

Workbook

English for Architects and Interior Designers

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IN THE MIND OF THE ARCHITECT: SEAN GODSELL

The following is an excerpt from "In the Mind of the Architect" (television series)

A slide show and the transcript reprinted below can be found at the following website:
<http://www.abc.net.au/arts/architecture/default.htm>



Sean Godsell: Well Victorian houses are dark. They are miserable places. It just doesn't work. It's cold. It's dark. It's dank. It relies on devices and techniques that are 100 years old. Why reproduce it?

Narrator: Architects have the power, if we trust them, to transform our lives. Buildings control the way we think and behave. So how do you decide what looks and feels right in a building, and do architects have to agree with you? Not in the houses they design for themselves.

Sean Godsell: Because this building forces one to confront oneself, then if you don't really feel good about yourself, you probably don't like the building. There is nowhere to hide in that sense.

Anne-Marie Godsell: Living here is about accepting the fact that you are in a very public domain. It's accepting the fact that your husband has a profession and the profession involves experimenting in the private domain. I have heard it referred to as a fish bowl and I remember one of the first nights we stayed in here, I became incredibly aware of the fact that there were no blinds in the front bedroom and that I'd have to change, get into the cupboard and change, which I did and after a short space of time I got very used to changing in the cupboard.

Sean Godsell: There was the day when I was working out on the nature strip and a man, his wife and his adult daughter were walking their dog and they walked past me and they said, "good morning", and I said: "Good morning" and they said... the fellow said: "So how is it up in Auschwitz today?" We've had people in the middle of the night, groups of people standing out in the street, yelling out: "let's feed the animals up in the zoo".

Anne-Marie Godsell: I'm used to the experimentation, I've become impervious to things that most people would find quite affronting and probably the most affronting thing to most people would be the lack of perceived privacy, but I don't find it at all confrontational. I find it a very comforting, nurturing home.

Sean Godsell: The building in terms of the plan is a divided plan, it's an Asian planning technique. It's devoid of corridor space. Its one space divided and one space that can be divided in a variety of permutations and combinations.

It's a symbolic gesture as well as a pragmatic one, but it forces a socialisation that we need to deal

with as a society in Australia. It forces tolerance within the house. And so in this building, bedrooms are inter-connected as they would be in a traditional Japanese house forcing a respect for privacy.



Why not in the 21st century have glass if you can get glass? Why not have light if you can get light and why not have air if you can get it? Why do they want to stop progress? Why are they so nervous? I don't know. As a generation of architects as a result of that, there are fewer fighters amongst us.

Vocabulary

miserable—

dank—

devices—

reproduce—

trust—

transform—

behave—

forces—

confront—

“in that sense”—

public—

domain—

private—

referred—

incredibly—

aware—

cupboard—

experimentation—

impervious—

affronting—

lack—

perceived—

comforting—

nurturing—

divided—

devoid—

permutations—

combinations—

symbolic—

gesture—

pragmatic—

socialisation (socialization)—

tolerance—

inter-connected—

respect—

progress—

nervous—

generation—

IN THE MIND OF THE ARCHITECT: SEAN GODSELL Worksheet

Create 10 sentences using any 10 new vocabulary words from this chapter:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

THE PERFECT HOME

Alain de Botton on Architecture



Alain talks about the role architecture plays in our everyday lives and how buildings can affect our moods and general well-being...

Can beautiful houses make us happy?

Beauty has a huge role to play in altering our mood. When we call a chair or a house beautiful, really what we're saying is that we like the way of life it's suggesting to us. It has an attitude we're attracted to: if it was magically turned into a person, we'd like who it was. It would be convenient if we could remain in much the same mood wherever we happened to be, in a cheap motel or a palace (think of how much money we'd save on redecorating our houses), but unfortunately we're highly vulnerable to the coded messages that emanate from our surroundings. This helps to explain our passionate feelings towards matters of architecture and home decoration: these things help to decide who we are.

Of course, architecture can't on its own always make us into contented people. Witness the dissatisfactions that can unfold even in idyllic surroundings. One might say that architecture suggests a mood to us, which we may be too internally troubled to be able to take up. Its effectiveness could be compared to the weather: a fine day can substantially change our state of mind – and people may be willing to make great sacrifices to be nearer a sunny climate.



Then again, under the weight of sufficient problems (romantic or professional confusions, for example), no amount of blue sky, and not even the greatest building, will be able to make us smile. Hence the difficulty of trying raise architecture into a political priority: it has none of the unambiguous advantages of clean drinking water or a safe food supply. And yet it remains vital.

Why are we drawn to old-fashioned buildings? What it is about modern architecture that people don't like?

People's taste tells us a lot about what's missing from their lives. People who decorate their homes with dolls and teddies are often escaping from something overly harsh and cruel in their lives, while those whose houses are white and completely empty are using their decorative scheme to keep at bay feelings of chaos and disorder. So why do so many people of us in the UK love old-fashioned things? This isn't a sign that we're actually rural, backward looking people.

Rather we're nostalgic for a rural past, precisely because we're now so far from having rural, rustic lives. We want to get away from what we feel we already have enough of: technology, concrete and high-tech. Many people hate modern architecture precisely because it doesn't help them to rebalance

their psyches. It seems to offer them more of what they have had too much of as it is.



Vocabulary

role—

affect—

mood—

huge—

altering—

suggesting—

attitude—

attracted—

convenient—

remain—

cheap—

redecorate—

unfortunately—

vulnerable—

coded—

emanate—

passionate—

matters—

contented—

dissatisfactions—

unfold—

idyllic—

surroundings—

internally—

troubled—

effectiveness—

substantially—

“state of mind”—

willing—

sacrifices—

climate—

“under the weight”—

sufficient—

romantic—

professional—

confusions (complications)—

“no amount”—

political—

priority—

unambiguous—

advantages—

old-fashioned—

vital—

taste—

missing—

decorate—

escaping—

overly—

harsh—

cruel—

empty—

scheme—

“keep at bay”—

chaos—

disorder--

actually—

rural—

backward—

nostalgic—

precisely—

rustic—

technology—

rebalance—

psyches—

disagree—

relationship—

THE PERFECT HOME Worksheet

Create 10 sentences using any 10 new vocabulary words from this chapter:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Worksheet 1a: Chapter 1 "What is Architecture?"

Section I Units 1-2

Write your own definition of "architecture."

What is the "function" of architecture? (What does it do?)

Create sentences using each of the following words:

abstract

confine

decisive

geometric

implement

organic

utility

Use a semi-colon to connect two independent phrases in one sentence:

Use a colon to introduce a list in a sentence:

Section I Unit 3

What is the primary purpose of architecture?

In your own words, define a "habitable interior."

Describe a building/structure that you feel "rises to the realm of art" and explain why.

Does function shape form or does form precede (come before) function? Give an example.

Create sentences using each of the following words:

celebrity

foremost

habitable

monumental

plain

Section I Unit 4

What criteria do you use to judge the success of architecture (in other words, what makes a building "good"?)

Create sentences using each of the following words:

antiquity

commodity

compile

construe

consult

firmness

symmetry

intervene

paraphrase

treatise

triad

weather(verb)

Worksheet 1b: Chapter 1 “What is Architecture?”

Section I Unit 5

What distinguishes a “building” from “architecture?”

What things do you “take into account”(consider) when building/designing architecture?

Create sentences using each of the following words:

compact

component

constitute

distinction

ecological

erroneous

humble

integrate

municipal

shed

transit

Section II Units 1-2
What problems can an architect solve?

Why must architecture belong to more than just the architect?

Create sentences using each of the following words:

assume

climate

conceive

authority

institution

legislation

promote

province

suspicious

benevolent

capricious

expedient

speculation

substance

testament

Section III Units 1-3

What is the primary role of architects?

What other roles do architects play?

Create sentences using each of the following words:

villa

survey

acumen

commitment

conventional

dignity

mediate

party(persons)

anonymity

boost

certification

commission

fantasize

harbor

limelight

notoriety

publicize

thrust

unfold

Worksheet 2a: Chapter 2 “Function”

Section I Unit 1

A single room or space can have many different functions. List several types of rooms or spaces below (for example, dining room, kitchen, bedroom, etc.)

What kinds of buildings have a “symbolic function?”

Copy, draw, or print images of the following:

- | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. alcove | 2. anteroom | 3. attic | 4. cellar |
| 5. corridor | 6. gallery | 7. hallway | 8. vestibule |

Create sentences using each of the following words:

accommodation (or accommodate)

circulatory (or circulate)

component

interrelate

optimum

pragmatic

What do you feel is the function of a building's "façade" (exterior face)?

Write a building type that best suits each activity (for example: sales / store):

sports event	_____	manufacturing	_____
worship	_____	dining	_____
work	_____	exercise	_____
recreation	_____	education	_____
musical concert	_____	art exhibition	_____

Section I Unit 2

Copy, draw, or print images of the following:

1. atrium

2. façade

3. frontispiece

4. pergola

5. porch

6. portico

7. rotunda

8. skyscraper

Create sentences using each of the following words:

appreciation

encircle

outdoor

superficial

utilitarian

Worksheet 2b: Chapter 2 “Function”

Section I Unit 3

Give an example of one way society influences the demands of the client.

Create sentences using each of the following words:

evoke

generation

upsurge

Section II Unit 1

Library activity: Find a building you consider to be “functionalist.” Prepare a photocopy of the building and be prepared to explain why it is a functionalist building. Below are the names of some architects whose work is considered “functionalist.”

Walter Gropius

Adolf Meyer

Mies van der Rohe

Alvar Aalto

Wells Coates

Giussepe Taragni

Eric Bryggman

P.E. Blomstedt

Uno Ullberg

Match each of the following words on the left with a word of opposite meaning on the right:

afterthought

arcane

derivative

embellished

pragmatic

preclude

up-to-date

willful

impractical

enable

old fashioned

unintentional

forethought

well-known

original

unadorned

Name an example which illustrates the Louis Sullivan quote, "form follows function."

Create sentences using each of the following words:

blithe

branch

manifest

pervade

sweep

toil

Worksheet 2c: Chapter 2 “Function”

Section II Unit 3

Deconstructivism

From the literary philosophy of "Deconstruction" comes the architectural and design school of "Deconstructivism". Inspired by Russian Constructivism, Deconstructivists believe in challenging the basic assumptions of Modernist design (for example, that rooms should be rectangular in shape, or at least that walls should be straight). There is also the influence of Italian Futurist architects such as Antonio Sant'Elia, particularly the striving for dynamic forms.

The general characteristics of Deconstructivist design are as follows:

1. Explodes architectural form into loose collections of related fragments.
2. Destroys the dominance of the right angle and the cube by using the diagonal line and the “slice” of space.
3. Uses ideas and images from Russian Revolutionary architecture and design—Russian Constructivism
4. Searches for more dynamic spatial possibilities and experiences not explored (or forbidden) by the modern movement.
5. Provokes shock, uncertainty, unease, disquiet, disruption and distortion by challenging familiar ideas about space, order, and regularity in the environment.
6. Rejects the idea of the “perfect form” for a particular activity and rejects the familiar relationship between certain forms and certain activities.
7. Note the work of the architects Peter Eisenman, Bernard Tschumi, Rem Koolhaas, Zaha Hadid and Frank Gehry.



Peter Eisenman



Zaha Hadid



Frank Gehry

How do these buildings illustrate “deconstructivism”? (*hint*: use words from the description above to describe the buildings).

Create sentences using each of the following words:

congruent

deformation

disregard

streamline

tidy (or untidy)

Section III Unit 1

Match each of the following words on the left with a word of similar meaning on the right:

aristocracy

pluralize

bewilder

staff

chore

allay

proliferate

nobility

comfort

task

personnel

confound

The car park or parking garage is an example of a building designed to fulfill a specific need in the modern world. Can you think of another modern building that fulfills a specific need that previously did not exist? Write the name of the building(s) and the structure(s) below.

Describe how hospitals “accommodate” (fulfill the needs of) the following groups of people who use them (for example: The emergency exit accommodates paramedics in an ambulance by allowing them to transport patients to medical personnel quickly).

Doctors

Patients

Visitors

Staff

Create sentences using each of the following words:

clarify

consultation

footage

identify

specify

Section III Unit 3

Label the following diagram:

- | | | | |
|-------------|------------|--------------|--------------------|
| 1. altar | 2. apse | 3. chancel | 4. crossing |
| 5. transept | 6. narthex | 7. sanctuary | 8. vestry/sacristy |



