

Sacred Space & Cultural Studies

studio

Bermudez / Campo Baeza

VAS

PROJECT 1 A CONVENT FOR 12+1. A Sacred Building for the Third Millennium

STARTS Monday 10 September (design process begins)
INTERIM R Friday 14 and Friday 21 September @ 2:15 PM (west wailing wall, CROUGH 133)
DUE Friday 28 September at 2:15PM (MILLER)

“Architectura sine idea vana Architectura est”
Alberto Campo Baeza **Principia Architectonica** (2012)

PROGRAM The Convent calls for:

Chapel (1,000 sq.ft.)
Library (1,000 sq.ft.)
Cells (1,000 sq.ft.)
Refectory (1,000 sq.ft.)
Deambulatorium
Services (1,000 sq.ft.)
Grove (5,000 sq.ft.)

While serving the Catholic faith, given the length of time and focus of the studio, we will not be addressing any particular order.

DISCUSSION *(by Alberto Campo Baeza)*

The convent has always been a key topic in Architecture. From Le Corbusier’s La Tourette to Louis Kahn’s Dominican Sister Convent, Barragan’s Convento de las Capuchinas, or Van der Laan’s St.Benedictine Abbey, the convent as program and building type has provoked new architectural models. The reason may be found in the fact that a convent is like a city homothety: a complex organism with cells, chapel, refectory, deambulatory, library, grove and services, where we can recognize the same elements than in a small town.

Cells ask us to study the minimal habitat for one person. *The Chapel* becomes a special inquiry about sacred space and light. *The Refectory*, which is a dining room, suggests an investigation of service and multiuse spaces. *The Library* is about reflecting what today means, when computers are so popular, a library. Lastly, *the Deambulatory and the Grove* invite a reflection on the relation between Architecture and Nature.

The place, the location where the building sits, is very important.

But, what is a convent today? What does a convent mean in the new millennium?

A convent is a piece of Architecture.

As said, a convent is a little city. A very well ordered, well structured and well organized city.

A convent is an *hortus conclusus*. A closed grove, as the Holy Scripture says.



The Chapel, the Library, the Cells, the Refectory, the Deambulatory and the Grove should reflect the special atmosphere and the spirit that this building must have. *The Chapel* must be a space with a clear sacred character, a space capable of suspending time. It is where we inquire about light and shadows and proportion and scale. It is a space for meditation, prayer, singing, and celebration.

The Library must be a silent and calm space. We will work one more time with light and shadow. Media have changed a lot. A book continues to be a book but people have changed their relationship with books. New generations have Laptops, iPads, iPods and so on to communicate or access books and information with. Many of the monks will be young people who are working with these devices as the most natural thing. The library will be a space for reading, writing, studying, and thinking.

The Cell should be a space for privacy, for being alone. We will develop a space with minimal dimensions but good enough for living. The Cell is the convent cell. A space for sleeping and praying and being isolated.

The Refectory should be a space more distended. A place to be in communication with others. A luminous and wide space. It is where the community comes together. A space for speaking, for eating for being more relaxed and for listening lectures.

The Deambulatory should be a space with a clear circulation. For walking. It used to be and could be the cloister, a space open to the sky, a patio? for walking, praying or reciting.

The Grove should be for working with your hands, for manual labor — trying to translate the Benedictine Ora et Labora.

But, overall we must look for and find a clear IDEA about what a convent is. Between walls? Around patios? We should decide if the horizon is the sky or nature. To study the models/precedents proposed at the beginning of the studio doesn't oblige us to copy them. We can "invent" a new type of convent by going to the most essential.

TEAM WORK Project 1 will be done in groups of 2 individuals (same groups as in Phase One).

READINGS In addition to the readings assigned in Phase One, you will review:

Louis Kahn. *Talk with Students --About Monasteries* (see link in course website)

T.S. Eliot. *The Four Quartets* (see link in course website)

Alex Roman. *The Third and The Seventh* (Film, link in the course website)

(http://faculty.cua.edu/bermudez/courses/bermudez-campo_baeza/other.htm)

GRADE 30 % of the course grade