The concept of integrity is one of the central criteria for assessing whether an old building retains enough of its character defining features to justify preservation. Jean-François Blondel conceived of integrity in stylistic terms as the proper relationship of the parts to the whole. Integrity meant achieving completeness in a composition by including all the elements and decorative motifs integral to a particular style. He emphasized the importance of connoisseurship in assessing integrity—only highly educated architects and amateurs knew enough about the stylistic rules of Architecture to be able to judge integrity. From this idea Blondel derived two correlative concepts: the idea of alteration, defined as the loss of integrity occurring when some essential features were taken away; and the idea of character, defined as the cultural values conveyed to a discerning viewer by different levels of stylistic integrity. Jean-François Blondel was born in Rouen, France, in 1705, into a family of architects: His grandfather François Blondel was the author of the 1683 *Cours d’Architecture*. He began his career as an architectural engraver before becoming an architect himself. He published encyclopedic works including *De la Distribution des Maisons de Plaisance, et de la Décoration des Edifices en General* (1737-38), *L’Architecture Française* (1752-56) and the *Cours d’Architecture* (1771-77), and opened an architectural school in Paris in 1743, the École des Arts. He was named an architect to King Louis XV in 1755; most of his own built works were commissioned in Metz under the patronage of the Duc de Choiseul. Blondel died in Paris in 1774.

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