

the yoga studio

inquiry into the relationship between architecture, mind, and body

Part II-B: Architectural Parti

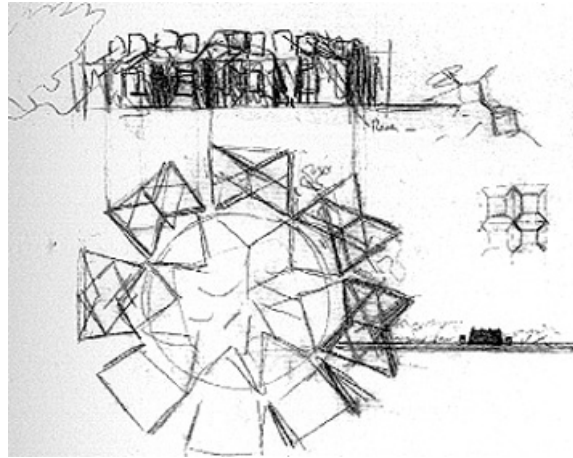
issued : Monday, 27 February

due : Friday, 31 March (Guest Jury)

Architectura sine idea vana Architectura est.

Alberto Campo Baeza

Principia Architectonica (2012)



Louis Kahn, First Unitarian Church, Rochester, NY

DESIGN PROCESS

Having gone through a series of architectural studies, it is now time to select and develop what you consider the design iteration that has the best chance to express a BIG ARCHITECTURAL IDEA. By this, we mean design work with a unifying concept or scheme (a “Parti”) that is formally-spatially beautiful, intellectually-emotionally engaging, functionally-environmentally compelling, contextually stimulating, tectonically provocative, and experientially meaningful. Don’t lose the spirit of exploration you have been engaged with thus yet bring your efforts into focus: a PARTI. Focus is on the BIG idea.

Exercise 1: Parti Selection – due at 2 pm on [Friday 3 March](#)

- Choose your best **two** studies from Part II-A (your instructor may select one).
- Consider the different elements of the program and how each element could be integrated into your studies – think about public versus private, individual versus group. Go slowly to adapt the program to the form and the form to the program. Modify/transform each study to incorporate the programmatic elements.
- Respond to contextual forces. Remember what you learned in Part I-B (site research).
- For each of the schemes, write an outline of specific design strategies for how that particular scheme responds to the sun, water, and wind as well as your chosen experiential theme and concept.
- For each scheme, photograph the model from above. If you don’t have a section model of the scheme, build one and photograph it too. Print out the photos and trace over to diagram the plan/section of the building (on tracing paper). Develop the building in plan and section using **FREE-HAND** tracing and transforming it multiple times (using layers of tracing

paper), and also creating accompanying diagrams that explain your design strategies (e.g., sunlight, reading room, site). Work at an approximate $1/16'' = 1'-0''$ scale. You can also work at $1/8''$ scale but if you do, make sure to use a thick pencil (3-4 B lead) to trace over.

- For each one of the two schemes, design a **second variation** that develops the ideas of the original scheme. For each of the two new schemes, write a new outline of your specific design strategies, build a model, and create accompanying diagrams that explain your design strategies
- All **four variations** are due at the start of class on Friday, 3 March.

Exercise 2: Parti Definition – due at 2 pm on Monday 20 March

- Choose **one** of the four schemes created for exercise 1 and design **two** variations of that scheme.
- In each variation, clearly articulate your design strategies as they relate to (1) the site conditions studied in Part I-B, (2) programmatic requirements (Part I-D), (3) precedents (Part I-C), (4) your experience of yoga (Part I-A), and (5) the study series done in Part II-A.
- Move to $1/8'' = 1\text{ft}$. scale (if you haven't done it already).
- You are expected to present drawings and models depicting the results of this design development of your parti.

Exercise 3: Design Parti Presentation – due at 1:00 pm on Friday 31 March

In studio on Monday 28 March (at the latest), you will choose **one** of the variations to develop for the final review.

Requirements for the March 31st Review:

- **Parti diagram** (to fit in $1.5'' \times 3''$) + **2 sentences description** (and 2 keywords)
- **Design process** (most important drawings, photos, and models produced in the past 6 wks)
- **Precedents:** architecture that inspires/supports your parti. This may play an important role both in arguing for your idea and indicate material choices.
- **Rough floor plans @ $1/8''$:1ft**, showing fundamental areas and circulation, hand-drawn or 'loose' CAD is fine.
- **Two sections @ $1/4''$:1ft (East-West) and $1/8''$:1ft (North-South) scale** -- neat freehand or 'loose' CAD is fine. Longitudinal section should include H street and back alley).
- **2 sketches/simulations** of experiential conditions (one 'interior' and one 'exterior')
- **Physical Working model @ $1/8''$:1ft** to fit in the studio model (showing some tectonics, transparencies, solid-void, inside-outside conditions, etc.).
- **Oral presentation:** prepare and rehearse your verbal argumentation for your design proposal.
- **H Street Façade at $1/16''$ scale.** Should include immediate neighbors -- neat freehand or 'loose' CAD is fine. (This is NOT required but encouraged)
- *No particular printing format is required for this juried review.* However, be cognizant of communicating your work.

Grading

Part II-B counts for 60% of Part II, which in turn counts for 40% of that total semester grade.

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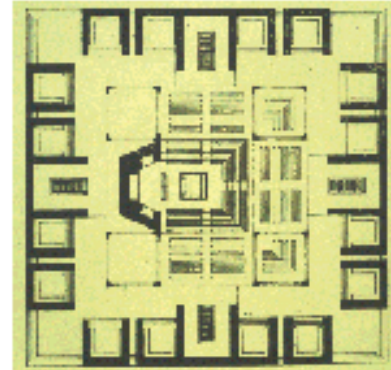
Part II-A: Design Explorations

issued : Wednesday, 8 February

due : Friday, 24 February

"The room is the beginning of architecture. It is the place of the mind ... The plan is a society of rooms. The rooms relate to each other to strengthen their own unique nature... The society of rooms is the place where it is good to learn, good to work, good to live."

Louis Kahn*



Louis Kahn

Introduction

If enclosing space (i.e., making a room) is the first archetypal act of architecture, the second is establishing a space-time “agreement” that allows the many enclosures to become one unified and coherent whole in concept, experience, function, and composition.

In this assignment, you will deal with many ‘rooms’, or, as Kahn would say, a ‘society of rooms’. Like any society, this one will demand a common ideal, belief, or ‘constitution’ that brings all the individual parts together. We call *‘parti’* to such an architectonic agreement.

A ‘parti’ aims at resolving, holistically, all the issues that an architectural situation brings up. However, depending on the architect’s focus of attention, different partis will spring out. Over the next 2.5 weeks, you will focus your DESIGN EXPLORATIONS on the possibilities for architectural organization enabled by attention directed to

- CONTEXT,
- CONCEPT,
- FORMAL TYPOLOGY, and
- PROGRAM.

In other words, your design moves will be directed towards resolving the general (NOT particular) challenges presented by the Yoga Studio on the given site by emphasizing one perspective at a time.



Le Corbusier



Richard Meier

Leoh Ming Pei



* Louis Kahn, “The Room, the Street, and Human Agreement (1971)”, in Robert Twombly (ed.): *Louis Kahn - Essential Texts*, New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 2003 (pp.253-254)

Inquiry

As said, you will study architectonic organizations resulting from addressing: **(1) Contextual; (2) conceptual; (3) formal-typological; and (4) functional** perspectives. Using Kahn's metaphor, each one of these four preoccupations will deliver you into an architectural "constitution" that rules the 'citizenry behavior' of the many rooms comprising the whole.

Another way to think of these four perspective is as METHODS, each one with unique demands and implying different responses. For example, contextual forces want you to address environmental, accessibility, and neighboring issues. Conceptual interests, on the other hand, call for 'big' ideas to guide the organization of programs, spaces and forms. In the process of responding to each one of these 4 approaches, you are to discern their differences and relationships. What design opportunities does each one afford (or negate)? How does each one is affected by the other(s), for example, how a functional response is affected by site and typology?

In order to maintain the investigation under focus, we encourage you to use the three fundamental architectural elements for defining enclosure: **structure** (skeleton, post-beams), **walls**, and **excavation/decking** (horizontal layer).

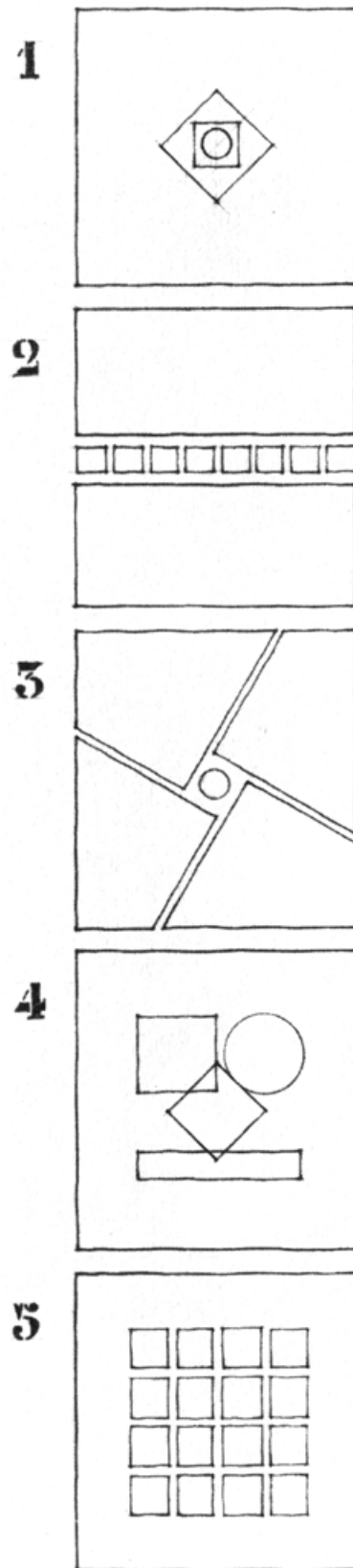
More specific guidelines will be offered by your studio instructor. However, overall, your design explorations should be open, disciplined, yet creative. Pay close attention to the breath and depth of your studies. The concept of series is as important as each unique iteration. Craftsmanship is secondary to architectural exploration. A rough or study modeling technique (glue gun + quick gestural techniques) is recommended.

The goal is to learn:

- the architectural distinctiveness of each design method;
- how to conduct a complex yet disciplined architectural inquiry;
- the relationship between parti and method.

Work Modality

From this assignment on, all studio work will be done individually.



from Ching's "Form, Space, and Order"

Readings

See original assignment links, reading list, and website.

Schedule (while a 1/8"=1' scale is good, a larger (e.g., 1/4") scale may facilitate model making)

Due: Friday 10 February: 3 design studies responding to *CONTEXT* using two enclosure methods at a time.

Due: Monday 13 February: 3 design studies responding to *CONCEPT* using two enclosure methods at a time.

Due: Wednesday 15 February: 3 design studies responding to *FORMAL TYPOLOGY* using two enclosure methods at a time (at least one linear and one central typology are required)

Due: Friday 17 February: 3 design studies responding to *PROGRAM* using two enclosure methods at a time.

Due: Monday-Tuesday 20-21 February: a minimum of 3 *thoughtful studies* (each day) developed after your previous 12 investigations.

Due: Friday 24 February: produce 3 good **synthesis** studies. Use what you learned from your 18 previous (minimum) explorations to produce the **best 3 solutions to the design problem** at hand. These synthetic works ought to include all 3 enclosure methods,

Materials (see class materials list)

Record

Upload photos of models and/or any other work in a folder called after your last name (SMITH) within the folder called "2a-Design Studies" in our studio google drive (within the "Part II" folder).

Evaluation

Open jury with grading using the following criteria:

- Understanding of the four design methods
- Response to the architectonic program and site vis-à-vis a Parti.
- Breath, depth, and creativity of the inquiry
- Interaction between representation, thought, and design product.

Part II-A counts towards 16% of the semester grade and, in combination with Part II-B, both account for 40% of the semester grade.

Vocabulary

parti	linear organization	system	central organization	scheme
typology	cluster organization	axis	courtyard	program
program	radial organization	periphery	edge condition	context
strategy/tactic	grid organization	path	rip'n'tear	order
method	functional typology	architectonic	architectural	inhabitation

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Part II-A: Architectural Parti

Companion

This following text was written by retired CUArch professor **Vyt Gureckas**. We find it very insightful and helpful and therefore I am sharing it with you.

What is a concept in architecture?

Simply put a concept is a driving idea for any particular project. It is usually stated in words. For Louis Kahn the concept for his Exeter Library was “get the book and take it to the light”

What is a *parti*?

Parti is the formal embodiment of the concept. It was a means used in the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris in its classical heyday (the 19th century). The *parti* is the general shape of the building and the disposition of the major spaces. It conveyed the fundamental form and composition of the spaces for the building. From the French word *partir* (to depart) it was the departure point for the project. In the case of the Exeter Library Louis Kahn, used a “courtyard” *parti*. The “courtyard” was actually covered at the level of the roof. The remaining “doughnut” was treated as a series of spatial layers that led to the last layer – the reading carrels at the perimeter of the building.

The next step in the Beaux Arts system was to generate an *esquisse* in 24 hours which could be said to be similar to what we consider design schematics today and had to include plans, sections, and elevations. The *esquisse* and further development of the project had to follow the *parti*.



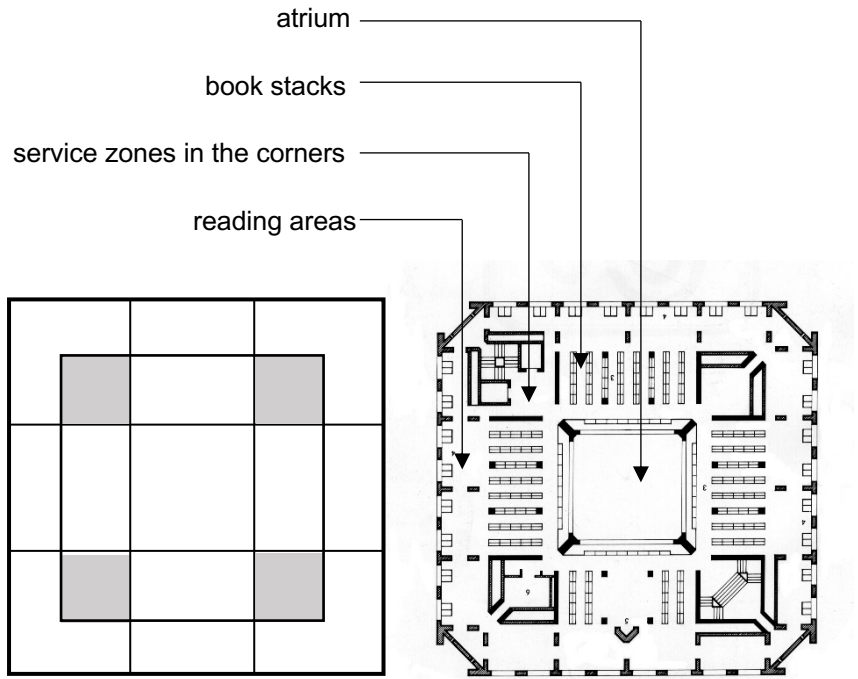
Exeter Library by Louis Kahn – exterior



Exeter Library by Louis Kahn – interior of the “atrium” or central grand space



Exeter Library by Louis Kahn – interior at the perimeter

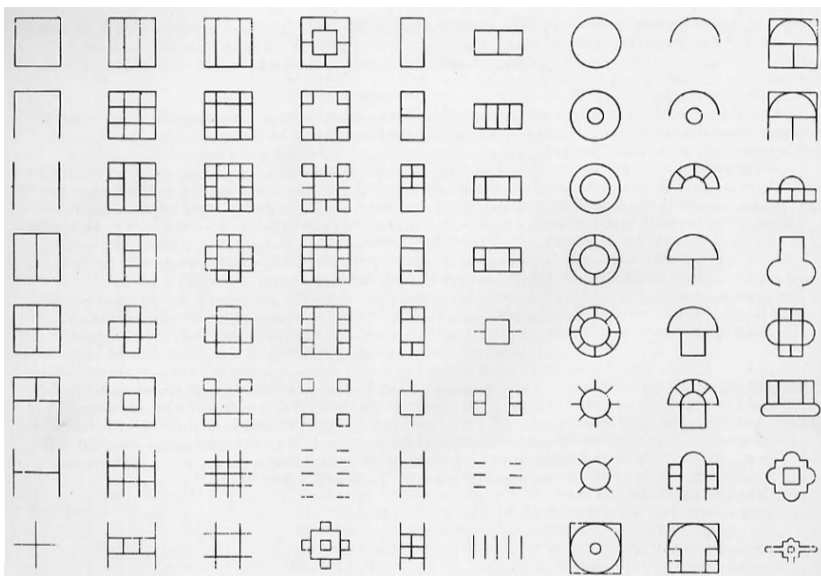


could be considered a courtyard parti or a 9 square parti.

typical floor plan

Today there are different uses of these terms and other terms that are more popular. The concept is still a pertinent notion for most architects. It is a verbalization of the main theme for the project. "Concept model" is often used today in place of *parti*. It differs from *parti* is that there is a looser relationship of what the final form might be than what *parti* once implied.

One other term that might be added here parenthetically is "type" and "typology". If we were to use the courtyard *parti* for a house we would have to acknowledge that this *parti* has been used many times throughout the history of architecture, therefore it is a "type" – a *parti* which has appeared in many buildings. We can categorize a variety of buildings into different types and therefore can talk about a typology of buildings. Another instance would be the "rowhouse" type – a common type we see in many American cities. To use a known type is not a sign of unimaginative design. It's what you do with the type that counts.



A typology of buildings by Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand. Appears in Rafael Moneo's article "On Type."

What is a conceptual model?

Today architecture professors may ask you to generate a conceptual model instead of asking for a *parti*. In part this may be because the *parti* is too quickly a solution to a building. In part it might be because a *parti* may not be exploratory enough. A concept model has the benefit of being 3 dimensional and it may open more possibilities that will translate into architecture in less linear ways. It may be easier to explore strong contemporary forms that embody an idea. This does not mean that concept models should be wild. They may be very simple and have great power for that.

Hence there is no one way to generate a conceptual model. It may be arrived at intuitively without worrying about how the program will work out. At the same time there might be a more rational translation of an idea. Below is a partial list that is a bit random. You may choose one of them or the list can serve to give you an idea of what a concept model could be and you can generate your own.

Juxtaposition – the building elements will be contrasted, put side by side in an architectural way based on how various programmatic elements are adjacent in a building.

Layers – the exterior walls and enclosures within are a series of layers:

- layers nested one in the other (how could they be used to prepare an experience?)
- layers front to back (how could they be used to support the ritual?)
- rooms created with an interstitial space between them (what will happen there?)

Formal exterior (to respond to context) and interior (to reflect the character of the program).

A grid of columns – (thin elegant / heavy powerful skeleton). The columns could be large enough to create intimate sitting areas. Thin columns will create a lofty space like a pine forest.

Matrix – the interior will have a 3D matrix of columns and beams not only to provide support for the floors and roof, but also to support spiritual functions.

Minimalist – the architectural elements will be elegant yet not overbearing so that the ritual of mass can be highlighted.

Precious containers – the Blessed Sacrament may be in highlighted or set apart (perhaps the whole chapel is windows with a solid, dark box within: the ultimate place of mystery where everything emerges from)

Dialogue of spaces – the chapel may establish an active dialectics with its surroundings.

What else?

For more on parti

I wrote a short text on what I consider to be an architectural design *parti*. I invite you to read it.

https://www.academia.edu/4020964/On_the_Architectural_Design_Partii