# Architypes.net
## a library of architectural design issues, solutions and ideas

At the heart of architypes.net are two simple but powerful ideas:
- Patterns: The principles and ideas are organized into "patterns". Each pattern describes a solution for a specific problem or design goal.
- Open Collaboration: architypes.net is a continuously evolving peer-reviewed project that you are invited to participate in.

## What we are not

While architypes.net also has a sizable library of architectural images along with information on those buildings and their designers, our purpose is not be be an extensive database of any photograph, building or architect. Instead we focus on images and information on buildings that serve to illustrate of one or more of the patterns.

Unlike an encyclopedia, which limits itself to facts, we encourage content that is a matter of opinion. You may even find that some patterns seem to contradict one another. Usually such patterns are intended to achieve different goals - part of the challenge of architectural design is to make the appropriate tradeoffs between such conflicting goals.

## Who we are

People from around the world are invited to contribute to architypes.net by proposing new patterns, by discussing and refining existing patterns, and by providing images that help to illustrate these patterns.

What are "patterns"? What role can they play in good architectural design?

## Problem / Situation

Architypes.net provides a public repository for architectural design "patterns".
*The purpose of these patterns is*:
**1**. to capture knowledge and ideas of what makes for successful architectural design, and
**2**. to organize that information in a way to make it most useful for someone designing a building or other type of inhabited environment.

## Solution

*Specifically, these patterns aim to capture*:
**1**. The goals we should keep in mind when designing buildings and other inhabited environments.
**2**. The fundamental problems we face in trying to achieve these goals.
**3**. Proven solutions and new ideas for how to address these problems and achieve these goals.

Successful design is rooted in a deep understanding of our goals and from observing and devising patterns for achieving those goals. While this understanding is often intuitive in nature, patterns provide a way to make some of that understanding explicit. In so doing, we create a "language" that allows us to better think about, share and discuss these patterns.

The notion of pattern languages originated from Christopher Alexander and the book he co-authored in 1977, A Pattern Language. That book captured approximately 250 patterns that the authors observed in traditional architecture.

Architypes.net takes the notion of a pattern language a step further by creating a collaborative repository for architectural patterns. Here, anyone can contribute ideas and observations, which are reviewed and built upon by others from around the world. The result is that rather

than being relatively static, the pattern language is continuously refined and evolves organically.

It is important to recognize that patterns are not the be-all and end-all of successful architectural design. Just as knowledge of notes and scales gives a composor or songwriter a language to work with, think of patterns as the designer or architect's notes. In music, the real beauty comes from how the notes are combined. Likewise in architecture, the real beauty comes from how skillfully the right patterns and ideas are combined. When done well, the result is far more than just the sum of the patterns.

**Architecture as an Activity**

When designing a building or other environment, one has to deal with a huge number of often competing demands. These demands range from the practical needs of the people inhabiting the space to various goals to create a beautiful, uplifting and protective environment. The patterns in this category describe proven approaches to the task of organizing these needs and goals through the design process.

**Natural Context**

**Problem / Situation**

By natural or rural context, we are referring to a site that is largely unaltered by human activities, where the predominant aspect of the context is the presence of natural trees, ground cover, stone and/or other natural formations.

**Solution**

When designing a building or other environment within a natural site, neighboring buildings, if any, become far less of a focus. Instead, one's focus should be on responding to the vegetation and other aspects of the site.

When designing a building for a natural context, it is particularly relevant that the building become part of its site.

**Suburban Context**

**Problem / Situation**

A suburban context is generally characterized by significantly lower density of population than an urban context. While a suburban context often brings with it the problem of urban sprawl, it has the advantage of often permitting more trees and green space and avoids many of the challenges associated with creating a truly fulfilling environment within a high density urban context.

**Urban Context**

**Problem / Situation**

Urban contexts are characterized by high density population, and may exist in anything from a relatively small town to a large city. Large cities often present an urban context at its core, and a suburban context at its periphery. At their worst, urban contexts bring lower quality of life for their occupants, and at their best, they bring the best that a community has to offer.