

First Brazilian Seminar about the Preservation and Revitalization of Historic Centers; Itaipava - 1987

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BASIC PRINCIPLES

I

Urban historical sites may be considered as those spaces where manifold evidences of the city's cultural production concentrate. They are to be circumscribed rather in terms of their operational value as "critical areas" than in opposition to the city's non-historical places, since the city in its totality is a historical entity.

II

Urban historical sites are part of a wider totality, comprising the natural and the built environment and the everyday living experience of their dwellers as well. Within this wider space, enriched with values of remote or recent origin and permanently undergoing a dynamic process of successive transformations, new urban spaces may be considered as environmental evidences in their formative stages.

III

As a socially produced cultural expression the city adds rather than subtracts. Built space, thus, is the physical result of a social productive process. Its replacement is not justified unless its socio-cultural potentialities are proven exhausted. Evaluation standards for replacement convenience should take into account the socio-cultural costs of the new environment.

IV

The main purpose of preservation is the maintenance and enhancement of reference patterns needed for the expression and consolidation of citizenship. It is through the outlook of the citizen's political appropriation of urban space that preservation may contribute to improve life quality.

V

Considering that one of the characteristics of urban historical sites is their manifold functions, their preservation should not take place at the expense of severe use limitations, even when the allowed uses are of the kind referred to as cultural. They should, in fact, necessarily shelter both the universes of work and of everyday life, through which the more authentic expressions of society's heterogeneity and plurality are brought out. Concerning this heterogeneity, and taking into account the evident housing shortage in Brazil, housing should be the main function of built space. Consequently, the permanence of residents and of traditional activities in urban historical sites, when compatible with those sites, deserves special attention.

VI

The preservation of urban historical sites must be one of the basic aims of urban planning, seen as a continuous and permanent process, supported by a proper understanding of those mechanisms that generate and influence the formation of spatial structures.

VII

The preservation of urban historical sites demands the integrated action of federal, state and local entities, and also the participation of the community concerned with planning decisions as part of the full exercise of citizenship. In this sense it is essential to favor and encourage institutional mechanisms assuring a democratic management of the city through a strengthened participation of civilian leadership.

VIII

Within the preservation process of urban historical sites and as part of the analysis and evaluation of prevailing conditions, inventories are basic tools leading to a better knowledge of cultural and natural property. The participation of the community in inventorying is revealing as to the value it attaches to the property relevant and stimulates its concern as regards such property.

IX

Legal protection of urban historical sites is to be achieved through different procedures, such as cataloging, inventorying, urbanistic regulations, tax exemptions and incentives, listing as to cultural interest and expropriation.

X

Accompanying the diversification of protective procedures, it is essential that the social value of urban property be made to prevail over its market value.