



The awareness of the past for an unknown future: The present act of the architect and the creative user in shaping spatial space.

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Abstract:

Architecture is yielded by use and design. The architectural realm is well known as a property of Architects “architecture is a heroic endeavor made by architects, guided by the masters” (Banham, 1975, p.3)*. Gropius articulated that the architect’s ultimate concern in designing buildings is represented in their human use and occupation. Therefore, questioning the architects’ perception of the users’ needs arises especially in times of crisis. Hereby, users are a threat to architects in terms of spatial transformation and how the building can adapt to reflect changes in use, and who between the architect, owner, and user, has the authority and knowledge to alternate the occupied form/ space. As if Functionalism is the starting point for most post-war architects’ assessment of use; flexibility, polyvalence, and user collaboration. Nowadays, the global pandemic emerged the necessity of the creative user to give existing spaces new meaning, a change of use that is not merely dependent upon a physical change but a change in the perception of the user toward the occupied space and the needs through the time of crisis. This paper is to concentrate on the intertwining role of the architect – the creative user who is not defined as a passive in the architecture realm but as a reactive user following the three types of creativity: mental, bodily, and physical. An analytical study of how users would shape their own space if they have the choice through a fixed space to design their quarantine based on the Covid-19 lockdown.

In 1936 Nikolaus Pevsner published his book “Pioneers of Modern Design from William Morris to Walter Gropius” the main idea of modernist architecture was to create functional spaces without decoration for its own sake. The modernists often used factory-made parts and man-made materials such as metal and concrete and rejected traditional styles and ornamentations. The most important figures in modern architecture had established their reputations by the 1920s; Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, and Le Corbusier who famously said, “A house is a machine for living in”. The phrase for the modern movement was “form following function”, the idea that a building should encapsulate the type of things that are happening inside it. However, architects like Charles Rennie Mackintosh as one of the most innovative and creative Scots of the 20th century and a pioneer of the modern art movement, there is more to him than form and function in his search for a new non-historical style of architecture, he designed according to human needs seeing people as individuals, not masses who needed not a machine to live in but a work of art taking as an example what is known now as Mackintosh School of Art the simplicity of Japanese design can be seen throughout the school itself, mostly in the library, a style that focused on simple forms and natural materials using texture, light, and shadow to evoke a calming and organic feel, a building that had an overwhelming impact on the creative lives of who studied there. “I remember when I got to the steps and just looked up, I knew that my life just could change forever. It was all the most exciting thing that ever happened to me..., I’d have no idea where my life would have gone if I hadn’t gone there.” – fashion designer Pam Hogg (2009), talking about herself as a student and her user experience at that building which was opened in 1909 and was one of the first buildings in Scotland to have electric light, heating, and air cooling system. Later, only a small percentage of art school students get to work on the “Mac.”. Meanwhile, the rest are distributed over a variety of nine “purpose-built” and “adapted buildings” nearby. To bring the rest of the campus to the standards of the “Mac.”, in 2009, they launched a competition to find architects for huge redevelopment including the demolition of all the buildings opposite the main school building and the creation of something “new” while Steve Holl Architects in collaboration with JM Architects and Arup were appointed with that mission. The building must have an idea that drives the design, and curiosity, imagination, and enthusiasm are all behind the creative act. As mentioned earlier, The original building has a wonderful light which led Steven Holl to follow as a key to designing the new Building across the street and how to make the new building related to the new Mackintosh building and it was the analysis of natural light and browsing circuit that connects all parts of the building with vertical tubes of light that represents the structure holding up the building at the same time to become a super energy conscious building. In the relation between a building and its users, the “Mac.” users for the long term are students-professors, however, with its international fame, before the devastating fire in 2018, it offered group tours, so it became a kind of museum that needs to stay preserved but in terms of museum

standards, meaning, it would not be allowed users to stroll around the building or to have access to unique works of art, there will be strict rules about not touching nor sitting but with careful management, there is a possibility to preserve the building but allowing it still to function.

“Problems arise when we forget it is an abstraction and assume that the physique, race, nationality, gender, social class and experience of all users are the same.” (Hill, J. 2001). When a split in Modernism occurred or as Charles Jencks announced it “The Death of Modernism” in 1977 by the demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe project in Missouri, U.S.A., which represented the failure of high modernism, a project designed by Minoru Yamasaki, the same architect who designed the World Trade Center in New York. In the shades of the crisis situation of the late Vietnam-War era back then, working with the St.Louis Housing Authority, Yamasaki designed thirty-three buildings of a public housing project of eleven stories each, following the cheapest plan with cost-saving measures from the skip-stop elevator on every third floor to the flimsy, cheap built-in interior accessories. However, the deterioration of Pruitt-Igoe after a few years of its completion in 1954 in which the local press addressed that the skip-stop elevators and hallways -where families could gather- had proved to be opportune environments for violent crime, residents were forced to walk through the galleries to reach their apartments and were threatened and tracked by gangs who used these spaces as hangouts. The aim to provide a better environment than the slums ended up with residents that felt ignored so they vented their frustration in the environment where they lived (Newman, O. 1972).

Influenced by the early 20th-century constructivism developed in the Soviet Union and by the deconstructivism theories of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida “architecture is nothing but one of many ways of communication”, besides the rise of CAD: Computer-Aided Design, which in specific, was a key factor in the development of the postmodern architectural style “Deconstructivism”, a style that attempts to move far from the conventions of modernism and its famous notion “form follows function”. The contribution of Zaha Hadid, the well-known radical deconstructivism architect, in the IBA Block Two, so-called “Women’s Block”. After the critics, the International Building Exhibition IBA Berlin received in the 1980s for not engaging female experts but only male architects and not taking into account how those projects will affect “female residents” and their needs. Women from the feminist group Frau-Steine-Erde made seven unannounced speeches that insisted on engaging women in all stages of the planning process and that IBA ought to hire female architects and planners with taking into account the living conditions for women during the renewal. In the end that led to more opportunities for female architects and to the creation of the Feminist Organization of Planners and Architects (FOPA). Three female architects were invited to the reconstruction of Wohnhof Block 2: Zaha Hadid

(Lot 1), Myra Warhaftig(Lot 2), and Christine Jachmann (Lot 3). The planning and urban design prioritized experimental and emancipatory living, being accessible to handicapped residents. The focus was also on the use of energy-saving construction methods and environment-friendly raw materials. Hadid herself aspired to achieve a spiritual liberation for women and responded with an expressive tower, seeking freedom through the form in the walled-off city and creating new architectural spaces where the roof functions as both garden and a children's playground. The consideration of disabled people has been a decisive point in considering the elevator as the pivotal point of the building with six handicapped-accessible apartments. Hadid found the theme "women building for women" very limiting. Albeit the fact that it was financed as social housing and the disagreements that led the architect to resign from the project before its completion, the Degewo residential building was finished.

Recently, a new generation of architects has accentuated with a particular metamodern sensibility, balancing idealism and practicality in their design approach. Metamodernism is a new moment in all spheres of human activities. Meta is a term in Latin that means "after, between, beyond". Thus, it is a movement that covered the period after Postmodernism. Researchers Robin van den Akker and Timotheus Vermeulen depict Metamodernism as a nonstop action, a "constant repositioning" combining elements of modernism and postmodernism, it represents a balance between two poles, modern 'strict functionalism' and postmodern 'boundless formalism' (Kadagishvili, D. 2013). In Metamodern, they investigate the ways in which the climate/ financial/ and geographical crisis affect contemporary ways of doing architecture. "Good design is careful, bad design is careless" Bjarke Ingels, the founder of BIG, as he calls his architecture himself, oscillates between modern and postmodern. For his company, it mastered effectively floating structures. Ingels incorporates his architectural concepts into every facet of his life, like his "SS Ingels" project; turning a tired 450-ton ship into his private home. So, is the floating structure idea considered the answer to the rising sea levels? In the preceding examples, the buildings are used over a long period of time, where the users are not passive but contributed to the building itself, even though "users are rarely clients" (Hill, J. 2001). The "SS Ingels" is a case where the architect-owner-user (consumer) is the same person who has long been a proponent of floating structures like the Urban Rigger project to alleviate students' housing shortage in Copenhagen, The Ocean City Island concept for 10.000 people. In his "SS Ingels", a new method to adapt to climate change, "sea levels rise, so will houseboats!". Albeit it does not prevent the consequences of climate change, it gives a feasible proposal to cope for the future.

There are three categories of users that determine how a design is used, the passive user, the reactive user, and the creative user (Hill, J. 2003). The passive user cannot

manipulate or modify the space (Hill, J. 2003). A reactive user adjusts the space within the predetermined format dictated or subtly suggested by the architect through their design (Hill, J. 2003). A creative user is able to generate a new space or give a new meaning to a space contrasting to the original intended use (Hill, J. 2003). All three types of users are important to consider when designing architecture presents problems in how they interact and use the architect's designed space. Moreover, the new European Bauhaus indicates the involvement of users in the design process. However, the question arises is to design for or by people? In human-centered design two main roles of participation require special attention, namely those of users and designers (Keinonen, T. 2009). For instance, a Finnish sports instrument company "Suunto" has recruited top athletes into its design teams to acquire deep personal knowledge – "hobbyist knowing" – about different sports cultures (Kotro, T. 2007).

Consequently, an open call named Design Your Quarantine "DYQ", was conducted on social media. A call for everyone to release their thoughts of their personal space, to organize a (10 x 10) meters fixed space for one to two inhabitants, without any other conditions but the way they find it suitable and derived from their own daily lifestyle needs against the backdrop of the Covid-19 lockdown. The needs they conceive in a "spatial space of their dreams", for various living patterns. Since this study is only subjected to two dimensions, only 2D horizontal plan suggestions were analyzed in terms of Areas and usage priorities with the exclusion of the 3D drawings, and vertical sections' impediments, since this call invites professional and nonprofessional people. In this study, twenty proposals/quarantine plans were selected to analyze. The participants were architecture students, architects, non-related to architecture with knowledge of smartphone drawing apps, and even parents of architecture students who were involved in this experience. Each contribution includes the 2D plan, the concept title, the participant/s' full name/s, and her/his/their country. Few samples of the submitted concepts' titles: Healthy and Smart Design/ Comfort Zone/ Flexible Lockdown/ Pause-Reconnect/ The Green House/ Stay Home/ Dynamism/ The Wellbeing Nook/ The Heaven/ Green Modular Home/ Dis-Connection/ All in One/ Square Isle/ The Positive Impact/ Arcs. The other five contributions remained untitled. Through these titles, the main concern of each participant to create the space was applied to mental, bodily, and physical notions by using the terms (healthy, Dynamic, Flexible, Disconnect, Reconnect, wellbeing, green, heaven, positive impact).

Respective colors indicate the common activities in each of the DYQ 2D plans (Figure 1). The classification follows the five common aspects included in the plans: Sleeping (blue)/ Outer space+patio+gym (green)/ Cooking+ Dinning (Bordeaux)/ Living room+ Office(red)/ Other services: Bathroom, Storage, Hall, Laundry (yellow). The purpose of this classification is to assist in the knowledge of the most acquired activities the

lockdown experience emerged according to the user experience. The data analysis of the spatial priority for the activities according to the specified areas of the DYQ 20 plans as created by each participant/virtual user shows the supremacy of the outer space area ahead of other activities which include a terrace, greenery Patio, and exercising zone (Figure 2). The contributors incline leveraging natural ventilation and maximum daylight exposure by maintaining the openness between spaces and possessing a tendency to seek connections with nature and its elements.

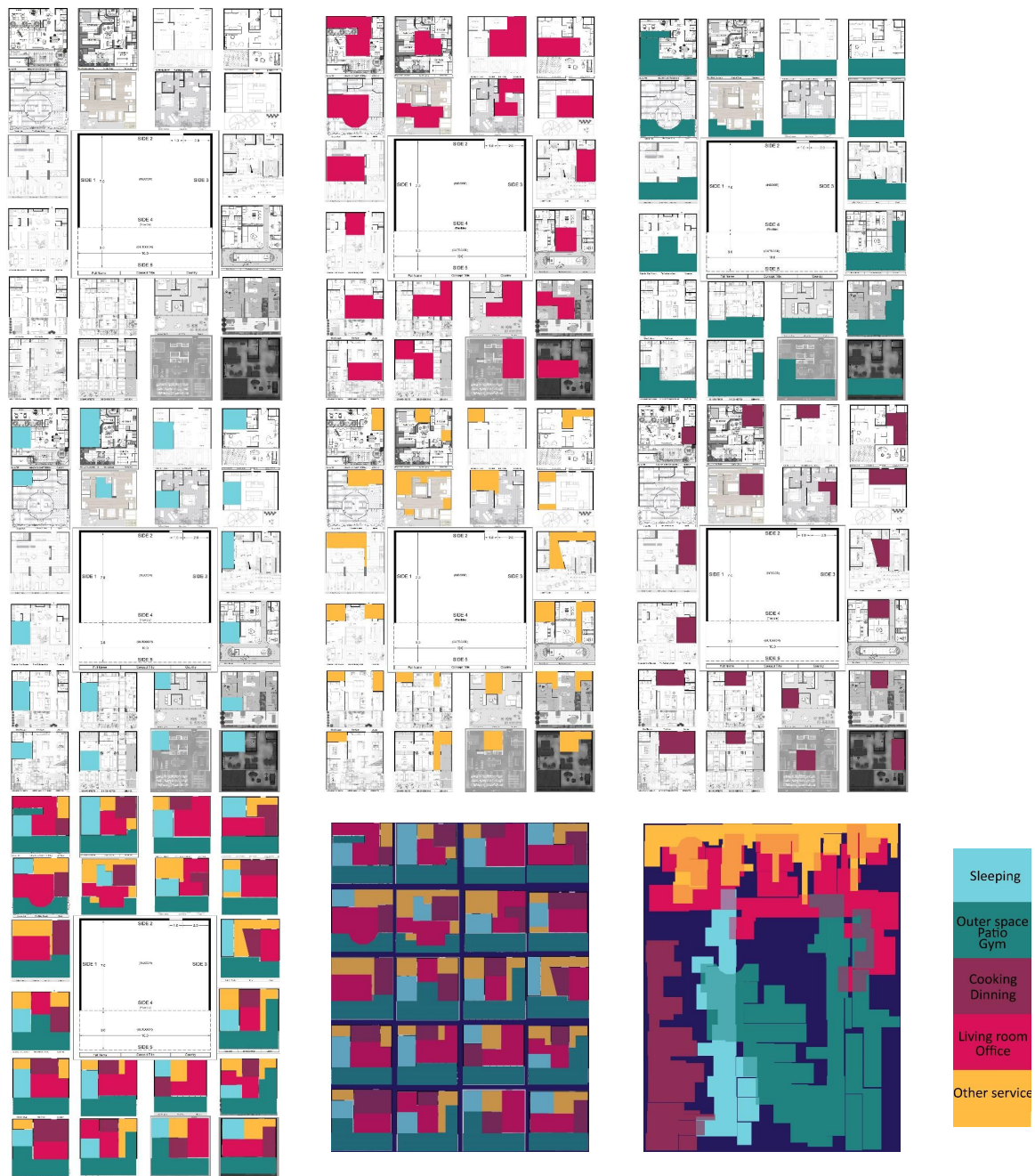
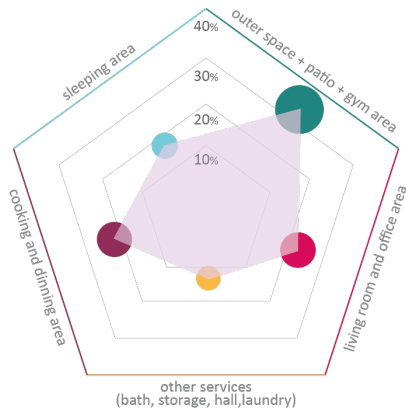


Figure 1. The DYQ 20 Plans and the activities areas are indicated by their respective colors. Source: Autor, 2022.



Activity	Area percentage
Outer space/patio/gym area	30.20%
Cooking and dining area	21.85%
Living room and office	21.70%
Other services(bath, storage, hall,laundry)	12.35%
Sleeping area	10.65%

Figure 2. Polygonal Chart demonstrates the spatial priority for the activities according to the specified areas of the DYQ 20 plans- Source: Author, 2022.

CONCLUSION

“Architecture does not exist, what exists is the spirit of architecture” -Louis Kahn.

The empirical study corroborates the users’ conviction toward improving the usage of the spaces they occupy once they have the chance to express their needs through creating their own built environment. The pandemic is a constant reminder of how much our living space is important to our overall well-being. How will we design our homes in the future? How will architects respond?. Architects have to build with people in mind and how the citizens of the planet may live together happily in the future. It is essential for the architect to understand the type of user a design suggests because, while the user can be passive, active, or creative whatever the character of the space he or she inhabits, space does often affect the use, even though one rarely determines the other. (Hill, J. 2001). The importance of architecture is enormous, its permanent changing movements and styles tend to respond to the contemporary needs caused by a crisis or welfare. Notwithstanding, what we are witnessing now as generating architecture by artificial intelligence while the AI has the potential to reshape the architecture of the future, customers/users can order prefabricated houses personalized following their own needs and prospects which sounds like a threat by the new technology to the role of the architect as it is perceived today despite the concern as Tado Ando describe it: “a future where architecture is created solely through the selective sorting of past data” (Borgus M., 2022). Albeit the uncertainty of the level of that threat, not only by customers/users but also by the new tech., another horizon can open for architects to embody their creativity including free forms and complex structures to reform the architecture realm.

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