

## THE LIGHTS OF A SETTLEMENT - PROTECTION OF THE VALUE BY NIGHT

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### **Abstract**

*ICOMOS charters, documents, and other guidelines determine the fundamental principles of restoration. Environmental, technical, social, industrial...and other ways of development cause serious pressure for historic settlements. Most of consequences of these pressures are more or less regulated. But some of the new practices and new possibilities give surplus possibilities for the protected zone as well. One of these is the illumination of the settlement. In parallel with the technical development the night illumination of the settlements has own evolution. But the appearance of a historic settlement or a monument is one of the most important characters. Instead of the accepted principles of daylight appearance of historic settlements the night appearance is rather followed by the uncontrolled technical possibilities.*

**Key words:** *Historic settlement, illumination, monument, appearance, artificial light.*



In connection with the new function of the monuments or in connection with the changing settlement context a lot of new possibilities, facilities, special devices have been appeared - as the requirements are changing steadily. The technical development gives new possibilities as well.

In general the technical innovation serves only the function in the first time. Later it gives a new prospective possibility. The next step when the new technique gives a new possibility to denote the original value from a new aspect.

The new technique may give a chance for a new special usage. Additional possibilities of this phenomenon appear sometimes not respecting the original elementary values later.

The natural light as the illumination of the historic buildings was always very important. In all ages the lighting of the interiors helped to recognise the inner space. The natural light was used as the enhancement of the original value. In former time the historic buildings and settlements had

differing relationship with the illumination than nowadays. The difference is in the different nature of natural and artificial illumination.

The technical development of artificial illumination gives further possibilities as well. Orthodox statement that the historic building should be authentically seen only at sun light as there was no former possibility to see them at night because the only light source was the moonlight.



From the other hand, the artificial lights give a new possibility to the historic buildings as well. The monument may get a new visualization. The serious technical illumination development has originated new appearance with the new possibilities. But finally the overstepping new technique lead up to art for art's sake while this technique don't find its own self-expressive methods.

That is naturally supported to take advantages of artificial illumination of historic settlements. A new vision of the monument offers a good opportunity also keeping in mind the requirement of the authenticity.

If we review the historical usages of the artificial illumination, we can define the following periods:

### **1. Functional period**

The lights for the everyday life. According to the original basic function that gives the light to the settlement in darkness in this period. There is no building with extra illumination, nor extra bright accent in the street and in the settlement.



**2. Period. Amazing floodlight is used for illumination to emphasize the historic appearance of the settlement.**

Those buildings that got an important role in the settlement silhouette got a special illumination. In this period the function of the illumination was to represent the same characteristic settlement structure that developed in a historic way.



**3. Period. The individual building got a special accent**

The important, characteristic building of the settlement get a special accent with artificial illumination in the town. The illumination of the whole facade or the silhouette is the reminiscence of the daylight appearance. The lights represents the importance of the building in the settlement structure at a given urban point.



**4. Period. Beginning of the individuality of the illumination**

As the lighting technique develops, the buildings get anti-natural aggressive illumination from strange direction at darkness.

Contemporary architecture uses the extravagant illumination but in this case this is a new valuable possibility for the architects. The architecture always considers the new technique as a new possibility. The architects always research new possibilities of the appearance of a building. The visual culture determines the architectural culture of the illumination.



**5. Period. The monuments get strange appearance by night**

The development of the light technique not follows the traditional historic monument care principles. The strange lights appear all of a sudden and try to introduce themselves as traditional tool.

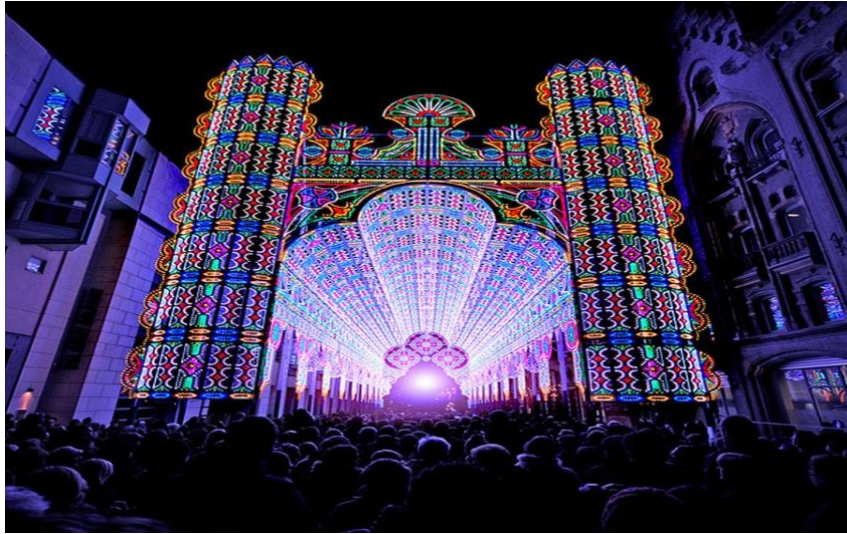


**6. Period. The monument as subsidiary object became only a screen for new art.**

The computer science and technique gives a new way of illumination. The historic monument became only the medium of the new visual experience. What is the role of a historic monument? – This is ethical question. Are the new effects respecting the monument preservation principles?

There are several examples when the commercial cultural tourism interest encourages - sometimes frightening - the new ways of development.





The question in connection with the authentic historic monument restoration is the same at the usage of the monuments and their appearance in the darkness.

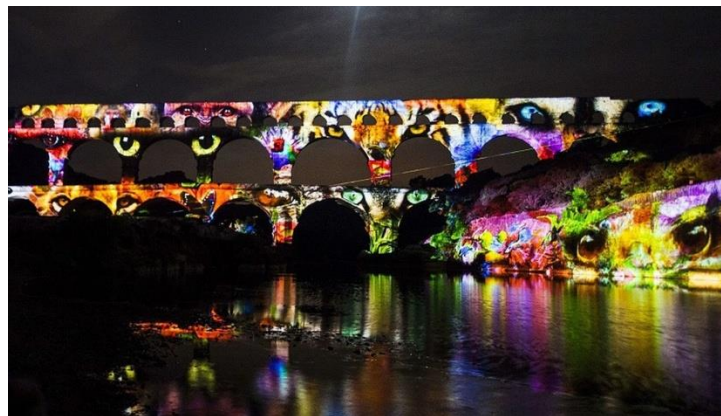
Sometimes the new kind of illumination not transmits the original value. That is mirroring the new nature of consumption of the contemporary man and his behaviour - or his misbehaviour.



Doubtless the appearance of the building and the settlement are in immediate connection. The building is the important part of the settlement system, and that has the same role also in darkness. In the settlement buildings always have the same importance - independently from the part of the day. Generally the investors consider only the building. Artificial illumination is important part of the renewing program - sometimes without settlement-level coordination. The appearance of the settlement cannot be a diffuse complex of amazing lights, not even if this appears as a picturesque scene. Can be a problem in darkness the integrity of historic buildings without their original context?



The usage of the monument as canvas maybe also ethical question. Everything for the tourism, and tourists like the astonishing strange artistic illumination. The monument should represent its own inner value without depreciation meanwhile it is used as medium for a nondescript art.



## **References**

1. In connection with the illumination of a historic settlement, this is only an extraordinary train of thought about the lights of a monument. If the requirement of integrity and authenticity is important preservation principle, the settlement view or a monument appearance is the same or another "night category"? What is acceptable in connection with a historic value in darkness? There is no common platform. The technical developers go ahead, the restorers always follow them. These problems haven't been raised yet seriously.

## **Illustrations**

- Ill. 1. Buda Castle at daylight
- Ill. 2. Buda Castle by night
- Ill. 3. Landscape of Budapest by night 1902.
- Ill- 4. Landscape of Budapest 1938

- III. 5. The illuminated Matthias Church by night 1930.
- III.6. A palace building with unnatural lights
- III. 7. Monument with false image
- III. 8. Technical development without peculiar individuality.
- III. 9. Light show for tourism
- III. 10. Overrated lights, overrated illumination
- III. 11. Joke or art- what is the real value?

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