Built Heritage Conservation Education
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Conservation and Change: Questions for Conservation Education in Urban India

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In India the contemporary city is largely defined by its kinetic condition, that is its movement and the place-making of its residents in the form of festivals, rituals, impromptu bazaars, and events. The kinetic city has largely replaced the static city (its physical architecture) as the primary and most dynamic aspect of urban India. In light of this, conservation students and professionals who work and study in India must look to the kinetic city for their cues when assessing significance and developing conservation plans or interventions. Architectural conservation programmes need to broaden their scope of concerns to reach beyond the material fabric to include the expertise of urban planning and the motivation and vision of local community groups. It will only be through the integration of these diverse actors that architectural conservation will bridge the objects of the past with the motion of the present and the direction of the future. If conservation of the built heritage in India is to be relevant (useful) it will need to embrace the kinetic city and accommodate the dance of its residents.

Urban India is emerging as a unique landscape of bewildering architectural pluralism. This landscape is characterized by intense dualities where modernity and tradition, prosperity and acute poverty, communality and communalism, medieval society and cutting edge information technology coalesce to create seemingly incomprehensible cities. These are represented more accurately as being driven by ‘motion’ and mutation of urban space rather than by conventional notions of the city as a largely ‘static’ and stable entity. One of the effects of this condition also challenges the conventional ideas of the conservation of the built environment and even our basic attitudes towards architecture, urban design and the training of professionals to deal with these emerging urban landscapes.

Contemporary Indian cities reflect two components which occupy the same physical space. The first is the formal or static city. Built of more permanent material such as concrete, steel and brick, it is comprehended as a two-dimensional entity on conventional city maps and it is monumental in its presence. The second is the informal or kinetic city. Incomprehensible as a two-dimensional entity, it is perceived as a city in motion – a three-dimensional construct of incremental development. The kinetic city is temporary in nature and is often built with recycled material: plastic sheets, scrap metal, canvas and waste wood. It constantly modifies and reinvents itself. The kinetic city is usually not perceived as architecture, but instead in terms of spaces, which hold associative values and supportive lives.
The intertwined existence of the static and kinetic city characterizes the landscape of emergent Indian cities. (Photo: Rahul Mehrotra)

Patterns of occupation determine its form and perception; it is an indigenous urbanism that has its own particular ‘local’ logic (Mehrotra, 2002). It is not necessarily the city of the poor, as most images might suggest; rather it is a temporal articulation and occupation of space which not only creates a richer sensibility of spatial occupation, but also suggests how spatial limits are expanded to include formally unimagined uses in dense urban conditions.1

The kinetic city presents a compelling vision which potentially allows us to understand better the blurred lines of contemporary urbanism and the changing roles of people and spaces in urban society. The increasing concentrations of global flows have exacerbated the inequalities and spatial divisions of social classes. As foreign investments find their way to India under the new liberalized economic policies of the government, the system by which the city form is evolving has transformed rather dramatically with private enterprise playing a much larger role in the delivery of housing and other public amenities. And so, as globalization ‘hits the ground’ it brings both glamour and displacement in its wake.2 In this context, an architecture or urbanism of equality under increasingly inequitable economic conditions requires looking deeper in order to find a wide range of places to mark and commemorate the cultures of those excluded from the spaces of global flows. These do not necessarily lie in the formal production of architecture, but often challenge it. Here the idea of a city is an elastic urban condition, not a product of a grand vision, but instead one that might be characterized as a ‘grand adjustment’.

The Kinetic City

The Kinetic City, bazaar-like in form, can be seen as the symbolic image of the emerging urban Indian condition. The processions, weddings, festivals, hawkers, street vendors and slum dwellers all create an ever-transforming streetscape – a city in constant motion where the very physical fabric is characterized by the kinetic. The static city, on the other hand, dependent on architecture for its representation, is no longer the single image by which the city is read. Thus architecture is not the ‘spectacle’ of the kinetic city nor does it even comprise the single dominant image of the city. It is perhaps for this reason that conservation debates do not have the currency they would in other societies where architecture is the most important mechanism by which the memory of the city is codified and contained. In contrast, festivals such as Diwali, Dussera, Navrathri, Muharra, Durga Puja and Ganesh
Chathurthi have emerged as the spectacles of the kinetic city. Their presence in the everyday landscape pervades and dominates the popular visual culture of Indian cities. Festivals create a forum through which the fantasies of the subalterns are articulated and even organized into political action. In Mumbai for example, the popularity and growth of the Ganesh festival has become a phenomenon.\(^3\)

During the festival, which occurs in August or September, numerous neighbourhoods transform themselves temporarily with lights and decoration. New spaces are created to house the idol of Ganesh for ten days. During this festival period, family, neighbourhood and city events mark the celebrations. On the last day a large part of the city’s population carries the idol in long processions. Ultimately Lord Ganesh is immersed in the sea.

Each procession carries tableaux, depicting images of both local and global concern, with Lord Ganesh mediating the outcomes. This representation is not based on formal scriptures or predetermined rules; instead, human ingenuity breaches the boundaries between the local and the global, the historic and the contemporary. They convey the hybrid urgencies of metropolitan India (Hoskote, 2001). The neighbourhood processions weave through predetermined routes in the city. Each procession vies against other neighbourhood processions to showcase the intensity of their followings. Set against the backdrop of the static city, the procession culminates with the immersion of the idol. It is bid farewell amidst chants inviting Ganesh to resurrect his presence the following year.

Immersion becomes a metaphor for the spectacle of the city. As the clay idol dissolves in the water of the bay, the spectacle comes to a close. There are no static or permanent
mechanisms to encode this spectacle. Here the memory of the city is an 'enacted' process – a temporal moment as opposed to permanent buildings that contain the public memory as a static or permanent entity. The city and its architecture are not synonymous and cannot contain a single meaning. Within the kinetic city, meanings are not stable; spaces get consumed, reinterpreted and recycled. The kinetic city recycles the static city to create a new spectacle.

This transformative ability of the kinetic city becomes even more vivid in the events that play out at Mumbai's Town Hall every year on 15 August, India's Independence Day. The Public Works Department (PWD) subverts the meaning and symbolism of the architecture of this classical building by reconfiguring it for an annual ceremony when the Governor of the State addresses the citizens.

To ensure it is weather protected from the monsoon rains, the PWD builds a structure, a sort of large porch, which is attached itself to the building. Built overnight in bamboo and cloth, the decorative trim and other ornamental highlights grafted on to this classical building a local and perhaps traditional sensibility that momentarily transforms the architecture. Many conservation professionals in the city protest each year, decrying this as an abuse of the legislation that protects heritage buildings, but they ignore the fact that this is a reversible action, well within the bounds of even the holiest of preservationists' canons. The intended image of this symbol of

The Town Hall in Mumbai – wrapped up every year for Independence Day – can be read as a momentary subversion of this colonial icon to celebrate India's independence. A safe reversible intervention that symbolizes a gentle accommodation that the static city makes for the kinetic city. (Photo: Rahul Mehrotra)
colonial power, a celebrated asset of the static city, is subverted and re-colonized by the kinetic city. The PWD alters the significance of this building momentarily to expand the margins of the kinetic city.

Cultural Significance

This idea takes on a critical dimension when contemplating the preservation of the built environment in these contexts. Debates about the conservation of the static city have often revolved around the idea of significance. The notion of ‘cultural significance’ as an all-encompassing idea is something that emerged clearly in the conservation debate in the 1980s. To be more precise, it first emerged in what is referred to as the Burra Charter – one of the many resolutions made by the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) to define and guide conservation practice. The Burra Charter (adopted at Burra, South Australia in 1979) defined cultural significance as the ‘aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present and future generations’. Implicit in this definition is the belief that ‘significance’ is static. It is a definition that sometimes leads to ‘object-centred’ conservation (devoid of life) with its roots in the debate propagated by the antiquarians of the Renaissance. What is the validity of such a notion where cultural memory is often an enacted process, as in the kinetic city?

How is cultural significance assessed in the kinetic city where meanings are fluid and often complicated by the overlay of both colonial and post-colonial conditions, especially when the creators and custodians of these historic environments are from different cultures? For example, in Mumbai the generation that grew up in the cities before India’s Independence in 1947 regarded the British buildings as icons of oppression and saw no need to preserve them. It took another generation to establish neutral associations with these buildings. For the present generation of custodians the buildings, drained of their symbolic potency along with their accompanying colonial environments, are just carcasses left behind by another culture.

How then do we read cultural significance in the kinetic city, which now forms a greater part of the Indian urban reality? In this dynamic context, if the production or preservation of architecture or urban form has to be informed by a specific reading of cultural significance, it will necessarily have to include the notion of ‘constructing significance’ both in the architectural as well as conservation debates. In this sense, ‘constructing significance’ is a process by which use, association, and significance are carefully constructed and invented to render these historic environments useful and relevant. One of the primary objectives of this process is to help ensure the long-term conservation of these environments for the future. An understanding that ‘cultural significance’ evolves will challenge as well as clarify the role of the architect as an advocate of change (versus some preservationists who oppose change) and as one who can engage with both the kinetic and static city on equal terms. Under such conditions, a draining of the symbolic import of the architectural landscape will potentially lead to a deepening of ties between architecture and contemporary realities and experiences. This approach will allow architecture and urban typologies to be transformed through intervention and placed in the service of contemporary life, realities, and emerging aspirations. Here, the static city will embrace the kinetic city and be informed and remade by its logic.

The phenomenon of bazaars in Victorian arcades in the old Fort area, Mumbai’s historic district, is emblematic of this potential negotiation between the static and kinetic city. The original use of the arcades was twofold. First, they provided spatial mediation between building and street. Second, the arcades were a perfect response to Mumbai’s climate. They serve to protect pedestrians...
Craft is alive in India – a reconstructed column at the Chowmahalla Palace in Hyderabad which now functions as a city museum. (Photo: Rahul Mehrotra)

from both the harsh sun and lashing rains. Today with the informal bazaar occupying the arcade its original intent is challenged. This emergent relationship of the arcade and bazaar not only forces a confrontation of uses and interest groups, but also demands new preservation approaches. For the average Mumbai resident the hawker provides a wide range of goods at prices considerably lower than those found in local shops. Thus the bazaars in the arcades that characterize the Fort Area are thriving businesses.

For the elite and for conservation professionals, the Victorian core represents the old city centre, complete with monumental icons. In fact, as the city sprawls, dissipating the clarity of its form, these images, places, and icons acquire even greater meaning for preservationists as critical symbols of the city’s historic image. Consequently, hawking is deemed illegal by city authorities, who are constantly attempting to relocate the bazaars.

The challenge in Mumbai is to cope with the city’s transformation, not by inducing or polarizing its dualism, but by attempting to reconcile these opposite conditions as being simultaneously valid. The existence of two worlds in the same space implies that we must accommodate and overlap varying uses, perceptions, and physical forms. For example, the arcades in the Fort area are a special urban component that inherently possesses a capacity for reinterpretation. As an architectural or urban design solution, the arcades display an incredible resilience; they can accommodate new uses while keeping the illusion of their architecture intact.

One design solution might be to adapt the functioning of the arcades. They could be restructured to allow for easy pedestrian movement and accommodate hawkers at the same time. They could contain the amorphous bazaar encased in the illusion of the disciplined Victorian arcade. With this sort of planning, components in urban historic districts would have a greater ability to survive because they could be more adaptable to changing economic and social conditions. There are no total solutions in an urban landscape simultaneously charged with the duality between permanence and rapid transformation. At best, the city could constantly evolve and invent solutions for the present through safeguarding the crucial components of its historically important ‘urban hardware’. Could ‘Bazaars in Victorian Arcades’ become a symbol of an emergent reality of temporary adjustment?

Unfortunately, most conservation debates discuss change in terms of the loss of something as opposed to new possibilities – because people (especially the propagators and patrons of conservation efforts), will readily react to any sort of new condition as worse than some ‘magic moment’ in the past. Conservation professionals then
Bazaars in Victorian arcades. Can the arcades simultaneously keep the illusion of the architecture of the buildings intact while accommodating a contemporary bazaar? (Photos: Rahul Mehrotra)

develop a rationale to describe that sense of loss. However, in the context of our contemporary urban state, the issue is how simultaneously to identify new typologies and work with them rather than to dwell too much on the ‘postcard city’ – a city that only flights of nostalgia momentarily recreate! It is this shift that is crucial for both the practice of conservation in Indian urban areas as well as in the education of practitioners for this context.

Conservation Education
Conservation education in India in its present form, with an emphasis on formal
and linear histories, does not equip potential practitioners to intervene in the Indian urban context. In fact, the present structure of education emphasizes the validity of continuous historic narratives and in the process only serves to perpetuate the nostalgia driven motivation to preserve. Discontinuities or inconsistencies in the environment are seen as aberrations in an otherwise ideal built environment. Thus, the ability to accept the validity of opposing or seemingly irreconcilable forms, histories, or narratives is not something for which conservation education prepares architects. Instead it draws them further away from dealing with the pluralism that is inherent in the Indian built environment (both historic and contemporary). Furthermore, with the recent liberalization policies of the Indian government and the massive change that it has triggered in the built environment, this approach to create an imagined world of lost glory seems a futile, irrelevant and unproductive track for conservation professionals to take.5

Several crucial questions (with far fewer answers) follow from this situation. How do we then embrace this ‘change’ as integral to the practice of conservation? How do contemporary aspirations ‘inspire’ the process of conservation where we look to the future and the past in a simultaneous gesture? How does one identify the contemporary engines that will drive this process of urban conservation? And to drive this process, how should one understand the validity or necessity of constructing ‘cultural significance’?

In the context of the emerging Indian urban condition, how do we train professionals to grapple with this emergent reality? What does architectural conservation mean in this dynamic context? Does the training of effective architectural professionals in the Indian and South Asian contexts require a training which is broader than the present ‘material conservation’ centred education which conservation programmes seem to emphasize? This is a particularly difficult condition because in India the conservation movement is at a very early stage – focusing largely on establishing fundamental rules (often driven solely by the international charters) and thus allowing little room for conjecture and strategy which might employ subjective interpretations. While conservators with specialized skills are far more objective in their interventions, the conservation architect, by definition, necessarily has to play a role which requires strategizing for new uses and interpretation, especially in the dynamic contemporary urban Indian context. Thus for specialized conservators to be effective when collaborating with conservation architects and planners, their ideological clarity about the practice of conservation within the discipline of architecture must be contextualized and responsive to the realities of that context.

Clearly the roots and norms of architectural conservation education in urban India lie in the Western canons of conservation practice in the United Kingdom, and are therefore limited by the issues and approaches dealt with in its practice in the West. Similar limitations are encountered when various charters of conservation practice are too literally or rigidly applied in the Indian context. For example, the articles of the Venice Charter ‘direct the restorer to sharply distinguish, on the surface of the monument where he is intervening, the elements of the past from those of the present’. Such a practice could be applicable in Europe where the Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution, and the fifty million deaths caused by two world wars have repeatedly wiped clean the slate on which living practices could have survived. But in most Asian countries such sudden catastrophes have not devastated craft beyond recovery (Khosla, 2002). Therefore as craft is alive and continuously evolving, it is capable of endless adaptation.

In Indian building practices it is not easy to distinguish between conservation, preservation, restoration, reconstruction and contemporary formulations. One reason
for this is that living craft traditions facilitate repair, preservation and reconstruction as easily and perhaps as authentically as norms might demand. The co-existence of skills, practices, approaches and values from different centuries that are simultaneously alive is an aspect in India that a practitioner cannot escape. In India (in the Hindi language) the word kal means both yesterday and tomorrow – the past and future are often viewed simultaneously in our perception. In fact even today, a number of heritage buildings in India are actively used by contemporary society, and are not treated as dead, isolated monuments. Thus the continuous nature of use and the notion of cultural traditions evolving into each other over time often blurs the distinctions that are made in Western traditions defined by specific time periods. In this respect, the Indian example and more specifically the urban Indian condition, relates much more relevantly to situations implied by the Nara Document on Authenticity (1994), where conservation professionals from around the world questioned some of the assumptions about authenticity found in earlier international charters. The charter and its follow up discussions emphasized developing greater understanding of the values represented by the cultural properties themselves, as well as respecting the role such monuments and sites play in contemporary society – suggesting that significance evolves.6

In contrast to this, institutions such as the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), which were established in the colonial period, propagate the European view codified in many of the earlier charters and in particular the Venice Charter. The ASI is limited by the bureaucracy of the government and is run by an administrative officer with no training or exposure to conservation or archaeology thus limiting the direction the ASI can take. As a result, its work is one of stabilizing monuments to ensure their continued survival rather than examining, questioning or even discussing ways in which their contemporary relevance can be reinterpreted or reinvented.

Similarly, UK-trained Indian professionals too rarely think outside the box of their training which is tempered with Western sensibilities. As part of a relatively recent professional specialization in India, they are extremely conservative in establishing the norms for practice and are often unwilling to take the risk of interpretation which might retard the establishment of their practice and identity as preservationists. Therefore the path of least resistance and a dogmatic adherence to the base line interpretation of the charters is the norm. Trained professionals in India, for example, pay lip service to craftsmen who are limited by the subservient role to which the colonists delegated them. The reference to craftsmen by the communities or guilds to which they belong is an historic and nostalgic view of craftsmanship – as opposed to viewing them as practitioners of an evolving and alive trade capable of adaptation as well as mobility within the multi-ethnic composition of contemporary India.

In India the sanctity of the site is often considered more important than the building that sits upon it. The building is regarded as a continuously evolving artefact, not a static object. The renowned American landscape commentator and historian, J.B. Jackson (1980) showed great insight when he observed that any society which sees itself as the direct product of the cosmic plan is likely to celebrate the original circumstance of creation. This then, allows a symbolic representation of that circumstance without necessarily resorting to its physical embodiment in buildings and the built environment in general. For example, in the Banganga Tank complex in Bombay or other such temple tank complexes across urban India, often the buildings around the tank (however ancient) are continuously replaced and transformed but the water in the tank (often with a pole at the centre symbolizing the axis mundi) remains unchanged for centuries. On the other hand,
religions such as Christianity or Judaism assume that the true meaning of existence derives not from the beginning of the world but from some extraordinary event or revelation, from a covenant between man and the divinity. Such religions are not concerned with reproducing any cosmic symbolism, but in celebrating the circumstance of the covenant. Here then, a building such as a church becomes the embodiment of the celebration of such a circumstance. Thus, the attitude in these different cultures to the marker of the sacred is very different. In one, the sanctity of the landscape and place are essential and continuous and not embodied by an object. In the other, the object of the place that represents a covenant is sacred and it is this focus upon the object that renders this condition more static.

Ironically and sadly, in this dynamic shifting and unique urban condition of India, the training of the conservation architect has not recognized this emerging landscape. Architectural education has thus far been technology based, and has not emphasized the phenomenological aspects of the built environment which are so critical to the Indian urban landscape. With regard to the specific training of the conservation professional, the situation is dismal. There is only one master’s level conservation programme in the country. The dearth of graduate degree programme opportunities forces students to train abroad (generally in the UK) and bring back with them a Eurocentric view of conservation. This view is shaped by international charters which still hold good but seem fundamentally challenged in dealing with conservation approaches in India. While these professionals, along with those trained in India, bring to practice high standards with regard to material conservation, their inability to connect with broader issues of the city in which their projects are located is perhaps an ineffective use of their skills. Their inability to reconcile the scientific view of conservation with ground realities is clearly a limitation. This postgraduate education is largely unable to generate solid knowledge for use outside the academy or university. Even worse, this kind of education produces seemingly overeducated professionals who usually do not engage productively for several years, doomed beneath the weight of their limitation to put into practice the paradigms they have been taught in school.

In the one master’s level programme in conservation education in India, which was established in 1986, the emphasis lies squarely on architectural conservation.7 This relatively young programme has attempted to widen the scope of training to include management and engage with the intangible aspects of heritage conservation. However, weighed down (presumably by university requirements) it is still overly centred on ‘historic building’ and ‘materials conservation’. Except for one course in the two-year programme which looks at ‘cultural landscapes’ the rest of the training is largely in architectural history, site management, legislation and material conservation. Its emphasis on the studio format is a good one and seeks to integrate the issues of dynamic urban landscapes in the studio projects. While this format does encourage conceptual thinking regarding the exigencies of the contemporary environment and their impact upon historic districts, it does not necessarily facilitate the development of new theoretical frameworks, as might be the case when courses such as this are set within cross-disciplinary laboratories. The limitation of a single lens, in this case building conservation, to view the complex urban condition of India is self-evident. Furthermore, in India, often the students who gravitate to conservation programmes at the master’s level are those who, in the course of their architectural education, realize their inability to engage with design. Thus, while this creates more focused interest in conservation, the self-selection process often reinforces the isolation and subculture of anti-design and the cynical reaction to any imagination of the future.
Questions for the Future

In urban India there is a need to situate the debate about conservation within the broader processes of urban development and planning. One example of this approach is the work which has been carried out over the last decade by citizens’ groups in Mumbai’s historic Fort area. Their conservation efforts have been located within the framework of urban planning issues. As active participants in the discussion about their community’s future, these citizens’ groups have served as the contemporary engines that help define or construct the significance of their urban spaces and forms. By constructing new uses and identities for these areas they can leverage the interest to conserve these precincts. Under heritage legislation, the architectural and physical character of the precinct is mandated.

Predictably, the postcard city syndrome dominated the first phases of the Mumbai historic Fort area conservation efforts where the process was driven by nostalgia and sentiment. Conservation standards came to be benchmarked by a ‘purist approach’ perpetuated by trained professionals often oblivious to the fact that the current stakeholders or constituencies in these historic areas had transformed completely. The emphasis by professionals on high end, often expensive, material conservation displayed a myopic view of the broader more pressing issues of the wider historic environment in which these projects were set.8 This unfortunately resulted in conservation being perceived by citizens as an expensive, elitist process and preoccupation without enough good or general improvements in the environment of the historic district. This process relates to a fundamental issue when dealing with conservation in post-colonial situations: whether the urban conservation movement grows out of an environmental movement, or out of a cultural desire to preserve historic icons? For an entire generation of citizens in Mumbai, the Victorian core of the city represents repression and exclusion. For most residents, the buildings are clearly icons of a colonial past. For others, the historic centre is a segment where cohesiveness of urban form and the integration of architecture and urban design create a pleasant (or at least potentially beautiful) environment in sheer contrast to the laissez-faire growth that has come to characterize the contemporary Indian urban landscape. Despite their conflicts, both groups were able to unite over a desire to upgrade aspects of their urban environment.

Over time, a broader range of professionals and NGOs engaged with the process of conservation and protection of the historic core and began to examine and then to grapple with the transforming nature of the city. Together they started addressing issues related to urban conservation, as well as to the general degradation of the environment in historic precincts. These groups questioned the value of restoring individual buildings when the landscape they lived in was falling apart. This critical adjustment of focus opened the issues of conservation up to a wider body of professionals (architects, urban designers, industrial designers, environmentalists and citizens at large) which resulted in a shifting of emphasis from fossilizing the past to integrating it within an emerging landscape.

To deal with this highly complex entity of urban India, notions of ‘cultural significance’ need to be broadened to respond to this highly pluralistic society where cultural memory is often an enacted process. This is especially relevant given that the ‘kinetic city’ now forms a great part of our urban reality! In this dynamic context, it is perhaps necessary in conservation debates to focus even more intensively on the notion of ‘constructing significance’. In fact, an understanding that significance ‘evolves’ will clarify the role of the conservation professional from being thought of as one who opposes change to one who manages or facilitates change.9 In this latter case, a conservator would be seen as an agent not
The Kala Ghoda district in Mumbai where citizens, by inventing a new use (constructing significance) for the historic precinct as an art district, have been able to effect its conservation. Grade one buildings like the Elphinstone College together with public space have created a revival and renewal in the area. (Photos: Rahul Mehrotra)
only of retention of what survives from the past, but also as one who gives expression to contemporary aspirations. Naturally, this crucial shift must occur first in the education of the conservation architect. If this occurs and the disciplines of architecture, landscape architecture and urban design once again blur then new kinds of conservation architects would be formed who could work more positively with the wonderful kaleidoscopic entity of the Indian city, where new futures are imagined and the past informs these futures.10

In India we need to reorient education to meet these challenges and to increase the number of training programmes for conservation professionals. It is critical that at this formative stage these programmes take into account their local context and the particular complexities of the urban Indian cultural landscape. What are the conservation and development related issues of urban India and how should these issues influence the content and teaching methodologies of conservation training programmes? Should urban design and conservation practice be an integrated discipline? Can conservation practice be as much about imagining futures as retaining pasts?

One of the fundamental conditions which prevents the merging of academic disciplines is the divergence which modernism has caused in both the profession and study of architecture. Modernist ideology has had a profound impact on contemporary architectural education, resulting in the often too rigid separation of the disciplines of architecture, urban planning, design and preservation into distinct and often polarized professions. One consequence of this division has been the development of specific subcultures within these professions which has not only drawn them apart but also made collaborative work harder to facilitate. The obvious impact of this on the built environment has been dramatic, resulting in unfortunate disjuncture in the physical form of cities, not only in India but also around the world. How then can the blurring between these disciplines be reinstated and re-established? Can these disciplines of design, planning and preservation be re-converged?

While this condition of total convergence is an idea that may be challenged and difficult to achieve, at least the curriculum for conservation studies can be expanded to include a greater emphasis on the emerging landscape in urban India. Essentially, it will be necessary to equip conservation practitioners with the analytical skills to conceptualize a framework where they might view concerns about the past and future as being simultaneously valid. They need to play a role both in engaging with the past and in discussing the future, because the future of the past depends on it. By fostering this approach, conservation efforts will more neatly fold into broader planning processes, and the static city and kinetic city can both be seen as integral to the emerging forms of contemporary urban India.

NOTES

1. Weddings are examples of how the rich, too, are engaged in the making of the kinetic city. The lack of formal spaces for weddings as the cultural outlet for ostentation has resulted in public open space being colonized temporarily for consumption by the rich. Often very complex wedding sets are constructed and removed within 12 hours – here a temporary spectacle is set up in the public domain for private consumption – and again the margin of the urban system is expanded momentarily.

2. These arguments have been elaborated in some detail by Saskia Sassen (1996, 2005); see also Chaterjee (2003). The authors discuss the effects of economic liberalization and the processes of globalization on the built environment.

3. The Ganeshtsav (as it is referred to locally) in its present form was reinvented in the late nineteenth century by Lokamanya Tilak as a symbol of resistance to the British colonial regime. Tilak took a domestic and private idiom of worship and translated it into a collective and public rite of self-assertion.

4. These ideas were first presented at a seminar
in July 2000 titled ‘Cultural Significance: Construct or Criterion?’ at the Center for Architecture and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Adelaide, Australia. I am grateful to Professor Peter Scrivener for his input in developing these ideas. Since the development of these ideas the original 1979 Burra Charter has now gone through a revision and in the latest edition of the Illustrated Burra Charter, 2004, the conception of cultural significance has been broadened to include fabric, use, associations and meanings. The revised charter also encourages the co-existence of cultural values, particularly where they conflict, and recognizes the importance of interpretation and also that restoration and reconstruction are themselves acts of interpretation. However in the Indian context where these ideas and their applications are still a recent phenomenon, the profession does not yet possess the confidence to interpret charters that provide any ambiguous space. Rather most practitioners refer to original statements in charters and hold these as sacred – often limiting their application or effectiveness in the Indian context.

5. In this scenario of the post liberalization economy, cities in India have become critical sites for negotiation between elite and subaltern cultures. The new relationships between social classes in the new economy are quite different from those that existed in state-controlled economies and the welfare state (Chatterjee, 2003). The fragmentation of service and production locations has resulted in a new, bazaar-like urbanism, which has woven its presence through the entire urban landscape. It is an urbanism created by those outside the elite domains of the formal modernity of the state. This contrasts with the many historic legacies of modernity in India where instruments such as the State Plan, borrowed from Soviet socialist planning paradigms, controlled, determined, and orchestrated the built landscape. With the dramatic retreat of the state during the 1980s and 1990s, the space of the ‘everyday’ is where economic and cultural struggles are articulated. These common spaces have been largely excluded from the cultural discourses on globalization, which focus on elite domains of production in the city and their spatial implications (Chatterjee, 2003).

6. The Nara Document on Authenticity was drafted by the 45 participants at the Nara Conference on Authenticity in Relation to the World Heritage Convention, held at Nara, Japan, 1–6 November 1994, at the invitation of the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs and the Nara Prefecture. The Agency organized the Nara Con-

ference in cooperation with UNESCO, ICCROM and ICOMOS. This final version of the Nara Document has been edited by the general rapporteurs of the conference, Raymond Lemaire and Herb Stovel.

7. This two year long masters programme in Architectural Conservation is at the School of Planning and Architecture in New Delhi. The programme, established 1986, was the first in the country and even today is the only one. The All India Council for Technical Education and the Council of Architecture, cleared the establishment of two other programmes in May 2007. One is located at CEPT in Ahmedabad, the other at the KRVIA in Mumbai. These are expected to commence in late 2007. In 1994 under the directorship of Professor Nalini Thakur the curriculum was modified considerably, moving away from a Western-influenced, material conservation-centred thrust to one that attempted to respond to, and connect with the India reality. In 2002 this was further modified to encompass ideas about cultural landscapes and to broaden the studio offerings to integrate urban conservation in a more holistic manner. In spite of these attempts by the faculty and director, a technical programme embedded in a university is limited by the requirements for technicalities that are more tangible, thus constraining a programme which might otherwise explore new directions that might be geared towards the liberal arts, which are within an intellectual territory that is harder to quantify.

8. Conservation legislation was first introduced in Mumbai in 1995, the first of its kind in India. Over the last 10 years, the debate about historic preservation or conservation (as it is more commonly referred to in Mumbai) has become a well-articulated one. A number of NGOs in the city are involved in activism and advocacy, and in lobbying for the protection of listed buildings. Unfortunately, most debates about the practice of conservation are biased towards British conservation practice because the largest numbers of Indian architects trained in conservation come from universities in the UK. They tend to bring a British-centred view to the protection of colonial buildings, often totally out of sync with contemporary Indian urban realities. Their benchmarks are British and European standards, which often contribute to the drawing of conservation practice into the realm of the elite (banks, government agencies, etc). The result is that all too often conservation is perceived by many to be an exclusionary activity.

9. See Teutonico and Matero (2003). The contri-
Contributors to this volume argue that conservation must be a dynamic process, involving public participation, dialogue, consensus, and, ultimately, better stewardship.

10. For examples of works/projects that have attempted to translate these ideas see Mehrotra (2004).

REFERENCES


