

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF MONUMENTS AND SITES

ICOMOS

Résolutions of the symposium devoted to the study of "The Streetscape in Historic Towns". Lausanne, Switzerland, 17th to 22 nd June 1973

---

The participants in the Symposium of the International Council of Monuments and Sites, devoted to the study of "The Streetscape in Historic Towns", held at Lausanne from 17th to 22nd June, 1973,

EXPRESS their sincere thanks to the Swiss National Committee of ICOMOS for the warm welcome extended to them, and their gratitude to the Federal, Cantonal and Municipal Authorities, who enabled them to hold the meeting,

TAKING as their basis the full documentation provided by the National Committees, the papers read by the experts invited and the excursions made to a number of historic towns in Switzerland,

RECALLING the views put forward in the Recommendations and Resolutions of previous ICOMOS Symposiums, notably those held at Caceres and Tunis on the protection and revification of centres of historic or artistic interest, and at Graz on Traffic problems in Centres of Historical Interest,

CONSIDERING that the street is the natural environment of the town-dweller, that the evolution of society has brought about a lack of awareness of the street as an urban phenomenon, causing it to deteriorate and to lose its original function, and that there is today a revival of awareness of the importance of the street in urbain and social life,

OBSERVE

that buildings contributing to an ensemble, without themselves being of exceptionnal value, have often been defaced or replaced by the most unfortunate creations, of the wrong scale, materials and colour,

that original buildings lines have been upset and the pattern of holdings obliterated,

that trees, fountain, stalls, terraces of cafes, porches and other elements of the streetscape have gradually been disappearing and have been replaced by a jumble of ill-consorted street-furniture,

that loud advertisements intrude everywhere by day and by night,

that the invasion of motor traffic threatens the happy balance of the town centre and disturbs the relation between the street and its users,

that the congestion of traffic has eventually affected trade, which, in moving to other sites, has called into question the future of the street,

that introducing of new uses and the property speculation which both results from and fuels this process, are driving the residents out of inhabited districts, thus taking away their animation,

that the everyday life of the street has decayed, and its spatial and social balance have been destroyed.

In historic towns the street is a necessary element for the equilibrium and identity of the town-dweller, and is equally an essential part of the common heritage of mankind.

The participants in the symposium held at Lausanne therefore propose the following recommendations for the approval of the Executive Committee of ICOMOS :

That public opinion and the relevant authorities should, as a matter of cardinal importance, be alerted to the irreplaceable contribution of the streetscape in historic towns to the wealth and balance, both cultural and human, of town life,

That the progressive deterioration of ancient streets ought therefore to be halted, and to this end the upkeep of buildings ought to be strictly enforced,

That, since the animation of the street is closely linked to the internal structure and life of the houses and blocks along it, rather than to the restoration of façades alone, inner plot-sizes and characteristics proportions should be respected,

That analysis of the fabric of society and study of the policies applicable to it should be carried on parallel to the drawing up of town-planning programmes,

That to keep its human scale, the regenerated ancient street should preserve, or even recover, its diversity of social composition and range of activities,

That any additional construction which proves necessary should be designed in a contemporary idiom, taking into account the harmonious character which is typical to ancient towns,

That traffic should conform to the structure and activities of the town. Motor traffic should so far as is possible be excluded from the historic centre. Quick and easy links should be provided by public transport of an appropriate type and scale, which should not cause pollution,

That uninterrupted and attractive areas should be reserved for the pedestrians, so as to promote exchanges, stimulate trade and improve leisure. Great attention should be paid to the contours and paving of the ground; subdued lighting should be installed with the greatest care and advertising kept in control; street furniture should be of a consistent design,

That all the advantages of modern life should be introduced into our ancient towns, in the form which is best suited to the particular character of each town.