

# What does architecture mean to you

[Design](#), [Architecture](#)



A simplistic definition of architecture would be the art and science of designing buildings. However, there is far more to architecture than that. An architect must be able to apply mathematics, science and art when designing buildings, but s/he must also take into account historical concerns, the political context and the social context.

There is a sense in which Architecture encapsulates man's ability to transform his environment. There is more to a building than simply the need to provide shelter from the elements; otherwise why not remain in caves. This includes the ability to create a structure which not only provides a rudimentary shelter, but also makes a statement. One thinks of buildings which incorporate symbolisms important to a particular religious belief, such as the pyramids of ancient Egypt or the cathedrals of Europe. Vaults and chapels for example imitate man's perception of the heavens symbolising and magnifying religious awe.

There is also the idea of Architecture as art. Here one is concerned with producing something which is primarily aesthetic rather than purely practical. Here architecture can transcend art; not only may it imitate natural forms and/or invent new ones but it also allows one to literally enter into the artist's work and explore his/her vision.

But Architecture is not only concerned with buildings; it also covers gardens, monuments and ideal cities. Whatever the design style of the garden it is an attempt to restate man's relationship with nature. Memorials force us to

reflect on a time in history which has specific significance and perhaps an attempt at thwarting history too, as the monument is intended to be permanent despite the passing of time and the vagaries of the human memory.

In creating ideal cities - such as the Milton Keynes type experiment - the architect is attempting to predict and perhaps shape how society will function by imposing form on a barren landscape. To a certain extent all such experiments must be short-lived as function changes over time, and the form becomes increasingly irrelevant. An exception to this might be adventure/theme parks such as Disneyland where the visitor volunteers to have the form imposed in order that they may participate in the architect's view of the function of such attractions.

Most of us experience Architecture through the sense of sight in much the way we would a painting. However from earliest times buildings have incorporated the sense of touch, for example through the materials used and through engravings. Many modern buildings are fully equipped with heating and ventilation systems, besides taking into account thermal sensibilities these systems are sometimes used to waft pleasant odours and/or music as part of the experience. The more fully engaged the senses, the greater the enjoyment and the longer the memory of a particular building or space. Why do certain architectural projects bring lasting pleasure to successive generations while others are described as being like carbuncles on the face of a beloved associate Perhaps in this sense Architecture is also about the

role of the viewer-participant.

Ultimately Architecture does not exist in a vacuum. There must be a social imperative to build or design, to transform space into a built environment. In this sense Architecture is a servant of society creating structures or utilising space in ways which seem relevant to the commissioning authority. An example of this might be utilitarian industrial buildings where the function determines the form.

### Bibliography

Definition of Architecture: <http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Architecture>

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