

# Risk Based Design...

## The idea of a 'risk based' design...

*When hiring an architect or a designer, a client is buying intellectual property. A good architect will provide more than just a great idea.*

Most architects will find it offensive if you define them as problem solvers. Architects like to think of themselves and tend to describe their own work, in wider more poetic, social political or conceptual terms.

## Concept of an idea...

Many clients complain that architects are inaccessible. They have a vision of the building they wish to create and will push for it to happen in their way, sometimes on the expense of not really listening to the actual needs of those they are appointed by.

For those architects, the specific site conditions, planning policies, building regulations and the daily practical needs of the occupier are limitations, harming their designs.

But some of the most iconic and successful building of our time are based on a concept of an idea, The Spiral Gugenheim in New York by Frank Lloyd Wright, The Pompidou Centre in Paris by Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano, exposing the 'internals' of the building and, the latest addition to the London skyline, the Shard (the name mirroring the design) again by Renzo Piano.

## Function or form?

Indeed, without the creative mind of the architect these buildings would not come to be. And so one might claim that this is indeed Architecture – so where is the risk? And more importantly, is there another way of making edifices and designing spaces?

When a project is described and then indeed conceived and drawn to reflect an 'Idea', function and practicalities tend to be secondary. Almost an afterthought.

In essence, the same list of restrictions (planning, site, use), if taken as information, rather than restrictions, and layered into the design space, create an incredible jigsaw puzzle that a good architect, and indeed architecture, will solve.

On one hand, it seems that adding to this mix any externally imposed ideas, concepts or metaphors is creating an unsolvable problem. On the other hand, a design based purely on functionality will be soulless and uninspiring.

## Unforgettable guest experiences...

*If functionality is considered carefully, and treated as a design tool, the idea emerges and becomes inherent through this process and will contain all that is needed to produce beautiful designs and unforgettable guest experiences from inside to out.*

## Artistic

After all a hotel needs more 'artistic' flair; than a hospital or a factory - where practicality is the name of the game. It all depends on how wide the definition of functionality is; specifically, with regards to use of the space.

Doesn't the fantastic view which your guests want to see in the morning fall under functionality? How about their sense of privacy, both in the room and out on the balcony? How easy it is for a guest to find their way around – to the spa, restaurant and lounge without signage. And what will they experience along this route to the spa – do they walk with a robe and slippers near the kitchen, or via a private space overlooking landscaped grounds?

What about maintenance. How easy is it to clean each room? How long does it take? There is no doubt that these are functional considerations which will directly affect the hotelier's profit. This, in turn, is a consideration for the architect, or interior designer, in the choice of materials, extent of built in furniture and geometries.

These 'limitations' themselves are extremely intriguing and relevant to the design. They are deeply rooted in human needs and desires in relation to a specific environment and to other people around. Why wouldn't architecture, based purely on this wide definition of the functional, be beautiful inside and out?

Unlike what we may assume, and what many architects may want us to believe, functionality does clash with externally imported, and therefore irrelevant, concepts. *The writer is a Registered Architect and Director of, London based, RIBA Chartered Practice, Scenario Architecture.*  
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