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NCARB Project-Planning-Design Exam Syllabus Topics:

Topic	Details
Topic 1	<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 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"> 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 4	<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 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.

NCARB ARE 5.0 Project Planning & Design (PPD) Sample Questions (Q92-Q97):

NEW QUESTION # 92

A site has been engineered with a 1:20 grade.

Which of the following sidewalk designs would be the most cost-effective way to get from the top to the bottom and still be in compliance with the accessibility standards?

- A. Cutting diagonally across the slope at 1:10 with a handrail
- B. At the same grade as the slope with no handrail
- C. Switchback ramps at 1:12 with a handrail
- **D. Cutting diagonally across the slope at 1:12 with no handrail**

Answer: D

Explanation:

Comprehensive and Detailed Explanation From Exact Extract:

A 1:20 slope means a 5% grade (1 vertical unit per 20 horizontal units), which is slightly steeper than the ideal maximum slope for accessible ramps.

* Option C: Cutting diagonally across the slope at 1:12 (~8.33%) slope without a handrail is the most cost-effective design that still complies with accessibility standards. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ICC A117.1, the maximum slope for an accessible ramp is 1:12. Handrails are required on ramps with a rise greater than 6 inches (150 mm). If the rise is less than 6 inches, handrails are not required.

Because the diagonal cut reduces the slope to 1:12 and the total rise is likely less than 6 inches given the gentle 1:20 original slope, handrails are not mandatory, making this solution economical and code compliant.

* Option A: Switchback ramps at 1:12 with handrails are compliant but more expensive due to increased construction complexity and space requirements.

* Option B: A 1:10 slope (10%) exceeds the maximum allowed slope for accessible ramps and requires handrails, thus non-compliant.

* Option D: Following the existing 1:20 slope without modification does not provide the maximum accessibility slope and may be acceptable but might not comply with certain stricter local codes for ramps.

Therefore, Option C balances accessibility, cost, and compliance optimally.

References:

ARE 5.0 Project Planning & Design Content Outline: Environmental Conditions and Context - Site Accessibility and Grading ADA Standards for Accessible Design (2010) ICC A117.1 Accessibility Standards The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice, 15th Edition, Chapter 7: Site Planning and Accessibility

NEW QUESTION # 93

Which existing site elements are most important to locate in preparing a schematic design phase site plan for an adaptive reuse project?

- A. Utilities and services
- B. Structures and site improvements to be removed
- C. Structures and site elements programmed to remain

Answer: C

Explanation:

Comprehensive and Detailed Explanation From Exact Extract:

In adaptive reuse projects, the most important existing site elements to locate early in schematic design are those programmed to remain, as they define constraints and opportunities for design, preservation, and integration.

Structures to be removed (A) are important but secondary as they will not impact final design.

Utilities and services (B) are critical but often identified after understanding existing building layout.

Focusing on elements to remain ensures the design respects existing conditions and capitalizes on retained assets.

References:

ARE 5.0 PPD - Project Integration of Program and Systems, Adaptive Reuse The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice, 15th Edition - Site Analysis

NEW QUESTION # 94

Which light fixture and finish configuration will increase the apparent length of an office corridor?

- A. Provide indirect cove lighting and paint the ceiling a light color.
- B. Install direct lighting pendants and a light color, highly reflective floor finish.
- C. Install direct lighting pendants and paint the ceiling a dark color.
- D. Install lighting parallel to the sight line and paint the ceiling a dark color.

Answer: A

Explanation:

Comprehensive and Detailed Explanation From Exact Extract:

The apparent length of a corridor can be influenced by lighting and finish strategies that affect perception of depth and spatial volume.

* Option D: Providing indirect cove lighting and painting the ceiling a light color helps increase the apparent length of the corridor.

Indirect lighting washes light softly onto the ceiling and walls, creating a continuous visual flow along the corridor. When combined with a light-colored ceiling, this reduces shadows and visual breaks, making the corridor feel longer and more expansive.

* Option A and C: Dark-colored ceilings absorb light and visually compress spaces, making corridors feel shorter and more confined. Direct lighting pendants create localized illumination that can produce shadows and disrupt visual continuity, which diminishes perceived length.

* Option B: While a light, highly reflective floor finish can brighten the corridor, direct lighting pendants and lack of emphasis on ceiling treatment limit the extension of perceived length. Reflective floors can increase brightness but don't significantly elongate space without complementary ceiling and wall treatments.

NCARB's ARE Project Planning & Design guidelines highlight that light color, fixture type, and ceiling finish greatly affect spatial perception. Light, evenly distributed illumination combined with light ceiling colors enhances the feeling of spaciousness and length in enclosed spaces like corridors.

References:

ARE 5.0 Project Planning & Design Content Outline: Environmental Conditions and Context - Lighting and Material Finishes The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice, 15th Edition, Chapter 9: Interior Environments and Lighting NCARB PPD Study Materials: Perception of Space and Lighting Strategies

NEW QUESTION # 95

A church congregation has hired an architect to help them determine the feasibility of converting a retail strip mall space into a new church. The space is 30' wide and 125' long and is in an interior location with tenants on both long sides. The client has requested the following:

Natural light into the central gathering space

Nursery space for young children

Church office space

Adequate restrooms

Visually appealing landscaping

Which of the following should the architect consider to help determine if the project can move forward?

Check the three that apply.

- A. Investigate the existing water and sewer services to determine their adequacy for the new use classification.
- B. Check the existing roof structure to determine potential locations for skylights.
- C. Conduct a demographic survey to determine the number of children to be served by the nursery.
- D. Analyze the existing building exits to determine their adequacy for the new use classification.
- E. Conduct a demographic survey of church membership to determine the capacity of the new restrooms.
- F. Engage a landscaping consultant to determine visually appealing landscaping options.

Answer: A,B,D

Explanation:

Comprehensive and Detailed Explanation From Exact Extract:

When converting a retail strip mall to a church, the architect must verify that the existing building infrastructure supports the new occupancy:

(A) Exits and egress must be adequate per fire and life safety codes for assembly occupancy.

(B) Roof structure must be evaluated for installing skylights to bring natural light into central spaces.

(C) Water and sewer services need to support increased demand, especially with added restrooms and nursery.

Demographic surveys (D, E) inform program design but do not determine feasibility.

Landscaping consultants (F) are part of later design phases, not initial feasibility.

References:

ARE 5.0 PPD - Project Integration of Program and Systems

The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice, 15th Edition - Adaptive Reuse

NEW QUESTION # 96

Which strategy enhances passive solar residential design in the northern hemisphere?

- A. Eliminating insulated glazing along the northern walls
- B. Installing an electric baseboard heating system
- C. Locating deciduous trees along the south side of the house
- D. Reducing heat storage capacity

Answer: C

Explanation:

Comprehensive and Detailed Explanation From Exact Extract:

Passive solar design in the northern hemisphere relies on maximizing solar gain during the winter while minimizing overheating during summer.

Deciduous trees located on the south side provide shade during the summer (when they have leaves), reducing cooling loads, and allow sunlight to penetrate in the winter after leaf fall, enhancing solar heat gain. This seasonal shading improves comfort and energy efficiency.

Eliminating insulated glazing on the north walls (B) increases heat loss, which is undesirable in cold climates.

Reducing heat storage capacity (C) lowers the building's thermal mass, decreasing its ability to moderate temperature swings, which is counterproductive.

Installing electric baseboard heating (D) is a mechanical solution and does not enhance passive solar design.

Therefore, option A is the best strategy consistent with passive solar principles.

References:

ARE 5.0 PPD - Environmental Conditions and Context, Passive Solar Design The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice, 15th Edition - Sustainable Design Strategies

NEW QUESTION # 97

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