
WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS

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In drawing conclusions from our first Workshop on Architectural Conservation, it is important to stress that we concentrated on *urban area conservation* rather than on monument conservation. These broader aspects of conservation – of protecting historic buildings, of looking at groups of buildings, at the space between the buildings and at whole areas with a view to improving them – are much less familiar and less understood than is *monument* conservation, which looks at a monument in isolation.

The workshop has been a wonderful learning exercise, and there is no better place to learn than in one's own country. The twenty Bangladeshi architects, planners and engineers who took part in the workshop have avowed to me that they learnt a lot, and, better still, that they now realise that they have to learn more and are ready to do so. One of the main conceptual difficulties lies within architects and planners, whose whole training, oriented as it is towards the design of new buildings and the planning of new suburbs or new towns on virgin sites, makes them ill-fitted for urban area conservation. Of course, learning about the values inherent in traditional urban patterns, or in traditional materials and forms of construction is perfectly possible, and this has been an essential part of the workshop. The readiness with which the groups embraced and quickly understood the field was impressive. The best evidence of this was the strong defence of conservationist principles which some of the groups produced, unaided, when challenged at their presentations.

If the Bangladeshi students and tutors have learnt a lot, for us tutors from abroad, it has also been a fascinating learning exercise. We have learnt a lot about the problems in Bangladesh, and we have learnt also about running and directing such a workshop. Another time, I would include economists and sociologists, both on the student and on the teaching side. Architectural conservation, as Alfred Van Huyck rightly told us, should not be left to architects alone.

Another time, too, I would make sure that the decision-makers were

present, especially at the presentation and evaluation. I would want to involve the leaders of the local community in whose area a project was situated. Perhaps it would be possible to have a special session in Bengali, so that they could join in the discussion and criticism. It seems to me to be essential to involve the local community, for this is one way of building architectural pride and environmental appreciation in a community. It is part of that much-needed process of public education which both Alfred Van Huyck and Professor Mohammed Arkoun have addressed.

In this context of education perhaps Professor Lewcock's written text provides the last word: "The lesson of the great monuments of the past, as well as of the past's most humble buildings, is that, through them, ordinary people experience architecture as it relates directly to the environment and to their everyday lives". This is perhaps the real and most fundamental justification for architectural conservation.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

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ILLUSTRATION CREDITS