

Preservation, Conservation and Heritage: Approaches to the Past in the Present through the Built Environment

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Abstract

The task of this article is first to establish that there are quite different ways of viewing the past from the present and that these approaches or paradigms have arisen for different reasons and have evolved through time. The successive introduction of what are labeled here as the preservation, conservation and heritage paradigms did not lead, as in most other academic pursuits, to the replacement of one paradigm by another, but to a parallel coexistence of multiple approaches. The consequence of this incomplete paradigm shift has been the emergence of a number of misunderstandings and even contradictions, with important impacts upon the uses of the past in the present. In particular, there are evident gaps between the theorists, resource custodians and managers and the various users. Although the past is manifested in many forms in the present, the focus here is upon relict built environments because historically it was upon this topic that the different paradigms became clearly polarized and issues of place planning and management arise.

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