

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND TERRITORY. ARCHITECTURAL TOOLS FOR A SUSTAINABLE CONSERVATION OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

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Abstract

The Cultural Heritage rules state that “the preservation and the enhancement of the cultural heritage contribute to strengthen the memory of the national community and of its territory” and in this context the cultural path tries to re-contextualize — unlike the “musealization” — the relationships among materials and immaterial values, that got lost and belonged to the cultural landscape. The paper is based on the concept of “cultural landscape” in reference to the urban and territorial changes; in order to understand the identity meaning is fundamental to know the history and the places change and finding an underlying theme in the sparse traces of the heritage that is a project subject to understand and make territories readable. The interpretation of Europe as a common property can lie in an international field research aimed at finding common languages inside a wide territorial framework. The device of the cultural landscape is often an abstract context connected to the tourist development; in this case the identity of a place is strengthened by immaterial aspects — the popular traditions — more than its physical and spatial aspects. This research takes from the beginning the design point of view as a field of investigation. The paper would investigate about the relationship between the architecture of the path and the territory, by prefiguring new design scenarios for the widespread and hidden cultural landscape. In the research, the cultural path is considered as a design device that can make a place understood by the territory arrangement; the cultural path is investigated in the physical and material features proper of Architecture. Many contributions of History of Architecture are useful to create a planning framework for those who work in this field. The study wants to address the future planning proposals of cultural paths towards true consequences belonging to the architectural subject.

Keywords: Architecture; Heritage; Landscape; Cultural route; Path; Territory.

Introduction

The development of a great consumer society led to the use of standardized models and the cultural promotion suffered from this homogenization affecting the timeless relation between the asset and its own environment [1-4].

The tourist increasingly pursues original experiences, but today it is possible to assert that even the same concept of authenticity has changed its meaning. In a situation where objects and monuments are no longer the original, or all the more when the preservation logics are reduced to strengthen the object's value and its fragments more than the meaning as a whole [5-

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16]. The general attitude still present in this field is like an indispensable conservation, which often leads to creating many aporias and a poor grasp of the territory's history [17-22].

The planning processes in the cultural route device are able to make one understand a place – in its various dimensional levels – and catch the sense of the historical traces. The cultural route is like a tool that looks into the reading of contemporaneity in connection with the past and the meaning that some places have had and have still now in a certain environment [23-27].

Many of the cultural politics working in the territory to enhance its patrimony – as for example those implemented by UNESCO – follow the preservation of detailed icons which contradict the link between these places and their context.

The denial of the point, by nature, is the line extending along the territory setting up a network which links and keeps the sense of each trace alive that otherwise would not be contained.

The arrival routes in an archaeological or heritage area together with the planning strategies are, potentially, the instruments to enhance the territory.

The traces of the patrimony, scattered all over the territory, are waiting for the project as a bearer of sense and revealing of history that is, by nature, intangible. The cultural path is a sign linked to the territory, a presence denoting an absence, it is bound up with the time and the history of a place and it generates memory by translating some traces into a present and ever evolving structure [17-27].

Therefore the cultural route is a material instrument, a communication route with certain and real aims in which the definition elements – as quoted in the ICOMOS Chart [28] – are the framework, the content, the overall shared value, the energetic nature and the environment.

Materials and Methods

This work investigates about the relation between cultural heritage and the territory through a kind of conservation that it is an architectural issue. The cultural route is considered a design device that can be understood by the territory arrangement. According to the research perspective, the aim is to show the design instrument able to understand a place with its history and to perceive a certain cultural heritage. Enhancing a heritage or a cultural landscape means to contribute to the economic and social development of places.

In order to understand a certain value connected to the territorial context, it is fundamental the perception of the cultural path as a way with a precise destination and directionality, with some design expedients from the starting point, through the several gradients of elements, toward the end. The thesis uses the adoption of an observer's favorite point of view and the arrangement of references concerning particular lookout points allows to experiment the cinematographic qualities of the path. The thesis tries to convey some features of Kevin Lynch's reasoning from the urban range to the territorial one and to the one of open spaces (Fig. 1). The third chapter of his book - *The image of the city* [29] - deals with the subject of urban images and the features of some elements used to make a certain meaning stronger.

The planning elements represent symbols, spatial schemes in turn, they are useful indicators helping the temporary user to orientate himself by focusing on their position, their design and the material they are made out of. The architecture's detail reveals fundamentally the interpretation of the entire environmental and anthropic whole. The care and the choice of change in scale and the linguistic-matter expression of the project represent a way for a green conservation of landscape. The inclusion of reference elements, as landmarks and its differentiations, are used for the orientation and communication of the context. These expedients modulate the path and the variation itself has a measurable shape. The importance of

the elements is based on the relation among each other as a network. The sequences of visual experience help simple logical connections of a territory.

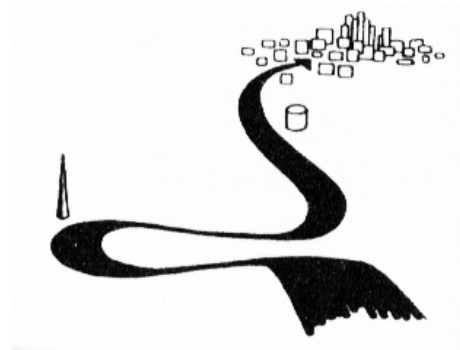


Fig. 1. *Designing the paths*. Source: K. Lynch, *The Image of the City* [28]

This work is part of the International PhD Thesis – *From perception to design. Architectural tools for cultural routes* – discussed in July 2015 at IUAV University of Venice. The paper wants to illustrate, in the next part, one case study chosen among others of the thesis because it is considered a good model for sustainable operate of preserving landscape.

Results and Discussion

The case study is the *Stonehenge Environmental Improvement Project* [30, 31] in United Kingdom, made in 2001 and built in 2014 by the architect Denton Corker Marshall, Gardiner & Theobald.

The case deals with the arrival at an archaeological area as a very important node to understand the site and its geography.

The enhancement of Stonehenge archaeological site's entrance suggests some significant changes with the aim of improving the visitor's perception at the arrival, by helping the narration and communication of this elaborate site's value. The initial path, in this case, is the fundamental scheme in order to understand the history of the territory. The planning proposal provides for a kind of territory restoration through the historical knowledge of the place and the re- establishment of ancient routes and site morphology dating back to 4000 b.C. without alterations, misleading to grasp the site. In this way the configuration of the prehistoric site of Stonehenge megaliths — World Heritage site — together with its background, by covering about sixty kilometers. The right arrival at an archaeological site, coherent with the primordial sense of site foundation and its position, it is an initiation act to know the place through an images succession and spaces connected each other. Therefore the change — parallax— in the position we observe is not a side issue, it represents a starting point where the place's temporal structure becomes explicit. It is a clear example of how important is the surrounding environment in order to make the interpretation of place to visit clear. Sometimes a meanings reversal is necessary, that is to reset a primordial order in the relations just because the territorial transformations during the years have satisfied a mere tourist need and an immediate access to the archaeological area, in order to use the good without thinking of communication of the place's history and geography which its sense and meaning come from. In this cases is necessary to intervene, also by modifying a little bit the existent, for a structure must continue to live and find a new balance. All those make us consider the need to create a system and a network with the territory, in the course of a good and a site enhancement, without increasing logics for an active preservation of the object itself. The heritage value is the territory itself and

covers its surrounding environment, so the forced bonds with the *buffer zone* could be modified and help the project in order to spread the past knowledge without being considered completed and fossilized areas, almost free from changes (Fig. 2 and 3).

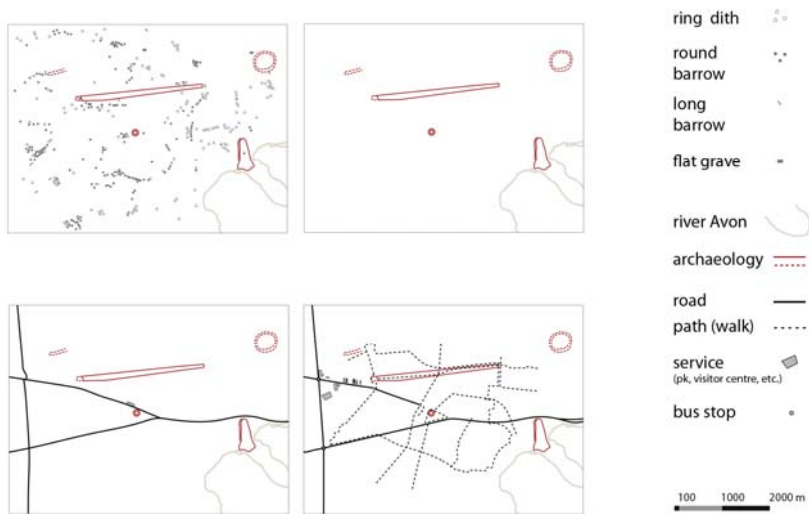


Fig. 2. Stonehenge Archaeological area.

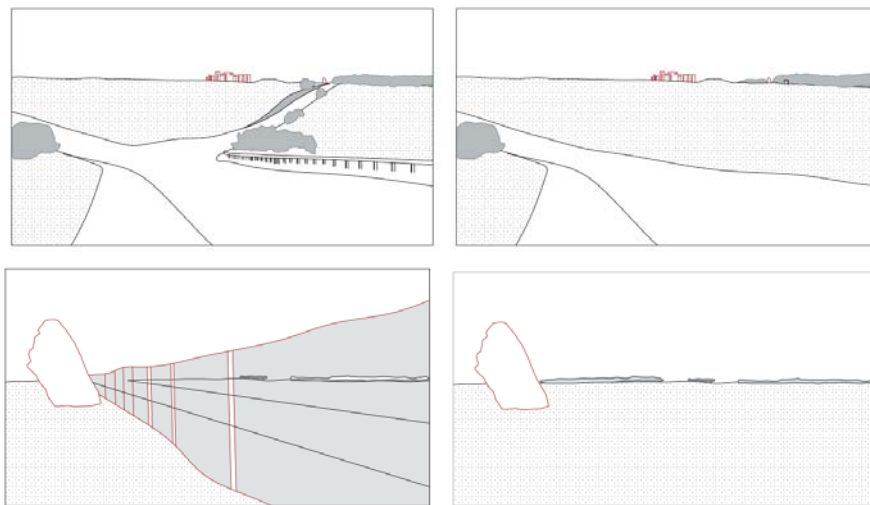


Fig. 4. Before and after views for the Stonehenge Environmental Improvement Project

Conclusions

This study want to address the future researches into recognize a type of active and sustainable conservation through the architecture. The perception defines an interpretation of territory and represents a potential in order to qualify the design.

This work relies in the cultural path as a potential design perspective in order to enhance the cultural landscape; it does not concern only the conservative logics of the object itself, but complies with the transformative ones which the territory is always subject to. The cultural path, as well as cultural landscape, is an elaborate issue: it contains mental, social, cultural and cognitive events; it is a combination of practices and mechanisms in order to give identity to places and make their multiple meaning perceivable.

In the field of this research, the role of the project is just to make the cultural nature of a whole of territorial values perceivable organizing it through the selection of significant sequences. To reach this goal it is necessary to recognize the entire intervention given to architectural materials and elements in order to activate lost senses.

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