

Aim

Evaluate the aims, methods, logic and effectiveness of your work in the West End Project by reference to the planning process and methods imparted in this unit; and critically evaluate the practical relevance of methods imparted by the unit by reference to your work in Planning and Design Projects.

Introduction

The planning approach seems to be as daunting as mapping every single bit of information that I personally possess. This is something that is not totally impossible to realise, but intimidating to begin.

Within Planning and Landscape 3 (PSB431), the first piece of assessment looked at the site, each taking a section of Observation, Behaviour and Survey. Each aspect was equally important as each other, but it was coloured by our own perceptions and beliefs. Initially, it was hard to maintain a degree of objectivity and direction without knowing, “why we were doing this?” From the initial lecture, it was told that West End was a “Cultural District”, and during the initial stages, I was pondering what was meant by culture. Surely the Cultural Centre was at South Brisbane, and there appeared to be a smattering of art galleries, but I still didn’t see a “Cultural District”. My personal perception of a “Cultural District” was a notion of seeing active Greek scholars, debating theories of thought, with open piazzas filled with artists painting schemes. Therefore, I seemed to have applied my perception of what a “Cultural District” should be like, compared to what it actually is in reality.

The first Design group, of which I was part of, looked at “the observation and appraisal of the issues”. We examined issues that faced the users by using visual observation and feelings throughout the site. As I progressed further, I started to perceive a greater awareness of other users, and to imagine what they were experiencing as a user within the site, at various times and places within West End. This task, like mapping my thoughts, became second nature, but

still I seem to lack a definitive goal-orientated approach. It felt like that there was a missing piece to the equation that is planning, and I realised that it was the human condition.

The second group looked into “Behavioural activity analysis”, which took into consideration the users movement pattern, diagrammatic recording and links between spaces and places. It seemed that my answer would lie here, but it seemed that this approach was a form of statistical query, which gave me some idea of who was doing what, and why they were doing it.

The third and final group looked into “Informal discussions with Users/Stakeholders of the study area”. By using a survey method they asked users/stakeholders questions about the area and site. The approach of directly asking users what they had thought of their area seemed to be surprising to the users, as they hadn’t really given it much thought, and the people who did had a very strong opinion seemed out of place, and driven by other agendas.

A combination of these three approaches, Observation, Behaviour, Survey, each give a perspective on the characteristics that are West End, its’ people, its use of site and the reasons why they use the area as they do. You cannot alone use one approach and expect a result that will fully appreciate the aspects of users.