**Research Article**

# Place through Time: Investigating Place Identity Language within the Temporal Dimension

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## Abstract

After an in-depth discussion on space, place, placelessness and place identity through readings from Heidegger, Norberg-Schulz, Relph and Lynch, the work concentrates on Aldo Rossi's Pathogenic and Propelling definitions. The paper aims to use these definitions to further understand the symbiotic relationship between place and architecture. This relationship leads to a continuous evolutionary process which develops place identity over time and plays an intrinsic part in architectural design. By transposing language from Rossi's 'The Architecture of the City' and applying it to place identity, the paper enables analysis into the effectiveness of pathogenic, propelling, and evolved place identity approaches. This language is explored further through the use of key case studies, mapping their identity from pathogenic to evolved.

The paper concludes that place identity plays a strong role in maintaining the authenticity of place. However, when necessary to maintain relevance in a changing world, architectural identity is required to be transformative and revealing - evolving and propelling alongside people, place, and culture.

**Keywords:** Architecture, Identity, Language, Place, Time.

Corresponding Author: laura.hanks@nottingham.ac.uk
Received: 12.09.2023 - Accepted: 09.10.2023

Cite: Bennett, C., & Hanks, L. (2023). Place through time: Investigating place identity language within the temporal dimension. DEPARCH Journal of Design Planning and Aesthetics Research, 2 (2), 115-140. https://doi.org/10.55755/DepArch.2023.19

**Araştırma Makalesi**

# Zaman İçinde Yer: Yer Kimliği Dilini Zamansal Boyutta İncelemek

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## Özet

Heidegger, Norberg-Schulz, Relph ve Lynch'in eserlerinden; yer, yer kimliği ve yersizlik üzerine derin tartışmaların ardından, bu çalışma Aldo Rossi'nin Patojenik ve İtici tanımlarına odaklanmaktadır. Makale, yer ve mimarı arasındaki simbiyotik ilişkiyi daha iyi anlamak için bu tanımları kullanmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu ilişki, zaman içinde mekan kimliğini geliştiren ve mimari tasarımın ayrılmaz bir parçası olan sürekli bir evrimsel sürece yol açmaktadır. Rossi'nin 'The Architecture of the City' kitabındaki dili aktararak ve onu mekan kimliğine uygulayarak, patojenik, itici ve evrimleşmiş yer kimliği yaklaşımlarının etkililiğine yönelik analiz yapılmasına olanak sağlar. Bu dil, kimliklerinin patojenden evrime doğru haritalandığı, anahtar alan çalışmalarının kullanılmasıyla derinlemesine araştırılır.

Makale, yer kimliğinin gerektiğinde değişen dünyada geçerliliğini korumak için yerin özgünlüğünü korumada güçlü bir rol oynamasına rağmen, mimarı kimliğin dönüştürücü ve açıklayıcı -insanlarla, yerle ve kültürle birlikte gelişen ve harekete geçiren- olması gerektiğini belirtir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Dil, Kimlik, Mekan, Mimarlık, Zaman.

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**Alınma Tarihi:** 12.09.2023 **- Kabul Tarihi:** 09.10.2023

**Atıf:** Bennett, C., & Hanks, L. (2023). Place through time: Investigating place identity language within the temporal dimension. DEPARCH Journal of Design Planning and Aesthetics Research, 2 (2), 115-140. https://doi.org/10.55755/DepArch.2023.19

## INTRODUCTION: PLACE THROUGH TIME

An understanding of place is necessary to understand architecture as "without place, architecture simply doesn't exist. When architecture is created so is place" (Kief, 2015). Place is "a meaningful location" (Cresswell, 2004), yet also a way of seeing, knowing, and understanding the world. As Christian Norberg-Schulz opined, "It is meaningless to imagine any happening without reference to a locality. Place is evidently an integral part of existence" (Norberg-Schulz, 1980). Architecture can respond to a place's identity through a comprehensive analysis of the cultural, historic, physical, social, and environmental contexts. The result is an architecture that is 'rooted' in its place and displays 'sitedness', along with an appreciation of time, place and understanding (Krause, 1991). Although a considered visual response is not essential to place identity, it can allow significance and meaning to be attributed. "Place identity has greatest power when visual form, individual and social meaning come together" (Ruggeri, 2010). This response does not, however, need to be a replica of the formal identity, but rather "the colours, materials, smells and sounds which are recognised and shared emotional heritage" (Sepe, 2013).

Furthermore, place identity is not simply a product of the architecture; while spatial qualities may distinguish a place from others, "characteristics of the inhabitants … distinguish them from inhabitants of other places" (Carta, 1999). Each individual has a unique yet significant relationship with 'their' place, or any place they visit. Some memories and responses will be shared while others will be individual. Therefore "overlapping definitions of place identity exist – again both individual and collective" (Hague, 2005). It is the complex relationship architecture has with place and identity that enables such meaningful and deep-rooted, emotional responses.

"Places are spaces with identity" (Day, 2002). Architecture defines place and place plays an intrinsic part in architectural design. This symbiotic relationship drives a continuous evolutionary process. Place identity is "not static and unchangeable, but varies as circumstances and attitudes change; and it is not uniform and undifferentiated, but has several components and forms" (Relph, 1976): the same place could be described differently with time (Hague, 2005).

### Aims and Objectives

This paper aims to gain a greater understanding of whether place identity adapts and evolves in an ever-changing world, or if it remains a static entity. By transposing language from Aldo Rossi's 'The Architecture of the City' and applying it to place identity, it enables a developed discussion and analysis into the effectiveness of pathogenic, propelling, and evolved place identity approaches. Finally, it aims to understand if there are connections between the legibility and effectiveness of place identity; what are the consequences of tangible and intangible interventions alongside material and formal responses?

### Methodology

Pathogenic, propelling and evolved place identity approaches will be tested using a case study methodology, using a mixture of primary (site drawings, planning applications, etc.) and secondary sources (books, journals, and articles, etc.). The process will comprise two steps: research involving a review and critique of existing literature on place identity, enabling a contextual framework of perception and reproduction of place, alongside analysis of existing theories into how identity evolves over time; and analysis involving the application of this framework to relevant case studies and consideration of the effectiveness of the place identity approaches. The case studies, which all share an affiliation

with place, will be categorised into pathogenic, propelling and evolved place identities, allowing comparison between the contrasting strategies.

## LITERATURE REVIEW: PLACE THROUGH TIME

### Importance of Place Identity

The importance of the relationship between architecture and place identity needs to be understood in order to appreciate fully the need to understand how place identity evolves over time. As Kief observed, "[p]lace plays an intrinsic part in any architectural design. It defines the what, where, and when of the structures and people who inhabit that place" (Kief, 2015). Allowing places to be unique, to differentiate themselves from other parts of the world, is a principal human desire of both individual and collective identity. Furthermore, with globalisation increasingly apparent, creating a sense of place becomes ever more meaningful. In 1976, Relph put forward the concept of 'placelessness', "the casual eradication of distinctive places and the making of standardised landscapes" (Relph, 1976). These sites, bereft of cultural, historical, and personal meaning, are the result of globalisation within economics and politics (Arefi, 1999). In response, Frampton argued the central strategy of critical regionalism was to "mediate the impact of universal civilization with elements derived indirectly from the peculiarities of a particular place" (Frampton, 1998). Although there were major criticisms of Relph's 'Place and Placelessness', "that it is essentialist; out of touch with what places are today" (Seamon, 2008), scholars still maintain that an appreciation of the concept, also labelled 'non-place', 'commodification' and 'standardisation', can provide useful understanding to enable better acknowledgement of place in future designs. With the current social and political landscape, this is potentially more relevant than ever with a "backlash against globalisation and supra-national organisations, and a seeming strengthening of national sovereignty and regionally devolved parliaments" (Hourston Hanks, 2018).

For Feld, "[h]uman experience begins with space and time and then proceeds to place" (Feld, 1996). Perhaps a more fundamental reading of place provides justification far greater than merely the human enjoyment of experiencing different place identities. A more dynamic and open-ended reading suggests place as the origin of community and individual identity. It suggests the locus of the emergence of identity alongside the separation of subjectivity and objectivity.

This reading stems from Heidegger's thinking, often regarded as a backstop of place identity theory, and discussed and built upon by many since then including Malpas and Norberg-Schulz. There is a suggestion from both these authors that architecture reveals things about the identity of a specific place, revealing wider concepts about the cosmos at a larger scale, whilst simultaneously revealing the identity of individual people at a smaller scale. Architecture, therefore, has the ability to draw parallels across scales between people and place, where "[t]he primary purpose of architecture is hence to make a world visible" (Norberg-Schulz, 1988). Norberg-Schulz draws on an example first provided by Heidegger: a temple that, "in its standing there, first gives to things their look and men their outlook on themselves" (Heidegger, 1971), suggesting a simultaneous revealing of both place and personal identity. Heidegger terms this as the temple "sett[ing] truth into work" (Heidegger, 1971), while Norberg-Schulz adds that the "given place possess[es] a hidden meaning revealed by the temple" (Norberg-Schulz, 1988). The temple is not simply added to what is there, but it allows things to emerge as what they are.

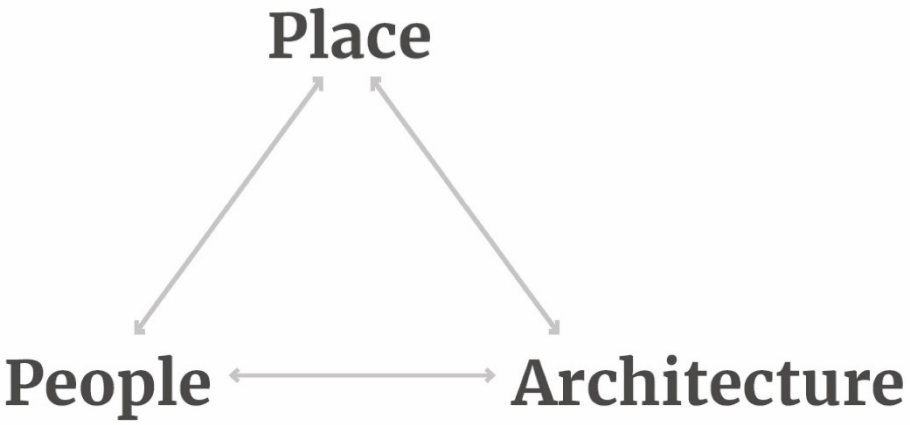


**Figure 1.** Relationship between Place, People and Architecture

In a similar yet even more radical vein, 'Place and Experience', the first major publication by Jeff Malpas, proposes place as the origin of self-identity from a philosophical and psychological perspective. Malpas builds upon the notion that we discover something from the landscape and describes place as a way of understanding where our communal and individual identity emerges. It is suggested that place is a primary unit of experience and that nothing can begin until we begin to engage with place. Malpas argues that place is something that pre-exists; it has the possibility of an identity that needs to be discovered. This is mirrored by our individual identity as he goes on to say, "[t]he land around us is indeed a reflection, not only of our practical and technological capacities, but also of our culture and society" (Malpus, 2018). He concludes we only discover ourselves through the way we engage with and the way we transform places.

These works suggest a complex and reciprocal three-way arrangement between place, people and architecture [Figure 1]. Architecture encompasses our fundamental reading of the world; both the places within it and our individual identity. Therefore, an understanding of this relationship - of place identity - is crucial.

**Differences between the Generation and the Continuation of Place**

While it is understood that "good architecture is born out of and developed in the context of existing environments" (Breitling, 2012), to further interpret the relationship between architecture and place, the generation of place identity must be understood.


**Figure 2.** Elements of the Generation of Place Identity

The elements that constitute the generation of architectural place identity [Figure 2] can be divided into two main groups: place identity formed as a function of industry; or an identity created as a result of geographical isolation. In reality, many identities are generated as a combination of both. Knowledge and culture appear as important elements, straddling both groups, and consequently have a strong relationship with place. They can be used to explore and understand each other; "Place informs culture and in return culture influences Place" (Kief, 2015). Due to the relative permanence of buildings, they often become bearers of individual and collective memory and knowledge, leading to strong associations and distinct regional patterns.

Often places are born out of a developing industry, with the forms and materials that are now seen to be vernacular to the region, used initially either as a direct result of a pragmatic functional requirement, or the increased generation of wealth in the area. Increased growth of a place, particularly during a period of booming industry, can form strong ties between a quickly developing place identity and culture. A primary example would be Stoke-on-Trent, where the now iconic and identifying bottle kiln shape was a requirement of the firing process being developed by the pioneering potteries.

The degree of geographical isolation can also affect place identity. In locations that evoke the strongest sense of place, "it is very often the pervasive presence of a single, readily available local material… that are their most striking feature" (Weston, 2003).

Finally, the local environment and climate often influence the creation of a place's identity, showcased by "[t]he amazing skill [of] primitive builders in dealing with climatic problems, and their ability to use minimum resources for maximum comfort." (Rapoport, 1969). However, the importance of climate on the creation of the built form has been questioned, with the "examination of the extreme differences in urban pattern and house types … show[ing] them to be much more related to culture than climate" (Rapoport, 1969). It could therefore be argued that only extremes in climate have a significant effect on a place's identity. As Heath argued, "[v]ernacular architecture, then, represents a localised response to broad cultural systems, historical events, and environmentally determined regional forces" (Heath, 2009).

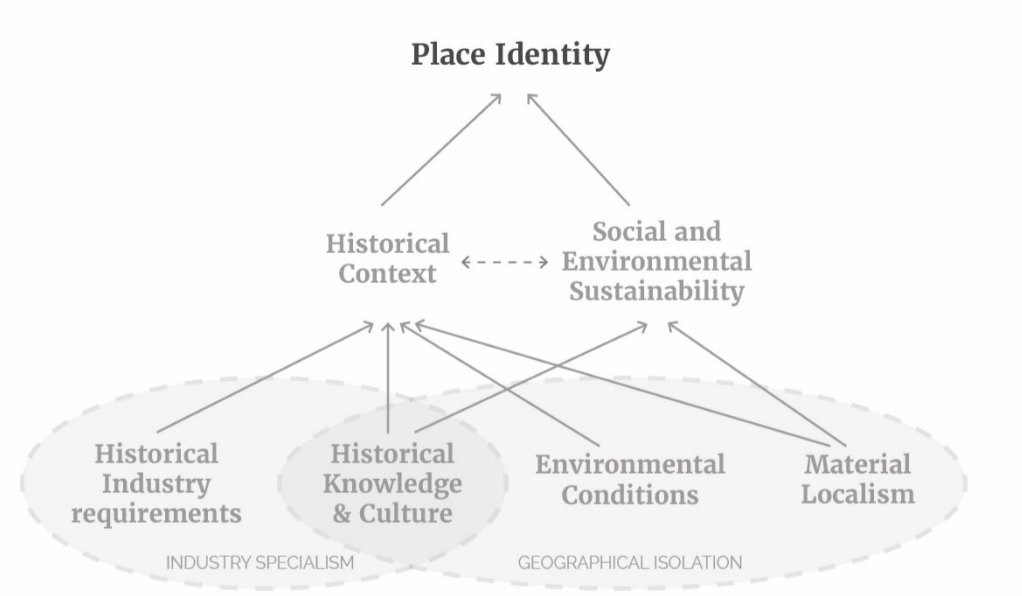


**Figure 3.** Elements of the Continuation of Place Identity

The continuation of place identity [Figure 3], however, is governed by a different, yet related, set of parameters. In most places, the primary industry has modernised or subsided; local culture has diminished in a globalised world; knowledge is instantly shared; and new technology and materials, that can be transported around the world where necessary, have been developed to overcome environmental issues. However, the historical context is still relevant for buildings to achieve 'sitedness', and to provoke and promote individual and collective memory. While the original parameters are no longer requirements, they are relevant as secondary elements, connected through the contexts of history and sustainability. Therefore, the different elements that make up the generation and continuation of place identity induce architectural responses relevant to the present context, and consequently, the place identity evoked by architecture can change through time, as the context develops.

It could be argued that contemporary placemaking is a balance between utilising opportunity whilst retaining memory. We invariably will –and should– alter buildings, spaces and places depending on current opportunities and constraints. Building forms and materials "grow, change, and evolve" (Heath, 2009) as new knowledge and technology allow for more sustainable construction, crucial within the current climate crisis. Sustainable architecture and place growth occur as "fully evolved, stabilised, and embedded building responses that embody a very slow rate of change" (Heath, 2009). This ensures "stories and connotations are transmitted and modified from one memory to another; they root us in time and place" (Von Meiss, 1991).

**Place Identity through Time**

In contrast to this evolving representation, place identity in literature is often associated with phrases such as authenticity and 'genius loci', the Roman belief that "every object has its own character or spirit" (Kief, 2015). This static reading of place, associated with Norberg-Schulz, implies every place has an essence that was established during a point in its history. Once discovered, a manifestation of the essence can be created that responds to the place's 'genius loci'. Consequently, architecture has the potential to govern the 'genius loci'; it "encompasses the persistent qualities … and potential of a built environment" (Breitling, 2012). Furthermore, Norberg-Schulz suggested, "[p]lace must preserve its identity through change, which is to say that it remains the same even if it is never identical" (Norberg-Schulz, 1988). This theory of a fixed representation of place can be successfully applied to certain places, where the entire identity responds to a single, important point of time in that place's history. While relevant to the discussion, this reading of place, however, creates the impression of urban and natural landscapes as "fixed entit[ies], fragment[s] of the past that ha[ve] endured the ravages of nature and human action" (Heath, 2009). Accordingly, it can become problematic when attempting to apply it to other places that have seemingly developed more organically.

These more transitional places are perhaps better understood when applying a more generous reading of Norberg-Schulz, which can be attained from his earlier work that builds upon theories from Heidegger. This more open-ended sense of place is built upon an understanding of give-and-take between people and place. It is argued that people do not simply project a pre-conceived idea outwards onto the landscape; an idea about themselves, society or even the wider universe. Instead, the landscape, both built and natural, can be used to discover, acting as a structure to guide understanding. Landscape and place do not conform in a linear process, but rather are one piece of a two-part process between people and place. Heidegger uses the example of a bridge, where "the banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the

stream" (Heidegger, 1971). This suggests the built landscape, the architecture of the bridge, makes the place come into presence and reveals an element of place identity. Norberg-Schulz adds, "[h]uman life takes place on earth, and the bridge makes the fact manifest" (Norberg-Schulz, 1988), suggesting that a strong yet dynamic relationship between an architectural landscape and the people within it can evolve over time. This reciprocal relationship allows parallels to be drawn between the structure of society and the landscape it is within.

Similarly, Relph argues place identity is "not static and unchangeable but varies as circumstances and attitudes change; and it is not uniform and undifferentiated but has several components and forms" (Relph, 1976). This suggests the identity of a place responds directly to the circumstances of the time and the attitudes of the people. Places act as experientially based versions of spaces (Seamon, 2008), suggesting place has a connection to the individual, and the meaning may be different depending on individuals past experiences. As people's opinions and actions change based on past experiences and contemporary thinking, their experience of a place also evolves as "appearance, observable activities, and functions [are] interwoven in the experiences of places" (Relph, 1976). This leads to a continuous evolution of experientially perceived place identity, due to the integral connection between people, places, and architecture. In Weston's terms, "[s]ense of place is necessarily a function of people's relationships with specific locations, not a property of them, and to do with intangible memories, associations, scents or other qualities" (Weston, 2003).

Lynch argues that the progression of time suggests the earth should be conserved, "as it cannot be preserved" (Lynch, 1972); in the same way, it could be suggested place identity should be conserved. Responses should be considered, however need not replicate the existing architecture, allowing place identity to shift over time in response to cultural changes and updated technology, while always allowing identity to be traced back through history. Heath argues tradition itself, "is the illusion of permanence" (Heath, 2009): vernacular forms can quickly move outside of tradition, as it is not a "static legacy of a past that is handed down from one generation to another" (Heath, 2009). It is instead a transposition of the past within the context of the present and future.

It is the importance of the relationship between place identity and architecture, the fact architecture can reveal the meaning and identity of places, that inspires the evolution of place and self-identity. As we continue to create architecture, we, therefore, continue to reveal a developing place identity.

**A New Place Identity Language**

This interpretation - a continually developing place identity - demonstrates parallels with some of the theories conceived and developed by Aldo Rossi in his seminal work, 'The Architecture of the City'. Among many pioneering and well-regarded theories, Rossi held the view that a city remembers its past, particularly through the use of monuments, which give structure to the city and can hold our collective memory. When discussing the temporal dimension, Rossi suggested: "the difference between past and future … reflects the fact that the past is partly being experienced now, and this may be the meanings to give permanences: they are a past that we are still experiencing" (Rossi, 1982). "The form of the city is always the form of a particular time of the city; but there are many times in the formation of the city, and the city they change its face even in the course of one man's life, its original references ceasing to exist" (Rossi, 1982).

Of particular interest is the language Rossi uses when defining permanences into two separate 'aspects'; He suggests they can either be considered pathogenic or propelling elements. Both these aspects symbolise a strong representation of the past. Pathogenic elements appear "isolated in the city; nothing can be added. [They] constitute, in fact, an experience so essential that it cannot be modified" (Rossi, 1982). Whereas propelling elements represent a "form of the past [that] has assumed a different function, but it is still intimately tied to the city; it has been modified and we can imagine future modifications" (Rossi, 1982).


**Figure 4.** The effect of Material and Formal Language on Pathogenic, Propelling and Evolved place Identity

While Rossi uses these aspects to describe permanences of the city, it is possible to transpose the language to place identity theory, allowing pathogenic and propelling forms of place identity, and consequently a unique and critical analysis of place identity within the temporal dimension. When transposing this language to the theory of place identity, a few key concepts become apparent. Firstly, the propelling and pathogenic aspects can be applied more widely. Rossi suggests the language can be applied purely to the permanences of the city, yet this language can be applied to all buildings evoking place identity, as all buildings in a place can contribute to the collective identity. Secondly, further definition can be applied by adding a third aspect: evolved. The place identity of these buildings has evolved into something new, and they can no longer be considered to conform to the existing place identity. This leads to the subjective question of when a place identity is perceived to be evolved place identity, rather than a propelling version of the existing identity. Analysis of case studies will be utilised to further this discussion. Thirdly and finally, artefacts can evoke different aspects of place identity from the different elements that constitute them. For example, the material language could evoke a different aspect of place identity compared with the formal language, as showcased simplistically in [Figure 4].

Exploring this language further, Figure 5 showcases how pathogenic and propelling artefacts affect the identity of a place over time. The gradient of the boxes implies the degree of evolution of each artefact from the previous. Pathogenic artefacts retain the identity of a place, in contrast to propelling artefacts which cause an evolution in identity over time.

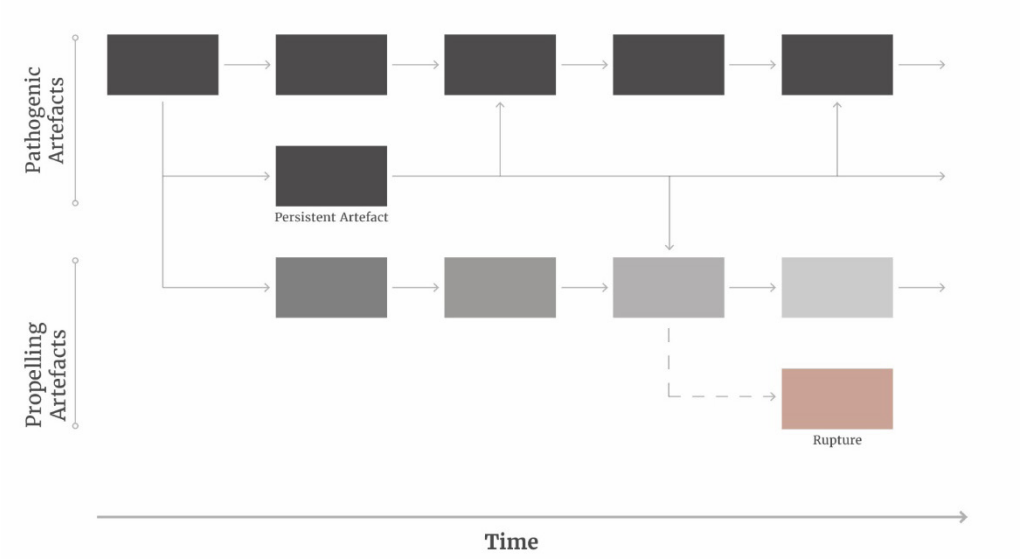


**Figure 5.** How Pathogenic and Propelling Artefacts of Place progress identity over time

As a result of these concepts, the following definitions can be formed as a transposition from Rossi's original definitions:

> *Pathogenic artefacts of place*: Buildings that continue to replicate the essence of place through traditional and vernacular elements, while responding to their context without modification.
> *Propelling artefacts of place*: Buildings that continue an intimate tie with the existing place identity yet develop it, generating a modified place identity for future developments to respond to.
> *Evolved artefacts of place*: Buildings that evoke a place identity that has evolved into something new and can no longer be considered to conform to the existing place identity.

A small selection of case studies will be analysed in detail in the following sections, each case study carefully chosen to explain, develop or question the discussions around place identity and how the newly defined language can be applied within the temporal dimension of place.

## PATHOGENIC PLACE IDENTITY: PLACE THROUGH TIME

### Lavenham, Suffolk

The Suffolk village of Lavenham may have been occupied for centuries, but the identity of the village that still exists today was forged during the prospering wool trade of the 15th and 16th centuries [Figure 6]. The resulting industry upturn led to Lavenham becoming one of the richest towns in the UK, paying considerably more tax than larger towns. This wealth was "reflected in the magnificent medieval buildings which were built by the wealthy merchant families" (Nash, 2017). A large portion of the building stock, therefore, was built within a relatively short period of prosperity, utilising the same materials, building techniques and aesthetic qualities desirable at the time. This uniformity, now seen to be 'quintessential Suffolk', has survived largely untouched to the present day, as the subsequent recession stalled growth in the area for many years. This moment

of pause in Lavenham's history perhaps broke the opportunity for any potential evolution and strengthened the existing uniform identity, Lavenham's 'genius loci', that induced the primarily pathogenic place identity that still exists today.

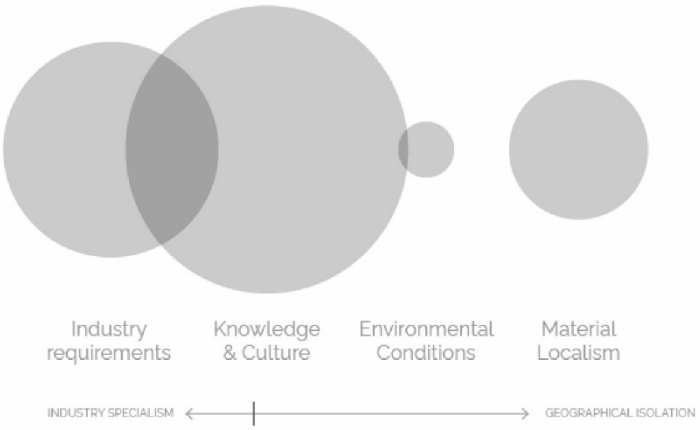


**Figure 6.** Generation of Place Identity in Lavenham

**Figure 7.** Lavenham Architectural Identity

Here, then, "[b]uilding vocabulary, material usage, and craft techniques were disseminated among builders and users alike until early experimentation yielded to a fully developed pattern of local building practice" (Heath, 2009). The architectural characteristics, both the material and formal language, have remained almost unchanged even through building use change and development, which could have resulted in performative and aesthetic changes to the identity. Instead, the magnificent timber-framed buildings with plaster infill remain and are now considered some of the best examples of half-timbered buildings in the country [Figure 7]. Diagonal glazing bars separating small diamond panes of glass prevail, despite major developments in glazing technology, and exposed timber construction is still used regardless of the increased maintenance required. These, among the many other iconic architectural characteristics in Lavenham, show no sign of modification into the future, suggesting the identity of Lavenham and its community is greater than the pragmatic improvements possible in a contemporary world.

Lavenham demonstrates that the period in which a place is conceived has a significant effect on the language and character of that place into the future; "It determines materials that can be used and is a starting point for understanding the cultural and social reasoning behind a place's creation" (Kief, 2015). It appears the strongest pathogenic place identity occurs in places with rapid periods of growth and recession. If a place is created during a single period with a uniform character, place identity is more likely to remain pathogenic, as any evolution appears out of place. This contrasts with areas built slowly, as place identity evolves over time, allowing for continued propelling development.

## PROPELLING PLACE IDENTITY: PLACE THROUGH TIME

### Pier Arts Centre, Orkney

Located on the waterfront in Stromness, Orkney [Figure 8], the Pier Arts Centre contains an internationally acclaimed collection of contemporary art. The project, led by Reiach and Hall Architects in 2007, included the "refurbishment of historic pier buildings, along with the creation of a new gallery building" (Reiach and Hall Architects, 2007). Three distinct elements are included in the scheme, leading to a combination of pathogenic and propelling identity: a traditional terraced block on Victoria Street containing the entrance point and two gable-ended perpendicular buildings projecting towards the sea; and the new shed building that acts as a contemporary and propelling counterpart to the original pier [Figure 9].

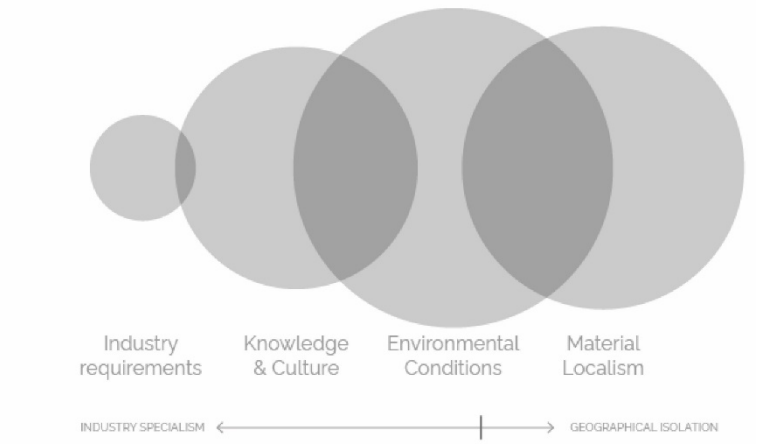


**Figure 8.** Generation of Place Identity in Orkney

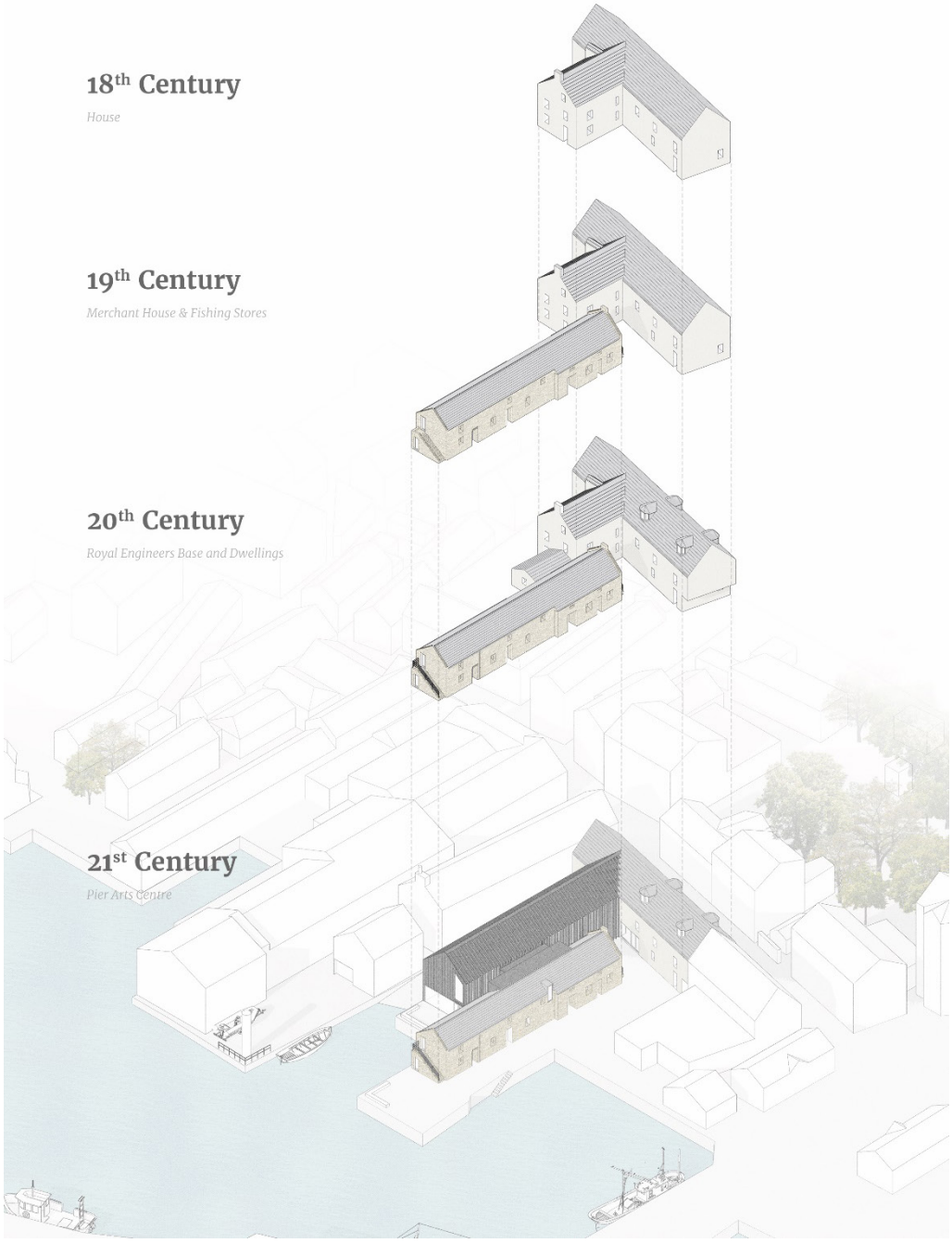


**Figure 9.** Pier Arts Centre through time

During the 18th and 19th Centuries, the morphology of Stromness developed into what it is today; "the houses, built gable on to the sea, belong[ed] to merchants [with] outbuildings and piers as were necessary to sustain their commerce" (Gillespie, 2007) [Figure 10]. Therefore, the piers in Stromness are sites of an individual yet shared past and contain embodied memories, defined by Pallasmaa to have "an essential role as the basis [for] remembering a space or a place" (Pallasmaa, 2012). Thus, a site of connectedness is located at the restored pier which can be described as "a material bridge to the past of the place" (Brown, 1975). Furthermore, the centre restores the community identity, as "the focal point for the local artistic community" (Pier Arts Centre, n.d.). It echoes the past when the Hudson's Bay Company ships docked while en route to Canada, one of the social highlights in Stromness, demonstrating that architecture has the potential to revitalise an individual and community identity.

**Figure 10.** Urban Composition of Stromness

The form of the new shed building initially appears pathogenic, maintaining the domestic scale of nearby buildings in Orkney (Gillespie, 2002) [Figure 11]. However, the design of the connecting structure also demanded the gravitas of a cultural building, leading to a composition "sitting parallel but further back from the sea, [but with dimensions] wider and higher" (Architects Journal, 2006) than the neighbouring dwellings. 'Familiarity' is also present with "the spacing of the ribs echoing the original gallery's rafters" (Reiach and Hall Architects, 2007). Appearing solid when viewed gable-on, the new element begins to dissolve as you travel around it, revealing the traditional harbour building behind. It is a character that varies rhythmically, connecting with both the past and future and mimicking the natural rhythm of the waves.

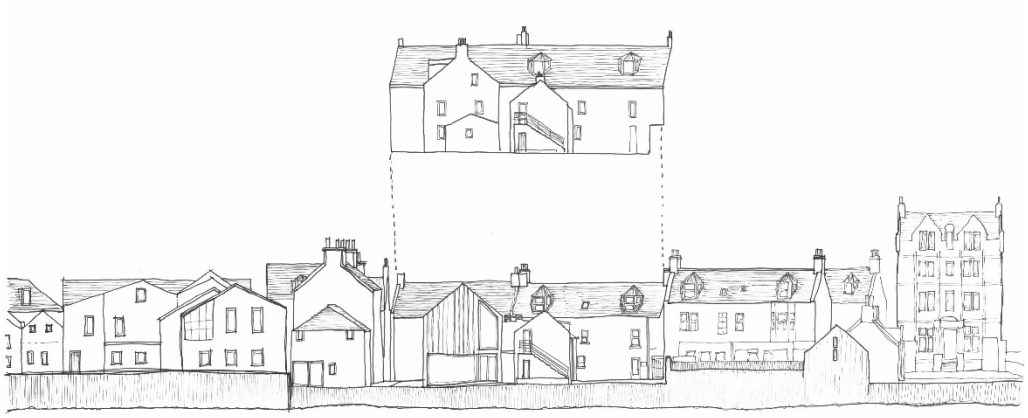

**Figure 11.** Urban Composition of Stromness

While all three buildings retain a vernacular gable-ended form, the Pier Arts Centre utilizes three different material strategies. The original and historic pier building has been restored to its original materials: "all existing stone quoins, sills, and chimneys [were] carefully refurbished" (Reiach and Hall Architects, 2004). This solid stone appearance is contrasted by the new shed construction, glazed and ribbed [Figures 12 and 13]. Although the form still provides a link to the waterfront setting, the exploration of contemporary materials is less archetypical. Additionally, the "ambivalent and melancholic" (Reiach and Hall Architects, 2007) façade alternates between solid and void; the black patinated zinc ribs enclosing the translucent glass panels relate to the tarring seen within the local architecture of Stromness (Gillespie, 2007). The contemporary lightweight construction allows for increased sustainability credentials and is a provocative step that embodies the forward-thinking environmental mindset Orkney has demonstrated previously, generating renewable energy that covers 120% of its own needs (McKie, 2019).

**Figure 12-13.** 1:20 Models comparing Pier Arts Centre's Tradition and Contemporary Gable Ends

Finally, the entrance street façade [Figure 14] is all white giving a "familiar yet … uncanny air about it" (Reiach and Hall Architects, 2007) in comparison to the 'dun-coloured' streetscape of Stromness. This feeling is continued with the window placement: considering the change of use from a residential house to a cultural centre, Reich and Hall introduced a large, glazed opening at the threshold, set back from the street at a slight angle. This intervention feels out of place in the small streets of Stromness, with most other buildings demonstrating

**Figure 14.** Pier Arts Centre Street Elevation, showcasing historic and updated façades

an inward-facing and protective stance, although it does allow for the new typology to be expressed within the streetscape. The angled 'shop window' glazing suggests part of the existing house was carved away at ground floor level, providing a covered porch as you enter the arts centre. Breaking up the glazing into a series of smaller elements, more synonymous with Stromness, may have helped to propel the place identity in a less audacious manner.

Generally considered a successful and sensitive intervention, a few key modifications propel forward the identity of the arts centre as a contemporary public building, while still retaining and imitating many of the vernacular architectural features of the Stromness pier typology.

**Windermere Jetty Museum, Cumbria**

The new boathouse and museum located at the edge of Lake Windermere [Figure 15] rehouse an internationally significant boat collection. The cluster of dark sheds includes "exhibition spaces for the display of steam launches, motorboats, yachts and other vessels" (Carmody Groarke, 2019). At its heart is a historic wet dock, allowing the display of boats on the water inside the museum [Figure 16]. The site's boatyard repurposes a historic gravel-extraction plant and runs live conservation projects, "continuing the working life of the place … as well as providing a reinterpretation of the site's industrial and picturesque heritage" (Carmody Groarke, 2019). The scheme was, therefore, designed to make a "connection between people, boats and water" (Groarke, 2019).

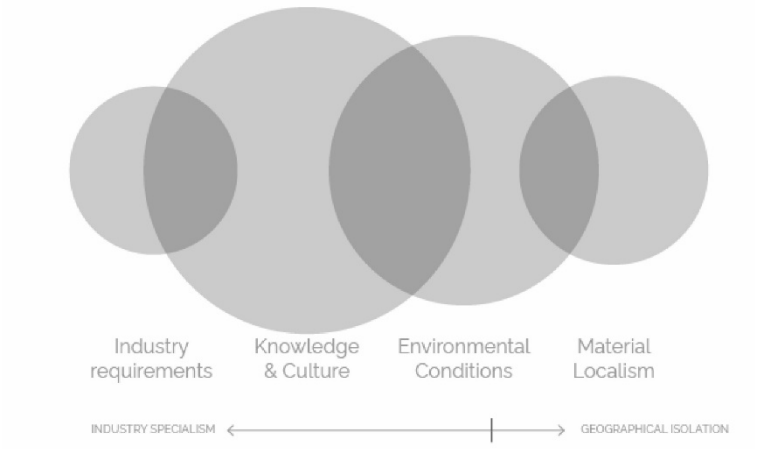


**Figure 15.** Generation of Place Identity in Cumbria

Reflecting the observations of Rossi, Windermere Jetty "expresses a conscious link from the past to the present" (Carmody Groarke, 2013). The boatsheds, designed with pitched roofs and extended eaves, form a hierarchy of masses, which when combined, retain the unmistakable essence of a boatyard with wharves and slipways [Figure 17]. Carmody Groarke believed this gave the forms a familiarity "made special by the overhanging canopies which extend the inside spaces of the building" (Carmody Groarke, 2013), while also providing the historic function of an all-weather shelter.

This pathogenic form is contrasted with a propelling material language; oxidised copper cladding that ordains the boathouses, with the wet dock clad in black-coloured timber, a counterpoint to the museum buildings representing the prominence of the wet dock historically. The "restrained palette of materials" (Wilson, 2019) stands in conflict with the local vernacular, comprised mainly of slate, stone and painted pebbledash render. The durability of copper, however, means the material will gain a natural patina expressing its "story of origin and history of human use." (Pallasmaa, 2012). This allows it to transition

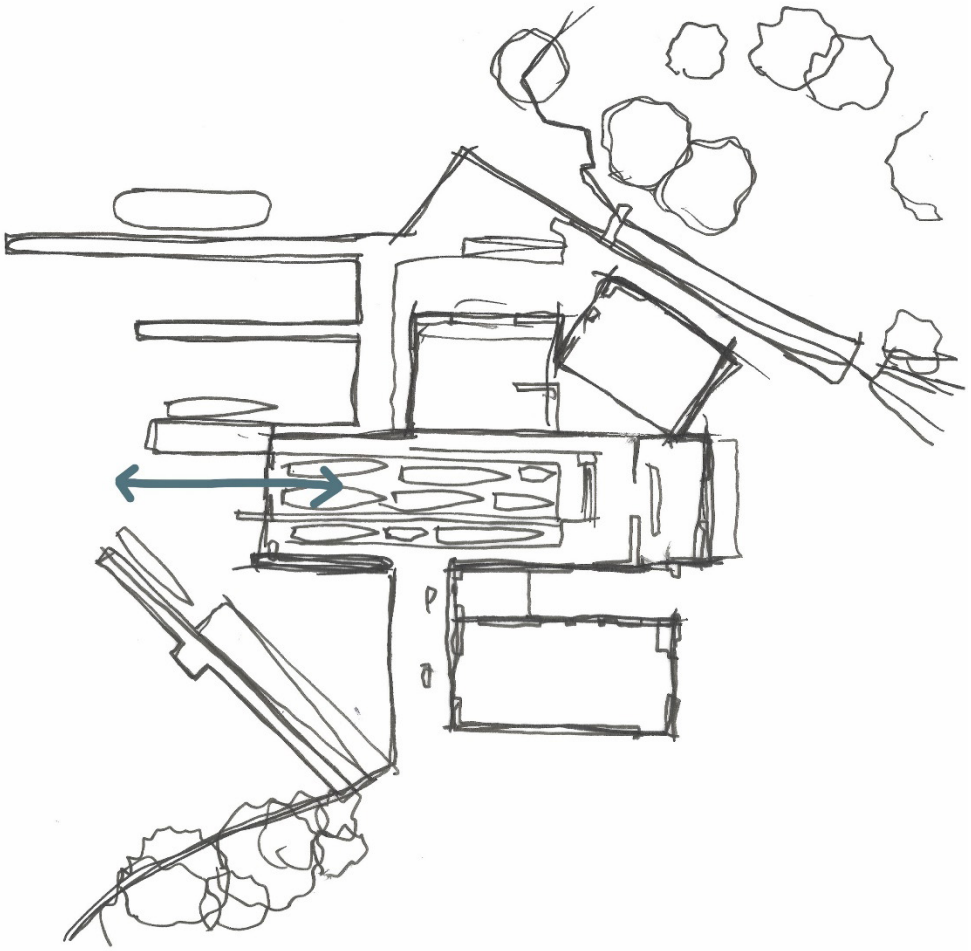

**Figure 16.** Windermere Jetty Museum Plan

from an appearance analogous with "the area's traditional, black-creosoted boathouses, [towards] an uneven verdigris" (Wilson, 2019), similar to the grey-green most materials in the Lake District tend towards overtime.

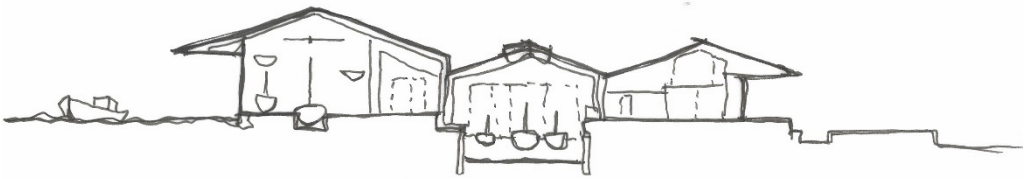

**Figure 17.** Windermere Jetty Museum Section

### Jesus College, Cambridge

In contrast to the past two case studies, Niall McLaughlin Architects' extension to Jesus college tends towards the use of a propelling form and pathogenic material choice. This inversion of formal and material language still enables the scheme to successfully respond to the identity of Cambridge [Figure 18] while also being a forward-thinking and contemporary piece of architecture.

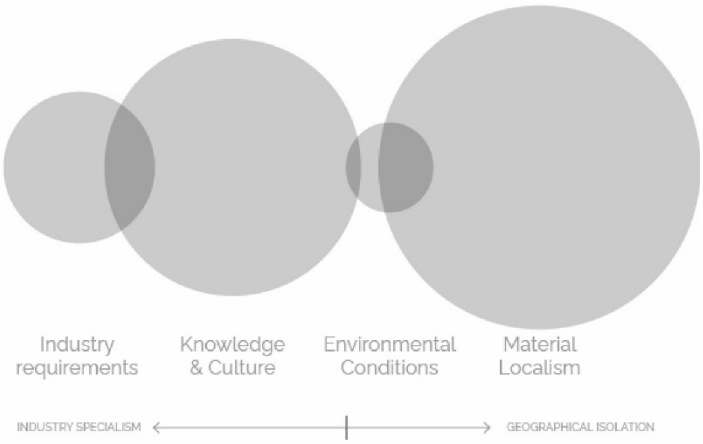


**Figure 18.** Generation of Place Identity in Cambridge

The re-modelled 1970's Rank building is "unified through a consistent palette of high-quality traditional materials including oak, stone, brick and quarry tiles" (González, 2017) chosen to suit the historic setting. Yet it remains innovative with its "loose geometry, use of daylight and simplicity of forms" (RIBA, 2018), propelling the existing identity while still echoing the rhythm of the original façade and adjoining buildings – the structural spacing has been retained and mimics the width of the neighbouring terraced housing [Figure 19]. The intervention combines a selection of dissimilar buildings, drawing upon the existing Cambridge identity and local materials, to provide "vital life for the College community [and] an outward-looking public presence in the centre of Cambridge" (González, 2017).

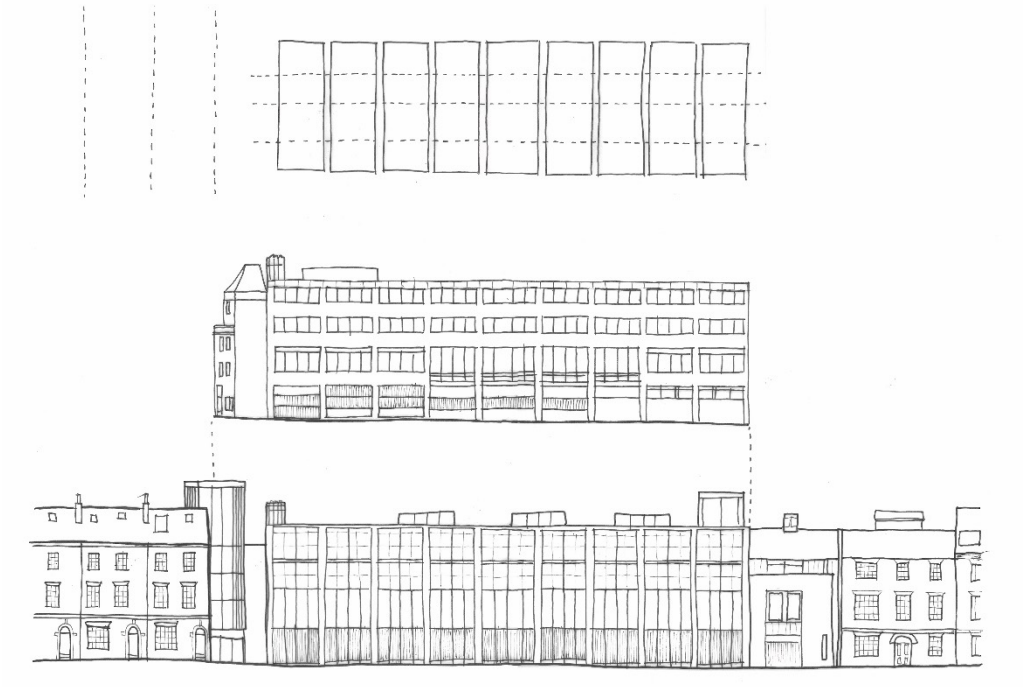

**Figure 19.** Rhythm of Jesus College Elevation showcasing historic and contemporary façades

## EVOLVED PLACE IDENTITY: PLACE THROUGH TIME

### David Brownlow Theatre, Newbury

To the southwest of Newbury, Horris Hill school appears almost isolated as a campus –a little village– providing a holistic education within 65 acres of countryside [Figure 20]. The cluster of red brick, hanging terracotta tile and

pitched gable buildings form a tight-knit and protective community for boys aged 4-13 years. Although there have been additions to the campus since the original building was completed, the unity of the settlement has been largely maintained, with most additions having been placed near the original Victorian school building.

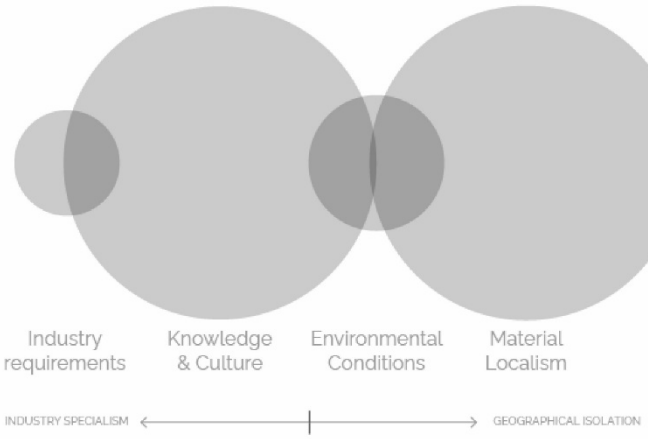


**Figure 20.** Generation of Place Identity in Newbury

The new theatre acts as a place of assembly within the school, whilst simultaneously utilising the performative nature of the architecture to create an external civic courtyard – "a new centre of gravity on the western side of the campus" (Jonathan Tuckey Design, 2020). The important role that theatre and public speaking play within the educational approach of the school is reflected in the interpretation of the campus as becoming a "little city" (Jonathan Tuckey Design, 2020), evolving the identity of the settlement significantly. This is emphasised in the façade design, with a prominent timber portico fronting the newly created 'Greenhill courtyard' [Figure 21], in many ways referencing the entrance of a classical temple. Jonathon Tuckey suggested the design for the theatre had been motivated in part by the vision of the Victorian school

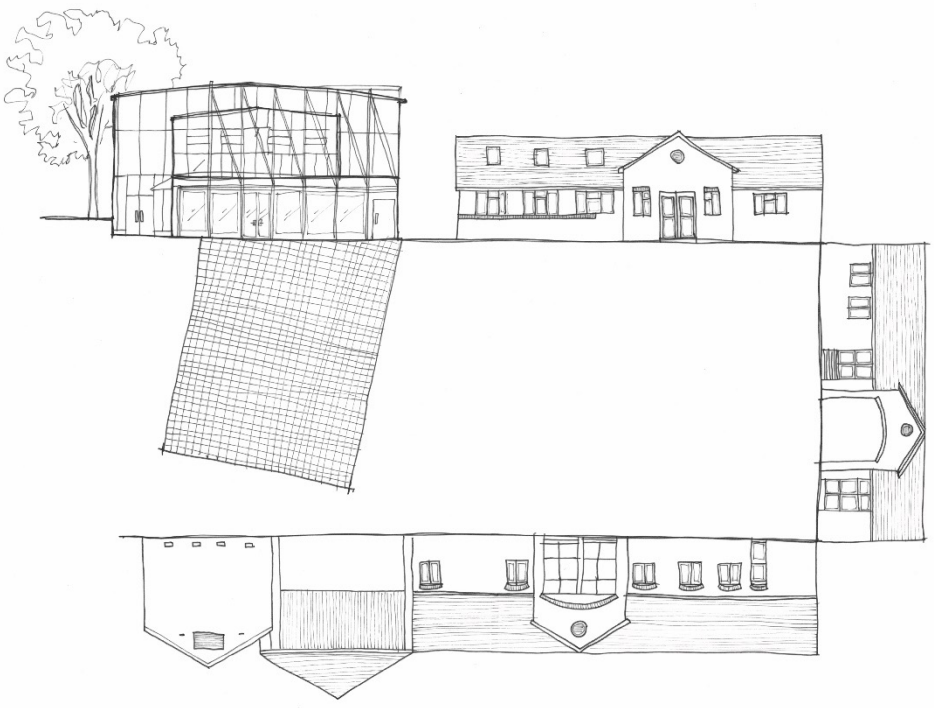

**Figure 21.** David Brownlow Theatre Courtyard Elevations

campus as a 'gothic' brick hill-town, with "the arrival of the new theatre building as analogous to the arrival of new civic forms within the Italian cities of the Quattrocento" (Jonathan Tuckey Design, 2020).

While the civic and performative nature evokes an evolved identity, the material language "draws from its surroundings" (Jonathan Tuckey Design, 2020), referencing both the textured red hues of the surrounding brick structures and nearby woodland [Figure 22]. The repetition of equally sized Viroc panels endows the building with rhythm and elegance both horizontally and vertically, recalling the appearance of Renaissance churches. Making use of Viroc sheets cut to minimise wastage, the facades are inventive in their ability to provide the building with varied depth and three-dimensional texture using only flat sheet

**Figure 22.** David Brownlow Theatre 1:20 Model showcasing the Material Language of the scheme

materials, rather than the solid construction of the nearby Victorian buildings. The designers have worked on themes of 'collective memory' rather than 'replication' to provide an evolved sense of place.

The theatre is formed with the ubiquitous use of engineered timber, consisting of a CLT frame surrounded by Viroc cladding [Figure 23]. These are ancient construction techniques updated for the modern era, with timber engineered offsite and cut as efficiently as possible to reduce wastage and emissions. Through the use of modern construction methods, however, the imperfections and traces of makers' tools are absent. Links are made to Tudor theatres through the inclusion of timber-framed stalls, while polished black Viroc is cut into a similar formation to the stone floors of great 17th Century public buildings. Contemporary engineered materials root the building in architectural history, yet it portrays an identity different to that of the existing red brick village.

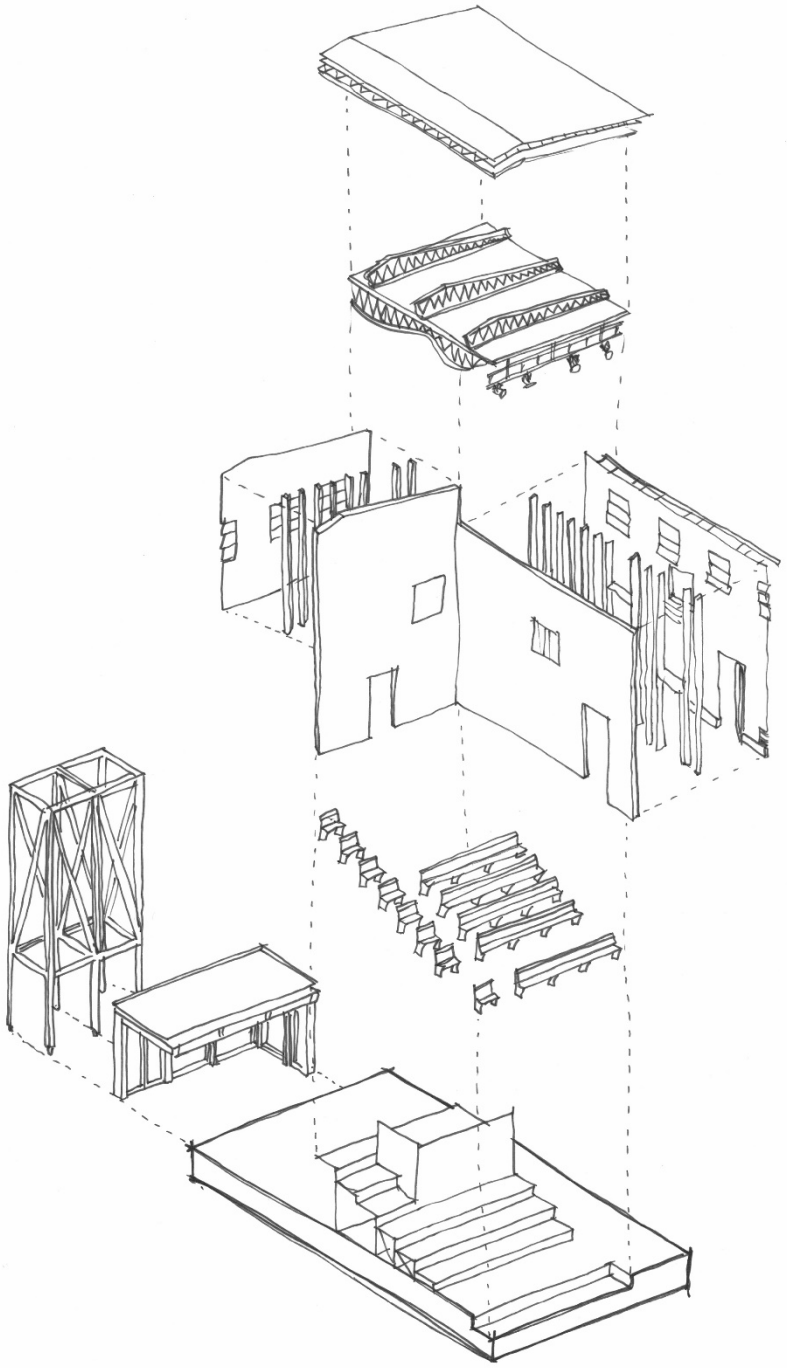

**Figure 23.** David Brownlow Theatre Exploded Construction Axonometric

This is a sustainable, contemporary piece of architecture that takes full advantage of modern manufacturing techniques to evolve the identity of Horris Hill school, activate the built context immediately surrounding the site and bring in to use several under-utilised and unloved spaces. While tangible links to the existing place identity are minimal, intangible connections achieve an evolved 'rootedness' that enables the building to fit with its context, and in many ways take command of the place identity of the settlement, revealing a new identity for the existing buildings.

## CONCLUSIONS: PLACE THROUGH TIME

The review of literature alongside the case study analysis has allowed the speculation of a series of conclusions.

### Pathogenic & Propelling Artefacts

It appears the strongest and most static place identity occurs in places with rapid periods of growth and recession, showcased clearly by Lavenham village. If an area is developed over a short space of time – within a period of uniform place identity - it is more likely to remain in a pathogenic position. Evolutions feel more out of place in contrast to places built over a longer period, where there are already multiple strands of place identity prevalent. Where place identity is constantly evolving, it could be suggested the speed of the evolution is determined by the number of pathogenic and propelling elements - more propelling elements leads to faster development of a place's identity. This evolution can be successfully conveyed using both material and formal language, although a conversation between the two is often most effective. A pathogenic form and propelling material language can allow for a sustainable approach to architectural placemaking, as demonstrated by the Pier Arts Centre and Windermere Jetty Museum, while Jesus College, Cambridge demonstrates a successful approach with a pathogenic material choice and propelling form.

### Tangible & Intangible Place Identity

Time deals with the intangible – the memory, both individual and collective. This is true for both places and buildings themselves - both can generate and emote memories (Hornstein, 2011; Day, 2002); "the very permanence of buildings makes them predestined for use as bearers and points of orientation in individual and collective memory" (Breitling, 2012). It appears intangible place identity relies on collective memory, which, while allowing for a deeper and more personal connection, also requires predetermined knowledge and experiences. For "our experience of the present very largely depends upon our knowledge of the past" (Connerton, 1989); the collective knowledge of the past, therefore, is reflected in the collective experience of the present. These intangible connections based on collective memory lead to a more propelling place identity, as the connections to place can be more abstract and subconscious. Finally, it could be suggested that place identity is described as evolved - that the place identity is different to that of before - when there are only intangible connections to the existing place identity remaining. The David Brownlow theatre uses a series of intangible connections that allow it to achieve a successful sense of 'sitedness' while the tangible, material and formal language has propelled and developed towards a new civic identity.

### Final Thoughts

The world changes. Currently, it appears, it is changing faster than ever. Place identity has played a strong role in maintaining the authenticity of place, whilst simultaneously revealing the world to the people, and the people to themselves. Yet how can this notion be reconciled with a "transformative state of identity and

multiple sources of local and global influence?" (Heath, 2009). It requires place identity to be equally transformative and revealing - evolving and propelling alongside people, place, and culture. For "as time changes so do the uses and meanings embedded in a place" (Kief, 2015), suggesting the passing of time is as crucial as the original creation of a place.

**Conflict of Interest**

No conflict of interest was declared by the authors.

**Authors' Contributions**

The authors contributed equally to the study.

**Financial Disclosure**

The authors declared that this study has received no financial support.

**Ethics Committee Approval**

Ethics committee approval was not required for this article.

**Legal Public/Private Permissions**

In this research, the necessary permissions were obtained from the relevant participants (individuals, institutions and organizations) during the survey, in-depth interview, focus group interview, observation or experiment.

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