



The Aga Khan Award for Architecture

32, chemin des Crêts, 1218 Grand-Saconnex, Geneva, Switzerland, Telephone (22) 98 90 70

1983 ARCHITECTS' RECORD

CONFIDENTIAL

I. IDENTIFICATION

- A. Project Title Liberal Arts Annex Building
- B. Postal Address Al-Najah National University
P.O.box 7 , NABLUS/ WEST BANK

II. PERSONS RESPONSIBLE

(Please give name and address for each. If more than one, please state precise roles and relationships.)

- A. Client/Owner Al-Najah National University
Board of Trustees

B. Architect/Planner

TBEILEH CO.

Samih Tbeileh (architect)
Sameh Abdulhadi (civil engineer)
Hatem Al Sader (Nablus Municipality engineer)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Rabih M. Masri (architect)
Jamal Araj (civil engineer)

Mufid Al Nabulsi (Najah University
civil engineer)

- C. Consultants (e.g. Economist, Sociologist, Demographer, Engineer)

D. Contractor

Ibrahim Al Sakhil
NABLUS / WEST BANK

E. Master Craftsman

All craftsmen are local
from the Nablus area

III. USE

- A. Type(s) of Use Administrative and faculty offices, classrooms, cafeteria and other facilities.
- B. User/Occupant
1. Occupation Administration, staff and students.
2. Income Level
- C. Specify any change(s) between planned and actual use. No change.

IV. PROJECT HISTORY

A. Programme Development

1. Date of Commencement _____
2. Date of Completion July 1st. 1979.

B. Design

1. Date of Commencement July 10th. 1979.
2. Date of Completion November 1st. 1979.

C. Construction

1. ~~Date of Commencement~~ Phase I (Sept. 1st. 1980) - Cafeteria & 16 classrooms.
2. ~~Date of Completion~~ Phase 2 (Sept. 1st. 1981) - All of building skeleton and external cladding - additional administrative and academic facilities are completed.
- ~~Date of Project Occupancy~~ Phase 3 (Sept. 1st. 1982) - project completion and landscaping.

V. PROJECT ECONOMICS

(For Costs, please give amounts and currencies. Specify their date(s) of validity)

- A. Total Initial Budget _____
- B. Total Actual Costs 824,487 Jordan Dinars.
- C. Analysis of Costs
1. Land _____
2. Materials 65 %
3. Labour 35 %
4. Professional Fees none
- D. Source(s) of Funds (indicate percentage)
1. Private Yes
2. Public
- a. Local Yes
- b. National _____
- c. International _____

(Please continue overleaf if necessary)

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VI. CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

A. Site Area and Characteristics

2550 m² (covered ground area)

B. Total Floor Area of Individual Building(s)

8980 m²

C. Structural System (describe)

- Reinforced concrete skeleton and ribbed slabs with lightweight concrete block (etong) infill.
- Hollow non-load bearing concrete block walls for internal partitions.
- External stone cladding.

D. Materials (describe and indicate whether locally produced or imported)

1. Infill Hollow non-load bearing concrete block walls (local).
2. Rendering of Facades External facades : stone (local).
Internal walls : plaster (local).
3. Floors Terrazzo tiles in covered areas (local).
Stone paving in courtyards (local).
4. Ceilings Plaster and emulsion paint (local).
5. Others (interior and exterior) All metal works are locally produced.

E. Site Utilities and Building Services (describe)

Utilites from the municipality to the annex building include sewage, water and electricity.

F. Construction Technology

1. Describe the Basic Method of Construction

Conventional cast in situ reinforced concrete foundations, columns, beams and slabs. Wooden formwork is used for all concrete forming.

2. Indicate which major building parts were fabricated on-site and which were fabricated elsewhere.

All building elements were fabricated in silu on site with the exception of the reinforced concrete lintels which were precast elements cast on site and lifted manually into place.

G. Type of Labour Force (indicate percentage)

- | | |
|--------------|------|
| 1. Skilled | 20 % |
| 2. Unskilled | 80 % |

H. Origin of Labour Force (indicate percentage)

- | | |
|-------------|-------|
| 1. Domestic | 100 % |
| 2. Imported | |

VII. EVOLUTION OF DESIGN CONCEPTS

Please describe the genesis of the project, through programme, design and construction to final and present occupancy.

Introduction: Al Najah National University is a five year old University in the West Bank city of Nablus in occupied Palestine. Initially, the University consisted of one building housing all its faculties on a tight thirty two dunum campus. The first extension to the existing building is the Liberal Arts annex building which is the subject of this paper.

Historical background: Al Najah was originally founded in Nablus as a high school at the turn of the century. Al Najah National High School quickly became a prestigious academic center as students from all corners of the Arab World as far as Morocco, sought it for its high academic standards.

Al Najah suffered a sharp blow in the aftermath of the 1948 Israeli occupation of most of Palestine when the majority of the local Palestinian inhabitants were expelled from their land and homes. In 1967, Israel occupied the rest of Palestine including the West Bank leaving Al Najah totally severed from the rest of the world. In the early seventies, after the shock of the occupation had subsided, a number of community leaders in Nablus transformed Al Najah from a high school into a teachers college. Shortly after Al Najah was declared a national University, the areas first national institution of higher education.

Project evolution: Al Najah National University was established under the adverse conditions of occupation with very little physical and academic resources necessary for the admission of the overwhelming number of applicants from Nablus and its villages, the West Bank, Gaza, and the 1948 occupied territories. The lack of teaching space, urgently needed to assimilate the thousands of applicants, encouraged the university to proceed immediately with its project for the Liberal Arts annex building. However the annex was faced from its inception by severe constraints which distinguished it from projects planned and executed under "normal" conditions. First, the university was eager to bypass all pre-construction preparations and commence construction in order to gain time before the authorities decide to halt all building on campus (the authorities have since blocked all the university building projects, including the engineering building donated by a member of the community). Second, the time constraint and the shortage of experienced personnel prevented the university from preparing a detailed and comprehensive development plan for the new annex building. Instead, the University presented the architects and engineers with only a basic list of the number of required classroom and faculty offices with the provision that the design be flexible and adaptable to other uses. The university assigned the task of designing the annex to us, as a group of architects and engineers who have joined their efforts and volunteered their services for this project. The university accepted our offer which stemmed from our conviction in the positive impact and potential role which the university will have in the development of the community.

Project philosophy and spatial organization : A mass plan was first developed for the whole campus which determined the layout and general configuration of the annex building with regard to the existing building and to the future facilities. The university, in the absence of the national authority, has become a national representative body at the community level which naturally integrates it into the mainstream of the cultural and political issues facing the West Bank. The campus environment, in turn, was designed to reinforce this relevancy between the buildings and the community. This relevancy was expressed by identifying the university environment, in terms of organization and form, with the old city of Nablus which is an embodiment of the Palestinian identity in stone and mortar.

The tight urban campus dictated a compact scheme with its high density buildings wrapped around interconnecting and opened sky courtyards. These courtyards are the equivalent of the "open areas" of American campuses with the exception that the courtyard spaces are not merely "left over" after the building has been completed. On the contrary, the annex courtyards echo the vernacular where all spaces, covered and uncovered are designed simultaneously and neither one is designed at the expense of the other.

The annex connects to the existing building at several points, breaking the long monotonous edifice of the existing building, into smaller unobtrusive segments, with the windows of each segment overlooking a courtyard. Connecting the annex to the existing building stems from observing the degree of physical "connectedness" exhibited by the traditional towns and villages in the West Bank. This "Connectedness" of traditional architecture reflects the social and cultural solidarity which characterizes these communities and shows that, "isolated buildings of contemporary architecture are symptoms of a disconnected sick society" (A Pattern Language).

Design : a) plans : the annex design is a simple collection of various sized spaces, utilities and staircases collected around open courtyards. The spaces are predominantly all single banked with windows on both the exterior elevations and on the interior courtyards. This arrangement satisfies the natural light and ventilation requirements in the same fashion as the traditional architecture of the old city. This simple arrangement also facilitates the flexible use and adaptability of the spaces by the university in the absence of a detailed development plan.

b) elevations: The annex elevations adhere to a simple and straightforward geometry of squares and rectangles with all spans and cantilevers strictly limited. The repetition of similar shaped narrow windows and the uniform adherence to an upright proportion of openings creates both a diversity and a continuity with the vernacular. At the ground level the entrances, arcades and iwans are marked by either pointed or segmental arches identifying the transition nodes and humanizing the transition experience.

c) Materials: The annex structure is reinforced concrete with stone cladding covering the exterior facades and courtyard interiors. Stone paving covers the open areas and wears beautifully under its exposure to climate and pedestrian traffic. The rich color and texture of the chiselled limestone highlight the homogeneous and organic character of the annex and testifies to the beauty and the indigenous material and craftsmanship.

Phasing : The university required that the construction be phased so that the new facilities could be utilized in the shortest period. Within nine months the first phase consisting of the cafeteria and sixteen were being used. The following phases were carried out in a two year period with the addition of an extra storey to one of the annex wings.

The annex is currently fully operational however it is far from being completed. The annex, like the old city is a building which is continuously undergoing a metamorphosis by virtue of the activities and aspirations of its users. It is an example of a building which strives to supercede the deep scar inflicted by underdevelopment and colonialism.

Community Development Group

Amman , August 1st. 1982

VIII. SIGNIFICANCE OF PROJECT

In what way is this project important?

Please describe the aspect(s) of the project which you feel represent a particular achievement, for example, the technical, economic, or social achievement, or its response to culture or climate, etc.

The establishment of Al Najah National University in the occupied West Bank city of Nablus will contribute significantly to the development of this predominantly Muslim city. The university's academic and institutional infrastructure will effectively expand the cultural, social and political awareness of its community which has been stifled by an excessive conservatism, naturally propagated by the repressive policies of the occupation.

The university is the only place in the community where the exchange of ideas is practiced without fear & at a mass level. The dialogue which takes place on campus is intrinsically democratic in a university which is a microcosm of a traditional society in transition.

The inherent contradictions of this phase are expressed on campus at all levels including academic, administrative, social, political, etc. The annex project was conceived of and carried out under these conditions during the formative phase of the university's life where ideas, contradictions and their resolutions play a major role. The annex from its inception was inspired by the social and political circumstances and is a building which has been intimately associated with the ideals and aspirations of the West Bank community.

Finally the annex is a reminder and a celebration of the Palestinian cultural identity and its users have turned it into a bastion of political activism.

(Please continue overleaf if necessary)

IX. DOCUMENTATION

Please indicate the materials you enclose for project documentation:

- ☒ 10 Photographs; Color, and Black & White; 8" x 10" (18 x 24 cm).
- ☒ 20 Slides; Color, and Black & White; 35 mm.
- ☒ Drawings: Community plan, Site plan, Floor plans, Sections, Elevations.
- ☐ Project Brief/Programme
- ☐ Biographical Data
- ☐ Other (Please specify: _____).

Please note: The submission of this Record is a prerequisite to candidacy for the Award. All information contained and submitted with the Form will be kept strictly confidential until the announcement of the 1983 Award recipients. Subsequently, such information may be made available by the Aga Khan Award Foundation for scholarly purposes only. Nevertheless, persons wishing to publish, reproduce or reprint such information shall be required to secure prior permission in each instance.

Authorized Signature Samir Y. Yari Date Aug 1, 1982
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