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The need to produce greener technologies and adapt environmentally friendly practices is becoming greater and greater. In few disciplines is this need as present as in architecture. Currently, the discipline is largely informed by sustainable practices. The Guide to Architecture Resources provides valuable references for further learning about the field of architecture. Prominent contemporary examples are explored and resources for use in planning architectural projects are also included. Among the many architectural guides in our collection, this source of information provides quality resources that are highly valuable for students, building managers, professionals and those who are otherwise interested in the discipline.



General Information on Architecture and Planning

Architecture is the discipline of designing and erecting buildings. While some consider it to be a science, others see it more as an art form. Physical buildings are significant representations of culture or politics and contain perceptions inherent in society. Architects also realize the importance of context in terms of environment as well as history. Good architectural practices are dependent upon utilizing these characteristics in order to create products that are historically and culturally relevant. Three practical principals guide the discipline: durability, utility, and aesthetics. These principals are integral at all levels of designing and planning. Architecture is continually acted upon by the functional requirements of buildings as well as the available technologies and resources for their construction. Many factors are responsible for influencing architecture and ultimately result in complex products.

Major Contemporary Examples of Architecture

Major examples of modern architecture challenge conventional conceptions of design through unique approaches and original appearance. Often constructed as iconic representations of geographic locations or as significant functional buildings which house art or events, these works are physical manifestations of culture.

Utilizing highly technical methods which are informed by technological innovation, these buildings are created through modern practices. The complexity of these projects is a result of cultural-ideological and practical advancement.



- **Sydney Opera House** – Arguably the most recognizable piece of contemporary architecture, the Sydney Opera House is an iconic symbol of Sydney and Australia as a whole. The architect of the building, Jørn Utzon, received the Pritzker Prize for its construction and it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- **National Grand Theatre** – An exterior of titanium accented glass surrounded by an artificial lake distinguishes this recent architectural project. While modern architecture is met with ambivalence in China, the construction of this work displays the future of architecture in the country.
- **The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao** is considered one of the most important works of contemporary architecture. Reflective titanium panels are used to create an organic looking building which matches its environment.
- **30 St Mary Axe** is an easily recognizable and unorthodox work of architecture located in London, England. Formerly the Baltic Exchange building, the 30 St Mary Axe is now Britain's most expensive building, costing 630 million pounds.
- **National Grand Theatre** – An exterior of titanium accented glass surrounded by an artificial lake distinguishes this recent architectural project. While modern architecture is met with ambivalence in China, the construction of this work displays the future of architecture in the country.

Planning and Architecture Resources

Within the last decade architecture has undergone a significant shift in emphases. Green technologies and building techniques have come to the foreground of architecture and are currently focal points. As existing buildings are challenged with limiting their negative impact on the environment, new methods and materials allow architects to construct in a more earth-friendly way. Beyond the ideological and conceptual benefits, such approaches are cost-effective and highly popular. Further, there are many government programs which reward and encourage green practices. In order to succeed as an architect, it is important to consider the value of such approaches.

- **World Architecture Community** – Is a global effort to create a virtual meeting place for architects from all over the world. WA offers resources informing users of contemporary architectural practices and theory.
- **ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities** – The official document which details technical requirements for accessibility in architecture as outlined by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. These guidelines must be followed in the design, construction and alteration of buildings.
- **The American Institute of Architects** is a professional organization for architects and allied partners that acts as the unified voice of architects. AIA is also responsible for creating contract documents, conducting market research and promoting design excellence.
- **The English Dictionary: Architecture Terms** – A glossary of over 1000 terms that are specific to architecture. Taken from the Collaborative International Dictionary of English, these definitions also include meanings outside of the context of architecture.
- **Built in America** – The Library of Congress hosts the Historic American Buildings Survey, Historic American Engineering Record, and Historic American Landscapes Survey collections which document the history of architecture in America. Explore achievements in architecture, engineering and design through a wide range of building types and environments.
- **Architect of the Capitol** – The Architect of the Capitol is a federal agency that is responsible for maintaining, preserving and developing the buildings and land of the United States Capitol Complex. Those in the agency utilize modern approaches in order to work most effectively, while respecting historical significance.
- **archINFORM** is a database of over 29,000 planned or built projects which mainly focuses on contemporary architecture. International in scale, archINFORM's database is the largest online collection of its type.
- **Building Design and Construction: White Paper on Sustainability** – A brief history in sustainable architecture is provided in addition to an analysis of leading trends and related issues. Dialogue surrounding sustainable development is further encouraged through an action plan of best practices and recommendations.
- **The Cities and Buildings Database** is a digital collection of buildings and plans searchable by country, city, style, title, architect or date of construction. Containing a wide variety of buildings which span across

large periods of time and geographical locations the database appeals to many.

- **LEED Certification** –Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is an international green building certification system. It provides a clear framework for encouraging sustainable building design and operations, while offering rating systems which promote strategies for environmental performance.
- **The Sustainable Facilities Tool** allows for the identification and prioritization of cost-effective green building strategies. It is also provides advice for materials to use in different building contexts and informs about sustainability in general.

Sydney Opera House Photo Wikimedia Commons by Enoch Lau

(http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sydney_Opera_House_Sails_edit02.jpg)

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