



EAAE_Charter on Architectural Research

Approved by the EAAE General Assembly, Chania, 03 September 2012

The EAAE Charter on Architectural Research is intended as a reference document for the use of universities, architecture schools, research institutions, funding agencies, professional bodies and architectural practices that are undertaking architectural research. It specifies the character and objectives of architectural research, confirms the variety of valid methodologies and supports the development of a vibrant, internationally recognized and well-funded research community.

architecture as a discipline and a field of knowledge

Architecture is the discipline devoted to the creation, transformation and interpretation of the built environment and the articulation of space at various scales. It involves art, science, design, conservation, planning, management, construction and representation, addressing issues of ethics, aesthetics, culture and society. The discipline of architecture engages with the cultural, socio-economic and environmental conditions affecting our quality of life.

Architecture is facing challenges of climate change, globalization, urbanization and social transformation that necessitate vital research. In parallel, the horizons of architectural experimentation are expanding rapidly with the development of new technologies and media. If we are to understand, explain, anticipate and influence the consequences of these changes, research is essential. Moreover, research is essential for the continued expansion of the discipline's knowledge base, the development of spatial understandings, and the improvement in teaching, learning and practice of architecture.

architectural research

Architectural research is original investigation undertaken in order to generate knowledge, insights and understanding based on competencies, methods and tools proper to the discipline of architecture. It has its own particular knowledge base, mode, scope, tactics and strategies.

research by design

In architecture, design is the essential feature. Any kind of inquiry in which design is the substantial constituent of the research process is referred to as research by design.

In research by design, the architectural design process forms the pathway through which new insights, knowledge, practices or products come into being. It generates critical inquiry through design work. Therefore research results are obtained by, and consistent with experience in practice.

connection to other disciplines

Architecture reaches out to and incorporates knowledge of other disciplines. Architectural research therefore is fertile for trans- and inter-disciplinary endeavours.

By embracing aspects of rationality and intuition, objectivity and inter-subjectivity, technique and emotion, logic and creativity, architectural research enriches the understanding of the world.

contexts

Architectural research takes place in a broad societal and cultural context, connecting academy, practice, and continuing education. A clarification of this position is necessary, stimulating stronger links between theoretical and practice-based research and between academic and professional arenas.

By its nature, architecture also connects to a variety of industries, including the cultural sector, the construction sector, the environmental sector, the public, private and social sectors. Moreover, architecture has its own industry which is professional practice. Much of the most innovative and relevant architectural research inevitably emerges from and contributes to this industry of professional practice.

**architectural
research and
education**

In academia and practice, architectural research supports education both directly, through research training of future architects, and indirectly, by providing for the continual advancement of the discipline.

Students in architecture are taught at the highest level of academic education. The aim of architectural higher education is to develop a research disposition in students. As future architects they need to be able to establish basic premises, perform critical analysis, conduct intensive research and propose syntheses independently.

The architectural school as a whole and the design studio in particular are places for research practice par excellence.

output

Peer review, communication and international dissemination are crucial and should relate to the nature of the research.

Valid architectural research outputs are as varied as the constantly growing range of research approaches. It includes installations, experimental projects, design proposals, models and actual buildings as such, in addition to written and graphic research outputs.

**criteria and
characteristics
for quality**

Architectural research meets the general criteria of originality, significance, and rigour. It produces forms of output and discourse proper to disciplinary practice, to make it discussable, communicable and useful to peers and others. It is validated through panels of experts who collectively cover the range of disciplinary competencies addressed by the work.

The following characteristics could guide architectural research to a high level of quality and open up new horizons:

- the research is meaningful and relevant for practice, for the discipline, and for society; it explores limits and expands them;
- it contributes to design practice, to the exploration of spatial understanding and/or the creative design process;
- it contributes to knowledge through intellectual work that is characteristic of architecture and design practice;
- the results are consistent with experience in practice;
- the research endeavors to make its processes and foundations as clear and explicit as possible;
- method, context, process and results are communicated and submitted to regular peer review; they refer to the work of peers;
- the research explores emotional, intuitive and/or artistic aspects of the domain, it engages architectural competences and experience in practice;
- it creates and exploits trans-disciplinary connections.

ethics

Ethicality requires the researcher to adopt a posture that manifests integrity, tolerance, acceptance of difference, and honesty regarding the participants in and the subject of research. Respect for existing ethical codes and for the freedom of researchers is fundamental. Architectural research must take into account its direct impact on society and nature

funding

Funding policies need to be structured in accordance with the variety of modes, scope and contexts of architectural research.

To guarantee ethical integrity architectural research must have adequate financing: a variable combination of public and private financing, depending on the aims of the research.

For these reasons besides existing short-term financing, a solid basis is needed for assuring a continuity of the research and its long-term quality.

**research and
practice linked**

The EAAE advocates stronger links between theoretical and practice-based research, and therefore between academia and the profession for the establishment of an expanded arena of architectural research.