



Faculty of Engineering
Department of Architecture

Professional Practice

5th year – 1st Semester

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Room No. 313

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Ethics and Professional Practice



Course Reading List and References:

- **The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice**
by R. L. Hayes, Ph.D., AIA Editor-in-Chief

Construction industry bodies

► Professional organisations

► Members of the building team all have their professional organisations that act as learned societies with libraries, research facilities and internet websites for members.

► **Architects**

► Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) (www.architecture.com)
► Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) (www.rias.org.uk)

► **Project Managers**

► Association for Project Management (APM) (www.apm.org.uk)



Employment Opportunities

- ▶ Many years ago, most architects were employed either in private practice or in local government.
- ▶ There were a relatively small number of architects employed in other areas, but they were the minority.
- ▶ One of the great advantages of an **architectural education** has always been that, because it is so broadly based, the architect has the chance to examine in some detail a great many employment possibilities.

► Private practice

- An architect will opt for private practice for many reasons:
- ***Because the type of work is likely to be varied***
- ***Because of the particular type of work***
- ***The opportunity to become involved***
- ***The opportunity to take responsibility***
- ***The opportunity for advancement***
- ***Satisfaction***



Because the type of work is likely to be varied

- ▶ This is the kind of statement which scarcely bears examination.
- ▶ There are certainly practices both large and small which handle an amazing variety of work, but most practices tend to have certain project types in which they profess particular expertise and they get commissions for work for which they have a reputation.
- ▶ Even in a large office handling different project types, the individual architect will often find that he or she is always given a particular kind of work to do.



Because of the particular type of work

- ▶ There are some private firms which tackle projects which an architect would not encounter elsewhere.
- ▶ These might include very large and prestigious buildings, or buildings under the direction of a famous and much sought after signature architect or highly specialised building types.



Because of the particular type of work

- ▶ In practice, the design of a new media centre, hospital and so on is rarely left to the 'in-house' architects.
- ▶ Therefore, an architect seeking to gain experience in such specialised buildings usually has to join those private firms which specialise in them.
- ▶ In theory, every architect can design any building after going through the appropriate processes of briefing, analysis and synthesis.
- ▶ In practice, **time is money** and the architect with previous experience of a particular building type will most likely design the next such building commissioned by a client.



The opportunity to become involved

- ▶ ***The opportunity to take responsibility***
- ▶ Certainly, in the small-to-medium-sized office an architect usually will be encouraged to take responsibility for work, site inspections, and even management of staff, provided he or she can demonstrate the appropriate ability.
- ▶ In larger offices, there may be more bureaucracy at work, but even there, an architect prepared to work hard and gifted with ordinary competence can enjoy a fulfilling life.



The opportunity for advancement

- An architect who feels involved in the firm's fortunes, who takes on responsibility above that which is indicated in the job description (if any), who demonstrates ability and who attracts a following of satisfied clients is almost certain to rise to the top of any private firm.



The opportunity for advancement

- ▶ In 2013, 20% of all architects in the country worked as one-person practices and 55% of architects worked in practices which fall into the category of medium to small employing 2–30 persons.
- ▶ Practices employing more than fifty architects account for 14% of all working architects.
- ▶ Some architects prefer the small office because of its friendly atmosphere. It by no means follows that a small office is friendly and a large office unfriendly.
- ▶ Indeed, a clash of personalities which can be absorbed within a firm employing fifty could be disastrous in an office of only five people.



The opportunity for advancement

- ▶ The larger office may also offer certain advantages in the form of back up and benefits which may not be available in a small office. There may be greater freedom in a small office, but there is less flexibility to meet sudden surges in workload.
- ▶ The most notable point about a private office is that there is always the pressure to earn the income to pay the bills.
- ▶ For the architect at the bottom of the hierarchy, the pressure is more noticeable in the smaller firm where the key policy decisions can readily be seen in a fairly crude way.
- ▶ Such pressure gives many people a sense of excitement and a rush of adrenalin.
- ▶ We suspect that it is an important, if perhaps un-recognised, factor in the decision to work in private practice.

Satisfaction

- ▶ We know of no architects who opt for private practice as a way of ensuring job security.
- ▶ Private practice usually suffers badly whenever there is a recession, because it depends directly on individual clients being prepared to invest money in building work.
- ▶ The public sector is usually thought of as more secure employment, but anecdotal evidence suggests that many architects find public sector employment more stressful than private practice.



Local authority

- ▶ Architects in local government have certain advantages.
- ▶ If the authority is of reasonable size, they have the authority's other departments, e.g. legal, public health, building control, planning and so on, available for advice.



Local authority

- ▶ It must never be forgotten that not all architects want to design very large and prestigious projects; many feel more at home working on smaller projects.
- ▶ **A particular feature** of working in local government is that architects who put in a number of years service with the same authority will build up an understanding of the philosophies of, and relationships with, the departments who regularly require building work.



Other public sector organisations

- ▶ Other public and semi-public organisations such as universities, health authorities and trusts tend to offer rather specialised experience.
- ▶ For example, many architects gain enormous satisfaction from a professional lifetime spent in the rapidly developing world of healthcare.
- ▶ The principal disadvantage of such sectors stems from the same root: the difficulty in moving to an office carrying out different kinds of projects unless the particular expertise is required.

Large companies

- ▶ Some large companies have their own architects departments.
- ▶ The work tends to be highly specialised, but it very much depends on the company.
- ▶ The atmosphere is more commercial than in local government, but there are similarities, particularly in the way in which the architect works for the employer rather than in an independent capacity for a client.

► Manufacturers

- Product design and development has traditionally had a valuable input from architects.
- Furniture design is a good example where many architects try their hand.
- There is a multitude of products which would, and in some cases do, benefit enormously from architectural input: electrical fittings, ironmongery, floor wall and ceiling tiles and panels, glazing units, doors, windows, etc.
- In many instances, a relatively common building component might be improved by an experienced architect.
- The number of architects who work in this field is small and it is usually an interest which develops in the course of performing general architectural services.

Academia

- ▶ There are good opportunities for architects in schools of architecture if they have an interest in teaching.
- ▶ Interest is the most important thing, but the ability to explain difficult concepts in a simple way is necessary for a good lecturer.
- ▶ The working environment is quite different from that in other employment areas.
- ▶ **The sense of cooperating with colleagues on a project is missing of course and friendships may not be formed easily.**
- ▶ **Lecturing is, by definition, usually a solitary occupation albeit with a changeable group who may or may not interact.**



Academia

- ▶ Experience in practice is the great difference between the requirements for a lecturer in Architecture and a lecturer in, say, Mathematics or History.
- ▶ The budding lecturer should, therefore, gain as much experience as possible before becoming a full-time teacher.
- ▶ Most posts have opportunities for research and consultancy work.



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