SONA

Society of Nepalese Architects
Annual International Convention 2023

Theme:

"Role of architecture in the creation of identity of the contemporary city"

Location: Nepal
Time: January 13-14, 2023

CALL FOR PAPERS

The SONA Annual Convention 2023, is planned to be held for two days in the beautiful holiday weather and is moderated by SONA, along with the Research Committee and other sub-committees under 14th executive committee of Society of Nepalese Architects.

During the annual convention, we expect that technical papers related to the theme are presented. All life members, general members, and non-members are invited and requested to register for the convention.

At the Annual Convention the latest studies, findings and information will be exchanged through panel discussions, technical sessions, poster presentations and exhibitions.

SONA International Convention 2023

Role of architecture in the creation of identity of the contemporary city

Cities are changing, from what which was developed out of traditional principles of hierarchies and functions, to amorphous agglomerations arising from unguided growth and commercial speculation.

The medieval cities had character. The hierarchy of spaces, between the public and semi-public, reflected the need of the communities. The architecture was determined by the available materials and traditional technological advancements, with ornamentation presenting the highly developed skills of the craftspeople. This was featured mainly in the religious, community and palatial monuments, but was also present in the private dwellings. However, the nostalgia of the medieval cities is not always justified, considering the squaller and lack of hygiene of the period.

Change has been introduced to the medieval city through the introduction of infrastructure and services. Often, there has also been extensive reconstruction carried out, where the traditional buildings have been replaced by tall concrete buildings. Sometimes these concrete buildings are given facades mimicking the traditional, but ignoring the essential character and the proportions. The medieval cities are changing.

The boundaries of the medieval cities have been torn down, both the physical walls and the intangible protective ring of deities. The cities now sprawl across the landscape, which used to be precious agricultural land. Areas which were the most fertile, which flooded during the rains, are now covered with haphazard array of buildings. The narrow roads wind around and around, following no principles of planning. The buildings present a spectrum of diverse images envisioned by the owners, or the architects, or not presenting any character.

Even the planned areas of the new city are created through the numeric plotting of a land pooling project. Plots are redistributed along a grid of roads. However, urban spaces are not planned. The overall character of the urban extension, the aesthetics of the building designs, is not considered. Usually, not even the environmental impact of the planning is considered. The sewer lines lead straight into the rivers.

This description will partially, or wholly, depict many cities, not only in Asia, but throughout the world. The question that arises here is, what is the architects role in all this? Are architects responsible for the dire situation of our cities? What would the responsibilities of architect be, to improve the cities? Do architects lack resolve in

dealing with these circumstances, or are they not given the opportunity to contribute by the relevant authorities.

The International Conference that SONA is organising, will discuss these issues. Paper contributions are sought under the following sub-themes.

1. The identity of traditional and modern urban spaces

The first sub-theme examines the identity of the traditional and modern urban spaces. Papers will need to examine the character of the urban spaces, that are defined by the functions and the surrounding architecture. There is a clear hierarchy of urban spaces in the medieval city, with the buildings themselves defining the courtyards, squares and streets, catering to the various categories of community activities. This has changed with the modern city, which is often defined by walls and fencing, reflecting the need of the individuals. How has the urban spaces of the cities, changed? What has been lost? What needs to be addressed?

2. The role of architecture in defining the identity of the city

The second sub-theme focuses on the architecture itself. The medieval cities presented a harmony due to the use of traditional materials and buildings designs. Even within a certain level of diversity, there was harmony in form, colour and scale. A certain level of uniformity was also sought when cities were designed using neoclassical forms of architecture. The streets lined with uniform white stucco facades presented the vision of an authority with power. The architecture of the city has changed to allow a diversity which shatters any form of harmony or uniformity. Who is responsible for this diversity in architectural design? Is it detrimental to the character of the city? What has the position of the architect been in this process? What needs to be addressed.

3. Sustainability of the traditional building technology in the urban context

The third sub-theme focuses on the building materials, and the related construction technology. The mud, brick and timber structures have changed to include lime and plaster, followed by reinforced cement concrete and steel. How has this change in materials affected the urban context? Taller buildings are being built, which might not have been possible without excessive use of materials. Every decreasing size of plots within the city requires efficient use of space and reduced thickness of walls. Do traditional building materials and technology still have relevance in the modern city? Do the considerations of sustainability play a role in this discussion? What is the role of the architect in determining the most appropriate use of construction materials? How do such decisions affect the identity of the city? What needs to be addressed?

Venue: Nepal

The SONA Annual Convention (SONA) will be held in Nepal. The convention shall be convened in a hybrid system as most of the technical sessions shall be carried online. The modality of the convention shall be determined by the COVID Scenario developed in the next couple of months.

Detailed modality of the program shall be finalized soon.

Coordination and Management

Ar. Rajesh Thapa
Conference Chair
President, SONA

Ar. Apil K C
Conference Secretary
General Secretary, SONA

Because of the unprecedented situation of the COVID19, the 14th executive committee has decided to take forward this annual event in the annual platform with the optimum use of Information technology.

In this perspective, we seek advice, coordination and support from all individuals and respected SONA members in successful organization of this convention. The management of the event shall be coordinated by the existing SONA executives and sub-committee members with generous participation and suggestions from respected SONA members.

Thank you.

SONA Convention Theme Track

1. Architecture and Cities

2. Traditional Vs Modern Spaces in cities

3. Vernacular architecture and Building Practices

4. Crafts, Innovations and architecture

5. Economic development and policy
6. Participatory design strategies and community roles

7. Design, Materials and construction tools and technology

8. Architecture and Urban policy and design strategies

SONA: Theme Track

Abstracts from a wide range of architecture fields are encouraged for submission. The conference theme tracks are mentioned above and it is intended to bring diversity in content as well as context in the discussion.

The authors are requested to choose at least one theme track. This will help us to identify the potential reviewer as well as group the convention schedule according to theme.

The papers must focus (primarily) on a single subtheme. The papers must analyse and assess the changing conditions of the city, and provide insight in the issues that need to be addressed. The papers must also take into account the position of the architect in defining the identity of the contemporary city.

Session Types:

a. Intensive panels – 30 minutes (Invited)

b. Individual Presentation – 15 minutes (Abstracts)

c. Poster Session – 60 minutes group session (Abstracts)

a. Intensive panels:

Panellists are decided by SONA and are invited from international platforms. It will be organized on the first day of the program.

Submission requirement:

i. Abstract of 800 words, and

ii. Author's biography 200 words.

Deadline: N/A (To be coordinated by committee)

b. Individual presentation:

Individual presentation includes scholar and professional research that has not been published elsewhere. Any individual can submit their abstract.

Submission requirement:

i. Summary (1500-2000 Words) which may include well labelled data, graphs, pictures and other information. The summary must be written in the given format which must include but not limited to; Introduction, Methods, Analysis, Discussion and Conclusion (refer. SONA Format.docx)

ii. Abstract of 100 words which is included in the summary format

iii. Authors' biography 200 words

iv. Authors' submission form (Refer. SONAAuthorsubmission.docx)

DEADLINE: September 20, 2023.

c. Poster Session:

The poster session will be held for an hour long during the conference, intending to have a group discussion and exchange session.

Submission requirement:

i. Abstract of 500 words

ii. Author's biography 200 words

iii. Authors submission form

iv.   Poster: 841mm x 594mm pre-printed to be brought along with during the event. The digital poster should be submitted no later than **October 20,2023,**

Key Dates:

August 05, 2022: Announcement of the convention.

20 September: Due date for all abstracts or the draft Poster

25 September: Acceptance notification for all abstracts or the Poster, and Request for full paper.

15 November: Acceptance notification for all the papers

30 November: Submission of digital posters and final revised paper

10 December: Announcement of presentation category and individual dates

20 December: Convention registration deadline for authors and participants

13-14 January, 2023: Convention at Kathmandu (Online & Physical)

*Detailed schedule of the program shall be finalized soon

Flow Chart

Submmission
- abstract and biography of author for all submission
- 2 page summary for individual presentation
- A0 size poster for poster

Review Committee
- Peer-reviewed abstracts
- Peer reviewed summary

Presentation

Conference
- NEXT STEP We request the authors to submit full paper for the SONA journal.