THE TYPOLOGY OF ADAPTABILITY IN BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

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«Change is the only constant»

HERACLITUS OF EPHESUS (535 BC – 475 BC)

CONTENTS

CHAMELEON

Class: Reptilia; Order: Squamata; Suborder: Iguania; Family: Chamaeleonidae; Genus: Chamaeleo Laurenti; Species: Yemen Chameleon (Chamaeleo calyptratus)

'*I observed that two chameleons assumed a milky white colour during mating and also that they turned almost completely black when aggravated. . . In general, the healthier and more excited the animal, the more vivid its colouration and. . . when agitated or alarmed, the animal turns blackish-grey with many yellow spots, and before death, it fades to light yellow or greyish white. . . The conclusion drawn from this is that colour change is dependent on how the nerves are influenced and occurs only when they are stimulated.*' [1]

[1] Brehm, 1913

Change is a reliable constant. Constant change calls for appropriate strategies and a high level of adaptability. Architecture must also rise to this challenge. The architect Richard Buckminster Fuller claimed, 'a room should not be fixed, should not create a static mood, but should lend itself to change so that its occupants may play upon it as they would play upon a piano.' [2]
In architecture, this liberal interpretation defines the ability of a building to react to changing requirements. If it fails to do so, or succeeds only with considerable structural and financial effort, the building is threatened with demolition.
In addition to the entire planning process, other architecturally relevant issues such as design, construction, technical equipment, economy, operation and maintenance must be questioned for adaptability. We believe that the resulting value retention, which will help to achieve users' identification with their building, is an important contribution to sustainability.

This publication is part of the ongoing research project 'The Typology of Adaptability in Building Construction'. It provides an overview on adaptability in building construction and aims to raise awareness to the topic and initiate discussion.

Following an exploration, the publication focuses on different types of adaptability, grouped together in a series of typologies. This is the basis for formulating consequences and measures for each discipline. The subsequent chapter shows how adaptability is determined by effort, cost and time, and how a building's degree of adaptability can be ascertained.

[2] Krausse & Lichtenstein, 2001