

# The ethical function of 'The ethical function of architecture'

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## Abstract

“This is not at all a book in what might be called ‘architectural ethics’”. In the very beginning of his *The ethical function of architecture* Karsten Harries states very clearly that he does not want his book to be understood as a contribution to the ethics of architecture. Given the title of the book, this is astonishing and a couple of questions arises: what is an architectural ethics actually? Why are there so little contributions to it? Is an architectural ethics needed at all? And if so, what features should it have? Indeed, what Harries does in his book is not at all ‘classical’ ethics, understood as developing and arguing for normative statements regarding the professional behaviour of architects. Instead, he shows that the highest goal of architecture—its ethical function—is to enable the dwelling of human beings. Thereby, since architecture is about improving a given situation, Harries mentions also the point of reverence for the acting of every architect. And in doing so, he lays the eudaimonistic foundations for building a normative architectural ethics in a classical sense. But given that one could do ethics on a normative and an eudaimonistic level, Harries’ book has to be understood as a contribution to what might be called “architectural ethics”.

## Keywords

Ethics of the Architect, Ethics, Morality, Building Culture, Ethics of Principles