

Session Track: Sustainable Heritage Conservation
Session Code: CS05a

Paper: Collaborative Conservation: Nanda Devi Biosphere in the Indian Himalayas

Presented by

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Speaker(s) Biography

Manish Chalana is a faculty member in Urban Design and Planning at the University of Washington in Seattle, where he teaches courses in the interdisciplinary Preservation Planning Certificate program. He has a masters in Architectural Conservation from the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi and a Ph.D. in Design and Planning with a focus on larger scale cultural resource management from the University of Colorado. His research interests include international planning and preservation, focusing on issues of cultural sustainability in an era of rapid globalization. Dr. Chalana s professional experience includes preservation projects in India and the United States. He has presented at numerous conferences on heritage preservation, including meetings of the National Forum on Historic Preservation Practice, the International Conference of National Trusts, the American Association of Geographers, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, among others. Recently he was invited by the U.S. State Department to undertake a four-city speaker program on heritage conservation and globalization in India. Dr. Chalana has authored journal articles and a book chapter on preservation theory and practice.

Abstract

The region of the Johar Valley is located in the buffer zone of the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve (NDBR), a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The NDBR contains two national parks (Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers) surrounded by a buffer area containing twenty villages, including some transhumance villages. The valley is inhabited by the indigenous Johari peoples whose livelihood depends largely on herding, subsistence farming and use of forests for biomass extraction. More recently, tourism has emerged as a powerful new force, which promises to bring economic benefits to the communities, but at the same time threatens to erode the cultural and ecological patterns that make the region unique. While much of the attention given to the biosphere focuses on preserving the biodiversity in the core area (the two parks), the humanized landscapes of the buffer zones remain under-appreciated. These landscapes face conflicts and threats made possible by the fact that the NDBR is designated as a natural world heritage site rather than as a mixed (natural and cultural) one. As a result, the buffer zone has seen growing conflict between the Joharis and the newly appointed stewards of the land the biosphere managers over issues of land uses and resource management. The rigid preservation position taken by the recent biosphere approach is in sharp contrast with the centuries old working landscape position of the Joharis. For the low caste Joharis especially, the biosphere is emblematic of a hegemonic practice of place shaped by class, caste and political forces that has alienated them from any meaningful participatory democracy. This is particularly evident in the recent promotion of ecotourism in the buffer areas by the state to boost the local economy in which these populations have been struggling to participate, but with limited success.

Johar Valley as a place lies at the heart of the discourses surrounding the creation of the NDBS and the ensuing conflicts. This place offers an excellent laboratory to test the collaborative conservation framework that has been used since the 1980s, primarily in the western United States. This interdisciplinary model uses a cooperative, ecosystem-focused approach to issues of land and resource management without separating the natural and the humanized landscapes. Combining this framework with data from fieldwork, including site reconnaissance and open interviews with community members and other stakeholders, this work demonstrates an alternative approach to heritage preservation at the regional scale, based on principles of sustainability and environmental democracy.⁷

Session Track: Sustainable Heritage Conservation
Session Code: CS05b

Paper: Oasis Architecture and Ecology: Developing a Sustainable Conservation Plan for a Tunisian Cultural Landscape

Presented by

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Speaker(s) Biography

Leslie Friedman is an architectural conservator specializing in the conservation of archaeological sites. She is trained in archaeology and buildings and materials conservation. After receiving her MSc in Historic Preservation from the University of Pennsylvania in 2006, she spent 2006-2007 as a Graduate Intern at the Getty Conservation Institute working on training programs in archaeological site conservation. She has worked on a variety of conservation projects in India, Puerto Rico, Tunisia, and California, and is currently conserving archaeological sites at Bandelier, New Mexico with the National Park Service and Mesa Verde, Colorado with the University of Pennsylvania's Architectural Conservation Laboratory.

Benjamin Marcus joined Page and Turnbull in 2007 as an Architectural Conservator. Previously, he was a Graduate Intern at the Getty Conservation Institute, where he conducted research and conservation field work on Roman and Mayan archaeological sites. He received his MSc in Historic Preservation from Columbia University in 2006. He has also worked as a sculptor carving architectural stonework for historic buildings, and as a conservator restoring public bronze sculpture and gilt objects. Ben studied stone carving and conservation at the Istituto Statale d Arte di Porta Romana in Florence, Italy, and has worked on a variety of conservation and historic preservation projects in the United States, Italy, Tunisia, Israel and Turkey.

Abstract

This paper examines the conservation issues of four un-occupied, historic earthen villages and their associated date palmeries within the Chott el-Jerid region of southern Tunisia: Chebika, Tamerza, Mides, and Kebili. While past conservation or architectural studies of this area have tended to focus on buildings alone, this paper looks at the conservation of oasis architecture and ecosystems as a whole, viewing the assemblage and relationship between villages as a cultural landscape. Offering shelter, nutrition and economy, date palms are a crucial aspect of this area's cultural heritage and built environment. The architecture of these villages responds directly to the particular desert/oasis ecosystem through building form and materials; the builders utilized earth, local stone and palm wood to construct densely packed, multi-story buildings that functioned as shelter, defense, and storage for livestock and crops.

The Chott el-Jerid region of southern Tunisia rooted in both Saharan North Africa and the Mediterranean contains a complex mix of historic vernacular architecture displaying influences of Berber, Arab, Roman and French colonial culture. Located between the Algerian border and the Sahara desert, the Chott el-Jerid region was part of the Roman Tripolitania line, a military zone constructed to defend the Roman provinces against Saharan tribes. This area, consisting of a mountainous desert landscape dotted with palm oases, is home to ethnic Berbers and contains numerous historic earthen villages situated near or within palm groves. Despite abandonment, some religious structures of the old towns are still in use and the associated palmeries continue to be cultivated.

The authors assess the conservation issues facing these important sites and propose a framework for their stabilization and management, working towards a sustainable conservation program for this unique, and largely ignored, cultural landscape in southern Tunisia. This framework encompasses key, short-term conservation

measures, such as emergency stabilization, documentation and selective conservation, as well as longer term conservation strategies that include site management, maintenance and interpretation. To truly be sustainable, any conservation program for this area requires an interdisciplinary approach and must take into account the economic realities of the region, including limited resources, increasing tourism, and lack of trained local conservators. Also vital to a sustainable approach, a cultural landscape perspective encompasses not only historic structures, but also incorporates the associated palmeries, oasis ecosystem, and historic transportation routes that connect the area.

These sites are rapidly deteriorating, threatened by tourism, material decay, and neglect. Visitation to southern Tunisia, and even to remote Berber sites, has been increasing. A record number of 6.5 million tourists visited Tunisia in 2006. Despite being a major focus of tourism in this area, historic Berber sites remain largely unmanaged from a conservation viewpoint. Tourism, often in the form of tour groups arranged by foreign operators, is relatively uncontrolled and potentially very destructive. Additionally, Tunisia, as opposed to other North African countries, is particularly Arabicized and westernized only 1% of Tunisia's population is Berber speaking; thus these sites are an invaluable imprint of Berber life in Tunisia. This study comes at a crucial time and offers a much needed outline of conservation priorities for Berber sites and landscapes in the Chott el-Jerid region.

This paper analyzes the conservation needs of this cultural landscape in the Chott el-Jerid and, in so doing, summarizes potential measures to mitigate further deterioration of these significant places. By looking at these sites and the oasis ecosystem as a whole, and balancing the natural and cultural priorities, a more sustainable conservation program emerges. This paper further underscores the need for conservation practitioners to understand historic sites holistically and recognize the interdependency of cultural and natural resources.⁷

Session Track: Sustainable Heritage Conservation
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Paper: Greening Over-the-Rhine: An Interdisciplinary Investigation into Sustainable Historic Rehabilitation

Presented by

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Speaker(s) Biography

Jeff Tilman is an associate professor of architecture at the University of Cincinnati. He holds a Ph.D from the University of Virginia in architectural history and a B.Arch from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo; he holds his architectural registration in the state of California. He writes on the history of American architecture between the Civil War and World War II, and is particularly interested in the French-American architectural exchange. His monograph on Arthur Brown, Jr., details the life of the prolific San Francisco-based classical architect. Tilman leads the certificate program in historic preservation at Cincinnati, and teaches preservation, history and studio courses in the School of Architecture and Interior Design.

Virginia Russell is an associate professor of architecture at the University of Cincinnati. She holds a Master of Landscape Architecture from the Ohio State University and a BLA from the University of Kentucky. Ms. Russell writes on the history of American landscape architecture. As a registered landscape architect, Professor Russell represents her profession in the curriculum of SAID. She is active in the national, state and local American Society of Landscape Architects, having served in several state officer positions and as national Vice President. She is a Fellow in the ASLA, and currently serves as national chair of the Landscape Architects Registration Examination Preparation Committee and the ASLA Archives Committee. As of October 2004, she is an accredited LEED Professional.

Abstract

Cincinnati shares many of the challenges that face the post-industrial Midwest. Its economy has shifted from a manufacturing base to an administrative and service-sector focus, and thousands of its residents have been caught in the transition. At the heart of the residential core of the city lies Over-the-Rhine, the city's largest historic district, and perhaps paradoxically, also the site of the city's greatest concentration of poverty. While Over-the-Rhine boasts one of the United States' largest collections of Italianate architecture and is one of the nation's largest urban historic districts, the future of this community as a viable living neighborhood is in some doubt. Due to rapid population decline and massive disinvestment, over 500 structures, nearly all historic, now stand empty. It is for this reason that Over-the-Rhine was named to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Eleven Most Endangered List in 2006. Today Over-the-Rhine is highly contested space tensions among the remaining Appalachian community, the African-American majority, arts organizations, social-service providers, preservation groups and the city's business interests have until recently resulted in a paralysis of efforts to redevelop the neighborhood.

The City of Cincinnati has made a significant commitment to both the redevelopment of Over-the-Rhine and to sustainable building. The City is committed to reducing its energy consumption and carbon footprint while maintaining its historic heritage. For example, the city offers a tax exemption for construction that meets the United States Green Building Council's LEED rating, and this incentive has been employed by many developers now working in the city.

Redevelopment agencies and citizens groups in Over-the-Rhine have become concerned with sustainable community and historic resource issues, and they have teamed up to study how Over-the-Rhine can become the greenest historic district in the United States. The Over-the-Rhine Foundation, a not-for-profit advocacy group, is leading this effort in partnership with the University of Cincinnati. Attacking the problem with an interdisciplinary team of experts of architects, landscape architects, urban planners, real estate developers, and environmental

engineers (the Integrated Design Team), the Foundation is identifying the barriers to and possibilities of a sustainable rehabilitation of Over-the-Rhine. An intensive all-day colloquium has brought to light a myriad of structural and customary impediments to sustainable design within the context of Over-the-Rhine. Some of these impediments cannot be readily changed, such as the paltry number of points awarded an adaptive-reuse project under the LEED system, while some barriers have been breached with increased study and creative adaptation of existing technologies. Having set the parameters of the study, the Foundation has sponsored design studios at the University of Cincinnati at both the graduate and undergraduate level to explore the design possibilities of historic sustainable design. Four buildings have been used as representative case studies that have allowed students the opportunity to test new methodologies for addressing the greening of historic structures. They have explored conflicts between the Secretary of Interior Standards for Historic Rehabilitation and LEED certification; demonstrated the feasibility of leveraging historic preservation tax credits, New Market Tax Credits and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit in order to deliver green design to the residents of subsidized housing; and explored design and technological solutions that achieve both historic and sustainable goals. The Integrated Design Team then joined with the students to apply real-world costs, the LEED point system, historic-district guideline criteria and the Secretary of Interior Standards to the design solutions to evaluate how well each solution will work. The results from these investigations are being compiled into a written report and a checklist of considerations and strategies to be shared with jurisdictions throughout Ohio and the Midwest.⁷