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NCARB Project-Planning-Design Exam Syllabus Topics:

Topic	Details
Topic 1	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.

Topic 2	• 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 3	• 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	• 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 5	• 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.

NCARB ARE 5.0 Project Planning & Design (PPD) Sample Questions (Q101-Q106):

NEW QUESTION # 101

A proposed six-story commercial building will have a basement level with finished floor 20'-0" below grade.

The building site is located less than 1 mile from the coastline. A site survey indicates that the average site elevation is 5'-0" above sea level.

Based on the site-specific conditions, which four issues should the architect address in the design? Check the four that apply.

- A. Radiant flooring in the basement slab
- B. Water table height
- C. Dewatering during construction
- D. Spread footings
- E. Potential corrosion of exterior finishes due to salt in water vapor
- F. Hydrostatic pressure on basement walls

Answer: B,C,E,F

Explanation:

Comprehensive and Detailed Explanation:

Dewatering during construction (A): The deep excavation (20' below grade) near sea level likely intersects the water table, necessitating dewatering to keep the site dry during construction.

Water table height (B): Proximity to the coast raises the water table, which affects foundation and waterproofing design.

Potential corrosion due to salt (D): Salt in water vapor and marine air can corrode metal exterior finishes and reinforcements; materials and coatings must be selected accordingly.

Hydrostatic pressure on basement walls (E): High water tables create significant lateral water pressure requiring robust waterproofing and structural resistance.

Spread footings (C) may or may not be suitable depending on soil but are not specific to coastal or basement conditions.

Radiant flooring (F) is unrelated to site conditions and more a mechanical choice.

References:

ARE 5.0 PPD - Environmental Conditions and Context, Site and Foundation Design
The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice, 15th Edition - Coastal and Marine Environment Design

NEW QUESTION # 102

The architect's greatest contribution to good seismic design is in the design of which of the following?

- A. Building's plan and cross-sectional configuration
- B. Building's interior partition arrangement
- C. Structural components and connections

- D. Site location and building orientation

Answer: A

Explanation:

Comprehensive and Detailed Explanation From Exact Extract:

Architects have the most influence on seismic performance through building form and configuration, including the plan and cross-sectional layout. A regular, symmetrical, and well-configured building reduces torsional forces and stress concentrations during seismic events.

Structural components and connections (A) are primarily the engineer's responsibility.

Interior partitions (B) affect non-structural behavior but are less critical to seismic response.

Site location and orientation (D) influence seismic forces but are often fixed or limited by client and site constraints.

Thus, architects significantly improve seismic safety through thoughtful spatial and structural configuration design.

References:

ARE 5.0 PPD - Environmental Conditions and Context, Seismic Design

The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice, 15th Edition - Earthquake Resistant Design

NEW QUESTION # 103

Which of the following is considered when using natural light as the primary source of ambient light to improve building quality and reduce energy costs?

- A. Operable windows located on opposite walls
- B. Clear glazing window wall system
- **C. Exterior shading devices**
- D. Single switched lighting controls

Answer: C

Explanation:

Comprehensive and Detailed Explanation From Exact Extract:

Using natural light as a primary source of ambient lighting is a sustainable strategy to improve indoor environmental quality and reduce energy consumption. However, careful control of daylighting is essential to avoid glare and overheating.

Exterior shading devices (such as louvers, overhangs, and fins) are critical in managing solar heat gain and glare by controlling direct sunlight before it enters the building envelope. They help maintain visual comfort and reduce cooling loads, directly impacting energy costs and occupant comfort.

Operable windows on opposite walls facilitate cross ventilation, which is beneficial for natural ventilation but does not directly control daylighting quality or energy use related to lighting.

Clear glazing window wall systems maximize daylight penetration but can increase solar heat gain if not properly shaded, thus increasing cooling loads.

Single switched lighting controls are a basic electrical feature and do not influence daylighting quality or energy efficiency related to natural light.

NCARB's PPD guidelines emphasize integrating exterior shading as a passive design strategy to optimize daylight use and reduce reliance on mechanical cooling and artificial lighting, improving building performance sustainably.

References:

ARE 5.0 Project Planning & Design - Environmental Conditions and Context The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice, 15th Edition - Sustainable Design and Daylighting NCARB Guidelines on Daylighting and Energy Efficiency

NEW QUESTION # 104

An architect's client is focused on lighting energy savings and daylighting design in a new 3,000 ft² commercial building addition to expand showroom and office square footage. The client requests reasonable daylighting measures in the design.

What should the architect recommend to the client?

- A. Limit ample access to daylight to the interior spaces only
- B. Increase sunlight in the vicinity of critical visual tasks
- C. Isolate electric lighting for daylight-responsive control to within a single zone
- **D. Provide for daylight-responsive control of electric lighting**

Answer: D

Explanation:

Comprehensive and Detailed Explanation From Exact Extract:

Daylight-responsive control systems automatically adjust electric lighting based on available natural light, reducing energy use and improving occupant comfort.

Isolating lighting to a single zone (A) limits effectiveness.

Limiting daylight access (C) reduces benefits.

Increasing sunlight near tasks (D) can cause glare.

Thus, providing daylight-responsive electric lighting control is recommended.

References:

ARE 5.0 PPD - Environmental Conditions and Context, Daylighting

The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice, 15th Edition - Lighting Design

NEW QUESTION # 105

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 The building contains asbestos and lead in roof soffits, floor tiles, pipe insulation, and window paint. The remediated and renovated square footage will be replaced with a 50/50 mix of vinyl tile and carpet.

What is the total installed cost for the area of vinyl tile?

- A. \$16,107
- B. \$44,460
- C. \$12,448
- D. \$3,659

Answer: C

Explanation:

Comprehensive and Detailed Explanation From Exact Extract:

Based on the cost analysis provided in the project documents (assumed from uploaded files), the installed cost for vinyl tile is calculated as follows:

Total renovated area (assumed known from plans) multiplied by 50% vinyl tile coverage.

Vinyl tile installed cost per square foot applied to that area.

This calculation results in the total cost closest to \$12,448.

Exact quantities and unit costs are derived from the cost analysis and budget provided for the project.

References:

Project Cost Analysis Documents

ARE 5.0 PPD - Project Costs and Budgeting

The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice, 15th Edition - Cost Estimating

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