

# The role of the second architect on a significant building site

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This article expounds Edmond Bacon's "principle of the second man", formulated in his *Design of Cities* (1967), as a criterion for judging the addition of another building or additional architectural structures on a significant building site. This principle basically implies that an architect who designs a new building for a site on which a significant building already exists, or a group of buildings that spatially belong together already exist, should not detract from the merit of the work of the first architect, but, also in the case of the restoration or addition to the original, should blend the new structure with the old, not necessarily by imitation or copying. This is a test for an architect's creative ingenuity and moral responsibility, because a disharmonious architectural addition on an established site can destroy its sense of place. In broad terms, a site that may be considered as architecturally significant can be identified in various ways: it could be an enclosed space, such as most city squares in which a historically important building has pride of place; it could be a historical or culturally significance space in which a sense of place has already been established and reinforced architecturally, or, furthermore, in the case of cities regulated by law with respect to building materials, construction practices or design to ensure uniform aesthetic norms and homogenous cityscapes. On sites with a meaningful urban tradition the designs of second architects may be considered successful if they do not only not distract from the primacy of the existing main building or group of buildings that established and conserves the sense of place of the site, but instead reinforces or enhances its architectural merit and the perceptual unity of the group design.

**Key words:** second architect, Edmond Bacon, group design, architectural sense of place

## **Die rol van die tweede argitek op 'n belangrike bousterrein**

In hierdie artikel word verder geteoretiseer oor Edmond Bacon se "beginsel van die tweede argitek wathy in sy *Design of Cities* (1967) geformuleer het as 'n kriterium vir die beoordeling van die toevoeging van 'n gebou of bykomende argitektoniese strukture op 'n belangrike bousterrein. Hierdie beginsel impliseer basies dat 'n argitek wat 'n nuwe gebou ontwerp vir 'n terrein waarop daar reeds 'n belangrike gebou of 'n groep geboue wat ruimtelik saam hoort, bestaan, nie aan die meriete van die eerste argitek nie afbreuk behoort te doen nie, maar om die nuwe struktuur, ook in die geval van die restourasie van of aanbouing, by die reeds bestaande aan te pas, nie noodwendig deur nabooting of kopiëring nie. Dit is 'n toets vir 'n argitek se kreatiewe vindingrykheid en morele verantwoordelikheid, want 'n onharmoniese argitektoniese byvoeging op 'n gevestigde terrein kan die pleksin daarvan benadeel. In breë trekke kan 'n terrein wat as argitektonies belangrik beskou kan word, op verskillende maniere uitgedruk word: dit kan 'n afgesluite ruimte wees soos die meeste stadspleine waar 'n geskiedkundig belangrike gehou aansien geniet; dit kan 'n geskiedkundig- of kultureel-belangrike ruimte wees waar die pleksin reeds gevestig of herbevestig is, of, in nog 'n instansie, in die geval van stede ten aansien waarvan die gebruik van boumateriaal, konstruksiemetodes of ontwerp wetlik beheer word met die doel om eenvormige estetiese norme en homogene stadslandskappe te verseker. Op terreine met 'n betekenisvolle stedelike tradisie kan die ontwerpe van tweede argitek as geslaagd beskou word indien dit nie net nie afbreuk doen aan die voorrang van die bestaande gebou of groep geboue wat die pleksin gevestig het en steeds bewaar nie, maar daartoe bydra om die argitektoniese meriete en perseptuele eenheid van die groeponwerp van die terrein te bewaar of te verhoog.

**Sleutelwoorde:** tweede argitek, Edmund Bacon, groeponwerp, argitektoniese pleksin

**For whom does an architect build? ... I think he builds for the next great architect (Nietzsche 1988: 7).**

The present paper expounds Edmond Bacon's "principle of the second man", formulated in his *Design of Cities* (1967), as a criterion for judging the addition of a further building or additional architectural structures on a significant building site. Bacon's relevant statement reads as follows: "[I]t is the second man who determines whether the creation of the first man will be carried forward or destroyed." This thesis basically implies that an architect who designs a new building on a site on which a significant sense of place has been determined, or on which a group of buildings that spatially belong together already exist, should not detract from the merit of the work of the first designer(s), but should subtly blend new structures with the old, not necessarily by imitation or copying, but should contribute to the perceptual totality of the group design. This is a test for an architect's creative ingenuity and moral responsibility, because a disharmonious addition on an architecturally significant site can spoil its sense of place.

In broad terms, a building site that may be considered as architecturally significant can be identified in various ways. First, it could be an enclosed space, such as most city squares in which a historical building has or a group of buildings have pride of place. Second, it could be a historical or culturally significant space in which a sense of place has already been established, reestablished or reinforced architecturally. Third, cities in which building regulations regarding materials, construction or design ensure uniform aesthetic norms and homogenous cityscapes. In such places the designs of second architects may be considered successful if they do not distract from the primacy of the existing main building or group of buildings that established and conserves the sense of place of the site, but instead reinforces or enhances the architectural merit and unity of the site. It is granted that the second architect's commission may be difficult to fulfill if the client is not concerned about a compatible design on a portion of urban real estate that has commercial value. A further reason for failure to harmonise with the existing ensemble can also be the architect's intention to ensure that his/her creation dominates or contrasts with that which exists in an egocentric way. This negative approach could also be made worse by a client who insists on a corporate identity. In this regard René Girard's (1961) theory of "mimetic desire" is applicable, since desire turns into envy when one wants what another has.<sup>1</sup> Desire is not only mimetic, but can turn conflictual and acquisitive when the second architect rivals the work of the first in an existing site.

For any architect the difficulty and responsibility of designing a building for a site on which a powerful sense of place already exists is beyond dispute. In a rapidly globalising world in which architects design buildings in places and countries with various cultural traditions, intertextuality becomes a supreme test for their expertise.<sup>2</sup> The more restrictive the framework of possible designs that would accord with Bacon's principle, the higher the demand to achieve an ingenious solution, such as those dealt with in Part II of this article.

The examples that are hereafter dealt with are chosen from widely different, mostly Western contexts, various periods and cultures around the world. They are grouped in three categories: first, unsuccessful architectural contextualisation of the designs of the second architects (the vast majority); second, examples of successful contextualisation, and third, examples referring to the co-existence of old and new architecture in historically unique cities.

## **I Non-successful contextualisation**

### *Saddam Hussein's palace as a reconstruction of King Nebuchadnezzar II's palace, Baghdad, Iraq*

Saddam Hussein (1937-2006) used architecture to awe and intimidate. When he rose to power as the President of Iraq, he conceived a grandiose scheme to rebuild the ancient city of Babylon, renowned for the hanging gardens, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Inspired by mimetic desire to equal the greatness of King Nebuchadnezzar II, who conquered Jerusalem 2,500 years ago, the Iraqi dictator also had a vision of ruling over a great empire.

In 1982 Saddam began reconstructing Babylon's most imposing historical building, the 600-room palace of the Babylonian king. Adjacent to the ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace that overlooked the Euphrates River, Saddam built his own palace, shaped like a ziggurat, surrounded by palm trees and rose gardens (figure 1). By building on top of ancient artefacts Saddam disfigured history. The four story palace extends across an area of five football fields that disrupted the dwellings of some thousand people. Saddam's workers laid more than 60 million sand-coloured bricks inscribed with the words, "In the era of Saddam Hussein, protector of Iraq, who rebuilt civilization and rebuilt Babylon", which began to crack after only ten years. This edifice was not merely mere conceived on a large scale, but as ostentatious. Consequently, it was enormously wasteful and costly in a poverty-stricken country.



**Figure 1**  
**Saddam Hussein's palace built on the ruins of King Nebuchadnezzar II's**  
**Palace, Irak (source: public domain internet).**

After the American invasion of Irak in 2003, the conquering troops pitched their tents in the vast, empty rooms of the palace, parodying its lofty purpose as an emblem of empire. The mismatched towers of the Cathedral of Our Lady of Chartres, France Chartres cathedral is considered to be one of the finest examples of the French High Gothic style. It was constructed between 1193 and 1250, and, remarkably, the speed with which it was built contributed to the consistency of its design. Its structure is in an excellent state of preservation; also the majority of the stained glass windows and sculptures survive intact. However, a strange anomaly is the unsymmetrical west facade which is characterised by two mismatched spires: one is a 105 metre plain, elongated pyramid dating from the 1140s, and the other a 113 metre tall early sixteenth-century Flamboyant spire on top of an older tower (figure 2).



**Figure 2**

**Facade of the Cathedral of Our lady of Chartres (source: public domain internet).**

After the destruction by lightning of the existing north spire in 1506 it was rebuilt in the Flamboyant style by a local mason, Jehan de Beauce. It took him seven years to accomplish the task of restoring Chartres Cathedral's facade, but in an unsymmetrical way that is uncharacteristic of Gothic architecture.

*The conversion of the Great Mosque of Córdoba, Spain, into a cathedral*

The Ummayyad Mosque, known as the Great Mosque of Córdoba was completed in 978 CE. On the original site there was a pagan temple. Then a Visigothic church was built there. The Ummayyad Moors converted the church into a mosque, then demolished it and built the Great Mosque. The Great Mosque held a place of importance amongst the Islamic community for three centuries, and it was said that its beauty was so dazzling that it defied description (figure 3).



**Figure 3**

**Interior of the Great Mosque of Córdoba (source: public domain internet).**

After the Spanish Reconquista, when Córdoba was captured by King Ferdinand III of Castile in 1236, spaces in the mosque were converted into chapels without much damage, but later a large plateresque cathedral was inserted into the centre of the Moorish building, causing major damage to the mosque (figure 3). The insertion of the cathedral into the mosque was done by permission of Charles V, king of Castile and Aragon – a gesture he regretted when he saw the destruction it had caused to the mosque.



**Figure 4**  
**The Great Mosque of Córdoba and the plateresque cathedral inserted into its centre (source: public domain internet).**

The act of desecration of the mosque was an act of revenge by the Christians, but was surely also motivated by envy and mimetic desire. By regaining military, political, cultural and religious dominance the Spaniards took revenge on the Moors' horizontally-spread architectural masterpiece by imposing a vertical, late Gothic structure into a significant part of its interior.

#### *The Alhambra and the Palace of Emperor Charles V, Granada, Spain*

The Alhambra (from the Arab “the red fortress”) is a palace and fortress complex constructed during the mid fourteenth century by Moorish rulers of the Emirate of Granada in Al-Andalus (Spanish Andalusia), occupying a hill on the southeastern border of the city of Granada. Completed towards the end of Muslim rule of Spain by Yusuf I (1333-35) and Muhammed V, Sultan of Granada (1353-91), the Alhambra is a reflection of the culture of the last centuries of Moorish rule over Andalusia. There was no master plan for the group of buildings on the hill and some are at odd positioning to each other. However, the Alhambra integrates natural site qualities with the finely decorated architectural structures and the lavish artificial gardens (figure 5).

After the conquest of Andalusia by the Catholic Monarchs in 1492, some rooms in the Alhambra were altered for re-use. Then Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, decided to establish his residence adjacent to the Alhambra palaces, a project was designed by Pedro Machuca (1520-50, who may have worked in Michelangelo's studio). The plan of the palace, which was begun in 1527, is 63 metres square, containing an circular inner patio. Its exterior consists of a typical

Italian Renaissance palace combination of rustication at the lower level and ashlar on the upper. Mashuca's design is reminiscent of the Italian Mannerist style that became popular in Italy at the time, but without following any prototype he created an avant-garde building, unique in sixteenth-century architecture (figures 6 and 7).



**Figure 5**  
**Detail of an Alhambra courtyard, Granada (source: public domain internet).**



**Figure 6**  
**Pedro Machuca, exterior view of the palace of Emperor Charles V, Alhambra, Granada, Spain (source: public domain internet).**



**Figure 7**  
**Pedro Machuca, courtyard of the palace of Emperor Charles V, Alhambra, Granada, Spain (source: public domain internet).**

However, the question is: did Machuca, as the second architect succeed in enhancing the site of the Alhambra? In answer to this question Edward Hollis (2009: 146) states: “the Palacio Real of Charles V merely stands next to the Alhambra in a shotgun marriage of sorts. Both palaces in Granada were descended from the palaces of antiquity, but by very different routes, and so they were unable to communicate with one another.”

### *The Hagia Sophia versus the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey*

The Hagia Sophia (From the Greek meaning “Holy Wisdom”) is a former Orthodox patriarchal basilica in Constantinople. At the orders of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian it was designed by Isodore of Miletus (a physicist) and Anthemius of Tralles (a mathematician), and built in about six years from 532-37. As an architectural construction it is famous for its massive dome that epitomises Byzantine architecture, and was the largest cathedral in the world for nearly a thousand years (figure 8). After Constantinople was conquered by Muslims the city was renamed Istanbul and the basilica was converted into a mosque. Later President Atatürk converted it into a museum.



**Figure 8**  
**The Hagia Sophia, Istanbul (source: public domain internet).**

Opposite the Hagia Sophia, on the Sultanahmet Square, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, called the Blue Mosque, was built by the conquerors between the years 1609-17 (figure 9). It was commissioned by the Ottoman Sultan Ahmed I (1603-17) to rival the splendour of the Hagia Sophia. This mosque is considered to be the last example of Ottoman architecture, designed by Davud Aga (died 1598), an apprentice under the Sinan (1450-1588), the architect who defined the Muslim architecture of the period. It is known that Sinan understood the structure of the Hagia Sophia well and executed some restoration work there after earthquake damage. In the single domed mosques he designed he emulated the basilica structure, but with additions and variations to create a functional mosque, and taught his pupil, Davud Aga, to do likewise.



**Figure 9**  
**The Sultan Ahmed Mosque, Istanbul (source: public domain internet).**

On the Sultanahmet Square the two monumental structures – the basilica and the mosque – face each other, albeit with some distance between them. Since the Hagia Sophia was turned into a hybrid with minarets added, the Blue Mosque appears to be the more imposing structure, but, notwithstanding the fact that both are single domed structures, their coexistence is that of a pair of rivals and unfortunate.

#### *The Red Square, the Kremlin and St Basil's Cathedral, Moscow, Russian Federation*

The Red Square, established in the fifteenth century under the rule of the Grand Prince Ivan III, epitomises the ancient Russian capital, but it is neither red, nor square. The enormous 400x150 metres open space – called red because it is the Russians' favourite colour – lies in the heart of Moscow and at its four sides stand the Kremlin, an apartment store, the State Historical Museum and St. Basil's Cathedral. Originally it was used as the equivalent of Rome's Forum, a vast meeting place for the people. The Tzars addressed the people there and during the time of the Soviet Union it was used as a place for the display of military might. Lately Lenin's Mausoleum has been installed there.

The Kremlin is a historic fortified complex, overlooking the Moskva River (figure 10). This citadel houses the Russian government, but it also includes four palaces, four cathedrals and the enclosing Kremlin wall and towers. The site has been continuously occupied since the second century BCE. However, it was Ivan III who organised the construction of the Kremlin as the seat of the tzars. The Kremlin walls were designed by Petrus Antonius Solarius (1445-94), a Swiss-Italian architect, and built between 1485 and 1495. After construction of the new Kremlin walls and churches inside, the monarch decreed that no structures should be built in the immediate vicinity of the citadel. It is notable that during the Soviet period Lenin selected the Kremlin Senate as his residence, but he removed tzarist emblems such as golden eagles on the towers and replaced them with shining Kremlin stars. The addition of Lenin's Mausoleum turned the Kremlin wall into a necropolis.





**Figure 10**  
**Areal view of the Kremlin, Moscow (source: public domain internet).**

The Russian Orthodox cathedral erected on the Red Square in 1555-61 by order of Ivan IV to commemorate the capture of Kazan and Astrakhan, called St. Basil's Cathedral, or the Cathedral of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos on the Moat, is built over the grave of a venerated local saint, Vasily (Basil), and is considered to be the ultimate Russian architectural icon (figure 11). It marks the geometric centre of the city and was the tallest building in Moscow until the completion of Ivan the Great Bell Tower in 1600. St. Basil's design is flamelike and consists of a montage of coloured onion-shaped domes, cupolas, arches, towers and spires. Since it stands adjacent to the Kremlin, it was completely secularised during the Soviet Union, but has an ambivalent existence the present Russian Federation.

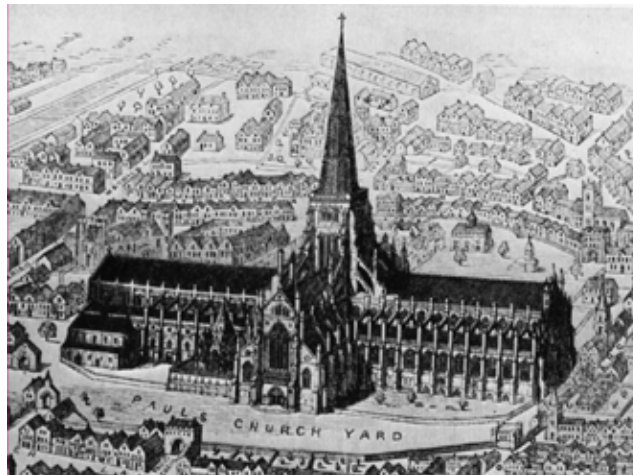


**Figure 11**  
**St. Basil's Cathedral, Red Square, Moscow, depicted in 1823 (source: public domain internet).**

The problem with St. Basil's Cathedral is that it distracts from the austere Renaissance design of the Kremlin Wall and transgresses on the monarch's decree that no structures should be built in the immediate vicinity of the citadel.

*St. Paul's Cathedral and its present surroundings, London, United Kingdom*

St. Paul's Cathedral is an Anglican cathedral, built on Ludgate Hill, the highest point in the city of London. The present building is London's fifth St Paul's Cathedral, all having been built on the same site since 604 CE (figure 12). The present building dates from the seventeenth century and was designed by Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723). At 111 metres high it was the tallest building in London from 1710 to 1962, and its dome is still one of the highest in the world.



**Figure 12**  
**The old St. Paul's Cathedral, London, in its original setting during the thirteenth century (source: public domain internet).**

St. Paul's Cathedral retains the status of one of London's most impressive buildings. However, during the twentieth century London's architects and urban planners have not been kind to the magnificence of Wren's masterpiece by closely surrounding it with nondescript modern buildings. While real estate in London is at a premium, the grandeur of the cathedral is diminished by its present bland context (figure 13).



**Figure 13**  
**Sir Christopher Wren, St. Paul's Cathedral, London, in its present environment (source: public domain internet).**

*Buildings alongside the National Mall, Washington DC, United States of America*

The National Mall is an open-area national park in downtown Washington DC, comprising a unit of the national park service (figure 14). It connects the entire area between the Lincoln Memorial and the United States Capitol, with the Washington Monument providing a division slightly west of the centre. This remarkable urban open space receives about 24 million visitors annually.



**Figure 14**  
**Pierre Charles L'Enfant, layout of the National Mall, Washington DC , USA**  
(source: public domain internet).

The history of the Mall is important. In 1791 Pierre Charles L'Enfant envisioned a garden-lined grand avenue, approximately 2,6 kilometres in length and 400 metres wide, in an area that would lie between the Capitol and an equestrian statue of George Washington to be placed directly south of the White House. It is designed as a showcase of the nation's history and culture, by including museums and historical memorials. The Vietnam Memorial is a recent addition. Unfortunately the art and history museums added adjacent to the Mall in the twentieth century do not enhance its prestige. Especially the Smithsonian Castle, the stark National Air and Space Museum and the Hirshhorn Museum by Gordon Bunshaft (1909-90) are unpleasing additions to the grand avenue with its stately focus on the Capitol (figure 15).



**Figure 15**  
**Gordon Bunshaft, Hirshhorn Museum, National Mall, Washington DC**  
(source: public domain internet).

*The addition of a large glass pyramid to the Musée du Louvre, Paris, France*

The creation of the Louvre as France's national museum of art is closely identified with the French Revolution. On 18 November 1793, a revolutionary government under Jacobin

domination officially opened the Louvre Palace (Palais du Louvre) as a gallery displaying works of art that were formerly a part of the royal collection.

In the late twentieth century the Louvre required a new entrance above an underground lobby. Commissioned by the then President of France, François Mitterrand, in 1984, the contract was given to architect I.M. Pei (born 1917) who designed what became known as the Pyramide du Louvre (Louvre Pyramid). Situated in the main courtyard (Cour Napoléon) of the Louvre Palace this large glass pyramid, supported by a metal frame, is surrounded by three smaller pyramids. It reaches a height of 20,6 metres, its square base has sides of 35 metres and consists of 603 rhombus-shaped and 70 triangular glass segments (figure 16).



**Figure 16**  
**I.M. Pei, Louvre Pyramid, Paris (source: public domain internet).**

Completed in 1989 this structure has become a landmark in the city of Paris, but is this a successful architectural addition to the Palais du Louvre? To echo an ancient Egyptian shape in glass in 1989 seems weird, especially in the context of the late Renaissance Louvre Palace. An explanation for the anomaly is given by James Stevens Curl (1994) who adequately appraises Europe's Egyptian obsession, since the time of Napoleon, with reference to the Egyptomania at the Louvre.

#### *The Koopmans de Wet House, Cape Town, South Africa*

On the site of the Koopmans de Wet House in Cape Town a rich merchant originally built a thatched cottage. The house was given its present form by Louis Thibault (1750-1815), a French-born, South African architect and engineer, in the mid-eighteenth century. Thibault designed a double-storey mansion with a flat roof in a distinctly neo-Classical style, which eventually belonged to the family Koopmans. After the death of the last family members the house, together with its most important contents, was purchased by the State and declared a public monument in 1940 (figure 17).

This house, which is a well-preserved architectural important link to South Africa's colonial past has been surrounded by International-style high-rise buildings, as an inevitable symptom of the need for commercial development of real estate.



**Figure 17**  
**Louis Thibault, Koopmans de Wet House, Cape Town (source: public domain internet).**

*Rafael Moneo's Town Hall, Cathedra Square, Murcia, Spain*

Rafael Moneo (born 1937), the Spanish architect who won the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 1966, made the following statement in 1978: “The architectural object can no longer be considered as a single, isolated event because it is bounded by the world that surrounds it as well as by history. It extends its life to other objects by virtue of its specific architectural condition” (Moneo 1978: 44). It therefore came as a shock to the citizens of Murcia in Spain when he designed their new town hall in 1998, in the form a stark, rectangular concrete box with an irregular gridlike facade, but without an alluring entrance, centrally on the Cathedral Square, adjacent to the Baroque cathedral (figure 18). Also in Ávila, the ancient Medieval city, Moneo aroused the anger of the citizens by designing a bland, modern building on the Plaza de Santa Teresa, in close proximity to the Iglesia románica de San Pedro (dating from the twelfth century), and the city’s medieval walls that are classified as UNESCO Patrimonio de la Humanidad.

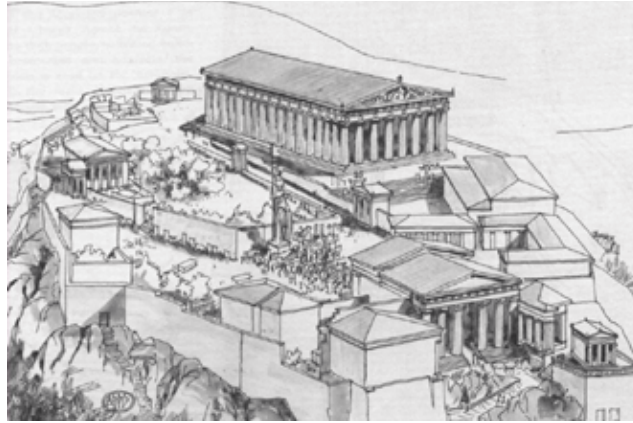


**Figure 18**  
**Rafael Moneo, Town Hall, Cathedral Square, Murcia, Spain (source: public domain internet).**

## II Successful contextualisation

### *Mnesicles's design of the Propylaea on the Acropolis, Athens, Greece*

I evaluated the role of Mnesikles, the designer of the Propylaea on the Athenian Acropolis, in my article, “Mnesikles, the second architect on the Acropolis” (2008). I argued that Mnesikles, the second architect on the Acropolis of Athens, designed the Propylaea in a way that does not distract from the Parthenon, the main building on the site (figure 19).



**Figure 19**  
**View of the Athenian Acropolis, showing the Propylaea in relation to the Parthenon (drawing by A. Rapanos).**

Mnesikles was a Classical Greek architect, active circa 440 BCE, whose life cannot be reconstructed in detail. He was the architect of the Propylaea on the Athenian Acropolis, while adjacent buildings there, the Erechtheum and the Temple of Athena Niké, are attributed to him. What these three buildings have in common is their unprecedented design; especially the Erechtheum and the Propylaea violate the foremost rule of Classical design by being asymmetrical. By contrast the Parthenon, as the main temple on the Acropolis, is a normative building on a monumental scale. Many reasons for the deviant appearance of Mnesiskles's buildings can be gathered from the extensive literature on all three. Whatever the influence of the vicissitudes of history or the irregular buildings sites may be, the real reason for the irregularity of the buildings auxiliary to the Parthenon should be sought in Mnesiskles's purposeful design strategy. If the Propylaea, the Erechtheum and the Temple of Athena Niké are “bemished” buildings, according to Classical norms, one needs to ask if Mnesikles did not intend it that way. The ambiguities in the secondary temples on the Acropolis may justifiably be interpreted as purposefully disorderly, thus acting as a foil to the main temple which is geometrized to the point of abstraction. It is therefore proposed that Mnesikles, as the second architect, designed the later temples and the Propylaea on the Athenian Acropolis not to rival the dominance and perfection of the Parthenon, by consciously making these structures imperfect by means of incomplete architectural articulation, the fragmentation of their compositional components and by limiting their scale.<sup>3</sup>

*The Duomo and the Gallery of Emanuele II, piazza del Duomo Milan, Italy*

The Duomo is the most venerable Gothic cathedral in Italy, dedicated to Santa Maria Nascente, and serving as the seat of the Archbishop of Milan. This edifice took five centuries to build: the groundbreaking took place in 1386 and the structure was completed in 1965. In front of it originated the most central and historical site in the city, the Piazza del Duomo, established in 1330 by Azzone Visconti for mercantile purposes. Its urban importance is revealed in Milan's layout, with streets either radiating from or circling the square. In 1936 another prominent structure on the square, adjacent to the cathedral, was inaugurated by Vittorio Emanuele II, who set the foundations of the Galleria, named after him, and later honoured with an equestrian statue placed in the centre of the square (figure 20).



**Figure 20**  
**The Piazza del Duomo, Milan, showing the Galleria Emanuele II adjacent to the Cathedral Santa Maria Nascente (source: public domain internet).**

The Galleria is a secular building, one of the world's oldest shopping malls, designed in 1861 and built by Giuseppe Mengoni (1829-77) between 1865 and 1877. Due to the long time difference between them, the Galleria does not compromise stylistically or functionally with the Cathedral. However, even if it is monumental in scale, the facade of the four story high Galleria, facing the piazza at right angles to the cathedral, in no way distracts from the Gothic structure. They Galleria coexist as proud exemplar of its time without intruding on the Cathedral's space.

*Giotto's Campanile, Florence, Italy*

Giotto di Bondone (1266-1337) was a supremely influential painter of the fourteenth century in Italy. Being a versatile artist he could nevertheless also handle an architectural commission for a free standing bell tower or campanile that is part of the complex of buildings that make up Florence Cathedral on the Piazza del Duomo in Florence (figure 21). Standing adjacent to the medieval Basilica of Santa Maria del Fiore and the Baptistry of St. John, the bell tower is one of the showpieces of Florentine late Gothic architecture, with its sculptural decorations and marble encrustations. The elegantly slender structure stands on a square plan with sides of 14,45 metres and a height of 84,7 metres, sustained by four polygonal buttresses at the corners. These four vertical lines are crossed by four horizontal ones, dividing the tower in five levels. It houses seven bells at the top.



**Figure 21**  
**Giotto di Bondone, campanile of Florence Cathedral (source: public domain internet).**

As a later addition to the Piazza del Duomo the geometrical exactitude of the campanile design gives no offence to the Basilica of Santa Maria del Fiore and the Baptistry of St. John, but establishes itself as a complementary entity blending with its historical counterparts.

*Piazza della Santissima Annunziata, Florence, Italy*

The Piazza della Santissima Annunziata in Florence is a consummate success due to the genius of the second architect whom Bacon praises: “The quality of Piazza della Santissima Annunziata is largely derived from the consummate architectural expression that Filippo Brunelleschi gave the first work, the Innocenti arcade, but it is really to Antonio Sangallo that we owe the piazza in its present form. He set the course of continuity that has been followed by designers there ever since.”

Antonio da Sangallo il Vecchio (1456-1534) and Baccio d’Agnolo (1462-1543) were the second architects on the site. They designed the Loggia dei Servi di Maria on the Piazza della Santissima Annunziata in 1518, following the model of the arcaded portico of the Spedale degli Innocenti by Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446) (figure 22). The portico of the new building was made consistent with that of the Spedale. The later development of the Piazza followed the arcaded motif, giving it its enduring perceptual unity as an architectural group design (figure 24).



**Figure 22**  
**Filipo Brunelleschi, Spedale degli Innocenti, Piazza della Santissima Annunziata, Florence (source: public domain internet).**





**Figure 23**  
Antonio Sangallo and Baccio d'Agnolo, Loggia dei Servi di Maria, Piazza della Santissima Annunziata, Florence (source: public domain internet).



**Figure 24**  
View of the Piazza della Santissima Annunziata, Florence (source: public domain internet).

### *The Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy*

The Galleria degli Uffizi in Florence is one of the oldest and most famous museums in the world. It was originally commissioned by Grand Duke Cosimo I de' Medici in 1560 to serve as the offices (uffizi) for the Florentine magistrates. The original architect was Giorgio Vasari, but the commission was completed by Alfonso Parigi and Bernardo Buontalenti in 1581.

The cortile (internal courtyard) between the Uffizi's two wings creates the effect of a short, idealised street, with a view towards the Palazzo Vecchio (figure 25). At its far end the courtyard is open to the River Arno through a Doric screen that articulates the space without blocking it. The design can truly be called the first regularised streetscape of Europe. As a painter Vasari knew how to emphasise the perspective length of the building by the matching facades of the two wings with continuous roof cornices, unbroken cornices between the storeys, and the three continuous steps on which the palace-fronts stand.



**Figure 25**  
**Giorgio Vasari, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence (source: public domain internet).**

*The Corridoro Vasariano, Florence, Italy*

This corridor was built in five months by order of Grand Duke Cosimo I de' Medici in 1564, to a design by Giorgio Vasari. It is an elevated enclosed passageway that connects the Palazzo Vecchio with the Palazzo Pitti, the city's power-bases on each side of the River Arno. Beginning at the south side of the Palazzo Vecchio, it joins the Uffizi Gallery and leaves on its south side, crossing the Lungarno dei Archibuseiri, following the north bank of the Arno River until it crosses the Ponte Vecchio, it snakes its way further and finally joins the Palazzo Pitti. It actually adds a level to the Ponte Vecchio, built in 1345, an inhabited bridge (figure 26).

The tall, high-level corridor was added to the elevation of the bridge in a remarkably harmonious way, simply demarcated with evenly spaced rectangular openings, in a plastered wall that forms an extension of that of the covered bridge.



**Figure 26**  
**Giorgio Vasari, Corridoro Vasariano, Florence (source: public domain internet).**

*The Logetta and Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, Italy*

The Biblioteca Marciana, also called the Libreria Sansoviniana was constructed by Jacopo Sansovino (1486-1570), a Florentine architect who had settled in Venice after the Sack of Rome. The purpose of the library was to house the collection of Greek and Latin manuscripts which the great humanist scholar, Cardinal Bessarion of Trebizond left to the state of Venice. The site of the building is right opposite the Palazzo Ducale, Sansovino brought ambitious new ideas of the Roman Renaissance with his design, but also appealed to the Venetian love of surface decoration by endowing the surfaces of the structure with an abundance of statuary. His original plan included a barrel-vault ceiling that collapsed shortly after construction. For that failure the architect was put in prison, from which his friends Titian and Aretino rescued him.

While Sansovino undertook large projects around the piazzetta of St Mark's Square he created a need for improvements in the surrounding structures. By adjusting the angle of the stalls around the campanile to construct the library he freed the campanile from the wall and joined the piazza and piazzetta together, and by making the tower stand individually Sansovino placed considerable more emphasis on the bell tower and its small loggia. Not only drawing attention to it spatially, the marked improvements of the surrounding structures made the existing loggia seem drab. Acknowledging the new grandeur surrounding it, the Procurata de Supra commissioned a replacement sometime before 1537, Sansovino as the chief architect led the project for the new loggia to its completion in the mid 1540s. A relatively small structure the new loggia's exterior not only enhances the piazzetta, but also the grandeur of the campanile (figure 27).



**Figure 27**  
**Jacopo Sansovino, Logetta and Biblioteca Marciana, Venice**  
(source: public domain internet).

*Arches on the axis of the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, Paris, France*

The Avenue des Champs-Élysées is one of the most famous streets in the world, known in France as “La plus belle avenue du monde”. It runs for two kilometres through the eighth arrondissement in northwestern Paris from the Place de la Concorde in the east, with the obelisk of Luxor, to the Place Charles de Gaulle (formerly the Place de l'Étoile) in the west, the location of the Arc de Triomphe, forming the major part of the Parisian “Axe historique” (figure 28).



**Figure 28**  
**The Avenue des Champs-Élysées, Paris, showing the length of the street from the obelisk of Luxor to the Arc de Triomphe (source: public domain internet).**

The Arc de Triomphe was commissioned by Napoleon in 1806 shortly after his victory at Austerlitz, but it was not finished until 1836. There are four huge relief sculptures at the bases of the four pillars, all commemorating major French victories. For the construction of the modern arch in the business district La Défence, on the historical axis of Paris President François Mitterrand launched a design competition in 1992, which was won by the Danish entrants, the architect Johann Otto von Spreckelsen (1929-87) and the engineer Erik Reitzel. They designed the twentieth-century version of the Arc de Triomphe, which was begun in 1995 and completed in 1999. This “Arche” is an almost perfect cube (width 108m, height 110m, depth 112m) in which government offices are housed (figure 29). It was inaugurated in July 1989, with grand military parades that marked the bicentennial of the French Revolution. It completes the line of monuments that forms the “Axe historique” running through Paris. In addition, the “Arche” is positioned to form a secondary axis with the two highest buildings in Paris: the Tour Eiffel and the Tour Montparnasse.



**Figure 29**  
**Johann Otto von Spreckelsen and Erik Reitzel, Arche, La Défence, Paris (source: public domain internet).**

With the design of the two arches, separated by two and a half centuries and the length of the Parisian “Axe historique”, the French expressed their magnificent sense of history and urban design.

*The National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, United States of America*

Financier Andrew W. Mellon began gathering a private collection of old master paintings and sculptures during the First World War, but by the late 1920s he decided to direct his collecting efforts, secretly, towards the establishment of a new national gallery for the United States. Designed by architect John Russel Pope (1874-1937) in a neo-Classical style, the new gallery in Washington DC was accepted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on behalf of the American people (figure 30).



**Figure 30**  
**John Russel Pope, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC (source: public domain internet).**

In 1978 the gallery was extended by the addition of the East Building, designed by architect I.M. Pei, which received a National Honour Award from the American Institute of Architects in 1981 (figure 31). The modern extension, linked by means of a passageway to the existing gallery, allows it to retain its individuality. Thus the West and East buildings co-exist as architectural exemplars of their times.



**Figure 31**  
**I.M. Pei, East Building of the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC (source: public domain internet).**

### III The co-existence of old and new architecture in historically unique Western cities

Francesco Bandarin and Ron Van Oers (2012: 21) states with reference to Graz in Austria:

The historic centre of Graz was listed as a World Heritage site in 1999 as a fine example of a Central European urban complex with a harmonious blend of architectural styles and artistic movements that had succeeded each other since the Middle Ages. During the first years of the new century the inscribed property saw a series of contemporary architectural inventions, which touched upon a decades-long debate in architectural and conservation circles concerning building in historic context.

Warsaw, the capital city of Poland, faces the same dilemma as Graz. (endnote: 4) Established at the turn of the thirteenth century Warsaw is presently the ninth most populous city in the European Union. It is widely known as the “phoenix city”, as it recovered from extensive damage during the Second World War during which eighty percent of its buildings were destroyed. Its present mixture of architectural styles reflects the turbulent history of the city and country. After the war most of the historical buildings were reconstructed, while some more or less intact nineteenth century buildings, for example the Leopold Kronenberg Palace were demolished in the 1950s to erect communist style residential blocks. Warsaw’s current urban landscape is one of modern and contemporary architecture (figure 32).



**Figure 32**  
Cityscapes of Warsaw (source: public domain internet).

In broad terms, all historical cities in Europe, Russia, Asia, the USA and Africa had to rebuild and extend their urban environments during the twentieth century, a process that will accelerate during the twenty-first century. The problem is mainly how modern architects respect the established traditions of the cities in which they act as second architects. The following examples illustrate some unsuccessful additions in traditional cities during the late twentieth century.

#### *The Palace of the Parliament, Bucharest, Republic of Romania*

The Palace of the Parliament, a modern building in the ancient city of Bucharest, was commissioned during the authoritarian rule of Nicolae Ceaușescu’s during the occupation of Romania by the Soviet Union. It was designed by Anca Petrescu (1949-2013) as the seat of political and administrative power, and work started in June 1980. In Bucharest, an ancient

European city with a venerable architectural history, (endnote: 5) one of the ugliest buildings in Europe, if not on the planet, took shape after June 1980 (figure 33). According to the Guinness Book of Records the twelve story high palace with 1,100 rooms, is the largest, most expensive civilian administrative building on the planet, and also the heaviest. Its ground plan measures 270m x 240m; it is 86m high and its basement is sunk 92m underground.



**Figure 33**  
**Anca Petrescu, Palace of the Parliament, Bucharest, Republic of Romania**  
(source: public domain internet).

This building will, as long as it lasts, be a reminder of the Communist ideology that infested so many eastern European and Russian cities with placeless buildings.

#### *Milunić and Gehry's Dancing House, Prague, Czech Republic*

Prague is an ancient city. It was founded and settled as early as the Paleolithic age. Around 200 BCE the Celts established a settlement, followed by various other settlements. Prague has been a political, cultural and economic centre of Europe, especially eastern Europe for more than 1,100 years. For centuries, during the Gothic and Renaissance eras, Prague was the seat of two Holy Roman Emperors and thus also the capital of the Holy Roman Empire. The city played roles in the Protestant Reformation, the Thirty Years' War, and in the twentieth century, both during two world wars and during the post-war communist era.

Prague which is at present the capital and largest city in the Czech Republic, with a population of about 1,3 million people, is an important historical place in which its architectural styles reflect its varied and turbulent past. Most characteristic is the Gothic Saint Vitus Cathedral began by Charles IV, Holy Roman Emperor and king of Bohemia who reigned from 1346-78. He also built the Charles Bridge and its towers, after the old bridge was destroyed in a flood.<sup>6</sup>

However, there is a new "sight" in this stately city, namely Ginger Milunić and Frank Gehry's Dancing House, built from 1992 to 1996, which may be described as an experiment in a postmodern deconstructivist style with pseudo neo-Baroque echoes. Clearly, this building does not suitably blend into Prague's architectural fibre, but it nevertheless became a tourist attraction (figure 34).



**Figure 34**  
**Ginger Milunić and Frank Gehry, Dancing House, Prague**  
(source: public domain internet).

*The Gesher Hameitarim Bridge, Jerusalem, Israel*

The Gesher Hameitarim Bridge in Jerusalem, commonly called the Chords Bridge, was designed by the Spanish engineer, Santiago Calatrava (born 1951) and completed in 2008 (figure 35). It is a cable-stayed light rail bridge at the entrance to Jerusalem, situated at the traffic intersection of Shazar Street and Herzl Boulevard, and used by trams running to and from outlying Jerusalem neighbourhoods and by pedestrians who cross from Kiryat Moshe to the Jerusalem Central Bus Station. The bridge which spans a total length of 360 metres is constructed of reinforced concrete, Mitzpe yellowish limestone for the abutments, with basalt cobblestone paving, and glass and stainless steel for the walkway. It is 14,82 metres wide, the pylon is 118 metres high, and the longest suspended span of 160 metres has a clearance of 5,5 metres.



**Figure 35**  
**Santiago Calatrava, Chords Bridge, Jerusalem** (source: public domain internet).

What is controversial about the bridge? Its structure is conspicuously futuristic, purposely defying Jerusalem's entrenched building code, which favours the uniformity of dolomitic limestone, with a varied range of pink, sand and off-white colours, as a construction material.



## Conclusion

Various other Pritzker Architecture Prize winners, the so-called international star architects of the present, are inundating cities with sensationally novel buildings that are showpieces on their own, without regard to context or intertextuality. Focussing on six leading contemporary architects – Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, Bernard Tschumi, Zaha Hadid, Rem Koolhaas and Steven Holl – Gevork Hartoonian (2013) puts forward a unique and insightful analysis of their “neo-avant-garde” architecture. He concludes that contemporary architecture thrives on spectacle and excess. Sadly, these architects build only for their own stardom or glory, without regard for the tradition that Nietzsche (1988: 7) envisaged when he meditated on the theory of architecture: “For whom does an architect build? ... I think he builds for the next great architect.”

## Notes

- 1 Girard first proposed the notion of mimetic desire in 1961. For a discussion see Paisley (1994).
- 2 Architectural intertextuality is defined by Kahled al-Sultany (2012: 11) as “a creative process to which the architect willingly resorts in order to enrich his design. In this context, intertextuality does not negate the architect’s individuality, which is intertextualised with the other through his achievement”. In other words, the architect who builds in an intertextual
- 3 situation is in Edmund Bacon’s sense the “second man”.
- 4 For a further discussion of the buildings on the Athenian Acropolis, see Maré (2013).
- 5 For a history of Warsaw, see Ságvári (1980).
- 6 For a history of Bucharest, see Ságvári (1980).

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