

UWTSD

History and Theory 2 – Part 3

Dissertation Synopsis:

**To What Extent Can Welsh Vernacular Architecture
Provide Sustainable Design Strategies for
Contemporary Buildings in Wales?**

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Total Word Count: 544

Introduction (46)

This dissertation will investigate the potential use of Welsh vernacular architecture in contemporary sustainable design. By investigating the traditional materials, techniques and details in the local vernacular, the dissertation will evaluate how these principles could be applied to current architectural and environmental problems in modern design.

Aims and Objectives (127)

Aims:

- To Investigate the extent to which Welsh vernacular architecture can inform contemporary sustainable design in Wales.
- To select and critically evaluate how some traditional Welsh building materials and construction techniques can be reinterpreted in contemporary design.

Objectives:

- To define 'Welsh vernacular architecture' and identify associated materials, construction techniques and design practices.
- To examine how vernacular architecture in Wales is defined in its climate, landscape and available local materials.
- To investigate modern sustainability principles embodied in vernacular Welsh architecture (e.g. low embodied carbon).
- To explore architectural theory on the relevancy of contextual and vernacular architecture in contemporary design.
- To identify and evaluate contemporary projects in Wales that employs Welsh vernacular architectural practices.
- To assess the opportunities and limitations of applying Welsh vernacular architecture within a contemporary context.

Methodology (141)

The research approach will be qualitative, focusing on interpretive and analytical methods. The dissertation will require a literature review of academic texts and books in order to define Welsh vernacular architecture, contemporary sustainability and architectural theory on the topic.

Relevant sources include:

- Contemporary Vernacular Design: How British housing can rediscover its soul (Nash, 2016).
- The Whole Building Handbook: How to Design Healthy, Efficient and Sustainable Buildings (Bokalders and Block, 2010).
- Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance (Frampton, 1983).
- Houses of the Welsh Countryside (Smith, 1975).
- Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture (Brunskill, 1970).

It will also include relevant case studies on contemporary buildings using Welsh vernacular building practices to assess the feasibility of employing the identified Welsh vernacular architectural principles.

Possible case studies include:

- Ty Pren (Feilden Fowles, 2008-2009)
- Galeri Caernarfon (Richard Murphy Architects, 2005)

Finally, I will identify and interview relevant professionals in order to gather qualitative insights and identify key opinions on the topic.

literature Review (139)

This dissertation will build on the work of architectural historians documenting the Welsh and British vernacular (Brunskill, 1970) and extend this research into the contemporary architectural context. Existing key sources regarding the use of British vernacular design in contemporary architecture (Nash, 2016), tend to focus exclusively on the architectural theory and actual implementation of vernacular materials and techniques, but do not address the environmental benefits and wider applications. By linking the contemporary sustainability principles (Bokalders and Block, 2010) to this topic, and addressing the economic and regulatory challenges involved, the paper can define the actual extent and feasibility of the implementation of the vernacular materials and construction techniques. Additionally, almost all sources focus on Britain as a wider entity despite the differing climates and local materialities across Britain. By focusing on Wales, I can address this gap in the research of Welsh vernacular architecture in contemporary design.

Limitations (39)

The main limitations include and overreliance on secondary research, possible biases in interviews, and word-count limitations. Due to limited word count I will need to reduce the scope of my research down to a list of materials and techniques.

Timeframe (52)

I will initially complete and produce chapter one, defining the Welsh Vernacular architecture, and chapter two modern sustainability principles before organising interviews with the relevant knowledge by the end of semester one. This will allow me the time to complete the case studies and analysis with all relevant information in semester two.

Reference List

Bokalders, V. and Block, M. (2010) *The whole building handbook: how to design healthy, efficient and sustainable buildings*. London: Earthscan.

Brunskill, (1971) *Illustrated handbook of vernacular architecture*. London: Faber and Faber.

Frampton, K. (1983) 'Towards a critical regionalism: six points for an architecture of resistance', in Foster, H. (ed.) *The anti-aesthetic: essays on postmodern culture*. Port Townsend: Bay Press.

Nash C. (2016) *Contemporary vernacular design: how British housing can rediscover its soul*. Newcastle upon Tyne: RIBA Publishing.

Smith, P. (1975) *Houses of the Welsh countryside: a study in historical geography*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.