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COVER: Lijiang Ancient Town, one of the few remaining authentic ancient towns in China, was listed as a World Heritage Site in 1997. The Global Heritage Fund has worked with its partners to manage the effects of the increased tourism development that followed the listing.
PHOTO: VINCENT MICHAEL
Learning from the International Community

DAVID J. BROWN

The National Trust is delighted to present this special Forum Journal on Study Abroad: Global Perspectives. As many of our readers know, the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States (our “official” name) has its roots in international preservation. We were modeled on the work of international conservation groups, most notably the National Trust of England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Today we remain active in international preservation issues and continue to work diligently with our counterparts overseas.

Preservationists in the U.S. may sometimes feel they do not speak the same language as their counterparts throughout the world. What we call “preservation” usually goes by the term “conservation” elsewhere. By whatever language, we have much to learn from our contemporaries abroad. In addition to the programs and topics covered in this journal, there are other organizations that help bring our global work together.

Just as we were modeled after our colleagues in the United Kingdom, an entire National Trust movement sprang up over the past 100 years, and today, National Trust or National Trust-like organizations can be found all across the globe. A desire to increase international cooperation and coordination between these groups resulted in the launch of the International National Trusts Organisation (INTO) in 2007. As a founding member of INTO, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has brought preservation groups and individuals together to share best practices and to serve as a global voice for preservation efforts around the world.

In addition, we have a long-standing relationship with the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and its U.S. committee. This year, the National Trust hosted an intern through the ICOMOS International Exchange Program, which was established in 1984 to promote an understanding of international preservation policies, methods, and techniques enabling interns.
to make professional contacts and ensure a dialogue between countries.

You will enjoy hearing about the experiences of this year’s intern, Maria Llanos Martinez, in her interview which is included in this issue.

In these articles, you will read about a number of issues that have applicability at home as well as abroad. As the National Trust broadens our portfolio of National Treasures, we continue to learn from and work with our international colleagues. Our recent work on the Charleston Waterfront called upon several global partners, including ICOMOS and the World Monument Fund, to help us examine various approaches to cruise tourism in historic port communities. In February 2013, a symposium in Charleston brought distinguished experts and participants from around the world to explore best practices and challenging issues facing this area of heritage management today.

Preservation Leadership Forum is a critical tool for helping us achieve these goals. This network of preservationists is continually expanding and evolving to engage new and diverse audiences, from emerging professionals to thought leaders in the field. This issue of Forum Journal encompasses the full breadth of this dynamic group. From reflections on French preservation projects to a discussion of community transformations in the Caribbean, the articles featured in this issue illustrate the variety and scope of global preservation work today.

I hope you will join me in studying abroad! FJ

DAVID J. BROWN is the executive vice president and chief preservation officer at the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

TWITTER CHAT

Join us for the #build heritage twitter chat on international preservation on November 6 at 4 pm EST. There will be a transcript posted following the chat on the Preservation Nation blog.
Global Heritage: The Process of Preservation

BY VINCENT L. MICHAEL

I am fond of saying that historic preservation—heritage conservation—is not a set of rules and regulations but a dynamic process whereby a community determines what elements of its past are worth bringing into the future. Teaching historic preservation, I focus less on the mutable and interpretable Secretary of the Interior’s Standards than on the process: Identification, Evaluation, Registration, and Treatment. This process can work in any society or community with almost any sort of resource—tangible or intangible. The key is to integrate community members into the planning process from the beginning, so that they help identify, evaluate, register, and determine future treatments.

This approach reflects both the maturation of the historic preservation movement in the United States and the impact of international heritage conservation over the last 20 years. Beginning with the Nara Document on Authenticity in 1994, the Asian take on “authenticity”—which often privileged ritual and practice above fabric and design—began to be incorporated into our field. The document expanded “authenticity” to include: “a great variety of sources of information (such as) form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling, and other internal and external factors.”

The classic examples of this are the Shinto shrine temples in Japan. The great shrine at Ise is rebuilt every 18-20 years, thus passing building techniques from one generation to another.

PHOTO: VINCENT MICHAEL

The Shinto Shrine at Ise is rebuilt every 18-20 years, thus passing building techniques from one generation to another.
more than a thousand years old, but is demolished and rebuilt every 18-20 years. When it is rebuilt, 1,000-year-old tools and techniques are used, which means the building tradition is preserved just as it was. In contrast, in the U.S. we happily restore 300-year-old farm-houses with epoxy and nail guns, taking care of the fabric but not necessarily the building tradition. It is not a question of which approach is correct: Each culture comes to its own conclusions using the same process of identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment.

The process was most eloquently defined in the Burra Charter of 1999, which unlike the Venice Charter of 1964, recognized conservation as an active process of change. No longer are there universal standards for what is preserved and how it is managed. But there are universal principles and procedures for making that determination. These principles include an expanded understanding of documentation: “The cultural significance of a place, and other issues affecting its future, are best understood by a methodical process of collecting and analysing information before making decisions.” The Burra Charter had its greatest impact on international practice by specifically calling for the involvement of communities associated with a place: “Conservation, interpretation and management of a place should provide for the participation of people for whom the place has special associations and meanings, or who have social, spiritual or other cultural responsibilities for the place.” In contrast to the top-down approach inherent in the Athens and Venice charters, Burra puts the community at the center of the process.

I have been working internationally for 15 years, now through the Global Heritage Fund (GHF), which helps preserve world heritage sites in developing countries through community development. We have just embarked on a project that highlights this process in Guizhou, China’s poorest province.

The Minority Villages of Guizhou, which have been nominated for World Heritage inscription, are diverse cultural landscapes that include both traditional buildings but also traditional landscapes, both agricultural and industrial. We will be working with UNESCO, the Guizhou Culture ministry, a regional conservation agency, two
universities, and a Chinese NGO called You Cheng, which seeks to help communities preserve intangible heritage. In Dali Dong village, You Cheng will help preserve traditional silversmithing crafts, while in Heshui village we are hoping to maintain a 600-year-old tradition of handmade paper. In each village we will also be crafting detailed plans for the preservation of buildings and landscapes, including the distinctive drum towers of the Dong people and the wooden covered bridges popular in each town.

I participated in initial community meetings in Heshui late last year and was impressed by the analytic discipline our Chinese and international partners exhibited. They genuinely brought the community into the process, and described what needed to be done to prove that their handcrafted paper tradition could be competitive in the modern world. There were no conclusions or directives yet, simply the first steps in a dynamic process.

**A DRIVER OF DEVELOPMENT**

The Guizhou project reminded me again of the lesson I learned more than 30 years ago working on the first heritage area in the United States: Preservation is a form of economic development. For many within the preservation movement, and even more outside of it, preservation appears to be opposed to development. In fact, preservation is a development choice about the future: If someone makes a different development choice, we might be opposed to it, but neither choice is anti-development.
The role of heritage conservation as a form of development has again been driven by its vital role in uplifting economies and lives in the developing world where GHF works. Since 2010 both ICOMOS and UNESCO have not only recognized the importance of heritage as a driver of development, but are focusing on it. We witness it in places as diverse as Turkey, Guatemala, Colombia, and Cambodia.

In a way, the argument is simple. Most forms of economic development—factories, shops, offices, etc.—are large physical installations and hence appear permanent. But they aren’t. As the famous Kelo v. New London case illustrated, even big factories and new mixed-use neighborhoods are moveable. Heritage sites are generally not movable, hence any economic development they bring can be considered more permanent and sustainable than almost any other form of economic development.

The Elgin marbles were moved in 1804, and the Pergamon Altar a century later, but these reflect a static, museum-based approach to heritage conservation. It is the same approach that led to the demolition of whole blocks of historic buildings in front of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris and Independence Hall in Philadelphia. As we move away from individual monuments toward context- and content-rich cultural landscapes, the concept of removing an artifact from a place becomes increasingly absurd.

The museum approach to heritage conservation also limits economic development options. In the 1980s, it seemed the primary economic value of a heritage site was tourism, and indeed major heritage sites like Angkor Wat and Machu Picchu reinforce that idea, but many sites also demonstrate the limitations and excesses of catastrophic tourism development. Lijiang, China, listed as World Heritage Site in 1997, was converted from a living city to one with a pure tourist economy, causing the Global Heritage Fund to step in almost a decade ago, to help Naxi people stay within the restored central city. Another site, Xishuangbanna, in the Yunnan Province, structured its whole economy around tourism only to suffer years of decline.

Tourism is an important economic driver, but the authenticity of a place—its tangible and intangible heritage—is what will drive both tourism and other forms of development in the long run.
As we have seen in innumerable economic studies of historic preservation in the U.S., properly preserved sites tend to circulate more money within the local economy, providing a broader and more sustainable uplift. A diverse local economy is not only more attractive to tourists, it also encourages people to live and invest in a place, not simply a site. Heritage attracts residents and businesses, and the metrics we use to look at the value of preserving historic places go well beyond tourism.

GHF’s work in Pingyao, China, over the last six years is emblematic. Pingyao is one of the only surviving walled cities in all of China, with more than 470 original siheyuan (courtyard houses). Pingyao was also home to the Rishengchang, the draft banking system developed here in 1823 which became the financial backbone of East Asia. The Rishengchang courtyard buildings are restored as a tourist attraction, but many other courtyards have succumbed to new development. GHF restored two courtyards as models, and the one at 12 Mijie Xiang has become a local community center where residents stage weekly programs on local dialect, culture, and tradition. There is a gallery and library available to the community as well.

12 Mijie Xiang neatly combines the tangible preservation of an original centuries-old courtyard house with the intangible preservation of local language and traditions. In the rear courtyard, GHF reconstructed a yaodong, a parabolic brick-arched structure found in this region. Yaodong have natural heating and cooling.
qualities and were reserved for the elders of each family. The structure is new, and I asked our Project Director Han Li I: “Was it hard to find someone who knew how to build yaodong?” The answer was no—the building tradition had survived and was continuous.

When I first visited Pingyao in 2008 I witnessed local planning professionals documenting courtyard houses and working with locals to research their history. By 2011 Tongji University had completed a detailed plan for the entire city that addressed not only conservation goals, but infrastructure needs that would allow Pingyao to function for both tourists and residents in a modern, efficient manner. GHF promulgated guidelines for courtyard house restoration that are now being used by the municipality to guide rehabilitation grants and loans for homeowners.

SUSTAINABILITY

The most overused word of the 21st century conjures up images of solar panels, twisty light bulbs, and maybe even composting toilets, but the real metric of sustainability is the metric of preservation: time. Sustainable architecture must meet the challenge of time through adaptability of design and the durability of materials, along with short-term concerns about minimizing operating costs. Remember the architectural mantra from the 1970s? “Long life, loose fit.” The only viable metric is how a building performs over time, and the same is true of sustainable development.

A development project rooted in the buildings, landscapes, and traditional social and economic practices of a place is inherently sustainable: You are perpetuating a development pattern that worked successfully over time. Now, of course, technologies and economies are always in flux, but that is the essence of what we do: We help buildings, landscapes, sites, and structures adapt to
GHF is working to implement sustainable development policies for Ciudad Perdida, the “Lost City,” in the Sierra Nevada in Columbia.

PHOTO: VINCENT MICHAEL

the current economy without losing their identity.

In the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta of coastal Colombia we have been working to conserve and develop Ciudad Perdida, built by the Tayrona civilization from the 7th through 15th centuries. It is a three-day hike to the site through dense jungle and 90 percent humidity, and tourism is a significant piece of the development puzzle. Eco-lodges operated by residents have been improved with gray water systems and more efficient wood-burning stoves. These benefit the tourists, but also the local peasant and indigenous community, as does a new bridge over a dangerous river crossing. Even where tourism is the main driver of development, smart choices can reap benefits across economic sectors.

When I sat in that hut in Heshui village last December, peeling mandarin oranges and listening as UNESCO, You Cheng, and Heritage Ministry officials queried the community leaders, I realized that international preservation today is presented as a positive challenge. How good is your handcrafted paper? What markets have you identified? How much more money is needed to make it worthwhile? What resource issues do you have? It was about feasibility, marketing, and developing a business plan. It was a business process, not a regulatory one.

Three or four generations ago we approached the task of preserving the past as a museum project: How do we conserve the object; how do we interpret it? And as an afterthought, how do we pay for it? This was the world of the Athens Charter of 1931, and while the Venice Charter of 1964 added a richer sense of history,
it was still focused on objects, not people. That is the key evolutionary step we have taken in the last generation: Now our process starts with people and works to preserve place in a manner that is socially, economically, environmentally, and culturally sustainable. FJ

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1 The Nara Document on Authenticity was drafted by the 35 participants at the Nara Conference on Authenticity in Relation to the World Heritage Convention, held at Nara, Japan, in November 1993, with final editing by the general rapporteurs of the Nara Conference, Mr. Raymond Lemaire and Mr. Herb Stovel.


5 Kelo v. New London (04-108) 545 U.S. 469 (2005) 268 Conn. 1, 843 A. 2d 500, affirmed. The case involved public condemnation of private land to be turned over to a private developer for economic development purposes. The Supreme Court said this was okay, but the irony was that the development plan failed to get financing, a proposed Pfizer factory never opened near the site, and the site became a garbage dump following Hurricane Irene.

6 Even those famous examples of removal of large artifacts—even buildings—were done with a contextual understanding and justified only as a last-ditch preservation effort. As Pergamon excavator Max Kunze said at the time: “We are not insensitive to what it means to remove the remnants of a great monument from their original location and bring them to a place where we can never again provide the lighting and environment in which they were created and in which they once conveyed their full effect. But we did rescue them from a destruction that was becoming ever more complete.” Alexander Conze, quoted from Max Kunze, Volker Kästner: Antikensammlung II. Der Altar von Pergamon. Hellenistische und römische Architektur. Henschelverlag, 2nd edition, Berlin 1990, ISBN 3-362-00436-9., p. 30 (translated).

New Buildings in Historic Settings: Recent Conservation Experience in England

BY STEVEN W. SEMES

The preservation community in England faces many of the same challenges as its American counterpart, one of which is the growing public debate on the question of the appropriate style for new architecture in historic settings. Designs that harmonize with their traditional contexts have garnered increasing public support amid growing concern about stylistically dissonant new architecture in historic settings, but opposition to unambiguously traditional new work remains strong among architects and preservation professionals, who have frequently criticized it as “imitation” or “pastiche.” In this arena, conservation experience in England, with its many similarities in architectural heritage, culture, and language, offers some valuable lessons for American preservationists confronting the same issues.¹

The English planning and approvals process for alterations or additions to “scheduled monuments” (structures subject to landmark protection) or new construction in “conservation areas,” (historic districts) principally occurs at the local level, where authorities apply broad national policy directives according to the varying circumstances, capacities, and resources of their communities. Non-governmental preservation organizations play an important role in this process through their statutory responsibility to review and comment on proposed interventions affecting designated heritage sites. Among the principal organizations are the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), the Georgian Group, the Victorian Society, the Twentieth Century Society, and English Heritage. The first four of these are “National Amenity Societies” (i.e., privately-funded charities that advocate for “preserving the art and architecture of past centuries”) whose missions are largely defined chronologically by their historical period of interest. The fifth is a “quango” (a quasi-autonomous non-governmental organization incorporated in the private sector but publicly funded) whose consulting role extends over all historical periods.
The testimony of these groups can play an important role in local decision making and, because they have taken different positions on what they believe appropriate for new construction in historic settings, their participation in the process potentially empowers designers, sponsors, and members of the public favoring or opposing a specific project. This article will cover national government policies and the involvement of three of the advocacy groups regarding the issue of style—that is, the degree to which the relationship between new and historic architecture should be one of continuity or contrast—as this is the subject of increasing debate on both sides of the Atlantic.

**GOVERNMENT POLICIES AFFECTING CONSERVATION DECISIONS**

In the last three years the Department of Communities and Local Government has published two successive sets of national policy documents related to heritage conservation: The March 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) replaced the 2010 Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS 5), reflecting the change from a Labor to a Conservative government. While PPS 5 was limited to conservation policy, the NPPF addresses a range of environmental and conservation issues with a “presumption in favour of sustainable development.” It offers the same level of protection for heritage resources as earlier policies, emphasizing that “planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.” A different branch of government, the Department of Culture, Media, and Sport, oversees the process of identifying listed buildings and defining conservation areas in consultation with English Heritage and local authorities.

The NPPF retains most of the definitions used by its predecessor: A “heritage asset” is “a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest.” The significance of such an asset is “the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations” due to its archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic interest. This interest derives “not only from (its)
physical presence, but also from its setting.” Local planners are encouraged to identify and support “opportunities for new development...within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance.”

On the issue of style, NPPF is less clear than PPS 5, which was notable for the recognition it (and the Practice Guide developed for it by English Heritage) gave to new work in traditional styles, encouraging architects and officials to consider “how existing valued heritage assets can inform high quality design that is inspired by its local context....” These documents avoided either promoting or discouraging stylistic conformity between new and old, but noted that “new features added to a building are less likely to have an impact on the significance if they follow the character of the building.” The NPPF omits these references, instead asserting that “Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality, or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.”

Far from resolving debates about style, this language can be read as favoring either modernist or traditional design depending on whether one considers one or the other more “innovative,” conducive to environmental sustainability, or locally distinctive. Hank Dittmar, executive director of the Prince’s Foundation for Building Communities, sees NPPF as “a step forward” because it “puts local character and local preference higher up on the agenda. Design quality is enhanced in the process, but no longer yoked solely to innovation.” Implementation of the NPPF’s broad principles is now in the hands of local authorities, with the national advocacy organizations lending their support to different approaches.

**THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF ANCIENT BUILDINGS**

The 1877 “Manifesto” of its founder, William Morris (1834-96), remains “the core of everything we do,” according to SPAB Director Matthew Slocombe. Morris’s impassioned text, inspired by the writings of John Ruskin, galvanized protest against the stylistic
restoration practices of the time. In Morris’s strict conservationist view, interventions should be minimal, directed toward repair rather than restoration, and “show no pretence of other art... in fine to treat our ancient buildings as monuments of a bygone art, created by bygone manners, that modern art cannot meddle with without destroying.” When new elements must be added, they should be “wrought in the unmistakable fashion of the time.”

Today, in addition to technical advice, training programs, and advocacy, SPAB has statutory responsibility for commenting on proposed projects affecting sites dating from antiquity to 1700. Consistent with Morris’s principles, SPAB focuses on “fabric” rather than “significance,” directing its attention to minimizing the physical—if not always the visual—impact of proposed changes. When new construction is necessary, SPAB prefers clearly modern insertions rather than forms or materials that might blur the distinction between new and historic fabric. As an example, Slocombe cites Blencow Hall, a medieval tower severely damaged during the Civil War of the mid-1600s and left unrepaired ever since. Architect Donald Insall tied the masonry structure together to prevent further collapse and placed within it a contrasting modernist glass enclosure and new interiors.

Similarly, Hopkins Architects inserted minimalist timber and glass elements into the stabilized masonry walls of the ruined medieval Refectory and Hostry at Norwich Cathedral. When asked if he would like this project as well if the new elements took on a more Gothic proportion and feeling, albeit abstracted, Slocombe responds, “No, we would want to discourage any replication of old forms, preferring to allow the old to speak unequivocally with the new as something visibly added and in a clearly supporting role. That is the preferred treatment.”

While this conspicuous distinction between new and old has widespread support among preservation professionals, critics have argued this approach runs the risk of de-contextualizing historic fabric, presenting it as fragmentary and alienated from present-day construction, and preventing new elements from composing a more harmonious whole. The question of the relative appropriateness of a contrasting or more harmonious style for additions is the crux of
the current debate in English conservation circles, and SPAB has been a powerful advocate for its “preferred treatment” based on Morris’s principles.

When asked about the effects of the new NPPF, Slocombe says that the greatest loss from the previous PPS 5 was the substitution of the earlier document’s “presumption in favour of conservation of designated heritage assets” with the current “presumption in favour of sustainable development,” noting that “no one is yet really sure what ‘sustainable development’ means.” He continues, “For us, the biggest problem with the NPPF is the concept of ‘enhancement of significance,’ which is being used to justify restoration of the kind the SPAB opposes.”

THE GEORGIAN GROUP

In contrast to SPAB, an alternative view favors stylistic continuity between new and historic construction, seeing traditional architecture as a discipline that has flourished in different times and places and remains valid today. This position recalls the theory of Morris’s contemporary and arch rival, the French architect and restorer Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814-79), who intentionally blurred the boundary between conservation and new design. While his approach was long rejected by the modern conservation
movement inspired by Morris, the writings and works of Viollet-le-Duc and his followers are attracting renewed interest today.¹⁴

The Georgian Group was founded in 1937 as a sub-group within SPAB, but by the 1940s had charted an independent course. Initially focused on individual buildings, the Georgian Group pioneered the development of conservation areas to protect entire neighborhoods. Today the organization has statutory responsibility for commenting on planning applications affecting sites from the period 1700–1840.

While it does not necessarily share Viollet-le-Duc’s views regarding “stylistic restoration,” the Georgian Group has been open to a range of approaches, including new construction in the same style as a historic structure. Although current exercises in classical design are frequently criticized as inauthentic “pastiche,” Secretary of the Georgian Group Robert Bargery points to use and “spirit” as critical contributors to authenticity. Focusing on preserving historic fabric is not enough he says; rather, new work in historic settings ought to be designed “in the spirit of the original.”¹⁵ Reinforcing an urbanistic emphasis, Bargery says one should ask of any design, “Would you want to see more of it? If it were imitated, would it make a good city?” For Bargery, a conservation program needs to propose “a template for a coherent and enriching urban environment that allows historic places to grow in keeping with their historic patterns and deriving their authenticity from continuities of use and style as well as fabric.”

In addition to its review of relevant planning applications, the Group confers annual design awards recognizing exemplary restorations, sympathetic additions, and “new architecture in the Classical tradition.” Recently awarded new buildings in London include 33 New Bond Street designed by George Saumarez Smith of ADAM Architecture and Quinlan and Francis Terry’s 264-267 Tottenham Court Road, two cases where the Georgian Group’s support was decisive for the realization of new classical design. Outside of London, awards have been given to Ann’s Court, Selwyn College, Cambridge, by Porphyrios Associates and the Pipe Partridge Building, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, by John Simpson & Partners. None of these projects is an imitation of
period designs but, rather, interprets the Georgian style in response to contemporary conditions and needs.

The Georgian Group sees its advocacy as consistent with the NPPF because continuing to build in the style of a place is a legitimate means to “enhance” historic settings by “better revealing” their aesthetic significance and reinforcing “local distinctiveness.” New buildings in historic styles also contribute to sustainable development by using natural, renewable, and recyclable materials. In contrast, Bargery sees modernist glass buildings as “a luxury we cannot afford” and conservation programs now face the challenge of conserving “disposable buildings that were designed to last only a few decades.” In the end, Bargery believes the public supports the Georgian Group’s approach and that “change is coming.”

**ENGLISH HERITAGE**

Occupying an intermediate position between these two organizations is [English Heritage](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk). While national government-sponsored conservation programs in England date back to the 1880s, the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission was founded in 1984 as a semi-autonomous agency “to secure the preservation and enhancement of the man-made heritage of England....” Since 1999
the organization has been known as English Heritage and is the government’s principal advisor on the historic environment. It recommends heritage sites deserving protection, though the actual designation (listing) is done by government agencies. The organization has statutory responsibilities for commenting on certain types of development proposals that affect scheduled monuments, conservation areas, and listed properties regardless of date.

English Heritage also offers guidance to supplement the broad policies established by government agencies. In 2008 it published Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment, defining a coherent preservation philosophy intended to unify varied interpretations and practices while recognizing realities in the field and diverse local circumstances. Conservation Principles defines four kinds of significance—evidential, historical, aesthetic, and communal—noting that different types may require different treatments and that, in some cases, these values may be in conflict with one another.16 The document recognizes that “retaining the authenticity of a place is not always achieved by retaining as much of the existing fabric as is technically possible.”17 Chief Executive Dr. Simon Thurley explains, “I am concerned about the over-emphasis on ‘fabric’ in conservation—the focus on the age of the material and the relative absence of concern about the design.” He continues, “there are three sources of authenticity: age, form, and use, and all need to be considered.”18

While Conservation Principles favors a distinction between historic fabric and added new materials, the text also acknowledges that “a subtle difference between new and existing... is more likely to retain the coherence of the whole than jarring contrast.”19 Seeking stylistic neutrality, the guidance “neither implies nor precludes working in traditional or new ways,” but asks project sponsors to respect “the values established through an assessment of the significance of the place.”20 As an example of a project English Heritage supports, Thurley cites the John Simpson & Partners design for a new entrance pavilion at Kensington Palace. He explains that this addition is in harmony with the existing structure, is an accomplished design in its own right, and would not be mistaken for part of the original building.
English Heritage “worked closely” with the government in developing the preservation components of the NPPF and published a “Commentary on the National Planning Policy Framework” that underscores the many points on which the latter document is similar to its predecessor. Given both the need for practical guidance and many local authorities’ limited access to specialized expertise, the work of English Heritage in national conservation training and guidance will likely only grow.

CONCLUSION

Even though their recommendations are not always followed by local authorities, the amenity societies and English Heritage are important players in the approval process. In an environment where professional opinion is divided and other guidance is often lacking, the advocacy of these national organizations contributes to a public debate that has the potential to locate the seemingly arbitrary decisions of local authorities within a larger framework of ideas that can be argued and defended, leading perhaps to better decisions and, ultimately, something approaching consensus. Would American preservation practice not also benefit from having a similar public debate led by prominent organizations and institutions on issues that are far from settled and about which the public has an essential interest? FJ
STEVEN W. SEMES is associate professor in the School of Architecture at the University of Notre Dame and author of The Future of the Past: A Conservation Ethic for Architecture, Urbanism, and Historic Preservation (W. W. Norton & Co., 2009). He is the editor of the Institute of Classical Architecture and Art’s journal The Classicist and a member of the Editorial Committee of the University of Pennsylvania journal Change Over Time. In 2010 he received the Clem Labine Award from Traditional Building magazine. He also publishes a blog, “The View from Rome” at http://traditional-building.com/Steve_Semes.

SLIDESHOW

Click here to see a slide show of new buildings and additions in historic settings in England.

1 The research supporting this article was made possible by the support of The Prince’s Foundation for Building Communities in London, where the author was Visiting Research Fellow, November 16–December 3, 2011. This study is limited to England, but the related experiences of conservation programs in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland should also be studied for understanding conditions in the United Kingdom as a whole.


3 English Heritage Commentary on the National Planning Policy Framework, March 27, 2012 (available online at: http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/imported-docs/a-e/eh-commentary-nppf.pdf).

4 All definitions of terms cited here are found in the NPPF, Annex 2: Glossary.

5 NPPF, 137.


7 Practice Guide, 186, p. 49.

8 NPPF 60, p. 15.

9 Email correspondence with Hank Dittmar, Executive Director, The Prince’s Foundation for Building Communities, London, June 2012.

10 This and following comments of Matthew Slocombe, Director of SPAB, from the author’s interview with him at the organization’s offices at 7 Spital Square, London, on November 20, 2011 and subsequent email correspondence in June 2012.


12 For the complete text of the William Morris manifesto, see the SPAB website: http://www.spab.org.uk/what-is-spab-/the-manifesto/.

13 For example, see the books cited in Note 3, especially Brolin, Hardy, and Semes.


15 These and following comments from author’s interview with Robert Bargery, Secretary of the Georgian Group, November 28, 2011 at the organization’s offices, 6 Fitzroy Square, London and subsequent email correspondence, June 2012.

16 English Heritage, Conservation Principles, section 72.

17 English Heritage, Conservation Principles, section 92.

18 This and following comments from author interview with Dr. Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage, November 18, 2011, in King’s Lynn, United Kingdom.

19 English Heritage, Conservation Principles, section 93.

20 English Heritage, Conservation Principles, section 143.
Preservation in France: Reflections from Three Hunt Fellows

WENDY HILLIS, AIA, MARY BRUSH, AIA, TINA ROACH, AIA

INTRODUCTION

Since 1990, the Richard Morris Hunt Fellowship, co-sponsored by the American Architectural Foundation and the French Heritage Society, has offered mid-career American and French licensed architects an intensive six-month exchange experience that showcases the latest scholarship and practice around historic preservation and architectural heritage.

The Hunt Fellowship is named for Richard Morris Hunt, the first American architect to study at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Hunt, one of the most renowned 19th-century American architects, helped to formalize architecture as a profession in the U.S. and to promote urbanism.

The American Architectural Foundation and French Heritage Society conceived the Hunt Fellowship as a means to introduce experienced preservation architects in France and the United States to preservation practice and technique in each other’s countries. Awarded in alternate years to an American and to a French fellow, the program carries a stipend of $25,000 and includes extensive travel and interaction with local preservation professionals in the host country. It affords design professionals the opportunity to broaden their outlooks on architectural and cultural heritage. Americans see a variety of current projects and are introduced to the state institutions that govern French historic monuments and landscapes. French recipients are introduced to federal, state, and local preservation organizations and professionals in public and private practices. They also visit significant historic sites and projects applicable to their proposed study in the United States.

The alumni fellows from France and the U.S., now numbering 24, constitute an active professional network for the program. They gather for biennial reunions in both France and the U.S.
Three American Hunt fellows share their experiences in the following essays.

THE POLITICS OF CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE IN HISTORIC CONTEXTS
WENDY HILLIS, AIA

The focus of my six months in France in 2007 was on the politics of contemporary architecture in historic contexts. I especially wanted to focus on cases when such decisions were contested and the discussion topics were controversial.

French historic preservation law creates a very different regulatory environment than that in the United States, and the long history of historic preservation in France creates a different cultural context. A summary of some of these differences is necessary in order to understand the nuanced discussions the French have regarding contemporary design in historic contexts. Specifically:

1. French preservation policy is dominated by a centralized government structure that codifies who may work on historic monuments and how such work is funded. The Commission Supérieur des Monuments Historiques, the equivalent of the American Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, was founded in 1837. Unlike the U.S. Advisory Council, which only reviews projects that are government-owned or government-funded (aka Section 106), the Commission Supérieur reviews all projects proposed for Monuments Classées (those of national importance), regardless of funding.

2. While the U.S. uses the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, France (and most of Europe) uses the Venice Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (1964), the document upon which the Standards are loosely based. Notably, the Venice Charter implies that a singular monument is inseparable from the setting in which it occurs. With that belief in mind, the French Code du Patrimoine enforces a 500-meter protected radius around classified monuments, requiring exterior design review (in a preservation context) for any architectural modifications or
new construction within this zone. For a city like Paris, with numerous monuments, these protected radii overlap, and there are very few places within the city limits that escape preservation review. As a result, the Service D’Architecture et Patrimoine or SDAP (the local preservation planning office) is adept at reviewing, discussing, and passing judgment on new construction in historic contexts. Historic preservation review is, therefore, the norm and not the exception for all projects within the city.

3. The father of the French preservation movement, 19th-century French architect Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814-79), has a lasting legacy. Known for his interpretive “restorations” of medieval buildings, Viollet-le-Duc’s influence is still evident and, as a general rule, French preservationists are more inclined to reconstruct missing pieces of historic buildings than their American counterparts. This tendency to reconstruct extends to replacement of deteriorated features. As one French preservation architect shared with me, “you Americans are worried about the historic integrity of each individual nail at the expense of the overall legibility of the historic monument and its context.”

The fellowship gave me the opportunity to spend time in the offices of various preservation stakeholders, including the Commission Supérieur des Monuments Historiques, various Architectes en chef des Monuments Historiques (an exclusive cadre of 55 national Chief Architects for Historic Monuments), the SDAP in various cities, and The Ministry of Culture. While most of the American recipients of the Richard Morris Hunt Fellowship visit the same roster of preservation professionals, each person’s research interests color the individual experience and filter the information received.

My biggest takeaway: Various “poster children” for contemporary design in historic contexts, including I.M. Pei’s Grand Pyramid du Louvre, were denied approval by the Commission Supérieur des Monuments Historiques in the mid 1980s, but were constructed because President Francois Mitterand overrode the Commission’s decisions. Other rejected projects include an addition to the 1831 Lyon Opera House by Jean Nouvel (constructed between 1985 and
1993) and the installation of the Colonnées de Buren in the Cour d’Honneur at the Palais Royal in 1986. I am currently continuing my research on the aftermath of these projects: how their public reception changed the ways in which French preservationists view contemporary architectural interventions.

At a more subtle scale, I was interested in the exterior renovations of the north tower of Paris’ Saint-Sulpice (17th-18th century) and discussions regarding authenticity and contemporary interventions. A major exterior renovation of the north tower of the church was underway during my visit. The entire wood structure of the tower was dismantled and shipped across the country for conservation efforts. Along with the wood structure, stone statues of the four Evangelists, dating back to the late 19th century, were lowered from their usual perch, 60 meters above the ground.

Upon investigation, professionals decided that these statues were too degraded to continue to remain exposed and, as a result of their decay, had reached the end of their life span. It was decided that new stone sculptures would be fabricated to replicate the appearance of the originals.

Each statue is 3 meters tall and weighs approximately 20 tons. The statues have been exposed to bad weather and pollution and

Although the Commission Superieur des Monuments Historiques rejected the contemporary designs for an addition to the Lyon Opera House (left) and the installation of the Colonnées de Buren in the Cour d’Honneur at the Palais Royal (right), both projects were eventually constructed after President Francois Mitterand overrode the Commission’s decisions.

PHOTO: WENDY HILLIS
received repairs as early as 1870. These aggressive treatments and continued weathering eventually resulted in a stone that was highly eroded, and artistic forms that were no longer legible, especially from a distance.

The decision to replace these pieces was fascinating to me. Both the Venice Charter and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards specifically state that missing historical elements should not be recreated. This leads to many preservation practices wherein decay is arrested, portions of historical elements remain, and prime importance is given to the integrity of remaining historic material.

I first assumed that this rush to recreate reflected the French debt to the theories of Viollet-le-Duc. Further investigation, however, into the minutes of the Commission Supérieur revealed that the matter had been debated, and that it was determined that more historic fabric could ultimately be saved by placing the historic sculptures in a controlled museum setting. Recreating the four sculptures in a contemporary aesthetic was also discussed by the Commission, but rejected because the expert consensus was that their presence would be disruptive to the overall aesthetic of the historic facade.

WENDY HILLIS, AIA, is the 2007 recipient of the Richard Morris Hunt Fellowship. She is the executive director of Preservation Durham (N.C.) and is editor of the AIA Historic Resources Committee’s newsletter, Preservation Architect.

TECHNICAL PRESERVATION IN FRANCE
MARY BRUSH, AIA

My Hunt Fellowship in 2005 focused on the technical side of architecture. How do French architects design the restorations, what do the details look like, and how are they implemented in the field. My professional experience was already focused on Chicago’s historic skyscrapers prior to my six months in France, such as the restoration of the facades of Burnham and Root’s Rookery Building (1888), and Louis Sullivan with Holabird & Roche’s Gage Building (1898, 1906), and one of Chicago’s art deco skyscrapers, the One North LaSalle building by Vitzhume & Burns (1930).

I had absolutely no idea what to expect, and what I experienced far exceeded my wildest dreams.
Where a visiting architect to Chicago might meet with me for a meal or two and get a site visit or office tour, a Hunt fellow gets to really experience the practice. To use the word “shadow” is insufficient, because the fellowship means being a part of the office for weeks; going on numerous site visits; sitting in progress meetings, council meetings, community hearings; and seeing the evolution and challenges of the project. And then you move on to the next office experience.

A one-day visit with the Architecte en chef for the Chateau de Versailles, Frederick Didier, resulted in a simple yet memorable exchange. We were on the scaffolding of the palace on the primary garden elevation. The centuries-old limestone facade needed repairs due to cracks, fissures, and corroding metal anchorage. I recognized similar failures in limestone from my Chicago work, and also recognized the replacement anchorage and repair techniques. Their limestone might be on centuries-old buildings, and “my” limestone might be 40-story towers from the 1920s, but the behavior of the materials over time is similar. My conversations with the architects and stonemasons reinforced shared connections and reminded me that we are ultimately all architects, and observe, diagnose, and design through similar methodology.

I was honored to be a month-long guest in the offices of Didier Repellin, the Architecte en chef for Lyon, Provence, and for the French-owned properties in Italy. I travelled with him to Rome where he was restoring the Villa Medici and the Trinità dei Monti high above the Piazza di Spagna. Over the course of several visits I was able to observe the application of structural anchoring and mortar injection. One outcome of these visits was a co-written publication between Repellin and myself in the Association for Preservation Technology Bulletin journal as well as presentations at conferences. I have since used variations of this technique for two Chicago projects.
Another highlight of my month with Didier Repellin was the opportunity to be on site for the first day of cleaning the murals within the Avignon popes’ private chapel, dating from 1309 to 1378. The conservator’s last name was Botticelli—truly!

The social lessons of the Hunt fellowship were innumerable. One that stands out is the conveyance of pride in craftsmanship. Repellin was involved with the restoration of St. Mayol in Ternay, France. We arrived without warning to inspect the masonry work on the bell tower. The conversation about the restoration was polite yet tense as the quality of craftsmanship was not to the architect’s standards. We were all in the bell tower for the initial conversations, then walked down the scaffolding and over to the village square. We re-examined the masonry work from a distance. The mason was reminded that not only was this an important project, but that it was his work on display, and on display to his peers. Wouldn’t he like to be able to tell his children and grandchildren that this was his work? Soon the mason was picking out flaws and remarkably offering to make the repairs. Everyone saved face, the project was back on track, and all shook hands at the end of the meeting.

Preservation visioning is an open and ongoing dialogue. Social pressures for wider streets and big-box convenience stores along with development pressures on underused buildings in desirable locations also exist in France. On the other hand, there is interest to save historic buildings. We may not have the solution for the building now, but if we let it be destroyed, we are robbing the future of that opportunity.

The Richard Morris Hunt fellowship is not a commitment of merely six months. It is a lifelong adventure. We get to relive our
magical experience during reunions in either the United States or France. We join a professional network of preservation professionals—architects, planners, conservators, and even archeologists—who share processes, similar challenges, and design ideas.

MARY BRUSH, AIA, was a Richard Morris Hunt Fellow in 2005. She is the principal and owner of Brush Architects, LLC, in Chicago, Ill. The firm focuses on preservation and envelope rehabilitation design and is a Woman Owned Business that works directly with owners as well as team with design architecture firms to round out their design skills with existing building and historic preservation challenges.

HERITAGE ARCHITECTURE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
TINA ROACH, AIA

My research as the 2009 Richard Morris Hunt Fellow built on my professional experience in sustainable stewardship at Quinn Evans Architects and focused on the intersection of heritage architecture and sustainable development in France. The future of historic preservation goes beyond saving old buildings from demolition. It requires us to consider preservation solutions in the context of the global environmental crisis.

Two questions were at the center of my inquiry:
1. How are the challenges of climate change affecting our assumptions regarding existing building stock?
2. How is the fervor of the sustainable design movement affecting the work of architects specializing in preserving historic building stock for future generations?

The six-month fellowship offered a broad perspective from roughly 100 preservation professionals in at least 30 cities across France. Several concepts stand out.

The Importance of Ambitious Targets
The preservation world in France and the U.S. both started with ambitious targets: to identify the most significant buildings to each nation. From there, the lists of protected heritage have grown exponentially, to the point where in some French cities, such as Paris or the southwestern city of Bayonne, almost every building is subject to historic design review. This is due to historic listing, as well as the 500-meter (1,650 feet) radius rule that was instituted in 1943.
To address climate change, ambitious targets are similarly important. The 1997 Kyoto Protocol established binding targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in 37 industrialized countries and the European community. While both the U.S. and France are signatories to the Kyoto Protocol, the U.S. Congress never ratified it. As a result, in the 21 years between 1990 (the base year) and 2011, the United States increased its greenhouse gas emissions by almost 8 percent, while France and other European countries have reduced theirs significantly: France by 12.2 percent and Germany by 26.7 percent according to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change website.

Current environmental protection targets in France are highly ambitious. In 2005 France mandated the reduction of carbon emissions by a factor of 4 by the year 2050 (75 percent reduction) and to generate 23 percent of electricity from renewable sources (wind, solar, hydro power, biomass) by the year 2020. In 2009-2010, new targets for buildings were established during national discussions held in the city of Grenelle and implemented with the 2012 Réglementation Thérmiques (Energy Codes). New buildings must be designed to consume 50 kilowatt-hours per square meter per year (50 kwh/m2/year, or 16 kBtu/sf/year). The City of Paris added energy usage intensity requirements for renovation projects: 80 Kwh/m2/year (25 kBtu/sf/year).
To attain these targets is technically challenging even in new construction. For comparison, know that the average office building in the U.S. consumes 236 kwh/m²/year (75 kBtu/sf/year) and recent zero net energy projects in the U.S. are achieving between 80 and 110 kwh/m²/year (25 and 35 kBtu/sf/year).

Building codes in France are often more lenient with historic buildings, which are perceived to be more difficult to retrofit to meet new standards. Grenelle specifically excludes historic monuments, but the everyday heritage of traditional or vernacular architecture is affected as this law gets implemented through the building codes. In 2010-2011, the City of Bayonne commissioned an energy efficiency study on a typical building in its historic center. The study demonstrated that protection of heritage is not necessarily an obstacle to improved occupant comfort, nor energy efficiency. The restoration project achieved an annual energy consumption of 42 kwh/m²/year (13 kBtu/sf/year). They noted that respecting the qualities of traditional architecture is a key to achieving a high performance historic building.

Change will happen faster with such highly aggressive mandates, and climate science tells us that we need to change faster. Ambitious targets help spur the discovery of appropriate solutions.

The Value of Both Mandatory Requirements and Voluntary Measures

Energy codes are one form of mandatory requirement, but they apply only when doing construction on an existing or new building. How can more building occupants and owners be made aware of the energy consumption of their buildings? Would you purchase or drive a car without understanding how much fuel it needs to run?

For years, the car industry has been required to provide a fuel economy label that provides the average miles per gallon for a vehicle. Following Kyoto and the 2005 law, the French Ministry of Ecology created a benchmarking and awareness tool for buildings called the Diagnostique Performance Energétique (DPE). The DPE created a ranking system for buildings based on their annual energy consumption and annual greenhouse gas emissions. DPE parallels the Grenelle law; an “A” building is one that consumes 50 kwh/m²/year, while the poorest achiever would receive a “G” rating, corresponding
to more than 450 kWh/m²/year. Some American cities, such as the District of Columbia, are beginning to implement similar benchmarking tools, first for public buildings and then for private buildings of a certain size.

Voluntary systems also have their place. In the U.S., the LEED rating system of the U.S. Green Building Council dominates the marketplace as a higher benchmark and is used by owners as a marketing tool nationwide. In France, three rating systems are in competition: the French one, called Haute Qualité Environnementale (HQE), LEED, and the British tool, BREEAM. HQE has the advantage of being linked to financial incentives, and it recently released a Renovation version. BREEAM offers a high degree of caché. LEED is the newcomer. The competition of multiple rating systems is healthy for the development of good tools. Each can present design challenges for historic buildings, but they do offer good frameworks to evaluate the environmental footprint of a building beyond its energy consumption by considering the site, transportation, and material selection among other things.

The Grand Hotel-Dieu in Lyon is listed as a Monument Historique Classé, the highest level. The building is undergoing restoration following the British rating system BREEAM. For more information on this project, which is scheduled for completion in 2016, go to the project website.

The Need for Building Science Research on Traditional Buildings

Building science focuses on the application of the principles of physics to the built environment. This includes heat, air, and moisture, as well as acoustics and lighting. The computer era has given us the ability to simulate the performance of a specific building to inform decisions about envelope improvements or heating, cooling, and ventilation systems. But how do tools like energy modeling deal with the physics of ancient construction materials and assemblies, assemblies that were intentionally designed to breathe for the health of the wall construction and the occupants?
The physics of traditional buildings differ from that of contemporary construction. In France, a historic wall may be half-timbered and filled with straw, mud, twigs, in a multitude of variations—with a render (a plaster coating) on the exterior and stucco or plaster on the interior. One French study, Project BATAN and its follow-up study Project ATHEBA, measured the actual energy performance of “typical” residential buildings, in tandem with surveys to assess occupant comfort and actual measurements in the spaces as well as in the thickness of the exterior walls. The initial study found that pre-war buildings were similar in performance to buildings constructed after the first French energy codes of 1975. Buildings constructed during the rapid and large-scale reconstruction effort after World War II until 1975 are generally poor performers. This was big news, as the environmentalists had previously lumped together all buildings constructed before 1975. Project ATHEBA has collected a large pool of data on approximately 100 buildings. This data is rich for further research, should funding become available.

The Association Nationale des Villes et Pays d’art et d’histoire et des Villes à secteurs sauvegardés et protégés (ANVPAH & VSSP) has united a community of professionals who are exchanging their local investigations into the building physics of the typical historic architecture found in their cities. These cities are translating the technical research into recommendations for building owners on how to improve the energy performance of their historic buildings without harming the building fabric or integrity. Two leading cities are Poitiers and Grenoble. More efforts like these could be useful on the local level across France and in the United States.

**Midcentury Modern Requires Special Attention**

Two separate studies found that the biggest energy consumers are the typical building stock constructed in the rapid postwar reconstruction period, after World War II, and before the first energy codes implemented in 1975 in response to the world oil crises a few years prior. Buildings from this time period require special attention to develop solutions that both “do no harm” and comply with the Venice Charter.
Conclusion
Preservation and sustainability share a long view. Both require actions that serve today and future generations. The richness of our world and the health of our communities are anchored in our pasts and our cultural heritage. Improving the environmental footprint of our historic buildings will require change, and we must remember that preservation is an activity of change. Any changes we make to historic buildings, whether in the name of sustainability or other objectives, must continue the tradition of design excellence in our work for the future. FJ

TINA ROACH, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, is the 2009 laureate of the Richard Morris Hunt Fellowship. She is an associate at Quinn Evans Architects in Washington, D.C., where she has practiced architecture since 1998. Quinn Evans Architects is a full-service architecture firm that specializes in designing sustainable, collaborative, and beautiful ways to preserve and enhance our built and natural environments. Read more on her blog: rmhf2009.com.
An Interview with Maria Llanos Martinez, ICOMOS Intern

Maria Llanos Martinez is the Trust’s first International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) intern. Established in 1984, the International Exchange Program promotes an understanding of international preservation policies, methods, and techniques enabling interns to make professional contacts and form personal friendships that will ensure a dialogue between countries. ICOMOS interns are young professionals with advanced degrees in conservation, preservation, and architecture.

Martinez is from Albacete, Spain, and received her architecture and engineering degree from Madrid Polytechnical University and her master in monuments and landscape preservation from La Sapienza University of Rome. She also minored in Restoration Strategies, Structural Pathologies, Cultural Heritage Management, and Cultural Landscape Management. She has worked in architectural studios and offices in Spain and Italy. In Madrid, she worked on an apartment complex for young people, and she completed the interior design of a water company in Albacete. In Rome, her firm created a museum for a roman-medieval collection within a 1900s building and designed the exhibit for discovered ruins beneath San Paolo Fuori le Mura.

Susan West Montgomery, senior director of preservation resources in the Preservation Division, sat down with Martinez on August 8, 2013, to talk about the differences between preservation practice in Spain and in the U.S. Martinez also talks about what she has learned during her internship and how she hopes to apply these lessons when she returns home. FJ

AUDIO CLIP
Click here to hear an audio clip of the interview.
Reincarnation of the Sacred Space: Issues in Adaptive Use of Hindu Temples in India

ASHIMA KRISHNA

Adaptive use has long been a sustainable and economically beneficial tool used by preservationists, architects, planners, and developers. It has been most popularly used for civic, industrial, and residential structures in not only the developed world, but increasingly in developing countries as well. In India’s rapidly changing urban and rural areas, abandoned or vacated buildings have been reused in different ways as public and private institutions, offices, museums, and hotels. The reuse of abandoned houses of worship—temples, mosques, churches, gurudwaras (the place of worship for followers of Sikhism), and synagogues—however, remains a pertinent yet sensitive issue in India. Can a non-functional liturgical space be more than a repository of our past? Can it also be an essential and utilized part of its community?

BACKGROUND

The Indian landscape is abundant with historic structures spanning a variety of time periods, made from different materials and for various uses. Most, however, escape any official (local, state, federal) attention. The federal agency in India responsible for the designation, maintenance, and preservation of nationally important historic structures is the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), similar to the U.S. National Park Service. ASI has more than 3,650 structures designated as nationally “protected monuments” (Government of India, 2011). Every state in turn has a state-level agency that designates state and locally significant structures. Other, undesignated private structures are often taken care of by a nonprofit or an advocacy group. Yet others either silently go to ruin within the rural/urban landscape, or are often put to some kind of unofficial use by the local inhabitants.

While the exact number of historic structures existing in India (both protected and unprotected) is yet to be determined, the list
of nationally-protected monuments reveals that more than 48 percent of the total structures had some kind of liturgical use at one point in time. The majority of these religious structures belong to the Hindu faith, which begins to illustrate just how many unprotected and undocumented historic structures of religious value actually exist across the Indian landscape.

Religious edifices, like other structures of historic value in India are usually either conserved or restored after they have been designated “protected monuments” at either federal or state levels, or by private patrons or (religious) trusts. The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), which is similar to the U.S. National Trust, often promotes the preservation of these unprotected sites by advocating and raising funds, hiring consultants, and entering into public-private partnerships. The “protected” structures that are not in continued religious use are, however, restored, preserved, or conserved by federal or state agencies as historic structures for tourism purposes rather than religious ones. This is primarily due to provisions in the federal legislation that prohibits the use of a “protected” structure for religious purposes if that was not its function at the time of designation (Government of India, 1958). Therefore for historic, protected religious structures of discontinued religious use, finding a new lease on life besides becoming a tourist attraction is difficult. Older, unprotected structures unfortunately share a similar fate. They typically face public opposition to adaptive use irrespective of their religious denomination. In the case of Hindu structures, these issues are more significantly manifested, given the volume of Hindu structures across the Indian landscape and an 80.5 percent majority in population (Government of India, 2001; Joshi, 2005, p. 130).

UNDERSTANDING THE HINDU TEMPLE

A Hindu temple is believed to be a vehicle for the enlightenment and salvation of the devotee visiting the shrine, a cultural and social hub, as well as a celebration of the rituals and traditional religious activities of a Hindu (Marathé, 1998, p. 11). The earliest temple form took inspiration from the ancient tabernacles constructed by the pre-medieval man, even before Hinduism developed as a religion. The Hindu temple’s actual evolution began with a small hut during...
the Vedic period,⁴ which evolved into a modest timber structure, which then gave way to the highly embellished stone and brick structures of the medieval period, and eventually into the myriad contemporary structures visible today. The Vedic-period structures were constructed in materials such as timber, plaster, brick, mud, and clay and were usually modest in scale (Marathé, 1998, p. 12). As a result, most Vedic-period temples have left no trace behind, while medieval period stone temples and post-medieval period temples are found in abundance across India.

Imbued with deep cosmological, spiritual, and metaphysical energies, the temple structure is considered the abode of the deity, which itself is considered to be a living entity. The construction of the Hindu temple starts with various rituals of blessing the ground, the site, the structure, and the idol (in that order). Construction is followed by the ceremonial blessing of the temple which involves a complex set of rituals and rites. This consecration of the temple structure, although beyond the scope of this article, is nevertheless important for its cosmological and metaphysical associations (Nair, 2000). It is important to note that once consecrated, a temple is always considered sacred. While religious structures in several Western contexts have been separated from all liturgical and religious iconography and associations for purposes of adaptive use, a Hindu temple, especially one built traditionally, cannot be de-sanctified (Bharne, 2012; Kramrisch, 1946; Michell, 1977; Nair, 2000).

However, there have been several instances of forcible desecration⁶ or defiling of Hindu temples over time, whether at the hands of Islamic invaders and British colonists or more recent treasure looters. Despite desecration, however, a Hindu temple does not fully cease to be a religious space. Desecration by defiling or harming the temple or the deity, or by destroying, defacing or decimating the space can merely render the space unfit for worship or for housing the deity. The space or the temple does not lose energies that have been channeled into it by orientation, by location, and by the placing of sacred stones and herbs in its foundations (Kramrisch, 1946). This makes a particular temple space eligible for re-consecration and fit for worship again.
CHALLENGES IN ADAPTIVELY USING A HINDU TEMPLE

Considerable work has already established how temples in India and other parts of Asia like Cambodia have historically been epicenters of a community and have inspired settlements to develop around them (Michell, 1977; Raghunathan & Sinha, 2006). In the case of a living temple, the role and identity of the temple is undisputed: It is usually a local visual landmark, a social and cultural epicenter of religious activity in both urban and rural contexts. However, a temple not in liturgical use presents various issues that challenge the possibility for its future. These include a lack of precedents, the sanctity of the space, its architecture and iconography, community sentiment, and legal issues.

Precedents

Preservationists in the United States seeking a new use for a historic religious structure can find abundant examples throughout the country. Churches have been turned into brew pubs, museums, artist’s studios, living spaces, and community halls. Projects like the Church Brew Works in Pittsburgh, Old St. George Project in Cincinnati, and the St. Dominick’s Roman Catholic Church in Portland, Maine, have consistently garnered attention for all the right reasons and have spurred the reuse of many other churches across the United States for a plethora of new functions.
Examples of adaptively used Hindu temples however, are rare. I stumbled upon one such structure several years ago. In the heart of a small village called Kamalapura, a stone’s throw away from the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Hampi in Karnataka, lies a tourist bungalow (guest house) that was once a Hindu temple. In the late 19th century a British collector (Local Government official) converted an abandoned Hindu temple into a small guest house. Vestiges of the temple’s original stone structure still remain. The erstwhile temple is credited to have been a Vaishnavite shrine, dedicated to the man-lion god, Narasimha (Verghese, 2000, p. 34). The temple itself is small, having a garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum), an antralaya (antechamber) and a mandapa (pillared hall). It is, however, an extreme and irreversible example of adaptive use; one that would not only be highly detrimental to the integrity of a structure, but also against the most basic preservation principles practiced today. It also raises the question: Can Hindu temples only be (forcibly) reused by non-Hindus? Clearly, the erstwhile temple is accepted in its new “avatar” and is in active use. However such an extreme conversion would be physically and culturally nearly impossible today, leading to the possibility of a debate on viable uses of such spaces today.

Sanctity and Faith
Such a debate, however, will face several hurdles. The spatial characteristics coupled with the metaphysical aspects of a Hindu
temple not only make it a unique experience as a sacred space, but also hinder any potential reuse proposals for its desecrated version. Despite the absence of the deity and the lack of “life” in the temple, cosmic energies deep in the foundations as well as energy lines radiating outward from the center retain some of the power of the erstwhile structure. Such metaphysical and cosmological beliefs among almost all Hindu communities often discourage any plans for reusing a temple structure, especially its principal shrine. The outer, ancillary structures however, would be wonderful spaces for reuse.

**Architecture and Iconography**
A quick look at the basic plan form for all traditional Hindu temples reveals a composite of squares based upon complex calculations and found in the Vastupurushamandala diagram (Michell, 1977, p. 72). As a result, the square sanctum sanctorum, followed by the open, pillared hall make reuse of the main shrine difficult without the use of infill material to enclose the outer walls of the hall as seen in the Kamalapura guest house. Additionally, the intricate and ornate religious iconography is often part of the structural elements of a temple, making it impossible to remove them for any potential reuse. Incorporating them would be considered sacrilegious. Therefore the use of the shrine itself becomes restricted, leaving mostly the other elements of the compound open to various kinds of use as seen in the photo on page 43.

**Community and Patronage**
Another factor which hinders the reuse of the temple structure is the community. Most orthodox Hindu communities would rather let a temple structure decay in place and in essence return to (Mother) earth than let it be reused for another purpose. This has been the fate of the Vardharajaswami Temple in the small village of Shivarpatna in Karnataka, where the village elders and the foreman were all opposed to any kind of reuse of the structure (Krishna, 2008, p. 123). Similar sentiments were echoed by the residents of the small villages of Hampi, Anantasayanagudi, and Nagenahalli in the heart of Karnataka. A small, medieval-period stone temple complex in Nagenahalli is in fact used informally by the villagers for various
functions: village meetings, drying dung cakes, washing clothes, and drying food items. They do not disturb the sacred sanctum which is used for worship, but use the pillared mandapas (halls) and ancillary structures within the temple complex in different ways.

Legalities
While undesignated structures usually do not face legal issues, designated ones are governed by rules that often prohibit any kind of use other than that which was recorded at the time of its designation. Additionally, it is clear that the principal shrine and especially the sanctum sanctorum cannot be reused for various religio-cultural reasons already outlined. However, the legislation leaves

At the Mallikarjuna Temple in Nagenahalli, Karnataka, village women use the temple compound for drying food items, washing and drying clothes, and drying dung cakes.

PHOTO: ASHIMA KRISHNA
enough room for its language to be interpreted in a way so as to benefit an abandoned, “protected” temple structure. Reusing the ancillary structures and the larger compound within a temple complex for a variety of compatible uses can be fiscally and physically beneficial for the temple as well as the local communities.

**CONCLUSION**

In today’s context, when the contemporary temples are moving beyond the traditional and reinterpreting their role within their communities both within India and outside, the absence of a dialogue to address the sustainable future of abandoned religious structures is alarming. The contemporary concept of the mega-temple complex, much like the mega-churches in the United States, has firmly taken root within Hindu communities, not only in India but worldwide. From my perspective, I would suggest that it is time to embrace the changing face of the religion to allow and encourage older, abandoned Hindu temple structures to be reincarnated in newer, compatible ways to ensure their care, maintenance, and perpetuation.

The needless decay and degradation of any built structure is a waste of existing resources, and preservationists and architects as well as the local authorities and community can make viable use of such structures to optimize their existing resources. Reusing abandoned or desecrated temples can cater to a community’s spatial needs in addition to breathing life into a structure that has lost its sanctity over time. Such spaces can also be turned into an educational experience for children to learn about and appreciate their cultural and built heritage. Most importantly, in congested urban areas where real estate is at a premium, such projects can also help land-use patterns by reusing existing temple structures instead of constructing new spaces. This will not only ensure the structure’s continued life, but also enhance the spatial interactions between local communities. In rural areas, such spaces can be used in a variety of sensitive ways and become a part of the rural development agenda. Hindus believe in soul reincarnation; I believe it is now time for them to believe in reincarnating their erstwhile sacred spaces as well. FJ
ASHIMA KRISHNA is currently a doctoral candidate at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., and is in the process of completing a dissertation that examines the challenge of heritage management in rapidly urbanizing second-tier Indian cities using the North Indian city of Lucknow as an example. She received her Bachelor’s Degree in Architecture from the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi in 2005 and Masters in Historic Preservation Planning from Cornell University in 2008.

References


The history of Hinduism can be traced to at least 1300 BCE, a pre-Aryan period that has been revealed through extensive excavations in the Indus Valley of the subcontinent over several decades. The presence of idol worship at the various Harappan and Mohenjo-daro archaeological sites in the Indus Valley that date to this period has been termed as the precursor to what we today know as Hinduism (Kenoyer, 1998; Khan, 2013; McIntosh, 2008; Wheeler, 1966). The advent of the Aryan race around 1500 BCE contributed to the socio-cultural and religious development of the Hindu society, in turn leading to the development of the sacred Hindu texts: Vedas, Upanishads and Brahmanas. Slowly, the doctrines led to the development of religious and sacrificial rituals, and a host of gods and goddesses gained popularity. George Michell provides further insight into the development of Hinduism and its influence on temple construction. The development of gods and goddesses in turn influenced art and architecture and helped produce a multitude of stone edifices consecrated in honor of the various deities, giving rise to a variety of temple sizes, types, styles and liturgical concentration all across the country. A Hindu temple is also known as mandir (Hindi), kovil (Tamil), alayam (Telugu), vimana (well proportioned), prasada (seat of the Lord), devalaya (house of God), devagram (the village of God), and sthana or sthanam (the holy place).

A small, basic form of shelter often constructed in wood with leaves or hay for roof covering.

This refers to the time period when the Vedas were written. Vedas are the earliest scriptures of Hinduism and date the Vedic period to roughly between 1700 and 1100 BCE.

Desecration can be defined as the act of removing a religious blessing from an object or a structure that had been previously consecrated by a minister or priest of that religion.

The Vaishnavite sect of Hinduism is one that follows Lord Vishnu, considered the Supreme Man by the sect; followers Lord Shiva are called Shaivites.

Mega-temple complexes like the Akshardham and the ISKON Temples today enjoy as much of a devout congregation as the older, historic temples. In fact, the new-age temples have embraced modern technology in every sphere of their function.
Our Visions, Our Way: Community Transformations in St. Croix and the Virgin Islands

CHENZIRA DAVIS KAHINA

EDITOR’S NOTE

The Virgin Islands Caribbean Cultural Center (VICCC) began as a vision of University of the Virgin Islands’ (UVI) faculty and administration and was officially launched in 2012. The mission of the Center is to preserve, cultivate, research, and nurture Virgin Islands and Caribbean culture and heritage through interactive education, arts, sciences, and technology.

Dr. Chenzira Davis Kahina, the organization’s new and first director, brings a rich and varied background to her position. She describes herself as “a mother, visionary, cultural heritage preservationist, educator, ordained minister, inspirational community activist, published author, psychotherapist, holistic health practitioner, folkloric and traditional performing artist, and natural earth scholar who shares her eclectic skills, talents, and expertise professionally locally and internationally.”

Under Kahina’s direction VICCC gathers cultural knowledge through extensive research and interviews of culture and tradition bearers. The VICCC intends to digitally archive cultural documents and publications in collaboration with the UVI library for easy access to all who are interested. A primary goal is to tap into the arts and “edutainment” aspects of the culture to allow people from varying walks of life and backgrounds to share experiences.

Here Kahina shares her observations about the Caribbean islands and about the importance of bringing diverse perspectives to the preservation story, engaging youth, and weaving together the stories of many cultures and traditions.

A family is like the forest, If you are outside it is dense, If you are inside you see that each tree has its own position.

African Proverb
Many communities grow stronger from within, and the U.S. Virgin Islands continues on a perpetual interdisciplinary quest for identity, culture, heritage, and accurate interpretation of her traditional legacy. As the above proverb implies, communities are composed of families, with individuals having respective positions that may appear “dense” from the outside. The American-owned Caribbean islands possess a forest-like community of natives, multicultural visitors, and transplant residents. Historic preservation and heritage restoration initiatives must delicately link to the diversity of descendants of African, indigenous, European, and other heritages.

Most preservation efforts in the Virgin Islands customarily highlight the narratives, folklore, customs, and traditions as interpreted by non-indigenous residents who depend on conventional research strategies, extrinsic databases, and case studies. These often overlook the oral colloquialisms that exist within the unique richness and intriguing heritage of the Virgin Islands and neighboring Caribbean.

**OUR STORIES, OUR NARRATIVES**

Sharing our stories, visions, and journeys in our own voice is imperative for an accurate accounting of the cultural heritage of the Virgin Islands. Sharing ancestral voices and experiences—especially from the island of St. Croix with a history of governance by several colonial and non-indigenous sovereign nations, including France, Spain, the Netherlands, Malta, Britain, Denmark, and America—requires weaving the preservation narratives with respect, integrity, and honor.

For more than 25 years, I have observed, witnessed, researched, experienced, and worked with an extremely diverse group of people, from naturalists to filmmakers, craftspersons to novelists, and linguists to historians, who share stories, narratives, and perspectives that often neglect to include the indigenous and ancestral voices of these regions. These multi-talented, community stakeholders have crafted, studied, and published a series of narratives, folklore, stories, and research documentations in an attempt to interpret the historic preservation and heritage restoration experiences of the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean. Going forward,
restoring respect for the diversity and multiculturalism among natives, residents, and visitors to the Virgin Islands is essential for increasing engagement, interaction, enrichment, and empowerment in the preservation movement.

We hope to do this through the Keeping VI & Caribbean Culture Alive! These “edutainment” and re-enactment productions share cultural narratives in a creative way that supports community-wide engagement long after the productions are over. The historical archives of the primarily European mercantilists and plutocracy of the 18th and 19th centuries fail to accurately interpret the experiences of non-Europeans during the economic shifts from feudalism to mercantilism and enslavement trade institutions to developing industrial imperialism. By revitalizing and updating traditional lectures and seminars, including the untold stories, with contemporary digital media technologies, we can assist in making these often boring historical accounts come alive in dramatic intergenerational presentations for a diversified range of community participants.

The institutionalized interpretations of the enslavement trade systems and capital punishment in the 18th to 20th centuries reflect the necessity of a more scientifically objective methodology and ideological paradigm shift.

I have noticed that by increasing the personal links, interactive attention, and accuracy of the content within historic narratives and experiences being preserved, contemporary institutions and campaigns for innovative historic cultural changes can increase the community’s interest in long-term legacy preservation.
Limited resources, educational institutional neglect marred by colonial romanticism, media-induced apathy among the general community, and minimal government support for compulsory inclusion of Virgin Islands and Caribbean legacy preservation efforts are common realities. Essentially, proactive and committed stewards of historic and cultural legacy are the catalysts for the resurgence of private- and public- sector partnerships, which have increasingly surfaced with new approaches for protecting, nurturing, researching, and delivering traditional histories, experiences, narratives, and folkloric stories to regain respect during this contemporary digital age.

Virgin Islands Heritage Education & Arts Literacy (VIHEAL) and related initiatives are used to provide complementary programs that offer new media technologies and diversified activities that incorporate historic preservation, cultural heritage resources, and “edutainment” for the Virgin Islands community. Other projects have established opportunities for community collaboration on the development of creative landscapes, environmentally-secure seascapes, and sacred historic preservation projects that add permanency for generations to come. The cooperative and collaborative efforts of non-governmental organizations, government agencies, private sector businesses, public service entities, and individuals have been facilitated via community workshops, interactive modeling of pilot projects associated with educational institutions, conferences, brain trusts, and related strategic planning initiatives throughout the Virgin Islands.

Transforming the vision of landscapes and cultural interpretation within preservation efforts in St. Croix and the Virgin Islands is innovatively linked to the complex cultural heritage and heterogeneous melting pot of Caribbean and global historical influences and experiences affecting this region. The 21st century preservation and
heritage restoration movements within Virgin Islands and Caribbean educational institutions require community involvement and vibrant diversity to be most effective.

Simultaneously, sustainable development, branding, and marketing of new media documentation and access for all people supporting Virgin Islands, Caribbean, and American legacy preservation institutions, campaigns, initiatives, and beyond are fostered to ensure the respectful sustenance of cultural resources, historic landscapes, and heritage traditions be respectfully strengthened and maintained.

**ENGAGING YOUTH**

Youth are the future we must prepare for now. Our youth are central to the training, technical capacity building, developmental skill bases, and overall holistic transformations of delivering our mother culture “Our Way.” To encourage a wider range of collaboration, cooperative agreement, and respect for the preservation movement in St. Croix and the Virgin Islands, we have used digital technology to videotape, audiotape, and photograph multiple programs and initiatives of community projects and programs from the early 1990s to present.

**Kwanzaa365** and **Sankofa Saturdays Youth Cultural Education Initiatives** represent community organizations that have partnered in this quest for improving the community’s involvement in the international historic preservation movement. In May 2013, in collaboration with Per Ankh Institute, Sankofa Saturdays, the Legislature of the Virgin Islands, and the Office of the Governor, I helped organize territorial observances and formal ceremonies commemorating Virgin Islands African Heritage Week and African Liberation Day. These heritage preservation projects strengthen
the intergenerational educational programs, heritage tourism resources, and accurate historical interpretations of the ancestral and contemporary experiences of the landscapes and cultural resources of the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean within the public, private, and parochial institutions in St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John, and Water Island and influencing our neighboring Carribean Islands.

**OUR VISIONS, OUR WAY BEING INSTITUTED FOR GENERATIONS TO COME**

I am exploring methods on how to strengthen and/or execute comprehensive cooperative agreements with diverse entities such as the Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of African American History and Culture, National Underground Railroad Network, International Association of Caribbean Archaeology, Barbados Landship Association, Danish West Indian Society, the U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Department of Commerce, among others.

The heritage restoration and historic preservation legacy work that I’m involved with embraces a holistic respect, understanding, and practical socio-cultural and sacred experience of indigenous, native, and spiritually-rooted ancestors of these lands, natural resources, and the human element along with their contributions to human development, history, cultural practices, traditions and our community’s extremely wealthy and prosperous legacy. We have conducted Bamboula (roundtable discussions) to assess and review the effectiveness of existing Virgin Island cultural history, heritage and education resources. Some 80 percent of program participants recommended more events, programs and school (K-12) initiatives to successfully involve all Virgin Islands /Caribbean Culture community stakeholders in preservation legacy work.

The intention is to strengthen the foundation of an innovative, expansive, interactive, and digital inventory of interdisciplinary cultural education resources that support existing international, national, and regional developing institutions in cooperation with the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI), the Virgin Islands Caribbean Cultural Center (VICCC), National Park Service-St. Croix, Virgin Islands public, private, and parochial schools, non-governmental,
civic, faith-based and community organizations to insure the promotion and sustainability of preservation legacy campaigns created for keeping VI culture alive for youth, elders, natives, residents, and visitors for generations.

I look forward to continuing my journey and preservation legacy quest for assisting, supporting, coordinating, sustaining, financing, and facilitating the fusion of culture, education, heritage arts, and sciences along with academic, vocational, and technological literacy for all participants and leaders working collaboratively with these projects and initiatives. FJ

VIDEO
Click here to hear a presentation by Dr. Chenzira Davis Kahina at the STX Maroon Commemorative Symposium, September 2012.
Transient Heritage

JEANNE M. LAMBIN

One of the oldest, continuously cultivated terraced landscapes in the world, Honghe Rice Terraces in Yunnan, China, is a sight that inspires awe. It is an exquisitely wrought world made by hand which has endured for 1200 years. In June it was inscribed on the World Heritage list as a cultural landscape, marking the culmination of a ten-year process aimed at tapping the tourist potential of the region. In the lightning fast world of China, more change has probably occurred in this area in the past five years than in the past forty. It is hard to imagine how this living landscape will survive for another century, much less millennia. The challenge is not unique to the site, the region, or even China. Although there is much discussion about the benefits and challenges with World Heritage designation, arguably, the real problem is not with listing, but the increasingly perilous, ever-changing world in which heritage must exist.

Change, as the saying goes, is inevitable. The pace of change however is variable. In 1970, Alvin Toffler’s book, *Future Shock*, was published and became a best seller. In it, Toffler lamented the “death of permanence,” describing change as “avalanching upon our heads and [that] most people are grotesquely unprepared to cope with it.” The result? Future Shock: “a time phenomenon, a product of the greatly accelerated rate of change in society.

Cultivated over the past 1,300 years, the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces in China, are one of the oldest continuously cultivated terraced landscapes in the world.

PHOTO: JEANNE LAMBIN
It arises from the superimposition of a new culture on an old one. It is culture shock in one’s own society.”

While some of the predictions were off base (we do not live in underwater cities—yet), much of it, especially when dealing with the break with the past, transient populations, and a throwaway society (even extending to the built environment), was spot on. Toffler wrote, “the shift toward transience is even manifest in architecture—precisely that part of the physical environment that in the past contributed mostly heavily to man’s sense of permanence... we raze landmarks. We tear down whole streets and cities and put new ones up at a mind-numbing rate.” Transience was to the 20th century, what fire was to the 19th. Important parts of our collective past were being crumpled up and thrown away. Globally there was an emerging interest in heritage conservation.

“ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM OF COLLECTIVE PROTECTION”

On November 16, 1972, “Noting that the cultural heritage and the natural heritage are increasingly threatened with destruction, not only by the traditional causes of decay, but also by changing social and economic conditions which aggravate the situation with even more formidable phenomenon of damage or destruction” and that the “deterioration or disappearance of any item of the cultural or natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world,” the United Nations National Scientific and Education Committee Organization (UNESCO) adopted the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. What came to be known as “the Convention” recognized that “parts of the cultural or natural heritage are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole.” To that end the Convention was ratified in 1975, the Committee established in 1976, and the first sites inscribed in 1978.

From that initial list of a dozen properties, the list has mushroomed to 981 properties with 190 States Parties (or signatories) adhering to the Convention. While there is much debate over its
effectiveness, if sheer numbers are a metric of “success,” then the Convention has been a great one. Over the years, as the list expanded and evolved, so too has the understanding of heritage, management policies, stewardship, and local participation. Oddly, it could be argued that the success of the Convention in terms of the number of listings is as much a testament to the perniciousness of the threats that led to its initial creation, as it is to the benefits of listing.

Last year marked the 40th anniversary of the Convention. With it came the expected examination of the successes, failures, and challenges of the program as well as increased attention to the threats such as climate change and natural and man-made disasters. If the Convention continues to expand at its current rate, by the 100th anniversary there could be more than 1,500 sites on the list. But in 2072 what will the world be like in which these sites exist? What forces will drive change and contribute to the 21st-century “Future Shock”? The threats to heritage are no longer discrete or easily managed. They are meshed and unpredictable. Part of the ability to cope with change comes from having some idea of the changes that will take place and an understanding of what forces might drive those changes. To examine all of the forces that might shape the future world is far beyond the scope of this article, but two that will possibly have profound effects are briefly addressed here.

**FORMIDABLE PHENOMENA OF DAMAGE OR DESTRUCTION: POPULATION GROWTH**

In the coming decades, one of the biggest drivers of change will be population growth. When the Convention was adopted, there were more than 3.8 billion people in the world. Today there are more than
7 billion. When the Convention celebrates its 100th anniversary, according to U.N. estimates, there could be 9.2 billion people in the world. This would be the equivalent of adding more than 2,000 cities with one million inhabitants in the next 60 years. Growth will not be distributed equally. Climate change, disaster, conflict, and other calamities will also affect migration of people and the growth and decline of regions. Asia will have an unusually dense population numbers. Africa, which currently has the lowest percentage of World Heritage sites, will experience the largest population growth. Africa’s share of the global population will almost double, whereas Europe’s will be cut in half. In some European countries, like Italy, which currently has the highest number of World Heritage sites; the decline in population will be even more dramatic.

Conversely, other areas will experience an influx of population. By the year 2030, the U.N. predicts that 60 percent of the world’s population will live in urban areas. To date there are more than 240 historic cities and urban sites in the world. Many cities are already struggling to adapt to an influx in population. In historic Cairo, the impact of urbanization has been devastating, both to the historic fabric and the inhabitants. A recent project, the Urban Regeneration Plan for Historic Cairo, attempts to preserve the historic assets of the city, but also improve the quality of life for its inhabitants. In a crowded, complicated city with profound quality-of-life issues that take precedence, it is a challenge.

The Convention asserted that the existence of international instruments concerning cultural and natural property demonstrated the importance “for all the peoples of the world, of safeguarding this unique and irreplaceable property, to whatever people it may belong.” While this may be true, with increasingly mobile populations that no longer have a direct link to the property, determining to whom heritage “belongs” and how invested the stakeholders may or may not be, will be a challenge. Twenty years from now, will the children of the farmers now tending the Honghe Rice Terraces want to do so? What will happen to the living landscape if most of those who once lived there leave? Will new residents of Zanzibar care about the stone monuments? How
invested can “whatever people” be, given the humanitarian crises that are likely to occur as a result of growth and migration, climate change, natural disaster, war, and rapidly shifting economic tides? Shifting populations will pose profound practical as well as philosophical challenges. The rise and fall of communities is a perennial challenge, as is assimilating “other heritage.” Both are reasons why there is a need to preserve heritage. Increased migration, whatever the cause, will arguably make it happen more quickly and with greater frequency. To some extent, changes in population, like disasters, can and should be planned for. Tools like the Hyogo Framework for Action, a 10-year plan endorsed by the U.N. to make the world safer from natural hazards, place great importance on the role of heritage preservation in steering sustainable development and cultivating the well-being of communities.

HERITAGE SITES IN A VIRTUAL WORLD?
The convention also called for “establishing an effective system of collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value, organized on a permanent basis and in accordance with modern scientific methods.” Modern scientific methods were rapidly evolving. The first jaw-dropping, full-frontal photographic view of the whole earth, “Blue Marble” was snapped by a member of the Apollo 17 in 1972.

At the time, the view of earth from space was a revelation. Today the earth is constantly scanned by satellites orbiting above us. Virtual tourists can now probe the remote corners of the earth. They can visit World Heritage sites using Google Street view and even visit the moon using images from the Apollo missions. In the near future, products like Google Glass, with translation assistance, overlay maps, soundscapes, and images will further transform the way we experience space and place. Docents and cyber re-enactors are
probably not far behind. Some 40 years after that first photograph of earth, there is a mind-boggling array of technology available.

Arguably one of the biggest challenges for heritage sites in the 21st century is that it will be possible for sites to exist in at least two worlds: the actual and the virtual. And in the actual world it is likely that there will be the world of the original and the world of the copy. While these copies will not likely be inscribed, they will still exist. Already, it is possible to make 3-D models or copies of sites and use 3-D printing to create components of sites.

This is not a new practice, it is just new technology. Plaster casts of classical sculpture and other works have been around since the 15th century. Many of the buildings in places like Colonial Williamsburg were “reproduced,” and China has been building copies of entire World Heritage sites. Tourists in China can visit the Austrian town of Hallstatt, the Tower of London, or even the White House, no visa required (for Chinese nationals).

This fall, CyArk, a nonprofit organization dedicated to digitally preserving cultural heritage sites through collecting, archiving, and providing open access to data created by laser scanning, digital modeling, and other state-of-the-art technologies, will launch the CyArk 500 Challenge: a campaign to digitally “preserve” 500 sites in five years. The accuracy and quality of the renderings is staggering. Yet, as impressive as this undertaking may be, the organization’s founder, Ben Kacyra, lamented in a recent TED Talk, “we are losing the sites and the stories faster than we can physically preserve them.” In the future, large-scale physical replication will likely be possible. Already, Loberough University, based in the UK is using 3-D scanning technology and 3-D printers to fabricate components of the Forbidden City in China.

With this comes a host of philosophical challenges as well as another danger. Some scholars have argued that virtual worlds cause us to disengage from real ones. How many original documents were disposed of once they were copied by the wonders of microfilm, and records replaced with CD’s and now MP3s. Digitization, enhanced modeling techniques, games, and virtual reality experiences mean that by the time the Convention turns 100, it is quite likely that a vast variety of simulacra will exist. As one blogger remarked,
“CyArk has the ability to conserve sites indefinitely which no other organization can do. Even sites that are well protected can ultimately be destroyed by nature or man.” Apparently the blogger overlooked the fact that digital files can also be destroyed by nature, man, or just a magnet. Digital files need to be properly stored, they require specific computer hardware to access, they can be corrupted and degraded in quality over time. The only thing definite is that the future of all heritage is indefinite. In reality, given the perilous state of the world, it is likely that at least some of these digital sites will exist only in bits, bytes, and memory.

Many argue that, in addition to being a tool for preservation, the copy can be a tool for education. Just as early photographs of Egypt inspired a new generation of travelers and scholars, will the increase in access through digitization, blogs, photosets, and whatever else may come along, result in increased interest and ultimately visitation? Will virtual tourists want to see the “real thing?” Could then this increased visitation put enough pressure on the actual site that access is limited and visitors are instead shuffled back to the simulacrum, a flickering display or a reconstruction in the back of the visitor’s center, like the filmstrips of yore? No doubt, this would require some changes to UNESCO’s Operational Guidelines and challenge notions of authenticity and integrity.

If sites are copied, who will own the rights? Can sites raise funds by selling copies? Will this lead to digital looting? Will techno-bandits sneak into sites in the dead of night to covertly copy it? And what about those without access to technology? There is still a great swath of the world without access to technology. Besides which, energy supplies (or lack thereof) might make quick work of our digital economy.

THE TRANSIENCE OF OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE
No doubt these changes will challenge the notions of outstanding universal value. The Convention has often (at least outside of the U.S.) been considered the standard bearer for the management and stewardship of cultural sites. Will that change over the ensuing decades? In 2072 will the Convention still exist? If so, will the List continue to expand (as is projected with the population) or as
population growth, climate change, and other forces trammel across the planet, will the number of actual sites decrease, while perhaps the number of virtual sites increases?

In *Future Shock*, Toffler writes, “in dealing with the future...it is more important to be imaginative and insightful than to be one hundred percent ‘right.’ Theories do not have to be ‘right’ to be enormously useful. Even error has its uses.” We don’t need to be exactly right about the future, but it is useful to think about it.

Sixty years from now (assuming life-expectancy estimates are accurate), in order to experience the night sky and once again see the Milky Way strung out across the Honghe Terraces, will I need to stand in a simulation? There, beneath the pixelated stars, I can contemplate the dwindling majesty of the universe while the virtual rice grows millimeter by millimeter beneath the dark sky.

I hope this is not the case. I don’t want to be “exactly right” about the future of this site. The future is speculative, it has not been written. By imagining what is possible, we can attempt to prepare for it, and hopefully we can even change it. Future Shock cannot be avoided entirely, but it can be made a little less shocking.

JEANNE LAMBIN, a former program officer for the National Trust, is now a writer, educator, and consultant based in Hong Kong. Prior to relocating, Lambin worked as an assistant professor at the University of Florida, Center for World Heritage Research and Stewardship.

References

While the paper focuses primarily on the future of cultural heritage in Europe, it provides a comprehensive overview of the drivers of change that the workshop participants felt will drive change in Europe.


A fascinating look at projected population growth and decline.

City of Lyon, World Heritage Center, Getty Conservation Institute, Council of Europe and ICOMOS, “Evolving Cities, Keys to Understand and Take Action: A compilation of case studies on the conservation and management of historic cities.