

# IKU 2018-19 Fall

ARC0005 Architectural Design Studio 5

## On the Trail of a Social Welfare Project: Community House Design in Vefa

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Selim ÖKEM

Community Houses, in Miriam-Webster Dictionary is defined as a center consisting often of a single building for a community's social, cultural, recreational, and civic activities <sup>1</sup>. Community houses, also known as neighbourhood houses or learning centres, provide a broad range of easily affordable educational and recreational programs in local communities. Activities are provided for both children and adults and can include programs such as language classes, computer training, art and craft courses and a range of recreational and physical activity programs. Community houses also provide opportunities to volunteer and participate in the life of the community <sup>2</sup>. In the modernization of Turkey, Community Houses (or People's Houses) together with Village Institutes play an important role in raising the social welfare of the people, providing formal and vocational education, technical and agricultural skills. They have been closed or let become obsolete after 1950's for they have been conceived as the manifestation of the political discourse of the single party era. Nevertheless, they had a substantial effect on the socio-economic development and welfare of the society in the early republican period. Community Houses differ from Civic Centers in terms of their existential objective to meet people from different social profiles, where more privileged individuals participate directly in helping people from a lower social status, in terms of social solidarity, education, and acquisition of cultural and professional skills. Recreation cannot be forgotten in regard of the functioning of the Community Houses, because sports, music, fine arts, and performing arts are important activities. This act of solidarity in-between the individuals from different socio-economic backgrounds is aimed to strengthen the social bonds in a community. Today, Community houses in the civilized societies are an integral part of communicative, tolerant, educated, mutually supportive society. Given those facts, in Architectural Design 5, A Community House Design in Vefa will be issued in Dr. Ökem's studio. Two design sites have been chosen for the design practice both of which are located alongside the Valens Aqueduct approachable from Atatürk Boulevard. Studio participants are required and encouraged to rethink or maybe to reinvent the idea of Community House and generate an adequate design thinking and research process.



<sup>1</sup> Miriam-Webster Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/community%20house>

<sup>2</sup> Glen Eira City Council, <https://www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/Community-services/Community-partnerships/Community-houses>