PART 3

AUTHENTICITY

3.1 Introduction

The importance of authenticity in conservation can be first appreciated when its introduction in the *Venice Charter* provided the *raison d'être* for conservation. Recognising ancient monuments as a common heritage, the Charter stated: "it is our duty to hand them on in the full richness of their authenticity."[1] As most of the members who drafted the Charter shared similar Western backgrounds, it was accepted that the meaning of the term was understood and hence taken for granted without question or debate.[2]

In the Foreword to the Nara Conference Proceedings, Herb Stovel referred to the acceptance of authenticity. He stated:

> The word is introduced [in the preamble to the Venice Charter] without fanfare, without definition, without any sense of the debates that will swirl around its use and meaning in the conservation world twenty-five years later . . . the concept (authenticity) invited little attention or debate at the time because most of those involved in writing the Charter shared similar backgrounds and therefore broad assumptions about the nature of appropriate response to conservation problems.[3]

One purpose of the Nara Conference was to bring to the participants the need to consider the reason for authenticity in relation to World Heritage Listing. The *"Nara Document on Authenticity"* (Appendix 14) is the distillation of the recommendations of the participants at the conference. The *Document* "is conceived in the spirit of the Charter of Venice, 1964, and builds on it and extends it in response to the expanding scope of cultural heritage concerns and interests in our contemporary world."[4] Reasons given for the concept of authenticity in the *Document* are stated in Article 9:

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[1] *Venice Charter* (Paris: International ICOMOS, 1964), Preamble.
[2] Herb Stovel, "Working Towards the Nara Document," in Knut Einar Larsen (ed.), *Nara Conference on Authenticity* (Japan: Agency for Cultural Affairs UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1995), xxxiii.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Raymond Lemaire, and Herb Stovel, (eds.), "Nara Document on Authenticity" in Knut Einar Larsen (ed.), *Nara Conference on Authenticity* (Japan: Agency for Cultural Affairs UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1995), xxi

> Conservation of cultural heritage in all its forms and historical periods is rooted in the values attributed to the heritage. Our ability to understand these values depends, in part, on the degree to which information sources about these values may be understood as credible or truthful. Knowledge and understanding of these sources of information, in relation to original and subsequent characteristics of the cultural heritage, and their meaning, is a requisite basis for assessing all aspects of authenticity.[5]

Given the need for all countries to consider authenticity within their own cultural context, definitions of authenticity are examined together with the various aspects arising from the Nara Conference, as a step towards providing direction to practitioners.

3.2 Definitions of Authenticity

The *Operational Guidelines* that accompany the World Heritage nomination forms require that each nominated place should meet one or more of the six criteria listed for evaluation, *and* "meet the test of authenticity in design, materials, workmanship and setting."[6] Countries which did not share the "similar backgrounds and ... broad assumptions" of western conservation philosophy had trouble with the restricting four aspects of authenticity.[7] It was this aspect that culminated in the conference at Nara. Now, following on from this, the subject of concern is not so much that of its necessity, but rather its definition, clarification and application.

Discussions at the Nara Conference were concerned with attempting to find a common meaning of the term "authenticity" in relation to the World Heritage Listing. The task of finding a commonality of expression among the many representative countries was considerably complex as each had differing ideas on the meaning of the word. It was found that defining "authenticity" was almost an

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[5] Ibid., Article 9.
[6] UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention,* (Paris: UNESCO, 1976), Division C: Criteria for the inclusion of cultural properties in the World Heritage List, Section 24, (b) (i).
[7] Herb Stovel, "Working Towards the Nara Document," xxxiii.

impossible task, and that the concept was unknown to many cultures, some, such as the Arabic and Japanese, not even having a word for "authenticity" in their language. My attempts to discuss the concept with architects in Syria illustrated how quickly confusion could grow even before a common understanding could begin. The closest Arabic word is *aṣāla* meaning "originality," from the word *aṣl,* "origin." In a cultural sense, *aṣīl* has a meaning of "ideal," but whilst some connection can be seen in these words to "authenticity," there remain differences and gaps in the complex Western meanings. But what did arise from these discussions were the strong moralistic overtones that prevail, by the use of associated meanings through such words as "truth," "honesty," and "integrity."

Western nations mostly perceive the word in terms of material value, and even when cultural differences are acknowledged, still define the concept in terms of physical and/or material associations. Even when the significance of a site is recognised in terms of historical, social or some other ephemeral attribute, authenticity is seen in terms of the physical evidence signifying that site or attribute. It can be argued that if the evidence is true, then the attribute will be capable of being understood in true terms. The problem lies in the physical evidence itself becoming the focus of significance, and the authentic *raison d'etre* of the attribute being completely ignored or misunderstood. This, then, associates authenticity with the presentation of the place beyond the apparent physical remains for a correct understanding of its cultural significance.

Stovel, in his attempt to clarify the definition of authenticity, referred to discussions at ICOMOS Headquarters in Paris regarding evaluation techniques.[8] He referred to the American National Park Service's technique to evaluate the *integrity* of a property using location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Emphasis was given to the originality of the site or the structure, and in the case of a structure, that it represented original material and workmanship.[9] "Integrity" was defined as a "composite quality connoting original workmanship, original location and intangible elements of feeling and

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[8] Herb Stovel, "Considerations in Framing the Authenticity Question for Conservation," in Knut Einar Larsen (ed.), *Nara Conference on Authenticity* (Japan: Agency for Cultural Affairs UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1995), 395.
[9] Ibid., 395-396.

association."[10] This definition goes beyond that of the dictionary by including the "elements of feeling and association." In dictionary terms, "integrity" refers to "wholeness, soundness or completeness," and it has tended to be used by those whose perception centres on the physical fabric. For example, it will be seen that for many charters the approach is to ensure that as much of the original fabric as possible is retained as evidence of the place's cultural significance, an approach that is closer to physical integrity rather than authenticity. If a place has "wholeness, soundness or completeness," this need not assume original material, but could include well-documented reconstruction. The World Heritage Criteria carries with its insistence on meeting the test of authenticity the statement: "the Committee stressed that reconstruction is only acceptable if it is carried out on the basis of complete and detailed documentation on the original and to no extent on conjecture"[11] It is also notable that Article 2 of the *Ethical Commitment Statement for ICOMOS Members,* (Appendix 20) of which more will be said later, refers to both authenticity and integrity, thus signifying a difference of perception between the two.[12]

Stovel remarked that during discussions regarding World Heritage listing criteria, a preference for the word authenticity was suggested, as "the integrity concept might limit analysis to concern for original form or design."[13] It was during this discussion that the seven integrities referred to above were reduced to the four authenticities—design , material, workmanship and setting.[14] Working through the arguments expressed at the Nara conference, of the three integrities that were dropped, the two most ephemeral—feeling and association—were considered among the most important by the non-Western delegates at Nara. The third,

[10] Ibid., 396.
[11] UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention,* Division C: Criteria for the inclusion of cultural properties in the World Heritage List, Section 24, (b) (i).
[12] ICOMOS, "Ethical Commitment Statement for ICOMOS Members," in *ICOMOS News* (Paris: ICOMOS, 2002), Article 2.
[13] Herb Stovel, "Considerations in Framing the Authenticity Question for Conservation," 396.
[14] Ibid.

location, was given less consideration during the conference, probably because, like authenticity, it had been taken for granted.[15]

Given the complexities arising from the myriad of meanings and their cultural context, the question quickly arises, as indeed Stovel stated at Nara:

> we are asking, as we have throughout the history of conservation: *is it possible to define universal principles, which lie at the essence of our conservation endeavours, without trivializing the cultural expressions or denying the cultural values of non-central, non-conforming communities or groups?* [16]

In the opinion of the conference delegates, the answer was no, but as the World Heritage List needs to be seen to be encompassing the world's total cultural heritage and equitable to all nations, then a common basis for assessment, and hence criteria, was considered to be necessary. The result of the conference was to give the World Heritage Committee "a broad set of guidelines for future thinking concerning the essential qualities that characterize world cultural heritage."[17] In addition, it was recognised that "preservation experts are forced to clarify the use of the concept of authenticity within their own countries and cultural spheres, [and that] the ways and means to preserve the authenticity of cultural heritage are culturally dependent."[18]

It can be seen that in this statement the emphasis of authenticity has moved from its application in the listing process to its broader use in conservation practice as it applies to single places, and by extension to urban areas. In this regard, what direction do the charters give to attain authenticity?

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[15] For Example, Yukio Nishimura, "Changing concept of Authenticity in the Context of Japanese Conservation History,"175, and Maria Dolores Penna De Almeida Cunha, "On Authenticity," 262, both in Knut Einar Larsen, (ed.) *Nara Conference on Authenticity* (Japan: Agency for Cultural Affairs UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1995).
[16] Herb Stovel, "Considerations in Framing the Authenticity Question for Conservation," 394. (Stovel's italics)
[17] Knut Einar Larsen, "Preface," in *Nara Conference on Authenticity* (Japan: Agency for Cultural Affairs UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1995), xiii.
[18] Ibid.

3.3 The Charters and the Question of Authenticity

As the concept of "authenticity" was uncritically accepted at the time of the drafting of the many charters, little, if any, reference is made to the meaning of the word. However, the study of the charters reveals an intention to retain as much of the original fabric as possible, which can be taken as a tacit acceptance of an "authenticity" approach. How far this pervades the various articles of the charters is discussed in the relevant sections of this chapter.

The *Athens Charter* makes no mention of authenticity. It allows for anastylosis, and where appropriate, the use of modern materials. In the latter case it requires that wherever possible these should be concealed in order that the aspect and character of the restored monument may be preserved.[19] This is the closest that the Charter comes to authenticity of the material or any other factors. It could be expected that at this time no thought had been given to the concept of authenticity, but rather that restoration work would automatically achieve an authentic result.

The *Venice Charter*, having made reference to authenticity in the preamble, no doubt expected that the following sixteen articles would achieve this objective. But given the few references to other than material factors, the means of achieving this authenticity must have been understood to be realised solely through the retention of the material fabric.

The term "authenticity" does not appear in the *Burra Charter*. James S. Kerr, in his influential book *The Conservation Plan,* warns practitioners to define what is meant by their use of the term, but alternatively, to avoid its use altogether.[20] As the Charter sees places of cultural significance as historical records and as tangible expressions of Australian identity and experience, it advocates a cautious approach to conservation action so that the cultural significance of these places is

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[19] *The Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments.* Adopted at the First International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, Athens 1931, Articles VI and IV.
[20] James Semple Kerr, *The Conservation Plan* (Sydney: J.S.Kerr on behalf of the National Trust of Australia (NSW), 1996), 29.

retained.[21] Throughout the Charter the emphasis is strongly towards retaining original fabric. Although authenticity is not specifically stated, the avoidance of the term rather than the concept seems to be the intention, and hence authenticity is tacitly perceived to be residing in the original fabric.

The UNESCO *Recommendation concerning the safeguarding and contemporary rôle of historic areas* refers only once to the word authenticity. Given the considerable focus on social, cultural and economic factors, it is notable that, with the possible exception of "unsuitable use," the word authenticity is associated only with the physical fabric (although it is argued below that even unsuitable use has a major effect on the fabric of the place):

> Historic areas and their surroundings should be actively protected against damage of all kinds, particularly that resulting from unsuitable use, unnecessary additions and misguided or insensitive changes such as will impair their authenticity.[22]

Again, with the *Washington Charter* the word authenticity appears once, and is associated with physical qualities. After reference to historic character and all the elements that express that character, the Charter specifically nominates urban patterns (relationships between buildings); the formal appearance of buildings (scale, size, style, construction, materials, colour and decoration); the surrounding setting, and the functions of the area.[23] The Article concludes, "Any threat to these qualities would compromise the authenticity of the historic town or urban area."[24] Authenticity rests with the physical qualities, but again function is included. It is possible that the Charter, following from the UNESCO *Recommendation,* translated the historic fabric approach together with the function aspect.

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[21] *The Burra Charter:The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance1999.* (Australia ICOMOS Incorporated, 2000), Preamble.
[22] UNESCO, *Recommendation Concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Rôle of Historic Areas* (Paris: UNESCO, 1976), Part II, general principles, Article 4.
[23] *The ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas, (The Washington Charter)* (Paris: ICOMOS Information, April/June no.2, 1987), Principles and Objectives, Article 2.
[24] Ibid.

3.4 Authenticity: Culture and Identity

The discussions at the Nara Conference revolved kaleidoscopically around values, truth, and criteria. The *Nara Document on Authenticity* summarised the discussions: “It is thus not possible to base judgments of value and authenticity on fixed criteria. On the contrary, the respect due to all cultures requires that cultural heritage must be considered and judged within the cultural contexts to which it belongs.”[25] This identifies the necessity for practitioners to recognise the cultural contexts within which they are working. This would be especially so if they are visiting practitioners from another culture. It is therefore essential that each culture identify those values that exemplify their perception of authenticity in relation to its cultural heritage. The concluding articles of the *Nara Document* emphasises this with the following statement: “it is of the highest importance and urgency that, within each culture, recognition be accorded to the specific nature of its heritage values and the credibility and truthfulness of related information sources.”[26] The *Nara Document* further refers to the great variety of sources of information to which authenticity judgements may be linked. In doing so, the four authenticities above have now been expanded resulting in “Aspects of these sources [which] may include *form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting,* and *spirit and feeling*, and other internal and external aspects of information sources”[27] (my emphasis). The *ICOMOS News* reprint of the *Nara Document* carries with it the following definitions:

> Conservation: all operations designed to understand a property, know its history and meaning, ensure its material safeguard and, if required, its restoration and enhancement.

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[25] “Nara Document on Authenticity,” in Knut Einar Larsen, (ed.), *Nara Conference on Authenticity* (Japan: Agency for Cultural Affairs UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1995), Article 11, xxiii.
[26] Ibid., Article 12, xxiii.
[27] “Nara Document on Authenticity,” Article 13, as reprinted in *ICOMOS Information* vol.4, no.3, 1994, 20.

> Information sources: all monumental, written, oral and figurative sources which make it possible to know the nature, specificities, meaning and history of a property.[28]

The concern for cultural context is marked in the *Nara Document*. In its Appendix 1 reference is made to determine authenticity "in a manner respectful of cultures and heritage diversity," and that the cultures should "develop analytical processes and tools specific to their nature and needs"[29]

The Declaration of San Antonio (Appendix 15) was produced in direct response to this statement, which was further requested by the Secretary General of ICOMOS following the Bergen and Nara Conferences. Delegates and members of the ICOMOS National Committees of the Americas attended an Inter-American Symposium on Authenticity in San Antonio, Texas, that resulted in the *Declaration,* a tier one document, being mainly a summary of findings and recommendations. References are made to the *Nara Document*, but no mention of its suggested aspects as a basis of discussion. The approach given in the section "Considerations and Analysis" refers to proofs of authenticity[30], recalling the requirement of the *Operational Guidelines* for the test of authenticity. This is then followed by the summary and recommendations of the *Declaration* structured under the headings of authenticity as it relates to Identity, History, Materials, Social Value, Dynamic and Static Sites, Stewardship, and Economics.[31] This arrangement of headings indicates the thinking of the delegates and their priorities. The first four headings indicate the value placed on those aspects of the built heritage directly related to cultural identity. Identity and history encapsulate some of the philosophy behind the concept; materials and social value point to matters of present day concern. Dynamic and static sites refer to the ethical problems associated with both archaeological and continuing urban sites and their relationship to cultural identity. The last two headings point to more practical concerns: stewardship, reflecting the concern for a knowledgeable approach to the

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[28] Ibid.
[29] "Nara Document on Authenticity," in Knut Einar Larsen (ed.), *Nara Conference on Authenticity,* (Japan: Agency for Cultural Affairs UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1995), Article 11, xxiv.
[30] ICOMOS National Committees of the Americas, *The Declaration of San Antonio* (San Antonio: 1996), Part B: Considerations and Analysis.
[31] Ibid., Part B, Sections 1-7.

assessment, conservation and maintenance of heritage sites with regard to the top four headings, and economics being largely concerned with the impact and control of tourism, with one mention of social concerns.

The *Declaration* states, “The authenticity of our cultural heritage is directly related to our cultural identity,” and further states, “The material fabric of a cultural site can be a principal component of its authenticity.”[32] Although the *Declaration* associates authenticity with other heritage aspects, its importance to material fabric is strongly emphasised. The delegates producing the *Declaration* did not assume that the whole question of authenticity had been covered in that document, but called on further consideration to be given to the “proofs of authenticity” so that indicators could be identified. They suggested the following:

i. *Reflection of the true value.* That is, whether the resource remains in the condition of its creation and reflects all its significant history.
ii. *Integrity.* That is, whether the site is fragmented; how much is missing, and what are the recent additions.
iii. *Context.* That is, whether the context and/or the environment correspond to the original or other periods of significance; and whether they enhance or diminish the significance.
iv. *Identity.* That is, whether the local population identify themselves with the site, and whose identity the site reflects.
v. *Use and function.* That is, the traditional patterns of use that have characterised the site.[33]

There is some overlap in these indicators. In the first three, the items revolve around original condition, completeness, and their resulting context. These all point to integrity rather than authenticity. “Identity” is much closer to authenticity. It is notable that identity here covers two aspects, the perception of the local people identifying with the site, and the true identity that the site reflects. It is in this dichotomy that authenticity could be found. If the local people truly identify with the site then the site will truly reflect this. But if, for example, the people are using the site as a backdrop to a supposed authentic performance of a perceived

[32] Ibid., Sections B1 and B3.
[33] Ibid., General Recommendations, Subsection c. Parts i - v.

previous period for the sake of tourism, the site will reflect this. This could also include the last proof of use and function, as the traditional patterns of use could be a genuine continuation of the traditional society, or alternatively be a performance of traditional functions no longer relevant to their present day living.

The direction of these indicators point to the truth of the remaining evidence, and from that truth arise the rest of the indicators: context, identity, and social involvement through traditional use and function of the site. The first result from authentication is credibility in the evidence leading to identity and social and cultural justification. Credibility is, in dictionary terms that which makes something worthy of belief, and which applies to the physical aspect of heritage as evidence of history. Evidence, again in dictionary terms, is the testimony or facts in support of a conclusion. The assumption is that the evidence is true and hence establishes authenticity. The World Heritage List needs the "test of authenticity" to ensure the credibility of each specific place, which will in turn ensure the credibility of the List. This is essential, as listing imposes a responsibility on governments and owners who should demand coherence and accountability in decision-making. Following a similar argument, each application of the conservation process also needs a "test of authenticity," again to ensure credibility of the built environment as the mirror of social and cultural identity, and the correct presentation of the history it represents. Professional conservators, therefore, should ensure that the quality of their decisions and action meet recognised acceptable standards.[34]

The "Considerations and Analysis" were followed by a comprehensive set of recommendations relating to architecture and urbanism, archaeological sites, and cultural landscapes. These were prepared for discussion at the ICOMOS General Assembly to be held in Sofia in 1996. The complexities of the concept of authenticity become apparent when the directions and results of these discussions are compared to those of the Nara Conference, particularly when it is realised that the sources of information suggested at Nara did not form the basis of the San Antonio discussions but rather another complete set of topics and indicators were

[34] Herb Stovel, "Considerations in Framing the Authenticity Question for Conservation," 397.

used. This latter approach arose no doubt from the cultural amalgam of San Antonio conference. This is not surprising, as at Nara, with reference to the complexities of examining authenticity, it was suggested to break down the question "into meaningful component parts in order to increase understanding and to promote the highest quality of appropriate treatment."[35] It was agreed that it was "not possible to base judgements of value and authenticity on fixed criteria. On the contrary, the respect due to all cultures requires that cultural heritage must be considered and judged within the cultural contexts to which it belongs."[36]

Reviewing the discussions above regarding authenticity helps only to illustrate the complexity of the concept. It further highlights the focus on material matters with lesser concern for social/cultural factors. Referring back to the American National Parks Services seven integrities, three related directly to fabric—design, setting and materials—and two related in some degree to fabric—location and workmanship. These latter two could easily be assessed in purely physical terms, but contain some relation to other attributes, for example, historical in the case of location, and social in the workmanship case. Only two of the seven, namely feeling and association, related directly to non-fabric attributes. When these were reduced to four authenticities—design, workmanship, material and setting—three related specifically to fabric. Workmanship, although still capable of being considered only in terms of fabric, at least had a chance of social considerations.

Taking another example, Stefan Tschudi-Madsen, a former president of the World Heritage Committee, separated his approach to authenticity into five aspects: "material, structure, surface, architectural form, and function."[37] The inclusion of structure, surface, and architectural form further emphasised the material approach.

3.5 Authenticity: Sources of Information

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[35] Ibid., 398.
[36] "Nara Document on Authenticity," in *Nara Conference on Authenticity,* Article 11.
[37] Herb Stovel, "Working Towards the Nara Document," in *Nara Conference on Authenticity*, xxxiii.

In an attempt to keep a tight rein on this ever-expanding subject of authenticity, I have for discussion, returned to the suggested six groups of aspects of sources of information that arose from the Nara Conference: *form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting,* and *spirit and feeling*, listed in Article 13 of the *Nara Document* (referred above). These are now used to examine authenticity with respect to the practice of conservation. Where applicable, the issues arising from this examination are matched against examples from Syria as a means of placing the arguments in a cultural context. This examination led to the identification of other aspects particularly in reference to urban conservation, and these form the basis for further examination in the subsequent chapters.

Form and design

Beginning with the examination of this section immediately highlighted the confusion that arises between form, design and material (the subject of the next section). For example, in the mind of builder the choice of material leads logically to the construction technique, which in turn determines the design and form of the finished product. An architect may approach the problem from the other direction, but the association of materials with the final design and form still remains.

The following discussion looks at the interplay between these three aspects of construction, and the problems that arise with authenticity and the character of a place as perceived through form as a means of cultural continuity. Opposing this are the attempts at contrived cultural continuity by reviving old but now defunct building forms. This in turn raises the consideration of facadism, first as a deliberate design approach to maintain urban character, and secondly the problem of interior and exterior form and design and authenticity in architectural unity.

Form and design in the heritage sense are usually those visual qualities that first project the heritage significance of a place. They can be taken for granted, unless they are, as self-conscious design, recognised as the work of a distinguished architect, or representing a major historical period. Taking its place with traditional design in city centres, self-conscious design reflects the standing of architects and designers in an expanding and sophisticated city structure, and in

turn illustrates the cultural aspirations of that society. Unself-conscious design, as witnessed in vernacular building forms, reflects strongly the cultural mores and social disposition of the inhabitants, and illustrates the slow and consistent changes that have taken place. Together with other aspects discussed below—materials, function, techniques and settings—the built forms arising from these designs provide the first visual impact projecting the identity of the place.

The criteria of the World Heritage List states that, as the first requirement, each property should "represent a masterpiece of human creative genius" and in addition should meet the test of authenticity in design.[38] Both these requirements illustrate the importance of design as a major prerequisite for heritage recognition. However, in architectural usage, both form and design are rarely defined. References are usually confined to the many and varied elements which comprise the built form, arising from the design process. In Western thinking, however, as demonstrated in the conservation charters, both form and design seem to be assumed aspects, for example neither the *Venice Charter* nor the *Burra Charter* refer specifically to either. It becomes apparent that when a monument or historic building is being considered, design is referred to through the architect, and form by way of the comprising elements and resulting style. The *Venice Charter* refers to "layout," "decoration," "relations of mass," "sculpture," "painting," "decoration," and "aesthetic," which, although related to form and design, are peripheral attributes.[39] The *Burra Charter* assumes form and design in the term "fabric," which is defined as "all the physical material of the place including components, fixtures, contents, and objects."[40] Even the articles on change, which could surely adversely affect both the form and design of a building, make no reference to them, but only to cultural significance and fabric.[41] Reconstruction is considered only in terms of "sufficient evidence to reproduce an earlier state of the fabric."[42] Form is referred to in the *Guidelines to the Burra Charter: Cultural Significance* under aesthetic value that considers "aspects of sensory perception

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[38] UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention,* Division C: Criteria for the inclusion of cultural properties in the World Heritage List, Section 24, (a) (i) and (b) (i). http://www.unesco.org/whc/opgutoc.htm.
[39] *Venice Charter*, Articles 5, 6, 8, 9.
[40] *Burra Charter,* Article 1.3.
[41] Ibid., Article 15.
[42] Ibid., Article 20.

for criteria [that] can and should be stated. Such criteria may include consideration of the form, scale, colour, texture and material of the fabric."[43] Here form takes its place with material in the context of conservation, embodied in the fabric.

But fabric should not be considered solely as the embodiment of either form or design. As abstract concepts form and design can rely on visual impact and association irrespective of the material being used. Nineteenth century architecture of colonial America, Australia and New Zealand relied on the association of known architectural forms that recalled "home." The construction material often didn't matter, as long as the form, even in an abstracted sense, conveyed a recognisable and comforting message. Gothic churches complete with pointed windows, buttresses, and arched construction on moulded columns were cleverly constructed of timber to simulate stone. Form and design were clearly one thing, and the fabric quite clearly something else, both being separately significant. (Fig.32) Examples from colonial settled countries tell us something of the attitudes and cultures that formed them, both in the forms and designs of the buildings, and also in the materials used. (Fig. 33)

Fig. 32. Queensland, Australia: timber "Gothic" church. (Author: 2000)
Fig. 33. Aleppo: a French colonial building from the early twentieth century with "oriental additions". The central arched openings are an "oriental" feature contemporary with the classical façade, while the kishk is a more recent curious mix of an Arabic form in modern materials. (Author: 1995)

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[43] *The Burra Charter:* "Guidelines to the Burra Charter: Cultural Significance" (Australia ICOMOS Incorporated, 2000), Article 2.2.

Authenticity and cultural variation

In some cultures specific forms have particular connotations, and to ignore this can result in social disquiet. The work at New Gourna by the renowned architect Hassan Fathy is a well-known case. Fathy's designs arose from his choice of construction, enforced by economic restrictions, of an age-old tradition of vaulting in mud brick without the use of timber centering.[44] He drew his construction system from a form of "skew arched" construction that spread down the Nile from Nubia and westward to central Egypt. It was used in Roman times in central Egypt, (Fig. 34) but has only continued down the ages to the present day in the construction of outhouses and animal pens. The inhabitants rejected the resulting houses. My discussions with the folk in Dahklah Oasis west of New Gourna, (Figs. 35, & 36) who also rejected examples of Fathy's work, suggest reasons for this rejection. These are that domes are reserved for the headman, or *shaykh,* of the village, and sometimes even then only for his tomb, and that vaulted structures are only used for cattle sheds, and therefore unsuitable for housing construction (who wants to live in a cattle shed?). The third reason is probably the main one for New Gourna, but does not apply in the case of Dahklah Oasis. The site of old Gourna village was on the Tombs of the Nobles, from which the inhabitants made their livelihood of tomb robbing. This was the reason for rehousing them in a new village, no doubt the same reason why they did not wish to leave their homes and place of "employment."[45]

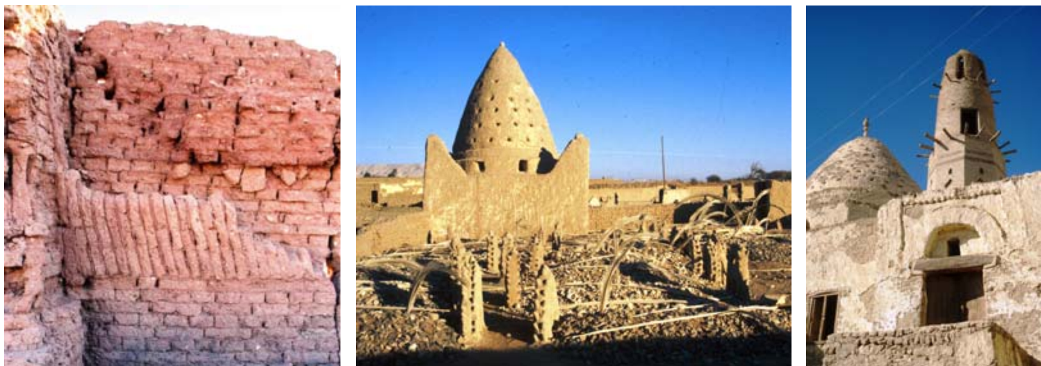

Fig. 34. Dahklah Oasis: example of "Nubian Skew Arch" construction at Ismant el Kharab, a 3-4th century CE Roman site. (Author: 2000)
Fig. 35. Dahklah Oasis: village of al Bashendi. Today domes are reserved for tombs of the *Shaykh.* (Author: 1998)

[44] Hassan Fathy, *Architecture for the Poor* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1973), 4-7.
[45] Ibid., 15.

Fig. 36. Dahklah Oasis: village of Qasr. Only the minaret of the Mosque and the small conical dome of the adjacent tomb contrast with the flat roofs of the other buildings. (Author: 2000)

In each case, the reasons are cultural in nature, and the reintroduction of the former structural technique was no longer relevant. Although Fathy's project has been seen as a failure in cultural terms, it highlighted the bond between form, design and culture, and hence has been of immeasurable value in the study of vernacular architecture and society. "His solution is of worldwide import. His thought, experience and spirit constitute a major international resource.[46]"

In Syria there are many examples of regional house forms and construction, and two are selected as an illustration. Separated by approximately 500 kilometres, they show distinctly differing housing construction techniques that have produced different forms, the first of which, in contrast to the Egyptian example, is domed. In the previously referred Idlib Region, Northwest Syria (Fig. 29), the local inhabitants themselves build their own houses from mud brick. These vernacular forms of corbelled brickwork require no formwork or other support during construction, and the domed form provides shelter perfectly suited to the environment. The many villages built of the same form and construction point to a continual regional culture stretching back several thousands of years.[47] In Southern Turkey, approximately 12 kilometres north of the Syrian border, is the village of Harran. This village, unique in Turkey, is built of the same domed houses, and no doubt originally formed the northernmost portion of the Syrian region. This illustrates the result of the indiscriminate severing of the cultural region by the formation of Turkey with artificial political boundaries following World War I.

The second example is from the Dara Province of the Ḥauran region in Southwest Syria, close to Boṣra. A recent description of the vernacular construction of this region identified the use of a corbelled construction.[48] Although the completed

[46] William R. Polk, "Foreword," in Hassan Fathy, *Architecture of the Poor* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1973), xii.
[47] Ghiyas Aljundi, "Idlib (Syria, NW)," in Paul Oliver**,** (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World, vol. 2.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1508.
[48] Ghiyas Aljundi, "Eastern Mediterranean and Levant," in Paul Oliver (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World*, *vol. 2.* (Cambridge: University Press, London, 1997), 1506.

system results in the typical cubic form with a flat roof so common throughout the Middle East, this construction is unique to the Hauran region. The basic construction is (Fig. 37) uses flat slabs of basalt stone in a form of projecting corbels which support further slabs in a balanced system, and finished with a layer of beaten earth. As a single span of stone would lead to narrow rooms, this corbelled system of local stone is used to assist in creating rooms of greater span. But this traditional structure is now compared with a recent example of the continuation of a local tradition.

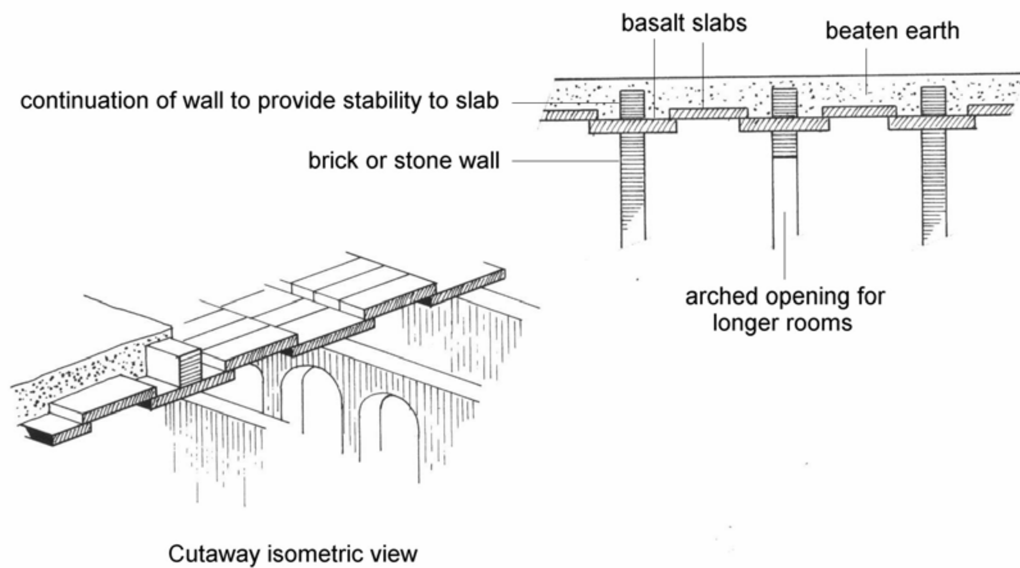

Fig. 37 Hauran Region, Syria: corbelled structural system. I am indebted to Abdal Al Nassan for drawing the structural system and making the written description easier to understand. 2002

Authenticity and continuing local tradition

A recent winner in the Aga Khan Awards (completed 1990 and published 1992), is a school complex in the Dar'a province near Bosra. (Fig.38) Although the resulting architecture is commendable, the basis of the design and construction is anything but traditional given that region. The vaulted structures, it was claimed, were based on local vernacular building traditions, and the jury for the awards based their judgement on this claim. The present scheme is a series of arches of approximately five metres span and one metre apart. The formwork between the arches is slightly cambered loose wooden boarding covered with concrete. Inside the surface is plastered. (Fig. 39) The architect claimed that the design was based

on the Roman theatre, which was of Roman design but the construction influenced by local traditions. He claimed that the Roman arches were adapted by the local craftsmen and were neither semicircular nor parabolic but something “in between.” The fact that the Roman work had been done nearly 2000 years ago; that at least two major cultures—Byzantine and Islamic—and many more subcultures had passed through this site, and that the vaulted construction had not been used for many centuries since the Roman period, did not deter him from calling this dubious tradition “vernacular architecture.” He spoke of “cultural continuity,” and that “culture was a continuous happening” and therefore the system was still relevant.[49]

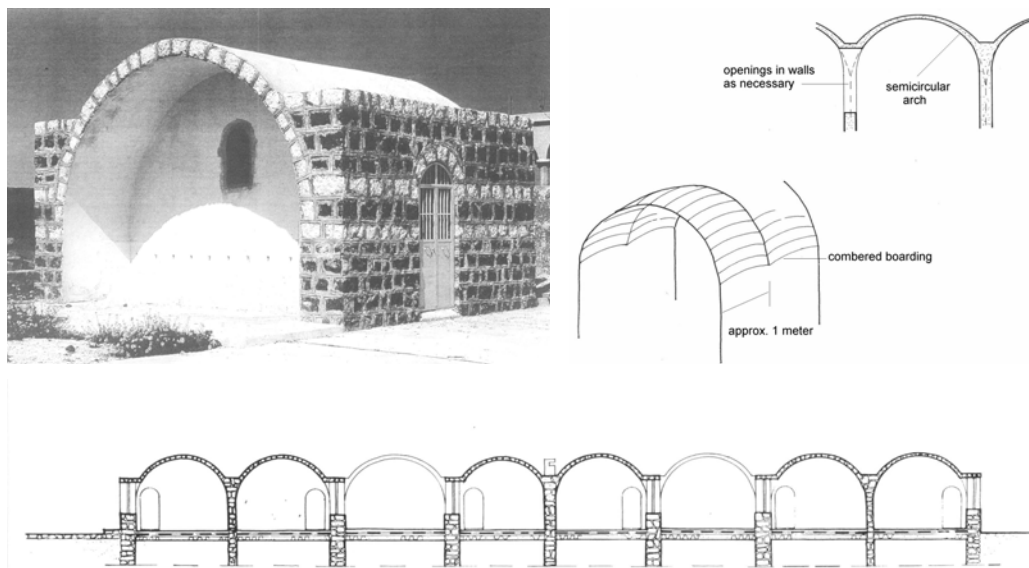

Fig. 38. Dar’a province near Bosra: new school (1990) claimed to be based on vernacular building traditions. Committee Citation “Stone Building System: Dar’a Province, Syria” in James Steele (ed.), *Architecture for a Changing World* (London: The Aga Khan Award for Architecture and Academy Editions, 1992). 157. But such vaulted structures do not appear in this region.
Fig.39. Dar,a province near Bosra: a sketch of the construction system based on a description by the architect. Compare this “traditional” construction with that of Fig. 37. (Author: 1998)

The jury, consisting of both Eastern and Western architects, praised the entry. The prize was awarded for the innovative use of local material and a traditional structural system, resulting in what was called generating a new architectural language. James Steele, in his commentary to the award publication, compares the Hauran example to the architectural dialect of Hassan Fathy, stating that:

[49] Pers. Com. Raif Muhanna, the architect for the scheme.

> the idea of using stone, instead of the reinforced concrete frame and block infill technique now commonly used throughout the region, conforms to the ancient tradition of stone construction here, with vaults reflecting the Roman presence in the past. … And so the stone building system is not only a tribute to the skill of the [architects] but an echoing vindication of Fathy's belief in the principles they represent as well.[50]

But what are the principles represented here? A structural system being the aesthetic use of a constructional form with no link to a living tradition. The vaults may be a reflection of the Roman presence in the past, but how can this be justified to the relevance of the present society? This misrepresentation is based, at best, on a misunderstanding of traditional techniques, form and design, and their relationship to social and cultural mores.

The comparison of this scheme with traditional construction illustrates the confusion that can arise when forms and construction techniques are used indiscriminately, or incorrectly as in this example, to produce a predetermined form without understanding the continuing culture. The structural system employed may, as in this case, be of ingenious design, but should not claim to be a continuing cultural tradition.

This can be contrasted with the use of form and design in conservation to achieve cultural continuity together with visual character. This will arise from the desire of the inhabitants to retain and reinforce those elements that they see as sustaining their cultural identity, as for example, the continuing use of the beehive structures in the Idlib region.

This raises the problem of using traditional forms in area conservation in the attempt to maintain historic character with new infill architecture. There are two points of concern in this situation. The first is the problem of new building design involving "pastiche," the mixing and melding of existing detailing to simulate the surrounding historic shapes and forms. This attempts to create an environment

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[50] James Steele, "Continuity, Relevance and Change," in James Steele (ed.), *Architecture for a Changing World* (London: Academy Editions 1992), 33-34.

that is “timeless,” a setting that seems to imply that it goes back beyond living memory. This recalls various conservation guidelines, such as those produced for the Aleppo project. Arguments then centre on “contrast” vs. “harmony,” “modern materials” vs. “historical materials,” and may revolve around notions of authenticity without actually addressing the concept.

The second concern is the total redesign of the interior of an old building to suit present day functions and aesthetics, and maintaining the exterior as a historic façade. Both concerns rest with the moral attitude of the practitioner, for example, the modernist approach, with honest contrast being morally correct as against dishonest historicism,[51] contrasting with the postmodernist approach of historical reference and participation of the local inhabitants. It also depends on the identification of what constitutes authenticity in each circumstance. More of this will arise and be considered as the arguments proceed through the later sections.

The *Venice Charter* makes reference to the contributions of all periods of a building, and that these must be respected, “since unity of style is not the aim of restoration.”[52] This counters the nineteenth century practice of restoring mediaeval buildings to a preconceived and romantic notion of the original designer’s conception. Considerable alterations were often made, particularly to religious buildings, to unify the inconsistency of styles that had occurred over the centuries to both the interiors and exteriors.[53] Today this practice meets with disapproval, not only that it illustrates attitudes of egocentric philosophy and a misplaced desire for unity of style, but also that it destroys historical evidence. The work done in the nineteenth century has now become history in its own right, with the efforts of conservation organisations being aimed at retaining these spurious restorations[54]. Today the emphasis is on the retention of the original form

[51] Brent C. Brolin, *Architecture in Context: fitting new buildings with old* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1980), 45.
[52] *Venice Charter* (Paris: ICOMOS, 1964), Article 11.
[53] This subject is covered in some detail for ten religious buildings in Britain, for example “Wyatt’s fell doings at Salisbury,” by Gerald Cobb, *English Cathedrals: The Forgotten Centuries,* (Hampshire: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 111.
[54] Sir Nikolaus Pevsner discussed this problem in 1973, and reprinted his argument in the fore word of Stephan Tschudi-Madsen, *Restoration and Anti-Restoration* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1976).

and/or design, in all of its perceived imperfections as the evidence of history, and the personal taste of the conservator is not encouraged.

Below we will consider use and function, and the changes wrought on the design and form in the pursuit of economic justification. This, in contrast to both the nineteenth century and present day practices, feels no impunity to totally upgrading the interior to the latest architectural stylistic whims, whilst leaving the exterior more or less intact for townscape purposes. Whilst this may devastate the authenticity of the building's interior, it can equally be justified as maintaining the authenticity of the urban landscape or streetscape. But the authenticity of the façade could be considered a false authenticity, as it ignores or blatantly rebuffs the design of the building as a total unit.

But this line of argument follows Western thinking. Form may be seen purely in terms of the exterior, but the original design and its concomitant form should be seen as a unity of expression, as both the interior and exterior of a building together constitute the historical evidence of originality and development. This attitude also gives rise to the arguments concerning facadism, that Western Modern Movement attitude regarding the "truth" in architecture. However, it is argued that Islamic architecture follows another line. Grube refers to "hidden architecture," the architecture that exists not as a monument seen from all sides but as an anonymous exterior to be experienced from the inside. He draws a clear distinction between monumental religious buildings and tombs, and the close-knit urban fabric of the traditional centre. Citing the example of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (Fig.40) as an exceptional case, a religious temple building that is viewed from all sides and is recognisable through its external form, he contrasts this with the Umayyed Mosque in Damascus, (Fig.18) a building of lesser external visual effect, which achieves its impact from within the courtyard setting. As Grube wrote this in 1978, the opening up of the square to the front of the Mosque has subsequently had an adverse effect on his "hidden architecture." The Umayyad Mosque was never intended to be seen so openly from the outside as was the Dome of the Rock, but he is quite correct that the courtyard setting still

achieves its greatest impact. He concludes " 'hidden architecture' may be considered the main and dominant form of truly Islamic architecture"[55] (Fig. 41).

Fig. 40 Jerusalem: Dome of the Rock. (Internet)
Fig. 41. Aleppo: a courtyard house showing the elaborate interior. (Author: 2000)

In the case of Islamic monuments, authenticity of design is of greater importance than authenticity of material. Saleh Lamei of Egypt was quite specific regarding the importance of design and material in authenticity, and stated that:

> The concept of authenticity was a very sensitive one in Arab countries, as a result of the interpretation put upon the text of the Holy Koran by fundamentalists. The heritage was seen as part of the living Islamic religion and culture. Certain elements recognized as heritage in Western countries, such as statues, shrines, and even monumental buildings, were identified as works of Satan, but continual construction and embellishments of mosques was encouraged. As a result, design was of greater importance than materials in terms of authenticity.[56]

Authenticity and integrity

But it is notable that at the Nara Conference, debates regarding form and design swirled around material. The Japanese delegate, Nobuko Inaba, saw the philosophical issue of *material* vs. *form* in the example of the beauty of ruins vs.

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[55] Earnest J. Grube, "What is Islamic Architecture?" in George Michell, (ed.), *Architecture of the Islamic World* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 12.
[56] Quoted by Henry Cleere, "Session Report No.4," in Knut Einar Larsen (ed.), *Nara Conference on Authenticity* (Japan: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1995), 251.

the beauty of wholeness.[57] The ruin, as the dilapidation of the form, retains its original material and is therefore considered authentic. If it is restored to its original form, it could become, depending on the percentage of new work, inauthentic. Inaba stated that material seems to have the highest priority, and other criteria—design, craftsmanship and setting—exist to support and justify the authenticity of monuments that embody original material.[58]

But this argument is now extending to the concept of integrity. A dictionary definition of integrity is "wholeness; soundness; uprightness, honesty."[59] Wholeness and soundness refer to condition or state of being, an attribute not necessarily equating with authenticity. Uprightness and honesty, as applied to remaining historic fabric, could be equated with authenticity, and with it, the ethical practice of the conservator. This issue will be discussed later.

The distinction between authenticity and integrity can begin to be appreciated with the above arguments. Practitioners, who prefer to acknowledge integrity rather than authenticity, run the risk of missing some of the points of these arguments. Regarding the ruins above, the question would need to be asked whether or not the ruins (of original material) needed to be restored to their original form. As evidence of history they could be more valuable as ruins, and would tell their story more honestly, as their ruinous state would be seen as part of their history. If restoration were seen to be the means of providing a better interpretation of the ruins, then the materials used for the work would present another decision. Whether new or "original" materials were used, the original form and/or design may be recaptured, but what constituted authenticity would need to be clearly explained. All of these factors would need to be considered to determine the final effect on the cultural significance of the place.

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[57] Nobuko Inaba, "What is the Test of Authenticity for Intangible Properties?" in *Nara Conference on Authenticity,* 329.
[58] Ibid., 330
[59] George W. Turner, (ed.), *The Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1987).

Authenticity and gardens

The dichotomy of material and design can also be seen in the examples of historic gardens. The Florence Charter for historic gardens, states "The *authenticity* of an historic garden depends as much on the design and scale of its various parts as on its decorative features and on the choice of plant or inorganic materials adopted for each of its parts."[60] A Japanese delegate at the Nara Conference, Kimio Kondoh said,

> "Japanese gardening has a history of fifteen centuries and is known to be a unique technique in the world in creating natural landscape gardens. If one questions the authenticity of such gardens, it can hardly be discussed because it is too natural an approach for the Japanese."[61]

But the fabric of gardens constantly changes as a normal organic process. Kondoh continues "it is not an easy task to discuss the authenticity of design in a Japanese garden which has adapted to the changes of the cultural stream in each period"[62] Kondoh here refers to changes in design rather than the expected changes in organic growth. This can be allied to changes to the design of buildings, that is, changes to the plan and scale, room volumes and other forms, through the possible necessity of changes of use. If authenticity of form and design is seen as a complete and untouched concept at one specific time in history, then any change will be seen as inauthentic. Again, if the changes made to the form and design are carried out in original materials, should the changes be seen as not damaging authenticity? Kondo also equates authenticity with traditional practice, saying that it is too natural an approach for discussion. Such questions will be discussed below.

In summary, form and design play an important part in heritage assessment, but the issues involving their authenticity are many and varied. Their misunderstanding in a cultural sense can lead to their misuse and abuse. The issues of blending in urban fabric can lead to pastiche, or facadism, and the moral

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[60] ICOMOS – IFLA International Committee for Historic Gardens, *Charter of Historic Gardens: the Florence Charter* (Paris: ICOMOS, 1982), Article 9.
[61] Kimio Kondoh, "Landscape, Garden and Authenticity," in *Nara Conference on Authenticity,* 339.
[62] Ibid.

issues that revolve around historicism and modernism. All this impacts on the final historic environment, and the message that it conveys to the viewer. When discussed at the Nara Conference, the debates of authenticity of form and design seem to centre on the material aspect, so now we turn our attention to this.

Materials and substance

The closest definition of materials and substance in the *Burra Charter* is “fabric,” defined as all the physical material of the place including components, fixtures, contents, and objects.[63] The *Venice Charter* has few references to material and gives no definition—again the meaning is assumed. Substance has a more complex meaning. The dictionary definition is a particular kind of material having more or less uniform properties. Substance also has metaphysical properties that could be aligned to the essence and meaning lying behind material. Being included with material, it can be construed to mean its more physical aspect that, relating to design concepts, gives physical reality to the metaphysical meanings underlying the design. So we can speak of a stone building or timber building, which may refer to the particular use of the material, for example, as the structural system which gives the building its specific character.

Michael Petzet, speaking at the Nara Conference referred to “objects of remembrance” as the material form that evokes the remembrance of something. He recounted the story of Jacob, who

> after his dream of the ladder to heaven marks the place where the vision occurred with an enduring sign made of stone: ‘Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel’ (Genesis 28:10 ff.).[64]

Petzet continues that if the stone were to be rediscovered, it would have

> obtained from Jacob an intentional authentic form to differentiate it from other ordinary stones in that it was erected out of an undoubtedly authentic

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[63] *Burra Charter* (Australia ICOMOS, 1999), Article 1.3.
[64] Michael Petzet, “‘In the full richness of their authenticity’-The Test of Authenticity and the New Cult of Monuments,” in *Nara Conference on Authenticity*, 87.

> material with the help of a particular (in this case rather simple, but nonetheless authentic) technique in order to make clear its authentic function.[65]

Petzet's example confuses the issue. Even if the stone was indeed rediscovered and its authenticity verified, his free use of the adjective "authentic" is confusing. Why is the stone "intentionally authentic" and what makes the material "undoubtedly authentic", and why is the pouring of oil on top of it "nonetheless authentic"? In addition, he does not comment on the hypothetical issue that the stone would take on an immense significance in its own right, even if it were no longer on the original site. The stone would be revered not only for authenticating the story of the dream, but also, and more importantly, that it was *the* authentic stone, and it would become a holy relic for this reason alone, regardless of context.

One underlying premise of the authenticity of the fabric lies in the perception of buildings as physical evidence of historical, social and other cultural significance. Buildings are a product of their time. They represent, as it has been often stated, the historical, social, economic, geographical and philosophical conditions of their time, and in that context can be "read" as the material manifestation of ephemeral values.[66] As aesthetic monuments, the visual qualities of buildings can be readily appreciated, far more easily so than their reading as an historical document.[67] This appreciation has led to their physical qualities often assuming a much higher significance than their representational and documentary status. In this case the emphasis for conservation has been directed solely to the preservation of the fabric, whilst other factors of equal or greater importance have often been overlooked. Although guidelines constantly emphasise the importance of knowing the complete cultural significance of an item, the ephemeral qualities of tradition,

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[65] Ibid., 88.
[66] For example, J.M. Freeland, *Architecture in Australia* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd. 1972). Preface; and Graeme Davison, and Chris. McConville (eds.), *A Heritage Handbook* (North Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1991), 71. Also The *Venice Charter* states as its aim: "The intention in conserving and restoring monuments is to safeguard them no less as works of art than as historical evidence."
[67] Eileen Power, as quoted in Graeme Davison, and Chris. McConville (eds.), *A Heritage Handbook,* 179.

social structures and mores, are often neglected in favour of the more easily appreciated physical evidence. Hence these buildings and historic areas have taken on a significance of their own based solely on their physical attributes, their materials, structure, form, design, details, and their settings often eclipsing the real values underlying this physical evidence.

Criticism has been aimed at the *Venice Charter* for its focus on material significance. Larsen, a conservation architect in Norway, wrote an insightful article for *ICOMOS Information* in 1988.[68] No doubt his experience with timber historic structures gave him a sympathetic background for the understanding of the complex nature of the physical conservation of timber buildings in Japan. He illustrates the Japanese approach to the constant repair of traditional timber buildings, and the various techniques used to maintain both the construction traditions and materials associated with these buildings. Deterioration by decay, insect attack, weathering, and fire are but a few of the problems encountered in these buildings. The techniques involved cover a wide variety of approaches, quite different to those taken by Western conservators. Techniques such as "half dismantling" and "complete dismantling," and the various means of replacing worn timber joints, the extent of which is determined by the extent of the damage, are all specific to Japanese timber construction techniques. In the light of continued use of these techniques he observes that

> it may seem as if some of the Japanese restoration projects in recent years have not been carried out in accordance with paragraph 11 of the Venice Charter which states that "… the valid contribution of all periods to the building or a monument must be respected since unity of style is not the aim of a restoration." If we study the construction of Japanese wooden structures in the light of this dictum, it may be argued that the Charter was intended mainly for stone buildings or structures.[69]

In the *Burra Charter,* articles relating to material aspects far outweigh those relating to other nonmaterial aspects. Duncan Marshall refers specifically to this emphasis

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[68] Knut Einar Larsen, "Impressions of Japanese Preservation Efforts," in *ICOMOS Information* (Naples: Edizione Scientifiche Italiane, 1988), July/September, no. 3. 13
[69] Ibid., 13-14.

of the conservation of fabric in his criticism of the Burra Charter (1988).[70] This led to the improved redrafting of the new *Burra Charter,* but even so the emphasis remains, albeit less predominately. This emphasis begins with the definitions, but continues specifically in those articles giving direction for actual conservation work—conservation processes, maintenance, preservation, restoration and reconstruction, adaptation, archaeology (included under "Disturbance of fabric"), and removed fabric. To this can be added those directions that refer to change of use, location, the setting or curtilage of the building, and the contents, which do so in relation to their effect on the place's physical fabric.[71] This also extends to the consideration of other factors such as the "owner's needs, resources, external constraints and [the places] physical condition."[72]

A major philosophical problem facing conservationists is the knowledge that the work they do will affect the fabric when considered as historical documents, and that this work may alter the document forever, even though genuine efforts may be made to reduce this impact. This may be one reason why conservation charters focus specifically on the material aspects of the building or urban area, and that they have so much concern for minimising physical impact, in order to retain the authenticity of the fabric. A common parallel is often drawn between the authenticity of building restoration and authentic performances of older music. Arguing this parallel, Lowenthal states,

> "to improve buildings, artifacts or musical performances is fraudulent. To restore a true past the nineteenth century consciously altered it: today we likewise alter the past, but habitually blind ourselves to our own impact on it."[73]

Although the sentiment may be true, the parallel is misleading, as it ignores the major difference between these two "restorations." In the case of music, the

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[70] Duncan Marshall, "Analysis of Conservation Practice and the Burra Charter" in Joan Domicelj, , and Duncan Marshall, *Diversity, Place and the Ethics of Conservation – A Discussion Paper* (Canberra,:Australian Heritage Commission, 1994), 26.
[71] *The Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter*, 1999, Articles 1.6, 1.7, 16, 17, 19, 20.1, 21.2, 22.1 (Explanatory Notes), 28.
[72] Ibid., Article 6.3.
[73] David Lowenthal, "Forging the Past," in Mark Jones (ed.), *Fake? – The Art of Deception*, (London: British Museum Publications Ltd 1990), 20.

essential quality is the interpretation brought by the performer, and no matter how the music is presented, the original manuscript remains untouched, and others may have access to it for further interpretations. In the case of building restoration, the building, *itself the original document,* is changed, and future interpretation by others is made all the more difficult.

This can be illustrated by the restoration of Qalaat Ja'ber in Syria. (Fig. 42) This striking Arab fortress, built on a high promontory underwent considerable conservation work during the nineteen seventies and eighties. This work, however, has left a great area of the central fabric in ruin, and the site covered in rubble.

Fig. 42. Qalaat Ja'ber: situated on the Assad Dam, the fortress still dominates the newly formed Lake Assad as it did over the River Euphrates. (Author: 2000)

Except for some brief historical information on a site board, (Fig. 43) interpretation of this site is almost impossible to comprehend, except for the obvious presentation, that it is the ruin of an impressive fortress of the Arabic period. No direction is given for the understanding of the layout of the fortress, what the various areas were used for (although little of the fabric within the walls remains). A restored minaret towers in the centre of the site, but without any attendant mosque or other associated buildings. The viewer may well ask why was the minaret restored, and what was the basis of the restoration? Again, at least

three different types of brickwork in the outer walls can be detected, with no explanation for the viewer. Which bricks are the original and constitute the original walls, and whether the restored sections follow the configuration of the original walls, is not made apparent. (Fig.44) This conservation work was carried out under the control of the Antiquities Department. Given the lack of information, it can only be assumed that it was done in the manner of European conservation, but with little understanding of the principles involved, or the necessity of interpretation. Since its completion, it is obvious that little or no maintenance work has been done. All of this is confusing to the visitor except to those awed only by the sheer size of the ruin, and renders further interpretation of this site's "original document" extremely difficult. [74]

Fig. 43. Qalaat Ja'ber: the only information board for the interpretation of the site. (Author:2000)
Fig. 44. Qalaat Ja'ber: portion of the ruins showing a variety of brickwork. (Author: 2000)

Authenticity in decay and archaeology

An example of the Eurocentric attitude to conservation is the veneration given to the original and historical fabric of both the building and the sculptures of European cathedrals. Although now decaying, the "hands off" approach ensures direct historical and religious links with the past. In addition, the romance of these venerable ruins, in both the structures and their decoration contributes significantly to the continual wonderment and awe of the onlooker. In contrast, other cultures express bewilderment that these European cultures should house their god in a dilapidated ruin. Nobuo Ito is quoted as saying that the periodical

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[74] A description is given in the tourist guide Ross Burns, *Monuments of Syria* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1992), 180. This entry gives a reasonable history, and a brief description, with a simple comment "much of this upper brickwork has been restored post 1972."

renewal of shrines parallels the agricultural cycle of growth from seed to harvest to renewal in the following spring. He continues that: "The Japanese people have, from the beginning of their history, also disliked things which were tainted or polluted by ageing or any other undesirable condition such as death."[75]

The patina of age can be seen as a mark of authenticity, and the removal of this patina can be condemned as eroding authenticity. The insistence of allowing a building to weather follows the natural order of aging, that all things have a beginning, a life of use and eventual death. This is the understanding of Maori cultures that see the conservation of a decayed building being equivalent to the mummification of a dead body. Once a person has died what is the point of keeping the body? Nature will take its course and the body, and a building, should decay in a natural manner.[76] The natural decay of a building is often used as an argument against conservation, justifying demolition and replacement. But what is natural decay in today's environment? The industrialised West has now produced so many environmental pollutants that accelerated decay is now unacceptable. The decay of the Taj Mahal, due to massive industrialised pollutants, led the Indian government to commence a continuing program of washing the inlaid marble walls. In addition, strict pollution controls were introduced, together with high penalties, to drastically reduce the quantity of emission. Pollution in Athens has led to the removal of the caryatids on the Erechtheion and their placement in nitrogen chambers to arrest the decay. Their replacement with concrete replicas has led to arguments—first, regarding the material, and secondly, being cast in their decayed form when they could have been recast in their original complete form, thus giving a better presentation of the building.[77] These reported arguments highlight the emotive perceptions of authenticity in both form and material.

But decay can also be induced through more noble activities. Archaeological excavation reveals material that has been buried for millennia, and this exposure,

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[75] Knut Einar Larsen, quoting Dr. Nobuo Ito in "Impressions of Japanese Preservation Efforts," in *ICOMOS Information*, 16.
[76] Comment by Jonathan Mane-Wheoki, Senior Lecturer in Art History, University of Canterbury, New Zealand, during his Lecture "Contested Sites: Heritage and Biculturalism" at The Architectural Heritage Conference 1997, *The Politics of Inheritance*, Auckland, New Zealand.
[77] These arguments and many more aimed at conservation form the topic of a heated article: "Classic Error," by Simon Jenkins, in *The Sunday Times* (London: 3 January 1988), 25.

following the destruction caused by the excavation itself, can lead to further decay of the remaining evidence. Petzet refers to authenticity in relation to archaeology:

> Every archaeological site is an authentic document. However, such a document is undoubtedly most authentic if it is still completely untouched. If we try to "read" it – to study it by means of an archaeological excavation – the authentic document (with the exception of the artifacts that wind up in a museum) will be more or less destroyed. The authentic document consisting of material traces is replaced by the record of the excavation, also a kind of document, that certifies the authenticity of the findings that no longer exist: a process by which the authentic document is to a certain degree lost, perhaps "living on" only in the form of documentation.[78]

The palace of Zimri Lim at Mari is an example of the above statements. The loss of the mud brick remains which illustrated the vast site coverage of this extensive palace, is not only a loss of the opportunity to present the site, but of greater import, precludes any further research. Even if there had been some attempt to conserve the remains, the lack of expertise and suitable techniques over the past forty years, may not have ensured the retention of the site in a suitable manner for further research.[79] Evidence of this can also be seen in Ebla. Here at least attempts have been made to preserve the mud brick walls for further research, but the confusion arising from the use of new plaster has led to misunderstandings regarding the comprehension of the site. Under the plastic roof the original plaster and the brickwork can be seen, but nothing has been done to present this in a meaningful way. In the mean time the presentation of the site is conveying mixed and confusing messages.[80]

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[78] Michael Petzet, "'In the full richness of their authenticity'-The Test of Authenticity and the New Cult of Monuments," in *Nara Conference on Authenticity,* 87.

[79] The conservation of mudbrick construction has not been satisfactorily answered to date. The experiences of Mari, Ebla, and to some extent Dura Europos illustrate this. The most reliable methods are either constant maintenance, or backfilling, both of which proved unsatisfactory to Dr. Muhesen in Damascus. See Part 1, Syrian Experience.

[80] Refer to Part 1, Syrian Experience. The archaeologist and the Jordanian lecturer had quite different opinions of the plastered finish in Ebla.

The excavations at Ain Dara resulted in the basalt structures decaying under the effects of exposure to the sun and rain. This illustrates that even substantial material, in this case basalt, can fall prey to disintegration after being exposed following its burial for several millennia. But given that the best solution is to back-fill sites on completion, this may not always be possible, and may result in the lost opportunity for the meaningful presentation of the site. Here the problem was exacerbated by the implementation of destructive conservation techniques. Following the failure of this, should backfilling now occur, which it probably won't for tourism purposes, damage has already been done to the fabric that has restricted the value of any further research work.

Authenticity and harmony

The general principles set out in the *Guidelines for the Restoration and Renovation of the Old City of Aleppo* (Appendix 16) state the requirements in order to achieve "harmony with the traditional pattern." Among these feature

> The sensitive repair of the original construction has absolute priority.
> Original building elements have to be repaired even if the costs are higher than new elements.
> Original building materials should be used.
> Construction materials on facades are to be adapted to the historic materials in the neighborhood.[81]

These are only general principles relating to materials, and the emphasis on original materials can be appreciated. Specific details are covered in the form of listing problems and providing the principle for their conservation.

One major element that has considerable impact on the urban character is the Kishk, described as "one of the main architectural features of the Old City; they provide privacy and conserve the inside overlook possibility."[82] The principles cover the return of lost kishks, and suggested conservation methods. (Appendix 15: Chapter 5 Building Elements) In this example the "preservation of maximum of old substance" is recommended, but the relatively modern practice of using

[81] *Guidelines for the Restoration and Renovation of the Old City of Aleppo,* 3.2 General principles.
[82] Ibid., Article 5.1.4 (incorrectly given as 5.1.1).

steel “I” beams is also allowed. Kishks are major architectural features in the old city. The introduction of steel beams, particularly with their shaped ends, for replacing the traditional timber beams, has been used for so many years that their use may now be accepted as traditional. The use of steel “I” beams is the only concession to modern materials and techniques allowed in this context. The principles state that eroded beams should be replaced by wooden beams or “I” beams, and specifically, that in the case of new construction or reconstruction, the use of “I” beams is preferable. However, the replacement of consoles by steel beams is listed as a problem, with the principle that original consoles should be preserved. It is not further defined, so it must be assumed that the “I” beams may only replace the timber beams and not the stone consoles.[83] If this were the case, then the example in figure 45 would not be acceptable. This is a pity, as the opportunity may be lost to continue the use of steel beams that could be seen as fulfilling the spirit of conservation for social and aesthetic purposes as well as material and historical rehabilitation.

[83] Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit, *Guidelines for the Restoration and Renovation of the old City of Aleppo* (Eschborn, GTZ, 1997), Chapter 5.1.4.

Fig. 45. Aleppo: two Kishks showing the juxtaposition of two steel "I" beams in the same configuration as the adjacent traditional timber beam on a stone corbel. Note the curving of the end of the steel beams to simulate the traditional beams, and that the structure above the beams is traditional. (Author: 2001)

The materials for the replacement or reconstruction of badly deteriorated kishks are specifically stated, wood as the historical material only being permitted to cover the exterior walls. Although these requirements will achieve a desired sympathetic aesthetic result, without some underlying reason for the directions being given, it remains puzzling why some new materials are acceptable and others are not.

Summarising issues of authenticity and its relation to materials and substance, similar problems to those of form and design can be seen emerging. The physical and material nature of both lead to questions of historical blending vs. a modernist approach in the attempts to present a historical background to a contemporary urban setting that speaks of an up-to-date and vital society. The problems of new materials vs. old, of decay and restoration according to the charters, and presentation that bespeaks history and modern technology, all fit awkwardly with understandings of authenticity. What is the final message presented to the viewers of these seemingly opposing ideals? Closely bound with each of these authenticity aspects are new uses and functions providing the lifeblood for area conservation.

Use and function

There is a distinct difference between use and function. Many buildings, particularly those built during the early twentieth century under the functionalist doctrine, were built for a specific function. However, over the passage of time, many are now employed for different uses, which may or may not accord with the original function.

The inclusion of function as an aspect of authenticity by Tschudi-Madsen highlights several points in the authenticity debate. The continuation of an original function of a building, or of the complex functions within an urban area, adds considerable support to their cultural significance, particularly if that function is now considered out-dated in an industrial or historical sense. For example, the

main collection of *suqs* and *khans* in Aleppo continue their centuries-old functions with a minimum of technological updating. This is a genuine continuation of a myriad of family based functions. Carpet menders and traders, olive oil soap manufacturers, rope makers, and all varieties of leather goods manufacturers, are but a few of the business, trade and craft practices operating within the old city walls and in the *suqs*. Western cultures may quaintly refer to these as cottage industries, but it is the traditional way that Aleppo has functioned over many centuries, and still forms a strong economic backbone of the city. (Fig.46)

Fig. 46a/b. Aleppo: traditional mode of transport in the *suq.* (Author: 2001)

The continuation of traditional functions and modes of transport adequately serve the local inhabitants both in city *suqs*, and in vernacular villages, and help sustain the places' identity. However, when such places are being assessed for their cultural significance, references to traditional functions are rare, and are frequently overlooked. In the case of larger traditional urban centres, relentless functional change over time has become an accepted norm, and there is the possibility of overlooking the smaller traditional functions in favour of the more recent functions that may now form the main economic base of the centre. The Aleppo *Guidelines* is one such example. Under "General background

information," the *Guidelines* state "Since the Old City has lost during this century its original functions the wealthy population has moved permanently to the modern outskirts of the city, being replaced by poorer residential groups."[84] This may be so for the residential section of the Old City, but it ignores, as indeed the entire document does, the continuing traditional functions in the *suqs.*

New uses for old buildings are a peculiarly Western concept based primarily on economic requirements and escalating technology. One of the most common arguments for the retention of old buildings is their adaptation to accommodate new and contemporary functions. The justification lies in the economic reuse of the building, but again the impact of the changes is considered in terms of the building's physical form. This reinforces the attitude that heritage significance resides in the structure, and as long as the physical form is conserved, its heritage value is assured. It is argued that a change of use continues the life of a building. Cantacuzino argues the same but from the opposite viewpoint: that "because structure tends to outlive function, buildings throughout history have been adapted to all sorts of new uses."[85] But either way, this continuing life is only the life of the building fabric. The *raison d'être* of the building may be gone, often accompanied by the loss of details that contributed towards its distinctive character. These losses and the necessary alterations required for the new uses often diminish the building's original quality, function and significance.[86] But how much greater is the cumulative loss within a total village or traditional urban centre with the influx of new functions and altered environment outside the control of its traditional development?

The *Venice Charter* does not specifically refer to the original function of historic buildings, but only to new uses. Even then the concern is not for the significance of the use, but rather for the conservation of the fabric. Article 5 states:

> The conservation of monuments is always facilitated by making use of them for some socially useful purpose. Such use is therefore desirable but

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[84] *Guidelines for the Restoration and Renovation of the old City of Aleppo,* 1.1 General background information.

[85] Sherban Cantacuzino, *Re/Architecture: Old Buildings/New Uses* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 8.

[86] For a sensitive discussion on this issue, see Paul Oliver, "Documentation and Preservation," in Paul Oliver (ed.), *Shelter and Society* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1969), 15.

> it must not change the lay-out or decoration of the building. It is within these limits only that modifications demanded by a change of function should be envisaged and may be permitted.[87]

The *Burra Charter* has more concern for original functions and proposed new uses. It states, "where the use of a place is of cultural significance it should be retained,"[88] and continues, "a place should have a compatible use."[89] This is an important inclusion in the new charter as its previous omission led to otherwise quite good conservation action being carried out on the lesser significant fabric of a building whilst overlooking the greater significance of its use, even to the point of eventually destroying its real cultural significance. The explanatory notes make quite clear the extent to which a conservator may go:

> The policy should identify a use or combination of uses or constraints on uses that retain the cultural significance of a place. New use of a place should involve minimal change, to significant fabric and use; should respect associations and meanings; and where appropriate should provide for continuation of practices which contribute to the cultural significance of the place. [90]

The importance of this Article is the identification of the significance of the original use and the context of its associations and meanings. In addition, the continuation of original practices should ensure that the cultural significance is not compromised, but this approach has often been sadly overlooked in the desperate attempt to introduce new uses in order to justify economic viability. In most cases, keeping the fabric in any form is considered better than losing the building altogether. Adaptation has assumed a significance of its own, which has extended from the single building to encompass whole urban areas. If the concern of the conservator fails to rise above the retention of the physical fabric, it may result in a growing collection of culturally anachronistic heritage structures, maintaining a visual link with the past, but losing the greater significance of the traditional uses that brought initial life to the area.

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[87] *Venice Charter,* Article 5.
[88] *Burra Charter*, Article 7.1
[89] Ibid., Article 7.2
[90] Ibid., Explanatory note to Article 7.2

Authenticity and reversibility

Article 1.10 of the *Burra Charter* defines *use* as "the functions as well as the activities and practices that may occur at the place."[91] Article 23 refers specifically to continuing, modifying or reinstating a significant use, and this may be the appropriate and preferred form of conservation. However, the explanatory note refers to this in terms of its effect on the significant fabric and that this should be minimised, emphasising again the importance of the fabric. Other articles refer to compatible and/or appropriate use, which are more concerned with the physical changes that may take place as a result of changes of use rather than the significance of the use itself.[92]

The tacit but firmly implied preservation of the authentic fabric inherent in the *Burra Charter* is the well-intentioned response to these concerns. For this reason emphasis is placed on the reversibility of adaptation work, so that at any time the place can be returned to its former authentic condition.[93] This is a wide spread practice as shown by Petzet, who states ""reversibility" presumes that all interventions, alterations, etc. are to be carried out so that they could be undone, that is, a previous authentic condition could be re-established."[94] This approach, whilst admirable, again refers only to physical conservation. In the mean time, an incompatible new use must surely reduce the level of significance of a building. Given the scope of much adaptive work, which, in spite of the Charter's admonitions, is largely irreversible, the original heritage significance could be lost forever, even though the physical remnants of the building would be accepted as the real heritage.

It is virtually impossible for an urban complex to exist without a viable economic base, but an integral part of continual economic viability is the social and cultural context of the inhabitants. But equally it is virtually impossible that reversibility could apply in urban conservation. If the perception of authenticity in an urban

[91] *Burra Charter*, Article 1.10.
[92] Ibid., Articles 7., 2, 9.3, and 14.
[93] Ibid., Article 15.2.
[94] Michael Petzet, "'In the full richness of their authenticity' - The Test of Authenticity and the New Cult of Monuments," in *Nara Conference on Authenticity*, 94.

context is to extend beyond the urban fabric, it must recognise the historical development and current status of this social/cultural and economic base that underlies its built heritage significance. A vital adjunct of a continual economic development may be the necessity for the traditional functions of the place to change to accommodate new requirements.

The functional aspects may be important to the fabric of a building, but when translated into urban terms this importance of function over fabric can become vital. Urban centres are complex social and cultural entities, and the web of functions, which combine to produce what is then seen as the function of the city, village or town, is its life-blood. The smaller the urban centre the greater impact the change of function will have on the inhabitants and consequently the built environment. The traditional centres of larger cities, such as that in Damascus, are more used to the continual introduction of new functions. In a more fragile village context, the development of new innovations and functions has traditionally occurred more slowly. This is particularly so where often isolated and close-knit societies have existed with little or no change to traditional functions from time immemorial. In these cases changes in function can make a considerable impact on the living conditions of the inhabitants. A village structure presents features that are unique to a specific country and period.[95] The characteristics of village life make the highly traditional and conformist culture peculiar to that particular village, and it is this timelessness in the lifestyles of the inhabitants, and concomitantly to the built environment, which presents the impression of authenticity. In these cases changes in function will happen, albeit slowly, and the change in the built environment will be a true reflection of this dynamic development. It is these values that may draw the conservationist's attention to the heritage significance of the place, and hence provide the reason for conservation. The irony is that the impact of this conservation could most likely begin the disintegration of this authenticity.

The village is the inhabitant's world, and their social structure is a product of their close dependence on each other. This social structure changes over time, and with

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[95] Teodor Shanin (ed.), *Peasants and Peasant Societies* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Education, 1973), 244.

these changes the function of the buildings may change, but this is always at the speed dictated by the culture. Oliver states, "preservation may mean the injection of formaldehyde but it cannot be said to perpetuate life," and continues

> But from the point of view of the preservation of vernacular forms it means the loss of some elements and the alterations of others which must inevitably mean a diminution of the original quality or function to a very different level. The building remains as a symbol, obscure and imprecise, a subconscious statement of the owner's implied sensitivity to the traditional modes of building, of his feeling for landscape and the rural tradition. Less happily it is a symbol of escapism, of a lack of confidence in the present and the future. [96]

Oliver's statement is bleak, but based perhaps on his perception of attempts at conservation that sought to preserve a village in aspic. Changes to vernacular houses, if done at the response to changes in lifestyle and functions normal to the society, will be the correct reflection of this change, and therefore authentic. The establishment of a village or a building depends on cultural requirements, but the re-establishment or change of function, if not based on cultural requirements, may be incongruous, no matter how authentic the conservation of the fabric. The theory and practice of adaptation, reuse and re-establishment within a historical context has grown from Western concepts, but some traditional non-Western nations, for example, Asian cultures and the Arabic world, see the evidence of history from other perspectives.[97] In this latter context the acceptance or otherwise of adaptation calls into question the limits of conservation and with it the limits to authenticity. One example of this is the village of El-Qasr in the Dakhleh region of central Egypt. (Fig. 47)

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[96] Paul Oliver, "Documentation and Preservation" in Paul Oliver (ed.), *Shelter and Society*. (London: The Cresset Press. 1969), 15.
[97] Michael Petzet, "'In the full richness of their authenticity' – The test of Authenticity and the New Cult of Monuments," in *Nara Conference on Authenticity,* 94.

Fig. 47. Dahkleh Oasis: village of Qasr. Once a thriving village, the deterioration of the fabric can now be easily seen. (Author: 2002)

This village is now a dilapidated ghost of its former self, housing a dwindling number of people where it originally housed 4,500. In an attempt to retain the original mediaeval fabric, the present inhabitants are not allowed to make any changes or do any form of maintenance or restoration. In addition no newcomers are allowed. The result is the decaying wreck of a city swiftly crumbling into total ruin.

This sad condition is all the more disastrous, as the city was an excellent example of an intact Egyptian mediaeval village. But how much longer will the fabric remain as an example that can intelligently convey a genuine message of this period? Trying to keep the fabric of the village in its current original form may be seen by the authorities as preferable to that of allowing changes which will keep the village alive, but the decay is eroding not only the fabric, but also its perceived authenticity, and, as an economic consequence, its tourism interest. In January 2002, two European conservators having submitted a proposal to conserve El-Qasr, were met first with cautious acceptance from the Egyptian authorities, and then by deliberate obstruction.[98] However, the project is now proceeding with the conservation of one house as a test case. The intention of the exercise is try and convince the former inhabitants and the authorities that conservation will make

[98] Personal comment from the principal conservator, Dr. Fred Leemhuis, a former Director of the Dutch Institute in Cairo.

the village habitable without destroying its authenticity, and provide ongoing economic sustainability beyond that of tourism.

The very loss of the traditional functions within a village or traditional centre, relegates them to the status of a museum piece, and that condition alone signifies an immense loss of authenticity.[99] This condition has to be balanced with that of maintaining the fabric of the urban setting but allowing new functions to keep the lifeblood flowing, even at the perceived loss of authenticity.

Boṣra was the unusual example of urban fabric and use. The antiquities provided the habitation for the present day society, even though their culture was not that of the original urban setting. Authenticity lay with the use of the ruins as a habitation together with the original remaining urban fabric. Now that the inhabitants have been evacuated, the loss is a double one: the use is gone, and the ruins have been relegated to another empty museum of aging urban fabric. The significance of fabric has won again over the significance of use.

In the UNESCO *Recommendation Concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Rôle of Historic Centres,* the word authenticity only occurs once, and this is in relation to a physical problem of damage: "Historic areas and their surroundings should be actively protected against damage of all kinds, particularly resulting from unsuitable use, unnecessary additions and misguided or insensitive changes such as will impair their authenticity, and to damage due to any form of pollution."[100] It is interesting to note that the final phrase of the sentence, coming after the word authenticity, implies that pollution, sometimes perceived as natural erosive damage, does not impair authenticity. Again the concern is aimed at the damage, or the physical effects of change, rather than the change of use itself. It is not clear whether the phrase "misguided or insensitive changes such as will impair their authenticity" refers to changes of use as a primary focus, and the subsequent changes to the fabric as secondary. Given the numerous examples where fabric

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[99] Michael Petzet, "'In the full richness of their authenticity' – The test of Authenticity and the New Cult of Monuments," in *Nara Conference on Authenticity,* 95

[100] UNESCO, *Recommendation Concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Rôle of Historic Areas,* General Principles, Article 4.

comes first, it is unlikely that change of use was in the drafter's mind when preparing this clause.

The *Washington Charter* places specific importance on the functions within urban areas. Under its Principles and Objectives, the Charter states, "Qualities to be preserved include the historic character... and all those material and spiritual elements that express this character, especially: ...(e) the various functions that the town or urban area has acquired over time."[101] It continues, "Any threat to these qualities would compromise the authenticity of the historic town or urban area."[102] Under its Methods and Instruments the Charter states, "New functions and activities should be compatible with the character of the historic town or urban area."[103] Whilst it is notable that the original functions are recognised, once again we see a concern for the impact on the physical fabric perhaps to the possible neglect of the natural development of the society. Even the introduction of new functions is seen in physical terms, "Adaptation of these areas to contemporary life requires the careful installation or improvement of public service facilities."[104]

Lowenthal echoes a Western understanding of change of use when he states: "Only by altering and adding to what we save does our heritage remain real, alive, and comprehensible."[105] Lowenthal's following discussion shows a common fault of seeing "preservation narrowly construed." He does not allow a continuing tradition of function where change to both the function and the building would be minimal. In his statement above, the building may remain real, but in what sense? Real in a physical sense only, in that it exists as a structure? It may remain alive, but alive to what? Some of its fabric may have been retained, and the building is earning its keep by housing some useful purpose, but comprehensible? What will people comprehend from such an adapted building of its original heritage significance? If heritage conservation is only concerned with saving building materials, where do the arguments for identity and cultural continuity fit into the

[101] *The ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas (The Washington Charter),* Article 2(e).
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid., Article 8.
[104] Ibid.
[105] David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1986). 411.

resulting “heritage”? And what is left that could possibly be called “authentic” in such heritage? This illustrates the paradox of retaining authentic material as the evidence of heritage significance, as opposed to retaining the authentic function, which may well have been the primary *raison d’être* for the building’s heritage significance.

The charters have to acknowledge the existence and necessity of new uses, but problems arise when these new uses threaten the original and culturally significant but now obsolete function of the building. In area conservation this problem can be greatly magnified. Compatible uses are an ideal but not always a practical answer to the problem. Although not often stated, it is new uses and functions that drive the direction and style of a building’s conservation. The charters are right to be concerned about the material effect that a new use will have on the fabric of the building. But fabric alone may not be the only significant element that is compromised. Authenticity may be compromised just as easily through use and function as it may through the fabric. Even the continuation or revitalisation of the original function may pose a threat to authenticity if it does not support a sustainable social or cultural need. The problem may lie more in change itself, both change to the function and then change to the fabric. These factors are discussed below.

Traditions and techniques

Traditions in the general sense refer to beliefs and customs that are handed down especially orally or in practice.[106] In the context of heritage conservation the connection between the ephemeral oral beliefs and physical practice underlies the further understanding of tradition as accumulated experience or continuous usage. The *Venice Charter* sees historic monuments as “living witnesses of … age-old traditions,” and continues that each country should apply the charter within the framework of its own “culture and traditions.”[107] The traditions here are seen in terms beyond the narrow focus of the built environment, but rather that the environment becomes the arena for the continuation of traditions.

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[106] *The Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press,1987).
[107] *Venice Charter,* Preamble.

The Aleppo *Guidelines* make reference to traditional elements of the old city, Aleppo as a traditional Islamic city, and the traditional residential buildings.[108] The UNESCO *Recommendation* also refers to traditional areas, but neither of these examples specifically defines the use of the word. The use assumes the acceptance of the term as those areas that have been built and used by generations of people living in a traditional pattern of life, and the reflection of this in the built pattern.

Traditions were discussed at the Nara Conference, but again, being associated with World Heritage listing the subject mainly revolved around their application in the construction of heritage structures. The coupling of traditions with techniques then implies those skills associated with the building industry in the construction of these traditional areas. The UNESCO *Recommendation* calls for research on "the crafts (sic) techniques indispensable for safeguarding."[109] Modern techniques are not excluded from this research, but the reference to crafts as being indispensable for safeguarding narrows their use from a broad reaching employment in their own right to esoteric conservation. This is echoed in the *Venice Charter* that states, "Where traditional techniques prove inadequate, the consolidation of a monument can be achieved by the use of any modern technique for conservation and construction, the efficacy of which can be shown by scientific data and proved by experience."[110]

The linking of the term techniques with crafts opens other related terms, for example craftsmanship and workmanship. Workmanship is given as one of the four aspects of the World Heritage "test of authenticity in design, material, workmanship or setting,"[111] and is usually understood to refer to finely executed details revealed on the building and hence illustrating the quality of workmanship at the time of building. In many cases of vernacular villages and traditional urban centres where the traditional building and artisanal techniques are still continuing,

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[108] *Guidelines for the Restoration and Renovation of the old City of Aleppo*, 1.1 General background information.
[109] UNESCO, *Recommendation Concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Rôle of Historic Areas,* Article 48.
[110] *Venice Charter,* Article 10.
[111] UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*

the workmanship itself could be seen as acknowledging this existing intangible heritage rather than merely its physical results.

The *Burra Charter Guidelines,* in determining cultural significance, require the practitioner to identify items of "technical interest, the cultural influences which have affected the form and fabric of the place," and "the relationship of the place to other places" in respect to technology.[112] This shows a concern for the artisans that produced the original fabric, as well as the significance of the fabric itself. Regarding the conservation of this original fabric, the Charter requires that "Traditional techniques and materials are preferred for the conservation of significant fabric."[113] It continues that modern techniques and materials may be appropriate, but only if they offer substantial conservation benefits, and are supported by firm scientific evidence or by a body of experience.[114] It further states that new work should be identifiable as such on close inspection or through interpretation.[115] The identification of new work, whether using new or traditional techniques and materials, again respects the original artisan as well as the original fabric. This is a preferable requirement than those of the *Venice Charter* or the UNESCO *Recommendation,* which consider the use of techniques only in terms of the fabric.

In some cultures traditional practices, seen as a necessary social attribute, are considered more important to authenticity than the fabric or use of the building. Japan is a commonly cited example of this, particularly in relation to the conservation of timber buildings. The fragile nature of timber demands that a different approach be taken for the conservation of timber buildings than that of the more robust stone structures. In Japan the constant renewal of timber members in old buildings is a continuing tradition. Dismantling and reconstruction is not done indiscriminately, however. The replacement wood is of the same species and quality as the original wood, and the same carpentry techniques are used wherever possible. So the Japanese see this as not only preserving the built heritage, but

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[112] "Guidelines to the Burra Charter: Cultural Significance," in the *Burra Charter*, Article 3.2, (c), (f), and (j).
[113] *Burra Charter*, Article 4.2.
[114] Ibid., Article 4.2, including explanatory note.
[115] Ibid., Articles 20 and 22.

also, and more importantly, preserving the traditional craftsmanship. Japan is a country that reveres craftsmanship, bestowing the term "National Treasure" on the craftsman as well as the buildings or objects on which they work.[116]

Nevertheless, confusion still surrounds explanations regarding authenticity and Japanese examples. Nobuo Ito states, "If "authenticity" is defined as genuineness, even the replacement of one timber would result in the violation of authenticity. However, if the meaning of authenticity can include reliability, the situation will become more flexible."[117] He justifies this definition by continuing, "If minute examination is made before replacement, the quantity of replaced parts is minimised, the size, quality and species of new material are the same as previous ones, the workmanship is the same, and the report is published after the work, the replacement would never violate authenticity."[118].

Ito has previously defined his meanings of authenticity, a word which he states does not occur in the Japanese language.[119] His closest equivalents are the words "authority, reliability, and genuineness."[120] Although he argues that authenticity arises from cultural understandings, including "intangible cultural heritage," he has still considered the above example in physical terms, that which he claims is a European approach. All of his argument given above, examination, minimal intervention, matching materials, workmanship, and documentation, are processes exhorted by the *Burra Charter*. But in his simple explanation, he has overlooked the vital cultural difference, that of traditional craftsmanship. Regarding his "workmanship," it may be taken that Ito is referring to traditional workmanship. This would not be the same as modern workmanship, where the technical result may resemble the traditional work without the actual hand of a traditional craftsman. The argument—if you cannot tell the difference what difference does it make? may cover particular examples, but the real problem remains that in a country like Japan where craftsmanship is revered, the loss of this tradition would not be balanced simply by the substitution of modern techniques.

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[116] Nobuo Ito, "Authenticity Inherent in Cultural Heritage in Asia and Japan," in *Nara Conference on Authenticity,* 43-44.
[117] Ibid., 44.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid., 35.
[120] Ibid., 36.

But the continuation of traditional crafts and techniques needs to be, as in the Japanese example above, a continuing and revered tradition. Petzet refers to the now highly endangered earthen architecture of northern Africa in that it "has been possible to preserve its authenticity through a constant replacement of materials carried out over centuries in a particular tradition involving craftsman's practices."[121] This replacement of materials in conservation practice is admirable, but one would have to question the motive behind this action if the society developed beyond its need. For example, the debate between mud brick and concrete block construction should first be argued from the environmental viewpoint, that is, on thermal insulation and economical arguments, before the aesthetic and museum arguments, or even for merely the continuation of outdated techniques. The techniques would certainly be acceptable for conservation of the older buildings, and this would be essential as, if the craft was no longer required for new work, a living record would be kept through this conservation.

Authenticity and visual finish

The Principles of the *Guidelines for the Restoration and Renovation of the Old City of Aleppo* require that "repair has to be executed in the traditional workmanship."[122] The Principle continues that original building elements have to be repaired. There is no explanation given regarding details of traditional workmanship, and given the age of the city and the myriad of techniques involved over its long history, it can only be expected that traditional workmanship would vary according to the specific age of the building under conservation. A further principle states that "If traditional techniques are inadequate; the consolidation can be achieved by modern techniques."[123] Consolidation is not defined, and the use of modern techniques for general conservation work is not canvassed. Regarding the specific sections on each of the building components, the principles relate entirely to the materials, and no further clue is given to the technique. In this case where significance is not attached to traditional workmanship, the

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[121] Michael Petzet, "'In the full richness of their authenticity' – The test of Authenticity and the New Cult of Monuments," in *Nara Conference on Authenticity*, 94.
[122] *Guidelines for the Restoration and Renovationof the Old City of Aleppo,* Section 3, Principles.
[123] Ibid.

requirement is given in order to ensure a correct visual finish to the work rather than to the significance of the technique involved.

An example of correct visual finish has occurred in Damascus where interest is being shown regarding a new technique for carving stone.[124] This involves an expensive machine, available through an Australian firm, which uses a very high-pressure fine water jet that the manufacturers claim can cut through steel, aluminium, and stone to an exceptionally fine degree of accuracy. The intention was to use this technique for carving intricate stone capitals and other complex architectural details such as stone fretwork screens. They argued that the cost and lack of expertise in traditional hand craftsmanship methods precludes this work being done in the traditional style. The craftsmanship involved in producing the original details is that which makes these historic buildings so breathtaking, and contributes to the buildings' special and unequalled character and significance. The danger here is that the temptation to reproduce accurately the complex details may not sufficiently distinguish the new work from the original. This not only demeans the work of the original craftsman, but may also raise doubts regarding the authenticity of all the fabric of the building. This form of reproduction may bring unity to the building or city's character, but at the same time, reduce the special singularity of the original handcrafted technique. This is not the only aspect regarding the use of this modern technique. The importance of the spirit of the original craftsman is discussed below.

The chances of finding traditional workmanship still alive in rural villages, such as the construction of the north Syrian domical houses, is much higher than finding them in the larger cities. Given the technological advances in modern cities, it will be in the forms, materials and the city plan that the historical traditions will be seen, rather than in the traditional workmanship.

Tschudi-Madsen cited above, in separating his approach to authenticity into five aspects rather than the previous four, omitted workmanship and setting. The omission of workmanship is regrettable, as this dissuades any thinking towards

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[124] Personal comments from architects in Damascus. They spoke to me about this technique, as they were sure that architects in Australia would be using the system for conservation.

traditional artisanal techniques, as well as "high-craft" techniques, being recognised for their own significance, as well as the artefacts that they produced.

Authenticity and oral tradition

This emphasis on traditional practices raises other important aspects of social life. For example, the oral traditions of formerly isolated societies can have an important influence on their built environment, and the authenticity of that environment may be perceived more in the understanding of those oral traditions rather than in the built evidence.

Folklore as exemplified in dance, stories, and songs, is ethereal in nature, but often manifests itself in some material way. It is recognised that in some cultures "oral transmission of an unwritten body of teachings from generation to generation [are] of equal authority with the written texts."[125] The association between oral traditions with some physical object or place is an ancient practice, for example, Aboriginal legends that are linked directly with features of the landscape.[126] In the eyes of the initiated, these objects take on a significance of equal importance to the oral tradition, as a manifestation or revelation of the inner truth and meaning of the story. Again, the authenticity of these objects is paramount for the confirmation of the message they convey. In Western society, physical evidence plays an important part in authenticating both oral and documented histories. In time, this physical evidence, whether natural or specifically crafted, takes on a significance of its own, to the point where even if the inner message is unknown, lost or ignored, the object itself may still be venerated, even if only for its age.[127]

Dobrowolski, referring to oral transmissions and social functions, states that new technological advances, new terms, customs and songs, over time begin to supplant the older traditions, and despite long co-existence, may eventually completely replace them. She concludes, "This usually happened when the old

[125] Jukka Jokilehto, "Authenticity: a General Framework for the Concept," in *Nara Conference on Authenticity,* 25.
[126] Amos Rapoport, "Australian Aborigines and the Definition of Place," in Paul Oliver (ed.), *Shelter, Sign and Symbol* (London: Barrie and Jenkins Ltd. 1975), 43.
[127] Lowenthal assigns a whole chapter to "The Look of Age," in *The Past is a Foreign Country* (London: Cambridge University Press 1986), Chapter 4, 125.

form did not find a material embodiment or iconographic representation or was not preserved in a written shape."[128] This can be seen with craftsmanship, that in the case of practical application, few craftsmen relied on written or drawn designs and calculations, but their craft was based on memory and repetitive skill. Variations in design would happen, but mostly within the knowledge of previous similar variations. Traditional practices result in an anonymous character, where the conformity of the society and their building traditions produces a similarity and anonymity of style, and concomitantly, this cohesion of the built form reflects the cohesion of the society itself.

The conservatism of traditional societies ensures little change in lifestyles, habits and social structures. This inevitably leads to little change in the built environment. It could therefore be assumed that the "untouched" village would project an authentic image of the culture stretching back over a long period of time. Maalula has maintained its ancient Aramaic language to the present day. Parallel with this has been the maintenance of its built heritage, growing from the original caves to their present façades utilizing regional building techniques. Now, in contrast, the reduction in the use of the traditional language has occurred hand-in-hand with a concomitant rise in modern building techniques and designs.

Parallel with the built heritage are the numerous artifacts associated with other traditional practices and customs, and they too could remain relatively unchanged over long periods of time. Although some oral traditions have associations with physical objects, there are those oral traditions or folklore that do not rely on physical memorabilia but are continued solely through the spoken word or ritual action. Since the late nineteenth century when folklore became a serious scientific study, the folklorists have changed their attitudes and approaches to the authenticity of folklore practice. From the earlier attitude of seeing only the first examples of folklore as being authentic and therefore worthy of acknowledging and recording, they now accept the changing and developing nature of folklore as

[128] Kazimierz Dobrowolski, "Peasant Traditional Culture," in Teodor Shanin (ed.), *Peasant Societies* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Education, 1971), 282.

an ongoing legacy rather than an antiquarian time capsule.[129] In the following chapter we shall be considering this legacy of change and development with reference to the conservation of the built environment.

The criteria for World Heritage Listing requires that each property should "bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition," and/or "be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions."[130] In the above examples it is the living tradition that is important, traditions that exemplify cultural continuity. Techniques transform immaterial traditions into material objects and their use, and through their application, give the ideas, beliefs, designs, and aspirations of the society tangible reality. But only if the techniques are based on the true living traditions can the resultant evidence be considered an authentic representation of that society's heritage.

In summary, traditions and techniques are closely related to social/cultural factors. These lie behind the visual impact that a heritage building or area projects. The choice of form and materials, and the method of design and of fashioning the materials, and the specific uses and functions of the place, will all be influenced by the traditions of the culture. The resulting physical manifestation of these traditions and techniques should then be an authentic reflection of the society and its culture. It is therefore essential that the traditions and techniques be identified and acknowledged along with the final physical product so that a fuller understanding may be presented.

Location and setting

The location of a building may be a matter of historical circumstance, its position generally determined by social or functional reasons, geographical factors or matters of safety and transportation. Today the location of historical sites can seem arbitrary, but these too carry historical messages. Bosra in the Hauran region, now set in a bleak and inhospitable landscape, was once the centre of "one

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[129] David Lowenthal, "Changing Criteria of Authenticity," in *Nara Conference on Authenticity,* 130-131.

[130] UNESCO, *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention,* Article 24.

of the granaries of the [Roman] empire,"[131] a rich and fertile region. Prized by the Greeks and the Nabateans, it finally passed to the Romans who increased its rich agriculture. Damascus was situated on an oasis at least as early as the fourth millennium BCE. Its position proved to be strategic, and its importance is noted in the cuneiform tablets of both Mari and Ebla (c 2500 BCE).[132]

Whatever the reasons, the setting and location can be considered to be of equal importance to the significance of the place itself. A building or an area that has lost its context may become an anachronism, a gem without a setting, unrelated to its place in historical development and devoid of interpretive meaning. The *Venice Charter* states, "The concept of an historic monument embraces not only the single architectural work but also the urban or rural setting in which is found the evidence of a particular civilization, a significant development or an historic event."[133] It continues "The conservation of a monument implies preserving a setting that is not out of scale."[134] The last comment—"that is not out of scale"—is notable that it points to the problem of newer development of modern times proceeding without concern for the surrounding historic areas which have become swamped within a mass of over-scaled modern high rise buildings. Again the concern expressed is based on the visual and physical effects rather than the historical and social continuity.

The building/landscaping relationship is vital, as the spatial affinity of the built environment and its setting creates a local discipline which forms its essential urban character. The urban context is equally essential, as a single monument, even with its own specific setting, may be an historic anachronism if its original surrounding environment has been lost to unsympathetic development. This argument is based on an understanding of the original historic setting, for the modern setting is an historical fact, even if the aesthetic appreciation is considered unsympathetic. This opposition of the original setting to the present setting may form the essence of the authenticity of the setting of the monument and its location.

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[131] Ross Burns, *Monuments of Syria*, (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd. 1999), 62.
[132] Ibid., 73.
[133] *Venice Charter*, Article 1.
[134] Ibid., Article 6.

Cleere, in referring to the authenticity of setting in the Nara discussions, said "In many ways this is the most difficult aspect of authenticity to evaluate."[135] He used as an example two monuments in Kyoto, Japan, which were part of a collection of seventeen such monuments, but these two were set in the midst of a sprawling city and had lost most of its historic fabric and character. He questioned:

> Should they be excluded from a carefully compiled group of temples and shrines that represent the entire cultural history of a city that was the capital of Japan for a thousand years because they are surrounded by modern buildings of no great aesthetic or cultural value? [He concludes] The ICOMOS recommendation was that all seventeen monuments should be inscribed on the List.[136]

He gave no reason for the ICOMOS decision, the impression being given that the two completed a collection and that this was seen to be more important than the inappropriate setting. Would the two have been considered significant if they were the only two examples, or would their rarity have lifted them beyond their non-authentic setting? Or again, does their current setting display an historic example of the changing attitudes and tastes of the designers of Kyoto? These questions illustrate the aesthetic approach to the problem of setting, for it could be questioned that the remaining fifteen monuments are presumably in their original settings and hence are considered authentic, at least in respect to their setting. But what changes have been made to these settings over the years, and although they may be aesthetically acceptable, are they really the original and authentic settings? It would seem from the direction given by the *Venice Charter* "preserving a setting that is not out of scale," that if the subsequent surrounding development was in scale, then the setting could be considered authentic.

The two examples of Aleppo and Damascus make an interesting comparison. Both of the old traditional centres of these cities are clearly defined by the old walls, or at least by some evidence where the walls were situated. In both cases

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[135] Henry Cleere, "The Evaluation of Authenticity in the Context of the World Heritage Convention," in *Nara Conference on Authenticity,* 64.
[136] Ibid.

modern development has taken place outside the walls and the traditional centre has been left largely intact.

In Aleppo, the Banshoya scheme, which resulted in one major inroad into the old quarter, caused an initial outcry from concerned citizens. (Figs. 23 and 24) The intention was to carry the road right through the centre, but this plan was halted following the outcry, and resulted in the current rehabilitation scheme being implemented. Several large modern buildings were built within and near the old wall break-through, but although they have an impact on the immediate surrounding area, they have had little impact on the overall old city. The explosive development that took place around the old centre during the twentieth century, maintained a relatively low scale (four or five-storey buildings being the norm) and the majority of the buildings have the same stone finish and general detailing. The lower scale and sympathetic materials are now being used within the old city with the reasonable results of a visually cohesive city in which the surrounding modern character fits well with the character of the old centre. (Fig. 48)

Fig. 48. Aleppo: new development in the old city. Even though situated on the major inroad of the Banshoya scheme, and in proximity of some high-rise buildings following that scheme, the present buildings maintain the general scale of the old city. (Author: 2001)

The old City of Damascus, although having most of its ancient wall remaining, and very little intrusive modern development, is surrounded with an equally explosive modern expansion as Aleppo. However, in contrast to Aleppo, the

development has been much more in the Western metropolis style of modern high-rise buildings, in a variety of modern materials, with wide busy streets and traffic flyovers. The scale of development is in much greater contrast to the old city than that at Aleppo, and there is little if any visual cohesion. (Fig. 49) The result of these two examples is that the compatibility of the character areas of Aleppo brings an aura of authenticity to both the location and setting of the old city. In contrast, the old city of Damascus, containing a higher degree of original buildings, remains a classic gem within an unprepossessing and anachronistic setting. Although the ancient lineage of this city is well known and therefore its location acknowledged, the current setting lacks the visual conviction of the city's historic authenticity.

Fig.49. Damascus: new development outside the old city walls. The photograph shows one flyover taken from a footbridge. Although situated within half a kilometre from the old city, and built on an area developed in the early twentieth century that had retained a close-knit and medium scale built environment, it now stands in stark contrast to the old city in all respects. (Author: 1996)

It is notable that ICOMOS, when recommending a place for entry on the World Heritage List, invariably does so with the condition of a defined buffer zone around the property.[137] This is a common remedy to ensure that the situation such as that at Damascus does not occur. The conservation charters support this approach. The *Venice Charter* refers to the concept of an historic monument

[137] Ibid., 65.

embracing "not only the single architectural work but also the urban or rural setting in which is found the evidence of a particular civilization, a significant development or an historic event."[138] The above example of the Charter's requirement regarding the setting to be not out of scale conflicts with the following article which states that "A monument is inseparable from the history to which it bears witness and from the setting in which it occurs."[139] This places the emphasis on the *location* of the building and the historical circumstances for it being on that site. It is to be assumed that if the surrounding buildings were out of scale, then conservation of the monument would require the demolition of those buildings to a setting that was in scale. This may indicate a distinct preference for aesthetic concerns rather than historic and authentic concerns. This approach continues with Article 14 that states, "The sites of monuments must be the object of special care in order to safeguard their integrity and ensure that they are cleared and presented in a seemly manner."[140] Although the article further specifies that the work of conservation and restoration of these sites should be in accordance with the other articles in the Charter, it is the blanket requirement that they should be "cleared and presented in a seemly manner" that is ambiguous and points to aesthetic concerns rather than the site's historic authenticity. Today, some European cathedrals stand in relatively cleared surroundings, denying the original settings of houses and shops that crowded around and against the cathedral walls for centuries. But would aesthetic or even historical reasons sanction the "restoration" of these buildings to crowd out the contemporary pleasant setting?

This problem of a significant place being located in an unsympathetic setting is exacerbated if little can be done to alleviate the surrounding area. In the case of urban conservation, this may be impossible to achieve without causing some form of historical and social disruption. It could be argued that the current setting is itself an historical fact, no matter how unsympathetic it may be, and any attempt to change this would be, in itself, inauthentic. The counter argument centers on significance. In the words of the *Burra Charter*:

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[138] *Venice Charter,* Article 1.
[139] Ibid., Article 7.
[140] Ibid., Article 14.

> The contributions of all aspects of cultural significance of a place should be respected. If a place includes fabric, uses, associations or meanings of different periods, or different aspects of cultural significance, emphasising or interpreting one period or aspect at the expense of another can only be justified when what is left out, removed or diminished is of slight cultural significance and that which is emphasised or interpreted is of much greater cultural significance.[141]

Remembering that the *Burra Charter* is to be used for urban conservation, this statement could be interpreted in an alarming manner. Removing surrounding development, whilst providing a pleasant aesthetic setting, would nonetheless leave the heritage place in a setting that may never have previously existed. Even if the surroundings could be restored to a previously known condition, it would fix the heritage place in one particular time frame, and deny the subsequent passage of history. The justification would rest with the interpretation of the exceptionally significant place being presented as it was at its most significant time, if indeed at that time it was sited on a clear setting.

The *Burra Charter* is more specific than the *Venice Charter*. Under the heading Definitions, Article 1 states that *Place* should be broadly interpreted, and its definition includes site, area, land, landscape, groups of buildings, spaces and views, as well as the usual buildings and other works. More importantly, the definition of cultural significance states that it is embodied in its setting (among other attributes), and defines *setting* as the area around a place, which may include the visual catchment. In a rural area the visual catchment could be quite extensive, and indicates the importance given to the setting of a heritage building. Article 8 requires the retention of an appropriate visual setting, and continues that new construction, demolition, intrusions or other changes that would adversely affect the setting are not appropriate. As with the *Venice Charter* these articles could be considered from an aesthetic point of view, but again could indicate a concern with retaining the surroundings in order to maintain the authenticity of the setting. The emphasis on new construction and demolition and other actions that would

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[141] *Burra Charter*, Article 15.4.

adversely affect the setting shows a concern for retaining the surroundings as they are, and hence ensuring at least some degree of site authenticity. The terminology is important, as the intention is given as “appropriate” rather than authentic. Again in comparison with the *Venice Charter*, the *Burra Charter* refers to demolition with other changes that would adversely affect the visual setting, whereas the *Venice Charter* (as noted above), calls for the site to be “cleared and presented in a seemly manner.” Again, this latter terminology points more strongly to aesthetic concerns than those of authenticity.

In the *Burra Charter,* location is not defined but is the subject of Article 9, which states that the physical location of a place is part of its cultural significance. Continuing that such a place should remain in its historical location, the rest of the article is concerned solely with the problems of relocation. This indicates the importance given to the location of a heritage place, being an important factor in its authenticity.

Authenticity and relocation

The relocation of heritage places is a confused issue, with strong advocates arguing both for and against it. The *Burra Charter* condones relocation but only if this is the sole practical means of ensuring its survival. The removal of the Dura Europos synagogue was done as a normally accepted archaeological expedient of that time. Hopkins writes that it would be impossible to leave the paintings in the desert, and divided the Synagogue paintings and the Church paintings into two equal groups, one for Syria and one for America. He claims that it did not matter which group was chosen by Syria, but he was disappointed to lose the Synagogue paintings to Syria.[142] Given the deterioration of the rest of the Dura Europos site, the protection of the paintings in the synagogue has exonerated the decision to move it to Damascus, whether for the right reasons or not. In contrast, the removal of the church to Yale University and its subsequent demise provides an example of condemnation for this practice. The results of both of these examples are dependant more on the manner in which the items were treated after their

[142] Clark Hopkins, *The Discovery of Dura Europos,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 203-210.

removal, rather than from the removal itself. Had they remained on site, it is most likely that they both would have deteriorated beyond redemption.

Huxtable refers to "preservation enclaves" being the assortment of developer-dispossessed fragments having been moved from places where they were inconveniently interfering with profitable new construction.[143] The convenience of shifting heritage places to accommodate new development has been well known for many years. It is usually deplored by conservationists with the arguments of the location being part of the cultural significance. This is the basis of the article 9 in the *Burra Charter* with reference to relocation. There are however other arguments which can support relocation. The charter refers to some works having a history of relocation, and so it can be argued that not only is any one location of greater significance than another, but also that the act of relocation may in itself constitute a building's significance. During the nineteenth century in Eyre Peninsula, South Australia, the police, in order to incarcerate offenders in any place without having to return to a major centre, used a movable wooden gaol. The significance of this gaol rests in its movability, a rare attribute for a gaol, which contributes to its authenticity.

The open-air museum is an example of many items being moved to a single site, as a means of presenting a variety of heritage settings as a compact and convenient educational tourist venture. This form of museum can be successful, such as that in Denmark, where cottages from a variety of regions are displayed in one large park. The settings of the various cottages have been sensitively created, with each regional item isolated from the other regional examples. The potentially confusing juxtaposition of the various regional types is thus avoided. This example is however, preferable to the more economically generated form of open-air museum, where items are brought together with no thought given to the appropriateness of the setting. This reduces buildings to the level of artifacts, which, being placed side-by-side without proper context, lose all sense of belief and understanding.

[143] Ada Louise Huxtable, *The Unreal America* (New York: The New Press, 1997), 19.

If the various forms of vernacular houses in Syria, such as those from Idlib, Hauran, and Maalula, were moved to one museum site, the whole understanding of the regional context of each type would be lost. The importance of the region goes beyond the mere construction of the houses and their contents. Culture is an integration of social beliefs and practices including music, dance, song, dress, cuisine, and a myriad of other ordinary daily life experiences, and an authentic presentation should attempt to impart the whole experience rather than just the buildings. This must begin with the buildings being in their right location and setting, within their regional context, and with their ordinary inhabitants going about their normal everyday life.

Context is the recurring word in summarising this section. The historical setting of a place needs its proper context to be understandable and credible. Authenticity goes beyond the object itself, whether an artifact, a building or an urban area. To be removed from its proper context diminishes an object's authentic understanding and relegates it to the position of a museum artifact. This raises issues of ownership and stewardship, and highlights the ethical position of the conservator. All of these issues are discussed below.

Spirit and feeling

Of all the aspects relating to authenticity, those associated with spirit and feeling are the most ephemeral. Although they can have considerable influence on the assessment of authenticity, they may have the least impact in their realisation in physical terms on the built environment. Although often perceived in a religious sense, spirit could be more recognisable as a collective understanding of the animating principal and moral quality of a society. Within it is formed the aspirations and ideals which sustain the society through periods of extreme misfortune as well as good periods of abundance. That the remembrance of these good and bad periods may take on the trappings of religion could be the way that the society copes with life's happenings in a purposeful way.

Although related, feeling reacts with the senses and is often expressed as an emotional value. It involves acceptance or rejection based on intuition formed unconsciously through experience. This can occur either with an individual, or it

could be a collective response shown through social action. Petzet states that "feeling value" is important for every type of "monument cult," a term borrowed from Riegl to cover all aspects of heritage including conservation.[144] It gives rise to the "age value," again borrowing a term from Petzet, denoting the transience of being, leading to the appreciation of the patina of age, manifest in the weathering of a monument, and eventually to the romantic love of ruins. This notion recalls a real or imagined nostalgia for a lost paradisian past, such as chivalry conjured up by mediaeval ruins.[145]

Petzet is quoted as saying that authenticity is the spirit of our existence today.[146] This statement is perhaps more easily understood with reference to those non-Western cultures where the spirit is manifest in ways other than the built environment. Intangible values may be better understood if they take on tangible forms, but these forms may not be usually associated with evidence as understood by Western cultures. Tangible evidence of Western cultures tends to reside in constructed forms, such as buildings and artifacts. In contrast, Australian Aboriginal cultures have a complex spiritual understanding that has its physical manifestation in the natural landscape. Rocks, trees, and other such natural elements contain meanings and be symbols of the traditional beliefs that are woven into the complex myths and legends of Aboriginal folklore.[147] As referred above, these myths and legends are transmitted through oral traditions as well as other ephemeral means such as dance, songs and folktales. The natural environment was expected to last forever, and so the continual transmission of spiritual understanding was assured. Similarly, Maori culture also tends to identify with natural features as reference points for history. These, as for the Aboriginal folk, are in the forms of mountains, rocks, rivers, lakes and streams.[148] In addition, Maori identity is a direct relationship with genealogy from Maori ancestors, and

[144] Michael Petzet, "'In the full richness of their authenticity' - The Test of Authenticity and the New Cult of Monuments," in *Nara Conference on Authenticity,* 97.
[145] For example, Lowenthal discusses patina of age (64); romantic love of ruins (156); and reliving mediaeval chivalry (299) in his book, *The Past is a Foreign Country.*
[146] Jukka Jokilehto, "Session report," in *Nara Conference on Authenticity,* 69.
[147] Charles Mountford, *Nomads of the Australian Desert* (Adelaide: Rigby Limited, 1976), contains a comprehensive account of the myths and legends of the Australian Aborigines and their relation to the physical environment.
[148] Ereatara Tamepo, "Maori Authenticity and Cultural Diversity in New Zealand (Aotearoa)," in *Nara Conference on Authenticity,* 168.

as such, identity is authenticated by this genealogy, and physical relics are unnecessary.[149]

In many cultures, both Western and non-Western, spiritual beliefs take some physical form. However, over time the original meaning that lies behind the physical manifestation may become forgotten, even though the veneration of the forms may continue. Émile Mâle at the beginning of the twentieth century was one of the first modern historians to study mediaeval art and architecture with reference to the beliefs and writings of the mediaeval period. His study of the sculptures and stained glass of the French cathedrals led to an understanding of them in terms of a symbolic code. From the earliest time of Christianity religious art had spoken to the viewer in figures that showed profound truths in a simple understandable way. In mediaeval art everything depicted is informed by a quickening spirit.[150] Mâle continues that the cathedrals are books, and that each "seems designed to place in relief some one truth or doctrine."[151] However, he claims that at the end of the sixteenth century Christianity had lost its plastic power, and had become solely an inward force.[152] Over the centuries the knowledge of the beliefs and stories underlying the art of these inspiring structures had been lost, and he bemoans the damage done and the difficulties now encountered through well meaning but ignorant restoration of the sculptures and stained glass, particularly during the nineteenth century. In 1913, he wrote "For more than two centuries a process of destruction or, what often amounts to the same thing, of restoration has been going on in nearly all the great churches."[153] He lists the mistakes, from the original craftsman's point of view, which have occurred, and the resulting confusion that subsequently arises when attempting to understand the mediaeval message behind the artifact. Referring to earlier conservation work he states

> At Auxérre, for example panels from the legend of St. Eustace and from the lives of St. Peter and St. Paul are found distributed haphazard in

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[149] Ibid.
[150] Emile Mâle, *The Gothic Image* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons. 1913), 14 – 15.
[151] Ibid., 390.
[152] Ibid., 391.
[153] Ibid., xiii.

> several windows of the choir and aisles. We have here a source of endless confusion and error.[154]

When considering the loss of Western understanding behind these art forms in what could be considered a continuous progression of culture, how much more-so the misunderstanding of other cultures' traditional beliefs, even though these may still form parts of living traditions but not be made manifest in such an easily recognisable physical form.

The *Venice Charter* has no mention of spiritual needs underlying its articles, and references to items of paintings and sculptures that form an integral part of a structure is only referred in relation to removing them if this is the sole means of ensuring their safety. Again the physical concerns (albeit important ones) are the only directions for the conservator, illustrating once again the Western fabric approach to conservation. Mâle would not have been impressed. No specific direction is given for any work on sculpture or other decorations apart from those for the general structure. Not so for the *Burra Charter.*

The Burra Charter (1988) paid little respect to spiritual matters, but in its new form contains specific articles that redress this. This is in recognition of the cultural differences, which exist within the country. The general approach of the *Burra Charter* is certainly towards the conservation of physical evidence as tangible expressions of Australian identity and experience. But its first definition, that of *Place*, includes the explanation that the concept of place should be broadly interpreted and may include spiritual and religious places.[155] It is notable that "spiritual" is seen as separate from "religious," and that whereas a religious place is usually construed as a physical structure, such as a church, mosque or temple, a spiritual place would be understood in its ephemeral or spiritual sense as having no physical presence, but rather a site of spiritual experience or emotion. This interpretation is supported by further references such as the definition of *Associations* being the special connections that exist between people and a place. Again *Meanings* are defined as what a place signifies, indicates, evokes or

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[154] Ibid.
[155] *Burra Charter*, Article 1.1 and Explanatory Notes.

expresses, and the explanatory notes refer to intangible aspects such as symbolic qualities and memories.[156]

The *Burra Charter* is to be applauded for the recognition of these aspects and their inclusion that were largely missing from the previous Charter. The language adopted in the articles and their explanatory notes tend to suggest that these articles were written with Aboriginal heritage in mind. These are again admirable, as the complex nuances of Aboriginal heritage were not given specific consideration in the previous Charter but have now been properly recognised. However, although the text refers to "social or spiritual values and cultural responsibilities" and "symbolic qualities and memories,"[157] no direction is given that these associations refer equally to the many other cultural groups such as Eastern European, Middle Eastern, Asian, African and South American groups living in Australia and being responsible for places of significance to their own specific cultural requirements. It could be equally argued that, as no specific ethnic group has been named, the requirements should be realised for all groups without further distinction. However, there is a danger that the basically Anglo-Saxon culture and the western European cultures living within Australia may still take the Eurocentric approach in heritage philosophy and practice and apply it without strict consideration of "other" cultural groups.

The various articles referring to ephemeral aspects support these definitions. For example, conservation is based on a respect of associations and meanings, that a new use should respect associations and meanings, that conservation, interpretation and management should provide for the participation of people for whom the place has special associations and meanings, and that conservation may include the retention of associations and meanings.[158] Of particular importance are the articles requiring that

> Significant associations between people and a place should be respected, retained and not obscured. Opportunities for the interpretation,

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[156] Ibid., Articles 1.15 and 1.16 and Explanatory Notes
[157] Ibid., Article 1.15.
[158] Ibid., Articles 3.1; 7.2 Explanatory Note; 12 and 14.

> commemoration and celebration of these associations should be investigated and implemented.
>
> Significant meanings, including spiritual values, of a place should be respected. Opportunities for the continuation or revival of these meanings should be investigated and implemented.[159]

In similar vein *The Declaration of San Antonio* recognises that spiritual aspects may be more important than the conservation of the physical features of the site, and that authenticity is a concept much larger than material integrity. This recognition is given greater emphasis in section four, "Authenticity and social value,"

> Beyond the material evidence, heritage sites can carry a deep spiritual message that sustains communal life, linking it to the ancestral past. This spiritual meaning is manifested through customs and traditions such as settlement patterns, land use practices, and religious beliefs. The role of these intangibles is an inherent part of the cultural heritage, and as such, their link to the meaning of the tangible elements of the sites must be carefully identified, evaluated, protected and interpreted.[160]

The paragraph following this refers to preserving memory; but in considering this aspect it is wise to err on the side of caution. The memory of an individual can be unreliable, and it would be advisable to accept a remembered incident with some additional evidence. It has been argued that the memory of an unlettered person is far more reliable than that of persons who have used written sources throughout their life. But before any conservation action is contemplated it would still be advisable to reaffirm the information. But memory can be a significant part of both spiritual and emotional experience, and should be at least acknowledged even if conservation action is cautionary. Collective memory may be a more reliable source, if the account of one can be assessed in context with other similar and contemporary accounts. The memory of collective experiences may be a

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[159] Ibid., Articles 24.1 and 24.2.

[160] ICOMOS National Committees of the Americas *The Declaration of San Antonio*, (San Antonio: 1996). Section B 4.

reasonable basis for urban conservation if the majority of the society is of similar mind.

The discussions of spirit and feeling rightly centre round these aspects as they affect present day societies and the remembrance of their continuing cultures. However, some considerations in the past have focused on the perceived spirit of past generations as far back to the time when the buildings and urban centres were first built. Bernd von Droste at the Nara conference stated that the recognition of the more ephemeral qualities could lead to the wider acceptance of authenticity, not only as exemplified in materials and techniques, but rather "including also the know-how, the context of the natural and social environment, which would also safeguard the context and spirit of the original builder or culture."[161] In the traditional context the spirit of the builder may be a continuing spirit, and conservation could honestly be carried out by these builders and reflect the true continuing culture of that society. But the above quote was stated in the context of a general summary, and the authors were probably unaware of the problems inherent in the understanding of the "spirit of the original builder" where this spirit has long since disappeared. To consider this we go back a little in history.

Authenticity and nineteenth-century conservation practices

Much has been written concerning the now-considered bad principles of early nineteenth century "restoration." The concerns expressed above by Mâle for the problems associated with the restoration of details confirm the confusion arising from poor conservation practice. Twentieth century conservation principles have been written to specifically avoid these previous mistakes. Architects such as James Wyatt and Gilbert Scott are used as prime examples of what is now seen as the worst conservation practice of their time in Britain. The awakening appreciation of Gothic architecture in that country led directly to the Romantic and Picturesque periods, renowned for its revival of Gothic architecture, the glorification of old ruins, and the extensive restoration of many Gothic buildings, particularly the larger abbeys and cathedrals. The approach of these architects was based on what they considered was the best understanding of the spirit of

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[161] Bernd Von Droste, and Ulf Bertilsson, "Authenticity and World Heritage" in *Nara Conference on Authenticity*, 15.

medieval architects and their architecture, including their intentions, technology, and craftsmanship. Young refers to this as the “authenticity of concept,”[162] that is, the knowledge of the genuineness of the original spirit or detail of a design. Restoration was seen in terms of returning the building to a better state than it had ever enjoyed, incorporating the completed design which was the original designer’s intention, but which often meant wholesale alterations and “improvements” in a style considered the best of English Gothic.

In 1866, the French architect Viollet-le-Duc made his classic definition: “Restaurer un édifice ce n’est pas l’entretenir, le réparer ou le refaire, c'est le rétablir dans un état complet qui peut n'avoir jamais existé à un moment donné” (“To restore a building is not to preserve it, to repair, or rebuild it; it is to reinstate it in a condition of completeness that could never have existed at any given time”).[163] Although Viollet-le Duc’s approach was different to that of the English architects—his philosophy was based on a rationalist approach rather than the “spirit of the original builder”—the result was often the same: the destruction and irreversible alteration of the original design and fabric.

This practice soon aroused the ire of concerned Gothicists who saw the results of this work as wholesale destruction of the real Gothic and its replacement with spurious Neo-Gothic reconstruction. However convinced the architects were of their knowledge of the original spirit, this did not convince the arch-critic Ruskin. His perception of the problem was that contemporary architects could not possibly know this original spirit and all supposition leading to “restoration” was subjective, or, in the words of Ruskin, “a Lie.”[164] Ruskin’s “Lamp of Memory,” in his publication *The Seven Lamps of Architecture,* contains heated outbursts against the practice of restoration. His writings point to an attitude that could be easily recognised as a plea for the recognition of the authenticity of the original materials of the Gothic cathedrals and churches.

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[162] Gregory Young, “Authenticity in Cultural Conservation” in Richard Cardew (ed.), *Australian Planner* (Royal Australian Planning Institute, 1991), vol. 29, no.1. 3.
[163] Eugène-Emanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonné de l’architecture Francaise du Xie au XVIe siecle*, quoted in Michael Petzet, “‘In the full richness of their authenticity’- The Test of Authenticity and the New Cult of Monuments,” in *Nara Conference on Authenticity,* 89 – 90.
[164] John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (London: J. M. Dent & Co, no date), 200.

Ruskin's authenticity, however, is not so much for the material but rather for a socio-moral authenticity of the craftsman. He sees the material results, the carving of the details, as the honest evidence of the workman. Throughout his writings we see the physical structure of buildings being presented not only as historical and artisanal evidence, but also, and more importantly, as a moral issue, where the "truth" of the material is not merely that it is the original material, but rather that it is the original work of the carver, and this work can never be reproduced or copied. As to the spirit he states

> that spirit which is given only by the hand and eye of the workman, can never be recalled. Another spirit may be given by another time, and it is then a new building; but the spirit of the dead workman cannot be summoned up, and commanded to direct other hands, and other thoughts.[165].

He continues,

> as for direct and simple copying, it is palpably impossible. What copying can there be of surfaces that have been worn half an inch down? The whole finish of the work was in the half inch which is gone; if you attempt to restore that finish, you do it conjecturally; if you copy what is left, granting fidelity to be possible …how is the new work better than the old?[166]

For Ruskin, the morality of society was the justification of his belief in continued artisanal production. He rejected machine-made artifacts and ornaments that he considered were produced without a soul and therefore spiritually bereft. This concern for the workman's honest work is an early example of Ruskin's concern for social reform that would become a major focus in his later life and writings.[167] With Ruskin, morality of society was pivotal to his argument, and that this

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165 Ibid., 199.
166 Ibid.
167 This is further illustrated in another chapter of his *Seven Lamps of Architecture* - the "Lamp of Truth." In this he refers to 3 deceits in architecture, the third being the use of cast or machine-made ornaments of any kind, Ibid., 35.

morality was reflected in the art and architecture of the time. In his opinion it was this that gave architecture the authenticity that could never be restored.

In summarising this section, the ephemeral nature of spirit and feeling present the most complex of all of the six aspects of information. This section requires the understanding of the mores of society and culture more than any of the other sources discussed above. The reason for the very being of an historical area or building depends firstly on the spirit of the society that has produced it. The animating or vital principles of a society will project through the physical form, illuminating the authenticity of the place of which the physical form is only a manifestation. If this is not acknowledged during conservation processes, the local people may reject the final result. This again points to an ethical approach and cultural responsibilities that should be taken by the conservator and the local people to ensure that not only the final result is a correct and authentic representation of the place, but also that its continuation as such is assured.

3.6 Summary

Working through the six aspects from the Nara Document has highlighted the scope of confusion that still surrounds the concept of authenticity. The example of *The Declaration of San Antonio* points to an attempt to grapple with the concept, but doing so within another set of indicators and criteria.

Nevertheless, the exercise of selecting the Nara aspects focussed issues that could be recognised as paramount in the theory and practice of conservation, particularly as applied to historic areas. These centred not so much on material concerns, such as those that the practice of conservation usually concentrates on, but rather ethics, morality, integrity and honesty kept arising, together with issues on change. The charters are ill equipped to provide suitable guidance for many of these issues. Hence more and more responsibility is thrown upon the practitioner, more so in the field of ethics than that usually met in the general field of conservation practice.

In *form and design*, pastiche and facadism raised ethical questions. Moral issues of truth underline the philosophies of historicism and modernism, the two design procedures of the early twentieth century, that now hover surreptitiously behind the procedures of conservation. This continued into *materials and substance*, and proceeding through the issues of ruins and decay, become issues in the ethics of restoration and presentation. Authenticity can be seen to reside in both these sources of information if the underlying social and cultural influences are not ignored.

Traditions and techniques dealt squarely with social/cultural issues, but recognised that the acknowledgement of these again points to correct or truthful presentation for the understanding of their authenticity. Truth in presentation comes again in *location and setting* where the credible understanding of an historic building or area depends largely on its historical location and the appropriateness of its current setting. The removal of buildings, and the insertion of inappropriate new buildings into an historic urban area can considerably diminish its presentation as being authentic. The decisions that determine location and setting in the heritage sense again centre on the ethical attitude of the practitioner.

The ethical issues involved with ownership and stewardship form an important adjunct to the above sources, particularly *location and setting*, and again form the focus of discussion with *spirit and feeling*. Further ethical issues arise with Ruskin's idealistic approach raising questions regarding morality and change. We may share the desire to recapture an ideal past, but Ruskin's problem was the inability to accept what he saw as undesirable change. The ethical, and in the case of Ruskin, the moral issues point to responsibilities of both practitioners and local inhabitants alike, for the success of conservation projects and their continuing maintenance.

Use and function continues the ethical subject in the consideration of balancing the necessities of new uses with historic and significant uses, together with a further balancing act between the attitudes and expectations of the local folk and the conservation practitioners. This source introduced the concept of "change," as

changes of use will invariably produce changes to the fabric, and from these arise questions of authenticity. Following on from the suggested sources of information of the *Nara Document,* and in light of the foregoing discussions, we now turn our attention to change and development, the inevitable consequences of both conservation and a progressing society, and question these in relation to authenticity.