

PROJECT 02

VENICE HOTEL

ARC 3110 | Fall Semester 2021

DESIGN BRIEF

See course website via Canvas for additional info



This studio project is dedicated to the late Arthur E. Hacker, Professor Emeritus at Cal Poly Pomona, who introduced the instructor to the classical language of architecture and the wonders of the city of Venice.

"If every museum in the New World were emptied, if every famous building in the Old World were destroyed and only Venice saved, there would be enough there to fill a full lifetime with delight. Venice, with all its complexity and variety, is itself the greatest surviving work of art in the world."

—Evelyn Waugh



"If you could live anywhere," asked my friend, "where would it be?"

I thought of all the places I had lived, and all the places I had visited, all the places I had read about, and all the places I had only seen in pictures, and all the pleasure I had gotten in those places. And then I remembered the sound of the flute in the Frari, beneath Titian's Assumption, and the taste of the gelato afterwards, and dining outdoors near La Fenice, beneath spacious umbrellas while the rain misted around us and footsteps echoed in the dark, and dining on the terrace beside the canal, and sunrise on the balcony, and walks filled with sublime surprises, and I said "Venice" if I could live anywhere, at least for a while I would live in Venice.

"Hurry," said my friend, "soon it will be underwater"



VENICE: A BRIEF HISTORY

The Republic of Venice first established itself in the 7th century amidst the feuding despotic states of Italy. Located in the middle of the Venetian lagoon at the mouth of the Adriatic Sea, its critical location allowed it to control trade routes to the Byzantine Empire in the East. Venice controlled the waters accumulating power and wealth. Her citizens enjoyed a prosperous and high quality of life: the immediate necessities were abundant, homelessness was nearly non-existent, and people from





different backgrounds enjoyed tolerance and art. It was indeed the Queen of the Adriatic. It embodied a way of life that was unique, robust, and beautiful. Though the Venetian republic is gone, the notion of the good life continues to this day.

Venice is first and foremost a city of the sea. She is a city on the water and must yield to it. It is a delicate relationship: Venice's beauty, power, and poetry are all gifts of the water, yet at the same time she is captive to it; it binds her and threatens her. She and all her inhabitants are dictated by the rhythms of the sea. Roughly 40 times a year, the sea welcomes itself onto the city's streets and into her buildings: it is called *Acqua Alta* or high water. It creeps across her gardens and campos. It walks over her bridges. It intrudes upon the city, and for a brief moment, she must concede all of her functions to the power of the sea.

The water also makes it impossible for the city to expand, and indeed, nearly every square foot of her is efficiently put into work. There are no roads, and sometimes barely room to walk, the main modes of transportation are through the water. Cars are forbidden by the water, bicycles threatened by its many steps and stairs. Instead, vaporettos, gondolas, barges, and speed boats lumber across the canals carrying the livelihoods of the Venetians. The city is dictated by its vast network of canals - her primary infrastructure carrying most of the resources she needs into, out of, and through her. The water absolutely imposes upon her a unique way of life. It reflects and magnifies her beauty and encapsulates it, preserving it, while slowly destroying it. It's what makes her a work of art. Venice owes much of what she is to the water.

What once made Venice such an opulent and influential nation threatens it today. The water binds it to its old way of life, unable to adapt to today's modern ways. It limits potential industries and is incapable of expanding or modernizing. It is unable to answer the call of globalization. As a result, the population of Venice is quickly dwindling. People who long ago might have lived and worked within the city are migrating, looking for new opportunities in the modern way of life. The population of Venice, once brimming with a large population of 260,000, is now critically small with only 60,000 inhabitants, a number that would certainly be barely able to sustain its own internal economy. Instead, Venice relies on tourism. Enough tourists flock to Venice to double its population. However, with tourism come hosts of problems. The masses of tourists are slowly trampling Venice. Its intricate beauty, combined with its antiquated ways incongruent with modernity makes it seem like a "Disneyland" to tourists. They crowd, and flock and stomp all over the city with wanton disregard, causing destruction and disruption. Many fail to realize that Venice is indeed a working community; a small town trapped in the body of a monument. Though seemingly lucrative, tourism causes more issues and the problems that arise from it are not offset by the money it brings in.

DESIGN CHALLENGE

A wealthy couple who owns an award-winning chain of Italian restaurants has just purchased the historic Palazzo Giustinian Pesaro and its surrounding property located on the Grand Canal in Venice. The



couple's design objective for the historic palazzo is to transform it into a high-end boutique hotel with eight to twelve rooms of varying sizes. The four to five story building would feature one of their award-winning restaurants that can seat approximately 70-80 people. A bar serving the restaurant will be accessible from the hotel lobby. A coffee shop (cafe/bar) and a gelato shop with minimal seating will be accessible to the public on the ground level. Since the couple plans visit Venice frequently throughout the year, the top floor will be used as a penthouse suite. The entire project will be approximately 18,000 square feet when complete.

The new owner has recently hired your architecture firm to assess the existing conditions of the historic structure and perform the adaptive-reuse design proposal for the hotel. Shortly after your firm's analysis of the historic structure, you inform the owner that the existing building is unsuitable for habitation due to its hundred-year-old envelope and other significant structural issues due to being abandoned for many years. As a result of these findings, the owner decides to raze the building and construct a new structure in its place.

The owner has requested that the new design proposal be respectful of the original palazzo by using the same footprint. Likewise, the owner has also tasked your firm with designing a proposal that fits into the historic context by using the classical canons on both the exterior and interior. In an effort to facilitate this request, your firm will study the works of an architect from the medieval Venetian, Byzantine, Renaissance, or Baroque periods of architectural history. Under the tutelage of this architect, your team will come to learn how to design in a language similar to your mentor.

This project will also require the designer to continue to learn how to balance the shifting design priorities that arise when considering client-user needs, site planning, architectural programming, socio-cultural norms, religio-political ideals, and contextual issues.



PROPOSED SITE

The location for the project is set in Venice, Italy on the *campiello* located between the Strada Nuovo and the Grand Canal adjacent to the famous Ca' d'Oro and the Palazzo Morosini Sagredo. The Ca' d'Oro has a classical composition, yet it is eclectic in its styling and not easily categorized into a particular style. As a result, the facades of adjacent buildings must be taken into careful consideration. Any design proposal must fit into the context and be thoughtful of its place among the many iconic facades along the Grand Canal.



Building in Venice introduces a multitude of considerations that Americans are not used to due to being unfamiliar with the unique environment. First and foremost, one must address the water. It is not unusual for *acqua alta* to interrupt the city. The water can rise unexpectedly and breach buildings and footwalls and cause flooding. One must consider how this might affect the functions of the building and design accordingly.

The city is mostly pedestrian. The lack of automobiles also means that people, and supplies will arrive on foot or through the water. The *vaporetto* stop will expose the project to both locals and tourists since they must pass the site in order to get to the major pedestrian street that is the *Strada Nuovo*. The site's tight confines and unique proximity demands sensitivity.



PROGRAM

The architectural program for the Venice Hotel is broken down as follows:

Hotel Area (+/- 4,000 SF total)

- Eight to twelve (8-12) hotel rooms of varying sizes (300-400 SF/ea) w/private bathrooms, sitting areas, closets, some with separate sleeping areas and/or balconies
- Maids room (170 SF)
- Hotel laundry (170 SF)

- Storage areas (100 SF)

Hotel Administration (+/- 1,100 SF total)

- Hotel Registration Desk (200 SF)
- Concierge Desk / Baggage Storage (120 SF)
- Hotel Manager's Office (130 SF)
- Storage/Supplies (50 SF)
- Large conference room (300 SF); accommodate 20-25 people
- Hotel Administrative Assistant w/Guest Seating (200 SF)
- Security Office (90 SF)

Restaurant Area (+/- 3,200 SF total)

- Restaurant Seating Area (1600 SF); should accommodate 70-80 people (up to a maximum of 100); 24-32 tables that can be reconfigured for 2-12 patrons; 1 or 2 private dining rooms
- Maitre'd (Host) Station / Waiting Area (300 SF)
- Kitchen / Kitchen Prep Area (600 SF)
- Waiters Station(s) (60 SF)
- Walk-in Refrigerator (70 SF)
- Walk-in Freezer (70 SF)
- Storage (60 SF)
- Accountant / Clerical Office (60 SF)
- Restaurant Manager Office (60 SF)
- Employee Break Room (110 SF)
- Two to four (2-4) Unisex restrooms (60 SF/ea)

Ground Level Services (+/- 1,650 SF total)

- Hotel Main Lobby w/Seating Area and baby grand piano; piano may be placed in the bar instead (400 SF)
- Bar w/kitchen, prep and storage areas, seating for 8-12 standing at bar (used typically for serving wine, Bellinis, American style martinis, and traditional Venetian bar food); main entry from *campiello*, secondary access from hotel lobby optional, outdoor seating (350 SF)
- Café w/storage and prep area, seating for 8-12 standing at bar (used typically for morning cappuccino and brioche, and lunchtime paninis); shared outdoor seating w/gelato shop, separate entry with optional secondary access from hotel lobby (300 SF)
- Gelato Shop w/storage and prep area; optional indoor seating (most gelato shops are take-away only), and shared outdoor seating w/café (300 SF)
- News stand as part of the cafe, gelato shop, bar, or the hotel lobby
- Dock for delivery boats and water taxi to the building
- Women's restroom – 2 water closets, 1 lavatory (150 SF)
- Men's restroom – 1 water closet, 1 urinals, 1 lavatory (150 SF)

Penthouse Apartment (+/- 3,300 SF total)

- Master Bedroom w/Closets / M. Bath (450 SF)
- Guest Bedroom w/Closet (230 SF)
- Bathroom (100 SF)
- Living Room (300 SF)
- Breakfast Nook (130 SF)

- Dining Room (150 SF)
- Kitchen / Pantry / Laundry (250 SF)
- Study / Library (170 SF)
- Rooftop Terrace
- Entry reached by private elevator and stairs

Support (600 SF total)

- Mechanical room (600 SF)
- A minimum of two (2) exits are required for egress for spaces with over 50 occupants
- Dumbwaiter elevator for room service
- Elevator (must be accessible to restaurant, hotel rooms, and penthouse)
- Grand stair and two fire stairs (must be accessible to restaurant and hotel rooms)

Exterior Improvements

- Shared outdoor seating area for café, bar, and gelato shop
- Developed gardens in the *campiello*

Venice Hotel total net square footage (13,850 SF)

Gross square footage - 1.35 multiplier for circulation (18,698 SF)

REQUIRED READING / VIDEOS

- “Venice: Rhapsody in stone, water, melody, and color,” in D’Epiro, Peter and M. D. Pinkowish, *Sprezzatura: 50 Ways Italian Genius Shaped the World* (Anchor Books, 2001), pp.281-290.
- Guthrie, Randolph. “Venice: The Art, Mass Tourism, and High Water,” in Barrie Kerper, *The Collected Traveler: Venice* (Three Rivers Press, 2002), pp.172-184.
- Hiss, Tony. “The Serene Spaces of Venice” in Barrie Kerper, *The Collected Traveler: Venice* (Three Rivers Press, 2002), pp.252-259.
- Watch one of the 17 best movie films set in Venice:
<https://almostginger.com/movies-in-venice/>

ADDITIONAL READING

- Umberto Franzoi, Mark Smith and Daniel Wheeler, *The Grand Canal*, The Vendome Press, 1993.
- Michele Furnari, *Formal Design in Renaissance Architecture from Brunelleschi to Palladio*, Rizzoli, 1995
- Richard Goy, *Venice / The City and its Architecture*, Phaidon, 1997.
- Paul Hills, *Venetian Colour: Marble, Mosaic, Painting and Glass 1250-1550*, Yale University Press, 1999.
- Mary McCarthy. *Venice Observed*, 2nd edition, Reynal and Company, 1957. (Collector’s item)
- James H. S. McGregor, *Venice from the Ground Up*, Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Antonio Salvadori, *Venice: A Guide to the Principal Buildings, Canal and Stamperia Editrice*, 1995.
- Tony Sepeda, *Brunetti’s Venice*, Grove Press, 2008
- *The Touring Club of Italy*, Venice, 1996.

- Ettore Vio, ed., *The Basilica of St. Mark in Venice*, Scala/Riverside, 1999.
- Garry Wills, *Venice: Lion City. The Religion of Empire*, Simon and Schuster, 2001.

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

- www.savevenice.org
- www.veniceinperil.org
- www.veniceprestige.com

ASSESSMENT

The weight of each of the projects and assignments will be broken down as follows:

PROJECT 02: Venice Hotel

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| Pre-Design Phase (Site, Precedent, Programming Analysis) | 10% |
| Schematic Design Phase (Interim Review) | 15% |
| Design Development Phase (Final Review) | 20% |