NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING

The 1st General Meeting of the Society for 1987 will be held in:

THE CONSERVATION CENTRE, 120 WAKEFIELD STREET ADELAIDE

on

MONDAY 23RD MARCH 1987 AT 8.00 PM.

AGENDA

1. Apologies:

2. Minutes of the Previous General Meeting:
   Minutes of the previous general meeting, held in the Conservation Centre, 120 Wakefield Street, Adelaide on 27th October 1986, having been circulated in this Journal to be confirmed.

3. Papers and Journals:
   Papers and journals received from other societies and organisations, since the last general meeting, will be tabled at this meeting.

4. Speaker:
   Dr Elizabeth Williams, will address the society.
   The subject of her address will be:

   "Archaeological experiences - Cooper Creek".

5. Supper will be served at the close of the meeting.

R. Allison
Hon. Secretary
120 Wakefield Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000
"CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF HISTORIC SITES IN CONTEMPORARY
AND ANCIENT CHINA".

by Betty F. Ross

An address to the Anthropological Society of South Australia, Adelaide.

27th October 1986.

Introduction:

This paper explores conservation and management programs at historic sites in contemporary and ancient China. The relevance of town planning to heritage management is examined in Beijing and other ancient capitals as well as country regions such as Henan Province in Central China.

During April and May 1986 I travelled through China with the Australian Academy of Tai Chi and Wushu. This presented the opportunity of visiting places of cultural significance in the development of China's fighting history as well as discovering Chinese history through the eyes of my travelling companions and our national and local guides from the China International Travel Service.

In particular I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Eng Chor Kmor, Australian Academy of the Tai Chi and Wushu, Mr. Qiao Buogiang, China International Travel Service, Zhengzhou Branch, Mr. Jing Bo, Central Office, Beijing, Communist Party of China, Mr. Chang Ping, Municipal Cultural Heritage Bureau, Mr. Zhang Ning and Mr. Zhao Qi Chang, Capital Museum, Beijing, Mr. Michael Wu, Ausina Tours and Mr. Phil Spencer, Corporation of the Town of Hindmarsh.

Town Planning - A National perspective:

Beijing is a modern capital set in a landscape with a remarkable history, including some of the earliest evidence of Man (Peking Man at 600,000 years and in southern China 1 - 2 million years), as well as nearly 4000 years of written records. It is from these recent historical dynasties that the present Han Chinese trace their ancestral origins in central China. Throughout the dynasties, significant social and political events, scholarly works, philosophy and legends of the day have been written or carved on stone tablets, such as the tablets at Shaolin Temple. Therefore, in China, retaining and respecting the ways of the past is a popular concept.

With regard to the protection of historic places today, a number of legislative Acts are being implemented at a national, provincial and local level. These acts appear similar in administration and content to many of the environmental, heritage and planning requirements under commonwealth, state and local government acts in Australia. Similar "Levels of Significance" for sites have also been defined - national, 'state' or 'local' significance and funding for conservation programs comes from corresponding sources.

In the decade since the Cultural Revolution, the modernisation of China has happened dramatically. Under the umbrella of the most recent National Development Plan, the Sixth Five Year Plan (1981 - 1986), China has achieved much in areas such as town planning.
Beijing:

As one of China's six ancient capitals, Beijing has the largest number of historical relics and ancient structures in China. The charm of Old Beijing is retained by controlling the shape of the skyline and restoring and displaying cultural relics is a major consideration under the General Plan for the Urban Construction of Beijing 1983.

To protect the aesthetic value of Beijing's historical structures, restrictions are placed on the height of new buildings going up in historic vicinities, eg. the grounds around the Forbidden City have been limited to lawns and houses under 9 metres. The height of surroundings can rise gradually as they extend outwards, with the highest building being 45 metres. Control over the height, size, style and colour of proposed buildings is monitored by the Capital Architecture Art Committee. This ensures that the structures to be built are compatible with the architectural style of the ancient city.

According to a recent survey, 7309 historical sites are located in Beijing. Of these 189 have been classified and listed by the State Government as some of the nation's most important relics. These sites are managed and restored under legislation administered by the Beijing Cultural Relics Administrative Bureau, founded in 1979. The Act provides for the protection of cultural relics and fire-proofing of ancient structures.

Between 1981 and 1985, 60 million Yuan ($30 million) was spent on renovating nearly 100 ancient relics in Beijing and more than 50 have been open to the public for the first time, including the Great Wall, Ming Tombs, the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace. The best preserved suburbs, characterised by the traditional residential courtyards, within Beijing are being restored and fitted with modern facilities.

Sorting and displaying relics is another project under way. The City of Beijing has only 40 museums, which compared to the wealth of relics, is seen to be far too few. Many museums display particular themes such as the Capital Museum, which represents the Pre-history and History of the Beijing City and Region including the site of 'Peking Man', and a historical War Museum which displays some of the earliest aboriginal stone tools and flint spear heads from neolithic times.

Restoration and development projects:

Cultural relics have not escaped the impact of industrialisation, urbanisation and tourism. Numerous projects were visited where restoration or conservation methods varied. Historic sites from Southern, Central and Northern China, in the form of ancient capitals, temples, tombs, sacred mountains, rivers, lakes and gardens are sites located in Beijing, Qufu, Zhengzhou, Xanghai, Hangzhou, Shaolin, Tai Shan, Li River, Qilin are illustrated here and preservation problems and solutions for each are discussed in these general categories.

Ancient Cities:

Beijing. The impact of New Beijing on the character of Old Beijing is apparent in this skyline, where traditional structures remain clear of the surrounding modern sky scarppers.

Forbidden City, Also known as Imperial Palace, was the nucleus of the ancient capital during the Yuan dynasty (1271 - 1368 AD) when the Palace grounds were built. Further constructions during the Ming (1368 - 1644) and Ching (1644 - 1912) dynasties produced the traditional courtyards,'Siheyuans'. The north/south grid system, unique
to Beijing is evident in the alignment of buildings along this axis. This photograph shows the outer walls of the Palace and the smaller support residences of court officials and relatives, the sculptured animals, cranes and turtles need protective barriers built of metal frames, to reduce tourist damage. The stone carved stairs or dragon walks, consisting of sculptured clouds, dragons, phoenixes, heavenly clouds and tranquil seas, also require these barriers.

Walls and Gates:

One of the sections of the Great Wall, open to visitors is located about 70 kilometers north west of Beijing at Badaling Pass. Built over a period of 2000 years, this wall stretches from Hebei Province in the east to Gansu Province in the west, a distance of 6700 kilometers.

Badaling Ridge is 1000 meters above sea level and one of the highest parts of the wall. Here a tourist centre has been incorporated into the developments. Various materials of cut local stone and bricks are evident in the structure of the Wall. The structural composition of the Wall is particularly evident in an ancient section which is under repair.

Eng Chor Khor performed a Dragon Phoenix Fan Dance on the Great Wall and on the surface of the Wall, in the background, tourists have carved their initials on every available square inch.

Building materials and styles at Badaling Pass contrast with the brick laying patterns of this northern gate of a Han Dynasty wall in Qufu, Shandong Province.

In Central China, an area rich in historic resources, the remains of an early Shang Dynasty (17 - 16th century BC) civilisation have been unearthed in the course of urban development in Zhengzhou, Henan Province. A small museum is being erected over the site so that relics can be excavated and displayed 'in situ'. This procedure is similar to the management of the 'Entombed Warriors' in Xian, but not at grand a scale. Sites such as these Shang graves, come under the classification of national importance and excavation work is being conducted from funds from Beijing.

Other signs of the ancient capital of Zhengzhou are evident in the remains of the Shang City mud walls. Old men, playing Chinese Checkers appear to guard the preserved sections of the mud walls.

Temples:

In Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, the Ling-yin Temple is one of the largest Buddhist centres in Asia. In 1953 the government formed the Chinese Buddhist Association, to organise previous local units of buddhist into a nation-wide body. One of the aims was to promote Buddhist cultural activities and to this end the Association assists in identifying and protecting cultural institutions and objects. The Ling-Yin Temple is one several famous temples being restored with government funding.

At the Confucius Temple in Qufu, Shandong Province, wood and painted decorations are also being repaired. Temporary mesh screens enclose many of the engraved columns. At this temple as protection from May Day tourists.
In Qufu, the government has undertaken to restore the many sites associated with the sage, Confucius. These funds will be allocated and administered by the Management Committee for Historic Relics, the body administering the Environmental Legislation in Qufu.

The entrance gate to Shaolin Temple was first built in 1735 AD and restored in 1974. The ancient bricks and ceramic roofing tiles are reproduced using the old methods with were recorded on tablets in the inner courtyards. Hence building materials and architectural styles can be confusing as an indicator of antiquity.

A Shaolin monk entertained us in a special courtyard, not open to the public, by playing an ancient musical instrument, a Gouheung. This courtyard is a source of dispute amongst the locals and monks who consider the secrets and knowledge of the monastery teaching should not be exposed or represented in this form. Others argue that these teachings are being practiced by so few, that the arts should be recorded by depicting animated figures demonstrating the eight fighting forms unique to Shaolin, before such arts are forgotten.

One stone tablet, at Shaoun, engraved with the face of a monk, depicts the three religions of China: Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. Parts of the face have been outlined in Chalk by a tourist, to improve the image for photography. This type of vandalism of relics was rarely encountered in China.

Some monuments were designed to be touched and to have healing properties, such as the belly and foreheads of the 800 year old Shaolin 'iron man' and the head and tail of this turtle at Qufu.

**Tombs:**

The Confucius Forest is an example of one of the oldest family graveyards, for the Kung clan, and is 2400 years old. Many of these relics were successfully restored during the Ming dynasty.

Ancient pine trees, of a brachless type, grow around Qufu and at Confucius' grave. Visitors are able to explore these sites without many restrictions.

In addition to the family graves, other types of tomb include the Pagoda Forest of the Shaolin Monks, the underground tombs of a Prefect and his wife during the Han dynasty, emperors tombs near Beijing, known as the Ming Tombs and built during the Ming dynasty.

The Dingling Underground Palace is one of the tombs in the Ming Tombs Complex and was built by Emperor Zhu Yijun as a young man. Grave goods in this tomb included exotic jewelled head dresses and eternally burning candles, in glazed ceramic urns filled with sesame oil. The Dragon Walk at Ding Ling features a dragon, the Emperor's heavenly symbol as well as a phoenix, the Empress's heavenly sign. Metal barriers around these stairs protect them from the feet of millions of tourists.

**Sacred Mountains:**

Five sacred mountains in China, Song Shan - central mountain, Tai Shan in the north, Hua Shan in the west, Huang Shan in the east and Heng Shan in the south, are depicted on a stone tablet at the base of Song Shan, near Shaolin. At the summit of Tai Shan in Shandong Province, is a Daoist monastery, many old women with bound feet make the six mile climb to the summit as a religious pilgrimage, to pay homage to the
mountain god for her blessing. Stones are placed in the bushes to ensure the birth of a son. Historic tablets, gates and legendary rocks occur throughout the mountain. Of particular interest is the Tang dynasty caligraphy at the summit, that tells of the visits by eminent Emperors and Philosophers.

A Buddhist monastery located on Thousand Buddah Hill, Qianfo in Jinan, attracts hundreds of locals at day break to meditate, usually practicing breathing exercises known as 'chekung'.

Mangshan, on the banks of the Yellow river, and Camel Hill, on the Li river, also have local significance.

Elephant Mountain in Guilin, represents a mythological elephant believed to have brought fertility into a barren landscape. So angered was the Emperor that he sent his warrior to slay the elephant for assisting the people. The Pagoda on the mountain represents the warrior's sword, piercing the elephant's back.

Rivers, lakes and gardens:

The wake of tourist boats on the Li river between Guilin and Yanhsou was eroding the river banks. Cement and stone levees have now been built to minimise the impact on the farming and fishing villages along the river.

Tourist boats on West Lakes, Hangzhou, have less impact on the landscape and these lakes are no longer subject to tidal flows. About 1400 years ago the lakes were dammed as a flood control measure. Historic bridges and restaurants around the shores of the lakes are examples of the many cultural relics in the area.

The Garden on Yingzhou Islet, West Lakes, typifies the beauty and antiquity of Chinese gardens. Other examples are those gardens in the Kung family mansion, Qufu.

Peony flowers at the Ming Tomb Gardens illustrate one of China's seven sacred flowers. Cities such as Luoyang, in Henan, have been famous for their Peony roses since the 7th century. Another ancient can be seen in the Bonsai Gardens at Guilin Zoo and the Concubines' courtyard in the Imperial Palace in Beijing.

In summary, the magnitude, wealth and frequency of historic and prehistoric sites in China is a stark contrast to the cultural sites in Australia. The administration and legal mechanism support retaining history in the face of development. Not all sites are kept and mistakes have been made. Beijing greatly regrets bulldozing the original city wall to make way for the new freeway. By comparison Australia has much to learn from China's experience in tourist management, town planning and heritage conservation.
Sources:

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