

Ebey's Landing Visitors' Center

484 / 584 studio • Fall 2009

Peter Keyes



Ebey's Landing, located fifty miles north of Seattle on Whidbey Island, is a unique place in the northwest, a landscape of prairies, woodlands, saltwater beaches and mountain views.

To preserve this cultural landscape, Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve was established in 1978 as the first national historic reserve administered by the National Park Service. It comprises approximately 22 square miles of land which is largely preserved in its original donation claims, and contains over 90 buildings listed on the National Register. The commercial center of the Reserve is the historic town of Coupeville, founded by New Englanders in 1853 as a port on Penn Cove on the east side of the island.

The Captain Haller House, built in 1866 at the corner of Front and Main, is in remarkably original condition. On adjacent sites on Main, there is a small park and a 50-year-old building being demolished; altogether, this will create a half-block, half-acre site in the center of town. The Park Service may be able to acquire the house to serve as the core of a new visitor center in downtown Coupeville. This studio will look at the design of the whole site, including how the house can be restored and adapted, how new visitor functions can be accommodated (in new construction), and what other uses can be accommodated, including commercial space and parking.

The two large-scale issues of this studio will be

- the design of new buildings to fit in a historic context, including compliance with new design guidelines being implemented by the town, county and reserve.
- the urban design of the immediate area, using the new construction to shape the public space and better connect the main streets of Front, Main and Coveland.

While the driving issues will be large, the buildings themselves will be relatively small, allowing students to develop their designs to a very detailed level.

Field trips

The studio will visit Coupeville on a field trip the first weekend after classes begin, **October 2-4**. We will meet with officials and tour local buildings and sites. There will be time for individual research and recreation, and exploring the town, the surrounding area, recent contextual designs, and nearby historic locations, such as Port Townsend, a short ferry ride away.

On **November 6 & 7**, there will be the second "Ebey's Forever" conference in Coupeville. We will have our midterm review on the Saturday of the conference, where your proposals will be reviewed by the Town and National Park Service officials, as well as members of the local historic review board. There will also be the opportunity for more informal discussions with the public.

On both these trips, housing will be provided at the instructor's house, or in the homes of local community members.

Ebey's Landing: <http://www.nps.gov/archive/ebla/theland.htm>