



## What Makes Historic Towns Identifiable? What to Preserve and What to Transform? The Case of Ljubljana

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The city is a living organism, a system, which embraces social, economic, technical and symbolic subsystems and interacting amongst them. It is not a concrete system, anchored in a specific time period, but a dynamic system, which changes constantly. The city can subsist for centuries, even millennium and it survives also when its original concept and meaning changed or expired. The city is constantly in the process of transformation, it is willing to accept new contents and a new formal character. A series of cities proves this: e.g. Florence as the birthplace of the Renaissance and is medieval in its original urban form, Rome is perceived as a baroque city today, but a series of monuments points towards its antique origins, medieval and renaissance traces can be unearthed. Baroque Ljubljana, which also has a medieval urban form. In short, as Mumford states: »Cities have an endless capability to adapt to new living conditions.«

Ljubljana is a specific case, which derives its identity from its situation, its natural conditions and its turbulent history. This makes debates about preservation and transformation very difficult. The debates are not only academic; they are closely connected with the concrete transformations of historic towns and mainly concern two different problems:

What makes the identity of a historic city, what should be preserved and what can be transformed? Is the ability to adapt to new living conditions purely an advantage, or is it also becoming a threat?

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