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Aesthetics and Architectural Education

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Abstract

Architectural aesthetic problems such as displeasing forms, shapes, and styles which create disordered environments have impacts on city dwellers visually, mentally and psychologically for centuries. The layout of buildings with monotonous repetition, lacking in characteristic urban fabric and harmony are accepted as the signs of poor aesthetic understanding (Gabr, 2009). When the architectural education is discussed, considering all the concerns about the problem of aesthetics in cities, the adaptation of study of aesthetics in architectural education curriculum seems inevitable. In this paper, the method developed for the aesthetics course in architectural education curriculum of The Department of Architecture in Near East University will be discussed.

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1. Introduction

Architectural problems such as displeasing forms, shapes, and styles which are creating disordered environments have had their impact on the city dwellers visually, mentally and psychologically for centuries. The layout of buildings with monotonous repetition, lacking in characteristic urban fabric and harmony are accepted as the signs of poor aesthetic understanding.

As being aware of such environmental problems, aesthetics introduces some essential questions such as: What are the criteria of “visual quality” in cities and who decides on these criteria? In this stage some of the factors should be considered as; governmental authorities responsible of these issues, regulations, social and cultural level of the society, efficient technological/industrial support, etc. Among these factors, another fundamental one it is the professional education and training which will give the ability of responding to visual quality as far as function and construction to architects. Despite all sorts of legal restrictions and other negative factors a well educated architect can create functional and aesthetic living environments.

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As aesthetics is important for the physiologically and psychologically well being of humans, the importance of finding ways to make the environment “livable” and more pleasing through aesthetic approaches should be understood by the architects and designers. The understanding of aesthetics also assists them to discover these ways as considerable factors contributing to the acceptable standard of living for people and how to solve the problems to make the visually pleasing environments (Gabr, 2009).

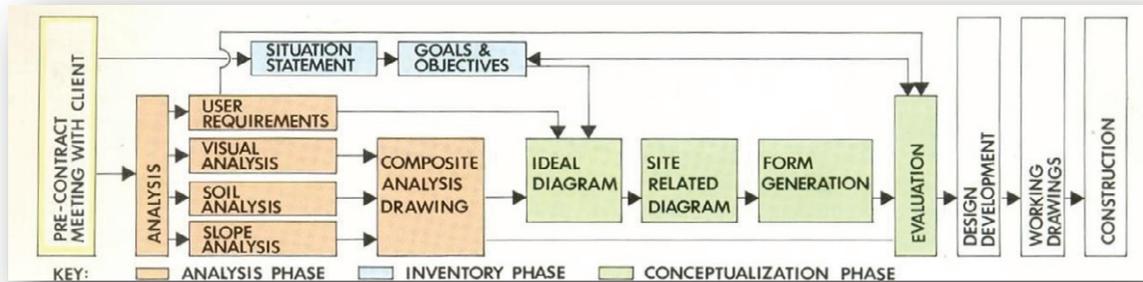


Figure 1. The architectural design process (Hepler, Wallach, 1987)

Architecture is a design process as shown in detail in figure 1. It involves programming, designing and constructing phases in general and brings the functional components together for creating a built environment that is functionally efficient, economically viable and aesthetically pleasing. In architectural schools these are considered as main evaluation criteria for architectural design education.

According to UNESCO/UIA Charter for Architectural education, the point “An ability to create architectural designs that satisfy both aesthetic and technical requirements” is included among the objectives of education. The Charter indicates that the architectural education should also involve the acquisition of the following capabilities among the others (UNESCO/UIA, 2004):

- Ability to act with knowledge of the fine arts as an influence on the quality of architectural design.
- Awareness of the links between architecture and other creative disciplines.

Architects create buildings and buildings form cities. At the same time, the designer is in the position of a decision-maker about the future of that environment (See figure 2.) When the architectural education is discussed, considering all the concerns about the problem of aesthetics in cities, the adaptation of study of aesthetics in architectural education curriculum seems inevitable. The reason for including aesthetics course in the architectural curriculum is to awaken the aesthetic senses of architectural students and make them be aware of aesthetic problems. In this course, students also understand how to deal with these aesthetic problems and create a desirable mental image for the built environment. Development of aesthetic senses which is fundamental for all art forms will equip the students to pursue any art form besides architecture depending on their personal interests.

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