Priceless or Bankrupt: Problems and Prospects from a Built Heritage Conservation Perceptive

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Heritage conservation today is recognised one of the oldest philosophies in the field of built environment aimed at creating a sustainable management system for historic buildings, sites and monuments. At the root of its theory, policies and practices lies the belief that cultural built heritage is a priceless asset. Unfortunately, some argue it is a bankrupt metaphor. The concept of pricelessness has failed persistently to protect places with important historical and cultural values from being demolished by way of neglect. Built assets may frequently receive appropriate listing or other statutory protection until such time as a conflict arises with what are considered the more mainstream values of capitalist societies, generating a tension often relieved, by the desecration and loss of the heritage asset. From this perspective, this paper explores the term priceless in relation to (i) its influence on heritage conservation and changing built environment (ii) how the concept can be employed more synergistically with the behemoth of economic development to achieve a more positive outcome for the community. A critical review of the literature and an empirical analysis of data collected from focus group studies conducted in Australia and Tanzania. It was found that heritage sector stands to lose far more without a paradigm shift that generates a balance between justifying new development at the expense of priceless, irreplaceable built heritage. The paper suggests that heritage practitioners need to more effective methods for assessing the values of cultural built heritage. The originality in this paper is its new perspective on pricelessness in light of understanding the impacts on sustainability in built heritage conservation.

Introduction

Built heritage conservation is the study of understanding the nature and management of historic buildings, monuments and sites using *heritage science*. According to Kennedy (2015), heritage science synthesises the knowledge of sustainable development with building conservation philosophy and practice – which have developed through the centuries (Amar 2017) and evolved with the changing built environment. In order to encourage positive long-term outcomes, heritage stakeholders involved in the decision-making sphere undertake a rigorous conservation process to ensure that their principles are aligned to those in cultural heritage documents (Henderson and Nakamoto 2016, Australia ICOMOS 1979). These include: heritage legislation, charters and recommendations implemented at the local, state/territory, national and international levels (Amar 2017, Labadi 2013, Mason 2008). Today, cultural heritage conservation encompasses different

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approaches to mitigate the impacts associated with transformation of the authenticity and integrity attached to built heritage values, and its relevance to both current and future generations (Staniforth and Lloyd 2012, Cane 2009).

One example of the ways in which this is already occurring, as detailed by Mason (2008), is the integration of economic discourses with built heritage conservation. It describes the protection of historic environments from the two perspectives of public good and private good. The conceptual basis for *public good* lies in social expression of historic fabric in terms of diversity, identity and individuality (Allen 2012). On the other hand, conservation economics is conceptually related to managing built heritage inventory while creating, but not limited to, '*construction jobs, returning under-utilised buildings to the tax rolls, attracting heritage tourists and maximising the use of* [its] *existing infrastructure*' (Allen 2012: 11). Thus, for over a century, heritage research including that by Jokilehto (1999) demonstrates how different conservation philosophy - preservation, restoration, reconstruction, rehabilitation - provides systematic integrated approaches that find balance between public and private discourse.

Despite such great effort, Amar (2017) argues that historic buildings, monuments and sites still suffer deterioration and demolition by way of conscious neglect. This has been (i) some heritage actors often abandoning built heritage that does not provide economic/financial value (Mason 2008) and (ii) when communities feel that, as noted by Jokilehto (1999: 14), '*there is a serious risk of being deprived of it*'. However, as the above two factors bring the discussion back to built heritage being a private and public good, this discourse is incomplete. As for the most part, the discourse has shifted the focus to '*heritage is priceless*' (Mason 2008: 304), a metaphor that the heritage sector regards as being understood as a unified framework for the conservation of cultural built heritage that conflicts with the behemoth of social, economic and environmental development (Amar 2017).

While, numerous academic and community groups — for instance the National Trust of Australia and English Heritage — have discussed this topic in depth over the last 30 years, it is unclear why the heritage sector has by and large ignored exploring the many ways that *heritage is priceless* can be used to guide the decision-making or alleviate its implications in their search to achieve heritage sustainability. To get an idea how priceless is a big problem, the British Parliament (2006: 32) notices that it is unrealistic to expect people to actively conserve their priceless built heritage for the benefit of the community or nation without financial assistance. Despite all efforts made by heritage practitioners and researchers to make conservation sustainable, there is a historical resistance from owners and developers, which is rooted in monetary value. From this standpoint, Section 2 presents a critical review of the literature, followed by methodology in Section 3 detailing the research approach and data collection. Section 4 provides a discussion of findings from the critical literature review and data analysis while Section 5 finishes with a conclusion including remarks for future study.

Literature Review

In its broadest sense, *priceless* shares a lineage of over two millennia lineage with the Latin word *Antinous* with unknown etymology, meaning *inaestimabilis* (not estimable) in Latin (Osborne 1999). In classical antiquities, *Antinous* is linked to a debated age of the *Antoninus* with their quest to establish a new religion on Antinoopolis (Vout 2005), a sacred city created of marble temples, monuments and colonnades for spiritual endeavour (Ewald and Noreña 2010). According to Riggs (2012), citizens were given special privilege to allow a social lifestyle of beauty and harmony, including tax-exemptions, child allowance, security and triumph of classical architecture. This period of Greek Roman civilisation marked the institutionalisation of value into cultural, spiritual and social structures. However, it was not until the 16th century that the Latin *inaestimabilis* took on its modern meaning of 'too precious' to set value on (Waite 2012). In 1733, a compiler of antiquity collection, sculptor Agostino Cornicchini, referred Cardinal Albani's priceless and worthy inventory as *Antinous* (Haskell and Penny 1998).

Today, its narration is greatly shaping contemporary institutional arrangements - public, private and community - impacting the many aspects of sustainable development outcomes. Bartelmus (2008) expresses a helpful way to understand priceless as an ethical principle to observe heritage and environmentalism as a necessary tool to account for the externalities caused by built environment activities. This is a notable principle endorsed by the World Commission on Environment and Development's central tenet, '*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*' (WCED 1987: 44). Although priceless intent is deceptively simple, its aspects of environmentalism and heritage have become two defining challenges of the 21st century (Bartelmus 2008). Each has its emotional adherents often opposed by the construction and development industry (Hussein and Armitage 2014). It threatens to undermine the corporate and non-corporate effort of an inert capitalism agenda in the built environment, both contemporary and heritage. The latter, heritage and specifically built heritage, is the main focus of this paper.

When discussing cultural built heritage, Amar (2017) for example, indicates most heritage stakeholders find it difficult to define this significant concept with the questions of 'what is price' and 'what is priceless' when assessing heritage values. In the study '*Priceless: The myth of fair value*', Poundstone (2010) holds that value of an object needs to be translated numerically and then communicated to others so as to ascertain an emotional response based on the cost-benefit analysis. As Zelizer (1994: 08) puts it - '*priceless itself surrenders to price.*' In the heritage sector, a recent article by Zancheti (2016) proposes that appreciation and protection of built heritage assets will increase if value assessment moves from the moral principle of priceless and includes price. Whilst the heritage sector finds cost-benefit analysis useful, Bandarin and van Oers (2012) discuss that its applicability is lacking in terms of what is included and what is left out in the conservation of cultural built heritage. More broadly, this fits with the sector's tensions wrapped up in theoretical justification pertaining to assessing pricelessness of heritage value typology (Amar 2017). Thus, this increases the chance of

demolition by neglect of historic places and, in turn, makes economic, environmental and social sustainability unattainable as discussed below.

The Economics of Built Heritage Pricelessness

Except for cultural heritage assets, Irons and Armitage (2011) and Mason (2008) explain that economists are capable of allocating scarce goods, services and other resources in a market efficient frontier paradigm since they morally consider such assets are priceless goods to human kind. Putting a dollar value for the purpose of improving their conservation efforts does not preclude commodification of historic buildings, monuments and sites to the highest bidder (Zancheti 2016). The objective is simply to gain an understanding of what the importance of their *use* and *non-use values* are to society (Irons and Armitage, 2011) so that policy and decision-makers can create appropriate efforts for sustainable conservation (Amar et al. 2017). After all, de la Torre and Mason (2002:03) states: '*It is self-evident that no society makes an effort to conserve what it does not value.*' Heritage values are created from the interaction they have with individuals and groups in a society rather than emanating from the historic asset itself. This illuminates the perception taken by heritage practitioners against built assets from the industrial revolution and modernisation and their deprivation of societies' historic assets at the dawn of the 20th century (Jokilehto 1999).

Heritage researchers argue that built heritage assets, because they are considered priced and priceless (Navrud and Ready 2002), tend to be overused or vandalised and destroyed thereby resulting in their demise (Owley 2015), This is apparent in Zanzibar Stone Town, where efforts of protecting and preserving unique heritages have aided destruction by way of the neglect of several historic buildings including the House of Wonders (Beit-Al-Ajaib) built in 1896. A landmark building celebrated for being the first modern house with mixed European and Middle Eastern architecture, installed with electricity in Zanzibar and an electric lift in East Africa (Figure 1). In fact, such problems created a need for economic valuation in which cost-benefit incentives are set to reduce damages and motivate sustainable approaches in built heritage conservation (Bandarin and van Oers 2012, Mason 2008). Similarly, a pragmatic view by Jokilehto (1999) implies that understanding the significance of use and non-use heritage values, as each have specific goals and objectives, is critical to stakeholder efforts directed towards sustainability in the conservation of cultural built heritage.

And, of course, one would argue about non-use values (understood with reference to socio-cultural and even spatial contexts) that cannot be captured by a market price, yet are protected by national and international heritage legislation, regulations and charters (de la Torre and Mason 2002). Typically, a decision for built heritage conservations is not only made by the responsible authorities, but also under rigorous assessment of the cost-benefit ratios of heritage intervention (Amar et al. 2017). This implies weighing up a plan for preservation and use of a heritage asset against the willingness to pay or accept its management costs - cultural built heritage costs the society funds to manage it (Throsby 2007). In this frame, Zancheti (2016) conceives that continuing to

ignore the relationship between use and non-use values in the conservation process will leave cultural built heritage to decay and ultimately in ruin. As demonstrated, Amar (2017) maintains a bottom line should be established to find a balance between the two types of values. Giannakopoulou *et al.* (2017: 157) on the other hand, suggests '*all these values embodied in cultural heritage need to be translated into monetary values.*'

Figure 1. *Collapse of Beit Al Ajaib Due Poor Maintenance and Heavy Rains*

Source: © Archives of Michuzi 2016.

In the economics of historic conservation, Amar (2017) reveals that assigning a tradeable price to use values attached to heritage assets in the markets is based on the assumption of private good (individualism) versus public good (collectivism). Essentially, this premise represents economic valuation framed by maximisation of net benefits of cultural built heritage to users (Mason 2008). Within this framework, not surprisingly, the owner(s) of the 159-year-old heritage listed Corkman Irish Pub in inner Melbourne (Figure 2), demolished this historic property overnight in February 2017 to allow a new development of a 12-storey apartment block project (Lucas 2017). Viewed from a privately good context, the incentive for its conservation was weak, because users were no longer able to use either socio-cultural values or economic values.

The alternative option might have been for the owner to leave the historic building in the state of disrepair until its demolition by way of neglect, unless it was protected based on the notion of a public good. The local council response was penalty of AU$ 200,000 to the owner after a strong backlash from the community. This is a lost cause of both use and non-use values. Hence, Zancheti (2016: 57) concludes that some heritage stakeholders prefer to be persuaded by the monetary value at which heritage assets are priced, rather than just appreciating its priceless socio-cultural values.

Figure 2. *Before and After Demolition of Corkman Irish Pub*

Source: © State Library of Victoria 1957 (Left) and Gloria Kalache ABC New 2016 (Right).

The Environmental Perception of Built Heritage Pricelessness

Cultural built heritage and environmental sustainability have been topics of interest both nationally and internationally since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. Environmental sustainability is defined by Ekins (2011: 637, 8) as '*maintenance of important environmental functions*' used to maintain and generate welfare whose '*loss would be irreversible*' and '*cannot be substituted by any other function.*' In the realm of heritage studies, Albert (2015) considers this perspective lies at the heart of UNESCO's 1992 recognition of the concept of *historic urban landscape.* It entails cultural built heritage as integral to understanding ways in which the natural environment is used to create urban and regional domains, by which societies express their social and economic values. According to Amar (2017), these built heritage values represent tangible evidence of humans and their use of natural resources to create a legacy which directly or indirectly is a source of human welfare. Heritage assets generate welfare by promoting local development thereby attracting investment in heritage tourism that creates employment and reinforces a community's sense of belonging and identity.

From an environmental sustainability view, Albert (2015) argues that built heritage assets are not only fragile and rare but are also priceless because they are limited, and their inventory is of limited extent. In contrast, De Graaf et al. (1996) views the concept that priceless values of natural or cultural heritage assets make people underestimate their benefits for conservation and planning of land use development. As a result, theories to explain different ways to protect the pricelessness of built heritage from socially and economically changed conditions are plentiful, but environmentally verifiable methods have been elusive. Amar (2017) notes that until the late 20th century no reference to built heritage was contained in environmental legislation, let alone how aspects of historic fabric related to policies aimed at reducing environmental problems like excessive use of natural resources, global warming and pollution (Irons and Armitage 2011). However, some studies detailed by Ruuska and Häkkinen (2014) and Australian Government (2012), Creyts et al. (2007) and Subramanian (2007) have shown how global construction projects are estimated to consume

about of 42% of energy use, 40% of raw materials, 25% of water, 12% of land use and 40% of atmospheric pollution annually. This then encouraged stakeholders in the built environment to integrate initiatives of historic conservation, (adapt and re-use) into new construction and development projects (Minner 2016).

Research in the construction sector suggests considerable efforts are put into development projects focusing on non-recoverable energy embodied in heritage assets (Minner 2016). The use of construction material such as those used for historic buildings, reduce adaption and refurbishment cycles and lead to reduced carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere which, if not controlled, result in climate change, natural disaster and land use change (Hu 2017). Further, Albert (2015) associates these impacts with material deterioration of built heritage and migration problems which Hall et al. (2016) identifies to be central for changes of future socio-economic policy in many countries' urban and regional development plans. Indeed, the simple solution to avoiding such problems is to include the value of embodied energy in the historic fabric into the environmental policy (Hu 2017). Clearly as Amar (2017) states, things are not that simple as built heritage conservation has not made progress in reducing the negative growth in the built environment. The problem is that price and priceless are viewed as two sides of the same coin in environmental sustainability. One view is that cultural built heritage should not be subjected to any form of valuation because its benefits to the environment are obvious and incalculable. The other, according to Armitage and Irons (2013), is the failing of the assessment of its environmental benefits by monetary metric makes internalisation of trade-offs and allocating of resources efficiently difficult.

An example of such an ethical dilemma is presented in a project conducted by Pullen and Bennetts (2011) on a 100-year-old Unley Villa in Adelaide, Australia. The renovate/extend scenario was estimated to save 26% of future life cycle emissions with an average saving on costs of 10% compared to the demolish/re-build scenario. Pullen and Bennetts (2011) conclude 10% is not a sufficient incentive to engage historic conservation however conservation can be viable, if the 26% life cycle emission savings is supported by energy use concession. Upon reflection, the environmental sustainability concept is not about 'what is price' or 'what is priceless', it's about a conservation discourse that cultural built heritage, if taken care of, synergistically drives investment growth and environmental changes to achieve positive outcomes for the current and future generations (Amar 2017). One last approach driving environmental sustainability is the antecedent of infinite and zero efforts and its limited scope in the practice of historic conservation. Rizzo and Mignosa (2013) perceives 'infinite value' and 'priceless' as synonyms meant to ensure zero efforts are made to alter or adapt the original fabric which makes effective and efficient conservation impossible. Take, for example, the current condition of the historic Zanzibar Stone Town. In between zero and infinity, however, Rizzo and Mignosa (2013) provide a wide range of choices which sustainable development seeks to narrow to appropriate conservation approaches; e.g. preserve, restore, adapt and reconstruct. Socio-cultural values, discussed in the subsequent section, are used as

a starting point to discuss a conservation approach capturing economic and environmental sustainability of built heritage.

The Social Perception of Built Heritage Pricelessness

It is sufficiently clear that applying economic and environmental dimensions to built heritage can fortify sustainability (Hribar et al. 2015). Equally, frameworks for sustainable development at different institutional levels have come to recognise this contribution by levelling it in antithesis of the conservation principles (Mason 2008). However, Amar (2017) argues one of the most important challenges of the application to repair, restore or adapt historic fabric pertains to the local urban and rural planning regulations. Albert (2015) states the challenge relates to local towns/communities undergoing the process of urbanisation as the consequence of construction and development projects occurring at the discretionary power of local authorities responding to market/community demand. For example, the fifteen storey Mantra Wings Hotel in Surfers Paradise sits on the Pink Poodle Motel's site after its demolition in 2004, but its neon sign which is listed on the Queensland Heritage Register in 2005 for its unique intangible values has been moved several times on its original Gold Coast Highway plot (Armitage and Burgin 2015). However recently it was relocated locally to Fern Street in response to the Gold Coast City Council's infrastructure development for the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

In this précis, the form of this extreme conservation brings into discussion the relevancy of sustainability and society to the authenticity and integrity of built heritage values. The good news is there are many public and private organisations in different countries now using rhetoric associated with *social sustainability* to strike a balance between historic and contemporary built environment (Yung and Chan 2012). Heritage and social sustainability are intimately linked and as such help societies to comprehend social-cultural systems (Hussein and Armitage 2014), which are not self-evident but are intangibly constructed by a relationship between people and their natural and built environment (Amar 2017). Despite this belief, Yung and Chan (2012) observe that social sustainability is the least quantifiable and most complex pillar of sustainability in the built heritage context. This is so because its idea is rooted in *pricelessness* (Albert 2015), as further shown by Yung and Chan (2012), propelled from an aspect of sense of place, identification and belongingness embedded in the built environment, which after a period forms historic environment. Thereby, Hribar et al. (2015) proposes that intangible values attached to the authenticity and integrity of cultural built heritage cannot be envisaged outside social sustainability. Perhaps at this stage it makes sense to define *social sustainability.*

Social sustainability refers to values in which the wellbeing of the current and future generations is safeguarded by '*recognising every person's right to belong to and participate in as a valued member of his or her community*' (Castillo et al. 2007: 41). This definition is underpinned by the idea that built environment communicates meaning between individuals and groups that share

similar social-cultural backgrounds. For example, colonial urban development was led by 'master/slave' design dividing European colonies into three settlements of white, Indigenous and others with better, poor and somewhat different living qualities, respectively (Amar et al. 2016). Its legacy still poses social consequences today, as in former colonial like Tanzania where much of the historic landscape was removed after the country's independence because of its representation of painful and recent memories relating to racism, oppression and segregation. Amar et al. (2016) specifies that Indigenous people, in countries like Australia, find it difficult to belong to a historic and modern built environment as their socio-cultural wellbeing is excluded in the decision-making processes. However, those adhering to white supremacy and Neo-Nazi ideology (Schofield 2014) hail such places as a tribute and invaluable heritage, therefore refusing the renaming of places dedicated to colonial governors (e.g. Lachlan Macquarie in Australia) or memorial statues (e.g. Theodore Roosevelt in the USA). Hence, individual and collective memories attached to cultural built heritage are what define its pricelessness.

From this perceptive, social sustainability is bound by the past, present and future memories of individuals and groups who share common experiences and wellbeing of a built environment. Yung and Chan (2012) claim social sustainability is a powerful symbol of traditional heritage value cores to historic conservation. Yet again, Amar et al. (2016) argues, its view on pricelessness may impede sustainability in built heritage management. In the above case, colonial built heritage can be categorised as both of 'great value' and 'no value' context. While Tanzania succeeded in wiping out colonial fabric as no value to its social sustainability (Amar 2017), this aspect of heritage dissonance has just begun in the Australian and American conservation of cultural built heritage. In the absence of strong social sustainability values there will inevitably be uncertainty in historic conservation (Yung and Chan 2012) as its values will be subjected to pressures from the economic and environmental spheres often leading to demolition by way of neglect (Mason 2008). Of emerging concern is the new heritage discourse of digital conservation. This adds to the corporate sector's incentives to deplete built heritage assets quickly as they can be reproduced in 3D computer models in support of smart cities (Albert 2015). This is a whole new discourse of social sustainability, fabric and built heritage conservation, but not one which is the focus of this paper.

Methodology

This methodology of this study is based on qualitative research as adopted for the doctoral thesis, entitled '*Conservation of cultural built heritage: an investigation of stakeholder perceptions in Australia and Tanzania*' completed in 2017. This method is considered as the most appropriate method for this study because of its utilisation of social inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln 1998), and case study approach in which a focus group is embedded to capture the unique ideas from participants in a social study (Yin 2009). So, a critical

review of the literature was undertaken to explore the term *priceless* and its influence on built heritage conservation. Then, four focus groups conducted in Australia and Tanzania brought together participants representing a variety of professional backgrounds and education, as well as those from higher decision-making positions. These included archaeologist, manager, advocate, historian, landscape planner, conservator, town planner, curator, policy advisor and engineer, all of whom are working in the heritage sector. In total, twenty-six respondents were selected from, and participated in, the New South Wales, Brisbane, Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar focus groups.

The purpose of the focus groups was to generate new insights by addressing the question: 'what drives conservation of cultural built heritage', and therefore this empirical study devoted itself to three key themes posed as follows:

- Knowledge about the conservation of cultural built heritage
- Perception of significant heritage values including an aspect of pricelessness
- Motivation and barriers for implementation of a sustainable management system.

The data acquired were coded and analysed based on the emerging design method by Strauss and Corbin (1997), a technique that allows open coding for the generation of new categories that were not initially anticipated in the planning stage of a research project (Bourque 2004). QSR NVivo[TM] 2010 was used to identify categories with a view to inform and present how *pricelessness* of built heritage assets can be employed more synergistically with the behemoth of economic development to achieve a more positive outcome. To ensure validity, both data and investigator triangulation were implemented in analysis, presentation and interpretation.

Findings/Results

Four categories of findings relating to priceless, sustainability and conservation of cultural built heritage emerged from what participants expressed during focus group discussions. The analysis indicated these key categories would be unlikely to materialise without knowledge from theories, policy and practice active within the heritage sector and related heritage literature. Each category of key findings is presented and discussed in the following sub-sections.

Built Heritage, Sustainable Conservation, Fluidity

When asked about the meaning of *built heritage and conservation,* a common response was the two terms were understood to have shared a discursive meaning over the last century. However, following the process of industrialisation and urbanisation at the turn of the 20th century, many heritage stakeholders changed the assessment of built heritage assets from *pricelessness* underlined by 'rarity or antiquity' to 'value-based' centred on cost-benefit analysis. One example offered

by a participant during focus group discussions: *Built heritage is an antiquity. There is no price for an antiquity because any amount of money you try to put on it is small compared to the value.*

From respondents' perspectives, changes in value belief systems combining with a need to commodify heritage assets have continued to undermine conservation efforts. Participants further noted: *People don't value it in terms of place-making and identity and social cohesion* because any '*talks about heritage conservation have competing investment agendas'* thus '*if its monetary value is not viable, heritage assets won't be protected properly.'* Given the plurality of built heritage conservation, it is impossible to give one set of meaning that encapsulates what it meant over a century ago and perceived in centuries to come. These findings are in line with the research conducted by Lähdesmäki (2016: 04) who describes cultural built heritage as '*an ambiguous and fluid concept'* because in the course of transformation of its implicit value, many other explicit factors – sense of place, identity, and belonging – have profound influence on the creation of cultural meaning and its expression on the changing built environment.

As a consequence of a fluid revolutionary process, Albert (2015) and Mason (2008) elaborate that various types of discourse for historic conservation have gained prominence considering the interdisciplinary nature of its stakeholder groups from the public, private and community sector. Even though heritage stakeholders have a shared understanding of built heritage conservation, Bandarin and van Oers (2012) describes existence of divergence stakeholder perceptions stemming from the social, economy and environment process related to sustainability. Hence, the phrase 'heritage is priceless' may have a slight different meaning as a result of cultural diversity and changing built environment of the community it is facing. That is, what is considered priceless in one community may not necessary be considered is priceless in another. The best approach to this conservation barrier, as presented by another participant, is thought to consider the three aspects of historic fabric: '*environmental sustainability, economic sustainability and social sustainability.'*

Economic Sustainability, Built Heritage Conservation, Power

In the previous section, study participants established that the diverse perception of stakeholders greatly affected the assessment of significant values related to and embodied in historic fabric. Participants observed that whenever sustainability and conservation of cultural heritage is mentioned the debate then is dovetailed into an '*economic argument, as well as all the other private versus public ownership issues.'* In this context, one set of responses was related to issues surrounding the property/land rights setting with significant built heritage assets and the public sector's right to exercise power over the use of private properties inscribed in the heritage register. Participants believed that survival or depletion of heritage assets on the changing built environment is central to management of its use and non-use values. They suggested that public good analogy should lie at the heart of private rights.

As reported by Amar (2017), more than 90% of heritage assets are privately owned in Australia and Tanzania.

> *The NHC* [National Housing Corporation] *who today own buildings in Dar es Salaam but also in other towns, plays quite a vital role because they hold so much of the built historic fabric in their hands… which is essentially public and to a certain degree should be considered as a public good as well.*
> *A public motivation is, in a sense, government on behalf of the community imposing those controls that require important places to be kept.*

On the other hand, the second set response in relation to private rights is the notion of highest and best use within which the market approach to built heritage conservation operates. Heritage stakeholders need to rationalise heritage conservation in economic terms. As one participant states, '*the main driver at the moment is economic viability*' for both private and public goods. The aim is to resolve stakeholder tensions associated with non-monetary (priceless) and monetary (price) benefits of historic conservation, respectively. Some participants further discussed that economic viability is key to accomplishing two goals. First, it enables private owners motivated by profit to receive economic benefit from their heritage assets. Second, it ensures the economics of built heritage conservation induces all heritage stakeholders to appreciate the unique values and significance of their historic environment. Here are examples of focus group responses:

> *Heritage preservation does not need to stand in contradiction to development. The individual's got a right to manage their own heritage property, make a profit out of it and look after it.*

The debate on public and private good, if put into heritage management systems, could balance between economic sustainability and conservation principles of cultural built heritage. On the other hand, Mason (2008) mentions perceiving built heritage as *good* is an attempt to quantify its *pricelessness*, albeit in different discourse and assessment processes, and with different conservation outcomes, often to the disadvantage of losing the authenticity and integrity of built heritage values. Some participants believe that this is where the dilemma between heritage sustainability and economic conservation exists. As established by the following quote:

> *What we have done is to try to enthuse and show people potential… but in major projects, time is money, particularly for developers, and they want certainty. So if you can be quite clear about requirements for approval processes… they can choose to actually say: that's not what we want to do, we're going to fight you about that or this is what we need to do to get the approval through as quickly as we can.*

Environmental Sustainability, Built Heritage Conservation and Core

During focus groups, the study participants identified that environment sustainability in combination with economic sustainability gives shape to the built heritage conservation. The term *environmental sustainability* was described as a reduction of ecological footprint through resource management, protection and restoration. It was reported by participants that demolishing particularly functioning historic buildings and monuments can create disturbances to the built environment and associated systems. Unfortunately, application of the principles of ecology to built heritage is being used as a tool for politicians who want to stay in power and, as a result, efforts for conservation are directed towards natural heritage including forestry and reserve parks.

> *You're dealing with politicians who want to stay in power - they won't list any privately owned heritage properties. So, you've got lots and lots of trees on the heritage register.*
> *Quite often the emotion comes into it when a significant place is under threat, when the place is not under threat, emotions don't come into play because it's just part of the landscape.*

Participants raised concerns that cultural built heritage is viewed as a cultural landscape made up of both structures and natural features society wishes to preserve and bequeath to future generations. As a result, the heritage sector finds itself applying an environmental-economic approach in which cost benefit analyses are incorporated into decision-making to achieve the intended sustainable outcome of historic conservation. To many, and in consideration of Section 4.2, economic rationalisation always transcends because its associated values are perceived to have a range of potential benefits as opposed to ecological values, which cannot be exchanged in the market. Another related environmental issue in the heritage sector is climate change: the majority of respondents argued that stakeholders downplay its impact on the materiality of historic fabric because heritage assets are not core to the built environment.

> *Ecological aspect is very clearly and plainly there ... then money, of course, becomes a huge factor and always built heritage values have to compete with the real estate market.*

Focus group discussion so far is limited in its recognition of the ability of benefits that environmental sustainability has to offer to historic conservation, in particular ecological values, or pricelessness. It was made clear by participants that people are not fazed by this sustainability pillar unless its framework somehow estimates its monetary value or facilitating a fundamental shift of stakeholder perceptions of ecological values attached to the authenticity and integrity of built heritage. Indeed, one exception as expressed by practitioners is to articulate social factors as core to built heritage's environmental and economic sustainability.

Attachment, Social Sustainability and Built Heritage Conservation

Focus group discussions revealed varying views about the extent to which social values ought to be included in built heritage conservation. First, participants identified that the feeling of ownership and identity, along with safety and security, are associated with individuals' view of themselves. Participants also highlighted that these intangible values are learned from social exchanges with family and community members and then transmitted to reinforce future generations. These tangible aspects are then expressed on built environment to create an intangible character. Focus group results' further identified that social value, in both its tangible and intangible aspects, is important to community well-being and development.

> *The last aspect is the social sustainability, this is where there has been successful conservation… of built heritage or priceless antique is valued from history, an emblem or brand of the society.*
> *In terms of Zanzibar Stone Town* [World Heritage List]*, we see building with styles of architecture, doors, these tangibles, but the design of doors and buildings is a skill, an intangible because - you can touch the door but not the skill.*

Secondly, participants across all focus groups recalled their struggle in assessing the social values of intangibility. For one, heritage legislation categorically mentions tangible aspects making conservation of priceless social values – cultural, spiritual, historical, traditional craftsmanship and emotional attachment – which are placed on, but cannot be seen on, landscape which is legally very difficult. Considering above sections, private owners and politicians use this legal loophole to call for cost benefit analysis to evaluate sustainability in built heritage conservation. This is nostalgic of the priceless and price debate.

> *Heritage legislation largely focused at physical conservation and doesn't deal with the broader aspect of heritage, which still exists.*
> *Politicians speak about their beliefs on built heritage conservation, but at the end of the day they have to compromise* [private owners]*.*
> *The Antiquities Department recommends preservation of priceless historic structures, but the Ministry of Land, the Ministry of Natural Resources, and Tourism suggest demolition of built heritage.*

With changing political regimes, directions towards heritage conservation change as well. The Howard era in Australia, for example, was a period where the government positively promoted a particular sense of self a lot of it built on classic iconic-supporting Anglo European views of the world. Following the current migrations of people across nations, immigrants from non-western countries do not know the social value of fabrics existing in their neighbourhood. However, the Tanzanian focus group felt that built heritage conservation is determined by its relevance to the culture and emotional attachment to the historic fabric of the

surrounding population. Participants mentioned that demolition of built heritage assets, which took place in the late 1960s through to the 1980s, was due partly because people didn't want to be reminded of colonialisation. Focus group examples include: '*defining heritage is sometimes controversial especially if it is related to colonial history and slave trade history*' and as a result people would actually say '*I'll never visit an Arab palace museum as is not part of my culture.*'

It was further agreed that social values need to be fluid at this time where new generations are moving towards having large new buildings instead of conserving existing historic environments. However, participants added further clarification to ensure that stakeholders recognise the need to actually inherit the truth rather than a made-up version: it is important to maintain the integrity and authenticity of a place. One suggestion offered was that the heritage sector could utilise 3D technology to archive heritage assets that are on the verge of extinction. The House of Terror in Budapest was given as a prime example of one building that had been retained and is now the Hungarians' focal historical point for people to remember the previous authoritarian regime.

Discussion

A critical issue arising from the findings is that if the phrase 'heritage is priceless' remains unaddressed by the heritage sector, it may have either constructive or damaging effects. Examination of both literature and data has highlighted the three constructive and damaging effects that priceless has in built heritage conservation. The role is to help reinforce a sense of identity and belonging, so that individuals and groups in a social community can be able to say that this is what makes tangible environment a place of significant importance. For example, the first Government House of Australia built in 1788 and demolished in 1845 to allow construction of a multi-storey building, is now illustrated on site at the Museum of Sydney. It was a wish of local, state and federal stakeholders to return this irreplaceable building which marked the beginning of the history of colonial settings and well-being in the development of Australian built environment - making its socio-cultural values priceless. Considering societal well-being, this is where the notion of priceless presents damaging effects, in particular emotional attachment. In European colonies, and including Australia and Tanzania, they were designed to not only exclude identities of Indigenous, but were also to make sure their living standards were abhorrent built environments (Amar 2017). For example, the planning laws and building codes in Tanzania specifically required natives to build 'negro huts' made of mud and thatched roofs with a pit latrine, as opposed to European buildings for 'whites'. Today, this historical environment is perceived as sustaining the horror and brutality of colonial society, but not a priceless one. As a result, many historical monuments are being defaced in Australia and demolished in Tanzania.

An alternative approach to avoiding negative social sustainability externalities would be to inscribe historic places into the heritage register, charging entrance fees and government incentives as well as educating people of the importance of

keeping the history intact. The upkeep of the listed activities requires monetary funds as discussed previously, this is where priceless and price aspects of built heritage assets wrangle. In their own right, both priceless and price, argue that they are as much about conserving the authenticity and integrity attached to built heritage values, as they are about advocating the highest and best use of these assets. As an example, the Tanzanian Government recently demolished TANU house under the umbrella 'reconstruction', a building where revolutionary meetings for independence for the country were held in the 1950s to 1960s – on its plot now sits a modern building with green glass walls representing the colour of the political party. Apart from the Pink Poodle example presented earlier, another example that deserves an honourable mention is the valuation of the Great Barrier Reef. Deloitte Access Economic (2017) reported that the $56 billion valuation included the quantified estimates of environmental and ecological functions but not its unique traditional values of the Traditional Owners. This shows how priceless and price have layer-upon-layer of value conflicts: socio-cultural versus environmental-economic, preserve versus adapt, old versus new, tradition versus technology – and the list goes on. Therefore, at some point in time, heritage stakeholders would be forced to choose either priceless or price as a base approach to their decision-making process for built heritage conservation.

The literature review, empirical data analysis and the findings have demonstrated there are distinct limitations to the applicability of 'built heritage is priceless' in the Australian and Tanzanian heritage sectors. However, whilst it does not demonstrate the absolute primacy of its role in the decision-making for built heritage conservation it does identify it as a significant factor that has been somewhat overlooked to date. First, the notion *priceless* is commonly discussed in relation to abstract heritage values, where the heritage sector assumes that stakeholders from different generations and diverse cultural groups are to share a belief of its contribution to a nation's identity and representation of their right to socio-cultural, economic and environmental well-beings. Second, the underlying meaning of built heritage pricelessness is influenced by, and responded to, stakeholder perceptions constructed from their knowledge and experience. At a more fundamental level, the phrase '*heritage is priceless*' can play critical and instrumental effort to resolving problems between sustainable conservation and the economic development to achieve a more positive outcome for the community (Zancheti 2016). While meaningful contributions about '*heritage is priceless*' have already been made (Mason 2008), the heritage sectors are only at the beginning of drawing on the phrases paradigm in order to advance an understanding of sustainability and conservation of cultural built heritage in combination with the profound transformation now taking place in the built environment.

Conclusion

Through both a review of the literature and reporting of empirical research, this paper has provided some useful insights into the discussion of the frequently

conflicting perceptions of built heritage when viewed as being either priceless or monetised/priced. After considering the conflicts and confrontation resulting from heritage practitioners' frequent powerlessness to protect places of significant community value in the face of dominant private ownerships aspirations for development led financial benefit, it has been argued that a more clearly articulated role for the practitioner would contribute to strengthening their contribution to protection of built heritage assets. Whilst this research has made progress towards informing this discourse, further study into aspects such as historic credit or other forms offset will provide opportunities to enhance the role of heritage practitioners to benefit both private owners and broader communities in Australia and Tanzania.

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