



Synopsis

The Hearth and The Home: How Fire Shaped Architecture

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BSc Architecture

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Introduction

The proposed dissertation will consider how architecture has developed in relation to fire, through necessary and aesthetic influences. The ability to create fire is considered one of the defining elements of humanity, but its effect on design is overshadowed by its effect on technological advances. The containment of fire allowed the development of individual rooms and floors, and for centuries a fireplace was almost essential for a room to be considered habitable.

Proposal

Methodology

The topic will be examined through all types of research but will have strong focus on primary research conducted through visiting case studies, due in part to the relatively unexplored nature of the topic. Relevant explorations of the topic will be consulted, and historical research will be necessary, e.g. examining historic plans and texts that are relevant to the subject.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of the dissertation will be to highlight how fire has shaped architecture, and provide evidence to substantiate this claim. Objectives will include providing focused and detailed analysis of specific examples that should prove the overall aim of the dissertation, examined through individual case studies. Case studies may include; the origins of fire and architecture, how fire shaped domestic housing, the dangers and consequential regulations of fire, and the diminishing significance of fire in housing.

Literature Review

While few detailed analyses of how fire shaped architecture exist, written evidence proves it has been a perennial subject for debate. In Vitruvius' *Ten Books of Architecture*, a mythologised story of the history of architecture begins with "the discovery of fire that originally gave rise to the coming together of men" (Vitruvius, 1960, p. 38). The dominance of Vitruvius in the history of architecture lends a powerful source to the beginning of the

study. 2000 years later, the 19th century architect Gottfried Semper considered that fire is “first and most important” within architecture, elevating it to “the moral element of architecture.”

Much of the literature relating to the subject is fragmentary, and so will require independent research to qualify such statements.

Limitations

There are certain limitations imposed on the dissertation due to the relatively unexplored nature of the subject. Finding adequate literature to reinforce aspects of the study may take especial consideration.

Ethical Considerations

Within this subject, there are no obvious exceptional areas that require ethical consideration, but the process will consider ethical considerations where necessary, such as explicitly explaining how any contributors to the dissertation will be quoted and referenced.

Timeframe

It is desirable that the dissertation is completed to a strict timeline, getting a head start by conducting as much research as possible before the beginning of the academic year. The first months of the academic year will be devoted to research, followed by a few months dedicated to writing the main sections and concluding by April 2025.

Conclusion

The proposed dissertation will consider what I believe to be a reasonably under investigated topic, allowing for new research into individual case studies. The subject covers a broad range of topics that chart the entirety of the history of architecture, and will intend to provide new insights into the relationship between architecture and fire.

References / Bibliography:

Vitruvius. (1960). *The Ten Books Of Architecture*. New York: Dover Publications Inc.