## **Behind the Manhattanist Facade**

Towards an reassessment of the energy performance of the atrium in the Seattle Public Library Building

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#### Introduction

In the heroic period of Modernism, architects dreamt of the International Style, simple, pure, sun-giving architecture. In the middle of the last century, in the relics and remnants of the foregoers' positive avant-gardes, architects and theoreticians propose the well-tempered interior as the universally applicable form of built environment and standard of comfort. The year 1989 has perhaps marked the era of neoliberalism in the post-Communist world, that one of capitalism which deregulates at all levels of market economy, that one which produces, as its primary effect in the built environment, not grands projets so much as Junkspace, the lifeless proliferation of the dull, uninteresting, featureless "well-tempered" interior of desire, fetish, and ecstasy: a world-interior of capital. With building materials and building components becoming increasingly modular, universally applicable, predigitised, prefabricated, standardised, and globally available, such ubiquity is pyrrhic: now that we all (strive to) live in air-conditioned tiny little interiors, nobody could remember experiences and environments without them. The international standardisation of indoor comfort standards is perhaps one of the best achievements in the field of climatic control ever since, and what is also viably true is that it has become the most remarkably taunting failure, a farce, a beautifully-crafted vandalism and has also engendered chains of environmental issues and crisis. The psychedelic, illusory capitalism of today has clearly become a fait accompli, powered by the continuous, spectacular landscape of the almost immaterialised, artificially climatised building interiors.

"Masterpiece has become a definitive sanction, a semantic space that saves the object from criticism, leaves its qualities unproven, its performance untested, its motives unquestioned." (Koolhaas)

This project challenges a "masterpiece" – the Seattle Library Building by Koolhaas. It analyses the performance of an as-found artefact inside the library atrium and, through a series of variations and simulations, demonstrates that the as-found condition successfully delivers a well-tempered interior space as a civic building. However, in order to challenge the idea of a well-tempered, homogeneous interior, this project blasts out several singular, discrete, and anomaly points from the homogeneous field of comfort and boredom. It investigates the space 3-dimensionally and transcends the restrictions of current means of simulation based on a 2D meshed plane. The proposed design intervention reacts to the spatial distribution of the singular/anomaly points and encases a threshold zone of activities

## Case Study: Seattle Public Library

#### Research

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Atrium Envelope



Living Room Area Space and Functions



Patio Detail



Facade Detail

Structure

#### **BY DAVID BADDERS/ P-I ARTIST**

# INSIDE THE NEW LIBRARY

Vertical

forces

#### AN ENGINEERING CHALLENGE

The building's vast open spaces and cantilevered platforms were made possible through the innovative use of vertical and sloped columns, trusses, and a steel diamond-shaped outer grid.

#### VERTICAL FORCES: GRAVITY AND WEIGHT

Because of its unconventional design and the "floating" nature of cantilevered floors, engineers minimized the use of true vertical columns (there are only 20 in the entire structure) and introduced a series of sloped columns on its perimeter to help support the building's weight.

#### THE ANCHOR

The floors that make up the Books Spiral and Reading Room (floors 6-10) use sloped columns to support not only the weight of all that area, but they also support the floors directly above and below. The trusses directly support each of the floors within "The Anchor" and transfer its weight from sloping column to sloping column.

#### True vertical columns

Sloped columns These unconventional columns are angled to create open spaces while These columns are typically spaced 30 to 36 feet apart in a grid determined by the column layout of the supporting platforms that are not in underground parking and extend the entire height of the building.





FOURTH AVENUE OVERHANG The meeting room platform extends 45 feet over the sidewalk, creating a sheltered plaza below.

## CANTILEVERED CORNERS CONCRETE CORE To maintain a floating appearance, none of the corners is directly Counter balance supported by columns Lateral

Sloped columns True vertical co Trucco

#### LATERAL FORCES: WIND AND EARTHQUAKES

The diamond-shaped steel grid that encloses the building not only provides resistance to wind and earthquake forces but also helps hold the building's glass system, or curtain wall, in place. Conventional buildings require separate seismic and curtain wall support systems but in this case the steel grid serves both functions. The grids collect wind and earthquake forces and transfer them down to the next platform until they are absorbed by the concrete base.



CLEANING ALL THAT GLASS Taking into consideration Seattle's love of the outdoors and plethora of rock-climbers, the architects installed metal carabiner clips around the building for daring window washers to traverse the building



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and shade throughout the structure, and optimize the energy



building. The platforms are connected at their perimeters by an envelope of steel latticework that functions both as the building's facade and as its primary resistance to lateral loads. Engineers used airflow and sunlight studies to maximize the energy efficiency of the building's expansive glazed surfaces and open spaces.

Civil Engineering MARCH 2003

Drawings







Basement

Ground Floor Lobby

2nd Floor Commons







Upper Floor Archives

Upper Floor Archives

Upper Floor Office



Upper Floor Archives



Site Plan

Drawings



Sections

Elevations



Massing Models

## PRIMITIVE ARTEFACT -- SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARAY

01: Digital Model02: Simulations03: Physical Model

#### Primitive Artefact: Seattle Public Library Digital Model

Digital Model – Main Elements of Space



Model of Seattle Library

Layers of Model

# Primitive Artefact: Seattle Public Library Digital Model Single Artifact : Atrium



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# Primitive Artefact: Seattle Public Library Digital Model Factors on Artefact



# Primitive Artefact: Seattle Public Library Digital Model Plan & Section of Atrium







Annual Temperature Profile









Irradiation and sky condition Radiation





Irradiation and sky condition Total Sky Cover



Irradiation and sky condition Sky Visibility within Site Context





Sun Path - Ladybug climate chart





Total Radiation 01 Jan 00:00 - 31 Dec 23:00 city : Seattle-King County Intl AP-Boeing Field country : USA time-zone : -8.0 source : TMY3 Total Radiation 01 Jan 00:00 - 31 Dec 23:00 city : Seattle-King County Intl AP-Boeing Field country : USA time-zone : -8.0 source : TMY3

Wind Speed



Wind Direction - Ladybug climate chart



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Wind Speed (m/s) city: Seattle-King County Intl AP-Boeing Field country: USA time-zone: -8.0 source: TMY3 period: 1/1 to 12/31 between 0 and 23 @1 Calm for 19.97% of the time = 1749 hours. Each closed polyline shows frequency of 0.7% = 50 hours. Wind Speed - Average (m/s) city: Seattle-King County Intl AP-Boeing Field country: USA time-zone: -8.0 source: TMY3 period: 1/1 to 12/31 between 0 and 23 @1 Calm for 19.97% of the time = 1749 hours. Each closed polyline shows frequency of 0.7% = 50 hours.



Wind Direction - Ladybug climate chart



Wind Speed (m/s) city: Seattle-King County Intl AP-Boeing Field country: USA time-zone: -8.0 source: TMY3 period: 4/1 to 4/30 between 0 and 23 @1 Calm for 23.33% of the time = 168 hours. Each closed polyline shows frequency of 1.5% = 8 hours.



Wind Speed (m/s) city: Seattle-King County Intl AP-Boeing Field country: USA time-zone: -8.0 source: TMY3 period: 8/1 to 8/31 between 0 and 23 @1 Calm for 0.0% of the time = 0 hours. Each closed polyline shows frequency of 1.1% = 8 hours.



Wind Speed (m/s) city: Seattle-King County Intl AP-Boeing Field country: USA time-zone: -8.0 source: TMY3 period: 12/1 to 12/31 between 0 and 23 @1 Calm for 21.24% of the time = 158 hours. Each closed polyline shows frequency of 1.4% = 8 hours.





**Plan** Rhino Model





**Direct Sun Hours** 

# hours





**Incident Radiation** 





**Section** Irradiation Simulation





Sun Hours Simulation



Irradiation Simulation - Atrium



Irradiation Simulation - Envelope



Wind simulation



Physical Model

Primitive Artefact - Seattle Public Library







## VARIATIONS

00: As-found Annual Simulations01: Facade Tilting Angles02: Atrium Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions03: Mezzaine Depths

#### Variation 00 : As-Found Annual Simulations

#### From the Coarse Grid to the Singularised Grid

 From the Coarse Grid to the Singularised Grid

 Variation Period:

 Variation Period:

 Variation Parameters:

 Facade Tilt:
 +0 deg

 Atrium Y:
 12m

 Mezzanine Offset:
 0m





 Variation Period:
 DirSunHrs@1 JAN 00:00 [HOY=0] - 31 DEC 23:00 [HOY=8759]

 Variation Parameters:
 Facade Tilt:
 +0 deg

 Atrium X:
 12m

 Atrium Y:
 12m

 Mezzanine Offset:
 om



 

 Non the coarse Grid to the Singularised Grid

 Variation Period:

 DirSunHrs@1 JAN 00:00 [HOY=0] - 31 DEC 23:00 [HOY=8759]

 Variation Parameters:
 Facade Tilt:
 +0 deg

 Atrium X:
 12m

 Atrium Y:
 12m

 Mezzanine Offset:
 0m

 +0 deg 12m 12m 0m



#### Variation 01 : Facade Tilting Angles



Top 10% of the Tessellated Grid - Singularised Grid 1m x 1m x 1m









#### Variation 02 -- Atrium: Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions

# From the Coarse Grid to the Singularised Grid Variation No.0: As-Found Simulation Period: DirSunHrs@1 JUN 00:00 [HOY=3624] - 28 JUN 23:00 [HOY=4295] Variation Parameters: Facade Tilt: +0 deg Atrium X: 12m Mezzanine Offset: 0m



Variation No.5: 6x12 Atrium Simulation Period: DirSunHrs@1 JUN 00:00 [HOY=3624] - 28 JUN 23:00 [HOY=4295] Simulation Period: Variation Parameters: Facade Tilt: Atrium X: Atrium Y: Mezzanine Offset: +0 deg 6m 12m 0m



#### From the Coarse Grid to the Singularised Grid Variation No.6: 18x12 Atrium Simulation Period: DirSunHrs@1 JUN 00:00 [HOY=3624] - 28 JUN 23:00 [HOY=4295]

 Simulation Period:
 DirSunHrs@1 JUN

 Variation Parameters:
 Facade Tilt:
 +0 deg

 Atrium X:
 18m
 Atrium Y:
 12m

 Mezzanine Offset:
 0m
 0m
 0m



 

 Simulation Period:
 Discuntrise 1 JUN 00:00 [HOY=3624] - 28 JUN 23:00 [HOY=4295]

 Variation Parameters:
 +0 deg

 Atrium X:
 6m

 Atrium Y:
 30m

 Mezzanine Offset:
 0m

 +0 deg 6m 30m 0m



 Variation No.8: 12x30 Atrium

 Simulation Period:
 DifSunHrs@1 JUN 00:00 [HOY=3624] - 28 JUN 23:00 [HOY=4295]

 Variation Parameters:
 +0 deg

 Atrium X:
 12m

 Atrium Y:
 30m

 Mezzanine Offset:
 0m



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 Simulation Period:
 DirSunHrs@1 JUN 00:00 [HOY=3624] - 28 JUN 23:00 [HOY=4295]

 Yariation Parameters:

 Facade Tilt:
 + 0 deg

 Atrium X:
 18m

 Atrium Y:
 30m

 Mezzanine Offset:



#### From the Coarse Grid to the Singularised Grid Variation No.10: 6x18 Atrium Simulation Period: DirSunHrs@1 JUN 00:00 [HOY=3624] - 28 JUN 23:00 [HOY=4295]

 Simulation Period:
 DirSunHrs@1 JUN 00:00 [HOY=3624] - 28 JUN 23:00 [HOY=429]

 Variation Parameters:
 Facade Tilt:
 +0 deg

 Atrium X:
 6m

 Atrium Y:
 18m

 Mezzanine Offset:
 0m



#### From the Coarse Grid to the Singularised Grid Variation No.11: 12x18 Atrium Simulation Period: DirSunHrs@1 JUN 00:00 [HOY=3624] - 28 JUN 23:00 [HOY=4295]

Simulation Period: Variation Parameters: Facade Tilt: Atrium X: Atrium Y: Mezzanine Offset: +0 deg 12m 18m 0m



#### From the Coarse Grid to the Singularised Grid Variation No.12: 18x18 Atrium Simulation Period: DirSunHrs@1 JUN 00:00 [HOY=3624] - 28 JUN 23:00 [HOY=4295]

Simulation Period: Variation Parameters: Facade Tilt: Atrium X: Atrium Y: Mezzanine Offset: +0 deg 18m 18m 0m



Variation No.13: 6x6 Atrium Simulation Period: DirSunHrs@1 JUN 00:00 [HOY=3624] - 28 JUN 23:00 [HOY=4295] Simulation Period: Variation Parameters: Facade Tilt: Atrium X: Atrium Y: Mezzanine Offset: +0 deg 6m 6m 0m



#### From the Coarse Grid to the Singularised Grid Variation No.14: 12x6 Atrium Simulation Period: DirSunHrs@1 JUN 00:00 [HOY=3624] - 28 JUN 23:00 [HOY=4295]

Simulation Period: Variation Parameters: Facade Tilt: Atrium X: Atrium Y: Mezzanine Offset: +0 deg 12m 6m 0m



From the Coarse Grid to the Singularised Grid Variation No.15: 18x6 Atrium Simulation Period: Variation Parameters: Facade Tilt: +0 deg Atrium Y: 18m Atrium Y: 6m Mezzanine Offset: 0m



## Variation 03 -- Mezzaine Depths From the Coarse Grid to the Singularised Grid Variation No.0: As-Found DirSunHrs@1 JUN 00:00 [HOY=3624] - 28 JUN 23:00 [HOY=4; Simulation Period: Variation Parameters: Facade Tilt: Atrium X: Atrium Y: Mezzanine Offset: +0 deg 12m 12m 0m Depth of Mezzaine 48800mm $\times \times$ $\times$ $\times$ Top 20% of the Coarse Grid Coarse Grid 3m x 3m x 3m Probability Distribution Function (PDF) — Coarse Grid 35% — Top 20% 30% 25% 15% 10% 5% $\rightarrow \blacksquare \times \times \\ \stackrel{\underbrace{\mathfrak{L}}}{\longrightarrow} \times \times \times \blacksquare$ Top 20% of the Coarse Grid - Tessellated Grid 1m x 1m x 1m 30 60 06 120 150

Distribution of DSH Results

Top 10% of the Tessellated Grid - Singularised Grid 1m x 1m x 1m

# From the Coarse Grid to the Singularised Grid Variation No.16: Mezzanine -6m Offset Simulation Period: DirSunHrs@1 JUN 00:00 [HOY=3624] - 28 JUN 23:00 [HOY=4295]

Simulation Period: Variation Parameters: Facade Tilt: Atrium X: Atrium Y: Mezzanine Offset: +0 deg 12m 12m -6m



# From the Coarse Grid to the Singularised Grid Variation No.17: Mezzanine -12m Offset Simulation Period: DirSunHrs@1 JUN 00:00 [HOY=3624] - 28 JUN 23:00 [HOY=4295]

Simulation Period: Variation Parameters: Facade Tilt: Atrium X: Atrium Y: Mezzanine Offset: +0 deg 12m 12m -12m



# From the Coarse Grid to the Singularised Grid Variation No.18: Mezzanine +6m Offset Simulation Period: DirSunHrs@1 JUN 00:00 [HOY=3624] - 28 JUN 23:00 [HOY=4295]

Simulation Period: Variation Parameters: Facade Tilt: Atrium X: Atrium Y: Mezzanine Offset: +0 deg 12m 12m +6m



# From the Coarse Grid to the Singularised Grid Variation No.19: Mezzanine +12m Offset Simulation Period: DirSunHrs@1 JUN 00:00 [HOY=3624] - 28 JUN 23:00 [HOY=4295]

Simulation Period: DirSunHi Variation Parameters: Facade Tilt: +0 deg Atrium X: 12m Atrium Y: 12m Mezzanine Offset: +12m



## SINGULAR ARTEFACT

00: Singularization Pathmap

- 01: Digital Model
- 02: Simulations
- 03: Physical Model





**00: Singularization Pathmap** Facade Tilting Angle -- Annual Direct Sun Hours



point in atrium

Sum direct sun hours for the first 28 days of month

January It is noticed that there is a concentration of points of anormaly around the corner in the south.



February Direct solar exposure is decreasing even for anormaly points in the south, and such trend relates to the points in the south, and such trend relates to the general reduction in direct solar exposure for the overal volume. Contributing factors to this phenomenon is therefore presumed as the rise of sun altitute angle which increases the amount of direct rays blocked by the overhead building volumes and shading devices.



March It is observed that there is an increase of solar gain at the north end and the general pattern of direct sun access presents a shift towards the northern part of the volume.



April In this month the access to direct sun could be regarded as almost homogeous throughout the volume



May As points of anormaly continuously shift northwards, it is noticed a difference in direct solar access at two ends of the volume.



November The scope of anormaly points in the south expand spatially, while the extreme values gradually blend into the overal increase of direct solar access.

July In July, it follows almost the same pattern as in June, and it is also predicted that for the rest of the year the distribution of anormaly points would regress backwards to the south as is the opposite to the first half of the year.

August In this month the anormaly points became again homor neously distributed.

September As the points of anormaly move southwards, there is a rise in such points of strong direct solar access in the southern corner.

10 - 15 m above FFL

June It is noticed that there is a concentration of anormaly points with considerable access to direct sun throughout the month, and such concentration are distributed in the north end of the volume. Specficially, typical locations range from 10 metres to 15 metres above the finished floor level of the lobby.





December Again in December there is a concentration of points of anormaly with effective access to direct sun light in the south part of the volume, ranging from 3 m to 15 m above the finished floor level.

From the Coarse Grid to the Singularised Grid	
Singularisation	Pathmap (1)

Variation Par Facade Till +0 dea 12m 12m 0m Atrium X: Atrium Y: Mezzanine Offset:



#### From the Coarse Grid to the Singularised Grid Singularisation Pathmap (2)

Variation Parameters: Facade Tilt: +0 deg Atrium X: 12m Atrium Y: 12m Mezzanine Offset: 0m



**Anomalies Artefact** 



**Anomalies Space** 



#### Anomalies Spatial Prototype 1



#### Anomalies Spatial Prototype 2



**Anomalies Spatial Prototype 3** 

#### From the Coarse Grid to the Singularised Grid Singularisation Pathmap (3)

Variation Parameters: Facade Tilt: +0 deg Atrium X: 12m Atrium Y: 12m Mezzanine Offset: 0m



Summer + East Corridor

Summer + West Corridor

Winter + West Corridor

Winter + East Corridor

Winter + East Corridor



#### Cones Trimmed by Facade



**United Cones** 





















