

# **Rethinking The Role of Context and Contextualism in Architecture and Design**

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Submitted to the  
Institute of Graduate Studies and Research  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science  
in  
Architecture

Eastern Mediterranean University  
September 2012  
Gazimağusa, North Cyprus

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## **ABSTRACT**

It is obvious that many popular products and understandings of contemporary architecture have left contextual design behind. Context is simply sacrificed to build an artificial identity and brand. Both on urban scale and on building scale insensitivity towards context in design have not been able to produce quite positive results. With this concern, this study is discussing contextuality in architecture within the framework of product, design and designer (architect). In this sense, necessity of how contemporary design's context should be dealt within the framework of ethical responsibility, in addition to the artistic aspects of the profession is emphasized and contextual design is reviewed. The subject has addressed some contextual design approaches of the period from 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present with criticism. In addition to pervasive studies that describes contextual design on the basis of known, concrete facts of environment (especially related with architectural characteristics), the study also attempted to reveal different aspects of contextuality by discussing the subject in line with designer's personal attitudes and the basic arguments of design activities.

In the study, the relationship of architecture with context from 1900s until today is scrutinizingly deliberated and prepared a ground for discussion. Different attitudes demonstrated against context corresponding to the periods of "Modernism", "Post Modernism" and "Deconstructivism" has been brought to the present and extensions/provisions of these attitudes are conveyed to contemporary discourse. Contemporary contextual architecture is scrutinized in relation to design activity and design product and related background is interpreted. Accordingly, guidelines,

strategies of contextual design, architectural habits and extensions from the past are critically discussed.

In addition to studies that have widely discussed contextual design with guidelines and strategies, this study addresses contextual design within the framework of designer's attitude. These attitudes are referred to as empathic, sympathetic and Independent. Although sympathetic attitude is superior compared to others, it is emphasized that considerations of the designer (architect) towards context is the most important point for the sake of contextual quality. In other words, it is underlined that whichever attitude is followed, the most important aspect determining success of the contextual design is contextual consideration of architect. As well as obedience to the context accepting it as a set of requirements to be complied with, an opinion that can be presented that accepts it as a tool in the design. In addition, in this study, "design concepts" derived from context is interpreted as extensions of attitudes and considerations revealing original examples that are strong and based on interpretation sampled on selected products.

**Keywords:** Contextual Design, Contextualism, Attitude, Consideration, Concept and Ethics

## ÖZ

Günümüz mimarlığında popüler olmuş bir çok ürün ve anlayışın bağlamsal tasarımı artık geride bırakmış olduğu aşıkardır. Bağlam yapay bir kimlik ve marka yaratmak uğruna adeta feda edilmiştir. Gerek kentsel ölçekte, gerekse bina ölçeğinde olsun tasarımdaki bağlama karşı duyarsızlık pek de olumlu sonuçlar ortaya koymamaktadır. Bu çalışma tam da bu endişe ile mimarlıkta bağlamsallığı, ürün, tasarım ve tasarımcı(mimar) çerçevesinde ele alarak tartışmaktadır. Bu anlamda günümüz tasarımında bağlamın nasıl etik bir sorumluluk çerçevesinde ele alınması, ve bu arada mesleğin sanatsal ve artistik boyutunun da gözden kaçmaması gerektiği üzerinde durulmuş ve bağlamsal tasarım tekrar gözden geçirilmiştir. Konu hem 20yy.dan günümüze kadar olan süreçte hem de günümüzdeki bazı bağlamsal tasarım yaklaşımlarını kritik ederek ele alınmıştır. Bağlamsal tasarımı çevrenin özellikle mimari özellikleriyle ilgili olarak, bilindik somut doğrular üzerinden ele alan, ve tanımlayan, yaygınlaşmış çalışmaların yanında, konuyu tasarımcının kişisel yaklaşımları ve tasarım faaliyetinin temel argumanları doğrultusunda ele alarak, bağlamsallığın farklı yönlerini ortaya çıkartmak denenmiştir.

1900'lerden günümüze kadar uzanan mimarlığın bağlamla ilişkileri araştırmacı bir tutumla ele alınmış, konu üzerinde tartışmayı besleyen bir zemin hazırlanmıştır. 'Modernizm', 'postmodernizm' ve 'dekonstruktivizm' dönemlerine tekabül eden bağlama karşı sergilenen tutumlar günümüze taşınmış, bu yaklaşımların uzantıları/karşılıkları konuyla ilgili güncel söylev ile aktarılmıştır. Günümüzün bağlamsal mimarlığı konusu tasarlama faaliyeti ve tasarım ürünü ilişkisi içinde

irdelenerek konuyla ilgili geriplan bu açıdan okunmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu doğrultuda bağlamsal tasarımın uygulamalarına yönelik ön görüler, stratejiler ve geçmişten gelen mimari alışkanlıklar/uzantılar eleştirel gözle ele alınmıştır.

Bağlamsal tasarımı öngörüler veya stratejiler ile pek çok defa ele almış çalışmalar yanında bu çalışma tasarımcının tutumu çerçevesinde bağlamsal tasarımı ele alır. Bu tutumlar; Empatik, sempatik ve özgürlükçü olarak adlandırılır. Bunların arasında sempatik tutum diğerlerine kıyasla daha üstün bir konumda olsa da, bağlamsal kalitenin sağlanması açısından bunlardan belki de daha önemli olanın, mimarın(tasarımcının) bağlama yönelik bakış açısı olduğu vurgulanır. Diğer bir deyişle, herhangi bir tutum tercih edilmiş olsa bile, bağlamsal tasarımdaki başarıyı belirleyecek olan en önemli unsurun mimarın bağlama bakış açısı olduğunun altı çizilir. Bu bakış açısı, Bağlama sadece uyulması gerekli zorunluluklar seti olarak itaat etmenin yanı sıra, onu tasarımda bir araç olarak görüp yorumlayan görüş olarak ortaya konur. İlave olarak burada, contextten türeyen tasarım konseptleri, bağlamla kurulan güçlü, yoruma dayalı ve genellikle özgün örnekleri ortaya çıkaran bakış açıları ve tutumları, bir uzantısı olarak değerlendirir ve seçilmiş ürünler üzerinden örneklenir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Bağlamsal tasarım, Bağlamsalçılık, Bağlamsal Tutum, Bağlamsal Bakış açısı, Bağlamsal Kavram and Etik

Dedicated to my family and my lovely fiance

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I would like to express my gratitudes; to my family and friends who always believed in me and to my fiancé who kept me encouraged and shared my stress.

and lastly to my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Turkan Uluş Uraz, she was to one who guided me throughout the study and spent all of her time for me. I would never forget her support and trust in me, I really owed to my dear supervisor. I wouldn't be able to achieved anything without her experiences and contributions.



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# **Chapter 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is accepted that the effect of context on architectural object and hence its role on design, has emerged with the postmodern trend. Contextualism, as it is well known, came from the desire to resolve the problems regarding harmony with the historical environment and the placement of new buildings within historical surroundings that was apparent throughout the postmodern period. Therefore it became significant in the relations between the architectural object within the urban fabric and its proximal surroundings. Such development established a common discussion ground for both architectural design and urban design; and through this, established a bridge between these two different fundamental scales, bringing them closer to one another. On the other hand both in architectural theory and practice, the contextualist perspective (an important field of knowledge - an important discipline) was the basis for increased critique and evaluation of the design product as it is important in education. This approach, which predominantly evaluated the architectural product in light of the characteristics of the environment within which the product exists, is nourished by the lessons learnt from the traditionalist and regionalist architectural examples formed in line with contextual data. The way was thus paved for development of a perspective of holistic design that was geared towards unity within the environment. It is for this reason that it is placed in front of the many approaches that ignore the environment/surroundings; it cultivates design as the starting point and main idea and even becomes a source for development of concepts.

## **1.1 Aims and Objectives**

It is within the scope of this contextual approach that the present study will progress. It aims to take a comprehensive look at the topic through the consideration of 20th Century architectural discourse, arguments and theories; and endeavours to associate them with interpretation of the environment and the many design approaches that develop attitudes in this regard. The thesis aims to once more highlight that, as opposed to projections that track its development together with the postmodernist trend, contextualism has in actuality been an important factor in architectural discourse and practise even prior to the postmodern period. As a result, while it may not have been given the importance that it is today, the study puts forward that contextualism has always constituted an important data source of architectural design. With this aim in mind, the study comprises of four Chapters, including an introduction and a conclusion. The second Chapter concentrates on discursive and theoretical background while the third Chapter concentrates on contextual design.

Accordingly, the second chapter aims to understand the various faces, meanings and roles of context in architecture by narrowing analysis of the wide theoretical, discursive and practical background to the study from the 1900`s to our contemporary time. Therefore, the detailed information is dealt with not particularly following the chronologic time line but related to the relevant context based approaches i.e. Pragmatic Attitude, Sincere/Modest Relations, Adaptive Approaches. In the third chapter, the role of context in design and various contextual approaches are briefly examined by introducing strong contextually-susceptible attitudes developed among professionals and academicians and the comprehensive and detailed research carried out by them as a means of evaluating the role of context in



formation of the architectural design object. In addition to this strong and conservative contextual attitude fed by the post-modern trend, deconstructivism trend's rejection of context will be investigated. The effects that such have upon architectural practise are described, examined and discussed from time to time throughout the thesis.

The contextualist approaches that began in the post-modern period also show variety in contemporary times. It is emphasised that amongst all of the architectural practice aimed at establishing unity and harmony with the surroundings it is not possible to say that each has the same valuable contribution to the environment, architecture and design. Contextual design approaches can be summarised as attitudes that usually replicate the styles and architectural form in the existing surroundings. On one hand establish harmony through contrast are the attitudes that are not anxious to secure unity/harmony and even reject it. In actuality, while in comparison to the others, the first of these shows itself as being an easier attitude, the third that rejects the existing surroundings also affords a certain amount of convenience and ease.

Nevertheless between these two extreme points as replicate and contrast it is more important to establish how and from which angle the approach will be reminiscent of the surroundings or will be opposing to it. Together with the establishment of visual relations such as similarities and contrasts, it is important to search for the way in which contribution to the surroundings can be established. At this point, the designer's role in terms of attitudes and considerations and the ethical boundaries of such come into play within the thesis, and the study aims to underline the importance of discussion of contextualist approaches within this scope. The study highlights the need to engage with contextual design in a manner that will ensure continuity of the

environment without disregarding contextual design's creativity. As a result, the study aims to associate and discuss context and contextualism with the trio of architecture, design and the architect.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

The research field seems to be losing its popularity in today's avant-garde architectural practice as de-constructivism ignores contextual approaches. However, it is obvious that the role of context in architecture is still crucial. Throughout architectural periods it could be said that contextual issues were either extremely highlighted or ignored; gained different meaning or employed different dimensions. In most popular cases contextual approaches can hardly go beyond the formal visual relations with the nearby environment. Therefore, aesthetic base values and discussions are widely used for the evaluation of new contextual objects beside the designer's attitudes and ethic codes, which bring true contextual consistency into design discussion.

All these context- based important issues and values are sometimes still missing, underestimated and forgotten. Consequently, a comprehensive study, covering context related discursive, theoretical and practical dimensions and issues will be very essential. It will also contribute to the main argument that can be established not on aesthetic values but on the professional ethical values of design, which will also be enhanced by contextual issues mentioned as attitudes and consideration.

In fact it is not just the avant-garde approaches brought about by deconstructivism that saw the contemporary demise of contextual design's popularity. At the same time, it was the historicist/conservative approaches supported by post-modernism. As

a consequence of such approaches, we can see the establishment of misleading environments that appear to be from that same time-frame or forged historical city environments. It is arguable how successful these were in the establishment of contextual unity. For these reasons, historicist or avant-garde approaches (that create similar or completely dis-associated and approaches that disregard the existing surrounding architecture) should not be contextually evaluated through use of selected examples as is common practice; but instead importance is given to highlight that their contextual evaluation should be dealt with through contextualist fitting, designers contextual considerations and attitudes.

The approach that the present study takes towards this subject bears resemblance to Brolin Brent's book (1980), "Architecture in Context." He pointed out that much of post modern architecture was not at all contextual in the sense of being sympathetic to the immediate surroundings. With such a perspective and with his questioning of the postmodernist trend's assertion of establishing harmony in contemporary times, Brent emphasised a need to re-investigate contextual design. As a result, it is necessary to associate the contextualist perspective with the ordinary modest surroundings of contemporary times (with the exception of historical and authentic/original environments) and re-conceptualise it as a phenomenon that should be engaged with in all manner of design activities. The urban contextual concerns that are shown in contemporary times through scale-based diversity increases the subject-matter's importance; and just as context is capable of being a city or urban area, the ability of 'infill' designs to be extended through a street facade i.e. "city wall" or a building's extension or annex also gains placement within contextual design and raise its importance.

Tied to all of these, the need to bring contextual design up-to-date lead to a desire for it to be brought to the forefront and examined at length. In this regard, the present study aims to return contextual design to its rightful position and strives to discuss its applicability to all contexts in an effective manner. It is thus imperative that contemporary context is defined. No matter how restricted contextual design was to historical settings within the postmodern trend, the concept is one that is capable of being valid in all contexts within contemporary times. It is necessary to take into account the unique problems that different contexts have; and accentuate how productive and innovative this may be. At this point, it will be seen that postmodern design differs and is set apart in its approach to context.

Contextual design is beyond stylistic architectural approaches which are fundamentally based on a stylistic manner of forms that are decided prior to the design. Therefore, designing with considering the context with its own circumstance and setting rather than non-contextual priori decided design ideas gains more significance. There is a necessity for an architectural solution which aims to form according to context, is contemporary, original, establishes dialogue with the surrounding. The basis of the thesis argument thus puts forward contextual design's desire to create dialogue with its surroundings and its aim to be an architectural resolve that creates unity, harmony and consistency.

### **1.3 Methodology**

The present study's methodology steps away from taking on a purely quantitative method as examined in the previous researches that are undertaken within the scope of this topic. Also, it is possible to state that this study does not aim to evaluate and measure with the aid of case studies designed for contextual fitting, and thus does not

aim to come to a definite conclusion on the subject. The study focuses not on the evaluation of the design object but rather the design activities themselves and prefers to relate these to the designer's role, attitudes and ethical stance. Connected to this, the study aims to give importance to and promote artistic creation and interpretation, subjectivity and differentiation.

Through invocation of a wide scope literature survey, the study has drawn upon the discussions, theoretical support and discursive developments - whether these have emerged in the recent past or in contemporary times. These are in addition to the use of professional practices and examples. The study shall adapt the definitions of previous chapters to the interpreted arguments; thus taking on a qualitative method which is expected to support the argumentative characteristics of the research.

#### **1.4 Limitations**

As highlighted in the subject's definition and defended throughout the thesis, the study, whose research area is based on subjective norms and values, supports contextual design's subjective facet through discussions of theory, discourse and practise on the subject. In this regard, the study establishes a forum within which design activities are discussed in an inclusive manner. Examples from practical application are selected in this regard also. Whether discussing the product's contextual harmony or whether the study is discussing the architect's position in this regard, the thesis takes care to engage with those that have gained approval within design literature.

The differences of contextual harmony are not highlighted amongst examples of existing building extension, annex, infill or urban block scales. Instead these are all

addressed under the heading of contextual harmony. The study strives to assure that the selection of examples have been appraised personally and physically; giving importance to ensuring that first-hand (designers) experiences are cited. The present study underlines that evaluation of design products without knowledge, and importantly, design experience in architectural criticism is incorrect; and thus refrains from making comments and extreme commentaries even in the selected examples.

## **Chapter 2**

### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

#### **2.1 Introductory Literature**

In this section, basic literal knowledge and understanding of the subject has been brought together consists the background information to support the arguments and provide the essential introductory pre-knowledge for the subject such as the definition of the context, the importance of contextual thinking and the context in architecture.

##### **2.1.1 What is Context, Why It is Important?**

Context can be described as the combination of one phenomenon /circumstance/fact/event with others for the creation of a whole; and as a result, 'context' is the term that denotes the generation of items through the combination of all events/circumstances. The term context can be also defined as the background, environment, framework, setting, or situation encircling an act or a circumstance. The completeness/unity that the context provides us to use our work space in an effective manner, allows us to clearly identify solutions to any problems that we face and their successful resolution; and is useful for the evaluation of the elements that belongs to it. The importance of context emerges when its ability to express and bring to light an item's contents, its inclusion within a combined unity, its definition and its formation and attainment of a meaning is the matter of discussion. Thus, the item becomes an element of the entirety/whole and becomes an integral part of the context. According to Nesbitt (1996), the main belief behind contextualism is that

every knowledge is context related; in other words, context is the key to understand any knowledge it is associated with.

With the strengthening of the respective part's integrated relation, the parts gain meaning within the whole. If the parts are structured and positioned within the whole with strong relations, then in their absence, their existence would make it difficult to talk about the 'whole'. This thus highlights that the elements making up the whole are an integral and inseparable part of the entirety. Context itself is therefore this noted entirety and the relations that make up its totality.

The importance of the contextual thinking is highlighted (comes forward) or gains importance when the problem is considered in association to the context and within the context it belongs to. If we are to take an example of this approach from other non-architectural fields, we can draw an analogy with the way in which a doctor takes the physical and socio-cultural factors of the patient into consideration in his analysis of a medical problem. According to Jonas (2005), in the field of medicine, the practitioner does not make a judgement on his patient's illness according to a specific symptom, but rather evaluates the patient's situation by considering it within a continuum. Together with the resolution of problems, context is also important for the understanding and expression of contextual complexities. In line with other scholars, Price (2008), also mentions the importance of contextualism by referring to philosophy and states that contextualism describes a compilation of perspectives in philosophy where actions, utterances and expressions are only meaningful when considered within their context. Similarly, contextual thought also plays a role in education. When a language is to be taught, it would be impossible to do so whilst separating the cultural context to which people belong (Wardhaugh, 1998). Again



giving an example from the linguistic field, it is not possible to understand the whole and true meaning of a poem from reading one stanza; nor is it possible to grasp the nature of a book by reading a single paragraph. The letters in a word, the word itself, the sentence, the sentences that make up a paragraph and the paragraphs themselves all make up the whole. And in the combination of these items and relationship between them we may speak of contextual totality. Beaver (2007), explains the importance and structure of words in the maintenance of unity by saying that “Words are only meaningful when they are viewed in relation to other words. Therefore even when only one word of a unity changes, the meaning changes”.

Contextual thinking does not reject anything in the unity that it creates. On the contrary, context purports to have awareness of all that it contains. This thought combines and holds a wide range of social, scientific, historical, regional, cultural, economic and such like abstract and concrete notions under one roof. Many contexts, according to their own special and particular circumstances, create comprehensive structures through their combination of items; and the coming together of the components that make the whole with the contextual thought is sensitive/susceptible and very much important to many fields.

### **2.1.2 Definition of ‘Context’ in Architecture**

As it is in many other fields, context also has a very important role to play in the field of architecture. It is one of the rare architectural concepts involved in all of the three main essential fields such as; architectural discourse, theory and architectural practice. The relationship between architecture and context has much variety and we can thus mention different approaches. While sometimes there is a rejection of the context or environment within which it is placed, other times there is an engagement

with them to exist in a coherent fashion. Occasionally there is a tendency to deplete the environment, while other times there appear approaches that try to add value to it. Contextual data are sometimes the essentials of design solution; while other times they can be seen as difficulties that can be easily disregarded. As mentioned, context is made up of many components. Some approaches aim to highlight the characteristics of the contextual components. Others ignore or exhibit the components in a superficial manner. From these differing attitudes, we are able to see the maturing development of contextual design attitudes within the architectural field. The fact that context is found in the design of different components, that it gives direction to design and that it plays an important role in the formation of architecture is not a novel concept. There has been both conscious and subconscious awareness and experimentation of this even in architectural history and before the architectural profession became institutionalised. In this regard, architecture has been inevitably intertwined with contextual thinking.

The Architects Design Partnership (2007), defines context and its placement within architecture in the following way:

The context is 'the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood' (Oxford Dictionary of English). In the case of architecture 'event, statement or idea' is building, and 'circumstances' that surround it range from the social, political, cultural and economic environment which it is built, as well as the more obvious physical setting (p.97).

Similarly, Burden (2001) defines contextual design in his work "Illustrated dictionary of architecture" as:

"...any doctrine emphasising the importance of the context in establishing the meaning of terms, such as the setting in to which a building is placed, its site, its natural environment or its neighbourhood" (Burden, 2001, p.87).

With the establishment of contextual thought as a solid concept, the important features of context became a fully-fledged notion through the term “contextualism”; the essence of which is explained by Burden (2001), refers to the term’s application and location within architecture as:

... an approach to urban planning (1960-1970) that considers the city in its totality; the view that the experience of a city is greater than the sum of its parts. All architecture must fit into, respond to, and mediate its surroundings (Burden, 2001, p.87).

In the definition of contextualism, Beaver (2007), associates the concept with physical features of the proximal environment in addition to cultural and temporal features. Within contextual thought, design should be approached in a current and contemporary fashion. At the same time, the necessity of positioning new designs at a point between past and future design is highlighted. As put forward, it is possible to state that Contextualism is at the centre of our thoughts regarding the built environment. It is further added that architecture is the tool for expressing culture and reflecting the fascination and concerns of our time.

Above all else, Contextualism is a concept that aims to create the relationship and dialogue of unity; a notion that aspires to move in a coherent manner within its entirety whilst carving a niche for itself. Johnson(1994) expresses this relationship and the context within architecture in an etymological manner:

Derived from the Latin word ‘contexere’, which means weaving together, the word ‘context’ can be described as “the setting of an event, composition, or text, in the sense of describing the spatio-temporal parts immediately preceding or following that determine its meaning.” The word ‘contexture’ which is no longer in use, can be considered to be more specific for the field of architecture as it has the following meaning: “the weaving together of words and sentences, or the structure of a composition.” Although the adjective “contextual” is being used instead of the adjective “contextural”, bearing in mind the architecture textural, this words evokes the essentials of architecture such as the mix of the elements, the tactility of surface, the perceptibility of material property, the cue to scale as

well as sign of handiwork. When modern architectural usage is considered the word context may have more than one meaning. It may refer to the physical built fabric in which a project is situated, it may refer to the ground, or it may refer to the environment in which the architects work taking into consideration the culture, history and other aspects (p.284).

The largest factor in the emergence of the notion in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the new construction and the desire to curb the careless associations that comes with it. With each new building and each day, cities were being reshaped; and harmony or dialogue with the current environment and/or historical setting started to gain importance. With the questioning of contextual relationships, the contents of context and its varying concrete and abstract notions were reflected in the architecture as the architect saw fit. It is now necessary for this to be put forward and understood.

As the main principle of the concept, ‘dialogue’ throughout architectural theory and discourse was also highlighted in this manner. Capon (1999), within his work *Architectural Theory – Volume 2: Le Corbusier’s Legacy*, under the heading of contextual design, the following passage can be found to bring together and emphasise communication and the importance of architectural relationships:

“The context is applied to the following two categories of ideas which are community and communication. By referring the context, Charles Moore's defines the term communication as follows “the making common of some property to a number of things” (p.185).

Although the terms community and communication usually refer to the relationship between human beings, Capon(1999) also mentions that “communication may also be between buildings or even between people and buildings” (p.185).

Le Corbusier notes that “buildings ... like so many people all talking at once”; and similarly, Kahn puts forward a “Society of spaces talking to each other in a plan” (Capon, 1999, p.186).

Capon defines the idea of buildings “talking to each other” as the relation or communication of building with others and the site around them. Such ideas are also present in the concept of context.

Otto Wagner notes “the aesthetic need to harmonize with the surroundings” in a chapter titled “Composition” (Capon, 1999, p.186).

Tugnutt & Robertson (1987) in their book *Making Townscape* defined contexture as the act of weaving together (Capon, 1999, p.186).

In addition to the noted expressions regarding this relationship, Clough Williams-Ellis cited in Johnson (1994), judges and the abstract/superficial relationship that his architecture has with the environment. In the publication, he stresses the necessity of unity with the context: "it's not possible to enjoy an individual building if it does not belong to suitable environment which constitutes the coherent picture" (Johnson 1994).

Gelemter (2001), reiterates Louis Khan's famous quote “What does the building want to be?” that put architectural composition and relationships at the forefront (p.279).

In Response to Norberg Schulz' view that "[The] relationship of a building to the environment as just a widening of the theory for a single building" (Capon, 1999, p.192).

Capon (1999) comments with regard to contextual relationships in the following manner: just as a building can be whole within itself, it is similarly necessary to relate buildings both amongst themselves and amongst the environment they find themselves in.

Together with this, Thomas & Garnham (2009) highlight the importance of architecture's relationship with its environment: Architecture and the place are inseparable; they are vitally attached to each other. Despite the factors shaping a building, the relationship to be formed with the intimate environment and thus the fitting is very important.

It is appropriate to say that contextual thought actually has a very wide scope. It is possible to talk of the concept's scale based hierarchy and the broad boundaries in this regard. Just as one cannot think of an object separate from its place, in architecture it cannot also think of even the smallest design's detail that it finds itself in, without taking context into consideration.

Taking the point made by Eero Saarinen (1956) with regard to context's scale hierarchy, Johnson (1994) notes that we should "[A]lways design a thing by considering it in its larger context: a chair in a room, a room in a house, a house in an environment, an environment in a city plan" (Johnson, 1994, p.284).

In Tugnutt & Robertson (1987) publication, "Making townscape: a contextual approach to building in an urban setting" it is possible to find views similar to those of Eero Saarinen: "in order to understand the local context, the wider context has to taken in to account" (p.22).

Also, Sotoudeh (2011) highlights that contextualist thinking can be found in various places ranging from city silhouettes to small details in indoor settings: "Different scales of Contextualism can be considered, ranging from the urban skyline to the minute details of an interior" (p.2).

The importance of the scale based hierarchy actually remains the choice of the architect. Sometimes intimate environment can conflict with the broad context. However, contextual thought always opens the door for the design to belong to the place in which it is found; and thus, even with many approaches, there is always the possibility of it becoming a part of the entirety.

One can find many ways in which different scales of dialogue can be established with context. Flexible approaches are available for evaluation of the architectural object from different scales; sometimes from a close environment, street, town and sometimes on a regional scale (Beaver, 2007). Referring to different scales of contextual design, Architects Design Partnership (2007), offers a wide range of detail-oriented approaches from city to countryside and also regional to minute detail. Similarly Capon (1999) refers to publications and approaches of contextual design that take each scale separately:

- Landscape: involving question of sitting, sunlight and views
- Cityscape: of the city planning by Camillo Sitte

- Townscape: introduced by Gordon Cullen`s publications,
- Roomscape: Introduced by Christopher Alexander`s pattern language  
(Capon, 1999, p.191).

Taking into account the direct surroundings, Kahn`s quote “what does the building want to be? indicates that there may be different preferences according to the scale of the architectural context. Initially put forward by Johnson (1994), Pablo Bonto`s views on context also question how trustworthy scale-based hierarchy can be: “Buildings are often criticised because they do not blend with their immediate and visual context. But why should they? Buildings must relate not to their neighbours in the street but to the broader context of images and ideas that constitute culture” (p.284).

The sensitive/susceptible relationship that architecture has with context and the architectural history in this regard relies on the existence of human. people organise himself/herself and his/her position within the environment according to the environment`s own conditions and features. This is especially true when we look at traditional/vernacular architecture, where this relationship is stronger. We can say that buildings are formed more-so according to environment and her conditions. people's interpretation of these conditions is more pragmatic due to necessity. Without any artistic aim and concern, people effort to set up populace in harmony with environmental factors, leads to different architectural construction according to different geographical contexts. In essence the aim is to ensure compliance with the natural conditions in which they find themselves. At this point, although it consist basic architectural language that constitute sense of belonging to a place, it is different to consciously developed contextual design. It is a desire to have a more



natural formation; and therefore for this reason it should be seen as different to an artistic, conscious claim.

Environmental design is given detailed consideration in Thomas & Gamham (2009), book. In this regard, they note environmental design's "emergence from people's need of sheltering" and the desire for this accommodation to be as adapted to the environmental conditions so as to ease living conditions. However, with the increasing maturity/development of local materials and local culture, people began to identify the benefits of having the architecture constructed according to its location. thus that is possible to see increased interest in the contemporary interpretation of these forms. The reason for the emergence of contextual architecture is also somewhat to do with interest in the context specific architectural language of vernacular architecture. In other words, we could say that it is the result of a spontaneous and natural attempt to regain natural integrity. Therefore, as compared to the other, this bears conscious artistic claims.

## **2.2 The Role of the Context in Architecture**

In this section, a comprehensive study is carried out from periods starting from 1900's towards the 2000's; and the various faces of the role of context have been taken into account. The modern period, the transition era to the post-modern period, the post modern period itself and the deconstructivist period are all studied and analysed according to their respective attitudes towards context. Accordingly, in addition to analysing the development of various attitudes towards context, this chapter will look to the changes leading to the emergence of many approaches and the changes that allowed for affiliation of context within architecture.

The contextual discoveries prior to the introduction of contextualism during the postmodern era will be investigated under the three sub-headings of Pragmatic Attitude, Sincere/Modest Relations and Adaptive Approaches. While it may, under such headings, be difficult to talk about the existence of a conscious approach towards context, the ability for such contextual footprints to be observed and their appearance within design in different impacts underlined the presence of context.

Under the Contextualist Innovations; Conservative Attempts title, the emergence of conscious efforts towards context, the postmodernist intervention aimed at resolving the deformation in city areas occurred by modernism and the periodic conservative approaches towards contextual design and the environment are all analysed. In addition to this, many concepts re-vitalised during the postmodern period and emergent in line with the contextualism approach are also examined.

### **2.2.1 Contextual Discoveries/Responses**

In the architectural field, the term context is frequently used in the second half of the 20th century. The ideas behind the concept, however, have existed long before (Capon, 1999). Beaver (2007) also argue that it is apparent that designing in relation to the context has existed for a long time; although the formal theory of contextualism has only existed in the last five decades.

Concerns have, to varying extents, always existed surrounding context in the architectural practise and discourse - even before architecture and design theory had taken a strong hold. This is especially so in the modern period where it appears that even a developed experienced contextual thought was not interacted with and from time to time, strong attitudes against it appear to be taken. Even so however, it is clear that context is still inadvertently given attention through the various aims

behind the context; and therefore we can say that it is influential still. In short, although it seems that the contextual approach was introduced in the postmodern period, interaction with context was apparently existent even prior to this period of time. After the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, through the investigation of subject, the approaches are defined. In this part of the thesis, attention is given to the approaches and concepts within the scope of the Pragmatic Attitude, Sincere/modest Relations and Adaptive approach. Each are examined under separate headings. Modernism, organic and environmental are all corresponding designs that emerged in the same period. They shall be analysed and discussed at length underlined headings that highlight their respective attitudes in relation to context.

With Modernism, local, traditional, historical designs were outcast; and the difficulties of context in design were tried to be overcome through the appropriate technologies emerging with the development and advancement of the construction industry. Modernism looked upon context as an overly scientific, pragmatic attitude; and remained uncompromising and unyielding in its own design principles. The most important principle is its lean, cubist language form that isolates from the environment. Within the scope of this pragmatic attitude, modernism takes the data of context that works within the scope of its design principles, and eliminate the contextual values that not needed.

Modernism's attitude towards context is not one that aspires to contribute; but rather has developed a strict utilising attitude which aims to subtract from and use context to its own way. In spite of this attitude, Modern architecture methodises formation in consonance with context; and therefore is not as ignorant of context as it looks.

The 1920s beheld not only the individuality of architectural design, but also the principle of the design product being a distinctive object from the environment and not exceeding beyond it. We can thus highlight that a relationship failed to materialise amongst design and environment in that period. As a result of such, the architectural object is withdrawn, imprisoned with the spacial limits of the building, and the building itself becomes the only aim of the building's design. In other words, the building is not harmonious within its context but instead focuses individually to itself and has the pretence of standing alone. Not so novel and perhaps not uncomfortable for the period, the subsequent popularisation of modernism and the visual lack of correlation with the environment brought this situation to a more problematic dimension.

In addition to this tense relationship, it is possible mention the emergence of other architectural and design approaches almost at the same time periods. However much these approaches attempt not to contribute to context consciously or directly, it can be noted that they established more mild, modest and sincere relationships with context in comparison to the modernist attitude of the time. These approaches will be analysed under the heading of sincere/modest relations and adaptive approach within the scope of organic and environmental design.

#### **2.2.1.1 Pragmatic Attitude**

It is claimed that the Modernist approach which is the dominant trend in the period, to the exception of a few examples, visually did not engage with the environment. However, modernist examples can be accepted as visually related when the context was developed with other modern buildings. Thus analogy can be found, and harmony created (Brolin, 1980). But still in ordinary cases the relationship with the

environment is not as weak as it may appear. While visually there isn't much unity between modern architecture and its environment, it is actually shaped due to different contextual properties.

Although the pragmatic attitude of modernism is to stray from supplementing context, it is oriented towards the use of context.

If we take the fact that the architectural language of form derives from functional aspects, modern architecture deals with functional aspect as the first problem that needs to be solved. The importance given to function and the fact that architecture is shaped according to function means that spaces are used in the most appropriate and comfortable manner; and are thus more economic. The aim here is to ensure the establishment of the architectural design that is the most comfortable and appropriate for the user's activity.

At this point, this approach differentiates from organic architecture and environmental architecture. The strict functional manner of modernism means that usability and comfort is obtained not through organic principles but rather through the scientific point of view that is emergent at that time, through technology and industrialisation. In this way, it isolates itself from the proximal environment. According to Thomas and Garnham (2009), the architectural scientific view came about from the modern trend and within this framework environmental ergonomic science and internal arrangement of the building are invoked. The scientific developments in architecture support the pragmatic/utilising point of view; and, in opposition to adaptation seen in the vernacular buildings, does not have the need to

configure itself according to the environment. In this light, it rejects traditional architecture and establishes a completely new architectural language on form.

Some technological advancements have had a positive effect on design related to the context. Examples include the heating and cooling problem's cessation through industrial development, the establishment of flowing spacial interior organisations and inside-outside relations with re-materialisation of interior and externally placed "walls" through transparent surfaces. An underlying reason for the view that spaces were becoming more whole and complementary, was the new dialogue with the surroundings through the removal of the "wall" and the establishment of even more transparency. Thomas & Garnham (2009) note how it can be seen that developments in the technological sphere have had a positive effect on the spaces and its relation to its context.

With similar views, Gropius cited in Capon (1999) discusses this advantage of modernism by saying that: "undivided glass planes giving new relationships of interior spaces to the infinite reaches of the outdoors" (p.194).

However, at the same time, with the resolution of climate problems through technology, the necessity to formation in line with the environment is absolved, and this removes the desire for environmental/vernacular architectural approaches. No matter how much spacial flow is established, the architecture itself is more insensitive towards its environment and does not have the need to relate to its environment.

Modernism in actuality gives heed to scientific thought; and although it holds itself at a distance to context, it does engage with it with a pragmatic/utilising attitude. The architect inevitably takes on many site strategies in the design and disregards or reduces to a minimum those considerations that are not necessary to the modern architects. Thomas & Garnham (2009) highlights that in these site strategies the solar consideration, wind, rain water, the ground (the way in which the design sits) considerations are all based on human comfort. He goes on to note that this same human comfort consideration is true in the functional planning, facade design and selection of materials for such strategies.

There is a move towards on architectural formation with an aim to secure user comfort through using environmental factors. With this in mind, it is possible to read the horizontal and vertical facades not only as elements of modernism's symbolic form language but more importantly as an effort to configure the building with its surroundings. Similarly, in functional relationships and positioning, site and the physical conditions of the land are taken into consideration. As well as topographical data's, sun, wind and similar climate and regional factors are taking centre stage and in fact these concerns become increasingly scientific with diagrams, charts and quantitative dimensions; which are calculated, perceived and reflected in the architectural language. In this way, even the measurement of the most basic sun-screening/blocking elements are arranged and shaped according to the regional and solar data. In doing so, modernism created for its time a contemporary and unique format language in not only the building's conformity to its broad environment but also in the emergence of the ability to use the scientific data and methods as an indicator of creation.

Through careful calculations, Modernism added much to the establishment and attainment of context. Specifically, we can highlight spacial innovations, the transparency behind it, and the playing with the reflection of the light and shadows that transparency brings to the space as examples of its success. Capon (1999), touching on what famed architects say on the matter, notes as follows (p.194):

As Wright said “Let the ‘modern’ now work with light, light diffused, light reflected, light refracted and light for its own sake”.

Le Corbusier wrote: “I use light abundantly ... light for me is the fundamental basis of architecture. I compose with light... the element of architecture are light and shade, walls and spaces.”

Sunlight therefore is an important component of landscape and sun and view may be seen to complement one another in the dual functioning of the window. A window allows light to enter a room, but also affords views out to the surrounding countryside. One of the major contributions of the modern movement lay in the attempt to break down this barrier between inside and outside.

Van Doesburg notes that “[w]e have by the destruction of enclosure ... removed the duality of interior and exterior... inside and outside now pass over into one another” (Capon, 1999, 194).

If context is purely evaluated on the basis of built environment, we would evaluate modernist view that not much preferred to be in modest relations with context, yet even more it contrasts with the historical surroundings. However, modernism actually interacts with context. No matter how pragmatic/utilising and scientific this



interaction is, it cannot be denied. Furthermore, in some conditions, it is possible to speak of modern architecture's positive relationship, even with contrasting attitude.

Gelernter (2001), while mentioning the technological advances in modernism, cites the development of a temperature and light controlling glass curtain wall. With such a development, the building's relationship with its intimate surroundings begin to change. Although modernist buildings have neglected to use the close environment to bring their own characteristics to light, with the preference of walled curtains becoming fashionable building facades, the close surroundings and modernist designs have established a relationship of stylistic contrast.

"The buildings hide their personalities behind the reflective walls just as one might hide one's feelings behind reflective sun glasses" (Gelernter, 2001, p.298).

#### **2.2.1.2 Sincere and Modest Relations**

Like the environmental design that emerged towards the end of modernism, organic architecture also adapts to the environment, understanding nature's roots and notions, learning from it; and overall aiming to, through nature, adapt architecture to the environment. but this approach was not directly influenced by the built environment or a physical setting.

Organic architecture consists analogical approaches to nature and natural resources have artistic conceptions within its abstract. Organic architecture originated in America; and Mumford (1989), in his leading article, examines and explains the combined relationship that art and nature have under the approach as follows:

[I]n the 19th century for architects who search for modern aesthetic in terms of organic architecture, nature was the main source of inspiration. To illustrate,

Emerson who is a prominent figure in organic philosophy also stated that the artist should produce like the nature. However, it is unrealistic to think that modern work of art could directly imitate nature. Architects like Frank Furness and Louis Sullivan have paid attention to these views on organic philosophy by adapting natural concepts and designing accordingly.

In his article, Mumford takes the pioneering points made by Emerson on this matter; and highlights the similar points put forward by Frank Furness, Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright's regard for context and his configuration, progression and composing of his own unique architecture within context is plain to see in his work.

In organic architecture, the relationship between context and the proximal surrounding is not a paramount consideration. Instead, its interaction with the environment is a slight attitude; the approach being sensitive to nature and its principles; while at the same time takes into account how all natural things living in nature establish a relationship within their own contexts, and adopts this as its guiding principle. (Mumford, 1989) mentions the fact that every component of nature adapts itself according to its surrounding setting. He also touches upon the formation according to the surrounding factors and states that just like in the nature, the architectural object also should not only adapt to the context but also the form and function should not be separated.

However, irrespective of the noted founding principles, organic architecture sometimes adopts these amongst itself in disregard of its relationship with the surroundings. This stems from the modernist design period where in the architecture

discards the environment within which it is found and instead stands as an individual “object”. Here, in the organic architecture, although nature is inspirational, the visual harmony with the surroundings comes the architect’s own effort. Organic architecture’s constitutive basis, as mentioned by Mumford, is not the close surroundings, but instead based on the scientific knowledge of the laws of nature: “Structure, analogies, balance, proportion, beauty of nature, adaptation... (plants, animals, living nature)”. It can be noted that the visual adaptation with the surrounding can be foregone. Usually, organic designs use natural materials and approaches derived from the natural environment with the aim of being natural, adapted to and part of nature. Sometimes the aim is to ensure the visual relationship with the surroundings; whereas other times the environmental factors are taken into account with the aim of more easily facilitating the life of those that shall live there and their comfort.

In addition to the effort towards being natural and adapting itself to the surroundings in the design’s material and construction, functional planning also plays a large part in the design. In this sense, there is an aim to interpret and incorporate elements such as sun, wind and topography into the design not taking advantage of technology as much as possible.

In taking inspiration from nature, the constituted architectural form when applied in rural areas can successfully come together and harmonise with the context. However this intention to be one with nature can be fail on a urban context when merged with the other architectural buildings that make up the city as a whole. The formal language of organic architecture has natural, local and regional connotations. While sometimes it may take up an individualist independent position from its environment,

next to the strict and decisive relationship of modernism, organic architecture can be defined as being closer and more amiable. Wright, a highly noted expert of period, is a pioneer of both the modern and organic architecture movements. he highlights the importance of context, tradition and the use of natural materials, and stresses that their effects on architectural form should not be ignored (Wright, 1954).

The organic movement mentioned by Mumford attracted the attention of many architects and was also notably advocated by many noted names in the architectural field including Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright. Discussing the enthusiasm of a pioneer such as Albert Ledner in this regard and its consequential effect on architecture, McCook (2009) notes that: As a student of organic architecture, Ledner was also significantly influenced by Wright's architecture. Also impressed by the Arts and Crafts movement, he took architectural education at the time that Louis Sullivan was teachings where upon he discovered Wright's early efforts.

In defining organic architecture's fundamental principles, Sullivan and Wright clarified it as expressing the designs desire to be one and establish unity with its existing environment, the people and nature and the place in which it is located. The design must be considered in light of the holistic theme in context (McCook, 2009).

Still, these noted fundamental principles are not given consideration by many architects whom do not aim to have the highest relationship with the surroundings. Rather, they are conscientious to use natural materials and traditional construction in their structures, are careful to keep the whole unit in mind in the structure's form and function and overall strive to be more receptive of the ways in which they can be natural and environmentally friendly. This sensitivity allows organic architects to

take knowledgeable advantage of the environment and puts them modestly at the forefront of developing awareness in this regard. Compared to modernism and its sharply recorded geometry, here we have a non-geometric form of configuration that is more free and natural. This way of shape assessment fulfils its relationship with the environment through preference of local materials and construction techniques. In this way these factors that give it a more amiable and unassuming relation with the context.

Taking a hand to modernist architecture's failings through his own architecture and discourse Wright's work does not reject functionalism but also combined with it, his organic architecture attains harmonisation with it through use of organic form. He has thus created his own architectural language. It is possible to see many traditional approaches in addition to organic architectural design apparent in Wright's work. While he does not stick to particular style, through the development of organic architecture, he has played an important role in its pronunciation. The fact that he does not strictly adopt any style therefore with his every proposal of an original design concept gives an indication of the importance he gave to the context in which a building belongs to. According to Capon (1999), with mentioning Wright's personal design attitudes, he claims that contextual thought has a much deeper history than it's been thought and often spoke of Wright's contextual awareness of this "before the contextual trend in postmodern emerged". His words and architectural work gave direction to the development of context and the language of context within the architectural field. As a leader and innovative architect and critic of the time, his works stressed the importance of context. His and such like-minded

individuals' approach and attitude is very different to the modernist approach towards context at the time.

Wright did not agree with the idea which proposes that form follow function; but instead he followed Sullivan's footsteps believing that form and function are bound as one (McCook 2009). Like many contemporary stylistic approaches, the process towards superior contextual object within organic architecture is mainly possible with the architect's personal skills and effort. It is possible to see the existence of visual harmony and unity in the work of Wright and like-minded architects' projects; especially where nature is placed at the forefront, and in contexts where the built environment is not intense.

As Gelernter (2001) explains, Wright's vernacular lines can be seen at the first Herbert house building. Usonian house turns its back on the back garden; and with its transparent panels and courtyard, it is in not only spacial but also visual unity. Made with natural materials it is economic and is thus a preferred choice. Wood and stone are generally used throughout the building.

With his organic thought background, Wright has discovered an economic home for low income families. Jacobs house is the first of such buildings (fig.1). Above all else it is one of the first of Wright's buildings that has managed successful harmonisation between the local landscape and the American house's surroundings. Uraz, Pulhan, Ulucay, (2010) note that architectural context not only includes visual or climate values but also is effect by social and economic conditions.

While being one of the strictly modern constructions of the period, Usonian house sets itself apart with its prototype construction and sympathy towards its surroundings. L-shaped to fit around a garden terrace, lots of local materials, and natural cooling, natural lighting with clerestory and a strong visual connection between the interior and exterior spaces is an important characteristic of all Usonian homes (Wright, 1984). While Wright's usonian homes and their prototypes were unique and characteristic in their design and expressions in their context can be seen in many examples (fig.1,2 and 3).



Figure 1: Wright's Jacobs House, 1936 (source: URL 1)

Figure 2: Wright's Johnson House, 1949 (source: URL 2)

Figure 3: Utzon's usonian house prototype, 1952 (source: URL 3)

However it is more possible to see Wright's high-level contextual relations in his work where the conditions are brought about by the context. Still mesmerising architects today, Wright's Falling Water is a great example to highlight organic architecture within a natural context and to show the modern and local perspectives of the organic architect.

No matter how much the modernist geometry in a strict language he designed, the accentuation placed upon being part of nature and being in harmony with it, selecting natural materials, and the effort to create unity between architecture and the surrounding nature clearly highlights that architecture gives great importance to

unity. Wright has shown yet again, as he does with much of his work, that architecture can go more further than being an individual “object”.

It is possible to analyse and explain this architectural approach with regard to context, whether we are referring to its relationship with the principles of organic architecture or its relationship to the architect’s personal effort. Gelernter (2001) discusses the relationship of context in relation to Falling water house in the following excerpt:

Wright combined his main interest in organic architecture and nature making use of clean, rational forms. Over the waterfall located in the Bear Run stream, the walls Wright built up seems to grow out of the land. Interior arrangement of building is placed according to the inner core which is the stone wall growing out of the site, and therefore, the building is shaped according to the main organic concept. From this organic fusion, Wright designed a series of cantilevered overlapping terraces playfully with the pure geometrical shapes and white tones of the international style. The water fall house seems weightless over the waterfall and at complete harmony with the nature.

In conclusion, in discussion of organic architecture’s attitude towards contexts, we can say that there is an interaction with nature so as to draw analogies, an intention to approach the design with as natural choices as possible; and although it may not be a principle aim, the inadvertent desire to exhibit a friendly attitude towards the environment and the surroundings is not amiss. Together with this, it is important to highlight Wright and other notable names that advocate the same line of thought and the high-level relations that they have established with context by going beyond the



noted principles and criteria. Organic architecture's establishment of a relationship form with context, although not a high-level approach to attaining urban environmental sustainability, is more suited for rural or suburban environments. Use of effective materials, topographies, climatic factors towards mass and spacial organisation allows for organic architecture's attainment of a relationship between the building and the environment within which it is found and attainment of unity with its surroundings. Similar high-level relationships that are established with the surroundings, characterised in the subsequent periods as Contextual design, are much more contextualised than other superficial 'contextual' examples of further periods.

### **2.2.1.3 Adaptive Approaches**

Towards the end of modernism, technological divergence and a longing for nostalgia in architecture takes place. The desire to attain comfort of the user (just as it was a main principle within modernism) becomes a paramount consideration for discussion. but his time it was attained not with the aid of technology but also by using environmentally appropriate natural formation in a self-sufficient manner. With this in mind, traditional architecture is looked to. The lessons of local architecture are taken into account and this form of thought is taken as the driving force for the buildings' formation. This approach allows us to attain architecture, design and scale in a more comprehensive and detailed manner within the contemporary notion of sustainability.

In one sense, these concerns/approaches/trends overlap with Organic architecture's aim. Thomas & Garnham (2009) is a firm believer that there can be harmony between the aim of serving human comfort and the desire for design to be attune to the scientific and environmental data. He notes that:

[a] major aim here is to help develop a sensibility in building design that is grounded in a greater sensitivity to the broader environment. Like plants and animals, a building must adapt itself to its habitat. But at the same time it must make an appropriate habitat for humankind (Thomas & Garnham, 2009, p.7).

Similar to the 'form follows function' ideology within modernism, this approach puts forward that functional form/formation requirements must be taken into consideration while creating a compliant context within the interior spaces. However, unlike the modernist style, we can examine traditional and vernacular examples together with modern science and use these as a guide for the creation of human comfort through natural means.

By analysing traditional and vernacular architecture, we are referred to the place concept which notes that just as all vegetation belongs to a place, all cultures have a deep-rooted tie to a place. All places/contexts are made up of an array of factors that come together ( these are: topography, geology, soil chemistry, climate, vegetation, human history, culture, locally available natural material – stone, earth, clay, trees and plants) (Thomas & Garnham, 2009, p.6). With the alignment of these factors, vernacular/traditional architecture attains organic unity and a sense of place. Through the Utzon's Kingo Housing project which is able to defined as 'modern vernacular', possible to be an example of adaptive approaches (fig 4, 5, 6 and 7).



Figure 4: Utzon's Kingo Housing, 1958 (source: URL 4)

Figure 5: Utzon's Kingo Housing, 1958 (source: URL 4)

Figure 6: Utzon's Kingo Housing, 1958 (source: URL 4)



Figure 7: Kingo Housing site plan (source: URL 5)

With its notion of contextualism, environmental design tries, albeit implicitly, to engage with the place concept that will come to light in a slightly detailed manner. This concept allows the design to obtain both concrete and abstract meaning within the context that it finds itself in. Response to places is often an emotional or intuitive one. The biggest deficiency of modernism is its inability to create architectural unity between the product and the context that it is found. The strength of the community's views towards context accedes to bring about this aim.

Throughout the period, Modernism was a leading trend together with organic architecture and environmental design. Following the World Wars, the importance that designers gave to scientific information increased, as did the interest in the context within which the building is situated. Climate, topography and such like data are measurable; however it was highlighted that some non-measurable values need also be included in the design. In awareness of this deficit it is also possible to establish and rectify, with the creation of form language, the situations where environmental harmony is not existent. With the control of architectural morphologies, sun, and wind, the relationship between Modernism and 'place' is

straining and is one that is not in accord with one another (Uraz, Pulhan, Ulucay, 2010).

### **2.2.2 Contextualist Innovations / Conservative Attitudes**

This section analyses the failure of modernism and cities that have seen damage as a result of the modernist architecture. It shall take an in-depth examination of criticizing responses to modernism and the contextual concepts that have emerged as a result.

#### **2.2.2.1 Deformation And Discontinuity Within The Urban**

When we look at the period in general, modernism's interest in context generally incorporates all climate factors. Its architectural form reflects its use of various methods for the establishment of user comfort. However, even if these factors predominantly guide the facade and surface formats, spacial organisation and planning, they do not have an effect on the establishment of visual interaction of the architecture with its surrounding setting. Due to modern architecture's simple and abstract language of form, it takes an individualist stance and thus has a generally weak relationship/dialogue with the context within which it is found. Johnson (1994)'s mentions Bonta's views on the modern architecture's stubbornness in harmonising with context and its exclusion of environment in design. As one that embraces the principles of modernism, he mentions architect Bonta's responses to the context in design as, he rejects architectural relationship with context, finding it difficult and limiting by saying "Why should I conform? (What of artistic freedom? What of the autonomy of the architect? What of individual rights?)" (Johnson, 1994, p.285).

Parallel to this thought, (Johnson 1994) notes Clough Williams-Ellis' criticism of modernism and the importance he placed on the contextual approach in design:

I have I must confess, but little enthusiasm for isolated masterpieces of any sort thus detached from their settings, the poignancy of the contrast between them and what adjoins is too liable to produce a depression that the grandest sight cannot utterly dispel .I would rather a land in which there were no masterpieces... a desire for average rather than for exceptional and dazzling attitude (Johnson 1994, p.284).

In his work titled *Beyond the Object in Design* Thackara (1989), qualifies modern architectural products as alienated architectures. He asserted that this approach to design propagates stress with the context and that it is necessary for design to take on a gentler attitude towards the built environment.

It possible to say that within the modernism, scientific research(s) had been done towards contextual relations. Many functionalist architects have engaged in analysis with sociologists and psychologists and undertaken studies about context and user. From the scientific perspective, the design is viewed as a problem that needs to be solved and the solution is provided by scientific rational methods.

However, when there is identification of a design 'problem', no matter how much Modernism (and with its scientific approaches, Environmental design also) strives to find resolutions to problems through its methods of scientific engagement, modernism's pragmatic and scientific relations with the surroundings are too cursory and inadequate to reach a successful resolution. Various projects would seem to indicate that the design problem is, and should be made up of more complex/comprehensive values and that scientific methods never adequately capture the complexities of the design process (Gelernter, 2001).

With modernism, the city unity was clearly in danger; whether by the weak visual unity amongst buildings or the gradual loss of the architectural meaning that had been the means of establishing dialogue with the community. Modernism's architecture-context relationship generated ill feelings towards modern architecture; and these responses were also reflected in the theory itself.

Capon, (1999) articulates the responses in the following manner: People started to react to modernism in the 1930's, when a search for alternatives that are more human and region based have begun. In England for instance, inspired by Pevner's research, Picturesque gained a growing interest. In the mid of 1950's, on "contextual thinking" Peter Smithson stated that new concepts have to be considered through patterns that exist within the context. In 1963, Norberg-Schulz added context as the fifth category to the main elements of architectural understanding. The following year, Alexander provided the following definition of context by saying that context is anything that demands the form. In 1980, Brolin Brent touched on the issue of context in his work "Architecture in Context".

Of all the critics, Robert Venturi can be seen as one of the most prolific. A pioneer of post modern theory and practice, he had belligerence towards the modern period and its relationship with context. While he may not have specifically and openly made an expression of it in clear terms, he has indicated a preference for a unitary approach to design and has, on numerous occasions, implied a yearning specifically towards vernacular traditional architecture. In his work "Complexities and Contradiction", in addition to criticising modern architecture, Venturi (1984), stresses the importance of architectural meaning and the use of traditional, historical approaches as a means of bringing this about.

Actually, Robert Venturi never advocated that modern architecture was a bad movement/trend; in fact he found the its simple geometric form language fascinating. He does however define the “international style” that came with modernism (advocating that all designs can be applied in any context with disregarding the context) as an wrong approach (Beaver, 2007).

While he showed understanding towards the high-level modernist examples that may have had support/satisfied by the community, he noted that unpopular ones can also do just as much damage as successful designs.

In addition to highlighting modern architecture’s insensitivity towards what had existed before, the context it finds itself in and disregard of their respective unity, Venturi cited in Nesbitt (1996), stresses that real architecture should be a more complex/comprehensive product. He also notes the necessity for architecture to be more intertwined with history.

With its abstract architectural language that puts forward individuality, modernism increasingly deforms the environment of the traditional and cultural city. The deficiencies, as highlighted by Venturi, can be overcome through integration of more complex values and a re-acquaintance with the nostalgic design approaches that can revive the lost architectural meaning. Problems of acquiring contextual rhetoric can be solved with new construction designs that assimilate unity with the proximal environment.

#### **2.2.2.2 Interpretation Of Local/Regional Values**

Before mentioning contextualism, it shall possible to examine “critical regionalism” which is one of the many theories formed as a reaction to modernism in the

postmodern period. Abel (2000), In his publication “Architecture and Identity”, highlights regionalism’s efforts towards the re-emergence of the absent values of modernism. In addition to this, Chris Abel touches upon regionalism’s desire and effort to bring back the lost architectural identity and architectural meaning.

Going further than addressing orthodox modern object that can be designed in all contexts (that is often not site-orientated), regionalism uses contextual principles to overcome the placelessness attitude apparent in modernism.

Critical regionalism also tries to find a design to suit the identity and potential of the site. The main concern of the movement’s members was to oppose universalism and inhumane, technocratic architecture. Their aim was to produce a form which brings out whatever made the site different from all others (Voordt & Wegen, 2005, p.38).

Regionalism’s terminology was initially mentioned by Tzonis & Lefaivre (2001, 2003, 2011). Subsequent to Kenneth Frampton’s more detailed analysis, the concept saw a rise in popularity.

In his work "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six points of an architecture of resistance" Frampton (1983), criticises and discusses not to reject modern architecture but integrates it with contextual perspective, the integration of regional values into the contemporary language of form.

It is possible to read of Frampton’s rhetoric in “Design After Modernism: Beyond the Object” cited in Thackara (1989). The heading “Place, Form and Cultural Identity”



considers the integration of cultural identity into architecture; and mentions that elements in the creation of the place will be exists in the design.

Its possible to mention the interpretation of regional/cultural elements in more tangible manner throught the following visuals:



Figure 8: Corbusier's Chandigarh High Court, 1947 (source: URL 6)

Figure 9: Louvain-la-Neuve Campus, Railroad station (source: URL 7)

Figure 10: Pietala's Shoping Center, 1979 (source: URL 8)

Figure 11: Pietala's Shoping Center, 1979 (source: URL 9)

Uraz, Pulhan & Ulucay (2010) talks of the corresponding architectural changes throughout this period. she discusses how Regionalism gives importance to local identity and culture, and how together with most notably modernism, has a reaction to traditionalist and historical inclinations. With the aim of gaining a “national” identity, the articulation of traditional icons to the rational-functionalist architecture can be encountered throughout the second half of the 1940s. Modern architecture started to take a more sensitive and susceptible approach towards climate factors, topography and culture; and in this sense, the importance of “place and context” within the space was heightened. In the Northern countries, with the impel of architects such as Aalto, Pietila, Jocabesen, Saarinen and Utzon local identity took placement at the forefront; and as a result, a more responsive reaction has been attained towards modernist, traditionalist and historical approaches.

In searching for local identity, Bonatz's addition to pure 'modern' exhibition hall, is a sort of well known example. Bonatz definitely aimed localized the hall with his light

additional touches like the roof eaves, White ornamented columns and the arcade along the side of the building (fig 12 and 13).



Figure 12: Bonatz's addition to modern exhibition hall, 1951, Ankara (source: URL 10)

Figure 13: Bonatz's addition to modern exhibition hall, 1951, Ankara (source: URL 10)

The architects of the time consciously protected local/vernacular architectural settings. with the critical regionalism, with the effort to secure harmonisation, they gave importance to the factors that surround the building - especially climate and site factors. Gelernter (2001), notes that architects including Wright have been able to attain a successful relationship with the environment. He stresses a need to re-analyse and consider the way in which they established such successful relationships; and look to their work in light of the increasing disparity of the relationship that started from the modern epoch. Furthermore, Gelernter talks of post-modern architects Venturi and Moore's aim to bring back the much desired regional ideas, traditional and vernacular approaches.

Through Following examples (fig14, 15 and 16) of Charles Moore and Alvar Aalto, possible traditional and vernacular analogies of village of region/context expressed in their architecture.



Figure 14: Aalto's Säynätsalo Town Hall, 1951 (source: URL 11)

Figure 15: Aalto's Säynätsalo Town Hall, 1951 (source: URL 12)

Figure 16: Moore's Sea Ranch, 1963 (source: URL 13)

Chaouni (2009), in support of Frampton's assertion that modern architecture should be fed with site and regional-based values, explains regionalism with the similar case of Elie Azagury's Tourist Resort building. According to Chaouni, in the Resort's progression to a language of modern identity, importance lies not just with the superficial details of the local architecture but also the surrounding contextual factors in the formation of the design. He defines the hybrid design process, sensitivity to topography, and urban unity and closeness to nature as the three fundamental principles of regionalism. The Mediterranean shore and Mediterranean context generated a more situated modernism. Therefore the author mentioned regionalism based on geography, where climate and topography were major shaping forces. He put forward the development according to the site's natural conditions; mainly topography, light, wind and views.

Another outcome was the complexity of the local architectural referent. Analysis on vernacular villages, sketches, drawing, site visit have been made – topography, land use, over vernacular history of the place has been inspiration point. Through Regionalism's integration of local, cultural and regional values, the modernist product was transformed into a whole new structure.

### **2.2.2.3 Contextualism As An Approach Of Recovering Urban Texture**

With the increased popularity of modernism's application to city areas, new individual designs and the tense relationship that existed amongst the buildings exasperated, and the dissension amongst the old buildings and the new designs became even more apparent. As a means of preventing the deformation that came about as a result of the individualist approach of modernism within city environments, Arnoth (2005), put forward the need for a rigged trend. Postmodern era was the period within which contextualism came to light. With the planning and conservative contextualists attempts to maintain following destroyed historical environment which resulted by modernist attitudes. With criticism of the deformation, contextualism developed. Along with contextualism, the attitude towards context in the postmodern period not only created utilising/pragmatic approaches where modernism could use the context; but these attitudes also contributed, improved complimented and aided modernism in its quest for the establishment of unity.

There has long been criticism in both theory and discourse towards the destruction and loss of identity as a result of the modernist design approach and its construction within cities. This criticism fostered application and design. We can see that the individual modernist buildings and their effort to stand out as a design product began to erode the city, its coverage, its history and meaning. For this reason, the research increasingly began to gear towards analysis of city and place.

With the study of historical continuity, contextualism also became an important concept for the establishment of city unity; appearing not only in architecture but within urban design also. It has capability to establishment unity within the city,

protect this unity and furthermore has an ability to propel designs so that they become so much more than just an object. Many began to theoretically explore the relationship between items that come together to make up the city. Many theorists including Lynch (1960), Gordon (1961), Rossi (1984), Rowe & Koetter, (1984), Venturi (1983), Gandelsonas (1998) and Nesbitt (1996) all addressed the commotion in the city by redefining the city itself.

Postmodernism took a more sensitive approach towards the city and its unity. It invoked careful analysis of the deformations within the city and endeavoured to find solutions to it. Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter in their 1984 publication “Collage City” examine the deformation and the lost city spaces. As a method that takes the city as a two dimensional plan, the figure-ground method was first used by Rowe and Koetter for the completion of city spaces. In addition to this work, they also have many publications in relation to change and deformation in urban cities.

Notter cited in Sotoudeh (2011), discusses the postmodern and contextual movements as follows:

These goals will continue to challenge cities to retain their older structures as a means of maintaining the excitement of the urban environment. These existing structures will exert even more influence over the character of the new infill architecture as well as enfolding the spaces that remain. The new emphasis on the context of cities and the respect for older architecture will continue to remind people of an earlier age, as they are drawn back into previously abandoned parts of cities that now surge with renewed life (Sotoudeh 2011, p.1).

Schumacher cited in Nesbitt (1996), also puts forward a similar view in his work “Contextualism: Urban Ideals and Deformations”. In addition to analysis of the unity that comes from traditionalist approaches, he examines and compares the modernist attitude to that of the traditional city. He notes that while the traditional city, defined

with its continuous walls of buildings, establishes harmony within its spaces and city unity, the modernist is in complete opposite, with isolation of structures, disregard of the buildings and spaces surrounding it and its desire to place itself at the forefront. The results are urban configurations which relate neither to the human being nor to the neighborhood which they interrupt. He notes that at this point, contextualism provides the solution.

Nesbitt (1996) refers to Venturi's work. He puts forward support for unity, together with the flexibility of the architectural elements and their application to context. Bringing the "Collaged" terminology to light as honed by Rowe and Koetter, Nesbitt stresses modern structures' deformation within its contextual conditions and the necessity for harmony.

Venturi cited in Nesbitt (1996) "... hybrid rather than 'pure,' distorted rather than 'straightforward,' ambiguous rather than 'articulated'... It is precisely the ways in which idealised forms can be adjusted to a context or used as "collaged" that contextualism seeks to explain..." (p.301)

Colin Rowe, with the value he places upon city unity, discusses how the individualisation of a simple house can lead to the decomposition of the city as a whole. Colin Rowe suggests that urban problems result from modernism's inversion of an important hierarchical relationship: the simple house versus the complex city (Nesbitt, 1996, p.326).

On the other hand, it is possible to find the work of Koolhaas, cited in Nesbitt (1996), who questions city unity: Rather than count on this sort of fascination, or bet on the absolute authority of architecture, I think you have to ask yourself which way the forces that contribute to defining space are heading. Are they urban- oriented or the opposite? Do they ask for order or disorder? Do they play

on the continuous or the discontinuous? Whatever the answer may be, there's movement there and dynamics that you have to get to know, because they are the matter of the projects (p.329).

The postmodern period supports and enters into strong trends with contextualism; both in theory and discourse, and also in practice. Contextualism has aided many concepts be re-established within architecture, establish brand status, and propelled as a design strategy. As it is with other fields, if we say that architectural trends develop with the aim of overcoming deficiencies apparent in current or past periods, then the development of contextual approaches in the postmodern period must be a direct reflection of the need for such.

"Contextualism attempts to define these elements that modernism forgot to define"  
(Beaver, 2007, p.16).

As a result of the importance given to context, the buildings begin to increasingly harmonise with the environment within which they found themselves by taking into account climate, regional and local factors in addition to finding harmony with the existing urban fabric and architectural character. In other words, the buildings aim to become, in all forms, a part of the existing order. As a result, the building design incorporates all complex values. The historical identity and fabric that context incorporates and, especially in the new designs, the feeling of the place and meaning are tried to be portrayed as much as possible. In addition to the establishment of unity, there is an endeavour to copy the buildings within the surroundings as far as possible, intent on keeping the facade and mass characteristics the same. Contextualism invokes the desire not only to keep the new structure in harmony with the proximal surroundings, but also puts forward a need to evaluate it accruing to the

general identity of the city as a whole; keeping the cultural, regional values in mind in the creation of the architecture. It would be appropriate therefore to say that everything is taken into account in the analysis of contextual content.

Capon (1999) gives the following notes on the wide range of Contextualist comprehensive thinking:

- Functional aspects: circulation, concepts of movement – light and vision within context
- Form– concept of scale, colour and relation to surroundings
- Meaning – historical associations – notion of the age of surroundings
- feelings of place - poetry and picturesque
- Nature – natural world –plants, topography(p.191)

The inclusion of all of these factors in the design is, in actuality, dependent upon the designer's personal approach, the context and period. As a result, some of these factors may be seen more predominantly within a design. In a design that is looked at in a contextual frame, everything is taken into account as a whole and the building will be shaped according to the “place” in which it is found.

As Capon (1999) has discussed, contextualism can help many context values of design be recalled and introduced to the current agenda. In this way, the continuity of urban fabric, the relationship between new and old and loyalty to visual harmony can all be established; allowing us to re-acquaint ourselves with the lost architectural meaning.

The concept of “new design in an old built environment” has become an important issue in itself. Connected to this, irrespective of modernism and the inclination



towards the easy demolition and re-construction of old buildings in city areas post-world wars, a different approach emerged which presented renovation and re-use of buildings in place of demolition. Many assemblies and organisations took this approach and began to restore and renovate, establishing relationships between the old and new building within the contextual design.

"The historic preservation movement emerged in this period, to fight development and to protect and preserve earlier architectural heritage. Sometimes this meant preserving old buildings as museums, more often it meant adaptively reusing and updating old buildings for new purposes" (Gelernter, 2001, p.291).

With the conservation-restoration movement taking place, many were involved in contextualism's effort to make old buildings suitable for new use. One of the noted persons active and involved in the movement was. Ray (1980), In her book "Responding to Existing Style", Keith Ray examines how contextual design interacts within this area in many differing ways; whether interiors, alterations, additions and in-fills, Keith Ray's "Responding to existing style" tackles the subject matter with the use of examples.

"Conservation should prefer adapting rather than demolishing existing structure/ re-using rather than discarding building materials" (Architects Design Partnership, 2007, p.100).

With the post-modern era, many constraints/regulations were established for the protection of the historical surroundings. In different cities, following conferences and assemblies, the protected zones were established together with the constitution of

design guidelines that are mandatory to follow not only where there is restoration but also when new construction is in question.

With the increase of public awareness in relation to context, design within historical context grew in significance within the contextualism model. Sotoudeh (2011) sees the protection of the historical surroundings as a legacy that need to be maintained: "Historic urban sites and traditional context are the most important evidence of the past life style. The conservation of these traditional values in the context of conservation and revitalization of architectural heritage is in a sense the preservation of culture. The main goal of contextualism is to enliven cultural properties of architectural, historical, environmental, visual and aesthetic characteristics" (p.1).

While many historical architectural styles purport to re-establish the Architectural “meaning” deficiency that was apparent within the postmodern and modern periods, there have not been successful developments and results towards the continuity of the environment. Similarly, there has been a conservative attitude towards contextual designs that strive to ensure historical preservation. Generally, the mass and facade characteristics of the existing buildings within the context are taken and copied in the new design as a means of re-establishing the lost city unity.

Important in this regard is Koolhaas's article cited in Nesbitt (1996), “Toward the Contemporary City” which looks upon the conservative attitude of the postmodern period with a critical eye:

"After the so-called Postmodern revolution the term “contextualism” began to attach itself to stylistic manifestations – as do most co-opted ideas in architecture. It referred to red brick buildings being built in red brick neighbourhoods and gingerbread matching gingerbread" (p.54).

Unity within the city and historical continuity began to assume high importance and were viewed as the primary theme considerations of design. Many approaches,

strategies and rules were established to ensure that the product would have harmony with the old structures in the area. While these strategies and rules were being exhibited, contextualism's conservative views emerge and attitudes that limited design freedom were existent. These views were in turn strongly criticised by Koolhaas and many such architectural theorists. It is actually questionable to what extent the contextual designs created unity/wholeness and harmony within the surroundings; and thus can be criticised in much the same manner as modernism (Groat, 1988).

#### **2.2.2.4 Contextualism and Place Theory**

The attitude of modernism, which does not give much heed to urban fabric, together with the visual conflict between the old and new structures, paved the way for distortion of the city's spacial organisation. As mentioned by Schumacher cited in Nesbitt (1996), modernism created structures that were withdrawn, distancing itself from the outside world, in disparity with the common /public living areas. Many, including Cullen (1961) in England, Schulz (1979) in Norway, Bacon (1976) and Lynch (1960) in the States have analysed these deficiencies of modernism; contributing in great bounds to the city spacial and unitary/integrated capabilities. The place concept developed in the post modern period with the noted authors efforts. With development, the place concept, which gave support to the success of the contextual approach, affected implementation practices. More importantly, the place theory was effective in the establishment of historical and temporal unity within the context that the structures were found. As they asserted the creation of a sense of belonging for elements that define spaces/venues and highlighted their importance, it was mainly at this time that meaning and dialogue found place within

architectural design. We can see that this was the time when the place theory found identity with contextualism.

Proceeding from the important publications on the matter throughout this period, Uraz & Balamir (2009) evaluated place theory in the following manner:

The concept of place entered into architectural thinking during the 1960's with the growing awareness toward the lack of identity in new towns shaped according to abstract notions. It was argued that a space becomes place when people attach meaning to it, and that the architect needs a degree of modesty intervening in areas that is considered to have a strong sense of place (p.2).

In modernism we have the refinement of individual structures standing alone; in regionalism the effort to propose solutions for the region; and in the postmodern era, the approach termed as “contextual” which purports to create relations between the building and its immediate surroundings and strives for products to become part of the city environment as a whole. With this said, place theory is highly concerned with the regional, street and city historical and current expressions and meaning. Beaver(2007) give attention to this issue under the heading “Contextual intervention: a sense of place”:

The streets and public spaces of the city are defined by the facades of the buildings that surround them. The exterior wall is the element that mediates between the two – between the public realm, whose edges it defines and the private realm, whose domain it encloses (p.18).

In the development of place theory, and in discussing the architectural evolution that 'place' has gone through, as has been highlighted, it is important to touch upon the spacial organisation of the theoretically criticised modern architecture. It is not possible to talk about the modern period having an eagerness to develop a relationship with context, nor can we speak of its relationship with the city's external

space organisation and building forms. Schmandt (1999), highlights the differentiation between modernism and postmodernism in this regard:

New buildings and their uses must consider the history of the region, mix land uses, and enhance the pedestrian environment, in terms of contextualism, developments must continue to incorporate aspects of neighbouring buildings, consider the physical environment, and offer greater connections to other developments (p.164).

However, the postmodern period is not just differentiated from modernism on account of its contrasting appearance; it is also the use of external spaces and how it connects to the spaces of the surrounding city. Modern examples proclaim themselves as independent, without establishing flow with its environment.

No matter how many high rises or plazas modernism adds to the city's inventory, they will not be inviting to the community. Usually the structures create rectangular blocks rising from the ground; and this does not positively complete the empty spaces within the surroundings. Schmandt (1999) notes the weak relationship that it creates with its external world, and as defines modern architecture "the wall" between the internal and external spaces. He compares this to the "fortress effect".

However, if we are to discuss a robust relationship within the city's institutions, we can succeed by the use of links and gateways forming activity corridors that guide pedestrians from one place to another (Schmandt, 1999).

Le Corbusier's view that "the corridor-street must disappear" led to cities of isolated over-blocks devoid of the feelings of motion and rest that vitalised our older towns.

Capon (1999) discusses two concepts regarding place theory in his article:

- concept of movement: streets, steps and alleyways leading from one activity to another.
- Concept of enclosure: the concept which defines the space.

In a matter that should be emphasised in design different to urban scale, modernism, with its independent buildings and strive for excellence within in its own endeavours, as mentioned previously, has a point of view that is closed off to the outside world; an approach that opens from the inside out. In addition to this, with its attitude to place/context, it has developed an approach whereby the point of view towards the design is one that occurs from the outside towards the inside.

According to Uraz, Pulhan, Ulucay (2010); Design from the outside in, will be successfully attained with the transitional separation of context from the street to the building, pavement to building terrace, garden entrance to building entrance, from garden walls to building surfaces and the from the public arena to the private.

With his important findings on the place concept, Schulz cited in Nesbitt (1996) initially defined place theory and aided attainment of its important placement within architectural theory. He notes that as place is a comprehensive phenomenon, it will have an incomplete meaning if it does not house itself with the context of any locality. He therefore strongly emphasises the need to take locality into account. He highlights that place's tangible values of material substance, shape, texture and colour harbour environmental characters; and that these tangible values will gain meaning together with the abstract meanings that they will include. He defines place within both the different quantitative and qualitative dimensional sections; and

actually emphasises that a place's sense of space is not made up through the tangible details of the space alone but rather that sense of place is established together with the abstract (qualitative) aspects and meaningful feelings.

While defining the undefined place as a space; he notes that it is insufficient to complete it with just random planes/surfaces, but that the place must include both the descriptive element's "character" and "atmosphere" that comes from it. Only in this way will be 'space' (undefined place) become a living place.

Schulz examines Lynch (1960)'s book "Image of the City" and Lynch's discussion of the defined space and analysis of the space-defining elements within the city scale. While discussing extension and enclosure concepts, Lynch determines the characters of the elements that define the boundaries of the place; and in accordance with this determination, Schulz highlights the need for character and identity in design and puts forward that only then can atmosphere and feelings within a particular place be discussed.

Turning its back on many values such as History and Culture, with its symbolic surfaces, mass architecture and interior and exterior spaces that are abstracted from one another; it is perhaps not surprising that modernism gave rise to the deformation of the environment/surroundings. In the postmodern period we see the efforts to save the deformed city with the rediscovery of contextualism and the new designs that it paved the way for. This contextual discovery put forward that in spacial organisation, the surrounding textures, the establishment of meaning and atmosphere, and the boundaries separating the interior and exterior spaces all need to be designed with the whole of the surroundings in mind. With Schulz's findings on the matter, place

theory, a concept so overlapping with contextualism, was defined and became a new theory that should not be displaced in new structure and design. While Schulz mentioned place's atmospheric feelings many times, it is important to mention the poetry and picturesque concepts that came back on the agenda with postmodernism.

With contextualism becoming a strong trend within the postmodernist period, sense of place/concept of place and similar discursive terminologies became popularised. Within this, the terminology established from the past to the present also found placement. With the need and nostalgia felt towards them, they begun to be re-established and re-used within the design discourse. Of these, poetry and picturesque while having been used previously, brought the poetic and pictorial aspects of architecture back into action and ensured their discussion. These concepts are encountered with the establishment of a strong sense of place. It is possible to take advantage of these terms and concepts in discussion vernacular, traditional historic or regional design unity and the nostalgic images that support them. These concepts and efforts for attaining unity with the surroundings that come from the yearnings for the past and nostalgic thought, can be expressed as the most widespread form of contextualism. If full integration is the aim and while we many mention the existence of unity, in the attainment of such unity, it principally does not contain an ethical design rule. Just like the establishment of the human dialogue value that cannot be measured, many items that invoke a feeling of place at this point establish a feeling and subjective dialogue with the environment. We see that once again art and architecture reach proximity here in contextual architecture. These concepts may be a few of the reasons for the immeasurable nature of the design product.



Although the picturesque and poetry mostly should be considered through immeasurable facet of context, it's possible to see the both, emotional/spiritual and physical side contributes to the atmosphere; and forms the sense of place (see in fig 17 and 18).



Figure 17: The Italian Mediterranean Coast (source: URL 14)



Figure 18: Colmar Village, France (source: URL 15)

Capon (1999), discusses the well-known architects' dialogue regarding Poetry and Picturesque in his publication in the following manner:

Frank Lloyd Wright also states the importance of the poetry by writing "Poetry of form is as necessary to great architecture as foliage to a tree".

Le Corbusier states architecture only exists when there is poetic emotion... art is poetry: the emotions of the senses, the joy of mind as it measures and appreciates... objects which signify something and are arranged with talent and tact create a poetic fact. Le Corbusier states: Poetry! The word needs to be proclaimed. Poetry which exists only in the context of associations. Association which brings precise objects and precise concepts into context in a desired form.

Like a building in a picture, a major consideration of any building should be its visual context – its foreground, background and side screens; site encouraged natural features of the terrain to lend irregularity to the scene. Colin Rowe on picturesqueness of the composition, picturesque effects with broad effects of movement, volumes, silhouettes and relationships.

### **2.2.3 Rejection of the Context**

With the development of the deconstructivist trend within architecture, the contextualism established within postmodernism, began to loose interest. During this time, Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, there were shifts in the meaning of the post modern architecture where criticisms began to develop towards the conservative strategies and towards environmental unity and consistency. The disattachment of architectural form from its original context to, different contexts leads to the disintegration of place/context or placelessness. Adopting these kinds of approaches, many architects copied architectural images from random contexts and simply applied them to any context without considering the circumstances. This concept caused discontinuity within the city surroundings; when we look at the consequences however, we can clearly see that there are not much differences between this placelessness (deconstructivist approach) and modernism's approach with regard to context. Architects Design Partnership describes the relationships that the Modernism, Postmodernism and Deconstructism trends have with their environment: The new principles of the Modernism movement's which bypassed and disregarded context and contained new structures that did not have relations/interactions with their physical surroundings quickly saw a response from the community and was the reason for the trend's demise. To prevent against this, contextual design developed. With its Modern construction techniques and materials, it managed to put forward a

solution for blending with the surrounding character. However there was a loss of interest with the development of specific causes within the method. At this stage, we see the development of structures that fail to establish relations with their functions or the environment within which they are found. Technologically and structurally high level buildings begin to manifest within the cities. (Architects Design Partnership, 2007)

As it was with modernism, in addition to the design product's invocation of an individual and singular approach, it took on a contrasting attitude towards the surroundings. The approach became popular with its quick adoption by many sections. Even if this approach's point of view has a stance that goes against context, it does accept context's existence and in each approach, we can see that there is a context-driven structure formation. For this reason, if we count the noted response towards the relationship, it is possible to talk of context's role in design. However we can qualify this approach as having an individual, contradictory and alienated non-relationship with postmodernist thought. Schulz cited in Nesbitt (1996) highlights this while stressing the importance of place:

"In modern society, however, attention has almost exclusively being concentrated on the "practical" function of orientation, whereas identification has been left to the chance. As a result true dwelling, in a psychological sense, has been substituted by alienation" (p.424).

Uraz & Balamir (2009), comparing Moneo and Libekind's architectures and the contextual change in this period, make the following observations:

In Moneo's case, the understanding of architectural object cannot be accepted as independent, isolated building, because it is tied to the surrounding world as well as

history. In Daniel Libeskind's position deconstructivist attitude is presented rejecting urban context and focusing on the buildings as an object. His approach, contrasting radically with a traditional urban fabric, cannot join the context and the object becomes more important than the City.

As opposed to modernism's simple form language, Deconstructivist architecture is generally of an unusual scale; invoking volume and high technological imagery which decompose it with its surroundings. In addition to this individualism, one of the main problems is the fact that they do not 'belong' to the place in which they are found. Reflection of human values and history are not involved in architectural design. It did not take long for this architectural style to become popular; and it soon became the cause of the branding of architecture and architectural language. Appealing to popular style in a short period of time, there was a gradual increase of buildings that contrasted with city unity; and soon the areas took on the imagery of the contemporary cities. The imagery of context and the inability to string up and develop from context lead to the emergence of many claims expressing the increased and rapid disappearance of the urban fabric. Tied to this, while it was not necessarily due to the new construction's problems in relation to the historical surroundings, many countries enacted laws for harmony and consistency making it a necessity to harmonise with the surroundings.

In relation to discussions concerning the objects ability to surpass the city, Hoelterhoff cited in Groat(1999), analyses the Louvre museum and the city's reaction: Louvre Museum's excavation – incurs debates “shaking up the hearts of and minds of all France”(p.28). In addition to this, while discussing the disharmonious harm to the surroundings in which it is found in the aesthetic sense, there are

supporters of I. M. Pei's design. In the design aesthetic, supported with the symbolic relationship, Napoleon I referenced with his discoveries made on Egypt. Similar responses can be seen in France and the "Protest Against the Eiffel Tower" (Gaenssler, 1978).

as well as Groat (1988), many others including Cengizkan (2003), state that while change is an essential that the city cannot prevent, it is however important to continue restructuring in a manner that gives importance to unity/wholeness: The City is unitary amongst change; excessive innovation and extreme-conservative approaches can harm the city's historical continuity and unity...

The city's continuity is made up of architectural items. Continuity cannot be protected through purely physical continuity or through approaches that look upon the architectural product as an object. It must be understood through the city's historical continuity, at the same time the architectural approach, architectural programs, and program functions. Furthermore, it must be understood within a social continuity that will engage in instrumental determination at the stage of implementation. The city is a whole unit; and any structure that is to be positioned within it (from whichever design perspective it may be approached) must pay attention to the exiting contextual unit, how it will protect, change and bring it to a better position. With a similar view, Uraz & Balamir (2009) examine this subject within the framework/scope of Continuity versus Rapture. Writers also discuss this topic in detail by transporting and moving it within the design phenomenon, under the heading of Design Freedom vs Restraints.

Above all, even though deconstructivism's shortcomings are still rife in this regard, Architects Design Partnership still highlight the importance in protecting context. Stressing the gravity of establishing a harmonising relationship with the surrounding environment, they put forward that contextual design has set the groundwork for the emergence of important unique architecture. Contextualism is about harmony; the relation between human, nature and mankind. It is very important for there to be conformity amongst the unit/whole - there is a necessity for the protection of the unitary of urban structures, by this time iconic/monumental buildings have an opportunity to differentiate or step up within whole, otherwise just like the problem that we are faced with, the architectural sphere will turn to chaos (Architects Design Partnership, 2007).

Perhaps the city has rapidly lost its contextual values because of these approaches that do not give importance to context and the planning interference that develops in a parallel manner; and it is for this reason that the city no longer has the ability to be a platform for the creation of new successful designs. As a result of the rapid change in context, the new designs that genuinely strive to comply with context above all else inevitably move more and more away from adoption of contextual approaches.

Putting forward that the most important value is consistency, Johnson (1994) notes that context is a concept that cannot be trusted to be theorised with as a result of its constant changes. The only contextual quality is sense of continuity, but quality generally changes in modern settings and as quality is consistently in architecture's rotation, context will resultantly viewed and approached with suspicion.

In relation to context's changes Johnson (1994) writes about Erskine's "Byker Wall" and the change that occurred to the context within which it is placed. Ralph Erskine's Newcastle Byker Wall project (a multi-story building) has been conceptualized according to its context. In other words, it has completely turned its back on the nearby motorway and has only very few windows facing the motorway. Also, there has been use of the landscaping area between the motorway and multi-storey building to create a large block, and use of the buildings curvilinear format to ensure that sound pollution does not reach the interior garden. The building turns its back on the motorway in every manner; and its interior space construction is completely organised according to this landscape. Unfortunately, the motorway closed shortly after the completion of the building and was replaced a few years later by a small bypass that did not create crowds or intense usage. This way, with the change in the context of the main concept of the Byker wall's composition, the buildings relationship with its surroundings was questioned. In this situation, it is doubtful to what extent preference would be given to change in contemporary surroundings for those architects, like Erskine, that give importance to context.

The rapid renewal of architecture and the cities as a whole inevitably led to change, reduced the interest of context in design and questioned the trustworthiness of the concept. Johnson discusses the anxiety towards design in conformity with context in contemporary times as follows: Context ceases to be a reliable concept as a result of current changing environmental conditions and its ability to mould a design is looked upon with suspicion. In prevention of changes, in some rare cases, there are limitations placed on design freedom in historical zones; but even while these are in place, change in modern settlements is unavoidable. He notes that many contexts

contain differentiating buildings amongst themselves, and that this creates impossible conditions for the establishment of contextual continuity.

The biggest role in the degeneration of the contextual concept, in addition to the conservative design include the emulation towards different designs, imitating elements in design that are appropriate/inappropriate in their contexts. Copying them as with their visualisation, also interest towards any other stylised architecture elements and the application of these visuals to the design without questioning the existing context. As a result, it is clear to see that post-modern and deconstructive approaches seriously harm context's originality and authenticity.

In his book "Hyper-contextuality: The Architecture of Displacement and Placelessness", Herman (2009) talks in details about the placelessness in architecture – displacement as architecture's paradigm shift. Culture and meaning, as values that are capable of being displaced, are carried from different contexts without questioning their suitability. In addition to this, the migration of people from different cultures, different life styles, their standards and their habits transport themselves to different contexts. In the adaptation of these human values to context, sometimes they are unchanging their own human values. When this is a value that they wish to reflect in the architecture, placelessness is an inevitability.

The transference of factors that belong to European cities, into the architectural style in other contexts gradually causes loss of place theory; and it is possible to say that placelessness is the defining concept of the period.



Sometimes it is possible to take architectural structures in a useful manner, succeeding in the aim of transferring them to similar context in an appropriate manner. Sometimes this aim to take a branded architecture directly and placing it within a context without adapting it in any way can make it stand out in a negative way. Gelernter (2001), talks of the American architecture that took inspiration from Europe in the postmodern period:

Many American academic architects between wars admired the contextual qualities, visual relations, and historical associations of European towns that had grown up over centuries, and that had adhered to a common regional style. When they had the opportunity, the American eclectics tried to recreate a similar feeling their own projects (Gelernter, 2001, p.236).

No matter how much contextual design is a trend that has took place in contemporary times, perhaps it has lost its appeal for the reasons stated and its wrong practical uses. For this reason, contextualism does not have a place amongst the popular concepts in contemporary times. While it may be hard to characterise this as contextual, the depletion and erosion of the environment's ecology led to concerns about the sustainability of environmental factors; not perhaps with the aim of aim of conserve the environment as a whole but definitely with the aim of contributing to the ecosystem. As a result, we can say that the contemporary handling of context is geared towards ecological sustainability (Architects Design Partnership, 2007). Sustainable architecture's form language is completely able to seen as the language of today's blobist, high-tech form; however sustainable architecture would also require buildings to work in sympathy with their local climates. The sympathetic attitude towards climate and ecology has not accommodated meaning and visual harmony in city unity (Gelernter, 2001).

#### **2.2.4 Conclusion of the Chapter**

In conclusion, it is possible to say that all throughout architectural and design history there has been an inability to run from contextual formation and that the architecture must have a certain attitude towards its surroundings. There are many differing discourses, practices and interpretations by various architects in this regard; varying from extremely conservative approaches, to attitudes that ignore existence of context. It is possible to qualify and examine the relationship that the varying contextual designs have with the environment as both positive and negative. However it is almost impossible to measure the relationship that they have with the environment i.e. their dialogue. While many studies have been made in the area and scientific points of view have been established identifying context as quantitative, it is quite clear that context also invokes qualitative values. As a result, it is almost impossible to propose methods and formulas of context that could guide contextual design. A contextual design could come about in many different ways; and the fact that there is a need for a redefinition by the designer in the event of any problem means that each design is different to the other. By its subjective interpretative side of contextual design, it is also possible to say that, different approaches can exist throughout different personal interpretation unless the architect is aware of contextual responsibilities. This study analyses the current position with regard to the creation, position and the role of the contextual design; and together with the suggestions for the assessment of context, aims to examine the architect's attitude and consideration towards context within contextual design in the subsequent chapters.

## **Chapter 3**

### **CONTEXT IN ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN**

In this Chapter the study will discuss interpretation of contextual data and the architect's development of an attitude and demeanour towards such data. It also intends to address these and other factors in the establishment of architectural form. At this point, we can see two different consideration towards to contextual data. On the one hand we have an approach that sees contextual data as a 'constraint' within design; the other being an approach that sees the data as a 'tool' in the establishment of architectural design. Discussions regarding design ethics stem from these approaches. In actuality, it's able to architecture that can be apply both of these approaches within the profession. However, while the purpose of the thesis is the interpretation of form, the effects of contextual data's and the manner in which subjectivity of the architect is presented are also given importance.

Parallel to these and in addition to the relationship that the architect establishes with context, the study will put forward how relative context-oriented design approaches are, and how subjectively dependent they are upon personal preferences and thoughts. Connected to this, the thesis aims to highlight how contextual design, leaving behind the stereotypical/rigid/formulaic and strategic approaches, has established a form that is unique and that invokes a sense of belonging to the place. For this reason, it is worth again emphasising the necessity for each design problem to be examined and considered within its own context. Each design contains its own

specialised problems. Designs should be considered within the context that they find themselves in, and designed accordingly.

In this light, as a result of varying developed approaches, interpretations, and preferences, it is possible to see that actually contextual approaches have saved designs from staying limited within the usual stereotypical approaches. Indeed contextual approaches are very appropriate; highlighting just how important a design concept it really is in the establishment of relatively “consistent and authentic/” architecture.

### **3.1 Contemporary Contextual Design**

The study aims to present that contextual design can be successful not only by using the common and well know approaches, but also through the use of may different and personal interpretations. These are mainly contemporary ones that are, much of the time, superior in many ways.

Sotoudeh (2011) cites Gaines (1980) as saying that “My concern is for architecture that accommodates change through a process of continuation, moving into the future by finding its order in both the present and the past” (p.2).

Sauer in Old & New (1980), under the heading “Reinforcing a sense of place”, analyses the relationship between old and new in Society Hills, – an area acknowledged as a historical with the state of Philadelphia. He reinforces the necessity for the new designs to stand in a contemporary manner with the historical structures in the area. While discussing that 200 year old architectural legacy invokes many different architectural styles (including colonial, federal and Victorian), within the different historical richness, design must establish temporal continuity and must

have a relationship between the past, present and future. He notes that only in this way can architectural dialogue be established. In this regard, he also discusses the added advantages that will be afforded to the environment.

The importance given to many complicated values and different factors related to the environment and their strong placement within the design is an important feature that separates contextualism from the other design concepts(trends). As well as the mainstream rules from an environmental-relationship perspective, it also sets itself apart and gains importance through the ability it gives to the designer to project his/her own original character. In this regard, contextualism has found solutions to a each design problem that has often, as in contemporary times, been a neglected issue. Contextualism has found location/context-specific solutions to design problems.

This Chapter holds the main argument of the thesis. Within this Chapter, there is development of a view as to how contextual design should be applied in a contemporary and successful manner. Not only will it present the importance of the architect's role in this regard, but will also engage with and highlight many noted arguments that are importantly related to contemporary understanding of contextualism. It aims to present contextual thought, as much as possible from a contextual fitting standpoint, as a "successful" established architectural product. While on the one hand questioning contextual fitting, the thesis will present known design strategies that leads how the product should be. As a result, while on the one hand the study will be questioning how the contextual design approach should be, studies were also constructed regarding the evaluation of the contextual product's compatibility. While these studies may highlight and show the different views within contextual design, their differences and the flexibility that they may have in this

regard, the underlying premise is that the design of the architectural product within the context is either extremely conservative or overtly independent. We thus see the manifestation of the two extreme approaches. When applied with the aim of contextual design, it is possible to see that with the two contrasting design approaches we do not get the harmonious results that we expect.

Often seen when new designs are placed into historical contexts, copying and mimicking the form specialities of the existing components within the environment is the most common example of the exceedingly conservative approaches. Such conservative effects on new designs of contextual approaches require us to look upon them with a critical eye. The reason for this essentially is the fact that its application, within the postmodern trend was limited, to the historical surroundings in the initial years in which contextual design manifested. In that period, contextual design was considerably invested with data for the protection of cities and protection from deformation. The conformist, simplistic and un-adventurous side of these contextual design approaches allowed them to become widespread and commonplace. While perhaps they were not the reason for visual inconsistencies, they were nonetheless the reason behind the development of spacial and temporal incompatibility.

For this reason, if relatively successful contextual design aimed, this excessively conservative attitude must be defecated and designers must aim to establish continuity within the contemporary settings. The architect, with her/his interpretation of the contemporary design problem, plays a highly important position and role in this regard. Rather than the copied, repetitive and mimicking approaches or the opposite completely individualistic unrelated overtly independent approaches, with a third approach the architect would be able to create healthier solutions within the

context. In this light, contextual design supports design that concerns itself with the appropriate positioning and formation of the design within the context.

According to Moore (1975) cited in Gaenssler, (1978) "merely to call a stop to the new and hold together the old can never be regarded as an attractive strategy for the future... we still need a new architecture, but one with a "memory", just like its inhabitants have their power of recollection (p.24).

I work to strengthen a sense of place by relating to its memory, a sense of familiarity. Yet I attempt to develop a building in ways that could only be done in today`s world, with today`s technology. I try to add time to the familiar and connect past to present, linking the identity of new environments to established ones (Beaver, 2007, p.20).

There are many similar studies within the general argumentative direction of the thesis. Foremost amongst these, it's possible to mention Brolin Brent`s "Architecture in Context". (Brolin, 1980) also engaged in numerous studies regarding the relationship between old and new and different/new ways in which this could be established. By stepping away from the guidelines that determine 'what' contextual design should be, he cast away with the rules and established designs that sat in harmony with the surroundings. At the same time, it is also possible to discuss his oft expressed views regarding the need to ensure that contextual design does not become stereotypical.

The thesis tries, amongst the excessively conservative or independent design approaches, to put forward novel, innovative design approaches that not only are in harmony with the environment but that are also authentic/unique and contemporary.

### **3.1.1 Design Incomes And Importance Of Site-Analysis**

With its efforts to attain a (relatively) successful design, the Inclusivity perspective gave importance to the interpretation of contextual data into the design in the most appropriate manner. Capon (1999) defines it as incorporating many contextual inputs

(formal, human, visual contexts). In discussing contextual design as a complex/comprehensive design phenomenon, Antoinades (1992), highlights that with the Inclusivist concept, not only a single value but that every components found within the context must be guidance in the design. In discussing the Inclusivist approaches' desire to attain unity, he highlights how the buildings, street and city components of unity can attain this desired unity by ensuring that they do not have superiority amongst themselves; just as it is within their own contexts. With the aim of establishing this unity, inclusivity puts forward the need to take in all design incomes and that these factors must be kept in mind throughout the design. If these factors are disregarded (not only functional, formal, spiritual factors, not only as part of historical/traditional or contemporary form), the architect is restricted and as a result, would be engaging with context in an insufficient manner. Antoinades and Capon discuss the necessity of acknowledging, giving importance to, and including the noted factors into the design. In this way, the need to analysis the context gains importance. Such analysis would tell us what role the values play in the design and which characteristics have inescapable importance in the context. The architect experiments and decides; and in doing so, prioritises. The design problem can therefore be interpreted. The reading of the problem is connected to the architect's own personal preferences on design; and therefore the interpretation of design in context is preferential and open to commentary (Antoinades, 1992).

In addition to the inclusivity concept which emphasises the need for the surroundings to be given a voice in the design, Mitchell (2009) notes, in his publication that defines contextual design, how the user is an interactive site owner throughout the design period. Day & Parnell (2002) also discuss how people, notably the user,



should be featured in the design, in their publication titled “Consensus Design: Socially Inclusive Process”.

As we can see from examples throughout architectural history, context has always had a say in the establishment of the architectural object. From the past to the present we are able to observe that context’s effect upon design has been different in each era, highlighting and placing different contextual values at the forefront each time. Similarly, we can see that contemporary contextual approaches give preference to different contextual data in the establishment of design. It is possible to determine these by reading through examples.

Capon (1999) also highlights that it is possible to discuss these contextual data's according to their categorizations. Capon separates the data into the following three headings as a means of defining them; and emphasises the imperative for the design to master all of the noted data:

- Visual Appropriateness - VISUAL CONTEXT – personal taste, feeling
- Micro climatic – FORMAL CONTEXT – scientific environmental data
- Identity, meaning, local and cultural- HUMAN CONTEXT - human values

Generally visual context which establishes unity, harmony and consistency; the human context that ensures the space’s atmosphere, meaning within the entirety and contact between people and abstract; and the formal context (site microclimatic conditions that almost all structures must act in accordance with) all play an important role in the design formation. The designer must research these factors in a detailed manner and be master of them. In this regard, the environmental analysis process will allow us to realise the inputs of contextual design.

Throughout the analysing process, we must ensure that the values are correctly analysed, used effectively and given the necessary importance. LaGro(2007) highlights the importance of this in his book "Site Analysis: A Contextual Approach to Sustainable Land Planning and Site Design". While discussing the many contextual characteristics that need to be analysed, LaGro notes that in the establishment of a relatively successful design, the most important factor of pre-design is site analysis. For this reason, examination of the site and the surrounding context in a careful and comprehensive manner is necessary for the attainment of a more successful design and a product that is able to belong in an all-embracing manner to the context that it is found within.

LeGro observes that context needs to be analysed on many levels; some of which are as follows: Site inventories of physical such as parcel size and shape, topography, geology, hydrology, soils, climate, hazards. among man made physical environment. Biological attributes such as vegetation and wildlife and Cultural attributes.

With commentary that categorises the design data in a similar fashion to that of Capon (1999), Sotoudeh (2011), separates the contextual product's relationship with context into three strategic approaches. Giving heed to the Gaines (1980) views in his article "Teaching a Contextual Architecture", Sotoudeh analyses contextual inputs. He defines the approaches as formal patterns, activity patterns, and climatic patterns. Just like those put forward by Capon above, these categorisations also highlight cultural and micro-climatic values. In other words, they give place to those that are not usually found in most contextual design definitions. The study shall now analyse the data in line with Capon's categorisation:

**Visual Contextual Factors:**

As an factors seen as being one that the design must be at unity with, the environment is an factor that is capable of giving positive direction to the design. Generally, allows the language form of design to be in visual balance with the built and the natural environment(generally existing architectural setting). In relation to the effect that context has on the design product or the formulation of the building, Voordt & Wegen (2005), note that in addition to functional and construction reasons, context also has a part to play in the selection of form. Existing architectural language of context have a say in the establishment of the object; albeit at different levels. In many architects' designs size, scale, rhythm, mass, use of colour and materials are interpreted within the design and are moulded in a manner that would be compatible with the other buildings in the surroundings. Visual context is one of the values engaged with the most in the attainment of contextual fitting.

**Formal Contextual Factors:**

These are the scientific factors, climate data, regional, topographical characteristics of the context. They are factors that are taken into account by many design styles (other than contextual design) in a paramount fashion. This data largely consist of environmental factors. They are the values that should generally be taken to account and that should guide the way in which we must act. They are usually engaged with within the scientific perspective.

**Human Contextual Factors:**

These are contextual factors that relate to humans. Mainly identity, cultural and historical, these factors are those that have gained meaning within human life and have therefore gained a place within architecture. They make the architecture and the city more meaningful for both the user and the community as a whole; and

establish spiritual connections. Often, human contextual factors are established with abstract or strong nostalgia. They are reflected in the language form and have a voice in the establishment of spacial organisation.

**Other Contextual Factors:** According to Voodt & Wegen (2005), it is also possible to discuss the many socio-cultural and economic values that context embraces.

With architects giving a different importance to each of these data in their designs, we may say that many different contextual interpretations exists. The separation of design data within each category has been effective in the architectural conformation, details or establishment of spacial organisation. However, while we may analyse these characteristics separately, they cannot be separated from each other in contextual creation. No matter how important a part each factor may have, some contextual characteristics may have more of a dominant effect depending upon what the context actually is. Beaver (2007), discusses the effects of contextual values in the development of personal architectural approaches. He puts forward that local materials, forms, identity that comes from the regional past, the human and cultural values and even the climatic values play an important part in his own personal approaches; and asserts that as a result, we need to take a hold of these values and analyse them in detail.

### **3.1.2 Certain Strategies And Contextual Fitting**

The main discourse of architecture touches upon the dialogue between the object and the surroundings. Besides, the architectural profession and professional ethics already hold “dialogue with the environment” as a paramount consideration. Inceoglu & Inceoglu(2005), also address this issue and deal with the nature of architecture in their publication “Discourse, Theory and Practice in Architecture”

and the Chapter that deals with identity, ethics and problems of legitimacy. One of the main points of discussion within architecture is the creation of architectural unity. Phillip Johnson cited in Inceoglu & Inceoglu (2005), discusses this concept of architecture by saying that “unity is the construction(organisation) of a relationship between one part and another part; in some way these parts carry a code and common language that determines their placement within the relation. The code shows that they are a part of a family. Coding connects one part to the others.” The writer, who refers to the apprehension of the common code and language, notes that the architectural profession in its quest for ethics and identity should already engaged with such superior and fundamental aims. He strongly emphasises that these harmony based relations should not be ignored.

#### **3.1.2.1 Basic Design Principles on Relation**

While Basic Design Principles may not have a direct relationship with the contextual design, some fundamental design principles are known to play a role in the formation of architectural design. Furthermore, as was highlighted in Chapter 2, the architectural profession and architectural design is already in fact directly interested in the establishment of a relationship between the building and the person, amongst the buildings themselves and also strives for the establishment of a relationship with the environmental characteristics that the building finds itself amongst. When this is successful, design unity will be established. In other words context will be attained.

Design principles always have the ability of common enthusiasm in contextual design’s efforts to establish unity. Unity and harmony (in other words the unity that is obtained through harmonisation) can be found/observed in all successful contextual design approaches. Looking to publications engaging with the basic

design principles, it is possible to discuss Lauer & Pentak (1999)'s publication "Design Basics". Lauer & Pentak (1999) define unity and harmony as the presentation of combined objects as the closest definitional analogy of integrality of design as "rule" within art. Unity denotes that there is harmony amongst objects and that they are in agreement with one another. It is not the coming together of a visual connection from a banal coincidence, but rather a sense of belonging that elements have amongst themselves to the location that they are found. This relationship can also be defined as Harmony. Authors also note that if some elements are not harmonious but instead are separate and unrelated, the composition will be unsuccessful and unity will not be able to be attained.

Furthermore they discuss how unity is needed for the attainment of composition, and touch upon the principles that need to be applied in this regard. Under the heading of "Ways to Achieve Unity", they note that repetition can be achieved by duplicating the elements such as colour, shape, texture, direction or an angle in similarly or differently ways.

With a similar thought, Meiss (1990), asserts that a harmonious relationship between fabric (urban fabric/pattern) and the architectural object can be established through continuity; thus highlighting the importance of this principle in this respect.

Meiss (1990), in a similar fashion to Lauer & Pentak (1999), declares repetition and similarity as the factors for establishment of unity; and in doing so, discusses them in detail. We can also see that there are more contemporary approaches (other than repetition and similarity) arising from the desire to create difference that also draw source from the composition principles of design. While defining hierarchy,

Ching(1979) discusses the different approaches for attaining unity within the composition. He touches upon how differentiations such as exceptional size, unique shape and strategic location can still create harmonious compositions. Categorising them into the three groups ‘Hierarchy by Size’, ‘Hierarchy by Shape’ and ‘Hierarchy by Placement’; he demonstrates the ways in which formal composition can be attained through differentiation as opposed to similarity.

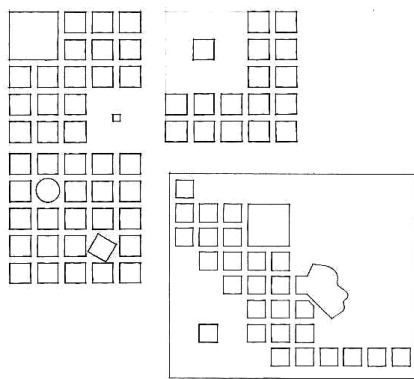


Figure 19: Harmony through different variations, source: (Ching, 1979)

Under the heading of “The search for unity”, Smithies (1981), while highlighting that there are many different approaches for the attainment of harmony, discusses how architectural elements/components can come together in the name of establishing composition and develop a sense of appreciation for unity as a whole. He touches upon original approaches for ensuring consistency/harmony from the approaches put forward by Wright and many other leading architects.

Within the scope of contextualism, the similarity and differentiation principles developed to establish harmony between the composition and urban fabric are defined by Meiss(1999), in line with basic design principles. He engages in detailed discussion of many design principles diversifying from Order to Disorder under the

heading of Homogeneity and texture, alignments, gradation, hierarchy, contrast, complexity, contradiction, chaos. Zalanski & Fisher (1995) put forward that unity/harmony can be attained through the creation of diversity within the Order principle of design. While disusing the ability for differentiation/diversity amongst repetition, rhythm, balance and such like values, they discuss how three different affiliations are warranted: "either slight variation, repeating a central theme or as a strong contrast.

### **3.1.2.2 The Guidelines and Strategies towards Contextual Fitting**

In addition to the basic design principles involved in the establishment of architectural form, there are many guidelines presented as to how contextual design can be attained. No matter how much these guidelines were established as means of shaping the design in conformity with the surroundings, it is argued in contemporary times how successful these guidelines are in the attainment of architecture with a sense of place. In fact, it is often argued otherwise. This understanding has the main aim of standardising the architectural language of the existing surroundings and design the projects in line with these standards. A contemporary example of such is its establishment and circulation of thousands of imitation buildings that do not own identity.

Oriented towards architectural form and involved in the direction of contextual design, the template design guidelines took up placement in both application and theory. The fact that the product is visual-based imitation and its problematic relationship with the environment meant that many solutions to the problem were not presented. Sotoudeh (2011) gives heed to the theoretical contributions in this regard. With the new design's visual and relationship with its surroundings becoming an



issue in itself, many theorists such as Groat (1983, 1984) and Rowe & Kotter, (1985) tackled this subject. Research has also been done by designers and theorists such as Brolin, Gaus, Tyler, Alexander, Hassan Fathi, Ando and Piano.

Brolin (1980), declared his own guidelines; although it is his preference that there are no guidelines that tell and guide how to design. The important points necessary in the attainment of visual harmony and unity are set out below. Brolin predicts that the design will be able to be similar to or differentiate with the surrounding building only in accordance with these listed characteristics within the context. As can be seen, these are the points that have the aim of creating a new design that is in harmony with the surroundings, and thus it is imperative that they are given strong attention: Set back from the street, Spacing from adjoining buildings, Massing: how the main volumes of the building are composed. Approximate height, Facade proportions and directionality, Shape and silhouette, Window and door dispositions, window and door size and proportions, Material, colour and scale.

"Facade represents internal arrangement of the building and should respond to its setting. How? Blending with its neighbours replicating their height, window pattern and materials" (Architects Design Partnership, 2007. p.124).

In defining contextualism, Sotoudeh (2011) also agrees with Brolin and sets out similar guidelines. He mentions that neighbouring buildings' characters must be in conformity. The particular characteristics that will make a building harmonise with its surroundings or its neighbour's character are defined by Sotoudeh as being: height, surface covered, mass, scale and proportions, materials and colours to more minute aspects such as details, ornaments and reliefs.

However, the application of these criteria are often applied and observed by local and central authorities and supervisory bodies, especially in those areas that seek historical environmental preservation. The architect thus has no choice other than to follow the established design rules. In the publication titled “Sense of Place: Design Guidelines for New Construction in Historic”, Preservation Alliance (2007), take the case of Philadelphia to highlight guidelines set up as a means of protecting the sense of place. There, all new designs within the restricted zones must conform to rules on size, scale, colour, material and character of the property and the neighbourhood/context.

**Height :**

- consistency with the existing height of the district, sub-area and/or immediate block
- consistency with adjacent rooflines by not exceeding rooflines by one story, or
- stepping back from a prevailing roof or cornice lines

**Street line:**

- maintaining the relationship to the street or property line characteristic of the district or block, including porches
- continuity of the building wall of the block

**Facade composition:**

- maintaining a tripartite building facade composition divided into base, middle and top
- maintaining a vertical orientation to the facade
- defining the top edge of a building by a cornice line or similar articulation

- fenestration patterns and proportions, and a percent of the facade devoted to fenestration that is consistent with the district or block
- avoidance of blank mirrored or opaque facades
- providing a sufficient percentage of windows and door openings particularly at the first floor, so as to create a pedestrian friendly scale alignment with cornice lines or window sills and heads of adjacent buildings

**Rhythm / Pedestrian experience:**

- inclusion of architectural elements that divide facade into intervals that maintain a pedestrian friendly scale
- using windows and doors in a manner that is harmonious with the established rhythm of the district or block

**Materials and details:**

- use of materials similar to those in the district or on the block, including similar colour
- use of materials in a manner that creates details, incorporates textures or small scale elements that give buildings a three-dimensional character and a “human scale”(Preservation Alliance, 2007, p.22).

Groat (1988), a theorist that has put forward many views on contextual design, developed Preservation Alliance(2007)'s, similar criteria and evaluates architectural structures in line with the said criteria in the publication “contextual compatibility in architecture: an issue of personal taste?”

In similar manner, it is possible to mention studies carried out in Eastern Mediterranean University. In her master thesis, Rıza (2009), studied the evaluation of the contextual relationship of the new building in historical district. Aiming to define

the design approaches/strategies, in case studies, Rıza studied contextual harmony by taking into consideration criterion such as Spatial Qualities(sitting and mass) and Visual Qualities (scale, proportion, Rhythm and material) through a continuum composed of Uniformity, Continuity, Juxtaposition and Non-contextual.

Groat (1988) places the design strategies noted above into three categories: site organisation, massing and facade design; and establishes a system upon which the examples' harmony with the surroundings is evaluated by ranking the values on a scale where the minimum is 1 and maximum is 7. The maximum values denote Replication whereas the minimum values express Contrast. Accordingly, 25 building samples were presented to both professional and non-professional sectors. The results were quite similar among them; with the examples with high replication points selected as having the most intense relationship and the samples with the top contrast points placed below the list as by the contributors. No matter how unsatisfied the theorists are with the outcome of the research/survey, replication emerges as the preferential design administration.

In his periodic research on contextual fitting, Schmandt (1999), analyses the compatibility of periods and practices with their contexts: He analysed the harmony amongst structures in the states of Phoenix, San Antonio and San Diego throughout the traditional, modern and postmodern periods. His results (in percentages) highlight that, more than findings of contrasts/contradictions, the designs that are close to replication are actually more harmonious with their surroundings, and that the postmodern period created a certain superiority with regard to architectural harmony. This study showed that postmodern buildings in all three cities, with a considerable percentage, established superiority with the environment/surroundings

in comparison to the modern buildings. No matter how superior postmodern samples may appear following the study, there is dissatisfaction with the quality of these samples. In all three cities, Author highlights the inability to interpret the design problem correctly with replicating attitudes; “false history” as Schmandt defines it. these examples of that attitude where we clearly see that the dose of the historical image has been overdone. Many examples appear artificial and gaudy within their surroundings; and he thus notes that as a result, not many appear to belong to their context.

"Most of all there are those that seem to fit – that are at home – yet look as though they could be at home anywhere" (Schmandt, 1999,p.161).

We can see that in application, the common result of both Groat and Schmandt’s work and the most popular solution was the overtly conservative attitudes - even though it was established that it was not successful from a harmonisation standpoint. Together with the extremely conservative, mimicking approach or the opposing approach that adopts an overtly independent stance, it was realised that a new design application was needed – one that was placed in between the two extremes and that would, with its original language, allow the architect to have more of a say.

Criticism of the conservative approach and its preference can be found in many publications. One such is Sotoudeh (2011)’s “Too much replication may not fit in the historic context” and his discussions that necessitate an old image to be reflected within the new structures. Generally, those that have such a critical view, highlight how the approach does not create harmonised results. In its place, we need the application of contemporary designs that position among the old and new in a

healthier way. New contemporary design must be differentiate from the old but at the same time been in conformity with it.

In Urban Environment Today magazine (2002), under the heading of ‘Making new buildings work in the historic context’ it is possible to see the following commentary: “A contemporary building may be less visually intrusive than failed attempt to follow historic precedents”( p.10).

Busse (1978) cited in Gaenssler (1978), "if in the past two decades our historically grown spaces, streets and squares were afflicted by the recklessness of uninhibited growth, they are now threatened with becoming soiled in a ghostly surrounding field of superficial adaptation and reminiscences... there is only one way to do justice also to the historical inheritance: through the independent creative design founded on the resources and principles of our own age"(p.29).

Ruskin (1880) cited in Gaenssler (1978) "let us make no mistake on this important point. It is totally impossible, as impossible as bringing the dead back to life, to restore something that has once been great or beautiful in architecture" (p.27) .

In spite of everything, Klotz (1988), in his publication “History of Postmodern architecture”, touches upon the relationship of old and new and discusses how the product can be in conformity with the context within the contemporary approaches (such as contrasting with context).

Cengizkan (2003) notes that there is a uniqueness in all that is historic. Just like historical structures, every architectural product is (and should be) unique with its characteristics and temporality. In this way, the historical fabric is protected in a healthier manner.

While many strategic approaches may be foreseen as a means of directing contextual design, it cannot be said that these efforts have put forward definite principles as to how a successful contextual design could be attained. However, it would be possible to observe and apply the auspicious aspects of examples that are successful from a contextual perspective.

It is possible to observe different contextual approaches. While most approaches allow environmental data to play a role in the shaping of the architectural product, on the other hand it is possible to observe approaches that only give the contextual data's a superficial place. There are similar attitudes that, while ignoring the meaning, take into account climatic data and as a result strive to establish visual conformity. Together with these, as a popular approach, it is common to see examples that strive to reflect the nostalgia for culture and tradition in the relationship that the contextual product has with people (mostly postmodern conservative approach). It is also possible to see design approaches that contribute to the context that it finds itself in by taking into account not just the physical surroundings but also the social and economic values. Through the language form of the architectural product and its use, it is able to see the relationships that are established within the different contextual frameworks.

While the contextual approaches show variety, the new design language's non-conformity with current existing environment should not be the case. Different contexts require re-evaluation of different design data each time when there are new problems/context/projects. While contextual design takes the establishment of harmony as its basis each time, the architectural surroundings inevitable change and deformation requires, and in fact necessitates, that different form languages need to

be existent together within the surroundings. As a result, in addition to the categorisation of the contextual data that gives direction to design, the categorisation and interpretation of the strategies of design also becomes inevitable.

It should not be forgotten that the important role that context plays in design does not only require a point of view that is passionately connected to context, but may also take on an approach that is actually critical of it. It is necessary to accept that the neutral or passive approaches that sometimes reject or ignore and not engage in dialogue with context, do not actually disregard context. consequently, they are all responses to the context and they all derive from context.

As a result, the contextual product can arise from many different approaches and can establish the harmony that we expect. The interpretations that range from harmony to contradiction are explained by Sotoudeh (2011) by referring back to Brolin Brent's work. A new structure in a historic surrounding is always challenging. There are approaches that aim on the one hand to separate the new structure from the old in scale, material or methods; while on the other hand there are approaches that try to protect it at all costs. These two approaches have existed for many years; and each has been preferred from time to time.

In contemporary times, it is possible to see that more varied relationships are established with context. One of such directly mimics the elements of the surrounding architecture. It is also possible to see forms that are completely contemporary and associate with the surroundings, contributing to the contextual unity in a strikingly positive way. In addition, it can be seen that attitudes that take the middle ground of these two approaches create more successful architecture.



However we can sometimes be witness to these two extremes merging and being applied together. This does not yield successful results. Sotoudeh (2011) discusses Edward Cullinan and later Michael Davies' views on this matter:

Cullinan highlights that contextual design does not need historical forms and icons but rather stresses the necessity and inevitability of new architectural forms. This is not for the demise of the noted relationship's establishment. Quite the contrary, the relationship is tied to the establishment of the architectural object. A talented designer should be able to create successful designs by both approaches. However, with modesty and discipline, the architect can reach the 'relatively successful' design at the right time and place(context).

On the other hand, Michael Davies believes that design within historical surroundings can be done with more than one approach. He defines the approaches that sit between the two extremes mentioned above into five categories and defines them as follows:

**(1) The 'Pastiche' Approach:** the design can achieve harmony with its surroundings by mimicking the outwardly looking surface and existing order. Davies, giving an example of an office building in Richmond, explains how the modern open plan office building can be covered by a very fine replica façade.

**(2) The 'Traditional Approach:** as Pastiche as this is the approach that while most preferred, is also the most discussed. This approach, found under the name of modern vernacular, takes quotes from the past and applies them in contemporary times.

**(3) The 'Arrogant' Approach:** this approach is very self-confident and gives almost no importance to historical context. It is difficult/risky to find conditional

acceptance of this approach from a contextual standpoint as even the most talented designer could be contextually unsuccessful with the application of this approach.

**(4) The ‘Contemporary’ Approach:** design is contemporary and while it has notes taken from the era within which it is found, it also takes inspiration from the past and is respectfully dialogs with historic context. This is the approach that is most accepted within contemporary times and bears similarities with that presented by Davies. In the present thesis’ subsequent analysis of contextual design, the Contemporary approach is put forward and defended in the study as the approach which should be applied.

**(5) The ‘Subtle’ Approach:** this approach takes a modest and bashful attitude towards the environment. This approach is perhaps that which gives the most respect to historical context with owns contributions.

In addition to these, Preservation Alliance (2007) defines the contextual strategies in a similar manner and emphasises their attainment through four different approaches:

**(1) Literal Replication:** in a similar manner to the ‘Pastiche’ approach, this approach tries to copy the surroundings as much as possible and tries to keep any differentiation to a minimum. It is conservative; seeking as little intervention as possible.

**(2) Invention Within A Style:** in this strategy the aim is to use similar or close relationships, without replicating the surrounding character, to protect the consistency found within context’s architectural language. Sometimes, the small differentiations are evaluated positively within the context.

**(3) Abstract Reference:** different to replication, this approach creates dialogue by giving history an abstract placement within the context. This may creates visual

differentiation with abstract mass language. While generally preferred, it is difficult to design and does require a certain amount of artistry.

**(4) Intentional Opposition:** this approach consciously has a contradictory attitude towards context. It is a risky design approach. Sometimes it places contextual character at risk, other times it is successful in establishing unity despite of all of the free/independent ideas.

Despite all of these guidelines, Brodin (1980) puts forward that we should not use the formulaic guidelines of contextual design nor can we define 'what' the design should be by looking to pre-directing strategies. Rather, he emphasises that the architectural design problem should be resolved in a more authentic and original way by using its own authentic/original interpretation. While highlighting that a successful design can be attained without use of the guidelines; he also asserts that use of the guidelines as a checklist can also allow us to rectify failure and dissonance within design.

In conclusion, there have always been efforts to rigidify and categorise the many different styles of contextual approaches. Despite the fact that there are many standards, rules and norms applied in the field, it is clear to see that contextual design is a vocal, flexible concept. In relation to contextual design's immeasurable and un-mouldable facets, Groat (1988) has put in much effort in the strive to measure context. Groat gives heed to the work of Bowsher and Lu not only in this regard but also in relation to the subjective facet of the branch as follows:

Bowsher (1978) cited in Groat (1988)– "some normative standard for evaluating contextual compatibility can be established and consistently applied to a variety of design proposals" (p.230).

However Lu, (1980) cited in Groat (1988) it is not actually possible to identify the specific types of contextual- design strategies that are advisable. For example, many guidelines simply require that a certain number or percentage of specified design relationships (e.g., scale, height, volume) be maintained, but it is left up to the designer to chose which of these relationships are the most significant or relevant (p.230).

Groat (1988) It is possible to achieve some consensual agreement on contextual approximations but may not possible to specify the types of design strategies which are mostly suitable for contextually sensitive situations (p.230).

### **3.2 Historicism Versus Contextualism**

With the contextual perspective and the effort to create a contextual product attaining a feature of contemporary thought, Historicism and traditionalism began to be redefined and interpreted by the architects. The aim of such trends is to place the architectural product closer to the “man” in a more genuine manner. In the field, it is possible to discuss many noted architects interpretations of localised approaches to context. According to Baytin (2000), Wright's architecture draws inspiration from North American and Mexican Indian culture, European architectural history and even from Japanese architecture. On the other hand, Le Corbusier's architecture draws strong inspiration from the Mediterranean's local traditions. Aalto's work, accepted as modern localism, has faint reference to archaic history, local Mediterranean buildings and village tradition. While it may not have been on account of the architects mentioned above, the inability to adjust the dose of historicist, local approaches used in contextual design creates approaches where there is a lack of relationship with the place in which they are found. No matter how much the historical and similar traditional attitudes and cultural values guide the aim to tie the product to the place, they were only managed to be transformed to contextual products in the hands of master architects. The rest were either recklessly applied as

a popular architectural trend disregarding the context or with their overtly mimicking approach, repeated the existing typology.

It can be seen that the contextual product should neither attempt to be completely historicist, cultural nor be in an effort to be completely vernacular. Contextualism, as opposed to the conservative perspective, is a full initiative, at a glance includes the variety of localism, and nevertheless is far removed from both a-priori historical traditionalism, the modern-day iconographic references and even emulation of localism (Uraz, Pulhan, Ulucay, 2010).

We previously mentioned Bonatz as a leading architect who interprete the tradition ,locality and local identity in this works impresively. It is also inevitable that we mention the Cypriot architect Ahmet Vural Bahaeddin who trained in Bonatz's workshops/design studio. In their publication "Modernism's Local Expansions(modernism'in yerel acilimlari)", (Uraz, Pulhan &Ulucay, 2005,2005, 2006) take Bahaeddin's genuine unique approaches in the strive for attaining architectural sense of place by looking at examples of his work and local references. While the architect may embrace a modernist character, he never compromised on the establihment of the deisgn's sense of place. For this reason, Bahaeddin never repeated himself and as result none of his structures bore resemblance to one another. No matter how many innovative and creative examples the architect may present, in his efforts to attain a sense of place he interpreted localty with his own unique idioms such as spacial organisation, mass surfaces and details all while referencing tradition.

In actuality, all of these architectural languages and styles should seek to include the values that context encompasses because the exceedingly conservative approaches

that are sought as a means of bringing about an architectural product that is closer to the “human”, more genuine and in most cases in harmony with the environment are not as a matter of fact, as harmonious with their environment as is thought and intended.

Without a doubt, while such approaches may seek to bring cultural and human values to the foreground and bring back the nostalgic sense of place, most of the time they are applied without been sure that they genuinely belong to the contexts that they are found in. As a result, these approaches harm the contextualist discipline. This problematic face of contextualism is one of the main and important contemporary issues of architectural practice. This issue has been addressed under many different headings within architectural literature. In this regard Antoinades (1992) discusses Mimesis, imitation and touches upon the results created following this approaches, their lack of desire to protect unity and the consequential individualisation of the structures.

Continuing this subject under the heading of “History vs. Historicism”, Antoinades analyses each approach under different contextual designs. In this regard, he notes that historical elements can also be included in the strive to attain unity between the design and environmental data. He emphasises, however, that this must be taken into account in a careful manner in the architect’s personal interpretation. This is due to the fact that excessive use of historicism will lead to a devastation of history. For this reason, contextualism and historicism should not be mixed. even as well, If they were, the approaches that emulate the history can be applied to every context and Antoinades proclaims that this would be wrong.

Furthermore, contextual design should be so abstract or concrete so as to establish a dialogue with its surroundings. In other words while being able to be local and historical, as well as modern and contemporary. In other words, historical or any other style format should not direct it completely. It is at this point that it again stepped away from the mimicking and even kitsch style and their design strategies. The way was therefore paved for establishing one-off temporal solutions and resolutions for a sense of place.

Contextual design is possible by moving beyond being an absolute form and style, and through conformation in light of the contextual requirements within the setting/context that it is found. This is related to the intensity of the meaning in the context that they are found (that must be installed in the language of form) and how the continuity is needed to be established. Perhaps the reason behind contextual design's alimentionation with approaches of historicism are the strictly conservative design trends used for establishing unity within the postmodern period in which it was founded. Ultimately, while contextual design is often intertwined with tendency to repeat different styles of architecture, it is a concept that should be separated. This is because form should not be the intended aim of contextual design, but rather that the aim of contextual design should be the attainment of context related-form and its establishment.

Whether used for the attainment of visual unity and consistency or whether to make the city surroundings and architecture more genuine/friendly for the user or the community, contextualism is aware of history and tradition and is known to use them. Historic characteristics, the rooted local architecture and regional identity are all values that have a place in the contextual design. These values that come from the

characteristics of the context's history and place, have found place in the contemporary interpretations. following both example are strongly relate them self to tradition of their locations. in Moore's examples, (fig 20, 21) the architect emphasized village analogy on spacial organisation of units and site and on their relationship to each other. Different in comparison to Moore's approach, Cansever's Holiday village is definitely Modern vernacular. Architect Cansever aims to live the vernacular tradition of context/region.



Figure 20: Moore's Kresge College University Of California, 1974 (source: URL 16)  
 Figure 21: Moore's Kresge College University Of California, 1974 (source: URL 17)  
 Figure 22: Turgut Cansever's Demir Holiday Village, Bodrum, 1987 (source: URL 18)

### 3.3 The Contemporary 'Context'

Contextual design had been resolution both for the old and new structures within historical environments as a means of harmonising the new with the old. Especially given precedence initially in densely historical contexts, contextualism helped us to observe that the environment within which the building is situated should be an important factor in all conditions. As a result, in the presence of different contexts - perhaps daily, banal and even complex city structure, sometimes productively rich, sometimes unproductive monotone, sometimes chaotic and even contexts/environments where there are no constructions and natural characteristics



are paramount - we can see that the application of contextual design is successful in the strive for sense of place and originality/authenticity.

No matter what and how the context is, the design should in some way be in harmony with it, should support its eligible properties/characteristics or should strive to find them and bring them to light. Where there are poor quality properties, the design should adopt such necessary attitude so as to protect itself. The design should provide clues and be an example for the design products that shall be successor to it within the said context. Taking into account the difficult surrounded conditions of contemporary times, it is not always possible for the architect to work in contexts where always harmony or rhythm exists. It may perhaps be out of the question to seek harmony within these different and in most cases unproductive contexts.

In such circumstances, the designer creates a context by the building to be placed within and strives to avoid being affected by the negative conditions. On the other hand, rejection of context actually means taking context into account. In the case of rejection, It would not be incorrect to say that every architectural stance responded according to the context's conditions is only as contextual as the strive for harmony and unity in original/authentic historical environments. With the application of contextual design to contexts that are not influential/directing values and even productive, the question becomes not 'what' should the design be but rather gives us the chance to question 'how' the design should be. This change in design perspective leaves behind all stereotypical/formulaic pre-established design strategies and triggered design approaches that aimed to establish original/authentic architecture, conceptualized according to specific context. Rather than thinking of the product's form characteristics, with the design's strategic thought, re-definition of the problem

and even its approaches to findings resolutions, it is obvious that it can be turned into a contemporary concept within design.

It is observed that the differing quality of environments in contemporary times require a re-conceptualisation of the contextual design field. We can see that this awareness has created, within different contexts, new many perspectives in both theory and discourse. The unity established within the design approaches actually contains a consistent relationship with the surrounding. This already has a place within the scope of architecture and design ethics; as has been highlighted in the previous sections.

As a result, no matter the type of environment that they are faced with, the architect is expected to act with this responsibility in mind. However, it is obvious that occasionally some contexts have more high quality and directing factors than other contexts. If the architect's attitude towards the context plays a more facilitating role and if there is dialogue with the noted attributes, then it is possible to have positive design behaviour that supports the attributes, and where necessary, repairs and revives them. However, where such directing facts are not found within the context, it may be necessary for the architect in this instance to take a stance that strong response/dialog/proposal to the environment. Brent (1980) questioning what can be done for diverse qualities within the contexts asks "what do you do when the context is not stylistically homogenous, but a mixture?" (p.148).

Similarly, Beaver (2007) discusses his efforts to seek traditional/regional richness in Tokyo when faced with a context that was not original/authentic. Unusually, as you move out from the tradition core of Tokyo's city centre, the traditional gives way to

modernist structure and we can see that Tokyo is increasingly becoming a role model for modernism. No matter how much it strives to find sentiment/emotion, it is difficult to feel a sense of place outside of Tokyo's city centre. In such condition where the proximal environment is unproductive, we should search for meaning and design by looking at the city's past; and evaluate climate and culture in the search for identity. Contextual approach is also important for the non-rural environment where there is an absence of construction.

Buildings should relate to landform and landscape especially when it is the only inspiration source. Ex: Yorkshire Dale, buildings made by local stone appear to almost grow out of the landscape. As we consume more Greenland it is vital that it should be done in a way that it enhances the Greenland which is left out (Architects Design Partnership, 2007, p 134).

Many different relations can be established with context as landscape, Behaeddin's Özdal house, which is defined as "climbing house to the hill" by (Bodamyalizade, 2006), the description is completely derived from the building's relationship with topography/context, as a contextual concept(see in figure 23). as seen in (figure 24) continuation of the green land through the roof of the Delfh university Library, strongly emphasize its sense of belonging to that location, further investigation of this building is taken into account in following sections. More different but modest relations/dialogues can be seen in (figure 25, 26).



Figure 23: Behaeddin's Ozdal House, 1992 (source:Personal archive)

Figure 24: Mecanoo's Delfh University Library, 1997 (source:URL 19)

Figure 25: Abalo Alonso's Nursery, 2011, Ourense (source:URL 20)

Figure 26: I.M.Pei's Miho Museum, 1996 (source: URL 21)

In a poor quality environment, the design site can be defined as one that has chaotic architectural surroundings, a settlement without unity, and generally a poor quality context. If it is possible to see the poor quality attributes that are so problematic for contextual design as having strengthened the design, then it is here that we can actually see the situation's problem solving face. Design Partnership (2007) discusses how we should contribute to design and consequentially the environment when we are faced with an uninspiring setting.

"We have created a new courtyard with the existing buildings, a new major presence in terms of the surrounding urban area... the new activity generated by the building and the quality of forms and materials have generated new vitality in the area and further investment will improve the urban context still further" (Architects Design Partnership, 2007, p 148).

Unlike the previously mentioned cases, context is not as much of a concern in the cases of bbc broadcast building's and federation square of melbourne's contexts, but its still possible to observe how the buildings contibuted to the urban context with reinforcing public spaces (see in figures 27, 28, 29 and figures 30,31,32).



Figure 27: New BBC Broadcast House, London (source: URL 22)

Figure 28: New BBC Broadcast House, London (source: URL 23)

Figure 29: New BBC Broadcast House, London (source: URL 24)



Figure 30: Federation Square, Melbourne (source: URL 25)

Figure 31: Federation Square, Melbourne (source: URL 25)

Figure 32: Federation Square, Melbourne, top view (source: URL 25)

Under some circumstances, the context can be considered to be weak or insufficient.

In such situations, it is necessary to create a sense of place and establish/incorporate structure and purpose to the context. Moreover, in some situations, there is no context whatsoever that we can respond to; and at this point, the design should support the context with special aspects, should create its own context within itself and even in some circumstances, be strictly and fiercely closed amongst itself or support the undefined areas of the context through the creation of spaces (Beaver, 2007).

In the example as seen in (figure 33,34,35) Building rarely interact with surrounded space of context and closes itself to its outside(context) however it's abstract form, similarly dialogues with surrounding settings.



Figure 33: Dornob's modern house design with contextual aim. (source: URL 26).

Figure 34: Dornob's modern house design with contextual aim. (source: URL 26).

Figure 35: Dornob's modern house design with contextual aim. (source: URL 26).

Faced with a similar environment to Beaver (2007) case in Tokyo, Brolin (1980) asks how design should be in light of the environment's constant update and change: should there be an updated fabric in new design? Or is there importance in the context's lost traditional past? Brolin (1980) discusses how, when necessary, the design form will develop according to the dominant value within its order, whilst harbouring the other values.

In conclusion of the argument set out in this section, each context has its own problem and it must again be emphasised that by using these, contextual approaches can develop resolutions to the said problems. This requires, first and foremost that there is dialogue with the context and there are many ways in which this dialogue can be established. In this regard, Beaver analyses structures and how much they belonged to the environment within which they were found; citing their inability to be transported to any other context. He notes that even if buildings have a common language, the relationship that they establish with context should be their own. In addition to the placement of memory and tradition within design, he also touches upon the explorative and innovative aspects of design. In his discussion of the Nanjing Tower, The Burj Dubai, and the 201 Broadgate tower in London he notes that they all reflect the context in line with values such as climate, culture, politics and economics and how dialogue has been successfully achieved with their contexts.

"Most importantly, each is clearly a site-specific solution; none of them could be replicated anywhere else, nor should they be" (Beaver, 2007, p.21).

Subsequently, the study shall analyse how the different ways of establishing dialogue with context actually arise from each architect's own personal definition and

interpretation of the contextual problem. Ancillary to this, the study will put forward that ethical approach is presented when the context-led design is consistent with its starting point.

### **3.4 The Role and Awareness of the Architect**

Contextual designer should re-define each different design problem(belonging to a specific context) at all times. Each context is taken with its own specific and unique values, and solutions should be created in accordance with these. From this perspective, it would not be wrong to refer to context as a strong design concept. As each design has its own problems, the architect's role in interpreting this problem and his/her contextual awareness is of great importance. It is at this point that the architect's role within contextual design gains prominence and for this reason that the questioning and criticism of contextual design should often be done in light of what the architect gives prominence to in his interpretation and definition of the contextual problem, and the ideas which form the basis of his interpretation.

#### **3.4.1 Architects Attitude towards Context: Empathetic, Sympathetic and Independent**

Under the 'Certain Strategies and Contextual Fitting' heading, the study has highlighted and placed the numerous contextual approaches under categorised templates according to the strategies' form and its relationship with the environment. However, all of these examples impose certain visual approaches; and it can be said that within their background they tend to ignore the designer's attitudes and perspectives towards the environment.

Eliminating this deficiency within contextual design, Capon (1999) defines contextual approaches as empathy and sympathy. In a similar fashion, (Brent, 1980) also highlights the sympathetic attitude within design. The present study analyses the



subject in a manner that incorporates the Independent attitude alongside empathetic and sympathetic approaches; and thus the examination of the matter within the scope of these three different approaches can be seen. A definition taken in this way will reflect the essence of contextual design in a more appropriate manner. Consequentially, it will be noticed that strategies which guide the design with certain pre-directing formations are incorrect and that, first and foremost, displaying an attitude towards context is a more correct approach to take. This is due to the fact that with the use of empathetic, sympathetic and Independent attitudes we can obtain results, in appropriate contexts, that can be described as positive and successful (fig 36,37,38,39 and 40) represent possible Infill design examples of various attitudes representing Empathetic, Sympathetic and Independent(from left to right) .



Figure 36: In Fill example, Empathic (source: Turkan Uraz Archieve )

Figure 37: In Fill example, Symphatic (source: Turkan Uraz Archieve )

Figure 38: In Fill example, Symphatic - Independent (source: Brolin,1980)

Figure 39: In Fill example, Independent (source: Turkan Uraz Archieve )

Figure 40: In Fill example, Independent (source: Turkan Uraz Archieve )

Design within the empathetic attitude, as highlighted by the concept's name, establishes empathy between itself and the environment. In other words, it puts itself in the place of any object within the surroundings, and strives to exist in such manner. As a result, with the product's easy and simple attitude, it can be likened to and resembled through copying and replicating. It is quite clear that it is an approach that is slightly limiting; especially with regard to design innovation. In actuality however, just as with the independent attitude, in rare circumstances it can be



evaluated as a successful approach. The Independent attitude, as opposed to the empathetic attitude, establishes a more unconstrained dialogue with its environment; and paves the way for design that is sometimes independent of its surroundings and that takes a contradictory stance most of the time. With such a independent attitude, there is the ability for innovation to be in the foreground in a more significant manner than with the empathetic attitude; and it can generally be illustrated with approaches that are conflicting with the environment or independent from it.

the figures below (fig 41,42,43 and 44) represent possible roof extension examples of various attitudes representing Empathetic, Sympathetic and Independent(from left to right)



Figure 41: Roof Extension example, Emphatic (source: Turkan Uraz Archieve)

Figure 42: Roof Extension example, Emphatic (source: Turkan Uraz Archieve)

Figure 43: Roof Extension example, Sympathetic (source: Turkan Uraz Archieve)

Figure 44: Roof Extension example, Independent (source: Turkan Uraz Archieve)

The sympathetic approach on the other hand adopts a more moderate attitude. Thought of as the correct and appropriate attitude towards Contextual design from the standpoint of contemporary professional ethics; the value that this approach gives to the interpretive ability of the architect is emphasised through examples. With the sympathetic attitude it is clear that the architect is capable of approaching the design from a more free and original standpoint. With such an approach, the product gives reference to the temporality of the context within which it is situated; and it is

important to underline that it has a different and more innovative stance when compared to the empathetic attitude. With this approach finds a response to the critique that surrounds the conservative facet of contextual design; and it once again highlights how important the architect is to the subject. It is possible to discuss the arguments within the field as a means of understanding the sympathetic attitude in a more in-depth manner.

The architect's sympathetic attitude within contextual design actually overlaps a great deal with the architect's ethical attitude within the profession. However while disregarded within professional environments in contemporary times, the approaches demonstrated within the independent attitude can often appear more popular.

Brolin (1980) notes that replica and contrast may lead to monotony and confusion - two sides of the same coin, both unwelcome in a city" (p.139). The strategies that the author defines as replica and contrast can evidently be found in the approaches designed by empathetic and Independent attitudes. If we are to take Brent's analysis of the sympathetically designed approaches, we can in fact also discuss the importance of innovation and skill within contextual design. Beyond the empathetic and libertarian approaches, contextual design is an experiment within which personal efforts and skill are greatly needed.

While arguments regarding lack of creativity can be seen with regard to the empathetic stance, at the other end of the spectrum, arguments can be seen to emerge in contemporary times relating to the independent approach's "ignoring the environment" at the expense of being original. In fact, compared to the series of

arguments regarding contextual design, the empathetic approaches while being highly populist, are also highly timid and simplistic.

The sympathetic approach on the other hand does not compromise the architect's flexible and attractive facets. Quite the contrary, it is seen that the architect can be very innovative within the context conditions. Antoinades (1992) notes how the Independent architectural approach plays an important role in the attainment of innovative design; but highlights that innovation creates more impressive architecture when placed within contextual concerns. According to the author, design arising within certain contextual conditions and limits is more creative, meaningful and valuable than free/liberal approaches that do not have any limits. Groat (1988) Put forwards Cavaglieri (1980)'s and views in this regard, they note that appropriate contextual design can be attained by leaving behind limitless free/liberal architecture; and that each design may have its own unique context-based problem.

In some circumstances, despite arguments that stress contextual design's lack of contemporary innovation, the value and importance that contextual design and contextual thought gives to traditional aspects of context is evident and cannot be denied. However professional ethics gives just as much importance to innovation and contemporary design within architecture. It is at this point that the sympathetic stance defended within the project distinguishes itself from the others. Design within this perspective is innovative and projects an original point of view. Inevitably no matter how much the highly technological products, blobist or deconstructivist constructions in the environment gain popularity within contemporary times and become iconised (symbolized) architectural objects, contextual approach does not connect with the way in which such approaches tackle innovation and creativity.

However, innovative and creative design, in being contextual, can create dialogue not just with the future but with the past also. This assertion can be observed more frequently in products created as a result of a sympathetic relationship established with the context when compared to other products.

While the sympathetic approach may have been underlined by Gaenssler (1978) as “The third way! Lying between adaptation and contrast”(p.7). A contextual attitude placed within the two extremes defended here can be easily affiliated with the sympathetic attitude. Whether empathetic or an independent stance capable of exhibiting acceptable relations with context, the sympathetic approach will be more effective in the establishment of original architecture with a sense of place.

Apart from all of these, no matter how open to discussion the risk and success of creating contextual success from empathetic and Independent design is, it should be kept in mind that when the architect has certain responsibility or susceptibility/sensitivity he is capable of creating quality contextual solutions no matter which attitudes he takes. In any case, in all conditions it is questionable how genuine and earnest a mandatory or unwilling architectural attitude will be. Here the architect must feel like the master, feel responsible and consider the design within this scope. Cengizkan (2003) notes how the original architect’s design processes will not be attained by artificial, a-priori decisions (on the contrary, that is what is wrong!); but rather he highlights that the architect and architectural product must “be itself”, “be original”, “achieve original identity” while emphasising the need to be natural and genuine.

The examples below can be considered to be designed mostly with independent attitudes, here we could see how differently they interpreted in order to dialogue with their context(see figure 45,46,47,48,49 and 50).



Figure 45: Moneo's Murcia Town hall, 1998 (source: URL 27)

Figure 46: Gehry's 'Dancing buildings', 1996(source: URL 28)

Figure 47: Hollein's Haas-Haus, 1990 (source: URL 29)

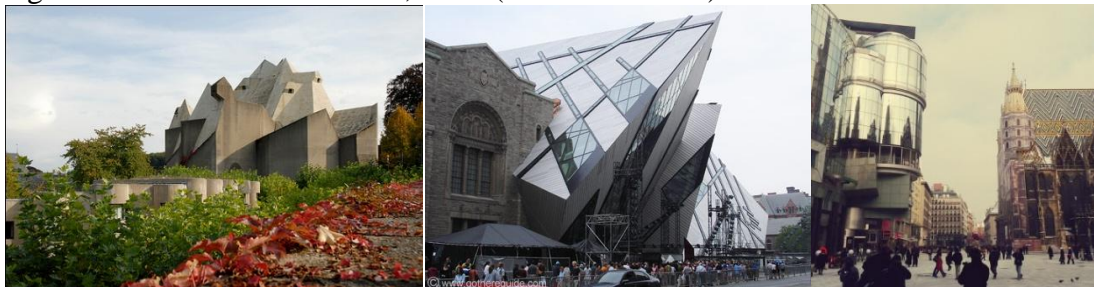


Figure 48: Bohm's pilgrimage church, 1962 (source: URL 30)

Figure 49: Libeskind's addition to the Royal Ontario Museum, 2007 (source: URL 31)

Figure 50: Hollein's Haas-Haus, 1990 (source: URL 32)

### 3.4.2 Architects Considerations towards Context: as a Constraint or as a Tool

Context does not have constraints. On the contrary, there are perspectives that see context as constraints. – in other words it's the consideration that admit the context as obligations and restraints. In place of perspectives that evaluate context as a constraint (and as a result limit the contribution that it may have through the new designs), it is necessary to consider it as a tool for the generation of new solutions. In this way, the process of establishing a dialogue with the environment and a creative relationship will commence. Seeing context as a tool could in fact transform it into a strong design concept. In this light it is not only important to see which of the

analysed sympathetic, empathetic and Independent approaches the architect has adopted, but also it is essential to see what type of consideration(as a tool or a constraints) he has in relation to context. This is because the designer's perspective is important in the attainment of a consistent contextual proposition. In other words, more than just defining the attitude, "through which considerations the architect handled the context and how it is evaluated is of more importance. Accordingly, dialogue with the environment (for which contextual design strives) will be able to be attained with the adoption of any approach/attitudes(sympathetic, empathetic and Independent).

In the creation of mediocre architecture in contemporary times we can observe that the environmental values do not go beyond the salt standards that should be applied or do not going beyond the foreseen standardised forms; and that in this way, it is possible to see that no other environmental values are taken into consideration. The city environments (which have contemporary concerns regarding their quality) are designed through the salt defined standards as though each parcel is in equal placement. At this point, above all else in the creation of design, the architect's perspective is of great importance. Although it is arguable how ethical it is, the architect is free to design according to his own preferences. It is however, possible to qualify this as either positive or negative.

We have two different perspectives that we can discuss; one that sees context (and contextual data's/Design incomes) as constraints in design, and another that sees context as a tool for the establishment of original designs with a sense of belonging. In the examination of these two different approaches, with the architect's limited perspective that is excessively pragmatic in the mandatory application of contextual

data, it is inevitable that we have have results that depart from being original and personal. With direction being given by environmental standards, products that are similar to one another and a monotone environment are created. In addition to this, again with a similar perspective, approaches exist that see the environment as an obligatory evaluation and also those that take the limiting nature of such an approach in defence of adoption of a more free/independent attitude. Both attitudes can be accepted as the same under all conditions. Both evaluate the environmental data as constraints: while one obeys, the other rejects them. Here it is possible to mention superficial/ordinary/accustomed approaches and, together with this, those architectural approaches that are overtly free-independent that step away from being responsible, sensitive and close to the environment. With its contrast and independent stance and its engagement with context only within the scope of certain obligations, it is possible to draw an analogy with the beneficial engagement with the historical surroundings found in the strict modernist trend at the start of the 20th Century (see in figure 51, 52 and 53).



Figure 51: Non-contextual infill (source: URL 33)

Figure 52: Non-contextual infill (source: URL 33)

Figure 53: Non-contextual infill (source: URL 33)

On the other hand, it is important to highlight how creative the architectural approach that uses contextual data as a tool can be in the resolution of problems. Instead of taking the design problem with simplified site-analyses, the architect redefines the

problem within environmental relations, reads context literally, understands and interprets it; seeing it as an effective input, it is possible to see that the architect evaluates it as an important tool in the establishment of design concept. While the enthusiasm to use context as a tool in design may not always be a strong way in which to develop concept, the fact that the contextual data has a say in the design importantly contributes to the product having a sense of place and attaining original form characteristics.

Brolin cited in Schmandt (1999), discusses how with postmodern architecture, the empathetic trend which gives excessive place to historical details, as opposed to harmonising with contemporary times, is more kept at harmonising with the past (and old). In addition to the historical environment being under threat, it is also defined as a barrier to the designer's creativity. We can affiliate Brolin's critique of the excessively conservative approaches with design's limited perspective and those attitudes that evaluate context as constraints. However the author sees history not as a barrier to creativity but rather highlights that it should be seen as a help and support(tool). Schmandt gives place to Brolin's statement and underlines the necessity for context to be seen as a guiding element in design.

At the beginning, although contextual design had a widespread trend of replicating the existing, the architect progressively began to have opportunity to reflect their own attitudes and thoughts. Moreover, within the scope of the present thesis, the perspective that uses context as a tool is evaluated as the best approach to take; and aims to highlight the virtue in the said approach. This is because the contextualist approach is not limiting like the analysing, problem finding/problem defining and such like, but is valued as an environmentally analytical and guiding tool relevant to



the creation of solutions. Therefore, the design is important enough to be a starting point for design concept. Strong propositions in making context have a say in design, giving importance to it and allowing for the design to attain a conceptual state, are irreplaceable and valuable. Accordingly, the architect sees the values not as constraints but as a tool that can help him attain a superior design. A perspective in contrast to this would, in any case, be seen amongst the profession as going against ethics. However some contexts provide a more appropriate environment for adopting these perspectives. It can be put forward that unproductive contexts in particular give the architect a strong chance to create solutions. Some contexts can be very limiting, but in the creation of resolutions to problems, instead of ignoring the problems, the architect can, through the design, make them more visible, direct them, mitigate/soften them or tame them. (as seen in figure 54,55 and 56) This residence in Japan shows us that no matter how limited the architect may be with regard to the context's limited conditions, it is possible to interpret these limitations as a tool. Turning the land's limitations into a tool for design, the example shows how from the outside in, softening and taming has created effective use; and how a volumised, rich and fluid basis has been established within the spacial construction.



Figure 54: House next Railway, Tokyo (source: URL 34)

Figure 55: House next Railway, interior, Tokyo (source: URL 34)

Figure 56: House next Railway, interior, Tokyo (source: URL 34)

In addition to the designing of spacial organisation from the inside out, Uraz & Balamir (2009) make an association between outside-in point of view and the contextualist approach and define it in a comprehensive manner. They note that in this way, interior-exterior spacial unity's functionality will be established in a stronger manner. When context is seen as a tool, it is possible to see just how extensively the interior and exterior spacial unity is capable of having an effect within the design. (fig 57, 58 and 59). With context used as a tool, an increasingly hidden contextual detail can also create the design's concept; and it is asserted that it can guide the shaping of the conceptualising, the mass, the surfaces and the spaces.

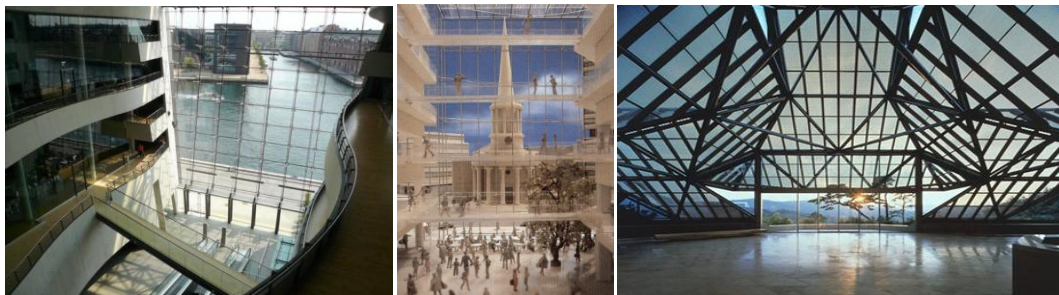


Figure 57: Lassen's library extension, 1999, Copenhagen (source: personal archive)

Figure 58: BBC broadcast house, proposal (source: Turkan Uraz Archive)

Figure 59: I.M. Pei's Miho Museum, 1997, Tokyo (source: URL 35)

As we mention the relations of Delph university library and the context in previous sections, beside dealing with its harmony with topographical landscape, here we are considering how the surrounding is interpreted as a 'tool' in order to achieve the contextual formation. From different views on the site, its conceptualized formation derived from the position of the gigantic, brutal auditorium building(see in figure 60, 61 and 62).



Figure 60: Mecanoo's Delft University Library, 1997(source: Turkan Uraz Archieve)

Figure 61: Mecanoo's Delft University Library, 1997 (source: Turkan Uraz Archieve)

Figure 62: Mecanoo's Delft University Library, 1997 (source: Turkan Uraz Archieve)

### 3.4.3 Context as a source for Concept Development

Context has a say in the design throughout the empathetic, sympathetic and libertarian trends. Through the use of any of these three trends, it is possible to create dialogue with the architectural object's surroundings. Furthermore, when contextual datas (in other words formal and human based values) are taken together with the sympathetic attitude, there will be support for more original solutions when compared to the empathetic trend. While this has been mentioned above, if in fact we interpret context as aiming for development of concept within design also, it can be seen as a contextual design approach that is more original and innovative.

As long as the architect identifies context as a tool, design will be more open to interpretation. The role of context will always be more superior and different within the plan for a architect who aims at creating original architectural objects. No matter how much contextual design is established generally in line with certain design inputs, with the instumentelisation of these inputs in the characterisation of the design problem, the role of context within design becomes even more transcendent. The design is thus capable of becoming a concept. However, this is only capable with an architect who gives importance to the re-characterisation of the contextual

design problem and an architect who sees it as a serious facilitating tool. This is because concept is the first step for the creation of the designer's original perspective and creativity within design. The reason for a design problem having so many different solutions is due to the fact that there are so many starting points (Ulusu, 1990).

From a contextual point of view, the success of many design examples is owed to the theme or concept borne from context. An architect that is aware of the interpretative freedom within contextual design can use the contextual data as the concept's main source. That is to say that they are capable of establishing a stronger, and most times, extraordinary relation with context. While the risks in establishing dialogue with context in the empathetic or independent trends have been previously highlighted, the fact is that we are capable of successfully overcoming this risk as long as there is an effective contextual concept (fig. 45,46 and 47).

Lawson (2006), notes that more than resolving the problem, design aims to finding problems. Before starting to design, the designer has to define/characterise the problem for himself. In other words he must find the problem or create one. In actuality, this means that we are finding concept or establishing concept. In architecture, concept should be the preliminary decision in the creation of the architectural product from the design; it should be seen as the starting point, main idea or that preliminary decision which guides design. In one sense, it is the core idea that is the foundation of the establishment of form and formation.

Starting from the beginning of the design, it is putting forward the solution as a whole so that concept effects the formation of the three fundamental components –

mass, space and surface – within architectural form. As no problem can be resolved without definition, form will just be able to define itself and it is especially necessary that the problem is initially found, removed and even created. This selective, investigatory and analytical stance of the designer will be able to produce a strong concept based upon form as a result of the strength and dexterity found within the context, richness from the constraints, or even just a small detail. In this way the product becomes one with the context within which it is located; and attains a sense of belonging (sense of place). It is in fact at this point that contextual design had an important experience. It would certainly be helpful to analyse a few meaningful examples as a way of explaining these expressions that associate contextual design with the development of concept within design. It would however be beneficial to feature a few fundamental concepts of architectural design beforehand, in order for these examples to be well understood.

Catanese & Snyder (1979)'s simple definition of the concept suggests that concepts are ideas that integrate various elements into a whole. These elements can be ideas, notions, thoughts and observations. In architecture, a concept suggests a specific way that programmatic requirements, attitude & consideration towards (my italics) context and beliefs can be brought together (p.208).

Thus concepts are an important part of architectural design because they help us to see the things in different ways or in orders through which we have not experienced before. As concept plays a visual model especially at the beginning of design, this helps designer to imagine and visualise the form (Ulusu 1990). According to Ulus, not only the concept is the problems that designer, he or she is forced to resolve, but he/she must also put forward any other issue, a message, create an effect or reveal his inner thoughts and feelings. Sometimes the designer looks at and analyses the concept that will create form beyond the problem that needs to be resolved. In doing so, he brings it about. In this way, it is possible to have expression through form, the

development of a view towards a product through a meaning or story told by the architect, interpretation and messages. These can create original results in the transformation of form. Such conceptual approaches propose more populist and simplistic relations. Various elements of architectural resolution integrate easily into a whole. An example of an interesting but simplistic form is the culture centre context's effect upon the architectural concept of the ship form found at Amsterdam Port (Figure 63 and 64).



Figure 63: Piano's Nemo Science Museum, Amsterdam, 1997 (source: URL 36)

Figure 64: Piano's Nemo Science Museum, Amsterdam, 1997 (source: URL 37)

The point that we will be addressing here is not as mature as the with the previously highlighted conceptual design derived from context. For this reason, it would be helpful to give examples where we believe that the context based concepts are more successful. In the selection of examples, contextual variety and scale is observed. Accordingly, concept based architectural applications have been chosen in a campus fabric, a residential development area, development of an urban centre, a natural and non-urban environment and ultimately original historical surroundings.

### **Carpenter Center for Visual Arts, Harvard University, 1963 By Corbusier**

The building of such a modern design in the traditional context within which it belongs gained large critique. However Le Corbusier defended the necessity for the building to have an image and relations with visual arts; and touched upon how in



such design freedom and creativity must be experimented with. Moreover, Corbusier tried to reach “artistic unity” with the building’s modest form language; facilitating this through painting, sculptures and such like visual arts. In addition to the building’s own internal concept, its language form and spacial organisation are formed through the pedestrian passage positioned upon it. This pedestrian road has become a passage going through the buildings and has preserved the existing pedestrian circulation. Not just used for such protection, the passage, splitting the building into two, allows for observation of the design studios during passing. Thus with this passage, public exhibitions are able to be shared with the community. The installation of meaning into the pedestrian road, its conversion into a passage going through the building and this concept’s direct contribution to the road/place, has all lead to the transformation of the road into a space; and with this attitude, it has found a strong place within its context.

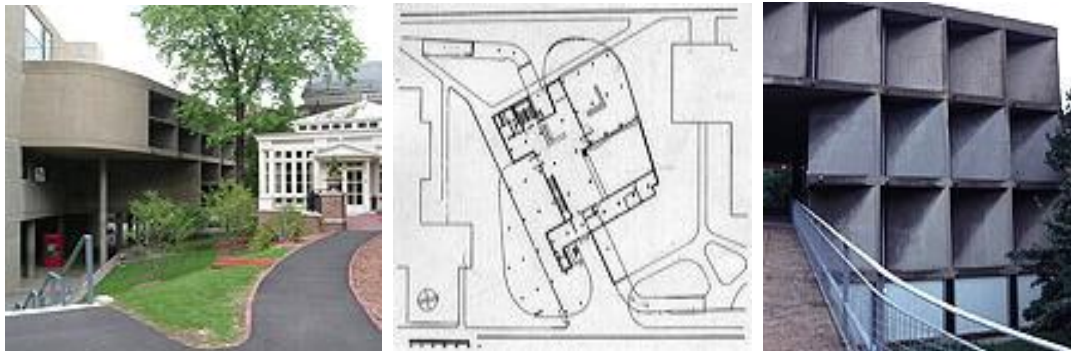


Figure 65: Corbusier's Carpenter Center for Visual Arts, Harvard University, 1963 (source: URL 38)

Figure 66: Plan of Carpenter Center for Visual Arts, Harvard University, 1963 (source: URL 38)

Figure 67: Corbusier's Carpenter Center for Visual Arts, Harvard University, 1963 (source: URL 38)

**Byker Wall, Byker Housing Redevelopment, Newcastle Upon Tyne, 1974 by Ralph Erskine**

The Byker Wall is situated in the Northeast of England next to a busy highway. The essential problem in the formation of social housing settlement is defined as the disturbing effects of the highway on the social areas; and this has been protected against with formation of the high-rise block in which the nuclear families dwell into a wall shaped between the highway and the low-rise residential areas (Ulusu 1990). As a result of the disturbing noise and busy nature of the highway the building has been formation as a wall; and this has protected the residential block and landscape zones from this negative environmental effect. The block nature of the wall has ensured that there is not much opening out towards the highway. The building has an important site and form within the context; and is defined by its dramatic form in addition to its existing residential blocks, internal gardens and spaces.



Figure 68: Erskine's Byker Housing Redevelopment, 1974, Newcastle (source: URL 39)



Figure 69: Erskine's Byker Housing Redevelopment, 1974, Newcastle (source: URL 40)

**Grand Arch, La Defence, Paris, 1989 by Johann Otto von Spreckelsen**

Danish architect Spreckelsen's La Defense on the historical axis of Paris is a "window to the unknown future"; a monument celebrating the second century of the French Revolution. The formation's essence is the expression of the "empty" metaphor. With edges spanning 100m, the giant cube in the centre is empty to



symbolise the blank space. To emphasise this further, the designer used elements that would create a contrast between the external form's abstract rigidity and hardness, by placing a cover that looks like 'clouds' into the surrounding emptiness and aimed to emphasise 'infinity' even more (Ulusu, 1990).

When analysed from a contextual perspective, The Grand Arche draws attention even from far away; and is even noticeable on the urban scale. Even the structure's axial orientation bears great importance in this regard. It grasps attention with its monumental dimension, symmetric form, luminous open nature marble surfaces and long staircase. Besides the other modern buildings in the surroundings, no matter how much it may be in disregard of human scale, the La Defence is in alliance with the context within which it is found and contributes to the futuristic sense. It is not however, the most fitting way according to the building's context.



Figure 70: Spreckelsen's Grand Arch, La Defence, Paris, 1989 (source: URL 41)



Figure 71: Spreckelsen's Grand Arch, La Defence, Paris, 1989 (source: URL 42)

### **Danish Embassy, Addis Ababa, 2005, by Bjarne Mastenbroek & Dick Van Gameren**

The Dutch Embassy is located within 5 hectares of steep slope and densely wooded land. The expectation of the design was to place 5 different buildings within the site, maintaining the quality of the landscape and placing them within the whole. Within the Embassy's area there is a centrally placed long and horizontal rectangular volume carved out from the landscape. The main building's strict horizontal volume

separates the summit into two and separates the slopes into two pragmatic units so as to preserve the natural fabric. These two units are the Ambassador's residence and the Chancellery. Like the building's surfaces, the roof surfaces have been designed so as to keep wholeness with the surrounding Dutch traditional countryside both visually and functionally. The roof in the area is noticeable, and can be used as a natural bridge.

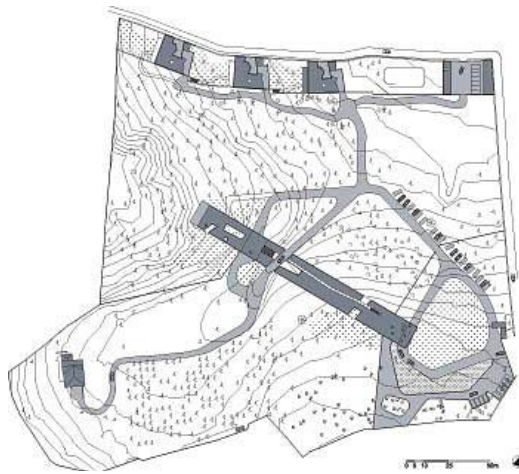


Figure 72: Mastenbroek & Gameren's Danish Embassy, Addis Ababa, 2005, site plan (source: URL 43)



Figure 73: Mastenbroek & Gameren's Danish Embassy, Addis Ababa, 2005 (URL 44)

Figure 74: Mastenbroek & Gameren's Danish Embassy, Addis Ababa, 2005 (source: URL 45)

Figure 75: Mastenbroek & Gameren's Danish Embassy, Addis Ababa, 2005 (source: URL 46)

### **Acropolis Museum, Athens, 2008 by Bernard Tschumi**

Situated in Makaryianni, one of the historical areas of Athens, the New Acropolis Museum is located less than 1,000 feet southeast of the Parthenon. This structure houses an archaeological site and the monuments of Acropolis with pedestrian walkways that connect them. This location was specifically chosen so as to exhibit dialogue amongst the museum's exhibition spaces and the Acropolis. The design of the New Acropolis Museum started with the responsibility to house the most dramatic statues of the Greek Antiquity. The unity of these objects was the element that shaped the project even before the site was even selected. The polemical location of the building added many more layers to the responsibilities of the design. In addition to the contemporary city, street grid and the existence of the Parthenon (one of the most impressive buildings in the Western civilisation), the placement of the site at the foot of the Acropolis meant that the designer has to be sensitive towards archaeological excavations. The area has a very hot climate and is found within an earthquake zone. These factors needed to be taken into account in the creation of a simple and precise concept. The building's design program is articulated into three parts: a top, middle and bottom according to specific needs. The mid floor of the museum is on pillars; located above the existing archaeological excavations. in the base floor The columns were carefully placed by experts to ensure that the sensitive excavation work was not disturbed. The base floor is shaped around the site. It surrounds and thus protects the excavation zones. In addition to the excavation areas, this floor also includes the entrance lobby, auditorium, support facilities and exhibition areas. The middle floor has gallant ramps that pass over the excavation sites of the base floor. The columns within the archaeological area of the base also support these ramps. In this way internal space circulation is attained. The empty

spaces that the ramps create highlight the volume of the double-height gallery. This floor exhibits many works of art ranging from the Archaic period to the Roman Empire.



Figure 76: Tschumi's Acropolis Museum Concept Sketch, Athens, 2008 (source: URL 47)

Figure 77: Tschumi's Acropolis Museum interior, Athens, 2008 (source: URL 47)

Figure 78: Tschumi's Acropolis Museum interior, Athens, 2008 (source: URL 47)



Figure 79: Tschumi's Acropolis Museum top view, Athens, 2008 (source: URL 47)

Figure 80: Tschumi's Acropolis Museum in Context, Athens, 2008 (source: URL 47)

### 3.5 Conclusion of the Chapter

As discussed within the present thesis, many suggestions have developed in line with contextual fitting, whether in the recent past or in contemporary times; and many different attitudes have been exhibited. While examples of successful application amongst these stand out, we cannot expect them to be pioneering examples,

producing their own genotypes. As each contemporary context imposes their own problems and conditions, it is necessary for designs to be addressed within the context and in light of these conditions. However, more than one approach can be produced from a specific context. At this point it is important to highlight how contextual design propositions can start with different priorities. Their subjective face can therefore be underlined not so that they can be pioneering examples of successful suggestions but rather so that they can be accepted as examples from which we may learn.

"There is no doubt that design, like art, is subjective, and trying to understand the meaning and the process of design is difficult, let alone attempting to prescribe what is good design, and what is acceptable" (Sotoudeh, 2011, p.4).

In this regard, it is possible to give examples of contest projects or studio work in the education of architectural design. Here, while many design suggestions are not accepted as being without fault, we can see that there may be more than one different resolution. As Sotoudeh (2011) mentioned, these are open to interpretation and that the questioning of the design's success-failure or good/bad nature is all relative. Groat (1988) defines contextual Fitting as a matter of personal taste or an aspect of basic environmental values. Brolin (1982) cited in Groat (1988), claims that "the whole matter of relating new building to old is a matter of taste" (p.228).

Brolin and Groat's important expressions in this regard support contextual design's subjective base. They also discuss how, alongside the widespread approaches deriving from the formal/visual inputs within the environment, there can be personal interpretation achieved within contextual design. We have discussed in the present thesis how differing architectural approaches in this regard can be contextually fit.

According to Johnson (1994) all architects have faced and will continue to face this kind of question: do I fit in or do I go my own way with this project? There is no correct theoretical position on the issue, although an idealist will argue that 'fit' even over an aesthetic matter is a duty, not a choice, except that is aesthetic matters choice is always an option (p.285).

As mentioned by Johnson, harmony with context inevitably means accepting and identifying that context is active within design. The noted harmony, instead of questioning whether a relationship has been established or not, should more importantly focus on and question 'how' the relationship with context should be. Its efforts to be in harmony with context, as an accountable perspective, gives guidance to, prefers and priorities the ascertainment of context based concept. It should not be forgotten that in the aesthetic-based selections, in other words in the establishment of which approach will direct the object's language (empathetic, sympathetic or Independent) and concept.

## **Chapter 4**

### **CONCLUSION**

The present study attempts to take an in-depth look at and re-investigate contextual design. The subject was analysed from the 20th Century to contemporary times, with certain contextual design approaches being critiqued. In addition to looking at published work in the field of Contextual design and particularly examining the architectural characteristics of the surroundings, addressing familiar concrete notions and the defining work of infamous scholars in the field, the present study will also take the subject from personal idioms. It will analyse the subject from the perspective of many contemporary arguments with the aim of bringing their different aspects to light. As a result, it is inevitable that authors personal interpretations are found within the subject investigation.

In Chapter 2 examination of contextual relationships throughout the period ranging from 1900 to today, can be seen to be taken from an analytical perspective. This lays the foundational basis for the subsequent discussions on the subject. Chapter 2 also goes further, striving to establish a comprehensive database on the subject matter. In this way, we are able to clearly see how contextual design actually finds a niche in many architectural trends and clearly highlight its changing dimensions. Different views towards contexts within the corresponding Modernist, Postmodernist and Deconstructivist Periods have been extended and find placement within contemporary times. This is especially so with regard to the conservative nature of

postmodernism, the pragmatic attitudes derived from modernism and the independent attitudes of deconstructivism that rarely express connection to context. With their extension or provisions, these trends see in practice ranging from avant-garde to contemporary application; and are transferred to the widespread contextualist discourse from which they are nurtured.

In Chapter 3 we have the search for how the contextual trend is in contemporary times; and this takes place through analysis of the many loudly resonating applications within the field, discourse and theories. The common found approaches of contextual fitting are examined in light of the studies that have been made in this regard; and are supported with approaches that question their premise. These approaches often overlap with the conservative attitude found within the postmodernist trend established for the protection of the cities. No matter how much it may be a preferred trend and approach, the attitude has in contemporary times been affiliated with contextual design but has also at the same time been subject to much criticism.

Counter to this, through use of resemblance and analogy, we have the establishment of a strong extreme that leaves visual harmony behind, that separates itself from the surroundings or establishes a contrasting face, and that is supported by the deconstructivist approach. Environmental relations were comprehensively emphasised. In the different contemporary contexts established as a response to these two approaches, space was made for the establishment of a third contextualist approach that is more effective, establishing dialogue with the environment; and that is a method that aims to reciprocally/mutually revive and support. At the same time, this placed much responsibility/accountability on both design and also the architect



himself; waiting for an original and unique ethical stance and approach from them. This was termed as being a sympathetic approach towards the environment.

In this way, instead of analysing the guides and strategies regarding what the contextual design should be, by adopting an attitude towards context we are able to see how it should be in a more effective manner. In other words, examination of the type of context of the object is given more importance; as is analysis of the facets of context that have been placed under higher consideration. Within the scope of the present study, such attitudes of the designer towards context are referred to as Empathetic, Sympathetic and Independent.

The attitude to be adopted correlates to the designer's own style and personal design approaches. In the analysis of which attitude will be more effective within a particular context, it is asserted that this can be easily determined by the architect that bears responsibility/accountability for that said context. In other words, the architect must move beyond his own habits and beliefs to ask – just as Kahn did – “what does the building want to be here”; and must bear this in mind in his development of thoughts and suggestions.

In addition to the different approaches established towards context, the perspectives (considerations) in this regard are also important to contextual design approaches. For example, as well as just obeying the mandatory provisions(considering context as constraints), seeing them as a tool for design and interpreting them can create a different perspective from which exceedingly creative and unique solutions are established. This perspective sometimes differs from context and sometimes prefers to continue on its own path irrespective of it. When this attitude allows for dialogue

with the environment and is comment based, then it is possible to say that it is just as contextual as the others.

Moreover, as the perspectives (considerations) and attitudes are comment-based and create original samples in light of context, they establish a subjective special dialogue with the environment. This study therefore finds that it is especially worth promoting them.

The present study, investigating contextual design in a contemporary manner, reiterates that a successful contextual design can be achieved with the used of any attitude towards context. As the extreme approaches discussed alongside this (whether empathetic or Independent etc.) prefer to either resemble or be completely different, they are in a sense simplified. They are, however, still under risk if the architectural object is to be evaluated.

The Bilbao and Dubai styles have popularised many products in contemporary architecture and it is clear that contextual design has been left behind. Context has almost been sacrificed for the sake of creating artificial identities and brands. Whether in the urban scale or in the building scale, the insensitivity towards context within design does not yield positive results. In this regard, the study takes contextual design within the scope of the architect, the design and the context and advises on how effective solutions can be created. In doing so, it touches upon how we should, in contemporary design, address context with the framework of ethical responsibility.

Within the body of the thesis, the modern contribution that the sympathetic attitude has to context and as a result of its moderate stance without affecting the continuity

of contextualist thought, it is promoted more when compared to the other attitudes. Despite the sympathetic approach's promotion however, it is clear that we are capable of attaining successful results through the use of the other approaches also. In fact, rather than giving importance to the type of approach that the architect exhibits, importance should be given to how effective (and to what degree) the architect makes context within the design. It should not be forgotten that approaches, whatever they may be, do not contain a priori form or ideas like strategies and guidelines do. Conversely, rather than it being the architect's approach, it is the perspective that the architect takes that will define a successful proposition of architecture within context.

This perspective is also associated with how proximal/close it is to context within the framework of responsibility. In design there are two perspectives that take context into account without evading their responsibilities, which see context either as a tool or an constraints that must be engaged with. Even if the underlined empathetic, sympathetic or Independent attitudes are effective in contextual fitting, the successful dialogues that they establish with context will actually be linked to these two distinguished perspectives. When environmental characteristics are taken as an obligatory element, we are left with standard, ordinary and unproductive results. However when they are taken as a tool, we can see how much the contextual values stand out and how much they have a say in the design.

Context's instrumentelisation(considering as a tool) and increasing support for an environment effective in the design process and object dimension (in other words support for the establishment of a design concept) is presented as the final point of creative design of the Contextualist perspective. For this, just as much as analysis of

context under concrete headings, it is important to read them together with personal interpretations as it will support more subjective success in the discovery of its conceptual potential. This subjective facet of reading the surroundings brings to mind that it is a faculty capable of being attained through experiences. In this instance, it is just as important for the architect's education to develop his ability to read the surroundings as it is for him to be taught how to analyse it.

Just as it has a say in the design of the architectural object, the Contextualist perspective, also has a role to play in its evaluation and critique. Each design is evaluated according to its own 'contextual' conditions and by questioning how the architect engaged with them and by evaluating this, we are able to check if there is contextual consistence; and this is an important approach to take for the development of a critical point of view. No matter how much we accept that the contextual product is an experiment that has developed with subjective design preferences, it should not be forgotten that it also sheds light on architectural education of the objective ground, validity, accuracy and so on bases (that can be carried to the design) necessary in the contextualist perspective's assessment of architecture and design.

Contextual approaches may sounds old and off-trend compared to today's famous stylistic architecture but it is the most important doctrine that our contemporary architecture always needed. Examination of many aspects/facets of contextual design has in actuality allowed for reflection of the importance of architecture and consistency in design; and consideration of its natural ability to promote original, effective solutions with a sense of place. Stemming from this point, in addition to how they can be used, the context itself i.e. the environment within which the design

object is located (whether land, area, region or city), should be contemplated as a means of teaching design; and should be considered time and time again as an important design input so as to protect its place on the educational agenda.

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