# Unbuilding

Dominique Peck 2018

COLUMN A

The teaching and research program Urban Design (UD), acting as the organizer of the summer school Building a Proposition for Future Activities 2016, was expected to restore the area on which the summer school took place to its original, if equally planned, state of a parking lot. During an on-site inspection, the client's project manager, an employee of a project management office and a lecturer from the UD drew up a task overview for the restoration. The summer school organizer was responsible to completely dismantle and dispose of the wooden shelter including tables and benches on the parking lot by the first week of November. Whether the materials and built structures would be stored elsewhere outside the construction site or thrown away was up to the organizer. The client provided an appropriate waste container and carried the costs for its delivery and pick up. The client further expected the organizer to return any unused materials and tools to the contractor of the housing project UPW. The project management points out that until the stability is proven and verified, HCU and the client will remain responsible for the construction of the façade as well as for any potential damage to property or persons resulting from the construction.

> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfsrvVhgCzA
> Stoldt, Milena. 2016. Unbuilding. Project Management in Urban Design
> Manual. CC BY-SA 4.0 The video shows the activities around the unbuilding
> on 31.10.2016.

ABOUT COLUMN A

> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPvvho9uAVE
> Keller Easterling in conversation with Nikolaus Hirsch and Brian Kuan Wood.
> 05.02.2014. e-flux Videos

The Intercultural Practice seminars explored, designed, tested and produced the form and content of the Summer School Building a Proposition for Future Activities. In the following semester, the students would once again deal with the project *Begegnungshaus Poppenbüttel* in the seminar

Project Management in Urban Design. For this purpose, the lecturers developed the concept of project archaeology. They encouraged the students to start working with the project archaeology through an interconnected discursive and performative form of practice. The project archaeology can make use of a number of methods and forms of representation, including description, film, images, but equally discussions, forums, guided tours etc. In this way, the evidentiary aspects of the summer school were to be translated into a mode documenting and reflecting upon their coming into being, their emergence and development, in other words, translated into an archaeology of the project.

The aim was to document the dismantling process so as to enable the exploration of the various processes before, during and accompanying the building activities in a way that allowed reading them as ways of encountering one another and concluding by problematizing the now – retrospectively – logical phase of the project's conception. By the time Hamburg's parliament promoted the project, the structuring phase 0 was nearly completed, while the reflective review as well as the reorganization of the stakeholders into a project group and a steering group was scheduled to take place during the project's conception phase. The seminar Project Management in Urban Design served to newly make available the project's material in all its aspects. Project archaeology thus figures both as method and means of representation.

As the seminar started, the students only had vague ideas of the structural aspects of the unbuilding and the objects they would be dismantling. What emerged from the discussion of some video clips and accompanying readings in the first session was the notion that spatial arrangements are usually conceived as products with particular costs and simultaneously as means to specific ends. The exercise rested on the assumption that students would be able to determine on site, for instance, that the squared lumber sheets used for the construction of the structure had largely remained in their original condition as found in the heavy-duty shelves at the DIY store before their delivery to the construction site, both in their materiality and their cut-to-size parts. While reflecting the video in light of the notations on the dimensions and connectivity of the individual pieces of timber, the students were able to reconstruct that the structure could be built by laypersons under the supervision and/or cooperation of trained specialists as long as fundamental principles were observed, e.g. not cutting up the pieces of timber when taking apart the timber structure. Deconstructing the structure thus made it possible for two people to retrieve all the original materials and carry them. Without using tools to cut, the process also proved to be faster and safer.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Ym9wUxi7KU

Schneider Tatjana. 2018. "Problematizing Social Engagement, as part of the weeklong workshop and seminar series Toolkit for Today: Activisms." *Canadian Center for Architecture CCA*.

The seminar's location on site enables an affirmative process of exploration and recording of what has happened. This way, a priori critical perspectives are grounded with facts, on the basis of which dense descriptions can be produced for critical analysis. The objects, which at first appear as complete, clean and self-contained, can be grasped as performatively changeable through the process of self-responsible dismantling. This, in turn, allows the students to problematize the framework conditions in which the practice took place and to relate it in their representation to further conceptual practices or historical references. Deliberately set up as an interdisciplinary seminar, students articulate different kinds of knowledge and engage in relating these to their respective means (of representation, of production). The articulation of the processes of embodied knowledge production goes hand in hand with a contextualization of the respective backgrounds and reflection of particular ways of problematizing, which contributes to understanding the importance of proximity as central to the project. As motifs, positions and limitations are anchored squarely in the project, they become negotiable. The exercise of dismantling the extended minimal structure thus prepares for a retrospective projection of the conversations to be had and an understanding of who is to sit around the table.

REFERENCES

Easterling, Keller. 2014. *Subtraction. Critical Spatial Practice 4*. Berlin: Sternberg Press.