Cultural Heritage and Rapid Urbanisation in India

2-4th March 2015, Delhi

Executive Summary

This report reflects on the findings from a workshop held in Delhi in March 2015 which examined the relationship between cultural heritage and rapid urbanisation in India. The workshop was delivered as part of the Newton Fund[1] and organised by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR), with support from RCUK India and the British Library. It convened academic experts from the arts and humanities from both the UK and India to explore an area of emerging importance with a view to future collaboration and enhanced inter-disciplinary engagement. Over the two days the scholars considered five main themes: 1. Urbanisation and History; 2. Public Spaces and Urban Planning; 3. Digitisation of Heritage and Urban Processes; 4. Architectural History and the Conservation of Built Heritage and 5. Urbanisation and Intangible Heritage.

Key areas that emerged from the discussions included: how to engage with contested heritages; how we can consider the future of heritage as well as its history and contemporary context; the extent to which comparative studies analysing one or more cities within India and further afield may enable a deeper understanding of heritage management; the relationship between intangible and tangible heritage and the need to examine more closely the relationship between public space and heritage. A number of specific research questions, covering issues such as how changing historical geographies and patterns of land ownership affect understandings of heritage; the role of linguistic and cultural transformation arising from urbanisation in shaping public heritage; and whether the value of cultural heritage can be quantified, were also produced.

The ideas stimulated by the discussions in the workshop would benefit from further development of the ideas in two main ways. Firstly, further forums in which these

[1] The Newton Fund is a new initiative intended to strengthen research and innovation partnerships between the UK and emerging knowledge economies. Launched in April 2014, it will deliver £375 million of funding over the course of five years.

ideas can be discussed would enable the ideas to develop into viable research projects. Secondly, for those projects in which the ideas are already at an advanced stage pilot projects would allow scholars from the UK and India to work together to develop outputs and form longer-term collaborative projects that build on the relationships established in Delhi. Options for further funding are provided in Annex 1.

Context and Workshop Focus

The tension between rapid urbanisation and cultural heritage is acute in India. The country's urban population has doubled from 100 million to 200 million in the twenty years between 1991 and 2011. This trajectory is envisaged to continue as 50 percent of India's population is expected to live in cities by 2041. Internationally, debates surrounding the value of cultural heritage in an urban context have recently intensified as cities experience both the process and consequences of urban development. Urban change, whether through rapid urbanisation or urban redevelopment initiatives, has historically posed real challenges and opportunities for cultural heritage. Indeed, within many countries, heritage legislation has been developed as a result of a fear that urban change will erase the history of places. This is exemplified by the recent move towards mainstreaming heritage protection internationally within an approach entitled 'Historic Urban Landscapes' in which cultural heritage is seen as an integral component of urban management and development (Bandarin and van Oers, 2014). There is thus an emerging belief within international heritage circles that the existing pressures on cultural heritage need to be re-examined in the light of a holistic vision of urban development. Given the historical evolution and contemporary condition of Indian cities this workshop, which brought together a range of Arts and Humanities scholars from the UK and India, was thus a timely contribution to the analysis of a complex relationship between cultural heritage and rapid urbanisation.

Structure of the Workshop

The workshop opened with a discussion of the key aims and objectives as seen by Research Councils UK, India; the Indian Council for Historical Research; and the Arts and Humanities Research Council. This was then followed by two overarching papers by the UK Academic Lead, Dr Rebecca Madgin and the Indian Academic Lead, Professor Narayani Gupta, both of which explored the relationship between cultural heritage and urbanisation in an international context but primarily focused on the UK and India.

Key points to emerge from these two papers were the need to:

1. Consider the historical development of cities in the context of contemporary urban pressures.

2. Manage the relationship between economic gain through tourism and socio-economic diversification with the needs of the existing and projected populations within the cities.

Whilst the UK conservation movement could be seen as a reaction to the forces of urbanisation in Western Europe during the nineteenth century, an awareness of the value of the built heritage as well as of art traditions began in India during the 1920s, at the same time as the rate of urbanisation increased markedly. As such the need for a historical perspective on the current context of rapid urbanisation was stressed by both speakers. Furthermore, the need to place cultural heritage within the context of time and place was also stressed. Whilst there are similarities between the two countries there is also a need to concentrate on the differing contexts of time and place both between countries as well as between cities within the same countries. Moreover, the circulation of ideas between town and country has historically informed conservation and seeing heritage as fluid, rather than static, is key to understanding how it can survive. Another common issue was the competing demands of attracting people to cities through tourism and/or through a desire for socio-economic diversification and the needs of an existing population whose conception of heritage and ways of managing their past was often at odds with top-down imposed urban development strategies. Seeing heritage as an integral part of urban development, in line both historically with Patrick Geddes and the recent turn towards 'Historic Urban Landscapes', in which the demographic, environmental and topographic contexts are respected was seen as vital for managing the future of cultural heritage.

The rest of the workshop was structured in such a way as to enable intensive discussion and exploration of the key issues firstly through a well-designed speed networking session and then through a series of facilitated breakout sessions structured around five key areas:

1. Urbanisation and History
2. Public Spaces and Urban Planning
3. Digitisation of Heritage and Urban Processes
4. Architectural History and the Conservation of Built Heritage
5. Urbanisation and Intangible Heritage

The facilitated sessions provoked lively discussion and resulted in each table reporting on the key points from their discussions. The richness of this discussion is hard to capture in a short report and often ideas were developed from one session to another. As such the brief summary reflects on key ideas that emerged from the individual sessions and then places these in a synthetic overview of emerging research areas in the final section of the report.

1. Urbanisation and History

This session, introduced by Professor William Gould and Professor AGK Menon, focused on a historical understanding of how cities have changed and the kinds of cultural heritage that are left as a legacy of this development. This session moved away from seeing historical layers in isolation to discuss the fluidity of the past within the process of rapid urbanisation. For example, rather than see the pace and scale of urbanisation as destructive, the discussion turned to consider the complexity of temporal and spatial layers of cultural heritage resulting from the historical and contemporary fusion of incoming migrants with existing populations. Alongside this was the belief that rather than 'freeze' heritage to particular time periods, or genres, research could be carried out into, for example, how incoming migrants have brought and continue to bring with them their own intangible heritages and then shape the physical and mental urban landscapes, in conjunction with existing populations. Alongside this was a consideration of which aspects of the past were denied or emphasised, by whom and for what purposes. In these ways notions of what is 'authentic' and therefore of 'historic interest' challenge the existing canons of knowledge held by a privileged few and recognise the inherent dynamism of the creation and maintenance of cultural heritage. History therefore does not just produce tangible heritage but through an examination of the relationships that have historically developed within urban space, a critical dialogue can open up between what forms of cultural heritage are created, negotiated and valued by existing, incoming and transient urban populations.

2. Public Spaces and Urban Planning

This session, introduced by Dr Suzanne Speak and Dr Partho Datta, considered the relationship of formal and informal public spaces to urban planning. Contained within this was an examination of what constituted 'public' space as opposed to 'private' and 'shared' spaces. One conclusion was that 'public space is where you can talk to

strangers' and this framed a broader discussion of who had access to public spaces, attachments to permanent and transient spaces as well as a question of whether public space, in the context of intangible heritage, had to be a physical urban space. The reportage brought out interesting notions of how to valorise public space both in the context of understanding the lived experiences of the users of these spaces but also in the context of how they look and how they are perceived by those who plan these spaces. Several dichotomies based on the formal instruments of planning and the organic nature of informal urban spaces were used to frame thinking such as 'interaction' versus 'delimitation' and 'indigenous generation of place' versus 'designed public spaces' as well as 'aesthetic' versus 'kinetic'. Concurrent throughout each of the discussion points was a call to improve the methodologies that can be used to interrogate how people use, value and experience public spaces. Drawing on a range of arts and humanities methods such as photography, story-telling, oral histories, ethnographies, community journalism and mapping could further the examination of the diurnal nature of public spaces and the ways in which a deeper understanding of the relationship between tangible and intangible cultural heritage could be obtained through a focus on public spaces.

3. Digitisation of Heritage and Urban Processes

The digitisation session was led by presentations from Catherine Eagleton and Nora McGregor from the British Library and Dr Ratish Nanda from the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and contained case studies by Dr M. Satish Kumar and Professor David Frohlich on their digitisation projects. Crucially this session demonstrated not just the possibilities for digitising further materials and the range of existing materials but also the ways in which digitisation can be an active component of preserving tangible and intangible heritage. This was demonstrated through the rescue and preservation of documentary and visual records as well as through the use of these kinds of materials to help with the conservation of built heritage in India. The concept of 'inclusive design' added a further methodological innovation to the session through the production of interactive apps that combine text, sound and visuals in order to connect people to their past, present and future. The role of archives, and turning them from hidden resources into active cultural assets which then give a future for the past by bringing alive the heritage of cities, was demonstrated throughout the session.

4. Architectural History and the Conservation of Built Heritage

This session, introduced by Dr Aylin Orbasli and Professor Mohammad Shaheer, considered the role of the built environment in urban development strategies. Discussions focused on scale and also brought the economic dimension of cultural heritage much more to the forefront than in previous sessions. There was a call to consider the city and regional contexts of rapid urbanisation and to research smaller urban settlements and those at the edges of larger cities. Linked to this was also a desire to situate cultural heritage within its ecological and environmental contexts and to recognise the importance of craft and vernacular heritage and the ways this worked with geological formations and topographical developments. This issue of scale was also discussed in relation to the political dimension of heritage in terms of whose memories are preserved and for what reasons and, as such, the discussion then turned to an economic agenda including land values and tourism. Questions were asked about the 'authorised' and selective stories that resulted in a unique selling point which was then used to attract tourists and often also to secure World Heritage status as well as the consequences of 'de-listing' some buildings as a result of rising land values in some Indian cities. Finally, there was a discussion of 'design heritages' and in particular how research into the original design features of buildings and urban spaces can inform a more sympathetic adaptive re-use of regeneration of historic environments. This session therefore considered the dialectic between past, present and future and how the management of the built environment profoundly influences the type of future for the urban past.

5. Urbanisation and Intangible Heritage

This session, introduced by Dr Daniel Rycroft and Dr Surajit Sarkar, focused on the different ways that the city is experienced and asked how the intangible aspects of heritage become intensified in, and through, their relationship with cities. Contained within this was a discussion of the relationship between tangible and intangible heritage. For example a view was put forward that saw intangible heritage as generated by an experience of life but mediated and stimulated by material culture. This was further developed by the belief that the distinction between tangible and intangible was artificial and that further research was needed to analyse the relationship between the two. Within the discussion the issue of 'voices' and 'language' came to the forefront. The city has multiple voices but these are expressed in different languages and the challenge is therefore the extent to which

these experiences should be curated and by whom. Whilst 'collective memory' is well theorised the groups discussed the role of individual memories within this. Linked to this was the role of language in naming practices, for example of streets and buildings, and how lived experiences then become tied to a particular and often collectivised reading of the past promulgated by dominant groups. Finally, a focus on intangible heritage also opens up questions of time and temporality. How, for example, does a cyclical rather than linear view of time inform an understanding of intangible heritage and how does this differ from the conventional periodisation often associated with architecture and built heritage? These questions and the lively discussion thus demonstrated the potential for theoretical and methodological advancement in the domain of the relationship between tangible and intangible heritage.

Examples of Existing Projects

To bring some of the themes to light the workshop heard from three projects:

1. The Southall Story/Southall and Beyond, Professor Jerri Daboo
2. The Indian Temple: Production, Place and Patronage, Professor Adam Hardy
3. My Sweet Home, Ms Samina Mishra

Each of these projects demonstrated the relationship between rigorous academic research, often founded on methodological advancement, and the impact of this for those outside the academic community. These were demonstrated in very different ways and included both tangible and intangible dimensions. This was reflected in the ways that individuals expressed their attachments to place and changed their perception of urban space and their heritage through story-telling; the ways that communities were brought together as a result of an arts-led project in a multi-cultural area and through the use of in-depth research into how temples had been built and reconstructed. The projects discussed in this session therefore brought to life the role that arts and humanities research has for the future of places. Although these projects were concerned with researching cultural heritage in the light of contemporary circumstances they each left an indelible imprint of the future of communities and cultural heritage.

Overall Conclusions and Future Priorities

There were a number of research ideas and key questions that were stimulated over the course of the workshop. These were refined in the final session as participants identified priority research questions / issues for future collaboration under each thematic area as well as an additional category – 'square pegs' – which assimilated points that crossed, or sat outside of, one of the themes. The following questions / issues were identified:

Urbanisation and history:

1. How do changing historical geographies and patterns of land ownership affect understandings of heritage?
2. What is the effect of rapid urbanisation on urban dwellers' (including those in the informal sector) sense of place and relationship to heritage?
3. Issues relating to migration and the city

Public spaces and urban planning:

1. In what ways can the urban planning profession produce/design and nurture the urban heritage public space?
2. In what ways are public spaces heritage spaces?

Digitisation of heritage and urban processes:

1. The theorisation of digital practices
2. New methods in, and approaches to, digitisation
3. The implications of digitisation for research projects focussed on specific areas of heritage
4. Digitization of demographic, topographic, cadastral and environmental data related to cities

Architectural history and the conservation of built heritage

1. Methodologies (context relevant) – looking beyond conservation, adaptive re-use, broadening conservation including social values and participation
2. Innovation in integrating history into conservation, listing various conservation practices including 20th century heritage

Urbanisation and intangible heritage

1. How do the cultural and linguistic transformations that have occurred as a result of migration and urbanisation inform the shape and scope of 'public' heritage in India?
2. How can historians and heritage thinkers work together to capture and represent the multivocal and changing nature of intangible heritage?
3. In making the invisible visible how can we engage the internet (of things)?

'Square Pegs'

1. Cultural resource management and mapping: what is the value of cultural heritage? Can it be quantified and what is the role of professionals in preserving cultural heritage?
2. Are heritage practices concerned with saving sites of consumption rather than production?
3. What are the opportunities for increasing the impact of AHRC funded projects through translation into other EU & non-EU languages?

These questions, and the discussions from which they arose, can be framed more broadly in five categories that traverse the boundaries of the thematic areas and which reflect key issues arising over the full course of the workshop:

1. **Contested heritages:** Many questions were concerned with unpacking the complex layers of history that make up the urban palimpsest. Alongside traditional debates about whose heritage is included and excluded, and by who, were considerations of how strategies could ensure the many pasts embodied in the urban environment could be reflected. For some this was about language and understanding how voices could be heard, for others this related to developing a better understanding of urban history and the management of the historic environment whilst the role of digital technologies was also considered important in allowing previously marginalised voices to be heard.
2. **Comparative Studies:** Key similarities and differences between Indian cities as well as between countries emerged during the discussions. This was brought out sharply with the tension between the need for urban *revitalisation* within the UK and the opposite desire for urban *devitalisation* within some rapidly expanding cities in India. Exploring comparative and transnational

dimensions of cultural heritage would move the debates past similarities and differences and into an understanding of how and why cities have responded in the ways that they have to the pressures on, and opportunities for, heritage as a result of urban change.

3. **Temporality:** Exploring how contemporary issues such as rising land values, sustainability, SMART cities and industrialisation/deindustrialisation are influencing the valorisation and thus management of existing cultural heritage was discussed. Additionally, the extent to which these processes are aiding/inhibiting the emergence of intangible and tangible heritages which may go on to achieve protected status ensures the notion of time and temporality, whether linear or cyclical, is key to understanding heritage and urbanisation.
4. **Co-existence:** of tangible and intangible heritage was discussed both in the context of how the material world shaped intangible heritage but also whether it is necessary or relevant to try to realise intangible heritage through changes to urban spaces.
5. **Liveability:** The distinction between formal and informal spaces and practices ran throughout most of the workshop and there was a real desire to engage with the informal city and to understand the 'use' value of spaces away from conventional definitions of this in economic terms. This link between everyday practices and how these then become valuable elements of intangible/tangible heritage is key to understanding heritage in the broader context of the liveability of urban spaces.

Running throughout each of these key areas was a desire to develop methodological approaches to ask new questions and to re-theorise existing debates in the context of contemporary rapid urbanisation. Alongside thinking about how different technologies could help to access embodied experiences of places there was also a desire to examine how digital sources and digitisation could help to democratise heritage. For the digitally excluded there was also a focus on the power of storytelling to elucidate aspects of social value, memories and the relationship between tangible and intangible heritage.

Next Steps

Overall the workshop brought out a number of different themes and questions which were stimulated by the intensive and focused workshop design which allowed a mixture of academics and practitioners from across India and the UK to engage across key themes. The emerging areas would repay further attention firstly by developing the ideas through extended and more focused conversations and by bringing in other academics and practitioners to work these ideas into viable projects. There is real potential in trying these ideas out through development awards to crystallise new ideas and emerging research partnerships.

Annex 1: Funding Options for Future Research Collaboration

It is intended that the workshop will provide the basis for future research collaboration between academics in the UK and India working in this field. The following AHRC funding schemes are highlighted for this purpose:

Newton Fund

It is anticipated that additional funding will be available through the Newton Fund in 2015-16 to support the development of issues and questions raised at the workshop. It is likely that this will take the form of funding for small, network-style awards that facilitate extended and more developed conversations between wider partners in the UK and India, in order to provide the basis for larger research projects focussed on urbanisation and heritage in India. Delegates will be provided with further information in due course.

Research Networking

The Research Networking scheme is intended to support forums for the discussion and exchange of ideas on a specified thematic area, issue or problem. The intention is to facilitate interactions between researchers and stakeholders through, for example, a short-term series of workshops, seminars, networking activities or other events.

Proposals can be submitted with a full economic cost of up to £30,000 and projects with international collaboration may apply for up to an additional £15,000 to cover the costs of any international participants or activities.

This scheme operates with an open deadline – you are able to submit proposals at any time of year.

Further information: www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funding-Opportunities/Pages/Research-Networking

Research Grants

The Research Grants scheme is intended to support well-defined research projects enabling individual researchers to collaborate with, and bring benefits to, other individuals and organisations through the conduct of research. The scheme has two routes; the standard route is for proposals with a full economic cost between £50,000 and £1,000,000 and duration of up to 60 months. The Early Career route is open to

early career researchers for proposals with a full economic cost between £50,000 and £250,000 and duration of up to 60 months.

There are two ways in which international collaboration can be included in a Research Grant proposal:

- Including an international co-investigator (see below)
- If it is not appropriate or possible for your international collaborator(s) to be included as an international co-investigator you can still involve them in the proposal. Further guidance on other ways to include international collaboration can be found on the international co-investigator page of the AHRC's website.

This scheme operates with an open deadline – you are able to submit proposals at any time of year.

Further information: www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funding-Opportunities/Pages/Research-Grants---Standard-Route

International Co-Investigator

AHRC are piloting a policy allowing co-investigators (Co-I) based at overseas organisations to be included in projects for a number of funding schemes:

- Research Grants (both standard and Early Career routes)
- Research Networking
- Follow on Funding for Impact and Engagement

Proposals still need to be led by a UK principal investigator and the international Co-I needs to have suitable academic experience and be based at a Research Organisation of significant research capacity. Costs for international Co-Is can be up to 30% of the 100% full economic cost of a proposal – salary costs can be included in certain circumstances but estates/indirect/overhead costs cannot.

Further information: www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funding-Opportunities/Pages/International-Co-Investigator

Annex 2: Workshop List of Participants

Title	First Name	Surname	Organisation	Position
UK Participants				
Dr	Rebecca	Madgin	University of Glasgow	Senior Lecturer in Urban Development & Management **(UK workshop lead)**
Dr	Pushpa	Arabindoo	University College London	Lecturer in Geography & Urban Design
Dr	Susan	Ashley	Northumbria University	Senior Lecturer in Cultural Management
Dr	Stuart	Burch	Nottingham Trent University	Senior Lecturer in Museum & Heritage Management
Dr	Angelique	Chettiparamb	University of Reading	Associate Professor, School of Real Estate & Planning
Professor	Jerri	Daboo	University of Exeter	Associate Professor in Performance; Co-Director, Centre for South Asian Studies
Dr	Catherine	Eagleton	British Library	Head of Asian and African Collections
Professor	David	Frohlich	University of Surrey	Director, Digital World Research Centre; Professor of Interaction Design
Professor	William	Gould	University of Leeds	Professor of Indian History
Professor	Adam	Hardy	Cardiff University	Professor of Asian Architecture
Dr	Iain	Jackson	University of Liverpool	Senior Lecturer, School of Architecture
Dr	Helle	Jorgensen	University of Birmingham	Lecturer in Cultural Heritage Studies
Dr	M. Satish	Kumar	Queen's University Belfast	Senior Lecturer in Human Geography
Professor	Christoph	Lueder	Kingston University	Associate Professor, Architecture & Urbanism
Dr	Ian	Magedera	University of Liverpool	Lecturer in French
Ms	Nora	McGregor	British Library	Digital Curator
Dr	James	Moore	University of Leicester	Lecturer, Modern History and Heritage
Dr	Aylin	Orbasli	Oxford Brookes University	Reader in Architectural Regeneration
Dr	Daniel	Rycroft	University of East Anglia	Senior Lecturer, Art History & World Art Studies
Professor	Flora	Samuel	University of Sheffield	Professor of Architecture
Dr	Suzanne	Speak	Newcastle University	Senior Lecturer in International Spatial Planning
Dr	Deborah	Sutton	Lancaster University	Senior Lecturer, Department of History

Title	First Name	Surname	Organisation	Position
Dr	Shabnum	Tejani	SOAS	Senior Lecturer in the History of Modern South Asia
Dr	Tamara	West	University of Birmingham	Human Geography
Mr	Adam	Walker	AHRC	Head, International
Mrs	Gemma	Evans	AHRC	Programmes Coordinator
Mr	Dylan	Law	AHRC	Strategy and Development Manager
Dr	Nafees	Meah	RCUK India	Director
Ms	Geeny George	Shaju	RCUK India	Communications Manager
Indian Participants				
Professor	Narayani	Gupta	Member of the Council, ICHR	Retired Professor, Department of History & Culture, Jamia Millia Islamia University **(India workshop lead)**
Dr	Prabhu	Prasad Mohapatra	University of Delhi	Associate Professor
Dr	Syed Ali Nadeem	Rezavi	Aligarh Muslim University	Associate Professor
Dr	Partho	Datta	ZAKIR HUSAIN POST GRADUATE EVENING COLLEGE	Associate Professor
Dr	Ratish	Nanda	Aga Khan Trust for Culture	Project Director
Dr	Diya	Mehra	South Asian University	Faculty Coordinator, Department of Sociology
Dr	Awandhendra	Sharan	Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS)	Associate Professor
Professor	Y.A.	Sudhakar Reddy	University of Hyderabad	Professor & Head, Centre For Folk Culture Studies, School of Social Sciences
Dr	Surajit	Sarkar	Ambedkar University Delhi	Associate Professor & Coordinator, Centre for Community Knowledge
Dr	Priyaleen	Singh	School of Planning and Architecture	Professor of Architectural Conservation
Professor	AGK	Menon	Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)	Convenor of INTACH Delhi Chapter
Mr	Mohammad	Shaheer	Shaheer Associates	
Ms	Baaraan	Ijlal	Freelancer	Painter
Ms	Samina	Mishra	Freelancer	Documentary filmmaker, writer, facilitator/teacher and sound recordist
Professor	Ajay	Khare	SPA Bhopal	Professor
Dr	P.D.	Balaji	University of Madras	Associate Professor
Professor	Manjiri N.	Kamat	University of Mumbai	Professor

Title	First Name	Surname	Organisation	Position
Dr	Sanjay	Garg	National Archives of India	
Professor	T.K.	Venkatasubramanian	University of Delhi	Professor
Professor	Y.Sudershan	Rao	Indian Council of Historical Research	Chairperson
Professor	Gopinath	Ravindran	Indian Council of Historical Research	Member Secretary
Ms	Shikha	Jain		
Dr	Jyotsna	Arora	Indian Council of Historical Research	Deputy Director (Library)
Mr	Ramesh	Yernagula	Indian Council of Historical Research	Deputy Director (Documentation)