

## DESIGN: ARCHITECTURE/INTERIOR/LANDSCAPE WORKGROUP

### DEFINITION OF DESIGN:

We must look at design how it relates to:

- Historic Property
- Existing Built Environment
- Nature
- Art
- Existing Culture
- Quality of Life
- Economic / Real-Estate Development

Design is about quality of life as reflected by the already built environment in response to the natural environment

### Sub-Elements

- Education: sensitivity and awareness training regarding the culture and historical significance of existing structures
- Cooperation: Public officials, designers, developers, local tradesman, artists and consumers
- Adaptability: working with existing designs and environments
- Infrastructure: creating a skilled workforce, implementing design tracks on high school level, incorporate design significance / importance in Louisiana history classes

### Stakeholders

Galleries, Museums, Theaters, Music Halls – Louisiana needs beautiful structures and venues to house the native, local talents

### Additional Points:

- Training: How to play a role in how it looks– codes, design, review ordinances, making new buildings to look like historic areas, making area to be unique, making shelters for rain/sun/ventilation, how materials are used, opportunity to accommodate new and still retain aspects of old, blending landscapes to fit environment
- Training stability: community work to offer projects to serve professional aspects to more understand values of elements to sustain work—nonprofit needs to know as well as commercial
- Rehabilitation: for prisoners to help landscaping—not enough money for higher skilled workers
- Cost: so commercialized and cheaper to just buy pre-made, no quality, making building at low cost to make profit
- Cost effectiveness of design: challenge is the appearance that it is cheaper for the consumer to buy pre-made with no quality

**Workgroup Notes**

- Input:: How can we engage our students to understand design services and consumers to buy professional services?  
Output: an individual who is sensitive to our cultural needs
- Restoration: is design, using new materials—has importance across state
- Manipulating: the built and natural environment to create quality places to satisfy social and cultural needs. Quality of life as shaped and reflected by the built environment and the sensitivity with which the built environment interfaces with the natural environment. Trying to tell consumer not all cheap project is best project.
- Educating our consumers: on cost benefit of getting professional help rather than cheaper help is better on long term cost.
- Market ourselves: to the consumers to let them know we are here to use
- Higher awareness: of decision makers of added value and quality of design and enduring cultural impact
- Educating: sensitivity and cultural awareness of designers, public officials, and consumers

**COMPETITIVE STRENGTHS OF DESIGN:****Unique and Unusual**

- Louisiana's rich culture + architecture + history already very distinctive
- Ideal climate, fertile land, beautiful natural landscapes

**Differentiates it from other states and regions**

- In theory, considerable...in practice, not enough differentiation

**Weaknesses**

- Specialized education + trained workforce
  - Louisiana is losing cultural traditions
    - Masonry
    - Iron workers
    - Wood workers
    - Plastering
- Bigger architecture / design firms not located in Louisiana
- Losing our talent and not developing new talent to serve our culture
  - Need to teach our kids that our state wants what they have to offer
  - Challenging our kids to work in situations that teach them our cultural values and traditions
  - Educating sensitive and culture-aware architects and designers
- Need disaster-resistant communities...disasters of social & cultural homogenization (WalMart), diminishing coastline, subsiding soils, hurricanes, flood, etc.—How do we mitigate? Plan? Protect?...to ensure social, economic, cultural viability, integrity, and sustainability of our communities?
- City planners not knowing what is important/sustainable
- Throwaway mentality

### **Opportunities**

- Capitalize on existing assets
- Design structures with existing cultural assets in mind
  - Enhance music / theater / arts / port through venues
- Build structures that celebrate natural environment
- Encourage programs that already exist
  - Creole Cottages Program
  - Booker T. Washington High School distributive / specialized education approach
- Generate more interest for design industries in high schools
  - Develop charter / magnet schools
- Create specialized schooling around existing trades
  - Mardi Gras traditions + costumes = fashion design
  - Legacy of Creole builders = architecture

### **Challenges**

- Often economic development compromises existing green space + natural environment
- Cost is a challenge in appearance – cheaper for the consumer to buy pre-made goods, which are low quality and aesthetically unappealing
- Capturing and preserving roots of culture in new developments
- Current university level education concentrates on building new structures
  - Graduates not trained to adapt to natural + existing built environment
- Louisiana architect graduates are often lured to out-of-state jobs

### **COMPETITION**

- Consumerism / capitalism often competes with quality design
- Quality developers are competing with unethical developers who pay no mind to restrictions, requirements.
- Developers with financial motives – not interest in quality of life aspects
- Urban areas within state as well as other states pull talent from rural areas in the building/design fields
- Consumerism competes with good design
- “Bad” developers who are allowed to move forward with building without restrictions or requirements for better design with an overall plan that impacts design/landscape—developers who just “don’t get it!”
- Economic power structure
- Planned obsolescence of the built environment
- Big box developers—with tax incentives

## **BARRIERS**

- Poor city and state regulations; corrupt political decision makers
- Lack of civic involvement
- Lack of appreciation for quality design
- Lack of appreciation of next generation regarding history, culture, preservation
- No passing on of appreciation to next generation of history, culture, or need to preserve it
- Is there a statewide requirement for LA History on cultural education or design arts appreciation?
- Art and environmental advocates should use design as platform
- Landscape experts rarely consider environmental sustainability
- Poor law enforcement for regulations / litter laws
  - Leads to lack of pride and quality investments
- Political decision-makers/planners/zoning laws/banks/lenders
- Lousy relations at city/state level
- Lack of appreciation for good design—built and/or natural environment
- Lack of linkage between museums, colleges, and advocacy groups such as environmentalists and preservationists to acquire funding support for educational programs
- Litter laws not enforced—lack of appreciation
- Poverty/ignorance—no voice to change their physical environment—a population that be taken advantage of
- Culture that is shifting to consumerism
- Lack of exposure to LA culture statewide at lower school level—no pride in what their state has to offer
- No source of landscape experts for environmental sustainability—protection of wetlands

## **INFRASTRUCTURE: IDEAS FOR ACTION**

- Create a GSA [General Service Agency] within the state to help guide innovative, quality structures
- Create tax incentives (i.e. – sales tax rebate) to use Louisiana designers, crafters, furniture makers – especially in hotels, restaurants, theaters
- Equal emphasis on tourism and eco-tourism
- Incorporate cultural / design appreciation in Louisiana history classes
- Look to public / private partnerships to procure funds
- Educational institutions work with local community and economic needs
- Create VOTECH / trade schools / creative academies
- Leave highway medians natural – stop cutting down natural wildflowers

**COMMENTS:**

- **Lt. Governor:** I feel that education is key to the development of our talents throughout the state. I would like to see more funding for our high schools and colleges/vocational education schools. Also, I am from a rural part of Louisiana, and I would like to see more opportunities for involvement in the arts in our communities. I would love to see our high schools foster vocational tracks that deal with the arts, because many of our state's talents are going by the wayside because we are not tapping into these individuals. As a parent of a budding artist and high school junior who wishes to become an architect, I have done all that I could by having him participate in the Arts Council's activities in the parish, gifted art program-school, band, and private lessons. I would love for my 17 year old to have an opportunity to work with an artist/architect as an apprentice or on the Arts Council. Kim Chadwick, Educator/Artist/Parent, 4270 Hwy. 38, Kentwood, LA 70444, (985) 229-8784
- Fine conference—met a great need—NOW→implement
- Excellent diversity of experience/expertise made for a rich discussion in breakout session
- Need to place emphasis on developing partnerships between education (especially higher education) and community-based partners. Especially get Board of Regents to understand this and emphasize...
- Need to place additional emphasis on “disaster-resistant” communities—resistant to social and cultural homogenization, as well as resistant to hurricane, land subsidence, floor, etc.
- Need to profile more Louisiana case studies, initiatives, expertise available, etc. (N.O. Operation Comeback; LSU Office of Community Design & Development, etc.)
- Benefits of economic development to help preserve and restore our architecture, environment, and training of our students in our cultural heritage.
- Positive!
- Continue efforts
- I found this conference was enlightening! It got people of all areas of art together to look at what we could do to help our state to look and appeal to others. We have something no others have; let's keep it and share it at the same time. But yet educate our younger generation to appreciate it all well.
- Excellent process for pulling the various cultures to table for economic enhancement ...I am looking forward to the action from this meeting. Jessie M Small
- Having these conferences are a valuable asset to the process of bettering the culture and economics of this state.
- I feel that the conference has been well planned and has offered a good balance / representing a very wide variety of the general public as well as professionals. I anxiously await seeing implementation and follow-up. I will be here next year. It is encouraging to see that historic preservation has been acknowledged as an economic driver in the overall welfare of the city and state. Discussion leader was good. Thanks.

**Key Points:**

- Excellence in design enhances economic development
- Design is critical to quality of life for residents and tourists
- Projects and developments should be guided through a quality-oriented process
- An under-emphasis of design excellence—Create a GSA-like (general service administration) agency to guide projects through a more quality-oriented process
- Incorporate cultural / design appreciation in Louisiana history classes
- Leave highway medians natural—stop cutting down natural wildflowers

**Opportunities and Strategies for Growing the Segment:**

- Expand upon Louisiana's ideal climate, fertile land, beautiful natural landscapes, rich history and distinctive architecture
- Build infrastructure to enhance and preserve traditional trade skills – masonry, iron working, carpentry, etc.
- Create sales tax rebates for developers to buy Louisiana based designs and support local businesses especially in hotels, restaurants, theaters, etc.
- Vo-tech / building trades / a NOCCA model / national caliber
- Look for funding strategies / public & private resources
- Equal emphasis on tourism and eco-tourism
- Training in design for political leaders
- Equal emphasis on natural environment for passing on to future generations of Louisianans
- Capitalize on existing assets
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