

Dear Dean Balfour:

I am pleased to be presenting to the Georgia Tech community next Wednesday. The following is intended to jump start our conversation. Please share this letter with your students if you find this helpful.

I recently returned from China—a trip that reinforced for me the urgency of humanity to acknowledge our role in the shaping of the manmade and its impact upon the natural realm. My presentation will include a current project collaboration with a noted Chinese landscape architect that addresses this fundamental challenge we are facing as a society.

I highly recommend the Architectural Review series - The Big Rethink: The Purposes of Architecture, which began in May 2012 as it sums up my concerns about our role as architects.

Quotes from this series:

“High tech fetishizations of technology icons take sculptural excess to new levels of meaningless autism as facilitated by the computer. As stand alone objects the buildings are fundamentally anti urban neither defining urban space and unable to relate to other buildings...defying any relationship with humankind.”

“A necessary step to sustainability is to re-enchant the world and evoke reverence and connection with it. Architecture has lost its enriching sense of purpose. In seeking to restore architecture’s rightful place in culture as a truly qualitatively and quantifiably sustainable art, we must look deeper and redefine what it is to be human and what sort of lines we want to lead.”

“Architecture is more than a record or reflection of who we are. The fundamental purpose of architecture is a means for creating our cultures and ourselves.”

“Architecture should root us in the past while looking confidently to the future, recognizably evoking tradition while also transforming its legacy and innovating to meet the demands of a very different future... helping us to find our place in an ever evolving world and within rich webs of ecological and community relationships.”

Perhaps this is a good place to start a dialogue about the role of architecture in modern day society. I look forward to our discussion.



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