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NCARB Project-Planning-Design Exam Syllabus Topics:

Topic	Details
Topic 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codes & Regulations: This section of the exam measures the skills of project architects and focuses on applying zoning laws, environmental rules, and building codes during the planning stage. Candidates are tested on how to integrate multiple regulatory requirements into a project's design effectively.
Topic 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Costs & Budgeting: This section of the exam measures skills of architectural designers and assesses the ability to evaluate design alternatives based on program goals, perform cost evaluations, and manage cost considerations throughout the design process.
Topic 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Conditions & Context: This section of the exam measures skills of architectural designers and covers how to use site analysis information to determine building placement and environmental planning decisions. It emphasizes applying sustainable principles and considering the neighborhood context to guide project design.
Topic 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Integration of Program & Systems: This section of the exam measures skills of project architects and focuses on integrating decisions about environmental conditions, codes, and building systems into one cohesive project design. It highlights how to configure the building and incorporate both program requirements and contextual conditions in a unified design approach.
Topic 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Systems, Materials, & Assemblies: This section of the exam measures skills of architectural designers and covers the understanding of building systems such as mechanical, electrical, and plumbing, along with structural and specialty systems. It also involves selecting appropriate materials and assemblies to align with program needs, budgets, and regulations.

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NCARB ARE 5.0 Project Planning & Design (PPD) Sample Questions (Q66-Q71):

NEW QUESTION # 66

To reduce embodied energy in a 500-unit redevelopment, the architect should create a strategy to include which of the following? Check the three that apply.

- A. Use simple geometric structures
- B. Construct buildings and infrastructure from local and low-energy materials where possible
- C. Re-use existing buildings and structures wherever possible
- D. Decrease the percentage of high-rise units
- E. Orient the building to create transitional spaces within the development
- F. Increase the percentage of single-story units

Answer: A,B,C

Explanation:

Comprehensive and Detailed Explanation From Exact Extract:

Reducing embodied energy involves strategies that minimize new material production and transportation impacts:

Re-using existing buildings (A) avoids new material consumption and demolition waste.

Using local and low-energy materials (C) reduces transportation energy and energy-intensive materials.

Simple geometric structures (F) use fewer materials and minimize complexity, lowering embodied energy.

Orientation and transitional spaces (B) mainly affect operational energy, not embodied energy.

Altering the proportion of high-rise or single-story units (D, E) affects land use and operational efficiency more than embodied energy.

NCARB emphasizes these strategies in sustainable design practices.

References:

ARE 5.0 PPD - Environmental Conditions and Context, Sustainable Design

The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice, 15th Edition - Sustainable Building Materials

NEW QUESTION # 67

If evaluating on a life-cycle basis, which of the following effects is the major reason for using native or adapted plantings on-site?

- A. Reduction in transplantation costs
- B. Reduction in root adaptation time period
- C. Reduction in irrigation water and fertilizer

Answer: C

Explanation:

Comprehensive and Detailed Explanation From Exact Extract:

Native or adapted plantings are used primarily to reduce long-term environmental and maintenance costs in sustainable site design.

The most significant life-cycle benefit is the reduction in irrigation water and fertilizer requirements because native plants are naturally suited to local climate and soil conditions. They typically require less supplemental watering, fertilizer, and pesticide use, which reduces resource consumption and maintenance efforts over the plantings' lifespan.

Option B (Reduction in root adaptation time period) is a minor factor relative to water and nutrient needs.

Option C (Reduction in transplantation costs) relates more to initial installation cost rather than long-term life-cycle impacts.

Using native or adapted plant species supports sustainable landscape design principles emphasized in the NCARB PPD content, contributing to water conservation, reduced chemical use, and improved ecological performance.

References:

ARE 5.0 PPD - Environmental Conditions and Context, Sustainable Site Design The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice, 15th Edition - Landscape and Site Planning NCARB Sustainable Design Guidelines

NEW QUESTION # 68

An architect is designing a multistory student housing project to be built of light wood framing. The following criteria must be met:

Minimize the floor assembly thickness

Maximize ceiling height

No individual HVAC room controls

No exposed ductwork

Which HVAC system should be selected for this project?

- A. Variable air volume (VAV)
- B. Four-pipe fan-coil system
- C. Packaged terminal units (PTAC)

Answer: B

Explanation:

For multistory residential buildings such as student housing with light wood framing, HVAC system selection must balance space constraints and occupant comfort. The requirement to minimize floor thickness and maximize ceiling height typically rules out bulky ductwork or ceiling-mounted systems.

Packaged Terminal Air Conditioners (PTACs) provide individual room control and require wall penetrations, conflicting with the "no individual HVAC room controls" and likely leading to more complex maintenance.

Variable Air Volume (VAV) systems typically require extensive ductwork and ceiling space, contradicting the goal to minimize floor thickness and eliminate exposed ductwork.

The Four-pipe fan-coil system is an efficient choice for this application: it uses small fan coil units within the ceiling or wall cavities with chilled and hot water supply pipes running vertically. This system minimizes the thickness of mechanical floors and allows centralized control rather than individual room controls. The fan coil units can be concealed, addressing the "no exposed ductwork" criterion.

This approach aligns with NCARB's guidance on HVAC system selection for multifamily and residential occupancies where ceiling height and floor thickness are critical constraints, and centralized control systems are preferred for ease of maintenance and energy management.

References:

ARE 5.0 PPD Study Guide - Building Systems and Assemblies

The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice, 15th Edition - Mechanical Systems NCARB Guidelines on HVAC Systems for Residential Buildings

NEW QUESTION # 69

An elementary school requires a renovation, selective demolition, and a major addition in order to accommodate a growing student population. An architectural firm has prepared schematic design plans incorporating the school's increased programmatic needs, including an enlarged library, cafeteria, and gymnasium; a secure courtyard; and additional space for administrative offices and classrooms. The main entrance was relocated in order to improve the traffic and pedestrian flow at the beginning and end of the school day, and additional parking was provided to comply with current zoning requirements.

The existing single-story masonry building was built in 1950. Two small additions were built later: the north addition will be kept and repurposed, but the south addition will be demolished. The building contains asbestos and lead in roof soffits, floor tiles, pipe insulation, and window paint. All existing mechanical systems need to be replaced; new systems have not been selected.

Considerations for the renovation include:

- * The relocated front entrance must be easily recognizable, highly visible, and secure.
- * Interior and exterior materials need to be durable and maintainable in order to withstand frequent student abuse, but also economical due to strict budget limitations.
- * Good indoor air quality and increased energy efficiency are priorities for the selection of mechanical equipment.

After completion, the entire school should look uniform, without a distinctive difference between the existing building and new addition.

Building information:

- * Construction Type is II-B.

The following resources are available for your reference:

- * Existing Plans, including site and floor plans
- * Proposed Plans, including site and floor plans
- * Cost Analysis
- * Zoning Ordinance Excerpts, for off-street parking requirements
- * IBC Excerpts, showing relevant code sections
- * ADA Standards Excerpts, showing relevant sections from the ADA Standards for Accessible Design When the addition is completed, the school will be fully sprinkled per NFPA 13 Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems requirements, with a

continuous 24-foot wide fire access lane provided around the building perimeter.

Through a code analysis, the combination of construction type, occupancy, and building area present a compliance problem.

- A. Check frontage area increase
- B. Add firewall to design
- C. Reduce building area

Answer: A

Explanation:

Comprehensive and Detailed Explanation From Exact Extract:

When a building's size and occupancy cause non-compliance with allowable building area or frontage requirements, the architect should first check frontage area increase provisions allowed by the code. The frontage increase can allow a larger building area based on the length of street frontage and fire access, especially when sprinklers and fire lanes are provided.

Adding firewalls (A) is a method to subdivide building area but is typically considered after exploring frontage increases.

Reducing building area (C) is a last resort if other allowances are insufficient.

Therefore, the architect should first verify if frontage area increases resolve the compliance issue.

References:

IBC Chapter 5 - Building Area and Height Limits

NFPA 13 - Sprinkler System Requirements

ARE 5.0 PPD - Codes and Regulations

NEW QUESTION # 70

Refer to the exhibit (multi-use building with apartments, offices, stores, parking).



The multipurpose building shown is located in a cold-winter, mild-summer climate.

Which of the following is the best location for the mechanical equipment floor?

- A. Store level
- B. Between the office and apartment levels
- C. Parking level
- D. Top floor

Answer: B

Explanation:

Comprehensive and Detailed Explanation From Exact Extract:

In mixed-use buildings in cold climates, placing mechanical equipment in a mid-level floor between different occupancy types (C) offers several benefits:

This location reduces the length and complexity of vertical distribution of heating and cooling systems to both apartments (above) and offices (below).

It avoids heat loss associated with exterior walls (as opposed to the top floor or parking level).

The equipment can be more centrally located, improving energy efficiency and system performance.

Locating equipment on the parking level (A) or store level (B) may require longer ductwork or piping runs and pose maintenance challenges.

The top floor (D) exposes mechanical equipment to outdoor weather, which is not ideal in cold climates.

References:

ARE 5.0 PPD - Building Systems and Assemblies, Mechanical Systems in Mixed-Use Buildings The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice, 15th Edition - HVAC Systems Design

NEW QUESTION # 71

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