International Competition

PLANNING & ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN CONCEPT

The New Campus

The American University in Cairo
Cairo
Egypt

Client
The American University in Cairo

Competitors
Boston Design Collaborative/CRJA
Cannon
Ellerbe Becket
Hillier Group
RTKL
Sasaki/CDC

Jury
Ismail Serageldin
Ricardo Legorreta
Charles Correa
John Hayes
Elizabeth Driscoll
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Kenneth Toepfer

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April, 1999

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University’s Planning & Design Guidelines & Considerations
5. University’s Planning and Design Guidelines & Considerations

1.0 The Understanding

An important cornerstone of the university mission is the provision of quality education. Equally important is its commitment to provide quality campus life to the students, staff, faculty and the community at-large. The campus built environment, being an important element in the shaping of campus life, received very special attention from both the “Century Committee Report” and the university Board of Trustees when the latter authorized the relocation of the current physically constrained downtown campus to a spacious new location on the eastern outskirts of Cairo.

This important decision to relocate resulted in the purchase of one million square meter site (260 acres) and the development of comprehensive “facilities space program” totaling approximately 200,000 gross square meters.

The “space facilities program” has been prepared by the firm of Dober, Lidsky, Craig and Associates of Belmont, MA. and is part of this competition document. It establishes all the quantitative requirements for the university and the preferred relationships and affinities among the various departments and units; and it establishes some design implications.

The program as presented will be the basis of the competition. However, the university considers it as a living document and anticipates that it will be subject to some modification and adjustment throughout the design process.

The following pages constitute the university’s list of “planning and design guidelines and considerations”, these address qualitative issues of major importance to the university and its constituencies. These issues are meant neither to replace nor to pre-empt the planning and design criteria and guidelines that the nominated consulting firm will be expected to develop in the planning phase of the project. Accordingly, they are mainly intended to communicate to competitors the present views, opinions, preferences and understandings regarding the shaping of campus life in general and the campus built environment in particular.

2.0 The Questionnaires

To address the above-mentioned issues and to develop a basic understanding of the preferences of the university community, two questionnaires were developed. One was designed by a Trustee and the other by the university administration.
The two complementary questionnaires address factors such as: social interaction, architectural features, aesthetics, image, climatic response, disabled consideration, parking, and information technology. The questionnaires were distributed to a randomly selected sample of university constituencies: students, staff, faculty, senior administrators, Trustees, parents and alumni.

For the competitor’s interpretation and use, the compiled responses (which are very revealing) are included, in Appendix “A”.

3.0 Campus Life and the Built Environment

The university is committed to produce an outstanding physical environment and to provide an exceptional campus life. As an academic institution, we believe that:

3.1 Learning is human nature;
3.2 Campus planning and design is the challenge to create spaces and places that facilitate, encourage, and celebrate the interactive learning process;
3.3 Campus life is essential to the development of student awareness and appreciation for culture, society and ideals. Indoor and outdoor spaces provide the setting for intellectual, personal, and spiritual growth;
3.4 Campus planning is urban design at its best. It is the balance between the public interest of the larger environment and the private interest of the users. It is the integrated planning and management of public spaces rather than the design of individual buildings;
3.5 The synergy created by campus life is paramount and far surpasses the importance of individual buildings serving merely their own needs.
3.6 Campus planning and design should be culturally instructive, introducing its users to the rich information, values, and experiences which architecture, landscape and art are capable of embodying;
3.7 Realizing that a good deal of learning occurs outside of the traditional classroom, there is a need for the creation of spaces that encourage and foster social interaction;
3.8 To heighten the sense and the appreciation of art, indoor and outdoor spaces should be designed, whenever possible and appropriate, to provide settings for various artwork;
3.9 Campus design should reflect economic, social, and cultural value systems as well as university needs;
3.10 The successful and meaningful campus design is a blend of function, economics and aesthetic factors;
3.11 Campus design should establish the overall intent of the university. It should define the primary spatial structure of the campus as well as its relationship to its surroundings;
3.12 Providing consultation and advise to developers and urban planners for the surrounding area, the AUC campus design
can contribute to the urban design quality of the surrounding community and its urban fabric.

4.0 The University Mission

Like most fine academic institutions, AUC values:

4.1 A campus environment that portrays its vision and mission, emulates its history and culture, and inspires its inhabitants with its spatial beauty;

4.2 A campus environment that translates the university’s educational mission into its physical setting;

4.3 A campus environment that reflects the ideals of American liberal arts education and, at the same time, is responsive to future generations of Egyptians.

5.0 The Image, the Style, the Character and the Identity

These hard and unquantifiable issues are of special importance to the university. They are partly addressed in the questionnaires. In addition, the university encourages the development of:

5.1 Campus design that belongs to its environment;

5.2 Campus design that is appropriate to culture and climate;

5.3 Campus design that draws themes from Egypt’s past, recognizes the present, and anticipates the future;

5.4 Campus design that combines contemporary ideas with Egypt’s historical contexts;

5.5 Campus design that reflects American university traditions with a sense of the local environment;

5.6 Campus design that reflects the character and the identity of this particular university in an image that is recognized not only in academic circles but also in the general community;

5.7 Campus design that will make the institution unique and a model for designers in the region.

6.0 Communication and Information Technology

Advances in communication and information technology are reshaping most, if not all, academic institutions with astonishing speed. We at AUC can capitalize on this opportunity to build a new campus, with communication and information technology systems and infrastructure that are forward-looking and appropriate. The following summarizes our views.

6.1 Campus planning and design should recognize the increasing role of information technology, and should introduce systems integrated into, and supportive of, AUC’s educational mission;

6.2 Campus planning and design should provide for a flexible information technology that serves the evolving needs of teaching and learning.
7.0 Building Technology

AUC envisages the new campus (facilities, grounds, and infrastructure) as a showcase for ecologically sensitive design and construction in the region. That sensitivity will be assured by:

7.1 Addressing constructability and maintainability of buildings and grounds at the very early stages of design;
7.2 Incorporating energy conservation and efficiency through passive or mechanical methods;
7.3 Applying the intelligent use of local building materials as much as possible; and
7.4 Assuring sustainability and recycling goals.

8.0 Safety, Security, and Accessibility

8.1 Campus planning and design should assure that all areas of the campus, indoor and outdoor, are accessible to the disabled;
8.2 Campus planning and design should provide safety and security within the context of the university commitment to serve and be an integral part of the community at-large.

9.0 Landscape

Landscape (soft and hard) is a prime concern in the planning and design of the new campus. We believe:

9.1 Outdoor spaces are as important as indoor ones. The two are inseparable and complementary;
9.2 Campus planning and design, in essence, is the artful arrangement of outdoor spaces surrounded, partially surrounded, or not surrounded, by buildings;
9.3 That landscape planning and design will provide places and spaces for social activity, contemplation, spiritual renewal, and intellectual energy, all contributing positively to campus life;
9.4 Campus planning and design should respect the natural beauty of the site and its unique characteristics;
9.5 Landscape materials are important sources of climatic modification, and should be consciously and creatively used;
9.6 Campus planning and design should rely on indigenous landscaping material to create a meaningful aesthetic and maintainable environment;
9.7 Campus landscape and design should be a model for ecologically sound design in the region, including in matters of resource consideration and use.
10.0 Growth and Future Consideration

Realizing that campuses outlive those who design and build them, we believe that:

10.1 Growth and change in response to academic, technological and social demands will be a continuing process rather than a single adjustment;
10.2 Campus planning and design should establish a system that guides the institution through change and growth with minimum disruption;
10.3 Campus planning and design should allow for the reconfiguration required over time in response to instructional changes and technological opportunities.
Appendix “A”, The Questionnaires

5.8 Questionnaire Number One

This Questionnaire was originally developed by the Trustee member Mrs. Edith Howe. It was first distributed to the Board of Trustee members, then adopted by the university in a slightly modified version that was widely distributed among university constituencies.

The following “tabulation” takes into account all the responses received (about 220).

Q.# 1 What architectural features of the existing AUC campus would you like to retain?
The majority of responses listed the following features:

- The courtyards;
- Islamic / Oriental features; Arabic style; Fountains.

Q.# 2 Which features of the existing AUC campus would you like to change?
The majority of responses listed the following features:

- Massive concrete style buildings;
- Lack of uniformity of design;
- The sense of clutter.

Q.# 3 Is there a theme or image you envision for the architecture for the new campus?
Unfortunately, some people did not fully understand the question. The following represent most of responses:

- Arab style and Middle East;
- Modern;
- Lots of attention be paid to landscaping;
- Green spaces, palms and trees;
- Environmentally friendly;
- Blend of modern design with Middle Eastern elements;
- The feel of “cool” oasis;
- Spacious, airy, “restrained” modern; practical and functional;
- Bridge between cultures;
- East meet the west in the land of Pharaoh;
- Village atmosphere;
- Smaller low rise buildings;
- Natural light;
- Stone and ceramic tiles, no concrete.

* In response to the same question, there were strong views of what the design should not be; of those:

- Not quick pre-fab look;
- Not Gothic, Pharaonic, Mamluk or Disney
• Not invasive, aggressive or arrogant;
• Not be a symbol of wealth or foreigners.

Q.# 4 Which would you prefer to emphasize in the design of the new campus: the past or the future, the Middle East or the West, the desert or the suq?
The responses to this three-part question were fairly balanced on the first two but showed a strong preference on the third one. The following are the majority responses:

• Past with future touch
• Past and future
• Combination of old and new, Middle East and the West;
• The feeling of Middle East on the outside and the West on the inside … a Western, pragmatic, technical core;
• Focus should be on the desert;
• American southwest but not adobe;
• Not suq.

Q.# 5 Should the design stand out or blend in?
Responses to this question were equally divided. Some felt that the new campus should stand out.

• Stand out for creativity;
• Stand out for excellence;
• Stand out for taste;
• Stand out but not be enormous

Other thought it should blend in

• Outstanding but not conspicuous;
• Blend in but be strong;
• Blend in, in terms of nature;
• Blend in with environment.

B. Questionnaire Number Two:

This “Questionnaire” was originally developed by Dr. Kenneth Toepfer the former Executive Vice President of AUC in an attempt to gauge the preferences / responses of the university community. It was posted on the new-campus web-site. It was slightly modified and distributed as a questionnaire to the various university constituencies.

Enclosed are the tabulated results of this questionnaire.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Planning / Design Guidelines for the New AUC Campus</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The new campus should be of a unified design which provides interest and variety within an overall scheme;</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The new campus should create and enhance a sense of an interactive community in which students, faculty, staff and quests can communicate and work with one another in an hospitable environment;</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Outdoor gathering and meeting places should be through courtyards and other devices to facilitate community interaction on a human scale;</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The campus should for the most part be a &quot;low rise&quot; campus with a maximum of three stories unless usage otherwise requires a higher building;</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The central campus should be a pedestrian campus with walkways, pergolas, and verandas that make moving about the campus on foot a pleasant experience;</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. All buildings will be designed to accommodate the needs of handicapped clientele and will meet or exceed U.S. and Egyptian building codes;</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Student and faculty lounges should be provided in strategic locations to encourage interaction among colleagues within departments and buildings;</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Adequate parking for faculty, staff and students should be provided;</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Building and campus design better be compatible with local architectural traditions, but should not slavishly copy &quot;ethnic&quot; designs;</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. All buildings should be environmentally and user friendly;</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Buildings design should respect the local climatic conditions;</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Windows should open;</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
General Planning / Design Guidelines for the New AUC Campus

13. Ventilation systems and air conditioning should be state of the art, but should be designed for maximum energy efficiency; 44 16 1

14. The new campus should provide a model for the best practices in energy management, waste management and environment-friendly planning and design; 44 14

15. The new campus should be wired/outfitted to take advantage of state-of-the-art communications and information technology; 45 13 1

16. Landscaping should be environmentally friendly and sensitive to the climatic conditions; 47 14

17. The infrastructure systems should be state-of-the art and should be planned for future expansion of the university; 52 9

Notes and Remarks