
Unite 3

Theory of architecture

● The earliest surviving written work on the subject of architecture is the architecture, by the Roman architect Vitruvius in the early 1st century CE. According to Vitruvius, a good building should satisfy the three principles of Durability, Utility and Beauty:

- Durability – it should stand up robustly and remain in good condition.
- Utility – it should be useful and function well for the people using it
- Beauty – it should delight people and raise their spirits.

According to Vitruvius, the architect should strive to fulfill each of these three attributes as well as possible. ●

Leone Battista Alberti, who elaborates on the ideas of Vitruvius in his treatise, *De Re Aedificatoria*, saw beauty primarily as a matter of proportion, although ornament also played a part. For Alberti, the rules of proportion were those that governed the idealized human figure, the Golden mean. The most important aspect of beauty was therefore an inherent part of an object, rather than something applied superficially; and was based on universal, recognizable truths. The notion of style in the arts was not developed until the 16th century, with the writing of Vasari. The treatises, by the 18th century, had been translated into Italian, French, Spanish and English.

In the early 19th century, Augustus Northmore Pugin wrote *Contrasts* (1836) that, as the titled suggested, contrasted the modern, industrial world, which he disparaged, with an idealized image of neo-medieval world. Gothic architecture, Pugin believed, was the only “true Christian form of architecture.”

The 19th century English art critic, John Ruskin, in his *Seven Lamps of*