# Whose land is it anyway'?: Conflict and conservation in Kashmir

Tim Winter (University of Sydney)
Shalini Panjabi (Independent Scholar, Bangalore)

## Introduction

The ongoing evolution of the global heritage movement has been marked by a move away from fabric-centred understandings of heritage, towards a language of 'place', 'values' and 'stakeholders'. Recent initiatives like the *Vienna Memorandum* and the *Seoul Declaration* represent important steps in such directions for managing the heritage of urban environments.

This paper examines these developments in the context of Srinagar, the capital city of Indian administered Kashmir. With the conflict in the region enduring for more than fifteen years, the city - regarded as one of the most important pre-modern urban landscapes in South Asia - has suffered extensive physical damage. Nonetheless, the city remains the cultural and political heart of a wider collective identity rooted in the Kashmir Valley. As such, Srinagar presents a rich example of a city that would strongly benefit from the insights gained from Seoul and Vienna; an approach that recognises how a sense of 'place' arises through an intimate dialogue between the built environment and the socio-cultural context within which it sits. However, as we shall see, a framework oriented around 'values' and 'context' opens up unfamiliar and difficult questions and challenges. If a city like Srinagar is to be discussed in more holistic, less fabric-based terms, the interfaces between heritage and its wider social values, such as cultural sovereignty, multi-culturalism or democracy require far greater attention than they have received to date.

## Embracing the complexities of Historic Urban Landscapes

Recent years have seen a major shift within the world of heritage towards understanding ideas of place, landscape and context. This has meant a departure from just conserving individual buildings, in favour of an appreciation of their values and the social, historical and environmental context within which they sit. Such factors have become pivotal to defining the significance of heritage sites.

Two factors can be identified as the driving forces of this shift. Firstly, the expansion of a heritage discourse into ever more complex landscapes, and a gradual recognition of the discordant and competing agendas such environments inevitably deliver. Secondly, a move towards conceiving heritage in less elitist and more democratic terms. As we know, the concept of World Heritage, for example, first emerged in the 1960s as an overwhelmingly 'fabric' based discourse. While the basic premise and concerns of World Heritage have proved relatively robust, concerns about the validity of universalist approaches based purely on expert opinions have continued to grow. In the face of such critiques, there has been a widespread departure from earlier 'top down' models of heritage management in favour of more democratic approaches which valorise concepts like 'stakeholders' or 'values'. These terms reflect a concern for incorporating multiple perspectives, and a plurality of voices. It is now everyday

practice for heritage planners to incorporate – and balance – the views of local residents, academics, local businesses, government offices and non-governmental organizations, with the needs of those consuming the heritage: tourists. As a result, the opinions and interests of central government or outside experts are now countered by more localized, everyday perspectives.

This shift from mere buildings to sites, places and landscapes has particular pertinence for our understanding of the role heritage plays in the complex and dynamic environments of cities. Indeed, it has become increasingly apparent that the foundational charters of today's heritage movement are inadequate for dealing with large urban landscapes and the myriad socio-political agendas they support. Accordingly, within the last two years, two separate initiatives, the Vienna Memorandum (VM) of 2005 and the Seoul Declaration (SD) of 2007, have attempted to foster a more holistic approach to heritage in urban environments. As the Seoul Declaration states:

> Because of the complexity of urban development in metropolitan contexts, new approaches are needed to ensure that heritage outcomes and community needs are effectively integrated into the design and implementation of major development and infrastructure projects. These include the recognition of the underlying economic and strategic planning forces at play, and negotiations based on good understanding of the interests of all parties involved in the planning and decision making process.
>
> (SD 2007: 4)

In a similar vein, the Vienna Memorandum declares:

> The expanding notion of cultural heritage in particular over the last decade, which includes a broader interpretation leading to recognition of human coexistence with the land and human beings in society, requires new approaches to and methodologies for urban conservation and development in a territorial context. The international charters and recommendations have not yet fully integrated this evolution.
>
> (VM 2005: 2)

By approaching heritage in urban landscapes in more holistic terms both documents work towards a language of 'place' narrated through ideas such as 'personality', 'life' or 'emotional quality':

> Heritage sites contribute to the life and memory of the metropolitan areas by the diversity of their uses…Alongside with geographical features and the living social ecosystem, cultural heritage contributes strongly to the personality and character of the metropolis.
>
> (SD 2007: 1)

> Taking into account the emotional connection between human beings and their environment, their sense of place, it is fundamental to guarantee an urban environmental quality of living to contribute to the economic success of a city and to its social and cultural vitality.
>
> (VM 2005: 3)

The documents recognise that in order to understand the 'current and past social expressions and developments' which together constitute a 'place' (VM 2005: 2) ideas of conservation need to move away from 'individual architectural or archaeological sites' (SD 2007: 2) towards an awareness of the broader social and political histories of an urban environment. In other words, the shift in emphasis towards understanding urban 'places' as lived spaces and sites of collective identity foregrounds the broader socio-cultural and political contexts within which heritage sits[1].

This realisation of how places and landscapes are socially realised strongly reflects recent academic debates on the subject, and the emergence of more humanist, phenomenological approaches capable of addressing socio-cultural, symbolic and relative values (Rose, 1993). By paying greater attention to localised environments, such perspectives have discussed ideas of 'place' in order to read landscapes as variegated and specific social settings. In contrast to earlier conceptions of space as abstract, objective and value neutral, notions of place invoke ideas of meaning, social action and ideologically charged regimes of values. In other words, the notion of place captures a sense of how landscapes are made meaningful, encountered and socially actualised. To illustrate this Tilley states 'place is a centre for action, intention and meaningful concern…fundamental to group and individual identities' (1994:18). And as Duncan and Duncan remind us, 'the web like character of places and landscapes means that they are capable of sustaining multiple meanings, and that multiple narratives criss-cross and thread through them' (1988: 123).

Not surprisingly, this analytical progression towards spatial multiplicity has also given rise to an understanding of landscapes as inherently political (Macnaghten & Urry 1998; Bender 1993; Prazniak & Dirlik 2001). Bender, for example, discusses how certain voices and values pertaining to Stonehenge have been marginalised in the face of institutionalised and hegemonic value systems. She demonstrates how Stonehenge has been encapsulated within certain institutional frameworks, in this case English Heritage, in an attempt to establish a normative historiography which legitimates a particular form of governance and ownership over the land (see Bender 1993 & 1999).

Similarly, in her description of the Acropolis in Athens as a material heritage layered with multiple framings and historical narratives, Yalouri (2001) demonstrates how the need to re/present the site for both national and international tourism has created a tension around the selective presentation of memories and their mode of narration. By discussing the relationship between identity, place and history in terms of memory, Yalouri switches attention to the ways a place like the Acropolis is continually constituted and reconstituted. In this respect, as *lieux de mémoire* (Nora 1988), landscapes conceptually emerge as the medium through which multiple temporalities are simultaneously remembered and forgotten and Yalouri's account thus identifies the complex political web arising from a discourse of heritage attempting to encapsulate intersecting local, national and global memories of place.

[1] As we shall see shortly, this raises interesting questions and challenges for cities like Srinagar.

Of course, the issues Yalouri, Bender and others raise are politically and emotionally charged the most when heritage sites have some association with war, trauma or atrocity. When heritage and the events of war or conflict come together the interface between the two is mediated in one of two ways. Firstly, heritage can be a tool for commemorating past conflicts, a mechanism for prolonging the memory of destruction, suffering or the loss of lives. This invariably takes the form of either custom-built memorials or the preservation of iconic structures which attempt to capture past horrors. But heritage sites can also become associated with war and conflict in a second way: by becoming embroiled in the conflict as it takes place. Among the many places that have been symbolically and/or physically fought over the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem or Babri Masjid in Ayodhya are two notable examples.

To date these two ways in which episodes of war and conflict, past and present, interface with heritage has been negotiated by conservationists and architects through a fabric based discourse, which, in part, creates a disconnect between the material culture and its immediate social context. In the case of memorials, monuments or preserved structures, these are set aside from the everyday as places to visit. Their symbolic value depends upon being demarcated as depopulated, museumified spaces. The Tuol Sleng museum in Phnom Penh or the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum are vivid examples of this process. For those sites that form part of the contours of a conflict, they do so precisely because they are part of the everyday. To overcome this the heritage industry thus imparts a value system that transcends the context of the dispute. Assertions of 'outstanding universal value' remove a heritage site from its immediate context by elevating it to a higher socio-cultural plain. Notions of 'civilisation' or 'humanity' are the tools by which the heritage industry attempts to depoliticise and thus safeguard. The fate of structures like the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem versus the Buddhas of Bamyan illustrate the degree to which these attempts succeed or not.

In both cases then, the heritage industry has utilised a scientific, fabric-centred discourse of heritage to isolate and de-contextualise. Indeed, the examples of the Acropolis, Stonehenge, The Bamyan Buddhas, and Tuol Sleng cited above all support the argument presented here that the relationship between heritage and 'difficult' histories has been largely restricted to the construction of preservation of specific, stand-alone sites, whether it be buildings, monuments, engineering structures or archaeological ruins. The language of the Vienna Memorandum and Seoul Declaration, however, clearly calls for greater contextualisation, and a far greater emphasis on viewing heritage as a socio-material relationship. In moving in such directions, these initiatives not only pull heritage into more overtly politicised terrains, but also attempt to do so in the highly complex, dynamic and everyday spaces of cities. As densely populated, historically layered environments, today's cities draw upon their material and social fabric to express a multitude of values - including social equity, multi-culturalism, cosmopolitanism or nation-building. Invariably, it is these very values that define the city as place. If a language of historic urban landscapes is to incorporate such values, then it must embrace and negotiate the challenges that arise when the expression of such values is either being oppressed, denied or a source of enmity and conflict. These unfamiliar philosophical and logistical challenges are nowhere more apparent than in a 'place' like Srinagar.

**Srinagar – 'perhaps the most threatened yet valuable site in India'**

The World Monuments Fund (WMF) has declared the old city of Srinagar as 'perhaps the most threatened yet valuable site in India', placing it on its 2008 List of Most Endangered Sites. As the capital city of Indian administered Kashmir, and the political, economic hub of the Kashmir Valley, Srinagar has a rich and extensive vernacular heritage. Situated in a mountainous valley, and oriented around the Jhelum River and many lakes, most notably the Dal Lake, the city has a unique material culture comprised of houseboats, wooden bridges, mosques, bazaars and hundreds of wooden houses. It is also home to some of the finest and most elaborate Mughal gardens in the region.

Records indicate that Srinagar has existed as a settlement from at least the third century BC. Not surprisingly, the built environment today reflects a long, complex history of shifting religious, cultural and political influences. Around the time the city was established, Buddhism was being introduced to the Kashmir valley by emperor Ashoka. By the end of the fourteenth century Hindu and Buddhist rule came to an end across the Kashmir Valley as the region came under the control of various Muslim leaders, including the Mughal emperor Akbar. It later came under the influence of the Sikhs and then the Hindus, after the treaty of 1846 between the British and the Dogra rulers of neighbouring Jammu. The Dogra rulers discriminated in various ways against the Muslim populace, and the anger against this rule intensified when the Dogra ruler Hari Singh acceded, under pressure, to India in 1947 – when the country gained independence and was partitioned. With India reneging even on the limited promises of autonomy, and with support from Pakistan, the movement turned violent in 1989. For the next 16 years, the valley was caught in a web of intensive and horrific violence. The situation has been returning to 'normalcy' over the last decade, though the political situation remains largely unchanged.

Srinagar, as a physical space, remains unique in various ways. Set at a high altitude in a mountainous valley, a lot of the architecture of the city is oriented towards either the Jhelum river or one of the lakes. There are wooden bridges and bathing areas (*ghats*) along the river, apart from the numerous old and beautifully crafted houseboats that, while they are a favourite of the tourists, are also home to many residents of the city. The long, joint rows of timber and masonry structures, with their sloping roofs and carved windows and doors, create a cityscape that is quite different from any other. At the crossroads of various civilisations, Srinagar has a rich cultural past that is reflected in its many mosques, shrines, temples, grand houses, gardens and bazaars. As Langenbach states:

> Srinagar, and other cities and villages in Kashmir are distinguished today for more than their monumental buildings and archaeological sites –they are unique in the world for their vernacular residential architecture. It is an architecture generated out of a distinctive use of materials and way of building, but in the modern world it is being rapidly displaced by reinforced concrete and other modern materials and systems.
>
> (2007: 9)

Located in an area prone to earthquakes, the traditional, vernacular architecture of Srinagar is also noted for its resilience to seismic activity. In describing this earthquake resistant vernacular construction, Langenbach identifies two distinct styles: *taq* and *dhajji dewari*. Although not specifically a Kashmiri term, *taq* refers to a type of buildings that employ a system of ladder-like horizontal timbers bedded into masonry bearing walls. These timbers ensure the brick, mud or stone of the walls are held in place and tied into the wooden floors. Whereas the Persian term, *dhajji dewari,* literally meaning 'patch quilt wall', refers to a style of paneled construction comprised of tightly packed wood and masonry (Langenbach, 2007). Characterised by hundreds of structures built from these two construction styles, the 'old city' remains a remarkable example of a large, relatively intact, historic urban landscape; one that endures as a dynamic 'living' city characterised by residences and shops in use today having been passed on through generations.

It should also be noted that, in other respects, the 'old city' remains similar to other old urban settlements in south Asia. It is a crowded space characterised by narrow, winding lanes and buildings abutting each other, with a mix of residential, commercial and religious structures. The city consists of many *mohallas* (quarters or neighbourhoods), demarcated variously by trades and communities. Some mohallas are identified as Shia Muslim or Hindu, and the streets and bazaars are often distinguished by the predominance of one trade like silverware or spices or utensils.

The ongoing conflict has had a paradoxical impact on the architecture of the old city, with some areas being destroyed while others have actually been preserved by the war. The political and economic isolation of the region since the early 1990s has meant Srinagar has not witnessed the modernization and 'concretization' that has become commonplace in other Indian cities. However, this isolation, along with the ongoing conflict and resultant economic 'poverty' has also meant the old city lies in a bad state of disrepair with hundreds of buildings literally crumbling away. The civic infrastructure too has been neglected through this period, and the river and the lakes need to be urgently revived. The reclamation of waterways has also occurred at a more rapid pace, and with roads being built over canals, it becomes a challenge to interpret the overall layout of the city today. Quite simply, as one of the most important historic cities in South Asia, an urban landscape of immense cultural and architectural significance, Srinagar urgently requires far greater attention than it has received to date.

At this point it is worth considering the prevailing factors that have contributed to the neglect of Srinagar as a heritage site, as they will undoubtedly continue to inhibit the development of any heritage discourse in the coming years. Since 1990 the city has been the site of sustained violent conflict. The conflict has still not been resolved, and the Kashmir valley remains tense with regular incidences of violence. Naturally the preservation of the past is considered a relatively low priority for both residents and local bureaucrats who are understandably more concerned with the everyday challenges of living in a conflict zone. Moreover, as a pivotal political and symbolic hub of the Kashmir Valley, Srinagar acts as an epicentre of the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir. This means that the material culture of the old city is a place that constantly reminds residents of past hostilities and enmities, bereavements and regrets. As we shall see shortly, the governance and stewardship of the built environment have contributed to the contours of the conflict.

Currently administered as part of India, Srinagar falls under the remit of the country's national heritage programme. However, in recent decades the principal focus of the heritage movement in India has been directed towards the monuments and religious structures of 'classical' eras. While organisations like the India National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) have endeavoured to widen the scope and time frames of the heritage discourse in the country, vernacular, wooden architecture less than two centuries old remain low on the list of conservation priorities. In the case of Srinagar, this means that whilst the World Monuments Fund have identified what they refer to as the 'Srinagar heritage zone', no such legal or policy frameworks exist on the ground. In 2005 INTACH completed a cultural resource mapping report, and although this has provided a comprehensive documentation of the heritage of the city and its environs, little progress has been made towards developing some sort of legislative or protective framework.

The political situation in Kashmir also creates major obstacles for interventions by the international heritage community. As an important step towards any future policy UNESCO produced a lengthy report in 2007 entitled *Guidelines for Preserving the Earthquake-Resistant Traditional Construction of Kashmir*. However, any move towards adding Srinagar to the their World Heritage List or List of Endangered Sites would require its nomination by the state-party, i.e. India. For Kashmiris seeking autonomy for the region, or its accession to Pakistan, any collaboration between Delhi and a United Nations organisation such as UNESCO would be politically charged. Indeed, any such interventions would likely be seen as an attempt to further integrate Srinagar within an Indian national heritage, and as such be regarded as a threat to the cultural and political sovereignty of the region.

Clearly, the all-enveloping context of the Kashmir dispute presents a series of significant obstacles to the development and implementation of any effective heritage programme. This does not however mean that progress cannot be made. The recent initiatives undertaken by INTACH, UNESCO and WMF noted above indicate the real urgency for raising awareness and resources for heritage conservation. However, as the following sections illustrate, if Srinagar is to be understood and valued as an Historic Urban Landscape, rather than merely a set of architecturally significant buildings, a move towards notions of 'place' and 'personality' or 'character' open up new analytical and pragmatic challenges.

## Foregrounding the context

For the residents of Srinagar the violent period of the conflict is a continual reference point. Discussions on most matters veer to the situation pre-militancy as compared to post-militancy. It was – and is – a conflict that has affected all sections of society and physically impacted the built and the natural environment in various ways. This is apparent all around today: in the accelerated reclamation of the Dal lake, in the bunkers and the sandbags on nearly every road, and even in the surge in construction activity in the suburbs – that ironically is fuelled by money made by some sections in the conflict. The 'old city' though has been the area most affected.

As the physical and ideological hub of the movement against the Indian state, it bears many scars from the violent decade. Most of the demonstrations and police action centred on this area, and many structures also suffered extensive damage from battles between militants and the police, and between different militant factions. A few prominent Sufi shrines were gutted, amidst conflicting allegations between the militants and the armed forces. However even as the 'old city' was emerging as the focal point of the conflict, it was losing its vitality as the social and commercial centre of the valley.

A critical event here was when, as a direct consequence of the conflict, many Hindu residents living in and around the old city fled in early 1990. Perhaps most significantly, the departure of Kashmiri Pandits - a Hindu minority indigenous to Kashmir valley and strongly in favour of Indian rule - altered the fabric of the city in various ways. After a spate of selected killings and deadly threats being issued by the Islamic militants, most Kashmiri Pandits abandoned their houses and fled en masse from the valley over the course of a few days. Many of them had occupied high positions in the bureaucracy and in educational institutions, and their social and cultural impact was always disproportionate to their numbers in the valley. They had a significant presence in Srinagar's old city – and some of the most beautiful houses belonged to them. Many neighbourhoods have been strongly affected by the exodus of the Pandits, and in various ways they have lost their original character and purpose, despite not having changed much physically. Officially, tenuous hopes are still being held that the Pandits will return, and so in a sense any redevelopment is in abeyance. However, the Pandits are highly unlikely to ever return and they have begun selling their houses over the last couple of years. In many cases, the houses are being bought by their erstwhile Muslim neighbours, who need the space to accommodate their growing families and start new businesses. To some the abandoned houses also represent a commercial opportunity, waiting to be exploited. In consonance with the needs of the new owners, many houses are being altered substantially, often beyond recognition.

The situation is complicated further by a deep ambivalence that characterises many reactions to the flight of the Pandits. With most Muslim families in the city too having suffered deeply through the conflict, they may on the surface seem unbothered about the Pandits' plight. However, almost any discussion on the issue evokes a sense of sorrow - and even guilt at their helplessness to reassure their neighbours and friends, and prevent them from leaving at the time. There is nostalgia in Kashmir today of a time when different communities lived together harmoniously. The loss of the Hindus is bemoaned in various ways; it is a loss of a way of life as remembered. This also gets intertwined with a general sense of despair and sorrow in the valley, and is seen by the Kashmiris as an indication of troubled times. However, concurrently all the residents of the city also feel a need to move on, and to begin rebuilding their lives. The rows of abandoned, dilapidated Pandit houses, unlikely to be ever reoccupied by their owners, are a poignant sight, and to many in Srinagar the continuous reminder is also painful. Coupled with the shortage of housing space in the old city, this results in the desire to reclaim and possess these old houses. If these aspirations are respected and duly considered, the challenges to conservation are many. There are signs that as new owners take occupation of these properties structural changes are made for practical re-organisation reasons, and to symbolically assert their new ownership as

part of a greater Muslim urban space. Such moves that create a rupture between the past and present represent a major obstacle for conservation.

Across the city, the Indian army has also occupied a significant number of historical structures over the last 16 years to accommodate the large number of troops in the valley. Throughout this period these structures have remained off limits for local residents. Among these are the many Mughal inns and other fortifications, including the prominent fort of Hari Parbat in the heart of Srinagar. The fort is perched on the top of a hill and commands a good view of the city, which makes it a strategic vantage point. As part of recent efforts at normalisation, the army has just begun to cede control over the fort. Kashmiris have consistently resented the occupation of these structures, which for them are tangible embodiments of their rich past. There has also been little involvement of Kashmiris in even the small efforts at conservation undertaken by the Indian government and its armed forces. The Vienna Memorandum clearly advocates 'a vision on the city as a whole with forward-looking action on the part of decision-makers, and a dialogue with the other actors and stakeholders involved' (p3). Such an approach seems particularly appropriate for the layered socio-cultural histories of Srinagar. However, in a situation of continued conflict and tension, how can such a dialogue be fruitfully undertaken? With an ever-shifting political landscape and a multitude of voices, whose position should be privileged is a question that will need to be confronted in some way. Moreover, how can calls for restoration and preservation be made relevant to a population living in a conflict zone, struggling to lead a 'normal' life?

Despite such obstacles, the distinct cultural identity of Srinagar and its pivotal role within the history of the Kashmir valley strongly point towards the importance of establishing a heritage discourse that captures the 'character' and 'life' of its urban environment: the elements which together constitute its distinct sense of place. As we have seen however, Srinagar equally illustrates the significant challenges that arise when that sense of place is politically charged and associated with a violent conflict. Indeed, for many of the residents of Srinagar, its character has become intimately tied to a quest for cultural and political sovereignty; a Kashmiri identity distinct from neighbouring India and Pakistan, and one that has become intimately linked to years of violent struggle.

## Negotiating Regeneration and Modernity

The dominant mood in the valley today is of gloom – it is the sadness that comes from the trauma of nearly two decades of violence, and that has been made worse by the realisation that it has largely been futile. The Kashmiris have not gained any major political concession, and are no closer to autonomy than they were in 1989 – and many of them hold the militants responsible, as much as the Indian and Pakistani governments for this mess. The need to now move on and rebuild their lives is thus constantly expressed. The consciousness of what it has 'cost' them is made more acute by the rapid economic development in India through precisely this period; and economic development that has physically and socially transformed many cities. There is a strong desire now to catch up, and go the way these cities have gone – with shopping malls, concrete houses, and industries. Regeneration and modernisation thus leads to another set of challenges. If these aspirations are to be respected, if it is seen as a 'place' inextricably tied to the dreams and hopes of its residents, then any

heritage policy will have to contend with these shifting needs. And the changes wrought through ‘development’ have their history too.

As noted, since the beginning of the violence the city has been incubated from rapid economic development. As such it provides a rare example in the subcontinent of a pre-modern city that has not been overcome by concrete and steel. But with stability new conflicts arise, and old ones raise their head again. It is clear that while the violent conflict has impacted the city in various ways, it is not the only reason for the neglect of Srinagar’s traditional architecture. Many of the issues around the conservation of Srinagar’s ‘old city’ are not much different from those facing other old city centres across India, and precede the conflict by decades. Vernacular architecture was neglected earlier too. Many structures were allowed to go to ruin, in other cases they were rebuilt in a new style, and encroachments were not controlled. This has been the general story through out India: there is lack of urban planning, and when people sell out or renovate their houses or shops, the aspiration is invariably towards the new – with concrete replacing wood and masonry. The strong desire to modernise leads to the old often being equated with ‘poor’ and ‘backward’. The consciousness of heritage is also often missing, and the maintenance of old structures comes at considerable cost. There are also logistical problems with materials not being available and skills in various crafts having been lost. In the case of Srinagar for example, discussions with the owner of the Jalali Haveli, a Persian style grand mansion located near the old city, indicated that he is currently unable to secure the craftsman capable of repairing the intricate woodwork of the windows (see Figure x). Not surprisingly then, in the rapidly transforming urban centres of India, it has been very difficult to preserve old structures. The decisions are not just difficult for individuals; governments too have tended to override calls for preservation. A notable instance here is the large stone-lined Nalla Mar Canal, that was distinctive for the arched bridges and the many fine, old houses lining its sides. In the 1970s, it was covered over with a road built on top. The bridges and most of the houses were demolished too. When discussing Srinagar’s heritage today, many older residents lament its destruction. In this respect, we can see the ‘conflict of progress versus preservation’ was apparent in Srinagar long before the political conflict turned violent (Langenbach 1982).

Given the years of violence such issues and tensions receded into the background. However, with some semblance of 'normality' being restored, they are re-emerging with a stronger force. In essence the complex situation in Srinagar today is characterised by two distinct and divergent trends. On the one hand there is a desire for maintaining the unique political and cultural identity of the city and the Kashmir Valley. Equally, however there is a widespread desire for economic and social mobility - for modernisation and a sense of inclusion in the wealth and prosperity enjoyed elsewhere in India. Any understanding of Srinagar as an *Historic Urban Landscape* needs to account for, and negotiate, such competing forces.

Bibliography to follow