



Figure 2. Street façade Pembroke Street.

without considering the social and visual significance of its configuration and how this affects the relation between public and private space and the impact of its retention on wider social and planning aspects.

Reference

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Understanding place in Serbia

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This Viewpoint follows two previous contributions to *Urban Morphology*. The first raised a central research topic in urban morphology – the problem of understanding the significance, character and identity of 'place'. This is a field of enquiry that in many ways characterizes the position of urban morphology at the overlap of the various disciplines involved in space creation and management (Samuels, 2010). In the UK it was noted that there is a loose relationship between the principles of historical area protection proposed by English Heritage, a statutory agency, and planning practice. Soon after, Bienstman (2011)

drew attention to the lack of practical guidance for integrating the various disciplines in the approach of the State Service for Cultural Heritage in the Netherlands.

With a very different history from these two northern European countries, Serbia's cultural heritage exhibits layers of the various civilizations that have inhabited the Balkan peninsula from ancient to modern times – Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman to the modern European, including the Socialist era. Cultural heritage protection is covered by a hierarchy of linked organizations with, at the top, the National Institute for the Protection

of Cultural Monuments, under the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia. Below this are the networks of provincial, regional, city and municipal institutes whose work is regulated by national laws. The Law on Planning and Construction obliges heritage protection institutions to participate in the planning process by issuing documents on measures of protection where the areas being planned contain historical and cultural assets. These must be presented as part of the textual and graphic contents of plans.

A problem arises from the fact that these documents usually do not go further than collecting data on, and descriptions of, individual entities. According to the Cultural Property Law, the National Institute is responsible for compiling the Central Register of immovable cultural properties in four categories: cultural monuments, spatial cultural-historical units, archaeological sites and landmarks, each classified according to the prescribed criteria as being of great or exceptional importance. Only registered entities are considered as the subject of protection, with no consideration given to the unprotected areas that form their context. Of 2536 immovable cultural properties, only 78 are spatial cultural-historical units (Republički zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture Srbije, 2017). Vernacular or 'ordinary' architecture and specific elements of urban structure at the different resolutions of scale (including street systems, public spaces, groups of buildings, architectural details, and materials), which contribute to the character, identity and authenticity of urban spaces, are not protected.

As demonstrated in the UK and the Netherlands, there is a lack of practical guidance regarding the investigation and evaluation of historical places that could be incorporated into the planning and design processes, especially with respect to regeneration projects. There is a need to relate heritage protection documents (mainly produced by experts in architectural conservation and the history of art) to urban planning and design (the responsibility of architects and planners) and to adjust protection measures to the specificity of each location.

These problems have been recognized by professionals and researchers who are promoting the extension of the scope of protection of individual architectural monuments and historic buildings on

a wider scale. This is being done through publications – for example the journal *Nasleđe* (Heritage) of the Belgrade City Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments – and through conferences that have provided platforms for interdisciplinary discussion. Here the potential of urban morphology as a comprehensive theory has been recognized (Niković, 2017). Also noteworthy are the programmes and projects managed by the Council of Europe for the rehabilitation of the architectural and archaeological heritage of South-East Europe, which includes Serbia (Council of Europe, 2014). Their main aim is to establish better methods and techniques for integrating conservation into the planning process, with a wider definition of cultural heritage to include urban and rural vernacular architecture and industrial heritage. Special emphasis is given to improving the legal and administrative mechanisms responsible for managing protection where the ratification of so far unadopted international conventions will have an important role when they are incorporated into the Serbian planning system (Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia, 2008).

References

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