

## ABSTRACT

Is contemporary architecture for contemporary times? No, most emphatically not.

Buildings are the most important documentation of historical evidence, whilst being an important and functional part of our everyday lives – irrespective of the era they were built in. Even the most recent buildings bearing some form of important feature, will, by the passage of time represent historical documentation. Whether we like it or not, the legacy of 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture has become part of our built heritage, and therefore belongs to the domain of history.

Is the 20<sup>th</sup> century different from other periods in history? Even though 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture has particular characteristics which can differentiate it from earlier constructions, it must be kept in mind that the architecture of today is a product of the evolution of past architecture.

The conservation of 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings is a recent branch of conservation. This subject has only been looked at over the past few years. Undeniably, the fact that 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture broke free from traditional design principles poses new challenges to traditional conservation philosophy. Yet, these setbacks will be overcome with time, ending with the adoption of the most effective principles. Not all contemporary architecture will survive, nor it is intended to. Only the most important exemplars of the period, marking a benchmark in history or being one-of-a-kind, should be regarded. Yet, in order to be able to make such identifications, 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture should be given the merit of forming part of our built heritage. That should be the point of departure.

Mortality or Immortality? The fate of 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture is at the mercy of the present.

**Zonnestraal Sanatorium, Hilversum (1928), after  
restoration:  
Duiker and Wiebenga.**



**Zonnestraal Sanatorium, Hilversum (1928), before  
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**The Penguin Pool at London Zoo (1934): Lubetkin and Tecton, has been recently restored to its original use.**

