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**On the Road, volume 9 Number 1, Architecture and
Travel.**

Thank you for your fax.

The topic is excellent and very important.
By airmail I have sent a bundle of travel articles, which
are intended to make complex ideas accessible rather
than push the intellectual edge of the debate. Let me
know if you want to use any of it, or need any
photographs etc. They should be with you in a couple
of days.

For your more immediate consideration.....
the following 2 page article

747 TRAVELLING ARCHITECTURE

by Tony Watkins

The new 747 nomadic architecture is very different
from the ancient vernacular nomadic architecture.

The new 747 travelling architecture is architecture
which is no longer territorial. It belongs in an
intellectual space rather than a physical place. It is on
the move because it has been freed from any
perception of "home", just as a true multi-national
company has no "home" country. Architecture which
itself travels changes every cherished notion of urban
design because it does not relate to the building next
door.

There was a time when architects knew their local
materials, their local builders, and the local people of
their own area. Architect's sketch books were filled
with acute observations of the architect's own
environment. Travel was less concerned with coming
to know the unfamiliar and more concerned with
seeing the architect's own place more acutely. Other

people and other cultures provided new eyes with which to see more clearly.

Today, through both contemporary architectural education and the architectural magazines, architects know more about the international architecture of other places than they know about the vernacular architecture of their own place.

Architectural perspectives show buildings located in a utopian context, free of signs, power poles and other visual junk. Non-architects see the whole picture and think the perspectives are misleading. The reality is that architects actually see their finished buildings looking exactly like the perspectives. Selective vision is essential for survival in contemporary society and it has made it possible to free buildings, seen as artifacts, from their context.

The new 747 travelling architecture is now perfectly integrated into the astonishing political and social changes which have been brought about by travel.

Once it was reasonable to assume that the populace related to the government and that governments maintained international links. Today there is less vertical communication within countries than there is horizontal communication between countries.

Politicians and businessmen read the same books, enjoy the same art, eat similar food, enjoy the same architecture, and very possibly employ the same architects. They know very little about their own vernacular traditions. The 747 is just one of the clubs where they meet, and they all feel quite at home in London, Paris or New York.

Fruit farmers in the Okanagan, on the other hand, have more in common with the fruit farmers of Oratia, New Zealand, than either group have with the company directors of their own countries. The fruit farmers are neither ignorant nor insensitive. They may know very little about Post-Modernism, or the exciting possibilities of the denial of logical form, but the ignorance of company directors about the delicate ecological balance of the world or the rhythms of the natural order is of much greater concern. The fruit farmers may well meet at a convention where everyone else is a fruit farmer, in Montreal.

People who live and work in buildings themselves often belong in another place or another context, because their city is not the city of the person next door. People have become nomads once again. The communication revolution and the transportation revolution have resulted in a new world order. The

concept of context has been transformed. Context is now often unrelated to place.

Architects and urban designers have been slow to recognise the new world order, although they live very happily within it. Most of the work to be seen in design schools throughout the world is the new 747 travelling architecture. This is not entirely illogical because the graduates will service the needs of clients who are part of 747 culture. The elite employ the architects and the universities service the needs of the elite.

Tourism in its turn has destroyed even its own reason for existing. A Sheraton Hotel is both anywhere and nowhere. The Lebanese restaurants in Sydney, Soho, or Vancouver are much more convenient, and probably a good deal safer, than those in Lebanon. On a Greek beach people listen to familiar music on familiar transistors.

The traditional spatial world of architecture and urban design no longer exists. Planners who live in the new world cannot even comprehend what the architects are talking about.

The new world order opens up exciting design possibilities. On the one hand context can be non-territorial. On the other hand the energy and resource conservation demanded by the global environmental crisis requires a much closer integration between architecture, place and climate.

The ancient vernacular nomadic architecture was as closely related to place as any architecture we have known. There is no reason why the new 747 nomadic architecture should not be the same.

The art of design is the art of ensuring that each part of the design network is enriched by differences. It is the art of knowing how to both belong and be free.

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