

# The Aesthetic Framework: 9 Core Archetypes

*This framework provides a comprehensive taxonomy for architectural and urban aesthetic preferences, designed for precise algorithmic profiling and personalized recommendations.*

## The 9 Core Aesthetic Archetypes

### 1. The Classicist

**Core Concept:** Embodies reverence for enduring principles of order, harmony, and grandeur inherited from Greek and Roman antiquity. Built on mathematical proportion and the belief that true beauty is timeless and rational.

**The Vibe:** Formal, Symmetrical, Grand, Rational, Ornate, Enduring

**Core Qualities:**

- **Structural Logic:** Clear emphasis on symmetry, axial planning, and geometric purity
- **Classical Orders:** Deliberate use of Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian columns, pilasters, and entablatures
- **Architectural Elements:** Prominent use of pediments, domes, arches, and coffered ceilings
- **Refined Materiality:** Preference for noble materials that signify permanence: marble, stone, fine woods
- **Controlled Ornamentation:** Intricate but highly organized decoration, including moldings, friezes, and carved garlands

**Umbrella Movements:** Renaissance & Palladianism, Baroque, Rococo, Neoclassicism, Beaux-Arts, Georgian & Federal Styles

**Urban Expression:** Grand boulevards, formal squares, monumental civic buildings, hierarchical street networks

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### 2. The Romantic

**Core Concept:** Prioritizes emotion, narrative, and individualism over rational order. Finds beauty in the expressive, historical, layered, and sublime power of nature.

**The Vibe:** Expressive, Story-Driven, Whimsical, Layered, Evocative, Atmospheric

**Core Qualities:**

- **Asymmetry and Organic Forms:** Rejection of rigid symmetry in favor of natural and complex compositions
- **Historicism and Eclecticism:** Deep appreciation for history, often blending elements from different eras
- **Symbolism and Narrative:** Objects and spaces should tell stories or evoke specific moods

- **Textural Richness:** Love for opulent and tactile materials like velvet, silk, chintz, and dark carved woods
- **Atmospheric Lighting:** Preference for dramatic, moody, and varied lighting conditions

**Umbrella Movements:** Gothic Revival, Victorian Eclecticism, Art Nouveau, Bohemian & Maximalist Styles, Dark Academia, Cottagecore

**Urban Expression:** Winding medieval streets, hidden courtyards, Gothic cathedrals, picturesque neighborhoods

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### 3. The Stylist

**Core Concept:** Defined by appreciation for glamour, surface, and visual rhythm. A confident and polished aesthetic that treats design as sophisticated curation.

**The Vibe:** Glamorous, Geometric, Luxurious, Polished, Confident, Sophisticated

**Core Qualities:**

- **Emphasis on Surface and Pattern:** Focus on bold, repeating geometric patterns and high-gloss surfaces
- **Polished Materiality:** Preference for sleek, reflective materials like lacquer, polished brass, chrome, and mirrored glass
- **Rhythmic Geometry:** Use of strong, repetitive motifs such as chevrons and sunbursts
- **Elegant Forms:** Preference for furniture and objects with strong, graceful silhouettes
- **Curated Compositions:** Careful arrangement and staging of elements for maximum visual impact

**Umbrella Movements:** Art Deco, Streamline Moderne, Hollywood Regency, Contemporary Luxury Design

**Urban Expression:** Luxury shopping districts, boutique hotels, high-end residential towers, designed nightlife districts

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### 4. The Modernist

**Core Concept:** Driven by belief in universal principles, functionalism, and rejection of unnecessary ornament. A rationalist pursuit of clarity and new aesthetic for the machine age.

**The Vibe:** Clean, Intentional, Minimal, Universal, Functional, Sleek, Systematic

**Core Qualities:**

- **Form Follows Function:** Shape should be primarily based upon intended function
- **Rejection of Ornament:** Beauty arises from purity of form and material
- **Truth to Materials:** Honest expression of modern, industrial materials like steel, glass, and concrete
- **Visual Clarity:** Emphasis on open space, light, and logical, grid-based organization
- **Systematic Thinking:** Preference for modular, repeatable systems and standardized solutions

**Umbrella Movements:** Bauhaus, International Style, De Stijl, Minimalism, Super Normal Design, Contemporary Minimalism

**Urban Expression:** Glass office towers, modernist housing estates, clean transit systems, rational street grids

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## 5. The Industrialist

**Core Concept:** Finds beauty in the raw, utilitarian, and exposed. Values honesty, durability, and character that comes from use and age.

**The Vibe:** Raw, Utilitarian, Edgy, Exposed, Functional, Urban, Authentic

**Core Qualities:**

- **Exposure of Structure:** Celebration of exposed brick, ductwork, and structural beams
- **Utilitarian Forms:** Preference for objects designed for function, often from factories or workshops
- **Patina and Wear:** Appreciation for materials that show their history, like weathered wood and aged metal
- **Functional Honesty:** Authentic expression of mechanical systems and infrastructure
- **Adaptive Reuse:** Finding beauty in converted warehouses, repurposed materials, and industrial heritage

**Subtype: The Infrastructuralist**

**Core Concept:** Celebrates the monumental scale and systematic complexity of large-scale infrastructure and megastructures.

**Additional Qualities:**

- **Megastructural Scale:** Appreciation for massive engineering projects and their visual impact
- **Systematic Repetition:** Beauty in modular systems repeated at vast scales
- **Technological Expression:** Celebration of cutting-edge engineering and construction
- **Engineering Aesthetics:** Finding beauty in structural efficiency and technical solutions

**Related Movements:** High-Tech Architecture, Structural Expressionism, Infrastructure Tourism, Megastructure Movement

**Umbrella Movements:** Industrial Heritage, Loft Living, Adaptive Reuse, Warehouse Conversion

**Urban Expression:** Converted warehouses, exposed infrastructure, industrial districts, working waterfronts, power plants, bridges, transit hubs

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## 6. The Visionary

**Core Concept:** Defined by relentless drive to push boundaries, experiment with form, and speculate on the future. Leverages new technologies to create sculptural, dynamic, previously unimaginable designs.

**The Vibe:** Sculptural, Unconventional, Dynamic, Bold, Innovative, Playful, Experimental

### **Core Qualities:**

- **Formal Experimentation:** Rejection of traditional forms in favor of fragmentation and complexity
- **Conceptual Depth:** Design driven by strong theoretical or philosophical ideas
- **Technological Integration:** Use of cutting-edge technology like digital modeling and AI to generate complex forms
- **Boundary Pushing:** Willingness to challenge conventions and propose radical alternatives
- **Future-Oriented:** Designs that anticipate or provoke new ways of living

**Umbrella Movements:** Deconstructivism, Parametricism, Postmodernism, Blob Architecture, Digital Architecture, Critical Architecture

**Urban Expression:** Iconic cultural buildings, experimental housing, tech campuses, futuristic transit hubs

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## **7. The Pop Culturalist**

**Core Concept:** Engages with aesthetics of commercialism, mass media, and spectacle, often with theatricality and irony. Uses design to communicate familiar symbols and create immediately legible experiences.

**The Vibe:** Thematic, Iconic, Commercial, Ironic, Spectacular, Theatrical, Accessible

### **Core Qualities:**

- **Use of Semiotics:** Deployment of recognizable signs, logos, and icons from mass culture
- **Spectacle and Theming:** Creation of immersive, often exaggerated, narrative environments
- **Commercial Integration:** Design unapologetically linked to commerce and entertainment
- **Irony and Kitsch:** Playful, often critical, embrace of popular taste and nostalgia
- **Immediate Legibility:** Designs that communicate quickly and clearly to broad audiences

**Umbrella Movements:** Pop Art Architecture, Postmodern Classicism, Googie Architecture, Entertainment Architecture, Branded Environments

**Urban Expression:** Times Square, Las Vegas Strip, theme parks, shopping malls, entertainment districts

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## **8. The Vernacularist**

**Core Concept:** Champions localized, indigenous, and community-born design traditions developed outside elite academic structures. Foregrounds cultural continuity, climatic intelligence, and embodied knowledge.

**The Vibe:** Rooted, Climatic, Communal, Tactile, Intuitive, Regional, Sustainable

### **Core Qualities:**

- **Embodied Knowledge:** Techniques and forms passed through oral tradition or apprenticeship
- **Material Localism:** Use of regional materials like mud, thatch, local stone, and indigenous woods
- **Climatic Intelligence:** Passive design strategies that respond to local environment
- **Socio-Spatial Integration:** Strong relationship between space design and community life rhythms
- **Cultural Continuity:** Respect for traditional building methods and local craft traditions

#### **Subtype: The Naturalist**

**Core Concept:** Values inherent beauty of natural materials and creation of serene, grounded environments through craft and organic forms.

#### **Additional Qualities:**

- **Material Honesty:** Celebration of wood grain, stone texture, natural fibers
- **Craft Emphasis:** Preference for handmade, artisanal quality
- **Organic Forms:** Shapes derived from or inspired by nature
- **Human-Centered Simplicity:** Warm minimalism that prioritizes comfort and connection

**Related Movements:** Arts & Crafts Movement, Prairie School, Scandinavian Design, Japandi, Biophilic Design

**Umbrella Movements:** Indigenous Architectures, Critical Regionalism, Tropical Modernism, Mud/Adobe/Rammed Earth Traditions, Sustainable Design

**Urban Expression:** Historic neighborhoods, local markets, craft districts, sustainable communities, cultural quarters

## **9. The Austerist**

**Core Concept:** Efficiency-driven design optimized for function, cost, and standardization. Represents the pragmatic backbone of the built environment through systematic, no-frills solutions.

**The Vibe:** Efficient, Systematic, Practical, Standardized, Functional, Universal, Cost-Conscious

#### **Core Qualities:**

- **Optimized Functionality:** Maximum utility with minimum resources and complexity
- **Standardized Systems:** Reliance on proven, mass-produced components and catalogued solutions
- **Cost-Conscious Solutions:** Design driven by economic efficiency and value engineering
- **Universal Accessibility:** Focus on meeting codes, standards, and basic human needs
- **Systematic Organization:** Spaces organized by logical constraints: circulation, fire codes, zoning
- **Temporal Consistency:** Unchanging environments designed for reliable, predictable function

**Umbrella Movements:** Corporate Architecture, Big-Box Retail, Institutional Design, Public Housing, Standard Office Buildings

**Urban Expression:** Business parks, strip malls, apartment complexes, institutional buildings, suburban office parks

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## Algorithmic Implementation Notes

### Scoring Strategy

- **Primary Category:** +5 points - Strong alignment with archetype
- **Secondary Category:** +2 points - Related or complementary aesthetic
- **Tertiary Category:** +0.5 points - Subtle influence (use sparingly)
- **Contradictory Penalty:** -1 point - For opposing aesthetic choices

### Subtype Resolution

#### For Industrialist/Infrastructuralist:

- Track both parent and subtype scores
- If Industrialist score > 40 AND Infrastructuralist subscore > 60% of Industrialist score → Classify as Infrastructuralist
- Otherwise → Classify as general Industrialist

#### For Vernacularist/Naturalist:

- Track both parent and subtype scores
- If Vernacularist score > 40 AND Naturalist subscore > 60% of Vernacularist score → Classify as Naturalist
- Otherwise → Classify as general Vernacularist

### Category Relationships

#### Natural Affinities:

- Classicist ↔ Stylist (shared appreciation for refinement)
- Modernist ↔ Industrialist (systematic thinking, honest materials)
- Romantic ↔ Vernacularist (historical appreciation)
- Industrialist ↔ Austerist (utilitarian focus)

#### Natural Oppositions:

- Modernist ↔ Romantic (rational vs emotional)
- Austerist ↔ Stylist (utilitarian vs decorative)
- Classicist ↔ Industrialist (refined vs raw)
- Vernacularist ↔ Pop Culturalist (authentic vs commercial)

### Confidence Scoring

Track three metrics:

1. **Response Decisiveness:** How strongly user selects preferences (quick vs hesitant)

2. **Cross-Scale Consistency:** Alignment across different architectural scales
3. **Category Separation:** Clear winning aesthetic vs. multiple close scores

## **Quiz Balance Requirements**

Each archetype needs:

- **5-7 primary scoring opportunities** across all questions
- **3-4 secondary scoring opportunities**
- **Maximum 2-3 tertiary scores** (to avoid noise)

Current distribution target for 15-18 questions:

- Questions 1-3: Master Planning scale
- Questions 4-8: Urban/Building scale
- Questions 9-12: Interior/Space scale
- Questions 13-15: Object/Detail scale
- Questions 16-18: Text/Philosophical

## **Urban Context Integration**

Each archetype includes "Urban Expression" to connect individual aesthetic preferences to citywide experiences and walking route recommendations. This enables the app to suggest neighborhoods, buildings, and routes that align with user preferences.