

**Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development**  
**The Heritage of the City - Europe's Future**  
**New opportunities through integrated urban development**  
**Berlin, December 8/9, 2011**

The appreciation for the architectural heritage of Europe's cities is growing. The potential for integrated urban development inherent in historic monuments, groups of historic monuments and historic urban fabric is increasingly recognized and exploited. The appreciation contrasts with the great need for support in performing tasks to preserve and renew the historic heritage. These tasks require integrated considerations and approaches.

Considerations on the issues of cities, the preservation of historic monuments and culture together with national and international best-practice projects are to provide an incentive for a Europe-wide discourse on built environment heritage. Here Germany can draw on a wealth of experience gained from the financial assistance programme for the protection of the urban architectural heritage and the investment programme for national UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

European and national players as well as already existing networks are invited to participate in a mutual exchange of views to discuss ideas, approaches and utilization options within the framework of preserving and developing the historic heritage of the European city of the future.

**Forum 1:**

**Invest in the future –  
Exploit the potential of built environment heritage**

The Heritage of/in the Future  
Prof. Michael Turner, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, UNESCO Chair,  
Jerusalem

In considering the future we recognize that values seem to be a moving target – 'places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups and values are continually renegotiated.' Are the values of today relevant for the past or future? With changing social patterns and demographic movement, we have now to focus on the continuity of place rather than people. The new-comers need to embrace place, while the old-timers need provide space, in the recognition of the heritage of today. If the potential of the heritage is in its universal recognition then its future might simultaneously provide for syncretism and symbiosis.

What are the uncertainties in predicting the future? The logic of Thales as the father of futures in negotiating the olive harvest needs to be understood within the urban context of risk and opportunities. Identifying the current shared heritage within a comprehensive environment will provide for spatial, in addition to temporal, sustainability. This needs to be attained through the consideration of process rather than project and the management of change through the cultural integration of socio-economic policies.

Our cities have evolved, developed and changed over the generations and have left a legacy of their past. The capacity of the city to adapt and reflect its history is a measure of its resilience; this is the key to its future. A quarter of all World Heritage sites are in the urban realm representing diverse values; past, present and future.

The contexts in which the monuments live are, in the words of Francis Bacon, the 'shipwrecks of time'. But these monuments remain while the people change; the pagan temples and the Christian churches – the ghettos and the religious migrants including the Departure from Egypt, the movement to New England, the search for new lives and better conditions. How is the layering affected? New neighbourhoods are built over, built by, built instead of, absorbed in, occupied or even hijack the previous layers, periods and cultures.

As the human component of the city transposes, what are the attitudes to the 'other'?

Acceptance of cultural diversity is an inherent part of the urban history. The dynamics of change in the city, its expansion and the migrant patterns that have left the traces and evidence including their planning, architecture and intangible traditions. The immigrant areas by the ports of entry and docks are duplicated all over the world. On a personal note, the East End of London is dramatic in manifesting this change over the centuries, moving from the 18<sup>th</sup> century Huguenot silk weavers to the Methodist community, then the Jewish tailors and finally the Bangladeshi culinary shops and the accompanying arts and fashion activities of the Muslim community. A true polyglot over time.

But there are also cities located on other types of commercial crossroads. Conceived as minorities, foreigners may include the so-called Diaspora groups such as the Jews, the Greeks, and the Armenians, but also the other "nations".

And while the European Chinatown's are somewhat 'lighter' than their American counterparts, it is the Paris banlieue or faubourg that provides the negative experiences that should be evaluated in the relationships of people to place.

Recent research<sup>2</sup> on migrant communities has witnessed a clear shift towards a more sophisticated understanding of the variety of bonds that link minority groups to the society they live in, as well as to their places of origins. The key issue of "minority spaces", is namely of urban spaces that were socially, architecturally or culturally formed and shaped by the presence of migrants and foreigners. How were such spaces perceived by the local population, as well as what is to be the role played by urban space as a stake within broader patterns of social coexistence or exclusion?

### **Shocks of culture**

How does the city react to the waves of immigrants? The shocks of culture have been identified in the meetings of the city by Walter Benjamin and in the meeting of cultures by Umberto Eco. Umberto Eco<sup>3</sup> debates the Culture Shock with examples from the meeting of European and indigenous cultures at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>1</sup> The Five Stages of Culture Shock - Critical Incidents Around the World. Contributions in psychology, no. 25; Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1995

<sup>2</sup> Migrant Communities and Urban Space in the Mediterranean ports, 17th-19th centuries

<sup>3</sup> Eco, Umberto; Serendipities – language and lunacy; Phoenix, 1999

He gives three options when the culture is confronted – conquest, cultural pillage or exchange.

*"Conquest:* members of culture A cannot recognize the members of culture B as normal human beings (and vice versa) and define them as 'barbarians'. Ergo, two further possibilities develop: to civilize them (transform people B into acceptable copies of people A) or to destroy them;

*Cultural Pillage,* the members of culture A recognize the members of culture B as the bearers of an unknown wisdom. Culture A may try to subjugate the members of culture B politically or militarily, but at the same time respect their exotic culture and try to understand it and translate its elements into its own. Hellenistic and Egyptian cultures are good historic examples – syncretism;

*Exchange:* two-way process of reciprocal influence and respect is certainly reflected in the early contacts between Europe and China. The Chinese accepting the Jesuit missions while the Europeans embraced aspects of Chinese civilization – symbiosis; he mentions that the Italians and Chinese are still debating who invented the spaghetti.

The cross-cultural city should be seen as a celebration of faith and recognition of the other. It might develop syncretic forms or symbiosis but should not be parasitic. If the potential of the heritage is in its universal recognition then its future might simultaneously provide for syncretism and symbiosis.

And here in Germany we have a unique example in yet another formula with the *Simultaneum Mixtum*, the dual use initiated in the 16<sup>th</sup> century after the Reformation.

It is the recognition of the shared values that allows us to provide the resilience in the city. But the 'minority spaces' need to be understood in the context of the future by recognizing that values seem to be a moving target – 'places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups and values are continually renegotiated.'<sup>4</sup> Are the values of today relevant for the past or future? With changing social patterns and demographic movement in the city, we have now to focus on the continuity of place rather than the continuity of people.

The exegesis of the Convention debates the ideas and concepts of values:

Values are beliefs (standards), which have significance for a cultural group or an individual, often including, but not being limited to spiritual, political, religious and moral beliefs.

*Australia ICOMOS Code on the Ethics of Co-existence in Conserving Significant Places, 1998*

Cultural heritage diversity exists in time and space, and demands respect for other cultures and all aspects of their belief systems. In cases where cultural values appear to be in conflict, respect for cultural diversity demands acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the cultural values of all parties  
*Operational Guidelines – Nara Document*

This also raises the issue of urban transformations and the dynamics of change from past to future and how cultural narratives support the way we interpret our past and future.

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<sup>4</sup> Australia ICOMOS Code on the Ethics of Co-existence in Conserving Significant Places, 1998

Past	myth and mythology transformed by the eighteenth century philosophers
Present	current religious and moral values, politics, religion and state
Future	future of the world community, the glocal, afterlife

The stakeholders of today are the custodians of tomorrow.

We are fooling ourselves with a single idyllic image of the European City – how many people in this room live in the city where they were born. In confronting the changing societies, there is a need to transcend time and place. If the new-comers might embrace place, then the old-timers will need to provide space, in the recognition of the heritage of today. Are we willing to accept syncretism or symbiosis? Will a North African living now by the Notre Dame claim this as his or her heritage and will the displaced French living in his manor accept this?

Aristotle describes in the story of Thales, a poor philosopher from Miletus who developed a "financial device, which involves a principle of universal application", as the father of futures<sup>5</sup>. Thales successfully negotiated low prices for the olive harvest because it was in the future and no one knew whether the harvest would be plentiful or poor and because the olive press owners were willing to hedge against the possibility of a poor yield. This needs to be understood within the urban context of risk and opportunities.

### Transplants

The opportunities for new urban forms are the potential for change.

I would give the analogy of medical transplants and how the body (the city) reacts and under what conditions can the transplant (contemporary architecture) be successful. Perhaps this can be debated in a future forum on bioethics?

However, I want you to make a leap of faith with me and consider the analogy for HUL. How can one guarantee the success of a transplant (contemporary architecture), is it the choice of a suitable or compatible donor or new element, and more important the preparation of the body to receive the transplant (areas of urban renewal) ?

Organ donation is one of the most challenging and complex areas of modern medicine. Some of the key areas for medical management are the problems of organ rejection - where the body has an immune response to an organ which causes failure of the transplant. I call on you to consider the analogy to the urban fabric and we will look at three of some six different types of transplants – autograft, allograft, isograft, xenograft and split and domino transplants.

The first, and simplest is the autograft where the transplant of tissue to the same person – could I say 'more of the same' in the urban context? Usually this is very successful, but does not solve too many problems .

An allograft is a transplant of an organ or tissue between two genetically non-identical members of the same species. Most human tissue and organ transplants are allografts. Due to the genetic difference between the organ and the recipient, the recipient's immune system will identify the organ as foreign and attempt to destroy it,

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<sup>5</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. Benjamin Jowett, vol. 2, *The Great Books of the Western World*, book 1, chap. 11, p. 453.

causing transplant rejection. To prevent this, the organ recipient must take immunosuppressant. This is the urban challenge for capitalizing on this potential.

The xenograft is a transplant of organs or tissue from one species to another. A current example is the porcine heart valve transplants, which are quite common and successful. However, the xeno-transplant is often an extremely dangerous type of transplant because of the increased risk of non-compatibility, rejection, and disease carried in the tissue. I would term xenophobia to describe this cultural reticence, and call to mind our attitudes to colonialism in the urban fabric of so many places as these domineering periods of history sink into oblivion while the successful 'chinatowns' are exemplary.

In the medical world transplantation also raises a number of bioethical issues, including the definition of death, when and how consent should be given for an organ to be transplanted and payment for organs for transplantation – the urban comparisons are mind-boggling.

### **Examples of the classical world**

Potential for growth raises the issue of how to grow. To invest in the future and reduce our risks we need to understand how to analyse the potential. The future is not just what we manage from the past but what we add to the present. It is interesting to note the differences of the Greek and Roman approaches and their effect on urban form. Two examples of Cevat Erder <sup>6</sup> are Pergamum and Pompeii. For the Greeks, before adding a new structure, not only the ambient architecture, but also its special relationship to surrounding buildings was taken into consideration..... Free symmetry was the rule. Roman settlements have a mechanical and simple pattern, not finding the elegance of Greek cities, created by the concern for beauty and aesthetics. By accepting the concept of monumentalism, by adding a concern for symmetry and axial order, and by establishing a proportional relationship between masses and empty spaces, the Romans created their own type of urban form.

### **Interpretations**

The narrative of Europe – how would we present the Battle of Agincourt.? Even if we say that the values might be accepted by the various stakeholders, their interpretation also poses a point of conflict. The proponents of historicism/empiricism or the application of universalism will be dramatic in the resulting solutions. Furthermore, existentialist versions bordering on the metaphysic will more likely provide debate for the intangible heritage.

The scars of history, and in the re-wording of Woody Allen, history is written by the survivors.

Is it the heritage **of** the future or **in** the future? Either way there is a need to develop policies based on determining the non-changeable parts of the city and its urban fabric through valorisation of the built environmental heritage, and thus defining areas of sustainability.

How do we maintain the assets inherent in the built heritage? Possibly by the economic management of change; the reallocation/reinvestment of values and political acumen.

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<sup>6</sup> Erder, Cevat; From Consciousness to Conservation, UNESCO Publishing House

Reference should be made to the architect mayor of Curitiba, Jaime Lerner whose urban environmental successes are based on what he coins urban acupuncture. The idea of urban acupuncture is to focus on urban “pressure points” to create positive ripple effects that affect the entire community. Curitiba has achieved an urban design that does not separate the places that residents live, work, play and shop.

In conclusion, the potential of built heritage is in identifying the current shared heritage within a comprehensive environment that will provide for spatial, in addition to temporal, sustainability. This needs to be attained through the consideration of process rather than project and the management of change through the cultural integration of socio-economic policies. The functional and spiritual space of the urban environment is packaged together as a single element and provides for such sustainability. It will simultaneously build on syncretism and symbiosis, allow for the multi-cultural interpretations, providing situations of compromise and coexistence, till finally the current transient community will be able to own and take responsibility for the heritage of that place with all its turbulences, and that the original owners will be able to accept this transposition with the renegotiation of new values.

David Lowenthal in responding to critics notes that 'the foreign past gets reduced to exotic sites of tourism or filmic period fantasy; the past cherished at home becomes a haunt of chauvinist heritage, nostalgic tribalism, and retro remakes. The wholesale perversion of history persuades me, in revising my book for publication in 2012, to retitle it *The Past WAS a Foreign Country*.'

Life is divided into three terms - that which was, which is, and which will be.  
Let us learn from the past to profit by the present, and from the present to live better in the future. *William Wordsworth*

Prof. Michael Turner, Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, UNESCO Chair,  
Jerusalem  
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