

WALK TO GLOBAL VISION: DRIVING HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT BY WORLD HERITAGE AWARD

Macau - A Colony With East And West Culture

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Abstract. Macau is a place of East meets West for over 400 years at the south-east coast of China. It was a colony of Portugal before it was handover to the Chinese Government to become a Special Administrative Region of China in 1999. Macau is now the second most compact city with highest gaming return in the world. Since the monopoly of gambling license ended in 2000, Macau undergone its ever fastest urbanization with huge “Las Vegas”-style casinos being constructed in 24-hour non-stop manner. The central district and seashore are all bounded by casinos. This paper will discuss the enormous threats from casino development to the urban cultural landscape of Macau. The recent two World Heritage Award submissions during colonial period before 1999 and the post-colonial period after 1999 had successfully inputted global vision to Macau’s heritage development for resistance to these threats. How these two submissions had prompted changes in governance management practice, conservation priority and new interpretation of Macau’s heritage monuments would be discussed. In 2005, “The Historic Centre of Macao” was granted the World Heritage Award by UNESCO. In view of great disturbance from imbalanced casino development, Macau’s heritage development was further driven by this award. Macau’s unique conservation example in successfully inputting global vision to drive heritage development through World Heritage Award submission enlightens all other heritage conservation projects in the world.

1. Macau - A Colony With East And West Culture

Macau is a place of East meets West for over 400 years at the south-east coast of China. It was a colony of Portugal before it was handover to the Chinese Government to become a Special Administrative Region of China in 1999. Macau is now the second most compact city with highest gaming return in the world. At present, the population of Macau is 556,800 people. This small coastal city with an area of 29.7 square kilometres now records an over 24 million annual visitor count¹ by its highly dense population.

Macau is the city with highest gaming return in the world. In 2010, Macau yields a gaming revenue of US\$23.4 billion apart from a GDP of US\$27 billion. Since the monopoly of gambling license ended in 2000, Macau undergone its ever fastest urbanization with huge “Las Vegas”-style casinos being constructed in 24-hour non-stop manner. The central district and seashore are all bounded by casinos.

2. Macau – Recent Urban Development And Threat To Heritage

After the handover of Macau from Portugal to China in 1999, the MSAR Government decided to liberalize Macau’s gaming industry. In 2002, three concessions were granted to casino operators*. Right after the liberalization, new casino operators started to build their new casinos in Macau in rapid speed. The earlier the new casinos can be opened, the more profit can be gained from gamblers. In order to face the keen competition from new competitors, the existing local operator also expanded its business by renovating old casinos and building new ones.

* The three casino operators are Sociedade de Jogos de Macau (a subsidiary of STDM), Wynn Resorts (Macau), and Galaxy Casino Company. (Macao Statistical Publications, 2007. Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) of Macau Government.)

As at September 2011, there are in total 34 casinos* in Macau. The construction of these “Las Vegas”-style casinos had caused much pollution and transportation problem to Macau. Such cluster of iconic casinos in international design had altered the urban fabric of Macau significantly. The spatial connectivity of the heritage inner city with the natural harbour was also affected by these high-rise casino developments crowded along the seashore.

3. Driver Of Regional Development - UNESCO World Heritage Award

The first submission of the Historic Centre of Macau to UNESCO for the World Heritage Award was prepared in 1987 when Macau was colonized by Portuguese Government. The city of the Holy Name of God of Macau was regarded as the only living testimony of the oldest European presence in China. The union of the traditional Portuguese City with the Chinese Bazaar displayed the conviviality of two cultural expressions. The Historic Centre of Macau selected for the World Heritage Award is the most important historic and monumental area of Macau. The union of the traditional Portuguese City with the Chinese Bazaar displayed the conviviality of two cultural expressions. Apart from civic building in European style, many religious monuments like convents of Franciscan and Dominican, a new cathedral and the great church of the Jesuits, namely the Ruin of St. Paul are nominated as key icons which formed the Historic Centre of Macau. Among all these built heritages, the Ruin of St. Paul is addressed as the most significant monument. Its outstanding architectural decorative façade with oriental images on Western baroque elements is an exotic original synthesis where East and West harmonized.

3.1. ADVANCED CONSERVATION PRACTICE

In preparing this submission, professional analysis and comprehensive recording of the inner city of Macau was launched with much academic and research input. The Cultural Institute brought professionals with local expertise to work closely with the commissioned external professionals familiar with ICOMOS best practices. The professional team designed specific conservation strategy of each of these unique European heritages adapted in Asia colony. Many civic buildings in European style and religious monuments were thus conserved with advanced conservation practice new to Asia countries.

3.2. RAPID LEGISLATION PROTECTION

Macau is one of the Asia heritage cities with early commitment to heritage conservation. Macau started to develop the legal framework of heritage

conservation since 1970s after the publication of Venice Charter. There were two major revisions in the conservation legislation in 1980s** and 1990s*** respectively to enlarge the protection authority of government and incentive benefit to private heritage owners.

The submission of World Heritage Award had driven the conservation body^A of Macau to think according to UNESCO's latest conservation concept for World Heritage. The heritage listed in the revised law extended from single heritage building to garden and heritage zone. The scale and concept of heritage protection continued to advance along with the development of ICOMOS charters to address not only individual monument but also cultural landscape as a whole. The legislation regulated the planning of new development to be more heritage-sensitive. The zoning of the new casino development of Macau was thus more heritage friendly.

The world heritage submission exercise had also prompted Macau to advance its legislation according to the visionary thought of the ICOMOS and UNESCO's conservation guidelines. The heritage conservation brought by the new legislation not only better prepared Macau for the submission of World Heritage Award but also better defended Macau from future casino threats.

4. Driver Of Cultural Development - Conservation Priority And Heritage Interpretation Of Macau

The second submission of Macau for World Heritage Award was launched after Macau had returned to China in 1999. Sharp change occurs during the handover year when Macau stepped out from

* Macao Statistical Publications, 2011. Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) of Macau Government.

** Decree 56/84/M, 1984. The Government is concerned to preserve and revive the historic, cultural and architectural heritage of the Territory. An important step towards this end was the creation of the Cultural Institute of Macau which, combining as it does the sectors of cultural heritage, cultural activities and training and research, will seek to coordinate activities in the cultural field. (Macau Heritage Kit)

*** Decree 83/92/M, 1992. The preservation of Macau's monumental, architectonic, urban and cultural heritage is based on the defence of its historic and cultural values, which is, still today, a unique witness, amongst the regions of Southeast Asia and the World. (Macau Heritage Kit)

^A The former Cultural Institute is currently named as Cultural Affairs Bureau.

its long colonial history to a new post-colonial era. Handover is a remarkable moment in Macau history which brings significant transformation to its social, economic and environmental setting. The change in governance management practice and social values can also be reviewed in Macau's interpretation of heritage monuments during this post-colonial period. The conservation priority and interpretation to heritage monuments transforms at the same time.

4.1. SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION OF UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE AWARD

In 2003 during the fourth year Macau was returned to China, Macau* submitted the UNESCO World Heritage Award application. With the support of the Chinese Central Government by selecting "The Historic Centre of Macau" as the sole national bid to be assessed by the World Heritage Committee, Macau was granted the World Heritage Award in 2005 by UNESCO**. In the UNESCO presentation award ceremony, Macau's heritage zone was highlighted as the product of cultural exchange between the western world and the Chinese civilization.

In this World Heritage Award submission, 5 out of 22 monuments*** are heritage of Chinese temples and traditional Chinese vernacular houses. These five^A Chinese heritage icons are essential representatives of Macau's Chinese cultural origin in the World Heritage zone. The traditional temples display how local Macau people perform religious worship in their daily life while the traditional vernacular houses recall the typical family life of local Chinese.

Moreover, equal emphases are put on the newly listed Chinese architecture with the European heritage to highlight the harmony of East and West cultures. For instance, the Na Tcha Temple next to the Ruins of St. Paul's are an outstanding example to illustrate the harmony of both cultures. The two heritage monuments are very close in their physical distance. Although they are originated from two very different religions of different cultures, their architectural design indicates respect to each other. They show respect to its neighbour's physical setting while maintaining their uniqueness. All along, both heritage monuments are popular worship places in their own religion with equal cultural attractiveness to visitors. They have been a friendly neighbour to each other for over 100 years to witness the cultural harmony of Macau.

4.2. RE-THINKING COLONIAL HERITAGE WITH GLOBAL VISION

In re-thinking the colonial heritage during the handover age of Macau, the colonial heritage is not limited to the identity of representing past colony history. It is also re-interpreted with global vision which

promotes the harmony of both colonial history and post-colonial development.

The successful inscription on the World Heritage List in 2005 featured not just the achievement brought by colonial government in historical, social, economical, religious and cultural aspects. The key message illustrated by the Historic Centre of Macau is the harmony of East and West. The built heritage and cultural landscape included in the World Heritage zone represents an universal value which placed equal emphasis on both cultures.

The directive recognition highlighted in the World Heritage Award has laid a solid foundation in both the tangible and intangible cultural setting of Macau for future sustainable growth. Continuous conservation resource is ensured for better heritage development to achieve this cultural harmony and defence against casino threats. On one hand, genuine input from local Macau citizen with participation of overseas experts and visitors can be easily guaranteed by the intangible recognition given by this UNESCO

* In the submission of World Heritage Award, Macau is regarded as a lucrative port of strategic importance in the development of international trade, was under Portuguese administration from the mid 16th century until 1999, when it came under Chinese sovereignty. With its historic street, residential, religious and public Portuguese and Chinese buildings, the historic centre of Macao provides a unique testimony to the meeting of aesthetic, cultural, architectural and technological influences from East and West. The site also contains a fortress and a lighthouse, which is the oldest in China. The site bears testimony to one of the earliest and longest-lasting encounters between China and the West based on the vibrancy of international trade.

** Macau Heritage Net, 2006. Cultural Affairs Bureau of Macau Government.

*** A-Ma Temple, Barra Square, Moorish Barracks, Mandarin's House, Lilau Square, St. Lawrence's Church, St. Joseph's Seminary and Church, St. Augustine's Square, Dom Pedro V Theatre, Sir Robert Ho Tung Library, St. Augustine's Church, "Leal Senado" Building, Sam Kai Vui Kun (Kuan Tai Temple), Senado Square, Holy House of Mercy, Cathedral Square, Cathedral, Lou Kau Mansion, St. Dominic's Church, St. Dominic's Square, Company of Jesus Square, Ruins of St. Paul's, Na Tcha Temple, Section of the Old City Walls, Mount Fortress, St. Anthony's Church, Casa Garden, Protestant Cemetery, Guia Fortress

^A A-Ma Temple, Mandarin's House, Sam Kai Vui Kun (Kuan Tai Temple), Lou Kau Mansion and Na Tcha Temple

World Heritage Award. On the other hand, international support and global attention for the benefit of Macau's future development is further secured by the inscription of World Heritage List.

5. Driver Of Public Awareness – High Sensitivity Of Conservation Threat

5.1. VISUAL EDUCATION TO NURTURE SPATIAL INTELLIGENCE

Most of the heritage buildings in Macau appeared old and were not well conserved before the World Heritage submission began in 1980s. The massive conservation work enabled the beauty of the heritage to shine again. All the heritage buildings were located at the city centre in this submission. In conserving these monuments, the massive construction works which lasted over months had drawn visual attention of general public in the compact city. People were firstly introduced to the authentic shininess of their heritage.

Apart from individual conservation work, extensive tiling works was carried out in the central plaza and the pedestrian path to connect all the monuments in harmony with the Chinese Bazaar in the heritage zone in 1990s. Citizens were further amazed by the connectivity brought by the tiling work which enabled them to understand the historical relationship of the entire collection of monuments. They were able to visualize the harmony to the city where they lived and where the heritage icons were highlighted. The high quality of spatial harmony achieved in this conservation exercise educated each citizen what a high standard of spatial living in a World Heritage city was. Through the preparation for World Heritage, the whole city upgraded its physical condition to mark a high conservation standard for qualitative living for Macau's citizen. The spatial quality achieved in environment nurtured the spatial sensitivity of Macau population. The Macau citizen can monitor the spatial environment with their spatial intelligence more sensitively.

5.2. HOLISTIC CULTURAL HERITAGE EDUCATION

There were massive promotion events to inform Macau citizens about the World Heritage application. In parallel with the candidacy of Macau's Historical Monuments for World Heritage in the UNESCO bid, 2004 was assigned the "Macau Cultural Heritage Preservation Year". In order to indulge more residents in preserving cultural heritage, programmes such as cultural heritage tours design competition, cultural heritage young journalist summer course, youth ambassador programme and school exhibition focused on Macau's architectural heritage were launched.

The Macau population were encouraged to explore Macau's history through her different historical architectures and to discover the beauty of the cultural spots in Macau*.

In addition, the UNESCO and ICOMOS values about universal cultural values are widely educated to school students and general public. Emphasis was put on the passion towards their own identity and love to their own city. As the fondness to Macau increases, the awareness to conservation protection for the Macau population also increases. The Macau citizens become more willing to fight for the heritage they love.

6. On-going joint forces to protect heritage

The driving force of heritage development does not decrease after the inscription of World Heritage List. Development in cultural heritage legislation, architectural conservation and public awareness is further enhanced with the World Heritage Award.

With the world recognition to Macau's cultural heritage, the new Macau government and all Macau citizens are responsible for maintaining and generating the authenticity of their heritage. Recently, the Cultural Affairs Bureau of Macau Government has launched a comprehensive consultation to improve the conservation legal framework with more refined cultural landscape consideration and latest conservation practice. All citizens and professionals are invited to present their opinion to contribute to their cultural heritage in this participatory consultation process.

Being the highest gaming return city on world, it is estimated that the casino threat to Macau's heritage must continue in the long run. The people and the government of Macau must join hand in hand to defense. The new post-colonial interpretation of Macau's traditional Chinese heritage and colonial European heritage forms a vision statement for future transformation of Macau. It is a proactive achievement for the young Macau Special Administrative Government to form this global vision so boldly and authentically with the whole world as witness right after the post-colonial period. In future, the new Macau government and all Macau citizens are responsible for maintaining and generating the authenticity of their heritage which processes universal value with world recognition.

7. World Heritage To Inspire

Macau's inspiring example of realizing the UNESCO

* The conservation list consists of 52 Monuments, 44 Buildings of Architectural Interest, 11 Classified Ensembles and 21 Classified Sites

requirement into its World Heritage sites had promptly driven heritage development across the Asia region. Other Asia countries nearby were able to refer to Macau's heritage to stimulate their conservation development through legal advancement, technological upgrade and architectural refinement based on ICOMOS and UNESCO requirement.

Imagine what if Macau had never submitted her World Heritage Award application:

- Will the people of Macau opt for casino development which brings enormous economic return rather than heritage development which bear intangible values?
- Will the heritage be conserved with the same resources allocated to UNESCO World Heritage standard?
- Will the universal values inherited be missed as the heritage deteriorated without sufficient conservation?
- Most importantly, will the heritage development die out slowly or terminate?

Macau's World Heritage Award submission is indeed an unique driver for conservation development in both local and regional scale. Regardless of the tiny compact city scale, Macau has illustrated how to think big for heritage development through World Heritage Award. Macau's successful experience prompted all other cities in the world to think as visionary as World Heritage in their conservation. Every city can dream to feature their heritage in the World Heritage List with real vision and real action.

Even though not every cities may be given a World Heritage Award, it is important for every cultural affairs authority to launch conservation governance with vision and practice as sincere as possible

according to the World Heritage standard. The more cities on world acquire World Heritage requirement in their conservation, the larger collaborative effort to generates a strong pool of drivers to promote heritage development regionally. If we can conserve our heritage like World Heritage in every corner of the world, we are painting a beautiful vision that drives heritage development for all.

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