WHITE PAPER FOR A QUÉBEC POLICY ON ARCHITECTURE

SUPPORT, VISION, MILESTONES

Ordre des architectes du Québec

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PRESENTING THE ORDRE DES ARCHITECTES DU QUÉBEC

The Ordre des architectes du Québec (OAQ) is the professional association representing architects in Québec; as such, its mission is to ensure the protection of the public. To that end, it controls admission to the architectural profession and governs its practice in the province. As part of its mandate, the OAQ takes an interest in any issue that is of concern to the profession or that, by its nature, may influence the quality of architecture and the built environment. Pursuant to its public protection mission, it is particularly sensitive to the challenges of sustainable development. The OAQ currently has more than 4000 members and some 1,100 intern architect members.

SUMMARY

Since 2014, the Ordre des architectes du Québec (OAQ) has been actively seeking adoption of a Québec policy on architecture. An architecture policy, which is common in many countries and regions, is a document that frames a government's orientations with respect to the planning, design, construction, maintenance and renovation of buildings, infrastructures and public spaces. Based on the premise that architecture informs the quality of life of all citizens, it serves to harmonize legislation and regulations governing the built environment, as well as the actions of the various government departments and agencies with a stake in it.

An architecture policy seeks to ensure that the buildings around us sustainably address the challenges of today as well as tomorrow, from climate change to the ageing population, social inclusion, and heritage preservation, among others. It is also economically advantageous, informing the attractive power of a region and the savoir-faire that it holds.

At a time when governments are reinvesting massively in infrastructure and real estate development is in a phase of sustained growth, there is an urgent need for Québec to adopt clear guidelines for ensuring quality in the buildings that we will leave as a legacy for future generations.

During 2017, the OAQ sought the opinions of people in Québec with regard to this project. From March 14 to June 6, collaboration with the Institut du Nouveau Monde (INM), it hosted public conversations in 13 cities. The initiative culminated in September, with the presentation in Montreal of the *Forum pour une politique québécoise de l'architecture*. That forum concluded with the publication of the *Déclaration pour une politique québécoise de l'architecture*, which to date has been signed by more than 4,000 people (the text of the declaration is reproduced in Appendix III).

Concurrently, some fifty cities, towns and boroughs representing more than four million people have adopted resolutions in favour of a Québec policy on architecture. Other bodies have also announced their support for the project (see list, Appendix II). That support manifested itself in response to the filing by the OAQ of a brief entitled *La qualité architecturale, un chantier à poursuivre*, as part of public consultations by the Ministry of Culture and Communications (MCC) on the renewal of Québec's Culture Policy in June 2016.

The purpose of this white paper is to reflect society's interest in the project for a Québec policy on architecture and, in turn, to appeal to the government to begin the work required to develop such a policy. Recommendations to that effect are listed on page 34. This document is initially being transmitted to the MCC. It will then be forwarded to other ministries, in view of the cross-cutting nature of the initiative.

Québec must translate the expertise it possesses with regard to architectural quality into a coherent vision that will engage the support of all stakeholders concerned by the built environment. The OAQ looks forward to working with the Government of Québec to map out and implement that vision.

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INTRODUCTION

Origins of the initiative

The OAQ's initiative drew inspiration from architectural policies enacted in Europe, mainly since the 1990s, where such instruments are currently in effect in some twenty countries and regions.[1] Programs and institutions with similar aims also exist in Australia, New Zealand and New York City.[2] Despite geographic contexts that differ from ours, the observations informing these policies are identical here: urban sprawl, deterioration of heritage buildings, and discrepancies between the nature of real-estate projects as built and the real needs of the population.

Architecture and quality of life

All of these architecture policies acknowledge the same fundamental premise: architecture, in the sense of the built environment, influences people's quality of life. First, because it is everywhere: whether we speak of homes, public institutions, retail establishments, or exterior public spaces, we are constantly in interaction with architectural achievements. Second, because architecture informs, among other things, our behaviours, lifestyle, travels, health, economy, and social relations, as well as our impact on the environment. Lastly, because it represents a long-term commitment: most buildings and other structures are designed to last many decades; centuries, even. Architecture therefore has a lasting impact on our lives and those of future generations.

1. Presentation by João Ferreira Bento, European Union Conference on Architectural Policies, Tallinn, September 2017. [Online], [http://bit.ly/2FzWY38].
2. Department of Design and Construction, City of New York, *Design and Construction Excellence 2.0.* [Online], [http://on.nyc.gov/2tLYQR3].

A pillar of culture

Architecture is a vital component of the cultural identity of a place and its peoples. It strengthens our sense of shared identity and of place, and defines the image we project to the rest of the world – aspects with potential to generate economic benefits. The specific nature of architecture is a determining factor in the attractive power of a region, whether for its current or future inhabitants, investors, or tourists. Architecture is also a showcase for the savoir-faire of our makers and builders. That is why its quality – and not just its cost – is in the public interest and must be taken into account by government.

Quality: a throughline

The idea of quality, of "good" design, is intrinsic to any architectural project executed with respect for best practices. A quality approach reconciles the needs of users with the sustainability of a structure as well as its beauty, all while delivering added value for a community. To ensure success, quality must be understood and fostered by all stakeholders concerned, and this is one of the major objectives of an architecture policy.

Does it cost more?

In architecture and in other fields, investing in quality is a wise decision for the long term. It is generally acknowledged that the design and building phases account for, respectively, just 1% and 5% of the amounts required to sustain the full life cycle of a building or development. The decisions made during these phases, which include choices as to energy-efficiency measures, have a major impact on subsequent operating and maintenance costs. In addition, a well-designed structure generates value insofar as it enhances the attractive power of a facility – or a neighbourhood, a city, or an entire region. Certainly, poor-quality architecture is costly over the long term, because it eventually results in the need for major corrective work and, in the worst-case scenario, abandonment or demolition of a building after only a few years of use.

Seizing the moment

The various levels of government have committed to reinvesting massively in infrastructure maintenance and renewal in Québec in the years to come. The provincial government intends to spend $91.1 billion over the period 2017 to 2027, while the federal government and municipalities plan to inject $10.1 billion and $9.4 billion respectively.[3] There is therefore an urgent, even crucial need to proceed according to a coherent vision allowing us to achieve optimum value for money over the long term. At the same time, our society is called upon to address huge challenges, such as climate change, the ageing population, and social inclusion. Meeting those challenges demands that we rethink old practices and innovate for the future.

Embracing a global vision

Architecture is a discipline that affords synthesis of a broad diversity of issues and formulation of a global vision so as to respond as appropriately as possible to the needs of a project's eventual users and surrounding community. By their training, architects are able to reconcile the functional, technical, urban, social, cultural, environmental, regulatory, economic, and political dimensions of whatever development or construction project they undertake. The complex challenges we face as a society require solutions born of this type of global vision, which calls upon creativity. But architects cannot act alone in advancing that vision. All stakeholders in the built environment – public authorities, clients, building contractors, professionals, users, and communities – must adhere to it in the interest of the common good.

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3.   2017–2027 Québec Infrastructure Plan.

WHAT AN ARCHITECTURE POLICY MUST CONTAIN

Architectural quality will not spring up out of nowhere. The consensus of existing architecture policies is that it is up to government to ensure the conditions conducive to that quality. Government's first duty, in its roles as contracting authority, property owner and custodian of built heritage, is to set an example. It must also align the actions of the various departments and organizations involved in architecture based on the vision it has defined. And for architectural quality to be valued and desired by all of society, government must, among other things, raise citizens' awareness and cultivate their engagement, support municipalities, and champion research and innovation.

International models[4]

France

In France, the *Loi sur l'architecture*, enacted in 1977, acknowledges that architecture is in the public interest. The legislation led to the establishment of the *Mission interministérielle pour la qualité des constructions publiques* (interdepartmental mission for the quality of public construction projects), which issues studies and recommendations that help improve practices nationally. It also sparked the creation of the *conseils d'architecture, d'urbanisme et de l'environnement* (CAUEs, or architecture, planning and environmental councils), which inform the public and local contracting authorities about quality in architecture. Another law, the *Loi sur la maîtrise d'ouvrage publique* (MOP act, or law on public project contracting), enacted in 1985, frames the obligations of public contractors and professionals to ensure project quality. Lastly, the *Code des marchés publics*, or public procurement contracting code, makes architecture competitions mandatory for public projects worth more than a certain threshold amount. Over the past twenty or so years, however, the construction industry has often succeeded in circumventing these laws, such that entire swaths of the country have been developed less harmoniously. In 2015, the Culture Ministry sought to reverse the trend by developing the *Stratégie nationale de l'architecture*. This has resulted, among other things, in a lowering of the threshold at which hiring an architect is compulsory (from 170 m^2 to 150 m^2) and public awareness campaigns around the importance of architectural quality.

The Netherlands

Over the past 20 years, the Netherlands' national architecture policy has positioned the country as a world leader in architecture and helped promote exemplary public commissions. The policy states that architectural quality extends beyond aesthetics and function, because it contributes to social cohesion, sustainable development and economic vitality, in the process benefiting entire communities. The most recent action plan pursuant to the policy was issued by the Ministry of Infrastructure along with the Environment and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, although other ministries had input. The priorities are people-friendly urban densification; adaptation of rural communities to demographic decline (repurposing of vacated spaces); upgrading of healthcare and education facilities; improvement of infrastructures; energy transition; and agricultural development respectful of the landscape. The Netherlands also has an architect-in-chief, heir to a tradition that goes back two centuries, who reports to the king and is independent of the government. The architect-in-chief acts in a consulting capacity and is empowered to conduct studies and issue opinions – whether solicited or unsolicited – on any public project, so as to promote architectural quality.

Denmark

Denmark has had two national architecture policies. The latest, published in 2014, begins by stating that architecture must serve citizens. The Danish concept of architecture encompasses not only buildings, but also landscapes and cities. The policy was developed at the initiative of the Culture Ministry and in collaboration with other ministries, including the Ministry of the Environment. An interministerial group was also formed to ensure the policy's implementation by all branches of government. The policy asserts that architecture must maintain the quality of the built environment as transformations are made to it. The country has seen rural populations migrate into its cities in recent years, has many abandoned heritage buildings, and must take steps to protect itself from the effects of climate change. While acknowledging the need to rethink the built environment and land-use planning, the government is adamant that this be done from a perspective of sustainable development that includes the social dimension. Special attention is paid to architecture on a human scale and user-friendliness of public spaces. To promote citizen input, the policy calls for government-funded awareness and education activities. Danish cities are urged to adopt their own architecture policies, and more than a third of them have done so. A further component of the policy frames the promotion of Danish architecture internationally.

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4. Ordre des architectes du Québec, *Définissons ensemble l'architecture du Québec : Cahier du participant*, Conversation publique pour une politique nationale de l'architecture, Montréal: OAQ / Institut du Nouveau Monde, 2017.

Main components

After studying various architecture policies, we summarized their main components. They are listed in the table below.

MAIN COMPONENTS OF EXISTING ARCHITECTURE POLICIES

ARCHITECTURAL VISION	• Acknowledgement of the contributions of the architecture discipline to the betterment of society • Presence of a body tasked with advising public authorities on a global vision of the built environment or on improvements to be made to project quality from the earliest stages
CROSS-CUTTING NATURE	• Coordination between the various ministries/departments and public-sector organizations • Harmonization of legislation enacted in disparate fields, e.g., heritage, construction, culture, environment, with respect to architectural quality
EXAMPLES SET BY PUBLIC CONTRACTING AUTHORITIES	• Enhancements to internal expertise in the public service • Accent on quality in awarding of public contracts • Publication of guides to good practice • Training and awareness raising for lawmakers and other public policy makers, for example via visits to exemplary projects • Support and guidance provided to smaller contracting bodies (municipalities, school boards, organizations) • Prize[s] for public contracting
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	• Regulations for building and land-use planning consistent with national environmental objectives • Incentives for greening of the built environment beyond standards (subsidies, tax credits)
PUBLIC AWARENESS RAISING	• Activities in schools • Architecture days • Support for TV programs, websites, publications, exhibitions, and guided tours

MAIN COMPONENTS OF EXISTING ARCHITECTURE POLICIES (CONT.)

SUPPORT FOR MUNICIPALITIES	• Support/guidance for development of architecture policies • Support/guidance for contract-awarding and citizen-input processes • Incentives and support/guidance for heritage protection, preservation and development • Dissemination of information (e.g., guides to exemplary development practices)
RESEARCH, INNOVATION, KNOWLEDGE SHARING	• Subsidies for research projects • Support for knowledge transfer from the academic to the professional communities • Exceptions to planning by-laws to allow innovation
CITIZEN INPUT	• Citizens consulted at all stages of projects, especially early in the process • Pilot projects aimed at enhancing citizen participation
HERITAGE PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT	• National heritage preservation plan comprising measures for repurposing, bringing up to standards, and occupancy of heritage buildings • Partnerships with tourism and economic bodies • Training and certification for artisans in the architecture building trades
DEVELOPMENT AND EXPORTING OF LOCAL ARCHITECTURE	• Promotion in other countries of local know-how and professionals • Measures to promote emerging generations of professionals • Assistance for technology upgrading in the industry

Disseminating expertise

Most countries that have adopted an architecture policy or equivalent policy have instituted a consulting body made up of experts tasked with promoting and encouraging architectural quality. These bodies' roles encompass multiple aspects, including public commissions, sustainable development, heritage, public awareness raising, and citizen input.

A number of heads of such bodies gave presentations on their roles and actions at the European Union Conference on Architectural Policies in Tallinn, Estonia, on September 21 and 22, 2017.[5]

In addition, the Forum pour une politique québécoise de l'architecture, held in Montréal on September 28, 2017, featured talks by three key figures behind European architectural policies[6]:

> • Patrick Bloche (France), former Member of the National Assembly and the author of the report that led to the country's national architecture strategy;

> • Chantal Dassonville (Belgium), Deputy Director-General, Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles Cellule architecture, which implements architectural policy; and

> • Henrik Stjernholm (Denmark), instigator of the architecture policy enacted by the city of Vejle, the first of its kind in Scandinavia.

Here is a summary of some of the models outlined by those speakers:

> • Inspired by the Netherlands, the Flanders region of Belgium has a *Bouwmeester* (Government Architect):

> "The core mission of the Flemish Government Architect is to promote the architectural quality of the built environment. The Flemish Government Architect and his team advise public patrons in the design and realization of buildings, public space, landscape and infrastructure. In addition, the Flemish Government Architect stimulates the development of visions and reflection, with an emphasis on interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral initiatives. The Flemish Government Architect acts as an advisor to the entire Flemish Government."[7]

> • The Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles (French Community of Belgium) has a *Cellule architecture*, itself inspired by the Flanders *Bouwmeester*; its mission is described as follows:

> "I. **Ensure architectural quality in buildings and spaces accessible to the public**, by promoting creative architecture that incorporates environmentally aware design and energy efficiency, and calling upon the disciplines associated with architecture such as landscape architecture, furniture and wayfinding design, scenography, etc.

> "To achieve this, the Cellule architecture provides support and guidance to implementation processes of contracts for selection of designers (e.g., assistance in drafting programs, identification of constraints, implementation of conditions conducive to the smooth running of competitions, communications, etc.). The goal is to confer upon buildings in the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, those that it co-finances or for which it provides design support, exemplary value for society.

> "The Cellule architecture has developed a series of model documents as part of a practical guide (e.g., choice of procedure, specifications, timeline, organization of the jury, framework for pre-analysis of projects submitted, sample minutes of selection and awardance meetings) to make the work of local stakeholders easier.

5.   The presentations are available at [http://bit.ly/2DmUu2Y].
6.   The presentations (in French) are available at [http://oaq.com/forum.html].
7.   Source: [https://www.vlaamsbouwmeester.be/en/team-flemish-government-architect/flemish-government-architect]

"**II. Support and develop integration of works of art in public buildings**.

"**III. Promote architecture as a cultural discipline**, via a policy for implementation of and support for public- and private-sector initiatives that help identify, promote and value architecture and its connected disciplines [. . .]."[8]

• Germany has the Bundesstiftung Baukultur (Federal Foundation for Building Culture), which aims to:

– Raise public awareness of "building culture";

– Lead debates among building professionals on quality;

– Encourage dialogue around "building culture" among local and state authorities; and

– Promote Germany's "building culture" internationally.

The Foundation publishes a yearly activity report, which it submits to the Federal Parliament.[9]

• Ireland has a State Architect, a position in the Office of Public Works. He leads a team of architects responsible for ensuring the quality of the state's property portfolio. The scope of the State Architect's action is quite vast, encompassing:

– Supervision of protection, conservation and development of heritage;

– Development of a maintenance plan (linked to heritage protection);

– Maintenance of a database of conservation, maintenance and repair needs;

– Integration of art into architecture;

– Publication of guidelines for sustainable construction;

– Supervision of awarding of public-sector architecture contracts;

– Acting as a consultee with other governmental bodies; and

– Design review of projects underway by an expert panel.[10]

8.   Cellule architecture website: [www.cellulearchi.be/a-propos/missions].
9.   Bundesstiftung Baukultur website: [http://bit.ly/2IqRCFo].
10. Presentation by Ciaran O'Connor, Principal Architect, Office of Public Works / State Architect, to the European Union Conference on Architectural Policies, Tallinn, September 21, 2017.

THE OAQ'S INITIATIVE

Revisiting and updating positions taken in an initial white paper issued in 1982,[11] the OAQ in 2014 made a commitment to promote adoption of a Québec policy on architecture. What follows is a summary of the key achievements in this process to date.

Meetings with lawmakers and political parties

Between 2014 and 2016, the OAQ presented its project to elected officials in 11 cities and to representatives of the main political parties in Québec. It also met with then Minister of Culture and Communications Hélène David and Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change David Heurtel. Discussions also took place with the staff of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Land Occupancy.

Two briefs filed

The OAQ produced two briefs ahead of the Ministry of Culture and Communications' (MCC) renewal of Québec's cultural policy. The first was filed in June 2016 as part of the preliminary consultations, and the second in September 2017 as a response to the draft cultural policy.[12] In each case, the OAQ called for architecture to occupy a prominent place in the future cultural policy, and for the MCC, in collaboration with the other ministries concerned, to develop a Québec policy on architecture along with an action plan.

Official support

In 2016 and 2017, some fifty cities and boroughs, including Montréal, Québec City, Gatineau, Sherbrooke, Longueuil and Laval, adopted resolutions in support of the recommendations made in the OAQ's first brief.[13]

The public conversation tour

To gauge the degree to which people in Québec support the idea of a policy on architecture, the OAQ conducted an extensive public consultation exercise. These "public conversations" took place from March 14 to June 6, 2017, jointly organized by the OAQ and the Institut du Nouveau Monde (INM).

Open discussion evenings were held in 13 cities: Québec City, Rouyn-Noranda, Saguenay, Rimouski, Trois-Rivières, Sherbrooke, Longueuil, Laval, Joliette, Drummondville, Gatineau, Saint-Jérôme, and Montréal. Throughout the tour, an online platform was also available, whereby anyone could express their opinion on the issues covered. Participants also stated their points of view in writing directly to the OAQ or the INM. In all, more than 500 people from all backgrounds took part in the process.[14]

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11. OAQ, *Livre blanc de l'architecture québécoise*, April 30, 1982.
12. OAQ, *La qualité architecturale, un chantier à poursuivre*, Spring 2016; OAQ, *L'architecture, un pilier de la culture*, September 2017. [Online], [http://oaq.com/pqa/documentation].
13. See Appendix II, p. 40.
14. Institut du Nouveau Monde, *Rapport synthèse de la conversation publique pour une politique nationale de l'architecture*, August 14, 2017. [Online], [http://www.oaq.com/pqa/documentation].

The forum

Once again in cooperation with the INM, the OAQ organized the *Forum pour une politique québécoise de l'architecture*. The event took place on September 28, 2017, at the Palais des congrès de Montréal, and attracted some 270 people from various fields. The forum was an opportunity for participants to learn more about architecture policies adopted by various governments abroad and hear presentations by three guest speakers. They then attended four themed workshops where they gave their opinions on various areas of action of a future Québec policy on architecture. The workshop themes were "Public Commissions and Architectural Quality," "Sustainable Development," "Heritage," and "Citizen Input and Awareness." Attendees also had the opportunity to comment on a draft declaration on a Québec policy on architecture.[15]

The declaration

The draft declaration on a Québec policy on architecture received virtually unanimous support from participants in the forum. The final version of the declaration, enhanced following the discussions, was posted on the website in October 2017.[16] People were then invited to sign it online. Thus far, the declaration has garnered more than 4,000 signatures.

15. Institut du Nouveau Monde, *Bilan des ateliers du Forum pour une politique québécoise de l'architecture*, December 2017. [Online], [http://www.oaq.com/pqa/documentation].
16. See Appendix III, p. 42. The names of persons who have signed are posted at [http://www.oaq.com/declaration].

OBSERVATIONS AND A VISION FOR QUÉBEC

The OAQ's research and the public consultation it undertook have determined that architectural quality in Québec is fragmentary. Despite this, the requisite expertise, tools and enthusiasm do exist, and would benefit from being brought together as part of a shared, coherent and well-communicated vision.

Counterproductive fragmentation

Currently, some twenty ministries and organizations in Québec have a stake in architecture.[17] Municipalities are also key players. This compartmentalization results in incoherence that hinders the quality of the built environment. Here are some examples:

• The Ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change has set ambitious greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets for Québec (37.5% below the 1990 level by 2030; 20% by 2020). The most recent available data show that, from 2012 to 2015, emissions in Québec have stagnated at 10% below the 1990 level, a trend that suggests the 2020 target will not be achieved unless a radical change occurs. While the building industry has seen a reduction in GHG emissions thanks to conversion of heating systems from oil to electricity, emissions in the transportation sector have increased because there are now more vehicles, being driven longer distances. There is therefore an urgent need to step up efforts to reduce dependence on automobiles. This factor is contingent on land-use planning and the location of buildings, which are largely the purview of cities and towns.

• In 2009, the government adopted a policy called *À part entière*, developed by the Office des personnes handicapées, which aims to increase participation in society by people with disabilities. The policy is based on various legal foundations, including the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. Despite these efforts, large parts of the built environment remain inaccessible to people living with disabilities, which is a form of discrimination under the Charter. The latest version of the *Construction Code – Chapter I, Building*, published in 2015, does not contain the hoped-for accessibility requirements, notably as concerns adapted housing (an update is currently being prepared, however). Moreover, the Code does not apply to buildings dating from before 1976.

• Historically, municipalities have been subject to a system for selecting professional services contractors that is distinct from that applying to the provincial government. Until recently, the *Cities and Towns Act* required them to choose architects according to the so-called two-envelope system, which means that contracts are almost always awarded to the lowest bidder – often to the detriment of quality. In provincial-government contracting, by contrast, for a number of years now bidders have been chosen based solely on quality, with compensation set by the *Tariff of fees for professional services* provided to the government by architects. Under new legislation aimed primarily at recognizing that they are local governments and, as such, merit greater autonomy and powers, municipalities have greater flexibility when it comes to awarding contracts, but the terms and conditions are complex. Currently, it is difficult to determine the extent to which cities and towns will avail themselves of that flexibility, and, especially, whether they will consider the quality factor.

17. See table in Appendix I, p. 36.

- The regulation on capital projects for cultural facilities states that any such facility valued at more than $5 million that receives funding from the Ministry of Culture and Communications must be subject to an architecture competition. A municipality wishing to hold an architecture competition for a building other than a cultural facility, however, must secure an exemption from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Land Occupancy, and the terms and conditions of the competition will be different in that case. Access to this procedure, the end goal of which is architectural quality, should be standardized so that contractors outside the domain of arts and culture can easily avail themselves of it.

Key principles

To ensure a coherent vision of the built environment in Québec, the OAQ is advocating for an architecture policy mapped out according to the following principles:

1. Sustainability

Sustainable development is a constant in the architecture policy advocated by the OAQ. Our vision of sustainability is in keeping with the definition in the Québec *Sustainable Development Act*: "[D]evelopment that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is based on a long-term approach which takes into account the inextricable nature of the environmental, social and economic dimensions of development activities."

Sustainable building

Because it is at once a consumer of resources, an economic driver and an expression of cultural identity, architecture must embrace the principle of sustainable development. Although the government has implemented a variety of measures along those lines in recent years, judging by the comments we received during our consultation initiative, members of the public are largely unaware of them.

Participants almost unanimously said they would like to see greater use of locally sourced, sustainable materials like wood, slate and granite. They stated that Québec must encourage their use while supporting innovation and development of know-how in this area. Some suggested that the *Fonds vert* ("green fund") be used to fund incentive measures and that public contracting authorities include, in their specifications, requirements on the sourcing and sustainability of materials, all with a view to reducing buildings' carbon footprint and generating economic benefits for the province's resource regions. This is more or less the goal of the *Charte du bois* (Québec's "wood-first charter"): for all projects under its management, the Société québécoise des infrastructures (SQI) assesses the potential of preferring wood materials and conducts an analysis of the GHG missions that would be avoided as a result. The goal is not to use wood at all costs, but to systematically assess whether doing so is worthwhile. If the answer is yes, the requirement to use wood is incorporated into the technical specifications.[18]

The SQI also adheres to Québec's Agenda 21 for Culture to promote cultural heritage, and seeks LEED v4 certification for construction projects and BOMA BEST certification for responsible building management. These exemplary orientations are also in keeping with what participants suggested at the consultations, but would appear to be little known to them.

At the same time, more stringent energy-efficiency standards have been in force since 2012 for residential buildings built in Québec. Likewise, Novoclimat 2.0 certification, administered by Transition énergétique Québec (TEQ), enables homeowners to make energy-efficiency upgrades beyond standards and receive financial assistance for the process. TEQ has also published guides to energy-efficient building design, integrated design process, and building information modeling (BIM). Lastly, TEQ is developing a master plan for energy transition, innovation and efficiency that will encompass the interdependent dimensions of building design and management, land-use planning, transportation, and innovation, among others. The OAQ responded to TEQ's proposals in a brief entitled *Se donner les moyens de nos ambitions*. It is confident that this process will, among other things, result in urgently needed modernization of Québec's energy-efficiency standards for large buildings, which date from 1983.

18. Presentation by Yann Françonnet, Sustainable Development Consultant, SQI, to the Salon Solutions Bois organized by Cecobois, February 1, 2018.

All of these exemplary actions already undertaken by the provincial government would benefit from inclusion in a Québec policy on architecture, and would function as mileposts toward achievement of well-defined sustainable development objectives.

For time is of the essence: Québec must ramp up efforts to achieve the GHG emissions reduction targets it has set. The OAQ therefore believes the time has come for ambitious, resolutely forward-looking solutions. In terms of regulations, many countries and regions have made huge strides. For example, as of December 31, 2020, all new buildings in European Union member states must be nearly zero energy (nZEB).[19]

From that perspective, bioclimatic construction (building orientation and window openings in accordance with sunlight and prevailing winds) should no longer be a curiosity in Québec, but standard practice. In addition, solar and geothermal energy technologies should be more widespread, as part of efforts to improve our buildings' energy performance.

In conjunction with more severe energy-efficiency regulations, incentives for training focused on 21st-century needs should be provided to construction-industry players, be they professionals, developers, contractors, or workers.

Lastly, given the substantial culture shift required to achieve energy transition, the OAQ believes emphasis should be laid on the desirability of the novel designs dictated. Besides benefiting from incentives for green renovation and construction, consumers must perceive benefits other than environmental, whether in the area of functionality of spaces or aesthetics. One way to propound such benefits is to promote architectural quality.

Land-use planning

The OAQ's consultation showed that issues surrounding architecture are deeply intertwined with those surrounding urban planning and land-use planning. Many of the wishes expressed in this regard by participants correspond to the appeals of the Alliance ARIANE, of which the OAQ is a member, and which is demanding adoption of a national land-use and urban planning policy[20] along with a policy governing the location of public sites and buildings.

In every city we visited on our tour, there was concern for giving sufficient place to people, who too often take a back seat to automobiles. Participants everywhere emphasized the importance of fostering collective and active transportation options, so as to stimulate user-friendliness of public spaces, improve public health, and help reduce GHG emissions.

Another recurring recommendation was to have more mixed-use neighbourhoods, whether in terms of social class or building function. Such mixed use goes hand-in-hand with densification of the built environment as a means of curtailing urban sprawl and its disadvantages, which include automobile dependency, encroachment on farmland and natural areas, and reduced attractiveness of city centres. The fact is, the opposite is the norm wherever we met with citizens: huge retail projects and residential-only neighbourhoods continue to be built in peri-urban areas.

19. See [https://bit.ly/2YIq9qC]
20. The Alliance Ariane declaration may be viewed at: [http://www.ariane.quebec/declaration].

With regard to densifying projects, many worry about their outsized dimensions compared with the surrounding landscape and the human scale. This is true of many tall buildings being planned, especially Le Phare, in Québec City. There thus appears to be an urgent need to reach consensus on what type of densification is best suited to Quebecers, and how best to adjust it to specific neighbourhoods.

During the OAQ's consultations, multiple participants lamented the fact that land-use planning in Québec mostly favours the interests of real estate promoters. To ensure that it better reflects the needs of the communities concerned, participants agreed to demand adoption of a global, long-term vision at the provincial, regional and municipal levels, and for that vision to be accompanied by sufficient means, especially as concerns cities. The Alliance ARIANE intends to develop the outline of such a vision in the wake of the forum *Savoir où on s'en va – Pour une politique nationale de l'aménagement du territoire et de l'urbanisme*, held on February 20, 2018.

Short-term, we believe that public authorities could systematically locate facilities in already built-up areas with the required infrastructures, rather than build on lands outlying cities (this would include buildings such as liquor-commission branches, healthcare facilities, and schools).

2. Public commissions as an exemplary practice

Architecture contracts cannot be awarded the way routine supply contracts are, because they have a cultural dimension and deliver custom-tailored solutions. In other words, architectural quality cannot rest on the shoulders of architects alone. Clients, too, must be driven by the desire to bequeath a value-added legacy to users and to society.

The OAQ acknowledges that efforts have been made over the years to enhance the architectural quality of public projects. Reliance on architecture competitions for any project valued in excess of $5 million and funded by the Ministry of Culture and Communications is one such initiative.

The OAQ also hails the willingness shown recently by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to produce higher-quality buildings as one means of encouraging academic achievement. Aspects such as natural lighting, greening, acoustic comfort, sense of shared identity, universal design, and energy efficiency can now be considered as part of school design. Use of the inclusive design process is also being promoted.

We must also highlight the continual progress of the SQI with regard to architectural quality. Some sixty architects are employed there, working on such aspects as development and updating of technical requirements for every building type, and developing construction programs that ensure the quality of individual projects. The organization is also planning mechanisms designed to ensure quality monitoring right from the design stage. It has also adopted an integrated design process for all of its major projects, includes worksite surveillance in all contracts it awards to architects, and is working toward systematically requiring BIM. The SQI is also open to architecture competitions, though it faces a variety of regulatory and political hurdles that prevent it from committing fully to that path.

Also worthy of mention are the efforts of the Société des établissements de plein air du Québec (Sépaq, the provincial parks and wildlife agency), which in recent years has implemented many projects that show concern for sustainable development, integration with the landscape, and wellness of occupants.

The concern for architectural quality shown by these organizations should be imparted to all contracting authorities in the public sector and those funded by government. In addition, regulations governing the awarding of public contracts in architecture should address quality in a more targeted manner.

Processes focused on quality

The issue of the processes surrounding public architecture projects emerged in the 13 cities that the OAQ visited. The methods of project execution greatly influence the quality of the final result. Following are some elements to consider.

Expertise of in-house architects

To take greater account of architectural quality, participants suggested, public contracting authorities should always include architects on their teams, or at least have access to an architect's expertise through a shared service. Often, this is not the case, for example in municipalities. From the earliest planning stages and throughout project implementation, these consulting architects could help set optimum conditions for quality, be it in matters of budgeting, timelines, programs, choice of proponents, or interaction with stakeholders.

Broadened access to public commissions

In public commissions, the very stringent requirements imposed on professional proponents generally limit qualification for tenders to a select few firms. As a result, the same group of firms shares the market, to the detriment of emerging firms and of innovation. Instead, government should adopt mechanisms that would allow a greater diversity of qualifying firms. This can be achieved through anonymous competitions (even if it means reserving them for smaller projects) or selecting professionals according to the vision of a project. Apprehensions about a smaller firm's ability to successfully complete a project can be eased by twinning that firm with a more established one. Other public contracting authorities, for example the governments of Flanders and the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles and, closer to home, the City of Edmonton, have acknowledged the importance of broadening access to public commissions not only as a means of ensuring architectural quality, but also to foster healthy competition within the industry.

Doing away with the "lowest bidder" rule

One consensus that emerged immediately among participants in our consultation activities was that the "lowest bidder" rule in municipal construction contracting is an obstacle to architectural quality, because it forces architects to devote less time to design and to seeking optimum solutions. The price criterion need not be abandoned in tendering, but it should no longer be the decisive criterion; this would allow at least as much weight to be given to those concerning the quality of the proposal. Furthermore, participants suggested, the price criterion should target the median bid, not the lowest one. The OAQ welcomes the new rules governing awardance of municipal professional services contracts, under which there is no longer any obligation to choose the lowest bidder. The option to do so still exists, however, and it is to be hoped that municipalities will receive the necessary support and guidance to place greater emphasis on quality.

Moreover, the "lowest bidder" rule still prevails when it comes to choosing building contractors, both at the municipal and provincial levels. During our consultations, we heard multiple testimonials critical of this practice. By choosing the least expensive option, clients are exposed to the risk of less careful execution and of dealing with "extras" demanded by contractors who (knowingly or not) underestimated the initial construction cost.

Integrated design process

The integrated design process, which calls on the skills of a multidisciplinary team, was often cited as the solution par excellence for enhancing project quality. This is in line with the opinion of many experts, including those at the Université Laval Centre de formation en développement durable (sustainable development training centre). In this process, professionals from various disciplines, building managers and clients remain in constant communication throughout the design phase, and the pooling of their perspectives promotes better solutions while at the same time anticipating problems. Sometimes, citizens and/or users are asked to take part. The integrated design process, already in use fairly often for public commissions, including at the SQI, should always be considered by contracting authorities.

Independence of design teams

When a project is executed in public-private partnership (PPP), the OAQ always recommends that the design team be independent of the consortium responsible for construction, financing and maintenance. To promote best practices and properly account for project needs and complexity, notably from the perspective of users, design professionals must work directly with the client. This desired independence of designers from contractors and financing bodies also applies to so-called turnkey projects.

Worksite surveillance

Participants during the OAQ's consultations also suggested that surveillance of worksites by professionals be systematically adopted, both to ensure contractors are complying with the plans and to enable design of high-quality replacement solutions in the event that problems crop up on the site.

Post-build evaluations

Participants also asked that projects always be subject to post-build evaluations, to document what is working properly as well as what has gone wrong in new buildings, in the interest of information sharing and continuous improvement.

The importance of architecture competitions

Many participants insisted on the need to have more architecture competitions, for buildings of all types. Some stakeholders, however, tempered their support for this idea, for the reason that the competition process leads to additional deadlines and costs – a perception shared by many contracting authorities.

The OAQ reminds the reader that a wide variety of competition formats exists, some of which are very simple to implement (for example, single-stage anonymous competitions). In addition, the OAQ needs only two weeks to approve a set of competition rules and regulations – a timeframe that has little impact on a project, which generally extends over several months. It is true that a competition must also be approved by the contracting authority. Greater alignment of the OAQ rules with those of the various ministries would certainly reduce these wait times. A further important consideration is that at the close of the competition, the project is no longer at a blank-slate stage: approximately 15% to 20% of the design work will already have been completed.

As for the additional cost involved, it is forecastable, and represents only 1.5% to 2.5% of the construction budget (depending on the scale of the project), which is a very small price to pay for the expected superior quality.

Lastly, it is useful to list the benefits of the competition format[21]:

- It affords a "big-picture" view of the functional, formal and expressive potential of the architectural project on the chosen site;

- It guarantees the transparency and thoroughness of the process of selecting professionals based on their submitted concept;

- It gives all architects an equal opportunity to put forward their ideas;

- It provides the contracting authority with greater visibility, reach and influence;

- It involves multiple stakeholders in the planning stage of the project and paves the way for the project's acceptance in the community;

- It generates added value for the eventual project.

With that in mind, the OAQ intends to continue dialogue with the government so that all parties can agree on ways of implementing a simplified and harmonized framework for competitions.

3. A heritage vision

Architecture is also heritage, contributing to a region's cultural richness. The news media regularly feature stories on the uncertain fate of a building of heritage interest that has deteriorated after having gone unused and been vacated. Demolition is then envisioned, either because the deterioration is too advanced, or the property owner lacks the means to have the necessary repairs done. An often emotional public debate ensues, pitting heritage experts against more pragmatic stakeholders. The Ministry of Culture and Communications or the municipality then intercedes, or does not, depending on the specific case. That such controversies occur so frequently speaks to the need for government to play an exemplary role and convey a clearer vision of heritage, both to the parties concerned and to the general public.

The *Cultural Heritage Act* comprises provisions such as classification, which are useful but do not always guarantee the preservation of the properties involved. One example is the Domaine de L'Estérel shopping centre in the Laurentians, which has deteriorated to a worrisome degree.

Taking responsibility collectively

Participants in our consultation activities told us that Québec must encourage creation of tools to assist decision making in regard to heritage, whether by municipalities, property owners or citizens. Public-awareness activities, publication of guides to good practice for municipalities, creation of expert committees, and citizen consultation were all suggested. Distribution of heritage directories in channels and formats accessible to the public was another solution mentioned. In addition, whenever heritage properties are vacated, new purposes should systematically be sought for them, and in the meantime, they should be temporarily occupied to prevent deterioration.

21.   Ordre des architectes du Québec, *Règles d'approbation des concours d'architecture*. [Online], [http://bit.ly/2FGUUqe].

Oversight of property owners

Observers also want to see better oversight of owners of heritage buildings, to be achieved through more stringent regulations on architectural elements to be preserved after renovations or transformations. Such regulations should also be combined with incentives such as subsidies or tax credits, offered through a provincial-level maintenance program. Building owners could also be offered professional services to assist in conservation of their property. Conditions must be created so that ultimately, it is more beneficial for them to preserve a heritage building rather than let it deteriorate or demolish it.

Recognizing artisans

Restoring the heritage characteristics of buildings requires the expert knowledge of specialized artisans: wood sculptors, stonemasons, metalsmiths, etc. According to the Conseil des métiers d'art, however, there are barely a hundred such experts in Québec, and these trades are not taught.[22] Safeguarding our built heritage necessarily requires training new generations of these artisans, and recognizing these trades.

Heritage is evolving

Our review of architecture policies abroad also shows that heritage must be considered as evolutive. There is no point in "freezing it in time" so that it corresponds in every respect to its original appearance and purpose. On the contrary, it must be possible to transform and upgrade a heritage building such that it meets current needs and remains a cultural and geographic touchpoint, while evading the trap of façadism. Such adaptability is seen as a condition for longevity.

In that light, heritage must be considered an essential component of sustainable development. Our many vacant churches, most of them already located in densified areas, are excellent candidates for repurposing. Ideas competitions or architecture competitions and citizen input could elicit new uses for these buildings. There are many inspiring examples already, among them the Maison de la littérature in Québec City, which won the OAQ Grand prix d'excellence in 2017. The idea is to allow room for imagination.

Lastly, participants said that Québec would do well to adopt a shared definition of heritage and ensure its widespread dissemination. That definition should encompass structures of all scales, from all eras – including the most recent ones. Modern heritage properties, many of which are showing signs of ageing, would benefit particularly from greater attention.

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22. "Métiers d'art, le souci du détail," *Esquisses*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Winter 2014–2015), p. 28–47.

4. Awareness

Building shared pride

The public conversations tour highlighted people's desire for architecture that would reflect Québec identity, through use of local, noble and sustainable materials as well as smart adaptation to our Nordic climate. Many participants pointed to the issue of harmonious integration of buildings with their surroundings, whether through coherent use of materials, respect for the proportions of the existing built environment, or outdoor spatial design that fits properly with the surrounding public spaces or landscape.

But many also noted that Québec has fallen short of this ideal, specifically decrying the excessive repetition of the same house designs, "which create landscapes of disconcerting monotony" within neighbourhoods or from one city or town to another. This prompted several participants to demand that all residential construction projects, including single-family homes, be subject to the Québec *Architects Act*. One might well ask, however, whether such a provision would be enough: monotony is also seen in buildings already subject to the legislation, such as the retail complexes located on the peripheries of cities.

Beyond the legislative aspect, raising the awareness of members of the public – and consequently of clients – with regard to the added value of quality architecture is crucial to enhancing the quality of the built environment. After all, today's building designs will be the heritage architecture of tomorrow.

Raising public awareness

Raising citizens' awareness of the importance of a quality built environment is an essential component of each of the architecture policies we studied. It is also what participants in our consultation activities want: demand for architectural quality hinges on it. More specifically, attendees at our forum were unanimous in their insistence that young people must be made aware.

Raising awareness of architectural quality can take many forms, depending on the target audience. In France, the national architecture strategy includes three national architecture days, during which people in every region of the country are invited to take part in events ranging from guided tours to talks, screenings and workshops of all kinds. In Denmark, the national architecture policy provides for funding of architecture-related content designed for digital platforms including geolocation apps, social media and virtual tours.

In both countries, as well as in Ireland, Finland,[23] the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles and Germany,[24] educational activities for primary and secondary school students are part of the architecture policy. Such activities can be integrated into existing school curricula, for example when teaching subjects such as history, geography, sustainable development, social inclusion, and democracy. They can also take the form of one-time workshops, e.g., co-creation activities related to neighbourhood projects that affect students.

23. See [http://bit.ly/2IoADDy].
24. From the Baukultur Report 2014–15. [Online], [http://bit.ly/2Ipn4nh].

Raising policymaker awareness

Awareness-raising must also target the public-contracting and regulatory authorities, especially municipal, which govern private promoters' operations. At our Forum pour une politique québécoise de l'architecture, participants emphasized the importance of providing training on existing heritage and planning legislation, organizing guided tours, pooling experience, and harnessing digital media to build awareness of examples of quality architecture to be emulated.

In Ireland, among other countries, the government publishes good-practice guides for municipalities, on such topics as revitalization of historic city centres, spatial design of retail areas, and protection of architectural heritage. The Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles architecture office provides support and guidance to its public contracting authorities to help ensure that architectural quality is considered as part of design processes. Francophone Belgium has also introduced the *Prix de la maîtrise d'ouvrage publique*, an award that recognizes and publicizes public-contracting processes leading to architectural quality. In Denmark, the central government encourages cities to adopt their own architecture policies consistent with the national policy. So far, more than a third (36 out of 98 municipalities) have done so, thanks in part to the advisory resources of the Akademisk Arkitektforening (Danish Association of Architects).[25]

Québec could easily adopt similar approaches, for example by consolidating and encouraging provision of awareness activities focusing on Québec architecture, using the *Journées de la culture* (Culture Days) as a model.

One thing is for certain: the more exemplary buildings and developments there are in Québec, the easier it will be to showcase them as part of initiatives promoting public awareness of architectural quality.

5. Citizen input

Participants in our consultation activities stressed that it is important to inform citizens of all backgrounds that they have the power to influence decisions affecting their built environment, and especially, to provide mechanisms for the expression and consideration of citizens' viewpoints. Denmark's architecture policy does exactly this, creating a discussion framework that allows citizens to speak out about their built environment and its attendant challenges.

Québec has passed the *Act mainly to recognize that municipalities are local governments and to increase their autonomy and powers*. This legislation nevertheless raises concerns because it allows cities and towns to circumvent the obligation to hold a referendum on a regulatory amendment, as long as they adopt a public information and consultation policy. The guidelines for this new provision are not yet known, and it is debatable whether all municipalities have the necessary resources to implement public consultation processes that comply with best practices. It also remains to be seen to what extent it will be possible to evaluate such processes.

It goes without saying that any citizen participation process must be begun well in advance of a project's start date, such that people's points of view can be taken into account during the design phase. As has been proven time and time again, a "packaged" project presented to the public is likely to encounter resistance.

25.   See [http://bit.ly/2IqrQ3N].

In addition to consultation sessions, citizen input can take many forms, from co-creation charrettes to an integrated design process to online participation and more. Ethnographic methods can even be employed when it comes to ascertaining the needs and aspirations of the various groups making up a community.[26]

For these reasons, we consider it essential that the above-mentioned provision on citizen participation in the new legislation be accompanied by measures based on generally accepted practices as well as support and guidance structures for municipal lawmakers and professionals: training activities, documentation, and exchanges of experiences with cities or towns of comparable size.

This is a decisive issue, because consideration of citizen opinion is now key to the social acceptability of any project. The substantial adaptation implied by neighbourhood densification and energy transition, among other things, demand responses that address citizens' concerns, and this is only possible through implementation of a thorough, well-orchestrated consultation process.

6. Universal design

In every city that the OAQ visited on its tour, people living with functional limitations attended the meetings to remind us of the importance of ensuring that public spaces and institutions as well as residential buildings are accessible by everyone. As mentioned earlier, this aspect is frequently neglected, because Québec's regulations are obsolete and incomplete. The Building Code, for example, includes standards for manual wheelchairs only, whereas power wheelchairs are increasingly in use. Many retailers are not required to conform to barrier-free design standards, preventing people with reduced mobility from shopping in their establishments. A step was recently taken in the right direction with the February 2018 announcement of a regulation requiring builders to include dwellings meeting a minimum accessibility threshold in residential buildings with more than two storeys and more than eight units. Given the ageing population, this dimension must be systematically considered in regulations, and designers should be encouraged to exceed standards to accommodate all types of limitations.

26. Bruno Demers, "Ethnographie et architecture – De la parole au geste," *Esquisses*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Winter 2016–2017), p. 48.

7. Recognizing the contributions of the discipline of architecture

An integrative discipline

In advocating for adoption of a Québec policy on architecture, the OAQ wants to see architectural quality considered in all government actions with regard to the built environment. Architectural quality essentially corresponds to fulfillment of three criteria: a building must be functional, long-lasting, and aesthetically pleasing. Because every architectural undertaking is unique – as to location, function, scale, and users – there is no formula or standard for achieving quality. Quality always results from a creative process that aims to meet the specific needs of a community while also taking into account a wide variety of issues and considerations. To implement a truly effective policy, it is important to properly understand that process.

A multidimensional field

Architecture has multiple, symbiotic dimensions that influence the quality of the final results. The role of the architect is to put forward a global vision that considers all of these dimensions and ensure it is respected through to project completion.

> • The **functional dimension** includes, for example, enhancing the productivity of employees in a work space, or the achievement of students in a school. It also comprises the search for optimum lighting, acoustic and temperature conditions for occupants. And it involves creating spaces that will be adaptable to future uses, while ensuring they are safe for users.

> • The **technical dimension** is ever-changing: consider, for example, advances in prefabricated materials and energy efficiency. The goal is to realize time, financial and quality gains by selecting and incorporating the systems and materials that perform best and are best suited to the context, which sometimes requires innovation.

> • The **planning dimension** demands that the project benefit the city or neighbourhood where it is located, meeting the densification objectives and guaranteeing a user-friendly living environment, for example by paying particular attention to the landscape and the activities that will be possible nearby. Ensuring harmony with the built or natural environment is here a concern, as is lending the project a specific character that will enrich its surroundings.

> • The **social dimension** considers the diversity of users, in terms of cultural background, age, socioeconomic profile as well as physical and cognitive abilities, among other things. It involves, for example, designing the spaces for meeting as well as seclusion that are necessary for social life, while fostering a sense of safety and security. Universal design is one aspect of the social dimension.

> • The **cultural dimension** comprises aspects such as lifestyle, local construction techniques, heritage protection, a community's sense of shared identity, and distinct character. The goal is to provide the community with reference points enabling people to situate themselves with respect to other times and places, and to help enhance the profile of the project locally, regionally, and even nationally or internationally. This dimension gives meaning to the project and confers value that extends far beyond material considerations.

• The **environmental dimension** entails minimizing the impact of construction on ecological equilibrium and the health of living things. The way a building occupies its location, the use of water, energy and territorial resources, and respect for the surrounding landscape are considered. The building life cycle, extending from production of the materials to decommissioning, is also considered, as is the possibility of reusing existing elements.

• The **regulatory dimension** refers to the various laws, regulations and codes that all parties involved in construction must be familiar with and obey.

• The **economic dimension** is dependent on the means and ambitions of the contracting authorities and on regulations. The architect considers this dimension in proposing the best possible choices with regard to construction, usage and maintenance costs, as well as current and future needs.

• The **political dimension** has an impact on the scale, function and appearance of projects, because of the influence wielded by lawmakers, civil servants, promoters, citizens, and certain interest groups. Part of the architect's role is to draw attention to solutions that represent added value for the client, users and the wider community.

CONCLUSION

In view of the colossal challenges that await us – climate change, the ageing population, social inclusion, decaying infrastructure – Québec will not be able to guarantee the quality of its built environment by taking a piecemeal approach to projects, involving professionals from the various disciplines involved in isolation, or seeking only short-term economic benefits. To begin the transformations that are required from a perspective of long-term collective success, we must have a shared vision and an action plan that consider complex realities and command multidisciplinary collaboration: in short, we must work to implement a Québec policy on architecture.

We can draw inspiration from other countries and regions that have adopted such policies, which are founded on the cultural, economic and social significance of the built environment and affirm that architectural quality is in the public interest. They are centred on key principles: sustainability, public commissions as an exemplary practice, heritage, awareness, citizen input, universal design, and the contributions of the discipline of architecture.

During 2017, the OAQ addressed these topics at public-consultation events that attracted some 800 people. That process showed that people have an intense desire to make our lands and living environments more friendly and welcoming, more attractive, more resilient, and more inclusive. Among other things, participants called for built environments on a human scale that include meeting places, employ universal design, celebrate local cultural identity, and are in harmony with their surrounding landscapes. Architects along with other design and building professionals possess the necessary skills to fulfill those aspirations; all they require is a framework conducive to action.

The OAQ therefore invites the Government of Québec to build on the recommendations stated on the following page to begin work to develop a policy on architecture and, to that end, offers its full collaboration. Would it not be extraordinary for Québec to position itself as a leader in architectural quality in North America?

RECOMMENDATIONS

■ **Create a working group tasked with developing a Québec policy on architecture and a related action plan, based on the following road map**:

> • Define the architectural quality to which Québec should aspire
>
> • Document existing exemplary practices in Québec so as to publicize them and bring them into widespread use
>
> • Document exemplary practices abroad and evaluate the advisability of implementing them in Québec
>
> • Examine regulatory obstacles to architectural quality in public commissions and recommend avenues for removing them
>
> • Document the inconsistencies across government departments that hinder architectural quality and recommend solutions for smoothing them
>
> • Define the terms of reference of the organization that will provide support to and advise the government, crown corporations, municipalities, and public-sector organizations on architectural quality
>
> • In carrying out that process, consider the following key principles:
>
> > – Sustainable development (building and land-use planning)
> >
> > – Public commissions as an exemplary practice
> >
> > – A heritage vision
> >
> > – Awareness
> >
> > – Citizen input
> >
> > – Universal design
> >
> > – Recognizing the contributions of the discipline of architecture

Concurrently:

■ **Consolidate and promote Québec architecture awareness activities using the *Journées de la culture* model**

■ **Communicate a clear vision of heritage to municipalities, property owners and the public, and provide tools for framing decision making in heritage matters**

■ **Publicize examples of successful universal design encompassing functional, sustainability and aesthetic considerations**

■ **Provide support and guidance to municipalities in defining contract-awardance policies that will foster architectural quality**

■ **Provide support and guidance to municipalities in developing public consultation processes**

■ **Urge municipalities to adopt their own architecture policies**

APPENDIX I

**Overview of the interdepartmental distribution of responsibility
for the various aspects of the built environment in Québec**

MINISTRY RESPONSIBLE	LEGISLATION/POLICY	SUBORDINATE ORGANIZATIONS	ASPECTS OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT CONCERNED
Treasury Board	• *Act respecting contracting by public bodies*	Société québécoise des infrastructures Autorité des marchés publics (currently being constituted)	• Construction, management and operation of government real estate inventory (e.g., ministries' offices, courthouses, prisons, all public projects worth in excess of $50 M) • Public contracts oversight
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Land Occupancy	• *Act respecting land use planning and development* • *Cities and towns act (supervision of municipal contracts)* • *Act to increase the autonomy and powers of Ville de Montréal, the metropolis of Québec* • *Act to grant Ville de Québec national capital status and increase its autonomy and powers* • *Act mainly to recognize that municipalities are local governments and to increase their autonomy and powers*		• Funding programs for municipal infrastructure rehabilitation and construction (e.g., libraries, community centres, arenas) • Supervision of certain architecture competitions • Government policy directions for land-use planning

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	• *Act respecting the preservation of agricultural land and agricultural activities*	Commission de protection du territoire agricole du Québec	• Authorization for use of agricultural land for purposes other than farming
Ministry of Culture and Communications	• *Cultural Heritage Act* • Cultural Policy	Conseil du patrimoine culturel du Québec	• Protection of heritage buildings and sites • Cultural buildings (e.g., museums) • Promotion and supervision of certain architecture competitions
Ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment, and the Fight Against Climate Change	• *Sustainable Development Act*		• Greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets • Environmental impact assessment • Environmental permits for work in wetlands areas
Ministry of Economy, Science and Innovation			• Funding for projects related to the design disciplines • Support and guidance to the construction industry on digital transition
Ministry of Education and Higher Education			• Construction, renovation, expansion and maintenance of educational institutions and sports facilities

Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources	• Energy Policy	Transition énergétique Québec	• Energy transition management • Promotion, pilot projects and funding programs for building energy efficiency
Ministry of Justice	• *Architects Act* • *Engineers Act*	Office des professions du Québec	• Right to use professional designation, mandatory threshold for retaining services of an architect
Ministry of Consumer Protection and Housing		Régie du bâtiment du Québec	• Construction Code • Supervision of construction (e.g., contractor permits)
		Garantie de construction résidentielle	• Warranty program for new residential buildings
		Société d'habitation du Québec	• Social housing
Ministry of Health and Social Services			• Construction, renovation, expansion and maintenance of health-care facilities • Supervision of seniors' homes
		Office des personnes handicapées du Québec	• Adaptive housing • Rules governing building accessibility (in coordination with the Régie du bâtiment)

Ministry of Public Security			• Fire safety • Natural disaster and industrial accident protection and prevention program
Ministry of Transport	• Sustainable Mobility Policy		• Construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of provincial-jurisdiction roads, structures (e.g., bridges, tunnels) and airports • Municipal road network funding programs • Public transit development funding program
Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Solidarity		Commission de la construction du Québec	• Supervision of construction industry trades

APPENDIX II
**Support received for the Québec
architecture policy initiative**
(as of March 1, 2018)

MUNICIPALITY	POPULATION[1]
Beaconsfield	19,957
Bois-des-Filion	9,776
Boucherville	42,264
Bromont	9,095
Candiac	20,987
Carignan	9,294
Chibougamau	7,610
Côte-Saint-Luc	34,066
Dorval	19,579
Gatineau	281,781
Hampstead	7,348
Laval	430,077
Léry	2,438
Lévis	145,454
Longueuil	246,152
Mirabel	50,575
Montréal (Boroughs: Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Anjou, Côte-des-Neiges–Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Lachine, LaSalle, L'Île-Bizard–Sainte-Geneviève, Plateau-Mont-Royal, Sud-Ouest, Montréal-Nord, Outremont, Rivière-des- Prairies–Pointe-aux-Trembles, Rosemont–La Petite-Patrie, Saint-Laurent)	1,765,616
Mont-Royal	21,198
Mont-Saint-Hilaire	18,810
Plessisville	6,594
Québec City	545,485
Repentigny	84,156
Rimouski	49,197
Rivière-du-Loup	19,767

MUNICIPALITY	POPULATION[1]
Saguenay	145,365
Saint-Basile-Le-Grand	16,944
Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville	27,155
Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue	4,975
Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines	15,054
Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu	95,915
Saint-Lambert	22,490
Saint-Philippe	6,495
Sherbrooke	166,633
Terrebonne	113,575
Varennes	21,620
Vaudreuil-Dorion	38,021
Vercheres	5,782
TOTAL POPULATION	4,527,300

1. *Population des municipalités du Québec*, 2017 decree

Other municipal bodies

Communauté métropolitaine de Québec

MRC de Papineau

MRC du Fjord-du-Saguenay

Other organizations

Culture Lanaudière

Commission scolaire de Jonquière

Commission scolaire de Laval

Commission scolaire de Montréal

Commission scolaire des Affluents

Fédération des commissions scolaires du Québec

Fédération Histoire Québec

Royal Architectural Institute of Canada

Société Logique

Université de Montréal School of Architecture

APPENDIX III

Declaration in Favour of a Québec Policy on Architecture

Architecture is all around us.
It constitutes our built environment: our homes, our schools, our workplaces and all of the public spaces we visit and use.

Architecture matters to us all.
It influences our habits, our travels, our health, our economy, our social connections, our impact on our environment. It marks our natural and urban landscapes for decades – sometimes centuries. Testifying to our values and ambitions as a society, it is an essential component of our cultural identity. It is a heritage handed down to us, and that we bequeath to future generations. It helps shape the face that we show the rest of the world.

Architectural quality is in the public interest.
Decisions about architecture projects must be inspired by a global vision. They must be made from a perspective of sustainable development, with input from citizens and according to ethical, transparent processes.

Architectural quality means balance.
It is the outcome of a creative approach that reconciles the needs of users with sustainability and aesthetic appeal, all while providing added value to the community. To be successful, that approach must be understood and promoted by all stakeholders.

Consequently, we ask that the Government of Québec adopt a policy on architecture, accompanied by an action plan:
• To provide Québec with a global, shared vision of architecture;
• To ensure that the government applies exemplary practices that foster architectural quality;
• To raise awareness among Quebecers, especially young people, of the importance of architectural quality;
• To put citizens at the centre of thinking about architecture and planning projects;
• To position our heritage as a cultural pillar of sustainable development;
• To generate economic benefits via remarkable achievements, on all scales and in every region;
• To support municipalities that wish to enhance architectural quality on their territory;
• To find innovative solutions to future challenges such as climate change, the ageing population and social inclusion; and
• To harmonize legislation and regulations as well as the actions of the various ministries and organizations with a stake in architecture.

The time has come for us to focus, together, on architecture that contributes to our wellness, to respect for the environment, and to the fulfillment of our aspirations.

The names of persons who have signed the declaration are posted at oaq.com/declaration.