

## Arch 6971 - Master's Project Studio

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### Concept Proposal Explanation

Given that there was confusion over the expectations for the conceptual proposals, this is a belated explanation of the difference between an abstraction and a concept and an explanation of what we expect in a conceptual proposal.

- (1) An **abstraction** is “a concept or idea not associated with any specific instance” (*WordNet* ® 2.0, © 2003 Princeton University).

In the case of many of the presentations on January 11 and 13, the models were three-dimensional abstractions of an idea related to the design project but were not associated with any of the five given areas of focus (experience, form, program, site, technology / tectonics) as they pertain specifically to the project. Abstract studies of this nature are an important and necessary part of the beginning stages of the design process. When an abstract idea has been studied and explored until the point at which it can be considered with a specific association to the project, the abstraction develops into a **concept**.

- (2) A **concept** is “an abstract or general idea inferred or derived from specific instances” (*WordNet* ® 2.0, © 2003 Princeton University).

A conceptual proposal draws from abstract studies and takes them to the next level through the application of one or more associations specific to the design project (in our case, the five focus areas: experience, form, program, site, technology / tectonics). For example, many of the abstract models can be refined and then considered in terms of the specific site or a specific programmatic requirement. Therefore, the conceptual proposal starts to challenge the ideas of the design project in an architectural way. This series of studies from abstraction to concept is linear or horizontal – it follows a clear progression from one to the next. When the concept proposal can be applied to the design project in multiple ways (multiple focus areas simultaneously) – when the architectural potential of the concept is clear – the concept begins to depart from the linear development and progresses into an architectural design **parti**.

- (3) The word **parti** is French, defined as a “political (etc) party; option, course of action”; examples of typical expressions: “*prendre un parti* - to make up one's mind, come to a decision; *prendre le parti de faire* - to make up one's mind to do; *prendre parti pour qn* - to side with somebody; to stand or stick up for somebody; *parti pris* - bias, prejudice” ([www.french-linguistics.co.uk/dictionary/](http://www.french-linguistics.co.uk/dictionary/)). Therefore, for our purpose, a parti is a specific course of action – an idea or system of ideas that relate architecturally to the design project at many levels. In this way, the parti can be applied to the design project in all dimensions. For more on architectural design parti, review the other posted document.