

Creating Attractive Hotels - Contemporary Challenges in Design and Architecture: Sustainability, Emotional Aspects and Desirable Elements in Hotel Selection

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Abstract

Background: Architecture and design, understood as artistic disciplines, go beyond the purely functional requirements of a building program and become key factors in creating attractive and recognizable hotel facilities. In the contemporary tourism context, hotels increasingly function as symbols of destinations, with architecture and design telling unique stories, contributing to the differentiation and success of hotel projects.

Objectives: The aim is to explore the role of architecture and design in creating attractive hotels with an emphasis on contemporary challenges, sustainability, emotional aspects and desirable elements of architecture and design in the hotel selection process.

Methods: Content analysis was conducted using qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews with hotel architects and designers.

Results: The research findings showed that architects emphasize the importance of integrating sustainable solutions, such as ecological materials and energy efficiency, and emotional aspects such as creating spaces that encourage a pleasant atmosphere, local identity and sensory activation. Aesthetics and design, connection to the local context and history, innovative approaches, and functionality and comfort were identified as desirable elements when choosing a hotel.

Conclusion: The research provides useful guidelines for creating spaces that are visually attractive, emotional, sustainable, and adapted to the needs of guests, while respecting local history and culture.

Keywords: Hotel Architecture, Hotel Design, Competitiveness, Emotional Aspect, Atmosphere Experience, Smart Hotels, Sustainability

Introduction

Architectural design plays a significant role in tourism and hotel industry and becomes one of the key factors for hotel positioning. Contemporary, modern tourists look for more than the location and special services provided by the hotel and pay more attention to the style of construction, personalized approach, specific design and overall atmosphere of the space. The fun-

damental core of architecture and design is an artistic expression through which it is possible to reflect the attractiveness and competitiveness of hotels as accommodation buildings. Over the last century, the field of architecture has focused on the functional and morphological aspects rather than on its relationship to people and its environment of interior space [1-5]. In recent decades, however, there has been much discussion on the phenom-

enological understanding of architectural space, as it has become more critical to focus on how people experience the space rather than on the current visual-oriented architectural form [6, 7]. The structure and spaces represent the appearance, creative and psychological presentation of the brand's identity. Art, as the purest expression of creativity, can influence a special experience just as much as the elements of the hotel's interior decorative elements. Contemporary hotels are more than buildings with rooms and beds; they develop into spaces filled with works of art; paintings, sculptures, digital art as part of the interior decor. Hotels think outside the box, place art in the most unexpected ways and challenge guests to think more deeply about their experience [8]. In the hotel industry, interiors play an important role in attracting customers. Interior decoration or design is defined as the act of arranging a space so that it is attractive, easy to use and works well with the existing architecture [9]. While hotel design may seem like a long-term marketing strategy that influences consumer accommodation choices, academic understanding of this aspect remains surprisingly sparse. Previous studies often compare only the perspectives of architects and the general public or focus on consumer satisfaction in large hotels [10].

By planning, designing and building the hotel, one strives to achieve complete expediency and aesthetics in order to satisfy the needs of guests, staff and owners. Guest needs go beyond basic functional requirements and extend to creating an emotional experience, making emotional design an important segment in hotel interior planning. Although there are already many studies on the phenomenological understanding of architecture, these rarely discuss the importance of the interior experience of architecture and its connection to the emotional aspects [5].

The strength of a good project lies in the architects themselves and their ability to perceive the world with a sense of space, ambience and functionality [11]. In addition to their perceptive abilities, they must act in synergy with all project members – designers, investors, potential users – to respond to the complex demands of project stakeholders. Integrating the perspectives of hotel design experts, architects, and marketers working together is rarely seen in existing studies [10, 12, 13].

Many architects and design-oriented firms in architecture strive to find sustainable solutions, applying a holistic approach that considers all aspects of the design process as well as its impact on the environment [14, 15]. Incorporating sustainability practices in business activities has become not only an approach but a necessity that forces companies to develop competitive strategies [16]. Although there is a wealth of research on the implementation of sustainable practices in architecture, there is a lack of research specific to the hotel industry and how architects integrate sustainability features into hotel design.

General aim of this paper is to explore the role of architecture and design in creating attractive hotels through the exploration of the views and considerations of a group of experts, architects, and interior designers. In accordance with the defined aim, the following research questions are posed:

- **Q1** - What specific challenges and professional motivations encourage architects to choose hotel design?
- **Q2** - What are the key sustainability characteristics that architects integrate into hotel design?

- **Q3** – Do the architects of contemporary hotels recognize emotional aspects when designing a hotel and which emotional key aspects?
- **Q4** - What are the desirable elements of architecture and design and integral quality that influence the choice of a hotel from the perspective of architects in the role of tourists?

The research presented in the paper is conducted through structured interview and explored the attitudes of the architects specialized on the hospitality industry. The contributions of the paper are reflected in the consideration of new aspects of architecture and design in the hotel industry to create competitive advantages. New knowledge could bridge the gap created by profound need of consumers, hotel guests of new experiences, sensations and immersive lifestyle, and hotels that go beyond uniform characteristics accommodation structures that provide lodging and food services.

The first part of the paper includes theoretical assumptions of hotel architecture and design and new approaches. The methodology is specified in the second part of the paper, while the research results are presented in the third part. Discussion, implication and conclusion section provides a summary of the research through research questions, theoretical implications, managerial implications, limitation and future recommendations.

Literature Review

Architectural Design in Hotel Industry

Architecture as a set of values for the design of material physical buildings is conceived, designed, realized and built in response to an existing conditions and user requirements. Conditions may often be functional, but may also be reflected in varying degrees of social, political and economic climate. The initial stage of any design process is the recognition of a problematic situation and the decision to find a solution for it, while design is primarily a voluntary act, a purposeful effort. The designer must first document the existing conditions of the problem, define its context, and collect relevant data for assimilation and analysis [17]. Perceived as artistic discipline, architecture is more than meeting the purely functional requirements of a building program. Basically, the physical manifestations of architecture adapt to human activity. However, the arrangement and ordering of forms and spaces also determine how architecture might promote endeavours, evoke responses and communicate meaning [18].

The architectural project is assigned the role of explorer of the unknown and affirmation of the new, a catalyst in the turning points of changing worldviews, social, political and technical requirements, and thus the change of architectural means and procedures contained in the definition of style. In the construction of hotels and catering facilities, architecture is very important because it determines the reputation and credibility of tourist facilities in the perception of guests. Many tourists will rather choose a hotel built in the domain of aesthetically acceptable and desirable architecture, than another one that fits into the authentic, unified appearance of the hotel facility. The aesthetics of the space influenced the appearance of new forms of tourism on the market, and with further development, new experiences and experiences that are imbued with a specific story and recognition gain importance. In the promotion of a tourist destination and in the creation of recognizable symbols, a key element is design

in architecture. Nowadays, hotels, as accommodation buildings, are increasingly becoming attractions that remain guests enchanted. Hotels thus become a means of achieving diversity because each hotel has its own story and concepts of design and organization. Also, architecture and interior design play a very important role in determining the success or failure of a hotel project. When creating a new hotel, aspects of lifestyles and trends that influence changes in the tourist market should be considered, and it is necessary to pay attention to the harmony of architecture and design.

The Evolution of Architecture, Design and Quality in Modern Hospitality

In developed tourist markets, the public's awareness of ecology is growing, which directly affects the architecture and design of hotels and is one of the main incentives for numerous trends in the modern hotel industry. By choosing the location where the tourist facility is planned to be built, care is taken to create a unique story as part of the natural and cultural environment with pronounced authenticity and the use of local materials.

Contemporary hotel common areas act as social hubs of activity and gathering places for social interactions. Therefore, it is necessary for hotels as hospitality companies in tourism to adapt to the needs of users and to the development of innovations and products to improve the quality of service. The successful architecture and innovative design of the lobby, rooms, restaurant, as well as the rest of the hotel, are the result of a creative idea, a meticulously designed plan and the final implementation of the project. In addition, it is necessary to attract and stimulate the positive perception and experience of guests towards the interior, regardless of whether it is a short visit or a realized tourist stay with an overnight stay. The importance of combining the concept of architecture and design in architecture with service marketing strategies is emphasized. The task of contemporary architecture and interior design of the hotel is to combine the story, the message of both the interior and the exterior, that is, the external environment, including horticultural design, in harmony with the wishes and needs of the guests. Modern hotel guests of the 21st century is looking for fun, excitement, style, fashion and technology, but at the same time they value tranquillity, mindfulness, calmness and surrender to their own mind and body through the concept of complete well-being. Despite the fact that today's guests are increasingly demanding and look for quick reactions, it is important not to overload them with too much information, content, elements of architecture and design, and sensory experiences. Independent hotels and those in the branding system need to understand that clients are looking for a clear concept and identity profile of the service in order to better understand and appreciate the experience they have had through their hotel stay. The effects of elements such as stimulating and outstanding innovation, products, creative idea, well thought out plan, courage and execution need to be evaluated and combined with marketing strategies to achieve the satisfaction of hotel guests and users [19].

Contemporary hotel industry is subject to the needs of monitoring world trends and requirements for the transformation of facilities through renovations and investments. The renovation results in an increase in the standard, quality and category of the hotel, as well as an increase in guest satisfaction. The goal of

the investment is to improve the quality and image of the hotel. Improving the hotel's image is achieved through product modifications, interior design changes or additions and reconstruction of entire buildings. In recent years, there has been a trend of an increasing number of hotels that stand out in terms of aesthetics, primarily from changes and development of the surrounding land, such as green areas, recreational areas, to unique architecture and interior design. The functions of such hotels become diverse because with the renovation, the hotels become differently themed, i.e. supplemented with, for example: business concepts, conference rooms, spa facilities, wellness, entertainment and recreational facilities, which is the result of investment in their renovation, in accordance with improved trends on the demand side. The change and variety of hotel architecture affects their transformation into desirable accommodation facilities of superior design and high quality.

The perception of quality and luxury in the eyes of tourists is changing with the transformation of society and values resulting from criticism of globalization processes. The redefinition is motivated by the valorisation of sustainability, green initiatives and the affirmation of authenticity. The luxury perceived twenty years ago, which was reflected through the splendour and opulence of materials and global brands in the modern hotel industry, is described by new values that mark complete well-being, a return to natural, original values, with the application of authentic style and design by local artists and designers [20]. "Glocalism" reflects the sense of space and points out the values that are original including nonmaterial, intangible storytelling and experiences that provoke unique experiences and new luxury [21, 22]. Explain that the quality of tourism arises from a process that assumes customer satisfaction with all products, services, needs, and expectations at a fair price. This is aligned with important quality factors, including safety, hygiene, accessibility, transparency, authenticity of the offering, and the alignment of tourist activities with the natural and social environment. In their study, Provide valuable practical recommendations for luxury accommodation operators regarding the design, presentation, and management of quality experiences [23]. They reference the findings of which highlight the strong positive influence of functional, natural, and cultural experiences on customer satisfaction, whereas sensory and social experiences were found to have an insignificant effect on customer satisfaction. Furthermore, in considering quality in tourism and hospitality emphasizes that quality is a complex concept, composed of several elements or criteria [24, 25]. The elements or criteria of quality arise from the essence of the quality of different types of products, services, activities, depending on their use, usefulness, importance for the customer - consumer. Emphasizes that quality also describes the material, tangible elements of hotel services, including the exterior and interior, the appearance of employees, promotional materials etc. [26]. As well as intangible elements.

The fundamental characteristics of quality in modern hospitality are reflected through values for guests in the form of reliability in providing services, or fulfilling the promise given to the user in terms of excellence in providing services already in the first attempt and in consistency in replicating identical services. Business responsibility implies timely activities and the readiness and availability of employees to provide the requested service. It relies on competence, which includes the levels of

knowledge and skills necessary for providing services and the expertise of contact staff. Human resources and interpersonal communication with users are of key importance for affirming empathy and responsiveness aimed at solving possible problems and complaints related to hotel services [27]. The choice of human resources affects the evaluation of the hotel's credibility through the profile of staff dedicated to the well-being of guests and the achievement of safety. Quality also implies time availability of the service, where modern technology enables different innovative service models, from robot butlers to butler's corner.

Interior Design within the Concept of Hotel Architecture

Design in architecture in an extremely competitive environment becomes one of the most powerful tools for hotels to achieve diversity and at the same time becomes a factor of innovation. It refers to the creative arrangement and integration of structure and landscape, the achievement of specific, functional and aesthetic goals, i.e. hotel design is essentially the result of socioeconomic changes, technological progress, the economic and political situation and environmental factors. The offer of uniform hotel chains began to lose its importance, and the new offer includes design & boutique hotels with special and unique decoration and personalized service. Design represents applied art, i.e. the artistic shaping of objects for use.

The long-term contribution to increasing the competitiveness of an individual hotel is reflected in the organization and competitiveness of the tourist destination itself. The synergistic development activities of all the key stakeholders of the destination result in a new quality in which the hotel industry grows from a key infrastructural accommodation facility into a factor of the destination's attractiveness. Awareness of the advantages of synergistic effects influences all activities of forming a modern hotel product, from the development of the hotel program to architectural and design solutions. Transformations of offer are influenced by various internal and external factors where the recent COVID-19 pandemic could be pointed out. Improving service in line with epidemiological standards became significant in the hotel industry during the Covid-19 pandemic [28]. It influenced the changes in space use (i.e. lobbies, rooms and kitchens) and architectural design (spatial organization) aiming the safety of both, guests and hotel staff [29].

While considering differentiation, hotels explore initiatives that could achieve the strategic goals of competitiveness. The solutions are related with personalized approach to the guest, a unique gastronomic offer, diverse additional hotel services, sensory attributes and visual identity of the hotel [30]. Sensory attributes are most strongly associated with memories, which is especially important for the reason that every guest tends to be emotionally attached to the hotel where they stay. Olfactory marketing, i.e. the use of special scents, marks a new trend in hotel marketing positioning. The reason for the intense increase in the use of olfactory marketing appears in the fact that smells are most strongly associated with memories, which is especially important because every hotel tries to bond emotionally with the guest [8].

Considered through the historical context, for decades the hotel industry primarily focused on business and functionality, and only recently have accommodation structures begun to be con-

sidered as a factor of tourist attractiveness [31]. Since architects have been dealing with hospitality projects for decades, the fact is that there is no "one size fits all" in the hotel industry. Since ancient times, hotels have been associated with travelers, which has led to different types of hotels in accordance with different types of cultures. This has led to an urge for hotel designers to develop new innovations in hotel strategies for the success of hoteliers operating at competitive market. Currently, in the hospitality industry, numerous hotels are continuously being built every year, which affects the formation of specific, creative structures of architecture, design and theming [32].

Hotel investments, new buildings and renovation inspired by local culture and art and enhanced by creative design stimulates the local economy that is, they create socioeconomic benefits for the community [33]. They expand the tourist offer, enables the development of tourism in the pre- and post-season and generate new jobs through the collaboration of local stakeholders and hoteliers [34]. In addition, with the creation of such hotels, there is an increased need for specialized employees who have knowledge in both tourism and art. It can be said that one of the most significant features of the art & culture hotel is the involvement of the local community. Considering the importance of implementing corporate social responsibility which has become one of the focal points in modern business it is necessary to support initiatives for its implementation [35]. In this context, the potential of local artists who can achieve commercialization and recognition with their exhibitions in hotels is visible. The implementation of authentic cultural assets in art, design or heritage hotels increases and enriches the competitive advantage of both the tourist destination and the hotel offer [36].

The topic of small, luxury heritage hotels is also dealt with by whereas it is evaluated extremely positively from both, an architectural and sustainability point of view, with the reason that such facilities are not intrusive and do not require large areas [37, 38].

Interior design and special architecture influence the perception of space and ambience with their activities and evoke a special experience [39]. The importance of cooperation is emphasized, so that, for example, the entry of fashion designers into the world of the hotel industry, architecture and design, presents a new branding potential. Namely, fashion designers or luxury goods producers become the authors of the interior design and often enter the ownership structure of the hotel. Their style is recognizable and unique, and with their fame and popularity they contribute to the hotel's competitiveness. The mentioned lifestyle marketing concept is also reflected on other well-known personalities of the world of showbiz and entertainment, actors, singers and influencers [40].

New Approach in Architectural Design in Hotel Industry

The task of contemporary architecture and hotel interior design is to combine it with the story, message, external environment, i.e. horticultural design, comfort, acoustic features, atmosphere and service of the hotel [41, 42]. It is essential to create a better environment in the premises with ambient lighting and plants, a kind of microclimate, aiming at savings on heating and cooling. Inadequately designed spaces consume a lot of energy reaching an optimal room temperature and are not sustainable for the en-

vironment nor profitable for the investor. Many authors research aspects of sustainability and eco efficiency of resources: energy, water, waste and discuss initiatives of optimization [43, 44]. In continuance, global institutions UNEP and UNWTO (2015) create a platform for sustainable and responsible decision making including spatial organization planning, tourist zones and building strategies. Features of space, indigenous, local materials and intangible storytelling of destinations, buildings and people represent inspiration for successful architectural and design projects in the hotel industry. As the contemporary hotel industry has abandoned the perception of the hotel as a uniformed generic building of basic hospitality services, creativity and innovation are being sought [45]. These qualities are the platform for the competitiveness of architectural projects that are evaluated by the investor and finalized in time dynamics according to the feasibility studies and strategic plans [46].

When considering an investment project at famous locations, there are often already built structures that should either be preserved or demolished [47]. Therefore, cooperation with urban expert public bodies as well as with department of cultural heritage conservators is extremely important. Initiatives of merging and transforming a historical building into a hotel structure often represent a successful interpolation of heritage and contemporary context [48]. In the aforementioned situations of the planning and construction of new structures in populated, urban destinations, communication with the local community contributes to understanding and affirmation of added value. The goal of architectural and urban creativity is the realization of spatial organisms that simultaneously satisfy quantitative and qualitative needs, psychological spheres of man and social symbolism, stresses out while elaborating competitiveness of innovative hotel architecture for the 21st century [49]. A hotel with adequate structural strength, with a purposeful arrangement of rooms and

a subtle position in the environment and an aesthetic shape in a harmonious balance of parts with the whole can take on architectural epithets points out [50]. He points out that it is important that architects have ecological and social empathy, and that they creative, whereby they must meet three conditions: an idea that is new, i.e. statically rare, secondly, that the idea is to a certain extent adaptable, and thirdly, that it is capable of preserving the original ideas that it brings to full expression through evaluation and elaboration.

Methodology

Data After determining the aim of the research, which refers to the examination of the role of hotel architecture and design in the context of contemporary challenges, approaches to sustainability and emotional aspects on the competitiveness of the tourist offer and the design of research questions, the target group of examinees was defined - architects of hotel facilities, and the implementation of qualitative research. In this paper, the term architects encompass experts who consider the 'skeleton' and foundations of a building, including its structural stability, functionality and safety, as well as design experts whose focus is on the 'soul' of a space, i.e. creating atmosphere, aesthetics and user experience.

The research was conducted on a sample of five architects who designed six well-known hotels on the Croatian coast. When selecting projects, consideration was given to the geographical distribution on the Croatian coast (Poreč, Krk, Zadar, Šibenik, Split, Hvar), tourist centers, different tourist brands, hotel complexes and categorization (4/5 stars).

At the beginning of the in-depth interview with each architect, demographic characteristics were recorded, which are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Interviewed Architects

Architect	Gender	Age years	Work experience in architecture
Architect 1	F	(31-35) 34	10
Architect 2	M	(51 and more) 57	30
Architect 3	M	(51 and more) 78	41
Architect 4	M	(31-35) 35	12
Architect 5	F	(41-45) 45	20

Source: Authors' Research

Based on the data from the table, it can be concluded that the respondents are three male and two female architects with an average age of 49.8 years and an average work experience in architecture of 22.6 years. The oldest architect is Architect 3 who is currently retired and is 78 years old with 41 years of work experience in architecture, while the youngest is Architect 1 who is 34 years old and has 10 years of work experience in architecture. From the data it can be concluded that the sample is reliable and valid.

Methods

Qualitative research had the character of reconnaissance research, and it was carried out using the method of examination,

that is, the technique of data collection by interviewing, which gained a deeper insight and collected a wider range of data. Due to the specific nature of the mentioned profession in terms of the uniqueness and diversity of the projects, and the possibility of partial comparability of answers, the in-depth interview technique with structured questions was chosen. Conducting an in-depth interview takes place in several stages; from problematizing the topic, designing questions, conducting interviews, transcribing conversations to analysis and reporting. Therefore, based on the researched literature, questions were developed and defined for conducting an in-depth interview (Table 2).

Table 2: Design of Questionnaire and Interview Question (resume) – Created and Adapted According Scientific Research

Motivation for project acceptance	Adams (2021), Kim et al. (2020), Penevska (2018)
Vision of architectural project	Mustapić & Vlahov (2015), Čerović & Čomić (2015), Jablonska & Trocka-Leszczynska (2020)
Sustainability characteristics of the project	Uskoković (2014), Alidadi & Zadeh (2016)
Investors perception, preferences and required changes in the project	Bondarenko & He (2021), Mustapić & Vlahov (2015)
New trends, innovations and experiences in hotel architecture	Asmara & Mohi (2016), Sterkenberg (2017), Puraprom & Dang-hkawkeaw (2022), Šker (2023),

Source: Authors' Research

Respondents were primarily contacted by phone and asked to participate in the survey, the purpose of the research was explained, as well as questions about data confidentiality and participant anonymity, followed by an agreement on the availability of an appointment for an in-depth interview. The research was conducted from October 2023 to March 2024, and an interview questionnaire was used to collect qualitative data, which contained demographic questions and five open-ended questions, which were focused on the motivation for hotel design, project modifications, project vision, sustainability characteristics, emo-

tional aspects of tourists' stay and elements of architecture and design when choosing a hotel.

The primary data obtained from the interview were recorded, and during the interview, the questions were read to the interviewees and the sequence of the interview was presented.

In-depth interviews lasted from 31 to 52 minutes (Table 3) in accordance with the recommendations on the duration of in-depth interviews, which are based on the general practice and methodology of qualitative research in the social sciences.

Table 3: Duration of in-depth Interviews

Architect	Duration
Architect 1	56'20"
Architect 2	38'24"
Architect 3	45'20"
Architect 4	40'17"
Architect 5	52'43"

Source: Authors' Research

Considering that Architect 1 was interviewed for two hotels, we can conclude that his interview lasted the longest. However, if we leave it out, the longest interview lasted 52 minutes and 43 seconds with architect 5, and the shortest 31 minutes and 50 seconds with architect 1. The average duration of the interview was 38 minutes and 71 seconds.

In qualitative research, it is challenging to ensure the validity and reliability of the results, however, there are several methods that solve this problem [51]. States that validity or credibility can be ensured by the method of triangulation, distinguishing four types of triangulation: the use of multiple methods, data sources, researchers, or theories. Furthermore, States that reliability or consistency can be achieved using triangulation methods, peer-examination or peer-review, researcher's position or reflexivity, whereby the researcher looks back to his assumptions and biases in the research, and audit trail, when the researcher describes in detail how the data was collected and categorized, and how the conclusions were reached [52]. When analyzing

the data in this work, the methods of review by colleagues and revision by the researcher were used. The obtained data were processed using the content analysis method using the WordArt program (<https://wordart.com>), while the NVivo 14 software package was used for data coding and analysis because automated content analysis can process large amounts of text faster than manual methods of literature synthesis as well as inductive and comparative methods [53].

Results

Motivation, Challenges and Project Vision

In the following, the processing of the collected qualitative data was started. The question "What motivates you most when choosing to design a hotel?" aimed to identify possible key aspects of architecture and design that contribute to the competitiveness of hotels from the perspective of architects. By processing the responses from Table 4, certain common themes such as challenge, history, brand, public content can be extracted.

Table 4: Results of Content Analysis on Hotel Design Motivation

Key word	Frequency of occurrence (number)	Frequency of occurrence (%)
Challenge	4	23,53 %
History / Historical Identity / Tradition	3	17,65 %
Brand	2	11,76 %
Public contents	2	11,76 %
Innovative approach	1	5,88 %
Anthology	1	5,88 %
Complexity	1	5,88 %
Location	1	5,88 %
Memory	1	5,88 %
Specifics	1	5,88 %

Source: Authors' Research

Most of the respondents mention the challenge as a factor that attracted them to the hotel project, however, the continuation of the sentence follows as the complexity of the project and the need to meet a number of criteria in order to successfully realize the project. Accordingly, some of the respondents state: "It was a special challenge and honor to work on this project due to the design of the entire urbanism, interior, environment and different types of buildings, not only hotels but also villas, annexes, castles, which are in an extremely important location for the city and form a unique functional spatial entity with a historical the core of the city" (Architect 5); "It was very challenging to work on both hotel complexes because they operate under the international hotel brand and require the fulfilment of many more criteria that should be invested in, in comparison with for example, a boutique hotel or a smaller hotel owned by a private person" (Architect 1). Several respondents emphasize the importance of the history and cultural identity of the location where the hotel is located, stressing the need for the hotel project to nurture history and contribute to the cultural life of the city. Some consider the influence of local architecture and specific architectural styles on hotel design, and try to integrate local elements and characteristics into the project. Furthermore, they reflect on how historical events and the development of a place can influence hotel design and contribute to the creation of an authentic experience for guests.

Certain interviewees emphasize the hotel company's brand as a key motivator when designing a hotel. One respondent points out the importance of brand recognition and reputation in creating hotel design and guest experience, while another respondent states that brands represent guidelines and standards that affect every aspect of the hotel, from architecture and interior to services and experience. Therefore, when designing, respondents carefully adjust the design to match the company's brand and target audience, thus ensuring brand consistency and recognition throughout all segments of the hotel experience.

Two interviewees emphasize that public facilities within the hotel are key to creating a lively and inclusive hotel environment. One respondent state that areas such as restaurants, cafes and congress halls not only provide additional services to guests, but also actively contribute to the hotel's economic success, emphasizing: "Public spaces, of course, allow the investor a higher in-

come on the one hand, while on the other hand the type of hotel becomes part of the community" (Architect 2). The respondent notes that these public spaces are open to the wider community, which enables the hotel to become an integral part of the local community and states: "The public cannot get to the room, but they can enter the hotel lobbies, which had a great tradition as social gathering space from the beginning of the last century until the time of socialism, when top hotels had a strong reputation for good restaurants, cafes, and congress spaces" (Architect 3). It can be concluded that through public facilities, the hotel becomes a place of meeting and interaction not only for hotel guests, but also for the local population. This encourages mutual connection and exchange of ideas, which contributes to the richness of the hotel experience and encourages the development of the community as a whole.

Considering the relationship between investors and architects, the next question is whether the investors asked for changes in the project and which ones, in order to understand what challenges, the architects face that can ultimately be reflected in the design of the hotel. All respondents stated that they had changes in the design of the hotel, emphasizing: "Yes, according to the handover, the project was reduced by almost 30% (Architect 4)", "The design took two years, and the project was elaborated and adapted to the needs, wishes and new knowledge of the investor" (Architect 5). Some respondents believe that the changes in the projects are the result of the current situation, regulations, budgets, external influences, changes in the demands of investors, all with the aim of increasing investor satisfaction and the needs and wishes of guests, i.e. increasing the hotel's competitiveness. Three respondents stated that the 3D visualizations of the projects they create represent opportunities to reduce changes to a minimum level. It is crucial to establish clear and open communication between investors and architects from the very beginning of the project. Regular meetings and discussions help to understand the needs and expectations of the investor and facilitate the adaptation of the project. In addition to aligning needs and expectations, Architect 2 states: "We are architects – a service industry ", but we are also creative, artistic and technically educated, and we have to satisfy all the technical things, and equally we have to satisfy our aspects, responsibility towards the city and the environment."

The next question related to the vision of the architectural project. All respondents emphasized the importance of realizing the vision of the hotel project and the satisfaction that they were able to convey the initial ideas to the end. In addition, they emphasize the need to design a functional and aesthetically attractive space that fits the investor's budget, stating: "We architects imagine beautiful things, but equally these things should be functional and should fit into the investor's budget", (Architect 1), and they emphasize the importance of integrating local elements and characteristics into the design of the hotel stating: "...use of natural materials, palette of Mediterranean colours". Also, the respondents look back on the specifics of the location of the hotel and its surroundings, and how they adapted to these contextual factors in realizing the vision of the project. All respondents emphasize the importance of guest and investor satisfaction as the

ultimate goal, and some emphasize that they succeeded in creating a product that was well received by the public.

Sustainability in Hotel Design

The continuation of the interview was related to the question of the sustainability characteristics of the project that is, "Which characteristics of sustainability are important when designing a hotel?". Respondents show a high level of awareness of the importance of sustainable design and practices in hotel design. Sustainability is a key aspect of their considerations and decisions. According to the answers, it can be concluded that the respondents referred exclusively to ecological sustainability without considering the fact that sustainable development includes economic, social and environmental welfare policies [54]. By processing the responses from Table 5, certain common words such as energy, materials, recycling, water, solar panels can be extracted.

Table 5: Results of Content Analysis on Project Sustainability

Key word	Frequency of occurrence (number)	Frequency of occurrence (%)
Energy	5	15,63 %
Materials	5	15,63 %
Recycling	4	12,50 %
Water	4	12,50 %
Solar panels	2	6,25 %
Electric service vehicles	1	3,13 %
Food waste composting	1	3,13 %
Heat pumps	1	3,13 %
LED lighting	1	3,13 %
Near Zero Object	1	3,13 %
Photovoltaic elements	1	3,13 %
Savings	1	3,13 %
Smart room systems	1	3,13 %
Stone	1	3,13 %
Trees	1	3,13 %
Underfloor heating with hot water	1	3,13 %
Ventilated facades	1	3,13 %

Source: Authors' Research

All respondents mentioned energy as a key word in their answers about the sustainability of the project. Some mentioned energy in the form of production through solar panels, some through savings, some through smart room systems that affected the unnecessary consumption of air conditioning energy. At the same time, the respondents mentioned materials as a key word in the project's effectiveness, encouraging natural materials, EU-certified materials and materials that can be recycled, stating: "...the hotel brand insists that all the materials that are installed can be recycled, for example, they do not want to use blackout fabrics - blackout fabrics because they are more difficult to recycle than decorative fabrics for curtains..." (Architect 1). Recycling follows a sequence of keyword occurrences. In

addition to materials, recycling is associated with environmental responsibility and care for the environment in the answers of two respondents. Water as a keyword has a total of four occurrences. Certain respondents emphasize the importance of using toilets with a lower water flow, which contributes to saving water and reducing consumption. Also, the use of seawater in pools as an alternative source of water is mentioned, which can contribute to the sustainability of the project.

The results shown in Table 5 are illustrated in Figure 1, using the WordArt application that visually shows the frequency of occurrence of certain words among respondents.

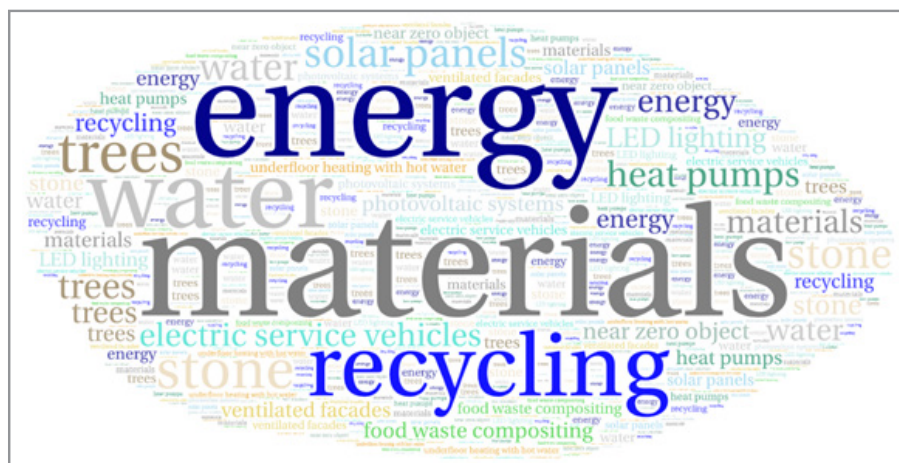


Figure 1: Frequency of Occurrence of Words Related to Project Sustainability Characteristics
Source: <https://wordart.com>

From the above data, we can conclude that the answers show a strong engagement of architects in creating sustainable hotels that not only meet the needs of guests and investors, but also respect environmental standards and promote environmental responsibility because they are aware that the impact of tourism on the environment is paradoxical – on the one hand, it harms the environment through high energy and water consumption, and on the other hand, the appeal of tourism relies heavily on the beauty of the landscape and untouched nature [55].

Emotional Aspects in Hotel Design

When planning and designing a hotel, architects often have to consider a wide range of factors that influence the guest experience. Emotional aspects are one of the most important elements that can significantly influence the perception and experience of the stay. By asking the question "When planning and designing, do you think about the emotional aspects of the guests' stay in the hotel?" we wanted to gain insight into how much architects take into account the emotional needs and experiences of guests when planning and designing a hotel, because consideration of these aspects can result in the creation of a space that encourages positive emotions and experiences in guests, thereby increas-

ing the attractiveness and competitiveness of the hotel on the market. All respondents emphasize the importance of emotional aspects in hotel design and indicate the importance of creating a space that will ensure a pleasant stay for the guest, stating: "It is important to create interiors that are pleasant, that provide the atmospheres that the user needs; whether it was a relaxing atmosphere, a calm - working atmosphere, a pleasant, intimate atmosphere in the bar, so all these things are incredibly important. If the space has bright white light, or faces the sea but the seating is oriented incorrectly, we as architects have not thought through the space and people will not want to stay there", (Architect 1). At the same time, three respondents state that other influences besides the visual space itself are important, and one respondent states: "...the theme can be not only visual, but also tactile, emotion, sound, smell...sometimes you surprise guests that it's not just a chair beautiful and pleasant, but feel that it is wood and nature and that it evokes emotion", (Architect 2). By processing the answers (Table 6), certain common words can be extracted that can affect the emotional aspects of guests in the hotel, such as atmosphere, local identity, smell, sound, tactile elements, texture.

Table 6: Results of Content Analysis on Emotional Aspects of the Project

Key word	Frequency of occurrence (number)	Frequency of occurrence (%)
Atmosphere (quiet, comfort, relaxing, business, intimate, Mediterranean)	7	31,82 %
Local (identity, typology)	3	13,64 %
Scent	2	9,09 %
Sound (music)	2	9,09 %
Tactile elements	2	9,09 %
Texture (materials, space)	2	9,09 %
Brand	1	4,55 %
Colors	1	4,55 %
Lighting	1	4,55 %
Functionality	1	4,55 %

Source: Authors' Research

The results shown in Table 6 are illustrated in Figure 2 by using the WordArt application that visually shows the frequency of occurrence of certain words among respondents.



Figure 2: Frequency of occurrence of words related to the impact of the project on the emotional aspects of the guests.
Source: <https://wordart.com>

All interviewees repeatedly mention the atmosphere in their answers about the impact of the project on the emotional aspects of the guests. The importance of creating different atmospheres in the hotel, such as a calm, pleasant, relaxing, business or intimate atmosphere, which can affect the emotional experience of the guests, is emphasized. At the same time, local identity is mentioned by two interviewees as crucial in designing a hotel, and one interviewee states: "When designing, we try to give the guest an experience of the destination, by choosing characteristic local typologies and shapes, materials, colors, textures", (Architect 5). Creating a space that will stimulate the activation of the guests' senses and thus affect their emotional aspects, four interviewees state, highlighting scent, sound, touch. The importance of tactile sensations and the texture of materials in creating a pleasant environment for guests is emphasized. In addition, some answers mention other aspects such as brand, colors, lighting and functionality, but their presence is less pronounced compared to the emotional aspects described above.

Desirable Elements of Architecture and Design for Hotel Choice
Given that the appearance of a hotel today dominates the decision to choose a hotel, the question of what architecture and design are in demand today was asked, the aim of which was to gain key insights into guest preferences and market trends that can affect the competitiveness of hotels. All respondents agree that aesthetics and design play a key role in choosing a hotel, however, due to different guest preferences, the choices are different, but there is a general agreement on the importance of combining functionality and aesthetics in hotel design. Two respondents emphasize the importance of adapting architecture and design to local characteristics and inspiration from the environment: "Architecture is very different, specific, tied to the

place where you do it. We design different buildings...in Rovinj we do it one way, in Osijek another, in Zagreb a third, currently in Italy we are also doing a fourth, in Japan we worked a fifth way", (Architect 2). While one respondent mentions the trend of multifunctional spaces and themed hotels, another gives examples: "We are looking for hotels with clearly defined themes and contents, designed for certain groups of guests: family, adult only, kids, relax, wellness, relax, sport hotels..." (Architect 5). From the analysis of the answers of the architects, it can be concluded that aesthetics and functionality play a key role in the selection of a hotel, whereby the importance of adapting the architecture to local characteristics and the trend of multifunctional spaces is emphasized. Also, there is an emphasis on themed hotels in response to the different needs and preferences of guests.

The aim of the following question was to investigate the architectural and design preferences of tourists when choosing a hotel, in order to understand what is important to them in creating a pleasant and attractive hotel from the perspective of tourist architects. Based on the analysis of the answers to the question "If you were visiting a tourist destination, what kind of architecture and hotel design would you choose?", several thematic guidelines can be structured that are repeated among the architects' answers, as well as certain elements that stand out as priorities when choosing a hotel, such as aesthetics and design, local context and history, innovation and contemporary approaches, functionality and comfort. The above question is aimed at architects as potential users of hotel services who, given their expertise, know how to recognize all the contexts of value implemented in the hotel product and want to perceive it during their tourist stay. This indicates the relevance and validity of the question and, analogously, the entire research.

Table 7: Results of content analysis on elements of architecture and design when choosing a hotel

Theme	Key word	Frequency of occurrence (number)	Frequency of occurrence (%)
Aesthetic and design	Design	6	9,84 %
Aesthetic and design	Aesthetic	5	8,20 %
Aesthetic and design	Unique	5	8,20 %
Innovation and contemporary approaches	Contemporary/modern	4	6,56 %
Functionality and comfort	Functionality	4	6,56 %
Local context and history	History	4	6,56 %
Local context and history	Culture	3	4,92 %
Innovation and contemporary approaches	Innovative	3	4,92 %
Functionality and comfort	Quality	3	4,92 %
Aesthetic and design	Specific	3	4,92 %
Innovation and contemporary approaches	Sustainability	3	4,92 %
Functionality and comfort	Comfortable	2	3,28 %
Innovation and contemporary approaches	Ecology	2	3,28 %
Local context and history	Identity	2	3,28 %
Local context and history	Local	2	3,28 %
Innovation and contemporary approaches	Technology	2	3,28 %
Aesthetic and design	Eclectic	1	1,64 %
Functionality and comfort	Interactive	1	1,64 %
Innovation and contemporary approaches	New elements	1	1,64 %
Functionality and comfort	Public spaces	1	1,64 %
Local context and history	Soul of the place	1	1,64 %
Functionality and comfort	Space for experience	1	1,64 %
Aesthetic and design	Strange	1	1,64 %
Aesthetic and design	“Wow” effect	1	1,64 %

Source: Authors' Research

The results shown in Table 7 are shown in Figure 3 using the WordArt application, which visually displays the frequency of occurrence of individual words among respondents.



Figure 3: Frequency of occurrence of words related to architectural and design elements when choosing a hotel

Source: <https://wordart.com>

Aesthetics and design are the words that appear most frequently in the architects' responses. In addition to the above words, the theme of aesthetics and design also includes the words unique, specific, eclectic, strange, "wow" effect. Design, aesthetics and uniqueness of a hotel are mentioned in almost all responses, which indicates the importance of visual appeal, aesthetic impression and recognizable uniqueness that gives a hotel character and sets it apart from others, creating an unforgettable experience for visitors. Architect 1 particularly emphasizes that he is attracted to hotels that have a strong aesthetic value and cause a "wow" effect, while Architect 4 mentions eclectic design, where the space evokes emotions. The theme of local context and history, in addition to the words local and history, also includes the words culture, identity and soul of the place. Connections with the local context and history of a place are also important elements in hotel design. Architect 3 emphasizes the importance of connecting design with local identity and history, stating that architecture should reflect the soul of a place, while Architect 2 mentions his stay in a certain hotel in Istanbul because of its specificity and historical significance. The architects want the hotel to be not only aesthetically appealing, but also to be grounded in the local cultural and historical environment. The topic of innovation and contemporary approaches includes the words contemporary, modern, innovative, sustainability, ecology, technology, new elements. These words indicate a modern approach in architecture and design with an emphasis on ecological and technological aspects. Contemporary but sustainable designs that bring new, dynamic elements to the space and connect guests to the local environment are desirable, as stated by Architect 3: "Contemporary, innovative elements that create a unique atmosphere" and Architect 5: "I like hotels that successfully integrate sustainability into their design". Innovation, especially in terms of sustainability and contemporary approaches, is becoming crucial for architects who want hotel architecture and design to reflect progress and environmental responsibility. Functionality and comfort are described by the word's functionality, quality, comfortable, interactive, public spaces, space for experience. Although aesthetic and innovative design are mentioned more often, the topic of functionality and comfort also plays an important role in hotel architecture and design. Terms such as functionality and quality are often used to emphasize that a hotel should be of high quality and practical to stay in, but also comfortable and provide a "space for experiencing" (Architect 5). Comfort is mentioned in the context of designing a space that feels like "home", as emphasized by Architect 4. "Public spaces" that allow interaction between guests are also mentioned, which indicates the importance of creating shared experiences in a hotel. Although architects value specificity and aesthetic appeal, comfort and functionality remain basic aspects that should not be neglected. Of all the elements mentioned, aesthetics and design stand out as the most frequently mentioned elements, while innovation and connection to the local context further contribute to the attractiveness of a hotel. Based on the analysis of the responses, architects prefer hotels that combine several key factors:

- Aesthetics – hotels that are visually appealing and evoke emotions, whether through minimalism or a wealth of details.
- Connection to the local context and history – hotels that reflect the soul of the place, connecting design with historical heritage.

- Innovation and sustainability – hotels that are not only contemporary, but also environmentally responsible.
- Functionality and comfort – while aesthetics and innovative design come to the fore, a hotel should be a functional and pleasant place to stay.

Architects prefer hotels that offer complex experiences that go beyond the basic function of accommodation, including emotional connection, cultural aspects and innovative approaches to design.

Discussion, Implication and Conclusion

The aim of the paper was to explore the role of architecture and design in creating attractive hotels, with a particular emphasis on contemporary challenges, sustainability, emotional aspects and desirable elements of architecture and design in the hotel selection process. The research was conducted through in-depth interviews with five experienced architects with many years of experience in the industry. The results of the research identify specific challenges, professional motivations, key aspects of sustainability, emotional elements and desirable characteristics of architecture and design when choosing a hotel. The analysis of the answers to the research questions yielded the following results:

What Specific Challenges and Professional Motivations Encourage Architects to Choose Hotel Design?

Architects are most motivated by professional challenges and the complexity of projects that require the fulfillment of a number of criteria and high standards, especially for brands of large hotel companies. They are also motivated by the opportunity to integrate local cultural and historical identity into the design and create an authentic experience for guests also list the challenges that global demands that require respect for the history and tradition of space, along with the rapid development of technology and innovative solutions, pose to architects and designers [30]. Also, an important incentive are the public facilities of the hotel that enable connection with the local community, making the hotel a social and functional center.

What are the Key Sustainability Characteristics that Architects Integrate into Hotel Design?

Sustainable design emphasizes the integration of environmental elements such as energy efficiency, the use of natural and recycled materials, water conservation, and the implementation of renewable energy sources. Architects attach importance to creating spaces that reduce the ecological footprint while meeting the requirements of investors and the needs of users, which is in line with the results of research. At the same time state that there are increasing global demands for responsible handling of the environment in the hotel industry. Many other authors also explore aspects of sustainability and environmental efficiency of resources: energy, water, waste and state the importance of its implementation in hotel structures.

Do the Architects of Contemporary Hotel Recognize Emotional Aspects when Designing a Hotel and which Emotional Key Aspects?

Architects recognize emotional aspects as key to creating a pleasant and meaningful guest experience. Also states that good hotel design can influence guests' emotions [56]. The atmo-

sphere of a hotel must respond to different emotional needs of users - from relaxing and peaceful to business or intimate, which is in line with previous research that states that when designing a hotel, a broader spectrum than the purely functional is considered and the focus is placed on how people experience the space. The importance of local identity is also emphasized, as well as the activation of guests' senses through textures, smells, sounds and other elements that stimulate positive emotional reactions. The also state that sensory marketing is becoming increasingly popular.

What are the Desirable Elements of Architecture and Design and Integral Quality that Influence the Choice of a Hotel from the Perspective of Architects in the Role of Tourists?

Aesthetics and design, local context and history, innovation and contemporary approaches, functionality and comfort are the most important elements that architects in the role of tourists consider desirable. The words unique, contemporary, culture, quality, sustainability, ecology, technology, eclectic, interactive, new elements, public spaces, soul of the place, space for experience, strange, wow effect that hotels should have to be selected are also mentioned.

Innovation as a characteristic of demand in the hotel industry is also mentioned. Contemporary challenges and trends are mentioned as significant elements because they can contribute to increasing hotel revenues in hotel operations, while the inclusion of culturally sensitive design elements increases guest satisfaction [57-59].

The scientific contribution of the paper is reflected in filling the gap in the academic literature by providing a deeper understanding of architecture and hotel design with an emphasis on the integration of functional, emotional and aesthetic aspects. At the same time, the research highlights the importance of the internal experience of architecture and its impact on the emotional needs of guests, which has so far been insufficiently researched in scientific circles. The results represent a platform for future research focused on new competitiveness in the hospitality industry. The research contributes to the theoretical understanding of the impact of architecture and design on the experience of space and hotel selection [60-62]. The practical contribution is reflected in useful guidelines for architects, designers and hoteliers who want to improve their projects and serve as a guide for creating spaces that not only look visually impressive, but also integrate historical context, culture, emotional experiences and innovative approaches. In addition, emphasizing the importance of sustainability and environmentally responsible design can encourage the implementation of sustainable practices in the hospitality industry, which further contributes to the development of modern, environmentally conscious hotel spaces. At the same time, investors can better understand the importance of balancing vision, budget and functional requirements of space [63, 64].

Although the research provides valuable insights into the architectural and design preferences of architects, there are some limitations. The sample of respondents is relatively limited and specific, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Namely, the architects who participated were from different backgrounds and experiences. Furthermore, the subjective nature of the responses may include individual preferences that are

not necessarily representative of the entire population of architects. Another limitation is the qualitative analysis, which may leave room for different interpretations of the data. For further development of the research, it is recommended to expand the sample to a larger number of architects and different geographical regions, which would allow for a broader generalization of the results. A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods could provide a deeper understanding of preferences and practices in hotel design, allowing better insight into different aspects of the design process. Also, focusing on specific elements of sustainability, such as smart technologies and energy-efficient solutions, would become crucial for understanding future directions in hotel architecture.

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