A Living Tradition

[Architecture of The Bahamas 2.0]

Congress for the New Urbanism

Savannah
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The New Urban Guild
Miami Beach, Florida, USA

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REQUESTS

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THE STYLES OF

Illustration by Seth Harvey, used courtesy of Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company
Evolving Styles

The great changes of human history have never been either easy or instantaneous. Some, such as the decline of the Roman Empire, occurred over centuries and with much loss of human life. It is preposterous to contemplate anything remotely so costly in the struggle to revive the human languages of architecture. But it is a world-changing event, and it will take time.

It appears that we are about halfway into a thirty to forty yearlong period of renewal of the human-based languages, or styles, of architecture. America leads most of the developed world, and the southeastern United States is one of the most progressive areas of the country. Traditionally planned towns and neighborhoods are at the vanguard of this movement.

The traditional architecture & traditional town planning movement began, as most movements do, as the vision of just a few pioneers. Most of them were architects. Seaside, Florida was the first such town. Progress was slow at first, until visitors could see a real picture of the vision. From that point forward, the success has been nothing short of legendary. The public at large voted where it counts: with their pocketbooks. Time magazine’s adulation of Seaside as Town of the Century is probably a bit of an understatement.

Huge popular successes such as this go unnoticed professionally for only so long. Public officials were quick to notice. What they noticed was an idea whose language of town planning made more sense than anything they had seen in a century. Most forward-looking civic officials around the country have signed on to the notion of traditional town planning. The city planners have followed in the past few years. Landscape architects are now generally in vocal support of traditional planning ideas. Only the architects remain, locked up in their impossible dreams and unable to face the enormous evidence of the failure of “modern” architecture.

There will come a time, however, probably two or three decades from the beginning of the renaissance, when most architects will have re-learned the patterns to a respectable level of fluency. They will be able to create places just as delightful as their ancestors. What then? Is the future to be nothing more than a museum of architectural history? Far from it.

Once society as a whole has re-learned the languages to a healthy level, the languages can begin to evolve again, just as they always have since the dawn of time. New construction innovations will come along, and they will be folded into the industry’s bag of tricks. New social realities will arise, to which the languages will respond. New patterns will arise, and old, irrelevant ones will fall away as architecture learns again to reflect mankind in all its complexity and history rather than just the tools of mankind at a single moment in time.

It is our intent to encourage the beginning of this sort of natural evolution of the languages by architects who are fluent in the existing languages. Guidelines cannot be written for the evolving styles because these styles do not exist in their future form at this time. Nonetheless, we believe that they will be consistent with the architectural principles listed earlier and will be built around patterns found throughout the Four Realms of Architecture. We encourage architects to first elevate their work to fluency in the existing languages and then to strike out to evolve them once again.

The images in this page are all from the environs of Seaside, Florida. They illustrate the evolution of languages from broken language to fluency to evolution. These are not totally chronological, of course, because each architect working on the project was obviously at a somewhat different level on this scale at any given point in time.
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Staying Alive
Respect for Nature

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The Industrial Revolution

Influence in Less Industrial Countries

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Nature From Master to Servant

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Commoditized Machines vs. Commoditized Places

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Towns

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Economy

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The Bottom Rung
Lean Economy

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HAPPY MARRIAGE RECIPE

3 CUPS LOVE  4 SPOONS HOPE
2 CUPS WARMTH  2 SPOONS TENDERNESS
1 CUP FORGIVENESS  1 PINT FAITH
1 CUP FRIENDS  1 BARREL LAUGHTER

Combine Love & Warmth
Mix thoroughly with Tenderness
Add Forgiveness
Blend with Friends & Hope
Sprinkle All Remaining Tenderness
Stir with Faith & Laughter
Bake with Sunshine
Serve Two Generous Helpings

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY DARLIN' FROM UNCLE RALPH
8/12/95

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before I Die I Want To...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel to Israel!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See the two wonders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit every continent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Be Happy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Be Successful</td>
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<td>Own a farm</td>
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<td>Own a ranch</td>
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<td>Marry Z.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Win the Lottery!</td>
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<td>Contemporary geometry</td>
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<td>Be Happy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher abroad</td>
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<td>Hala</td>
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SMARTCode
INFRASTRUCTURE
RETURN ON INVESTMENT
SPRAWL RECOVERY

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Lean Urbanism

Unfair

Current System

- Excludes
- The young
- The small
- The maker
- The immigrant

Problems

- Takes too long
- Costs too much
- Requires experts
- Requires certification
- Privileges high tech
- Vernacular systems

Solutions

- Pink zones
- Thresholds
- Workarounds
- Apprenticeship

A return to common sense

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