

About analyzing 36 buildings of the FAR Game

Ahn Keehyun

Analyzing and explaining a design process and its methodology of a building with a single perspective ("the FAR Game") is not an easy task. In a design process, not only intention(will) of the architect but also ever changing requests from the client, limited budget and time, various regulations, compromises due to the collaboration with contractors and all other things are involved as independent variables. Moreover, such variables don't just come in order but simultaneously and repeatedly, so it seems almost impossible to explain a design process with a single perspective. Nevertheless, under the title of "The FAR Game", we tried to analyze and interpret 36 buildings designed by architects. Constructed in Class II general residential area during recent 10 years, these 36 buildings are well explaining about changes in the Korean construction market (the decline of apartment construction and the present trend demanding diversity) and about other phenomenon triggered by architects (especially young ones) who is stepping into the market which originally has been led by builders. But there are more important things which have drawn our attention. The first one is that the 36 buildings are not promoting themselves as a piece of artwork of architects but as a very practical and ordinary building. The second is they are used as a medium controlling and reliving the desires of client with a design which is meticulously and fiercely calculated considering both FAR and other extrinsic variables. And the last thing is various gestures reflecting architectural values (quantitative and qualitative) embodied by architects into those buildings. Focusing on these three aspects, we analyzed the 36 buildings and came to realize that those aspects were the very factors which have shaped all sorts of buildings in Korea just as they are now.

As it's mentioned above, this attempt is close to impossible and vulnerable to errors, but it will give us good opportunities to come up with varied agendas and discussions on changes in the Korean architectural scene (led by changes in market due to the beginning of the age of austerity, the emergence of young architects and etc.). At the same time, because our work well corresponds with the theme of this year's Venice Biennale, 'Reporting from the Front', we believe that it will help to introduce the uniqueness and universality of Korean architecture to publics/architects/professionals from all around the world and so to have a discussion with them.