Event Brief: Architecture Workshop

The Institute's Architecture Workshop offers a glimpse into how architecture shapes human experience and influences emotion and behavior. Through this workshop, you'll learn to look beyond buildings as functional structures and consider how their design communicates meaning and shapes the way you live.

About Patrick Alles & Andrew Blumm

- **Patrick Alles** is a partner at Alles & Blumm Architects. He earned his Master of Architecture from Notre Dame's classically focused program and began his career at Robert A.M. Stern Architects in New York. His work emphasizes architectural history, proportion, ornament, and classical detailing, with experience in educational, hospitality, residential, and liturgical design.
- **Andrew Blumm** is a partner at Alles & Blumm Architects. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Anthropology from the University of Oregon and a Master of Architecture with honors from USC. His approach combines an anthropological understanding of the human experience with the rigor of architectural practice, with experience in university, K–12, historic renovation, and liturgical projects.

What to Consider

I. Experience — How Architecture Affects Us

Architecture is not simply something we look at; we experience it with our whole person. Consider how features such as proportion, scale, light, materials, openness, and curvature affect your experience of a space. Research suggests that these physical characteristics can have a measurable, positive effect on human psychology.

II. Emotion & Behavior — What Architecture Makes Us Feel and Do

Different architectural environments can influence emotion, stress, attention, movement, and social interaction. As you compare different styles and spaces, consider what they invite you to feel and how they encourage you to behave.

III. Beauty —Subjective or Objective?

Psychological research raises a deeper philosophical question: if certain architectural characteristics consistently produce positive human responses, what does that tell us about beauty? Is beauty simply a matter of personal preference, or might there be objective features of beauty that human beings are naturally disposed to recognize?

Cultural Formation: Why Architecture?

I. The Need for Cultural Formation

The Institute forms virtuous leaders for the marketplace and public square. This requires more than just professional skills; leaders must be formed with a deeper sense of meaning and an appreciation for truth, beauty, and goodness. Accordingly, education should "combine excellence in humanistic and cultural development with specialized professional training."[1]

To that end, The Institute provides a core suite of professional skills that all leaders need, personal formation to enable them to use those skills well, and cultural formation that cultivates the search for truth and forms "the human spirit…in such a way that there results a growth in its ability to wonder, to understand, and to contemplate…"[2]

II. Architecture

Architecture provides a concrete example of how human beings shape the world around them and, in turn, are shaped by it. The buildings and spaces we create influence how we experience our surroundings, what we feel, and how we behave. As you participate in the workshop, consider what these effects reveal about the nature of beauty and whether beauty is simply a matter of personal preference or something rooted in objective reality and human nature.

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[1] Pope Saint John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 23.
[2] *Ibid*.