

CIVVIH Annual Meeting 2018

18-22 September Nîmes, France

Paper Abstract

Theme 2 - City project, urbanism, architecture, urban project and site project

Title – The question of aesthetics: how can we encourage a better quality of new design responses within historic urban areas?

This paper is concerned with new infill in historic urban areas. It argues that if the new design outcome is better, the quality of the historic urban fabric will be maintained, enhanced and more sustainable. It seeks to do five things:

- 1 Understand ‘aesthetics’ as a criteria in the assessment of the heritage value of an historic building or site.
- 2 Posit the vulnerability or sidelining of aesthetics as a criteria within the heritage assessment process - as well as across disciplines ranging from art history to the social sciences.
- 3 Document (briefly) the current attempts to manage better design outcomes within the heritage process – focusing on the compulsion towards data gathering and design guidelines.
- 4 Categorise more carefully the various aspects of what constitutes new infill and its historic context. Understanding its nature and variation affects application to context.
- 5 Open a discussion and highlight possible new inroads into addressing the problematic topic of aesthetically appropriate responses or how better design outcomes might be achieved.

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