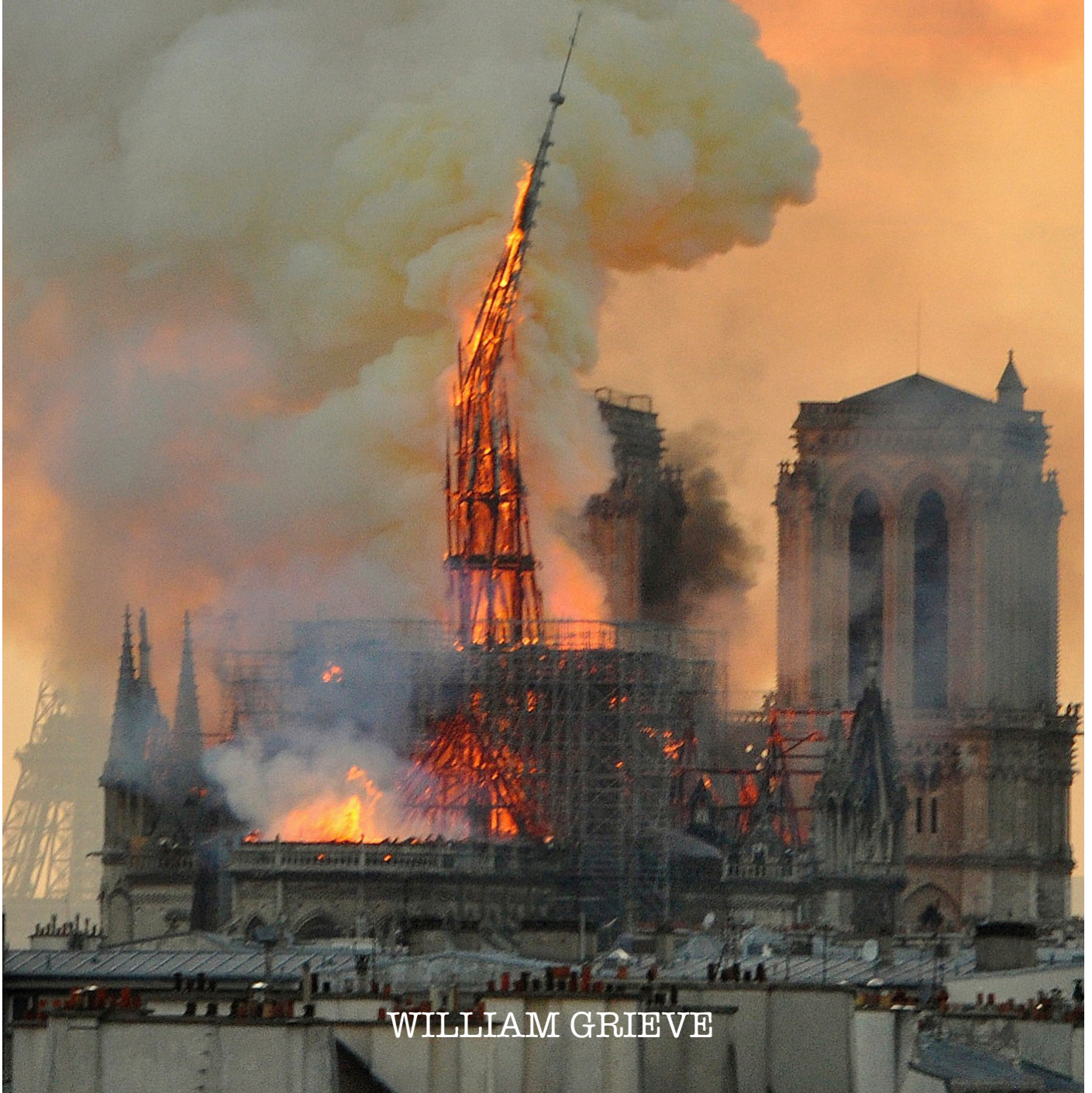


NOTRE DAME 2019

TO RESTORE OR NOT TO RESTORE?



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Introduction.

On the 15th of April 2019, a tragedy struck Paris as a fire started in its world-renowned medieval Catholic cathedral; Notre Dame. The structural blaze burnt for almost 15 hours, destroying the cathedral's spire, the majority of its roof and severely damaging its upper walls (The New York Times, 2019). As the news broke, hundreds of thousands of heartbroken on-lookers from across the globe started to fund-raise over \$1 billion to restore the UNESCO World Heritage Site to its former glory by 2024 under the instruction of the French President Emmanuel Macron (Ganley, 2019). However, is it fully justified to erase part of the building's history by restoring it to its pre-fire state as to pretend the fire never took place? This essay aims to decide the argument as to whether it is better to cover up the building's history or to celebrate it, whilst looking into the buildings previous restoration and assessing how the past and present restoration theories will determine what should rightfully be done to the cathedral in modern day.



Source A. - Fire on the roof of Notre Dame (2019)

Chapter 1 - The Fire of 2019.

The fire broke out in the attic beneath the Cathedral's roof just before 18:20 (Peltier et. al., 2019). Moments later, the alarm sounded and guards were sent to the attic of the sacristy to investigate. Unfortunately, about fifteen minutes later they discovered they had gone to the wrong place, but by the time the guards had climbed the three hundred steps to the cathedral attic, the fire was well advanced and had started to engulf the spire (Peltier et. al., 2019). The majority of the wooden/metal roof and the spire of the cathedral was destroyed, with only about a third of the roof remaining (Nossiter and Breeden, 2019). The remnants of the roof and spire fell on top of the stone vaulted ceiling underneath. Some sections of this vaulting collapsed due to weight, allowing debris from the burning roof to fall to the floor below (Goodheart, 2019). However, most sections of the ceiling remained intact due to the rib vaulting, which greatly reduced the amount of damage to the cathedral's interior and objects within, including precious artworks and relics (Goodheart, 2019). It is believed that the fire started as an accident, involving a piece of machinery that short-circuited during the ongoing repairs to the roof (Vaux-Montagny and Corbet, 2019).

On the night of the fire, French President Macron announced that the state-owned cathedral would be rebuilt and launched an international fundraising campaign. The heritage conservation organisation estimated the damage in the hundreds of millions of euros and while Macron hoped the cathedral could be restored in time for the 2024 Paris Olympics, architects expect the work could take from twenty to forty years (The New York Times, 2019). There has been a discussion as to whether the reconstruction of the cathedral should be in modified form. Initial ideas such as rebuilding the roof with titanium sheets and steel trusses have been suggested. Other ideas included rebuilding in the original lead and wood, rebuilding with modern materials not visible from the outside (such as reinforced concrete trusses at Reims Cathedral), or a combination of restored elements and newly designed ones (Clarke, 2019).

Shortly after the fire was extinguished, the French Prime Minister announced an architectural design competition for the replacement of the spire which should be 'an adaptation of the techniques and the challenges of our era' (Philippe 2019 cited by Cole 2019). On 16 July, a law was passed governing how the restoration should take place, recognising the cathedral's UNESCO World Heritage Site status and the need to respect existing international charters and practices, to 'preserve the historic, artistic and architectural history of the monument' (Bandarin 2019 citing French Parliament 2019), meaning all work done must be respectful to the heritage of the building. However, this does not mean that the work done must be a copy of what was there before. This also is not the first time the cathedral could undergo dramatic change after damage and decay, as it was heavily altered by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc in the 'restoration' of 1844.



Source B - A competition entry for the design of the new roof and spire (2019)

Chapter 2 - The 'Restoration' of 1844.

In the early 19th century, Notre Dame was in severe disrepair. The earlier French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars meant much of its religious imagery was damaged or destroyed and the Cathedral came to be used as a warehouse for the storage of food and other non-religious purposes (Chavis, 2013). However, popular interest in the cathedral blossomed soon after the 1831 Victor Hugo novel; the Hunchback of Notre Dame. Although Hugo was a novelist, he had a great interest in Parisian Architecture and began writing to make his contemporaries more aware of its value as he felt gothic architecture was being neglected and destroyed to be replaced by newer buildings or defaced by the replacement of parts in newer styles (Cochran, 1999). The success of the novel triggered national interest in the Cathedral, although not all of this was positive. The same year the novel was published, the Cathedral's sacristy was looted by anti-Legitimists who wanted an end to the monarchy. In retaliation, the major restoration project from 1844-1864, supervised by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc and Jean-Baptiste Lassus by the order of King Louis Philippe to show that the monarchy still held significant power in France.

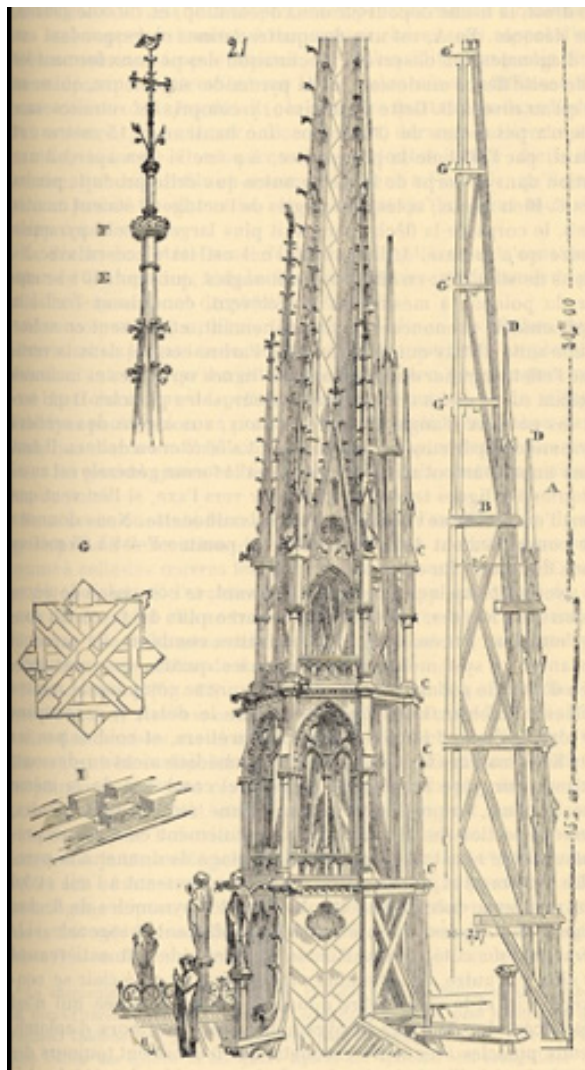
However, what Lassus and Le-Duc created was not a restoration of the 13th-century Cathedral. Instead, it was a 19th-century 'medievalism', intended to recreate a monument to honour France's past (Mondschein, 2019). They remade and added decorations in the 'spirit of the original style', which largely exaggerated what existed previously due to the influence of the Hugo fairytale. This included a taller and more ornate spire replacing the original 13th-century spire, which had been removed in 1786, as well as elaborate sculptures of mythical creatures on the Galerie des Chimères (Chavis, 2013). Not only did Le-Duc create exaggerated alterations, but he also removed all signs of previous alterations and baroque decoration as well as destruction by revolts, revolutions and six centuries of decay (Reiff, 1971).

This 'adaptive' design was typical of Le-Duc who was known for his interpretive neo-gothic restorations, making the building's he worked on 're-appropriational'. The interventions proposed by Le-Duc for restoration works were usually extensive, and often included inserting new physical elements into the building, albeit still mimicking the original style (Stanley-Price et. al., 2010). His work on the restoration of Château de Pierrefonds was renowned for its 'fanciful' style with its fairytale-like turrets, moat and drawbridge, overemphasising the 14th-century military base which stood before (Roux, 2012).

Le Duc's restoration style stemmed from a deep respect for the existing architect of a building. His intentions in his restorations were to pay homage to the design style of the original building by restoring them to their 'original condition', thereby keeping them in use which he believed was 'the greatest compliment to an architect' (Kalčić, 2014). Le Duc believed all the work he did to a building was complimentary to the era in which it was erected and if there were no original plans or drawings available to copy, he would imagine himself to be in the original architect shoes and build what he saw as suitable for the period, therefore justifying all the exaggerated features he would add (Scott, 2008). Most importantly, Le Duc (1854, p. 4) believed that; "the best means of preserving a building is to find a use for it, and to satisfy its requirements so completely that there shall be no occasion to make any changes", thereby making a building better, not retaining its weaknesses. By believing this, he not only restored but added entirely new elements of design to Notre Dame as "Architecture should be a direct expression of current materials, technology, and functional needs" (Viollet-Le-Duc 1854 cited by Bressani 1989), as such; his theory on the restoration of historic buildings implied adaptation as well (Yazdani Mehr, 2019). However, user requirements of a building change over time, therefore it would not be unthinkable that buildings use changes over its lifetime. In response to this, Le-Duc (1854, p. 4) stated that; "one should suppose one's self in the position of the original architect, and to imagine what he would do if he came back to the world and had the current programme with which we have to deal laid before him", therefore justifying the right to

continually change and adapt a building to suit its most contemporary user requirements. This can also be seen in his various adaptation projects, such as the conversion of Saint-Martin-des-Champs from a monastery to a library (Jokilehto, 1999).

Due to Le-Duc's progressive attitude towards restoration and his favour of technological advancement where possible, there is little doubt that he would not oppose restoring the cathedral to its pre-fire state to mirror that of 1844, or even using more contemporary materials and techniques in its re-build to make it more suitable for modern-day use. This poses a strong argument for the case of restoration and even alteration of the cathedral as it is clear that it would be supported by the architect who had spent decades perfecting his 'magnum opus' almost two centuries earlier.



Source C. - The new spire (1859)

Chapter 3 - The Critics.

Le-Duc's ideas on restoration were extremely influential, but not without their critiques. The 19th century was hugely conserved with the discussion and argument of restoration versus anti-restoration (Plevoets and Van Cleempoel, 2014). John Ruskin, a famous British art critic and activist in the 1840s strongly apposed Le-Duc's attitude towards restoration. Ruskin spent his life devoted to the preservation of historic buildings believing that restoration was a falsification of history and instead tried to promote the use of regular maintenance to preserve a building's character and history (Burman, 2010). To this extent, Ruskin refused the RIBA gold medal because of 'the destruction under the name of restoration brought about by architects'; claiming that architects do more harm to a historic site than good (Ruskin 1874 cited by Scott 2008). Ruskin (1885, p. 204) argued that there was no such thing as restoration, only "destruction accompanied by the false description of the thing destroyed"; claiming that it is "impossible to raise the dead"; therefore impossible to restore anything. Yazdani Mehr (2019) claims that Ruskin seemingly viewed a historic building as a 'corpse' which could not be restored to life, but to be maintained and preserved as if it were an Egyptian mummy, allowing the unique creation of an architect from a certain period to be conserved. This follows the 'zeitgeist' theory (which translates to spirit of the age and deems age as the biggest asset to a heritage building), showing that Ruskin viewed age as the number one contributing factor to the beauty of a building and claimed age value must be preserved at all cost in his conservation theory. Ruskin believed that the closer the copy of a building, the greater the deception (Scott, 2008). He said: "it is impossible to recreate the signs of the past", which were in the fabric of a heritage building and that these were the things that gave a building spirit and character so to destroy these would be destroying the 'spirit of place' (Powell 1999 citing Ruskin 1885). He believed that life remained in heritage buildings in the form of mystery, and the suggestion of what could have been. Scott (2008) argues that this mystery is lost through the harshness of the new 'faux historic' replacements.



Source D. - A painting of the medieval ruins at Kenilworth by John Ruskin (n.d.)

Ruskin described Le-Duc's work on Notre Dame as "the betrayal of the worst kind", that the cathedral has suffered "the most complete destruction that an edifice can suffer" and that; "the whole enterprise was a lie from beginning to end" (Davidson 2019 citing Ruskin 1885). Ruskin strongly favoured conservation, claiming that Le-Duc had destroyed the beauty of Notre Dame by falsifying its facade and features, showing a clear disregard for its history. Ruskin had great empathy with the original craftsman, saying that altering the building is deeply disrespectful to those who spent years perfecting their craft, only for it to be destroyed years later when not deemed to be in perfect condition anymore (Scott, 2008). He believed that if action should have been taken in terms of building work at Notre Dame, they should only have been the preservation and conservation in its current state. Ruskin made a huge contribution to the preservation of historic buildings globally, and was titled a protector of heritage buildings and is recognised as the pioneer of the conservation movement in the 19th century (Scott, 2008).

Ruskin also was highly influential in his theory of building conservation, so much so that the well-known arts and crafts style 'founding father' William Morris was regarded as his disciple (Burman, 2010). Inspired by Ruskin, Morris was also heavily conservative in his thinking as he believed in the honesty of crafts and that 'buildings should be repaired, not restored in order to protect their history' (Yount, 2005). Due to his beliefs, Morris set up the Anti-scrape movement which later turned into 'The Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings' with its manifesto for the protection of ancient buildings, viewing them as unique

works of artists in a specific historic period which must be preserved for age value (Wong, 2017). This is directly similar to Ruskin who saw the zeitgeist theory of preserving buildings and monument due to their age as fundamental (Kuipers and De Jonge, 2017). This manifesto emphasises the repair and maintenance of heritage buildings rather than restoration (Burman, 2010). This is due to the belief that regular maintenance of a building was in order to protect it from decay over time, preserving it and not letting it deteriorate any further. Morris also believed that unique features of a heritage building should not be removed or restored, but preserved, even if a building's function changed (Donovan, 2014). However, Morris was more pragmatic in his ideology than Ruskin, believing that; 'if building work has to be done on old buildings, it should be complementary', that the work done 'should not be a copy of history' and that it 'should be removable without damage to the original' (Jackson, 2004); hinting that further change to a building would be allowed in order to preserve its historic value. Morris's theories and anti-restoration societies sparked a greater interest in heritage buildings, inspiring organisations such as the National Trust and English Heritage to be established in order to preserve a buildings historic value (The William Morris Society, 2014).

However upon deeper analysis, one could regard Ruskin and Morris as hypocrites as their main arguments were flawed. Both wanted to preserve a historic monument in its current condition and protect it from future deterioration from use or weathering, but in their manifestos and theories, they claim that these were the things that give a building character and spirit (Scott, 2008). By limiting future deterioration, they are stopping any further 'character' being added to the building. It can also be questioned as to whether Morris and Ruskin were doing the right thing. How can it be justified for them to decide that the character already there is more worthy of the potential character being added in future? One could further this argument by questioning as to whether Morris and Ruskin should have interfered in a buildings life cycle all together through the act of conservation. Perhaps it is more ethical to let a building complete its life cycle naturally over time, finalising in ruins which have a picturesque beauty in their own right. This is a theory that Alois Riegl favoured, stating that buildings should be allowed to deteriorate naturally. Riegl (1903, p. 246) viewed Ruskin's conservation theory to be "too concerned with commemorative values", suggesting that conservationists sometimes keep a building alive just for the sake of it, rather than focusing on its present-day value which he deemed more important. Arguably, this suggests that Ruskin and Morris are no better than Le Duc by impeding a building's natural ageing progression, stopping it creating any more historical significance in the future by natural deterioration, something they heavily critiqued Le Duc for being involved in.

It is clear to see that both Ruskin and Morris would argue that the French government should focus on preserving its current state of Notre Dame and focus more on its conservation rather than its restoration, as re-building and replacing elements such as the spire and roof in the style of Le Duc in 1844 would be a falsification of history and essentially erase a very important part of its history, however modern it may be. They would argue that it is more important to conserve Notre Dame in its current state after the flames went out and make it a structurally sound artefact of the cathedral which celebrates the modern history of the fire showing its 'character' for generations to come.

Chapter 4 - Wider Analysis.

During the 19th century, restoration and anti-restoration were points of discussion and argument (Plevoets and Van Cleempoel, 2014). These theories became increasingly popular after the industrialisation and enlightenment of Europe in the 1800s. Anti-restoration focused on the preservation of the original design of buildings within their own history and context, whilst restoration referred to the change to some parts of heritage buildings where necessary, providing a spirit of re-order, improvement and perfecting the imperfect. Restoration can fundamentally be split into two categories; stylistic restoration and age-value restoration. Stylistic restoration refers to the theory that all work carried out on a building should be a 'historical reconstruction' of it before it fell into disrepair. It must hide any signs of decay or passing of time by using materials that replicate the ones initially used. Spurr (2017, p.159) states that; "where the aesthetic of ruins fixates on the marks of time, stylistic restoration seeks to erase them". This emphasises on a specific time period and restoration of authentic features and heritage values concerning that era, favouring the buildings historic value rather than its age value (Tomaszewski, 2008). In comparison, age-value restoration grew out of the dislike for stylistic restoration. The falsification of original features was seen as 'erasing history' rather than honouring it and creates a counterfeit feeling of the age, meaning buildings should therefore display all signs of decay to show the real age of the building (Kincaid, 2003). With this in mind, any future alterations to a heritage building should be done using different materials which clearly show the difference between the old and the new. This will communicate a true feeling of a place. The proposed restoration of Notre Dame would be a stylistic restoration, showing the building as it was when it was last touched in 1864.



Source E. - An example of stylistic restoration on Georgian stonework. (2018)

Chapter 5 - Contemporary Theories About Restoration.

The theory surrounding restoration has changed since Le-Duc 'restored' Notre Dame. Whereas the 19th century focused on the stylistic restoration and conservation of heritage buildings, the 20th century introduced the theory of building adaptation and re-use due to a shift in social demands and financial insecurity after the destruction of heritage buildings in Europe after the world wars. The Athens charter of 1931 was the first international document to encourage modern conservation policy and introduced seven solutions to restoration, conservation and preservation of historic buildings (Haspel, 2008). The charter is the first to have criticised stylistic restoration, and instead promoted regular maintenance of a building which in turn stated that no style/period is more important than another (Chung and Kim, 2010). Whilst it was important to conserve the building in its original location, for the first time it was deemed acceptable to restore a building in a manner that preserves its historic and artistic values, even using modern technologies such as concrete; to keep a building standing. Regarding ruins, the irreparable fragments can now be replaced and the new materials should be recognisable from the original. Yazdani Mehr (2019) argues that this shows a clear evolution in thinking as the Athens Charter indirectly implied adaptive reuse of heritage buildings as a way of making a building usable, therefore preventing its further decay in future.

These ideas were later added to by the Venice Charter of 1964. This charter was introduced after the destruction of the war not only destroyed buildings that had 'historic value' which had previously been limited to describing antique and medieval buildings up until the Victorian era, but now included all building styles and typologies which were deemed valuable for preservation (Plevoets and Van Cleempoel, 2014). The post-war era was an interesting time for restoration as architects and conservationists began working together after architects began to show interest in the re-use and adaptation of heritage buildings to suit the ever-changing needs of modern society. Initially, architects in the 1940s and 50s started to deal with thousands of buildings which were semi-damaged in the Second World War. As many countries' economies were only just recovering, it seemed foolish to waste money in demolishing an entire structure and rebuilding it from scratch if only a small area was damaged, therefore adapting and re-using a buildings shell became the way forward. This further progressed in the 1960s when architects began to work on the conservation and restorations of monuments and heritage buildings. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (1964) stated in Article 5 that the conservation of monuments had to be carefully considered in a way that would impact society by making them 'socially useful'. Therefore, the Charter is fundamentally considered as a driving force for modern-day conservation of heritage buildings and thus places a priority on social usefulness of buildings, directly implying that the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings should take place to make a building useful in the modern-day.

The changing of built structures to suit other functions and uses has regularly taken place since the start of civilisation, however adaptive reuse as theory and practice were only technically been formalised in the 1970s (Yazdani Mehr 2019). The act of adapting existing buildings to a suit new function is not a modern one as, throughout history, structurally sound buildings were often changed to satisfy new functions and requirements, without much opposition (Cunnington, 1988). An example of this is the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, Turkey. It changed its function from a Greek Orthodox Basilica, to an Islamic Mosque, to a Roman Catholic Church, back to a Mosque and finally as a secular museum; being altered and added to with each occupation to meet the required needs. The similar reuse of the Hagia Sophia for a place of worship is an early sign that functional and financial factors were the main reasons for adaptive reuse (Powell, 1999). Cantacuzino (1989, p. 8) wrote that the "structural durability of old buildings was the main driver for their adaptation over time".

This is because a building's structure tends to outlive function. He went onto say that the adaptation and preservation of existing buildings in an urban context over time led to a greater sense of 'belonging', enabling it to increase heritage values in the form of pride from its local population. Brand (1995) furthered the discussion on adaptive reuse stating that; technology, fashion, and money are the three main reasons for adaptation and that in the contemporary practice of adaptive reuse, the focus should be on technical upgrades of a heritage building without compromise of its heritage values, which is similar to what is stated in article 10 of the Venice Charter. This argues that; although the condition of an existing building is the most important thing, these factors are critical in making decisions related to how adaptive reuse should be done on a heritage building in the modern-day. This shows that the purpose of adaptive reuse of heritage buildings has changed over time from the preservation of values to financial motives and now to technological improvements.

Contemporary theories clearly show that adaptive reuse as a way of conserving a building's history by making it useful for modern-day is the way forward. This is also akin to the practice Le-Duc hinted at. As time goes on, it is clear that restoring buildings to make them aesthetically pleasing is longer good enough and that architecture should be functional in order to survive. Therefore arguing that the 2019 restoration should be one that adapts the existing building into one that will be useful for generations to come in a function that will benefit society whilst also retaining its historic value, and that this should be done through the use of modern materials.



Source E. An adaptive reuse project of a 19th century German Catholic Church into rectory into 33 modern apartments. (2019)

Conclusion.

After assessing the different arguments by theorists over the years, it is clear that the attitude towards restoration has progressed along with the needs of society. Heritage buildings can now be celebrated in a way in that wasn't deemed suitable in Le-Duc's era; through the form of adaptive reuse and making them useful for the modern-day through the preservation of its historic and artistic value but combining them with new technologies that ensure the building will stand and be useful for generations to come. Even though there was great criticism of the style of restoration by Le-Duc in the 1840s, he was not erasing Notre Dame's history but adding to it, in the same way the 2019 fire did and in the same way a contemporary restoration would to ensure its survival, thus highlighting this important part of this building's history. This adaptive restoration of the building and the use of contemporary materials and styles to replace the parts which were destroyed will start a new chapter in the rich, long history book of the cathedral's life.

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Image appendix.

Source A:



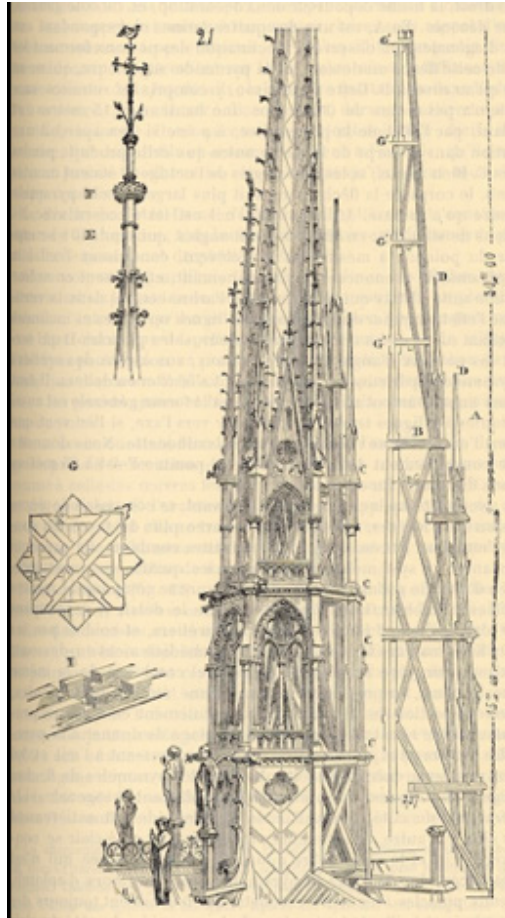
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Source B:



Vincent Callebaut Architects (2019). Palingenesis, VCA'S tribute to Notre Dame. Vincent Callebaut Projects. Available at: https://vincent.callebaut.org/object/190503_tributetonotredame/tributetonotredame/projects [Accessed 1 Dec. 2020].

Source C:



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Source D:



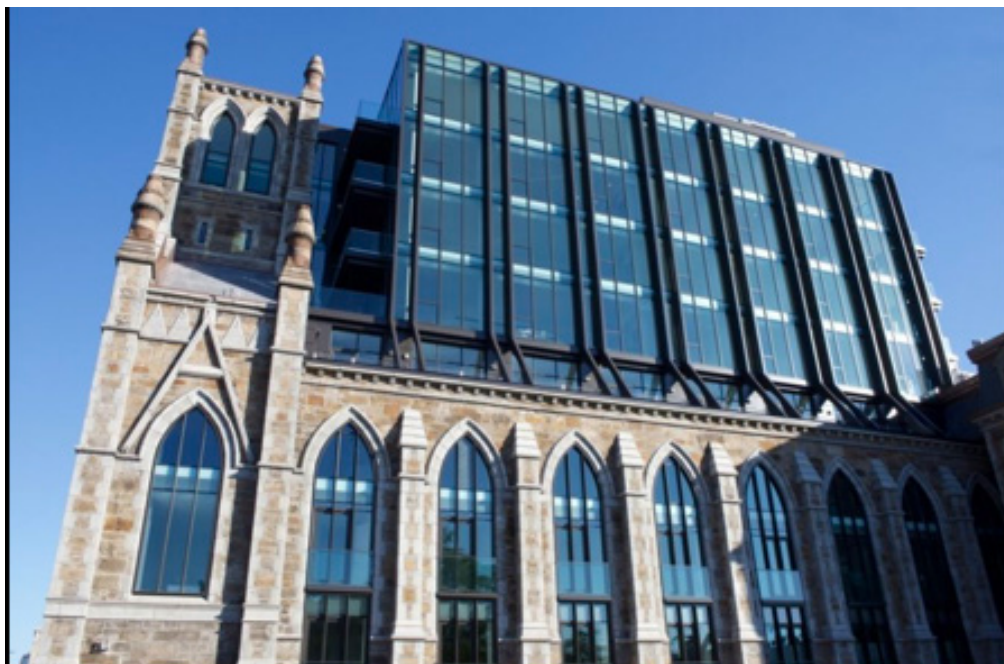
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Source E:



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Source F:



CEI MATERIALS (2018). An Adaptive Reuse Project Converted a 19th Century Holy Trinity German Catholic Church and Rectory into 33 Luxury condos. Metal Architecture. Available at: <https://www.metalarchitecture.com/articles/all-about-adaptive-reuse> [Accessed

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Malle, T. (2019). Flames and Smoke Rise from the Blaze as the Spire Starts to Topple on Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Poynter. Available at: <https://www.poynter.org/fact-checking/2019/why-fact-checkers-couldnt-contain-misinformation-about-the-notre-dame-fire/> [Accessed 16