Contextual Preferences of Experts and Residents: Issue of Replication and Differentiation for New Infill Design in Urban Historical Context

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Abstract: Quality of infill design in historical district has been debating for recent decades, the degree of replication and contrast in building features to achieve visual harmony, still is an issue that experts and public involving with it. For designing a new building in historical context an important aspect is considered contextual design. Previous studies have focused on compatibility of new buildings and their surroundings but none of them focused on the historical district that need to preserve cultural values. This study tries to compare preference ratings of experts and residents in the contextual relationship between the new building and historical surroundings and the degree of replication from context to the new infill design. Methodologically, a case study approach was adopted and 100 experts and 204 residents of historical context participated in the survey. The findings of this research show that among experts and residents although there are differences in degree of replication in building cues, but both groups have rated same to some physical elements. The findings of this research can give better understanding in formulating the frameworks toward establishing the design guidelines for architectural intervention in such urban historic environment.

Key words: Contextual Preference • Infill Design • Compatibility • Environmental Perception • Historical Context

INTRODUCTION

New buildings and settlements are built every day to serve both individual people and social groups in the performance of the daily activities of life. The appearance of a building is affected by social and economic systems and symbolizes personal and public attitudes toward the quality of life; buildings also affect people's activities, their values and their behavior. City officials, design professionals and groups of the public interested in architectural issues and concerned about the visual quality and the future of their cities. These groups have been discussing about issue of newly erected projects' harmony with their older settings and their aesthetic effect on the livability and attractiveness of their localities to achieve a successful and enjoyable relationship between new and old architecture [1]. This issue becomes more sensitive when a new construction wants to add within historic district or areas contain a significant number of historic buildings. Intervention to historic contexts especially addition and infill design have always been a big issue in the preservation field. There have been many discussions about the proper way to approach a historic context when it is in need of development to create more usable space for a new or expanding use [2].

For the new addition into urban historical context, there are no simple rules for achieving quality of design in the new addition, although a clear and coherent relationship of all the parts of the new work to the whole, as well as to the setting into which it is introduced is essential. New work should aspire to a quality of design and execution related to its setting, which may be valued both now and in the future. In shaping the built environment it is important to have a responsibility to past, present and future generations [1]. Therefore, Infill work or design in a historic context should be linked the past to the present and projects into the future. This neither implies nor precludes working in traditional or new ways, but demands respect for the significance of a place in its setting [3].

Around forty years ago, with the increased awareness of historic preservation, also came an increased consciousness of the need to be able to design new buildings which are compatible with historic