

Abstract: Third International Conference on Ecological Sanitation

Title	Ecological Sanitation meets architecture
Keywords	architecture, design, participatory planning
Author(s)	Elke Müllegger, Markus Lechner
Address	Neulerchenfelderstr. 9/32, 1160 Vienna
Telephone	+43(0)1/4053817
Fax	+43(0)664/3798000
Mobile	+43(0)664/3738672
E-mail	elke.muellegger@ecosan.at
Abstract ID no	E/2.1

Ecological Sanitation meets architecture

We know that the necessity to improve sanitation has become a widely discussed topic during the last years. Additionally with the MDGs claim to halve the fraction of the world's population without basic sanitation by 2015 this challenge has developed to a forcing issue. But conventional sanitation system cannot solve the global sanitation problem - this becomes clear already by looking at the costs, as one major factor.

So far sanitation was and still is mainly in the hands of technicians. Solid and liquid waste disposal is solved on a purely technical basis neglecting that sanitation is more than a technical problem. In contrast Ecological Sanitation addresses the problems in a holistic way on an interdisciplinary base. A variety of disciplines, from wastewater engineering to agriculture, hygiene to social sciences are involved in promoting, planning and implementing EcoSan projects.

During the last years and in various discussions it became clear that this list requires an expansion to architecture, as a discipline which is traditionally involved in participatory planning processes of buildings and constructions. Architects are more familiar with planning tools to find out their clients preferences, independent from technologies. They define planning in a wider sense than only constructing infrastructure to solve a certain problem. However, architecture tries to balance effect and functionality and shows that design has a major influence on acceptance among users.

The Austrian architect Ernst A. Plischke has formed the term of "modern architecture" which has to be a unit between a spatial concept and operational planning on the one side and the building structure and the construction on the other. Nowadays this concept has to be augmented with concepts for ecological building materials und economical use of resources (Treberspurg, M. 2004).

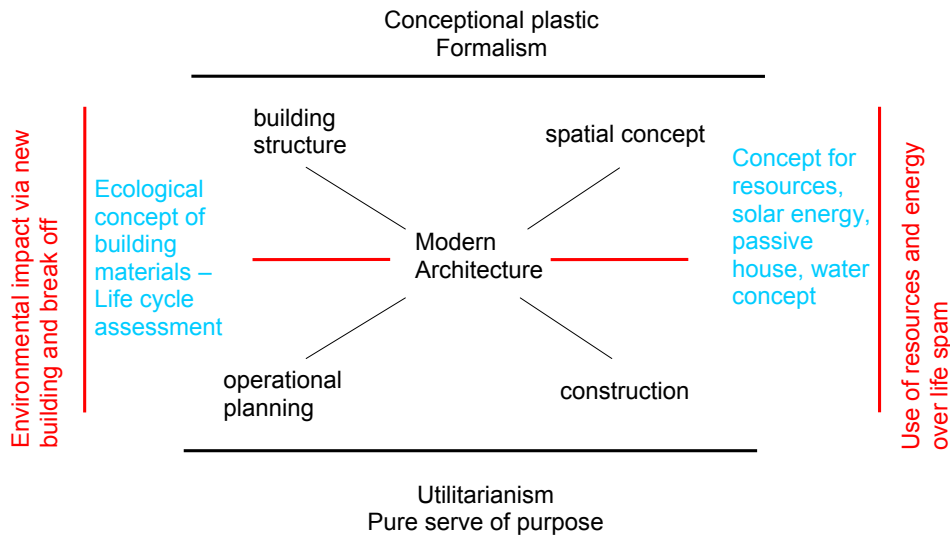


Figure 1: Modern Architecture (Ernst A. Plischke, modified by Treberspurg, 2004)

EcoSan concepts fulfil this claim of “modern architecture”: they look at the entire system, they use resources on an economical, ecological and sustainable base, and they recover and recycle nutrients and organic matter as far as sensible. But on the other side what can Ecosan concepts learn from architecture and what are their basic shortcomings? This paper will present how important Ernst A. Plischke requirements are also for sanitation. That design is an important, disregarded factor and goes hand in hand with prestige and furthermore that for prestige functionality often plays a secondary role. A future aim is to make EcoSan concepts / EcoSan infrastructure presentable.