

Heritage Conservation: New Alliances for Past, Present and Future
Conference on Heritage Conservation in South and Southeast Asia

Notes on the Proceedings

July 29, 2004

Session 1: Built Heritage: Scope, Concepts, Issues and New Horizons

Moderator: Prof. Y. Raj Isar, Special Advisor, WMF

Mr. Richard Engelhardt, UNESCO Regional Advisor for Asia and the Pacific
Changing Ideas of Heritage Conservation and the Potential for New Alliances

Globalization and the increasing loss of cultural distinctiveness has called for a paradigm shift in the heritage conservation profession because cultural heritage is no longer an elite possession of a few but almost a human right and part of the sustenance of our daily lives. Therefore, heritage conservators need to re-skill themselves to deal with these challenges.

Dr. Augusto Villalon, Architect/Conservator, Philippines
The Social Value of Public-Private Cooperation in Conservation

In the Philippines, a “top-down” approach to cultural heritage management operates at the government level but that official priorities can differ from the interest of the community. It is more effective and beneficial to work with communities when they are informed about the importance of conservation and when it is of benefit to them.

Dr. Gamini Wijesuriya, Architect/Archaeologist, Sri Lanka
‘Livingness’ in Asian Contexts and Attitudes Towards the Past

Advocates an anthropological approach to heritage conservation and broader definitions of what we want to conserve. We should be conserving culture and promoting diversity. One benefit of such an approach is the ability to identify owners/users/patrons of sites.

Mr. Rahul Mehrotra, Architect/Urban Designer India
Planning for Conservation – Looking at Bombay’s Historic Fort Area

Presented the idea that South Asian urban areas incorporate two cities – the static city of architectural monuments and the kinetic city built of temporary materials which moves as processions, festivals, etc. The latter are expressions of a city which is temporal and dynamic. Advocated cultural mapping to identify areas and players that can help to bring conservation closer to urban planning.

Mr. Surya Sangachhe, Architect/Conservator, Nepal
Conservation of Cultural Heritage Sites and Landscapes in Kathmandu Valley

Spoke about Bhaktapur, in the Kathmandu Valley, where heritage sites are integrated into the city. Welcomed private initiatives in conservation and their being supported by government and guided by experts to prevent good intentions from becoming bad practice.

Mr. Manish Chakraborti, Conservation Architect, India
Reviving the Original City Center: The Second Coming of Dalhousie Square

Endorsed the view that culture is difficult to define and that adhering to definitions of culture in international charters is problematic. Advocated community development through participation in conservation projects and championed the “bottom-up” approach, with communities as stakeholders, while also acknowledging that involvement at the ‘middle level’ is important.

Ms. Anila Naeem, Architect/Conservator, Pakistan
Synopsis of Issues in First Session

Claimed that communities are the representatives of the ‘livingness’ of Asian cultures, but due to deprivation they deplore the existence of what conservators' value. Emphasized need to educate communities to value heritage and for people outside to value local communities.

Open Discussion

Addressed the issue of the need for the profession to reach a consensus on where it is going or needs to go. Also discussed the issue of cultural significance in heritage conservation and the need to let local communities and regions define significance.

Session II: The Policies and Institutions of Heritage Stewardship – Strengths and Weaknesses

Moderator: Ms. Amita Baig, WMF India Projects Coordinator

Ms. Yasmin Cheema, Architect/Conservator, Pakistan
State Intervention and its Limits

Stated that archaeology in Pakistan was the creation of the British who carried out conservation in order to improve their imperial image abroad and subjugate people through cultural change. Noted that the British concentrated on large monuments and ignored native cities and made their own colonies, which was a disjuncture from indigenous traditions of conserving heritage.

Mr. Ros Borath, Executive Director-General, Authority for the Protection and Management of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap (APSARA) Cambodia
The Combination of Governmental and Non-governmental Resources

Discussed the 20-year neglect of Angkor and the creation of the APSARA Authority by Royal Decree and the allocation of a major portion of the ticket intake at the site for maintenance and conservation. Presented APSARA partnerships with international and other partner organizations as a model for international cooperation.

Dr. Pisit Charoenwongsa, Director/CEO of SEAMEO-SPAFA, Thailand
Problems of Conservation as Observed by SPAFA

Advocated an inclusive conservation process that raises awareness through strengthened communication strategies. Claimed that communication was the key to achieving consensus within conservation initiatives.

Ms. Elizabeth Cardoso, Executive Director, Heritage of Malaysia Trust
Heritage Stewardship in Malaysia: The Role of the NGO

Badan Warisan (National Heritage Trust) is an NGO working with government to get heritage legislation into place in Malaysia and which has also embarked on an ambitious project of working with cultural

advocates and experts to develop a set of heritage conservation principles and a cultural heritage policy for Malaysia.

Mr. S.K. Misra, Chairman, INTACH, India

Heritage Conservation in South and Southeast Asia: INTACH's Role in the Field of Conservation

Considered the use of cultural heritage in poverty alleviation and that heritage conservation should have a social purpose, i.e. as a vehicle for economic growth and cultural regeneration. Referred to a need to develop an independent evaluation agency for all heritage conservation projects and initiatives, to establish an Indian Charter for Conservation and – through discussions with colleagues in the region – a regional charter on conservation.

Dr. Rohit Ranjitkar, Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust, Nepal

Sustainable Conservation: Adaptive Reuse of Heritage Buildings

Noted that some Kathmandu monuments are private houses. Private house holders have the finances to conserve them but are persuaded by architects to demolish and rebuild. There is no enforcement of legislation against demolishing old buildings in Kathmandu.

Prof. Nalini Thakur, Head, Department of Conservation, School of Planning and Architecture, India

Response to Session II

Stated that cultural heritage conservation is a colonial problem, that it is viewed in a monument-centric way. The Ancient Monuments Act (India) does not help the proper conservation of spatial areas and cities. The “conservation infrastructure” – both government and NGOs in the country and the region – have their strengths and weaknesses. NGOs do not represent the city or the people, but are an elite. Need small local alliances to conserve cities.

Open Discussion

Focused on the Indian subcontinents, the British colonial legacy of heritage conservation and the need to adopt a more people-centered approach to heritage conservation, especially in urban conservation.

Session III: Issues of Sustainable Conservation

Moderator: Archt. Plnr. Pali Wijeratne, ICOMOS Sri Lanka

Mr. Laurence Loh, Deputy President, Heritage of Malaysia Trust

Sustaining Conservation Through Managing Urban Transformations

Considered several challenges to conservation in managing urban transformation and focused on the need to encourage conservation consciousness. The greatest threat to heritage is change and conservation is only a process of buying time to save a segment of human heritage. True heritage needs no protection; it transforms itself and sustains itself.

Mr. Sangay Wangchug, Secretary, Department of Culture, Bhutan

Religious Heritage

The heritage of Bhutan is still alive with most historical, cultural and religious monuments still being used. The utility value of these structures however continues to increase due to population increases and other developmental activities.

Mr. Karan Grover, Architect, India
The Champaner Project

Spoke of his involvement with the project to set up an archaeological park at Champaner-Pavagadh, India's 25th World Heritage Site, which was inscribed in 2000 on WMF's list of *100 Most Endangered Sites*. The Champaner projects hopes to set global standards for best practice in conservation.

Prof. Nimal De Silva, Dean, Faculty of Architecture, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka
The Wise Use of Traditional Materials

Asserted that modern conservation science is not interested in intangibles and aims only at prolonging the lifespan of historical buildings. However, a majority of monuments are integrated with living culture and are changed, added to and transformed. The modern conservator should respect long established traditional knowledge and techniques of conservation and use traditional materials.

Mr. Nguyen Van Phuc, Deputy Head, Planning and International Cooperation Department, Hue Monuments Conservation Centre, Vietnam
Conservation of Timber Structures in Hue Monuments

Discussed the adaptive reuse of monuments, the use of traditional materials and methods of conserving timber structures either through partial restoration or total dismantlement and restoration.

Mr. Jagath Weerasinghe, Artist/Archaeologist, Sri Lanka
Sustainable Conservation: Some Thoughts on the Sri Lankan Experience

In countries like Sri Lanka, sustainable conservation is a challenge in areas where pre-modern and traditional religious practices thrive. Sustainable conservation will be successful only if the conservation professionals develop methodologies and intellectual tools to manage the contending interests of various groups of stakeholders, where they are only one group among many.

Ms. Gurmeet Rai, Conservation Architect, India
Qila Mubarak, Patiala, India

Reported on the conservation of the Qila Mubarak, a fortified Sikh palace, which, unlike the Golden Temple at Amritsar, attracts little public engagement or interest as a monument.

Open discussion

Reference was made to conservation as a development act, a long-term investment that accumulates value over time. The discussion also focused on the issue of addressing stakeholder interests and the need for conservators to understand the emotions and values that people attach to sites.

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Session IV: Heritage Conservation, Community Development and Public Awareness

Moderator: Mr. Richard Engelhardt, UNESCO Regional Advisor for Culture in Asia and the Pacific

Mr. John Sanday, Conservation Architect, WMF Consultant
Community Mobilization for Architectural Conservation Projects

Focused on the importance of training workers and students as part of the conservation process. Provided several examples of successful conservation projects which drew on the traditional skills of local craftsman and the support and involvement of local communities in the conservation of monuments in Nepal, Bhutan, Cambodia and China.

Ms. Abha Narain Lambah, Architectural Conservator, India
Community Initiative in the Conservation of Heritage Case Study: Restoration of the Maitreya Buddha Temples, Basgo, Ladakh

Spoke about the involvement of the community which served as the client, contractor and critic in the restoration project. The architect was a facilitator who worked with local engineers and workers using traditional materials which were donated to the project by local villagers.

Mr. Ricardo Favis, Consultant for Culture, UNESCO Bangkok
The Role of Religious Communities in Heritage Conservation Community Development and Public Awareness

Described the UNESCO regional program LEAP and “Cultural Survival and Revival in the Buddhist Sangha,” a pilot project that involves monks in heritage conservation by reviving the traditions of older monks and handing down knowledge of traditional temple arts and crafts to younger novices.

Archt. Prashantha B. Mandawa, Consultant Architect, Central Cultural Fund (CCF), Sri Lanka
Central Cultural Fund – A Pioneer Institution of Heritage Stewardship in Sri Lanka

Described the different levels of operation of the CCF. Local communities are employed as workers at Cultural Triangle sites with assistance from the World Food Program. Local communities were involved in manufacturing bricks for use in the restoration of the Abhayagiriya and Jetavane stupas.

Ms. Pia Alisjahbana, Journalist, FEMINA Group, Indonesia
The Role of the Media in Heritage Conservation

Provided examples of when the media helped to raise awareness of and support for heritage conservation initiatives. Intends to set up a Heritage Trust for Indonesia and press the bureaucracy to set up regulations to protect historic buildings.

Ms. Lin Lee Loh-Lim, Conservation Consultant, Malaysia
Reestablishing Cultural Vibrancy for Diverse Communities in Community-Based Heritage Conservation

Described the work of the Penang Heritage Trust in educating school children to preserve their heritage through workshops, including programs on good and bad practice in conserving their homes, heritage walks and informal apprenticeships which traditional craftsman.

Hon. Kesara Senanayake, Mayor of Kandy, Sri Lanka
The Kandy Experience

Presented a proposal for Stage Two of the Conservation Master Plan for Kandy including the conservation of the medieval city and the five approach roads and bridges to Kandy. Mentioned the work of a new authority set up in Kandy, which will work with homeowners in conserving listed buildings.

Mr. Wilkie Delumen, Restoration Architect, Philippines
Cultural Heritage Conservation in the Philippines

Advocated adapting buildings in historic cities rather than destroying them and claimed that both government and NGOs should be the proponents of cultural heritage programs.

Open Discussion

A wide range of issues were raised including the importance of educating children in preserving cultural heritage, courting the support of the media for heritage conservation initiatives and the importance of continuous maintenance in preserving historic buildings.

Session V: The Promise of Cultural Tourism

Moderator: Mr. Robert Glick, Vice President, Public Affairs and Communications, the American Express Company

Dr. Wiendu Nuryanti, Secretary-General, International Centre for Culture and Tourism, Indonesia
Heritage, Conservation and Community-Based Tourism

Presented the benefits of attracting heritage tourists to Borobudur, the importance of management and interpretation of the site for tourists, strategies for developing heritage tourism at the site and the importance of participation of local communities in the process.

Dr. Somrudee Nicrowattanayingyong, Director of Urbanization and Environment, Thailand
Environmental Institute
Tourism Carrying Capacity and Sustainability

Considered the economic, socio-cultural and ecological impacts of tourism in Thailand and the sustainability of tourism in a country where national policy on development aims to promote it as the tourism capital of Asia.

Ms. Pamela Lee, Senior Director, Singapore Tourism Board
The Singapore Experience

Joined in the debate about “mass vs. class” tourism and advocated providing access to heritage sites to the latter. Described her personal experience of tourism development and marketing in Singapore and the importance of getting the government and the private sector involved in the tourism development process.

Mr. Aman Nath, Heritage Tourism Entrepreneur, India
Neemrana

Described the restoration and adaptive reuse of the Neemrana fort-palace as a heritage hotel in India. The complete restoration and addition of a new wing at Neemrana though an irreversible intervention was necessary for its present needs.

Mr. Hiran Cooray, Managing Director, Jetwing Hotels Ltd., Sri Lanka
Tourism and Heritage in Sri Lanka

Discussed the lack of communication between heritage managers and tourism organizers in Sri Lanka. Claimed that although carrying capacity of tourism in Sri Lanka has so far not been a problem because of the slowdown of tourism in reaction to violence in the country, it could become one in future and discussion with the authorities was necessary to avoid conflicts between tourism providers and heritage managers.

Open Discussion

Referred to the cultural tourism experiences of different countries in the region and the need for increased communication between heritage managers and the tourism industry.

Session VI: Building New Alliances for Stewardship of the Built Environment

Moderator: Dr. Nicholas Stanley-Price, Director-General, ICCROM

Mr. O.P. Jain, Chairman, Sanskrit Foundation, India
The Practical Experience in Implementing Conservation Objectives

Shared his experiences as the Convener of the Delhi Chapter of INTACH on working with the government in listing heritage buildings and conserving some important heritage buildings and monuments in Delhi.

Ms. Laretna T. Adishakti, President Indonesian Network for Heritage Conservation, Indonesia
Building Alliances in Indonesia: From People to People by People

Discussed the importance of building alliances with people in heritage conservation and described collaboration work between her NGO, ICOMOS Indonesia and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Dr. Choong Sim Poey, Chairman, Penang Heritage Trust, Malaysia
Building New Alliances: the Experience of a Heritage Trust

Shared the experiences of the Penang Heritage Trust, which started out as an organization where people were interested in heritage as a hobby. Spoke of the difficulties of getting government interested in heritage and the need to work with grass roots organizations and look at people rather than just buildings.

Mr. John Stubbs, Vice President for Field Programs, World Monuments Fund, USA
Some Architectural Conservation Management Systems that Work

Provided advice on the importance of using listing, defining values and significance in cultural resource management planning and the use of workshops or “charrettes” in project planning as useful tools in managing heritage conservation projects.

Mr. Debashish Nayak, Heritage Communicator, India
Creating Opportunities for Strategic Partnership Towards Urban Conservation

Shared his experience of heritage conservation and its popularization, the involvement of government, institutions and other stakeholders in the conservation of Ahamadabad and other historic cities in India

Mr. Ashley de Vos, Architectural Conservator, Sri Lanka
Conservation for Whom?

Questioned the elitist orientation of heritage conservation practices and claimed it should be done only if people wanted it and not because heritage conservators want it.

Open Discussion

Discussion referred to the vulnerability of heritage in the developing world; the role of NGOs as catalysts in heritage conservation and the need for peer review in conservation practice.

Rapporteur, Nilu Abeywardena