

Kuwait University College of Arts and Education - Sabah Al-Salem University City, Farwaniya, Kuwait  
Essay by Mohammad Mothaffar

The College of Arts and Education (COAE) was part of the Kuwait University project which began in 2005 to introduce a university city in Kuwait and take the next step in higher education. The old campus was in the Shuwaikh area and was not dedicated to education only as it was also home to multiple ministry buildings, factories, the Shuwaikh Port for imports and exports, scientific research centres and other buildings which resulted in a large traffic problem and thus, the university city masterplan was introduced. SSH International and Canadian Consortium Architects were responsible for the design process as well as the construction supervision of the infrastructure at the heart of the city. BurroHappold was involved in other aspects of the design of the city as well as the engineering. Gulf consult was the associate architect firm hired for the project, they were responsible for the architecture, interior design, landscape and environmental graphics.

The city is now complete with all colleges ready to accept and welcome students through their doors. However, some students still attend the Shuwaikh campus and the university has taken a slow approach to transfer to the new campus, which is the university city. A factor that has slowed this down even further is the COVID situation as having half the students attend one campus and the other half attending a different campus means for less dense populations and smaller crowds in an effort to fight the global pandemic. As of yet, the COAE has not accepted all students yet transferring from the old campus, and is therefore not working at full capacity.

The project COAE alone came out to be USD185M and spans an area of 50,000m<sup>2</sup>. The contractors for this project were Arabtec Construction L.L.C and Combined Group Contracting Co K.S.C.C JV which made the infrastructure possible after working closely with BurroHappold. SSH which was working with CCA hired Dar Al-Handasah Consultants (shair+partners) and Perkins+Will International Engineering Consultants W.L.L to participate in the project, not only that of the COAE, but of the University City in its entirety.

The COAE contains a unique curtain wall system which is composed of a golden colour curtain wall which does not cover the entire face of the building, and leaves some parts completely uncovered such as the middle where there is an indented triangle in the face of the building which gets the shading it needs from the protruding faces on either side of it therefore does not need shade due to the sun path in Kuwait and the orientation of the building. It seems to be using moment frames because from the inside of the building there are no exposed lateral elements going through any floors, which you would expect to be the case due to the shape of the building and in the areas where the roof is connected to the floor in the lateral direction. On the ground floor, you will find that the area of the base is smaller than the upper levels creating a courtyard perimeter which circles the building and this creating shade at all entrances but also gives cover from any rainfall, as Kuwait only gets rain during specific times of the year, but when the rain does come, it is heavy and plentiful. From my own personal experience of living in Kuwait and my knowledge of the climate there, I find the elements used in this building very appropriate and even for someone who knows nothing about the climate, I am certain that they would find the structure very aesthetic.

Sources for this paper:

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sshic.com/our-projects/kuwait-university-college-of-arts-and-education/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://ssuc.ku.edu.kw/project/college-of-art-and-college-of-education-coae/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sshic.com/our-projects/sabah-al-salem-university-city-kuwait-university/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nbbj.com/work/sabah-al-salem-university-city-kuwait-university/>

