



## ARCHITECTURE AND BEYOND

### EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

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**“The future is not a result of choices among alternative paths offered by the present, but a place that is created – created first in the mind and will, created next in activity. The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made, and the activity of making them changes, both the maker and the destination.”**

- John Schaar, Futurist

Over the last year, there has been much media attention about architecture not being a viable career path; articles have degraded architectural education and the profession. Despite this negative attention, the career of an architect (and the architectural education), serve as a springboard to a myriad of career pursuits both in architecture and beyond.

#### SUSTAINABILITY

Green building technology or sustainable architecture is one of the fastest potential career paths for architects. Many architects and architectural graduates are pursuing LEED accreditation where opportunities exist through increased use of renewable energy technologies (e.g., wind, geothermal, hydropower), eco-friendly construction materials, and recyclable building materials. As of 2005, nearly all of the largest 150 corporations had a Chief Sustainability Officer – who better than an architect to fulfill these positions. While architects may not be overly involved with residential architecture, an opportunity exists by helping homeowners convert their homes to zero-energy homes. Kermit Baker, an economist for the American Institute of Architects (AIA), says, “Sustainability and architecture are now intertwined.” In a recent AIA survey, architects reported that 47 percent of their clients in 2008 used green building elements.

#### DESIGN and CONSTRUCTION

The relatively new delivery system of Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) is another potential avenue for architects to prove their value. As stated by architect Ron Green, “If architects want to retain whatever edge they tenably hold in the area of building construction, they need to expand their knowledge of building technology and construction documents; architects must also take a leadership role in the design and construction process.” Buildings are consistently becoming more complex and architects can increase their career opportunities by becoming leaders again. Similar to the opportunities in IPD is the use of BIM technology. BIM has created a whole new business model for architects and firms that create virtual designed environments, including the management and facilitation of the additional layers of information.

#### SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

Another area of great potential for the future of architecture is Public Interest Design. Perhaps ignited by Architecture for Humanity, Design Corps, Public Architecture, and others, it has emerged as a viable alternative to traditional practice. In March 2012, Architectural Record dedicated an entire issue to “Building for Social Change.” In research by RIBA, many recent architectural graduates and students chose a career in the built environment professions because of its social agenda. Further proof in its growth is the Public Interest Design Institute® and the SEED (Social Economic Environmental Design) Network; both believe that design can play a vital role in the critical issues facing communities and individuals, in crisis and in every day challenges.

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#### COMPUTER GRAPHICS

Today's architecture students spend more time on the computer than ever before and this has translated into yet another career path. Architects design real buildings, but there are opportunities in designing virtual worlds & communities. With the advent of the smartphone and now the tablet, architects have the opportunity to enter the fast growing industry (38%) of simulation development. One such example of architect turned tech entrepreneur is Evan Sharp, founder of Pinterest. He was in the midst of his architectural education at Columbia when he created the popular phenomenon, which has become one of the most visited social networks.

#### BEYOND ARCHITECTURE

Over the years, numerous resources highlight careers that “look beyond architecture,” -- landscape architecture, interior design, lighting design, acoustical design, engineering, construction, urban and regional planning, architectural history, theory and criticism, and environmental and behavioral research. Once such resource is Archinect's ongoing series, *Working Out of the Box*, that profiles individuals educated as architects in pursuit of other paths.

So, the next time someone asks of your future, reply confidently that you intend to use what you have learned as an architect to improve the quality of life in the built environment and are just pondering the details to fully implement your desired path. As Leslie Kanes Weisman, of the New Jersey Institute of Technology has stated,

**“I am certain that ... those who are in command of the powerful problem-defining and problem-solving skills of the designer will be fully capable of designing their own imaginative careers by creating new definitions of meaningful work for architects that are embedded in the social landscape of human activity and life's events.”**

Keeping in mind that the current President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Chrysler Brand for Chrysler Group LLC, Saad Chehab, holds a degree in architecture, below are just a sampling of possible career fields and occupations that are not only open to, but would benefit from, those having received a generalist architectural design education ...

Advertising  
Automotive  
Book Publishing  
Energy Conservation  
Environmental and Codes  
Environmental Scientist  
Ethics and Sustainability  
Fabric Structures  
Fashion Design  
Festival Architecture  
Financial Services  
Furniture Design  
Gaming Environment Design  
Graphic Design  
Global Web Technologies  
Historic Preservation  
Magazine Publishing  
Media and E-Commerce  
Product Analysis  
Production Designer  
Sales and Marketing Management  
Set Design  
Social Media  
Space Architecture  
User Experience ■

#### REFERENCES

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2. Architectural Record, Building for Social Change, March 2012
3. SEED Network - <http://www.seednetwork.org>
4. Public Interest Design Institute® - <http://www.publicinterestdesign.com>
5. <http://www.popularmechanics.com/technology/gadgets/news/4314253>
6. <http://www.brighthub.com/office/career-planning/articles/99031.aspx>
7. <http://specsandcodes.typepad.com/specsandcodes/2011/10/towards-a-more-irrelevant-architect.html>

