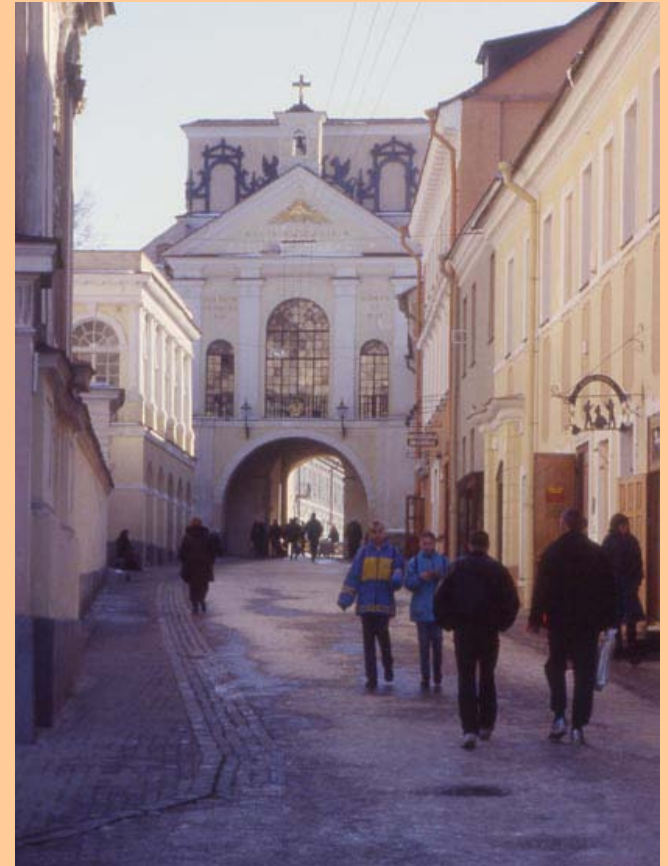


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The Visual Integrity of Historic Urban Landscapes

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Historic Cities: Key Challenges Today

Key challenges facing Historic Cities today

Include:

- Dramatic demographic and socio-economic changes, especially in many non-Western countries, including rapid urbanisation.
- The pace of change and dynamics of development in cities.
- Hitherto and generally, the concentration of these forces in the most sensitive historic parts of cities – physically and culturally.
- High rise and other out-of-scale buildings within and neighbouring historic city centres.
- Iconic modern/contemporary architecture.
- Pressures for large-scale floor-space for public administration, commerce, retail and services.
- Forecast doubling of international tourist numbers by 2020.

- The threats these all pose to the fabric, grain, functionality, distinctiveness and urban landscapes of historic cities.

Opportunity

- To devise new solutions for the historic parts of cities that enable them to function in harmony with their expanding forms and secure a sustainable future for them.
- To recognise, embrace and highlight the positive aspects of incremental change, including those that:
 - secure continuity of traditional mixed use, small scale functionality, and
 - through a focus on sustainability, respond to concerns about climate change.

Cases referred to UNESCO World Heritage Committee

Europe and beyond

- Vienna, Austria – Wien-Mitte high-rise development
- Cologne, Germany – cluster of towers
- Esfahan, Iran – high-rise development
- Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation – Marinsky Theatre and Gazprom tower

United Kingdom

- London: Westminster and Tower – high rise developments
- Liverpool – ‘Fourth Grace’
- Bath – design issues
- Edinburgh – scale and height issues

Deletion from the World Heritage List

- Dresden: in 2009 – bridge over the river Elbe; inscribed as *cultural landscape*

Examples

High rise and out-of-scale

- City of London: montages illustrate existing tall buildings together with those with planning consent; these include such bizarrely named skyscrapers as the ‘gherkin’, ‘walkie-talkie’, ‘cheese-grater’, ‘helter-skelter’ and ‘shard of glass’.
- Gazprom tower, Saint Petersburg (RMJM architects): montages show the proposed 400m high headquarters building for 20,000 employees on the 24ha site; a single storey building across most of the site would suffice. When asked the justification for this project, an economist advised consulting a psychologist.

Iconic modern architecture

- ‘The Fourth Grace’, Mann Island, Liverpool (first project: Will Alsop, architect) .
- Marinsky Theatre, Saint Petersburg (Dominique Perrault, architect). Known variously as the ‘Glittering Shroud’, ‘Golden Cockleshell’ and ‘Silver Snowflake’.

High rise, out-of-scale and iconic modern all in one

- Crystal Island, Moscow: 500m high ‘dahlia stuck in a string bag’ (Norman Foster, architect also of London’s ‘gherkin’)

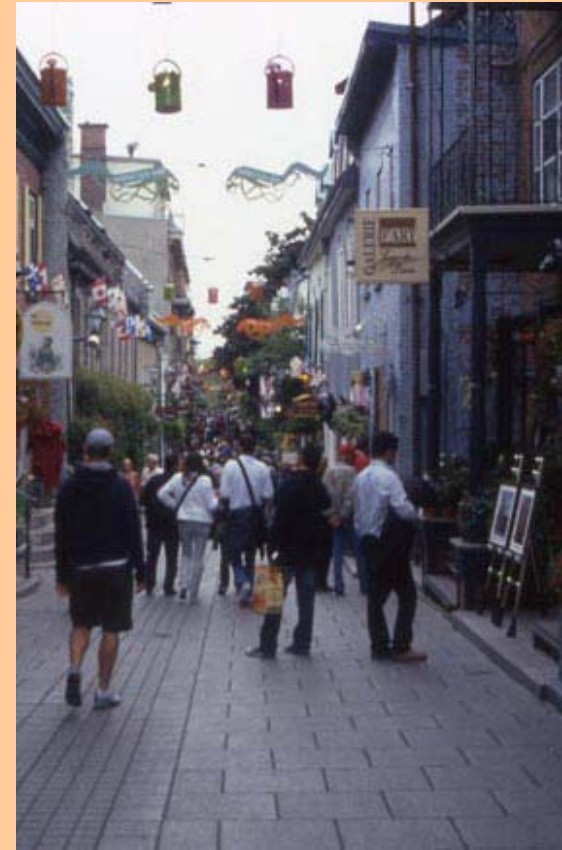
conflict: heritage conservation *versus* modernist urban planning and architecture

‘Cultural tourism’ and Disneyland (1/2)



Quebec City, Canada

- 12th most visited city in the world
- 8 million visitors a year
- Old Quebec reduced to 5,000 inhabitants
- Concentration of bars, restaurants, souvenir shops, art and sculpture galleries
- But where is the bread shop?
- Viable community – vs – Disneyland



‘Cultural tourism’ and Disneyland (2/2)



Warsaw: hurdy-gurdy in the old town



Genoa: ‘galleon’ in the historic port

“Tourism is a great modern industry. [...] We had lots of those during the Industrial Revolution and we have been cleaning up the mess ever since.”

Professor Alexander Youngson, Edinburgh, 1990

**‘Historic Urban Landscapes’
a UNESCO initiative**

‘Historic Urban Landscapes’ (1/2)

The concept seeks to convey our holistic understanding of inhabited historic cities:

- Tangible and intangible cultural heritage aspects.
- Related natural elements, both within and in their settings/surroundings.
- Thus: ‘the combined works of nature and man’ (as *cultural landscapes* in the UNESCO *Operational Guidelines*).

Stages of the initiative to date:

- **2005**: Vienna Memorandum.
- **2006**: Jerusalem regional conference.
- **2007**: Saint Petersburg + Olinda regional conferences.
- **2008**: workshop at ICOMOS General Assembly, Quebec.
- **2008**: planning workshop at UNESCO, Paris.
- **2011** (provisional): new UNESCO Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscapes (historic cities worldwide) + revised *Operational Guidelines* (World Heritage Cities).

‘Historic Urban Landscapes’ (2/2)

Historic urban landscapes is envisaged as an over-arching framework that establishes principles and guidelines across a sphere that has, to date, lacked consensus at the international level. It is not, of itself, a tool-kit.

In February 2008, ICOMOS sought to define the concept as referring to:

“... the sensory perception of the urban system and its setting. A system of material components (urban layout, plot system, buildings, open spaces, trees, urban furniture, etc.) and the relationships among them, which are the result of a process, conditioned by social, economical, political and cultural constraints over time. The concept of [*historic urban landscapes*] contributes to link tangible and intangible heritage components and to assess and understand the town or urban area as a process rather than as an object.”

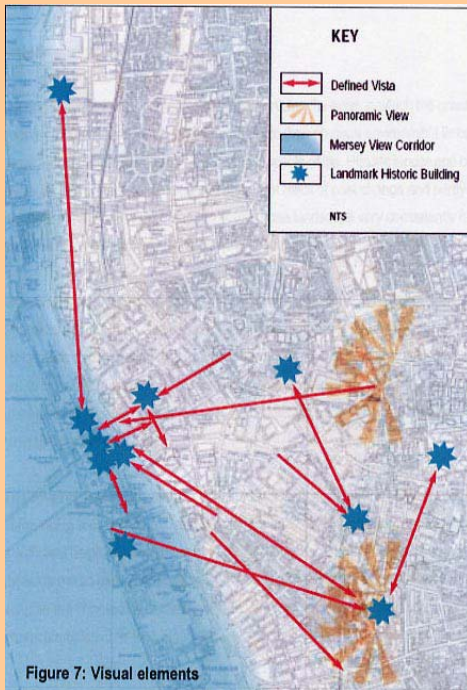
This ICOMOS definition did not, however, mention natural elements.

Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation

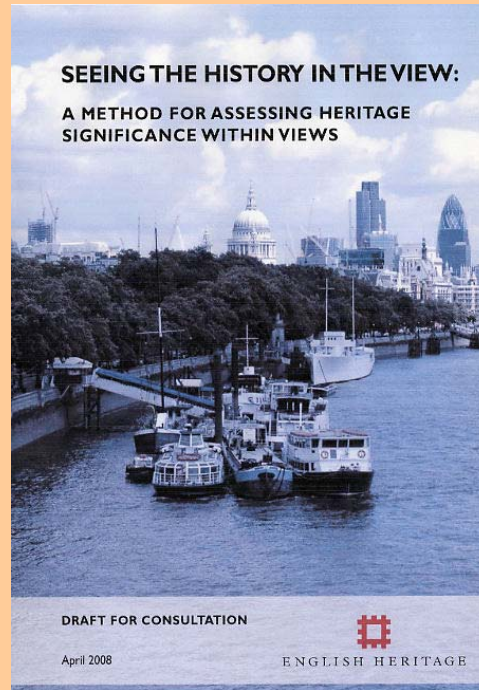


One of the key characteristics of the city's urban landscape is its horizontality, and the relationship this reinforces between people and the city's streets, public spaces and parks, canals and riverbanks. The 2007 Saint Petersburg Regional Conference was unanimous that the embracing term of *historic urban landscapes* is an essential working concept that enables historic cities to be managed effectively in the age of globalisation and at a time of increasing development pressures.

The 'views' Methodology

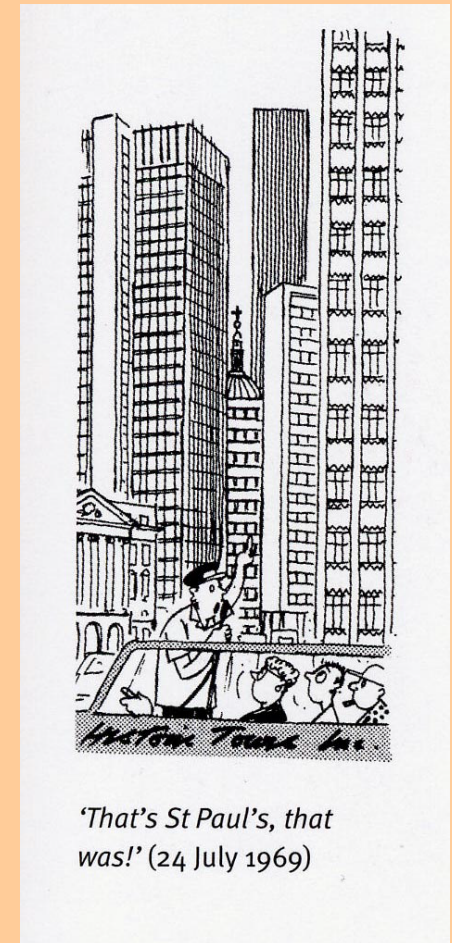


Liverpool



London

- The single vista picture postcard approach.
- *Historic urban landscapes* represents a concept to be *experienced* rather than *observed*.
- The 'views' methodology is the subject of challenge.



admission of planning failure?

Alternative Urban Planning Models
Conflict – versus – Harmony

The 'Western model' for post-industrial cities

Determining influence: the negative imagery of the C19 English and French industrial city: eg Charles Dickens + Gustav Doré + Emile Zola.

The Garden City: **Ebenezer Howard** (1850–1928): Simplistic two-dimensional quasi-sociological concept of land use separation for new towns/cities:

housing – recreation – industry – circulation

The Modern Movement: **Le Corbusier** (1887–1965) and the promotion of the *Charte d'Athènes*: Reconstruction of historic cities following Howard's model:

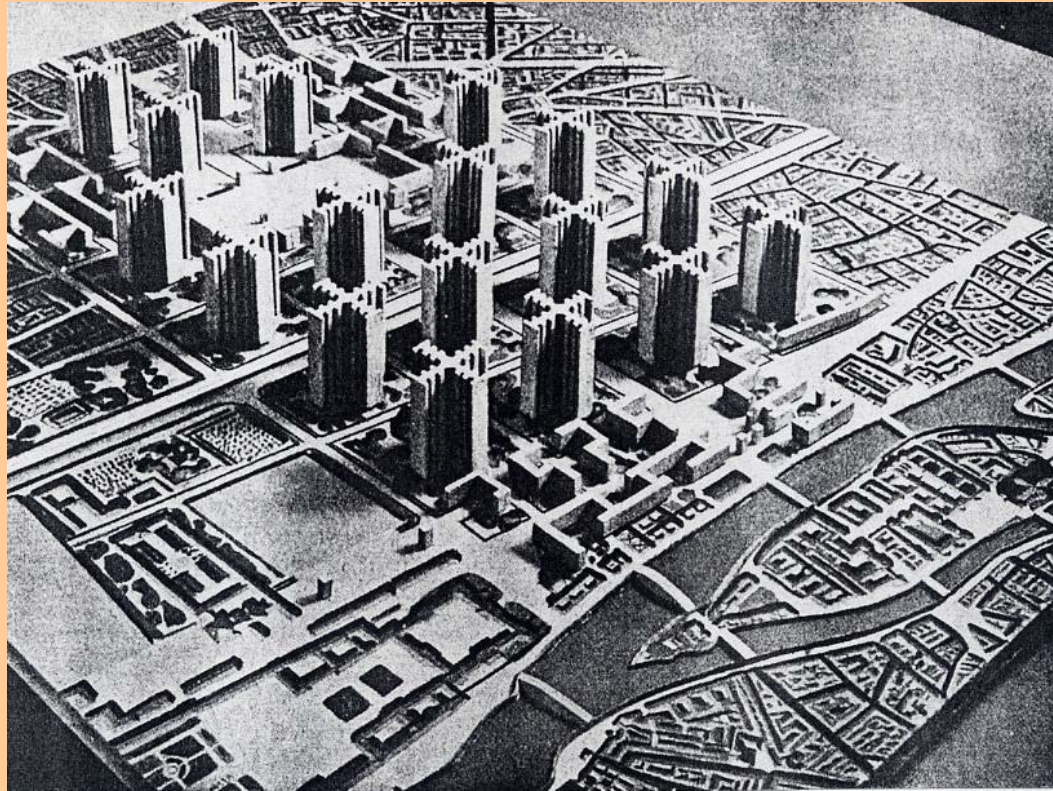
living – recreation – working – transportation

Legacy of the 'Western model':

- Urban dispersal + transport dependence.
- Concentration of volatile redevelopment pressures in sensitive historic centres.
- Loss of material fabric + socio-economic identity.
- Inner city neighbourhoods the focus for degradation + socio-economic problems.

Recipe for conflict: historic *versus* modern

Le Corbusier's 1925 *Plan Voisin*



Proposed the rebuilding of Paris according to the Western Model, including the replacement of the Marais quarter by 18 office-use skyscrapers.

Fundamental conflict: inspired strong resistance

Alternative vision of complementary development

Gustavo Giovannoni (1873–1947), engineer, architect, architectural historian, restorer:

- Pioneered a vision of mutually supportive, harmonious coexistence.
- Emphasised the complementary qualities and opportunities.
 - Historic city:
 - compact; small scale urban grain; proximity
 - vibrant, distinctive socio-economic role
 - contextual homogeneity
 - Modern city:
 - open, larger scale + limitless possibilities for expansion
 - alternative dynamics
 - absence of contextuality = freedom from design constraint
- Giovannoni opposed:
 - Le Corbusier's ideas as simplistic and out-dated.
 - 'embalming' historic cities for historical, aesthetic or tourist objectives.

Recipe for harmony: harmonious coexistence

Giovannoni's influence



Siena



Urbino

Seminal in modern Italy

**The Historic City
and The Sustainable City**

Archetypal European historic city (pre-industrial)



Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany

- Clearly defined, compact.
- Few major buildings; central market place.
- Diffused with artisan workshops.
- Mixed communities: always socially; sometimes also by ethnic origin and religion.
- Balanced relationship to their locality: physically and ecologically.
- Limited range of local constructional materials and craft skills.

identity – sense of place – human scale – mixed use – proximity – harmony

Historic port cities (Adriatic)



Venice



Dubrovnik

- 1000 year-old maritime mercantile republics.
- Balanced trading, cultural and ecological relationships to extended hinterland.
- Mélange of ethnic and religious communities: melting point of cultures.
- Strong sense of place.
- Strict urban planning regulations: Dubrovnik, 1272; heights, materials, ..., not style.

globalisation *per se* is neither a twentieth century invention nor is it necessarily negative

Characteristics of the Sustainable City

Key Issues:

- Land: efficient use.
- Material and energy resources: renewable.
- Wastes: limitation + recycling.
- Environmental quality – including air quality.

Consensus:

- Compact, dense, mixed-use.
- Proximity: limit daily journeys.
- Prioritisation of walking and cycling.
- Polycentric development, expansion, and relationship to other cities.
- Historic cities considered as a material and socio-economic resource as well as a cultural one.
- Enhanced reason for their conservation and adaptive reuse.

The Historic City may be considered a model for the Sustainable City

Sustainability in an inhabited historic city



mixed community



Dubrovnik



street markets

Sustainability recognises the full range of socio-economic issues and values – including mixed-use functionality down to the smallest scale.

Paris

Strategic Approach in a Metropolitan City

Strategic approach, Paris region, 1950s onwards (1/2)

[Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859)]



1960

spot the difference ...



2006

La Défense on the horizon
(established, 1958)

polycentric metropolitan city

Strategic approach, Paris region, 1950s onwards (2/2)



Freedom of architectural expression outside the historic centre



Protection of the urban grain in the historic core
(Loi Malraux 1962)

polycentric metropolitan city: harmonious coexistence

Paris: tools for a holistic approach



- Polycentric regional plan dates from 1950s: distributes development pressures.
- Building height protection dates from 1930s.
- Protection of small-scale, mixed-use urban grain dates from the 1850s.
- Continuity of artisan businesses and traditions in the city centre.

polycentric metropolitan city: mixed-use city centre quarters

Genius loci: sense of place + socio-economic and cultural continuity

Comparative strategic approaches – 1950s onwards



London

Monocentric metropolitan city

City of London

Functions separated – esp. work-residence

The City only functions on weekdays

building height controls relaxed

[Le Corbusier (1887–1965)]

undermined

–

historic urban landscape

–

protected



Paris

Polycentric metropolitan city

La Défense, Cergy-Pontoise, Evry, ...

Mixed use quarters

The whole city functions 24/7

building height controls enforced

[Gustavo Giovannoni (1873–1947)]

Sibiu, Transylvania, Romania
Integrated Approach in a Walled City

Sibiu 1/5



Historic core, 86.50 ha; population, 14,000



- 12th century: founded by ‘Saxon’ settlers.
- 1998: UNESCO + Council of Europe Conference: identified threats; promoted vision for a coordinated programme for conservation and sustainable development.

Sibiu 2/5

Year 2000: *Charter for the Rehabilitation of the Historic Center of Sibiu*

Argues: that conserving both the tangible and intangible heritage, together with the living character of historic Sibiu, is fundamental to preserving its identity for future generations and securing a sustainable future for it.

Aim: is to build local capacity for urban rehabilitation and to instil a conservation ethic and practice ... the people, the institutions, the tools and the finance.

Needs include: cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary coordination and management skills.

Results: pioneer and exemplar of best practice in integrated top-down/ bottom-up regeneration of a historic city in Central and Eastern Europe.

Protecting the *genius loci*

Sibiu 3/5

The **city centre programme** encompasses all aspects of urban management:

- service infrastructure
 - traffic and parking
 - public spaces
 - commerce
 - retail
 - cultural tourism
 - townscape
-
- **housing rehabilitation for the existing inhabitants**
 - **capacity building amongst and between professionals**
 - **revival of craft skills and the use of traditional materials and methods**
 - **specialist training and support for new businesses**

Sibiu 4/5

Key outcomes of City's overall strategy

- Employment opportunities and skills: city-wide unemployment dropped 20 to 5% from 2000 to 2006
- Technical and transport infrastructure: substantially renewed (city centre)
- National and international transport links (commerce + tourism): upgraded airport and main railway station
- Historic core housing rehabilitation and building restoration: ongoing programmes
- European Capital of Culture 2007
- Ongoing bid for World Heritage Site status

Protection of historic urban landscape, urban grain and building fabric

Securing creative continuity of cultural identity and socio-economic functionality

Sibiu 5/5

The **2009 Newsletter CIAV** (ICOMOS International Scientific Committee of Vernacular Architecture) characterised as **'outstanding'** and **'faultless'** the coherence of the integrated conservation efforts in the city and the resultant **'strong sense of integrity'**.



Contemporary interventions

The cloning of cities

“... never before has the world been so firmly in the grip of an establishment like the present architectural one, the most rigid in the history of art. All modern cities, as they are rebuilt, grow to resemble each other more. Rio and Hong Kong, to take two with rather similar settings, are clothing themselves more and more in the same style; London and Tokyo come closer each year.”

David Hunt, *Memoirs: Military and Diplomatic*, London, 2006



Compare waterfront images of Liverpool (here) and Shanghai

Istanbul

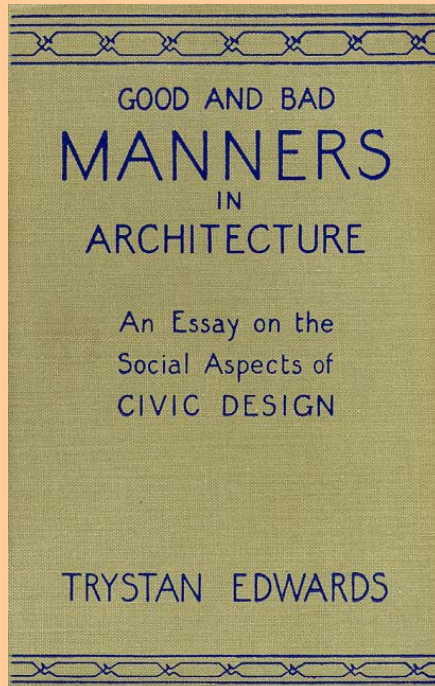


Failure to respect the visual integrity of a historic urban landscape

The harmonious integration of new developments into the urban landscape of any historic city depends on two key factors:

- A strategic urban plan that prevents the concentration of high value redevelopment pressures in their most sensitive historic parts and their settings.
- Strictly enforced build height controls.

Good urban design?

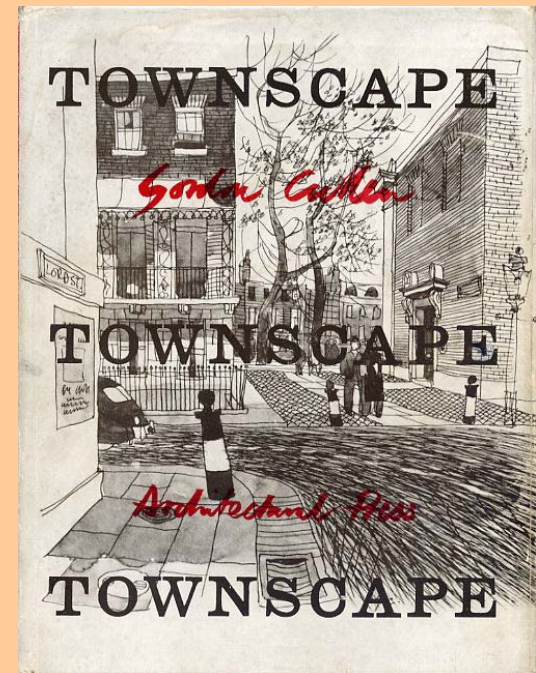


Trystan Edwards, 1944:

Contrasts *selfish, presumptuous* and *rude* buildings with *polite* and *sociable* ones.

Gordon Cullen, 1961:

The essence of good urban design is: ‘the agreement to differ within a recognised tolerance of behaviour.’



Can architecture exist in isolation from its context?

Confused messages

International references:

- 1964 Venice Charter (for the conservation and restoration of *monuments*): where components are replaced they should be integrated harmoniously but ‘be distinct from the architectural composition and ... bear a contemporary stamp’.
- 1975 European Charter (architectural heritage including *urban areas*): ‘integrated conservation’
- 1987 Washington Charter (*historic towns and urban areas*): ‘harmonious adaptation to contemporary life’.
- 2005 Vienna Memorandum (*historic urban landscapes*): ‘... should avoid all forms of pseudo-historical design, as they constitute a denial of both the historical and the contemporary alike’.

Quebec City experience

Official guidance grades interventions into six categories: from total disregard to their surroundings; through integration with the established architectural language but using modern materials; to facadism.



Integration using modern materials

Scottish Borders

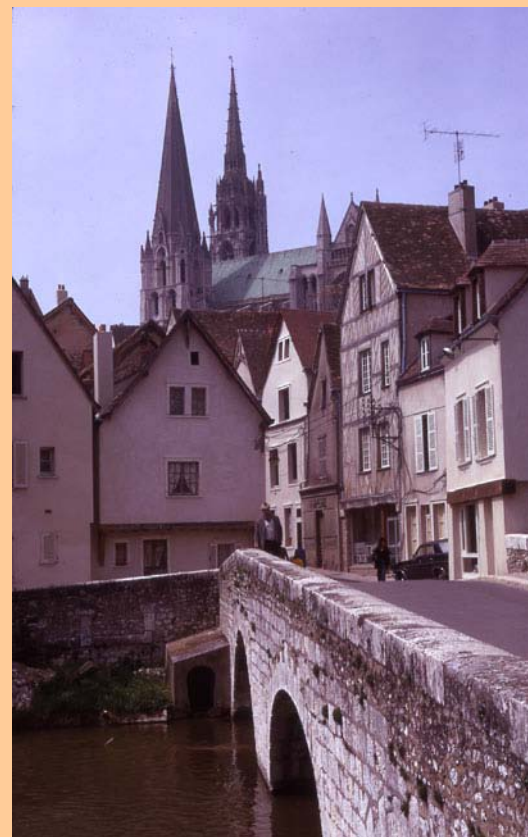
- *Placemaking and Design Principles* (published 2010):
- Does not provide prescriptive guidelines.
- Obliges the architect/designer to think and justify her/his design by going through a process of analysis against checklists:
 - The wider area, its context and features – including natural features.
 - The local area, its context and features.
 - The building and the features that are appropriate to its neighbours.
 - What (positive) contribution will my design make?
- Key words and phrases: ‘relate’, ‘fit’, ‘work with existing features rather than against’, ‘consider the form, proportion and window design’, ‘seek inspiration from the best’.
- Encourages ‘the agreement to differ within a recognised tolerance of behaviour.’

Paris examples



[for reference]

Chartres examples



[historic centre]

Advertising and Other Controls

Dubrovnik takes the initiative ...



permitted signage



Strict urban planning regulations since 1272; heights, materials, ... **and advertising**

Enforcement or Culture of Compliance?

- However good the guidance, laws and regulations, enforcement requires more human resources than cities can normally justify, and is rarely recoverable in penalties.
- The management plan for the City of Bath World Heritage Site (for example) has the over-arching ambition to insinuate heritage values into every aspect of urban management, and to harness citizens' sense of common ownership of a culture of excellence in which good practice in the historic environment becomes the norm.
- This, of course, is not easy, but as a workable way forward it has more prospects of success than any amount of enforcement.
- Amongst the most successful 'ambassadors' in this are young people. Inspire their enthusiasm and they will inspire their peers and elders.

Anti-pvc campaign in Sibiu, Romania



Conclusion

Key Management Issues today, include ...

- The role of historic cities/quarters and their relationship to their modern counterparts:
 - **harmonious coexistence**, through
 - **strategic planning** (two and three dimensional)
- Modern interventions:
 - **harmonious integration**, through
 - **mutual respect** (scale and design)
- Scale and proximity of functions: prioritise
 - **small scale mixed use**, through
 - **detailed planning** (including protection of artisan activities)
- Housing, generally the dominant historical use (floorspace):
 - **protect the function**, as well as
 - **social and cultural mix**
- Sustainable relationships: strive for
 - **ecological balance** within (wherever possible) and between cities
 - **“reduce, reuse and recycle”** + **“stay close to source”**
- Avoid domination by tourism.

Thank you

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