Architectural Agility: Re-tooling Architecture for a Society on the Move

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The value system by which architecture is judged today still conforms to Modernism's original stipulation that it should embody the spirit of the time in which it is created. Unlike the previous Classical approach, which dictated a slow, iterative refinement toward a timeless ideal, Modernism insisted that architecture should instead be *timely*, that it should reflect the contemporary aspirations of the society it addresses, thereby becoming an icon of its cultural and technological progress. As a consequence, however, architecture today is continually re-evaluated with a frequency that rivals that of the fashion world as rapid cultural and technological changes drive it to endlessly re-invent itself in an attempt to remain fashionable and current.

Yet architecture has also historically been invested in asserting a sense of monumentality and per-manence, and it has refined over time its various means and methods of construction specifically to express these characteristics. This has conferred upon the discipline a certain inertia that resists rapid change, and a legacy of technique geared toward producing built works that far outlast the interest they are able to sustain—which makes ar-chitecture as it has traditionally been understood constitutionally unsuited to the seasonal trending cycle within which it is currently attempting to op-erate.

This inability of architecture's physical output to keep pace with changes in society, whether cul-tural or technological, makes it difficult for it to satisfy its ostensible mandate to embody the spir-it of the times. As a consequence, the cultural and critical value that architecture's physical produc-tion once had has been slowly usurped by other media, such as digital imagery, which can be pro-duced and consumed more quickly and without regard to economic or physical limitations. This represents a looming crisis for the discipline; if the products of its physical production are to reclaim their ability to embody the values and worldview of today's highly mobile and digitally facile soci-ety, then architecture needs to develop strategies to make its built work more *agile*, more able to respond to and celebrate change.

Change, in fact, has become *the* defining aspect of the current age. Society today is, more than ever, a society on the move—defined by qualities of mobility and fluidity, and the seamless interlacing of formerly discrete activities. While these qualities are perhaps most easily observed in the wake of the recent digital/information revolution, they are actually the culmination of a long history of steadily increasing individual empowerment and the technology that has facilitated it, beginning with the locomotive and automobile that allowed individuals to easily move from place to place and cover large distances. The portable communication technologies of today, such as the cellphone and wireless internet, have only compressed those distances, and have also enabled remote access to multiple places while allowing individuals to remain on the move.

By rendering many common activities portable, these technologies of communication have in turn liberated them from the fixed spaces that they once occupied, thus breaking down the one-to-one correspondence between space and activity that has historically not only been assumed, but also used to advantage, by architecture.[1] While laptops, cellphones, Blackberries, and iPhones, for example, have allowed individuals to bring their work home, or even take it on vacation, these

very same technologies have conversely allowed them to attend to their personal lives while at work. This has had the additional effect of allowing individuals to shift back and forth between these heretofore mutually exclusive areas of their lives with the natural ease and fluidity of channel-surfing. Although this has resulted in an increased sense of individual empowerment and personal freedom, it also poses serious consequences for architecture: as design is most often predicated on an assumption of specific relations between places and the people who inhabit or make use of those places, the elimination of such specificity—the opening of the door, so to speak, of the places that architecture typically covers to a wide array of unrelated ad hoc activities courtesy of portable communication technologies—undermines the very basis of most architectural design. In this scenario, the notion of building typology, for instance, will cease to have any meaning for all but the most idiosyncratic pursuits.

Looking forward, as society becomes increasingly defined by technologies that facilitate and encourage change and mobility—and as this trajectory is extrapolated even further into the future with the inevitable technological and cultural changes that will result from the impact of immersive VR and nanotechnology—the physical medium of architecture as it is currently understood, which is so inherently inflexible and so rooted in relating the character of a place to a fixed idea of its use, will be increasingly less capable of accommodating or otherwise giving meaningful expression to this reality.

In the meantime, rendering and animation software borrowed from Hollywood is already allowing architects to speculate beyond the limits of their traditional physical medium, and to produce imagery that seems captivating in its own right: parametric modeling techniques provide contemporary architects with the ability to produce the same flawless and complex curved surfaces that were the basis for the dinosaurs of *Jurassic Park* and countless subsequent special effects. This has allowed for the creation of a biomorphic formalism that at least *suggests* a kind of fluidity and malleability, and is certainly less static and enduring by virtue of the fact that the vast majority of such efforts remain confined to the digital medium, given the practical and economic difficulties involved in

adequately reproducing such effects with the materials and technologies currently available (even taking into account the recent rise of digital fabrication methods). Those few examples that have been realized fall far short of the promise inherent in the digital versions, providing only a grim reminder of the underlying and growing gulf between architecture's inert physical medium and its aspirations.

Ironically, this has led some architects and architectural critics to regard architecture's traditional physical medium as inadequate to support the visions of its most radical and celebrated constituents, and to favor instead the insubstantiality offered by the virtual realm of the computer. In fact, the rhetoric supporting these formal efforts focuses heavily on their *ephemeral* and *atmospheric* qualities, as if to eschew an interest in anything but the briefest physical manifestation, and setting the stage for a fundamental shift away from the physical medium altogether.[2]

If the salient question of the moment, therefore, is how the discipline of architecture, finding itself somewhat at sea, should take account of this rise of the digital and the virtual and its seeming indictment of physicality and specificity, then the response by this group would seem to suggest that the only answer is to abandon ship.

Such a mutinous leap is perhaps encouraged by the absolute primacy that has come to be granted to architecture's imageability. After all, over the course of the last century architecture's audience has increasingly been able to experience its work "virtually" as its means of representation and reproduction have become more robust and widespread, first through printed periodicals and books and now by means of the internet.[3] In fact, these sorts of virtual experiences have now become the *primary* means by which architecture is experienced: today most people—including the vast majority of architects, theorists, critics, and students—experience "significant" works of architecture indirectly through these other media, which provide the bulk of the evidence upon which the evaluation of this work and subsequent discourse is based. This has had a profound impact on the direction of the profession; since the photographic medium, for example, emphasizes such architectural concerns as image and form to the exclusion

of most others, these more objectified and scopic aspects of the discipline have come to dominate the profession's discourse and physical output.

As a result, over the years architects have been trained and have trained others to value the *image* of a work over its *presence*. In this context, the otherwise radical notion of jettisoning architecture's longstanding reliance on a physical medium possesses a certain dreadful logic. After all, as the discipline's emphasis has shifted away from physical presence and toward image, and as rendering and animation software has become more sophisticated and competitive with photography, architecture's stipulated responsibility to discern and embody the spirit of the times seems to be increasingly satisfied by imagery of virtual, unbuilt propositions.

Following this trajectory into the future, it seems clear that this move in fact constitutes the first steps on a slippery slope toward the abandonment of architecture's traditional purview of built and inhabited physical space in favor of a new, arguably lesser, role as purveyors of flashy imagery and short-lived environmental experiences played out primarily in installations and in the virtual space of the computer. In such a future the status of the discipline will be severely diminished. It will become—and is, in fact, already becoming—irrelevant.

A way to avoid this crisis, however, would be to identify a strategy for satisfying architecture's need for radicality and currentness within the physical means at its disposal by re-imagining architecture in such a way that it embraced the issue of change more directly. Rather than continuing to assume that the discipline should reinvent itself every time that there is a perceived sea change in culture or technology (and thereby promulgate a culture that values architectural novelty as a sign of keeping pace with these rapid changes) or that it should divest itself of its traditional mastery of physical form and space in favor of other media, such as the digital or virtual, that are less cumbersome and less prone to immediate obsolescence, architecture could instead develop techniques that allow it to physically change, and to furthermore embody the issue of change itself. It could cultivate a literal *agility* that would both deliver the physical experience of fluidity and

mobility and celebrate the defining role of these two aspects of contemporary culture.

By invoking the issue of change itself as the catalyst for its physical output, rather than mining the idiosyncrasies of every successive instance of change that is observed in society's dizzying cultural and technological slalom into the future, architecture could be spared the increasingly rapid and seemingly endless cycle of obsession and obsolescence that has plagued it in recent decades. Instead of the urge to reinvent itself, Phoenix-like, at every turn, an agile architecture *of change* could ride the waves of cultural and technological progress more gracefully, remaining relevant all the while, and providing sufficient time to develop and sustain an interest in the ideas it formulates in order to evaluate and refine them.

This could promote a new era for architecture wherein its physical medium is once more considered culturally relevant and captivating, and in which the digital and virtual are seen as congruent with and extensions of architecture's much more agile and responsive physical medium.

Yet, by what means does architecture cultivate such an agility?

Certainly there are a host of new and pending technologies (such as wireless internet, telepresence, and "smart" systems) that could be called upon to lend a kind of agility to architecture's built works, but the mere inclusion of such technologies would constitute a superficial—rather than a substantive—change, and would only forestall architecture's seemingly inevitable decline. As an example, the introduction of the telephone and the electric lightbulb into buildings in the latter half of the 19th century had remarkably little impact on the character of the architecture of the day.[4] Instead, the primary effect was a social one, with these inventions liberating society from the previous constraints of distance and time.[5] In turn, this had only an indirect effect on architecture, primarily by underscoring the growing sense of its incongruity with other aspects of society, and thereby stoking the flames of discontent that eventually led to the firestorm of the Modern Revolution.

In contrast to these examples, it would seem that in order to impact the character of architecture a

technology must instead be able to be incorporated into its physical medium at a fundamental level. It must be sufficiently compatible with architecture's existing repertoire of technique—the manipulation of mass, scale, form, and the like—in order to be used in combination with these techniques to generate a variety of new forms and experiences. Architecture is fundamentally expressive, and it depends upon the versatility of its physical medium in order to support its expressive potential. Plate glass and reinforced concrete, for example, are two technological innovations that, when they were introduced, demonstrated just such a versatility. They could make and give form and character to space in much the same way that architecture was already accustomed to do, and yet they were also able to be instrumentalized to generate new spatial and formal possibilities: the cantilever, free façade, ribbon window, and curtain wall opened the door to a wealth of new architectural forms and experiences, and increased architecture's expressive potential.

However, some technologies that find their way into the built environment never demonstrate a potential to affect the form or character of architecture. To return to the example of the lightbulb and the telephone, in the more than 100 years since they first secured their place in the physical medium of architecture neither has ever been truly instrumental in producing new experiences that could realistically be considered *architectural*.[6] In fact, the same could be said for modern plumbing, or air conditioning. Instead, these technologies simply co-exist with architecture, occupying the same space, making it perhaps more comfortable and useful. And, far from being the agents of expression or of compelling new experiences, it is their potential to detract from the overall architectural proposition that is more often of paramount concern.

At this point in time, wireless internet, telepresence, "smart" systems, and other sophisticated information and automation technologies seem similarly incongruent with the body of architectural technique, regardless of their potential to introduce *change* to architectural space. In fact, it is perhaps their inherent sophistication that makes them so fundamentally incompatible. The medium of architecture is, after all, a relatively dumb one; for all of the hype of sophistication and current-

ness that has surrounded architecture in recent decades, the body of architectural technique–the toolkit with which architects construct architectural experience—remains remarkably primitive. Mass, scale, form, material, color, adjacency, transparency, procession—from these basic, constituent characteristics of architecture, and the simple physical elements within which they are manifested, the discipline has managed to create, through the cultivation of specific techniques, an amazing variety of architectural experience. In fact, it is their very simplicity that is responsible for architecture's richness of expression; the elemental nature of architecture's constituent elements allows them to be manipulated and combined, atom-like, to produce an almost infinite variety.

The problem with sophisticated technologies, however, is that they are not elemental enough to be congruent with architecture's existing—and much simpler—materials; rather, they are difficult to deconstruct into more universal elements that might relate at a fundamental level with the stuff of architecture. And, as a consequence, they seem doomed to remain outside the scope of its physical expression.

Therefore, instead of casting about outside of architecture's traditional materials and techniques for an exotic, cutting-edge technology (such as telepresence or some "smart" system) in a futile attempt to render the discipline more agile and culturally relevant, a more successful strategy would be to discover an approach that would be seamless with the elements with which architecture is already familiar. This could be achieved by developing a new category of technique to supplement the basic toolkit: specifically, the ability to modify or manipulate over time any of the previously enumerated basic characteristics of architecture. This technique would encompass the transformation of the form of architecture, the manipulation of its mass or scale, or the physical character or relationships of its constituent elements through the use of basic materials and means that are either already part of architecture's traditional physical medium, or otherwise congruent with it. It would confer upon the discipline a literal *agility*, an ability to change.

Of the many advantages inherent in such an architectural agility, the most immediately obvious

A house with a rolling bridge that can be repositioned within a large open volume. It provides access to the storage shelves on either side, but its guardrails can also fold down to extend its floor area, allowing it to serve as a movable seating area or sleeping loft. (Image: Jones, Partners: Architecture)

An exhibition demonstrating the effect of three moving columns within a room. As the columns are relocated by means of a two-degree of freedom rail system they create different spatial relationships in combination with the surrounding walls. (Image: Jones, Partners: Architecture)

are those of the practical variety. As has already been noted, cultural and technological change has far outstripped the ability of traditional architecture to keep pace, and this underscores the growing disconnect between the fundamental nature of architecture's built work and the worldview and lifestyle of those that occupy it. Developing techniques that allow architecture to literally change, even if those techniques relied upon relatively unsophisticated technologies, would permit the discipline's built works to be tuned or manipulated in order to respond more directly to the myriad, shifting activities of its highly mobile, digitally facile, and wirelessly connected occupants.

Such an approach would allow a single building to exist in multiple different modes, enabling it to respond to changing conditions. A house, for example, that can turn to face the sun over the course of the day, or open up to the sky to take advantage of pleasant weather, or redistribute its interior spaces to accommodate the comings and goings of its occupants is one that is more directly engaged with both its site and the lives of those that inhabit it than its conventional, static counterparts, an active participant rather than simply a passive container. This ability to maneuver between various positions or configurations allows each mode to be specifically tailored to take the maximum advantage of the unique condition it addresses, as opposed to a static structure that must adopt a lowest common denominator approach in which the orientation, enclosure, or spatial configuration is the result of a compromise between competing interests.

An agile, changeable architecture is also capable of reducing the amount of wasted space, since a flexible space that can be transformed to accommodate multiple different activities or uses eliminates the need for multiple, activity-specific spaces, many of which might otherwise remain unused for large portions of time.[7] In the case of a house, for example, program elements that can be stowed or deployed at will allow space that would normally be empty for the majority of the day, such as that devoted to bedrooms, to be reassigned to other spaces that are actually in use at any given time. This resulting spatial efficiency, meanwhile, creates the possibility for either more program to be included in the space of a typical house, or for smaller building footprints and increased outdoor space.

In addition, buildings that can literally change and grow with their occupants suggest that the occupants are, in turn, less likely to outgrow their buildings.[8] This long-term "fit" can reduce the pressure on the occupants to relocate as their needs change, since the building itself can flexibly change to accommodate these new conditions. As a consequence, occupants would be more likely to occupy their buildings for longer durations, which would reduce the need for the design to suffer the homogenizing influences of re-sale value considerations. In addition, these longer duration occupancies suggest the potential for a greater commitment on the part of the occupant to their local community, with the promise of an increased sense of responsibility to and interest in its stewardship.
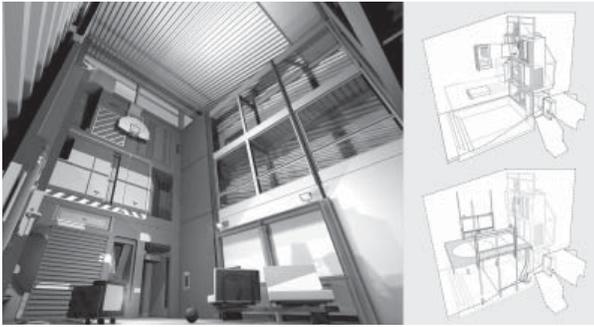
A small bachelor pad where the entire floor is a hydraulic elevator platform. The floor can be raised or lowered to engage various vertically-distributed program "stations" in order to support various activities on an ad hoc basis. Consequently the house supports a relatively large domestic program within a relatively small footprint. (Image: Doug Jackson)

However, despite the practical advantages that such an ability to change and transform offers, there has not been and will likely never be a sufficient incentive for architecture to incorporate such literal, building-scale transformation into its repertoire on the basis of pragmatic benefits alone; in the end, humans are infinitely flexible and have long been accustomed to adapting themselves to buildings that otherwise do not provide a perfect fit. The ramifications of adapting the types of construction implied by such transformation—which are currently reserved for industrial applications—to the civic, commercial, and residential projects that comprise the majority of architectural commissions, and the difficulty in assigning a re-sale value to such construction within the standards established by the real estate market, impose additional economic constraints that would likely trump any other practical considerations.
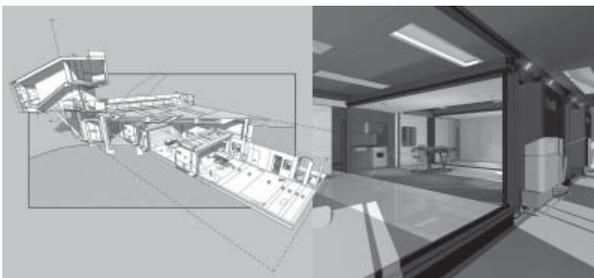
A house with rolling frames that can become separate rooms as needed to host guests. These frames can be positioned adjacent to various program-specific "stations" in order to particularize them to specific activities. (Image: Doug Jackson)

A proposal for an entire neighborhood of mobile houses, each comprised of two similar structures mounted on crane rails. The individual units of each house can be relocated relative to one another or in relation to a striated lawn deck, allowing them to customize their solar exposure or their adjacency to particular exterior conditions at will. (Image: Jones, Partners: Architecture)

In any case, simply ensuring a better fit, or offering increased flexibility or responsiveness, is hardly sufficient in its own right to satisfy the traditional understanding of architecture. Rather, these are issues of performance, and simply satisfying a performance criterion is, in itself, unremarkable; it is essentially to solve a problem, and, whether it is a problem of flexibility or of something as mundane as keeping the rain out, the mere fact of solving the problem falls far short in terms of the level of significance customarily demanded of architecture. Rather, architecture is expected to have a superlative quality, to be *more* than mere building, or engineering, or problem-solving—an expectation that complicates any approach to architecture that would rely so heavily on performance issues as the basis for its evaluation.[9]

Ultimately, it is not the *fact* of a building's performance but, rather, the *character* of that performance that would more appropriately qualify it as architecture. Whether it does so elaborately or simply, elegantly or brutally, quickly or slowly, loudly or quietly—each of these aesthetic considerations relates directly to architecture's inherent expressiveness.

This is again why architecture should not necessarily prefer the most advanced technology, but rather the most expressive technology (which is, in fact, often less advanced), since it is this expressiveness that enables performance to be superlative, to rise to the level of architecture. Con-

sequently, the reason for architecture to develop techniques for achieving a literal agility is not to solve the practical issues related to flexibility and fit that are currently unmet by conventional, static building. Instead, the most compelling argument in favor of an architecture that actually moves is that it allows architecture to once again, in keeping with Modernism's original mandate, give meaningful expression to the times—to produce an architecture that not only literally moves, but is also literally *moving*.

The way that architecture should most appropriately address the challenge of digital and the virtual, therefore, is not by competing with it, vying for the attention of the public with ever more spectacular, eye-catching formal gesticulations. Nor is it by yielding to it, foregoing its provenance in the design of enduring physical form and space for the production of less significant (albeit less problematically specific and obsolescence-prone) digital imagery and short-lived atmospheric installations. The more productive path, the one that demonstrates the value of architecture's physical production and thereby preserves the legacy of the discipline and its traditional medium, is to make the stuff of architecture more relevant by making it more agile, more changeable, capable of participating more directly in the lives of an increasingly wired, mobile, and multi-tasking society and, in so doing, invested with the ability to embody and celebrate this most defining aspect of the times. This path restores a degree of dignity to a profession that has witnessed a long decline by providing its built work with the potential to once again be compelling and significant, even over the lifespan of a building and in the face of the rapid pace of cultural and technological change. And, moreover, by broadening architecture's repertoire of technique to include means to enable it to change and transform, it extends architecture's spectrum of physical production in a way that brings it a step closer to the fluid domain of the digital and virtual, with the potential to develop, over time, a real congruency with these non-physical realms, based on their shared ability to effect and express change. In such a future the digital and virtual could interface with physical architecture and be incorporated seamlessly into it on its own terms—not as autonomous technological agents, but as fundamental constituents, extending architecture's range of expression and experience. In this way the digital and virtual would no longer constitute a threat to architecture's medium of expression; they would, instead, be a part of it.

ENDNOTES

1. The particular function of a space that serves to distinguish it from other spaces has always served as a ready source of decorative or design inspiration, even prior Modernism's aesthetic of functionalism. Alberti, for example, observed that spaces which are "different both in Nature and in Species…are to be adorned in various Manners," and expressed a preference for such adornment that arose out of the nature or use of the space in question. See Leon Battista Alberti, *De Re Aedificatoria: On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, and Robert Tavernor (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988). The idea of this decorative adornment provided a means within the Classical context to confer specificity to spaces whose formal and spatial characters were otherwise strictly governed at the larger scale by an overarching Order that required a degree of homogeneity in order to comply with rules regarding symmetry and proportion. With the rise of Modernism, of course, architectural expression became famously conflated with function.

2. Or, at least, to assert a position that attempts to recast static, physical architecture's dwindling ability to captivate in a positive light by arguing for a reality in which architecture would in any case only serve as an ambient background—a passive, unengaged counterpart to the activity of the people who occupy it. A fair summary of this position can be found in Mark Wigley, ed. "Constructing Atmospheres," *Daidalos no.68* (June 1998). This seems, however, more of a short-term attempt to spin (and capitalize on) the bad news of architecture's crisis of relevance rather than a long-term attempt to correct the underlying problem.

3. Another inheritance from the Modern Revolution in architecture, which was heavily indebted to printed media for the validation and dissemination of its polemics. Le Corbusier, its most vociferous proponent, filled the pages of the journal *L'Esprit Nouveau* and subsequent books (such as *Vers un Architecture* and *L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui*) with numerous images in support of his position—many of them, in fact, manipulated in order to strengthen his case, as Beatriz Colomina has extensively pointed out. See Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).

4. A pointed example of this is the decidedly neoclassical architecture of the world's fairs that were held during the late 1800s as electrical power first became available for street and interior lighting. Both the Columbian World Exposition, held in Chicago in 1893, and the Pan-American Exposition, held in Buffalo in 1901, made extensive use of electrical lighting—the latter, in fact, selected electricity as its central theme. Nevertheless, the architecture of each was resolutely neoclassical in character, and the electrical lighting was viewed only in terms of its ability to accentuate this particular character, rather than as a catalyst for change. In fact,

David Nye has suggested that in terms of the exteriors of public buildings, at least, the advent of the electric light might have even prolonged pre-modern formalism, since this particular approach to form provided more ornate surfaces that were attractive subjects for artificial lighting. See David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994),146-181.

5. See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 9.

6. A small exception might be the few projects that have used electric lights as pixels, which are then controlled by software to produce images on the facades of buildings, such as the BIX light and media installation on the façade of the Kunsthaus in Graz, designed by Realities:United.

7. Since telecommuting and office hoteling are on the rise, both the home and the office have witnessed the increasing demand for flexible space, wherein multiple people can use the same space at different times and for different purposes. In the case of the home, for instance, today 38% of all employed Americans do at least some telecommuting. However, given the inflexible nature of the average house, the conflation of such work with domestic space has been problematic. Because telecommuters' non-work activities are much more evenly distributed across the day than those of their non-telecommuting cohabitants, a conflict arises between their more flexible schedules and those of other members of their household. This problem is exacerbated for those telecommuters involved in international business ventures, or for those working at branch offices of corporations centered in other time zones, whose activity schedules are often extremely out of phase with those of other household members. For a more complete discussion of these issues see Peggy Gurstein "The Home As Information Factory: The Changing Role of the Home for Home-Based Workers," in Marc M. Angelil, ed. *On Architecture, the City, and Technology* (Stoneham, MA: Butterworth Architecture, 1990), 128-130.

8. Whereas the size and nature of the American family is dynamic, the current model of the house is static. Statistics derived from U.S. Census data show that the majority of single-parent households did not begin that way. Rather, they indicate that the steady decrease in the average size of the American family has occurred largely through changes in the sizes of existing households through death, divorce, or the departure of children. The conventional dwelling, however, cannot easily be re-sized to accommodate such change in family size. As a consequence, the size of the average family is typically mismatched with that of the average house: while the average house size has doubled over the past 30 years, the average household size has decreased, making it more difficult for families in the market for a home to find an affordable option. In addition, studies have shown that instances of cohabitation are on the rise. These days, with more than half of all marriages ending in divorce, more and more people are electing to cohabit first before committing to marriage. According to a 1999 study conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, not only is the current rate for co-

habitation seven times higher now than it was in 1960, but cohabitation has also become the norm for both men and women as their first form of union and after divorce. Most cohabiting relationships, however, are short-term, leading to either dissolution or marriage within a year. This therefore suggests an additional demand for the ability to flexibly increase the size of one's household to accommodate a cohabiting companion, and the potential to revert to its original size in the event of dissolution.

9. For an architecture based on performance to be superlative, it must either exceed the performance criteria spectacularly—wherein such excess might arguably serve to distinguish it as architecture—or it must otherwise solve the problem at hand in a manner that brings more to the table than the mere fact of its performance alone. In the case of the former, a work would maintain its relevance only as long as its level of performance could be considered to be remarkable. In this scenario, however, the success of any particular built work would be short-lived, as it would inevitably be outperformed by subsequent examples that are able to take advantage of successive advances in technology. And, once the performative capabilities of such work have come to be taken for granted, then it will have lost its superlative edge and, with it, its ability to inspire. In the case of the latter, the additional material brought to the table that enables a performative architecture to be superlative is typically the expressive character of the performance in question.