The Importance of Preserving Historical Sites to Maintain a Communities Identity
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Abstract
The relation of a community’s identity to an architectural structure is an influential setting for humanity’s cognitive processing. In communities architecture can show a direct reflection of what history has deemed as vital knowledge for the future. The purpose of this proposed study is to examine the importance of how an historic building can hold meaning to a town’s identity. This study will also examine how revitalization of a significant building holds importance in maintaining the historical teachings for community members as well as tourists. The conducted research will seek to examine what aspects of the building are most crucial to the town’s identity and why is it so important to preserve the history of this building. Also an understanding of the physical importance of the building as well as the local’s psychological perceived emotional attachment to conserving the historical site will be examined. In researching this proposed study the sociology of culture and environmental sociology as well as the theory of collective memory will help to better understand the importance of preserving historical sites to conserve a communities identity. Methods that will be used will include comparative historical analysis and in-depth face-to-face interviews.

Introduction
In 1901 a team of construction workers in the small village of Shoreham, Long Island worked to create a truly extraordinary structure known as the Wardenclyffe Tower. Over a period of several years the assembly of the framework and wiring for the 187-foot-tall tower was built in spite of budget shortfalls due to abandoning investors as well as a few engineering difficulties. The project was masterminded by its designer, the peculiar yet innovative inventor Nikola Tesla. On his tower was suspended a fifty five ton dome of his tower to the whole globe without wires using the Ionosphere. The tower was demolished for scrap in 1917 and the property taken in foreclosure in 1922. The original brick building that stood below the tower where Tesla’s research took place remains standing to this day. There has been a struggle for the last two decades to obtain this property to create a memorial site in honor of Nikola Tesla. Preservation campaigns of the Shoreham community have fought to save the site from being completely demolished in hopes of turning the site into a museum to maintain the memory Nikola Tesla as well as create a tourist site to inform those of his importance in the field of electrical engineering.

Methods

Comparative Historical Analysis:
An examination of the social processes through architecture over time in this certain area in reference to the present day will be researched.

Individual Interviews:
In-depth face-to-face interviews to preservation campaign members as well as randomly selected community locals by a way of structured questionnaires will be used to collect information about their opinions of the psychological and emotional attachment to having this historical building preserved.

Literature Review

1) The Meaning of Architecture to a Society:
The sociological and psychological factors that influence humans through architecture are important to study. The relationship between architecture and human perception of specific buildings and the need to satisfy certain needs for aestheticism can allow us to understand the importance of the relationship between architectural structures and a society.

2) The Community
Collective identity is constructed through many different ways but is important to developing different forms of modernity. Through architecture we can create social places to develop structures that allow us to study and gain knowledge of past historical events. When a building is put at higher value because of its architectural importance to a community it develops a sense of identity and cultural heritage. Architecture provides the symbolic ideas of habitation that serves humankind.

Preliminary Findings:
- Architecture must have two components to create identity which include a building and culture formed around the building to develop a built environment.
- A space becomes meaningful due to activities made through a communities culture to make the architectural structure memorable.
- Demolishment of significant architecture within a community is a loss of home and identity.

Discussion/Concluding Thoughts
Questions that need to be answered for this study that this literature lacks is what areas of the building are important to keep preserved and not revitalized. When the building starts to be constructed on what will be the main focus of the new museum/science center. This study will seek to examine what aspects of the building are most crucial to the town’s identity and why is it so important to preserve the history of this building. In this study an understanding of the physical importance of the building as well as the local’s psychological perceived emotional attachment to conserving the historical site will be examined.

References


