


## Article

# Conserving the Historical Identity of North Nicosia Walled City: Exploring Design Approaches and Implications from 1983 to 2003

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**Abstract:** Nicosia Walled City, on the northern side of Cyprus, encapsulates historical imprints from various cultures and civilizations within its layered structure, despite being a divided city since 1974. Based on this beautiful Medieval sequence, this study investigates the implications of architectural design approaches aimed at incorporating contemporary architecture into this heterogeneous historic city to conserve its historical identity. While the threats facing this diverse built heritage composition are various, the changes brought about by design outcomes and development actions can be challenging. This is especially so when designers are obligated to adhere to conservation principles that clash with the city's character and that resort to design strategies that prohibit the addition of new layers. This study employed a mix of qualitative and quantitative research methods and examined three case studies based on buildings that were erected during the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus period, spanning from 1983 to when the crossing began in 2003. This study's conclusions revealed that the design schemes negatively impacted the city's historical identity layers because the designers followed selective conservation principles that entirely concentrated on nostalgia rather than typological values. Rather than creating new layers, preferences energized this problem, and the designers' attitudes towards the place's heterogeneous character maintained the same context uniformity patterns. Efforts to add sequences of layers reflecting the identity of the present time and its perceptions were thwarted. These reductions in the historical layers, the subsequent transformations, and the current social-cultural necessities should stimulate individual determination and practical policy instruments. The tools proposed here will accommodate inclusive ideas that encourage fresh dialogues with the past, thus keeping the city's identity significant for the future.

**Keywords:** architectural expression; conservation principles; contemporary architecture; design approaches; historical identity; historic environment; North Nicosia Walled City; sequence layers



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## 1. Introduction

The Walled City of Nicosia in Cyprus is among the Mediterranean cities that witnessed the dramatic succession and influence of empires. Today, their footprints are preserved around the city like an open museum with significant tourist value. Both the past layers and the present ones together have given it a distinctive identity in the heritage world, especially those from the Middle Ages (Medieval civilizations). In these material-cultural strata, visual evidence shows that architectural objects in the form of buildings played a significant role in the development of the city and society. It is a perfect example of a historic place, with its composition of past architectural features and contemporary layers giving it a heterogeneous character. Historically, the built environment of Nicosia in Cyprus has been imprinted with the soaring vaults and arches of religious buildings, traditional domestic houses, and imperial symbols that constitute its identity expression [1]. These visual layers keep responding to periodic cultural changes; some are extinct, some are ruined, and others are still standing. However, this sense of place intangibly relates to

the genius loci of other Medieval settlements and cultural influences from the East and West [2].

Nicosia, or Lefkosa, replaces the geographical area formerly known as Ledra (the Ancient city), and this place has been called several names in history because of cross-cultural pollination on the island of Cyprus [3]. The city has been divided into two halves since 1974, with a green line and a buffer zone, with the north being Turkish-speaking communities and the south being Greek-speaking communities [4]. Based on the evidence and narratives available, the northern side was selected for this study, which is nowadays referred to as North Nicosia Walled City as an aftermath of the social-spatial partition. This study examines cases from the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) period, which began in 1983 and continues to the present day, but it narrows the cases to end in 2003 (the year crossing started across the divide through the approved gates). That year marked the beginning of another significant era for Nicosia when bi-communal negotiations, after approximately three decades of separation, reconnected the interests of the two communities—Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. This study focuses on the implications of design approaches as a crucial aspect of interventions in historical settings. Within this scope, a recent analysis of specifically selected neighborhoods in this historic environment indicated a failure of the interventions to follow sustainable development strategies. In particular, faking continuity challenges the achievement of heritage conservation targets in some places [5].

The historical environment possesses a definite form (character), heterogeneous or homogeneous, similar to every life-sustaining landscape [6]. The historical environment has many definitions, but in this paper, the ones that focus on two concepts, diversity and integration, are built upon. These two concepts are interwoven in a discourse that concerns contemporary architecture coexisting with the historic fabric and cultural and identity matters [7]. From a diversity standpoint, the historic environment is defined as the legacy of the past in the present [8]. In terms of integration, three researchers have defined it as the representation of the city's grain [9]; the containment of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, environmental, and equity matters [10]; and an integral totality for the interaction of change [11]. In this material-cultural identity, the architectural object, as a symbolic space, transcends the reflected meaning of the object but releases visual meaning to the surrounding environment. From a general perspective, a heterogeneous historical environment shows a diversified character within an integrated whole. Examples of such cities include the ones that link Medieval civilizations (e.g., Rhodes Old Medieval Town, Greece).

In contrast, a homogeneous historic environment possesses a uniform character but is ecologically structured. Most historic cities with such a character come from Arab civilizations (e.g., Timbuktu, Mali). On a universal level, the forces of evolution naturally shape historic urban spaces according to cultural, spatial, and temporal specificities. This is the case with the human race, and the Scottish town planner and biologist Patrick Geddes (1854–1922) systematically defined the Medieval city as a balanced integration of nature and human artifacts. Beyond Sitte's vision of embracing the city's environmental and social dimensions [12], this type of ecological layering assumes a perfect state without considering the altering tendencies of man, and it is criticized for its linear mechanistic framework. However, an alternative strategy for expressing these ideas based on openness, unpredictability, and dynamism was introduced [13]. Upon this premise, Christophersen [14] conceptualized the social-ecological system (SES), which incorporates nature, culture, and man into a single ecological system.

According to Parker [15], the definition of design approaches provided in architecture was adapted as the process and methodology by which an architect arrives at a design for a building or group of buildings in a specific context within the built environment. In the heritage conservation domain, it refers to different design types (typologies) used by designers to add any kind of contemporary architecture to an existing historic place [16]. The scope of contemporary architecture in Item 9 of the *Vienna Memorandum* [7] refers

to all significant planned and designed interventions in the built historic environment, including open spaces, new constructions, additions to or extensions of historic buildings and sites, and conversions. Today, the challenge remains how the sequence layering can continue to withstand differing temporal and spatial changes without relinquishing its historic identity layers. The heterogeneous historic setting is configured with diversified layers, while the homogeneous ones possess uniform layers with a similar character to the natural environments earlier defined by [6].

Historic identity is a complex formation within the scope of a city that can be understood as a simplistic process of building design, as well as one containing the sociocultural aspirations of individuals and groups [17]. These enhance the historic setting's wholeness with other compositional factors (the many layers) of a city, and are also a part of the urban built form [18,19], in building the connection between the past and the present to the future. In this nested series, new layers also contribute to the urban sequence of the historic city. At the urban scale, Baytin [20] iterated that contemporary ideas and material innovations have the power to awaken the physical and social layers of historic environments. This place is the playing field where the new architecture interacts with the existing ones to form the coinage "new and old" [21]. It means new construction affects the historic area either positively or negatively. Meanwhile, the historic context is a part of the overall city and would have to grow since the city is an organism [22]. In fact, contemporary architecture breathes new life into historic places.

The aim of this paper was to address the implications of design approaches for adding new layers in the historic environment of North Nicosia Walled City as a strategy for building relationships of inclusive expression that conserve multiple historic identity layers. Based on this aim and the relationship between conservation principles, design approaches, and historic environment character types, this paper examines two hypotheses with four objectives. The first hypothesis was that guideline criteria directly affect the outcome of design approaches when followed fully. The second hypothesis was that design approaches are inherent in qualities that can be articulated in different directions in a specific historical setting to create a design dialogue between new and old. The study objectives were: (1) to encourage the design of new layers that will be added to the historic identity sequence, (2) to showcase the causal implications of designing with new and old conservation principles that direct inputs and outcomes toward a selective set of values inherent in historic places, (3) to establish the direct relationship between conservation guidelines and newly conceptualized approaches to foster future quality design dialogue between new architectural artifacts and the old ones, and (4) to provide useful policy and design tools that will sustain the union of new and old in historic contexts.

This study contributes to the ongoing debates on interventions within historical contexts. Taking the legacy of architecture to connect three major concepts (design approaches, principles, and relationships) on the subject of co-existing "new and old", other researchers have focused on only the single themes before. In general, this study renews our perspectives on the preservation of architectural heritage within the dynamics of sustainable heritage conservation as an inclusive phenomenon.

## 2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

An earlier thematic review carried out before writing this paper revealed tendencies as one of the macro themes, encompassing ideologies, impacts, and implications that contribute to the expression of structures in various historical contexts. To find a suitable theoretical framework, Moon and Blackman [23] suggested exploring multiple knowledge-based paradigms such as ontology (knowledge acquisition from the world) and epistemology (knowledge discovery). The relativist ontological paradigm, which sees reality as dynamic and socially constructed, and epistemic relativism, which maintains that knowledge is not universal but rather depends on the context, interact with the ontological position to achieve this study's hypotheses and objectives [24]. Epistemic constructivism, on the other hand, is an additional epistemological paradigm that is crucial for this study

because it holds that individuals or communities construct knowledge. The first hypothesis of this study is related to relativist ontology and epistemic relativism because, when conservation documents' guiding principles are applied without taking into account contextual evidence and logical opinions, it causes replications, and vice versa. Meanwhile, epistemic constructivism relates to the second hypothesis, which shows how architects and other designers influence the outcomes of architectural objects through the articulation of their context. This requires an inductive knowledge-based approach that arranges options into general knowledge or outcomes (categorization and causal inferences) [25]. It was important to search for inclusivity that would add value to the existing knowledge about the architectural heritage and cause a rethink of discourse monopolies in heritage conservation platforms that are non-reductionist in ideas [7,26–28]. This consensus among stakeholders is necessary, especially since historical urban landscape problems have become multifaceted. Predictable and generalized outcomes are possible based on the current state and patterns of design approaches and regulatory instruments discussed in the literature.

Design approaches in architecture are dynamic concepts that can be explored from different directions. However, the idea of design is not limited to architecture but has a multidisciplinary network that has contributed to its complexity and manifestation in society. To contextualize this premise within the built environment, urban challenges call for consensus in handling current environmental problems. Reviewing design requires new ways of thinking for efficient outcomes and satisfying design-based needs. Design in the historic setting is urgently needed as a conservation strategy to preserve the layers of history, while upgrading is permissible depending on the historic situation. There are even times when the physical and functional assessment may require “doing nothing at all”. Design approaches are a set of problem-solving guidelines followed by architects through the design process to resolve matters of the site and the building [29]. This path of design approach simplification emerged from the industrial design domain as the process of developing diverse types of products under different situations, which manifest in two directions [30]. The inside-out design approach focuses on product-working functionality, while the outside-in design approach targets human-using functionality. In this discourse, the “product” is architectural objects; “inside-out” refers to the problem solving of topic, concept, and context. In contrast, “outside-in” refers to action-reflective practice. The latter is what post-occupancy evaluation (POE) does to inform future measures for solving housing issues. In the historic environment, these two cannot be separated, and this study questions the overuse of a particular approach that fuels imitation designs [31–33].

The expressive value of architectural objects has attracted several criticisms from different philosophical stances, but this paper aligns with [34,35], which linked it to the aesthetic symbolic space and the tectonic plastic space. The space mentioned is not mathematical in nature but a phenomenological, psychological, and social construct. Their assumptions harmonize with the earlier 20th-century ideas introduced by architect Thomas Evensen that explained architectural expression as an impression of the spirit of the building, not the function or the meaning. A search to form a common language despite cultural differences freezes patterns. In addition, Chebaiki and Chabbi [36] engaged with the expressive and figurative attributes of design to ensure the preservation of nostalgia value and typological forms of sociocultural qualities and to satisfy the contemporary needs of the environment. These expressive concerns were reinterpreted as visual syntax, a type of adaptation approach called “facadism” [37,38]. The design classifications used in the existing literature for adding contemporary architecture in a historical context were logically appraised to unveil the current situation, taking into consideration the most recent sources that sort out the concept, as presented in Table 1.



**Table 1.** Classification of current design approaches in the literature.

Design Groups	Sources	Logical Highlights
Literal replication, invention with a style, abstract reference, intentional opposition	[39]	Intentional opposition is applied to face-lifting weak contexts as strength
Similar, opposite, harmonic contrast	[40]	The distinction between imitation and version in a similar approach requires separating them like the intellectual and re-founding strategies proposed by Brolin [41]
Referential, differential, contrasting	[42]	Literally multicolored better explains the term contrasting, but limiting it to contradictory leaves behind some untouched attributes
Maximum disclosure, degree of architectural style allusion, neutral	[43]	The concept of adaptation via underground extensions, use of large transparent screens and transitory openings as gateway windows to see the historical artifact in a neutral typology opens the door to full contemporary application
Contextual uniformity, juxtaposition, continuity, freestyle	[44–46]	Freestyle is non-contextual, so needs a different class
Mimetic, associative, contrasting	[47]	The meaning of contrasting differs from Demiri’s [42] use of the same term
Simulation, integration, analogy, contrast	[48]	The use of contrast agrees with Alfirevic and Alfirevic’s [48] meaning and showcases 3 layers: information, interpretation, and creativity for the design process
Pastiche, traditional, subtle, modern, arrogant	[49]	Imitation can be rich or poor depending on the existing visual context and design reflects design values

Table 1’s classification, which was inspired by other studies, seems to be in conflict with the use of some design approaches. Arguably, certain conservation actions that have been criticized as ‘alien’ to historic places could be a misplacement of the human sense of time and application. The technique of forming clusters from a set of texts could lead to a regrouping of the existing classification because some of the group names denote design types seeking a holistic major class. Furthermore, other design typologies used in some historic projects were not captured in the existing classification. They are:

- The philosophical approach contributed by Ruskin [45,50], in the late 18th century is an idealistic approach [51] to designing a new building in a historic area.
- The Spatialism approach brings artistic contributions to architectural objects introduced into a historic setting as space and explains how such objects can transform the environmental meaning of the place, sometimes positively or negatively, according to Fontana [46,52].
- The Collage City approach advocates a middle ground between scientific engineering and a diverse range of things to design the new in a sustainable manner while adapting to the future through time [53].
- The participatory approach is a two-way framing, a top-down and bottom-up method, that seeks the cooperation of all concerned groups, especially in multicultural territories [54].
- The Strategic approach is a combination of conservation and sustainability in historic cores through welcoming new developments that do not displace existing functions and occupancy [55–57].
- The Partitioning approach uses the physical construct to create meaning in the historic environment as a scene for the display of the visual environment of the city. Partitioning enhances the sense of place, identity, and intangible values of the historic context as part of sociology, culture, and environmental psychology [58,59].
- The Picturesque Design approach restructures the old to produce reciprocity between a pre-modern urban fabric and contemporary architecture [60].
- The humanistic approach is conceptualized as a relational space created from the integration of a community facade, a product of formalistic and humanistic aspects

that constitute a framework for inserting new architecture in a historically sensitive context [61].

The question of “appropriate place” was not substantially addressed, although contextual approaches and other related design typologies have focused on context from the perspectives of physical, social, cultural, historic, new, etc. This paper sees all such aspects as layers embedded in a historic environment whose types could shine light into the discourse of conserving historic identity. When this premise is revisited from the bottom up, a gap appears with respect to what character of a place should attract certain design approaches. Place in this instance is translated from the excerpts of *The Burra Charter*, Article 1, 1.1 [62], that explain it as “site, area, building or other work, group of buildings or other works together with pertinent contents and surroundings”. A search for that characterization, which is their distinctiveness as a positive partitioning, should not be confused in the midst of variety (contrast), which prompts this paper’s process into the models developed by several studies to evaluate new designs in historic areas.

At the end of the 19th century, Steve Tiesdell and others working on “Design in Historic Urban Quarters” organized what they called Continuum to evaluate compatibility levels—uniformity, continuity, and juxtaposition [45]. Another renowned urban planner wrote *What Time Is This Place?* And developed the Loose fit long life by defining the outside (facade) as public and the inside (function) as private. In the same period, the best fit rule, based on visual appraisal, was formulated by Sanoff [63]. The following century contributed the following: prescriptive rules focused on the development of regulations [64]; the visual scale technique with three categories, historicized, modernist, or hybrid [65], similar to Rossi’s [66] concept of visual continuity; contextual preferences dependent on formal and symbolic aspects of new infill design [67]; the spectrum interpretation model for formal fitting using two poles, imitation and abstraction [68]; and the slide scale for testing contrast intensity of new architectural objects [49]. These spectrum-based models still have deficiencies in tackling the scenario of the character of a place and try to force design outcomes interpretation to three main design approaches. Based on this determinate evidence, which pierces holes through the research methods earlier adopted for this kind of exploratory study, more inclusive techniques from the linguistic discipline could activate additional tools to seal the identified holes.

The relevance of the typological value of a historical setting represents diverse layers of the past, present, and future and is the reality of heritage. This paper selected different conservation bodies’ views on their activities over the years and adopted an inclusive approach to the preservation of cultural heritage. In this order, the Amsterdam Declaration stated that “the new buildings of today will be the heritage of tomorrow; every effort must be made to ensure that contemporary architecture is of a high quality” [69]. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Royal Fine Arts Commission first criticized how designers failed to abide by the Town Planning Act of 1947, structured to guide the city’s historic heritage conservation. Their negligence fueled poor pastiche design approaches for all rehabilitation projects at that time. The Commission suggested the following principles for designing contemporary architectural objects:

- The new should be of original and innovative design.
- Its contrast should be tolerable.
- In the existing context, design should take an inward–outwards approach and not outward–inwards.
- Style should not be secondary to function and purpose.

English Heritage (Historic England) [70] underscored the historic environment from a broader perspective of keeping both the intrinsic and extrinsic values of heritage. Their five points are compressed into four:

- From a general perspective, our environment accommodates a distinct and magnetic record of human endeavors. In response to the settings they inherited, it houses the desires and vocations of consecutive generations.

- The natives value it as a component of their natural and cultural heritage. The place displays the diversity of the various communities in terms of traditions, beliefs, and knowledge. It anchors our sense of place, belonging, and identity, a venue for education and relaxation and a sociocultural asset.
- The inputs of each generation into the historic environment should pave the path for users' benefits without barring future generations from reaping their endowment.
- The heritage values deposited in historic places attract public interest, irrespective of ownership. The protection of the public interest needs legislation, public policy, and public–private partnerships (PPP).

Every historic environment has intrinsic social, cultural, educational, and spiritual value and offers sustainable scenarios for inner-city revitalization and 'iconic' architecture [71]. Iconic in this sense means pointing toward present-day values and perceptions rather than the architect's signature. The Getty Conservation Institute [72], in charge of a publication dedicated to contemporary architecture in the historical environment, raised four salient hypotheses to represent the aspirations of various generations:

- Time is visible in the city, and generations interact through architecture.
- Architecture is a scene, and reading meaning from buildings calls attention to the fact that the building is a symbol of culture on the one hand, and of the built urban form on the other.
- Introducing new designs into historic places does not have a single approach; situations will determine the choice of approach within the range, and design involves many layers of narrative.
- Architecture that perceives the need for development must be open to dialogue and compatibility to achieve harmony.

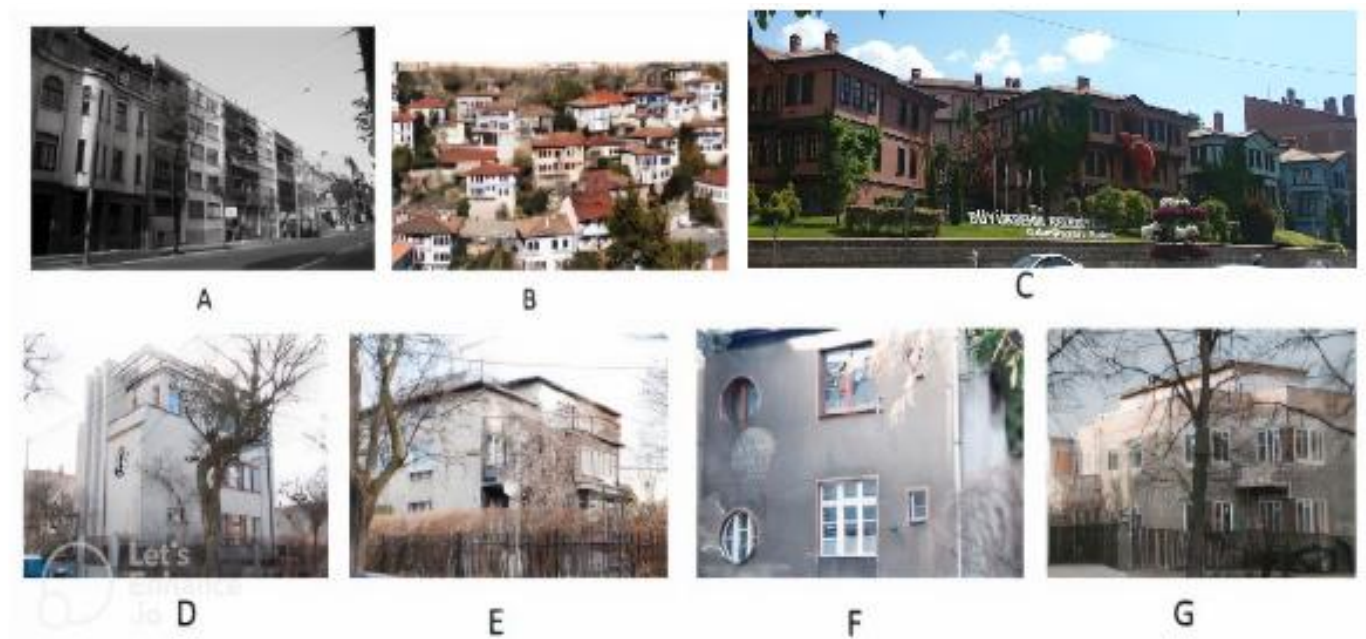
Conservation is the management of change in historical quarters in order to maintain their continuity [73]. It houses other intervention actions and differs from preservation, which has a narrow application. In terms of physical change, Toprak [74] echoed the criteria of not copying the existing context of the historical setting, but rather reflecting all the cultural, technological, and defining activities of our age. Quality design principles that would discourage design universality and enhance the dynamics of meanings and values and the significance of urban heritage are crucial [75]. Similarly, Toprak and Sahil [76] argued against the growth of repetitive design methods in historic environments and new layers that cannot communicate environmental dynamism. This is happening in existing urban fabric with contrasting harmonious characters. This study questions the implications of such design approaches that have led to reductions in historic layers' identities.

A review of other related research that has explored conservation legal instruments was carried out for insight into how complete adherence to principles has influenced design approaches that in turn affected historic cities of heterogeneous character. The first example came from [77], which engaged with two objectives, first reviewing documents of the Council of Europe (CoE), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The focus of that study was "the principles of urban heritage conservation and development and recommendations for new architectural elements to be integrated into urban heritage sites, such as quantitative addition and qualitative elaboration". It then identified four directions where regulation principles converged in relation to adding new designs within a given historic location and their corresponding periods:

- Visual compatibility with historic buildings, 1964–1972.
- Contextually by identifying a character of place, 1975–1982.
- Ongoing evolution of multidimensional traditional patterns, 1987–1999.
- Toward high-quality interventions, 2000.

The outcome of Navickiene's work on the Lithuanian historic urban heritage sites showed that local development control authorities concentrated on maintaining visual compatibility and contextual character rather than creating additional expressions. New

layers were denied their template with imitation design approaches or replica design concepts, which reduced the number of additional layers. A similar situation occurred with the interventions carried out in Safranbolu, and Odunpazari, in Eskisehir historic districts in Türkiye, where strict control monitoring by the urban control authorities to preserve the existing visual character ended in pastiche design approaches [40,68,76,78]. In the example of the Silesia region of Poland, imitation designs surfaced as homogenization as a result of unclear policies to guide individuals' housing developments [79]. Figure 1 shows the visual images of each historic city example discussed.



**Figure 1.** Imitation examples from Lithuania, Türkiye, and Poland (adapted by the authors, 2023). (A) The modern architecture of dwelling units sticks out from the existing facades of the historical Keščiū Street in Kaunas [77]. (B) Safranbolu's historic context in Turkey [40]. (C) Odun pazari houses with uniform character (Photograph by Emine Efiloğlu, 7 July 2017). (D–G) Villas from the Silesia region of Poland [79].

Abrar [80] reviewed twenty-one instruments and built upon 20-point guidelines aimed at showing 'how to integrate contemporary architecture into a historical context.' A framework to be used to evaluate contemporary structures based on international principles of heritage was successfully developed. However, the claims of the Athens 1931 charter, as the highest charter enacting any additional principles to guide the introduction of contemporary architecture in historic contexts, were incongruous with what other studies have found about the charter as being the formative principles for preservation and conservation [81]. These issues over principles constitute another determinate piece of evidence to be ascertained during the course of this study.

The next set of researchers studied how designing new buildings in historic cities is addressed in international agreements, relating it to Turkish historic cities [76]. Their paper drew attention to the importance of controlling strategies and regulations. Their contribution was that contemporary architecture in historic areas should be treated at three relational levels: people, culture, and environment. They highlighted the need to determine the limits of designing new buildings with modern features without harming the historical environment [80]. This research was conducted by 15 renowned contributors on approaches and forums and reviewed 22 international documents.

The "new is necessary" design criteria that they proposed align with the regulations set by most conservation bodies. However, a close examination of the articles that abide by this principle within the same legal documents yields design outcomes that are superficial and



repetitive. On the other hand, the historic cities mentioned above showcase such practices. This study emphasizes designing new layers that do not harm the historical context but reflect cultural, technological, and defining activities of our time without imitating existing expressions [82], and that incorporate original value, concrete, and experiential data. The sum of these variables today describes what other studies refer to as new preservation [83].

The next goal in this section would be to ascertain whether regulations influence or do not influence the adoption of certain design approaches. The outcomes in these historic cities exemplify and challenge our perception of how contemporary design principles are configured in local contexts. An elaborate one-way movement towards preservation action would yield design falsification consequences. A critical view of the situation in a two-way manner anchors what has already been proposed: that modernization and contemporary ideas about material innovation possess the power to awaken the physical and social layers of historic environments [20]. Stavreva [21] further discusses the historic city as the playing field where the new architecture relates to the already built fabric and calls the merger ‘new and old’. The implication of this union manifests in two forms: the existing architectural objects are polished as the historical template of the location, while the new buildings connect the historic area with the city at large because the historic area is a part of the overall urban environment. Thereby, contemporary architecture breathes new life into historic places. This assertion was demonstrated in the conversion of the iconic Plumstead Library in Greenwich, London, into a community hub that drew people in [82]. The highlight of their work suggests that the new civic center is “the threshold between old and new”. In this example, the two layers are not diminished in any way; the old red brick remains intact, and a new glass panel is inserted that represents a transition between the two historic blocks (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Plumstead Center (Photograph by Jack Hobhouse, 21 September 2021).

Researchers who had practical experience on the subject in the American context emphasized that dynamic environments stir creativity, but delicate contexts weaken it due to the lack of an appropriate urban design framework [84]. Based on character definitions, the dynamic environments referred to are identical to heterogeneous historical settings, while delicate contexts are homogeneous ones. Unfortunately, this issue has not been sufficiently addressed in any existing international or national conservation legal documents. Although what constitutes a cultural heritage site or landscape has been sufficiently described in existing heritage conservation documents, something related to that, namely, explicit character definitions for historic environment types, remains to be done. Their specifics (personality or character) need to be considered, especially as certain policies that work for one may not work for the other because their defining characteristics are different. Although continuity is a difficult task, contemporary architecture can lean on



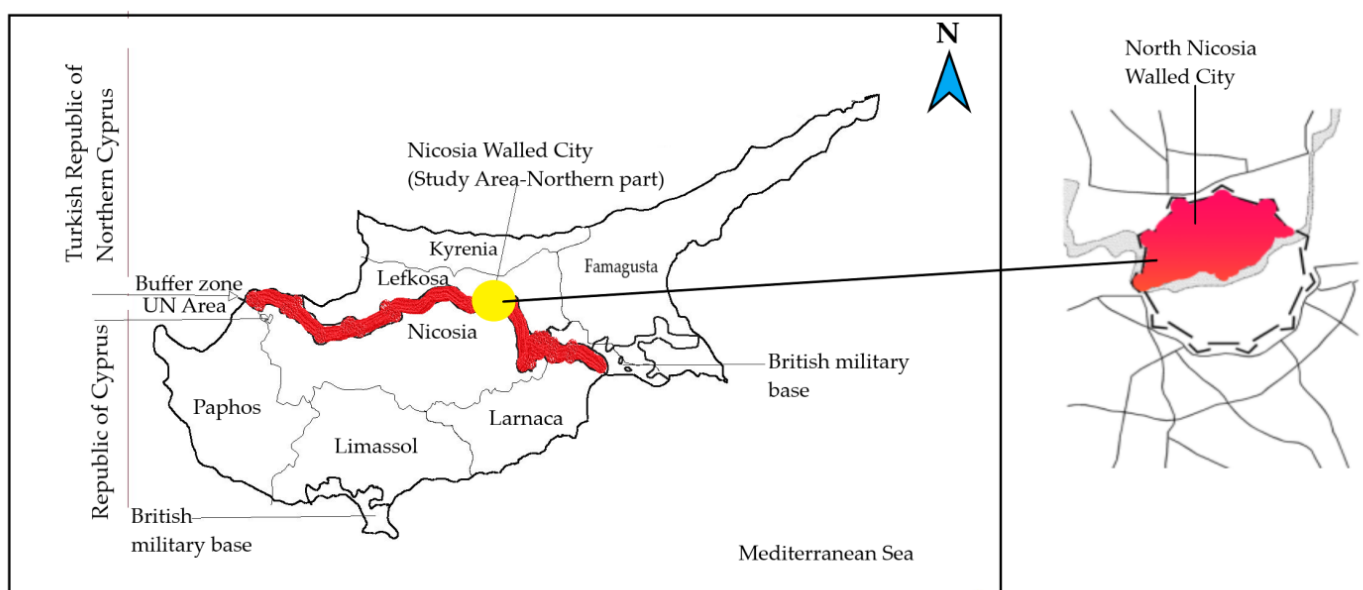
the past to build unique identity layers without unnecessary breaks for future cities [85,86]. The continuity is implemented when each generation seeks its image in symbols, and architecture is such a symbol connecting the creative/aesthetic community and society [87]. The narratives on this subject continue to broaden our view of the historical setting, with a current situation in London being an example. In a recent virtual webinar [88], Chris Miele reiterated that the amount of effort that planners and regulators put into preserving an old building is disproportionate when it comes to new designs in the same setting. The consequences lead to a lack of distinctiveness and a generation gap. Another keynote speaker, Rebecca Madgin, argued that human perception of a given setting is not just limited to nostalgia but that there are also wow sensibilities, a composite emotional response linked to aesthetic appreciation, admiration, and adoration for the place.

These missing links between design approaches and regulation principles for introducing contemporary architecture in historical environments, as shown in this review, could have implications for the historic identity layers with either heterogeneous or homogeneous character.

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Context of the Study

The study area was the historic environment of North Nicosia Walled City, Cyprus. It is half of Nicosia City, divided since 1974 as a result of a communal war between the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots. It is one of the surviving Medieval heritage sites with rare value, and it is a perfect example of public space representation where contemporary architecture meets with native architectural objects (new and old). The northern half of Nicosia from the green line separation is now Turkish Cypriot communities' territory, while the southern section is the territory of Greek Cypriot communities. Despite that unfortunate event, which also divided the entire Cyprus landscape, the city is known as a meeting place of many cultures and civilizations and has been maintained as the center of administration for both territories of Cyprus till now [89]. Such a sense of place has historically influenced Nicosia Walled City's identity layers, but in general, it challenges the walls that surround the historic city on both sides of the green line/buffer zone [90] and its connection with the new urban cities (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Map of Cyprus and of Nicosia Walled City., redrawn by authors. Nicosia, Lefkosa, Kyrenia, Famagusta, Larnaca, Limassol, and Paphos are the names of the prominent districts of Cyprus before the divide.

The historical layering comprises the cultures and civilizations whose traces are still visible in North Nicosia Walled City: the Lusignan times (1192–1489), the Venetian period (1489–1571), the Ottoman period (1571–1878), and the British periods I and II (1878–1930; 1930–1960), which define the old architectural expression. This study conceptualized the old architectural expression as the period when all the monumental and important buildings were fully constructed, whereas the new architectural layers are regarded as a time of architectural renaissance that came with modernity. The periods when new layers were boldly instituted began with British Period II (1930–1960) and included the Republic of Cyprus period (1960–1963), the Partitioning period (1963–1974), the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus (TFSC) period (1974–1983), and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) period (1983–present). This study included the styles, the design approaches (micro design typologies from step 1), the conceptualized classification of design approaches (macro design typologies from step 1), the civilizations and periods, and building photos and images. The outcome of this step was the architectural expression timeline of the North Nicosia Walled City.

The architectural form of Nicosia was earlier correlated with previously divided cities around the world to establish the language of the ironic architecture of division [4]. However, the city's architectural identity is broadly defined by the surrounding fortification [91] and the use of constructed domestic similar buildings called 'sachnisi' [92]. In addition, the new contrasting layers are inserted to dialogue contextually with the past. Each civilization in the Walled City of North Nicosia influenced the material and cultural aspects of the city in diverse dimensions and scales. They show features upon which various attempts at transformation are built for continuity, like a palimpsest [93]. In line with these historical and use values, precise but major identity features of each civilization and the architectural timeline of the study area are presented in Table 2 and Figure 4 as part of the historical evidence.

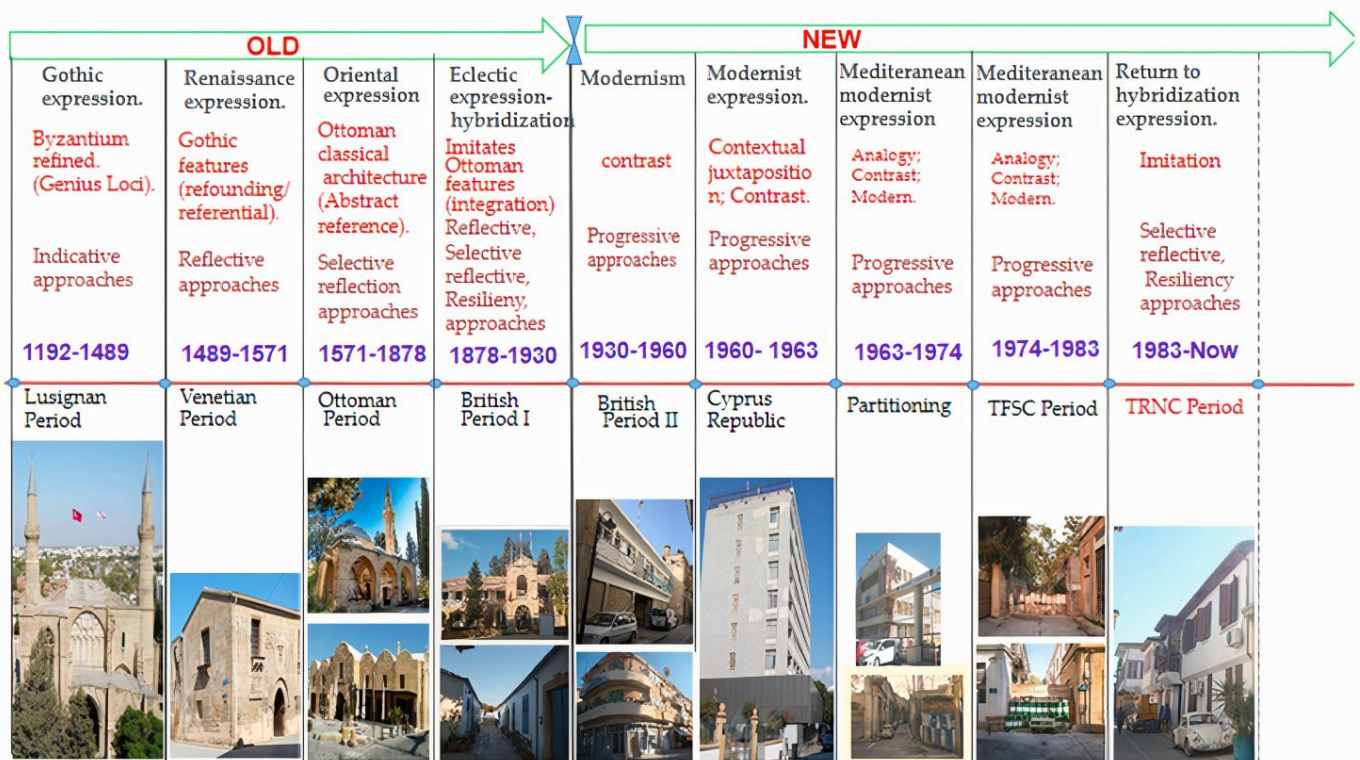


Figure 4. Architectural expression timeline of North Nicosia from 1200–2003.

**Table 2.** Features of different cultural evidence.





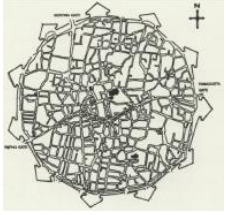





Civilization	City Evolution	Morphological Layers	Architectural Tissues	Identity Elements
Lusignan Period (1192–1489)	Laid the foundation of the city, including the fortifications. Refined the byzantine Gothic architecture: vaults, pointed arches, buttresses.			Pointed arches, piers, rib vaults, flying buttresses, wall paintings, and mosaics.
Venetian Period (1489–1571)	Gained connection to the Medieval defensive city lines but with features that harmonize with the Lusignan architectural idiom.			Broad use of classical Roman/Greek elements, arches as entrance definers, columns, domes, massive rigid walls, decorative elements around openings, and symmetrical facades.
Ottoman Period (1571–1878)	Compound partitions started to surface as a response to extended family structure in an obvious organic manner.			Cumba (facade cantilever for the sofa space), portico with freestanding columns in an arcade, pilaster on the facade, rustication with local yellow stones, symmetrical flanks and quoins, cornice and dome, tall, spire-like cylindrical minaret with cone-shaped crown, arch-like entrance, wooden doors and windows, broad eaves.
British Period I (1878–1930)	Integration with traditional material cultures was accelerated.			Symmetrical facade with Gothic pointed arches or Neoclassical semi-arches held by composite columns, centrally positioned entrance/front door with both sides flanked by windows. Portico for buildings oriented away from the street; building line setback, moderate or small eaves, and cornice of pitched roofs. A mix of Cumba and balcony structures or cantilevered structures, either straight or curvilinear. They are treated as semi-open with iron/stone balustrades or dwarf walls without the Cumba.
British Period II (1930–1960)	Splitting lines and the emergence of modern material culture.			Large window openings are shaded with wooden shutters, pilasters, and stone moldings over doors and windows and corner pediments; concrete balconies are suspended with decorated wooden floor joists or concrete beam heads; concrete flat roofs have decorative stone balustrades around the roof deck and pitched roofs with chimney flue.



Table 2. Cont.

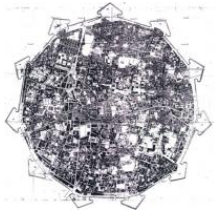

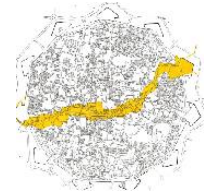



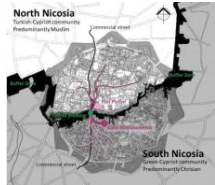

Civilization	City Evolution	Morphological Layers	Architectural Tissues	Identity Elements
Republic of Cyprus(1960–1963)	New lines of emancipation, configured as corporate modernism, defined the tools of decolonization and civility.			Reinforced concrete frame structures with straightness in horizontality became the new aesthetic, with glazed strips on windows and doors and curtain walling, stair hall modules are emphasized on the facade, reinforced concrete (Rc) flat roofs, luxury terraces are used in conjunction with balconies, square planar Rc columns, facades are designed asymmetrically without ornamentation, definite/composite forms, buildings mostly painted white.
Partitioning time (1963–1974)	International lines of thinking and post-war buildings started to flourish.			Pilotis, transparent ground floors, large-span buildings, building form followed the shape of compact sites, vertical and horizontal elements replaced ornamentation, the last floor terrace is open to future extensions and concrete louver.
Turkish Federated State of Cyprus (1974–1983)	Contemplating lines from the forces of war, division, or reunion bewildered the place.			Identity elements were not changed but abandoned because of relocation, the transfer of modern tendencies to new urban development areas of the island.
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (1983–present)	Turks' environmental perceptions used to recreate a liberal Anatolian historical identity created a random feel and attributes.			Randomly constructed layers in an attempt to recreate a liberal Turk material culture, partly traditional Ottoman and modern features, but applied inconsistently.

Table 2 shows that family structures, travel from the West and East, and the motherland's influence all had an impact on the architecture of the Walled City of North Nicosia. The social strategy of building an educated middle class replaced parochial systems [94], re-imagining the city's developmental structure. The city's architecture has been reinterpreted and abstracted throughout its history, with elements like arches, columns, materials, openings, and decoration resembling but contrasting each other in the old era. Modern-era attempts to recreate consistency have failed, but periodic distortions have created challenges. In Figure 4 above, reflecting on past experiences can help the present learn from history, as a sense of place can bridge the gap to the future. The architectural timeline of North Nicosia reveals that the old era (old layers) varied in styles and design typologies, reaching saturation during British Period I. The British control of Nicosia and Cyprus stood midway between the old era and the new era. New layers emerged during the Ottoman period, but their relationship was limited to reuse and restoration actions. The new layers gained prominence during British Period II, integrating material culture and sociopolitical life. The Mediterranean region regionalized modern expression, but war and division slowed down development. The TRNC period attempted to combine all available layers, but incoherent new layers were added to link to the present time, falsifying imitation design typologies.

The Buffer Zone is causing severe damage to the urban areas on the northern side of the Walled City, particularly the Selimiye and Yenicami quarters. The Antiquities Laws (Eski Eserler Yasasi, 60/1994) [95] documents outlines North Nicosia legislation, which provides guidelines for designers and monitors of projects in this historic city. According to the document, "new designs should be compatible with the environment, sites, properties, heights, architectural construction materials, and perception of environmental issues". However, these principles have been criticized for lacking a conservation framework [96–98]. In Northern Cyprus, the focus is on protecting buildings of historical and cultural value rather than preventing incompatible uses. This has led to a trend of allowing commercial brands to establish their identities in different neighborhoods within the historic city, which could potentially harm its identity layers.

### 3.2. Methodology

The authors used a mixed-methods research approach (qualitative and quantitative) to explore the implications of design approaches for the historical identity layers of the North Nicosia Walled City. The selection was appropriate because this research integrates three multifaceted themes (design approach, relationships, and regulations) on adding new layers to built heritage. Mixed-methods research involves combining qualitative and quantitative techniques, such as data collection, analysis, and inference, to achieve a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of a topic. This approach seeks to utilize the strengths of both methods to their fullest potential [99]. Apart from the three types that were tested in different studies, it provided access to multiple techniques. Since this study was dealing with two hypotheses that were causal on one end and associative on the other end, it adopted a qualitative design, which provided data and tools for the quantitative process. The qualitative approach enabled the authors to have a broad insight into the relationship between design approaches, regulation principles, and historic places. In order to validate and offer more reliable scientific interpretations and implications, quantitative methods were relevant for simplifying these complexities.

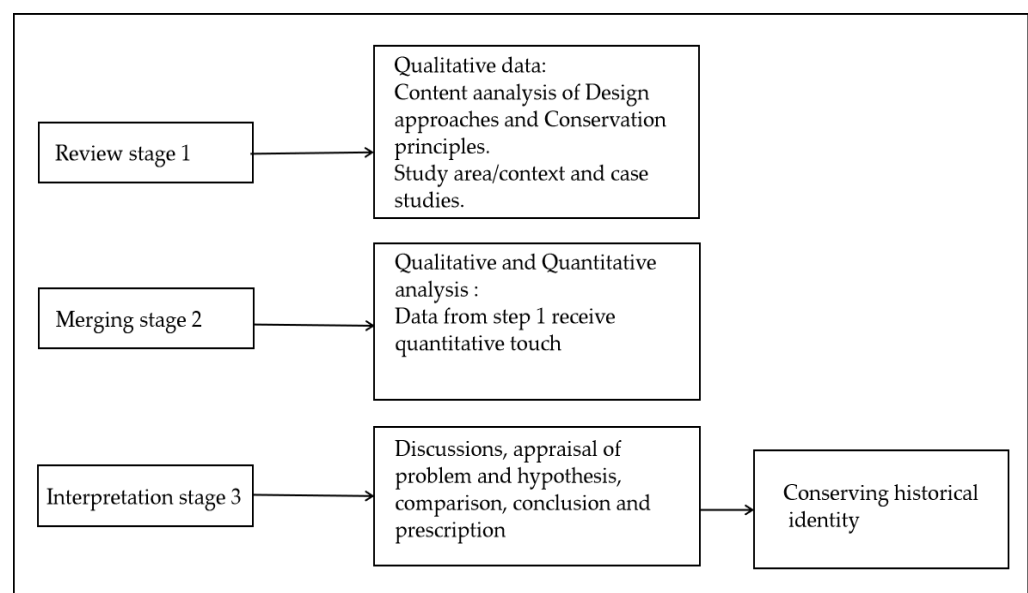
Similar studies where mixed methods were adopted include Farmer and Knapp [100], who used mixed methods to clarify the long-term impacts of interpretation programs at a historical site. Researchers later used them in the specific processes of the regeneration of abandoned industrial sites in urban areas in China [101]. Li et al. [102] used mixed methods to assess issues with adaptive reuse of architectural heritage; Menconi et al. [103] used them to present a plan for intervening in historically significant buildings that are listed in order to improve their environmental impacts and create a more resilient heritage.



### 3.3. Research Design

Mixed-methods design can be grouped into four categories: sequential design, concurrent design, multiphase design, and multilevel design [104,105]. After considering the pros and cons of different designs, we chose a sequential design with an exploratory foundation. This approach allows for the blending of qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques [106]. This approach is suitable for exploring a phenomenon and identifying themes. Relevant variables are identified after conducting the qualitative study. Separate data collection phases require significant time and resources. Variables can be irrelevant if the instrument is very small. The research design is composed of three primary phases: the review stage (denoted as R), the merging stage (presented as M), and the interpretation stage (featured as I).

The review stage was where the study began, and its goal was to examine how to conduct a systematic review that gives the reader a clear but comprehensive picture of the various trends and features connected to design principles and conservation legal issues in coexisting new and old. This preliminary stage introduced the contextual and historic character of the study area. It provided the criteria for testing the new layers' relationship with the existing context. Then, the merging stage took the various techniques proposed from both qualitative methods (such as content analysis, coding, intertextuality, case studies, and observation) and quantitative methods (such as prescriptive analysis and statistical analysis). The purpose was to look for intersections, patterns, and divergences (relaying the situation of things based on the data and injecting how the future should look). Finally, the interpretation stage was a central phase in this study. During this phase, design validation was carried out to confirm the problem and hypothesis we previously identified. We also examined the cause-and-effect relationships between design approaches and regulatory principles and historical identity, and then drew the conclusions, made predictions, and stated the limitations of this study. This research design process is simplified in Figure 5 as an "RMI research design" ("R" is review, "M" stands for merging, and "I" is interpretation).



**Figure 5.** RMI research design diagram.

### 3.4. Research Process

For design approaches, a content analysis of 100 scholarly papers was conducted, which were sourced from different research databases (mostly the prominent ones, such as Web of Science and Scopus). The search process used keywords like 'contemporary architecture', 'new designs', 'modern architecture', and 'new constructions', but each term

was connected to “historic environments or contexts”. Criteria of inclusion and exclusion were defined to exert control and conciseness as:

1. Only journal articles and published conference papers were included, while chapters in books were excluded.
2. Papers whose titles and abstracts had ‘contemporary architecture’ in them, or synonyms of it, and papers in which the methodology and definitions of design typologies were provided, were read.
3. Adaptation, appearing as a design approach, was included, but excluded when applied as a conservation principle.
4. Only peer-reviewed papers published between 1800 and 2021 were included.

Based on the criteria outlined above, 43 papers that conducted research on diverse design typologies were selected and sorted with an inventory form that provided a worksheet for spotting the interlinking of texts and the connection of ideas with similar knowledge (see Figure A1).

For the conservation principles of new and old, 25 international and national legal instruments endorsed by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), or the Council of Europe (CoE) were selected. These principles are laid down in different formats, such as charters, recommendations, reports, declarations, resolutions, and memoranda. These bodies were logically selected based on two previous works [74,80]. The regulatory bodies’ preferences as either a single motive or as a collective whole about the subject were critically traced. The sections of the documents we focused on were the definitions and policy statements on design aspects. The 21 guideline criteria were extracted from the textual relationships of the 25 regulatory instruments’ documents using a different inventory form and a two-way preference check, vertically and horizontally, with numerical counting based on occurrences taken into account. The vertical preference check took one specific regulatory instrument against the 21 guideline criteria identified, while the horizontal preference check took up the reverse direction of operation—one guideline criterion was plotted against the 25 regulatory instruments (see Figure A2).

Three case studies were selected from two neighborhoods (Selimiye and Arabahmet) to demonstrate the goals of this study. The process followed the qualitative method described in the RMI framework under the review stage of the study to form five assessment criteria for the case studies:

- Design approaches containing massive design typologies (see Figure A1).
- Principles taken from conservation regulatory documents, new and old (see Figure A2).
- Relationship with context—compatibility, harmony, etc. [107–109].
- Visual appreciation—human perception of the place [88].
- Historic environments that are heterogeneous or homogeneous [1–3,6–11].

The use of visuals like maps from the Lefkosa Municipality online archives, other online media like PetalPixel, VICE, and Anne Travel Foodie, Google Earth satellite and street views, photos, and a physical appreciation of the cases in context also supported the analysis. The selected cases from the North Nicosia Walled City for the analysis were: A. Sabor Restaurant next to Yunus Emre Enstitüsü on Semiliye Square by Müftü Hİlmi Street (Semiliye); B. İstimdami Koruma ofisi on Müftü Asim Effendi Street (Semiliye); and C. two-floor residential row houses on Şht. Salahi Şevket Street by Derviş Pasha Street (Arabahmet). The selection of these case studies was based on the following criteria: (I) The cases were products of the interventions after the static development problems caused by the 1974 major division of Nicosia Walled City. (II) All the cases were constructed during the TRNC period up to the beginning of the Crossing period (1983–2003). This period witnessed the first bi-communal negotiations that were productive with the rehabilitation of some dilapidated neighborhoods on both the north and south sides of Nicosia Walled City. (III) They were selected from two major districts with historical cultural roots in the city, the Selimiye and Arabahmet neighborhoods, which had significant quantities of

threatened architectural structures (sick buildings) and demographic changes at the time. (IV) They were built according to the principles contained in the international, national, and local conservation principles. And, (V) the visual character of each case in relation to the context had been compared (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Visuals of case studies.

Case A was located northeast of Selimiye, directly facing Selimiye Square. It was a restaurant that handled both local and continental dishes, serving both natives and tourists.



The human interaction with this building and its surroundings during lunch breaks was the reason a detachable canopy was added to the facade facing the square. Turkan and Ozburak [110] in their research had earlier identified this building as an addition to the Selimiye historic square. The design resembled the adjoining historic traditional building and many others around it, as shown in the Cases A and B rows of Figure 6 above, despite the contrast in materials of construction and color. The use of the Cumba element was very prominent and a major identity feature of Ottoman architecture in the twelve neighborhoods on the northern side of the Walled City. Its visual expression aligned with design typologies like contextual uniformity, referential, simulation, etc.

Case B was located on the northwest side of the Selimiye Mosque. The building functioned as an office for Employment Protection. The new building's color and materials of construction were in contrast with the context, but the Cumba character wore the British colonial architecture vocabulary as a semi-open balcony (Cases A and B row, Figure 6 above). The flat roof, which was still an element of British Period II, paid tribute to the architectural approach called hybridization. Although it blended with the ambiance of the street, there was a visual riot in the selection of elements from past periods, which translated as a lack of consistency. The visual appearance of this case was associated with design typologies of contextual continuity, abstract symbolism, harmonic contrast, differential, integration, etc.

The common factor that reappeared in Case C was the Cumba character and other facade elements, which linked it with British colonial architecture. These buildings historically have Ottoman and Turkish connections (cultural affiliations with Anatolia in Türkiye). They are reproduced with a touch of modern materials, but the identity expression is a copy of the buildings referred to as *sachnisi* in the literature. They belong to the design typologies of contextual uniformity, referential and simulation, and version (Case C row, Figure 6).

### 3.5. Data Specification

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. We accessed specific documents from published papers and conservation regulatory bodies. Additionally, we selected random types of resources, such as books, chapters in books, and other documentary sources, that have contributed to the subject's current understanding. They included a virtual webinar, architectural and heritage conservation discourse platforms or institutes, blogs of designers, and other stakeholders' contributions. We accessed the open-access archives of Lefkosa Municipality and the Antiquities Department directly connected with the study area, and we conducted informal talks with some Antiquities Office and Urban Development Office staff and a renowned artist who has lived and now operates a studio in the Arabahment quarter (they have requested to be treated anonymously).

We conducted physical tours of the study area at different times, taking photographs and field notes, observing the visual transformation trends, and participating in research meeting discussions. The case studies were selected as samples out of many others within the broader scope of research where the authors had been exploring the resurgence of forgery expressions in the heterogeneous historic environment of North Nicosia Walled City. We also prepared checklists using the inventory forms and organized data with sorting, tables, statistical measurement tools, diagrams, charts, and other visualization and image-enhancing tools to make it easier to interpret.

### 3.6. Limitations and Implications

Although the literature section of this study provided a general view of the current state of design approaches and conservation principles for introducing new designs in the historic environment, the study area, as a demonstration of translating policy into practice, was limited to the historic city of North Nicosia Walled City. Accessing each case's historical data was difficult, especially considering the dates when they were built. The narrow street network constrained us from taking direct facade photographs. Because of the crossing

requirements, the study was limited to only the northern side of Nicosia Walled City. The other half, Nicosia's southern side, can also be studied to provide an opportunity for a comparative study of how the historical identity is responding to new designs within and at the edge of the Walled City.

#### 4. Results

The sorting of design approaches produced three levels of results. Level 1 identified 11 design typologies **frequently used** by designers to add new layers to historic settings, but they are contextually based. Level 2 showed eight design approaches excluded from the existing classification of design approaches in the literature. Level 3 showed six newly injected design approaches as an inclusive conceptual design classification that incorporates both the results of levels 1 and 2 (Table 3).

**Table 3.** New classification of design approaches.

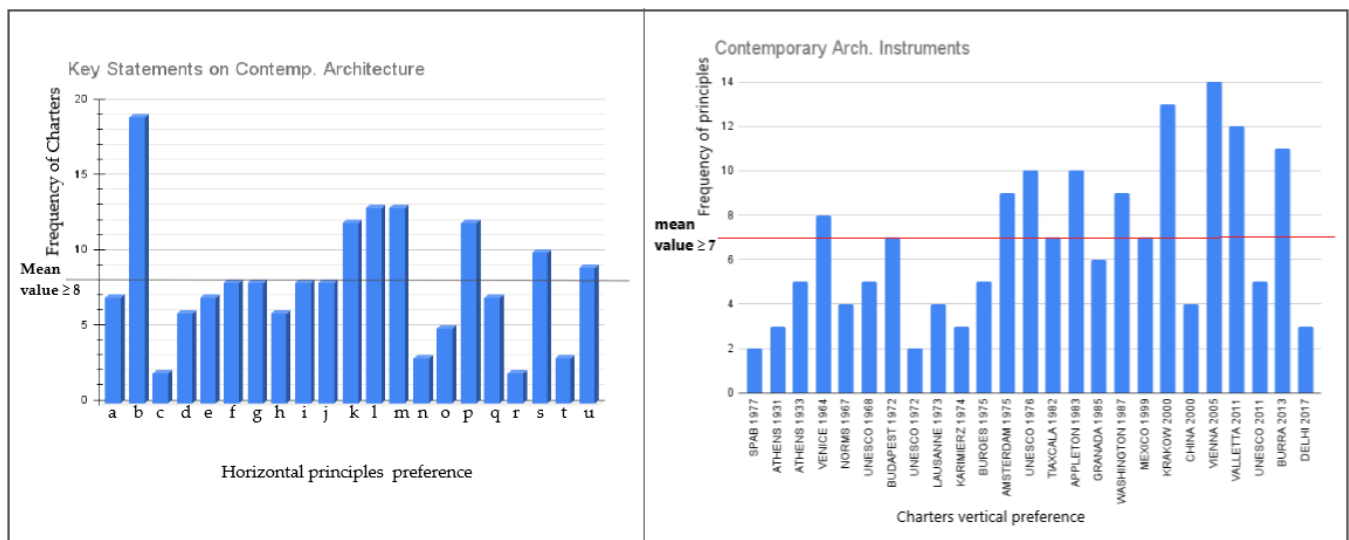
Level 1: Design typologies frequently used by designers				
Contextual Design Approaches			Sources	
Contextualism preferences (replication and contrast)			[67]	
Contextual approaches (contextual uniformity, contextual juxtaposition, contextual continuity, freestyle)			[44]	
Compatibility and differentiation			[39]	
Interpreting the historic context (modernist, historicized, and hybrid)			[65]	
Contextual compatibility and admiration preference			[40]	
Contextual value interpretation			[42]	
Contextual architectural styles			[43]	
Contextual typologies based on qualities that are distinct, specific, or indistinct (mimetic, associative, and contrasting)			[47]	
Contextual continuity via creation of new architectural emergencies			[48]	
Formal fitting into the historic context (imitation and abstraction)			[68]	
Contextual image through a model (too modern and too historic)			[49]	
Level 2: Design approaches missing in existing classification				
Philosophical approach, spatialism approach, collage city approach, participatory approach, strategic approach, partitioning approach, picturesque design approach, and humanistic approach.				
Level 3: Newly injected design approaches classification				
Design approaches (new class)		Design typologies	Brief notes	Frequency
Indicative approaches		Philosophical, genius loci, and prescriptive.	Approaches that serve as a sign and bring about the attributes of similarities between the new and the old.	7.0%
Reflective approaches		Facadism, re-founding, morphological, parody, impressionistic, contextual uniformity, pastiche, literal replication, imitation, referential, simulation.	Approaches that reflect previous character and patterns of the old	25.6%
Selective–reflective approaches		Collage city, contextual continuity, abstract symbolism, stylistic, intention within a style, abstract reference, version, harmonic contrast, differential, integration, partitioning, and traditional.	New selection of certain elements or components of old preference.	27.9%
Resiliency approaches		Intellectual, strategic, neutral, participatory, subtle, and humanistic.	Design approaches that are neither old-biased nor new-motivated.	14.0%
Progressive approaches		Spatialism, contextual juxtaposition, opposite, analogy, contrast, spectrum interpretation, modern, picturesque.	New work grows in innovative stages with age, without a common language	18.6%
Fashionista approaches		Intentional opposition, contrasting, freestyle, arrogant.	Approaches that insert surprise.	7.0%

The findings in Table 3 demonstrate that designers have extensively used reflective and selective–reflective approaches, along with the design typologies that fall under them,



to add new layers to the historic environment. The typologies ‘contrast’ and ‘contrasting’ from the different definitions provided by researchers were separated; “contrast” is best grouped under progressive approaches, while “contrasting” shows features of fashionista approaches. This distinction was necessary to correct its previously confused placement.

In the horizontal preference check, each principle (coded as a-u) was triangulated across the frequency of regulatory bodies. The mean values in both directions served as the benchmark for capturing the 11 principles most preferred by regulatory bodies. And bar b (Protection of monuments’ character, surroundings, and historic values, and not demolition) represented the guideline criterion significantly featured by almost all the bodies. The horizontal preference results were used to ascertain why some principles were later given equal rank. In contrast, the vertical preference check showed that the regulatory bodies actually preferred the introduction of contemporary layers in historical environments. The results indicated that Vienna Memoranda 2005 and another seven regulatory bodies were the top regulatory bodies that provided most of the principles (Figure 7). The results also showed three pairs with different intersecting outcomes because they made equal contributions: UNESCO 1976 and Appleton 1983; Amsterdam 1975 and Washington 1987; and Budapest 1972, Thaxcala 1982, and Mexico 1999.



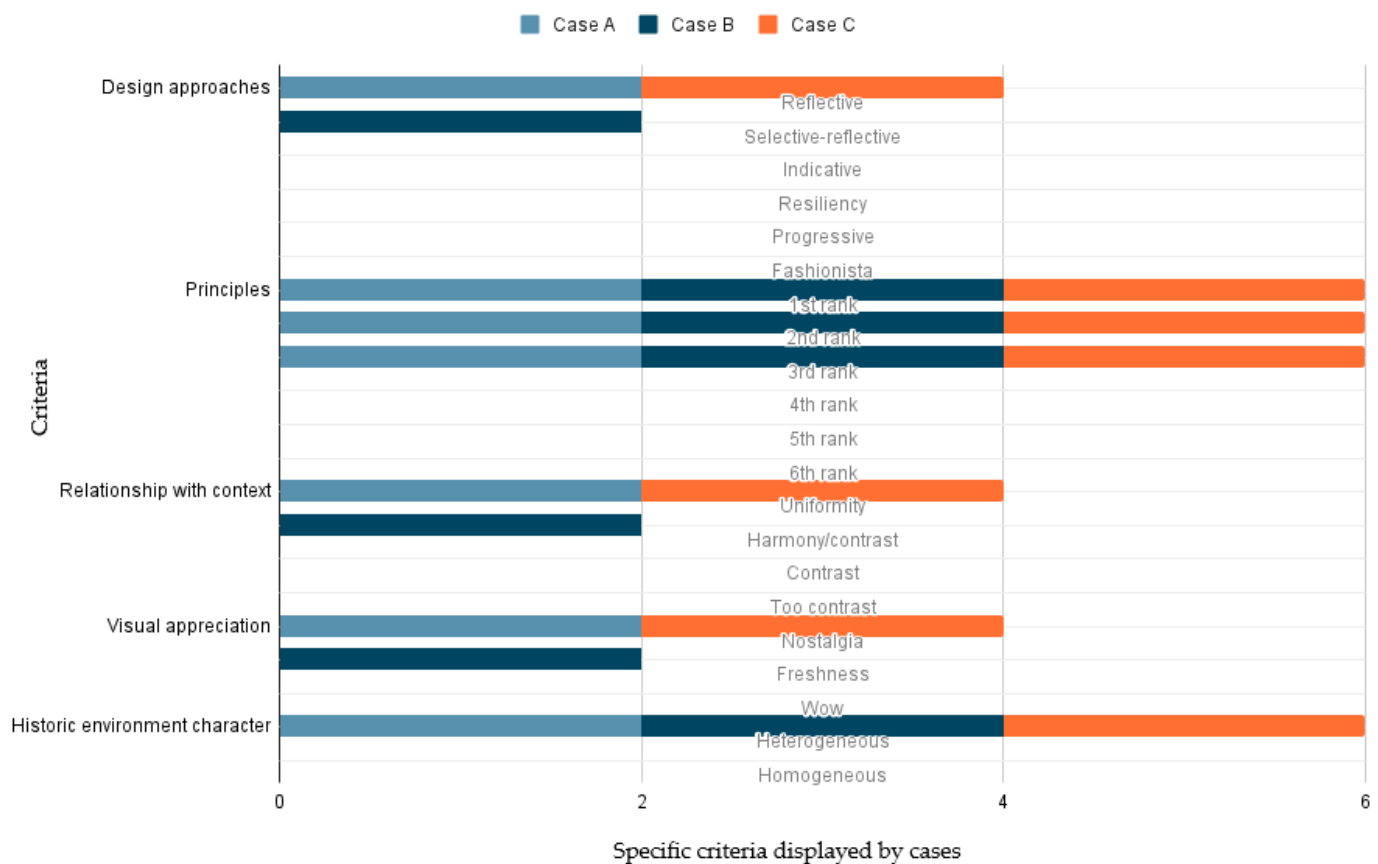
**Figure 7.** Regulatory bodies’ principles preferences for contemporary architecture.

In Figure 7, the following additional highlight can be observed: the national regulatory preference for contemporary architecture was approximately 92%, while the international bodies’ preference stood at 8%. Based on the outcomes enumerated above, six ranks were developed with the 11 preferred principles for guiding the design of contemporary architecture in a historical context. Likewise, equating each rank to a percentage value logically validated the results for the reasons why some principles have the same rank. The vastly preferred guideline criteria are the 1st rank, which concentrates on monuments. Conversely, the least preferred guideline criteria are the 6th rank, which tries to recognize contemporary architecture’s expressive value (Table 4).

The assessment of the case studies using the five criteria selected from the exploration of the literature and the qualitative analysis above was analyzed (see Figure A3), and the results are shown in Figure 8.

The findings depicted in Figure 8 reveal that the cases fully embodied reflective and selective–reflective design methodologies. The guideline criteria that were adhered to aligned with the 1st–3rd principles’ ranking as presented in Table 4. This reflects a contextual and uniform (resemblance) relationship with the study area. A sentiment of nostalgia was observable in both cases A and C, whereas Case B exhibited a sense of freshness. This indicated a moderate preference for the introduction of new layers,

interpreting it as a lifestyle phenomenon. These cases were all part of a heterogeneous historical environment.



**Figure 8.** Outcomes of case studies' criteria assessment.

**Table 4.** Ranking regulatory principles.

Guideline Criteria	Percentage	Rank
b—Protection of monuments' character, surroundings, and historic values, and not demolition.	11.31%	1st
l—Contemporary architecture as part of town-planning schemes for future development demands administrative resources.	7.74%	2nd
m—Avoid new uses that destroy residents' livelihoods and historic condition.	7.74%	
k—New role/adaption of the 'historic groups' and authenticity/integrity should be regarded.	7.14%	3rd
p—New should be harmonious/contextualize with its surroundings/whole town.	7.14%	
s—Safeguarding the natural or manmade environment as an umbrella concept for heritage care (activities and interventions).	5.95%	4th
u—Duplicate Venice Charter principles.	5.36%	5th
f—Rigorous scrutiny of contemporary proposals/new materials by specialists.	4.76%	6th
g—Permit change of function/modifications as urban evolution/continuity.	4.76%	
i—New must be distinct and bear a contemporary stamp (mark of our age).	4.76%	
j—Valorization of cultural heritage as tools for progress.	4.76%	

## 5. Discussion

At the contextual level, the findings show that the Ottoman and British impacts on the Old City's layers were extensive. The Ottomans started the new additions process, but these were preservation, reuse, and restoration intervention actions. Such alterations did not replace the historical layer; for example, St. Sophia Cathedral was converted to Selimiye Mosque, but the original identity of the Church still remains. On the other hand, the British

period in this historic place brought demolitions that affected the identity layering and ushered in the modern identity. The imitations that surfaced from the Lusignan period to the Cyprus Republic were selective–reflective design approaches. They culminated in a form of adaptation and adherence to contextual strategies. From the perspective of the historical, cultural, and material trends of this historic city, the TRNC period presents a challenging period where the practice of copying and maintaining the urban fabric of past civilizations is clothing new layers’ identities as a norm. Such design approaches and conservation actions failed to articulate this context’s personality about “appropriate place” from a two-way preservation lens, which recent studies referred to as new preservation. Ideological perceptions of creating an Anatolian identity on the northern side of Cyprus misinterpreted and suppressed the idea of multiple layers and adding newness. This could be an afterthought to the replacement of a modernity perceived as cultural assimilation. A significant similarity developed between the outcomes of the cases analyzed using the RMI model and the contextual evidence from the study area (see Table 2).

When comparing the conservation principles that led to the ranking in Table 4 with the design approaches in Table 3, a direct connection can be spotted, particularly for the 1st–3rd ranks with reflective and selective–reflective approaches. The first claim is supported by the textual meanings of the terms in documents, even though they were written by various researchers and organizations in various eras. The second piece of evidence was garnered from the scrutiny of case studies hailing from the area of study, where a notable visual similarity was detected among the cases (see Figures 8 and A3). Upon studying the conservation regulations of North Cyprus, the details for the new design layers contain aspects likely to bend new additions toward the existing context’s visual image. The content agrees with the 1st–3rd ranks conceptualized in Table 4 above. The contrast provided by the cases also seems to have been rather necessary at the time, given the area’s struggles with the deterioration of its existing buildings.

Additionally, examples from historic cities in Lithuania, Türkiye, and some cities in Poland show that the amount of attention given to these principles by regulators continues to influence the design process, resulting in imitation architectural expressions in historic environments. These findings support the first hypothesis of this study, which stated that “guideline criteria directly affect the outcome of design approaches when followed fully”. While previous studies attempted to link conservation principles to successive years of influence, this study delved into specifying design typologies for each macro design category, which other studies only managed to generalize as conservation approaches and actions for managing change [70,111,112].

The findings show that each historical location has unique features that designers can express in various ways. Architects have a crucial role in highlighting the historical significance of a place through their design choices. This is exemplified in Table 3’s design approach classifications, which encourage an inclusive way of thinking and operating. These ideas align with previous research showing that dynamic environments encourage design creativity while fragile settings can hinder it. The design approaches themselves do not pose a danger to the historical environment, but their usage can elicit positive or negative feelings. It is possible to combine new and old elements without relying solely on old methods. By incorporating a new preservation approach while still respecting and enhancing the old context, it can be accomplished. The transformation of Plumstead Library into Plumstead Center is a positive example mentioned in the literature, where the new relates to the old symbiotically without each way of existence giving up its identity status.

This kind of argument supports the study’s second main finding, which states that “design approaches are inherent in qualities that can be articulated in different directions in a specific historical setting to create a design dialogue between new and old”. This implies that certain design approaches that can fit in one particular environment may not be suitable in another, which the study identified as heterogeneous or homogeneous. Bringing these views to the case studies indicates a diversion from adding extra layers to repeating the existing character of the context as a form of one-way preservation. Although

the new layers added are made of modern materials, their expressions relay old features. On the contrary, the findings found that simply preserving the existing character of the context is not enough to represent the layers of the present time and can result in a lack of diversity in the identity of the historic city. This does not mean that contemporary architecture is a threat. Instead, design elements and principles can be used to create unity and balance without creating monotonous layers that obstruct environmental perception.

Table 4 demonstrates that previous regulatory guidelines primarily focused on safeguarding monuments (Figure 7), rather than promoting new designs in historic environments. This resulted in the recurrence of architectural designs, akin to the homogeneity of modernity. Instead, an approach that prioritizes contextual factors overshadows the historic scenes but allows for less layering and diversity. The principles for effectively incorporating new layers can be found in rank 6. However, treating all historic places as a single entity without accounting for their unique characteristics presents challenges for interventions. Designers and other agents without heritage conservation training may struggle with identifying and preserving the character of each place.

Based on these premises, design approaches by interpretation represent a fused process, structured to be manipulated dynamically to achieve design values. A dynamic historical context can slide into a static state or even oblivion when regulatory principles and design strategies applied by designers end in replication.

## 6. Conclusions

This paper questioned the implications of design approaches for the historical identity layers of North Nicosia Walled City in the context of uninterrupted sequence layering during the period 1983–2003. The findings identified an intersection between regulatory guidelines' ranking and the classification of design approaches, evidence which cannot be overlooked. In this regard, the protection of monuments' character, surroundings, and historic values and not demolition was the principle most significantly emphasized for adding new layers to existing ones. This attention directly influenced the face of design approaches for reflective and selective–reflective design approaches (approaches that reflect previous characters and patterns of the past; new designs select certain elements or components of old features). This connection fluctuates whenever there is interplay with the variable of the type of historic urban environment. The implication manifests the problem of sameness, which is an acute resemblance. Such a quality of monotony is inappropriate for a heterogeneous historic environment and harms human perception. Design is made up of many different components, and this paper argues that it should be rethought to account for various design nuances. These claims reflect the nature of knowledge described in conservation regulatory documents. The tendency to always trim the design process to obey this one-sided direction for nostalgia without carrying other design values deprives new layers of their identity and, in general, reduces the overall historical identity of the historic city.

Since the Cumba element has been domesticated from Ottoman times through the British period to now, perhaps the TRNC era could reinterpret it in line with how Turkish Cypriots today interact with balconies, within the concept of spatial broadness and biophilic attachments beyond the British invention. This kind of action would not be capital-intensive but would require mindset, orientation, and willpower. The Medieval to post-Partitioning periods gave this historic city its multilayered identity. In contrast, a return to the past character began to resurface in the TRNC period, which signified aspects of imitation approaches as a form of design falsification and a social–cultural function linked to the expansion of Anatolian cultural material abroad (the motherland factor). The old periods had a positive impact on the layers, whereas the new era's impacts are negative from a lack of consistency (not just repetition) and quality. This is not because imitation approaches are obsolete but rather because they were misapplied in a saturated, heterogeneous environment. Based on these outcomes and interpretations, it is vital to suggest that the North-Nicosia Walled City needs additional new layers that adopt the forward design

approach. These interpretations align with the quote: “Contemporary architecture can learn from vernacular principles without resorting to pastiche, creating high-quality buildings that fit in the same way that vernacular architecture does but reflect a very different time” [113].

The design approaches impact the historical identity of old cities because they integrate the goals of urban heritage conservation with those of social and economic development. This method sees urban heritage as a social, cultural, and economic asset for the development of cities. The Historic Urban Landscape approach moves beyond the preservation of the physical environment and focuses on the entire human environment with all of its tangible and intangible qualities. It seeks to increase the sustainability of planning and design interventions by taking into account the existing built environment, intangible heritage, cultural diversity, socio-economic and environmental factors, and local community values. As part of these concluding thoughts, taking inspiration from the past is not synonymous with copying a past style in the present. All these views bring this paper to a logical conclusion: the historical implications of design approaches are relative (contextual). They can have an impact, depending on the nature of the conservation principles used by the designer to create the new design as a direct representation of design typologies, either positively or negatively. The negative consequences are those that pull new layers together to replicate previous architectural artifact expressions. They reduce the number of sequences, which are especially important in heterogeneous historic environments like the North Nicosia Walled City scenario discussed here. The positive implications, on the other hand, are diametrically opposed to the negative because they are interpreted as intervention actions that bring about continuity in historical sequence layers. Again, how designers treat the personality of a given historical setting’s character has similar implications, as interpreted above.

#### *Limitations and Recommendations*

Since this historic place fundamentally possesses a heterogeneous character, perhaps future research can replicate this study in historic environments with a homogeneous character, so that a wider spectrum of evidence could inform policy making. The general context of North Cyprus is made up of other historic cities (Famagusta and Girne), or the southern section of the Nicosia Walled City could be studied, which also has such an identity. Future researchers (who are not restricted by crossing rules) can study these places at a comparative level to ascertain their consistency or the fluctuation in their layering. Moreover, engaging these tools to evaluate global cases can lead to sufficient evidence for generalization. This paper made the following suggestions for urban development decision makers, architects, and interested bodies involved in the management and development of the place and in other historic environments with an identical character of Medieval heritage:

- i. Local regulatory documents should be enlarged to accommodate new design criteria that fall within the 6th rank of the international or national legal framework. This rank contains four principles: rigorous scrutiny of contemporary proposals and new materials by specialists; permitting change of function or modification as urban evolution or continuity; new must be distinct and bear a contemporary stamp (mark of our age); and the valorization of cultural heritage as assets for economic gains and development progress.
- ii. Designers’ proposals should be reviewed for quality and creativity to keep the historic city dynamically alive into the future. The existing layers should not be demolished or diminished but preserved, while the new layers in the development should possess present-use value. This was successful in the designs of the National Architectural Heritage Museum, Diriyah, in Saudi Arabia, where the designers built upon the intangible aspects of perception, place, and memory of history without imitating the expression of the native layers [114]. Another example is the National Museum of Qatar, Doha, in Qatar, where the desert rose plant became an inspiration to create



- architecture that responds to the desert harshness without obscuring the Sheikh's historic palace and installing a contemporary layer [115].
- iii. Architects and other designers should study the design tools contributed by this paper and apply them proactively when considering environmental significance. The tools are inclusive classification of design approaches and a ranking of regulatory conservation principles for adding contemporary architecture to the historic environment.
  - iv. NGOs involved with heritage conservation should work with the Antiquities Department to implement environmental awareness among the locals and educate owners of businesses in the historic context on the need to maintain environmentally friendly practices. Examples of such non-governmental bodies are the Turkish Cypriot French Cultural Association of Cyprus (KTFKD), the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR), etc.
  - v. Issues of commercial brands gaining visual dominance are widening these days, and the city's Control Authority and Antiquities Department should reconsider their advertisements' visual insertions. Although this paper did not elaborate on the color scheming issue, future research could build upon the dark color dominance delineation that is morphing between different commercial facades in the TRNC period.

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## Appendix A

Code	Approaches	Key Focus	Author /Year
A	Philosophical	Inspiring the present from idealistic or architectural ideology stand point to keep the past character.	Ruskin 1890
B	Spatialism	Synthesis of art and science to create the new- Progressive possibility.	Fontana, L. 1946
C	Facadism	Placing new buildings behind a preserved facade.	Smith 1975
D	Collage City	Assemblage of old plus new.	Rowe & Koetter 1978
E	Genius Loci method	Spirit of the place as historic core.	Norberg-Shulz 1979
F	Intellectual	Use of links.	Brolin 1980
G	Re-founding	Awakening lost architectural style or ambiance.	
H	Morphological	Urban morphology and typology of existing environment.	Rossi 1982
I	Parody	Imitating the features of past styles.	Sachner 1987
J	Impressionistic	Visual factors.	Sanoff 1988
K	Contextual uniformity	Copying that is pastiche.	Rogers 1988
L	Contextual Juxtaposition	Contrastive with different period styles	
M	Contextual continuity	Using Post-Modernism architectural style.	Tiesdell et al. 1996
N	Strategic	Stability of uses and occupancy.	Hunt 1996; Rodwell 2003
O	Abstract Symbolism	Mix of geometric abstract forms and historical symbols abstraction	Bekar 2018
P	Stylistic	New localism and historicism	Baytin 2000
Q	Prescriptive	Formation of legislation	
R	Pastiche	New mimicking old.	Linda 2006
S	Literal replication	Replicate historic context image.	Semes 2007
T	Invention within a style	Selects closely related styles.	
U	Abstract reference	Uses modernist language transformed from old visual resources.	
V	Intentional opposition	New is dissonant with old with	
W	Imitation	Coping past characteristics.	Birlik 2013
X	Version	Rebuilding with different features.	
Y	Opposite	Build with the features of the present era.	
Z	Harmonic contrast	Combining features of both past and new era.	
Z <sup>1</sup>	Referential	Build from references of old context.	Demiri 2013
Z <sup>2</sup>	Differential	Evolutionary with selected analogies of old .	
Z <sup>3</sup>	Contrasting	New features are used in all aspects oppositely directed.	
Z <sup>4</sup>	Neutral	Adaptation-Neither new nor old.	Tawab 2014
Z <sup>5</sup>	Freestyle	Alien to historic context	Riza & Doradi 2015
Z <sup>6</sup>	Participatory	Involving all cultural groups and visual control.	Khalaf 2015; Basarir et al. 2016
Z <sup>7</sup>	Simulation	Rebuilding or restoring the old.	Gambassi 2016
Z <sup>8</sup>	Integration	New elements blended with the old.	
Z <sup>9</sup>	Analogy	New elements detached from the old.	
Z <sup>10</sup>	Contrast	New elements in contrast with the old.	Zonouz 2018
Z <sup>11</sup>	Partitioning	Showcasing identity components of the context.	
Z <sup>12</sup>	Spectrum Interpretation	Formal and visual sources of old context.	Bekar 2018
Z <sup>13</sup>	Pastiche	Imitation of old.	Davies 2019
Z <sup>14</sup>	Traditional	New follow local vernacular.	
Z <sup>15</sup>	Subtle	Minute shift from historic themes to modern.	
Z <sup>16</sup>	Modern	New, inspired from the past.	
Z <sup>17</sup>	Arrogant	Alien with past and present.	Allies & Morrison 2021
Z <sup>18</sup>	Picturesque	Built upon multiple layers of old but whole	
Z <sup>19</sup>	Humanistic	Build interactive space for human ties to buildings	
Notes:			
i. Pastiche Approach appears as code R and Z <sup>13</sup> but will be combined as a single hybrid in the groups sorting as (RZ <sup>13</sup> ) for equitable distribution.			
ii. The design approach(es)- Contrast/Contrasting was sorted according to the scholars explanations however, such meaning created sorting difficulty and was contradictory. Additionally, when compared with the explanations given by several authors on its synonyms design nomenclatures, this exercise regroup 'contrast' and contrasting with code Z <sup>3</sup> and Z <sup>10</sup> as another hybrid (Z <sup>3</sup> Z <sup>10</sup> ) to end the existing disparity for clarity.			
iii. These adjustments thereby step-down the total approaches to 43 to conduct the next step - grouping.			

**Figure A1.** Inventory for collating design typologies Adapted from the authors' data deposited with Figshare [105,116].

n	KEY STATEMENTS	Code	SPAB 1977	ATHENS 1931	ATHENS 1933	VENICE 1964	NORMS 1967	UNESCO 1968	RUDAPEST 1972	UNESCO 1972	LAUSANNE 1973	KARIMIERZ 1974	BURGES 1975	AMSTERDAM 1975	UNESCO 1976	TIA XCALA 1982	APPLETON 1983	GRANADA 1985	WASHINGTON 1987	MEXICO 1999	KRAKOW 2000	CHINA 2000	VIENNA 2005	VALLETTA 2011	UNESCO 2011	BURRA 2013	DELHI 2017	Count-down □	
1	New work should avoid forgery approaches	a	■			■									■												■	7	
2	Protection of monuments' character/surroundings, historic values and not demolish.	b	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■			■	■		■	■		■	■	■				19
3	Demolition of slums surrounding monument for greenery and situation removal of buildings	c			■														■									2	
4	Permit use of modern materials, advanced techniques and sciences	d		■	■	■			■	■																■		6	
5	Styles of all periods should be represented/respected	e				■														■	■					■		7	
6	Rigorous scrutiny of contemporary proposals/new materials by specialists	f			■										■	■		■			■		■	■				8	
7	Permit change of function/modifications as urban evolution/continuity	g					■	■				■							■	■						■		8	
8	Avoid distortion or conjecture but maintain consistency	h				■											■	■			■				■	■		6	
9	New must be distinct and bear contemporary stamp (mark of our age)	i				■			■			■					■	■			■				■	■		8	
10	Valorization of cultural heritage as tools for progress	j					■	■						■	■	■			■				■	■				8	
11	New role/adaption of the 'historic groups' and authenticity/integrity should be regarded	k						■				■	■		■		■			■	■	■		■		■		12	
12	Contemporary architecture as part of town-planning scheme for future development demands administrative resources	l							■	■				■	■	■	■	■	■				■	■	■	■	■	13	
13	Avoid new uses that np residents' liveliness and historic condition	m									■	■	■		■	■	■				■		■	■	■	■		13	
14	Contemporary architecture/change must add or be of high quality	n													■								■	■	■			3	
15	Contemporary interventions should consider social costs	o													■						■		■	■	■	■		5	
16	New should be harmonious/contextualize with its surroundings/whole town	p												■	■	■	■			■	■		■	■	■	■	■	12	
17	Continue to use traditional crafts and methods (contemporary vernacular architecture)	q												■			■	■			■	■				■		7	
18	Homogeneous groups of historic and architectural areas should continue unchanged	r													■							■						2	
19	Safeguarding the natural or man-made environment as umbrella concept for heritage care (activities and interventions)	s													■	■	■	■	■				■	■	■	■	■	10	
20	Urban context analysis should precede new construction	t													■		■		■	■	■		■	■				3	
21	Duplicate Venice Charter principles	u					■	■				■					■		■	■	■	■		■		■	■	9	
	COUNT-DOWN □		2	3	5	8	4	5	7	2	4	3	5	9	10	7	10	6	9	7	13	4	14	12	5	11	3		
Total COUNTDOWN I=168 (mean value=7), and Total COUNTDOWN II=168 (mean value=8).																													

Figure A2. Inventory form for sorting regulatory bodies/principles on contemporary architecture.

Criteria	Case A	Case B	Case C
<b>Design approaches</b>			
-Indicative	■		
-Reflective			■
-Selective-reflective		■	
-Resiliency			
-Fashionista			
<b>Principles</b>			
-1st rank	■	■	■
-2nd rank	■	■	■
-3rd rank	■	■	■
-4th rank			
-5th rank			
-6th rank			
<b>Relationship with context</b>			
-Uniformity	■		■
-Harmony with contrast		■	
-Contrast			
-Too contrast			
<b>Visual appreciation</b>			
-Nostalgia	■		■
-Freshtness		■	
-Wow			
<b>Historic environment character</b>			
-Heterogeneous	■	■	■
-Homogeneous			

Figure A3. Criteria analysis of case studies.

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