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AT THE TURN OF THE MILLENNIUM

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AT THE TURN OF THE III MILLENNIUM"

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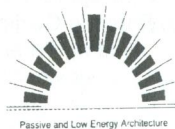
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ARCHITECTURE URBANISM  
AT THE TURN OF THE III MILLENNIUM



VOLUME 1  
INTRODUCTION

FROM DECONSTRUCTION TO RECONSTRUCTION

5. Migration

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**URBAN REHABILITATION AT THE END OF THE CENTURY :  
THE CHOICE OF METHODS FOR PRESERVING CITY CENTERS WITH VARIOUS  
MODELS FROM ABROAD**

**EVA VANISTA LAZAREVIC, B.Sc.A.E.,** assist. Prof.

**ALEKSANDAR VIDENOVIC, B.Sc.A.E.,** assist. Prof.

*Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade*

*Bulevar revolucije 73/II*

*Belgrade, Yugoslavia*

**ABSTRACT**

In general, this work treats problems of reconstruction and preservation of city centers. The defining of the most appropriate ways of town remodeling depends on the city pattern and on the position on the cultural and historical scale. Despite the fact we have the exact parameters, this delicate task is not only a multidisciplinary one but also involves ones sensibility. Methodologically, the choice of reconstructive methods starts from level of the existing situation in situ. This is the compulsory starting point in the choice of reconstructing methods. We have analyzed and compared some typical examples of European city centers. Due to the huge variety of methods, some errors are often possible. These errors, in the field of architecture, have very serious results that can hardly be repaired. Therefore, this matter needs serious multilevel consideration and control.

Introduction

Dealing appropriately with the valued legacy of the past is a challenging problem for many city centers, particularly in Europe but also in the USA.

Since the 70's, **historic areas and city quarters** have undergone a reevaluation.

*History-The first wave*

The **first wave** of historic preservation policies protected **individual buildings** which were preserved because of their relation to the great figures from the nation's history, or in case when the established religions were concerned in them (cathedrals and churches). These initial preservation policies were significantly limited in effect.

*The second wave*

The second wave of preservation and conservation policies was related to **groups of historical buildings, townscapes and spaces between buildings**. Conservation pointed out the inevitability of changes and the management of these changes. The legal

definition of conservation areas which have to be protected as a whole is "areas of special architectural or historic interest the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The idea starts in Venice, in 1964, where this policy was established. In our country, at the conference in Ohrid, in 1967 and also in Split, in 1971 we followed the new wave from its very beginning.

**Area-based conservation also appeared as a reaction to the apparent social, cultural and physical disruption of life caused by policies of clearance comprehensive redevelopment and also by road building schemes / traffic boom at 70's. Netherlands and France (with famous Malraux's law) were first practice the "new wave".**

In the USA there were several historic districts preserved prior to the Second World War. John Rockefeller effectively turned the small town Williamsburg into a museum spending millions of dollars. Charleston and New Orleans followed this first model, but however, federal legislation was not put in place until 1966 by the National Preservation Act.

#### *Policies - public and private costs - legislation*

Statutory protection of buildings or areas, as allowed and implicitly encouraged by the legislation doesn't imply direct public costs. The problem is that conferring of such status contains an open-ended permanent commitment to the maintenance, renovation and rehabilitation of the area as a whole. Nevertheless, this preservation and conservation cannot practically fall only on the public expense. Protected zones bring one more problem: protected building of the zone cannot all be turned into museums or contribute directly to the economy of the area creating a need for their occupation for economic uses. The problem to finding new uses to preserved buildings was introduced as a conservation concern.

#### Methods

##### *Reconstructive methods*

The choice of reconstructive methods provides different aspects and approaches to the problem of rehabilitation. We may decide upon various methods in the same protected zone which complicates the whole process. This means, of course, that to protect just one building as previously done, becomes a history of the rehabilitation process.

##### *The scale of intervention levels (methods) in historic buildings:*

**PRESERVATION:** The maintenance of the artifact in its current physical condition. Nothing is added to or subtracted from the aesthetic corpus of the artifact.

**RESTORATION:** The process of returning the artifact to the physical condition in which it would have been at some previous stage of its morphological development.

**REFURBISHMENT (Conservation and consolidation):** The physical intervention in the actual fabric of the buildings to ensure the continued performance.

**RECONSTITUTION:** The piece-by-piece reassemble of a building, either in situ or on a new site.

**CONVERSION (Adaptive use):** The adaptation of a building to a new function or use.

**RECONSTRUCTION:** The re-creation of vanished buildings on their original site.

**REPLICATION:** The construction of an exact copy of an existing building.

### *The change*

The change from the protection of individual buildings to conservation of areas rapidly developed from a straightforward and restrictive concern in preservation to a concern in revitalization and enhancement. Thus, the methods also changed and became more active, leaving conservation methods behind. And then, the staff transformed: the locus of professional concern was largely transferred from architects and art historians to planners and other concerned with economic development. When the townscape and the street pattern as a whole became the objects of general concern, the global idea of rehabilitation completely changed.

### *An appropriate time*

The second wave of conservation policies and legislation was mostly enacted during the period of steady economic growth. However, in most countries, the policies were to be implemented during the period of economic stagnation that followed the crisis in the early 70's. Furthermore, during the 60' and 70', the qualities of older housing were recognized and followed by a wave of rehabilitation and gentrification of those inner urban areas that had escaped the bulldozer. Using negative powers of control, planners have generally found it easier to prevent the negative effects for occupying buildings than to attract more desirable uses.

### *The third wave*

As a result there has subsequently been a third, more fragmented, "ad hoc" and local wave of policies. The new policies have been concerned with the revitalization of the protected historic urban areas and quarters through growth management. Efforts were focused on attempts to generate the investment and local economic development able to provide the financial means to conservation and enhance the quarter. The initial policies were largely concerned with the transition of the past and the later conservation and revitalization policies focused on the future for the past.

### *Know how*

Nevertheless, although we have almost reached the end of this century, we are still trying to find the most appropriate way of town remodeling relying on various aspects within the city pattern and the level of historical and cultural scale. Despite the facts that we have certain parameters, this delicate task is not only multidisciplinary labeled but also involves a personal touch of sensibility.

Compulsory starting point in the choice of reconstructive methods is, amongst others, the present situation in situ. Revitalization attempts within historic urban quarters are restricted by its sensitive context and environment. The areas have to cope with unrelenting changes in their economic fortunes while change in their physical landscapes is restricted and controlled in the interest of preservation. In such areas, the necessity to reconcile the various pressing demands for conservation and regeneration, the balancing economic development which respects the environment quality desirable.

Due to a huge variety of possible methods, some errors often may occur. In architecture, the effects can hardly be repaired. Possibly, the right way to a "know how", can be reached by examining the processes, conflicts and results of the conservation and revitalization of historic quarters in a number of study cases.

Concerning the methods, "preservation" and "restoration" are generally of major importance when dealing with buildings of exceptional architectural or historical quality. Most of the buildings considered in case studies do not fall into this category. "Reconstitution" and "replication" have occurred in some cases, but such actions are rarely respected except in certain, very specific situations. The term "rehabilitation" has been used as a generic term to include restoration, refurbishment and conversion. Rehabilitation includes not only the most drastic changes requiring a certain amount of internal and external alteration, but also brings the building in compliance with the expectations of contemporary users, for example, in terms of safety and comfort standards.

## Results

### *Case studies: Step no.1 (Paris, France - Marais<sup>1</sup> - the pioneer case)*

In Europe there is a long established tradition of mixed use urban quarters for both workplaces and residences. Due to the improved transportation, the general move of population away from living in town and city centers and the corresponding peripheral expansion of most urban areas through suburbanization, has also led to the separation of workplace and residence. Nevertheless, the vitality of mixed uses is arguably more desirable when residential uses invade traditionally industrial and commercial areas as is currently the case in SoHo in New York, rather than when industry and commerce uses invade established residential areas. Marais, area in Paris, is an example of these mixed uses.

In Marais, the revitalization and physical rehabilitation of the quarter was also an attempt to resist gentrification and the displacement of its original population. As a distinctive quarter, punctuated with magnificent sixteenth and seventeenth-century *hotels particuliers* - town houses built for wealthy patricians, it nestles into a maze of narrow streets and courtyards with more modest dwellings.

The contrast of nice monuments and anonymous texture gives the Marais its physical character. Also, it has always been and still is a center of highly specialized skills: jewelers, clocksmiths and special crafts associated with *haute couture*. Many of these specialists still work in the area and formerly, many of these people also lived in the

<sup>1</sup> Tiesdell, Oc, Heath: "Revitalizing Historic Urban Quarters", Oxford, 1996.



quarter. However, by the end of the seventeenth century, Marais was becoming crowded. The lower-middle class was growing, and during the nineteenth century the area declined into a poor artisan quarter with multiple occupations and industries crammed in and around the *hotels*. The courtyards - private pleasure gardens were roofed over, sanitary provisions remained very primitive, the area became a slum full of disease (tuberculosis and cholera in particular).

The Second Empire remodeling of Paris including Marais by Haussmann proposed the street drainage and the slum clearance. Many people concluded that total clearance was the only solution, including Le Corbusier whose 1925 Plan Voisin proposed the demolition of most of central Paris. A significant part was torn down in the early 1930s and the site remained empty until the building of the Pompidou Center.

Although legislation governing the preservation of historic buildings in France originated from the mid-nineteenth century, it was not until 1962 that the legislation to preserve the historic character of districts, such as the Marais, was introduced. In 1965, Marais was designated France's first *secteur sauvegarde* or conservation area covering some 120 hectares. The Marais had a wealth of listed buildings: 176 *monuments classes* and 526 *monuments inscrits*. The higher classification required an agreement between the owner and the state where the state obtain a 50 per cent of the cost of repairs and for the *monuments inscrit* up to 40 per cent. Therefore, many of the *hotels particuliers* have been converted into museums. French concept of *curettage* proposed extensive clearance of parasite "buildings" including some 1 000 dwellings and workspaces utilized by 10 000 people.

Despite of the physical conservation and renovation, the most controversial issue has been the change in its functional character as a result of displacement and gentrification. Despite its relatively successful physical renovation (which included the aim to retaining the social mix), the revitalization process had a limited success. Higher rents, which forced 20 000 residents to move out and a rather smaller number to move in resulted with dramatic social change. The working class was again being driven to the periphery creating a similar effect to Haussmann's removal under the Emperor Louis Napoleon.

#### *Step No. 2 - Bruges, Belgium<sup>2</sup> - "bringing to life"*

One of the most beautiful small towns in Europe, Bruges, effectively had similar problems like many post-war's towns in Europe. The Gothic town was on the way to loose its historical character as a result of a bad policy in the period 1945-1970, while a number of catastrophic demolition of major monuments happened during the modernist's period. Also, several slums appeared in the inner city, lack of industry and few jobs with a strong loss of functions in the inner city after its industrial and employment decline; this destroyed the core of the city.

One of the mayor strategy was to obtain a New Legislation and to provide state financial support to private owners who followed several good examples of renovating houses. In 1974, Bruges was picked out as one of the pilot towns in view of Architectural Heritage year. For that reason it received 133 million BF from the Government. The money was

<sup>2</sup>Protection and Cultural Animation of Monuments, Sites and Historic Towns in Europe, German Commission for UNESCO, Bonn, 1980.

used for restoration and sanitation of empty dwellings which were rented out afterwards. Beside the restoration of the old, the construction of modern buildings is now allowed, but only in special areas, patronized by the Housing Association. The media gave daily information about the renewal and the complete plan took place. The tourists gave special support admiring resurrection of the old city. The initiatives for new uses (shops, offices, schools, hotels) for the adapted historical buildings were very much stimulated. The expansion of these functions should be controlled. Many parking places had to be constructed, all of them underground. The sanitation of the canals and a sewage system were made. Many financial and personal interests were mixed up which resulted in a comprehensive, rather successful and continuous process of urban renewal. Bruges became a classic case for urban remodeling.

*Step no.3 - Design in historic urban quarters (London Docklands,<sup>3</sup> United Kingdom)*

The revitalization of historic urban quarters involves two processes which inevitably conflict: the **rehabilitation** of buildings and areas - which seeks to accommodate the consequences of economic change, and the **preservation** - which seeks to limit changes and protect historic building and an area's character. Today, more than ever, "the management of change and the active use of remains for present and future purpose are preferable to an inflexible reverence for a past" as K. Lynch said. However, the continuity and development of the quarter's *genius loci* is one of the most important design considerations in an historic urban quarter.

At London Docklands, there was a policy of **selective demolition**. Of course, we must say that the London Docklands Development Corporation permitted the demolition of certain historic buildings of indifferent quality and of little architectural or townscape importance. Still, unregulated change (even relatively small changes) can, over time, result in the erosion of the area's character. The London Docklands principal is of an external historic shell preserved allowing internal physical modification suitable to new uses. "Facadism" permits the provision of up-to-date accommodation for all comfort. Also, The Shad Thames is an example of a **housing-led revitalization**. The conversion of warehouses to residential use at London Docks have shown that it can be realized without compromising its character. The unsolved problem still was the provision of parking. Certainly, the provision of central parking facilities for residents should be seen as a part of an area's public infrastructure.

Several developments in Shad Thames demonstrate an approach which straddles those of continuity and juxtaposition. What is witnessed is an engaging **dialogue between new and old** with various points of consensus and dispute. In England, Prince of Wales's Institute is one of the most conservative protectors of historical buildings. Also, the public opinion has the possibility of last decision, like in a recent competition for a new bridge over the Thames near the Docklands. Zaha Hadid's bridge or Grombach's one - the question is now? The citizens of London will decide.

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<sup>3</sup> Tiesdell, Oc, Heath: Revitalizing Historic Urban Quarters, Oxford, 1996.