

## **Public Participation in Political/Administrative Decision**

### **A DEMOCRATIC SETTING for A CITY HALL**

#### **1-Aim of the Studio**

The studio revolves around a proposed general theme which addresses a number of fundamental issues of local/global nature with the aim of promoting students' awareness and understanding of the role of Architecture in these issues. Taking into account contextual and sustainable design, it aims to develop students' tools and knowledge in terms of observation, critical analysis and design skills of integrating knowledge gained throughout previous years. It explores how to infer from the project's objectives and its context guidelines which instruct the design in terms of space, form, structure, order, character and tectonics. It also provides the opportunity for students to develop appropriate conceptual and theoretical agendas and to challenge preconceptions related to the notion of building typology.

#### **2-Theme of the Project: DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION**

Egypt is currently undergoing a phase of democratic transformation, which requires attentively reviewing all conceptual, programmatic spatial and formal issues underlying the design of governmental buildings. **Democracy is a form of government in which the supreme power is delegated to people collectively, and is administered by them or by the representatives they elect. It is also a state of society characterized by recognition of equality in rights and privileges; be it political, social or legal.**

In general terms the studio addresses the problem of designing a democratic architectural & urban setting for **A City Hall** with a public plaza. **A City Hall is the chief administration building of a city, town or a district.** It usually houses the city or district council, its associated administrative departments, and their employees. Its main purpose is twofold; To promote and enhance public participation in political decisions and in administrative management. Second, management & control of civic services, infra-structure facilities (water, gas, electricity, garbage networks and billing center), healthcare & legal advice.

The local government may endeavor to use the city hall building to promote and enhance the quality of social life of the community. In many cases **"City Halls"** act as **"Urban & Socio/Cultural Nucleus"**. They serve not only as buildings for government functions, but also have facilities for various civic and cultural activities. These may include art shows, stage performances, exhibits and festivals, small libraries and educational classes. Contemporary city halls are often designed with a great variety and flexibility of purpose in mind in order to respond to the socio/cultural demands of their local communities.

As **symbols of local government**, city halls usually have distinctive architecture. They may serve as **“Cultural & Regional Icons”** that symbolize their cities and localities as in the case with Toronto, Brussels, Los Angeles, and London city halls.

The studio aims to develop exemplary design models that re-establish the City Hall and its plaza as **magnet for political/civic and socio/cultural activities, as a democratic setting for public participation, and also as iconic cultural symbols.** A number of potential sites in major cities of Cairo, Alexandria, Aswan, Ismaelia, Fayoum...etc, are proposed. Students are encouraged to propose other sites that should help to enhance the multi-purpose nature of a City Hall.

### 3-Preliminary Components of the Project

The following brief is intended to be further developed by students according to their site and design concept. The proposed built area of approximately 10000-12000 m<sup>2</sup> includes the following items;

- **Council Chamber:** Assembly Hall for the elected council members (used occasionally for ceremonies, conferences and special events), with foyer, services and rest rooms. Offices for council members.
- 4-6 Meeting Rooms of different sizes. Information center, Restaurant and Public Facilities. Storage vaults. The number and size of spaces depend on the size of the City on which the hall is located.
- **Civic Offices :** This includes management & control of civic services, infra-structure facilities (water, gas, electricity, garbage networks and billing center), traffic healthcare & legal advice.
- **Socio/Cultural Functions:** These functions are to be investigated by students according to the socio /cultural and urban context of the site as well as the student's design concept. These may include art shows, stage performances, exhibits and festivals, small libraries and educational classes.
- **Public Urban Square or Plaza:** Outdoor urban space with shaded areas exclusively for pedestrians to perform public activities.
- **Services:** Parking (council members, employees, and public users)

### 4- Investigated Issues

The studio suggests four basic issues for exploring their implications upon the design process and the architectural form ;

#### 1 .Plurality

Plurality is a system of philosophy that allows for multiplicity in principle of thought or being. A democratic setting has to cater for different opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and doctrines.

## 2. Diversity within unity

This diversity of attitudes and freedom of expressing one's opinion have to be balanced by a sense of unity, harmony and organization.

## 3. Participation

A democratic setting has to promote the participation of all members of the society in the process of decision making.

## 4. Transparency

The principle and process of decision making should be clear, permeable and available to all members of the society. A democratic setting should make this possible actually as well as symbolically. Investigating these issues should help in developing your concepts and guiding ideas.

## 5- Studio Management

The project's design is composed of three stages; First, **Research&Programming**. Second, **Brainstorming &Concept Development**. Third, **Concept Statement& Design Development**. (See project's schedule). Concept statement comes in latter stages as it should be based upon fully understanding the nature of the project and its urban and social context, as well as the raised design issues and themes.

**Research and Programming** represent important stage that precedes design cycles. It consumes 1-3 weeks and is carried out **collectively** by teamwork of 4-6 students, which we refer to as **Research Team**. Research is carried out in three directions(as explained in the time schedule); **Site Analysis& Contextual Studies, Project's Data& Program, Analysis of Precedents**.

**Brainstorming&Concept Development** is also carried out **collectively** by a teamwork studying the same site to develop alternative approaches and ideas through collective thinking and discussions as actually happens in practice. This stage consumes 1-2 weeks. Through research and a series of seminars and discussions, students come to identify the specific themes and issues to be addressed, develop the detailed brief, select and study the appropriate context and site.

**Concept Statement & Design Development** is carried out **individually** to give the opportunity for each student to fully express his/her potentials. This stage consumes 8-9 weeks till the end of the semester. Design cycles proceed through desk criticism as well as general critiques where all students and staff members are involved. Students are encouraged to communicate and present their ideas in various ways which include verbal and written statements, use of study models, schematic drawings as well as scaled drawings. Throughout design stages students are categorized into equivalent groups in terms of number and

GPA. Each group is supervised by two staff members who evaluate their work on a daily basis. Keystone Sketches (7<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, semi-final and final sketches) are evaluated by all staff members and usually submitted on Monday.

## 6-General Considerations

- Attendance and consistency is a keystone to success and understanding the project. No exceptions are considered in the studio. Any special cases concerning the students' **Attendance, Progress & Grading** should be immediately reported.
- The use of 3D model (physical or CAD) as a design tool from the early design stages.
- Sites and their contexts, must be visited, photographed and comprehended by each student individually.
- Sustainability is to be considered from the environmental, economic and socio/cultural perspective.
- Project Evaluation is based on; Personal Involvement & Ability (**Attitude**) - Development of Design Work (**Process**) – Ability to communicate ideas (**Clarity of Drawings**) - Quality of Design (**Product**).

## 7-Projects Portfolio

An A3 formatted report must be updated weekly where all documents, comments, sketches, photocopies and freehand sketches, etc... must be archived & documented in a neat, representable format. It is very important for data recovery. This report will be graded at the end of the course.

## 8-Deliverables

The final Project should be executed on 3 to 4 A0 boards (or 120 x 80cm boards)

### Deliverable Drawings; (minimum requirements);

- Project Studies in appropriate scale
- Lay-out 1/400
- Ground Floor Plan 1/200
- Typical Plan/s 1/400
- Longitudinal Sections 1/200
- Cross Sections 1/200
- External Elevations 1/200
- Internal Elevations (if any) 1/200
- Main Birds Eye View & Exterior/Interior Shots
- Physical Model

## 9-Time Schedule/Grades

WEEK		PROBLEM (BUILDING)	CONTEXT (SITE)	CONCEPT			
TEAM WORK	1	INTRODUCTION	Sat	Introducing Project	Introducing Prop. Sites	<b>Identify</b> themes & Issues	
			Mon	Precedents, Spatial & Environmental Requirements of			Site visits – Photos Preliminary analysis & Site selection.
			Tues				
			Thurs	<b>Review and Concluding Remarks</b>			
	2	DATA GATHERING	Sat	Presentation & analysis of activities, data & precedents	Site analysis- Urban tissue & Character- Constraints- Environment Building Regulations.	<b>Analyse</b> themes & Issues	
			Mon				
			Tues				
			Thurs	<b>Review and Concluding Remarks</b>			
	3	DATA ANALYSIS	Sat	Areas & Spatial organization of activities Block Diagram - Circulation	Final site selection Draw site layout to scale 1/800 – 1/400 Proposed approaches	<b>Reinterpret</b> themes & Issues	
			Mon				
			Tues				
			Thurs	<b>Review and Concluding Remarks</b>			
	4	PROGRAM & SITE MODEL	Sat	Final Program, Conceptual Solution in 3D Physical Model (scale 1/400)	Site Model 1/800 - 1/400	<b>Concept Development</b>	
			Mon				
			Tues				
			Thurs	<b>Review and Concluding Remarks</b>			
INDIVIDUAL WORK	5	1 <sup>ST</sup> DESIGN CYCLE	Sat	- Preliminary 3D Model in Site (Plastic - Foam - CAD) - Preliminary Ground floor Plan	<b>Concept Statement &amp; Development</b>		
			Mon				
			Tues				
			Thurs	<b>Review and Concluding Remarks</b>			
	6	2 <sup>ND</sup> DESIGN CYCLE	Sat	- Development of the 3D Model in Site - Development of plan(s) & section(s)	<b>Concept Testing &amp; Development</b>		
			Mon				
			Tues				
			Thurs	<b>Review and Concluding Remarks</b>			
	7	SKETCH	Sat	- 3D Model in Site - Layout 1/800 - 1/400 - Plans and Sections 1/400 and 1/200	<b>Final Concept Statement</b>		
			Mon				
			Tues				
			Thurs	<b>Review and Concluding Remarks</b>			
8	<b>Design Cycles</b>	- Requirements and assignment of every week (including 12th, semi-final, and final) will be announced					
.		- Monday is dedicated for sketches.					
.		- Thursday will always be for Review & Concluding Remarks					
16							

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