

Sense of Place in Historic City

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Abstract : Historic cities and places of cultural significance is continuously under the pressure of economic development and social change that threaten its natural and cultural environment. The challenge here is to find a balance between preserving the cultural character while ensuring the socio-economic gains and continuity of its uniqueness. That is by sustaining the use, character, meaning and social interaction associated with the place, in other words the sense of place. The main argument here is what we attempt to conserve is the cultural physical and non-physical dimensions of the historic city. It is based on the proposition that what give the historic city its character is its strong sense of place- whether it is historic or current. When properly identified, its various dimensions (use, meaning and form) would help determine what to sustain and what not by making the development meaningfully related to the uniqueness of the historic place. Accordingly, those socio-economic features within the context of a changing historic environment needed to be clarified. This paper, thus, explores the various perspectives of the role of sense of place within the historic city and its connection to cultural heritage. It also reviews urban conservation practice as it is currently understood in the context of historic city development. It concludes that sense of place lies in complex interrelated relationships between various users of the place and the physical, economic, cultural, political, and environmental contexts in which they interact. This calls for the need to sustain the sense of place as part of the overall urban development and conservation strategies.

Keywords : cultural heritage, historic urban areas, urban development, sense of place

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