ARCHITECTURE'S INTENT:
Beyond green rating tools in form and aesthetics in green architecture

INTRODUCTION
The modernists believed in the heuristic of "form-follows-function", loosely explained to mean that a building should take its shape and form from its program or intended use. In the emerging practice of green architecture, guided by green rating tools, "form-follows-performance" seems to be evolving as the new ethos. In the pursuit of recognition through maximum ratings under the green rating tools, some critical fundamentals of architecture seem to have been side-lined and has thus resulted in buildings which are an exhibition of green technologies or the characteristic "glass box" with no real cultural, philosophical or artistic meaning that architecture represents.

OBJECTIVE
The objective of the poster is to study the intent of architecture and how it aligns with the five target issues for sustainable construction. The poster studies how the incorrect or "blind" application of rating tools, Green Star in particular, has engendered the apparent bifurcation in architecture. Two case studies, Council House 2 in Melbourne and Eastgate Centre in Harare Zimbabwe, form the basis for the argument that architecture has a deeper obligation than utilitarian concerns. One other case study, Santos Headquarters in Adelaide Australia, illustrates architecture that is highly utilitarian and is guided by rating tools with minimal progressive and social-cultural aspect of architecture.

COUNCIL HOUSE 2, MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

RATING TOOL - GREEN STAR AUSTRALIA

CH2 was designed to stimulate a responsive design brief by having the impact through its location within the greater city context and have a reference to its neighbours (CONTEXTUAL & AESTHETIC IMPACT). Radiant cooling, balcony plants, shower towers, chilled ceiling panels, thermal mass, re-useable resources and night purge (QUANTUM CHANGE & TRANSFERABILITY) in CH2 along with the technical and environmental performance of CH2.

The concept for CH2 was for it to behave as a living organism that's environmentally sustainable (ECOLOGICAL QUALITY & ENERGY CONSERVATION), requires no effort by its users to maintain comfortable internal temperatures and expresses these issues in its aesthetics while arousing the public's interest (ETHICAL STANDARDS & SOCIAL EQUITY).

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From Vitruvius’ theory that architecture is simply good planning, sound construction and a pleasing appearance, to Le Corbusier’s expressionist theory that a building is something symbolic, to Durand’s theory that the aim of architecture is the public and private usefulness and the happiness and preservation of mankind, it is evident that architecture has always aspired to a "higher goal" beyond the immediate utilitarian demands or specifics of a given project in terms of program, client or site. In particular, its aspiration to remain as society’s channel of enquiry (a way of understanding or knowing) into space and form has often found expression in the term and concept of aesthetics. It is this "transcendence" dimension which transforms any architectural project from a solution-delivery service or activity into an act of social provocation (ETHICAL STANDARDS & SOCIAL EQUITY) in the way we comprehend space and form.

This also explains to a large extent why architecture shuns formulaic as well as heuristic solution-templates which attempt to subvert the originality and creativity goal in a project. This serves to explain the bifurcation architecture is currently experiencing, signified by the highly-award mainstream architecture on the one hand and the highly green-rated architecture (often denoted as green-rated buildings) which arise out of a formulaic application of green rating tools in practice. Such formulaic application of the tools in the design process easily stifles the creative endeavor and aspiration of architecture.

However there is limited but growing evidence that in the hands of an inspired architect, the aesthetic and green agendas in architecture could be mutually achieved. This poster contrasts two projects by the African architect, Mick Pearce, with a highly green-rated project in Adelaide Australia, which is viewed as firmly utilitarian, to substantiate this view of coexistence between aesthetics and green and how to mitigate against the looming bifurcation-risk in architecture as it embraces the green agenda.

RESEARCH & SOURCES

COUNCIL HOUSE 2, MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

SHANGHAI TOWER CONTINUES TO IMPRESS AS IT TAKES ITS PLACE AMONG THE WORLD'S BEST HIGH-RISES

SANTOS HEADQUARTERS

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CONCLUSION

Each of these three buildings offer somewhat different experiences when inside the buildings, walking past them or even from looking at a picture of either of them. In, CH2 & Eastgate Centre, one is left intrigued by the innovation in the forms & the unusual elements expressed on the facades thus proving important questions. The Santos Headquarters seem too similar, aesthetically, to many other surrounding buildings. One could easily walk past and not be intrigued or understand that it is an environmentally sustainable building as no sustainability element is expressed. This type of architecture fails to inspire. Is it indeed sustainable architecture or simply a sustainable building?

REFERENCES & SOURCES

SANTOS HEADQUARTERS

Floor-by-floor air handlers, active chilled beams throughout the building and water chillers were used to maintain a low-energy comfortable internal environment (ECOLOGICAL QUALITY & SOCIAL EQUITY).

SANTOS HEADQUARTERS

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