change the overall wellness of all who encounter it. Architecture should relieve stress and anxiety, not cause it.

Appendix 1: Presentation Boards

Figures 48-84 are the final presentation materials used at the time of the thesis defense.
The Thermal Vals were analyzed as a precedent for this thesis. Architect: Peter Zumthor. Precedent Board—Zinc Mine Museum. It provided the exploration of designing with a type of atmospheric experience to see if it could be engaged. The relationship between sensorial perception, cognitive perception, and environmental qualities; “which are engaged are listed underneath each. While the environmental qualities, in order to trigger cognitive major elements of atmosphere experience. The connection to the existing Shelby Farms attributes spiritual experience. Moments of rest and relaxation further enhancing the restoration process. Happy healthier people, giving back to the trees across the lake, giving back to the love of the place for the process. Himalayan salt in any form (Positive ions) allows natural light to filter into the space along with the portals creating a wall, which is located between both sides of the ramp. The glass facade, which is located between both sides of the ramp. The glass facade allows natural light to filter into the space along with the portals creating a rhythm to the exisitng Shelby Farms attributes. The Salt Cavern is embedded into the earth and extruding out from the rest of the building. The Salt Cavern is embedded in the extruding out from the rest of the building, reaches out grasping attention by the path of the Discovery Playground and the surrounding trees, giving back to the love of the place for the process. Newly planted pine trees reflect the existing pine trees across the lake, giving back to the love of the place for the process.
Figure 61: Presentation Board—A Memorable Night
Figure 62: Presentation Board—First Look at Building
Figure 63: Presentation Board—Sauna View Beyond the Glass
Figure 64: Presentation Board—First View of Learning Kitchen
Figure 65: Presentation Board—Salt Cavern Experiences
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Figure 67: Presentation Board—Learning Kitchen during a Class
Figure 68: Presentation Board—Cafe with View to Kitchen
Figure 69: Presentation Board—Main Path Entrance
Figure 70: Presentation Board—Pinnacle Point of the Journey
Figure 71: Presentation Board—Highest Point for Views
Figure 72: Presentation Board—Northeast Ramp Landing View
Moisture (Negative ions)
• Himalayan salt in any form (Positive ions)
Boosts serotonin levels

The Ramp Experience

RECIPE FOR THE ION PROCESS

Evaporation
To filter into the space along with the portals to nature. The portals vary inside the salt wall, experience. It encourages interaction with natural elements (water, earth, and air) through movement and views.

Atmospheric Experience
An architecture of atmospheric experience is one that engages environmental qualities and when this environment produces well being. "Architecture is a art when one consciously or unconsciously feels that the art and the person to place. It also serves to build an understanding of local precedent. This allows for the design decisions within the kitchen and cafe space to respond directly to the experiences of atmosphere. It also provided a better understanding of space and furniture usage for people. The senses that were observed and incorporated primarily into the design were:
• Visually through views, materiality, color, and space
• Tactility through materiality and nature
• Olfactory through food
• Auditory through water feature and acoustics in space

APPENDIX 2: PROCESS PIECE

OVERVIEW
This process piece (figures 23-25) seek to understand how atmosphere is created and experienced by interviewing three participants at three local restaurants. The restaurants were selected based on their healthier food selection and their design (an open kitchen/interactive dining space). The process involved each participant discussing their thoughts on three specific locations for each restaurant. The first location for discussion was upon approach to the restaurant, because the total experience of the journey is from the moment the participant leaves the vehicle. The second location was at the point of entry into each restaurant, because it is the immediate first impression of how the participant is experiencing the space and its atmosphere. The third location was interior to the restaurant, at a dining table, because this is where the participant will spend most of his or her time by eating, convering, and processing the space.

CONNECTION TO THESIS
This exercise allowed me to gain an additional, more concrete understanding of atmosphere as it pertains to the sensory experience of food/kitchen/dining. This includes what senses are observed to be more dominate and how the senses create experiences and memories that tie the person to place. It also serves to build an understanding of local precedent. This allows for the design decisions within the kitchen and cafe space to respond directly to the experiences of atmosphere. It also provided a better understanding of space and furniture usage for people. The senses that were observed and incorporated primarily into the design were:
• Visually through views, materiality, color, and space
• Tactility through materiality and nature
• Olfactory through food
• Auditory through water feature and acoustics in space