THE DECORATED SHED IN THE TEXAS TRIANGLE

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

by

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RESEARCH COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATION

Research activities involving the use of human subjects, vertebrate animals, and/or biohazards must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate Texas A&M University regulatory research committee (i.e., IRB, IACUC, IBC) before the activity can commence. This requirement applies to activities conducted at Texas A&M and to activities conducted at non-Texas A&M facilities or institutions. In both cases, students are responsible for working with the relevant Texas A&M research compliance program to ensure and document that all Texas A&M compliance obligations are met before the study begins.

I, Robert Williams, certify that all research compliance requirements related to this Undergraduate Research Scholars thesis have been addressed with my Research Faculty Advisor prior to the collection of any data used in this final thesis submission.

This project did not require approval from the Texas A&M University Research Compliance & Biosafety office.

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ABSTRACT

The Decorated Shed in the Texas Triangle

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Within the Texas Triangle, a region defined by rapidly growing metropolitan areas, the relationship between architecture and the edge-city is emerging and being defined. Dating back to the 1930s, with the help of special interest groups lobbying for highway construction and Eisenhower's Federal Highway Act of 1956, American urbanism dramatically shifted its trajectory advocating for private automobile ownership for each citizen. Due to the population's dependency on the automobile, architecture began to establish itself as roadside advertisements or better known in architectural discourse as the decorated shed, a term coined in the book Learning from Las Vegas. The architectural discoveries discussed in Learning From Las Vegas are still prevalent in roadside architecture of the 21st century yet there are new topics for study that have since revealed themselves. A topic that has made itself most prevalent is the fact that the decorated shed has evolved with our society to use the digital interface as a new medium to establish and exploit itself. Similar to the introduction and thus dependence of the car to the American society, our dependence on the phone and internet is heavily affecting the way these so-called decorated sheds are presenting themselves to their environments. The question remains,

how has and how will the decorated shed evolve to exploit the current urban context? In order to speculate the future of the decorated shed, a creative artifact is made in order to create a fictional conclusion that takes place at intersection 191 which is found on interstate 35, the highway connecting San Antonio and Austin. The artifact is presented as though it is a series of Google Maps searches of buildings found at intersection 191. Doing this as a way to present the project implies that the decorated shed of the future exists not only in the physical world but also in the digital interface. The buildings that have been rendered at the intersection are meant to represent the current and evolving state of the common roadside building which includes the way people are interacting with the building physically, programmatically, and by means of the Internet.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Roger and Dana Williams, who have supported me through my entire

educational career.

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Contributors

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NOMENCLATURE

Decorated Shed	A contemporary design concept characterized by buildings generally of purely utilitarian design but with fronts intended to give them more grandeur or to announce their functions.
Metroplex	A very large metropolitan area, especially one which is an aggregation of two or more cities.
Urban Fabric	An urban environment composed of its physical, psychological, socio-cultural, ecological, managerial, and economic structures.
Pin up	A term referring to the action of pinning a drawings or image to a wall to present work.
Visual Pollution	An aesthetic issue and refers to the impacts of pollution that impair one's ability to enjoy a pleasant view.
Pedagogy	The method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept.
Agency	A business or organization established to provide a particular service, typically one that involves organizing transactions between two other parties.

1.   AESTHETIC MOTIVATION AND RESEARCH QUESTION

This thesis aims to study and address the current state of the decorated shed in the Texas Triangle, a region bounded by Interstates 10, 45, and 35 that connect San Antonio, Austin, Dallas-Fort Worth, and Houston (Figure 1.1). This region is defined by rapid growth and large metropolitan areas which creates a slew of commercial buildings. Interestingly the corridor that connects Austin and San Antonio, Interstate 35, is experiencing rapid growth, so much so that it is believed Austin and San Antonio are going to merge within the next 30 years creating the next metroplex in Texas.

Figure 1.1: Satellite Image depicting the Texas Triangle from 2019

1.1   The Texas Triangle

The architecture that lies along city peripheries is meant to exploit current and complex issues of their built environment, including aesthetics, economy, ecology, politics, and social dimensions. Within the Texas Triangle, a region defined by rapidly growing metropolitan areas, the relationship between architecture and the edge-city is emerging and being defined. Dating back to the 1930s, with the help of special interest groups lobbying for highway construction and Eisenhower's Federal Highway Act of 1956, American urbanism dramatically shifted its trajectory advocating for private automobile ownership for each citizen. This transformed the collective urban landscape by forcing the population to rely on cars to traverse the new sprawl.

Texas cities are driven by a centrifugal force meaning they are always expanding and creating new clusters of built environments. Ian Caine in his publication Texas Unbound, published in the 26th edition of MONU, talks about the fact that the future of Texas cities exists outside of their centers as cities begin to create polycentric regions along their peripheries. These peripheral centers are known as edge cities which consist of "…regions connected by freeways, centered by a mall, and ringed by neighborhoods of post-war single-family houses" (De Jong 77).

While the sunbelt region within the United States sees extensive growth, the state of Texas far exceeds the others with its population growing by 367,215 people between 2018 and 2019 according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Texas is already home to two metroplexes, yet within the next 50 years, San Antonio (or Bexar County), and Austin (or Travis County), and the smaller cities that lie on the traversing interstate 35 are believed to merge and create the next single standard metropolitan area in Texas. Interstate 35 is similar to the Las Vegas Strip in that

its buildings establish themselves as roadside advertisements or decorated sheds, a term coined in the book Learning from Las Vegas.

1.2 The Frontage Road

Unlike other states, the Texas highway system is unique because it includes what is called a frontage road. The frontage road is a secondary road that runs parallel to the highway and its purpose is to allow for ease of access to houses and businesses. It is said that the frontage road is a major contributor to the visual pollution and infrastructural growth along interstate 35. This is because the frontage road is a cultivator for businesses to flock too. It is designed to provide easy access to consumers to roadside buildings allowing for businesses to utilize the frontage road as a tool to exploit their users. The technical report *Frontage Roads in Texas: A Comprehensive Assessment* states that, "As traffic volumes increase businesses will find that easy access to their properties via a frontage road will actually entice consumers to frequent their businesses." (Kara, Kockelman M., et al 102)

1.3 Architectural Parts

The parts that make up the urban fabric of Interstate 35 exist at a multitude of scales and mediums. What that means is these parts expand beyond the building in a physical and structural sense begin to include different agents that supplement a building when it comes to the way it is understood. For example, when talking about Whataburger, a major fast-food chain that began in Texas, one may think of the building as a whole or one may think of the smaller parts that are creating the building itself. These parts could include the highly saturated orange order number which mimics the aesthetic qualities of Whataburger or even their favorite meal rather than thinking about the building's physical presence (Figure 1.2):

Architecture depends in its perception and creation on past experience and emotional association and that these symbolic and representational elements may often be

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contradictory to the form, structure, and program with which they combine in the same building. (Brown and Venturi 87)
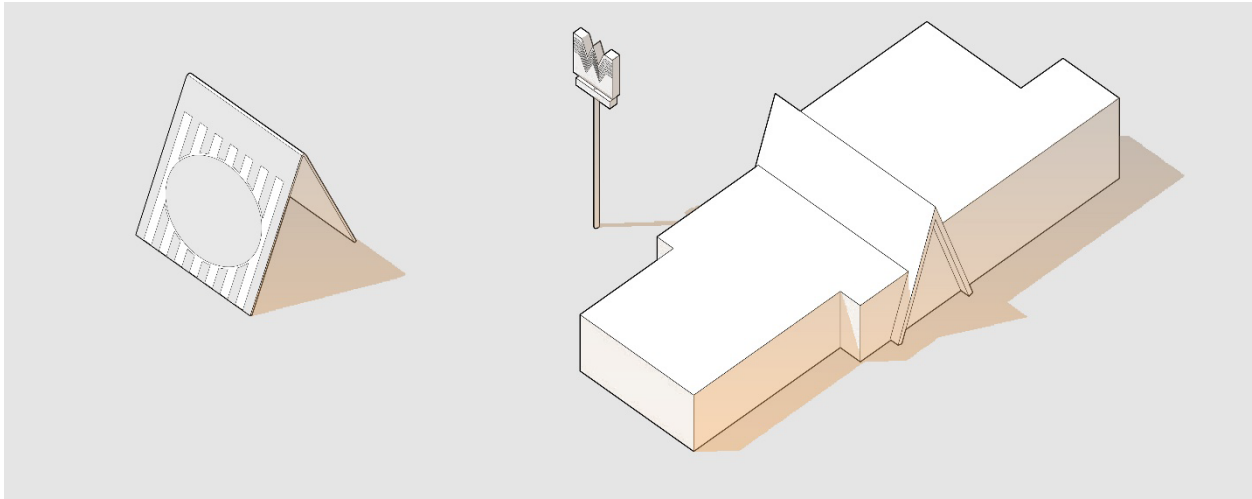

Figure 1.2: Whataburger Order Number and Building

The notion that Interstate 35 is made up of a multitude of parts creates a symbolic framework which is similar to what was discussed in Learning from Las Vegas. They say, "Symbol dominates space. Architecture is not enough. Because the spatial relationships are made by symbols more than by forms, architecture in this landscape becomes a symbol in space rather than form in space" (Brown and Venturi 13). Talking about symbols as means of representing an idea, object, and relationship is important when focusing on what is talked about in this thesis. This thesis looks past architectural form and instead looks at thinking about the symbolic nature of the current architectural commercial building. These ideas supplement the way we can understand roadside buildings by moving past thinking about a building's representation through presence as a symbol which conveys emotion and thought. The differentiated parts of Interstate 35 come together to create one large megatexture (Figure 1.3) meaning that the ways the parts relate to each other are creating a complex network of connections, similarities, and relations. These include issues such as transportation, waste and environmental impacts, advertisement,

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and infrastructure. While those parts were present when Learning from Las Vegas was written in the 70s, there is a new part that is found within the current megatexture of the 21st century which is the internet, creating a new realm which I call the digital landscape.
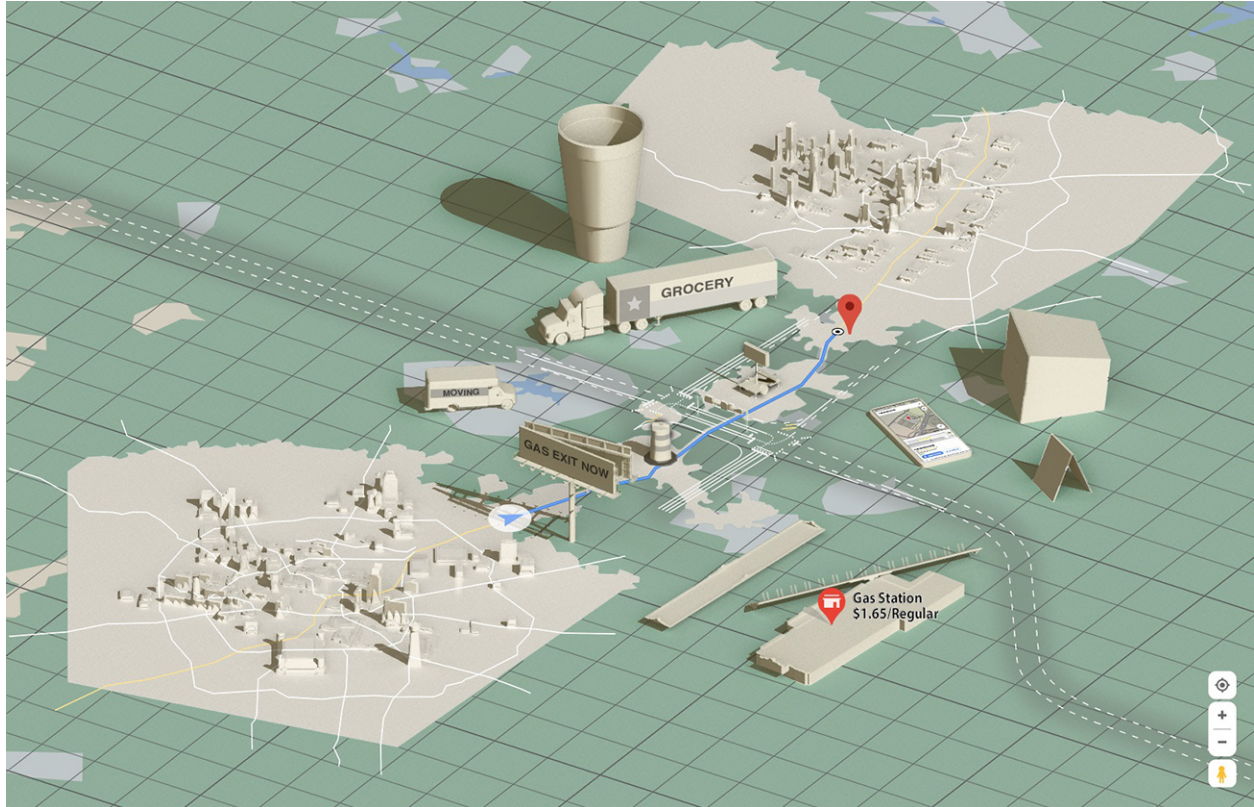

Figure 1.3: The Megatexture of Interstate 35

1.4   The Megatexture of Interstate 35

Not only do these parts exist as a physical presence, but they also now exist as digital mediums. Like how we interact with things in the physical landscape, we now echo these interactions within online platforms and digital screens. Like the Whataburger number analogy, when talking about Buc-ee's, a gas station home to Texas known for its immense size, one may think of the Google Maps interface they used to find the building or a social media post that they saw of someone standing with the famous Buc-ee's bronze statue located at the entrance instead

of just thinking of the building's physical qualities such as size and graphics. Overall, the parts that make up Interstate 35 come together to create an urban fabric, or a whole. A quote from Learning From Las Vegas says that, "The space that divides high-speed highway and low, sparse buildings produces no enclosure and little direction. To move through a piazza is to move between high enclosing forms. To move through this landscape is to move over a vast expansive texture: the megatexture of the commercial landscape" (Brown and Venturi 13).

The megatexture that lies along Interstate 35 comprises dense and semi-dense regions which result in a series of archipelagos that are all connected by the highway that runs through them. Where density is seen at its greatest is found at the intersections and these intersections are filled with decorated sheds yet there seems to be little architectural intervention that takes place among these so-called archipelagos. The intersections each create their own urban fabric challenging the scale of the greater urban context.

There is a set of formal typologies that the buildings along interstate 35 seem to follow. There are 4 types of buildings that are seen at almost every archipelago which include Big Box stores, Hotels, Gas Stations, and Fast-Food restaurants. The big box stores tend to be the anchor for smaller stores and are occasionally accompanied by a gas station at the entrance of their parking lots. Hotels seem to always be situated in a way so that their largest face is facing oncoming traffic from the highway, like the face of a billboard. It is also common to find a hotel accompanied by a restaurant situated in their parking lot. Gas Stations are almost always located at the intersection of the highway and a perpendicular street, an area that experiences the most traffic within the archipelago. And finally, fast food restaurants are always accompanied by others and usually are axially organized with each other.

2.   HISTORICAL CONTEXT, DISCIPLINARY PARADIGMS, AND AESTHETIC STANDARDS

Denise Scott Brown believed there was a set of new urban typologies such as Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Levittown, the swinging singles on the Westheimer Strip, golf resorts, boating communities, the Co-op city, the residential backgrounds to soap operas, TV commercials and mass mag ads, billboards, and Route 66 to name a few. Looking back to the 1970's, the book Learning From Las Vegas that was written and curated by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, provides a new take on the ways we as architects should understand architecture. The book showed us that architectural dialogue should expand and include the buildings that make up the immense urban fabric within the United States, a country becoming more and more defined by the automobile. Their work emphasized the formal, aesthetic, and programmatic moves that were utilized to exploit the automobile by buildings along the Las Vegas strip. The architectural moments of these buildings arguably created what can be considered advertisements within the physical landscape by utilizing animate super graphics. "The graphic sign in space has become the architecture of this landscape" (Brown and Venturi 13).

Looking back even further to the 50s, the Smithson's, in their article But Today We Collect Ads, talk about how advertisers were able to shape the way in which architecture is organized, more than architects were ever able to accomplish because architecture was heavily controlled. "...the influence on mass standards and mass aspirations of advertising is now infinitely stronger than the pace setting of avant-garde architects, and it is taking over the functions of social reformers and politicians". With the presence of our phones and computers in

our daily lives, companies are now able to deliver advertisements at an extreme scale compared to previous decades. In addition to paper, magazines, and billboards, companies can now utilize Instagram, Google, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, and more to establish their presence and thus greatly impact the way people and architecture are organized. Commercial architecture of our current time is exploiting advertisement in both the physical and digital landscapes.

2.1   The Digital Landscape

Like mentioned above, people are occupying the digital landscape just as much if not more than the physical landscape. So, what does this mean for architecture? Companies are utilizing this new medium to exploit the common consumer, just like how the graphic sign was used in the 70s. Visual pollution has transitioned from roadside to phone screen. While a company's advertisement is not always explicit, its presence is affecting our lives almost constantly. It is said that if you are not paying for the product, then you are the product. Take Instagram for example, you don't pay for the app directly, but you are given an advertisement every three posts that is specifically curated towards your digital profile that your phone is creating about you through you likes, searches, and habits. While the common user of Instagram may think they have control over their feed, companies are managing to insert themselves to sell products and push certain agendas. Similarly, while some may think that Google Maps is a simple navigation tool, upon a closer evaluation it is clear that it is aiming to do more than simply direct users to where they want to go but to also guide users in interacting with your designated destinations, whether that be physical or digital. Along with directions, the interface includes links to easy online purchasing, social media pages, and can even tell the user the last time they visited their commercial destination. The creators of Google Maps say that, "Building for global populations meant honoring the emotional connection that people have to places near

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and far… [Google Maps] helps you understand things about the physical world, the way someone far away might look at a paper map and imagine snow-capped peaks and far off forests. It better depicts the world we live in and adds meaning" (Vallis 2020). Google Maps serve to create a mirrored representation of the physical world through simplified 3-dimensional building forms, graphic natural colors, and a vast network of roads. The Google Maps interface now is creating a quasi-landscape of the entire world that can be held in the palm of our hands.

The creative artifact of this thesis serves to speculate the future of companies and how they are going to use architecture in order to exploit their urban fabric. In Delirious New York, Rem Koolhaas creates a fictional conclusion based on his research of architecture found in New York City. This was a useful way for my artifact to respond to the research that has been done thus far because the research really focuses on the evolution of architecture and how the decorated shed is impacting and changing with society. The creative artifact is meant to look at the fictional decorated sheds of the future not in a physical sense but through a digital lens, enforcing the idea that buildings are becoming more understood through the digital landscape and possibly superseding how a building is read in the physical landscape. The fictional conclusion that my creative artifact creates that takes place at intersection 191 which is found on interstate 35, the highway connecting San Antonio and Austin. The artifact is presented as though it is a series of Google Maps searches of buildings found at intersection 191. The buildings that have been rendered at the intersection are meant to represent the current and evolving state of the common roadside building which includes the way people are interacting with the building physically, programmatically, and by means of the Internet.

When talking about consumerism and road-side commercial buildings it is interesting how these ideas are morphing to create the parts mentioned before. With buildings becoming

more reliant on the digital landscape, their physical presences are becoming increasingly simplified, more than they already have been. The big box store has always been, in a sense, simple in their aesthetics and form. Sharon Zukin in her book Point of Purchase says, "The debate over superstores turns partly on aesthetics and a sense of place: these stores are ugly, they turn their backs to the street, they buffer themselves with acres of asphalt parking lots, and they look the same no matter where they are. They attract too many shoppers whose automobiles clog the streets and pollute the air" (Zukin 67). The big box store for example is rather plain in its architectural pursuits when thinking solely about form but the building becomes extremely complex when thinking about symbols and systems.

3. EXPLANATION OF EXHIBIT

3.1 NCBDS

The National Conference on the Beginning Design Student (NCBDS) is a conference focused on gathering a group of professionals, educators, and students such as myself in order to present papers, projects, and discussions pertaining to the beginning design education. The conference has existed for over 35 years and has been hosted at a different university each year. NCBDS originated as a small gathering at the University of Wisconsin in 1972 and was the first-time design educators were brought together to discuss the beginning design education. The third gathering was held in 1984 at Arizona State University and this was the first time it was considered the National Conference on the Beginning Design Student. The conference of 2021 is being held at Texas A&M University, the school where I wrote this thesis. Texas A&M University was originally scheduled to host the conference in 2020 but the Coronavirus forced the conference to be postponed. Because of Coronavirus the conference reverted to a digital model and was held on Zoom, a video conference software. This conference is perfect in terms of presenting this thesis because it hosts a dedicated community of beginning design educators whose interests are to further the education of people like myself.

3.2 Tools for a Digital Learning Space

Like I mentioned before, due to the coronavirus educational practices have reverted to a completely digital platform. We as students have had to adapt and propose solutions to continue our education at the quality of "in person" teaching and working. Over the past couple months, the methods, and tools in which I have pursued, researched, and presented my thesis have been alternative to the common way in which a common creative project is created. The use of digital

tools has allowed me to receive a lot of valuable feedback on my work from just my bedroom, and I believe that this would not be the case if Coronavirus hadn't forced education to on online platform. Some of the tools we use at Texas A&M University for learning purposes include Zoom, Miro and Google Drive. Zoom, a video call application, allows for people to gather in a digital space similar to a physical room. Zoom offers the "share screen" option to present work on a digital screen. It is a useful application because it has allowed for people to gather and learn in a time where we aren't able to meet face to face. We now meet screen to screen, camera to camera allowing us to meet with people on calls in spaces that suit us best and for me it has mainly been my bedroom. The "pin up", a term describing the physical pinning of drawings and images on a wall to be displayed is imperative for architecture students because it allows a way to present projects and receive critiques on designs which is essentially the root of architectural education. Up until now, the physical pin up has been the main method as to how architecture students present work, but like mentioned before, Coronavirus has forced students to seek alternative ways of presenting drawings and images. A tool that allows for this digital pin up is the application Miro (Figure 3.1). Miro is essentially a virtual presentation tool allowing for people to place pdfs, jpegs, videos, and google drive documents onto a digital pin up board allowing for students and educators to use their own cursor in order to view the pin ups with freedom to move their frame of view individually. This creates a space of interaction where the computer cursor takes the place of the physical body and each induvial person is allowed to view the work as they please which is different from a power point presentation in which the viewer is only allowed to see what is on the current slide. Finally, Google Drive has been a tool that has proven very useful even before Coronavirus forced students to revert to an online platform. It is a great way to share files among a large group of people and allow for those people to edit those

files creating a space for group collaboration between students and faculty. We at Texas A&M University use Google Drive to share architectural renders and drawings with our professors and collaborate in groups on projects by allowing for shared ideas and files.
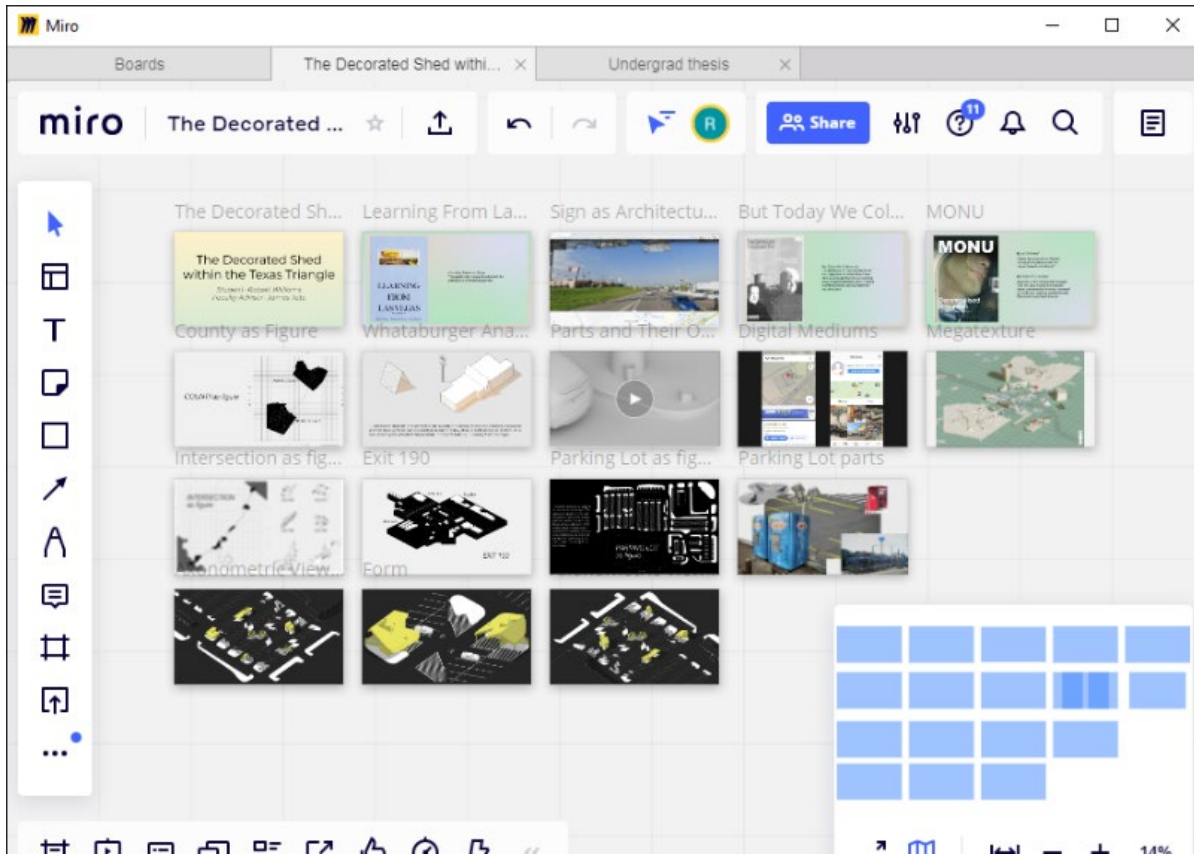

Figure 3.1: Miro, a virtual pin-up board

3.3   Exhibit

The National Conference on the Beginning Design Student required its participants to submit a video presentation prior to the conference to minimize technical difficulties. For my exhibit and presentation, I used Prezi Video, an application that allows for the speaker to record their own face while also displaying a slide show within the same video. The reason I chose to use this is because I found it important to connect with the audience how a presenter would be able to if it were a live presentation rather than an online platform. This allowed me to present

both my arguments and research finds in conjunction with my drawings, renders, and creative artifact.

Something that I have been focusing on in my thesis argument is the idea of the digital landscape and how we as humans interact in the digital landscape at a higher degree than the physical landscape. I think the fact that NCBDS was online is very fitting for my thesis presentation because the presentation now is presented and exists in the digital sense rather than the physical sense. My creative artifact combines the user interface of Google Maps with the renders that I had created pushing the notion that the future of the decorated shed exists in the vast network that is the internet. I find that the fact that the presentation is held through the screen of a computer supplements the research and ides expressed in the presentation and creative artifact.

4.   REFLECTION

The process of formulating a creative thesis I feel is different from that of a scientific paper because a creative field, especially one like architecture, requires a clear sense of precedents and references to establish a framework for the thesis and creative artifact. The overall process I developed to create the thesis was not rigid but rather the research and design process operated in unison. I spent most of the first three months of the project focusing on research and I began to work on my design responses when the school year began. The research process continued throughout the whole creation of this thesis because it was important to be thorough when it came to supporting my creative artifact, representative drawings, and the overall work.

What I found most interesting about pursuing a creative thesis at Texas A&M University was the fact that the university is one that values quantifiable fact and research that can be backed by concrete data. This is different from the creative artifact thesis process because the research consists both of fact but also conjecture and that these two forms of research evidence are what come together to formulate the creative thesis. What I noticed while writing this thesis is that the audience that I am writing too is different than what I have been used to in terms of presenting my work. I had been used to presenting mostly to architects and designers but what I found was that the people that were helping me formulate and format this thesis were non-architects and non-designers, so it became clear that the way I write this thesis needed to adapt to its audience. Something that I value greatly through this process was getting to hear from people who were not within the discipline of architecture and hearing how they viewed my project. It allowed me to think and comprehend the way I was working in ways I have yet to do. For

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example, during my first public presentation of the work I had done, I received feedback from one of the faculty members within the program that this thesis falls under and she told me that she appreciated the drawings I produced because it made her view her surroundings in a different way and that my representational aspirations were cultivating new ways of thinking for her. This feedback helped show me how an architect can shape the way a non-architect can view their surroundings and pushed me to pursue ways of representation that were clear to the common person and not only people with an architectural background. To be an architect is to provide a service to the common people. Something that is interesting about architectural pedagogy, at least the current state of it, is that it self-confined and the conversation and feedback that we as students receive rarely comes from people who exist outside of the disciple, yet we are then expected to go on and practice outside of the rigidity of this so pedagogy. This goes back to architectural agency which has been a major issue within the field of architecture. I think that in order for architects to regain agency we must start including people outside of the disciplines within our discussions but not hinder the way in which we pursue and write about our work, but rather make the work legible for non architects- the people who architects work for.

In terms of the work I produced, I feel that my creative artifact and my research expands the current conversation of architecture in many ways. To start off, I made sure my research was thorough and that I began with established historical research and work within my disciples, the focus of research being *Learning From Las Vegas,* a book that focuses on the ways in which roadside architecture established itself along the Las Vegas strip in the 1970s. This thesis aims to take what is talked about in learning from Las Vegas and apply their findings to the 21st century. This means I also had to research current works and findings in order to understand how the decorated shed evolved from the 70s to the present and also speculate how it will continue to

evolve. Something I talked a lot about with my faculty advisor was the fact that architects currently seem to be ignoring the ways in which the internet and the digital landscape are affecting the way in which people are interacting with buildings. I feel that my thesis established a new focus on the term Decorated Shed by "dusting off" the term and evolving the conversation to something that is more relevant to our society today.

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APPENDIX: CREATIVE ARTIFACT

A Fictional Conclusion

Intersection 191

Intersection 191 is devoted to the future of interstate 35 (Figure A.1). Its relationship with its surroundings and the parts that make its whole are both supporting each other and in combat with each other. The buildings lie in a future that combines past affinities with new technology and culture. It is confused as to what it wants to be. While buildings are becoming increasingly simple in their formal pursuits within the physical landscape, they are becoming more complex when it comes to all the parts that define the decorated shed.

Is there value in the current state of the decorated shed in the early 21st century or should it supersede itself and look to the future focusing on our most prominent issues including climate, transportation, foreign relations, and technology? In terms of technology, the intersection located at exit 191 speculates that the future of interstate 35 is completely controlled by the phone. The phone has managed to completely simplify the way people interact with buildings while making it incredibly more complex by creating a vast network of code and digital interactions. The phone wants to make the human experience as efficient as possible, but does efficiency and perfection ignore the way the people of interstate 35 really live? Going to the grocery store is comparable to driving through a fast food line. Big box stores convert themselves to fulfillment centers and instead of being filled with a market like atmosphere, are now just mega storage containers of products that we consume. Cars are no longer powered by gas but electricity and charging stations are readily available at almost every parking space which is making the gas station a dying commodity, forcing the program of the gas station to

challenge what it once was. Along with the gas station, the career field of architecture starts to wither as people value digital aesthetic, programmatic, and formal issues and it is now up to architects to rethink the way they impact both the built and digital environment.

Do architects have a say in the way intersection 191 is built? Can there be places for people to go other than the interior of their cars or the screen of their phone in this near future?
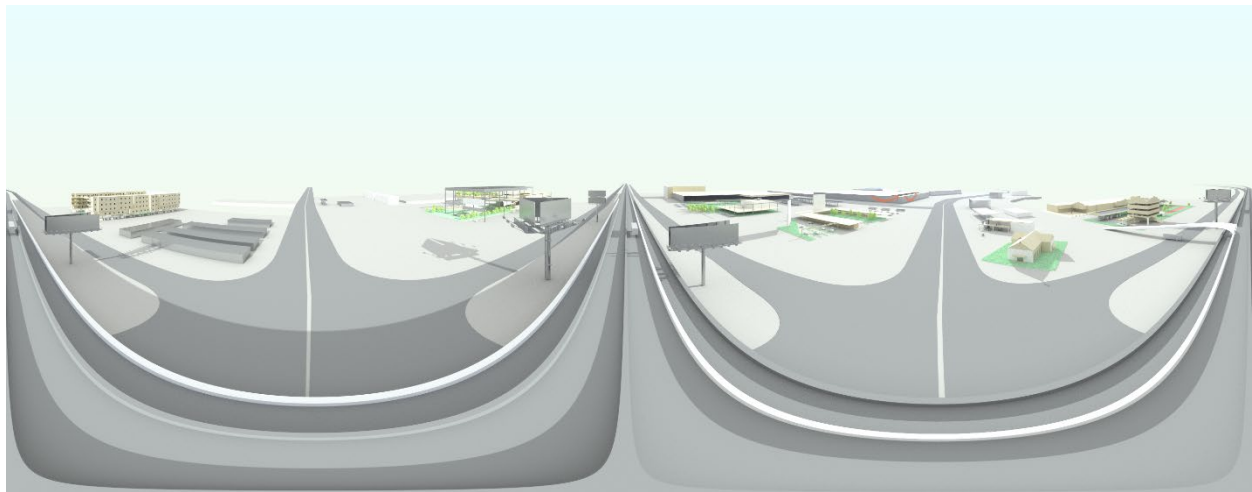

Figure A.1: Panoramic of Intersection 191

The Fulfillment Center Center

The big box store converts to poche, meaning the interior of these corrugated metal structures are not meant for humans and thus are filled in plan. With the presence of fulfillment centers owned by amazon and walmart, where are people now supposed to go? (Figure A.2) There is a new set of urban typologies that these buildings are creating. Walmart thought it was a smart idea to include a motel service connected to their building for the truckers who were waiting for their trucks to be filled. But what else is there? The intersection becomes activated by social condensers, providing grass and spaces for interaction juxtaposed with the asphalt and corrugated metal. An athletic complex becomes the center of social interaction. People flock here

in order to develop their own physical aesthetics through the gym, and interact with others on the field. This building challenges the phone because developing one's physical body is something the phone has yet to replace. Yet the complex also embraces the phone, allowing for people to receive cuts on the cost of their health insurance the more they use the facility and tracking the person's health as they interact with the facility, something only a phone would be able to track. In relation to the social condenser, the fast food complex becomes a place for interaction in and of itself. Once fast food buildings are no longer separated and they all share a single drive in line and kitchen, how do people interact with the space and with each other? Next to the online order and food delivery pick up lot, there is a space for people to eat and kids to play and also an indoor dining area that is cleaned and serviced by the multiple fast food companies that take part in the building. The menu for each restaurant is now accessed through the qr code, a link from the physical landscape to the digital. Overall, the fulfillment center center becomes a confused landscape, combined with poche and space, digital and physical.
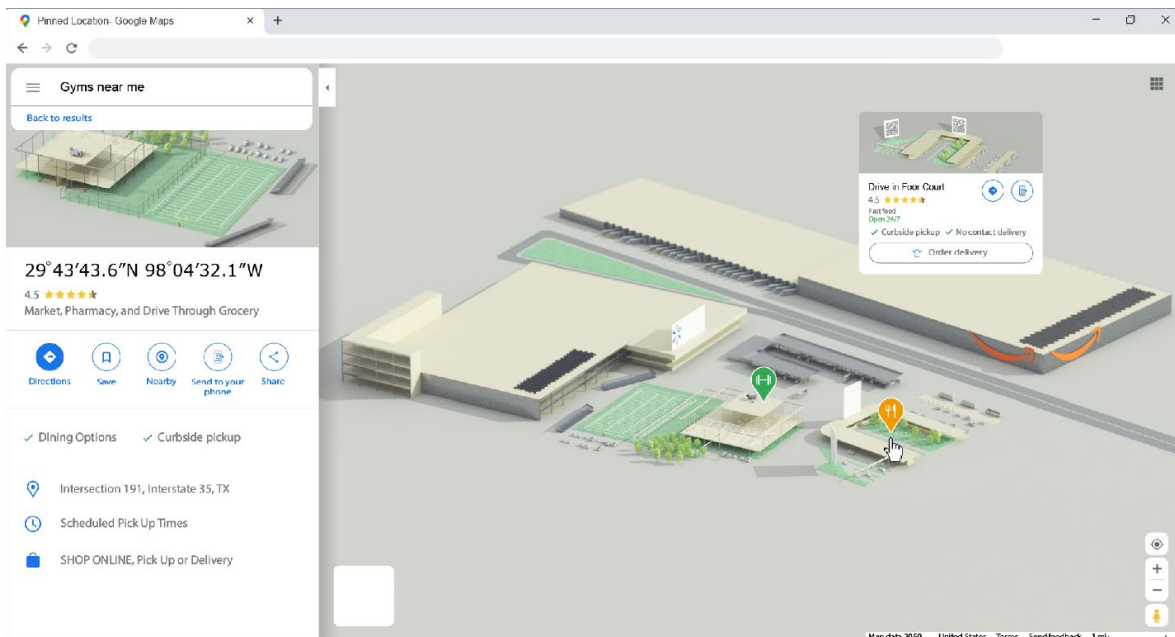

Figure A.2: The Fulfillment Center Center is a collection of building with a multitude of programs including overnight stay, athletic complex, a food court, and of course fulfillment centers.

HEB Market

HEB is now a drive through. (Figure A.3) There is no need to go inside to get your groceries because they can just be ordered online and brought to your car at a designated time. The HEB market is similar to the fulfillment center center because it too has a poche interior but HEB found it important to still create a market-like atmosphere. The building now supersedes architecture as building and becomes a hyper-efficient machine with many different moving parts, whether it be digital or physical activity. The market takes what was previously on the interior of the building and places it in the parking lot. These things include the sushi stand, meat and fish market, fresh produce grown on site, hair and nail salon, a bank, and a pharmacy. HEB in their mission statement promises to make "each and every person count," and that every customer will encounter "great people, best service, freshest products, and low prices with the best value" but there is clearly a deeper agenda, how can HEB profit off of this mission statement? The new HEB questions the market set up and also the products that HEB plans to sell at the market. The store decides that it can use new hydroponic technology in order to grow marijuana, allowed by a recent bill legalizing the crop within Texas. It is powered by the sun creating a LEED certified building which eases people to know buildings are working to fight climate change, whether it be simply a presented image or an actually working model that can solve issues about global warming. The stage allows for guests to utilize the space and also for a venue area to host events and concerts. This entices people to utilize the space in order to sell more products.
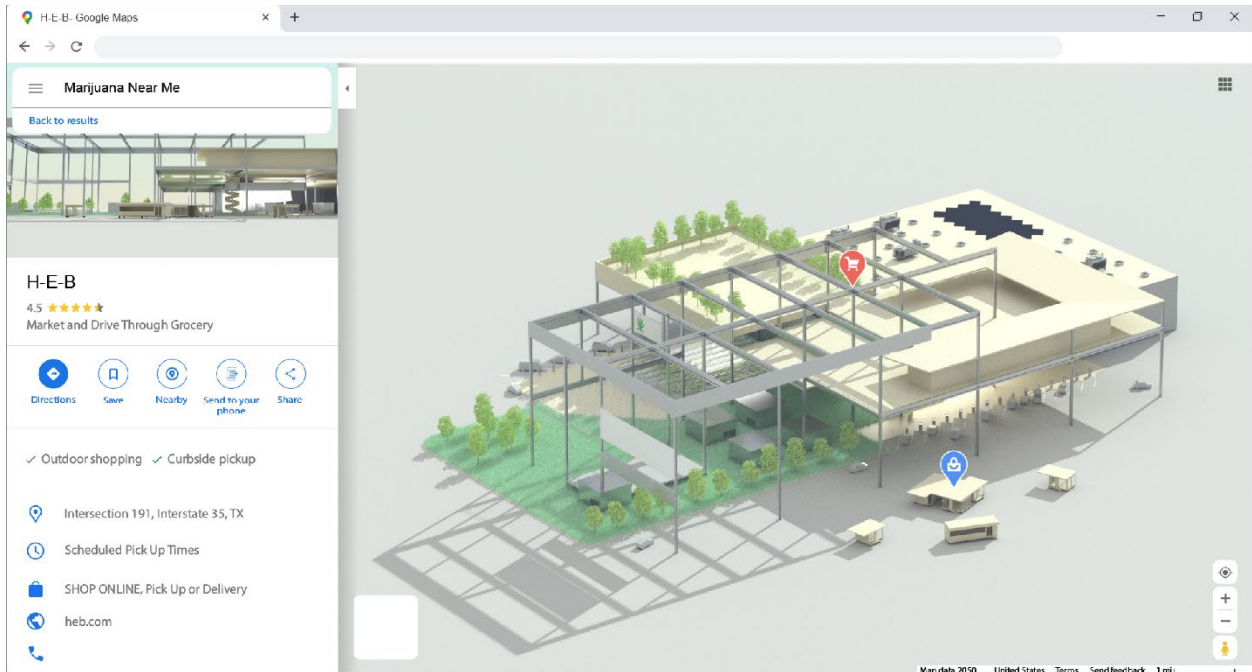
Figure A.3: This HEB no longer allows people to enter inside but now operates more like a fast food line. The grocery store still provides outdoor amenities meant to sell products in a market-like fashion.

The Buc-ee's Plaza

Now that a majority of cars are powered by electric and not gas, Buc-ees has had to change its entire business model struggling to stay open with declining profits. Buc-ee's decided it would use it's extra space to now create a park for people to use as they stop at their store to buy food such as beaver nuggets or an icee (Figure A.4). This is meant to replace what is lost which is the simple pleasure of walking through a store. People who travel with their dogs can now use the dog park located next to the track gathering a community of people together which in turn will hopefully gather people inside in order to purchase items. Buc-ees, noticing that their dying business model was based on the transportation industry, decided that with the extra spaces on their properties they could host bus stations that connect the freeway and allow for people to travel more efficiently. Since Buc-ee's has created a social gathering space, the city has implemented more multi-programatic buildings to create what they consider a mixed use space.

Those buildings include the amazon locker hub (an extension of the near by amazon fulfillment center), an international information booth (due to fake news of course) and a church-movie theater hybrid, utilizing the building parti in order to serve two similar functions (Figure A.5). The amazon locker hub allows people to have packages delivered to a locker rather than sitting on their doorstep, so when someone arrives back from work at the bus station, they can then pick up their recent online purchase. The international information center connected to the amazon locker hub is a way to disseminate reliable information. The surrounding area of the information center allows for no cell service because the information that people have been getting through social media (long live the 24/7 news source) is heavily biased and unreliable. A church, while it provides video streaming, it is recommended people be present in the physical to take part in the ceremonies and the building itself. Buc-ees is known for bringing large amount of travelers and commuters together and they stick to this even in this not so distant future.
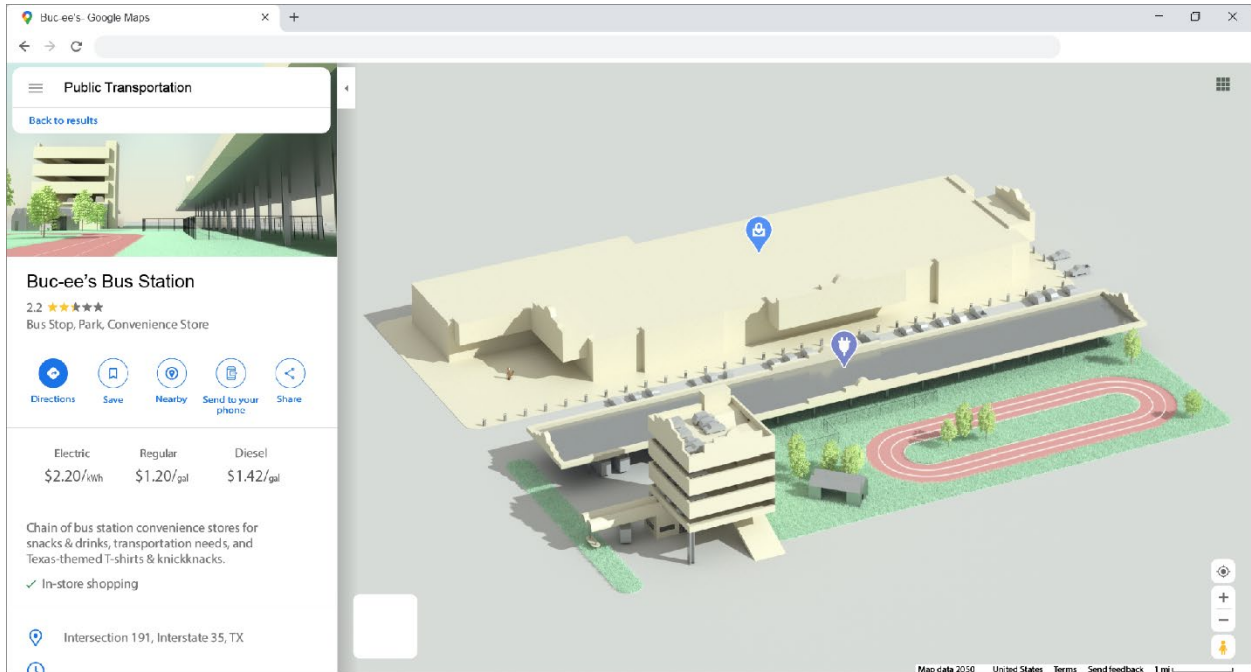
Figure A.4: Buc-ees is no longer a gas station due to the fact that cars are powered by electricity now. This Buc-ee's offers a bus station, a multitude of charging ports, and an outdoor area including a track and dog park.
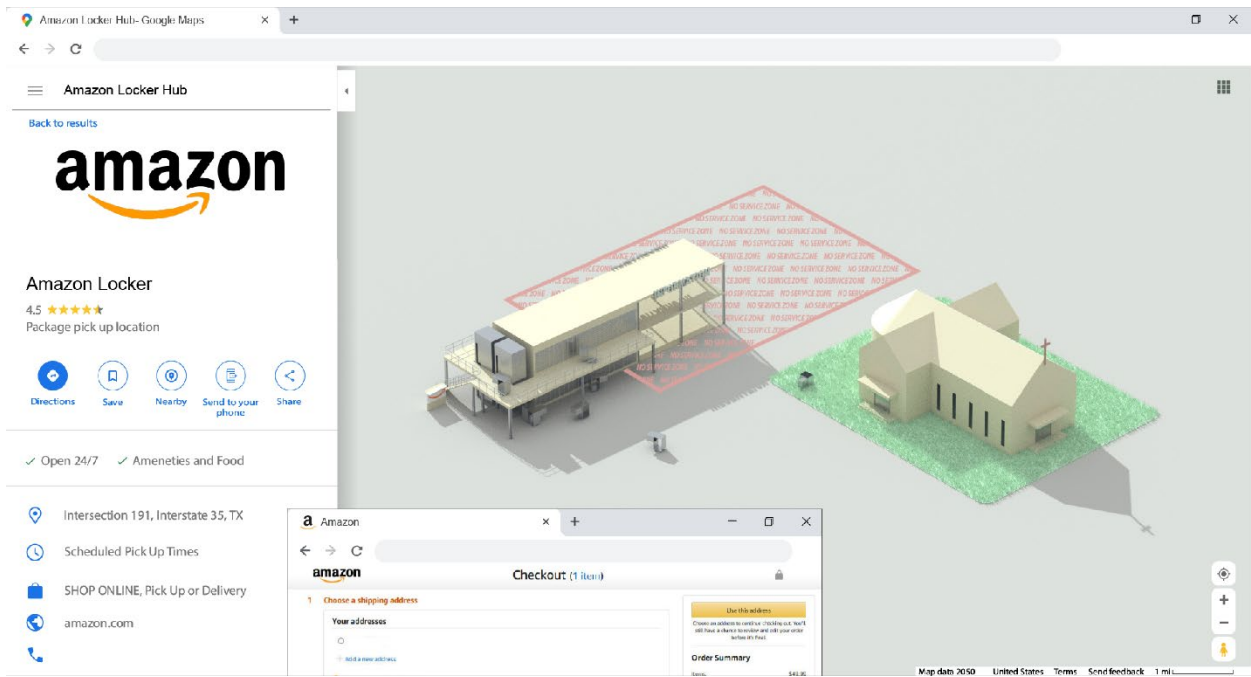

Figure A.5: Amazon Locker Hub, Information Center, and Church.

Hotel 191

Hotel 191 is a center in it of itself. It is a trashy motel as a model for a place that promotes grander social interaction. (Figure A.6) Like a regular hotel it works as a chaotic machine hosting many different activities and people. Those activities include sleeping, drinking, watching tv, intimacy and erotica, swimming, eating, socializing, bathing, etc. They are all happening simultaneously and the architects of Hotel 191 wanted to open the building and displaying these in a plaza like setting. The infrastructure of Hotel 191 contains functions that are extensions of what we consider private settings including the digital and physical landscapes. By doing so, it becomes an interesting place that is allowing for mass communication and also freedom of appreciation and acceptance of provocation. In a world where people are tied to their phones, the hotel takes what would be private and kept on the phone and exposes it, accepting what it means to be human and creating a place to interact with said humans. The building welcomes truckers, commuters, families, swingers, friends, and phos creating a constantly changing community of people echoing the metroplex. Hotel 191 becomes an archipelago within the archipelago within the archipelago and so on.

Figure A.6: Hotel 191 exposes what is usually seen on the inside of a room and presents it to promote social interaction. These things include recreation, eating, drinking, watching tv, and intimacy.