

RECONCILING THE LIVING LANDSCAPE WITH OUR LIVING CULTURE¹

Abstract:

Conservation townscape ideas and understandings move with generations and innovations (Fallow well et.al, 2010). As new generations respond to an electronic and globalised world, daily life and public policy seem to respond to events, often leaving the settings to take care of themselves. Often the only environmental response is to ensure basic facilities, or to enhance for the benefit of an essentially tourist market. The historic context of many decisions is having a hard time. One is not to compliment oneself on a job well done, nor does society often understand what one is doing. It is seen as a desirable commodity for those who can afford it, a significant factor in Western planning perhaps, but modest when faced with community protest for basic facilities. It is somewhat of a luxury, and it is treated as such.

Culturally and politically are relies on the shared meanings and understandings behind current public life, and therefore on the landscape, both the green landscape and built settings provide a mental context for one's actions. So when London in mentioned a particular image of London comes to mind. That image might be a complex overlay of television images, personal visits, narrations from relatives, or political events. They all come together and everyone has a different image. The next decision about London, will be based on a combination of those images.

The big question remains as to how, and to what degree, should these contexts be conserved, maintained and promoted in contemporary cultural life? The argument in this paper reviews around the fact that these past remnants are not just for the package holiday visitor, but their presentation serves as an essential, visible text to remind citizens of the origin of their current beliefs and aspirations. They are markers of where one has been.

Urban squares, buildings, and routes, and the arrangement of rural land provide the textbook for what is to be retained, retrieved or rejected in the future, they are part of personal encyclopedias. They are often more eloquent and universal in their language than the modern polemic, and ways must be found for re-incorporating them into the thought process of a contemporary population. It is 'thinking differently' by the current generations, as well as the generations that are to follow, that is both interesting as well as very disturbing. Electronic media should be used to learn about place, but it also means that a lot of older ideas need to be re-evaluated with a big task at hand for teachers. The challenge for those who choose to conserve and understand such places is how to integrate them with the current ways of knowing.

(Key words: Heritage, Urban meanings, culture, landscape).

¹ Prof. Emeritus Brian Goodey (Oxford Brookes University, UK)

This paper was presented by Prof. Brian Goodey as the keynote speech in the 6th seminar of Urban and Regional Planning, organized by Department of Architecture and Planning, NED University of Engineering and Technology in 2011.