

Frazer Hay...intervention

*"First we shape our buildings, then they shape us, then we shape them again-ad infinitum"*  
[Stewart Brand, 1994]

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[Winston Churchill, 1943]

There is a fine balance between architecture and humanity. The buildings we design directly influence the way in which we live our lives, they direct and manipulate the way in which we engage with our social values, educational, commercial and spiritual needs, even our appreciation of the arts. This means the balance between society and architecture is in a constant state of flux, buildings and people evolve repeatedly, new buildings are built to facilitate our social development but more often than not, it is the existing buildings which are re-shaped, as Stewart Brand's quote suggests, *"First we shape our buildings, then they shape us, then we shape them again-ad infinitum"*. Stewart Brand's quote in 1994 is a reinterpretation of Winston Churchill's quote in 1943 *"First we shape our buildings, then they shape us"* whilst addressing the nation with regard to the re-building of the 'Houses of Parliament' after its destruction during the Second World War. There were 51 years between each quote and in that period of time, society was changing rapidly, freedom from world war, politics, technology and science had accelerated development in travel, communication and finance. These changes had altered the way in which society viewed itself, it was now well on its way to becoming an International community. Cultural phrases such as, "the global village" appeared and architecture was increasingly seen as a machine for living. As the feeling of internationalism grew, the significance of a national identity grew too. Cultural tourism evolved, architecture and the arts were under growing pressure to facilitate modern life styles but also preserve national identity. International organisations like ICOMOS [International Council on Monuments and Sites] in 1965 and UNESCO's [the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization] world heritage convention 1972 emerged. The rising interest in heritage combined with the nationalistic feeling after the war and the economic value associated with cultural tourism fuelled the continuing debate on conservation theory and on how best to care for the buildings of cultural significance.

Since the nineteenth century the debate over restoration verses anti-restoration has dominated conservation theory. Restoration focused on the recording and reconstruction of structure championed by the Frenchman Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, infamous for his rigorous, stylistic and often brutal restoration works.

*"Means to re-establish [a building] to a finished state, which may in fact never have actually existed at any given time"*  
[Braziller George. 1990]

Anti Restoration on the other hand argued that to restore the architecture to a fictitious past, destroyed the structures authenticity and historic fabric, this theory was championed by Englishmen, William Morris and John Ruskin, who founded the Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings [SPAB] in 1877. *"Neither by public, nor by those who have the care of public monuments, is the true meaning of the word restoration understood. It means the most total destruction which a building can suffer: destruction out of which no remnants can be gathered; a destruction accompanied with false description of the thing destroyed. Do not let us deceive ourselves in this important matter; it is impossible, as impossible as to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture"*.

Ruskin John, [180-1989]

The SPAB Manifesto introduced a 'conservative repair' ideology; repair rather than replace with a soulless copy, respect and celebrate the structures' authentic and historic fabric.



1. Viollet-le Duc



2. John Ruskin



3. William Morris

The SPAB and Viollet-le Duc discourse, underpins much of the western European contemporary conservation theory and practice.

A contemporary theory of conservation regarding architectural intervention and the building's subsequent re-use, has been developed to tackle the growing number of historic buildings which have become tired and neglected. For buildings no longer fit for purpose and struggling to adapt to a new use, rehabilitation was required. In 1983 the Appleton Charter defined rehabilitation from a conservation perspective: *"modification of a resource to contemporary functional standards which may involve adaptation for new use"* [1983 Appleton Charter, B – Rehabilitation]

Adaptation for new use is by no means a new phenomenon; buildings have been re-used throughout history. The Baths of Diocletian in Rome were converted into the 'Santa Maria degli Angeli Church' by Michelangelo in 1566. However new and considered architectural interventions are seen as a creative way to breathe new life into an existing historic context, whilst reinventing an economic and social value. The new and old architectural- a layered combination - would ensure the continuation of an authentic character, whilst providing an appropriate new use. The new use would eventually add to the building's historic fabric.

Early examples of contemporary architectural intervention work within a historic context are those of Swiss architect Peter Zumthor, Norwegian architect Sverre Fehn and an Italian designer Carlo Scarpa.

Carlo Scarpa, a designer from Venice who never completed his architectural education, went on to create some of the most celebrated and revered architectural intervention projects, studied by architects and students throughout the world, the most famous being the Castelvecchio Museum in Verona. Originally a castle, the building was re-designed as a museum displaying a collection of sculpture, statues and paintings. The new and historic layers can clearly be read through the architect's considered material choices and elegant detailing which underpins the use of form in relation to the host building's structural requirements. [Images 4, 5&6]



Image4



Image5



Image6

Image 4 External Staircase Image5 view of West wing Image6 Entrance to Castelvecchio Museum in Verona [1958-64]

The Norwegian architect Sverre Fehn, built a regional museum for the municipalities within the historic ruins of a medieval cathedral in Hamar , Norway. The design intent was to create ways in which the materials and the structural forms of Fehn’s architecture, would contrast and co-exist alongside that of the cathedral’s. Fehn makes no attempt to interfere with the historic fabric of the host structure. The new intervention sits comfortably within the historic context, leaving the site easily read and clearly understood as new and historic layering.  
 [Images 7&8]



Image7 Interior view of Hedmark Cathedral Museum



Image8 Exterior view of Hedmark Cathedral

Sverre Fehn’s Hedmark Cathedral Museum, Hamar, Norway. [1967-79]

The Swiss architect Peter Zumthor built an art museum around the wreckage of the parish church of St.Kolumba which was destroyed in WW2. Commissioned by Cardinal Meisner, Zumthor won the architectural competition in 1997 and the project was finally realized, 10 years later. The museum is an ancient castle for religious art - 2000 years of sycamore culture, as well as for modern installations. This project on first impression seems an extreme example of an intervention project; the new architecture almost smothering the historic ruins of St. Kolumba, almost using it as a piece of ‘spolia’. It is not until you take a closer look that you see the sensitive way in which the architect has detailed the junction between new and historic, and you begin to see the architectural integrity within the scheme. The material choice and finish to the new building’s exterior gives the building an understated presence, respectful, almost shy of its ancient host. The interior of the church is easily read and clearly layered. Light is used to great effect to highlight and soften the impact of the intervention.  
 [Images 9&10]



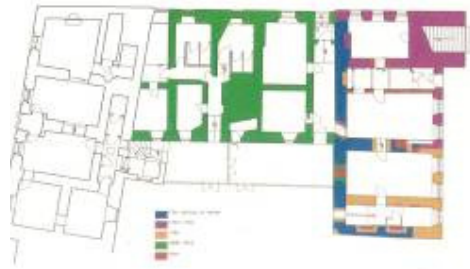
Image 9 External View  
 Peter Zumthor, museum of modern art in Cologne [2007]



Image 10 Interior View

The Stirling Tolbooth project is an example of Scottish architectural intervention within a building of cultural significance, a quality later to be defined in the 'Burra Charter [1999] as, "aesthetic, historic, scientific or spiritual value for past or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related place and related objects". 1999 Burra Charter

The historic site has an interesting past, layers of use and architecture [Image 11]. Built on the site of an earlier Tollbooth construction, dating back to the 1470<sup>s</sup> [shaded blue on the plan] the old town house designed by Sir William Bruce was built between 1703 and 1705 [shaded purple on the plan] incorporating parts of the earlier building. In 1785 the town house was extended by Gideon Gray [Shaded in brown]. In 1806-1811 [shaded in green], a court house and jail was added by Richard Crichton creating an intriguing group of buildings from a variety of dates known collectively as the Stirling Tolbooth. [Image11 and 12]



[Image11]



[Image 12]

The Stirling Tolbooth functioned variously as a town hall, courthouse and jail over the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and well into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Eventually in 1997, and after its original uses where no longer required, Stirling council, conscious of the building's continuing struggle to adapt and accommodate modern day demands, set an architectural competition. Stirling council invited key Scottish architects to compete for the opportunity to rejuvenate the Old Tolbooth. Keen to revive the Tolbooth's place as a key public place in Stirling, the council whilst securing a preliminary National lottery grant, invited architects to submit designs. The competition brief set out an intention to renovate the Tolbooth as a music-focused arts venue; opening the building to the local community and a wider national and international audience. The winning architect's scheme was as the completion judges put it "innovative and exuberant". RIAS Architecture Awards PR-27 Sept 2002

Richard Murphy architect's winning scheme proposed an intervention that interfered with the existing building as little as possible. The scheme insured that the key street facing elevations [Image 12 &18] and the existing individual interiors retained their historic integrity whilst hosting the integral spaces of the intervention. The old court room would host the main performance space with a two hundred audience capacity [Image 15], the robing room would host the grand bar [Image 13] and the council chambers would host a high quality restaurant. [Image 14]



[Image 13]



[Image 14]



[Image 15]

The major working parts of the intervention such as the circulation and access spaces would be contained behind the host structure within an empty space of the eastern courtyard into which the old tolbooth was extended [Image 15, 16]. The new extension nicknamed the 'Backpack' [Image17] was designed to house services, circulation and the additional practical spaces, key to the building's reuse. [Image 16,17 &18]



[Image 16]



[Image 17]



[Image 18]

The Tolbooth project was completed Jan 2001 at a cost of £4.2 million, the project was awarded the RIBA Crown Estate Commission Conservation Award 2002. The Tolbooth intervention has had a positive impact on its local environment re-energising a tired and forgotten historic part of the town which was being used mainly as an access route to Stirling's medieval Castle. The local community have embraced the Stirling Tollbooth as a social focal point and an accessible means to re-engage with their rich and varied local history. The building has drawn national and international tourism back to the area which has triggered an economic and urban regeneration. Cafes, shops and restaurants have begun to appear and the local population have shown a renewed pride in their local area and its history.

Nationally the Tolbooth has played an important roll in consolidating Scotland's national identity. With Devolution in 1997 and a devolved Scottish parliament in 1999, Scotland's architecture assumed a growing political as well and economical value. The new Scottish Parliament building celebrates Scotland's political independence. Architecture and its importance in helping redefine a national identity grew. The re-use of the Tollbooth as a music focused arts venue helped celebrate Scottish culture and enhance a civic connection with its past. *"The Tolbooth will not only bring you the best of new music and other arts but, like so many other projects the Scottish Arts Council funds, will provide a focus for the community to come and participate in and enjoy the arts"* [Marshall, Maud 2002]

The Tolbooth's success as a reinvigorated historic building actively participating in the delivery of Scotland's cultural heritage has a lot to do with the architectural intervention. The intervention was sensitive to the historic fabric, and provided space for the current re-use. However the Tolbooth project is not purely an intervention project but a hybrid of restoration and intervention techniques which challenges the historic conflict between the theories of 'SPAB' Conservation and Violet's restoration.

The project was a complex blend of conservation and restoration. On one hand the restoration techniques of Edinburgh based, 'Simpson and Brown' architects was based on a respect for the original material, authentic documents available and the removal of a superficial layer of minimal cultural significance to reveal one of a greater cultural importance specifically in the 15<sup>th</sup> century parts of the building [the restoration conforming mainly to the Burra charter 1979 and Venice charter 1964, and on the other, a sophisticated architectural and structural response. The structural additions and interventions consciously design as bold statements adding a new layer of history and architecture to a historic building of cultural significance.

## Conclusion

The concern of conservation is the past, present and future of a building and involves making balanced judgements with regards history, present day needs and the future sustainability. The significance and success of the Tolbooth building can be defined through an assessment of its historic, architectural and cultural importance and through a value-based approach. By identifying key values related to the building and its intervention, it is clear to see the current Tolbooth building's importance as a contemporary conservation project. The Tolbooth has an 'age and rarity value' in that the nature of the building predates the 15<sup>th</sup> Century and has a variety of layered architectural programmes which have been enhanced by the new layer of architecture and engineering. The Tolbooth has a strong 'cultural value' providing information on various aspects of Stirling's past period of commerce and law which connects to the building's 'educational value'. The building informs us on a past way of life, architectural tectonics past and present and a period of Stirling's history. The educational value of the building has been enhanced after the intervention making the tollbooth more accessible to a wider variety of visitor. The Tolbooth has become an icon for Stirling's tourism strategy and is a key feature of the town's cultural experience. The Scottish arts venue has created a focus for the local community but has had an impact in drawing audiences nationally and international to the town. In celebrating Scotland's tradition in historic and contemporary music the visitors are investing in the buildings 'economic value'. The original Tolbooth has a historic value in its role in Stirling and Scotland's history, whilst the new architectural layer potentially creates a new cultural stratum to Stirling and Scotland's history.

*"It is ...not possible to base judgements of value and authenticity on fixed criteria. On the contrary, the respect due to all cultures requires that the heritage properties must be considered and judged within the cultural contexts to which they belong"*

1994 Nara Document,

The Political value of the Tolbooth is easily read within the cultural context of the Tolbooth and its local jail. It is not until the re-use of the building, that the political value becomes directly related to a national identity and re-enforces the country's independent cultural roots by celebrating music and the Arts, which are promoted through social events and festivals highlighting the building's important social value.

The Stirling Tolbooth project has been a success with regards the re-use and its social impact locally, nationally, internationally and culturally but could this impact, just as easily, have been delivered using any of Stirling's historic buildings? Can the Tolbooth and its historical fabric be clearly read or has the divide between new and historic been blurred in the architect's eagerness to provide too much programme?

On reflection and after many visits to the Stirling Tolbooth the building seems difficult to read as a historically layered project. The building is dominated by the re-use and its programme, with the extension [the backpack] apparently at odds with the conservation guidelines addressed in the Venice Charter 1964,

*"The conservation of monument is always facilitated by making use of them for some socially useful purpose. Such is therefore desirable but it must not change the lay-out or decoration of the building. It is within these limits only that modifications demanded by change of function should be envisaged and may be permitted"* [Article 5 the Venice Charter, 1964]

The Stirling Tolbooth is a tangible example of Brand's layering mantra, *"First we shape our buildings, then they shape us, then we shape them again-ad infinitum,"* and an example of the fragile balance between conservation practice, architecture and humanity. Architecture and humanity have a multiplicity of meaning and are in a constant state of flux. Buildings are an important gauge or tool from which to shape development and direct behaviour. Buildings do shape us but not as clearly and sequentially as Winston Churchill's quote suggests.

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Image No4. External Staircase, Castelvecchio Museum in Verona Schultz, Anne-Catrin [2007], *Carlo Scarpa Layers*. Menges,

Image No5. View of West wing of Castelvecchio Museum in Verona Schultz, Anne-Catrin [2007], *Carlo Scarpa Layers*. Menges,

Image No6. Entrance to Castelvecchio Museum in Verona Schultz, Anne-Catrin [2007], *Carlo Scarpa Layers*. Menges,

Image No7. Interior view of Hedmark Cathedral Museum available from <http://www.worldarchitecture.org/world-buildings/world-buildings-detail.asp?position=detail&country=Norway&no=699>

Image No8. Exterior view of Hedmark Cathedral available from <http://www.worldarchitecture.org/world-buildings/world-buildings-detail.asp?position=detail&country=Norway&no=699>

Image No9. Image 9 External View of museum of modern art in Cologne available from Peter Zumthor [http://www2.arnes.si/\\_ljdessal/zumthor/](http://www2.arnes.si/_ljdessal/zumthor/)  
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