INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON URBAN HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND DESIGN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR URBAN HERITAGE CONSERVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (PART II)

From 26 to 28 September 2023, Tongji University, as host, together with the College of Architecture and Urban Planning (CAUP), World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region, a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO (WHITRAP Shanghai), and Shanghai Tongji Urban Planning and Design Institute Co., LTD(TJUPDI) successfully co-organized the International Conference on Urban Heritage Conservation and Design for Sustainable Development and held the first meeting on the establishment of the International Network for Urban Heritage Conservation in Higher Education Institutions. The event was also presented as a forum during the 2023 World Design Cities Conference.

The background of the conference was acknowledging, on the one hand, a major paradigm shift in our understanding of heritage, its values and functions, and how, though still under threat, it is considered as a solution to address sustainability and resilience. And on the other hand, acknowledging the lack of competency and capacity at all levels. Therefore, with a particular focus on the 2011 UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape Recommendation (HUL), the aim of the conference and of establishing a Network, was to explore the current experiences, practices, and objectives, and identify the gaps to fill in the arena of education, research and action. The purpose was to discuss innovative approaches to inventing new types of research and education models, considering high-tech and low-tech, traditional knowledge, and AI to go beyond the disciplines and skills traditionally used in the domain of conservation, particularly in the area of urban and rural development.

3. THEMATIC SESSION I: INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH -- IMPLEMENTING THE UNESCO HISTORIC URBAN LANDSCAPE APPROACH, THEORY AND PRACTICE

Conference working group
WHITRAP Shanghai
CAUP Tongji University

The Topic One sub-forum on the evening of 26 September was moderated by Prof. Shao Yong, Executive Director of WHITRAP Shanghai. Nine speakers from China, the United States, Portugal, Italy, Japan, Macau SAR, Spain, the Netherlands and Ecuador presented at the session on the topic of ‘Interdisciplinary Research: Implementing the UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape Approach, Theory and Practice’.

3-1. Four-Dimensional City: The Theory, Methods and Practice of the Urban Built Environment

He Yi
Professor of the School of Architecture and Urban Planning of Huazhong University of Science and Technology

Prof. He Yi from the School of Architecture and Urban Planning at Huazhong University of Science and Technology presented her research progress on the
3-2. Getting Creative about Governance

Randall Mason
University of Pennsylvania, Weitzman School of Design

Prof. Randall Mason of the University of Pennsylvania presented a lecture on the topic of “Getting Creative with Governance.” He raised a few concerns about the issues of governance that are critical in the implementation of the Historic Urban Landscape. He also emphasized the growing importance of addressing governance issues in diverse social contexts, particularly in heritage conservation education. Prof. Mason defined governance as a collective means of managing the environment and society. He distinguished between governance and government, and subsequently presented three essential issues about governance. The first pertains to the challenge of integration. Drawing upon the example of the streets in Philadelphia, he emphasized the need to shift from viewing historic preservation or heritage conservation as a discipline or a field to viewing it as a larger community of practice with many shared ideas rather than a few solo ideas. The second issue concerns property ownership, exemplified by the case of gentrification in Philadelphia’s neighbourhoods, posing specific governance challenges in balancing public and private benefits, as well as economic and cultural outcomes. He encourages creativity in developing new senses of ownership and exploring novel tools of governance while being mindful of emerging practices in interdisciplinary practices. The third concern relates to the issue of growth. He believes that the emphasis on growth and design responses will probably persist in the new narrative about sustainable development. To succeed, it must prioritize inheritance and conservation and foreground governance. Prof. Mason ultimately pointed out that while integration could be improved in the short term, the challenges of ownership and growth are long-term and will not immediately change. Therefore, we must consider both the present and the far future. It is crucial for professionals in the field of heritage conservation to comprehend these problems in the context of managing urbanism over a longer period of time.

3-3. Experiences from the Past for Tomorrow’s Challenges

Mariana Correia
Director of the Department of Architecture and Multi-media Gallaecia (DAMX) at Universidade Portucalense Infante D. Henrique (UP) and the Director of the Research Centre

Prof. Correia began by outlining the plight of vernacular building practices and traditional ways of life that are gradually disappearing as a result of technological advancements, the emergence of new materials, and globalization. Afterwards, she systematically presented the four primary sections of the presentation. In the first section about vernacular architecture, she defined vernacular architecture as “buildings that are not formally planned but possess inherent cultural and intellectual value.” She contended that vernacular architecture has the potential as a solution to sustainability by taking into account social factors, energy efficiency, tradition, and the environment. The VerSus project in Europe offers an example of acknowledging principles anchored in vernacular knowledge. A more inclusive and holistic approach is necessary to improve the sustainable development of our neighbourhoods. The advantages of community involvement were highlighted in the second section, emphasizing its role in fostering social cohesion, preserving traditional ways of life, and promoting social integration. She further emphasized the importance of community cohesion, demonstrating this through examples of collective water usage and collaborative housing construction. In the third section, it was suggested that maintaining local sustainability requires social and cultural harmony as well as local technology. The VerSus project connected to intangible heritage has been suggested that developing strategies to preserve the distinct architectural culture of each region by identifying local technologies is essential. In the fourth section, which discussed education and research, the argument was made that many architects and engineers working on heritage restoration projects have opted to demolish sections of interior building spaces because they have a poor understanding and appreciation of local architectural knowledge. These parts were subsequently replaced with modern materials. The curricula of architectural schools can have a significant impact on the understanding of traditional building systems, regional skills, and the specific qualities of vernacular architecture. To conclude, Prof. Correia advocated increased engagement in sustainable development through greater community involvement, valuing local technology and assuming social responsibility.
Historic Urban Landscape approach addressing some of the open challenges of the recognition, and appropriation of urban heritage, operational tools for questioning the perception, of research offers novel interpretive keys and developments of the cognitive sciences and facing the extraordinary.

Kepes, Kevin Lynch, and Christopher Alexander, among Giovanni, Nikolaus Pevsner, Bernhard Hoesli, Gyorgy August Schmarsow, Albert Erich Brinckmann, Gustavo. The consequence of this convergence throughout convergence between two contemporary thought Sitte’s writings, we can witness an unexpected that would serve as breeding ground for the birth of modern city planning: Camillo Sitte’s Der Städtebau borrowed insights and concepts from late- modern city planning: Camillo Sitte’s Der Städtebau, borrowed insights and concepts from late-19th century optical physiology – especially from Hermann Helmholtz’s seminal Handbuch der physiologischen Optik: the same body of research that would serve as breeding ground for the birth of experimental psychology. In other words, in Camillo Sitte’s writings, we can witness an unexpected convergence between two contemporary thought: the invention of urban heritage and the invention of the sciences of the mind. We can follow the historical evolution of this convergence throughout the course of the 20th century, in authors such as August Schmarsow, Albert Erich Blinczmann, Gustavo Giovannoni, Nikolaus Pevsner, Bernhard Hoesli, Gyorgy Kepes, Kevin Lynch, and Christopher Alexander, among many others. Even today, facing the extraordinary developments of the cognitive sciences and neurosciences, the same interdisciplinary thread of research offers novel interpretive keys and operational tools for questioning the perception, recognition, and appropriation of urban heritage, addressing some of the open challenges of the Historic Urban Landscape approach.

3-4. From the Other to the Self: Interdisciplinary Insights at the Root of the Idea of Urban Heritage

Jacopo Benedetti
Postdoctoral Fellow at the College of Architecture and Urban Planning (CAUP) of Tongji University

Jacopo Benedetti, a postdoctoral fellow at CAUP of Tongji University delivered a presentation titled “From the Other to the Self: Interdisciplinary Insights at the Root of the Idea of Urban Heritage”. The presentation begins by acknowledging how urban heritage was first defined, in the late 19th century, as that which was other than the contemporary processes of urbanization (i.e., the self): paraphrasing François Champsaur, “Historic city has been conceptualized not for what it was, but rather for what it wasn’t.” One of the first attempts to provide a positive definition of urban heritage can be traced back to a classic of modern city planning: Camillo Sitte’s Der Städtebau. Following the publication of this seminal work, the concept of historic city was taken up by architects such as Hermann Mumenthaler, Hans Steingruber, and Oskar Laske, who, in turn, were influenced by Sitte’s ideas and the writings of his contemporaries. The concept of historic city has been used to justify the preservation of urban fabric, the maintenance of traditional building practices, and the promotion of a particular architectural style. However, the concept of historic city has also been subject to criticism, with some arguing that it is too narrowly focused on the preservation of physical structures and fails to take into account the social and cultural contexts in which these structures are embedded. As a result, there has been a growing interest in understanding the role of historic cities in shaping contemporary urban development and the challenges faced by urban planners and policymakers in managing these areas.

3-5. Necessity of Interdisciplinary Collaborative Researchers’ Response to the Needs of Local Heritage Management

Nobuko Inaba
Professor Emeritus at the University of Tsukuba, Special Advisor to the Director General of ICOMOS

Prof. Nobuko Inaba began her presentation by addressing the translation considerations of heritage conservation concepts in Japan. She stated that in Japan, there are no distinct physical markers between urban and rural areas. Each municipality in Japan today is defined solely by its population, density, and the ratio of vocations that match the demands of administrative management, even though their historical origins are distinct. It is often challenging to distinguish clearly between mid-size cities, towns, and villages in terms of heritage management viewpoints, except for major cities like Tokyo, Osaka, or Kyoto. Then, it was revealed that the cultural heritage protection system in Japan encompasses not only classical types of cultural heritage but also natural heritage and landscapes as well as intangible heritage. To ensure successful management of these heritage concepts, integration and decentralization of decision-making to the local level, the closest level to the public, is necessary. An advantage of this interdisciplinary approach is tackling current heritage management. Japan’s cultural heritage management is currently devoted to implementing an integrated strategy that connects natural and cultural heritage. The Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties has undergone three revisions in 2004, 2007, and 2008, and Japan completed the most recent revision in 2018. This legislation serves as an integrated strategy that connects natural and cultural heritage. The Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties has undergone three revisions in 2004, 2007, and 2008, and Japan completed the most recent revision in 2018. This legislation served as the legal foundation for the Comprehensive Cultural Properties Protection and Management Local Plan at the municipal level. This plan aims to identify and map cultural and natural resources in the region, protect and utilize heritage. The policy has directed the establishment of local government units within the content of sustainable development, shifting from spot conservation to integrated territorial conservation, and adhering to the policy direction on heritage resource management. This shift contributes to the sustainable development of local government’s capacity. Lastly, Prof. Nobuko Inaba shared a case study on cultural heritage resources undertaken by the Kita-Akita municipality. She stressed the necessity of interdisciplinary collaborative researchers’ response to the needs of local heritage management and capacity building. She encouraged joint research collaboration for heritage resource management.

3-6. The Configuration Mechanism of HUL Hierarchy and the Sustainable Strategy of Contemporary Urban Landscape in Macau

Zheng Jianyi
Associate Professor, Faculty of Humanities and Arts, Macau University of Science and Technology

Prof. Zheng Jianyi, Director of the Architecture Programme at the Faculty of Humanities and Arts, Macau University of Science and Technology, delivered a presentation on “The Configuration Mechanism of HUL Hierarchy and the Sustainable Strategy of Contemporary Urban Landscape in Macau”. Following an overview and the history of Macau, he analyzed the urban landscape of Macau in detail. Using Conzenian urban morphology approach, he identified three hierarchies of townscape composition that shaped Macau’s historic landscape: street block expansion, residence repeal, and breakthrough street redevelopment. This in-depth examination demonstrates the continuity of Macau’s urban development over 450 years and the characteristics of the collage urban landscape. The community cultural landscape is the contemporary component of HUL. It contributes to the conservation and continuation of the material landscape and revitalizes the historic place. Consequently, he displayed a few sustainable practices in tackling current challenges. Association is a distinctive element of HUL’s sustainable development, with public education and participation aiding in the understanding and participation of historic sites. For instance, the Macau Cultural Heritage Reinventing Studies Association has offered HUL lectures/workshops in Macau for high school students, as well as graduates and undergraduates in architecture and urban planning. The Macau Community Construction Promotion Association has provided professional and technical assistance to the revitalization of the Sitio do Espinho, and acted as a mediator to facilitate communication between the community, relevant government agencies, and other social groups. Digital technology is a valuable tool for conserving historic landscapes. The research team, using key landmarks in Macau, as an illustration, performed a computational analysis of view corridors to obtain accurate and overall characteristics of the area, and identified limitations, and other essential indicators. This data can aid in the protection of historic urban landscapes in high-density urban settings.

3-7. A Cultural Boost in the Achievement of the SDGs: How Local and Regional Governments Are Promoting Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Cities and Territories

Jordi Pascual
Coordinator of the Committee on Culture of the World Organisation of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

In his presentation entitled “Cultural Boost in the Achievement of the SDGs: How Local and Regional Governments Are Promoting Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Cities and Territories,” Jordi Pascual provided a concise overview of the goals, topics, and methodology of UCLG, followed by some remarks on the interconnectivity between culture and the SDGs. He argues that the SDGs that deal with culture are inadequate and do not give cultural actors and the communities the support to accomplish their goals. As a result, UCLG is committed to equipping local government representatives with tools to facilitate cultural policy alignment with local implementation of and achievement of the SDGs. Cultural policies are closely linked with urban policies, urban planning, education, health and well-being, economic growth, and infrastructure in their local implementation. It is crucial that existing cultural policies consider the contribution of cultural action to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the role of cultural actors. Cultural policies must be assessed based on their values and behaviour. Cultural policies need to be re-evaluated based on their values and behaviour. An instance of the negative impact of excessive tourism on the cultural life of residents in specific areas was cited. Additionally, women face limitations in participating in cultural activities in their communities due to the prejudice against them. Finally, Jordi emphasized the importance of cultural progress. While advancing culture is essential to achieving the 17 sustainable development objectives, the 2030 Agenda urgently needs to include a cultural goal. Even if it may not be possible to include additional targets in the current framework for the SDGs, cultural development remains a pressing issue that has to be addressed.
The Historic Urban Landscape Approach

3-9. The HUL Recommendation in Cuenca: Risks and Challenges in the Conservation of the Heritage City

Sebastián Astudillo Cordero
Professor and Director of the Master in Conservation of Monuments and Sites, University of Cuenca

Julia Rey Pérez
Associate Professor in Architectural History, Theory and Composition Department at Higher School of Architecture, University of Seville

Maria Eugenia Siguencia
PhD Architect, University of Cuenca

Sebastián Astudillo Cordero, a professor and Director of the Master in Conservation of Monuments and Sites at the University of Cuenca, along with his colleague Julia Rey Pérez and Maria Eugenia Siguencia, presented a lecture titled “The HUL Recommendation in Cuenca: Risks and Challenges in the Conservation of the Heritage City.” The trio discussed the challenges faced by Cuenca in the past, present, and future. Cuenca underwent considerable social and urban transformation at the beginning of the project, in the midst of early economic fluctuations impacting the historic districts and their surroundings. The HUL Recommendation was made available to Cuenca as a tool for identifying the city’s tangible and intangible cultural and natural assets. This was accomplished through innovative approaches such as HUL New Perspectives and interdisciplinary collaboration along with engagement of social forces. Furthermore, a critical assessment of potential and emerging risks was conducted, while a collaborative network of stakeholders comprising community, government, and expert groups formed, culminating in the dissemination of findings. Maria outlined the current situation in Cuenca and its challenges with the HUL conservation approach. Cuenca needs to address both recognized heritage and contemporary architecture, as well as future development needs, such as real estate and transportation, while also taking into account socio-economic challenges such as migration and tourism. It is essential to create new management plans since earlier ones are no longer applicable to current developments. In light of these challenges, scholars from the University of Cuenca propose implementing the HUL recommendations. The aim is to concentrate on the correlation between governmental planning, sustainable development, early indicators, and public policies. Integrating holistic conservation with urban planning requires a multifaceted approach that accounts for specific goals. This involves developing a methodology that allows the implementation of the HUL Recommendation in a pilot area of the city of Cuenca, performing a thorough inventory that includes the components of the historic urban landscape in an ecosystem; defining a set of indicators, quantitative and qualitative, to assess population’s quality of life; and developing a set of public policies to ensure heritage conservation and urban planning in pursuit of the quality of life of the inhabitants. Efforts must be made to explore the integration of conserving urban heritage with sustainable development, by incorporating cultural and natural heritage in inclusive and sustainable planning. Achieving comprehensive conservation and promoting safety and social innovation in cities should also be priorities.

3-10. Wrap up

Michael Turner
Professor at Bezael Academy of Arts and Design; UNESCO Chair holder in Urban Design & Conservation Studies

Finally, Prof. Michael Turner from the Bezael Academy of Arts and Design contributed a concise but valuable summary to round out the session. Drawing upon the presentations made during the session, he outlined three new challenges encountered by the heritage community: climate change, the new dimensions, and new scales of cities and the spatial and temporal continuity that impacts the layering of the Historic Urban Landscape. In order to create the Quintuple Helix, which represents a more holistic and integrated strategy, we need to include an additional ecosystem dimension to the existing four types of tools – civic engagement, knowledge and planning, regulatory systems, and finance. He concluded by emphasizing that to achieve interdisciplinarity, we must adopt an approach that goes beyond applying traditional knowledge, to improving, adapting and integrating new and existing concepts. Therefore, heritage is something pertaining to the future, not to the past.

4. THEMATIC SESSION II: INNOVATIVE PRACTICE -- URBAN CONSERVATION FOR IMPROVING LIVEABILITY

Conference working group
WHITRAP Shanghai
CAUP Tongji University

The topic two sub-forum on the morning of 27 September was moderated by Marie-Noëlle Tournoux, Project Director of WHITRAP Shanghai. Twelve speakers from China, Germany, Australia, Singapore, UK, Morocco, France and Saudi Arabia presented at the session on the topic of “Innovative Practice: Urban Conservation for Improving Liveability.”

4-1. The Continuity of Historical Context in the Creation of Urban Waterfront

Zhang Ming
Professor and Head of Department of Landscape, CAUP, Tongji University

In his presentation titled “The Continuity of Historical Context in the Creation of Urban Waterfront”, Prof. Zhang Ming illustrated how the heritage of the Yangpu Riverside area in Shanghai can be transformed and integrated into urban public spaces, promoting a sense of well-being by giving the riverside back to all the residents, identified six dimensions for developing waterfront spaces in urban areas: creating urban public spaces; maintaining historical continuity; diversifying infrastructure; recovering ecosystems, building scene nodes, and incorporating public art. The speech focused on the second dimension: the transformation and regeneration of industrial heritage; conversion from a heavily polluted production line to an eco-shared living shoreline; the restoration of waterfront ecosystems; the creation of adaptive landscapes; a responsive system to history, behaviour, and environment; and the establishment of a multi-functional, accessible, and shared waterfront area.

4-2. The Role of Heritage in the Development of Innovative Practice for Urban Conservation: Lessons from Adelaide

Sarah White
Assistant Professor, School of Architecture and Urban Design, The University of Adelaide

Sarah White presented key findings from the University of Adelaide’s research projects that demonstrate the role of heritage in the development of innovative practice for urban conservation. The presentations highlighted the importance of understanding the cultural significance of heritage sites and the role they play in shaping the identity of a city. She discussed various case studies from Adelaide, including the repurposing of industrial heritage sites for cultural tourism, and the integration of heritage buildings into new developments to promote mixed-use projects. The research emphasized the need for a collaborative approach involving all stakeholders, from government to local communities, to ensure the successful implementation of innovative practices that respect and enhance the heritage values of a site.
4-2. Using Heritage Impact Assessments as a Tool for Sustainable Development of Historic Urban Landscapes

Michael Kloos
Professor of Preservation & Sustainable Development at the Main University of Applied Sciences, Wiesbaden, Germany

In his presentation titled "Using Heritage Impact Assessments as a Tool for Sustainable Development of Historic Urban Landscapes", Prof. Michael Kloos highlighted a conflict between conservation and development and argued that UNESCO's conservation concepts frequently remain as ineffective protection instruments due to their inability to be embedded into States Parties’ legislative frameworks. Could Heritage Impact Assessments be a viable solution? He gave three case studies in response to this query. The first case study, "Conservation and Development: A Sustainable Approach," demonstrated how the integration of impact assessments into the planning and legislative processes can provide evidence-based planning and decision-making for the sustainable development of historic urban landscapes. The second case study, "Heritage Impact Assessments in Practice," illustrated the operationalization of the ECLIS practice to ensure that the assessments are conducted in a systematic and understandable manner. The third case study, "Heritage Impact Assessments and the Future," discussed the potential of heritage impact assessments for future development in European cities.

4-3. Evolving and Changing Community Values. Whose Values Are We Addressing and Whose Heritage It is?

Ken Taylor
Honorary Professor, Centre for Heritage & Museum Studies, School of Archaeology and Anthropology, Australian National University.
Emeritus Professor Landscape Architecture, University of Canberra, Australia.

Prof. Ken Taylor delivered a lecture entitled "Evolving and Changing Community Values. Whose values Are We Addressing and Whose Heritage It Is?" He outlined the criteria for assessing the significance of heritage places, which include: 1. Be apparent and understandable by other researchers, clients, community, & other stakeholders; 2. Applies evidence-based methodologies for replicable, i.e. can be applied elsewhere and modified where appropriate; 3. Allows evaluation of proposed decisions or recommendations and is appropriate to the country and culture in which you are working. He continued to identify five key questions that must be addressed during the research process: What has happened? When did things happen? Where did things happen? Who was involved? And how and when did they do what they did? Furthermore, Prof. Taylor emphasized the need for the documentation of the evolving values within local communities as a crucial component of heritage conservation and preservation. He also mentioned the concept of nostalgia, which is evident in the decisions of residents to relocate or remain in a particular place due to their sentimental attachment to the place. Therefore, conserving urban heritage encompasses safeguarding the place. Managing changes in a sustainable way is a pivotal aspect of ensuring that heritage endures amid transformation. To make such decisions, it is necessary to organize additional stakeholder discussions, encourage cultural mapping and participatory mapping, and foster community engagement. By actively engaging in these processes, it is possible to identify and preserve heritage assets and cultural values.

4-4. Survive with Water: Memory, Space and Life of Flood Diversion Area Settlements

Jiang Hong
Vice Dean of the School of Architecture at Southeast University (SEU-Arch)

Prof. Jiang Hong delivered a speech on "Survive with Water Memory, Space and Life of Flood Diversion Area Settlements". The presentation started by exploring the history of the floodplain and its communities, using the Jiangjiang Floodplain in Gong'an County, Hubei Province as an example. Water management emerged as a top priority for the country in its early years after its foundation, and the central government put in place extensive water control systems nationwide. Prof. Jiang also looked into the specific attributes of the heritage. He explained accurately identifying such items is essential for maintaining and passing forward the city's historical values. The safety zones, safety platforms, immigrant homes, water shelters, immigrant roads and bridges, and other physical remnants within the flood zones, along with the collective memories and emotions of the safety zones and other intangible elements, all represent significant sources of value in addition to the water conservancy project facilities. Prof. Jiang then looked at the notable challenges that settlements in floodplains face. First off, following the completion of the Three Gorges Dam, the use of floodplains reduced substantially. Settlements began to spread beyond the embankment, creating a barrier to further expansion. The floodplain embankment causes traffic congestion, making travelling difficult. Moreover, high density and substandard housing are common features of living on the floodplain. His team examined these obstacles and took the following actions: 1) Extensive historical research and assessment of the floodplains' values were made. 2) A questionnaire-based survey of more than 2,000 residents was conducted. 3) Wide-range research and a thorough evaluation were carried out. 4) Ultimately, five action plans at four levels for the renewal were developed. Three planning and design strategies were implemented to enhance the city. First, a public system built on embankments with a multi-use ring belt is created. Second, barriers were torn down to increase traffic flow, and enlarge public areas. While also enhancing traffic services. Third, former factory properties were refurbished to facilitate interconnectedness and stimulate public activity within the open space. Prof. Jiang concluded his presentation with a thought-provoking question for his fellow architects to ponder: How and when do spaces come into place?
4.5. Sustainable Development Ethics and Pedagogy

Johannes Widodo

Director of Graduate Programs in Architectural Conservation and Tun Tan Cheng Lock Centre for Asian Architectural and Urban Heritage (in Melaka) of the National University of Singapore

Johannes Widodo from the National University of Singapore presented on "Sustainable Development Ethics and Pedagogy." He explained how the climate crisis is connected to human ethics and behaviour. The first step toward conservation is to shift from a top-down to a bottom-up strategy. Educating the next generation is a critical component of changing people’s mindsets and attitudes. Universities should provide extensive learning opportunities and curricula that emphasize problem-solving and forward-thinking concepts in order to prioritize education’s goal of changing attitudes and values. Additionally, the younger generation must foster teamwork and community participation through initiatives such as cultural mapping projects, which allow students to immerse themselves in their surroundings and set a positive example. Prof. Widodo discussed improving both the campus environment and economic prosperity through sustainable ecology. He gave several examples from the lab work, including the utilization of carbon-neutral projects and energy-efficient campuses. The younger generation can be educated about and inspired to support this movement by these examples. He recommended ways to improve energy efficiency and promote sustainable development. Start by establishing the notion that we are socially accountable individuals with empathy and integrity. Next, be authentic in accordance with local culture and traditions. Thirdly, strive for environmental sustainability with the goal of becoming carbon neutral, creating zero waste and emitting zero carbon. Fourthly, ensure cost-effectiveness for long-term economic viability. Lastly, in terms of architecture and technology, be adaptable in accordance with modernism and modernity. It is worth noting that Europe possessed five times more World Cultural Heritage sites than Africa. Finally, he referred to The Cape Town Document on Modern Heritage, which is the primary output of the Modern Heritage of African Initiative in the spirit of the Nara Document on authenticity. The document aims to reframe, reassert, and document the Eurocentric perspective of modernity that UNESCO and its advisory bodies have traditionally held. Instead, it proposes a more equitable and globally representative concept of modernity in a planetary age.

4.6. From Sustainability to Survivability

Edward Denison

Professor of Architecture and Global Modernities at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL

Prof. Edward Denison delivered a lecture titled "From Sustainability to Survivability" where he concentrated on the question of the heritage in the Anthropocene, the new geological age created by human species. He emphasized that a radical change of our mindset towards a planetary one is required to ensure survivability before any cultural heritage can hold any value in the future. Prof. Denison then presented a range of projects involving the architecture and environment of historic cities, with a focus on environmental, racial and spatial equity. He touched particularly on two aspects of the environmental and racial, with the equity issues in the Anthropocene. The exponential increase in production and population, energy use, carbon dioxide emissions and global surface temperature rise in the 20th century, have generated liveability issues in anthropic environments. Cities are continuously undergoing change, with old buildings being demolished and new ones being created. Old landmarks are being replaced by new ones. This shift is reshaping the entire globe. Prof. Denison highlighted the topic of colonization and national ownership and equality, which is consistent with the European notion of modernism and modernity. It is worth noting that five national key cultural relics protection units and the initial batch of national historical and cultural cities were established. Subsequently, in 1962, the protection of the historical urban layout, style and historical neighbourhoods was advocated. In 1998, Guangzhou delineated the first batch of 37 historical and cultural conservation zones, followed by the announcement of the first municipal intangible cultural heritage listings in 2005. In 2014, the boundaries of the historical urban area were defined. Guangzhou has created a five-tiered model to protect tangible and intangible cultural assets of natural settings, historical urban areas, prominent towns and villages, historical neighbourhoods, cultural artefacts and heritage structures, and traditional architecture are among the categories. Second, Guangzhou has improved its legislation and processes for adaptive and responsive urban heritage management. It has put in place a process to research and evaluate cultural and historical heritage, as well as protecting regulations for objects of potential significance for preservation. A system of legal professionals dedicated to cultural heritage conservation has been established to handle cases of public interest. In terms of technology, digital-based technologies have also been implemented for heritage management, facilitating virtual-real interaction and aiding in the preservation of cultural heritage. The effective implementation of organic renewal and heritage operation through micro-renovation in Yongqing Square on En’ning Road, along with the encouragement of multiparty participation and autonomous renewal action for heritage conservation, has contributed to the development of a public consensus on heritage conservation. Guangzhou has been commended internationally for its innovative approaches to cultural conservation and innovation, which have made exceptional contributions. Prof. Wang concluded that maintaining urban heritage requires a harmonious combination of global consensus and local implementation, as well as a balance between historical memory and modern living. Historical preservation is the starting point, cultural heritage is the main objective, and revitalization and innovation are the essential components.

4.7. International Consensus on Heritage Conservation and the Practice in Guangzhou

Wang Shifu

Professor of Urban Planning and the Vice Dean of the School of Architecture at South China University of Technology

Prof. Wang Shifu presented on the topic of "International Consensus on Heritage Conservation and the Practice in Guangzhou." He first outlined how an international agreement developed, moving from a singular focus on individual monuments to a more holistic perspective, from artistic values to the fulfilling of daily demands, and from preservation to adaptive reuse. He further explained the practices employed in Guangzhou, emphasizing the range of processes involved, from preserving physical features to a comprehensive landscape approach, as well as from technical interventions to institutional innovations. Guangzhou, being a megacity, confronts various challenges when it comes to conserving its historical architecture, such as a large population, intense growth pressure, a lack of building maintenance, and complex property rights. He continued by presenting significant explorations conducted in Guangzhou, covering a variety of aspects. First, the safeguarding of heritage has consistently progressed with the development of knowledge, understanding, and equality, which is consistent with the European notion of modernism and modernity. It is worth noting that five national key cultural relics protection units and the initial batch of national historical and cultural cities were established. Subsequently, in 1962, the protection of the historical urban layout, style and historical neighbourhoods was advocated. In 1998, Guangzhou delineated the first batch of 37 historical and cultural conservation zones, followed by the announcement of the first municipal intangible cultural heritage listings in 2005. In 2014, the boundaries of the historical urban area were defined. Guangzhou has created a five-tiered model to protect tangible and intangible cultural assets of natural settings, historical urban areas, prominent towns and villages, historical neighbourhoods, cultural artefacts and heritage structures, and traditional architecture are among the categories. Second, Guangzhou has improved its legislation and processes for adaptive and responsive urban heritage management. It has put in place a process to research and evaluate cultural and historical heritage, as well as protecting regulations for objects of potential significance for preservation. A system of legal professionals dedicated to cultural heritage conservation has been established to handle cases of public interest. In terms of technology, digital-based technologies have also been implemented for heritage management, facilitating virtual-real interaction and aiding in the preservation of cultural heritage. The effective implementation of organic renewal and heritage operation through micro-renovation in Yongqing Square on En’ning Road, along with the encouragement of multiparty participation and autonomous renewal action for heritage conservation, has contributed to the development of a public consensus on heritage conservation. Guangzhou has been commended internationally for its innovative approaches to cultural conservation and innovation, which have made exceptional contributions. Prof. Wang concluded that maintaining urban heritage requires a harmonious combination of global consensus and local implementation, as well as a balance between historical memory and modern living. Historical preservation is the starting point, cultural heritage is the main objective, and revitalization and innovation are the essential components.

4.8. Historic Urban Landscape of Rabat Area, Morocco

Imane Bennani

Dean of the School of Architecture at the International University of Rabat (Morocco), Chairholder of the UNESCO Chair "Historic Urban Landscape, between training and research"

Imane Bennani from the School of Architecture at the International University of Rabat (Morocco) presented on the topic of "Historic Urban Landscape of Rabat Area, Morocco." The presentation began with a description of the area's extensive and diverse architectural and cultural heritage, showcasing its capacity to unite the past and present. She also popularized the neo-traditional design aesthetic, which was inspired by historical structures and reinterpreted by applying modern architectural techniques. The goal of this design is to blend the beauty of the past with modern building materials. The management plan and action plan for the Moroccan region of Rabat were then presented. The management strategy also lays out a basis for the revitalization of the heritage, highlighting its potential for financial success. Finally, she outlined the fundamental elements for managing the heritage site of Rabat. These include the requirement for government commitment, full coordination between the city and the Ministry of Culture, legislative safeguards for plans, and impact analyses of heritage-based approaches.

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4-9. From Slums to World Heritage - Two Case Studies of Urban Conservation and Renewal in Belgium

Wu Meiping
Distinguished Associate Professor of the School of Architecture, Tianjin University

Prof. Wu Meiping from the School of Architecture at Tianjin University delivered a speech titled “From Slums to World Heritage - Two Case Studies of Urban Conservation and Renewal in Belgium”. She started off by giving a brief review of Belgian heritage conservation. She emphasized Belgium’s favourable location, which enables it to swiftly acquire cutting-edge ideas and methods from other European countries. Additionally, she talked about the broader context, encompassing the Venice Charter and the founding of ICOMOS, as well as the two European Architectural Heritage Years. She proceeded to present two examples of urban conservation and regeneration. The first relates to the conservation and regeneration of a specific cluster of buildings located in the heart of Leuven’s old city, known as the Great Beguinage of Leuven. This case study demonstrates the limitations of the Venice Charter in addressing the conservation of such building groups. The subsequent example examines the strategies and concepts for integrated conservation and focuses on the preservation and revitalization of Bruges’ historic city centre. The long-term goal is to improve living standards, attract former residents to return, and enhance the tourist experience, all of which will help the city continue to grow sustainably in the future. Finally, it can be concluded that these two cases relate to urban conservation and regeneration in the context of Belgium’s post-World War II reconstruction and high-speed development marked by a transition from incremental to inventory growth. Both cases have been inscribed as World Heritage Sites, demonstrating that high-quality preservation and regeneration carried out with a long-term strategic vision not only achieves the conservation and inheritance of the heritage but also enhances its intrinsic value and the quality of living for local residents.

4-10. Back to the Sources: Understanding the Past to Build the Future

Elisa Marguin Hamon
Director of Research and International Relations of the École Nationale des Chartes, France

Elisa Marguin Hamon, the Director of Research and International Relations of the École Nationale des Chartes, presented “Back to the Sources: Understanding the Past to Build the Future”. She began by introducing the methods of urban survey for understanding the beginnings of cities. The goals of documentary heritage were subsequently outlined, emphasizing its unique status as a type of heritage. Managing and preserving historical objects can be of great educational value as they provide insight into the past and offer inspiration for modern architecture. The overarching goal is to spread and enrich knowledge through the contributions of various approaches and disciplines; identify and digitize pertinent documentation; develop information systems for enriching and structuring digitized data; enable the correlation and alignment of data through semantic tools, such as ontologies and thesauri; and share and open up knowledge in order to use it as the foundation for study, teaching, and promotion programmes.

5. THEMATIC SESSION III: WORKSHOP ON HIGHER EDUCATION TOWARDS SDGS, AND THE CLOSING CEREMONY

Over 35 participants attended the 3rd session themed “Workshop on Higher Education towards Sustainable Development Goals”. It was chaired by Prof. Zhang Peng and was designed as a workshop, held online and offline on the 27th afternoon. It proposed to discuss the initiative for an International Network for Urban Heritage Conservation in Higher Education Institutions. Its aim was to address educational practices and needs for urban conservation and development by inviting universities and higher education institutions and partner institutions to share their experience and thinking on (1) education; (2) research; and (3) action, with insight into their scope, goals, methods and outcomes as well as a focus on evolving needs and beneficiaries. To facilitate the discussions participants were invited to reflect on three preparatory questions:

Question 1: Based on the Sustainable Development Goals, what are the study areas and approaches that require rethinking in the urban heritage conservation field, at the level of education, research, and action?

Question 2: How can we combine traditional knowledge with modern technology in education, research and action for urban heritage conservation and sustainable development?

Question 3: What are the main aims, motivations, and reasons for setting up and participating in this Network at the level of education, research and action?

5-1. Introduction to Session III

Following a presentation of the aims of the session and its working method by Prof. Plácido González-Mártinez, Prof. Zhang Peng and Marie-Noël Tournoux respectively introduced heritage education at Tongji University and WHITRAP Shanghai.

In his introduction, Prof. Zhang Peng presented the history and aims of Tongji’s College of Architecture and Urban Planning (CAUP) and its research-supported architectural education approach and
its key areas of new architecture, built environment and heritage. He further described the built heritage education strategy. He furthermore presented CAUP’s new undergraduate, master, and PhD courses as well as the innovative cross-discipline research group integrating architecture, urban planning, landscape, civil engineering, history and survey. In the last part of his presentation, he focused on CAUP’s national and international cooperation and network activities.

In her background introduction to WHITRAP, Marie-Noël Tournoux presented what are Category 2 Institute and Centres (C2C) under the auspices of UNESCO and their relation to the Organization. She continued by providing an overview of WHITRAP’s history and key objectives and some of the current main activities, including training and raising awareness initiatives. She further explained how C2C engage with universities and WHITRAP’s special relationship with CAUP Tongji. She detailed how WHITRAP as a C2C allowed regional and international cooperation and development, and served as an innovative platform and hub to implement joint and pilot activities.

5-2. Group discussion

These introductions were followed by presentations and round table discussions. Participants introduced their respective institutions, experience and approach to education, research and existing networks, and shared their reflections on the three preparatory questions. For the sake of greater efficiency, participants were distributed in three parallel small working groups, chaired by (1) Prof. Zhang Peng, (2) Prof. Plácido González-Martínez and (3) Marie-Noël Tournoux. There were many topics covered during the workshop and hub to implement joint and pilot activities.

5-3. Wrap up

The results of the working groups were presented in the plenary followed by thoughtful reflections by Prof. Benjamin Mouton based on the participant’s written contributions and his reflection of objectives. Mouton firstly commented on heritage and sustainable development as two decisive concepts, which are now at the forefront of international discussions when it comes to the future of the planet. He developed 5 key points:

- In his first point, he stressed that heritage should be considered as a whole, which varies in scale, type and time and is not solely what still stands.
- He further commented on sustainable development, highlighting the paradox of the combination of the two terms. As one term conveys the notion of transformation of societies, implicitly of progress and opens the discussion on the legitimacy of growth. Whilst the other conveys the notion of duration, stability, and permanence. From the combination of these two contrary terms arises the notion of improving the living conditions of humankind in its environment.
- His third point focused on how few tangible heritage features have remained unchanged in time and are therefore more or less easy to understand. Vernacular heritage, and rural and small urban settlements have kept a higher level of integrity because as they have been often neglected, they have undergone little transformation. This is how vernacular heritage could provide answers to the challenges of tomorrow’s society and provide solutions to the impact of climate change.
- In the fourth point, he insisted on the relevance of traditional knowledge systems as part of modernity and how crucial it was to stop opposing the present and the future. He warned against the illusion of substituting modern technologies for traditional knowledge, but continued, by explaining how modern technologies could provide in-depth analyses of heritage and improve conservation processes. He acknowledged that modern technologies could provide in-depth analyses of heritage and improve conservation processes. He also acknowledged that the issue was less about knowledge than relevance of the fruitful cooperation which is being initiated for building together a bright future for heritage education. The participants were asked to provide feedback on this draft document, to develop a network structure and strategy, to be used as a reference by the members in the future.

5-4. Closing Ceremony

Session 3 was followed by the Closing Ceremony. Marie-Noël Tournoux and Prof. Plácido González-Martínez respectively provided a summary of sessions 1 and 2 and the main outcomes of session 3. Prof. Shao Yong, Executive Director of WHITRAP Shanghai followed by presenting the draft Initiative on Urban Heritage Conservation and Design for Sustainable Development and Roadmap for Urban Heritage Conservation in Higher Education Institutions. The participants reached a consensus on the common objective of the Network: to improve, through their contribution from the academic sector, the quality of the historic urban landscape. Considering the lively and high-level debates, participants agreed on the relevance of the fruitful cooperation which is being initiated for building together a bright future for heritage education.
SPECIAL FEATURES
WHITRAP Newsletter Vol. 61 (2024)

Initiative on Urban Heritage Conservation and Design for Sustainable Development and Roadmap for Urban Heritage Conservation in Higher Education Institutions (draft)

1. On 26 to 28 September 2023, Tongji University, as host, together with the College of Architecture and Urban Planning (CAUP), the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region, a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO (WHITRAP Shanghai), Shanghai Tourism Urban Planning & Design Institute Co. Ltd. (SJTUDP), co-organized an International Conference on Urban Heritage Conservation and Design for Sustainable Development and held the first meeting on the establishment of the International Network for Urban Heritage Conservation in Higher Education Institutions.

2. The participants reflected on three main areas of interest: education, research and action in particular discussed three questions:

   Question 1: Based on the SDGs, what are the study areas and approaches that require rethinking in the urban heritage conservation field, at the level of education, research, and action?

   Question 2: How can we combine traditional knowledge with modern technology in education, research and action for urban heritage conservation and sustainable development?

   Question 3: What are the main reasons, aims and forms for setting up and participating in this Network at the level of education, research, and action?

3. They, furthermore, discussed the setting up of an International Network for Urban Heritage Conservation in Higher Education Institutions which would aim to strengthen cooperation with and among universities and higher education institutions that have recognized urban heritage conservation as a key subject of their teaching, research, and action plans.

4. The participants highlighted universities and higher education institutions share a common goal: to improve, through their contribution from the academic sector, the quality of the historic urban landscape. Members of the Network acknowledged their commitment to sharing best practices, and developing partnerships that promote urban heritage conservation and sustainable development in their research, education and action agendas.

5. The Network would aim to:

   • contribute to the international debate on the role of culture and heritage in sustainable development processes and address priority areas such as climate change, economic development and heritage, acknowledging traditional knowledge systems;
   • strengthen cooperation between universities and higher education institutions that have urban heritage conservation and sustainable development as a core line in their teaching, research and action initiatives;
   • stimulate and enhance initiatives led by member universities and higher education institutions to make urban heritage conservation and sustainable development an essential component of academic development, notably through partnerships among other universities and urban conservation-related stakeholders;
   • develop academic exchange and innovation and broaden opportunities for teachers, researchers and students in the urban heritage conservation field;
   • improve the academic quality of teaching, research and action on urban heritage conservation and sustainable development as well as the academic development of students and researchers;
   • facilitate cooperation with non-academic stakeholders such as local communities, local and national governments, and traditional knowledge holders.

6. Following the conference, WHITRAP Shanghai and CAUP Tongji will develop a programme proposal and schedule pointing at possible contributions from the members. This will include the definition of practical and operational considerations and defining the formal partnerships and statutory membership frameworks.

7. Considering the lively and high-level debates, participants agreed on the relevance of the fruitful cooperation which is being initiated for building together a bright future for heritage education.

Launch of the Feasibility Study of the Joint World Heritage Nomination of China’s Baihelang Inscription and Egypt’s Nilometer Phase II

Lina Park
WHITRAP Beijing

On 22 November 2023, the WHITRAP International Symposium was held in Chongqing’s Fuling District, gathering over 40 experts in the fields of hydrological heritage from 7 countries. The conference focused on protecting hydrological heritage and the Joint World Heritage nomination of China’s Baihelang Inscription and Egypt’s Nilometer.

In the session “Discussion on the Feasibility and Strategy of the Joint World Heritage Nomination of Baihelang-Nilometer Heritage”, the project team from PKU School of Archaeology and Museology and WHITRAP Beijing presented the “Characteristics and Value of Chinese-Egyptian Hydrological Heritage”. The experts participated in the dialogue and exchanges on the heritage value research, the path and strategy of heritage application in the context of global climate change for Chinese Baihelang Inscription and Egyptian Nilometer.

Sun Hua, Director of the Academic Committee of WHITRAP Beijing, Zhang Jianwen, Executive Deputy Director of WHITRAP Beijing and Associate Dean of PKU School of Archaeology and Museology, L. Kuanghan, Director Assistant of WHITRAP Beijing, and Zhao Yang, PhD student of PKU School of Archaeology and Museology attended the forum.

In December 2023, Fuling District Cultural and Tourism Development Commission of Chongqing launched the Research Project on World Hydrological Heritage (Phase II), and entrusted WHITRAP Beijing to carry out the investigation and reporting on significant hydrological heritage around the world.

Completion of the research project on the Urban Heritage of Fuzhou City

Jiang Yeqin, Yan Haiyue
WHITRAP Suzhou

WHITRAP Suzhou and Xi’an Jiaotong-Liverpool University signed their second strategic cooperation agreement on significant hydrological heritage protection to accumulate successful experience.

WHITRAP Suzhou and Xi’an Jiaotong-Liverpool University signed their second strategic cooperation agreement

WHITRAP Suzhou

In December 2023, WHITRAP Suzhou and Xi’an Jiaotong-Liverpool University signed the second round of strategic cooperation agreement at the Xi’an Jiaotong-Liverpool University Museum. The ceremony was attended by Zhu Haijun, Director of WHITRAP Suzhou, and Prof. Ma Fei, Assistant Vice President and Dean of Research and Graduate Studies of Xi’an Jiaotong-Liverpool University. Following the ceremony, a heritage round table forum took place. During the forum, Yuan Xuesong, Deputy Director of WHITRAP Suzhou, and experts and scholars from various fields at Xi’an Jiaotong-Liverpool University delivered keynote speeches and discussed potential areas of cooperation between the two institutions.

In this new phase of strategic cooperation, the two parties will collaborate further to conduct scientific research projects on the classical gardens of Suzhou. The projects will focus on heritage conservation capacity building, World Heritage Education and the protection and restoration of built heritage. Both sides will promote cooperative research related to cultural heritage protection and management, share the resource advantages of both sides, and strengthen cross-field cooperation in cultural heritage protection to accumulate successful experience.

Initiation of the Research Project on World Hydrological Heritage (Phase I)

Lina Park
WHITRAP Beijing

In December 2023, Fuling District Cultural and Tourism Development Committee of Chongqing launched the Research Project on World Hydrological Heritage (Phase I), and entrusted WHITRAP Beijing to carry out the investigation and reporting on significant hydrological heritage around the world.
2023 HeritAP Annual Meeting on World Heritage Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals

Dong Zhaoqi (Intem) WHITRAP Shanghai

On 29-30 November, the 2023 HeritAP Annual Meeting on "World Heritage Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals" was held online. The annual meeting was organized by WHITRAP Shanghai, College of Architecture and Urban Planning at Tongji University, Shanghai Tongji Urban Planning and Design Institute Co. Ltd.

The 2023 HeritAP annual meeting aimed at facilitating the understanding of the 2015 Policy on the integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention (the 2015 Policy) and proposing to streamline a roadmap for heritage practitioners through a six-year HeritAP project. Ms. Eloundou (Director of UNESCO World Heritage Centre) and Prof. Zhou Jian (Secretary-General of WHITRAP) delivered the opening addresses. Ten experts were invited to present at the annual meeting. In total of 53 people attended the Zoom meeting and about 3,863 people watched the livream throughout the two-day meeting.

HeritAP anticipates more exemplary cases and advanced experiences in World Heritage contribution to SDGs to be shared on a broader scale. It aims to assist practitioners, institutions, communities, and networks involved in World Heritage to harness the benefits that engagement in sustainable development can deliver to properties.

Ms. Hattaya Siriphaththakurn (Senior Specialist in Cultural Heritage Management, SPAFA) introduced the role of SPAFA in promoting the achievement of SDGs utilizing heritage as a driver of initiatives. She underscored the importance of capacity development, raised questions on the sustainability of the efforts themselves, as well as the results, and pointed out some aspects that could enhance sustaining results in the long term. She also provided examples of work delivered by SPAFA regarding policy planning and implementation for integrating SDGs into cultural activities.

On 29 November 2023, representatives interpreted policies and their implementation from the global level to the national level. Ms. Mizuki Murai (Senior Programme Coordinator World Heritage of IUCN) gave an overview of how IUCN has engaged with World Heritage and presented the ongoing initiatives and recommendations for future work, including the 8 key strategic and operational recommendations for IUCN’s engagement with the World Heritage Convention.

Prof. Wang Xinyuan (Deputy Director of the China Academy of Cultural Heritage) presented the national practices in China to mainstream the discussion of sustainable development in World Heritage conservation and management. She underscored the importance of creating mechanisms and their implementation from the global level to the national level.

Ms. Carolina Castellanos (Senior Consultant at WHITRAP Shanghai) provided a summary of the state of the art regarding policies and frameworks that have been developed to mainstream sustainable development into heritage conservation and management to evaluate what is still needed to better assist practitioners. She presented an outline of the proposed process to streamline sustainability policy into heritage practice and the potential end-products to be developed through HeritAP's six-year initiative, mainly guidance for practitioners and a roadmap for the World Heritage sector.

Ms. Li Hong (Programme Consultant of Heritage Management, SPAFA) introduced HeritAP's six-year initiative, mainly guidance for practitioners and a roadmap for the World Heritage sector.

Prof. Kou Huaiyun (Associate Professor at Tongji University) gave a presentation on the interaction between public space and community in heritage sites, showcasing two sites, Dong Villages and Xijie. She emphasized the influence of cultural practices, traditions, and values on shaping surroundings, including the natural environment. Through the Dong Villages cases, heritage’s place-making processes, and their continuity, were demonstrated, highlighting the importance of creating mechanisms for the protection of the settings that allow for these practices to occur. Meanwhile, the post-earthquake reconstruction of Xijie demonstrated how meeting community needs for open spaces enhanced cultural practices, traditions, and values on shaping surroundings, including the natural environment. Through the Dong Villages cases, heritage’s place-making processes, and their continuity, were demonstrated, highlighting the importance of creating mechanisms for the protection of the settings that allow for these practices to occur.

Prof. Nokubo Inaba (Emeritus Professor at University of Tsukuba) discussed the conservation and management of cultural and natural resources in Japan, emphasizing how nature and culture are not divided in Japan, calling for good practices and hosts to be shared on a broader scale. It aims to assist practitioners, institutions, communities, and networks involved in World Heritage to harness the benefits that engagement in sustainable development can deliver to properties.

On 30 November 2023, experts provided examples of how to illustrate the good practices at the site level focusing on Dimension One: Environment and Resilience.

The 30 November 2023 experts provided examples of how to illustrate the good practices at the site level focusing on Dimension One: Environment and Resilience.

Prof. Zhang Kai (Director of the Planning and Design Studio Four, Shanghai Tongji Urban Planning & Design Institute Co. Ltd.) spoke about the sustainable management of urban heritage, with the example of Shaché, which demonstrates layers of tangible and intangible values embodied in surviving fabric in a dynamic environment. Her presentation gave examples of alternatives for renewal, not only of public buildings but also private dwellings and the protection of other features, not only heritage buildings but also public spaces. Finally, she highlighted the importance of the project for creating jobs and sources of income during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Finally, Ms. Li Hong (Programme Consultant at WHITRAP Shanghai) further introduced the six-year project (2023-2028) of HeritAP that includes research, professional exchange meetings and field studies. She called for good practices and host sites in the integration of sustainable development in heritage conservation and management.

World Heritage Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals

Dimension One: Environment and Resilience
The special theme of this issue is the interpretation and protection of Fuzhou’s urban heritage value, based on the results of the 2022 joint workshop on cultural heritage protection of Peking University. The articles focused on Fuzhou from ancient times to modern times, connecting the Three Lanes and Seven Alleys, Shangxiang Historical District, and attempted to interpret the heritage value of Fuzhou at a larger spatial scale, through the lens of integrated and series heritage.

Huang Kang et al.’s investigation and value study of the Three Lanes and Seven Alleys placed the subject in the context of the city. They investigated the evolution of the Three Lanes and Seven Alleys from the perspectives of history, geography and culture. They focused on the cultural ecology of the district formed by the gathering of the intellectual elites since the Song Dynasty. They cultivated many enlightened sages and men of noble character in modern times. Based on the field survey, Wang Xiaoxu, Wang Siyu and Xue Yali deeply discussed the impact of the main participation behaviour of the government. They managed enterprises, merchants and residents on the space utilization of the historical district. It was pointed out that in this process, one should also attach importance to the power of local merchants and residents.

Liu Zhading, Liu Wanhua and Li Xuanghang attempted to reconstruct the narrative of Shangxiang Historical District, through its architecture and street facades. They pointed out that Shangxiang has developed a more significant role in the historical succession. Xie Zhiqiang et al. analysed the generation of urban space and architecture in Yantai Mountain from a diachronic perspective, pointing out the role played by local actors in Fuzhou in the process of modernization. Yantai Mountain echoed the elites of the Three Lanes and Seven Alleys across the river, becoming the centre of dissemination of new knowledge, and generating a unique space.

Shang Chenwen placed Kuliang in the holistic context of people and society, exploring the unique connection between people and place, place and practice. There, the heart-warming lasting Chinese-foreign friendship of Kuliang was widely praised. In addition, this issue published an interview with the people who were personally involved in the protection and utilization of the Fujian shipbuilding culture. Exploring the achievements and difficulties in the protection and inheritance of Fujian shipbuilding culture. It hoped to inspire the protection and inheritance of shipbuilding heritage and its spirit in the future.

Using the concept of “Dawn of Enlightenment” as an entry point, one can connect the forerunners of Fuzhou, Fujian merchants, philanthropists and patriots with the urban context, tangible spaces, architectural heritage from the Tang and Song Dynasties to modern times, as well as the community life and spiritual emotions that continued to this day, this obtaining a more holistic expression of the urban historical narrative and value interpretation, or demonstrating the prominent and universal significance of its value in the global view.

WHITRAP Beijing participated in the Seminar of the Scenic Spots Professional Committee of the Chinese Society of Landscape Architecture

Lina Park
WHITRAP Beijing

From 21 to 23 December 2023, the 5th Special Committee and Seminar of the Landscape Professional Committee of the Chinese Society of Landscape Architecture were successfully held in Hangzhou. Prof. Chen Yaohua, Deputy Director of the Academic Committee of WHITRAP Beijing, and Prof. Song Feng, Deputy Director of WHITRAP Beijing, attended the activity. At the seminar, Prof. Chen Yaohua gave a keynote speech titled “The Process and Reflection on the Heritage Value Conception of the Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of the Jingma Mountain in Fujian”, Prof. Song Feng gave a keynote speech titled “Key Technologies for Detailed Planning and Compilation of Urban Scenic Spots Guided by Governance – Taking the West Lake Scenic Spot as an Example”. During the meeting, Prof. Chen Yaohua was elected as the Vice Chairman of the 8th Special Committee.

WHITRAP Suzhou successfully held the Fifth Youth Boundless Forum Finale

Jiang Yeqin, Yan Huiye
WHITRAP Suzhou

On 6 January 2024, the Fifth Youth Boundless Forum Finale’s final round was held at the Wuhan International Communication Centre, hosted by WHITRAP Suzhou. The Forum’s theme was “A Letter to Cultural Heritage”, and 13 Chinese and foreign youth teams presented their works and discussed with seven expert judges from China and abroad.

Since the registration opened in early December 2023, the Youth Boundless Forum has attracted participants from 15 provinces and municipalities, including Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Suzhou and Wuhan, as well as from other countries such as South Korea, Malaysia, Russia, Uganda, Thailand, France and India, expanding WHITRAP Suzhou’s international influence. Furthermore, the Boundless Forum aims to guide contemporary youth to pay attention to the world heritage around them, linking academic expertise to daily life, and discussing the importance of cultural heritage in our lives, as well as youth’s responsibility in its preservation and inheritance in an open and “boundless” format.

UNESCO WHITPIC Delegation visited WHITRAP Beijing

Lina Park
WHITRAP Beijing

On 12 December 2023, delegates from UNESCO International Centre for Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites (UNESCO WHITPIC) visited WHITRAP Beijing to meet with Zhang Jianwei, Executive Deputy Director of WHITRAP Beijing and Associate Dean of PKU School of Archaeology and Museology, Li Kuanghan, Director Assistant of WHITRAP Beijing, and Wang Siyu, Director of PKU CAAGP and Assistant Professor of PKU School of Archaeology and Museology. During the meeting, both parties introduced their mission, structure and strategic plans, and had an in-depth discussion on the feasibility of future cooperation.

Review of the 2024 Research Project on Fujian Ancient Transportation System (Eastern Fujian Section)

Ma Lerong (intern)
WHITRAP Beijing

In January 2024, the Research Project on the Ancient Transportation System in Fujian Province (Eastern Fujian Section) was officially launched. This project is commissioned by the Fujian Provincial Institute of Archaeology and organized by PKU School of Archaeology and Museology and WHITRAP Beijing. On 14 January 2024, the field investigation kicked off in Fuzhou, Fujian Province, and lasted for 18 days. The fieldwork was divided into three stages: research training, field investigation and data collation.

On 15 January 2024, the training and mobilization meeting for the project was held at the Fujian Provincial Institute of Archaeology. The professors and practitioners from the Fujian Provincial Institute of Archaeology and Peking University attended the meeting on-site. Representatives from the local cultural relics protection units also participated online.

From 16 to 26 January 2024, the research team, with the support from Fujian Provincial Institute of Archaeology and the local cultural relics cadres, completed the field investigation of five ancient routes: (1) Fuzhou-Lianjiang-Luoyuan-Ningde route; (2) Ningde-Xiapu route; (3) Xiapu-Fuding route; (4) Ningde-Fuan-Shouning-Taishan (located in Zhejiang Province) route; and (5) Fuan-Zhetong-Fuding route.

From 27 to 31 January 2024, the investigation entered into the data collation phase. Each group conducted data processing and computer drawing of the collected first-hand data, modifying and improving the existing pictures and text materials, and eventually finalized the report.
Research on the Li Ethnic Group in Hainan Province

Lu He (intern) WHITRAP Beijing

To support the nomination of “Hainan Tropical Rainforest and the Traditional Settlement of Li Ethnic Group”, Dr Li Kuanghan and Prof. Wang Siyu from WHITRAP Beijing led a team to carry out a systematic survey of 50 traditional settlements of the Li Ethnic Group in 7 cities and counties in Hainan Province from 16 to 26 January 2024. The survey includes traditional settlements and architecture of the Li Ethnic Group in Hainan, as well as the situation assessments on heritage protection, sustainable protection and utilization of the Li culture.

UNESCO Delegation led by President of the 42nd Session of the General Conference visited China

Wang Siyu from WHITRAP Beijing (intern)

On 16 to 26 January 2024, Ms Simona-Mirela Miculescu, President of the 42nd Session of the General Conference of UNESCO, and Mr Qin Changwei, Secretary General of the National Commission of the People’s Republic of China for UNESCO, along with their delegation, paid a visit to Tongji University. Ms Fang Shouen, Secretary of the University Party Committee, met with the delegation. Representatives from WHITRAP Shanghai and the University’s International Exchange and Cooperation Office attended the meeting.

Secretary Fang Shouen extended a warm welcome to Ms Simona-Mirela Miculescu and expressed his gratitude for the support UNESCO has provided to the development of Tongji University. He presented an overview of the school’s history, curricula, disciplinary specializations, and internationalization initiatives. He also highlighted the achievements of WHITRAP Shanghai, which is based at Tongji. He underlined that a city’s history and its cultural traditions are embodied in its urban cultural heritage. The Tongji alumni, represented by Prof. Ruan Ysan, remained steadfast in their pursuit of the research and practice of cultural heritage preservation during China’s rapid urbanization phase. They have established exemplars for the protection and development of China’s historical towns and cities, serving as an inspiration for many other ancient towns and cities and making a substantial contribution to the country’s high-quality urbanization. In the future, the university hopes to receive further guidance and support from UNESCO, as it aspires to apply more of Tongji’s wisdom to the innovative preservation and development of cultural heritage in the new era.

Ms Simona-Mirela Miculescu expressed her heartfelt admiration for and congratulations on the work Tongji University has been doing in the field of heritage preservation and the achievements it has made. She said that it is of significance to take Tongji University as the first stop of her visit to China in her capacity as President of the General Conference of UNESCO. She deeply appreciated Tongji University’s understanding and promotion of the role and value of culture and art in urban development, meanwhile firmly believed in the active part Tongji will play in supporting Shanghai’s participation in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) and UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (UNLCC). UNESCO values and looks forward to further collaborating and exploring new collaborative projects with Tongji University in the future.

Accompanied by Vice President Liu Yongqiang, Ms Simona-Mirela Miculescu also visited WHITRAP Shanghai located on the campus. She was briefed on the institute’s work and toured the exhibition showcasing its achievements.

In her message to WHITRAP Suzhou, she said, “I would like to extend my warm congratulations and deep respect for the passion with which you preserve this gem of UNESCO world heritage. May these gardens always be between Heaven and Earth, due to your care!”

WHITRAP Suzhou launched winter holiday and Spring Festival social practice experience activities for minors

Jiang Yejin, Yan Huiyue WHITRAP Suzhou

During the winter break and Spring Festival, WHITRAP Suzhou offered social practice and experience activities for minors via online booking. On 31 January and 16 February, WHITRAP Suzhou held thematic experience events titled “Jiangnan Culture - Lantai Stone Exploration” and “Jiangnan Culture - Animal Images in Gardens”, respectively. The staff gave the students an introduction to the Taihu stone, Lingbi stone, marble and book stones found in Suzhou gardens. They also discussed the animal images and their representations in Suzhou gardens, such as the gardens’ resident animals, the animals featured in the landscape names, plaques and couplets, and the animal symbols found in the wood carvings, flower windows, rockeries and paved floors.

In order to provide students with a more vivid understanding of the garden and an appreciation of its unique culture, the activity included an on-site visit, an animated short film, and handcrafted creation. In order to give students a fun way to explore and learn about garden culture, WHITRAP Suzhou introduced these brand-new experiential events that blend traditional festivals with garden cultural resources.

**In Focus**

- **WHITRAP Suzhou**

  **President Miculescu met with Liu Fang, the Deputy Secretary-General of the Suzhou municipal government during her visit. Representatives of WHITRAP Suzhou, Suzhou Garden and Landscaping Bureau, and the Municipal Forensis Affairs Office participated in the meeting and accompanied the inspection. She was impressed by and highly praised the exquisite landscape elements and garden art of Suzhou classical gardens.**

  In her message to WHITRAP Suzhou, she said, “I would like to extend my warm congratulations and deep respect for the passion with which you preserve this gem of UNESCO world heritage. May these gardens always be between Heaven and Earth, due to your care!”

  Ms Simona-Mirela Miculescu visited the World Heritage Sites of the Lingering Garden, the Tiger Hill Scenic Area, and the Humble Administrator’s Garden. They were presented the conservation and management situation of the World Heritage Sites and the rich achievements in the protection, inheritance, and utilization of Suzhou’s cultural heritage.

- **WHITRAP Shanghai**

  **Visits to WHITRAP Suzhou and Suzhou Gardens**

  **Jiang Yejin, Yan Huiyue WHITRAP Suzhou**

  On 1 February, Ms Simona-Mirela Miculescu, President of the 42nd General Conference of UNESCO, and her delegation travelled to Suzhou to visit the World Heritage Sites of the Lingering Garden, the Tiger Hill Scenic Area, and the Humble Administrator’s Garden. They were presented the conservation and management situation of the World Heritage Sites and the rich achievements in the protection, inheritance, and utilization of Suzhou’s cultural heritage.
**WORLD HERITAGE IN ASIA & PACIFIC**

**MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTuARIES ALONG THE COAST OF YELLOW SEA-BOHAI GULF OF CHINA (PHASE I)**

Collected by Yang Kaiyue (intern), WHITRAP Shanghai

**Country:** People’s Republic of China  
**Category of site:** Natural site  
**Date of inscription:** 2019  
**Criteria:** (x)

*Source: [https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1606/](https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1606)*

The Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of the Yellow Sea-Bohai Gulf of China (Phase I) is located on the coast as a stop-over, molting, staging, wintering, foraging and/or breeding grounds. The property’s tidal flats are of exceptional importance for the conservation of the world’s migratory birds, supporting globally significant numbers, including rare and threatened species. The Phase I tidal flats offer critically important seasonal habitats for more than 10% of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway populations, including two of the world’s rarest migratory birds—the Spoon-billed Sandpiper and Nordmann’s Greenshank. These remaining natural habitats are vital for the very survival of these birds and a wide array of other threatened species including the Black-faced Spoonbill, Oriental Stork, Red-crowned Crane and Great Knot.

**OUV**

The property supports some 680 species of vertebrates, including 415 species of birds, 26 species of mammals, 9 species of amphibians, 14 species of reptiles, 216 species of fish, as well as 166 species of zoobenthos.

**Criterion (x)**

Large aggregations of birds depend on the coast as stop-over, molting, staging, wintering, foraging and/or breeding grounds. The property’s tidal flats are of exceptional importance for the conservation of the world’s migratory birds, supporting globally significant numbers, including rare and threatened species. The Phase I tidal flats offer critically important seasonal habitats for more than 10% of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway populations, including two of the world’s rarest migratory birds—the Spoon-billed Sandpiper and Nordmann’s Greenshank. These remaining natural habitats are vital for the very survival of these birds and a wide array of other threatened species including the Black-faced Spoonbill, Oriental Stork, Red-crowned Crane and Great Knot.

The location of the Kraton and the city were chosen by the Sultan Mangkubumi in 1775 to conform to Javanese cosmological beliefs, where the capital of the Kingdom is considered to be a miniature of the universe following the Hindu-Buddhist concepts of the physical, metaphysical and spiritual universes. These concepts pre-date the property itself, shaped through the history of Java since before the 1st century CE. The attributes of the property have been identified and include both tangible and intangible aspects. The latter include cultural heritage practices relating to the cycle of life (birth, marriage and death), venerating ancestors, coronations, funerals, Islamic days, the connection of the natural, macroscopic and microcosmic worlds, and day to day offerings.

**OUV**

The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historic Landmarks includes the Kraton (Palace) Complex and a series of linked landmarks, monuments and spaces located along a six-kilometre-long north-south axis in central Yogyakarta. The property is an exceptional testimony to Javanese civilization and culture, and exhibits an important interchange between diverse belief systems and values.

**Criterion (iii)**

The orientation of the axis and the placement of the landmarks along its length were designed to manifest in physical form the Javanese philosophical thoughts on human life, especially the cycle of life (Sangkan Paraning Darmad), ideal harmonious life (Harmayum Hayuning Ilawana), the connection between human beings and the Creator (Manunggalating Kawula Gusti), and the microcosmic and macrocosmic worlds. The landmarks are connected spatially, in their design, through rituals, and by the traditional management systems of the Sultanate of Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat known as Tata Rakiting Wewangunan. The axis is aligned between Mount Merapi, considered the abode of Guardian Spirits, and the Indian Ocean, regarded as the home of the Queen of the Southern Sea, reflected in the shape and meaning of the northernmost and southernmost monuments that define the axis.

**Criteria:** (i) (ii) (iii)

**Country:** Republic of Indonesia  
**Category of site:** Cultural site  
**Date of inscription:** 2023