

AIA Gold Medalist Cesar Pelli has this to say about the breakdown of contemporary rules and expectations, many of them born of functionalism:

*In trying to understand our art we may keep in mind that not only buildings that flaunt their aesthetic intentions are artistically valuable; so are many modest structures that have been designed with love and care.... The contemporary rules for designing and judging architecture put such a premium on original talent that only a handful of architects have been able to master them. Examples from the past demonstrate that when rules and expectations are reasonable, most architects can design good buildings. Any society should expect that architects' rules will produce good buildings most of the time. This is what a healthy architecture does. The evidence of the majority of our buildings suggests that there is something wrong with today's rules. They do not suit our cities and need to be reconsidered. The final result of our work is making cities. It is our greatest responsibility. If we do not make beautiful, enjoyable, and workable cities, we are not going to be worth much in that history that we all prize, no matter how brilliant our individual efforts may be.<sup>6</sup>*

## Typology?

Typology is an idea that the Modern Movement intentionally abandoned.

Typology—the study and theory of architectural types—revived a traditional way of looking at function in the 1970s and 1980s. Theorists asserted that it was a better point of departure than Modernist functionalism when designing a building. Typologists like Leon Krier argued that almost any spatial problem at hand has been solved in the past. They defended enduring and commonplace architectural types that have evolved over time rather than following the mandate of the Modern Movement to discover new forms latent in program, site, or technology. In architectural education, typology brought academics to see their discipline more and more as a traditional language and not as an artistic and technical field in which invention is valued more than convention. Although the center of gravity of architectural theory later moved on to Deconstructivism and to social and environmental concerns, the idea of type remains alive as a result of Postmodernism.

Designers who utilize a typological approach may admit that a design problem can present unprecedented social issues and new technical opportunities, but they also know that human nature, human needs, and the human body haven't changed; nor has climate (yet) or geography (much). They also believe that cultural continuity is more desirable than constant change. Because archetypes represent origins, a return to typology is an attempt to recover purity and continuance, privileging tradition over endless progress.

Typologists look at how the design problem at hand has been solved in the past, especially in similar physical and cultural milieus. They visit built examples in the field. They visit the library, unashamed of learning from the history books that were not allowed any influence in the functionalist's office. They ask if there is a normative or standard architectural type that has evolved over time to solve the problem. If, for instance, the problem is a house, there are many types to draw on. Some types are ancient: the country villa and the atrium house. Some are high architecture: the palazzo and the Palladian villa. Some are low: the sharecroppers' cabin and the garage apartment. Some are prehistoric and universal: yurt, thatched hut, house on stilts, and tree house. Some are national: center-hall colonial, Cape Cod cottage, ranch house, split-level, and bi-level. Some are regional and colloquial: New England "salt box," Charleston "single," New Orleans "shotgun," Philadelphia "trinity," Seattle "box," Florida "cracker," Baltimore "stoop," and so on. Some are from other countries: Dublin "Georgian," Sydney "terrace," Bengalese "bungalow," New Zealand "villa," and Russian "dacha," to name a few.

## Type

An architectural type is not an easy thing to explain. It is like a three-dimensional template that is copied over and over in endless variations. It is a norm, an abstraction, not an actual building. It is not usually the kind of abstraction that is ordained from on high or that springs whole from a single designer or builder. Rather a type is rooted in the commonplace, the unselfconscious, even the unconscious. It is idealized in its archetype, which is its purest or most exemplary expression. A type devolves as a characteristic and typical representation of the archetype. It can be vernacular or high-style architecture. Even in the latter case, its origin cannot usually be traced to a single architect.