



Threads of Conservation

Social fabric • Fabric and place • Conserving fabric

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Donald Ellsmore is convenor of the Australasia Chapter of the Association for Preservation Technology International (APT). A conservation specialist and educator with more than 35 years heritage conservation experience, including advising on works to many landmark Australian heritage places for state and federal Government agencies and in his own practice, he trained as an architect in Australia and France. In 1993 he was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy by the University of York.

In recent years he has taught heritage conservation subjects in Bangkok and Melbourne and developed quality measures and training methodologies for sustainable heritage conservation practice. He is a regular visitor to South East Asia where he delivers occasional heritage conservation workshops in Hong Kong and Malaysia. Donald Ellsmore is the convenor of the annual Longford Academy.

Learning at Longford: the evolution of collaborative training

Paper Abstract

The Longford Academy has emerged as a reliable learning model for the transfer of knowledge and practical skills in built heritage fabric conservation. Now in its sixth year, participants report that they are routinely incorporating their Longford-acquired learning into their day-to-day work at heritage places. This confirms the value of the annual program for heritage practitioners.

The collaborative learning model developed at Longford has been applied with some success elsewhere. It underpins aspects of the training delivered at the George Town World Heritage site in Penang, Malaysia, where the need to build capacity in traditional conservation practices is arguably more acute than it is in Australia. There are now strong indications that the benefits are flowing into the day-to-day work of workshop participants in Penang and Malaysia more generally.

Experiential learning, learning by doing and collaborative learning are key components of training in heritage fabric conservation offered over the past five years at the World Heritage sites, Woolmers and Brickendon in Longford and at the George Town World Heritage site. Without these components training would lack the necessary practical dimensions to make the learning experience real.

In this paper the evolution of the training model will be described and explained. The model will be compared and contrasted with other comparable learning experiences in heritage fabric conservation.