Feng Shui for Architects

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Feng Shui, which literally means wind and water, is the art and science of living in harmony with nature’s forces. This practice encourages the proper flow of energy and life forces for more humane and livable environments.

Feng Shui is no longer just an ancient Chinese secret. While slow to take root in the United States, it is now global and transcends culture and politics. So say Barbara Dellinger and Bobbie Galate, interior designers who explained Feng Shui to an audience of architects at a seminar in early December hosted by the architect firm of Davis, Carter, Scott in their Washington, D.C., offices.

“This is not a fad,” Dellinger said, citing the Trump Towers, MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Sydney Harbor Casino in Australia, and several Bank of America centers as representative of projects whose clients have employed Feng Shui during their design. Countries is the Pacific Rim, Australia, Finland, and the United Kingdom have embraced Feng Shui principles at varying levels, and many architecture firms abroad include Feng Shui consultants on their design teams. Anecdotal reports from the field now say U.S. corporations, health-care providers, services organizations, and residential clients are asking their architects about it. “We need to be smarter than our clients, who read about Feng Shui in the Washington Post,” said one health-care facilities architect.

History and tradition

Feng Shui developed well over 3,000 years ago among rural people of China who depended on its common-sense rules for their basic survival. They used the principles to develop their settlements, plant their crops, and even to site burial grounds. Studying natural elements such as river patterns, terrain, and the shapes of mountains, helped this ancient civilization understand the flow of the earth’s energy and how it could affect their daily lives.

Private residences, public buildings, towns, and the Forbidden City itself all were planned according to Feng Shui principles. Design elements were used not just for aesthetic reasons, but for more practical concerns such as controlling interior temperatures, air flow, and light, and protecting occupants and dwellings from flooding. Today, Feng Shui has evolved into different philosophical schools. For instance, the Compass System is the traditional feng shui, based on aligning the elements and the cardinal points to parts of a room, building, or town. The Black Hat system is a more recent development that uses a grid system and intent to achieve balance and harmony.

Basic principles

Dellinger explained that although it has roots in Tibetan Buddhism, Feng Shui is continued on next page
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neither a religion nor a superstition. It is an art based on harmony, balance, texture, color, and style. It is equally a science, based on astronomical and mathematical principles such as the golden ratio and the golden rectangle and spiral. Feng Shui also incorporates philosophical principles from the I Ching.

Feng Shui first became popular in the U.S. among homeowners, but has made its way into large commercial projects, including hospitals and other healthcare facilities. Dellinger, who works for the District of Columbia’s Washington Hospital Center, said that in her experience, many Western health practitioners are getting into Feng Shui because they understand the environment—including the flow of energy and buildings themselves—affects people’s health. These practitioners sometimes find that traditional Western medicine is often not enough to help patients or their families.

Intention is one of the guiding principles of Feng Shui, Dellinger explains. By thinking it and designing it, we are creating part of the energy that makes things happen. Other design principles addressed through Feng Shui include balance (the most important element); symmetry; ceiling heights; views; angles; shapes; and circulation patterns, for which meandering paths and curves are preferred over direct routes and sharp angles. In essence, Feng Shui is all about what nurtures a building’s occupants and makes them feel comfortable in a space. “As architects and designers, we instinctively do a lot of these things. Feng Shui provides the framework and the philosophy to support our instincts,” Galate said.

Recommended reading

If you would like to learn more about Feng Shui, Dellinger and Galate recommend the following sources:

• Clear your Clutter with Feng Shui, by Karen Kingston, (Broadway Books, 1999, recommended for those who never read any books on the subject.)

• The Western Guide to Feng Shui, by Terah Kathryn Collins (Hay House, 1999)

• Feng Shui Design, by Sarah Rossbach and Master Lin Yun (Penguin USA, 2000)

• The Practical Encyclopedia of Feng Shui, by Gill Hale (Lawrence Books, 1999)

• Feng Shui Chic, by Sharon Stasney (Sterling Publications, 2000)

• Healing Design, by Hope Karan Gerecht (Charles Tuttle, 1999, advanced reading that explores actual case studies and incorporates Compass School and Black Hat)

• Essential Feng Shui, by Lillian Too (Element Books, 1996).
While the influence of feng shui can easily be witnessed in the Chinese landscape, it has made its way into western architecture as well. Many famous and prominent architects of this generation can be found trying to incorporate these ancient principles into their creations. In this article, we are going to discuss the basic principles of feng shui and how you can alter your dwelling according to it. Feng Shui Architecture 101. Contents. Feng Shui Architecture 101. The Mysterious Energy Called Chi. Basic Principles of Feng Shui. Leaning against Mountains and Facing Waters. Symmetry. Curves. Fe...
Architectural Feng Shui is the soul of China’s ancient architectural theories. It enjoys a high status in China’s architectural history. One of the important Feng Shui principles used in architecture is ‘leaning against mountains and facing waters’. This has been widely used at either a large or small scale. Take Xi’an, the well-known ancient capital city, for example; one of the important reasons it was chosen by 13 dynasties as their capital was because the site was surrounded by nine mountains (Mt. Zhongnan, Mt. Cuihua, Mt. Architectural feng shui is the soul of China’s ancient architectural theories intertwined into a modern space and architecture that uses ‘The art of placement’ to enable a space to be harmonious, balanced, and focused towards the aspirations and goals of anyone who is intended to inhabit the space. Architecture. I am an American educated and trained Architect who for over 15 years has been working both in the U.S. and Europe as an Architect and Feng Shui Consultant combining those two passions together to the benefit of clients and friends. By integrating Feng Shui principles into one’s space we’re able to create spaces that are attuned to ones goals, desires, intentions. Planning and building a feng shui house should follow feng shui house layout designs and basic feng shui rules that allow for good chi energy flow. By … There are several feng shui rules you want to follow when selecting a building site for your new home. It pays to have a detailed analysis conducted by a feng shui practitioner as you plan. If you don’t have access to such a professional, you can avoid major issues by following basic feng shui principles. I am sure architects will find traditional Feng-Shui practices reasonable after reading this book. We can expect more and more architects will be interested in designing houses in accordance with Feng Shui principles. Joseph Yu. Chapter 1. Introduction: global perspective. Architect’s Guide to Feng Shui. Macrocosm to microcosm. The jewel that we find, we stop and take it Because we see it; but what we do not see We tread upon. Buildings everywhere used to be imbued with magic, carefully oriented to the heavens and nearby spiritual features of the land, and integrated with the world at large. Planetary rotation helped us define cardinal directions which, along with the centre, ‘here’, assumed importance for humans more than 10,000 years ago.