

David

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Architecture

Christopher Counts wins Moore Square Design Competition



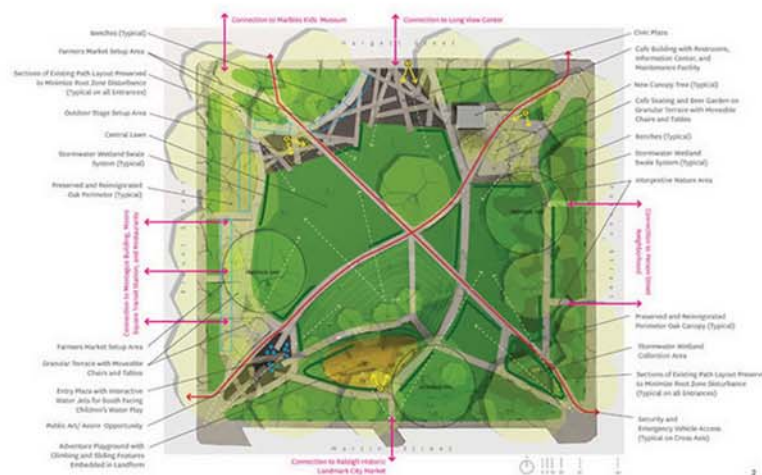
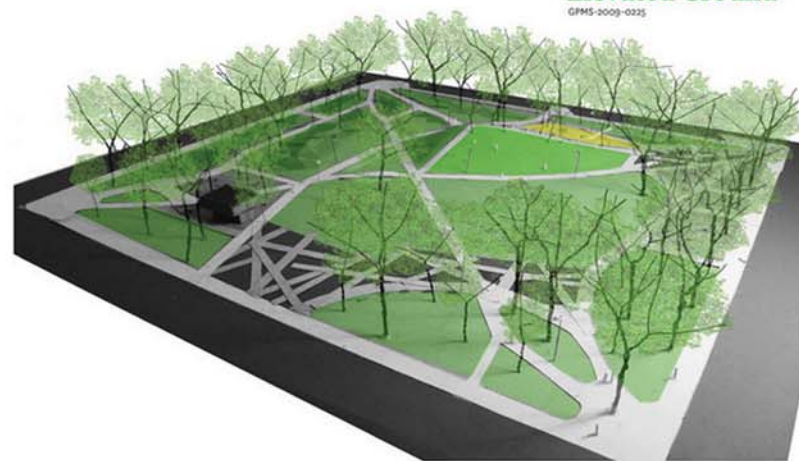
Above: One of Christopher Counts' Renderings

Back in April the city announced the Moore Square Design competition. The competition was an opportunity for the public to get involved in the future of the square- a public that had many opinions about what that future should be. The juried competition had 79 applicants from all over the Southeast and the country. The competition was heavy and local firms showed up in a big way taking 2nd place and most of the honorable mentions. In the end though it was Christopher Counts Studio of Charlottesville Virginia who took the first place award.



New Raleigh, we have had a lot of conversation about Moore Square. Writers had criticism that the block was already the city's living room, that we are trying to revitalize what is already very much alive, and very real fears of more needless gentrification.

Elevated Ground
 GPM-2009-0325



The winner, Chris Counts, presents a design that looks at the tradition of Moore Square and then adds some novel features to the park. Counts' entry had many of the same elements that were in other entries, rain gardens, playgrounds and a major effort to protect the existing oak perimeter. Those elements are essential in this project, as the natural elements of the park are by far the most valuable and hardest to replace. Surrounded by restaurants and retail already, Mr Counts' team placed a cafe in the northeastern corner of the park. That particular element seems symptomatic of a team unfamiliar with the surrounding retail climate of downtown Raleigh and the businesses around the park. But Counts' team also included 'adventure playground' and identified each of the heritage oaks in the park. The comprehensive vision and novel features seems to have won the judges over.