From this, we see the portrayal of power using a variety of means of which 3 are highlighted:

- The building achieves a larger massing by grouping all functions into one massive building.
- The sectional articulation of spaces alternates from a low to a high volume, repeating this volumetric sequencing, heightening the awareness of space.
- Although the building makes use of extensive use of glass the complex as a whole internalizes activities and creates dead street and waterway edges. Once one is within the complex, one enters an entirely 'self contained world'.

Analytical sketch: sectional sequencing of volumes

Analytical sketch: monumental scale

Analytical sketch: ‘self contained world’
Building as seen through the theoretical context

The use of architecture to construct nationalism

Nationalism in the context of the EU is not defined in terms of a linear narrative of a particular state, but in terms of multi-central democracy. Thus the image that is intended to be projected and legitimized is one of unity, consensus and superiority over individual nation states. The architecture attempts to achieve this with clear forms and volumes. This includes the circular drum tower, its elliptical court and the elliptical wooden clad dome that rises to an overall height of 14 stories. The facade becomes its clearest at the most visible point of the site that links to the local, national and regional waterways. This allows the public and passing vessels to clearly view the full height dome. The overall profile of the building is kept simple although the building contains a multitude of spaces.

This simplicity has been criticized as not being reflective of the diversity of Europe: “The ironing out of different functions and forms beneath the roof seems an inappropriate symbol for a Europe whose distinctive character is the diversity of its member states.” (Hein 1999:59) However, in the construction of a ‘continentalism’ perhaps this approach is commendable.

The role of the elite in constructing an architecture that reinforces the political status quo

This is achieved in two ways. Firstly by the site selection, which was on the basis of the point of highest visibility in terms of local, national and regional waterways. Secondly, the building connects physically at one point to the surrounding fabric. (With the exception of the bridge connection to the European Commission building) Although the building
predominantly uses fully glazed facades, the connection to the surrounding fabric is merely visual.

The postcolonial project that in attempting to differentiate itself from colonial legacies actually recoup these spatial and architectural methodologies.

The building does not relate to the post colonialist project however, it does relate to globalization and the use of architecture as a symbol of economic development.

The use of the building as an icon of economic development

In this project we see that the city of Strasbourg out of its own initiative, chose an ‘appropriate’ site, launched a design competition and arrange funding and leasing mechanisms in order to swing vote in European Parliament in its favor. The building design was thus used as a persuasive tool giving the city an edge over rival cities. The director of the winning architectural practice, Robert Tisnado commented that this marked a new era of monumental architecture, in which such buildings are “an essential weapon as cities fight each other for employers and funding.” (Welsh ed. 1998:18) The building is thus not only used as a symbol of progress and development locally, but an active tool in securing foreign investment.

Conclusion

At an urban scale, the buildings site is located at the point where the local waterway meets with a channel joining the national waterway to the regional waterway. The proximity to the Rhine is particularly significant since the river runs through or along 5 countries within the region and is considered as one of the most commercial inland waterways in the world.

At the scale of the building, we see the use of clear geometrical volumes that link to universal ideas of multi-central democracy and non-hieratical political structures. This includes the circle and the ellipse. The complex’s three major elements are known as the ‘tower’, ‘dome’ and ‘arc’. The hollowed out tower and the dome reference these universal geometrical ideas. The ‘arc’, which mimics the curve of the site’s edge along the waterway, links more to the local context. The building uses a variety of means to portray power, which include massive scale, sectional height sequencing and the creation of a visibly accessible ‘self enclosed world.’

From the theoretical context, we see the use of universal geometric volumes as a symbol that seeks to convey rationality, unity, consensus and symbolic supremacy over national states. By the predominant use of glazing on the facade, the organization is portrays as progressive and rational. This is used to construct a ‘continentalism’
as opposed to nationalism. The second important point raised is the use of architecture as not only a sign of economic development and growth, but as an active tool in ‘turning the table in your favor’ and as a global competitive weapon in securing foreign investment.

**Conclusion: Exploration into provincial, national and international legislative buildings**

The intention of the section was to explore a variety of legislative architecture in order to identify current and historic paradigms relating to buildings of this nature. Five case study buildings were identified and contextually explored, and as a result, the following themes emerged.

- The use of legislative architecture, to remodel collective memories and in doing so legitimize the political position and perpetuate the status quo
- Through, differentiation from the context, strategic site selection, overemphasis on security and mono-functionality of these complexes; the complexes became highly visible, isolated icons, separate form the everyday lives of ordinary people.
- Through the active persual of symbolic references either to a romanticized past, reference to the primordial/natural landscape, or the building being ‘of the people’, the complexes perpetuate the postcolonial project. This discourse results in the perpetuation of a vicious cycle where the leading doctrine of the time seeks perpetual preservation through replacement or outdoing of the symbolic remnants of the past.
- The use of legislative architecture to draw attention to the political ideals/hopes of the patron in either seeking support, recognition or in attracting foreign investment to the city province or nation that it represents.

Right: Photomontage of case study buildings
(Shepard ed. 2006:10,17)(Guirgola 1979:119)
(Frampton 1989:11)(Bouman ed. 1999:56)
Conclusion

This chapter explored the architectural vision of the PAP’s competition brief and discovered the perpetuation of well-established hierarchies in political architecture. In situating the vision into its theoretical context, the architectural vision of the PAP competition brief reaffirmed the above, which in the opinion of this thesis would result in the continental potential of the PAP being stifled.

The exploration of the various legislative buildings examined the architectural and spatial paradigms in detail. Through this exploration as well as the understanding of the theoretical context of the PAP’s vision, the chapter concludes the incapability of the architectural vision in achieving the core mandate of the PAP becoming an inclusive platform for the involvement of ordinary Africans and African grassroot organizations in the continental decision making processors.

The thesis therefore argues against the perpetuation of existing political architectural paradigms in pursuing the design of the proposed PAP complex.