



# **HISTORY AND VALIDITY OF DESTINATION ARCHITECTURE**

**CONDENSED DOWNLOADABLE  
OVERVIEW**

**The following document should be cited as: Institute of  
Destination Architects and Designers. 2002. *History and Validity  
of Destination Architecture.***

**[www.idad.org](http://www.idad.org)**

**Both destination design and land architecture are concerned with the design of physical space i.e. landform, water, surfaces and infrastructure. The difference between the two is that outdoor space in destination/coastal architecture also includes entertainment potentials which require investigation from a background within travel and tourism or theatrical design.**

**The phrase “landscape architecture” was first used by Gilbert Laing Meason in 1828. However, the meaning of his use relates more to destination design than landscape architecture, as the title was in reference to the artistic presentation of luxurious resort estates in the landscape, not landscape architecture specifically. The art of illustration through painting depicting these fanciful vistas was the topic of his compilation.**

**Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, a Roman architect in the first century BC, was the author of the oldest and most influential work on architecture. He was the first to reveal the fundamental practice of destination/coastal architecture. This can be seen in chapters five and eight, and in his references to theatres, baths, harbors, breakwaters, acoustics, harmonics, water and travelers. He also laid down the origin of landscape architecture in chapter six.**

**John Dixon Hunt, in a published work, states that besides landscape architecture “only dance and body painting ... (are) arts that actively involve a living, organic and changing component” (landscape architecture does not have exclusive historic precedent for designing with nature). However, destination design can be seen as prevalent in and derivative of all three of these art forms, and by extrapolation, destination architecture can easily be connected to this historic lineage. Therefore, the development of theatrical art can be said to be part of the theoretical basis upon which to establish the history of destination architecture, as it is a fundamental mold for human expression and entertainment.**

**The issues considered by destination, leisure and theme architects are also closely related to the activities of ancient**

**designers in the Far and Middle East. Ancient architects in Asia throughout their history were generally used for the design of places with significance to human happiness and emotional/spiritual well-being. They did not concern themselves only with the making of space, but rather were advisors for enhancing the quality of life with architectural moments, and experiences with potential for lifting the human spirit. Likewise, the ancient architects of India trained and meditated in order to elevate positive life experiences for users of space, rather than simply good design practice.**

**Throughout world history the architect designed for theme, experiential and entertainment venues in order to improve upon the human condition and satisfy deeper levels of meaning than the actual physical environment itself. The making of space was secondary to the forming of experience and fanciful architecture. Good destination design produces within humans great transformations. Imaginations flow easily and fun is enhanced. A feeling of joyousness and creativity abounds. This is frequently less common among other man-made architectures, and is the principal distinction of the end-product of destination design, as opposed to other design practices.**

**Therefore, destination and coastal architecture is both a very old discipline, and a very new profession; and the Institute of Destination Architects and Designers is the only body specifically defining the nature of destination design/coastal architecture and how it should be pursued.**

**Good design process is a product of creativity, individual study and self-actualization. Good design process is never promoted as a substitute for specialized knowledge and understanding. It is best argued to assist a designer in the gaining of temporal project-specific understanding of an otherwise unfamiliar topic.**

**Good design process, as a concept, ensures that all parameters are considered, but not necessarily understood, as it is impossible for a generalist to become expert at every point**

**necessary in vastly differing projects. Therefore, it is difficult to suggest that a destination can be designed well through this introductory process only. Such a suggestion could be criticized fairly as poor design practice.**

**It is assumed that the building architect is trained with sensitivities to enclosed structural environments; and landscape architects are trained with sensitivity to open infrastructure environments. The issue of awareness in design practice gives rise to the need for destination architects, as they, too, by virtue of exposure and consideration are sensitized to principles and priorities that constitute experiential and entertainment environments.**

**So the question of whether destination architecture constitutes a differently-sensitized design approach than building or land architecture (or simply good design practice in general) is self-evident. The parameters that a developing designer is trained to consider, through exposure to various disciplines, builds a reference repertoire and a sensitivity focus which cannot be engendered or exercised on demand by those not devoted to frequent consideration of the issues involved in a particular design type or field.**

**Recognizing that there are already established fields within architecture and design such as building architecture, land architecture, industrial design, interior design, etc., it stands to reason that their differentiation was predicated on divergent pathways of dedication and sensitivity. These differences necessitated them being distinguished from one another, irrespective of good design process being recognized universally. Furthermore, the concept of destination design as being a superspecialization that includes a unique way of approaching all of the aforementioned design concerns, suggests that it is an additive outgrowth profession, not subtractive or diminishing on any field.**