

Friday, 24 May

09:15-10:30

PARALLEL SESSIONS

Room 2

Cultural Considerations

Impact on Cultural Significance: A Values-Based Approach to Architectural Heritage Conservation

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The presence of the term ‘cultural significance’ in heritage conservation guidelines issued by ICOMOS, UNESCO and more recently the Council of Europe (CoE) has shifted the origin of evaluation of historic environments from experts to users. The social impact of architectural conservation is, therefore, a topic in need of research, so that cultural heritage values can be enhanced and not mitigated by inattentive interventions. In this presentation the values of a specific building typology of our common cultural heritage will be discussed, and a methodology developed to evaluate the impact of architectural conservation practices will be presented, using historic schools in Portugal as case studies. The presentation will conclude on the value of the use of research and evaluation methods in the built environment stakeholders when addressing the case of architectural conservation of historic schools.

Social Impacts

The Power of Place: How the National Museum of African American History and Culture’s Interactive Place Table Highlights the Social Impacts of African American Built Environments

Lindsey Bestebreurtje, Curatorial Assistant, Office of Curatorial Affairs, Smithsonian Institution - NMAAHC, United States

The Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) opened its doors in September of 2016. One of its inaugural exhibitions is the “Power of Place.” This exhibition uses ten case studies of places in the U.S. illustrating the distinct flavor and experience of each - including the Bronx, Oak Bluffs in Martha’s Vineyard Massachusetts, Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Greenville, Mississippi. These place studies contain a mix of diverse stories—well-known and unknown; mainstream and edgy; celebratory and challenging. At the center of this exhibition the idea of place and region as a crucial component of the African American experience is explored through an interactive multimedia area called the “Place Table.” This table shows professional and personal photographs dating back more than a century. Behind each photo is a story that describes African American life in every pocket of the country. The stories reflect on themes of home, migration, community, displacement, neighborhood, travel, and loss. The table seeks to highlight regional African American culture, and also recognizes the ways in which place is tied to displacement for the community – those places that were lost. In this paper, I explore the development of the table, how stories and images were chosen to highlight the personal and social impacts of physical spaces, and the struggles of both finding stories from lost environments and crowd-sourcing new entries within the black community.

Social Impacts

