

Relational Authenticity: A critical review of approaches to authenticity in a selected range of the architectural conservation work of Gawie Fagan (1925-2020) and Gwen Fagan (1924-)

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Gawie Fagan and his wife, Gwen, have had an illustrious career in the field of architectural heritage practice, spanning a period of over 50 years. They have run the full gamut of responses to architectural heritage, from conservative to radical interventionist approaches, all subconsciously attuned to aspects of authenticity. This article will locate the Fagans' heritage responses within theories of the authentic, that were either covertly or overtly recognised in a number of heritage charters, preceding and succeeding their first restoration project La Dauphine in Franschoek, South Africa, in 1966. Through a selected range of their architectural conservation projects, a critical understanding of the authentic and its meaning for the retention of an understanding of the past, and its extension into the future, will be highlighted.

Keywords: Authenticity, architectural conservation, preservation.

Relasionele egtheid: 'n kritiese oorsig van benaderings tot egtheid in 'n geselekteerde reeks argitektoniese bewaringswerke van Gawie (1925-2020) en Gwen Fagan (1924-)

Gawie Fagan en sy vrou, Gwen, het 'n uitstekende loopbaan op die gebied van argitektoniese erfenis praktyk, wat oor 'n tydperk van meer as 50 jaar strek, gehad. Hulle het die volle spektrum van reaksies op argitektoniese erfenis uitgevoer, van konserwatiewe tot radikale intervensionistiese benaderings, almal onbewust ingestel op aspekte van egtheid. In hierdie artikel word die Fagans se erfenisreaksies binne die teorieë van die outentieke geplaas, wat of in die geheim of openlik in 'n aantal erfenishandveste erken is, en hul eerste restourasieprojek La Dauphine in Franschoek, Suid Afrika in 1966, voorafgegaan en opgevolg het. Deur middel van 'n geselekteerde reeks van hulle argitektoniese bewaringsprojekte, sal 'n kritiese begrip van die outentieke en die betekenis daarvan vir die behoud van 'n begrip van die verlede, en die uitbreiding daarvan in die toekoms, uitgelig word.

Sleutelwoorde: egtheid, argitektoniese bewaring, bewaring.

In 2007, Gabriël (Gawie) Theron Fagan (1925-2020) was nominated for membership of the American Institute of Architects. A number of prominent South Africans and Americans wrote letters of motivation, one being penned by the eminent international architectural historian, Prof Kenneth Frampton (1930-). His succinct and insightful understanding of Gawie Fagan's work was marked by a somewhat critical phrase, referring to some projects as bordering on pastiche. This led me to reflect about the Fagans'¹ attitude to architectural conservation. With a career in the heritage field spanning over 50 years, the Fagans have run the full gamut of preservationist responses, from that of conservative attitudes to radical interventionist approaches, all subconsciously attuned to aspects of authenticity, that were not necessarily formulated or recognised in their early careers.

This article will locate the Fagans' heritage responses in internally and externally formed definitions of the authentic, that were either covertly or overtly recognised in a number of heritage charters, preceding and succeeding the Fagans' first restoration project La Dauphine in Franschoek, South Africa, in 1966. Through a selected range of the Fagans' architectural restoration projects that represent approaches across time, a critical understanding of the

external influences on authenticity and its meaning for the retention of an understanding of the past, or its extension into the future, will be highlighted. This will be done through a diachronic understanding of authenticity in terms of heritage practice. Relevant foundations for heritage practice that relate to the Fagans' approaches and their context will also be outlined. Then a nuanced understanding of authenticity, through the impact of external forces will be developed and this structure will be used to analyse the selected range of the Fagans' conservation approaches and responses to authenticity.

Definitions and development of authenticity in heritage practice

In heritage practice authenticity is important as it establishes a foundation for our understanding of, and engagement with, our past. Artefacts, that are representative of cultural and social practices, form a materialist (the physical object) and constructivist (associated creation of, or underlying, meaning) foundation for the concept of authenticity (Jones 2009: 1).

If authenticity is a concept related to sincerity and honesty, it is relevant to heritage because it is through the past that we build a collective version both of society and of the individual self. If confidence in this construction is lost, there are consequences – a loss both of a sense of self and of the cultural and social environment which provides individual and shared stability and security (Wood 2020: 14).

But the meanings of authenticity are nomadic, selectively constructed, fluid and relational. They are also contextually bound and, often, personally constructed. The Merriam Webster dictionary defines authenticity as being “worthy of acceptance or belief, conforming to an original to reproduce essential features, made or done the same way as an original and not false or imitated but real and actual”. The concept of authenticity is therefore tightly bound with ideas of truthfulness and integrity as human beings seek connection and identity. Gawie Fagan (2002) noted that “the value of old buildings for all of us is that we can identify ourselves through the continuous thread of our communal culture with previous generations and so by better understanding them, reaffirm our own values”.²

But authenticity is also a contested construct. Authors such as Richard Handler (1986) and Regina Bendix (2009) have noted that nationalist movements have abused the term for their own ends while the definition of an artefact can often lead to its commodification (Lo Lacono 2020).

To be able to make decisions about intervening in historic contexts, a range of values need to be recognized through which significances are defined, so as to establish authenticity. It is through this process that the integrity, which is the ability of an artefact to convey its significance (Stovel 2008: 12), can be established.

In a world that is increasingly subject to the forces of globalization and homogenization, and in a world in which the search for cultural identity is sometimes pursued through aggressive nationalism and the suppression of the cultures of minorities, the essential contribution made by the consideration of authenticity in conservation practice is to clarify and illuminate the collective memory of humanity³.

One of the first references to authenticity, in heritage practice, was that of Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879), who, in 1854, reinforced his stylistic and materialist approach to restoration by explaining that

the historical approach requires that the shape, form and/or appearance be ‘historically correct’: this requires authentication primarily through documentary research of the particular case/object. The stylistic approach requires that the design, shape, form and/or appearance be consistent or appropriate: this requires exhaustive research of the general type so as to equip the designer with sufficient knowledge in order ‘to put oneself in the place of the original architect and try to imagine what he would do if he returned to earth’ (Darke 2012: 80).

In 1931 the Athens Charter was adopted at a conference organised by the International Museums Office (ICOM), under the auspices of the League of Nations. It defined the basic principles guiding the preservation and restoration of ancient buildings.⁴ Important aspects of the charter were that new techniques could be used in restoration but that these needed to be identifiable and distinct from that which existed. The charter also focused on a diachronic understanding of history, so that all periods of construction would be respected. The Athens Charter was also materialist in its viewpoint of authenticity highlighting that functions of a building could be changed with the aim of increasing future use, but that the layout or decoration should not be altered. A preventative measure was, however, instituted in that restoration should stop where the conjecture begins.⁵

In the Venice Charter of 1964, the materialist viewpoint began to shift to take more account of meaning through an understanding of culture.

Imbued with a message from the past, the historic monuments of generations of people remain to the present day as living witnesses of their age-old traditions. People are becoming more and more conscious of the unity of human values and regard ancient monuments as a common heritage. The common responsibility to safeguard them for future generations is recognized. It is our duty to hand them on in the full richness of their authenticity.⁶

In 1953, the United States National Park Service Administrative Manual, the concept of integrity represented “a composite quality connoting original workmanship, original location, and intangible elements of feeling and association” (Stovel 2008: 12). In 1976 and 1977, the World Heritage Committee (Feilden and Jokilehto 1998) revised the concept of integrity renaming it authenticity.

At the 1984 APT conference in Toronto, Canada, Stefan Tschudi-Madsen’s paper *Principles in Practice* highlighted five aspects of authenticity namely material, structure, surface, architectural form, and function (Stovel 2008: 12). But Tschudi-Madsen’s materialist assertions were balanced with an understanding that authenticity was also bound with place-specific circumstances, and time.

In September 1994, a World Heritage meeting on the evaluation of potential nominations of historic canals to the World Heritage List took place in the United States of America to discuss how to apply the test of authenticity (Stovel 2008: 13). The meeting resulted in a developed understanding of authenticity through design conception (plan), design implementation (execution), and long-term operations (use).

Two months later, an historic meeting of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) took place in Nara, Japan. Ostensibly called by the Japanese to deal with a different approach to heritage conservation in their own country⁷. This impacted on the materialist viewpoint of authenticity as recognized by the conference participants as being a limitation by a western hegemonic viewpoint on restoration. Thereafter a number of meetings of the same vein were held worldwide, including at Texas in the United States of America

(1996), Great Zimbabwe in Zimbabwe (1999) and Riga in Latvia (2000). The latter resulted in an ICOMOS charter that defined authenticity as a

measure of the degree to which the attributes of cultural heritage (including form and design, materials and substance, use and function, tradition and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling, and other factors) credibly and accurately bear witness to their significance ... believe that replication of cultural heritage is in general a misrepresentation of evidence of the past, and that each architectural work should reflect the time of its own creation, in the belief that sympathetic new buildings can maintain the environmental context, but that ... in exceptional circumstances, reconstruction of cultural heritage, lost through disaster, whether of natural or human origin, may be acceptable, when the monument concerned has outstanding artistic, symbolic or environmental (whether urban or rural) significance for regional history and cultures.⁸

The increasingly constructivist viewpoint has provided a more nuanced and place-based understanding of authenticity, that fosters a continued development of the concept. However, the construction and understanding of the concept of authenticity has been internally generated through a focus on the document and little has been written about the external influences on authenticity that impact on the conservation of artefacts.

Relational authenticity in heritage practice

As authenticity in heritage practice is a fluid concept, it is necessary to outline a framework of analysis so as to unpack its internal and external influences. Figure 1 is a summary of the concept of authenticity that indicates its origins, assessment, response and user interaction. The left hand scale of assessment, that frames production to consumption, indicates that any artefact under consideration has an origin that can be tied to a socio-cultural context and designer. Through a value assessment of the artefact, that encompasses the range of tangible to intangible layers of authenticity, significances can be determined. These can attest to the authenticity of the artefact which ultimately determine its integrity.

But several actions also need to be undertaken to reinforce the assessment which, in turn influences the effect the artefact will have on its users. I would argue, in the spirit of the Nara document on authenticity, that it can be described on a relational scale of universally understood principles and locally influenced content. Several layers of significance determine authenticity, and these vary from materialist aspects to those of the intangible, constructivist, aspects for example of memories and stories. Pierre Nora (1989), an historian on French identity and memory, described this difference as manufactured authenticity versus curated authenticity, which I have framed as conservative versus progressive authenticities.

Then through a series of actions, that are scaled from preservation to conservation, an effect is created on users, they being either individuals or groups. Through an assessment of an artefact's values and significance an understanding of authenticity can be located within a scale of production to consumption.

But authenticity is not just an internally generated construct that often privileges an understanding of the artefact in itself, rather than the influences that gave rise to it. Socio-cultural constructs and associated meaning are essentially founded through the influences of practices and place but are also affected by several external factors, either before, during or after the artefact's production or consumption.

International heritage charters such as those created by the ICOMOS and local legislation such as the earlier National Monuments Council and after 1999 the South African Heritage Resources Agency play a key role in directing heritage responses. The tenets of these legislative constructs will impact on the way an artefact is assessed and then reacted to. The historical context of the artefact would usually be aligned with the cultural construct of the times.

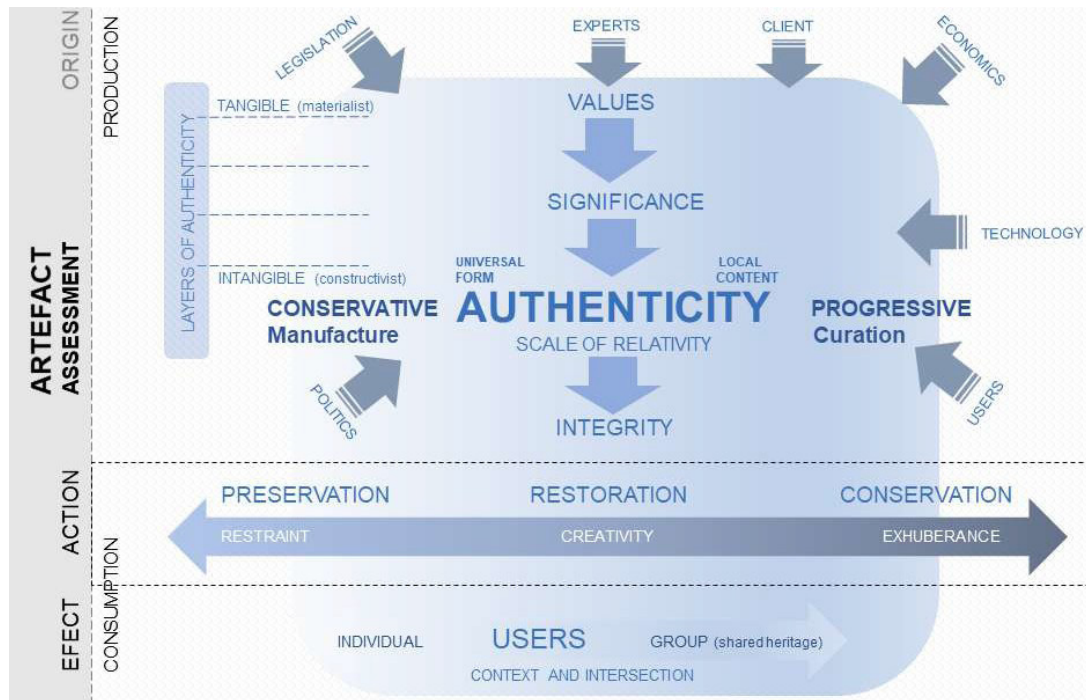


Figure 1
Authenticity in heritage practice: a scale of analysis
(framework and drawing by the author)

The background, education, philosophy, role and intentions of the expert, or heritage practitioner, will influence the analysis and actions related to the artefact. Similarly, the relationship between the expert and politics would change the nature of authenticity. The political climate will play a major role in the privileging of certain artefacts over others, while power and money will affect the overall value of action. This is often associated with the role and influence of the client who will directly impact on the materialist and constructivist aspects of authenticity. At the heart of any authentic response is the materialist viewpoint, which has been the focus of much heritage legislation. Here an understanding of the object and its making or technology is key, but the impact of technologies and techniques will similarly change the view on authenticity as the use of ancient or current technologies will heighten or detract from material authenticity.

The impact of past, current and future users is also important in understanding the nature of a reflexive and changing authenticity. The effect of approaches on authenticity and its eventual consumption are also scalar as they relate from the individual to, possibly, a collective through their intersection with a particular context.

As much has already been written on the internal influences and understanding of an artefact, through its materialist and constructivist nature, a focus will now be placed on the external influences on authenticity through a critique of a selected and diachronic range of the Fagans' conservation work.



Figure 2
Gawie and Gwen Fagan at the Visitor's Centre for South African Breweries, Newlands, Cape Town (photograph by the author, 2007).

Analyses of the Fagans' approaches to authenticity

For the purposes of analysis, I have used the seven external influences on authenticity so as to understand the Fagans' conservation responses over time. Similarly, I have made a diachronic selection of their projects that range from the late 1960s until recently to illustrate the changes in approach to heritage practice by the Fagans. Each selected project provides a snapshot of heritage practice, in a specific decade, so as to capture changes in approach as related to concomitant heritage practice, regulations and promulgations. A diagram with its center representing materialist practices (which are regarded by most heritage charters as the core of any conservation project) are ringed by the range of external factors that influence authenticity as well as a description of the relationship to constructivist practices which have increasingly been recognized as being important. The outer band of lighter colour indicates the extent of the varying external influences on authenticity in a particular project while the darker hue represents the Fagans' response within that. The extent to which the Fagans are subservient (receding from the lighter colour), closely following (in sync with the lighter colour) or reacting against (extending beyond the lighter colour) is demonstrated with each project under consideration.

Main Street, Tulbagh, South Africa (1969-1972)



Figure 3

Top left: Tulbagh main street residence after the earthquake (source: courtesy Fagan archive).

Top right: Tulbagh main street after restoration in 1969 (source: courtesy Fagan archive).

Bottom: Main Street (photograph by the author, 2007).

On 29 September 1969, an earthquake of 6.3 on the Richter scale damaged many buildings, some severely, in the towns of Ceres, Wolseley and Tulbagh in the Western Cape of South Africa. Twenty-nine years earlier the Old Church Volksmuseum in Tulbagh was declared one of the earliest South African National Monuments, setting the tone for a renewed restoration effort in the late 1960s. After the devastation of buildings in the main street of Tulbagh (figure 3) Gawie Fagan, through the Cape Institute of Architects (CPIA) and the Cape Provincial Administration (CPA), was appointed to oversee the restoration work. He noted:

Now the Old National Monuments Council was very slow and sleepy, and I will never forget when I urgently appeared before their executive in 1969 to ask for the immediate temporary proclamation of all 28 houses in Church Street Tulbagh, to prevent their imminent and total levelling by the Defence Force. I was told: 'But Mr Fagan, you don't understand the procedures required. It takes at least 6 months to process a single proclamation!' It certainly took an earthquake to rock the gentlemen of the old National Monuments Council, but by dropping the name of the prime-minister as patron-in-chief, we managed to get our temporary proclamation, and the rest is history (Fagan 2002: 1).

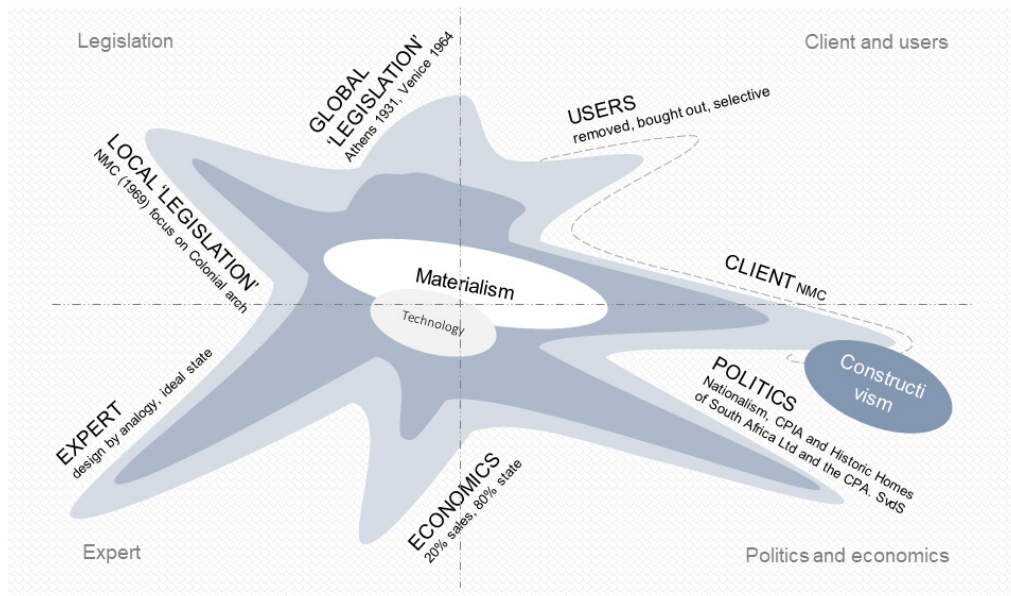


Figure 4
Tulbagh Main Street: a scale of analysis
(drawing by the author).

The external forces impacting on authenticity (figure 4) in the Tulbagh project were driven by politics and Gawie Fagan’s close association with the client. At the time, South Africa was in the deep throes of apartheid. The Nationalist government saw the project as an opportunity to foster a particular cultural identity. The then Prime Minister, John Vorster, was made a patron of the project while another state body the National Monuments Council (NMC) acted as the client. A private institution, with Afrikaner leanings, the Historic Homes was also instrumental in supporting the project, reinforced by 80% state funding for the original R12 million cost (Simson 1982: 48).

With nationalist undertones [including Gawie Fagan’s reference to the ‘slums of Tulbagh’], the public relations and fundraising campaign used emotive and evocative images of shattered gables and derelict farmhouses to help garner popular and public support of heritage issues, as defined in apartheid South Africa. The inaugurated street was a huge success for those involved and all the restored buildings were declared National Monuments in order to preserve them for posterity (Augustyn-Clark 2017: 2, 75).

As with most authentic heritage responses, a materialist approach was at the heart of the restoration project which fostered Gawie Fagan’s philosophical approach and his technological and new-found historical skills.

The architect Kendall, in his book on the restoration of Groot Constantia after the fire of 1925, observed that if walls have ears, they can also have tongues. When investigating any old building, we should in fact be guided by these tongues, allowing the clues found through close observation of the structure itself, to provide a case history of alterations, additions and ailments (Fagan 1982: 1).

Fagan’s materialist approach is further reinforced by his presentation in 1982 (Fagan archive), for the Symposium on the Restoration of Buildings, titled *The Ethics of Restoration: A Practical Approach*, where he outlines aspects such as structural research, historical research, general physical assessment, measured drawings and a photographic record.

In Tulbagh, the type of technology directly responded to particular vernacular traditions associated with a Cape Dutch cultural identity. It was the Fagans (as the experts) that drove decisions to restore many of the damaged buildings back to particular (and ideal) period, preceding that which had existed and, in so doing, preventing a slated demolition. Although only six houses were reconstructed, in a highly materialist manner, the ideal historical and architectural condition was determined. Even though local legislation, through the NMC, indicated that houses should not be allowed to disappear or be altered or rebuilt indiscriminately and even although the Simon van der Stel Foundation (SvdSF) had published the Venice Charter (which clearly indicated that reconstruction is frowned upon) the Fagans' determinism reigned supreme. In addition, the Venice Charter reinforced the intentions of the Athens Charter and highlighted that unity of style was not the intention of restoration. But the Fagans could, possibly, have argued that it was the aim of preservation! In fact, Gawie Fagan maintained, in the late 1960s, that

... [I] had to formulate my own ideas unless you wanted to refer back to Ruskin or Pugin [or Kendal and Eaton there was very little English literature available at that time and] there was very little available by way of conservation guide-lines in English at the time when John Rennie (who was in my office at the time) and I restored La Dauphine in 1966. Or for that matter, Tuynhuys in 1967, or the Castle starting in 1969. After all, ICOMOS was only instituted in Paris in the 1960s, the York University course started in 1972, and the Australian Burra Charter was formulated as recently as 1999 (Fagan 2002).

However, in contrast to the previous statement⁹

[w]hen interviewed in 2015, neither of the Fagans recalled hearing about the Athens or Venice Charters, only becoming aware of the Burra Charter 'the fashionable one' in the 1980s. Gawie Fagan maintains that his conservation philosophy has always just been to follow his head and common sense (Augustyn-Clark 2017: 93).

It is important, however, to note that South Africa's membership of the British Commonwealth ended in 1961 and until 1994 South Africa was excluded from United Nations activities and was not a party to any of its Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) cultural heritage conventions. Apart from a possible lack of knowledge, it is telling that, Gawie Fagan acknowledged that many people shared his father's¹⁰ feelings that Church Street should be conserved (Fagan 1977: 1) supported by a further admission (2004a: 1) that he had been born in one of the most beautiful streets in the country!

The Fagans' argument was that the 'rarity' of the building dictates the method of conservation and therefore this is the primary factor justifying his stylistic reconstruction and restoration of the building and overrules alternatives presented by others. His methodology is therefore clear in terms of the creation or rather recreation of an idealized expression of the artefact. 'My intention was to return the buildings to their best state' (Darke 2012: 94-5).

Constructivism (the socio-cultural aspect of authenticity) was least influential in the restoration work. Save for some gables being recreated according to family histories, there was little response to intangible aspects such as the stories of the residents (many of whom had been expropriated) and albeit that the historical background of each house and their inhabitants was recorded in a published book, there is no sense of the uncensored past or the earthquake today (Interview with Jo Noero cited in Scurr 2011: 132). Willem Punt and Meiring Naude of the SvdSF bought two of the houses and requested very specific restoration, an attitude that reinforced a conservation gentrification:

We want to give these two historical buildings a proud restoration and we are well aware of your great creative and practice work on the Company House in the Gardens. We request the use of all the best materials and most attractive decorations within the house, including brass doorknobs and Dutch tiles (Augustyn-Clark 2017: 96).

As the work on Tulbagh was underway, Gawie Fagan was appointed for the largest and longest restoration project ever undertaken in South Africa.

The Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town, South Africa (1969-2001)



Figure 5

Left: Entrance portico of the Castle of Good Hope

(retrieved from the public domain <http://www.theheritageportal.co.za/thread/castle-good-hope-cape-town>).

Right: The Dolphin Pool

(retrieved from the public domain <https://www.cometocapetown.com/castle-of-good-hope/>).

In 1969, Gawie Fagan was appointed by the Department of Public Works to undertake the restoration of the Castle of Good Hope (Castle) (figure 5). It was the largest conservation project ever undertaken in South Africa, with the work completed in seven contract phases spanning thirty-two years (Fagan 2002). Although much of the work at the Castle focused on materialist aspects through its remedial nature, the client “requested the recreation of certain parts of the Castle to its original state, in order ‘to allow the Castle to come into its own again’” (Buttgens 2010: 2).

[Gawie Fagan] states that the client permitted him to work according to his own methods and that there was no interference in the execution of the works. He confirms that the Department of Public Works ‘understood what I wanted to achieve and allowed me to work accordingly’. The Ministry of Public Works did, however, control all decisions pertaining to the project, as reflected in Mr Green’s discussion with the National Monuments Council. ‘Dr Loedolff’, Mr Fagan does not do anything here on his own. All decisions are referred to us and the Minister’ (Fagan interview in Darke 2010: 79).

Two main external influences drove decisions regarding authenticity (figure 6). The first was, just as in Tulbagh, the political climate and associated patronage. The restoration continued the 1960s movement, by the government of the day, to restore towns and buildings through national and provincial departments reinforced by the fact that by 1994, 95% of National Monuments Council buildings were colonial relics. The project was also state funded and in 2012 the project value stood at a staggering R560 000 000.

The second major influence on authenticity was Gawie Fagan, as the expert:

The building must be regarded as a valuable document, which must not be falsified. In the same spirit, additions and changes made should be clearly visible and not ‘antiqued,’ just as a codicil to a will is dated and signed at the time of the change. In this way the sequence of events is legible and the layering clearly visible to all. Should the condition of the building indicate restoration, the restorer should therefore be informed by thorough historical research and detailed archaeological examination of all the parts of the building. And to avoid personal whims, broad guiding principles are required (Fagan 2002).

Although Gawie Fagan has indicated (with contradiction at times) that he was not trying to restore the Castle to an ideal state, the majority of the work was performed in this way. “To achieve ‘genuineness’, [he] believed buildings needed to be restored in such a manner so that they convey a credible message through an ‘appearance of cohesion’ and ‘unity in style’” (Buttgens 2010: 54).

One is often asked to what period the restoration has been taken. As the castle was built over a period of time and then changed when taken over by the English, it was decided that though the structure should be made structurally sound, as much of the changes should be left as possible to reflect the historical sequences which in themselves are interesting and culturally valuable (Fagan 1993: 3).

This exemplified a design-by-analogy approach (countering heritage practice at the time) where definitive proof could not be established for some aspects like the Dolphin Pool, which was completely reconstructed. “The meaning and values of authenticity for the Fagans, as they were for the restorers of the nineteenth century, are embedded in the imagined idea of the historical building and not in the historical fabric” (Buttgens 2010: 54). The Fagans made very little attempt to ensure that these buildings were visually interpreted as a contemporary intervention. When interviewed in 2010 by Scurr (2011: 122) Gawie Fagan noted that a contemporary intervention approach could not be implemented, as the Castle was an example of rare stylistic value.

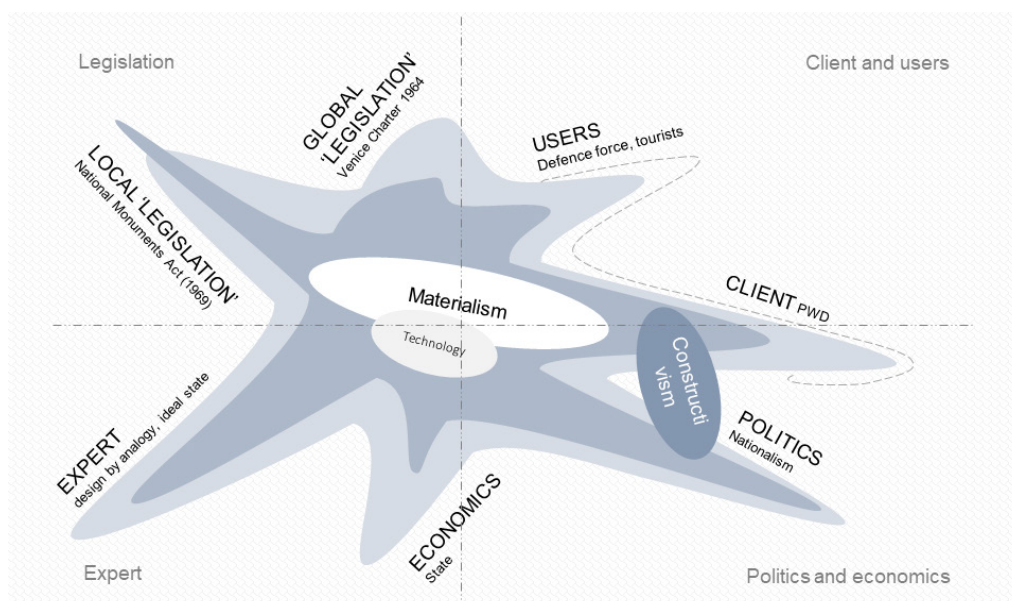


Figure 6
The Castle of Good Hope: a scale of analysis
(drawing by the author).

The Fagans did however use the building-as-document approach (favoured by the Athens and Venice Charters) in the layered restoration of Block E which is the building between the Buuren and Catzenellenbogen bastions. The Fagans' conservation approach to this building was to preserve its VOC and British legacy. It can be regarded as the most authentic building in the Castle due to the limited number of changes (Darke 2010: 60-1).

The constructivist aspect of authenticity was intertwined with politics, the military users of the Castle and both local and international visitors. In so doing, it was a curated experience largely devoid of the stories of those that had created the edifice and certainly privileging those in power at the time.

Local legislation played a limited role in achieving authenticity. The NMC were in charge of heritage issues until 1994. It was only after that that the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) was established with a larger mandate to safeguard cultural significance that included aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific, social, spiritual, linguistic or technological value or significance. Interestingly in the early to mid-1980s the Fagans contested the approaches of the NMC and UCT archaeologists regarding how excavations were being undertaken at the area of the Dolphin pool. They received direct support from another architect and internationally trained heritage practitioner John Rennie who had worked in the Fagans' office and who was familiar with the latest conservation techniques.

Visitor's Centre for the South African Breweries, Newlands, Cape Town, South Africa (1994-7)

The South African Breweries (SAB), which housed the oldest brewery and malt-house in the country dating back to as early as 1859 (figure 7), had long been preparing for a centenary celebration which they planned on using in a marketing and branding campaign to coincide with the 1995 Rugby World Cup. The brief called for a visitors centre that would reconstruct the history of beer-making in the Cape with parking for visitors and staff (100 open, 100 covered bays), lecture, dining and pub facilities for staff, memento shop and the reuse of the 1863 distillery (De Beer 1995: 13) as an environmental centre (Anon 1996).



Figure 7
Visitor's Centre for the South African Breweries (SAB), Newlands, Cape Town.
Left: original brewery (1859-1903) (source: courtesy Fagan archive).
Right: Visitor's Centre with new lift and extended chimney (photograph by the author, 2007).

The Fagans responded directly to the client’s requirements for an intervention that could be used as an exercise for marketing and branding of the 1995 World Rugby cup. The project received a 1997 Conservation award from the South African Institute of Architects describing it as responsible, intelligible conservation practice (Anon 1997: 18). The “rehabilitation and extension of the brewery at Newlands may not have satisfied the purists in conservation or, for that matter, radical interventionists of (the) Scarpa school, but then its remarkable success in ensuring the survival of the old must have calmed down both camps” (Pretorius and Raman 2006: 53). The conservation process focused on historical conservation, functional restoration and stylistic restoration approaches.

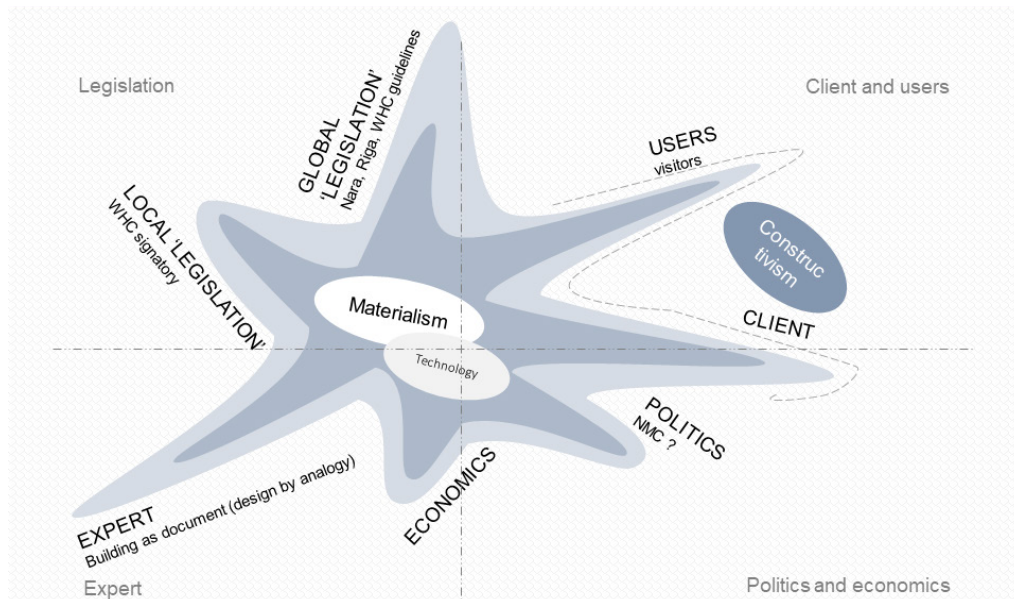


Figure 8
Visitor’s Centre for SAB: a scale of analysis
(drawing by the author).

The Fagans’ relationship to the external forces on the creation of an authentic conservation approach was guided by their own expert mindset, in this case less deterministically than in preceding projects (figure 8). Although the materialist approach still formed the core of the Fagan’s response through the use of contrasting technologies, the Fagans more closely followed global heritage charters, working in a building-as-document manner. “Divisions and fixtures are loose fitted to emphasize the distinction between old and new, enhancing the old not only by contrast but by its veracity not being questioned” (Fagan c1995). Working in the vein of architects like Carlos Scarpa (De Beer 1995: 15), the Fagans removed layers to reveal best elements while increasing spatial legibility. Areas, like the basement and the chimney, part of which was reconstructed with a clear distinction between old and new brickwork, revealed the history of the buildings and areas that had to be reconstructed and reclaimed for legibility of the historic fabric. Here materials were closely matched to reconstruct the old (Scurr 2011: 93).

By colour-coding the walkway blue and constructing it of contrasting modern materials, a clear distinction was made between original fabric and the movement ribbon. In this way suspended floor-boards, for instance, could be retained making the solution more economical while enhancing the credibility of the old (Fagan 1997: 18).

The responses were in line with the South African National Urban Conservation Symposium of 1990 which indicated that whole environments should better reflect history rather than isolated monuments (Townsend 2000: 135).

The Fagans' approaches also reinforced the mantra of the 1979 Burra Charter which suggested that as little as possible and as much as it necessary be done in conservation projects, implying that additions should be able to be removed. Notably, South Africa signed the World Heritage Convention (1972) in 1996, the mantra of which recognised the way that people interact with nature, something that the Fagans subtly responded to in the topographically and industrial functionalist (Cooke 2009: 288) inspired concrete framed parking garage constructed around existing trees. Although no heritage impact assessment had to be provided prior to the Heritage Resources Act of 1999 (NHRA) the Fagans did, through a partially constructivist approach, place a larger focus on cultural significance in the conservation of the Visitor's Centre. The Fagans balanced the requirements of the client and the user and, succeeded in creating a legible and engaging user experience through the story of place and beer making, particularly through the addition of glazed movement spine which "fulfils functional and curatorial requirements" (Scurr 2014: 102). There seems to have been a growing engagement with cultural issues witnessed through a 1995 lecture given to the Swellendam Trust where Gawie Fagan highlights that "the notion of conservation can be extended beyond purely material objects, to cultural conservation, where we would include the arts, music, dance and letters or oral history, in fact even the mode of life of a society" (Fagan 1995: 1). However, the conservation strategies at SAB are not completely authentic as the actors behind the curated scenes, for example those who made the beer and their origins, are not visible. It therefore does not fully support the culturally-contextual nuances of the 1994 Nara Document published during the development of the project and is, therefore, limited in constructivist terms.

Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine, Mowbray, Cape Town, South Africa (2004)

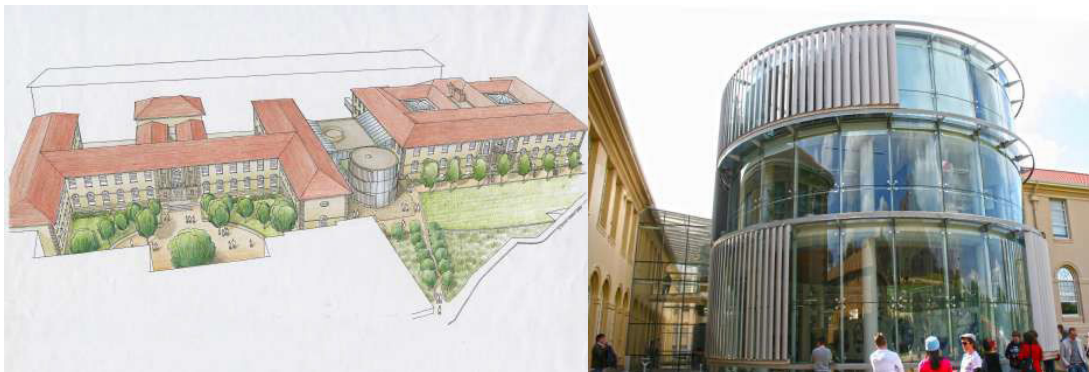


Figure 9
Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine, Mowbray, Cape Town
Top left: Sketch proposal (source: courtesy Fagan archive).
Right: view of the link, rotunda and sunscreen (photograph by the author, 2007).

In the early 2000s, the programs of the Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine at the University (IIDMM) of Cape Town were spread across three independent buildings (Deckler *et al* 2006: 101), hindering functionality. The management of the IIDMM

wished to not only link their activities physically and symbolically but to encourage the valuable informal interaction between colleagues and heighten the feeling of community within the Institute (Fagan c2004 and Fagan 2004b: 39).

The South block demolition and rebuilding proposal was designed by the Fagans but the project was completed in association with MLH Architects and Planners. The Fagans were responsible for the new link and associated insertions (figure 9).

Preceding the Fagans’ work, an urban design proposal for the precinct, by Kruger Roos, illustrated a transparent insertion between the existing north and south blocks (Scurr 2011: 107). The Fagans followed suit with the new link building as a glazed insertion but projected a free-standing rotunda or “tempietto” (Coetzer 2007: 367), known as the Wolfson Pavilion (De Beer, 2014: 90) projecting beyond the line of Wernher and Beit (W and B) South wing creating an entrance knuckle. The removal of post 1940 work on W and B South and extension of this building, by replication to mirror the North Block, created a unified row of buildings along Falmouth Road but “[t]his delight is tempered by the lack of any inventive design attempt on the exterior of the W and B South building. Rather, the appearance of the original 1928 building is extended over a few more bays to create a stylistically unified building. The building is essentially returned to its original appearance, but with matching rear extensions” (Scurr 2011: 109-10). The rear 4 bays were built in 2005. Gawie Fagan noted that “[f]or a building to transmit these values [of significance], however, it must be completely genuine and credible. To achieve ‘genuineness’, he believed [that] buildings needed to be ‘restored’ in such a manner so that they convey a credible message through an ‘appearance of cohesion’ and ‘unity in style’” (Büttgens 2010: 54).

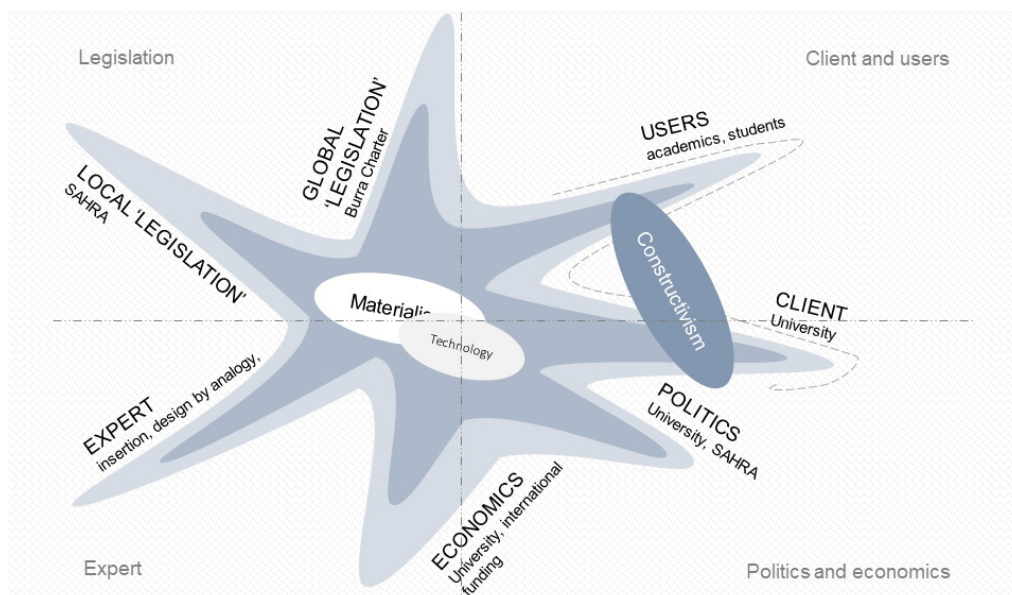


Figure 10
Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine: a scale of analysis
(drawing by the author).

In the IIDMM project, the external influences on authenticity (figure 10) were more closely balanced through a synthesis of the needs of client and university and heritage politics. It was also guided by a less expert, and a more user-focused and client-responsive mind set. A critical role was played by Prof Wieland Gewers of UCT, whose primary motive was to combine the two university departments to “enable cross feed of disciplines and to bring people together” (Scurr 2011: 101). He gave unwavering support for the Fagans’ solution for the Link Building by “break[ing] across the University establishment” (Scurr 2011: 102). In the design of the IIDMM the Fagans’ materialist response fostered the use of new technologies,¹¹ reinforcing the urban design proposal by Kruger Roos Architects and Urban Designers.¹² But the Fagans’ proposal for a somewhat bolder, contemporary version of the 1925 neoclassical W and B North and South buildings¹³ was not supported (Scurr 2011: 102). Here the Fagans adopted a “design by analogy approach” even though the 1940s W and B South extensions and the Falmouth building were deemed to be intrusions (Scurr 2011: 106). Even though the IIDMM project was undertaken under the newly introduced National Heritage Resources Act (which required significant attention to any building over 60 years old) through a Heritage Impact Assessment, the SAHRA approved the Fagans’ proposals.

International sponsors from the United Kingdom funded a substantial portion of the cost while the IIDMM alone raised one third of UCT’s research funding (Scurr 2011: 101-2) the former influence limiting a possible client bias. Although the Burra Charter was in full swing with its revised 2000 charter and mantra “do as much as is necessary and as little as possible” at the time of design and construction of the IIDMM, the Fagans argued that a contemporary intervention was only applicable or suitable when restoring a less significant building or object. The “rarity” of the artefact determines the intervention and method regardless of conservation charters and texts (Scurr 2011: 123,124) and because of its architectural “contrast the Wolfson Pavilion extends the usual life of the neo-classical boxes” (De Beer 2014: 90).

The Barracks, Cape Town city centre, South Africa (2004-)

In 1767, a Dutch warehouse at the corner of Strand and Bree Streets, in the heart of the city of Cape Town, was built as part of the Lutheran Church complex (figure 11). From 1785 it was used as military barracks and later to store wine and wheat. In the early 1800s it was described as a Military Depot also used as a naval hospital. The artefact is regarded as having historical, architectural and aesthetic value and is rare due to its functional nature and as very little of it has been lost (Townsend 2014: 18).

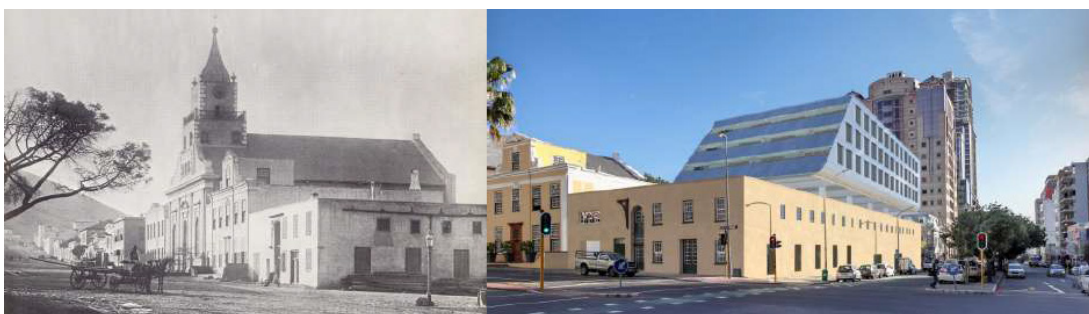


Figure 11

Left: The original warehouse building, 1880 by Arthur Elliot (retrieved from the public domain <https://thebarracks.capetown/about/>).

Right: A 2014 architect’s perspective showing the proposed addition of a commercial building above the warehouse (retrieved from the public domain <https://www.capetownccid.org/news/landmark-heritage-development-set-transform-downtown-cape-town>).

The Fagans were only appointed as architects in 2009 after a number of other proposals had been made, as early as 2004 (Townsend 2014: 10). The owners consolidated a number of existing erven and wished to develop the property for commercial purposes. The facades of the historic warehouse, on Strand and Bree streets, were to be returned to their best-known form.

All authentic heritage fabric was also to be retained, restored and showcased. The main entrance to the building was created on Bree with an arcade slicing through the building to link up with the Church courtyard. All the fabric from this slice was salvaged and used to re-instate a part previously demolished (<https://thebarracks.capetown/the-Fagan-design/>).

The most contentious part of the project was the addition of a suspended commercial block, designed in a contemporary idiom, above the old warehouse. The new building was designed to be setback from Strand Street to preserve the formal integrity of the Lutheran Church and its 18th century streetscape (<https://thebarracks.capetown/>). An original four-storey proposal was eventually reduced to three to lessen the impact on the surrounding environment.

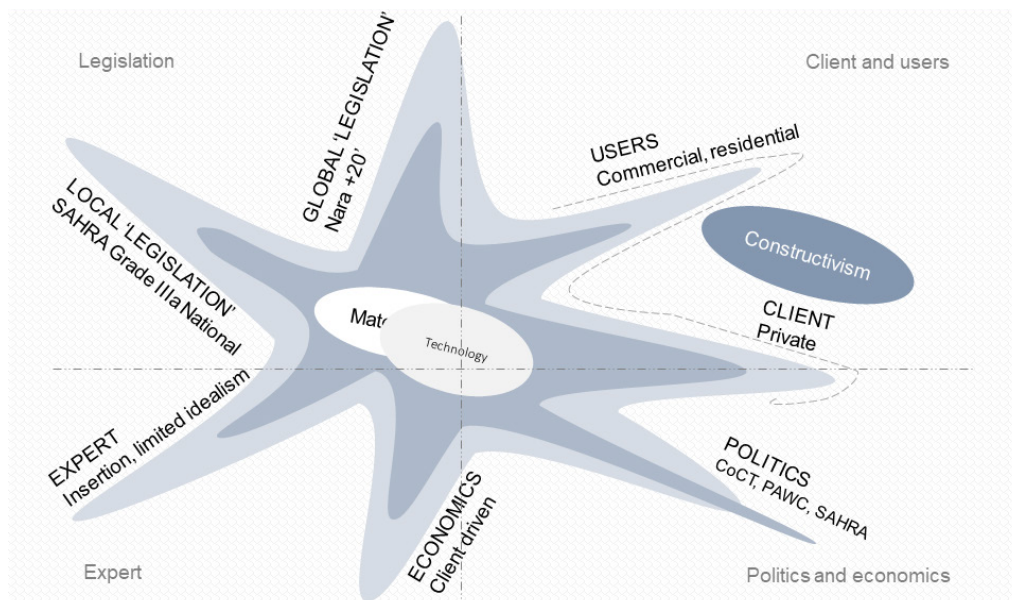


Figure 12
The Barracks: a scale of analysis
(drawing by the author).

In this project, the politics of heritage and plans approval, through the City of Cape Town (CoCT), the Provincial Administration Western Cape (PAWC) and SAHRA were the main external influences on authenticity (figure 12). A protracted process of approvals and rejections saw an initial proposal being approved by Heritage Western Cape, in April 2010 (under the National Heritage Resources Act) and finally approved (with revisions) in 2016. The Fagans fought a long and hard battle not only with authorities but also a number of conservative heritage associations that saw the proposal as too radical. But in Townsend's (2014: 22) Heritage Impact Assessment, he notes that

[i]t appears that these objectors are troubled by contrast, and it seems that they do not recognize the character of the environs in which this block is sited or even the architecture of much of the building on the block; they also seem not to recognize that the very 'layering' they find attractive is the result of iterative building through history. And they imply that this history of layering should cease, though they do not give reasons why (other than their dislike of contemporary architecture).

The Fagans certainly fought the good fight for their client but persuaded them to reduce the building bulk and, in so doing, provided a more sympathetic response to the Lutheran Church. Gawie Fagan's predilection, as expert, for an ideal state of heritage response continued, albeit in a restrained manner, as he proposed that the exterior facades along Strand and Bree were to be returned to their best-known form by referencing an 1880s photograph from the Cape Archives. Townsend (2014: 29) suggests, however that

... these relatively minor changes to this façade are not intended to 'restore' the façade to any previous appearance but rely on two related arguments: first, that attempts to return to previous hypothetical forms are inauthentic unless the building is largely intact and that restoration should be carried out only by 'returning existing fabric... to a known earlier state by removing accretions or reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material'; and, second, given the arrangement of the existing openings which are similarly proportioned to those shown in the circa 1880s photograph, we contend that the adjustment of the height is sufficient, enabling the façade to contribute appropriately to, or at least not detract from, the viewer's experience of the Lutheran Church complex. This will not constitute any loss in significance.

No doubt as the warehouse was only granted a grade IIIa status,¹⁴ the Fagans saw fit to introduce a contemporary building above. In this project the Fagans' heritage approach is closer to current local legislation receiving NHRA support at the highest levels from the manager of the built environment unit through praise for retaining the significance of the block (<https://thebarracks.capetown/>). The heritage approaches are even closer to the Nara document on authenticity revised in 2014. In constructivist terms, the Fagans responded to aspects such as community participation, social inclusion, sustainable practices and intergenerational responsibility (Silberman n.d.: 1). The Fagans had also specifically responded to suggestions that the trade-offs between conservation of cultural heritage and economic development must be seen as part of the notion of sustainability (Silberman n.d.: 1) by reducing the size of the building, even though the zoning of the site allowed more bulk. In addition, The Fagans were responsive to the needs of current and future users through the commercial activities at street, and roof level, and a range of appropriate, albeit expensive, residential accommodation mostly focused on studio-type units.

Conclusion

To be able to make decisions about intervening in historic contexts, a range of values needs to be recognized through which significances are defined, so as to establish authenticity. It is through this process that the integrity, which is the ability of an artefact to convey its significance, can be established. Authenticity in architectural heritage practice is formed from a range of tangible and intangible influences that sit between the extremes of materialist and constructivist viewpoints. To provide a more critical understanding of authenticity, so as to limit the focus on the artefact, its direct meaning and a concomitant preservationist approach, a number of external influences on authenticity have been identified in this article. These are the effects of politics and its associated hegemonies, economics and power, the needs of the client, the attitude of the heritage "expert", local and international "legislation" (through promulgations such as heritage charters) and the needs and effects on user groups. These external influences were used to diachronically analyse authenticity in a selected range of the Fagans' conservation projects.

In the Fagans' early work there was a close relationship between their approach to conservation, the political dispensation of the day, the client and the type of conservation project. In Tulbagh and the Castle of Good Hope there was a concerted effort to preserve the artefacts of a particular culture, so much so that subsequent cultural expression was sublimated or superseded

by newly reconstructed and sometimes invented constructions. This has resulted in a biased authenticity, making the experience for the users less rich. Later conservation work has been less politically biased, as the clients were mainly private entities or semi-government institutions. Here a more balanced and constructivist approach has increased the user experience.

In all of the cases that have been analysed, the wishes of the client were accommodated at great lengths, at most times in line with the politics of the day but in later projects often against the prevailing legislative tendencies. The former approach has foregrounded less authentic responses and the latter a better synergy of the needs of the client and users and more nuanced responses to concomitant heritage practices.

Quite often “ignorance was bliss” or “selectivity was sound” in the choices made when the Fagans operated in terms of the heritage practice approaches of the day. The Fagans have operated largely independently of promulgated heritage charters such as those produced by UNESCO. At times they have either recognised or denied the existence of these heritage practice guidelines. Gawie Fagan has argued that he has operated on “instinct, context and brief” (Fagan interview in Scurr 2011: 16) but that there should be no falsifications (Fagan 1977: 4). “[N]ew work should be visible and personal whims should not play any role and there are no preset approaches” (Fagan interview in Darke 2017: 84, 157). Gawie Fagan also believed that “the academic ‘in’ thing is to say that all additions and accretions should be left to tell their story on an building. But this naive oversimplification is seldom wholly true – sound judgement is required” (Fagan 1977:6). These statements are in stark contrast to the work undertaken in Tulbagh, the Castle of Good Hope (and even IIDMM) where some complete reconstructions that have been built that do not reflect a contemporary heritage approach or architectural result. These conservative materialist approaches have limited the possibilities of truly authentic responses whilst often denying the value of a constructivist viewpoint, even though many new promulgations had surfaced during the 50 years of the Fagans’ involvement with restoration.

Quite often authorship overrode other informants while the treatment of the “document” (the artefact) was not always sacred. The Fagans’ expertise, focused on materialist aspects and the construction of the “ideal document” has grounded their heritage approaches in a largely preservationist standpoint, where the artefact is regarded as unique. The Fagans have argued that their approach to conservation is not determined by any particular philosophy, but rather practical considerations such as stabilisation of the built fabric and reuse. But modern technologies can achieve the same without detracting from the original and, in so doing, can establish a more authentic building-as-document approach.

Ultimately, approaches to authenticity in architectural heritage practice are contextual and bound by the times in which the artefact exists. More importantly, authenticity is both internally and externally generated and is relational to materialist and constructivist approaches, as well as conservative and progressive design approaches. It is hoped that the content of this article will bring a new perspective on authenticity to heritage practice. This perspective can provide practitioners with an understanding of the generative aspects that form authenticity while providing a balance of approaches to heritage that limit preservationist attitudes and an externalized, view of the artefact. As times change and new heritage practices come to the fore, so will new informants impact on artefacts. It is important for heritage practitioners to continually recognize these changes, so that an appropriate contextual authenticity and concomitant integrity can be properly defined. Through this process important artefacts will find their rightful place in a changing society with revised perspectives and a constantly evolving socio-cultural environment.

Notes

- 1 During the process of research work that was undertaken for the Tulbagh project, Gawie's wife left her medical practice to join his firm. She has been an integral part of all practice projects since then. In this article I will refer to the Fagans (in the plural) so as to provide an understanding of the joint efforts of the pair in bringing heritage practice to fruition. Where Gawie Fagan has made quotes directly associated with his pen (as witnessed through my primary archival research in his office), I will refer to Gawie directly.
- 2 Through the influences of politics, the values of a particular culture can be privileged.
- 3 ICOMOS. 1994. *The Nara document on authenticity (1994)*. Paris: UNESCO: 1. Retrieved on 20 April 2021 from <https://www.icomos.org/charters/nara-e.pdf>.
- 4 Australia ICOMOS. 2013. *The Burra Charter: The Australian ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*. Australian ICOMOS Inc: 2.
<https://www.icomos.org/en/167-the-athens-charter-for-the-restoration-of-historic-monuments> retrieved on 6 July 2021.
- 5 <https://www.icomos.org/en/167-the-athens-charter-for-the-restoration-of-historic-monuments> retrieved on 6 July 2021.
- 6 ICOMOS. 1964. *International charter for the conservation and restoration of monuments and sites (the Venice Charter 1964)*. ICOMOS: 1. Retrieved on 28 May 2021 from https://www.icomos.org/charters/venice_e.pdf.
- 7 Japanese conservation practices include the periodic dismantling, repair, and reassembly of wooden temples, which mitigated against the materialist definition of authenticity.
- 8 ICCROM/Latvian National Commission for UNESCO/State Inspection for Heritage Protection of Latvia [in cooperation with: World Heritage Committee and Cultural Capital Foundation of Latvia]. 2000. *Riga Charter on authenticity and historical reconstruction in relationship to cultural heritage*. Riga, Latvia, 23-24 October: 259. Retrieved on 24 May from https://www.iccrom.org/sites/default/files/publications/2020-05/convern8_07_rigacharter_ing.pdf.
- 9 Tellingly, in a 1992 lecture (Fagan archive) delivered at the Standard Bank Arts Festival, Gawie Fagan explains, in fine detail, the development of heritage practice internationally and locally but omits any references to important heritage charters like that of Venice in 1976.
- 10 Gawie Fagan's father Henry Allan Fagan (1889-1963) was born and buried in Tulbagh. Gawie Fagan's grandfather, Henry Allan (1865-1931) ran the general store in the town which had been, in turn, established and owned by his father, also H.A. Fagan (1837-1891) (Barker 2012: 121).
- 11 No doubt due to The Fagans' attitude that these buildings were not that significant.
- 12 Following a heritage survey of "Places and Buildings" at the Medical School Campus for UCT in July 2001 that had been completed by Trevor Thorold Architects together with Elizabeth van Heyningen.
- 13 The heritage practitioner, Trevor Thorold, graded the original portion of W and B South, plus W and B North and the mortuary building (on the northern edge) all as Grade 2 (Provincial Heritage sites).
- 14 The South African Heritage Resources Agency lists Grade I as National Heritage Sites, Grade II as Provincial Heritage sites and Grade III as Built Environment Heritage Resources that have sufficient intrinsic significance to be regarded as local heritage resources that are significant enough to warrant that any alteration is regulated.

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