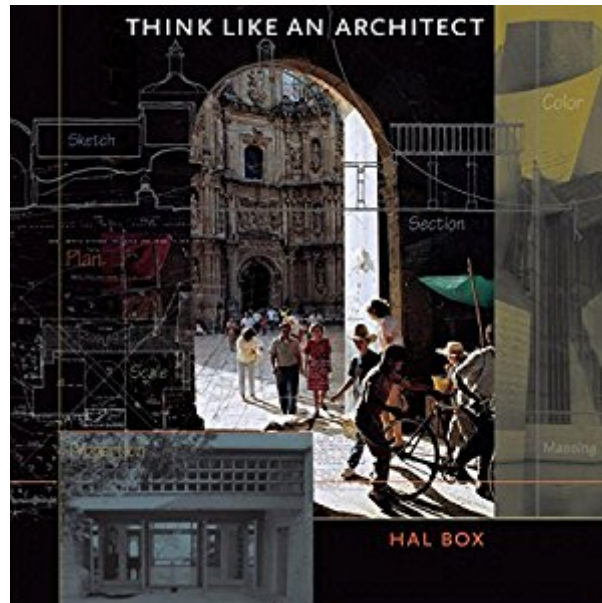


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# Think Like An Architect: Roger Fullington Series In Architecture



## Synopsis

The design of cities and buildings affects the quality of our lives. Making the built environment useful, safe, comfortable, efficient, and as beautiful as possible is a universal quest. We dream about how we might live, work, and play. From these dreams come some 95 percent of all private and public buildings; professional architects design only about five percent of the built environment. While much of what non-architects build is beautiful and useful, the ugliness and inconveniences that blight many urban areas demonstrate that an understanding of good architectural design is vital for creating livable buildings and public spaces. To help promote this understanding among non-architects, as well as among those considering architecture as a profession, award-winning architect and professor Hal Box explains the process of making architecture from concept to completed building, using real-life examples to illustrate the principles involved in designing buildings that enhance the quality of life for those who live with them. Box believes that everyone should be involved in making architecture and has organized this book as a series of letters to friends and students about the process of creating architecture. He describes what architecture should be and do, how to look at and appreciate good buildings, and how to understand the design process, work with an architect, or become an architect. He also provides an overview of architectural history. For those involved in building projects, Box offers practical guidance about what goes into constructing a building, from the first view of the site to the finished building. For students thinking of becoming architects, he describes an architect's typical training and career path. And for the wide public audience interested in architecture and the built environment, Box addresses how architecture relates to the city, where the art of architecture is headed, and why good architecture matters.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As someone who has an interest in architecture but whose knowledge of architectural theory and history are superficial and spotty, I found Hal Box's book *Think Like an Architect* an especially rewarding read. Written with the confidence earned from a long, successful, and satisfying career, his book is a straightforward explanation of both the intention and process of producing the kind of buildings that are life-affirming and enduring. His writing is entirely free of the thornscrub argot that makes most architectural criticism an impenetrable thicket closed to "outsiders" and hostile to dialog. Thus unarmed, Mr. Box may therefore be vulnerable because he dares to use old-fashioned words like beauty, graceful, charming, and harmony. But to me, watching my local landscape erased and replaced by generic chain stores and anonymous neighborhoods, this language is as welcome as a summer thunderstorm falling on parched ground. It was especially interesting to me to learn how a post-war generation of eager young architects were "brainwashed" by Modernism's cerebral rationality. This I can understand, as the enthusiasm followed their experiences of the Great Depression and World War II. Something new was certainly in order. But even newness can become stale and lifeless. Today, as a new generation of architects meets perhaps the even greater challenge of designing buildings that are "sustainable" or "green", we may be seeing another great age of inspired innovation, expanding the smaller scale vernacular experiments of Sam Mockbee, the elegant shelters of Glen Murcutt, and the social works of Cameron Sinclair's Architecture for Humanity Foundation, to influence and shape the mainstream market. I hope that architects, planners and consumers will avail themselves of the wisdom in Mr. Box's book as they participate in this great new adventure.

I am not an architect; merely someone who appreciates the end results of good architecture. I do not routinely read books about architecture, or books written by architects. But as a long-time admirer of Hal Box's architectural work, I was curious how a book titled *Think Like an Architect* might read. Short answer? Terrifically! I learned something interesting about the history, art and science of architecture in every chapter. As I finished the book, which I accomplished faster than I would have liked or imagined, it occurred to me that Hal Box accomplished with this book what Vitruvius, the first century BC Roman architect, espoused as the goals of good architecture: commodity, firmness, and delight. The book accomplished its program of encouraging me to think

more like an architect (commodity); the ideas and illustrations are thoughtfully and artfully presented in a sturdy format which will withstand years of referencing and re-reading (firmness); and Professor Box puts forth his ideas and opinions, earned over a long and distinguished career as an educator and practicing architect, clearly and entertainingly (delight). Whether one plans to build or is simply curious about how to do it right, *Think Like an Architect* is a must.

Are you about to build a new home, serve on a school building committee, or design a public park for a client? Or do you just like to be in and around jewels of architecture? If you answer "Yes," get Second Day delivery on your new copy of *Think Like an Architect*. This is a rich compendium of letters (chapters) written to friends and colleagues, replete with drawings, photographs, and tools such as "10 ways to explore and understand a building," plus a thorough Seeing List, as well as a Reading List. A blend of architectural history and 21st Century reality -- deftly connected by Dean Box's passion for and knowledge about the importance of architecture in our daily lives and our cultural legacies - these are two hundred of the most helpful and inspiring pages you'll read. It also is a fast read. Yesterday in fact an active aficionado friend who has been intimately involved with half a dozen projects in recent years excitedly told me that he'd, "just finished, the best, most enjoyable book on architecture. I lost sleep because of it, staying up to read it at night and awakening early to continue." I knew the title he was about to tell me.

Hal Box's book, *"Think Like an Architect,"* is one book I wish I had read prior to entering, or while still in, graduate school, studying architecture. While the book is indeed helpful to anyone that is an architect, or aspiring to become one, it is also targeted to those who aren't in the profession but are involved in the built environment. It is interesting how so much of what's built today is NOT the work of architects, nor is it deemed architecture - but Box goes to show how a building can be something masterful, even from someone who is not trained nor licensed in architecture. Box also addresses how architecture relates to the city - how in the modern built environment, especially in the United States - you can go miles before seeing quality works of architecture - unlike the cities of old, which are/were chock full of solid architecture. Box poses this conundrum as an ideological clash between community and independence- and how the notion of independence has come at a cost to both community and architecture. The book shares a glimpse of what it takes to become an architect, as well as how the profession developed, and where it is headed. While published before the 2008 recession, and having since passed this past May, Box provides timeless advice for those concerned with the evolving field that is architecture.

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