

café

Toward an Architecture Policy for Canada

2019-2020

CANADIAN ARCHITECTURE FORUMS ON EDUCATION FORUMS CANADIENS D'ARCHITECTURE SUR L'ÉDUCATION

PLACE

In its broadest sense, architecture includes not just buildings, but all inhabitable spaces between them and virtually every aspect of our interactions with the built, natural and social environment. Architecture is also interconnected with value systems, world views, language and history. As such, architecture has a profound role to play in the construction, preservation and experience of place. Architecture always exists in a particular location with unique characteristics, some of which are not visible or immediately apparent. Meaningful place-making requires genuine understanding and sympathetic dialogue with a site's tangible and latent conditions.

CONTEXT AND SCALE

Architecture participates in natural and human ecosystems that precede construction and extend far beyond the footprint of any building. Regardless of a project's size or location, design always involves seeking balance and harmony with complex interdependent conditions, including topography and microclimates; plant and animal habitats; soil and water conditions; local resources and infrastructure; cultural practices and heritage; regional history and customs; ambient atmosphere, and more.

LAND AND RESOURCES

Canada covers a vast, awe-inspiring and heterogeneous terrain, rich with resources crucial for wildlife, biodiversity, sustainable ways of life and vital industry. The Canadian landscape is also saturated with cultural and spiritual significance, place-based knowledge and long histories of use by Indigenous Peoples, whose rights to land, territories and resources must be recognized and renewed. Good design involves careful and creative responses to local geography and materials, but also deep respect for vulnerable natural and human

ecosystems, and Indigenous rights.

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND VITALITY

Architecture is integral to culture. Like art, music, drama and poetry, it is a creative medium of expression, yet it is grounded in particular places and purposeful for multiple communities. Architecture and building practices embody and preserve cultural values over time, while enabling change and renewal. Diverse multicultural and multi-lingual populations support Canada's unique pluralistic identity. First Nations, Inuit and Métis are original and vital agents of this cultural richness.

FORGING COMMUNITY

Architecture shapes the physical environment, which in turn shapes social experience and potential. Buildings and public spaces influence daily routines and provide frameworks for social gatherings and public life. Architecture can enhance a community's connection with place, but this requires meaningful dialogue and inclusive collaboration, mutual recognition and respect, listening and openness, honesty, accountability and trust.

QUOTES THEMES QUESTIONS PROVOCATIONS



This place may seem like the middle of nowhere to you now, but it will soon be everything you will be in search of later in life. It's who we are.

– Jake Chakasim
Recalling a story of his Mooshim (Cree for grandfather) about the Omushkegowuk People, *Unceded: Voices of the Land*, 2018

*Architectural form is eloquent only in context.
The act of siting betrays to us the tenor of human aspirations.*

– Arthur Erickson, "Weight of Heaven," *Canadian Architect* (Mar. 1964)

The ultimate purpose of architecture is community.

– Brian MacKay-Lyons, *Economy of Ethic*, 2017

PLACE is one of four themes - together with **PEOPLE, PROSPERITY & POTENTIAL** - orienting CAFÉ conversations. Participants are encouraged to provide feedback on the following questions:

- Regarding architecture's impact on PLACE: what is most concerning? and exciting?
- How might an architecture policy help address these concerns and opportunities?
- What examples best demonstrate architecture's impact on PLACE?
- What strategies would invigorate public understanding of the value of PLACE?
- Are any key issues missing from the thematic summary of architecture & PLACE?
- Other comments?