



**Programming Charrette Summary**  
August 1, 2016





Charrette participants brainstorming various possible layouts for the Arts +Creativity Center.

### **Agenda**

- 5:00 Food & Beverage/Mingle
- 5:20 Introduction by the Project Team
- 5:40 Design Team Presentation- Project Overview/Introduction to Charrette Process
  
- 6:00 Breakout Session I:
  - Dwelling*- Designing the Live/Work Space
  - Site*- Designing the Architectural Site Layout
  - Amenities*- Designing Shared Spaces and Resources
- 6:40 Break
- 6:50 Large Group- Session I Review
  
- 7:00 Breakout Session II: Rotation of Groups
- 7:40 Break
- 7:50 Large Group- Summary/Overall Review
- 8:30 End

## Summary of the Breakout Sessions

The format of the charrette included a series of smaller group breakout sessions focusing on three designated topics: *The Dwelling*, *The Site*, and *The Amenities*. After each session, the breakout groups presented summaries of their discussion for review by the larger group.

### ***The Dwelling***

This discussion focused on the design of the individual units that will compose the larger complex. The essence of the project centers around affordable live/work space. How can design assist these dual purposes to come together?

As this issue is composed of many smaller, nuanced and complicated issues, the following questions were offered as jumping-points for the discussion:

*How does the creative process influence daily life? How will the project accommodate families? What are the aspects of the built environment that inspire creativity? How will the project provide for flexibility in live/work lifestyles while still meeting bedroom requirements? How will the project deal with raw space vs. finished space? Will the project include private outdoor space?*



Santa Fe architect Trey Jordan listens on as local artists share their expertise in the A+CC design process.

Each of the two sessions focused on *Dwelling* had distinctly different emphases. Whereas the first group focused on general relationships between the dwelling space and workspace, the second group focused more on specific studio requirements.

Given the premise of the project, an affordable rental complex for low-income artists/craftspeople, the group suggested that particular attention should be given to design aspects that don't necessarily create cost, such as *proportions* and *daylight*.

The idea of *vertical separation* was prominent in the discussion of the relationship between living space and studio space. The group was excited by the idea of using different levels to create designation of space without being too restrictive and explored several possible scenarios including:

- 1) Placing live and work spaces on the same level with a flexible transition between
- 2) Separating live spaces from work spaces with a loft above the studio space below, or
- 3) A crow's nest workspace above the kitchen and bathroom, overlooking the living space below

As no two artists or craftspeople function exactly alike the group honed in on the need for malleable adjacent spaces that would be easily adaptable to suit a wide variety of creative practices and lifestyles. Participants saw value in creating variable studio types – detached, attached, separate, open, but wanted all spaces to be flexible and capable of evolution.

The second group focused on specific studio requirements. Popular ideas included the need for a sound-proof central room, built-in storage, overhead doors, rolling partition walls, smooth walls (with a plywood substrate for secure connections), no carpet, and an open floor plan to maximize flexibility. There was also consensus with regard to the need for a dog park, a playground designed by artists, and use of courtyards to help establish separation between public and private spaces. The group advocated for sustainable design and solar power to minimize utility bills for residents. Providing covered access to the studio was discussed as important for loading art. The topic of security of the project grounds came up, with some expressing concern over access that non-residents would have. The issue of public/private delineation with regards to the project was clearly a subject of particular interest.

An interesting idea sprang up with the consideration the number of bedrooms per unit, the idea of *multigenerational units*. Some participants argued that the project should accommodate a variety of lifestyles including multigenerational housing, where three generations of artists could live together in four-bedroom units. In response, others argued that the units should be seen as *short term* housing, and that the project should encourage the residents to make the most of the live/work arrangements prior to relinquishing the space to the next deserving candidate. While no group consensus was made on this issue, it was a powerful moment where the group addressed the impact of culture and tradition on a variety of lifestyles and living arrangements.

## **CONSENSUS**

While there were a wide variety of opinions shared, the group achieved consensus with regard to a need for the following:

- Garden space
- Children's play area (both private and communal)
- Sound segregation
- Flexibility of space
- A variety of units in order to accommodate different creative practices
- Units that are both raw and constructed of durable materials, giving flexibility to residents to fine-tune units to meet individual needs
- Configuration of the buildings to provide for both community and security
- An equal importance placed on both shared and private outdoor space

## **QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION**

- Is the project intended to be a long-term artist community or short-term residency?
- Will the development be geared towards youth?

- What is the feasibility of providing true live-work space within the given financial constraints?

## THE SITE

This breakout session undertook the consideration of the overall architectural site layout. The discussion centered on the relationship between public and private space including common areas, shared resources and parking.

Creating a residential community of artists and creators that is respectful to both the individual needs as well as the collective well-being is not a simple task. Again, as this single issue is comprised of many smaller nuanced and complicated issues the following questions were offered as jumping-points for the discussion:

*What is the relationship between “creativity” and “community?” What types of physical spaces and equipment are needed to facilitate the creative process? What are the aspects of the built environment that inspire creativity? How can the local artistic community collaborate in the design and construction process? How should the site link to and through the community? What is the role of the acequia which runs along the property? Should the project include community gardens? How should privacy be balanced with collectiveness? Should the development be designed to facilitate studio tours? Should the project include public/shared outdoor workspace? What is the appropriate place for vehicles such as bikes, cars, trucks, vans?*



An interactive model was prepared by Extraordinary Structures to facilitate exploration of the site. This playful arrangement by Edie Tsong explored public and private space.

The topic of *Site* focused on uncovering the organizational and physical requirements that can help foster a creative, productive and yet equally residential environment. These uses are admittedly at least potentially in conflict with one another other, e.g. the need for quiet vs. loud space. What are potential benefits/conflicts that may arise due to the relationship between residential dwellings and creative processes? A 3-D interactive model of the build site was provided in order to allow the groups to explore various possible scenarios for the arrangement of the site.

Here are some of the key topics of discussion:

*Public Space vs. Private Space:*

It became clear from the discussion that the project will need to develop strategies for creating boundaries between public and private spaces. How can design help to prevent public visitors from wandering into resident areas of site? One idea was to employ the strategic placement of workspaces between these areas.

The group also contemplated the project in the context of the larger community, touching on such issues as property edge conditions and neighboring property uses. There was an emphasis on integrating with the larger Santa Fe community in some way while maintaining privacy. Consideration of these conditions helped to facilitate discussion of the orientation of site structures including residential units, workshop spaces and common areas. It was also suggested that the project find a way to connect to existing walking trail system in the area.

*Open Space:*

Participants shared a general consensus concerning the value of open communal space. The inclusion of garden space and the incorporation of the historical irrigation channel or acequia was a popular sentiment, but further exploration will be needed concerning the existing municipal rules which regulate the acequia and its uses. Some thought the project should feature edible landscapes and community food production. It was also suggested that rooftops could be used for gardens and open space. Some expressed the idea that open spaces should be areas for relaxing, decompressing and recharging creativity and that the project should avoid the temptation to “over-program” their use. Another idea to increase the sense of sanctuary was to use berms or other land forms to block offsite noise such as traffic.

*Work Space:*

There was a general consensus that the project should also feature shared/subdivided workspace and that it should included a variety of spaces, with some studios connected to one another and others standing alone as some residents might prefer the separation of work/creative space and the residential unit. It was noted that communal workspaces/tool

sharing can be opportunity for conflict so special care should be taken in developing these space as well as the flow of their use.

The importance of sunlight was pointed out especially with regards to creative space. It was suggested that workshop space should be oriented with solar orientation in mind. Also the need for storage and sound mitigation were high priorities for the group. It was suggested that thoughtful selection of architecture/construction methods such as *Super Adobe* could be used as a solution to noise concerns.

Another idea to increase workspace flexibility and to mitigate noise conflicts was the inclusion of outdoor workspaces that would require shade in the summer and should be usable. It was also suggested that parking spaces could double as personal workspaces.

One concern that arose was that the creation of restrictions with regards to noise and workspaces would create a precedent of restriction that is in conflict with the spirit and intention of workshop community and could lead to further restrictions down the road.

Micro Economy:

The group considered the possibility of including small commercial elements into the project design. One suggestion was for a shared retail space/store front on Siler Road. This would allow residents the opportunity to display and market their crafts and creations. Other suggestions included hosting a radio station, a coffee shop, a shared gallery and even a laundromat. Other revenue creating ideas included a rentable venue that would pay dividend to the residents. Electricity generation through the use of solar panels was also seen as a possible revenue stream. It was suggested that team continue to look at existing projects such as the Brewery Art Collective in Los Angeles, as possible models for revenue generation.

*Parking-*

There was consensus on the importance of vehicles to the residents in practical matters. Keeping the automobile spaces close to the units was a goal shared by the group. The group discussed the possibility of utilizing vehicular space as an extension of the studio space. This happens frequently at the Second Street Studios where table saws and other equipment are sometimes pulled into an immediately adjacent parking space.

The pros and cons of a few specific options for parking orientation were discussed. Placing parking below the dwelling would offer a protected space, while orienting parking adjacent to the units would provide for more convenient extension of studio space. It was also offered that the project should consider 1) rear loaded parking, 2) parking areas that double as event space and 3) the use of parking as a buffer between residences and adjacent industrial properties.

## **CONSENSUS**

The level of interface and separation between the public venues and the private residences was found to be a strong concern among the participants. The importance of privacy and personal space will need to be addressed in the site planning and programming. Strong consensus was

also found in the utilization of the existing acequia as a foundational armature for the site's open space. The project should include a combination of connected and separate studio spaces. It should allow for the possibility of outdoor performance/exhibition space, as well as take into consideration the importance of the proximity of parking to the units and the potential for entrepreneurial enterprises throughout the site.

#### **QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION**

- How can open space be programmed for the public without opening the entire site to non-residents?
- How can outdoor workspace be designed and sited, in an affordable manner, that avoids creating an artist petting zoo?
- Can open space provide effective linkages to adjacent land and possible future developments?

## THE AMENITIES

The last breakout session dealt with the topic of *Amenities*. Artists need amenities to create and residents need amenities to live. The following questions were used to kick off the conversations:

*What types of spaces and equipment are most needed to assist in the creative process? What specific amenities (shared, public and residential) should be included in the project? How might the shared and public amenities relate to the residential amenities? Should the project include public and/or shared outdoor workspace?*



Creative minds at work.

Two primary recurring issues were *common areas* and *flexibility*. Various spaces should be thought of as commons – outdoor open space, meeting space, gallery, shared workspaces, etc. It was suggested that these spaces should be designed to permit the free-flow and exchange of ideas. Participants expressed a desire for flexibility in both living and amenities spaces, e.g., movable walls, open space plan, bare bones apartments, multi-purpose amenities buildings, as well as flexible outdoor space. Participants were most concerned with the overall flexibility of entire complex. Size and flexibility of work space were considered to be more important than

living areas; most would prefer an open plan, loft-like space rather than traditional apartment space. Sharing resources between residents along with promoting active communication and an open exchange of ideas was thought to be of the utmost importance.

The public/shared amenities building should include:

- Shared space that would allow for dialogue through artistic practices.
- A non-competitive partnership with Meow Wolf, where the shop has different equipment, in order to share resources. Some thought we should not spend money on high tech equipment but focus on craft based needs.
- Shared Studio/Shop Equipment: plasma cutters, welding, sewing/upholstery equipment for autos, mechanics tools, big machinery hard to find in SF, kilns, etc.
- Theater rehearsal space and performance space. This would require flexible lighting grid/risers, which could be moved around along with flexible flooring, lighting and sound equipment. It was recognized that provision of rehearsal space was more likely as it could be used for other purposes as well.
- Outdoor performance/theater/music space is important and both indoor and outdoor space should be flexible, ie: should be mobile/located in a variety of possible locations.
- Mercado to sell wares
- Space for pop-up events
- Gallery space especially for those without representation
- Outdoor space should be designed to be functional for events such as low-rider shows that embrace a larger view of what it means to be creative.
- Residents should have priority access to resources. Would there be resident user fees to support operations and maintenance?
- There was a repeated emphasis on the need for sufficient electrical outlets both inside and out, and on roofs, for theater/performance/music and workshop equipment.

The private amenities building should provide for:

- Library/Resource Center/Meeting Space (residents can house and share personal books), a shared space to exchange ideas, share knowledge, engage with other residents and possibly the public (lectures/presentations).

Design of amenities buildings and shared work space will impact dwellings. A strong case was made that the quality/size of workspace is more important than living space. Someone expressed that if units had outdoor space, living spaces could be smaller.

## **CONSENSUS**

The amenities will define the culture of the project and will impact the type of residents who live there. Amenities are key to interaction of residents and construction of community. When asked about including collaborating artists in the design and fabrication of the buildings and landscape in the development, the group saw more value in use of the buildings as blank canvases for rotating murals, new media/projections, and public engagement art. A public wall would provide the image of a dynamic and ever changing creative community and a means for young artists to gain visibility. Repeated calls were made for ample storage space both private

and shared. It was thought that the amenities must be carefully programmed to complement and not compete with existing resources in the neighborhood.

With regards to amenities, sustainable design and alternative energy should be implemented with the goal of lowering utility costs. Also with regard to amenities, acoustics, soundproofing, and security must be carefully planned for and controlled.

#### **QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION**

- Are the amenities the heart of the development or should they be placed so as to facilitate interfacing with the larger community?
- Should the amenities be on the street, in a consolidated facility, or distributed and integrated into the residential buildings?
- How will shared spaces be managed and scheduled?
- Who will own the tools, audio/visual equipment, etc?
- It's obvious that this project can't be everything to everyone. It was suggested that the types of artists targeted needs to be limited (4 or 5 types?) so the amenities provided will be made the most of and result in a more productive and harmonious live/work environment.