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The Preservation of Urban Heritage in Cambodia

Report and Conclusions of the
National Seminar held in Phnom Penh
16+17 January 2006



Municipality of Phnom Penh
UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh

Preface

This report documents the first national seminar on the preservation of urban heritage in the Kingdom of Cambodia, which was held on 16 and 17 January 2006 at City Hall, Phnom Penh.

While the initiative for the seminar came jointly from UNESCO and the Municipality of Phnom Penh, enthusiastic support and strong contributions were provided by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, The Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction and the Ministry of Tourism. The importance of the issues being discussed was reflected in the opening address graciously prepared by His Majesty the King, Norodom Sihamoni and through the participation of Deputy Prime Minister, His Excellency Sok An.

As growth and development continue to take place in Cambodia, issues of urban and architectural heritage are increasingly being acknowledged as priorities. It is fortunate in that, at the moment, its towns and cities still retain much of their historical style and character.

Cambodia has a rare opportunity to preserve its historical urban heritage through the establishment of national policies and legislation balanced with strategies for continued economic growth and social development. Economic development and cultural preservation are not competitors but can support and strengthen each other in a vibrant and modern society.

The conclusions of the seminar (see Annex 1) were developed and agreed by the participants of the seminar through a process of working groups and discussion. I hope that UNESCO and its partners can find the opportunity to promote further debate leading to tangible outcomes for urban heritage in Cambodia.



Teruo JINNAI

UNESCO Representative in Cambodia

Acronyms

APSARA	Authority for the Protection of the Site and the Management of the Region of Angkor/Siem Reap
CKS	Centre for Khmer Studies
CNC	Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO
DED	Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst
MCFA	Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts
MLMUPC	Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction
MOT	Ministry of Tourism
MPP	Municipality of Phnom Penh
RUFA	Royal University of Fine Arts (Phnom Penh)
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation
URA	Urban Redevelopment Authority (Singapore)

Acknowledgments

The seminar was organised by the UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh and the Municipality of Phnom Penh, in collaboration with the Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts.

UNESCO gratefully acknowledges the collaboration of the other organising partners, as well as the commitment of all the participants and contributors.

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Opening ceremony

H.E. KEP Chuk Tema
Governor of Phnom Penh

Welcome address

Your Royal Highness Princess Norodom Marie Ranariddh, High Representative of His Majesty Norodom Sihamoni, King of Cambodia; Mr Teruo Jinnai, Representative of UNESCO in Cambodia; Your Highness; Excellencies Messrs. Secretaries of State; Excellencies Messrs. Ambassadors, Representatives of Foreign Embassies in Cambodia; Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished national and international guests, dear members.

Personally and in the name of Phnom Penh Municipality, I am honoured and extremely happy to welcome Her Royal Highness Princess Norodom Marie Ranariddh, High Representative of His Majesty Norodom Sihamoni, King of Cambodia, who has accepted to preside over this Seminar.



On this auspicious occasion, I am also glad and highly honoured to have been requested by the participants to contribute to the opening ceremony of this National Seminar on Urban Heritage.

It is the right time and the right place to organise this seminar, because Cambodia possesses an important heritage that has been preserved by our ancestors for generations. Besides, Phnom Penh, which is one of the oldest capital cities of Asia, has been continuously developed since the XVIth century and has been known as the “precious stone” of Southeast Asia. The city of Phnom Penh, which developed progressively thanks to the aesthetic achievements of numerous brilliant Khmer architects, also benefited from western influences during the French colonial era. Thanks to its variety of fine architecture, our capital city has a diverse range of urban and aesthetic heritage.

Most Respected Royal Highness, Highness, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear national and foreign guests; the whole of this heritage does not only contribute to the diversity, architectural elegance and the organisation of the city, but it also constitutes a historical testimony reflecting its long history as well as the sacrifices and the price paid by our ancestors. Unfortunately, Phnom Penh was abandoned for almost four years from 1975 to 1979 during the Democratic Kampuchea regime, when it became a ghost city, leading to

further deterioration of its infrastructure and buildings which had already been wrecked by war. After 1979, the repair and reconstruction of Phnom Penh became a huge responsibility for the Government. At that time, just finding shelter and food, or obtaining water and electricity were difficult in themselves, before being able to think about preserving urban heritage.

Today, under the direction of the Royal Government of Cambodia lead by Samdech Hun Sen, we have risen again to a point we would not have dreamed about 27 years ago. We have grown to master a great extent of Phnom Penh’s restoration and development until recently when we received a first world prize at the Forum on leadership and development in London. At the same time, we have elaborated a development strategy to manage the city’s growth until year 2020. Thanks to this strategy we are able to properly address the Royal Government’s political goal of reducing poverty.

Nowadays, the city of Phnom Penh must face another challenge which is the balance between the preservation of historic architecture and modern ideas for future development, so that it can be a modern city which preserves both its heritage and its national identity, while providing infrastructure, suitable transportation systems, standard-abiding buildings and a developing periphery.

Most Respected Royal Highness, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, in the name of the Municipality of Phnom Penh, I wish to thank and to extend my congratulations to UNESCO, especially Mr Teruo Jinnai, who organised this important national seminar. I do hope that through this event, new ideas for protecting urban heritage will emerge which, together with the Royal Government’s tourism policy, be effective in addressing poverty reduction objectives, as well as contributing to the transformation of Phnom Penh so that it can again become the “precious stone” of Southeast Asia.

On the auspicious occasion of the New Year 2006, I wish to thank again Her Royal Highness and to extend my best wishes to Her. I hope that this national seminar will be a great success.

Unofficial translation

Opening ceremony

**His Majesty Samdech Preah Boromneath
NORODOM Sihamoni, King of Cambodia**

delivered by
H.R.H. Princess NORODOM Marie Ranariddh

Royal message

Excellencies, Ladies, Gentlemen and my fellow foreign friends, I am very pleased to participate in this important National Seminar on The Preservation of Urban Heritage in the Kingdom of Cambodia.



Phnom Penh and other cities and provinces in the Kingdom of Cambodia have grown and developed through a number of historical periods. Social infrastructure projects have been creatively designed and built by professional architects in various cultural styles, as is still apparent.

His Majesty Preah Bat Norodom Sihanouk, King-Father, Father of Peace, Independence, Territory, Integrity and National Unity has, in the service of Cambodian society, accomplished many significant achievements. In the Sangkum Reastr Niyum (Popular Socialist Community), the King-Father's aim was to transform cities into splendid places - Phnom Penh became considered as the "pearl of South East Asia." With modern and innovative architectural ideas linked with Angkorian tradition, new architectural projects were constructed to meet new requirements and living standards. These works now contribute to the unique urban heritage of Cambodia. Unfortunately, many of these achievements were damaged in the war during the 1970s. Currently, some old and frail structures, challenging the influence of modern and scientific views, might soon collapse and disappear.

I welcome this seminar, which brings into focus the key measures needed to preserve the urban heritage of Cambodia, something which is valuable to us all. I greatly appreciate the efforts of the Royal Government of Cambodia, authorities at all levels, monks, and all Cambodian people who have renovated and built social infrastructure projects to gradually better cities and towns for the benefit of society. I am most grateful to the Municipality for initiating this

seminar and I warmly thank UNESCO for their assistance and support in preserving the cultural heritage which are our Khmer ancestors have left to us throughout the country.

Cities and towns should provide comfortable and efficient places for living and working, where social and economic growth and development can freely take place. Cities are also the focus of culture and civilisation, their character and spirit reflecting people and society. For reasons of national pride as well as cultural, social and economical development, our towns and cities must be clean and green for the benefit of those who live in them.

Historic neighborhoods and buildings have value as tangible evidence of the diversity of cultural, religious and social activities which took place and are a part of national identity. From wooden houses and urban blocks to richly decorated Buddhist monasteries and old or modern public places - all form part of urban heritage. We must welcome the diversity of styles and preserve the best examples which give our towns and royal capital city their character.

As part of this vision, my wish is that this seminar will contribute to the making of towns and cities in the Kingdom of Cambodia more beautiful; and I hope that all the participants will be inspired with good ideas which they can put into practice, to preserve both private and public architectural heritage in the cities.

I encourage all of you to start implementing this process so that future generations will be able to live in beautiful and comfortable cities, surrounded by the evidence of their culture and history.

Finally, I extend my deepest respects and best wishes to Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Norodom Sihamoni
14 January 2006

Unofficial translation

Opening ceremony

Mr Teruo JINNAI
UNESCO Representative in Cambodia

Opening address

My respects to Your Royal Highness, Your Excellency the Governor of Phnom Penh, Excellencies, Honorable Experts, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is indeed a pleasure and great honour for me to deliver this opening address on behalf of Mr Koichiro Matsuura, the Director General of UNESCO. Personally, the pleasure of hosting this very important seminar at the City Hall of Phnom Penh together with His Excellency Mr Kep Chuk Tema, Governor of Phnom Penh, is extremely meaningful since my work in Cambodia began at this City Hall nine years and eight months ago, as a technical adviser to the Municipality of Phnom Penh.



Please allow me to remind you, respected audience, of the meaning of the letter C of the acronym UNESCO. The C is for Culture. In the domain, until around the year 2000, UNESCO concentrated on the protection of rich Cambodian tangible heritage. However, since then we have been strongly promoting the cultural diversity with special emphasis on intangible culture as well, the domain in which UNESCO's cultural action demonstrates pertinence, recognised expertise, comparative advantage and visibility.

More precisely, within UNESCO's core functions of advocacy, capacity-building and standard-setting, it is standard-setting which is essential to enable Member-States to better protect all forms of culture. UNESCO facilitates the setting of legal instruments in the form of declarations, recommendations and conventions, which may then be adopted by Member-States.

Following the spirit of the above mentioned standard-setting mandate of UNESCO in the field of Culture, our Office in Phnom Penh together with the Cambodian National Commission of for UNESCO proposed to the Municipality of Phnom Penh that a National Seminar on the Preservation of Urban Heritage in Cambodia should be organised. Urban heritage is an important and integral part of Cambodia's rich heritage. I would like to take this opportunity to once again express my deep gratitude to HE Kep Chuk Tema and his team for accepting enthusiastically this proposal.

The objective of the seminar is to provide a national setting for the discussion of many aspects related to urban heritage and the safeguarding of historic areas while taking into account the changes necessitated by social and economic development. UNESCO's aim was to link this discussion with the related legal instruments of UNESCO, in particular with the following UNESCO recommendations concerning:

1. *"The Preservation of Cultural Property Endangered by Public and Private Works."*
2. *"The Safeguarding and the Contemporary Role of Historic Areas"*.

Both of those recommendations have been adopted by all Member-States.

UNESCO Recommendations are texts addressed to one or more States and are intended to invite them to adopt a particular approach or to act in a given manner in a specific cultural sphere. In principle, Recommendations are not binding on Member-States. My colleague, Mrs Tey Sambo, will introduce in a few minutes these Recommendations mentioned above.

We hope that after two days of plenary presentations, case studies and working group discussions, we will together be better able to understand the challenge of development in light of the benefits which come from the protection of urban heritage. I wish you all a very fruitful and interesting seminar.

Recommendations of UNESCO General Conference

Mrs TEY Sambo
UNESCO Phnom Penh

The presentation reviewed two UNESCO Recommendations, adopted by the General Conference 1968 and 1976.¹ The following are outline notes summarising the main themes.

1 Recommendation concerning the Preservation of Cultural Property Endangered by Public and Private Works

Adopted by the General Conference at its 15th Session, Paris, November 1968.

Contemporary civilisation and its future evolution rest upon, among other elements, the cultural tradition of the population of the world.

It is indispensable to preserve it as much as possible, according to its historical and artistic importance.

It is the duty of the government to ensure the protection and preservation of the cultural heritage of mankind, as much as to promote social and economic development.

I. Definitions

'Cultural property' applies to:

- Immovables, such as archaeological and historic or scientific sites, structures or other features of historic, scientific, artistic, or architectural value including historic districts in urban areas.
- Movable property of cultural importance.

The term 'cultural property' includes both:

- Established and scheduled architectural, archaeological, and historic sites and structures, and
- Unscheduled or unclassified vestiges of the past, artistically or historically important recent site and structures.

II. General principles

- Measures to preserve cultural property should extend to the whole territory of the state and should not be confined to certain monuments and sites.
- Protective inventories of important cultural property, scheduled or unscheduled, should be maintained.
- Where such inventories do not exist, priority should be given in their establishment to the thorough survey of cultural property in areas where such property is endangered by public or private works.

¹ Available from UNESCO's website. To find, search for the title of the document using a reputable search engine.

Due account should be taken when determining measures required for preservation of the entire site, and salvage or rescue of cultural property if the area is to be transformed by public or private work.

III. Preservation and salvage measures

Precise measures are to be determined by the legislation or organised system of the State.

Legislation: Member-States should enact or maintain on the national and local level, the legislative measures necessary to ensure the preservation or salvage of the cultural property endangered by public or private work.



Colonial buildings

Finance: Member-States should ensure that adequate budgets are available for the preservation or salvage of the cultural property endangered by public or private work; and should encourage proprietors of artistically or historically important structures to preserve their character and aesthetic qualities.

Administrative measures: Responsibility for the preservation or salvage of cultural property endangered by public or private works should be entrusted to appropriate official bodies. There should be a coordinating consultative body, composed of representatives of the authorities responsible for the safeguarding of cultural property, for public and private work, for town planning and of research and institutional institutions. The service responsible for the safeguarding of cultural property should be adequately staffed with specialists required for the preservation or salvage of the cultural property endangered by public or private work.

Administrative measures should be taken:

- to coordinate the work of different services responsible for the safeguarding of cultural property with that of other services responsible for public and private works etc.
- to establish an authority or commission, in charge of urban development programmes in all communities having scheduled or unscheduled historic quarter, sites, and monuments which need to be preserved against public/private construction.

Historic quarters in urban or rural centres should be zoned and appropriate regulations adopted to preserve their setting and character.



Modern buildings

Penalties: Member-States should take steps to ensure that offences, through intention or negligence are severely punished by their penal code, fine or imprisonment or both, including restoration of the site or structure at the expense of those responsible for the damage.

Repairs: Member-States should also foresee the possibility of requiring local authorities and private owners of important cultural property to carry out repair or restoration, with technical and financial assistance.

Awards: Member-States should encourage individuals, associations, and municipalities to take part in programmes for the preservation and salvage of cultural property endangered by public or private work, through award of certificates and ex-gratia payments.

Advice: Member-States should provide individuals, associations and municipalities with the required experience.

Educational programmes: Member-States should stimulate interest through:

- specialised publications, articles in the press and radio.
- programmes of educational institutions, historical and cultural associations, public bodies.
- exhibitions at museums and educational institutions.

2 Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding and the Contemporary Role of Historic Areas

Adopted by the General Conference at its 19th Session, Nairobi, 26 November 1976

Historic areas are part of the daily environment of human beings everywhere, that they represent the living presence of the past, that they provide variety in life's background.

The safeguarding of historic areas, and their integration into the life of contemporary society is a basic factor in town planning and land development.

I. Definitions:

a) 'Historic and architectural area': any groups of buildings, structures and open spaces... constituting human settlement in an urban or rural environment, the cohesion and value of which, from the archaeological, architectural, prehistoric, historic, aesthetic or socio-cultural point of view are recognized

b) The 'environment' shall be taken to mean the nature or man made setting which influences the static or dynamic way these areas are perceived, or which is directly linked to them in space or by social, economic or cultural ties.

c) Safeguarding shall be taken to mean identification, protection, conservation, restoration, renovation and revitalisation

II. General principles

Historic areas and their surroundings

- should be regarded as forming an irreplaceable universal heritage. The government and the citizens of the state in whose territory they are situated should deem it their duty to safeguard this heritage, and integrate it in to the social life of our times.
- should be actively protected against damage of all kinds, particularly that resulting from unsuitable use or unnecessary addition that will impair their authenticity.

Attention should be paid to urbanisation, where there is a danger that newly developed areas can ruin the environment of an adjoining historic area.

The preservation of historic areas and their surroundings can make an outstanding contribution to maintaining and developing social and cultural value of each nation, and can contribute to the architectural enrichment of the cultural heritage of the world.

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III. National, regional, and local policy

In each Member-State, the national, regional, local policy

- should be in conformity with the condition of each state as regards with the allocation of powers.
- should influence planning at national, regional, and local level.
- should provide guidelines for town planning, and regional and rural development planning at all levels.

IV. Safeguarding measures

Legal and administrative measures:

- The application of an overall safeguarding policy should be based on principles which are valid for the whole of each country.
- Laws concerning town and regional planning should be reviewed to bring them into line with the law concerning the safeguarding of the architectural heritage.

Establishment of a system for the safeguarding of historic areas should include a safeguarding plan and documents concerning:

- General condition and restrictions for the protected areas.
- A statement on the programme and operation to be planned for the conservation and provision of public services.
- Designation of a body responsible for authorisation of the restoration work, modification, new construction or demolition within the protected perimeter.
- Means to finance the safeguarding programme and work to be carried out.



National Library

The law should be designed in principle to prevent any infringement of the preservation law, and speculative rise in value within the protected areas, and involve town planning measures:

The operation of the safeguarding machinery:

- There should be an authority responsible for the coordination of all those concerned.
- The safeguarding plan and documents should be drawn up once the necessary advanced scientific studies have been carried out by a multi-disciplinary team.
- The authorities should take the lead in sounding the opinion and recognized the participation of the public concerned.
- The safeguarding plans and documents should be approved by the body designated by law.
- The responsible authorities should be provided with the necessary staff and given adequate technical, administrative, and financial resources.

Technical, economic, and social measures:

- Lists of historic areas and their surroundings to be protected should be protected at national, regional or local level.
- A survey of the area as a whole including the analysis of its spatial evolution should be made.
- An analytical document should be drawn up to determine which buildings or groups of buildings to be protected with great care, which buildings or groups of buildings are to be or conserved under certain conditions, and which buildings, in quite exceptional thoroughly documented circumstances, to be destroyed.
- Thorough survey of social, economic cultural and technical data, and the structure of the wider urban or regional context, are necessary. Protection and restoration should be accompanied by revitalisation activities.
- A cultural revitalisation policy should make the historic areas as centers of cultural activities, to give them central role to play.
- Availability of necessary funds for the level of public investment should be insured in the budget of the central, regional, and local authorities.
- Should encourage the setting up of public and/or private financing agencies for the safeguarding of historic areas and their surroundings.
- Special funds should be set aside in the budget of public and private bodies for:
 - large scale public work and pollution.
 - repair of damage caused by natural disaster.

V. Research, education and information

Member-States should encourage the systematic study and research on:

- Town planning of historical areas and their environment.
- Inter-connections between town planning at all levels.
- Methods of conservation for historic areas.
- Alternative materials that can be used.
- Modern techniques that could be applied in conservation work.
- Craft techniques which need to be safeguarded.

Awareness of the importance of safeguarding historic areas and their surroundings should be encouraged by education through schools, universities and out of school activities.

VI. International Cooperation

Member-States can seek aid from international organisations (in particular UNESCO, ICOM, ICOMOS) under the following forms:

- exchanges of information of all forms.
- organisation of seminars and working parties.
- study tour fellowships.
- joint action to combat pollution of all kinds.
- implementation of large scale conservation, restoration, and rehabilitation projects.
- mutual assistance.

Session 1.2

The role of towns and cities in cultural continuity

Mr LY Daravuth

Director of the Reyum Institute, Phnom Penh

Presentation on the role that urban places play in the continuity of culture through memory.

Summary

My presentation is drawn from a paper I presented a few years ago in an academic international conference on the topic of "Urban Culture and Memory".

Given the context of today's seminar, I thought it would be more appropriate if, instead of giving a lengthy paper, I would rather look at some examples of local names of places and buildings such as streets, markets, cinemas and hospitals which are persistently remembered and referred to by the "common".



These references constitute what I call here "landmarks of memories". This collective memory constitutes a repository of a local urban history.

I have chosen a few example of these landmarks ranging from institutional (listed) buildings or places such as Angkor, the Royal palace or national monuments, to very popular places such as cinemas, streets names and market places.

Through these examples I wish to point out a few ideas which I hope will contribute to the thinking on heritage which is the topic we are talking about today:

- 1 Change and continuity: change (and development) is often seen in opposition to preservation and heritage. I would argue that, on the contrary, change is normal and is part of everything, not a contradiction but essential to development.
- 2 It is important to broaden the understanding of heritage: not only focus on obvious symbols of heritage but also places, people and memory.
- 3 And finally I would like to stress the importance of memories (as they are embedded in collective memory or a physical building) in the continuity of any society. They are an asset and not a setback!



Session 2.1

Policies on urban heritage in Cambodia

H.H. Prince SISOWATH Kulachad
Secretary of State, Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts

Cambodia's largest and most prestigious legacy is certainly the Angkor heritage made up of monuments built between the 9th and 12th centuries.

This significant national treasure has been recognised to be of international value, as indicated by its inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List. For over a century now it has been the focus of sustained interest, in-depth studies and major development operations in which the *École française d'Extrême-Orient* occupies a historic place.

I Angkorian heritage

The principal temples of Angkor are now out of danger thanks to the joint efforts of the Royal Government of Cambodia, UNESCO and the international community.

Other major sites such as the temples of Banteay Chhमार, Preah Khan of Kompong Svay, Koh Ker or even Phnom Chisor are still under threat or in a worrisome condition because of their remoteness or because there is no way to put them under surveillance or do maintenance or restoration work on them.

Then there are the innumerable less spectacular sites that are dispersed throughout the realm of Kingdom. The inventory of these sites has just been completed after 10 years of research by a Ministry of Culture team placed under the scientific authority of the EFEO and funded through French cooperation. However, they are now left unattended.

The situation is no doubt of even greater concern outside of the Angkor region. Indeed, our knowledge of the current state of Khmer architectural heritage is limited basically to the domain of Angkor, and this is certainly not good enough.

Additionally, Cambodia has a major heritage linked to its more recent history.

II Non-Angkorian heritage:

We would like to provide an update today on:

a. The state of knowledge:

Outside of the region of Angkor, as we stated, knowledge of the current condition of Cambodia's architectural heritage is limited:

- Only one-off studies have been made on this subject or that style.

- We do not have an exhaustive inventory such as the one made by the EFEO for the world of Angkor.
- Neither do we have an inventory of their recent condition.
- The only studies on urban heritage center on Phnom Penh and Siem Reap; there is virtually no exhaustive study of vernacular architecture.
- This situation is such that no comparative overview is possible, which of course limits what can be done.

b. What this means:

With no available knowledge of the non-Angkorian heritage:

- Civil monuments that characterise recent periods of Cambodia's history are being demolished or modified in whole or in part;
- Temples and community halls in Buddhist monasteries throughout the country are being demolished or carelessly restored;
- Artifacts from the Buddhist heritage (wooden sculptures, bay window shutters, etc.) are being lost or stolen at an increasing rate.

Urban heritage:

Cambodia has inherited a major body of architecture from the colonial period, one of great variety, the styles of which illustrate a recent phase of the country's history.



Battambang

This architecture has only been superficially studied, with the exception of that in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap.

continues...

Greatly neglected and basically unknown, this heritage is often left unattended, destroyed or improperly restored.

Entire mansions are being demolished; harmonious building groups are being disfigured by the adjunct of modern characterless constructions.

Even more serious is the situation of architecture dating from the Sangkum period. Mostly under the influence of HE Vann Molyvann, this period was marked by the development of an original architecture, unique in Southeast Asia, one that combines modernism and tradition in an innovative architectural style.

This outstanding period that the Kingdom was fortunate enough to experience throughout the 1960s can be considered as a “school” of its own right due to its developments; its productions therefore constitute major features of Cambodia’s architectural heritage.

Buddhist religious architecture:

Buddhism is the dominant religion of Cambodia. It brings together both village and urban communities in a sacred, multi-purpose location—the pagoda.

The pagoda is therefore a structuring element in both the urban and village landscape. These various elements, whether being furnishings or the architecture itself, are therefore a special object of attention.



Wat Bo, Siem Reap

This heritage is sometimes very old and highly regarded because of its religious value, but it is given little recognition for its heritage value. If temples, their communal halls and monks’ quarters come to be viewed as too old, they are simply destroyed.

III Current “heritage” trends:

An analysis of current trends indicates that the cost of the restorations is not the major issue. Indeed, many temples of pagodas have been rebuilt at great cost with donations from the devotees, after the older buildings considered to be dilapidated beyond repair have simply been destroyed.

Similarly, considerable means are deployed sometimes to give an “easy-over facelift” to some urban buildings in a manner viewed as being more suitable to current “tastes” that are supposed to give a modern look to the building.

Often, the financial argument covers up the existence of major socio-cultural obstacles: people are unfamiliar with the notion of heritage and therefore the idea of conservation or restoration is not factored into the decision-making process.

A religious building viewed as unfit for repair is viewed as unfit for its function, hence not worthy of being conserved. In other words, the purpose the object is intended to fill, its religious function, is considered to be more important than the object itself.

The trend highlighted in this presentation is being accompanied by the loss of traditional know-how: People know how to demolish a building and reconstruct it using modern technology and materials (concrete, tiling, sheet metal, steel), but they have forgotten how to restore ancient buildings.

Thus, the traditional and colonial architectural heritage, the productions of the school of the 1960s or even religious complexes, are condemned to disappear sooner or later due to the indifference felt towards them. Phnom Penh, Kampot, Kompong Cham, Battambang — to mention only a few cities — are now losing part of these treasures.

Nevertheless, efforts are being put forth here and there. It is necessary to direct these efforts, encourage and supervise them, in order to make Cambodia aware of this priceless resource—its architectural heritage—an integral part of its identity and culture.

Unofficial translation

Session 2.2

Heritage preservation strategies in Phnom Penh

Mr IENG Aunny

Director of the Bureau of Urban Affairs
Municipality of Phnom Penh

Our main goal is to make Phnom Penh a livable city, a meeting point of competitive business, tourism and talents, with diverse culture heritage and a healthy environment, where every citizen can share its qualities.

Many cities in South East Asia are rich in historic heritage; their architectural monuments and urban heritage constitute an important potential for tourist development.

However, the main challenges for Phnom Penh are its rapid population growth and simultaneous development. The balance of investment interest and the concept of sustainable development (globalisation) have caused the idea of historical preservation, as well as the preservation of national character, to be almost ignored. So, the Municipality of Phnom Penh has now made efforts to address these in the setting up its Master Plan 2020.



Phnom Penh, historic quarter

One of the main strategic policies in Master Plan is the preservation of historical monuments and tourist development; the city center of Phnom Penh possesses an historical urban quality different to any other metropolis in the region.

Thus, some objectives are to:

- Preserve architectural and historical monuments in order to develop tourism.
- Define regulations which combine the protection of urban heritage with current contemporary city development.
- Develop policies on financing the rehabilitation of historical buildings in the old city center (Khan Daun Penh), such as the rehabilitation project of Central Market, Phsar Tmei, (including preparing documentation for application to the world historic building list), and also the rehabilitation project planned for the Tourist Department of Phnom Penh.

This policy will link closely with green-space planning; we need to keep and continue our tradition of the 'garden-city'. Thus, this will well preserve our city environment.

Somehow, the Municipality of Phnom Penh needs to develop more regulations, policies, and law reinforcement in order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives.

Session 3

Conservation and development in secondary towns

Dr BENG Khemro

Deputy General Director, General Department of Land Management and Urban Planning, Ministry of Land Management Urban Planning and Construction

Cambodia is one of the few countries in the world that has a primary asset: hundreds of temples at Angkor Wat. People travel to Cambodia because they want to see Angkor (just as people go to Egypt to see the Pyramids). Cambodia also has a wealth of secondary cultural and heritage assets, i.e. those things that people will do (e.g. watch performing arts, wander through the city heritage areas), or places they will go (e.g. Phnom Chisor, Tonle Bati) when they are visiting Cambodia. Secondary resources are normally not as well known or publicised, especially in the case of Cambodia, but are becoming increasingly popular. Many tourists are becoming less impressed with visiting sites promoted for mass tourism (the experience becomes less personal and meaningful, e.g., Phnom Bakheng, Siem Riep, Angkor at sunset). This may actually deter tourism in these places.



Development of more secondary assets will help alleviate problems of exceeding tourist carrying capacity at places like Phnom Bakheng, Siem Riep Angkor as well as provide development opportunities elsewhere to those who need it. This is very true for urban tourism promotion; if heritage and cultural resources such as historical buildings and sites are well preserved, they will attract tourists to stay longer in the towns. When tourists stay longer, income generated from visitors will also increase accordingly, thus contributing more to the economy and learning more about the diversity within the country. Environmental and cultural resource stewardship is paramount to long-term success. Landscape, environment, culture and heritage vis-à-vis tourism go hand in hand.

There are several problems, however, such as weak law enforcement. There are many decent laws, but the enforcement of the laws and ability to educate the general public (locals and tourists) are still major problems throughout

Cambodia. Urban planning has not been able to seriously take into consideration the importance of the urban heritage issue. In order to cope with this issue, good practical planning and local community involvement and education are in desperate need. Moreover, investors and planners often want to maximise monetary returns, not the sustainability of the resource. Yet, public education and awareness on urban heritage have not been active for many reasons including a serious lack of trained people, funds and facilities to educate various communities, and train guides. To be effective, education should not only be focused on the public and rural poor; decision-makers and developers need to be educated as well.

Understanding all of the above problems, the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction has strived to introduce and instruct all of its departments in the concept of urban development planning which includes conservation of cultural and heritage resources as part of the planning process. Since its establishment in 1998, a number of Laws, Sub-Decrees, regulations and Prakas (Declarations) have been drafted and enacted for this purpose. In its recent effort to use these heritage and cultural resources, especially in urban areas throughout the country and particularly in Battambang town, the draft Sub-Decree on "Conservation of Historical and Cultural Buildings and Sites of the Kingdom of Cambodia" and the draft Joint Declaration between my Ministry and the Ministry of Interior on the same topic applied to Battambang town, were prepared.

If these laws and regulations are enacted and enforced, the remaining heritage resources - especially those in urban areas which are under great pressure from development - should be safeguarded. It is our strong belief that conservation and development could and should go hand in hand for the economic growth that will contribute to the government's prime effort of Poverty Reduction for All.

Session 4.1

Heritage conservation planning: the role of urban design guidelines and incentives

Ms Montira UNAKUL
UNESCO Bangkok

Summary

Much valuable work has already begun in Cambodia in urban heritage planning. Cultural heritage provides a link between the present and the past, as well as being a foundation for the future.

Recently, thinking about heritage, which used to be mainly about monuments and large historic structures, has moved towards emphasising historic places where people live, work and study, that is to say the urban fabric – this can have real meaning and significance for local communities and societies. And it requires a different, more participatory management approach. An example is Hoi An in Vietnam, where through ongoing consultation, what the people considered is important is included in the heritage management plan.



The role of public sector and private sectors can and should be balanced, where the public sector focuses on legislation/planning, compliance and capital/resources; the private sector can provide time and funds.

One recent useful publication on the topic of heritage conservation planning is “StreetWise Asia” written by Elizabeth Vines and published in collaboration with UNESCO. The author asks particular questions:

- The first question to ask ourselves is “why urban heritage?” It should not be seen simply as a cost, but rather as an asset, both psychological and economic.
- Secondly, what should be considered urban heritage? Mapping and inventories are necessary first; however the views and ideas of the people who live and work in an area can be useful in finding what is thought of as important, as well as encouraging people to support the process. The

Danish Government supported a project in Thailand to carry out community heritage mapping.

- Thirdly, how do we plan to safeguard and develop a conservation district in a balanced way? Boundaries have to be drawn, and guidelines agreed for the control of both development and demolition. These should also cover suitable re-uses of old buildings, as well as control of street-scapes. Issues of funding, tourism management and education should be considered.
- Fourthly, individual buildings need to be considered. Why is it important? What is special about it?
- Fifthly, all this needs to be conducted within the framework of a strong legislation. The draft sub-decrees and joint declarations we have heard about earlier in this seminar are an important step in this process. Legal structures need to be established at all scales, from broad policy scale down to detailed planning documents.

Adding new buildings to historic areas should not be done in a way which makes the new buildings look identical to the old. In cities, heights and densities will change over time, to meet changing demands. New buildings should fit in and reflect the character of the area but not imitate and thereby create a “Disneyland”.

Heritage planning requires financial commitment from the government, but the private sector can also be encouraged to contribute; small improvements to the condition of historic buildings by owners have been seen to be effective in raising the profile of an area, making the buildings more valuable in the longer term.

Two case-studies, both from the lists of the UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Awards, illustrate some of the points made above:

continued...

Mumbai, India, Dadabhai Naoroji Road
(2004 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Award of Merit).



Mumbai

This grand Victorian street was heavily cluttered by larger and larger signs which obscured the buildings. A local heritage trust commissioned the development of urban conservation guidelines, the first in India.

Based on research and consultation, they developed rules which the local owners voluntarily agreed to comply with, paying themselves for new signs. The street has again become a unique landmark and the local owners have set up their own heritage association, without the municipality being involved either in funding or legislation of the project.

China, Shaoxing City, Zhejiang Province
(2003 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Award of Merit).



Shaoxing City, China

This 2,500-year old district in Shaoxing City is characterised by 19th and 20th century traditional waterways and streetscape, surrounded by Chinese vernacular architecture. With the involvement of the government, the refurbishment of the district was carried out in only 5 months.

The joint objectives were to improve the quality of life of the people and to preserve the heritage of the city. 45% of the cost of the building renovations and sewerage renewal was paid for the residents and a local housing office, the remainder by the City government, who also paid for the temporary relocation of the residents. The residents now are able to stay where they wanted to, and the area has become a place for tourists to visit.

Session 4.2

Integrating heritage development and policy

Mr Augusto VILLALÓN

Architect, Cultural Heritage Planner
Chair ICOMOS Philippine Committee

Awareness and cooperation are most important considerations when initiating legal framework that successfully integrates architectural heritage with urban development. All sectors, public and private, must be aware of the architectural heritage of the city and their joint responsibility to conserve it. Both sectors must be aware of the uniqueness and significance of the heritage, of the benefits conservation will bring to the people and to their city, and most of all, both sectors must have the same, clear picture of how the integration of the new with the old will be achieved.

Cooperation comes hand in hand with awareness. Conservation of heritage and national development are primarily for the benefit of the people, to improve the quality of their life, an effort that requires joint participation from public and private sectors. It does not really matter whether government or stakeholders initiate the development program. What matters is that the stakeholders are involved in the program to the point of assuming 'ownership' of the program, thus assuring their participation leading to the success of the program. In many regional examples, government-initiated programs implemented without stakeholder participation have largely been failures.



For an overview of heritage, we should look at its total scope – tangible and intangible manifestations that express a certain culture. Tangible expressions are architecture, townscapes, cityscapes, painting, sculpture, and traditional craft. Intangible expressions are music, dance, literature, cuisine and much more. After considering the total range of the tangible and intangible, we see that cultural heritage defines the unique qualities of a people that sets them apart from other nations existing in today's globalised world.

The architecture and urban-scapes that we are focused on conserving are simply one part of the entire cultural heritage picture. These are simply the covered and open spaces where cultural activities take place. Architecture does not exist in a vacuum. It is part of human life.

Therefore we should ideally plan on conserving architectural heritage while including the other tangible and intangible aspects that take place within the architectural envelope. We are conserving the total heritage picture, which is the collection of images that define a people.

What would Cambodia be without its international symbol, Angkor Wat, or without its language, music, dance, sculpture, cuisine and other facets of typically Cambodian heritage? Its heritage is what gives Cambodia identity. Without it, Cambodia could easily be mistaken for any other country in the world. To keep Cambodia standing out as unique among other cultures existing in the world today, it is therefore essential to conserve all aspects of its heritage, not only the architectural and urban, as part of national development strategy. Ultimately what should be conserved is the total heritage picture.

Our purpose here is to initiate the appropriate legal framework that ties in conservation with development, starting with the existing architectural heritage in urban locations, specifically in Phnom Penh. It is essential to point out that conservation of heritage is essential in nation-building. Software is psychic, not measurable, but what results in an improved quality of life. Hardware is measurable. It can be counted in GNP, currency reserves, kilometers of new highway, increased electrical power supply, new airports, number of tourist arrivals, hotels, and so on. However to make the gains from improved hardware relevant, they must result in improving the life of the people. It provides the software that backs up the hardware of nation building. All of us work hard to improve the lives that we are living.

Many do not like old buildings. They prefer to replace them with new structures. A popular belief exists in many cultures around the globe that we must destroy the past to move forward, that the past symbolises an era of darkness, of ignorance, poverty and oppression. That rationale justifies the continued destruction of what remains of the fragile architectural heritage in many cities. The new buildings built on the debris of the old are seen to be symbols of having stepped out of the dark ages into the 21st century. They are the shining skyscrapers of progress.

continued...

Hong Kong and Singapore relentlessly built skyscraper after skyscraper over the skeletons of their heritage buildings. After a few decades of construction, they realised that past memory was erased from their cities, that the people were looking to restore their connections with the past, and that the special identity of their cities was close to disappearing.

To correct the situation, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Singapore identified heritage neighborhoods, set guidelines for their conservation, either purchased blocks of houses for conservation by the URA or offered assistance to private property owners who wished to conserve their houses. The lesson to learn from Singapore is that the legislation did not focus on single, stand-alone heritage properties but instead focused on conserving groups of houses or entire neighborhood settings. Setting gives more relevance to conserving architectural heritage. It encourages a continuation of the living patterns that may have existed within the neighborhood.

China passionately rejected the decaying heritage architecture in its old cities, pulled them all down for replacement with towering structures. However, after a decade of rapid expansion and modernisation, China has learned to value her architectural heritage and to see that neighborhoods of old architecture have an important place in modern China. The old neighborhoods give new China an identity, a link with the rich history of the Chinese people, and a validation that despite the highly modernised lifestyle in Chinese cities today, the traditional living patterns as seen in old houses remain applicable today. In Shanghai, the old houses in a traditional neighborhood were conserved and re-used to become today's Xintandi, a widely successful entertainment-shopping destination that combines old with new with stunning architectural results. Financially the development is a success as well, proving that money can indeed be earned from conservation. Today it is one of the most popular destinations in the city for both locals and tourists. It is a stellar example of how old architecture can continue to serve our 2006 lifestyle.

The Xintandi example, contrary to popular belief, proves that conservation is progressive. It does not freeze a city and its people in their past. Although conservation builds on the past, it brings the city forward into the future, which is the rationale behind the development of a successful heritage and development plan.

Freezing residents into old life patterns simply because they happen to live in a heritage area goes against development goals because it prevents their successful integration into the 21st century. They have the right to benefit from the improvement of their neighborhood. In many instances the residents of heritage neighborhoods are forced to relocate. Their abandoned houses become the nucleus of a redeveloped neighborhood whose use changes from residential to commercial.

During the Xintandi recycling process the attention was solely on conserving and re-using the heritage structures without considering the original residents who eventually were displaced. In Xintandi the setting was conserved at the expense of the original living pattern. Conservation practice today looks at conserving both the heritage structures and as much as possible to include the original living pattern that took place within them.

It is of course important to formulate the correct legal framework that addresses the Cambodian situation in general and that of Phnom Penh in particular. There are many guidelines to refer to when preparing a legal framework to integrate heritage conservation with development. It is important to be aware of what other cities have thought of when preparing their own legal framework for conservation.

It would help to galvanise the conservation legislation through planning a pilot project that unites all sectors to serve as one model for future development.

Session 5.1

Tourism and urban heritage

H.E. ROS Ren

Secretary of State, Ministry of Tourism

Your Excellency Sok An, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister in Charge of the Office of the Council of Ministers; Your Excellency Kep Chuk Tema, Governor of Phnom Penh; Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, National and International Guests, on behalf of the Ministry of Tourism, I would like to express my deep thanks for inviting the Ministry of Tourism to make a presentation at this meaningful seminar which focuses on the preservation of architectural heritage in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

According to the 'Rectangular Strategy' led by Samdech Hun Sen, the Prime Minister of Royal Government of Cambodia, tourism is a high priority for the national economy.



Tourism is a core activity contributing to poverty alleviation - through job creation for people from all walks of life, family income generation as well as national revenue - and to the conservation of cultural and natural heritage.

The Kingdom of Cambodia is rich in tourist potential including both natural and cultural heritage. For the latter, we have Angkor Wat (a World Heritage Site), thousands of ancient Khmer temples and much other architectural heritage. In terms of natural tourism resources, Cambodia is rich with white sand beaches, coral reef islands, and the beauty of eco-tourism.

Tourism in Cambodia has been rapidly developing since 1993 with a gradual increase from 25% to 30%. In 2004, 1,050,000 tourists visited Cambodia, which was a 55.53% increase compared to the year 2003. It is estimated that 1.3 million visitors came to Cambodia in 2005. These figures indicate the essential role of tourism in developing the social economy. Therefore, we need to expand quantity and quality of hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, resorts, and transportation to accommodate this massive influx of tourists into Cambodia.

Tourist development has a positive impact conducive to national economic development, itself a key to poverty alleviation. Based on a 2004-study, millions of US dollars have been earned

from tourism, which is a major contributory factor to 12% to 15% of GDP and to the creation of 180,000 jobs. Furthermore, local tourists play an important role in economic growth. For example, in 2004, millions of US dollars were earned for the economy from the spending of four million local visitors.

Today, I would like to take this opportunity to join all of you by taking Phnom Penh as a model for a conservation area for tourist development. Phnom Penh is the centre of administration, politics, economy, education, art, culture and tourism. Phnom Penh is at a confluence between the Mekong River and the Tonlé Sap River, which makes the only 'four-face' river in the world. In addition, Phnom Penh, the royal capital, is the heart of South East Asia, abounding with new architecture, French-colonial architecture, beautiful parks and avenues, the Royal Palace, Wat Phnom, the riverside, Independence Monument, the National Museum, and Khmer style monasteries. In addition, Phnom Penh has the Genocide Museum, Choeng Ek Killing Field, and other places of interest to visitors. Therefore, we must protect and conserve this priceless heritage for the future.

To achieve sustainable tourist development, buildings and architectural heritage must be well looked after and protected; that means we must work cooperatively on the conservation of these treasures. Moreover, tourism can be an effective tool, contributing to heritage conservation through direct financial support as well as national income, as well as being an encouragement to local people to consider the value of heritage.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for this seminar which will propose recommendations for valuable cultural and historical heritage conservation. On behalf of the Ministry of Tourism and myself, I appeal to UNESCO to conserve all national treasures in Phnom Penh as well as provinces and cities across the country by establishing more mechanisms for heritage protection.

It is essential to initiate "Heritage Conservation via Tourist Development" while at the same time taking the view "Conservation for Development".

However, the development must be sustainable.

continued...

In this context, let me share with you the strategic planning and mechanisms to protect and conserve architectural heritage through tourist development as follows:

- 1 Indicating the importance or essence of heritage by studying thoroughly the features of history, culture, and religion, which is a dissemination of tourism.
- 2 Analysing the tourist impacts on social culture and environment, which is a major issue for planning and development.
- 3 Activities and planning for protection and conservation: the cultural essence of historical and archeological conservation is divided into planning, integration, and renovation.
- 4 Services for tourists: extending the services for the tourists by integrating the areas near a major resort into a tourist zone.
- 5 Maps and signs for tourists: exit and entry, allowance signs are important for tourists. Signs of indication and prohibition shall be installed at a convenient time in a proper place in order to avoid any damage. Tourist guide booklets shall cover the story and features of each resort.
- 6 Translation and explanation: explain any activities through cartoon characters or other methods to tourists. Loudspeaker use and history narration shall be promoted.
- 7 Monitoring: monitor and study the feedback, complaints and satisfaction of visitors.
- 8 Art and Craft activities: we must show decorations, sculptures, and Khmer styles, which draws more attention to our architectural heritage.
- 9 Special cultural events: an important way to attract tourists is to organise special cultural events such as rites, art activities, dancing, music, and festivals including Royal Ploughing Ceremony, Water Festival, and Pchum Ben.

We are of course optimistic that more visitors will be attracted to Cambodia because we have many tourist destinations such as Siem Reap, Phnom Penh, and the northern eco-tourist zones of the country. Based on our vision, in 2006, 1.5 million visitors will arrive, and the number of tourist arrivals will reach 2 million in 2008, and 3 million in 2010, which will create 360,000 jobs and generate national income worth millions of US dollars.



Royal Palace, Phnom Penh

Finally, I appreciate this national seminar which is a key for strengthening the relationship of relevant institutions of the government, authorities, private sectors, and international organisations including UNESCO. This seminar is a contribution to heritage conservation. May I stress that the sustainable development of tourism depends on good relations between Ministries as well as national and international organisations. Furthermore, we all have to work cooperatively to protect and conserve the valuable architectural heritage throughout the country.

Before I conclude, I once again would like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude and appreciation to the Royal Government of Cambodia and UNESCO for organising this seminar.

Unofficial translation

Session 5.2

Partnerships for successful conservation

Mr Augusto VILLALÓN

Architect, Cultural Heritage Planner
Chair ICOMOS Philippine Committee

Urban heritage does not exist in a vacuum. Heritage buildings are part of daily life. Aside from being national monuments, these buildings within an urban setting form the settings where people have conducted their daily existence for many years.

A government-owned heritage building might be regarded as part of national patrimony but it is also where people work to run the bureaucracy. A temple may be considered national heritage but to monks it is where they live and conduct religious ceremonies, and to the faithful it is where they come to pray. An urban district might have high heritage value, but to its residents it is where they live, work, and relax.

Heritage, therefore, must integrate into the daily lives of people. It is part of daily life. Therefore it is essential to involve the stakeholders in its conservation. Successful conservation of heritage is achieved through public-private partnership, a relationship where the needs and expectations of both sides are understood and met. The conservation of urban heritage is a joint effort between public and private sectors.

Enlightened legislation is essential in protecting urban heritage. However the stakeholders must be included in each stage of the legislative process. When stakeholders feel that they are part of the conservation process and are the beneficiaries of it, and when they are aware of how conservation legislation will protect their rights and improve their quality of life, then they take ownership of their heritage and participate in its conservation.

Protecting heritage only through legislation, in other urban centres of Asia, has resulted in simple dependence on government initiatives without any stakeholder participation in the process.

Case 1: Intramuros, Walled City of Manila

Intramuros, the fortified center of Manila, was built by the Spanish in the 16th century. For the Philippines, it is the national symbol of the Spanish colonial era (1521-1898) that lasted almost 400 years. Until the early years of the 20th century it was the government, religious, business, and residential center of Manila.

Heavily destroyed during World War II and the following years, the government founded the Intramuros Administration to oversee the reconstruction of the area. It was the first urban area in the country with its own conservation legislation that specified strict architectural reconstruction guidelines implemented by an extremely competent and well-trained staff of historians and architects from the Intramuros Administration.

The Administration successfully reconstructed the fortifications. It also built clusters of buildings in the Spanish colonial style were built to house museums, shops, restaurants, and a small hotel. A few privately owned buildings were also constructed, this time for office and commercial use. Intramuros fills up with office workers and students (three major universities are located in the area) during the day who desert the area at night.



Intramuros

Many years after the establishment of the Intramuros Administration, the rebuilding of the quarter is not complete. The Administration's plans did not envision encouraging structures that would attract life back into the quarter, nor did they encourage local residents to participate in the reconstruction of the heritage area.

Intramuros is an example of unsuccessful conservation legislation done **without** the participation of local residents.

Case 2: Gota de Leche, Manila

UNESCO Asia-Pacific Cultural Heritage Awardee, 2003



Gota de Leche

A simple conservation program achieves unforeseen results.

Gota de Leche (Drop of Milk) is one of the oldest NGO's in the Philippines. Since its establishment in 1907, it has continued its mission of distributing free milk to babies of needy families. It remains in the same building that was constructed in 1912, considered to be an important architectural landmark in the Philippines.

The organisation restored its badly deteriorated heritage building in 2001 with unexpected results. The restored building became a symbol of hope in the very congested city center neighborhood where Gota de Leche is located. Residents noticed the restoration, as did former organisation volunteers who, as a result of the new "image" of the Gota de Leche, renewed their commitment to the organisation by donating funds to increase its endowment. As a result of its building restoration, the once-forgotten organisation has reestablished its position of respect with public and private leaders in the city.

Conservation of heritage indeed establishes and improves image and reputation.

Case 3: Far Eastern University, Manila

UNESCO Asia-Pacific Cultural Heritage Awardee, 2005



Far Eastern University

A campus-wide program to restore its Art Deco buildings achieved astonishing and unexpected results. The conservation program re-established pride of place with students, faculty, and alumni.

More importantly, the program initiated a private-public initiative for neighborhood revitalisation. When restoration was completed, neighbors, noticing that their buildings needed improvement, grouped together and agreed on improvement measures such as cleaning sidewalks and repainting façades. Upon the completion of the simple improvement, a neighborhood association was formed that successfully requested the Manila Mayor to improve security, install street lighting, and to improve other facilities.

This is the first example in the Philippines where a modest stakeholder improvement project has evolved into a public-private cooperation for urban revitalisation.

Session 5.3

Built Heritage Conservation in Singapore: A Public-Private Partnership

Mrs TEH Lai Yip

Deputy Director of Conservation & Development Services,
Urban Redevelopment Authority, Singapore

Summary

The present rejuvenates the past to prepare for the future. The big question is “which part of the past”? On a small city state of about 700 sq km, the dilemma was more acute. In the 1950s and 60s – the struggling years after the World War, Singapore could ill afford to romanticise about its past when the stark reality was a widespread urban slum.



The priority was to provide decent homes for the people, relieve traffic congestion on the streets and eradicate poor sanitation and other environmental pollution.

It was only in the 1980s, after urban renewal had seen some success, that attention was turned to conservation. Many comprehensive studies were carried out on areas with high historic value. The shift in emphasis was set out in the Central Area Structure Plan (1985) which embraced the remaining old parts of Singapore. By then, the planners were confident that there was sufficient land to accommodate the future growth of the city.

Public Feedback

The studies culminated in a draft Master Plan for conservation which was exhibited in 1987 for people to give their views. Two clear signals were received – one wanted totally new developments and nothing to do with the past. The other wanted to freeze all the old buildings and even the shopkeepers, if possible.

Given Singapore's limited land resources, the pragmatic approach is to conserve selectively. Be it a whole district or an individual significant building, it also has to be self-sustaining by continuing to be relevant to the market place. This requires the government agencies to work closely with the private sector as illustrated by the following two examples.

Boat Quay Revitalised

The first is Boat Quay – which hailed among the pioneering batch of areas gazetted in 1989 for conservation. Located at the mouth of Singapore's river of life where Raffles landed, three quarters of our shipping activities was conducted here by the 1860s.

By the 1970s, however, the river was choked with pollution. It was like an open sewer lined with decrepit buildings. As the days were numbered for lighters ferrying goods from sea-going vessels to river godowns, a concept plan was formulated in 1985 to transform the river into a shopping, eating, recreation and entertainment belt. Some of the oldest warehouses found here were earmarked for adaptive re-use while new buildings of compatible scale were proposed to be introduced to revitalise the river.

The journey to realise the plan included exhibitions and dialogues to get public buy-in. A multi-agency action programme was also initiated to clean up the river. Many parts of the river walls which have fallen into disrepair, were reconstructed and strengthened. Existing bridges were upgraded. New underpasses and pedestrian links were constructed to connect both stretches of the river banks. This gives a continuous promenade conducive for strolling or jogging.



Singapore and Boat Quay

The total government expenditure came to about S\$170m. By July 1991, restorations to about 110 privately-owned buildings fronting Boat Quay and Circular Road were completed, encouraged by waivers of development charge and car park deficiency charges. Today, almost all the 230 buildings within the 2.5 hectares are restored.

True to the vision, the old warehouses and trading offices have been converted into attractive food outlets and these low-rise buildings provide an interesting contrast to the tall modern buildings in the backdrop. Boat Quay is also popular for alfresco dining. The water-body, previously devoid of marine life due to pollution, has also become a national venue for water activities.

Fullerton Building Transformed

The Fullerton Building, formerly the General Post Office and built in 1928, is also located in the heart of the CBD at the mouth of the Singapore River.

When the last government department moved out in the mid 1990s, there were debates on what to do with this historic 8-storey building that has outlived its usefulness. Many developers were interested in buying the land to build another 60-storey modern office block. None was keen on the original building because it had limited internal space and no car-park. We could not simply sell it off and hope for the best. Our solution was to couple it with another piece of land, recently reclaimed across the road and facing the sea.

After the site was sold, we worked very closely with the developer to give flexibility without losing the historic features of the building so that the owner can still maximise his business returns.



Fullerton Building

The challenge was not just how to make this old building work as a hotel. It went beyond just restoration. We had to make efforts to ensure that it worked as a complete business entity.

Today, this old “seemingly useless” building has been transformed into a 5-star hotel. It has clinched an international FIABCI Prix d’Excellence Award 2003 for its successful adaptive re-use and an Urban Land Institute (ULI) Award 2004 for being a historic landmark that enhances the waterfront. Together with the other 6500 conserved buildings in Singapore, the Fullerton serves as a tangible record to give the city character and identity.

Conclusion – Strategies for Sustainability

Conservation goes beyond architectural details and ornamentation. It has to be sustainable in the long run to achieve a balance between modern redevelopment and keeping the past for the people. In Singapore, we have adopted a pragmatic approach in partnering with the owners to selectively conserve key areas and buildings. To make conservation attractive to owners, we allow old and new developments to minimise potential economic loss. We also allow flexible negotiation for adaptive reuse of old buildings as driven by the market.

Session 5.4

Local case-studies

Examples of renovated historic buildings for business or with community participation.

Library, Centre for Khmer Studies Wat Damnak, Siem Reap Presented by Mr Chhim Phet



Built in 1941 as a primary school, the building fell into disuse and was abandoned for a number of years till 1999. The Centre for Khmer Studies, which is based at Wat Damnak, chose to renovate the old building for use as a library, which was awarded 'Honorable Mention' in the 2002 UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation.

On the same site, CKS renovated a 1920s library, now used as a conference room, and is currently carrying out restoration of the 1923 vihear building (prayer hall).

The Old Indochina Bank, Phnom Penh Presented by Ms Van Porleng



The building was originally constructed as the first branch of the Bank of Indochina in Cambodia around 1920. Located on a corner site on Street 106 with streets on three sides, one elevation faces the Post Office. In the 1960s it became the offices of the Chip Tong Company, and after the civil war was returned to use as a bank, this time the National Rural Bank of Cambodia.

Renovation of the building began in 2003, with the aim being to retain the architectural features while providing well-serviced office space for businesses and institutions. The building contains fine floor mosaics, wooden paneling and plaster-work, which have been retained and cleaned. The redecorated exterior remains unchanged.

Audio Visual Resource Centre Phnom Penh

Presented by Mr Alejandro de Castro Mazarro



The project for the renovation of this 1960s building was initiated by the film-maker Rithy Panh and is being developed by the *Association for the Assistance of Audiovisual Development in Cambodia* (AADAC) and the *Association for the Research, Production and Archiving of Audiovisual Documents* (ARPAA). The Centre will provide a public area dedicated to memory, and a facility for training in audiovisual professions.

The design for the remodelling of the building has involved contributions from architecture students at the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh. The character of the original building is being retained, with many of the interior details and materials being conserved. Advantage is being taken of the methods of natural ventilation which were incorporated in the original design.

Session 6

Working-group discussions

Four working groups discussed separate themes, and debated the draft conclusions of the seminar.

Themes for the working-groups:

- A The role of heritage conservation plans in the development of towns and cities.**
- B Developing public awareness, participation and education.**
- C Economics and heritage preservation.**
- D Heritage legislation; future directions.**



Session 7

Reports of the working-group conclusions

The Moderators of the working groups reported back on the group discussions and suggestions for amendments to the draft conclusions.

It was felt by the participants that the issues being discussed were important and warranted further time.

It was agreed that the Seminar should publish an interim revised 'Draft Conclusions' document, and that firm consideration should be given to holding future events to develop the discussions on the topic of the preservation of urban heritage in Cambodia.

*The draft Conclusions are included in **Annex 1**.*



Closing ceremony

Mr Teruo JINNAI
UNESCO Representative in Cambodia

Closing Address

Your Excellency Deputy Prime Minister, Minister in Charge of the Council of Ministers, Chairman of the National Commission of Cambodia for UNESCO, Excellencies, Honorable Experts, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me begin by thanking all those who have participated in this seminar over the past two days and for making it a stimulating, fruitful and successful event. Towns and cities are complex environments, which rely on communication, dialogue and collaboration to make them good places to live and work. We have had the privilege here to listen to policy-makers from the Royal Government of Cambodia - to representatives of the private sector, and to members of the community and specialists in cultural planning and heritage. There is no doubt that preserving the physical evidence of the historical cultural activities of a society can be instrumental in maintaining a sense of continuity and identity. What to keep and what to allow to fall away is a key judgment for a community to make, but it is clear from many examples around the world that the most economically and socially successful cities have taken decisions to value and protect the urban and architectural heritage which is left to them by their forebears - even when this may have colonial connections, as in Hanoi or Singapore.

From Singapore, we have had the opportunity to hear from the Urban Redevelopment Authority about the partnership possibilities between the public and private sectors. The private sector is an essential partner in the growth of cities and brings with it the potential for energy, initiative and investment. We welcome that, while at the same time recognising that investment decisions which affect urban environments need to be taken within a long-term strategic framework. We applaud the master-planning work being carried out in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh, and encourage those involved in master-planning to make heritage conservation planning a key element at an early stage. We hope that the preparatory work in Battambang which we heard about from the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction can come to fruition. UNESCO offers again its congratulations to the Municipality of Phnom Penh for the recent award received in London.

The issue of conservation legislation is important, as it gives owners clear guidelines and limits, while also giving officials the means to protect what should be protected.

How to value built heritage and what to protect are questions which many experts have views on, but the people who are really affected by these decisions are those who live, work and play in these spaces and buildings, as well as who make investment decisions about their property. Building a common consensus about what is valuable and worthwhile to protect should be part of all conservation strategies. We should encourage participation, both in the development of policy and in voluntary forms of involvement which can spread the word at grass-roots level about heritage issues.



Turning to the Conclusions of this seminar, I feel we have together debated over the past two days many key issues and principles which are the concern of both the Municipality of Phnom Penh and UNESCO, and have today in Phnom Penh agreed a useful and pertinent set of conclusions and recommendations. I hope that these will be utilised in future debates on this topic and look forward to other opportunities to participate in this.

Finally, I would like once again to thank the team of the Municipality led by HE Kep Chuk Tema, the National Commission of Cambodia for UNESCO and my colleagues from the UNESCO Office, for their commitment and energy which made this seminar happen.

Closing ceremony

H.E SOK An

Deputy Prime Minister

Minister in Charge of the Office of the Council of Ministers
Chairman, Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO

Closing address

Your Excellency the Governor of Phnom Penh, Your Excellency the Representative of UNESCO in Cambodia, Your Excellencies, National and International Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

First of all, I would like to express my great pleasure in attending the first National Seminar on the Conservation of Urban Heritage in Cambodia. Certainly, the seminar is a rare opportunity for national and international experts to share ideas and experiences gained in their respective countries. Furthermore, this is a most timely event to promote more consideration of the future conservation of the heritage in our cities.

On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I congratulate you on organising these discussions on the conservation of urban heritage in Cambodia, which is the historical evidence of the achievements and prosperity of our nation. It is a visible link between the past and the future, and a sign of cultural continuity and diversity.

I also appreciate the Phnom Penh Municipality for their significant initiative; and I would like to express my deep thanks to the Phnom Penh UNESCO Office for their financial and technical support. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all speakers for sharing their valuable experience and knowledge at this seminar. I also wish to thank all the participants for their discussions and commitment shown in their working groups.

Your Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen, compared with vital issues such as infrastructure development, poverty alleviation or job creation, the conservation of historical heritage such as styles, dancing, music, and sculpture seems to be low on the scale of priorities. Nevertheless, the effective conservation of historical heritage not only helps develop a sustainable economy but also gains the soul of city identity of one nation.

Cambodia's history since 35 years ago has left a number of scars. We are all aware how much our Cambodian people have suffered through decades of war - a time of destruction, killing, and isolation. Some of these physical scars can still be seen in buildings in the city and the country.

One outcome of this recent history is the slower rate of development in Cambodia compared to neighbouring countries, countries which used to stand neck and neck with us. However this dark cloud has a silver lining; in the rush towards development and expansion of their economy, some other countries dismantled and removed

their historical architectural heritage, later finding it was too late to conserve this valuable asset.

In Cambodia we find ourselves in a preferable situation. Despite the incidents of history, Cambodia still retains much cultural and historical heritage such as different styles of architecture and art in its cities and towns. We have a rare opportunity to plan, preserve, and develop our cities and towns while finding a balance between tradition and modernity, and preserving their attraction and beauty. With careful planning and law-making, as well as private and public partnership, we can leave much valuable heritage to the next generation.

Moreover, visitors around the world are attracted to this heritage. We know that if we take good care of this great ancient heritage, it can become a vehicle for development in the future. This concept has been adopted in suburban development in the last century. If this inheritance is neglected and damaged, we will lose not only our national identity but also the opportunity to attract tourists.

It is my observation that if we protect and renovate colonial buildings in their original style, we will be able both to attract more tourists and to preserve our historical heritage.

Let us imagine that if Psar Thmei (Central Market), the old stadium, old houses and buildings dating from the previous regimes, French-colonial architectural departments and ministries, and markets along the Mekong River in Kampong Cham and Kampot provinces were preserved and renovated, and if parks were well looked after and cleaned, Kep and Bokor resorts were reopened for tourists – these would attract tourists outside of Siem Reap province and as a result other cities would experience growth.

What I would like to raise today is planning for conservation. Whereas the Cambodian economy has been rapidly increasing, urban sprawl, especially in Phnom Penh, has significantly risen. In order to keep the balance of development, we must have a master plan as the Phnom Penh Municipality did in the past for development and preservation. I also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Phnom Penh Municipality on their recent achievement in winning the "Leadership and City Development" award in London, United Kingdom.

I agree with the viewpoints in the recommendations of the seminar integrating heritage preservation in the master planning of cities. This integration must be done after research and detailed criteria are carefully and clearly established, and ratified with the involvement of all stakeholders concerned. It is essential to pay attention to the interests for both the local people who live in the conservation areas and the investors.



I have stressed that conservation planning should be linked with investors' interests. The seminar sees the private sector playing an important role in heritage preservation in cities. The private sector, which provides a central dynamic linking innovation and investment, with the potential for public and private partnership, is praised and encouraged to pursue two targets: ECONOMY and CULTURE. Historical buildings and districts, protected and preserved, can become valuable tourist attractions which also motivate people to live and work in those areas.

On the other hand, the public sector must accept its responsibility for heritage preservation in towns and cities. I would like to appeal to all authorities, at both ministerial and local levels, to first of all prepare statistics and inventories of all the existing heritage, and then prepare strategies for its conservation. This work must be done in consultation with investors and local people, in order to develop the economy in accordance with the Rectangular Strategy led by the Prime Minister Hun Sen.

Based on research and experience in conserving historical and cultural heritage, the provincial and municipal authorities shall pursue three aspects as follows:

1. More participation of the public and civil society.
2. Preparation of heritage inventories, heritage classification, master planning, and heritage conservation plans.
3. Institutional and policy strengthening.

In this context, I appeal to UNESCSCO to continue their support for such discussions on heritage preservation. I also appeal to UNESCO to provide technical assistance in order to establish the juridical standards related to the protection and preservation of historical heritage. We have both opportunities and challenges in the development and conservation of our cities.

Once again, I hope that the recommendations agreed by the participants in this seminar will become a tool and reference for municipalities and provincial towns across Cambodia to develop their cities and towns in the future. I am delighted to announce the seminar closed!

Unofficial translation

Annex 1

Conclusions

National Seminar on the Preservation of Urban Heritage in Cambodia Phnom Penh, 17 January 2006

As agreed by the participants of the seminar on 17 January 2006,
for future consideration and discussion.

We, participants in the National Seminar on the Preservation of Urban Heritage in Cambodia,
held in Phnom Penh on 16 and 17 January 2006, share the understanding that:

- 1.1 Built environments and realised architectural concepts may, according to historical, artistic or cultural (tradition, religion and social) importance, be regarded as forming an irreplaceable universal heritage.
- 1.2 Through their preservation, the significance and message of historic buildings and areas can form a part of the spirit of the people and contribute to their sense of cultural continuity and common memory.
- 1.3 Where a growing universality of building techniques and architectural forms may create a uniform environment throughout the world, the preservation of historic areas can make an outstanding contribution to maintaining and developing the social values and cultural diversity of each nation. This can contribute to the architectural enrichment of the cultural heritage of the world.
- 1.4 Consequently, historic areas and buildings which are considered significant should be protected against any change which would impair their authenticity, and we endorse the UNESCO *'Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas'* adopted by its General Conference in Nairobi, 26 November 1976 and the *'Recommendation concerning the Preservation of Cultural Property Endangered by Public or Private Works'* similarly adopted in Paris on 19 November 1968.

In particular, we endorse the following recommendations:

- 2.1 We support the development of statements and strategies which set out how urban heritage can be integrated into the development of towns and cities and be a clear connection between past and future. We support the implementation of these objectives through the establishment of heritage conservation plans at local and regional levels, to act as guidelines for development.
- 2.2 We recognise the progress and achievements in the developing of master-plans, particularly for Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, and support the integration of urban heritage issues by the inclusion of heritage conservation plans, where possible in the initial assessment stages of the master-planning process. But, these urban heritage conservation plans must be established separately in detail and specifics.
- 2.3 Based on inventories and research, and through a process of debate and consultation, we propose that heritage conservation plans ensure an integrated relationship between the historic urban areas and the town as a whole. Heritage conservation plans would:
 - a) Acknowledge the present social and economic life of historic areas, which is dependent on related activities and structures, and include assessment of these.
 - b) Identify which functions and activities would be compatible with the characteristics of the area and contribute positively to economic sustainability and growth.
 - c) Include assessments and judgments on the relative value of historic areas, buildings, views, open spaces and special characteristics and set out priorities for their preservation and protection.
- 2.4 We support further work in the development and actualisation of historic building inventories at a local level in each city, with coordination and approval at national level. These inventories would include spatial analysis as well as archaeological, historical, architectural and technical studies.

- 3.1 We recognise that local participation and consultation is essential and should be included in the developing of policies and guidelines on the protection of urban heritage.
- 3.2 We acknowledge the role of communities in valuing and protecting their local heritage and recommend that this be supported through the involvement of heritage interest groups and through the organisation of seminars and workshops, publications and exhibitions, training and work with young people, technical advice, media events and programmes. Heritage conservation plans should be supported by the occupants of the historic area.
- 4.1 We recognise the need for economic sustainability in the preservation of heritage areas and buildings; we encourage the involvement of the private sector through investment in projects and partnerships, with the aim of achieving significant benefits both to society and the economy.
- 4.2 We encourage consultation amongst government line-agencies, civil-society, the local community and the private sector in the establishing of heritage protection policies, and recognise the desirability of planning towns and cities so that the development of new buildings and business districts can take place in balance with the protection of urban heritage.
- 4.3 We acknowledge the financial costs of maintaining heritage buildings and areas; we support further research into possible strategies for raising additional revenue, such as government approved service and tourist charges, corporate and individual sponsorship, private foundations and trusts, as well as international donations. We also support research into options for providing financial incentives to owners and donors to maintain historic structures, such as a heritage fund, tax reductions and grants.
- 4.4 We also recognise the potential increase in financial value of properties in conservation areas, through both local market demand and tourism.
- 5.1 We recognise that to enable the protection of architectural and urban heritage, suitable measures should be included in national legislation which are readily understood and enforceable, and that this legislation should protect significant individual heritage buildings as well as designated historic areas and public spaces.
- 5.2 Laws concerning town and regional planning and housing policy should also be reviewed so as to coordinate and bring them into line with the laws concerning the safeguarding of architectural heritage.
- 6.1 Further opportunities to discuss these draft conclusions, as well other new initiatives and actions, would be welcomed and UNESCO is respectfully requested to assist in this.

Annex 2

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