1 *Article*

2 # Urban Commerce and Protected Cultural Landscape

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9 **Abstract:** By analyzing the urban landscape, this investigation focuses on commercial typologies in
10 historical urban areas and its relationship with the urban landscape and its heritage values. Trade
11 plays an essential role in historical urban areas, both in the past and in the present, since it is part of
12 the urban landscape—creating it and modifying it, but also preserving it. Historical protected
13 urban areas contain diverse elements reflecting the impacts of commercial activities that have
14 existed in cities throughout history. At present, the urban landscape of commercial activity is made
15 up of a multiplicity of typologies and formats which interact with the historical landscape and its
16 values, using them to strengthen its strategies of attraction, differentiation, and sales. Shop owners
17 contribute to the preservation of historic urban areas by maintaining the commercial functions
18 within them. Therefore, we affirm that the role of commercial activity in the preservation of urban
19 protected areas is essential. However, further research is needed because this aspect has not been
20 addressed in depth by the scientific community specializing in the management of cultural
21 heritage.

22 **Keywords:** urban commerce; cultural landscape; historic city; cultural heritage; management

23

24 **1. Introduction**

25 The transformations brought about by the Industrial Revolution triggered the evolution of the
26 conservative concern —from the isolated monument to historic areas— coinciding with what
27 Françoise Choay called the conquest of the disciplinary status of the conservation of historical
28 monuments [1]. This was a process that was shaped during the first half of the 20th century, and
29 ultimately consecrated in the 1960s, as a consequence of the restoration of numerous urban areas
30 following the devastation caused by the two world wars.

31 From this period onwards, the milestones that were to establish the doctrine of cultural heritage
32 in relation to the city, and the consequent task of preserving the values that make it worthy of that
33 condition, began to occur. The notion of a protected urban landscape was established by the jump
34 from the isolated monument to the historic area; although, it was already implicit in the concept of
35 setting of a monument. An international definition of setting is included in the Xi'an Declaration on
36 the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas [2].

37 The historic urban landscape has been defined by UNESCO as "the urban area understood as
38 the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the
39 notion of "historic centre" or "ensemble" to include the broader urban context and its geographical
40 setting" [3] (article 8).

41 The broader context "includes notably the site's topography, geomorphology, hydrology and
42 natural features, its built environment, both historic and contemporary, its infrastructures above and
43 below ground, its open spaces and gardens, its land use patterns and spatial organization,
44 perceptions and visual relationships, as well as all other elements of the urban structure. It also
45 includes social and cultural practices and values, economic processes and the intangible dimensions
46 of heritage as related to diversity and identity" [3] (article 9).

Among social and cultural practices and economic processes is trade. The need for the supply and exchange of goods that occurs in every human agglomeration has motivated, throughout history and until now, the continued presence of commercial activity in the focal areas of urban social activity [4].

The routes generated by the flow of goods and services have impacted upon the emergence, flourishing, and decay of numerous urban centers throughout history [5–6], while also allowing contact between cultures, beliefs, and different systems of organization [7–9]. Therefore, commercial activity is an essential functional element both in the history of the city and in its present.

Since antiquity, commercial facilities have been located in the vicinity of palaces and temples [10–12], next to the gates of cities, and near ports. These thematic facilities, sometimes made up of temporary structures, were complemented by shops installed on the ground floor of residential buildings, usually with direct access from the street. These facilities have been present in urban growth processes and, sometimes, they were determinant in these processes, as was the case during the 16th and 17th centuries, or since the middle of the 20th century [13–16].

The profound changes that have taken place since the 19th century —derived from the new economic model, technical development, the increase in urban population, and the transformations that took place within cities— would give increasing importance to commercial activity.

This activity would experience permeability to aesthetic fashions like never before, thanks to the development of interior and exterior design, shop windows, and advertising [17–18]. In parallel, there appeared new architectural typologies for commercial use, such as passageways or department stores [19–20]. The functional hierarchy of commercial facilities that has determined their location since the mid-19th century would continue to develop to the present day.

These tendencies that began in the 19th century would be accentuated in the 20th century, ultimately determining urban transformations [21–22]. In those tendencies, the importance of commercial activity would increase, placing it at the heart of the new models of urban growth that began to develop in the United States in the first half of the century [23]. These models pursued the perfect commercial city and materialized as residential areas in the suburbs, whose center of community life is the shopping center [24].

The appearance and development of the typology of the shopping center—the symbol of the consumer society of the 20th century—and the role granted by urbanism to this entity, would set the rhythm between central urban trade and peripheral trade that would be a constant throughout the century [21, 23].

The 20th century would end with a concept of the city where commercial leisure activities, along with recreational and cultural activities, played a leading role in urban life.

The elapsed years of the 21st century have moved between the global expansion of the peripheral commercial area typology, especially in Asia and the Middle East, as well as in ex-communist European countries, and the realization that, in the United States, symptoms have been produced that that we are in a post-mall era in sense of shopping center understood as a center of community life and a relevant institution in society [25].

One of the most significant symptoms of this phenomenon is the conversion to new non-commercial uses of old shopping centers. The First Baptist Church at the Mall opened since 2006 in Florida (USA) is a case in point.

New types of shopping centers have also appeared, such as the strip shopping center, strip mall, or affinity center and villages. In parallel, the situation in city centers is marked by what has been configured as a new urban commerce, with a mix of typologies where the old —with and without modifications— coexist with new types.

Thanks to the historical importance of urban commerce and expansion of commercial entertainment, commerce plays an important role in processes of degradation and revitalization of urban areas.

The main objective of the present work is to analyze commercial typologies in historical urban areas and its relationship with the urban landscape and its heritage values.

2. Line of Work and Methodology

The research is based on the relationship between the preservation of historic urban areas and their adaptation to the needs that contemporary society demands of them in order to continue living within them [26-30]. In particular, we focus on urban commerce, as it is one of the elements that have received the least monographic attention relative to the primary focuses of preservation and the scientific knowledge of cultural heritage. There is a large amount of literature devoted to the management of commercial activity in urban areas, which in some cases looks at areas with heritage protection, but generally concentrates on the analysis of economic and management aspects [31–38], lacking a deep cultural heritage-oriented approach.

The research method used is based on the empirical study of the object of attention, from the perspective of the visual analysis of the urban landscape. The choice to identify and evaluate the results of the initiatives developed or under development from the visual analysis of the urban landscape is motivated by the specific point of view of the art historian. This is always based on the vision, analysis, and interpretation of the image, what it contains, and how it is perceived—a reading that is integral, allowing one to simultaneously analyze the physical and the functional, the tangible and the intangible.

Research is an integral part of a doctoral thesis entitled 'Commerce and Cultural Heritage: Management strategies and actions carried out in historic urban areas' [39] which objective is to analyse the role of the commercial activity in historic urban areas in relation to the preservation of their heritage values. Entities, models and cities from five continents have been investigated, especially from the United States, Cuba, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium and Spain.

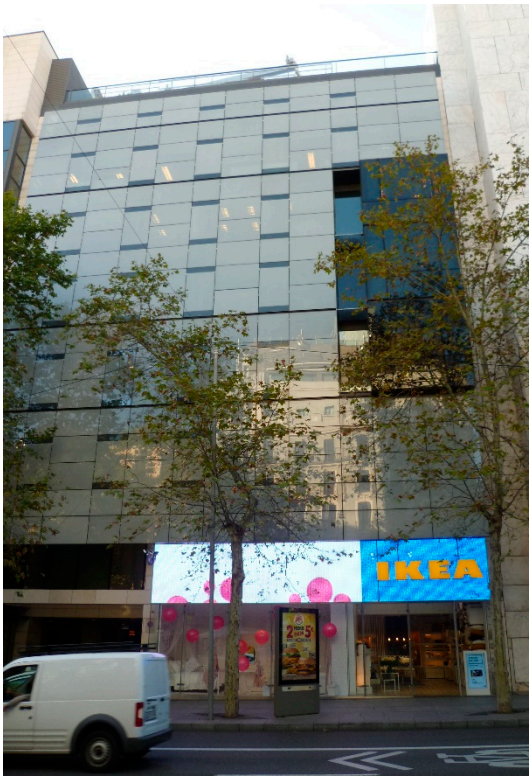
The present work includes different cases of study. The approximation to the historic development of urban commerce is based on United States and Western Europe experience. The results of the field work are based on four European cities: Madrid (Spain), Porto (Portugal), Norwich (UK) and Leiden (Netherlands). All of them have historic urban areas protected in which urban commerce play an important role. Madrid is the capital of Spain and has a population of around 3.222.000 [40]; Porto is the second most important city in Portugal and its population is around 214.500 [41]; Norwich has a population around 140.300 [42] and is 'one of the five fastest growing cities in the UK' [43] (p. 18); Leiden is one of the most important cities in South Holland province and has a population around 124.400 [44].

3. Results

The traditional commercial areas of urban centers are considered commercial laboratories, especially in large cities, where they try out and filter tendencies that later expand into other small cities and towns.

The analysis of the urban landscape shows that, at present, there is a convergent tendency of commercial typologies that includes the adaptation to urban centers of formats typical of the peripheries, such as supermarkets or the urban stores of companies whose premises were formally only installed in peripheral commercial areas (Figure 1). Due to this, companies have developed formats in which the concept is adapted to the requirements or limitations of the urban regulations in protected areas and the characteristics of existing commercial premises. This process has contributed to the disappearance of local supermarkets, which cannot compete on prices with those belonging to large groups, which can now also operate as franchises.

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

Figure 1. (**a,b**) Proximity formats of the Carrefour supermarket chain (Carrefour Market and Carrefour Express). (**c,d**) Urban pilot stores of the Ikea chain. All images come from the city of Madrid (Spain) [45]. Source: Mónica López, 2018.

144   At present, we no longer only speak of a traditional supply trade for urban commerce, but also
145 associate it with innovative business profiles that are going to develop their activities in permanent
146 and non-permanent physical spaces, constituting themselves as essential actors in the current urban
147 landscape of historical urban centers.
148   The rise of electronic commerce, or the simple possibility of purchasing from a computer, has
149 forced retail outlets to change strategies in their stores. They must now make it an experience to visit
150 their stores so that customers will want to go to them [46].
151   We speak of an attraction trade whose clientele transcends the residents of the neighborhood,
152 its extent depending, more or less, on the function that the city represents within the territory, the
153 attraction capacity of the store owners, and the character and state of conservation of the cultural
154 heritage of the urban center.
155   A formula that is gaining prominence is that of the shared space, where several business people
156 share the expenses of a single place in which each one has an individualized store space. This is the
157 version of commercial activity known as the co-working premises, a concept associated with offices
158 and professional activities that providing services rather than selling products.
159   In the search for space optimization and cost reduction, multifunction spaces house different
160 uses or services depending on the hour or day. There are also spaces that house different functions
161 simultaneously, usually selling clothing and decoration associated with cafeterias, to which can be
162 added other functions, such as hairdressing, massage, or sale of art works.
163   In the ephemeral urban landscape produced by commercial exchange activity, a new format has
164 appeared: pop-up stores/retail/shops. These are installations that appear and disappear, directed not
165 at sales, but to the promotion and branding of the company and/or of certain products. They seek to
166 convey a goal that is not simply to sell a product, but to sell a concept and provide an exclusive
167 experience, thereby attracting the customer to the brand by directing them to both its online store
168 and its digital communication channels.
169   Another ephemeral manifestation of creation or intervention in the landscape is the punctuated
170 event format similar to a market, but spread or developed over a specific urban area. These actions
171 provide the possibility of buying and selling products to complete cultural programs generated
172 around commercial activity, which is always the main reason for the existence of these events.
173 Sometimes only shops installed in physical stores in the area can participate, which display their
174 products on the street, or the events can be open to other companies to install pop-ups or have
175 temporary displays.
176   The businesses that represent new urban commerce coexist with other older businesses, these,
177 in many cases, tending to disappear for different reasons: disappearance of shop owners without
178 generational relief, exhaustion of the concept of a particular trade, changes in the commercial
179 dynamics of the street or area where the store is located, regulatory changes, or the disappearance of
180 its clientele. There are also cases in which historic stores are kept alive and accommodate the
181 demands of the current consumer without changing their focus. Another traditional method that is
182 maintained is that of the craftsperson who has a shop-workshop where they make and sell their
183 products.
184   A historical commercial typology that is maintained is that of the market, whether it be a stable
185 market housed in a building (Figure 2) or an installation erected for that purpose (Figure 3 a, b), or in
186 a temporary format (usually of a weekly nature) (Figure 4, a, b). However, a substantial number of
187 the markets housed in buildings have being restructured in order to revitalize them and also update
188 its offer (Figure 5 a, b, c) or turn them into a tourist attraction (Figure 5, d).
189

190   **Figure 2.** Bolhao Market Porto, Portugal. Source: Mónica López, 2017.

(a)

(b)

191   **Figure 3.** (**a**, **b**) Norwich Market, UK. Source: Mónica López, 2011.

(a)

(b)

192   **Figure 4.** (**a, b**) Saturday market in Leiden, The Netherlands. Source: Mónica López, 2014.

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

Figure 5. (a, b, c) San Antón Market and (d) San Miguel Market, Madrid (Spain). Source: Mónica López, 2018.

Most of the new formats of urban commerce respond to the concept of a city that has been established since the end of the 20th century, where the festive, the immaterial, the playful, and the cultural, and their combinations with commercial leisure, take on greater prominence [47].

Added to this are the implications of the translation of business management techniques to urban management, from which city marketing has emerged [48]. Cities develop value creation strategies in which cultural heritage emerges as a differentiation resource that is linked to its ability to attract visitors [49], strongly associated with cultural tourism, but also with the attraction of other economic activities, such as commercial activities.

This power to attract visitors exerted by heritage is linked with concepts that are going to become hegemonic in the 21st century: the emotional and the sensory [50], which are characterizing present and future trends of marketing and branding; and also experience, which guides the tourism and luxury industries, "two of the most powerful engines of the planetary economy" [51] (p. 193).

The clearest case of using the historic urban landscape as a scenario that strengthens and multiplies the brand values that companies want to transmit is found in the ephemeral formats we have discussed. For example, this is the case of the installation of a pop-up of the company Custo Barcelona in one of the buildings that is part of the World Heritage Works of Antoni Gaudí [52–54].

Frequently, these ephemeral formats are promoted and organized by groups of traders who are located in the same urban area (e.g., a neighborhood, group of streets, or an individual street) with the aim of attracting potential customers of their businesses. This is the case of the so-called Market of the Frogs (Figure 6 a, b), organized on the first Saturday of each month by the Association of Merchants of the Barrio de Las Letras in the city of Madrid (Spain).

(a)

(b)

216   **Figure 6.** (**a**, **b**) Market of the Frogs, Barrio de Las Letras in Madrid (Spain). Source: Mónica López,
217   2016.

218   These uses of heritage value take place in commercial premises. Mainly in the case of the
219   exteriors, the maintenance of the defining elements of the premises' facades may be motivated by the
220   requirements of heritage protection regulations. These usually contain guidelines regarding
221   materials, designs, colors, and decorative elements. However, maintenance can also occur, as is
222   usual for the case of the interiors of the premises; a new company recovers historical elements
223   associated with its trade for the design of its premises by maintaining existing elements, or deciding
224   not to part with elements associated with its own activity throughout its history.
225   These cases are also significant for the recognition of heritage values related to the commercial
226   activity, through the elements associated with it, by its direct participants. In addition to the
227   provision of value, store owners contribute to the preservation process of cultural heritage through
228   the identification of the heritage elements, the realization of intervention projects, and the diffusion
229   of these and of the knowledge related to the commercial activity itself.

230   **4. Discussion and Conclusions**

231   The analysis of the relationship between the urban phenomenon and commercial activity
232   throughout history allows us to affirm that this is an essential element of the city and its urban
233   landscape. For this reason, the historical research of urban commercial activity provides essential
234   information on the configuration of cities, in general, and of protected urban areas, in particular. The
235   relationship between commercial activity and urban space is also an important point to understand,
236   at present.
237   The transcendence of commercial activity in the historical evolution of the city is reflected in the
238   presence of elements linked to it in the cultural heritage currently existing in urban settlements.
239   The relationship of feedback between stores and markets and the influx of people is manifested
240   throughout the history of the city, and is reflected both in the names of many streets and squares,
241   and in the fact that various commercial uses are currently maintained in certain spaces that have
242   been hosting these activities for decades, even centuries.
243   It is common that among the elements of urban cultural heritage preserved in many cities
244   today, a direct relationship with their commercial past can be established. In some cases, buildings
245   or other architectural, sculptural, or pictorial elements are preserved specifically because they are
246   associated with the commercial boom in which they appeared. In other cases, it is because the urban
247   framework preserves developments or reforms that have occurred as a result of the impact of
248   commercial activity. There are also cases in which manifestations of intangible heritage are linked to
249   commercial events or the production of certain goods and services that have fueled an economic
250   boom associated with their trade.
251   Commerce is also a part of the heritage value of protected cities, as it is one of the defining
252   functions of the urban entity itself. Trade is a living activity, as are the people who give it meaning,
253   who generate the flow of goods, ideas, and of people who have to pass through the inherited urban
254   fabric. The commercial urban landscape of historic urban areas is a mixture of formats, sizes, and
255   proposals, where hundred-year-old establishments coexist with newly created ones, stores anchored
256   in the past with the avant-garde, stable points of sale with the ephemeral, local shops to supply
257   residents from the neighborhood with other attractions for clientele that originate from the same city
258   or visitors from another country. All this is in constant movement and susceptible to change.
259   Given its nature as a private economic activity, trade changes, evolves, and transforms
260   according to the needs of the market and society, or it disappears. This makes it, therefore, difficult
261   to approach from the point of view of protection of cultural heritage, both of its physical and
262   immaterial elements.
263   From the point of view of the preservation of urban protected areas, it is necessary to unite with
264   this the preservation of the commercial function itself, both for its intrinsic values and for its role in

265 the balance of the urban ecosystem, especially in relation to the establishment of the resident
266 population.
267   In this sense, it can be said that the substitution of one trade for another is good news because
268 the premises retains a commercial function despite the closure of the previous business. Detailed
269 analyses of the urban landscape frequently reveal periodic changes in terms of products and brands,
270 but globally the use of the premises and the flow of people they generate are maintained.
271   The new formats of local supermarkets are also helping to recover the service of supplying
272 necessities that has been badly damaged by the expansion of land use in the suburbs and the
273 disappearance of food stores in most central areas. These types of establishments also offer extra
274 services, such as home delivery, for which they have vehicles adapted to the historical layout of the
275 city. It is a clear example of how trade is essential to maintaining the residential character of these
276 areas.
277   Trade is part of the urban landscape, creating it and modifying it, but also preserving it. At
278 present, the predominant tendencies in promotion and sales strategies look to elements that are
279 contained in cultural heritage, in general, and in historical urban landscapes, in particular. This
280 favors the idea that, in the difficult equation between preservation and destruction, urban commerce
281 is an ally of preservation, despite the complex historical relationship between merchants and
282 administrations in their management of protected areas.

283

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