



L-Università ta' Malta

Faculty for the
Built Environment

B.Sc.(Hons) in Built Environment Studies

BEN2101 Design Workshop 3:

Housing Project

Design Tutors

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Duration

The design workshop consists of a **14 week design studio** commencing on Tuesday 24th September 2024 until Tuesday 7th January 2025. Digital submission on VLE by latest Friday 10th January 2025 and Reviews held in studio in the form of student presentations between Monday 13th January - Friday 17th January 2025

Design Objective

The primary objective of the design workshop is for each student to design an apartment block that responds to several factors such as the residents, immediate community and surrounding context utilising fundamental tools of architectural design. This scope will enable a wider discussion and critique of the current state of speculative apartment development that has intensified across the Maltese islands over several decades now.

The ongoing public debate of uglification associated with mostly apartment blocks is a relevant theme. While being conscious of this reality, this design workshop can be means to express a creative and critical approach that enables relevant architectural solutions for housing design against speculative development. In order to achieve this, certain parameters are required as guidelines to support the student's design process from the initial conceptualisation to the final design proposal. These parameters include:

- Site
- Theme
- Building Parts

Site

The specific site and immediate context are crucial influencers of the design process. The students are expected to visit the site at several times of the day/s to experience and understand the literal aspects of the site from the topography, the neighbouring buildings form, typology and immediate urban fabric as

well as the various uses in the area. Furthermore, there are other layers of site specific analysis that should be considered including behavioural and social aspects and how people in the immediate community interact (or not) within the context as an example.

The sites being considered are situated at the development zones of different towns and villages and are positioned at a corner. Some of these sites may possess approved building permits or have already been constructed. For the purpose of this academic exercise, **all sites are to be considered as vacant plots**. Also, it is important to note that **all sites are privately owned and access (even if just a plot) is not granted**. We advise all students not to trespass. All sites are easily visible from the public street and measurements can be extracted from the the Planning Authority Map Server or Google Maps tools. The sites being considered are as follows (area is an approx.):

Site 1_Zabbar_Triq Villabate c/w Triq Dun Gwann Debono (601 sq.m.)

Site 2_Marsascalea_Triq iz-Zonqor (576 sq.m.)

Site 3_Swieqi_Triq il-Keffa c/w Triq il-Qantar (565 sq.m.)

Site 4_Birkirkara (Swatar)_Triq il-Qanpiena c/w Triq L Onofrio (687 sq.m.)

Theme

A set of themes are being considered to provide a general outlook on the potential users of the housing proposal and how this can effect or support the immediate community. These themes reflect our current reality, societal challenges and can cultivate a deeper discussing on what it means to dwell in compact residential blocks. Aspects of privacy, public, ownership, shared spaces, enabling spaces, universal design amongst several other aspects are related to the overarching themes presented. The student is expected to conduct research relating to the allocated theme and to document the data gathered through various mediums including, text, images, diagrams, hand drawings and other relevant design orientated tools. The themes include the following:

Theme A_Contemporary family

Theme B_Intergenerational living

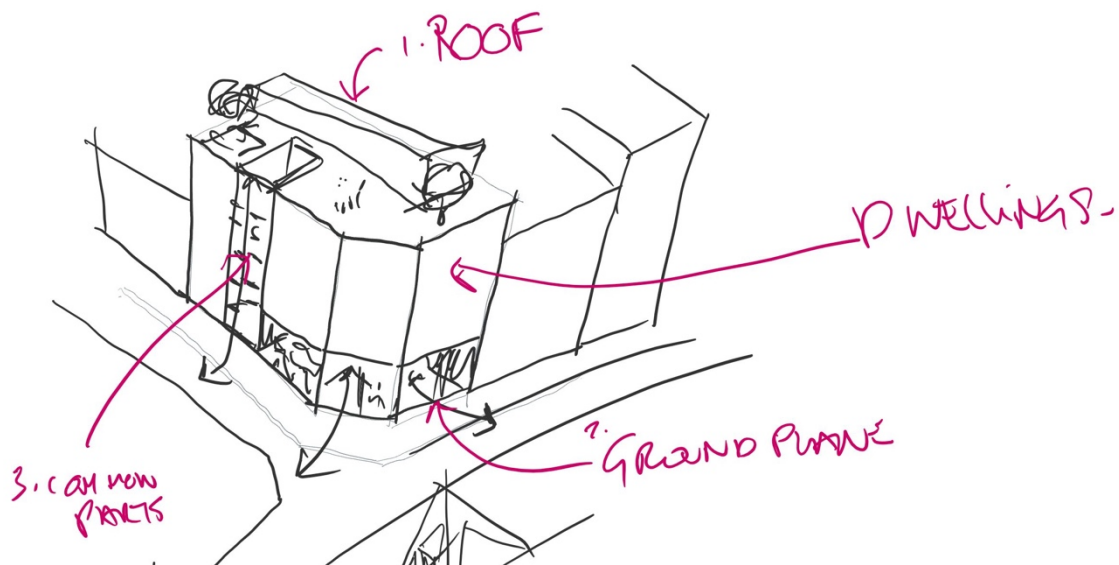
Theme C_Half temporary / half permanent (AirBnB phenomenon)

Theme D_Student living

Building Parts

With the site and theme allocation, the following parts are necessary to be considered during the design process. These parts will include:

- **The ground plane** – interaction between the street and potential uses
- **Common parts** – more than a confined functional means of access
- **Mixture of apartment units** – different unit typologies allow for engaging architectural spaces
- **The roof space** - potential open space for residents



Sketch_highlighting building parts

Group Work_Site Studies (1st October)

First weekly objective is for students is to analyse and study their assigned sites and this will be a group effort and presented digitally in graphical form for the next studio session on Tuesday 1st October.

This site study exercise will also include a site massing model of 1:200 of the immediate context. This model needs to be simple in material choice and highlight important contextual factors such as topography, building form, front and backyards, dividing walls, pavements and any specific landmarks or detail if visible at specified scale. This will accompany the site analysis content to be presented in digital format on Tuesday 1st October in studio.

Group Work_Case Studies (1st October)

Accompanying the site studies and site model deliverables, students are also requested to research a series of relevant architectural examples of housing blocks (3 in no. minimum case studies). These can be a mixture of local or foreign and the research approach should be a thorough study and not just repeating any information easily prepared/published on any of the respected architectural and design

websites. The study and presentation should be mostly graphical and explaining the following aspects/themes:

- Architectural concept/vision
- Context and site awareness
- Architectural massing and layouts
- Materiality, construction and structural methodology
- Any passive design approaches and/or understand of HVAC services / infrastructure
- Particular specific elements of importance such as the common parts, courtyards, active roofs or any other spaces of relevance that make the project distinct
- Who designed it ? Architect, Studio or Firm ?

These are just several disciplines/themes to consider when analysing the case studies. All this information will be presented digitally along the site analysis presentation during the studio session next Tuesday 1st October.

The Programme

The studio sessions will be conducted every week for the duration of the semester at the ground floor studio of the Faculty for the Built Environment and all studio sessions are mandatory for all students. Each student will be assigned a group and follow the official schedule that will rotate according to the assigned tutor to meet and discuss as a group/individually at respective tutor's availability as per BSc yr 2 Semester 1 Timetable of Tuesdays or Fridays.

Attendance

As already mentioned, all studio sessions, meetings, discussion groups, presentations, lectures and any related activity to this design workshop are mandatory for all students. It is in the best interest of the student to attend the design workshop to receive weekly constructive critique and guidance from various perspectives of the tutors. It is also important to show constant progress and design development in order for tutors to react and provide the necessary feedback. Fulfilling this commitment will also allow the tutors to keep track of the various phases of design development from initial conceptualisation to final proposal preparation.

Models & Drawing

Physical model making & drawing (sketching) are considered fundamental tools that support students' design process development. All students are expected to utilise such tools during various phases of the design process during the semester and presented weekly in studio sessions.

Deliverables (final submission in January 2025)

The workshop has a strong architectural basis and students are required to establish architectural thinking and develop a mature understanding of the design process.

The final submission as digital version is due on VLE by latest Friday 10th January 2025 @ 23:59 (i.e. between Friday 10th – Saturday 11th). The Review will be held at the ground floor studio of Faculty between Monday 13th-17th January 2025 and follow a student presentation method. A schedule will be issued closed to the date.

The final design proposal will be a mostly graphical submission in the form of drawings and images accompanied by a series of working physical models of varying scales. The basic deliverables for the final submission include the following:

- Sheet size varying between A1 or A2 depending on the scale of the drawing/s
- All physical working models made during the semester to show massing and architectural development
- Site Plan at 1:200
- Site analysis
- Concept/brief in the form of mixed media such as concise text, sketches, physical working models
- Architectural plans (with furniture layout) of all floors including roof & basement floor at 1:100
- Elevations (both streets) including neighbouring properties at 1:100
- Sections at 1:100
- Architectural details that focus on specific aspects of the proposal at different scales ranging from 1:50, 1:20 and even 1:10. Example would include the building facade between external and internal interface detailed section at 1:50 or 1:20
- Structural diagram/schematic in sketch form to illustrate understanding of structural form, gravity loads and horizontal loads to foundation level (no calculations required)
- Materiality mood board
- Photomontages of the approach to the building from pavement level / across street
- Sketches/collages of internal spaces that are specific to design – common entrance, courtyards, common parts, residential apartments, roof space, etc..
- All drawings to be scaled, labelled and annotated properly
- Any other material that is important to express the design project

The design project should be presented in a clear, concise and graphically engaging manner that highlight salient points of the design proposal. Please note that high glossy paper for printing is prohibited.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module which includes considering the scope, objectives and deliverables of the Housing Design Project & Supporting Design Workshop, the students will be able to:

- *Prepare and present building design projects of a more complex scale, mixed typology in a dense urban context, using a range of media, and in response to a brief.*
- *Develop a conceptual and critical approach to architectural design that integrates and satisfies aesthetic aspects of building and the technical requirements of its construction and the needs of the user/s.*
- *Ability to generate design proposals using understanding of a body of knowledge, some at the current boundaries of professional practice and the academic discipline of architecture*
- *Ability to apply a range of communication methods and media to present design proposals clearly and effectively*
- *Ability to evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions in order to make and present sound judgements within a structured discourse relating to architectural design.*
- *Understanding materials, processes and techniques that apply to architectural design and building construction*

The above listed outcomes are extracted from the Architects Registration Board (ARB) General Criteria & Attributes Part 1 www.arb.org.uk

Participation Disclaimer

This brief is solely the basis of the Design Workshop that is fully developed through the Design Studio sessions.

The Design Studio sessions introduce the full scope of the brief systematically and guide students in achieving learning outcomes through weekly milestones. They also present the theory required by the Design Workshop task not covered in study units.

The Design Studio sessions combine lectures, class discussions, student presentations (pinups), and feedback sessions. Students' participation in all components is essential to design development. Students must follow peer feedback throughout the session and recognise and take on board aspects that apply to their design process.

Students have to carry out each weekly task. Weekly Design Studio reviews are as valuable as the final one as they offer an opportunity to present work and gain timely feedback.

For this reason, attendance is mandatory for the entire duration of the Design Studio sessions. Poor attendance will impact students' progress, results, and ability to develop expected deliverables at the required level.