

café

Toward an Architecture Policy for Canada

2019-2020

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

Society is facing an increasing number of challenges in the 21st century. The human-induced climate crisis is threatening ecosystems, biodiversity and human settlements. Irresponsible resource extraction is causing catastrophic damage. Rapid urbanization is exacerbating social division and inequality, while deteriorating infrastructure needs urgent renewal. Architects must rise to these challenges by acknowledging the crises and designing with comprehensive sustainable strategies and social consciousness. Green technologies are not enough. A prosperous Canada needs political will and public care for collective well-being and the planet.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Architecture impacts the planet's health. The energy to build, heat, cool and power buildings accounts for a significant percentage of greenhouse gas emissions; potable water circulating through every inhabitable space is a limited resource; construction waste and hazardous materials are accumulating in landfill sites and damaging ecosystems. Through informed design decisions, consultation with Indigenous Peoples, responsible leadership, legislation and investment, Canada could be an exemplar in environmental stewardship.

SUSTAINABLE URBANISM

Arbitrary urban sprawl and profit-driven development is not sustainable. With municipal, provincial and federal support, planning and design strategies can foster appropriate density and diversity while enhancing quality of life for all. Sustainable cities require optimized infrastructure, mass transit systems and water supply, as well as pedestrian-oriented developments and affordable housing with access to public space, parks, civic institutions and social services. A holistic approach to regional

development, inclusive of environmental and social goals, is necessary and urgent.

EQUITABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Architecture can be a catalyst for equitable economic prosperity. The design and construction industries generate jobs in diverse sectors and stimulate private enterprise. Sustainable development and lifecycle costing can yield massive energy savings, and investing in design can revitalize neighbourhoods, strengthen community, enable self-sufficiency, inspire the next generation of city-builders, promote tourism and generate long-term socio-economic stability.

ADAPTATION

Architecture persists for generations. Good design considers resiliency of new buildings over time and creative adaptation of old structures to new uses. Demolition and rebuilding is costly and can be damaging to environments and social fabrics. Promoting adaptive reuse requires changing not only building practices but attitudes, embracing innovative renewal and the complementarity of new and old.

QUOTES THEMES QUESTIONS PROVOCATIONS PROSPERITY

There is no Wealth but Life.

– John Ruskin, *Unto This Last* (1860)

We could live in a country powered entirely by renewable energy, woven together by accessible public transit, in which the jobs and opportunities of this transition are designed to systematically eliminate racial and gender inequality. Caring for one another and caring for the planet could be the economy's fastest growing sectors.

– LEAP Manifesto, 2015

You are never too small to make a difference.

– Greta Thunberg, UN Climate Change Conf, Dec. 2018

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

- Regarding architecture's impact on PROSPERITY: 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 PROSPERITY?
- What strategies would invigorate public understanding of long-term design value?
- Are any key issues missing from the thematic summary of architecture & PROSPERITY?
- Other comments?