



ARAB ACADEMY FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND MARITIME TRANSPORT  
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY  
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURAL ENGINEERING AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN  
CAIRO CAMPUS

## GRADUATION PROJECT - AR 501

SPRING 2016



---

# CITY HALL

Public Places

Public  
Buildings

Public Transit

Civic centers

## STUDIO APPROACH AND POLICY

We will base our work in this capstone studio on the accumulated knowledge from previous design studios and classes to integrate previously acquired knowledge to solve complex problems, rely on developed creative and design abilities to develop visual and verbal architectural position.

Each student will be encouraged to choose a *generative architectural approach* and guided to achieve a *clear formulation of intentions* to lead decision making. We will base our review on: “*all decisions need to be justified*” and on the importance of understanding the solution within its *larger class of solutions*. The process will follow a feedback model; each phase will feed into the next while allowing for adjustment of previous input. Students will be encouraged to *explore alternatives* to reach best reflection of the original intentions.

---

## PUBLIC PLACE: THE CITY HALL

### INTRODUCTION:

The studio will explore local issues rooted in the built environment of Greater Cairo. Our city has grown into unprecedented scale; its population has reached an 11 + million.

The malaise of Cairo could be described as "City Fragmented" (existing or functioning as though broken into separate parts; disorganized; dis-unified)

or as "City in Disjunction" (lacking of connection between things that are related or should be connected).

We can argue that there lies its charm and exceptional character. **But where does the city provide the sense of citizenship? But where are its public / civic buildings? Where are its civic spaces/places?**

Each part of Cairo's disconnected parts has a center usually shopping/entertainment streets, but nowhere for its citizens to come together, to congregate, to break barriers, or to get their official business done.

Its inhabitant use the services of public buildings reluctantly. They suffer from inadequate buildings, dispersed facilities and foremost the public places they are entitled to. **How can architecture respond to this condition?**

We will investigate areas within GC: in existing dense centers **"A context problem"** and in a peripheral new town **"A tabula rasa<sup>1</sup> problem"** to design a Town Hall that will act as civic nucleus of public and civic places connected via mass transport to its surroundings and other parts of the city.

The proposed Town Hall will act as a core: the connection to the dispersed disjoint neighborhoods, the alternative to the monopoly of corporate buildings and residential settlements. The Town hall will bring a sense of belonging to local citizens and liveliness to the municipality.

---

<sup>1</sup> Something new, fresh, unmarked, or uninfluenced. Tabula rasa is Latin for "blank slate."



Sites: Different Problems

1Heliopolis      2New Cairo

3Downtown (Opera Sq)

## TOWN HALL:

On a site of 30000- 40000m<sup>2</sup>, built surface of 15 000- 20 000 m<sup>2</sup> to serve people's administrative needs, offers a municipal seat while offering a public services and acting as clear marker and iconic symbol.

### DEMOCRACY - CIVIL SOCIETY

---

Concepts of good governance and community based democracy are represented in the city hall. The design of the city hall must be

**transparent** of the inner workings, must be creative and/or reflective of **identity** and culture.

- I. **Seat of local governance:** The City Hall provides all the administrative and services of the locality
  1. **Administrative.** The City hall is the quarter for town meetings, political assembly and different public functions. The building accommodates administrative and civic functions of local government:
    - i. Council meeting hall
    - ii. Office of chief administrator and Support staff
    - iii. Offices for council members

- iv. Meeting rooms (of different sizes)
- v. Services and rest rooms
- 2. **Offices** To accommodate day to day operations (in municipal, technical services, medical –health, social services, permits)
  - vi. Public transaction hall (One Stop Shop)
  - vii. Administrative Offices for 12 departments:
    - Open floor offices
    - Private offices
    - Office for dept. head with secretary’s office
    - Meeting room (s)
    - Storage vaults, record rooms, garages, equipment stores

## SENSE OF PRIDE - MEANINGFUL CONTACT BETWEEN CITIZENS

---

The City Hall is iconic, it is the image of its community; it is representative of its values and achievements it is the public symbol of the city. The City Hall should be inspiring and functional. It is the center of large scale ceremonial and civic assembly: it acts as a focal point for social and cultural life of the community it serves. It should be inviting to the local residents and city administration to develop the city socially and culturally.

It is essential for cohesion and foundation of strong local community by encouraging small scale business and local entrepreneurs, farmers markets, festivals, and local activities.

### II. Public Communal Facilities:

1. **Meeting/ Assembly hall** (used occasionally for ceremonies, general conferences, special events), with foyer, services and rest rooms.
2. **Multi-purpose halls of** different sizes with services
3. **Other facilities:** as needed

- III. **Public square** or **plaza** exclusively for pedestrians: an urban place used as for public activities.

#### EASILY ACCESSIBLE BY PEDESTRIAN AND TRANSIT

---

The City Hall must be connected to major transit within the city and part of a network of pedestrian path

- IV. **Transport station:** connected to modes of mass transit, the site is accessible via an Underground Metro station or a bus station
- V. **Parking:** Surface and multi-levelled parking spaces in easily accessible areas of 500 cars

#### ISSUES AND THEMES:

**Design generation** will start from a thorough Investigation of the problem, the context and the search for a *Big Idea* (commonly known as *Concept*), a design generator or a *theme* through *keyword(s)* that can *translate* into architectural solutions.

Consider these issues to generate keywords and themes:

- |                 |                  |              |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| A. Connectivity | B. Transition    | C. Enclosure |
| D. Transparency | E. Accessibility | F. ...       |

The theme/keyword should be clear in *"More ways than One."*

## PROCESS

- Emphasis on the 3 dimensional
- You will be required to create a record of all the phases and process of your design in a blank paper diary.
- All your research, exploration, analysis, thoughts, explorations must be clearly recorded and dated.

### PHASE 1: RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

3 weeks

**Group (of 2-3), Analyze and Understand:** each group will share the information and present ANALYSIS in a format that contributes to the learning experience of the studio.

- **Themes and Design Issues:** A Visual Data-Bank
  1. Group research: investigating and collecting data and examples of **Issues and Themes** from architectural ***precedents***.
  2. Group Investigation: How do we maneuver the city? What are the inspiring places in Cairo? Where do Cairenes congregate? Where are ceremonial (and other) events located?
- **Context Analysis:**

The site: its context, problems and potentials: accessibility, character, ...
- **Develop Program**
- **Design Diary:**

In parallel **Each student** will start a of possibilities and options.

### PHASE 2: BIG IDEA - INTENTIONS FORMULATION

2 weeks

- **Formulate** a position on themes and issues : BIG idea –Intentions in Diagrams, mood board, model
- **Suggest** a 3D architectural solution (based on your understanding of project, and context) .
- **Preliminary explorations in** scaled 3 dimensional: Models, sketches, diagrams, photo montage

### PHASE 3: TESTING: DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

**5 weeks**

- This design is a long term project; starts with the project in total and progress to design specific components (repetitive and 1 of a kind).
- Scaled drawing following standards and data of components, structural solution, to test and adjust design as needed.

### PHASE 4: SOLUTION FORMULATION

**5 weeks**

- Bringing all design issues into an integrated state
- Synthesize various issues of form and tectonics

### PHASE 5: REPRESENTATION OF DESIGN

**2 weeks**

- Produce drawings and models legible, accurate and representative of design solution.

#### READINGS:

1. Project for Public Spaces. “What Makes a Successful Place?”  
Accessed 11 Feb 2016. <http://www.pps.org/reference/grplacefeat/>

2. Paul Kesky, "From Brutalism to BIG: Charting the Remarkable Evolution of City Hall Design", Architizer. Accessed 11 Feb 2016. <http://architizer.com/blog/from-brutalism-to-big/>
3. Tschumi, Bernard. "Introduction" in Event Cities 3. MIT Press . 2004
4. Introduction by Simon Sadler, archival text by Charles Moore, "You (Still) Have to Pay for the Public Life," in Places Journal, January 2016. Accessed 11 Feb 2016. <https://placesjournal.org/article/you-still-have-to-pay-for-the-public-life/>
5. David L. Ulin, "Sidewalking Along the Miracle Mile", in Places Journal, September 2015. Accessed 12 Feb 2016. <https://placesjournal.org/article/sidewalking-along-the-miracle-mile/#>
6. Andre Vltchek, "Bandung –Creative City?" <http://journal-neo.org/2016/02/02/bandung-creative-city/>

## DESIGN FACULTY:

Prof Lobna Sherif  
Arch. Aziz Mitry  
Arch. Makhlof Essam  
Arch. Malak Maher  
Arch. Marwa Elattar  
Arch. Tarek Kattaria  
Arch. Yomna elGhazi