Planning for Urban Heritage Places: Reconciling Conservation, Tourism, and Sustainable Development

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A conflict between the preservation of the character of existing historic towns and “change” has formed the central argument for conservation. More recently, heritage has superseded conservation, where marketing of heritage as a product according to the demands of the consumer, mainly tourists, has resulted in the commercialisation of heritage over conservation values. Today, the symbiosis of both tourism and heritage places has become a major objective in the management and planning of historic areas. This article examines the current conflicts among the ideas of conservation, heritage, and tourism and argues for a sustainable approach to the management and planning of heritage places based on a community and culture-led agenda.

Keywords: culture; heritage; conservation; tourism; sustainability

Globalising forces inherent in the shift from production to consumption are influencing changes in the built environment and in their local cultures. This is most acute in places of heritage value where the local culture with its built heritage is being transformed into a product for tourist consumption. The global scale of tourism and its accrued uniformity is increasingly evident, particularly the proliferation of standardised hotel architecture, restaurant chains, and street furniture. Similarly, local cultures are losing their local identities as global “cultural industries” dominate (Oncu and Weyland 1997). With the emergence of a greater number of destinations competing for unique tourist experiences, traditional historic places are undergoing a redefinition and reinterpretation of their cultural heritage in order to be competitive and attractive. By doing this, however, heritage places are responding to the commercial forces of consumer demand, and in many cases conservation and cultural values are being compromised. This article provides a critical analysis of ecological, economic, and social equity implications of conservation and heritage. It presents the idea of sustainability as an overarching framework for managing tourism in heritage places based on the balance between sociocultural needs, economic gain, and the protection of the heritage resource.

Within the context of planning in historic environments, a dichotomy exists between preserving the past for its intrinsic value and the need for development in

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response to changing societal values. This conflict arises from the new sense of historicity and a romantic nostalgia for the past, which according to Lowenthal (1985), stems from a psychological need to know the past as a reference point, although how we “know” the past varies from personal experience through fallible memory to learned history. Lowenthal shows clearly that we want old things to “seem” old, with antiquity valued and validated by decay and the patina of age. Hewison (1987) describes this continued fascination with the past as a symptom of national decline and a loss of confidence in the future. Concepts such as symbolism, whereby certain attributes of past landscapes are imbued with a symbolic significance for the present landscape and its inhabitants, are part of this nostalgia. Within the sustainability discourse, Campbell (1996) believes that the romanticised past offers little to planning. He states that “our modern path to sustainability lies forward, not behind us” (p. 302). In his view, taking a historical perspective is not instructive; solutions to the problems of preindustrial society are not transferable to those created by modern industrial and postindustrial society (Campbell 1996). Although this is true at a general theoretical level, planning for sustainability in heritage places is significantly different because of their inextricable link to the past as a continuum. Heritage places represent layers of evolving traditional forms of architecture and city building that have together created a “sense of place.” Urban planners recognise the link to the past and its influence on the “sense of place as an important dimension of sustainable places, strengthening local identity, contributing to investment, and retaining communities (Beatley and Manning 1997). Any sustainable future for historic contexts, therefore, must be intrinsically linked to its past, not just in the continuity of the built heritage and urban spaces but also in the living culture that created, and is still shaping, the distinct townscape, or genius loci, that characterises heritage places.

This article highlights the various concepts associated with heritage places that should be considered in any sustainable planning for these areas. The first concept discusses building preservation and conservation in which the primary concern is protecting the built and cultural heritage. The second concept revolves around the exploitative nature of heritage tourism in which commercial gain has created an imbalance in conservation and cultural values. The third and final concept is that of sustainable tourism that argues for an alternative tourism that will contribute to both conservation and development objectives, as well as safeguard social equity and cultural values.

FROM BUILDING PRESERVATION TO URBAN CONSERVATION

A brief introduction to the historical roots of conservation will highlight many of the continuing debates of modern conservation approaches, especially issues of selectivity and authenticity. Jokilehto’s (1999) thorough overview of the history and theory of architectural conservation includes the origins of the interest in conservation within the European context where it began. The first half of the eighteenth century paid increasing attention to cultural diversity and national identity through the development of the “Grand Tour.” These were visits to countries such as Italy, Greece, and the Levant to collect and study works of art, mainly oriented toward classical studies that soon became an established feature in the education of an English gentleman. Travellers also founded special societies, and the members came to play an important role in preservation based on an increasing awareness of the “universal value” of important works of art and historic monuments stressing the beginning of a more general feeling of responsibility for their care. Therefore, the first approach toward conservation was that of repair and restoration, influenced by a small and wealthy intellectual élite.

Changing fashions influenced approaches to the conservation and restoration of historic objects and places. Classicism at the end of the eighteenth century encouraged the idea of mimesis (the imitation of models or objects in order to reach the closest possible resemblance), which was challenged in the age of Romanticism. This new approach of “stylish restoration” was founded on respect for the original style not any more for purely aesthetic reasons but due to the building’s significance as a representation of achievements in the nation’s history (Jokilehto 1999). Restoration of a historic building came to be seen as a scientific activity that aimed at stylistic unity as an illustration of an ideal.

The conception of stylistic restoration during the age of Romanticism raised issues of “authentic restoration” and “style selectivity” that faced increasing criticism in the second half of the nineteenth century and saw the rise of an “antirestoration movement” and modern conservation. Two schools of thought developed on the principles of restoration, as Jokilehto (1999) explains: the first wanted to preserve the remains even if mutilated; the second group preferred to go ahead with a “careful restoration” (p. 149).

The new method of restoration, according to Viollet-le-Duc (1987), consisted in principle that every building should be restored in its own style, not only as regards
appearance but also structure. Restoration had come to mean reinstating the building in a condition of completeness that might never have existed at any given time. This also meant the replacement, and in some cases storage, of the original, historical material that was lost to the building itself. An example of the manifestation of this principle can be seen in England, where stylistic restoration of churches and cathedrals was most prominent. National monuments, such as churches, represented a living tradition that was the restorer’s responsibility to maintain and take care of in order to guarantee its functioning as part of society. The restorers came to be termed the “Ecclesiologists” whose objective was to restore churches back to their former glory, in their best and purest style. Considering that the buildings had been modified in various periods, preference was given to restoring all to one style rather than preserving each part in its own form (Jokilehto 1999).

The antirestoration movement, instigated by John Ruskin in the midnineteenth century, was directed at the fashion of stylistic restoration, criticising restoration architects for the destruction of the historical authenticity of the buildings and fighting for their protection, conservation, and maintenance. Ruskin argued that authenticity meant a retained building should be restored to its original state and use where possible and that its age gave it historical value and interest. William Morris, founder of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), reflects the beginning of the modern approach to conservation that quickly spread internationally. The SPAB manifesto addressed a number of issues on authenticity and originality in the evaluation of historic buildings.

Among these were that: protection was now not limited to specific styles any more, but based on a critical evaluation of the existing building stock; and, that ancient monuments represented certain historic periods only so far as their authentic material was undisturbed and preserved in situ; any attempt to restore or copy would only result in the loss of authenticity and the creation of a fake. (Jokilehto 1999, 185)

This new concept was termed the building’s **historicity**, which identified that each period and each culture, with its peculiar conditions and requirements, defined the artistic values of the period.

Since the 1960s, shifts in the approach toward conservation widened the object of attention to ensembles and areas, as opposed to the previous approach, focusing on buildings or their remnants as monuments. The presence of an overall architectural quality or historical association would define an area, often denoting a significant historical and social relationship to the rest of the town. The major changes and different pressures on historic towns in the last half of the twentieth century, reflected by a wealthier society and a transportation revolution, was increasingly in need of both architectural and socioeconomic protection.

Therefore, urban conservation has three interrelated objectives; physical, spatial, and social (Orbasi 2000). Physically, it is linked to building preservation and the type of new development to ensure that a town’s past, its present, and its future combine to create a recognisable unit, so that its growth can be seen and felt to be continuous (Worskett 1969). This involves seeking to improve old environments and bring them into modern use by adapting the townscape, but as Larkham (1996) suggests, this is hard to achieve without wasting some of the investment of previous societies. Spatially, it is viewing the townscape as a holistic entity, with its relationships between spaces and their use, as well as circulation and traffic. The third objective, and most neglected, is social, which concerns the users, local community, and the urban population. Orbasi (2000) argues that although the social dimension is the most difficult to define, it is the most important, as continuity in conservation can be achieved only through the continuation of urban life.

The literature on urban conservation reflects the gap in integrating the social dimension. Factors of selection, restriction and expansion, efficient use, and viability are rather more product focused, concerned with the physical attributes and their commercial potential, and not with the users, residents, property owners, and those who depend on the area for their livelihoods. Nevertheless, these factors merit discussion since they provide a guiding framework on how historical qualities and individual identities can be retained without unnecessarily inhibiting a reasonable degree of essential growth and modernisation.

**Selection**

The “spirit of place” or genius loci has introduced concepts of unity and diversity that have influenced the selection of conservation-worthy areas and even planning policies; all urban landscapes contain elements of both variables. Some are highly uniform where diversity may be confined to minor details and embellishments. Other areas are highly diverse—for example, in architectural styles and materials—but may retain some uniformity in, for example, plot widths and story heights (Larkham 1996). Conzen’s (1966) morphogenetic approach to townscape management follows the belief that new buildings introduced into areas pro-
ected for their architectural or historical significance should respect the character of the existing built form. In his book, *The Character of Towns*, Worskett (1969) advocates that the townscape be used as a guide to the design and siting of new development, so the townscape becomes the link between preservation and change. He argues that although individual buildings contribute to the overall quality and character of a town, they cannot be considered the only constituent part of that character, nor necessarily the most important part. Visually, most towns derive their identity and personality from the way in which individual buildings, both good and not so good, together create a general atmosphere and build up a recognisable local townscape.

To evaluate a town’s genius loci, selectivity is necessary to grade aspects of a town’s identity in order of priority for conservation. However, the selection process is influenced by differences in interpretation of values; just like any other phenomena, it is subject to change and even fashion. Larkham (1996) assesses the tensions that abound in discussions between heritage, conservation, and urban form:

> There are clear conflicts of ideology in the design and production of the built environment. Some of these conflicts may be due to changing professional approaches and philosophies over time, such as moves from urban renewal to rehabilitation and conservation. Conflicts also arise in the move in architectural fashions, with styles governed by the preference of leaders in architectural taste. (P. 18)

Until very recently, social attitudes depicted in the case of conservation were those of the ruling class, the élite intellectual force. These élite claimed to represent public opinion, but were small in proportion to the general population, and tended to focus their attention on major monuments and areas of high land values. However, rising academic pressure has forced local amenity groups to consider vernacular heritage as worthy of conservation as the heritage of the social élite (Ashworth 1990).

Changes in preferred styles have had significant consequences for the urban cores being conserved. Extensive developments are often given façades that attempt to give the appearance of comprising more than one building of traditional plot widths. Larkham (1990) describes, in the case of Britain, the approach of “façadism”: rebuilding in forms suitable for modern functions behind a restored and retained façade. Such techniques retain the visual appearance of historic areas, although they may obliterate much of the historical and architectural significance of individual build-

ings and lead to the loss of the townscape “grain” through plot amalgamation (Larkham 1990). Nevertheless, Hubbard (1993) has examined the reactions of residents toward this approach and has found that they do not perceive this as a problem but consider external appearance as more important than authenticity or originality. This rekindles the “authenticity” debate: the need to identify a building’s architecture as an accurate revelation of the past as a fixed truth. In a key contribution to the literature, Ashworth and Tunbridge’s *The Tourist-Historic City* (1990) argues that authenticity as it is defined needs to be replaced by a more flexible concept. Their argument revolves around the idea that the existing stock of old buildings are a result of survival over time, dependent on such factors as building type, materials, districts and towns, natural catastrophes, and socioeconomic pressures. Hence, a range of fundamental biases exist that distort authenticity of conservation as an accurate revelation of the past, before it has begun. In their words,

> If authenticity is the accurate reflection of the past through its architecture, then skilful reconstruction may be more authentic than scattered remnant relics. Most old urban structures are the result of much adaptive reuse. Restoration therefore faces the problem of choosing which past from many should be restored. (Ashworth and Tunbridge 1990, 24)

**Restriction and Expansion**

Legislation has been used to embody the outcomes of the selection process, putting conservation area allocations in place and creating building listings. The process of identification, delimiting, and designation differs from country to country. Nevertheless, the siting of the conservation area in relation to other areas of the town will have established the area’s physical and social importance. Worskett (1969) defines the term conservation area as follows:

> It must be taken to mean an area in which preservation will be a principal planning aim but in which some change, although small in scale, must nevertheless take place. The listing of buildings is also determined by their special historical or architectural interest. Listing adds an administrative layer of protection to a building, so that change is controlled. (P. 48)

However, there are critics who question the amount of protection that conservation area designation or the listing of a building offer. Bourne (1967) highlighted the idea that it is the age of the building stock, coupled with changes in function and economic influence through time, that leads to change in the urban landscape. Struc-
tural and functional obsolescence are depicted as a natural process of decline that lowers the effectiveness of the building. However, with periodic maintenance or adaptation, the structure will be able to continue to perform acceptably. Major rebuilding considerably extends the life span of the building, whereas the absence of either process leads to neglect, decay, and demolition. The legal implications of the designation of listed buildings, or conservation areas, suggest that these buildings and areas are, to a considerable extent, isolated from the usual cycle of demolition and rebuilding. Restoration leads to the preservation of the building, or area, in the form of rebuilding. Functional obsolescence is overcome by seeking appropriate alternative uses for older buildings. In this manner, conservation prolongs the life spans of building beyond that which is usual. This affects historic town centres through the principle of restriction and expansion. The restrictions that conservation areas and listed buildings may have on new development, due to greater demands for space or inappropriate uses, will require the expansion of new sites for development in other areas of the town. Such a scenario holds the danger that development will seek peripheral areas, shifting with it the urban core and central business district (Worskett 1969).

Efficient Use and Economic Viability

Another aspect of prolonging the life span of conserved buildings is that of adaptive reuse. To be effective, theorists argue that conservation must be based on efficient use and economic viability. These two qualities are interdependent; the economic viability of a building depends on the use to which it can be put. For a building to function efficiently, it must not only be convenient to use but also capable of use at reasonable cost. Fundamental direct and indirect economic forces are at work. The former makes apparent that adaptive reuse of buildings is more economic not only in general terms (e.g., the conservation of energy represented by the built environment) but absolutely (i.e., relative costs of old and new built space). Rehabilitating, instead of demolishing sound but decayed structures, generally offers a more economically and socially less disruptive means of renewing cities (Fitch 1982). The conservation ideal is for the original building use to persist, but it is more likely that use will change over time. The more robust the building type, the less impact that changing land uses will have on the fabric. Nevertheless, the other side to the argument is that whatever the environment, a building will remain empty unless there is a demand for a structure of that type. Efficient use of a building requires either a ready-made demand or a new demand that should be created for it (Worskett 1969).

THE SHIFT TO THE HERITAGE APPROACH

Heritage is the most modern phase of conservation. It is the concept that provides “the link between the preservation of the past for its intrinsic value, and as a resource for the modern community as a commercial activity” (Ashworth and Tunbridge 1990, 24). In some cases, this approach has been referred to as “exploitation” where “there is an apparent shift to a market orientation that focuses upon the relics of history as a product, selected according to criteria of consumer demand and managed through the intervention in the market” (Ashworth and Larkham 1994, 16). On the other hand, preservation and conservation have no such direct implication and focus on the artefact or area itself. This distinction has consequences in the approaches to historic city management.

Ashworth (1992) argues that heritage is the product of a “commodification” process in which selection is central: heritage conservation is creation and not preservation of what already exists. The nature of the final product (as heritage) is not determined by the resources endowment, nor can it reflect any supposedly accurate factual record of the past. Schouten (1995) adds that heritage is a product and, as a product, it is subject to difference in validation and interpretation as the historical process itself. Heritage changes over time in the way it is presented and also in the ways in which the public reacts to its presentation. Hence, there is a tendency to change the past to suit changing requirements; relics can be adapted, added to, copied, and interpreted, all of which idealise the past.

Since heritage cannot logically exist without a consumer, then, in effect, the consumer defines heritage. Then, the perceived problem of authenticity is largely irrelevant in heritage planning, because the consumer authenticates the resource. Wilsmore (1994) discusses the credibility and importance of authenticity in heritage:

Philosophically, it is possible to consider whether it is wrong to replace the old with the new in order to deceive the eye. Thus, in projects which are open to public view, it may be argued that the intention is to allow the public to see the grandeur of the original design. Therefore, it may be possible to return to a finish which, to the uninformed eye, appears original. This then begs the question whether something is allowed to be recreated for the tourist who is too unfamiliar to be critical. But should appreciation be just scholarly activity or for those that are otherwise informed? (P. 25)

One answer may be that the uninformed viewer should be educated to be able to perceive what is fake and what
is not, otherwise the truth lies hidden and the viewer is corrupted. Moreover, there is a counterargument that if change is not shown to be change, by alteration in sympathetic but modern design or honest repair, then the ability to distinguish change over time will be arrested. Lowenthal (1985) supports the latter, that in interpreting or presenting the past, there are constant distortions that distance the reality from that which is seen by modern visitors. Lowenthal feels that this problem is compounded by the naivety of audiences who do not have the cultural capital to understand heritage.

Another faction believes that heritage is being less distorted than recreated. Hewison (1987) invokes the idea of an identical copy for which no original ever existed. He provides this analogy of the museum experience: the ultimate logic of the new type of museum is the museum that has no collection, the Heritage Centre, where the original purpose of having a museum (i.e., to preserve and interpret, in a scholarly way, a significant number of objects) has been almost entirely displaced by the desire to give the visitor some kind of more or less pleasurable experience. As a result, the distinction between museums, heritage sites, and theme parks is becoming more blurred. As museums move toward greater variety in forms of presentation and interpretation, theme parks are showing greater awareness of authenticity (Herbert 1995). These phenomena are referred to as “museumification” and “disneyfication” (Larkham 1995). One example of “museumification,” Colonial Williamsburg in the United States, shows how conservation has largely ignored the depth and dynamism of a “living” urban environment in favour of the re-creation of a sterile and superficial setting of a past lifestyle (Tramposch 1994). This represents a new type of cultural heritage museum based on the reenactment of history aided by the assembly of authentic materials to create scenes appropriate to a period and animated by waxworks or people dressed up in period costumes. Similarly, “disneyfication” is the creation of an area based on an abstracted, fictional history made to look and feel authentic, first seen in Disneyland in California with the re-creation of the American Main Street of the nineteenth century. But this trend has spread to urban areas, such as the case of St. Nicholas quarter in east Berlin, in which buildings and urban spaces have been replicated in authentic-looking medieval styles for which there is no historical origin in order to provide a pleasurable tourist experience (Newby 1994). These trends have proved popular, however, calling into question whether tourism-led development is undermining many of the precepts that conservation is based on, particularly an overemphasis on the physical, external aspects of heritage and conservation, at the expense of an in-depth understanding of urban culture.

THE TOURISM-HERITAGE RELATIONSHIP

Although increasing wealth and leisure time have led to increased tourism, which has been the impetus for heritage planning, the relationship between planning, heritage, and tourism is one of paradox (Urry 1990). As with any economic activity, tourism makes use of resources and produces an environmental impact that amounts to exploitation if the quantity and quality of those resources are degraded. Newby (1994) identifies a complex relationship between heritage and tourism in which culture evolves from being a shared entity, to being exploited, and in extreme cases created. When culture is shared, tourism and heritage coexist so that tourism revenues can be used to sustain and conserve environments of heritage value. However, when culture is exploited or created, there is an explicit domination of commercial values over conservation values as tourism becomes central to the local economy. In this instance, the cultural heritage becomes a consumer product susceptible to a selection process restricted by the choice, fashion, and taste of international organisations involved in the marketing of the heritage product, and the consumers.

Selectivity in tourism generates cultural and economic problems, of which the latter has the greatest impact on the conservation of the built heritage. Commercial pressures exerted through the tourism industry may lead to public investment in conservation being directed disproportionately to support the tourism economy. This leads not only to area bias in conservation but a style or time bias as well.

Moreover, tourism activities result in land use selectivity. Tourist activities and the growing number of tourists induce spatial transformation processes. Changes in the morphology of the place, in the physical structures, in the functional patterns, and in the use of public space all contribute to this transformation process. Jansen-Verbeke (1997) reveals that different tourist activities have a physical impact on artefacts in the urban environment. Tourists visiting historical cities are attracted by the spatial concentration of historic buildings as a setting for sight-seeing and the range of opportunities for cultural activities such as visiting museums. The number of attractions and the actual dispersion of interesting artefacts in the historic city explain to a large extent the way in which the tourist activity is evolving in time and space, causing overcrowdedness, traffic congestion, shortage of parking, biased range in retail trades, rising prices, and intrusion in the private domain, ultimately leading to conservation bias (Jansen-Verbeke 1997).

Tourists may be strongly attracted to the conserved relics of the past, but tourists also require modern sup-
port facilities. Those functions that support the tourist activity may provide a use and justification for parts of the historic city, but simultaneously they attract less-welcome land use demands, such as hotels and infrastructure needed to cope with the high demands of tourists (Ashworth and Tunbridge 1990). The progressive domination of tourist service functions leads to functional conversion, particularly from retail to food service provisions, and the expansion of the tourist area into surrounding craft and residential areas. A uniformity in retail and service provision such as the introduction of fast-food outlets, modern car park facilities, street furniture, and standardised hotel architecture often represents a significant distortion of what is required to serve the local population. In fact, tourism brings with it the erosion of differences between heritage places, even though it markets what passes for individuality (Newby 1994).

Moreover, a particular form of tourism referred to as “enclave tourism” occurs where the type and location of facilities are not oriented toward the local community (Healy 1992). Money generated from these enclaves generally has little effect on the local economy or even the host country, especially if foreign interests own them. “Heritage shopping” is one example of a district created specifically to serve the needs of recreation and particularly the needs of the tourists. Although from a conservation perspective the historic buildings are being reused, two problems arise. First, more attention is paid to the conservation of those areas of the historic city that are intensively used by tourism, resulting in land use selectivity. Second, this leads to upward inflationary pressure on local economies. Prices of land and property, as well as the goods that are being sold, are neither affordable nor responsive to local needs. This “export” orientation ultimately leads to higher rent prices, distorting the character of the area and creating an “outsider” zone in the heart of the historic city. Moreover, if land is sold as freehold to the developers, it means loss of sovereignty for the locals, translated into loss of control in decision making, as well as loss of benefits.

Similarly, both economic pressures and time bias govern building selectivity. As previously observed in urban conservation approaches toward the reuse of individual buildings, the best alternative is generally to have a function whose values are sympathetic to building form. However, the preeminence of economic forces generated by tourism means that frequently commercial activities, often with a leisure or tourist dimension, conflict with form (Newby 1994). This conflict between whether conservation is concerned with a building as a structure or as a shape raises questions on authenticity. Significant structural changes to historic buildings often indicate that more value is placed on the exterior to generate revenues from the progressive commercialisation of tourist activities, rather than valuing the building as an integral whole.

The selection process in conservation also depends on the age and rarity of buildings. The building’s differences, its ambience, and its imageability support its conservation value and are also the basis for its attraction to tourists. Many towns have evolved through many periods and hence offer a variety of architectural styles dating up to the modern age. These towns are now faced with the problem of favouring certain periods above others. As a result, less favoured areas fall into economic decay and fabric deterioration, whereas other areas receive priority funding (Newby 1994). Ashworth (1994) attributes selectivity to the marketing of heritage places as products driven by the requirements of the consumer: “They [heritage places] are assemblages of many diverse elements: thus the same resources can be used in the production of a wide array of place products serving an equally wide variety of consumer markets” (p. 23). Thus, depending on the changing tastes of consumer demand, buildings from diverse periods will experience unevenly distributed conservation efforts.

More recently, urban theorists have drawn attention to the ways in which tourism conflicts with the living culture. Where culture is made to serve tourism and is simultaneously transformed into a market-oriented commodity, a revalued or sanitised history results (Larkham 1995). According to Herbert (1995), locals are in danger of becoming part of the “spectacle” of tourism, gazed upon by outsiders who know little or nothing about their culture or society. Some of the social and cultural problems that arise stem from the different cultural norms and assumptions perceived by both the tourists and locals on such issues as child labour, the role of women, religion, alcohol, and so on that may be shocking or offensive to either side. The greatest conflict between host and visitor occurs in the different cultural uses of urban space. Private space, such as those associated with residential areas, as well as religious space are the most sensitive to tourist intervention (Orbasli 2000). Thus, the development of heritage places and the increase of tourist numbers may bring with them an invasion of privacy. Tourism, which has been heralded as a means of cross-cultural understanding, can also be the cause of cultural confrontation, augmented by the lack of cultural awareness on the visitor’s behalf. In addition, this cultural confrontation can be unintentionally exacerbated by displays of wealth and consumerism that may be disruptive to locals. Tourism also induces changes in local lifestyles and cultures. Imported ideas on heritage induced by cliché
images that become symbolic of certain cultures, such as dragons or belly dancers, promote the vulgarisation of culture (Dahlan 1990). This can be seen in the performance of cultural acts that become a form of entertainment to the tourist industry, destroying their inherent meaning (Furze, de Lacy, and Birckhead 1996). Similarly, tourists and their desire for souvenirs and artefacts create a market for replicas that devalues cultural items. The demand for tourist items can also lead to a loss of some local crafts in favour of those that cater to the tourist, such as T-shirts and souvenirs.

Tourism also has economic impacts on local populations of historic cities. The local economy may be disturbed through the introduction of tourist earnings making some locals richer than others. High inflation from tourism pushes prices up beyond the reach of the local community, restricting resources to foreign investors and tourists that could cause resentment among locals. This results in inevitable economic leakages, compounded by the international organisational arrangement of tourism. The majority of tourists originate from the developed countries, and consequently their tour, travel, and accommodation needs are largely coordinated by firms based in these countries. As a result, a large percentage of expenditure is not made at the destination end. Britton (1982) estimates that the proportion of a total inclusive tour price that is retained to the tourist, such as T-shirts and souvenirs.

**CAN HERITAGE TOURISM BE SUSTAINABLE?**

The realisation that mass tourism in many cases is destructive of culture, the environment, and the built resources has contributed to the development of alternative forms of tourism. Viewed as a form of alternative tourism, the concept of sustainable tourism has been motivated by the growth in environmental awareness among many people and the recognition among conservationists that tourism is one method of capturing conservation values for conservation purposes. However, the term *sustainability* has become a catchphrase, which, partly because of its imprecision, has attracted widespread interest from proponents and opponents. The ambiguity lies in the potential conflict in terms: *sustainable* implies a state that can be maintained, is ongoing, perhaps even unchanging, whereas *tourism* implies the dynamic process of change to suit consumer demands. On the other hand, the ambiguity also potentially permits flexibility and fine-tuning to meet the needs of different places and cultures.

From its inception, the concept of *sustainability* has revolved around managing current and future development by reconciling the three e’s: environment, economy, and an equitable society. One of the first definitions was given in 1987 by the Brundtland Report (the World Commission on Environment and Development) as “development which meets the needs of the future without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (p. 8). This underpins the basic precept of intergenerational equity that calls for natural resource conservation and environmental protection for the good of future generations (Jepson 2001). But equity is not just about the distribution of resources, services, and opportunities. It also includes issues of quality of life and community participation in decision making as advocated by Beatley and Manning (1997). Jacobs (1991) defines *sustainability* as the capacity of the environment to accept demands without irreversible or otherwise unacceptable change. In this view, the ecological concept is one of defining the *carrying capacity* of an environment to sustain a certain population, and beyond that level, the species will collapse (Beatley and Manning 1997). Sisman (1994) suggests a concept of sustainability entailing a long-term objective when he argues that sustainability must include a working partnership that blends good environmental practice and profitable business for mutual long-term advantages. Therefore, sustainability acknowledges a “critical natural capital” that must be maintained for future generations. This does not, however, rule out change. As English Nature (1992) suggests, there are other conservation elements of lesser value that are “compensatable.” That is, they themselves could be damaged or lost, but they could be replaced by other elements of equivalent worth to ensure “constant environmental assets.” From an ecological perspective, the system is capable of reproducing itself on the long term through renewal and recycling, as well as creative innovation (Campbell 1996).

Sustainable tourism is rooted in sustainable development, in the sense that if tourism is to contribute to sustainable development, it must be economically viable, environmentally sensitive, and culturally appropriate. Two schools of thought have developed views on sustainable tourism. The first argument reflects the functional approach of analysing tourism and its impact on the tourist destination as a cultural resource, whereas the second is referred to as the political economy approach, which takes the view that in order to minimise the worst examples of exploitation, host countries and populations need to seek public ownership of the tourist industry and direct marketing of the product.
few see tourism as a pollution-free industry which is environmentally benign, although many would accept that it is in the long-term interests of the tourist industry to assure the longevity of the resources on which it depends. But this is easier said than done, for tourism exhibits many of the attributes of common property resources, with most money being spent on transportation, accommodation, and food and beverages, and relatively little being directed to the maintenance of the natural and cultural heritage resources on which tourism ultimately depends. (P. 46)

Nevertheless, proponents of sustainable tourism believe that if development is founded on small-scale, locally owned activities, tourism can fulfill a nonconsumptive use of resources, which appears to have the potential to serve both conservation and local development roles as well (Furze, De Lacy, Birckhead 1996). In this case, the benefits are threefold. First, there will be less need for financial investment in infrastructure and superstructure facilities compared to conventional mass tourism. Second, locally owned and operated businesses will not have to conform to the corporate Western identity of multinational tourism concerns and therefore can have a much higher input of local products, materials, and labour. Third, the profits made should accrue locally instead of flowing back to the state or foreign organisations (Cater 1994).

In support of the functional theory, scholars like Richard Butler identify the paradox of sustainability and tourism. Butler (1997) argues that tourist destinations are deliberately changing in anticipation of, or to reflect changes in, customer preferences brought on by moving; rearranging; and, even within limits, duplicating them. This is compatible with strategies on sustainability of natural resources that stress the possibilities offered by recycling and renewal. In terms of cultural resources, this notion encompasses the recycling of the past and renewal in the sense of repair and reconstruction that are clearly essential.

Butler (1997) attributes the decline in the tourist destination cycle to the unchecked development of the destination until it exceeds its innate capacity to absorb tourism and its associated development. After this point, problems emerge, which if not addressed satisfactorily would result in subsequent visitor decline. Ashworth (1995) believes that the link between resource valuation and output equity can be made through the concept of “carrying capacity” as a tool for heritage management. This concept determines the maximum use of any place without causing negative effects on resources, the community, economy, culture, and environment, and the subsequent loss of visitor satisfaction (Wahab 1997). However, even though these principles appear to be central to sustainability, Jansen-Verbeke (1997) illustrates the complexity of the multidimensional character of carrying capacity. It is impossible to decide on the limits to the numbers of tourists that a city can “carry” in a particular time span. The impact of tourism is not only deduced from actual numbers of tourists but to a large extent depends on the combined impact of tourism-related activities in a particular urban environment and the physical changes induced in the built environment.

The concept of carrying capacity has been used as a form of management for tourist destinations in several countries. In Britain, Chester City Council has adopted such an approach in bringing historical issues to the centre of the decision-making stage. The methodology
sets out to measure the change in special historic qualities as circumstances alter by the use of easily available indicators. The sum total of all the special qualities, the indicators of change, and the possible critical points of future change make up the capacity framework. Following on from this analysis, the capacity framework is used to work out several hypothetical scenarios representing a possible future for the town (Arup et al. 1995). There is danger with this method, in that manageable physical capacities may not coincide with other optima, such as the limits of existing societies to absorb the demands of tourism without provoking negative reactions. There is, in addition, a serious danger that any general capacity figures used as the basis of overall management neglects the specific capacity of particular locations or sites. This is common when considering secondary supporting tourism services where capacities are controllable rather than the primary heritage facilities, which are often more difficult to monitor and control visitor access (Jansen-Verbeke 1997).

The political-economy approach, on the other hand, dwells on the structural inequalities in world trade, characterised by severe distortions and imbalances in the share of income and profits from tourism that remain inside a peripheral economy. To minimise these effects, theorists argue that governments would need to intervene in the market, oversee integration of planning and implementation, and encourage local involvement.

Cater (1994) uses these criteria to suggest ways to ensure sustainable tourism. In his view, allowing the free play of market forces is not conducive to sustainable outcomes when tourism organisations benefit from increasing visitor numbers at the expense of the environment. Cater suggests governments should have greater control of the markets through fiscal measures on tourism companies, such as forcing them to build in appropriate cost and price signals, together with incentives for environmental protection, and other measures such as taxation. The introduction of foreign visitor fees to heritage places is one method of subsidising heritage places by the users themselves. The fees levied should then be channelled back into ensuring sustainable tourism development with a lower charge for locals.

Sustainable tourism activities concerns many government ministries, so it is vital to integrate planning for sustainable tourism with national development plans in general and sector targets in particular. It is also necessary to recognise the mutually dependent interests of the public and private sectors in tourism. It is in the government’s interests to create the conditions and business environment within which private local business can make a reasonable profit.

Finally, the most vital factor to ensure sustainability of tourism development is to increase local involve-
The focus is primarily on creating more liveable built environments rather than integrating a more holistic view of community development. The absence of a social and cultural perspective is also evident in the conservation and heritage planning literature, in which the physical product forms the principal focus. This has raised philosophical problems of selectivity, authenticity, interpretation, and re-creation of the cultural heritage that have defined and redefined the meaning and significance of the cultural resource. More practical problems stem from the dichotomous relationship between preservation for posterity and change and development necessary for keeping heritage places alive and attractive.

This article has examined the potential relationships between tourism, conservation, and planning within the sustainability discourse. Four objectives have been identified: (1) the need for long-term planning, (2) the need to protect the cultural heritage as a natural resource that if overexploited will be degraded, (3) the acceptance of change and development to ensure continuity, and (4) the need to consider equitable access to heritage resources by the local community and visitors.

Therefore, to plan for an agenda for heritage places as an integrated part of a holistic view of community development, two interrelated approaches should be realised. The first approach is to reunite urban form, that is, the buildings and urban spaces, with the activities and uses that take place within them. The second approach is to integrate land use planning with social ideals (Campbell 1996; Jepson 2001). In heritage places, this means managing and resolving the dominance of tourist activities over local needs and aspirations, reflected in the transformation of land uses and buildings, the disruptive use of public and private space, changing ownership patterns, and the externalising of the local economy.

Within this framework, the management of change is crucial to the long-term survival of heritage places. Change associated with historic buildings should involve adaptive reuse and reconstruction in order to combat both structural and functional obsolescence in accordance with changing social needs. This process of renewal and recycling has two objectives. First, it protects a critical capital of cultural assets for future generations, and second, it preserves the genius loci and sense of place that gives historic areas their individuality. The process of renewal also redefines the concept of authenticity from one that is focused only on the past to one that views the present as part of the continuum. Skilful reconstruction rather than restoration, therefore, contributes to the added value of the building and forms part of its evolution (and survival). Compatible uses also raise the building’s economic viability, promoting the efficiency of local economic activities and its social benefits. The degree of change to the historic fabric is defined by the selection and legal designation of conservation-worthy buildings. However, this article has also highlighted that too much legislated protection can restrict essential growth and modernisation, pushing development to peripheral areas. To a large extent, this can be controlled by integrating conservation areas within comprehensive development plans to promote a strategy for transportation, environment, energy, land use and design, and public facilities that applies not only to local areas but to the city scale (Berke and Conroy 2000).

Change in the way of creative innovation is also essential to ensure the continued vitality of heritage places. The replacement of building stock so that new forms meet changes in social and cultural values, as well as in materials and technology, is a form of reproduction and revitalisation to provide the cultural assets for future generations. Conzen (1966) introduced the concept of historicity in his work on conservation of historical townscapes and their management. He noted that this quality was not a permanent attribute but may be lost; the rate of loss increasing geometrically compared with the amount of destruction of traditional forms and the quality of the associated redevelopment. Thus, the location, form, and quality of new development are paramount and should be managed under architectural design guides and controls informed by an active involvement with, and interpretation of, the existing context stressing the continuity between time frames (Tiesdell et al. 1996). The contextual juxtaposition of robust buildings will give an added value to the built environment, replacing structurally obsolete buildings with resources capable of sustaining future activities. The quality of new development also reinforces the sense of place that supports community identity and attachment (Berke and Conroy 2000).

In terms of the sustainability of heritage places, managing tourism can have substantial inherent potential to underpin sustainable development and conservation. First, tourism can yield economic development at the local, regional, and national levels, creating jobs and bringing in much-needed foreign income. However, mechanisms for ensuring equitable access to social and economic resources and their distribution among all social groups of the local community require careful management. One area of sustainability that has received markedly less attention is that of financial resource mechanisms. Revenues generated from tourism should feed back into the local community through mechanisms of cross-subsidisation such as revolving trusts to refurbish and reclaim buildings or enforced entrance fees to tourist attractions. These revenues
could operate to improve local incomes, saving and enhancing whole areas of towns. Second, tourism also has the potential to create more demand for conserving buildings including less valued monuments and overlooked traditional environments (Orbasli 2000). Third, tourism can create uses for redundant buildings, which if carefully managed, can contribute to preservation. Fourth, tourism can also increase an appreciation for the historic environment, contributing to greater local and cross-cultural understanding.

Tourism, however, does create conflict between visitors and hosts that needs to be resolved in the educational, spatial, and participatory realms. Tourists should be made aware of the cultural customs of host communities available through sufficient information and orientation of the heritage place and its people. By educating tourists, they can become more accountable for conservation goals and the way they use the heritage place. This has spatial implications; raising their awareness of cultural space helps define tourist areas versus no-go private space. Visitor management should also include restricting tourist numbers in heritage sites by dispersing the tourist activity within the town to relieve pressures (Orbasli 2000). Addressing the community’s needs and aspirations while raising awareness of the value of the cultural resources should also be an important goal in tourism and conservation activity. This can be achieved by the reuse and building of new forms that are an expression of the community’s cultural, social, and economic values. A greater role in decisions related to tourism management, development, and the reuse of historic buildings is one way of securing this objective.

In conclusion, tourism can have positive attributes for conservation and development in heritage places. For planners, the principal goal is to create a strategy for minimising the adverse impacts and maximising gains from tourism. This would have to include the management of the cultural resource and the quality of new development, the uses and activities the built environment sustains, and the integration of both these factors with the sociocultural needs of the local community.

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