Site morphology as a point of departure for placemaking

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ABSTRACT

The discussion on place and placemaking, which commenced in the post-war period as reaction to the crisis of the public space, has recently revived, however, in a new social context. Focused on providing urban spaces that have the potential to reconcile the community and the individual, the debate on place currently has a particular interest in the politics of city management, including policies that introduce various activities as well as, support education. Other relevant studies concentrate on analyzing the morphology of urban spaces which are the scene of human interaction. The aim of this paper is to add a point to this debate, accentuating the role of architectural design intended as a process, in which making decision resorts to a set of given conditions. Among others, a range of site-related features or constraints can influence the design process. Proceeding to examine selected renowned works of contemporary architects, the paper aims to identify and discuss the design methods relevant to the site morphology and, at the same time, aimed at anchoring the new architecture in the existing context. The conscious application of these methods can also enrich architectural design.

Keywords: Place, placemaking, role of architectural design, site morphology.

INTRODUCTION

The multitude of contemporary architectural trends, which often remain in contradiction one to another, might conceal the fact that architects cannot escape from the social responsibility inherent to their profession. Not only do they define the quality of space we live in, but also provide a reflection of the society within their designs for public spaces.

Furthermore, the built environment that architects creates influence people’s awareness of community and of themselves as well. For this reason, it can be said that the architects have power to “situate a person socially and personally” (Golhhagen, 2001: 207), which constitutes one among key principles of placemaking. Being an art of creating unique places that attract people by offering them a feeling of belonging to the society can be defined as “spaces that you can remember and that you can care about and make a part of your life” (Lyndon and Moore, 1994:xii); placemaking was a response to the crisis of civic architecture in the postwar period. The will to restore the social significance of public space pushed some architects to search for the new monumentality. A question was raised whether an architectural monument could express aspirations of the society and whether it could strengthen the sense of its identity. The importance that a group of postwar architects attributed to the monument was accompanied by the notion of landmark. Often assigned to an institution, the role of an urban landmark inspired the search for the new monumentality. Simultaneously, the debate on the place to identify was raised. Already in the 1950s, a couple of British architects, Alison and Peter Smithsons, aimed at the restitution of the place, which they found essential so as to realize “the task of our [their] generation”, which was to “re-identify man with his house / community / city” (Smithson and Smithson, 1955). As remarked by Sarah Ksiazeck, the interest in the monument, understood as an urban and a social landmark, was
accompanied by the emergence of two aesthetic models: the new humanism and regionalism (Ksiazek, 1993: 420), while the first had recourse to the language of the Italian Renaissance, in which a potential to restore the architecture’s institutional value was identified and the other sought inspiration in the specificity of the region.

**Notion of the place and critical regionalism**

Some architects, like for example Louis I. Kahn or Mario Botta, developed throughout their professional career the design methods that made linking the two approaches possible. Frequently quoted for his interest in the classical language, inherited from his Beaux-Arts education, Louis I. Kahn did equally draw inspiration from the particular character of the location (McCarter R., 2005). Basing his vocabulary on the classical principles of composition, the architect opened up to the local influences that would enrich his method and link his works with their context. By means of long and refined study, he managed to integrate great architectural types into the contemporary landscape. Rooted in the epoch marked by a search for new monumentality, the architecture of Kahn is backed by both new humanism and regionalism. Resulting from the latter and close to Kahn’s approach was the trend of critical regionalism, advocated by Kenneth Frampton, Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre. Aiming to combine the contribution of the modern movement with local heritage, this tendency seeks to derive inspiration from the site’s characteristic features, including its climate and light as well as, cultural and built heritage. At the same time, however, it remains contrary to imitating traditional forms of vernacular architecture. Focused on achieving “a self-conscious synthesis between universal civilization and world culture” (Frampton, 1998: 25), critical regionalism considered this balance as the groundwork for conceiving identifiable places, defined by Kenneth Frampton as place-forms. Opposed to the infinite development of indifferent urban structure, which is associated with the concept of megalopolis, the place constitutes both urban as well as, social landmark. The role that collective memory plays within the concept of the place is underlined by Aldo Rossi, according to whom a place (locus) is defined not only by its space-time, but equally “by its topographic dimension and form, by the fact of being the place of human history, both old and new, by its memory” (Rossi, 2001: 145). Nourished by the experience of some postmodern architects, critical regionalism develops the notion of the place. Assuming integration of architecture with its environment, the concept gains an important human element that is collective memory (Norberg-Schulz Ch., 1997). Defined as spaces that are inscribed in the consciousness of their habitants, places constituted a response of some postwar architects addressed to the contemporary crisis of social identity and to the developing mass culture. The question of the place is still evoked at the moment as the globalization continues to challenge the architects and inspires the quest for balance between modernity and local identity (Eklemery, 2009).

Providing spaces of appropriate quality that would meet the users’ needs and ambitions and could eventually be adopted by the society as the locus of its history requires implementation of certain analytic tools and design methods. They can be summarized under the term of placemaking, which describes the creation of unique places, capable to attract individuals by offering them a feeling of belonging to the society. Rediscovering these tools and methods can be extremely useful when “we are good at putting up buildings but bad at making places” (Hunt, 2001). As admitted by Lyndon and Moore (1994: xi) “much of what is built now is too tepid to be remembered”. Facing the difficult task to succeed in placemaking, the question of what design methods arise and features can potentially “upgrade” a public space in order for it to be considered by its users as a place that makes part of their lives, a place to be remembered and cared for. This important question encourages one to study the works of those contemporary architects who were interested in the human dimension of public spaces, for example Louis I. Kahn or Mario Botta. The choice to study their works so as to examine their individual placemaking methods is also underpinned by their didactic impact as professors and shall bring some practical guidelines, adding missing details to the present discussion on the place.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The works of architecture and urban design selected for the study were analyzed from two points of view. Firstly, the characteristic features of the site, including both its geographic elements and the history of its urban development examined so as to give better understanding of the project’s background. Secondly, the project itself was carefully analyzed with regards to the decision-making process at its essential stages. By linking certain decisions made by the architects with diverse factors that have forced or influenced them, we can identify a set of regular juxtapositions that we can call the elements or tools of the architect’s design method. Observing their application in various projects and extending the research onto the works of other contemporary architects who are associated with critical regionalism provides an opportunity to recognize some general principles that are important both to the placemaking as well as, to the trend of critical regionalism.

**TOOLS OF PLACEMAKING**

The placemaking design principles identified in the effect of analysis can be grouped accordingly to their nature into the
following categories: topography, landscape, latitude, climate, urban form and local heritage. Resulting directly from the definition of the place, the presented range of categories is meant to cover its various dimensions. If the goal of the architect is to create unique places that reflect ambitions of the society and its human values, the success relies on harmonious proportions of the place various components. Achieving such a balanced design involves special methodical approach, composed of individual operational tools that the architects have developed in the frame of their professional career. Among others, a group of design tools aiming to transform certain elements related to the site's morphology into architectural concepts was identified as particularly prominent. Their application is exemplified and discussed in the three following aspects.

Site's topographic dimension: The question of scale

The mastery of placemaking does often coincide with a will to take possession of what the site has best to offer when it comes to its topography and landscape. In order to create unique places the architect seeks to harmonize the architecture he conceives with its environmental scene, taking under consideration the quality of natural light. To achieve intended effect, he studies the relationship between the building and the site not only by means of drawing, but also by using models. For the Salk Institute in a Jolla, for example, Louis I. Kahn ordered models at different scales, one of which represented the entire site with the cliffs facing the Pacific Ocean, allowing the architect to study the landscape quality of the whole project. Far away from the site, in his Philadelphia studio, this model makes sense of some historic references evoked by the project. For example, its reference to the Acropolis proves to be more than an inspiration, as it also supposes the unity of buildings with their location - a relation transformed by Kahn into a concept.

In La Jolla, the abundant site initially posed a problem to the architect. The difficult task to manage such an immense plot, furthermore complicated by its unusual morphology, has marked the design's first stage which consisted of a few randomly placed buildings. Among them, the group of laboratories is actually limited to a "copy and paste" of the architect's precedent design made for the Richards-Goddard complex in Philadelphia. Moreover, the buildings initially proposed by the architect were exaggerated in relation to the real functional space requirements. Most probably, this deformation of scale resulted from a misinterpretation of the plot's size. Another consequence was placing the Meeting House near the cliff and far away from laboratories, which would not be convenient and, moreover, was most probably disapproved by the local authorities because of protection of the endemic Torrey pine species. Nevertheless, the progressing comprehension of the site and its great scale soon allowed Kahn to produce new version of the project, based on a more appropriate site plan. Since then, all building groups proposed by the architect have been allocated closer to each other and concentrated around the canyon which carves through the site's center (Figure 1). Also, the surface of each among the three groups of buildings has been significantly reduced and their architectural forms adjusted so as to fit the terrain and make the most of it. By means of decreasing the project's scale, Kahn gained knowledge about the site's tectonics and identified its most outstanding features: the cliff, canyon and the plateau. These three significant elements inspired the architect to crystallize a concept of three separate functional identities composing the Salk Institute.

The laboratories, the only realized fragment of the design, were allocated to the plateau so as to make use of a relatively flat portion of land with a moderate height difference which facilitated the development and implementation of a large area, horizontally extended structure. The second identity resulted from combination of the site's privileged viewpoint overlooking the cliffs high above the Pacific coast with the representative function of the Meeting House. Finally, the third unity consisted of arranging the Institute's residential dwellings along the canyon's edge. Being a merger between architecture and terrain's topographic features, the three unique identities of Salk Institute can be defined as place-forms, making reference to the spatial archetypes of the monastery (laboratories), of the Acropolis (the Meeting House) and the Pompeian village (housing). Derived from the history of humankind, the spatial archetypes underlie the collective memory and respond to various subconscious concepts. Therein lies the source of their appeal to people, influencing them to perceive the visited places as being unique, worth remembering and being part of their lives. Despite the decreasing scale of the project's subsequent versions, Kahn seeks to maintain the essential concept based on the three identities, which can be summarized as the allocation of terrain's particular features to the specific architectural objects.

The principle of testing the plot's scale is equally valid for the projects situated within urban centers. However, because of the nature of their location, the architect has less freedom when it comes to exercising this principle, the limits of the study being more restricted and the choice of situation being more limited. In urban areas, the architect based his comprehension of the site and its scale on a study of existing buildings and spaces. Through an extensive documentation, including models of the surrounding architecture, Kahn attentively studies the relationship of his projects to the existing environmental setting. By adequacy to its scale and character, the architect defines the design's first principles, its orientation, volume and accessibility. In the case of the Kimbell Art Museum, for example, the architect first expresses his understanding of the contextual frame by adjusting the height and proportions of the
museum's unit to the scale of surrounding buildings. The consecutive design stages of Kimbell Art Museum revealed the architect's concern about identifying the site's potential to be appropriated by the project. Taking advantage of the situation where the investor could not predefine space requirements due to anticipated growth of the museum's collection, Kahn started with a very global vision of the project, filling the site nearly entirely. Of a conceptual quality, the project's first version expresses Kahn's first comprehension of the location and corresponds to identification of its essential features. Two aspects were clearly in the interest of Kahn: the Will Rogers East Street, which was previously decided to be removed and the project's relation to the existing Amon Carter Museum, designed by Phillip Johnson a decade before. Starting from the project first phase till its realization, any drawing of the site's plan shows a trace of the erased street as well as, its preserved rows of trees (Figure 2). The architect made every effort to maintain the existing trees and initially and while the museum's first plan (Square Plan) was covering a great portion of the plot, he placed its numerous internal courtyards in such a way that most of large trees would be saved. Later, when the building’s surface was limited to an “H” shaped footprint (H-Plan), its middle footbridge was narrowed so as not to cause felling. Owing to the following surface reductions, the museum's plan was conformed to a rectangular shape (Rectangle Plan) and finally, to its definitive form of a “C” (C-Plan) (Ronner H., Jhaveri Sh., 1987). The architect's final proposal consisted of moving the building away from the former Will Rogers East Street and from the rows of trees that formerly lined it. In the effect, the western part of the plot retains its original character of a park. The same move has helped Kahn to resolve the problem of maintaining the pedestrian passage throughout the site, which he previously tried to ensure by means of courtyards and passages below the museum's main level. Similarly to the case of the Salk Institute, the first design of Kimbell Art Museum was greatly exaggerated in terms of its surface. During the project's development, the museum’s scale adjusts to its functional requirements, to the budget as well as, to the scale of local architecture. And, in the end, it occupies less than a half of the first proposal’s area.

In summary, it can be observed that the comprehension of the site's scale is an essential process present in any of Kahn’s designs. The architect uses this method to appropriate most of the site's potential, which became one of foundations of his individual approach to placemaking. Identification of the site's privileged features serves the architect as a base to develop the conceptual vision of a project. From the beginning, the architectural idea is nourished by the designer's understanding of the terrain and it evolves in parallel with the study of location. Among the instruments of the study hand sketches and models were preferred by Kahn who collected an extensive

**Figure 1**: Louis I. Kahn, Salk Institute in La Jolla. Appropriation of the site's scale on the design stage.
The appropriation of the site's scale was, for Kahn, his first tool of placemaking. Through a scrupulous study of the area, including numerous drawings and models, the architect seeks to comprehend the site's scale and limits as well as to identify its privileged locations. He then transforms them into architectural concepts. It can also be said that the architect attributes them with the meaning of the architectural object to be situated within. In the eyes of Kahn, the understanding of the site adds a new dimension to
any architecture project.

**Site's topographic form: Using the slope**

The topographic way of approaching architectural design has its important aspect in using the slope so as to contribute to the project's uniqueness. When it comes to Kahn, he does not hesitate to draw inspiration from the site's topographic form to decide about the building's section. In any of his projects, Kahn takes care to define its reference level in a way that would ensure optimal use of the plot and the building itself. At the same time, defining the building's section has a strong impact on the spatial distribution within the floor plan. When available, Kahn uses the slope to integrate his architecture within the land, to draw most benefits from the location and, at the same time, to make the project express its character. For example, this was precisely to express the slope that the architect selected to place the Erdman Hall in Bryn Mawr exactly on the crease. Simultaneously, he used the natural slope to revise the perception of the building's scale.

In this project, the site's topographic form was one among essential issues of its implementation. While the inclination demanded much attention from the architect, it also contributed to the design by facilitating distinction between its representative entrance from the service access. Pedestrian pathway leads to the residence throughout the campus grounds and reaches its main entry hall located on the middle floor. One level below the architect provided a separate access to the building's technical facilities and for services (Figure 3). The two access levels are connected by a

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*Figure 3: Louis I. Kahn, Erdman Hall in Bryn Mawr. Location of the new residence compared to the axis of the campus.*
ramp and two exterior stairways, while the main entrance level was adjusted to the existing parking. The attention that Kahn addressed to elaborate the residence's cross section in its sloped plot, entailing extensive earthworks to provide a retaining wall all along the building's facade, proves his great interest to inscribe the building into the terrain.

Identically, to the Erdman Hall in Bryn Mawr, the cross section of Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth was also conceived to express and benefit from the plot's inclination (Figure 4). Inspired by the slight slope, Kahn determined the principles of museum's spatial hierarchy at the design's very early stage. Contrary to popular opinion, the museum was from the beginning intended as a two-storey building. According to the investor's suggestions, Kahn proposed one level for the gallery and another, inferior level to host services, equipments and, in the first version, a car park. Despite project's further modifications and surface reductions, this essential functional division was maintained till the design's final version and its implementation. The upper level contains privileged spaces, mostly exhibition galleries, while the lower floor consequently plays a servant role. Moreover, when the architect elaborated the museum's first plans, being aware of the site's inclination, he opted for two separate entrance levels, like he did in the case of Erdman Hall in Bryn Mawr. Such distinction allowed the architect to perfect the distribution of served and servant spaces. The upper representative gallery level is associated with the main pedestrian entrance, which faces Amon Carter Museum. Simultaneously, on the opposite side of the museum a secondary entrance, which Kahn named a "back door", links the servant lower level with a car park and a technical access. The choice of two separate entrances situated on the building's opposite sides, defines the sense of principal distribution, which is perpendicular to the axis of symmetry of the preexisting park and the Will Rogers Memorial Center. The museum's principal axis of distribution is also transverse to the building structure, which is composed of elongated vaulted unities. Their north-south orientation, which is same when compared to the stables of Will Rogers Center, has not been subject to any change during the design process and can be justified by the analysis of natural light, as it will be later explained.

A Swiss architect Mario Botta, who worked for Kahn for a period of time adopted a similar approach to design. His individual topographic way of thinking involves, however, a method of integrating architecture into its environmental setting by contradiction (Jodidio P., 1999, Mario Botta). While designing on inclined, natural sites, Botta opts for buildings that are "not layered into the contours of a given site, but rather built the site by declaring themselves as primary forms set against the topography and the sky" (Frampton, 1983: 157). A great example of this approach is represented by one of the architect early designs, that is, a single family house at Riva San Vitale in the region of Ticino, Switzerland, realized in years 1971 to 1973. Situated at the foot of San Giorgio mountain, above the Lake Lugano, the building sets a dialogue with its natural, mountainous environment by its elementary, cuboid shape, bringing to mind a defensive tower. Its footprint is very limited and its accessibility has two distinct aspects. While the building's lowest level can be accessed by car, its main pedestrian entrance is situated on the top floor, where a thin, metal truss bridge creates a physical link between the house and the mountain. As in the case of the two works by Louis I. Kahn earlier mentioned, the upper pedestrian access corresponds to the representative character of the concerned level. Starting from this area, the building's spatial hierarchy is defined in a vertical sense, with the services situated in the basement.

Mario Botta's method of "building the site" with elementary volumes inserted into a natural context was further developed in his project of two churches located in Swiss alpine valleys. The Church of St. John the Baptist in Mogno, designed in years 1986 to 1992 and built later in the 1990s, was inspired by the destruction of the local village, with its original historic church, by an avalanche. Following his intention to give voice to the multifaceted relationship between the nature and the work of human, the architect opted again for a contradiction of a simple, elementary shape.
of a beveled cylinder to the natural background. The architect calls this form "a bulwark for the village" (Botta, 2016), opposing itself to the mountain. He also decides to underline the building’s durability by the massiveness of the stone wall, contradicted to the lightness of the glazed roof. Inside, two immense buttresses tie upper and lower points of the building's cylindrical form. According to the architect, they highlight "the strength of resistance required in a building designed to cope with the brutal forces of nature" (Botta, 2016). Characteristic of Botta's works, the building’s gravity is underlined by the use of classic stone construction method, creating horizontal, two-color stripes across the facade.

Another approach to the site’s topographic form is represented by Álvaro Siza (Jodidio P., 1999, Álvaro Siza). In his works, the topographic way of thinking consists of fitting the geometrical design into the terrain, translating its contours into the broken lines of the building, the retaining walls and the pathways. Being an important element of any Siza's project, the broken line paths leading through the site do also play a significant role when it comes to assisting the users to fully experience the visited spaces. This is done by orientating their sight towards mindfully selected points, from where unexpected perspectives are opened. Framing a view; opening an axis towards selected object and unfolding a panorama are all methods of using the paths so as to contribute to the visitor's unique experience of the place. The succession of spaces and views does therefore contribute to the multidimensional vision of a place-form.

Viewing the landscape

The Chapel of St. Mary of the Angels, located on the peak of Monte Tamara in Switzerland, was designed by Mario Botta at the beginning of 1990s. Inspired by the idea of offering a viewing point over Lugano Prealps, the building stems from the slopes gradually. Starting on the natural slope and leading towards the chapel's roof, the passage way takes the form of a viaduct and offers two paths to follow. The first leads down to the church entrance, while the other stays outdoor, ending with a belvedere looking over the valley from the building's top. The chapel’s roof is stepped, climbing towards the belvedere, highlighting its importance within the design process. Situated beneath the viewing platform, the chapel's circular interior is divided into three naves, the central of which narrows in the direction of a small apse full of daylight falling from above. The chapel's periphery wall has two symmetric rows of window slits, giving a view over the valley. Designed with a special regard to emphasize the beauty of the landscape, the chapel embodies the architect's method of building the site with the use of primary geometric volumes. Gradually evolving from the mountainous site, building’s extended form refers to the concept of a bridge. Moreover, the use of stone as building material makes reference to the nature of its mountainous location. In the design of the chapel, the architect managed to combine his tested method of using the slope with a challenge to emphasize the panorama rather than the building itself within a single and coherent methodical approach.

Thirty years before Botta elaborated his design for the Chapel of St. Mary of the Angels, Kahn created his most iconic space dedicated to the contemplation of the landscape. At the Salk Institute in La Jolla, watching the scenery did not only influence the disposition of the openings, but also inspired the idea of the central plaza (Figure 5). In the eyes of the architect, the paved plaza plays the essential role in terms of appropriating the landscape, being a scene from which to contemplate the view over the coast and the ocean. This famous space, by which Kahn wishes to theaturalize the natural scenery, was designed with participation of Luis Barragán, a Mexican landscape architect. Invited by Kahn to share his ideas concerning the garden to be planned between the two laboratory buildings, Barragán surprisingly suggested to pave the plaza entirely so as to create "the fifth facade to the sky", while the view of the ocean to the west would be one of its "walks". This overall idea, which pleased Kahn, did not convince all future users and an alternative project was commissioned to an American landscape designer, Lawrence Halprin. His proposal consisted of densifying the eucalyptus grove and adding new plantings of orange trees, olives as well as, some grass. Defending the puristic vision of Barragán, Kahn agrees nevertheless to update the project with some of Halprin's ideas (Brownlee D., De Long D., 1991). To complete the space, the architect adds a watercourse that runs towards the ocean along the courtyard's axis of symmetry, connecting two fountains: the "silent" fountain at the entrance and the "noisy" fountain at the west end of the plaza.

It could be summarized that both discussed works of architecture were designed by their authors to theatricalize the landscape. However, if the sensitivity towards the natural context has delivered inspiration during the design process, the intention was to tie the project with its location. The interdependence between the terrain and architecture, where the terrain influences the architecture's design which, in turn, will modify the final perception of the first and contribute to the uniqueness of the place.

CONCLUSIONS

Presently, creating place-forms is still needed so as to support formation of the modern and responsible society, to

*Louis I. Kahn, Abstract of the Program for the Institute of Biology at Torrey Pines, La Jolla, San Diego, Box LK 27, Louis I. Kahn Collection, University of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Philadelphia: "From the presence of the uninterrupted sky, the sea and the horizon, the clear and dramatic configuration of weather beaten landscape of foliage, the buildings and their foliage must find their position in deference to Nature."
reconcile people to their city, to their homes and communities. For this and more reasons, urban designers and architects shall join their efforts to counter the placelessness of our cities and public areas. The principles of critical regionalism can potentially be a recourse so as to achieve the desired effect. According to them, new public spaces shall be realized with the use of modern technologies and contemporary architectural language, while anchoring a new project in its local context can be supported by the design methods based on the site analysis. As seen in the discussed examples, the topographic features of the site can deliver important inspiration in terms of architectural concept. At the same time, creating unique places needs to refer to people's collective memory, which can be supported by making use of the site's geographical characteristics as well as, its cultural heritage, including its various dimensions, for example, local history, urban form typology, architectural standards and typical building materials. The success of the described examples relies on their capacity to become place-forms. Being public space that attracts citizens by offering them a feeling of belonging to the society, such unique places make part of people's lives, what makes them worth remembering and being cared for. It is therefore particularly important to identify site's heritage and potential before commencing any design and development. Taking into account the indications originating from the site analysis and incorporating them into the design, however without exaggeration, balancing them with contemporary architectural and technological solutions, it is possible to create a unique place.

Drawing inspiration from the context does not only mean to adjust to the given conditions, but also provides an opportunity to derive most benefit. Various methods can be used to perceive the site's potential. Firstly, the terrain's privileged places can be identified and appropriated by the two important topographical ways of approaching the design, which are the scale appropriation and the thoughtful use of the site's inclination.

The site's morphology can equally constitute a point of departure to reflect on different ways of viewing the landscape, which are intended to enrich the experience of the place and involve a thoughtful design of the user's itinerary. Another method relies on making reference to the essential elements of the urban form, for example, to the notions of the alignment and the city block. And, in non-urbanized areas, the design's interaction with the natural landscape is an equivalent source of reflections to nourish the search for its adequacy with the contextual frame. Moreover, creating unique places entails an individual treatment of daylight supply so as to adjust it to the latitude.

Analogically, placemaking tries to respond to the local climate. Finally, the facade is an essential means to relate the
new building to its environment. Mainly, the assortment of finishing materials, but also detailing and opening proportions do shape the facade so as to make reference to the spatial characteristic of the surroundings. Developed by different architects associated with the critical regionalism, these and other methods of placemaking are committed to finding right balance between the site and architecture, the interdependence of a building and its location being fundamental to succeed in creating unique places. Derived from the character of its particular location, place-forms have the ability to be accepted by the local society, being for them more than buildings and not only identifiable public spaces, but also a kind of pictograms. Finally, a network of such unique places is a foundation of the city’s subconscious maps, personal to every individual. Leading from one important space to another, these maps constitute the basis on which to orientate within the city.

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