

# Example of historic living city literature review

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## **Introduction**

Heritage planning primarily involves the development, preservation, and restoration of heritage sites. Heritage sites come in different forms and one of which is the historic living city. Essentially, the historic living city pertains to towns or cities that grow alongside the development of urban spaces. It contributes or influences development in various disciplines such as heritage planning and architecture among others, and components or segments of human life be it cultural, economic, social, and political life (Bandarin & van Oers, 2012; Serageldin, Shluger, & Martin-Brown, 2001; Weyeneth, 2000). Historic living cities also bear specific qualities and characteristics, which is why defining the term is very important so practitioners in heritage planning can evaluate and identify spaces thoroughly and appropriately. Identifying historic living cities by defining qualities and characteristics of spaces is also a prerequisite in heritage planning.

Through proper evaluation and if spaces prove to be historic living cities, only then can practitioners develop suitable objectives and prescribe appropriate methods and approaches towards the development, preservation, and restoration of these sites. The following discussion covers a broad definition of the 'historic living city' based on different charters, laws, and approaches or movements. It will be followed by a discussion of heritage planning practices in historic living cities within the context of different dimensions – social interaction, safety and security, physical structure, cultural identity, privacy and movement pattern.

## **Defining Historic Living City**

Defining historic living city is important in heritage planning because the definition will help establish the practitioner's goals and objectives for the heritage plans. More specifically, defining the qualities or characteristics of historic cities is important in identifying appropriate sites that must fall under plans of development, preservation or reconstruction among others, anticipating the needs of historic cities, and determining suitable approaches or practices that would guide the management of these sites. Prior to the drafting of specific approaches and practices to implement in historic living cities, spaces must be assessed based on pre-established features and characteristics (World Heritage Center, 2012).

Historic living cities were not appropriately defined previously, but the rise of urban spaces and the necessity to preserve key features and structures in urban areas changed that. During the 19th century, practitioners developed the operational definition of 'historic living city' as a concept that influences design practices and contributes to urban development (Bandarin & van Oers, 2012). The following definitions of the 'historic living city' specify approaches, strategies, and practices in heritage planning based on various charters, laws, and approaches that set guidelines, objectives, and methods. Historic living city may be defined in many ways depending on the context of use. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defined the historic area or city as "any groups of buildings, structures, and open spaces including archaeological and paleontological sites, constituting human settlements in an urban or rural environment" (UNESCO, 2011). Historic areas or cities include but are not limited to the following: "prehistoric sites, historic towns, old urban quarters, villages and <https://assignbuster.com/example-of-historic-living-city-literature-review/>

hamlets as well as homogenous monumental groups” (UNESCO, 2011).

These sites must be acknowledged and considered of value by experts in different disciplines in different sciences, such as applied science (e. g. Architecture) and social sciences (e. g. Anthropology). The Washington Charter of 1987 also supports this stance, such that heritage planning and the conservation of historic living cities must be in accordance to and address issues in other disciplines, such as archaeology, architecture, and history among others (ICOMOS, 1987). The qualification of historic living cities must be substantiated by professionals in these disciplines.

The Washington Charter of 1987 defined historic cities within the context of traditional urban cultures. Heritage planning has become a highly important function and practice as a result of the rapid urbanization of spaces that threaten to undermine heritage sites that contribute to cultural awareness and development. The discipline of heritage planning responds to this issue by ensuring that historic sites are preserved regardless of modern developments in other areas. In the Washington Charter of 1987, the priority of heritage planning must be to protect heritage sites such as historic cities from the detrimental outcomes of urbanization as a result of industrialization. Hence, it also involves a monitoring of urban development or the evolution of urban areas to

In response to this problem, the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, also known as The Venice Charter, constitutes a set of objectives and practices for the protection, conservation, and restoration of historic urban areas. In the charter, the definition of historic urban areas include natural and man-made, and small or large environments in cities, towns, and quarters. Similarly, the Operational <https://assignbuster.com/example-of-historic-living-city-literature-review/>

Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (World Heritage Centre, 2012), historic living cities pertain to clusters of urban structures such as uninhabited towns proven to be archaeological evidences. Historic living cities also include inhabited historic towns affected by socio-economic change, and new towns developed during the 20th century that bear similarities with the former criteria. The distinction between these three types of historic living cities clearly defines their features, characteristics, and differences.

Inhabited or old historic towns or cities are essentially fragile, and therefore, in danger and needs protection in an environment that adheres to rapid urbanization. Hence, these towns or cities must draw attention to these inhabited historic spaces not only because structures or areas played a role in history but also because they require immediate attention because of their precarious state. Only through the identification of these features will these areas be inscribed for development plans. In this case, the role of heritage planning is to look for ways to conserve and restore inhabited or old historic cities or towns in order to ensure that they would withstand changes in their environment. Inhabited or old history towns or cities have four different categories: towns that represent a particular period in history, towns that evolved throughout time, historic centers, and spaces that define the character of towns. These categories further define historic or old towns or cities. Due to the fragility or vulnerability of inhabited or old historic towns or cities, the preservation or restoration of these spaces take precedence over urbanization in their environment. On the contrary, uninhabited towns are not similarly in precarious states as inhabited or old historic towns or cities. However, they require attention because they are of historical importance <https://assignbuster.com/example-of-historic-living-city-literature-review/>

(World Heritage Centre, 2012).

Bandarin and van Oers (2012) further discussed the inhabited or old historic cities or towns based on changes or trends over time. Bandarin and van Oers cited the definition of the historic living city as a representation of historical continuum that necessitates learning and understanding. It is through the understanding of historic cities' role in history that people, such as heritage planners, can subsequently understand how to link development planning to current trends and changes in the sites' surroundings. Hence, the historical continuum illustrates the relationship between inhabited or old historic towns or cities to urban development, such that the continuity of the latter also involves plans for the former.

Modernism has also contributed to the definition of historical living cities (Bandarin & van Oers, 2012) such that it highlighted the importance of viewing heritage sites as important factors that similarly contribute to urban development. This concept contrasts with previously held beliefs or views that historical towns and cities are barriers to urban development.

Modernism helped by allowing practitioners to assess historic living cities using a set of guidelines and approaches. Later on, approaches that emerged after modernism, such as the typo-morphological approach continued to contribute to the definition of historic living cities. The typo-morphological approach, for instance, defines historic living cities alongside urban developments. As urban spaces evolve, so do historic living cities. Hence, an understanding of the changes brought about by urban development on historic living cities and vice versa would clarify the role and functions of the latter as industrialization and urbanization continue (Bandarin & van Oers).

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Apart from charters and approaches, laws implemented by various institutions also contributed to the definition of historic living cities. Examples of laws that define historic cities in urban spaces include Italy's Law for the Protection of the Historic Centres of 1973 and the United Kingdom's Civic Amenities Act of 1967. Both laws emphasized the importance of preserving historic living cities defined as spaces that play a valuable role to society even throughout evolution of spaces due to urbanization. Hence, the criteria in categorizing a site as a historic living city depends on the site's value in society despite changes in the environment. Aside from establishing the literal definition of historic living cities, heritage planning must also consider the definition of these spaces within the context of specific dimensions that will be discussed in the next section. Each dimension describes ideal features and characteristics of historic living cities that should be considered in heritage planning of these spaces in urban areas.

## **Dimensions of Heritage Planning**

Heritage planning is an all-encompassing discipline that views heritage sites such as historic living cities within the context of various dimensions. Such dimensions include historic living cities in relation to social interaction, safety and security, physical structure, cultural identity, privacy and the movement pattern.

In terms of social interaction, heritage planning considers sociological and behavioral impact and features of historic living cities. Essentially, public spaces must encourage meaningful social interaction towards the objective of making human connections a way of life to nurture harmony especially in

urban spaces where diversity is commonplace. In historic living cities, Litvin (2005) asserted that a social interaction must be established through the development, preservation, or restoration of spaces that can host communal activities.

These communal activities bring about liveliness in the community that elicits involvement and contribution from different cultures and sub-cultures in historic living cities. Social interaction as a dimension helps define the objectives and practices in heritage planning, specifically in the conservation of historic living cities. Within this context, social interaction also relates to another dimension – cultural identity. Cohen (1998) identified these objectives and practices as follows:

- Define the character of the urban setting and clarify its borders.
- Define the character and atmosphere of the urban setting to establish the locality's sense of place.
- Describe the link or relation between the urban space and its environment, specifically the use or function of the space in the community.
- Evaluate the style, character, and design of the space and appropriate approaches in relation to these features.
- Evaluate the viability and authenticity of building technologies.

### **Source: Cohen, 1998**

The aforementioned objectives and practices in heritage planning highlights the need for the process to take socio-cultural aspects into consideration in order to maintain the function of historic living cities as spaces for social interaction. Spaces that host various human activities will more likely augment the local culture and lifestyle, which consequently solidifies cultural



identity. As argued by Relph (1976), cultural identity in historic living cities can be defined by its appearance but more so by the kind and quality of human activities that create meaning for people in these communities. Physical structure is another dimension that concerns heritage planning in historic cities. The Washington Charter of 1987 has clearly defined objectives, approaches and methods that should guide heritage planning in historic living cities in relation to the preservation and restoration of physical structures. In conserving physical structures in historic cities, heritage planning must consider economic and social development. Moreover, heritage planning must also consider the conservation of structures that contribute to the character of the historic living city. Qualities such as urban patterns, the juxtaposition of modern structures and green or natural spaces, the quality or characteristics of the interior and exterior, and the function of historic living cities in urban areas define the character of historic living cities (ICOMOS, 1987).

In a way, the physical structure also relates to the dimension of social interaction because one of the roles of the practitioner in heritage planning when it comes to the conservation of historic cities is the enhancement of the aesthetic qualities of the city while also ensuring that it would serve as a significant purpose (Bandarin & van Oers, 2012). Overall, aesthetic approaches in heritage planning and other disciplines such as architecture define practices in relation to the conservation of historic living cities such that priorities for development and reconstruction include the visual appearance of structures.

The Washington Charter of 1987 also defines heritage planning and conservation of historic living cities in part in relation to the dimension of

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safety and security. Safety and security in these areas not only concern the protection of heritage sites but also of the people in the community. Hence, heritage planning not only involves the implementation of measures to ensure that human activities and other events do not damage the historic fabric of these cities but also to protect people and the site from natural and man-made disasters. Safety and security measures may include practices that curb pollution of any kind and other disruptions to human activity such as heavy flow of traffic (ICOMOS, 1987). Heritage planning must take these issues into consideration.

Privacy is another dimension that influences heritage planning because historic living cities include inhabited places where human activities commonly occur. Privacy relates to safety and security not only of structures and sites in historic living cities but also to the safety of people in the community. Urban areas essentially consists of public and internal spaces. Public spaces are open for people in the community while internal spaces are for families and individuals. Privacy is a right and people are entitled to private internal spaces free from public scrutiny, which contributes to personal safety and security. Similarly, privacy also contributes to the safety and security of heritage sites or structures because it is part of conserving historical living cities. In a way, privacy of sites and structures in historic living cities ensure that boundaries are set to limit access to these sites and maintain or preserve their quality.

Laying the groundwork for future policies and practices concern movement patterns as a dimension that influence heritage planning. Movement patterns essentially concerns patterns in human activities and migration among other concepts. Movement patterns relates to heritage planning for <https://assignbuster.com/example-of-historic-living-city-literature-review/>

historical living cities because urban development similarly concerns the growth of population and human activities. It is highly important because population and human activities affect the quality of life in urban communities and could potentially impact the quality and structures in historic living cities, especially their physical features.

Consequently, movement patterns affect environmental sustainability.

Continuous growth of human population in urban areas, for instance, limits resources and thus, creates imbalance and leads to environmental degradation (Bandarin & van Oers, 2012). Hence, alongside urban planning for populations, growth or changes must also be taken into consideration during heritage planning in historic living cities. Heritage planning should therefore involve strategies and practices to maintain sustainability of environmental resources in relation to the current population in historic living cities.

## **Conclusion**

The importance of defining historic living cities lay in the need to correctly identify sites or spaces as part of heritage and developing or implementing appropriate strategies, practices, and approaches to develop, preserve, or restore historic towns or cities. Charters, laws, and approaches help practitioners define historic living cities. Dimensions of these spaces also define heritage planning practices. Dimensions such as social interaction, safety and security, physical structure, cultural identity, privacy and the movement pattern define practices that should be implemented to develop, preserve, and restore historic living cities alongside continuous urban development.

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