Acta Technica Napocensis: Civil Engineering & Architecture Vol. 59 No. 3 (2016)

Journal homepage: http://constructii.utcluj.ro/ActaCivilEng
Special Issue– 5th International Workshop in Architecture and Urban Planning
Buildings-Cities-Territory

Architectural Connection in Historic Areas Contemporary Interventions

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(Published online 14 March 2017)

Abstract

Architecture is timeless, but buildings cohabit periodically in territory. New and old relationship is an ample debate in historic areas architecture intervention discourse. Organizations, agencies and institutions are concerned with elaborating published documents, declarations, charters, norms and laws in order to instrument design in places with heritage values. The study is focused on new freestanding buildings in historic environments. New architecture insertions in historic settings which are considered for the present research are additions to larger historic urban environments with delineated ensembles. The link between architectural interventions and the historic habitat is analyzed from the written literature perspective. Design policies, control, regulations, approaches and philosophies are explored in order to grasp a general overview on architectural contemporary intervention in historic areas guideline apparatus. The main concern is to identify the impact of the written instruments on architectural design and transmitted message through new interventions. Moreover, the study follows to what extent architecture quality and the link between contemporary buildings and historic monuments are guided or influenced by heritage conservation policies and design control methodologies.

Rezumat

Arhitectura este nemuritoare, dar clădirile periodic conviețuiesc în spațiu. Relația între vechi și nou reprezintă un subiect amplu în discursul intervențiilor arhitecturale în zone istorice. Organizațiile și instituțiile elaborează documente, declarații, carte, norme și legi pentru a instrumenta proiectarea în zone istorice cu valoare de patrimoniu. Studiul este axat pe clădiri noi independente inserate în medii istorice. Noile inserții de arhitectura din siturile studiate pentru prezenta cercetare se află în medii urbane istorice ample cu ansambluri conturate. Legătura dintre intervențiile arhitecturale și habitatul istoric este analizat prin filtrul literaturii scrise. Sunt explorate politicile de proiectare, de control, regulamentele, abordările și filozofiile de intervenție pentru a contura o imagine de ansamblu asupra aparatului de reglementare al intervențiilor contemporane arhitecturale în zone istorice. Principala preocupare este de a identifica impactul instrumentelor scrise de design arhitectural și mesajul transmis prin acestea și prin noile intervenții. În plus, studiul urmărește în ce măsură calitatea arhitecturii și relația între clădiri contemporane și monumente istorice sunt ghidate sau influențate de politicile de conservare a patrimoniului și a metodologiilor de control.

Keywords: contemporary architecture, historic areas, design reference

1. Introduction

The historic areas around monuments present spiritual and cultural connections transmitted through built surfaces. The process of designing contemporary architecture interventions in historic sites is a creative process as valid as designing new buildings. Compared to a building outside a defined historic zone new buildings or interventions in the historic area need to be more sensitive in order to protect the value of monuments and cultural identity.

The study focus is on the relationship between contemporary architecture and historic areas of intervention. In her work "Contemporary architecture in historic urban environments. Conservation Perspectives", Susan Macdonald identifies the role of contemporary architecture in historic environments as reinvigorating while conserving the place's heritage values.[1]

The design process can create buildings relationships, described by Edwards A. Trystan in "Good and Bad Manners in Architecture" as "polite" or "rude". One of the main recommendations in order to create a "polite" or "rude" intervention is to undertake a value assessment prior to the start of the design process.[2]

In order to understand the difference between "polite" and "rude" in buildings relationships there are the following examples. The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao where Frank Gehry represents the "rude" because is taking the main role and creates "starchitecture". The "polite" is illustrated by Danish National Maritime Museum from the BIG architects represented here by Bjarke Ingles and David Zahle. In this case the architects decided to hide the museum's building underground in order to preserve the perspective to the Kronborg Castle. The new intervention acknowledges the main role of the Castle and shifts to the second place conserving and upgrading the historic importance of the area.

Both architecture examples are valued projects implementing economic growth while maintaining place heritage value. Even though the projects are placing themselves at two poles regarding their attitude towards the historic area ("polite" and "rude"), the outcome of their presence is comparable in terms of the area liveliness.

2. Architectural Interventions in Historic Areas Instruments

The new intervention projects success in historic contexts depends also on the prior assessment and the designer sensitivity, but is not guaranteed. The context's prior assessment is supported and guided by international instruments of conservation policies. This instrumentation functions as an organism, developing and growing time wise taking different formats such as: recommendations, declarations, charts and other documents written by groups of experts on conservation of the historic environment and, more specifically, on integration of new contemporary architecture in historical, urban or rural, contexts. (fig. 1)



Figure 1. International heritage instruments – Conservation policy

In time, with every document issued there are new concepts introduced orchestrating historic areas developments.

Athens Charter, points 65 - 70 discussing "Heritage of Historic Cities" recommend earlier cultures building structures and city layouts preservation. Point 70 abolishes past architecture styles use for new structures in historic areas. Consequently, the architectural language continuity was encouraged.

The Venice Charter advocates for interventions not compromising historic buildings or their setting relationship. The Charter advocates for original scale, mass, color and for *distinguishable* new interventions. These measures *limit new interventions* number in historic areas in favor of intrinsic developed relationships.

In the Norms of Quito one of the most important actions is the buffer zone establishment, as well as regulations for volume relationships.

In 1975 Council of Europe issues two seminal policy documents. First, the Declaration of Amsterdam takes into consideration the social factor and calls for conservation approach involving both local authorities and citizens. It advocates for high quality contemporary architecture. Second, the European Charter of Architectural Heritage promotes modern architecture respecting the existing context, as well as its proportions, shapes, sizes, scale and use of traditional materials. The document refers to *compatibility* between intervention and existing.

Nairobi, 1976, UNESCO establishes the Recommendation Concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas, document focused on historic areas preservation. It pulls the alarm on historic areas damage that can suffer due to additions, incompatible uses and changes. Recommends *minimum intervention* and historic vistas preservation. In order to create new buildings is reinforced the need for context prior assessment determining the basic principles for the new intervention. "Harmony of heights, colors, materials, forms, constants in the way the facades and roofs are built, relationship between the volume of buildings and the spatial volume, as well as their average proportions and their position" [3] are major features to be studied.

1982 Tlaxcala Declaration "reinforces the idea of using traditional technics while still reflecting current times".[4] The document encourages inspiration from local architecture, referring to the concept of continuity.

The Washington Charter, article 10 states "the introduction of contemporary elements in harmony with the surroundings should not be discouraged since such features can contribute to the enrichment of an area".[5] Residents involvement is encouraged and a general information program is recommended to be established. The importance of participatory design in historic areas is also underlined.

Vienna Memorandum states change is an essential part of urban tradition, new interventions shouldn't cause harm, but should add culture. Therefore the idea that "High-quality design and execution, sensitive to the cultural-historic context" that could create "continuity of culture through quality interventions is the ultimate goal" [6] promoted.

Cesare Brandi's principles of restoration, recognizability, compatibility, reversibility and the minimum intervention, are reiterated and through time. (fig. 2) The theoretician comprises the vast documentation in an accessible tool, a book of restoration theory.

Figure 2. Teoria del Restauro. Cesare Brandi – Restoration principles



3. Case Studies

In prior assessment of historic areas both qualitative and quantitative approaches are regarded. In the following case studies Cesare Brandi's restoration principles were used as guidelines as well as overlapping the sequential and Kevin Lynch's analysis. The latter are quantitative tools, while the first are qualitative analysis guidelines.

3.1 Deva Citadel

In case of Deva Citadel the analysis elements varied big to small scale. The relationship between the old and new parts of the city with the citadel and the landscape participation in the urban development. The relation between the parts and their participation to the hole underwent systematic analysis.

Most striking characteristics observed are the urban ax and its continuity. Even if in an excentric position, the symbolic presence at the core of the Deva city of the Citadel is maintained by the urban characteristics. The whole urban tissue of the city is concentrated on the presence of the citadel, maintaining a main axis emphasizing its important place. The physical place in relation to the city is not only visually highlighting the monument, but also underlines the relationship established between the community and the urban tissue. (fig. 3)

3.2 Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa

Samizegetusa is a particular example because of layering of XIX century settlement on an ancient roman site. The village developed on the ancient ruins, materials from the site being used at its construction. A small part of the ancient settlement is visible today, the rest being buried under the inhabited village. (fig. 4 and fig. 5)

The rural settlement is comprised of two parts, the community and the architectonic site. The parts are segregated. Besides the physical overlapping there is no relationship between the inhabitants and the heritage. The village could be positioned anywhere and still have the same attitude towards the roman inheritance.

4. Conclusion

The two examples are exhibiting different situations of interventions in historic areas. The physical interventions is relevant also for the community's attitude towards the architectural heritage.

Monuments play an important role for the community identity. Nowadays we witness restoration cases excluding the community. Recent European projects focus on monuments as tourism attractors. The monument role in the local community in transmitting the heritage is neglected.

The mentioned instruments guiding new interventions in historic areas are underlining the importance of community involvement in monument restoration projects.

At this stage the main question is how can we, as architects, enable the relationship between the communities and their monuments?

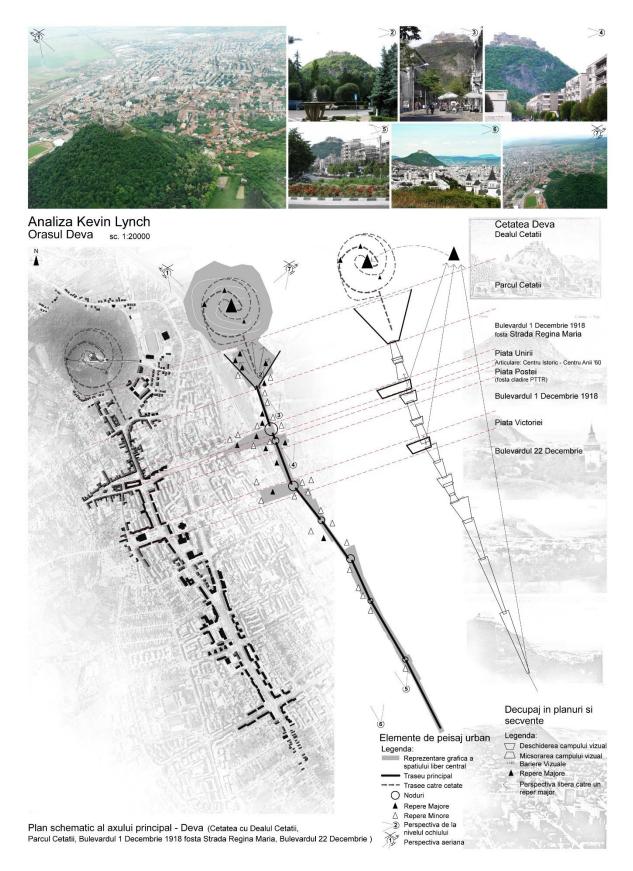


Figure 3. Deva citadel analysis



Figure 4. Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa site plan

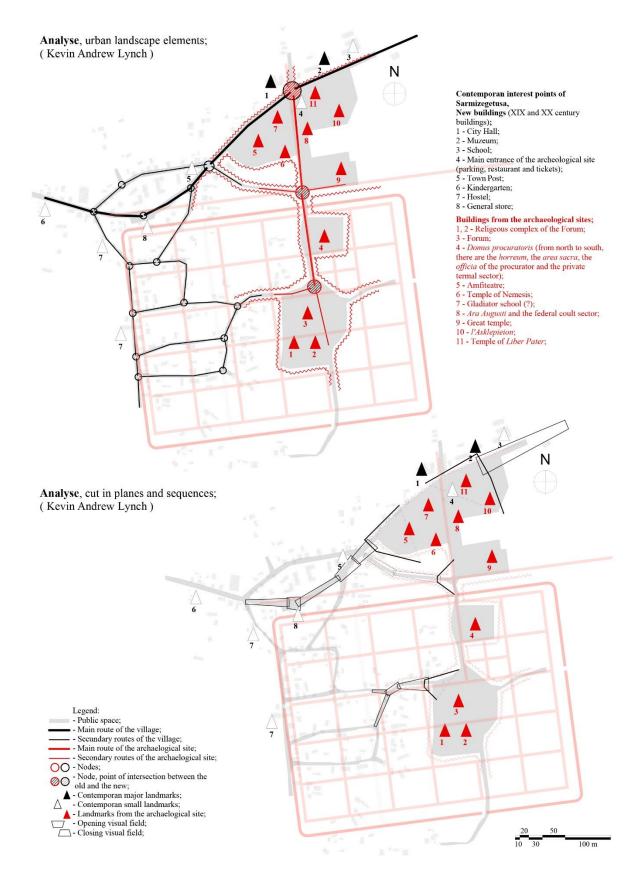


Figure 5. Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa analysis

^[1] Macdonald, S. Contemporary architecture in historic urban environments. *Conservation Perspectives: The GCI Newsletter* 26 Vol. 2, pp.13–15, 2011.

http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/newsletters/26_2/contemporary.html [2] English Heritage, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), and Kent Architecture Centre. *Building in Context Toolkit: New Development in Historic Areas*. London: English Heritage; CABE, 2007. http://www.building-in-context.org/the-bic-toolkit/

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^[5] ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas (Washington Charter 1987). Quoted in Contemporary Architecture in the Historic Environment, pp. 12, 2015.

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