Historicity: Preservation or Revitalization Planning Tools?

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Abstract: The historic centres revitalization addresses the challenges related to the preservation of fundamental heritage values. At a time, when everyone looks with concern to our cities' future, it is important to reflect on the received heritage, seeking the most appropriate answers to the planning of the historic centres. These fabrics are reference places in the urban space, due to their role of memorial testimony and of generators of cultural and economic dynamics. However, often times, inherited urban fabrics are affected by the limitations of the heritage policies which, for being too general and based on theoretical and abstract frameworks, have difficulty incorporating the characteristics of each area and neglect the formulation of specific criteria and intervention methods. The purpose of this paper is to provide a comparative reading of the levels of urban renewal allowed by the planning tools. This study chooses two historic centers in Portugal: Oporto and Guimarães historic centres (World Heritage Sites since 1996 and 2001, respectively, and were the last to get this classification in Portugal). This reflection is a contribution to peer trends and raise the discussion on the role that the different heritage policies have to the revitalization of the historic centres.

Key words: Historical centre, planning tool, urban renewal, heritage, urban planning.

1. Introduction

Cities are concentrating their worries on territory qualifications and the central territories have seen their role reinforced on the social and economical development promotion of themselves. It is urgent to tackle the challenges related to the safeguard of heritage fundamental values along with the need for revitalization of historic centres, giving them new functionalities and residential attractions. Consequently, it is important that pre-existence management policies are capable of their preservation and at the same time adequate for present and future challenges. Heritage policies dictated by current planning tools represent the conservation strategy adopted by each historic centre. We will be looking to evaluate the different policies adopted for this heritage preservation, especially concerning its adaptability capacity for a sustainable future.

2. Historic Centres: Conceptual Evolution and Heritage Policies

2.1 Concept Developed up to 1st World War

The urban heritage concept has changed with time in its articulation with the historic centres, in accordance with the social perception of the value of this resource. Urban renovation policies adjusted to its own heritage evolution in accordance with its respective era, social characteristics, culture, economics and policies. In this evolution, we can emphasize three distinctive phases of urban renovation policies: preservation, conservation and heritage [1]. Preservation was the first phase for these policies and focuses on buildings looked upon as monuments, selected by beauty or age criteria. The constructions were preserved by legal protection rules imposed by specialists, whom identified its relevance as cultural goods [2].

2.2 Concept Developed between World Wars

The 20th century modern movement upholds a

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radical approach for the intervention and resolution of historic centre's problems. The modern movement supported the destruction and reconstruction according to modern principles, not giving especial importance to the pre-existences, as exemplified by the Voisin Plan (1925) conceived for Paris by Le Corbusier.

However, at the same time, radically opposed concepts started to emerge to this approach of looking at the inherited city. We underline the works of Gustavo Giovannoni—for whom the historic city was a monument, because of its topography, landscape character and the set of built typologies.

It is after the 1st world war that the intervention in historic centres considerations intensify, because a fast answer became imperative for the rebuilding of the destroyed cities. The Italian Giovannoni gave an important contribution, for this reflection, in formulating the urban heritage concept, considering the historical city as a density of relevant values. We underline the works of Gustavo Guiovanni who developed the minor architecture concept meaning a monument conception viewed not anymore as an isolated spatial piece, but with an essential surrounding for its understanding [3]: one asset that should be preserved through protection laws as it already existed for isolated monuments [4].

2.3 Concept Developed after the 2nd World War

It is only in the sixties, a strong economical recuperation period after the 2nd world war, that renovation methodologies in historical centres were implemented for the first time in Europe, such as the Plan de Sauvegarde et Mise en Valeur do Marais (1969) in Paris, and Bolonha's Historical Centre Regulating Plan [5]. These places were degraded physically and at a social, cultural and economic level, enabling the change for a second phase of urban conservation policies, the conservation, magnifying the attention aimed at urban sets [2]. At this stage, the goal was to better the physical environment, such as housing, and at the same time, solve the social

problems of the resident population.

Nowadays when everybody anxiously looks with concern to the city's future, it is important to reflect over the received heritage of the past, in order to search for the most adequate answers for planning and managing of the historic centres in the set of the contemporary city.

The international orientations mirror the worries and distinctive attitudes towards the preservation and conservation of historic centres as a resource and legacy for future generations. General heritage safeguard international documents show us a diversity of conceptual evolution that justified the intervention in these places, like as the role of contemporary architecture and urban planning.

Five relevant international documents can be identified:

(1) Nairobi's Recommendation (UNESCO, 1976) determines that the historical set and its surrounding are a coherent whole, but identifies new constructions as a threat that could destroy the set's character (consulted in Ref. [6]);

(2) Resolution 813 (Council of Europe, 1983) assumes as a guide rule the need to integrate contemporary constructions in historic sets, in order to give continuity to the architectural tradition and building a future European heritage (consulted in Ref. [5]);

(3) Washington's Charter (ICOMOS, 1987) identifies as a guide rule that the historical sets safeguard should be carried out through social and economical coherent development policies. It supports the preservation of urban forms, of the built and empty spaces relationship, building's form and function (consulted in Ref. [6]);

(4) Burra's Charter (ICOMOS [7]) for the first time identifies a larger conservation concept, "Conservation means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance" (Art. 1.4) which "means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations." (Art. 1.2);

(5) Vienna's Memorandum (UNESCO [8]) identifies as guideline the acceptance of the city's building process, in which change plays an integrated part. It defends heritage conservation and simultaneously its modernization strengthening its own identity and social cohesion. Hence, contemporary architecture should complement the existing urban historical landscape as a fundamental strategy.

Historical centres today are treated by the third phase of urban renovation policies, the heritage, which occurred when they came under a market orientation [1]. The architectural legacy began to be seen as a consumer selected product, and managed by current market demands. The past is molded to answer contemporary needs [9]. It has become an urgent necessity that conservation and urban planning have a symbiotic relationship that leads to harmonious cities development [10].

Historic centres carry a double achievement of being a memorial witness, as well as a generator of cultural, economic and social dynamics, crucial for the cohesion and qualification of the contemporary city. Therefore, historic centres are reference places in the urban space.

However, the urban net legacy is many times penalized by the heritage policies limitations that, by being too general and established by theoretical tables, have difficulty in incorporating each intervention area's singularities. Usually heritage policies do not care for the formulation of criteria and methodologies adjusted and adapted for each case.

Planning in historical sites resides nowadays in the dictum between preserving the past, by its intrinsic value, and the transformation necessity, answering to the values of a restless for innovation, inclusion and culture seeking society. As such, if urban areas do not have the ability to change, they will end up stagnating in the set of the urban fabric [11].

"Conservation is a complex process of managing the tensions between continuity and change in the city,

and its main aim is to manage the cultural character and identity of the city" [12].

3. Evaluation of Clearness and Renovation Capacity of Planning Instruments in Emblematic Portuguese Historical Centres

When the planning instruments have explicit rules, it minimizes the bureaucracy and maximizes the margin of interest in the projects, thus boosting economies, population flows, services and cultural programs to these historic centers through a clear and objective management of urban renewal. This can result in a gradual and rigorous transformation of the built fabric that leads to the preservation, revitalization and sustainable development of this urban heritage.

The following analysis focus on two historic centres in Portugal: Oporto and Guimarães historic centres, which are World Heritage Site since 1996 and 2001, respectively. These two historic centers were the last to get this classification, of the four existing World Heritage historic centers in Portugal.

The current planning and management instruments for these historic centres reflect different ways of thinking and intervention on built heritage enabling us to understand the different policies adopted for the conservation and renewal of these world heritage urban places.

3.1 Guimarães Historic Centre

3.1.1 Plan Type and Management Entity

In the historic centre of Guimarães the Local Technical Office (GTL (Gabinete Técnico Local)) is the responsible entity for managing the interventions in buildings (Fig. 1). This entity has a threefold objective of maintaining the population, provide better living conditions and preserve/restore the heritage values of authenticity. The GTL advocates a logical maintenance and minimal impact through the use of skilled local labor, materials and traditional techniques.

Fig. 1 Plan with the delimitation of Guimarães historic centre classified as World Heritage (in blue) and its protection zone (in red) [14].

3.1.2 Criteria and Levels of Intervention

The Local Technical Office classifies interventions according to two categories: light works and deep works. Light works focus on repairing facades, eaves, window frames, painting elevations or introduction of sanitary facilities. Deep works include interventions in the structure and interior organization.

This entity elaborated the Regulation for Intervention in the Urban Center and History of Guimarães (RICUH, 1994), which requires multiple constraints for urban renewal. It constrains exterior characteristics, as facades design, colors and materials, these should be maintained as the originals. In buildings interior the same method is applied, original typology and materials should be also preserved.

3.2 Oporto Historic Centre

3.2.1 Plan Type and Management Entity

In Oporto's historic centre, the built heritage intervention management is run by Porto Vivo—SRU (Urban Rehabilitation Society) [13], whom since 2004 produced Strategic Documents for each block, assuming each of these as an intervention unit (Fig. 2). These strategic documents establish the foreseen and authorized works in each building, safeguarding the minimum sanitarian and habitability conditions.

The strategic documents have law enforcement power over the building and has to be followed both by public and private dwellers. The foreseen interventions were produced by the joint work of Porto Vivo—SRU with the Portuguese Institute for Management of Architectural and Archaeological Heritage (IGESPAR—Instituto de Gestão do Património Arquitectónico e Arqueológico).

3.2.2 Criteria and Levels of Intervention

Porto Vivo—SRU's strategy covers an extended range of concerns placed both on the survey and diagnosis of the existing conditions and in the procedures for the intervention management (Table 1).

The Porto Vivo—SRU, with a deep knowledge of its intervention area and in order to clarify its intervention criteria in the historic centre buildings, has also established three building intervention categories: light, medium and deep. A light intervention is applied in buildings in a reasonable conservation state and the intervention can not interfere with the daily

Fig. 2 Plan with the delimitation of Porto historic centre classified as World Heritage (in pink) and its protection zone (in yellow) [15].

Table 1 Intervention criteria in Oporto's historic centre.

1. Intervention technological aspects	-Understanding and respecting the existing building, the primitive technologies, and if not possible assuring that new technologies are compatible with the old ones.
2. Urban Elevations	-Maintaining and qualifying elevations, through consolidating operations; -Repairing and cleaning (reposition of original elements by withdrawing unfitting elements).
3. General typological resolution	-In profound or deep interventions, to maintain the elevations, and main building side walls, in order to maintain relationship between external openings and internal spaces; -In deep interventions there are typological reformulation operations, in the scope of plot definition, internal spatial room alteration, horizontal and vertical distribution common areas alteration, with the introduction of lifts, equipments and services demanded by current legislation.
4. General criteria for technical interventions	Aims to any level of intervention: -Respect as much as possible for building's insertion environment; -General rehabilitation and anomalies correction, focus on structural safety and fire risk; -To abide current demands for new construction whenever possible; -Primitive elements upgrading, with authenticity, safeguarding their compatibility with new intervention elements.
5. Securing of main demands	(a) Structural safety: -Introducing new structures (concrete, metal or steel) to reinforce the building main structure and creation of new vertical communications; -Traditional timber structures (ensure fire safety, acoustic insulation and waterproofing in water areas); -To reinforce foundations and seismic resistance. (b) Safety against fire risk: -Risk reduction measures of fire starters and fire spreading. (c) Hygrometric thermal comfort: -(New construction or deep intervention) uphold thermal comfort passive systems , to reduce heating thermal charge, through good insulation and minimize cooling active systems (air conditioning); -(Existing construction rehabilitation or light interventions) reinforce roof thermal insulation, renewal of degraded opening's frames (thermal bridges); -Insulation reinforcement (roof, opening frames, double glazing, lowering thermal bridges, bettering night ventilation systems). (d) Acoustical comfort: -(New or deep constructions) fulfillment of current demands; -(Existing constructions), sound insulation between storeys (ceilings and/or roofs) and between plots, reinforcement and insulation of opening frames. (e) Healthcare of conveniences and kitchens: -Employment of ventilation, water supply and drainage, necessary equipment and washable, waterproof and resistant finishes. (f) Services and infra-structures: -Application of rainwater drainage, telecommunications, active security and gas systems. (g) Durability and economics: -Pragmatic attitude in solutions choices, as to cost and acceptable durability, through control and critical continuous assistance in all project phases.

Source: Ponte Nova, PBDE, Annexe II.

life of the residents. The medium intervention concerns the repair of timber works and opening frames, reinforcement of some structural elements, as floors, roofs and walls. It also includes the improvement of the commons parts of the buildings and upgrading functional conditions in accordance to current legislation. The deep intervention mainly includes light and medium interventions and it is also about changing the typological organization (number of plots, functions). It implies demolition and reconstruction, it also allows changing materials and

finishes and can imply temporary relocation of the building residents.

4. Conclusions

This reflection is a contribution not only to interpret the effects of the different planning tools in the architectural interventions in historic centers, but also to peer results and trends. Thus it raises the discussion about the role that these different policies assume through the planning tools to the urban conservation and renewal, i.e., in the revitalization of the historic

centres, which possess strong identity valences.

Comparatively, we can see that the planning tools that allow greater urban renewal are the Strategic Documents in Oporto. In this historic centre, the strategy developed by Porto Vivo—SRU is based on the deep knowledge of the buildings, preserving its original design and aesthetic from the exterior, but allowing contemporary interventions that benefit the whole. The strategy followed by Porto Vivo—SRU allows a deeper intervention inside the buildings, with the aim to provide the standard conditions of habitability for contemporary people that want to live in these places without losing comfort.

In Guimarães the RICUH, designed by the Local Technical Office, reflects a reduced possibility of intervention with contemporary values in this historic centre. Almost all characteristics must remain as the original features of the buildings, either exterior or interior. In our interpretation, this shows a strategy of perpetuating the past values, believing that contemporary architectural values would reduce the artistic, social, cultural values and the economic development acquired by the place so far.

Although in both cases different levels for intervention are set (Oporto—light intervention, medium intervention, deep intervention and Guimarães—light works and deep works), the planning instruments establish clearly different approaches to deal with the urban renewal of the built heritage.

In sum, we can understand that the latest Portuguese planning tools, and the Strategic Documents in Oporto, are the most complete and flexible. They cover, for example, how to intervene on the building's structural system and they also point out objectively the constraints relating to the factors of facade design, roof and internal typology. This planning approach, through strategic documents, allows a regulated change of the historic centre. On the other hand, the approach developed for Guimarães historic centre defends quite the opposite, it supports the idea of maintenance of the past as it, not adding

contemporary values.

As suggested by the Vienna Memorandum [8] in the management of architectural interventions in the historic centres must exist as a principle the acceptance of change as part of the construction of the city, not only advocating the preservation of heritage, but also and at the same time, the upgrading in order to strengthen the identity and social cohesion. The planning tools of Oporto, and the Strategic Documents, are the ones studied that best embody the idea of preservation and revitalization support by the Vienna Memorandum, which is necessary to keep the historic centres actual and alive in the contemporary city.

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