

The Direction Of Buildings

(NAPSA)—While the face of modern architecture has changed throughout the world, a number of countries have struggled to make their history an important building block in all their major newly constructed structures.

As a result, many of today's architects design buildings to reflect the specific culture of the area they build in.

For example, in a recently completed building in Abu Dhabi (a member of the United Arab Emirates, or UAE), designers worked to combine modern artistic form with important imagery and symbols that reflect the area's centuries-old traditions.

The plan for the high-rise building centered around two interlocking squares (a pervasive symbol of Islam), enclosing a central elevator core and atrium. The architects maintained continuity with the surrounding landscape by linking gardens throughout the building with roof gardens.

The atrium features long-known and modern building materials—wood and cast-aluminum screens—to reflect traditional building practices. In addition, the materials and positioning of the atrium reflect natural light throughout the structure, while the screens filter out the sun's glare.

The atrium and its effect are meant to symbolize a "Tree of Life" motif—a traditional metaphor from the ancient cultures of the Gulf.



Many of today's buildings are designed to reflect modern culture, while paying tribute to the past.

Advocates of the structure say it fulfills a basic function of architecture: To realize the potential in existing and evolving cultures while still recognizing the importance of the past.

"Clearly, we have, in such projects, the stirrings of effective ways to synthesize the traditional and the modern in the UAE," says Samir Mattar, author of the article *Architectural Reflections on the United Arab Emirates*. "It involves respect for the past, the environment and every aspect of human creativity and cultural identity. It realizes the potential in existing, evolving elements of the social and national life."