

# Architectural Prologue

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The Department of Architecture, Faculty of Design and Architecture, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) was officially formed in the year 1999. The department's main function is to develop multi levels architectural knowledge through teaching, research and consultancy. It offers two undergraduate programmes, Bachelor of Design (Architecture) which started in May 2000, and Bachelor of Architecture program which commenced in December 2004. Both programmes have received the Board of Architect Malaysia's (BAM's) Part I and Part II accreditation respectively.

The Bachelor of Design (Architecture) at UPM is a three-year programme which stresses on mastering basic design principles, communication skills and architectural design process encompassing the understanding of design and technical requirements of various building typologies. The first year studio's emphasis is on the integration of arts and architecture through explorations of different mediums, design understanding and real space involvement. During the second year, students will design small-scaled buildings within a suburban context and incorporate technological and theoretical aspects. The studio culminates into a comprehensive design project of high complexity during the third year.

Meanwhile, the Bachelor of Architecture is a two-year programme stressing on opportunities to explore urban design aspects, sustainable design issues, advance building technology and architectural professional practice. Studio projects normally deal with community issues, heritage, town planning and integration of structural and building services. During the fourth year, students delve into housing, office building, museum, hotel and library projects. Each individual student then culminate his or her study with a thesis project during their fifth and final year.

The Department of Architecture aspires to include sustainable development into the curriculum especially in the design studio. It has taken great stride with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia (PAM) in developing Green Building Index (GBI) in a studio teaching. Exposure and awareness of sustainable issues are inculcated among students during their first year, application of natural ventilation and lighting in their designs during the second year, and effective site planning and energy-efficient design during their third year. Students are expected to utilise their knowledge in sustainability during their fourth and fifth years design studios.

For academic session 2008/2009, the first year studio continued the approach taken in previous years in liberating the senses and hidden talents of new incoming students. In the first project, students explored the relevancy of scale, balance, proportion, anthropometrics and ergonomics in design. From sheets of corrugated cardboards students were required to construct an object that that would accommodate the basic need for sitting, working, storing, relaxing or even sleeping. The students were then required to design a display area for a selected object and eventually created a small scale industrial outlet.

In the second year studio, a theme of 'viewing and the art of being viewed' was adopted. Students were required to design a *Habitable Sculpture*, which functions as a viewing platform and landmark for a Mini-Eco Resort. The *Archaeological Gallery* challenged students to create temporary facilities to view delicate excavation works within a historical fort on top of Bukit Melawati, Kuala Selangor. The second year studio culminates with *The Kampung Boy Gallery* with the intention of celebrating how cartoons can be an art medium that touches universal values and unites humanity.

The third year studio explored the boundaries of architecture and the built environment. The studio started with a design esquisse where students were required to design a creative conceptual application through perceptual and experiential development. They were not allowed to base on arbitrary symbols or forms. Instead they were required to respond to a particular site/setting with the placement of morphological forms that were intuitive, instinctive or merely inspired. *Between Dichotomies* proposed the CIQ Complex at the Melaka River estuary. It was the final project where students need to address the dichotomy between land and sea, public and private, pedestrian and vehicular access and other dichotomies.

*Beyond Housing* was the fourth year project for the academic session 2008/2009. Students working in groups designed a master plan for a 250-acre land at the Pandamaran peninsular in South Klang. Great emphasis was given to sustainable and environmentally sensitive design ideologies, town planning strategies and socio-cultural agendas. Each student would later design a housing scheme within designated areas of the master plan.

Selected works by students published in the design catalogue and exhibited in STEdex09 have gone through a rigorous process at departmental level and a 'blind review' by distinguished external reviewers. Nik Ariff Azmee (Design Evolution Sdn. Bhd.) and Wan Azhar Wan Sulaiman (Universiti Teknologi MARA) reviewed and selected works for first and second year students' works. Additionally, Ar. Lee Chor Wah (immediate past President of PAM) and Prof. Dr Ahmad Bashri Sulaiman (Universiti Teknologi Malaysia City Campus) reviewed and selected the third and fourth years' works. The selected works epitomise a broad perspective of the architectural programme at UPM.