

# Call for Papers: The Future of Historic Cities: Challenges, Contradictions, Continuities

Saturday, 15 November 2008

## **10<sup>th</sup> Cambridge Heritage Seminar**

### **The Future of Historic Cities: Challenges, Contradictions, Continuities**

**Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge,  
UK**

**18-19 April 2009**

**Deadline for paper proposals: 15 November 2008**

For the past ten years the Cambridge Heritage Seminars have brought together researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to explore the most pressing issues in heritage studies today. For its tenth anniversary in 2009, coinciding with the celebration of the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the University of Cambridge, the Cambridge Heritage Seminar will focus on cultural heritage, architecture, and the built environment in the context of a rapidly globalising and modernising world. Taking historic cities as its departure point, the seminar asks: how can urban cultural landscapes be preserved and sustained, challenged as they are by development, legislation, and commodification-and what are the reasons for and outcomes of such preservation?

As scholars such as Patrick Wright, David Lowenthal, and Laurajane Smith argue, the emergence of a heritage consciousness in modernity has depended on a complex, changing relationship not just to what the built heritage *is*, but how it is *valued*: what a community reads into the heritage and what they hope to gain from it. Aided by legal protocols that standardise heritage into readymade frameworks of historical, political and economic value, such processes take place on numerous interacting levels - the local, the national, and the international - which rarely operate in harmony. Within an urban setting, where the built environment (and its ruins) produces and is produced by a changing relationship to the past, these issues are highlighted in an immediate and unavoidable way. With this awareness, the Seminar hopes to explore the challenges, contradictions, and complexities that arise in the contemporary analysis of the historic city.

The Seminar will follow three broad themes with associated case studies, for which proposals for papers are solicited:

- **Challenges:** What are the most salient challenges and problems faced by historic cities and how are these currently being articulated? Within these articulations, how are changing values and attitudes toward the past weighed against the needs of the present?
- **Contradictions:** On an urban scale, when and how does conservation cause harm, and does development intrinsically threaten the 'authenticity' of a place? Is the desire to maintain a historic site the very process that ends up altering and even destroying it? Can neglect amount to preservation? Are claims to the 'uniqueness' of a historic city ever meaningful, and how do they function on rhetorical and political levels?
- **Continuities:** In the efforts to address these contradictions, how can the needs of historic cities be reconciled to continued growth, development, and modernisation? In what ways can sustainability of the urban historic environment be articulated, and to what effect? Is adaptive re-use an end or a means to an end? What opportunities exist for dialogue between researchers and policymakers that enables movement forward?
- **Workshop:** In addition, each day will end with a workshop dedicated to Cambridge and other historic cities as in-depth case studies to use of the insights that emerge from the other sessions. This workshop will primarily be generated from delegates and participants. Proposals are welcomed from all members of the research, policy and practitioner communities. Please send 500-word paper proposals to Afroditi Chatzoglou at [ac513@cam.ac.uk](mailto:ac513@cam.ac.uk). Proposals should be sent in PDF or Word format and should include full contact information and a brief academic biography. General enquiries and registration requests should be sent to Shadia Taha at [st446@cam.ac.uk](mailto:st446@cam.ac.uk). Deadline for proposals is 15 November 2008; acceptance will follow shortly afterwards.