


The House of One. Sacred Space as Collaborative Process

La House of One. El espacio sagrado como proceso colaborativo

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the potential of the client-architect relationship to be part of a design methodology conducive to conceiving sacred space as collaborative, dialogical practice. The case study for this investigation is the multi-confessional project 'House of One' by Kuehn Malvezzi, currently on site in Berlin, Germany. The client for this project is not one cleric or religious community but a foundation initiated by a local Protestant, Jewish and Muslim congregation. The fact that the client is not one homogenous entity has shaped the conception of the project and consequently the building's final appearance: all design decisions have been taken conjointly by the three clerics. In this project, the correlation between theological considerations and material realisation has been recognised as a reciprocal two-way process: theological doctrines are materialised through constructed space – equally, architectural questions can act as a catalyst for theological debate between the three clerics and their respective communities.

KEYWORDS

Multi-Confessional, religious architecture, collaboration, spatial practice.

RESUMEN

Este artículo explora el potencial de la relación cliente-arquitecto para formar parte de una metodología de diseño conducente a concebir el espacio sagrado como una práctica colaborativa y dialógica. El caso de estudio de esta investigación es el proyecto multiconfesional 'House of One' de Kuehn Malvezzi, actualmente en obras en Berlín (Alemania). El cliente de este proyecto no es un clérigo o una comunidad religiosa, sino una fundación iniciada por una congregación local protestante, judía y musulmana. El hecho de que el cliente no sea una entidad homogénea ha determinado la concepción del proyecto y, por consiguiente, el aspecto final del edificio: todas las decisiones de diseño han sido tomadas conjuntamente por los tres clérigos. En este proyecto, la correlación entre las consideraciones teológicas y la realización material se ha reconocido como un proceso bidireccional recíproco: las doctrinas teológicas se materializan a través del espacio construido; del mismo modo, las cuestiones arquitectónicas pueden actuar como catalizador del debate teológico entre los tres clérigos y sus respectivas comunidades.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Multi-confesional, arquitectura religiosa, colaboración, práctica espacial.

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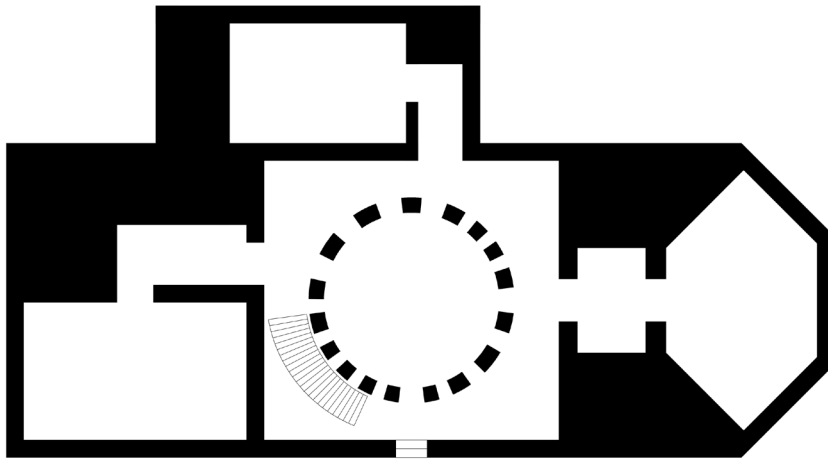


Fig. 01. Kuehn Malvezzi, *House of One*; floor plan diagram depicting sacred spaces and Central Hall.

INTRODUCTION

The *House of One* is a sacred building, conceived jointly by a local Protestant, Jewish and Muslim community in Berlin, that is to house a synagogue a church and a mosque under one roof. At the time of writing, the *House of One* has not been built. And yet, throughout its decade-long planning and development history, it has attracted international interest from over 60 countries (Stolte 2023), covered newspaper spreads (Evans 2014, Lepri 2014, Wilkinson 2016, Connolly 2021), has been applauded for and sparked controversies over its architecture and programme, inspired numerous exhibition projects,¹ formed partnerships with comparable initiatives as far away as the Central African Republic and Georgia (Foundation 2021b), and has been the subject of lectures and academic writing in and outside the field of architecture. Despite this international coverage, however, the *House of One* has been and will remain an undeniably local project, initiated by three comparatively small Berlin-based congregations.

So, what is it about this project that raises this level of global interest? One reason, one can assume, lies in its programmatic ambition: the three monotheistic religions joining up to cohabit within the same building, worshipping side by side and engaging in constructive dialogue, at a time when much of the global news coverage is overshadowed by reports

about violent religious conflict. A second contributing factor, however, may lie in the unusual nature of its clientship: the seed of the project is a *grassroots* initiative instigated by a local priest, rabbi and imam that have been working together and with their respective congregations since 2011.

In-keeping with this *bottom-up* ethos, the clients launched a crowd-funding initiative to finance the building in 2014, which continues to date: for as little as 10 euros everybody wishing to participate can purchase a virtual brick —and thus, effectively, become a part of the clientship. After purchasing one or numerous (virtual) bricks, every donor has the option to leave a message together with their name and city of residence on the *House of One* website. The spread of messages on display stretches from the project's residential neighbours to inter-continental benefactors (Foundation 2021a). They are testimony to the clients' unconventional disposition as being a small-scale group of local congregations yet operating within an extensive global network. In that sense, the client for this project engages different layers of the plural: on the one hand the foundation that is *the client* has been formed as a collective of different faiths, each bringing their versions of religiosity to the table.

On the other hand, it has engaged with at times complex, global associations, which in turn have fed the development of the project in Berlin. It is my



Fig. 02. Kuehn Malvezzi, *House of One*; sectional perspective.

view that this multi-fold identity of *the client* has had a significant impact on the development of the project's architecture and the processes behind it.

THE CONCEPT

The *House of One* represents a new typology of sacred architecture, accommodating a synagogue, a church and a mosque as individual spaces in one building that are connected by a large, central hall, which is non-denominational and acts as a space for dialogue between the three monotheistic religions but also, for dialogue between believers and Berlin's predominantly secular urban population. The spatial diagram depicts the way the founding communities

conceive of their relationship within the building: the three prayer rooms are of distinct character as they differ in geometry, daylight control and orientation to suit the liturgical requirements, traditions, and cultural references that are specific to each of the three congregations. However, all sacred spaces are situated on the same floor and face each other on three sides of the shared hall, which, lined by a permanent bench, facilitates chance encounters and offers a place for spontaneous dialogue, but also provides a congregational space for organised events of up to three hundred people (Fig. 01).

By stipulating that the synagogue, the church and the mosque with their auxiliary facilities are to

be designed as separate spaces under one roof, the competition brief for the *House of One* diverted from the more common typologies of multi-faith rooms, that offer a shared ritual space, which in daily life operates by means of a time-share model (Crompton 2013). By contrast, the briefing for the *House of One* was very clear, that an amalgamation of faiths in one space is not the objective, but that each of the three sacred spaces was to be developed individually, also respecting the spatial requirements to cater for more conservative forms of religious practice.

Although the three founding communities are from the more liberal end of the spectrum of their respective faiths, the synagogue for example provides a gallery for gender separation as required for orthodox Jewish service and the church can be arranged in such a way that Christian-Orthodox prayer, facing directly east, is possible. By including the spatial needs of conservative and orthodox Jewish, Christian and Muslim religious practice, progressing the project demanded a multi-layered process of collaboration: on the one hand, the three clerics had to reach agreements between each other and with their respective resident congregations, but further afield they also needed to liaise with local communities following a different interpretation of Judaism, Christianity or Islam.

Furthermore, at an age when «people of all ages are turning away from organised religion» (Crosbie 2017, 353), the house consciously makes space for much of the local population in Berlin as being not religiously affiliated (Wikipedia contributors 2023). The large central space serves multiple purposes: It provides a vertical circulation space, connecting an archaeological zone in the basement with the entry level Foyer, from where a continuous helical staircase circulates the three-storey central hall before continuing to the rooftop loggia. On the main floor, the central hall connects the three prayer rooms and provides a space for dialogue and larger religious celebrations. It is also envisaged, however, that secular events, such as panel discussions, concerts or readings on non-religious topics may take place here, thus inviting the non-denominational public into the house and providing a forum for an extended

interpretation of *pluralism* that includes dialogue and exchange with agnostics or atheists (Fig. 02).

THE HISTORY

It is significant, that the development of the concept for the *House of One*, a building addressing the present and future practises of urban religiosity in the city centre of Berlin, is deeply rooted in its site's material ecclesiastic history. The site of the *House of One* is St. Peter's Square, which historically belonged to the joint parish of St. Mary and St. Peter. It is the location of one of Berlin's oldest churches: no less than four consecutive churches stood on the site, the oldest one dating to the beginning of the 13th century, which was followed by a Gothic church in the 14th century, a Baroque church in the 18th century and a neo-Gothic church in the 19th century. This last St Peter's church was partly destroyed during the Second World War and in 1964, by order of the GDR administration, its ruins were demolished, the site was transferred to state property and turned into an East Berlin carpark (Rauhut et al. 2021).

Following Germany's reunification, and as part of a renewed interest in Berlin's historic centre, the square was excavated between 2007 and 2009. During the excavation, the archaeologists unearthed foundations and floor coverings of the last three St. Peter's churches as well as the human remains of close to four thousand bodies that had been buried in the churchyard since medieval times (Melisch and Wesner 2008, Melisch 2015) (Fig. 03-05). Some of the skeletons found in the churchyard stem from Berlin's first recorded inhabitants and provide thought-provoking evidence regarding Berlin's founding population: the forensic analysis is still ongoing, but a first examination, besides providing data on questions like child mortality, nutrition, and violent conflict, also suggests another phenomenon: Berlin's historic urban population appears to have been far less homogenous than previously assumed. The DNS sequencing points to skeletons with DNS markers originating from as far as modern-day Turkey, Russia, Ireland or Spain (Melisch 2021).

From this perspective, the site of the *House of One* is not just the site of one of Berlin's earliest churches,

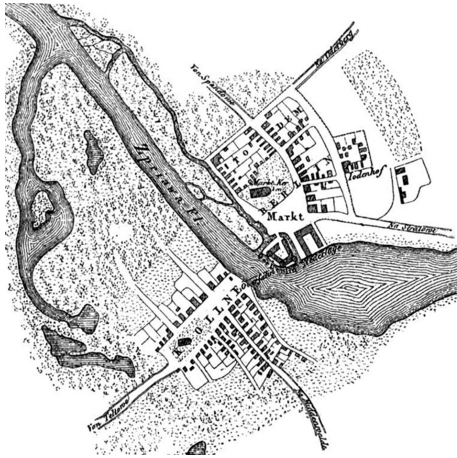


Fig. 03. K.F. Klöden, Berlin at the beginning of the 13th century, etching from ca. 1840.
Fig. 04. St. Peter's Square Berlin in 2012.
Fig. 05. Foundation of 19th Century Church during excavation.

but it is also testimony to migration and diversity having formed part of the city's history from the very beginning. From the Gothic and Baroque churches only fragments of their foundations and parts of stone walls have survived at different corners of the square. However, the archaeological foundations and cellar floors of the most recent church have remained mostly intact, and the new construction will by and large follow their perimeter and display the foundations and historic floor coverings as an accessible archaeological zone in the basement of the future building.

Each of the four historic churches had been strongly rooted in their respective cultural and political framework, altering its orientation, size and architectural style depending on the time-specific theological and socio-political paradigm with every construction. Accordingly, the city council's support for the creation of a new church on the historic square prompted the local Protestant parish to examine the reality of Berlin's present-day religious landscape, an «interreligious reality coexisting in our cities» (Pérez Prieto 2011, 95) featuring an atheist majority and a significant (and rising) number of Muslim residents—however, as yet no mosque in central Berlin (Wikipedia contributors 2023).

At the same time, a few hundred meters from the site, the remains of a medieval Synagogue and Mikveh, that constituted the centre of Berlin's earliest Jewish quarter, had recently been discovered, and are testimony to Jewish communities being constitutive to Berlin's founding history. Following the idea of its pastor, the St Mary's-St Peter's parish consequently decided to address Berlin's religious pluralism not just by acting as a host to other religious groups, but by forming a clientship consisting of a Jewish, Muslim and Protestant community on equal terms. Following a process of exploratory conversations with Berlin's various Jewish and Muslim groups, an *Association House of Prayer and Learning* was formed, made up of the Protestant St Mary's-St Peter's Parish, The Jewish Community Berlin (in conjunction with the Abraham Geiger Rabbinical Seminary) and The Forum for Intercultural Dialogue, a local Muslim association.

Prior to developing the brief for the future building, the three founding communities underwent a process of defining their joint vision and developing a charter that set out their core principles of cohabitation, which was signed by all three collaborating communities. The charter, among other objectives, such as a commitment to mutual respect and a commitment to a culture of equal rights, states that differences between the three participating communities are not to be glossed over, but to be viewed positively as an incentive for mutual curiosity (House of One 2011). By developing the concept for the future building conjointly from the very beginning, the founding members of the *House of One*, or *House of Prayer and Learning*, the project's then working title, entered a process of conversation and exchange that anticipated the project's future objective and established a dialogical praxis before the existence of the material building.

THE COMPETITION

The competition brief for the international architecture competition was developed through a practice of regular meetings between the three founding communities, discussing, and elaborating their ideas for the spaces their cohabitation will require. In parallel, the association entered a coordination process with the city council and the Berlin monument authority to integrate the use of the site for a multi-confessional building into the urban development plan, pointing out the relevance of preserving the archaeological foundations of the former churches, while translating the site's religious history into their vision for cooperation and togetherness as physical construction.

When reconstructing the process prior to the architectural competition in 2012, it appears that two parallel, but intertwined threads informed the initial concept for the future use of the site: on the one hand the archaeological excavation that took place between 2007 and 2009, had sparked an overwhelming response and expression of interest in Berlin's founding history among its contemporary inhabitants, compelling the local authorities to conceive of lasting ways to preserve the site as a place of origin and to find the means to permanently display

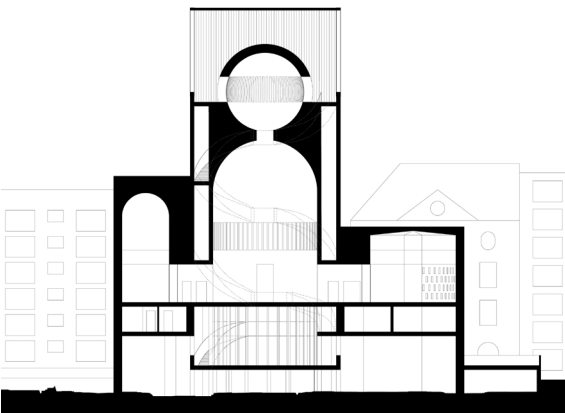


Fig. 06. Kuehn Malvezzi, *House of One*, 2012; competition model.

Fig. 07. Section A-A.

Fig. 08. Section B-B.

Fig. 09. Exterior perspective.



its material remains within the contemporary urban fabric. According to Prof. Wemhoff, professor for pre-history and early history at FU Berlin, it was the first time in the history of Berlin, that archaeological finds caused a change of the urban development plan (Melisch 2021).

On the other hand, the three founding communities entered a process of intense theological discussions: should the new building simply facilitate neighbourly relations between Jews, Christians and Muslims, or should inter-confessional services be held? And if so: which liturgical format is conceivable and on which theological basis? The competition briefing connects the project's very distinct local roots and its archaeological manifestations with the overreaching question of multi-religious cohabitation:

The archaeological finds must be preserved as the square is transformed, and they must be connected in a meaningful way to any building that is constructed here. This site's aura as a place of origin should remain intact so that visitors can experience it, and the new should build on the old there (...) The intention is to restore this place's symbolic importance as a traditional locus of interplay between religious and civic life, by creating a structure with a purpose oriented to the future, while taking into account the changed circumstances of our time in an increasingly multi-religious city (...) Thus, something entirely new will be created on Petriplatz: a new building, a house of prayer and learning, open to all, in which Jews, Muslims, and Christians will worship (...) This house of worship represents an effort to accommodate in physical space the growing need for cooperation and togetherness among people of different religious backgrounds and world views that we already see in social and intellectual realms (House of One 2012).

Beyond the extraordinary situation of physically connecting an archaeological zone to a structure dedicated to a highly contemporary and pluralistic conception of urban religiosity, the briefing also differs from a more standard architectural competition brief in a number of other striking ways: its precise and elaborate descriptions of the project's theological and historical considerations, its ambitions as a future site

of multi-religious cohabitation and the description of the potential modus operandi testify to the intense collaboration process the three monotheistic communities had undergone prior to the briefing's publication. The first page, following quotations from the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament and the Quran, identifies four key terms the architecture of the future house should emanate: *Dignity*, *Tranquillity*, *Strangeness* (or 'Otherness') and *Beauty* (House of One 2012).

The briefing describes the aims for the new construction in spatial qualities and atmosphere, such as the deliberate design and symbolic role of daylight in the architectural traditions of all three religions and the desire for sacred spaces «imbued with transcendence» (House of One 2012). While some parameters for the new design were defined with great precision, others were left deliberately open, reflecting the association's principal attitude towards the theological discourse and the architectural design for the future house as open-ended and evolving throughout a process of progressive approximation.

THE DESIGN PROCESS

Following the competition win by the Berlin-based architecture practice Kuehn Malvezzi in 2012 (Fig. 06-09) the architects and the client, always represented by one clerical and one regular member of each religious community, entered a course of set meetings to refine the user requirements and to further develop the building's architecture. In a sacred building serving Jews, Christians and Muslims alike, theological positions and architectural propositions cannot be viewed separately, but they constitute a two-way process: as this is a structure without typological predecessors and imbued with symbolism, every decision about spatial configurations or choice of materials carries principal questions about the relationship between the three communities inhabiting the building in the future: how do we want to live together? Which of our common roots and which of our theological differences should be communicated through spatial relationships and material expression?

Interestingly, the client association had stipulated from the outset, that design decisions are always taken conjointly, emphasising the project's collaborative ethos: rather than the rabbi taking decisions on the synagogue, the priest on the church and the imam on the mosque, architectural proposals were discussed between the three clerics and reviewed collectively within the framework of relations in the house. The majority of design questions required conversations between the three clerics and with their respective communities, including representatives of more conservative congregations, before they could be answered.

This included very direct constructional questions, such as the building's solid brick wall construction and the detail of the brick bond to be specified, which then acted as a catalyst for more expansive theoretical discussions, while at once being tied to the very concrete material environment. In consequence, the architectural development, requiring by its very nature a commitment to the physical manifestation of an idea, constitutes an integral element to the clients' inter-religious discourse, thus pointing to the practice of *building together* as a central act of inter-faith engagement.

FINANCING

As cited in the introduction to this article, the paradigm of funding the project through a crowd funding initiative extends the concept of *the client* from the founding religious communities to a more inclusive notion of patronage: by setting the financial threshold for participation deliberately low, the initiators allowed for a broad range of socio-economic groups and individuals to participate.

Collecting money from as many donors as possible, irrespective of their personal belief or country of residency, consciously diverts from the funding structures behind the building's historic predecessors, that were financed either by wealthy and powerful worldly rulers, as in the case of Berlin's Baroque St. Peter's Church, which had been sponsored by king Frederick Wilhelm I (Kommander 2004), or the Christian Church as a hegemonic institution in the European context.

One might argue that collecting contributions from the community for the construction of a new religious building is not a novel idea: prominent Cathedrals such as Cologne Cathedral were financed to a large extent by community members, who, from the late Middle Ages, received indulgences in return for their donation (Hoffrath 2018, Gimpel 1983). Correspondingly, Mosques have historically been either financed by a wealthy patron or funded by community contributions, occasionally collected through a specific tax charged temporarily to fund the construction of the new mosque (Blankinship 1994). Jewish communities after the second temple almost exclusively had to rely on community funding to build new Synagogues, owed to their diaspora existence and minority status.

In that sense, the idea of raising the construction cost for the *House of One* through a multitude of individual donations, sits within a long-standing tradition of funding sacred buildings through contributions from the community. However, the proposal to finance the *House of One* through a global crowd-funding campaign adds to the concept, partially owed to its 21st context and the availability of global communication networks: while some of those participating financially may live locally and consider personally using the synagogue, church or mosque as a place of worship in the future, other donors live far away and are unlikely to directly benefit from the new structure. Their knowledge of the project derives from (social) media, and their investment is of a more principal nature, contributing to a building that, beyond offering spaces for religious worship, deliberately fosters peaceful dialogue between the three monotheistic religions.

Some of the messages left on the *House of One* website mention personal religious beliefs as a motive for participation, others, however, cite overtly political ideals, such as «peace among religions and nations» (Foundation 2021a). Extending the notion of *the client* from local communities to an international network of financial support, also occurs in other contexts of contemporary religious buildings, as evidenced by recent controversies over the funding of new mosque constructions in France

and Switzerland by Qatar (Chesnot and Malbrunot 2019) and it is not without historic precedents if we think of church constructions in former European overseas colonies from the 16th to the 19th century, that were financed by European congregations and built under the pretext of Christian missionary activity (Lachenicht 2019).

In the case of the *House of One*, however, the proposal is noticeably different: in order to avoid major financiers, local or abroad, of one of the three founding faith groups buying themselves influence over the other two congregations, the foundation *House of One* capped the amount one individual can donate. Since launching the crowd-funding campaign, the German state has also made substantial financial contributions on a federal as well as on a regional level. Nonetheless, raising the necessary funds by collecting numerous but small amounts has taken a long time and led to several pauses in the progression of the building project. During those pauses, however, collateral projects, such as exhibitions, events and international cooperations related to the project's architecture and programmatic objective have been realised, which offered a chance for the three founding congregations to evolve their ideas for the use of the future building and provided the architects with the opportunity to test some of the key architectural hypotheses through installations and full-scale models.

COLLATERAL PROJECTS

The building project *House of One* has experienced numerous breaks since the architectural competition in 2012. The instances, when the architectural development process had to be suspended were, for the most part, caused by intervals required by the foundation to collect more funds to finance the next steps. At other instances, supplementary archaeological excavations and monument evaluations on site required an intermission to the planning process. However, during those pauses to the development of the construction project, the overriding project *House of One* carried on progressing on a number of levels: Firstly, the Foundation *House of One* hosted frequent events that related to the clients' objective of mutual

learning and offered a forum for public religious discourse.²

Secondly, the foundation extended their international network, forming multiple cooperations with comparable initiatives, such as the *Peace Cathedral* project in Tbilisi or the *House of Peace* in Bangui.³ The architects were included in this process, equally benefitting from the exchange on processual, theological and architectural matters discussed during select meetings with delegations from partner initiatives.

Thirdly, collateral projects and cooperations with artists for installations were realised, each exploring different aspects of the architectural proposal. In 2014 for example, a short film by photographer and film-maker Armin Linke was displayed at the exhibition *Erasmus Effekt* at MAXXI in Rome, which shows the three founding clerics in dialogue about the theological dimension behind the architectural proposal.

In 2015, an installation was mounted at the Chicago Architecture Biennial, which explored the three prayer rooms and the central hall as large-scale solids, inverting the principal interior spaces as external volumes, which were placed in a room lined by photographs of the three clerics performing their respective prayer rituals. In 2016, the floor plan diagram of the main floor was applied as a full-scale drawing of the three sacred spaces and the central hall at the cultural centre Le Centquatre in Paris. Applying the plan on a public floor surface at 1:1 scale, provided an intriguing testing ground for the geometries, sizes and spatial relationships of the future building.

The idea of exploring key architectural elements through full-scale models and installations was then translated into a three-dimensional installation commissioned as part of the Protestant Reformation 750-year jubilee at Wittenberg in 2017. Here, a 1:1 model of the rooftop loggia, a covered terrace that constitutes the highest part of the central axis in the final project, was constructed as a timber pavilion, surrounded by the three prayer rooms that were delineated as an installation by landscape designers Atelier Le Balto. Following the celebrations at



Fig. 10. Kuehn Malvezzi, *House of One*; 1:1 Floor Plan Installation at Le Centquatre, Paris, 2016.

Fig. 11. Pavilion at Wittenberg (Germany), 2017.

Fig. 12. Pavilion at St Peter's Square, Berlin, 2018.

Wittenberg, the pavilion and landscape installation then moved to St Peter's square, the site of the *House of One* in Berlin (Fig. 10-12).

Installing the pavilion in Berlin was of architectural interest as much as it was of processual relevance. By having a provisional home on the site, the foundation was able to engage in constructive dialogue with diverse groups and practices. Events hosted at the pavilion ranged from inter-faith practice, such as shared prayers and celebrations, to local neighbourhood consultations, cooperation projects with nearby schools, and joint events with archaeologists, narrating the site's religious past.

Each of the collateral assignments constitutes a standalone project with its own briefing, budget, beginning and finish, separate to the overriding construction project. Nevertheless, by exploring select aspects of the future building, each of the installations and cooperations also impacted on the overall *House of One* project and created new impulses for public discourse on multi-religious cohabitation.⁴

DISCUSSION (AND OUTLOOK)

I would like to raise two crucial points that I believe to be of relevance beyond the specific case of this project and its client, the foundation *House of One*. They are concerning firstly, the processual attitude towards progressing a sacred building project, understanding the in-between steps and collateral projects as a positive component to the process. Secondly, the involvement of the architects in the clients' theological discourse and, vice-versa, the engagement of the project's theologians in constructional matters, which created a culture of interdisciplinary exchange and mutual learning.

Developing an architectural project over a period of more than ten years is unusual and, in most instances, unfavourable. There is no denying that a stop and go process comes with economic drawbacks and administrative issues, such as potential changes to building legislation. However, the comparatively long development period is owed to two of the projects' most relevant hypotheses, that are a) the clients' principal commitment to fund the project through a participatory process and b) a commitment to quality

and, therefore, a preference for implementing the building well and in the time that it takes to raise the necessary funds, rather than at a haste and with concessions to its spatial qualities.

The latter proposition is to be considered in conjunction with the *House of One's* sensitive programme: since the ritual spaces for Jewish, Christian and Muslim prayer, as well as the secular public spaces within the building, are developed conjointly and imply a delicate balance, moving forward with the necessary care and consideration is imperative within the context of this project. Beyond the solid brick walls of the *House of One*, however, choosing diligence over a speedy completion proposes an interesting alternative to the more common paradigm of time-is-money, applicable to the majority of architectural construction within the context of free-market capitalism.

To resist the pressure of the market for a fast hand-over in order to accomplish meaningful spaces is not new within the realm of sacred architecture – the Sagrada Família, under construction since 1882, may be the most prominent precedent. The question that beckons is whether a paradigm shift towards a more measured pace of development in favour of a more diligent process, potentially fostering better spaces, could be applied to other programmatic proposals. Furthermore, the cooperative process evolving architectural and content-related questions in conjunction, conducted as a series of conversations between client and planners, is specific to this project's particular constellations, history, and programmatic ambitions.

However, it also contains an interesting wider-reaching proposition regarding the nature of the client-architect relationship. At the beginning of the architectural development process, several user requirements and the most relevant theological positions had been stipulated as binding, while many other questions had been left deliberately open. Similarly, the essential architectural proposition had been set through the competition entry, but the spaces were yet to be worked out in more detail.

Conducting this process through an extensive series of round table talks, allowed for a conversational space to emerge between clerics, users and

planners that (arguably) led to more interesting proposals than the detached specification of user requirements followed by architectural solutions. In that sense, the project's focus on mutual learning was embedded in the design development process: just as the most prominent space in the house is the empty room situated in between the three prayer rooms, the conversational space unfolding in between the different professions of theologians and designers may prove to be of acute relevance within the context of multi-confessional sacred architecture.

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NOTES

1. Examples of exhibitions and installations on the *House of One* (selection): Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Rome (*Erasmus Effect*, 2013), Models of the *House of One* at the Chicago Architecture Biennial (2015), installation at Le Centquatre, Paris (2016), installation at the Musée de l'histoire de l'immigration, Paris (*Lieux Partagés*, 2017) and 1:50 timber model at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London (*The Future Starts Here*, 2018).

2. The Foundation *House of One* has hosted events of varying content and format since 2013. Some examples are *Fasting. The Art of Renunciation in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (2023), *Death and Language* (2023), *The Political Dimension of Reconciliation* (2021), *A House of Three Religions Built for Many* (2019),

Dialogue in Conflict Regions (2018), *Artist talk: Art and Judaism* (2015), *Artist talk: Art and Christianity* (2015), *Artist talk: Art and Islam* (2015), *First Modernised, then Tolerated? Do the three religions need a reform or do they have a history we don't know?* (2013) (Foundation *House of One* 2023).

3. The *House of One* has forged fruitful relations with international partner initiatives, such as the *Peace Cathedral* in Tbilisi, a project initiated by Bishop Malkhaz in Georgia in cooperation with Imam Aliev. It is linked to the *Peace Academy*, which organises youth camps Muslim, Christian, Yezidi and other children and youth in Georgia. *The Maison de la Paix et des Religions* in Bangui, Central African Republic, initiated by Cardinal Nzapalainga and Imam Kobine Layama. The project was preceded by the *Plateforme des Confessions Religieuses de Centrafrique* (PCRC), an interreligious peace platform. In Israel, the *House of One* is cooperating with the Project *Garden of One* in Haifa, which has been initiated by Rabbi Golan Ben Chorin (**Foundation *House of One* 2021c**).

4. This is evidenced by the newspaper coverage generated by each of the installations and other collateral projects. About the Installation in Chicago for example it was written that «The *House of One*'s potential lies in the simultaneity of intimacy and foreignness, the similarities and differences between the three Abrahamic religions (...) The Biennial installation exposes the visitor to this potential in a specific spatial setting, where three models are experienced in one installation» (McKnight 2015). In particular the Pavilion on St Peter's Square sparked media discourse in architectural publications, such as *Divisare* (Malvezzi 2018) and local newspapers alike, announcing the pavilion as a new locus of inter-faith activity in Berlin (Schmiemann 2018).