

- 1) You have been commissioned to work on an historic Grade 1 Chapel in South Wales with a brief to make proposals to secure its long term future. Discuss how you would approach such a challenge given then philosophical choices in terms of restoration, renovation and refurbishment?

I would first consider the requirements under the grade 1 listing that CADW have placed in order to protect the historic context and significance of the Chapel for Welsh heritage. As CADW states in their 'Conservation Principles' document, the aims of CADW are to protect and sustain, for the benefit for ~~the~~ both the present and future generations.

Taking this in mind, it would also be important to explore the needs of the area; what is missing? What can be done to improve the site and the locale? The ways in which design could improve awareness and attraction to the area is also a consideration. Since the Chapel has significant historic value, this can be ~~utilized~~ utilized in promoting and expressing the culture of the area in which can bring tourism to the site.

The context of the Chapel and surroundings would also be important to consider, as any renovations or refurbishments ~~would~~ ~~could~~ use it as influence and a guide over the design phase. A good example in which this has been done is the Glasgow Cottiers Theatre, which is a refurbishment of an existing Grade listed ~~building~~ Chapel into a venue for weddings, theatre and entertainment. All while expressing the historic fabric of the Chapel ~~and~~ but still bringing it into modern today's standards.

3) What is your understanding of the idea of 'critical regionalism' in architecture? In what ways did the work of Alvar Alto and Jørn Utzon demonstrate this idea in their work by briefly describing the commonalities and distinctive qualities of the architecture and design approach of both architects? In your opinion, give examples of the buildings that best display their work in this regard?

Critical regionalism is the ~~idea~~ philosophy that all buildings should have contextual identity, be apart of the surrounding environment and culture. The idea that express architecture through local influences and that they are used as part of the design of both the building and site. These notes of thinking can be seen in both Alvar Alto's and Jørn Utzon's work in which both architects express the use of natural light within their designs, a good comparison of this is between Alvar's Bockarvite library in which he utilizes the local natural lighting through the use of hole tunnels and ceiling light windows of which can be seen similarly in Jørn's work in which he created architectural forms that incorporated natural light through glass facades and long narrow windows which can be seen in his 'The Wave in Vejle'.

It is also notable that both architects share similar philosophical ideas that seen from Scandinavian architecture, the idea that architecture can be incorporated within the landscape or opposed to just 'sitting' on the landscape. Using the contours and features of the site to influence the flow of the buildings design.

3) There are distinct differences between their works
 (cont. However, Alvar Alto likes to design with ~~more~~ geometric shapes and angular forms, which is different from Jørn Utzon who designs with curvature and Parametrics. But both architects have building styles that dominate the landscape whilst in keeping with the original context.

In my opinion, I think Jørn Utzon's work is his Parliament building in Kuwait which expresses how he has taken the local cultural identity along with the site context and created his curved structures and forms. Which is also seen in his other building the Sydney Opera House, which also has dominance across the landscape and taking influences from local cultures.

The ~~best~~ best examples of Alvar Alto's buildings for 'critical regionalism' are his ~~Säijölä~~ Säijölä town hall in Finland that shows how he uses natural lighting into the spaces along with creating landscaped areas on the site to integrate with the natural context.

Another good example is the University of Technology in Helsinki which also incorporates green façades and the use of red brick to express his architectural style. While also shaping the site's landscapes with a mix of grasslands and walkways.

~~Both Architects~~

1) For this project, it would be necessary to establish
 cont. What is required to be done on the Chapel and
 which approach is most ~~sen~~ sensitive ~~to the~~ but
 important to the needs of the chapel; if there is
 repairs involved for example, how should the designer
 approach the repair? There could either be for-like
 repairs in which all attempts to repair the Chapel are
 in keeping with the original material and texture of
 the building. This approach is commonly used when
 restoring and one example of this is the work done
 on St Eustace Church in Aberdeen, in which repairs
 on the roof structure were needed due to leaking.

In my opinion, this type of approach is not
 authentic and has weak integrity as materials
 and techniques used in repairs like these are often
 not the same as used originally or while bronze of
~~the~~ whether it is right to repair buildings in this
 fashion.

Another approach to this could be
 to be honest about repairs and use materials
 and techniques that express that changes have been
 made. This can be seen in the SPAB approach
 in which guides on how architects and conservationists
 should consider how repairs can be used to increase
 longevity of buildings rather than try to keep them
 old new.

For the Chapel, it would also
 be necessary to consider ~~the~~ whether it requires
 renovation, or which means the repair of an old building
 into a good state of repair, or refurbishment. Which
 means the change in functions and use of the
 building in order to utilize it for a different purpose.

I would most likely consider refurbishment
 for this project as it would aid in the longevity
 of the building, through using it ~~for~~ as an entertainment
 space.

- 4) What can be said about contemporary architecture in Wales? Discuss this statement and give examples of buildings to support your argument.

Wales has a significant industrial history and contemporary architecture takes ~~influence~~ influences from that historic fabric of Wales. In addition to this, Welsh architecture is heavily affected by the wet and changeable climate in which certain materials take precedent to withstand such external environments. There is also the preexisting landscapes that were shaped by industrial powerhouses, such landscapes include docklands, which particularly in Swansea and Cardiff have defined the shape of Welsh cities.

One example of a contemporary building in Wales is the Senedd Building by Richard Rogers which ~~means~~ is meant to represent the Welsh history through use of slate and Welsh timber but due to problematic supply issues, the materials were shipped from abroad. This shows that Wales' ~~can~~ architecture can ~~be~~ suffer from integrity issues when attempting to express historic architecture in a contemporary setting.

Another example of contemporary architecture is the Meridian Tower in Swansea by Habitat Architects which uses modern materials such as concrete and glass with steel framing that acts as a 'beacon' for Swansea and a point of interest for tourists and locals alike. ~~It~~ It can give recognition and identity to the area.

4) ~~These examples are~~ A great example of Contemporary
 (cont.) Welsh architecture is Plas Gwyn by Donald Insall
 Associates, which is an extension to a pre-existing
 dwelling that overlooks the lush Welsh natural
 landscape. It uses local quarried Stone Combined
 with vertical zinc cladding to ~~also~~ create a
 modest design that reflects the feel of the sites
 context whilst also incorporating new materials to
 the area.

These examples are a few
 of the buildings that I think represent Welsh
 Contemporary architecture; the history at the
 industrial and historical significance of Welsh culture,
 using materials that ~~whilst~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~
 sometimes harsh environment and climate that
 Wales has; Contemporary architecture in Wales
 has to respond to the wind (ash and rainfall
 to which often ~~more~~ influences the design aesthetics,
 structure and response when compared to other
 parts of the world.

It also has to respond
 to landscape issues as the majority of Wales
 is encompassed by valleys that were formed by
 glaciers, in which buildings need to adapt too.
 There are also financial constraints that also
 restrain Wales from developing a strong Contemporary
 style as many projects get shelved due to lack of
 funding. Such as the Swansea Lagoon ~~to~~ that
 the council have changed the shape of Swansea.

- 2) Discuss the origins and various interpretations of 'organic architecture'. Is the term 'organic architecture' relevant today?

Organic architecture can be argued to originate from the very first man built structure. The use of natural materials and the fact that both nature and buildings both have the same constraints; the ~~for~~ forces of gravity, the impact of light and the local climate. All of which affect the design of both nature and buildings alike. As the term was coined by Louis Sullivan in the beginning of 20th century, it is easy to consider that to be the starting point of 'organic architecture', in which designers ~~based~~ after the fact that his work as influence in thinking about natural forms of structure and aesthetics. This would have definitely affected how architects approach the design of buildings in both a structural and aesthetic point of view.

A good example of this is the many works done by Frank Lloyd Wright. Who took 'organic architecture' into his philosophy and embraced it. His Falling Water in Pennsylvania for example takes the idea of using the context of the site, in which has a flowing stream and rocky grounds, along with the use of modern materiality and construction techniques to merge both natural and man-made into one form. Showing that both exist in parallel and can work together to create architecture.

It can also be seen in his various books on the topic, such as 'An organic architecture', in which he explains how organic can also be the evolving and changing of architecture with time.

2) This brings up the misconception that man-made
 Cont. is not organic or natural. But by our existing on
 the planet earth, we are natural in of ourselves and
 so anything we produce is apart of the natural
 cycle. The arts and architecture we are creating
 is constantly evolving and changing with time. Responding
 to the environment we live in.

On the other hand, 'organic architecture' has
 got its own approach to designing as opposed to
 other forms of traditional architecture. Such approaches
 include Biomimicry in which influences from
 natural forms in the structure or aesthetics of the
 design, examples include the Serrada family by
 Anni Gaudi or the Singapore Bay Gardens both of
 which use nature to inspire their work.

As for whether it is relevant today, then I would
 definitely say it is. As organic architecture has been
 relevant since the beginning of architecture as we know
 it, I think that it is more relevant than ever
 due to the increasing awareness of climate change
 and the impact we have on our environment, and I
 feel that 'organic architecture' can be a tool to
 improve the ways we design. We can
 utilize the way nature evolves the best forms of
 structures and use them to find the most minimalist
 approach to designing particular structures and also
 use structural forms in the most efficient ways.
 The work done by Buckminster Fuller for example,
 shows us how Parametric design can be used to
 express structure as aesthetic elements but also
 use the strongest natural shapes such as triangles
 and hexagons within design.