The Mission Inn Hotel and Spa, a hotel in Riverside, California, is a piece of architecture almost as old as the city itself. For years, its stone walls and tiles roof have stood in the same place as a window to the past, even as modern office buildings, suburbs, and freeways gradually sprouted around it and the city’s expansive orange groves began to disappear. Despite its age, some may say that the Mission Inn is not a good representation of Riverside’s history and culture because it has been renovated and expanded so many times since it was first constructed in 1876. Rather than being a pure symbol of the city’s essence, one may note that it has absorbed the influences and styles of other times and other regions. They may also doubt the extent to which the Mission Inn serves the local people as compared to wealthy out-of-state guests. It is true that the Mission Inn in its current state is very different than the humble boarding house that it once was. However, in spite of these changes, the hotel still retains many aspects of its original California mission-inspired style, and continues to serve the people of Riverside even while welcoming guests from outside of the city. Thus, the Mission Inn remains, at its core, a good representation of Riverside’s culture.

*Street view of the Mission Inn. Photo credit:* [*www.myownrealtypro.com*](http://www.myownrealtypro.com/property/3015-grand-ave-ste-330-coconut-grove-fl-33133/)

Any article that accurately reflects local culture is called “critical regionalism.”

Writer Keith Eggener discusses critical regionalism, as well as its value and legitimacy as a term in his work “Placing Resistance: A Critique of Critical Regionalism.” In this work, he mentions another writer, Kenneth Frampton, who says that one of the main purposes of critical regionalism is “’to reflect and serve the limited constituencies’ in which it was grounded” (Eggener 228). However, Eggener worries some of the things that we associate with a particular culture are not actually a reflection of that culture at all, but rather a stereotypical image of it imposed by outside forces. This image serves them and not the people that it is supposed to represent. Frampton also proposed the idea of critical regionalism as an “architecture of resistance,” or as a way of resisting a more homogenous, modern culture. Frampton accepts that architecture will most likely contain some modern elements, but as Eggener clarifies, “To be regional and modern involve[s] an extremely delicate balance” (Eggener 229). At first, it may seem as though the Mission Inn does not meet either of Frampton’s standards, confirming Eggener’s misgivings.

First, it could be argued that the Mission Inn has an excessive amount of influence from outside of the city whose culture it represents. The hotel’s founder, Cristopher Miller, and his son Frank Miller, who was responsible for the hotel’s conversion from a boarding house to a resort, came to California from Wisconsin. Thus, they may not have had as strong of a grasp of Californian, or Riverside culture as a Riverside local would. Additionally, Frank Miller liked to travel to different parts of the United States as well as different countries in Europe and Asia, and would bring back souvenirs, such as the “Nanking temple bell” from China, that he would display in the hotel. Some parts of the hotel itself are inspired by these travels.

In addition to being physically influenced by other regions, one could point to the hotel’s change in clientele over the years as evidence that it is not a good example of critical regionalism. When the hotel, originally a small boarding house known as the “Glenwood Hotel,” first opened in 1876, it mainly served local agricultural workers, most likely working for the region’s lucrative citrus industry. According 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 month at a time.” (Johnson 7) In other words, the hotel very quickly adapted to serve wealthy outsiders instead of average local citizen. “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. Thus, by appearing not to serve the local people, the Mission Inn seems not to be a true example of critical regionalism.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning the hotel’s multiple renovations, and the hotel’s modern amenities. Originally a smaller building with just 12 rooms Lech (Johnson 7), the Mission Inn now has “238 guest rooms and 27 upscale suites...complete with luxurious and modern amenities” (Historic Hotels of America). These amenities include a fitness center, a spa, and a heated outdoor pool. Over the years, the hotel was updated multiple times to reflect contemporary aesthetics. For example, in 1956, the hotel’s owner, Benjamin Swig tried to update the hotel to reflect “the latest midcentury styles” (*Mission Inn Foundation*).

However, despite the Mission Inn’s renovations and outside influence, it is still a good example of critical regionalism that keeps Riverside’s culture and history at its heart.

Although the Miller family came from outside of California, they based the Mission Inn’s architecture on authentic California Missions (all 21 according to the hotel’s website), and the Mission Revival architecture that was unique to California at the time. In fact, Mission Revival architecture itself can be considered an “architecture of resistance” as Frampton calls it. Mission revival architecture became popular in California in the early 1900s, roughly fifty years after California was ceded to the United States by Mexico in 1848. Following California’s addition to the American territories, Californian architecture began to reflect styles from the East coast and other parts of the United States. In response to this, Californians began to embrace their own local culture, which included Mission architecture, incorporating into homes and other buildings. (Essley) This style of architecture Original Mission architecture from the 1700s evolved over time, but was mainly characterized by Spanish and European styles expressed through the medium of local materials. (Newcomb 226). Some of the mission features that can be seen in mission architecture that can also be found in Mission Revival architecture and the Mission Inn are the use of stucco, stone, tile roofs, balconies, domes, and a central courtyard. Another style present in the architecture of the Mission Inn is the “Arts and Crafts” style, which was popular at the same time as Mission Revival. The “Arts and Crafts” style was part of a movement in The United States and England to embrace a simple, hand-made aesthetic in response to the industrialization that was taking place at the time. (Gray). This movement fit in well with mission-revival architecture, as the missions upon which this architecture was based were often made with local materials by priests, monks, and other common people with no prior experience in architecture. “The Historic Hotels of America” website also mentions the use of “design features from throughout the Southwestern United States, Mexico, and several Mediterranean countries” by the Mission Inn. This, to some extent supports the authenticity of the hotel’s architecture, as the California Missions themselves drew inspiration not only from Spain, but also Mexico, the Southwest, and Europe (but not necessarily the Mediterranean) (Newcomb 225).

*Example of Mission Revival architecture. photo credit:* [*www.geog.ucsb.edu*](http://www.geog.ucsb.edu/~joel/g148_f09/lecture_notes/mission_revival/mission_revival.html)

The Mission Inn hotel, although it comes quite close, doesn’t entirely share its cultural origins with the California missions, and has been influenced partly by the international escapades of Frank Miller. In spite of this, Douglass Powell, another author who discusses critical regionalism, might argue that the Mission Inn is still an example 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 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.

Additionally, although the Mission Inn’s pricey rooms may not be aimed at the common Riverside citizen, the hotel does still serve the community. 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. The Mission Inn, as part of the entire city block that it occupies, contains a museum that is free and open to the public and The Mission Inn Foundation and Museum, a group founded to preserve the Mission Inn and its history in 1976, offers daily walking tours. The museum also contains archives that are available for use (by appointment) for anyone who is interested in using them for research.

Each year in December, one can also take part in a relatively new tradition called The Riverside Festival of Lights. Started in the 1990s by the Mission Inn’s current owner, Riverside area native Duane Roberts, the free event extends throughout the entire downtown area with the hotel at its core. 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 celebration involves the entire city. Its co-sponsors include the Greater Riverside Chamber of Commerce and Riverside Public Utilities, and volunteers from the community participate to keep the event clean, safe, and fun.

In addition to the Festival of Lights, the Mission Inn joins the rest of the downtown area in hosting “First Sundays,” an event in which local businesses and organization host crafts and games to encourage children’s’ engagement in the arts. Sometimes, school district events such as “Good Morning Riverside” (An annual meeting of school district officials, teachers, students, and staff to discuss district news, new studies regarding education, share experiences, etc.) and the annual district-wide coloring contest are also held at the hotel. Therefore, although the Mission Inn’s rooms are targeted at the wealthy, the hotel fits Frampton’s definition of critical regionalism by serving the local people.

By serving the local people and acting as an “architecture of resistance” as Frampton suggests, while avoiding the outsider-imposed stereotypes that Eggener fears and embracing the outside influences that Powell accepts in its own unique way, the Mission Inn Hotel and Spa can be considered a good example of critical regionalism. It is true that 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 and 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, historical roots, and ongoing connection with the community 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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Post-mortem:

The writing concept that I found to be the most useful was essay structure/ organization. Often, I have a lot of ideas regarding projects, as well as information, but it is difficult for me to arrange this information in a logical and organized manner. Therefore, it was helpful for me to review this in class, as well as to discuss organization during the conference. I also appreciated the information about motive and constructing good introduction paragraphs. For this project in particular, in which there were multiple things that I had to address (the issue of whether or not my cultural document was an example of critical regionalism, describing the document, explaining what critical regionalism was and using various lenses with regard to critical regionalism), so it was helpful to find an organized way of making all of this interesting to my audience and easier to follow, even if I cannot do this perfectly yet. In terms of writing process elements, I found the feedback at each step (including the peer review and the conference) helpful for narrowing my focus, and knowing when I needed to clarify or better support my claims. I think that it was good to get an outside perspective on my work to get a better idea of how my audience might interpret it, and how I could make it clearer and more interesting for them.

WRITING 05.028 (w16) Project 1 Feedback and Evaluation

Dear Kaylee,

**Formative Response:**

This draft demonstrates significant re-visioning. You’ve engaged more thoroughly with evidence here. And you’re putting the critical debate to good use. You offer a clearer motive in this draft, and that motive structures the logic of the document. It’s a quite successful essay.

I do have a couple of lingering questions about your ideas. The argument and motive are very clear in the introduction and within the body of the document. But I wonder if the conclusion you draw might be a bit simple. Everything seems very pure and ideal by the end of the project, but I’m not convinced the fact that Hotel participates in local festivals really does mean the institution meaningfully serves the local population. At the very least, it seems like that services has major limits. The clientele largely remain upper-middle-class tourists and business people, right? I guess I think that means the project might have done more to take a nuanced position rather than a strong pro vs. con position. More nuance would seem to better acknowledge the fact that your evidence is pointing you in both directions.

For future projects, there are a few things you should focus on:

* Citation.: In project 2 and in future courses, you’ll want to be more consistent in citing sources for facts that are in any way contestable. You’ll find marginal notes asking you to be more transparent about your source use in several places.
* Argument: as my note above suggests, you might benefit from allowing more complex answers to the interpretive questions you raise.
* Transitions: you might focus on crafting more precise conceptual transitions between paragraphs.

I want to encourage you to focus on this feedback (and the marginal notes in the essay itself) at least as much as you do on that forthcoming evaluation and grade. Those latter features of my response are important only if you are able to use them to motivate and structure your learning process moving forward. They can be disruptive to learning if they end up silencing your own self-evaluation and undermining your engagement and self-regulation.

If you’d like to talk to me about any feature of Project 1 or about any element of this response, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

-Nick

**Evaluative Response:**

In class, we agreed on six categories for evaluation, and the rubric—[posted here](https://canvas.dartmouth.edu/courses/12044/pages/project-1-grading-rubric) and included at the end of this document—establishes benchmarks for three tiers of quality within each category. Below, you’ll find my description of the document within each of the five categories.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Document Feature** | **Description of project quality** | **Tier** |
| Style; mechanics; formatting | The essay’s style is almost always very clear. You have only a few typos and errors and only a few moments where sentences offer unnecessarily abstract nouns and verbs. | Excellent/Good |
| Audience (excluding other rubric elements) | You usually offer helpful information for an audience unfamiliar with the case and the critical debate. You explain quotations consistently as well. | Excellent. |
| Argument; Thesis | There’s a clear motive formula, and the claim you advance is likewise very clear. I do think the conclusion you come to erases some of the complexity of your local arguments however. | Excellent/Good |
| Evidence; Archive | The evidence here is complex, precise, and relevant, and your engagement with that evidence is likewise fairly deep.  Still, the essay also doesn’t always cite a source for the evidence it offers (take the owners’ origins, for example, or the room pricing). | Good (high) |
| Logical Structure; Arrangement | The document offers a clear and logical structure. You use the motive mechanism to create a dramatic transition between sections. Your paragraphs are generally well organized and anchored in clear topic sentences. In places, you might have done more to offer clear logical transitions. (The mini-section on community service shows more room for improvement than other areas, but elsewhere you occasionally rely on imprecise transitional concepts like “additionally” or “furthermore.” When possible, aim for robust transitions that explain what is precisely new about the ideas we’ll get in the upcoming paragraph). | Excellent (low) |
| Application of Debate; Use of Critical Lens(es) | While I think the essay’s use of Powell might be a bit unconvincing, you engage genuinely with the complex ideas presented in the debate, putting them to creative uses in your analysis of the Mission Inn. I think you adequately explain critical concepts. | Excellent/Good |

**Grade: 91**

In the [Project 1 Assignment page](https://canvas.dartmouth.edu/courses/10082/assignments/53921), I explained the grade function of the assignment documents leading up to the final version. Here’s a reminder of their point value:

Response to reading (used in class discussion); not graded

Two texts in dialogue (used in class discussion); not graded

“Close Reading” with keyterms (used in class discussion); not graded

Workshop draft (used in peer workshop); 10 pt

Conference draft (used in conference with me); 15 pt

Revision (completed project, graded)

The initial grade for Project 1 is based on the final, submitted document. That value is generated from the evaluation above. The total available points for the pre-revision assignments is then subtracted from the initial grade. The points you actually received for those documents are then added back to the total, giving us a Final Project 1 Grade.

Initial Project 1 Grade: 91

Total Available Drafting Points: 25

Total Received Drafting Points: 25

Additional Grade Adjustments: n/a

**Final Project 1 Grade: 91**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Composing Element** | "Excellent"  **100-90** | "Good"  **89-80** | "Acceptable"  **79-70** |
| **Style;**  **Mechanics** | The language of the project is clear and accessible, including word choice and syntax. Clarity and simplicity are balanced with some syntactical complexity, and the project uses varied sentence structures for different effects. There are almost no errors, typos, or other mistakes. | The language of the project is usually clear. Clarity and simplicity are occasionally disrupted by confusing syntax or word choice. The project uses varied sentence structures. There are a few typos, errors, or other mistakes. | The language of the project is clear in places but regularly causes confusion. The sentences are either repetitively structured or disruptively complex. Typos, errors, and other mistakes appear frequently. |
| **Audience**  **(excluding other rubric elements)** | The information provided is shaped to be accessible and compelling to an audience unfamiliar with the scholarly conversation and (very likely) with the archive. | Most information is shaped to be accessible and compelling to the appropriate audience. Some necessary information is occasionally missing or excessive. | There are many cases where information is not adequately shaped for the appropriate audience. Frequently, claims, evidence, or important context is left unexplained or shaped for an inappropriate audience. |
| **Argument;**  **Thesis** | The project's main claim is clearly expressed in the introduction and genuinely motivated. In other words, it is revelatory or surprising. The problem or starting position to which it responds is also compellingly presented in the introduction. | The project's main claim and a motive mechanism are clearly expressed in the introduction. The motive is either genuine but not elegantly expressed, or the motive is not convincingly genuine. | The project presents a main claim and a motive mechanism somewhere in the document. Either the claim is unclear or the motive is unclear or very clearly not genuine. |
| **Evidence;**  **Archive;** | The project always marshals detailed, appropriate evidence to support the claims it makes about the archive. That evidence is precise and incorporated elegantly into argumentative paragraphs. If visual aids are used, they enhance but do not replace the project's presentation of evidence in language. | The project often marshals detailed, appropriate evidence to support its claims. Those details are often but not always fully or convincingly connected to the claims, or they are not always clearly described or incorporated. | The project sometimes marshals detailed evidence in support of its claims. Those details often fail to convincingly support those claims; they are unclearly described or incorporated; or, several key claims are unsupported by evidence. |
| **Logical Structure;**  **Arrangement;** | The project arranges information, claims, and sources in a clear, logical, and dynamic way. The project's sections are focused and coherent. The relationships between sections of the project are clearly articulated, and their arrangement clarifies the project's argument and motive. | The project arranges information, claims, and sources in a clear and logical way. Sections are usually coherent, although there may be minor digressions. The relationships between sections are usually but not always clear. Arrangement of the sections is logical. | The project arranges information, claims, and sources within sections that are sometimes coherent. The relationships between sections are often unclear. The arrangement of the sections undermines or obscures the logic of the project's argument. |
| **Application of debate;**  **Use of critical lens** | The project presents ideas and arguments from the debate clearly and accurately. It explains or interprets the debate for its readers, and it uses the terms of the debate to generate claims about the archive. The debate it represents contains diverse perspectives. | The project presents ideas and arguments from the debate, but may sometimes be somewhat unclear or inaccurate in its account of the sources. It often but not always makes the key ideas from the debate clear for the reader, and its analyses of the archive are usually driven by the ideas of the debate. | The project presents ideas and arguments from the debate, but it doesn’t make those ideas clear and may misinterpret the sources it uses. Ideas summarized or paraphrased are often difficult to understand or arranged in a confusing way. The connection between the debate and the text is occasionally difficult to follow |