

The Architecture of Additions – Design and regulation

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Review

Although it is one of the most frequent project work practices, the theme of additions on architectural and urban pre-existences has not been the subject of many focused and systematized reflections; many projects that fit this typology appear in usually dispersed authors' monographic works. Thus, this work first published in 1998 has specially interest, problematizing and summarizing in its 191 pages some of the fundamental questions that are posed to architects and those responsible for the management of the architectural and urban heritage in the act of designing and deciding; it remains surprising current and proves to be of great practical utility for the variety of cases presented and for the depth of its analysis. How can one building affect the meaning of another when its different expressions combine and interact? And how do they affect each other when one of them is protected regarding its patrimonial public interest?

These two issues are present throughout the book, proposing a structure of thought that help us answer them. Beginning with a careful reflection on the public value (or rather, the public values) of architecture - an issue that today is on the agenda - the author establishes the relationships between the architectural work and the construction of the identity of places and people, the dynamics of the reconstruction of identities, the successive and multiple impacts of interventions on interventions - continuously creating new meanings - and the values generated in these interactions.

The author examines the question of the evolution of the meaning of the work of architecture that is the subject of an addition, of an enlargement or, more generally, of a modification in four chapters, methodically focusing his analysis always from paradigmatic case studies - fundamentally European and North American - and with extensive graphic support. Chapter 1 "The Evolution of Meaning (of Architecture) in Combined Works - The Lessons of the Masters" analyses, through different cases chronologically examined, ranging from successive additions in the Church of St. Peter in Rome to the interventions in Castelvecchio in Verona, the role of pre-existing architecture in confrontation with added architecture, in its old and new (modern) qualities, and how they mutually enhance their values. In Chapter 2, "Combined Works of the Twentieth Century: The Significant Possibilities (potential) of Modernism" the author, beginning with the case of the Eiffel Tower in its urban context in Paris as a symbolic starting point for the proliferation of expressive potentials that accelerated in the 20th century with the modern movement, presents a large set of cases that illustrate the impact of modernist interventions on pre-existing buildings and the reciprocal contribution to a better understanding of their meanings; the author organizes the cases in 3 categories: i. (additions) in extension, ii. (additions) by derivation and iii. (additions) by transformation, presenting such distinguished projects as the Reichstag in Berlin, the Opéra de Lyon, the Pompidou Centre, the Maison Carré and the Opéra in Nîmes, the 500 Park Avenue in New York (Pepsi-Cola Building), the Falkestrasse 6 in Vienna, and the Courthouse in Göteborg, Sweden.

In Chapter 3, "Combined Works of the Twentieth Century and the Legislation: The Special Case of Safeguarding", we see very clearly, again supported in concrete and categorized cases, how legal provisions on safeguarding architectural and urban heritage accompany condition and integrate the practice of projects on pre-existence, in this case practically all North American and British ones, including examples such as the Guggenheim Museum or the Whitney Museum in New York.

Finally, in Chapter 4, "Combined Works and Contemporary Expression: the Architecture of Additions at the End of the Twentieth Century," Paul Byard makes a bold typological classification of the conflict between understanding a pre-existence as a source of information and inspiration for a new addition project, and the emergence of new patterns of intervention as a result of a globalization of images, information and exchanges, which configure a great diversity of approaches: i. the architecture of imitation, ii. the architecture of the forms of things, iii. the architecture of appropriation and iv. the architecture of possibility.

The Architecture of additions – design and regulation, despite its first edition dating from 1998, is today a work of great relevance, especially in a period of global crisis and failure of values and ideologies, of opening to new understandings of the world and creative processes, clearly problematizing the assumptions and impact of interventions in heritage contexts on societies and people.

BYARD, Paul Spencer – The architecture of additions – Design and regulation. W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 1998, ISBN 0-393-73021-2