**The purposes of architecture**

Architecture can provide setting for certain activities, remind people of what these activities are, signify power, status or privacy, express and support cosmological beliefs, communicate information, help establish individual or group identity, and encode value system. It can separate domain and differentiate between here and there, sacred and profane, men and women, front and back, private and public, habitable and unhabitable, and so on. Although the differentiation among places is central, the purposes for which it is done. And the means employed to do it may be very different.

We have already seen that domains may be separated conceptually, though changes in the nature of ground cover or its treatment or though symbolic devices such as ceiling beams or bead curtains. Low fences or even cornerstones may have the same effect. An example of the latter is provided by a squatter settlement in Africa, where whitewashed stones making the corners of the lot kept people from trespassing the whole property. Changes in level or solid barriers may also be used. One particular device, such as solid barrier, may have different purposes that are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Such barriers may screen from view, prevent movement, give shade, protect from the wind, separate domains, provide a series of distinguishable settings for distinct activities, and so on. Thus, buildings can be understood in terms of how they relate to people and natural settings and how these relationships change with culture and over time.

There is a general tendency towards the separation of activities in different settings. Similarly we would expect a tendency for materials to be used in terms of their availability, but this is not the case. We have also seen the materials come to have meaning, they have communicative functions

Architecture makes tangible meanings; it produces concrete metaphors of the ideas and beliefs of a group. It has been suggested that certain forms in architecture are mimetic, that pyramids, temples, domes, and towers humanize and make permanent shapes that have acquired ideological and symbolic value in perishable materials.

**Cultural origins of architecture**

Most people. If asked, would probably say that architecture began as shelter. After all, the first buildings were dwellings, and people need shelter to survive. Yet shelter is not the only, or even the principal, function of housing. In cold climates- which makes stringent demands for shelter and protection- one finds great variability, ranging from minimal shelter in Tierra del Fuego through fairly low levels of protection among some American Indian dwellings in Wisconsin to the highly developed shelter of the Eskimo.

Built environments have various purposes: to shelter people and their activities and possessions from the elements, from human and animal enemies, and from supernatural powers, to establish place, to create a humanized, safe area in a profane and potentially dangerous world, to stress social identities and indicate status. thus the origin of architecture are best understood one takes a wider view and consider sociocultural factors, in the broadest sense, to be more important than climate, technology, materials, and economy.

In any situations, it is the interplay of all these factors that best explains the form of buildings. No single explanation will suffice, because buildings even apparently humble dwellings are more than material objects or structures. They are institutions, basic cultural phenomena.

**Architectural planning**

The architect usually begins to work when the site and the type and cost of a building have been determined.

The site involves the varying behavior of the natural environment that must be adjusted to the unvarying physical needs of human beings, the type is the generalized form established by society that must be adjusted to the special use for which the building is required, the cost implies the economics of land , labor and materials that must be adjusted to suit a particular sum.

Thus planning is the process of particularizing and ultimately of harmonizing the demands of environment, use and economy. This process has a cultural as well as a utilitarian value, for in creating a plan for any social activity the architect inevitably influences the way in which that activity is performed.