PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN IN THE TROPICS

by

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Abstract

"Sustainability" as an order is not universal but is modified by regional circumstances. It is an order of process and thought necessarily adjusted by local circumstances – the rightness of sustainability and its cultural relevance relies upon the celebration of difference. In this sense, sustainable architecture can be regarded as place sensitive. With globalisation comes a call for location-specific architecture that responds to local climate conditions and utilises local materials and construction methods. From the survey of literature, most references on sustainable architectural design are generated from European and American perspectives; exemplars of which are largely unsuited for the tropical regions. Despite the fact that sustainability is fast becoming one of the main considerations for architects, such concerns seem lacking in the architectural scene of the Southeast Asian region, perhaps with notable exception of a few designers like Ken Yeang and Tay Kheng Soon. Much of the architectural discourse in this region is still preoccupied with issues on identity, culture, stylistic expressions, etc. Since the issue of sustainability impacts on a global scale, this calls for a greater concern from all architects, regardless of the location of their practice.

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