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Women in the Design World: Work in Progress

Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts

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9-7-2014

Lea Oxenhandler, LEED AP / Bachelor of Arts in  
Architecture, 2009

Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts

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**THE CITY SCHOOL | A CRITIQUE OF THE ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING OF URBAN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS MAY 2012**

The architectural relationship between schools and their cities can become radically more contextual and porous, allowing schools to overcome the introverted 'campus' typology and branch out to the rest of the urban fabric they have historically isolated themselves from. This spatial and programmatic configuration allows schools, which are often lacking a key framework of amenities and resources, to best serve their own students, sharing programmatic resources across traditional physical and bureaucratic boundaries.

Utilizing existing vacant buildings and land on a large site in Philadelphia, this thesis seeks to create an interior and exterior teaching landscape that explores a learning environment that has a more open relationship to its surrounding community. Through adaptive reuse, this model for a new urban school system seeks to improve the overall urban experience both within and outside of schools.

This Master of Architecture thesis work was done at the University of Pennsylvania School of Design and advised by David Leatherbarrow.



Alumnae Biography

**BIOGRAPHY**

Lea Oxenhandler is an architect who engages her passion for design to address the needs of the urban environment through multiple professional and personal endeavors. Lea works at internationally-recognized architectural firm KieranTimberlake. While at KT, she has worked on large scale civic, institutional, and government projects such as the New London Embassy and

an integrated Master Plan for Rice University. Additionally, Lea is a founding member and serves as the President of the Board of Directors for the School Redevelopment Initiative, a 501c3 non-profit organization that advocates for reuse and redevelopment of former schools and other vacant buildings in Philadelphia. While at Washington University, Lea studied Architecture, graduating with Service Honors in 2009.

**AWARDS**

National Institute of Building Sciences Member Award, BIM Development for STEM Education, 2014 First Place, Fels Institute Public Policy Challenge, *Closing Schools Opening Opportunities*, 2012 The Craft Economy, Cape Town, South Africa, National Science Foundation Grant, 2011 E. Lewis Dales Traveling Fellowship, University of Pennsylvania School of Design, 2011

**PUBLICATIONS**

*Collective Disruption: Wandering Without Wandering*, Spring 2013, PLAT 3.0, Rice University *Modeling a Base on Mars*, May 2014, Updates, KieranTimberlake.com *Repurposing Schools Gives Life to Vacant Buildings*, May 2012, Governing Magazine *Good Ideas for Philadelphia from Students in Penn Competition*, April 2012, The Philadelphia Inquirer

**EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES, LONDON  
MEMBER OF ARCHITECTURAL TEAM AT KIERANTIMBERLAKE  
CURRENTLY IN CONSTRUCTION**

**STATEMENT**

The Embassy of the United States in London, scheduled to open in 2017, is located within a public park in the emerging Nine Elms district on the River Thames. The crystalline building affords openness and transparency through an energy-gathering façade, flexible work and meeting spaces, and interior gardens.

The new embassy, located in the Nine Elms district, will serve as a major redevelopment for the South Bank of the Thames, bringing new life to a formerly industrial area and creating a pedestrian greenway to link Vauxhall to Battersea.

The complex holistically manages water, energy, and materials—integrating building systems to lessen consumption and extend life-cycle. Incorporating core values of openness and equality along with a high degree of sustainability, the embassy sets a new paradigm for buildings dedicated to diplomacy.

Renderings by ©KieranTimberlake/Studio amd



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