

café

Toward an Architecture Policy for Canada

2019-2020

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

PEOPLE

Architecture can enhance human life on many levels, potentially helping everyone to have enjoyable, engaging and meaningful lives. People are not passive users and consumers of the built environment; they are living, breathing, striving and thinking individuals whose diverse backgrounds and capabilities, occupations and aspirations, actively make Canada what it is. Architecture provides safe and suitable settings for people to live, work and play, while shaping daily life in ways that can foster social cohesion and cultural vitality, inspire personal and collective imagination, and stimulate wonder and respect for the complex world we must share and sustain.

HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

Quality of architecture is linked to quality of life. Well-designed environments foster physical and psychological health. Spaces with ample daylight, fresh air and pleasant views - and attuned to lived experience - not only improve productivity and reduce illnesses, but enhance emotional well-being.

MEMORY AND MEANING

What we build says something about how we live, what we value and who we are as individuals and as a society. Public institutions - like museums, libraries, theatres, schools, sports facilities, government buildings and places of worship - become symbols of shared values and aspirations; just as everyday places - like favourite markets, cafés, streets and parks - form meaningful settings for cherished experiences.

DIGNITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Architecture affects our sense of dignity and intersects issues of human rights. Where one lives, learns, works and plays becomes intertwined with personal and cultural identity. The built environment can help people feel

fulfilled and hopeful; or, conversely, neglected and demoralized. Good design accommodates everyone with dignity, enabling equal access and a sense of belonging. Serious problems, like poverty and prejudice, will never be solved by architecture alone, but design can ameliorate social inequities and foster pride and community.

ENGAGEMENT, EMPOWERMENT AND RECONCILIATION

People possess the power to influence the quality and direction of design in their communities. Informed participation by affected citizens can compel appropriate action, accountability, and better built environments. By fostering genuine inclusion and mutual understanding, architecture and its participatory design processes can become transformative vehicles of reconciliation. Empowering social agency and self-determination also means disempowering systems that obstruct necessary and desirable change. These goals transcend issues of design to implicate the political contexts, procurement processes and legislation affecting architectural services.

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QUOTES THEMES QUESTIONS PROVOCATIONS

Architecture trades on its ability to touch and shape people's lives in profound and meaningful ways.

- Brigitte Shim
Reflecting on the 2007 Aga Khan Award for Architecture

All peoples contribute to the diversity and richness of civilizations and cultures, which constitute the common heritage of humankind.

- United Nations
Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007

Architecture is a public concern.

- Canadian Center for Architecture, founding premise

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

- Regarding architecture's impact on PEOPLE: 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 PEOPLE?
- What strategies would invigorate public understanding of well-designed environments?
- Are any key issues missing from the thematic summary of architecture & PEOPLE?
- Other comments?