

Architecture a building – it is how

[Design](#)



Architecture to me is not only the aesthetics and the complicated form of a building – it is how a space is formed when there is an interaction and a harmony of three main elements: human, nature and program without compromising the existing site, social or economical context. I am a firm believer in using architecture to promote social interaction, growth in community and use it to affect one's life. This passion sparked when I was first introduced to the Igualada Cemetery by Enric Miralles and the poetics in architecture and how a space can affect one's mood or provoke a feeling. I was taken aback at how a cemetery, normally built as a place for reflection and memories could also help visitors to understand cycle of life as a link between the past, present and the future. It was then that I knew that all architecture can affect a person's life whether good or bad and how architects have an ethical duty to the community. My main interest is to see how public spaces can affect the growth and success of a community.

When travelling, I always observe ways a public space in a city can benefit its community or the public in everyday life. My personal favorite is the big canopy trees along the streets of Hanoi that shelters pedestrians from the tropical climate of Vietnam, or how the back alleys are fully utilized rather than used only for services. These attempts keep public spaces more friendly and usable for the public. I also think public spaces if designed carefully with sensitivity to the community and site can benefit a community. With great involvement with the community throughout the planning, designing and construction process, Thornton Place in Seattle, USA by Landscape Architecture Foundation is a good example of how a physically

constrained site can provide an opportunity to serve multiple purposes while also improving the environment by introducing stormwater treatment.

Carved out from a nine acre parking lot, what was an automobile-oriented place is now an apartment complex with a public plaza and landscaping that provides pedestrian links to nearby commercial and residential buildings. This idea can be implemented to the designs of new high-rise buildings whether commercial or residential in Malaysia. Another example, is the Gehl Institute's Toolkit for the Creation of Public Spaces, Jan Gehl is an urbanist and architect who married architecture with psychology and urban planning and later on created a toolkit that encourages designers to engage and collect data on how people interact with cities before planning and designing public spaces. Jan Gehl's studies was used to form urban policy and implement public space and pedestrian improvement in Copenhagen which has spread into development of public spaces in other cities.

His approach is simple and straightforward – making cities for people and can be used when approaching a design for public spaces or urban planning. Form follows function all the way. My point is, there are many strategies to better an architecture if architects focus on working with people to create mutually beneficial relationships between people's quality of life and their built environment.

After all, I do believe an architect has an ethical duty in increasing the quality of cities and quality of lives overtime.