



1993 0404

SA Heritage Resources Agency Library

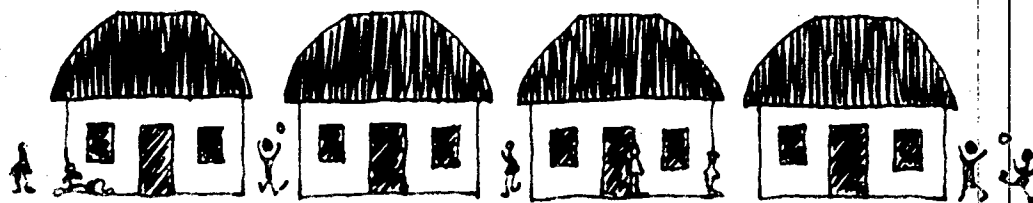
NATIONAL MONUMENTS COUNCIL

Key	PRCO SUWO
Acc. No.	93/404
Dew. No.	720.288

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONSERVATION SURVEYING WORKSHOP

6 APRIL 1990

National Monuments Council Library



PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONSERVATION SURVEYING WORKSHOP

Friday 6 April 1990

The Professional and Technical Section of the National Monuments Council (NMC) organized this workshop in order to improve and encourage co-ordination between the various people involved in surveying our heritage; to share experience and expertise.

Difficulties for the NMC occur because surveys differ, making it laborious to use the information produced by the various surveyors. Surveyors need to be familiar with statutory protection available and most crucially, to agree on assessment criteria.

WELCOME

The Director of the National Monuments Council, George Hofmeyr, welcomed everyone and fervently stressed the importance of this workshop as a step in the co-ordinated identification of what is valuable in our cultural environment and integrating its conservation into the planning process.

NATIONAL STRATEGY AND CO-ORDINATION

Penny Pistorius of the National Monuments Council spelt out the urgency of integrating conservation into environmental management. by explaining that the inclusion of a national register in the 1986 amendments to the Act was an indication that the law was following the international move towards environmental conservation rather than historical or cultural conservation, as represented in national monuments.

She emphasized that the register and conservation areas were primarily planning tools as set out in the Act.

A first proposal was that the NMC be a data centre for surveying and that it be given a copy of every survey that was done. Areas that had been surveyed would be mapped, priorities for our own resources established, and funds for surveys where they were lacking, would be sought.

Unless surveys were similar, the NMC had to practically redo the survey in order to be able to use the information. Therefore this workshop needed to establish the basic information that was required in a survey.

The NMC was committed to getting a conservation system going on a local level. Nominations for the national register from local communities were essential, and would be an educational process.

To this end the NMC was working on a conservation kit for surveying which would consist of a very basic manual of architectural styles, an illustrated bilingual architectural terminology, (so that people could identify architectural features and name them), and a handbook on how to do surveys.

General by-laws and guidelines for conservation areas, which would be adjusted for use in different areas, had been produced by the NMC.

The NMC needed to know whether the direction it was working on in the conservation surveying kit was the right one, or whether we needed to adjust the information we give amateurs.

SURVEYING METHOD

Archival Research

Fabio Todeschini stressed that "to contextualize the necessary research for surveying, inclusive of archival research, in the broader questions relative to effective research in planning for conservation of the cultural environment, was essential".

He suggested that a two part thrust was needed in conservation.

1. To produce the inventory
2. To produce the document to be translated into conservation programmes in the field

He gave the following reasons for these two issues being kept separate:

An inventory alone was not a starting point in conservation planning;

- * inventories record individual buildings
- * they do not map patterns at the larger scale
- * they do not give an overview of an area
- * they do not identify important relationships between buildings and other significant features

Conservation area policies were usually the most appropriate for these kinds of relationship.

Inventories could be considered as a step in the development of an integrated conservation policy problems. Making inventories was expensive and very time consuming. Therefore a more time effective surveying method was needed which would still supply the basic evidence for a conservation programme to be implemented in any area.

Their work had been an attempt to achieve this and it was from this perspective that they made a contribution to the workshop.

What type and depth of archival research is necessary to provide adequate evidence for a conservation programme?

It was essential that a considerable amount of work was done in the archives prior to getting involved in any specific area because there were unique configurations, families of elements and types which could be found across the spectrum of natural and building elements and that could explain cultural landscape history.

There was a constant need to check research findings against fieldwork to note what had endured and what had been built in its

place.

There was an absolutely non-negotiable need to systematically date buildings, comparing historical maps to see if certain buildings were there or not at a certain date.

Substantial work was required to build up the evidence of architectural history using photographs, panoramas, and building plans.

Collection of data should be guided by criteria which were always relative:

1. they were always context-related,
2. the perspective was a cultural perspective,
3. they are relative to a particular researcher.

The surveyor should be conscious of inevitable bias and state clearly the values and criteria that were used.

An attempt should be made to identify

1. assets,
2. current threats,
3. appropriate policy responses.

Maps are the essential inventory tool.

It is not the standard forms, but the maps that represent and explicate the specifics of the place, and represent the essential tool for policy-making.

Once the basis for a conservation programme in the area has been established, the other environmentally significant features of the area, which are not necessarily conservation related in the narrow sense, but may be more related to development or opportunity, are identified. An attempt is made to connect conservation with development.

THE FIELD SURVEY

Method and mapping

Pat Riley had been involved in a range of differing scales of surveys.

She noted the importance of keeping in mind the use of the survey:

Identification of national monuments, items for the register, concentrations of conservation-worthy items - conservation areas, guidelines, cataloguing and as dating sieves in more sophisticated surveys.

The aims of surveys were:

1. The identification and location of conservation-worthy items, such as buildings, cemeteries, archaeological sites, etc

2. The identification of potential threats, such as zoning, roads, decay due to outdated usage, building material hunters, etc.

In practice:

Surveys should be carried out by at least two people.

No decisions or evaluations should be made unilaterally.

Local statutory bodies and local inhabitants should be alerted to the fact of one doing the survey in their area.

Identifying clothes, badges, etc should be worn and one should be ready to explain one's activities.

Communication with local people often brings useful information.

One should get to know one's area intimately.

Preliminary archival research must continue through survey and relate to physical findings.

Documents should be arranged to facilitate use in the field.

The following steps were recommended:

1. A windscreen survey.
2. Definition of area to be surveyed.
3. Selection of items considered conservation worthy.
4. Mapping and recording.

All surveying systems should be orientated towards easy information retrieval by whatever method seemed appropriate to the particular area - this could differ according to circumstances.

When mapping in urban areas it was vital to obtain the co-operation of the local authority.

A scaled map showing erf numbers and road names was used and this often needed to be updated, a daunting task for an amateur.

Accuracy was essential.

Mapping in rural areas could be difficult because maps did not exist, and aerial or trigonometrical surveys were often out of date and at too small a scale.

Doing one's own aerial survey could be not too expensive. This would then need to relate to the national grid and be scaled.

Correct present and possible earlier names of properties must be ascertained. It should be remembered that these are sometimes incorporated into larger estates.

Accuracy must be constantly checked.

The Survey Form

Lesley Townsend Freedman presented the NMC's proposed survey form. She explained that the purpose of the form was to obtain information in a format that was easily retrievable by the NMC. The surveyed item would then be assessed in terms of its cultural value, in order to decide on the protection needed and the policy to be adopted for its conservation.

Archaeology and indigenous/non-permanent architecture were not being considered at this workshop, but would be addressed at successive workshops.

The form had been designed to be as simple as possible - to be used by untrained recorders as well as professionals.

The form would be distributed with a handbook explaining how to do a survey, including explanations on the reasons for, and how to do, archival research, where to obtain information, maps, photographs etc. The necessity for noting sources was stressed.

The handbook explains how areas that have retained their historical character, and the various landscape elements, were mapped.

The NMC was responsible for compiling a national register of conservation-worthy property and conservation areas in consultation with the local authority. The conservation strategy should be worked out together, so that the local authority could amend their town planning schemes to manage conservation.

A simplified book on house styles was also being produced, together with an illustrated glossary of architectural terms, in order to enable non-architects to identify and name architectural elements.

In discussion, Derek Japha said that he thought that one of the problems with the form was that it mixed up things that are better mapped with things that are better accumulated on the form. It was necessary to decide what depth of information was needed to put on the inventory and to make it a real data base that records in considerable depth the cultural heritage of the country. This was a long term project.

One had to distinguish between the information that was geared to putting policies into place, and building up an inventory.

Penny Pistorius said that one could not get a whole lot of basic information on buildings and decide that it was conservation worthy unless one had investigated policy related issues. One needed to know its wider context in order to assess its cultural significance and its conservation-worthiness. The two had to be done concurrently.

Fabio Todeschini thought that one did not have to wait for all the evidence to come in in order to make a decision. It was a cyclical process.

The requirement was to devise a quick method.
Certain basic knowledge could make it possible for at least a

preliminary decision. A method precisely based on methodological principle should be devised.

James Walton noted that one of the problems was the format in which this could be expressed, and the selection of information to record. He tabled Bob Meeson's summary of the problem.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Dealing with assesment criteria, Professor Brian Kearney said that if we accept the fact that items had to be surveyed, or inventorized, there were three possible reasons for assessing or evaluating the value of the items surveyed:

1. The first related to the purpose of the workshop: to provide or support motivation for the declaration, listing or inclusion in a conservation area, of an item, by the NMC;
2. to clarify the significance of the item, or parts of the item, to guide a policy for its conservation:
3. to provide a value for the item in relative terms, so as to gauge its level of importance.

These reasons would overlap with each other.

The problem with establishing clear criteria for NMC motivation was that such criteria should relate to the National Monuments Act which nowhere mentioned architecture, although the majority of declarations, etc were buildings conserved for their architectural merits.

He suggested that the most effective assessment would be provided by a brief statement of significance of each item surveyed.

Words of description were needed and they should be brief and unambiguous, including the phases of construction and their dates, the scale and size of the item, the uses, the architectural form and spaces, the relationship of the building to its immediate and greater environments and any other associations it may have.

Together with all the other survey information, the establishment of assessment criteria provided the basis for appropriate and reasoned decisions regarding the conservation, restoration, or rescuing of the item.

Broad and general categories such as cultural and scientific did not assist us in this process.

Very specific criteria should be used which seek to clarify and describe the precise elements of the architecture. This should not include style description.

One must accept that the process of recording was in itself imbued with a value judgement. Declarations of the NMC were value judgements, based on the maximum amount of information available at the time of assessment.

The NMC should set itself a checklist of architectural,

environmental and historical criteria in order to make decisions regarding the protection a building or an area may require.

Professor Kearney gave a list of suggested criteria by which to evaluate items which would be used by the NMC, referring to the information provided by the surveyor on the survey form.

* This list is enclosed for your perusal.

GRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION OF THE SURVEY

Dr Wally Peters described the different field survey documents that he had encountered.

He identified five main categories to be used in conservation surveying:

1. Identification data (photographs, cadastral information, and addresses),
2. Architectural and construction data,
3. Historical and biographical data,
4. Other information, including environmental data, bibliography, sources of information,
5. The evaluation.

The evaluation should be integral with the survey sheet, with judgement being based on explicit criteria.

Data should be descriptive and as objective as possible.

He recommended the use of a file on each building, in which photocopies of articles, old photographs, maps, etc, conveying important information about buildings and groups of buildings and their contexts, could be kept.

He emphasised the need for the document to be robust since its purpose was for use in the field and being thumbed by many people.

SURVEY ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Derek Japha used two of the studies his team had done to illustrate his points. The two studies were selected for their differences rather than their similarities.

He talked about the relationship between research and policy.

Each of the studies related to policy issues in two ways.

Methods had been designed so that survey data accumulated could be directly related to the various conservation policy instruments that were available, and that would be used to deal with it.

The Rondebosch study was done for a sophisticated local authority with in-house conservation staff, with an expensive data base and an

established awareness of the importance of conservation planning.

The process had been as follows:

1. Thorough date screens of every building in the study area were compiled, made from archival maps with a 25 year interval, which were considered reliable.

Once the date maps were compiled from archival sources, every building was checked in the field against the dates produced by the maps for discrepancy.

2. A short urban history was compiled from evidence from historical maps. The main purpose of this exercise was to understand the history of the urban morphology of the area. This was then represented in a series of diagrams.

3. A limited amount of archival research on buildings was done, mainly by examining historical photographs of selected buildings - the objective being to sensitize themselves to the range of common types of buildings built in the area at different periods.

4. Most important product of the study was a series of maps, which were produced by:

- a. Mapping buildings and other elements considered to be significant in certain categories,
- b. Mapping streets considered to have retained their historical character and those streets that had retained the historical grain of their development, but not necessarily historical detail of individual buildings.
- c. Mapping landscape features such as trees, open spaces, hedges, etc

Judgements were made with the policy planners about which areas should be considered for promulgation as conservation areas or special areas, and these were mapped.

5. As an adjunct to the maps, the study gave detailed reasons why each area was proposed as a conservation area.

6. A list of buildings by street number was supplied, giving reasons why the buildings were considered different. They were placed into different categories of significance and related to what was considered the appropriate policy instrument to be applied.

7. The final product of the study was an appendix on the method.

The principle policy instruments used by the CCC were conservation area provisions framed in terms of the Land Use Planning Ordinance which permits special building regulations, aesthetic control and guidelines and also Special Area provisions which included zoning controls.

The study was framed to flag buildings outside the conservation areas and to suggest possible courses of action.

Landscape management was a vital concern on the Rondebosch site

because of its relationship to the mountain, its well developed open space system and well established trees.

Franschhoek was totally different. The study was done for a local Trust and covered a small municipality in the process of completing a structure plan. The study was done to supply the local Trust with ammunition to use in affecting the outcome of the structure plan.

The following information was collated:

1. a date screen from data provided by the museum;
2. urban history of the area, descriptions of building types found in the area;
3. analysis of the main public spaces in the town, maps showing landscape features and significant buildings;
4. an analysis of development pressures tending to result in the loss of, or erosion to, historical buildings in the town;
5. a list of buildings with photographs and descriptions of those considered worth conserving;
6. principles for guidelines for a conservation programme;
7. the types of control relating to new and existing development;
8. index of the method which detailed the way that judgement had been applied.

The report addressed general planning issues which impinged on conservation and which could not be dealt with directly by the conservation programme itself.

These included investigating appropriate densities and sites of new housing developments in different parts of the town, so that existing patterns of development could be re-inforced, looking at where new housing development in the town could best be located, so that the adverse effect on the historic core of the town could be kept to a minimum, and examining the implications of new development in particular areas in the town for its relationship to its rural landscape setting, particularly to the farmlands around its boundary.

The local Trust gained control of the municipality on a pro-conservation platform and was now directing the business of putting the programme in place. The study was being incorporated into the structure plan.

What was shown was that studies must be tailored to the specific problem at hand and the following was the range of possibilities:

1. Discussion of the method used to make judgements about significance.
2. Urban and architectural histories of the area to different degrees of detail.
3. Descriptions of every building in the area.
4. Descriptions of selected buildings.
7. Compilation of streetscapes of selected parts of the area.
8. Maps of significant buildings and built features.
9. Maps of significant landscape features.
10. Maps of buildings' condition.
11. Analyses of development pressures on conservation-worthy features.
12. Maps of proposed special areas and conservation areas.

13. Arguments motivating for each conservation area.
14. Lists of buildings in different categories which would be dealt with by different conservation policy instruments.
15. Analyses of possible policy instruments which could be used by local authorities to implement a conservation programme.
16. Descriptions of how guidelines work and what kind of controls they should and should not impose.

Out of this range of possible elements in the study, each particular study had its own internal demands and it was impossible to standardise it because what was necessary was a function of the problem.

The variables that must be taken into account in deciding the kind of material that goes into any particular study should include:

1. The type of client
2. The type of planning process of which the conservation programme was part
3. The policy instruments which were intended to be used
4. The management strategy which was intended to apply to those policy instruments once the conservation programme had been going
5. The particular characteristics of the context in which one was working
6. The budget which was available to the person doing the survey

During discussion Fabio Todeschini explained that a structure plan did not remove or confer rights, but was an instrument from which guidance was sought with respect to any modifications, and the policy instrument in terms of giving direction. The zoning scheme was the day to day management instrument which took its direction from the structure plan.

In the Land Use Planning Ordinance there was only one requirement that was made with regard to substance of the proposed structure plan: It had to address conservation issues. It didn't say that it had to address anything else.

THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

Mr Tertius Smit, Architect and Town Planner of Worcester Municipality said that a solution had to be found to allow for a balance between conservation and development. There had to be acceptance by the town council, the National Monuments Council, the Simon van der Stel Foundation, future developers, the Provincial Administration and other bodies involved.

Further to the survey of Worcester done by the NMC, the municipality wanted to take those buildings that they had listed and their different categories as a guideline. The listed buildings were going to be incorporated into their new revised town planning scheme, as well as the structure plan of Worcester. A shortcoming in the survey was the graphical presentation of street scenes. He, together with his department, divided it into blocks and put in the heights of buildings, zoning of the property, their condition, the land-use etc. Also lacking was a brief historical background and plans of each building. When plans were submitted for alterations the municipality needed to know what the original plan looked like. When people came and did research in the town, the municipality would

like to have the information to give them.

He felt that the workshop was long overdue.

During discussion time Ms du Preez noted that an aesthetics committee had been established in Worcester under the chairmanship of Mr Tetius Smit with various architectural firms, land surveyors, the NMC and other bodies represented. The formulation of guidelines for alterations and additions to properties in Worcester is being done.

Tertius Smit noted that the smaller towns that did not have aesthetic committees were suffering.

Fabio Todeschini thought that the National Monuments Council should use the Act to show that it had considerable power which it was willing to exercise.

George Hofmeyr, Director of the NMC, agreed that it was important to have precedents in which the Act was shown to be effective.

Franco Frescura stressed the importance of oral history and surveying being done within an anthropological framework.

THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL MONUMENTS COUNCIL

Ashley Lillie (Northern Cape Regional Representative) said that the NMC recognised that it was dependent on three distinct features: education, control and management. In order to exercise control conservation-worthy buildings had to be identified. Surveying was what enabled this.

On receipt by the NMC of a survey of any area it had to be processed in a certain way. Declaration of national monuments was one aspect.

He emphasised that "what we are concerned with today is the national register". What protection was there for that building once on the national register or in a conservation area?

The local authority was the body that should control the conservation of those buildings. The only control that the NMC had, was that the local authority had to consult with the NMC in the event of any planning affecting the building.

Part of any survey should be guidelines and recommendations. Thence special plans procedures could be generated by the town planning schemes.

Buildings were placed on the national register with the co-operation of the local authority. Problems arose with local authorities which did not have expertise in conservation.

He noted that a centralised data bank would enhance the NMC's ability to manage conservation by generating registers and lists of national monuments which could be supplied to local authorities.

The idea of having a register was to create by-laws, Control delegated to the local authority through their town planning schemes and by-laws and then the protection determined in consultation with the NMC.

Penny Pistorius said that a case could be made for doubling up on legislation because, for example, the control that Cape Town was able to exercise in its urban conservation areas was quite limited, therefore they would need the NMC as a back-up.

SUMMING UP

Professor Kearney summed up at the end by noting his surprise that such an amazing assembly of people should have such difficulty finding consensus on what would appear to be quite a simple exercise.

The workshop was, from many points of view, extremely valuable, if only in that so many viewpoints had been openly debated.

What we were witnessing was a situation where the concept of surveying was viewed from many perspectives and each one came with an almost divergent view of what we meant by surveying.

He identified three groups:

1. The NMC's view of the survey and how they perceived the need.

The form was an expressed viewpoint of a range of information that the NMC would like to have, to enable it to do a number of things.

The NMC had to be asked to articulate more clearly what the information was going to be used for.

Was its purpose simply a data file, a collection of cadastral descriptions as statements of significance? Was it to encompass the broad range of types of conservation problems and potential through the country from items on the register to national monuments?

Was it, as he had understood the workshop to be, primarily concerned with items on the register? If so then we could reach consensus quite easily - simple basic information could be agreed upon:

- map reference and a statement about the building -

This would be the base from which we worked, from which other more carefully studied elements were drawn. After that one could decide what needs to be analysed and studied further.

As far as the form was concerned, if we perceived the need and the possibility that there were people around our country who were only too willing to assist in that process, then maybe another form was required, with a guide book.

Thus there would be two forms; one for professionals and one for amateurs.

2. The professional surveyors, who articulated a requirement for a philosophically neat well-structured process of surveying, one that starts with a new and exiting view of history and culture, that was more all-embracing, deeper in many respects.

This group must be aware that there were different levels. We could not expect to resolve a conservation crisis by having the

depth and quality of academic research that should be done. It was a fairytale situation. It was never going to happen and we were going to lose an enormous amount of our heritage.

3. The local authority viewpoint, who articulated the need for urgency, and hard tangible information. From them we needed to know what kind of assistance was necessary.

Fabio Todeschini said that if the basic information was needed for beginning the register, the design of the form should be tackled by the NMC.

Penny Pistorius said that she thought that there seemed to be a fear that if the register were started and going in the wrong direction, that this could never be resolved. The register was flexible, it could be adjusted constantly, items could be removed and added, it was not fixed. If the form that we start out on was not ideal it could be changed and the register could be reassessed.

CLOSURE

Professor Danie Theron noted at the end of the workshop that there was a need for a planning tool, or a base of some kind. No matter how shaky that base may be, one could build on it from there onwards.

He said that there had been a wide range of opinions and the NMC should now evolve a form or forms to obtain the information required by the NMC to establish the register.

The Council wanted to broaden its support and its scope and perception.

He said that in the end the opinions heard were not as divergent as they may have seemed. It was in the debate, that a policy was embroidered and enhanced.

He said that when the form was evolved it would be distributed for comment.

THANK YOU

In closing the workshop George Hofmeyr, the Director of the NMC, said that it had been a very important exercise from the NMC's point of view. He felt that the NMC had been given some guidelines for the direction in which it should be going, and that had been the reason for the workshop. Thus its purpose had been fulfilled.

He said that we needed everyone around the table to assist us, and thanked them all for their enthusiastic participation.

He thanked Lesley Townsend for organising the workshop, and Penny Pistorius and Janette Deacon, who encouraged and assisted her. He thanked Janette Deacon and Elizabeth Nojoko for serving the teas and lunch; and Cemelia Bam for her help.

Lesley Freedman Townsend
12 June 1990