

RE-IMAGINING RED SQUARE

A CREATIVE IDEAS CHALLENGE

ROUND 3: DESIGN COMPETITION



Image credit: Cody Logan

RE-IMAGINING RED SQUARE is a creative ideas challenge for the University of Washington's Central Plaza, commonly known as Red Square. The challenge takes place in 3 rounds:

Round 1: Understanding the experience of Red Square

During Round 1, first-year Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA) and Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA) students collected and documented information about Red Square: its history, how it has been used, and how it is perceived by current students, staff, faculty, and visitors. Round 1 was completed in Autumn 2018 quarter.

Round 2: Landscape Architecture Ideas Charrette

For Round 2, all BLA and MLA students participated in a weekend-long design charrette to develop and document creative approaches to Re-Imagining Red Square. Round 2 occurred January 11-13, 2019.

Round 3: UW Design Concept Competition

Round 3 is a nine-week long design competition open to all UW students. Student teams will develop and document design concepts for Re-Imagining Red Square. The competition will run from February 1 – April 7, 2019.

RE-IMAGINING RED SQUARE is IDEAS only, there is no expectation that any of the winning submissions will be built. Instead, we expect the creative work of UW students to provoke a deeper conversation about the latent potential of Red Square to serve as a vibrant heart of the UW Campus. These ideas should seek to increase the welcoming character of the plaza as a special place on campus for everyone in the UW community.

The challenge is sponsored by the Department of Landscape Architecture, the Office of the Provost and the UW Facilities Office of Asset Management. Additional information about the challenge and each round, can be found at: larch.be.uw.edu/re-imagining-red-square/

SCHEDULE

- Competition Launch:** Friday, February 1, 12:00-1:20 pm, Gould Hall (Team Leader must attend)
- Q+A Period:** Friday, February 1 – Wednesday, February 6, 11:59 pm.
- Review #1:** Wednesday, February 13, 5:30-8:30, Architecture Hall, rm 042 (Team Leader must attend)
- Review #2:** Wednesday, March 6, 5:30-8:30, Architecture Hall, rm 042 (Team Leader must attend)
- Submissions Due:** Sunday, April 7, 8:00 pm. See Submissions Instructions for more details.
- Jury Deliberations and Awards Announcement in early May.**

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COMPETITION BRIEF

RE-IMAGINING RED SQUARE asks you to redesign the University of Washington's Central Plaza, commonly known as Red Square. The heart of our campus, Red Square is nearing 50 years old. Over the last half century, it has weathered student demonstrations, Seattle winters, hundreds of thousands of pedestrians and cyclists, quiet moments and great celebrations. Although considered by some as an example of Northwest modernist architecture, the plaza is often perceived by students, faculty and staff as "stark", "uninviting", and "a space to move through" as well as being slippery when wet. Additionally, in the coming years, the plaza will require significant upgrades to address issues of water leakage into the parking garage roof below and public safety, wayfinding, and accessibility concerns.

This challenge asks you to RE-IMAGINE Red Square as a dynamic, receptive, and engaging space where students, staff, faculty, and visitors want to linger; a place that embraces creative, environmentally-smart landscape and stormwater strategies; a place that accommodates all users regardless of weather, time of day, or number of users; a place that serves as both the figurative and spatial heart for campus and link to UW's developing West Campus and University District; in short, an iconic space that exemplifies the unique character and spirit of the University of Washington and the Pacific Northwest.

This challenge seeks to explore the following questions:

- 1) What is the primary role of Red Square on our campus? What could it be if it were re-imagined?
- 2) How can a contemporary identity for a campus plaza activate a strong connection to Campus Parkway as a link to the broader urban context of the University neighborhood?
- 3) How can placemaking mix with strategies of performance, ecological health, and sustainability?
- 4) Given the significant history of Red Square, how does the contemporary interpret the historical, and how, together, do they anticipate the future?

Teams should provide a plan, a short explanatory text, and supporting imagery (such as diagrams, vignettes, context images, etc.). The challenge criteria highly favor conceptual rigor and imagination and places emphasis on engagement with the questions outlined above. Teams should seek an integrated design proposal or collection of design strategies rather than a series of independent "surface" modifications or additions. Basic issues of feasibility, circulation and accessibility, safety and programming will also be taken into consideration by the jury.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Central Plaza (Red Square), located on the main campus of the University of Washington, Seattle WA is one of the most well-known open spaces on the campus. The site under consideration includes the main Red Square as well as the area around the George Washington Statue. Built in 1971 and designed by Kirk, Wallace, McKinley & Associates; Walker and McGough, it is one of the largest plazas on the campus and sits above a three story, 1000 space parking garage. Surrounded by libraries, an administration building, lecture halls and a performing arts center, the space is used for informal gathering, staging events and demonstrations and is a convergence of north/south and east/west circulation routes across campus and into the surrounding University District community. With five entrances to the plaza, it links the east/west and north/south parts of the campus and serves as the forecourt for Suzzallo and Odegaard Libraries, Gerberding, Meany, and Kane Halls. Most people who visit, work, or study on UW's Seattle campus pass through it daily. Additionally, the Plaza is highly active both during the day and at night as special events are scheduled in adjoining buildings and in the plaza itself.

The minimum area that must be addressed in this challenge is defined by Suzzallo Library to the east, Kane Hall to the north, the Henry Art Gallery to the west and Gerberding and Meany Hall to the south. Attention should be paid to the five entrances. Additionally, ideas that view the Plaza as a catalyst for extending further into the campus would be welcomed.

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SITE HISTORY

From Norman Johnston The Campus Guide: University of Washington:

“During the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition of 1909 (AYPE), this was the site of the U.S. Government Building, an enormous pentagonal structure occupying almost the entire space of today’s Central Plaza (in common parlance, Red Square). What one sees there today is a relatively recent realization of Suzzallo’s dream and the Regents Plan as interpreted in large part by Carl Gould: a great plaza connecting two major axes, that of the Arts (Liberal Arts Quad) and that of the Sciences (Science Quad). These two fields of study are locked together symbolically where their axes meet, at the heart of the university, Central Plaza, the library towering over all of it. It was a powerful vision, remarkably expressed in the campus of the University of Washington. Today’s interpretation of that dream is more modest, less symmetrical, and less Gothic. It is a generous open space, rather irregularly defined at its perimeter by the forms of the buildings now surrounding it. Its paving is said to be inspired by the great Piazza del Campo in Siena, a brick surface (slippery when wet!) with radiating dividers reaching out from a central low, four-part, concrete slab platform for the plaza’s outer edges. Deciduous trees offer some relief, especially when in leaf, from its overall starkness. Dominating the Plaza are three tall clustered brick-clad pylons. Though it is possible to mistake them for an enormous abstract sculpture, or the beginnings of a campanile they serve in fact as the vents for the underground garage below the plaza.

At one corner just off the Liberal Arts axis to the northeast is noted painter/sculptor Barnett Newman’s two-ton, twenty-six-foot-high steel sculpture, Broken Obelisk. A gift to the university from the Virginia Wright Fund in 1971, the piece is in wonderful harmony with its environment, as if it had been specifically designed for it, but instead is a happy coincidence. As noted in a University Information Center brochure, Newman created the obelisk from fabricated Cor-ten steel that now has weathered to a rusty brown.”

According to a May 17, 1996 The Daily article about Red Square, the other notable work of art at the west end of the plaza, a large bronze sculpture of George Washington, was created by artist Larado Taft. The University purchased the sculpture in 1909 with assistance from the state legislature and contributions from the Daughters of the American Revolution.

In 1967, the University approved a plan to construct a 1000 space parking garage under Suzzallo Quadrangle, the grass-covered quad that preceded Red Square. The parking garage was built in 1969 and due to concerns about leaking and the weight of a grass lawn over the parking garage, the University decided to use a brick covering of three-quarter inch bricks. Carbon monoxide fumes are released from the parking garage through the 140-foot brick monolith near Kane Hall and the large central benches are used as intake vents for the parking garage ventilation system.

Although sometimes rumored to have been paved with red bricks (which become slippery when wet) for ease of hosing down student protestors in the 1960s, Red Square was in fact a grass quad until the parking garage was constructed in the late 60s/early 70s. Architect and UW alum Paul Hayden Kirk designed Red Square and several of the surrounding buildings including Meany Hall and Odegaard Undergraduate Library as a Northwest modernist composition. Kirk is quoted in a February 5, 2007 The Daily article as stating that the plaza “should be open for the people to use and the big groups to get together.”

Similarly, the story of how Red Square got its name is often misunderstood. Paul Dorpat describes the story in his HistoryLink.org “Essay 2566: Then & Now – Suzzallo Library” (January 1, 1999): “...the red-tiled expanse officially named the Suzzallo Quadrangle, but almost always called Red Square. This popular name may have been inevitable, but its choice was helped along by Cassandra Amesely, news editor of the university newspaper, The Daily. Given a class assignment in propaganda, she decided, “My project would be to get the students to refer to it as Red Square.” And, of course, she managed the news and the name.”

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Responds imaginatively and boldly to the challenge and questions outlined in the Brief.
- Clearly and convincingly communicates how the concept(s) responds to the site, context, and functions spatially and temporally.
- Presents ideas that are comprehensible for a wide audience, increases understanding of place-making on campuses, and is deeply compelling for University administration, students, staff, faculty and visitors.

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ELIGIBILITY

The Design Competition (Round 3) of Re-Imagining Red Square: A Create Ideas Challenge is open to all UW undergraduate and graduate students enrolled full-time for Winter and Spring 2019 quarters. Participation in Round 1 and/or Round 2 is NOT required to participate in Round 3.

TEAMS

Students teams may have 3-5 members. Teams may include eligible UW students from any department or unit, however the Team Leader must be a student from the College of Built Environments (CBE). CBE students from any of the five departments (Landscape Architecture, Architecture, Construction Management, Urban Design and Planning, and Real Estate) are eligible to be a Team Leader. Teams for Round 3 are NOT required to include a team member from Round 1 and/or Round 2. Additionally, students who participated in Round 1 and/or Round 2 are NOT required to team with their team members from an earlier round.

Multidisciplinary teams are preferred as are teams that include both undergraduate and graduate students. Up to 6 teams will be selected through the registration process to participate.

To facilitate team formation for the Design Competition (Round 3), there will be two informal "Meet & Greets". Prospective participants may attend one or both of the Meet & Greets.

- Wednesday, January 16 in Gould Hall Court, 12:00-1:00 pm. Winners for the Ideas Charrette (Round 2) will be announced at 12:00 pm. Students from Round 2 will be present.
- Wednesday, January 23 in Gould Hall, 3rd Floor gallery, 5:30-6:30 pm.

The Ideas Charrette (Round 2) submissions will be exhibited in Gould Court from Tuesday, 1/ 15 – Friday, 1/ 18 with student names added after jury deliberations. On January 18, boards will be relocated to the 3rd floor of Gould Hall.

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

Teams will register online via the competition website: larch.be.uw.edu/re-imagining-red-square/

The following information is required for registration:

- Name, UW email, Degree, and Home Department for **each** team member.
- Designation of Team Leader (must be a CBE student)
- Team Statement of Interest (3-5 sentences) – statement of interest should describe your team's interest in participating in the competition and any other supporting information.

QUESTIONS + ANSWERS

Teams may submit questions of clarification regarding the Design Competition beginning February 1 until February 6, 11:59 pm. Questions should be directed to Julie Parrett (parrettj@uw.edu). A summary of all questions and answers will be provided to all teams.

PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY REVIEWS

All teams are required to participate in two (2) Professional Advisory Reviews (Reviews). For each Review, teams will prepare a short (5-10 minute) presentation (verbal and visual) after which they will receive comments from the professional advisors. Each team will have 25 minutes total for presentation and comments from reviewers. Presentation images may be digital and/or printed/hand drawn. All teams will present on the same night, however only team members of the team presenting, professional advisors, and competition organizers may attend a team's review. The team leader is required to attend, however other team members are highly encouraged to attend.

- Review #1: Wednesday, February 13, 5:30-8:30 pm, Architecture Hall, room 042
- Review #2: Wednesday, March 6, 5:30-8:30 pm, Architecture Hall, room 042

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SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Each team must submit two (2) design boards:

- Each 32" x 42", oriented vertically (portrait).
- All information (text and images) must be contained on your team's design boards. There will be no verbal presentation or additional printed materials or models allowed.
- Your team number must be clearly visible in a bottom corner of each board, minimum font size 24 pt, no closer to the board's bottom and right edges than ½-in.
- All entries will be judged anonymously. No identifying information (names or images) other than your team number, may be included on your design board. Any boards with identifying information will be disqualified.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

All submissions are due by 8:00 pm Pacific Time on Sunday, April 7, 2019.

Team will submit their design boards digitally as a single pdf file no larger than 25 MB. Files should be uploaded to the RE-IMAGINING RED SQUARE website: larch.be.uw.edu/re-imagining-red-square/

File naming:

- RS_Round3_Team[teamnumber].pdf ie: RS_Round3_Team03.pdf

Only entries submitted on time and in accordance with submission requirements will be eligible for judging and awards.

PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS

No Professional Advisors will also serve on the Design Competition (Round 3) jury.

- Nancy Chan, Landscape Architect, Hewitt and UW Alumna
- Mark Johnson, Architect, Signal Architecture
- Lara Rose, Landscape Architect, Walker Macy
- Kara Weaver, Landscape Architect, GGN and UW Alumna
- Sandy Fischer, Landscape Architect, Fischer Bouma (alternative for 2nd review)

JURY

The Design Competition jury members will be announced during Winter Quarter. No members of the Ideas Charrette (Round 2) jury or the Professional Advisors will also serve on the Design Competition (Round 3) jury.

AWARDS

First place: \$5,000 in scholarship funds to be distributed among all team members.

The jury may select and award additional prizes.

Awards will be announced in May, 2019.

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MATERIALS PROVIDED TO EACH TEAM

(Note digital versions of all materials are available on RE-IMAGINING RED SQUARE website under “Resources” tab - <http://larch.be.uw.edu/re-imagining-red-square>)

- Campus Survey of Red Square (printed 24”x36” at 1”=40’) (pdf + cad versions on website)
- Aerial of Red Square (printed 24”x36”)
- Competition Brief

MATERIALS AVAILABLE ONLINE

- History and Context of Red Square posters (Round 1 work)
- Data Visualization of Interviews conducted in Red Square Autumn 2019 (Round 1 work)
- 2015 Campus Landscape Framework – select pages printed
(full document - <https://cpd.uw.edu/do/tours/campus-landscape-framework>)
- 2018 Campus Master Plan – select pages printed;
(full document – <https://cpd.uw.edu/campus-master-plan>)
- Environmental Analysis of Red Square (2005 Landscape Studio)*
- Structural Analysis of Red Square (2005 Landscape Studio)*
- Circulation Analysis of Red Square (2005 Landscape Studio)*
- Presentation on Red Square by Kristine Kenney
- Historical Photographs of Suzzallo Quad and Red Square
- All Ideas Charrette submissions (Round 2 work)

*In Autumn 2005, Daniel Winterbottom and Elizabeth Umbanhower co-taught a graduate landscape studio entitled, “Re-envisioning Red Square”. Their studio explored some of the same issues and concerns about Red Square. RE-IMAGINING RED SQUARE has benefitted greatly from their knowledge and experience and the work produced by the students.