Education, Design and Practice – Understanding skills in a Complex World

• Paper / Proposal Title:

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• Abstract (300 words):
From the post-war period on, the field of heritage conservation has grown significantly in Canada. An ever-increasing focus on the legacy of the past has enabled the implementation of policies as well as the development of sophisticated expertise, doctrine and principles of intervention. However, these measures have developed and evolved in parallel with architectural practice. This is largely due to the fact that learning about heritage conservation is not mandatory in architectural education in Canada. In addition, professional associations do not recognize specializations in architectural practices. The sensitivity demonstrated in projects that include a heritage component is therefore often based on the goodwill and the intuition of the designers.

We must recognize that this is no longer sufficient in today’s context given the new paradigm that has emerged in recent years which promotes a pluralistic
vision of heritage and associates it with human values. The Historic Urban Landscape Recommendation adopted by UNESCO in 2011 and, more recently, the 2015 inclusion of heritage in the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are strong indicators of this new way of defining heritage. Conservation is no longer limited to reconstruction and restoration interventions, but also includes the transformation of buildings and sites, either through reuse or rehabilitation.

This paper will present an innovative design course offered as part of the Professional Master’s degree at the École d'architecture de l'Université de Montréal (Canada). The course invites students to learn both theoretical and practical ways of designing and developing an architectural project that builds on the knowledge, methods, thinking and precedents of heritage conservation. World Heritage provides a framework for this learning, in particular the Historic District of Old Québec (inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1985) and the Old Town site and New Town of Edinburgh in Scotland (inscribed in 1995).

- Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Claudine Déom is an Associate Professor at Université de Montréal's School of Architecture where she has also headed the Master’s program in Conservation of the Built Environment since 2007. Claudine Déom is currently pursuing research in the history of architecture and heritage conservation with a focus on the process of attributing heritage values, specifically to public buildings in Montreal and Quebec City. She has undertaken research in partnership with the Montreal School Board for the architectural conservation of schools. She is active in various conservation organizations such as Heritage Montreal and the Conseil du patrimoine culturel du Québec, the provincial Ministry of Culture’s advisory board on heritage matters.