

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BEAUTY

Respect for beauty and its preservation is inseparable from the health of a society and the continuance of its civilized values. Any society that turns its back on its honored traditions of celebrating beauty first tolerates and later embraces that which is bland, ugly, or weird – weakening itself in the process. Who could deny that our country is witnessing, even abetting the erosion of the appreciation for beauty. Replacing that appreciation is a prevailing human ugliness that now invades our lives on virtually every level.

Regrettably, opportunities for the creation of beauty are often met with an insensitivity that says: “We don’t care what it looks like, just make it as cheaply as possible.” This way of thinking clearly explains the current lack of concern for any artistic ethos. It seems that many are unaware of how important their comfort, sense of well-being, and connection to beauty could be to them.

As a result, almost everywhere we look, we’re inundated with ill-groomed people, sloppy clothing, and degrading body tattoos...along with a host of other disturbing things: offensive art, tasteless advertisements, and ugly buildings.

Fortunately, there remains a remnant of sensitive people who venerate beauty and are concerned about the current trend that seems bent on dismissing it. Among them are those who also possess the ability to offer appealing alternatives. The manifestations of their passion inevitably evidence a strict adherence to the fundamental principles responsible for the creation of beauty.

In the field of architecture, their creations provide places that are beautiful as well as comfortable...places that offer an escape, even a refuge, from the pressure of life and a welcome alternative for those who lament what now seems to surround them. Through their vision, others are able to step into their dream and experience a fantasy, come true.

Architectural design should be viewed as a language. As such, the design of some structures are only able to communicate at an extremely simple level (maybe as simple as the words found in a grade school primer) revealing a very limited vocabulary of design understanding that’s unable to express feelings, compose complicated thoughts or offer interpretations of abstract concepts. Some think, and thus speak, in a confused unintelligible collection of ill-selected words, like a book written in an assortment of languages – a little English here...and there some German, French, Chinese, etc., all appearing randomly throughout the text. Such, a book would be incapable of communicating much, if any, of its intended meaning to its readers. But, there’s a few whose writings are a composition of beautiful thoughts that are expressed with words carefully selected for their precise meanings. In that rare instance when their native tongue seems to lack the necessary vocabulary to convey a complex concept, they have, within their grasp, a collection of foreign-language phrases that are able to fill that gap and provide an enrichment of their ideas. And so it is with the design of homes as we witness the various levels of architectural communication.

*Some homes are so lacking in any evidence of having been designed as to fail, at all levels, to convey any sense of security, comfort, or aesthetic attractiveness.*

*The designs of other homes present such a confused assortment of architectural expressions as to leave an observer unsure of what it was they were viewing. The result is something that's confusing...even disturbing to experience.*

*However, there are a few whose architectural language is as rich and beautiful as the writings of a gifted poet.*

*The architect's goal should be the creation of a properly functioning floor plan that's a living sculpture, a work of art, and an unforgettable experience to be encountered. To assist him in this process, he must be able to recognize important relationships in order to correctly prioritize that which really matters from that which doesn't, by knowing how things should fit together, and how best to present them.*

*Nothing will serve his quest for understanding better than the lessons that can be learned from observing nature. There is a certain inexactness, an ingenious collection and juxtaposition of contrasts, and a certain beauty in the occurrence of decay. Though nature is full of almost similar units, it's never modular. We know that machines make straight lines. The human hand makes almost straight lines. This realization suggests that if we intend to mimic nature in our designs, absolutely straight lines (or anything perfect) should be avoided. Also to be avoided are things that speak to a manufactured process – like wood laminates, imitation stone, corner bead, things that are veneered, hollow, or fake.*

*For this reason, a building that is well designed (one that's alive) will have the same balance of repetition, variety and imperfection that's found in nature. People feel "at home" in buildings that have respected the design principles taken from nature. Man's appreciation of beauty is universal because God created beauty and all the elements that contribute to it – including man's ability to appreciate the beauty in what He created. We all have an inherent ability to see loveliness, recognize it, and ultimately appreciate it. The creation of beauty is a matter of adhering to the basic rules of design which involve the incorporation of one or more of its seven governing principles: scale, proportion, symmetry, balance, rhythm, emphasis, variety, and unity. All of these principles are abundantly present in nature. Thus, structures that feel good have been constructed in observance of the rules of nature. They've employed "natural" materials...put together in natural ways.*

*But there's yet another, deeper level of creative communication...that which is capable of arousing our emotions. It's a level of communication that reaches beyond our six senses. Great paintings, photography, writings, music and yes, architecture are all capable of stirring our emotions by causing us to react at some deeper level of feeling.*

*Architecture that's capable of this brand of interaction with the viewer has succeeded in achieving a level of artistic understanding that surpasses all other competing efforts that lack it. Briefly stated, a home of such design influence will be capable of producing a wide range of emotional responses, such as a sense of timelessness, a mood of pure comfort, warmth and invitation. This is the intended path for the architecture within our development, Orofino! We call it Emotional Architecture.*