IN PURSUIT OF CONTEXTUAL FIT: MANAGING CHANGE IN THE BUILT HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Monika Dankova

Faculty of Environmental Design
The University of Calgary

20 May 1994
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ABSTRACT

In Pursuit of Contextual Fit: Managing Change in the Built Historic Environment

Monika Dankova
May 1994

prepared in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Environmental Design in Planning at The University of Calgary

Supervisor: Dr. Walter Jamieson

The contemporary dynamics of the built environment are very different than those of the past. Architectural styles, building technology, land values, and the decision-making process, have all changed over time making it a challenge to successfully fit new architecture into an established historic context. This document examines these and other factors that impact upon the management of change in the built environment.

Given the different stakes of the many participants, achieving successful contextual fit is likely to remain an elusive goal; ensuring a successful process may be a more realistic goal. It is proposed in this document that in order to achieve better contextual fit, decision-makers and planners must address the following issues:

1) Balancing public good with individual rights. Given the public nature of architecture it may be justified, in certain circumstances, to limit the rights of property owners in order to achieve appropriate contextual fit.

2) The level of understanding and appreciation for aesthetics and design among those affected by change. Planners and decision-makers must keep in mind that this knowledge is often limited, even among the professionals involved.

3) Context and the sense of place are the ultimate factors to consider when attempting to achieve successful contextual fit. Historical resources are part of a larger physical environment that possesses certain characteristics beyond those of architectural expression. Preserving the unique set of characteristics of a particular environment, the sense of place, is significant to achieving successful contextual fit. Historical resources are also part of a larger system that involves a number of social, cultural, economic and political factors; all of which must be taken into consideration before implementing change.

4) Prescriptive guidelines are not sufficient to ensure successful contextual fit. Although they are a powerful tool available to planners and decision-makers, guidelines cannot be relied upon as the only control mechanism for ensuring successful contextual fit.

KEY WORDS: Infill; Contextual Architecture; Heritage Preservation Planning; Historic Districts.
The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Environmental Design for acceptance, a Master's Degree Project entitled:

In Pursuit of Contextual Fit: Managing Change in the Built Historic Environment

submitted by Monika Dankova in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Environmental Design.

Dr. Walter Jamieson
Supervisor

Dr. Michael McMordie
Dean, Faculty of General Studies

Dale Taylor
Dean's Appointee

MAY 20, 1999
Date
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INTRODUCTION

In Pursuit of Contextual Fit;
Managing Change in the Built Historic Environment

With these new attitudes, we accept the city as a rich and contradictory place of the designed and the accidental that operates on many complex functional, sensory, and historical levels. We know how valuable and how fragile the urban fabric is, and how susceptible to the interventions of man. This understanding is the background for a sophisticated kind of preservation that is far removed in its responses to twentieth-century urbanism from the nostalgia and knee britches of the Williamsburg-type restoration. This perception is behind increasingly thoughtful strategies for controlling development and the quality of urban life through policy and law. The individual landmark saved or sacrificed, the construction projects defeated or brought to fruition, are only transient, peripheral events in a larger revolution. My hope, and prayer, is that this will not all be lost in the current proliferation of meaningless arguments about style.

(HUXTABLE 1986, p. xv)

The genesis of this thesis was born during the course of numerous visits to the Czech capital, Prague. It is my personal opinion, as a lover of cities and as a student of architectural history and urban design, that Prague is one of the two most beautiful cities in Europe (the other being Venice). Pondering this, I realized that the beauty lay in the effect of the ensemble. In Prague, the Baroque, the Gothic, the Romanesque, the Renaissance, the Rococo, the Neo-Classical and Empire, the Art Nouveau, the Cubist, and various Revivalist styles, are all represented, and are all intermingled. The effect is both pleasing and stimulating, each style having further information to reveal about the past of this city, each contributing to the unique sense of place. Stylistic unity is not a prerequisite to beauty; new architecture could be integrated with old without imitating it. And so was launched this examination of managing change in the built historic environment and achieving contextual fit.
This document is intended to serve as a resource to anyone involved or interested in the process of combining new architecture with old. This includes members of the community, as well as planners, developers, architects and members of design review committees. This document is designed to provide a framework for consideration of the issues posed by such an endeavour, and does not offer technical or detailed solutions to the problems of combining new with old.

A specific objective of this document is to raise awareness of the many facets of this problem, and to focus attention on the fundamental underlying concepts. This document will attempt to describe the concepts underlying contextual design, and explain why it is important to understand them.

The general approach of this document has been to consider the topic from a broad theoretical point of view. Specific examples drawn from personal observation and/or field research have been used to illustrate concepts and principles.

The information gathering procedures included an extensive bibliographic search; interviews with key informants; personal observation and field research. The interviews were conducted with the municipal and state (provincial) planners in charge of historic districts; members of design review committees; architects and planners who have designed buildings within historic areas; members of national and international organizations concerned with heritage preservation; and members of community organizations involved in heritage and “sense of place” preservation efforts. The field research was conducted in Prague, and in Québec City.

Although the focus of this document has been largely based on urban examples, the basic principles and concepts apply to rural situations as well. The topic has been kept at a general level so as to most effectively address the common underlying factors in all cases of managing change in the built historic environment. The discussion is concerned with
the introduction of new elements into a context of historic architecture. For the purposes of this document, historic architecture will be defined as having the potential to seek legal designation status. In the province of Alberta, this generally means the structure should be fifty years of age or older. This is a comparatively generous definition. Historic resources also imply architectural forms of a traditional nature; in the interests of avoiding confusion, the term will not be used to indicate modernist buildings (which may be over fifty years old, but lack traditional architectural forms).

The assumptions on which this document is based are the following:

- It is a worthwhile endeavour to preserve heritage resources. Their intrinsic value, economic value, and contribution to the quality of life have already been proven successfully elsewhere. This document will not attempt to restate the case in support of historic preservation.

- Achieving visual harmony, as well as delight, are important considerations of achieving good contextual fit. Although “Good Design” may be impossible to define in a universal sense; beauty contributes positively to quality of life, and so the pursuit of beauty and good design are worthwhile endeavours. Corollaries of this assumption include the undesirability of visual chaos, and that mediocre and bland designs do not constitute success.

- Strong communities are a worthwhile goal and contribute to the quality of life.

- Stylistic unity does not necessarily create a sense of place or result in success with respect to contextual fit.

This document is organized into four chapters, followed by a set of conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 1 defines the problem of managing change in the historic environment: the dangers of managing and not managing change are both discussed; the current situation is described; the contribution of changes in technology and architectural styles are discussed; and finally, the history of approaches to intervention is presented.
Chapter 2 examines the concept of intervention in considerable detail. The types and possible extent of intervention are chronicled, and the regulatory environment of intervention is delineated. A discussion of what may constitute successful intervention follows.

Chapter 3 explores the concept of context. The physical context is defined, followed by a discussion of the non-physical context.

Chapter 4 identifies four key issues central to developing a strategy for managing change in the built historic environment. These include: the public good vs. individual rights, and the nature of property laws in North America; the question of social values; context and sense of place; and the strengths and weaknesses of control mechanisms.

Following Chapter 4 is a set of conclusions and recommendations synthesized from the analysis presented in the previous chapters.
CHAPTER 1:
PROBLEM DEFINITION

This first chapter establishes the parameters for a discussion of managing change in the built historic environment: why it is a matter of concern, the risks of both managing change and choosing not to. The current state of affairs, and the factors responsible for it, are also discussed. Finally, the general theory and historic practice of combining new architecture with old are examined briefly.

1. Why Managing Change Is A Matter of Concern

How best to combine new architecture with old is a problem which inevitably confronts all cities, their planners and their residents, because change in the built environment is inescapable. Cities are constantly growing, transforming and evolving in response to various factors. Buildings age and deteriorate beyond repair; fires and natural disasters take their toll; and additions or modifications to existing buildings are often felt to be necessary as different requirements arise. As tastes and fashions change, they become incorporated within the built environment as a matter of course: cities adapt and alter over time.

Combining new architecture with old is a complex challenge. Issues arising from these complexities include: managing change without stifling architectural creativity; ensuring the preservation of sense of place; encouraging the design of contemporary buildings of a calibre to one day merit preservation themselves; and balancing the rights of the individual property owner against the public good. Many diverse actors hold positions which frequently overlap and can appear contradictory. Combining new architecture with old is within the purview of the planning process, as well as being included within that of
architecture and urban design. Combining new architecture with old also involves community identity and cultural heritage, quality of life, and economic and political considerations.

The extent and rapidity of the inevitable evolution in the built environment can be controlled. Cities, local governments and citizens have diverse views concerning controls on change in the built environment. Property owners are often very sensitive to restrictions that may limit the use, and therefore the value, of their property; they are also sensitive to regulations that will increase the amount of money they have to expend on their property. Other citizens and special interest groups may support the need to preserve local historical resources.

**THE DANGERS OF NOT MANAGING CHANGE**

When change in a historic built environment is not controlled or managed, various risks are entertained.

The most obvious cost of not managing the built historic environment is the loss of heritage resources. Since they are the tangible remainders of a time and a place, and an essential component of the history of a people, their loss can erase part of the story of a culture. Heritage resources are finite; only a certain number of structures are left standing from any given era, their numbers subject to inevitable decline due to floods, fires, earthquakes and other natural forces and events. Although it is possible to reconstruct certain buildings, the cost is prohibitive in most cases, and it is impossible to replicate the original to the smallest detail. If heritage resources are demolished as the result of an insensitive, injudicious, development proposal, then they are gone for good. At stake are important aspects of community and cultural identity. Buildings are more than structures to shelter people from the elements; they are the product of a vision of the world, and are the vessels for historical events.
The physical risk of not managing change is that of allowing disharmonious relationships to develop and flourish between buildings. If a framework is not developed for creating successful relationships between new and old architecture, then the risk is run of disturbing the aesthetic balance of a street, a district, or a city. Gradually over time, the distinctive architectural character of an area can become diluted until it eventually becomes little more than a lingering stutter. The evolutionary continuum of vernacular architectural styles may be derailed, and the existing architectural hierarchy may be destroyed.

Physical interventions have the potential to contribute positively to the aesthetic relationships of a place, and to continue in the evolutionary tradition of vernacular form. By not attempting to achieve such a positive result, the potential for good presented by the situation is needlessly squandered.

Interventions can also alter the unique character of an area. The sense of place is a concept that goes beyond visual harmony to include the distinctive patterns of use, and other unique aspects of a place. An inappropriate change in use, form or style, can detract from the established sense of place.

Quality of life, as the sum of the value placed on the various features of a place that determine "livability", is also potentially impacted by the decision to not manage the design relationship between new and old architecture. Heritage resources contribute to the quality of life (BEATSON 1990), which in turn can be used to spur local economic development. If change is not managed appropriately, an aspect of the quality of life is diminished, and the potential for economic development is decreased.

The management of change in the built architectural environment concerns the stewardship of cultural resources, of being responsible and accountable to future generations as well as our own. Decisions made regarding the built environment, as much as the natural environment, must consider long-term consequences. The lifespan of a building often far
exceeds that of a human. The architectural legacy of each generation affects the quality of life of succeeding generations, and is judged by them. Although the values placed on past architectural periods by later generations may differ from those of our own, and may even change and evolve over the course of time, it is still necessary to address whether the architectural legacy of the current generation is potentially worthy of preservation by any subsequent generation.

• THE DANGERS OF MANAGING CHANGE

Choosing to manage change also poses certain hazards and risks to the built environment.

Legislation to regulate change in the built environment does not in and of itself produce good design. A common criticism of prescriptive design guidelines, a method commonly used to manage new construction in the context of historic built fabric, is that although they may prevent the worst projects and designs, in their attempt to discourage and avoid contrast, they do not facilitate the best, and in fact often result in mediocrity. Often, they produce a stifling, and inappropriate, homogeneity. Design standards may be set too low, may be too easily misinterpreted, or may preclude many valid options.

The latter is a considerable danger: through efforts to regulate and sensitively manage change in the built environment, potential masterpieces may be rejected on the grounds that they contrast with their surroundings without an understanding of their potential. Frank Lloyd Wright's design for the Guggenheim Museum in New York City is just such an example. His low-rise white conch-shell shaped design indisputably contrasts with its pre-war Fifth Avenue limestone-clad apartment building neighbors - but are not the street, the city of New York, and the architectural world the better for its construction? Had the design been proposed today, it is unlikely it would have been allowed since those same apartment buildings merit design protection. Its construction was fraught
Successful cities and streets are often a hybrid of the planned and the unplanned. The challenge confronting cities and planners is to determine how to balance the contributions of the planned and unplanned interventions, and to somehow ensure that neither component will destroy something of great value. The danger of overregulation is very real.

2. The Current Situation

Across North America there is currently little protection afforded to historic buildings and areas through the management of new construction. Often, the only protection is afforded by zoning, which regulates such things as height, setback, and use, but cannot mandate appropriate designs. Only areas specifically designated as historic districts are afforded any measure of protection, generally through design guidelines. These may range from very prescriptive guidelines that regulate such aspects as material, form, solid-to-void ratios, style; or they may be less detailed, and regulate the more general aspects such as height and massing. Historic district designation can only be sought, and not always successfully, in order to protect a significant area. Two or three lone historic houses, or one or two blocks do not, as a rule, constitute a district and so can be offered little protection from inappropriate intervention even if the buildings are individually designated.

Achieving successful relationships between new and old architecture is an idea that is being resurrected in planning and architectural circles after having lain forgotten for most of this century. In North America at least, this trend seems to be particularly true. It is a young continent, where the historic building stock is in relatively short supply in comparison to Europe. North Americans have a reputation for being practical and firmly embracing the future. Entrenched attitudes that “new is improved”, and that design is superfluous, have taken their toll. But these attitudes are changing. One of the first acts
of the new Clinton presidency was to establish the President’s Council on Design, bringing together industrial, interior, and urban designers and architects, to tackle issues such as quality of life, affordable housing, and the state of American Cities. “Good design is good business” is the new motto. The report produced the following three broad initiatives:

1. A Strategic Design Initiative, to foster collaboration between designers, manufacturers and investors in key areas of innovation;

2. An Urban Design Initiative, to restore cities and towns and to create new and sustainable communities for the 21st century;

3. An Inclusive Design Initiative, to develop design standards that remove barriers to participation in government and promote access to the civic realm. (PEARLMAN 1993)

Tangible results of these initiatives have yet to be achieved, but it is progress nonetheless. Events over the course of the last decade in Great Britain give further cause for hope that attitudes and practices are changing. The issue of integrating new with historic architecture has received a great deal of attention in recent years, thanks largely to Prince Charles, illustrating the potential support for public involvement, as well as for the critical examination of planning and architectural practices. The sensation caused by Prince Charles’ infamous address at the 125th Anniversary Dinner of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1984 has proven to have a lasting effect upon the British planning and architectural professions. Issues raised by the Prince are still being hotly debated.

The level of public support for the Prince’s ideas was considerable. Subsequent to the broadcast of A Vision of Britain on the BBC in 1985, fully 99% of the nearly 5,000 letters received agreed with the Prince in his views (MARTIN 1989, p.9). A significant portion of the respondents are dissatisfied with their environment. Many facets of the issue have now become part of public discussion: the nature of historic preservation and historic districts; the incompatibility of modern architecture with traditional architecture;
the planning and development process; as well as the validity of community participation in the process. And although the focus of the discussion is Great Britain, the involvement of HRH Prince Charles has raised the debate to an international stage.

There appears to be a sense in the planning and architecture professions, as well as in the general public, that decisions made in the recent past about how to combine the new with the old were not successful. The reactions to Prince Charles’ comments indicate just how widespread this opinion may be. Prevailing attitudes in the 1950s, 1960s and even the 1970s, assumed contrast between old and new was desirable and was appropriate. Contrast would allow both styles to be seen to their advantage, playing the unique aspects of one against the other. The results have been judged to largely contradict this assumption: glass curtain wall highrises towering above five storey brick buildings, discordant in every possible way - height, mass, scale, material, detail, and style. The old and new were so dissimilar that there seemed no point of relation. In the process, the special qualities of the old were often overwhelmed and obscured. And sadly, in order to allow for new construction, elements of the existing ensemble were often demolished. Not only was the character of a place often negatively affected by the construction of new buildings, but quality of life and community heritage were often impaired as well.

In the recent past, the demolition of buildings with even significant architectural or heritage value was readily sanctioned under the banner of progress, even against the wishes of significant numbers of the community. “Progress must not be stopped!” was the guiding mantra.

This situation has changed over the last two decades, but since the problem is a complex one, it has yet to be resolved. Our response to the situation of appropriately combining new architecture with old is unskilled and unpracticed through decades of disuse.
3. Changes in Technology, Style, and Taste

The difficulty in defining and achieving a compatible relationship between styles of an older vintage and contemporary ones has presented itself most dramatically during the course of the twentieth century. Much of this difficulty can be ascribed to the recent and rapid changes in technology, taste, style, and economic valuation of land.

3.1 The Compatibility of Historic Materials

Previous generations were limited in their architectonic expression to a large extent by the technology and materials available in their day, and this had a direct effect on compatibility between buildings. Prior to the advent of reinforced concrete and structural steel, masonry construction techniques and the engineering limits of structural spans limited the height, mass and size of buildings. As a consequence, height and mass tended to be comparatively uniform and were of a human scale. This produced a harmonious visual effect and sensory experience when walking down the streets. Construction of a new building within the existing fabric was technically limited and thus respected and adhered to the pattern of height established by earlier buildings.

In addition to visual compatibility, the scale and form of elements such as decorative detailing, signage, window and door openings contributed to this sense of human scale. Since the advent of skyscrapers, achieving this degree of conformity or regularity on height is not such a simple task. In contemporary cities, the sense of scale is often gargantuan, far beyond that to which humans can relate.

The technical limitations of masonry construction also influenced the solid-to-void ratio, as well as the number, size, and style of windows. The development of church architecture between the Romanesque and Gothic illustrate this point. Romanesque architecture was characterized by very thick walls, low building height, and quite small window
openings. The subsequent Gothic style benefited from advances in technology, such as the system of exterior buttresses and the pointed Gothic arch, which allowed for the construction of thinner, higher walls, and numerous large window openings in the building fabric.

As architectural technology progressed, window openings increased in both size and number, but it was only in the 20th Century that architects were able to achieve entire walls of glass windows and spandrels. Another factor that limited both the size and number of windows was the technology of glass production. Oiled paper was often used instead of glass because of the latter’s prohibitive cost; bulls-eye glass and cylinder glass were labour-intensive processes that relied on skilled craftsmen. In addition, the dimensions of the glass produced through those processes was limited; (circular) glass had to be pieced together with lead came to make a pane. It is not surprising that window openings were limited on all structures but those with generous budgets. It was only later, with the development of plate glass, that glass became affordable and available in large sheets.

Another factor which has allowed for greater congruity between historic buildings is the limited number of materials used in construction. Stone, brick, stucco, wood, and plaster were the primary materials used until the advent of bronze plate glass, vinyl siding, “artificial stucco”, and cinder blocks. Transportation costs often further narrowed the selection to locally available materials. In an age without cargo planes, eighteen wheeled freight trucks, trains, or large cargo ships, the cost would have been prohibitive, especially for items as heavy and cumbersome as building materials. Consequently if there was a good local source for bricks, then bricks tended to characterize local buildings. If there was a good local source for a particular type of stone such as sandstone, limestone, marble, or granite, then this would predominate.
The consistent use of a limited assortment of building materials over a period of time contributed to the development of a distinct regional character.

Another factor that has exerted an indirect but unmistakable influence on the development of architectural styles is of land speculation. If land was at a premium, then the most efficient use was made of it, and buildings were erected to the extent of the technical limitations; where land was less valuable, building heights often remained limited to one or two storeys. Buildings constructed for profit by developers, as opposed to buildings constructed for owners for a variety of reasons besides merely profit, have impacted on the quality of building design and construction. The approach tends to be geared to the short-term, and obsolescence is planned within one generation. There also may be a hesitation to engage in restoration work, and a reluctance to be constrained by legislation requiring greater effort in areas of architectural sensitivity.

3.2 THE PACE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

Historically, changes in architectural style and expression have evolved slowly and gradually at a pace largely determined by changes in technology. The rate of technological change has increased exponentially in recent decades; current indications are that advances will only continue to increase. New materials and processes, expand dramatically the possibilities of architectural expression. And the pace of technological change appears now to have outstripped the ability of architecture to keep pace.

The resulting changes in architectural style have left the non-expert struggling to understand them. The value and criteria against which architectural styles have been traditionally judged have changed; developing new criteria and sorting out the good from the bad has often been confusing, for layman and expert alike.

The end result is that it has become problematic to fit traditional and contemporary architectural styles together because they have become increasingly dissimilar. This was not
always the case. One need only examine the Old Town Square in Prague to confirm this. This square contains buildings that represent practically every style built in Prague over the last millennium: Romanesque; Early Gothic; High Gothic; Renaissance; Renaissance with a “sgrafito” facade; Czech Baroque; Roccoco; as well as Beaux Arts, Art Nouveau, and revival styles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Despite this great diversity in style, the Old Town Square remains harmonious and coherent. This is because the many styles are more alike than they are different, with relatively similar heights and massing, use of colour and material, detailing and sense of scale.

3.3 MODERN ARCHITECTURE: A RADICAL BREAK WITH TRADITION

Much of the blame for the current problem in fitting new with old architecture has been laid at the feet of Modern Architecture. For this reason, it is necessary to examine the nature of Modern Architecture and the role it has played.

Modernism is not just an architectural style; it is a philosophy, a movement and a term used by architects, scholars, writers, painters, and sculptors. Contrary to popular understanding, the term does not only refer to that which is contemporary.

Modernism actually began in the visual arts, more specifically, with painting. It represented a break with tradition, and originality became the highest compliment that could be paid to an artist. The traditional institutions of art were set on their ears; the rules the establishment had perpetuated were rejected and broken. Initially the modernist movement championed a greater democracy, removing art and design from its exalted and elitist pedestal and putting it within the reach of the middle and working class. However, it was not a fully participatory democracy, and style and taste were still dictated by an elite, just a different one with different aspirations. Quite rapidly, the layperson was forgotten and alienated, and the pursuit became increasingly elitist, requiring an education.
The Modernist movement in architecture shared the same preoccupation with creativity and originality as the modern movement in painting. By stressing originality, this architectural movement went against the traditional concepts of how buildings should relate to each other. Traditionally, the calibre of an architect was determined by how he was able to interpret and translate the rules, demonstrating his knowledge and understanding of them.

Architecture developed similarly to, albeit somewhat later than, painting. In architecture, the modernist concern with "democracy" found a ready audience. At the time, an acute worldwide housing shortage stimulated efforts to create designs for the "common man"; technological developments and the need for efficiency guided architects somewhat in their architectonic expression. In essence, technology enabled and encouraged the new architectural ethos. What is most ironic is that this "democratization" of architecture never involved the "common man"; the opinion of the "common man" was never sought, nor were his/her needs ever queried. Architecture as social progress, as social reformer, was carried on by the elite of architecture on behalf of the masses.

Technology enabled architects to revolutionize their vocabulary. But it is the theory of Modernism that encouraged them to develop a new language with a new grammar. Art Deco and Moderne architecture had embraced the new technology, but essentially these styles had absorbed the new materials and methods into the traditional order of form and design. These styles still retained a sense of architectural detailing, of scale, and of order. However, Modern architecture, as practiced by the Bauhaus and the Stijl for example, challenged these traditional concepts. Le Corbusier for example, proposed that the old *arrondissements* of Paris be razed, and that everyone live instead in high rises separated by landing strips for planes. It was not only a change of style, but a fundamental change in massing and scale - the result of changes in transportation, in technology, a response to the political and economic situations with which they were faced. The lead-
ers of the modernist movement in architecture advocated a break with architectural
design tradition, rejecting centuries of past thinking. This statement made by Le
Corbusier is revealing: “If we set ourselves against the past, we are forced to the conclu-
sion that the old architectural code, with its mass of rules and regulations evolved during
4,000 years, is no longer of any value; it no longer concerns us.” (STEVENS, FOSTER,
ADAM et al. 1993, p.27-29) Contrasting with the past, inventing something new,
became the goal. Times had changed, the established social and political orders had been
destroyed, and new ones needed to be devised to take their place.

Architect Robert Adam writes:

Modern Movement architecture started off as a revolution: ...I quote
Corbusier: ‘There is no longer any question of custom nor of tradition.”
It is here that the fundamental difference lies between recent Modern
Movement architecture and all architecture of the past: the concept of
tradition. This distinction is now well established and the term ‘tradi-
tional architecture’ has come to mean all that is not Modernist. (IBID, p.
27-29)

The consequences of these revolutionary attitudes and approaches of Modernism for
infill and intervention in the built historic environment are revealed in the following quo-
tation:

A well-known architecture critic, referring to a proposed design to be
inserted into a row of Greek Revival townhouses in Greenwich Village,
recently wrote that a building which blends too well with its surroundings
was a “soft and (creatively) weak solution.” The correct, and presumably
more virile, creative solution is the uncompromising personal architectur-
al statement, the strength of which seems best measured in our times by
how violently it offends its surroundings. If a design does not stand out
from its neighbors, most believe it has failed: it is neither creative nor
original. (BROLIN 1980, p.6)

Not only had the possible elements of relatedness been eliminated with the changes in
technology and sense of style, but contrast was a deliberate goal.
It would seem that Modern Architecture, by virtue of its precepts and philosophy, is inherently incompatible with historical styles. Modern architecture challenges traditional ideas of order and propriety. It is however, inaccurate and overly simplistic to lay the blame for the often disharmonious built environment solely at the feet of Modernism. There are many factors that continue to contribute to the dilemma of combining new with old architecture even now in the post-modernist era, not the least of which includes the nature of the clients, and their design programme requirements.

4. A History of Approaches to Intervention

At this juncture is would be of use to examine the approaches to intervention in the built historical environment, as well as to examine the theory that has guided these approaches to the present day.

Although preservation as a deliberate movement did not come about until relatively recently, historical examples abound of sensitive additions to older structures or ensembles of buildings. Although not necessarily guided by the wish to preserve, the architectural conventions, together with the technological and transportation limitations, of the day generally succeeded at relating buildings of different styles and vintages.

In the nineteenth century, heritage resources began to be increasingly perceived as valuable. Out of this movement, were born the seeds of the modern preservation movement, as well as the underlying philosophies of intervention approaches.

To the French restoration architect Eugene Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879), responsible for such projects as the restoration of Notre-Dame Cathedral and Saint-Denis in Paris, is attributed the idea of reconstructive addition (RENY 1991, p. 5-7). Although he championed historical research, he believed the role of the restoration architect was also to complete the building. To Ludovic Vitet, a contemporary, can be ascribed the
belief that the hand of the restorer should pass undetected and unseen (IBID, p. 5-7).
The Englishman John Ruskin (1819-1900), enamoured of the middle ages, championed the approach to neither add nor destroy anything, in short, to preserve. The Italian Camillo Boito (1836-1914) advocated scientific restoration/conservation, maintaining that historical fabric should be preserved but that if any new material needed to be introduced, it should be done so honestly without any attempt at deception. Boito also considered use of paramount importance, was against reconstructions, and advocated a national inventory of buildings. He was also concerned about the landscaping of a historic building or monument, and expressed opinions about commercial signage (IBID, p. 5-7). These are but some of the important historical figures in the development of preservation theory.

In the modern era, these philosophies of intervention approaches have been defined and codified in charters produced by various international bodies concerned with historic preservation, and are of various scope, beginning with the monumental and ground-breaking Charter of Venice. They articulate what has been defined to be the correct approach and treatment of heritage resources. They guide and set the standard for all intervention work.

4.1 HISTORICAL PRACTICE

The historical practice of combining new architecture with old was faced with a far less challenging set of circumstances than today.’s Nonetheless, architectural styles did change, but the rules and conventions of architectural practice and urban design were able to keep up with the changes and continue their regulatory function. Here follows a brief summary of the prevailing attitudes and practices through time.

Osmond Overby writes “...as a general rule, new building in the context of old building has almost always been done in the new style.” (OVERBY 1980, p. 19) The Piazzetta San Marco, is a good example.
In the Piazzetta the Venetian genius for organizing dazzling combinations of sizes, shapes, textures and colours may be seen at its very best. The elements in the view are not tediously symmetrical, but are nonetheless exquisitely balanced; nothing matches, but everything is so exactly placed and so successfully accommodates everything else, that the unity of the whole is guaranteed.” (LIEBERMAN 1982, plate 93)

The stylistic differences between the Gothic and Baroque are quite marked, but, at least to our twentieth century eyes, the effect is not jarring. Another good illustration of this point is the Old Town Square in Prague.
3a. On the north side of the Square are a Roccoco palace, Early Gothic tower, and Renaissance school, behind which are situated the steeples of a High Gothic church.

3b. The east side of the Square has examples of Baroque facades, as well as two examples of late 19th Century Revival Styles (the second and third buildings from the far left).

3c. Another view of the east side of the Square. This view is to the immediate right of the view in 3b.
The earliest written record indicates that stone buildings have surrounded this square, the intersection of major north-south as well as east-west trading routes, since at least the year 929 A.D. Although the only romanesque architecture can be seen in cellars, the square is a varied assortment of gothic, renaissance, baroque, roccoco, beaux-art, as well
as twentieth-century revival, architectural styles. As with Venice, the effect is stimulating, creating a richly complex urban tapestry.

These two examples of Venice and Prague have something in common. Osmond Overby states what element this is:

Although it usually has been assumed without question that new building would be done in the new style, effective architectural ensembles were created in spite of the restrictions that this practice imposes. New and old were harmonized by the larger urban design. As a second general rule, then, it can be said that the problem of juxtaposing new buildings with old is a matter of urban design, not simply of the design of the new building. (IBID, P. 21)

Although urban design as a formal discipline did not arise until the Renaissance, and did not rise to its zenith until the Baroque period, certain rules of architectural "etiquette" were in place much earlier. Edmund Bacon has pointed out how skilfully Greek designers planned the growth of their cities (BACON 1974, p.72-83), and how medieval towns demonstrate the use of building hierarchies, with church and castle towering above the rest.

There are historical examples of new buildings imitating the style of older ones. Osmond Overby however, points out that:

When old styles were imitated, it was only rarely out of consideration for the old style of the immediate architectural context; rather, there was a desire for the added meaning that came by association with the borrowed style or out of respect for the authority of accepted historical models (OVERBY 1980, p. 22).

The most obvious example of this is the Piazza della Santissima Annunziata in Florence, a clear example of Bacon's "principle of the second man": that it is the second man who determines whether the creation of the first man will remain and serve as the focus for future development, or be destroyed. The arcade of Brunelleschi's Hospital of the Innocents, was a very influential building, often proclaimed the first example of
Renaissance architecture, designed in 1427, was echoed by and further reinforced by Michelozzo's 1454 redesign of the facade of the Santissima Annunziata church. When the architect Sangallo was commissioned to design a building directly opposite that of Brunelleschi's 89 years later in 1516, he chose to copy it almost exactly, choosing to complete the aesthetic scheme instead of making his own individual statement.

4.2 THE PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING CURRENT PRACTICE

The Charters produced by the international body concerned with preservation, the International Committee on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), a part of the United Nations body concerned with education and cultural issues (UNESCO), are intended to guide current professional preservation practice. They represent the joint effort of some of the world's leading theorists and practitioners, and are the formalisation of practices and principles. The ideas and recommendations developed within them are the product of the cumulative wisdom and experience of the international community.

Although many Charters speak to the issues of intervention in the historic environment, three are particularly germane: the Charter of Venice, the Appleton Charter, and the Charter of Plovdiv.

The Charter of Venice is a seminal work, the starting point for all subsequent preservation charters. It provides guidance on context; restoration; reconstruction; additions; as well as new construction. Many later charters have focused exclusively on specific aspects of preservation: the preservation of landscapes; archaeological remains; on intervention; and vernacular architecture. Collectively, the charters stress the importance of public education, both the Appleton Charter and the Charter of Plovdiv make particularly strong recommendations with respect to education, and the government role in the process. The following highlights from these three charters focus on the issues most important to establishing relationships between old and new architecture: context; restoration; use; and vernacular architecture.
• **Context**

The following article of the Charter of Venice indicates a recognition of the importance of context, identifying some of the factors that infill or other form of intervention ought to respect:

The conservation of a monument implies preserving a setting which is not out of scale. Wherever the traditional setting exists, it must be kept. No new construction, demolition or modification which would alter the relations of mass and colour must be allowed.

In article 7 of the same charter can be found a further statement about context: "a monument is inseparable from the history to which it bears witness and from the setting in which it occurs." Both Articles 6 and 7 indicate that the preservation of even a single historic building goes hand in hand with preserving the context of that building, or at the very least, ensuring an appropriate context.

The Appleton Charter reiterates the Charter of Venice in its recognition of context, mandating that "...all interventions must deal with the whole as well as with the parts."

• **Restoration**

The Charter of Venice's Article 11 delivers the international verdict on "scraping":

The valid contributions of all periods to the building of a monument must be respected, since unity of style is not the aim of restoration. When a building includes the superimposed work of various periods the revealing of the underlying state can only be justified in exceptional circumstances and when what is removed is of little interest and the material which is brought to light is of great historical, archaeological or aesthetic value and its state of preservation good enough to justify the action.

This paragraph provides a clear directive for restoration, and indicates the validity of intermingled styles. The most important phrase is "...unity of style is not the aim of restoration". The implication of that statement is that unity of style is not the goal of preservation, either.
Again in the Charter of Venice, Article 12 provides guidance on the correct form of any reconstructed or replacement parts which may be part of an intervention.

Replacements of missing parts must integrate harmoniously with the whole but at the same time must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the artistic or historic evidence.

There is a very distinct reluctance expressed towards any form of imitation or falsification. Although this passage refers to the specific instance of the restoration of an individual monument, it can be assumed that this attitude would probably prevail in the larger context of an approach to a historic district.

- **Intervention (Addition and Infill)**

  Article 13 is the section of the Venice Charter states:

  Additions cannot be allowed except insofar as they do not detract from the interesting parts of the building, its traditional setting, the balance of its composition and its relation with its surroundings.

As discussed later in this document, additions are somewhat more sensitive than infill, and different rules apply in determining what is and is not appropriate.

The Appleton Charter provides more explicit guidance on intervention in the built historic environment than the Charter of Venice, taking into account the more recent practices and trends in the preservation field. The Charter begins by addressing the question of how to determine the appropriate level of intervention:

...The appropriate level of intervention can only be chosen after careful consideration of the merits of the following:

- cultural significance
- condition and integrity of the fabric
- contextual value
- appropriate use of available physical, social and economic resources
Direction for the search for appropriate intervention in the built historic environment is provided by the Charter of Plovdiv in the following two paragraphs:

1. The meaningful protection and enhancement of our vernacular heritage can only be carried out within a context which recognizes: a) the inevitability of change and development in adapting traditional expression to the demands of new and ongoing use, and b) the need to ensure such development recognizes and promotes a community's cultural identity.

5. Contemporary expression acquires most legitimacy in materially acknowledging and reinforcing the cultural values bound into a community's vernacular continuum.

- **Use**

Use is an important aspect of intervention which is addressed by the Appleton Charter. With the enormous popularity of adaptive re-use projects, the resulting change in use and its effect on the sense of place needs to be recognized. The charter states:

A property should be used for its originally intended purpose. If this is not feasible, every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use which requires minimal alteration. Consideration of new use should begin with respect for existing and original traditional patterns of movement and layout.

- **Vernacular Architecture**

The Charter of Plovdiv is concerned with the nature of vernacular architecture, and provides direction for an appropriate response to a situation involving some form of intervention, most especially infill, in a built historic context. Historic areas are often characterized by vernacular architectural styles, the material expression of the exigencies of a cultural and physical environment. The charter recognizes that cultural values and cultural identity are inextricably linked to vernacular structures and ensembles. It also recognizes vernacular architecture as an evolutionary process, a process that must continue if we are to maintain our unique cultural identities. The ideas expressed in this charter fly in the face of the homogenizing trends unleashed by modernism and mass production.
such as the continent-wide proliferation of "California-style" bungalows.

In summary, the many charters produced by international bodies such as UNESCO and ICOMOS provide guidance for professional practice. They set the standard of what should be achieved, or at least attempted.

One final addendum to the direction provided by the charters is the report from the 1972 ICOMOS conference in Budapest as related by Osmond Overby:

The delegates from both east and west of the Iron Curtain recognized the special circumstances that justified stylistic imitation in rebuilding cities devastated by World War II. They resolved, however, that as a general rule contemporary architecture is both feasible and appropriate within groups of old buildings. They agreed that the value placed in the authenticity of historic monuments precludes imitation; that new architecture is feasible because it can be related to the old through mass, scale, rhythm and appearance; and that it is appropriate because architecture is the expression of its age, and in a whole environment there must be a sense of past, present and future. They further resolved that adaptive use is acceptable if it does not affect the structure or character of the historic building (OVERBY 1980, p. 36).
CHAPTER 2:
INTERVENTION IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

This chapter constitutes a comprehensive examination of intervention in the built environment. It defines intervention, recounts how intervention is regulated, and identifies elements of successful intervention.

For the purposes of this discussion and this document, the term “intervention” is used to indicate any situation of physical change to, or within the context of, heritage resources. The specific types and extent of intervention vary greatly and are broad in scope, requiring different design solutions. Intervention refers to the insertion of new buildings between or next to historic buildings, renovation, and restoration of historic buildings. The term may be used to indicate demolition, or new construction on a portion of virgin land.

The term intervention was chosen for this document because at this time there does not appear to be a professional term in common usage which encompasses a similarly wide range of physical possibilities. Generally accepted professional nomenclature that is used to indicate the insertion of new construction in an older context is the term “infill”. Infill is used within this document to indicate this specific form of intervention; but the term is inadequate to describe other activities that impact context and involve the introduction of new materials. As this document addresses the management of change in the built historic environment, and considering the importance of overall context, the broader issues of intervention, and not just infill, will be discussed and defined.
1. Types of Intervention

It is useful to identify the many variants on interventions and examine the conceivable extent of their impact upon the built environment. Certain types of intervention introduce new materials to a more obvious extent than others, and these tend to generate the greatest concern. However, other forms of intervention can also have significant impacts upon the built environment. These interventions should be recognized and included within planning functions and regulatory regimes. Basic interventions are described following, ranked in order of least to greatest potential change.

1.1 SOMETHING OLD...

The following interventions - preservation and restoration - deal predominantly with existing fabric and their focus is to maintain a historic appearance. However, they both involve the addition of new fabric to at least some degree, and both affect the established aesthetic character of a place.

- **Preservation** - In this document the term “preservation” indicates a building which is maintained in its current historical and physical condition. Although architectural conservation intervention may be necessary to preserve structural or physical integrity, and certain modifications may be necessary (for example, installation of a security system, or fire sprinklers), these are generally unobtrusive. Normally, little of the physical appearance is changed.

- **Restoration** - This term describes the process used to return a building, or group of buildings, to a certain point in their history. It is a more radical form of intervention than simply preserving or maintaining the physical condition; it involves actually “scraping” off later changes, and returning the building or buildings to some previous physical appearance or point in time.
The Charter of Venice, as discussed in Chapter 1, clearly indicates that restoration is not a solution to be pursued in the interests of stylistic unity, or because one style is thought to be more important than another. The inducement for restoration needs to be more compelling, as outlined in the charter, because it will have an effect on the character of the area, and can involve substantial physical changes.

A dramatic example of a restoration is of the building U zvonu (At the Bell), in the Old Town Square in Prague, where a remarkably well preserved Gothic structure from the mid-14th Century was discovered under a 19th Century Neo-Baroque facade. The original Gothic facade was preserved beneath the later facade, and a chapel and Gothic wall paintings were found inside.

Restoration (and a certain amount of reconstruction too) was pursued in this case only after careful consideration. The building in question had been the frequent home of the greatest Czech king, Karel IV, who was also the Holy Roman Emperor Charles I. He established the first Czech university, made Prague the seat of the Holy Roman Empire, and created plans for the growth of the city which endured well into the nineteenth centu-
ry. Apart from its association with this individual, the extant Gothic fabric of the building was truly extraordinary and of superior quality; the Neo-Baroque facade was neither exceptional nor rare, and so was felt to be dispensable.

1.2 SOMETHING NEW...

The following types of intervention characteristically involve the introduction of considerable new fabric. They include: renovation; addition; demolition; reconstruction; and new construction.

- **Renovation** - This term indicates that the building is being “modernized” in some way. The term can be used to indicate a vast spectrum of changes: interior changes that are not discernible from the exterior; or reversible exterior changes; or changes on both the exterior and interior. It may indicate adaptive re-use, which may involve extensive interior, and perhaps exterior changes, or it may indicate that the appearance of the building is being updated. For example, in the 1970s it was popular to “slipcover” old buildings with aluminium siding to make them appear contemporary. Also in the 1970s, it became popular to renovate old houses by removing their exterior detailing, and re-siding with then-popular cedar. Renovation may also imply some sort of a change in use or function: for example, the same function may still be carried out in the building, but requirements such as space or equipment may have changed.

Although renovations may be said to constitute a natural progression, the Venice Charter counsels against them, indicating that the destruction of historic building fabric is not desirable and is to be avoided. However, the same Charter only recognizes the value and validity of the renovations carried out in the historic past, thereby implying that the architectural contributions of our own period are somehow undesirable. Not allowing buildings to be updated or modified results in buildings and districts that are frozen in time; they become urban museums of the architecture of the past. Progress along the
continuum of the architectural expression is thus curtailed, as is development in the art of combining new with old. Renovations have become a very sensitive matter in recent years. Deliberate and difficult consideration is necessary to arrive at decisions on which buildings are too precious to be interfered with in any way, and which are appropriate to modify and continue their architectural evolution.

- **Addition** - As the term indicates, new fabric is added onto the historic fabric of a building. Additions to older buildings require very sensitive design solutions, and are perhaps the most difficult of contextual architecture endeavours because they seek to integrate old and new within a single building.

One example of a historical approach to addition was evidenced in the now-demolished Misericordia Hospital in Edmonton. The original hospital was built in 1905 in the Second Empire style. The first two decades of this century were a time of phenomenal growth in Alberta; the hospital needed to expand twice in order to meet the burgeoning demand - first in 1914 and then in 1921.

![Illustration 5a: The Misericordia Hospital, Edmonton, Alberta c. 1905](image)
Illustration 5b: The Misericordia Hospital, Edmonton, Alberta, post-1921

Note the change in roof colour which delineates the extent of the addition.

The additions were in fact a “completion” of the original wing, as the photographs reveal. Even though the Second Empire style had become somewhat “dated” - no longer the height of fashion - it was continued. It is obvious that the client or architect valued the creation of a cohesive, rational, structure more than making an “au courant” architectural or design statement.

A more recent example of a graceful addition is that designed by SOM and Lee Nixon Ferguson & Wolfe for the Memphis Brooks Museum in Memphis Tennessee. The existing building, a 1915 white marble Neo-Classical building designed by James Gamble Rogers in Frederick Law Olmstead’s Overton Park, was the prime consideration upon which they based their design solution (MURPHY 1990, p. 103-105). The addition is clad in two shades of cream stucco, which respect the marble without imitating it. Such is the case with all the new elements: they take their cue from the original, harmonizing with it, but are unmistakably contemporary.
An interesting variation of the addition involves the joining of two or more neighbouring but otherwise unrelated buildings, addressing the architecture of the “in-between”.

Unrelated buildings were generally designed for particular uses, which were also dissimilar. Although they may relate well to each other as separate buildings in a streetscape, the buildings do not necessarily relate well to each other in a more intimate arrangement. Tying together unrelated buildings is therefore very tricky, and many times the results, although programmatically successful, leave much to be desired as aesthetic endeavours.

A local case-in-point is the Calgary Performing Arts Centre.

Sandwiched between the cream terracotta Burn's Building and its 1980s addition, and the grey limestone-clad Calgary Public Building, the low-rise brown-brick Performing Arts Centre may provide a physical link, but not a visual one, between the buildings.
- **Demolition** - Demolition is mentioned here because site-clearing is often a first step for intervention involving new construction. The term refers to the destruction and removal of a historic building or buildings; this form of intervention often involves a substantial, even complete, loss of historic fabric. Despite growing awareness of the value of historic buildings and streetscapes, demolition is frequently undertaken in the face of a sufficiently large development proposal.

In Québec City the construction of the Loews Hôtel Le Concorde in the mid-1970s illustrates possible impacts.

**Illustration 8a: Loew's Hôtel Le Concorde on Grande Allée, Québec City, Québec.**

*Referred to by many locals as "the ski boot", the angular concrete building towers above neighbouring Second Empire rowhouses.*

Situated on Grande Allée just outside the official boundaries of the historic district, the site was part of an architectural ensemble of Victorian Second Empire terraced houses. In a city with fewer architectural resources than Québec, it is debatable whether their demolition would have been permitted. In this case, in opposition to the protests of many residents, the new hotel was considered more valuable, and so demolition of these buildings was officially sanctioned.
Illustration 8b: The building which preceded the Concorde

Demolished prior to 1970, the house was styled in a combination of Second Empire and Italianate features.

The new hotel, clad in concrete and metal siding, towering many storeys above its neighbours, contrasts quite dramatically with its environment; the new building lacks architectural detailing, and its bold mid-seventies form is juxtaposed with the staid and traditional forms surrounding it. This example also clearly demonstrates the limits of historic districts. The hotel site was immediately outside the walls of the official heritage district boundary, but no special protection was in place. The row houses were part of an immediate architectural ensemble; as well, they related to the larger environment. In hindsight, the general consensus is that the demolished buildings were probably of greater importance than the hotel which replaced them. Achieving foresight with perception to equal hindsight is an elusive goal.

Conversely, successful examples are also known to happen. In the district known as Josefov (the Jewish Quarter) in the Czech capital Prague was demolished in order to improve the sanitation system. Originally an area characterized by crowded, teetering medieval structures with steeply pitched roofs and gables, it became an area characterized by exquisite examples of Art Nouveau, richly adorned with sculptural decoration. Although the loss of the gothic homes is significant for Prague, where they are in short supply, they have been replaced by an extensive collection of buildings unique in all of
Europe. The number of Art Nouveau buildings in Josefov challenges what is to be found in Vienna, Paris, and other cities renowned for this style. Although in many respects it may have been desirable to preserve or restore the Gothic structures, ultimately the decision to demolish and build anew has proven to be not inappropriate. The replacement buildings were of very high craftsmanship, they were well designed, products of their time, and respected the pre-existing spatial order and sense of place.

The following are the possible forms that new construction can take:

- **Reconstruction** - This term describes the rebuilding of structures no longer standing. This may entail the recreation of historical buildings, or refashioning the missing components in a contemporary style. Subjective decision-making is inevitably involved.

Examples that spring to mind that attempted to rebuild or recreate actual historical buildings and their styles, include the many European cities destroyed or heavily damaged as a result of the Second World War, including Warsaw, Nuremberg, and Cracow. Other examples include the Governor’s Palace at Colonial Williamsburg, the Globe Theatre in London, and Place Royale in Québec City. Often the techniques used are of such high calibre, that all but the expert are beguiled into believing that the building is actually many hundreds, instead of just a few decades, old. There are often compelling reasons for this, but it is a deception nonetheless.

An interesting example of reconstructing by means of contemporary expression can be seen at the Emmaus Monastery in Prague. The original single Gothic tower of the church was rebuilt in the Baroque style and featured two towers. The Baroque was itself rebuilt in the 19th Century in Neo-Gothic. The towers were then destroyed during the course of World War II, and so in 1967 the church was provided with a new roof and towers, designed by the architect F.M. Cerny. The design incorporates the form of the Gothic single tower and the Baroque twin towers in an uncompromised modern style. It is technically a reconstruction, but also has implications for additions.
Pastiche - The French word for "pasting", it describes the practice in architecture of attaching ornamentation of one style onto a building predominantly built in a different style. Pastiche essentially describes the application of architectural features out of context. It is most commonly used as a term of criticism of post-modernist buildings, it refers to historical features applied out of context: for example, a structure made of poured concrete and glass, but with a cut-out of a gable on the roof, and a neo-classical colonnade along the sidewalk. This term refers to buildings that skirt authenticity and combine attributes of vastly different architectural styles and movements. In combination, the design is not authentic, although individual components may be authentic, or suggest authenticity. The criticisms levelled at this approach charge that it constitutes a debasement of aesthetic standards, and is intellectually, as well as visually, affronting. Supporters contend that it is less visually offensive than contrast. This is a device frequently used in historic districts and, with perhaps equal frequency, to disguise parking garages and parkades. This practice involves pretense, and lulls many lay people into believing that the structure or structures may indeed be historical structures. This deception becomes more pronounced as the buildings age because they begin looking old, and hence, historic.

Prince Charles' severest critics in Great Britain have levelled the charge against him that he supports pastiche, and that his comments have resulted in the proliferation and justification of pastiche. (CHARLES 1989, A Vision of Britain, p.9) Whether or not Prince Charles is to blame, pastiche is common in Britain, as it is in North America.
Illustration 9a: McDonald's, Rue St. Jean, Quebec City

This building fools many into believing that it is as authentic and historic as its neighbours on the popular Rue St. Jean. Although the building succeeds in not contrasting with the context, it is a weak and bland design solution, and illustrates pastiche.

Illustration 9b: Rue McGuire, Sillery, Quebec

Sillery lies immediately west of historic Quebec City, and is within Greater Quebec. Although off the tourist track, the aspirations still seem to be there: the trendy clubs, restaurants and shops that line this street are all housed in new buildings, pastiche versions of traditional Quebecois architecture.

• Contemporary Expression, Low Contrast - No pretense is made about the historicity of the new building, nor is an effort made to integrate the building by stylistically referring to the surrounding buildings. However, despite the contemporaneity of the new building, it seeks to contrast as little as possible with the surrounding buildings. This may mean respect for the form, massing, fenestration, facade materials, and other characteristics of the surrounding buildings. This particular approach leaves a very wide avenue open for the design of a new building.
Illustration 10a: Sweet Shop, Town Square, Pehirimov, Czech Republic

In this case, the new construction that is blended so skilfully with the old is reconstruction work done on the existing Baroque facade. In 1913, the needed repairs were so extensive, that the work was done in a contemporary style, Cubist, in order to differentiate it. The "how" window is also new.

Illustration 10b: Cubist infill in Prague, Czech Republic, by the architect O. Novotny (1923).

Although markedly unusual, this curious building nonetheless manages to harmonize with its neighbours. The semi-circular forms that are part of the continuous sill and recessed bays between windows relate to the window decorations of the Neo-Baroque buildings to either side.
- **Contemporary Expression, Contrast** - This approach differs from the latter in that although it may (or may not) respect certain characteristics of surrounding buildings, its design is a deliberate and fundamental visual contrast with its surroundings. The most obvious example would be of a glass curtain-wall skyscraper inserted into a street of masonry buildings between three and eight stories high. This is blatant contrast; but contrast is not always so obvious. It can occur more subtly, while certain physical characteristics of the neighboring building, or neighborhood, are respected. A building can be the same height, but the massing, material, and/or solid-to-void pattern, or any such permutation or combination, may be substantially different.

The examples cited in the section discussing demolition each entailed new construction that stylistically contrasted with the context. In the Quebec example, the contrast was complete: there was no point on which the new building did not contrast with the older surroundings. In short, there was no point of relation. However, the example in Prague, as mentioned, was successful partially because it paid attention to certain criteria characteristic of the place; namely height, materials, colours, and walls of continuity.

*Illustration 11a: The Maj Department Store, Prague, the Czech Republic*

On a major artery through the Old Town, the building (now a K-Mart) is unabashedly contemporary. Although it differs from its neighbours in many respects - notably the materials, fenestration, and solid-to-void ratio - the structure relates through its height, massing and ground-level display windows, making it a good fit.
Illustration 11b: Addition to the National Theatre, Prague, Czech Republic

This addition was extremely controversial, among architects and planners, as well as laymen. The green glass tile, and sheet glass reflecting a green marble interior, complement the greenish cast of the stone of the old National Theatre. Again, the new structure relates to none of the detailing of the historic structure, choosing instead to imitate only its height and massing. It relates quite successfully to the rhythm of buildings along the street, and is deliberately divided into two separate sections for that purpose.

2. Scale of Intervention

As there are different types of possible interventions, there are also different scales of intervention.

Interventions can be of a cosmetic or of a structural nature, and vary as to the degree of their reversibility. Although, given unlimited resources and exhaustive documentation, almost any form of intervention is reversible, possibilities are constrained by limited budgets and history. Frequently it is not justifiable, economically or politically, to restore architectural resources, and so all intervention decisions need to be carefully considered at the outset.

The possible scales in intervention follow, and are listed from least to most obtrusive:

- **The Building Interior** - Because the interior of a building is generally not visible from the street, changes to its interior are usually perceived as being a less radical form of intervention. There may however, be significant architectural resources in the interior which require protection from irreversible changes.
• **The Rear, Side, or Foundations of a Building** - Generally, these areas have limited potential for disruption or visual interference to building or street character. This does not hold true in all instances of course, and must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. For example, in the case of a building on a corner lot, the side of the building will definitely be of concern. Similarly, if there are archaeological remains, the area beneath the building will be of concern. Frequently, in areas of special or distinctive character, the facade is preserved and the interior and rear of the building are partially or entirely rebuilt. This is the situation represented by the term “facadism”; the facade is authentic, but it is only “window dressing” because what one would expect to find behind it is no longer there. Frequently, use is changed as well.

• **The Building Facade** - Changes to the building facade are an extremely sensitive issue. The facade is the most readily visible component of a building, an area where a good deal of the character and style of the building are expressed. If the facade is changed in some way, the effect has the potential to be significant; the character of not only the individual building may be altered, but also that of the street or even district.

• **The Entire Building** - This is the most extensive level of intervention that involves changes made to a single building. The consequences of such an intervention to the street facade will be the most marked, so the implications are the greatest for streetscape integrity.

In recent years, a most interesting variant of intervention has become popular: given an historic building with a protected facade in an irresistible location, developers have circumvented planning and preservation legislation by retaining the facade, but not the building. Everything behind the facade is renovated or entirely rebuilt; what had previously been a five-storey building can be turned into a forty-five storey skyscraper with a five storey veneer of the original historic facade.
3. The Regulatory Environment of Intervention

Policies and regulations are an attempt to control or balance numerous aspects of intervention in the built historic environment. Namely, the desires to:

- preserve
- beautify
- profit from real estate and development ventures
- maintain sense of place
- community development
- not infringe on the rights of individual property owners
- desire to achieve that which is in the public interest

It is very demanding to accommodate these desires simultaneously, and often one is in direct contradiction with another. Furthermore, there are many different stakeholders involved in the process of both intervention and regulation, each with their own agenda. The balancing act is a difficult one, and often the reason why there are often less than successful outcomes. There is constant pressure on the legislative bodies with respect to the ranking of the above-mentioned priorities.

The regulatory environment is not set by a single level of government, rather, it is usually a function of two, and sometimes all three levels - municipal, state or provincial, and federal. An example of this is historic district designation, which often is a marriage of municipal and provincial (or state) level heritage legislation.

3.1 ZONING AND OTHER BYLAWS

The most common tool at the disposal of planners, and those concerned with preserving the unique character of an area, is to control development by means of zoning. Zoning regulates the height, mass, building setbacks or easements, and in a general sense, the use
of a building. Since aspects of architectural control such as use of material, colour, and type of form are not encompassed by zoning, it affords only minimal protection to architecturally sensitive areas. Variations do exist, such as “spot zoning” and “overlay zoning”, but generally zoning offers a rather simplistic and abstract approach to the issue.

The city preceded zoning. Only after we lived in cities for some 10,000 years did zoning come about, and zoning is still a rather crude instrument for guiding what has always been shaped by the tacit understanding and regulation of a city’s physical form (CHARNEY 1991, p. 57).

Given the economic and political realities surrounding development, creative variations have developed over the years. For example, it has become common practice to use “density bonuses” in order to encourage projects with certain desirable features. In New York City, developers were allowed to increase the density of their high rise towers if they provided some sort of public plaza space. Another variant on this is to offer an increase in density in return for development of “superior quality” (ROBIN 1990, P.201). Allowing the sale of unused development rights from a lower-density building to a development project on another parcel of land, enables the new development to exceed the zoned density. This allows the preservation and restoration of historic buildings to be economically feasible for their owners.

Currently, zoning is the only protection afforded the vast majority of historic buildings and ensembles. This is especially true in Canada, where very few historic districts have been designated in comparison to the U.S. and Great Britain. Historic buildings, if designated at all, are much more likely to be designated individually as opposed to districts or units. Individual designation generally does not provide for any control over the surroundings. Hence, that task falls to zoning. But zoning can offer only a very limited form of protection, regulating height and use in a general sense, and affords next to no architectural control.

Municipalities also have the right to enact bylaws which control aspects of visual appear-
ance. It would be extremely cumbersome to attempt extensive controls through such bylaws however since, for reasons of enforcement, the bylaws must specify measurable results (for example, the exact degree of pitch of a roof, or the exact width of a window opening or doorway). Such bylaws do not have the necessary interpretive leeway that is provided by historic district designation.

3.2 HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION

Development controls beyond those provided through zoning imply the existence of some sort of protective historic designation legislation. Either single buildings, a group of buildings, or an entire district may be designated. Legislation protecting single buildings or a group of buildings typically cannot regulate context. Neither can district designation have an impact on context, and district designation is often the only way in which to regulate design.

There is no broad consensus on either the term to indicate district designation status, nor the exact protection afforded by such status. The most popular of the various terms in current usage include: conservation areas; conservation districts; heritage areas; heritage area conservation districts; and municipal heritage districts. The use of identical terms in different places does not necessarily indicate similar or identical regulatory conditions.

The following definition of the term “heritage conservation district” provides a general understanding of district designation. It was developed through the analysis of a number of definitions, and the most widely accepted and practiced meanings of the term.

A Heritage Conservation District can be defined as an area “within defined geographic boundaries” (1) where there is a “concentration of properties united by similar use, architectural style or historical development which retains the atmosphere of a past era...” (2) which “possesses form, character, and visual qualities derived from arrangements or combinations of topography, vegetation, space, scenic vistas, architecture and other man-made features that create an image of stability, comfort, local identity and liveable atmosphere” (3), having a “character and appearance...which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” (4), and which “is preserved and protected through the enforcement of architectural controls on new development” (5). (PLASKETT 1988)
The concepts of the heritage district are all rooted in the understanding that the context of a historic building or buildings is as important, if not more so, than the individually remarkable buildings themselves. The relationships between buildings, the streetscape, open spaces, squares, landscaping, signage, use, traffic patterns, as well as any and all other features that result in the creation of a unique character or sense of place are worthy of preservation. District-wide designation recognizes that the character of an area is the result of many factors in combination and not just a few individual buildings of historical or architectural importance. District-wide heritage conservation necessitates regulations involving a combination of development planning and heritage legislation as well as broader community planning. Design guidelines, guiding principles, design review boards, and direct control are the mechanisms most commonly used to manage change in heritage districts.

Heritage, or conservation, district designation is often fought because it is perceived to be anti-development and economically regressive (GALE 1991, p.325). Research indicates that this is not so. Case studies throughout North America have shown to the contrary that “the rehabilitation of heritage districts has increased retail activities from 24% to 125% per year over four years and increased the taxable property values by 9% to 43% per year over the same period” (IBID, p.325-340). District designation removes any uncertainty that may exist about the compatibility of future development in the area and thus encourages the upgrading of properties in the district. Historic district designation also impacts the economy by stimulating building conservation and restoration work, more labour intensive than new construction (IBID, p. 325-340).

The potential benefits of historic district designation thus accrue to the district as a whole, and not to any one building owner in particular. Similarly, the same restrictions are shared by all; all residents and business owners must operate under the same constraints imposed by the conservation legislation. It is generally viewed that the interests of the majority outweigh individual interests, and so owner consent is generally not a
prerequisite for district designation (PLASKETT 1988, p. 40). The issue of compensation for injurious affection, however, has become a reason for historic district designation to be blocked. Although the general line of thinking is that all share equally in the pain and benefit, and the international charters have made a strong stance against providing compensation, some provision for compensation has been made in each of the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. One of the principal difficulties in cases of injurious affectation is that it is extremely difficult to assign an accurate dollar amount to such claims.

The benefits of heritage district designation are many and obvious. But there are drawbacks as well. Kevin Lynch writes:

The preservation of entire urban districts as historic areas is a relatively new phenomenon, symbolically important and most interesting and diverse in character over the world. Yet these districts are microscopic in proportion to the whole of the urbanized region, and moreover their vitality is frequently undermined by the act of freezing their outward form. (LYNCH 1990, p. 549)

As Lynch points out, halting the natural evolution of a place may preserve some buildings, but the negative consequences of such an action are significant and cannot be ignored. Determining the appropriate rate or course of evolution of a place would be an important aspect to identify in any change management scheme. Also, by concentrating attention and energy on a single definable area with a discernible, relatively consistent, character increases the risk that the district may be steered artificially in the direction of a single theme. When that happens, the area loses its authenticity and vitality, succumbing to the "tourist trap cuteness" that can characterize such places. The demarcation of special districts inevitably creates boundary lines that can become quite marked. Creating "buffer zones" around such districts may relieve the pressure somewhat, but the inevitable question arises as to whether it is in the best interest of city design to create a two-tier planning system, demanding excellence in special areas, while allowing almost anything in others where there may also be historic resources, but not enough to qualify as a district.
1. The United States

The United States was a pioneer in the concept of the heritage district, and now has established a considerable number. Historic districts are encouraged as a matter of national policy, and steps have been taken to address the compensation issue. However, there is no federally-designed model of legislation, and so the situation varies from state to state.

The first legislation to create a heritage conservation district was passed in 1931 preserving Charleston, South Carolina, to be followed in 1937 by New Orleans, Louisiana. (GALE 1991, p. 325) Today there are approximately 2000 such districts in the United States, a number that is steadily increasing (IBID, p. 325). The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 empowered the National Park Service to create the National Register of Historic Places, a listing of landmarks and historic districts considered to be of significance beyond merely local or regional levels (Public Law 89-665).

It is generally recognized in the U.S. that “protection of landmarks and historic districts is a valid public purpose and a legitimate function of local government” (5) This is reinforced at the federal level by tax incentives for the owners of registered historic buildings (Tax Reform Act, 1976) and assistance for communities with certified historic preservation ordinances (National Historic Preservation Act Amendments, 1980) (IBID, p. 325).

The efficacy of the designation varies from state to state, and community to community, since there are no national standards:

Some states provide full autonomy to local authorities, while others require enactment of specific state legislation before a particular community may designate a local district. The precise powers of local authorities in relation to heritage district planning also vary from state to state as does the strength of local ordinances. (PLASKETT 1988, p. 9)

Typically, historic district statutes establish the official boundaries around a historic area and provide for the creation of a commission to rule on individual applications to demolish or alter a property or to build a new structure in the area. The commission is usually
made up of from three to ten volunteers selected by the local government for their expertise or experience in matters related to preservation. An appeals process is provided for affected property owners who disagree with a commission's decision (IBID, p. 39). Administratively, a U.S. heritage district generally has an historic area commission which acts in an advisory capacity to the overall planning authority which, in turn, is ultimately responsible for the issuances or denial of permissions.

The United States has addressed the perceptions that heritage preservation and district designation results in financial loss in a number of ways. A tax abatement has been devised as a positive incentive, and the transfer of unused development potential has been used. The concept was pioneered by the New York Historic Preservation Ordinance, allowing property owners to transfer, that is to say sell, their unused development rights to nearby properties. If financial compensation is sought by a property owner, they must prove that they have been injuriously affected, and must also prove the amount they claim. If it is proven, the municipality must then compensate the owner, generally through tax relief, or by purchasing the property. If the compensation cannot be satisfied by such methods, the municipality must issue permission for the development (IBID, p.50-51).

Although the many heritage conservation districts in the United States have proven that such designation can greatly contribute to the revitalization of entire neighborhoods, levels of public and political support differ. Many business people and homeowners fear that they will be unjustly penalised by such designation: prevented from making alterations to the property; restricted from using their real estate as they see fit; and ultimately, experiencing an economic loss as a result (GALE 1991, p.325). Consequently, the strength of an ordinance is determined in part by whether it provides sufficient financial incentives to property owners "to offset any economic hardship that may be caused by heritage district designation" (PLASKETT 1988, p.5) The assertion that historic dis-
strict designation negatively impacts property owners has been challenged by Dennis E. Gale. His findings indicate that heritage conservation district designation actually insulates property values from the peaks and valleys of cyclical fluctuations "...because of a higher degree of investor confidence in these officially recognized and protected areas". (GALE 1990, p. 336)

2. The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has made not only the creation of heritage districts, or rather "Conservation Areas", a matter of national policy, but has also imposed a greater level of standardization. The legislation provides for financial compensation, but balances it with the concept of public rights. Although standardized, the approach provides for a great deal of flexibility, and allows for local standards to be defined.

Despite the vast heritage resources of the United Kingdom, the concept of heritage conservation districts did not become part of heritage legislation until the Civic Amenities Act in 1967, a considerable lag when compared to the United States. The Act in question "required that every local planning authority determine which parts of its area were of special architectural of historic interest, and worthy of preservation or enhancement." (PLASKETT 1988, p. 6). Conservation area planning has been an integral part of the Town and Country Planning Act ever since 1971; as a result there are now over 5000 conservation areas in England and Wales. (PLASKETT 1988, p. 6) "Local Plans are required to set forth not only the rationale for any development controls that are imposed but also the manner in which the authority proposes to enhance the conservation area.” With regard to controls of alterations, however, there are different levels of control, depending on whether a building in a conservation area is listed or unlisted. Listed (designated) buildings require what is known as "Listed Building Consent": all alterations, no matter how minor, must receive consent. Unlisted buildings are permitted specified minor building activities under what is known as the "General Development Order"
These include exterior painting, window alterations, and the construction of small porches and additions up to certain size limits. However,

"if a local authority considers that permitted developments under the General Development Order will have a negative effect on the character of the conservation area, application may be made to the Secretary of State for what is called Article 4 Direction. This withdraws the general permission granted under the Order, hence bringing minor activities under local planning control." (PLASKETT 1988, p. 7)

In practice, this piece of legislation is seldom used (PLASKETT 1988, p. 7) in the interest of maintaining public cooperation. Conservation authorities tend to be involved more in the giving of advice than in the denial of permission. And although there is little formal requirement for public involvement, "...on a non-statutory basis, however, local authorities are strongly advised that public interest and participation is essential for success in conservation...[and that they]...should make special efforts to harness the enthusiasm of amenity groups and interested individuals" in the planning process. (PLASKETT 1988, P.8)

The British system provides owners with financial assistance in the form of numerous grants for individual building repair and maintenance as well as more extensive public works to improve the appearance of conservation areas. The Town Scheme program provides 50% grant aid for building repairs in communities which have comprehensive plans for conservation area enhancement (PLASKETT 1988, p. 8). In Britain, compensation for injury can only be sought and awarded to listed (that is, designated) buildings (PLASKETT 1988, p. 26). The owner must prove he has been negatively affected as the result of a development refusal, and if successful, may demand that the Council purchase the property (PLASKETT 1988, P.25).
3. Canada

In Canada, unlike the U.S. and Great Britain, there is no single piece of national legislation to guide either heritage preservation or the creation of heritage conservation districts at the municipal level. Heritage conservation district planning is managed through complex, and at times confusing, interrelationships between municipal planning statutes and provincial heritage legislation, differing from one province to another. Eight of the ten provinces, excepting Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, now provide for heritage district planning.

Following are brief summaries of the situations in three of provinces: Alberta, Ontario, and Québec. Their district designation legislation pre-dates that of the other provinces and they, the two eastern provinces at least, have the greatest amount of historical resources.

a) Alberta

The Historical Resources Act (HRA) of 1980 promotes integration with the Alberta Planning Act by requiring that any heritage district bylaw that is adopted shall become a part of the Land Use Bylaw for the area and shall be subject to the Planning Act. (PROVINCE OF ALBERTA HISTORICAL RESOURCES ACT, 1992) However there is no requirement for the prior adoption of heritage district planning policy or a full municipal development plan. (IBID) No heritage districts have yet been designated under the HRA, and there is no established practice to comment on. There is only a municipal heritage district, the Old Strathcona district in Edmonton, which was designated under the revitalization-oriented Area Redevelopment provision of the Alberta Planning Act (PLASKETT, p. 10). Alberta is the only province in Canada which specifically enables the payment of compensation for a “decrease in economic value” resulting from heritage designation (PLASKETT, p. 10). Likely because of the fears of such claims, as well as the lack of any counterbalancing statutory provision for financial incentives (ie., no tax relief), no Alberta communities have yet been designated as “heritage districts".

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b) Québec

The CPA, or Québec Cultural Property Act (amended in 1985/86 to include provision for municipal heritage districts), and the Québec Land Use Planning and Development Act (LUPDA) are designed to work in tandem. The CPA requires that heritage districts conform with overall municipal planning, while the LUPDA obliges municipal plans to identify “territories that are of historical, cultural, aesthetic or ecological interest.” (GOUVERNEMENT DU QUÉBEC, LOI SUR LES BIENS CULTURELS, 1986) As of 1988, there were approximately 40 heritage districts in the province designated under LUPDA, the greatest number of any province in Canada (PLASKETT 1988, p. 11). The province of Québec’s heritage district legislation is advanced in that it incorporates not only architectural control, but subdivision control as well (RENY 1990 and PLASKETT 1988, p.11-12), and makes provisions for landscapes and rural areas as well (RENY, 1990). This is pertinent to heritage planning because the subdivision of property surrounding heritage buildings often leads to development that can affect district character.

Quebec does not make mention of compensation for any loss suffered by property owners as a result of designation (GOUVERNEMENT DU QUÉBEC, LOI SUR LES BIENS CULTURELS, 1986)

c) Ontario

Overall, Ontario seems to have very progressive legislation with respect to heritage district designation.

The Ontario Heritage Act of 1974 was the first provincial statute to contain a provision for heritage district designation. The Act requires that a municipality must have a plan with “provisions relating to the establishment of districts”, but does not specify what those provisions ought to be (PLASKETT 1988, p. 9-10). On a non-statutory basis however, the Act advises municipalities to prepare a “rigorous examination” of the character-
istics of the area that it desires to protect so that the designation will proceed through the requisite Ontario Municipal Board Hearing. The “examination” is supposed to include a thorough evaluation of the district’s architectural and physical character, a careful delineation of its boundaries on the basis of visual, physical and historical factors, and a full program of public participation to involve property owners and residents of the district. The Ministry’s guidelines also advise the inclusion for heritage district policies in the official municipal plan. The policies are to outline the “intended future physical development of the district, the specific objectives to be sought in conserving, protecting and enhancing the heritage environment of the area, and general design guidelines for future change in the district”. The heritage district designation bylaw should be complemented by a municipal zoning bylaw under the Planning Act and a Tree Bylaw under the Municipal Act. There are 18 heritage conservation districts in Ontario. These districts are governed by local councils with the input of the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committees (LACAC’s) (IBID).

As in the province of Québec, Ontario does not make mention of the issue of compensation.

4. The Players in Intervention

Legislation is only one facet of controlling development in the built historic environment. The legislation is important, but just as important - if not more so - are the individuals who administer the regulations and the individuals whose actions are regulated. Participants bring to the process their own particular viewpoints and biases, their own understanding of the issues. Frequently the process is a contentious one because the participants have different concerns, and lack an understanding of the positions of the other actors. Also, the different participants each bring to the process differing levels of education as to the issues of historic preservation, design, and community planning. All this
must be recognized so as to facilitate communication and collaboration to provide a basis on which to formulate strategies for achieving the desired results.

4.1 THE STAKEHOLDERS

Ideally, regulations should attempt to satisfy all stakeholders.

However, the divergences between the stakeholders are often substantial. For example, a building owner has probably a stake in the profitability and saleability of the end product - often in the short term. If the owner is a developer or a large scale real estate agency, it might even become important that profits be generated as fast and with as few cumbersome procedures as possible. The municipal authorities might be concerned primarily with the area’s economic activity levels and potential sources of tax revenues. The neighbours and residents of the area might have a stake in the aesthetics or the amount of activity generated by the intervention. The contractors might have a stake in the extent and complexity of the work to be done; if the contractors are not historical resource specialists, they might favour the fastest and simplest routes at the price of lower work quality. Some potential users of the building might prefer practicality over aesthetics and historic accuracy or vice-versa.

Even if it is impossible to satisfy everybody, a conscious effort must be made by decision-makers (planners, architects and municipal authorities) to identify all the stakeholders and understand their stake in a given intervention. Too often, a majority of stakeholders are not even considered. Only by carefully identifying and assessing all that is at stake can an intervention’s success be maximized.

4.2 THE POLICYMAKERS

The process of intervention within the context of historic resources usually brings together two different groups: the preservation amateurs, and the preservation specialists. The
preservation amateurs may include social activists, representatives from communities being affected or from special interest groups, as well as individuals appointed to heritage review boards who may have little or no background or interest in heritage matters. The preservation professionals may include municipal heritage planners, representatives from the provincial and federal ministries of culture, mainstreet programs or expert consultants. Finally, the process also usually involves representatives from various municipal committees along with municipal planners from different fields: social planning, transportation, urban design, economic development or land-use.

The possible tensions between these many individuals are equally numerous and varied. Planners, both development planners and social planners, may for example “…feel that conservators are concerned solely with saving buildings, and have no sense of the dynamics of urban activity.” (LYNCH 1990, p. 624). Special interests are not limited to those of developers or property owners: citizens groups, mayors and other political figures, as well as architects and city departments may all have special interests in the project. “[T]he existence of these forces can be ignored only at the peril of the process.” (TINTI 1980, p. 183)

5. Successful Intervention

Having established the definition and set the parameters of what constitutes intervention, it is now appropriate to venture into the murkier waters of what constitutes successful intervention. Satisfying all stakeholders is the penultimate definition of success. However, it bears repeating that the various stakeholders will each have a different idea of what constitutes a successful intervention project. Some will define success on the basis of cost and financial return; some will define it in relation to their personal aesthetic; while yet others will determine success more pragmatically based on how the changes meet user needs. Satisfying all stakeholders then, is very difficult and may not be even possible. Can a universal measure of success even be developed? Different forms of
intervention have different criteria on which to judge success. The international charters produced by UNESCO and ICOMOS provide guidance, but can do no more. The problem is that the analysis of success is not quantifiable, it is an essentially subjective endeavour. What is needed is that all the stakeholders and policymakers share at least a basic understanding of all the issues and problems, as well as share a basic design education: in short, that they have the basic elements needed to establish communication. In order to communicate effectively, they must be able to evaluate the cost of the tradeoffs and compromises inevitably made in the course of the process.

What constitutes a successful intervention is also dependent upon the individual set of circumstances encountered in each preservation project. Understanding the architectural, historical, cultural, social, and even economic significance of the project is critical to being able to evaluate it. In one case, it may be appropriate to aim for a seamless infill; in another, such a “safe” approach would constitute a diminishment of the spirit of place. The following are the quintessential requirements for success:

• preservation of historic fabric
• adherence to the spirit of the Charters
• adherence to local preservation regulations
• retention or reinforcement of the sense of place
• authenticity
• aesthetic strength (it must constitute “good” architecture)
• urban design strength
• positive contribution to community identity and community pride
• positive contribution to community vitality
• good return on investment
• minimal bureaucratic red tape
• practical applications for the end-product
• positive contribution to economic activity
• positive contribution to the local tax base
Some measures of success are easier to evaluate than others, and it is the same with types of intervention. Contributions to the local economy, an increase in the tax base, or a good return on investment are measurable. Some conditions of success are not quantifiable, but rather, are qualifiable. Different types of intervention are easier to categorize than others. For example, success is comparatively straightforward in the cases of intervention entailing preservation and restoration. Research by an architectural historian and the work of an architectural conservator can, albeit at some cost perhaps, readily determine if authenticity was achieved.

The case with respect to demolition is somewhat less straightforward. It would appear straightforward that a demolition results in the loss of historic fabric and so cannot be deemed a success for that reason. However, if the buildings demolished did not contribute to the overall sense of place and character of the area, if they were of poor design and quality, and the replacement structures a better fit, then the case for demolition being a success may be made.

Reconstruction, although appearing relatively cut-and-dried as to what constitutes success, is not. The criteria of authenticity is the major stumbling block. No matter how well executed, no matter the skill of the craftsmen, a twentieth-century reconstruction of a fifteenth or sixteenth century building will be found lacking in authenticity when compared to the original. It will always be an imitation. The criteria of authenticity carries with it the idea that producing a good contemporary building is more authentic than trying to reproduce a historic one. Nevertheless, it is possible that the compelling social and cultural reasons for a reconstruction may outweigh the other considerations; a point already made by the international preservation community at the 1972 ICOMOS conference in Hungary.

Intervention involving infill is often the most difficult to evaluate. The most important criteria upon which to evaluate the success of an infill project are the most subjective
ones; and this is part of what makes infills inherently difficult to judge. To design a building appropriate to its environment is not easy: in one case it may entail fitting the building seamlessly into its surroundings, in another it may entail grasping the spirit of the place and designing a building that contributes to the architectural evolution of the place. But no matter the circumstances, architectural excellence must always be the goal. Bland, generic buildings, into whose design little or no creative effort has been made, are as insupportable as buildings that deliberately turn their backs on their surroundings. That is why the design of infill is the most difficult of architectural endeavours, and to achieve excellence, should be attempted by only the most skilled of practitioners.

Additions are forms of intervention that are tricky to execute successfully, but are not as difficult to gauge as infill. The charters clearly indicate that any new construction or new architectural fabric must be honest. This means that no artificial aging should be attempted, and distinction between old and new must be clear, although not jarring.

These are the general parameters of success in the different types of interventions. But genuine success can only be gauged on an individual site-specific basis. Regulations assume it is possible to define a successful result. However, there is no one “right” answer to a question of intervention; there are many possible right answers. And this is where regulations often fail; by limiting the possibilities. Any successful solution will be based on educated and informed opinions and judgements.

Ultimately, it is perhaps more useful and more appropriate to define a successful process, as opposed to a successful result. A successful process is one that will allow all views to be expressed; will provide opportunities for all parties to understand the issues at stake; will address these issues in the larger context; will encourage discussion and understanding; and will balance the right of the individual against the right of the majority. The highest standards of professional judgement and training are also integral to a successful process.
CHAPTER 3: 
DEFINING THE CONTEXT OF INTERVENTION

Common sense - as well as common courtesy and many design guidelines - dictates that any change proposed within a historic area, designated or not, should take into account the context. It can be further argued that the context should be the ultimate test of what is and what is not appropriate intervention.

Since context is an important concept in the endeavour to design of successful intervention projects, the term needs to be defined and discussed.

Generally in architectural terminology “context” indicates the immediate physical surroundings. For example, the buildings on either side of a proposed infill site, or the building to which an addition will be made are considered to be context. It can also refer to the street and streetscape affected by a project.

The term “context” can also refer to more than the mere physical form of a place. In this document “context” also makes reference to the social, cultural, historic, economic, political, and other “intangible” aspects of a place.

Examining and understanding the non-physical context of a building and the district of which it is a part yields the answers to a number of questions. What lies at the root of a style? Why does a building or a district look the way it does? What role or purpose was a building was meant to serve and what role does it serve? These are all questions that should be answered by such an examination. And knowing the answers to these questions can reveal the most appropriate direction in which to guide future development, preserving both the building, and the sense of place.
1. The Physical Context of the Building

Although the physical context of a building is the most obvious type of context it is often insufficiently analysed, either in breadth or depth, or both. There are the many physical aspects of the individual building in question, the immediate neighbors, the street, the district, and the landscape to consider. There are the architectural qualities to consider, as well as the urban design features, natural features, and ambient qualities. Participants in the intervention process need to be able to identify, understand, and ultimately evaluate, the various constituent elements of the physical context.

1.1 PHYSICAL RELATION

The following are the specific physical elements through which buildings relate to one another. They are relatively straightforward, and have already been exhaustively identified and categorized over the course of the past three decades. Based on guidelines developed in Savannah, Georgia in the mid 1960s, the following list was among the first in the United States to explicitly define sixteen features and characteristics of buildings important to recognize when trying to establish a relationship between old and new. It is a thorough and widely-accepted categorization; for the purposes of this document, it has been slightly modified. New criteria have been introduced, and the elements have been organized to reflect whether they are general, or more specific, features of relation.

For the purpose of this document, these elements have been organized into coarse-grained elements and fine-grained elements. The coarse-grained elements are more obvious and difficult to disguise, and so deserve the greatest respect when any sort of intervention is proposed for an established area. The more refined elements may be just as significant in a specific area, but they may initially appear less important. However, they may establish a more refined and subtle interweaving of buildings that is required in certain contexts. Categorizing elements in this way recognizes that there are certain features
that are more important in establishing an empathetic and even synergetic relationship between buildings of different styles and vintages. The characteristics of primary importance to interrelation include the height, massing, and stylistic characteristics of a building. However, a new infill, addition, or renovation proposal may correspond with these benchmarks, and still be inappropriate for the context. This is why it is necessary to be aware of the different possibilities, and levels, of interrelationship between buildings.

Successful contextual fit is not determined wholly or solely on the basis of these physical elements. These elements of interrelation are but a single component of a many-faceted issue.

The following elements of relatedness are based on the seminal list produced in the *Historic Preservation Plan for the Central Area General Neighborhood Renewal Area, Savannah, Ga.*, by the Eric Hill Associates and Muldawer and Patterson, Washington D.C., 1966 (LU 1980, p. 196-197).

• The Coarse-Grained Elements

If a new construction is introduced into an established architectural context, and does not respect these criteria, it will be obvious. As Ada Louise Huxtable, former architecture critic for the New York Times, bluntly stated: "...blockbusting scale and bulk cannot be corrected or much ameliorated by decorative trim" (HUXTABLE 1986, p. 243).

1. Height

Height is perhaps the single most critical element of relation between buildings. No amount of clever detailing, no amount of architectural talent, can disguise a 20 storey building on a street of four and five storey walk-ups. It is impossible to minimize or obscure the impact of a building on its environment if its height is blatantly discordant with that of its surroundings. This very plain and simple truth has frequently been
eschewed and minimized by planning departments and developers alike through flexible zoning practices, such as the sale of air rights and plaza bonuses.

2. Massing

The overall physical mass of a building is also of prime importance in establishing a design relationship. A building with a mass two or three times that of its neighbors will be conspicuous. Similarly, if surrounding structures are vertically-oriented, and the new building strongly horizontally-oriented, it will also be out of place. The shape of the structural mass is also important. Buildings with stepped-back upper storeys became popular in dense urban centres such as New York because they allowed light to penetrate to street level and minimized the shadow cast by the building. This concept has resurfaced in popularity in recent years, and is being applied in historic contexts. Needless to say, the ziggurat effect does not alter the true height of a building, and makes the building very conspicuous if the surrounding buildings are of the straightforward rectangular variety.

3. Architectural Style

Whether adjacent buildings have been done in identical, complementary, or contradictory styles makes a difference in the way they relate. This does not imply that an ideal stylistic relationship exists. Rather, architectural style is an important element which co-determines the nature of the physical, visual, relationship between buildings. A homogeneous architectural style, extended over the course of a street, a district, or a city, need not be good or bad. A diversity of styles can be good, or as often experienced, diversity may not be successful. The exact nature of the relationship is something which is determined by the fine-grained elements of relation.

As Wolfgang Braunfel wrote: “Only ideal cities were supposed to be built in a single style. Living cities have always renewed themselves. Every epoch of their history
became architecture. They are enriched, torn down, extended, reinterpreted. There is constant rebuilding” (BRAUNFELS 1988, p. 9). It is only natural, only the course of history, that different styles will be introduced into the context of the city. However, different streets, and different quartiers may have significant ingrained characteristics. Some districts which have developed or retained a very distinct architectural style over the years, may be compromised or diminished if new discordant elements are introduced. In making the determination of what is appropriate, cues from the surroundings will be important. In an area with a strongly homogeneous architectural style, as little contrast as possible might be the only appropriate course; conversely, in an area that has developed a varied architectural vocabulary, a more adventurous approach may be fitting, although other elements of the context should be identified and addressed.

4. Materials

An area may exhibit the use of a predominant building construction material. It may be limited to a street, or it may prevail throughout the area. There may be a single material that is used; for example, in old Montréal many of the townhouses are faced with the same type of grey stone. Or there may be two or three (or more) materials used in a street or neighborhood - stucco and limestone for example, or sandstone and brick. Introducing a new material may dilute the strong visual relationship that already exists. A change from the established material may make the new structure or intervention quite conspicuous and out of place. Depending upon the circumstances, the choice of material can be a primary factor in the relationship between structures.

5. Colour

The element of colour has in the past been closely related to the type of material, and both are coarse-grained elements of primary relation. In Old Montréal for example, the townhouses are almost exclusively faced with a grey stone; interjecting a different shade
or colour, even if it is the same stone, may profoundly change the character of the area, and will likely create a discordant note between the new intervention and the older neighborhood.

6. Rhythm of Solids to Voids in a Facade

The rhythm of solids to voids in a facade refers primarily to the fenestration pattern. However, it can also refer to the alternation of strong and weak elements in a facade, as well as to the pattern of projecting and recessing elements. Historically, the rhythm of solids to voids in a facade was determined by architectural technology and financial wealth; today the options are limitless. Glass curtain walls do not relate on equal terms to buildings with an explicit solid to void character. The rhythm of strong and weak elements in a facade is an architectural device that can be used in certain circumstances to blend or disguise the overwhelming or inappropriate mass of a building to its context.

7. Front Facade Proportions

This is the ratio of a building’s width to height. It is one of the fundamental characteristics of a building, and one of the most important pre-existing patterns that should be respected in any sort of intervention. This is one of the criticisms frequently leveled at residential infill developments: due to the smaller size of the building lot, the houses are extremely vertical in character, which may jarringly contrast with the established residential neighborhood surrounding it.

8. Rhythm of Spacing on the Street

The alternation of building masses with spaces on the street is also a more coarse-grained element to be respected. It becomes of particular concern when additions or infill are planned. It is another concern raised by the increasingly common practice in North America to subdivide standard sized lots in older neighborhoods. There is great pressure to do so due to the scarcity of building lots, soaring land values, and the increasing desir-
ability of close-in or inner-city neighborhoods. However, the result of such practice is that the established rhythm of spacing on the street is grossly violated. A neighborhood of buildings set back from the street with generous spacing on either side becomes transformed into a neighborhood with buildings sited closely to the sidewalk, with little, if any, spacing on either side. Sideyards and frontyards are often almost entirely eliminated. This "densification" has been an important urban structure since very early times for dealing with population and economic growth.

9. Roof Shapes

The roof shape can also be of fundamental importance if the established district has a majority of roofs in a single style, or a very limited assortment of styles, be they gable, hipped gable, mansard, flat, or any other sort. As well, a building with a gable roof oriented from side-to-side in an area with gable roofs oriented from front to back might not be a good fit. The most striking violation to occur commonly is the introduction of a flat-roof structure into a context composed entirely of gable roofs.

• Fine-Grained Elements of Relatedness

These elements are the more particular and exacting features that may contribute to a connection or linkage between buildings, or that may conversely, contribute to a contrast between them.

10. Architectural Details

Architectural details are the finer-grained elements that distinguish styles. They may include cornices, lintels, arches, quoins, balustrades, and the like, or they may include any variety of specific decorative elements, such as custom-made lighting fixtures, carved doors, sill treatments, etc. Historically, buildings were often limited in their mass, height, and use of material. It is particularly through the architectural details that styles
were distinguished from one another. Traditional architectural styles called for considerable detailing; however, modernism and variations of it have progressively decreased both the number of details as well as degree of detailing. The lack of detailing at a fine level often causes contemporary buildings to contrast sharply with historic or more traditional structures.

11. Textures

Two buildings may be quite similar in height, style, solid-to-void ratios, and may even by faced with the same material. But if the texture is different, it can alter the overall impression of "likeness". An ashlar-faced building, similar in all other respects to a rubble-faced one will nonetheless create an entirely different impression. The rubble-faced building will seem heavier and coarser, and will attract considerable attention to its surface finish. By having a more subdued finish, other features of the ashlar-faced building, such as the design, will be more obvious.

It may be desirable to use texture as a feature to distinguish two structures, and so it is worthwhile to be aware of it. The texture of a building can be surprisingly significant in the overall impression of a building, making this element either coarse-grained or fine-grained depending on the circumstances. The texture may be visible from afar, for example, a rusticated masonry finish, or it may only be discernible in close proximity.

12. Scale

The term "scale" refers to the size of architectural features and details in proportion to humans. Examples of features that exhibit scale, independently and in unison, are: windows, doors, entrances, stairs, and the like, as well as the overall height and mass of buildings. Different scales can create different atmospheres and impressions; people can be made to feel different things according to the scale that is used. A modest human scale, can impart a sense of intimacy and comfort. A grander sense of scale can be used
to create a feeling of awe. Each scale has its place and role; understanding both is important for infill and intervention. Again, the context will give the cue. Is the scale small, creating a sense of intimacy, or is it a monumental scale? When attempting an intervention what should also be addressed is the reason for the scale: is it used as part of a hierarchical organization of the environment? For example, public buildings and church buildings have a more monumental scale than a greengrocer’s shop or a bookstore.

Factors that often determine the choice of scale include: status and power; money; technology; and design intent. It is not necessarily appropriate to imitate the scale of the immediate surroundings, although in certain circumstances it may be the most appropriate course of action; however, it is very important to understand the sense of scale in the context of the intervention and how it is used.

13. Proportion of Openings

This element, the width-to-height relationship of windows and doors, is closely related to the solid-to-void relationship, and to scale, but is more specific. It is possible to have the same solid to void ratio while having horizontally-oriented windows or vertically-oriented windows. The type of window is an extremely important character-defining element. Windows are often the clearest signal that an intervention has taken place, often a renovation or addition. When buildings are modernised, the windows, for various reasons, are the most likely to change. The contrast between a double-hung window and an identically-shaped single-pane window communicates a difference in decades, if not more. And this is but a comparatively minor change.

14. Walls of Continuity

This element includes walls, fences, landscaping, building facades or any combination of them which form a cohesive wall or extended surface. There may be a staccato pattern of very brief walls; or there may be a pattern consisting of extensive continuous walls.
Whatever the form, an appropriate intervention would respect the established pattern, including both the form and extent of the continuity. "Respect" may include imitating the established pattern, or merely referring to it. The appropriate response is determined by the specific circumstances of a given instance. This feature may have an impact similar to that of massing. The materials and designs, use of different fence types for example, may have an impact similar to that of texture.

15. Directional Expression of Front

The directional expression of the front is a more specific form of relation than the proportion of width to height. A building that has a strongly vertical character, defined by having much greater height than width, can still have either a vertical or horizontal character as defined by smaller-scale architectural details and design elements. Windows and details may be vertically oriented, thereby lending even a horizontal home some verticality; or strong horizontal elements, such as a facade-spanning porch, string course, or wide balcony, may be used to lend even a vertical structure strongly horizontal elements. These elements cannot disguise the fact that a building is essentially vertical or horizontal, but they can either further emphasize the dominant character, or subdue or disguise it somewhat.

16. Rhythm of Entrance and/or Porch Projections

There may be an established relationship of entrances (with and without porches) to sidewalks, or there may not. If there is a strong rhythm, then this becomes a more significantly point of relation to be respected or understood in an intervention.

17. Landscaping

The established landscaping of the streetscape or the district where the intervention is proposed can also be significant. The factors to be evaluated include the type of landscaping (such as the formal design aspects and the selection of vegetation), the quantity,
quality as well as the extent of landscaping. Mature trees have long been identified as a significant defining element of many established neighborhoods. The trend towards subdivided lots in urban districts can impact significantly upon landscaping.

18. Ground Cover

Ground cover may consist of brick pavers, cobblestones, granite blocks, a poured concrete sidewalk, gravel, or asphalt. It is a feature that is most significant on a broader scale, such as a neighborhood or district, than in the case of a single building. It establishes consistency, and may have varying levels of significance dependent upon the context. In Prague for example, the older districts are consistently paved with grey, accented with black and white, granite cobblestones. They are square in shape, and no more than two inches in diameter. The paving is quite distinct from that to be found in other places, and so is a key feature of the city of Prague.

1.2 THE PHYSICAL CONTEXT OF THE INTERVENTION

Depending upon the extent and nature of the changes caused by an intervention, the impact can affect the entire district, the skyline of the city, or the landscape. The relationship between an individual building and its context is a complex one; the two interact, and share an interdependency. The context is not constant and unwavering; it is responsive and in a state of perpetual flux:

...there is a continuous exchange between the physical form of the urban environment and the people who inhabit it. Urban forms are not fixed, but dynamic forms in which the parts - buildings, open spaces, infrastructure - interact constantly with one another and with the whole. Each new building establishes a new set of relationships with surrounding buildings. Other buildings are influenced by these alterations, as are the ways in which people use them, the activities performed in them and the economy of the area. (LYNCH 1990, p. 10)

One seemingly small change in the physical environment can set into motion other small changes, with the cumulative sum being quite substantial. Identifying the essential ele-
ments of a place is a part of the preservation process. Given the nature of change, it becomes particularly important to identify the less obvious, less tangible aspects of context so that they are not inadvertently impaired or lost. Examining the physical sense of place can pinpoint these components.

1.3 SENSE OF PLACE: THE PHYSICAL ASPECTS

Sense of place encompasses both physical and non-physical components in its definition. It is used to indicate the unique qualities of a place which differentiate it from any other. Sense of place includes both specific buildings as well as architectural styles; the physical elements of place combined together create character and sense of place. Some of the more tangible and classifiable aspects have already been discussed in the physical elements of relation and the extent of the physical context. However, aspects of sense of place that do not fit neatly into either of these two categories include ambient qualities, natural features, the spaces between buildings, and the manner in which buildings are linked.

Retaining the sense of individuality and uniqueness is important in the face of spreading homogeneity and the increasingly generic quality of many cities in North America. Often the sense of place is really what is threatened by intervention. Any change constitutes a possible threat because the physical elements are part of an "ensemble", part of a system, created by the relationships between them.

- Ambient Qualities

Ambient qualities include features such as light and air, smell and sound. The micro-climatic features of a particular place contribute to its ambient qualities: wind patterns (for example, the reduction of wind resulting from the strategic placement or construction of buildings), controlled temperature, and humidity levels. Another ambient quality which
can be impacted by intervention is illumination - the quality of light and shade.

Ambient features are readily affected by development if not explicitly recognized and addressed. Light and shade often contribute powerfully to the character of a place. Perhaps the quality of light of a certain place dictates that certain colours are more appropriate or effective than others (think of the dazzlingly bright light of Greece, augmented by whitewashing and through the use of blue trim); or the climate of a place may indicate the use of certain materials and forms, and counterindicate others.

Sound can also be a powerful ambient feature. The sound made by footsteps in a Baroque courtyard or a 1930s “Pasaz” in Prague are intrinsic ambient features of the city. Changing the paving material, and/or the space between buildings, would inadvertently change this quality. On the other hand, if recognized as an ambient quality the effect could be repeated elsewhere to provide continuity and better integrate infill.

• Natural Features

Natural features contribute to sense of place include not only the forms and types of vegetation, but also the nature and quality of the landscape. This includes the combined effects of the topography, water features, and vegetation. It includes as well certain atmospheric qualities that are the result of that unique terrain.

For example, the city of Prague is built in a valley straddling a river. Small hills surround the central core of the city, and were used as strategic locations on which castles and palaces were built. The river creates a moist microclimate which encourages rich vegetation. Tall, columnar trees were planted alongside the river, creating two thick green bands that trace the river through the city. The whole of the city is frequently shrouded in fogs and mists due to thermal inversions as a direct result of the topography. Parks and gardens contrast with the mortar and stone of built form, and the gentle
Bohemian countryside meets the city’s edge. The natural features of Prague are as much a part of the unique sense of place as the buildings.

As with ambient qualities, natural features can either be threatened, or can be used to advantage to create a good “fit” when interventions are undertaken.

**Spaces and Links Between Buildings**

The spaces and links between buildings are not something revealed by two-dimensional figure-ground maps. The proportion of openings, walls of continuity and rhythm of spacing on the street discussed earlier consider the issue in a decorative sense, as a motif to recognize. In this section, spaces and links between buildings are examined in a more profound physical sense: as the complex product of three-dimensional structures, shadow and light. The spaces and links between buildings include approaches and gateways, squares, courtyards, the direction and quality of streets and alleys. In this context we are interested in more than the footprint of a building, the space it occupies, or whether it conforms to a setback, but how a building contributes and fits with its context in three dimensions.

2. **The Societal Context of Intervention**

Limiting the contextual analysis solely to the physical attributes of a place is short-sighted. The result of such an analysis may echo the physical form of the place, but may lack the vitality that distinguishes it. Special areas such as have been mentioned through the course of this document are imbued with a sense of history and culture. This is expressed not only through the choice of decorative and built forms, but also through the buildings’ use, and users’ lifestyles. For infill or intervention to be a truly good “fit”, the social patterns, needs and desires of the society must be understood. Both the historic and contemporary social patterns and use need to be examined to ensure not only the physical manifestations of a culture are preserved, but also what animates and creates
them are respected.

Preserving the sense of character is different from merely preserving a building. And when the issue is that of guiding development or managing change then it is most important that this distinction not be forgotten.

2.1 UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIETAL/CULTURAL CONTEXT

The character of a building or a place is determined not only through its physical appearance, but also by the factors that shaped it: the values embodied by its form; and by the roles it serves - the use it was designed for, and the uses for which it has been adopted.

The following passage explains the concept of external factors influence on the form, style, role, and value of buildings:

Every architectural work can be regarded as a sign of the power, wealth, idealism, even the misery of its builders and their contemporaries. A good farmhouse not only serves its purpose; it reflects, thanks to its architectural and decorative forms, the worldview in which the farmer's family feels secure. Only by this means does it become a form of architecture in its own artistic genre. A good town house can be perceived as a textbook of bourgeois virtues. It is the area in which bourgeois diligence, sense of order, cleanliness, and careful accounting are all cultivated. The rows of houses in a city show the efforts of families to regulate and distinguish themselves. If a good monastery confirmed by its appearance the ordering of life for which the monks had left the world, then in other forms, every palace, every princely castle, every city hall, every cloth hall, cathedral, or city church tries to do the same thing. (BRAUNFELS 1988, p. 3)

These inherent clues and revelations should be sought and ought to be used as part of an evaluation. Only upon such reflection can the nature of a place, the nature of the society, be determined and the impact and propriety of different intervention possibilities be judged and assessed effectively.

There are two primary questions that need to be answered through this type of analysis. First, what role or function, including social ones, did the building serve? And secondly,
what social values and lifestyle factors did it reflect? Next, it should be determined how the answers to these questions have changed over time. Only by doing so will the appropriate direction for change be made clear.

1. Function

Although the need for shelter is the most primal and basic function fulfilled by a building, specialized needs have resulted in great variety of forms. Theatres, churches, grocery stores, all have uniquely identifiable forms. To a certain extent function contributes to form, and leads to the establishment of culturally-specific norms of what certain buildings look like.

The intended function(s) of a building when first built may contribute to the understanding of the building, explaining physical attributes, and so it is useful to examine and research.

Understanding the intended function may assist in assessing the appropriateness of preservation, demolition, restoration, and other forms of intervention and can explain why certain forms were chosen for a specific building or area. This is especially important in circumstances where the original intended function has been lost or forgotten.

Building functions often evolve, as needs, circumstances, and technology all change; understanding the origin of a specific form can help determine its relevance today or in the near future. The proper evaluation of a building will include not only the recognition that a change of function has occurred, but also the reason why a change has occurred.

The form and intrinsic value of a building can easily become confused when a structure begins as a theatre, next changes to a cinema when movies become the rage, and then, upon the advent of the video cassette, is converted to a dining lounge.

There are consequences arising from the change in function of a building, as well as the rate of said change. Especially affected is the relationship of the building with its imme-
diate surroundings. Imagine that a small town creates a policy whereby it encourages older, historic, homes to become offices and clinics through a change in zoning from residential to commercial. Where once there was a family with children - ones who had barbecues in their backyard, tricycles and toys in their front yard, who gardened for the love of it, whose television set shone at night - there is now a denture clinic. Soon, a lawyer sets up shop next door. In quick stead, the neighborhood is transformed, and an intervention has taken place before anyone was aware of it. There are consequences for intervention when a change in function is proposed for a building. Preservation in the broader sense does not only imply the physical conservation of a building; it can also indicate the preservation of a use or a function of a building or area. Even if the historic structures are preserved, the success of the project may be in jeopardy if use is changed because of its eventual effect upon the sense of place.

2. Social Needs and Values; Lifestyle

The answers to questions about the needs, values, and way of life of a society will help determine the appropriate programme for a design solution to intervention. A good interior designer or a good architect first assesses clients' likes and dislikes, determines their values and lifestyle before proposing a design solution. And so it should be with urban design. And any intervention in the built historic environment inevitably has an urban design component; in the case of an intervention not in an urban context there will still be a design component to address its natural context.

The sorts of questions that may be asked include: Is this a society that predominantly values the sense of community, for whom design of a nature that encourages social contacts would be important? Or is this a society for whom safety, and perhaps limiting social encounters, is of greater importance? Other avenues to explore include the primary areas of employment, and how that may affect perceptions and patterns of use. Is this an area founded on the agricultural industry, or perhaps the financial industry? What are
the implications for needs, use, and lifestyle? From these observations will arise further conclusions about the sense of place.

The importance of the cultural environment in determining the actual existence and physical form of buildings is similarly obvious. The value a culture places on built form and design is one of the deciding factors in how much built form there is, and of what quality.

The form of cultural life also affects architecture. The term "culture" is inclusive of religion, whose struggles are frequently played out in an architectonic fashion. An example of this would be the magnificent Baroque Churches which were built in Prague, and throughout the Protestant Czech lands, by the Hapsburgs, the Catholic Emperors of Austria, in order to promote and encourage the re-Catholicization of the Czech people. This latter example indicates the close relationship between political, social, and cultural forces.

It will be shown again and again that these works serve an institution, whether it be a state or a family, and illustrate, by their architectural form, that institution's essence, its goals and its ambitions. Every architectural patron identifies himself, and the institution into which he is coordinated and to which he is subordinated, with the building he is having built. (BRAUNFELS 1988, p.3)

3) The Historical Context and the Current Context

Historic buildings link the present with the past. They are a monument to important events in the history of a people as well as the tangible reminder of the lifestyle of a previous generation. Research reveals that old facades inspire people to think about the history of a place and about its future (FLEMING and VON TSCHARNER 1987).

Studying historic buildings and attempting to understand the people that built them and lived in them, much as an art or architectural historian would do, reveals another aspect of the sense of place. It reveals the historical legacy of a place, as well as the nature of the society that created the structures. It reveals why buildings were built the way they
were, and may be used to guide future designs.

The current context must not be forgotten however. Not only must the question asking how people have used a place be answered, but also how people currently use the place and how they wish to use it are also issues to address. The change between the past and present, and potential future, must be identified so that more enlightened planning can occur.

**Summary**

The relationships between buildings and their users are complex. Change in use can set into motion many other changes that can ultimately result in physical changes as well as a change in the character of a place. Lewis Mumford summarizes the course of these changes in the following discussion about Venice:

> As buildings interact with people, so people constantly modify the city. Individual actions may have a small immediate impact, but the accumulated acts of many people can change the city in much more substantial ways.

Both the form and contents of the Piazza [San Marco] were, in brief, the products of cumulative urban purposes, modified by circumstance, function, and time: organic products that no single human genius could produce in a few months on a drafting board. Gradually, the political and social functions of the piazza pushed back the original rural and marketing functions; and the latter were, step by step, transferred to other parishes if the city, leaving only the restaurants, cafes, shops, and hotels near the site of the first hostelry for pilgrims.

> In short, the plan of Venice was no static design, embodying the needs of a single generation, arbitrarily ruling out the possibilities of growth, readaptation, change: rather, here was continuity in change, and unity emerging from a complex order. (MUMFORD 1961, p. 322)

This is why not only buildings must be examined, but also the social patterns and values that guide and shape buildings. The secret of great cities such as Venice is that change was not discouraged or denied, but accepted in such a manner as to provide for continuity. If a place is to retain its vitality and character, it must be allowed to change sensibly.
CHAPTER 4:
DEVELOPING A STRATEGY

In this chapter, the information presented in the previous three chapters will be synthesized and analyzed as a part of the process of developing an approach to regulation. Four themes key to the resolution of managing change have been identified from the earlier chapters and are discussed. They include a discussion of the countervailing forces of the public good versus individual rights; the question of social values; context and sense of place; and control mechanisms.

1. The theme of the public good explores the nature of North American attitudes toward individual rights, and the nature of property laws. The fundamental schism between regulations, which are based in a concept of the public good, and the challenge of appropriately balancing individual rights and public good will be explored. The issue is at the heart of any regulatory attempt to manage change in the built environment.

2. The role of social values in shaping policy and the physical environment are considered, and some of the prevailing attitudes with respect to the physical environment are discussed.

3. The section on context and sense of place explores tradition, community participation, and the role architecture plays in community identity.

4. In the last section, control mechanisms are analysed; the necessity for, and inherent difficulties with, control mechanisms are studied.
1. The Public Good vs. Individual Rights

Individual rights and freedoms are the very cornerstone of North American society; the United States and Canada are democracies that uphold these principles. As free-market, capitalist economies, the private ownership of land is central to wealth and wealth creation.

However, living in communities requires that rights be tempered with responsibilities. Individuals do not have the right to do with their land as they see fit if it diminishes the lot of others. Living in a community requires of its members to assume certain responsibilities toward the other members. Individuals are basically free to do what they please, as long as others are not negatively affected by these actions. Public good must be a concern for each member of the community.

Managing change in the built historic environment invariably creates a situation in which community rights and the rights of the individual are in potential conflict. Achieving a balance between them is necessary in the interests of creating appropriate policy.

• LEGISLATION: BALANCING THE RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL WITH THE PUBLIC GOOD

In many states and provinces in North America, the designation of historic buildings is not undertaken if it is against the wishes of the owner. In North American society, the notion of the public good is constantly challenged by the inviolability of individual rights. The roots of the belief in the sanctity of property rights are very long and deep, and are at the crux of the reluctance on the part of legislators to impose design controls. The lack of political will to create or enforce legislation to regulate intervention in the built environment denotes a conviction in the belief that individual rights come before the public good. In the english-speaking world the roots of social attitudes to the rights of property ownership extend at least as far back as the signing of the Magna Carta,
probably even earlier. The right to own property is one of the cornerstones of a free and democratic society and an intrinsic part of a capitalist economy. The provisions of the Magna Carta state that no "free" man would be deprived of his freehold "unless" by the lawful judgement of his peers and by the law of land. (TINTI 1980, p.176) The Constitution of the United States echoes this sentiment in the Fifth Amendment: “Nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation” (IBID). The notion that individuals have the right to do with their property as they see fit, with the sole proviso that it does not pose a danger to public health and safety, is similarly entrenched. Purportedly based in Roman Law, resurfacing in the writings of John Locke, “this natural right to property...helps explain why most buildings and zoning codes say very little about the design of structures that otherwise meet health and safety requirements and basic massing and setback restrictions” (FISHER 1992, p. 102).

An opposing view to property rights was held by other cultures that helped settle these shores. Deferring to the analysis provided by Thomas Fisher:

The so-called “conventional” approach to property (which has its origins in early Germanic law and was imported to this country through various channels - the early Protestant religious communities, the writings of idealist thinkers such as Hegel, even the urban visions of Modernists such as Le Corbusier and Hilbersheimer) holds that property belongs to the group - the clan, the community, the state - and that the group can attach any number of restrictions on the use of property by individuals. (IBID)

In recent years there have been signs that attitudes in North America are changing towards property ownership. Condominiums, co-ops, historic districts and even residential subdivisions are becoming more commonplace, and their acceptance is growing. Residential subdivisions have been subject to design controls for many years; for example, in maintaining a defined colour palette, and restricting the use of materials in a district. In the past decade the town planning ideas of Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Andres Duany have become popular and have been adopted in over forty communities across
North America. Their ideas of community planning are firmly rooted in the “conventional” approach to planning, and it is interesting to note the increasing popularity of their concepts. This trend has resulted in changing attitudes toward design controls, but acceptance of these ideas is far from universal.

In the United States the provisions of the Fifth Amendment which state compensation must be given when private property is taken for public use, form the basis of property law. The 1922 ruling by Justice Holmes in Pennsylvania Coal Co. v. Mahon indicated “while property may be regulated to a certain extent, regulation that is too extreme will be recognized as a taking” (TINTI 1980, p. 177). This rule was tested in Maher v. City of New Orleans:

Maher had argued that the commission ruling deprived him of his right to devote his property to its most profitable use. The court held however, that the test to be applied was whether the regulation so diminished the property value that the owner was left with nothing or nearly nothing and stated that even a substantial diminution of value would not constitute a taking. (IBID)

The other noteworthy development in the American courts has been the 1975 ruling in John Donnelly & Sons, Inc. v. Outdoor Advertising Board. The case centered around the billboard regulations in Brookline Massachusetts, regulations defended in previous courts on the basis of the preservation of property values and ensuring highway safety. The interesting development was the following ruling made by the Court:

...What was deemed unreasonable in the past may now be reasonable due to changing community values. Among these changes is the growing notion that towns and cities can and should be aesthetically pleasing, that a visually satisfying environment tends to contribute to the well-being of its inhabitants...We conclude that aesthetics alone may justify the exercise of the police power. (IBID)

William Tinti concludes that “...the legal limit of design control has been expanding, not contracting”. So, although the rights of the individual property owners are still generally
viewed as being of importance, there is an increasing sense of acceptance of design controls in the United States.

• THE PUBLIC NATURE OF ARCHITECTURE

Architecture is by nature potentially the most public of arts. A building is there for all to see, the passersby as well as the neighbour, and so affects the environment of more than just the building owner. Any proposed changes in the built environment have an extensive potential impact on the general public.

Structures are almost always on public exhibit, and so it is not unreasonable to request designs to “mind their manners”, so to speak. And since heritage resources are finite by nature, the case for subjecting them to regulations is even more compelling, even if it means overstepping individual rights. International charters have recognized the need for such regulation and have identified it as the role of the government to both regulate and educate. (CHARTER OF VENICE, CHARTER OF PLOVDIV)

Overstepping individual rights is justifiable only under specific circumstances. For example, a situation must involve the potential loss of significant heritage resources, sense of place or quality of life.

2. A Question of Social Values

The values held by a society or community are at the core of determining where individual rights stop and where public rights begin. The value a society places on aesthetics and design will determine to what extent those resources with aesthetic merit can be preserved and what price, in terms of sacrificing individual rights, a society is willing to pay.

The ruling by the Court in the 1975 case of John Donnelly & Sons, Inc. v. Outdoor
Advertising Board, mentioned in section 4.1, clearly indicated the importance of social values in the legislative and regulatory process. The Court wrote that community values were the ultimate determining factor of what is reasonable and, ultimately, of the nature of legislation.

The nature of the widely-held values of North American society are commented upon by James Stewart Polshek in his article “The Role of Education in Achieving Design Relationships”:

Two hundred years is a short time to develop a culture sensitive to its physical environment. American pioneers were unconcerned with the "public good" while they were taming and exploiting a hostile physical environment. This rugged individualism resulted in the attitude, You keep your hands off my property; I'll build what I want to. (POLSHEK 1980, p. 80)

Although Americans and Canadians are no longer a society of homesteaders or pioneers, rugged individualism is still cherished, and comparatively little value is placed on aesthetics. The financial bottom-line seems to take precedence over aesthetics; the majority of this society is not willing to pay for the "frill" or "luxury" of aesthetics. The majority of homes are not designed by architects, but rather, are based upon builders' plans which vary startlingly little between the coasts. Manufactured products still tend to be designed by engineers, and not industrial designers. Few cities employ urban designers, or have an urban design department. Architects are often judged by whether they can bring in a project on time and on budget, as opposed to the quality of their designs. Art and design education in the public school system, what there is left of it, is usually the first to hit the chopping block in the face of budget cuts. Kevin Lynch, the author of The Image of the City, has reached much the same conclusion:

I think that a deeper reason for this lack of application [of the Image of the City] lies in the special place of aesthetics in our culture. Aesthetics is thought to be something separate from the rest of life (which it is not), and the perceptual form of something is believed to be solely an aesthetic issue (which it is not, either). Aesthetics can be considered a sacred issue
- the highest goal of human activity once basic needs are satisfied. Or it may seem to be a secondary affair, subordinate to more fundamental needs. In either case, it is thought special, idiosyncratic, and not subject to rational debate. Thus, it is not an appropriate concern for public policy, or at least, it must be dealt with separately, gingerly, and at late stage of decision. Urban design, which tries to deal with public aesthetic issues in conjunction with other 'functional' issues (as if seeing were not functional!), holds only an uneasy position in this country. By custom and by institution, public policy at larger scales deals with economic and social ends, whereas perceptual questions are addressed at the level of small territories, or of single buildings. Decision-makers often base their choices on a strong personal image of the environment, but this image is implicit and is not tested against others. Politicians do not base campaigns on explicit sensuous issues, although such questions are often hidden motives in political battle, and even though there is the pervasive, inarticulate public response to the way localities look. What is usually called urban design today is more often large-scale architecture, which aims to make an object in one sustained operation, according to the will of a gifted professional. It may even be no more than a visible gloss, applied to a development 'package' to help it glide along the rails of decision. True city design - dealing directly with the ongoing sensed environment of the city, in collaboration with the people who sense it - hardly exists today. (LYNCH 1990, p. 254)

Aesthetics do not appear to be highly valued by this society. Even the preservation of historic buildings is almost never justified on the basis of their beauty; rather, the criteria generally includes mention of historic events, famous people, and the building's contribution to the architectural evolution of a place. And although historic preservation may have a higher marginal value than mere aesthetics, managing change in such an environment is usually undervalued.

In much of North America, financial gain is valued above aesthetics. And in these days of "downsizing", "restructuring", and other euphemisms for layoffs and budget cuts, the value placed on aesthetics has plummeted even further.

The following excerpt, originally published in the New York Times, recounts how even religious orders have been tempted by financial gain.
The Temptation of St. Bartholomew’s

If Faust exchanged his soul for immortality, the temptation of St. Bartholomew’s is a more pragmatic lure: financial security being offered by a most appropriate modern devil, New York real estate. The testing of moral fibre against sensory gratification or material gain is as old as biblical history, and this time the tempster came in the form of a “prestigious corporation” offering $100 million for the church’s prime Park Avenue property as the site for a new office tower. In these days of shrinking congregations and growing deficits, $100 million is an attractive sum. The trials of conscience that have sent saints into poverty and the desert have delivered St. Bart’s into the hands of the real estate brokers and developers.

…the church sees no loss of spiritual values in its decision. Temptation comes complete with convenient, if confused, rationalizations about people and buildings, missions and mortar. Brick and stone are called secondary to human needs; it is said that cash will serve society better than beauty. And solvency has a beauty of its own.

That the beauty of the St. Bartholomew block contributes to the welfare of the city and all of its inhabitants are not part of the reckoning. The close link between the spirit and the environment is denied. False and irrelevant equations are being made between dealing in real estate and dealing with poverty. Although the quality of the church’s art and architecture is well known, the serenity and public availability of its sun-filled and flowered garden in the congested commercial heart of the city are a less acknowledged contribution to all the people of New York. Only in a culture where commercial values have vanquished spiritual values would such a church and its setting not be considered a legacy beyond price from the past to the present and the future... The threats to the integrity and even to the survival of the city’s art and history today are as devastating as any posed by the bulldozer; they are just wrapped in real estate clothing. (HUXTABLE 1986, p. 152-156)

This article was written about New York City, but almost exactly the same situation arose in Québec City. The rather grand St. Patrick’s Church had been founded by Irish Catholic settlers in the last century, and stood as a monument on Grande Allée just outside the walls of the old city. The Church however, wanted to raise money, and with the exodus of the English population of Québec, no longer saw the need to keep such a large and majestic building. Despite the very vocal protests of the community, despite the efforts of the city and the province, the clergy were determined to have the church
demolished, and sell the land to a developer wishing to build condominiums. And they won. Condominiums, it would seem, are more valuable than the soul, even to the Catholic Church.

Recognizing that in fact the majority of North American society has not accepted the assumption that aesthetics and historic preservation have intrinsic value and contribute to the quality of life, provides a starting point from which to address the issues of contextual fit and managing change in the built environment. If the assumption on which regulations are based is not accepted, or is not understood, the regulations are rendered impotent because enforcement and compliance will tend to be avoided. Public awareness needs to be raised about these issues in order that existing legislation be used and/or improved. But the needs go beyond merely heightening awareness; a change in education is also required. The ranking of a society’s values can be changed, and if any progress is to be made in the cause of preservation, must be changed. The start made by the President’s Committee on Design needs to be built on.

3. Context and Sense of Place

Appropriate infill, a felicitous addition, well-chosen restoration or seemly reconstruction can only be the product of a process guided by context and sense of place. Context and sense of place are the ultimate factors that determine what is and is not appropriate in a case of intervention. They are, in point of fact, what design regulations are attempting to preserve.

- PRESERVING BUILDINGS VS. PRESERVING THE SENSE OF PLACE

The social and cultural identity of a place are expressed through physical elements. Therefore, the physical elements are essential to the social and cultural identity of that
A change in those elements can affect that identity positively or negatively. However, the physical aspect of a place involves more than architectural details. Simply regulating architectural detailing, as some guidelines attempt to do, is not a guarantee for success.

...Such is frequently the story in community preservation. The heroine is sometimes a group of buildings but more commonly, the character and vitality of a place. The peril is usually either too much growth and development or too little. And the hero, assuming there's a happy ending, is often a combination of careful planning, considerable citizen effort, and sheer luck....One obvious point is that the preservation of a physical place and the preservation of its character are two very different tasks. While all of these plans have resulted in the saving of buildings, one or two of them fell prey, at least in part, to the cuteness that often stalks historic districts. Retaining a sense of real community, especially when a district becomes a tourist destination, is no easy task. (Fisher 1990, p. 100)

This can often result in the creation of a misleading or inaccurate picture of a community, a less than honest version of history, and a less than rigorous attempt at solving the issues of physical intervention in the built environment. It is very important to clearly identify the primary goal as being the preservation of the sense of place.

**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

Community participation is a key component to the success of any preservation effort. The community is central to defining sense of place, and is the impetus behind any change in legislation.

The project organizers of *Our Town* in Battleboro Vermont believed developing a personal sense of place is a necessary first step in the process of linking personal perception to public policy. The *Our Town* approach challenges the tenet that the community is powerless in the face of change:

...we all have such places in our lives, but we have come to accept their loss as a matter of course. We leave planning, whether constructive or destructive, to planners and developers, thinking the issues too complex for
our lay minds. Against a background of environmental degradation, historical amnesia, the decline of the community and the absence of spiritual values, the loss of these small places seems minor and inevitable.

Or so we have come to believe.

There are people who believe otherwise. They believe that the responsibility for our landscapes lies best in the hands of those who live in them and care about them. They believe the quality of our ordinary, daily environment is crucial to our sense of well-being. They believe that the economic health of a community is strengthened by its sense of history and sense of place. (DRISCOLL 1991, p. 80)

The simple truth of the matter is that not only is the community best able to provide valuable insight into the planning process, but those insights are absolutely critical in the devising of a strategy to maintain the sense of place.

Likewise, plans seem hollow when they focus mainly on the physical form of a place, with little attention given to political, social, or economic conditions. It is an all too common sight in historic districts to see facade improvements on vacant storefronts or pedestrian malls without people. The best ... plans gave careful study to the economic and social issues to create a vital community that, in turn, generated lasting physical renewal. (FISHER 1990, p. 100)

The process of maintaining the physical appearance of more than a single building - for example, a group or district of buildings - requires more than merely a conservation architect, skilled tradesmen, and an architectural historian. It is a massive undertaking, which if it is to succeed, must be planned for and by the recipient community. The community is most acutely aware of its own needs, both in the present and the future, and has an awareness of what it can support. The community should not be bypassed in either preservation or regulation.

• TRADITION, COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND ARCHITECTURE

In the RIBA Journal special edition on new buildings in historic contexts Robert Adam writes: “...the key to building successfully in a historic context is an understanding of
how to be traditional. In fact, the key is an understanding of tradition itself.” (ADAM 1993, pg.27) What then is tradition, and how does understanding tradition help establish contextual fit and manage change in the built historic environment?

It is a generally accepted fact that traditions are central to cultural identity, and that traditions are part of a community’s collective memory. Memory is often triggered by, and associated with, historic buildings and places. As Robert Adam points out,

...unlike custom, the practice of tradition is self-conscious. Traditional practice must then be comprehensible and recognisable to the community to which it refers. In architectural terms it will, therefore, tend to rely on appearance: things like materials, formal arrangement and decoration. These things, to be traditional, must be recognisably drawn from existing tradition, from past buildings. (IBID, p. 28)

Traditions may change. In fact, traditions do change as a matter of course, but they must always retain a recognisable link to the past in order to remain traditions. New traditions, invented traditions, must be part of an evolutionary framework in order to be truly part of the cultural identity. It can be further reasoned that if too many breaks are introduced into the evolution of a culture’s traditions, the link with past traditions is slowly weakened and destroyed, eventually leading to cultural amnesia and “placelessness”.

There is no formula to determine when too many breaks are occurring; when a place becomes anonymous the threshold has already been breached. Adopting a “theme” to guide and manage change in the built environment creates similar problems. The solution lies in contributing to the evolution of the design tradition:

Here, then, is the key to building in historic contexts. It is to participate in and contribute to the traditions that have created that historic place. While that place is made up of the vernacular, the Gothic or the Classical or whatever, then these are the traditions which the new buildings must clearly and recognisably participate with and contribute to. (IBID, p. 29)

Change is appropriate if it recognizes the existing parameters of the sense of place.
4.4 Control Mechanisms

The demise of traditional and casual forms of control in the built environment have made more formal design control and incentive mechanisms necessary. The traditional ways in which contextual fit was managed, such as a system of building hierarchies, have been forgotten or rejected. If a semblance of order is desired, these vanished systems need to be replaced. The possible mechanisms include policies, guidelines, administrative, regulatory and advisory bodies, processes, legislation, regulation, and models of community participation. Once the other issues key to managing change have been addressed - such as the social values, design education, and sense of place - the next step becomes examining the nature of the control mechanisms. The strengths and weaknesses of the control mechanisms currently in existence, and the reasons for the strength or weakness, should be identified.

• ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

The administration and application of the control mechanisms needs to be recognized as a potential weakness. The best, most enlightened, legislation and guidelines are only as effective as the administrators who apply them. Recommendations emphasizing contextual analysis depend to a great extent on professional judgement. The administrators need to be able to understand many different design philosophies, and be able to perceive and deal with a single building as part of a larger context, not just as an entity unto itself. (LU 1980, p. 190) There must be adequate representation in the administrative function of the various professional disciplines involved, including: history; architectural history; historic preservation planning; architecture; architectural conservation; landscape architecture; and urban design.

Unfortunately, the reality of the situation is often less than ideal.
Review boards are peopled by individuals appointed by elected officials “...who may have only limited interest in historic preservation and urban design...”. (SYMONDS 1980, p. 203) Although there is often a formula used to assemble a review board, ensuring the inclusion of community members as well as professionals, there are often no real standards set for qualifications. Interest in the issues of preservation or design is not a guarantee of professional or educational qualifications, and so these need to be addressed.

Very extensive involvement of the community in the design revue process is not part of general practice. It is often not included as a meaningful part of the process. The opportunities for involvement are few: communities are rarely consulted for their views when the controls are devised, and when expressing unsolicited opinions, are unwelcome.

Participatory processes are also often inadequate. They can be intimidating and may not promote true discussion and exploration of alternatives. “Town Hall” style meetings, where community members address their concerns toward a panel of experts, generally with a time constraint of a couple of minutes, is not a fully participatory process. The latter requires that the community be able to participate more regularly and more fully in the process - assuming the community wants it and will devote the necessary time and attention to it.

Architects involved in the process - either sitting on a review board, or soliciting project approval from the board - frequently are at conflict with preservationists.

One might expect architects to have a great deal of respect for a quality environment. Unfortunately, review boards meet few architects who allow the surroundings to dictate the basic design of buildings, but many who think of architecture as a means of self-expression. Such assertion of ego rarely enhances a historic environment. (IBID)

Architectural training may have some role in this, and so exposing architecture students to the concepts of contextual fit may ease this.
Sometimes the review boards themselves have little power - either real or political. They are sometimes only ad-hoc boards or, because of the nature of social values, their pronouncements carry little weight. Although legislation may be in place to allow for the designation of buildings against the wishes of the owners, or to fine owners for inappropriate actions (such as building unsuitable additions, or destroying historic fabric), there is a strong reluctance on the part of the agencies involved to ever enact them. These are the most pressing and urgent of issues pertaining to administration.

**THE PROBLEMS OF BOUNDARIES**

One of the most effective mechanisms currently available to manage change in entire districts is that of historic district designation. It is an important tool, but it does have some drawbacks; one major drawback being the problem of boundaries. Although it may be possible to physically circumscribe an area as a distinct district, either through historical convention, stylistic similarities, or perhaps use; it is often difficult to create a neat boundary. That is often the nature of boundaries. Without physical walls, the lines are often transgressed. Buildings and streets that merit preservation efforts may not be included in the district scheme. Inappropriate developments may be built on land bordering the conservation district; although not detracting directly from those areas, they may create surroundings that contrast sharply with the district. Inappropriate developments may do away with the subtle, graduated border that marks the district from other parts of the city, and replace it with a strongly demarcated one. Ultimately, it may result in an architectural enclave. Other areas of the city may receive little or no attention in architectural or urban design matters. “Buffer zones” have been created in some places to stem the problem, but ultimately result in a two-tiered system of design “haves” and “have-nots”. Areas with historic buildings may merit special attention, but time doesn’t stop and cities continue to grow. The ideal solution would be to apply a comprehensive design philosophy to the entire city, or town. The design standards would be consistently
high, thereby eliminating any sense of being penalised by attempting intervention in a historic environment.

**GUIDELINES: CREATIVITY VS. PASTICHE**

Written guidelines developed to guide potential interventions in the built fabric of a historic district pose a number of serious problems. There are different types of guidelines, from broad guiding principles, to very prescriptive guidelines specifying materials, colours, the pitch of a roof, or the type of window. It is the latter that are problematic; analysing an area and developing a list of the most important features to respect is one thing, but attempting to create a short-cut for architects and developers by dictating to them what forms and material they may and may not use is quite another. There are many “right” answers to questions of contextual fit; prescribing such a limited number eliminates many possible solutions. It is too facile an approach. The result is often a paint-by-numbers effect, and the sort of cuteness associated with historic districts.

When a new building is designed, it is created from the inside out; artistry, budget, consultation and function will determine the internal space to generate a plan, turn brief into outward form. A building of integrity expresses its character in its outward appearance. With contemporary, popular “facadism”, you are working in the reverse; the datum is a two-dimensional external wall, often a piece of architectural jetsam rescued and re-used, quite brazenly, to barricade the past against an assault by the present. (HUTCHINSON 1989, p. 64-65)

The writings of Robert Venturi counter this view of facadism. Venturi points out that the richness and ambiguity, the complexity and contradiction, of architecture can sometimes result in an interior that contrasts with the exterior, but that it is desirable - both for architecture and urban design.

Designing from the outside in, as well as the inside out, creates necessary tensions, which help make architecture. Since the inside is different from the outside, the wall - the point of change - becomes an architectural event. Architecture occurs at the meeting of interior and exterior forces of use and space. These interior and environmental forces are both general and par-
ticular, generic and circumstantial. Architecture as the wall between the inside and the outside becomes the spatial record of this resolution and its drama. And by recognizing the difference between the inside and the outside, architecture opens the door once again to an urbanistic point of view. (VENTURI 1977, p. 86)

Prescriptive guidelines may seem an expedient way to achieve the desired results of appropriate infill or additions, or even correct restorations or preservations, but they are not. There is no substitute for a design education. There is no substitute for a thorough contextual study. Taking these shortcuts often results in bland mediocre structures which actually destroy the character the guidelines were intended to preserve.

Guidelines also destroy creativity. They prevent the worst of development plans, but they do not encourage the best. They stifle creativity by pre-determining the result. And even if adherence to the guidelines is not mandatory, they stifle creativity by setting standards, and defining expectations.

Beautiful cities, like Venice and Prague, tend to be a combination of the planned and unplanned. They became beautiful over the course of time, as the result of the visions of many individuals, many generations. Edmund Bacon has discussed how it is the second man who determines the course of the first man’s plans. By creating prescriptive guidelines, sufficient room is not allowed for the unplanned.

The ultimate case of guidelines gone awry is that of Bruges, in Belgium. Reinventing the medieval past has, curiously, been a matter of concern since the 1830s, the time of Belgian independence. Desiring an architecture to match its conservative and catholic character, medieval buildings were restored and new Gothic buildings erected. (STAMP 1989, p. 35-36) The desire to control its own image did not stop with this however, and through the rebuilding effort subsequent to World War I that continued through the 1930s, Bruges consistently carried through the Gothic and Renaissance theme, even to the point of transforming authentic classical structures into authentic-appearing gothic
ones. And what is the problem with an intelligent self-conscious approach to self-identity? Is it not the goal of designing in context? The problem is in the deception and myth-making. Bruges creates the impression in the naive and uninformed that they are in a "...medieval city, perfectly preserved, a giant, sprawling, ancient metropolis once of world significance, and yet today almost unaltered in its former splendour, its awesome beauty and time...a city arrested in time." (IBID). Arrested in time it is, but only as the result of an officially instituted policy that had discouraged and outright banned contemporary expression because of an overly rigid sense of identity. Guidelines must take care not to recreate history by stultifying contemporary expression. The example of Bruges provides compelling support for the contention infill be of contemporary expression.

That is not to say however, that the contemporary expression should be allowed to violate the established order and conventions of a place; on the contrary, they need to be identified, respected, and incorporated within the new construction. Guidelines, or preferably guiding principles, do have a role to play in this process, but their limitations must be acknowledged and they should never be used as a substitute for the creative talent of able urban designers and architects.

Contemporary designs are not constricted by working within an established district with definable stylistic conventions; as Robert Venturi discloses, it is the essence of architectural practice.

Present-day architects, in their visionary compulsion to invent new techniques, have neglected their obligation to be experts in existing conventions. The architect, of course, is responsible for the how as well as the what in his building, but his innovating role is primarily in the what; his experimentation is limited more to his organization of the whole than to techniques in the parts. The architect selects as much as he creates.

These are pragmatic reasons for using convention in architecture, but there are expressive justifications as well. The architect's main work is the organization of the whole through conventional parts and the judicious introduction of new parts when the old won't do. (VENTURI 1977, p. 43)
CONCLUSION

This document is based on the premise that the built environment is a contributing factor to quality of life. Consequently, encouraging quality in the built environment is desirable. Bland and mediocre designs, although they may not necessarily detract from the established built environment, do not contribute to quality of life, and therefore should be avoided. Ideally, interventions that positively reinforce their surroundings are to be sought. Such interventions usually require creativity from their initiators.

The conclusions and recommendations that arise from this document are as follows:

1. Understanding Context and Sense of Place

The concept of “context” in the built environment is actually more complex than what may be initially assumed. Context comprises the expected physical relationships and factors, but also includes non-tangible economic, social, cultural, and political factors. These are not static influences; rather they are in a state of perpetual evolution and development.

“Sense of Place” includes both physical and non-physical components. It is the cumulative effect of the ensemble, including: patterns of use, ambient qualities, natural features, and the spaces and links between buildings.

Context and sense of place are the ultimate factors which determine what is and is not an appropriate intervention in the built historic environment. In order to determine what is appropriate in any given intervention, the players involved must understand both concepts. What is appropriate will necessarily differ in any given set of circumstances. Context and sense of place should be integrated within the valuation criteria of the process which determines the suitability of intervention.
2. Improving Communication

Communication between the many parties involved in intervention is frequently poor and limited. It is often fraught with hostility or misunderstanding. The different parties each have distinct perspectives and biases which they bring to the planning and decision process. Educating one about the other will increase the means they have to communicate with each other. The planner holds a critical educational role in that regard.

The existing participatory processes are often intimidating for potential participants, especially members of the communities being affected by change. Participatory processes must make people feel comfortable, and be conducive to open and honest discussion.

By neglecting the input from certain groups, the success of the project will tend to be skewed according to the perceptions of those groups or individuals favored by the participative process. If a more broadly-based definition of successful intervention in the built historic environment is desired, all parties need to become involved.

3. In Pursuit of the Elusive Perfect Solution to Contextual Fit

There is no single perfect solution to the problem of contextual fit. There are many right answers to a given set of circumstances, their degree of rightness determined largely by individual tastes and perceptions. So far, the use of prescriptive guidelines has failed to reflect the complexity of the built environment. Through overgeneralization and oversimplification, prescriptive guidelines risk constricting choice, and in doing so, eliminate the possibility of many “right” solutions. The contextual variables are so many that tidily categorizing and valuing them is not possible for all circumstances.

Although they are a powerful tool that can be used as part of a more comprehensive approach, guidelines cannot be relied upon as the only control mechanism for ensuring successful contextual fit. Preservation is not simply about preserving bricks and mortar,
preservation is about integrating and using historical resources within a constantly changing built environment.

Given the many criteria for success from the many participants in the process, successful contextual fit according to all these criteria is likely to remain an elusive goal. Within that context, it is easier for planners and decision-makers to ensure a successful process than a successful result. It is the role of the planner and the decision-maker to ensure that all the relevant issues from all the relevant groups be given the attention they deserve.
ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

Illustration 1:  Photograph by Paul Warchol from the article: “Finally the Guggenheim as Wright Conceived Them”, House Beautiful. Volume 134, No. 6, June 1992: 82-83.


Illustration 3a:  Author’s Collection.

Illustration 3b:  Author’s Collection.

Illustration 3c:  Author’s Collection.

Illustration 3d:  Author’s Collection.


Illustration 5a:  OB 559, The Oblate Collection, the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

Illustration 5b:  OB 560, The Oblate Collection, the Provincial Archives of Alberta.


Illustration 7:  Author’s Collection.
Illustration 8a: Nég.: 14810, Ville de Québec Division des archives.

Illustration 8b: Nég.: 12203, Ville de Québec Division des archives.

Illustration 9a: Author’s Collection.


Illustration 11a: Photograph from Josef Ehms’ Praha: p. 123.

Illustration 11b: Author’s Collection.

Illustration 12a: Author’s Collection.

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