

Added Value of Quality Design...?

Questioning the mantra in its capacity for architectural salvation

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Supervisor: Sebastian MacMillan

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Abstract

The architecture profession has rapidly been losing influence since the end of the post-war boom. In response to this, the RIBA, whose responsibility it is to ensure the continued influence and relevance of the profession, is encouraging architects to promote the added value of quality design. This 'mantra' relates directly to the on-going discourse on value and quality that has been churning discussion since the Latham report in 1994.

In chapter 1 this dissertation intends to give a brief history of the decline of the architect alongside an introduction to the rise of this comparable discourse, followed by an objective examination of the terms 'added-value' and 'quality-design'.

In chapter 2 the dissertation focuses on two initiatives within the established discourse. In looking at 'Be Valuable' and the 'Design Quality Indicators' in greater detail it becomes apparent that there are significant problems with attempting to situate a mantra for architects within a discourse that is focused on the construction industry as a whole. It becomes clear that an acknowledgement of architects' contributions is down-played and that attempts within industry to gain proof of 'added-value' and 'quality-design' in fact go against a number of architectural principles.

In chapter 3 a remedial suggestion is made, indicating that architects should divorce themselves from associative discourse, and shift our focus from the added value of quality design to the added value of the architect. The chapter progresses to elaborate upon the change of direction by taking an understanding of value from the business world to attempt to situate the architect within a value framework.

The paper concludes by looking again at the advice given by the RIBA, summarising the difficulties displayed within and highlighting the proposed changes.

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Introduction

The architect is losing influence.

Building Futures, the think-tank for the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), undertook a study into the future role of architectural practice (2011). The report amalgamated opinions from a number of stakeholders, from both the supply and demand side of the construction industry. In it there were perceptions that may unsettle believers in the power of architecture to improve society through the built form;

“The concept of the architect as a technician who composes all the constituent parts of a building that are designed by the subcontractors was widely thought to be a realistic vision of the future” (2011, p.12).

Where in the past architects have fulfilled the role of both generalist and the specialist, the current role of the profession is very much up for debate. In response to this the RIBA, amongst a number of other initiatives (RIBA, 2013b), have advised architects to promote the added value of quality-design to help them regain influence (RIBA, 2011; Reed, 2010): Ruth Reed in her final year as RIBA president commented:

“It is vital that architects learn to promote themselves as being able to bring added value to clients, particularly through promoting and practising 'good design'”(Reed, 2010)

This advice has been informed by two decades worth of reports coming from a number of different sources. The discussion itself can be traced back to two critical reports; ‘Constructing the team’ by Sir Michael Latham (1994) and ‘Rethinking Construction’ by Sir John Egan (1998). These reports untapped a torrent of investigations within the construction industry which included significant exploration into the subjects of value and quality in design. It is within these that the RIBA’s advice is firmly entrenched.

While it appears sensible to tie ones advice to such an established discourse, it potentially renders itself as vulnerable to unforeseen nuances within such a vast body.

The purpose of this dissertation is to understand the problems that may occur by the RIBA situating advice for architects within a discourse intended for the construction industry as a whole.

By looking closely at what is actually meant by 'added value' and 'quality design', and through an exploration of two case-study initiatives, this dissertation intends to demonstrate the challenges of associative discourse. In discussing the implications of this association, the dissertation will propose a different course ought to be followed; one that centres more productively on the architect as a highly trained individual.

Chapter 1: Establishing a chronology and outlining definitions

Changes to the architecture profession

Western architectural discourse often begins with the words of Vitruvius (2001);

'Firmitas, Utilitas, Venustas'

Often translated as 'Commodity, firmness and delight' these three words have continued to summarise architecture as produced by the architect, with very little exception, since late Antiquity. While although this has remained fairly constant, the architects' role throughout history has been largely varied. In each new scenario however it was common for the architect to be placed in a position of power over the creation of buildings.

This position was last manifest during the post-war boom in the middle of the 20th Century; at which point large numbers of architects given a unique social respect as they were hired by the state in a large-scale building programme. The architect was still dominant at this point through traditional forms of procurement, and in response to the increasing numbers of architects employed in the public sector, architectural education programmes expanded to meet the new high levels of demand.

However under Thatcher's regime the role of the architect which had already begun to change, accelerated: the public sector was cut dramatically in size, and in combination with the end of the post-war boom and 'Sick Building Syndrome' in the 1980s demand for architects across the UK rapidly decreased (Bresnen, 1996, p.249) In addition, after the monopolies commission under the labour government, the professional body was forced to relinquish control over fee scales, intended to protect architects, in favour of a new conservative/capitalist competition culture. With the combined impact of changing methods of procurement to favour the contractor as clients first port-of-call, along with sliding pay-scales due to oversupply of architects and a new competition culture, the

position of the architect could be regarded as less influential. This point was vocalised by Frank Duffy in his inaugural speech as RIBA President, who described the architect as 'under siege' (Duffy, 1998, p.131).

The architect was still expected to be both generalist and specialist for a long time, but many skills were slowly being stripped away as new specialist professions began to emerge (Brindley, 2010). The professionalization of the roles of the quantity surveyor and project manager coincided with new models of procurement which placed the contractor in the locus of control rather than the architect. The shifting hegemony saw architects lose their influential position as primary consultant and as mediator between client and contractor. The architect's new position appearing as a de-skilled version of its former self rather than a specialist in its own right, and where previously it had a retained a monopoly over managerial positions, during this period of change the architect began to lose much of this too.

This rapidly changing industry faced controversial issues of its own and during a period of recession Sir Michael Latham was commissioned to review systems of procurement and contractual arrangements within the construction industry. The subsequent report condemned industry inefficiencies and urged a reform based around partnering with construction companies, with a focus on simplifying procedures and improving communication and management. (Loe, 2000, p.29) These findings were instrumental in changing contractual processes in the industry, but New Labour, elected in 1996, and were decisive in creating their own building programme that they required a new study to be done under the new government.

Invited by John Prescott, then deputy Prime Minister, Sir John Egan chaired a group 'the industry task force' to produce Labours equivalent report. 'Rethinking Construction' focused on improving the efficiency and quality of the UK construction industry with five key new focuses: Leadership, the customer, integrated processes and teams, quality

driven agenda and commitment to people. It was the Egan report specifically which framed the discussion on quality and introduced the elements that were to dominate the focus from there on in; management, measurement and integration.

Added-value of quality design: introducing the discourse

However while having contributed to the formation of new procurement strategies - design and build, and management contracting - the reports had mentioned neither quality-design nor architecture (Prasad, 2004, p.176). In response to this, and an acknowledged lack of investment in design,(Sallette, 2005, p.75) attempts were made by the UK building design community to give justice to these omitted subjects. The highlights of this effort were; RIBA's 'Value of Architecture' essays by Warpole and Loe, The report from the Urban Task Force "Towards an Urban Renaissance", The Construction Industry Councils' (CIC) introduction of Design Quality Indicators (DQI's) as well as governments deployment of Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) along with their subsequent reports, and finally a report relating specifically to this discussion topic; 'Be Valuable' by Richard Saxon.

Of the many engaged in this discourse, there are three which stand out in relation to this discussion on added value and quality design:

One of the only attempts to respond to industry's desire for more quantitative proof was the CIC, as the umbrella organisation representing UK construction professional institutions (Gann, 2003, p.319), creation of the DQI's. This was intended to provide much needed quantitative support for the quality of design discussion enabling clients to monitor the quality of design throughout a project (Prasad, 2004, p.175).

Alongside this an initiative funded by the department of culture, media and sport to research and monitor the influence of design was created. The governmental watchdog, CABE, had several schemes intended to improve the quality of the built environment;

from training design champions, to producing a number of publications, to the design review and the provision of advisory services to planning authorities others (CABE, 2007). However their lasting success is a large body of work focused on the challenging task of conveying the value of quality design to various stakeholders within the industry (Macmillan, 2006, p.265). To mitigate against a 'new generation of buildings that might be produced where an emphasis on measuring and reducing time, cost and waste in the process would lead to a loss of functionality and boring, unattractive buildings design' (Gann, 2003, p.319).

More recently in 2005 Richard Saxon was commissioned to investigate the discussion of value in the construction industry – 'Be Valuable' gained tremendous praise and influence within the industry and complemented publications from neighbouring bodies such as CABE. The report focused significantly on promoting whole-life value to the industry, a proposal backed up by research from the Royal Academy of Engineering.

This collective body of knowledge spread amongst the design community and others in the construction industry, encouraging them to review their position within it.

Subsequently the notions 'value' and 'quality' emerged as crucial.

“The emphasis has shifted from the objective truth of the building to the subjective truth of the perceiving individual” (Wittkower, 1962, p.147)

Defining: Added-Value

“Value: [mass noun] the regard that something is held to deserve; the importance, worth, or usefulness of something.”(Oxford English Dictionary)

It is important in this discussion to define ‘added-value’ independently of the associated discourse, enabling us to establish a benchmark situated in a theoretical context to later examine various initiatives which have a diverse array of ways to discuss value (Loe, 2000, p.15).

In order for us define added-value we must first attempt to understand the concept of value. Value can be understood as derived from many perspectives, first of all from values. Values are the principles by which people live, they are held by individuals and organisations and influence their perception of the world. Values frame the assessment of value; it is through the expression and sharing of our values in which a value system emerges. (Thomson, et al., 2010, p.337). Value therefore cannot be understood in isolation, but is integrally connected to an agreed set of values. In the construction industry different groups emerge with similar values, these define themselves by their position as stakeholders.

However while it is useful to understand value in relation to stakeholder groups sharing value, a philosophical understanding of value reaches a more holistic definition of the term Dent (1995);

“Three connected issues: first, on what sort of property or characteristic ‘having value’ or ‘being of value’ is; second, on whether having value is an objective or subjective matter, whether value reposes in the object or is a matter of how we feel towards it; third, on trying to say what things have value”

The significance of this understanding of value, while agreeing with the previous, is that it calls into question not only the values of individuals upon assessing value, but asks us to first consider whether value resides within object before calling into question the human perceptions of value based upon their values.

Added-value therefore can be understood as the value given to an object which is then determined by to be of value by the value-assessor.

The RIBA added-value toolkit (2009, p.2) provides the following which are based upon The Value Handbook (CABE, 2006b) and define six value-types:

Exchange Value: The building as a commodity to be traded, whose commercial value is measured by the price that the market is willing to pay.

Use Value: Contribution of a building to organisational outcomes. Examples include productivity, profitability, competitiveness and repeat business.

Image Value: Contribution of the development to corporate identity, prestige, vision and reputation.

Social Value: Developments that make a connection between people, resulting in social improvements such as lower crime rates.

Environmental Value: As arising from a concern for intergenerational equity, the protection of biodiversity and the precautionary principle in relation to consumption of finite resources and climate change.

Cultural Value: This is a measure of a development's contribution to the rich tapestry of a town or city, how it relates to its location and context, and also to broader patterns of historical development and a sense of place.

Added-value arises when one of these value-types can be created within the object and is in turn viewed by the stakeholder as important. For example, a property may have

both significant cultural and exchange value; however a property developer may consider only the exchange value as added-value. In contrast to this, a planning authority may only consider the cultural value as the added-value of the scheme.

“in a democracy everybody can become an architectural critic, and many do so.”

(Worpole, 1999, p.9)

Quality-Design

“Quality: [mass noun] the standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind; the degree of excellence of something; distinctive attribute or characteristic possessed by someone or something.”(Oxford English Dictionary)

Having established an understanding of added-value from first principles, to gain a more objective idea of ‘quality-design’ it must likewise be looked at it in the same way. In this discussion quality and good are often taken as synonyms – however in an attempt to achieve greater clarity a focus on quality shall be made.

Where it was useful to understand value as a function of values, likewise a useful insight is gained by discussing quality in terms of qualities. Qualities are the physical or functional attributes of a product; quality arises when these qualities enable a product or service to fulfil its intended application. (Thomson, et al., 2010)

For something to be of quality it must first acknowledge its specific aim. For example the primitive hut as explained by Laugier (1977): the design of a shelter can be deemed as quality so long as it fulfils the intended mechanistic and primitivistic function of providing the occupant with shelter, whereas to assess the quality of a ‘house’ you must first establish the elements of ‘house’ by which you wish to assess it.

While this understanding of quality is useful, often quality refers to the positive value-judgement placed upon a subject. In this instance quality can appear synonymous with high-quality.

It is therefore important to recognise that in striving for quality a value-judgement must be established along with the aim.

Now to design: the Oxford English dictionary defines design as the “purpose, or planning that exists behind an action, fact or object” this definition is useful when combined with an understanding of the design processes; explained by Michael Dickson, chairman of the CIC and DQI initiative, as “a series of stages which divide into analysis, synthesis, evaluation and communication” (2004, p.191) Design is thus split into two constituent parts, design as processes (the analysis, synthesis part) and design as output (action, fact or object part).

Quality design therefore considers the interaction between the design aims, the value judgement placed upon the output, the output itself and the process that leads to it.

In picking just three understandings of what makes a good, or quality, building it is clear to see that within the literature there are a number of differences:

In *Better Public Buildings* by the DCMS (2006, p.4), they comment that good design is about: buildings and spaces that are fit for purpose, built to last and lift your spirits.

In the Royal Fine Art Commission (1994, pp.70-79) attributes the same to: Order and unity, expression, integrity, plan and section, detail and integration with neighbouring buildings.

In CABE's report into civic buildings and spaces (2002c, p.4) the same was given to: appearance, context, buildability, maintenance and operation

“People are complicated and happily unpredictable...buildings which work on paper can be disliked and under-used; spaces with little apparent value can attract affection and activity” (Matarasso, 2005, p.42)

Chapter 2: Questioning the 'added-value of quality-design'

Introducing the case-studies

While it is important to recognise that the delivery of quality-design in building is a collaborative process (nCRISP, 2005, pp.24-25), the architect historically remains the most connected discipline to the concept. In the controversial design of the 1960s tower block, arisen from visions of architectural utopia, there are many chases which have had such low standards that they have been torn down. The architect was primarily blamed. (Lund, 1996, p. 127) Equally the positive effects from buildings are often attributed to architects too; take the classic example of Gehry's Guggenheim which led to the coinage of 'The Guggenheim effect'; or at any number of the buildings nominated for the RIBA sterling prize: for example in 2007 the Manchester Civil Justice centre was acknowledge to have changed the experience of being within the legal system to one that was much less intimidating and more pleasant for the user (CABE, 2011).

While the architect is clearly relevant to quality the RIBA's call for architects to promote the added-value of quality-design requires an exploration into the relationship between the architecture profession and what can collectively be called the '*added value of quality design*' discourse as is established in the previous chapter.

There is a significant output associated with this discourse, however in order to explore the mantra within the discourse, I intend to focus on two initiatives as indicative of the wider discourse's outlook in order to establish a few important understandings.

Initially looking at 'Be Valuable; Constructing Excellence in the Built Environment' by Richard Saxon (2005) as a report which is indicative of the discourse surrounding 'value'; next examining the Construction Industry Council's initiative of the Design Quality Indicator as indicative of the discourse surrounding quality, and the desire within the construction industry for measurement and proof.

Over the course of the next chapter the challenges posed by associating advice for architects within a discourse that was not directly influenced by the RIBA will be revealed, and in particular the dangers of associating with the term 'quality design'.

'Be Valuable'

'Be Valuable' was written for industry stakeholders to highlight the importance of a value-based argument over a narrow focussing on cost alone.

One argument that was heavily endorsed in the paper is the concept that quality-design has the potential to improve 'whole-life value'; which refers to a consideration for the cost of the project throughout its lifetime. The concept is based upon research from the Royal Academy of Engineering and defines the relationship between various costs associated with building;

"0.1:1:5:200" (Saxon, 2002, p.39)

The ratio describes the relationship between the cost of design (0.1), to the cost of construction of the building (1) to the cost of running the building throughout its lifetime (5) and to the operating cost of salaries (200). The popularly quoted ratio was designed to prove to stakeholders that skimping out on design quality is a false economy and will end up costing much more in the long term, demonstrating that design in fact value for money.

There has since been controversy over the derivation of the figure which was updated later by Greame Ive to be 1:1.5:10 or 15. The challenge for architects lies however in the conflict between promoting the value of whole-life design and the practical issue of architects' fees. The architect, who has significant influence over whole-life value has little financial incentive to design it in, as fees are often calculated as a percentage of the capital expenditure of a project rather than of the whole-life costs (Eclipse, 2002, p.8). In this scenario the architect is burdened with extra design information without financial gains. In addition to this, the figure challenges architects' relationships with developers, who often have only short-term financial interests and are therefore only interested in the temporary gains received from a projects early profit margin.

There is further issue to be found in 'Be Valuable' when comparing the value-types discussed here with those established in the RIBA toolkit:

"Asset value: the amount realisable by selling the asset or its income stream.

Use Value: the functionality and economy of a facility in service of the occupiers' business.

Image value: The communications content of a building, enhancing the owner's or occupier's status, creating identity or brand and motivating its occupants and users. This can be generated through intrinsic design quality, the fashionability of its designer or other cultural associations (could also be termed perceptual value).

Cultural value: Contribution made to the community of a cultural resource, including that of the artefact as a work of architecture.

Environmental value: The balance of benefits and costs to the natural environment.

Social value: Value created for the public through provision of job opportunities, public amenities, environmental enhancement, tourism potential, area regeneration or improved accessibility" (Saxon, 2005, pp.10-11)

Image value is equated to perceptual value, which is unhelpful considering as has already been established; any form of value is perceptual. By suggesting that image value is the most reliant value-type on subjective perceptions, the definition specifically undermines image value against the others. The 'perceptual value' undermines the importance of the psychological impact, experiential significance or ambience which investment in image brings.

In undermining image value, a key focus of the architects is undermined. The following phrases from architectural theoreticians capture the importance of form and image value:

“architecture is an art with its own traditions...so that its concern with image making is no less vital than its solution of practical problems.” David Watkin (1971, p.12)

“the sublimity of Beauty of Forms arises altogether from the associations we connect with them, or the qualities of which they are expressive to us” Rudolf Wittkower (1962)

“To say that you can evolve a form from a social programme or from an analysis of the situation in terms of flow and so on is meaningless, because analysis without the formal content, the architect’s particular specialisation, has one factor missing from it” Peter Smithson (Watkin, 1971, p.9)



To coincide with this problem, the only time that Architecture is mentioned within these definitions of value is in the defining of cultural value. However in singularly framing the value of architecture as artefact, the report again

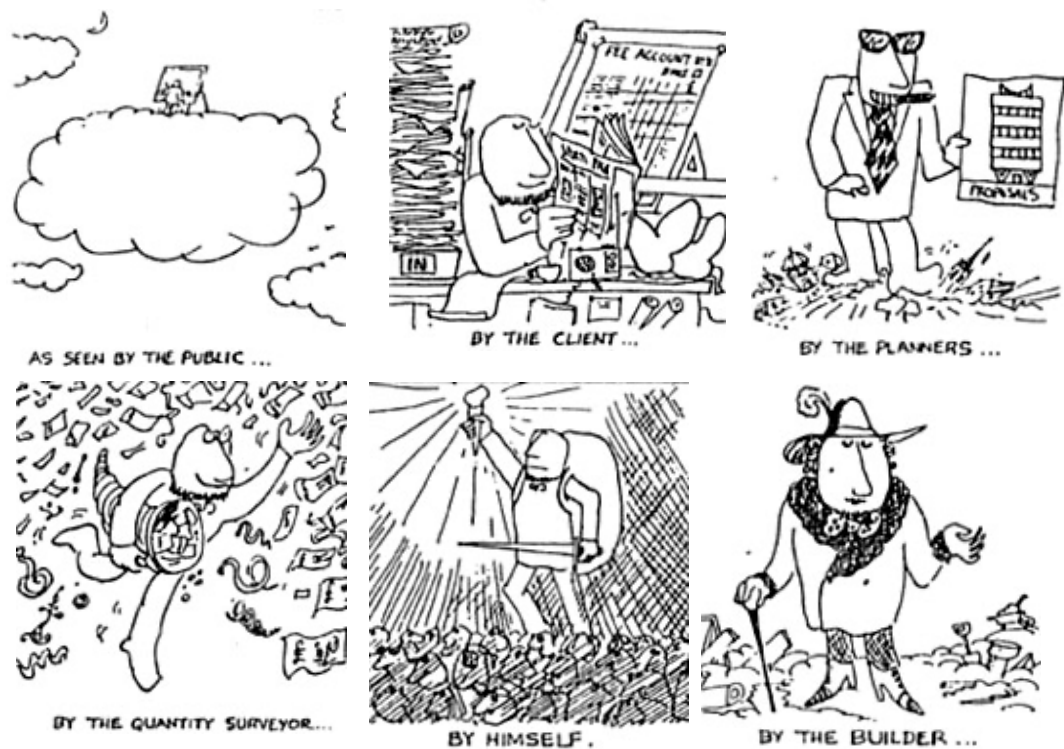
undermines the breadth of value architecture can bring. Tying architecture to artefact also has connotations of the static and historical; an understanding which is detrimental to the contemporary capability of architecture to be dynamic and culturally engaging.

Take for example the Quinta Monroy Housing project in Chile, 2003-05; homes which were designed to be easily adaptable, and which the residents have in time made their own - in effect even displacing the architect and the associated modernist ‘artefact’.



Finally, while there is an acknowledgement of social value, there is no mention of the socio-psychological impacts of space that are heavily influenced and extensively considered by architects in creating socially responsible architecture.

Architects engagement with value



While it is possible that the architects' role is deliberately being down-played in favour of a discourse not wanting to be seen as biased to any one profession, the profession doesn't help itself prevent such difficulties.

In both its relationship with the client - through payment and procurement models - and in its relationship with the construction industry - through historical precedent - the architecture profession under represents itself.

Industry perceptions

Peter Trebilcock, former vice-president of the RIBA, uses the overly self-deprecating cartoons of Louis Hellman to highlight perceptions of the architect, (2004, pp.158-159)

Collectively these images convey an architect disengaged with the values of other industry professions: the quantity surveyors perception of the money wasting architect is in direct confrontation with the goals of their profession; the contractor likewise portrays the architect as the epitome of impracticality - again in direct confrontation

with the practical role bestowed upon their craft; even the public's perception is unhelpful; it ties into the historical perception of the architect as an omnipotent figure with their head in the clouds. In many occasions this disengagement results in a lack of trust in designers and design (Eclipse, 2002, p.8) with architects instead becoming the opposite of valuable: a hinderance.

In the Building Futures report, one client advisor commented "The problem is the separation between what architects want to do, and the reality of the marketplace" (2011, p.34) This is added to by a voiced frustration that the marketplace doesn't in fact understand what the architect does "everyone asks why did it take seven years to learn how to draw buildings?" (Building Futures, 2011b) and accusations such as the "god-like wish of architects to mould human behaviour to their own ends" (Worpole, 1999, p.12)

This separation was even made worse by the RIBA itself which until the 1980s stopped professions members joining any limited company and then legally disqualifying anyone who defied the rule.

Further to this, architects continually undermine their value through their association with money. Even Heidegger, known for his distaste of modernism, makes the assertion that "we assess beings according to values and make them the goal of all action and activity". (Heidegger, 2002, p.77) In our capitalist society therefore the 'goal of all action and activity' is predominantly focused around money.

Architecture practices are continually undermining their value by providing work for free. In the market today, architects provide this free service to bring in new projects, and if they don't there is usually another practice willing to do so. However even Saxon

acknowledges that it is the front-end input by the architect that tends to increase value through: brief making, design, and planning (Saxon, 2005, p.29).

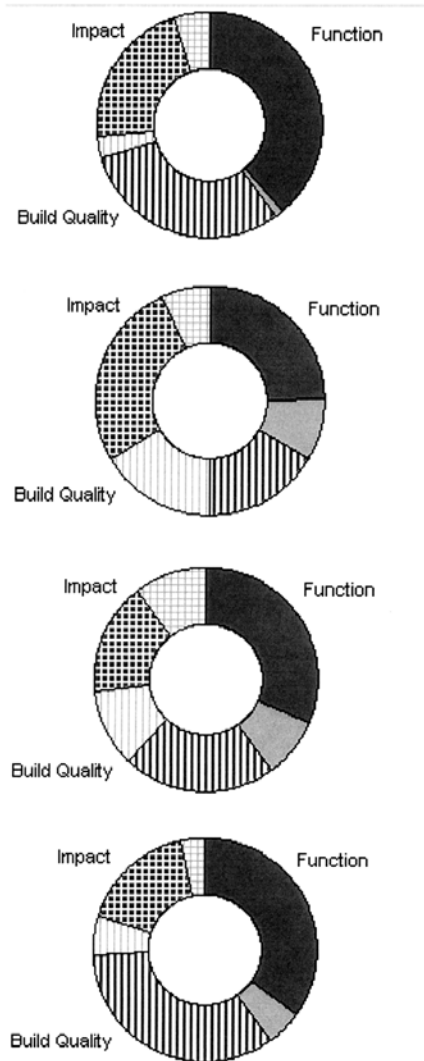
In addition to this, although it is an issue which is being targeted (Dezeen, 2013); across the UK architecture graduates are entering into unpaid internships. While there is a moral question that could be asked here, this practise also has significant impact on the perceived added-value of the architect. The culture enables these practices to charge lower prices in order to win contracts, relying on the ability of this unpaid workforce to pick up the costs. This puts architects in a spiral which leaves them destined to hit rock-bottom sooner or later.

Competition culture acts as another foe (MacCormac, 1992). Competitions rely on the participation of many different practices all of whom investing significant time and expenditure in their application. This process leaves all but one successful participant with any form of reward and all others having again worked for nothing. Further to this, it is not uncommon for competitions to result in no built product at all; in these instances the system is manipulated by the client's for such ends as, to develop a possibility bank for their future consideration. Occasionally signature architects are employed for their design and are later dropped to enable a cheaper architect to complete the project – often leading to mutilated design concepts at best.

“if something cannot be measured it is deemed not to exist” (Macmillan, 2004, p.171)

The DQI

Saxon primarily focuses on the relationship between value and cost, however in looking at the DQI, the second issue of quality can be explored.



While there are several methods and certification bodies which have attempted to control questions of quality, most of these focus on a singular value-type; for example the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) relates almost exclusively to the environmental value of a project, Post-Occupancy Review of Buildings and their Engineering (PROBE) on the outcome of the design process, or the Housing Quality Indicator (HQI) which is designed primarily for assessing social housing.

Only the CIC's creation of the DQI has there been an attempt to assess the success of multiple value-types. For this reason the DQI's are a critical part of attempts setting out to prove the added-value of quality design. The DQI tool both acknowledges, and confronts, several of the problems facing assessments of value; it intends to be capable of measuring an individual's view of design quality against their own chosen intent for the building, to allow participants to compare and contrast different options, to be of a flexible, multipurpose and generic nature, and useable on many different types of buildings while also being useable at different phases in a buildings' lifecycle: conception, design, construction and in-use. (Gann, 2003, p.323)

However the tool was developed “*explicitly to measure the quality of design embodied in the product – buildings themselves. It was not intended to assess the design process, although the tool has subsequently been used at various stages of design to help inform design decision-making during the process*” (Gann, 2003, p.319)

Several difficulties however have arisen in its attempts to give justice to such a broad range of values. In the move away from ‘single-point’ value (initial conceptualisation only) to the current display of a range of values, they have had to compromise. Single point value could have allowed developers to integrate design into their numeracy based development appraisals however a single-point value does not suffice in doing justice to the complex set of values in play within a design project and would only ever be an over-simplification. The new outcome has the additional problem that while it attempts to display the value of quality design with improved realism (by opening itself up the complexities and nuances of design-quality perception) it will never be sufficiently diverse to compare with the truly creative problem solving capacity of architects to reveal solutions yet to be considered. The DQI’s are thus compromised; something which is perhaps indicative of the nature of quality assessment for design in the face of a melting-pot of industry values.

Not only does the DQI system face challenges with its result output, but within the process of assessment it again opens itself up to critique. The DQI makes a noble attempt to address subjectivity and intangible values, however through asking users questions such as ‘does the building lift your spirits’ or ‘is the building inspirational’ it moves away from the scientifically rigorous realms of quantification and into ambiguous accuracy which renders the success of the DQI tool stunted in the eyes of the stakeholders it would otherwise appeal to (Meel, Dewulf, 2004, p.248).

Indeed the DQI questionnaire is described by Gann et.al, 2003, as a ‘tool for thinking’ with one of its aims to allow stakeholders within a project to gain a greater

understanding of design criteria. The intention behind this is to ensure the effective mediation between customers, end-users, designers and producers. (Gann, 2003, p.324) However this service, of establishing client needs into a suitable design brief, is a task usually left for the architect. The DQI in attempting to do this becomes a further competitor to the architect rather than what could have been a useful tool at its conceptualisation. However can “an over-simplistic evaluation...displace difficult questions in spheres like aesthetics and ethics”? (Macmillan, 2004, p.171)

The tool attempts to acknowledge the heritage of architectural theory in formulating the output display around the three Vitruvian tenants. However the framework is a reductionist, token view of the multifaceted heritage of the architectural theory.

This dichotomy displays itself most clearly in the phenomenology of dwelling. Heidegger, who wrote at length about architecture, began his phenomenological discourse as a critique of modernity and rationalism (Fromm, 1999, 683). He believed the Cartesian ontology, which laid the grounds for modern science, is detached from the true nature of existence. Attributing this problem to the tendency of science to abstract reality in its attempts to make it easier to control and manipulate. (Colins, Selina, 1999)

In Heideggers ‘The Age of the World Picture’ his critique of modernity extends to believing that society needs to escape its scientific perspective in order to appreciate true being. (Kolb, 1986, p.124) In addition, a significant body of his work tries to develop the properties of Dasein, German for ‘being there’; which is how Heidegger refers to the ‘authentic being’; human nature as being-in-the-world (Fromm, 1999, p.682).

He re-affirms that true existence lies in understanding the multi-layered texture of life, seeing it as ‘a texture of lived possibilities that reveal the things around us as having this or that character. A doorknob is for turning; turning is for entering; entering is for talking, and so on in many directions and dimensions at once’ (Kolb, 1986, p.132) Here

Heidegger explores the complex fabric of existence that captivates us beyond science and the limited possibilities of such rationality as imposed by the DQI.

There appears to be a lack of acknowledgment for the socio-psychological elements of awareness that architects bring to each new problem solving scenario. The complexities of human nature disappear in amongst the questions of the DQI, and so it must be ascertained if it is possible for these quantifiable models to assess such things as beauty and delight, or 'why artists tend to prefer old warehouses, young entrepreneurs feel happy in garage-like buildings or why the general public is so fond of old buildings'(Dewulf, Meel, 2007, p.248) These behaviours are scenario based, they are that which the architect will strain to understand with new eyes and to respond to – they are something that measurement is currently unable to fathom (Sutcliffe et al, 2006).

In the words of former RIBA president Sunand Prasad:

"How is one to measure art, elegance, invention, wit?"(2004, p.175)

In recognising this, we must also recognise that attempts at measurement mustn't always be rejected, for in doing so is to reject their value as language. Future attempts must be welcomed with caution, as they may enable architects to more effectively translate their ideas to developers, quantity surveyors and project managers.

"every new piece of construction is to some extent a hypothesis and its performance in practise is the experiment"(Bordass, 2004, p.29)

Chapter 3: Implications and Propositions

Implications of associational discourses

The term 'quality-design' has become the buzz word for improving the state of our built environment, yet it creates an abstract concept which must first be assessed, quantified and made understandable. When attempting to tie down quality-design through such things as the DQI the possibility to exceed expectations is dramatically decreased; it places design in a framework when "often the best design breaks or transcends the rules" (Salette, 2005, p.70)

Even examples of quality-design fall short of the mark:



In 'Good design – it all adds up' the Urban Splash project 'Chimney Pot Park' in Salford was used as an exemplar for demonstrating good design. Many queued for the 'desirable', 'high-quality' new homes. However today current tenants are fighting for their money back, with complaints of "*4+ years of damp problems, still no fix and a worthless house*" (Chimney Pot Park, 2012) Another problem with 'good design' is that it is both complex in its expression of the qualities that make it, but also in the temporal nature of change. Where Salford was given an accolade in 2011, by 2013 it is clear that the homes are neither 'high-quality' nor 'desirable'.

It has been argued that:

"Quality in design is a matter of creativity and cannot be measured or theorised per se; instead, research should focus on understanding and improving the process of design" (Sutcliffe, et al., 2006, p.119)

Today if you Google the term 'architect', it not only comes up with our profession as situated within the built environment, but with increasing regularity it suggests our

virtual cousins; the systems-architect. The statement above is not from an architect of spatial construct, but from one of them. They see that the key to improving matters isn't through 'quality design', but through improving and understanding its process;

Design adds value primarily through this successful design process: a basic understanding of which will first of all highlight the importance of non-linear iteration. The renowned architect-developer Roger Zogolovich contributes with the salient point;

"The best way of understanding value based rather than cost based projects is by using an example of a journey. A value based journey sets out with an ambition but no clear destination" (Saxon, 2005, p.41)

This suggests that if the objective is value, the investment must be in the process seeking it. Iterative design by its very nature reveals routes that could never be premeditated. Design as discovery conflicts with our earlier understanding of quality in which in order to assess quality the aim of the quality assessment must first be made. Design seeks to exceed expectations, whereas 'quality' seeks to regulate them within a degree of certainty.

The idea that restrictive abstract ideas should be avoided is expressed within architectural theory too: for example in Peter Eisenman's critique of le Corbusier's separation of 'Mass' and 'Surface'. (Eisenman, somewhere in chapter 2) Lessons learnt in the analysis of architectural theory should be adopted into the infrastructure which encases it, and there should be a removal of this troublesome middle-man concept. In doing so the architect can be placed in direct contact with stakeholder's value outcomes and can respond with creativity and innovation out-with the confines of 'quality-design' restrictions.

Architects should aim to sell themselves: they need to become the focus of this value discussion.

In order to do so however, the architect must define itself in the image of value. Unfortunately it is clear from the Building Futures debate that there is increasing frustration within the profession at the lack of coherent branding (2011b). Without a coherent understanding of the added-value of the profession from within, the architect will continually be forced to correct false and unhelpful perceptions.

On the route to defining the architect the most prominent difficulty is to avoid generalisation and to acknowledge the breadth of skills within the profession (Davis in Building Futures, 2011b). However even Heidegger acknowledged that “specialisation is not the consequence but rather the grounds of progress” (Heidegger, 2002, p.63). An attempt to define the architect in its increasingly specialist role must be made.

While although each individual architect possesses the ability to change themselves - to effectively alter wider perceptions there needs to be a collaborative effort from the profession as a whole. In acknowledging this as an opportunity to be exploited rather than as a threat, the RIBA should have no qualms in changing their mantra and to initiate, coordinate and make this happen; starting by defining the architect in the image of value.

Proposition for a responsive position

The previous approach to value has been seen to be awash with ambiguity and problems of perception, instead by defining the architect under a value framework established in the business world, perhaps a more sufficient insight can be gleaned into the future direction of the architect.

Donald Sull, a lecturer at the London Business School, published in the Harvard Business Review a concentrated value framework into a few primary rules (Sull and Eisenhardt, 2001). First, in order to create value one must carve a unique position for themselves in

their chosen market. Once this is done, he stresses “high barriers to entry” must be put in place to stop any competition closing in on your so claimed advantage. Typical examples of these barriers are regulatory or economies of scale. It is what you have that the others don't; the thing that sets you apart from the competition.

Sull also discusses two distinct types of value creation; a resource approach which requires you having and controlling resources that are perhaps rare, valuable for your clients, or are difficult to imitate. These act as your barriers to entry, and if you retain control over these it becomes hard for your competitors to imitate you. The second type discussed is the opportunity logic of value creation; this involves looking for a gap in the market.

Furthermore, a pre-requisite for continued success is through choosing a process that puts your organisation in a flow of opportunity; examples Sull sites are new product development and acquisitions. While in this flow you must nurture some opportunities, but leave others, it is only by investing time in the right places that allows for successful value creation. The implication here is one of prioritisation; making sure you're using your limited resources and capital to achieve the best possible outcome.

Finally Sull highlights the importance of timing; for example getting your product released at the appropriate time is crucial for success.

To begin with, taking Sull's first proposition it is clear that the architecture profession - and the architect more specifically - needs to define their unique position within the industry. The architect as has been established is often valued not by current abilities, but in the absence of the abilities which it lost.

The architect shares a number of capabilities with other industry consulting professions; project management, drafting of plans and sections, 3D design, selection of building materials, understanding the interaction between structure and cost. The list

goes on to include many more abilities which the architect practises on a regular basis yet also shares.

However what is the unique position of the architect? answers come from a number of places:

Amongst those interviewed for the Building Futures report, many agreed that the architecture profession differed in bringing a “social science aspect to the building process” (2011, p.14) this answer lies in the understanding acquired by architects for the interaction between people and their physical surroundings, designing spaces that can manipulate this relationship to ‘enhance individual and social well-being, and therefore quality of life’ (Macmillan, 2004, p.4). This is the moral position of the architect which is again highlighted by Giedion who comments “contemporary architecture takes its start in the a moral problem...[and where it] has been allowed to provide a new setting for contemporary life, this new setting acted in turn upon the life from which it springs. The new atmosphere has led to change and development in the conceptions of the people who live in it.” (Giedion, 1941, p.705)

Next, looking back to the essays on architecture Loe portrays this unique value through quoting Ian Richie; *“Imagination-creativity-intuition, material understanding-analysis-design-economics, and an understanding of the political and social role of the process through which we realise projects are all ingredients in the making of architecture, and the urgent need to dissolve the intellectual boundaries between professions is a fundamental necessity if we are to realise more intelligent and responsive architecture”* (Loe quoting Ian Richie, 2000, p.39)

Ken Worpole (1999, p.13) argues that architects unique value is in their contribution to: *“the wider economic impact of attractive buildings and settings; achieving greater value for money through technical and intellectual expertise; enhanced individual and social*

well-being, and therefore quality of life; greater adaptability, energy-efficiency, and environmental sustainability”

Roger Zogolovich stated that the skill lies in: “being creative to order, and within very tight physical and financial constraints...the skills of fine-tuning a complex building and fitting it into a difficult site are going to be needed more in future, as pressures to build on urban brownfield sites, or adapt existing buildings, continue and increase” (Worpole, 1999, pp.24-28)

Sull follows up with the need to provide ‘barriers to entry’ to this differentiating skill. One would assume that this would be the RIBA and ARBs regulatory protection over the term ‘Architect’. However the value of this term lies in its ability to ensure a completed architectural education. Today this logic can be questioned: in a seven-year course, only 60% of initial entrants make it to part 2 and only 20% make it to part 3 RIBA, or ‘Architect,’ status. (RIBA education statistics 2011-2012) This leaves 80% of architecturally skilled, non-architects within the industry.

Therefore the legislated term architect ceases to be a barrier as for those non-architects to practise architectural design; a number of whom may be better designers than their qualified counterparts (Audience member 3 in Building Futures, 2011b) or more celebrated examples such as Thomas Heatherwick who designs buildings but isn’t himself an architect.

Therefore it must be concluded that the barrier to entry instead becomes the education an architect receives. In no other profession within the built environment do you rigorously study so many elements of building design which contribute to a range of value-types: exchange, use, image, cultural, environmental and social. An architect’s studio training is unique in providing them with years of experience in designing spaces which respond to the subtleties of each of these.

Unfortunately with high-levels of unemployment today it is clear that the supply-demand balance of architects – as controlled by education primarily - is in need of re-calibration. However between 2004 and 2009 the intake of architecture students has increased out of line with the current economy and the number of applicants had increased 23% (Building Futures, 2011, p.36).

The trouble is that while an architectural education prepares students with the many skills needed in practising architecture, the training isn't always seen to function as any other degree subject might. Tom Jeffries, head of Manchester school of architecture, argues that consideration should be given to architectural education as the grounding for a number of professions, with the added bonus that students can easily become an architect if they so choose. (Building Futures, 2011b)

Architecturally trained students who fall from the prescribed career path should be encouraged to seek out non-architectural post-graduate degrees, cross-pollinating the skills of the architect with those of other professions. In this there is potential for an architecture education to produce a far broader supply to a far greater market with unforeseen demands. This cross-pollinating would also have the added benefit of spreading people with an understanding of what architects really do to a number of different areas.

Continuing with Sull, who suggests that capacity for added-value has a limited life-span, and to remain valuable for extended periods of time one must situate themselves within a stream of constant opportunity; and in this, understanding which of the opportunities to prioritise.

In recognising that the unique attributes of the architects are retained and monitored through education – then it follows that opportunities are likely to be developed here

too. The architecture profession therefore must constantly shift its model of education to catch new opportunities that present themselves, especially to take advantage of the “impact of a globalising economy, exploding information technology capacity, and cultural confusion” (Dickon Robinson, 2011, pp.4-5).

A number of architecture school leaders have expressed frustration for the homogenously defined criteria enforced by RIBA validation (Alex Wright, Chair of the Standing Conference for Heads of Schools of Architecture (SCHOSA), commented at the ASN Forum 2013); which while being successful in unifying an architecture education, struggles to be limber enough to pick up the opportunities presenting themselves in potential new methods of practise. The profession must be characterised by its diversity, and ability to adapt to new opportunities if it is going to address the uncomfortable position alluded to in the Building Futures report, and as such perhaps new models of educational regulation need to be investigated. Perhaps they already are.

Next Sull suggests that by placing yourself in this changing opportunity flow there must be diligent prioritisation. Having established the process of architectural education as the foundation of the professions potential for added-value, prioritization must be given to its future direction and must therefore put in its place out of touch pedagogies cast in increasingly de-saturated images of Vitruvian ideology. Indeed even more recent discussion such as Eisenmans view on architecture need to be questioned “The essence of any creative act is the communication of an original idea from its author, through a means of expression, to its receiver” (Eisenmann, beginning of chapter 1) Which although capturing a regularly accepted understanding of design, must be challenged. It captures the idea of architect as author, something which has troubled a number of theoreticians (such as Roland Barthes in his book on the ‘death of the author’) and is indicative of an architecture removed from its stakeholders. The need for a continued exploration into architectural pedagogy suggests that introductions into histories of the

architect should be taken with both an informative and sufficiently critical perspective, highlighting alongside it the more recent developments with as much conviction as those gone by.

Even William Curtis in his prodigious work 'modern architecture since 1900' acknowledges this change: "Each generation poses different questions, has different problems to solve, and sees the same buildings differently." (Curtis, 1996, p.688)

Today there are exciting new areas for architects to explore. Take social media for



example; the capabilities of globally interactive elements such as Facebook, Twitter and an increasing mobile culture all have the potential to transform the collaborative element of design (Bakos, 2013). Innovation has already begun to flourish in reaction to the professions changing sphere of influence: examples such as 'Assemble' a part 1 qualified group who produced 'Folly for a flyover' and 'Cineroleum'

- convey new possibilities of what it means to be the architect in contemporary society.

Sull concludes by highlighting the importance of timing. An area which again the architecture profession has demonstrated its lack of awareness for; in the introduction of BIM and 3D modelling to the RIBA in the plan of work (2013); they are thirty two years behind the release of CATIA 3D which was being used by aerospace, automotive industries and in industrial design since 1981 (Bernard, 2003).

Today is a significant moment in time (Elliot, Building Futures 2011b); the current, and continuing economic difficulties in the UK are having dramatic impacts on levels of construction and employment in the industry. In areas such as housing, the aged housing stock is becoming unsustainable (DCMS, 2006, p.18), and developers are

continuing to damage our cultural heritage through the mass production of 'Noddy Boxes', so named by current RIBA president Angela Bradley (Bradley, 2011). The profession needs to respond now.



In looking at the added-value of the architect through the lens provided by a business worlds perception of value, it is clear to see that new frameworks can reveal interesting insights into the profession..

Does the architect need to engage with an industry understanding of quality-design, an understanding that comes with several challenges, or can the architecture profession forge a new direction for themselves?

In 'Good design – it all adds up' the following list is attributed to good design, perhaps they are examples which should be related directly to the architect:

Better, Healthier places to live; More marketable homes; Build strong communities; create spacious, flexible homes that keep their value; reduce crime; Environments that help learning; happier schools; higher-quality higher education; support learning and encourage good behaviour; build higher education environments with strong identities; Shorter stay for patients; Less Hazardous, healthier hospitals; Connected, more valued and productive work force; Profitable premises; revitalise run-down neighbourhoods

Conclusion

It is vital that architects learn to promote themselves as being able to bring added value to clients, particularly through promoting and practising 'good design'”(Reed, 2010)

The statement by Ruth Reed, then President of the RIBA, is significant in its expression of the recent advice from the RIBA for architects. The statement too carries many sentiments from the discourse which is aiming to prove the added-value of quality-design.

This poignant phrase manages to capture within it several of the issues which are trapping the architecture profession outside the sphere of influence driving the built environment forward. The phrase itself contains unhelpful generalisations: it assumes that ‘architects’ are a clear and homogeneously defined set of people which as has been established are in fact in need of a re-evaluation, and may include some non-architects within its folds; it states that it is the responsibility of the ‘architect’ to promote themselves to clients – in doing so absolving others of this responsibility (including the RIBA themselves); it allows us to think that inadequate promotion of skills is the main barrier to restoring faith to architects – choosing not to acknowledge that architects don’t necessarily always have the skills to fulfil clients value outcomes, specifically when it comes to issues involving exchange or use value; it uses the term added-value without consideration for the subjectivity ingrained in the concept and the multitude of clients and stakeholders who hold a rich and unpredictable array of value judgements; it promotes quality-design as the key to gaining clients investment in the architect instead of focusing on the inherent skills that architects can bring to the table - skills which aren’t tied to the notion of quality-design, a term which instead divorces architects from stakeholders, and with the introduction of the term invites – along with its discourse - the critique of what is quality-design; a critique that has led to measurement and quantification being sought after; that which perhaps is the holy grail of this discussion.

I propose that while it is important for the RIBA to provide advice and ammunition for architects in the face of new challenges, the implications of this dissertation suggest that perhaps a new advice should be sought in a different area. Instead of forming advice for architects around an already established body of literature outwith its control, the RIBA should attempt to extend its own markedly distinct body of research to provide architects with the necessary ammunition in an ever competitive market of industry consultants.

Instead of trying to convince industry stakeholders of the added-value of quality-design, the architect must aim to clarify its definition to respond to recent changes in the construction industry, and through this promotion aim to alter stakeholder perceptions. It must be ensured that architectural education provides the skills which will allow architects to have a strong position in industry today, and in the future, and to provide a critical stance on traditional, out-of-touch, discourses. In making these changes the real reason behind Ruth Reeds statement and the task of the RIBA can be addressed; to create a more influential architecture profession that can be impactful in carving improvement within the built environment.

Ruth Reeds statement should be modified, and instead should read: "It is vital that those who are architecturally educated work together, and with larger institutions, in carving a clear definition for themselves, as architects; a definition which must be shaped in an understanding of the values of our contemporary stakeholders and by the capacity for adding-value 'architects' receive from their unique training – our understanding of the human condition"

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