I, Petar I Mitev, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture in Architecture.

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Identity & Building: Engaging in Dialogue with Context Through Architecture

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Identity & Building

Engaging in Dialogue With Context Through Architecture

A thesis submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Cincinnati in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture (MArch) in the Department of Architecture at the College of Design Architecture Art and Planning (DAAP)

by

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As modern cities expand in size and density, the question of representing cultural identity and meaning through new construction has been largely sacrificed in favor of a rigid formalistic image. This is largely due to the treatment of architecture as capital and commodity, and the greater economic landscape. Urban context and a sense of place and identity are informally connected, and by foregrounding relevant histories of the physical and existential qualities of architectural context, this thesis aims to promote the design and construction of architecture which enhances the everyday experience of the built environment.

This paper draws on literary source material and precedent case studies from architectural critics and practitioners to create an architectural intervention in Odeonsplatz, a public square in Munich, which enhances the modern function and felt-experience of the site. The main themes of this discourse are the poetics of construction as outlined by Kenneth Frampton’s writing on tectonic culture, and the existential considerations of place and identity as explored by Heidegger, Tzonis, and Norberg-Schulz. Through the architectural curation of the relationship between new and existing, this thesis will propose a framework for improving the modern experience of the site, with a poetic representation of regional values.
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It is often said that people are the product of their environment; and I am no exception. I grew up in a post-socialist Balkan state – a condition much akin to a carefully cradled aversion. The socialists valued utility above all else; so much so, that a misguided disregard for culture and history was common practice in the field of architecture. We spent most of our lives living in the reality of a post-war Corbusian drawing, finding relief only in the rural outskirts of the country where an older generation had learned to find relief in culture. Today, what's left of this period of socialist architecture is in many ways a monument to our failure as a creative culture. The old modular housing units crown our skylines with shame as a reminder of our neglect towards the appropriation of Slavic culture within our arts and architecture; periodically renovated for no purpose other than to simply stand, they emphasize our modern lack of creativity as conditioned by decades of architectural and cultural neglect behind the iron curtain.

To deprive a people of cultural continuity within the built environment is to take the meaning out of architecture altogether. A cultural connection with architecture is essential as it serves as a foundation for dialogue between the individual, the building, and the collective. Such a conversation must exist in order for the individual to feel a connection to their environment. In order to avoid similar cultural neglect within architecture in other parts of the world, we must connect with our architecture on a deeper level than simple utility, or rigid formalism.
The issue of cultural influence on architecture is relevant to all places, not only those with a history of politically-motivated design. As modern cities expand in size and density, the question of representing and building cultural identity and meaning through new construction has been largely sacrificed in favor of a rigid formalistic image. This is largely due to the treatment of architecture and culture as capital and commodity, and the rise of the “starchitect” movement which sells a fixed image rather than creating a dialogue with context.

There are several modern conditions which contribute to this problem. At the finest scale is a modern condition of the arts, influenced by the mainstream pervasion of capitalism, which is “production for the sake of production.” This directly leads to the treatment of art and architecture as commodity. Architecture created under these conditions thus lacks any sort of connection to its surroundings, having been made from a purely market-oriented perspective. On the largest scale, this type of work is most reflective of the economic conditions which birthed it, rather than the people which inhabit it and the city which it inhabits.

Kenneth Frampton’s essay “Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance,” attempts to link some of these concepts together for a holistic view of the problem. In this essay, Frampton argues that the effects of globalization are having a detrimental effect on architecture. He further argues that architecture and planning have lost value over time because the professions have lost responsibility in order to cater to a widely popular capitalistic model of building and urban growth. He also argues that production “for the sake of production” has generated meaninglessness over time. He further notes that this meaninglessness makes the
arts (and architecture) “gravitate towards commodity.”¹ The “starchitect” movement, has fully exploited this gravitation of architecture towards commodity by repeatedly selling minor variations of the same image to different clients.

To combat this trend, he argues for the abandonment of the avant-gardism, and for the move to the arrière-garde position so that architecture can be sustained as a critical practice. In his next point, Frampton makes the distinction that the taking of the arrière-garde position does not simply mean “to revive the hypothetical forms of a lost vernacular.” He then expresses his belief that critical regionalism should “achieve, through synthetic contradiction, a manifest critique of universal civilization.” And in order to achieve that critique, Frampton suggests a deconstruction of world culture.

In order to analyze Frampton’s critique on the position of the arts, one must understand the concept of the “critical” as used by Frampton but initially outlined by Alexander Tzonis and Liliane Lefaivre. The concept aims to place the new work in a dialogue with the existing context through the process of design and building. Frampton does this through what he calls “a self conscious rereading, remaking and re-collection of tradition.”² It is important to understand this concept in order to properly frame the full context for understanding Frampton’s meaning behind arrière-garde. He is not arguing for a literal reproduction of a past form-language, but rather a position which distances itself from the Enlightenment myth of progress: that the collective well being would be improved solely through modernization and technology.³ He further rebels against this idea later in his text when he argues that technology has only fueled this aggressive production and the gravitation of art and architecture towards commodity and meaninglessness.

Technology has certainly played a role in the increased commercialization of art and architecture; buildings are easier and faster to design and construct. But what is perhaps most relevant to this trend is the way architectural representation has evolved through the mainstream media channels of the modern world. With the advent of television, internet, and personal social media platforms, the amount of visual-centric architectural representation has skyrocketed. Because of this, architectural qualities other than visual aesthetics have been increasingly neglected; they simply don’t translate efficiently enough through the currently popular channels. With architecture being so easy to create and produce, the most popular approach has been to treat it as a product rather than an experience or place of dwelling. In regards to this trend Professor Tzonis writes:

> Like other kitsch works or mass media products, these feed settings of emotion and starve rationality. They are an architectural pornography of sorts, targeting the economically privileged in the second part of the nineteenth century, but as we moved into the twentieth century, increasingly embraced the masses..⁴

A key point to this argument is the focus on the “economically privileged.” In a capitalist structure, the privilege of the arts tends to float to the top, and much of Frampton’s proposed “resistance” revolves around the economic oppression of the industrialized world. He argues that the automotive industry and the real estate market essentially caused this problem, by making it economically inviable to build urban spaces that did not cater to those markets. Frampton further

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elaborates upon these ideas in his work, *Studies in Tectonic Culture*. Early in this text, Frampton clarifies the problem as outlined by his previous essay. He draws upon a lecture from Vittorio Gregotti, quoting:

The worst enemy of modern architecture is the idea of space considered solely in terms of its economic and technical exigencies indifferent to the ideas of the site...Through the concept of the site and the principle of settlement, the environment becomes the essence of architectural production. From this vantage point, new principles and methods can be seen for design - principles and methods that give precedence to the siting in a specific area. This is a vat of knowledge of the context that comes out of its architectural modification. The origin of architecture is not in the primitive hut, or the cave of the mythical ‘Adam’s House in Paradise.'

Gregotti’s critique on this subject is unique because it critiques the design process more so than the architecture and spaces it creates. Furthermore, he recognizes that the larger climate of the architectural profession has been influenced by the capitalist social and political structure, and this is what he chooses to base his criticism around. In regards to the process, he writes:

This is now such a widespread idea that it seems almost objective...It is a question of a shrewd modernistic enemy capable of accepting the latest, most fashionable proposal, especially any proposal capable of selling every vain formalistic disguise, favorable only to myth, redundancy or uproar, as a genuine difference.

Gregotti’s argument is very much in line with Frampton’s critique on the position of the arts in modern times, however Gregotti’s consideration of the architectural process as a vehicle for change sets him apart. His approach is holistic even in its consideration of the architecture at the smallest scale: the detail. Regarding the building process, he maintains that the creation of a tectonic quality in architecture stands in direct contradiction to the current ocular-centric approach to design articulation. There can be no articulation of the poetics of construction when the design strategy is so one dimensional that it panders solely to a visual reading of the work. He also argues that this approach divorces us from the experiential qualities of architecture and its meanings. This arbitrary architecture created by solely economic and aesthetic drivers is simply not enough to satisfy the needs of a changing human culture.

This idea has been presented in the works of Edward Relph, Karsten Harries, & Catherine Howett as well. Their works suggest that current western environments are too often determined by economic, technological, or aesthetic concerns alone and do not relate to the full range of human experience, particularly a sense of place and dwelling. Karsten Harries further argues that modern architecture and planning practices do not meet the needs of human dwelling because they have been “made arbitrarily rather than allowed to arise spontaneously out of the requirements and concerns of particular people and landscapes.” The neglect of human dwelling conditions within design and architecture may seem difficult to quantify, but it is the culmination of the previously discussed social and economic trends. It is impossible to divorce the human condition and experience of dwelling from the life-world within which dwelling happens.

Regarding this disconnect, architectural preservationist and professor Scott Garner writes:

The philosophical alienation of the body

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8 Ibid, 3.
Garner recognizes this separation, but relates it to a more tangible point of reference - the body. Garner’s focus on the body as a means of illustrating the concept and issues with modern dwelling serve well to characterize an otherwise elusive concept. There have been many reactions to this disconnect between human and world: Frampton’s resistance, the critical regionalism of Tzonis and Lefaivre, Heidegger’s concept of the phenomenon, and Norberg-Schulz’s writing on the genius loci. Ultimately, all of these works outline a way for architecture to better connect and relate to the human experience both in utility and cultural experience.

Garner’s critique is itself a blueprint for human dwelling, and invokes many of the same themes as Martin Heidegger in his original exploration on the concepts of bauen and vierfache (dwelling and the fourfold). Dwelling is not merely the physical inhabitation of a space, or the extension of boundaries, but rather it is a physical and intellectual connection to the world: being. Garner’s critique on the alienation of the body and the mind in contemporary theory and practice is therefore relevant because increasing alienation between the two to the point of disconnect would result in an empty human experience. Garner also realizes the importance of the involvement of the body in “constitution and realization.” Heidegger’s original exploration of dwelling focused mainly on an etymological dissection of the word, but nevertheless he outlined that building and dwelling are one and the same, and we cannot separate the two processes. Garner’s critique is itself a blueprint for human dwelling, and invokes many of the same themes as Martin Heidegger in his original exploration on the concepts of bauen and vierfache (dwelling and the fourfold). Dwelling is not merely the physical inhabitation of a space, or the extension of boundaries, but rather it is a physical and intellectual connection to the world: being. Garner’s critique on the alienation of the body and the mind in contemporary theory and practice is therefore relevant because increasing alienation between the two to the point of disconnect would result in an empty human experience. Garner also realizes the importance of the involvement of the body in “constitution and realization.” Heidegger’s original exploration of dwelling focused mainly on an etymological dissection of the word, but nevertheless he outlined that building and dwelling are one and the same, and we cannot separate the two processes. Garner recognizes this separation, but relates it to a more tangible point of reference - the body. Garner’s focus on the body as a means of illustrating the concept and issues with modern dwelling serve well to characterize an otherwise elusive concept. There have been many reactions to this disconnect between human and world: Frampton’s resistance, the critical regionalism of Tzonis and Lefaivre, Heidegger’s concept of the phenomenon, and Norberg-Schulz’s writing on the genius loci. Ultimately, all of these works outline a way for architecture to better connect and relate to the human experience both in utility and cultural experience.

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The intellectual reaction to the pervasion of capitalist ideals in mainstream art and culture has revolved around a modern application of pre-industrial values to the realm of architecture. As mentioned previously, professors Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre were the first to articulate this idea as “critical regionalism.” Regarding the goals of critical regionalism, Tzonis writes:

Regionalism was not the term the architects themselves were referring to. It was a conceptual device that we chose to use as a tool of analysis. To make the argument more accurate and explicit we combined the concept of regionalism with the Kantian concept critical. The link was intended to distinguish the use of the concept of regionalism, from its sentimental, prejudiced and irrational use by previous generations. The concept of regionalism here indicated an approach to design giving priority to the identity of the particular rather than to universal dogmas. In addition, we wanted to underline the presence in this architectural tendency of “the test of criticism”, the responsibility to define the origins and constraints of the tools of the thinking that one uses.\textsuperscript{11}

The statement provides some background on the evolution of the concept of “critical regionalism.” Putting the concept in the context of Kantian critical theory, we can have a better perspective of Tzonis’ argument. Kant’s denial that the world is independent of human existence and experience is what makes him relevant to the concept of critical regionalism. He even argues in his early work that knowledge of the world is only possible because the self, or ego, determines the structure of human experience; therefore human existence is already deeply tied with the world.\textsuperscript{12} Tzonis

\textsuperscript{11} Lefaivre and Tzonis, Critical Regionalism, 10.
\textsuperscript{12} Susan Bernstein, “Goethe’s Architectonic Bildung and Buildings in Classical Weimar” (Maryland: John Hopkins University Press 1999), 03.
even goes as far as to suggest changing the term to “realism” instead of “regionalism” to further distance it from a potential for misinterpretation in the case of “its sentimental, prejudiced, and irrational use by previous generations.”

Ultimately, Tzonis presents critical regionalism not as a style or method of design, but as a “tool of analysis.” This is crucial in understanding the basis of the regionalist reaction and the framework for solving the problem as previously presented. It is also very close to Heidegger’s concept of phenomenology and Hans-Georg Gadamer’s articulation of the hermeneutic circle. The commonality between them, in terms of architecture, is the desire to create a dialogue and negotiate between the world (encompassing everything which is already there) and the human experience. This encompasses both the body in a space, but also the space in the greater context of an urban fabric. It is also crucial to understand that all of these concepts are methods of understanding, not rigid guidelines for critique, design, or building. David Seamon summarizes the ultimate desired outcome as:

Phenomenological ecology, therefore, not only widens and deepens our knowledge of the world outside ourselves but also facilitates our own growth as individuals whose abilities to see and understand can become keener and more refined. We become more awake to the world, and see things in a more perceptive, multi-dimensional way.13

The concept of the “phenomenon,” and more specifically, architecture as a phenomenon was first articulated by Martin Heidegger. In *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, he argues against a purely empirical observation of things, and instead champions for understanding them within their context (lifeworld). He defines this process as being dialogic, and interactive; a constant negotiation between everything in the world.

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13 Seamon, *Dwelling, Seeing, Designing*, 16.
Heidegger argues that there are infinite meanings embedded in the lifeworld which we already know, however they are backgrounded until they reveal themselves. The process of revealing is known as the phenomenon. Revealing can happen in a number of ways. Heidegger mentions poetics, strangemaking, and inconvenience as everyday ways of a thing or work of architecture to presence itself. This unique terminology employed by Heidegger is defined within a modern context by professor John Hancock.  

Poetics and strangemaking present an interesting opportunity in terms of art and architecture. Heidegger believes that the presentation and representation of a thing can work as a vehicle of presencing. A poetic representation isn’t necessarily confined to the literary medium which Heidegger chooses as his primary method of discourse, but rather it is a broad term which applies to the process of building in its entirety. Frampton outlines a very similar line of thinking in his concept of the “tectonic” and the “poetics of construction.” It is clear that Frampton has knowledge of the original text from Heidegger, and he does well to bridge the gap between the two texts and between the acts of building, revealing, and dwelling:

This essay further contains insights that are of pertinence to the tectonic. The first turns on the related but etymologically distinct notion of techne, derived from the Greek verb tikto, meaning to produce. This term means the simultaneous existence of both art and craft, the Greeks failing to distinguish between the two. It also implies knowledge, in the sense of revealing what is latent within a work; that is to say it implies aletheia, or knowing in the sense of an ontological revealing.

Aletheia finds its origins in Greek philosophy. It is translated as “truth” or “disclosure” literally from the Greek original, however Martin Heidegger also adds that: “Aletheia, disclosure thought of as the opening of presence, is not yet truth.” Aletheia is the act or process of revealing (an unconcealment out of concealment of the being of an entity); it is ongoing and not a finite state of being. This distinct quality ties in with Hans-Georg Gadamer’s concept of the hermeneutic circle. Heidegger laid the foundation for Gadamer’s understanding of the circle by envisioning a fundamentally interpretive experience of reality through the individual experiences of things within the greater whole. Gadamer later developed this idea by re-imagining the circle as an iterative process for creating new understanding rather than a cyclical self-referencing. This process is infinite, and inexhaustible; revealing hidden meanings and relationships through the relationships among the observer and the things around them, and their multiple contexts.

Within the metaphor of the circle, the ultimate point of importance lies within the relationships between the observer and the world around them. This relationship can simply be called “human experience” since the body is the ultimate point of reference for our understanding of the world. Therefore an emphasis on the body and its experience within the world is at the center of the philosophical reaction against the post-industrial architectural climate. Regarding the philosophy of experience, Harries writes:

Conventional Western philosophy assumes a division between person and world, between body and mind, between feeling and knowing, between subject and object, between theory and practice, between nature and culture. These Cartesian-Kantian dichotomies emphasize isolation over togetherness, specialization over generalization, things over processes, matter over spirit, and secondhand cerebral

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14 John Hancock, “Key Terms,” in Phenomenology Syllabus (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati, 2015), 03.
15 Frampton, Studies in Tectonic Culture, 23.
knowledge over firsthand lived-experience.\textsuperscript{17}

Bridging these divisions and gaps in experience has been explored in a variety of different ways. Frampton attempts to bring this discourse to the foreground by envisioning a resistance or liberation from constraints which distract from a focus on the sentient body, and the lived-world around it.

In Frampton’s essay *Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance*, he discusses the “placelessness” which has befallen the world in his “fourth point.” He references Martin Heidegger and specifically his emphasis on the “boundary” as a crucial point of presencing. Heidegger further writes that “dwelling and being can only take place in a domain that is clearly bounded.” Frampton thus argues for a “place form”, which is “necessarily dependent on a clearly defined domain.”\textsuperscript{18} He makes the distinction, however, that such a domain should not be treated with the modern *tabula rasa* tendency, which “predicates the rationalization of construction.” This is a very important distinction regarding the treatment of the site and its context. Another case study could be useful here to visually illustrate this point. Frampton’s texts on the subject of tectonics and the ethic of construction are heavily indicative of a careful attention to the process of building, to which the nature of site treatment is crucial.

Frampton further illustrates his theory with a relevant case study: the Bagsvaerd Church, by Jorn Utzon. For the first time, the reader has a clear visual of what Frampton is suggesting. He believes the building is successful due to its rational method of construction, and the careful treatment of the interior worship space in what he calls “a highly secular age.” Although Frampton mentions the dichotomy between façade and interior, and the eastern forms and their secularization, he does not ground the project and explain its context. There is no mention of the attention to northern Danish light as it meets the interior, and there is no mention of the religious demographics of the people. Perhaps it is assumed that the observer already knows this, but it is nonetheless very important in “grounding” the building and rooting it to its context, both physical and existential. Frampton has clearly illustrated a problem, and a potential solution, but he is presenting them in different settings. Utzon’s church is in northern Denmark, and one would be hard pressed to find a “megalopolis”\textsuperscript{19} as Frampton describes it, in Denmark, or in any Nordic European country. It would only make sense that the discourse on “critical regionalism” is in fact, a critique of a specific region.

In his last point, Frampton emphasizes the importance of all of the senses in a work of architecture. He uses Alvar Alto’s Saynatsalo Town Hall as a case study to illustrate how important the tactile experience is in addition to the visual. Frampton accepts that the visual sense is a very strong source of architectural understanding, but he also believes that the rest of the senses should equally enhance the quality of architecture and the perception of it. He later writes that “the tactile opposes itself to the scenographic and the drawing of veils over the surface of reality. Its capacity to arouse the impulse to touch returns the architect to the poetics of construction…”\textsuperscript{20} Frampton then boldly finishes his essay by asserting that “the tactile and the tectonic jointly have the capacity to transcend the mere appearance of the technical in much the same way as the place-form has the potential to withstand the relentless onslaught of globalization.”\textsuperscript{21} Although these are bold claims, it would be interesting to further study other works which embody similar principles, and determine whether they have “withstood globalization.” Again, Frampton’s case study example is located in a Nordic


\textsuperscript{18} Frampton, *The Anti-Aesthetic*, 24.

\textsuperscript{19} Frampton, *The Anti-Aesthetic*, 25.


\textsuperscript{21} Frampton, *The Anti-Aesthetic*, 29.
European country, one which hardly falls under the umbrella critique of the “megalopolis”. That does not render the work invalid, but it is worth investigating the potential application of these theories when applied to an urban scale. Although Frampton begins to outline a framework for solving the problems he outlines, there is still some necessary exposition around the concept of the context, “lifeworld”, or more simply, the social, cultural, and physical aspects of the site. In order to argue for a deeper connection with the world around us, one must first understand how that is defined.

“Context” is defined by the Oxford English dictionary as: “the whole structure of a connected passage regarded in its bearing upon any of the parts which constitute it; the parts which immediately precede or follow any particular passage or ‘text’ and determine its meaning.” Through our understanding of modern English, we interpret the word “text” to mean written words almost always, however in Latin, texo means “framework or structure”. That is why even in the modern English definition of “context”, we see that the first part of the definition refers to the entirety of the framework around the element in question. This framework gives meaning to the particular element, and undoubtedly has an effect on the interpretation of the thing in question.

The word “context” is derived from the Latin contextus, meaning “connection”. Contextus is also the participial stem of contextere, which means “to weave together”. In the Latin language, the word takes on many forms, serving as noun, adjective, and verb. Each of these uses of the word gives some more information about not only its origin, but its evolution into modern meaning. As a verb, contextere has multiple definitions. The primary definition is “to compose, connect, link or combine.” Connecting, linking, and combining are all actions which give a connotation of coming together, or joining in some fashion. Even “composing” is defined as “making by putting together parts or elements.” In this case one can imagine the composer of an orchestral work; bringing together dozens of different sounds to create something through their interaction. Similarly, the architect is charged with bringing together a slew of materials (physical) and considerations (metaphysical) into a project in order to create something greater than the sum of the parts. On a slightly larger scale, the architect must also link his creation to those around it.

The secondary definition of contextere is given as “weave, entwine, braid, or twist together.” This is perhaps the most literal translation of the word, as it is made up of two parts: com, meaning “together”, and texere, meaning “to weave.” This further reinforces the idea of cohesion through the combination of parts. The idea of weaving and entwining brings forth the images of physical contact, and inevitable abrasion. Weaving can’t happen without a certain amount of friction, and this is the case for architecture as well. The architectural process is our friction – planning, approval, legal issues etc. But architectural friction can be physical as well, just as the Latin definition suggests. As cities grow, redevelopment projects are becoming more and more common. In those instances, the architect must quite literally weave his or her ideas into the existing armature they are given.

As a noun, contextus means “connection, coherence, or continuity”. Essentially, contextus is the resulting product of contextere. When one successfully composes a new creation by bringing in a multitude of parts, coherence and continuity is created. The created coherence then becomes the framework through which meaning is further derived and interpolated. A secondary definition of the word in its noun form is “a structure, or fabric”. This ties into architecture
directly. A discourse on the “urban fabric” can be observed at the presentation of almost any new architectural project. It is important however, to keep the architectural scale in mind. A piece of architecture is only a piece in the urban fabric. And the architect is the agent of cohesion within that fabric. But one can look at the ideas of “fabric” and “texture” (derived from contextus) in a smaller scale as well; one more familiar to the architect. “Fabric” doesn’t need to include the entire city, it can be as small as the context of a street, or neighborhood. Ultimately, if a building does not respond well to those directly around it, it also is highly unlikely that it will resonate well within the larger scale of the urban fabric.

As an adjective, contextus takes on a slightly different connotation. It is defined as “continuous, uninterrupted, or unbroken.” In the adjective form, the word does not allude to the bringing together of elements, but it does explicitly mention continuity. It also mentions the idea of breaking. Although “unbroken” is a synonym of the other two definitions, it does carry a slightly different connotation. Rather than conveying the idea of implied cohesion, “unbroken” implies a holistic physicality. Applying this connotation directly to the familiar architectural scale can have multiple interpretations. One interpretation is that the new construction must physically touch the context in order to create an unbroken mass. Although this is possible in some architectural applications, it is not always so. Through this design idea, there is an opportunity to re-envision the idea of the “unbroken” and the physical connotation that it carries. A context-sensitive material palette and method of construction have the opportunity to physically manifest the inherent historic meanings and relationships within the new architecture. Therefore, the physicality which comes with the definition of “context”, is architecturally unavoidable.

It is evident that the discussion of “context” includes both the physical reality of the built world, and the metaphysical ideas and meanings associated with it. In the middle of this dialogue between the two, the architect stands as the “composer”; his sheet music replaced with a sketchbook, and his orchestra made up of builders, consultants, and planners.

It is clear from Frampton’s writing that he is not arguing against innovation in architecture, but he is making a call to action. By the “remaking and re-collection of tradition,” he argues that we are able to manifest tradition within a modern context, and technique. In order to achieve this however, we must be in constant dialogue with the tradition, as well as the “context” of past and present, as it is defined by the previous etymological exploration of the word. To illustrate this, Frampton references a lecture from Gianni Vattimo, quoting:

...therefore, in architecture, as also in philosophy, in existence in general, we renounce any metaphysical, superior, transcendent legitimization (of the kind reaching ultimate truths, redemption of humanity, etc.), all that is left is to understand legitimization as a form of the creation of horizons of validity through dialogue, a dialogue both with the traditions to which we belong and with others.\(^\text{27}\)

The idea of this “dialogue” is further explored by architect and preservationist Stephen Day. Day’s essay, “Building Modern in the Context of Historic Architecture,” attempts to illustrate the dialogue between new and old through case studies, and the exploration of the term “synergism.” Day defines “synergism” as

...a word with ancient roots – representing the phenomenon where certain elements combine, connect and interact – and create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. The concept is most often used in chemistry. But synergisms of a different strain can also occur in certain architectural combinations - where new work is inserted into a preexisting historic/cultural context - and a new set of relationships emerge.

Similar to Frampton, Day recognizes the importance of integrating existing context into new construction. Although he is a specialist in historic preservation, Day also makes the distinction that neither "Viollet le Duc's blended reconstruction-restoration nor Ruskin's quasi-archaeological stance" are fully appropriate for creating a synergism over time. He further cites Camillo Boito as a more appropriate example, “advocating a weave of old and new and a renewed attention to authenticity and transparency of historical layers.”

Day even makes the case that this form of design is ultimately more sustainable. He writes:

In the best examples, architects have created a dialogue between past and present. For these designers, historic architectural elements are seen as a resource, as cultural objects troves that can be mined for meaning, as well as providing a rich counterpoint to modern design elements. Various eras and historical strata intersect, bringing the participant into a new awareness of both history and modernity. This dialogue between past and present has extremely important implications for modern design theory, the evolution of historic preservation and for environmental sustainability. Adapting, engaging with, adding to, modernizing and re-defining existing buildings is one of the most effective tools in working towards a more sustainable built environment.

In this passage, Day is arguing for perhaps a more literal engagement with existing context than Frampton would have suggested. Nonetheless, their theories are in agreement when it comes to the importance of culture and tradition as a resource which can drive contemporary design and construction towards a sensitive innovation. Charles Bloszies, a practicing architect, makes a similar argument in his book Old Buildings New Designs. This text goes a step further than Day’s concept of synergisms, and attempts to illustrate successful relationships between new and old architecture, created through a physical joining of the two, and an appropriation of traditional techniques for the execution of the new construction. In some ways, this is close to Frampton’s theory as well, however Frampton does not directly argue for the physical link between old and new architecture. In regards to this physical link, Bloszies writes: “When new forms are physically joined to old forms, however, the question of context is more immediate. This architectural fusion overtly exposes differing philosophical perspectives as architects propose individualistic interventions or designs that are seamlessly integrated into the existing urban fabric.” This argument again speaks to the dialogue between new and old, and the question of legitimation as discussed by Gianni Vattimo. Exposing the “philosophical perspectives” behind the interventions is an opportunity to critique the validity of the architectural interventions, and to better understand their relationship with the existing context. Although Bloszies keeps this argument connected to the physical link between new and old, it is applicable to a non physical link as well.

Later in his text, Bloszies discusses taking cues from context which can be integrated into the new construction. He writes:

Perhaps one approach that can lead to a kind of aesthetic sustainability, in which a design can endure well beyond the movement it was created, is for architects to take cues from the

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time-tested passive features of old buildings that still meet rigorous performance criteria. Some of these features, such as overhand and sunscreens, may be rendered in a modern architectural vocabulary and applied to old facades or integrated with new fabric as a kind of functional ornament.\textsuperscript{32}

This is in agreement with Stephen Day’s theory on sustainability within the built environment. Although Day is referring to a larger scale of sustainability, the gesture must begin at the scale of the individual building as Bloszies is suggesting.

Carlo Scarpa’s work at Castelvecchio in Verona is perhaps one of the most striking examples of architectural synergy between new construction and existing context. Built between 1958 and 1970, it was designed as a museum for sculpture and art. Although much has been written about Scarpa’s mastery of architectural joints, “the foundation of Scarpa’s work lies in understanding and reading of the Veneto region and its architectural/cultural underpinning, including such elements as the unique local stone, metal and plaster craft traditions and the rich history of Verona and the Veneto region.”\textsuperscript{33} Scarpa’s intervention, thus goes beyond simple preservation, or the modern tabula rasa approach to new construction by highlighting the value of the existing, through the addition of the new.

To Scarpa, the damaged former military building was an opportunity for him to highlight and enhance the past life of the building, by celebrating its new life as a museum. Having undergone an unsuccessful “restoration” in the 1920s, Castelvecchio was a mix of architectural style and language. Scarpa himself admitted that “Castelvecchio was all deception,” and thus decided to highlight the layers of history to remove the deception, rather than attempt to mask them as the previous restoration efforts and done. This strategy is most apparent in the main courtyard which houses the statue of Cangrande della Scala. At this courtyard, a clear contrast can be seen between the old stone structure, and Scarpa’s smooth intervention of concrete, wood, and metal.\textsuperscript{34} There are no attempts made to veil the old structure, but rather to highlight it through contrast. This technique can be observed throughout the building, and especially within the joints that Scarpa is so often celebrated for. Although all of the joints are unique, they are similar in that they highlight the differing materials being joined, by leaving some form of clear boundary between them. Sometimes the boundary is negative space, while sometimes it is a simple layer of another material which highlights the method of construction used to join two different materials. In any case, there is always a clear physical and intellectual relationship between the joined materials.

This articulation of the joint is the point of much contemporary celebration, and it is not so without reason. Through the articulation of the joint, Scarpa is able to bring in regional awareness through the smallest unit of architecture. Frampton even calls Scarpa’s treatment of joints “tectonic condensation” because the intended method of assembly comes from a combination of regional traditions, available materials, and other constraints of function and necessity; a combination of factors which Frampton would undoubtedly call “organic.”\textsuperscript{35} Nonetheless, although Frampton celebrates Scarpa’s theory and method of assembly, he critiques Scarpa’s understanding of space, writing that “spatial interpretation is largely absent in his (Scarpa’s) work.”\textsuperscript{36}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32} Charles Bloszies, \textit{Old Buildings New Designs}, 37.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Stephen Day, “Building Modern in the Context of Historic Architecture,” 11.
\end{itemize}
This critique of Scarpa’s work, lacks foundation. His selective construction and deconstruction within Castelvecchio demonstrate his confidence in creating commentary through the physical manipulation of space. This is illustrated by the writings of professors and architects Tamara Coombs and Richard Murphy. Murphy argues that:

Scarpa embarks on clarifying and exposing the layers of history by elective excavation and creative demolition. (By demolishing the Napoleonic barracks and staircase) Scarpa was offering...a critique of the Fascist myth of Italy’s past.37

Through this demolition, the relocation of the statue of Cangrande and the reinterpretation of Castelvecchio’s circulation, Scarpa was able to weave a narrative through the architectural experience from the point of experience of the body. The relocation of the statue caused it to be the focal point of the exhibit, and the focal point of Scarpa’s circulation as well. By moving it to a semi-enclosed exterior space, he allowed for a variety of new perspectives for viewing the statue, and for viewing it within a different setting. This can be seen as a deliberate move to glorify the rule of the Lord of Verona rather than Napoleon’s for example. His demolition of Napoleonic elements such as the staircase and barracks within the building further support this claim. In any case, this makes a comment on the idea of a “collective identity” in the Veronese region, and it shows the amount of influence that an architect can have over the perception of such an identity.

A more contemporary example of masterful contextual response is Renzo Piano’s addition to the Morgan Library in New York, built in 2006. The site initially featured three historic buildings, and Piano’s challenge was to bring them together with a single architectural intervention. He took his design cue from the traditional Italian concept of the piazza, creating public space by framing it through its surroundings. Piano thus inserted volumes of glass between the existing masonry buildings in order to introduce light, and provide shelter in the interstitial space between the old masses. The largest of these spaces is dubbed by Piano as an “interior courtyard.” It features a glass roof, and it is oriented to provide views to the neighboring McKim Building and views to neighboring pre-war apartment buildings. Additionally, the courtyard features some plant life in order to provide a more piazza-like feeling.

This architectural intervention is not only aesthetically responsive to its setting, but sincerely revealing as well by method of construction. The large interior courtyard mass also provides a new ground-level entry to the museum, as well as a reading room, and additional gallery space as well. It is not limited to a gathering place for people, but rather connects the spaces around it as well. The other two main glass interventions also serve a similar purpose. They create office space, gallery space, and service areas, but they also connect the existing programatic functions of the old buildings. Aesthetically and functionally, Piano’s intervention serves to highlight the historic importance of the existing buildings, by adding increased functionality, and adding to the architectural narrative of the existing spaces by the building of new spaces.

These works are unique because they invoke attention and awareness to their current condition and history. They can narrate their story through human experience, while building a relationship with the inhabitants. In order to better capture the nature of this experience, one needs to look no farther than the early architectural writing of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. He describes this state as:

A sense of emotional familiarization arises (faint divining); an inexplicable temporal awareness of the past, a past region in space and time, and a past community. The rapport between spectator and building reaches a

37 Samia Rab, “Carlo Scarpa’s Re-Design of Castelvecchio in Verona, Italy.”
unification.\textsuperscript{39}

An excerpt from Goethe’s description of the cathedral in question sheds more light on his novel method of representation:

If an important ruin has something impressive about it, we sense, we see in it the conflict between an admirable work of man and time, still, mighty and wholly inconsiderate: here we are confronted with something at once incomplete and gigantic, whose very incompleteness reminds us of the inadequacy of man, the moment he undertakes something that is too big for him.\textsuperscript{40}

Regarding this passage, Professor Bernstein also writes that “it is not difficult to trace here a suggestion of the Kantian sublime, according to which an experience that exceeds the faculty of sense perception is then mastered by a representation.”\textsuperscript{41}

On the surface, Goethe’s literary explorations of the Strasbourg Cathedral were no more than a series of proverbial promotions and praise for German architecture. Nonetheless, Goethe’s impact comes from his methodology, rather than his intended result. Goethe’s involvement of time and experience within the discussion of “quantifying” or otherwise analyzing architecture set a precedent in literature and architecture which helped set the foundation for a contemporary understanding of “regional” architecture and an awareness of a “collective past.” This can serve as a foundation for developing a contemporary design within a similar setting and context. In regards to German architecture, he writes: “German architecture must thus embrace something great and fundamentally felt, something considered

\textsuperscript{38} Susan Bernstein, \textit{Goethe’s Architectonic Bildung and Buildings in Classical Weimar} (Maryland: John Hopkins University Press 1999), 16.

\textsuperscript{39} Bernstein, “Goethe’s Architectonic Bildung and Buildings in Classical Weimar,” 15.

\textsuperscript{40} John Gage, \textit{Goethe on Art} (Berkeley: University of California Press 1980), 121.

\textsuperscript{41} Bernstein, “Goethe’s Architectonic Bildung and Buildings in Classical Weimar,” 15.
and developed, and it must both conceal and manifest proportions whose effect is irresistible.” In order to embrace something “fundamentally felt” however, one must first root themselves within that context in order to have a frame of reference through experience. Within architecture, this can be understood as developing a relationship with the site in question, its histories and meanings, and its forms and spaces.

42 John Gage, Goethe on Art, 118.
The proposed site for this project is Odeonsplatz in Munich, Germany. Munich, and the greater region of Bavaria are home to the traditionally “conservative”. An emphasis on culture, religion, and tradition dominate everyday life and create a challenging atmosphere for creating contemporary intervention in the form of design. Architecturally, much of the city is preserved as it once was; highlighting the old, and intervening with a modern touch only when appropriate. This approach leaves little room for criticism, as Munich has quickly evolved into the financial capital of Germany. A thriving tourist industry, coupled with a thriving modern workforce has elevated the city to the level of regard it currently has. But there still remains some room for criticism. It is not without criticism, and self-reflection that Munich has been able to elevate itself to this capacity.

From an architectural point of view, there is ample opportunity in the city for a relevant intervention in the form of merging the old and the new into something more than the sum of the parts. Nonetheless, it is visible that every piece of the city is either ultra-modern, or ultra-archaic, with little room for interpretation or cohabitation in-between the two. This strategy preserves the traditional identity of the urban form, however it does not attempt to integrate and engage in critical dialogue with it. Although there is a clear appreciation for the aesthetic language/form of the past, it is not applied to the modern growth that the city is subject to. Over time, this approach may turn into a type of fetishization of the once appreciated historic urban form. As the modern city grows around the old one, the historic context may evolve into being simply just another tourist destination, or postcard photo-opportunity.

Within this greater reality of the urban form, lies the thesis site: Odeonsplatz. Primarily a public square, it was developed in the early 19th century by Leo von Klenze. It is surrounded by several notable buildings: the Theatine Church, the Munich Rezidenz, the Feldherrnhalle, and the Hofgarten. These buildings
are essential to Bavarian culture, and if understood properly, have the potential to frame the scope of design thought for the proposed project. The Felderrnhalle was completed in 1844, serving as a monument to the honors of the Bavarian army. Unfortunately, it was also used by the Nazi party for large military events; most notoriously, for the swearing in of SS officers. Today, the Felderrnhalle serves a much less ominous purpose; it is used as a platform for holding medium-sized public events when it is not serving its daily role as a tourist attraction. On the West side of the Felderrnhalle is the Theatine Church, built in 1690 by Ferdinand Maria as a celebration of the birth of an heir to the Bavarian crown. Built in the high baroque style, this church survived for several centuries before being partially destroyed in World War II. It was later restored to the form which exists today.  

To the East of the Felderrnhalle, lies the Munich Residenz. The history of the Residenz begins in 1413, when it was the royal palace for the Bavarian monarchs of the House of Wittelsbach. Construction was so long, that the building encompasses a wide variety of architectural styles ranging from renaissance to high baroque. Today it serves as a museum of the Bavarian monarchs, housing artifacts and pieces of art acquired from their reign. On the North side of the Residenz, lies the Hofgarten, completed in 1617 by Maximilian I. In the center of the garden lies a pavilion dedicated to the goddess Diana, and modern additions include a memorial to members of the White Roses, executed for their non violent protest of Hitler’s regime. Today, the garden is open to the public, housing several cafes and pavilions for the enjoyment of the public.

The site is diverse both in its architectural and intellectual presence, and as such requires careful consideration prior to designing and building an intervention. Since the physical reality of the site provides the most common point of relation, it should be addressed first. What is now known as Briener Straße on the North boundary of the site was once the northernmost border of Munich, marked with a large stone gate known as the Schwabing Gate (Schwabinger Tor). The gate was ultimately removed when the square was completed to today’s level of development at the behest of King Ludwig I of Bavaria in 1816. Ludwig I commissioned Leo von Klenze to lay out the entirety of the public square, and determine the layout of Ludwigstraße as well. As with most of von Klenze’s work, neoclassicism and Italian inspiration dominated the work, and set the tone for a similar development of the surrounding spaces as well. The design of Odeonsplatz was modeled after the Palazzo Farnese in Rome, which would also later set the tone for the inspiration of the Feldherrnhalle’s design in 1840 from the Loggia dei Lanzi in Florence. Oddly however, the Feldherrnhalle was not commissioned from Leo von Klenze, but rather his rival, Friedrich Ludwig von Sckell.

Nonetheless, the development of Odeonsplatz continued in the direction of Leo von Klenze’s vision, which was to create a semi-enclosed public square. By 1890 the square had taken its final built form. Although at this point the physical development of the public spaces was nearly completed, the development of the private remnants of the monarchy was still in progress.

The Munich Residenz began its development in 1385 as a result of a failed uprising against Stephen III. It was first conceived of as a bastion to protect against rebels, and was thus situated just within the northernmost city walls. The development continued under Albert V, who built banqueting halls, an art chamber, and the Antiquarium. Development was scattered throughout the following years, following the whims of the various

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45 “850 Years of Urban Development in Munich.”
Site Through Time: Understanding the relationships and connections between these spaces over the course of time is crucial in establishing a point of reference for understanding the “identity” of the site, and how to represent it with new architecture. This drawing links events, people, and spaces associated with the history of the site, as classified into volumes and public spaces.
ruling monarchs. Most of today’s spatial development of the Residenz was completed under Ludwig I and his heirs, who used Leo von Klenze as their designer of choice.

Throughout this development of the Residenz, several courtyards in a variety of sizes were formed in between the volumes. The Grotto Courtyard (Grottenhof) was built under William V, by Friedrich Sustris in the middle of the 16th century. Today, it is frequently used for small concerts and recitals, specifically by the Munich Symphony Orchestra. This is the smallest of the courtyards, and was quickly followed by the construction of the Fountain Courtyard (Brunnenhof) and the Emperor’s Courtyard (Kaiserhof). Although historically they were used as part of ceremonies and processions of the monarchy, today they house a variety of seasonal installations and several cafes, tourist hubs, and other small points of public interest. The most notable of these “courtyard” spaces, within the Residenz however, is the Hofgarten. It was originally completed by Maximilian I in 1617, with the addition of a gate to Odeonsplatz completed in 1816, and designed by Leo von Klenze. Initially, the garden was a private point of leisure for the monarchy and their procession of nobles, but with the fall of the monarchy, the garden was opened to the public.46

As with much of this site, the Hofgarten was almost completely destroyed during World War II. During the postwar period, Odeonsplatz and the buildings which frame it were rebuilt and renovated with preservation as the main goal. During this time, the underground train lines were also constructed, including a crucial stop at the Northern side of Odeonsplatz. This period of reconstruction provided an opportunity for the public to reclaim the site, and make changes to their relationship with it by making physical changes on the site.

Initially following the war, Odeonsplatz was targeted by graffiti and unorganized protests as a means for public expression, following a lengthy period of suppression. This public idea continued to grow, especially aided by the social fervor of the 60s and 70s, and the site saw an increase in the amount of public expression during this time including anti-war protests, teacher strikes, and other forms of peaceful demonstration. Today, this tradition continues as the public continues to use the square as a platform from which to speak. Fund-raisers, political rallies, pop-up events, and protests are only some of the many diverse programs which find a home within the site. Occurring within such a historically rich site, these modern functions find a somewhat comfortable home in the midst of a rapidly modernizing urban landscape.

In some ways Bavaria is still intellectually in a “post-war” period. This manifests itself socially, and artistically on a variety of scales. Architecturally, there is a powerful and visible reaction to the design ethic of the Third Reich. Post-war works such as Frei Otto’s Olympiapark, the Bayerische Staatskanzlei renovation, and Braunfels’ Pinakothek der Moderne suggest a strong reaction against a rigid typology, and a consensus around the need for a more democratic architectural typology.

The Bayerische Staatskanzlei is perhaps the most clear illustration of this concept. Today, a modern glass panel facade replaces the old neo-classical stone which was destroyed at the end of WWII. The glass intervention maintains the rhythm and geometry of the old language, yet it adds a touch of modern transparency, a direct contrast and reaction to the previous oppressive political climate. This architectural move is similar to the reconstruction of the Reichstag in Berlin by Foster and Partners - translating the idea of modern transparency within architecture through a sub-conscious intellectual connection with materiality.

Given these works as a cultural and regional precedent, one can begin to imagine a similar theory being
Site Qualities: Physical and metaphysical qualities of a place.
applied to Odeonsplatz. The site is already publicly inclusive, and yet it has the potential for a larger bridge in experience. In some cases, program is even unintentionally used to exclude. The square serves as a major point of interest for tourists, and as a major point of thoroughfare for the local residents as well. Programmed events by either group can easily make the space inaccessible for the other simply due to the lack of infrastructure. A large concert may completely bottle-neck pedestrian thoroughfare, just as a fund-raiser could render the space acoustically inhospitable for neighboring shops and restaurants. The site also has a long history of exclusion, and this requires a critical reaction, especially in the face of contemporary issues such as globalization, and cultural identity during mass human migration and displacement.

At its earliest conception as an urban space, Odeonsplatz was just inside the northernmost gated walls of the city; all travelers coming from the North would enter through the old Schwabinger Tor, and be welcomed into the city by the impression of Odeonsplatz. Being at the very South end of Bavaria, Munich is so positioned that any travelers coming from the North, would most likely be Bavarians venturing South, whereas other points of entry would more often connotate international visitors. It is then only to the Bavarian travelers that the arms of Odeonsplatz would open up in a welcoming embrace, having traveled South through their land with alpine ambition. Whether intended or not, this spatial layout is historically critical to the development of the site, and the later forms of spatial exclusion.

The completion of the square to its fullest modern aesthetic was unfortunately only a couple of decades prior to the rise of the Third Reich. Odeonsplatz was notoriously the site of Hitler’s failed Bier Hall Putsch, and would later be turned into a “sacred Nazi site” commemorating the Nazi “martyrs” which were killed by Bavarian State Police during the Putsch. A memorial was thus commissioned for the East side of the Feldherrnhalle, and residents were required to salute it as they walked by. This greatly altered the public perception of the space, and many locals began avoiding the area as they would be harassed by the SS troops standing guard at the site. Eventually, most avoided the monument altogether by going through the Viscardigasse behind the Feldherrnhalle, which eventually received the nickname Drückeberger-Gassl (shirker’s alley).

With the fall of the Nazi regime and the removal of monuments associated with it, the reclamation of sites and spaces like Odeonsplatz could begin. Shortly after the war, the Feldherrnhalle became the visual representation of this reclamation. The first example of this was in 1945, when a large message appeared on the front of the monument reading: “Dachau - Velden - Buchenwald - ich schäme mich, dass ich ein Deutscher bin” (Dachau - Velden - Buchenwald - I am ashamed to be a German). This message was followed only a couple of days later with a similar message reading “Goethe, Diesel, Haydn, Rob. Koch. Ich bin stolz, Deutscher zu sein.” (I am proud to be a German). The space continued to evolve through physicality and public perception as a platform of public expression throughout the years following the fall of the Third Reich. This space is full of architectural potential for expansion in order to meet its modern requirements. The site is rich in history and experience, which makes it a prime location to receive a work of architecture which embraces and illuminates its surroundings.

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47 DK Eyewitness Travel, Munich & the Bavarian Alps (Great Britain: Dorling Kindersley Limited 2012), 72.
The architectural intervention must be rooted in the contemporary requirements of the site which could enhance modern experience. In order to enhance the experience of these conditions, first the “problems” need to be outlined, and understood within the greater context of the site.

Although the site and its uses have evolved and changed over time, the physicality of the site has remain largely unchanged. This means that a lot of modern functions occurring there are simply not well equipped to occur comfortably. Concerts, speeches, and pop-up events all occur regularly within the space, yet space is not provided for the utilities they require such as power, waste storage, and protection from the elements. Additionally, during these types of events, there are issues of circulation around the site, since so much space must be devoted to fitting in the necessary equipment and utilities. This is further exaggerated by the precarious placement of the entrances to the subway. The two entrances South of Briener Str. do not do much more than clog circulation by way of the bicycles parked in and around them. A relocation of these subway entrances could provide more efficient circulation around the site both above ground and below.

In addition to the issues with the public space, there are also problems with the circulation within the buildings which make up the public square. The Residenz Museum utilizes the concept of a circular loop as a method of circulation, yet it merges the exit and entrance into one space. This creates issues of intersecting traffic, as well as taking away from the power and impact that a celebrated entrance could have. In addition to this, the Feldherrnhalle lacks contemporary utility besides its use as a platform or concert venue. By creating a dialogue between it and the Residenz, there is an opportunity to reinvent the experience and perception of both spaces. The program of the proposed work of architecture is a bridge which links the Feldherrnhalle and the Residenz and acts as a new point of entry for the
museum - linking the underground approach, as well as the familiar approach through Odeonsplatz. This bridge will also serve as a way to bring power to the Feldherrnhalle for events, concerts, and other social activities. On the lowest level, a loading dock will be created to receive all necessary equipment before events, and to efficiently retrieve it for storage when it is no longer in use.

The exterior expression of the architectural intervention will focus on illuminating and reflecting its surroundings. As a facade, a paneled dual-layer glass facade will be utilized to diffuse light and reflect views of its surrounding buildings from different perspectives and angles. At night, the light source from the interior will be evenly diffused, and spread to the surfaces around it; highlighting the surroundings through the expression of light. The joint between the new architecture and the existing buildings will be used as an opportunity to highlight and emphasize the appropriation of regional building traditions and techniques. A recessed reveal will be used to further exaggerate this relationship between new and old, on the smallest architectural scale.

The language of the interior spatial progression will be dictated by the optimization of pedestrian traffic into the museum. Bringing visitors through the Feldherrnhalle via stairs or elevator will be used to create a dialogue between the two spaces, and invoke a historical awareness within the individual through the altered experience. The material expression of the interior will be a modern negotiation between the materials of the two existing buildings. Structure and construction will be handled in a modern fashion, however the material dialogue with the past will be addressed within the smaller scale of the architectural detail.

The new point of entry for the Residenz will be the Theatiner corridor. This part of the building was destroyed and rebuilt after WWII, and is therefore not considered as “protected”. A raised flooring system will be used to provide ample space for the bridging of utilities between the two existing buildings, and allow for flexibility in the future. Concrete floor tiles will be used to create a conscious dialogue between the curated tiling of the Residenz and the austere stone flooring of the Feldherrnhalle. Underneath this flooring system, a correlated concrete slab with steel beams will support the above-ground spaces.

Alterations will also be made to the greater scope of Odeonsplatz in order to reinvent the experience of the site. At the Feldherrnhalle, the two statues to either side of the main monument will be removed, allowing a greater celebration of the main monument and more room for contemporary activity. The statues of Count von Tilly and Marshall Wrede do not serve the purpose of the monument. They commemorate violence and the individual history of the statues’ patrons, rather than promote a memory of those who perished during the course of human conflict. By contrast, the main monument calls a focus and a memory to the Franco-Prussian war in a more appropriate context.

Additionally, the underground circulation of the site will be reinvented. Rather than having four above-ground entrances to the subway around Briener Str., a new connection will be created to merge with the proposed architectural intervention and bring dedicated museum visitors through a separate path through the underground infrastructure.

The combination of these architectural moves will ultimately serve to put the site into a new context, and perspective. By embracing the principles of inclusion and the modern idea of public space, this intervention will have the opportunity to reflect the ever-developing concept of regional identity, and its manifestation in architecture.
Day and Night: The exterior facade of the proposed design reflects the existing context during the day, and illuminates it during the night - bringing the space and its qualities to the foreground through different techniques.


DK Eyewitness Travel, Munich & the Bavarian Alps (Great Britain: Dorling Kindersley Limited 2012).


