

Student architecture on display in Pullman

Structures offer settings for 'exchanges' between people, environment



Geoff Crimmins/Daily News

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Washington State University architecture student Seth Clark sits in a structure his classmates built out of shipping pallets Thursday in Pullman.

By Katie Roenigk, Daily News staff writer Moscow-Pullman Daily News

Three new buildings appeared throughout the city of Pullman this week, erected by graduate students in the School of Architecture and Construction Management at Washington State University.

Their assignment was to use donated or found material to create a 6-by-6-foot structure that would enable some sort of exchange to take place. For Laura Uskevich and her group, for example, the exchange was one of knowledge among students - that is why they placed their "pallet-able" structure near the Compton Union Building.

"We were hoping students could come here to talk about their classes and things they had learned," Uskevich said on Thursday before presenting her project to her peers at the CUB.

Another team envisioned an exchange between people and nature, placing their building above the Pullman High School football field overlooking the Palouse.

"There's a great view there at sunset," student Talia Olson said.

She invited members of the Pullman community to visit the location and take advantage of the temporary viewing area, adding that it has been fun to see her work displayed in a public place.

"It's pretty rewarding," Olson said.

Another group worked on something they call a "hygge box," inspired by a tradition in Denmark wherein people dedicate time each day to relaxing with friends and being "warm and cozy" according to student Jeff Luedeman.

"I thought it would be neat to introduce the concept to the Pullman community," Luedeman said.

He described his team's structure in downtown Pullman's High Street Plaza as more intimate and enclosed, with candles available inside for ambiance. The building is made primarily out of cedar, and scraps of marble have been fashioned into a counter top.

Student Mark Lo said the physical construction process was his favorite part of the project.

"It was interesting to pull different materials out to play with," said Lo, who has been involved in several design-build projects in the past.

Other students in the class were new to the hands-on portion of a construction project, however, and they said it was enlightening to see the difference between creating a design on paper and constructing a real building.

"This was my first experience building something at a 1-to-1 scale," student Betsy Humbert-Lawton said. "With that came a lot of challenges."

Materials had to be gathered, then actually put to use, all to the satisfaction of every member of each four-person group. And once the structures were built, students had to go through permitting processes in order to display them.

"You have to consider logistics and coordinate everything," student Orlando Orozco said. "These are real-life skills."

Uskevich said the "real world" impacted the final outcome of her project in a major way, as her group initially had envisioned a place where students could keep warm.

"We had to abandon that," she said, explaining that it wasn't feasible to insulate their structure using only borrowed or found materials. "So we kept it basic instead."

They realigned their goals, aiming instead for a building that would draw pedestrians toward a part of the campus that rarely gets used.

"These benches don't get used often," Uskevich said, pointing toward the CUB. "So we put a diagonal (hallway) there to bring people off of the mall to experience part of the CUB they haven't seen before. ... I hope people will enjoy that."

Professor Taiji Miyasaka was happy to hear that he had been able to offer a new experience to his students. This was his first trial with this kind of project, and he said he anticipates similar lesson plans in the future.

"I learned a lot," he said this week.

Katie Roenigk can be reached at (208) 882-5561, ext. 301, or by email to kroenigk@dnews.com.