

CULTURAL HERITAGE – URBAN DYNAMICS ZANZIBAR, BAGAMOYO, DAR ES SALAAM

CPD held on 4th November at the Goethe Institute.

Report written by: Comfort Badaru,
Managing editor, ANZA magazine
Assistant member AAT (DARCH!)

Moderator: Sauda Simba

Presenters: Uli Malisius, German expert on cultural heritage
Issa Makarani, Director General of Stone Town Conservation and Development authority
Simon Odunga, Head of Conservation Unit of Antiquities

PART 1 (Covered by Uli Malisius.)

The challenge of urban heritage in a changing society

What is the basis for regulations about conservation on the international scene? Zanzibar has had its shares of journey down the conservation trip. It is one of the unique conservation areas because of its natural harbor and of course its history. In 2000, Stone Town was officially inscribed in the World Heritage list of UNESCO. Many parts of stone town such as Harumizi had periods when there were many significant buildings that collapsed over a short time, of which very few have been restored.

Beyond just buildings there is also, art and crafts which are part of heritage. Areas such as Gizenga are home to many of the crafts and wood carvers of Zanzibar. Most of this talent has been re-ignited since it was noticed that the talents still existed and only needed an uplift. Recently, the Maasai have started flooding Stone Town with their own crafts and services because of Zanzibar's boom in the economy. These masaa's are taking over most of the craft scene. The question is, *"Is this a problem or not?"*

When you look at general urban plan of Zanzibar, we see the existence of the narrow streets. This is believed to encourage community interactions and togetherness. There are a number of new buildings coming up in Zanzibar which has led to the general variation in buildings in the area. Some of these new buildings are copying the old style of construction and look. Another question is, *"Are these good or bad?"*

On a good note however, some of the conserved buildings have been restored based on the regulations from UNESCO. The Washington Charter gives recommendations and aspects that can be incorporated in conservation context of any historical town or city. These are policies that should be understood and applied by architects and everyone in the planning field. However, in the event that more buildings were at the risk of collapsing, there is the chance for owners to rebuild a replica. Case studies the building along the harbour in Zanzibar.

Project Hyatt Hotel(Mambo msinga building)

This was formerly a site where fishermen used to repair their boats and even before that it was owned by the Omani government who failed to maintain the area. This site or historical

area is popularly known as the Mambo Msinga – a special building that reflects the Arab existence in Zanzibar. The new development, however, is an unavoidable condition.

Question: “Are plans, regulations and laws strong enough, and well-controlled in the conservation process?”

BAGAMOYO

Bagamoyo is collapsing, collapsing, collapsing. The Antiquities has made several attempts to protect the massive historical sites in the town including sending in a tentative list of areas and buildings to be conserved, for UNESCO to approve. UNESCO looked through the list and sent back their comments which included more detailed documentation. Up till date, the Government has not presented the documents and as such no follow up has been made. Such an act has caused great implication on Bagamoyo and Tanzania as a whole as it puts at risk areas such as the Slave Route, which is a vital part of East Africa’s history.

Nevertheless Antiquities has provided Bagamoyo rules and regulations aimed at conservation of Bagamoyo town there are still buildings that are going against the heritage regulations. , there are success stories in Bagamoyo which show a little hope for conservation of Bagamoyo, some of which include the Old Post Office, the old Arab Tea House (which is now offices for the district council). This refurbishment was done in collaboration with the Zanzibar building brigade through foreign funding. This was a good sign of collaboration among the historical towns.

Question: Why must conservation of towns in Tanzania always depend on foreign aid? Can the government not fund it? Does it not see the value in it?

DAR ES SALAAM

Dar es salaam city is a city that is conflicting with itself. The rate of old versus new and the rate of colopasing/demolition of historical buildings in Dar es salaam are alarming. Soon the authenticity of Dar es salaam will be lost. This is at the hands of not only individuals but governing organs. The proposal in 2009 by TPA to have an infill done in the new port – a proposal that was a bad idea for supposed land development. Such a project would be killing the waterfront of Dar es Salaam and ultimately destroying what Dar es Salaam really is. Another sad case for Dar es salaam is the Hosco building along Samora Avenue. This is one building that has been neglected, and yet it is at a very prime location. If it were to be revived it would be a jewel as a beautiful corner building right in front of the public park. However, just like all the other historical towns and cities, Dar es salaam has a outstanding success stories such as The TRA building along samora avenue by Arch. Anthony Almeida and the Ocean Road Hospital.

PART 2 (covered by Issa Makarani)

Mambo Msiga Project

The project started with project preparation drawings in 2010 without the notification of the Stone Town conservation and development authority STCDA. UNESCO was alarmed

through media and sent an immediate enquiry to STCDA for an explanation. The STCDA sent a letter to the developer and eventually received the drawings, also in 2010. After reviewing the drawings, STCA rejected them and the developer had to re-submit. After 7 re-submissions over a lengthy time period, the drawings were still found to be not compatible with the heritage requirements. The government therefore tasked itself to find an appropriate developer – a process that took two decades. They finally got the developer; submitted their documents to STCDA, who passed on the drawings to UNESCO. UNESCO immediately responded with comments, and asked the Advisory Mission to conduct an HIA. The drawings were revised and re-submitted to UNESCO however this time round, did not respond until a year later. The project started three years after submission to UNESCO. The archeological drawings were submitted to UNESCO through STCDA. This was an eye opener to STCDA, in that sometimes the big organizations also at times lead to the delay in the process of conservation and heritage matters.

Is poor communication among the organisations also a cause of failure to heritage and conservation projects?

Question: What are some of the inner resistances? Is it always the government's fault?

PART 3 (Covered by Simon Odunga)

Heritage Conservation in Bagamoyo and Dar es Salaam

Dar es Salaam has a designated conservation area and moreover it also has individual buildings and areas that are set apart and said to be conserved. Ilala municipality tasked itself to do this many years ago and produced the tentative list of buildings to conserve. Unfortunately, the Antiquities Department then did not provide the proper guidelines and basis for this list. This list was entirely based on guidelines picked out of a few government policies.

The issue of demolition and argument over the list started when the individual organs were arguing over who was of higher authority. Basically, most of the issues arise via the fact that these organs such as Ilala Municipality, the Antiquities Department, and the government do not work together. It was therefore difficult to argue the cases of demolition as there were no proper guidelines that could back up the list.

It is also important to note that most of these building are privately-owned or NHC-owned. The government or the Antiquities Department owns few of these buildings. Some religious institutions are also keen on protecting the old buildings. It therefore falls to the good faith of the owners to conserve these building. Eventually in 2006 Antiquities managed to make a list based on the recommendations and guidelines for conservation and presented it to the Ministry of Natural Resources and tourism. It was signed for 110 buildings to be preserved. However, this only lasted for a short time as the government could not pass the list claiming that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism should not have signed it without consulting the Ministry of Lands.

There is a need for deconstruction of the myth against conservation and accepting the challenge of conserving as part of development. There should be a change of the mind-set and see heritage as a sign of development and not obstacle to development. We can see that from Zanzibar as a success story – which is now listed as a World Monument Site and it also has one designated authority to look after conservation. Unfortunately for Dar es Salaam and

the mainland, Antiquities is merely a department and division. The consequences of that is that the Heritage properties are in unsatisfactory condition.

DISCUSSION

Panelists

Tamim Amijee.

Daniel Matondo., Representing the Architects Association of Tanzania.

Mwaalim A Mwaalim. Planning Commissioner of Zanzibar.

Dr Mohammed Juma, Zanzibar

Tamim Amijee.

There are three key aspects that need to be addressed to deal with conservation:

- i) Political will: there needs to be an open and clear debate about what we should and should not do, and come to common decision, as a country, and start to develop the policies and laws.
- ii) There should also be a dedicated Ministry for the heritage portfolio, with authority to maintain this and a civil society movement.
- iii) There should be an increase in public awareness from all ages and generations

Daniel Matondo.

There is a big concern on the role of architects in heritage conservation. Architects need to review and document what was, so as to initiate the concepts for design. Architectural conservation is a two-way street. Clients mostly have no idea and the architects have to guide them.

Mwaalim A Mwaalim.

To know the value of these cities, we need to define these cities are. When planners, architects or designers are working on cities, they ought to define the people, lifestyle and character of the city, beyond just the buildings. Defining the city helps you define the soul of the city – hence the value of what is in the city. Modernization comes from tradition: you can not have city without a historical centre as such tourism and heritage development should always be considered in the planning process.

Dr Mohammed Juma.

Once values are defined, communities will be understood. The issue is that conservation is attached to just the physical buildings and forgetting the value of what the soul purpose of the building is. The context of heritage needs to change from the protection of individual building to the whole city. To address this issue of conservation, the public requires a change of mindset from protection to promotion and this include debates about the city, the landscape, the people and the lifestyles.

PLENARY

Edgar, 4th year student Ardhi.

Question: How is it wrong that one decides to add a historical element to new building for purposes of aesthetics? Is it not the case of trend versus the outlook of existence?

Response (Uli): Conservation is based on the preservation of the authenticity of items. If you intend to do something new, let it be fully new so as to avoid confusing the public. It is also based on the guidelines and regulations of heritage.

Response Sylvia (MSc student Archi University): Architecture is not about trend. It is something that is defined and designed to last for years and not just for a moment. Trends are there just for a short time.

Architect Mwaleka (Vice president AAT)

QN: What do you envisage conservation rules today and in fifty years to come? Do you think these conservation rules will last for that long? At the end of the day, what are you doing as Antiquities Department, to protect the city?

Sylvia (MSc student Archi University):

QN: What more did Antiquities do beyond just having the plan?

Mwalimu (response to AAT Vice President Mwaleka). The regulations will continue to remain as is, until such a time that it is a last solution to go against them.

Simon Odunga (Response to AAT vice-president): Regarding the restriction to building conservation rules, heritage is what you create today and preserve for the future. As far as the restriction is concerned, some are acceptable and are simply a means of how well one can work within the rules. Most cities agree, as a community, what should be kept and what shouldn't.

Antiquities Dept has made an inventory of the buildings and provided a platform for discussion and debate. We are marking and buffering Pangani conservation area. Bagamoyo has also got a new conservation area that is designated. We are having discussions and debates with building owners, beginning with the NHC.

We (Antiquities) are not toothless, but merely following the law, in the face of conservation resistance.

QN: Iman (Daily News): Don't you think that art should be included in the Primary curriculum or the education system as a whole instead of preaching to the converted? I think there is a need to include knowledge of art among the younger generation so that this can filter on in the later generations.

Tamim (response to Iman). Schools should be engaged in cultural heritage. However, the topic of heritage needs to be broadened to be beyond just buildings. It includes crafts as well as well as art. And it still comes down to political will and the role of Antiquities. Antiquities has moved from education and national identity to technical parts and policies.

Edgar student(response to Iman). I think we should incorporate the marble theory, whereby if you threw marbles on a table it is best to capture all of them by putting one boundary, so they all stay within. That means that it is important to start with the young ones. However, at the same time, we should come up with means that will provide awareness to all the other ages.

QN: Kitosi Paul (Msc Student, Ardhi). Don't you think there is a need to understand architecture versus power? How far have you gone to present history, not as the past, but as the history of the people today?

Responses (Juma). The converted forget that there is a new generation, but we need to create the debate and bring the discussion of culture, sustainability and resilience and help the general public and stakeholders to understand what they need as a community and as a nation.

Response (Odunga). AAT is having a discussion with Ardhi to start a course for architects in conservation.

Dr Lekule (Lecturer Ardhi UNiversity). Heritage is an important element in the city. But we need to ask ourselves what really constitutes the urban heritage fabric. It is the intangibles, the details of the city – and that is what makes the city. The transformation of policies. There are forces working against the process of conservation. But we need to work on bringing all the resistance to one table. Policies on construction have been diluted because they state 15 storeys and above with plot ratios of 2 – which is impossible. However, everyone merely pays attention to the 15 storeys and above part.

CONCLUSION

Political will and our funds need to go into the process of conservation. To work with investors – however, those who come with values. We should encourage conservation from a promotion aspects instead of only a protection aspect. Heritage is a public good, essential for preservation of national identity, views and values as it is the soul of any nation.