

Ref = Hyung Park → 2013.
-4u**Case study 12.4: Albania's nuclear bunkers converted into hostels**

During the Cold War in Albania, around 750,000 bunkers were built in fear of nuclear war. Albania is just 28,700 square kilometres in size and there are more than 26 bunkers per square kilometre. This project was instigated and led by the country's former dictator, Enver Hoxha, in the 1970s and 1980s. Since the demise of the country's communist government in 1992, this unique military infrastructure has apparently become of no use. Despite the fact they are the material remnants of the country's brutal and paranoid history, the bunkers remain as significant heritage that should not be lost. Two Albanian graduate students, Gylar Mydyti and Elian Stefa, started a project in 2010, entitled 'Concrete Mushrooms', which aims to catalogue the country's network of bunkers and encourage their new uses. In the blog of the project, it is clearly emphasised that:

The priority of the 'Concrete Mushrooms' project is facing the symbol of xenophobia (bunker) with deliberate awareness for the purpose of inverting its meaning, the preservation of the memoir of a significant period of the Albanian history, giving bunkers value instead of having them as a burden and as a result the promotion of an underdeveloped touristic sector such as Eco-Tourism which has an enormous potential at the same time growing the financial viability, social and environmental sustainability.

A new book featuring step-by-step guides for converting derelict bunkers into everything from hostels and toilets to cafes and gift shops was launched at the Venice Biennale in 2012. In Lezhë on the Adriatic coast, 30 miles north of Tirana, a joint German-Albanian tourism venture, 'Bed & Bunker', officially launched in 2012, is in the process of transforming a bunker into a no-frills hostel for backpackers.

Sources: Geoghegan (2012); http://blog.concrete-mushrooms.com/?page_id=112.

Heritage and climate change

The World Monuments Fund (WMF) aims to monitor damage to heritage buildings and sites. The WMF identifies three major threats facing heritage sites as political conflict, tourism and climate change. Political conflict and tourism development have widely been discussed as the main culprits of damaging and denigrating heritage sites and experiences. On the contrary, climate change issues in heritage have remained largely unexplored. The impacts of climate change on both cultural and natural heritage have become evident across the globe in the past decade. International organisations including UNESCO, the WMF, the GHF and ICOMOS have started to seriously engage with the particular issues of climate change. But it was not until 2005 that the issue of climate change was brought to the attention of the World Heritage Committee. In 2007, UNESCO published Case Studies on Climate Change and WH in order to enhance public awareness of WHSs exposed to various climate change threats, including flooding in London, sea-level rise in Venice and its lagoon, Italy, desertification in Timbuktu, Mali and coral bleaching in the Great Barrier Reef, Australia (see Case study 12.5).

Case study 12.5: Climate change issues and cultural heritage

Historic cities: the case of Cesky Krumlov, Czech Republic

In 1992, the World Heritage Committee decided to inscribe the historic centre of Cesky Krumlov, a Czech city located south of Prague. Situated on the banks of the Vltava River, the town was built around a thirteenth-century castle with Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque elements. It is an outstanding example of a small central European medieval town whose architectural heritage has remained intact thanks to its peaceful evolution over more than five centuries. But the sites remain exposed to natural hazards, such as the severe floods that affected Eastern Europe in the summer of 2002. The WHSs of the historic centres of Prague and Cesky Krumlov suffered significant damage from these events. In Cesky Krumlov, the historic centre was flooded up to 4m and about 150 buildings from the medieval Gothic and Renaissance periods suffered considerable damage. It was only due to the preference of medieval builders in the Czech region to use stone, bricks and lime, instead of the less durable wood or raw bricks, that prevented the damage from being much worse. The biggest challenge encountered in the recovery of these floods was how to dry the waterlogged walls and structures before the winter brought frost damage. Preserving the authenticity of the sites after the floods proved to be difficult because of several pressures to replace historic features by modern materials assumed to be more resistant to floods.

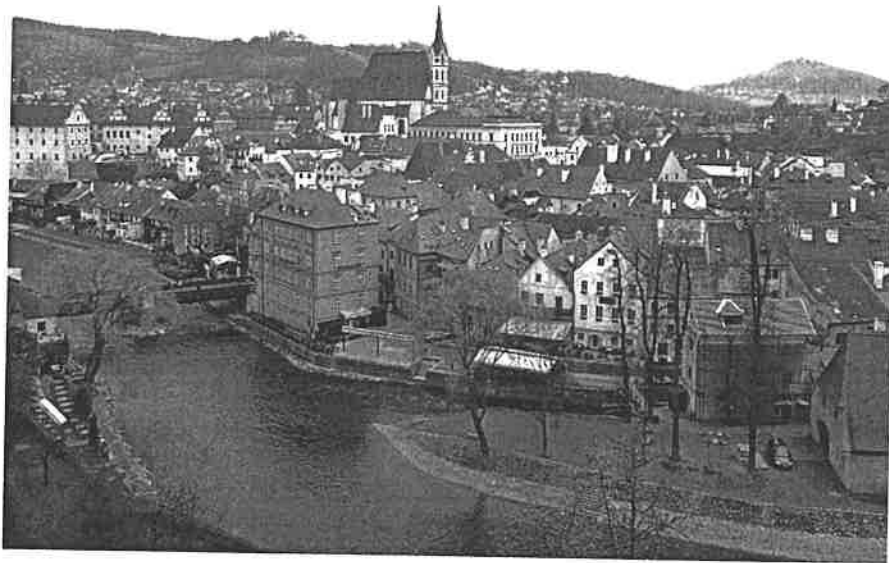


Figure 12.2 The historic centre of Cesky Krumlov, the Czech Republic

Archaeological remains: the case of Chan Chan Archeological Zone, Peru

Chan Chan, capital of the ancient Chimu Kingdom, is one of the largest and most important pre-hispanic earthen architecture cities in the Americas. The architectural ensembles and the complexity of the urban design reflect the high political, social, technological and economic levels attained by the Chimor society between the ninth and fifteenth centuries, just before falling into the hands of the Incas. The archaeological complex, therefore, synthesises the historical evolution of ethnic groups in northern Peru that contributed to the development of the Andean culture. The El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) phenomenon consistently affects regional variations of precipitation and temperature over much of the tropics and sub-tropics. Over the northern coast of Peru, warm episodes of this oscillation are associated to large positive anomalies in precipitation. In coastal arid zones of northern Peru, the historical average of annual precipitation is only 20–150mm, but this area received up to 3,000mm of rainfall during the El Niño event of 1997–8. Intense precipitation is damaging the base of the earthen architecture structures. It leads to greater humidity in the lower parts of the buildings and, consequently, to an increase in salt contamination of the structures and to the growth of vegetation such as reeds and water lilies in the low-lying *huachaquas*. A monitoring survey of the 68 wells has been underway since 2000, as part of a ten-year action plan in management, and it has revealed a progressive rise of the water levels that had already reached alarming heights in January 2003. Chan Chan Archeological Zone has been placed in the list of World Heritage in Danger since 1986.

Source: Colette (2007).

As evident in the case studies above, climate change causes adverse effects on cultural heritage as well as natural heritage. Less significant focus has been, however, placed on identifying and investigating the impacts of climate change on cultural heritage. World Heritage Centre (2007) recognises a lack of data pertaining to climate change impacts on WH cultural properties. Subsequently, various possible impacts on cultural heritage are identified:

Archaeological remains and related evidence will be affected when the hydrological, chemical and biological processes of the soil change. Since historic buildings materials are more porous than modern constructions, any increases in soil moisture might result in greater salt mobilizations; consequently drying will cause salt crystallisation to damage decorated surfaces. Timber and other organic building materials may be subject to increased biological infestation in altitudes and latitudes that may not have been previously affected. Flooding may damage building materials not designed to withstand prolonged immersion. Increases in storminess and wind gusts can lead to structural damage. Desertification, salt weathering and erosion is already threatening cultural heritage in desert areas.

(World Heritage Centre, 2007: 3)

Interestingly, the WMF list focuses on the 'human factor', anthropogenic factors in climate change, which link the change to human energy consumption and tourism development (Barthel-Bouchier, 2013). The impact of efforts to meet the challenges of climate change is

also regarded as a significant threat to heritage. Environmental sustainability and historic preservation need to be integrated in the management strategies of heritage. There is currently a lack of adequate capacity and financial resources for research and its application, particularly in developing countries. Ongoing generic research on the issues of climate change needs to be incorporated in heritage management. Long-term monitoring of the impacts of climate change on heritage is critical in detecting and investigating any signs of possible threats and changes before any irreparable damages are made. It is also critical to raise awareness among the public of the impact of climate change. The challenge is to understand what climate change means for heritage, and hence consider what practical steps can be taken to adapt its built environment without damaging its historic and architectural importance (see Barthel-Bouchier, 2013).

Conclusion

It is critical to recognise the significance of intangible heritage, drawing attention to the deep-rooted interdependence between intangible and tangible heritage. The importance of tangible heritage is often grounded in its intangible values manifesting diverse symbolic meanings and embodiments. Overall, the inclusive and holistic understanding of intangible heritage would contribute to enriching the discussions around the values and practices of heritage. Recognition of intangible heritage could also enhance the understanding of the peripheral and marginalised version of heritage, which is often under-represented in the authorised version of heritage. Excessive commercial interest in developing intangible heritage for tourism can be carefully balanced by more anthropological approaches to heritage. Both heritage and citizenship are identified as effective agents of global unity and identity. The issue of multicultural identity and heritage needs to be more holistically integrated in theorising and integrating heritage and citizenship. Careful approaches need to be made in assessing, appropriating and reappropriating multicultural heritage as part of the mainstream display of social history in contemporary societies. The role of digital technology and social media has had a fundamental impact on contemporary uses of heritage. New technological changes in heritage need to be complemented as an auxiliary means to encourage more participatory and interactive heritage experiences. The use of digital technology as a presentational and communicative tool should not circumvent unique first-hand heritage experiences. Currently, there exists a general lack of academic research in the field of heritage accommodation and climate change issues. More empirical-based research will provide an enhanced understanding of protecting heritage in the face of increasing signs of climate change.

Research questions

- 1 Explain the interdependent nature of tangible and intangible heritage.
- 2 Discuss ways in which heritage and citizenship interact in multicultural societies.
- 3 What are the implications of digital or virtual heritage in enhanced access and participation in heritage?
- 4 What opportunities do digital technologies offer for collaboration between heritage sites and communities?
- 5 Discuss and critically evaluate the ways in which social media has enhanced tourists' participation in heritage.
- 6 How can cultural values and economic values be balanced in the increasing use of historic buildings for accommodation?
- 7 Using relevant examples, discuss the impacts of climate change on cultural heritage sites.