

**NO PLANNING OR
DESIGN WORK CAN
BE INITIATED OR
CONSIDERED BEFORE AN
ASSESSMENT OF THE
CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE
OF THE BUILDING HAS
BEEN ARTICULATED
AND AGREED TO.**

It is also true that the significance(s) of heritage are affected by questions regarding the authenticity of the relic, building, site, place, cultural landscape/ townscape and/or environment in question. 'Attributes of authenticity' include 'form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling'.⁷ For example, the artistic significance of a building by an important architect may be affected by provenance and by the completeness of form/image; the historical significance of a multilayered building complex may be affected by the provenance or reliability of the evidence and its patina; the architectural significance of a vernacular building may be affected by the still-living (or lost) local building traditions; and the spiritual significance of a place may be affected by the continuity and accuracy of the community's oral record of events or activities practised there. In other words, significance and meaning are affected by authenticity.⁸ However, the attributes of authenticity are – like the significances

of the relic, building, site, place, cultural landscape/townscape and/or environment in question – cultural constructions and are, therefore, diverse.

By limiting or threatening to limit the use/development potential, the meanings and significances associated with the physical often effect the economic or use-value of the land accommodating such heritage. In other words, the identification of heritage often introduces social conflict – conflict between owners of title to land or the users of the land and heritage claimants.

Given this, the research and analysis involved in describing the history and associated significance of claimed

heritage and its claimed depth (its quantitative value relative to other heritage of similar and disparate categories) must be provenanced/authenticated and assessed rationally and publicly.

South Africa is a developing country with considerable development needs. Claims of heritage significance and demands regarding state action must be weighed against development needs and the costs of protection.

The conflict between owners of title/users of land and heritage claimants and/or between claimants of mutually exclusive heritage protection can only be resolved through law. In other words, the articulation of significance and the identification of heritage always invoke the law, however subliminally: there is no reference to heritage that does not invoke state action or responsibility, however distantly or obscurely.

Given this, conservation of the physical, of the built, is social criticism in action. In other words, conservation is all the processes by virtue of which society assesses the significances of the physical, the relics, buildings,

sites, places, cultural landscapes/ townscapes and/or environments (the critique), and then regulates the protection, use and development of the heritage (the actions it takes).⁹

CONSEQUENCES FOR HERITAGE PRACTICE AND MANAGEMENT

This view of what heritage is has several important consequences for heritage protection and management, and for heritage practice more generally. These recognitions require that certain principles be adhered to in this context. These principles are as follows:

1. PRINCIPLE: SIGNIFICANCE DETERMINES EVERYTHING

Significance determines everything. The cultural or heritage significance of a site or place or building or environment determines the scrutiny and management regime, and the type and extent of limits imposed by the authorities. No planning or design work can be initiated or considered before an assessment of the cultural significance of the building/site/place/environment has been articulated and agreed to by the appropriate authority(s).¹⁰ Such assessment must articulate and evaluate both the types or qualities of the significances and the degrees or quantities of the significances.^{11 12}

2. PRINCIPLE: SIGNIFICANCE IS ESTABLISHED THROUGH RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION WITH MANY PARTIES

Cultural significance is established by research and the compilation of detailed histories, and by consulting many parties, as many parties as have knowledge of and interest in the buildings/sites/places concerned.¹³ In certain cases, the knowledge and evidence of parties who are heritage claimants should be regarded as expert evidence.¹⁴

3. PRINCIPLE: PROTECTIVE MEASURES MUST BE PROPORTIONATE TO SIGNIFICANCE

All protective measures and limitations imposed should be directly related to and proportionate to the type and degree of significance.¹⁵ In other words, state interference in private interest (and the rights of property ownership) should be directly related to the degree of significance. Heritage resources of great significance should be expected to be limited by greater demands for care and protection, while those of lesser significance should be expected to be enhanced, transformed or even sacrificed to a greater or different social or economic good.

4. PRINCIPLE: DIFFERENT TYPES OF SIGNIFICANCE DEMAND DIFFERENT PROTECTIVE MEASURES

Different types of significance shall be protected by measures appropriate to the type or nature