

YouGov survey published this week suggests people prefer traditionally designed buildings

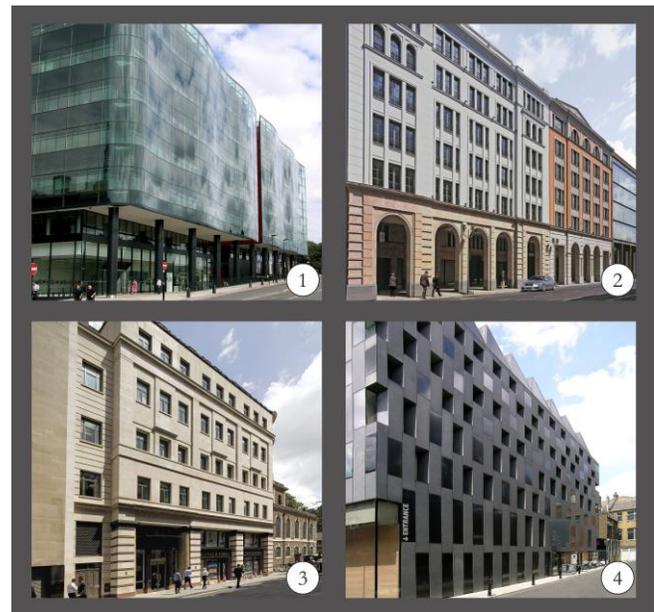
In a YouGov survey to determine whether the public prefers traditional or contemporary buildings, 77% of respondents who selected a design, from a choice of 4, chose traditional architecture over contemporary styles. Only 23% chose contemporary buildings. This is thought to be the first time that a survey has been conducted to find out the people's preference in relation to non-residential buildings.

The YouGov survey asked 1042 respondents to select a preferred building from a choice of four, in answer to the question;

"Please imagine a new building is planned to be built near where you live. Four different designs are proposed. Please look at the designs below. Which one would you most like to be built near you?" The illustrations show new buildings of a similar height, size and orientation to the street.

Two of the buildings shown are highly regarded examples of a very contemporary style and two are traditional in design.

12% declined to make a choice, but of those who did 77% selected buildings numbered 2 and 3 (see image) with just 23% preferring the contemporary buildings numbered 1 and 4 (see image).



Robert Adam, Director of ADAM Architecture, said of the YouGov result:

"This long overdue research by YouGov shows that individuals do have a strong view on the style of non-residential buildings in their area. This interesting result follows previous surveys which have consistently shown that traditional homes are more popular with the public."

NOTES

1. Previous surveys include Attitudes & Decision Making among Home Buyers, prepared for CABE, WWF & HBOS, by Mulholland Research & Consulting, 2004. Design For Homes Popular Housing Research, Perceptions of Privacy & Density in Housing, by Mulholland Research, published by The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2003

2. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1042 adults. 12% of the sample declined to make a choice. The figures are based on the 88% of respondents who did make a choice. Fieldwork was undertaken between 12th - 14th October 2009. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+)

3. The survey question and images were prepared in collaboration with ADAM Architecture.

4. Images 1 and 3 were re-handed so that the orientation of all the buildings is consistent.

Update 27 October 2009

Controversial response to YouGov survey results that people prefer traditionally designed buildings

The architectural profession has responded to the results of the recent YouGov survey to determine whether people prefer contemporary or traditional buildings and this has now become controversial.

As the results of a new YouGov survey reveal that more than three quarters of the public prefer traditional buildings to 'contemporary' buildings, architects have lashed out at traditional architecture. Leading the professional attack is the new president of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Ruth Reed, who claimed that traditional buildings are "frequently very expensive and often use unsustainable materials".

She was followed by a flurry of on-line comments, from "a public survey doesn't mean architects should blindly follow what is popular" to "it would be very silly to continue to build structures that don't speak of our time". Lord Rogers, interviewed after winning the Sterling Prize, the prestigious architects' award, weighed in complaining that, "a lot of British people are much happier living yesterday than they are today".

Further analysis of the results has now revealed that there is very little variation by region, age or income group.

Robert Adam, director of the architectural firm ADAM Architecture who commissioned the survey has commented, "I don't know what planet Ruth Reed is on if she thinks that the glass, steel and concrete favoured by modernist architects are more sustainable or cheaper than the natural materials like brick, stone and stucco used by traditionalists, but this knee-jerk negative reaction from the architectural profession is to be expected.

There are hardly any traditional architects today as it has been a guaranteed way to fail in architecture schools for 50 years. Being traditional is not living in the past; it's making sure that the present and past are connected. Architects are not interested in designing for the public and only care about what their fellow architects think - remember it's architects who hand out the architecture prizes. The survey reveals just how far architects' ideas are from the public they are supposed to serve. "