Concrete Mazes and Brutalist Trails: Wayfinding at Lane Community College

Comprehensive Project
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The Problem:

The Site:

Built in a single architectural style: New Brutalism
--Rejection of grids and Beaux-Arts order
--Rejection of architectural detail
--Avoidance of elegance or comfort
--Mechanical systems displayed overtly

The Client:

College vision: “Transforming lives through learning”
Students—the real clients

The Problem—Its Effects:

An illegible environment has a profound effect on learning

Contributing Factors:
Too much unity—color, material, style, form
Too much diversity—
--no axes or organizing principles
--no direct routes, and multiplicity of routes
--multiple elevations
--no spatial hierarchy
--lack of spatial definition
--no clear districts
--no consistent frame

The Strategy:

Spatial Definition:

1. Give buildings memorable names.
2. Define spatial nuclei—Districts are defined not by building masses but by spatial volumes.
4. Locate a landmark in each nucleus.
5. Mark accessible routes.
6. Delimit main entrance routes.

Environmental Graphics:

1. Develop user-friendly map.
2. Develop hierarchy of standard sign types.

A Selection of Before-and-After Examples:

Lack of spatial definition
--no clear districts
--no consistent frame

Psychological

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Social

Food, shelter, safety

Physical

Actualization

Exploration