AS AN ATTEMPT TO ENCOURAGE THE reinterpretation of modern and regional designs, the Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE) has built a new headquarters. CEDARE used to occupy an office space in the Nile Tower, Giza, but has now moved to a purpose-built structure in the Cairo suburb of Heliopolis.

The new headquarters was designed by the Architecture and Urbanism Group of Ahmed Fahim and Hisham Bahgat. The two Cairo University professors were commissioned for design and supervision after winning a closed competition. Their design task started in March 1997 and the headquarters was finally opened in January 2000.

Established as non-profit institution in 1992, CEDARE is funded mainly by both Egypt and Saudi Arabia’s governments, together with multilateral institutions and government bodies from the Middle East and Europe. The institution aims to assist governments in their capacity as managers of environmental resources, and as builders and overseers of sustainable development policies and strategies.

A variety of projects and tasks had to be housed within the building. The centre has three major programmes, focused on resource management, the development of human settlements, and the development of urban environments. CEDARE organises other programmes that foster awareness and environmental education, environmental impact assessment (EIA), and the development of environmental laws. Over 40 specialists in Information Technology (IT) and environmental sciences work in the centre, together with a considerable number of short and long-term consultants.

Walking through the headquarters, a sense of the concept behind CEDARE becomes clear: aesthetics are considered in terms of the broader built environment and often overridden by function.

The design adheres to the paradigm of "Glocalism," in the sense that it embodies global and local visions, and also incorporates a time element, which the two other concepts tend to ignore. The CEDARE building conceptualises the built form in a manner that resists absolute
immersion in global trends and refuses to copy and paste from the past, and thus can be described as resistant architecture. The design presents a built form that conveys the positive co-existence of the Middle East and Europe. This concept is carefully translated as a metaphor into all facades of the building. Layers of materials make clear cultural comments. The first layer is of brick, referencing Arab cultural origins, and the second is the glass curtain wall that acts as a shell which engulfs the first layer, expressing the modern technology of Europe.

Notably, the selection of materials also defines the possible pattern of relationship between the intended concept and the final building image. The tapestry of interlocking traditional brick layering with glazed blue steel cylinders and the glass curtain wall represents the intersection between traditional/local and modern/global values. Due to high land values, the building interior maximises the allotted space which results in a very functional design. The design skilfully accommodates the building regulations of Heliopolis by not occupying the entire plot of land. Out of a total land area of 150,000 sqm, the ground-floor area is 75,000 sqm and the typical floor area is 83,500 sqm. A front yard increases the setback line, allowing freedom in the façade treatments to express fluently the marriage of heritage and modern technology.

The importance of comfort and a sense of belonging are self-evident when we refer to living spaces; but what about work places? These are places where many spend their time, at least from 9 to 5. So in addition to comfort and belonging, employees need to feel safe at work. Originally, the intention was to designate the building for CEDARE only. However, the preliminary architectural programme was changed after contracting the architects. Due to the client’s financial considerations, the space was reconsidered and reallocated. Accordingly, some changes were made to the original design to accommodate new activities.

Parts of the ground floor and the mezzanine level were sold to the Commercial International Bank, CIB. The bank expanded to take over the first and second floors as well. These floors were redesigned to house a training and visa centre as well as other banking activities. The adapted design caters to the increased demand for public accessibility, and spaces for parking, storage, and circulation.

Work environments must not only be functional and efficient. They must also satisfy, support, and enhance the psychological needs and self-esteem of employees. Concomitantly, the critical question was how to accommodate the CIB occupancy while at the same time maintaining a building image that reflects CEDARE? Functionally and aesthetically, the answer was striking: adjustments aimed at the separation of circulation to serve the building’s dual function.

Entrances are adapted to match the relocation of the core for the separation of the two types of users working in and visiting the CEDARE and CIB premises. The main entrance for CEDARE is located to the right of the main façade, while CIB’s entrance is situated on the left. A third side entrance at the end of the right façade serves as a secondary entrance for CEDARE and acts as CIB’s emergency exit as well.

The CIB occupies four floors with a vertical circulation space internally linking the levels by a staircase as well as two elevators. The third to seventh floors, occupied by CEDARE, follow typical open-space office planning which defies the usual rigidity of grid plan work spaces. The roof plan, levelled at 26 meters above ground level accommodates entertainment and free time activities for CEDARE employees. The two basement floors, which contain additional socialisation areas, are accessed by two descending ramps providing dual accessibility to the basement for gender segregation requirements.

As a society we constantly re-evaluate the meaning and desirability of built environments. What was visually acceptable some years ago becomes unacceptable now, and what was refused before is suddenly valued and acquires meaning over time. The design of the CEDARE headquarter addresses three basic visual qualities that preoccupy the built environment at any given time and place: imageability, legibility, and identity. Imageability is the ability the building
possesses to create an image, or a probability of evoking a visual message to society that can be memorised easily. Legibility is meant to express the building's function in a way that is readable and not confusing. Identity, the collective aspect of the visual characteristics of the building, makes it definitively recognisable.

According to Fahim and Bahgat, Egyptians generally and Cairenes particularly possess a multi-architectural heritage that ranges from Pharaonic, Coptic and Islamic to post-colonial, socialist, and modern. Thus, another critical question can be posed here: How to introduce a relatively new functional office environment in the area of Heliopolis that possesses an original residential urban environment? Would the answer be to borrow and copy from these multi-layers of Heliopolis heritage? Or to imitate Western architectural trends?

The architects' response to these questions is objectively and marvellously articulated. The merging of the underlying values of these various cultures is manifested in the building image, in an attempt to open a new avenue for Egyptian architecture in the third millennium. This corresponds with architect Charles Correa who warns architects of the developing world to neither copy your past nor the present of others.

Fahim and Bahgat assert that their search for a vocabulary – in this time when the Egyptian contemporary dictionary and the grammar for using existing architectural vocabulary are not yet well developed – resulted in this dualistic design.

It is interesting to note that while the office space of different floors adheres to the rigidity of the structural system, a mobility within the grid system is celebrated, creating another hidden dialogue between the static and the dynamic. On the other hand, the decomposition and re-composition of building elements have resulted in a form that is indigenous and local, yet extremely contemporary.

Examining the building in terms of context, interface, and way-finding confirms the preceding qualities. The context, or the building setting, exemplified by char-

acter, size, and other visual cues is clearly celebrated. The height is appropriate and fits well with the surrounding buildings, yet the building's special identity is also emphasised. Routes, traffic paths, the sidewalk and the ramps leading to the basement levels are designed to tie the building into its surrounding environment.

The building's outer shell serves as a crucial meeting place where the inside office space occupied by both CEDARE and CIB connects with the outside. The building's function is expressed with no ambiguity. Contrasts of forms, materials, textures and colours soften the rigidity of the building mass. The transparency of the main entrances conveys a welcoming message to the visitors and the clients of CIB, while at the same time satisfying the curiosity of the public.

As a conscious and honest attempt at Glocalism declaring a new form of resistant architecture, the CEDARE building adds to Cairo's architectural discourse. It illustrates how architects can shape and reshape a building design according to the clients' needs while keeping a strong influence on the building image and built form. A real need for examples like this is clearly on the rise, in order to demonstrate creativity and innovation in the construction of better work environments.
وعلى الرغم من أن المسقط الأفقية للأدوار المتكررة ينتج بفضلية المحدود التمويض الإنشائي، نجد أنه قد تم تحريك الفجوة الخارجية للمبنى وبخاصة في الأدوار من الأول حتى الثالث بالواجهة الرئيسية لخلق حوار آخر بين الساكن والمتحرك.

ويتصدى المبنى بمعايير السياق العمراني والعلاقة بين الداخلي والخارجي. نجد أنه يعبر عن وظيفته بدون مشروض، فهو من ناحية يتواءم تماماً مع السياق العمراني للمنطقة من حيث التراث والتراث والأدوار وال الإسلامية والدائماً المخصصة لأدوار البدروم. ومن ناحية أخرى يساهم التباين في الشروط والظروف الملموس والأسوار في الأقسام من الأسوار مجموع الكثر من النظام، كما يساهم شكلها الخارجي في نقل رسالة ترحيبية لكل من زائر المركز والسكن، وفي نفس الوقت توفر منحة الفضول البصري للمارة.

وشكل الموازنة، يمثل مبنى المركز الرئيسي لسداري محاولة جادة لتحقيق تزاوج العمارة والمجلة، مع ذلك ما بين درجة من درجة المقاومة. كما يمكنه مرحلة من مراحل تطور العمارة المصرية المعاصرة، وتوضح في نفس الوقت، كيف يمكن للمهندسين أن يساهموا في ذلك استقلال احتياجات العمل مع الحفاظ على تأثيره الخاص على تكوين المبنى. وهذا تحول احتجاجنا الشديد لأمثلة مشابهة للتاجد والإبداع في بناء عمل أفضل.
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المركز الرئيسي لسيدار

العولمة - المحلية وعمارة المقاومة

تضمن مجموعة العمارة والعزaman. د. أحمد فهمي، و. هشام بهذت، وذلك بعد فوزهما في السابقة

ويتمي من الحكم المصري والمصرى الصناعى للعملية الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والبرنامج الإحتقانا للدعم المحدود. تم تأسيس سيدار، مركز الشرقية-الشمالية للإيصال العربي وأوروبا، عام 1994 كمنظمة عالمية بحثية غير ربحية. ويدفع المركز إلى دعم قوات المؤسسات الوطنية في مجال إدارة موازنة البيئة، وتحقيق سياسات استراتيجيات التنمية الدائمة. ويدعم المركز العديد من المتخصصين في مجالات علم البيئة وتكنولوجيا المعلومات، ضمن العديد من الاستراتيجيات، وذلك في إطار ثلاثة برامج أساسية، هي: إدارة التغيرات العالمية ومشاريع الأراضي، والمشتجعات البيئية والمستوطنات البشرية، بالإضافة إلى التنمية البيئية وتكنولوجيا الأثر البيئي وسياسات قوانين البيئة.

وقد انتقل المركز حديثًا إلى مبانى الجديدة بصر المパソコン، بعد أن كان يشمل مبنى إداري يぶり النيل بالجزء. حيث قام تصميمه بالإشراف على تنفيذ مجموعة العمارة والعزمان. د. أحمد فهمي، و. هشام بهذت، وذلك بعد فوزهما في السابقة.