TELEGRAPHING CONTEXTUAL CHARACTER:

AN INTERIOR DESIGN APPLICATION

By

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Abstract

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Accepting premises set forth by Katherine Benzel, this thesis investigation proposes a design approach that allows a room and its constituent parts to communicate contextual character, effectively creating a portal to the host locale. The writer proposes a coupling of Edward T. White's research strategy for defining community character, with Benzel's arguments concerning Integrated Design: this research framework culminates in the Interpretive Matrix, which is used to identify indicators of contextual character per locale, called Influencing Factors. The Influencing Factors are then transcribed into an Interior Design application, using a theoretical framework: the Telegraph Model. Relationships that define each indicator within the urban context are identified and preserved within the Telegraph Model. The goal of this model is to create scale linking between a community and an interior application by transcribing the distinguishing social, aesthetic, and functional components of a community through an interior design application.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents who have always

believed in me and to Brian for his unyielding support.

Introduction

Accepting premises set forth by Katherine Benzel, this thesis investigation proposes a design process that allows a room and its constituent parts to communicate contextual character, effectively creating a portal to the host locale. This is accomplished by pairing Benzel's assertions with research strategies proposed by Edward T. White, to develop a theoretical framework titled the Telegraph Model.

Benzel believes "knowledge and use of common ground, scale linking, connections, and relationships are pivotal to well-designed responsive human environments" (Benzel, 1998, p. 21). Her arguments respond to the Post-Modernist movement *Contextualism*, which seeks a response to or mediation of the surrounding environment (Jencks, 1991, p. 92). Benzel's perspectives concerning spatial design are founded in a philosophy of integrated design.

> Integrated Design is fundamentally a philosophy that reexamines common ground and boundaries and brings together diverse scales and disciplines into a single organizing network. Spatial designers must be guided by a holistic philosophy that ties the environment together by connecting each element to the next – the room to the world beyond it (Benzel, 1998, pp. 18-19).

More precisely Benzel believes that as interwoven living networks, spatial environments are innately connected; all interactions between people and their

environment consequently affect the related environments. She asserts 'scale linking' – as both a system and a philosophy that engages relationships between spatial environments of various scales – is fundamental to all spatial design. Additionally, Benzel believes that an interior environment communicates on social, functional, and aesthetic terms. Thus it follows that scale linking between interior and urban environments is reliant upon an understanding of the social, aesthetic, and functional components of each; those are the common properties that may be used for communication between the two scales.

White's work includes the examination and definition of community character. While he acknowledges scale-linking in the urban context, he also demonstrates a way to identify community character. Understanding the character is essential; only then can the character be transcribed through interior design. The author uses both Benzel's premises and White's strategies to create a theoretical framework, engaging interiors with the contextual site. Thus the goal of this thesis is to create scale linking as both a framework and a method between a community and an interior application, by transcribing the distinguishing social, aesthetic, and functional properties of a community through an interior design application.

Literature Review

This thesis investigation stems from a perceived gap in literature, between an influential design approach and its application within one of the fasted growing design disciplines today. Specifically, the application of Contextualism within the Interior Design discipline deserves greater consideration. According to the literature review contextually based interior design is responsive to the building within which it exists,

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whereas contextually based architecture relates to the urban context (Kilmer & Kilmer, 1992; Malnar & Vodvarka, 1992; Pile, 1995). There is extensive literature dedicated to Contextualism as a theory, and specifically its application in architecture. Literature from authors Botond Bognar (Bognar, 1989), David Ley (Ley, 2003), and Bill Risebero (Risebero, 1983), contributed to the overall understanding of Contextualism, for the purposes of this investigation, in addition to those authors cited.

Benzel begins the discussion regarding the potential that an interior environment has to communicate with the urban context, itself. The author explores the potential of this relationship; the interior design process is assumed to begin at the inception of the design, rather than as a response to the architecture of the building.

Contextualism, a theory emerging from the Adhoc Urbanist movement of the Post-Modern tradition, is a movement concerned with honoring and exposing the authentic character of a locale. The theory is based on a celebration of the dualities found within an urban context and the tissue between those dualities that ultimately reveals the natural character of a place (Jencks, 2002, p. 78). Rather than focusing on any controlling element, the aggregate becomes paramount; a bricolage of the pieces and elements that merge to collectively define a locale. Contextualist theory embraces the Post-Modern tenant that there should be "an equal emphasis on past, present, future as if all these times were valid" (Jencks, 2002, p. 3). Contextualism as a design application may be used to engage a spatial design (architecture, interior design, landscape architecture) with its *host locale*: the community, neighborhood, or city within which it exists.

A connection is made, then, between built form and exposure to an environment. The spatial relationships call attention to, and begin to evidence, the meaning and culture of

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the site: the contextual character. Elucidating the 'environmental character' within the built environment encourages connections between the locale and the user of the space. Infused with the characteristic, total phenomenon of a given locale, the built environment will inevitably take on unique design characteristics and create an opportunity for Place development.

According to Martin Heidegger, built works such as buildings and art bring the world around them into presence. Their role within the context of the site is to "open up a world and at the same time set [sic] this world back again on earth" (Norberg-Schulz, 1983). Heidegger is suggesting that placement of built and natural elements upon a site, their spatial relationships interpreted through a cultural context, begins to distinguish meaning and thus, ultimately, Place.

Cues for the suggested application of contextual design to the interior environment may be taken from Katherine Benzel, author of The Room In Context. Her work concerning contextual design, as it applies both to public and private spaces, discusses social implications of design and the need for awareness of meaningful relationships that may be constituted through design. Benzel suggests *how* the building presents itself to the public reveals something within the context of the community: "projection of meaning is inherent both in the creation of built form and the act of observing it" (Benzel, 1998, p. 184). Her assertions that the room is a part of a larger whole recalls her assertions that meaningful relationships may be constituted through design, recognizing an interior design application as representative of the social context it exists within . A place as intimate as an interior room may provide not only security, but also exposure to the greater social context it represents.

Both Benzel and Charles Jencks discuss the importance of "the tissue between objects in the urban context" (Jencks, 1991). Jencks emphasizes that Contextualism encourages architecture as essentially a social craft responding to its surroundings, whereby implicit relationships *between* elements matter rather than the inherent meanings of each element. These relationships are how community is created. Citing Colin Rowe, Jencks states that Contextualism is, by definition, an attempt to honor that tissue: "The design must fit with, respond to, mediate its surroundings, perhaps completing a pattern implicit in the street layout or introducing a new one" (Jencks, 2002, p. 78). In doing this, Benzel and Jencks agree that one must understand meaning through various dialectics between the public and private realm, present and past, and the morphology of solid and void. Benzel addresses this concern by recognizing the *relationships* that each indicator has within the context – the relationships are the tissue, they are what define the indicator. Spatial designs must honor the indicators of contextual character, and also the relationships those indicators are defined by.

In this sense the built environment not only must honor the character of the locale it exists within, it may act as a canvas for exposing the implicit elements of that character. Magali Sarfatti Larson explains this concept most eloquently:

> As physical artifacts, buildings do more than articulate spaces within their
> shells: they also make the space around and between them perceptible and
> organized. As significant artifacts, buildings give spatial expression to the
> social relations and basic social hierarchies that inform a culture,
> nourishing its language and cosmology with spatial metaphors (Larson,
> 1995, p. 144).

This is precisely the suggested role of an interior design application, within this thesis investigation. The design ought to introduce the host locale, making the contextual character perceptible. Designers may easily construct a design that capitalizes upon selected aspects of a given locale, but to accurately acknowledge and display contextual character in a holistic sense is paramount to this investigation. According to the writer, the elements of the contextual character shall be demonstrated within the interior design in a manner that is proportionate to their demonstration within the community.

One of the key relationships that must be understood is the temporal layering of each Influencing Factor in order to see how each component contributes to the materialization of contextual character. Edward T. White speaks to this concern, discussing the developmental process of community character. White contends that many influencing factors contribute to a community's unique character, drawn from both natural and cultural processes. His research strategy for identifying these components employs both rational and poetic responses to understanding an urban space (White, 1999). Furthermore, White identifies that the urban environment is composed of elements of various scales and purposes, each introducing and relating to the next. This idea of sequential experiences recalls Benzel, whereby all scales of the built environment are related and connected to one another.

> Because of the interdependent nature of spatial design, what is needed to
> achieve harmonious flow of spaces is knowledge and understanding of the
> entire network in which the space exists. This implies on a small scale
> that when a room is planned, all the relational connections inside and
> outside that room must be considered so that the functional and perceptual

aspects of the room will reinforce or merge into the whole sequential flow

of spaces and events (Benzel, 1998, p. 6).

Premises

Two of Benzel's assertions are accepted by the author as the premises for this thesis

investigation. The first articulates the need for an interior environment to relate to its

context, and the second introduces the properties by which an interior design application

may do so. The theoretical framework developed within this thesis investigation is a

response to these premises.

Premise I: Scale Linking

Benzel's theory on scale linking - creating connections between environments of

various scales – is the first premise of this thesis investigation. Benzel asserts interior

designers must design a room "in relation to the *building*, its cohesive integrity; the

landscape, its sustenance and renewal; and the *city*, its collective symbols, patterns, ideals

and ideas of social living" (Benzel, 1998, p. 5). In doing so the interior is not only

absorbed into the contextual fabric; the author interprets that the interior may also

effectively introduce that which exists beyond its boundaries, serving as a portal to the

host locale. Just as a portal will introduce and frame the place beyond, so too can a room

or building introduce and frame the community. Consider a hotel establishment as a

portal to a community, a point of reference for visitors unfamiliar with an area. Upon

arrival and throughout their stay the hotel's design may translate the contextual character

for the visitor, as they move between the larger scale community and the smaller scale room.

Benzel's perspectives support this contention. Not only is the room derived from its context, it also changes to reflect contemporary realities:

> The room is … where life is lived inseparably from its context; it is daily
> life's link to the world. Marked by changes in attitude towards personal
> conduct, society, and the world, the room is also an image of the
> contemporary world (Benzel, 1998, p. 4)

Contextual character is resultant – in part - of changes invoked from within or upon the locale. There exists certain ebb and flow between social beliefs and behaviors, and the physical expressions of a site. Correspondingly, impressions made upon the community will inevitably institute changes within and upon the room. Thus, the room is not static. In this way, scale-linking requires that relative relationships are maintained between components of the community and their corresponding components within an interior design application, so that changes invoked within the community may be expressed within the interior.

Premise II: Social, Aesthetic, Functional

According to Benzel:

> As places imbued with context (a particular place), social use (family life,
> friendship, wealth, power, reputation, and influence), and mood
> (prevailing emotional tone), rooms express our social fabric and needs.

Thus, the concept of the room is characteristically social, aesthetic, and

functional. (Benzel, 1998, p. 23)

If the room has the potential to communicate in terms of social, aesthetic, and functional

properties then the designer needs to understand social, aesthetic, and functional

properties that are manifested in the community. Then, corresponding properties of the

interior design application may be utilized to evoke those urban properties and their

associative relationships. Understanding the context of the community becomes half the

challenge. Benzel indicates *experiencing* a space is integral to understanding it. She

calls for *critical assessment* of the perceived and witnessed evidence, as well:

Movement within and through spaces … allows for the critical assessment

of the varied ways in which the spectacle of social order constantly

renewing and asserting itself shapes an entire environment, connecting

cultural use to spatial form, inside to outside, decoration to space making,

and smallest part to largest whole (Benzel, 1998, p. 9).

Benzel does not, however, offer a framework for understanding the community character.

Proposed Research Strategy and Theoretical Framework

Research Strategy: Interpretive Matrix

The Interpretive Matrix is the coupling of White's research strategy and Benzel's

premise concerning the expression of Social, Functional, and Aesthetic properties as a

basis for communication within an interior environment. This component of Benzel's

argument lies within her philosophy and method of Integrated Design. White's

philosophy can be merged into a method. Thus, the power of this investigation is the

coupling of Benzel and White, merging their philosophies and methods to create the Interpretive Matrix. The result of the matrix is an understanding of how to define the contextual character of any given site, for the purposes of translation into an interior design application.

This thesis looks to White to offer a framework for the research strategy. White states "understanding precedes implementation" (White, 1999, p. 4) and thus outlines a framework for understanding the character of a community, as a prerequisite to design implementation. Similar to Benzel, White believes a designer must "sense more, experience more, to hold (a community) in higher regard" prior to design intervention (White, 1999, p. 4). White outlines a framework of investigation that allows the researcher to understand the complex nature of character, specific to the locale. Generally speaking, his assertion is that each community maintains a unique identity that can be simply understood through broad generalizations ("a New England fishing village") and then further appreciated as a result of in-depth investigation (White, 1999, p. 8). According to White, community character is defined by many influencing factors:

> In the same way that tides and currents shape shorelines and wind and rain
> shape cliff configurations, human values, institutions, policies, and
> decisions shape cities together with climate and geography. The original
> siting and settlement of communities is often influenced by waterways,
> topography, and vegetation. (White, 1999, p. 10)

As White contends, the evolution of a community may be shaped by gravitation to amenities such as waterways and mature landscape; the geographical amenities will influence the form of the community in terms of space utilization (sprawl in open, flat

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land) and material (natural resources are often evidenced in built form) as well as

industry and thus program (logging town, fishing village, agriculture) (White, 1999, p.

10). Each of these factors

influences subsequent

development within the

community, and even
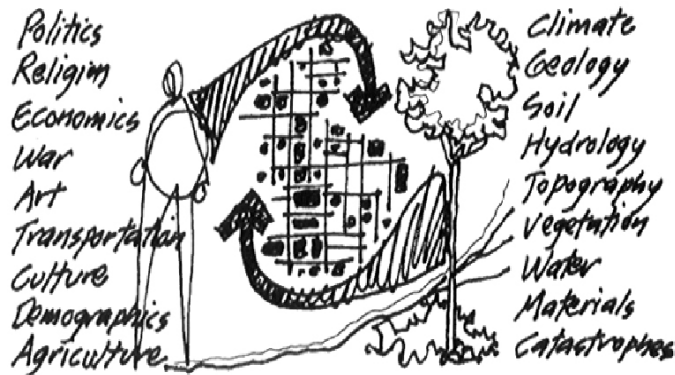
community character. The

contemporary urban fabric,

Figure 1: White: Urban Form as Printout of Natural and Cultural Processes

however, may not resemble the

history distinctly; with technological advances virtually any material imagined could be

used in the built forms, and business and commerce do not necessarily rely upon

geographical allowances (a business district may be equally productive in various

geographical locations – Seattle, Chicago, and Atlanta have all developed as dense urban

communities despite widely different geographical make-up and history). Therefore, the

history of the community's inception (foundation layer) may no longer be directly

evident, yet its influence is manifest in subsequent development and through various

other informational venues. Clearly then, some evidence of Influencing Factors are

evidenced on site and recognizable through observation; other evidence must be learned

or perceived by other strategies.

Further, even after a community of people is established and their policies,

economics, warfare, and various social dynamics shape the community, each change

among them continues to influence subsequent development patterns. For example, a

large-scale highway project may divide a community and initiate dramatic growth pattern

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changes (White, 1999, p. 11). The division may instigate *programmatic* changes in the

community, thus *behavior* of citizens, thus *material culture*. In this way, community form

and character are never static. Many communities do not change as rapidly as this

example would imply, however; small scale, incremental changes allow a strong

community identity to remain despite inevitable change.

Regardless, the physical form of a community enables human transactions, which in

turn influence the character of the community. Broad sidewalks and appropriate shading

will invite community members to walk through town and engage with the street. The

resulting presence of people likely fosters an interactive, seemingly safe environment.

The reputation as a safe community may attract a certain population, commercial and/or

residential development, and social expectations. Through this very simplified example,

it becomes clear that many factors work together to create the character of a community.

Correspondingly, White's theory is based upon a framework that addresses four *Ways*

of Knowing: Experiential, Historical-Factual, Analytical, and Poetic. Since he believes a

broad variety of influential information comprises the contextual character of a place, his

framework is equally broad and consequently applicable to very different types of

communities. The <u>Experiential</u> process gathers the cumulative *impressions* of a place.

The impressions are immediate, intuitive, and visceral understandings that are bounded

by our personal pre-occupying conditions, and yet keenly attuned to the ambience of the

space. This process moves us to pursue other modes of knowing (White, 1999, p. 102).

The <u>Historical-Factual</u> process gathers aspects of information within economics, politics,

religion, commerce, art, meaning, and culture. This process concentrates on the origin of

the community, its evolution, chronology, genealogy, key events, dates, people, statistics,

patterns, and narratives. Essentially the traces, trails, and records, or the wake the space has created by its movement through time, is collected through this process. Approaches for gathering such information may be through archival documents, published texts, and interviews (White, 1999, p. 105). The Analytical mode considers reasons for and causes of relationships between factors identified through the other processes. "This is an intentional investigation to learn about place aspects not apprehendable from surface appearance" (White, 1999, p. 106). This process may include measurements (façade geometries, sound decibels, satisfaction levels of people using a space). It is a method of decomposition, and search for causes or congruencies (White, 1999). Poetic is the most elusive process of *Knowing* as it is concerned with the transcendental nature of understanding. "Site is understood poetically when myth, poem, fiction, and metaphor are employed as bases for arriving at realizations, revelations, appreciations that can't be reached in conventional ways" (White, 1999, p. 108).

By applying White's framework each of Benzel's three categories of information (Functional, Social, Aesthetic) may be revealed through multiple strategies. Such an overlap is appropriate, as various *types* of aesthetic evidence, for example, will be understood by experience and observation whereas others will require historical documentation to determine the symbolic meanings. Therefore this type of reiteration ensures a rich understanding of the contextual character, and is a systematic interpretation that offers reliability to the designer's definition for the contextual character. Although each designer may address slightly different elements within each category, this matrix demonstrates how to establish an understanding of the contextual character belonging to the particular locale.

The interpretive matrix is proposed as a way of knowing more than a superficial understanding of a community. Through this research method a designer can begin to understand how the influencing factors within the community contribute to the contextual character,

	Benzel's Integrated Design Categories		
White's Ways of Knowing	Functional	Social	Aesthetic
Experiential	X	X	X
Historical-Factual	X	X	X
Analytical	X	X	X
Poetic	X	X	X

Figure 2: Interpretive Matrix. This matrix pairs White and Benzel to create a research strategy

and relate to one another. The most defining influencing factors will be revealed through multiple ways of knowing, and will affect properties within multiple Benzel categories. For example, using this matrix in the case study community of Ballard the researcher will begin to understand that the community has been defined in part by industrial markets. Using the Experiential strategy the researcher will identify that the community exhibits evidence of mechanical and industrial markets as seen in the general aesthetic, as well as services offered within the community. Upon engaging with the Historical-Factual strategy the researcher will uncover information that explains the lumber mills and shingle factories as the driving force behind the inception of Ballard as an established community. Documents timeline the development of Ballard as an industrial community, identifying the lumber mill and shingle factories that have since closed as well as machine and service shops that remain today – lasting evidence of the trade that Ballard was borne of. Upon reflection and analysis the researcher will identify and understand more clearly the lasting impression of the industrial history within the community. Each of White's four

strategies contributes to the researcher's understanding of industry as an influencing factor upon the contextual character of Ballard. The fact that multiple *Ways of Knowing* underscore this assessment, and that the influencing factor impacts several of Benzel's categories (in this particular case Industry impacts all three), means that the Influencing Factor is not only a contributor to the character, it is a *defining* contributor. The research will reveal many layers of contributing factors of contextual character; the idea is to begin to recognize the most defining, the most influential of those factors.

Once understood, the contextual character of the community may be transcribed through interior design, to create a portal. As a portal the design will reinforce the *defining* aspects of the community; experiencing the community itself will reveal the details and nuances of the community character and the interior itself will develop characteristic nuances as well. Each scale of environment will maintain differences. The goal of this investigation is not to condense the entire community into one interior application, but rather to establish a relationship between the two scales, using common properties.

The Interpretive Matrix demonstrates a strong relationship between Benzel and White, but it does not facilitate a full transcription of that information into an interior design application. The matrix illustrates a need for movement from the community level of data collection to translation into interior design strategies

Theoretical Framework: Telegraph Model

In order to use the information garnered via the Interpretive Matrix, the writer posits a method to facilitate the transcription of the found contextual character into an interior

design application. The Interpretive Matrix as a collection of influencing factors is filtered through the Telegraph Model to ellicit an understanding of how those factors engage with the community is discovered. Said another way, the Telegraph Model outlines the relationships that define the influencing factors. Figure 3 shows an example of *types* of influencing factors garnered from the Interpretive Matrix, and is the first component of the Telegraph Model; information shown is drawn directly from the results of the Interpretive Matrix.

	BENZEL CATEGORY		
	F	S	A
Pop culture	X	X	X
Material Culture		X	X
Government	X	X	X
Geography	X	X	X
History	X	X	X

(Left axis label: INFLUENCING FACTORS OF CONTEXTUAL CHARACTER)

Figure 3: The first component of the Telegraph Model. The information demonstrated above are categories of Influencing Factors, identified by the Interpretive Matrix

Each site is different. Some communities may be defined by their geography, or only one aspect of their geography, while others are not defined by the geography at all. Likewise, the assessment of a community may list a component of some of these categories, rather than the category itself; for example, the Ballard case study would consider Industry and Nordic Heritage as Influencing Factors that are components of its history, but not list 'History' as a general category. Each influencing factor shall be identified for its contribution to the Benzel framework as well; the researcher must list which of the three categories the Factors affect within the community.

The Interpretive Matrix also elicits other information that will comprise the Telegraph Model. Namely, the *temporal relativity* and *interpretation* of each influencing factor. *Temporal relativity* refers to the permanency of the Factor. This means influencing factors of the contextual character that are established – rooted in history or unchanging

geography - are stable and enduring. These factors are unyielding; the meanings will not change. Conversely, evidence emblematic of contemporary popular culture is seemingly more fleeting than static. The contemporary popular culture will eventually find its way either into history or disappear entirely, but to do so it will necessarily move from the status it holds in contemporary standards. That is to say, it will change rapidly since it sits upon the surface of the system of contextual character. The designer must recognize where on that continuum each piece of evidence falls – from static or established, to fleeting and developmental.

The other type of necessary information is the *interpretive meaning* of the influencing factor, as it relates to the context. Influencing Factors carry meaning as independent entities, and they also gain meaning from the relationships they have with various other elements in the community. Just as a word may be

| | BENZEL CATEGORY | | | TEMPORAL RELEVANCE | INTERPRETATION |
	F	S	A		
Pop culture	X	X	X	constant or frequent change	
Material Culture		X	X	semi-permanent interact with	
Government	X	X	X	semi permanent	
Geography	X	X	X	foundational, relatively static	
History	X	X	X	static, structure, foundational	

(INFLUENCING FACTORS OF CONTEXTUAL CHARACTER)

Figure 4: This section of the Telegraph Model demonstrates the defining relationships of Influencing Factors. Categories of Factors are listed here in order of increasing temporal relativity.

understood independently, how it is used in a sentence is more important within the context of a statement. The same rule applies to symbols within a community. This step looks for the interpretation of what each Influencing Factor 'says' about the community; *how* it exists within the context. This is a largely phenomenological concept widely supported by various authors and thinkers in the disciplines of philosophy (Habermas,

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1988; Norberg-Schulz, 1979), psychology (Gibson, 1973), and architecture and landscape

architecture (Jencks, 1991, p. 60).

A designer must understand each of these three defining relationships of the

Influencing Factors (Figure 4[1]). By adding the last component of the Telegraph Model

(Figure 5), the model then demonstrates how the designer may transcribe the contextual

character into an interior application. The Telegraph Model was created as a mechanism

| INFLUENCING FACTORS OF CONTEXTUAL CHARACTER | BENZEL CATEGORY | | | TEMPORAL RELEVANCE | INTERPRETATION | CORRESPONDING ELEMENTS OF INTERIOR DESIGN APPLICATION |
	F	S	A			
Pop culture	X	X	X	constant or frequent change		art, lighting, program, decor
Material Culture		X	X	semi-permanent interact with		furn./floor, wall, window trtmt.
Government	X	X	X	semi permanent		set-back, materials
Geography	X	X	X	foundational, relatively static		adjacencies, views
History	X	X	X	static, structure, foundational		structural materials, program

Figure 5: Telegraph Model

to filter the information from the Interpretive Matrix into interior design elements,

without losing the defining relationships and interpretive message. The elements selected

must correlate with the Influencing Factors they represent, by embodiment of the same

temporal relevance and *interpretative meaning* within the design as the Factors maintain

within the community, and they must affect the same Benzel categories that the

Influencing Factors do. The goal of the Telegraph Model is to accurately preserve the

Influencing Factors within an interior application.

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[1] Note that Figure 4 does not incorporate an example of Interpretation: this information must be attributed to the exact site, and cannot be demonstrated with a generalized example.

Influencing Factors are sometimes telegraphed through analogical expression rather than literal demonstrations; either way the defining relationships must be honored.

Relationships are essential for spatial designers because they promote evaluation through comparison, which in the end means by judgment, consideration, experience, and insight rather than by "dos and don'ts," likes and dislikes. The study of relationships seeks correlations among the individual, society, the built environment, and nature (Benzel, 1998, p. 21).

The Telegraph Model demonstrates relationships between the community and the interior application.

If the model is translated into a formula **A=(x,y,z)=a**, where *A* is the influencing factor found in the community and *a* is the expression within the interior application, then **(x,y,z)** -- being the Benzel Categories, Temporal Relevance, and Interpretation -- must pertain to both *A* and *a*. Therefore, where the community expression of an influencing factor is both aesthetic and functional (Benzel category), so too must the interior expression be; the interpretive messages being conveyed by the influencing factor and the interior expression shall be the same; and they both need to be equally transient to the greater systems of community and room. In this way, the relationships that are definitive of the Influencing Factor are being preserved when translated from the urban to the interior environment.

As noted previously, some of the example categories of influencing factors in the Telegraph Model may not be applicable to all specific sites; if they do not influence the character of the specific community, they need not be applied. Further, the interior

design elements listed per category in the Telegraph Model are only representative of elements that may address each of the three types of relationships and information (Benzel category, Temporal Relavence, Interpretive Meaning). The Telegraph Model does not dictate the precise interior design expressions that correspond to various influencing factors within the community; rather the model outlines the correlation between those interior expressions and the defining relationships that the expressions must adhere to.

Looking at the first example line within the Telegraph Model, the researcher may find that an Influencing Factor is indicative of Popular Culture, and that it affects each of Benzel's three categories. Belonging to pop culture, the Factor is also an innately contemporary aspect of the community. By definition, Popular Culture is not embedded within the community and will in fact change rapidly (it may disappear entirely or filter down to become a lasting impression within the community, but either way it will change status within the community). Therefore, the interior design components used to transcribe the interpreted meaning of the aspect of Popular Culture must be functional, aesthetic, and representative of its social impact (each of Benzel's categories) and also be easily removed or changed to honor the temporal relevance of popular culture. Therefore, art and other moveable elements may be appropriate as representative for this category. This influencing factor of popular culture will be meaningful in some way to the community; the interpretive message that it contributes within the urban context also must be expressed via the selected interior design components.

The *system* of relationships that the Telegraph Model outlines is the most important aspect of the theoretical framework. The interior design elements with which a designer

chooses to express the property, or the 'influencing factors' that a designer believes are most influential and important to incorporate, are flexible and at the discretion of the designer. In this way, the framework is defined by its flexibility. The resulting design is an interpretive assessment of the host locale:

> The room as one space within this interconnected social and spatial
>
> network is linked to it in perceptible and imperceptible ways. The spatial
>
> relationships that join the individual and society to an interconnected
>
> physical, social, and spatial organism are not hardwired but flexible and
>
> yielding. A designer of rooms, buildings, cities, or landscapes should
>
> acknowledge spatial elasticity and dynamic communication (Benzel, 1998,
>
> p. 13).

Where one designer may realize very literal opportunities of expression between the community and the interior, another designer will be more abstract. Analogy is a widely accepted approach to communication, forging strong understandings of concepts and relationships, and in fact emulates the Poetics category of White's framework. Analogy lends itself well to spatial design as it communicates from one scale to another, where each scale is meaningful in similar ways and yet expressed using entirely different vocabulary.

> Scale Linking, or working across scales, suggests standing back and using
>
> a wider lens to detect exactly how the larger acts on the smaller and how
>
> small scale comes into harmony with large scale. Scale linking also
>
> utilizes analogy by finding the similarity between features on which to
>
> base a comparison… (and) not only gathers different scales into broader

design consequences but also gathers diverse perspectives, areas of

expertise, and professional languages (Benzel, 1998, p. 20).

Discussion

This thesis investigation sought to open a line of questioning concerning contextual

character as a design directive for an interior design application. The proposed

theoretical framework explores relationships between context and interior expression.

The process introduced within this thesis is not intended as a prescriptive or predictive

approach to interior design. Rather, coupled with an interpretive approach to research,

the writer intends the process to be directive – that is, it will act as a framework to help

the designer achieve contextually relevant designs.

Correspondingly, since both Benzel and White utilize broad categories within their

philosophies and methodologies, it is difficult to anticipate how influencing factors will

manifest. This reality both allows for extensive variation and demands adherence to the

Interpretive Matrix, as a way to recall and explain relationships being constituted through

design. This is one reason why, from a theoretical perspective, this is a challenging

approach to addressing interior design. The author recognizes that not every application

of interior design will be appropriate opportunities for utilization of this model. The

theoretical framework should be tested further to identify the general applicability to

various design types. Future development of this methodology may include a

concentrated comparison of the outcome of similar design projects in various

communities: (1) two traditionally industrial communities from different areas of the

same country, or (2) two communities with very different historical backgrounds, perhaps from different countries.

Additionally, the theoretical model produces within this thesis may be used as a teaching model for interior design students, as an explanation or demonstration of context; both in term of its definition and the potential impact relationships with context may have within the interior design discipline.

APPENDIX 1

Case Study

The writer engaged with a case study site to begin exploring a framework for both identifying a community's contextual character and then telegraphing the found information through an interior design application. The case study facilitated development of the theoretical framework proposed within this thesis investigation.

The case study is sited in Ballard, WA. The specific site is located in the Historic District of Ballard, and is empty of permanent built structures. The original building burned down and has not yet been replaced, although the lot has become a valued pocket park for the community.

Figure 6: Case Study site: this site is void of built structures. The remaining elements of the original building are a fire door next to the easement at the rear of the lot, and party walls still used by adjacent buildings.

Figure 7: The site is used by the community for various social gatherings, and as a garden and sitting area for the adjacent cafe.

During the site selection process the writer recognized that the Ballard site ultimately chosen had a combination of history and contemporary characteristics that allowed for –

even dictated – a hospitality related design be implemented. Therefore the site was selected and a boutique hotel was designed.

A Brief History of Ballard, WA. Ballard is a community originally established as a fishing and lumber mill community. The geography of the area – bordered by Salmon Bay and the Puget Sound - allowed each of the industries to develop and succeed. With the growth of shingle factories various metal foundries, millwork, and machine manufacturers established themselves along the shoreline as well. An influx of immigrants to work in the industries boosted the population. The growing population demanded development of support services; much of that early development now comprises the Historic Landmark District of Ballard. Historically the 2-3 stories high buildings were designed for services and retail on the pedestrian level, and boarding rooms or apartments on upper floors. The community became the City of Ballard in 1890 but lost their independence and was annexed to Seattle in 1907. Ballard was then designated during the 1990s as one of five Seattle communities to become an urban center. With this influx of city resources and directives, gentrification has escalated and Ballard is experiencing rapid development. Ballard asserts a unique resilience against gentrification infiltrating the community, however; perhaps a result of its geography that has allowed the community to operate in some regard as an isolated community, and perhaps for other reasons. Gentrification has certainly made a mark, but has not yet eliminated Ballard's core community character. Various 'worlds' have emerged within the community, allowing for the industrial community, burgeoning music scene, and influx of trend and money to co-exist.

Case Study Research

This investigation stems from a largely interpretivist approach to qualitative research, which is derived from the phenomenological tradition, and focuses upon an effort to appreciate a context of lived experience, seeking to understand the ultimately "subjective human experience" (Groat & Wang, 2002, p. 186). Various tactics employed provide discrete results, although a strong consideration is given to the Heideggerian phenomenological fascination with 'how' things exist in the world. For example, the coffee shop in a neighborhood center may reveal itself to be a highly trafficked place based upon observation and statistical analysis (discrete): an important distinction, however, is whether residents are meeting there socially, for business, or if most of the patronage is actually from people *outside* of the neighborhood. And if that is the case, then why? Such details are revealing of the community character.

In order to most accurately transcribe the contextual character of a community, each of the social, functional, and aesthetic properties identified shall maintain their defining relationships (interpretive meaning) from within the community, when incorporated into the interior application. As such, resulting designs will grow and change as the community does.

In her quest to identify the contributing elements of contextual character – the Influencing Factors - the researcher began by recognizing that some definition must be made to limit or direct the research process. Initially, her approach was to gather only information for which there was physical, perceivable evidence *within* the community – defined by a one-block radius of the selected site. This decision required that she visit the site and conduct a photographic documentation of the community. While on site she

engaged with people and events, to gain an experientially based understanding of the community. Her encounters with various local citizens and employees of local establishments led her to gain a more personal understanding of the social mentality within the community, and learn some of the history otherwise not evidenced on site. Such engagements indicated that a significant portion of local character was resultant of the historic development of the community; this realization prompted the writer to consider archived documentation concerning the community and specific site, in order to more accurately understand the cues she was observing on site. Such an alteration to the research process seemed only to enrich the writer's understanding of the contextual character. Thus all information she could gather that related to the Ballard community – and specifically the Historic District of Ballard where the site exists – was incorporated for consideration. While not a defined process, the research incorporated various tactics:

- **On-site Experience**: Three days were spent on site, during which 4 unstructured interviews occurred. During the site visits the writer was able to document behavioral observations and conduct photographic documentation of the neighborhood. Material culture was noted as evidence of social and functional aspects of the community character. In addition, the researcher participated in a walking tour of Ballard, sponsored by the Seattle Architecture Foundation and led by SAF members – one guide was a Ballard citizen and another was an active member of the Ballard Avenue Landmark District Board (SAF, 2006). Each was able to provide anecdotal information, in addition to the scripted tour, that further introduced the social values of Ballard as a community.

- **Historic Documentation**: Information was collected from the Regional Archives; this included records pertaining to the original building upon the selected site. It was within these documents that the writer discovered the original use of the building as a 22 room hotel, with a store on the pedestrian level. The original facade is documented, from which it is obvious that certain architectural relationships tied the building to the adjacent buildings: most notably, cornice heights and fenestration ratios. The SAF walking tour, The Chamber of Commerce, Nordic Heritage Museum, and conversation with local citizens provided additional information concerning the history of Ballard.

- **Material Evidence**: Understanding of the community was gained through art and literature published by Ballard citizens or about Ballard as a community. Local publications included The Stranger, Seattle Weekly, Seattle magazine, and various bulletins and posters discussing local events and programs found both within the community and in neighboring communities. Virtually every dining establishment displayed notices for local events, and surfaces throughout the community (telephone poles, sidewalks, fences, cars, windows, buildings) were plastered with bulletins or stickers advertising local events and venues.

Figure 8: Material Evidence: Bulletins torn from a telephone pole along Ballard Avenue are an indication of the struggle between various populations within the community.

This type of material evidence elicits the writer's assessment that the informants are a combination of young, grass roots, and underground populations. Interestingly, an effort has been made to eliminate such evidence in some areas: telephone poles covered with staples line the street, only a few bulletins existing on each (and presumably those will be removed also in the near future). This behavior is indicative of a struggle between an active population and a governing body – or an opposing population by some definition - that is attempting to maintain a clean face for the community.

A New York Times article offered an outsider's perspective of Ballard (Ashenburg, 2002), documenting lasting influence the Nordic Heritage has made upon the community, as well as an observance of clashing populations within the community. According to the Permanent Collection at the Nordic Heritage Museum, Thea Foss of Ballard, who developed a tugboat rental company and ran it with her husband, inspired the character 'Tugboat Annie'; Ballard's reputation forever immortalized in the movie industry.

- **Analysis** of the collected data and evidence, and perceived understanding garnered from being on-site and interacting with community members, led the writer to finalize her collection of information. Drawing connections between historical events and documents, and the contemporary traces of such found on site but otherwise not understood, was integral to the researcher's understanding of the community. Reflecting on the data analysis, the writer was able to recognize how history and geography had shaped much of the contemporary social properties that define the community.

Upon collection of the data, the researcher identified those most distinguishing characteristics for inclusion within the design; Geography, Industrial development, Nordic heritage, Landmark District Board, Gentrification, Sustainability. Given the site selection, the researcher felt it was important to maintain a few fundamental relationships between the 'new' design and the original building on site. Because there were party walls still standing she was able to determine ceiling heights by looking at the lathe and plaster remnants and the floor joists still evident (Figures 6 and 7). This information was confirmed by King County Assessor documents in the Regional Archives. As the proposed methodology seeks to capture *contemporary* character, several adjustments were made to acknowledge current standards. The writer developed floor plans for both stories, although only fully developed the first floor. Therefore, the hotel rooms on the second floor are expressed in plan and exterior perspectives only.

Case Study Application

Selected Influencing Factors from the research, and the design decisions they informed, are explored:

> ***Geography****: The geography of Ballard attracted not only the Shilshole Tribe of Native Americans who first settled along the water in the Ballard area, but also the Europeans who eventually developed what became the City of Ballard. Bordered by Salmon Bay and the Puget Sound, Ballard quickly was recognized for its innate potential for the fishing and lumber industries. Both were developed and led to the establishment of numerous shingle factories and mechanical, metal, and other industrial shops. It was upon these industries that the community*

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developed; thus geography was instrumental in the inception of Ballard as a

community. (Knowledge of above information garnered from: Nordic Heritage

Museum, Regional Archives, SAF tour, Ballard Chamber of Commerce).

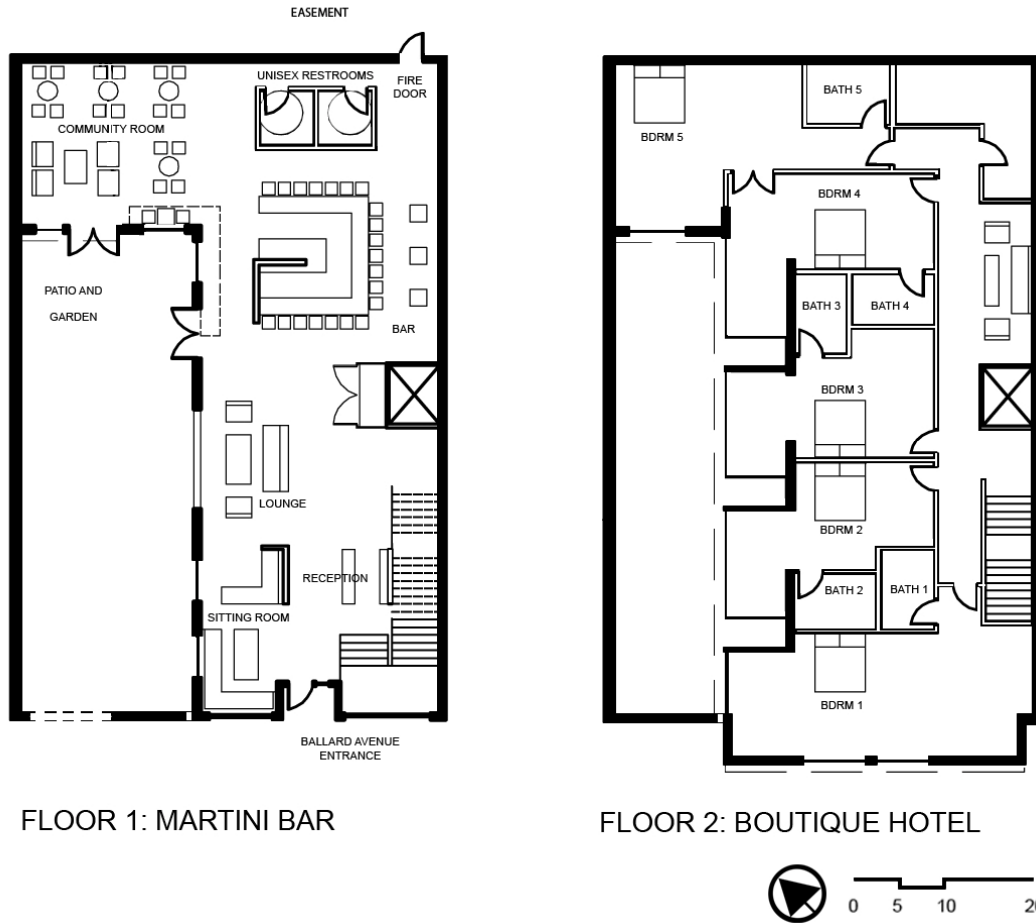FLOOR 1: MARTINI BAR

FLOOR 2: BOUTIQUE HOTEL

Figure 9: Case Study Floor Plans. Greater design emphasis was given to Floor 1, although design gestures within Floor 2 are discussed.

Geography was integral to the development of the community. While there may not

be many visible influences of geography upon the case study site on Ballard Avenue, the

researcher decided to incorporate geography in subtle ways that reflect its influence as

one travels along the avenue. Periodically one catches views that provide a false sense of

convenience to various surrounding features. The design expresses this reality through

adjacencies and views within the design; from various locations visual access is granted

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to areas that are in fact not directly accessible. The guest is required to maneuver around

built-in furniture and through doors or around corners in order to arrive at the identified

area.

Further, with or without direct views to the water, Salmon Bay and Puget Sound

affect the community in even more discreet ways. The geography (and namely the

bodies of water) dictate limited direct access into the community, draw people into the

community for marina and fishing activity, and affects the economy insomuch as it is

supported in part by the industry and trade of water-based businesses. Therefore, the

design identifies hydronic radiant floor heating to be incorporated in the concrete floors

on the pedestrian level. Not only is this a sustainable heating option (which is important

to the community and discussed in a subsequent section), while users of the space may

not perceive the source of the heating they will nonetheless feel the impact. In this way,

the hydronic heating both literally incorporates water but also allows it to behave

similarly to the way the natural bodies of water affect the community along Ballard

Avenue, away from the water's edge – perceived but not seen.

> ***Industry****: Industrial activity was the foundation that established Ballard as a*
>
> *community. While the industrial shops and mills were prominent along the*
>
> *water, much of the subsequent development along Ballard Avenue directly*
>
> *supportive of industry workers. Thus, ample living quarters (boarding houses,*
>
> *apartments, hotels) were built in the second and third stories of the buildings,*
>
> *while along the pedestrian level the avenue was crowded with saloons, eateries,*
>
> *banks, and various other service related retailers. These functional aspects of*
>
> *the community effectively determined the social and aesthetic properties of the*

community as well. The built form and aesthetic is generally unassuming and quiet, with machine shops and other industrial buildings interspersed along the street. Materials chosen are neither glamorous nor remarkable. This was a working community. The community was likewise unassuming and until recently considered a blue-collar community.

The primary demographic for this industrial community was single young factory workers; the saloons and bars filled with rowdy patrons, and a gritty nightlife defined Ballard. Combined with musical celebration (in part a natural social occurrence and in part influenced by the Nordic Heritage) Ballard became a known hub for music and in the recent few decades has emerged as a center for underground and burgeoning musical artists. Although part of the community's history, this type of activity now draws also a younger population interested in a less pretentious, alternative, independent music scene. (Knowledge of above information garnered from:Nordic Heritage Museum, SAF Tour, Material Evidence, Interviews, Ballard Chamber of Commerce)

As the very foundation of the community, the industrial influence affected social, aesthetic, and functional properties within the community. Industry was therefore incorporated in the structural and foundational elements of the design, and done so in a manner that expressed social, aesthetic, and functional aspects of the community. Although the case study design utilized the existing party walls on site, all additional structural and foundational elements were created with unassuming materials: namely concrete and steel. All new concrete walls were identified as cast-in-place wood-frame construction. Timber and shingle mills were primary components of the industrial

aspects of the community, and so the visual expression of wood grain on concrete was an appropriate integration of history being expressed through contemporary methods.

Functional aspects of the industrial community were addressed in a subtle manner: where structure or functional elements such as plumbing walls were necessary, there they fell. Rather than masking their function by routing plumbing through a column or other deliberately veiled solutions, the design accepts the functional necessities in the way that Ballard has never tried to mask its industrial and blue-collar functions. This addresses the social properties of Ballard as an industrial community, as well, insomuch that the community behaved as a proud working-class community, never purposely drawing attention to their strength and resilience. The corresponding design gesture is only subtle in terms of not attempting to draw additional attention to itself: there is nothing subtle about an entire community or floor plan being dictated by the functional aspects of the design, and accepting that reality as part of their character rather than attempting to mask or neglect that which allowed the community to exist at all.

> ***Nordic Heritage****: The Nordic population within Ballard never exceeded one third of the community population, and has declined significantly during the past several decades. Their heritage nevertheless was instrumental in the development of the early community. The lasting influences upon the community from the strong Nordic heritage may be seen in each of Benzel's three categories, affecting the social, aesthetic, and functional aspects of Ballard. Historically much of the industrial workforce was comprised of immigrants, and they quickly developed a reputation for being hard working and community oriented. Integral to their lifestyle was also music and art. Ballard is still defined as a hard working*

community, despite the elimination of much of the lumber, machine, and fishing industry, and has a strong independent community. Although belonging to Seattle, Ballard is know for maintaining a community core that is committed to local concerns and activities. Characterized also as an art and music hub, the community maintains the Nordic appreciation for each. Ballard's burgeoning music scene attracts bands from across the country, and has developed a reputation within the greater Seattle area. Therefore, much of the social and functional aspects of the community have developed in response to supporting this population; this may be seen in the prominence of music venues, advertisements throughout the community on every bulletin board and telephone pole, and the influx of a young population that expresses the contemporary independent music scene. Also prominent is a commitment to art. Evidence of such is clear throughout the community as artful installations are displayed in both operational, functional situations as well as simply for observation. Art galleries and handcrafted goods find their home in various retail locations, and at the weekend market, a longtime installation of Ballard.(Knowledge of above information garnered from: Nordic Heritage Museum, Ballard Chamber of Commerce, SAF walking tour, Interviews, on site experience).

Fundamental to the design (and likewise programmatic) was creating gathering spaces to support community interaction, as the Nordic heritage was influential in creating the solidarity that defines the Ballard community even today. Ample space was incorporated for live music performances in the 'Community' section of the floor plan, to honor the current and historic celebration of music within the community. Also

incorporated in the pedestrian level is a bar. These uses are indicative of the historic

scene along Ballard Avenue, which was lined with saloons and eateries; the history of the

site is fundamental to Ballard's character, and so a programmatic expression of such is

appropriate since it too is fundamental to the design.

Artful gestures are infused throughout the design in numerous ways: a hanging wall

separates the lobby from the stair leading to the hotel rooms and features a cut-out that

allows people in the lobby to watch feet traverse the stairwell between an existing brick

party-wall and the new hanging wall. (Figures 9 & 11) The hanging wall demonstrates

the contemporary developments within the community; standing in the lobby and looking

through the contemporary wall at the original brick wall is indicative of many visitors

learning about the history without experiencing the history first hand. Once a guest

commits to staying at the hotel and they traverse the stair to find their room, they become

more intimate with the brick wall and begin to understand that much of the structure is

historic, in the way that the history of the community is the foundation of the

contemporary character.

Figure 10: The Bar represents community interaction, historic program of community, and incorporates artful gestures throughout. Note the contradiction of 'gritty' materials on structural elements, and the 'posh' or refined materials for applied elements.
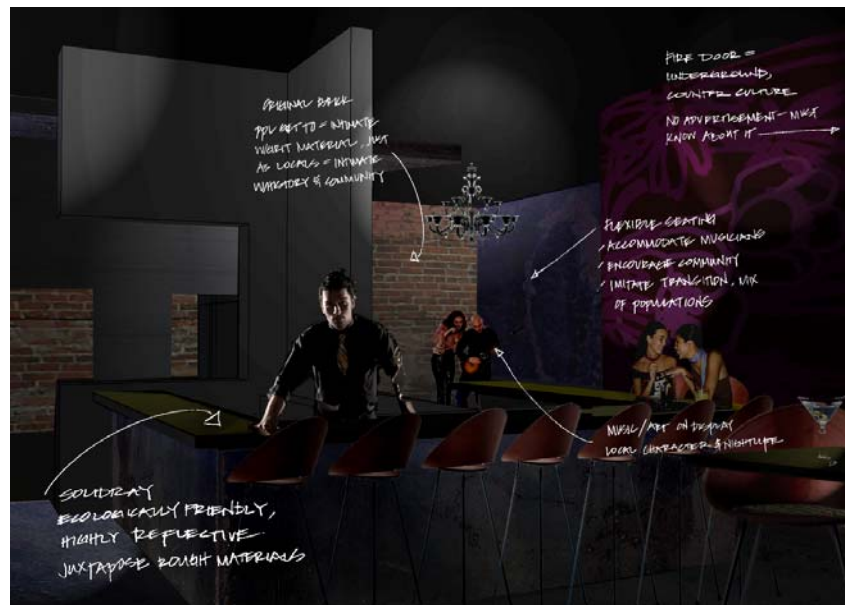
Additionally, Scandinavian furniture design is popular today for characteristic sculptural, artistic qualities. Inclusion of Scandinavian sculptural chairs at the bar is both indicative of the functional art throughout the community as well as (ironically) the influx of 'posh' fashions (Figure 10).

> ***Landmark District Board****: New development within the neighborhood must comply with design guidelines instituted by the Ballard Avenue Landmark District Board; these guidelines were developed to ensure consideration of the historic context, and are necessarily considered within the case study research and subsequent design. The landmark board dictates setback regulations, percent transparency at the Pedestrian level, and allowable materials for all new construction and remodels within the historic district. The regulations explicitly announce that new construction shall not mimic original architecture and built form, but rather be respectful of the existing neighborhood aesthetic and comply with the regulations set forth that will ensure natural mergence within the district.(Knowledge of above information garnered from: Landmark District Board, SAF walking tour, Interviews).*

The pedestrian level is therefore designed with large fenestrations allowing for appropriate transparency. Setback regulations indicate that new construction shall be comparable to surrounding buildings, and discourage set-backs from the property line, on any story. Thus the façade of the building aligns with the edge of the sidewalk and penetrates at the party walls already found on site. Considering that the community had commandeered the lot for use as a park and a gathering area, a courtyard is maintained

for community use; the facade incorporates an industrial sized garage door (compliant with existing district aesthetics) which is intended to remain open during business hours to encourage café patrons as well as patrons of the bar and hotel to enjoy the space. This gesture underscores the community's commitment to community gathering, and honors the community's demonstrated appreciation of the green space. Therefore there is a reveal in the façade where one hotel room protrudes, hovering above the street. This reveal not only emphasizes the 'pushing beyond' concept that the hotel room extension is a reference of (see *Gentrification* section, below); the reveal is also a demonstration that the façade along one edge of the building is false. This is an acknowledgement that while the building complies with Landmark District Board regulations, the community behavior and principles – which the courtyard represents – are also an honored reality. Acknowledging the false façade in this way is exemplary of Contextualist ideals.

> ***Gentrification****: The community that once maintained a reputation for slow drivers and quaint shopping grew into a bedroom community of Seattle. With the influx of money directed towards development of Ballard from the City of Seattle, an increase in population and exposure is currently following. Much of the development occurs outside of the Historic District where the case study site is located, but evidence of the growth has infiltrated the program of the historic neighborhood also; retail is becoming increasingly trendy with prices to match. Local boutiques are carrying name-brand product as well as their singular merchandise, and such businesses as gourmet cooking studios and yoga studios speak to the contemporary trends and interest of the growing population. These changes are indicative of the influx of money and popular culture; not yet integral*

to the community character, the changes are somewhat 'applied' to the face of the

community. Nevertheless, they are functional and aesthetic considerations that

are representative of the social changes in the community. (Knowledge of above

information garnered from: Material Evidence, Interviews, on site experience,

Ballard Chamber of Commerce).

As noted previously, the program for the case study design incorporated a bar – indicative of the historic and lasting character of the community where saloons and bars provided entertainment and earned Ballard the reputation for maintaining a gritty nightlife. An alteration to that program, however, addresses the contemporary changes: the designation of the bar as a 'martini bar' rather than a saloon, pub, or otherwise colloquial establishment. With the disappearance of industrial work in Ballard, the residential population is increasingly white-collar professionals who use Ballard as a bedroom community. There remains an 'underground' or gritty feel belonging to much of Ballard, but <u>new</u> establishments – as the case study design necessarily is – are catering to the gentrified community.
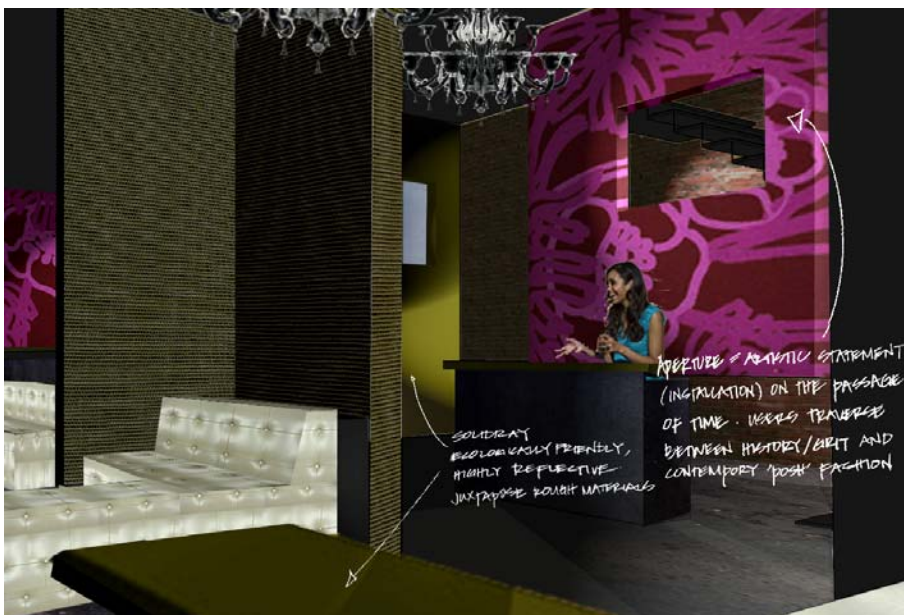

Figure 11: Lobby & Sitting Room. Directly behind the reception desk is a hanging wall with an aperture, created as an artful gesture embedded within the design. The seating in the foreground is built in, and the L-shaped wall that defines the Sitting Room is a plumbing wall, the location of which is dictated by the design of the hotel rooms above.

Additionally, as it is the *face* of the community that is becoming more refined, the design upon entrance from the street reflects the indulgent and refined taste that is infiltrating the community. Just within the front door into the lobby, window coverings are velvet drapes that pool at the floor and the seating is fixed and covered in plush upholstery. With limited movement and space, the lobby design reflects the exclusivity that defines much of the incoming trends and economic vitality (Figure 9 & 11). Seating gradually becomes more flexible (Figure 10) and accessibility opens up as one progresses through the space into the bar and performance area, indicating the core nature of the community, which is still relatively 'gritty' and unassuming, and community oriented. In fact, the existing easement along the back of the lot is utilized as a back entrance into the bar: this unadvertised access is only discovered with familiarity of the building and the community, as a side street provides immediate access to the easement and yet it remains unannounced (Figure 9). This entrance is called the 'Fire Door' as it is where the fire door of the original building still hangs.

Further, more discreet details are included: an elevator is placed between the lobby and the bar for guest transportation to the second floor. From the lobby, the elevator is sheathed with drywall and a wall covering applied, imitating the influx of refined taste (Figure 11). The back (bar) side of the elevator is exposed, however; one may notice that the elevator is glass, and therefore the mechanical elements of the system are available to see. With such exposure a connection is made to the unassuming, blue-collar, industrial community that would instead celebrate the functional beauty of the mechanical system; this is the population which the bar begins to represent.

Although the second floor is not developed to the level of detail that the ground level is, the influence of contemporary development and gentrification is expressed in the architecture of the hotel rooms. The original building housed 22 rooms for rent; by today's standards there is insufficient space for that number of rooms on this particular site; guests expect larger rooms than were historically provided, and each room now must also comply with code requirements for window access and emergency exits. Further, the case study design had already diminished the footprint of the building to allow for a courtyard space on the pedestrian level. With a small lot to work with originally, now compromised further, the designer chose to design a boutique hotel with only five rooms for rent. This afforded the designer more space per room, and each room incorporates windows onto the courtyard. The structural wall, which defines the edge of the building along the courtyard, was carried to the roof. Each hotel room on the second floor then punches through the structural wall to create more enclosed space, capturing greater square footage per room than otherwise allowable. Defying the limited footprint in this way is a visual expression of the contemporary expectations for hotel accommodations exceeding the originally acceptable boarding-house type accommodations (Figures 9 & 12). Architecturally these rooms appear to be hanging from, or applied to, the structural wall. In this way, the designer has continued the expression of refined and contemporary taste being 'applied' to the foundation of the community, not yet embedded.

Figure 12: Massing Model using SketchUp. Notice that each hotel room protrudes through the structural wall, looking down upon the courtyard or sidewalk.

Sustainability: Ballard has been a leading community in developing sustainable

practices at the citywide level. Ballard is currently recognized by Al Gore as the

first community working to be carbon neutral and it maintains a strong

organization called Sustainable Ballard. Sustainable Ballard has several guilds,

each addressing different aspects of sustainable practices and each leading

various projects throughout and for the community. New civic buildings

including the local library have been designed with sustainable practices in mind,

and various retailers and programs throughout the community are focused on

sustainable practices and products. Already a strong community – as noted in

previous sections – the grassroots, localized program of sustainability suites

Ballard's community ethic. Commitment to sustainable practices through the

community is indicative of the social properties of the citizen group, and also

affects functional and aesthetic elements of the community as services and

programs are instituted, and built form adheres to sustainable design practices.

(Knowledge of above garnered from: Material Evidence, Interviews, on site

experience, Ballard Chamber of Commerce).

While the case study design is not entirely focused on being a sustainable building, many aspects of the design address concerns for sustainability. Solidray – an eco-friendly and highly durable product - is specified for various prominent surfaces including the bar top, lounge tabletops, walls wrapping the elevator, and the horizontal surface of the reception desk. These are places where people gather within the building; allowing guests to touch and become familiar with the product as an integral element within the building highlights the community's commitment to bringing sustainable practices to the community. The material carries a high sheen, and being so reflective will attract attention as light plays off the surface; at first glance this product may be read as representative of the posh, gentrified aspects of the community because it candidly contradicts the aesthetic of the industrial materials used throughout the space.

Other design decisions towards sustainable principles are the use of hydronic heating elements in the flooring, and the use of both existing brick party walls. Additionally, although not specified in the case study explicitly, many products and materials may be selected for their fiber and chemical content and manufacturing processes, as they adhere to sustainable product guidelines. Both functional and aesthetic decisions are therefore indicative of the social properties of the community as they relate to sustainable practices.

Case Study Discussion

After completion of the Case Study, the writer identified several weaknesses between the research and the design implementation; these weaknesses informed and refined the subsequent Theoretical Framework. Listing the Landmark Board as an Influencing Factor is questionable; while the Landmark Board does in fact influence and define components of the design, they are a civic entity that protects the aesthetic of the community. The elements they dictate come from the desire to allow contemporary development to be accomplished, provided it is done in a manner sensitive to the context – notably the building standards and social standards prevalent during the development of the original town. Therefore, in honoring the urban fabric one responsibility the designer inherits is maintaining certain aesthetic and geometric relationships with the surrounding built form. This concern relates to a discussion had during a design critique of the Ballard case study: critics felt that contemporary design standards simply dictate an awareness of the context – that 'good design' demands many of the tenants of this methodology. The writer agrees that contemporary design standards call for an awareness of context and sensitive design integration, without intentions of mimicking detailing or other aesthetic components of historic or neighboring buildings (echoed by the Landmark District Board). New construction should acknowledge and utilize contemporary technique, standards, and materials. The discussion during the critique did not address considerations for the social and functional aspects of the community; current 'good design' standards do not necessarily expect incoming designs to honor the social and functional properties of the community. This consideration is the key deviation from traditional Contextualist thought, which also does not entertain conversation regarding

these two aspects of a community as they apply outside of design. They are also limiting factors of this theoretical framework; the writer believes they are important considerations to the extent that they may be implemented. However, the designer does not always have the liberty of dictating programmatic stipulations (functional) congruent with the contextual character. Often a strict program is determined by the client and owner, and is not variable. As previously mentioned, the methodology is appropriate for certain design applications and less so for others. If the design loses programmatic correspondence with the contextual character, then the methodology is not applicable:

> The room, the smallest link in the human environmental spatial network, derives its meaning as much from its spatial relationships as from its designated function. It is part of an extended family of people, building, landscape, and city by virtue of common ground, connections, and relationships. Knowledge and use of common ground, scale linking, connections, and relationships are pivotal to well-designed responsive human environments. (Benzel, 1998, p. 21)

Therefore, if the function of the space cannot engage with the contextual character of the host locale, then this methodology is not applicable. This is because the room – the interior – will be defined by its function and so if the function is dramatically disparate from the contextual character, then the room's relationship to the context will be significantly altered. However, it is interesting to note that in such a scenario the function of the space may become an influencing factor itself, upon the character of the community. For example if a hospital is built in an otherwise residential, small

community, the hospital will initiate changes within the community that redefine its character.

During the first critique of the case study, critics felt the design looked as though it could exist in New York City as well as Ballard. While that would imply that the design did not effectively convey the unique character of Ballard, the fact that it may appear to belong elsewhere as well makes it no less contextual. This is because there are very similar development processes for many communities across the country: developing from industrial backgrounds many communities will share a similar aesthetic, and many communities are now facing gentrification as larger cities expand into their respective bedroom communities. Thus a very similar clash of culture occurs, and so is indicative of many communities across the country.

The writer considers two alterations that may clarify the design: one concerns the use of analogy and the other concerns definition of locale. With regard to analogy, careful consideration must be given as to whether the cues and gestures that symbolize various aspects of the community are too abstract to be effective. Each design decision reflects some aspect of the community, and therefore should be 'legible' as meaningful. Interestingly, if a design element is not overtly significant or is too abstract, it may in fact mirror the corresponding component of the community character; many Influencing Factors of contextual character are based on historic development or other factors that are not immediately apparent upon initial survey of the community. In the way that the character of a community develops from discreet events and layers of information, so too does the design express its meaning. Analogy is most appropriate for conveying the discreet elements of the community character, as determined by the researcher/designer.

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Definition of the 'host locale' is another way to clarify the design. The case study

site is located along Ballard Avenue in the Historic District. The writer acknowledged in

various instances that some Influencing Factors affected Ballard Avenue differently than

other areas of Ballard, although she did not distinctly define the boundaries of her

'locale' within the greater community of Ballard. Many Influencing Factors were

generalizable across the community, and most of the historic influences were indicative

of the historic district itself. However, with future application of this methodology it may

be necessary to more clearly define the limits of the 'host locale' in order to clarify and

limit the influencing factors, as well as clarify the method of research.

Analysis of Case Study with Telegraph Model

The Case Study in Ballard may be analyzed, retroactively, as it applies to the eventual

Telegraph Model that was a result of the investigation. The designer understood the

industrial background of the community to be a foundational Influencing Factor to the

contextual character of Ballard, WA. This assessment was made based on research

gathered using tactics that fulfill each of White's *Ways of Knowing*, and the evidence of

such corresponds to each of Benzel's 3 properties; social, aesthetic, functional.

Essentially, this was the process now considered the Interpretive Matrix. The industrial

background influenced built form of the historic community (aesthetic, functional), the

working class mentality of the civic institutions and citizens (social), and fostered a gritty

nightlife and social scene (social, functional) – all of which are evidenced within current

Ballard. Therefore, the design must reflect the gritty industrial influence in aesthetic,

functional, and social properties that are correspondingly foundational to the interior

design. Note that the interpretive meaning (unassuming, blue-collar, gritty) must also be

expressed, as well as the temporal relevance (historical and thus foundational to the community). Therefore, incorporating unassuming materials within the foundation and structural walls (both are exposed concrete), Benzel's aesthetic category is addressed. Social implications of the industrial influence may be seen by the incorporation of a social areas (bar, courtyard), and the back entrance (called 'The Fire Door') that recalls underground or otherwise socially unrefined behaviors. Furthermore, an overlap of definition occurs when the functional properties of industrial expression are identified with the inclusion of a bar and community access to the courtyard (an industrial community is not generally exclusive and prim, but rather prone to collaborative efforts). Such an overlap occurs - similar to Benzel's assertions - since each component of the community influences the other. Clear lines are not necessarily drawn to decipher one component from the next, and Influencing Factors infiltrate various avenues of expression.

In this way, the resulting interior design application is reflective of the designer's interpretation of the community. This process may be utilized also to frame the client's perspective of the community, should they agree to participate in the research an analysis process. Thus, the proposed methodology is a framework to ensure that the defining relationships of Influencing Factors are being preserved when translated from the urban to the interior scales. This is an effort to ensure that the design is proportionately representative of the community, preventing the exploitation of one element. The methodology thus limits the designer is some manner, but celebrates their interpretive ability as well.

INFLUENCING FACTORS OF CONTEXTUAL CHARACTER

	BENZEL CATEGORY			TEMPORAL RELEVENCE	INTERPRETATION	
	F	S	A			
Geography	X			Embedded, integral	Isolated, limitted movement, perceived influence	Adjacencies, views, water is perceived but not seen in hydronic floor heating
Industry	X	X	X	Foundational	Industrial mills and shops defined the community, directing subsequent development and attracting workers.	Foundational elements in design use industrial materials, functional aspects of the design take precedence.
Scandinavian & Nordic Heritage	X	X	X	Embedded, integral	Art and music were central to lifestyle. valued community, Immigrants ran many of the boarding houses and worked in the mills.	Artful expressions, program (music, hospitality, community gathering)
Landmark Board			X	Immediate, city mandated, lawfully imposed	Regulates architectural development within historic district to honor existing design.	Determines materials, setback, fenestrations, building height, signage.
Gentrification	X	X	X	Contemporary issue; applied to community & beginning to infiltrate	Influx of money and population demands programmatic changes and creates aesthetic and social changes.	Alters program, introduces an aesthetic
Sustainability	X	X	X	Developmental, integral to civic identity.	Many community founded org.s making changes to systems and programs for the community.	Hydronic floor radiant heating, material selection.

CORRESPONDING INTERIOR DESIGN APPLICATION

Figure 13: Case Study demonstrated in the form of a Telegraph Model (this model was created after completion of the Case Study).

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