# protected

Engineering, medicine and law, with their underpinnings in physics, biology and logic, are calculable, analyzable and procedural; concepts that can be taught, tested and objectively evaluated. These concepts are quite compatible with societies' standards gauged in quantifiable terms. The technological aspects of good construction (sanitation, safety, durability) can likewise be taught, tested and evaluated.

However, the qualities that distinguish architecture from mere construction are the very qualities that transcend the technological. Architecture certainly involves technology, but often as a means to non-technical ends. Architecture's non-technical aspects (character, suitability, intrigue) are subjective and can be judged only by the users, inhabitants and public, but definitely not by quantitative conventions and governmental regulations.

When society requires professional licensure for a field and thereby grants monopoly protection to practice, it asserts that there is a special necessity of that field for society's survival. Engineering, medicine and law; along with architecture require licensure to practice. The legal legitimacy of a protected profession rests on the objective ability to protect human welfare. Engineering protects safety, medicine protects health and law protects justice. A lapse in any of these three can be detrimental to human welfare. That architecture is a protected profession by definition automatically means society considers it of vital public interest; however, it is the technical aspects, and not the subjective, ethical aspects that are regulated.

All protected professionals are supposed to be official representatives of their profession's core values. For example, legal ethics require that lawyers be ambassadors of the law. Though it may seem hard to believe, lawyers are not supposed to help their clients break or even bend the law to private purpose. The moment a client engages a lawyer, the lawyer assumes a double duty; the lawyer must not only use the law to serve the client's case, but must also use the client's case to serve the law. Likewise, licensed architects are supposed to be ethically compelled to use a client's project to serve the realm of architecture, to improve the built environment, and at the very least be obligated not to damage it.

Although making architecture a protected profession should have achieved this, it has not. Many architects have used a client's project not so much to serve the realm of architecture through the continuation of a culture of building that creates useful, enduring, beautiful and appropriate designs relevant to the general public and its context; but instead to serve their own haute egos and stylistic cannons. They may have complied with the technical aspects of societies' standards for producing safe buildings, but they have used the unquantifiable aspects for their own purpose, instead of that of the public's interest, which has become a detriment to the built environment.

Architects are not artists free of all responsibility, contrary to all of their academic training that encourages aspirations to become the next new "starchitect". If their image-based spectacle object design buildings fall down, they are responsible. Likewise, if such buildings "fall down on the job" of meeting human needs — if they are unduly stressful, inappropriate with the context, or damaging to the quality of life — then that is also a kind of architectural malpractice, and nothing less.

Architects often aspire to have the recognition and pay of the other licensed professions: engineering, medicine and law. Unfortunately for the bottom line, haute architects have made architecture irrelevant to the general public, similar to irrelevant fashion designers offering up garments that neither fit typical human bodies nor a family budget. Outside of a petite boutique market for the wealthy, irrelevancy reduces demand, and reduced demand diminishes what consumers are willing to pay for architectural services. In doing so, these architects have been irresponsible with the trust society placed on the practice of architecture by dedicating it as a protected profession.

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