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Revision plan: One of the main changes that I will make is to be more specific, and further elaborate some of my arguments. As my peers have pointed out, there are statements that I make that could be better supported by including specific examples, as well as areas that I need to explain better. For example, I say that the rooms of the Mission Inn are “pricey,” but I do not give a price range. I also mention that the hotel brags about its “modern amenities” but I do not say what these amenities are. It might also be a good idea to elaborate more on the appearance of the architecture itself rather than just focusing on the significance of the building. There are also points that I mention briefly that might be expanded in order to better support my thesis. Something that was not mentioned during the peer review, and that I haven’t changed yet in the conference draft, is my use of professional lenses such as the works of Powell and Eggener. Although I quote their works to support my argument, I do not sufficiently demonstrate how their viewpoints contrast. This is something that I plan to work on for my final draft. I may also add references to Allison Calder’s ideas, as I think that they would be a good addition to the paper.

The Riverside Mission Inn: An Evolving Reflection of Local Culture

The Mission Inn Hotel and Spa in Riverside, California is an object of dualities. On one hand, it is deeply entrenched in Riverside history, starting out in 1876 as a small boarding house

for agricultural workers. On the other hand, the hotel has been renovated and expanded many times, and its website boasts of its modern amenities such as a fitness center and a heated outdoor pool. Additionally, while the Mission Inn stands as a symbol of local culture, its design has been influenced by a variety of outside aesthetic trends. To what extent, then, is the Mission Inn an example of critical regionalism, or a creative work meant to express and reaffirm local culture? Ideas from the works of writers Keith Eggener and Douglass Powell, who have varying viewpoints regarding the concept of critical regionalism, seem to confirm that Mission Inn is a good example of critical regionalist architecture.

According to Keith Eggener in his work “Placing Resistance: A Critique of Critical Regionalism,” an object of critical regionalism, such as a building, is something that should reflect the current needs and mindsets of the people that it seeks to represent. Specifically, he quotes author Lewis Mumford, who claims that “Regional forms are those which most closely meet the actual conditions of life and which most fully succeed in making a people feel at home in their environment: they do not merely utilize the soil but they reflect on the current conditions of culture in their region” (Eggener 228). In this manner, the Mission Inn was initially a truly local, regionalist piece of architecture. As I have mentioned earlier, the hotel was originally built to meet the needs of the agricultural workers living in the area. According to Steve Lech and Kim Jarell Johnson in their book, *Riverside’s Mission Inn*, however, the Inn changed from a boarding housing for local workers to “a grand destination hotel, the type that would attract and retain visitors from the cold east and Midwest who would stay for months at a time.” (Johnson 7) In other words, the hotel very quickly adapted to serve wealthy outsiders instead of average local citizens. “The Mission Inn,” Lech and Johnson explain, “grew out of the need to house successive waves of very wealthy tourists coming to Riverside” (Johnson 7). This is the type of guest that

tends to visit the Mission Inn to this day, as both room reservations and the restaurants that operate within the hotel are very pricey, with a single-night stay for one adult ranging from \$179 to \$749 per night. Because of the hotel's limited accessibility to the people that, according to Eggener's interpretation of critical regionalism, the Mission Inn should be designed to serve, it might be argued that the hotel is not a good example of critical regionalism. Rather, one might suggest, it is a structure whose purpose was imposed upon it by the needs of outsiders, which is something that Eggener fears can happen to critical regionalist architecture.

However, although the hotel has come to mainly serve wealthy out-of-staters, it has still kept the interests of the local people in mind. The reason tourists came in the past, according to Lech and Johnson, was to take part in Riverside's booming citrus industry, and to enjoy the beauty of Southern California in general. It was a way of exposing outsiders to our culture, rather than having theirs imposed upon us. Additionally, the famous visitors, including U.S presidents have become a point of pride for not just the hotel, but for Riversiders as well. Today, the cultural significance of the hotel continues to lie beyond its rooms. Regardless of whether or not one is a guest, he or she is welcome to walk through the hotel's halls and courtyards to read about its rich history and enjoy its unique architecture. Each year in December, one can also take part in a relatively new tradition, started in the 1990s by the Mission Inn's current owner, that extends throughout the entire downtown area with the hotel at its core: The Riverside Festival of Lights. The owners of the hotel begin decorating the Mission Inn and surrounding buildings with lights, animatronic carolers, towering nutcracker figures, and other Christmas regalia months in advance in preparation for the month-long celebration that boasts thousands of attendees from both inside and outside of the Riverside area. The influx of so many people to the downtown area most likely stimulates the local economy. Therefore, although the Mission

Inn's rooms are targeted at the wealthy, the hotel fits Eggener's definition of critical regionalism by serving the local people.

When the hotel was renovated in the early 1900s, it was built in the mission-revival style, which emulates architectural from the California Missions such as tile roofs and adobe walls. This style was popular in California at the time as a way to break free from the more general American culture (Essley). Thus, the early Mission Inn reflected another concept that Eggener mentions: critical regionalism's role as an "architecture of resistance" (228). This term refers to the supposed ability of expressions of regional culture in architecture to oppose a more general, modern "globalization," or a tendency of all architecture to look alike for the sake of function, that some fear might obscure the cultures of smaller cultural groups.

Eggener also warns against critical regionalist buildings built on false perceptions of a culture that usually come from outside of the region. The two people who had the greatest influence on the construction of the hotel, Christopher Miller and his son, Frank Miller, were not natives of California. But, Frank Miller was able to achieve a sense of authenticity by directly basing the hotel's design on real California missions, rather than on preconceived, stereotypical notions of what Californian architecture should look like.

It could be argued that the Mission Inn is not a completely authentic representation of Californian and Riverside culture because it has been changed so many times over the years, and because in addition to the mission-revival style, Frank Miller, the second owner of the hotel, introduced styles and decorations from his travels to other countries. It is true that the hotel has been changed many times to reflect contemporary styles and styles from other parts of the county, but writer Douglass Powell might argue that this, too, is a reflection of critical regionalism. In his work "Critical Regionalism: Connecting Politics and Culture in the American

Landscape,” Powell mentions that we can’t just look at a region in an isolated way; we need to look at its interactions with other regions and the global community as a whole as well. The changes in the hotel’s appearance might have been an attempt to assimilate new architectural trends, in with the old mission theme which the hotel kept at its heart, thus keeping the hotel current and relevant. The global collections kept at the hotel may not be a part of Californian culture, but they are what set the Mission Inn aside as something that is uniquely “Riverside.” Rather than being a reflection of just any Californian Mission, it has become a building with its own unique history and personality.

Over the many years that the structure now called the Mission Inn Hotel & Spa has been serving guests, it has undergone multiple changes, turning the once- modest boarding house into an expansive luxury resort, picking up the styles of various cultures and time periods along the way. Some would argue that all of this change detracts from the hotel’s local feel. However, due to its unique style and historical roots, it remains a good example of critical regionalism. It has evolved along with the city it was built in, and it embraces modern improvements while honoring its past.

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