

Session title: DECONSTRUCTING POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION

Organizers: Britt Baillie and Tera Pruitt, University of Cambridge, UK

Time: Thursday afternoon

Room:

Session abstract:

To reconstruct or not to reconstruct, that is the question facing worldwide conservators in post-conflict situations. Since John Ruskin wrote “Do not let us talk then of restoration. / The thing is a Lie from beginning to end,” reconstruction has remained one of the most controversial topics in heritage management. In peacetime, heritage reconstruction is often used as a public interpretation device or as a promotional tool for tourism; it is ‘performed’ on a past which might be seen as safely ‘dead’. However, war and conflict complicate the social role of historic preservation and reconstructions and bring underlying ethical issues into fine relief. Monuments mediate cultural and social change through active and continuous (re)construction and negotiation of identity, place, and memory. All reconstruction projects are directed in the hope of achieving certain ‘social outcomes’. Such social outcomes have ranged from the desire for: religious revival, social dominance, public education, social exclusion, maintenance of traditions, maintenance of use values, and reconciliation, etc. In post-conflict situations, ‘reconstruction’ is often a crucial concept and activity. Whole social and physical landscapes, architecture, and objects are ‘put back together’, often with the explicit goal to be reconstructed ‘as they were before’. In most internationally sponsored post-conflict reconstruction projects today, the functioning paradigm is that reconstruction helps maintain diversity and advances possibilities for reconciliation. The ‘conservation fetish’—the assumption that the remains of the material record should be preserved—takes hold. Yet, does restoration fill this need, and for whom-particular ethnic groups, survivors, future generations-or is the lacunae between the piecemeal remains left by war and the reconstructions they spur unbridgeable? Does reconstruction, to paraphrase Clausewitz, become a continuation of war by other means?

How can we move beyond a myopic scientific approach to reconstruction, one which envisions reconstruction something akin to a medical treatment? Such a view personifies the object, implying that the conservator is ‘just doing what the object needs’. However, as Pye points out, the object is not the client and the conservator is not accountable to ‘it’. The failure of this ‘positivist’ approach in post-conflict situations has resulted in the recognition that decisions about reconstruction need to be made on a case-by-case basis, as there is no one-size-fits-all best practise. However, if this is the case who is accountable for the results of the conservation interventions?

Some indicative questions we hope to address are:

- In communities divided by war, which sense of local identity or experience of the past can or should be ‘preserved’ or restored?

- Can heritage management help the process of reconciliation, or does restoration merely mask an unwanted past(s) and reify a new geography of the excluded?
- Who should conduct and/or monitor post-conflict reconstruction of heritage?
- How can we help reconstruction projects meet the needs of today's population and yet function as sustainable solutions?
- Individuals make individual interventions in post-conflict situations, but they operate within a larger corporate framework or within a shared collective experience. Should people or institutions be held accountable for the effects of their work? How would they be held accountable? Who has the authority to decide?
- How do we deal with the often conflicting needs of present, past and future generations?

Paper abstracts:

INTRODUCTORY PRESENTATION

Britt Baillie and Tera Pruitt, University of Cambridge, UK

POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTIONS IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA 2000/2005

Damir Hadžić, Institute for the Protection of Cultural-Historic and Natural Heritage of Canton Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

The restoration of heritage properties can in some ways contribute to a positive climate for the return of refugees. The Dayton Peace Accord (14 December 1995) stopped the long conflict in Bosnia and arranged for the return of refugees and the reconstruction of destroyed cultural heritage. But was this the end or just the beginning? Safeguarding and restoring cultural heritage is clearly justified in annex 8 of the Dayton Peace Agreement, and this policy has surely helped to save many destroyed monuments. However, large numbers of properties have been considered impossible to restore or are still waiting to be reconstructed. Today, 13 years after Dayton, reconstructing heritage in Bosnian and Herzegovina is still an unfinished task. This paper highlights a study of impact assessment and restoration on eight Bosnian towns and villages which can demonstrate that people can feel safer after agencies restore monuments that the town's people consider 'their own'. For example in Prusac, a town in Central Bosnia, the reconstruction of Handanija mosque has improved the quality of life and encouraged the reconciliation process in this area. This paper focuses on the notion of proper and well-targeted restoration process(es) taking place in Bosnian-Herzegovian cities and regions.

A QUEST FOR THE MEANING OF RECONSTRUCTIONS

Amra Hadžimuhamedović, Commission to Protect National Monuments, Bosnia and Herzegovina

This paper aims to demonstrate that reconstruction can mean protection if a system of the heritage has been destroyed by war. If establishing a system of heritage is a prerequisite for development, then heritage is a measure of the sustainability of development. The reception of heritage directly reflects the development of attitudes to reconstruction in theory and practice. This paper pays particular attention to the debate over the authenticity of reconstructed heritage. It addresses the significance of destruction, ritual reconstruction, post-war reconstruction, reconstruction of townscapes by approximate restoration of forms, recycling, virtual reconstruction and museum-style reconstruction in the history of humankind, with special reference to reconstruction in the complexities of the postmodern age. The meaning of reconstruction, opportunities for reconstruction and the methodological framework for heritage reconstruction in war-ravaged societies is explored. Research includes a classification of various manifestations of reconstruction based on the following criteria: reasons for the destruction of the heritage; situations on the ground where reconstruction is carried out; justifications for reconstruction; impacts of reconstruction on the existing cultural environment; extents of documentation on the original condition of destroyed heritage; reconstruction methods; materials used in reconstruction; and the presentation of reconstructed buildings. The case study is Bosnia.

THE ETHOS AND PRACTICE OF POST-SECOND WORLD WAR II RECONSTRUCTION IN EUROPE

Dennis Rodwell, architect and consultant in cultural heritage and sustainable urban development, UK

This paper examines ethos and practice in the field of the 'authentic' or quasi-authentic reconstruction of major monuments and historic city centres in Europe following their destruction during World War II. It highlights: the restoration of Tsarist palaces surrounding St Petersburg; restoration and reconstruction in the historic centres of Warsaw and Gdansk; and restoration and interpretive reconstruction (in the spirit but with only selective authenticity) in West German cities such as Nuremberg. The paper will discuss the philosophy behind these restorations and reconstructions before the onset of mass tourism, and at a time when the recovery of local pride and national identity was a more critical force than international reconciliation. The parallel but evolving ethos that inspired the early-1990s post-conflict recovery in Dubrovnik is explored: recovery of local pride; icon of new national identity; and pivotal role in economic recovery in the tourism sector. This paper concludes by examining and questioning the ethos behind delayed projects of post-Second World War reconstruction—often to replace disassociated modern developments constructed on their sites during the intervening period—especially in Germany (Berlin, Dresden) and pre-War Königsberg. Whose memory and identity do such reconstructions recover, and whose social and commercial interests do they serve?

IDEOLOGY, MEMORY AND WARSAW'S 'OLD' TOWN

G. Michal Murawski, University of Cambridge, UK

The act of rebuilding Warsaw's Old Town after the Second World War was an attempt to ensure the continuity of the communist Polish state with the traditions and history of its predecessors, as well as what Adrian Forty calls 'counter-iconoclasm... remaking something in order to forget what its absence signified.' However, contrary to the claims of the city architect in the early 1960s that 'the Old Town now looks as it used to long ago', it is clear that the rebuilt Old Town was no pure facsimile of the pre-war city - the ideology of the Polish United Workers' Party had a significant impact on the architectural profile of the 'new' Old Town. In contemporary Poland, the dominant discourse suggests that links between ideology and the built environment were severed after the fall of the Polish People's Republic in 1989. However, ideology continues to impact the 'nexus' of social relations between Warsaw's reconstructed buildings and those who use, design and think about them. The Old Town still occupies a contested, uncertain position in the political imagination of post-communist, late capitalist Poland.

RE-BUILDING LOCAL IDENTITY IN ALBANIA THROUGH ARCHEOLOGY AND RESTORATION

Frederica Broilo, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy

There were 1,127 mosques in Albania at the end of the Second World War. Of the 1,050 mosques that existed before 1967, only 800 survive today. Thirty of the most important ones were preserved by a 1967 edict, which "protected Albania's cultural patrimony while allowing the people to destroy those mosques and churches which had no historical value". This edict was issued only because the chief of Albania's Institute of Architectural Preservation convinced the Communist government that the destruction had to be stopped. The economical, political and social changes that South-Eastern Europe underwent during the last fifteen years have made local populations aware of the exigency of reaffirming their cultural identities and cultural heritage. This transition has recognized that consciousness of culture is a critical factor in determining social and political attitudes, either in the direction of fostering dialogue or in increasing the causes of ethnic and religious conflicts; in this sense it is even more essential to promote understanding and respect for the specifics of each country's cultural identity and to raise awareness about the importance of preserving the Islamic Heritage as a shared resource, both within the region and toward the international community.

RUBAB, BUSKASHI AND WRESTLING HEROES – THE DIVERSITY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN AFGHANISTAN

Andy Miller, Aga Khan Trust for Culture Historic Cities Programme, Afghanistan

“A Nation Stays Alive When its Culture Stays Alive” is the statement proudly displayed above the entrance to the Kabul National Museum, once one of the finest in Central Asia. It is also the tag line for the ‘*Hidden Afghanistan*’ exhibition currently touring in the United States. Whilst the visual impact of such material culture figures heavily in the Western psyche, as do such iconic monuments as present in Jam and the Bamiyan Valley, the complex and diverse oral and intangible heritage of the country is as significant and by its nature often more fragile. Not only has such intangible heritage suffered from the effects of 30 years of war and inter-factional conflict, but also specifically as a result of culturally suffocating religious edicts imposed by the ruling order throughout 1996-2001. This brief presentation highlights a number of examples of oral and intangible heritage from across the country, both from previous centuries and more recent times. Over 30 years of turmoil have not managed to completely extinguish the rich intangible heritage of this country and the future for the survival of its complex regional identity is currently an optimistic, albeit delicate one.

COMPUTER RECONSTRUCTIONS FROM IMAGES – BAMIIAN HERITAGE, AFGHANISTAN

A. Gruen, F. Remondino, Th. Hanusch, Institute of Geodesy and Photogrammetry (IGP), ETH Zurich, Switzerland

Images constitute a rich data source for building up computer models of objects. The discipline Photogrammetry has developed techniques and tools to generate these 3D models precisely and reliably. In particular, for cases where the object has been fully or partially destroyed, the use of old images is a viable way of reconstructing the object in its original location, orientation and size in the computer, which in turn may serve as a basis for physical reconstruction. In the past, we have worked on several such projects. In this paper we will report about our Bamiyan, Afghanistan project. This includes the 3D modelling of the entire UNESCO World Heritage area and beyond from satellite imagery (40 x 50 sq km), the 3D reconstruction of the two lost standing Buddha statues from old imagery, as well as their actual empty niches and the full rock facade, dotted with monk caves, the mapping of all the frescos inside the niche of the Great Buddha and the documentation of the Cultural Heritage site with a topographic and tourist information system.

DESTROYED MOSQUES, NEW BUILDINGS AND RELIGIOUS RENAISSANCE: FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND RECONSTRUCTION IN THE POST-WAR BALKANS.

Alvaro Higuera, archaeologist, writer and consultant, Italy

This paper will analyze the process of defining the new landscapes of post war Bosnia and Kosovo. Much of the new landscapes, at least the ones in the realm of cultural heritage, will depend on the decisions and process of reconstruction of mosques and churches in different parts of these two new territories. These decisions go hand in hand with political issues, namely the conformation of the ethnic divisions as separate

entities in Bosnia and Kosovo and the process of resettlement of displaced population (the “returnees”) restoring just a resemblance of the former multiethnic mosaic. In addition, the factor of a “renaissance” of religions has impinged on the reconstruction (and the new building) of monuments and has been an important part of the “normalization” effort. The war of 1992-1993 in Croatia and Bosnia and the 2000 struggle in Kosovo brought important, intentional destruction to the religious heritage preserved as patrimony by Yugoslavia. This patrimony had been until then centres of low-key religious activities. Today churches and mosques are set of the religious renaissance with much influence of external “powers” mostly focusing on the Muslim population.

THREE APPROACHES IN POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTIONS IN DUBROVNIK 1806-2007

Denis Vokic, Association of Croatian Restorers, Croatia

Cultural heritage has cultural, emotional and use values. It carries many intentions from the author(s) to the destroyer(s)! There are at least three possible answers to the question of the session: it is possible to legitimate the intention of destroyer (to use the ruin ideologically in its new “memento value?”); it is possible to make new object; or to reconstruct – “restore visual memory“ by falsification of destructed material. In the area of Dubrovnik all three approaches are to be found. It is possible to reconstruct some values: use value, esthetic, social, part of the context, and emotional values of memory, identity and continuity... It is not possible to reconstruct some documentary, ancient, artistic and archaeometric, scientific values (it must be mentioned that is a paradox, but destruction sometimes provides valuable findings). Reconstructing also depends on if some object is made by distinctive artist (paintings, sculptures), or some object is made by group of craftsman (architecture, majority of monuments). Reconstruction (restoration of visual memory by falsification of destructed material) has legitimacy if applied at destructed heritage. If a majority of the original material is intact, than reconstruction-restoration is nothing else but destruction, and it is opposite to the conservation-restoration.

DISCUSSION

Britt Baillie, Frederica Broilo, Damir Hadžic, Amra Hadžimuhamedović, Th. Hanusch, A. Gruen, Andy Miller, G. Michal Murawski, Tera Pruitt, F. Remondino, Dennis Rodwell, Denis Vokic