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ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2012 when militants attacked the US Consulate in Benghazi, Libya the relevancy of the United States' diplomatic missions was fire-tested both in their effectiveness representing US interests abroad and the security requirements required to promote American ideals beyond the nation’s borders. Despite the improvements to embassy security and design abroad attacks like the one in Libya continue to impact the ability of diplomatic outposts to perform their missions. Additional security features added at most US facilities following the 1983 embassy bombing in Beirut, Lebanon have similarly challenged the ability to faithfully represent American ideology on foreign soil.

The State Department’s efforts to incorporate security features into the architectural design have resulted in fortress like bunkers and clumsily ironic representations of the American values of diplomacy, openness and freedom of expression. While diplomatic facilities may indeed be more secure it calls into question the effectiveness of these facilities when handicapped by the security features that counteract the diplomatic process on foreign soil. It is my contention that the security features surrounding embassies have transformed representations of American values into symbolic targets that break down the diplomatic process. If the embassy was rethought, replacing contingent symbolism for true representation, security could be maintained, diplomatic functions would improve and therefore attacks may decrease. Rethinking the notion of a single diplomatic outpost such as the embassy is essential in creating effective diplomatic relations today.

As the country enters the second decade of “the war on terror” roughly half of US Diplomatic missions have been upgraded or rebuilt to meet the security requirements detailed in the INMAN report to the United States Congress. While these changes have had minimal effect on some outposts those with the most potential to influence foreign relations have often undergone (or are slated to undergo) the most dramatic changes.

The security modifications that are now required in embassy designs impact the ability of representation strategies to function effectively. As security has increased at sites worldwide the ability to read representational elements are increasingly contingent upon not only immediate foreign context but also “designed” security features. Ideologically charged representational elements have increasingly become symbolic, due to their proximity to these prominent physical features and therefore decreased any potential potency for universal meaning. Understanding the relationship between representation, context and symbolism is required to achieve the level of outreach intended for foreign diplomatic missions.

Within the confines of the major security requirements set forth by the US Congress there is room to anticipate security threats by designing architecture that plays a dual role: security and representation. By combining urban program elements with advances in building technologies that respond to security threats the embassy can cease functioning solely in a symbolic role and instead become representational of the United States and the host nation where it resides.

Because embassies increasingly function as symbols instead of diplomatic outposts it is necessary to question their effectiveness as diplomatic tools in a global society. If the United States intends to maintain physical diplomatic outposts as part of its foreign policy, then it will require reducing the collateral that is associated with such dangerous missions. While security enhancements have improved the safety and welfare of the Foreign Service in the past, persistent attacks question the relevancy of this approach. Architecture and Urbanism should be included in as possible, if not probable and appropriate, solutions to this difficult problem.

Abstract

The relationship between representation, context and symbolism is required to achieve the level of outreach intended for foreign diplomatic missions.

Within the confines of the major security requirements set forth by the US Congress there is room to anticipate security threats by designing architecture that plays a dual role: security and representation. By combining urban program elements with advances in building technologies that respond to security threats the embassy can cease functioning solely in a symbolic role and instead become representational of the United States and the host nation where it resides.

Because embassies increasingly function as symbols instead of diplomatic outposts it is necessary to question their effectiveness as diplomatic tools in a global society. If the United States intends to maintain physical diplomatic outposts as part of its foreign policy, then it will require reducing the collateral that is associated with such dangerous missions. While security enhancements have improved the safety and welfare of the Foreign Service in the past, persistent attacks question the relevancy of this approach. Architecture and Urbanism should be included in as possible, if not probable and appropriate, solutions to this difficult problem.
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Report of the Secretary of State’s Advisory Panel on Overseas Security recommended a range of security improvements that compounded the difficulties of maintaining physical representation by the United States in foreign locations.
Predictable current events

Since 1958 the diplomatic missions of the United States have increasingly become targets for foreign governments and opposition leaders to express discontent through physical harm to US property and the welfare of US personnel. Although political alliances have shifted and large segments of the international community have changed political systems since the US Department of State’s Embassy Building program began in earnest after the second world war, threats to the security of these compounds occur at fairly regular intervals over time. The Iranian hostage crisis marks the beginning of a current events cycle in which US embassies are threatened within a year or two of the last major attack. While these events have not been localized to a particular region the propensity of attacks to continue in perpetuity for the near future has facilitated the shift of urban embassies highly engaged in the local community to ‘embassy compounds’ often located far from the persons with which the United States is maintaining diplomatic relations.

As the security recommendations of the 1982 INMAN report have been carried out attacks on US Diplomatic missions have not significantly decreased in frequency. Simply fortifying existing diplomatic program is not a sufficient deterrent and may increase the sentiments that fuel aggression against these compounds.

Because incidents involving embassies are rarely open declarations of hostility by the officiating government of the host nation the United States often maintains or reasserts a diplomatic presence in the host nation in a relatively short time frame. Accordingly, the edifices that house these missions should simultaneously reduce the severity of the attack and enable a functional diplomatic mission as soon as possible. The inference that the attacks on US diplomatic missions are often not representative of the United States’ formal relationship to the leaders of the host nation reveals that attacks are the product of armed civilians or civilians enlisted in militant groups. Therefore to reduce incidents the embassy should attempt to establish relations with the civilian populace as well as maintain relations through official channels. The primary function of the embassy should be commitment and representation of American values to the citizens of the host country.
The development of the embassy has influenced the manner in which Americans and constituents abroad view the embassy. From the cliché of a former aristocratic palace to a modernist and capitalist alternative to Stalinist building programs in West Germany; the history of embassy development describes how the efficacy of embassy program has been tied to its architectural form.

The half-hearted pursuit of architectural form pursued today as part of the State Department’s Design Excellence program is a product of the developments in foreign policy and foreign building that preceded it. By understanding the goals and results of these developments the current iteration of this bureaucratically produced typology can be assessed in relation to typological goals throughout its development.

“The model has become, we will go to dangerous places, and transform them, and we will do it from secure fortresses. And it doesn’t work.”

Prudence Bushnell former ambassador to Kenya
Development: Embassies based on program instead of official style or form

Goal: Elevate the stature of the United States government through association with ornate and historic structures. New buildings attempted to remain neutral, not mimicking local conditions or establishing an official style.

Description: From the beginnings of the embassy-building program attempted to associate the increasing prominence of the United States in foreign affairs by appropriating lavish historic structures for use by diplomatic personnel. Using former aristocratic buildings may have seemed ideal for the image of a young nation at the time but also ironically established a new rhetoric that American values could be perceived through ambiguous architectural form. When confronted with building new structures the state department opted for an ambiguous “style” to alleviate the associations with traditional western architecture and authoritarian regimes using the same symbols to articulate opposing value schemes (ie national socialists). One example is the US Ambassadors Residence in Tokyo completed in 1926. The architect Antonin Raymond described them as, “not modern in their design, but neither do they reflect any period.” It is important to note that the state department acted here with significant autonomy in contrast to wave of federalist style construction taking place in Washington, DC at the time.

Implications: National identity through replication of specific formal typological considerations were excluded from consideration at the onset. In other words, a replica of the white house, or similar for each country was not considered an appropriate representation of the United States in the host country.
Development: Adoption of Modern motifs to function as propaganda agency of the US Government abroad

Goal: Demonstrate a strong prosperous and democratic capitalist system through the use of Modern architecture

Description: Following the conclusion of the Second World War the state department utilized foreign credits from wartime activity to finance a majority of embassy construction. Because these credits could only be used in foreign currency the materials and design reflected modern architecture in part as a method to finance new embassy construction specifically because it was not contextual. “The steel came from Belgium and the cement from France; movable partitions made of extruded plastic and other special equipment came from England; and furnishings were manufactured for the Havana embassy in Paris.” As a result a majority of buildings were given modern features even Knoll furnishings and copies of Mies’ Barcelona chair as a result of massaging bureaucratic regulations to finance new construction projects. At the time there was no ordained design guidelines so many of these projects were marketed as democratic transparency and openness as realized in glass, concrete and steel. The buildings followed the hallmarks of modernist planning techniques elevating programmatic units, utilizing the free plan and drastically overheating rooms with south facing windows.

Accompanying the fall of the iron curtain across Europe the United States established a series of Amerika Haus in West Germany. These “information centers” different significantly from the standard embassy program by replicating much of the public relations functions embedded within the symbolic edifice of the embassy. Here modernism was a definite choice in maintaining appearances within West Berlin and West Germany at large. “At a time when the USSR was housing itself abroad in classically detailed masonry buildings that looked to the distant past for inspiration, the United States offered a striking contrast – radically modern buildings of steel and glass.” Similar because of the rich roots of modernism within pre-war German culture the best minds of the homeland had continued modernisms development in the United States and re-exported it to their homeland as a commercialized version of previous egalitarian ideals. Moreover, both the Nazis and Stalin rejected modernism and thus it was ideologically fused with alternative capitalist and democratic systems of government.

Implications: Modernism is seen as an appropriate image of the United States Abroad by constituents overseas and those at home.
1952-1957

Development: Diplomatic functions secondary to design aesthetic of well-known architects chosen primarily by politics and prominence

Goal: Hegemonic dispersion of US culture in foreign locations

Description: Following politically motivated changes at the state department and exhaustion of foreign tax credits new embassy projects came under private scrutiny through the newly established Architectural Review Board. An ad-hoc committee established to meet funding requirements it was populated with prominent architects, many of which later received embassy commissions from the review board that they had previously served. One requirement of architects presenting schemes to the review board was a site visit to evaluate climate conditions and devise best methods to mitigate extreme conditions.

As a result of these fact finding missions new embassy schemes were often rationalized by appropriating a local cultural element into an architectural form. For instance, Edward Durrell Stone justified his used of a taught white box by claiming it was an allusion to the Taj Mahal. One of his colleagues, Harry Weese, used a similar cultural justification for including piloti in the US Embassy in Ghana. He claimed they referenced African spears used by local hunters.

The local relevance of a design was promoted as part of the first written design standards set by Architectural Review Board:

“To the sensitive and imaginative designer it will be an invitation to give serious study to the local conditions of climate and site, to understand and sympathize with local customs and people, and to grasp the historical meaning of the particular environment in which the new building must be set. He will do so with a free mind, without being dictated by obsolete or sterile formulae or clichés... His directness and freshness of approach will have a distinguishable American flavor.”

Edward Durrell Stone, US Embassy New Delhi, India completed 1959

Implications: Common understandings of modern architecture regarding the symbolic role of free plan, transparency etc. were institutionalized in the most iconic buildings the embassy program had produced to date. When confronted with the security concerns that would later dictate architectural form they were often ill-equipped to meet the new requirements. Nevertheless these projects provide the momentum to reassert principles of modernism under Design Excellence.
Development: Dormancy due to political infighting and lack of funding

Goal: Demonstrate a strong prosperous and democratic capitalist system through the use of Modern architecture

Description: Shifts in the political climate and world caused the US Department of State to severely diminish its embassy-building program overseas. Requesting funds in 1957 the program continued to give the impression of vibrancy due to the completion of projects in the 1960s. One such project was the US Embassy in London designed by Eero Saarinen after selection through competition. The building epitomizes the use of modernism to address local context and symbolism without regard for the security requirements that would become necessary. The proximity of project massing reflects an urban understanding of the site on Grovesnor Square while the massive eagle sculpture becomes more architectural duck than symbol transforming the building into an overall icon. The projects interior spaces were originally open the public allowing access to the United States Information Service and Library as a distinct unit prominently placed adjacent to the main lobby.

The year 1963 marked the last large-scale appropriation for foreign embassy projects by the US Congress and funding became contingent on the individual circumstances and the will of politicians on the subcommittee for State Department Appropriations. Nevertheless projects were moved forward on individual merit and as the global political climate dictated.

Implications: Design of embassies was no longer considered an important role for innovators within the architectural profession. This made it more likely that security concerns would later be implemented in a clumsy manner.

Iconic sculpture above US Embassy in London measures 35’ wing tip to wing tip.
1985-2002

Development: Upgrade facilities to meet new security requirements

Goal: Reduce number and severity of incidents. Quickly establish diplomatic relations after fall of communism.

Description: "In the decade between 1975 and 1985 there had been 243 attacks and attempted attacks against US diplomatic installations." Following the bombings in Beruit in 1983 the department of state submitted to Congress what is now widely known as the Inman report, formally known as the Report of the Secretary of State’s Advisory Panel on Overseas Security recommending security standards that remain the basis of security recommendations today:  
- 100 ft setback
- Consolidate all facilities in one secure compound
- Purchase land for expansion within compound
- 15% maximum glazed surface and fortified construction
- Isolated locations preferred to dense urban areas
- Controlled access to the compound
- No-climb walls and fences
- Anti-ram barriers
- Blast resistant construction

Additional bombings in 1998 precipitated more funding for security related improvements. Existing buildings were retrofitted with guardhouses, fencing and defensive planters to meet the new security standards while new projects like the US embassy in Cairo incorporated these elements into existing site plans and conceptual design.

Implications: Additional security requirements dictated embassy designs during the height of postmodernism. While this restrained architects at the time it prevented post-modernism from gaining favor as the appropriate choice for embassy design.
Development: Architectural form and programmatic considerations subservient to security and budget under Standard Embassy Design

Goal: Reduce number and severity of incidents. Implement post 9/11 foreign policy.

Description: As new foreign policy was promoted in response to large-scale terrorist attacks on American soil the need for defensible embassy structures in potentially hostile environments was met with the creation of a standard embassy design. This embassy design foremost met the security requirements and then attempted to reduce project costs through common design features and integrated project delivery methods. These projects undermined the tradition of symbolism through architectural expression developed in the previous stages of construction at the state department. Examples of Standard Embassy design projects include Abuja, Nigeria and Tashkent, Uzbekistan. 

Although much larger than other embassy projects, the aesthetics of the current US Embassy in Baghdad Iraq epitomizes the shift from the goal of architecturally derived meaning to ensured security.

Implications: Use of Standard Embassy Design prompted politicians to reconsider the role of design in embassy construction following public criticism.

2002-2010

STANDARD EMBASSY DESIGN: SMALL
- Estimated construction cost: less than $47 million
- Approximate size: 4,200 gross square meters (gsm)
- Estimated planning time: 6 months
- Estimated design-build acquisition time: 6 months
- Estimated commissioning time: 2 months
- Estimated total project time: 26 months

STANDARD EMBASSY DESIGN: MEDIUM
- Estimated construction cost: more than $50 million
- Approximate size: 4,200–7,400 gsm
- Estimated planning time: 6 months
- Estimated design-build acquisition time: 6 months
- Estimated commissioning time: 2 months
- Estimated total project time: 38 months

STANDARD EMBASSY DESIGN: LARGE
- Estimated construction cost: less than $88 million
- Approximate size: greater than 7,400 gsm
- Estimated planning time: 6 months
- Estimated design-build acquisition time: 6 months
- Estimated commissioning time: 2 months
- Estimated total project time: 42 months

US Embassy Abuja, Nigeria 2005

US Embassy Baghdad, Iraq, 2009

US Embassy Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 2004
Development: Design Excellence policy champions symbolism through form instead of programmatic efficacy

Goal: Offer simultaneous architectural “language of diplomacy”

Description: When Secretary of State John Kerry was serving on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 2009 he criticized the results of security improvements and implementation of the standard embassy design:

“We are building some of the ugliest embassies I’ve ever seen... I cringe when I see what we’re doing.”

In response to this criticism and many like it the Department of State launched the design excellence program in early 2011. Here the department diverged from the evolution of embassy design by reasserting the role of design in the conception and function of the embassy:

- Renewed preference for urban sites (not necessarily city centers)
- Promoting an overall cohesive design for site and structure
- Renewed emphasis that designs must meet traditional interpretation of security standards set forth by the INMAN report.

The program launch coincided with the selection of KieranTimberlake’s scheme as the winning proposal for a new embassy in London. And can be seen am emblematic of the goals for the aspirations of the new program in the future. By analyzing the limited iterations of the Design Excellence produced to date it is possible to discern if the stated goals of the US Department of State are being achieved with the current design guidelines.

Implications: Although the present trajectory marks an improvement compared with previous developments of the embassy typology it does so with one hand tied behind its back. By assessing the goals and reevaluating the methods available to achieve those goals there is room for improvement in embassy design beyond the checklist design formulae.
Given the criticism that the State Department received regarding the embassies built in the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks, the new guidelines, promoted as “Design Excellence”, mark a step forward in terms of aesthetics and marketability of the US presence abroad. Unfortunately, these guidelines also rely on cliched architectural forms that are more about projecting a positive presence instead of becoming representational of US interests, values, and presence in the host country.

In short, they are wolves in sheep’s clothing. The security requirements continue to segregate embassy personnel from the constituents on the ground. The building materials are still impervious to fire, bombings, and appear heavily fortified when not seen from privileged viewpoints chosen by editors of glossy design magazines.

Perhaps most important, the designs still heavily reduce access to building itself, reducing the effectiveness of US presence abroad.

The designs strive to accomplish all goals by concealing/denying the threat that the symbolism of diplomatic relations poses in hostile environments. Given the ubiquity of terrorist threats, it is prudent that the program and form of the embassy must change to accommodate these new realities. Given the variety of tools via new media that the State Department is equipped with to encour-
The architectural systems of space, structure and program are submerged and distorted by an overall symbolic form, whether devised through conventional symbolism or spatial structure meant to represent diplomatic ideals (cliches of transparency, openness etc.).

If the efficacy of the architecture is to be preserved then the suburban-house-appliqueed-to-embassy model must be reevaluated according to the state goals for buildings representative of the U.S. abroad.

Developed from learning from Las Vegas, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, 1968.
Design Excellence: a comparison

“Designs and construction will meet or exceed all security and safety standards and specifications... OBO will evaluate designs on the basis of their success in skillfully balancing requirements and on how well the design represents the U.S. to the host nation.”

notations developed from comments by Martin Fuller of the New York Review Of Books Fig. 22
Criticism of London Embassy:
KieranTimberlake 2011
- “First dig your moat” (the economist)
- bunker like podium
- twenty first century avatar of the Tower of London
- risibly aloof from the surrounding urban setting
(NYRblog)

In the new London embassy defensive elements are elaborately disguised to seem as innocuous as natural the landscape along the Thames. While they do provide some certainty of protection from threats they also decrease the possibility of the general populous accessing the building or diplomats inside. The project meets the security requirements like a puzzle that once you put it together, you wish you hadn’t. They are disparate and awkwardly conjoined as to call attention to each of the plethora of security features assigned to the architect. It is as if the architect attempted to embody Edmund Burke's idea of sublimity through intense multiplication and complexity only to realize the all of the pieces were from different puzzles. Despite all these security features the largest threat remains: embassy occupation by a multitude of protestors.
15% MAX
GLAZING

100 FT

15% MAX
GLAZING

15 ACRES

Controlled
Access

Anti-ram
Barriers

Blast Resistant
Construction

No Climb Walls/ Fences

Controlled
Access

Anti-ram
Barriers

Blast Resistant
Construction

No Climb Walls/ Fences

Fig. 24
Criticism of Dublin Embassy:
John Johansen 1964
- “Most important single tangible act in history Irish-American relationship.
- National Trust of Ireland Award for “sympathy of scale with existing environment and interest of character”\(^\text{15}\)

Defensive Elements transformation into a programmatic vehicle to provide back of house services allowed icon to be preserved and received as a contextual response to local history.

Can the appropriation of local, historical, fortified structures provide a genuine contextual response and embassy security?
**Representational Spaces**

The management of international relations by negotiation.

To assume or occupy the role or functions of (a person), typically in restricted, and usually formal situations; to be entitled to speak or act on behalf of...

“Embassies and consulates have two essential purposes: to be safe, functional, and inspiring places for the conduct of diplomacy and to physically represent the U.S. Government to the host nation.”

US Department of State Design Excellence Guidelines

Source: OED ONLINE

a location, not a typology
If embassies are evaluated on the basis of whether or not it meets its stated purposes politics and design aesthetics will not factor heavily into the criticism of diplomatic architecture abroad. The US Department of State in its Design Excellence Guidelines provides the following description:

"Embassies and consulates have two essential purposes; to be safe, functional, and inspiring places for the conduct of diplomacy and to physically represent the U.S. Government to the host nation."

Dissecting this statement reveals the basic goals and purposes of an embassy facility so that it can be reconstituted as a better functioning individual program or program type. Please see notations at left.

Perhaps most difficult is the problem of how to represent the U.S. Government to the host nation. Is it through physical reproduction of symbolic elements? Is it through direct export of American culture? Perhaps a better method would be to evaluate the goals of diplomacy within representation. Does the United States see its embassies as places of refuge from totalitarian regimes or as propaganda machines to mitigate terror threats?

To answer this last question it is helpful to consider Henri Lefebvre’s discussion of systems of representation. Here he distinguishes spaces by their efficacy to the constituent instead of the intended meaning by the so-called authors of the space. Perhaps most important he distinguishes between representations of space often programmed and delineated for public consumption (even if not consumed) by architects and design professionals and representational spaces in which efficacy is based on lived experience not design rhetoric.

These representational spaces are readily identified, in one instance, as sites of political expression in which representation and value statements are combined with physical, often primarily visual representation of sentiments and lived experience of those self-representing.

Because the embassy throughout the history of its typology has rejected an universal symbolic scheme to ‘represent’ the U.S. Government the physical products of architects in many cases become either cliche duck or cliche shed to use Venturi’s terms. Attempting to achieve representational space as opposed to simply representations of space is difficult. One instead where style and government intervention succeeded in creating a strong union between the two is Venice. Henri Lefebvre offers it as an example of mutually reinforcing spaces:

"In Venice, the representation of space (the sea at once dominated and exalted) and representational space (exquisite lines, refined pleasures, the sumptuous and cruel
Representations of space are tied to the relations of production and to the ‘order’ which those relations impose. DUCK AND SHED both produced by architect.¹⁹

Representational spaces embody complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to clandestine or underground side of social life and also to art. Space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols.²⁰

Is there a similar pair for the embassy typology? Can the values of transparency, expression and democracy purported by Americans be securely lived instead of represented? How does defensive architecture address these seemingly opposing goals?
representational space examples

Fig. 27

**Physical Environment is Neutral**, represented symbols ignite representational action.

Complex symbols

Space as directly lived

Former US embassy Tehran, Iran

Fig. 28

**Physical Environment is Neutral**, represented symbols ignite representational action.

Complex symbols

Space as directly lived

US embassy Sana'a, Yemen

Fig. 29

**Physical Environment is Neutral**, represented symbols ignite representational action.

Complex symbols

Space as directly lived

Berlin Wall, West Berlin
Program: representational spaces

Physical environment is neutral, represented symbols ignite representational action.

Complex symbolisms

Space as directly lived

While Lefebvre’s definition of representational space often precludes the intervention of the architect in the case of the embassy it is unavoidable. The conception of the embassy as an intentional representation of the United States government necessitates inauguration of symbolism and representation by the architect. But just as the doges of Venice developed the archipelago the embassy architect can appropriate representational systems that already require extensive amounts of space. To this end recreational space proves incredibly useful. It promotes action by the constituent creating a lived experience that may reinforce value systems that are in the interest of United States foreign policy.

Recreational space formally requires large amounts of space that are often fortified for the safety of participants and the general public. These fortifications could replace or reinforce some of the security requirements that are required for embassy construction.
Protestors rejoice following the resignation of president Hosni Mubarak after 18 days of demonstrations for democratic reforms.

Following the revolutions of 2011, popularly known as the Arab Spring, the United States renewed its commitment to promoting American ideals, including true democratic forms of government in the Egyptian republic.

The Egyptian revolution and practice of a hybrid-secular government in a highly religious society offers the opportunity to test representational strategies amongst constituents that may or may not align themselves with the United States depending on the issue.

In short, Cairo is a site that is not neutral to test if representational strategies will have an effect.
Integrating representational space within secure structures is a challenge that has been exploited by designers throughout the history of architecture. By evaluating the methodologies used by these architects and builders a better understanding how program can in fact be defensive will enrich the possibilities for an embassy in Cairo.

**Moat**

Breuer’s depression at the Whitney Museum functions in two manners: 1) it provides the primary entry and processional sequence into the museum and 2) Allows ad-hoc program space and basic services for visitors that have completed their tour or separate private event space. Perhaps most importantly the moat and entry portal are united through common materials and conceptual form rejecting common associations with the moat bridge dichotomy.

**Gate**

The city of Cairo had successive fortifications along its early history. One series involved erecting gates along the main thoroughfare to the bazaar. This gate demonstrates how holding chambers existed within the fortification to assess the security of the travelers while reducing ability to penetrate the city walls by elongating the gate structure itself.
MULTIVALENT WALL

In Kahn’s design of the Dominican Mother’s House he utilized the thick wall in a mutlivalent way. Here it provides individual program units as well as defining the interior courtyards and cloisters. The wall surface moves continuously from inside to outside; from sacred to profane and back again. Similarly blast resistant materials might allow an increase in public space in the embassy site.

HA HA

Although primarily seen in English landscape gardens the ha ha is a feature used to add security to sites that for established symbolic reasons need to appear open. Its most important feature is that the two sides of the divide can be programmed differently and yet be visually united when viewed for the first time. This method of association could be manipulated to invoke a particular political or representational response.

WALL + PROGRAM

Near the Bab an Nsar gate the Hakim Mosque simply attaches a program element to a defensive element. The union provides the interior focused mosque stability and support and reduces cost. By placing the program function next to the defensive structure it enables immediate access for visitors new to the city. Similarly by juxtaposing program elements with defensive structures there may be increased access to constituents.
possible formal logics

Thick wall programmed with protected spaces.

Concentric spaces allow a scale of accessibility for the general public.

Maintain security and program space through only point interventions.

Common space between buildings is protected by exterior wall. Multiple tenants.

Ease of flow for quick entry and exit. Allows control point to secure facility.

Integration with Site/Landscape as security measure.

Using topography as program and source of disruption.

Protect it with a cage.
This thesis project seeks to explore how programmatic combinations can meet the diplomatic needs of embassy staff, express America values through representational strategies, and act diplomatically with local constituents by engaging the host city.
ENDNOTES:
3. Ibid, 66.
4. Ibid, 100.
7. Ibid, 125.
8. Ibid, 240.
12. Worth.
14. Ibid.
15. Loeffler, 231.
18. Ibid, 74.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY


Introduces infrastructural form as a functional and architectural device at the urban scale.


Discussion of similar occurrences in British embassies.


Examination of buildings campaigns in Washington, D.C. in the early 20th century offer a comparison to the Embassy building campaign during the same time period.


Case study of embassy design in Warsaw.


Many of the design strategies advocated here were included in the final version of the Design Excellence guidelines adopted by the US Dept of State in spring 2011.


Offers basic advice for mitigated hazards as part of the design process.

The megaform at the urban scale is similar to the embassy. Both interact with the city at large but function separately. This may be one strategy to develop defensible yet representational structures.


Documents reaction to the new proposed Embassy in London developed with the Design Excellence Guidelines.


Describes the history of landform building as both a protective, representational and symbolic form.


Describes methods for deriving meaning and therefore efficacy and identity from the built environment.


Consideration of the monument as generator of identity describes (in a positive manner) the ideal function of a symbolic embassy building. Discussion of symbolic function will hopefully offer some clues as well.


History of embassy buildings of the United States and the design changes and modifications up to 1998.

Compares multiple embassy projects in Berlin after the reunification of Germany. Includes competition entries meant to question the role of the embassy.


Discussion of changing priorities as embassies transitioned between wartime and long-term peacetime.


New Guidelines for Embassy design stress security requirements as a necessary evil instead of rethinking the embassy.


Details security requirements for embassy buildings and state of standards as of January 2008.


Venturi’s discussion of symbolism is the architectural starting point for determining the difference between symbolism and representation.


Good example of shifting definition of what urbanism might entail and how programmatic distribution may inform the new embassy.


Documents changing attitudes amongst foreign service members leading up to the attacks in Benghazi of September 2012.
FIGURE CREDITS:

Fig. 1. Ibrahim Alaguri/AP Photo - September 12, 2012
Fig. 3. Washington Post.
Fig. 4. New York Times.
Fig. 5. Associated Press.
Fig. 6. Sheffield Hallam University.
Fig. 7. Samantha Catalyst for Paparazzi Ethnography (http://paparazzi-ethnography.com/2012/12/05/nobel-peace-prize-ceremony/).
Fig. 8. Lefteris Pitarakis/AP Photo - September 21, 2012
Fig. 9. US Department of State. Photo credit: Elizabeth Gill Lui.
Fig. 10. Author.
Fig. 11. Photo credit: Unknown. Source: <http://frankfurt.cervantes.es/es/videos_espanol.html>
Fig. 12. Author.
Fig. 13. Huffington Post. <http://images.huffingtonpost.com/2012-01-09-NewDelhiFacade.jpg>
Fig. 14. Collage by author.
Fig. 15. Author,
Fig. 16. Author.
Fig. 17. American Institute of Architects.
Fig. 18. Author after United States Department of State.
Fig. 19. Author.
Fig. 20. Photo collage by author after US Department of State and Vincent Thian/ AP Photo.
Fig. 21. Author.
Fig. 22. Author after KieranTimberlake/studio amd.
Fig. 23. Author.
Fig. 24. Author.
Fig. 25. Author.
Fig. 26. Orbis-travel.com.
Fig. 27. Author's collage after unknown.
Fig. 28. Author's collage after unknown.
Fig. 29. Author's collage after unknown.
Fig. 30. Author's collage after unknown.
Fig. 31. Author's collage after KieranTimberlake/studio amd.
Fig. 32. Author’s collage after Metcalf and Associates.
Fig. 33. Author's diagram based on map by David Sims.
Fig. 34. Pedro Ugarte / Ghetty Images.
Fig. 35. Author after Marcel Breuer. Syracuse University Special Collections.
Fig. 36. Author after K.A.C. Creswell.
Fig. 37. Author after Louis Kahn.
Fig. 38. Author’s collage after Robert Adam and OLIN Partnership.
Fig. 39. Author after K.A.C. Creswell.
Fig. 40. Author’s diagram.