

FIRST PLACE: THE AMERICAS**URBAN HOUSING: MEXICO CITY****Veronica Cerda, Rudy Lara Alvarez, Angeles Vizcarra de los Reyes**

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Due to the fact that the capital of Mexico is the largest and most populated in the world, with over 20 million people, it becomes a very conflictive zone, with intense traffic and an excessive population. Mexico City has a lack of well-designed and planned dwellings that can solve the problems faced by a large city like this. People seek comfortable and pleasant housing neighborhoods in which to live and socialize with a peaceful and quiet interior to get away from the daily routine and stress provoked by a big city.

The main purpose of this project is to regenerate consolidated areas to vitalize the city and stop its expansion, creating small cities within the metropolis. The selected site is located in the Benito Juárez delegation south of the city, where the old Sports City used to be. Even though a dwelling area prevails now in this area, the soccer stadium and bull ring, both built in 1945, are still operating. Presently the stadium is creating major problems for this neighborhood due to the great concentration of people attending soccer games, complicated with the bull fight events in the adjacent plaza.

After careful study and marketing surveys of this zone, we propose to relocate the stadium. Our proposal consists of using the stadium's structure and two adjacent triangular-shaped blocks where two new buildings will be built to complement the stadium block. One of the buildings is designed with a triangular shape and the other one in a circular shape, creating pure volumes that properly suit the city's context.

Due to the ellipse-shaped stadium stands and the existing excavation of 16 meters below grade, the dwelling units can be terraced without having the feeling of confinement like other apartments. This will also allow natural illumination and ventilation through these terraces. All dwellings will have a main view to the inside of the complex, where the soccer field is located now and which will become the community recreational area. Commercial places are independent of the units, facing the street on the outside perimeter of the ellipse.

One of the main points for social interaction between people of all ages is the center of the ellipse. This will include a daycare center, a playground for older children, a rollerskate runway, and a swimming pool; a jogging track and bike trail is considered for the outside perimeter of this area. There are also groups of trees, shrubs, and flowers to give scale to the project and propitiate a gathering point for people. The existing axes of the stadium's shape are taken as a basis to modulate the areas designed inside the center of the ellipse. As a special event that breaks the rhythm of the housing units, a volume where four cinemas will be located intersects the structure of the ellipse.

The complex consists of 300 dwellings divided into three subgroups, with duplex modules alternated with terraces and plazas, creating meeting places for the neighbors. The first subgroup is the ellipse shape, designed with nine levels of terraced units. The second subgroup is the triangular-shaped building, 30 stories high with 63 apartments. The third subgroup is the circular-shaped building, with 20 stories and 20 apartments. It is important to underline that the proposal for two-level units in all subgroups has the purpose of including double-height space in the living room area.

The structural system for both buildings is concrete and steel. As for the stadium, the existing structure, which rules the housing arrangement, will be completed or reinforced with bearing walls. The exteriors are finished with concrete and rock materials, obtaining an architecture that experiences a new plasticity by the use of economical materials taken from traditional Mexican architecture while expressing new schemes as a reaction to our socio-economic situation. Interior spaces allow flexibility for different solutions.

Besides being an innovative challenge, this project is culturally feasible and affordable, but above all it serves a social need that will bring many benefits to the community. A very important issue in this project is that it will catch people's interest because of the stadium's shape, inviting people to discover step-by-step as they walk through the plazas and garden terraces. It will give a solid and contemporary image without overwhelming the observer with its architecture, giving prior importance to the scale. It has a balance between individual and common life where relationships are made plentiful by the cohabitation of different generations of people of all ages and abilities.

JURY COMMENTS

This is a very convincing concept for the conversion of a building of radically different use to urban housing, which has historic precedent in many of the ancient Roman structures in Europe. What is successful with the scheme is the cross-section; basically it's a step-back section scheme, however it is articulated with not just housing, but a theater and other ancillary features set into it. The community spaces have been thoughtfully considered and the plans work out very well. It would be a nice place to live.

It is a good urban design solution, particularly in terms of the open space used for the community. This is an inward-looking scheme, so a lot depends on the central space—outside, it's a wall, but inside, it's a city. The overall project is enhanced by the two towers, the triangular one and the circular one, which add density and become part of the urban intervention.

