GLOBAL vs. LOCAL: Exploring Architecture as a Local Brand for Covent Garden

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The decline and subsequent revitalization of urban districts around the world is a common history in the life of a city. While the built environment – the architecture and streets – may be slow to change or seemingly fixed, the activities, social and economic trends, and political action are constantly changing. The loss of identity is intrinsically liked to the decline of an urban district, and in many cases it is due to the fact that the district, that was once vibrant and thriving, did not keep up with the social, economic, and political changes that influenced and ultimately supported the vibrancy of the district. In some cases the change is immediate: the move of industrial or wholesale functions, construction of a freeway, or a natural or manmade disaster. Regardless of the cause, whether immediate or gradual, part of a successful revitalization includes reclaiming or constructing an identity for the district that is responsive to contemporary trends and needs, while still maintaining a local integrity. Cities often look to the past for solutions to determine what worked and how those elements can be revived, but the shifting nature of economic and social trends do not always align with past success. History: the memory, the stories, and in many cases the historical architecture can help to form a local identity.

In the past century as shopping has evolved into an activity of leisure and recreation, retail development has become an inherent part of most urban revitalization schemes, which bring in the comfort and familiarity of global brands to help draw a larger audience. With this, a unique, local identity is threatened by the homogenization of the global brand. This paper will explore urban revitalization using historic architecture as a method for developing a local brand identity. It will look at how an urban district can capitalize on the historic past, using the historic architecture to represent the local identity while simultaneously situating the local brand for growth and success in the midst of globalization. Looking at Covent Garden in London, it will focus on elements within the retail district that have, in recent years, distinguished the local brand of Covent Garden.

This paper will focus specifically on the retail district of Covent Garden for a variety of reasons. First, in 1974 the main use of the district, a wholesale fruit and vegetable garden, was removed over night. The immediate removal of the primary activity, economic generator, and identity of the district is unique to many revitalization schemes and created a proactive stance on the development of a new identity. Rather than looking to the past to determine the root of decline, the focus was on the future and how to replace, in a unified manner, the hole that was created in Covent Garden. Secondly, Covent Garden has a deeply rooted history that has left traces of this history, layered in the architecture throughout the district. And finally, Covent Garden is a prime tourist location with a vibrant shopping district that has, in recent years, transitioned from a district that in the 1980s was described as a uniquely local shopping selection: "Instead of the mass of multiples, which make our high streets repetitive and boring, the majority of The Market's shops are run by individuals who do sell fairly original goods."[1] To its contemporary state where global shops are the majority, lining the streets, while the district still maintains a strong local identity.

Covent Garden also has a long tradition in the performing arts, with the Royal Opera House and The Royal Ballet School located in the district, and has maintained an "unbroken association with English theatre since 1630," [2] but this paper will focus only on the retail components of the district. This is not to undermine the cultural presence, but to highlight interesting links related to the relationship of globalized retail district with the local identity established through historic architecture.

COVENT GARDEN: LOSING INDENTITY, REBUILDING IDENTITY

Covent Garden has an extensive historical past. The area can be traced back to use as a Roman settlement in the first century AD, but the name Covent Garden is derived from its 13th century use as a kitchen garden on approximately 40 acres[3] for St. Peter's Convent at Westminster. The current day typography can be linked the brick wall erected for the garden within the earlier wood fence perimeters of the Covent Garden pasture between 1610 and 1613 to contain the garden.[4]

Crops from the early Covent Garden orchard and arable supplied the monk's table, with surplus fruit and grain were often sold outside the walls of the garden to the citizens of London.[5] This activity evolved into a more formalized marketplace and by 1830, a permanent market building was built in Covent Garden, making the location a popular wholesale fruit and vegetable market in central London.[6] For over a hundred years, the market – housing the Covent Garden Market Hall – was a thriving wholesale market in central London.

Covent Garden survived World War II, with large parts of London destroyed by bombs, wholesale and industrial businesses began moving out of the city. In addition, wholesale trade was becoming more standardized, and new methods to transport goods made central London locations less convenient for trade. As a result of these shifts, the Fantus Report was commission in 1963, as a comprehensive study of the Covent Garden wholesale market to determine the viability of having this wholesale fruit and vegetable market location in central London.[7]

The Fantus Report revealed the magnitude of trade that existed in Covent Garden Market – far beyond estimations[8] – and the fact that approximately one-third of all UK imports passed through Covent Garden Market. Handling over 90 percent[9] of the fruit and vegetables consumed in Central London, Covent Garden Market was an integral part in the daily lives of Londoners, whether or not they went to the market location. Above all, the Fantus Report recommended a move for the market from it's central London location to Nine Elms, a site situated along the Thames, which could support new methods of containerized shopping. As the containerization of shipping developed, the deep-water port facilities required to accommodate this shipping method were built further downstream, inconvenient to the Central London location of Covent Garden Market.[10]

From 1963 to 1974, the decision to move Covent Garden Market along with the new location to house the market was agreed upon and solidified. A new state-of-the-art market facility was built in Nine Elms, with efficiency the driving factor in the design and development of this facility. The move on the weekend of November 9th and 10th in 1974, was described by C. Allen and CGM as a simple procedure with no disruption in trade, "…there was no hiatus whatsoever in trading. Business ceased at the old market on Friday 8th November, and traders then transferred their remaining stocks, 'tools of the trade', office equipment and other items."[11] The move was fast and easy for business of the wholesale market but had an immense impact on the Covent Garden district, stripping the primary activity and identity of the past three hundred years from the area. In addition, it removed the marketers, many of whom, had grown up in the area, frequenting local businesses for food, drink and entertainment – it stripped a historically embedded social structure and community from the area.[12]

The move of the market happened during the post-war period, where the trend for development favored the new over the old. It followed a period of time in which architects questioned the old and conceptualized plans for the modern city.[13] Likewise, Patrick Abercrombie developed a post-war scheme for London that would raze Covent Garden in favor of the car, with a traffic interchange meant to run through the district. The disregard to the old was evident in the initial scheme for Covent Garden, which presented a large, monolithic Conference Center and Hotel development. In place of the historic architecture, a new, modern building would cover a majority of the district.

The new plan for the conference center still allowed for the old uses to exist, which was a primary concern of the community.[14] Despite this consideration the move and redevelopment proposal proved to be too dramatic for the local community.

Following the Conference Center proposal, the community responded in strong opposition, ultimately defeating this new development in favor of restoring the old market hall and developing a new social and retail space:

> "A scheme for restoration commenced in 1975, and is expected to be completed in 1979. The building will be converted into small shops, galleries and workshops, with studios at first floor level. Extensions for shop and gallery use will be created at basement level, whilst the main covered halls will be a totally new amenity for London, with the character of the galleries of Milan and Brussels and providing space for pavement cafes. The Central Market is conceived as the principal attraction for the Piazza area."[15]

The restoration was completed in 1979 and small local shops moved in. During the 1980s Covent Garden was developing a new identity, the local community was built with artist and architects who converted the old industrial warehouses into affordable live and work space. The marketplace opened with unique, local stores occupying the restored market hall and the retail stores throughout the district. In the late 1980s, the Covent Garden Area Trust was formed to help manage the historic buildings once owned the Greater London Council. By the early 2000s, global brands began to move into the area, shifting the popular tourist destination to a global shopping center from district that was formerly occupied with unique, local shops. In 2010, the agency Covent Garden London was formed to help manage the district and further define the brand identity. As part of their mission, they have targeted major global brands, while focusing on promoting and distinguishing the local identity to attract consumers.

THE LOCAL: FROM THE HISTORIC TO THE PRESENT

Covent Garden is a site from which many lessons can be learned. It is a location with a layering of history and corresponding layers of architecture. It consists of the architecture of the city that Aldo Rossi defines "not only as consisting of single buildings or as visible cityscapes with ensembles of structures, but more as a process of building, a development over a course of time."[16] The community support and overthrow of the monolithic development proposed in the 1970s to replace the wholesale market retained the historic architecture, the layers of time and conglomeration styles and histories.

With the physical, there have also been social and economic shifts and shopping has seeped into our everyday lives, taking form in urban districts and helping to drive urban revitalization. Which Rem Koolhaas echoes: "Through a battery of increasingly predatory forms, shopping has been able to colonize – even replace – almost every aspect of urban life." [17] In addition to this activity that has engulfed our cities and our social life, globalization is a counterpart, creating an increasingly homogenized experience where, as described by Richard Sennett, "The consumer seeks the stimulation of difference from goods which are increasingly homogenized. He or she resembles a tourist who travels from one clone city to the next, visiting the same shops, buying the same products in each."[18] If, in the globalized world of shopping, the strong recognizable brand identity has created a homogenization from one district to the next, then how do local retail districts with global brands distinguish themselves from one another?

This problem is evident in the current goals developed by Covent Garden London, a new body formed to manage and market the district in 2010, for the Covent Garden district. In addition to physical improvements and a curated tenant mix, the organization has listed "perception change" as one of their interventions in the district.[19] It is the perception of a consumer that can ultimately affect the vibrancy of an area. If the district is perceived as a place worthy to frequent, then it is ultimately more successful than one with the opposite perception.

In the case of Covent Garden, the history of the area is an asset to developing a positive perception. To further define how the perception is being developed, three locations within Covent Garden embody three different approaches in developing and defining the local within this global shopping district: First the Italian Piazza, a central gathering space, created by Inigo Jones in 1631 raises questions of authenticity that parallel the use of the notion of authenticity in branding. Second, the

Apple store located in a landmarked building from 1876 utilized Covent Garden London's branding to help distinguish the local in the global. The last example is "The Bridge of Aspiration" designed by the London-based architecture firm Wilkinson Eyre in 2004, this small, elevated footbridge that connects the Royal Ballet School to the Royal Opera House above Floral Street, speaks to the architecture of the future and the continual integration of new architecture within the historic in London. Together, these three cases represent different perspectives of how the architectural legacy of London can frame and develop a unique, local experience within an oversaturated globalized world.

AUTHENTICITY: CAPITALIZING ON THE PAST

The word 'authenticity' is often used when discussing branding in architecture with the notion that "authentic architecture" adds value to the urban experience.[20] The consumer wants an authentic experience in a unique environment that produces an authentic brand message. Authenticity is often referred to in both the revitalization of historic districts and the development of new districts. In the case of Covent Garden, the Italian Piazza [Figure 1] created by British architect Inigo Jones in 1631 raises the question that is at the core of this phenomenon: What is authenticity?

The Piazza has been the central gathering spot in Covent Garden since it was built nearly four centuries ago and was lauded as "… the first great contribution to English urbanism,"[21] by architectural historian, Sir John Summerson. However, despite the long-standing history surrounding the Piazza and the praise it has gathered, the Piazza is often discounted by architectural professionals as "not being British" or being a "fake replication of Italian architecture." The question of authenticity dovetails with the question of what is real or fake. Jean Baudrillard defines the origin of these issues, "It is the Renaissance that the false is born along with the natural."[22] And it could be argued that with the birth of the false also came the birth of the authentic. It is from this point too, that Baudrillard argues "Theatre is the form which takes over social life and all of architecture from the Renaissance on."[23] The Italian Piazza in Covent Garden has been the stage to a varied of activities and societies, including the location of the Covent Garden Market Hall, for nearly four hundred years.

Figure 1. Inigo Jones' 1631 Italian Piazza with the 1830 Covent Garden Market Hall. Photo by Sophie Handler.

The word authentic is derived from authorship with roots to "primary," "at first hand."[24] In terms of architecture, these definitions hint to the beginning or root of a style – but how can this be established? History is as ephemeral as the concept of authenticity. The stories of the past come with great distance and interpretation of details, but it is perhaps that distance that helps to further develop a perception of authenticity. In the Italian Piazza in Covent Garden, it is the historic architecture that is a physical mark from the past, one that shapes this historic identity with the perception of authenticity. The district, with a deeply embedded past history, frames the past through the present experience. It creates the conflict that theorist Mark Crinson discusses, "The past is everywhere and it is nowhere. We seem at times overwhelmed by the oceanic feeling of a limitless archive, of which our city is the most physical example…"[25] For many, this constructed past still exists in Covent Garden. Preserved, restored, and pedestrianized, Covent Garden has, in historian Roy Porter's words, become "a centre for strolling and diversion" and "has unexpectedly recaptured some of the spirit of the eighteenth century."[26] But without having experienced the eighteenth century, how can Porter justify this statement? For him, it is his perception through the historical accounts that are evident. The fear of losing this past, when the move of the Covent Garden Market was announced, was evident in the local fears expressed:

> "Now, after three hundred years, the actual market is moving the Nine Elms. Many of us Londoners feel a pang of sorrow, because any change is always rather frightening. Yet consider the Piazza. Could we

> recreate the symmetrical arcades of Inigo Jones? Could there be a garden for lunch-time rendezvous and where old people could watch the world go by? Could there be shops, restaurants and cafes? Ought there to be Punch and Judy shows on the same spot where the first one ever seen in England was given by the Italian Pietro Gimonde in 1662?"[27]

The Piazza has built an image of the past and the misconception that the past is still possible in the present. Which is, possibly, due to the notion of the authentic. If the space is authentic, then the experiences that build up the space can also be authentic, real, primary. After all, the Italian Piazza looks "the same" as it did in 17th century depictions and as the first public square in London, it is the benchmark for this form of public space that was continually repeated. In Adrian Forty's essay *Common Sense and the Picturesque* he discusses the visual appeal and the role of sight in architecture and this relates to the 18th century notion of the picturesque. For Forty, the focus only on the visual in architecture produced a false understanding of the architecture. "Attachment to the visual properties of architecture at the expense of all the others leads to fallacy that what makes a good picture must be good architecture."[28] Similarly, this type of fallacy exists in relationship to authenticity and historic architecture. When discussing historic architecture, attachment to the notion of the authentic leads to a fallacy that what is historic must be authentic. Both the good picture and the historic architecture are distanced from the real – neither can be understood as fully due to this distance – but both create a genuine perception.

When Covent Garden Market was moved to Nine Elms, the local community looked to the activities and structure of the past for answers to the present. The local quality of Covent Garden, as described by photographer Clive Boursnell who documented the market in its last few years, was due to the long rooted history of the area. "The camaraderie grew out of a long history of settlement and of occupation. There are certain places in London that possess, or are possessed by, a *genius loci* or spirit of place. In the case of Covent Garden, it is of proven age."[29] A reminder of this spirit continues to exist in the historic architecture – or to some - a physical manifestation of the spirit. If the past spirit of the market is captured in the architecture from that time, it is the branding of the historic architecture that helps to continue the spirit of the place, similar to the desire for authenticity that Pine and Gilmore define:

> "Despite how much people today desire authenticity in a world of paid-for experiences, businesses cannot fabricate authenticity from thin air. Despite claims of "real" and "authentic" in product packaging, nothing from businesses is really authentic. *Everything is artificial, manmade, fake*."

For Pine and Gilmore authenticity must be located in the experience and perception, not the physical object in order to affect the brand:

> "First, understand that there is no such thing as an inauthentic experience – because experiences happen inside of us; they are out internal reaction to the events unfolding around us. How we react to what happens at a particular venue depends on who we are, what we've experienced before, how we feel at the time, who accompanies us, and so on. No two people ever experience anything alike. This intrinsic characteristic of experiences makes them inherently personal."[30]

Similar to the Covent Garden Market Hall situated on the Italian Piazza, Faneuil Hall in Boston was also converted to a retail district in the 1970s. In this redevelopment scheme, a "sense of nostalgia and constructed authenticity"[31] appealed to the shoppers. For Covent Garden in 2011, it is the history, the past, and the layering of historic architecture – the patina of time – that are being used to develop and market authenticity. But, does capitalizing on the past to construct a historic identity further develop authenticity? How does an inherently constructed object such as architecture produce authenticity? How does this approach to branding affect the perception of authenticity?

BRANDING THE GLOBAL AS LOCAL

> "We have reached a point where 'consumption' has grasped the whole life; where all activities are sequenced in the same combinatorial mode; where the schedule of gratification is outlined in advance, one hour at a time; and where the 'environment' is complete, completely climatized, furnished, and culturized."[32] – Jean Baudrillard

The concept of branding became commonplace in the mid-20th century as the consumer society grew, with the first positive effects of branding published in the late 50's.[33] Rather than focusing on presenting a singular product, establishing trust in a brand enabled new, unknown products to be introduced under the guise of a well-known and trusted association.[34] The brand is not only affixed to a product but the lifestyle, aesthetic, and overall value associated with the brand, and as described by Otto

Reiwoldt, created a personal connection within a global market:

> "In the increasingly global competition for the customer's eye, wallet and above all, heart, brands are the number-one success factor. In the consumer's consciousness they stand for values, send out powerful signals, communicate images and promise to provide the key to new experiences. Today brands have become important landmarks. As American writer Naomi Klein rightly notes, we increasingly define our identity through the brands we choose. "Brands are the main source of identity. The brand fills a vacuum and forms a kind of armor, taking over the part once played by political, philosophical or religious ideas. Logos are becoming fetishes." Brands signal our membership of an 'in' group. They are the tools with which we build status. They ensure we belong and give us security. Brands build emotions, promise happiness and provide kicks."[35]

To connect to the personal, brands created experiences, which are inherently unique to the individual but developed around the brand with methods of retail display and presentation to develop "brandscapes," an experience that embodies the character and feel of the brand. Consequently, this created a new branch of the consumer economy: the experience economy. The experience economy manifest the brand as an experience to "*engage* customers, connecting them in a personal, memorable way"[36] to present the ephemeral notion of a brand through a lived experience, further connecting the consumer to the brand. This retail environment once used solely for selling and promoting commodity has now become an environment used to create an experience; an experience to enhance and promote a brand and to create an experience of the lifestyle associated with the brand.

Brandscaping is tied to the use of architecture to represent and help shape the brand experience, "The decisive paradigm shift has taken place on the emotional plane of the brand experience. Traditional forms of addressing the customer will no longer suffice if a company is to hold its own in a multimedia, globalized marketplace."[37] Connecting the consumer is as Otto Reinwoldt describes it not "about making a brand into a place but making a place into a brand."[38] Global stores have successfully built their brands within the walls of their stores to connect consumers to their identity, connecting to a global crowd for whom their brand becomes a place for engagement. With the proliferation of global brands in the marketplace, the replication of these brand experiences from one retail location to the next, threatens an exclusion of a unique experience with local character and favors a homogenized global shopping experience.

Figure 2. Apple workstations in the courtyard of the original 1876 architectural warehouse. Photo by author.

The Apple Store in Covent Garden is a prime example of how the local can brand the global using historic architecture. In 2010, Apple opened its largest retail location in the world in an 1876 landmark building in Covent Garden.[39] The move to use historic architecture rather than the standard Apple design in this new location reflects Anna Klingmann's notion that, with the use of architecture, the local can help to counter the global:

> "Since identity today is localized in particular lifestyle attitudes and experiences, architecture has the unique opportunity to participate in the decisions on what these experiences should constitute: whether they ought to be consumable resurrections of symbolic orders long gone by or whether they ought to contribute to the construction of changing priorities that more adequately respond to the contemporary lifestyles of a delocalized society. With the end to a connection between cultural identification and place,

> architecture must reflect the potential for diversity that inevitably results from the restructuring of social space. Experimentation with creative ideas and innovative spatial concepts is crucial to adequately counter prevailing notions of place in the context of the transformations wrought by the forces of economic globalization."[40]

Original arches welcome visitors into the courtyard space with dedicated stations for visitors to browse the internet on their wifi enabled Apple devices [Figure 2]. Rather than the clean, smooth white or grey walls that line most Apple stores, the original light brown brickwork is framed by Apple's signature glass and steel staircases and the simple wood tables displaying ipad, iphones, and Macbook Pros in Apple stores throughout the world, in this case, are made of English oak.[41] The use of a historic building enables Apple to develop an experience unique to Covent Garden while maintaining the global brand and the experience associated with that brand. Similarly, the presence of the Apple store boosts the status of Covent Garden due to the acquisition of this global brand - it not only draws in a global class of consumers but integrates the local character through the use of historic architecture which further boosts the brand of Covent Garden.

Apple's intervention in Covent Garden makes reference to both it's own brand and that of Covent Garden, the historic Covent Garden and the localness that this history produces [Figure 3]. Apple capitalizes on both their corporate brand and the experience that it embodies, along with the local brand of Covent Garden. A visitor from Los Angeles can have a unique Apple experience just by sitting at a typical Apple workstation surrounded by a visible display of Covent Garden's history in both the exposed historic architectural elements of the building and in the view of Inigo Jones' Italian piazza outside the window. The Apple store in Covent Garden has shifted from the homogenized global brand to embody the local characteristic of the district – with the Covent Garden historical brand integrated into and enhancing the Apple experience. In line with the principles of the experience economy, [42] it is a new way to engage global customer through a differentiation of the brand, in this case it is a combination of the Apple brand with the local Covent Garden brand.

As the Experience Economy has evolved, the need for the local brand grew. In their book, *Authenticity*, the authors who defined "The Experience Economy," Pine and Gilmore explore the "emergence of

Figure 3. Merging of the brands: Integration of Covent Garden's historic architecture with Apple's signature glass and steel staircase.

the Experience Economy as a backdrop and consider how staged experiences can leave consumers longing for less contrived encounters."[43] In the case of Covent Garden, it is the local brand, which capitalizes on its historic architecture that utilizes the reuse of the historic to help establish a local identity and an experience unique to London in the midst of a globalized world.

LOOKING FORWARD

It has already been established that the history of Covent Garden is embedded throughout the architecture of the district. The feeling of authenticity and ability to capitalize on the local history has contributed to the district's brand identity. Even though Covent Garden has a strongly established identity through historic architecture, it is not weighted down by a looking back attitude; the district continues to add new architecture within the historic mix. It is not just the past that has developed the Covent Garden brand - it is the mix of the past and present

Figure 4. *The Bridge of Aspiration* by Wilkinson Eyre, linking The Royal Ballet School (left) to the Royal Opera House (right). Photo by Author.

inherent in contemporary development throughout London and evident in Covent Garden.

In Anna Klingmann's book Brandscapes, she quotes Peter Eisenmann saying, "Architecture should capture the energy of the moment."[44] In Covent Garden, the combination of historic architecture captures the past but in terms of Eisenmann's statement, it has the potential to create a stagnant district with no inclination of the present. While a majority of the architecture can be traced back a few hundred years, the integration of new, small architectural projects within the district captures the contemporary energy of London and parallels the global marketplace.

In 2004 The Royal Ballet School hired architects Wilkinson Eyre to build a bridge over Floral Street linking the school to the Royal Opera House. Calling it *The Bridge of Aspiration* the bridge created both a literal and symbolic link from the school, which trains young ballerinas, to the stage at the Royal Opera House where many of the young performers aspire to perform. From the street, this spiraling set of square frames builds a delicate and unexpected sculpture in the sky. The bridge [Figure 4] is tucked away one street north from the bustle of the piazza on Floral Street, elevated high above the street this small, yet elegant intervention yields a feeling of discovery and surprise.

Figure 5. *The Bridge of Aspiration*, view of London landscape from within the bridge – the combination of the historic and new. Photo by Author.

With a majority of the architecture in the district historic, this small, but dynamic addition breaks from but enhances the historic brand message. With retail shopping at the core of many urban revitalization schemes, Covent Garden embraces the global brands within its historic shell – the historic distinguishes the local and the past the authenticity. This architectural intervention ties the historic Covent Garden brand with London's continued architectural tradition of placing the new next to the old [Figure 5]. The cityscape of London is comprised of a variety of architectural styles spanning centuries of time, with cranes sprouting throughout the city next to new sites for development, marking the continual addition of contemporary architecture. The focus on new architecture in London was exhibited through the Millenium project, a project that introduced new architectural projects throughout London to welcome the year 2000. This project, for architectural theorist Mark Dorrian, was a spectacle of image making – with aims to produce images of the future through architectural interventions in London.[45] This spectacle helped to

further emphasize the progression of London, using architecture as the image of this progression.

Along with the spectacle of the new that represents the contemporary architectural scene in London, the architecture firm Wilkinson Eyre are both highly respected and awarded; recipients of two Stirling Prizes[46] from 2001 and 2002. The Stirling Prize is the "UK's most prestigious architecture prize. Every year it is presented to the architects of the building that has made the greatest contribution to the evolution of [British] architecture in the past year." Due to these awards alone, the British architecture firm is considered to be distinctly British and highly acclaimed for their contribution to contemporary architecture prior to the design and construction of this project. Similar to Inigo Jones, Wilkinson Eyre represents and develops the standards for British architecture of their time. The integration of new architecture by an architecture firm respected for their contribution to British architecture represents a "looking forward" attitude. Rather than just focusing on the past, looking back to what has been - this small project makes a large statement toward the future of Covent Garden.

This bridge reflects a typical London attitude reflected in the community response from 1971, when plans for a new Covent Garden were being developed:

> "But even in modern idiom, please let us keep as much as possible of the intimate character of Covent Garden; the alleys, the courts, the cozy streets, which are so typically English. Yet if this seems impossible, remember that we are also masters of that other English characteristic, compromise. Buildings old and new, small, and large, can live happily side-by-side if the scale and proportion and materials are right."[47]

Upon completion of the project, it received critical acclaim winning over a dozen prizes with positive reviews:

> "In the last century, most of the incidental additions to London's streets have been coarse and clumsy: here at last is an addition that shows how contemporary technology and architectural invention can rival the elegance and dignity of anything the Victorians did – and be much lighter too."[48]

This small intervention is now compared to the architecture of the past – a looking forward attitude that reflects the overall attitude toward architecture in London – that new and old can coexist. Differing from the historic brand message, the local in *The Bridge of Aspiration* exists in through the contemporary attitude for the new, through the prestige of the British architecture firm Wilkinson Eyre, and in the stark contrast this project has from the historic architecture of the district. The discovery of the project brings pause and a look to the future, a decidedly British future, rather than the historic past in this global retail district.

CONCLUSION

Covent Garden is an undisputed global shopping district and one of the prime tourist locations in London. The global shopping district is similar to Baudrillard's ideas of retail display, that displays are a 'gamut of differentiated objects.'[49] Each store sells similar products, but uses the brand to differentiate from one another. Similarly, the district of Covent Garden has captured the local to differentiate this potentially homogenized global district from one that could just as easily have the same combination of stores and product in a city around the world.

The brand message of Covent Garden capitalizes on the visual to evoke the historical. As Anna Klingmann defines how this formula is utilized for marketing purposes. "Since half our brain is dedicated to the visual system, it would be a mistake to ignore the power of the icon, which has been pervasive throughout history as a marketing tool signifying greater cultural, political, and economic aspirations."[50] In Covent Garden, the piazza design by Inigo Jones it the historic architecture that the marketing of the district has been formed around. The historic architecture acts as a tool for framing the notion of authenticity and is capitalized to distinguish a local brand message of the Covent Garden district.

In the global competition among retailers, branding is imperative to both distinguish one brand from the next and gather a global following. With familiarity a key to consumer loyalty, the brand trumps the product in establishing a following. The Apple store frames the local brand to distinguish their global experience as a draw for the consumer, tourist and local, to have a unique and 'authentic' experience. Just as the global brand adds an exchange value to the commodity, the local brand of a retail district adds value through the experience.

Stepping away from the past and into the future, *The Bridge of Aspiration* breaks from the historic focus and looks forward. It represents the contemporary attitude toward architecture in London, where architecture is an image of the future – and more importantly a British focused look to the future. The small intervention questions the focus on the historic while seamlessly integrating into the layered architectural history of the district.

The architectural history of Covent Garden is not just mark of the past, but is a brand of the local, and a brand for the contemporary uses. Similar to the methods embodied in marketing and branding of the Experience Economy, Covent Garden highlights the historic past to distinguish the local. Overall, these three sites from three different centuries depict the unique, local architecture and a brand that works against the homogenization of the global to form the local. But, with these sites, it is the history that enhances the brand which raises the question of whether these techniques used to establish the local can be applied to other districts and cities, or if establishing the local is a solution embedded in and specific to that locale, and therefore cannot be repeated globally.

ENDNOTES

1 Judy Hillman, "Has The Market Found It's Market?," ed. Peter Knight, *The Covent Garden Magazine*, no. 2 (June 1981): 7.
2 Audrey Woodiwiss, *The History of Covent Garden: Covent Garden through the Years* (London: R. Conway for the Covent Garden General Store, 1980), 25.
3 *Covent Garden: the next Step; the Revised Plan for the Proposed Comprehensive Development Area.* (London: Greater London Council, 1971), 25.
4 Audrey Woodiwiss, *The History of Covent Garden: Covent Garden through the Years* (London: R. Conway for the Covent Garden General Store, 1980), 16-17.
5 Ibid, 16-17.
6 Clive Boursnell and Peter Ackroyd, *Covent Garden: The Fruit, Vegetable and Flower Markets* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2008), 7.
7 Audrey Woodiwiss, *The History of Covent Garden: Covent Garden through the Years* (London: R. Conway for the Covent Garden General Store, 1980), 31.
8 According to the Fantus Report, the volume of fruit, vegetables, and potatoes handled in the market in 1961 was between 1 million and 1.2 million tons; which was significantly higher than the Runciman Committee's estimate of between 750,000 and 900,000 tons. Overall, the Fantus Reported unveiled a much higher trade volume than what was estimated.
9 Fruit and vegetable does not include potatoes - if potatoes are included, this number drops from 90% to 50%.
10 C. Allen and Covent Garden Market Authority, *Transplanting the Garden: The Story of the Relocation of Covent Garden Market* (London: Covent Garden Market Authority, 1998), 34.
11 Ibid, 115.
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