

PROJECT ASSIGNMENT AND PHASES OF IMPLEMENTATION IN INTERIOR DESIGN – THEORY AND PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

During the direct work in teaching interior design of residential and public objects with students in the specialty "Engineering Design" at the University of Forestry, in Sofia, Bulgaria it was found that they have particular difficulties in applying the design methodology in practical briefs and work. For this reason, the present work was made. The report clarifies the stages of project assignment implementing, which accompanied by the basic concepts in the design assignment theory and practice in Bulgaria gives the key to the successful creation of a harmonious interior composition, both in public and in residential buildings.

Key words: interior, project, design, project assignment.

INTRODUCTION

Project assignment composing is a process in which information about a task is collected, analyzed, and clearly indicated to provide a basis for design. It defines the task before seeking a solution.

A project assignment is an analysis of tasks, while design is their synthesis.

It involves gathering information about the specific needs of the client, architectural's site data, as well as identifying more general human factors issues, often related to social and cultural influences.

The overall assignment includes a wide range of information. In addition to the above, the assignment defines the site requirements, the design phases and the required design parts.

The design task for the initial phase serves as a reference for each subsequent phase, together with the project from the previous phase of project designing. (Ordinance № 4 of May 21, 2001 on the Scope and Contents of Investment Projects).

ASSIGNMENT COMPOUNDING

There are several assignment methods, all of which can be used to establish the guidance and information that the design process may be based on. For residential projects and small public ones, a project assignment may consist only a few sentences, indicating the goals of the project and a list of required spaces and furniture. In many large projects, such as corporate headquarters, the assignment can be quite voluminous, containing very detailed information about the current and future needs of the organization. If an assignment has not yet been completed, it is the responsibility of the interior designer to determine how much information is needed before the project begins and to collect and analyze that information.

Raycheva points to a four-phase process of interior designing (Raycheva R., 1998):

1. Design assignment. The terms of reference are drawn up by the contracting authority (investor), or by the contractor when the investor assigns it.

It includes:

- Data on the architectural object (drawings required such as layouts,

- sections, or drawn photographs of the object);
 - List of the main activities and functional purpose of the premises;
 - Number and occupation of workers or residents of the site, as well as their age composition, gender, preferences, etc.;
 - Style features and preferences for the character of the interior.
2. Conceptual design of the idea.

Based on the terms of reference and some additional data, the designer begins his work, whose material expression is the idea's conceptual design. It is also developed in variants, subject to evaluation, validation, adjustments by the investor.

The conceptual design necessarily includes arrangement, elevations and perspective images.

3. Technical (working) project. This is the next stage in the realization of the author's idea. Here, an accurate arrangement is made of selected samples, which is given a specification of units, prices and supplier. Architectural details (cornices, flooring, joinery, etc.) are given. All furniture is drawn in layouts, sections and characteristic details. Possible contractors are indicated.
4. Designer's supervision (author's control). This stage takes place during the construction and repair work, in the manufacture of the furniture and in their installation. Often, designer's supervision and control is also an opinion about replacing defective or expensive material with another, resolving problems „on the moment“, and more.
- Delchev outlines the following steps in the methodology of design (Delchev S., 1993):

1. Preliminary design study;
2. Preliminary design project;
3. Working design project.

According to him, failure to comply with this design sequence has a negative impact on the final result.

- Angelova describes five stages in design, namely:
 1. Pre-project's study;
 2. Analysis;
 3. Concept development;
 4. Proposal for final project;
 5. Implementation (Angelova D., 2019).

- The architects Tikholov and Grozev (Grozev O., K. Tikholov, 1993) systematize the following main design phases:

1. Study phase,
2. Drawing up a functional diagram,
3. Development of an interior solution, including:
 - a) Development of spatial composition,
 - b) Space Grading,
 - c) The relationship between the elements of the volume composition,
 - d) Sizing of interior spaces,
 - e) Means and methods for achieving a uniform interior appearance.
4. Design of furniture elements.

- W. M. Penia and St. A. Parshall's book "Problem-solving" describes a design method that uses a five-step process. (W. Penia, St. Parshall, 2001). The five-step process involves defining goals, gathering and analyzing facts, discovering and testing concepts, identifying needs and setting a task.

1. *Setting Goals*: Goals (long-term goals to be achieved) show what the client wants to achieve and why.
2. *Fact-gathering and analysis*: The facts describe the existing conditions and requirements of the task. There are always many facts; part of the designer's job is not only to collect them, but also to organize them in useful way.
3. *Concept Finding and Testing*: Writing a project assignment should develop abstract ideas that are functional solutions to the client's assigned tasks without identifying the physical means that could be used to solve them.
4. *Identifying needs*: This step in the research process balances the customer's desires with the available budget or sets a budget based on goals and needs. During this step, "desires" must be separated from "needs."
5. *Assignment*: The previous four steps are a prelude that clearly describes the essence of the assignment. Defining it is a bridge between the job and the design process. The assignment agreed by the client and the designer describes the most important aspects of the task and serves as a basis for design and criteria by which the decision can be evaluated.

There are slight differences in the theoretical concepts discussed so far regarding the phases of interior design in Bulgaria, Europe and worldwide.

However, are there clearly regulated legal prerequisites and restrictions related to interior design and furnishing in Bulgaria?

While the Spatial Development Act and Ordinance № 7 For Rules and Norms for De-

velopment of The Separate Kinds Of Territories And Development Zones defines the rules and regulations for the design of residential and public buildings in Bulgaria, only Ordinance № 4 Of May 21, 2001 On The Scope And Contents Of Investment Projects of Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works distinguishes the part "Interior and Furnishing" as a separate independent part of a project. It can be made at newly designed sites or as a standalone project for furnishing existing objects with or without changing their purpose.

The interior and furnishings part provide solutions for:

1. the main function of the individual rooms and spaces and their interconnections in order to satisfy the compositional, technological, physiological, ergonomic, acoustic, security and other requirements;
2. the design of the floor, walls and ceiling of the premises, as well as of additional created partitions for partial separation of the spaces;
3. the location of the movable and fixed elements of the furniture;
4. the location of the artificial lighting fixtures in relation to the general spatial layout;
5. the inclusion in the interior of works of fine and decorative arts.

There are no clearly defined legal constraints on what kind of specialists may or may not be involved in the implementation of interior projects.

However, when completed, they must include:

1. drawing of the basic functional and architectural solutions with the arrangement of the elements of the interior;

2. a drawing of the ceilings showing the main and additional processing, lighting, etc.;
3. elevations, showing the basic and additional processing and the design of the elements of the installation systems;
4. color solutions and materials;
5. drawings of characteristic decorative, artistic and other elements of cultural and historical value from the interior of buildings - real cultural values;
6. characteristic details of the interior on an appropriate scale.

All of the above is accompanied by an explanatory note that describes:

1. the main function of the premises and the spaces and the connections between them;
2. the main elements that are used to build the interior;
3. the solutions adopted to satisfy the basic functional, compositional, technological, physiological, ergonomic, acoustic, security and other requirements;
4. the materials used and the manner of their processing;
5. justification of the works of art and applied arts included in the interior.

When designing an interior in Bulgaria we could meet all of the above approaches for finding a solution and preparing a project - individually or in combination, chosen according to the personal vision of the designer and the investor.

Regardless of the design method used and the complexity of the project, the entire design process must be accompanied by the preparation and completion of some type of written document that stores the information collected and the conclusions drawn from the analysis. This document must be reviewed and approved by the client before starting the

project, as any incorrect design information will result in a project that may not meet the client's needs.

Although the exact format of the functional program will vary depending on the size and complexity of the assignment, each plan must include at least the following information:

- Outline of long-term and short-term goals. This may include results-oriented goals such as "increasing sales by updating the store's image" and functional goals such as "improving traffic and personal interaction between departments."
- List of customer requirements. It should include the number of people who will use the space, as well as information on the types of activities they participate in, the necessary neighborhoods between people and activities, as well as the specific furnishings and equipment that each person requires. In addition, special needs for lighting, acoustic separation, flexibility in the use of space should be noted.
- List of required premises and their floor space. This information is basic and serves as a starting point for an architectural solution. This type of list should also include the need for secondary spaces such as corridors, closets, and other spaces that are not listed but needed to make the space functional.

INFORMATION GATHERING

There are various methods of collecting the necessary information to complete the planning and preparation for design, applicable to both residential and public design. Each has its own advantages and disad-

vantages. In most cases, two or more methods are used together for a project. Before being discussed individually, the following lists provide comprehensive detailed information on the specific information that may be required for a project. Of course, different types of projects will use different items from this list.

Checklist of required information

It is advisable, before proceeding with information collecting, to draw up an indicative list in order not to miss the analysis of certain information which may be relevant at a particular moment. This list could include the following:

1. Goals and objectives

- Main goal – creating a brand new or adapted existing interior space,
- Functional goals – such as achieving more space, adapting an existing room to accommodate more (or fewer) occupants, working more efficiently, or changing the workflow,
- Aesthetic goals - a change in the style of the interior, a change connected with fashion trends.

2. Requirements of residents or employees

If the project concerns a residential interior:

- number of inhabitants, is there a change expected in the near future that needs to be taken into account,
- user characteristics: age, gender, special needs (right-handed or left-handed, physical disabilities, etc.),
- personal preferences: colors, special interests, etc.,

If the project concerns a public interior:

- the location of the workspace or functional area (eg, North side service areas, corner office for managers).

- individual information about employees or occupants: by name, title or position,
- number and function of groups, if not individual employees,
- a description of the position of the employee,

3. Activity requirements

- type of principal, additional or incidental activity,
- the nature of the activity, when it is performed and how often it is performed,
- whether the activity is carried out independently, in small groups or in large groups,
- whether the activity shares space with other activities,
- special requirements for the activity: lighting, acoustics, heating or cooling, ventilation,
- other special requirements (security, environmental friendliness, sustainability).

4. Furniture and equipment

- the types of furniture or equipment needed, whether existing furniture will be used or new ones purchased, sizes,
- necessary style, color, quality level, ergonomic needs, etc.,
- types and requirements of communication equipment, audiovisual equipment, electrical installations, mechanical requirements of the equipment: cooling, ventilation, etc.,
- the types and sizes of astorage: libraries, shelves, drawers, cabinets, etc.,
- personal or shared furniture and equipment,
- space required for accessories.

5. *Functional connections*

- the necessary contacts between the persons,
- necessary movement of objects, equipment or documents,
- connection level: mandatory, preferred or insignificant,
- necessary zoning of related activities, departments or functional groups,
- External links required: visitors, service, visibility, delivery, etc.

6. *Requirements for premises or areas listed by area of activity and space*

- premises defined by the fields of activity: people and equipment, requirements for them.

7. *Time and budget requirements*

- total budget allocated to the budget for possible reconstruction or construction, furnishing costs, equipment costs, taxes, unforeseen expenses, etc., by project type,
- life-cycle cost analysis,
- Transport deadline or phasing-out requirements.

Customer survey

Asking questions to prospective users is one of the most valuable ways to gather information. Properly asked questions can collect non-verbal data about what the user can really think or about his/her attitude to certain aspects of the topics being discussed. The interview technique works in both residential and public interiors.

Interviewing takes time and requires the interviewee to stick to the topic while allowing for some open-ended questions and comments. The interviewer should prepare a list of specific questions or points for which answers are needed. This keeps the process go-

ing in the right direction and provides a common basis for comparing interviews and gathering results.

The general topics for which questions may be developed do not differ from those detailed in the checklist description.

Observation

One of the surest ways to gather information is by observing what people are doing instead of listening to what they say. The danger of observation, however, is to come straight to the conclusions without clarifying why people are doing things in this way. For example, some people may have a large number of small appliances on the kitchen counter, not because it is so convenient, but because there is nowhere else to store them. The client may prefer to have storage space in the closet, but the observer may incorrectly conclude that the client likes to have appliances on the counter.

Surveillance is best used to verify information gathered through interviews or questionnaires, or as a way to generate questions to determine the cause of the behavior observed.

Surveillance is also useful in situations where questionnaires or interviews are not possible – for example, to determine how people use a given public space.

Site investigation

Because interior design is done within an architectural space, it is an important part of the job to determine the existing conditions. Whether the building already exists or is still in the planning stages. For existing buildings, architectural surveying is done on site, and special conditions may be noted. If a building is still being designed, the information must be determined by architectural drawings.

CONCLUSION

Clarifying the stages and phases of information gathering and design is a key to team-working in interior design and assists designers and users. In the course of the research, however, the dissonance between the normative regulations and the design practice became obvious. There is a need for discussion and updating of the terms, stages and approaches in the design, as well as of the legal framework in which it is carried out.

During the direct work of the author in teaching interior design of residential and public objects with students in the specialty "Engineering Design" at the University of Forestry, in Sofia, Bulgaria it was found that they have particular difficulties in applying the design methodology in practical briefs and work. For this reason, the present work was made. The report gives the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the basic concepts in the design assignment theory and practice in Bulgaria, the correct use of which is key to the successful creation of a harmonious interior composition, both in public and in residential buildings.

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