



Sightings

A publication of



The Longview Group, LLC

INSIGHTS...IN SIGHT

June 2008 Vol. 6, No. 6

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To Boldly Go - Why good design pays

by Dennis Schrag

Tony Alleyne, 54, is a London designer. Tony Alleyne is a BIG Star Trek fan.

Shortly after his divorce a few years ago, he described himself as “down.” The divorce was emotionally draining; he lost his job. But he had his one bedroom flat, his creative zeal, and his passion for Star Trek. He needed to channel his attention and energy. The three assets would boldly go where no man had gone before. Enterprising Tony redesigned his flat into Voyager’s flight deck. The sci-fi abode now includes molded wall panes and touch-panel blue lighting. It has a life-size model of the transporter room. **Beam me up!**

Obsessed with the futuristic design, Tony worked for two years on the project. He invested \$60,000 and hundreds of hours. The details were important. The kitchen stove controls became a lighted trekkie flow display system. For Tony it was “... a dream that became a reality and spread throughout the stars.”

Tony bought his condo 10 years ago for \$53,000. Other apartments in his area recently sold for \$160,000. Tony just sold his galactical design for an astronomical \$850,000. Five zealous bidders launched a star war for the transported flat. “We have engaged . . . the Borg.”

Tony’s design into the future is simply the past re-lived. Going back to the future confirms what we have known for centuries. Superior and creative architectural design has always resulted in value added. The people who live and work in the space enjoy it. The people who own it take pride in it. When it is time to sell, they take profit.

Wasted and inefficiently designed space costs building owners an estimated 15 percent in construction costs. The right planning and design with carefully defined needs saves money. Not only will owners save the 15 percent of construction costs, they will realize significant life cycle

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Come to think about it...

It started out innocently enough. I began to think at parties now and then -- just to loosen up

Inevitably, though, one thought led to another, and soon I was more than just a social thinker.

I began to think alone -- "to relax," I told myself -- but I knew it wasn't true. Thinking became more and more important to me, and finally I was thinking all the time.

That was when things began to sour at home. One evening I turned off the TV and asked my wife about the meaning of life. She spent that night at her mother's.

I began to think on the job. I knew that thinking and employment don't mix, but I couldn't help myself.

I began to avoid friends at lunchtime so I could read Thoreau, Muir, Confucius and Kafka. I would return to the office dizzied and confused, asking, "What is it exactly we are doing here?"

One day the boss called me in. He said, "Listen, I like you, and it hurts me to say this, but your thinking has become a real problem. If you don't stop thinking on the job, you'll have to find another job."

This gave me a lot to think about. I came home early after my conversation with the boss. "Honey," I confessed, "I've been thinking..."

"I know you've been thinking," she said, "and I want a divorce!"

"But Honey, surely it's not that serious."

"It is serious," she said, lower lip aquiver.

"You think as much as college professors and college professors don't make any money, so if you keep on thinking, we won't have any money!"

"That's a faulty syllogism," I said impatiently.



She exploded in tears of rage and frustration, but I was in no mood to deal with the emotional drama.

"I'm going to the library," I snarled as I stomped out the door.

I headed for the library, in the mood for some Nietzsche. I roared into the parking lot with NPR on the radio and ran up to the big glass doors.

They didn't open. The library was closed.

To this day, I believe that a Higher Power was looking out for me that night. Leaning on the unfeeling glass, whimpering for Zarathustra, a poster caught my eye, "Friend, is heavy thinking ruining your life?" it asked.

You probably recognize that line. It comes from the standard Thinkers Anonymous poster.

This is why I am what I am today: a recovering thinker.

I never miss a TA meeting. At each meeting we watch a non-educational video; last week it was "Porky's." Then we share experiences about how we avoided thinking since the last meeting.

I still have my job, and things are a lot better at home. Life just seemed easier, somehow, as soon as I stopped thinking. I think the road to recovery is nearly complete for me.

Today I took the final step...I joined a political party.

Author unknown. Source: <http://www.orange-papers.org/orange-thinker.html>

costs. That 15 percent poorly designed space requires heating, cooling and at least 50 years of maintenance. Ask Tony. He will tell you, the right space is a valuable thing.

Without a good architect specifying quality building products and construction details, owners do not know what quality of construction they are paying for. Poorly constructed buildings made with inferior products have 10 percent higher maintenance costs. Owners lose their inflation hedge by continually spending new dollars to finance and fix bad buildings. Only short-term thinkers design and build poorly.

"Spock, will you *please* sit down!"

In a competitive market, you need all the advantages to maximize your building investment. Let the others put their life on hold for two years trying to sell a boring and inefficient property. When function and aesthetics merge, the demand for ownership persists. Location, location, location . . . yes. But design, design, design, too.

Go boldly where others may not go. Live long, and prosper. Or as the Ferengi say, "Never confuse wisdom with luck."

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