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ΣΧΟΛΗ ΑΡΧΙΤΕΚΤΟΝΩΝ ΜΗΧΑΝΙΚΩΝ

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN 9: URBAN DESIGN

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URBAN DESIGN OF A SOCIAL HOUSING AREA ALONG WITH SUPPORTING INFRA-STRUCTURES AT ELAIONAS, MUNICIPALITY OF ATHENS



Teaching team

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1. Course description

In a period of multiple and interconnected (multi)crises (climate crisis, cost of living crisis, housing crisis ...), whose effects are felt in many aspects of life, a significant part of the population is unable to solve their housing needs without support, or is forced to live in conditions that do not meet their needs.

It is therefore necessary for architectural design to seek proposals that define housing as a social good and housing complexes as places of common life and a site of justice.

In this workshop we will try to explore the issue of housing from a particular socially critical perspective - that of social housing. **Nowadays, the emergence of social housing as a specific and socially significant genre of architectural problematic is of pivotal concern.** And it is necessary to redefine and re-address the housing problem that a large number of urban inhabitants of present-day metropolises face; especially of those inhabitants who cannot resolve their housing problems by ordering from a specialist or by buying ready-made houses of their dreams. It is equally crucial, to re-signify the claim for the 'right to housing', as part of wider claims for social and spatial justice - a claim expressed by an increasing number of people and collectives.

If, in the period of architectural modernism, the housing problem was framed by a focus on the predetermined needs of the so-called 'average user' or the 'typical family' and the separation of functions, **today it needs to be radically and inclusively reframed through the understanding of different ways of life and their spatial-architectural expression as well as by the multiplicity of relations between individuals, social groups, functions and spaces.**

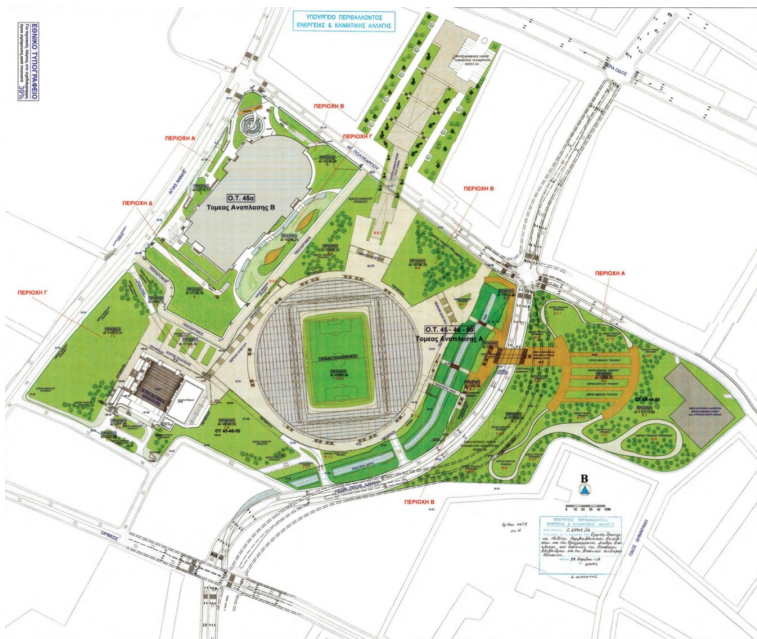
Instead of a single and unique type of housing, there is a need to explore multiple housing nodes and assemblages that respond to the multiple and different needs of diverse subjects and groups, according to their subjectivities - economic, social, cultural, ethnic, racial, age, gender and sexual. For the appropriation and functioning of both these multiple assemblages and nodes and of the wider complex, it is important to simultaneously explore the public and communal spaces of gathering of subjects and groups, the supporting infrastructures as well as the possible centralities that reflect the different and multiple needs and intentions.

2. Place of intervention: Elaionas, Athens

The place where we will try to explore and apply the abovementioned intentions is located in Elaionas, within the boundaries of the Municipality of Athens. Elaionas partly encapsulates significant parts of the city's history, as it condenses the impacts of industrialization, 'modernization' and subsequent de-industrialization, including the management of urban voids these processes left behind.



Yet as Elaionas is an area on the edge of the city, an area in transition, it becomes a territory upon which dominant visions of Athens are projected. An array of development intentions and future plans have been projected and are being promoted in Elaionas, aiming to transform it into a sports and commercial park within the framework of the Double Regeneration, into Athens' Silicon Valley with an emphasis on research and development clusters, or into an area of real-estate investment and redevelopment of small and larger former industrial units and urban voids intended to house mixed residential, cultural, commercial/office and tourism complexes.

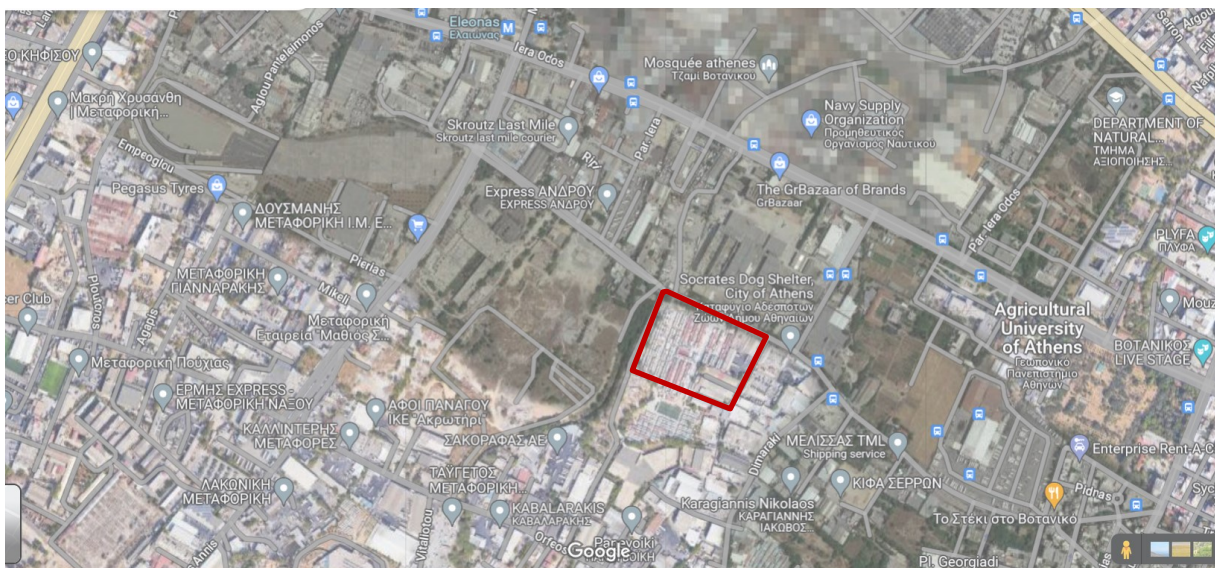


At the same time, however, Elaionas has been, and still is for some, the "backyard" of Athens; a partial "heterotopia" within which social groups and uses that are deemed "undesirable" for the main "body" of the city are displaced: Roma and refugee populations, precarious workers, the main Mosque, scrap yards and sorting sites, the planned cremation centre... Yet simultaneously, temporary or permanent art and entertainment spaces and the weekly rag-pickers' bazaar find a home in semi-invisible or semi-visible urban voids.



Within this multifaceted area, our project focuses on the former refugee camp of Elaionas. A former place of confinement and habitation of a large number of refugees that was created in 2015 on a plot of land of the Municipality of Athens, expanded in 2020, presented as a "model camp" and then forcibly closed (with the simultaneous expulsion of its residents) in 2022 to become part of the much promoted "Double Redevelopment" of Elaionas.

In contrast to the expressed intentions for this site and the area in general, our specific workshop highlights the urgent necessity for social housing and the critical role that the development of such projects now plays in this site - not as a temporary emergency solution again placed "in Athens' backyard" but as an alternative model of habitation and urbanization of the site and the city's neighbourhoods.



3. Methodology of analysis—Intervention scenarios

Firstly, it is important to understand the area and its multiple characteristics as well as the needs and desires of the different groups that are invited to live there. The design of the social housing complex needs to be part of a development scenario for the wider area. Using tools of urban analysis and synthesis, each team will decide which features of the area it wishes to retain, which to modify and which new ones to introduce, as well as the networks and associations it wishes to strengthen or remove.

Habitar en comunidad

La vivienda cooperativa en cesión de uso

Lacol y La Ciutat Invisible



Epilogo de La Dinamo Fundació



The aim of the proposed social housing complex is to enhance existing and to create new conditions that facilitate the development of vibrant neighbourhoods without becoming an isolated and marginalised place "at the edge of the city".

For this reason, the scenarios of each proposal should provide for supporting residential infrastructures which, depending on the choices of each team, will include public and common spaces, associated welfare and socialisation infrastructures (e.g. schools, clinics, community centres, community spaces, etc.) and maybe small-scale productive activities.

Prerequisites of the scenario:

- Scenario for the development of the wider area using tools of urban analysis and synthesis
- Proposal for a spatial system of social housing related to the existing and proposed urban infrastructure such as public spaces, educational and/or sports spaces, commercial and production spaces and social/cultural uses
- Developing the relationship between the housing spaces of the complex and public, open and shared spaces (e.g. courtyards, balconies, balconies, etc.)
- Design and differentiation of housing types based on provisions for the respective different lifestyles that will inhabit them

Targeted lectures will help us to understand the area and different ways of spatially analysing it, the multiple dimensions of social housing, the criticality of public spaces (public spaces, common and shared spaces, spaces of collective privacy, etc.) as well as the crucial role that the concept of minimum space and the logic of repeatability of the units of space acquire in the design of social housing. **The aim is also to think about new ways of organising space that correspond to differentiated ways of living and which do not equalize the typological approach with the standard anonymity of many social housing complexes.**

Deliverables:

1. A pdf booklet of appropriate size that will include: Site reading and analysis (using whatever means each team deems necessary) and Site Intervention Scenario with as many diagrams as each team deems necessary
2. A 1:2000 scale plan-diagram of proposed land uses (showing which uses are retained and which are proposed to be changed)
3. Masterplan of the intervention area at a scale of 1:1000
4. A 1:500 scale plan of the intervention area clearly showing the layout of the proposed social housing complex and public and common areas.
5. 1:200 plans and in addition any drawings, sketches and sketches that are deemed appropriate to describe the types of housing
6. 1:500 scale model of the settlement