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Old Lhasa

Built heritage and urban form 1995-2005

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ABBREVIATIONS and ACRONYMS

CAUD  China’s Academy for Urban Design
CIVVIIH  ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Vernacular Architecture
IATS  International Association for Tibetan Studies
ICROM  International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
ICOMOS  International Council on Monuments and Sites
IUCN  International Union for Conservation of Nature
LCHB  Lhasa City Housing Bureau
LCPB  Lhasa City Planning Bureau
LCRB  Lhasa Cultural Relics Bureau (Lhasa CRB)
LUAG  Lhasa Urban Area Government (Lhasa Chen Guan district government
LUCC  Lhasa Urban Construction Committee. A great majority of the urban development work also in Old Lhasa has been handled by the part-private real estate company ‘Lhasa City Real Estate Company’
NTNU  Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim
PMGL  People’s municipal Government of Lhasa
PRC  People’s Republic of China
SACH  State Administration for Cultural Heritage, Beijing
TAR  Tibet Autonomous Region
TARC  TAR Cultural Heritage Management office
THF  Tibet Heritage Fund, www.thf.com
UNDP  United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO  United Nations’ Organisation for Education, Science and Culture
WB  The World Bank
WCCD  World Commission on Culture and Development, Our Creative Diversity
WH  World Heritage
WHC  UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Paris
WHO  World Health Organisation
1972 WHC  UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)
Abstract

Representing a knowledge lacuna, a long history and status as holy city in Tibetan Buddhism, historical Lhasa was a unique subject for empirical studies on change – and Tibetan resilience to change – within a living urban context. The inscription of the Potala Palace on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1994 increased international concerns for historical Lhasa – without positively affecting the implementation of earlier approved urban development plans.

My research objective has been to investigate how traditional cultural practice and contemporary international doctrine on conservation and development have affected urban conservation in Old Lhasa during the period 1995-2005. Processes of change that affect urban form and built heritage in Lhasa need to be understood on a background of socio-political developments in China after 1949 and in Lhasa from the mid-1950s onwards. The research question was formulated as how and why do built heritage and urban form in historical Lhasa change? – this guided by defining the historical environment, and how urban conservation may to support traditions and characteristics of a Tibetan social community and physical historical fabric in a disappearing historical environment.

The theory base in the study was formed by international doctrinal texts on heritage and urban conservation, juxtaposed with regional traditions, and development thinking. To understand processes of change, the research approach was contextual and inductive, qualitative and knowledge-seeking – and normative in terms of built heritage management. Field studies were carried out 1995-2005 on four case categories: buildings, neighbourhoods, urban form, and the Lhasa World Heritage properties. The study confirmed intangible heritage as more important than built heritage to Tibetan respondents who perceived international doctrine as alien and ‘outsider-administered’. Change to townscape and built heritage was a major concern only to educated respondents. The study indicated considerable distance between perceptions of ‘value’ as expressed in traditional practice and international conservation doctrine, and that a ‘nearing’ of international conservation discourse towards a developmental context built on cultural diversity in Lhasa appeared remote.

Theory was revisited with focus on sustainable urban development, the historical urban landscape and rights-based approaches to heritage management. Main sources of data were direct observation with architectural documentation and interviewing – a reflective methodology with informal semi-structured interviews used to study lifeworlds – supported by cartographic studies, public documents and archival- and literature studies.

The study has proved the relevance of the research question. A few remaining significant buildings, and their residents, inform of a diversity of strategies that polarize state intervention and private enterprise. This situation calls for representative local involvement to support heritage and resilience. Recommendations aim to strengthen urban conservation as relevant institutions appear insufficiently equipped to handle the physical and social reality in Old Lhasa. In a disappearing Old Lhasa affected by
increasing physical and social vulnerability this constitutes a considerable challenge, the relevance of which could indeed be questioned.

Keywords: Historical Lhasa, Tibet, Urban conservation, sustainable development, historical urban landscape, rights-based approaches.

Endnotes

1 'Old Lhasa' was in the study defined as the near continuous townscape that characterised the settlement into the early 1950s, with Jokhang Temple and Barkor as natural focus (see Aufschnaiter, 1948).
2 The larger part of the study was completed before I had to delay its completion due to serious illness (2006 onwards).
EXTENDED SUMMARY
Introduction – background and relevance

Change attributed to and embedded in political, socio-economic processes and aspects of territoriality significantly affects historical towns. Lhasa, the historical capital of Tibet and holy city in Tibetan Buddhism, is no exception. A dominating international perception from the early 1960s onwards has been that the modernisation following China's invasion of Tibet (1951) has marginalised Tibetan traditional culture and way of life, contravening basic human rights. I have wished to contextualize how ‘the new system’ after 1959 has gradually appropriated Old Lhasa of 'the old order'. A near continuous traditional townscape characterised the historical town into the early 1950s, with Jokhang Temple and Barkor as its natural centre (Aufschnaiter, 1948).

The larger part of the study presented (including chapters 1 to 6) was carried out by 2005. Serious illness in 2006-2007 meant an unavoidable delay to the completion of the work.

My research objective has been to investigate how traditional cultural practice and contemporary international doctrine on conservation and development have affected urban conservation in Old Lhasa during the period 1995-2005.

This has led to investigate issues such as traditional and contemporary diversity of built typology, resilience to change in the historical physical fabric, citizens perception of and relationship to Old Lhasa as place, how and why change has taken place, and how urban conservation may safeguard disappearing Old Lhasa.

The inscription of the Potala Palace complex on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1994 – extended to include Jokhang Temple Monastery and Barkor in 2000 and Norbulingka in 2001 – confirmed international recognition of Tibetan culture and built heritage. In contrast to increasing international concerns for the historical town, earlier approved urban and housing development plans and social policies continued to transform a unique historical environment.

An assumption underlying this study has been that heritage management can contribute to improving livelihoods as well as supporting the resilience of both social and physical fabrics, and that a relevant built heritage management regime should support local representative participatory processes towards community empowerment and development.

My own involvement with Tibet and Lhasa started in the mid-1990s with the project Lhasa Historic City Atlas (1994-1999) carried out with Knud Larsen; part of the LHCA material was published as The Lhasa Atlas (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001).
Study motivation and intention

My primary motivation for the presented study was growing concerns over the increasing vulnerability of built heritage in a development context generally and the situation facing Old Lhasa specifically. Lhasa has for several reasons remained less researched than many historical towns. The intention of the study was therefore to contribute to filling a lacuna by contributing with new knowledge i) that reflect theory and practice relevant to urban conservation in Old Lhasa, ii) on impacts and causes of change affecting the historical kernel, and with iii) initiatives that would strengthen urban conservation here.

Although Lhasa for various reasons may be associated with a low academic research focus, much information on the historical and contemporary city has been distributed by other media – from PRC public policy documents, and national and international papers to international interest groups. My intention has been to present some of this with components of the international discourse on conservation and development in a larger frame relevant to the context of present Lhasa, and stimulate further investigations and dialogue.

Research question

The research question was formulated as how and why do built heritage and urban form in historical Lhasa change? – this guided by defining the historical environment, and how urban conservation may to support traditions and characteristics of a Tibetan social community and physical historical fabric in a disappearing historical environment.

Theory

Processes of change that affect urban form and built heritage in Lhasa need to be understood on a background of socio-political developments in China after 1949 and in Lhasa from the mid-1950s onwards – reflecting central government policy implementation that has directly been affecting the Tibetan cultural frame of the study subject.

Culture and development

Culture as an elusive continuously changing construct is often held to represents a permanent national or regional ‘platform’ (Pieterse, 2004). In this I follow the school of anthropology rather than traditional ethnology. In the Post-WW2 period, development was perceived as a system of ‘universally’ applicable technical interventions – ‘a linear process of economic development (to achieve) progress’ (Escobar, 1995:44). Later, development as process has been recognised as a cultural construct that influences and responds to the specific social-political context in which it takes place. Power as an often dominant factor in development might similarly be associated with state power. Power could more appropriately, however, be viewed as social relations diffused throughout all aspects of society – in ‘continuous
struggle of gaining and keeping control’ (Pieterse, 2004:66-67). That local culture, like the national, constitutes a unique web of power relations and unequally distributed cultural knowledge in struggles for respect, freedom and autonomy is widely known but often overlooked (ibid. p. 65).

The ‘Modernisation Paradigm’ dismissed indigenous knowledge as slowing down or preventing development, traditional culture as a residual variable believed to disappear with the advance of modernisation (Hettne, 1995:49). The self-evident notion that ‘understanding and appreciation of local ideas and practices inform development work’ has in reality taken several decades to be anchored – as ethnic identity was considered an obstacle to development, nation building and progress. The notion that indigenous (local) knowledge represents considerable and largely untapped potentials of social and cultural capital for development thinking is well documented, as in Jigyasu’s recent research on earthquake disaster vulnerability in India and Nepal (Sililtoe et al, 2002:2-5; Jigyasu, 2002).

Concerned with aspects of continuity and change, resilience and rupture in the historical urban fabric, central issues in the study have been associated with territoriality, ecological urban sustainability and cultural diversity and continuity.

The territorial as concept relates to a community’s ownership of and entitlements to land, resources, skills, traditions and self-organisation vis-à-vis a larger cultural and social environment – complex issues to discuss and analyse in an urban context (Bjønness, 2008). Cultural diversity was finally recognised not only as a central factor in development (mid-1990s) but by many considered to be as important as biological diversity (Nurse, 2006; chapter 2). Cultural continuity expresses an inherent need to resist change to values and goals for the survival of social practice and knowledge. Ethno-development as approach may by reducing loss of cultural diversity and continuity contribute to ecological urban sustainability, but needs to protect itself from a potential one-sided focus on the local that can introduce nostalgia or chauvinism, besides notions of ‘protecting ‘ss developed’ societies from development’ (Stavenhagen, 1990 and Hettne, 1995:203 in Bjønness, 2011:282; Pieterse, 2004:66).

Conservation and development

Although material in manifestation, heritage indeed remains intangible by representing memory, value, context and perception – by its necessity of being perceived and declared. As a combined social, cultural and economic resource, urban heritage may be defined as ‘a historic layering of social and cultural practices and values produced before and in our own times’ (Doc. 36 C/23, UNESCO General Conference Nov 2011, para II.4).

To embrace cultural diversity and continuity, conservation increasingly acknowledges and builds on fields beyond conventional cultural studies. The international discourse and doctrine is moving away
from a tradition of protecting objects towards a focus on resource management within social change. Stressing support of livelihood and local community needs in development, a focus on rights based approaches in heritage management is today ‘standard’ in international and NGO development practice although somewhat inhibited in practice in oppressive political contexts. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) recognised dignity as a central dimension of the human condition (Art. 1, UN 1948), stating that ‘all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights’.

The World Heritage Convention (WHC) ratified by the UNESCO General Conference in 1972 and today adopted by nearly all UNESCO member states, is recognised for its contributions to building international understanding of cultural and natural diversity. In contrast to all later conventions adopted by the UN family, however, the convention made no direct reference to human rights. A vital link between the convention and the UDHR is the WHC insisting on community participation in all aspects of its work (selection, nomination, decision-making and site management). In reality, however, there are numerous cases of this not even being attempted by governments. Later international documents, such as the Nara Document on Authenticity (1994), the WCCD (1995), the Burra Charter (1988 and 1999) and the Faro Convention (2005), have aimed to strengthen the importance of dignity and cultural diversity. Many national governments nevertheless question the political potentials of these documents. Burra provided a methodical procedure for assessing cultural significance of place, and for spreading information on this through the community –thus opening the international heritage environment’s eyes to the importance of indigenous culture and traditional group entitlements. Nara stressed the equal worth of all tangible and intangible expression as heritage resources, and the responsibility the cultural community for managing them. Arguing a clear linkage between community and heritage, Faro described ‘cultural heritage’ to include all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time (Art. 2, Council of Europe, 2005).

From the 1990s the earlier distanced fields of human development (and cultural-natural heritage) and human rights are being brought together in shared efforts to advance sustainable community development. In international planning and development activities rights-based approaches (RBAs) are today commonplace, and increasingly recognised as relevant for and within the conservation field. A rights-based approach is one whereby all actions – from policy and development programme to individual action in a community – shall support human rights principles and standards.

Urban conservation

Assessing an individual heritage object requires deep specific knowledge and following a rigorous process. Assessing a living historical urban environment – concurrently representing parallel ‘realities’ as arenas for life and death, development and interaction – introduces complexity of a significantly
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higher, and largely untested, order. Here is used the term historic urban landscape (HUL), adopted by UNESCO General Conference in Nov. 2011 (Doc. 36 C/23).

In historic ‘places’ continued aggressive competition to produce the most saleable ‘virtual or manipulated’ reality for cultural tourism, a reality that would ‘more and more (be) replacing the real’, society may disregard unique resources for which it serves as steward (Sekler in Theophile and Gutschow, 2001). With this increases the threat to the ‘genetic code’ of aggregate characteristics (features, qualities and values) of place (Pound, 2008). Further, as perspectives on assessment may be directed by of external experts’ views, heritage management processes, and actors, are often distanced from local community. Social inclusion thus easily not enhanced, communities may lose sense of ownership and responsibility of their own heritage.

In Buddhist and Hindu traditions, changing aspirations, needs and use (functionality) – also efforts of individual merit building – would warrant modifications to built form. A ‘eurocentric’ concept of originality of a built structure and material authenticity would hence not be granted particular importance. The overarching spiritual value of a built structure – with all human action and hence structures considered sacred – would be perceived manifest in its symbolic value and functionality, not in age of fabric. A structure’s location, however, cannot be changed. In clear contrast to the above, the World Heritage paradigm has focus on concepts such as authenticity, integrity and outstanding universal value (OUV), administered through complex operational guidelines.

A challenge with a ‘holistic’ approach to urban conservation would be that ‘full’ integration of heritage management and socio-economic and planning mechanisms, could make heritage values into ‘building blocks’ of politically correct statements of urban dynamics. In such a context, threats to heritage resources might become stronger than concerns for them.

The concept of historic urban landscape is likely to add to the complexities introduced above. A major challenge lies in introducing issues that in legal terms go beyond the accepted mandate of the WH Convention – possibly already ‘overruling’ aspects of specific national planning and heritage legislation on rights of use, ownership and development. Principles of the historic urban landscape concept may, despite the near-total demolition of the historical urban fabric, benefit Old Lhasa through a re-focus on the historical structure of streets and urban blocks to support the resilience of these partly extant dimensions of urban form towards change. HUL principles may potentially form a much needed bridge between international conservation doctrine and the ‘Asian authenticity debate’ or traditional practice.

Methodology

The research approach has been contextual in order to reconcile an historical retrospect with the contemporary. Further, it has been inductive, qualitative and local knowledge seeking to understand
processes of change, but also normative in terms of describing current built heritage management and recommending a strengthening towards *deductive* realities of society.

Field studies were carried out within a *reflective approach* and from an anthropological position. Intending to promote deeper understanding, a reflective methodology entails conscious efforts to view a subject matter from different angles and to avoid a strong single ‘a-priori privilege’ of a single favoured angle.5

As regards the methodology of data collection, i) *primary source methods* were *direct observations* with architectural documentation, and *interviewing*, a reflective methodology with informal semi-structured interviews used to study lifeworld narratives. For ii) *secondary source material* were used cartographic studies, available public documents and archival- and literature studies. A challenge not resolved in the study was this author considering international ideology and methodology as potentially incompatible to a Lhasa context study process and analysis. Not clearly recognising one’s own cultural position or ethnocentricity inevitably brought into the research process, would also represent inherent dangers to the research. Change in Old Lhasa was observed through visits twice a year throughout the study period.

**Context**

**Glimpses through time**

According to known sources, Lhasa was founded by King Songtsen Gampo in the mid-7th century CE (Snellgrove and Richardson, 1986). The king built the ‘lha sa’ and ‘ramoche’ Buddhist sanctuaries (today known as Jokhang Temple Monastery and Ramoche Monastery) around which small settlements are assumed to have developed. The ‘lha sa’ sanctuary has through more than one millennium been recognised as the holiest in Tibetan Buddhism.

After centuries of changing circumstances, Lhasa again became capital of Tibet in 1642, and remained so until 1951 when the Tibetan territories were over-run by China, and the ‘Seventeen Point Agreement’ was ’negotiated’ with Tibet’s traditional leaders (Tsering Shakya, 1999:449).

Lhasa in 1950, i.e. ‘Old Lhasa’ had a population of near 20,000 persons in a loosely urbanised area of about 1,5 km2 and inside Lingkor. By comparison, in 2005 Lhasa covered an urban area of about 90 km2 with a population estimated to about half a million Of this a large majority was non-Tibetan (some Hui-Muslim Chinese but mainly Han-Chinese). Old Lhasa had in 2005 a mainly Tibetan population estimated to about 80,000 persons.

The growth and development of Old Lhasa has here been described in six distinct periods: i) Sanctuary and settlement (mid 7th to mid-17th century CE); ii) Capital of Tibet (1642 onwards); iii) Modern
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**Representation and Tibetan cultural context**

Interpretation of history and contemporary context is central to any understanding of place. Current representations of Tibet (and Lhasa) may be simplified in two contrasting ‘positions’: one in which Tibet is an ‘inalienable part of China’, and another with Tibet as an independent state in fact, law and cultural traditions. Both positions at the outset (1950s) tended to ‘idealise’ Tibet as a ‘pure and untouched’ virgin territory outside the modern world’, a ‘primitive and barbarian’ highly spiritual nation in need of being ‘civilised’ (Bishop, 2000). In reality, China’s interventions in Tibet seem to contrast sharply from the ‘empathic’ manner by which ‘civilisation’ would be brought to this ‘undeveloped’ region – with the severe limitations imposed on traditional Tibetan way of life, minority cultural rights and religious practice.

Cosmic connectedness between knowledge, living beings and the earth is in the perspective of Buddhism manifested in a cyclical notion of reincarnation (Sillitoe et al, 2002:29). Traditional built heritage in material and immaterial representation would constitute ‘an embodiment of local or indigenous knowledge, a complex product of people, place and time, evolving in consequence of dynamic processes’ (Thakur, 1998).

It appears self evident that different and contested positions of representation on Tibet’s history and geo-cultural relationships would exist. The issue of representation is recognised as beyond the scope of the study, but briefly visited as the study is concerned with understanding how change affects territoriality, sense if ownership and identity in Old Lhasa and thus contributing to forming the individual’s lifeworld6 that were investigated through interviews.

Differing representations of Tibet and ‘Tibetanness’ (such as Western: more than one, Chinese: ditto, ‘Asian Buddhist’, exile community, Tibetan population, government representatives: Tibetan and Chinese, and by non-Tibetan settlers) are from the perspectives of the viewer all perceived as ‘real’. My own approach towards representation of Lhasa and Tibet undeniably reflects solidarity with a ‘victim’ – ‘David versus Goliath’ – recognising excessive use or misuse of power. This position could, however, seriously threaten an informed and unbiased discussion.

To illustrate, through personal interpretations of place, respondents insisted different Lhasas to exist for residents, administrators or visitors, Tibetans, and Hui- or Han-Chinese. Tibetan traditional buildings of a limited typology and constructed in the few locally available materials might at first glance appear ‘identical’ and ordinary. On closer inspection, however, their diversity of massing, plan, size, richness of details and decoration, and diversity of function are emphasised – all within a wonderfully expressive yet controlled architectural language. Little research made on traditional Tibetan architecture, even less is published.7
I hold that built form traditions of Central Tibet are unique whether considered in a Himalayan or wider geo-cultural perspective, and that Tibetan traditional architecture and settlement planning are evidence of cultural bridges between Central Tibet and parts of Central Asia, China and the Indian subcontinent. Built form traditions in the Western Himalayas and Hindu Kush bear witness to this.8

Chinese context

China recognised central international documents on conservation during its massive reconstruction of national legislation in the early 1980s. In parallel the PRC government adopted a national policy to actively ‘commodify’ iconic heritage structures, areas and religious sites for centuries considered integral with a larger ‘sacred’ cultural-natural landscape into wares for tourism. ‘Overuse’ of historical environments through tourism is known to ‘mono-functionalise space’, reduce heritage values, residents’ sense of ownership, identity and commitment. After an initial ‘boost’, resources may thus be lost that could provide a basis for cultural continuity and diversity and local community income-generating. The policy of ‘commodifying’ heritage resources contributes to urban conservation strongly reminiscent of ‘museum- and thing-making’ for economic benefit.

Lhasa developmental context

From 1960 onwards, Lhasa city was built around the historical kernel but with the traditional ‘centre functions’ relocated to the new urban areas. In a period of little if any investment in the historical district, and with its status as ‘open city’, Old Lhasa soon experienced severe overcrowding. Dilapidation of the urban fabric inevitably followed. There could be several reasons for the authorities retaining of Old Lhasa as an ‘untouched’ historical urban environment inside the growing new city (1950s to mid-1980s). One reason was possibly to safeguard its substantial housing potential for the dramatic processes of social redistribution implemented from the mid-1950s onwards. Another would be the well documented lack of government resources. The ‘protection’ of Old Lhasa could alternatively be interpreted as the old tradition whereby a new Chinese dynasty would construct its chief urban settlement outside that of previous ones. In the context of China’s policies on Tibet from 1950 onwards, the latter is considered less likely.

The start of my study period (1995) coincided with the start of major construction activity inside the historical district to ‘modernise’ Old Lhasa. The PRC central government approved Lhasa Urban Development Plan 1980-2000 provided the legal and operational framework for the construction of the new city and ‘repair’ of Old Lhasa. The Barkor Conservation Plan, PRC-approved in 1996, declared only 15 of more than 400 pre-1950 buildings to be worthy of protection – leaving the door open for the ‘necessary demolition’ of historical-traditional Lhasa.
Case studies

Four case study categories in various stages of transformation were selected for investigations inside Old Lhasa: i) individual buildings, ii) neighbourhoods inside and outside the Barkor World Heritage buffer zone, iii) urban form, and iv) the Lhasa World Heritage property areas (state of conservation and urban conservation in general). Most of my respondent interviews were with residents living in buildings and neighbourhoods selected for case studies, and provided input on aspects of respondents’ knowledge of Old Lhasa, relationship with the authorities, and their attitude to New and Old Lhasa – in short about their lifeworlds.

The built typology selected for case studies was: the small townhouse, the tenements, the courtyard manor, and the monastery complex. Issues seen as especially relevant for investigating the 13 building studies were associated with a) processes related to urban conservation and development interventions, b) residents lifeworlds, and c) changing built form (authenticity versus ‘Tibetan renewal’) and urban morphological transformation. Three neighbourhoods were selected for investigation. Two of them, Barkor and Shasarzur were located inside the historical kernel. The third, Yuthok Tseshing, was located ‘on the edge’ – on the historical route between Jokhang and the Potala Palace.

Study findings

The study findings have been related to the research questions, the main question formulated as how and why does urban form and built heritage in historic Lhasa change? supported by the more specific questions: what defines Old Lhasa and its borders in the past and at present and as WH sites; how are changes to Old Lhasa built heritage and urban form physically expressed; why is site specific and general change taking place in Old Lhasa; and how initiatives could generate positive urban conservation to safeguard Old Lhasa from disappearing and contribute to building social and physical resilience of the Tibetan environment in Old Lhasa (chapter 9).

On boundaries - Lhasa past and present

Boundaries and approaches to investigating them are outlined in chapters 2 and 6. The 1950 Lhasa near mono-ethnic and mono-cultural Tibetan society was by 2005 transforming into a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society, albeit with a dominant and expanding Han-Chinese population majority.

A theoretical framework for studying impacts of ‘boundary-making’ and understanding resulting social cultural and territorial issues or relations, may be outlined (Hans Christie Bjønness, 2012:3, unpublished) as: i) alignment and nature of the boundary superimposed and its rationality, and use and misuse of power; ii) impact of the boundary on creating changes in relationships between individuals and groups of citizens; and iii) impacts on livelihoods, closely related to understanding of the territorial relations of
the place in terms of community, resources and skills, land and ownership relations, and the place in the larger context of the territorial landscape – are briefly discussed in chapter 8. Let it here suffice to mention as regards issue i), David Delaney’s statement that ‘the intensity of territoriality seems to be a function of the intensity of control or power’ (Delaney 2005: 75 in Bjønness 2012 unpublished), and as regards issue ii) that in Lhasa the concept of gemeinschaft, still alive with part of the Old Lhasa population. The dimension of gemeinschaft, may have assisted in accentuating a perception of ‘otherness’ – of ‘us’ (ethnic Tibetan population) versus the incomers ‘taking over’ (non-Tibetans) in Old and new Lhasa. Boundaries such as Lingkor and other koras that earlier ‘only’ indicated inside and outside may today carry meanings of ownership and control, and lack of this, for much of the Tibetan population in Lhasa.

World Heritage property boundaries, and buffer zones, are differently defined throughout the ‘Indian-Chinese’ region. A realistic ‘span’ of what is acceptable may be seen in the Kathmandu Valley. The historical town of Bhaktapur has embraced World Heritage further than some WH properties by linking the major monuments through an extended albeit narrow buffer zone. In Bhaktapur in the Kathmandu Valley, a discussion on what belongs inside and outside a buffer zone is nevertheless still feasible. In contrast to efforts of linking central heritage areas in Bhaktapur, the three parts of the Lhasa WH property are separated by modern townscape, the geometry of which radically broke with the traditional geometry of the old ‘meandering’ settlement. In Lhasa, a discussion on ‘inside and outside’ is more complicated with the ‘connectivity’ between major heritage resources and spiritual power-points in some cases visually broken.

Often fairly arbitrary boundaries relating to issues of ownership, use and an opinion of ‘what is possible’ define boundaries of urban heritage sites – a created boundary impacting on residents’ relations and access to sites in use, introducing territorial of social and ethnic changes, and to livelihoods. The Potala-Shöl, Jokhang-Barkor and Norbulingka World Heritage status appear to accentuate cultural and urban planning issues not ‘on the table’ for local or regional government planners at the time of inscription. Although the ‘seamless spiritual cultural landscape’ of Lhasa and the Lhasa Valley remains sacred to Tibetans, to the national, regional and municipal government levels this built and intangible heritage has at no point seemed worthy of protection (personal communications).

Real and potential conflicts between traditional territorial and politically determined boundaries were by Tibetan Old Lhasa respondents simplified as ‘two Lhasas coexisting in daily conflict and collaboration’: namely a ‘white city for Tibetans’ and a ‘red city for all others’. Recognising a functional dependence on both, most respondents, however, hesitated when asked whether one represented a ‘good Lhasa’ and the other a ‘less good’ – although admitting the Lhasa representing Chinese authorities to be the
‘winner’. This dichotomy appears as one major reason for Old Lhasa residents perceiving their own lifeworld as one ‘in-between’ the traditional and the modern – besides a perception of not adequately belonging to formal society.

A perception of Lhasa with boundaries that defined physical and spiritual nearness (such as ‘inside or outside’ Lingkor) and territorial issues, appears replaced by one that to the Tibetan population signals areas of ‘control’ and ‘ownership’ – or to many Tibetans, a lack of this.

**Sacred versus secular and sense of ownership**

In vulnerable and transforming historical urban environments, the sense of ownership – or lack of same – is often decisive in a ‘battle’ over property use rights and potentials between aggressive newcomers and an ‘indigenous’ population. In Old Lhasa a majority of trade (and space) potentials have within the study period been appropriated by non-Tibetans (mainly Han-Chinese; chapter 6).

Respondents described the sacred Lhasa historical urban landscape as secularised by ‘ordinary- and thing-making’ (museum-making) sacred sites and landscape features, and their own sense of connectivity to sacred powerpoints within the traditional townscape and the larger geo-cultural landscape as severed by the new urban environment.

Tibetan respondents unanimously emphasised intangible heritage as more important to them than tangible and built heritage – in view of the sacred dimensions of functionality and location. Change to townscape and built heritage was a concern to the educated respondents but seemed little important to most Old Lhasa respondents.

Respondents almost exclusively saw international conservation doctrine and the World Heritage system and designation awarded Lhasa (1994 onwards) to represent an alien system administered by ‘foreigners’, in contrast to a regime grounded in Buddhist traditions of maintaining use and place (buildings, location and community). A considerable distance is thus indicated between perceptions of ‘value’ as expressed in traditional practice and in international conservation doctrine.

The 1994 World Heritage status, the Chinese policy of commodifying heritage resources, and tourism are considered as major causes of ‘increased interest’ from non-Tibetans.

Respondents described the distance between themselves as residents and the authorities as real, and saw themselves – with disillusionment – as strangers in their own city, unwelcome and with little sense of ownership granted them by ‘alien government policies administered by strangers’. In sum, ‘gains’ through modernity were in the eyes of numerous Old Lhasa Tibetans over-shadowed by grave concerns over loss of traditional entitlements and values. At the end of the study period, ‘fruits’ of Old Lhasa’s economic and social revitalisation may appear different than expected.
**Extended Summary**

**Change to built heritage and urban form**

*Temporal change* – Located in a large sacred landscape, Lhasa as settlement was a consequence of continuous and incremental transformation over many centuries, its integrity produced by combined spiritual and material expression through interaction between religious institutions, authorities, environment and the life of a fairly stable resident population. In 1950, Lhasa was still a clearly defined settlement inside Lingkor circumambulation route or kora.

In the period 1951-1986, the area between the main settlement, Potala-Shöl and the Lhasa River was developed, with the traditional meadows (Tibetan: *lingkas*) absorbed by the growing city for civil and military government semi-urban work-units (Chinese: *danwei*). *Danweis* established during the 1960s also inside Lingkor to this author clearly illustrated early government decisions to substantially alter land-use and demography in Lhasa. By 1990, all Lhasa *lingkas* were transformed into urban blocks.

*Urban form and urban conservation* – Major factors to affect Old Lhasa urban form were recognised in the continuous population increase, the orthomorphous street structure, the work-units or *danweis*, mass housing construction (1980-onwards) and the construction of social-physical infrastructure. At an ‘intangible’ level, these factors contributed to cause change to traditional life, religious practice, and traditional trades in Old Lhasa. Highly relevant to the process of change are impacts of ownership change, stronger financial interests (property developers and investors) and change in land-use – often ‘dictated’ by expanding economic potentials. Han- and Hui-Muslim Chinese continued to move into the Tibetan district, and Tibetan individuals and interests seem increasingly marginalised.

New urban areas made the historical kernel ‘dysfunctional’ as all categories of public institutions until now located here were replaced with modern government institutions (education, research, health, civil and military government) in Lhasa City. This process may, however, have strengthened Tibetans’ identity, spiritual and traditional commercial importance with the extended Barkor area.

As part of the orthomorphous street structure established in the early 1960s, the traditional diagonal lane between Jokhang and the Potala Palace was replaced with Yuthok Lam, the first street of the new geometry to penetrate historical Lhasa. Also the lane from the West Gate through Lhasa to the east was transformed into the straight and wide street Beijing Shar Lam.

Non-Tibetan buildings constructed in Lhasa 1950-70 closely resemble standard urban construction of this period in China, with construction in Lhasa from 1980 onwards seen as early Chinese interpretation of ‘international’ architectural images.

In 1995 the historical-traditional townscape of Old Lhasa remained the largest homogenous urban built heritage resource in Tibet. The townscape, however, was already reduced to 280 buildings from the 600-700 plots (buildings) documented by Peter Aufschnaiter in 1948 (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001).
By 2005 the number of historical-traditional buildings was decimated to about 50 (about 17% of 1995 and merely 7% of buildings assumed extant in 1948; Sinding-Larsen, 2012). With this, the municipal government could claim to have met the main goals of the government approved urban planning and conservation plans for Lhasa. The historical town had become a small reconstructed ‘historic district’ inside expanding, and encroaching, modern urban construction. In Lhasa, to my knowledge all new buildings were through the study period designed by Chinese architects and engineers, and outside Tibet – with local construction supervision only.

The irregularity of the street and lane structure and urban blocks in Old Lhasa is interpreted to have emerged from gradual accretion of willed and informal development schemes over a considerable span of time, with Barkor Street as a consequent street – a boundary street or fixation line - that as the most used kora of the early settlement separated the settlement core from later looser outer areas (Conzen, 19xx).

Reconstruction in Old Lhasa had by 2005 transformed diverse townscape assemblies built over several centuries into regular ‘carpets’ of contemporary monotonous construction of uniform bulk and height. Major land-use and functionality changes were evident. Residential streets had been commercialised. Most of the few extant courtyard manors housing work-unit employees were purchased by property developers (private-public sector) for commercial development – mainly tourism. New construction now filled all open space previously left open inside the settlement. The orthomorphous street geometry fragmented the traditional townscape, as the ‘open-ended publicness’ of this spatial structure was made ‘directional’ and ‘closed’ by the loss of incidental spaces and the loss of numerous large semi-private areas and courtyards (this discussion is not general but limited to Old Lhasa).

The first modern Old Lhasa infrastructure upgrading project (external paving, new drainage and services 2002-2004) significantly improved the public external environment, and positively affected living conditions for most of the Old Lhasa population, reducing health-risks from living in the new but often damp accommodation. In parallel, the local (and regional) government was by Old Lhasa respondents seriously criticised for allowing property developers (Chinese and Tibetan) huge financial benefits from demolishing and reconstructing Old Lhasa.

A ‘step-by-step’ approach towards traditional building repairs was in Old Lhasa used only for the few projects initiated by an external interest group, the NGO Tibet Heritage Fund.11 Residents described the approach as very successful in providing good quality traditional housing with reasonable rents to the ‘original’ tenants. The approach appeared to engage tenants and local community in a first-ever process of together improving their shared environment. A broader use of the ‘step-by-step’ approach could have opened for urban repairs at building and neighbourhood levels to safeguard significantly more of the unique historical-traditional fabric of the
historical town. Those significant potentials were in this authors view actively overlooked, disregarded and avoided by the government to meet short term housing objectives by means of a demolish-and-construct strategy. Reasons remain unclear why this approach was discontinued, but assumed to be a combination of political policy and capacity available.

**Causes of general and specific change**

The level of social and physical transformation recognised in Lhasa during the study period may not be unique for historical towns in China, similar interventions of ‘rebuilding’ – or ‘re-creating’ – historical areas being well known from Chinese cities (Chengdu, Lijiang and numerous others). Addressing and reducing change in urban minority areas was by Lhasa government respondents described as an early PRC central government objective (1950s). This author would describe the overall transformation implemented in Old Lhasa as extraordinary and unfortunate in view of the rarity of old urban environments in Tibet.

Some factors causing change resulting for instance from changing land-use, the need to reduce overcrowding, new built typology, and growth of enterprises (from finance to construction), are all considered as general or pan-Chinese impacts and influences external to the Lhasa context, in part ascribed to modernisation and globalisation. Here is visited the central government effort to achieve maximum ‘valorisation’ of heritage resources (chapter 5).

In 2005, the PRC State Council has remained in direct control of all political and administrative issues that concern Lhasa and Tibet, including urban conservation, planning, and development. In accordance with the national Chinese model, responsibility for urban conservation in Lhasa is spread across several ministries and relevant regional and municipal government agencies, with heritage management as a sub-activity of urban planning and development – as reflected in the government bureaucracy structure (chapter 5). I hold that mandates and responsibilities overlaps between the Ministry of Construction (national level) and the State Administration for Cultural Heritage (SACH) especially encourage fragmented management regimes at regional and municipal levels. Operational heritage management in Lhasa, faced with numerous challenges and limited resources – systemic, manpower and financial – appears at present to lack essential mandates and capacity, as seriously bureaucratised and slow moving.

Long-term property stewardship in Old Lhasa by major public work-units has contributed to the resilience of the built fabric as a whole. In the late 1990s, however, this stabilising effect was seen to disappear with expanding property development, tourism, and more non-Tibetan interests.

The overall population increase in Lhasa during the study period may not have exceeded that experienced in many other cities in China (and represent a general cause of change). Impacts of incentives to encourage in-migration of non-Tibetans into Lhasa and Tibet from the mid-1950s onwards
have been such as to interpret this as a site specific cause. The documented Han-Chinese majority in Lhasa City could within a decade result in a Han-Chinese majority also in Old Lhasa.

Claims by government representatives that Tibetans’ lack most skills to participate in developing its own society beyond providing manual labour, has ‘necessitated’ import of most technical and other capacity from the ‘Motherland’. This unfortunate operational policy possibly linked to traditions of politicised urban China appears to be contravening the official Central Government policy of building capacity at regional level. Also it seems a likely factor likely to contribute to increased social and cultural polarisation between ethnic groups in Lhasa.

The study indicates that a ‘nearing’ of international conservation discourse and doctrine towards a developmental context that respects cultural diversity, as ‘exemplified’ through Nara, Burra and Faro (chapter 2) remains unrealistic as a goal in Lhasa – however well known most of the relevant international documents are to professionals and bureaucrats at central levels (government and academia) in China.

The study period has seen at least one highly commendable goal achieved, namely that a large part of the Old Lhasa population in 2005 enjoyed improved housing. At the same time, however, housing ‘upgrading’ was paralleled with a significant eviction of poorer Old Lhasa residents. Further, the traditional built typology diversity of residential, religious and public buildings has been reduced to standardised housing and some ‘neo-Tibetanised’ commercial buildings. The official strategy of demolition and new construction in Old Lhasa has hence confirmed all government levels to support a ‘neo-liberal’ property development approach of ‘urban non-conservation’.

The study described and discussed how the urban development policy (Central Government approved) administered since 1960 forty years later had led to a near-complete extinction of unique vernacular urban built form in Lhasa. Urban development and conservation master plans gave property developers (public-private enterprise) substantially free reigns to demolish and construct that in Old Lhasa resulted in major densification of buildings and population in the historical town. The process of transformation resulted in irreparable loss of tangible and intangible heritage values.

The overall study intentions were to i) assemble data from numerous disparate sources, ii) digest and present this in relevant manner, and to iii) extract central issues and dimensions for critical discussion. Seen in retrospect, whilst I believe that filling the lacunas of i) and ii) are in large part met, the major challenge in the study has been responding appropriately to iii) by isolating central issues for appropriate analysis.
Extended Summary

Theory, practice and methodology revisited

In terms of the parallel perspectives of resilience and vulnerability and the study subject, it would seem relevant to consider social and community resilience, resilience of cultural traditions, heritage and the built environment – and appropriate vulnerabilities. Aspects of built heritage and cultural tradition resilience appear in various contexts through the study text, and social and community resilience are indirectly touched on in connection with respondent lifeworlds (respondent interviews). As topic, however, the above is considered well beyond the boundaries of this study (chapter 2).

A number of important concepts have during the study period received increasing attention in international urban conservation work, and three of these were revisited: i) sustainable urban development, ii) rights-based approach to conservation, and iii) historic urban landscape – all three found to be especially relevant to this research, through the critical perspectives used to the analysis of changing Lhasa.

Sustainable urban development

The overall objective of sustainable urban development – to strike a balance between competing and conflicting interests, and achieve positive ecological impacts on urban environments with benefits to residents’ livelihoods – should have reducing inequality and achieving positive development as main focus (Nurse, 2006:37). A compromise between ‘needs’ and ‘wants’ in ecological and environmental terms seems needed, as a balance between anthropocentric and nature-centred development today appears of increasing importance (Galtung, 1996:129 in Nurse, 2006; Langhelle, 1999:133 in Nurse, 2006). In the sustainable urban development discourse, early voices argued sustainable development to be defined by social, economic and environmental dimensions only, with the cultural dimension ‘contrary’ to ‘environmental protection fundamental to long-term maintenance of natural life-supporting systems’ (Næss, 1995:121). Opposing this, from a perspective that people’s identities, cosmologies and epistemic frameworks ‘shape how the environment is viewed and lived in’, is held that culture (cultural identity) – as a driver of continuity and development – constitutes the fourth and central pillar in sustainable development (Nurse, 2006:37). Important to this, ethnodevelopment, a long accepted central concept in current ‘development thinking’ is based on the premise that people are divided into territorial cultural groups, ‘multiculturalism advocating a society that extends equitable status to distinct cultural and religious groups, no one culture predominating’ – a principle that demands mutual respect and openness for peaceful coexistence’ (Stavenhagen, 1986; Hettne, 1995:203 footnote in Bjønness, 2011:281-282). Although little of the above appears reflected in urban conservation and development policies for Old Lhasa, the ethnodevelopment concept could prevent the historical holy town Old Lhasa – despite
presence of some social ecological devastation and ‘Disneyfication’ of heritage resources – from becoming an environment expressing mere politics of nostalgia. Further, recent planning and construction have introduced a planning and construction doctrine that can only be considered inappropriate to a high altitude climate and Tibetan traditions.15

Traditional Tibetan values in support of identity, continuity and way of life seem in Lhasa aggressively opposed by national Chinese ‘ethnocentrism’ that during the study period has increased already existing distances in asymmetrical power relations – an asymmetry part of what most of my Old Lhasa informants described as ‘creating in-between lifeworlds and fuelling unavoidable acts of ventilation’ – phenomena that the central government in contrast claimed to express ethnic fundamentalism. The question remains difficult to answer whether the sense of loss of self determination that seems to affect the Tibetan community in Lhasa today is ‘new’ and ‘real’ in response to an autocratic power of government with increasing competition for Tibetans in the labour market, or a sad ‘repeat’ of days of earlier monastic-noble theocracies. Nevertheless, Lhasa shows evidence of absence and abuse of several categories of basic human rights (Sinding-Larsen, 2012b).

Historical urban landscape

Urban heritage conservation has come to constitute an important sector of public policy worldwide in response to preserving shared values, the legacy of history and non-renewable resources. A shift towards recognising the importance to urban conservation of social, cultural and economic processes – from an emphasis on the architectural conservation – requires adapted policies and new tools.

Assessing qualities of a historical urban landscape (HUL) presents a substantial challenge in terms of its complexity (tangible-intangible structures, built form, processes and resources) of contradicting and competing socio-cultural factors (Pound, 2003).

The aim of the recent recommendations on HUL adopted by the UNESCO General Conference (Nov 2011) is to strengthen international guidance on conservation and development in historic urban environments. The concept suggests a “landscape approach”16 to identify, conserve and manage historic areas within the broader urban context. HUL seeks to integrate goals of urban conservation and socio-economic development by preserving the quality of the human environment, enhancing the productive and sustainable use of urban spaces while recognizing their dynamic character, and promoting social and functional diversity (ibid, 2011 paragraph I.11). Here lies a significant challenge as often aggressively competitive processes of appropriation are seen in vulnerable and transforming historical urban environments – as also in Old Lhasa.
Rights-based approach to conservation

The concept of a rights-based approach to conservation is intimately linked to those of sustainable urban development and historical urban landscape.\(^{17}\) It has become clear that also World Heritage, the most demanding level of heritage management, on occasions is less than adequate in respecting traditional rights of natural area-users, residents and communities within or affected by a World Heritage property. The introduction of the 5th ‘C’ – Community – to the Strategic Objectives of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in 2007 underlined a widespread concern about this – ‘[…] recognizing the critical importance of involving indigenous, traditional and local communities in the implementation of the Convention’.\(^{18}\)

Further, ‘pioneering’ work has recently been started by the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Convention (ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN) and the UNESCO WH Centre collaborating to investigate independent and shared experience with this, and to assess needs of procedures, approaches and methodologies to improve all aspects of their tasked World Heritage work in terms of rights related to communities.\(^{19}\)

On methodology

Triangulation of data was an aim in using a range of data collection methods in the study. This was made difficult, with possibly questionable results, by perceived research process shortcomings. Some of these were manifested in the lack of dialogue with the public sector, little information available (little transparency), the relatively limited knowledge that most respondents were discovered to possess, their uncertainty as regards topics that could openly be discussed, and the triangular interpretation needed throughout.

Uncertainties associated with data and information collected (lack of conventional verification) naturally raised aspects of uncertainty to the researcher on how to secure a satisfactory overall research process. At the outset I had distinct expectation of constructive discussions with all categories of respondents, whether initiators, ‘operators’ and ‘merely’ residents – achieved to a lesser extent than anticipated, and much for reasons indicated above. The study circumstances made observing the direct observable even more importance than anticipated at the outset – observing as regards physical change, functionality change, population change, change related to and analysed with cartographic material.

Recommendations

An appropriate urban conservation strategy for Old Lhasa should be i) normative as relevant to government and public agency resources and mandates, ii) empowering local stakeholders including residents in efforts to ensure cultural continuity, cultural diversity and human rights and enabling their
participation in heritage (environment) management, and should contribute to Old Lhasa remaining a Tibetan urban environment in its social and built diversity, Buddhist significance, and Tibetan residential qualities must be addressed.

The unique buildings and townscape of Old Lhasa were by all categories of my Lhasa respondents described merely as old, not as cultural heritage. The latter term was clearly not in daily use by respondents (from government representatives to residents) – despite the Chinese term for heritage or cultural property: wenwu being well known (Agnew and Demas, 2002).

In order that the historical holy city in a few years shall not ‘drown’ in commercial success of tourism and economic development, the HUL concept is needed integrated with an updated urban conservation strategy for Old Lhasa. That strategy in contrast to earlier ‘narrow-dimensioned’ conservation and development plans would need to build on representative local community participations from all stakeholders, and reflect respect for both Old Lhasa and the larger sacred landscape so central to a contextual perception of the place.

The Old Lhasa built heritage was a result of continuous interaction between people, traditions and their institutions, and to re-activate this relationship to a cultural-territorial context threatened with extinction constitutes a substantial challenge. One danger could be that within another ‘hectic and short’ generation Tibetan cultural traditions merely represents a mere ‘stimulant’ to tourism or an optional romantic ‘pass-time’ to a small cultural elite – and thus a poor representation of what has been and still tenuously remains a significant living cultural minority.

Old Lhasa with its religious and cultural significance calls for all ‘constructive forces to unite’. This applies to open up for local representative bodies as well as using professional competence of all parties, including the universities. Resilience is achieved and needs to be supported, through ‘responsibility-making’ and respect for cultural diversity and people’s integrity.

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Endnotes

3 ttp://www.um.dk/Publikationer/Danida/English/ThematicBooklets/ThePowerOfCulture/chapter_2/2.2.asp
4 Assisting to ascertain the value of place, cultural significance here means aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations. The Australia ICOMOS ‘Charter for the conservation of places of cultural significance’ (the Burra charter, 1988, articles 1.1 and 1.2).
5 The researcher and the object of study ‘affect each other mutually and continually in the course of the research process, and reflection (reflexivity) is thus above else a question of recognizing fully the notoriously ambivalent relation of the researcher’s text to the realities studied’ (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000:40).
6 ‘Lifeworld’ (German: Lebenswelt) is here described as the universe, context or state of affairs in which the individual world is experienced (Husserl, 1936/1979: pp 106-109; various sources).
7 See Germer, 1987; Bernier, 1997; Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001; Alexander, 2005. See chapter 4 for references to the known literature and this author’s outline on Lhasa built typology. Close links are known to have existed between the Kathmandu Valley, Central Tibet and China at least from the 7th century CE onwards. Building studies convincingly argue that Newari craftsmen constructed major structures in Lhasa (‘lha-sa’ sanctuary, 7th century CE) and Central Tibet (Samye Monastery, 8th century), and their later contributions to the construction of the Potala Palace (17th century CE) are well documented (Vitali, 1990:70-73; Vergara et al, 1987; Akester in Alexander, 2005:148; Batchelor, 1998:169). These and other constructions with Newari and Tibetan characteristics are influenced also by Chinese architectural traditions (ibid). Traditional built form in Tibet expressed deep knowledge of and humility towards living traditions and the human dimension.
10 Trade and commercial activity in Old Lhasa that in 1995 was interpreted as majority-controlled by Tibetans (80% of number of shops) had by 2005 been replaced with non-Tibetan interests (about 80%), mainly Han-Chinese.
11 THF Tibet Heritage Fund, website: http://www.tibetheritagefund.org/
12 WCED, World Commission on Environment and Development (1987); the ‘Earth Summit’ or UN Conference on Environment and Development (1992); the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (1993) and the World Summit for Sustainable Development (2002).
13 Keith Nurse, 2006; stating the issue of culture to constitute the fourth pillar of sustainable development as addressed by him at the Mauritius International Meeting for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in 2005.
14 ‘Real’ ethnodevelopment would focus on traditional values that support identity, continuity and meaning to the life of individuals and community, over time reflecting traditions and contemporary influences. Appropriate urban conservation and renewal efforts should reflect this. From a premise that the value of cultural diversity is equivalent to that of genetic diversity, Nurse (2000) held that reconstructing the concept of sustainable development with clear emphasis on goals and values of justice, self-reliance and ecological balance thus has potential for greater coherence than current mainstream versions (Bjønness, 2011; Hetne, 1995).
15 At an overall level, the expanding city will soon have absorbed all available arable land in the Lhasa valley, increasing the already present need to import from outside Tibet most foodstuffs, daily goods and industrial produce.
16 IUCN and WWF, ref www.assets.panda.org/downloads/po11landscapeapproach.pdf
17 The IUCN policy paper No. 71 outlined a rights-based approach: ‘Conservation with justice means that all state and non-state actors planning or engaged in politics, projects, programmes and activities with potential impact on (...) conservation shall secure to all potentially affected persons the substantive and procedural rights that are guaranteed by national and international law’ (Greiber, 2009:6, box 1 in Oviedo and Puschkarsky, 2012:290).
18 (Decision 31.COM/13B). The other C’s of UNESCO’s Strategic Objectives are Credibility, Conservation, Capacity building and Communication as stated in the 2002 Budapest Declaration on World Heritage celebrating 30 years of the WH Convention
‘Traditional cultures knew that the various layers of reality from the material to the spiritual plane coincide. Thus they can mirror one another through a chain of references and analogies implying the relationships between macrocosm and microcosm. Sacred sites cannot and should not be disassociated from their more mundane environments. They are in fact the places where the world manifests itself in its most real and most concentrated form. Establishing permanent connections between the visible and the invisible, quantifiable and qualitative, was one of the concerns of traditional civilisations. Historic cities offer, potentially, the opportunity to overcome the effects, if not the causes of the relatively recent mental and physical disintegration (caused by) the modern movement’ (Bianca, 2002).
1.1 Introduction

The study tells of built form, built heritage and urban form in a living historical urban environment transforming. The subject of the study is the historical district Old Lhasa in Lhasa, Tibet, China. Lhasa is a Holy City in Tibetan Buddhism and was capital of Tibet from 1642 until 1951 when Tibetan territories were overrun and annexed by China. The study covers the decade 1995-2005, during which Lhasa experienced demographic, social and physical change possibly more deep-reaching than ever before. No community or its heritage is excluded from impacts of fluctuating cultural and socio-economic influences – local, regional or international. A relevant perspective of safeguarding heritage resources therefore cannot overlook the dynamic dimensions of social development.

Fig. 1 Having left the snow-capped Himalayan range behind (picture), the long road towards Lhasa remains no less exciting; 2000

Development and change that have affected Old Lhasa since 1951 need to be recognised as impacts of socio-economic and cultural phenomena embedded in a political-ethical dichotomy of ‘traditional Tibet’ and ‘modern China’, reflecting ebbs and flows in China’s formal policies and progress to establish ‘a new society’ in Tibet (Tsering Shakya, 1999:447).

China’s apparent challenges in handling ‘Tibetan issues’ need to be seen in the complex context established by factors such as current ‘real-politics’, the resilience of Tibetan way of life and of traditional built form towards change, a need of modernity and improved livelihoods with individuals and community deep-rooted in Tibetan Buddhism. As ‘keeper and owner’ of unique heritage resources, the
Part One: The study introduced

fragmented Tibetan community in Old Lhasa has since the mid-1950s been in a state of
gradual ‘release’ from traditions with re-anchoring to a pan-Chinese ‘modernity’. For the above reasons, and to sketch out the larger frame within which to read, interpret and review processes of transformation that may affect a historical environment and its community, material of a ‘widened’ platform of theory and practice has been included (chapters 2 and 4).

In recent decades, international doctrines on heritage conservation and on development have recognised the vital importance of the site-specific. For heritage conservation this is reflected in international documents emerging from the Venice Charter (1964) onwards: cultural production in its specific geo-political context is recognised as vital for positive change at community level.

Fig. 2 Pilgrims climbing the hills towards Drepung Monastery town outside Lhasa; 1995

Whilst fully recognising the unique values of acclaimed monuments in Old Lhasa (protected at national, regional or municipal levels), the study has focused on how change has affected unique un-recognised traditional or vernacular built form in Lhasa.

Discussing political, economic and environmental, social and cultural causes and impacts of change admittedly requires command of knowledge fields beyond that of this author’s. The study has therefore tried to stay within the author’s base line knowledge – architecture and built heritage conservation – and with major although possibly restricting focus on the tangible dimension of built heritage and urban form.

The larger part of the study presented (including chapters 1 to 6) had been carried out by 2005. However, serious illness in 2006-2007 meant that the remainder of the work was unavoidably delayed.
Part One: The study introduced

My research objective has been to contextualize how ‘the new system’ after 1959 has gradually appropriated Old Lhasa of ‘the old order’, by investigating how traditional cultural practice and contemporary international doctrine on conservation and development have affected urban conservation and urban change in Old Lhasa during the period 1995-2005.

My first visit to Lhasa and the Tibet Autonomous Region (Tibet) was in 1994, the year the Potala Palace Complex was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List (extended with Jokhang Temple and Barkor, 2000 and Norbulingka Summer Palace, 2001).

Fig. 3 Symbols of traditional and modern power meeting in the square below the Potala Palace; 1994

1.2 Study subject

The study of Old Lhasa aims to document and discuss ongoing observable physical transformation during the study period. Ongoing transformation is attributed to and embedded in combined processes of socio-economic change, housing improvement, urban conservation and urban development within a territorial frame. Transformation is initiated and fuelled internally by needs, aspirations and policy potentials, and externally by complex political and global modernisation processes.

For the few known pre-20th century visitors, Tibet and Lhasa may have appeared covered by a translucent veil of ‘remoteness’ – as if existing outside time. Few ‘places’ seem over a longer period to have had such a magical hold on the imagination of people of several continents (Scheel, 2000; Feigon, 1996; Bishop, 2000).
The Neolithic site of Chögong near Sera Monastery in 1984 confirmed the Lhasa Valley to have been inhabited long before the Yarlung Dynasty moved its main base or ‘capital’ here (Chan, 1994:60; Batchelor, 1998:48). The place later known as Lhasa is believed formed in the 7th century CE, and developed gradually around the ‘Lha-Sa’ sanctuary – the Buddhist sanctuary in Central Tibet built by king Songtsen Gampo soon after the first known sanctuary of ‘Trandruk’ (Khra ’brug) in the Yarlung Valley (Reinhard Herdick in Lo Bue, 2009).23

In 1642 Lhasa was again made capital of Tibet and remained not only holy city and spiritual heart of Tibetan Buddhism but also political and trade centre of a vast geo-cultural region until Tibet’s government was formally ‘disbanded’ by China in 1959 (Richardson, 1993).24 With resistance also from the ruling theocracy, early 20th century attempts to modernise Tibetan society failed, and groups across Tibetan society showed little reluctance in welcoming China as a modernising influence in 1950 (Shakya, 1999:xxii; Bernstein, xx).

Until 1950, Lhasa remained a near mono-ethnic Tibetan community with small resident groups of Newari-, Kashmiri-, and Hui- and Han-Chinese trading families.
Part One: The study introduced

In 1965 Lhasa became main city of Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) of China, and is today the centre of a city-level prefecture – an administrative unit ranking below the province but above a county – with an urban core (Chengguan Urban District, or ‘Lhasa City’, old and new) and surrounding counties.

A continuous influx of non-Tibetans, mainly Han-Chinese, from the mid-1950s onwards, on one hand has negatively affected Tibetan culture and issues of territoriality. In contrast, representing social change and an accelerating economy, the non-Tibetan population has contributed towards modernising Lhasa as urban environment and society.

In Lhasa, as in much of China, social processes that in Europe had taken one or two centuries to mature, were after 1959 brought into play in the course of a few decades only. Impacts sometimes described as ‘necessary’ or ‘easy’ would represent gross over-simplifications.

1.3 Study motivation and objectives

Old Lhasa was on my first visit recognised as a highly vulnerable urban environment of unique urban heritage threatened by a combination of social transformation and urban development. Loss of tangible and intangible heritage in the form of buildings and their functionality, shared memory and knowledge of traditional skills seemed accelerating.

Compared to numerous historical settlements in Asia, Lhasa was little researched, and few known studies have addressed built form, architecture and settlements. A recognised lacuna concerning the history, life and characteristics of Lhasa through the centuries has made it important to search for, review and add new material to the existing descriptive base – potentially filling some holes in the knowledge of Old Lhasa built form and development – to enable and stimulate further research. Built form traditions in the Trans-Himalayas reflect diverse contexts of place in terms of climate, culture, resources and belief systems. Lhasa built
Part One: The study introduced

form is ‘typical’ yet unique in representing urban Tibetan architecture. Old Lhasa hence provided a unique opportunity for empirical research on an urban living historical environment. Despite radical government policies imposed on Lhasa that from 1959 gradually transformed Lhasa society from ‘feudal-spiritual’ to ‘socialist-capitalist’, the historical kernel was in the mid-1980s still described as significantly ‘intact’ (various visitors reports; Barnett, 2006; Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001). Around this time, however, a process of comprehensive and undocumented demolition and new construction started in Old Lhasa. Supporting the urban heritage – and urban conservation – in Lhasa has been the overall aim of this study. Within a framework of theory and practice, specific research objectives aim to contribute knowledge on the status on built heritage conservation in Lhasa, on impacts and causes of processes of change as well as on how to strengthen urban conservation in Old Lhasa. The study has been i) physically rooted in urban heritage resources, architecture and planning, ii) contextual in terms of the socio-cultural environment, and has iii) combined a normative and practice oriented focus intended not restricted to authorities’ perspectives. In this it may hopefully contribute to urban conservation in Lhasa and other historical urban environments of minority culture in China.

1.4 Research background

The presented study was made possible by the ‘Network for University Cooperation Tibet-Norway’. Network mechanisms enabled building trust and dialogue in several fields with authorities in Lhasa and Beijing, also in that of cultural heritage management. The Network established, I had the privilege in 1994, together with UNESCO Norway, to make an initiative for setting up a ‘UNESCO Chair of Conservation’ at Tibet University Lhasa for the academic study of cultural heritage, funded by Norway. The initiative did, however, unfortunately not materialise. The study presented here has been built on the platform provided by the project ‘Lhasa Historical City Atlas’ (LHCA) 1995-1999 that documented extant historical and traditional buildings and major spaces in Old Lhasa. Beyond establishing an important base-line survey of Old Lhasa built form – a first government-approved documentation of historical Lhasa by external researchers using internationally developed methodology – the LHCA project was restricted to addressing traditional architecture. The LHCA project team, provided with all necessary access in Old Lhasa by the local government, documented the number of extant historical-traditional buildings in 1995 to be less than 300. The project was successfully navigated through ‘new territory’ with excellent dialogue with Tibet Academy for Social Science (TASS). The dialogue with the authorities on conservation issues, including the ‘Lhasa Urban Development Committee’ of Lhasa Municipal Government, remained challenging throughout the project. Documentation alone could hardly provide protection of built heritage threatened with demolition in Lhasa. When published internationally as ‘The Lhasa Atlas’ (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001) and in
Part One: The study introduced

2005 in China (Chinese and Tibetan language version) the LHCA material proved important in building awareness amongst politicians in Lhasa and Beijing of the unique values of Old Lhasa.31

1.5 The field of study

Nation building after WW2 indirectly ‘protected’ numerous historical urban environments until population growth and economic ability opened them to urban redevelopment, modern infrastructure and demographic change. Historical urban fabric of living communities would then disappear ‘overnight’. Processes of change affecting a historical urban environment may be described as ideological, economic or environmental in nature – influenced by dynamic socio-cultural processes. Urban conservation and development present a serious dichotomy of sustaining a specific cultural context whilst improving living conditions.

Culture represents an ever-present dimension in ‘development’. Along the argument forwarded by the WCCD Report (1995) that ‘(d)evolution divorced from its human or cultural context is growth without a soul’ (‘Our Creative Diversity’, WCCD, 1995), it is held that a largely culturally determined collective motivation is needed ‘if a development programme is to achieve more than mere economic growth and modernisation’ (Arfwedson, 1995:12).32 Developing modernisation (read Westernisation) focused on the state and on national culture and was in the 1950-70s held as an insistent spreading of a ‘must do, must have’ culture. In the Post Cold-War period, local culture has become the standard-bearer within development (Pieterse, 2004:60-64). In recent years development has taken on a ‘humanitarian meaning with attention to social, cultural and spiritual needs’ in recognition of earlier failures to address these (Sillitoe et al, 2002:182).33

Fig. 7 Celebrating 40 years of Tibet Autonomous Region (2005). Public decorations in front of the Potala Palace and Shol; 2005

Development is sustainable34 if the processes reach ‘the driving forces in the community and strike the right cords in this cultural unconscious’ – and if the local community becomes master and beneficiary of the involved processes (Arfwedson, 1995:12; AKDN, 2002). In sustainable development reducing inequality should thus remain a primary goal (Nurse, 2006:37).35 In the sustainable development discourse that followed the major initiatives in 1987, 1992, 1993 and 2002, some researchers argued that sustainable development consisted of social, economic and environmental dimensions (Naess, 1995:121).36
Part One: The study introduced

From the perspective that people’s identities, cosmologies and epistemic frameworks ‘shape how the environment is viewed and lived in’ as a driver of continuity and development, it has in contrast convincingly been argued that culture (cultural identity) constitutes the fourth and central pillar in the sustainable development concept (Nurse, 2006:37).

![Fig. 8 Traditional streetscape, mid-day pilgrims and shoppers on Barkor North; 1996](image)

How heritage resources are perceived, defined and administered depend on the values of each society. As social constructs in an overall temporal-cultural context, heritage is never static but integral with cultural production based on changing aspirations and needs – elaborated in the international discourse through for instance *Nara, Burra* and *Faro*. ‘Eastern holistic mind-frames’ are today met with increasing respect by the ‘Western normative stance’ rooted in material representation (Thakur and Bjønness, xx). The ‘complexity’ in the overarching tangible-intangible cultural ‘system’ of Buddhism in contrast embraces the transient – the meaningful and permanent state of impermanence – and ‘opposes’ entrenched Western concepts of (tangible) permanence and authenticity. Both views are grounded in traditions of knowledge- and skills transfer, and embedding cultural continuity in community – with heritage representing not only artefacts but categories of knowledge and economic, social and cultural capital that may more concern ‘the ways in which selective material artefacts, mythologies, memories and traditions become resources for the present’ than engaging directly with the study of the past (Graham, 2002).

From a tradition of ‘keeping objects safe’, the current conservation paradigm is increasingly community-driven and ‘values- and rights-based’ towards a management of social change and development
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(Rodwell, 2007:8; Araoz, 2009). Built heritage as a vital component of the community resource base (as the building stock), to be utilised and respected as such, seems nevertheless often to be disregarded by authorities and development programmes.

Fig. 9 A new city in the making. Beijing Shar Lam (Banak Shol area); 1998

Most historical urban settlements promote ‘the spectacular and exceptional’ in dependence on international tourism, to which the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention has substantially contributed. In commodifying heritage resources, a ‘Disneyfication’ may result, as recognised also in Lhasa – with conflicts over access to and use of the resources as feepaying tourists are preferred to Tibetan pilgrims. Tourism constitutes a complex area of research beyond the scope of the study.

1.6 Research on Lhasa

Lhasa as society and settlement has been subjected to centuries of top-down processes and ‘autocratic controls’, whether as capital of a Tibetan Buddhist theocracy (17-20th centuries) or from 1950 onwards administered from Beijing through a regional government. As urban structure Old Lhasa embodies a complex field of competing influences to both residents and government through Tibetan Buddhism, Chinese communism, ‘free’ government-led economy, traditional culture, modernity, ‘international standards’ and globalisation. I would locate ‘protection of built heritage’ to ‘the middle’ of a field of ‘international standards’.
Part One: The study introduced

Lhasa as a historical settlement was pre-1980s little documented and researched. Urban form and built structures seemed not of prominent interest to earlier visitors. ‘The Lhasa Atlas’ (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001) provided an overview of earlier reports and mapping efforts. Published work on urban form in Asia is still predominantly based on international theory and concepts, and limited in scope and volume. A dearth of material made finding ‘contextually comparable’ studies and cases a considerable challenge. English language literature on Tibetan architecture, settlements and development is restricted. A small number of recent publications provide a lead into the field.

In terms of providing access to historical and contemporary sources of information, I would describe Lhasa as remaining ‘closed’ to all but a ‘political’ environment and smaller groups of external experts – knowledge and information in Lhasa seeming to remain distributed on a ‘need to know’ basis only.

The study assumed at the outset that urban conservation was ‘entirely’ steered by government through its many levels of policy making and bureaucracy. This was recognised as such through the study. The growing private sector may, however, contribute to a local community ‘awakening’. It is important to state that area-based civil society cooperation appears monopolised by the Chinese local governing system – the neighbourhood- and street-committee administration. Civil society in Old Lhasa, as ethnically and socially defined groups from specific localities or as descendents of kudrak family may
Part One: The study introduced

have Gemeinschaft-like characteristics. Social networks of Hui-Muslim traders or Han-Chinese administrators in Lhasa may resemble Gesellschaft-groups (Tönnies, 1887).

Fig. 11 Lhasa. Surveyed by Peter Aufsnaiter in 1948.

The tangible, social-cultural normative dimension of urban development is perceived as principally based on government perspectives. In reality this might, in a fragmented landscape of governing and management, permit presence of ‘participating’ interests and levels (stakeholders) other than government. A study on communities in Lhasa would entail social and community studies beyond the scope of my research possibility.43

1.7 The present study

As regards the methodology of data collection, i) primary source methods were direct observations with architectural documentation, and interviewing several categories of respondents (from residents to government representatives) to study lifeworld narratives. For ii) secondary source material were used cartographic studies, available public documents and archival- and literature studies.

In order to reflect relevant resident-authority relationships, field study interviews related to issues of past and present Old Lhasa, and on respondents’ personal relationship to and understanding of the historical landscape. Contacts with senior government representatives (central, regional and municipal) in Lhasa and Beijing enabled a constructive dialogue throughout the study period, strengthened through my commission to evaluate the ‘state of conservation’ (SOC) for the Lhasa World Heritage properties’ (in 2002-2003 for the UNESCO World Heritage Centre on behalf of the WH Committee).

Potential study yields were described as contributing towards the practice of urban conservation in a framework of Lhasa as living historical environment – with respect for its particular context (including Tibetan Buddhist cultural frame and ethnicity), and towards awareness of values posed by Old Lhasa heritage, with subsequent opportunities and challenges. The research process was anticipated to be fraught with aspects presenting dilemmas throughout the process, and affecting research findings.
Part One: The study introduced

Fig. 12 Lhasa Prefecture County. Lhasa City is marked in red, with the surrounding seven counties (Map from Chinese official map publication; date and source not known)

Fig. 13 Lhasa City. The urban area, Lhasa Chen Guan, is marked in brown and located in the main on the northern embankment of the Lhasa River – although at present expanding also on the southern river embankment (Map from Chinese official map publication; date and source not known)
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Fig. 14 Map of the central part of urban Lhasa (Lhasa Chen Guan) based on the LHCA Project map (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001). Direction of North is UP.

KEY: B= Barkor centred on Jokhang Temple Monastery; P= Marpori Hill with Potala Palace and Shöl village below; C= Chakpori Hill; N= Norbulingka Summer Palace; L= Lhasa (or Kyichu) River; T= Thieves Island; W= Protected wetlands; D= Drepung Monastery (left, outside the map); S= Sera Monastery (top, outside the map); 2007

Fig. 15 Lhasa inside Lingkor. Traditional-historical buildings documented in 1995 as the Lhasa Historic City Atlas Project (LHCA, Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001). Direction of North is UP. With locating places important to the study. KEY:
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1. Jokhang Temple Monastery inside Barkor (middle kora);
2. Marpori Hill with Potala Palace and Shöl village below inside the fortified enclosure, with Lukhang Lake and Temple north of the hill;
3. Jokhang Square;
4. Chakpori Hill;
5. Potala Square (earlier ShugTri Lingka or the Dalai Lama Gardens);
6. TAR Government Centre (civil and military);
7. Karnadong Lam;
8. Yuthok Tseshing neighbourhood, with ‘original Yuthok Lam running as diagonal Potala to Jokhang;
9. Yabshi Takster (earlier the property of the 14 Dalai Lama family);
10. Shide Dratsang;
11. Ramoche Monastery, according to tradition built soon after the ‘lha sa’ sanctuary;
12. Beijing Shar Lam (main street);
13. Yuthok Lam;
14. Lingkor Chang Lam (North);
15. Lingkor Sharlam (East);
16. Jingdrol Sharlam;
17. Lubu neighbourhood;
18. Lhasa West Gate;
19. Shasarzur neighbourhood;
20. Mentsikhang lam;
21. Dosenge Lam

1.8 Research method

My professional background is in architecture and built heritage conservation. Not being a linguist or Tibetologist has clearly restricted my access to possibly available and valuable sources. With evident ‘drawbacks’ such as being ‘culturally distanced’ and the above, I have throughout the study retained considerable humility towards carrying out research in such a ‘foreign’ geo-cultural context. A significant component of field based work depended on interpreting already doubly interpreted statements (from respondent and interpreter), in a process of double or triple hermeneutics.

An inductive-investigative strategy of parallel perspectives was used with narrative main lines concerning process of change affecting built form and heritage, living-conditions and Old Lhasa residents’ lifeworlds. The inductive dimension in the study is considered the stronger in the work.

Using a reflective methodology to achieve a deeper understanding of the issues investigated, the parallel perspectives necessitated conscious efforts to avoid evidence of a single favoured angle or vocabulary – as ‘(r)eflection (reflexivity) is above else a question of recognizing fully the notoriously ambivalent relation of the researcher’s text to the realities studied. (as t)he researcher and the object of study affect each other mutually and continually in the course of the research process, as context-dependent (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000:40). By using a reflective approach in the interviews the intention was to bring forth information that could otherwise remain hidden.
An evident danger for the study would be selecting international or even ‘Europe-focused’ examples of theory and practice, ideology and methodology that might be incomparable and incompatible to the context of Lhasa at levels of analysis. The risk here is of reflecting merely ‘ones own’ cultural position as researcher, affecting a ‘Janus contradiction’ of Western value-sets that still dominate the international discourse on conservation and development.

Fig. 16 Old Lhasa. Accelerating social and physical change. Clockwise from left: Traditional business handled near Ramoche Temple (1996), modern public housing on the outskirt of Old Lhasa (1999), Jokhang Square with tourists, pilgrims, monks and operators (2002); 2005

In an inductive perspective of observation, documentation and discussion, the qualitative research presented was based on a case study approach (chapter 3) with extensive on-site observation and open informal interviews of stakeholders of different categories in the local and ‘larger’ regional-national community.

Regular visits to Lhasa since 1994 (mostly two each year) made possible a relatively ‘continuous’ documentation of change by means of conversations, mapping, photography and field-notes.
Part One: The study introduced

1.9 Research questions and study premises

The study builds on established discourses within conservation and development. In the light of perceived transformation, loss and opportunity, the main research question has been formulated as:

*How and why do urban form and built heritage in historical Lhasa change?*

The research started with the site specific and has aimed to develop towards a more general understanding of potential based on status descriptions. Investigations as regards ‘what, why and how’ looked for spatial, contextual, place specific and causal relationships, including why some resources would be left intact. Research questions were flagged in sequence in the study findings. An overall premise for the study was that although seen as integral with processes of community development, conservation and community development policies are admittedly often in conflict. Built heritage in use is treated in accordance with conservation legislation and legislation and policies of other sectors, the conservation regime affected by cultural-social and political trends. The main research question has been guided by investigating some more specific issues:

*What defines Old Lhasa and its borders at present and in the past?* The question implies that the perception of Lhasa is today different from that of earlier times, and this is seen related to phenomena linked to issues of territoriality, individual understanding, and social and physical development. Borders may be described as converging and conflicting – in the past and at present.

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Fig. 17 Pilgrims and Lhasa devotees prostrating at the Jokhang Temple Entrance; 1994
Part One: The study introduced

How are changes to Old Lhasa built heritage and urban form physically expressed? The urban environment of Old Lhasa has been transformed since the mid-1980s in terms of building typology and volumes, spatial structure, environmental standards, demography as well as general activity. The above question is seen closely linked to the following: Why is site specific and general change taking place in Old Lhasa? The question could imply that processes affecting change – some probably implemented with the purpose to create change – may be interpreted as controversial in terms of safeguarding a traditional culture and built form. How is this change understood and explained?

How urban conservation may to support traditions and characteristics of a Tibetan social community and physical historical fabric in a disappearing historical environment? Some Old Lhasa resource categories can be interpreted as ‘dormant’, two of them concerning community and participation. The last question, related to forming realistic recommendations, may seem hypothetical in terms of whether Old Lhasa is in a state of ‘disappearing’ – the ‘disappeared’ and ‘disappearing’ needing to be investigated. The issue
of guiding principles should be considered in terms of emergency and normative action for urban conservation, development and planning initiatives.

1.10 The thesis organized

The thesis is divided into six sections. Part One ‘The Study’ (chapter 1) has outlined the study. In Part Two ‘Theory and Practice of Conservation and Development’ (chapter 2) were discussed aspects of conservation doctrine with focus on built heritage in an urban context (urban conservation), development thinking seen a perspective of traditional management practice relevant to the study objective, and factors that cause change.

In Part Three ‘Research methodology’ (chapter 3) are presented methodological considerations relevant to the study, and the methods that have been implemented in the study – with primary focus on the case study method.

Part Four ‘Cultural Context’ consists of two chapters that outline the cultural context of Lhasa and traditions of contextual practice (chapter 4), and the growth and development of Lhasa with sections on urban planning, conservation and development (chapter 5).

In Part Five ‘The Case study’ (chapter 6) are first outlined the multiple-case studies structure, followed by a detailed account of field studies at levels of buildings, neighbourhoods, urban form, and Lhasa World Heritage issues.

In Part Six ‘Concluding, Revisiting and Recommending’ are presented main findings (chapter 7), a revisit to central aspects of theory and methodology from Part Two and Part Three (chapter 8). In chapter 9 are outlined recommendations for urban conservation in Old Lhasa, with suggestions for further research.

Endnotes

20 ‘Modernity’, a complex issue to discuss; normally seen rooted in ‘The Age of Enlightenment’ and Rosseau with its dichotomy or conflict of industrialisation and ‘back to nature’: here related to China’s socio-cultural revolution.
22 The Yarlung Dynasty (7-9th CE), said to have started in 127 BC (http://www.tibet.com/Status/statuslaw.html). http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_emperors_of_Tibet. A unified Tibetan state is assumed not to have existed before the times of the kings number 31 Tsho-n-gyalsa (sTsho-rn-mi gnNos-rgyas), 579-619, 32 Namri Songtsen (gNam-rถ gSton-btsan), ?-629, and 33 Songtsen Gampo (gSton-btsan sGam-po), 607-649 CE. The earlier rulers, known as the Yarlung dynasty, were probably local chiefs in the Yarlung valley area, certainly not emperors of Tibet (traditional Tibetan titles for the emperor include tsenpo (‘Emperor’) and rlekha (‘Divine Son’). The known records state that King Songtsen Gampo moved the centre of power of the Yarlung Dynasty from the Yarlung Valley to Lhasa Valley. The dynasty is normally described to have ended with king number 42 Langdarma (836-842 CE).
23 ‘Lha-Sa’ in Tibetan is generally accepted as meaning ‘place of gods’, although the place may earlier have been referred to as ‘ra-sa’ – place of goats. The importance and fate of ‘Lha-Sa’ is assumed to have been dramatically reduced for several centuries after the collapse of the Yarlung Dynasty in the 9th century.
24 From 1642 when the Fifth Dalai Lama re-established Lhasa as capital of Tibet and until the then Premier Zhou Enlai signed the State Council decree on March 28, 1959, “declaring a disbandment” of the Tibetan government after “the reactionary clique at the upper levels of Tibet led by the Dalai launched an all-round armed rebellion on 10 March 1959, aimed at splitting the motherland” (Kate Saunders, press@savetibet.org, 27.0309). For numerous Tibetans Lhasa is still
Part One: The study introduced

today manifested by the Lha-Sa sanctuary, ‘Jokhang Temple Monastery’, that holds the Jowo (Buddha) shrine and image, and not the historical town as such ([ibid; personal sources].

25 The physical area and population of the TAR constitutes about one half of Tibets territories before 1950, the other half incorporated into adjacent provinces of China.

26 The Lhasa Prefecture (27,335 square kilometres administered by the Lhasa City Government consists of seven counties: Lhünzhub County, Damxung County, Nyêmo County, Qüxü County, Doilungdêqên County, Dagzê County and Maizhokungar County (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lhasa).

27 The ‘network’ was established in 1994 between Tibetan academic institutions Tibet Academy of Social Science, Tibet University and TAR Committee for Technology, and the then four universities in Norway (Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Tromsø Universities) with expressed approval by the governments in Beijing and Oslo. The author was a member of the ‘founding group’ as advisor to UNESCO Norway. The ‘network’ was from its start funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway over a NORAD programme.

28 The proposal that was made with the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO, with support from the Directorate for Cultural Heritage and NORAD was met with positive initial response from the Chinese authorities represented by senior personnel from the TAR and national governments. Despite two rounds of concrete discussions supported by specific program proposals and confirmed funding from Norway, the proposal was finally rejected by China in 1998 for reasons interpreted to refer to the political sensitivity of working with Tibetan cultural heritage.

29 Joint project leaders Knud Larsen, Professor at NTNU and Amund Sinding-Larsen, Associate Professor at AHO, the Oslo School of Architecture and Design. The LHCA Project was funded by the Norwegian Research Council, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Network. After discussions with our collaborating institutions the LHCA Project research objectives were i) to contribute to the protection of Old Lhasa through documenting its extant historical-traditional (pre-1950) built structures, ii) to make this information available to the authorities in the form of a database, texts, maps and photographs, and iii) to encourage dialogue and cooperation between professionals and academics in Tibet and Norway through capacity building and transfer of technology. Reluctance on the part of the authorities to approve such objectives meant they could only in part be met by the LHCA Project.

30 The methodology adopted for the project was that of ‘InterSave’, focusing on topography, history and architecture as principal components, in order to establish ‘conservation values’ for individual buildings and ‘developed structures’ – or single objects and areas or clusters of townscape. ‘InterSave’: International Survey of Architectural Values in the Environment, developed in the 1980s by the Danish Ministry of the Environment. A major element of a ‘typical’ InterSave project process would be to establish a working group of local politicians and residents to take direct part in the survey and the following interpretation; for the LHCA-project not possible in Lhasa for political-cultural reasons. ‘Intersave’ as a community conservation approach and limits in the case of adopting it in a research context in Lhasa (or China) is discussed later in the text. The methodology and central aspects not relevant or feasible within a current Lhasa research context are outlined.

31 This second publication was funded by the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway. The English language version of ‘The Lhasa Atlas’ was not clarified for sale in China. The Chinese and Tibetan language version was distributed to leading bookshops and libraries throughout China, including in Lhasa. Judging by the interest in ‘The Lhasa Atlas’ and parallel later publications by Chinese scholars, the LHCA-project and ‘The Lhasa Atlas’ appear to have contributed positively as intended in professional, academic and local, regional and national government environments in China.

32 As a background to impatience and criticism of ‘international development’ through the last 50 years, it should in a global perspective be borne in mind that differences between the world’s richest 20% and poorest 20% by the start of the 21st century had been doubling for each generation (Rabinovich, 2003).

33 ‘Development is not only an amalgam of processes of change but also a system of knowledge and power which produces and justifies these processes’, and hence ‘central to our understanding in the emergence of indigenous rights movements and use of ethno-nationalism’ (Escobar, 1995; UNESCO, 1995).

34 The definition of ‘sustainable development’ as ‘meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ has after it was ’first’ argued by ‘The Brundtland Commission’ (WCED, 1987) pervaded the spheres of economic, social and cultural policies (Hall & Pfeiffer, 2000).

35 In this a compromise between ‘needs’ and ‘wants’ is critical – as also is striking a balance between anthropocentric and nature-centred development (Galtung, 1996:129 in Nurse, 2006; Langhelle, 1999:133 in Nurse, 2006). Mechanisms of sustainable urban development aim to achieve benefits to livelihood by building healthy and bio-diverse urban environments, with positive ecological impacts.

36 WCED, World Commission on Environment and Development (1987); the ‘Earth Summit’ or UN Conference on Environment and Development (1992); the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (1993) and the World Summit for Sustainable Development (2002). Described as ‘human beings working in harmony with natural and manmade environments to safeguard the long term interests of the planet and its many life forms’ (Rodwell, 2003 and Rodwell 2007:56), I could see sustainable development potentially creating an interesting link with conservation, the two concepts seen as complementary built from some shared principles (as an extended ‘Næss-platform’).

37 Keith Nurse, 2006; addressing Mauritius International Meeting for Small Island Developing States in 2005.

38 See chapter 2. The Faro Convention (2005) stated ‘cultural heritage’ to embrace ‘all traces of human activity’ (Council of Europe, 2005; chapter 2; Appendix). Faro defined cultural heritage as ‘resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through
time (The Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, 2005) – and that ‘supporting goals and processes of heritage conservation as activity integral with those of developing local community is taken to support our contemporary understanding and definition of cultural heritage’.

35 International programmes brought attention to primary livelihood needs of local community development (UN Millennium Development Goals, UN 2005), as did pioneer activity by the Aga Khan Development Network, NORAD and the World Bank.

40 ‘Autocratic control’ is here described as control exercised by individuals or leaders of a political system with virtually unlimited power to make and execute decisions regarding individuals, society and settlement (Mazumdar, 2000:319).

41 Exceptions to work with focus on individual sacred buildings are here mentioned early reports by Heather Stoddard (1980s-90s), a historically based recent work on Lhasa and water by Per Sørensen, and the ‘emergency-level’ survey of historical Lhasa, published as The Lhasa Atlas (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001). A few studies have been carried out on urban form in China since the mid-1990s, little if any on towns in China’s extensive interior regions. Refer to work by Gaubatz, Whitehand and Gu.

42 i) An Introduction to Tibetan Traditional Architecture (chief editor Xu Zongwei 2004), ii) ‘History and Development of Ancient Chinese Architecture’ (Science Press Beijing 1986) and iii) ‘The Lhasa Atlas’ (Serindia Publications, 2001). Ongoing research cooperation between Tibet University in Lhasa, Tribhuwan University, Kathmandu and NTNU Norway (the ‘Thunder Project’) may contribute positively to this situation.

43 Whether on Tibetans from a specific locality, Hui-Muslim and Han-Chinese traders, or Han-Chinese administrators. See Flyvebjerg on Civil Society re definition, also addressing organisational aspects in Habermas and Foucault perspectives; and Arif Hasan on the role of NGOs.

44 Cadastral data of towns in China are generally lacking, and for Lhasa entirely absent, except as partially ‘covered’ in the 1948 survey by Peter Aufschnaiter.
'Development divorced from its human or cultural context is growth without a soul. Economic development in its full flowering is part of a people's culture' (‘Our Creative Diversity’, WCCD, 1995). ‘Development cannot be limited to economic growth only. It also embraces a political, social, human and environmental as well as a cultural dimension’ (Boutros Boutros Ghali, Le Monde, Paris, Oct.1994).
Part Two: Elements of theory and practice

Similar in nature to the social constructs of culture, heritage and development are also traditions, doctrine and discourse on how a specific society should deal with such temporal-contextual resources in theory and practice – and not plainly empirical categories (Hastrup, 1988:126-129). The empirical material of the study is thus considered from a cultural-analytical perspective (ibid).

By the end of the 20th century the ‘UNESCO-family’ had adopted an international doctrine on heritage conservation influenced by numerous geo-cultural traditions. Central elements have been vital building blocks for this study, particularly heritage conservation related to local community development, and are identified and discussed here in Part Two of the thesis.

Chapter 2 deals mainly with contemporary international conservation ideology – that for long remained explicitly Eurocentric in frame and concepts. Regional approaches and traditions are discussed in Chapter 4 under the heading of ‘Lhasa cultural context’, relating to the discussion in chapter 2 on ‘holistic conservation’, territoriality, ecological planning and sustainable development, and revisited in chapter 8.

Each socio-cultural context may define its own approach to conservation as ‘robust’, although external interpretation and understanding might not be in agreement and even contradict site-specific path dependency – explaining how views and decisions of now and here are affected by decisions of a past, even though past circumstances may not be relevant. Theory can generalise and codify knowledge as a basis for practical action, and resist and challenge taken-for-granted ways of thinking, putting forward alternatives (Swaffield, 2002). A traditional yardstick of science is for theory to be confirmed by empirical evidence to reflect ‘objective reality out there’. Good qualitative research would share qualities that aim to be pluralistic and democratic, receptive of diversity, and with a strong feeling for the social reality under study.

The Part Two material links to several fields of knowledge. After an introduction (2.1) follows an outline (2.2) on doctrines and discourses of heritage conservation and development thinking – following both ‘streams’ to the present. Urban conservation and change (2.3) discusses issues central to the urban environment – from land tenure (2.3.1) via urban governance to agents of change (2.3.5) and strategies (2.3.6). Chapter 2 ends with a short summary (2.4).
2: HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Introduction

'The study of development (...) necessitates the study of shared values of all kinds, and the examination of their multifaceted transformation. Religion and kinship are just as significant as economic transactions and the political life of nation states, and in fact these things are not really separable or comparable' (Allen, 1992:337).

Already in 1909, Raymond Unwin (1863-1940) was concerned that '(w)e have become so used to living among surroundings in which beauty has little or no place that we do not realise what a remarkable and unique feature the ugliness of modern life is' (Unwin, 1909). He warned of a 'modern town planning tendency to drill all town plans into a similar type and pattern'. 'To avoid (this) the personality of each town must be understood' (ibid, chapters 1-2). More recently, Rapaport and Kantor (1974) argued that people prefer a complex visual environment to a simple one: 'Contemporary urban design is simplified to such an extent that all it has to say is revealed in one single glance. This loss leads to a loss of interest.'

The urban environment exists as a complex web of processes, tangible-intangible resources, and spatial form. Townscape and community together represent an accumulated record of intentions, needs and activities through time. A town is thus several organisms concurrently – representing parallel ‘realities’ as arena for life and death, development and interaction. Material and immaterial layers reflect long phases of activity and ambitions that together manifest the town’s life history, phases that are often conflicting. Some of the layers are important to the authorities, some to residents – others again only to
visitors. A town’s ‘narrative competence’ or ‘ability to tell its story’ is central for its historical identity – and a dimension to which residents may appear less conscious (from Hertzfeld, 1991). Cultural layers support collective memory and awareness of time in the form of history, existence and identity. Social aspects such as tenure, livelihood and relationships to power would condition the individual’s attachment to place. A relevant management strategy should thus be based on an understanding of qualities and values of the specific place (ibid; Orbasli, 2008:38; Pound, 2003:11; Palmer, 2005).48

Initially identifying values raises issues on how to relate them to an ‘optimal’ regime of change management (urban governance). The complexity and continuity of a living historical urban environment requires an approach towards assessment in which material and immaterial values and qualities are recognised in their specific – and in parallel varying social-cultural – context. In itself this may create contradictions, as possibly assessing recognised values against a range of interrelated but conflicting criteria (Pound, 2003).

Cultural traditions might continually be reinvented through externalised concerns for the continuation of a much-admired culture.49

By discussing current spatial dynamics in Old Lhasa, the study has aimed to contribute towards understanding urban conservation in a context of change, contributing to develop existing concepts.50 To support the text of this chapter, in the endnotes to this chapter are included brief outlines on a few terms.51 For more terms and concepts see Appendix.

Culture has a powerful role in struggle for freedom and autonomy. In this study is held that a democratic culture where there is access, respect and coherence is not elitist but a basis for human and social development’.52

2.2 Heritage conservation and development

‘Beyond some related European traditions of the pre-Christian Era, specific concepts to protect art and architecture, inherent in Buddhism, may have spread to Europe well before the extensive intercontinental trade and travels started in the 14th century. The origin of cultural heritage protection in modern Western philosophy is seen as pan-European and based in the same period, the Renaissance. Interpreted from late 17th century French texts, conservation is a ‘child’ of the modern period’ (Sekler in Theophile and Gutschow, 2001).

European conservation traditions may conventionally be split into two periods, the first of ‘very early’ origins. The European ‘Classical period’ (6th–7th century BC through the rise of Christianity and the 5th century AD decline of the Roman Empire, blending into the Early Middle Ages, AD 600-1000) and the Renaissance (14-17th centuries CE) provided a philosophical base for the second phase of the field, starting with the ‘Modern Era’, 16-19th centuries (Stubbs, 2009).53 The objective of the current chapter is to outline how this latter tradition was interpreted by 20th century social development relevant to heritage conservation and community development thinking – and to change affecting Old Lhasa.
2.2.1 Conservation ideology rooted

‘Somewhere between the dates 50,000 BCE and 8,000 BCE, that is, from time immemorial, humankind became interested in safeguarding its practical and symbolic creations. Annals of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127 CE) in China provide tangible evidence of documenting and preserving artistic work of that (even more) distant past (Stubbs, 2009:25).

Europe’s traditions seem rather short compared to temporal frames now known for cultural regions in Asia. Protection of artefacts and structures for religious or spiritual reasons may be as old as the first symbols of belief systems themselves. The oldest evidence of durable expressions of artistic and spiritual beliefs is dated to at least 50,000 BCE, and the earliest evidence of construction and maintenance of built structures and settlements dated to about 8,000 BCE (Stubbs, 2009:25).

Moving to our own times, development of Western doctrine on heritage conservation stems from numerous cultural traditions and individual intellectual contributions, ‘summary’ intentions, actions and reflections of the 20th century manifest through international documents – a few summarised in the chapter endnotes54 – such as ‘The Athens Charter’ (1931), ‘The Hague Convention’ (1954), and ‘The Venice Charter’ (1964). These were followed by numerous normative texts addressing issues such as economic utilisation, potentials development, and ‘new use and adaptive reuse’ of heritage.

The ‘Norms of Quito’ (1967, Part II, Art.1) importantly stated that ‘since the idea of space is inseparable from the concept of monument, the stewardship of the state can and should be extended to the surrounding urban context or natural environment. Its good intentions clear, ‘Quito’ nevertheless reflected a focus on nation building and national culture, a driving force of the UN paradigm – ie supporting a stronger role of the state to the detriment of local (the affected) communities and cultures.

A monumental zone, structure, or site may exist, even where none of the elements composing it would deserve such a designation when individually considered’ (ibid; http://www.icomos.org/docs/quito67.html).

2.2.2 Culture in development

‘The importance of the human factor – that complex web of relationships and beliefs, values and motivations, which lie at the very heart of a culture – (has) been underestimated in many development projects’ (‘Our Creative Diversity’, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, 1995).

‘Development’ needs to be the direct concern of the community in question, in order ‘to reach the driving forces and strike the right cords of the community’s cultural unconscious’ (Arfwedson, 1995:12).

Most development activity would reflect decision-making and needs defined by the structures that initiated and are most likely to benefit from it. International experience of the last decades has singularly showed the importance of direct participation by the affected community in order that potentials of culture in development be realised. For development processes to achieve any degree of local community ownership, implemented measures need to interact with the local socio-cultural context.55 In
the late 1970s, the international conservation doctrine was changing, with other fields of knowledge and thinking being interrelated.

In order to see connections between interdependent discourses on heritage management and development – political, intellectual and practical – in large part relevant also to the study subject, the text takes a sidestep into selected aspects of development thinking before advancing towards the ‘evolution’ of the conservation paradigm.

Culture, development and power

‘Development is not only an amalgam of processes of change but also a system of knowledge and power which produces and justifies these processes’ (Escobar, 1995), and ‘central to our understanding in the emergence of indigenous rights movements and use of ethno-nationalism’ (UNESCO, 1995).

‘The problem with normative concepts is that they become ‘worn out’ when reality remains the same; eco-development was soon replaced with ‘sustainable development’, participation with ‘empowerment’ and basic needs with ‘human development’ (Hettne, 1995:175).

Post-WW2 ‘development’ was conceived as a system of ‘universally’ applicable technical interventions to deliver ‘badly needed’ goods – a linear process of economic development achieving progress (Escobar, 1995:44). ‘Modernisation theory’ saw ethnic identity as an obstacle to development and nation building, as part of the ‘traditional that opposed progress’ – and traditional or local ‘culture’ was in other words regarded as a residual variable that would disappear with the advance of modernisation.

Although disrupting and destroying traditions, some traditional cultures survived modernisation ‘through their transformative engagement with modernity’ (Schech and Haggis, 2000:35-37; Escobar, 1995:219).

At the ‘Cocoyoc Symposium 1974’ in Mexico, common ‘UN-thinking’ of a top-down world order was seriously criticised and development redefined as more than fulfilling basic needs but including freedom of expression and self-realisation.56 Encompassing the multi-perspective context of human development, improving overall conditions of living became primary objectives (Cowen and Shenton, 1996:57; Rostow in Hettne, 1995)57 with issues of human rights, population, food and water, environmental protection, and human settlements and technology ‘suddenly’ critical – and obsolescence, alternative materials and energy receiving attention in architecture and planning.58 A search for anotherness emerged (1960s onwards), to include the excluded and focus on the ‘content’ of development rather than on its ‘form’ (Hettne, 1995:176, 199) – within a developmental agenda concerned with short term development within a long term perspective as expressed in ‘act locally and think globally’.59

Another Development in contrast to growth was built on territorialism as a counterpoint to functionalism, with ecological sustainability and resource conservation, social equity and cultural diversity as central dimensions (Hettne, 1995:204-6). The significant contribution of this normative approach to development theory – within which each society is presupposed to find the direction of its own development in accordance with human needs and resources – has been attention to issues such as
Part Two: Elements of theory and practice


The ‘territorial’ as concept is concerned with a group’s or nation’s relations to ownership of and entitlements to land, area and resources, to culture and traditions. Rights and entitlements would include those of movement, entitlements to land and its use, to belief and practice, and to uphold traditions. Some of the above are issues particularly complex to analyse and discuss in the urban context of competing processes for space and opportunity. In a Buddhist cultural environment immaterial values appear stronger than the material or tangible.

In a *territorial perspective*, resource-, technology- and skills links would contrast those of a *functional perspective*, as could also those related to land, land-use and relationships of society and land tenure- or ownership.62 Territoriality as an inherently cultural and ecologically sound approach would nurture ‘an ethics of care and concern for our fellow citizens and for the environment we share with them,’ (Friedman, 1992:133 in Hettne, 1995:200).

*Empowering* seems sadly far removed from the hierarchical functional systems that govern numerous nation states and regional societies.

This raises interesting issues on *national* versus *local* culture, and on reification63 of culture (by this author regarded of central relevance to Lhasa as study subject but outside the study scope). The ‘local’ should be seen to exist in contrast to the other – the national, and other local – existing ‘as much without as within: in the construction and negotiation of external boundaries’ (Pieterse, 2004:64).64

Indigenous knowledge (IK) was the unique base for communication and decision-making in traditional society. Sources of indigenous knowledge are maintained and developed through practice, innovation and by receiving or passing on information, by definition shared and inter-disciplinary – as ‘local people’ perceive their environment as one entire system (Warren et al, 1995:xv; Sillitoe, 1998:247).

The Buddhist reality of cosmic connectedness between knowledge, living beings and the earth, is manifested in the cyclical notion of reincarnation through birth, death and rebirth (Sillitoe et al, 2002:29).

In such a perceptive, built heritage constitutes in material and immaterial representation ‘an embodiment of local or indigenous knowledge, a complex product of people, place and time, evolving in
consequence of dynamic processes’ (Thakur, 1998). To empower local communities with appropriate control of life and environment, the international community needs to renew its recognition and rediscovery of indigenous knowledge (Aggrawal in Jigyasu, 2002; Hettne, 1995). ‘That understanding and appreciation of local ideas and practices inform development work should be self evident’ (Sillitoe et al, 2002:2-5). That extensive social and cultural capital of indigenous knowledge remains largely untapped for community development was clearly documented in case studies on disaster vulnerability in India and Nepal (Jigyasu, 2002).

Structural and macro approaches to development were recognised as seriously flawed, failing to address local, culturally defined goals. Culture came into development thinking with actor-oriented approaches and attention towards primary livelihood and social, cultural and spiritual needs of local communities (Sillitoe et al, 2002:182; Long and Villereal,1993 in Pieterse, 2004:60).65 ‘The cultural dimension of development’ came to constitute a major building block in UNESCO’s 1980s Cultural Sector programme and ‘The World Decade for Cultural Development’, 1988-1997 (UNESCO 1995:36-37)66 – however, unfortunately in the mid-1990s already to be replaced by an all-inclusive concept of ‘environment’ as the dominant international political issue (Schech and Haggis, 2000:81-82). The perspectives of environmental degradation and conflicts were supplemented by the fight against urban poverty (The UN Millennium Declaration and Goals, 2000).67

Social and cultural analysis by contemporary international thinkers (Michel Faucault and onwards) show a preoccupation with the ‘social, ideological and political knots bound up in the concept of power’ (Gibson, 2007).68 Power, often thought of as state power, may more appropriately be viewed as a social relation diffused throughout all aspects of society – within a field of hegemony (of the dominant and dominated) in ‘a dynamic continuous struggle of gaining and keeping control’ (Pieterse, 2004:66-67).69 Local culture, like the national, is a landscape of power with its own distinct patterns of stratification and uneven cultural knowledge (Pieterse, 2004:65). Unevenness of power relations, and the roles of elites within indigenous communities, may potentially be underestimated in analyses that focus on local culture and tradition (Fomton (1988) and Keesing (1987) in Pieterse, 2004:66).

Political-cultural efforts to build national culture can suppress minorities and indigenous peoples through ‘internal colonisation’, as also defining national monuments might construct minorities; territorial issues outside society’s official focus potentially feeding ethnic mobilisations (Pieterse, 2004:62-63). Most cultures – local or national – are today hybrid, affected significantly by external value systems, beliefs and practices, as well as by the international culture of commercialism (Thompson (1995) in Schech and Haggis, 2000:203).70 Local culture exists in contrast to ‘the other’ – the national and other local – and ‘is as much without as within: in the construction and negotiation of external boundaries’. An
otherwise appropriate discourse on culture and development based on local culture might result in cultural ‘boundaries’ and ‘local culture’ reflecting a politics of nostalgia (Pieterse, 2004:64-66). Issues of ‘internal colonialisation’, minorities construction and representation are central to understanding and interpreting contemporary Old Lhasa, Lhasa and Tibet, but considered beyond the study focus and the knowledge field of this author – and assumed beyond the zone for approved research in Lhasa at present.

International collaboration anchored

From the growing discourse indicated above, a number of specific instruments and mechanisms developed, seeking to link architecture and planning, cultural heritage management and community development as a major societal concern.

**Integrated conservation** - In some contrast to the dominant focus on monumental architecture, ‘The European Charter of the Architectural Heritage’ (1975) (‘Amsterdam Declaration’, Council of Europe, 1975) focused on anonymous or vernacular built heritage – ‘groups of lesser buildings in our old towns and characteristic villages in their natural and manmade settings’ (Article 1). An important charter was adopted on the policy of ‘integrated conservation’, the main goal of which was ‘to integrate the conservation of historic monuments and sites into town planning systems, to preserve groups of historic buildings and atmosphere and to incorporate heritage issues into economic and social issues’ (ibid). Implementing the concept of ‘integrated conservation’ was recognised to necessitate considerable legal, administrative, financial and technical support, and be based on stakeholder collaboration – local authorities and residents recognised to have particular responsibilities as expressed in the much later ‘Local Agenda 21’ adopted in 1992 (Jokiletho, 2007:25).

**World Heritage and universality** - Today recognised as a near universal instrument contributing to peace across cultural–political divides through a focus on cultural dignity, diversity, pluralism and respect, the UNESCO ‘World Heritage Convention’ 1972 (WHC) – ‘Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage’72 – was adopted in 1972, built from consensus expressed in earlier documents. Reconfirming the ‘UN Universal Declaration’ (UDHR)73 focus on humanity’s shared responsibilities, the WHC was in 2011 adopted by 189 of 193 UNESCO member states. The UNESCO World Heritage List serving ‘as a reference for what is worth preserving for future generations’ (T.M.Schmitt, 2009:119 in K. Rao, 2009), the Convention also creates, in some ways, ‘a world without borders’ (S. Pannel, 2006:76; ibid).
Part Two: Elements of theory and practice

A direct link between the WH Convention and the UDHR is the WHC prerequisite of community participation throughout (selection, nomination and maintenance), although often recognised not to be present either by oversight or intent (national culture allowed to dominate the local).

Central in the World Heritage paradigm is that some objects and sites possess unique value that transcends use, and separating them from ordinary historic or historical objects. This makes them a concern of the international community rather than merely the nation states they are located. World Heritage recognition may, however, raise challenges in terms of rights of ownership (private or public), and possibly distance a site or area (property) from local community influence and ownership as becoming subject to international jurisdiction to some degree (a complex aspect of WH designation not yet adequately clarified by UNESCO).

A main tenet of the WH Convention states that ‘a system of international co-operation and assistance designed to support States Parties to the Convention in their efforts to conserve and identify (the world natural and cultural heritage)’ should be established (WH Convention, Article 7). For the purpose of identifying ‘the best of the best’ extant heritage, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee of 21 elected member states is advised by its secretariat (World Heritage Centre) and three formal ‘Advisory Bodies’ to the World Heritage Convention (ICCCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN).74

To be designated World Heritage status a cultural or natural property needs to be seen to satisfy one (or more) of ten World Heritage criteria. For the current study subject, a living historical urban environment, criteria No’s 2, 3, 4 and 5 would seem the most relevant:

II - exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
III - bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
IV - be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
V - be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

(II.D Criteria for the assessment of outstanding universal value, WHC OG para 77, 2008.

Also criteria No. 6 may be applicable (history of criteria development not discussed):
VI - be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria).

( Ibid)

Paragraph 78 of the WHC Operational Guidelines is vital: ‘To be deemed of outstanding universal value, a property must also meet the conditions of integrity and/or authenticity and must have an adequate protection and management system to ensure its safeguarding (II.D Criteria for the assessment of outstanding universal value’, WHC OG paragraph 78, 2008).
Part Two: Elements of theory and practice

To what extent the original purpose of the convention is being satisfied (Article 7 above) remains present disputed. Without here entering into a detailed discussion, this author would argue that the Committee has adopted a controversial policy of near indiscriminate inscription in conflict with Advisory Body advice, thus designating not ‘the best of the best’ but ‘representative of the best’ (Cameron, 2005 quoted in Rao, 2009), the duties of the Advisory Bodies have escalated whilst those of the Committee seem reduced, and the States Parties are not being offered adequate technical advice by the same Advisory Bodies due to potential conflicts of interest and acute shortages in financial and human resources (Rao, 2009; Meskell, 2012).

World Heritage nevertheless centres on a framework for assessing significance and associated qualities of a site, establishing ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ (OUV), authenticity and integrity of the properties seen to satisfy the exacting albeit subjective interpretations of the criteria to the Convention. Again a wide literature deals with the concepts to central the WH paradigm, here outlined in the Appendix.

A ‘test of authenticity’ is accepted met when criteria formulated in the WH OG are satisfied. ‘Material truthfulness’ of a structure has been described as a combined expression of authenticity and significance (Jokilehto, 1997) – its significance expressing the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).

In a perspective of tangible and intangible heritage recognised as inseparable, and conservation being carried out and integral with and in social change, this author argues that a concept of combined ‘social-material truthfulness’ may closer represent the reality of which the joint discourse on conservation and development is part.

To protect the setting of the WH designated property, a buffer zone needs to be established surrounding it (WHC OG paragraphs 103-107). Despite efforts emphasising the importance of settings (Xian Declaration, ICOMOS 2005), the issue of buffer zones remains one of the most controversial aspects of WH work. The buffer zone concept should be extended beyond a relevant buffer zone to the protected area to include a construction- and land-use control zone relevant to the setting of each WH property. The WH Convention has resulted in a ‘flood’ of international documents on heritage conservation, intending to contribute to the discourse but potentially ‘ordinary-making’ major decisions and texts. Many of these international documents have continued to confirm a normative approach of ‘rights and wrongs’ seen through a Western cultural perspective, with surprising disregard of other knowledge systems.

Of particular relevance to this study, the ‘Washington Charter’ adopted by ICOMOS in 1987 (‘ICOMOS Charter for the conservation of historic towns and urban areas’) recognised the potential of contemporary elements enriching historic settings – with contemporary architecture a positive contribution to historic environments by creative continuity (Rodwell, 2007). ‘Washington’ called for urban conservation to be integral with socio-economic development and planning policies with active participation from all stakeholders, and for a first time represented conservation as multi-disciplinary.
2.2.3 Shifting contexts of conservation

‘Each culture and entity accords (values) a different meaning that moreover shifts over time (Lowenthal, 1994:36). Cultural property becomes cultural heritage if someone accepts, owns, takes charge of, and accepts responsibility of it’ (Tomachewsky, 2007).

‘Today – somewhat tongue-in-cheek – one may be tempted to agree that something authentic is simply something that looks as you imagine it might, based on a lifetime of movies and television’ (Curtis, 2000:39).

Material in its manifestation, built heritage in essence remains intangible from a process of selection and declaration, and in representing memory, perception, value and context. The political dimension of cultural heritage is ever present, in selection, interpretation, appreciation and use. Management governed by political management processes and external experts environments distanced from local community, social exclusion may be accentuated (Lidén, 1991:101-102). An external expert hegemony can result in communities losing ownership and responsibility for their own heritage.

Judith Alfrey and Tim Putnam (1992) asked whether ‘heritage (is) a result of desire to celebrate achievement, an interest in innovation and ingenuity, or an effort to compensate for irreparable loss’ (Alfrey and Putnam, 2008; in Hilary Orange, 2008 in Industrial Archaeology Review XXX:2).

In a study subject such as Old Lhasa, affected by complex processes of transformation over recent decades, this multilayered issue cannot but surface in several forms. Can this help to ‘easily explain’ why tourists are made a first priority before local devotees and pilgrims? – or by raising ‘new’ versions of ‘who has the right to formally interpret the heritage resources’, and whose history is right? Here are tensions between conservation of heritage representing ‘outstanding universal value’ and the sustainability of associative value at local level.

Built heritage as socio-economic utility brings forth conflicts between private interests with ownership and potential to act, and public sector management through legislation. Further, the researcher Peter Næss (1995) opined that conflicts exist between ‘sustainability’ and culture (heritage as resource). Behind a seemingly simple front of ‘definitions’ is located a complex discourse documented in an extensive literature in part only. In sum, at the start of the 21st century the conservation field increasingly battles for attention at community and political levels.

Cultural diversity, pluralism and continuity

Virtually all the world’s societies are multicultural in composition, so equating cultural identity with national identity is an obvious fallacy – as illustrated by language as a centerpiece of cultural identity (Pieterse, 2004:62).

‘Culture takes diverse forms across space and time. The diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humankind and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefits of present and future generations’ (UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001, Article 1; ICOMOS Background paper to Expert Meeting on OUV, 2005).

‘Our Creative Diversity’ expressed needs of cross-cultural respect and ‘global ethics’ as essential, grounding the advocated principles in equality and cultural freedom. They confirmed the responsibility of
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each society to protect and develop its own heritage resources, addressing the plight of traditional knowledge in development of modern society – in approach closely related to the parallel ‘Nara Document on Authenticity’ (1994) and the revised ‘Burra Charter’ (1999). Although cultural diversity is a core concern for the UN family of member states and institutions it was only in 2001 recognised formally as a central factor in development (WCCD, 1995:176; UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2007). Cultural differences between people are manifested in the way societies organise themselves, in conceptions of beliefs, morality and language, and in interaction with the environment. ‘Cultural diversity’ in contrast to ‘cultural uniformity’ is commonly recognised as necessary for (survival of) humankind as biodiversity is for nature, and a driving force of development – for intellectual, moral and spiritual life as for economic growth – its promotion a pressing contemporary issue (‘Universal Declaration of UNESCO on Cultural Diversity’, Art. 1, 2001).

Cultural pluralism is said to exist where ‘smaller groups within a larger society maintain their unique cultural characteristics, and whose values and practices are accepted by the wider culture’ (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_pluralism). The ‘smaller group’ or ‘local culture’ would be subject to a varying level of exposure within the larger society, and international experience shows cultural pluralism to be possible only if cultural communities are afforded some protection by law (ibid).

Cultural continuity through living traditions, community cohesion and socialisation (the process of inheriting norms, customs and ideologies) is recognised to ensure a needed degree of familiarity through gradual and continuous transformation processes (Høyem and Sauerla in Erring et al, 2002:342). The processes and agents of change to constitute the most serious threats to cultural continuity vary with the specific context, whether in the form of internal or external globalisation (cultural uniformity).

The value of and respect for cultural diversity, pluralism and continuity are today internationally acknowledged although far from universally adopted.

From Nara to Faro

The paradigmatic change caused by the 1994 Nara Document on Authenticity, embracing cultural diversity, opening for widened interpretation of ‘authenticity’ and emphasising the importance of context, are by this author held to be in conflict with the WH notion of ‘inherent value’.

Further, ‘Nara’ emphasised the value of a ‘thing’ (object, site or area) as cultural construct continually reinterpreted and always considered in relation to ‘something else’ and to prevent static values and criteria of interpretation (Art. 10). The potential of the ‘Nara imperative’ is thus as a critical corrective in assessing heritage resources – whether of World Heritage status or not. ‘Nara’ would, however, hardly have emerged without ‘The Burra Charter’. ‘Burra’ presented guidance for ‘conservation and
management of places of cultural significance’ – ie both tangible and intangible heritage. For subsequent development of urban conservation in Asia, the ‘China Principles’ and the ‘Intach Charter’ and the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter’ (1992) are of particular interest.

‘The INTACH Charter’ (2004) – ‘Charter for the conservation of unprotected architectural heritage and sites in India’ (‘Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage’, INTACH) – projected a holistic social-cultural perspective with focus on traditional knowledge of material and intangible heritage – ‘living heritage’ – retained through Master Builders. This recognition constitutes another milestone for built heritage conservation doctrine in Asia.

The China Principles (2000) ratified by the PRC Central Government in 2004, constitute a vital legal and professional instrument as the first national charter for cultural heritage management in China. Due to its direct relevance to the study subject of Old Lhasa, the ‘Principles’ are presented here in some detail.

The Principles were developed from a perceived need of guidelines that would reflect and respect Chinese traditions and approaches to conservation under its existing legislation – and grounded in a holistic cultural tradition. Built heritage as a category of cultural heritage (‘cultural relics’; Chinese: ‘wenwu’) in China includes cultural and historic extant objects, structures and sites above and below ground, of which these categories are relevant to the study:

- Buildings, sites and monuments related to important historical facts, the revolutionary movement, and important personalities and having a commemorating and historical value,
- Cultural sites, old tombs, old buildings, stone cave temples, inscriptions and so forth that have an historical, artistic or scientific value,
- Valuable works of art and handiwork of different periods,
- Revolutionary written documents and old books and documents with an historical, artistic or scientific value,
- Objects able to represent the social system, the social production, and the special life of different periods.

The objectives of the Principles were to:

- develop national guidelines for conservation and management of cultural heritage sites in China, resulting in an informed and integrated approach to conservation practice;
- promote the guidelines within China and apply them at selected sites in a dissemination-adoptation strategy;
- enhance the role of China ICOMOS (China’s national branch of the International Committee on Monuments and Sites) as a professional conservation organisation in China;
- provide a potential model for other countries in the region; and
- better understand the traditional approaches and methods to conservation and management of cultural heritage sites in China.

The Principles reflect a ‘top-down’ society with strong focus on the ‘Master Plan’, but have potential that may allow ‘bottom-up’ community processes – a ‘globalisation from below’ (Jokiletho, 2007:24). The ‘Principles’ mark a significant achievement for built heritage conservation in China – as their adoption would do in most countries. Published in Chinese and English the document has achieved wide dissemination outside China.

(WH-activity) towards society, social- cultural and spiritual specificity and culture-nature relations – with tangible heritage values potentially finding themselves reduced to a ‘back seat’ position. Aspects of the above are reflected on (with reference also to current work of ICOMOS) in later text.88

Some of the numerous ‘declarations’ nevertheless project regional and generally relevant foci. The ‘Hoi An Declaration’ (2003), the ‘Bam Declaration’ (2004), the ‘Seoul Declaration’ (2005), and the ‘ICOMOS Xi’an Declaration’ (2005)89 address threatened urban heritage resources, tourism and ‘setting’.

Culture defined as social behaviour has to some extent replaced a ‘Eurocentric monumental object heritage focus’ on castles and cathedrals with that of cultural landscapes. Further, the World Heritage Committee has ventured into listing intangible cultural and ‘difficult’ heritage – ‘places of pain and shame’ such as Auschwitz, Robben Island, Hiroshima, Zanzibar Stone Town (Logan and Reeves, 2009:1-10).90 Heritage places maintain a groups’ sense of connection with roots and a past. As memory owned by all categories of victims, heritage places possess political potential that may be used or abused (Graham et al, 2000, in Logan and Reeves, 2009:2) – sometimes in willed distortion.

The current accepted anthropological-sociological definition of cultural heritage may, however, empower also ‘negative’ cultural expressions of life (as ‘heritage’) to become ‘acceptable’ (ibid; Lidén, 1991; Faro, 2005) – giving signals of shifts in focus and reflecting changing community concerns, new trajectories of involved professions, and needs of new philosophical grounding.

Visions expressed through the WH paradigm have given the WH-system a dominating international influence in urban conservation. Initiatives by ICOMOS and international academia and practice have contributed to build this gradually out of ‘Eurocentric’ folds. In overall terms, the ‘WH-system’ has, however, internationally functioned as builder of respect between cultural regions, of cultural diversity, of local culture, and as community generator – but also led to processes of intense politicising and commercialising of heritage resources.91

Western heritage practice has nevertheless retained a focus on conservation of physical fabric of heritage and place, as tangible manifestations of heritage remain much more quantifiable and manageable than the intangible. This challenges the sustainability of immaterial, ephemeral organic and evolving associative values.

The WHC Operational Guidelines, 2005 for a first time recognised ‘traditional management measures’, statutory authorities (national-regional-local manifesting national policy) having a near monopoly to administer also local heritage resources. Leaving it to national authorities, however, no processes have been described or identified in the WHC OG on how community should get involved or local traditions respected.

Since 1972, authoritative statements used in the convention text have been made milder, step by step – changing from must and shall to may – and becoming less commanding or normative (Pound, 2008).
Main threats that World Heritage properties are known subjected to, are lack of conservation, loss of authenticity, over-visiting and environmental pressures. An analysis by ICOMOS shows that although these threats are serious, the most significant threats affecting world heritage sites are i) lack of adequate management (in Asia affecting 88% of inscribed sites), ii) development pressure (in Asia affecting 40% of inscribed sites), and iii) natural disasters (unknown percentage of sites affected in Asia). The analysis also shows that threats that persist beyond five years are more frequent in Asia (with Arab States and Latin America) than in other regions (ICOMOS – Threats to World Heritage Sites 1994-2004 – An Analysis, Paris 2005). Increasing intensity and politicising of recent WH Committee debates suggest a need for updating how to address contemporary development and conservation in the urban context.

The phenomena of culture and cultural heritage as interrelated and interdependent with all societal processes was ‘prepared’ by the evolution of documents from ‘Venice’ through to ‘The Faro Convention’ that introduced a fundamental change in perception. ‘Faro’ ‘affirmed’ the importance of cultural heritage, that value was represented through meaning and use attached by and to people – and that the point of departure of ‘heritage thinking’ should therefore be people, not objects – with heritage management policies geared towards ‘the needs of society, human progress and quality of life’ (Council of Europe, 2009:29). This integrated ‘trans-frontier’ collaboration-based approach to cultural heritage management was rooted in the humanistic political aim to build strong pan-national communities and to broaden knowledge and awareness of values.

Recognising cultural heritage as a reflection and expression of values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions in constant evolution, the convention argued for an essential link between the community and the heritage – one sustaining the other in mutual relationship – expressing the need to involve everyone in society in an ‘ongoing process of defining and managing cultural heritage’.

The inherent contradictions between ‘outstanding universal value’ and ‘associative local value’, between institutionally guided conservation and local sustainability, to this author questions to which extent and how World Heritage site designation has capacity to contribute towards processes of social inclusion. This ‘reservation’ is raised despite the accepted view that heritage resources constitute an inherent catalyst for economic renewal and social inclusion (regeneration) released ‘automatically’ through a World Heritage listing. Despite positive impacts of ‘Nara’, ‘Burra’ and ‘Faro’ (confirming respect for and relevance of cultural diversity) the conservation discourse and doctrine remains ‘distanced’ from the developmental needs to reflect local community development processes if to retain relevance beyond that of elitist cultural production.
2.3 The urban environment

Urban environments may contain ‘problems’ without necessarily being ‘problems’ in themselves. It is often a ‘failure of governance within cities that explains the poor environmental performance of so many cities rather then the inherent characteristics of cities in general’ (Mitlin and Satterthwaite, 1996:50; my italics).

All urban environments, old and new, are challenged in terms of how they meet needs of their society and its aspirations – so also historical Lhasa. The ‘failure’ described in the above quote may be due not to lacking legislation, but to lacks in financial and human resources to enforce legislation, sometimes seen in a lack of will.

The current section outlines issues of community and the individual in the urban environment, leading onto aspects of urban form and factors of change relevant to Old Lhasa in section 2.4.

2.3.1 Habitat

Principles and goals to ensure how to achieve adequate shelter and make habitat and settlements safer, healthier and more liveable, and for development of settlements, are the focus of several international initiatives and agreements – and the subject of continuous international concern.

The twin priorities of Habitat II, The Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II in Istanbul, Turkey, 1996, were adequate shelter for all and sustainable cities – a result of Agenda 21, the UN program focused on sustainable development established at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (http://www.agenda21culture.net/). Habitat II took place twenty years after the 1976 Habitat conference in Vancouver that had led to the establishment of the Nairobi-based United Nations Centre on Human Settlements (http://www.un.org/Conferences/habitat/). The ‘Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements’ (1976) stated that ‘historical settlements, monuments and other items of national heritage, including religious heritage, should be safeguarded against any acts of aggression or abuse by the occupying power’ (Article 16). The ‘Habitat Agenda’ and other international documents have been incorporated in Chinese national policies.

The Habitat Agenda and China - At the 56th UN General Assembly in 2001, the PRC delegation stressed the differences between countries in political systems, legislation, development levels, history and cultural traditions and natural environment, stating that ‘in promoting human settlement development, countries might learn and borrow from each other’s practices, (as) it is impossible to adopt a uniform approach or model. Human settlement development should be compatible with economic development and be coordinated with population growth, productivity expansion, resources utilization and environmental protection, so as to follow the path of sustainable development’. With this, China is understood to confirm sustainable development as the relevant path for achieving the objectives of its human settlements development.

Prime goals of international development efforts today focus first and foremost on poverty reduction and cultural continuity – poverty characterised not only by lacks of material resources and social inclusion,
but accompanied by severe lack of dignity and respect (UN Millenium Development Goals; UN, 2000).

‘Checklists’ are made for chief values that should be met to ensure overall habitat sustainability:

(i) Equity, social and spatial inclusion;
(ii) Efforts towards environmental protection and sustainability;
(iii) Civic engagement and empowerment through democracy and local governance;
(iv) Skills development and work for all;
(v) Local / global relationships and conflicts resolution;
(vi) Cultural continuity by recognizing intangible cultural practices and heritage resources of the environment built through history.

2.3.2 Land tenure

Land tenure is understood as ‘the mode by which land is held or owned, or the set of relationships among people concerning the use of land and its product’, tenure as term used to convey a wide range of meanings related to occupation of urban space and legal complexities involved (Payne 1997:3; Shafi and Payne 2007:v). Some modes are well studied, particularly as regards land controlled by a community, private owners, public authorities, or land tenure modes that result from a specific culture – as traditions of Islamic land control, or political processes by colonising (ibid). An operating land tenure system regulates access to land for a population. In the economically and judicially complex urban landscape, globalisation has contributed to developing several ‘new’ or hybrid forms of land tenure and control. Although land management as a general topic is considered outside the scope of this study, a brief outline relevant to China and referring to Lhasa is included in chapter 5.

Land is in China defined into two categories: a) state-owned land (as all urban land; further details later in the text), and b) land owned by rural farmers collectives (see chapter 2). Chapter 1 Article 10 of the China’s Constitution states that the state retains ownership of all land. The state can expropriate land in the best of ‘public interest for its use in accordance with the law’ with a duty to compensate individuals who loose access to fundamental resources through infringements of their civic rights. The state has the right of all land ownership and can sell use of land-rights on certain conditions for periods for 40, 50 or 70 years depending on the category of land-use. Urban land is administered through the three levels of government, central government in charge of national legislation and policies while provincial government monitors and evaluates implementation carried out by local government.

Land tenure as political and judicial issue is in China intimately linked to economic development, demography and specifically urban development and housing provision. The reforms of the Deng Xiao Ping period (1978-1989) led to farm workers becoming ‘superfluous’ in agricultural production, with local towns and villages unable to absorb the surplus labour. Providing a vital labour force to urban construction, and free to migrate, migrant workers without and urban registration could live in the cities.
‘illegally’ and ‘informally’. The urban population increase led the state from the mid-1980s to transfer large areas of rural land into the urban land market in order to stimulate the housing market. Transfer of land significantly exposed the security of tenure to housing and land for large volumes of farmers. To cater for the new urban workforce, informal settlements emerged in Chinese cities in the 1980s. Of Beijing’s population of 16 million in 2006 about 3.6 million were migrants, with almost one half living in about 330 informal settlements (Beijing Municipal Statistical Bureau, 2006 and 2005). A large population located within the 2008 Olympics was relocated, but it remains unclear to where (Westendorff, 2007:6-11).

In Lhasa was followed a policy of aggressive economic development. During the study period a number of major work units with use rights on land owned by the state were rumoured to have over-extended their financial potential for real estate development benefits. Going into commercial construction where an appropriate market was not yet established (rental and purchasing), many experienced debt crisis and subsequent state agency take-over (personal communications). No data has been available on the issue of land tenure for Lhasa (here is referred to work by Dawa Tsering and Hans C Bjønness for Gyantse from 2005 onwards).

2.3.3 Urban governance

‘While development is modern and global, urban administration is not. The practice of most Asian governments in placing responsibility for urban planning functions in infrastructure portfolios has exacerbated the separation of social and physical development policy and reinforced the dominance of central government in economic policy’ (Logan, 2002:251).

Urban governance as political, economic and administrative management of a city at all levels comprises mechanisms, processes and institutions through which all stakeholders may articulate interests, mediate differences, and exercise legal rights and obligations. Good urban governance promotes constructive interaction between the state, private sector and civil society, and is participatory, transparent and accountable, effective and equitable – promoting rule of law, be consensus-based, and hear the voice of the vulnerable in decision-making on resource use, with sustainability, equity and civic engagement.99

The urban centre creates increasing pull effects as a major reason for rural urban migration, with incentives of urban work opportunity, the ‘glamour’ of urban life, and a push effect in terms of non-dependence on farming in view of rural areas population growth beyond what can be supported. In the industrialised world most cities have in the last decades been able to stop or halt inner city deterioration. With huge influx of population into cities, high natural birth increase within cities and lack of resources, this is unfortunately far from the case in cities in developing societies that ‘on average’ expand 7-8 times faster than those in industrialised countries.100
Shortage of resources for ordinary people means mushrooming of informal settlements characterised by little infrastructure, overcrowding, construction on ill-suited land (exposed to flooding or land-slides), and fierce competition for space to erect shelter and achieve a stable livelihood. Informal housing is often demolished by local governments, with eviction of residents. In some countries this has been seen to support local community development encouraging community self-management with some independence from ‘real’ authorities.\textsuperscript{101}

Different people, organisations and governments would define ‘good governance’ according to own experience and interests, with participatory planning and decision-making seen as the strategic means for realizing goals set for urban governance, this expressing a strong linkage between good urban governance and practice of human rights and equal access to entitlements.

### 2.3.4 Urban sustainable ecological frame

The section heading necessitates a brief outline of some key concepts. The outline is followed by a short description and discussion.

**Sustainable development** is described as development that does not require or make use of resources beyond its environmental capacity. It aims for intergenerational equity and trans-frontier responsibility, promotes social justice, and would be established through inclusive decision-making procedures (Jenks and Burgess, 2000:1-6; Strange, 1999:229). The ‘marriage’ of development to environment built on a notion of ‘no development without sustainability and no sustainability without development’ (Brundtland Commission; ‘Our Common Future’, WCED 1987; Sachs, 1995) and aimed to strengthen urban governance to meet needs and expectations of urban populations. Following the 1992 Rio Conference, ‘urban sustainability’ became the urban political ‘ticket’ of the 1990s.\textsuperscript{102} Whilst the overall debate on sustainable development is far from new, however, its adoption into planning and development of historic environments is.

**A sustainable urban environment** is one where ‘people and businesses continuously endeavour to improve their natural and cultural environments at neighbourhood and regional levels, whilst working in ways which always support the goal of global sustainable development’ (Haughton and Hunter, 1994), reducing use of non-renewable resources and improving ‘liveability’.\textsuperscript{103} Urban sustainability would require willingness towards open review of policies and practices of environmental, social and urban development. Today a ‘sustainable urban environment’ is seen to be compact, have high density, mixed land-use, and be well served with employment, infrastructure and transportation. This may appear close to our understanding of the traditional ‘pre-industrial city’ (Sjöberg, 1960) – the high level of self-sufficiency, order and social balance of which most likely represents a romantic interpretation of our time.\textsuperscript{104}
Ethnodevelopment as a central pillar in current ‘development thinking’ (‘Another Development’; Hettne, 1995; chapter 2) and as elaborated by Rodolfo Stavenhagen is based on the premise that people are divided into territorial cultural groups, ‘multiculturalism advocating a society that extends equitable status to distinct cultural and religious groups, no one culture predominating’ – a principle that demands mutual respect and openness for peaceful coexistence’ (Hettne, 1995:203 footnote in Bjønness, 2011:281-282). ‘Real’ ethnodevelopment would focus on traditional values that support identity, continuity and meaning to the life of individuals and community, over time reflecting traditions and contemporary influences, and appropriate urban conservation and renewal efforts should reflect this.

An urban ecological approach aims to strengthen ecological integrity through connections between ideology, knowledge and organised future action that respect constraints of locally found, dynamically responding ecosystems (Bjønness and Corneil, 1998; Friedmann and Hudson, 1994:2). Urban Ecological Planning (UEP) aims to address locality-relevant issues (economic, social, cultural and environmental), with case specific proposals.

Local resource- and environment-traditions are of primary interest to UEP. The approach is local culture- and people-oriented – starting with the local perspective and ending with the global. Differences between Urban Ecological Planning, (UEP) and Urban Environmental Management (UEM) are briefly presented in the appendix. UEM remains the reigning approach in most industrialised cities. How and when UEP may be seen implemented in a developing context remains an open question.105

Sustainable development was narrowly defined in a perspective of environmental protection as long-term maintenance of natural life-supporting systems, a concept in which there was room for social, economic and environmental dimensions but not that of culture (Næss, 995:121). If material, intangible, non-instrumental dimensions and amenities are included in the term sustainability, however, in a cross-embracing of social, cultural and environmental dimensions – as integral components of overall social behaviour – then cultural heritage and efforts to protect it should be included (Owens, 1994). This appears evident also to this author (chapter 8). Needing intellectual clarification, development and sustainability remain as likely in tension as in harmony in a dichotomy that needs serious investigation, as do also sustainability and cultural heritage.

In order to achieve sustainable development at the complex level of a historic urban settlement, environment- and resource issues need a central position in decision-making processes, from local community (Rodwell, 2003; Pickard, 2002; Larkham, 2004).106

‘Our archaeology, historic buildings, gardens, towns and historic landscapes were all created by people in the past but in addition this heritage owes its present value and significance to peoples’ perceptions and opinions or in other word to their personal beliefs and values’ (Larkham, 2004 in EH discussion...
Larkham expressed the values in the historic environment to be the following, associated with:

- Cultural – distinctiveness and sense of place;
- Educational – sources of information;
- Economic – tourism/community support;
- Resources – use of energy in construction;
- Recreational – part of everyday life;
- Aesthetic – townscape and landscape.

( Ibid, Larkham, 1997).

Conservation within a frame of urban sustainability is about ensuring optimal use of the historical environment, ‘a tool for managing change as an overarching philosophy – the opposite of a wasteful society’ (EH, 2002). A major problem confronting urban sustainability is, however, that the historical urban environment is poorly understood (Larkham, 2004) – and even less respected.
The capital of existing buildings, public spaces and infrastructure manifested in an urban historical environment may be seen at least as important as their cultural value (Rodwell, 2007:116-32), that same building stock, by politicians and residents alike, often not be seen as suitable for providing ‘decent’ housing for today, not to speak of tomorrow. To the contemporary property developer sustainability is likely to be misunderstood as “achieving a level of economic growth that is attractive to continuous capital investment into existing buildings, new development, or other significant change-driven and money-orientated activity” (Rodwell, 2003). Easily seen as echoing economic objectives of the financial entrepreneur, ‘sustainable development’ in the historic urban context should probably as a term be replaced with ‘sustainable evolution’ (Rodwell, 2007). Research shows that of key issues that affect urban sustainability, the land issue is the critical as rapid urbanisation absorbs agricultural land needed for feeding expanding populations (Jencks, 2000). A broadly seen hope is that ‘sustainability’ may develop ‘unique character’ as a product of the specific place – possibly also with an agenda to create a ‘glorious’ future based on a glorious past for the community concerned.

The dimension of power is central in eco-development, concerned with such issues as ‘who has power to mobilise resources, to corner benefits, to stall the process’ (Glaeser, 1984:35). ‘In many respects, the ecological approach constitutes a radical challenge to the conventional paradigm. Not only are positions in a developmental hierarchy questioned, but also the consumerist values behind it. Development cannot be a universal process. There are no models to emulate’ (Hettne, 1995:205).

Traditional values support the perception of identity and cultural continuity of individuals and community, and ethnodevelopment aims to strengthen local cultural manifestation and development. The globalising of cultural processes, however, constitutes unequal and asymmetrical access to political power and economic resources that frequently result in culture turned into a weapon of defence and attack: indigenous communities as ‘last custodians of paradise lost’ have the potentials of ‘politics of nostalgia’ (Pieterse, 2004:66), and arrogant ethnocentrism has potentials to turn into ethnic fundamentalism (Hettne, 1995:195-202). A challenging of rights to use native language, maintain traditional religious practice, participate in political processes, exercise control over land and other resources are known to raise issues of wide societal implication often explosive to the cohesion of a culturally pluralistic society (Hettne, 1995:204). Although ethnodevelopment thus may narrow development, Pieterse and Stavenhagen appear to agree in recognising a non-inclusion of the ethnic dimension in development work not as an oversight but much more important – ‘as a paradigmatic blind spot’ (Pieterse, 2004:69; Stavenhagen, 1986:77).
2.3.5 Development, dual city and culture

Few if any cities can today be considered ‘monolithic’ in terms of demography or culture, but are characterised by multiculturalism as a ‘cultural mosaic’. Multiculturalism may be contrasted with the concepts of assimilation and social integration and described as a ‘salad bowl’ rather than ‘melting pot’ (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiculturalism). Contemporary understanding of multiculturalism describes it either as i) a focus on interaction and communication between different cultures; interactions of cultures providing opportunities for the cultural differences to communicate and interact to create multiculturalism, or simply ii) a focus on diversity and cultural uniqueness (ibid).

Further, multiculturalism is taken to mean the doctrine that several different cultures rather than one national culture can coexist peacefully and equitably in a single country and applied to a specific place (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/multiculturalism) usually at the organizational level (schools, businesses, neighbourhoods, cities or nations). In a political context multiculturalism has come to mean the advocacy of extending equitable status to distinct ethnic and religious groups without promoting specific ethnic, religious, and or cultural community values. As an opposite to multiculturalism, cultural isolation may protect the uniqueness of local culture (of nation or area) and contribute to maintain global cultural diversity (ibid).

The concept of ‘dual city’ is normally discussed in terms of Marxist theory, illustrating societal contradictions and potential conflicts between rural and urban society. In current meaning a ‘dual city’ is characterised by increasing urban inequity and social polarisation with socio-economic and ethnic segregation. ‘In a ‘dualistic’ urban environment, where parts are held to be ‘good’ and others ‘bad’, major divisions exist between the formal and informal sectors (economy, social structure, culture, identity) Savage and Ward, 1996. Processes of globalisation and multiculturalism are generally held to be major contributors, affecting most urban environments (Castells, 1989:227).

Confluence of the two opposing characteristics could indicate ‘acceptance’ of social inequality as a flattened inherited social structure (small elite, very large middle class, and working class) takes the form of a large new-rich elite, reduced middle class and immense working class with ‘new poor’ ejected from traditional work markets from difficulties in accessing formal social networks (http://www.atributosurbanos.es/en/terms/dual-city).

In the context of the current study, ‘underdevelopment’ is described to refer to symptoms of lack of access to education, jobs and housing (Myrdal, 1955), aspects of which appear to be acutely affecting large parts of the Tibetan population in Old Lhasa – and according to respondents affecting the Tibetan population in general.
2.4 Urban conservation and change

‘By its nature the historical environment should be recognised as a tribute to how earlier generations managed their development and a flag bearer for sustainable development’ (‘A Force for Our Future’: DCMS, UK 2001).

‘Sustainability is more than just about physical resources; it is about community and culture’ and an integral part of protection of the historic environment. Conservation provides the appropriate management tool for sustaining the built environment. Historic buildings are a reservoir of embodied energy’ (English Heritage, 2002).

In the following text, sections are included in reflection of challenges that were confronting Old Lhasa at the start of the study period on urban form and urban morphology, historical urban landscape, importance of place, commodifying urban heritage resources, and analysis of place.

2.4.1 Urban form

‘Even in modern histories of art, which discuss every significant thing, city planning has not been granted the humblest spot’ (Camillo Sitte, 1889).

Every town has a life history in which each period is manifested by physical-cultural requirements and statements – the urban environment an accumulated record of development’ (Whitehand, 2001:103-9).

The urban environment is ‘not conditioned by the few works taken to be ‘architecture’ but by the countless works bordering on anonymity in building’, and ‘lives’ through an interpretation of narrative and space whilst continually impacted by ‘external’ parameters (history, cultural, economic and political activity, topography, climate and natural conditions, resources) all producing ‘urban change’ (Caniggia and Maffei, 2001; SAVE, 1987).

In scientific literature the phenomenon of ‘town’ is given several contradicting definitions. The difference between a small town and a large village is normally perceived in terms of the functions and complexity present. A settlement pattern seen as a village in one geo-cultural region can elsewhere be interpreted as urban (Ward-Perkins in Christie and Loseby, 1996:4).

Today, Lhasa when again made capital of Tibet in 1642 would accordingly most likely have been seen as a village with a specialised primary function of sanctuaries and monastic communities located in and outside the settlement.

As composite townscape – an urban structure – Lhasa is a result of ‘conditions’ (or states) constituted through agglomerations of landuse, built fabric and town-plan, and ‘processes’ through which it changes. The ‘conditions’ and ‘processes’ are interdependent and continually re-interpreted as cultural constructs (Jokilehto, 1997).

At each level of the urban hierarchy are present elements –

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual structures</th>
<th>define specific functionality of residents and institutions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patterns</td>
<td>as central to perception, identification and description of character define relationships between spaces and structures, and the narratives connecting them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narratives</td>
<td>constitute the interpretative filter of individual and collective perception and knowledge through which the tangible and intangible context co-exist (Hertzfeld, 1991).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space</td>
<td>the most dynamic of the four elements, provides the arena where public and private life meet. (Caniffe, 1999; Bølling-Ladegaard, 1996).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

International research indicates that historic environments cannot reproduce and regenerate themselves without interventions, regulation and management of their physical and social fabric – and that regulatory mechanisms are needed for them to retain the quality and character of historicity as well as economic vitality (Strange, 1999:227; Whitehand, 2001). In recognition of this dynamic nature, ‘historic
towns which are still inhabited and which, by their nature have developed, will continue to develop under the influence of socio-economic and cultural change.\textsuperscript{118}

Investigating spatial and social structures of urban form contributes to understanding the history of place, the interpretation of which depends on the ability to read and understand a specific context and on the reader’s own cultural-intellectual position. As investigations on urban form interpret imprints of history with focus on similarity and contrast of character, they contribute to ‘reading the history of cultural continuity of a place’ (Whitehand, 2001:1003-9). Temporal history has in contrast remained a focus in Western conservation tradition and urban conservation ideology based on the Venice Charter and its numerous document descendents, despite criticism of such ‘orthodoxy’ being expressed by numerous distinct voices (ibid; Adam, 1998, 2003).

In contemporary Western conservation ideology physical change to the structure in question, whether object or building is sought minimized (Jiven and Larkham, 2003:74). Urban conservation, however, is exposed to the driving forces of urban environments within their multilayered continuous development. Not limited to building preservation urban conservation is a component of environmental policies. This raises numerous challenges (the HUL concept, below). Conservation and development are difficult ‘partners’, with concurrent overlapping layers of conflicting policies, perspectives and needs – as illustrated so clearly by Old Lhasa as study subject. The ‘sustainable development paradigm’ defining all aspects of human activity as heritage (Nara, Burra, Faro) has further complicated this.

\subsection*{2.4.2 Urban morphology}

Urban form is an aggregate consequence of social-cultural and political contexts and development regimes that change over time and reflects change of different cultural periods in terms of their material and spiritual form (Conzen, 1960:5). Urban structures thus originate, develop and function within a physical and human cultural context without which they are less meaningful and possibly incomprehensible.

Urban morphology, the study of urban form, is concerned with how a town has come into being and evolved, and how the components of its layout structure are interrelated.

In this, urban morphology is unlike urban conservation that may focus on location, inventorying and management of historically and architecturally notable buildings or important areas of townscape.

The roots of urban morphology as a knowledge field are found in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century work by the German geographer Otto Ludwig Karl Schlüter (1872-1859), (Larkham, 1996; Whitehand, 2001; Pendlebury, 2009). The field has developed from two major schools of conceptual thinking – the ‘British (Anglo-German) school’ of history-geography focus built on concepts initially developed by the geographer M.R.G Conzen (1907-2000)\textsuperscript{119} in the period 1930s to 1950s, and the ‘Italian (Italian-French) school’ built on concepts by Italian architect-planners Saverio Muratori (1910-1973) and Gianfranco
Caniggia (1933-1987), (Slater, 1990). In this study, some concepts and aspects of ‘Conzonian’ methodology are outlined. Understanding the temporal layering of tangible and intangible components in urban form is key to comprehending urban morphology, and to use such knowledge in management of historic and contemporary townscapes (M.R.G. Conzen and J.W.R. Whitehand). New knowledge is in urban morphology produced from complementary fields that study ‘a same reality’ but from different perspectives – coordinated into one ‘holistic’ perspective on development of urban form:

- **Archaeology** studies the form of towns to understand their development.
- **Architecture** assembles background to ‘synthesize’ work or seek the potential iconic value of individual structures.
- **Geography** seeks explanations to current forms.
- **History** studies evolution of place in a chronological frame.
- **Planning** seeks understanding to inform urban management.

Methodologies of urban morphology are little incorporated by the ‘doing-disciplines’ of architecture and planning, impacting urban conservation practice much less than visual analyses of townscape. Contrasting cultural positions, academic backgrounds and different languages may be ‘natural’ reasons for urban morphology remaining a fragmented field, as even identifying significant texts remains difficult in a ‘new’ field in which similar (identical) concepts are often expressed differently from one language to another: such as for instance: Conzen’s ‘plan unit’ and Keysers ‘Stadtteil’ and Kretzschmars ‘Anlage’ remain very close to Piccinato’s ‘zona’ or Caniggias ‘tessuto urbano’ (Gauthiez, 2004:72).

In the SAVE methodology (1987) used in the already introduced LHCA project in Lhasa (emphasis on architecture, topography and history) can be seen clear links to Conzen’s approach that remained largely unknown until ‘rediscovered’ by a next generation of British geographers (Whitehand, 1981; Pendlebury, 2009).

Urban morphology, grounded in historic evidence documenting change and methodological rigour, is held to be a suitable platform on which to build a practical theory of conservation and management of historical areas – a theory that would be conceptually strong in terms of a) its emphasis on a need of continuity in built form, b) in addressing the historic evolution of place, and c) providing an analytical framework to monitor change – the urban landscape divided into a hierarchy of components such as plan-units, streets, plots and buildings (Larkham and Chapman, 1996).

The resource base of an urban environment is constituted by diverse elements that include landmarks, edges, views in-out, entrance points and gates, open spaces, the mix and intensity of interior activities, and intangible, symbolic and interpretative content. New function in an old area may not result in new built form, as adaptation of existing fabric may take place rather than replacement. The town plan has the highest level of complexity in containing all levels of residual features, traces of activity and change of all elements. The street appears to remain the most refractory element of a town-plan in terms of ‘withstanding’ change. Tracing existing forms back to underlying formative processes and interpreting
them then seems rational as method. Some concepts of urban morphology are included in the Endnotes.

A plan unit may as part of the town plan may appear morphologically different from its surroundings in terms of the dimensions streets, plots and buildings that are held to be of central interest (Conzen, 1960:5, 108).

The plot, defined as ‘a parcel of land representing a land-use unit defined by boundaries on the ground’ (Conzen, 1969:128), or an area with buildings on it and a module of urban tissue (Moudon, 1986 on Gianfranco Caniglia) – in common usage a small area of land – plays a significant part in built typology and urban morphology (Kropf, 1997). As property, the plot identifies a relation between an ‘object’ (the plot, building or structure) and someone. To interpret the plot situation, knowledge is needed as regards the nature of that relationship – of the thing owned and of the owner (ibid).

This author would hold ‘town plan analysis’ – investigating the three components of town plan, built fabric and land use (Conzen, 1960:4) as the morphological expression or physiognomy of an urban landscape – combined with a relevant documentation regime such as SAVE (Denmark, 1987) or the DIVE-methodology, to be essential tools for producing new knowledge on a historical settlement exposed to change. On a descriptive base of analysis credibility, urban morphology methodology may offer opportunity of results-validation and part-replicability of process (Whitehand and Gu, 200x) – possibly so also in a study of Old Lhasa, granted ‘suitable’ conditions.

2.4.3 Historical urban landscape

As a continually changing organism, a living historic urban landscape is an ‘amalgam’ of built form and cultural processes formed over time – a locus of great diversity of interrelated forms by its nature expressing complexity, diversity and continuous change – in which are produced new old ‘things’ and old new ‘things’ within the existing (Zancheti and Jokilehto, 1997:42).

The living urban historic environment may reflect homogeneous, monogenous, characteristics – as pre-1960 Lhasa is seen to have– or alternatively convey a specificity reflecting cultural, demographic and temporal diversity.

‘The European Charter of the Architectural Heritage’ (Amsterdam, 1975) extended heritage as ‘monuments’ to include traditional or vernacular built form and settlements, and launched the innovative concept of ‘integrated conservation’ to make conservation a result of interaction and collaboration across sectors, professions, and partners from government and community, taking account of environmental and social-cultural needs (Council of Europe, 1975).

The Nairobi Recommendations (1976) recognised the importance of typological and morphological analyses – the needs to survey an ‘area as a whole, including an analysis of its spatial evolution’ and that ‘surveys of social, economic, cultural and technical data and structures of the wider urban or
regional context are necessary' (Nairobi, 1976, Art. 19-20; also known from 19th century British planning guidelines).

As phenomenon, HUL is recognised to constitute a ‘human, social, natural and cultural accumulation that goes beyond the definition (WH Convention) notion of groups of buildings’ (ICOMOS Brasil, Itaipava 1987; ICOMOS Washington Charter 1987; Jokilehto, 2007:28). The World Heritage Operational Guidelines 2005 defined historic towns or settlements in categories as either i) ‘historic towns no longer inhabited, ii) inhabited (living) historic towns, and iii) new towns of the 20th century (Annex 3. Art. 14-15). Category ii) is relevant to the study object: Inhabited (living ) historic towns (historic urban landscapes) – environments that continuously develop with socio-economic and cultural change; assessment of authenticity complex and conservation policy problematic especially with ‘runaway’ speed with which surroundings are urbanising; their significance expressed in architectural interest, spatial organisation, structure, materials, forms and functions reflecting a civilisation, and not alone on basis of high historic symbolic relevance.

Living historic towns may be further divided into subcategories
- typical of a period or culture, preserved in ‘entirety’ and unaffected by change;
- as historic environment that gives evidence of the character of a disappeared historic town;
- with spatial arrangement and structures typical of successive stages of history;
- as historic environment now enclosed by contemporary urban development.

The living ‘historic urban landscape’ remains a ‘difficult’ concept to pin down, as the understanding and interpretation of ‘historic’ dimensions or values are bound to change over time. A clear danger is that retention of ‘historic’ fabric may gradually have less relevance to ongoing life and values of a community – and appear as ‘reconstructed’ or ‘Disneyfied’ – the HUL thus potentially perceived in ‘visual’ terms only.

A historic urban landscape as concept is in the study represented by its spatial built form, or ‘built- anthropic territory’ (Jokilehto, 2007:33). The economy of (most) HULs depends on tourism in which heritage resources are actively exploited through techniques of presentation and interpretation (Strange, 1996) and discussed later in the context of Old Lhasa.

Within the changing paradigm of conservation, the concept ‘historic urban landscape’ (HUL) provides a proactive instrument. Its definition reflects the state of discussion on conservation in the urban context, as formulated by a UNESCO Expert Planning Meetings (2006-2010): ‘HUL is a mindset, an understanding of the city or parts of the city, as an outcome of natural, cultural and socio-economic processes that construct it spatially, temporally, and experientially. It is as much about buildings and spaces, as about rituals and values ..(...). Its usefulness resides in the notion that it incorporates a capacity for change’.133
In the following text, sections are included in reflection of challenges that were confronting Old Lhasa at the start of the study period on urban morphology, historical urban landscape, importance of place, commodifying urban heritage resources, and analysis of place.

2.4.4 Boundaries

Boundaries may be tangible or intangible. Some are both. Intangible borders may refer to a larger social-cultural-symbolic context, such as a ‘Tibetan Lhasa’, manifesting traditional dimensions of spirituality, memory and perception in Tibetan Buddhism. Boundaries with physical functions are for instance boundaries of political jurisdiction, property boundaries and borders defined by World Heritage status.

Boundaries cause change that may be perceived as positive or negative, and inevitably divide or unite in physical or intangible terms. Boundaries as a consequence of administrative policies for local governance, planning decisions or other special designation such as heritage, may impact not only on residents’ relationships to place but also affect their rights and entitlements. Conflicts easily occur between traditional territorial and socially determined boundaries and administrative units in terms of alignment and size.

A theoretical framework would be necessary for studying impacts of ‘boundary-making’ and understanding resulting social cultural and territorial issues or relations. Three main theoretical and methodological approaches could be outlined to assess the issues (Bjønness, 2012:3, unpublished): i) alignment and nature of the boundary superimposed and its rationality, and use and misuse of power; ii) impact of the boundary on creating changes in relationships between individuals and groups of citizens; and iii) impacts on livelihoods, closely related to understanding of the territorial relations of the place in terms of community, resources and skills, land and ownership relations, and the place in the larger context of the territorial landscape.

Impacts on Lhasa from boundaries associated with the World Heritage designation, although deserving a separate study, are briefly discussed in chapter 6 and revisited in chapter 8 as regards the first two approaches.

2.4.5 Importance of place

The sum of values particular to each living historical environment presents its specificity of place. Perception of character and values of a place – the ‘specificity of place’ – is interpreted by visitors, residents and external ‘experts’ in an ‘immediate’ or conscious process and at varying levels of ‘intensity’ linked to issues ranging from issues of territoriality to economic potential depending on motive and lifeworld. An accumulative ‘specificity of place’ unique to a location, context or period is expressed through its combined material-immaterial resources, shared cultural memory and cultural production...
(Schech and Haggis, 2000).  

No amount of theory or ‘established practice’ can fully explain the individual richness that generates and rules each heritage location (Jokilehto, 2002). A ‘specificity-assessment’ of a living historic urban environment would entail parallel evaluations of material and immaterial values related to the specific environment, and to impacts related to use and functionality and development (Pound, 2008). Assessment of a historic settlement dating from a single period (archaeological case or ruin) would by comparison be much less complicated. Each ‘specificity’ is made up by features, qualities and values giving each place a ‘genetic code’, their combination defining a unique ‘genetic print’ of a place (Pound, 2003:i-16). Such ‘genetic prints’ may be compared for similarity or difference with those of other places. Supporting ‘locally-valued-distinctiveness’ is recognised to strengthen people’s sense of belonging and as a key motivational force behind a will to preserve cultural resources and heritage (Lowenthal and Binney, 1982) – local identity seen as ever more important and threatened by the ‘ordinary-making’ processes of globalisation (Strange, 1999). This ‘locally valued distinctiveness’ may supplement values attributed to acknowledged urban heritage and support intangible factors that make up cultural ‘significance of place’ (Meethan, 1997; English Heritage, 1997). Processes of change can strengthen the specificity of an urban area (or individual property) – whether functional or religious authenticity – but reduce its real authenticity of material, setting, community and process – its social-material truthfulness.

Lhasa as holy city could be subjected to a comparative assessment by correlating it to other holy cities of a ‘similar’ cultural or religious context (sites considered to possess ‘similar’ qualities, values and opportunities/threats). To select relevant aspects for comparative analysis, however, would constitute a major challenge, as recognised in several comparative studies related for instance to World Heritage properties (Pound, 2008).

To analyse place various methods may be utilised, ranging from descriptive to normative – depending on the objective of analysis, assumed suitability of method, and cross-field knowledge aimed for.  

Today, analysis to define areas of shared attributes of plan type, building type and landuse (‘morphological regions’, see Conzen, 1975) is particularly relevant as emphasis in urban management and protection has changed from individual sites to a concern for historic urban landscapes as ensembles, and settings (Bandarin, 2006; ICOMOS Xian, 2005; Bandarin et al, 2012).

### 2.4.6 Assessing heritage resources

An assessment of heritage assets based on subjective ‘normative’ approaches remains problematic also when subject to specific set ‘standards’. Most formats in use today still aim to document ‘what is there’. Establishing and maintaining regional or national inventories present significant challenges. The
approaches of ‘Heritage auditing’ and ‘Characterisation’ (both initiated by English Heritage, EH) and SAVE (Survey of Architectural Values in the Environment; Denmark, 1987) are briefly outlined below (profiled more fully in the Appendix). A ‘heritage audit’ may be formulated to review the state of affairs, assess the capacity of the historic environment to absorb development, and make contact with other dimensions of societal life and functions that are conventionally more readily auditable (EH, 2002 and 2003). A differentiation between resources that are ‘critical’ and ‘compensatable’ would be central to sustainability of urban conservation and management (ARUP 1995; Strange 1999), and should go beyond description and concern for physical objects as the assets reflect cultural and social aspects (skills, traditions, cultural practices that make a place special or ‘unique’ and contributes to its vitality) beyond characteristics of material culture and artefacts.

Normally only large monuments or monumental buildings have been recognised as critical assets or resources, anonymous townscape as ‘ever present’ regarded as compensatable and replaceable. This has contributed to its general disappearance. Earlier seen as a barrier to economic growth, the historic fabric may be vital to realise economic and cultural potentials.

Efforts to describe a basis for calculating a ‘capacity for growth’ of historical urban landscapes in the early 1990s (English Heritage, DoE 1993 with Chester City Council) included descriptions of ‘optimal levels’ of economic and physical change that the environment could accommodate as part of an environmental capacity methodology (a capacity framework) for the community. This was illustrated by the matrix below, expressing pressures on critical environmental assets and indicators of capacity change (Roebuck, 1994):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue:</th>
<th>Capacity indicator:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development pressure on the edge, infringing on dense traditional form</td>
<td>Distances from centre to edge; availability of land; physical change in the urban area; relationship of this environment to adjoining or neighbouring settlements; related to a discussion on validity of boundaries and area based strategies etc;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism impacting on trade and commerce, and on historic fabric</td>
<td>Type and range of shops; type of trade activity run by whom; commercial activity as a phenomenon in the townscape; crowding; damage or physical change to buildings and external space etc;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic impacts</td>
<td>Pattern of traffic; categories of traffic; impact on pedestrian areas/use;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure impacts</td>
<td>Intervention needs; physical change to buildings and space etc;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the matrix can also be set up likely development scenarios (BDP, 1994; CPRE, 1994), for instance characterised by Minimal Change, Major change, and Selective change options.

‘Characterisation’ is here used to capture an overall understanding of the totality of a place ‘bringing together as many aspects of a place as possible, to appreciate and understand it better, and to understand the experience of being in it’. ‘Character’ is defined as the aggregate of features and traits that form the apparent individual nature of some person or thing (Webster’s 1996).
overall effect of all ingredients, elements, component and characteristics that make up the area or environment in question; character understood by identifying and analysing constituent characteristics and assessing their contribution to the combined result' (Goodchild, 2007). Characterisation as a methodology, and likely to be of distinct importance for developing the HUL-concept that is based on a ‘landscape approach’, aims to bring together as many aspects affecting development of a historic environment – Old Lhasa – over time as possible, providing a larger, wider view or perspective to understand the historic environment better by tracing imprints of history and trajectory of change and continuity by this contributing towards a better understanding of change and better management of change as the character of different areas investigated are highlighted.

Lack of access to relevant official documents in Lhasa (policy documents, legislation and approved plans) may prove difficult, and the study may have to manage without much of this.

The objectives of ‘characterisation’ are to define a context, understand the past and its trajectory of continuity and change, and contribute by ascertaining morphological phases of the study subject.

In a process of ‘characterisation’, first the larger environment or townscape is identified, mapped, described and interpreted in its present status. Then an assessment is made of values, relationships and objectives in terms of an ‘intention of what to do with the townscape’ (Clark et al, 2004), reviewing overall potential to accommodate change anticipated to affect the resources for securing their future.

The ‘SAVE’ (Survey of Architectural Values in the Environment) and ‘InterSAVE’ methodology (the latter intended for political-bureaucratic contexts outside the Nordic Countries) was developed in Denmark in the 1980s and used extensively there to establish a national inventory (historic atlases) on urban and rural areas. ‘InterSave’, the international version of the methodology was used in the LHCA (Lhasa Historic City Atlas) project earlier referenced for documenting and assessing heritage values in historic Lhasa.

Recording the three dimensions of architecture, topography and history, the method is based on recognition of five values (architectural, cultural historic, environmental, originality or uniqueness, and technical condition) that considered together ‘produce’ a composite conservation or heritage value.

The methodology is built on central assumptions, such as the collaboration of professionals advising ‘lay-resources’ that in some cultural-social contexts could be unavailable or alternatively rejected by the authorities for this reliance on lay expertise in the final questions of selection and evaluation, as also for the element of community participation. This authors’ working experience with InterSave (the ‘international’ version of SAVE) in Lhasa confirmed the method as highly suitable for establishing an initial or ‘emergency level’ documentation of heritage resources in a context threatened by fast and random urban redevelopment, and for establishing a first understanding of important relationships within
a complex historic environment earlier ‘unknown’ to the researcher (the authors experience with the method in Lhasa is discussed in a later section).

‘Save/InterSave’ is normally listed amongst conventional aesthetic methods of analysis. The method is through use (the LHCA project and others) seen to have a potential of linking to urban morphology methods, with a declared intention towards participation.

2.4.7 Urban heritage commodified

Built heritage in Europe generates a turnover in trade and services in the order of Euro 335 billion pr. year, and is instrumental in assuring direct and indirect employment of about 8 million persons. One Euro invested in maintenance and upkeep of built heritage can generate a turnover to society of 10 Euro. With 6-10% of visitors daily spending the difference at the heritage site, the remaining 90% of the accumulated revenue flows to the society around the site – built heritage is thus an instrumental factor to the tourism industry (from Nypan, 2007:2).

The ‘past’ continually disappears, but can be ‘visited’ – today such visits may be to places of substantial heritage or of commercial ‘Disneyfied’ modifications. In all cases the visitor ‘meets’ a past and interpreting it with perspectives and values of her or his own time and context. Urban conservation combined with property development in the 1970s in France, UK and US brought a cult of culture that developed into business and industry. The field of ‘cultural engineering’ initiated new activity that made the historical environment a magnet for domestic and international tourism as business generator, providing essential ‘community-glue’ for skills development and improving living conditions.

Authorities, politicians and the public still live under a misapprehension that conservation of urban heritage is about ‘doing-up’ the odd building, and ‘prettying-up’ public spaces. Despite such resistance, heritage-led regeneration is today established as a field of knowledge (and practice), supported by a developing discourse on theory and ‘trail-and-error’ project activity.143

Commodifying urban resources, especially urban heritage – here used in parallel with urban regeneration, and in China known as valorising – involves complex political, financial and technical processes but is rarely seen to be much influenced by urban planning and conservation.

The objective of heritage-led regeneration is to develop value of place and enhance specificity of place for economic advantage and increased cultural activity by presenting heritage resources in space and time – dressed in a commercial management plan and ‘best practice’. Dormant resource potentials have in Norwich, England as elsewhere been turned into sustainable benefits to local business interests by ‘integrating socio-economic development policy with conservation principles and interpretive tourism’ (HEART, 2006).

Principal actors of urban regeneration are the public sector, the market and the community. Relationships between the actor categories, however, are complex, each being fragmented, interdependent and uniquely networking.144
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Outside Europe, the early activity was carried out by international development agencies (1970s onwards) intended integrated with local community development, and is today gathering momentum. A prerequisite of heritage-led regeneration would be a strong civil society leadership to enable and empower community participation in respect of the geography and history of the place in question, embracing the overall context of the place, and the pattern and scale of its built environment, traditional materials and building methods, even important views (Sutherland and Tweed, 2007:19-47). De-industrialisation in many Western communities led to cultural-social and economic distress in the 1970s. This later became a prime motivator to ‘heritage-led regeneration’. A selection of interpretive ‘stories’ excludes or obscures other story-lines. The complex web of resources from which heritage-led regeneration processes would develop may, however, contribute to reduce dominance by a national culture (Hettne, 1995; Howard, 2003:249).

‘All of the above’ is hoped achieved by utilising the ‘treasure trove’ of tangible and intangible heritage that the urban storehouse provides – and developing attractive business and investment with training and skills opportunities to further social inclusion, traditional knowledge and employment. In other words: working towards the creation of sustainable communities, or with failure in the process reducing ‘iconic’
territorial cultural heritage resources to showcases of a culture, an ethnic group or a specific ‘model’ settlement (Sutherland and Tweed, 2007:3; Hayden, 1995). Among obvious pitfalls of such ‘valorisation’ of resources are tendencies to uniform methods, reducing place diversity and ‘specificity of place’. Often met obstacles are pushing capacity levels beyond saturation levels and ‘banalising’ historic resources through culture-tourism developers’ aggressive take-overs (UNESCO, 1975). ‘Urban regeneration’ in the context of a living historical urban landscape often proves controversial, involving demolition of historic structures, eviction or relocation of a resident population, destruction of businesses, and expropriation. Carrying high costs to existing communities, heritage regeneration have in many cases caused the destruction of entire vibrant neighbourhoods.

Contributions of heritage to economic regeneration and social inclusion remain obscure. Several international studies, however, confirm economic gain from heritage led regeneration to be a significant factor in economic development (Nypan, 2004).

Tourism has significant potentials to support livelihood improvement, reduce poverty and establish contact between people. Tourism, however, contains ‘the seeds of its own destruction, destroying the very environmental attractions which visitors come to (…) experience’ (Glasson, 1995) by overexposing unique resources. Tourism may thus for a while protect heritage resources, although in parallel manufacture and ‘museum-make’ historical sites and settlements as attractions with ‘history’ deployed in a project of economic development.

‘Cultural tourism’, pragmatically described as ‘movement of people to cultural attractions away from their place of residence with the intention of gathering new information and experience to satisfy cultural needs’ (Richards and Bonnick, 1995 in Sutherland and Tweed, 2007:31), presupposes a presentation of unique heritage resources. The synthesis of heritage, people and ‘experiencing’ may over time to generate hybrid architectural styles that impact the ‘original’ historical environment – as may also the activity of urban conservation.

Traditional social-cultural life cannot remain unaffected by influx of tourists eager to consume ‘traditional’ culture, as residents ‘compete’ with visitors for resources in their own traditional social-physical space. This is the present situation in Lhasa, where locals and pilgrims are given a back-seat position to domestic and international (paying) tourists as regards access to the historical holy sites.

Most nation states have enthusiastically adopted the World Heritage paradigm and the cultural tourism associated with it – making contemporary versions of the 19th century ‘Grand Tour’ available to all. Specific agendas may vary, from raising dignity, respect and understanding of the specific and shared, to democratising knowledge and culture.
‘World Heritage’ as a ‘universal’ concept has without doubt contributed substantially to reduce heritage resource loss. Its insistence on ‘inherent value’ of the selected properties, and focus on recognised national monuments may, however – indirectly and inadvertently – have accelerated transformation of traditional settlements and built form.

Whilst ‘pre-World Heritage tourism’ seems not to have exposed local heritage resources or the community to pressures beyond tolerable ‘carrying capacities’, the economic potentials of World Heritage status attract traders and entrepreneurs. Newcomers’ business-networking may push out commercially less aggressive traditional vendors, or purchase rights to their space and potential. Based on the experience of this author from Lijiang World Heritage town in Yunnan Province, China the phenomenon is defined as ‘the Lijiang syndrome’.

I would argue that ‘the Lijiang syndrome’ represents a general trend at World Heritage sites, where traditional and site specific goods are soon substituted with pan-regional produce sold to less discriminating visitors. The more special is the place and context in question, the greater is the impact of imports by external operators.

So also in Lhasa, where religious buildings that for centuries were objects of active traditional religious devotion have recently become iconic ‘museum’ objects used by an expanding all-Chinese and international tourism industry. Physical exposure with overuse of urban heritage and demographic change within historic living environments contribute to gentrification. Also in this Lhasa is not a unique case.

2.5 On agents of change

National culture as the corollary of nation building has been part of modernisation discourse. Today the culture and development discourse seems primarily focusing on local culture: ‘The first cultural dimension of development is the local level’ (Kottak, 1985:46), ‘national culture is next in the line of priorities – followed by the culture of the planners (Pieterse, 2004:63).

The task to reduce loss of built heritage resources and built form character whilst coping with urban change remains the central challenge in historical urban environment continually affected by external processes of globalisation and internal impacts of changing government policy and development pressures (Larkham, 1996).

At the urban level, dramatic needs of serviced land should be recognised for fast growing poor urban populations (and relevant land policies) – whilst governments’ lack of mandates, skills and resources to be proactive in the urban public arena seem to grow. At the same time, the market of land and services is being privatised by global players through processes of globalisation (Jencks, 2000).
Industrialised environments of the second half of the 19th century, affected fundamentally by urban growth, pollution and change, recognised numerous ‘urban ills’ and the need to urgently deal with them. Pressed into action by the adverse social-physical conditions of Paris around 1850, Georges-Eugène Haussmann (1809-1891) was commissioned by Napoleon III to ‘modernise’ the city (1852).

During this period, two radically different theoretical frameworks emerged for explaining urban transition: the Weberian and the Marxist outlooks ‘competing’ as models to which to explain and develop urban society. Modernity-thinkers such as Max Weber and Karl Marx saw the urban settlement as locus of power, a ‘cultural creation and an engine for development – a place for diversity and heterogeneity (Report OCD:216).

To cure the recognised ‘ills’, policies and operational mechanisms were established – known under different strategies in each country – many of which were utilised well into the 20th century. Regardless of theoretical framework base (Marxist or Weberian), urban development has at a near universal level ‘swept away’ heritage resources in the name of efficiency, cost, and modernity – or for the political objective of ‘meeting resident expectations’, impacting character and demography of historical urban areas (Sutherland and Tweed, 2007:2).

However, efforts of urban regeneration were up towards 1970s – here is used the term commodifying urban heritage – in the eyes of many urban planners and civic leaders seen to have failed, until the activity was gradually refocused towards redevelopment of existing communities with upgrading of infrastructure and business investment incentives that were to initiate processes of gentrification.

### 2.5.1 Factors causing change

Urban environments originate, develop and function within a physical and cultural context without which they are less meaningful and possibly incomprehensible. It is often said that urban environments must change – in the form of abrupt or continuous, ‘gradualistic’ change – from one or more diverse causes such as natural or manmade disasters, regime change, redevelopment, natural life of structures and materials, changing fashions, and needs of functionality – often seen to be acting together (Larkham, 2005; Roskams in Christie and Loseby, 1996:278-280). De-mixing of land use, relocation of town core functions, reduction of public services and changes in ownership affect demographic and social community structures.

Within a historical environment, the changing social, cultural and political contexts in society continually affect processes of change. How heritage resources are managed is perceived as integral with the policies and efforts adopted in order to ‘develop’ that society.

Functional or religious authenticity of an urban area (or individual property) may itself be strengthened by change that is nevertheless likely to reduce its authenticity of material, setting and process – its material truthfulness.
An often seen consequence is gentrification of the historical core, whereby poorer residents are ejected into a less expensive ‘hinterland’ – often with less work opportunity, adding speed to a downwards spiral. New infrastructure systems, normally alien to the scale and character of a historical kernel fast become indispensable to a new population. Associated with cultural-territorial issues of spatial appropriation (space and economic potential), relocating small commercial activity or ‘craft-industry’ away from its traditional location in a mixed-land-use historic district may change this environment from economic ‘provider’ into becoming a ‘receiver’. Alternatively, Lijiang historical town in the Yunnan Province, like Old Lhasa, have become monofunctional through relying on tourism in recent decades, from centuries of being multifunctional as a ‘self-contained social-economic organism. It has been suggested that associated with urban change, ‘the term evolution (my emphasis) may possibly be more appropriate than ‘development’ (Rodwell, 2007). With the slow rate of change that historical environments were traditionally associated with, the term appears relevant. Associated with the fast rate of change that affects most historical urban environments today, however, the term evolution to this author appears less relevant.

Main factors recognised to cause change may be grouped as environmental, economic and ideological. To change is in Webster described as making the form, nature, content of something different from what it is, what it could be if left alone, in some particular direction (Webster, 1996). To transform is described as a change in form, appearance or structure, metamorphosis, or in character or condition; transition a movement or passage from one state, position, stage, subject, or concept to another – or ‘one identifiable system giving way to another’ (Webster, 1996; Pickvance, 1997:99-100). In general, the term ‘change’ is associated with processes that affect structural criteria or parameters. The term development may be associated with a gradual process of evolution that leaves structural criteria or parameters ‘unaffected’. Ideology has a dominant role as policies, plans and legislation generate, direct and are in turn led by change. Ideology, power and decision-making as institutional factors hence affect the growth morphology and operational control mode of an urban environment, and forces associated with the factors limit, push and pull residents’ freedom of action.

Processes of change in an urban environment invariably affect its residents freedom of action whether specific ‘processes are rooted in environmental, economic or ideological causes’ – and whether caused by ‘natural or manmade disasters, regime change and redevelopment, natural life of structures and materials, changing fashion needs and functionality’ (from Steve Roskams in Christie and Loseby, 1996:278-280; and Larkham, 2005). Arguably absent in mid-20th century built heritage conservation doctrine, processes affecting specificity of place and human activity today constitute vital parameters when values and conservation of place are considered – as discussed and concluded in international documents from Burra and Nara to Faro.
Some factors may contribute to reduce change or cause ‘non-change’ in an urban environment. Official protection (‘listing’) normally ‘injects’ built heritage against certain forms of change. Modern below-ground infrastructure may reinforce street patterns, reduce the need or opportunity of physical change, and hence assist resilience of the built environment.

The term resilience is defined as ‘the property of a material that enables it to resume its original shape or position after being bent, stretched, or compressed; elasticity (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. 2000. Houghton Mifflin Company, US).

In terms of change, the London fires and bombing during WW2 had less impact than changes introduced by the social-political regime (including traffic and transport) after the war. In fact, after near 40 years of ‘conservation areas’ in the UK, many of them are affected by such significant change that today questions are raised as to the appropriateness of such designation (Larkham, 2005:23).

### 2.5.2 Change, society and environment

’Persistent and systemic deprivation has led attention away from exclusive concentration on income related deprivation, to the more inclusive idea of capability deprivation’ (Amartya Sen).

Social structures are mutually cemented by their built environments – and social inclusion results only from affirmative action to prevent exclusion. Economic and functional restructuring and specialisation can lead to polarisation between places and segregation of individual social groups – with social segregation. Spatial restructuring, potentially leading to cultural degradation means loss of traditional practices and of tangible and intangible heritage (Bjønness in Erring and Høyem, 2002:248). The term social exclusion is generally understood to refer to processes in which individuals or communities are blocked from opportunities, rights and resources that should normally be available to all citizens. Although what is required as key to social integration appears ‘well known’, there is no single agreed definition of social inclusion.

Society interacts with its environment by ‘stewardship, economic exploitation, ‘scientisation’, and visual consumption’ (Urry, 1995). Of these ‘economic exploitation’ might to many governments appear not only ‘convenient’ in terms of generating income from national to local level but also as requiring little human and financial capital investment. International experience, however, has shown reality to be more complex than ‘simplistic’ theoretical ‘models (Urry, 1995:74). An urban environment will present varying characteristics that are more complex than a dualistic urban analysis of good and bad might indicate (Castells, 19xx; Bjønness in Erring and Høyem, 2002:248).

### 2.5.3 Urban change over time

Town-plans are perceived to originate, develop and function within a physical and human cultural context that helps to ‘explain’ them. International studies on the genesis of urban form indicate that
towns develop in ‘boom-bust’ cycles, that waves of construction and redevelopment are ‘synchronized’ with waves of immigration, and that transport innovation and economic investment incentives at individual parts of ‘boom-bust’ cycles create different demographic and physical development (Whitehand, 1987; Gilliland, 2003). Some general tendencies are summarised in the chapter Endnotes (Conzen, 1960; Caniggia and Maffei, 1979; Whitehand, 1981; and Kropf, 1996:256). 153

2.5.4 Lhasa development in context

The perspective in which to interpret Old Lhasa after 1950 should be that of the PRC government’s indirect decision to protect the historical settlement by constructing the new city outside the old, combined with impacts of radical PRC social policies against a strong backdrop of deeply traditional Buddhist values. The changes in Old Lhasa hence reflect the overarching processes that Tibetan society and Lhasa were subjected to after 1959 in a quest for maintaining traditions and obtaining modernity – in processes that would run across all layers of Tibetan and Han-Chinese ‘implanted’ society in the growing regional capital. Historical-traditional buildings and townscape in Old Lhasa well into the late 1980s constituted a rich spatial web of considerable individuality, yet within the uniformity of built form traditions.

2.6 Strategies

Urban development strategies span from globalising and modernising to maintaining local cultural identity and traditional urban form. Operational strategies for safeguarding urban heritage could in the second half of the 20th century be characterised as ‘museum-making’ and ‘reconstruction’ – approaches that are still common in Asia and China – in clear contrast to approaches that seek to protect and manage the combined resources of the living historic city. In Lhasa, heritage resources seem less likely as focus unless linked directly to the competitive tourism potential.

A strategy of ‘museum-making’ aims to retain the overall authenticity of an urban assembly with little or no new construction permitted. This is for instance illustrated by the monumental and urban complex of ‘The Forbidden City’, Beijing, China.

In ‘reconstruction’ buildings and townscape are re-created where this was may earlier have been destroyed through conscious action. In post-WW2 Europe the strategy was extensively used to re-establish destroyed urban environments (Warszawa, Poland). Nation building may use the strategy to strengthen the historic identity (tangible to symbolic-intangible) connected to selected cities (East European nations; the ‘Royal Palace’ being reconstructed in Berlin, Germany).

A strategy of ‘narrative conservation’ 154 would focus on the storytelling capacity of material and immaterial fragments to interpret narrative elements expressed in built form and space, with less emphasis on overall morphological structures of the townscape.
This author would hold that all strategies of urban conservation contain a narrative dimension. None of the above would normally reflect the developmental perspective of a living and continually changing and living historic urban landscape. For this, a strategy of ‘urban upgrading’ is essential, with focus on providing healthy and secure housing and improved living conditions – the strategy that was adopted for developing historic kernel of Lhasa after 1950. However, a strategy of ‘urban upgrading’ should also – as an ‘integrated strategy’ – respect and safeguard heritage resources and values as non-renewable, without preventing necessary development may be built from knowledge and interpretation of values expressed by townscape, spaces, routes, social life and memory. This could be achieved by for instance a ‘town plan analysis’ combined with ‘InterSAVE’–methodology. Old Lhasa as study object requires an ‘integrated strategy’ that embraces principles of territoriality and sustainability.

2.7 Chapter summary

Overarching spiritual value of a ‘physical envelope’ is perceived as influenced by spiritual symbolic value and functionality, not by age – and hence in Buddhist-Hindu traditions continually modified in functionality and to suit needs and aspirations, without this raising issues of originality or ‘authenticity’ to the ‘users’.

Although ‘dignity’ was recognised as a central criterion of human rights in the UN’s 1948 ‘Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ (Article 1) in stating that ‘all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights’ (UN, 1948), ‘dignity and respect’ of heritage and its spiritual-symbolic presence is generally missing as value or criteria from contemporary ‘international’ conservation.

Religious structures that for centuries were integral with a larger ‘sacred’ geography or environment – in China, as elsewhere in Asia – are as part of national secularising culture today being transformed into iconic objects as wares for tourism; with religious practice becoming ‘secondary’ to fee-paying and ‘historicism’.

Despite the major driving forces of social change, urban conservation remains strongly affected by terminology and concepts understood as ‘museum object driven’. ‘Ethno-development’ as approach aims to ‘repair’ this, but is little understood and falsely argued to artificially protect ‘less developed’ society from ‘development’ (Pieterse, 2004:66).

Society often disregards unique resources of which it is guardian as historic ‘places’ in processes of transition are confronted with ‘the virtual or manipulated’ more and more replacing ‘the real’ (Sekler in Theophile and Gutschow, 2001). The features, qualities and values that contribute to give each place a genetic code of aggregate characteristics (Pound, 2008), are hence under increasing threat.

In a context of mono-functional space for tourism, heritage resources that provide the essential potential income base for so many local communities are easily compromised through overuse, with loss to heritage value, residents’ identity and commitment.
A major challenge and danger in ‘holistic’ urban conservation would be that achieving ‘full’ integration of heritage management with socio-economic mechanisms – and urban planning – unique values could be reduced into continually reinterpreted, politically correct statements of urban dynamics, and threats to the heritage resources stronger than concerns for them.

Change is attributed to and embedded in political, socio-economic processes and aspects of territoriality. Processes of change affecting urban form and built heritage need to be understood on a background of socio-political development (in Lhasa and China after 1949) and the cultural frame permeating the local-regional culture or study subject being investigated – i.e. a Buddhist versus a socialist/communist frame in the case of Lhasa and Tibet.

Endnotes

46 ‘UNESCO-family’: here referring to UNESCO sections for cultural and natural heritage with States Party Members, UNESCO Conventions, UNESCO World Heritage Committee and Advisory Bodies.

47 Views adopted by contemporary non-positivist thinkers tend to go beyond a traditional ‘truth criterion’ of Positivists, and in ‘critical theory’ would be used ‘softer’ criteria such as trustworthiness instead of internal validity, transferability instead of external validity, and confirmability instead of objectivity. See Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 114. With focus on dimensions such as: Empirical arguments and credibility, Open attitude to vital importance of interpretive dimension of social phenomena, Critical reflection as regards political and ideological contexts and issues of research, Awareness of ambiguity of language and limited ability to convey knowledge, and awareness of the rhetorical nature of ways of dealing with this, the representation-authority problem. Silverman (1997:25 ) defines criteria for evaluating research this way: ‘Has the researcher demonstrated why we should believe him? Does the research problem tackled have theoretical and or practical significance?’ Importance of qualitative research is seen as achieving: richness in points, a novelty value, and achieving an epistemological break with everyday knowledge (Bourdieu et al, 1991).

48 Marilyn Palmer (2005) saw ‘archaeology’ – here interpreted as cultural heritage generally – as representing two ‘faces’: i) one concerned with the interpretation of surviving material evidence in order to understand past human activity, and ii) the other as a preservation movement largely focused on the recording and description of individual buildings. Palmer, 2005: The Country House: technology and society. Industrial Archaeology Review XXVIII(1): 96-102. I would hold this to be relevant for the following discussion. Alternative ii) focusing on ‘architecture’ was by many seen as ‘outdated’ already in the 1970s, but has nevertheless defined much of 20th century theory and practice for urban conservation. Further, the international discourse and doctrine has remained somewhat removed from the developmental dimension (conservation in social change and for community development) that would appear highly relevant and necessary in most societies.

49 In Kathmandu this is recognised in differences of approach towards conservation of WH sites and those ‘less important’ – in a conflict of UNESCO-approved indigenous methods and materials that may not have a substantial life, and state-of-the-art technology solutions permitted for the less important heritage sites (Theophile and Gutschow, 2001); or in aspects of representation of Tibet and Tibetan culture initiated by exile groups. Use and development of local knowledge and skills are essential for cultural continuity, continued ‘way of life’ and capacity building around it, with access to and control of traditional resources. Cultural practice of a community and individuals are linked through the physical-cultural (material-immaterial) context that governs territorial relationships. As regards national versus regional-local culture, the state may –as clearly also do exile groups – adopt cultural elements not necessarily ‘in vogue’ with living society, expropriating them for their own versions of ‘tradition and traditional’. Where ideology ‘perceives’ socio-cultural ‘emptiness’ or incorrect traditions, a remedy often used is establishing ‘national cultural traits’ to develop identity.

50 A case study can in terms of its intended theorising potential be i) a non-theoretical study; ii) a theoretical interpretative study; iii) a study that aims to create new concepts; iv) a study that develops existing concepts; v) a hypothesis-generating study; or vi) a hypothesis-testing study. Only studies aimed to create or develop concepts are by some held to be ‘truly scientific’ (Anderson, 1997).

51 Built form means all aspects of the physical built environment – individual buildings, clusters of buildings and the spatial structures that form townscape. Conservation of cultural property is described as all actions aimed to safeguard it for the future in order to study, record, retain, and restore the culturally significant qualities of the object, site, or building with the least possible intervention (IIC-GC,
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Heritage does not just ‘happen’, as traditionally the ‘victor’ or dominant culture would identify the ‘icons’ to which society should pay homage perspectives – to a state-sanctioned construct of national identity not reflecting diversity in backgrounds and opinion. In times of conflict, the potency of built heritage to affirm identity is sadly confirmed through extreme nationalism and shown in numerous cases of destruction by a dominant culture or system (Lidén, 1991:101-102).

Built heritage is defined to embrace a) Protected monuments and structures (protected by cultural heritage and planning legislation, urban planning regulations and development/detail plans), b) Religious/sacred buildings and structures (in China mostly protected by other legislation), c) Monumental buildings and structures (protected at international, national regional and municipal levels) and d) Vernacular built form including townscape (features, patterns and elements, ref SAVE; including external spaces, connectors and links, views and visual perspectives, settings).

Cultural heritage is the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes inherited from past generations, maintained in the present for the benefit of future generations; cultural heritage of one generation may be rejected by the next, to be revived by a succeeding generation: internationally defined as ‘All traces of human activity in our physical environment, including places etc that are associated with historic events, religion, belief and tradition’ (as in The Cultural Heritage Act 1978, rev 1992, Norway), and may be described as a social field of politics and facilities management, cultural products and practice integrated in daily life, or physical material structures. Sites and artefacts may become divorced from their contexts as we abstract them – possibly make them meaningless, into nostalgic objects as all conservation is interpretation, or as Goethe said – we ‘see what we know’. ‘Cultural heritage is a record of humanity’s relationship to the world, past achievements, and discoveries – the present manifestation of the human past’ (World Bank EAS update, Sept 1994).

Cultural heritage management is the vocation and practice of managing cultural heritage. It is a branch of cultural resources management, although it also draws on the practices of conservation, restoration, museology, archaeology, history and architecture. While the term cultural heritage is generally used in Europe, in the USA the term cultural resources is more often used referring to cultural heritage resources (http://en.wikipedia.org).

Change is understood as a single or multiple linked processes in which structural criteria and conditions for activity – or understanding-describing the present– are expressed or take place. To change is described as making the form, nature, content of something different from what it is, what it could be if left alone, in some particular direction (Webster, 1996). To transform is described as a change in form, appearance or structure, metamorphosis, or in character or condition; transition a movement or passage from one state, position, stage, subject, or concept to another – or ‘one identifiable system giving way to another’ (Webster, 1996; Pickvance, 1997:99-100). Environment, economy and ideology are recognised as main categories of agents of change.

Development is proposed as evolutionary without change of underlying or overarching conditions – and ‘a complex phenomenon to comprehend for reasons such as ignorance of implications of ‘modernity’, traditional views may remain resulting in a conflict-dichotomy, ‘modern’ education rarely builds a bridge back to traditional knowledge, and an inability to sustain what is perceived as ‘modern’ (Jigyasu, 2002:316).

Widely described criticism of mainstream international development thinking and efforts, in the 1970s fuelled a search for alternative development paradigms. Particular contributions such as the ‘NIEO-debate’ and ‘What Now’, published by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in 1975, contributed to the paradigm of ‘Another Development’, with alternative theories developed from non-Western perspectives such as Gandhian philosophy and Buddhist economics, with work by Naess, Galtung and Schumacher (refs).

John Stubbs in his valuable work ‘Time Honoured’ chose not to give further references to this, stating merely that conservation of heritage ‘because an object is old regardless of religious or aesthetic content is a thing very much of our day’, i.e. from the late 18th century onwards (Stubbs, 2009:22).

Count Francesco Agarotti (1712-1764) and Luigi Crespi, Abbott of Bologna, introduced concepts and notions on the value of ‘original’ work, time and the notion of ‘no intervention’ a long century before this was to be reflected in writing by John Ruskin (1819-1900) in the late 19th century.

The Industrial Revolution (late 18th and early 19th centuries) with its huge transformations introduced the Second phase – economically with capitalism, technologically with industrialisation, politically with centralising and bureaucracy, culturally with new concepts of time and space, and spiritually with secularising society. Science took over as chief supplier of premises to legitimise and explain reality, and identity became a strong marker with increasing contrasts of collectivism and individualism. The extreme transformation reinitiated a Romantic period in Europe with a discernible bias towards nostalgia, with an embryonic concern developing for cultural heritage as a limited resource.

Industrialising 19th century Western society came to relish originality and the exotic in a romantic-positivistic quest for the atypical – and for the purity or innocence of ‘original’ folk, itself defining ‘the unique’, the ‘educated class’ in an intense hunt of ‘unknown’ species, peoples, cultures and continents, was to amass extraordinary volumes of new knowledge and huge artefact collections.

Quatremere de Quincy (1755-1849) argued for clear distinctions between existing buildings and new additions (‘Dictionnaire d’Architecture’, 1832), and in contrast, Carlo Cattaneo (1801-1869) claimed that ‘architecture should not be limited to imagining new works or beginning them but should even know how to complete them and conserve them with timely
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restoration works’ (Bardeschi, 2002). Mainstream approaches to built heritage became polarised between the opposite lines of thought promoted by Eugene-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc’s (1814-1879) philosophy of ‘interventionist conservation, or stylistic restoration’, and John Ruskin’s approach of ‘minimal, preferably no interventions’.


57 Through improved governance, health and education, economics and livelihoods, human rights, infrastructure and environment in a process of continuous definition.

58 Third World leaders in contrast recognised new concepts of ‘no-growth’ and ‘control’ as ‘environmental colonialism’, rejecting the concepts as Western dictate (Hetnne, 1995).

59 Local Agenda 21. Focusing on Urban Environmental Management, ‘Local Agenda 21’ is a local-government-led, community-wide, and participatory effort to establish a comprehensive action strategy for environmental protection, economic prosperity and community well-being in the local jurisdiction or area. This requires the integration of planning and action community-wide, and participatory effort to establish a comprehensive action strategy for environmental protection, economic prosperity and community well-being in the local jurisdiction or area. This requires the integration of planning and action across economic, social and environmental spheres. Key elements are full community participation, assessment of current conditions, target setting for achieving specific goals, monitoring and reporting (http://www.gdrc.org/lem/la21/la21.html).

60 A territory may be a physical area of land or a region where people share culture, ethnicity or identity – and a human community may be a geographic community, a community of culture, of need, or identity (Peck, 1987). It is alternatively argued that beyond a geographical and spatial definition, community is a process (Marsh, 2001 in Jigyasu, 2002:21). A community could be defined to have (traditional) culture only if seen to ‘express a rate of change slow enough for the same personality type to be recreated in the next generation’ (Bauman, 1973:35-6). The purpose or role of traditions may differ from legitimising or establishing institutions, status, relations or practice, via establishing or symbolising social order of community, to socialising beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour (from Hobsbawn, 1983).

61 The terms ‘Gemeinschaft’ and ‘Gesellschaft’ introduced by Ferdinand Tönnies (Tönnies, 1887) describe community modes of social integration that have since been seen as central for understanding ‘territorial’ versus ‘functional’ dimensions of community.

62 How to make a qualitative assessment of built environment and publicness of open spaces? A regional framework of territorial links (nature and cultural regions); ‘Space of flows’ of the global network society rooted in the territorial ‘space of place’. An overriding focus would be addressing traditional (and fragmented) societies through their main territorial strengths at different levels.

63 Reify means to convert into or regard as a concrete thing (Websters)

64 Pieterse has argued that culture cannot be localised because it is not in itself a spatially bounded category (Pieterse, 2004:70). Local or ethnic culture is therefore with its unevenness of power relations no more homogeneous than national culture in terms of gender, class, status, religion or ideology (Pieterse, 2004:69). To Robert Park, influential member of the ‘Chicago School’, the ‘dominance’ of a particular group was ascribed to its superior competitive power, ‘competition’ closely linked to economic competition and spatial appropriation. Concepts such as ‘invasion’ and ‘succession’, as parts of cyclical processes, would describe the gradual incursion of one group into the territory of another, with a group’s displacement resulting in land-use change and or population type (Herbert and Thomas, 1990:131-132). The influence of cultural factors such as sentiment and symbolism on urban behaviour exposed to urban development were argued by Walter Firey in criticism of Park’s mechanistic conceptual framework for the city (Walter Firey in ‘Land Use in Central Boston’, 1947). Later research was to show main concepts proposed by Park to be central in urban ecology, as ‘invasions, succession, segregation had empirical reality to be examined within the city without resort to biotic forces’ (Herbert and Thomas, 1990). Also see Grenier, 1990:1; Stilltoe et al, 2002:109; Mark Hobart, 1993a in Jigyasu, 2002:15. Stilltoe argued that the notion of traditional knowledge as ‘dominant owner’ until recently appeared alien to the ‘terra nullius-concept’ propagated by many Western explorers and scientist (Stilltoe et al, 2002:24).

65 The international ‘development industry’ has, however, only gradually been persuaded from ‘merely reproducing inequality’ (Schech and Haggis, 2000:81-82). Neoliberal urban development trends (Gunay, 2008; Aquire, Eick and Reese, 2006), often seen to mean extended opportunity given to private sector entrepreneurs, were in the last decades of the 20th century seen to further inequality.

Neoliberalism – (http://www.answers.com/topic/neoliberalism) was a political movement beginning in the 1960s that blends traditional liberal concerns for social justice with an emphasis on economic growth. There are two principal meanings of the term neoliberalism: The first refers to a set of market-liberal economic policies. In the developed world neoliberalism is often coupled with Thatcherism and grew up in opposition to Keynesianism. In the developing world it emerged in opposition to the traditional liberal concerns for social justice with an emphasis on economic growth. There are two principal meanings of the term neoliberalism: The first refers to a set of market-liberal economic policies.
Part Two: Elements of theory and practice

movement) to characterize the economic ideology behind capitalist globalization. Whilst all of these usages are related, the economic use of the term neoliberalism is somewhat general and imprecise. The second use of the term is within academic International Relations. Here it describes a theoretical approach to the study of institutions (sometimes described as neoliberal institutionalism or regime theory). Developed in the mid-1980s as a reaction to the dominant neorealist paradigm, neoliberal institutionalism sought to demonstrate that international cooperation is possible, even on realist premisses—namely that states are rational, unitary actors which seek to maximize their utility in an anarchic international system. Although recognizing that the absence of a sovereign authority at the international level creates opportunities for conflict, defection, and cheating, neoliberals argue that institutions and regimes help states cooperate by reducing uncertainty, linking issues, monitoring behaviour, and enhancing the importance of reputation. These arguments are countered by neorealist theorists who stress the importance of relative rather than absolute gains and the extent to which powerful states can shape institutions for their own purposes and avoid them when they are too constraining.

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66 Finally acknowledged at the ‘UN World Conference on Cultural Policies’, Mexico City, 1982. The UN-UNESCO ‘Cultural Decade’ (1988-1997) identified goals as: 1) to acknowledge the cultural dimension in development, 2) to affirm and enrich cultural identities, 3) to broaden participation in cultural life, and 4) to promote international cultural cooperation.


68 Key issues concern power and ownership (tangible and intangible). A particular challenge is how to conceptualise the relation between culture and power in the discourse of development and of culture.

69 Pieterse argues that a perspective of national culture tends to follow a deductivist approach with culture viewed as derived from macrosocial powers. This in contrast to an inductivist approach of a local culture perspective influenced by anthropological culturalism and populism. Pieterse warns of inductivist approach weaknesses that may explain cultural differences but not inequality, decontextualising the local, and easily equating ‘popular culture’ with ‘tradition’. A central strain of the UN-discourse from 1948 onwards wamed of domination of national culture by international culture in the context of nation building.

70 Dynamics of ethnicity can be approached not from within but from the external observer, and interpreted in terms of post-nationalism and the dialectics of globalisation and localisation (Pieterse, 2004:64).

71 The full text of Agenda 21 was revealed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit), in Rio de Janeiro on June 13, 1992, where 178 governments voted to adopt the program. The final text was the result of drafting, consultation, and negotiation, beginning in 1989 and culminating at the two-week conference, the number 21 referring to a 21st Century agenda.


73 The ‘World Heritage Committee’ was founded in 1976, and the first twelve sites were inscribed on the ‘World Heritage List’ in 1978.

74 ICCROM – International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property – set up in 1956, provides the UNESCO World Heritage Committee with expert advice on conservation and training in restoration techniques (http://www.iccm.org/).

75 The WH Convention states that for buildings and groups of buildings, outstanding universal value (OUV) should be defined from the point of view of history, art or science; and for cultural and urban landscapes from historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological points of view. Article 1, WH Convention.

76 See UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM, IUCN and published work by numerous authors.
Part Two: Elements of theory and practice

79 Protection of traditional and indigenous cultures is today regarded as important as the protection of species and ecosystems, for reasons of developmental ‘balancing’, protection of endangered ‘cultural minorities’, protection against ‘commodification’ as cultural protectionism or post-colonialism. Cross-cultural respect as overarching aim and a pre-requisite for international understanding, and ‘global ethics’ founded on the principle of equality rooted in mutual cultural freedom (WCCD, 1995). With most ‘freedoms’ referring to the individual, cultural freedom is a collective freedom expressed as a right of a group or people to choose its way of life (ibid).
81 Ethnic (cultural) minorities in China refer to the non-Han Chinese population. The PRC officially recognizes 56 ethnic minority groups within China in addition to the Han majority (92%) – the component considered ‘Chinese culture’ (http://www.c-c-c.org/chineseculture/ minority/minority.html).
82 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialization
83 ‘Cultural diversity’ is described simply as ‘the variety of human societies or cultures in a specific region, or in the world as a whole’ (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_diversity).
84 ‘The Nara Document on Authenticity’. 1994. Larsen, KE; editor, was a result of an Expert Meeting in Nara, Japan following a preparatory workshop in Bergen, Norway (1994). ‘Nara’ stressed the diversity of heritage resources and values, and stated: ‘All cultures and societies are rooted in the particular forms and means of tangible and intangible expression which constitute their heritage, and these should be respected. It is important to underline a fundamental principle of UNESCO, to cares for it.’
86 ‘The Burra Charter’ (1988) provided a methodical procedure for assessing the cultural significance of a place, for preparing a statement of cultural significance and for making such information publicly available. Assisting in estimating the value of place, cultural significance here means ‘aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations’ (The Australia ICOMOS charter for the conservation of places of cultural significance The Burra Charter, 1988, articles 1.1 and 1.2).
87 The ICOMOS New Zealand Charter’ (1992) followed up the intentions of the ‘initial’ Burra-charter, particularly addressing its own national indigenous heritage.
88 Cultural traditions in China are described to extend back some five thousand years, with an outstanding cultural legacy of exceptional diversity, and tradition of conservation and restoration. ‘The China Principles’ 2000, Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China, were developed by ICOMOS China with the Getty Conservation Institute, US with ICOMOS Australia.
89 The inventory of immovable cultural property in China as of 2004 included over 400,000 entries, of which 1230 were listed as being of national importance. In addition to the conservation and maintenance issues that must be addressed, rapid economic development, social mobility, and increasing tourism are posing new management challenges. SACH sees the development of conservation principles and their widespread adoption and application as an important and timely initiative (http://www.getty.edu/conservation/field_projects/china/). The number of inscribed sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2004 totaled 788 with 389 of them designated as World Heritage sites (the study by Vladimir Krogius, 2005, ‘The Full Systematized Inventory of World Heritage Cities’, Institute of Reconstruction of Historic Towns (INRECON), Moscow 2005; quoted Ron van Oers, 2006 is regarded the most comprehensive available). Of humankind’s common heritage, urban settlements are amongst the most abundant categories, and with resources that are perhaps the most complex to manage in balancing development with heritage resource retention. Although 237 of 389 (60%) were located in Europe, their geographical distribution was global – in 94 of the 154 States Parties with WH sites within their territories in 2004 (Ron van Oers, 2006:2). The number of inscribed WH cities and geographical distribution has continued to grow after 2004.
89 ‘Hoi An Declaration on the Conservation of Historic Districts in Asia’ (2003), ‘Recovery of Bam’s Cultural Heritage’ (Bam Declaration, 2004), the ‘Seoul Declaration on Tourism in Asia’s Historic Towns and Areas’ (2005), and the ‘ICOMOS Xi’an Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas’ (2005). 89 UNESCO Bangkok recently proposed places of forced migration of people as a new WH theme (Logan and Reeves, 2009:3) – as part of additional muscle to the ‘WH Global Strategy’ that was adopted in order to shift the WH List away from being dominated by Western tangible heritage.
91 To be discussed later. The links to websites (www2.rgu.ac.uk/schools/mcrg/stdoc.htm) and (www.icomos.org) provide comprehensive access to documents on cultural heritage.
contexts a focus - policies and contexts that were for long left in 'safe and object-focused mode'.

perspective. ‘Faro’ has presented new challenges by making operational cultural heritage management policies and
instance in UN, 1995; ICCROM ITUC, 1997; European Commission, 2003; Bjønness, 2007. The ‘Vancouver Declaration’ -
process of selection and maintaining that position.

international declaration on issues of human equity, habitat (rural-urban), basic needs, health and poverty.

CICERO WP 1998:4 - Implementing China’s Agenda 21: www.cicero.uio.no/media/175.pdf

Shelter for All /10.47.

solid www references to Agenda 21 in China (http://www.acca21.org/chnwp10.html - in program A. Management of

Conference on “Values and Criteria in Heritage Conservation”. Fondazione del Bianco, ICOMOS, ICCROM. Firenze, 1st to 4th
Territorial Values in Urban Conservation. From Patan, Nepal - to Gyantse, Tibet Autonomous Region”: International

102 The concepts of Agenda 21 and Local Agenda 21 came up as part of the policy recommendations of the Rio conference, held in 1992.

103 Experience show manifold benefits gained from investment where government has encouraged local community participation (and associations), with funding for conventional housing for a population of 12000 persons restructured to produce positive effects and adequate housing for a population as large as one half million people (Orangi, Pakistan).

104 Available projections indicate a need to increase by 65% the capacity of these cities to produce and manage urban infrastructure, services and shelter – just in order to maintain the present status of conditions for its populations (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, projections 2000).

105 To make human settlements safer, healthier and more liveable, equitable, sustainable and productive – adopted at the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul, 1996. A sustainable habitat constitutes an ecosystem that produces food and shelter for people and other biological organisms without resource depletion, and with no external waste. Continued diversity of settlement, culture and people can only be achieved with appropriate understanding and respect for others and their culture (WCCD 1995:15). As part of a global code of ethics, cultural continuity is embraced through regenerative energy of individual sustainable culture. Such understanding of diversity is a prerequisite to promoting equity as it recognises how poverty, disability, age, and gender influence access to needs and opportunities within settlements. World poverty is challenged by a significant ‘settlement dimension,’ as expressed in the UN Millennium Development Goals (particularly Goals 1, 3, 7; UN Millennium Development Goals Report, UN 2006).

Habitat II broke new ground for UN conferences in the use of innovative official dialogue sessions with NGOs and led to the adoption of the Habitat Agenda, which included substantial recognition of the vital roles of non-governmental partners including NGOs, municipal governments / local authorities, professionals, scientists and others. The Habitat Agenda was adopted by 171 governments and provides a practical roadmap to an urbanizing world, setting out approaches and strategies towards the achievement of sustainable development of urban area. Important documents are ‘Guidelines for localizing the Habitat Agenda in Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP, 2001’ (www.unescap.org/huset/habitat.html) and UNCHS report: The State of the World's Cities Report 2001).

Rooted in the ‘UN Conference on Human Environment’, Stockholm 1972, this is elaborated in a number of texts as for instance in UN, 1995; ICCROM ITUC, 1997; European Commission, 2003; Bjønness, 2007. The ‘Vancouver Declaration’ - from the UN Conference on Human Settlements Habitat, Vancouver 1976, from which was produced a ‘first’ comprehensive international declaration on issues of human equity, habitat (rural-urban), basic needs, health and poverty.

http://english.peopledaily.com.cn; date not provided.


There are three distinct dimensions of governance (http://www.gdrc.org/u-gov/governance-define.html): the form of political regime; the process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources; and the capacity of governments to design, formulate, and implement policies and discharge functions. The criteria that constitute good governance have been drawn from these dimensions: legitimacy of government (degree of “democratization”), accountability of political and official elements of government (media freedom, transparency of decision-making, accountability mechanisms), competence of governments to formulate policies and deliver services, and respect for human rights and rule of law (individual and group rights and security, framework for economic and social activity, participation) (Novartis Foundation for Sustainable Development). Added: legitimacy and accountability of government; freedom of association and participation; empowering women as a key poverty eradication strategy; availability and validity of information.

Part Two: Elements of theory and practice
103 ‘Liveability’ has two faces – livelihood and ecological sustainability – key principles being equity, dignity, accessibility, conviviality, participation and empowerment (Timmer and Seymour, 2006). Urban sustainability as ‘the long term viability of urban living’ means meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, and striving for a more equitable distribution of resources (http://reuurbanise.co.nz/resources/articles/urbansustainability; http://stlcamp.org/urban).

The UN definition of a sustainable city is ‘a city where achievements in social, economic and physical development are made last’ using resources at a level of sustainable yield. There is a need to clarify what is meant by ‘sustainable city’ in terms of physical layout and operating systems. Around 1900 about 14% of the world population lived in urban environments, by 2000 increased to 50%, the vast majority of population expansion taking place in developing regions.


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Use of land and ownership structure, demography and population density, infrastructure facilities, urban sprawl, and encroachment on agricultural land and natural resources, availability of water, consumption of non-renewable resources, degree of pollution and impacts on health, generating and disposal of waste, and urban environmental quality. Urban environments occupy only about 2% of the world’s land surface, but account for about 75% of the world’s annual consumption of natural resources and discharge of waste (Rodwell, 2007:112).

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Part Two: Elements of theory and practice

115 Some recent ethnic conflicts combine combat of culture and identity with that of geographical resource control (Balkans and Africa), or in consequence of development that threatens the ecological system of a region (HCHR, 2005) – and both categories may constitute cultural threats against affected ethnic groups.

116 With rich contributions of 20th century ethnography providing diverse material, such as for Afrocentrism, ’roots’-thinking (US) – and possibly also the post-1960s upsurge of the discourse on ’real Tibet versus virtual Tibet’ (Schell, 2000; Feigon 2000) – the discourse on local, ethnic or national culture continues. See: also Bjønness, H. C (2009) “Building Memory of Heritage in Multi-cultural Societies”. Paper and presentation for International Conference on “The Image of Heritage: Changing

117 Architects’ accounts of townscape are often criticised for being merely descriptive or chronological (Johns 1965; Burke 1971, 1976), as a conventional architectural approach may view each element of a townscape as individual works of artistic merit, claiming ’townscaping’ to be an applied art (Cullen, 1961; Sharp, 1968).

118 The ’town’ (Latin civitas, Greek polis) in Greek, Roman and the early Medieval period in Europe was not determined by size but whether a centre of secular or ecclesiastical administration (Christie and Loseby 1996:6).

119 A large settlement of economic, administrative, religious or military function is not recognised as a ’town’, as a primary ’specialisation’ needs to be subsumed into a broader range of functions (Christie and Loseby, 1996:5).

120 Townscape may be described as a wide scenic view of a town or parts of a town, with common characteristics of design – its vocabulary composed by individual buildings and developed structures as features, patterns, and townscape elements (Johns, 1965:10 in ISUF Glossary - http://www.urbanform.org/glossary/online.html; InterSave, 1995).

121 Tools for urban morphology analysis are Space syntax, Figure and Ground, Linkage Theory, and Place Theory, and the Town Plan Analysis.

122 Particularly related to ’town plan analysis’ developed by M.R.G Conzen for the medieval town of Alnwick in North England (Conzen, 1960; Whitehand, 2001:103-9), considered relevant to conservation (Conzen, 1975).

123 Tools for urban morphology analysis are Space syntax, Figure and Ground, Linkage Theory, and Place Theory, and the Town Plan Analysis.

124 ‘Space Syntax’ is a set of techniques for the analysis of spatial configurations of all kinds, especially where spatial configuration seems to be a significant aspect of human affairs, as it is in buildings and cities. Originally conceived by Professor Bill Hillier and his colleagues at The Bartlett, UCL in the 1980s as a tool to help architects simulate the likely effects of their designs, it has since grown to become a tool used around the world in a variety of research and areas and design applications. It has been extensively applied in the fields of architecture, urban design, planning, transportation and interior design. Over the past decade, space syntax techniques have also been used for research in fields as diverse as archaeology, information technology, urban and human geography, and anthropology (Syntax: the ordering of and relationship between the words and other structural elements in phrases and sentences; grammar that studies syntax).

125 ‘Figure and Ground’ theory is founded on the study of the relative land coverage of buildings as solid mass (figure) to open voids (ground). Each urban environment has an existing pattern of solid and voids, and figure and ground approach to spatial design is an attempt to manipulate these relationships by adding to, subtracting from, or changing the physical geometry of the pattern. The objective of these manipulations is to clarify the structure of urban space in a city or district by establishing a
hierarchy of spaces of different sizes that are individually enclosed but ordered directionally in relation to each other. (Roger Trancik, 1986:97, in ‘Finding the Lost Space’)

‘Linkage Theory’ is derived from “lines” connecting one element to another. These lines are formed by street, pedestrian ways, linear open spaces or other linking elements that physically connect the parts of the city.

125 SAVE and InterSAVE methodology (www.sns.dk/byter-byg/Netpub/INTRSAV/tekst/Intersav.htm) Denmark.

124 Character of an urban environment is the embodiment of variations over time in the form of urban extensions and change within sub-areas and various unique contributing ‘features’ (such as physical context of place, its geography and topography, climate, location within a larger geography – for a defined historic district located within a larger cultural or natural landscape.

123 Information sources quite readily available on an English town would be church books, borough archives and cadastral maps, most of which would not be available in the context of the study subject.

A contemporary plan analysis based on urban morphology would discuss the presence of key terms (some discussed in the case study).

Town-plan analysis would include evaluating physical conditions, socio-economic and cultural parameters, and development, providing a background on difference of the elements ‘plan, built fabric and land use (Conzen; Urban morphology) or alternatively ‘architecture, topography and history’ (InterSave). In later chapters concepts of urban morphology are discussed related to Lhasa.

Town plan analysis may bring forth information less distinguishable in other methods, the methodology centred on tracing existing forms back to underlying formative processes, and interpreting them.

126 Burgage cycle – cyclical development in terms of use of land due to circumstances affecting society as a whole, not only local community – cycle that ends in a social fallow phase and starts a major revaluation and successive redevelopment cycle.

127 ‘Town-plan’ comprises the site, streets, plots and block plans of buildings. By ‘building-fabric’ is described the three-dimensional form of buildings. The third component is ‘land-use’ (Conzen, 1960:4).

128 ‘Town-plan’ comprises the site, streets, plots and block plans of buildings. By ‘building-fabric’ is described the three-dimensional form of buildings. The third component is ‘land-use’ (Conzen, 1960:4). (Directorate for Cultural Heritage, Norway, http://www.riksantikvaren.no/English/Cultural_Heritage_Analysis). The degree to which and basis on which that I have worked with urban morphological methodology in my research is discussed in the case studies chapter.

129 The World Heritage Convention defined urban heritage as ‘groups of separate or connected buildings, which because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science’ in the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, 1972 (Article 1 of the Convention and Operational Guidelines Article 43). No attention was given to the dimension beyond clusters of buildings – the urban (Jokilehto, 2007:23).

130 (http://www.icomos.org/docs/euroch_e.html) Another decade was to be needed, however, for the concept to become noticeably put into action. NORAD, AKTC and a few others (UNESCO) were to be pioneers in this from the early 1980s onwards, the approach later adopted also by The World Bank.


132 With the recognition of the outstanding ‘universal value’ of cultural landscape it will for the first time be possible to include non-urban landscapes and the landscape of non-monumental cultures which are equally precious and in many ways are exposed to much greater threats of the kind foreshown in the preambles to the 1972 Convention (‘Cleere, 1995), and Cleere 2007; Operational Guidelines 2005, Annex 3, paragraphs 1-5, 6, 8 and 10; WH Convention Article 1. The same year, ‘cultural landscape’ was incorporated into the WH OG with a definition ‘in keeping’ with contemporary perception of environment and ecology – environment no longer regarded as static but dynamic (Jokilehto, 2007:32).

The WH Committee in 2008 defined HUL as a topic for reflection. Seen previously to hold a somewhat ‘fundamentalist’ position through a focus on object preservation, work by ICOMOS on the concept of HUL in preparation of the WH Committee discussion indicates renewed potential and intellectual interest from the Advisory Body. ICOMOS is currently discussing relationships between cultural landscapes and historic urban situation, and how historical towns may constitute a category of cultural landscape, preparing a potential ‘revision-proposal’ of a WH Convention criterion, and first described in the ‘Vienna Memorandum’ (2005).

133 World Heritage Cities Programme (whc.unesco.org/en/cities/).
Part Two: Elements of theory and practice

134 A specificity (uniqueness) of place would be expressed through the diversity seen as major parts of community-shared cultural memory and a basis for generating new cultural production, and ‘material truthfulness’ assessed as a combined expression of authenticity, integrity and significance (Jokilehto, 1997 unp).

135 Methods for ‘analysis of place’ are conventionally grouped as: Art historical analyses, Visual analyses (SAVE/InterSAVE), Realistic analyses, Participation analyses, Social-cultural analyses, Social-economic analysis (SWOT-analysis), and Nature and landscape analyses, including GIS analysis. See www.ra.no/...

A descriptive method of analysis is values-neutral, built on ‘objective’ data tested for validation, would provide a base for an alternatives-review and have a ‘long life.’ A normative method of analysis is in contrast values-based with subjective interpretation of ‘facts,’ expressing approach and values relating to the time of analysis, would express ‘how things should be.’ Some methods are of a ‘shared’ typology. The methods reflect different traditions of planning, cultural contexts and professions in which they are grounded.


The townscape ‘analysis’ methodology gained serious ground in academia and practice planning and architecture through the early 20th century, particularly with Gordon Cullen’s publication ‘Townscape’ (Cullen, 1961). The methodology was applied systematically to conservation issues for a first time in ‘The Character of Towns (Roy Worskett, 1969) and has since been much criticised for lack of a recognised ‘scientific approach’ and for over-emphasising visual composition (Hiller and Hanson, 1984; Punter and Carmona, 1997; Baumann, 1997).

Contributing to the ‘New Urbanism’ of the 1980s onwards, with numerous romantic projects implemented through its traditional approach towards architecture and planning, the modernist stance opposing reproduction of historic areas and buildings in the context of contemporary functionality has remained through voices such as that of N Baumann (Baumann, 1997; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Urbanism; INTBAU) – who nevertheless recognised the potential of the methodology if linked to those of urban morphology.

137 Heritage management institutions on most continents have developed standard heritageinventorying formats. resources(http://www.emeraldinsight.com/Insight/ViewContentServlet?Filename=Published/EmeraldFullTextArticle/ Articles/0590180305.html).

138 Environmental headline indicators have a tendency to focus on ‘conventional’ tangible criteria, and avoid the issue of the historic resources and their environment; as for instance in the UK, the six main indicators deal with issues such as emission of gas, wildlife diversify, development of housing (DETR/DTLR, 1999).

139 Monuments seem ‘always’ to survive through protection, whilst anonymous townscape today has become a critical resource prone to destruction.

140 In Europe in the 1950-60s, the historical fabric of a town was more often than not seen as a barrier to economic growth (Donald Insall Associates reporting on Chester historic town, UK).

141 ‘Characterisation’ as a concept is well known in connection with literature. English Heritage website, Introduction by Grenville and Fairclough.


144 Figure 1, Hamdi 2004 in Sutherland and Tweed 2007:37-38; figure 2 in Hamdi 2004.

145 Projects implemented by UNESCO, the World Bank, the Aga Khan Development Network and NORAD are relevant as pilot activity. German conservation-led activity by the GTZ in the Kathmandu Valley from the early 1970s onwards contributed significantly to develop the activity, developing methods of participative conservation with local community. This resulted in numerous historic structures and environments rescued, with significant local skills-development and income generating. Repair and conservation brought radical adaptive re-use as historical structures were transformed into tourism-facilities contributing to make ‘old’ and vacant environments viable. Much traditional knowledge is ‘documented’ in the memory of older residents, and today near to being lost. Despite unavoidably introducing an aspect of ‘conjecture’ into traditions, this knowledge should be brought into assets interpretation as a basis for regeneration processes.

146 The EU is particularly active, and groundbreaking work done in the UK is identified here. The UK ‘Gateway Methodology’, a Best practice and development strategy developed by Newcastle City Council and EAHTR has been an important activity within Europe.

The Gateway Methodology is illustrated by ‘The Grainger Town Project’ in Newcastle, addressing a 40 hectares central historical area with major component of vacant floor-space, deteriorating buildings 47% of them listed and at risk. Ref www.newcastle.gov.uk/...

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by English Heritage (EH) also in 1998. In addition in the UK there are numerous charitable trusts that fund heritage-led regeneration activity. Only in the UK public and private funds finance regeneration projects of near GBP 100 mill per year (Sutherland, 1998). The Heritage Dividend (2002) by EH defined major achievements of the sector, with an impacts assessment methodology developed by EH and the LSE (London School of Economics).

English Heritage 2005 Regeneration and the Historic Environment. Heritage as catalyst for better social and economic regeneration. London – Reuse of existing buildings – upgrading existing building stock over a 30 years projection seen to save 40-60% of costs of demolition and new construction (UK). Historic residential property increasingly attracts premium value. Attracts investment and jobs creation, and furthers quality of life of residents. Historic places are powerful focus for community action, Mixed use high density human scale historic neighbourhoods are today model for new sustainable communities worldwide EH 2005).

European experience with heritage-led regeneration indicate that for it to be successful, local consensus is needed expressed at local level on the role of the larger area in a continuous competition between geographical regions, on the values that define the specific vitality of a region or town/settlement, and on the economic, environmental and social base that sustainable development should be rooted. Commonplace, fragmented public administration ‘preferring’ short term gains against long term needs, often fails to meet such criteria as urban transformation seems increasingly guided by the logic of individual projects, public agencies are withdrawn and urban planning left to private investors and market forces (Sutherland and Tweed 2007).

With a focus to ‘ensure preservation, rehabilitation and the management of change’ through funding mechanisms structured towards sustainability, heritage-led regeneration needs to take into account social and economic needs (Pickard, 2002; Larkham, 2004).

Assets of heritage-led regeneration are the combined heritage resources, infrastructure and experience, skills and activity base of the community - embracing all material and immaterial cultural representations. Heritage-led regeneration needs to be implemented at community level, involving assets of the community fabric, established within regional or national policy frameworks, and as a proactive and participation-based approach to local community development, in the UK developed through the 1990s developed on a mindset of ecological sustainability (HEART Norwich 2006). Heritage-led regeneration argues to represent ‘means of communicating ideas and feelings that help people understand more about themselves and their environment’. ‘Interpretation Australian Association’, 2004. Referring to the construction of meaning, a cultural construct, the term is today used in two differing contexts – that of hermeneutics where interpretation refers to how individuals make sense of things and phenomena, and interpreting on behalf of others: the museum context (Hooper-Greenhill 1999).

The Weberian outlook on change from an ‘idealist perspective’ defined social categories in terms of sets of attitudes that form a description of beliefs rather than explanation of where the ideas and attitudes originated; a basic assumption being that towns represent current political choices in terms of an investment strategy studied through use of space, symbolism and monumentality. The Marxist outlook on change from a materialistic perspective, with all agencies and phenomena rooted in a material reality rather than ideas, described the town as where class conflicts would play themselves out, arguing that a town was a symptom of variation on social and economic power. Defining and interpreting a context with its mode of production would predict categories of settlement that benefit under such conditions. Urban studies could thus be built up progressively, with hypotheses of overall historically specific social order that define and describe modes of production (from Steve Roskams in Christie and Loseby, 1996: 263, 278-80). Later reflection on urban duality would in part lock into this thinking (Castells, 199x).

In Paris in the period 1850s to 1870, Baron Haussmann’s plans restructured most of the urban areas. ‘Similar’ urban development interventions in the Western world would continue into the late 1940s – and by the same nation states in some of their then colonies – under banners of slum clearance, modernising or reconstruction, and with reference to France: rehabilitation. Great Britain referred to land redevelopment in areas of moderate to high density land as urban regeneration; the US as urban renewal. Post-WW2 in numerous countries slum clearance and modernising became synonymous with implementing a new system.

Factors of exclusion are for instance lack of access to income or resources, labour market, social services and social interaction through opportunity for civic engagement and democratic participation CL UK ref 31; Indicators on social exclusion (Jürgen Friedrichs).

Stewardship – the principle of managing resources for future generations, is a much used justification for conservation activity (Urry, 1995).

Economic exploitation of resources in the urban environment. The conservation field has consistently denied any existence of exploitation through urban conservation (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 1990), although ‘all the time’ being active in brand-making and creating new products by marketing historic structures and settlements as economical potential and commercial commodity. Cultural heritage as the generating force for economic growth, investment and tourism identifies an established route for ‘exploitative’ conservation (Urry, 1995).

Scientisation – the environment is an object of investigation in need of regulation and intervention in order to develop sustainable development strategies: In a focus on area conservation and integrating it into land-use planning, urban conservation can be an act of ‘do-gooding’, exploitation or investing in the future – and where are the residents in such processes? Tourism provides economic activity, the tourists provide cash, and cash is king in most historic environments where modern economy has not yet adequately reached down to residents or community (Urry, 1995).
Visual consumption – regards townscape as ‘embellished for aesthetic appropriation’ (Urry, 1995:74). The construction and management of visually pleasing townscape and environment easily reach the dangerous field of pastiche and sentimentality for ‘the old and old-worldly’ – in rich parody of ‘real’ historic environments (Strange, 1997: 228).

Growth of towns tends to occur in phases, more or less distinct, in distinct physical directions rather than in a piece meal or haphazard fashion or accretion;
Areas developed in certain phases tend to have a consistent type of development character, an urban block deriving most of its characteristics from the initial phase of it being established with character and properties inherited from this;
Changes from transformation tend to occur at variable rates at the different levels of resolution;
Different periods give rise to distinct forms of development, especially at the street-block level that remains the main level at which to distinguish urban tissue;
As regards the hierarchy of buildings, plot, and streets-patterns, buildings are documented as more prone to change than plot patterns that may be transformed by subdividing or amalgamation associated with change of ownership, with street patterns and urban block layouts documented to be the most resistant to change;
Studies in Europe show the town-plan in small to medium size towns to be a change-resistant morphological complex, more so than land-use and built fabric; and larger towns subject to substantial urban development less so, that buildings change the fastest, that plot patterns are more resistant to change, with street patterns the most resistant to change (Whitehand, 1981).

Although strengthened in the important documents of Nara and Burra and by the Asian Human Rights Commission (July 2006):’human dignity is the true measure of human development’ – dignity and respect for cultural diversity are held in low regard by many governments.
3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

‘The safeguarding of the subjective point of view is the only but sufficient guarantee that the world of social reality will not be replaced by a fictional non-existing world constructed by the scientific observer’ (Schütz, 1967:8). ‘Identity is ‘in a permanent state of becoming, as various social constructs vie with each other for supremacy’ (Thomas & Linstead, 2002: 75) – so also in Lhasa.
Part Three: Methodology

**Part Three: Research methodology**

In Part Three are presented and discussed methodological considerations on which the study was based, the research process as planned and carried out, and the methods used. Following a brief introduction (3.1) are outlined methodological considerations on which the study is based (3.2). The subsequent section (3.3) concerns the study process and issues that were met during the research work. In the last section (3.4) are presented methods as planned and as implemented, including the methods used for data collection. Sub-section (3.4.2) illustrates the use of a reflective approach in interpretation of a respondent interview. His lifeworld\(^{156}\) is understood to represent views, perceptions and attitudes ‘typical’ for many Tibetans in Old Lhasa.
3: Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

As it has become clear from chapter 2, the study lends most of its theory and practice from cultural heritage conservation set within the fields of development thinking and urban studies, supported by elements of empirical and normative research traditions. The inductive empirical study has a ‘reflective’ base, and the case study methodology used has focused on Old Lhasa as study subject.\(^{157}\) The circular character of interpretation in a reflexive methodology – as a ‘hermeneutic circle’ – does not make it impossible to interpret a text but implies that its meaning may be sought within a larger cultural context (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000-52).\(^ {158}\)

![Welcoming Lhasa residents at home; 2003](image)

3.2 Methodological considerations

A traditional yardstick for science is that theory should be confirmed by empirical evidence to reflect ‘objective reality out there’. ‘Critical theory’ in contrast makes use of ‘softer’ criteria beyond the ‘truth criterion’ – such as for instance trustworthiness instead of internal validity, with transferability instead of external validity, and confirmability instead of objectivity (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 114).
By trying to investigate respondents’ lifeworlds the aim was to gain understanding of how individuals and groups participate in the construction of their perceived social reality. In a deeper sense this would mean looking at how social phenomena are created, known, institutionalized and made into tradition. The social construction of reality as an ongoing, dynamic process is in consequence of peoples’ interpretations and knowledge, introducing the possibility of change. Investigations such as the above were seen to fall within the sphere of social constructionism.\textsuperscript{159}

3.2.1 Inductive or deductive research
Deductive research works from the general towards the specific, and is often described as knowledge-driven. Inductive research in contrast works from specific observations towards broader generalisations. Research may involve both in a circular manner, whereby theory may lead to observations leading to identifying new patterns that lead to developing new theories. Both ‘categories’ are present in this study, with inductive research considered the stronger.\textsuperscript{160}

3.2.2 Reflective frame
In order to gain wider understanding of Old Lhasa respondents’ lifeworlds, the research has been carried out in a frame of ‘reflectiveness’ – a reflective (reflexive) approach entailing to view a subject matter from different angles and to avoid ‘a-priori privilege’ of a single favoured angle or vocabulary. ‘Reflection (reflexivity) is thus above else a question of recognizing fully the notoriously ambivalent relation of the researcher’s text to the realities studied...reflexivity (thus defined as) the interpretation of interpretation’ (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000).\textsuperscript{161}

The initial impression of the social-psychological ‘atmosphere’ in Old Lhasa made a reflective approach seem essential in order to reduce potential ‘information distortion’ that might be reduced by means of a wide-spanning (source criticism) focus on authenticity, bias, distance and dependence – and by providing insight on lifeworlds and internal-external relations (3.4.4).

3.2.3 Case study
Case studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships, or investigate a selected phenomenon within its real-life context. To quote Robert K. Yin, the case study research method is ‘an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used’ (Yin, 1984, p. 23).

Supporters consider case study research to excel in providing understanding of a complex issue or object, potentially adding strength to what is already known through previous research. On the other hand, critics of case studies as method may hold that the study of a small number of cases offers little
ground for establishing reliability or generality of findings, with others consider that intense exposure to study of a case shall bias the findings. Others again dismiss case study research as useful only as an exploratory tool.

Well-known case study researchers such as Robert E. Stake, Helen Simons and Robert K. Yin have suggested techniques for the method, in outline proposing steps to: i) determine and define the research questions, ii) select the cases and determine data gathering and analysis techniques, iii) prepare to collect the data, iv) collect data in the field, v) evaluate and analyze the data, and finally vi) prepare the report.

Case studies may be descriptive or explanatory, the latter to explore causation in order to find underlying principles. A case study can in terms of its intended theorising potential be a) non-theoretical; b) a theoretical interpretative study; c) a study that aims to create new concepts; d) a study that develops existing concepts; e) a hypothesis-generating study; or f) a hypothesis-testing study. Only studies aimed to create or develop concepts are by some held to be ‘truly scientific’ (Anderson, 1997).

The case study method was selected as research method also as ‘the case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points.’ (Yin, 2003:13).

The unit or subject of study and analysis has been Old Lhasa, the study aiming to contribute towards understanding urban conservation and World Heritage concepts in practice, potentially relevant to versions a) and d) above by contributing knowledge related to existing concepts. To describe and discuss spatial dynamics, investigations were delimited to selected buildings and neighbourhoods and a study period of ten years (1995-2005), briefly introducing a few earlier events considered important to understand the context. In view of change that has affected Old Lhasa, the study emphasis on physical change should ideally be paralleled with socio-cultural research – that for reasons of scope, opportunity, and knowledge was considered unfeasible.

3.2.4 Quantitative or qualitative research approach

Good qualitative research is conventionally seen to share several qualities as pluralistic, democratic and receptive of diversity – a strong feeling for the social reality under study recognised as a solid criterion. Political and socio-economic processes affect internal and external spatial dynamics of each cultural context or environment in consequence of the individual and collective powers of agents that act within that situation. Urban form and built heritage are impacted by many factors, and particularly by change in land use, density and spatial typology, without these factors in themselves necessarily providing strong causal explanations of change.

To investigate and ‘measure’ spatial change in physical terms can be seen as constituting quantitative research, and possibly as incongruent with a qualitative investigation. Investigations identifying main
Part Three: Methodology

actors, stakeholder and roles, and how they affect spatial dynamics as agents of change may provide
insights beyond what they contribute in quantifiable terms (Aryana, 2003: 130). A quantification of
change might give a part explanation of spatial change and provide valuable input to a larger qualitative
field study.

It is argued that the interaction of qualitative and quantitative approaches when investigating change to
built heritage and urban form would depend on the research questions (Aranya, 2003:131; Kvale, 2009),
relevant hypotheses formulated on the basis of qualitative investigations on existing knowledge. Further
investigations might include elements of quantification on which subsequent qualitative interpretations
are based. The phases of data collection and analysis to follow could be mainly qualitative or
quantitative, although in this study seen to interact. Results reporting, the final phase was predominantly
qualitative’ (ibid). This study has focused on qualitative dimensions and ‘produced’ data viewed as a
‘bricolage’ with the researcher as ‘bricoleur’: a person ‘who creates a body of knowledge from the
diverse range of material at hand’ (Bishop, 1989:3; Ellingsen, 2002; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

3.2.5 Information and interpretation

In the context of Tibet, ‘facts seem historically reduced to a minimum, often hidden in pious texts, and
not easily found or validated’, reflected Giuseppi Tucci (1949). In agreement, Per Sørensen added that
‘Buddhist historiography was possibly deeply coloured by pious mythopoetics rather than facts’
(Sørensen, 2003; my emphasis).

The ‘historicity’ of historical urban environments would in Europe normally be validated through archival
studies. Reflecting aspirations and needs of individuals, and regulations of society through time,
archives would provide detailed records of ownership change, plot divisions and constructions. Such
cadastral records normally did not exist in China, and if they should exist, are still rarely made available
(Whitehand and Gu, 2007). Each period would take itself and its own knowledge as the yardstick for
reviewing a past and looking towards a future, and the researcher would bring pre-understanding and
preconceived notions into any research situation. That interpretation precedes data in all research
became evident already from the various modes of representation on Tibet and Lhasa that confronted
this researcher at the outset of investigations: representation that with ‘a history and a tradition of
vocabulary, thought and imagery.(provided)... reality and presence in and for the West’ (Said, 1978).

3.3 Research process and issues

Very few Western researchers in the fields of architecture and urban conservation or planning have to
date had the opportunity to carry out research in Lhasa. Being personally provided with such opportunity
Part Three: Methodology

has been a privilege possibly only through my participation in the Network for University Cooperation Tibet-Norway—and presented distinct feelings of obligation and enthusiasm to use that opportunity. The study was from the start well ‘rooted’ contextually and geographically, but less so institutionally. Formulated in 1998 during the last phase of the ‘LHCA-project’ (1995-1999), the study was finalised in dialogue with senior faculty at AHO (Oslo School of Architecture, 1998-2000) and NTNU (Trondheim, 1999-onwards).163

The academic study was formally started at NTNU ‘Department of town and regional planning’ (now: ‘Department of urban design and planning’) in late 1999 whilst teaching at the AHO ‘Department of architectural theory and history’ (combined with professional work). The institutions NTNU, AHO and UMB (Norwegian University of Life Sciences) that year established a tripartite doctoral teaching programme that provided me with the required course opportunities. A successful application to the Norwegian Research Council (NRC) for part funding (2000-2003) made it possible to formalise a relationship to NTNU.

The study design and study plans were made after preliminary field investigations in June and September 1998 and 1999. Field studies continued with twice yearly visits to Lhasa, some funded over the NRC grant, others by the ongoing academic collaboration under the ‘Network’ umbrella. Activities ‘external’ to the research very positively contributed to the process of data collecting and interpretation. I was in 2001 commissioned by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre to carry out ‘Reactive Reporting’ on the state of conservation of the Lhasa World Heritage sites (2001 and 2002). The two visits made possible formal meetings and on-site discussions with senior government representatives in Lhasa and Beijing, and with Lhasa World Heritage property management teams.

The 2003 ‘Conservation Workshop’ and the 2004 ‘Lhasa International Conference on Traditional Art and Architecture’ at Tibet University (TU) arranged by TU and NTNU (the author with Knud Larsen), contributed positively to strengthen collaboration between Tibet University and NTNU in architecture and planning as senior members of the above institutions met with a larger invited group of Tibetan, Chinese and international experts to share experience and discussions.164

The presented study was anticipated completed much sooner than what was to be possible. The need to combine research activity with maintaining family income exposed the study to more delay than planned. Obtaining travel permits to Lhasa and some lengthy unsuccessful attempts to gain access to known official material also contributed negatively. Unfortunate and serious personal health issues in 2006 were to considerably postpone the completion of the study.

Stimulating and professionally rewarding contacts were established early with senior representatives within the national cultural heritage administration. Fieldwork challenges included the establishing of contacts, trust and understanding with resident respondents and authority representatives. Lhasa as ‘context’ was culturally new to me as researcher, and remained so Old Lhasa after several years of visits. Amongst critical issues encountered concerned ethics of carrying out research work, how
Part Three: Methodology

to behave, what to engage in, and not the least how to use situations and material that resulted from
documentation and interviews.

Socio-cultural circumstances would affect all stakeholders party to a research process – researcher,
interpreter and respondent, as of course also the study subject as entity. My understanding of aspects
of potential intersubjectivity between respondents could influence both research process and results. As
no true or easy answers exist, the researcher in interview situations would have to remain acutely aware
and respectful to protect the dignity and personal ‘dimension’ of the respondent.

3.4 Methods of investigation

Few sources of reliable information were available on Old Lhasa. The approach to data collection
became to assemble all information obtainable, followed by a process of selection and interpretation. In
the relative ‘information-lacuna’ of Lhasa, this may, however, have led to marginal background
information being included.

3.4.1 Data collection

Data from primary sources was developed through a) interviews: based on a reflective methodology
through semi-structured interviews with focus on selected issues and lifeworld narratives, and b) direct
observations based on architectural documentation of buildings, neighbourhoods and urban form. Direct
observations became a major element in all data collection, demanding a high level of researcher
‘presence’ in all situations.

Secondary source material was collected through c) cartographic studies, d) analysis of public
documents, and e) archival and literature studies.

Table 3.4.1 Data collection methods

Data was collected through the use of methods, ‘stand-alone’ and interrelated, as summarised below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Case category 1 (buildings)</th>
<th>2 (neighbourhoods)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary source data:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Interviews: reflective methodology with semi-structured interviews and lifeworld narratives</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Direct observations and architectural documentation</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary source information:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Cartographic studies.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Public documents, and</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Archival studies and literature studies</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In advance of defining the study, Old Lhasa and adjoining street blocks were photographed and map-
surveyed as an initial investigation. See illustration (map of Old Lhasa with neighbourhoods).
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For *neighbourhoods* data collection focused on overall character, demolition versus new construction, use of public and ‘private’ space and building typology, with Conzenian terminology of urban morphology was used (http://www.urbanform.org/glossary/online.html) to describe various ‘dimensions’ in the urban situation.

In the multi-method or multi-case fieldwork a form of ‘visual archaeology’ was used combining visual surveying and site visits, photography, interviewing and archival searches with cartographic studies. At neighbourhood level, data was collected through cartographic studies, field surveys and photography, supplemented by material drawn from archive- and literature studies.

**On primary sources**

*Interviewing* – in view of a likely dearth of official information, and lack of access to such for the researcher, interviewing as method would constitute a central field study component, hopefully providing input to better understand aspects of the respondents’ *lifeworlds* and for their interpretation of processes of change. A range of topics was prepared for the interviews, to be varied in terms of weight and importance relative to which respondent category I was in dialogue with (schedule of topics, see Appendix). Respondents were selected to present a diversity of life-experience, differences in socio-economic, occupational and educational backgrounds, in approach and attitude towards the environment they live in, and in their relationship to the authorities.

*Direct observation and architectural documentation* – all buildings cases would be regularly surveyed visually and photographed (1995, 2000 and 2005), some more often if considered under threat of demolition or radical transformation.

**On secondary sources**

*Cartographic studies* – cartographic material might constitute a quantitative research component. Although highly interesting as a cultural construct, the (qualitative dimension of) traditional Tibetan maps shown in thankas is not discussed here, considered outside the study scope). The Municipal Survey of 1986 had been made available for the LHCA-project (1995-1999). The first modern Chinese Municipal Surveys of Lhasa are assumed made around 1960 (maps of 1960 and 1970 were seen at Lhasa Municipal Planning Bureau but not made available). The initial intention was to carry out a town plan analysis of the historical kernel.

*Public document analysis* – to explain urban conservation and development as planned and implemented on the ground, access to public documents would be essential in parallel with discussions and dialogue with senior government agency representatives and politicians.

*Literature and archival studies* – in view of the relative dearth of information on Lhasa, to provide an adequate contextual background to the study, texts on a diverse range of topics would be studied.
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dealing with the past, leading up to the study period and relevant to the study subject as well as the study period of 1995-2005.

3.4.2 A lifeworld interpreted

In the following are illustrated some of the potentials of using a reflective methodology in the interview situation. Here are used sections of a longer interview (see Appendix) that provide anthropological glimpses into aspects of life in Old Lhasa to indicate how aspects of ‘source criticism’ and ‘discourse analysis’ contributing to analysis of text. As the author is not a trained social scientist, the text can hence merely be an indication of potentials for reflection and discussion. Many key issues could be introduced – here are selected some.

The manner in which people wish to present themselves and their motives would ‘be heavily influenced by what would be contextually normative in terms of acceptability and understandability’ (Silverman, 1985:199) – in Lhasa as elsewhere.

Numerous pre-interview considerations reappeared during in-situ interviewing, and could concern simply the likelihood of obtaining ‘relevant’ responses in the specific setting, or whether the topics raised could be safely talked about technically, culturally and politically. Safely should here be considered in a context of anonymity versus the informant fearing potentially being reported on. Further, would the respondent and interpreter be willing to take the ‘interview-path’ suggested – and if so, in a situation of continuous language translation and interpretation – could I actually know whether they ‘deviated’? The interview situation hence brought interdependent aspects of uncertainty that affected all involved.

The interview took place in the home of Dawa. The interpreter, a Tibetan unknown to the courtyard community and a foreigner (the researcher) had entered his building courtyard and asked the first person met for an interview. The ever present building manager pointed to Dawa who was also there, tending his flowers. He agreed and invited us upstairs to his rooms. Photos were taken. Sunshine streamed into the room. Dawa’s brightly coloured canary sang cheerfully in a window cage. The frame of authenticity of the situation was clear.

After normal greetings and pleasant small talk, the researcher put questions to Dawa through the interpreter. Dawa gently and politely responded. Contributing with bits from his own life-memory, he clearly improvised as responses were given. Through his responses, Dawa seemed to try to find out something about these strangers – one could be an informer, the other anything from a simple tourist to a ‘government friend’. His ‘perceptual reality’ would be built from present memory of earlier so-called factual experiences and motives, affected by reflections on representations – on his lifeworld, on us, and ‘in reverse’ on my understanding of representations of Tibet, ‘Tibetanness’ and Dawa as special and typical individual.

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Dawa had arrived in Lhasa with his family in the important year of 1959, still in his teens. He experienced firsthand the upheavals of 1959 and those afterwards, and lived and raised his family here. In the late 1960s, still a young man, Dawa was dismissed from his job as carpenter. Although ‘never politically active, and trying only to care for my family and stay away from involvement with sensitive issues’ Dawa had not had permanent employment since. At the time of his family getting their first flat in Lhasa (around 1960), the policy was that registered residents would receive lifelong rights to accommodation (confirmed by other respondents). In Dawa’s case this was possibly never confirmed in writing. Most ‘ordinary’ Lhasa residents were welcomed into the ‘new times’ by the Chinese government and granted full rights as members of the ‘new and fresh proletarian population’. Members of the elite (noble families) in contrast had all their rights revoked.

In terms of potential bias in the story, the interview material came from one participant in a complex social construction that we were all three part of. The basics of Dawa’s story were believable, and his interpretation on the authorities’ role and ‘contribution’ was highly subjective – but possibly containing important elements of a ‘Tibetan’ inter-subjectivity of his generation. The interview touched on events Dawa had experienced through a long life, to which he now expressed some distance, and memory distortion.

In terms of external motive, it remained unclear whether Dawa was unfairly dismissed by ‘the new system’ or was in reality someone who did not adequately contribute. From his account it seemed most likely that Dawa was one of very many early victims. Similar stories, views and experiences were told by other Old Lhasa respondents, in this process of simple ‘triangulation’ and confirmation.

In terms of identity, Dawa appeared wishing to present himself as a good Tibetan, a man hard done by who was not a burden on society but active and responsible – now supported by his loving children. The issue of ownership raised questions of Dawa’s situation and attitude towards contemporary Lhasa society and system. Dawa seemed not to represent an assertive subjective life orientation, but possibly that of a fairly submissive individual – one subdue by circumstances. With his early years of being brought up in the ‘old system’, ‘ownership’ of life and circumstances may not be a relevant notion for this ‘traditional Tibetan’. During this section of the interview, Dawa fought to keep his emotions under control.

The interview illustrated a pendulum action of part and whole occurring between the respondent representing ‘all Tibetans’ and the researcher (through the interpreter) representing ‘the sympathetic outside or other’.

The in-situ interview situation was characterised by an asymmetry of power. The researcher came to Dawa as ‘a dominant’ with a potential although unexplained possible link to the authorities – presenting a potential threat to the respondent merely by possessing knowledge? – and brought the all-important
interpreter. The respondent, on the other hand, ‘owned’ and controlled the large ‘basket’ of experience. Throughout this and other interviews the question whether the researcher as ‘dominant’ could be a good listener subduing his own ‘baggage’ of pre-understanding, remained an unanswered issue.

A larger number of interviews might have produced more varied responses on motives and intentions, and provide a more robust cross-case information base for ‘discourse analysis’.

In the interview situations distances were present and unavoidable – between researcher and interpreter, the interpreter interpreting the researcher to the respondent who is interpreting the interpreter and responding with another link in this endless chain of interpretations. The social, cultural and ‘systemic’ distances between researcher, interpreter and respondent in sum affected aspects of the primary source field-work process considerably.

As regards interpretations of authority and representation the open question remains whether the respondent’s narrative was another case in the large catalogue of ‘good Tibetans done hard by’ and to what extent his apparent identity was constituted by the act of narrating. Could the interview be seen as a form of ‘sales talk’ or alternatively as mere ‘cultural speak’? (Giddens, 1991).

Dawa did not have substantial advantage in the interview situation – he was challenged to speak about personal matters to strangers; he was not very verbal, appeared rather tired possibly shy in the circumstances, and had to speak through an interpreter. But we were in his home, he had invited us in with pride. Given compliments Dawa responded with a pleasant grin and a nod. Dawa was clearly not an elite member of society, past or present. The interpreter was a young and on-the-rise Tibetan academic – a member of the new elite closer to the new system than Dawa would ever be. The researcher, however friendly and interested, clearly came from a very different ‘place’.

In sum, the alternation between preconception – on how I would assume Dawa would behave, act, and explain his life – and my own perception of what this was all about, to this researcher became an important dimension of the event. The interview situation might have privileged Dawa’s account. In a critical-theoretical context the interview and narrative were clearly about the lifeworld of a Tibetan resident, less about a member of a system. The respondent held that the current social-political system presented a significant ‘loss’ to the good Tibetan’s way of life, and that at the same time the potential of the system was possibly not utilised. Dawa expressed sadness, but also satisfaction with life and his family.
Endnotes

156 ‘Lifeworld’ (German: Lebenswelt): the day-to-day world in which the individual lives out his or her life, and which is generally taken for granted (www.answers.com/topic/life-world), see Concepts and Terms (Appendix).
158 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_constructionism, accessed 15.03.2012). Social constructionism and social constructivism are sociological theories of knowledge that consider how social phenomena or objects of consciousness develop in social contexts. When something is socially constructed, there is focus on dependence on contingent variables of our social selves rather than inherent quality that it possesses in itself. The underlying assumptions on which social constructivism is typically seen to be based are reality, knowledge, and learning.
160 Inductive – deductive: http://atheism.about.com/od/criticalthinking/a/deductivearg.htm: An inductive argument is one in which the premises are supposed to support the conclusion in such a way that if the premises are true, it is improbable that the conclusion would be false. Thus, the conclusion follows probably from the premises and inferences. An example: Socrates was Greek (premise) Most Greeks eat fish (premise) Socrates ate fish (conclusion). A deductive argument is one in which it is impossible for the premises to be true but the conclusion false. Thus, the conclusion follows necessarily from the premises and inferences. In this way, it is supposed to be a definitive proof of the truth of the claim (conclusion). A classic example: All men are mortal (premise), Socrates was a man (premise), Socrates was mortal (conclusion).
161 Alternatively by Hardy, Phillips and Clegg (2001): reflexivity ‘involves reflecting on the way in which research is carried out and understanding how the process of doing research shapes its outcomes’.
162 Empirical arguments and credibility, Open attitude to vital importance of interpretive dimension of social phenomena, Critical reflection as regards political and ideological contexts and issues of research. Awareness of ambiguity of language and limited ability to convey knowledge, and awareness of the rhetorical nature of ways of dealing with this, the representation-authority problem. Silverman (1997:25) defined criteria for evaluating research as - Has the researcher demonstrated why we should believe him? Does the research problem tackled have theoretical and or practical significance? Importance of qualitative research is seen as achieving: richness in points, and a novelty value, achieving an epistemological break with everyday knowledge (Bourdieu et al, 1991).
163 The LHCA-project provided the first post-1950 documentation of Lhasa as historic town – in text, maps and pictures of built heritage resources inside Lingkor, the Lhasa outer kora – published as ‘The Lhasa Atlas’.

The study presented here was formulated after discussions with Professor Halina Dunin-Woyseth, Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO), and Professor Hans Christie Bjønness, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim.
164 The 2003 workshop and 2004 conference were both arranged by TU and NTNU, by Tsewang Tashi and Guo Hongwei of Tibet University, Lhasa, on initiatives by& with Knud Larsen and Amund Sinding-Larsen, NTNU.
165 Part of critical interpretation would be to scrutinise less obvious consequences of a particular societal institution rather than accept it at face value – by looking at the mechanisms that exist across the Tibetan cultural and functional networks in Old Lhasa.
Euro-centricity and cultural arrogance expressed (in the 20th century) was unfortunately exported by numerous Western architects through development cooperation into the Middle East, Africa and Asia, their contributions a) de-building knowledge of traditional holistic knowledge throughout the world; b) stripping such knowledge of its credence, of its cultural respect; c) taking away the socio-economic and cultural deep functionality of traditional knowledge; d) destroying building traditions and debilitating larger cultural traditions in consequence extricating from local communities and cultures traditional tools with which to manage their own human habitat (Oliver, 2003).
Part Four: Cultural context

Part Four

Cultural context

Part Four presents important parts of the cultural and historical context on which to interpret Lhasa as historical environment, with the material divided into two chapters.

In order to better understand Old Lhasa of today, knowledge is needed of the past – of its development as historical town.

Chapter 4 ‘Lhasa cultural context’ outlines traditions of built form in the larger geo-cultural region – from archetypes of built typology to traditions of urban settlements, followed by Chapter 5 ‘Lhasa growth and development’ – an assembly of events important to the development and character of the settlement form early times onwards with focus on the recent decades.

The contents of Chapter 4 ‘Lhasa cultural context’ are: after a brief introduction (section 4.1) are outlined important aspects of the cultural context of Lhasa as place (section 4.2), including on the representation of Tibet. Traditions of built typology and urban form are discussed in section 4.3. Tibetan built form, with an outline on Lhasa built typology is discussed in section 4.4. Section 4.5 discusses contextual practice, i.e. traditions seen as relevant to ‘compare’ to current international ideology of conservation. This is followed by a short chapter summary (section 4.6).

In Chapter 5 ‘Lhasa growth and development’, the study period 1995-2005 as the real focus is described on a background of earlier periods (5.2). Section 5.3 describes main events and ‘periods’ relevant to Lhasa after 1951 to the end of the study period. The narrative is based on numerous formal and informal sources including relevant material from my field studies with an outline on urban conservation and planning in Lhasa and Old Lhasa, – for which objectives and mechanisms were ‘provided’ and directed by PRC government agencies to accord with approved PRC government policies. After a brief introduction and outline on Lhasa’s early periods of development as settlement, the bulk of the chapter concerns the extended ‘contemporary’ period from 1949 onwards – with particular focus on the study period 1995-2005.

Section 5.4 presents the material found concerning the urban expansion in Lhasa, with a subsection (5.4.1) on urban land tenure in China. The present official approach to urban conservation in Lhasa is presented and discussed in section 5.5. The chapter ends with a short summary (5.6).
‘Gurkha (Nyingpa) Mansion provided housing for many, and was in late 1990s sold by the government to a private developer, a Tibetan from Kathmandu. Now it is reconstructed as a fancy hotel. It is better to have only housing in this area, but Lhasa leaders like hotels and receive much money from a developer, he will keep them with good living, beer and entertainment. So the leaders give permission for most things now’ (Barkor residents, 2002).
4.1 Introduction

‘All aspects of human habitat are in consequence of overall context, conditions and resources of location of the habitat and of numerous individual factors. They include physical and intangible, economy, material resources, process of construction, cultural constraints, opportunities of climate, and social and societal needs in meeting all demands of life, significance of which is expressed by the occupiers in symbolism and decoration’ (Oliver, 2003) – as expressed in habitat and built form of such diverse environments as those of Zimbabwe, South Africa, Yemen or Tibet (author’s comment).

In Tibetan Buddhist traditions all aspects of life and culture – and built form – are embraced. In such a perspective, the topics of contextual practice and its rooting would deserve more and deeper attention than this study can provide.

Studies within one field or even policy area may use different period categorisations than those accepted for other fields. Based on literature studies and conversations with senior Tibetan academics, the periodic structure used is shown below.

4.1.1 Setting

Lhasa is located in Central Tibet at an altitude of about 3650 M (29 deg. 39 min. North and 90 deg. 7 min. East), and in the middle of a fertile river valley that has often experienced seasonal flooding. Tall and craggy mountains line the valley, mountains by Tibetans known as representing ‘the eight precious emblems’ of Buddhism (Tibetan: tashi takhyal). The flat valley floor, sloping gently towards the west is broken by two hills rising about 100 meters: Chakpori where the famous Medical College was located.
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until 1951, and Marpori with the Potala Palace – the residence and formal seat of the Dalai Lama. Age-old communication routes along the winding river and from other valleys across mountain passes meet here, the Lhasa Valley being relatively sheltered from brutal mountain winds.

### 4.1.2 Periodic structure

Lhasa, capital of Tibet since 1642, in 1965 became main city in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) as Tibet formally became a province of China. The TAR, in the study called Tibet, with the provinces of Ü-Tsang and the western half of Kham, includes only about half of the earlier Tibetan territories – the other areas were in 1965 incorporated into adjacent provinces. The TAR nevertheless remains the second-largest province of China by area, and the least densely populated (1220000 sq.kms and officially about 3 mill population in 2005).167

The period described under ‘Early development’ in this text spans a millennium – from the founding of Lhasa, believed to have been in the mid 7th century CE to the mid-17th century when the Tibetan territories were again united under one ruler.

‘Capital of Tibet’ – Lhasa was spiritual and political capital of Tibet from 1642 and formally until 1965 but in reality this ended in the autumn of 1951 when Chinese troops reached Lhasa.

‘Settlement in turmoil’: 1951 to 1978 – with major sub-periods of ‘The Mao Era’ (Mao Zedong 1893-1976) subdivided into the First Five Year Plan (1949-1957); the Great Leap Forward (1958-1965); the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), with a ‘brief aftermath’. China of 1949 and the 1950s was built from ‘Soviet’ influence, with periods of serious tension between the two large nations in most areas of political development for a communist society.


‘Historical islands’: 1995 to 2005 – saw in Lhasa the implementation of large infrastructure and urban development programmes in a climate of economic growth and continued demographic and social change. Little of the extensive urban heritage was to be protected from transformation, the historical environment becoming islands of historical-traditional built form.

This categorisation of periods is not discussed further but used as the base for outlining policy changes that caused changes to urban built form and heritage in Lhasa in chapter 5.

As holy city of Tibetan Buddhism, and synonymous with Tibet as a combined physical and spiritual home and phenomenon in Tibetan Buddhism, Lhasa remains the religious and cultural centre for all Tibetans and all Tibetan territories (Whitehand and Gu, 2007:644).168
4.2 Cultural background

The built environment is in a frame of Buddhism linking the many-layered world of humans to the world of gods through a mathematically perceived physical interpretation of cosmos. Belief concepts and principles of built form constitute interdependent zones within the overall perception of a lined sacred life and environment, with little acknowledgement of so-called secular concepts. Buddhist rituals fill spiritual and political roles and purposes. Central concepts of doctrine and practice concern impermanence, void-ness, virtuous action and merit-building (Appendix 4.x.).

The ultimate goal in Buddhism is reaching nirvana by removal of ignorance and transcendence of the material delusory world. Despite its intellectual-spiritual teachings against material possessions, Buddhism and its centres of devotion and learning came to accumulate extraordinary riches. Art and imagery of highly idealised categories developed – of quality ‘infinitely finer than those apparent in ones mundane existence’ (Fischer, 1996:8-19). Donations for merit building were received in the form of manuscripts, ritual implements, buildings and property (ibid).

To assist the individual in understanding a complex faith, Buddhism depends on ‘reminders’ in the form of material and functional objects ranging from alms-bowls and reliquary objects to buildings of worship, abstract representation of building types included as constituting a ‘reminder’ of the faith. Buddhism
presupposes a spiritual and physical hierarchy is present within the Buddhist monastic community. Buddha sculptures are regarded as more holy and important than the temple they are housed in. The temple is more holy than an ordinary house.

Buddhism contains an essential recognition of universal and personal impermanence. Cultural continuity is embedded in cultural and religious practice in the ability to recreate, and in the recognition of creative and destructive forces. Old or new is not seen as of vital importance, the focus being on its representation, on personal and nature–man relationships of non-violence, with the approach of ‘no harm’ to others as essential (Stein, 1972; Levy and Rajopadhyaya, 1992; Gellner, 2001; Tiwari 2002, in Bjønness 2007).

The act of building is in Buddhism regarded as a ‘divine’ art, and a magical connection between the universe and the construction site is made by use of traditional rites (Larsen & Sinding-Larsen, 2001:39).

Knowledge of ‘building’ was in Tibet traditionally restricted to inaugurate lama-architects as master architect-builders appointed by the king – ‘secret knowledge’ contained in and released through rituals and ceremonies. All categories of built form would in Buddhism serve votive needs and actions. The different building typologies were seen to represent varying degrees of ‘holiness’.

The ‘stupa’ represented the highest degree of holiness, followed by the temple, the monastery complex and official buildings. Residential buildings would occupy the lowest position in this hierarchy (section).

4.2.1 Representation of Tibet

‘With firsthand and concrete reports on the Tibetan plateau ‘the West learned of a theocracy that – depending on the attitude of the reporter – was either guided by an enlightened priest or held its pagan population in deliberate blindness’ (Dodin and Rather, 2001:xi).

‘I suppose our distant country holds little of interest for your public except for what of the strange can be written about us, and…your writers often contradict each other’ wrote Rinchen Lhamo of her experiences in London in the 1920s (Rinchen Lhamo, 1926, pp. 95–96, cited in Tashi Tsering (1996:3) and Barnett, 2001).

‘We, in the West, cannot attempt to understand the ‘Orient’, the other, without realising that such an endeavour is beset by innumerable prejudices, habits of thought, and instinctive attitudes’ (Kvaerne in Dodin and Rather, 2001:47).
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‘For years, the only way Tibetans could get a hearing in the world’s capitals was to emphasize our spirituality and helplessness ... Tibetans who pick up rifles don’t fit that romantic image we’ve built up in Westerners’ heads’ (cited in Salopek (1997), see Jamyang Norbu (1989) and Tsering Shakya (1991, 1993).

Before the text moves further towards the specific issues of study, here is included a summary on a vital dimension of context in the case of any study on Tibet and Lhasa – that of the representation of Tibet – of which there are several perspectives from which to approach, such as those of: the Western (which is possibly more than one representation), the Chinese, the Asian Buddhist South background representation, the exile community, the Tibetan population in Tibet (influenced by internal and external representations), Tibetan government representatives, and non-Tibetan settlers. Attempting to go into them all would entail a series of studies with access to, and research knowledge of far wider fields than that of this researcher. Here is therefore given a brief summary with outline discussion on a few selected issues, with reference to a wider literature given in the endnotes.170

‘European Tibetophilia’ – a fascination for Tibet dated from the 17th century with the Portuguese Jesuit Antonio de Andrade’s travel accounts, focused on ideologies – religious, political or even racist (Frangville, 2008 quoting French historian Hugues Didier).171

When seen from the perspectives of Tibet and Tibetans, China, the East, the West, the past and the present, it appears self evident that different and contested positions could exist on the issues of Tibet’s history and geo-cultural relationships through time as on current representation of Tibet.

The issue of representation is important to the study presented although a deep presentation of the topic would lie beyond the scope of the study and of this researcher. A short presentation is therefore included in this chapter (4) built from a wide literature of which two presented papers are central (Barnett, 2001; and Frangville, 2008).172 In chapter 7 are included some summary comments from conversations with key informants in Old Lhasa, seen as highly relevant as concerning the complex – and sensitive – issue of representation.

Interpretation of history is central to the perception of Tibet and the question of its status. The representation of Tibet may be outlined in the two main and clear ‘positions’: In one, Tibet is considered an ‘inalienable part of China’. In the other, Tibet is an ‘independent state in fact and law’. Tibet was ‘idealised by both positions as a virgin ‘pure and untouched’ territory outside the modern world’, a “primitive and barbarian” nation, that needed to be ‘civilised’. Tibet was nevertheless somehow not expected to enter the modern world, but rather to be fixed in an imaginary and idealised past? The ‘West’ was in other words not alone in its images of Tibet as ‘paradise lost’ and a heaven for spirituality and purity – also in the eyes of Eastern narrators, Tibetans were backward and child-like, represented as ‘noble savages’.173 As Colonel Younghusband’s wrote: Tibet, seen as a medium for constructing better Selves was thus a ‘Lost Paradise’ having ‘something ‘we (Western society) have long lost, that’s pure innocence’ (ref).
Representation of Tibet after 1950 has been more multi-layered. In PRC Communist propaganda – some of which has survived into the Post-Mao Era, Old Tibet was ‘Hell on Earth’ with the cruelty of the feudal system under a ‘dictatorial’ theological leadership – in contrast to Tibet as a ‘Garden of Eden’ in Western narratives – and in opposition to the China’s declared ‘New Tibet liberated’ following its military intervention in 1950-51. Tibet was and remains in need of modernity through an appropriate state and institutional apparatus – whether Chinese or independent. As Robert Barnett stated, the modernisation and globalisation of Tibet in economic, industrial, cultural and social domains is within the Western representations assimilated to ‘the rape of Tibet and hence its special state of purity and isolation’ (Barnett 2001). In Chinese narratives, current modernisation and emancipation of Tibet society are largely promoted to legitimate the Party line on the Tibet’s status, but it does not enable Tibetans to act by and for themselves. Tibet is represented as having no other alternative than to follow the Chinese central policy.

To speak in the name of Tibetans or defending such or such a political status of Tibet is complicated by there being few if any unambiguous definitions. Tibet may not be regarded as homogeneous as current discourses may pretend. But, as Vanessa Frangville holds, this does not mean that Tibetan people do not feel and regard themselves as a single and unified nation. ‘Identity is not so much a provable fact of history as a situation that Tibetan have created through their determination to be considered as a single people’ (Barnett, 2001:2) – and – ‘The Tibet issue said to be reflective of centuries of popular consensus are actually very recent constructions’ (Elliot Sperling in Frangville, 2008). Sperling demonstrated through Tibetan and Chinese historical material that Chinese assessment of Tibet being an integral part of China did not appear before the second part of the 20th century. Representing Tibetan culture and Tibetans’ experiences and aspirations as homogeneous may thus be false (Frangville, 2008 note 75). It is argued that one cannot dissociate Chinese vision of Tibet from Chinese vision of non-Chinese in general as Chinese representations of Tibetan and of Chinese ethnic minorities in general echoed a tradition of distinguishing between barbarian outsiders and civilised Chinese (Thomas Heberer in Frangville, 2008). China and the West hence both contributed to an ‘otherisation’ of Tibet and Tibetans through centuries that contributed to Chinese control of the Tibet Plateau in the modern political discourse – particularly (Heberer quoted in Frangville, 2008).

Whilst numerous studies tackle the Tibet issue from a Chinese perspective or a Tibetan perspective, very few consider both – despite the fact that the discourses cannot be fully understood if read isolated, since they mutually influence and induce each other’. In all of this, a strong current of ‘otherisation’ has been and is present. Presented contrasts between Tibetans and the main non-Tibetan characters involve a distance that carries out an ‘otherisation’ of Tibetans, has stigmatised Tibetans and resulted in
a fragmentation that hides asymmetrical power relations: non-Tibetans shown as dominant, being the owner and producers of knowledge of Tibet. As a consequence, Tibetans are ‘passive’ with non-Tibetans maintaining their dominance by producing narratives (Frangville, 2008).

The Western ‘dreamworld’ representation of Tibet has been ‘dismantled’ by describing Europeans’ identification as a deliberate assertion to impose European values and beliefs – an ‘ego trip of uniquely Western proportions’ (Schell, 2000:45) – rather than the ‘coincidentia oppositorum’ (“union of oppositions”) suggested by Didier.

A perception of Tibetan protests, with increasing political participation by monks and nuns, as related to similar movements elsewhere in Asia and understood in terms of structural and institutional features common to Buddhist societies, would remove Tibet from its unique and isolated position. This would normalise Tibet as exponent of post-WW2 social empowerment and colonisation processes recognised in several Asian countries (personal communications with anthropologist Ronald Schwartz).

Tibetans may not always have accepted foreign representations of their country without complaint, for instance as expressed by Rinchen Lamo in 1926 or Jamyang Norbu in 1989. Rinchen Lamo found Western remarks about Tibetans to be condescending, inaccurate and self-contradictory. Tolerance by Tibetan officials and policy-makers of such representation today raises the possibility that Western condescension towards Tibetans might among Tibetan leaders be used as an expedient or advantageous strategy or political culture (Barnett in Dodin and Raether, 2001).

Robert Barnett argued (Barnett, 2001) that ‘in the case of the foreign supporters of the Tibetan case, their appeals are often based on a notion or principle that is held to be pre-existent or overriding’ — as the right of a nation to independence or to the right of a people to cultural or religious freedom — and which in the case of Tibet is seen violated, with primordiality (presence from ‘the beginning’) the driving force of the argument in both cases. On one hand, China claims to have existed as a state unified with Tibet for centuries. On the other, Tibet as nation, culture, identity and society has existed independently for millennia (ibid).

Official and semi-official Chinese texts routinely refer to Tibet as ‘Land of Snows’ or ‘Rooftop of the World’ – bringing forth a romantic, commercial image of ‘other-ness’. In Western and exile political representations since the early 1970s, Tibet has been put forward mainly as a special case of violated uniqueness and excellence – in some cases the violation linked to a perception of the place or the people as previously unimpaired, and now desecrated. Western politicians seem to have gravitated progressively towards three related versions of this representation: i) Tibet as a site of cultural, religious or environmental specialness (Barnett, 2001); ii) Presenting Tibetans as a collective embodiment of religiosity or as the only society or state apart from the Vatican to be entirely religious; iii) the representation of Tibet as a violated religious zone that was the basis of the 1985 submission on Tibet in the UN. 'The world has witnessed the sad and almost total destruction of Tibet's unique culture and
religion, and has done precious little to end the extraordinary repression,’ said US Congressman Benjamin Gilman in 1999. ‘Tibet’s unique culture’ has appeared in most of the political speeches given by the Dalai Lama after 1987 (ibid).

Western politicians could have described Tibet as an invaded independent state, as they did with Kuwait (1990). Although activists and politicians in the West believe this to be the case, that representation rarely appears in parliamentary statements of the last few decades.

Importantly, Tibet has not been represented as a colony entitled to decolonization. Had such a model been developed, it would have been based on violation of a universally accepted legal principle – and its appeal would have been through its collegiality with other colonized peoples rather than through its uniqueness. This representation has in effect been abandoned or ignored by Western politicians as far as Tibet is concerned, despite recent efforts by Tibetan leaders to introduce it (Barnett, 2001).

Tibetan exile leaders have chosen use of prominent Western intermediaries to present their case – selecting public relations rather than political alliance as its form of politics and turned to collaborating with former colonizers rather than to formerly colonized (ibid).

The present dominant appeal of the Tibetan case to the West appears to remain related to China’s violation of human right principles, and possibly where the influence of the exile Tibetan leadership is seen most clearly. A problem with the representation of Tibet as a case suffering human rights abuse may perceivably be its vulnerability to what Barnett has interestingly termed ‘double orientalism’: the tendency to view the Chinese system of governance and society as deeply alien because it is ‘Eastern’ or Asian, coupled with the tendency to view it as deeply alien because it is Communist and totalitarian (Barnett, 2001).

The idea that Tibet is not really a mystical or romantic place re-emerged as the standard journalistic comment on Tibet in the early 1990s (Bishop, 2000), although at least since the 1970s scholars have been critical to mystical depictions of Tibet (Barnett, 2001). More recently, texts have challenged not only the Shangri-La view of Tibet, but also the notion of it being violated.

Time will most likely confirm as inaccurate the Chinese modernisation of Tibet as a value-neutral device by the PRC policy makers designed to advance living standards. Wang Lixiong (1998), for example, an often critic of Chinese state policy, has quite openly in influential papers described the above as a policy mechanism for countering religion and nationalism in Tibet. Whether as ‘violated specialness’ or ‘wonderfully savage virgin territory’ in need of an equity-based social structure and modernity: potential choices for a ‘relevant’ or at least expressive representation of Tibet are many. And, as Per Kvaerne said ending his paper in Dodin and Raether (2001:63): ‘who can say how future generations will judge our images of Tibet?’
4.3 Buddhist built typology and urban form

The earliest Buddhist structures seen at Indian settlements are the known rock-cut structures for instance at Ajanta, Bharhut, Ellora and Aurangabad. Halls and cells were carved into the rock face with ‘superfluous’ details such as ‘supporting’ columns and beams without any purpose other than in possible memory of earlier timber-masonry building tradition they may be imitations of (Fischer, 1996:52; Alexander, 2005:155). In architectural scheme and storytelling are here present the essential history and major ‘reminders’ of Buddhism (ibid).

Instruction on traditions (such as those of the Vaastu Shastra, see Appendix) constituted a base for Buddhist built form, this larger legacy subject to a dynamic albeit slow change refined by practice and patrons. Building types remained ‘true’ to older models through the centuries. The tradition of carrying out ‘identical reconstruction’ over generations was nevertheless considered to be representing ‘change’ from an original. Local customs were absorbed into the larger tradition.

Close links are documented to have existed between the Kathmandu Valley and Central Tibet in the 7th century (Vitali, 1990:70-73). In Lhasa, Newari craftsmen are believed to have built the upper structure of the ‘lha-sa’ sanctuary after King Songtsen Gampo himself according to legend had erected the base structure (Vitali, 1990; Akester in Alexander, 2005:148), and most likely also other major structures in Central Tibet (incl. Samye Monastery). In the 17th century, Newari craftsmen, highly respected for their excellence in crafts and artistry, were again heavily involved with construction of the Potala Palace (ibid). The Newaris were organised in guilds (Nepali: guthies). Through the Guthi system traditional craftsmen and artisans retained and passed on knowledge not only on construction but on iconography, significance of different motifs used in painting, and of rituals (ref HCB).

4.3.1 On built form typology

Buddhist culture early made two categories of structure the most important: one to represent objects of worship, the other to support life in the monastery.

Stupa or chörten

The ‘stupa’ (from Sanskrit and Pali: ‘heap’; in Tibetan: chörten) or mound-like structure containing Buddhist relics, developed into a multilevel pagoda (China) and as a large domed stupa or ‘bodhta’ of the all-seeing Buddha (Nepal). The ‘chorten’ (Tibetan: ‘dharma place or seat’) as structure would represent the eight different spiritual stages of life (of Buddha), presenting a psycho-cosmogram similar to the Mandala manifesting the body of the Law.180

The chörten would house relics of saints, some stupas containing the whole ‘buried’ body. The structure is fundamentally a temple symbolising the Buddha or any other person who through ascetics has
realised the ‘body of the Buddha’. From ‘chortens’ found in Tholing and elsewhere in Western Tibet,

Giuseppe Tucci (Tucci, 1973; Vitali, 1990) drew influences and parallels in building technique to
Gandhara culture (Pakistan).

Giuseppe Tucci (1894-1984) confirmed ‘non-Chinese’ origin of carved elements at Jokhang that could
link date and origin influence to Newari craftsmen – later confirmed in detail investigations by Paola
Mortari Verdara (Beguin and Vergara, 1987; Alexander, 2005). Tucci’s arguments was built on evidence
of close links between West Tibet, the Gangharan cultural region and Kashmir-Nepal, and the Guge
kings (West Tibet) believed to have contributed to rebuilding and enlarging temples in Lhasa, although
no specific references are known (Tucci, 1973).

**The vihara or monastery**

Vihara is the Sanskrit and Pali term for (Buddhist) monastery. It originally meant ‘a secluded place in
which to live for wandering monks of the Sangha’ (Buddhist community), dedicated to asceticism and
the monastic life who during rainy seasons stayed in temporary shelters, wooden constructions or
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(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vihara) simple thatch bamboo huts. However, as it was considered an act of merit not only to feed a monk but also to shelter him, sumptuous monasteries created by rich lay devotees ‘emerged’ near settlements, close enough for begging alms from the population but with enough seclusion to not disturb meditation. Trade-routes with potential donations from wealthy traders were ideal locations for a vihara.

With an increasing demands for teaching, viharas also developed into educational institutions from the first century CE onwards (ibid). The 2nd century BCE brought a standard vihara plan – built either as a free standing structure, or formed as rock-cut caves like ‘chaitya-grihas’ or rock-hewn halls of worship regarded as one of the most important aspects of Buddhist architecture ) and known from the Deccan plateau in South India (forum.indianetzone.com/6/chaitya_grihas_buddhist_architecture – consisting of a walled quadrangular court flanked by small cells (basic layout similar to the communal space of an ashrama – residence of a religious community and its guru; ringed with huts in early Buddhism (www.thefreedictionary.com/Ashrama).

Over the centuries simple cave monasteries (viharas) and worship halls (chaityas) became free-standing structures, formally designed and built by highly skilled artisans and craftsmen with memory of their ‘timber roots’ and continued imitating the nuances of a wooden structure and the wood grain in their stone structures in India (Tadgatt 1990; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vihara).

Fig. 28 The early vihara transformed into a stone structure, as here the core of Jokhang Temple (hypothetically built as a fortified structure before taken over as sanctuary in the mid-7th century CE). The original monks cells (may have been gradually transform

Fig. 29 Jokhang Temple Monastery as been expanded over several periods to the form and character it has today. The central vihara contains numerous deity chapels including the main Jowo image (LHCA Project 2001)
The kora

Kora is a type of pilgrimage and a type of meditation in Tibetan Buddhism, performed by making a walking *circumambulation* around a sacred structure, site or temple. Although not a built structure, the kora is a conscious construct of high importance in the built and spiritual environments and therefore included here as typology. The circling or circum-ambulation is in Buddhism and Hinduism an essential part of a ritual of *puja* (Sanskrit: pilgrimage purifying the soul), the *kora* being an essential combined physical and spiritual cultural construct.

In a natural or rural setting the *kora* may occur as an 'organically' meandering path (Michell, 1989). In the urban context the *kora* may enclose an/the early phase of the settlement – for instance following the perimeter of an earlier town wall in Kathmandu (Gutschow, various publications), and quite likely also in Lhasa along Barkor Street around the early kernel known as Barkor.

Other structures

Along and off a kora, and connected to this, would be located various Buddhist structures such as *mani walls*, *dorings*, *darchens* and others. This typology is well documented in an extensive international
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literature. A further discussion is considered outside the scope of the study (large scientific literature; also see Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001).

Fig. 31 Mani walls are gradually build up with contributions from the passing pilgrims adding stone on stone. Maniwalls may be found along the kora on special sacred locations, as here towards the top of the Lingkor climbing Chakpori hill in Lhasa; 1998

4.3.2 Urban traditions

Traditions of Buddhist and Hindu settlement planning as known are understood to be based on the principles of the Post-Vedic shastras. Research indicates that temple complexes in India reflect the principles of planning, building and design that were defined for indo-Arian villages and settlements in the Arthasastra (a 4th century BC Sanskrit work on politics and statecraft; and the Vaastu Shaatra (Mabett, 1964; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthashastra; http://www.hinduism.co.za/kautilya.htm)).

Built structures and their functionality would be ‘quality-guaranteed as long as the instructions of Vedic texts were followed. In a similar manner, use of traditional building types would bridge the present with the past (ibid). A hinterland of villages would ensure material and ritual tributes to a Buddhist town, with a larger ‘Mandalic’ structure ‘visible’ to the initiated within the larger sacred landscape. In the intimacy of the temple, representing a world of devotion connected to the cosmic order, the devotee would be
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reminded of the ever-presence of cosmos through the ‘Mandala’ interpreted in numerous material and spiritual forms (ibid).

The Chinese empire was ‘similar’ to that of Rome or India in that its vast territories were subdivided into series of ‘cellular’ units with an aggregate of cities established for resource and administrative control, production and military protection.

Major towns serving as political, economic and religious centres were supported by nets of smaller settlements. Written sources as well as contemporary research indicate that size of a settlement may not have been decisive for its power, only its functions (Christie and Loseby, 1996:1).

Indus region

Major settlements of the Indus region were established as military encampments, some subsequently to be transformed into rulers’ fortified towns as often as possible located where major trade routes crossed.

Cultural development across the Indian subcontinent is often simplified into four main historic periods: two before and two after the start of the Christian era (Volwahsen, 1969). More than 330 settlements of the ‘Indus culture’ (2500-1500 BCE, with Mohenjo Daro, Harappa and later Taxila) are known in that region, the earliest ‘real’ written sources dated to about 600 BCE (ibid; Wright, 2010; Ching et al, 2006).

A new ruler could not inhabit his conquered enemy’s town, but would build a new town, located even next to the one conquered. Each division of a town would be structured by caste and occupation.

By 600-500 BCE there were 20-30 major towns in the NW Indian region, and ca 500 in all (ibid). On the rich agricultural plains of northern Punjab in the Taxila Valley between present Islamabad and Peshawar accommodated around 50 major fortified monastery towns within a 5 km by 4 km hilly landscape, all with orthomorphic layouts and within fortified walls. Together they were known as ‘Taxila’ (a World Heritage site since 1980) – the first towns believed founded in the 7-6th centuries BCE (Wright, 2010; Ching et al, 2006).

Bhir Mound - Taxila’s first town dated to the Achaemenid period (560-330 BCE) early became a centre of commerce and intellectual activity linking Iran with Central Asia and India.

Sirkap was the second town at Taxila and established around year 185 BCE with Greek urban planning including town walls 6 meters thick and 6-9 meters high and with ‘Buddhist’ structures, although its palace may show clear similarities to Assyrian palaces of Mesopotamia (Barnow 2000:70-71). Sirkap’s main street was 700 m long, with shops all along in single and double storey buildings of mud and timber construction. Internal courtyards gave access to up to 20 rooms in each house.

Sirsukh was established around 80 CE, abandoned when the White Huns invaded Punjab in late 5th century CE.

Takht-i-bahi monastery in Swat (North-Western Pakistan) of the Gandhara culture is located on protecting hills as a dense and complex assembly of orthogonal stone structures of one and two storeys, believed established in the first century CE and eventually abandoned (6-7th centuries CE) as Buddhism weakened. Takht-i-bahi is still the most complete Buddhist monastery complex extant in Pakistan (as ruin). Part of a tradition of Hindu and Buddhist monastic institutions and built structures as typologies spread also into the Himalayas and Central Asia.

Alexander the Great’s invasion in 336 BCE had introduced Greek political institutions and administrative systems that were to influence most aspects of community life, administration and culture for centuries.
to come. In the ‘Gandharan period’ (peak 1st to 5th century CE) buildings of early Indian traditions blended with Hellenic influences (Ptolemaeus in 145 CE mentioned 300 Indian towns of various sizes, from metropolis to town). In the last decades of the 5th century CE, the Huns overrun India to Ganges, and Buddhist monasteries and universities were destroyed or turned into Hindu institutions (Son, 2011; Ching et al, 2006).

Central Asia
Earlier Central Asia was heavily influenced by Chinese, Indian and Persian culture. Waves of Arab and Mongol conquests (9-11th centuries) brought havoc through Central Asia and beyond – Muslim and Mongol culture came to have lasting influence throughout the region. Towns were demolished, abandoned and then rebuilt, often on new sites. Urban traditions of Central Asia at the start of the period were significantly informed by Islamic traditions with a polyfocal structure organised within an ‘organic’ layout of loosely connected family and tribally oriented ‘muhallahs’, most such neighbourhoods with their own religious structures century (Manu, 1999; Gaubatz, 1996; Southall, 1998).

This would mean the town had a fortress or citadel normally located west or northwest of the town. The inner city (Arabic: medina) would include a central market street with the most important buildings (religious, administrative) located adjacent. Artisans and merchants quarters were normally around the market street by the town centre. Where a town would have more than one important node (polyfocal) suburbs would emerge between main nodes. The town would normally be protected by town walls, sometimes in two or three layers, each ‘muhallah’ or neighbourhood was often walled and protected, locked at night for defensive purposes, in an ‘inward’ built form, the outer normally far outside the built up area as outer defence of the population and agricultural areas inside (ibid). Caravanserais would be located outside the town centre, whilst the market, the religious centre and school were normally located together in the kernel (Gaubatz, 1996; Southall, 1998). The 14th-15th centuries are acknowledged as a period of unprecedented development of urban living, culture and construction also here, based on earlier traditions that were sustained into the 18th century (ibid).

China
China was a relatively stable region already by 1500 BCE. A well documented ‘unbroken’ civilisation in written sources is known since well before the later Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE). Urban traditions in China date from the same period as in India, around 1500 BCE. Already before the 1st century BCE, the emperor was the largest landowner, and an imperial bureaucracy the backbone of Chinese society and culture. Landownership was directly linked to bureaucracy, and the vast majority of the people served as tenant farmers (Barnow, 2000:116). The state, that is the emperor, soon came to control also all trade. In China by 1800 CE, only 10-20% of landowners lived in agricultural villages, the rest in
administrative towns (Gaubatz, 1996; Southall, 1998). China’s urban history extends over more than 3500 years, and the contemporary city is built on ‘predecessors’ of urban form with layers of development and historical features (see Dong, 1989:7; He, 1996:4; Nelson, 1988:1). Urban historians have divided ‘the development line’ of urban form in China into 5 distinct periods:

- Early traditional form, present in the Shang Dynasty (1600 BCE-1048 BCE);
- Late traditional form, from the Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE) onwards;
- Transitional forms developed during the Republican period (1842-1949);
- Socialist city of the Mao period (1949-1978); and
- Contemporary urban form, emerging from 1980 onwards.

(Gaubatz, 1998:251-270; Nelson, 1988)

Early Shang cities provided the religious, political and administrative functions of a government that ruled a large kingdom (Nelson, 1988:1). The technology to build urban protected settlements existed before the Shang period, and fortified villages from the Neolithic period (ca 2000 BCE) are known to have covered up to 30 hectares — ‘the rectilinear shape, position of gates and orderly division of space within late Neolithic villages clearly foreshadow the structure of early Chinese cities, while house foundations suggest the use of classical Chinese beam-and-frame construction easily’ (Nelson, 1988). From the ‘Spring and Autumn Period’ (722 BCE-476 BCE) are recorded about 210 cities as present in China.

During the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) was developed a hierarchical structure of urban centres, with transportation networks between population centres.

The base module of the Chinese urban system was the ‘hsien’, an economic and politically self contained, independent territorial, well regular unit in Chinese society. The number of ‘hsiens’ between year in China between year 0 CE to 1700 CE varied from 1200 to about 1400. The population of a ‘hsien’ could vary from 4-5000 to more than 12000 persons. Above hsien was the ‘fu’ or prefecture town, each normally administering six ‘hsiens’, and in all about 200-250 fu’s in China. Above the fu were 18 provincial capitals, and above these was only the emperor’s capital only. The system was maintained from late 6th century CE and into the early 20th century. By ca 1000 CE, ‘hsiens’ in NW China had a relatively open character, as walled segments were opened.
and markets allowed to be located outside the town walls, and the town plan less regular. This possibly signalled a more secure political situation, and less dominance in planning of the cosmological principles were possibly signs of greater local independence and reduced state intervention (Gaubatz, 1996, 1998; Barnow, 2000:117-140; Nelson, 1988).

Well before the Tang Dynasty were described a small range of urban form ‘archetypes’ in China, laid out according to cosmological principles.

One was a rectangular walled settlement of north-south orientation. A synthesis of ‘classical’ principles of urban planning is documented in the Han re-interpretation of the ‘zhou li’ principles, an ancient document attributed to a statesman of the early Zhou period (ca. 900 BCE). The principles were to remain of major influence on development of urban form in China up towards present times (Nelson, 1988:4; Whitehand and Gu, 2007), and closely related architectural space, social status, social role and functionality (drawing on principles of archaism, centralism, organicism and moralism – not discussed here; see Charles M. Nelson (1988) in ‘Urban Planning in Pre-Industrial China’, US-China Review).

The ideal capital city was a perfect square, each nine li on a side (and ideally with nine by nine streets) bisected by a central meridinal axis so that it formed the ideographic character for earth and China. The square or rectangle palace complex was located in the centre of town, with the ceremonial hall immediately south of the palace, opening towards the south. This kernel was surrounded by an administrative complex of square or rectangular main building complexes, and, finally the outer city. This structure mirrored the division of the universe into three levels and symbolizing the moralist division of Chinese society into the emperor, scholar-administrators, and commoners (Nelson, 1988). A settlement was a town only if it was enclosed by a protective wall and sanctified by the ruler; town and wall the same sign in Chinese writing.

Protective gates and walls laid out in the cardinal directions enclosed functionally differentiated spaces, with the main entry into the city from the south end (Nelson 1988:2). Town walls and gates may have had a largely symbolic importance as signifying the presence of government, rather than a special safety level (Barnow, 2000:117-140). Outside the walled core more fluid settlement patterns often developed, sometimes linear along the main routes (Gaubatz, 1998). The hierarchical and strictly controlled societal structure that led from the Emperor via the administrative elite to the common citizen,
held the population as immutably fixed and stable. Social as well as geographical movement between allocated spaces in the hierarchy was strictly controlled by law, policy and custom (ibid).

There was in China not going to be a religious state within the state – unlike in Europe – and despite the fact that also in Asia (China, Japan and India) endorsement and instruction by the King was normally required for a set of beliefs (religion) to be accepted by the people, as in King Songtsen Gampo’s ‘conversion’ of people in the Tibetan region to Buddhism (Gaubatz, 1996; Wu, 1986). The Abbot in charge wielded considerable power, and each Buddhist and Tao institution was typically quite independent of the Emperor. Existing outside the emperor’s state, Buddhism in China borrowed secular architectural traditional character from other Chinese built form (ibid). Monastic institutions were therefore architecturally ‘anonymous’ in built character, similar to other traditional structures – and like most buildings square or rectangular with axial courtyard layouts. Religious structures in China hence contributed less towards developing architectural monumentality than did religious structures in Hindu India with highly complex urban structures ordered from cosmological (Mandalic) concepts (Barnow, 2000:117-140).

Fig. 34 Plan of a Yunnan Province Buddhist Temple reflecting age-old guidelines for building layout (internal functionality and relationships) and, relationship to surrounding nature with fengshui.
4.4 Tibetan built form

A severe climate combined with scarce resources (building materials and manpower) contributed to define the scale, appearance and building methods for traditional buildings in Central Tibet. Located in the rain-shadow of the Himalayas, buildings in Central Tibet could have flat roofs, waterproofed against the short rainy period by traditional methods well known and tested from the Himalayas through Yemen and throughout mountainous North Africa, with traditions that reflect the cultural context of each region – whether Buddhist or Muslim (authors comment, based on own work throughout this extended region).

Fig. 35 Samye Monastery, built in ‘mandalic’ form inside a near circular outer wall was most probably first constructed between 775 and 779 CE under the patronage of King Trisong Detsen of Tibet who sought to revitalize Buddhism, which had declined since its introduction by King Songtsen Gampo in the 7th century. The monastery was supposedly modelled on the design of Odantapuri Monastery in Bihar, India. The original buildings have long disappeared, badly damaged several times - by civil war in the 11th century, fires in the mid 17th century and in 1826, an earthquake in 1816, and in the 20th century, particularly during the Cultural Revolution (various sources).

The early Indian vihara-type structure and the Mandala influenced monastic and secular Tibetan architecture at least since the introduction of Buddhism (7th century BCE) – that is as far back as available sources (documents and physical remains) allow (Fischer, 1996:140). In Lhasa early Indian-Newari influences in construction and decoration (brackets and struts) are documented at the Jokhang temple (possibly 7th century remains) by Verdara (Beguin and Vergara, 1987). In parallel are recognised some ‘pan-Asian’ building typologies – from courtyard dwellings to large building complexes. Buddhism continuously shaping material culture (Fischer 1993; 1996:64). Emphasising ‘tradition’ and ‘treatise’ as central, Buddhism has always celebrated excellence in skills and craftsmanship, individual
creativity regarded as relatively unimportant in ‘copying’ or interpreting traditional images and forms. Buddhist building and design traditions are in Central Tibet held to have been of overarching influence well into the second half of the 20th century, Tibet's traditional architecture has by many been described as indigenous and unique (Alexander in De Filippi, 2007; and others). Although it is recognised to have absorbed numerous influences of traditions, styles and development from India, Central Asia and China – especially Hindu and Buddhist architectural principles – and establishing cultural bridges between early settlements, Tibetan traditional architecture in this authors view, without any doubt expresses unique qualities as one of the world's most distinct and recognisable forms of architectural expression.

Tibetan sources indicate that a Buddhist tradition was followed of building main temples in imitation of earlier Indian models (Tucci, 1973:89). Sources of the Nyingma school of Buddhism state that Samye Monastery built around 775 CE as the first known Buddhist monastery town in Tibet was not 'invented' but built on Mandalic cosmological models after the famous Otantapuri Temple (or Udandapura) in Bihar, India. The architectural-spiritual concept for Samye was according to Giuseppe Tucci ‘to create a microcosm, a projection of the macrocosm,’ the central temple with 4+4 buildings set out in cardinal and intermediary directions clearly seen to be representing the eight continents of Buddhist cosmology.
Part Four: Cultural context

(Tucci 1973:89). Samye was built in different styles by craftsmen from different regions, their participation possibly more relevant than to buildings and overall form (ibid).

The later version of Ramoche Temple in Lhasa was modelled on Vikramasila temple in Bihar, India. The Potala Palace is named after Mount Potala in southern India, a holy mountain of the Hindu God Shiva – by Buddhists dedicated to Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva of compassion. As both king Songtsen Gampo and the Dalai Lama were considered reincarnations of Avalokiteshvara, Potala was an obvious name for their dwelling. Drepung Monastery in Lhasa, founded in 1416, is believed modelled on the temple at Dhanyakataka in southern India (Tucci, 1973:89; Batchelor, 1998:80).

Tibetan legends tell of supernatural activity associated with construction of both the ‘lha-sa’ sanctuary (Jokhang Temple in Lhasa) and Samye Monastery – both completed only after a performance of secret rites (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmasambhava; others). This I interpret as the legends clearly telling of a long battle of ‘the old’ versus ‘the new’ Buddhist culture.

Under the strong continuous influence of Buddhist culture, a form of architectural stability resulted in Central Tibet – considerable social-cultural continuity also affecting adjoining communities, according to early Chinese sources report (Fischer 1993:124).

4.4.1 Traditions of building

From a distance individual buildings in the Tibetan landscape may appear as austere roughly hewn ‘block-houses’ existing beyond any immediately recognisable scale – to do with the dimensions, force and ‘monotony’ of the landscape, the unique high altitude light, and the momentous contrast between natural and the manmade. When viewed at a close range, each individual building (rural or in townscape), reveals a wonderfully rich yet controlled language of built form – proportions, building materials, methods, motifs, colours and contrasts – created with deep knowledge and humility towards living traditions.

The apparent ‘identical’ traditional buildings of a limited typology in Central Tibet in reality all ‘differ’ in plan, section and organisation, size, use of carved details and painted decorations, as in their overall architectural projection. Traditional built form in Central Tibet would be represented by a vocabulary of relatively few ‘language elements’ whether the structures were intended for monastic or secular functionality. Only limited research on traditional Tibetan architecture is available internationally (Larsen & Sinding-Larsen 2001; Alexander, 2005; Chinese publications). The development of built form principles and traditions of Central Tibet is recognised as a complex and surprisingly little researched area, in itself a complex study beyond the scope of this study.

In reality these traditional and seemingly modest buildings of only very few ‘types’ are all ‘different’ – in size, material projection, intensity of crafted details and painted decorations and their overall expression.
A wonderfully rich yet controlled language of contrasts is experienced whether seen as an individual building or as a random and rich streetscape, and created with the simplest of means.

In Chinese and Indian culture the square with focus on its centre (axis mundi) as a Mandala was the symbol of the ordered world (as in numerous Chinese temples, see ‘Oriental Architecture’, as on in http://www.orientalarchitecture.com/china/).

![Potala Palace on Mrpori hill, with Shöl administrative village below, right) seen from Chakpori hill. Shöl representing an old settlement (undated, but some parts could possibly go back to the 7th century CE) inside and outside the Potala dzong fortification walls remained intact for another few months before near-total demolition; 1994](image)

Also in Central Tibet building layouts would reflect this, as square or rectangular building volumes assembled around square or orthographic external courtyards, some closed on all four sides, and others opening to the outside – likely in consequence of combined cultural-spiritual principles of Buddhism, and of traditional geomancy, and physical ‘constraints’ such as the optimal lengths and weights of timber that could be transported by yak and man across high mountain passes.

The human dimension ever present at close range, traditional built form expresses clearly the joy and spiritual importance of ‘making’ – a sign of vernacular architecture of long traditions and of the finest order. The traditional ‘rough-cut’ rural Tibetan building that would in odd assemblies interpreted into an ‘urban’ setting also constitute the character of Lhasa townscape represented urban heritage of unique value whether seen in a Himalayan or wider international perspective.

Tibetan built form may have given architecture without the greater surprises, but buildings and built form of monumentality, harmony of scale and proportion, with unique richness of details and decoration.
The dictate of available building materials has been significant for the development of Tibetan traditional architecture.

Fig. 38 A typology overview of traditional-historical buildings formed by the same construction methods in a climate of scarce building materials. Of the six monastic structures shown (top), only Jokhang and Ramoche (the first known constructions here) are located east-west (according to traditions they have varying orientation due to different geo-cultural origins). All the buildings illustrated – as all other pre-1950 construction in Lhasa and Tibet were based on an ‘architecture of pillars’ (see Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001). The above building plans are not to scale; 2006
Building layouts were made symmetrical square or rectangular by repetition of orthomorphous modules and grouped around courtyards – ‘architecture of pillars’ (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001). Methods of building and the prevalent building typology recognised in Lhasa are interpreted as transformed from rural ‘archetypes’ and traditions into a setting that was gradually urbanised. A main example of this is the rural courtyard mansion.

Building volumes have solid external walls (combination of stone and mud-brick) and a ‘light’ interior predominantly constructed in timber posts and beams, in grids of 2-2,5m modules as ‘an architecture of pillars’, the base module the same for large or small structures, monastic and ‘secular’ (ibid). In the interior space, a short-span construction of heavy timber columns and beams created spaces where the
pillars and overlaying beams are highly prominent visual elements. This is so again, whether the building is residential or monastic, also in a large prayer hall.

Old Lhasa is located on flat land, its ‘repetitive’ courtyard structures characterised a loose village structure that in Lhasa is believed gradually densified as townscape in the 18-19th centuries. Lhasa in 1995 had, in addition to an extant significant components of the historic Tibetan settlement (Old Lhasa), remnants of ‘organic’ mountain village built form as shown in small extant clusters of buildings on Chakpori.

High noble’s residences and important monastic buildings were allowed built in masonry only, but normally only the lower floor had such construction – the remainder of the external envelope constructed in sun-dried mud bricks.

The courtyard-house as building type is well known in large parts of Asia – a pan-Asian built typology. North-south orientation opened the building towards life-giving sun; important for spiritual reasons and at Lhasa altitude essential for the physiological life of its inhabitants – and still in ‘use’ today. The modest Himalayan courtyard house found for instance in the Western Himalayas and Hindu Kush, normally built in terraced clusters on sloping non-arable land, in Central Tibet early met building traditions of other topographies and cultural regions, such as the dense village clusters of China and south-east Asia (Knapp, 2000).

Buildings constructed entirely in timber (Chinese pavilions) are not considered indigenous to Central Tibet but as an ‘import’ from China in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE). The few that exist are normally built on top of heavy traditional masonry-timber constructions (as at the Jokhang and Samye temples), with near ‘identical’ Chinese roof construction of these in composite timber framework of heavily decorated tie-beams and struts.

The length of timber that could easily be transported by horse, yak and man across the high Himalayan passes was limited to 2-2.5 meters. Buildings in Lhasa as in central Tibet are therefore constructed as
additions of such square modules, separated as needed by structural walls in stone and mud-brick. The module was base unit for layout and construction of also large and complex structures. The resulting ‘architecture of pillars’ is thus a consequence of limitations from available building materials – a room defined by its number of pillars (Larsen & Sinding-Larsen, 2001; Alexander, 2005). Short span timber beams (Lhasa average centre-to centre distance of pillars is 2.2 m) transferred heavy dead loads from stone and earth floor/roof constructions on to short, multi-segmented/spliced timber columns or deep load-bearing rubble masonry pillars or wall-lengths (ibid).

Load bearing walls were built in rubble masonry and sun-baked mud bricks in a nominally binding mud mortar, onto which were transferred heavy dead loads of construction. External walls were all load-bearing and built with an inwards incline that varied from 3% to 5% off the vertical.

The construction of interior spaces in a short-span construction of heavy timber columns and beams, created spaces with pillars and beams as highly prominent visual elements, whether the building was residential or monastic, as in a large prayer hall.

Monastic interior spaces were normally heavily decorated with mural paintings with religious, spiritual motifs (as could also be ‘richer’ secular buildings). Entire wall surfaces, finely crafted timber brackets, columns and beams would be painted as decorative components, as would also be doors and windows surrounds.

Temples and houses or rooms for higher lamas would be painted ochre, with monastic residences, assembly halls and other areas usually white-washed. Secular residential rooms may inside have wall murals, often on a coloured base.

Floors and flat roofs were built with a waterproofed clay finish on graded layers of earth, on graded rubble again laid on timber (larger to smaller in layers). A roof structure could (adding new layers of clay to waterproof the surface) over time easily build up to a depth of 40-60 cm, hence building up to very considerable deadloads. Collapse was a well-known and ‘expected’ occurrence, as was also demolition and reconstruction of buildings – in cyclical physical-spiritual sequences.
Buildings owned by a monastic institution show this by the top ‘pen bey’ or ‘benma’ frieze in maroon coloured short and clay-reinforced bunches of the tamarisk bush, or ‘benma’ (ibid).

Traditions in use of colour and decoration differed across the regions of Tibet, and between the religious schools. This is less evident in historical Lhasa that predominantly represents the Gelugpa school of Tibetan Buddhism.

In Western Tibet colour ranges of blues and greys (Sakya region) or a white-wash decorated with red-white and red-white-blue vertical stripes are dominants (Alexander, 2005; Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001).

Non-permanent decorations have always been important for Tibetan buildings, the symbolic importance of banners, prayer flags, cylinders and objects giving the buildings special protection against ‘evil forces’, identity and character, manifesting a living ‘symbiosis’ of people and their environment.

In modern Lhasa society there seems to be little room for traditional building methods – both in terms of time, cost and keeping knowledge of the traditions. The few private building projects carries out in Old Lhasa, however, have shown that high standard traditional craftsmanship is available. In rural areas traditional building crafts seem prominent, with less use of modern materials (concrete blocks etc) and
modern building types than can be seen in other parts of the Himalayan region (as in parts of the Hindu Kush).

4.4.2 Old Lhasa built typology in 1995

In his important book on Himalayan architecture (1987), Manfred Gerner described and discussed five main categories, typologies, of built form in the Tibetan areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prozessionswege – koras for circumambulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tschorsten – stupa, in tibetan chörten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kloster, Temple und Schrine – monastery, temple and shrine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Profanbauten: Burgen und Paläste – secular buildings: dzongs and palaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stadtebau: Bürger und Bauernhäuser – townbuildings: courtyard mansions and townhouses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Ronald M. Bernier in 'Himalayan Architecture' (1997) dealt with architectural and cultural aspects closely associated with but not quite within the Tibetan geo-cultural region – with focus on geographical/cultural areas outside Tibet that were and in part still are strongly influenced by Tibetan cultural traditions. Bernier considered Central Tibet geographically located beyond the Himalayas, and in his book hence gave its architecture surprisingly little attention.

'The Lhasa Atlas' (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001) proposed and discussed a more complete and complex typology of monastic and secular buildings than the above publications. The later publication by Andre Alexander ‘Temples of Lhasa’ (Alexander, 2005) went further in describing and discussing a monastic typology through an emphasis on selected building complexes in Lhasa. In addition, a few recent Chinese-language books are also published on traditional Tibetan architecture – unfortunately little accessible to this author. Together this literature provides a first base from which to further investigate a Lhasa and Central Tibet typology of built form. Material published in 'Tibet Geographic' (Tibet Literature and Art League, Beijing, 2006/3) should also be mentioned.

Built typology as presented in 'The Lhasa Atlas' defined buildings as either monastic (religious) or secular. Religious buildings were divided into three groups (A to C), and secular buildings into nine groups (D through to L). See Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001:60-61.

The range of built typology in Lhasa in 1995, as presented here, was seen to be confirming the traditional built typology of Central Tibet – building types simply described as residential, administrative, monastic, and dzong (see later) – with the kora added as physical-intangible structure.

Residential buildings

Courtyard manorhouse – (Tibetan: gZim-shag/Zim-sha; Chinese: Senxia). Family home and business ‘centre’ for the noble families and well-off traders. The courtyard manor house represents a major ‘building-block’ of the settlement structure – this typology generating the urban grain or tissue from a
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relatively small number of important large family residences. After the 18th century, gradual 'infill' in the form of smaller townhouses and other buildings gave Lhasa of the 20th century its unique character.

Fig. 43 Rural mansion near Samye Monastery, Central Tibet. The plan elements – a main building and outbuildings separated by and enclosing a large external courtyard – and the overall orientation may be recognised in most if not all homesteads in the region, from simple rural village farmsteads to urban courtyard manors; 1999

Fig. 44 Kungsangtse Courtyard Manor, located of Lingkor South was repaired and upgraded in 2002-2003 to a good standard, providing traditional and good housing to a considerable number of families; 2004

The property focus was normally a 2 to 4 storey main building facing south into a large courtyard enclosed by 2-storey outbuildings accommodating servants above rooms for storage and animals; entry
to the complex was through a main gate in the south-wing of outbuildings; the complex having an overall symmetrical layout. Structures of varying quality and ‘opulence’ in execution of size, use of space, decoration and carved details would depend on the ‘grade of aristocracy’ – ie what the ‘rules’ would permit the specific owning family, and their wealth. These buildings were considerably larger, better built and more lavishly decorated than any other secular buildings in Lhasa. The building type originated from the country estate that landowning families replicated in Lhasa from the 17th C onwards when instructed by the 5th Dalai Lama to establish residence also in the capital to play their part in government (Snellgrove and Richardson, 1968). A brief outline on functionality, use of space, is included in the chapter endnotes.184

Other residential buildings

Fig. 45 Jamyang Courtyards Tenement – with seven to eight connected courtyards – was built to house servants, animals and storage, and has from the 1950s provided housing for a large number of families; 2004

Ordinary residential buildings – (‘ordinary’: Tibetan: sGo-ra/Gora – Chinese: Guore) on single to three storeys with small courtyards, often two or three buildings combined in close groups sharing walls (party walls), sometimes several smaller structures changed into one larger building later. Most goras were
owned and erected by the monasteries, for their own use, or as rented accommodation for pilgrims and particularly for their large community of monks on and off living in Lhasa during the religious rituals. Example: Trapshichar.

**Tenement** – Large courtyard construction as ‘regular’ construction filling available space with one or more open internal courtyard that also provided access to all units; usually built to let, often owned by monasteries. Example: Jamyang courtyards.

**Townhouse** – Small infill courtyard construction built on odd sites in the town, usually built to let, often owned by monasteries, some times by lower level officials, craftsmen or traders. Example: Trapshichar.

**Single family house** – (Tibetan: khang-pa) Small buildings often for independent owning families; sometimes described as of three types (small dwelling, shop, summer house). Example: Dakar, Loden, Choetrikhang.

**Summer house** – (Tibetan: dro-khang) Dwelling for the noble family or high lama located in an open landscape or large gardens of an estate outside the core of historic Lhasa to avoid the heat and increasing pollution of the Barkor summer. Also described as khang-pa. Extant example: Tsomonling Drokhang. Small shops – (Tibetan: tsong-khang)

**Smaller buildings** with shop unit/s on the ground floor and living accommodation above – sometimes called khang-pa.

**Administrative buildings**

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Fig. 46 Shol Lekung below the Potala Palace accommodated part of the Kashag military HQ until 1951, and in the 1990s the main office of the TAR regional cultural heritage administration; 2004
Part Four: Cultural context

(Tibetan: las-khungs or lae-kung) These buildings have differing forms and layouts that vary with location and topography of the site, and size, type and use of the structure. Example: Shôl Lekung in Shôl; see ‘The Lhasa Atlas’ for details (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001).

Temple and monastery

Fig. 47 Meru Dratsang (monastery and monastic college); 2002

(Tibetan: dGon-pa/Gonpa) A Buddhist monastery complex would normally be located at a distance from the road and reached through a gate-structure opening into a courtyard (in contrast, a Hindu temple would mostly be located directly on the road, in locations of maximum exposure). The typical Buddhist monastery complex of a single or several orthogonal courtyards is oriented north-south, with main access normally from the south, its main shrine located opposite the main gate. The main deity shrine and general areas located on the ground floor (the Disciples Way) would be open to all devotees. The main room of the temple (Gumpa, the Great Way) with its major deities and as relevant Tantric shrine (the Diamond Way) would be located on the upper level, with restricted access – women were normally excluded (Gellner 2001:37; Larsen and Sinding-Larsen 2001:60).

Monasteries would vary in composition and layout depending on topography, setting, and criteria associated with ‘fengshui’ traditions – all within an orthometric geometry related to the courtyard manor (‘zim-sha’) – when larger assemblies then in the form of ‘village clusters’ such as at Sera or Drepung
monasteries. A monastery main building would have the main prayer room at the end of the main entry axis (with an extended volume for the higher main Buddha), the main room surrounded by numerous smaller chapels – origins related to the Indian vihara structure; a main building would usually have four storeys as illustrated at Meru Nyingpa. Main components would be protector temple – a single storey double height square block or mandala structure; prayer wheel house; labrang – representative office of the monastery, high lama estate or house for the head of the monastery; monks quarters – usually located above and around the main temple volumes (Jokhang), in single or double storey buildings enclosing the courtyard, or in separate buildings located in the landscape (Drepung). Whilst earlier all Lhasa monasteries are assumed to have contained all functional components, these are still present within the Jokhang Temple Monastery Complex ( lhaden tsuglakhang).

The dzong

The dzong (Tibetan: rDzong) was a defensive fortress found throughout Buddhist areas, frequently built on a hilltop or mountain spur – and an administrative-spiritual-military county base. Up to 1951, Tibet’s territory was divided into 53 prefecture districts also called Dzongs, each with two ‘Dzongpöns’ – a lama (Tse-dung) and a layman – who had spiritual-civil and military powers, equal in all respects. Dzongs serve as the religious, military, administrative, and social centres of their district, and were often the site of annual religious festivals.

Rooms inside the dzong were equally allocated administrative and religious functions, the division of religious functions reflecting the idealized duality of power between the religious and administrative branches of government. Located in the middle of the dzong complex was the dzong palace (Tibetan: sPo-brang or Podrang), with architectural and decorative characteristics also found in monasteries and noble courtyard mansions. Similar to most Tibetan buildings, the podrang is strictly symmetrical on a central axis with a vertical architectural hierarchy. Built across the extended Himalayan region as towering massive stone, earth and plaster construction with, with inward sloping walls – whitewashed
Part Four: Cultural context

with few or no windows in the lower levels – surrounding a complex of courtyards, temples, administrative offices, and monks’ accommodation, most dzongs are believed built by tradition without the use of architectural plans (Amundsen, 2003; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dzong_architecture). For a major dzong, such as the Potala Palace in Lhasa, elaborate plans are known to have existed early – possibly at the time of construction. Although inspected by the author at the TAR Archives Bureau, Lhasa by special invitation in 2000, it has not been possible to confirm the date of the Lhasa construction drawings. The planning and construction work was directed by high lama master-builders, and traditionally built using ‘corvee labour’.185

The kora

![Diagram of koras in Lhasa](image)

Fig. 49 The kora or circumambulation route is a central component of all Buddhist and Hindu settlements. The form of the kora may vary with the specific geographical and spiritual topography. Here are shown the main koras in Lhasa: Lingkor (1, ‘outer kora’) embraces the entire historic settlement. Tsekor (2) circles Marpo Ri hill with the Potala Palace. Barkor (3, ‘middle kora’) circles the Jokhang Temple Monastery (with Meru Nyingpa) along Barkor Street. For further notes, see the Lhasa Atlas (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001)

Although it may be disputed whether it is actually ‘built’ or not – and hence inside or outside the conventional built typology – as a typology of ‘structure’ the ‘kora’ is all-important in the Buddhist townscape and landscape (see earlier section). The Buddhist town as we know it would hardly exist without its various koras. The ‘kora’ is therefore included here as a category of spatial structure, constituting possibly the holiest category of combined material and intangible ‘objects’.

For the worshipper the purpose of circumambulation would be a personal identification with the object within which the deity has taken place, gradually becoming one with the deity through successive and closer circling. As part of building merit for the next life, a holy site (a town, an area, a building or object) should ideally be circled three times before the deity is physically approached (Michell, 1989).

In the holy Tibetan landscape would be found numerous koras, paths and lanes that circuit entire landscapes and holy mountains, towns or individual structures – so also inside and in the vicinity of
Lhasa. Lhasa thus has several ‘koras’, amongst them the three ‘external’ ones that at varying distance circle and embrace the Jokhang Temple sanctuary – the holiest of holy Tibetan sites as accommodating the Jowo (Buddha) image. A last inner kora circles the Jowo chapel and image itself. Koras to other holy sites are daily revered by devotees in the Old Lhasa landscape.

The kora is always present, whether by conscious design or perception, whether as a ‘planned and built’ component, or a spiritual path, meandering through a natural, rural or urban landscape – and as regards towns, often circling an earlier phase of the urban structure, for instance following the perimeter of an earlier town wall (Gutschow, 1982; Sudarshah Tiwari, 19xx).

**1995 dominant built typology inside Old Lhasa**

- Monumental buildings, religious or secular, historical or traditional
- Vernacular buildings, historical or traditional, integrated in townscape;
- Modernised courtyard buildings, residential, in new materials, methods and decoration;
- Modern buildings, residential blocks 3-4 storeys, in near-traditional methods, materials;
- Single/double storey Chinese tin-roofed blocks (1960-70s work-units), most demolished;
- Modern structures in concrete construction, modern method, materials, décor.

Fig. 50 Traditional vernacular Barkor townscape; 1994

Fig. 51 Traditional Barkor streetscape; 1994; 1998
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Fig. 52 Lubu area, Barkor south-west: housing from 1980s (left) and late 1990s; 1994 and 1999

Fig. 53 Major courtyards: Iconic Jokhang Temple (left) and Meru Nyingpa (right); 2002

Fig. 54 Housing under construction in the Barkor Lubu area. Reduced ‘squeeze-lane’ between new buildings; 1994
Part Four: Cultural context

Fig. 55 Barkor Lubu area housing built in the 1980s. Gated complex for government employees (left), conventional housing for Lhasa hukuo households; 1994

1995 dominant built typology on Old Lhasa perimeter to the new city

Fig. 56 Along Ramoche Lam 2 and 3 storey commercial buildings, with older residential buildings behind (left). In the Ramoche-Tsomonling area expanding construction of 4-storey housing; 1994

Fig. 57 Dosenge Lam shops with housing above (left), and Jingdro Sanglam 1980s 3-storey housing (right); 1994
Fortified residences are assumed to have been prevalent as building typology for the upper social hierarchy. ‘Yumbulhakhar’ or the rural mansion may illustrate the types of structure commonly found in Central Tibet into the 1950s. Near-continuous struggles between tribes, tribal subgroups, external dominators and monastic schools are assumed to have necessitated constructed defences. Rulers’ quarters would have high and impressive defensive walls and structures in stonework and sun-dried bricks, as known across Central Asia, Hindu Kush and into Iran. Watchtowers were built for territorial control across the country at 10 ‘li’: the Chinese distance measure of about 600 meters locating the ‘Milarepas’ towers (Han Dynasty sources; Tucci, 1973).

Some early sites exist that are known from written sources but are in total ruin and hence provide little material evidence of early Tibetan built form (Tucci, 1973). ‘Yumbulhakhar’ in the Yarlung Valley (falsely dated to 7t century CE) has often been presented as typical of the very early Tibetan hill top complexes. The structure was however, radically transformed in the mid-20th century, making its value as ‘source material’ more than dubious.

With building collapse a normal occurrence, demolition and reconstruction took place in a regular practical and spiritual frame of necessary and ‘votive reconstruction’ – often not necessary but done to build merit for the individual or family providing the resources.

If the Tibetan settlement likened a Newari one, its spatial organisation would be interpreted as a Mandalic structure (Gellner, 2001:278), with the principal deity worshipped by the community being located in its centre.
Part Four: Cultural context

Early Tibetan settlements are assumed to have been tented encampments with some form of protective enclosure. Giuseppe Tucci (1973) suggested that the protective element may in Central Tibet have developed with Buddhism. Constant tribal and trade ‘competition’ assumed to have existed in the region for millennia may, however, seem to make an indigenous tradition of early fortified structures as likely. Early Han Dynasty (206BC-220CE) sources that reported from the Western high mountainous areas (Tibet) informed that even tribal chiefs and nobles lived in tents with a nomadic life style during the warmer season, using buildings (possibly fortified?) in winter only (Science Press 1986; Tucci 1973). For the extensive and less intensely cultivated areas of Central Tibet, types of settlements in reference to the typology described by Paul Oliver (2003) are typically categories i) and ii), with settlement categories iii) and iv) also quite prevalent. Category v) is the least known settlement form in the traditional Tibetan built environment. The typical village settlement would have a loose layout as dictated by geomancy (Tibetan: Sa-che), topography and needs of open space between family clusters – each farmstead with its own more or less privately enclosed courtyard. A village would if possible face south in the slopes of a hillside above arable land, respecting principles of geomancy. Older Tibetan villages located in arid or less arable land in the zone between cultivated fields and rocky hillsides (often within stony outcrops) were normally protected by fortifications not located within the village but on an adjacent overlooking, dominant hilltop. Some of these structures could develop towards a small ‘dzong’ in appearance. Recent settlements are often located in flat open terrain but adjacent to hills or rocky outcrops; with less respect towards safeguarding traditional arable land (as seen below Ganden monastery, east of Lhasa). Illustration.

Few settlements of urban character are known in Central Tibet before 1960. Lhasa was major town and the centre of power, with Shigatze, the historical base of the Panchen Lama, as the second largest town. Gyantse was a significant monastic-secular settlement, and centre of a major agricultural region. A number of monastery ‘towns’ constituted ‘near-urban’ character, but as mono-functional settlements would not meet a conventional definition of town. A considerable number of semi-urban settlements with character as larger villages existed in symbiosis with the adjacent monastic centres, some still extant. Illustrations (Samye, Sakya). Since 1980 rapid urbanisation affected most communities in Central Tibet, causing abandonment of rural habitats in preference of an often fragmented, anonymous urban existence. Urbanisation continues to consume valuable and highly scarce arable land resources in TAR (Dawa Tsering, 2007), and affects livelihoods of rural and urban farmers (Tsering, Bjønness, Guo, 2007). An ongoing study of Gyantse
(ibid) indicates that expansion in terms of housing areas, maintained in 'Tibetan style' is so far fortunately located mainly to non irrigable, arid and sloping land. 

4.5 Contextual practice

'Asian people have been concerned with conservation of cultural property but paid little attention to the conservation of the original physical form of an artefact. It hardly mattered if a broken image was replaced by a new one' (Agrawal, 1975 in Chung, 2004).

Chinese culture held no tradition for protecting built form as a heritage resource. Also in Tibet built form was seen to have a residual use value, with ‘destruction’ and renewal taking place through natural cycles of use, dilapidation and renewal. This was in contrast with the traditional protection of calligraphy, painting and literature. Conservation of cultural heritage in China before the 20th century focused on ancient cultural relics and symbolic architecture, and only a nominal level of legislation was in place in China before the 1949 (Lu 2002).

Before Tibet became part of the PRC, all resources of a Tibetan community, including housing and built heritage are assumed to have been administered in accordance with Buddhist traditions and practice without interference from external legislation or guidelines.

In traditional Lhasa all aspects of life (economy, way of life, devotion, material culture and education) were organised according to Tibetan Buddhist principles, in which religion permeating all aspects of human existence and nature. To illustrate, farming was not only an economic activity to sustain life but represented active religious devotion (Snellgrove and Richardson, 1986; Karan, 1976:2). The new system in contrast to traditional Tibetan values, aimed to create an active new culture with all responsibilities and loyalties passed from the family onto the state as the collective family, with foremost values being ‘nationalism, scientism and popularism’ (ref).

International charters that confirmed normative conservation in terms of ‘rights and wrongs’ have prevented much thoughtless ‘conservation’, but also established a doctrinal base in direct conflict with living traditions of much of the world. Impacts of international conservation documents as intellectual-practical tool-box in stemming excesses of modernist development has possibly contributed to ‘stunt development in the mutually informed field of architecture, urban development and built heritage’, with surprising disregard of traditional, holistic knowledge systems (Theophile and Gutschow, 2001).

Buildings were in a Buddhist or Hindu community constructed on the advice of astrologers monks, based on knowledge from manuals of Vedic periods that provide guidance on general location, timing of building work to be done, and which rituals to be performed at which stage of construction to ensure optimal wellbeing for the future users. Traditional built form would continuously develop a typology of ‘common-sense and appropriate design responses’ (Khan, 1989:172-75)
Part Four: Cultural context

Paying attention to an important ‘bridge,’ Nalini Thakur (1998) has focused on the dynamic context of local knowledge, a product of people, time and place, and confirming traditions and built heritage as knowledge and capital. Appropriate regard is needed towards both tangible and intangible dimensions, both so significantly embodied in traditional built heritage.

‘Asians’ through time preferred renewability, within permanent features such as ‘planning principles, decorative principles, plan forms and building types’ (Boyd, 1962 in Chung, 2004). In Tibet as in Asia at large, built form is ‘understood as a symbolic structure which conveys a spiritual message rather than as a project of aesthetic significance’ (ibid). Merely preserving the integrity of physical material would ‘miss the intrinsic value of architecture’ (Chung, 2004). In their important work with the ‘Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust’, Nepal, Rohit Ranjitkar and Erich Theophile have experienced numerous confirmations that ‘local devotees love the deities inside, not really the building fabric, and certainly not the old fabric. Old fabric should (according to Buddhist/Hindu traditions) be renewed as an offer to the gods, and use of modern materials and techniques may scar the object and offend the deities’ (Ranjitkar in Theophile and Gutschow, 2001).

Historic reconstruction and copying have remained the essential basis for traditions of art and architecture in Asia until the present, as known also from Europe pre-1900s, the original representation of an idea, concept or building considered to be ‘preserved’ through copying, Artistic ‘free’ interpretation through individual creativity was hence not highly respected. Although ‘despised’ in international doctrine, from a Buddhist cultural position, copying reconstruction and ‘conjecture’ are recognised to be making perfect sense. Much of the built heritage in China (and Asia) is therefore not old in terms of its date of construction but in traditions of form, design and methods of building – reflecting continuous cycles of inception-growth-flowering-deterioration through centuries (Theophile and Gutschow, 2001). Its ‘closeness’ to heritage resources would empower traditional society to replace a historical structure to meet present needs or religious aspirations – with adaptive reuse freely determined on a basis of ‘needs’.

In Chinese and Pan-Asian tradition of protecting built form, the vital concern is for the overall ‘setting’ that is regarded to maintain the spiritual values of both structure and site in an expression of overall harmony with nature. In pan-Asian traditions, maintaining spiritual values in built heritage is achieved through respecting the unity of heaven and earth, maintaining good geomancy and showing respect for evolution through time.

In expressing tradition, built form in Asia is quite expected to remain in continuous change of use with constant reconstruction (Chung, 2004). To illustrate, in contrast to the academic and romantic fascination of ruins in Europe, in China ruins (defined as fragmental heritage) were only recently given recognition as cultural heritage (Chen and Xu, 2005).
International conservation doctrine and practice when introduced in Tibet represented an ‘alien’ cultural position, projecting an ‘optimal’ philosophy and practice of conservation in conflict with living traditions that for centuries had maintained unique heritage resources. The international discourse was in contrast to the traditional approach introduced and implemented as top-down processes with little or no involvement of local knowledge, capacity or participation. International methods, value-sets and appraisals were implemented ‘cold’ into a unique indigenous cultural context. In current urban conservation in Old Lhasa, deeper respect of cultural traditions is needed, and for the dignity and humility that are integral parts of the Tibetan Buddhist context.

As regards World Heritage, a living ‘traditional’ community, an extensive and complex historical landscape can ‘overnight’ be redefined as a ‘scheduled composite monument’ by inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Such a sudden ‘redefinition’ might bring trauma or at least ‘serious surprise’ of several kinds to a community, introducing hitherto unknown agents of change. International principles of conservation and development introduced suddenly may indeed be experienced as representing an ‘alien’ culture (Jiven and Larkham, 2003:67-81).

Defining an urban environment as ‘heritage’ may, however, create ‘added value’ importance to the collective memory and identity of society. Some residents would likely be taking pride in their ‘huge new monument’, grasping the advantage for new opportunities provided.

‘Fixing-up’ or re-invention of the historical-traditional by the authorities may be experienced as an equally ‘remote’ concept for local people.

The community and the built fabric of Old Lhasa were subjected to the above in 2000 with Barkor, the kernel of Lhasa and locus of power and spirituality inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List and declared a World Heritage Site. It remains an open question whether the phenomenon reinforced or weakened historical Lhasa, where memory and some aspects of a living ‘medieval’ theocratic society may still daily be recognised.

4.6 Chapter summary

Traditional built form in Central Tibet has a vocabulary of relatively few ‘language elements’, whether the structures are for monastic or secular functionality. All categories of built structure are sacred in Buddhism. The three main categories of functionality are i) supporting life in the monastery, ii) providing objects of worship, and iii) serving domestic life (residential buildings).

The individual Buddhist institutions existed in China independent of the Emperor’s state. Borrowing character from secular built form, monastic institutions were architecturally ‘anonymous’ – most buildings square or orthomorphic with axial courtyard layouts – and contributed less towards developing
Part Four: Cultural context

architectural monumentality than religious structures of Hindu India with its complex urban structures ordered by cosmological concepts.

Tibetan built form expresses knowledge of and humility towards the human dimension and living traditions. Apparent ‘identical’ buildings would all vary in size, use of carved details and painted decorations, also when ‘identical’ in their overall architectural projection, each building layout based on a grid of square modules clusters of them grouped around orthogonal courtyards. Overall building arrangement and details would all be influenced by constraints of resources available, building materials, cultural-spiritual principles including geomancy. This gave a built form without the great surprises, but buildings of harmony of scale and proportion, with richness of details and decoration, and in a close relationship with the nature within which they were built – expressing a unique tradition whether Central Tibet is seen in a Himalayan or wider geo-cultural perspective. These are dimensions that appear largely lost also in Lhasa in the pragmatism of contemporary society and its physical environment.

Endnotes

166 They are: Wheel of Dharma, Conch Shell, Parasol, Standard of Victory, Lotus, Treasure Vase, Gold Fish, and Endless Knot (http://www.exoticindiaart.com/article/symbols/).

167 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibet_Autonomous_Region

168 Questions of periodic (temporal) structuring and interpretation of ‘belonging’ and representation raise complex issues beyond the scope of this study, and well beyond the knowledge of this author. Further referencing or outlining in the text can therefore easily appear simplistic or out of context – for which the author apologises.

169 A number of websites and printed publication (see bibliography) were visited regularly and used, such as (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism); (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Buddhism); A brief history of Tibet, by Tim Lambert (http://www.localhistories.org/tibet.html); Buddhist art and architecture (http://indiapicks.com/annapurna/B_Buddhist.htm); (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibetan_Buddhism).


171 The latter as a search for ‘purity’ and Aryan origin was organised by 1930s Third Reich central leaders. Pursuit of ‘universal truth’ went hand in hand with search for ‘purity’. The much earlier publication by Nicolas Notovitch The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ, first published in 1894 and reprinted in 1926 idea of Jesus travelling to Tibet was also largely spread and extensively discussed through the last century. Notovitch, a Russian Jew converted to Greek Orthodoxy, claimed to have acquired a copy of a sacred book mentioning Jesus (called ‘Issa’ by Tibetans, close to Arabic word ‘Isa’ for Jesus) visiting Tibet and Lhasa, and gave a translation and an analysis of the texts. Recent search for ‘universal truth’ by the ‘New Age Movement has focused not only Buddhism but also Tibetan cultural and environmental practices. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Age). A Western spiritual movement, ‘New Age’ developed in the second half of the 20th century. Its central precepts have been described as “drawing on both Eastern and Western spiritual metaphysical traditions.


173 This ideal has been very influential upon humanist movements in the ‘West’ and in China after the nineteenth century through anthropological studies. The perceived simplicity of Tibetan is regarded as a virtue, and savagery as the original and natural state for humankind. Generosity, as well as their “innocence” (stressed by the presence of children and young women), their infinite loyalty to their foreign friends (they even die for them), their close relation to nature and apparent disregard for material wealth and their “innate wisdom” are all aspects of the “Noble savage”.

174 Thus Buddhist town was different with Buddhist monasteries located in different ‘toles’ or neighbourhoods, but linked to each other in a hierarchical order. The settlement-Mandala would be divided into sections in a geometric fashion, each settlement unit with its own autonomy and tutelary deities for regularising ceremonies of devotion towards the central deity. A small or large Mandala-structure would have four gates oriented in the cardinal directions. A definite boundary would define the inside from the outside, as marked by a kora, the encircling route or path embracing the holy site. The above is considered valid for a Newari town like Patan (with four stupas) in Nepal. It remains conjecture, and would need to be validated for Lhasa by other research.

175 Settlement typology, Oliver, 2003: i) dispersed, isolated dwellings (nomadic or permanent); ii) dispersed settlements and homesteads (nomadic or location-fixed), located and organised according to topography and the resource base or context, generally restrained from utilising arable land; iii) hamlets as for example linear village, often kinship based (normally clustered in Central Tibet); iv) hillside clusters and nucleated townships; and v) protected (fortified) and ‘tightly packed’ villages and towns (Oliver, 2003)

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178 The Mandala (Sanskrit: circle, ring) is symmetrical around the centre (axis mundi); may be shaped as a square with circles, spiral of wheel. In Buddhism the Mandala is a symbolic diagram of cosmos, and a manifestation of the gods, particularly used in meditation (Tibet and Japan; http://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandala).

179 Vedic literature is divided by tradition into two categories Shrutī (sanskrit: that which is heard (traditionally understood as revelation) and constitute sacred texts, and Smrīti (sanskrit: that which is remembered (stemming from human authors, not revelation) termed as post-Vedic scriptures (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_texts).

180 The mute Jampa and his peers, serfs, were emancipated and re-humanised by the kindness of the Communist government’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers and the benevolent thought of the Bodhisattva’ Mao Zedong. The sympathetic image of Jampa, who finally recovers his voice when liberated from his lord’s oppression, contrasts with previous description of wild and barbaric Tibetans, appealing for Han Chinese compassion portraying Tibetan feudal system as extremely bloody and inhumane.

181 There is not one Tibetan language and culture but several practices and dialects spread among different groups and subgroups in various regions of a large and indeterminate territory, and authors (for instance Sautman or Norbu) may omit to mention that (Frangville, 2008).


184 The main building: The ground floor was used for storage. On the first floor was the main family living accommodation, with a family temple/prayer-room. The second floor was used by the head of family, and for entertainment. With sun-windows facing south. The outbuildings: The lower floor housed animals and storage. The upper floor accommodated servants, and might have been rented out to locals as housing. Typical examples: Yabshi Punkhang, Shatra and Pomdatsang Manors. Charles Bell described ‘life’ in a large manor-house provided fascinating social-cultural insights (Bell, 1924, 1928).

185 There is not one Tibetan language and culture but several practices and dialects spread among different groups and subgroups in various regions of a large and indeterminate territory, and authors (for instance Sautman or Norbu) may omit to mention that (Frangville, 2008).

186 In Newari townships of the Kathmandu valley the secular authority was also located in the centre, but in scale subordinate to main Hindu temples. The Buddhist town was different with Buddhist monasteries located in different ‘toles’ or neighbourhoods, but linked to each other in a hierarchical order. The settlement-Mandala would be divided into sections in a geometric fashion, each settlement unit with its own autonomy and tutelary deities for regularising ceremonies of devotion towards the central deity. A small or large Mandala-structure would have four gates oriented in the cardinal directions. A definite boundary would define the inside from the outside, as marked by a kora, the encircling route or path embracing the holy site. The above is considered valid for a Newari town like Patan (with four stupas) in Nepal. It remains conjecture, and would need to be validated for Lhasa by other research.

187 Settlement typology, Oliver, 2003: i) dispersed, isolated dwellings (nomadic or permanent); ii) dispersed settlements and homesteads (nomadic or location-fixed), located and organised according to topography and the resource base or context, generally restrained from utilising arable land; iii) hamlets as for example linear village, often kinship based (normally clustered in Central Tibet); iv) hillside clusters and nucleated townships; and v) protected (fortified) and ‘tightly packed’ villages and towns (Oliver, 2003)

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Lhasa’s history is ‘one of water and site interlinked in constant and near fatal efforts in order to protect the sanctum, prevent disaster and develop a community. Numerous questions should be asked to which still inadequate answers only are available’ (Sørensen, 2003).

‘Government leaders just want to redevelop not for the people but for their own benefit. This is very sad and bad. A Lhasa property developer has politicians on his side, and they all decide. We don’t ask. They may decide to demolish on the 15th day. So the day before they come to throw you out, having told you one day before that again; if you don’t move out, you have to pay a big money-fine’. ‘The work-units always get the best housing. We have great difficulties in getting housing and also in keeping it’. ‘Work units in Lhasa range from 500p to 2000 p, and more than 2/3 are inhabited mostly by Chinese workers, and built to Chinese standards. Up to mid-1990s it was only in work-unit that Chinese and Tibetans lived together; this has changed quite a lot since, but with considerable scepticism from the Tibetans. Corruption in the housing sector is alarming in China for decades, and is large also in Lhasa. In early 1990s the TAR government started a clean-up, but we don’t know how it has worked.’ “New settlers would not accept to live under our normal local conditions”, (Long-time Barkor residents, 2002)
5 Lhasa growth and development

5.1 Introduction

‘The city (Lhasa) is without much interest. I’ve had quite enough of visits to lamaseries; I have seen so many of them! The palace of the Dalai Lama has nothing very special. In town, the shopkeepers, by way of exotic objects, display stacks of aluminium saucepans’ (Alexandra David-Neel (1924) on Lhasa, cited in M. Taylor, 1985:218).

Fig. 59 The Potala Palace on Marpori Hill ‘lighting up’ Lhasa City in the early morning sun; 2003

The founding and history of Lhasa as settlement is steeped in mist and legends, and the location chosen for the settlement appears less than ideal. Shrines, buildings and people needed continuous protection from seasonal flooding, and the growing settlement was exposed to physical attack from all sides. Much of the current knowledge of Tibet ‘as we know it’ today is dated to this later period, but mixed with legends, assumptions and conjecture. The Italian scholar Giuseppe Tucci (1894–1984) put it this way: ‘True’ historic facts are difficult to find in Tibetan texts – as they are reduced to a minimum’, often hidden in pious texts’ (Tucci, 1949; Powers 1995:121, in Fjeld 2005:98). A generation later, Danish Tibetologist Per Sørensen stated: ‘Buddhist historiography was possibly deeply coloured by pious ‘mythopoetics’ rather than ‘facts” (Sørensen, 2003).

The 17-18th century settlement is assumed to have been a loose townscape of low clusters of buildings (1-3 storeys), large orchards with further outlaying meadows, open areas that accommodated the religious festivals of the Lhasa year, and extensive ‘floodwater-areas’ and channels to accommodate the regularly revisiting river water.
The concept of a ‘collective national heritage’ – as part of ‘national culture’ – emerged in China already the PRC (in the late 1940s), and was from 1953 onwards integrated in the ‘Five-Year Plans’ in order to protect special or well known heritage. Central and regional Heritage Conservation Administrations were set up in China soon after 1949, with important policy documents formulated. Much of this was based on the institutions of the earlier republic (Lu, 2002; Whitehand and Gu, 2007:644). The concept of material authenticity was imported in the 1950s but adopted only in the later ‘new’ 1980s legislation. Heritage resources remained officially regarded as something to be ‘fitted into’ the bigger scheme of urban planning and development, but were often destroyed for social-cultural political and urban development reasons.

5.1.1 Lhasa topography
The overall topographic form of the central Lhasa Valley is characterised by a flat wide river delta at about 3,700 meters altitude with two hills Marpori and Chakpori rising another 100-150 meters – low when compared to mountains that rise another 700-1000 meters along the south and north sides to the valley.

5.2 Early development
Lhasa is popularly described to have been the capital of Tibet since the 7th century CE. Lhasa’s cultural and political influence varied over the centuries with a zenith assumed to have taken place in the 7-9th centuries CE in accordance with cycles of conquest and dominance by competing Tibetan fractions and external formations. A cultural renaissance took place in the 13-14th centuries, with a further period of significant cultural and political growth again starting with the reign of the 5th Dalai Lama (Losang Gyatso, 1617-82). However, this long period, from its 7th century CE founding until the town again in 1742 formally became capital of Tibet, is little known.

5.2.1 Sanctuary and settlement
Queen Wencheng made the king understand how the ‘supine demoness’ suppressed development of his country. It became important to the king to establish a first Buddhist temple in the position of her heart located in the middle of a watery, swampy marshland in the ‘centre’ of the valley, in the ‘Milk Plain Lake’ (Tib: othang), called so because of the co-location of the heart and breast of the demoness. In order to subdue the demoness, the king undertook to build in all 12 temples located on her extensive body so as to pacify her. The temples were positioned in three concentric squares above vital points and points of her body. The marshland had to be filled with stones before the building could be constructed, and goats were used for the transport. Lhasa might have been first known as ‘ra-sa’, ‘Place of the Goats’, as legends say, although this is far from certain. (Numerous published sources).

The first settlements in Lhasa are ‘recorded’ to the 7th century. ‘Before King Songtsen Gampo’s time (604–650 CE) there was most likely on Marpori a hermitage for the previous king, Songtsen Gampo’s father’ (Sørensen, 2003:87). Whether there was also a small village by Marpori is uncertain as no
(known) sources on that’ (ibid). Legends tell of tall fortified tower palaces on Marpori, some believed built by Songtsen Gampo for himself, his two main queens and numerous Tibetan consorts. Legends tell that to firmly establish Buddhism in his expanding empire, the king constructed the ‘lha-sa’ (Jokhang) and Ramoche sanctuaries. The ‘lha-sa’ sanctuary (today Jokhang Temple; Tibetan etymology of the word Lhasa – lha meaning God, and sa meaning the earth; thus Land of the Gods; (although earlier referred to as land of goats (Tib: ra-sha) central icon and ‘national shrine’, has been dated to about 625 CE, with Ramoche Temple dated to some years later.

‘We are still left in the dark as to what actually existed of settlements on the marshy river-land of the Lhasa Valley prior to the erection of the ‘ra-sa’ sanctum in the 7th century CE’ (Sørensen, 2003). Strong Newari influences are recognised in the ‘lha-sa’ building concept, layout, structure and artistic decorations (various sources; Fisher, 1997). The valley was chosen as the king’s main stronghold. It does, however, remain unclear how and why the earliest Buddhist temples in Lhasa were built in the marshy land in the middle of the Lhasa (Kyichu) River delta at a distance (1-2 km) from the protection offered by fortified structures on Marpori and Chakpori. Geomancy may be one of several factors, alternatively that a suitable vihara structure already existed here (argued by art historian Amy Heller, 2004).

In my understanding the legend of Lhasa’s founding recounts a tale of ongoing cultural-political conflicts between Buddhism and Bön, the ‘indigenous’ belief and ruling system – and how early Buddhism was met by the ‘world of pre-Buddhism’ that in the form of a ‘supine demoness’ protected the land from outsiders influence. Despite the strength of the new society, the old regime remained, its influence only reduced (Pommaret, 2003; Barnett, 2006:202.) Recent research argue that the legends today ‘accepted’ for lha-sa’s (Jokhang’s) origin were brought to Lhasa by Nepalese artists not earlier than the 11th
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Early and small settlements may have developed around the two sanctuaries, with a third (possibly earlier?) settlement assumed located at the foot of Marpori, below the fortified towers.\(^{196}\) Early sources may by *lha-sa* have referred only to the inner courtyard of the *vihara sanctum* that ‘mimicked’ Indian vihara models. To many Tibetans the name of Lhasa still today refers to the sanctuary – some maintaining that only after the 17\(^{th}\) century did ‘Lhasa’ become the accepted name for the settlement (personal communications).

Several researchers emphasise the importance of Indian-Nepalese models for Lhasa's origin and structure, including the concept of a Mandalic structure developed for ‘protection and management’. The ‘Lhasa Mandala zone’ was given high symbolic value in the 17\(^{th}\) century nation building (Sørensen, 2003:89).\(^{197}\) Lhasa’s ‘mythic origin and historic role ensured an unrivalled position both as epitome and as a monument of national heritage and legacy’ (Sørensen, 2003). Religious schools in Tibet kept the shrine in high esteem through the centuries, its spiritual importance possibly matched only by the main temple at Samye Monastery (Sørensen, 2003).\(^{198}\) Seen in summary, this may illustrate a geo-political idealisation that has characterised Lhasa through history and contributed to its development as a prime site of veneration.

Flooding as a major foe necessitated the construction of dikes and levees to protect ‘the sanctuary for all eternity and hence secure the survival of the Buddhist Doctrine’ (Sørensen, 2003). Flood protection maintenance work constituted an important part of several annual religious festivals, engaging both monks and residents (Richardson, 1993). Given Lhasa’s location and exposure, it seems more than reasonable that flooding was taken seriously from the first days of ‘lha-sa’. Destruction by flooding seems nevertheless never to have been apocalyptic for Lhasa (ibid).\(^{199}\)

5.2.2 Capital of Tibet

‘There is nothing striking, nothing pleasing, in Lhasa’s appearance. The inhabitants are begrimed with smut and dirt. The avenues are full of dogs, some growling and gnawing bits of hide that lie about in profusion, and emit a charnel-house smell; others liming and looking livid: others ulcerated; others starved and dying, and pecked on by ravens; some dead and preyed upon. In short, everything seems mean and gloomy, and excites the idea of something unreal’ (Thomas Manning (1772-1840) on visiting Lhasa in 1811).

After a period of bloody wars between Tibetan religious schools and Tibetan warlords, the Mongol Chieftain Gushri Khan intervened in 1621 CE as supporter of one of Tibet’s religious schools: the Gelugpa. Central Tibet was ‘liberated’. In 1625 Gushri Khan installed the Gelugpa leader and monastery abbot Losang Gyatso (1617-1682) as the 5\(^{th}\) Dalai Lama. Overall power of Tibet assembled into one hand was thus re-established in Tibet for the first time since the Yarlung Dynasty– now with allegiance to Gushri Khan.
The 5th Dalai Lama influenced most aspects of intellectual, political and ‘practical’ life of Lhasa and Tibet throughout his lifetime. His supreme powers challenged by military uncertainty at the time of his enthronement, dictated that he should build a strong base (dzong). Marpori was chosen as location, and construction of the Potala Palace was started in 1645. From now Lhasa was a religious and political powerbase as the home of the ‘Jowo’ (Buddha image), the Dalai Lama and his government.200

Documents of the 5th’s reign do not describe any settlements in the vicinity of the Lhasa sanctuaries, and a notion of Lhasa as an established village or small town already in the mid-17th century is conjecture only. With ‘the Great 5th’s’ extraordinary abilities of nation building, Lhasa expanded as settlement. One contribution to this came from the landowning families being actively included in government, which required them to build permanent major residences in Lhasa. A growing population, major buildings and religious festivals are assumed to have established Lhasa as an urbanised settlement in the 18th century known as relatively open to outsiders – and ‘full of shrines and supernatural power in a sacred landscape of spirituality and mysticism’ – ‘where ascetics interacted with the lives of ordinary people’ (Snellgrove and Richardson, 1986; Lo Bue in Pommaret, 2003:133).

By the end of the ‘5th DL’s reign, the Kashmiris had been given land for a mosque and cemetery in the so-called ‘garden of kashmiris’ (Tib: khache lingka), north of where Norbulingka was later established, and Muslim traders had established more than 50 companies inside Lhasa, now a clearly formed settlement enclosed by an outer kora or circumambulation route, Lingkor (ibid).

In the early 19th century (around 1820), as international interest in Central Asia built up (‘The Great Game’)201 the Tibetan government (Tibetan: kashak) closed the gates of Lhasa. To the outside world Lhasa became a ‘forbidden city’.

From the published accounts by one of the few foreigners to reach Lhasa before the 20th century (Thomas Manning (1772-1840) in Lhasa 1811) the huge impression on seeing the Potala Palace is clear, but also his ‘reservation’ towards the town itself (section start quote).202
5.2.3 Modern influences

‘We must be ready to defend ourselves. Otherwise our spiritual and cultural traditions will be completely eradicated. Even the names of the Dalai and Panchen Lamas will be erased… The monasteries will be looted and destroyed, and the monks and nuns killed or chased away… The birthrights and property of the people will be stolen. We will become like slaves to our conquerors, and will be made to wander helplessly like beggars. Everyone will be forced to live in misery, and the days and nights will be passed slowly, with great suffering and terror’ (13th Dalai Lama’s testament).\textsuperscript{203}
The British Expedition entered Lhasa in 1904 and ‘opened’ Central Tibet to external contact. ‘Romantic’ accounts by early visitors were published, few with more than a cursory glance towards social, cultural and community issues, and social ‘organisation’. Descriptions of settlements, their geography and built form character were rare. Townscape and architecture were clearly of little interest to ‘spies’, military victors and cultural visitors of the early 20th century. The work (ca 1910 onwards) by Charles Bell (1870-1945) was an important exception.

Accounts of Lhasa by Younghusband, Landon and Waddell described a town of squalor and stench located in the middle of marshy terrain. In his dispatches to London to ‘The Times’, Perceval Landon (1869-1927) showed himself as someone more easily ‘inspired’ than his fellow travellers.

‘...but the sheer magnificence of the unexpected sight which met our unprepared eyes was to us almost a thing incredible. Here is nothing missing from this splendid spectacle – architecture, forest trees, wide green places, rivers, streams and mountains, all lie before one as one looks down from the height upon Lhasa stretching out at our feet.... The beauty of Lhasa is doubled by its utter unexpectedness... there was nothing – less perhaps in such maps and descriptions of Lhasa as we had than everywhere else – to promise us this city of gigantic palace and golden roof, these wild stretches of woodland, these acres of close-cropped grazing land and marshy grass, ringed and delimited by high trees or lazy streamlets of brown transparent water over which the branches almost met degradation’.

(Sir Francis Younghusband in ‘India and Tibet’, 1910).

Interpreting from written accounts and map sketches made in the early 1900s, the larger noble family residences seemed to be located in open semi-urban landscape with extensive gardens, properties that were gradually densified with division and in-fill buildings.

After the 1913 meeting in Simla, Tibet claimed ‘total control of its own internal and external affairs’, something that the Chinese government (Republic of China 1911-1949) never accepted (Goldstein, 1989: xix). The period up to 1950 was to be controversial. Attempts to modernise Tibetan society were countered by the monastic elites, and thus of little avail in preparing Tibetan society and the Buddhist theocracy for the challenges that were to come. Already in 1931 the 13th Dalai Lama Thupten Gyatso (1876-1933) wrote – in strange anticipation – as was quoted at the start of this section.

In reports on Lhasa over the next decades, the focus remained on people, monuments and natural surroundings. Lhasa as a town was still experienced by many as dusty, unhygienic and un-spectacular – and of limited interest to seasoned travellers.

5.3 Urban conservation and planning in Lhasa after 1951

In the following section the period 1949 to 2005 is divided into three, with subsections on urban conservation and urban development as relevant.

5.3.1 A settlement in turmoil

The period in question is 1949 to 1977. The new PRC regime was in its first decade after 1949 heavily influenced by the Soviet Union. Although denouncing efforts and institutions of the China Republic
(1911-1949), efforts and institutions of that period were retained as instrumental for responding to key political and cultural issues, and building the new Chinese nation – particularly in the field of urban planning and conservation (Whitehand and Gu, 2007).

In Tibet, the second half of the 20th century started dramatically as the Chinese Red Army entered Kham (East Tibet) in May 1950 and reached Lhasa in October 1951. In Chinese terminology Tibet was ‘liberated’, and to reform the ‘backward’ country, a parallel administrative system to the kashag was quickly established.

The new government established itself in 1951 in the Yuthok Mansion immediately west of Jokhang and the old town. Construction of a ‘New Lhasa’ was started in the form of small ‘townships’ located away from the old town. From 1951 onwards, large private estates in Lhasa were confiscated and redistributed among homeless Tibetans or for government offices, army camps and new urban development to meet the new national policies (aerial 1965).

The few remaining private properties were expropriated. All ordinary buildings not in ruin (and some of these also) were taken over for housing. Also non-residential damp ground floor construction (stables and storage areas) was taken over for housing. The historical kernel became a primary housing area for poorer and informally employed Tibetans, of whom many were recent rural migrants.

Lhasa was ‘planned as a Soviet socialist city’, a new orthogonal street geometry set out (mid-1950s), and streets given ‘socialist’ progressive names to celebrate government policy (personal communication, 2001).

The main Lhasa settlement – the Jokhang-Barkor-Ramoche extended area – was by the central government in the late 1950s designated as the major Tibetan housing area inside an expanding city (personal communication, 2001, unconfirmed).

Beijing’s control of Lhasa and Tibet, however, appears to have been ‘moderate’ until after the 1959 Tibetan uprising, when new government policies were implemented. By then Chinese administrators and new settlers had already taken over much of the existing housing in Lhasa. Tibetans moved to areas further out of the old town centre.

The PRC government did not seem anxious to introduce immediate or grand gestures of urban change in Lhasa – beyond a campaign to ‘create a visually rich city’ (1958) – and trees were planted along all major roads and thoroughfares. The overall landscape is said to have changed only little for several years after 1959 (personal communications).

From 1960 onwards, numerous separate construction sites gave new Lhasa character of a loose web of Chinese ‘barracks-style’ buildings inside rectilinear walled compounds: the ‘danweis’ had arrived in Lhasa, some located inside the traditional boundaries of the old town – most grouped as external ‘townships’. The new urban grid layout developed, in part changing the historical and ritual routes Lingkor (1965 aerial).
The Kashag (Tibetan government) archives were in 1959 believed to have contained records of about 2500 Tibetan monasteries (number of active monasteries unknown) with a gross population estimated to more than 110,000 persons. In 1961 about 70 monasteries were extant, with a population of about 7,000. In Lhasa, mainly the religious buildings were destroyed.

During the ‘First Main Construction Period’ (late 1950s to about 1970) in Lhasa after the ‘liberation’ a new Lhasa centre was formed west of the historic settlement, with housing, industry and civic areas (Barnett, 2006:211, interviewing Lhasa’s Mayor Loga, 1991). Commercial activity was directed away from the historical kernel, and several hundred Tibetan shops in Barkor were closed. An international report (1960) on Tibet and China described ongoing heavy housing construction in Lhasa. Many Tibetans had been evicted from Lhasa, and Chinese settlers and government employees were accommodated also in the Potala Palace and Shôl, and at Norbulingka, the Dalai Lama’s Summer Palace – Lhasa’s housing volume was nevertheless said to have been doubled by 1960 to provide for the growing Chinese population.

The Tibet Autonomous Region, TAR, was formally established in October 1965, and the government relocated itself from the Yuthok Mansion to a new campus built in Zhung Tri Lingka, the Dalai Lama’s Gardens south of Potala Palace and Shôl. By now Tibetan institutions were reorganised and their traditional symbols of power and authority removed. To transform Tibetans into socialists, the assault on Tibetan traditional culture and values brought the added complication of ‘insurmountable division between Tibetans and Chinese (with) central government action in Tibet interpreted to express an extraordinary contempt for the manifestations of Tibet’s traditional culture’ (Shakya, 1999:316).

The period of the Cultural Revolution in Tibet was to be dramatic and violent, forcing Tibet’s traditional culture and way of life into near total submission. In the summer of 1966 Lhasa with hinterland was ravaged.

The Chinese News Agency proclaimed that ‘the storm of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is sweeping out the sludge and filthy water of the old world, from which a new Lhasa is emerging resplendent with the thought of Mao Tse-tung’. The reporting continued: ‘new Lhasa is reconstructed as a tidy and beautiful new urban district with 25 modern buildings, already exceeding the total floor area of old Lhasa’.

In July 1966 the CCP leadership in Tibet to little avail had declared that the Cultural Revolution should be confined to academic and literary circles. Red Guard groups in Lhasa focused on rectifying traditional ‘ills’ of the old society as a struggle against all feudal traditions. Members of traditional Tibetan society active in the emerging new society were overnight transformed from patriotic to counter-revolutionary, and for the next ten years branded as ‘class enemies’ (Shakya 1999:318). In early 1967 the Red Guards attempted to seize control in Tibet, the most radical group (Gyenlog) using Jokhang temple as their Lhasa headquarters (Shakya 1999:338). Despite Chairman Mao’s announcement that the Cultural Revolution in Tibet should end by the end of 1967, armed conflicts continued unabated. Although the Cultural Revolution in Tibet ‘officially’ ended with the year 1969, revolutionary action continued to 1972, and was soon beyond the control of the TAR leadership.

The government had early defined upper floor of traditional Lhasa houses as ‘bourgeois excesses’, and let the PLA and Red Guards demolish them. The residents were forced to live in damp ground floor rooms, never before
used for human habitation. Considerable health problems resulted, still extant as lung- and chest related illnesses in many families (personal communications).

Maintaining primary focus on ‘The Four Olds’, the Cultural Revolution in Tibet devastated Tibetan culture as in every village the people were mobilised to destroy everything ‘old’ – from artefacts and buildings to behaviour and thinking.

The majority of Tibetan built heritage had been destroyed before the Cultural Revolution. Data released in 1987 by a TAR Vice Chairman showed that of 2700 monasteries in Tibet, 80% (2160) were destroyed before 1965. Of the remaining 540, 527 were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, only 13 protected and ‘surviving’ (Shakya, 1999:512).

An early morphological ‘mark’ was made in 1965 with the first new market street established, Yuthok Lam running from the Jokhang Temple to the government complex in Zhung Tri Lingka.

The Cultural Revolution inflicted further serious damage to Lhasa heritage resources. Jokhang Temple Monastery was sacked by the Red Guards already in August 1966, ransacked for valuable religious objects. Parts of the building complex were set afire. The Jowo image was destroyed. For the remainder of the Cultural Revolution, Jokhang accommodated troops.

Ramoche Temple was gutted and partly destroyed. Mentsikhang, the Tibetan medical college and monastery on Chakpori, was demolished as was also the West gate to Lhasa linking Marpori with Chakpori. The Sera, Drepung and Ganden monastery towns were ransacked, emptied of valuables and in large part destroyed.

In a program interpreted to achieve a removing of ‘visible’ traces of the Tibetan identity, for instance Norbulingka was renamed as the ‘Peoples Park’ (Tib: Mimang Lingka). As China propagated a policy of total assimilation with Chinese national culture, the intention and the effect were seen as reducing the evidence of Tibet’s separate cultural identity to the Tibetan language alone (Tsering Shakya, 1999:322). Later also this ‘last frontier’ came under attack. A spontaneous Tibetan revolt took place in 1969 as Tibetans were increasingly antagonised by the new social and economic policies. The revolt quickly involved one quarter of TAR’s 70 counties before it was squashed by the Chinese Army, ‘the Chinese reasserting their absolute power over Tibet’ (Tsering Shakya, 1999:344).

Tsering Shakya (1999) has argued that the uprising, rather than being a conscious ethnic uprising, was a cultural response to the chaos of the Cultural Revolution, as Tibetans sought to regain some measure of social, psychological and cultural freedom. For many Tibetans the traumas of the Cultural Revolution have remained the time when ‘the sky fell to the earth’ (Tsering Shakya, 1999:346).

Already in 1972 Tibetan and Chinese workmen started repairing damage inflicted to Jokhang (Shakya, 1999:358). However, the Cultural Revolution’s attempts to obliterate religion appear little successful in Lhasa and Tibet. The period was followed by some liberalisation as monasteries and temples re-opened in the early 1980s.
5 Lhasa growth and development

Defined in China’s post-1960 ‘industrial relocation policy’ as a priority area for people from densely populated eastern regions, Lhasa ‘benefited’ during the Cultural Revolution with increased Han-Chinese and rural Tibetans in-migration. Contradicting national policies, the Lhasa urban population (1963 to 1976) continued to grow (Kirkby, 1985).

In the ‘Second Main Construction Period’ (during and immediately after the Cultural Revolution, possibly early 1970s to early 1980s) the focus was on building infrastructure, commercial areas and housing (Barnett, 2006:211, interviewing Lhasa’s Mayor Loga, 1991). Many of today’s Tibetan institutions were established, amongst them Tibet University (1977).

Large areas of open land appeared to all sides of Old Lhasa. It was considered cheaper and simpler to build around the historic kernel than inside, and development pressure remained off the old town. By 1975 Barkor street had been upgraded and resurfaced in gravel, again lined by shops. Outside the historical town, a new urban structure was taking shape (Loga, 1976 in Leckie, 1994:67).

5.3.2 A modern city forming

‘I saw the new western section as a massive new development, ugly and grey, one huge grey industrial zone with ugly buildings, a dusty cement factory, gravel works and concrete roads’, the high percentage of Han-Chinese inhabitants in Chinese dress, and Lhasa as ‘a distinctly Chinese city’.

The regime change (1978) brought social reforms with ‘an opening doors’ economy. Post-Mao change towards a market economy had enormous impacts on the structure of cities in China. The state-run planned economy represented by the ‘danwei’, was to be replaced by a ‘modern enterprise system’ stripped by most welfare functions (Bray, 2005: 157-193).

Trends of ‘neo-liberalism’ became gradually present as government authority and control was somewhat ‘recharged’ to provide some degree of ‘autonomy’ for commercial and community organisations (Bray, 2008:396). In this ‘new climate’, earlier goals of egalitarianism, frugality, uniformity and anti-consumerism seemed to start disappearing. A city was permitted to adopt ‘its own’ specific planning procedures and objectives (Sit, 1995:362-; Lo, 1987:446) and a dynamic private sector economy developed (Guthrie, 1999) – this seen as indirect impacts of both neo-liberalism and globalisation in trade and production, and market oriented national Chinese policies (with China’s entrance into WTO; Sept. 2001).

Although the economic benefits to Lhasa of the ‘opening-door’ policy period were modest, the period brought some openness towards Tibetan culture (Shakya, 1999:393). New enterprises were established. The TAR Foreign Affairs Department purchased large areas of land in Lhasa, later to be developed for commercial housing (Shakya, at SOAS 2001). To encourage tourism, the government funded 43 major construction projects in Lhasa. In 1984 Tibet was opened to Chinese business and trade, with a
continuing influx of Chinese settlers met by new infrastructure and privileges unavailable to Tibetans. Linking Lhasa with the national train-net was identified as an essential prerequisite for faster growth in Tibet (‘Far Eastern Economic Review’ 1979:57. Possibly biased, to some: ‘Tibet appeared much poorer now than ever before, with a total lack of health care, education, and decent housing and employment opportunities’.228 Much temporary housing was still evident on the outskirts of Lhasa – ‘numerous tin roofs were seen’ – when Heinrich Harrer revisited in 1984 (Harrer, 1986).

Barkor was in 1984 confirmed by the government as the commercial tourist ‘heart’ of historical Lhasa. The traditional-historical buildings between Mentsikhang hospital and Jokhang temple were subsequently demolished (1987), and Barkor Square constructed, and the first new housing projects in Old Lhasa were completed (Luhan, 1989:23). ‘Repairs’ and new construction in Old Lhasa were based on government policies approved in the 1970s.229 At this time, a number of religious institutions were reopened, most of them for housing. Most of the Gyume Lower Tantric College buildings were turned into high density multi-let housing; Tengyeiling was taken over entirely for housing, with a small chapel erected on the upper level in the rear courtyard. Meru monastery was turned into a dance and drama school. Tsomoling monastery became a rambling compound with private dwellings. Shide dratsang (monastery) was left to deteriorate. Kumbum lakhang was turned into a granary, and Tarpaling turned into housing. Trijang labrang became offices for the TAR Electricity Board and housing. Kundeling dratsang was converted into a large residential building, Tsecholing dratsang was converted into a military supply depot (Batchelor, 1987; Paljor, 1977).

During ‘The Third Main Period of Construction’ (early 1980s to late 1980s) the focus remained on industry and people (Liu Tung Fen and Wangdu 1991:7-16; Barnett, 2006:211, interviewing Lhasa’s Mayor Loga, 1991). ‘From 1980 the urban area increased by 2 sq. km each year. Of 43 cement factories in Tibet, 18 of them were located in Lhasa alone. There were so many new factories around the Potala’ (Loga in Barnett, 2006:216).

The ‘open door’ policy that granted an individual city the relative freedom and responsibility to develop according to its own inherited characteristics was not to apply to Lhasa. All aspects of policy, planning and approvals remained entirely in the hands of the State Council.

Lhasa urban development plans 1980 onwards


The main premise of ‘Lhasa 1980-2000 Development Plan’ was – ‘that Lhasa is the political-economic centre, the communications hub, and the headquarters of the autonomous government of the region’, concluding that ‘within the period of this plan the emphasis will have to be on the development of Tibetan light industry and handicrafts, and cultural and educational centres. The local tourist industry must also be gradually developed. By the year 2000 the population should be controlled so as to be 200,000 persons. The area for construction should be 42 sq.km by this time.’

In line with PRC policy the chief intention of the plan was to create
‘a modern socialist city with local national characteristics, a nice, civilized and clean new city, a beautiful and charming sacred city. The transformation of the old town means re-adjustment (‘tiao zheng’) in a step-by-step process. New urban districts should be developed north, east and west of the existing urban structure as well as on the south side of the Lhasa River with the planned Lhasa railway and goods terminal as sub-centre’.

The plan aimed to cover all aspects of urban development within the area of the Cheng Guan district (the urban area of Lhasa County). Protection of built heritage was presented as a priority concern. ‘Lhasa 1980-2000’ bears a definite stamp of the current pan-Chinese development vision and urban planning tradition, with a focus on economic development and industrial production. An expressed need of ‘local character’ reads as included mainly for ‘decoration’, a concern for new construction methods and new products.231

‘Lhasa Development Plan 1980-2000’ was approved by the State Council in 1984, and defined the pattern and pace for developing Lhasa, including the renewal of most of its traditional–historic building resource: ‘traditional lanes and alleyways should be straightened and widened, and by 1996 most traditional buildings should be demolished and replaced with modern construction’. Ambiguity was indicated on areas of traditional townscape. Shöl and Barkor were on one map shown as protected areas but another as demolished and redeveloped.232

Fig. 63 Lhasa Urban Development Plan 1980-2000, Landuse plan. Key: Black: Monument; Cross-hatching: Old Lhasa; Red: Commerce; Brown: Military; Dark Brown: Military and Government Institutions; Red Star: Government Precincts; Green: Par; Ochre: Residential.
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Fig. 64 Lhasa Urban Development Plan 1980-2000, Landuse Central Area. Key: Black: Monument; Cross-hatching: Old Lhasa; Red: Commerce; Brown: Military; Dark Brown: Military and Government Institutions; Red Star: Government Precincts; Green: Par; Ochre: Residential.

Fig. 65 Lhasa around 1985 showing phases of construction from 1951 onwards
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Fig. 66 Lhasa in 1955 (red), with the authors sketch interpretation of construction phases in 1965 (green) and 1970 (blue). The above two maps indicate the exceptional volume of construction in Lhasa during a period of assumed little to no urban expansion elsewhere in China.

Fig. 67 The Lhasa City Development Plan 1995-2015. Landuse plan (the plan was not made available by the government agencies contacted)

In 1994 the plan was adjusted by the municipal government to ‘better match needs and potentials of the city’ (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001:155).
Only religious structures were protected at regional and municipal levels in Lhasa. Private sector housing being encouraged from the late 1980s onwards resulted in sharp increases in rent levels of both public and private sector housing. Most national social security policy mechanisms (including the Affordable Housing programme) appear to assist only a very small proportion of the Tibetan population. By mid-1989, more than 40,000 Tibetans without Lhasa residence permits had been expelled (mainly from Old Lhasa) to their native villages. The policy did not affect Chinese residents without Lhasa registration (Central Tibet Administration, Daramsala 1993).

‘The Fourth Main Construction Period’ (1987 – 1991) was described as ‘mainly (a) renovation of the old town, with modern urban areas constructed around the old town combining the principles of modern town planning with traditional architectural grace, creating ‘a new townscape’ in historic Lhasa’ (Lhasa Mayor Loga in Barnett, 2006:211, 217 ref 39). This argument is supported by the ‘Detailed (Conservation) Plan for Barkor Lhasa, 1992’ (see below) initiated by Loga as Mayor and approved in Beijing in 1996.

From 1988 to 1990 a large number of residential buildings were demolished and new housing constructed in Old Lhasa, and ‘this should see an end to dangerous housing in Lhasa’. The new styles of planning and architecture in China took some years to find their way to Lhasa. The overall aim remained to construct Lhasa as ‘a beautiful socialist city’ (Barnett, 2006:211). Chairman Deng’s national ‘Commercial Tide’ (1992) resulted in a flush of new department stores and markets in Lhasa – with modern building materials and Chinese ‘international style’. Even ground floor areas of government offices were converted into commercial space. Relaxed national controls brought more Han- and Hui (Chinese Muslim) settlers. Although Lhasa was seen to have limited economic and political attraction for ‘external finance, Chinese companies were established for construction work, trading and financial development. Lhasa continued to expand by absorbing agricultural land, the only protected area being the bio-diversity protected wetlands immediately north of the city.

‘The Fifth Main Construction Period’ in Lhasa started from 1992: ‘modern wide avenues with canopies of trees on either side and islands of colourful gardens en route were built in the north of the Lhasa river. This has further enhanced the beauty of the ancient town of Lhasa’ (Loga in Barnett, 2006:211, 217). An unofficial survey of shops and businesses in Lhasa City in 1993 estimated Tibetan-owned businesses to account for 10-15%, with 8-9% as government owned businesses, and the remainder (75-80%) owned and run by Han- and Hui-Chinese interests. The second national ‘Commercial Tide’ reached Lhasa in 1994. With ‘long and cheap’ government funding and investment from other provinces of China, 62 major public projects were declared. The
new city was already established to most sides of Old Lhasa – by mid-1990s reaching critical proximity to the historic kernel, impacting on townscape character, built density and demographics. At this time, the aims of the ‘Lhasa 1980-2000 Plan’ to make Lhasa ‘a city full of nationality characteristics’ appear to have been forgotten.

In morphological terms, earlier ‘fragmented’ clusters of construction within an open wide-meshed urban grid were filled with continuous ribbons of commercial, residential and administrative development that soon surrounded Old Lhasa. Open land, ‘lingkas’, that earlier separated outer kora Lingkor from middle kora Barkor had been filled with urban construction. The traditional open area of brooks and meadows that separated Marpori Hill (with Potala) from the old town was developed. Traditional ‘lingkas’ were by 1992 visible only where streets had replaced the lanes that separated them. Urban expansion continued to the north and to the west seemingly scattered across a large-meshed loose orthogonal planning grid, grouped around industry.

By 1990 the total number of traditional-historical buildings in Old Lhasa is estimated to have been about 500, reduced from approximately 650 in 1959.

That same year Old Lhasa was reported to be ‘visually virtually intact’.²⁴² The view may reflect a ‘distanced’ official view rather than that of an informed visitor.

Also in 1990, the ‘TAR Cultural Relics Protection and Management Regulations’ were adopted and issued, see Appendix (quoted in Leckie, 1994:129).

North of Barkor street demolitions had made room for the large 3-storey Tromsikhang market hall with about 1800 trading stalls.
The Barkor 1992 Conservation Plan

‘The Future Detailed Construction Plan for Barkor in the City of Lhasa’ (Barkor Conservation Plan) prepared by the China Institute of Urban Planning, Beijing was submitted in 1992 and approved by the State Council in 1996. The land-use plan defined most of the traditional townscape for residential use, with restricted areas for business and service, and a small number of religious buildings (monuments). The northwest and northeast segments of the plan area were defined for administrative use, for large work-units, a few smaller located in the vicinity of and on Barkor.

Large sections of the plan-area were marked as ‘area with ordinary or high level dangerous housing’. Presenting design prototypes for new courtyard buildings, the plan advocated renewal of all housing in the old town. Only 15 building complexes or parts of such were in the Barkor Conservation Plan identified to have specific heritage protection value – only the most important religious structures and a negligible number of secular buildings designated for protection. All other built structures were to be demolished and replaced. The Barkor plan was processed by all relevant authorities (assumed also by SACH, State Administration for Cultural Property) and finally approved by the PRC State Council in 1992. A plan amendment (State Council, 1999) stated an intention to ‘strengthen protection and ethnic development’ (senior TAR government representative, 2003). The ‘Barkor Conservation Plan’ confirmed the ‘Lhasa Development Plan 1980-2000’ intention to demolish and renew all but selected ‘monumental heritage’ in Old Lhasa.

Between 1989 and 1993 more than half of Barkor’s traditional buildings are believed to have been demolished, replaced with modern housing of low to moderate standard. In September 1993 there were 45 active building sites in Barkor alone. In 1994 most of the extant traditional-historical buildings were overloaded with residents, with most buildings in conditions of galloping dilapidation (the LHCA project, 1995-1999) – with demolitions and reconstructions in high evidence. The same year, the Potala-Shöl complex became the first case of Tibetan cultural heritage inscribed on the UNESCO World heritage List. Evictions from Shöl the same autumn prepared for construction of the Potala Square.

All the main plan proposals of the 1992 Barkor Conservation Plan are included on the following pages.
Fig. 69 Map 1 2 02 General plan (map). Key: Yellow: residential; Brown: production; Orange: education; Green: administration; Deep Brown: religious; Red: services (social and business); Red/Yellow diagonals: market (commerce).
Fig. 70 Map 2 2 02: Land use map (map of status quo) Key: Yellow: residential; Deep Red: religious; Lighter Red: Business and service; Light Red: health and hospital; Orange: Culture and education; red/Yellow diagonals: Market (commerce); Light Green: administration; Brown: production; Ochre: military.
Fig. 71 Map 2 2 03: The quality of buildings (including distribution of population) Key: Deep Brown: special danger residence; Red: new residence; Brown: danger residence of grade one; Ochre: danger residence of grade two; Dotted lines: borders of neighbourhood committees.
Fig. 72 Map 2 02 04: Built heritage protection levels (status quo of relics) Key: Deep Red: National level; Pink: Regional level; Ochre: Municipal level; Yellow: having preservation value.
Fig. 73 Map 2 2 05 Public facilities (the status quo of public facilities) Key: Red/White vertical stripes: Business street; Red/White diagonal stripes: Market; Ochre: Education, school; Red Dot: Hotel and Restaurant; Grey/green full Dot: Police station; Grey/green and white Dot: Residence Committee; Red w/cross: Hospital.
Fig. 74 Map 2 2 11: Protection Plan. Key: Brown: Relic (officially recognised monument); Red: Protected Block of Grade One; Lighter Red: Protected Block of Grade Two; Orange: Protected Block of Grade Three; Yellow: Protected Block for assistance; White streets/lanes: Protected Block Road.
Fig. 75 Map 2 2 12: Protection Plan. Key: Brown: Relic; Red: Protected Block of Grade One; Pink: Protected Block of Grade Two; Orange: Protected Block of Grade Three; Light Yellow: Protected Block for Assistance; Black/White diagonal hatching: Protected Square; Yellow Dots: Main Entrance Road to the Block.
Fig. 76 The controlling map of building style. Key: Cross-hatching: Control by Type A; Diagonal hatching: Control by Type A and B; Black Road: Control on both sides by Type B, C, G; Black Dotted Road: Control on both sides by Type C, D; Dotted area: Control by Types D, E, F; Black triangle: Control by Type G.
Fig. 77 Map of Road and Traffic. Key: Rectangular Dots/Broken Black Lines: Municipal roads with vehicular access; Dots: Pedestrian street; Black are with White Dot: Park; Diagonal Hatching: Important Square.
Fig. 78  Space Protection Map. Key: Grey Large Dot: Protected Space; Black Line: protected space of street.
Control of Building Style

The Barkor Conservation Plan restricted building styles to be limited to seven types:

A. Traditional Tibetan style building, include monastery, residence or noble family residence and other buildings of high artistic value;
B. Normal local style Tibetan building;
C. Tibetan style modern building;
D. Modern building with Tibetan style symbol;
E. Modern building
F. No limit
G. Special stipulation

Control of Building Height

The Barkor Conservation Plan stated that building near Jokhang Temple should be limited to two storeys. In Protected Block Grade Two and Three, buildings should not exceed three storeys. This has not been respected in the construction of new buildings.
Fig. 80 Jokhang Temple and Barkor Street: Heavy hatching: Protected Buildings; Black Outline: New Construction, ongoing.

Fig. 81 Proposed new housing, prototype block floor plan with planning module at ca 3M cc (near side). As part of the approved Barkor Conservation Plan, the modular plan unit shown here was to be used throughout Old Lhasa. The plan shows 2 water tap positions in the small and open central courtyard to cater for the entire building (10 units x 3 or 4 storeys) of 30 or 40 households.
5.3.3 Historical islands

‘Most urban areas in Tibet provide a stark contrast between new and relatively well equipped quarters for Chinese settlers and rundown, primitive housing in the segregated Tibetan sector. Most Tibetan towns are surrounded and even dwarfed by expansive Chinese sections having walled compounds with running water and electricity. Tibetan quarters often lack running water or reasonable sanitation. In larger towns both sectors have electricity, but for Tibetans it is often rationed. In smaller towns and villages there is generally no electricity at all, unless they lie along a major highway and contain a Chinese compound’.247

‘It is critical that a comprehensive approach covering the conservation of historic buildings and controls of new development be adopted. The Barkor area has been declared a conservation area. Unfortunately, little is being done to conserve existing buildings’. The report called for a complete halt to demolitions in the old town and in Shöl. The report to the Tibet Tourism Bureau in 1990 stated that much of Lhasa has become an amorphous mass of ill-defined urban areas, with unclear edges extending towards the rural hinterland.248

Cartographic studies indicate that one quarter of the perimeter of Old Lhasa in 1990 still faced towards ‘open’ space.249 Unlike urban development in China, urban development projects in Lhasa City were characterised as mostly ‘un-modern danwei-enclosures’ (Marshall, 1990). By the mid-1990s, Lhasa had become a large sprawling city reaching from historic Lhasa to Tölung on the western outskirts, to the north ‘touching’ Drepung and Sera monasteries and the mountain slopes. The chief Chinese imprint on Lhasa remained as the earlier danwei-planning with anonymous buildings within an orthogonal street geometry: the ‘uniformed urban block planning’. This made Old Lhasa an isolated island inside a large
sprawling Chinese city. Urban construction did, however, provide significant labour opportunity for the Tibetan population for whom large housing areas were now developed (Leckie, 1994:90,193).

Most of Old Lhasa was in 1995 characterised by demolition, frantic construction activity, collapsed buildings and overflowing foul drainage pits. Mixed surface water and foul drainage swamped neighbourhoods also in the dry season. New housing seemed of a mediocre construction standard, with little attention afforded climatic conditions (insulation or heating).

The ‘Thieves Island’ (Tib: gumalingka, the river island for centuries used for rituals and summer picnics) was transformed into ‘The Entertainment City’, filled with restaurants and housing for new Chinese settlers.250 The PRC government in 1997-1998 opened for the sale of use-rights to land, with leases valid for up to 50 years, and from 2000 legal also in Lhasa.251

On the north perimeter of the Barkor World Heritage buffer zone, the new Public Security Bureau tower block was approved to considerable local and international concern.

From an overall perspective, the Lhasa rail link project became the most visible element in the ‘Western Development Campaign’.252 Emphasising tourism development, the government estimated the urban population to rise by about 200,000 persons within 2-3 years of the project (completed in 2006).253 Despite mounting development pressures outside and within Old Lhasa, ‘positive’ impacts of expanding tourism might be an increased recognition of the historic townscape and buildings as potential for income generating.254

The ‘Provisional Regulations on the Management of Old City Protection in Lhasa’ of the People’s Government of Lhasa, adopted Oct. 16th 2000 (deci. No. 14) contained important sections:

The Lhasa Cultural Relics Bureau, LCRB is responsible for all aspects of cultural heritage protection and management, coordinating ‘upwards’ with the Lhasa Planning Bureau (for Lhasa Urban Construction Committee) and other departments of the Chengguan District Government in charge of Lhasa urban area (paragraph 3).

The conservation approach adopted is ‘protection being emphasized, salvage being prioritized’, with protection described as ‘effective protection, reasonable rehabilitation and reinforced management’ with ‘renewal as it was and no change to the original appearance’ (paragraph 4).

The LCRB has the duty not only of management but to carry out active documentation and research on the historical town, its buildings, culture and environment (paragraph 6), and ‘authenticate’ the traditional buildings in the old city (paragraph 7).

All buildings and structures ‘shall be in harmony with the traditional Tibetan architectural style and the historic landscape, discordant buildings and structures to be gradually demolished’. The penalty for demolishing a traditional building without consent is stipulated to 1% of the value of the structure as well as rebuilding to its original state. A penalty of 200 RMB Yuan is set for carrying out activity forbidden by the LCRB (paragraph 9).

Outdoor advertising is permitted only when approved as in harmony with the ‘general atmosphere of the district’ (paragraph 14).

The Chengguan government has the authority to ‘strategically disperse the work-units and population to new urban areas’ (paragraph 16). Activities that support and develop tourism (paragraph 17) are generally encouraged.

Penalties were set for contravening the legislation (national and regional-local), but nominal size seems not to have prevented ‘free-range’ urban development in Old Lhasa.
The ‘Urban Planning Regulations of Lhasa’ were approved by the People’s Congress of Tibet Autonomous Region in October 2001. Amongst important contents were:

‘Chapter I: General Principles’, paragraph I.3, stated that ‘urban plans and constructions shall keep the general layout and style of the historic city, respect ethical traditions, and follow sustainable development principles harmonizing the population, economy, society, environment and resource conditions.’

‘Chapter II: Formulation of Urban Planning’, paragraph 8 (the first) stated that ‘special attention shall be given to preserving historical and cultural heritage and relics, protecting traditional townscape and landscape, and emphasizing local characteristics.’ Mandates and approval processes (paragraph II.15) are defined concerning all plan levels (master plans, district plans and detailed plans (construction-oriented plan, paragraph II.15E)), confirming work-units to contribute input and in formulation of plans. With referral to the TAR People’s Congress and the TAR government for consent, the municipal government is provided with a privilege to adjust a master plan approved by the ministry and central government in light of local social and economic needs (paragraph II.16).

‘Chapter III: New Urban Development and Urban Renewal’ stated that urban development must adhere to principles of ‘unified planning’, interpreted to mean adhering to principles laid down in the master plan and to avoid ‘fragmental development’ (economic aspects of prime importance; terms are not described or defined in the available English translation of the document; author’s comments). Character of traditional townscape, urban layout, architectural style and landscaping shall be maintained and developed (paragraph III.19), and the relationship between protection and development ‘correctly coordinated. (R)epairing shall be the main method’ with ‘inserted fragmental construction’ strictly forbidden. Areas with high population concentration shall be alleviated by dispersing this to other urban areas, (paragraph III.20). In paragraph III.21 is stated that ‘the traditional housing and the urban quarters reflecting traditional Lhasa characters shall be protected as a whole’. Following approval (paragraph IV.23) ‘the municipal government shall publish urban plans’.


In view of recent development in Old Lhasa, Chapter III contained the most surprising formulation in the regulations. As example of commercial urban design without quality assurance, an ‘upgrading’ in 2000 of the Yuthok Lam provided the street with plastic palm trees – this in parallel with efforts to ‘Tibetanise’ buildings inside and outside Old Lhasa.

**Lhasa 1995-2015 Conservation Master Plan**

The plan is assumed based on the ‘Barkor Conservation Plan’, reflecting development strategies implemented by the government during the early 1990 for the expanding city (central government policy from the 1950s-60s). The plan was reported as covering all major planning issues for the entire Lhasa urban area (land use, housing, transportation, tourism to disaster prevention). Importantly, height restrictions are inside Old Lhasa and surroundings divided into three zones (8, 15, and 21 meters). The plan defined Conservation Areas of three categories:

**Conservation Area 1** is the core area of historical Lhasa, also called Barkor Historic Area, with buildings along Barkor street (assumed on both sides). No new construction is allowed and all buildings shall retain the original built form, structure, number of storeys, details and colours, with heights of buildings up to 8 meters.

**Conservation Area 2** is the Jokhang-Barkor World Heritage buffer zone including the urban landscape across to and including the Potala-Shöl WH-buffer zone. The exterior of traditional-historical buildings shall be retained but the interior is allowed modernised, within the overall original architectural format, volume and appearance, with building heights up to 15 meters and four storeys.
Conservation area 3 is the ‘construction control zone’ immediately outside the WH buffer zone (area designation unknown) ‘a good balance’ is sought between traditional and new character, with building heights within 21 meters.

Outside Conservation area 3 is located an environmental harmonization area – the guidelines for which are not known.

‘Conservation Area 1’ (Barkor) is interpreted to open for Chinese-type ‘repairs and replacement’ buildings. It has not been possible to have the demarcation between areas 1, 2 and 3 officially confirmed. The Potala-Shöl complex is assumed designated as a separate ‘Conservation Area 1’. It is not known to what extent the ‘1995-2015 Plan’ is implemented, and how deviations and dispensations from the plan are handled. Further, the planning and building control regimes for the ‘environmental harmonization area’ are not known.

Lhasa tourism development

The plan to develop tourism in central Lhasa (prepared by ‘China Academy of Urban Planning and Design’, Beijing, 2004, and presented at the 2004 International Conference on Traditional Art and Architecture, Tibet University, Lhasa) is assumed based on the ‘Barkor Conservation Plan’, and the Lhasa 1995-2015 Development and Conservation Plan (adjusted by the Lhasa City Government and passed by the PRC State Council; Zhao 2004; only the Barkor Plan available).

Fig. 83 Tibetan monks on Barkor, and Chinese tourists watching Jokhang Temple; 2004

‘The primary objectives of the tourism plan are protecting the cultural values of the Potala-area for tourism, to add necessary tourism facilities in Lhasa, and to create a harmonious environment’ – the plan is rooted in the symbolic importance and the special cultural heritage value of historic Lhasa. The plan aims to support conservation in Lhasa – conservation objectives to revitalise the historic town, to improve conditions, and to develop a harmonious environment are close to those of tourism. Tourism is a prerequisite for continued conservation in Old Lhasa, and future tourism must fund conservation activity’ ‘The primary plan area is defined by a radius of about 250 m centred on the Potala Palace, and is seen to correspond reasonable well with the World Heritage designated site.258

Restricting the number of tourists allowed to access each site is one of several vital issues: Into the larger Potala area up to 5000 persons would be permitted each day. Into the Potala Complex area (the palace including Shöl) perhaps 1500 persons each day, and into the Potala building itself may be only 850 persons – or 100 persons per hour. Pilgrims might be given access in addition. With many more tourists, new functions would need to be added in Shöl.
To retain free sightlines from and of the Potala, areas for tall buildings are allocated well outside central Lhasa, to the far west and north of the present city, and south of the river - in the shade of the mountains. Along control sight lines between Marpori and Barkor only buildings of two or three floors would be allowed. The road in front of the Potala, Beijing Sharlam, would be widened, with new lighting and street furniture. The area by Chakpori would become a tourist facilities zone, with more tourism development expanding also outside the West gate. The TV head quarters complex would be relocated and the area incorporated in the tourism zone. East of Potala-Shol existing civic functions would be removed to include the area in the tourism precinct. Differentiated traffic routes would be established, with a new ring road to divert most non-tourism related traffic outside the inner core, making Beijing Sharlam into the East-West main tourist artery, supplemented by the southern main road along the Lhasa River.

The Thieves Island ('Xian Dao' Island) development has proved commercially highly successful, but its nature and buildings in retrospect are by the authorities considered to impact negatively on Lhasa’s image, and of unacceptably low standard for future development in Lhasa. (Professor Zhao, in Lhasa 2004)259

The primary plan area seemed to omit important segments of the Potala World Heritage buffer zone. The plan could change Lhasa from a centre-oriented city into a zonal city. This could hypothetically contribute to divert development pressures and increase respect of the development periods of the different parts of Lhasa City. Supporting plans (unavailable) are assumed prepared by Tibet Tourism Bureau and its Lhasa bureau.

5.4 Urban expansion in Lhasa

There are few reliable data available on Lhasa demographics up to 1950, and the same may be said of the decades since.260 The following data collected from various sources and shown in a table format, indicates the urban growth since 1951:

Fig. 84 Lhasa towards teh north seen from the North promenade at the Potala Palace; 2000

Lhasa city population controls appear to have been targeted towards residents’ permits (hukou) with a secondary objective to control the size of the town, the hukou-system known to have been applied mainly on the Tibetan population.261
### Table 5.4.A: Summary on Growth of Lhasa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Lhasa City Population</th>
<th>Lhasa City Urban area in sq. km</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>A permanent population of ‘only 20,000 people and some thousand beggars, pilgrims and seasonal traders in place’.</td>
<td>about 2 sq. km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>About 80,000 persons</td>
<td>20-25 sq. km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Registered population reported as 70,245 persons at 58% of the total population and gross population about 120,000 (TAR government data 1979) excl. seasonal population.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Estimated to 110,000-130,000 persons, with a fast increasing component of non-Tibetans (Himal 1, 1995; Leckie, 1994:193).</td>
<td>20 sq. km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Estimated to be 70-100,000 Chinese and 50,000 Tibetans.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>About 40 sq. km.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>About 130,000 persons, official estimate. The floating Chinese population in Lhasa alone now estimated to be higher than the official urban population estimate.</td>
<td>52 sq. km (unofficial municipal estimate).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Gross population of 300-350,000 persons, of which 100-150,000 were seasonal workers and traders, most from outside TAR, and of these again 40-60,000 construction workers. Tibetans were now estimated to represent ca 40% of Lhasa’s urban population, Han and Hui Chinese representing the remaining (60%).</td>
<td>65-75 sq. km (unconfirmed input from public sector)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>With a registered population of 230,000 persons, at least 70% were believed to be ethnic Chinese (Pommaret, 1997:xv). Old Lhasa registered population 30,000 persons.</td>
<td>53 sq. km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>About 400,000 persons with 50-60,000 in Old Lhasa, or 5% of urban population living inside 1.5% of the urban built area (informal estim.).</td>
<td>Estimated as close to 90 sq.km.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.5 Urban land tenure in China

Very limited data are publicly available for Lhasa (the major source on statistics being the ‘Tibet Statistical Yearbook’). The topic is nevertheless generally outlined below (see chapter 2), and specifically is referred to work by Dawa Tsering (NTNU Master thesis) that addressed the important issues of land conservation and processes of change in land ownership relations in TAR and China (chapter 2: see also paper by Dawa, Hongwei and Bjønness, ref).
Until 1949 land was in China held by large and small private landowners, communities that administered areas for 'remote' landlords, and institutions such as monasteries (Hook, 1973:202). In reality, however, the land was considered the property of the state and personally owned by the emperor, administered through the imperial civil service (Barnew, 2000). In 1949 the PRC central government 'cancelled' all operational property market mechanisms – i.e. the property market.

The ‘Land Reform Law’ (1950) confirmed public ownership of all land in China. Through the ‘Land Reform 1956’ (‘the socialist transformation of industrialists and capitalists’ with the so-called ‘Gong Si He Ying’ (Engl: private-public-cooperation; Li, 2002:51) agricultural land was redistributed from landowners to about 300 million peasants (Hook, 1973:206 in Li, 2002:9). In the cities most urban land was officially absorbed by the state, although private land ownership coexisted with public ownership (administered for the state through regional and local government) into the mid-1950s.

During the Great Leap Forward (1958-1961) remaining privately owned land (rural and urban) was systematically expropriated, a ‘take-over’ of privately owned land systematically implemented, and by 1982 private land ownership had disappeared altogether as national legislation (1982) designated all urban land as state property.

With the opening of the economy (1978 onward) the property market mechanisms reappeared. Problems and potentials of the evolving economy led to land tenure rights and land ownership being separately regulated by law (1988 Land Management Law). Specific rights, period of tenure and mandates of the administrative structure (5 levels) were issues not addressed by Chinese legislation.

Only two categories of urban land ownership exist – one is ‘administratively allocated land’, ie in state ownership but allocated to state work units (danweis), with the other as ‘leased land’ where Land Use Rights (LURs) are transferred to a user for payment (Anthony and Wu, 1996:338 in Li, 2002:12).

The second category is a result of legislation passed in 1988 that importantly declared land as a resource and commodity, the use right of which (LUR, land use rights) could be bought and sold (leased) independently of ownership (Zhu, 1999:534).

The State Council in 1991 ratified regulations on land use rights for urban land (Li, 1999:25-27). LUR for residential use was set to 70 years, for commercial, industrial and other usage land use rights may be awarded for 50 years at the discretion of the local authority (ibid).

In terms of developing and promoting issues of land tenure and land use rights, ‘LUR’, imply potential empowerment of a local community to adopt a territorial strategy on development – with numerous and
interesting implications and consequences to the local-national systems as empowering seems far removed from the mainly hierarchical functional systems that still govern P.R. of China. Chinese legislation is fully operational in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and Lhasa with regional and local government given some defined zones – and special mandates – of discretionary ruling (see also chapter 5).

5.6 Contemporary approach to urban conservation

Through legislation society expresses normative intentions that often divert from practice. Built heritage legislation of most societies has traditionally focused on icons of elite culture, symbols of nation building and seats of power, closely linked to legislation for the built environment and physical planning.271 Through regional government, China’s national government directs all policy areas, some of which impact heritage resources more significantly than policies and mechanisms specifically designated the heritage resource field (such as infrastructure development, socio-economic policies, urban planning and development, issues of demography and population densification). Roles of chief actors in urban planning and heritage management, and how they interact, are sketched (see additional material in Appendix).

5.6.1 Principles in practice

The ‘Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China’ adopted by SACH in 2004, re-defined principles and practice of cultural heritage conservation in China. Based on the laws of the People’s Republic of China, the ‘Principles’ reflect international principles and practice of cultural heritage conservation, and should be recognised as a document of remarkable courage and clarity from any perspective.

The principles adopted for conservation of protected buildings in China, as explained by several senior government representatives – central, regional and local – are:

‘For a building protected at ‘the highest level’ (national or regional levels), both exterior and interior must be kept as original.

For an important traditional building or structure, the outside appearance must be kept, while the interior layout, use and details may be changed.

For a building that contributes with a ‘positive character’, changes are permitted to both outside and interior, also replacing the building with ‘look-a-like’ ‘traditional’ construction.

A building that ‘contributes negatively’ should be demolished and reconstructed in a recommended new form. The latter is especially relevant for pre-1975 construction in historical Lhasa today deemed to be out of character and of low architectural standards’.272

Traditional built form of anonymous living historical environments was before the ‘conservation area’ not protected in China, unique functional, heritage and identity values not recognised from an overall socio-
5 Lhasa growth and development

economic and cultural perspective until the recent ‘China Principles’ were adopted. This may in part explain the practice to permit more extensive urban non-contextual developments in historical environments.

Most work to protected built heritage in Lhasa has since the late 1980s been carried out by non-Tibetan companies and experts (at Potala, Jokhang and Norbulingka World Heritage sites – buildings, painted murals and objects, as well as most repairs to other protected sites). Tibetan expertise (theoretical and practical) has generally been considered as insufficient if recognised to be present. The impact of this is a near dominating presence of pan-China institutions on all tasks defined as beyond the ‘ordinary’ (or unimportant) in size and scope. The TAR government seems to actively support this policy through political-commercial preferencing.

In view of the general dearth of official material available on Lhasa conservation, here is referred to two informal memos that aim to ‘deal with’ some of the challenges facing built heritage in Lhasa – ‘Conservation Plan of Lhasa Historical-Cultural City’ (‘old policy’) 1995, and ‘Origin, Development and Conservation of Lhasa Historical-Cultural City’ (‘new policy’) 1995, formulated by a senior Lhasa government representative (personal communications).

Conservation Plan of Lhasa Historical-Cultural City focused on confirming the importance of ‘conservation units’ and ‘construction control zones’ in Lhasa at national (PRC) and regional (TAR) levels (Potala Palace, Jokhang Temple, Norbulingka, Drepung Monastery, Sera Monastery (national level); with Ramoche Temple, Tromsikhang (TAR level). The document confirmed a first level (subordinate) mandate of the Lhasa Cultural Relics Bureau (LCRB) as regards any activity that could affect a unit or its ‘construction control zone’ for subsequent approval by the Lhasa Urban Planning Bureau (LUPB) on behalf of the Lhasa Urban Construction Committee (LUCC). The document confirmed economic development and tourism as the overarching priorities for Lhasa, check - that more urban squares should be constructed more, all this while fully respecting all aspects of heritage legislation and approved management plans for official monuments, traditional buildings and townscape.

Origin, Development and Conservation of Lhasa Historical-Cultural City projected a ‘new policy’ in which ‘all’ religious conservation units in Lhasa were identified. This document confirmed the principles adopted in Lhasa of ‘conservation in development’ and ‘development in conservation’, and emphasised the need to develop practical guidelines based on national and regional legislation. Again economic development was given clear emphasis on.

In concluding the document states that as more than 95% of Tibet’s population is Buddhists, conservation of built heritage ‘is not just mere conservation, but has a direct bearing on national and whole Tibetan interests, and has epoch-making significance’. The document confirms municipal plans to let only 50-60 traditional-historic buildings remain inside historical Lhasa.

The two memos are insubstantial as regards the serious issues facing built heritage in Lhasa, and believed circulated only to a restricted group (including the author). They are interpreted as produced mostly out of a need felt by government individuals ‘to show and prove concern’. This could have indicated a growing awareness of Old Lhasa heritage values.

5.6.2 Actors in Lhasa conservation

Reflecting the national structure of government, urban conservation and built heritage management through all levels involve three arms of government – urban planning, cultural heritage and culture.
Urban conservation and built heritage management depends on schedules of approved heritage resources (lists of sites and structures) at national, regional, and county levels. The two most important lists in China identify i) national cultural sites, structures or objects to be preserved at state, province and county levels, and ii) historical towns and districts approved for special protection at state and province levels. The ‘State Administration of Cultural Heritage’ (SACH) and the Ministry of Construction (MOC) monitor the state of conservation (SOC) and proposals affecting all national level heritage resources in dialogue with relevant regional and municipal administration. As Endnote are included an outline on the PRC political and government structure.273

The Ministry of Construction (MOC) is charged with supervising all planning matters and development of master and development plans, including conservation plans. Operational areas of the ‘State Administration of Cultural Heritage’ (SACH) and MOC agencies overlap in some sectors, particularly where development, planning and management concern politically sensitive environments. The MOC specialist agency ‘China Academy of Urban Planning and Design’ (‘CAUDP’) in Beijing is thus generally charged with monitoring development and management of historical towns and districts (development of legislation and guidelines, enforcement and management). To illustrate, Lhasa conservation plans have been researched and prepared by the MOC ‘Institute of Historic City Conservation’ (CAUDP) in Beijing and through the MOC submitted to the State Council for approval. Illustration. The Ministry of Culture is responsible for implementing national policies on intangible cultural heritage, and can through its agency the National Commission for UNESCO in China (Ministry of Education) be involved also with selected aspects of built heritage management.

Religious policy, activity and resources are in China administered and monitored by the ‘State Administration of Religious Affairs’ (SARA), a department under the State Council which oversees religious affairs and issues for the People’s Republic of China, with regional and municipal offices.274 ‘SARA’ in Lhasa, or ‘Lhasa Religious Affairs Bureau’ (or RAB; Tibetan: choe-don uyon lhan-khang) was established in 1956, disbanded during the Cultural Revolution, and re-established in 1978. The Lhasa RAB controls all aspects of monastic life and activity ‘together with’ the internal ‘Democratic Management Committees’.275 RAB mandates include management, repairs and rebuilding of monastery property (see also chapters 3 and 6.

China has a well developed structure of agencies charged with heritage protection and management at regional, provincial and municipal levels, administered at national level by the ‘State Administration of Cultural Heritage’, SACH, a semi-ministry under the State Council. SACH primary responsibilities include monitoring the state of conservation of China’s material heritage (including the museum sector),
drawing up policy and legislation, developing protection programmes, providing operational conservation guidance, advising public institutions, and building ‘heritage-awareness’ in society. National capacity building in the entire cultural heritage sector is delegated to ‘China National Institute of Cultural Property’ in Beijing, reporting to SACH. In charge of World Heritage management in China, SACH may delegate tasks to lower government.

The ‘TAR Cultural Property Administration Bureau’ (CPAB, at TAR Ministry of Culture) is SACH’s representative at regional level, with responsibility for national and regional level cultural heritage in Tibet. The CPAB has management and supervision of two of Lhasa’s three World Heritage sites (the Historic Ensemble of Potala Palace, and Norbulingka Summer Palace and Gardens), the third (Jokhang-Barkor) administered by the municipal level Lhasa City Cultural Relics Bureau (Lhasa CRB).

Main tasks of the ‘Lhasa Cultural Relics Bureau’ (Lhasa CRB) are to monitor development in Lhasa that impact heritage resources (from planning issues to individual structures), supervise individual projects, and offer advice. Limited capacity and wide mandates make the bureau seem unable to meet controversial projects – a considerable challenge as ‘privately’ funded urban development tends to give little heed to heritage values. Lhasa CRB must obtain approvals from the ‘Lhasa Planning Bureau’ (prefecture level), and coordinates with higher agencies.

The ‘TAR Design and Supervision Bureau’ provided technical capacity to repair and upgrading to historic buildings in Old Lhasa (and Tibet) as well as new construction. Employing individuals with considerable knowledge of traditional skills, their work with new construction shows a need of architectural expertise and contextual design.

The demolition and reconstruction activity of housing in Old Lhasa was administered by the ‘Lhasa Urban Construction Committee’, LUCC. A great majority of the work has been handled by the part-private real estate company ‘Lhasa City Real Estate Company’ as project developer, contractor and overall agent. Commercial private-public operators were encouraged in urban development. National and regional financial institutions provide work-units with credit for property development. This has in Lhasa led to a number of work-units overextending their own financial capacity without yet having access to a well-functioning property market. Only a small number of private owners have upgraded their own traditional buildings in Old Lhasa. In short, contemporary ‘participatory’ methodologies remain untested in the context of Lhasa.

The international community (UNDP and UNESCO) have formally been ‘present’ in Lhasa since the early 1990s, UNESCO and its World Heritage Committee a ‘watch-dog’ on heritage issues, and UNDP China collaborating with all levels of government on socio-cultural and economic development projects.
Only very few international interests have been involved in Lhasa in fields affecting built heritage resources (from poverty alleviation and health programmes to craft support and repairs of traditional buildings). In the field of built heritage, the ‘Lhasa City Historic Atlas’ project (LHCA) and ‘The Lhasa Atlas’ are important research collaborations that started in 1994 through the ‘Network for University Cooperation Tibet-Norway’.

The international NGO ‘Tibet Heritage Fund’ (THF, www.thf.com) was 1996-2000 active in practical building and infrastructure upgrading in Old Lhasa. Collaborating informally as well as formally with municipal agencies (Lhasa CRB, Lhasa Housing Board and LUCC), THF’s pioneering work in Lhasa built heritage saved a considerable number of buildings from early demolition, and initiated traditional skills training.

5.6.3. Lhasa heritage values

In the early 1990s each year about 40 traditional-historic buildings would be demolished in Old Lhasa. Of the historical town’s 600-700 traditional-historic buildings in 1950, only 280 were extant in 1995 (LHCA-project, below), and the historic townscape had lost significant heritage value. Courtyard manor houses constituted traditional landmarks in Old Lhasa. With new larger housing projects and widened roads planned, they were considered of little value. Overcrowded and falling into disrepair most of them were soon demolished.

‘The Lhasa Historical City Atlas’-project (LHCA, 1995-1999) was to provide the first survey of Lhasa’s buildings and townscape since Peter Aufschnaiter’s land survey of the late 1940s. The LHCA-project registered and documented 335 traditional-historical buildings and structures inside Lingkor. Near parallel documenting and inventorying of historical Lhasa was started by the Lhasa Archives Project, LAP-project, and continued in 1997 as THF, Tibet Heritage Fund. THF initiated important pilot conservation work in Lhasa, repairing and upgrading traditional-historic residential and monastic buildings. The activity was continued by the Lhasa City Cultural Relics Bureau (Lhasa CRB).

In 1997 the municipal government set up the ‘Committee for the Repair and Protection of Lhasa Old Town’ to oversee development, construction and conservation activity in Lhasa. The committee in 1998 protected a total of 94 traditional-historic buildings in Old Lhasa (municipal level protection). Demolitions were ‘stopped’ for about 18 months – although in 1998 nine courtyards housing 88 families were demolished.

In parallel, a ‘Tibetification’ of commercial building along main streets between the Potala Square and Jokhang Square was started. Main building fronts were adapted with ‘Tibetan’ elements of architectural decoration, but now in modern materials and execution (such as concrete instead of traditional timber and clay-render to window and door surrounds; steel and aluminium instead of timber to windows; steel shutters instead of timber, etc).
The ‘protection’ of traditional-historical buildings seemed to apply only to external surfaces and the main construction. Residents are often relatively ‘free’ to make changes to their own spaces. In Lhasa this appears to contravene approved municipal level legislation. Here the general building control (of no-alterations) in declared historic structures (such as Meru Nyingba, Lhasa) is enforced by the municipal housing bureau. The following is included to illustrate some of the challenges faced by urban conservation in Lhasa:

In 1994 the Barkor Neighbourhood Committee as managing authority of one of the most important historical buildings on Barkor South, Labrang Nyingba, stated that the building would be demolished and replaced with a modern office building. After reactions from residents, Lhasa CRB and the TAR Cultural Centre all emphasizing the high value of the building, the Neighbourhood Committee in 1995 confirmed that the building would be saved. Of seven sites protected by Lhasa Municipality in February 1995 Labrang Nyingba remained not protected. By 2002 Labrang Nyingba had become a successful case of repair and restoration, the project eventually implemented by Lhasa City Cultural Relics Bureau. The old building is home to many families enjoying good housing, protected hopefully through its use if not formally.

Of the 94 traditional-historic buildings protected by Lhasa municipality in 1998 only religious buildings were extant by 2005 (less than half of the number of buildings protected). Some of these have been repaired by the Lhasa CRB, and today appear well maintained.

The UNESCO World Heritage Committee in 2000 extended the Potala-Shöl World Heritage site (1994) to include the Jokhang Temple Monastery Complex and Barkor. In 2001 ‘Nobulingka’, the Dalai Lama’s former Summer Palace was added.

The approved nomination documents showed little concern for the physical connections that were still extant as historic remains between the three sites. In Barkor and Shöl informal constructions were demolished, and residents evicted. Demolition affected also the buildings protected by the city government in 1998. Jokhang Square was reconstructed.

From now on, 25-30 buildings were demolished each year, replaced by taller and bulkier new residential construction, the Mayor arguing demolition and new construction to be necessary to meet demands of local people.

*When rebuilding, the government seeks to keep colour, form and appearance of buildings as they were. With these Tibetan style old buildings, we cannot change their outside appearance, but the inside can be rebuilt as necessary to improve conditions. Buildings in historic Lhasa of the 1970s are today inappropriate, and are gradually demolished. Part of our work in the historic core is control of building heights. Construction is the concern of the city government, no one else, inside and outside the WH buffer zones (including issues such as the PBS-tower). Lhasa urban development plans set out to respect and achieve balance as regards provision of facilities and development, national characteristics, and modernisation now and in the future. Repairs done by THF did not meet local requirements, and their work shall be demolished and reconstructed. International criticism and UNESCO views are unfair considering what the government already had achieved for Lhasa’s residents’.

(The Lhasa Mayor in meeting with the author, 2002).
5 Lhasa growth and development

2004 saw completion of the most comprehensive Old Lhasa infrastructure upgrading project undertaken ‘in modern times’. New networks were laid to most neighbourhoods (power, electricity and water and drainage), and all external public areas, streets and lanes were stone paved.\textsuperscript{288}

To manage the exploding tourism generated by Lhasa’s World Heritage status and the lifting of domestic tourism restrictions, access restrictions were enforced for main religious monuments (2003 onwards, initially to Potala Palace only). This seemed to favour tourists to the disadvantage of locals and pilgrims.

Across the community, Tibetans have expressed that the government policy of ‘museum-making’ has contributed to secularise stronghold sites of the Lhasa ‘sacred geography’ (the Potala Palace, temples and monasteries being turned into museums, Shöl and Norbulingka as picnic parks). It should nevertheless be stated that the standard of conservation since the start of the millennium (to most of the traditional-historic buildings retained) has been of markedly improved standards, both in terms of principles and execution (Tsinghua University, ‘China’s Academy for Urban Design’, and Tibet University responsible for the transformation of Shöl, for SACH and the TAR government).

Repairs to monastic buildings in old Lhasa have mostly been respectful of overall traditional architectural and cultural character, and these buildings have therefore changed little in character and appearance.

By 2005 almost the entire resource (townscape) of traditional-historic residential buildings in Old Lhasa – unique to the larger Himalayan region – had been demolished and replaced with larger new construction filling all urban space, also that earlier not built on. The conservation plan for Old Lhasa (1992 Barkor Plan) had been of major consequence to kick-start processes of urban renewal, but of nominal value only in terms of protecting heritage resources (only a small number of declared ‘monuments’ protected. About 50 traditional-historic buildings were extant in 2006, of the 335 still in place in 1995. Demolitions seemed to continue. The few remaining courtyard mansions were almost with no exception transformed into hotels and tourist facilities.\textsuperscript{289}

Shöl and Potala Square transformed

An important area transformed – With the Potala-Shöl complex was given World Heritage status (1994) to the applause of the international heritage environments, Tibetan traditional-historical architecture seemed with this at last adequately acknowledged also in China. More than 100 families lived in traditional buildings in Outer Shöl – the complex of traditional-historic buildings below and outside the 17th century Potala-Shöl fortified walls. Some of the buildings would most likely be termed as ‘historic’. In the WH nomination process residents were evicted. The proposal not known to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, the Potala Square construction on Beijing Shar Lam and directly opposite Potala-Shöl was announced soon after the UNESCO WH-List inscription was officially confirmed (in October 1994), and construction started in mid-October.\textsuperscript{290} During the construction of the
square, the remaining residents of Outer Shöl were moved to the new residential area of New Shöl (map) and the Outer Shöl buildings demolished. In 2001 ‘The Monument of Peaceful Liberation of Tibet’ to commemorate 50 years of peaceful liberation of Tibet was constructed on the south side of Potala Square, facing the Potala Palace. Of little artistic merit, its symbolic value of Chinese presence has been seen to create negative responses with locals and visitors (only time will show whether its confrontational presence will diminish; time might interpret its context differently).

In spring 2002 Shöl residents were relocated to New Shöl. Further construction work in Shöl was stopped, and much of the recent construction demolished. Initial plans to transform Shöl into an open green area catering to tourists (?) were stopped by SACH, the proposals by Tsinghua University, Beijing amended in consultation with SACH and TAR authorities.

The remaining 300 families in Shöl all were evicted by October 2003, most of them re-housed in New Shöl. Further demolition inside Shöl were suspended.

In 2003-2005 extensive repairs were carried out to extant traditional-historic buildings in Shöl, and to historic interiors and the external fabric of the Potala Palace complex itself (including the 17th century enclosure to the Potala-Shöl complex). The completed works provided a pleasant ‘museum-park’ of buildings in extensive lawns, but devoid of its well described historic vitality and qualities.

To complete the ‘story’, during 2004-2005 all construction west of the Potala Square was demolished to establish a landscaped enlarged and ‘un-historic’ new Potala Square Park (completed 2006). The implemented project may have brought back, however non-contextual, ‘memories’ of the ‘Zhung Tri Lingka’ of before 1960 (the Dalai Lama’s gardens), possibly providing some ‘environmental’ gains to the larger Potala Complex and TAR Government Precinct.

*Fig. 85 The final demolition of Shöl as residential community about to start. Shöl as settlement may have roots that go back to the 7th – 8th century CE; 2003*
5.7 Chapter summary

Changes to Lhasa before 1960 have been difficult to ascertain due to the sketchy or fragmented information available. Monastery archival material probably still exists that could shed new light on Lhasa’s community, growth and development through time.

In 1950 Lhasa was the larger Tibetan urbanised settlement in Tibet, and remains so today, albeit with a Han-Chinese population majority. New political-social systems, overcrowding and investment outside the kernel led to serious urban dilapidation that invited to and in part necessitated demolition and redevelopment.

Reasons for retaining Old Lhasa as traditional historic urban environment into the late 1980s were linked to the severe limitations on financial resources in the 1950-60s in China, and the general policy and culturally rooted decision to construct new urban settlements (cheaply?) outside existing ones, rather than being a result of any conscious policy of safeguarding a historic settlement.

The ‘Lhasa 1980-2000 Development Plan’ and the ‘Barkor Conservation Plan’ provided the legal and operational frameworks within which to ‘repair’, demolish and reconstruct Old Lhasa. The ‘Barkor Conservation Plan’ by confirming the majority of Old Lhasa’s buildings as ‘unhealthy and safety risk’, justified and made necessary the subsequent near-complete demolition.

1995 saw a modernising urban environment undertaking major development activity.

In 2005 Lhasa had become a contemporary city with a small deconstructed historic kernel, and a majority-population transferred here. The largest homogenous traditional heritage resource in Central Tibet – the traditional-historic townscape in Old Lhasa – has in 15-20 years (mid-1980s onwards) been transformed, never considered worthy of the term ‘cultural heritage’.

An increasing focus on tourism development has been recognised during the study period. Designating Lhasa as World Heritage (1994) has contributed strongly to this through the WH-system focus on raising ‘awareness of the unique’ and on income generating from tourism (‘the Lijiang syndrome’). The government (through work-unit owners) sold most of the remaining traditional-historic secular buildings in Old Lhasa to private property companies for development as ‘boutique hotels’. The process might in the longer term positively involve more actors (outside the public sector) in conservation work and management – a prerequisite for which would be ownership ‘controlled’ by local interests (‘relevant’ local stakeholders and related interests are at this stage not identified).

The responsibility for urban conservation in Lhasa, as in China, is divided across the policy mandates of several ministries, and closely dependent on urban planning policies. Within the bureaucratic system, heritage management is ranked below urban planning. Overlaps of mandates and responsibilities (especially between the Ministry of Construction and SACH) are apparent and contribute to fragmented
management regimes. The State Council remains directly involved in all planning and management issues that concern Lhasa and Tibet. The city (and province) may by some today be regarded as 'colonised' by the Chinese. A visual and actual majority of Han- and Muslim Hui-Chinese populations, Chinese institutions and cultural influences that dominate life and environment may justify such an interpretation.

Multiple tasks and limited resources (systemic, manpower and financial) of the Lhasa CRB are seen to make operational processes of conservation management highly pragmatic, where only the narrowest of policy-goals may be met (see attached diagrams; Appendix: China’s government structure).

In Old Lhasa a large population has in about one decade been provided with decent housing standards and general welfare. Carried out in a period of socio-economic and cultural transformation, this would be recognised as a highly commendable achievement in any society. During the period, however, the housing ‘upgrading’ processes have resulted in what seems to be a significant exchange of population. In parallel, the large increase achieved in residential space per capita for well-off ‘hukou’ holders seems to have exposed the large section of low-income ‘hukous’ and ‘no-hukous’ in Lhasa again to insecurity of housing tenure. In possible ‘memory’ of earlier days, fears of evictions may be heard (chapters 6-7).

Endnotes

190 As an illustration of this, if the ‘chorten’ or ‘caitya’ (stupa) concept came to Lhasa with Newaries, how and why was the main ‘caitya’ in Lhasa at high risk located in the valley floor, in marshland, while in Kathmandu the ‘caitya’ was located on the hillsise, protected well above the valley and the town?
191 In China in mid 1990s, more than 80% of state housing was devoted to state owned work-units. Most residents of Old Lhasa did not belong to work-units, with a large proportion not even registered as Lhasa residents. Therefore, most of residents did not qualify for public housing provision, and have remained in the unregulated informal housing market.
192 ‘Even Tibetologists, until the present day, have not been interested in the history of the city itself and, in spite of their knowledge of old documents, have implicitly tacked onto the site the western concept of capital city, stating that Lhasa became the centre of political power in the 7th century’ (Lhasa, Legend and History, by Anne-Marie Blondeau and Yonten Gyatso, in Lhasa in 17th century, in F. Pommaret ..:15.
193 The Central Tibet power base changed according to which religious school was in power and supported by which stronger warlord. In a relative vacuum resulting from the fights of religious schools, appointed governors (14-15th century) set up a hereditary system of rule.
194 Tibet’s first conversion to Buddhism is believed to have happened with Songtsen Gampo. Its ‘real’ conversion is assumed to have taken place in the 9-11th centuries; Sørensen, 2003:20 and other references. This complex and quite beautiful story of Lhasa’s founding is believed to have emerged first in the 11-12th centuries CE, and possibly as a religious text, a ‘treasure text’.
195 His dates are elsewhere stated as 569-650 CE or (617-650 CE. Songtsen Gampo is believed first to have built Pabongka north of the present Sera Monastery. He supported Sampotha to develop a Tibetan written language that would combine the various tribes and help build an empire of Songtsen Gampo’s vision (Pommaret, .... Legends tell that King Songtsen Gampo Songtsen195 was born not in the Yarlung Valley, his father’s territory off the Tsangpo Valley, several days of riding and walking to the south and east of Lhasa, but in Gyama about 50 km upstream from Lhasa. He is attributed with founding Lhasa, moving the political centre there from the Yarlung Valley before 650 (Blondeau and Yonten Gyatso, Pommaret ...).
196 Maybe not unlike tower structures known from elsewhere in the Himalayan region. In Baltistan and Hunza, Northern Pakistan, over a period of about 10 years I have been associated with AKTC projects. Baltit Fort in Hunza and Shigar Fort in Baltistan emerged in their present form after several centuries and many stages of construction (I was consultant to the Aga Khan Trust for Culture on these projects), as dzongs of well known Himalayan-Tibetan type, development, size and character.
The Nepalese Princess Brikuti from the Kathmandu court – said to have ‘built’ Jokhang Temple; and Princess Wencheng from the court of the Chinese emperor in Dachang, now Xian – said to have ‘built’ Ramoche Temple, they were amongst the first sanctuaries established in Central Tibet. Jokhang retains constructional and decorative elements that are dated to the 7th century, the present Ramoche temple seems not dated before 17th century (‘Great monuments of Lhasa’, by Gilles Beguin, Chapter 4 in Pommarède 2003:60). His Chinese Queen, Wencheng, who had knowledge of geomancy, found that the whole of Tibet was full of evil, cursed by a female demon (quote above).

Already 7th century Tibet was famous for extensive trade in musk, gold, medicinal plants, fine wool and furs. Gold may have been exported already before the 5th century BCE. Tibetans not documented as extensive trade travellers themselves let others do this, particularly Newaris and Kashmiris, allowed to settle in Lhasa from at least the 13th century onwards (Luce Boulnois in Pommarède, 1997:153).

The origin and purpose of the ‘Lhasa Mandala zone’ concept are not ‘known’. The ‘Lhasa Mandala zone’ is believed to have received its ‘final’ form in the 17th century during the ‘ganden podrang’ rule prior to the 5th Dalai Lama moving his powerbase from Drepung Monastery to Marpori hill.

The Lhasa Mandala may be paralleled with the ‘Nepal Mandala’ believed established there in the 7-8th centuries CE (Licchavigupta period) and used politically as synonym for the King and Kingdom of Nepal (Slusser 1982). ‘A Mandala is a circle, a mystic diagram of varied form, and in ancient Indian usage signified an administrative unit or a country. From at least the sixth century CE, in conjunction with the word ‘Nepal’ it signified to the Nepalese the Kathmandu valley and surrounding territory’ (Slusser 1982).

The concept may later have been transported to Lhasa later for a ‘similar’ role confirming state formation and kingship. It may have come to Lhasa as a Newari ‘import’ in the 11-12th century (Sørensen, 2003). Other research, however, has drawn parallels to territorial conception and concentric models prevalent in ancient imperial China with so-called ‘cosmomagic’ models, territorial concepts that were possibly widespread in state building and urban planning (Aris, 1979:19).

Four mountains marked the outer cardinal points of the Lhasa Mandala ‘pentagram’ that had the ‘lha-sa’ sanctuary (Jokhang) as its ‘axis mundi’: the Lower sTod-lund (west), Nyang-bran/Dog-sde (north), Ba-lam (east) and Grib (south). Chapels may early have been erected in four cardinal directions around ‘lha-sa’ (Indian models), possibly as forerunners to later ‘lha-sa’ sde-bzhi’ communities thought to have shared the custodianship of the sanctum, before the ‘rigsum’ chapels erected to strengthen this concentric pattern (Sørensen, 2003:90).

Chapels forerunners to the four rigsum borpo (Tib: rigs-gsum mgon-po) chapels, although serious chronological uncertainty exists on this (Sørensen, 2003; Larsen and Sinding-Larsen 2001; Chan…128. Again, it is not known whether the rigsums were concurrent with the erection of the sanctum, as the few known sources are quiet also on this (Sørensen, 2003:90).

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On ‘lha-sa’: ‘its key idol, the Jo-bo (Jowo) statue of Sakya muni, … the country’s most sacred object of veneration, the cynosure as a magnet kept and keeps attracting endless crowds of devoted pilgrims from all over Central Asia’ (Sørensen, 2003).

Known ritual manuals provide descriptions of pre-emptive protection of the shrine from natural threats, especially from water.

Already Songtsen Gampo was recorded as erecting simple constructions to ‘avert flooding from sKyid-chu river’; Sørensen, 2003:91-92; Sørensen, 2003:99.

Continuous geo-physical change can indicate that the river bank at this time came considerably closer to the shrine. Traditional construction in the extended Himalayan region show highly developed methods to protect settlements against flooding, re personal experience from Ballistan and Hunza. And (Sørensen, 2003).

Following some destructions in its earlier centuries the lha-sa shrine was elevated into its status as the key state shrine during the reign of the 5th Dalai Lama (17th century).

In 1642 enthroned as ‘king’ of Tibet. In the system of dual religious and political power (Tib: chöyön, a ‘preceptor-patron’ relationship) the two parties were considered equal; the preceptor giving the patron religious teachings and spiritual guidance in return for material and political protection.

An alternative to the religious and military stronghold of Drepung Monastery (Samten Karmay in Pommarede, 1997). Construction started after one of the DL’s spiritual advisers, Konchog Chophel (d. 1646), pointed out that the site was ideal as a seat of government, situated as it is between Drepung and Sera monasteries and the old city of Lhasa. The Dalai Lama and his government moved into the Potrang Karpo (‘White Palace’) in 1649. Construction lasted until 1694, some twelve years after his death. The Potala was used as a winter palace by the Dalai Lama from that time. The Potrang Marpo (‘Red Palace’) was added between 1690 and 1694 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Potala_Palace#History).

The Dalai Lama resided on the holy mountain Marpori as the reincarnation of Tibet’s foremost protector, ‘Avalokiteshvara’. The traditional power-split, religious and overall power given the Dalai Lama and practical responsibilities of government split between his regent and Gushri Khan, adopted principles developed by the Sakya Master Phagpa and Khubilai Khan in the 13th century (Anne Chayet in Pommarede, 1997:41). Tibet’s complex political system developed from an interwoven web of social, economic, religious and political interests, involving religious communities and their leaders, rituals and protective deities, and their established armies – a circle of legends that are at least rooted in Lhasa’s 7th century founding thus seemed complete (Pommarede, 1997).

The system of combined secular and religious-spiritual power of the Dalai Lama was to remain in Tibet up to 1951.

The Great Game was a term for the strategic rivalry and conflict between the British Empire and the Russian Empire for supremacy in Central Asia. The classic Great Game period is generally regarded as running approximately from the Russo-Persian Treaty of 1813 to the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907.
A number of Indian spies and surveyors sent by the British in India contributed valuable information on Tibet and its capital. A brief overview of activity that has contributed to formal and informal knowledge on Lhasa through the centuries would confirm the Jesuit priest Father Antonio de Andrade (1562-1627) as a major early traveller in Central Asia already. In 1626 he established the first church in Tsaparang, in the kingdom of Guge, Western Tibet (‘Les Portugais au Tibet, les premières relations Jesuits’ (1624-1635) ed. Hugues Didier, Paris, 1996). Francisco de Azevedo (1578-1660) was a younger member of the Tsaparang mission, joining in 1631. His interpretation of the Buddhist trinity (the Buddha, Buddhist law and the community of monks) – is still regarded as highly relevant (ibid). 

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Chinese claims of sovereignty over Tibet date back to the period of the Guge Kingdom (1100s). Tibet was recognized as an independent state under the rule of the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama, and the Karmapa. This status as an independent nation has been disputed by some of its neighbouring states for centuries. China has particularly claimed a form of ‘control’ of Tibet, and Tibet’s legal status has remained an issue of concern to the UN. Tibet’s status as an independent nation has been disputed by some of its neighbouring states for centuries. China has particularly claimed a form of ‘control’ of Tibet, and Tibet’s legal status has remained an issue of concern to the UN. The Accord provided that Tibet would be divided into “Outer Tibet” and “Inner Tibet”. Outer Tibet, which roughly corresponded to Ü-Tsang and western Kham, would “remain in the hands of the Tibetan Government at Lhasa under Chinese suzerainty, but China would not interfere in its administration. “Inner Tibet”, roughly, equivalent to Amdo and eastern Kham, would be under the jurisdiction of the Chinese government. The Accord with its annexes also defined the boundary between Tibet and China proper and between Tibet and British India.

Tibet’s status as an independent nation has been disputed by some of its neighbouring states for centuries. China has particularly claimed a form of ‘control’ of Tibet, and Tibet’s legal status has remained an issue of concern to the UN. Tibet’s status as an independent nation has been disputed by some of its neighbouring states for centuries. China has particularly claimed a form of ‘control’ of Tibet, and Tibet’s legal status has remained an issue of concern to the UN. Substantial literature is available on the topic, including Bernstein’s ‘History of Tibet’, (1949).

The British Doctor Manning had arrived in 1811 and stayed for a few months, and two French Lazarist priests (the Catholic fathers Gabet and Huc) visited in 1846 (Francoise Pommaret, in Lhasa in 17Century, edited by F. Pommaret, ….. ). A number of Indian spies and surveyors sent by the British in India contributed valuable information on Tibet and its capital. A brief overview of activity that has contributed to formal and informal knowledge on Lhasa through the centuries would confirm the Jesuit priest Father Antonio de Andrade (1562-1627) as a major early traveller in Central Asia already. In 1626 he established the first church in Tsaparang, in the kingdom of Guge, Western Tibet (‘Les Portugais au Tibet, les premières relations Jesuits’ (1624-1635) ed. Hugues Didier, Paris, 1996). Francisco de Azevedo (1578-1660) was a younger member of the Tsaparang mission, joining in 1631. His interpretation of the Buddhist trinity (the Buddha, Buddhist law and the community of monks) – is still regarded as highly relevant (ibid).

The Red Army had contact with Tibetans and Tibet earlier, in 1935 during the Long March. During the campaign through Kham (eastern Tibetan areas under the rule of the Guomindang government, not that of the Dalai Lama) the Red Army met hard resistance, ‘their suffering on this part of the trek exceeding anything of the past’ (Edgar Snow in Shakya 1999:33). The Party had a very small Tibetans membership, part of which was the red Army left behind, and who formed the first Tibetan Soviet (Bod-Pa) in Garze in 1936. It appears that they no influence over or even contact with the Tibetan environment in Central Tibet, whether the ruling elite or the ordinary people.
The old order existed in a near original form until after the Tibetan uprising in 1959 that radically changed everything as new and harder policies were introduced. Ideology (here defined as ‘a body of ideas and beliefs with a commitment to a certain social, political and economic order to achieve these values’ (Hsiung, 1970:97), or (Websters) ideology ‘as a body of doctrine, myth etc, referring also to a political plan with devices for putting it into practice’. By new ideology is here meant the ideas, values and aims of people who had come up together through the Chinese Civil War including representatives of many minorities, also Tibetans) was of central importance to develop and maintain society before the Chinese takeover of Tibet in 1950 - during the ‘old order’ - as well as after.

Some Tibetan families did, however, receive relatively decent compensation. Rong Ma in ‘Han and Tibetan residential patterns in Lhasa’, China Quarterly no.128, a 1991 government publication. Already by 1955 the new government had accommodated itself in the Yuthok family manor located next to the Yuthok Zampa (the Turquoise Bridge). As one of several old families, the Surkhang’s were forced to sell their historical residence on Barkor (south-east corner) to the Chinese administration, the historic building complex was demolished in 1993 and replaced with a ‘glass and marble’ department store (Personal communications by Lhasa residents 1997 and later).

The farming population in China was in 1955 organised into collective farms, at the same time that programmes for nationalising industry and commerce started in urban areas. This came to mark the end of the tradition of crafts excellence throughout China. The mainland government campaign of encouraging diversity the winter 1957 (‘Let The Hundred Flowers Bloom’) seemed never to reach Lhasa.

As an illustration of impacts for large cities in China, in Xian after 1949 urban form continued in principle to be steered by the Han and Ming Dynasty principles of urban form. Earlier housing development, slab blocks, were oriented east-west, later being oriented along street-lines and increasingly enclosing the street block, in the danwei-tradition of fencing the entire unit. From interviews with Tsering Shakya, at SOAS London, July 2001. The commune system was finally disbanded in Lhasa in 1980; D. Schwartz. From the beginning of the 1960s, China had an immense focus on industrial development, expanding its interests elsewhere in Asia and in Africa. In June 1964 the PRC government ordered massive relocation of industry from coastal port cities into the mid inland for strategic, military reasoning. The programme entailed vast relocation and reconstruction costs, much more than the GLF (1958-1961).

In 1968 China’s mainland rural population was organised in new and larger units called ‘people’s communes’, the plan was to organise China’s 550 million peasants into 26,000 plus such units, with shared canteens, and dormitories that would split families. The same year also urban communes were also tried established but not implemented.


As mechanised production and transport logistics had never existing in the agrarian Lhasa region, the town had little chance of becoming an industrial town overnight.

Stated in numerous personal communications to the author. International concern and uncertainty over Tibet’s actual historic status related to China may have caused the PRC government to ‘tread softly’. After the uprising, ‘caution’ was abandoned with the government claim that ‘Tibet was an inalienable part of China and belonged to the big family of Chinese people’ (Patterson, 1960:93). After the flight of the Dalai Lama and his inner circle in 1959, the state confiscated all property of the fled families. Lhasa was divided into three sectors (south, east and north). ‘After cleaning up Lhasa’s district of disaster, it has now become the district of happiness’, Beijing report in November 1959, in the Jurist 1960:112.

The old town was subsequently divided into three zones each administered by a government appointed committee, each zone further subdivided. Twelve neighbourhood committees administered in all 240 block committees. ‘In exile from the land of snows’ by John Avedon, 1986, Vintage Books, New York.

Well known of colonial settlements, as for instance the urban additions the British constructed to existing settlements in India (as at Agra).

Mayor Logá: ‘How are you improving the living standards of the people of Lhasa?’ by Liu Tung Fen and Wangdu 1991:7-16 in China’s Tibet, Tibetan language edition (Grung-go bod jongs), Beijing spring 1991. The Tibet Autonomous Region, TAR was formally established on September 1, 1965. A new government complex was constructed in ‘Shugti Lingka’, the Dalai Lamas’ park south of and facing the Potala Palace and Schöl. Lhasa was said to have doubled in size. Quite confusing data; from Moselye 1965:16.

As an illustration of impacts for large cities in China, in Xian after 1949 urban form continued in principle to be steered by the Han and Ming Dynasty principles of urban form. Earlier housing development, slab blocks, were oriented east-west; later being oriented along street-lines and increasingly enclosing the street block, in the danwei-tradition of fencing the entire unit (Hayem, 2007:187). Housing was located in critical proximity to industry units. Influenced by the 1950s Soviet planners, major streets were widened, made monumental and large squares and urban spaces formed. In ‘danwei’ tradition social-cultural amenities were located inside the street-block, and ground level areas given varied use (commercial and shared functions).

The commune system established in China in 1958 came to Lhasa in 1964. Little is known about specific impacts of this. From interviews with Tsering Shakya, at SOAS London, July 2001. The communes system was finally disbanded in Lhasa in 1980; D. Schwartz.
5 Lhasa growth and development

Report in Beijing Review 1975:15, by Chang Hua and Yuan-mei. With Gongkang Airport completed in 1975, air-flights from Lhasa were reported to go to 'anywhere' in China (Suyin, 1977:7). Also in 1975, 'New Lhasa is the hub of a network of roads, there are 90 big and small, radiating from here' and new Chinese great white sand roads' (Suyin, 1977:115). Essential for economic development and political administration, major road projects were completed - such as the 1200 km long road to Kathmandu, the Lhasa-Sichuan road (2800 km long going east), the road to Kansu (2500 km north), and the road to Sinkiang (5000 km west and north).

In his major work ‘The dragon in the lands of snow’ the Tibetan historian Tsering Shakya (Shakya 1999) described aspects of events and relationships less known of this period. His work is referenced here as found relevant. By late 1966, in Beijing 4922 out of the capitals’ 6843 monuments (recorded in 1958) were demolished (i.e. 72% of all destroyed). Much of the destruction that took place across China is argued not to have been spontaneous by ordinary people but implemented by Red Guards (Jung and Halliday, 2006).


Not realising the radical shift that had taken place in Beijing already to ‘radicalise’ the people and make the Cultural Revolution a mass movement.

Not referring to any overarching struggle of socialism versus capitalism, or to the Party, the process also here brought severe attack on the elites in Tibet (Chinese and Tibetan), with renewed attacks on Tibetan culture. Efforts by the CCP leadership in Tibet to prevent upheaval from the Cultural Revolution soon proved fruitless. In 1968 the national campaign ‘Down to the Countryside Movement’ was initiated. Urban youths were sent out of the cities into the countryside, for re-education, as likely in order to reduce the level of unrest, also from Lhasa (personal communications).

The Cultural Revolution in Tibet proving to be very violent, several new Chinese troop divisions were sent into Tibet to overcome the fighting that gradually had absorbed also factions of the PLA (Shakya 1999:341).

In 1972 the Cultural Revolution was already regarded to be over in Lhasa (personal communications).

The main Jokhang temple was used for animal storage and the monastery complex as a government guest house, ‘State Guest House No 5’ (Karan, 1976:27 and Paljor, 1977:17).

Early in the Cultural Revolution, the central government may have announced the protection of the Potala Palace from destruction and looting. Shakya, however, highlights as ‘a Zhou-En-Lai-myth’ that he protected Potala, known to have early incited Tibetan students to act like their colleagues in Beijing and destroy traditional cultural heritage (Shakya 1999:367). Ramoche only in the late 1970s changed from a shrine to Mao back into a monastery. Gate of Lhasa or ‘Daggo Kanl’ demolished, to be rebuilt in the mid-1990s in a ‘similar-to-original’ fashion but now accommodated to vehicular traffic. The governing Revolutionary Committee led by the Army appear not to have made huge efforts to reduce the ethnic hostility or the Chinese hostility towards Tibetan culture and traditions. By early 1970 all monasteries and temples were vandalised by the Red Guards and left in ruin, and by Tibetans and Chinese alike stripped for firewood and any usable objects. The period was one of endless political meetings (Shakya 1999:348).

It was to be into the late 1960s before repairs of major monumental complexes in Lhasa got underway in earnest (International Campaign for Tibet, 1990:31-32).

Major monasteries were nevertheless severely affected: Sera Monastery reduced from 5,-6.000 to about 100 monks, Drepung Monastery from near 10.000 to about 400 monks. Following the diplomatic break with the USSR in 1960, China moved central industrial complexes away from the coastal cities. Rural migration into cities was rigidly controlled, and mass deportations sent millions of urban residents into the countryside (the ‘Period of Anti-Urbanism’). Flyvbjerg in ...(1996) raised the question whether urban planning was in China used as a tool to exercise control and oppression of the masses, specifically of minorities, and querying what then minority power is, perhaps defined by size or by lack of power on the part of the minority itself? Foucault (1978) developed a concept where power was argued as an outcome of practices. In society, the state is in reality the minority and the population the majority – the majority controlled by a minority?

Han-Chinese resenting being sent to Tibet, reacting not much different than others ‘banished’ to the frontiers as part of an overall national efforts to take control of the continent (Schwartz, 1963:74).

Tibet was in 1971 ‘demoted’ from an independent military region into an administrative subsection of the Chengdu Military Region (Shakya 1999:354). Primo 1960s, Beijing saw China under potential siege by Soviet and India – and with ‘troublesome’ minorities inside along the borders. For China Tibet’s importance after the Cultural Revolution was it strategic position and resources, and full military control of Tibet hence justified. Preparing for ‘the worst’, in Lhasa as elsewhere, the civilian population was made to dig caves, tunnels and air raid shelters in the adjoining hills and mountains (Shakya 1999:350).


Policies saw spatial order recast in terms of commodification of space as government promoted entrepreneurial development and gentrification of urban neighbourhoods, deregulation and privatisation in policing of public space, and encouragement and mobilising of local community to augment and sometimes replace the state in governing social order.
5 Lhasa growth and development

227 The period 1991 to 2000 marked the early period of the socialist market economy. In legislation of 1992 land use rights were detached from ownership of urban land, opening the real estate market by allowing legal persons to transact land use rights. The legislation quickly brought government agencies and state enterprises into the real estate sector with the intention to develop the potential of un- or underused land they were in control of.

228 But left open central questions of Tibetan long term economic development. Tibet continued to generate considerably less revenue than needed. The remainder was provided by central government. For instance in 1983 Tibet generated only about 500 of the needed 1000 million yuan (ibid). Companies and hotels were established by transferring property rights to previous commune leaders in this manner (Banak Shol, Kirey, Snowlands). The enterprises and property represented the pension fund of the earlier work-units, with pensions being paid out of profits. Already in 1979 an extensive telecommunications system was opened, linking Lhasa with other provinces.

These included the Lhasa Hotel (Lhasa Holiday inn), the Arts House for the Masses (in Outer Schöl), People’s Hospital, and the bus terminal.

229 Two residential projects were completed with built area 57.000 m2 for 8,5 million Yuan. From author’s meeting with Lhasa City Vice Mayor in autumn 2001.

230 Known as the Lhasa 1984 Plan, the ‘Lhasa City Planning Documents’ or ‘Lhasa Municipal Planning Maps’) by TAR Planning Department, approved by the State Council in 1985. The above document clarified the ruling ideology on municipal planning and development (Leckie, 1994:95 ref 211 quote 3;Tibet Information Network, TIN, London).

231 The registered population was stated as 117.000 (parts 4 and 9; with 60.000 p in central, 29.000 in northern and 28.000 in western sectors, excluding 3 townships assigned to Lhasa in 1980). One fifth of the workforce, 8000 p not including road workers, was stated to be occupied in construction. Assuming a registered workforce of about 40.000 as approx. 2/3 of the adult population in Lhasa (excluding Chinese), children and pensioners making up one half, this would confirm a registered Lhasa population in the early 1980s of about 120.000 as likely (Part 9; TIN Doc 13 and 8, WZ).

232 The plans’ population target for 2000 was 200.000 p with an urban area for construction of 42 sq.km, expanded from 110.000 p and 25 sq.km. The magazine Himal Volume 8 No.1 Jan/Feb 1995 issue, page11, comments on the unreliability of official population figures in China, with official sources give Lhasa population as 120-180.000, with 87% Tibetans, with unofficial estimates of the civilian population at 300-400.000 with about 40% Tibetans (check - Infrastructure, roads etc should be able to accommodate double the official population, a population figure close to reality in 2005?).

233 The average living space in this large part of China remains lower than elsewhere, and is officially described as 17 m2. In Lhasa as in Tibet generally it is most likely to be considerably lower (2002 meetings with Lhasa government representatives; lack of reliable statistics).

234 A central government goal (Ministry of Urban and Rural Construction and Environmental Protection, in China Daily, 24 February 1987) was that by the year 2000, each household will have an economical and habitable flat of 8 m2 per person, and each rural household would have a practical, hygienic and compactly laid out house that will meet the households living and productive needs.

235 The programmes possibly do not reach the low-income households here that according to all available statistics are significantly more exposed than in other regions of China (Plan for the Implementation Concerning Improvement of the Endowment Insurance System for Workers and Staff of Enterprises, approved by TAR Government, July 2006; http://www.china.org.cn/china/tibetfactsandfigures/2008-04/28/content_15025592.htm).
In 1987 a group of visiting Nepalese described the urban environment of Lhasa as ‘backwards and filthy’ using much the same terms of description as visitors of earlier decades (Dr Hari Bansh Jha, in Development in Tibet, pamphlet by the Forum of Economic Writers, Kathmandu, 1988, p. 39; in Barnett 2006:204).

236 With rumours of Tibetan dissent, demonstrations broke out in Barkor in September 1987 and resurfaced in 1989, again to be squashed. Some of the unrest was documented by Western eye-witnesses, see Barnett, 2006. The central government stated that ‘unity and stability were prerequisites to economic development in Tibet, and that unwillingness of Tibetan society to be transformed into a commodity economy is seen as a sign of their backwardness’ (Schwartz 1989:8-10). Some buildings and sites in Old Lhasa were by the demonstrators recognised to represent centuries of particularly troubling presence and influence on Lhasa and Tibet (Barnett, 2006). Among these were the Dalai Lama preaching square ‘Sungchöra’ on Barkor South, ‘Tromsikhang’, built by the 6th DL, and used by the Mongol ruler Lhazang Khan as his Lhasa residence until 1717, on Barkor north. After 1717 used by the Chinese Ambans until 1751 when two Ambans were killed there and they moved to ‘Yamen’ in Lubu. And Kyitöpa located opposite Sungchöra – believed to be the Chinese spy-central in Lhasa and headquarters for early Chinese government missions (Barnett, 2006). The Kyitöpa site is now the Mandala hotel (Barnett, 2006). The ‘Yamen’ in the Lubu area was already made part of the present expanding Chinese military compound.

237 A total floor area of 377,000 m2 providing housing for 3272 Tibetan families, most of them party cadres given a gross average of 115 m2 per unit (Leckie, 1994:90 ref 200). The last quote published in Renmin Ribao, 25 March 1990, Beijing. Loga stated that from 1987, with a majority of the traditional buildings in Old Lhasa officially ‘on the verge of collapse, the government successfully re-housed more than 2000 families after five years of demolition and reconstruction – so many grateful families’ (Loga in Barnett, 2006).

238 ‘Desirable’ urban developments of the mainland cities were imitated in Lhasa, in modern materials and in Chinese ‘international’ style, all designed and built by companies from outside TAR (Personal communications from ranking government representatives, and supported by most media published material). The few government buildings erected in Lhasa still expressed traditional and heavy ‘socialist monumentalism’. Here were, however, no Mao-statues, and only few centrally placed edifices to the revolution.

239 In spring 1992 Chairman Deng called for speedy development of the ‘non-public’ sector economy in of China towards what he termed a ‘socialist market economy’. After a generation of little opportunity for individual responsibility and initiative, the government sought to re-activate the public. A 1994-survey by the ‘Alliance for Research in Tibet’, a Western group, estimated about one third of the migrants to be Hui-Muslims. Lhasa saw a significant burst of official and military, commercial and residential construction (Himal, ibid). Was this result of a government decision not to be ‘grand’ but retaining more to a pragmatic ‘socialist’ tradition, or the still before the storm of commercial and real estate development?

In mid-1992 a black-market Lhasa residence permits cost 5000 Yuan, an exorbitant amount for most Tibetans, but relatively easy to afford for Chinese residents. Leading towards a development of parallel societies in Lhasa, Tibetan residents seemed in general poorer, regardless of the residents’ average skills levels or economic standards. One aspect of ethnic differentiation being that Han-Chinese in Lhasa receive up to their double salary from China, with perks, including guaranteed housing, compared to Tibetans on low local salaries.

By 1993 more than 5000 individual enterprises were set up in Lhasa, mainly by Chinese settlers. In 1980 there had been only about 500 enterprises in all of Tibet, then most of them Tibetan owned (Barnett, 2006).

Conflicting information from 1993 stated that in consequence of the Han-Chinese population transfer into Tibet, in Lhasa were registered a total of 12,527 Chinese-owned businesses with only 300 Tibetan-owned shops (excluding shops in and around Barkor) (Dept of Information and International Relations, ‘Tibetan capital as a Chinese city’, by Centennial Administration, Dharamsala, 2 Feb 1993).

239 By 1993 housing had increased twelve times since 1959 to more than 3 million m2, a major part of it as Chinese settlements, and many building projects built with Tibetan labour were by the early 1990s taken over for use by Chinese companies (Leckie, 1994:73). Also construction activity inside Old Lhasa was expanding (personal communications 1997). Residents already voiced concerns and complaints on the low standards of the housing that was being built, with the use of unsuitable construction and materials, the lack of insulation and degree of noise transmission (Leckie, 1994:90; author’s personal communications).

240 (Himal 1, 1995). In August 1994 Xinhua New Agency reported that 1700 new businesses had opened in Lhasa that year. My own estimates concerned an extended Barkor area and deviate somewhat, see Case Study.

241 Other provinces were instructed by central government to help Tibet with development project investment. With this came also more restaurants, clubs, more bars and more prostitutes, ref The ... Five Year Plan.

242 TIN, April 1990; Tibet Press Watch, 1990:3. By the end of that year another 130,000 m2 of ‘dangerous housing’ was upgraded (mostly demolished and built new), with 2,000 families moved into new accommodation, with some 3,500-4,000 Tibetan residents evicted (Leckie, 1994:103). Barnett, 2006.

243 The plan area concerned about 1.3 sq.km (130 hectares) within the streets Lingkor Changlam (north), Lingkor Sharlam (east), Jingdrol Sharlam (south), and Dosegna Lam (west). The urban area in 1992 still unaffected by new construction was probably about one half of the plan area (50-70 hectares). The later World Heritage designated area Jokhang Temple and Monastery (2000) is about 7.5 hectares or about 6% of the plan area.
In the central part of the historical town only the Jokhang complex, Menrulhakhang, Lhalu Porchang, Antsangkung temple, Karmashar temple and the Great Mosque were identified as protected structures. In the plan-area north of Beijing Sharlam, only Ramoche temple and Shide dratsang, Tsonmomling dratsang, Gyume temple and Meru temple were shown as protected structures.

Of the 45, 13 were private, 14 were public sector housing projects for larger work-units providing 5-600 housing units of low standard, 3 retail shopping complexes (Leckie, 1994).

In 1991 Tibet received 1,2 billion Yuan from the central government, 30% of this used on capital construction investment, much towards infrastructure, roads and public administration, the economical benefit to Tibetans by the outside world stated as very small (US National Committee on US-China Relations, April 1992). To indicate one type of disparity, central government investment in 1988 went predominantly to the urban sector, with an average of USD 128 per urban dweller and only USD 4.5 per rural dweller (TIN 1989).

A 1992 national survey showed that living conditions in Tibet were the worst in all of China. In 1993 living standards in Tibet were documented as the lowest of all 29 provinces in China (Leckie, 1994:83, ref UNCED). To indicate one type of disparity, central government investment in 1988 went predominantly to the urban sector, with an average of USD 128 per urban dweller and only USD 4.5 per rural dweller (TIN 1989).

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A 1993 report on demolition and reconstruction in historic Lhasa (Demolition and Reconstruction in the Old Quarter of Lhasa 1993, TIN Background Briefing Paper No.23, 8 November 1994) examined housing renovation in old Lhasa. In late 1993 in all 67 new buildings were under construction, representing demolition of around 100 traditional-historical residential structures (in contrast to 26 construction projects in 1990). Almost one third of the 1993 construction projects were private construction projects. In 1993 the housing volume in Lhasa had increased by 12 times since 1959 (to more than 3 million m2), most of it as Chinese settlements. The government said that a majority of traditional buildings in old Lhasa was ‘on the verge of collapse’. After four years of demolition and reconstruction the government was to have successfully re-housed more than 2000 grateful families. A 1993 report on demolition and reconstruction in historic Lhasa (Demolition and Reconstruction in the Old Quarter of Lhasa 1993, TIN Background Briefing Paper No.23, 8 November 1994) examined housing renovation in old Lhasa. In late 1993 in all 67 new buildings were under construction, representing demolition of around 100 traditional-historical residential structures (in contrast to 26 construction projects in 1990). Almost one third of the 1993 construction projects were private construction projects. In 1993 the housing volume in Lhasa had increased by 12 times since 1959 (to more than 3 million m2), most of it as Chinese settlements. The government said that a majority of traditional buildings in old Lhasa was ‘on the verge of collapse’.

A Chinese entertainment city with restaurants and gambling was developed by a Macao-Lhasa consortium and administered by the major property developer, Lhasa City Real Estate Company. Mayor Loga had in 1991 confirmed that development in Chinese areas were constructed. Some south of Sera and at other locations; expensive houses and landscaped areas, all inside walls, by the Lhasa City Real Estate Company. Personal communications.

In 1981 only about 1,500 tourists arrived in Lhasa, and by 1984 still less than 4,000 tourists had been given entry. As reflected by a visitor in 1987 – and illustrating a central paradox, ‘tourism in Tibet (had) injected a new political ingredient into Tibet’s reality, ‘the government selling what it wants to repress’ (Avedon, 1987:19). Through the rail-link project tourism was hoped boosted by at least 400,000 per year, with tourist revenues doubled by 2010. In 2002 about 150,000 international visitors were registered through Lhasa, with ca 500,000 domestic visitors. The volumes were said to have doubled in 2005 (personal communication). Critics continue to claim that the rail-link will spur a further influx of long-term migrants into Lhasa and the Tibet. Website www.savetibet.org, July 01, 2006. Andrew Fischer, prominent researcher of the LSE, London, states that ‘the railway might increase tourism, although might just shift tourists from air and bus to rail. Also, tourism has already been increasing rapidly, more than doubling over the last 5 years to an estimated 1.8 million tourists in 2005 according to official figures. Like most industries of the TAR, much if not most of the tourist industry (particularly in higher-value areas) is controlled by Chinese companies based outside the TAR, leading to polarisation in the local TAR economy, given that wealth in these booming sectors is highly concentrated in few hands and has little time to circulate in the local economy before exiting the province. Thus, there has been a sharp rise in all measures of inequality in the TAR since the late 1990s, far beyond most other provinces in China. A good example is urban-rural inequality which is much higher than that of any other province (Andrew Fischer, 2005, ‘State growth and social exclusion in Tibet: challenges of recent economic growth’. Nordic Institute of Nordic Studies, Copenhagen).

Official media in China have stated that approx 4,000 tourists will arrive in Lhasa daily on the railway after opening on 1st of July, and the Tibet Tourism Bureau expects railway to bring additional 400,000 visitors to the TAR during remainder of 2006. Xinhua, May 21, 2006. Plans are now unveiled for extending the rail-link to Lhasa further to reach Dromo, the border town with India that will also link major Tibetan towns (www.savetibet.org June 28, 2006).

Xinhua Press Agency in savetibet.org June 30, 2006. Input also from personal estimates and various well informed Lhasa sources. It was in 2006 reported that the Tibet Travel Permit (ruzawng zhi) that applies to ‘Taiwanese and foreigners’ was to be abolished (Minbao News in www.savetibet.org July 06, 2006).

Ongoing reform of the household registration system is assumed to facilitate movement of all categories of skilled and unskilled Chinese workers to live and work in Tibetan areas, allowing Chinese from mainland regions to move easily obtaining residency while still retaining their rights to live in original location. Temporary migration into Lhasa is expected to grow in the coming years, as rural Tibetans are moving in, and Han Chinese are continuing to arrive in larger numbers with the completion of the Qinghai-Tibet railway link (Paper on temporary migrants in Lhasa in 2005, by Ma Rong, Beijing University and Tenzin Lhundup, Chinese Center of Tibetology Studies).

In 2005 Chinese business interests were said to be controlling more than 85% of all trade, commerce and economic activity in Lhasa and the TAR.

Passed on the 26th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Seventh Session of the People’s Congress of Lhasa, and by the 23rd meeting of the Standing Committee of the Seventh Session of the People’s Congress of Tibet Autonomous Region.

The ‘Lhasa 1995-2015 Conservation Master Plan’ has been referred to by government representatives in meetings, but not been available to the author (despite numerous requests in 2000, 2002, 2003 and 2004 to government in Lhasa and Beijing). Knowledge of this important document can therefore be inferred only. (Based on meetings with government representatives in Lhasa and Beijing). The concern from the international community for the unique built heritage in Lhasa was growing.

Input given by a Vice Mayor of Lhasa City Government in meetings in October 2002 and April 2003; confirmation of statements and data not possible.

Professor Zhao Zhongshu in Lhasa 2004.

In 2004 the primary and secondary industries in Lhasa constituted near 60% of annual export, much as timber and minerals. The ‘tertiary’ industry, including service and tourism, in 2004 accounted for 60% of Lhasa’s GDP, and near 50% of the GDP of the TAR. In 2001 tourism in Tibet was worth 300 million Yuan, in 2010 expected to be worth 1.85 billion Yuan, a six-times increase in 9 years. Experience of historical towns in China (Pinyang and Lijiang historic towns) has shown that World Heritage status can increase tourism from a nominal volume to millions of visitors over a few years only (Pinyang). Lhasa wants to achieve a ‘similar’ growth in tourism volume and revenue. Input indicates that in common with most developing communities, only a nominal part of gross revenue remains in the local community or province as most business is generated and run by external operators and expertise, and taken out of Tibet by them (Author’s comment based on external sources and observations; NDoro, 2009, UNESCO).

Presented by Professor Zhao Zhongshu at the ‘International Lhasa Conservation Conference’, Tibet University, September 2004. A revised version is believed approved by the State Council.

A wide literature provides a discussion on this (as Pomnaret, 2002; Tsering Tsonmo, 1994; Feigon, xx).

Lhasa residents have needed to carry identification cards at all times. Numerous evictions of Tibetans have been made (various reports). ’Tibetans without resident permits were in March 1989 forcibly removed from Lhasa, with no reports of evictions affecting Chinese settlers without residence permits’ (report by Habitat International Coalition, 1990). Chinese settlers in Lhasa seem to have remained un-affected by all aspects of population control policies (Asian Watch 1990; personal communications).
5 Lhasa growth and development

260 Jing Wei, 1989:91 in the government report ‘100 Questions about Tibet’, Beijing Review Press, Beijing. The basis of calculation is unclear as in some early estimates the populations of the monastic communities of Drepung and Sera are included (authors comment)

261 The period 1950-61 was to be one of continuous unrest, although Lhasa was allowed to function in many ways as before. To stabilise Tibet, Stalin had before 1949 advised Mao to boost Tibet’s population with Han-Chinese settlers. In 1952 the PRC government discussed a proposal to increase Tibet’s population to 10 millions through resettling Han-Chinese as a first step of its official policy of ‘Giving Help to Tibet’, TIN Summary 25 May 1990 in Leckie, 1994:71. The Chinese military had in 1951 set up their main camp outside the town, beyond the ‘Lhalu’ pastureland to the north-west by the foot of the ‘Gampel Utsa’ and near where Colonel Yo unhusband had set up camp for the British Expedition force in 1904.

262 Himal 1, 1995. Leckie, 1994:193. Considerable uncertainty is attached to any figures, to the percentage of Tibetans and non-Tibetans and as to registered versus non-registered population.

263 at the end of the decade (Leckie, 1994:193; and informal estimate). In 1988 the number of Old Lhasa neighbourhood committees was doubled from 12 to 24, each household obliged to send one member to the meetings, to avoid the family being fined or loose its housing.

264 In a Chinese tradition of ‘understating’ in official statistics, the figures are likely to have been higher on all scores. The mobile or seasonal population was not included, by some unconfirmed reports stated to be between 40,000 and 150,000 varying with the seasons. Some stated the seasonal population in Lhasa to be as large as 150-170,000 persons.

265 In late 1980s, official estimates stated the floating population in Lhasa to between 40,000 and 100,000 persons. In 1990 alone, around 200,000 persons entered Tibet, a majority coming to or passing through Lhasa. This included the Lhasa seasonal population (Tsomo 1994:64). In addition, Lhasa might be temporary home to 10-20,000 pilgrims at any one time (my informal estimate). In 1994 some official records estimated the mobile population of Lhasa to be about 75,000 (Barnett, 2006:217 ref 40).

In their statement on development of Western Tibet one decade later, the CCP in 2000 confirmed the policy of population transfer that came to affect also Lhasa greatly. ‘Two-way population flow is inevitable trend of Western (region) development…people from Western regions moving to the east as a result of the rapid development of the coastal regions in China. In carrying out the strategy of large-scale Western development, development of the west will be greatly accelerated and human talent will flow westward if the country favours the western regions in policy and capital’.

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267 With an official claim of a Chinese population in all of Tibet of 73,000 to 118,000 persons (South China Morning Post 1993, ref 194).

However, all non-Chinese estimates made during the 1990s on the urban population in Lhasa, stated Tibetans to be in minority. ‘As an indication of a general development at least one half of all urban dwellers in Tibet are Chinese’ (Leckie, 1994 ref 196).

268 Such as army facilities, police stations, government compounds. For Tibetans, the issue of population transfer into Tibet has for some time been experienced as the most pressing problem, the physical impacts visible with expanding Chinese settlements in Lhasa. The population of Lhasa city was planned to exceed 300,000 persons by the end of 2005 (excluding the seasonal population (est. 80,000-150,000), not including the expected 150-200,000 persons impact from the railway opening.

269 Unconfirmed input from numerous interviews. The Hui-segment has been expanding fast, possibly from 1500 to ca 15,000 in about 10 years and growing.

270 Meetings with the government in Lhasa, 2001 as the author had received a commission for UNESCO to report to UNESCO World Heritage Centre on the state of conservation of Lhasa WH sites.

271 In many countries heritage assets given official protection during an early period still constitute a larger volume of protected heritage, representing categories and sectors where conservators had most detail knowledge and could make selections near to their own cultural position and cultural ‘bias’ – as in Norway; author’s comment.

272 The principles, although confirmed as ‘official’, have not been found in published form. The quote is from communication in the author’s numerous meetings with government representatives.

273 For information on the PRC government structure see Appendix and websites http://www.chinadetail.com/Nation/CentralGovernmentConstructMinistry.php; and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China

274 Semi-ministry administered by the PRC State Council at the head of the Central People’s Government. The Regulation on Religious Affairs (RRA, effective of 2005) required local religious affairs officials to standardize the management of religion. As a result, local officials may measure their success in terms of a great variety of criteria (http://www.oecg.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt05/2005_3d_religion.php#39a).

275 Each Tibetan monastery and nunnery has a Democratic Management Committee (DMC) that functions as its administrative interface with the state. The RRA, art. 17. ‘Venues for religious activities shall set up management organizations and practice democratic management. Members of the management organizations of venues for religious
activities shall be selected through democratic consultations and reported as a matter of record to the registration management organs for the venues’. In a Tibetan monastery or nunnery, a DMC is generally made up of monks or nuns elected from among themselves, or sometimes screened by local officials, see (http://www.ceccc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt052005_3d_religion.php#39a).

279 Lhasa Urban Area (Tib: ‘Cheng guan’) constitutes the urban area in an extended county. The Cheng Guan authority reports to Lhasa Municipal (County/Prefecture) government. The Lhasa Cultural Relics Bureau (Lhasa CRB) is charged with heritage resource protection and management throughout the Lhasa County, collaborating with other municipal bureaus, and formally reports to a Lhasa Vice-Mayor.

277 The director of the bureau is normally a specialist on public sector administration or cultural heritage on secondment to Lhasa for a limited period (3-5 years) from a major Chinese urban authority or cultural institution.

278 Further, Tibet University and NTNU (Norway) collaborate on capacity building in development planning, traditional arts and architecture. The University of Pennsylvania, US documents Tibetan culture and heritage. The Trace Foundation, WWF, International Red Cross, Save the children and a few others have significantly contributed to Tibetan capacity building, also funding numerous projects (see the individual websites).

279 A future actor of considerable potential to Lhasa could be the ‘Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Centre’, CHP (www.bjchp.org) whose expertise and operative government-community skills would be of immense value. Although not yet active in Lhasa or Tibet, CHP formally recognised as NGO in 2003, is successfully undertaking programmes and projects in China’s minority areas with focus on empowering local communities to protect their own cultural heritage (tangible and intangible).


281 LHCA project border, ref Aufschnaiter 1948, see appendix.

282 The LAP project was initiated by Andre Alexander. LAP was in 1996 reorganised as a new NGO, THF, Tibet Heritage Fund. Until about 1999 Alexander was contracted and paid by LHCA to coordinate LHCA fieldwork in Lhasa.

283 In 1998 a concept of integrated approach to conservation and upgrading was proposed with The Network for University Cooperation Tibet-Norway with other interested parties from Norway; following LHCA-initiated discussions with the Lhasa government and after a visit to Lhasa by senior Foreign Office representatives from Norway. Such collaboration was in spring 1998 confirmed to be of major interest to the Lhasa city government. In autumn 1998 this dialogue met with a full stop, with the Lhasa city government giving clear signals that foreign advisors and participants were ‘regarded as unwanted’ (several meetings with senior TAR and Lhasa government representatives, and to the author’s personal communications with senior representatives of central government in Beijing).

284 Headed by the Mayor of Lhasa, all main branches of municipal government were represented. Their 1998 report on the status of conservation in Lhasa was not made public (the author in meeting 23.9.98 with Vice Mayor Huang Bao Rong and others). THF was external advisor to the committee.

285 Recommended by the Lhasa Old City Protection Working Committee (Lhasa OCPWC). The proposal was presented to the Lhasa Mayor and the TAR authorities in 1996-97 by the LHCA project (Larsen & Sinding-Larsen) and the Tibet Heritage Fund (NGO).

286 The government in 2001-2003 demolished informal structures and evicted about 1.100 families (personal communications).

287 In the period 1979-2001 the central government is said to have allocated about USD 30 Mill to ‘improve about 230 dilapidated residential buildings’ in historic Lhasa. By 2000 repair and ‘upgrading’ – in reality reconstruction - was completed to 92 buildings in Old Lhasa, with about 130.000 m2 of built area affected. Reported at a total cost of about 38 million RMB. As the average cost for public construction in Lhasa at this time was reported as 700-900 RMB/m2, the above figure seems hardly credible 1998-2000 in all 92 buildings ‘upgraded’. In 1998: 23 buildings, in 1999: 39 buildings, in 2000: 30 buildings. Total built area affected: 130.710 m2; budget of ca 37.5 million RMB, approx 288 RMB/m2 built area. From 1998 to 2002 in all 29 courtyards housing 534 families were ‘repaired and upgraded’ for 11 million RMB. This meant almost exclusively demolishing the old and building new housing, and re-housing 8671 families (up to 35.000 persons) with a total built area of 480.000 sq.m (260-300 million RMB, authors meeting with Vice Mayor in April 2002). For 2001-2002 another 70 million RMB were allocated for upgrading dilapidated housing (ibid). In 2001 a total of 12 courtyards housing 331 families were repaired and upgraded for 7 million RMB (ibid).

288 The renovated area said to be restricted to 70.000 m2 or 5-6 % of historic Lhasa. This is clearly not correct, the affected areas significantly larger. Lhasa Municipal Government in early 2002 is believed ‘for reasons of residents’ safety’ to have decided ‘to replace all pillared construction’ (traditional-historical buildings with internal construction of masonry walls with timber columns and beams) with concrete construction. Reported in China Daily in February 1999. The above decision was refuted by the Mayor that such a decision had been made (meeting with the author in April 2002). In the subsequent meetings with senior Lhasa City Government representatives (2002 and 2003), main problems of the historic core were explained as ‘old buildings, dark buildings, damp buildings, fire danger’, with the aim to improve living conditions as the highest priority.

That year four buildings of great historical value were to be restored and upgraded (Poridsatsang, Rongsatsang, Nagamu and Tsabalahanghai).
For 2003-2004 a budget of 169 million RMB was allocated to upgrade dilapidated housing in Old Lhasa. It is not known whether these huge funds were allocated only to improving dilapidated houses (demolish/reconstruct housing), or also part of the infrastructure improvements. A total of 70,000 m² of building area was renovated in this mentioned period, said to represent 5.5% of Old Lhasa gross housing stock. The works were carried by two construction companies approved for repairs and conservation contracts, with experience from repairs at the Potala Palace and Jokhang Temple Monastery (input from various meetings with representatives of Lhasa government 2003-2004).

In Old Lhasa in 2005, Chinese component of commercial activity in Old Lhasa was estimated to about 80% of the total (number of businesses), and in Lhasa City higher – indicating fast progression of a process of ‘territorial expropriation’. The project covered 30 hectares including the entire area of Outer Shöl and was completed in 1995. To an expected cost 110 million RMB. Xinhua News Agency; SWB 23 Oct.1994; FE/2133 G/12. SACH nomination file submitted to ICOMOS, 1993.

Some residents stated that they received some compensation (informal communication).

Originally proposed located inside Shöl (rejected by SACH), this project was also funded by Shanxi Province and designed by Southeast University Architectural Institute, Nanjing, at a cost published as 14.5 million RMB.

In 2006 the Potala Palace daily entry quota was raised from 1500 to 2300 persons as a result of the opening of the Golmud-Lhasa railway link – believed at the expense of access for pilgrims. The increase was justified by the recent repair and maintenance efforts at Potala in recent years (Xinhua Press Agency in savetibet.org June 30, 2006). In May 2006 every monastery and nunnery was instructed to intensify patriotic education, and set up with each their own committee of local monastery monks and lay Tibetans, responsible for distribution of official documents, publishing government policy, and finance and security of the monastery. Each monastery and nunnery is managed by a Democratic Management Committee (committee appointed and supervised by government). The above text is credited to CCP party secretary to the TAR, Zhang Qingli, calling for ‘fight to death struggle’ against ‘DL and clique’ at meeting of party officials on May 16 2006 (report by Xinhua 21 June, in Chinese, and translated by ICT, International Campaign for Tibet, Washington DC, US, June 30, 2006).
‘While development is modern and global, urban administration is not. The practice of most Asian
governments in placing responsibility for urban planning functions in infrastructure portfolios has
exacerbated the separation of social and physical development policy and reinforced the dominance of
central government in economic policy’ (Logan, 2002:251).
Part Five
In Part Five Chapter 6 Case studies investigated is presented and discussed the field work carried out, and dealing with the how, why and when of the research question. Part of the what-dimension was dealt with in the preceding text (chapters 4 and 5), with specifics coming out of case studies presented here in chapter 6.

Contents
Section 6.1 Introduction outlines the scope of the chapter (referring to terms defined earlier in Chapter 2, section 2.1).
Section 6.2 introduces the study subject that has been investigated, with material on interpretation of Old Lhasa as ‘perceived’ on a background of data collected in the study. In section 6.3 is introduced the research study and process, as planned and implemented. Section 6.4 presents the case categories selected, with selection criteria. Section 6.5 presents all the building casestudies, and these are summarised in section 6.6. The neighbourhood studies are presented and discussed in section 6.7 and summarised in section 6.8. Section 6.9 discusses change to built form and urban form, with focus on urban morphological periods. Section 6.10 outlines built typology in 2005; typology in 1995 was outlined in chapter 4 (section 4.4.2). Section 6.11 presents input assembled on Old Lhasa residents’ livelihood. In section 6.12 called ‘Lhasa urban heritage’ the emphasis has been urban conservation and World Heritage issues in Lhasa with the state of conservation of primary conservation resources, with a brief look towards the urban conservation context in Lhasa before 1994.

The cases were investigated by means of: Primary source material through – a) Interviews: based on a reflective methodology through semi-structured interviews with focus on selected issues and lifeworld narratives, and b) Direct observations based on architectural documentation of buildings, neighbourhoods and urban form. Direct observations became a major element in all data collection, demanding a high level of researcher ‘presence’ in all situations; and Secondary source material was collected through c) Cartographic studies, d) Analysis of public documents, and e) Archival and literature studies.
6.1 Introduction

Built heritage may constitute a major functional, cultural, physical and visual component of an urban environment – as it has ‘always’ done in Old Lhasa. The spatial structure of individual buildings and plots, street- and townscape with cultural connectors and visual links make up specific urban form within a larger landscape setting. Patterns are evident at all levels of urban form – some patterns dominant for the specific overall spatial character of place.

Ideology, power and decision-making as institutional factors affect the growth morphology and operational control mode of an urban environment with forces that limit, push and pull residents’ freedom of action. Control exercised by individuals or political leaders with virtually unlimited power may be described as ‘autocratic control’ (Mazumdar, 2000:317-338). Due to difficulties in accessing available official documents, and a dearth of the same, a substantial part of the study material is built on ‘inferred facts’ or evidence, rather than facts that are verified or documented.

The integrated social, economic and cultural life of Lhasa pre-1950s – characterised by strict hierarchies – is understood to have described a society generally cohesive in terms of its shared values and aspirations of Tibetan Buddhism, but in contemporary eyes held back from inbuilt and unquestionable aspects of inequity. The built form of the traditional settlement was a representation of community
values, needs and aspirations and externalised relations between social and physical space held by society and authority.

6.2 The study subject investigated

'The threshold is the limit, the frontier that distinguishes and opposes two worlds – and at the same time the paradoxical place where these worlds communicate, where passage from the profane to the sacred world becomes possible' ….'Since the sacred mountain is the ‘axis mundi’ connecting earth and heaven, it in a sense touches heaven and marks the highest point in the world; consequently the territory that surrounds it……is held to be the highest among countries’ (Mircea Eliade, 1959:25 and 38 in Bishop, 2000).

In this section is described how Old Lhasa respondents perceived and defined the old town and its boundaries.

6.2.1 Lhasa and boundaries – past and present

Lhasa is understood to have been a near mono-cultural and mono-ethnic Tibetan society into the mid-20th century, although a small contingent of resident foreigners made temporary roots in Lhasa from the early 1900s onwards besides the groups of Kashmiri-Nepali, Han- and Hui-Chinese traders here – some married into Tibetan families (Snellgrove & Richardson, 1986). By 2005 Lhasa was transforming into a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society, with a dominant and increasing Han-Chinese majority population. The above raises issues of cultural influences considered beyond the scope of the study.

Historically Lhasa was defined by the hills Mar pori and Chakpori (west/north-west), and by the settlement itself (east), centred on Jokhang and Ramoche temples.

Assumed to have developed from the sanctuary core with an encircling kora, Lhasa as settlement is known at least from the mid-17th century to have been ‘protected’ by an outer embracing kora. Lingkor defined the settlement as a physical and spiritual-religious environment, separating a protected inside from an ‘open’ but also sacred outside (chapter 5). With the construction of the Dalai Lama’s Summer Palaces at Norbulingka (1740s onwards), Lingkor was extended – physically as well as in perception.

In simple terms, Lhasa may into the mid-20th century best be described as consisting of three ‘environmental layers’ – three ‘rings’ one outside the other: i) the physical settlement defined by Lingkor, ii) Lhasa in the central valley, and iii) spiritual Lhasa or the ‘Lhasa Mandala’ embracing a huge sacred landscape of Central Tibet. This study focuses on aspects of the former. Map.

Aerial photographs confirm that in the late 1950s, an orthomorphous street structure was superimposed on Lhasa and the immediate cultural landscape surrounding the settlement – a frame within which to construct a modern ‘efficient’ city.
In 1959, PRC government representatives in Lhasa took over all roles from Tibet’s traditional government (*kashak*, chapter 5). Facilities for the new government and civil-military institutions were constructed around the historical kernel, taking over all official functionality from Old Lhasa.

Old Lhasa was in 2005 an area of ‘historical’ townscape within the 90 km sq Lhasa Cheng Guan (Tibetan: Lhasa urban area), its traditional boundaries towards the new and encroaching urban landscape increasingly blurred. Map.

Old Lhasa has been an open city from the 1950s until today – an urban environment where Tibetan rural settlers could live without the *hukou* - the household registration and control permit generally required throughout China. This became a major cause of population density increase in Old Lhasa – and has in my understanding contributed to strengthen the identity of the historical town as main Tibetan settlement area.

Numerous Tibetan respondents emphasised they were living within a ‘clash of two systems’ – and inside two ‘parallel’ cities – describing Lhasa as a ‘dual city’. One was ‘official’ Lhasa represented by the TAR and Lhasa City governments, an increasing majority of Han- and Hui-Chinese, and the new expanding urban environment – a ‘red city’ for non-Tibetans. The other was ‘traditional Lhasa’, the settlement inside Lingkor, or ‘real’ Lhasa of pre-1960 – a ‘white city’ for Tibetans (Fjeld, 2005:134).

Although recognising a functional dependence on ‘both cities’, most respondents hesitated when asked whether one represented a ‘good’ city (Old Lhasa) and the other a ‘less good’ one. Educated Tibetans shared perceptions of Lhasa (tangible-intangible) as physically centred on the sanctuary, that the historical urban landscape included the Potala–Shöl–Lukhang–Chakpori complex, and extended to Norbulingka (a spiritually strong although physically weak ‘tentacle’). The Ramoche Temple and townscape area form a natural part of Old Lhasa but remained surprisingly absent in all respondents’ descriptions of the historical town. In contrast, however, numerous Tibetan respondents held that not only the monastery towns of Drepung, Sera but also Ganden (the latter about 7 km east of Lhasa) were part of Lhasa and contributing to its identity of place. In contrast to such responses, government representatives (Tibetan and Han) described Lhasa to include the entire valley. Government representatives, contrary to the Tibetan respondents, expressed pride in the modern city, eagerness for urban change, modernisation and expanding the city as well as to further ‘touristify’ monastic sites.

World Heritage in Lhasa is represented by the three major heritage areas of the Potala Palace Complex (1994), the Jokhang Temple and Barkor (2000), and Norbulingka Summer Palace (2001). The delimitation of World Heritage property boundaries and buffer zones differ vary widely. The Kathmandu Valley World Heritage properties are interpreted to present a realistic ‘span’ of what is currently seen as acceptable to the state party and to UNESCO.294
The three parts of the Lhasa WH property are located one to two kilometres apart, separated by modern urban construction and the rectangular street geometry of 1960s Chinese urban planning that radically broke with the traditional geometry of Lhasa as traditional ‘meandering settlement’. The historical diagonal route between the Potala Palace Complex and the Jokhang Temple with Barkor remained an extant but ignored potential into the 1990s, and was then finally ‘built over’ and obliterated by modern townscape. In Lhasa the connections between the heritage areas are complicated by the reduction of physical and visual ‘connectivity’ between major heritage resources – and a ‘strengthening’ between them hence made less achievable today.

### 6.2.2 Study subject stakeholders

The main stakeholders for the purpose of the study were defined in three major groups, of which the first two appear dominant:

i) The PRC government represented by the Ministry of Construction, the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH); the TAR government; and the municipal government represented by the municipal heritage and planning bureaus. The international community, represented by UNDP China has since the late 1990s collaborated with the PRC and TAR governments as regards social-economic development of Old Lhasa; as ‘bystander’ and watch-dog the UNESCO World Heritage Committee is in principle ‘present’ on all matter concerning World Heritage designated heritage resources.

ii) The private sector (here finance, real estate and urban development planning, construction, infrastructure in Old Lhasa such as the Lhasa Real Estate Development Company.

iii) ‘Local community’, the ‘Tibetan resident community’ – seen as fragmented clusters of groups and community layers outside the street or neighbourhood committee structure, and Non-Tibetan settlers (Han- and Hue Chinese) – ‘community groups’ with various kinds of government support, and others (Nepalis and Kashmiris). Old Lhasa ‘local community’ would thus reflect a heterogenous population with often conflicting concerns and agendas.

In addition, a small and changing environment of external semi-permanent residents (academics and NGO-staff) take part in various aspects of the ‘life’ of Lhasa and that of Central Tibet – as do also varying volumes of visitors, and domestic and international tourists. Seen as stakeholders (real to nominal), they all influence the life and context of Lhasa. Most are, however, not specifically referred to in the project.
6.3 The study structured

The research project was outlined in 1997 and formulated in 1998 as the LHCA-project was completed in 1999 (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001). After early informal support from senior faculty whilst teaching at the Oslo School of Architecture (AHO, 1997-2001), formal institutional connection was established with the Department of Urban Design and Planning, NTNU in Trondheim from 1999 onwards.

6.3.1 Research activity summarised

The historical town and urban environment of Lhasa were visited regularly throughout the study period, normally twice a year. The visits contributed to improving my understanding of Lhasa as place and events of the study decade, as they were affecting people and institutions with whom I had become acquainted. A realistic timeframe and plans were made at the start for the entire research and field study process, but soon had to be revised for external reasons, to suit personal needs and to accommodate Lhasa logistics. Official travel permits and invitations to visit and carry out research were on some occasions received late or not received. Unfortunate personal health issues were to severely delay the completion of the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Activity and focus:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>The research topic and study outlined informally;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>General orientation as regards the study, fact finding, initial interviews;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Initial townscape survey and documentation, with preliminary case selection;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>The research was presented at the ICOMOS General Assembly, Mexico;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Considered criteria and trial selected neighbourhoods and individual buildings;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Main interviews and surveys continued;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-2001</td>
<td>The academic doctoral study subjects were completed;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Further case study material collected with illustrations (photos/sketches/map-studies);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Main interviews and surveys continued;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Interviews were written up with notes on the other investigation categories;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>A further Reactive Monitoring Report follow-up mission for UNESCO;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Case material was revisited and added to;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Cases and case material reviewed, revised and added to, chapter writing started; Material, so far, presented in International Conference at Tibet University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>The research presented at the International Seminar on Urban Form (annual conf), London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Case material near finalised with supplementary site inspections; text writing continued with illustrations reviewed and pre-edited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>The research presented at the ICOMOS General Assembly (CIAM), Xian China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>The research presented at the INTBAU Conference ‘Venice Revisited’, Venice, Italy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Final writing on most chapters, preparations and preview of illustrations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Completion delayed due to serious illness in December 2006; the study put on hold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Little activity due to continued illness and extended convalescence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Research presented at International Seminar on Urban Form (annual conf), Artimino, Italy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Little activity due to extended convalescence, with gradual upstart of work on the thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>The research presented at the Thunder Conference, Kathmandu, Nepal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Little activity due to extended convalescence, some completed (setback due to illness in family).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Completion of the thesis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.3.2 Institutional and professional structure

In contrast to the previous LHCA-project, published as *The Lhasa Atlas* (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001), the study presented here had no formal link to ‘Network’ partner institutions in Lhasa, but was carried out on an informal basis in full openness vis-à-vis Chinese government institutions, Network partner institutions and individuals from the Tibet Academy of Social Sciences (TASS) and Tibet University who were kept informed. The interpreters I had the privilege of working with in Lhasa were all young Tibetan academics with good to excellent command of English but little or no previous knowledge in the knowledge fields of heritage conservation or historical urban environment.

Personal contacts were established in Lhasa and Beijing through the Network activities from 1994 onwards. My parallel international involvement with ICOMOS (UNESCO advisory body on cultural heritage) enabled excellent dialogue with senior ministry representatives and academics in Beijing and Lhasa. In 2003, I was appointed Guest Professor at Tibet University School of Engineering in Lhasa.

In addition to the research work, other academic activity in Lhasa contributed to the study. The Lhasa conference opportunities – the ‘Invited Workshop 2003’ and the ‘Invited International Conference 2004’, both with Tibet University and initiated by the author with Knud Larsen – provided unique opportunities to also discuss the study topic with senior Tibetan, Chinese and international colleagues.

After a commission from the UNESCO World Heritage Centre (WHC) in Paris to carry out a ‘Reactive Monitoring Review’ on the State of Conservation of the Lhasa World Heritage property, the author reported at the World Heritage Committee meeting in June 2003 (reports from missions October 2001 and April 2002, the latter with Professor Yukio Nishimura, Tokyo University). This added valuably to the study and networking, providing further dialogue opportunity with senior government representatives.

My research work has also regularly been presented at international conferences and seminars, such as those by the International Association for Tibetan Studies (IATS), the International Seminar on Urban Morphology (ISUF), the international cultural heritage environment, and at academic institutions in Asia, the US and Europe.

6.4 Case studies

Fieldwork was carried out during two visits of varying length each year (duration 3-6 weeks), on several occasions combined with activity connected to Tibet-Norway academic network activity in Lhasa. The case study material presented is thus a result of different phases of fieldwork: a) April and October 2002, b) April and September-October 2003, c) June and October 2004, with d) a shorter ‘summing-up’ mission to Lhasa in June 2005.

The neighbourhood cases were photographed and ‘surveyed’ in 1995, 1998, 2000, 2002-03 and 2005 to varying detail as regards change affecting built form, overall character and townscape change or
urban development activity. This was part of a simple documentation of the area described by Potala-Shöl, Yuthok Tseshing, Kharngadong, Dengjeling/ Mensikhang, Barkor with the WH-buffer zone, Tsomonling, Ramoche, Jebungang, Shasarzsu, Tromsikhang, Khyire and Lubub (Map).

Urban blocks surrounding the historic kernel were 1990-95 faced with demolition, re-development and upgrading or reconstruction (Yuthok Tseshing–Kharngadong–Dengjeling-Mensikhang, Shasarzur-Tsomonling–Ramoche (Jebungang), Lubub, Tromsikhang, Khyire).

To investigate changes to Old Lhasa urban form, issues focused on were such as land use, character containment, linkages and relationships between the historic core and new townscape, population, density, and building layouts.

In parallel with literature studies and archival searches, architectural recording, photography and cartographic follow-up on changes were continued throughout the study. Cartographic studies were difficult due to a lack of source material. The official ‘ordnance survey’ maps (1985-87 versions) obtained for the LHCA project proved invaluable to link the few known maps of the past with a changing present, and were supplemented with the regular on-site observations. ‘Personal observations’ proved an essential part of data collecting.

6.4.1 Case study context

The urbanised area of Lhasa in 1950 covered almost 1.5 km2 (irregularly shaped). Inside the outer kora Lingkor, the ‘gross’ settlement was about 3 sq.km (300 ha). With the orthomorphous street geometry
implemented in the late 1950s, Lhasa inside the revised Lingkor constituted an area of about 3.5 sq. km (350 ha; author’s estimate, 1999; Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001). Map illustration.

Case studies were selected at the levels of i) buildings, ii) neighbourhoods, iii) urban form and iv) urban conservation including the Lhasa World Heritage properties.

The cases studies were all located within or on the edge of the studied neighbourhoods. All neighbourhoods within Old Lhasa were affected by transformation after the mid-1980s. This fact alone potentially presented a larger number and diversity of cases areas to furnish research questions with relevant data.

All the case studies at levels i) and ii) were located within or on the periphery of the old town. The Potala-Shöl-Chakpori area located on the west perimeter of this urbanised environment has been a primary part of Lhasa as settlement and spiritual centre at least since the 17th century CE, and has after the 1950s – and again since 1995 – undergone fundamental transformation. The Potala-Shöl area has therefore been included where relevant for the theme of presentation or discussion.

Individual case studies at levels i) and ii) were supplemented with informal investigations of Old Lhasa residents’ lifeworlds. Data was collected through interviews and personal observations. Some of the ‘new’ information came from public-sector personnel (government representatives at national, regional and municipal levels). The restricted number and categories of public documents and plans that have been available to the study were used as baseline information both for documentation and the interpretation of physical change.

Individual responses to spatial dynamics and demographic change are discussed in chapter 7. The qualitative interpretation of interaction dynamics between levels, interests and issues as presented is largely a result of direct observations. Triangulation of data was to some extent made and carried out through interviews, direct observation and secondary sources such as reports and plans.

6.4.2 Cases, categories and selection criteria

‘In Lhasa there was never dirt and sewage flowing in the streets. The government would look after things so this would not happen. Then we used yak dung for burning and also wood, and added the ashes into the human waste. It was all carried away into the fields and used as fertiliser so there was no smell in Lhasa then. It was in the late 1970s that the waste started to appear and change our environment. Today the government just redevelops without improving sanitation or water. With more and more people of all kinds in old Lhasa, sanitation is our biggest problem and it is impossible to complain to anyone’ (Old Lhasa Tibetan resident, 2001).

Individual cases were followed and documented at ‘detailed’ and-or ‘general’ levels. Those documented at ‘detailed’ level were expected to provide data at individual building and neighbourhood levels; those documented at ‘general’ level were expected to contribute data at the level of urban form transformation (inside and outside) Old Lhasa. The traditional built form has thus been explored at the levels of individual structures, typology and townscape.
Part Five: Case studies

Case buildings

Individual buildings, constituting the ‘micro-scale’ of built form in the study, were investigated from a combined perspective of physical condition and change to built form and heritage, and selected issues of residents ‘lifeworlds’.

Individual buildings cases were selected on the basis of the criteria:

a) representativity of built typology
b) representativity of functionality,
c) state of fabric originality (from ‘authentic’ to transformed),
d) size and complexity of structure (large or small structure).
e) role in townscape,
f) historical value and age (from traditional to modern),
g) level of protection (from listed at national level to non-protected),

‘Original’ site-characteristics criteria for selecting case buildings were:

i) restricted urban site (such as Trapshishar),
ii) building within a larger property in semi-urban landscape (such as Shatra),
iii) built structure in open cultural landscape (such as Yuthok Zampa).

Case buildings represented one of three baseline conditions:

1) built form in original condition,
2) building maintained and upgraded with traditional repairs, or
3) property transformed (earlier building demolished, plot integrated with new development).

Table 6.4.2.A Individual buildings cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building cases Category /Number</th>
<th>Built typology and baseline condition:</th>
<th>Courtyard Manor</th>
<th>Monastery complex</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trabshishar b)</td>
<td>Townhouse (small)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tromsikhang</td>
<td>Tenement (large)</td>
<td>b(c)</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meru Nyingpa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labrang Nyingpa</td>
<td></td>
<td>b)</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomdatsang</td>
<td></td>
<td>b)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shatra</td>
<td></td>
<td>a)</td>
<td>c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorka Nyingpa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsuymo Khangsar a)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samding Khangsar c)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamyang</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shide Dratsang</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yabshi Takster</td>
<td></td>
<td>b)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuthok Zampa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b(c)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part Five: Case studies

Fig. 88 All case buildings are marked with red circle. For cases in the Barkor area see separate figure; 2006

Fig. 89 Case buildings inside the Barkor area marked with red circle; 2006
Part Five: Case studies

Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhoods represented the ‘middle scale’ of built form investigated – as urban morphology and morphological periods. Main issues of investigation were the overall conditions in 1995 baseline, and changes and overall impact to built form and character, and to observable territorial relations up to 2005. On-site documentation, cartographic investigations and photography contributed importantly to building up case information. Neighbourhood case categories (and buildings) were selected as A) located in the historic core or kernel, B) located on the edge of the traditional townscape, and C) transformed from cultural landscape into urban environment. Neighbourhoods are defined as per their ‘official’ area names).

![Fig. 90 Neighbourhoods investigated as case studies: Yuthok Tseshing (left), Shaarzur (middle) and Barkor (right) (PHCA Project map, 2001)](image)

Table 6.4.2.B Neighbourhood cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category and Area, Neighbourhood 'Original' use</th>
<th>General status 1995</th>
<th>(Acreage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barkor - Historical core</td>
<td>Mix of well maintained historic kernel, medium dilapidated Religious circumambulation route with recent structures Central traditional market street. Inscribed on UNESCO WH List in 2000.</td>
<td>(17 ha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Authentic’ Lhasa physical fabric.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shasarzur - Edge of traditional townscape</td>
<td>Traditional-historical buildings of varying size, age, standards and architectural quality on gravel lanes; Important buffer to Barkor district, Important residential area</td>
<td>(29 ha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional residentl neighbourhood.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuthok Tseshing - Cultural landscape transformed into urban environment</td>
<td>Cultural landscape integral with historical Lhasa with some courtyard manors, gardens and orchards. Important historical traces &amp; layers.</td>
<td>(29 ha)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Urban form

The historical urban environment (historic urban landscape) is here discussed with a focus on built heritage management and the state of conservation of the Lhasa World Heritage areas (chapter 7).

6.4.3 Interviews, issues and responses

Of all interviews carried out (33 individuals interviewed), about one half were repeat interviews (1995-1998 and 2000-2002). Of the total number of key informants, three were external (foreign) specialists visiting Lhasa. The issues discussed varied somewhat across the respondent categories, as did also the length and intensity of the interviews.

Table 6.4.3.A Key informant categories

The following categories of key informants were interviewed, with number of respondents shown in brackets:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Tibetan Professionals, Engineers and Architects</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Tibetan Monks</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Kashmiri Muslims, permanent residents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Hui Muslim business people, permanent residents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Nepali-Tibetan business people, permanent residents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Tibetan Academics, young and senior</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Tibetan Old Lhasa permanent residents and business people</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Tibetan Old Lhasa temporary residents</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Government representatives – Tibetan and Han</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. External visiting specialist (non-Chinese nationals)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interviews and preparations

Before interviews were carried out, I had preparatory discussions with each interpreter to familiarise them on the overall topics of the study, and formulate interview questions in an ‘optimal’ manner for each respondent category. It was not possible to work with one interpreter throughout the fieldwork. The interpreters expressed the preparations as particularly important in advance of interviews with representatives of government and public institutions.

All the interpreters I worked with were young Tibetan Academics, and the good contact established with the interviewees was in most cases a direct result of the interpreters’ excellent efforts. An interview would sometimes go into considerable detail – at other times remaining ‘superficial’ – depending on the interviewee’s response ability or willingness. This was particularly the case on lifeworld issues for which an amount of trust from the respondents. Such topics were also complex, combining issues of ‘real’ life with personal aspirations.
Two thirds of the key informant interviews were made in their own homes. Interviews were informal and mostly relaxed, and took up to 2 hours including the necessary introductions and general start conversation. Only a few interviews were less than relaxed. Interviews with government representives of different levels (national, regional and municipal) usually turned out to be more difficult and fragmented than with other respondents, with several shorter talks necessary to 'complete' a relevant sequence of topics.

The main topics discussed with key informants who were Old Lhasa residents, were divided into the categories of a) ‘personal lifeworlds’, b) Old Lhasa developing, c) on the environment they lived in, and d) resident-authority relationships (see Appendix). The respondents’ personal lifeworld, age and social ‘position’ would clearly affect an interview process as well as interview responses. To this would be added the author’s own ‘bias’ in terms of assumptions on image, attitude and relationships that the respondents might have or indeed ‘should’ have.

Table 6.4.3.B Old Lhasa interview responses

The table identifies the responses received in ten interviews with Old Lhasa respondents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>interview: 1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Living and livelihood</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Tenure and ownership</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Real estate and land values</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Relationships</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Implications of official plans</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Historic Lhasa physical cultural resources and condition?</td>
<td>(x)</td>
<td>(x)</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>(x)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 What defines the Lhasa historic townscape boundaries?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 How does built form change?</td>
<td>(x)</td>
<td>(x)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(x)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 How and why are its physical cultural resources under pressure – and which are site specific reasons for change?</td>
<td>(x)</td>
<td>(x)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Who are formal/informal actors in Old Lhasa conservation?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(x)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 How are resources managed?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 How to improve management of cultural sites in historical Lhasa</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Other</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X  this was a specific or direct topic in the interview
(x) this was an indirect topic in the interview
?  the issue was not ‘understood’ as relevant or interesting by the respondent
-  the respondent did not know or did not wish to comment
Interview response

On ‘describing’ the historic town, Old Lhasa respondents came forward only on issues they considered part of their own lifeworlds, anything outside this was expressed to be ‘political’ and therefore not ‘relevant’ (or permitted) for discussion. Most of them chose not to comment or discuss issues 11 and 12 (relating to how built heritage in Lhasa had been and was being managed by the municipal government), possibly as the issues were considered to be ‘political’ and outside their own concerns.

The ten key respondent interviews quoted were Old Lhasa residents from categories a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h. All respondents expressed clear ‘commitment’ to Old Lhasa but varying opinions on how society and Old Lhasa was developing – individual concerns varied from day-to-day economic survival (‘ordinary’ residents), to achieving career advancement (government representatives).

6.5 Buildings casestudies

Buildings constituted the micro-scale of urban built form investigated in this study. The investigated issues focused on change to urban built form and built heritage first from a perspective of physical change to built form and heritage, history, shared space and urban form in the selected buildings to neighbourhoods. In a previous chapter were addressed issues central to residents ‘life worlds’ – aspects of personal living– and livelihood conditions affected by issues such as tenure and ownership, land values and general urban development. Not all the cases provided relevant information on all topics.

The data collected is presented under the headings:

i) Building history;
ii) Status 1995 (site and location, legal status, functionality, building, setting);
iii) Status 2005 (summary of change, legal status, current use, building);
iv) Summary (building and setting, project process);
v) References.

Each case represented a building that was either: a) original or authentic (potentially dilapidated), b) maintained with traditional repairs, or c) transformed (earlier building demolished and the plot integrated with new development). The selected buildings were thematically studied in terms of general conditions and change. Where possible, residents were interviewed on issues spanning from personal ‘life world’ to relationships to authorities and the urban environment. Illustration. In the following, the building reference numbers are those of the buildings registration system used for the LHCA-project.
### Table 6.5.A Individual case buildings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case No.</th>
<th>Building name</th>
<th>‘Original’ use</th>
<th>General status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LHCA bldg ref, Area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhouse – dilapidated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tsuymo Khangsar 43, Area B</td>
<td>Small townhouse</td>
<td>Medium dilapidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Demolished 2005-2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhouse – traditional repairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Trabshishar 1, Area A</td>
<td>Small townhouse</td>
<td>Medium dilapidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Repaired 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhouse – transformed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Samding Khangsar 47, Area B</td>
<td>Family residence</td>
<td>Medium dilapidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenement – traditional repairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Jamyang 38, Area B</td>
<td>Large courtyards tenement</td>
<td>Well maintained/repaired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Built for stables &amp; housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtyard Manor – original</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Shatra 143, Area A</td>
<td>Large family town residence</td>
<td>Decent to acceptable condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtyard Manor – traditional repairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pomdatsang 141, Area A</td>
<td>Large family town residence</td>
<td>Medium dilapidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Labrang Nyingpa 30, Area A</td>
<td>Large family town residence</td>
<td>Medium dilapidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Protected and repaired 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yabshi Takster 315, Area C</td>
<td>Lhasa residence of 14th DLI</td>
<td>Protected and repaired 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Building complex repaired and altered for government guest house; several work-units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtyard Manor – transformed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tromsikhang 71, Area A</td>
<td>Built as palace, major town residence</td>
<td>Protected National /Regional? level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gorka Nyingpa 183, Area A</td>
<td>Nepali embassy in Lhasa</td>
<td>Partly demolished and redeveloped 1997, transformed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medium dilapidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monastery – original, in ruins, part repairs only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Shide Dratsang 268, Area B</td>
<td>Religious property</td>
<td>Heavy and medium dilapidations, housing repaired in 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monastery – traditional repairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Meru Nyingpa, 18, Area A</td>
<td>Religious property,</td>
<td>Medium dilapidation. Main structure protected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Repaired 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical structure – transformed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Yuthok Zampa 63, Area C</td>
<td>‘Early Medieval’ bridge linking Potala-Jokhang</td>
<td>Fully transformed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Restored’ in the early 1990s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 13 case buildings, 4 were said to be described at National level (disputed), two of those protected at Regional Level, and 8 at Municipal Level – in all 11 of the 13 buildings protected under the government approved heritage protection regime – with two of the 11 (Lhasa Atlas building ref 18 and 268) by a national PRC ‘blanket protection’ on religious structures (Lhasa Municipality, 1985; Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001:156):
### Table 6.5.B Case building protection category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protection Category</th>
<th>Case ref</th>
<th>Building ref</th>
<th>Bldg name</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Regional</th>
<th>Municipal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Trabshishar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Tromsikhang</td>
<td>N?</td>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Meru Nyingpa</td>
<td>N?</td>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>Labrang Nyingpa</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>Pomdatsang</td>
<td>N?</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>Shatra</td>
<td>N?</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Gorka Nyingpa</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Tsuymo Khangsar</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Samding Khangsae</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Jamyang</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>Yuthok Zampa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>315</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yabshi Takster</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only two of the 13 cases have remained outside the official heritage protection regime: Yuthok Zampa documented to contain remains many centuries old, and Yabshi Takster, the Lhasa residence of the 14th Dalai Lama’s family.

The selected individual buildings cases are presented in the following sub-sections.
Part Five: Case studies

6.5.1 Trapchishar Townhouse

Meaning in Tibetan: house belonging to the Trapchi Temple.
Case category: Townhouse – small,
Maintenance condition and need: traditional repairs
Location: On Barkor West (turning into Barkor North), on the inside of Barkor on the first corner clockwise from the Jokhang entrance area.

BUILDING HISTORY

Trapchishar is believed to have been built in the 17th century, its specific date of construction uncertain. The building may have been reconstructed around 1900 CE. On the top floor was a lama’s residence. Ground level areas were rented out to shopkeepers, with residential accommodation above.

Fig. 91 Location of Trapchishar townhouse is shown in yellow circle.

STATUS 1995

Site and location: Trapchishar is located on the inside and immediately adjacent to the north wall of Jokhang as one enters Barkor. On ‘Aufschnaiter 1948’ the plot is identified in simple trapezoidal shape, stepped towards the street frontage. Trapchishar has structurally been ‘adapted’ (general arrangement) to fit a very irregular corner site. It is not known whether this is a result of plot-alterations over time, or whether Aufschnaiter has ‘simplified’ the plot.

Legal status: Trapchishar is, despite its architectural-townscape importance and age, not protected at any level. Trapchishar was built and owned by the Sera Tantric College, and used as town residence for its visiting monks; and expropriated by the state in the 1960s.

Functionality: In 1995 the building was only in part inhabited, the upper storeys emptied about two years earlier awaiting complete demolition of the building. With no use or maintenance, the entire building was in an advanced state of dilapidation. Four small shop units and a teashop on the ground floor faced Barkor. About 10 families were living in low standard accommodation at Trapchishar, some of them Barkor shop- or stall keepers.

Fig. 92 Trapchishar townhouse, (from LHCA Project map)
The building: Trapchishar is a typical 3-storey townhouse, and is well built in composite construction of stone (ground floor) and mud brick, around a pleasant small trapezoidal courtyard. The degree of dilapidation (1995) was assumed to have resulted from earlier constant overcrowding, lack of repairs and a general low standard (inadequate traditional sanitation facilities), combined with upper floors left empty over some time.

From Barkor, a low long corridor leads into the pleasant courtyard, with shared water tap. An open staircase leads to first and second floor open galleries from which to access the dwelling units. Carvings on corner stones, interior decorative murals, age and location contribute to make Trapchishar important as a traditional-historic building. Trapchishar was judged by the author to be in a good and quite ‘original’ condition, as only a few additions or alterations seemed made to the ‘original’ structure.

Building and setting: Trapchishar is lent special significance by its location in marking a major corner as the narrow Barkor West meets Shasarzur lam – at this point turning and opening into the wider long space (the square) of Barkor North. This significance was strengthened by the fact that Trapchishar already in 1995 was one of only few secular traditional-historic buildings left on Barkor.

STATUS 2005

Summary of change: The derelict Trapchishar, scheduled for demolition, was in 1996 rescued by the first traditional repairs pilot project of the ‘Tibet Heritage Fund’ (THF) – Trapchishar and the adjacent Chotrikhang (Dharma Throne House). The upgrading and maintenance activities involved the ‘original’ tenants who moved back into the house after completion. In 1997 THF installed sewage-pipe connected sanitary installations.

Legal status: Trapchishar was in 1998 included on the list of Lhasa Municipal Level Protected Buildings. The residential property is owned by the municipal government and administered by the Barkor Street Committee (no information was made available as regards specifics of ownership, tenancies or rents).

Current use: Towards Barkor, the ground floor accommodates four shops and a tea-house. Internal rooms to the courtyard are used for storage. The tea-house ‘spills’ over into the courtyard that has become a semi-public space. On the first floor are located nine dwelling units, all accessed from the open gallery (two of them have access also from shops below). At the end of the gallery, the gallery has been privatised (enclosed). On the second floor are located six dwelling units, part of the gallery
privatised also here. Most of the Trapchishar dwelling units are quite small, only one is large and extending over two floors.

The building: The THF interventions in 1996-1997 saved the building from imminent demolition scheduled by the municipal government and street committee – the works involving full repairs with structural and finishes restoration including upgrading of sanitation and water supply. The upgraded building provided the ‘original’ residents with much appreciated upgraded accommodation. The project constituted the first vernacular and secular building conservation project in historic Lhasa and the first THF building repair and upgrading project. Completed in 1997, the Trapchishar-Chotrikhang pilot project was a very important initiative for Old Lhasa, although unfortunately regarded by the Lhasa government as controversial in terms of process and quality of repairs achieved.

In my understanding, there were several reasons for the criticisms directed at THF-activity by the Lhasa Government. The idealistic individuals of THF operated generally on the borderline of acceptable practice in terms of adhering to government instructions. THF ventured into activities where the government had formal control. THF engaged local residents in manners not acceptable to the authorities and in work that was not carried out in this manner before. THF may in its eagerness to achieve progress in safeguarding unique built heritage, have violated some official guidelines and permissions. Initially some Lhasa government agencies may have felt ‘infringed’. From unconfirmed information (both sides) THF may have initiated its own brand of ‘free-range’ construction upgrading in Old Lhasa – from not seeking and obtaining conventional approvals, not formally approaching the responsible regional or municipal level government agencies through the correct bureaucratic channels, to resolving technical matters unconventionally.

SUMMARY

Building and setting: The use of space at Trapchishar illustrates traditional fluidity between categories of space and in levels of privacy – results of tradition and necessity. Shared semi-private space fronts the dwelling units. The courtyard has been ‘allowed’ taken over by one of the ground floor commercial functions (tea house). All spaces (private and public) have shared or multiple functionality. Trapchishar as a structure has evident importance as physical component or ‘building block’ in the context of townscape. Its traditional (‘authentic’) construction and appearance provide harmony of atmosphere, scale and construction. Immediately adjoining both the Jokhang Temple complex and commercial/residential buildings along Barkor, Trapchishar is a self-contained residential unit in the larger busy and important traditional townscape of Barkor.
Part Five: Case studies

The importance of the Trapchishar-Chotrikhang buildings is more by their location and traditional form than by their architecture, both buildings prominent examples of low-key traditional built form and functionality in Lhasa.

After an initial period of conflict with Lhasa government (1996-1998), THF was embraced as a technically competent conservation and upgrading resource – then to be (the NGO and its central individuals) expelled from Lhasa and Tibet only a few years later.

**Project process:** Had it not been for the THF pilot initiative, the two buildings would most likely have been demolished and replaced with new larger construction.

The fact that the Lhasa government for some years publicly used the Trapchishar-Chotrikhang project as an example of ‘bad’ restoration is in my understanding and an exaggerated criticism. The project achieved for a first time in Lhasa the involvement of government agencies with local residents and community in practical upgrading efforts for which underused traditional craft skills (through unemployed traditional master craftsmen) were employed – upkeeping skilled individuals which were very little encouraged by public agencies in Lhasa. I hold that much was gained from the approach and as outcome.

![Fig. 94 Trapchichar from corner of Jamyangshar sanglam; 2000](image1)

![Fig. 95 Trapchichard: courtyard after repairs; 2000](image2)

**REFERENCES**

6.5.2 Tromsikhang Manor

Meaning in Tibetan: ‘watching the market’, located on the Barkor North market square.
Case category: Courtyard manor, transformed.
Maintenance condition and need: traditional repairs
Location: On the eastern section of Barkor North, facing the square and Nangteshar (LHCA 8).

BUILDING HISTORY

Tromsikhang was constructed in the late 17th century CE as town residence for the 6th Dalai Lama (Tsangyang Gyatso (1683–1706), and after his early death used as Lhasa residence by the Mongol ruler Lhazang Khan until 1717. Tibet’s King Gyurme Namgyal (reigned 1747-1750) was murdered at Tromsikhang in 1750, possibly by the Ambans (ambassadors) of the Qing Emperor. After this the Ambans moved to the new ‘Yamen’ compound in the Lubu area. The Tromsikhang complex continued to be used by the Chinese government. The use and role of Tromsikhang for the Kashag, the DL’s government after this is not known.

STATUS 1995

Site and location: The property is located on Barkor North (north side) facing the N-E square, and opposite the access lane to Meru Nyingba monastery. On ‘Aufschnaiter 1948’ the site is identified as L-shaped, with a major section (about 60 M long x 40 M deep) along Barkor, and one section of roughly the same dimension extending to Kirey Sanglam Tangpo (Tromsikhang market).

Legal status: The TAR Cultural Relics Bureau in the 1980s recommended that Tromsikhang be protected, as confirmed (regional level) in the Barkor Conservation Plan (Ministry of Construction, 1992; State Council approved in 1996), but by government respondents described as a ‘National Level Protected Grade 1 historic building’
(personal communications), owned by the government (Lhasa City) and administered by the Tromsikhang Street Committee.

**Functionality:** In 1995 all of Tromsikhang was used for public rented housing, administered by the Lhasa Housing Bureau (municipal level agency). The accommodation of a large number of residents (temporary and seasonal residents) was from somewhat to severely dilapidated. At ground level numerous small shops faced Barkor North.

**The building:** Tromsikhang Palace Manor is one of the architecturally culturally and historically most important buildings, a significant example of building traditions in Lhasa – considered as the most prominent example of urban monumental buildings in Old Lhasa. The layout of the three-storey main building (symmetrical) facing Barkor North was built in high quality stonework, and was decorated as an important official building.
The top floor was richly decorated with carvings on wooden balconies and in the interior wooden construction (columns and beams). The main elevation was finely proportioned. Its continuous ‘bema’-parapet identifies the property as earlier owned and used by a monastic institution. The main building from the start probably had one large courtyard away from the street, to the north.

Fig. 100 Tromsikhang Palace Manor: inner left hand courtyard built 1999; 2002

The courtyard had two- and three-storey outbuildings for storage, livestock and servants or retainers, and a later two-storey extension that divided the courtyard. Several informal structures were added to the outbuildings in recent decades, about one half of the outbuilding built in traditional-historic construction, the rest as recent incidental construction. Tromsikhang was by 1995 severely overcrowded with some parts of the complex badly dilapidated – some areas not used since soon after 1960. The overall structure was in 1995 by this author and other visitors with experience in conservation considered still suitable for traditional repairs and with potential to provide good traditional housing.

**STATUS 2005**

**Summary of change:** Despite Tromsikhang’s status as protected, all but the front part of the main building facing Barkor North (60 by 10 m) was in summer 1997 suddenly demolished and reconstruction started in consequence of a proposal by the Lhasa Municipal Planning Office authorized by a TAR Vice Chairman. The proposal seemed to be contradicting guidelines for the historic property issued by the Ministry of Construction agency responsible for historic towns in 1992. A detailed survey of the remaining part was permitted made (by THF), with outline plans for the conservation of remaining parts of the structure.
Part Five: Case studies

By mid-1998, new four-storey housing blocks were completed behind the front building that was also upgraded for housing. Important 17th and 18th century remains were removed.

**Legal status:** Despite its recent transformation and regional level protection, Tromsikhang was in 1998 confirmed as a Protected Building at Municipal level as the first residential building to be protected by Lhasa City Government. It is not known whether Tromsikhang due to its radical transformation has been de-listed from national registers – I believe this to be less likely.

**Current use:** ‘New’ Tromsikhang in 2005 provided 125 dwelling units with a resident population estimated to about 600 persons, about 10% of the number of units in 2005 were privately owned. A number of ‘original’ or pre-redevelopment tenants have moved back into the front building.

**The building:** The original three gates into the property have survived in amended form, with interior stairs and some rooms rearranged. The roof cover consisted of layers of earth with absorbing red sand on top, but no ‘arga’ (stamped and oiled clay, the traditional roof technique). Intermediate floors are now built in reinforced concrete, also the areas that had well-preserved traditional arga floors (traditional stamped clay floors; floor levels have in consequence been raised). Carved window frames on the facade were replaced by simpler ones. A 1950s Nepali-style tiled bathroom has disappeared, and a hallway on another floor was converted into a toilet to be used by all the tenants on the west side of the building complex (front and new rear buildings). For people on the east side of the complex, new toilet areas were provided in the new middle section.

**SUMMARY**

**Building and setting:** In terms of functionality, size, specific and symbolic historic value, and significant architectural qualities Tromsikhang remains a culturally important and architecturally dominant historic structure on Barkor North and in historic Lhasa.

The restored Tromsikhang facade has enhanced the appearance of the northern stretch of the Barkor.
Project process: When discovering the starting demolition and redevelopment activity, I personally contacted the central authorities (Lhasa and Beijing) in an attempt to have the decision revoked – to no avail. The achievements of Tromsikhang’s restoration have been marred by the demolitions of most of the original complex, as well as of the neighbouring Dechen Rabten and Lagang buildings. The repairs and ‘conservation’ of the main Tromsikhang building remain questionable and raise important issues, regardless of the possible shift in government attitude that this partial conservation project may have indicated: Tromsikhang was only the second non-monastic building in the old city to be restored by the government – the first was the old courthouse and prison, Nangtseshar in 1995.

Fig. 102 The larger part of the Tromsikhang Palace Manor complex as known since the 1700s was suddenly demolished. Excavation and reconstruction started as soon as one part of the old building complex was sufficiently cleared – ie without any apparent documentation of the old structures or the historical layers that were exposed; 1997

REFERENCES
6.5.3 Meru Nyingpa Monastery

Meaning in Tibetan: old place or monastery of Meru or Muru (name of god/protector).
Case category: 3.3 Monastery – upgraded traditional repairs.
Maintenance condition and need: traditional repairs
Location: Off Barkor North, on inside at the eastern end with entrances from Barkor North and East. Building references: Aufschnaiter: Ka x, and LHCA: 18.

BUILDING HISTORY

Meru Nyingpa is believed to date from the Imperial Period (7-11th centuries CE); its earliest remains possibly dated to 7th to mid-9th centuries CE.

Meru Nyingpa was founded as one of six protector chapels built about 820 CE around and near the Jokhang Temple by King Ralpachen (reigned 815-836 CE). Destroyed by King Longdarma (reigned 836-842 CE), Meru Nyingpa was rebuilt by Atisha (980-1054 CE), and became a Gelugpa monastery under the 3rd Dalai Lama Sonam Gyatso (1543-1589 CE).

The oldest part of the existing structure is believed to be the Jambhala (Dzambhala) Lhakhang, located in the west wing of the complex and on the site where Tonmi Sambhota is believed to have finalised the Tibetan alphabet at the time of king Songtsen Gampo (reigned 607-649; Alexander, 2001). Major repairs and some investigations was carried out after 1982, however, they did not find conclusive evidence of ‘imperial’ chapel remains.

There are few written sources on Meru Nyingpa, and little is therefore known of the chronological history of Meru Nyingpa.

Meru Nyingpa was extended by the 5th Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso (1617–1682) as town residence for the Nechung State Oracle in the 17th century. The 7th Dalai Lama Kelsang Gyatso (1708–1757 CE) constructed an extension to Jokhang, the eastern perimeter of which reaching Meru Nyingpa. The Jambhala Lhakhang was said to be ‘embraced’ by the extension.

The Meru Nyingpa, Nechung and Drepung monasteries were linked,
Meru Nyingpa and Nechung through oracle cults (State oracle), with Meru Nyingpa particularly important to Nechung during the annual Great Prayer Festival. The Dalai Lama and the Nechung Abbot would visit Meru Nyingpa, where the Dalai Lama audience room still exists. The Nechung Abbot would visit several times through the ceremonial year, the Dalai Lama once each year.

About one half of Meru Nyingpa was built in the 19th century. The main temple building with the dukhang (assembly hall), believed constructed on the order of the abbot of Nechung Khenpo Sakya Ngape, may date from the 1880s or very early 20th century – gave Meru Nyingpa the form seen today. It may be at this time that the main entrance to Meru Nyingpa was relocated from the south and into the north-west corner (not unique, but unusual). The courtyard buildings earlier provided monks accommodation and storage. In 1959 Meru Nyingpa main temple building and parts of the courtyard buildings were taken over for public housing. Some of the lower level courtyard spaces also used as stables and granaries throughout the 1960s. In 1964 the temple was closed and in 1966 vandalised (Cultural Revolution). All the original murals and decorative paintings were over-painted (removed in the early 1990’s). In 1981 all of the upstairs level courtyard buildings were taken over for housing. Meru Nyingpa reopened as a monastery in the mid-1980s. Initial restoration work started in 1984. The ground level stables were used for storage until 1991, and then also taken over for housing.

**STATUS 1995**

**Site and location:** Meru Nyingpa was the Lhasa seat of the State Oracle (Nechung Monastery) and is located on the inside and in the north-east corner of Barkor, hidden for the uninformed visitor.

**Legal status:** Meru Nyingpa is a historic structure protected at National level, as a religious property protected under PRC and TAR Government legislation. The overall property is owned by the government, with the main temple building owned by Drepung Monastery. Its courtyard buildings (housing) are today administered by the Lhasa Housing Bureau through the Barkor Street Committee.

**Functionality:** Besides housing and the religious use described the monasteries Gongkar Choede and Meru Khangsar maintain chapels in the west wing of the temple building.

**The building:** The building complex consists of a three-storey main temple building built in high quality stonework (plus roof additions), with a courtyard to the south lined to three sides with two-storey
buildings. The layout has been noted as particularly reminiscent of the Chödegang monastery in Tsethang, in the Tsangpo river valley, south east of Lhasa. In 1995 the condition of all structures at Meru Nyingpa was in a state of serious dilapidation from overcrowding and maintenance neglect. Meru Nyingpa represents some of the few remains of early known construction in Lhasa. The complex has ‘survived’ in entirety in its pre-1959 form and layout.

![Fig. 106 Meru Nyingpa: courtyard during extensive repairs work; 1998](image)

**STATUS 2005**

**Summary of change:** Meru Nyingpa was restored, repaired and upgraded by ‘Tibet Heritage Fund’ (THF), the work completed in 2000. The property has since been well maintained by the monastery, Lhasa Housing Board and residents. The repairs work made fine decorations, murals and carvings at the Meru Nyingpa main building again visible to the visitor.

**Legal status:** Meru Nyingpa as institution collaborates with Meru Dratsang on financial and religious (ceremonial) matters.

**Current use:** The resident population at Meru Nyingpa was in 2005 about 10 monks and 25 families, in all about 100 persons. Meru Nyingpa again attracts large crowds of devotees for an annual prayer festival (Tibetan: ‘ma ni dung phyur’) held during the fourth lunar month.

**CONCLUSIONS**

**Building and setting:** Hidden from view of Barkor, but gives functionality to the interior of the Barkor east urban block – that potentially could have taken over for modern housing.
Part Five: Case studies

**Project process:** The project was important to set in motion public sector involvement to repairing traditional buildings. The project provided an essential demonstration that these buildings could be saved to give very acceptable and much needed housing also for the future.

Fig. 107 Meny Nyingpa Monastery courtyard during prayer festival; 2001

**REFERENCES**

6.5.4 Labrang Nyingpa Manor

Meaning in Tibetan: Nyingpa: old; labrang: lama’s residence
Case category: Courtyard house – upgraded, traditional repairs
Maintenance condition and need: traditional repairs
Location: Barkor South (inside the Barkor urban block)

BUILDING HISTORY

Labrang Nyingpa on Barkor South is associated with several historic figures such as King Songtsen Gampo’s advisor Tönmi Sanbotha who is said to have ‘established’ the Tibetan script, the residence of the Buddhist reformer Je Tsongkapa (1357–1419 CE), and the 5th Dalai Lama. Labrang Nyingpa became the residence of a noble family around the end of the 17th century. Some 17th century details remain in the main structure. Although Labrang Nyingpa has been ‘dated’ to the time of the 5th Dalai Lama (mid-17th century), the present three-storey structure is believed to have been built around 1900. The buildings numerous rich decorations were destroyed during the 1960s-70s.

STATUS 1995

Site and location: Labrang Nyingpa is located on the inside of Barkor South, adjacent to other major residential constructions (such as the Surkhang family residence demolished in the early 1990s).

Legal and ownership status: Labrang Nyingpa was in the early 1960s expropriated by the new government and retained by a central danwei (work unit or public sector institution, and is managed by the Barkor Street Committee.

Current use: Labrang Nyingpa provided overcrowded housing for staff of the work unit.
The building: Labrang Nyingpa is a very well built three storey structure in high quality composite construction of stonework and mud brick. Its rich interior decorations were damaged (overpainted) and many details (fittings) removed during the 1960-1970s. The building was without any of the alterations or additions that were so often made to major traditional structures after 1950. Although in 1995 in a rather dilapidated condition, the primary and secondary construction components (main structure, stairs, main screens, windows and doors) were in quite good order.

STATUS 2005

Summary of change: Labrang Nyingpa was repaired and restored 1999-2001 under the management of Lhasa Cultural Relics Bureau, to provide upgraded housing.

Current use: Labrang Nyingpa provides housing for staff of the owning work unit, many of whom lived here also before the upgrading project.

CONCLUSIONS

Building and setting: Labrang Nyingpa was in 2005 the only traditional-historical building extant on Barkor South. Its historic value is unquestionable, as is also the architectural value representing a prominent example of ‘classic’ Tibetan architecture. To the townscape, the building plays a pivotal role in ‘grounding’ the varied building volumes along a street that has been much altered during the last two decades.
Part Five: Case studies

**Project process:** The upgrading is in 2005 regarded by the Lhasa municipal government as a highly successful case of public sector engagement at the levels of residents, and an example of sustainable strategy that could have benefited many more traditional-historic residential structures in terms of process and results if only implemented on a larger scale – a view that is wholeheartedly shared also by this author.

**REFERENCES**

Fig. 112 Labrang Nyingpa Manor: view along BArkor South (AA 1996 for LHCA Project).
6.5.5 Pomdatsang Manor

Meaning in Tibetan: Pomdatsang was the Lhasa residence of the Pomda family.
Case category: Courtyard house – upgraded, traditional repairs
Maintenance condition and need: traditional repairs
Location: On the corner Barkor South and Barkor Rabsal Sanglam, opposite the Surkhang department store, on the corner with Barkor East, with main entrance from Barkor Rabsal Sanglam.

BUILDING HISTORY

The property now known as Pomdatsang Manor was built around 1914 by Minister Tsarong as his Lhasa family residence. The earlier construction had been extensively damaged during the violent ousting of the Chinese garrison from Lhasa in 1912. Already in 1923 Tsarong left the property in preference of a new house closer to the river in order to avoid increasing inner Lhasa densification, and its sanitation and pollution problems. The Manor was sold to Cabinet Minister Tsarong Shapey, the main reformer during the reign of the 13th DL.

In 1926 the property was purchased by the wealthy trader Pomdatsang to be used as his Lhasa family residence, after which the property has been known as the Pomdatsang Manor. Pomdatsang sold the Manor to the new government in the 1950s. The extensive Tsarong Estate (south and west of the kernel) was after 1960 taken over and incorporated into the very large grounds of the PRC regional military headquarters.

STATUS 1995

Site and location: Pomdatsang is located within the Barkor World Heritage site (2000); map.
Legal status: Pomdatsang Manor has been presented as a National level Protected Grade 1 historical building. This has however never been confirmed by regional or national government agency representatives and seems highly unlikely (personal communications).
Part Five: Case studies

**Functionality:** Pomdatsang in 1995 had a large resident population of around 80 families, or 250-300 persons. About one half of the households were informal residents or seasonal traders.

The building: The Pomdatsang main building is connected to the gallery of the neighbouring property Kyakashar (LHCA 142) by a part cast-iron construction that may confirm the date of construction of ‘Pomdatsang’ to around 1914. Another construction feature at Pomdatsang Manor is use of steel beams, new to Lhasa and introduced here around the time of WW1.

The property consists of a traditional three-storey main building in high quality stonework with one smaller interior courtyard. The main building faces south into a major courtyard lined with the normal two-storey courtyard buildings for animals, storage and servants/retainers to all three sides. Main entrance through the eastern courtyard building.

By 1995 the Pomdatsang Manor complex was badly dilapidated through neglect and overcrowding over several decades.

Building and setting: The adjacent townscape consisted of an uneven mix of highly attractive and important traditional-historical buildings and incidental recent construction. The overall scale and character of the neighbourhood was nevertheless of a quality that could relatively simply make repair and upgrading of external environment and buildings both realistic and highly desirable.

**STATUS 2005**

Summary of change: Very extensive repairs and upgrading of Pomdatsang was completed (for housing), and some of the dwelling units already sold to private owners. The work was carried out by a highly reputable local building company, using traditional methods and materials, and to high standards.

Legal status: Pomdatsang was protected at Municipal level in 1998 and remained in the ownership of a major public sector work unit.
Current use: Pomdatsang was through the repair and upgrading project divided into about 90 small residential units of average 40 m² each, to accommodate a resident population estimated to 350-400 persons.

The building: The property was repaired, restored and upgraded by the Lhasa Housing Board on behalf of Lhasa city in 2001-2002, the work carried out by the Lhasa First Urban Construction Company. The company was established 1960 as a cooperative and has carried out major repairs also to the main historic monumental buildings in Lhasa. The work has been carried out with considerable respect for the original structure and original finishes where this has been deemed possible. The residential property is formally owned by the municipal government and administered by the Lhasa Housing Board. The dwelling units, or room-units, sold for private ownership represent the portion of the total built area in the project that a contractor would have to accept as his project risk.
This would normally represent 25-30% of the dwelling units that the contractor (a joint project developer) would sell or let for his own profit after completing the contract (presented by the contractor's project manager as normal Municipal government contract clause). In Pomdatsang in 2005 the Han Chinese residents were said to account for about 30%. The building complex was in 2005 in very good condition.

CONCLUSIONS

Building and setting: Pomdatsang as an urban component and as a typology representation of a manor house in the remaining traditional townscape is of high importance to the townscape.

Project process: The upgrading project as administered by the Municipal government and the contractor must be seen as very successful in its respect for the original building fabric, and retaining the traditional use of the building complex. A major concern is, however, represented by expected future overcrowding within this so easily worn down traditional construction.

POSTSCRIPT

In 2006 the property is said to have been sold to a private property developer to be transformed into a modern hotel.
Fig. 119 Pomdatsang main courtyard during the full repairs and upgrading project; 2002

REFERENCES

6.5.6 Shatra Manor

Meaning in Tibetan: Family name, a well known family (Shatra was prime minister to the 13th Dalai Lama).
Case category: Courtyard house – original
Maintenance condition and need: traditional repairs
Location: Close to, south of Barkor South, on Luguk Sanglam Dangpo, in a combined traditional and transforming area with very few extant traditional-historic buildings.

BUILDING HISTORY

Shatra Manor may have been built already around 1800; with major reconstruction around 1900 as the Lhasa residence for the Shatra noble family (one family member was Prime Minister).

The property was confiscated by the government when the Shatra family fled Lhasa in 1959, and allocated a major work unit, the Chinese Peoples Political Consultative Conference, CPPCC (CPPCC).

A small section (the original west wing chapel room) was in the late 1980s returned to a surviving member of the Shatra family.

STATUS 1995

Site and location: Located on Luguk Sanglam Dangpo south of Barkor South, Shatra is in the middle of an area under growing development pressure.

Legal status: Shatra Manor was described by government respondents to be a Grade 1 historic building. Shatra is owned by the important political institution the CPPCC, section Lhasa.

Functionality: Shatra in 1995 housed in all 50-70 families, most of them permanent Lhasa residents and a majority of them workers (or relatives of workers) of the CPPCC work unit.

The building: The atmosphere and environment of this splendid complex (three-storey stone main building with two-storey courtyard buildings around a large courtyard) is very pleasant.
Part Five: Case studies

Shatra had a reasonably stable resident population. Although the building maintenance appears to be nominal, building standards are acceptable. Numerous informal constructions were added inside the courtyard, on courtyard galleries and on courtyard building roofs. Overcrowding over long time has added to the whole structure dilapidating.

Building and setting: Shatra Manor was already in 1995 one of Lhasa’s few and most ‘original’ extant manor houses. The neighbourhood constitutes an important section of traditional although transformed Lhasa townscape.

STATUS 2005
Summary of change: No significant change has taken place. Only informal structures have been removed as part of the ‘clean up-operation’ by the municipal government. The resident population is in consequence reduced, although still to large for the fragile traditional building fabric. Some of the still too many dwelling units have been ‘repaired’, mostly by the residents themselves.

Legal status: The property is still owned and managed by the work unit, the housing element administration carried out in conjunction with the street committee. Shatra was in 1998 protected at Municipal level (inconsistency, not confirmed, see above).

Current use: The resident population in 2005 was said to be about 40 families with in all 150-200 persons. Only 4 or 5 of the families had lived at Shatra for longer than 10 years.

The building: Shatra in 2005 had the character of a rather neglected but very charming traditional pleasant place to live. With only nominal repairs carried out, the building fabric was deteriorating quite fast. Fears of plans by the owning work unit to repair and upgrade, or rather redevelop and expand the property were talked about among its residents.

CONCLUSIONS

Building and setting: All the traditional buildings in the immediate and larger area have been demolished and redeveloped. This is hoped not to happen to Shatra (2011: Shatra may be turned into a
hotel). The process of only nominal maintenance has made the buildings survive so far, but more serious efforts are now needed to rescue this important historic building complex for another generation. **Project process:** The permanent ownership of a strong work unit has clearly been a main factor maintaining the building complex in its traditional ‘original’ form.

Fig. 124 Shatra Mansion: corner of main building and outbuildings; 2002

**POSTSCRIPT**

In 2011 the entire Shatra Manor complex was reported emptied of all residents, and awaiting permissions to be transformed into a modern boutique hotel (new owners?).

**REFERENCES**

6.5.7 Gorkha Nyingpa Manor

Meaning in Tibetan: the old Nepali embassy.
Case category: Courtyard house – transformed
Maintenance condition and need: traditional repairs
Location: A the Barkor Rabsal Sanglam opposite Shatra Manor
Building reference: Aufschnaiter: (not known). LHCA: 183

BUILDING HISTORY

Gorkha Nyingpa is believed built around 1650 CE in its near-present form, and served as embassy or consulate for Nepal in Lhasa from about 1750 onwards. The property was expropriated by the PRC government after 1959 for public housing – mainly as informal housing for a large floating group of seasonal residents.

STATUS 1995

Site and location: Gorkha Nyingpa is located on the southern side of Luguk Sanglam Dangpo.

Legal status: This architecturally splendid property was owned and used as the Consulate of Nepal until expropriated by the PRC government.

Functionality: Public housing for a large number of households, living in very simple conditions.

The building: Gorkha Nyingpa is a three-storey main structure in high quality stonework standing free of its surrounding two-storey outbuildings (to all four sides) inside a large courtyard. This gave the property a unique layout for Lhasa where the majority of courtyard manors have their main building located towards the northern perimeter of the property with a courtyard and main entrance to the south. It should be borne in mind that the original property of the courtyard manor was usually considerably larger than indicated today, the courtyard construction surrounded by extensive gardens, orchards and fields. The qualities that this courtyard structure have presented to the visitor must have made it among...
the most attractive properties in Lhasa. In 1995 the main building was structurally in decent condition, its interior very dilapidated. The courtyard buildings were in a state of advanced dilapidation.

**STATUS 2005**

**Summary of change:** Already in 2002 the extended Gorkha Nyingpa property had been transformed into a commercial property, the first luxury boutique hotel to appear in Old Lhasa.

**Legal status:** Gorkha Nyingba became a Protected Building at Municipal level in 1998. The property was in 1999 sold by Lhasa government to a private developer who also purchased the adjacent smaller property providing access to Lingkor South, and subsequently remodelled all structures, all outbuildings unfortunately demolished.

**Current use:** In 2000-2002 the property was in large part demolished and reopened as the first high standard privately owned ‘boutique-hotel’ in the old town. Also the main structure was reconstructed, except its solid but in the context somewhat ‘wafer-thin’ original external and load bearing walls constructed in stone.

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**CONCLUSIONS**

**Building and setting:** The ‘reconstruction’ has seemed to meet the requirements defined by the Municipal government (Lhasa Cultural Relics Bureau) and has within a pragmatic perspective been decently carried out. The ‘conservation’ approach implemented for this property of high heritage value and repairs potential has, however, favoured the building of a ‘boutique hotel’ with modern conveniences to the neglect of the qualities of the original building fabric and the potential awareness-raising that a combined and well-reflected conservation-commercial pilot project could have contributed to Old Lhasa.
Project process: Although the traditional streetscape is retained, the loss of Gorkha Nyingba represents a significant loss of traditional townscape quality and built heritage of Old Lhasa.

REFERENCES

Fig. 129 Gorkha Nyingpa Manor: main building before 'restoration'; 1996

Fig. 130 Gorka Nyingpa Manor: main courtyard before transformation, below; 1996
6.5.8 Tsuymo Khangsar Townhouse

Meaning in Tibetan: house of those who milk the dri (female yak).
Case category: Townhouse – small, dilapidated.
Maintenance condition and need: traditional repairs
Location: On the eastern side of Shasarzur Lam West, north section, and adjacent to the important historic courtyard manor Yabshi Pünkhang (42).
Building reference: Aufschnaiter: (not known); LHCA: 43.

BUILDING HISTORY

In its present form the modest and traditional Tsuymo Khangsar building is believed to have been constructed around 1947 and altered in the 1970s.
On the roof and in the courtyard are remains of numerous informal additions and extensions constructed after the 1970s.
Traditional decorations to wooden elements and wall surfaces were painted over during the Cultural Revolution.

STATUS 1995

Site and location: Tsuymo Khangsar is located on Shasarzur Lam West (east side, with Yabshi Pünkhang as neighbour (north).

Legal status: The Tsuymo Khangsar building and courtyard was in 1995 stated by its private owner-occupiers to be in their private ownership.

Functionality: The modest Tsuymo Khangsar building and small courtyard accommodated 5 families or households, with individual rooms or flats arranged around a small open courtyard.

The building: The traditional construction with the lower storey built in traditional stonework with mud bricks above, was regarded as a whole to be in a medium to bad condition of dilapidation. The building was rather overcrowded.

Building and setting: Tsuymo Khangsar is an important component of traditional built form in a traditional residential street that was already under visible early development pressure and transformation.
In 1995 adjacent to Tsuymo Khangsar important buildings in addition to Yabshi Phünkhang (ref 42) were: Tizur Labrang (309) and Deleg Khangsar (46) with the large tenements Ongdu Khangsar (44) and Jamyang (38) to the south. Together these traditional-historical buildings in 1995 constituted a major traditional area of townscape with a charming meandering traditional lane (lam) passing through the neighbourhood and binding it together.

In the other ‘arm’ of Shasarzur Lam all other important building complexes (such as buildings ref. 39, 40, 41, 100, 102, 103, and 104), were demolished soon after 1995.

**STATUS 2005**

**Summary of change:** Tsuymo Khangsar in 2005 appeared unaffected by the ongoing adjacent medium-scale housing development. Its private owners had turned down a couple of offers from a major Lhasa property company and the Lhasa Housing Board to sell the building and integrate with a larger housing project.

**Legal status:** The Tsuymo Khangsar property was protected at Municipal level in 1998, and said to remain in private ownership during the life of its present residents and owners. This small traditional building, together with the very few remaining older plots and buildings, could after that potentially be
taken over through compulsory order by the Municipal Government and incorporated with new housing construction.

**Current use:** In 2005 most of the residents were still the same as 10 years ago.

**The building:** No repairs have been carried out at Tsuymo Khangsar since long before 1995. An informal additional roof construction erected by one owner was pulled down (ca 1999) by order of the city government. In 2005 the building appeared increasingly dilapidated. A major upgrading would be needed within a few years for the building to survive.

![Construction work in Shasarzur Lane West; 2003](image)

**CONCLUSIONS**

**Building and setting:** In 2005, only Yabshi Phünkhang and Tsuymo Khangsar were extant of the many traditional-historic buildings in Shasarzur Lam.

**POST-SCRIPT:** Tsuymo Khangsar was demolished in 2006, and the plot integrated with the ongoing larger housing development.

**REFERENCES**

6.5.9 Samding Khangsar Townhouse

Meaning in Tibetan: new house of the Samding monastery (near Yamdruk).
Case category: Townhouse – integrated and transformed.
Maintenance condition and need: traditional repairs
Location: In the middle of Shasarzur, between Shasarzur Lam (west lane) and Mentsikhang Lam.
Building reference: Aufschnaiter: Kha 34; and LHCA: 47.

BUILDING HISTORY

The three-storey main building and two-storey courtyard buildings are believed constructed around 1900, with additions and in-fill (almost one half of the building volume) built as late as in the early 1990s. The overcrowded and badly dilapidated traditional building had clearly not been repaired for several decades. Since the mid-1980s (estimate), Samding Kangsar has been locked in by larger construction lining Mensikhang Lam and Beijing Shar Lam.

STATUS 1995

Site and location: Samding Kangsar is located off the Mentsikhang Lam. The property is accessed from Menstikhang Lam through the entrance gate of a large new building (commercial with housing above).

Legal status: Samding Khangsar was in private ownership up to 1959, then confiscated by the state (in the period 1959-1962 the building owner served a prison sentence and when released moved to India).

Functionality: Samding Khangsar has for several decades been overcrowded by permanent and seasonal residents, all Tibetans – with an estimated population of around 80 persons. The seasonal residents used their accommodation as outlet for trading (carpets and textiles).

The building: The old owner’s house was clearly well built. The new construction was cheaply built in less permanent materials and building methods. Although overcrowded and dilapidated, Samding Kangsar had in parts an interesting interior wooden construction, and had potential for upgrading as decent housing for a smaller rnumber of residents.
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Building and setting: The ‘land-locked’ location of Samding Khangsar made it near impossible to appreciate the qualities of this traditional residential courtyard complex.

STATUS 2005

Summary of change: Samding Khangsar was protected at Municipal level in 1998 and suddenly demolished in April 2002.

The site and the building: The Lhasa Housing Board had then purchased the property as part of the Lhasa City Urban Development Committee project to redevelop the larger area for modern housing. The Samding Khangsar property was integrated with the expanding new 4 storey housing complex (between Mensikhang Lam, Beijing Shar Lam and Shasarzur Lam), and completed in 2004, providing 70 dwelling units for a population of up to 200 persons. The new buildings were constructed in three and four floors, with gallery access in narrow courtyards to the dwelling units, and a single water source/tap in each courtyard to serve all households. As no toilet provision, only a Chinese type public pay-toilet was set up near-by. At least one third of the number of dwelling units were assumed privately purchased (a standard unit of 40-50 m² costing 120,000 – 180,000 Yuan in 2004).

CONCLUSIONS

Building and setting: All traces of the older courtyard building were obliterated the new larger housing project.
Project process: The Samding Khangsar tenants were given five days notice by the Lhasa Housing Board, and as is so often the situations in Lhasa, alternative accommodation was not offered. The purpose of the demolition was to integrate the plot in an already started large scale construction project located between Mentsikhang Lam, Beijing Shar Lam and Shazarsur Lam. The ‘original’ tenants of Samding Khangsar were offered to purchase accommodation in the new buildings, although few if any of them could in the end afford to accept this offer (personal communications with residents). Residents were not compensated for being evicted or a period of alternative accommodation. Samding Khangsar development appear as one of a large number of pragmatically implemented construction projects in Old Lhasa, carried out with little consideration or dialogue with the local residents and community – and as such unsatisfactory in terms of socially responsible urban renewal initiatives.

REFERENCES
THF, (http://www.asianart.com/lhasa_restoration/76houses/index.html#5, accessed 25 Sept 2007);

Fig. 139 The fork of Shasarzur Lam West and East, from junction with Jamyangshar Sanglam; 2003
6.5.10 Jamyang Courtyards Tenement

Meaning in Tibetan: place of soft sound and god’s wisdom.

Case category: Large courtyard tenement – traditional repairs

Maintenance condition and need: traditional repairs

Location: On the south end of Shasarzur, located between Jokhang Temple and Mensikhang Lam on Jamyangshar Sanglam, sufficiently close to Barkor to act as a ‘bridge’ between two neighbourhood environments, inside the area administered by the Shasarzur Street Committee.


BUILDING HISTORY

Much of the Jamyang complex is believed constructed in the 18-19th century, as stables and outbuildings for servants, storage and animals (any exact date of construction remains very uncertain). Through its life, the building complex has most likely seen numerous major changes and additions. The east wing (Jamyang Shar) of this building complex of eight courtyards was demolished in 1992. Most of the top floor across all courtyards was reconstructed in 2000 with loss of much historic material.

Fig. 140 Jamyang Courtyards is shown in yellow circle.

STATUS 1995

Site and location: Jamyang is located on Jamyangshar Sanglam, north of Barkor, separated from Jokhang Square only by narrow strip of recent construction.

Legal status: Owned by Lhasa government and administered by the Shasarzur Neighbourhood Committee.

Functionality: Of the between 200 and 300 persons with 94 families living here as ‘official’ population, only 5 to 10 were Han-Chinese, the remainder all Tibetans (visual estimate). In addition, Jamyang had a significant informal, seasonal population, many of who rented in the informal sub-let housing section.

The building: Jamyang is a unique extensive eight-courtyard buildings-complex originally erected as stables with servants quarters above serving adjacent major residential buildings (unknown which), and one
of very few remaining larger tenement buildings in Old Lhasa.

Jamyang courtyard buildings, constructed in mainly 3 and 2 storeys with courtyards of varying size, were in varying states of dilapidation (from severe to medium) as a consequence of long term overcrowding and little investment in maintenance and repairs.

**Building and setting:** Jamyang is located in an area with increasing demolition of traditional buildings and much new construction.

**STATUS 2005**

**Summary of change:** With the demolition and new construction accelerating through the decade 1995-2005, Jamyang was already in 2000 the only extant 18th century residential tenement building complex
(with 19th-20th century additions) in Old Lhasa – and thus the only extant larger undeveloped traditional-historical assembly of interlinked courtyard structures inside the Barkor buffer zone.

**Legal status:** The property was protected at Municipal level in 1998. Jamyang is a residential property in government ownership and administered by the Shazarsur Street Committee.

**Current use:** The resident population was estimated (by a resident) to about 100 families or 350 to 450 persons (other residents’ estimates were considerably higher; my own lower at maximum 200 to 250 persons), with still only a very small number of non-Tibetans. The uncertainty on resident population could have stemmed from different understanding of temporary and permanent residents. Incidentally, the informal housing sector on average in the study period 1995-2005 seems to have been commanding rents of up to 10 times those of the official, regulated housing market.

**The building:** Extensive repairs were carried out 1998-2000 by ‘Tibet Heritage Fund’ (THF), activity that was subsequently taken over by Lhasa government through the Lhasa Cultural Relics Bureau and Lhasa Housing Bureau, and completed in 2001. With numerous smaller repairs projects and additions carried out in good quality traditional construction, the complex was in 2005 generally in very good condition – with none of earlier threatened major transformations (demolition and reconstruction, 1996-98) implemented.

![Fig. 144 Jamyang Courtyards Tenement: view along Jamyangshar Sanglam; 2003](image)
Jamyang has repeatedly been added to and repaired over the recent decades, but always with respect given to the character and scale of the traditional environment of the old town.

CONCLUSIONS

Building and setting: Jamyang remains an essential traditional ‘building block’ within the rapidly transforming urban morphology of Old Lhasa.

Project process: The traditional construction repairs implemented at this property illustrate the positive impacts of gradual upgrading of traditional built form, achieving good housing at a small level of investment.

Postscript

The Jamyang Courtyards complex was in 2010 reported demolished and awaiting larger new construction.

REFERENCES

6.5.11 Shide Dratsang Monastery

Meaning in Tibetan: monastery of peace and good health; alternatively as Shi means the number 4 in Tibetan this could refer to its early founding as one of four (?) protector temples – see below.

Case category: Monastery
Maintenance condition and need: Original, in ruins, ‘incidental’ repairs, needs of traditional repairs
Location: inside the Tsomonling neighbourhood, north of Beijing Shar Lam.

BUILDING HISTORY

Shide Dratsang (monastery) is considered to be one of the six protector temples built around the ‘lha’sa’ sanctuary or Tsuklakhang (Jokhang cathedral) by King Tri Ralpachen whose reign was 815-836 CE (possibly only four monastic communities were initially founded).

Shide, said to have been located on the kora around Ramoche, served as custodian of the ancient Ramoche Temple and was known as Ramoche-Shide (not verified).

‘Shi’ meaning four in Tibetan, the name Shide may originate from an earlier and much reduced building complex compared to today: in the 9th century the monastic institution accommodated 4 monks only, or alternatively, Shide was one of four ‘original’ monastic communities, or again its name may refer to the layout of its major complex – the large quadrangle.

Shide that was destroyed by King Longdarma (reigned 836-842 CE), was relocated to its present location and in the mid-1200s constructed to accommodate about 20 monks (1239-1250 CE).

With a chequered history, the community of monks soon relocated to the Ramoche (13th century CE). Much later (18th century CE) Shide became associated with, and the Lhasa seat and residence of, the Reting ‘tulku’ (incarnate lama; more than ten Reting reincarnations have been abbots here).

Shide’s present form and character was, however, a result of its expansion in 1816. The Shide monastic community received increased attention when the Reting Lama
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became Regent of Tibet in 1845 (the Regents had been associated with Reting Monastery since the mid-1700s).

Severely damaged in 1862, Shide was gradually repaired, with some major reconstruction already in 1865. Severely damaged by fire in 1912, extensive repairs were carried out only in 1935. The fall from power of the last Reting in the 1940s seems not to have affected the monastic community of Shide. Until 1959 Shide’s population counted 300-400 monks. After 1959, Shide was closed and stripped of contents, and the TAR Opera Troupe occupied the courtyard buildings until Shide was taken over by Cultural Revolution factions some time soon after 1966 – at which time the temple was vandalised, finally collapsing in 1989. The Shide courtyard buildings were taken over for public housing in 1984. Most of the extensive Shide monastery gardens, with the Lama’s summer house Shide Drokhang (LHCA 253), was in 1995 redeveloped for housing.

STATUS 1995

Site and location: Located adjacent to (directly west of) Tsomonling Monastery the Shide Dratsang property was in Aufschnaiter’s Lhasa survey of 1948 split into more than one plots.
Legal status: As a property still partly under the jurisdiction, ownership and administered by the National Religious Organisation, Shide Dratsang had a level of protection not offered to vernacular traditional-historical buildings. Protection level was not known, but assumed to be regional level. The main monastery complex, with the gompa (Tsepha Lakhang) is owned by Ramoche Monastery. The residential complex (courtyard and courtyard buildings) is Lhasa municipal government property and administered by the Lhasa Housing Bureau.

Functionality: In 1995 Shide Dratsang was populated by about 80 families, estimated to about 400 persons, living in very low standard accommodation – about one half of them were informal seasonal tenants in accommodation sub-let at high rents by Lhasa-registered residents (the residents with Lhasa-hukuo were allowed a very low rent by the Lhasa Housing Board).

The building: The Shide complex consists of a central 5-storey ‘du-khang’ building, to the east flanked by a three-storey former Reting Labrang. The two-storey courtyard buildings accommodated monks dormitories (dra-sha). The monastery ‘gompa’ was built in very high quality stonework over five storeys. Doors and windows were marked with richly carved ‘surrounds’, inside the gompa was richly decorated with wall murals, decorative painting and richly carved construction components. The two-storey outbuildings line the three sides of an unusually large courtyard facing the gompa, and were in a decent standard traditional construction. The enclosing walls of Shide Dratsang marked an area as large as 70 meters by 100 meters. Shide has been described as a typical example of Lhasa dratsangs of the mid-18th to late 19th century period. ‘The Temples of Lhasa’ give an interesting and detailed account of the building complex (Alexander, 2005). The impressive central monastery building complex had in 1995 long collapsed, and was by this author considered to be beyond rescue except through a full
reconstruction. Numerous informal constructions had been added inside the courtyard, adding ‘living space’ for numerous households living here (registered and informal residents).

**Building and setting:** In 1995 Shide Dratsang was part of an area of traditional townscape that was exerted to increasing urban development pressures.

![Google Earth image of Shide Dratsang Monastery and Tsomonling Monastery](image1)

**STATUS 2005**

**Summary of change:** In 2005 about one dozen monks transferred to Shide from Ramoche (Shide is still under the jurisdiction of Ramoche) to repair and rebuild the Shide Dratsang religious buildings. Repairs were by 2006 completed to the former Reting Labrang building east of the gompa. Repairs and reconstruction have not been attempted to the main monastery buildings since the monastery was closed or evacuated may have resulted principally from a combination of ownership and development issues (state versus monastery), and lack of resources (from Ramoche Monastery and the state).

**Current use:** In 2005 Shide’s residential population was about 65 families or 250-300 persons; more than two thirds were families who have lived at Shide for less than 10 years.

**The building:** In early 2003 all tenants at Shide had been evicted and full repairs of the courtyard buildings was started, and wee completed in 2005 by a Lhasa contracting company. This allowed a number of ‘original’ tenants to move back, but at rents 5-10 times the previous. With all informal constructions demolished the upgrading of the courtyard buildings took unusually long for construction
work in Old Lhasa, due to complex contractual negotiations between Lhasa Housing Board and the contractor.

CONCLUSIONS

**Building and setting:** Shide Dratsang in 2005 presented an optimistic case of upgrading traditional built form of the highest architectural, cultural and functional value to Lhasa.

**REFERENCES**


POSTSCRIPT

In 2010 it was reported that Shide Dratsang again had become severely dilapidated, and that nothing had been done to repair or reconstruct the Tsepha Lakhang (main gompa).
6.5.12 Yabshi Takster Manor

Meaning in Tibetan: home of the Dalai Family family, named after Takster, their village in East Tibet.
Case category: Courtyard house
Maintenance condition and need: traditional repairs; upgraded by traditional repairs
Location: a large corner property on Beijing Shar Lam and Nyangdren Lho Lam

BUILDING HISTORY

Yabshi Takster was around 1940 built as the Lhasa residence for the parents and family of the 14th Dalai Lama. Expropriated by the government after 1959, the property with extensive gardens was gradually parcelled out to public sector work units (danweis) and developed.

STATUS 1995

Site and location: Takster was originally (1940s) located adjacent to the Potala Palace, and is today separated from this complex by the ‘Post-Office and Bus Station urban block (Kharngadong), on the north side of Beijing Shar Lam.

Legal status: Owned by the TAR government and operated by a public sector work unit as a government guesthouse.

Functionality: With the main building as a government guesthouse, the courtyard buildings serve as housing for staff and are let to tenants. As the majority of the property is partitioned and allocated various work units, it is unclear how much area still ‘belongs’ to Yabshi Takster Manor.

The building: The main three storey stone building and two-storey courtyard buildings lining the large courtyard are typical of high standard traditional Tibetan construction, although bland in their architectural expression and treatment of details as a result of its late construction and later changes.

Building and setting: The large property ‘bridged’ the old town with the Potala-Shöl complex north of the Yuthok meadows, its northern boundary following an old passageway or lane. The parcelling of the property for numerous recent constructions, from aerials seen to have started before 1965, can be interpreted as an official move to reduce the spiritual-symbolic importance that this particular Yabshi
property would have to traditional Tibetans, it is nevertheless recognised that the main building has been retained.

**STATUS 2005**

*Summary of change:* Yabshi Takster in 2005 bears little mark of significant changes, and is locked in by commercial development along its perimeter as well as in its immediate vicinity.

*Legal status:* Despite (or because of) its cultural and historic importance, Yabshi Takster is not protected at any level.

*Current use:* It is still used as a government guesthouse, and reasonably well looked after.

**CONCLUSIONS**

**Building, setting and ‘process’**: The Yabshi Takster has been ‘obliterated’ from the surface of Old Lhasa, its cultural and historic values downplayed, also to the benefit of realising its full potential as commercial property.

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![Fig. 156 Yabshi Takster: ground floor plan](image)

![Fig. 157 Yabshi Takster Manor: view from outside the building complex, looking towards Marpori with the Potala Palace; 1994](image)
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Fig. 158 Yabshi Takster Manor: the property surveyed with adjoining plots; Peter Aufschnaiter, 1948

REFERENCES
6.5.13 Yuthok Zampa

Meaning in Tibetan: bridge with turquoise roof
Case category: Historic structure
Maintenance condition and need: traditional repairs. The structure is today transformed
Location: West of Jokhang Square, and south of Yuthok Tseshing urban block.

BUILDING HISTORY

A bridge structure is believed to have been constructed here already in the 7th century CE. With several major reconstructions Yuthok Zampa changed through the centuries – historic evidence (written sources) state that the structure was reconstructed several times, including the reconstruction of its roof during the 5th Dalai Lama’s reign, around 1650 CE. The new or reconstructed Chinese roof then possibly gave the structure its popular name ‘Turquoise Bridge’ because of its bright coloured roof tiles (the turquoise roof tiles may have been brought to Lhasa as late as after Tibet’s war with Bhutan 1710 and again 1729-1735 CE; personal communications, not verified).

The bridge, a 28 meter long construction (as it appears in its present form), was located on the main ceremonial and practical route between Chakpori-Marpori (and the Potala Palace) and the Jokhang Temple. This diagonal lane through meadows and marshy land, crossing the ‘Yuthok Brook’ on the long bridge west of the entrance gate to the old town, was used until quite recent times (1960s). Some time after 1959 (early 1960s), the marshland was laid dry and subsequently built on.

The bridge was considered functionless and left to decay until the structure was dismantled in 1993 and ‘restored’ or rather reconstructed as a ‘replica’ of the original soon after this. At this time the older stone foundations were exchanged with new in reinforced concrete, and all timber constructions replaced with new (personal communications with national agency representatives). After several hard reconstructions it is unlikely that any trace of the believed origin of the 7th century structure may exist.
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STATUS 1995

Site and location: Yuthok Zampa is today located in a small concrete-lawn square on the south side of Yuthok Lam, west of Jokhang Square, and almost entirely enclosed by new commercial buildings.

Legal status: Yuthok Zampa is not a legally protected structure, and is 'owned' by a commercial work unit.

Current use: In 1995 Yuthok Zampa was used as a restaurant and shop. The recent 'restoration' gave the structure for the first time its present enclosed form.

Building and setting: Already in 1995 the Yuthok Zampa was closely built-in by non-distinct modern construction architecturally and environmentally all together out of context with the visually open setting and the assumed history of this important historic structure.

STATUS 2005

Summary of change: Yuthok Zampa has since 1995 seen different usage as shop, café and billiards room. The modern buildings surrounding the site to three sides – and across the street – were constructed after 1995 are unpleasant, high and bulky.

Legal status: The Yuthok Zampa appears to be without any protection, despite its historical origins and remains.

CONCLUSIONS

Building, setting and project process:

Yuthok Zampa is by educated Tibetans considered to describe the western limit of historical Lhasa. The overall handling of the historical structure and its surroundings is seen as inappropriate for one of the earliest constructions in Lhasa (although not verified, so conjecture). The reconstruction process (1993)
is not seen to have respected the still extant characteristics and remaining values (historical materials, tangible and intangible cultural-symbolic values) or its unique setting.

Fig. 163 Yuthok Zampa: as jewellery shop, snooker gallery or cafe, and surrounded by commercial buildings; 2002

REFERENCES
Tibet Heritage Fund: http://www.tibetheritagefund.org/database/php/ (accessed 24 Aug 2006);
6.6 Buildings cases sum

**Trapsishar**

The modest traditional townhouse, located next to the Jokhang Temple at the ‘start’ of Barkor Street, was in 1998 saved from demolition through a repairs and upgrading initiative by the NGO ‘Tibet Heritage Fund’. The initiative was considered controversial by the Lhasa Municipal Government and constituted the essential first pilot upgrading activity of traditional non-protected buildings owned by the street committee and housing ‘ordinary’ Old Lhasa residents. The Trapsishar project was instrumental in terms of in-situ testing methods of building conservation and craft skills training in Old Lhasa, and illustrated how traditional buildings as part of the fabric of the historic town could provide decent housing at a reasonable cost to ‘original’ tenants, in addition to contributing to retaining the unique streetscape and fabric of the historic town.

**Tromsikhang Manor**

Tromsikhang Palace Manor, protected at Regional level (not confirmed protected at national level), has been a major historical-cultural ‘institution’ in Lhasa since it was constructed in the late 17th century. The Tromsikhang reconstruction 1997-98 could potentially – and in my understanding wrongly – be perceived as a case of ‘grass-roots’ or ‘bottom-up’ community initiative in Old Lhasa, and to illustrate the potentials of ‘local power’ and ‘civil society’. In reality, ‘Tromsikhang’ confirmed the ‘top-down’ process implemented by government throughout all levels of society in Lhasa – in meeting the objectives of the ‘Lhasa 1980-2000 Development Plan’ as well as the ‘restoration’ principles of the ‘Barkor 1992 Conservation Plan’.

The transformation of Tromsikhang confirmed a policy whereby unique built heritage became the easy victim of pragmatic urban development. The building layout adopted transformed a former palace with outbuildings from a repairable major historical building complex into a standard high density housing block with little connection to traditions of Tibetan built form, identity or history. As far as can be ascertained, no investigations and documentation of the buildings and site (urban archaeology) were carried out or attempted before the extensive demolition and reconstruction took place.

The part demolition of the historical building complex illustrated the power of an Old Lhasa street committee (Tromsikhang) entering into direct dialogue with the municipal-regional political leadership to redevelop a major protected property – referring to aims and approved principles of a clearly unsatisfactory official conservation plan, the Barkor Conservation Plan 1992. Despite protests to national, regional and municipal authorities by local and external interests (including my own contacts to central government representatives in Lhasa and Beijing) the reconstruction project was implemented as approved locally by TAR and Lhasa City authorities.
Meru Nyingpa

The Meru Nyingpa monastery complex (protected at TAR regional level) was the first large traditional-historical building complex in Old Lhasa to be repaired – besides the national level declared monuments of Jokhang Temple, Potala Palace and Norbulingka. An initiative by THF, the Meru Nyingpa project illustrated how the essential on-site training in traditional crafts and building methods could be accomplished and stimulate further ‘traditional skills’ knowledge building and engagement. The upgraded courtyard outbuildings have provided good and much needed housing.

The project contributed significantly to raising skills of the Lhasa Cultural Relics Bureau activity in repair and restoration of traditional-historical buildings. It also contributed awareness of the value of built heritage within the Lhasa government. Meru Nyingpa has remained a central component in the sacred geography in Lhasa, as a place of devotion for locals and pilgrims on a daily basis as well as during permitted annual religious festivals.

Labrang Nyingpa

Amidst rumours of demolition (late 1990s), this historical building owned by a major work unit, was instead repaired and upgraded by the Lhasa Municipal Government. Providing residential accommodation to many families, Labrang Nyingpa plays a major role in the Barkor townscape, located opposite Pomdatsang Manor in the culturally most important street in Old Lhasa where most historical-traditional buildings were demolished before 1990.

Pomdatsang Manor

The Pomdatsang Manor repairs and upgrading project provided insight into the ‘standard’ project development process adopted by the Lhasa government for Old Lhasa buildings. The project illustrated how traditional buildings could be retained for housing in a triangle of positive cooperation between public authorities, a private owner and an experienced traditional building contractor – despite the ‘inevitable’ gentrification taking place in terms of new ‘better-off’ residents pushing out the earlier residents. The Pomdatsang Manor project proved that traditional high quality building contractors still existed in Lhasa – with resources and experience to handle ‘repairs- restoration’ and upgrading at the level of complexity of Pomdatsang. In 2008 Pomdatsang Manor was emptied in preparation for upgrading as a boutique hotel.

Shatra Manor

Shatra Manor was in 2005 the last remaining and ‘intact’ courtyard manor in Old Lhasa – not reconstructed or transformed for other use. Although overused in terms of its number of residents, a
lack of major upgrading or change initiatives, and an established ownership may have contributed to ‘a more stable resident environment’ at Shatra Manor than indicated in most other Old Lhasa case surveys. The quality, ‘authenticity of fabric’ and uniqueness of the Shatra Manor complex warrant its immediate protection and repair action by the authorities. In 2010 Shatra Manor was reported emptied of residents and awaiting ‘upgrading’ as a ‘boutique hotel’.

**Gorkha Nyingba**

In 1995 Gorkha Nyingba was one of very few extant courtyard manor structures, representing a typology unique in Lhasa with a main ‘freestanding’ building surrounded by courtyard structures to all four sides. The complex possessed a high level of material and intangible authenticity. The Gorkha Nyingpa transformation should raise questions with Lhasa authorities as regards objectives, standards and appropriateness of the official ‘Old Lhasa project development process’ (see appendix) as this seems only to concern the pragmatic project management aspect of urban conservation and not its development-and-change dimensions. The project indicated how traditional and unique built heritage could in Lhasa be easily ‘upgraded’ with little or no advice, dialogue or corrective action from the government agencies responsible.

**Tsuymo Khangsar**

The small and ‘ordinary’ traditional building in the middle of Shasarzur West lane played the role of ‘anchor’ in a transforming streetscape – retaining the presence of disappearing traditional built form here. Tsuymo Khangsar was demolished in 2005 and replaced with larger residential construction and absorbed into the larger urban block housing development. This has meant the loss of a unique traditional structure (only one now remaining) and has negatively affected the overall heritage value of the Shasarzur neighbourhood.

**Samding Khangsar**

Although already enclosed by the construction that resulted from the construction of Mentsikhang lam (1960s), the traditional property through the 1990s formed part of ‘incidental’ townscape prevalent in Old Lhasa. Demolition of Samding Khangsar illustrated the goal of increasing the housing volume at the expense of extant historic structures. My own visual surveys of the property well before the demolition indicated that Samding Khangsar at relatively low costs could have been repaired to provide decent traditional housing.

**Jamyang Courtyards**

The Jamyang Courtyards complex, an integral part of the traditional-historical fabric of the Jokhang-
Barkor World Heritage buffer zone, was by 2000 the only large traditional residential complex, or tenement extant in Old Lhasa. The traditional repairs and building methods used for regular step-by-step maintenance of Jamyang, illustrated that traditional buildings could simply provide good quality housing. A major reconstruction of the complex (demolition and new construction) that could provide more housing units would be detrimental to the traditional townscape remaining in the zone between Shasarzur and Barkor Street neighbourhoods. The Jamyang Courtyards complex was demolished in 2010, to be replaced with larger housing construction.

Shide Dratsang
The culturally, historically and architecturally important Shide Dratsang monastery fell into disrepair after 1960. Its dilapidated condition in 1995 was partly a result of early vandalism (1960s and 70s), overuse (excessive numbers of residents), and lack of maintenance. Recent efforts by monks from the ‘owning’ monastery are proof of the potential of incremental repairs for such traditional and fragile structures. Shide Dratsang if restored with sensitivity towards its unique inherent values (tangible and intangible), could constitute a model project for Old Lhasa and provide a unique oasis cherished by residents, visitors and monastic community alike.

Yabshi Takster
With impacts of several categories the yabshi appears to have largely disappeared from the memory and consciousness of Tibetans in Lhasa. Expropriated by the government soon after the 1959 uprising the property was repeatedly divided. The new street layout ‘isolated’ the property as modern buildings were constructed in front along the streets, making Yabshi Takster invisible to all who did not know it from before.

Yuthok Zampa
The historical bridge structure across a small stream, with lanes and adjacent orchards represented significant intangible and tangible dimensions of Tibetan society and heritage. The bridge and lane provided an essential link between vital power points – the Potala Palace, the Jokhang Temple Monastery and the Lhasa historic settlement structure. This described a historical cultural landscape seen as integral with intellectual religious life and functionality in Lhasa. Yuthok Zampa further marked a border-zone between Old Lhasa as formal settlement and the larger cultural landscape that surrounded the town. Yuthok Zampa as cultural heritage was never protected at any level although said to have been constructed in the 17th century CE with elements of construction dated to the 11th century CE and earlier (informal communications, TU and TASS). The ‘conservation’ of Yuthok Zampa confirmed an unfortunate heritage management policy by municipal and regional authorities (Lhasa and TAR levels)
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that ignored obvious aspects of material and intangible (processional) authenticity, functionality and setting of the well documented historical structure (several historic written sources) – merely to the benefits of conventional property development. In this, cultural, historical, symbolic and material values were lost. Ability and willingness to learn from the case of Yuthok Zampa would be essential if the operational urban conservation policy in Lhasa is to be strengthened.
6.7 Neighbourhood casestudies

Main topics of neighbourhoods investigations were:

i) conditions and overall impacts of change to built form and character;

ii) change to territorial issues of neighbourhoods with built heritage

Issues concerning the World Heritage designated areas in Lhasa are dealt with separately.

6.7.1 The neighbourhoods

The Neighbourhoods were selected to represent the conditions: a) the core of historic Lhasa (Barkor World Heritage site), b) an edge or fringe zone between old and new townscape (Shasarzur neighbourhood located outside Barkor and inside the World Heritage buffer zone), and c) earlier cultural landscape recently absorbed by modern townscape (Yuthok Tseshing was located in the ‘geographic centre’ of pre-1950 Lhasa, and was after 1960 gradually absorbed by urban development).

One of each neighbourhood category was selected and investigated to record townscape change (neighbourhoods and urban form). A thematic description was made of each neighbourhood related to status, condition and characteristics at the start and the end of the study period.

Table 6.7.1.A Neighbourhoods with category, ‘original’ use and 1995 status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category and Area, Neighbourhood</th>
<th>‘Original’ use</th>
<th>General status 1995</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ii) Edge-fringe zone to old-new townscape – b) Shasarzur</td>
<td>Traditional residentl neighbourhood.</td>
<td>Traditional-historical buildings of varying size,age, standards and architectural quality on gravel lanes; Important buffer to Barkor district</td>
<td>29 hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii) Cultural landscape land recently absorbed by townscape – c) Yuthok Tseshing</td>
<td>Cultural landscape to townscape</td>
<td>Cultural landscape integral with historical Lhasa with some courtyard manors, gardens and orchards. Important historical traces &amp; layers.</td>
<td>29 hectares</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The gross area investigated was estimated to about 75 hectares or 0.75 sq.km.

The three study areas formed a crooked ‘slice’ of significant although discontinued or disrupted historical urban landscape that stretched from the heart of Old Lhasa (the ‘lha-sa’ or Jokhang sanctuary) to the Potala Palace Historic Ensemble World Heritage site on Marpori. Illustration, categories
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Table 6.7.1.B Schedule of neighbourhood issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Barkor</th>
<th>Shasarzur</th>
<th>Yuthok Tseshing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i) Conservation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>(X)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) World Heritage issues - site and buffer zone</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>(X)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii) Traditional/historical structures new</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>construction and fill-up affecting individual plots and individual neighbourhood character</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv) Traditional/historical structures smaller plots integrated into large construction projects affecting neighbourhood built form.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v) Commercialisation and tourism</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi) Infrastructure and external spaces</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii) Modern non-traditional townscape</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii) Neo-Tibetan elevations treatment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(X)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ix) Ethnic 'character'</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X issue considered relevant and important to the neighbourhood (direct), and (X) neighbourhood affected by the issue (indirect).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Areas of streetscape linking the neighbourhoods were in part documented, namely: Beijing Shar Lam between Ramoche lam and Shöö; Kamgadong lam – Yuthok Lam – Jokhang Square (to Jokhang Temple entrance); and Dosenge lam and Mentsikhang lam.

Fig. 164 Lhasa (1995) within Lingkor: map by the LHCA Project
Fig. 165 Lhasa: neighbourhood numbers and names - see attached schedule; 2006

**Map ref Name of street or neighbourhood committee:**

1. Barkor, inside Barkor Street  
2. Shasarzur  
3. Tromsikhang  
4. Khyira  
5. Banakshol  
6. Kharidong Drokhang  
7. Shatrom  
8. Wabaling  
9. Rabsel  
10. Deling  
11. Lubbo  
12. Yuthok Tseshing  
13. Lubub Nagher  
14. TAR Government / First Military Command  
   (south), Potala Square and Park (north)
15. not known  
16. ditto  
17. Shōi village with the Potala Palace above Lukhang Park, with Lukhang Lake and Lukhang Temple  
18. Kharangadong  
19. Yabshi Takster  
20. Tangsebling  
21. Tsomorling  
22. Ramoche  
23. Jebungang  
24. Gyume-Meru  
25. Mensikhang (south) with Dengjeling (north, to Beijing Shar Lam)

Fig. 166 Neighbourhoods in the Lhasa central area (from West Gate including the historical townscape (Old Lhasa)) informal translation for the author; 2007
6.7.1 Barkor

Meaning in Tibetan: ‘middle kora or circumambulation route’ to the Jokhang sanctuary.

Case category: The historic core (kernel) of Lhasa.

Area: a) Inside Barkor Street, also Jokhang-Barkor WH site: approx 4.5 ha; b) Barkor as case area: approx 14 ha; c) Barkor as describing Old Lhasa: approx 125 ha or 1.25 km².

Location: Barkor is the geographic and spiritual heart of Lhasa historic settlement as this developed and grew around the 7th century ‘lha-sa’ sanctuary (Jokhang Temple Monastery). Centred on and surrounding the historic core, Old Lhasa is defined by Barkor Street. The larger central part of the historic settlement is commonly referred to as Barkor. Jokhang Temple Monastery is the focus and Barkor Street defines the Barkor neighbourhood. The Old Lhasa townscape up to Beijing Shar Lam is normally referred to as the Barkor area. The official demarcation of Barkor as area is seen to vary in official Chinese documents, as are also the World Heritage designated property and buffer zone.

Fig. 167 Barkor with Jokhang Temple and Jokhang Square (SACH, 1993)

Unless otherwise referenced, the following is based on the author’s visual surveys from 1995 onwards.

BACKGROUND

Describing Old Lhasa and Barkor, one would preferably start with recognising its ‘heart’ – the ‘lha-sa’ sanctuary, today Jokhang Temple Monastery, the holiest temple in Tibetan Buddhism – and then physically and spiritually try to approach this ‘heart’ in the pilgrim’s tradition. If done before 1950, this would mean embracing a typical Lhasa morning by first walking Lingkor, the outer kora that followed the outer perimeter of the settlement. Possibly coming towards the historical town from the northern side – and before arriving Ramoche Temple one would glimpse the major monastic institutions of Shide and
Tsomonling across extensive meadows. At Ramoche, in a landscape of still open meadows, one would look across to Gyume and Muru. Passing close by Bönsho Manor, the kora would in a wide arc turn towards the south. When reaching the Banakshol area, *Lingkor East*, one would wander along and inside townscape until the Lubu area in the south-west was left behind (in Lubu, the Chinese Ambans estate was located). At that point, some might have made a short-cut to Barkor Street, others continuing Lingkor South along the river towards Chakpori and the climb and ‘loop’ onwards to where one started the kora.

After a complete circuit of Lingkor and then of Tsekor (the Potala or Marpori kora) one would enter the holy city itself, and advance to Barkor, the middle kora. This kora should ideally be circumambulated three times – circumambulating holy objects (settlement, temple or holy object), burning incense, leaving offerings and performing religious rituals considered as merit-building for one’s next life. Many would be well satisfied with circling Barkor once.

Only then would the Jokhang complex itself be entered. By now it would be late morning, almost lunchtime. Before reaching the sacred Jowo image in Jokhang’s innermost chapel, shorter interior koras would be completed slowly, and numerous rituals performed.

In a dimly lit, smoke-filled interior filled with smells of incense, burning butter lamps and people – and groups of seated, chanting monks – would be hundreds of believers, colourful Tibetan pilgrims and locals from all walks of life – wandering from chapel to chapel whispering mantras, occupied only with themselves. Deep religious devotion, hope of salvation and sense of humility would permeate the moment. A morning at Jokhang Temple makes an unforgettable impression, whether you are a faithful or merely an occasional visitor.

In parallel with this nearly tactile manifestation of religious devotion would be present elements that constituted risks to people and buildings – dangers of accident, panic, fire or even structural collapse – all events that are tragically experienced and documented at Jokhang through time.

Today such a morning would be different in several respects. Not so much the last part of the journey inside Old Lhasa, but the start along new ‘rectilinear’ *Lingkor*, amidst the growing din of urban traffic and people hurrying elsewhere.
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BARKOR AROUND 1950

The land use and functionality in the Barkor area (Aufschnaiter, 1948) was split between: i) Monastic institutions, ii) Government institutions, iii) Commercial, iv) Residential, v) Public open space including streets – ‘spiritual space for circumambulation and accommodating smaller holy structures such as chortens, incense burners and tachens – and vi) informal space (between buildings), flood control areas, and gardens.

Aufschnaiter (1948) identified in all 52 plots or properties inside Barkor Street, much of the area absorbed by the Jokhang complex. Within a ‘ring’ of plan-units– the area here taken to mark the central Barkor area – Aufschnaiter documented property boundaries and ownerships of another 104 plots.

Old Lhasa as urban structure was a part dense and part open web of public, semi-public and private space. Traditions by which major owners along a street or lane would take responsibility for ‘upkeep’ and clearing of ‘their own’ public external spaces had by the 1950s largely disappeared (Snellgrove and Richardson, 1995) – traditionally the house-owners and residents in a lane would look after shared public-semi-private spaces, much in the same manner that residents would in the enclosed ‘jiefang’ of towns in China and in the controlled ‘muhallahs’ of a Muslim settlement.

The townhouse courtyards were often base for busy business activity. Despite a degree of control on access and use, I have interpreted this as semi-private space. ‘Real’ private space is interpreted to have existed only in the interior courtyards and inside private buildings, or in the form of enclosed gardens.

To have one’s residence on the inside of Barkor Street was – and is – regarded as highly auspicious in terms of one’s personal closeness to Jokhang and the Jowo image – this is assumed also to have been the case in pre-17th century Lhasa. This is assume to have made central core or kernel (‘Inside Barkor’) denser than other parts of Lhasa, and provided little expansion potential already in the early 20th century (Cowie and Ryder, 1904; Aufschnaiter, 1948). The Barkor area is characterised by its diversity of traditional buildings of varied height (1, 2 and 3 storeys, as marked on the 1985-1987 Ordnance Surveys), size and appearance – but all respecting the tradition that kept them visually below the Jokhang Temple, and all within the vocabulary of Tibetan architecture. Narrow lanes between tight clusters of buildings characterised the area inside and outside Barkor Street. Outside the kora, however, lanes and passage ways were wider, made for a busy and less dense urban settlement, but still intended for people and pack-animals only.
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BARKOR IN 1995

Landuse and functionality - Different from 1948, the Barkor area principal landuse categories were in 1995 i) Monastic institutions, iii) Commercial, iv) Residential, and v) Public space. The main differences were that ‘Government institutions’ were relocated, ‘Public space’ was ‘augmented’ and ‘Informal space’ significantly reduced.

i) Monastic institutions - During the 1950s, the government (‘kashag’)-functions were relocated from historic locations at the Jokhang, Potala Palace and Shöl to a purpose built walled government compound in the southern part of the Shugtri Lingka facing Marpori Hill and the Potala Palace.

ii) Commercial land use – Barkor Street, in common with other Buddhist (and Hindu) settlements constitutes a combined religious processional route and main market street. Respondents have told of several ‘formal’ markets (4-5) established within the Barkor area from the 17th century onwards, but none of Barkor’s importance. Reports from the early 20th century told that everything from diamonds to elephants could be bought here (Snellgrove and Richardson, 1995). In 1995 mainly daily goods and large volumes of traditional cultural and religious objects were offered locals, pilgrims and visitors.
Most ground level of buildings facing Barkor Street and side streets were in 1995 used as shops. Continuous rows of light-weight street-vendor stalls were daily set up along Barkor Street, the majority of shops and temporary stalls (at least ¾) appearing owned and run by Tibetans (author’s visual survey 1995) – the rest split between Nepali-, Hui-Muslim and Han-Chinese traders (some non-Tibetan families were said to have lived in Lhasa since the 1700s).

iii) Residential land use – A majority of Old Lhasa’s population were living in overcrowded, unsanitary and little serviced buildings. An estimated one quarter was accommodated in temporary shelters inside courtyards, on galleries and on rooftops, often built in non-permanent materials. ‘Inside Barkor’ in 1995 suffered like the rest of the historic settlement from extensive overcrowding and building dilapidation, but less than areas from informal constructions.

iv) Public space – By 1995 a noticeable densification of the historic settlement had started, by which spatially more ‘generous’ traditional properties were demolished for larger new housing projects. Public and semiprivate space was on the downturn, countered only by the recent Jokhang Square (1987). Barkor Street was ‘as always’ thronged with the daily circling of faithfuls and shoppers – most of them being both.

**Major institutions and use of space** – Inside Barkor, and in the Barkor area as a whole, the Jokhang complex constituted the major space user (about 3 ha of 4.5 ha), with the Jokhang Square as the second larger single spatial unit. The other major ‘public’ facility although physically small was the Barkor Post Office on Barkor South. The vast majority of construction (ground cover and gross built area) was used for housing. Commercial use was in 1995 estimated as equally split (ground level area) between building interiors and street market stalls.
Religious sites in 1995 in the Barkor area – in all 18 Buddhist and 2 Muslim sites – together represented a major landuse and functionality.

**Built form** – To protect the traditional-historical townscape was also on this author’s first visit to Lhasa (1994) recognised as an urgent action (of cultural, historical and architectural high importance) for Lhasa and Tibetan – as for China. Townscape inside Barkor as well as outside, in 1995 most likely represented the nearest to ‘original’ urban form and built form traditions to be found anywhere in Central Tibet, and characterised almost without exception by a tightly knit web of traditional buildings on narrow lanes.

For the neighbourhood case studies, built form is described in terms of

a) ‘Individual structures’ – buildings, and

Outside Barkor Street, lanes and passage ways were wider than in ‘inside’ Barkor. A few lanes provided vehicular access, all others remained at a comfortable scale for people and pack-animals (although the latter had admittedly long disappeared). In 1995 the Barkor streets, lanes and external spaces were unpaved, and outside Barkor Street expansive pools of stagnant sewage- and groundwater were common and resulting from a high water table, faulty surface and sanitation drainage with seepage of sewage into the drinking-water supply.

**Individual structures** – In the area defined as Barkor for the purpose of this case study (map), of in all 80 registered traditional-historical buildings, a total of 49 were protected, 45 at Municipal Level, 3 at Regional Level, with 1 (Jokhang Temple Monastery) at National Level (map illustration). Of the total, 39 traditional-historical buildings were located ‘inside’ Barkor (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001). A majority of traditional-historical buildings inside and outside Barkor Street were in 1995 in an advanced state of dilapidation, also the few building complexes formally defined as monuments.

Most structures were considered to have definite repair- and upgrading potential (LHCA project and the author’s visual surveys, 1995-1998) although a considerable number of them in the Barkor area were demolished well before— from the mid-1980s onwards.

The Jokhang- and Potala-Shöl complexes in 1995 constituted the exception to an apparent ‘no-maintenance policy’ in historical Lhasa, as the two National Level protected sites were by the early 1990s focus of extensive repairs and restoration supervised by the national cultural relics administration in Beijing (later SACH).

Despite specialist contributions and extensive funding, questions can be raised as regards methods used and quality of work achieved particularly in the restoration of the unique interior with construction elements dated to the 7th century AD (Jokhang), and early wall paintings (both complexes).
The new housing that in 1995 replaced traditional-historical structures was built with little regard towards climatic conditions, environmental performance (insulation) or services needed (sanitation, water and power supply), the construction of some buildings raising questions also of structural stability and safety (author’s surveys 1995-1998). The construction contrasted strongly with Lhasa traditional built form – if not in terms of the plan-concept used (buildings with internal courtyard still being the predominant typology), then in scale, size, design quality, use of materials and building methods, and the standardised non-Tibetan decorative elements reflecting Chinese taste.

The old Surkhang Manor family residence on the Barkor south-east corner had already in the mid-1950s been taken over by the government and in 1994 demolished and reconstructed as ‘Surkhang Corner Department Store’. The modern bulky building projected aggressively into the traditional pedestrian Barkor Street. By its overall shape, height (4 high floors and challenging the Jokhang), bulk, inappropriate design and materials (concrete, marble and glass) the building represents intrusive and non-contextual modern architecture in Old Lhasa.

Plots – Inside Barkor Street rows of adjacent plots (‘plot series’ in Conzenian terminology) of similar characteristics (building lines and plot utilisation) are interpreted to represent residual elements of the pre-1950 settlement- and plot structure, in 1995 seen to be extant also elsewhere in the Barkor area.
Most of a traditional and living ‘archives’ on plots structures, owners’ history and cultural memory – represented by people – are, however, assumed irretrievably lost after the state appropriated all urban property (implemented in Lhasa in the early 1960s), and intimate links between land, people and time were broken. Aufschnaiter’s 1948 survey material still provides unique research opportunities, and was therefore translated from Tibetan into English as part of my study, the material included here in the Appendix section.

**Developed structures** – The Barkor area may be split into numerous ‘developed structures’ as i) Features: landmarks, edges, entrance points, views, open spaces, points of reference, intangible, symbolic and interpretive content and ‘power-points’; ii) Patterns: building patterns, plot structures and accumulation; or iii) Elements: objects, spaces, characteristic or dominant, intangible functionality (kora). Here are identified a few.

To illustrate: As major ‘features’ in Barkor, the Jokhang ‘front’ and Jokhang itself dominate the entire Jokhang Square. Potala Palace with mountains behind, seen from several positions along Barkor Street, also constitutes a ‘feature’. Barkor Street with buildings lining both sides is seen to form one integral large developed structure as ‘pattern’.

As a kora, Barkor also represents an ‘element’ in tangible and intangible terms, as do also the sections of ‘functionality’ that Barkor may be split into (Barkor with the darchens, Barkor North with the ‘square’
between Nangteshar (8), Tromsikhang (71) and the alleyway to Meru Nyingba (18), Barkor East with Tarajhang (314), Barkor South with the ‘Sungchora square’ attached to Jokhang. Meru Nyingba, placed in the anonymous inside of Barkor Street and adjacent to Jokhang represents both an ‘element’ – and intangible level ‘feature’.

BARKOR IN 2005

Land use and functionality - In 2005 the Barkor area landuse categories were: i) Monastic institutions, iii) Commercial use, iv) Residential use, v) Public space, and vii) Tourism (hotels and tourist services). The main differences from 1995 were:

i) ‘Monastic institutions’ – little change in principle but significant in ‘operational’ terms, as described under category vii) below.
ii) ‘Commercial use’ – a major difference had taken place, in that not only Barkor Street but the majority of streets and lanes in the Barkor area had now become commercial with predominantly non-Tibetan interests and vendors (author’s visual surveys).

Barkor Street would each day accommodate two ‘markets’ of different character: the traditional ‘Tibetan’ market from early morning until late afternoon, run by Tibetans, Nepali, Hui- and Han-Chinese; and after this the evening street market run mainly by recent Hui- and Han-Chinese settlers selling cheap general goods and second hand clothing – taking place on the street itself.

iii) Residential use – the major change was an increasing non-Tibetan population settling in this until now almost exclusively Tibetan district of Lhasa. This is seen as a result of the increasing pressures of a non-Tibetan population majority in Lhasa City that potentially increase economic differentials between the different social group0s in Lhasa (and Old Lhasa), and the economic potentials of World Heritage designation and tourism (international and domestic) that again might increase non-Tibetan population pressures.

v) Informal space – there was ‘none’ left from the extensive construction activity of the last ten years.

vii) Tourism (hotels and tourist services had by 2005 established itself as a dominant and growing category of landuse and functionality. A number of new hotels had been completed; some provided by the functional and constructional transformation of traditional-historic courtyard manor houses. The other significant change within this category was that of transforming sacred sites into museums, as seen at Jokhang and Potala, with a prioritising of ‘dollar-paying’ tourists in preference of the no-fee or at least reduced-fee-paying traditional pilgrims.

The volume of domestic tourists exploded after Tibet was opened as a domestic tourist destination after 2000, a large increase also of international tourists (Tibet Statistical Yearbook, xx). The increasing volumes of Chinese and external tourists attracted large volumes of sales goods from China, often in the form of ‘authentic’ Tibetan goods and ‘antiques’ mass produced elsewhere in China or in Nepal.

Of the estimated gross ground cover area in the Barkor neighbourhood case area (approx. 17 ha), in 2005 religious functions occupied about 40% (dominant land use), commercial use around 25%, residential use 15-20%, with the remainder 20-15% as external space (narrow lanes mainly). In terms of building volume, residential use was estimated to more than 60% of gross building volume (dominant space category above ground level). Within the area surrounding Barkor Street, ground level land use was estimated as a 10:1 split between residential and commercial (street space excluded) – residential the dominant space use, and possibly 90-95% (see map illustration, author’s visual surveys), but losing ground to tourism.
Major institutions and spatial use – Housing on the ground floor level had by 2005 in near all central streets and lanes been replaced with commercial use (iii) and tourism (vii) and seen to represent a positive change in terms of improving many residents’ living conditions. Although the number of religious sites in Old Lhasa remained the same as in 1995 (18 Buddhist temples and 2 Muslim mosques), only 4 Buddhist sites were marked on the Lhasa official tourist map (2004): Jokhang, Ramoche, Gyume and Meru.
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Fig. 177 Barkor: aerial in PRC SACH-publication on Lhasa World Heritage Property (SACH, 2004) looking from Barkor East towards Jokhang Square, with Marpori and Potala Palace in the background. ChakporiHill with the large TV-mast that replaced the famous Medical College is seen to the left of Marpori Hill.

**Built form** – Construction and design standards of new buildings in Old Lhasa improved to some degree from 1995 to 2005 (visual observations), contributing to improve also standards of housing in Old Lhasa (see statistics). Whilst building designs and materials used might appear more ‘appropriate’, the loss in ‘authenticity’ and heritage values had become highly pronounced – with the parallel loss of visual diversity.

Most of the very few townhouses extant in 2000 had been repaired and upgraded with some level of respect for traditional architectural dignity, character, building methods and materials.

In Barkor Street, a World Heritage area, dramatic shifts in character were recognised by 2005. Aggressive advertising wall panels of less relevance to any historical town had by 2005 been allowed to dominate. The growing tourism had, however, brought new cultural activity and added vitality from artists’ shops and galleries into Barkor.
The Jokhang-Barkor WH site buffer zone (inscribed 2000) included all of extant traditional Lhasa (in area 1–1.5 km², see map illustration). The State Party, however, appears not to have upheld this definition, and in 2008 'confirmed' the buffer zone to be about only half of this area (extending north only to Beijing Shar Lam), see later. Despite extensive new construction, inside Barkor had retained its traditional characteristics as a developed structure (see later discussion on ‘plots appropriation’ and related issues).

**Individual structures and developed structures** – The larger volume of new buildings had by 2005 reduced public open space by ‘expropriating’ most informal space for new construction, by planning the new buildings with smaller interior courtyards, and constructing higher building volumes with vertical, not traditionally inclined, exterior walls. An aspect of ‘public airspace’ deemed important not only environmentally (natural ventilation and direct sunlight into the interior of un-heated building in a harsh climate) and psycho-socially for the residents was fundamentally transformed (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001).

Since the World Heritage designation of Jokhang and Barkor in 2000, near continuous cycles of repairs with new construction, demolition and re-construction have characterised the large Barkor area, reducing its material integrity by additions that may at best be described as syncretic ‘Tibetanised’.

The number of traditional-historical buildings inside Barkor Street was from 1995 to 2005 reduced from 39 to 36. In the remainder of the Barkor area included here, however, the number of traditional-historic buildings was reduced from 41 to under 15, several of these monastic structures that were supposed to be protected under special legislation. The huge loss in heritage resource and value in the Barkor case area has hence been from demolition of so-called ‘secular’ traditional-historic buildings. The protection of 94 traditional-historic buildings in 1998 by Lhasa Municipal Government – a majority of them residential – was at the time considered a major victory for urban conservation and the major reason for their continued survival (a large number scheduled for demolition). The normative act of listing clearly ensured their existence for a while, although not guaranteeing their survival.

By order of SACH’s department for World Heritage Properties’, the Surkhang Department Store was in 2003 reduced by one floor in height. The action was taken in consequence of a mounting WH Committee focus on the management of the Lhasa WH sites (see later) and the 2002-2003 Reactive Reporting on the State of Conservation (SOC) requested by the committee (Sinding-Larsen, 2002; Nishimura and Sinding-Larsen, 2003). SACH has requested that Surkhang Department Store be demolished and rebuilt as a traditional structure (personal communication).

The Jokhang Candle House was built in 2002 and located about 50 meters west of the main entrance to Jokhang Temple. Its major purpose was said to be to remove obvious fire risks to individuals and buildings from traditional devotional practice taking place inside the Jokhang Temple, to ‘confine’ a volume of devotees to outside the temple proper, and hence to permit some devotional practice
throughout the day as Jokhang has become closed for much of the day. The external construction is satisfactorily executed, providing decent access to most devotees, although religious practice would then be remote from the temple and the deities. Compared to the 1995 situation this radically alters the use and total experience of Jokhang as an open temple. It was not possible for me to get clear responses on whether devotees or Jokhang’s resident monks regard this as a definite step backwards for their religious practice.

Considerable repairs and upgrading had in 2005 been carried out to some buildings in the Barkor area defined as monuments – the Jokhang complex (government-funded) and Meru Nyingba (THF-funded). Since the pilot-project initiative by THF to repair and upgrade traditional-historic buildings in Old Lhasa (1998), the municipal government has increased its efforts in this sector – although the same government through the study period continually reduced its obligations towards the extant volume of buildings by demolition, see above.

New street furniture and materials have been introduced to Brkor Street since 1995. Although commonplace in 2005 to much modern townscape in China, most of this was highly non-contextual to Lhasa, ranging from Chinese ‘rococo-style’ lamp posts here, to plastic palms in nearby Yuthok Lam. The major infrastructure upgrading project (stone-paving of all external areas and new sanitation, water and power supplies and drainage throughout Old Lhasa) completed by 2005 (carried out 2002-2004, the first known major upgrading of the infrastructure of the historic settlement since the early 20th century), to Old Lhasa residents and external environment both ‘overnight’ proved of immense benefit in terms of better housing conditions – and for long term health improvement.

Outside and inside Barkor Street, secondary development gradually filled open space as part of ‘market colonization’. Barkor has the function of a ‘fixation street’ (Conzenian term) that defined the central area separated from outer areas, and as ‘market-street’, and is here described as a hypothesised ‘consequent street’, a boundary street of the early settlement – a ‘fixation line or street’ – separating the early or original part of townscape inside the Barkor kora or street from later outlying ‘fringe areas’: the hypothesised ‘consequent street’ would define a denser core area from looser outer areas (Conzen, 1969:124-125). Barkor has remained the principal street of the historic town that with gradual densification from inside the kernel (Barkor) is assumed to have developed outwards. Despite new construction Barkor as primary historic core has retained many characteristics of an extensive developed structure.

The prediction concerning the 1998 municipal level protection has proved to be sadly correct: The Municipal government had by 2005 permitted a majority of the structures to be demolished and the sites incorporated into new larger housing projects – conservation of unique built heritage losing out to the power of property development and Lhasa’s ‘housing renewal’ policy. The special Municipal Level protection declaration only prolonged the life of this important building stock by a few years.
The larger Barkor area plan-units had remained dominated by traditional architectural and spatial features well into the 1980s. An accompanying sketch illustration of Barkor area plan units confirmed this. Most of the plots are oriented perpendicular to the adjoining street or lane raises question of direction of access, north – south etc) see sketch. The plot structures and their recent transformation raise a number of additional issues, such as regards growth that are considered beyond the scope of this study. The large-mashed urban development plan/approach implemented since 1959 seems to have provided a number of openings and potential discussed elsewhere.
6.7.2 Shasarzur

**Meaning in Tibetan**: ‘middle market place or corner’; the name is assumed to refer to the market area located at the junction of the two lanes of Shasarzur.

**Category**: Shasarzur is a traditional residential area adjacent to the historical core of Lhasa, and an integral part of the historical environment, representing a ‘transforming Lhasa’.

**Area**: The entire neighbourhood is estimated to comprise an area of 4 - 4.5 ha.

**Location**: Shasarzur neighbourhood is located north/north-west of Barkor Street, a short walk from the entrance to the Jokhang Temple and Monastery Complex (south), and Beijing Shar Lam (north). The neighbourhood is administered by the Shasarzur Street Committee, and is made up of the properties along two lanes that separated at their junction with Jamyangshar Sanglam and Tromsil Khang Lam – both called Shasarzur Lam (west and east), and Jamyangshar Sanglam – Tromsil Khang Lam that define the south-east and east border of the neighbourhood, and (since the 1970s-early 1980s) the properties along Beijing Shar Lam, Mentsikhang Lam (west and north borders).

**BACKGROUND**

The Shasarzur area was into the 1970s defined by i) a major thoroughfare – the old main east-west lane that has ‘always’ run through Lhasa, now the major street Beijing Shar Lam, and ii) the two Shasarzur Lams (east and west) connecting the area to Barkor Street. Together the lanes with immediate hinterland formed an integral traditional townscape linked to the Dengjeling and Tsononling areas.
Peter Auschnaiter’s survey (1948) registered and identified ownerships of 55 plots in the Shasarzur area. It is not known whether all the properties in the three ‘parts’ of the area traditionally belonged to Shasarzur – some may have been part of the Dengjeling area; see 1948 – 1955 – 1986 maps.

Reconstruction along the outside perimeter of the neighbourhood (two busy modern streets, west and north) started in the mid-1980s, and accelerated in the early 1990s – the new impacting strongly on the ‘original’ townscape.

**SHASARZUR IN 1995**

Shasarzur was characterised by buildings of differing age, architectural quality, height, size and condition facing the lanes, with much open space inside between the buildings. A random patchwork of built and open space made the Shasarzur area in 1995 one of the few remaining areas of traditional townscape in historic Lhasa. The ‘meandering’ west lane added to the ‘slow-scale’ traditional neighbourhood character, the area that has always ‘straddled’ the two main zones of Barkor and Ramoche as an important tissue of Old Lhasa and its historic core.

**Landuse and functionality** - The 1995 land use categories listed and discussed for Barkor have also been used for the Shasarzur and Yuthok Tseshing cases – i) Monastic institutions, ii) Commercial, iii) Residential, iv) Public and semiprivate open space. In contrast to the Barkor area, Shasarzur of the two lanes was in 1995 a near mono-functional residential neighbourhood (landuse category iii) with many residents accommodated in informally constructed shelters. Commercial use (landuse category ii) was similar in the two lanes, and limited to a few ‘hole-in-the wall’-shops that provided local residents with
some daily goods. Along Beijing Shar Lam and Mentsikhang Lam were permanent shops, workshops and restaurants. The two lanes provided an amount of open space (landuse category iv), and access to some more behind the residential clusters.

Fig. 181 Shasarzur Lam West; veiw towards the south; 1994

Built form – Built form has been described in terms of a) ‘Individual structures’ – buildings, and b) ‘Developed structures’ as i) Features, ii) Patterns and iii) Elements (previous section).

Individual structures – In Shasarzur Lam West the building complexes Yabshi Pünkhang (42) and Jamyang (38) formed north and south ‘anchors’ in a townscape of traditional residential buildings of varying size and standards –manifesting the architectural-spatial integrity of Old Lhasa townscape. Along the lane, the buildings Trizur Labrang (309), Ongdu Khangsar (44) amd Padnu Khangsar (39) visually dominated.

On Shasarzur Lam East, the large traditional buildings of Saeching (104), Samdu Pholing (103) and Kedung (102) with Kading Khangsar (100) in 1995 visually dominated.

Along Beijing Shar Lam only the Yabshi Pünkhang (42) remained as traditional structure amidst 3-4 storey housing assumed built from the mid-1980s onwards. Mentsikhang Lam was developed from open
Along Beijing Shar Lam only the Yabshi Pünkhang (42) remained as traditional structure amidst 3-4 storey housing assumed built from the mid-1980s onwards. Mentsikhang Lam was developed from open land in the late 1970s-early 1980s (assumed period of construction), and therefore had a number of traditional-historic buildings inside the new-defined urban blocks only. In 1995 there were in only 18 traditional-historical buildings left in Shasarzur, reduced from 55 in 1948 (Aufschnaiter 1948).

Developed structures – The Shasarzur area was in 1995 faced with threats of urban development. Its extant traditional-historic buildings were therefore documented (at the ‘emergency level’ of InterSave) at an early stage of the LHCA-project fieldwork (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001). ‘Developed structures’ in Shasarzur as ‘Features’ were not monumental but characteristic of a traditional ‘slow-scale’ townscape area – the junction between Shasarzur Lam West and Beijing Shar Lam modestly anonymous and difficult to notice for the first-time visitor; the southern meeting of the two lanes similarly disguising the harmonious west lane ahead – or the emerging ‘street’-quality of the east lane (width and regularity of building facing it). Developed structures as ‘Patterns’ in the east lane were present through the built form regularity in shape, volume and architectural expression, in contrast to the lack of the same in the west lane by its irregularity and diversity of expression.

Through Shasarzur two building patterns were highly distinguishable – one being that of traditional small and large courtyard structures positioned and some expanded according to spatial opportunities, the other that of modern ‘strip-buildings’ or perimeter block of contemporary urban development anywhere. As ‘Elements’, developed structures were ‘played’ at a ‘piano’ or almost ‘pianissimo’ level hardly
noticeable to the visitor. Elements such as the vista of the Yabshi entrance – and the memory of the function of this property as Lhasa residence to the family of a former Dalai Lama, and view in through a doorway (309) of activity around a courtyard waterpost, made a wander down the west lane very pleasing and memorable.

The constructional diversity of the traditional buildings (varied height, bulk and architectural treatment) was emphasised by inwards-sloping external walls that also left varying odd spaces and gaps between buildings and plots. Hardly unique to Shasarzur, this architectural feature represents a central element of Tibetan traditional built form. Towards the lanes, the ‘backwards’ tilt provided more natural light into the often narrow space, and made one perceive even the narrow lane as quite generous, at least welcoming in the way it would spatially open towards the sky and the light.

The southern part of Shasarzur in visual and communication terms ‘belonged’ to the central Barkor area, with the northern section oriented towards the modern main street Beijing Shar Lam. This new street divided Old Lhasa into the larger Barkor area (‘southern’ central part), and the Ramoche area (northern part). As area, Shasarzur was in 1995 one of the last intact traditional neighbourhoods in Old Lhasa, its lanes two of the last ‘original’ ones in Old Lhasa.

Located in a nominal slope made Shasarzur less prone to flooding from stagnant pools of combined surface- and sewage-water so common to eastern and southern parts of the Barkor area (author’s visual surveys 1995-1998). Although providing a convenient shortest distance between Barkor Street and Beijing Shar Lam, the lack of sanitation in the Shasarzur Lam West made it a smelly area and a less attractive alternative to the Shasarzur Lam East.
SHASARZUR IN 2005

The Jokhang-Barkor area in 2000 received World Heritage status as an extension to the Potala Palace WH site, and Shasarzur became part of the WH buffer zone. The WH designation appears, however, not to have affected the continuing demolition and extensive new construction in Shasarzur.

Fig. 183 Shasarzur Lam West: view towards south after the completed transformation, 2005

Parts of Shasarzur for some years after 1995 remained an attractive traditional and ‘slow-scale’ residential neighbourhood in the central part of the old town. In 2000 Shasarzur Lam West was still an attractive, meandering local lane with numerous traditional-historic buildings of varying architectural quality, size, appearance and condition. Random entrance nooks and areas along a crooked lane made this an attractive pedestrian and public area away from the busy activity of the streets at each end – but
conveniently close to both. Shasarzur Lam West displayed many of the qualities today admired in ‘ordinary and authentic’ traditional townscape.

Extensive demolition in spring 2002 signalled a rapid transformation of the traditional residential environment of Shasarzur Lam West that by spring 2003 has resulted in most traditional-historic buildings replaced with taller and bulkier new housing. The lane lost most of its traditional character and unique heritage value.

**Landuse and functionality** – Change in landuse from 1995 to 2005 within Shasarzur might at first glance appear not significant. A close look would tell a different story.

On Shasarzur Lam East a large plot had been redeveloped as the new large Dhood Gu Hotel (landuse categories ii and v). Much of the ground floor areas of the new buildings along both lanes had been constructed as small shops. All earlier although incidental pockets of open space were in 2005 absorbed into new construction. The built volume of the area was estimated to have increased by 50-60% with population increase estimated to 20-30% since 1995, and to be more varied in terms of social groups and ethnicity (author’s visual surveys).

**Built form** – The new buildings that after 1995 were to emerge in Shasarzur were bulkier, higher (by one to three storeys), all with the same monotonous facades, and were built with vertical walls – the ‘opening’ profile of a traditional Tibetan lane or street had disappeared.

**Individual structures** – Of the 18 traditional-historic buildings in Shasarzur in 1995 (from about 55 in 1948), in 2005 only four were extant – all on or near Shasarzur Lam West:

i) Yabshi Phünkhang (42) on the east side of the west lane (and facing Beijing Shar Lam) mostly hidden from view and with the main courtyard entrance concealed, and its main north elevation only exposed to really into Beijing Shar Lam;

ii) Tsyumo Khangsar (43) on the east side ‘below’ Yabshi Phünkhang;

iii) Deleg Khangsar (46) on the west side – but in the same year (2005) absorbed into the expanding Mentsikhang Lam development (2003) – as did in 2005 also Tsyumo Khangsar (43), the owner-occupiers of which had until then refused to sell to the municipal real estate development company; and

iv) Jamyang Courtyards (38), the large tenancy complex on Jamyangshar Sanglam.

**Developed structures** – All traditional-historical residential buildings on Shasarzur Lam East were demolished already between 1995 and 1997, and replaced with four-storey buildings, mostly housing. Several of the buildings (see above) had been in a condition of dilapidation, all with distinct repairs- and upgrading potentials to be upgraded into good quality traditional housing (author’s visual survey).

With the material integrity of both buildings and streetscape of Shasarzur Lam West gone in 2005, the 1995 description of Shasarzur Lam West as a modest developed structure ‘Feature’ could no longer be upheld. The west lane had become one of many ordinary fully reconstructed and anonymous minor streets in the so-called historic town.
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In 2005, the building pattern of Shasarzur – developed structures as ‘Patterns’ – had become uniform as a mixture of ‘traditional’ courtyard construction and modern ‘strip-buildings’ (perimeter buildings) – typical of a majority of the reconstructed blocks of Old Lhasa illustration.

Life in Shasarzur in 1995 – described as ‘lived at ‘slow-scale’ and ‘pianissimo’ level’ and composed of elusive ‘Element’ developed structures – was by 2005 in contrast interpreted as that of an ordinary near-central neighbourhood located near a busy settlement core (Barkor Street). The immaterial values might still have been part of the cultural memory of some residents, but the majority appeared to have come recently into the area.

All the smaller residential plots were between 2001 and 2005 ‘accumulated’ as sites for larger modern housing developments that filled all pockets of land – also those earlier not built on. The ethnic character of the neighbourhoods in 2005 remained mainly Tibetan, but with a noticeable increase of Han-Chinese and Hui-Muslims, as these population groups – with the continuous in-migration of non-Tibetans into Lhasa – were now settling also inside Old Lhasa. North of Beijing Shar Lam (Tsomonling and Ramoche neighbourhoods), Han-Chinese residents in 2005 seemed to account for about 50% of the resident population, and in trade (shop-units and street vendor stalls) an even larger majority. By 2005 Shasarzur Lam West and East were both lined with four-storey new buildings. An attempt at recreating a character of ‘traditional Tibetan townscape’ had with varying degrees of success been attempted through use of ‘traditional’ building materials for new construction – as stone and clay renders to structural walls. The new buildings were said to respect traditional Lhasa construction in use of materials and decoration (Lhasa Construction Bureau). In Shasarzur Lam West there were in 2005 as yet no glaring shop-fronts, only a broken line of local modest shops with conventional fronts and an increasing Han-Chinese presence. The 2002-2004 infrastructure and external environment upgrading project contributed to major improvements of living conditions in Shasarzur. Of the two traditional-historical buildings extant in Shasarzur in 2005, the Yabshi Phünkhang was in 2006 converted into a boutique hotel. Some time later, the only other traditional-historic building complex, Jamyang, was demolished (2009-2010). Shasarzur Lam West remained a largely residential neighbourhood as a dead end to vehicular traffic. Despite large and bulky new buildings and reduced internal open courtyards, the street could serve as a ‘model’ for other so-called traditional Lhasa housing areas. The densification in this part of the historical kernel and socio-economic and cultural impacts of the influx of non-Tibetan settlers remain unstudied.
6.7.3 Yuthok Tseshing

**Meaning** in Tibetan: ‘area by the turquoise (bridge) for growing vegetables’

**Category:** Historic cultural landscape turned into an ‘ordinary’ modern urban environment.

**Area:** About 17 ha.

**Location:** In the area were up to the 1950s located a couple larger manor estates, but the area contained mainly gardens, meadows and grassland stretching west of the Yuthok Bridge by the Western entry to Old Lhasa and through to Shugtrī Lingka and the Dalai Lama Gardens south of Shöl. In terms of land use and building design the area represents ‘New Lhasa’.

**BACKGROUND**

Peter Aufschnaiter’s 1948 survey clearly showed the open character of the landscape, and the partly enclosed (walled) lane that connected Jokhang and the Barkor area to the Potala-Shöl complex along the shortest diagonal route – following the ‘Yuthok brook’ (my name) and crossing this at the Yuthok Zampa (the Turquoise Bridge) west of the settlement.

In the official ordnance survey map of 1986 the ‘original’ geometry remained inside the interior of the new urban block, with the perimeter zone developed in orthomorphic manner.

The perimeter of this large neighbourhood or urban block is altogether formed by modern and recently constructed buildings. Inside the urban block were in 1995 still a few smaller second-generation ‘Chinese’ buildings, from construction and appearance possibly built in the 1960s.
Located about half a kilometre west of Jokhang Square on the north side of Yuthok Lam, Yuthok Tseshing thus presents a major dimension of ‘New Lhasa’ inside historical Lhasa – with dissimilar but primary Lhasa ‘neighbours’: the Potala Palace, the Shugtri Lingka TAR Government complex, the TAR Military HQ, and the Barkor area with Jokhang Temple.

YUTHOK TSESHING IN 1995

The character of Yuthok Tseshing in 1995 resembled that of a large construction site implementing a second generation of construction as already documented in the 1986 ordnance survey maps. As an area recently transformed, Yuthok Tseshing, absorbed by townscape after 1960 (geographical centre of 2-km wide zone that defined Lhasa pre-1950) stretched from the Yuthok or Barkor gate to the gardens and meadows (lings) below the Potala Palace about one kilometre to the west. In 1965-70 Yuthok Tseshing was developed for ‘danweis’ (government work-units). By 1995 the few pre-1950 buildings, structures and geometry were long gone, retaining only nominal traces of 1960s construction that still respected the importance in the geometry of the historic area (seen in property lines until 2000 as a reflection of Yuthok Tseshing lane). The historical precession route from Potala to Jokhang diagonally crossing Yuthok Tseshing was by 2005 eliminated by overpowering orthogonal geometry of the new townscape, a major trace of history needlessly eliminated. Immediately south is located the important Yuthok Zampa (Turquoise Bridge; 8-9th century CE) today a popular snooker joint.
Fig. 186 Yuthok Tseshing neighbourhood in 1995 (map from the LHCA Project). Early construction inside the urban block is seen to have respected and reflected the ‘original’ diagonal geometry. The only historical-traditional structure not demolished in this area is the Yuthok Zampa, its location marked with yellow circle.

**Landuse and functionality** - The entire area with adjoining land existed largely as meadows and orchards into the late 1950s, and was first developed for Chinese work-units from 1965 onwards. The few remaining ‘Chinese’ buildings of the interior are dated to 1960-70 in character and resemble modern buildings of Chinese cities of the period 1930-50. Their alignments within the larger block bear witness of the important diagonal connection between Potala and Barkor, still visible in ordnance surveys of 1995, but already less noticeable on the ground. The perimeter of this large urban block is formed by a varied mass of modern and recently constructed buildings with large parts of the block left open as if for development. Only the buildings along the north-east corner are assumed built before 1985. Urban densification 1990-1995 incorporated the area into the central area of the modern town (extending towards the west).

The urban block perimeter was in 1995 zoned for mixed commercial-residential landuse (commercial on ground and first floor levels with residential space above) in new three-and four-storey buildings.

**Major spatial use** - Much of the land belonging to large Chinese public sector work-units, one of them a large educational institution (intermediate level school) along Dosenge Lam.

**Built form** - Built form has been described in terms of a) ‘Individual structures’ – or buildings, and b) ‘Developed structures’ – as i) Features, ii) Patterns, or iii) Elements.
Individual structures - Inside Yuthok Tseshing were important remains and traces of old and recent construction and geometry that the earlier architectural research in Lhasa overlooked (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001). During the study period, these remains and traces were nearly all eliminated through a continuous process of urban development and plot-property realignments. The only individual structures documented earlier were the Yuthok Zampa (63, Turquoise Bridge) and the Yabshi Takster (315), both located outside, and to the south and the north of the urban block respectively.

Developed structures - Present in Yuthok Tseshing at some scale, developed structures were in 1995 in contrast to the cases of Barkor and Shasarzur all of recent construction, and without the character or characteristics of traditional built form. Although interesting as a case of contemporary urban planning in Lhasa, the very ‘ordinariness’ and visual poverty of Yuthok Tseshing seen from the outside of the urban block thus made it of less interest to include any detailed description or analysis here. Inside the urban block, however, were traces of both a very old and newer geometries and built form that as ‘patterns’ and ‘elements’ would deserve to be documented and retained – as described below.

The major developed structure ‘Features’ of Yuthok Tseshing remained the views of the landmarks and powerpoints of Potala on Marpori, and along Yuthok Lam of Jokhang Temple in the far distance – views of immense symbolic importance to Lhasa and Tibetans.

As developed structure ‘Pattern’, the ‘New Lhasa’ building pattern and largemesh plot structure introduced the new urban environment to the vicinity of the historic core.

Yuthok Tseshing in 2005 contained a number of developed structure ‘Elements’ (objects, spaces, characteristic or dominant ‘bits’, or intangible functionality) – that could also be defined as ‘Features’ – in the form of new architectural objects (Agricultural Bank and Lhasa Department Store at the north and south corners of Karmadong Lam), and close-up views of streetscape, street furniture, buildings, landscape such as Yuthok Lam with plastic palms, ‘Tibetanised’ building elevations, huge advertisement panels as well as distant, half-obstructed views of Potala amongst mountains.

The Yuthok Lam area, and Yuthok Tseshing, had random size plots with random building heights and development ratios to both sides, built as plain ‘modern’ unspecific structures, commercial property for shops, offices and some residential accommodation from 1990 onwards. Buildings and townscape in 1995 had a character of rapid construction built under austere conditions, only the south-east corner (new department store) an example of the type and scale of commercial development also in this part of Lhasa.

The only traditional and possibly historic structure in the area – at least in terms of location if not in fabric – was Yuthok Zampa, the Turquoise Bridge. The other most important man-made structure in the area was the diagonal route or lane between Jokhang and Potala, a route that was used for numerous religious processions during the Lhasa ceremonial year.
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YUTHOK TSESHING IN 2005

Fig. 187 By 2002 the Yuthok Tseshing urban block had been transformed into a regular orthomous geometry with little trace of the ‘original’ geometry at all recognisable; 2000

The contemporary stamp of urban development and functionality was by 2005 firmly established on the entire urban block.

**Landuse and functionality** - The commercial-residential mixed landuse density had increased with recent (third-generation) urban development (visual surveys). The perimeter of the urban block was by 2005 dominated by large banks, residential blocks, shops and department stores (Karnadong Lam), shopping, offices and hotels (Beijing Shar Lam/Beijing Kyil Lam), shopping, education facility, residential (Dosenge Lam), and again residential blocks, shops, department stores and hotels (Yuthok Lam).

The urban block interior accommodated the mentioned functional categories as well as several larger public sector work units including at TAR regional government level (Illustration).

**Major spatial use** - The school along Dosenge Lam in the eastern part of the urban block has remained. Hotels and department stores had by 2005 expanded into space earlier ‘belonging to’ public sector work units’ extensive areas – some of this clearly developed and sold as real-estate.

**Built form** - The area today defined as Yuthok Tseshing contained rich residual elements of an ‘original’ Lhasa geometry that remained clearly visible in maps and on the ground within the overall geometry (from remains of lanes and property borders to building pattern and their orientation) until about 2002 and major urban development de-constructed all historic traces. Since 1995, the Yuthok Tseshing area had by 2005 been massively redeveloped, large new commercial and residential buildings replacing the medium scale of earlier construction here. The vital historic link between the major Old Lhasa powerpoints (Potala Palace and Jokhang Temple) was thus eliminated.
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Individual structures – Inside the urban block in 2005 less than six built structures predated the 1980s, all smaller buildings assumed constructed under the first phase of ‘danweis’ here (1960-1975). On the south east perimeter, Yuthok Zampa, the ‘Turquoise Bridge’ remains the only object of potential interest as heritage resource. In reference to the earlier discussion on historic urban landscape (HUL) and the Xian Declaration (2005), the treatment of the Yuthok Zampa does, however, raise important questions concerning the interpretation or indeed embracing in Lhasa of current Chinese conservation approach towards objects and settings. As much as about two thirds of the neighbourhood block footprint (about 11-12 ha) was redeveloped 1999-2005.

Developed structures – Until recently the area thus represented a major potential for retaining important tangible and intangible memory of historic Lhasa – through the possibility to recreate the historic Potala-Jokhang route diagonally through the block, based on the numerous extant residual elements. Only a cartographic investigation of earlier maps could today reveal some of the potent history and ‘visual living memory’ of this part of historic Lhasa – ‘deconstructed’ without documentation, and replaced by an orthomorphic geometry of streets, plots and large new buildings anonymously extended throughout the urban block interior. The orthogonal street-block geometry of New Lhasa is thus ‘internalised’ also throughout Yuthok Tseshing. Large new buildings (residential, commercial/offices and hotels, and for public sector agencies) dominate the area. Building mass and heights in the western
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section approach those of Modern Lhasa west of the Potala-Chakpori West Gate. Further construction activity is assumed to roll a near identical carpet of higher density urban development across the remained of the urban block bring the entire urban block towards the kernel of the historic settlement within only a few years – despite the ‘existence’ of still unpublished official building height restrictions.

Fig. 189 View along Yuthok Lam towards Jokhang Square and Jokhang Temple; 2003

In 2002 a proposal was commissioned by the municipal government – with design proposals submitted in the same year – to make buildings in Yuthok Lam, the entire streetscape from Potala/Shol to Jokhang, ‘more Tibetan’. Yuthok Lam was pedestrianised. A ‘Neo-Tibetan’ veneer of ‘Tibetan’ decorative motifs were as prefabricated components fixed to the front of the standard commercial concrete structures (built early- to mid-1990s). The governments’ intention was to extend this ‘Tibetan’ treatment to all buildings along the main streets between Jokhang and the Potala Palace. In Karnadong Lam, the new well designed ‘Agricultural Bank’ building (completed about 2000, on Beijing Shar Lam corner) and the more commercial Yuthok Department Store (Yuthok Lam corner) were treated in the same manner. Street furniture (from lamp posts to waste bins) exhibited an uncertain style of modern design – from decent to dire out-of-place, such as plastic look-alike palms with coconuts (Yuthok Lam, 2003-2005). Upgraded external areas of polished granite paving stones used for streets and pavements in consequence closer recalled modern Beijing or Chengdu than Lhasa – the entire effort impacting negatively on otherwise possibly good intentions for urban design in transforming Lhasa.

Efforts to ‘Tibetanise’ raise interesting questions of principle as regards intentions: to ‘bridge’ between cultural-architectural contexts with reference to contemporary language of architectural design, surface
treatment, and how to interpret traditional built form towards a new ‘relevance’, or whether the efforts express a mere approach to ‘window-dress’ modern construction to ‘blend into’ a so-called historic built environment.

Its contribution has been to exhibit a ‘homogeneous’ ordinarily glossy visual contemporary approach to managing and transforming commercialised heritage resources, where individual objects or historic traces are given an inappropriate and artificial setting.

A potentially interesting model approach was implemented with a superficial understanding of the significance of place and a base-language that might broker necessary environmental and architectural understanding between Old Lhasa and the modern city.

Urban development pressure transformed the ‘open land’ of Yuthok Tseshing that in official plans was unfortunately not defined or regarded as part of the primary historic landscape – may be due to its lack of built structures.

It location between Potala and Jokhang-Barkor in material and intangible terms bridged two centres of Tibetan spiritual sacredness and power as a major ceremonial route. Its inherent value as part of the intimate Lhasa sacred geography disappeared to the benefit of defining a new large urban block as ‘open’ for conventional real estate development.

Main concerns, particularly with the critical proximity of this neighbourhood to the Potala Palace World Heritage site (an integral element of the historic ensemble and its declared buffer zone) and to Jokhang, Barkor and the core of historic Lhasa. The neighbourhood could have become a major element in a
larger townscape where main components of historic Lhasa were still in existence, linked and given a meaningful identity.

The memory of Yuthok Tseshing as place for age-old processions and traffic between the Lhasa power points were lost, the area emptied of the rich resources and heritage values it so long retained – today’s ‘version’ illustrates the short term consequence of pragmatic urban planning and urban development for profits.

A ‘window-dressing’ such as that implemented in Yuthok Tseshing could potentially mark an important start of a process of cultural reinterpretation or in contrast represent a superficial pacifying of concerns over the future of unique cultural heritage resources – resources that in the international understanding to a great extent are already obliterated.

References:
6.8 Neighbourhoods summary

The new urban areas in Lhasa were constructed outside and around the historical kernel, mostly at some distance – although a number of the new work-units were located within the historic townscape (Chinese: danwei, China’s urban-rural planning prototype introduced to Lhasa in the 1960s; see chapter 5). The effect on the overall character of Old Lhasa, however, was not significant, as work-unit plots were generally large with low height and density of construction.

During the study period the three case neighbourhoods were to varying degrees affected by non-contextual urban construction – both at the levels of developed structures and neighbourhoods (chapter 5). Most of the construction plots were ‘demolition sites’, and some earlier open spaces traditionally not built on – the reasons could vary from the spiritual value of a specific space, need to leave room to channel or distribute seasonal flood-water, the marshy character of the area, or a high water-table. The official urban development and conservation plans through extensive demolition of historic-traditional buildings actively discouraged ‘infill and renewal’ construction that could have supported traditional townscape characteristics. Very few ‘infill’ projects were attempted in Old Lhasa. The housing construction programme stimulated demographic change and gentrification. Findings from the investigations of three major neighbourhoods are summarised below.

Barkor

In 1995 more than 60 historical-traditional buildings were extant inside and directly on the outer perimeter of Barkor Street. By 2005 this was halved, most located inside Barkor Street. Commercial pressure resulting from Lhasa’s World Heritage status meant increased tourism, expanding trade and income – and resulted in needs or at least the opportunity to invest in buildings – new buildings. Moderate street advertising signs expanded into large wall panels – allowed to remain and expand despite specific instructions to remove then on Barkor by the World Heritage Committee. Despite all of this, Barkor, as an extensive developed structure, has retained its traditional role as the primary spiritual and commercial environment in Tibetan Lhasa. The initiatives by the Tibet Heritage Fund (THF, active in Lhasa 1996-2000) to repair and upgrade buildings by traditional methods (with Lhasa municipality following this example) contributed to this. In upgrading Barkor Street a ‘Chinese neo-rococo’ atmosphere was added to the traditional Tibetan – as seen in the use of highly ornate and out-of-place lamp posts. Major land uses were in 2005 almost evenly split between institutional (religious), residential and commercial (informal estimate).

Shasarzur

In 1995 Shaarzur represented traditional Lhasa residential urban neighbourhoods, as one of few extant.
Already by 1996 most historic-traditional buildings on West and East Shasarzur lane were demolished. The qualities of the neighbourhood’s traditional built form remained unrecognised by the government – and considered expendible. By 2005 only one historical-traditional building remained, the significant Yabshi Phünkang built in 1838 for the family of the 11th Dalai Lama (with Municipal level protection only). By 2008 the yabshi was transformed from residential building with Tibetan families into a small exclusive ‘heritage hotel’.

Characterised in 1995 by meandering lanes and spaces accommodating a great variety of buildings (size, quality, and ‘health-risk standards’), Shasarzur in 2005 appeared as a ‘modern’ standard urban environment with the sameness of new construction already common to most Old Lhasa neighbourhoods. Today new medium to large scale housing projects dominate the Shasarzur neighbourhood, most of its ‘original’ and spontaneous character eliminated. The residential community by 2005 had a growing commercial content in the form of numerous small shops, tourist accommodation and services. The population (resident and short term visitors was estimated to have doubled since 1995 (the authors informal visual surveys).

Yuthok Tseshing

The main values contributed by the area called Yuthok Tseshing to the traditional settlement were described in terms of the diagonal processional route between the Potala Palace and Jokhang Temple as vital link between the most important power points in Lhasa, open cultural landscape of a few estates, meadows, a stream with bridge.

These values disregarded in the new 1960s urban plan, with urban development allowed to gradually overbuild parts and traces of the historic geometry that remained visible into the 1980s – because some of the plot-lines and buildings of early work-units did reflect this. In the 1980s the government’s policy of economic development in Lhasa gave free reign to property development. Nominal traces of the historic morphological ‘grammar’ could be recognised inside the urban block until about 2000, but were then erased by the larger scale commercial redevelopment of Yuthok Tseshing.

Urban development pressures and real estate potentials in less than 20 years transformed the Yuthok Tseshing area from a gentle cultural historical and sacred landscape of meadows and lanes into faceless modernity, albeit highly profitable. Had the main elements of the old landscape been retained, the Yuthok Tseshing area today could have been a positive ‘role-model’ area introducing new typologies and urban development approaches to Lhasa.
6.9 Built heritage and urban form changing

Built form remains an externalisation and representation of the political-social-cultural value sets, needs and aspirations held by society and authority, expressed in relations of social and physical space (Erring et al, 2002:273-276). Traditional buildings respect climate and environment as they are built in natural materials and making use of all sunshine they can get. To build in concrete is against these principles’ (Lhasa kudrak family member, 1997).

Case studies provided information on selected buildings and neighbourhood (chapter 6). Here are discussed aspects of change to built heritage and urban form, and urban conservation. Of all respondent categories only monks and Tibetan academics expressed concern over the continuous loss of heritage value taking place in Old Lhasa through demolition and urban development.

6.9.1 Built typology

Old Lhasa built typology in 1995 was discussed in chapter 4 (section 4.5.2). The traditional built typology dominant in 1995, seen as a confirmation of traditional built form in Central Tibet was in 2005 mostly replaced, only very few cases extant (residential, administrative, monastic) – and now as isolated examples that could hardly be said to represent a living built typology in the historical urban landscape on which the 2000 WH List Extension of Jokhang and Barkor was based.

The fact that a majority of the old town residents was given access to improved housing standards must be recognised as a major achievement. In the redevelopment process, traditional and substandard informal structures – some of them cardboard shacks in a damp courtyard or on galleries and roof – were first demolished and their occupiers evicted. New buildings of low to medium quality (architectural, engineering and environmental) met immediate housing needs but were unlikely to prove a long term sound investment for Lhasa. The proportion of ‘earlier’ to ‘new’ residents renting and buying leases does, however, remain uncertain (no data available). I assume that a large component of the 1995-population for economic reasons left Old Lhasa due to the pressures of gentrification. In Old Lhasa, only Wabaling, the Muslim residential area located immediately off Lingkor south-east remained as a ‘traditional’ non-Tibetan ‘neighbourhood with a ‘hutong’-inspired layout.

‘Tibetan-style’ housing in modern construction, transformed built form character of the old town after 1995. Studies of selected neighbourhoods showed that by 2005, traditional townscape of great diversity of space and built form in Old Lhasa had been turned into a near-continuous matrix of monotonous built form and ‘equal spaces’. From traditional fine meshed to large-meshed and modern without character – buildings and townscape – commercial and fast to construct; much of it ‘Tibetan-decorated’ in new materials (concrete ‘details’ replacing carved wood). For Old Lhasa, a low skyline has been maintained for new construction in critical proximity to the historic district.
Efforts by the Lhasa municipal government in 2004-2005 to ‘Tibetanise’ new construction in Old Lhasa, particularly between Barkor and Potala-Shöl are recognised as positive, although this in essence meant applying ‘Tibetan’ decorative features in modern materials to the main elevations of new commercial buildings. This could potentially represent one step towards realising a need for more knowledge, integrity and quality in architectural and urban design, and construction. With new building types and urban construction reflecting cliches of Chinese-international modernism, however, the above highlighted a policy that remained ininterested and uninformed by local cultural context and practice. Individual efforts to ‘modernise’ Tibetan built typology were made in new urban areas, such as in the new residential compounds of academic institutions, and on ‘Xiansu Island’ in the Lhasa River.

Fig. 192 A ‘cross-section’ of images in the Yuthok Tseshing urban block provides a rich illustration of the challenge facing urban architecture in Lhasa: the majority of structures are of pan-Chinese and/or international in architectural character, with the nominal traces of earlier construction (here 1950-1970s) are disregarded; 2005

Already in 1995 the number of larger Lhasa Courtyard Mansions was reduced to about one dozen, buildings that potentially constituted ‘storehouses’ of heritage resources (intangible and tangible) and traditional knowledge.

By 2005 some were formally split into multi-household lets or lease-holds – the remainder transformed into ‘heritage’ hotels. Shatra Manor was the only extant courtyard manor building complex in an ‘original’ or assumed ‘near authentic’ state in material terms – and in residential use, albeit for a large number of
households. New ‘courtyard buildings’ (‘zhimsa-style’) as a modern ‘tenement’ version of traditional courtyard buildings were constructed inside historic Lhasa.

Inside and outside the historical town, a non-contextual architectural vocabulary had by 2005 replaced traditional built form until then maintained by living traditions with building types changed to a pan-Chinese and semi-international urban environment. The demolition of traditional buildings and spaces led to losses both of heritage value and significance of place.

In modernising Lhasa society, the government appears to have given little if any focus to the skills-, knowledge- and work-generating potentials of traditional crafts and building methods. A few private building renovation projects in Old Lhasa nevertheless showed that experienced traditional craftsmen were available.

Fig. 193 Kundeling Village. This Google Earth image illustrates the emerging pattern of ‘informal’ Tibetan settlements constructed inside the formal geometry of the new large urban blocks (Google Earth 2007)

Inside several new urban blocks a settlement pattern was recognised whereby Tibetans would build ‘organic’ clusters of housing inside the block perimeters that would be dominated by shops, workshops and housing for the Chinese newcomers (‘Kundeling village’ largely demolished in 2006). The Tibetan cluster with buildings, courtyards and indicental lanes and open spaces would resemble the traditional village structure.

Walled government compounds (‘danwei’ or work-units) filled the 1960s’ orthogonal matrix. The Chinese work-unit buildings constructed in 1960-70s illustrate an important phase of Lhasa's modern history that by 2005 was mostly eliminated and replaced with modern larger construction of higher standards. Public
housing estates of 3-5 storey blocks with nominal shared external space ('New Shol') modelled on Chinese prototypes were built outside and on the edges of Old Lhasa (mid-1980s onwards). New Lhasa townscape was constructed as an open-meshed uniformity typical of modern towns in China. A somewhat pragmatic and 'vulgarised' architectural vocabulary of 'modern monotony' replaced traditional built form that was until then maintained by living traditions of knowledge and crafts - the pragmatic presence as seen in the Thieves Island development, and the urban blocks of 'New Lhasa'.

**Traditional diversity**

Old Lhasa contains considerable residue of earlier urban form as the contiguous 'compact' areas of 'Barkor', 'Ramoche' (and in part Shol) denote plan-units and 'plot-series' that represent pre-1950 settlement structure – the townscape inside Barkor is believed to predate 1650.297

It appears like, supported by sources in the form of traditional thankas, that the 'circular' route of Barkor Street functioned as kora, location of protective 'town wall' and again kora as the settlement expanded with core and fringe areas in phases before and after the 17th century. This may contribute to explain the presence of several semi-circular 'kora' sections outside Barkor (conjecture).
The traditional functional diversity of the built typology and urban environment has disappeared with recent urban development in Old Lhasa as traditional open ‘publicness’ – as in open and public combination of private and public spaces – of the spatial structure has been changed into either private or public space.

The process of demolition and new construction has increased the volume of buildings, the number of dwelling units and hence the population in Old Lhasa (based on visual surveys, with no formal data available).

Increasing property values during the study decade have affected most residents negatively with housing rents have increased significantly. As a long-term investment for meeting residents expectations of ‘modern’ standards and construction safety needs in special natural and climatic conditions, the new construction may in a longer term prove a disappointment to all but the property developers.

The traditional urban fabric constituted a rich and interwoven mixture of open-air and ‘inside’ workshops, busy trading courtyards, dedicated market areas, official functions, religious institutions, incidental small shops, residential buildings, storage buildings, barns and stables – many of these often in combinations under one roof.
New buildings, not only monotonously similar in terms of built form, are most near-monofunctional in terms of use – the earlier so ‘wide range’ now decimated to commercial and residential combined as most Old Lhasa lanes are commercialised or commercial only (expanding needs of tourism), with the religious institutions as incidental islands of relief.

Built form inside Old Lhasa by 2005

Fig. 196 Lingkor South seen from east towards the new buildings of Gorkha Nyingpa Hotel with covered blue glazed courtyard; 2003

Fig. 197Barkor interiors. Repaired courtyard buildings at Kunsangtse Courtyard Manor (Lingkor South, left) and staircase at Jokhang Temple; 2003
Fig. 198 Mentsikhang Lam. New construction nearing completion. New 4-storey ‘continuous’ buildings replacing a mixture of 2 and 3-storey smaller buildings constructed around 1990; 2002

Fig. 199 Wabaling. Early evening in the Hui-Muslim Wabaling neighbourhood off Lingkor South-East corner; 2004
Part Five: Case studies

Fig. 200 Barkor roofscape 1998. Traditional roofscape before the near continuous and complete demolition of traditional-historical non-monastic buildings; 1998

Fig. 201 Barkor 2005. New and old in timeless combination; 2005
Part Five: Case studies

Fig. 202 Old Lhasa. The Potala Palace on Marpori Hill seen from the roof of Jokhang Temple; 2002

Fig. 203 The small Mosque on Lingkor South. Left: the Mosque as seen from Lingkor South in 1994. Right: the old Mosque demolished and rebuilt and expanded, seen from (the other direction from) the Kunsangtse Manor Courtyard on Lingkor South; 2001
Part Five: Case studies

Fig. 204 The new Ganden Gowar housing adjacent to the Jokhang Sungchöra Square, and built one tall storey higher than allowed by traditional and contemporary legislation for constructing near the main sanctuary; 2003

Fig. 205 Yabshi Pünkhang being repaired and upgraded from residential use to high quality heritage hotel; 2005
Fig. 206 View along Barkorshan Sanglam lane (left) and adjacent Barkor scene; 2000

Fig. 207 New housing on Mentsikhang Lam; 2004
Part Five: Case studies

Built form on border and outside Old Lhasa by 2005

Fig. 208 Lhasa. The urban dream presented with the urban development plan and model in early 1990s; 1994

Fig. 209 Beijing Shar Lam. 1980s buildings expanded and upgraded(left) and ready for demolition in Mentsikhang Lam (right); 2002
Part Five: Case studies

Fig. 210 Karnadong Lam towards south and the river; 2005

Fig. 211 Newbuilt traditional Tibetan courtyard housing (‘low and dense’) northwest of Old Lhasa. Housing most Tibetan respondents – and residents – would be very happy to obtain; 2004
Part Five: Case studies

Fig. 212 Public housing on Lhasa River island (left) and public housing estates north and east of Old Lhasa; 2005

Fig. 213 New medium density Tibetan private housing outside Old Lhasa; 2004
Part Five: Case studies

Fig. 214 Karnadong Lam department store and the Potala Palace; 2005

Fig. 215 New Lhasa commercial development (left), and department store on corner of Beijing Shar Lam and Dosenge Lam; 2004

Fig. 216 China Town on Thieves Island - the earlier Tibetan river picnic and festival area; 2004
Part Five: Case studies

Fig. 217 The new Public Security Bureau building in Lhasa, located on the edge of the Barkor World Heritage buffer zone; 2003

Fig. 218 New tall Lhasa. new hotels west of Old Lhasa (west of Chakpori Hill). See scale and dimensions, below; 2005

Fig. 219 The lower floors of the tall blue-glazed hotel tower (left above) being constructed; 2003
Part Five: Case studies

Fig. 220 New Lhasa, commercial development in the Kundeling area: 2005

Fig. 221 ‘New traditional’
Part Five: Case studies

Fig. 222 16 Modern Tibetan residential buildings. Rental holiday home on Lhasa River Island (left), and private house in the Lhasa urban area; 2004

Fig. 223 Lingkor South. Modest and anonymous Lhasa building between recent 4-storey housing and new hotel, 2003

Fig. 224 New Lhasa housing. Mid-range commercial housing development for sale (left), and housing in New Shöl for the residents evicted from Shöl village below the Potala Palace; 2003
Case buildings: built typology 1995-2005

Traditional Tibetan society and its built form are considered to have been sustainable in terms of its energy use, economic base (numerous and interdependent local businesses), use of materials and methods of building. To what extent this has been 'true', in terms of feeding the population remains as topic outside this discussion. Case categories and buildings were selected on the basis of criteria listed earlier. The case buildings were selected with assumed ‘original’ site-characteristics as i) restricted urban site (Trabshishar), ii) building within a larger property in semi-urban landscape (Shatra), or iii) built structure in open cultural landscape (Yuthok Zampa). Each case presented one of the three baseline conditions a) original or authentic (potentially dilapidated) built form, b) building maintained and upgraded with traditional repairs, or c) property transformed (earlier building/s demolished and the plot integrated with new development).

Table 6.9.1.A  Case typology 1995 and 2005

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<tr>
<th>Case building</th>
<th>Protection (N-R-M)</th>
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In 1995, the selected case buildings represented the following built typologies:

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In 2005 the selected case buildings represented only the following built typologies:

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Typology categories represented by case buildings
Ths – Townhouse (small);
Ti – Tenement (large);
Case typology heritage values 1995 and 2005

Traditional built form has generally been considered sustainable in terms of its economic base (numerous and interdependent local commercial activities), and use of resources, energy, materials and methods of building.

Table 6.9.1.B Case buildings heritage values 1995 and 2005

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Assessing values

The case buildings were assessed in terms of 5 dimensions or values (InterSave).

A - architectural value: expression of proportions and harmony of composition, character of design of the whole or parts of a building;

C - cultural and historical value: evidence of a role in the cultural and historical life of the community, town or nation, or evidence of particular qualities of craftsmanship or construction;

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E - environmental value: expression of how a building contributes to its setting (aesthetic, environmental or social aspects);
O - originality: the degree to which the original building fabric is extant and repairs to safeguard authenticity are considered possible;
T - technical condition: whether original components can be repaired or replaced in an acceptable manner.

In the above matrices are shown two added parameters:
R – representativity – a decisive criteria for case selection this is seen as an important parameter to read or measure change.
P – level of protection (at national, regional or municipal levels, or none). The presence of protected structures extant amongst case buildings in 2005 is seen as indicator to how the authorities regard the listing/protection decisions as permanent protective measure.

Hatching
In addition in the matrices are shown hatching of different greyness. The heavy grey describes important value assessed. Lighter greys indicate reduced value – as in the case of Tromsikhang and Gorka Nyingpa where transformation of the historic building complex has resulted in severely reduced heritage value.

The fact that very few historical-traditional buildings are extant in Old Lhasa in 2005, warrant full protection of all structures and townscape pre-dating 1960 – and this ‘despite’ the generally accepted ‘fact’ that each individual ‘traditional building may possess low protection value on its own. Each extant building, however, is considered vital as memory of a traditional townscape demolished and transformed from the late 1980s onwards, and representing unique value in terms of built fabric and form, and cultural memory.

6.9.2 Lhasa morphological periods

Differing interpretations constitute confronting positions and representations of Tibet’s history. The objective of the following has been to assemble and structure data of various categories and sources to better understand Old Lhasa as place, and present its development in terms of morphological periods based on investigations and conjecture (Conzen, 1969). Although insufficiently grounded in facts, Old Lhasa of 1950 is seen as a result of settlement form of the early periods ‘Sanctuary and settlement’ and ‘Capital of Tibet’. Much of the following is thus recognised as inferred, albeit where possible based on written, cartographic or visual sources. A morphological period builds on impact of events that have affected the urban form of Lhasa– impacts resulting from ‘dynastic’ controls, social-political policy, issues of territoriality, demographic-economic factors and changing development pressure.298

The irregularity of the Old Lhasa structure of lanes and urban blocks is interpreted to have emerged from a gradual accretion of willed and informal schemes that reflect a tradition of circling sacred sites, needs to expand the settlement, and impacts of changing natural conditions (flooding and earthquakes) over the centuries. The decades from 1950 are here divided into three periods: Settlement in turmoil (1951–1986); A modern city forming (1987–1994); and Historical islands (1995–2005).
Part Five: Case studies

Sanctuary and settlement – Mid-7th to mid-17th century CE.

Marpori and Chakpori hills accommodated the first settlement strongholds that physically protected the central valley, and in turn were spiritually protected by the ‘lha-sa’ and ‘ramoche’ sanctuaries (Goldstein, 1989; Snellgrove & Richardson, 1986). 299

Capital of Tibet – 1642 to 1951.

The initiative by the 5th Dalai Lama that major landowners establish their main residence in Lhasa and take part in government expanded and ‘formalised’ the settlement. The Potala dzong was (re)constructed, and Lhasa gradually formed into a large and expanding village. Outside a denser core Barkor was a loose layout of homesteads, semi-rural manors and monastic institutions, with large gardens and surrounding meadows. Protective town walls protected against invading armies and regular river flooding as well as the outer kora Lingkor defined the settlement.

Gradual 18th and 19th century settlement densification ‘formalized’ private and public spaces and lanes (some of which would later become streets).

In the settlement ‘hinterland’ and surrounding open landscape were located monastic structures and clusters of artisan- and tradesmen’s homesteads – spread through large areas of ‘forested’ fields. Off the south-east corner of Lingkor, agricultural land of the Wabaling area may have turned into ‘built settlement’, mostly for non-Tibetans and ‘excluded’ Tibetans, already before the mid-19th century.

Late 19th century Lhasa had an open character of buildings with gardens within a structure of ‘meandering’ open space – closer knit the nearer Jokhang Temple (supported by known early cartographic material as pictorial ‘thankas’ that depict symbolic and relational relationships).
Part Five: Case studies

Gradual settlement densification led to larger private properties being subdivided and buildings constructed on derivative plots, some facing ‘the other way’ – ie burgages were cut off as tail-end plots onto new lanes and a new geometry developed (Conzen, 1960).

Residual town wall remains were extant into the early 20th century (David-Neel, 1927) but had by all accounts disappeared in 1995 (vague sources and unspecific locations). Traditional routes and tracks trailed along the river valley and across mountain passes, remains of routes and tracks still discernible in early 20th century maps that showed a relatively dense urbanised settlement inside Lingkor (that was surrounded by an expansive area of lingkas or meadows). Inside the settlement were left open large and connected spaces to accommodate seasonal floodwater. At this time Lhasa was composed of three settlements – Barkor around the ‘tha-sa’ sanctuary (Jokhang), and that surrounding Ramoche Temple. The third settlement was located inside and outside the protective walls of the Potala-Shöl enclosure. Outside Barkor, a ‘loose’ structural layout of buildings and meandering areas defined Lhasa. By 1920 some modern building materials had become available. This affected building methods and typology but not the urban form as such. By the early 1930s meadows and gardens between the settlement and Lhasa River represented permanent residential areas as wealthier families moved away from the density and pollution of Barkor – the zone between town and river is hence understood as a residential fringe area to be gradually absorbed into the expanding urban structure (Conzen, 1960).

Main morphological changes in the later part of this period are assumed to have been a continued densification outside Barkor Street, and development of cultivated areas and gardens along the river into a suburban residential area.

A settlement in turmoil - 1951 (1965) to 1978. The Chinese government took firm hold on all aspects of Tibetan life after the people-initiated uprising of 1959 in order to build a Chinese communist society. The restructuring of Tibetan society was to significantly affect urban form.

Around 1960 the PRC government (civil and military authorities) were established in new buildings in Shutri Lingka (the Dalai Lama ‘Throne Gardens’) between Potala–Shöl and the Lhasa River. The PRC government started to build a new city – outlining a street structure, building facilities for the civil and military authorities, and housing for a Han-Chinese population – away from the historical settlement.
Part Five: Case studies

Phenomena later known from the Cultural Revolution in China (1966-1976) came to Lhasa in the early 1960s, and the majority of Tibetan monastic settlements in Lhasa was demolished and emptied with radical ‘adaptive reuse’ (chapter 5). However, now an extraordinary programme of construction was started in Lhasa, and continued through the Cultural Revolution.

As the settlement expanded, the green fringe belt of lingkas was taken over as an urban area, and new fringe belt areas formed outside. Some of the traditional lanes that separated the earlier lingkas ‘reappeared’ in the later orthomorphic street structure (1960s), separating new urban blocks or plan units. The new street structure ‘overlay’ opened Old Lhasa to vehicular traffic. The placing of some new streets appeared ‘sensitive’ in terms of overall settlement form in following historical routes.

By 1965 much of the perimeter areas to the old settlement were developed with a first generation of ‘Chinese’ buildings, only its eastern perimeter remained unaffected.

The new Beijing Shar lam, ‘starting’ from outside Lingkor West ended by the eastern Potala fortification wall. Municipal facilities were completed in Outer Shöl. Between Shutri Lingka and Barkor, Yuthok lam as the first ‘axial’ street was completed, geometrically ‘removed’ from the traditional diagonal route between Jokhang and Potala. Large new work units were located along both sides of the diagonal Yuthok lane, most of this construction reflecting the new orthomorphous geometry, not that of the historical area. This is seen as confirming an early decision (about 1960 as shown in ‘secret’ aerials) to establish Jokhang S quar, constructed 1986-87, and ‘open’ up Barkor. By 1965 also the southern wide main street (Jingdrol Sharlam) long Lhasa river was completed.

Aerials show urban construction in Lhasa to have continued into the 1970s, albeit at a slower pace than earlier. Large volumes of housing for mainly for Han-Chinese new-comers was constructed, much in single storey Chinese barrack style with pitched roofs. With this, the first generation ‘new Lhasa’ was completed, a well documented severe lack of resources (political, financial, human) for urban development, and changing national politics halted further urban development.

Large construction work was nevertheless completed around 1970: filling in several water channels and wet areas, the water channel below Shöl and Chakpori, and clearing the area north of the Jokhang entrance area to construct Mentsikhang lam.
By 1970 a large number of production plants and military camps and installations were established, and the Lhasa population had reached about 80,000 persons in an urban area of nearly 20 sq.km, expanding chiefly towards the west.

Until the late 1970s Old Lhasa was ‘left alone’ as the main Tibetan residential, cultural and commercial district. Although the traditional property divisions, plot structures, had lost their relevance with the state expropriation of all urban land in the early 1960s (chapter 5), much was retained due to a lack of urban development and investment on the historical town.

Although the ‘liberal’ PRC economic policies from 1978 opened the door to external funding, with major urban expansion and property development taking place in new Lhasa, Old Lhasa’s traditional streetscape and built form remained robust into the mid-1980s when efforts to modernise reached the historical kernel.

The 1980 official Lhasa map showed an expanding urban structure, much of the new construction as 2-3 storey work-unit buildings in an urban area reported to total 20 sq.km with a population of 110,000-130,000 persons. The ‘Lhasa Urban Development Plan 1980-2000’ was developed and approved by the central government. In 1986 the Lhasa City population was near 150,000 in an urban area of about 40 sq.km, with a near-even population split of Tibetans and non-Tibetans. Real demolition of historical-traditional buildings had started in Barkor in the early 1980s. Jokhang Square was completed in 1987.

Numerous important institutions (educational, cultural and political) were established Lhasa in this period, most facilities constructed in open areas to the west, north and south-east of Old Lhasa. One of these was Tibet University. New construction gradually ‘filled’ the perimeters of the new urban blocks.

The Lhasa urban development plan 1980-2000 included plans for developing also the south side of Lhasa River in connection with a railway connection being planned to reach Lhasa from China.


Stimulated by the central government economic policies urban development in Lhasa, soon encroached and ‘greyzoned’ the unofficial ‘buffer’ between the old townscape and new urban areas. Old Lhasa was being integrated with the new city. Extensive demolition and new construction in Old Lhasa was carried out in accordance with the not yet approved ‘Barkor Conservation Plan’.

Fig. 229 Lhasa in 1980 (sketch outline). White circle indicates position of Barkor with Jokhang Temple; 2006
Larger housing projects in early 1990s absorbed historical plots and boundaries that had remained as residual features in townscape and ordnance survey maps, thus obliterating the historical-cultural relevance of the old plot structure.\textsuperscript{305} The same year that the Potala Palace and Shöl Complex received World Heritage status (1994), Outer Shöl was demolished and the new Potala Square was constructed.

In Barkor, enlarged building footprints and volumes (mid-1980s onwards) had by 1995 annexed most ‘informal’ open spaces (environmental pockets and windows) that traditionally surrounded and separated buildings inside the historical kernel.\textsuperscript{306} Although in relative respect of traditional building heights (no building allowed higher than Jokhang) this constituted major urban morphological change.\textsuperscript{307} A hybrid ‘urban form’ was recognised as Tibetan households would build ‘organic’ clusters of housing away from the traffic and out of sight (‘Kundeling village’) inside block perimeters that were dominated by the shops, workshops and housing built for the non-Tibetan newcomers. The ‘internal’ Tibetan cluster with buildings, courtyards and incidental lanes and open spaces would resemble traditional village settlements. To what extent this was supported or encouraged by policies of urban planning and social-economic development is not known (related to issues of territoriality, this indicates a potential research topic).\textsuperscript{308} Several activities that were to affect at least the knowledge on urban conservation of Old Lhasa, without necessarily physically ‘marking’ urban morphology as such, took place or were initiated during 1994.\textsuperscript{309}

**Historical islands - 1995 to 2005.**

Demolition and redevelopment continued in Old Lhasa, and repair and upgrading of a few historical-traditional buildings was completed.\textsuperscript{310} Large housing projects took the place of demolished historical-traditional buildings. Vacant sites and any adjacent open space were by the end of the study period all ‘filled’ with construction.

By 1995, about 60% of the number of structures assumed extant in Old Lhasa in 1960 was demolished (280 remained), and Lhasa City had expanded to an area of about 50 square kilometres.\textsuperscript{311} As part of preparations for the national railway link to reach Lhasa (the Golmud-Lhasa train connection completed in 2006) urban neighbourhoods for 200,000 persons were planned on both sides of Lhasa River, and actual urban expansion continued to the west and the east of new Lhasa.
The Potala Palace Ensemble World Heritage property was extended to include the separate areas of Jokhang Temple with Barkor (2000), and Norbulingka (2001). This initiated development of the ‘Lhasa Tourism Development Plan’ – only known to this author from an outline oral presentation (chapter 5).

The Old Lhasa infrastructure project 2002-2004 improved housing conditions (supply and waste networks, external public spaces and lanes stone paved) ‘cemented’ the traditional street and lane structure as a major traditional urban form component.

Lhasa City had by 2005 expanded to an urban area of 90 sq.km, and in Old Lhasa only about 50 historical-traditional buildings were extant (5-7% of the number of historical-traditional buildings that existed in 1960) – the small remaining clusters making the historical kernel appear as fragmented islands within a landscape of modern ‘ordinary’ construction.

The observable Old Lhasa urban morphology was particularly affected by changes to built typology and character of urban blocks as these were ‘filled and densified’ with increased building heights and volumes. Impacts of the ‘Second Lhasa Development and Conservation Plan’ approved in Beijing are not known as not made available, the plan assumed approved by the State Council around 2003.

Traditional townscape diversity changed towards ‘mono-functionality’ of residential and tourism service (commercial use) as also residential streets were commercialised. Nearly all other than monastic buildings were by 2005 demolished.

On an ‘intangible’ level in Old Lhasa several factors caused change, much resulting from ongoing demographic and social-economic processes inside the historical kernel. Han- and Hui-Chinese moved into Tibetan neighbourhoods, and Tibetan individuals and street trade interests increasingly lost to the new settlers (chapters 5 and 6). Other change resulted from ownership transfers, the presence of stronger financial groups (property developers and investors) and change in land-use ‘dictated’ by the urban master plan and expanding economic potentials.

In the New Lhasa City the urban morphology was particularly affected by continued densification of recently constructed urban blocks; with fast urban expansion towards the east, south (including south of the river) and west of earlier urban area ‘limits’.

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6.9.3 Old Lhasa urban conservation

‘As ‘a pearl on the roof of the world’, the Potala Palace embodies the outstanding skills of the dab hands from the Tibet, Han, Mongolian, Manchurian and other nationalities and the great achievements in Tibet’s architectural art. (...) The beauty and originality of the architecture of the site, the rich ornamentation and harmonious integration in a striking landscape, add to the historic and religious interest ('Justification for World Heritage Inscription', State Bureau of Cultural Relics (SACH), Beijing 1993).

‘Because of development pressures in the city of Lhasa, particular attention (should) be given to the mitigation of the changes in the areas surrounding the World Heritage properties' (UNESCO World Heritage Committee, 2001).

A non-contextual ‘international’ approach to urban conservation and urban development may ‘ordinary-make’ a community and environment, and it is generally being recognised that traditional communities need to protect their local culture from excessive impacts of globalisation and dominant national culture (Pieterse, 2004). Dangers of this are often recognised only after major heritage resources are transformed or depleted.

‘Collective national heritage’ was adopted as a political concept by the PRC regime already in 1949, and integrated in the First Five-Year Plan 1953-57 ‘heritage resources should be ‘fitted into’ the bigger scheme of urban planning and development’ (ibid), but were often removed if in conflict with plans for urban development.”

Conflicts between conservation and redevelopment have continued also in historical urban China, and the concept of ‘historico-cultural conservation areas (lishi wenhua baohuqu) was introduced only in 1986 (Lu 2002; Whitehand and Gu, 2007:648). Aiming to bridge conservation of recognised heritage with urban heritage resources and urban conservation in general, the concept was explained as:

‘Protection work should also cover areas where cultural relics are concentrated, and where the historical appearances and local ethnic flavours are best preserved, like the example of a street, a group of buildings, a town or a village etc. The local government at various levels can judge and announce them respectively as their local historical and cultural protection area based on their historical, scientific and artistic values. The protective measures taken in this respect can follow the practices of the cultural heritage protection unit, concentrating on protecting the outlooks and characters as a whole’ (Lu 2002; Whitehand and Gu, 2007:648).

Efforts of urban conservation and social-urban development need to be based on the specific legacy of place, and for Lhasa this means emphasising the Trans-Himalayan Tibetan settlement. Cultural protection would for Lhasa be to prevent Tibetan traditional culture being replaced by a dominating Han-Chinese ‘national’ culture. The central government, however, dictated all development action in Lhasa after 1960 through socio-economic and cultural interventions – as they did in most living historical cultural minority environments in China.

In his Survey of Lhasa, 1948, Peter Aufschnaiter identified in all nearly eight hundred plots and owner- ships within the historical town (788, authors assessment) – not counting the area around the Potala Palace, Shöl and Chakpori. Of these, nearly six hundred plots (76%) were located within the ‘Barkor area’ south of the future Beijing Shar Lam (597, my assessment). The remaining 24% (191 plots) were located north of this street in the ‘Ramoche area’.
Part Five: Case studies

Less than 5% of the plots were listed as ‘lingkas’ or meadows and gardens (authors estimate; Aufschnaiter, 1948), and it is assumed that about 90% of plots contained buildings. On this basis, the Lhasa settlement around 1948 is assumed had between 600 and 700 traditional-historical buildings (all structures built before 1950 defined as traditional; Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001). From available cartographic data and aerial photographs, my estimate is that Lhasa in 1960 had about 600 traditional-historical buildings (Aufschnaiter, 1948; cartographic data; aerials).

The large-cell orthomorphic street structure introduced in Lhasa around 1960 was ‘completed’ during the 1980s. A radical transformation was by the mid-1986 well under way in Old Lhasa. Yuthok Lam had reached the Jokhang entrance area already by 1965, but was not completed until the Jokhang Square was built in 1987 (see aerial 1965; Barnett, 2006).
Already in 1982 Lhasa was by the PRC State Council declared a ‘historic city’ as one of 24 historical settlements on the ‘List of the First Group of Historically and Culturally Famous Cities’.

The picture of change within Lhasa historical town up to 1994 outlined below has been built from available sources – this ‘despite’ the limited reliable documentation being available (published reports by TIN, eye-witness reports, newspaper clippings etc). Already soon after 1985 a significant number of traditional-historical structures had been demolished throughout the historical town (‘thinning out’, see Old Lhasa sketch map 1995).

Protecting built heritage has been an official priority of Lhasa urban development policy since the early 1980s (Lhasa Development Plans; Barkor Conservation Plan 1992), albeit exposed to a regional pragmatic interpretation of ‘conservation’.

Continued demolition of Old Lhasa had by 1995 reduced this number to 293. By 2005 this was reduced to about 50 – most of them monastic structures. An extensive and unique testament to Tibetan culture and traditions has been eradicated. The process of transformation must be recognised as a successful implementation of specifically formulated intentions in the mentioned PRC State Council approved Lhasa Development Plan 1980-2000 and the Barkor Conservation Plan (1991, approved in 1996). Contrary to these vital official planning documents, external surveys had indicated that a majority of the demolished buildings had significant potential to provide good standard traditional housing through upgrading and repairs (LHCA survey; visual surveys by the author and visiting experts; THF surveys 1996-1998).

The importance of preserving the character of Old Lhasa as a special historical area was confirmed by China Central Construction and Planning Authority already in the late 1980s, although most of the old buildings were at this time defined to be demolished due to being ‘dangerous’ or ‘unsafe’ (the Barkor Plan Report, 1991).
Barkor Plan ‘approved’ only a total of 15 building complexes and individual buildings in Lhasa to have ‘some preservation value’ (six were monastic institutions).

Built heritage in Old Lhasa by 1995 played a vital role as income generator for the local community, but possibly most of all for larger pan-Chinese interests in terms of income from growing tourism. Traditional built form, however, in the form of assemblies of and individual ‘anonymous’ buildings and external spaces, was to remain outside legislation, urban conservation plans and heritage resource management. The main aim of government initiated urban development activity in Old Lhasa appears to have been to provide a maximum volume of new housing units within specified limits of cost and time. Activity by external interests (THF) in contrast aimed to provide affordable decent housing by repairing the historical-traditional buildings in collaboration with the residents. Main criticism of the local government in interviews with Old Lhasa residents, focused on the huge economic benefits that were ‘handed’ developers and contractors for fast and cheap but expensive construction.

**Urban conservation approaches**

The repairs and urban conservation approaches used for case buildings (chapter 6) in Old Lhasa were: i) Traditional repairs, ii) Transformation, and iii) Demolition and new construction – and results are summarised as follows:

i) Traditional repairs:
The category is split into the subgroups a) ‘grass-roots’ or ‘bottom up’, b) incremental repairs and upgrading, and c) adaptive reuse.

a) The approach was successful in protecting valuable examples of unique urban heritage and streetscape from demolition or radical transformation – although some for a limited number of years only – and providing good housing at reasonable project cost and housing rent. Initiative and approach were of primary importance in setting standards for conservation and upgrading of historic-traditional buildings in Lhasa.

b) The approach proved to be highly relevant for properties unaffected by urban development activity – until market conditions persuaded also the owner-occupiers of these few remaining properties to provide the plots for larger new construction projects.

c) The approach proved the presence of highly competent Tibetan traditional building contractors in Lhasa – the skills and management capacities of which could be developed and utilised further.
Part Five: Case studies

ii) Transformation: The approach indicated the considerable potentials and threats that faced the historical-traditional building-stock in Old Lhasa into the 1990s – threats that were realised in the vast reduction of historical-traditional structures before 2005.

iii) Demolition and new construction: Grounded in the explicit aims of the State Council approved urban development plans for Lhasa, acute needs of urban housing, and ‘neo-liberal’ national economic policies enabled property developers to collect what are understood to have been uniquely high profits in Old Lhasa during the study period.

Work to case buildings that were upgraded according to method i) was carried out according to the Lhasa Municipal Government approved contract procedures for historical-traditional buildings (Appendix). Residents described the buildings cases of traditional repairs (‘grass roots and participation approach’) as very successful, completed with and for the ‘original’ residents, and without radical housing rent increase resulting (chapter 6).

For the case neighbourhoods, the aims of the government urban development projects were to improve (housing and urban landscape standards), commercialise, densify (population and construction volume) and ‘gentrify’ – the last through ‘in-migration’ of better-off residents – particularly Han- and Hui-Chinese into Old Lhasa. Demolition and ‘reconstruction’ impacts were significant although varying across the three case neighbourhoods. The approaches used for the three neighbourhoods have more in common with ‘urban cleansing’ (of buildings, urban environment and population eviction) than with approaches that are commonly associated urban conservation and upgrading in a unique historical urban landscape (Appendix. Case approach summary matrix).

Urban conservation implemented

The Lhasa Historical City Atlas (LHCA) survey in 1995 (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001) was the first internationally published survey since Aufschnaiter’s survey in 1948. The LHCA Project documented all traditional-historical structures extant inside the outer kora Lingkor, and identified in all 293 traditional-historicl structures – less than 40% of the number of structures estimated to have existed in 1948. Of these 293 extant structures, 219 were located in the area of Barkor, 34 in Ramoche, and 40 in the Potala-Shöl–Chakpori area.
A total of 117 of the 293 extant traditional-historical structures, about 40% of the total number, were protected under national, regional or municipal level heritage management. Of these, 2 were protected at National level (Potala and Jokhang), 11 at TAR Regional level, and 104 at Lhasa Municipal City level. The Old Lhasa urban fabric superimposed on a 1995 Lhasa town map illustrates contrasts in urban form between current PRC ‘Master Plan thinking’ of ‘large-mesh-with-danweis’ and urban blocks, and the ‘fine-mesh’ intimate scale townscape of the historic settlement. The 1995 LHCA project documentation confirmed assumed date of origin of extant traditional-historical structures.
Although ‘real’ dates of origin of buildings in Aufschnaiter’s 1948 survey remain unknown, it seems reasonable conjecture that the extant historic-traditional structures in 1985 included a considerable number of highly important structures in terms of age value, historical and symbolic importance, many forming significant developed structures within the townscape (chapter 2). The 1995 sketch map against that for 1985 shows the extraordinary number of individual buildings and composite developed structures demolished during one decade (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001; http://www.tibetheritagefund.org; www.tibetinfonet.net). The regional and municipal governments during the years 1996-2000 permitted a ‘step-by-step’ approach for upgrading traditional buildings (THF). Potentials of this
approach built up fast as regards local residents and community participation, training of traditional crafts, and ‘products’ in the form of good quality housing provided the residents at a reasonable rent.

The approach, implemented in numerous historical towns as a successful alternative to demolition and new construction, was in reality politically squashed by the authorities in 1999, with the initiating group (THF) expelled from Tibet. Its potential as a realistic approach for urban conservation to retain unique values and qualities in Old Lhasa were lost.

The strategy of comprehensive demolition and new construction that was implemented throughout Old Lhasa 1985-2005 – excepting the above genuine attempts to safeguard unique monumental and vernacular urban heritage – in Old Lhasa seems to confirm the government’ support of a ‘neo-liberal’ property development approach to ‘urban non-conservation’.
Part Five: Case studies

The political goals of governments plans for Lhasa (the Lhasa 1980-2000 Development Plan and the 1992 Barkor Conservation Plan in particular) appear to have been met with a generous margin in terms of the number of housing units provided—at enormous to historical Lhasa.

As a ‘last’ example of a unique Himalayan urban built form and settlement traditions, Old Lhasa as place has been ‘ordinary-made’, a large and continuous townscape turned into ‘anywhere’ by non-contextual urban development contrasting the vernacular monumental heritage that Lhasa manifested into the 1990s. Early signs going ‘unrecognised’, Old Lhasa today contains only dispersed fragments of historical-traditional built form – the extant built resources of Old Lhasa are close to dissipated.

Regional and Municipal level protection of selected building in Old Lhasa have not prevented radical change or even demolition of a considerable volume of them under an urban ‘beautification’ programme. Constructing new housing inside Old Lhasa was clearly deemed more important than working within the criteria by which Lhasa was awarded World Heritage status in 1994 (extended in 2000 and 2001, see below).
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The townscape infrastructure upgrading project implemented 2002-2004 (buried infrastructure) is recognised for reinforcing existing street patterns and hence somewhat reducing or delaying townscape change potentials. Demolitions with new construction projects spanning across several ‘old’ plot boundaries have, however, resulted in radical change of built form.

In summary, change to built heritage and urban form in Old Lhasa are recognised to have resulted from processes deemed either typical of the ‘current’ urban situation (policy and ‘reality’) in China: i.e. as ‘general’ factors of change, or ‘specific’ to the context of Lhasa (see Bjørness, on diversified interpretation of change and territorialism).

A ‘new reality’ represented by systemic change in ownership and functionality (‘private’ sector enterprise and private owners coupled with growing mono-functionality of tourism) with the potentials of new infrastructure illustrate some of the conditions of an uncertain future for Old Lhasa.
6.10 Lhasa World Heritage

Here is presented an outline of the ‘history’ and state of conservation of the Lhasa World Heritage property. As UNESCO World Heritage Committee Decision texts are not expected to be well known or easily accessible (http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/707/documents/), they are included in the Endnotes in full with graphic editing of the original document only.

6.10.1 Potala Palace World Heritage property 1994

In July 1994 the Potala Palace Complex (coordinates N29 39 28.512 E91 7 1.812) was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List under criteria: (i), (iv) and (vi).\(^{314}\) The World Heritage (WH) inscription constituted a long awaited national and international acknowledgement of Tibetan built heritage, and marked a milestone for World Heritage management in China. The Potala WH site included Marpori with the palace and Shöl, Lukhang Lake with the Lukhang Temple (Lukhang Island), the adjoining Lukhang park areas, and to the west a part of the hill Chakpori. The protected area was stated as 60.5000 ha, with a buffer zone of 198.8000 ha (http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/707ter).

I regard the inscription as an illustration of a ‘monumental’ or object-focused approach. The extended Lhasa World Heritage property (Potala-Shöl with two extention areas and three buffer zones) today in my interpretation represents a considerable number of well known modes, dilemmas, opportunities and threats that urban heritage sites and their conservation are exposed to – typical to many complex historic urban landscapes.

At the start of the study period (1995), the buildings and fabric of ‘Outer Shöl’ (outside the fortified walls of Potala-Shöl had just been demolished (in the autumn after the Potala inscription) as part of preparations for the Potala Square that was completed already in spring 1995 (the ‘Lhasa Tiananmen Square’, Chinese: literally ‘Gate of Heavenly Peace’; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiananmen). Neither element was incorporated in China’s application for WH status. The subsequent map from China’s submission to the WH Committee merely shows Potala WH site and buffer zone as approved by the WH
Committee. I regard the buildings and social fabric of ‘Outer Shöl’ to have had definite historic and cultural importance as a part of the Shöl settlement, and the demolition resulting in a clear loss of the Potala-Shöl complex heritage value.

Fig. 242 Potala Palace Ensemble: the World Heritage Property as confirmed by SACH to the UNESCO WH Committee (SACH, PRC, 2008)

6.10.2 Lhasa World Heritage property extensions 2000-2001

In China’s submission to the WH Committee The Potala Palace renominated as the Potala Palace and the Jokhang Temple Monastery for inscription on the World Heritage List – Jokhang Temple Monastery (SACH, Beijing 1999) the WH site extension was shown in two versions, and the World Heritage Committee appeared to have approved both:

a) showing the WH designated site (‘protective zone’) as the area inside Barkor Street of approx 38,000 m² (3.8 ha). The buffer zone (‘construction-restrictive zone’) was defined by the area inside Jingdrol Sharlam (south), Dosenge Lam (Zasengelu, west), Lingkor Chang Lam (north), and Lingkor Sharlam (east), an area measured to in all approx 1,265,000 m² or 126,5 ha (see Map 2 of the submission).

b) the other version showing the WH site restricted to the building complex of Jokhang Temple Monastery, an area of about 15,000 m² (1.5 ha), with the buffer zone (‘construction-restrictive zone’) limited to inside Barkor Street (see Map 3 of the submission).
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Map 4 of the State Party submission may support this second definition, and shows an area of urban blocks adjacent to Barkor Street to be of ‘second grade protection’, but without describing this classification further. The alternative and directly conflicting data given by the State Party appears surprisingly enough not to have been an issue of discussion for the WH Committee at the time of inscription, and the intention of the above maps remains unclear.

Fig. 243 Potala Palace Ensemble: final delimitation of the WH Property and Buffer Zone by SACH, PRC to the WH Committee in 2008 (SACH, PRC 2007)

World Heritage Committee decision in 2000

In the Jokhang-Barkor extension submission (1999), the Potala-Shööl WH site and buffer already appear in two variations (maps 2 and 3 as above), without this being queried by the WH Committee. At the time when the Jokhang-Barkor extension was approved (2000), the number of traditional-historic buildings in Lhasa had been reduced from 293 in 1995 (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001) to about 150 (50%), without the process of demolition and new construction apparently raised as an issue in WH Committee deliberations (or by ICOMOS). The accelerating demolition and new construction should have given reason to serious concerns being expressed officially on the relevance of the Barkor area, or Old Lhasa, as a World Heritage historic urban landscape.
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Fig. 244 Potala Palace and Jokhang Temple Barkor: the World Heritage Property extended in 2000 to include the Jokhang Temple Monastery and Barkor urban structure (SACH, PRC, 2000)

In the State Party’s submission The Expanded Potala Palace-Norbulingka–Jokhang Monastery Project in Lhasa – Norbulingka (SACH, Beijing, 2000) the WH site (protective zone) was stated as 36 ha, but appears to measure only about 14 ha, with buffer zone (construction control zone) stated to extend 200 m beyond the WH property boundaries that would make a WH buffer zone of 43 ha (57 minus 14 ha).
World Heritage Committee decision in 2001

The buffer zone shown – maps 3 and 4 of the Norbulingka submission differed and were not to scale but when checked on scaled maps appeared to measure a total of ca 61 ha (gross 75-14). Regardless of size of WH buffer zone, this author interpreted the proposed nomination not to adequately protect the WH designated areas from ongoing and adjoining high volume and density urban construction (Sinding-Larsen, 2000 ICOMOS internal).

World Heritage Committee Decision in 2004

Most of the above committee decisions repeated committee conclusions of 2002 as proposed to the committee by this author in the form of recommendations, at the request of the UNESCO WH Centre (Sinding-Larsen, 2002).

A continuous problem with the material submitted for the Lhasa WH properties has been that from the 1994 submission onwards, the maps supplied by China were not to any stated scale, and the material seen as insufficient. Further, no specific (details of) urban planning control measures for all three WH areas were proposed by the State Party or requested by the WH Committee (on building heights within and outside the WH extension area, adjacent urban development pressure).
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Fig. 248 Potala Palace-Jokhang-Norbulingka World Heritage Property: three components; 2002

Fig. 249 Lhasa World Heritage Property as delimited in SACH PRC Nomination Document 2000

Fig. 250 The Lhasa World Heritage Property, as delimited by SACH, PRC in 2008
Fig. 251 The Jokhang Temple Monastery and Barkor part of the Lhasa World Heritage Property, as finally delimited by SACH, PRC in document presented to the UNESCO WH Committee in 2008.

Fig. 252 The Lhasa World Heritage information signboard in front of Jokhang Temple (Jokhang Square) was soon taken over by eager new street traders (March 2002, left) and by October 2002 entirely appropriated; 2002
6.11 Territoriality and lifeworld in Old Lhasa

‘Barkor, the holy area for all Tibetans is also an important marketplace particularly for the lower income sector, and both sides of the shop counters traditionally belonged to Tibetans. With commercial pressures there are changes in ownership and control of shops, and weaker Tibetan interests are pushed out. New vendors have taken over not only established market streets but also quiet streets that never saw street trade, turning them into markets. A fundamental competition for control of space has in the last five years already been won by strong newcomers, Han- and Hui-Chinese settlers. New developers’ and vendors’ interests in Barkor are a result mainly of the World Heritage status’ (Tibetan academic).

To better understand individual conditions of livelihoods and lifeworlds (chapter 7) in Old Lhasa, the study made extensive of interviewing. No reliable official data has been available as the government published TAR Statistical Yearbook does not go into such areas, or if producing relevant data restrict this to the Chinese language version.

A widely accepted definition is that ‘a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living’ (Chambers and Conway, 1992). Access to basic services within health, education and safe watersupply and sanitation are clearly part of this, as are also access to affordable housing and security of tenure – the latter also one of the main indicators in the ‘UN Millenium Development Goals’. A livelihood ‘is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain and enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels in the long and short term’ (Chambers and Conway, 1992).

Most Old Lhasa respondents having come for the work opportunity and Lhasa’s ‘open city’ status (whilst retaining close contacts with their ancestral village, ‘real’ home), more than 2/3 of them described themselves as recent settlers (5 to 10 years) with little roots and knowledge of Lhasa.

Migration into Lhasa 1960-1980 contributed to considerable overcrowding, Old Lhasa taking on some characteristics of ‘ghetto’. It is assumed that a majority of the Tibetan migrants, as rural poor, were primarily absorbed into the informal sectors of the Lhasa economy. As population density increased, environmental standards were reduced, in 1995 with visually recognisable signs of extensive poverty.
The rural-urban migration possibly started, however, with the early 20th century ‘modernisation’ efforts. After 1980, Han-Chinese settlers constituted the significant volume of migration into Lhasa, first into the new urban areas, and then gradually competing with less well-off Tibetans over commercial space and housing in Old Lhasa (‘Contest of space and potential’). Signs of poverty in Old Lhasa in 2005 seemed reduced. This is interpreted to be partly in consequence of major infrastructure upgrading, housing renewal and a partly new population in Old Lhasa. Poorer and ‘informal’ Tibetan residents were in the study period evicted or simply relocated themselves to cheaper housing – many ending up in villages at considerable distance form Lhasa with less job-security. The Old Lhasa population is changing fast with volumes of Han- and Hui-Chinese settling in the historic kernel (no official data available to back up the claim; issues of urban poverty and demography outside the study scope).

6.11.1 On Lhasa representation – people and place

‘New myths spring up beneath each step we take’ (L. Aragon, 1980 in Bishop, 2000).
‘Views of cultures as collective phenomena, of symbols and meanings as public and shared, need to be qualified by a view of knowledge as distributed and controlled’ (Roger M. Keesing, 1987:161 quoted in Fjeld, 2005:96).
‘There are so many changes in Lhasa compared to when I left 15 years ago. Also after I returned from India. Old Lhasa is totally changed but Tibetans are exactly the same. I feel that my life is uncertain, often changing direction. I feel indifferent about the future, like many young people in Lhasa’ (young female kudrak-descendent).

Related to issues of territoriality, individual understanding, and social and physical development, the question ‘what defines Old Lhasa and its borders at present and in the past’ may suggest that the perception of Lhasa is different today from what it was earlier. Most respondent interviews indicated that Old Lhasa residents have restricted knowledge about the environment in which they live.

Sacred and secular

Old Lhasa respondents expressed a very strong place attachment to their historic town, something that Tibetans living outside the historical kernel appeared to focus less on.

Most Tibetan respondents described Lhasa as place in secular terms. This led this researcher to have suspicions of the opposite being the case – a ‘conscious’ understating of the importance of the Tibetan Buddhist lifeframe would confirm the importance of the sacred dimensions of Lhasa.

A secular emphasis might be explained in the present political-social context with lack of religious freedom for many – particularly public sector employees in Lhasa – this despite the fact that all citizens in China are granted religious freedom by the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China. Faced with two interviewing strangers (interpreter and researcher), public sector employees and others dependent on public sector goodwill – i.e. most citizens – might fear negative responses from government representatives in return for their personal openness. The above could, however, indicate a
bias and paranoia by me, who like most others have experienced occasions of anxiety in Lhasa when under the scrutiny of the official security system – whether imagined than real.

To many Old Lhasa respondents the ‘new’ orthomorphic street structure was a representation of the new society that had – with economic development and processes of modernising society – secularised Lhasa’s landscape and reduced their spiritual connectivity to power-points such as Potala and Jokhang. That the modern street structure has altered traditional routes of movement and access to, and presence of, holy sites, and hence affected ‘religious behaviour’, was stated as beyond dispute.

**Lhasa defined**

The physical and mental territory of Old Lhasa is identified by four physical objects: In the west the Yuthok bridge; in north Ramoche temple; in east the main Mosque; in south the Tsarong estate – now part of the military command area (Rinpoche Choky Gyaltsen, 2002.04.18) . Educated Tibetans and members of the monastic community described Lhasa as centred on Jokhang (physically and spiritually) and extended westwards to include Potala-Shöl and Norbulingka. The Ramoche area north of Beijing Shar Lam (Ramoche, Shide and Tsonomling neighbourhoods), a natural part of the Old Lhasa townscape remained surprisingly absent in my respondents ‘delimitation’ of the historical town. Spiritually Lhasa was perceived to include the Sera and Drepung monasteries on the
northern edge of the Lhasa Valley – and even Ganden Monastery located some kilometres to the east. In contrast government representatives described Lhasa as Lhasa City, with Old Lhasa as a quaint old district for seeing glimpses of an old way of life – and for income generating from tourism.

Tangible and intangible

All Tibetan respondents expressed intangible heritage to be ‘much more important’ than built heritage, holding traditional cultural knowledge of Tibet in high regard – knowledge that most of them did not have but ‘saw’ being kept by descendents of the noble families and monk officials (Tibetan: kudrak: noble families, aristocracy; Tibetan: tsidrung: monk officials). As ‘cultural experts’ on Tibetan society, kudrak knowledge defined social and cultural memory of Tibet, and was as ‘control’ of the past, culture and history seen to support cultural continuity (personal communications; (Fjeld, 2005:63, 79, 96, 110).

Parallel Lhasas

Different Lhasas may always have existed, varying in form and character with the interpreter’s perception and perspective. Contributing personal interpretations of place, respondents insisted that different Lhasas exist ‘for residents, administrators or visitors, Tibetans, and Hui- or Han-Chinese, but avoided being precise on content and difference (presence of ‘otherness’?). Some respondents argued that Lhasa represents not only different Lhasas but two contrasting ‘worlds’: One ‘world’ – Lhasa City – was defined through the ‘official Lhasa value system of the PRC, TAR and Lhasa City governments’ and manifested in policies of official atheism, economic development, social controls and unity with the ‘Chinese Motherland’. ‘Belonging’ to the government and non-Tibetan settlers, Lhasa City was ‘Red Lhasa’ with non-Tibetan residents described as ‘aliens and foreigners’ (personal communications; Fjeld, 2005).

‘Real or White Lhasa’ was by Old Lhasa residents described as the remnants of pre-1960 Lhasa centred on the ‘lha-sa’ sanctuary (Jokhang), where religion saturated life, and traditions and ‘Tibetan-ness’ were shown through compassion and merit building in the spirit of ‘yara’, in Tibetan meaning being good, respectful, humble and polite (personal communications). Old Lhasa Tibetan respondents described the two to coexist in daily collaboration and conflict, with that ‘world’ representing the PRC perceived as already having ‘won’. Several respondents held that living as ‘Tibetan at heart’ was increasingly more difficult than living as ‘Red at heart’ – for political, cultural and practical reasons (Fjeld, 2005:134). Old Lhasa interviewees held that the new urban areas existed outside their own ‘lifeworld’ – although on a scale varying from ‘not existing’ to being ‘very good’ – but with ‘unease’ expressed towards the
new urban areas and non-Tibetans. I would hold that both ‘worlds’ are easily ‘idealised’ and interpreted as real. New Lhasa (the new urban areas) for many respondents remained culturally and spiritually – but not functionally – distanced from the life of many Old Lhasa Tibetans. Early impressions that respondents across categories shared considerable intersubjective pre-understanding of for instance how ‘Tibetan-ness’ would direct opinions, was weakened as influence of individual lifeworlds was expressed as dominant.

**Personal and ‘in-between’ versus the political**

The sub-section relates to how change to Old Lhasa built heritage and urban form is physically expressed and understood, starting with issues of personal lifeworlds and territoriality that may contribute to understanding attachment to place. Investigations on individual Old Lhasa lifeworlds had emphasis on living conditions and livelihood, changes to which represent part of overall processes of change (chapters 2 and 6).

![A large number of Old Lhasa residents - and rural farmers - depend on daily sale of 'religious goods' in Old Lhasa for their livelihood; 2003](image)

On ‘explaining’ the old town to me, they would come forward on issues part of their personal lifeworlds, with anything outside this described as ‘political’ and therefore ‘not relevant for discussion’. Was
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anything beyond the personal possibly ‘not permitted’ – or was the respondent simply taking refuge in convenient and harmless politically approved ‘system-speak’ for passing foreigners?

For many respondents Lhasa as community and place seemed to exist as a tightly controlled society and in parallel an informal social community, unhinged from that same bureaucracy: ‘Our community is administered through unexplained rules and by an external (Chinese) hierarchy’ – ‘We live on the edge of the formal society and welfare system, in an ‘inbetween lifeworld’ (personal communications). This ‘inbetween-ness’ was argued to increase with the ongoing ‘spatial- and potentials takeover’ by non-Tibetans in Old Lhasa (Appendix). Numerous respondents spoke of loss of traditional social infrastructure, despite appreciating opportunities of increased social and economic mobility within the current Lhasa community. Interviewed kudrak descendents and monks emphasised concerns over reduced shared civic pride, ability and will to collaborate – stressing loss of empathy between individuals and across the community.

Kudrak descendents amongst the Old Lhasa respondents emphasised their strong informal social networks across Old and new Lhasa, linking individuals across the hierarchical government-structured community (chapter 2).

Fig. 256 Young nuns chanting on Barkor for money; 2004

Case-related interviews indicated that many respondents remain outside the formal social and economic system. This could be quite typical for the Tibetan Old Lhasa population – if not for the large Tibetan population living outside the historical kernel.
Main reasons for a reduced ‘relevance’ of the formal economy for so many, appears to be a combination of them not having a Lhasa hukou (urban household registration), low language and knowledge skills that may exclude them from jobs in public and private sectors, and lack of knowledge on – or anxiety of – how to approach the authorities. Alternatively this could express prejudice from the system and from the population group concerned.

Although most Old Lhasa respondents considered the current economic development to be little relevant to their own lifeworlds, they appreciated without exception the government’s top priority on economic and welfare development (infrastructure, housing, education and healthcare). A few respondents claimed to have a written contract with the municipal government giving their family housing for life, but were not willing to show documents.

Residents with Lhasa hukou appeared considerably more relaxed than the non-hukou’s as regards all contact with government, including the aspect of tenure safety.

Government representatives paid little attention towards possible benefits of local community engagement – the subject of community empowering appearing absent from current Lhasa governance policy. The old town community itself seemed rather distant from the concept of community engagement on any issue – beyond responding as required to rare government requests.

The above to me suggests that transformation of society has seriously destroyed traditional social-cultural practice and cohesion, with social polarisation resulting – at least on ‘the outside’. In contrast, however, observations indicate that traditional culture and way of life are dominant also for urban Tibetan residents living outside Old Lhasa. This is supported by concerns expressed for following traditional religious practice and observing rituals, particularly those associated with life cycles (births and deaths).

A clear ‘conclusion’ is that Tibetan Buddhism remains very much alive despite concerted efforts towards the opposite. A ‘disembedding’ and alienation from one’s own place appears nevertheless to have resulted from a loss of individual influence on livelihood. The distance between individuals and the authorities in Lhasa society today could possibly be as serious as that of pre-19660 Lhasa – but now with the important larger family or clan as social institution no longer present.

Issues of territoriality (chapter 2) remained central throughout the study in terms of the dignity of traditions, sense of responsibility for cultural resources (here particularly built heritage), and respect for
specific, or others’ codes of behaviour and value systems – territoriality thus affecting both soft and hard aspects of respondents’ lifeworlds.

The wish was often expressed by Old Lhasa respondents to live near or even inside sacred sites and be close to their own deities, the ultimate privilege being that of living close to the Jokhang Temple – and held as major reason for the continuous increase of Tibetan residents and density of buildings in the Barkor area. Respondents expressed distinct ‘pride of place’ for the personal privilege granted them for being able to make daily spiritual journeys and merit-making amongst sacred sites.

Fig. 258 Pilgrims - urban and rural enjoying a Barkor circumambulation; 2004

Today several communities of different codes of behaviour, value sets and backgrounds live in parallel in Old Lhasa: Kashmiris, Hui-Muslims and Han-Chinese alongside ‘rural and urban’ Tibetans. This cultural and social pluralism and expressed presence or lack of social integration and infrastructure, identity and sense of belonging thus characterises the contemporary Old Lhasa community. In chapter 8 I shall return to some of these issues, in a revisit of perspectives of territoriality, cultural pluralism and ethno-development (Appendix).
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**Individuals and authorities**

Old Lhasa respondents expressed concerns that leaders down to the level of neighbourhood (street) committees were appointed by the government through closed elections – contrasting with practice developing elsewhere in China. Not applauding the authorities easily, the respondents disproved of the authorities’ tradition of penalising citizens’ openness or disagreement. Little opportunity for dialogue given community and individuals by the authorities, most Old Lhasa respondents expressed anxiety towards involvement with local government representatives.

A request to the authorities for needed repairs of a traditional residential building was reported to have often resulted in the authorities evicting the residents, and demolishing and ‘reconstructing’ the building for the purpose of ‘needed urban cleaning’. Residents were often not consulted, the needs of demolition were generally not explained, and eviction might take place with only a few days notice (personal communications; chapter 6). Numerous residents admitted to being unable to meet the high rents of new ‘reconstructed’ housing.

**Dialogue opportunity**

A couple of times each year local government representatives would appear at compulsory meetings at which all registered neighbourhood households had to be represented. Policies and outline plans would be explained to the residents on a need-to-know basis – ‘informed and instructed on issues regarded to be of relevance to us, but dialogue is rarely allowed’ (personal communications). A stern top-down hierarchical system of governance in Lhasa appears to have ‘kept a lid on’ most forms of citizen engagement. Consequences of this may be the clearly recognisable feeling that residents show little responsibility for the urban environment they share, and limited awareness of Lhasa’s unique heritage resources.

**Central administration**

Senior central government officers made it clear that all issues concerning development and planning matters in Lhasa – as for Tibet – are administered by the PRC State Council in Beijing – ‘the political sensitivity of everything concerning Tibetan’ was given in explanation (personal communications). Hopes to establish community-empowering processes – potentially realistic ‘elsewhere’ in China for instance urban conservation with community participation – therefore at present appear unrealistic for Lhasa and Tibet.
6.11.2 On personal income

Based on information from a small number of key informants willing to discuss personal issues, it appears that salary and wage levels were fairly stable in the period 1995-2000, even somewhat reduced for individuals in the service sector (large influx of job seekers). After 2000 salary levels were said to have increased as indicated below:

Tibetan respondents in Old Lhasa maintained that personal income from informal street trade was normally significantly lower (often by 50%) than ‘average’ figures for 2005. Increasing trade with other regions in China were known to bring major financial rewards within sectors such as property development, finance, trade and tourism, but the income collected by commercial interests outside Tibet (interview respondents). A majority of key informants expressed that the current national focus on economic development in Lhasa had resulting in community polarisation and segregation, and cultural degradation – i.e. not including the Tibetan population.

Table 6.11.2.A Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category income</th>
<th>1995-2000 in RMB/month</th>
<th>2005 in RMB/month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary wage</td>
<td>600-750</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle/good income</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>2000-3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High income/ and academics</td>
<td>1200-1500</td>
<td>3500-4000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numerous Old Lhasa respondents – with Lhasa hukou and without – stated they owed their ‘entire life and livelihood’ to Lhasa holy sites and their economic potentials. A large number of individuals and families described their dependence on daily income from informal street-trade as well as accommodation there. Considerable anxiety was expressed over the ongoing economic change and increasing government taxation.

Many Old Lhasa respondents stated they were totally dependent on informal economic activity in the old town to sustain life for their family. Some expressed that being able to both live and work in Old Lhasa holy sites was a wonderful personal privilege. Others ‘admitted’ to be working in new Lhasa, but living in Old Lhasa out of economic necessity – cheaper housing being available there. Many Old Lhasa respondents appeared creative in using any opportunity to make an income, whether from trading, sales, subletting, gambling and broking, to legal and illegal property transactions. Government officials were said often to be involved in such transactions, ‘initiating and setting up operations and taking the larger share of the profit’ (personal communications).

Respondent input on general living expenses during the study period indicated a rise at least in parallel with that of average per capita disposable household income, stated in official statistics as: 1990: 1613 RMB; 1999: 5998 RMB; 2000: 6448 RMB; 2003: 8058 RMB.
The average wage has risen; from 1990: 3181 RMB, in 1999: 12904 RMB; in 2000: 14976 RMB, in 2003: 26005 RMB. The urban population on TAR has risen from being 17.4% of gross population in 1990 to about 20% in 2003 (Tibet Statistical Yearbooks, 2001 and 2003).

6.11.3 On housing

The Lhasa Municipal Housing Bureau provided and managed all housing in Lhasa well into the 1990s, gradually to be ‘competing’ with an increasingly aggressive ‘private sector’ of semi-public property developers – ‘private sector’ companies were established by earlier senior public sector personnel in partnership with outside-Tibet financial interests (personal communications). Respondents described ‘private sector’ activity in Old Lhasa to be very high, even when compared to that of ‘new’ Lhasa, the major reason stated to be the municipal policy to reconstruct Old Lhasa – demolish the old and construct new housing – in a ‘free’ market for people without Lhasa residential permits (hukou).

Residents without Lhasa hukuo said they still had no access to free health and education services, but could – as far as they knew – stay in Old Lhasa as long as they wished or their lease lasted (this varied with the rental or purchase agreement they had entered into). Also in Old Lhasa, the maximum purchased use rights period (70 years) defined in PRC legislation was said to apply, although several respondents had bought shorter leases, down to 20 and 25 years (at Tromsikhang). A general problem in Lhasa concerning use rights generally was described to be the government expropriating land and property for ‘infrastructural’ or other public development project (often used).

A few respondents stated they had ‘always’ had Lhasa hukuo, and to be living in housing that was guaranteed them by the state. In the increasingly commercial environment of Old Lhasa of the study period, many of them appeared to be amongst the least well-off and most exposed residents – representing a segment of the Tibetan population easily marginalised. Little is however known, beyond hear-say, about sales of use right for housing.

Documented evictions in Old Lhasa during the study period 1995 – 2005 stated to affect 10-20.000 persons who were ‘relocated’ from ‘informal’ accommodation in the old town through urban upgrading and redevelopment activity (Leckie, xx; TIN, xx). Many of these residents were said to have been relocated out of Lhasa to cheap housing in villages at a considerable distance from the city, and with further reduced opportunities to find work. The government approved system of compensating evicted residents was said not to apply to ‘non-hukou’ residents in Lhasa. I have, however, found no official data to back up the above claims. The population in Old Lhasa has, however, visibly changed between 2000 and 2005, with large numbers of Han- and Hui-Chinese settling and trading in the historical kernel.327 Residents with Lhasa ‘hukou’ appeared more relaxed as regards safety of tenure than informal or seasonal residents. An often met concern was nevertheless that a request to the government for
building repairs could be met with their own eviction, building demolition and reconstruction of larger, more expensive housing. ‘Hukuo-residents’ expressed less anxiety for such ‘building make-over’ (demolition and reconstruction) or for a Han-Chinese take-over, compared to ‘non-hukuo’ residents. ‘Hukuo-residents’ have until recent few years been guaranteed housing by the authorities, but increasingly find themselves exposed to huge rent increases and demands to vacate. They can still be evicted, but only through months of mismanagement of their rental and other obligations as citizens. Informal residents (including the large population of seasonal residents) enjoy no safety of tenure. On failing to pay monthly rent, they may be given only a few days notice to vacate. It has not been possible to obtain any written or clear information on this central livelihood issue that in one way or another would affect all Old Lhasa residents (personal communications).

‘Reconstruction’ would normally mean increased built volume, number of floors – and higher rents that a large number of respondents admitted to being unable to meet.

‘Older’ hukou respondents claimed to have a written contract with the municipal government giving themselves and their children housing for life, although no-one was prepared to show such documents. The multiple case study documented the government’s ultimate approval of the large-scale demolition and reconstruction in the historic town (1995-2005) that was established as the main goals of state council approved planning documents. Implementing the overall intentions of the 1992 ‘Barkor Conservation Plan’ – providing more and improved standards of housing – could alternatively have been achieved through an approach of incremental repairs and upgrading of existing buildings. Although this could have resulted in a somewhat reduced number of housing units achieved through the new construction, such a strategy would have retained essential characteristics and heritage values of the historic town, and developed traditional knowledge and skills as living practice and capacity.

Old Lhasa respondents who were affected by demolition and construction maintained that they were rarely if ever consulted, the needs of demolition generally not explained, and evictions often taking place with a few days notice. Linked to the above, Old Lhasa respondents expressed concerns that leaders and members of their own neighbourhood (street) committees were still appointed by the government, with little freedom of action and expression granted to residents – in contrast to what they believed to be current practice elsewhere in China.

Unemployment levels were high in Old Lhasa throughout the study period, and by key informants said to be rising at 30-40% – affecting most Tibetan households in Old Lhasa (interview statements). A high standard of Chinese language skills was in 2005 essential for young Tibetans to secure any employment. Young Tibetan family members were therefore reported to leave Lhasa for anywhere they could see work opportunity.

Onsite surveys and repeat interviews indicated that through the study period, Old Lhasa changed from being a near mono-cultural Tibetan society towards a multiethnic and multi-cultural society. In 1995 the
majority of buildings in Old Lhasa had Tibetan residents only (residential or commercial), with little noticeable change before 2000. By 2005, however, Han-Chinese individuals and families had in considerable numbers moved into the old town. To illustrate, Jamyang had in 1995 only one seasonal non-Tibetan resident (Chinese shop-keeper). In 2005 this had increased to 15-20% of the total number of permanent residents (according to interview sources; not possible to collect or find reliable relevant documentation on this issue). Although Tibetan residents were strongly ‘hanging on to’ their housing in Old Lhasa, many in 2005 seemed increasingly anxious about the future: ‘If you let (a room) to one Chinese in your house, then one day you will loose the entire house’ (older Tibetan resident).

The data collected can also on this topic hence provide a very limited outline of a large picture only, and could incorrectly reflect a ‘real’ situation, as reliable information on livelihood conditions and change would require a living conditions survey.

Cost of housing

The following provides data on costs of housing inside and outside Old Lhasa, based on interviews with residents of the properties identified in the table. Public statistics in this sector were not available. Average rents for an average 40-50 M2 housing unit in Old Lhasa (most new housing would in 2002 be: three rooms with a ‘bathroom’: 300-400 RMB per month, and three rooms without ‘bathroom’: 200-300 RMB per month (interview data).

Into the late 1990s, housing rent levels for all hukuo-residents in Lhasa remained low – as they did throughout most of China as part of the social security package provided by the state to all members of public sector work-units. The monthly rent for a 3-4 room housing unit in a major city could be 10-20 RMB or less, and in Lhasa in single figures (from 2 to 10 RMB). Rent levels were said to vary between categories of ‘owning’ institutions, ie whether direct or indirect government owned. Most public sector workunits still provided free housing. A large volume of housing in Old Lhasa (possibly around 40%) was in 1995 ‘owned’ (life-long lets) by hukuo-residents. Much of this was sublet at large profits to unregistered and seasonal non-hukuo residents (interview communications). In Old Lhasa also public rent levels were raised significantly around 2000, depending on specific circumstances of management, ownership, location, demand and urban development potential.

Table 6.11.3.A  Old Lhasa rent levels in 2002

A summary of data for specific properties assembled from key respondent interviews was in part contradictory – and is presented below. This can only serve as a preliminary sketch that should be verified by further indepth data collection (if only available and possible).
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation at:</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Size unit – M²</th>
<th>2002 – RMB/month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tsomonling, with ID</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsomonling, sublet</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meru Nyingba, w/ ID</td>
<td>Upgraded traditional</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meru Nyingba, no ID</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamyang -2000, w/ ID</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamyang 2000- w/ ID</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shatra, with ID</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shatra, no ID</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tromsikhang, with ID</td>
<td>New ‘traditional’</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tromsikhang, no ID</td>
<td>New ‘traditional’</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonsho, with ID</td>
<td>Upgraded traditional</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonsho, no ID</td>
<td>Upgraded traditional</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector, no ID</td>
<td>W/ bathrm / no ‘bathrm’</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>150-250+, 300-400+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:
- ID – the resident possessed a Lhasa residence permit, ‘hukou’;
- Traditional – traditional building maintained with traditional/nominal repairs;
- Upgraded traditional – traditional building fully upgraded, repaired by traditional building methods;
- New ‘traditional’ – new construction built according to so-called ‘traditional’ methods and design.

Housing for sale

A housing project appointed building contractor would normally have to accept a significant economic risk by the Lhasa Housing Bureau, often in the form of financing the construction of and selling 40 out of every 100 housing units in a project – only the remaining 60 units paid for through the contract. The contracting companies that I approached (one developer-contractor, one contractor) stated that they had positive experience with this arrangement, and regarded the risk-taking as ‘promising’ for contractors in a buoyant property market.

The municipal government appears to have awarded contracts for new housing in Old Lhasa to a small number of ‘private’ construction and development companies – the majority of the construction volume in Old Lhasa since 1995 may have been shared by two or three companies (communications with residents and government representatives). The Lhasa Housing Bureau as municipal agency responsible for public housing was said to have administered most of the projects, also constructing housing for public sector institutions.

Cost of new housing

To buy an average size and standard housing unit inside Old Lhasa – for instance purchasing use rights for a flat of about 50 M2 for a period of 50 years at Tromsikhang, was in 2000 reported to cost 60,000 RMB and in 2005 about 100,000 RMB – or an increase of 60% over 5 years. Such a housing price increase would be regarded as extremely high and rather worrying in most urban property markets worldwide. In Old Lhasa the cost increase would exclude a majority of Tibetan residents from ever owning their own housing – despite a positive increase in income and living standards. The resident
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would still in 2005 in Lhasa, however, not be paying the gross asking price. The municipal government would subsidize the purchase by paying 25% of the gross amount (starting date of the policy is not known).

Even with the ‘documented’ increase in personal income (monthly average from 1400 RMB in 1995 to 2000-3000 RMB in 2005) it seems clear that an ordinary household also in 2005 would have problem with paying interest and repayments on a loan of 75000 RMB – possibly paying 35% of income for financing their housing in an environment of significant cost increase (ref: interview communications; Tibet Statistical Yearbook).

Table 6.11.3.B Cost of newbuilt housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Size of unit M2</th>
<th>Unit cost 2000 RMB</th>
<th>Unit cost 2005 RMB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary standard</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80-100.000</td>
<td>120.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary standard</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120-150.000</td>
<td>180.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher standard</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>200.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher standard</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>300.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super standard</td>
<td>250 +</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>600.000 - 1.500.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.11.4 On land costs

The interviews provided only patchy input on the cost of land for construction within Lhasa – inside Old Lhasa and outside. This should be accepted as rudimentary, hardly providing a realistic picture of the situation.

Table 6.11.4.A Cost of land

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Location</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inside Old Lhasa</td>
<td>1400 Rmb (about 150 USD)</td>
<td>4000-6000 Rmb (450 to 650 USD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wabaling, inside Old Lhasa</td>
<td>2500 + Rmb (275-400 USD)</td>
<td>6000-7500 Rmb est.d (650 upwards USD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lhasa City outside Old Lhasa</td>
<td>1000-2000 Rmb (100-160 USD).</td>
<td>2500-3000 Rmb (275 to 350 USD).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Wabaling area (1995 majority of Han-Chinese) inside Old Lhasa, the high land costs express a shortage of land available in the restricted Wabaling area. The figures for 2002 and 2005 were given by and discussed with a number of reliable individuals involved in property development in Lhasa, but appear exceptionally high. If correctly reported, it is assumed that the property developers would be willing to take extraordinary risks, realistic only with ‘cheap’ external financing from elsewhere in China, some possibly part of international groups driving up cost levels – in anticipation of huge profits over the next decade. To illustrate, real estate property prices in urban China (70 large cities) are assumed to
have continued to increase by more than 12% also for the year May 2009 to May 2010 – and this after the financial downturn.328

6.11.5 Contest of space and place

‘Barkor, the holy area for all Tibetans is also an important marketplace particularly for the lower income sector, and both sides of the shop counters traditionally belonged to Tibetans. With commercial pressures there are changes in ownership and control of shops, and weaker Tibetan interests are pushed out. New vendors have taken over not only established market streets but also quiet streets that never saw street trade, turning them into markets. A fundamental competition for control of space has in the last five years already been won by strong newcomers, Han- and Hui-Chinese settlers. New developers’ and vendors’ interests in Barkor has happened mainly as a result of the recent World Heritage status’ (Tibetan academic).

Spatial appropriation329 is described to be present in urban environments at all times, and to be particularly recognisable in environments subject to rapid change through a ‘sudden’ presence of external interests.330 These and linked processes of globalisation, affect – in parallel reinforcing and diminishing internal and external ‘perceptions’ of place – of the study object.

Statistics on population size, distribution and demographic change in Old Lhasa during the study period have not been available – neither in terms of ethnic-cultural population groups, relative volumes (or %) of population groups or persons resident in Old Lhasa over time.

Data from my own surveys (1995, 1998, 2002, 2005) shown in data and diagrammatic forms below, indicate significant changes in ownership and/or control of commercial and residential space in Old Lhasa. An assumption that may be drawn from the surveys is that increasing volumes of non-Tibetan settlers continue to move into Old Lhasa, and that the majority of them are Han- and Hui-Chinese.

Although my data comes from informal visual surveys, I consider the weight of the data to strongly indicate an increasing competition of spatial and economic potential having taken place in Old Lhasa at least since the mid-1990s.

According to my on-site visual observations and notes, during the study period the Tibetan ‘control’ of commercial space and potential in Old Lhasa has been reduced from about 80% towards a mere 20%.

Interviews with Old Lhasa respondents indicate that parallel spatial contests have taken place for residential space.

As shown by my survey data, in 1995 about four fifths (ca 80%) of all shops and commercial activity of commercial activity in Old Lhasa was by Tibetan respondents described as in Tibetan ‘ownership and control’, and the community seen as ‘9/10 Tibetan’ with small established groups of Nepalese and Hui- and Han-Chinese.

Around 2000, Tibetan shop- and stall-holders were in noticeable numbers replaced by non-Tibetans as these moved into the historic district, and as earlier residential streets were ‘commercialised’. In 2005, visual surveys by this author indicated that ‘Tibetan ‘ownership and control’ of commercial activity in Old Lhasa was reduced to 20-25% at most, with an increasing non-Tibetan population now also as permanent residents in the old town. Reputable sources (Tibetan business people) described more than 90% of gross trade and commerce in Lhasa City as controlled by non-Tibetan (Han and Hui-Chinese) interests.
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The above is illustrated in diagrammatic form, identifying changes taking place in the most active streets and lanes of Old Lhasa – all based on my visual surveys in the historic kernel through the period 1995-2005, notes from interviews and numerous personal communications.

To further investigate the wide range of political, socio-economic and cultural factors that may together have contributed to such dramatic change has been considered beyond the scope of this study for reason of professional background – I am not a social scientist. Also, the related topics have not been open or available for research in Lhasa.

The presence of non-Tibetan Chinese in Old Lhasa was seen to intensify in the late 1990s onwards, supported by government policies to achieve a population boost – and possibly demographic change – and regional development in Tibet. Tibetan shop- and stall-holders were replaced by non-Tibetans as these moved into the historic district, and earlier residential streets became ‘commercial’, with another increase in this from about 2000. Issues of territoriality have been affected – from commerce and housing to traditional devotional practice.

The Han- and Hui-Chinese groups may be utilising primary resources that the ‘indigenous’ Tibetan population would be seen to need for a longer-term economic and cultural ‘survival’. Although the comment may indicate a cultural-political bias on the part of this researcher, and to many illustrate ‘inevitable’ social processes, there seems little doubt that the Tibetan population and its socio-cultural interests in Old Lhasa are being marginalised from within its own community and society.

Table 6.11.5.A Control of space and trade

Tibetan control of number of shops in percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barkor street</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jokhang Square</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luguk lam</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dongtsenzur lam</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentsikhang lam</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuthok lam</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsumonling lam</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramoche lam</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wabaling square</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dozengi lam</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beijing shar lam</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lingkor East lam</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lingkor South lam (north side)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lingkor North lam (Ramoche lam east)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Processes of ‘Han- and Hui-fication’ with gentrification and touristification already affect Old Lhasa (interpretation of survey data). Territorial contests between Tibetans and non-Tibetans for control of
Fig. 259 Old Lhasa: process of spatial appropriation 1995-2005. Tibetan majority interest and control has been replaced by non-Tibetan control of commercial space and potential; 2006 physical space and economic potential could be directly reflected in recent social unrest. ‘Similar’ factors might instead – if administered politically with a reduced ‘pan-China’ emphasis –potentially contribute positively towards mutual empowerment across Old Lhasa community and population groups.

Summary characteristics of individual areas and streets in Old Lhasa are based on my own visual registrations in 1995, 1998, 2002 and 2005:
6.12 Causes of change

Changes to built heritage and urban form in Old Lhasa were recognised from processes considered either as a) ‘typical’ of the ‘current’ urban situation (policy and ‘reality’) in China, or b) specific to the context of Lhasa (chapter 2).

By general causes of change is here meant that change is originated and dominated by central government policy or external agents or actors in the form of trade and capital flows.

By site specific causes of change is meant that the cause of change has emerged and evolved in and from processes of internal (regional-local) change from impacts on local social-cultural and environmental issues – including urban conservation and ‘self-initiated’ modernisation. A cause of change interpreted to have attained a specific character although grounded in a general context or phenomenon, may here be described as site specific.

‘Inserting’ national PRC social-cultural policies to replace traditional built form and crafts knowledge (1960 onwards) has in Lhasa resulted in a pan-Chinese urban and planning-constructional vocabulary inappropriate to traditional Lhasa.

6.12.1 General causes of change

Only general causes of change interpreted most important are included. Dominating elements of Tibet’s monastic community quite enthusiastically welcomed the China-Tibet 17 Point Agreement (of October 1951), believing that China would be satisfied with securing a symbolic claim over Tibet (Shakya, 1999). This may have contributed to replacing traditional Tibetan Buddhism, way of life and culture in Lhasa with socialist modernity sooner than envisaged (Tsering Shakya, 1999:90).331 Throughout the study period, housing in Old Lhasa remained overcrowded. The national housing policy of ‘housing for everyone’ was in the mid-1990s modified with central government support of private-commercial housing provision, ownership and letting. A reduced public-sector responsibility meant that for most households rents became a significant expenditure, prejudicing vulnerable households and leading to a ‘turn-around’ in the urban population. During the study period, the municipal government in addition appeared to actively ‘support’ gentrification by evicting socially vulnerable groups from Old Lhasa, most of whom represented low-income non-hukou residents.

In preparation for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, Old Lhasa like most major urban environments in China was an object of ‘urban cleansing and spruce-up’ campaigns – with eviction of more ‘informal’ residents and demolition of more informal construction (ref).

Urban development strategies in Lhasa from the 1980s onwards were dominated by a combination of socialist and ‘neo-liberal’ market-oriented urban planning and property development objectives. Heritage
management as policy area and operational activity has remained subordinate to urban planning and urban development within the government hierarchy, prioritised below that of other social or urban environmental concerns (chapters 5 and 6).

However, far from all policy implementations in Old Lhasa have been negative. New housing has significantly improved the lives of residents. This author, however, fear the improvement to be short-lived in view of the varying standards of construction employed. Perhaps has the upgrading of permanent below-ground infrastructure in Old Lhasa strengthened the Old Lhasa more by ‘confirming’ the traditional geometry of streets and lanes, contributed to making important aspects of urban morphology such as street structure and possibly remnants of traditional plot structures more resistant to change.

Steady long-term property ‘ownership’ by major public-sector work units in Old Lhasa contributed to divert pressures for change, ‘protecting’ important built complexes such as the Shatra Manor by default to still represent near-complete ‘material authenticity’ – possibly mostly through a combination of long term ownership and a lack of investment (Appendix).

### 6.12.2 Site specific causes of change

Early Central Government decisions to retain the Lhasa historical townscape as major urban Tibetan housing district ‘protected’ the old town. Physical impacts of a continuous population transfer of non-Tibetans into Lhasa (and Tibet) for government and security service, trade and production were mainly felt outside the old town (from late 1950s onwards; chapter 5).

In terms of employment, it appears difficult for most Tibetans to be involved in the urban development sector beyond providing manual labour. The ‘official position’ that ‘Tibetans’ general lack of skills’ necessitates manpower and resources from China mainland seemed to remain unchallenged through the study period (expressed by regional and municipal level government representatives).332

The new 1980s economic policies gave the municipal government clear incentives to meet targets of the official development plans. Extensive urban development started in Lhasa City. The unique historical-traditional townscape of the historical kernel could no longer be ‘protected’ – much of the Old Lhasa overcrowded building stock was in addition officially being classified as dangerous. Large-scale demolition and new construction activity started, and increasing population pressure on the old town and a neo-liberal expanding economy opened areas earlier considered unsuitable for construction (ground conditions; waterlogged).333

The early 1980s PRC policy to commodify heritage resources (valorise in translated Chinese texts) ‘kick-started’ property development in Old Lhasa.334 Impacts of this policy in Lhasa meant that pilgrims
and local worshippers already were being disadvantaged by the mid-1990s as access to the sacred sites was being limited in terms of time and numbers.

Lhasa tourism before the 1994 World Heritage inscription was limited, exposing neither built heritage resources nor community beyond tolerable ‘carrying capacities’, but had by 2005 changed dramatically. With the 1990s sacred sites in Lhasa that for centuries had been objects of intense religious devotion to local devotees and pilgrims became iconic objects of a tourism industry with fast expanding servicing needs. By 2005, tourism had contributed to a change in ‘user-functionality’ in Lhasa – from Tibetan ‘poor’ pilgrims to and ‘preferred’ fee-paying Chinese and foreigners. Current experience in international tourism indicates heritage resources that could feed Lhasa ‘for eternity’ may fast be devoured – with a real danger of ‘ordinary-making’ and secularising the living sacred heritage. A degree of ‘Disneyfication’ is feared to have reached Lhasa (ref).

The objective of the ‘Lhasa Tourism Development Plan’ (assumed approved 2004; chapter 5) was to develop ‘Historic Lhasa’ – stretching from Norbulingka to Lingkor East – as the primary Lhasa tourism zone with new main road networks and extensive traffic and tourism facilities located to service the ‘inner historical ring’ (ref). The plan if implemented with major street widening, new urban open spaces and large commercial facilities would radically change the urban morphology and the character of historical Lhasa more than most other earlier interventions.

Demolition of ‘unsafe’ historical-traditional buildings (1985-2005) was in numerous cases deemed unnecessary on technical grounds by external experts (also by this author, based on own investigations). However, with the Beijing-approved development and conservation plans (late 1980s) and a distinct lack of value-recognition of traditional built form across most government levels, Lhasa had become a ‘fruit ripe for picking’ and provided property developers with a near ‘free reign’ opportunity to demolish and reconstruct ‘at will’ inside Old Lhasa (Appendix). The hierarchical ‘top-down’ planning and development process permitted by central government for Lhasa appears to have excluded all categories of community participation, and is seen as a contributing factor to the low ‘sense of ownership’ of own environment and control over own livelihood perceived amongst Tibetans in Old Lhasa – a disempowered population (Sinding-Larsen, 2012).

The unique values inherent in built heritage and living knowledge as cultural and economic capital unfortunately appear little recognised by the TAR and Lhasa governments. Field study investigations in Old Lhasa indicated presence of an often found challenge across historical urban landscapes – that of attaining appropriate knowledge of extant heritage resources, an ability to use such knowledge, and willingness to consider these in urban conservation-development processes. Although not unique to Lhasa this is considered a site specific cause of change du to the intensity of use and vulnerability of the Old Lhasa urban fabric.
As regards territoriality and appropriation, the contest between Tibetans and non-Tibetans for control of spatial and economic potentials in Old Lhasa – that by 2005 had secured non-Tibetans a dominant majority stake – appears to have been actively supported by the PRC policy to change the demographic population structure in Tibet (chapter 5 and 6). One recognisable impact of this has been a more competitive (aggressive) street vendor atmosphere – with Barkor towards sunset daily appearing as a Chinese market, another is the possibly even more devoted religious practice shown by Tibetan pilgrims and local worshippers. The Tibetan population Old Lhasa also here could become a minority to the expanding Han-Chinese population in Lhasa within a decade or so, with continuous, hardly noticeable changes to buildings and external spaces – already transformed towards some definition of pan-Chinese typology.

Endnotes

294 In the historical town of Bhaktapur major monuments – within the extensive heritage area and town centre – are linked through an extended albeit narrow buffer zone along the major street (map from http://whc.unesco.org/en/list). The nature and potential ‘generosity’ of the buffer zone as defined may enable a continued discussion on connectivity of heritage resources versus urban development – in terms of what belongs inside and outside the buffer zone.

296 Stakeholder: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stakeholder. Defined widely as someone, a person, group or organization with an interest in a project who affects or can be affected by initiatives or action. Stakeholder analysis is the process of identifying those affected by the same.

297 1997-2001 AHO Professor Halina Dunin-Wóycieck kindly acted as informal advisor. From 1999 onwards I was formally accepted as a Dr.Ing candidate with the Department of Urban Design and Planning, NTNU Trondheim; Professor Hans Christie Bjønness as main supervisor and Professor Harald Hayem as assistant supervisor.

298 ‘Plot series’ are rows of adjacent individual properties or plots that share similar building lines and development characteristics (ISUF Glossary; http://www.urbanform.org/glossary.html; Conzenian terminology).

299 Tibetan and Chinese written sources describe the formation of a main settlement in the agriculturally rich and strategically well located central ‘Lhasa’ valley to King Songtsen Gampo who around 630 CE made it the main base of his expanding Central Tibetan empire (Goldstein, 1989; Snellgrove and Richardson, 1986). King Songtsen Gampo (re-)constructed a stronghold (fort) on Marpori Hill where a small village settlement may already have existed and the first known temples in the valley (Jokhang and Rampoche). ‘meru nyingpa’ monastery adjacent to ‘lha-sa’, koras for circling the sacred sites formed, the early Barkor (conjecture). Buildings were possibly located around the construction sites of the early temples and monasteries to accommodate craftsmen and traders. A town wall to protect the sacred sites may already have run along Barkor. ‘The Lhasa Mandala’ or sacred geography as concept may have emerged only in the 11th-12th centuries CE (Slusser, 1998) in parallel with the Kathmandu Mandala (ibid). Onwards from the 13th century, large open areas north of Barkor developed as a slowly built early ‘fringe belt of religious institutions in extensive gardens and meadows (Gyume dratsang 13th century, Meru dratsang 13-16th century, Shide dratsang 14th century, with Tsomon Ling in the early 18th century; Tibetan: dratsang: religious school or college). By early 17th century Lhasa is believed composed of village-like structures clustered around the Jokhang and Ramoche monasteries, with another at Shöl ; the clusters separated by cultivated fields and meadows between extensive waterlogged areas.

300 Residual town wall remains said to have remained into the early 20th century (David-Neele, 1927) had by all accounts disappeared in 1995 (sources were vague and locations unspecific. The only known documentation (sketch) of the Lhasa town wall was published in ‘The Buddhism of Tibet’ (L. Austine Waddell, 1894) as shown in ‘The Lhasa Atlas’ (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001:66). Recent research supports a ‘traditional memory’ of flood protection devices, barrages, earth walls and dyke constructions along the northern river bank, maintained by monks and laypeople through annual festivals.
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(Sørensen, 2003). Barrage - an artificial obstruction, such as a dam or irrigation channel, built in a watercourse to increase its depth or to divert flow.

301 Lhasa’s population was 1904-1910 estimated to about 15,000 persons. Another 15-20,000 persons, mostly farm workers tied to the major monasteries lived outside the settlement in the rural Lhasa Valley.

An “urbanized” Barkor (Ryder and Cowie, 1904) formed a continuous developed structure (InterSave, 1995). Lingkor was surrounded by an expansive area of linggas or meadows – Taring in his map of 1959 named 22 lingkas that were absorbed into new urban areas between 1960 and 1980. Barkor (the kora) is interpreted as the definite fixation line that influenced the mode of settlement development – as the most likely first kora and provided the delineation of a first town wall (conjecture; Conzen, 1960).

Gradual urban densification was elsewhere accompaniment with gradual transformation of open ground outside the line of town wall (in Vienna the town wall was demolished and transformed into a ring road).

302 The 1960-70s continuing influx of rural Tibetan migrants and non-Tibetans more than doubled the Lhasa population – in clear contrast to the national policy on urban populations in China during the same period.

303 The Beijing-led Lhasa government took early initiatives to build a new city – outlining a street structure, building facilities for the civil and military authorities, and housing for a Han-Chinese population – all located away from the historical settlement (now about 20,000 persons on about 2 sq.km).

The southern wide main ‘river’ street (Jingdrol Shariam) completed 1965 was interpreted by Tibetan respondents as an aircraft landing strip.

304 The conservation plan documentation and analysis work was initiated 1986, with the plan approved by the central government in 1992.

305 As regards the street and plot structure of Barkor, the 1948 Aufschnaiter survey showed the land use ‘cells’ or plots (burgages) to both sides of Barkor Street to be distributed surprisingly evenly as a traditional high-street layout or structure. The larger properties assumed partitioned to provide a wellknown ribbon type development along Barkor and other main streets and lanes. I hold the Lhasa irregular street-block layout, without apparent rules for spacing and width of lanes (and streets; main streets, secondary streets) to reflect an incidental or incremental ‘urban’ structure that only recently densified and with clearly defined spatial (possibly not all primarily spiritual only) koras. Lhasa’s traditional spatial structure of alleys, cul-de-sacs and semi-private spaces constituted a pseudo-street system, with Barkor Street as a hypothesised ‘consequent street’ – a boundary street of the early settlement that as fixation line separated the settlement core from later looser outer areas ( fringe areas; Conzen, 1969:124-125). In Barkor peripheral streets to fringe areas are seen to run as part ring systems to the main kora of the historical core.

306 Before the 1990s, acute housing needs were met in Old Lhasa through densification and informal constructions to courtyards, galleries and rooftops. Large ‘Tibetan’ and ‘Chinese’ housing estates were developed in open agricultural land. Into the 1990s, different Old Lhasa craft and resident groups remained in ‘their own’ traditional areas: the ‘old and ineffective’ historic townscape long left ‘untouched’.

307 A number of activities that were to affect Old Lhasa, without necessarily physically ‘marking’ urban morphology as such, were initiated during 1994. Activities that were to prove important for Old Lhasa although not in direct terms affecting the urban form were initiated during 1994: Lhasa Archive Project (Alexander, 1994); the Lhasa Historic City Atlas Project published as The Lhasa Atlas (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 1995-1999 and 2001) contributed significantly to documentation and discussions on the future of the historical town, and to knowledge on Tibetan traditional architecture and settlement form.

308 From 1985-86 onwards extensive demolition and new construction in Old Lhasa was carried out in accordance with the not yet approved ‘Barkor Conservation Plan’ (work initiated 1986, the plan approved by central government in 1992).

309 Activities that were to prove important for Old Lhasa although not in direct terms affecting the urban form were initiated during 1994: Lhasa Archive Project (Alexander, 1994); the Lhasa Historic City Atlas Project to be published as The Lhasa Atlas (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 1995-1999 and 2001) were to contribute significantly to documentation and formal discussions on the future of the historical town, and to knowledge on Tibetan traditional architecture and settlement form.

310 Municipal level protection of selected structures (chapter 6) contributed to halt demolition for a short while (1998) but was during 1999 followed by “focussed” demolition.

311 The ‘Second Lhasa Development and Conservation Plan’ was approved but not made available.

312 (http://www.chaos.umd.edu/history/prc.html).


314 (i) represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;

315 (iv) is an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

316 (v) be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.

317 A widely accepted definition is that ‘a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living’ (Chambers and Conway, 1992) – although as concept and approach extensively discussed among academics and development practitioners; see Ellis, 1998, Batterbury, 2001; Chambers and Conway, 1992; Camey, 1998; Bernstein, 1992; Frances, 2000, 2002; Radoki, 2002 – referenced on http://www.livelihood.wur.nl/?s=A1-

as concept and approaches extensively discussed among academics and development practitioners; as in Ellis, 1998, Batterbury, 2001; Chambers and Conway, 1992; Cane; Bernstein, 1992; Francis, 2000, 2002; Radoki, 2002 – referenced on http://www.livelihoods.wur.nl/?s=SLA-Livelihoods); Sustainable Livelihoods Enhancement and Diversification (SLED) - A Manual for Practitioners; IMM Ltd, IUCN et al, 2008; websites: www.livelihoods.org; and http://www.eldis.org/go/livelihoods/

Livelihoods approaches place people and their priorities at the centre of development with focus on poverty reduction, aiming to be people-centred, responsive and participatory, multi-level, conducted in partnership, sustainable, dynamic – and holistic (http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/dossiers/livelihoods). The ‘Sustainable Livelihoods Approach’ (SLA) concept and framework adopted by DFID in the late 1990s (building on work by IDS, IISD, Oxfam and others) have been adapted by different organisations to suit a variety of contexts, issues, priorities and applications (http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/dossiers/livelihoods). This introduction section draws heavily on DFID SLA materials. Other resources in this Eldis Livelihoods Dossier cover a wide range of more recent applications and adaptions of that thinking - brought together under the umbrella term of livelihoods approaches.

In addition to these principles, livelihoods approaches are based on a conceptual framework to aid analysis of the factors affecting peoples’ livelihoods, including: the priorities that people define as their desired livelihood outcomes; their access to social, human, physical, financial and natural capital or assets, and their ability to put these to productive use; the different strategies they adopt (and how they use their assets) in pursuit of their priorities; the policies, institutions and processes that shape their access to assets and opportunities; the context in which they live, and factors affecting vulnerability to shocks and stresses.

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As already described (chapter 4 and this chapter section 6.2), Old Lhasa since the 1950s served as an open city where the conventional resident registration (hukou) required in order to live in an urban area in China, did not applied. This is still the case, and has through the last 50-60 years meant that a large portion of the population of the historic town has been living there informally, in part outside the (earlier) welfare system, and as informal residents exposed to informal housing rents and salaries (numerous personal communications, also from government representatives, through the study period).


Possibly Gemeinschaft-like cultural communities in a Gesellschaft-like dominant environment.

Evictions in Old Lhasa during the study period are documented to have affected upwards of 20,000 persons, the total probably underreported. Most evictions were from ‘informal’ accommodation in the old town through ‘urban cleaning’ (personal communications; international reports; ref ’2002 Lhasa demolition’).


To illustrate the width of current research re spatial appropriation are here mentioned works such as ‘Drag Spaces’ by Neil Leach (http://static.londonconsortium.com/issue044); ‘Cultural identity and spatial segregation in the public spaces of Lisbon - criteria for the evaluation of public spaces’, by Da Silva, Serdoura and Costa (ISOCARP); and perhaps the most relevant of these to the context of Old Lhasa: ‘Spatial and Ethnic Patterns - The interface between ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ in Macedonia’ by Amir Ferati. 2009. State University of Tetovo, Department of Architecture, Tetovo, Macedonia (Proceedings of the 7th International Space Syntax Symposium. Edited by Daniel Koch, Lars Marcus and Jesper Steen, Stockholm: KTH, 2009. Ref 030 030:1).
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330 Numerous studies.
331 PRC government efforts to reach the national objectives were significantly strengthened in Lhasa and Tibet from 1959 onwards.
332 A ‘conciliatory’ interpretation could see this as expressing a temporary blind spot with the Han-Chinese senior government leaders in charge - and a result of the lack of experience with local conditions of most senior government representatives, by tradition posted in Lhasa on shorter periods of duty (normally 3 years).
333 This author fears that much of this new construction may increase residents’ health risks as important environmental aspects may not have been satisfactorily addressed by the authorities.
334 To commodify means to attract investment and develop tourism by ‘effective protection’ and ‘urban marketing strategies’; chapter 5.
335 About 1,500 foreign tourists in 1991 had increased 75,000 in 1995, and to about 150,000 in 2005 – alongside an estimated 500,000 domestic tourists (Tibet Statistical Yearbook 2001:276). Refer to chapters 4, 5 and 6.
336 More than 90% of the historical-traditional buildings extant in 1995 were demolished before 2005 (from 280 to about 50) supported by the central government approved Barkor Conservation Plan 1992.
Part Six: Concluding and recommending

Chapters

7: FINDINGS
8: THEORY AND METHODOLOGY REVISITED
9: RECOMMENDATIONS
Part Six: Concluding and recommending

The concluding part of the text consists of the three chapters Chapter 7 Findings, Chapter 8 Theory and methods revisited, and Chapter 9 Recommendations (with research suggestions).

Findings of chapter 7 that turned out to be particularly relevant in the study are in chapter 8 revisited in terms of aspects of theory, practice and methodology, and then brought into the discussion in chapter 9 as considered relevant in normative, operational and use perspectives.

In Chapter 7 Findings are presented research findings structured in response to the main research question ‘How and why do urban form and built heritage in historic Lhasa change?’ with ‘subsidiaries’, starting with how the historical environment is perceived and interpreted (section 7.2), and how and why change is taking place (sections 7.3 and 7.4).

In Chapter 8 Theory and Methods Revisited, aspects of theory, practice and methodology are considered and reflected on in view of the study as it was implemented; aspects that became particularly relevant as the study progressed. Under a heading of sustainable urban development (section 8.2.1), the aspects of theory raised were: i) urban conservation versus development, ii) the historical urban landscape concept and its potentials, and iii) built heritage conservation in a rights-based perspective. In section 8.2.2 are in a perspective of heritage resource conservation discussed aspects of local versus national culture, and nature versus culture. As regards methodology revisited (section 8.3), the focus has been on methods planned and used, study limitations, the researcher’s role in the field studies and potential study yields.

Chapter 9 Recommendations has responded to how urban conservation may safeguard a disappearing Old Lhasa – to support resilience of both its Tibetan community and physical historic fabric – with focus on normative, operational and use perspectives seen to strengthen urban conservation as part of the management regime for Old Lhasa. Suggestions for further research include factors of territorial, ecological and cultural perspectives as part of the emerging paradigm on urban heritage conservation related to needs and research potentials as perceived by the author.
7.1 Introduction

‘Embedding local people with opportunity of more control of own space, of social and cultural traditions, strengthening face to face interaction between people, community and government, seems to remain the biggest general challenge facing society’ (Logan, 2002:245-248).

‘Development’ is a complex phenomenon to comprehend for reasons such as ignorance of implications of ‘modernity’, traditional views may remain resulting in a conflict-dichotomy, ‘modern’ education rarely builds a bridge back to traditional knowledge, and an inability to sustain what is perceived as ‘modern’ (Jigyasu, 2002:318).

Fig. 260 Potala Palace on Marpori Hill and the new Potala Square seen from Chakpori Hill towards Old Lhasa. A major challenge will be to maintain the entire area of Old Lhasa as a low urban fabric; 2005

Seen from the outside, a major challenge for historical urban environments in China – not always recognised by government – has since the early 1980s been to balance economic development with safeguarding unique urban heritage and townscape. Central government housing programmes have tended to ‘overlook’ the potentials of much of the historical-traditional building-stock to provide good quality housing. This has been well illustrated in the transformation of Old Lhasa 1995-2005. Study findings are in the following structured in response to the main research question formulated as ‘How and why do urban form and built heritage in historic Lhasa change?’ and its ‘subsidiary’ issues, defining the historical environment and how urban conservation may to support traditions and characteristics of a Tibetan social community and physical historical fabric in a disappearing historical environment (the latter discussed in chapter 9).

7.2 On Lhasa defined – people and place

Sacred and secular – Many Old Lhasa Tibetan respondents described Lhasa as a secular place, and led the author to interpret this as a ‘conscious’ understating of the importance to them of the Tibetan Buddhist lifeframe, and of the sacredness in which Lhasa as an expansive geo-spiritual landscape was held. The secular emphasis was hence interpreted as linked to the present political-social context and a wish or need to be politically correct (chapter 6).

The pleasure that my Old Lhasa respondents described in living near or even inside sacred sites and be close to their own deities was expressed with a distinct ‘pride of place’ – the closer to the Jokhang
Temple, the better. This granted them the special privilege of making daily spiritual journeys and merit-making there amongst sacred sites.

The often met interview-indication that Old Lhasa residents had limited knowledge about the environment in which they lived, may be explained by many being recent arrivals, a relative low level of education, and a persistent focus by PRC authorities on the national history and culture of China to the detriment of that of Lhasa and Tibet. Nevertheless, Tibetan Old Lhasa respondents expressed a very strong sense of attachment to their historical town, more than an ‘average’ Tibetan living outside the historical kernel.

A ‘disembedding’ and alienation from one’s own place appears nevertheless to have resulted from a loss of individual influence on livelihood, as discussed in the following paragraphs.

**Tangible and intangible** – That all Tibetan respondents expressed intangible heritage to be ‘much more important’ than the tangible is interpreted as a natural consequence of a strong presence of a Buddhist cultural context. Although a location remains sacred ‘regardless’, continued devotional practice and use of space would rest strongly with the intangible – here confirming the overarching sacred nature of the ‘lha-sa’ sanctuary and the larger Lhasa geography (chapter 5; personal communication). Seen closely related to this, Tibetan Old Lhasa respondents held to cherish traditional cultural knowledge – although most of them did not possess this knowledge themselves (chapter 6). Tibetan culture has, at least from the outside, been seen as defined from the top of the social hierarchy, by the kudrak and tsidrung (chapter 6). I hold that Nomadic Tibetan culture, today strongly romanticised but officially seriously down-graded, should be recognised as an inseparable component.

**Parallel Lhasas** – As regards parallel Lhasas, ‘real or White Lhasa’ in contrast to ‘Red Lhasa’ was by Old Lhasa residents described as the remnants of pre-1960 Lhasa’ and centred on the ‘lha-sa’ sanctuary (Jokhang), where religion saturated life, and traditions and ‘Tibetan-ness’ were shown through compassion and merit building (personal communications). The two Lhasas would coexist in daily collaboration and conflict. The new urban areas were described to exist outside ‘Old Lhasa Tibetans’ lifeworld’ – each of the two ‘worlds’ (white and red Lhasa) easily ‘idealised’ and interpreted as real.

Tibetans described Lhasa as physically and spiritually centred on the townscape of Jokhang with Barkor, and including Potala-Shöl and Norbulingka. Only occasionally was the Ramoche area north of Beijing Shar Lam (Ramoche, Shide and Tsonomling neighbourhoods), a natural part of the Old Lhasa townscape included in respondents ‘delimitation’ of the historical town (chapter 6, boundaries). In contrast government representatives emphasised the entire Lhasa City, with Old Lhasa merely as a quaint old district for glimpses of an old way of life – important for tourism and income generating.
Personal and ‘in-between’ versus the political – Lhasa as community and place was by many Tibetan respondents described as both a tightly controlled society and an informal cultural community unhinged from that bureaucracy (personal communications).

Many respondents referred to an ongoing ‘spatial- and potentials takeover’ by non-Tibetans in Old Lhasa, and a ‘community administered through unexplained rules and by an external (Chinese) hierarchy’– and spoke of loss of traditional social infrastructure despite enjoying increased social and economic mobility (Appendix).

On explaining that many Old Lhasa Tibetans existed in an ‘inbetween lifeworld’, main reasons were held to be a combination of not having a Lhasa hukou (urban household registration), low language and knowledge skills (no Chinese language proficiency) that excluded them from jobs in public and private sectors, and with no hukou many respondents’ remained outside the formal social and economic system.

Old Lhasa respondents considered the current economic development less relevant to their own specific lifeworld than to other Lhasa citizens: ‘Lhasa as formal society is not relevant to us, we depend on ourselves and on our informal social networks’. This was often said in a combined expression of sadness, anger and pride – probably expressing elements of prejudice from the system and from the population group concerned.

Government representatives paid little attention towards possible benefits of local community involvement – the subject of community empowering appearing absent from current Lhasa governance policy. Simultaneously, the ‘old town community’ seemed distant from the concept of community involvement or participation – beyond responding as required to government requests. The above may suggest that transformation of society has seriously destroyed traditional social-cultural practice and cohesion. Interviews told of concerns for further social polarisation. In some contrast, however, observations indicate that traditional culture and ways of life are dominant for the urban Tibetan residents living also outside Old Lhasa – as supported by following traditional religious practice and observing rituals, particularly those associated with life cycles (births and deaths).

The distance between individuals and the authorities in Lhasa society today could possibly be as serious as that assumed to have existed in pre-19660 Lhasa – but now for most without the supporting presence of a larger family or clan.

Individuals and authorities – Not seeming to be applauding the authorities easily, most respondents expressed particular anxiety over the government tradition of penalising citizens’ openness or disagreement. Similar criticism was expressed for the fact that in Lhasa all levels of society structure, through the local community and down to individual building supervisors remain government appointed and part of the political structure, providing little opportunity for dialogue across the community or with the authorities. However, they all expressed appreciation towards the government priority on economic
and welfare development (infrastructure, housing, education and healthcare). Anxiety and aspects of fear were expressed towards any involvement with local government and its representatives. The importance in Tibetan society of kudrak descendents and monk officials remains acknowledged by central government in appointing members also from these ‘groups’ to the (advisory) Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, CPPCC (chapter 4).

At a few compulsory neighbourhood meetings each year that all registered households were required to attend, local government representatives would inform the residents on plans and policies that they would need to know. According to respondents, the hierarchical government system would ‘keep a lid’ on any form of citizen involvement. One likely consequence of this would be the clearly recognisable feeling of residents showing little responsibility for their own urban environment, another being their apparent very limited awareness of Lhasa’s unique heritage resources.

All issues concerning development and planning matters in Lhasa – as for Tibet – are administered through the PRC State Council in Beijing – ‘the political sensitivity of everything concerning Tibetan’ given in explanation (personal communications). Hopes to establish community-empowering processes – in part seen as realistic ‘elsewhere’ in China for instance in urban conservation with community participation as initiated and carried out by Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Centre (CHP) at present appear unrealistic for Lhasa.

To most Tibetans, traditions of Tibetan Buddhism are recognised as very much alive despite concerted efforts by the PRC government to achieve the opposite.

Several Tibetan respondents described the orthomorphous street structure as a strong – and quite oppressive – representation of the new society that had secularised Lhasa’s landscape and reduced their spiritual connectivity to power-points such as Potala and Jokhang, and a daily reminder. The street structure had affected their routes of movement and access to holy sites, and therefore changed their ‘religious behaviour’.

A secularising might possibly be felt more strongly by Tibetan residents in Lhasa than by Tibetan pilgrims whose ‘singular’ focus would be to reach the holy sites and perform set rituals and acts of devotion. To the ‘external’ visitor recognising that processes of transformation (of tangible and intangible heritage) known from other historical urban environments are taking place also in Old Lhasa, such sense of loss could appear the strongest.

Today several communities of different codes of behaviour, value sets and backgrounds live in parallel in Old Lhasa: Kashmiris, Hui-Muslims and Han-Chinese alongside ‘rural and urban’ Tibetans. This cultural and social pluralism and expressed presence or lack of social integration and infrastructure, identity and sense of belonging thus characterises the contemporary Old Lhasa community. In chapter 8 I shall return to some of these issues, in a revisit of perspectives of territoriality, cultural pluralism and ethno-development (Appendix).
7.3 Built heritage and urban form changing

Case studies provided information on selected buildings and neighbourhood (chapter 6). Here are discussed change to built heritage and urban form, and aspects of urban conservation.

Of all respondent categories, only monks and Tibetan academics expressed concern over the continuous loss of heritage value taking place in Old Lhasa through demolition and urban development.

7.3.1 Built typology

Old Lhasa built typology in 1995 was discussed in an earlier text section (4.5.2). In 2005 only very few cases of the 1995 typology were extant (residential, administrative, monastic, chapter 4).

Fig. 261 Old Lhasa Barkor 2005 inside Lingkor. Red outlines identify extant historical-traditional buildings. Lingkor is indicated by blue sweeping arrows embracing the settlement, with the protected traditional lane-structure and main spaces inside (blue lines and circles). The diagonal Potala-Jokhang lane through the Yuthok Tseshing area is marked by dotted line arrows (left – pre-1959 (curved) and today (straights)); 2007
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As isolated examples the individual buildings could not be said to represent living built typologies in a historical urban landscape – and on which the WH List Extension in 2000 to include Jokhang Temple Monastery and Barkor was based (Appendix on Lhasa WH history). ‘Tibetan-style’ housing in modern construction had by 2005 transformed a traditional townscape of great diversity of space and built form into a near-continuous matrix of monotonous built form and ‘equal spaces’. From traditional fine meshed buildings and townscape had become large-meshed and modern of little character.

By 2005 Shatra Manor was the only extant courtyard manor building complex in an ‘original’ or assumed ‘near authentic’ state in material terms – and in residential use, albeit for a large number of households. The Chinese work-unit buildings constructed in 1960-70s illustrate an important phase of Lhasa’s modern history that by 2005 was mostly eliminated and replaced with modern larger construction of higher standards.

Efforts by the Lhasa municipal government in 2004-2005 to ‘Tibetanise’ new construction in Old Lhasa could represent one step towards more knowledge, integrity and quality in architectural and urban design. With new building types and urban construction reflecting cliches of Chinese-international modernism, however, the above highlighted a policy that remained uninterested and uninformed by local cultural context and practice.

Demolition of traditional buildings and spaces led to losses both of heritage value and significance of place. In modernising Lhasa society, the government has given little attention to the skills-, knowledge- and work-generating potentials of traditional crafts and building methods.

New Lhasa townscape was constructed as an open-meshed uniformity typical of modern towns in China. A somewhat pragmatic and ‘vulgarised’ architectural vocabulary of ‘modern monotony’ replaced traditional built form that was until then maintained by living traditions of knowledge and crafts - the pragmatic presence as seen in the Thieves Island development, and the urban blocks of ‘New Lhasa’. Providing a majority of the old town residents with improved housing standards, however, must be recognised as a major achievement, although in that process structures were demolished and their residents evicted.

Traditional and new diversity – Old Lhasa contains considerable residue of earlier urban form as the contiguous ‘compact’ areas of ‘Barkor’, ‘Ramoche’ (and in part Shol) denote plan-units and ‘plot-series’ that represent pre-1950 settlement structure. It appears like, supported by sources in the form of traditional thankas, that the ‘circular’ route of Barkor Street functioned as kora, location of protective ‘town wall’ and again kora as the settlement expanded with core and fringe areas in phases before and after the 17th century. This may contribute to explain the presence of several semi-circular ‘kora’ sections outside Barkor (conjecture).
The traditional urban fabric constituted a rich and interwoven mixture of open-air and ‘inside’ workshops, busy trading courtyards, dedicated market areas, official functions, religious institutions, incidental small shops, residential buildings, storage buildings, barns and stables – many of these often in combinations under one roof.

The functional diversity of the traditional built typology and urban environment disappeared with urban development in Old Lhasa after 1990 as traditional open ‘publicness’ – as in open and public combined of private and public spaces – of the spatial structure has been changed into either private or public space.

New buildings, not only monotonously similar in built form, are most near- mono-functional in terms of use – the earlier ‘wide range’ now decimated to commercial and residential combined as most Old Lhasa lanes are commercialised or commercial only (expanding needs of tourism), with the religious institutions as incidental islands of relief’.

**Built typology and heritage values 1995-2005** – Of five typologies identified in the case buildings in 1995 (chapter 6), only two could be said to be extant in 2005, namely the courtyard manor and the monastery complex.

In the same period, the protection of case buildings has been further reduced, from 3 Regional level, 8 Municipal level, and 2 without protection (1995) to 2 Regional level, 6 Municipal level and 5 without protection (2005).

In 1995, of 13 case buildings 6 were documented to meet all six defined values, with 4 meeting five values, and 3 meeting four values.

In 2005 this was assessed as reduced to 5 meeting six values, 2 meeting four values, 1 meeting two values, 3 meeting one value, and 2 meeting none. If an assessment should be made on a simplistic ‘arithmetic’ base, this would mean that only 2/3 of the case buildings gross heritage value remained in 2005. However, such assessment cannot be made arithmetically. The loss of case buildings heritage value is more significant, with a near total loss to 6 of 13 case buildings, and significant loss to 2 more.

The above two assessments illustrate a conservation management regime paying lip-service to protection of unique heritage resources. The fact that very few historical-traditional buildings are extant in Old Lhasa in 2005, warrant full protection of all historical structures and all townscape pre-dating 1960 – and this ‘despite’ the generally accepted ‘fact’ that each individual ‘traditional building could be assessed to be of potentially low protection value on its own. Each remaining building is considered vital contributing to describe a largely missing traditional townscape, demolished and transformed from the late 1980s onwards, and representing unique value in terms of built fabric and form, and cultural memory.
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Fig. 262 Barkor traditional lane structure cut by 1960s street structure

Fig. 263 Old Lhasa traditional and modern street structure
Fig. 264 Sharzur area 1948 to 2005. Transformation of built form showing reduction of traditional-historical buildings (left) and plot structure showing numerous smaller ownerships transforming into larger plots; 2007
Part Six: Concluding and recommending

Fig. 265 Tromsikhang Palace Manor, Barkor North. Transformation of built form showing reduction of traditional-historical buildings (left) and plot structure showing numerous smaller ownerships transforming into larger plots; 2007
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Fig. 266 Built form transformation 1948 to 2005. Left: The Lubu area south of Jokhang Square. Right: The Shid-Tsomonling area North of Beijing Shar Lam; 2007

For all map assemblies:

Top map by Peter Aufschnaiter 1948. Middle map by the LHCA Project 2001. Bottom sketch map by the author 2005; 2007
Fig. 267 Northern Barkor in 1995 (map by LHCA Project 2001). Please compare to sketch map on next page.
Fig. 268 Northern Barkor in 2005. The reduction of historical-traditional buildings and the extent of new construction as evident in the sketch map by the author (the previous map by the LHCA Project 2001) illustrates the fundamental loss of heritage value within the historical settlement. As is evident in the sketch map, the urban blocks immediately around Barkor street, and east of this, have not been amended in terms of the 2001 LHCA map; 2006
Fig. 269 'Kundeling village' - informal settlement cluster inside urban block near the Kundeling Monastery. This ‘hybrid’ urban block development pattern can be documented across many new urban areas in Lhasa: Tibetan households are grouped in looser clusters inside the formal perimeter buildings, most of which accommodate shops-units owned by non-Tibetans, with their housing above, and various commercial activities (Google 2008).

Fig. 270 New Lhasa 2005 onwards. Much of the new urban areas are developed with high density orthogonal planning layouts providing little private or public shared spaces (Google, 2008).
7.3.2 Lhasa morphological periods

The topic of Lhasa morphological periods was discussed in chapter 6, and here is concluded only in overall terms.

The urban planning and development for the new city from the mid-1950s onwards was to be ‘dictated’ by factors of which there appear the most important:

i) The extensive ‘government precinct’ for the new Beijing-led civil and military authorities that was already by the late-1950s established along the northern river embankment from the Shugtri Lingka opposite the Potala Palace to east of Barkor,

ii) Military and industrial installations located (initially at a distance) to the west of the Marpori-Chakpori topography,

iii) Providing an ‘inner half-ring’ for urban land use,

iv) Civil and residential developments towards the north, and

v) Leaving the historical environment of Barkor initially free of urban development or construction.

During the (1970-)1980s, iii) above was gradually filled and expanded, with parallel focus on area iv) for residential and institutional development – with a new area vi) east of i) again developed for new public institutions. Already by mid-1970s, Lhasa was strongly influenced by a layout of numerous large public work units (danweis), also affecting the until now open landscape surrounding the historical Barkor extended settlement with traditional residential-institutional fringe areas.

The early 1990s saw an acceleration of urban development across the city, with two focus areas: area ii) extensive urban expansion, and vii) renewal (housing demolition and construction) in Old Lhasa.

During the 1990s significant urban expansion was started towards east of Lhasa for relocating expanding institutions such as Tibet University, and providing more residential development. On the southern river embankment were planned urban and residential areas for the population expected to rise even faster with a completed national railway link (completed summer 2006).

7.3.3 Old Lhasa urban conservation

Protecting built heritage has been an official priority of Lhasa urban development policy since the early 1980s (Lhasa Development Plans; Barkor Conservation Plan 1992), albeit exposed to a regional pragmatic interpretation of ‘conservation’.

Built heritage in Old Lhasa by 1995 played a vital role as income generator. Although a large number of residents took part, it may be assumed that most of the revenue was received by larger pan-Chinese operators.
Beyond the commercial activity, however, traditional built form, a core resource of the income generating process, and in the form of assemblies and individual ‘anonymous’ buildings and external spaces, was to remain outside legislation, urban conservation plans and heritage resource management. The main aim of government-initiated urban development in Old Lhasa was to provide a maximum volume of new housing units within specified limits of cost and time. In contrast, activity by external interests (such as THF) aimed to provide affordable decent housing by repairing the historical-traditional buildings in collaboration with the residents.

**Urban conservation before 1994** – Although the China Central Construction and Planning Authority already in the late 1980s confirmed the importance of preserving the character of Old Lhasa as a special historical area, most of the old buildings were in 1994 destined to be demolished as being assessed ‘dangerous’ or ‘unsafe’ (the Barkor Plan Report, 1991). The Barkor Conservation Plan ‘approved’ only 15 building complexes to have ‘some preservation value’, and six of them were monastic institutions.

**Urban conservation results** – The regional and municipal governments during the years 1996-2000 permitted a ‘step-by-step’ approach for upgrading traditional buildings (THF). Potentials of this approach built up fast as regards local residents and community participation, training of traditional crafts, and ‘products’ in the form of good quality housing provided the residents at a reasonable rent. The approach, implemented in numerous historical towns as a successful alternative to demolition and new construction, was in reality politically squashed by the authorities in 1999, with the initiating group (THF) expelled from Tibet. Its potential as a realistic approach for urban conservation to retain unique values and qualities in Old Lhasa were lost.

The impacts of the urban conservation repairs approaches used for case buildings in Old Lhasa (chapter 6: i) Traditional repairs is split into subgroups a) ‘grass-roots’ or ‘bottom up’, b) incremental repairs and upgrading, and c) adaptive reuse, ii) Transformation, and iii) Demolition and new construction) were found to be as follows:

i. a) protected valuable examples of unique urban heritage and streetscape from immediate demolition and radical transformation – although some buildings and part of streetscape for a few years only – providing good housing at reasonable project cost and housing rent. The initiative and approach (by THF) were of primary importance in setting standards for conservation and upgrading of historical-traditional buildings in Lhasa. Residents described the approach as very successful, completed with and for the ‘original’ residents, and without radical housing rent increase resulting (chapter 6).

i.b) proved to be highly relevant for properties unaffected by urban development activity – until market conditions persuaded also ‘their’ owner-occupiers to include the plots for larger new construction projects.
i.c) proved the presence of highly skilled traditional Tibetan building contractors in Lhasa – whose skills and management capacities could be developed and utilised further.

ii) indicated the considerable potentials that remained inherent to the historical-traditional building-stock in Old Lhasa into the 1990s.

iii) grounded in explicit objectives of State Council approved urban development plans, acute needs for more urban housing, and ‘neo-liberal’ national economic policies enabled development and construction throughout Old Lhasa, providing property developers with ‘uniquely high profits’.

For the case neighbourhoods, the government urban development activity aimed to improve (housing and urban landscape standards), commercialise, densify (population and construction volume) and ‘gentrify’ – the last through ‘in-migration’ of better-off residents – particularly Han- and Hui-Chinese into Old Lhasa. Demolition and ‘reconstruction’ impacts were significant although varying across the three case neighbourhoods.

7.3.4 Appropriate World Heritage management approach?

The UNESCO World Heritage Committee Decision texts concerning the Lhasa World Heritage property with extensions are included as a separate Appendix as they are not expected to be well known or easily accessible, with graphic editing of the original document only (http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/707/documents/).

The political goals of governments plans for Lhasa (the Lhasa 1980-2000 Development Plan and the 1992 Barkor Conservation Plan in particular) were possibly met with a generous margin in the number of housing units provided –at enormous cost to historical Lhasa.

Under a heading of urban ‘beautification’, Regional and Municipal level protection of selected building in Old Lhasa have not prevented radical change or demolition of a vast majority of traditional-historical buildings. Constructing new housing inside Old Lhasa was clearly deemed more important than working within the criteria by which Lhasa was awarded World Heritage status in 1994, extended in 2000 and 2001 (see below).

The townscape infrastructure upgrading project implemented 2002-2004 (buried infrastructure) is recognised for reinforcing existing street patterns and hence somewhat reducing or delaying townscape change. Demolitions with new construction projects spanning across several ‘old’ plot boundaries have, however, resulted in radical change of built form.

As a ‘last’ example of a unique Himalayan urban built form and settlement traditions, Old Lhasa as place has been ‘ordinary-made’, a large and continuous townscape turned into ‘anywhere’ by non-contextual urban development contrasting the vernacular monumental heritage that Lhasa manifested.
Part Six: Concluding and recommending

into the 1990s. Early signs going ‘unrecognised’, Old Lhasa today contains only dispersed fragments of historical-traditional built form – the extant built resources of Old Lhasa are close to dissipated.

To this author the study has confirmed an approach to urban conservation and World Heritage management that has more in common with urban cleansing of buildings and urban environment (followed by population eviction) than with approaches normally associated urban conservation in a unique historical urban landscape, and – except the limited attempts described to safeguard unique monumental and vernacular urban heritage – has confirmed government support of ‘neo-liberal’ property development and ‘urban non-conservation’.

This can only be described as contrary to the intentions of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in declaring Lhasa as World Heritage, and to the perceived intentions of the formal earlier documents that China as State Party to the World Heritage Convention submitted to UNESCO.

7.4 Causes of change

Changes to built heritage and urban form in Old Lhasa were recognised from processes considered either as a) ‘typical’ of the ‘current’ urban situation (policy and ‘reality’) in China, or b) specific to the context of Lhasa (chapter 2).

By general causes of change is here meant that change is originated and dominated by central government policy or external agents or actors in the form of trade and capital flows.

By site specific causes of change is meant that the cause of change has emerged and evolved in and from processes of internal (regional-local) change from impacts on local social-cultural and environmental issues – including urban conservation and ‘self-initiated’ modernisation. A cause of change interpreted to have attained a specific character although grounded in a general context or phenomenon, may here be described as site specific.

‘Inserting’ national PRC social-cultural policies to replace traditional built form and crafts knowledge (1960 onwards) has in Lhasa resulted in a pan-Chinese urban and planning-constructional vocabulary inappropriate to traditional Lhasa.

General causes of change

Of general causes of change discussed in chapter 6? only those interpreted most important are discussed.

Dominating elements of Tibet’s monastic community quite enthusiastically welcomed the China-Tibet 17 Point Agreement (of October 1951), believing that China would be satisfied with securing a symbolic claim over Tibet (Shakya, 1999). This may have contributed to replacing traditional Tibetan Buddhism,
way of life and culture in Lhasa with socialist modernity sooner than envisaged (Tsering Shakya, 1999:90).

Throughout the study period, housing in Old Lhasa remained overcrowded – this has been seen as accelerating a need to demolish and densify – and hence to the government constituted an important motivation for change.

The national housing policy of ‘housing for everyone’ was in the mid-1990s modified with central government support of private-commercial housing provision, ownership and letting. A reduced public-sector responsibility meant that for most households rents became a significant expenditure, prejudicing vulnerable households and leading to a ‘turn-around’ in the urban population. During the study period, the municipal government in addition appeared to actively ‘support’ gentrification by evicting socially vulnerable groups from Old Lhasa, most of whom represented low-income non-hukou residents.

In preparation for the PRC 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, Old Lhasa like most major urban environments in China was an object of ‘urban cleansing and spruce-up’ campaigns – with eviction of more ‘informal’ residents and demolition of more informal construction (ref).

Urban development strategies in Lhasa from the 1980s onwards were dominated by a combination of socialist and ‘neo-liberal’ market-oriented urban planning and property development objectives. Heritage management as policy area and operational activity has remained subordinate to urban planning and urban development within the government hierarchy, prioritised below that of other social or urban environmental concerns (chapters 5 and 6).

However, far from all policy implementations in Old Lhasa have been negative. New housing has significantly improved the lives of residents. This author, however, fear the improvement to be short-lived in view of the varying standards of construction employed. Perhaps has the upgrading of permanent below-ground infrastructure in Old Lhasa strengthened the Old Lhasa more by ‘confirming’ the traditional geometry of streets and lanes, contributed to making important aspects of urban morphology such as street structure and possibly remnants of traditional plot structures more resistant to change.

Steady long-term property ‘ownership’ by major public-sector work units in Old Lhasa contributed to divert pressures for change, ‘protecting’ important built complexes such as the Shatra Manor by default to still represent near-complete ‘material authenticity’ – possibly mostly through a combination of long term ownership and a lack of investment (Appendix).
Site specific causes of change

Early Central Government decisions to retain the Lhasa historical townscape as major urban Tibetan housing district ‘protected’ the old town. Physical impacts of a continuous population transfer of non-Tibetans into Lhasa (and Tibet) for government and security service, trade and production were mainly felt outside the old town (from late 1950s onwards; chapter 5).

In terms of employment, it appears difficult for most Tibetans to be involved in the urban development sector beyond providing manual labour. The ‘official position’ that ‘Tibetans’ general lack of skills’ necessitates manpower and resources from China mainland seemed to remain unchallenged through the study period (expressed by regional and municipal level government representatives).341

The new 1980s economic policies gave the municipal government clear incentives to meet targets of the official development plans. Extensive urban development started in Lhasa City. The unique historical-traditional townscape of the historical kernel could no longer be ‘protected’ – much of the Old Lhasa overcrowded building stock was in addition officially being classified as dangerous. Large-scale demolition and new construction activity started, and increasing population pressure on the old town and a neo-liberal expanding economy opened areas earlier considered unsuitable for construction (ground conditions; waterlogged).342

The early 1980s PRC policy to commodify heritage resources (valorise in translated Chinese texts) ‘kick-started’ property development in Old Lhasa.343 Impacts of this policy in Lhasa meant that pilgrims and local worshippers already were being disadvantaged by the mid-1990s as access to the sacred sites was being limited in terms of time and numbers.

Lhasa tourism before the 1994 World Heritage inscription was limited, exposing neither built heritage resources nor community beyond tolerable ‘carrying capacities’, but had by 2005 changed dramatically.344 With the 1990s sacred sites in Lhasa that for centuries had been objects of intense religious devotion to local devotees and pilgrims became iconic objects of a tourism industry with fast expanding servicing needs. By 2005, tourism had contributed to a change in ‘user-functionality’ in Lhasa – from Tibetan ‘poor’ pilgrims to and ‘preferred’ fee-paying Chinese and foreigners. Current experience in international tourism indicates heritage resources that could feed Lhasa ‘for eternity’ may fast be devoured – with a real danger of ‘ordinary-making’ and secularising the living sacred heritage. A degree of ‘Disneyfication’ is feared to have reached Lhasa (ref).

The objective of the ‘Lhasa Tourism Development Plan’ (assumed approved 2004; chapter 5) was to develop ‘Historic Lhasa’ – stretching from Norbulingka to Lingkor East – as the primary Lhasa tourism zone with new main road networks and extensive traffic and tourism facilities located to service the ‘inner historical ring’ (ref). The plan if implemented with major street widening, new urban open spaces and large commercial facilities would radically change the urban morphology and the character of historical Lhasa more than most other earlier interventions.
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Demolition of ‘unsafe’ historical-traditional buildings (1985-2005) was in numerous cases deemed unnecessary on technical grounds by external experts (also by this author, based on own investigations). However, with the Beijing-approved development and conservation plans (late 1980s) and a distinct lack of value-recognition of traditional built form across most government levels, Lhasa had become a ‘fruit ripe for picking’ and provided property developers with a near ‘free reign’ opportunity to demolish and reconstruct ‘at will’ inside Old Lhasa (Appendix). 345

The hierarchical ‘top-down’ planning and development process permitted by central government for Lhasa appears to have excluded all categories of community participation, and is seen as a contributing factor to the low ‘sense of ownership’ of own environment and control over own livelihood perceived amongst Tibetans in Old Lhasa – a disempowered population (Sinding-Larsen, 2012).

The unique values inherent in built heritage and living knowledge as cultural and economic capital unfortunately appear little recognised by the TAR and Lhasa governments. Field study investigations in Old Lhasa indicated presence of an often found challenge across historical urban landscapes – that of attaining appropriate knowledge of extant heritage resources, an ability to use such knowledge, and willingness to consider these in urban conservation-development processes. Although not unique to Lhasa this is considered a site specific cause of change due to the intensity of use and vulnerability of the Old Lhasa urban fabric.

The contest between Tibetans and non-Tibetans for control of spatial and economic potentials in Old Lhasa – that by 2005 had secured non-Tibetans a majority stake – seems actively supported by the PRC policy to change the demographic population structure in Tibet (chapter 5 and 6). With one recognisable impact of this being a more competitive (aggressive) street vendor atmosphere – with Barkor towards sunset daily appearing as a Chinese market, another is the possibly even more devoted religious practice shown by Tibetan pilgrims and local worshippers. The Tibetan population Old Lhasa also here could become a minority to the expanding Han-Chinese population in Lhasa within a decade or so, with continuous, hardly noticeable changes to buildings and external spaces – already transformed towards some definition of pan-Chinese typology.

However, the real and significant danger in this to Old Lhasa is what such a slow but definite change in ‘ownership’ would mean in terms of loss of character – loss of Tibetan specificity of place in terms of its physical, social and cultural environments – and constitute a devastating blow to the ‘Tibetan-ness of Old Lhasa, Tibet’s historical capital.
Endnotes

337 Several well documented disagreements or conflicts between the Dalai Lama supporting the lay citizens, and the nobility indicate that kudrak as regards cultural knowledge and defining Tibet’s past and cultural memory would need to accept ‘sharing this stage’ with others (Tsering Shakya, 1999:163-211 on the 1959 uprising initiated by Tibetan laypeople).


339 ‘Plot series’ are rows of adjacent individual properties or plots that share similar building lines and development characteristics (ISUF Glossary; http://www.urbanform.org/glossary.html; Conzenian terminology).

340 PRC government efforts to reach the national objectives were significantly strengthened in Lhasa and Tibet from 1959 onwards.

341 A ‘conciliatory’ interpretation could see this as expressing a temporary blind spot with the Han-Chinese senior government leaders in charge - and a result of the lack of experience with local conditions of most senior government representatives, by tradition posted in Lhasa on shorter periods of duty (normally 3 years).

342 This author fears that much of this new construction may increase residents’ health risks as important environmental aspects may not have been satisfactorily addressed by the authorities.

343 To commodify means to attract investment and develop tourism by ‘effective protection’ and ‘urban marketing strategies’; chapter 5.

344 About 1,500 foreign tourists in 1991 had increased 75,000 in 1995, and to about 150,000 in 2005 – alongside an estimated 500,000 domestic tourists (Tibet Statistical Yearbook 2001:276). Refer to chapters 4, 5 and 6.

345 More than 80% of the historical-traditional buildings extant in 1995 were demolished before 2005 (from 280 to about 50) supported by the central government approved Barkor Conservation Plan 1992.
‘For a tradition to remain alive, its qualities must be valued and seen as meaningful, and absorbed and enacted by individuals in a social group within its own territory. Traditional culture should follow its inbuilt order’ (Bianca, 2010:29).

Holding that UNESCO’s efforts in the field of cultural heritage would focus on placing ‘humanity at the heart of conservation’ it would also be ‘intrinsically linked to the idea of community’ (Cummins, 2010).

‘Anthropological ‘culture’ is not what it used to be as anthropologists, as Geetz has written, don’t study villages, they study in villages. And increasingly, I might add, they don’t study in villages either, but rather in hospitals, labs, urban neighbourhoods, tourist hotels, the Getty Center’ (Clifford, 1992:98-101).
8.1 Introduction

The study has focused on investigating urban conservation and development affecting and affected by physical change in a living urban historical environment. This raises issues of resilience and vulnerability, discussed in various contexts through the presented text in terms of built form (the extended range of built heritage and urban form). This 'revisit' is restricted to vulnerability and resilience evident in built form affected by change, as discussed. Other aspects of vulnerability and resilience (as for instance social) appear indirect in interview input on personal lifeworlds, but are beyond this considered complex and outside the study scope.

Set within a field of urban studies and empirical and normative research traditions, a substantial part of the study relates to theory and practice of urban conservation. Components of theory and methodology revisited were recognised to be particular relevance as the study developed.
8 Theory and methodology revisited

8.2 Theory and practice revisited
Theory was revisited in terms of sustainable urban development with the issues of conservation versus development, the historic urban landscape (HUL), and the rights dimension (human rights) in cultural heritage conservation and development emphasised.

8.2.1 Sustainable urban development
The overall objective of sustainable urban development should be to achieve positive ecological impacts on urban environments with emphasis on benefits to resident’s livelihood. An ethnodevelopment approach would focus on traditional values that support identity, continuity and meaning to the life of both individuals and community, over time reflecting traditions and contemporary influences. Appropriate urban conservation and renewal efforts need to reflect, although not necessarily replicate the above mechanisms.

Urban conservation and development in Old Lhasa may reflect aspects of sustainable urban development goals to some degree only. Recent planning and construction have introduced a planning doctrine and use of materials and methods of construction that can only be considered inappropriate to a high altitude climate and the context of Tibetan traditions. Further, an apparent emphasis by the government on Han-Chinese ‘ethnocentrism’ has during the study period contributed to deepen already existing asymmetrical power relations. This asymmetry is part of what most of the Old Lhasa key informants described as ‘creating in-between lifeworlds and fuelling unavoidable responses’ – phenomena that the central government in turn may describe as representing Tibetan ethnic fundamentalism.

Culture and cultural diversity is today recognised as the fourth pillar of sustainable development, alongside the economic, social and environment pillars.346 To this author the cultural dimension thus presents a major driver of recognised sustainability that embraces continuity and development, parallel to that appearing as inherent in most traditional societies.

Lhasa as dual city
Lhasa is clearly no longer a mono-cultural city (if it in reality ever was) but one of multi-socio-cultural segregation, differentials and assimilation, as the study period showed. The population of the old and new city may be identified as consisting of four main components (a) those belonging to the government structure and b) those outside it, and c) Tibetans and d) non-Tibetans), but such a ‘rough’ division would in terms of describing the social community remain superficial, not adequately reflecting the important roles of the Tibetan monastic community, or that of the incoming Han-
Chinese settlers (briefly related to built form and place attachment, the above is considered outside the scope of this study).

Is Lhasa then a ‘dual city’ in terms of the concept as discussed earlier (2.3.3) – with a bipolar character reflected in urban space, identified as ‘an association of highly qualified urban areas with others in unprecedented physical decadence’ as argued by neo-Marxist city theorists (Mollenkopf and Castells, 1992). The above characteristics may easily be recognised in ‘pre-industrial’ Lhasa by the fact of its dominant traditional social-cultural hierarchy where the ‘top’ held all privileges, and a large serving population with no entitlements. Signs of economic and social differentials seem to increase between Tibetan, Han- and Hui-Chinese population groups in Old Lhasa – and to reinforce socio-cultural segregation.

Identifying with Chinese ‘national’ culture was argued to provide better access to services and support from the authorities, and hence of vital importance for improving individual living conditions in a changing Old Lhasa demography. Respondents held lack of such identification and access to strengthen social and spatial polarisation and the continuous segregation of a large part of the Tibetan population in Old Lhasa. With neighbourhoods ‘multi-ethnicity’ growing, to promote social inclusion and mutual respect between different social strata were argued to constitute huge challenges.347 At the start of the study, Lhasa as a representation of the phenomenon ‘dual city’ was visually expressed in Old Lhasa as a physically dilapidated historical kernel or spatial ‘urban ghetto’ for Tibetan urban poor348 when compared with modern ‘high profile’ urban areas surrounding it. At the end of the study period, upgrading of the historic kernel infrastructure had contributed to give the old town a better image as living environment but ‘ordinary-made’ the unique historic urban landscape through extensive demolition and new construction.

The ‘dual city’ as a ‘white city’ for Tibetans and ‘a red city’ for the others was recognised in the case studies (chapter 5). Although the functional interdependence of the two was generally recognised, the question remained open whether the duality to the respondents also represented a ‘good’ city and ‘bad’ city.

Conservation versus development
The present near universal ratification of the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention (by mid 2011 189 of 193 UNESCO member states) has contributed to establish the World Heritage paradigm as the centrepiece of international doctrine on cultural heritage conservation. In 1972 the convention was built around key words of environment and protection (Rodwell, 2012). Today, these are replaced with sustainable development, climate change, cultural diversity, community and social change. The ‘original’ concepts of outstanding universal value (OUV), authenticity and cultural
significance remain ibid). The current conservation paradigm, however, is increasingly affected by concerns expressed in the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Heritage (2003), the Faro Convention (European Council, 2005) and the UNESCO Recommendations on the Historic Urban Landscape, HUL (2011).

An openness to change could to some indicate a declining recognition of potentials and impacts of conservation ideology and practice. Instead, I hold this to confirm the conservation field’s respect for and collaboration with the complex socio-political ‘space’ inside which the field operates.

National heritage management is in China administered by ‘political’ technocrats through a legislative base and administrative networks to suit specific national policies. At national and international levels this is met and interpreted by conservation technocrats often with limited community-related expertise and experience. This represents a challenge, and may not contribute to resolving situations of community ‘passiveness’ known from Old Lhasa (explained by influences caused by community and the government structure).

A wider spectre of views on urban conservation and development is today invited by the authorities, and the field is showing interesting signs of development. This is seen for instance in the work by Beijing Heritage Centre that for about ten years has been working with tangible an intangible heritage in cultural minority areas in China.

In Lhasa, senior faculty from Tsinghua (Beijing), Tongji (Shanghai), North-East (Nanjing), Chengdu and Xian universities have been invited to advise the TAR and Lhasa governments on urban conservation and planning issues (gradual participation also by Tibet University warrants well). The Implemented project at Söl inside the Potala Palace enclosure indicate concerns for contextual interpretation and specific setting that are earlier not seen in Lhasa.

Despite some progress in local recognition and awareness of built heritage values in China, urban conservation has through the 20th century remained in conflict with the priorities of community development and modernisation – those of satisfying basic needs of safety, food, health and education.

Urban conservation – seen by some to represent static traditions trying to fight progress and modernisation – has especially lost out to comprehensive urban development. Recognition of needs for a people-centred process of development that supports capabilities – traditional and new – remains a serious challenge to the Lhasa authorities.

The material and intangible Lhasa geographies appear less than adequately recognized by authorities at all levels, and most relevant professional environments in China.
In a process of ‘museum-making’ of the recognised monuments, the disappearance of unique anonymous built form and a larger Lhasa cultural landscape appears enthusiastically government supported.

A contemporary sentiment expressing that ‘the principle of sustainable development provides for the preservation of existing resources, the active protection of urban heritage and its sustainable management seen as a condition *sine qua non* of development’ can only be supported. In the context of Old Lhasa, however, this *sine qua non* in the understanding of this researcher remains unrealistic, as also for a multitude of historical urban environments in China. Further, my field studies have shown that the reality of Old Lhasa is far removed from the current international discourse that aims to integrate heritage conservation with community development efforts.

**Historical urban landscapes**

Urban conservation today worldwide represents an important interrelated sector of urban governance policy in response to needs to preserve shared values, to benefit from the legacy of history, and to protect non-renewable environment resources. Recognition of the importance of social, cultural and economic processes to urban conservation marks a shift from emphasis ‘purely’ on the architectural monument, to an approach of conservation with social change -- and requires new tools. To support this, the UNESCO General Conference in November 2011 adopted new recommendations on the ‘*historic urban landscape*’ to strengthen international guidance on conservation and urban development in historic urban environments.

The *historic urban landscape* is the urban area understood as the result of historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of ‘historic centre’ or ‘ensemble’ to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting (UNESCO, HUL 2011, para. 8, section I. Definition). A combined social, cultural and economic asset, *urban heritage* may be defined as a historic layering of social and cultural practices and values produced before and in our own times (ibid., para. 12, section I. Definition).

The recommendations seek to better integrate and frame urban conservation strategies within the larger goals of sustainable development, in order to support public and private actions aimed at preserving and enhancing the quality of the human environment. In this, close participation between authorities and affected local communities is anticipated and encouraged (UNESCO, HUL 2011, para II.4 and 5). The HUL concept builds on a *landscape approach* for ‘making landscape-level conservation decisions to integrate urban conservation into strategies of socio-economic development’ (ibid., para. 12, section I. Definition).
Several well known threats to the conservation of historical urban areas are recognised to affect Old Lhasa as historical core. Modified approaches, policies and guidelines are needed to meet such challenges (UNESCO, ICOMOS and others; chapter 2). Especially apparent are impacts of unmanaged growth in urban density that undermines the sense of place, integrity of the urban fabric, the community sense of identity, the environment as base for the present population, as well as loss of traditional functionality, role and population (chapters 5, 6, 7). Urbanisation and development provide difficult challenges to achieve sustainable management of Lhasa’s urban heritage resources. The historic urban landscape approach may possibly assist in mitigating such impacts. Old Lhasa constitutes a vulnerable and transforming historical urban environment where today aggressive actors compete in appropriating space and economic potentials. During the study period a majority of commercial and spatial potentials have changed hands from Tibetan to non-local interests (mainly Han-Chinese).

International and domestic tourism to Lhasa as a ‘World Heritage city’ represents an important reason for the decreasing built form diversity and increasing mono-functionality (generated by tourism as a dominating industry) now engulfing the historic core. Already in 2005, ‘fruits’ of WH status and the economic revitalisation of Old Lhasa could appear questionable – taking place under the cloak of the official Chinese ‘valorisation’ policy, and with much of the revenue generated collected by larger pan-Chinese or external interests.

Boundaries
Theoretical approaches to study impacts of ‘boundary-making’ and understand the resulting social and territorial issues were outlined in chapter 2. Recognising that investigating impacts on Lhasa from WH-designation boundaries would deserve a separate study, here is briefly commented on the first two approaches.

Re i) – New boundaries created by the new urban environment outside Lingkor raise the issue of the importance of this meandering route. Relevant to discuss here could be David Delaney’s statement that ‘the intensity of territoriality seems to be a function of the intensity of control or power’ (Delaney 2005: 75 in Bjønness 2012 unpublished). The ‘intensity of territoriality’ could in the case of Lhasa reflect potential local power overruled by national power also through the special designation (but far from only). Removed from local jurisdiction by its national status, and further complicated by the national ‘sovereignty’ of the WH property turned into one in part under international jurisdiction or at least ‘policing’, it is little wonder that rights, entitlements and social cohesion can seem exposed also at non-controversial heritage sites.
Re ii) – This reintroduces the concept of **gemeinschaft** in which members of a group or society feel committed to each other and a shared identity. The boundary between Old Lhasa and New Lhasa have for many Tibetans produced or also supported an understanding and situation of ‘otherness’ – of ‘us’ the ethnic population versus the incomers and ‘taker-overs’. Boundaries (Lingkor) that earlier ‘only’ indicated inside and outside today carry perceptions of ownership and control, and lack of this, for much of the Tibetan population in Old Lhasa.

**Cultural heritage and human rights**

International initiatives to protect and use natural and cultural heritage resources were established with the intention to contribute towards building shared understanding of the value and importance of cultural and natural diversity, support cultural continuity and stakeholder dignity – also to strengthen democracy and local community, and are recognised for most of this.

The UNESCO Constitution already in 1946 expressed human rights as a vital dimension to international collaboration. The UN’s *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) has remained a milestone document as the first international proclamation on the inherent dignity and equal rights of all people and a reference point for discussing ethical values across national, ideological and cultural divides.

![Fig. 272 Shöl village with the Potala Palace above. Numerous demolitions in Shöl, with repairs of the few buildings remaining, and extensive landscaping of the entire Shöl area, has without doubt created a pleasant tourist facility – but removed all traces of the historical residential and government support village that Shöl has represented. This may further contribute to distance the sacred heritage of the holy Potala Palace from Tibetan Buddhists’ religious life and spiritual memory. The World Heritage tourism ‘agenda’ is seen already to have significantly restricted access for pilgrims to Potala – affecting a fundamental entitlement in Buddhist tradition. This raises a number of related issues that are discussed in Sinding-Larsen, 2012; 2003](image)

The potentials of a *rights-based approach* (RBA) in planning and implementation of development activities is today recognised as part of sustainable development and integrated in virtually all international cooperation strategies, programmes and projects. In terms of focus, content and procedures, however, nations interpret and implement this variedly.
A rights-based approach may be outlined as: ‘Conservation with justice means that all state and non-state actors planning or engaged in politics, projects, programmes and activities with potential impact on (...) conservation shall secure to all potentially affected persons the substantive and procedural rights that are guaranteed by national and international law’. In more direct terms this may generally be described as an approach whereby all development activity affecting a community, from programme to individual action, will support a realisation of human rights principles and standards. The approach addresses policy-, governance- and management concerns involving a variety of stakeholders, including local, national, regional, international, public and private actors in the urban development process.

An increasing number of research institutions and individuals are engaged in theoretical and practice-based investigations on inter-relations of heritage conservation, community development and human rights. The combined field is considered under-theorised and under-utilised by practitioners and international institutions.

In societies subject to rapid social and cultural change, a visible concern for human rights and traditional entitlements is recognised to contribute to a relevant heritage conservation and development strategy, one that further aims to empower the local community.

The World Heritage Convention (1972) held to still represent an international community flagship engagement – although formulated and adopted long before human rights concerns became mandatory for international treaties – needs to operationalise rights based approaches throughout its work from heritage identification through conservation to site management.

When natural areas and cultural properties are selected for special (national or international) status – particularly as World Heritage – states and-or local stakeholders sometimes find themselves in conflict particularly over rights of access, ownership and use. This author considers few if any levels of the World Heritage environment to be adequately equipped to contribute to resolving or help to channel potential conflicts into calmer waters. Knowledge and understanding of human rights is needed as conservation has moved from being a specialist ‘elitist’ surgical activity to one taking place inside and with community.

Traditional community based management of cultural heritage may run contrary to rulings by national and international decision makers, and in several cases has been recognised to be in conflict with contemporary legislation. Decision makers from outside the community easily overlook or hinder traditional rights-holders associated with or living within WH properties, use of a building, place or area – and hence violate basic rights of a local community or a traditional religious community with little say in the use and management of the heritage property. To illustrate, WH designation and
increased tourism are known to have restricted local communities in utilising site-based resources – with deterioration of resources and community sometimes seen to follow.

The introduction of the 5th ‘C’, Community, to the Strategic Objectives of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in 2007 underlined a widespread concern about ‘[…] recognizing the critical importance of involving indigenous, traditional and local communities in the implementation of the Convention’ (Decision 31.COM/13B). underlined also in the World Heritage Convention Strategic Action Plan adopted by UNESCO’s General Assembly in November 2011 (ref).

Protection of shared heritage is inherently good, international concerns and work through a world body to protect ‘the best of the best’ of the world’s heritage is admirable. To reduce violations of intrinsic human rights and entitlements serious effort are needed to ensure a minimum of negative consequences of heritage designation (infringement of rights) for affected communities and individuals. Knowledge, dialogue and experience of RBA’s are needed, whether seen from the perspectives of ‘rights holders’ or ‘duty holders’.

The ‘eagerness’ of States Parties to fund and secure a position on the world’s ‘premier list’ may encourage them to overlook the much wider responsibilities all member states have for all the not-World Heritage-designated resources – the vast majority. Introducing rights-based approaches may contribute to more balance in that complex international quest of conquering one or a few places on the WH List – and ignoring the rest. The field of cultural heritage management should to investigate potential, implications and practical application of RBA principles. IUCN as Advisory Body for natural heritage has started this process. ICOMOS as Advisory Body to the WH Convention for cultural heritage has recently taken the initiative to develop the topic of heritage and human rights in partnership with IUCN, ICCROM and the World Heritage Centre.

Several of the ‘dimensions’ discussed above are present in the context of Old Lhasa. This author believes that also here introducing an approach to operationalise the rights dimension, for increased knowledge about and use of rights-based approaches to heritage management in order to apply ‘human rights’ rather than invoking them, may prove beneficial to much needed dialogue between experts and politicians, authorities and citizens.

In Lhasa, an even more acute challenge is that of local versus national culture. From selection of government recognized heritage to its treatment (conservation and utilization) a process of ‘Disneyfying’ unique Tibetan heritage resources towards a Han-infused transformed nostalgia has been noticeable since the mid-1990s (chapter 2.3.1).
Nature versus culture and local versus global

In some traditional cultures, the terms nature and culture do not exist as opposing, or even as categories. For people in local traditional communities, however, emphasis on links between nature-culture-heritage-history may be known to result in social marginalisation, spatial exclusion, temporal displacement or the replacement of their cultural values by globally sanctioned and officially sanitized ones (from Pannell, 2006).

In a wider perspective, what passes as nature, culture or heritage at the ‘local’ level may not agree with definitions operationalised by the WH Convention, as ‘[n]o single meaning can in fact be given to nature or culture in Western thought; there is no consistent dichotomy, only a matrix of contrasts’ (Marilyn Strathern, 1980:177 in Pannell, 2006).

Describing indigenous peoples as ‘one with nature’ in an evolutionary display of ecological relicts, often reflects a Western romantic perception of the environment rather than real respect for cultural diversity.352

To this author, related to the above is the global (Western) predominant focus on tangible heritage, and on authenticity – overlooking or somehow suppressing the ever present sacred and intangible dimension of all aspects of the environment we live in, and the fact that in many cultural perspectives and traditions, authenticity is seen as a secular concept that focuses merely on the ‘thingness’ of an object, removed form its spiritual value or content – and hence of less relevance to traditional ways of life. Again, perceptions of representation on Lhasa (and Tibet) appear, as regards what was and what is.

Although recognised as nearing in international conservation work, the two ‘opposing’ terms ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ are continually ‘redefined’, and with major documents still providing conflicting definitions and understanding of the terms.353 The ‘1972 WH Convention’ defined ‘cultural heritage’ as ‘monuments, groups of buildings’ and ‘sites’, as ‘works of man or the combined works of nature and of man’ (WH Convention Operational Guidelines (OG) 2008, Article 1, paragraph 45). The recognition of ‘cultural landscape’ (1992) served to articulate the nature-culture distinction on a broad level (OG 2008, paragraph 47). The Convention has nevertheless not distanced itself from the notion of nature and culture as separate and opposed domains.

Despite a growing focus on ‘the World Heritage mission’ (Bandar in, 2003:3), the WH system says little on the nature-culture dichotomy. One reason for a lack of reflection on this ‘dichotomy’ of social, environmental and economic consequences was by David Pannell argued to be ‘that ‘nature and culture’ have become so commonplace in everyday life that the ‘Western world’ would no longer problematise on the two concepts’ (Pannell, 2006).354 Here lie issues of deep relevance to many WH
properties, also those in Lhasa, as a property perceived as ‘object’ is easily taken out of the overall (sacred) context of which it is only one component.

A globalisation of the nature-culture distinction with parallel conflicting foci on ‘specificity’ and ‘ordinary-making’ may paradoxically encourage threats and dangers sought ameliorated through WH listing, and be less than helpful in terms of complex social and environmental conflicts a focus on ‘dichotomy’ might generate (Schlosser in Pannell, 2006: 14). On the other hand, an invocation of culture and nature may be a far more interesting area of investigation than defining what culture or nature is or is not – in other words, looking at the ‘relationship between the word and the world’ (Appadurai, 1996: 51-).

That there are challenges associated with the above, however, is clear also from the following:

In the ‘Faro Convention’ (Council of Europe, 2005) was recognised that a cross-disciplinary concept of cultural heritage needs to focus on people and human values. ‘Faro’ thus defined cultural heritage as ‘a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time’ (Faro, Article 2), and described a heritage community to ‘consist of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations’ (ibid). ‘Faro’ further urged a change from heritage ‘being treated as a valuable asset – something to keep from harm – to being something to exploit as a useful resource’, giving self-declared ‘cultural communities’ mandates to act – whether choosing to protect or to commodify (commercialise) the resources (Fairclough in Council of Europe, 2009:40).

Numerous WH properties are inscribed as illustrative of a ‘significant stage in human history’ (WH Criteria iv: to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history; UNESCO 2008: 20). Notable as World Heritage designation most often would be, ironic effects are sometimes seen as history is being sanitized – or historic events erased – in conflict with and detrimental to giving appropriate territorial meaning to local history. In a ‘struggle’ over this, nature and culture are often key terms used in international discourse and practice. Scenarios of heritage demotion may be the fate of heritage places and resources transferred for instance to the WH in Danger List, with possible parallel ‘demotion’ of caretaking groups or people – from a classification by association as ‘relict’ or ‘in danger’.

The creation of new spaces is in general seen as inimical (contrary to or even harmful) to World Heritage brand production, despite such spaces possibly enshrining and enacting the combined conjuncture of ‘global’ and ‘local’. Further, World Heritage branding invariably establishes the local (glocal) as a destination product consumed by a national-global tourist market. In the context of the
multi-billion dollar business of World Heritage tourism, production of ‘locality’ is about the production and sale of differences, and in this the Convention’s cornerstone-concepts of nature and culture are given localised form and meaning. In the dialectics of the global and the local, it could be argued that listing signifies the end point of the process by which local history is gradually transformed into something called ‘World Heritage’ within a ‘construction’ of nature-culture through the Convention. In creating properties designated as World Heritage, the Convention contributes to eliminate perceived presence of some borders whilst creating others. Although ‘World Heritage’ as a global concept should be subject to negotiation and accommodations at local level, local communities and indigenous peoples are increasingly seen to resist WH designations. Their reasoning is that areas under WH control may easily be taken away from their regime of traditional use and management (Appadurai, 2001; Gro Ween, 2012:257-270). It has been claimed that with this concept, and through international treaties and policies of conservation and protection, ‘whole territories are now outside state authority’ (Mbekembe, 2001:50). Although this reflects an extreme interpretation of international rights from WH designation, it may express real concerns for fragmented political, economic and cultural sovereignty of nation-states in the post-Cold War period. Representing a highly bureaucratized international response to challenges facing our shared heritage, I emphasise that the WH Convention inspired a new global governance regime – and that UNESCO through the World Heritage ‘mission’ hence contributes directly to positive and negative processes of globalisation. The local communities in Lhasa seem not to participate in setting agendas for management, use and development of their own environment – or indeed raise issues that concern local autonomy and national-international interventions. All responsibilities for this are ‘left’ to national authorities. In my view, this situation is not unique but shared by numerous communities living at, using and ‘looking after’ World Heritage properties. World Heritage inscription has been argued to give ‘buildings, precincts, and ways of life that are no longer viable for one reason or another, a second life as exhibits of themselves’ (Pannell, 2006:150). Stamped with the imprimatur of World Heritage, listed monuments, historic centres, ‘cultural landscapes’ and so-called ‘natural’ areas may fast become museums of themselves within an international heritage tourism economy (ibid). This is seen as a real threat in Lhasa. Distinctions between ‘fake’ and ‘real’ may be difficult to make as tourism activity is given ‘access’ to sacred symbols and representations – for the sale of differences to visitors without knowledge. I should, however, here remind myself that with the ‘all-embracing perception of sacredness’ that purveys Buddhism, it is easy again to make simplistic and incorrect judgments.
8.3 Research methodology revisited

Methodology is revisited in terms of selected methodological considerations and methods planned and implemented. Reflecting on the researchers role, research process limitations and potential yields have been important throughout the study. An ethnomethodological approach with direct observation has been used in the study (Blackburn, 1996:126).358

8.3.1 On methodological considerations

_**Empirical study of reality** – the intentions to establish ‘empirical evidence to reflect objective reality out there’ was already set in quotation marks in chapter 3.2 because ‘Lhasa reality’ was found to be multifaceted and duplicitous. Respondents’ reservation towards speaking freely, varying lifeworld realities of different groups and strata of society, and different relationship to the political structure made the convincing objective evidence difficult to ascertain. Respondents’ own social construction of reality appeared somewhat temporary and uncertain, as often exposed to new policies and instructions from government.

_Deductive and inductive_ – Fieldwork producing all primary source data established a broad inductive study that could not stand alone without deductively considered study components that urban conservation and planning documents represented – including influence on the Lhasa cultural heritage regime from national policy and international doctrine.

The deductive components are informed by strong official policy and practice dictate. The inductive components emerged subjectively through the researcher’s so-called ‘grass-roots’ investigations. Whether the two dimensions are compatible, and how they can usefully meet in a constructive discourse needs to be reflected through further studies.

_Reflective frame_ – Rephrase this: The main process ingredients of a ‘reflective frame’ (chapter 3.4.2) became increasingly present throughout the fieldwork processes for primary source data collection, main values or dimensions provided useful hooks by which to show and visualise issues wanted discussed.

_Information and interpretation through interviewing_ – The interview material seems to share strong common traits despite various origins. Most situations seem to confirm a considerable distance to the researcher (language, cultural context and interpretation), and indicates a strong loyalty by respondents to _Lhasa system-speak_ and _public rhetoric_ – and much of this probably seen by them as _cultural script_ that should also be commensurable to the researcher.

With distance between researcher and interpreter - the researcher interpreting the interpreter who is the interpreter of interviewees – individuals who themselves interpret, simple material may be transformed into complex material.
A fear of foreigners who wish to know was still noticeable. For the respondent, 'system-speak' is safe and available for use vis-a-vis the little informed foreigner. Repeat interviews are used to make up for this, to get beyond the façade of possible 'system-speak' statements. Unstructured interviews were used throughout, and tape-recording and questionnaires avoided for fear of prejudicing anonymity and stopping people's willingness to speak openly.

Case study – The selected building case studies were all historical-traditional buildings in different stages of change achieved through a range of described methods. The neighbourhoods were selected to present how the present diversity of traditional and new urban landscape – also subjected to various forms of transformation. As for interview categories, the assumed weak was focused on, Tibetan groups. Han-Chinese new settlers in Old Lhasa were not interviewed, but established non-Tibetans were. A weakness of the interview process may lie in the fact of a majority of interviews having being with a (however diverse) group of Tibetans.

8.3.2 On methods planned and used

Primary sources

Interviewing – The interview, a complex social event calling for a reflexive approach for considering various theoretical and practical viewpoints, became a central field study component in view of the relative dearth of information (official and otherwise) and lack of access to what seemed to exist. The initial goal to receive input to better understand aspects of respondents 'lifeworlds' was in part fulfilled. Seeking to investigate their perception of processes of change affecting themselves and the built and social environment was prejudiced or negatively affected by several factors. A limited (theoretical) understanding of use of interview material on the part of the author possibly made the result partly naïve. Difficulty in realising the reflection base in the interviews material may have presented interviews more as products than intended. A lack of general knowledge on the topics discussed amongst interpreters and respondents would add to the above 'screw-ness'.

Of the about thirty interviews made with defined respondent categories (chapter 6), many were made as repeat interviews over one or two years. The respondents represented a diversity of life-experience, differences in socio-economic, occupational and educational backgrounds, in approach and attitude towards the environment they live in, and in their relationship to the authorities. The range of topics introduced to the respondent varied considerably with the category of respondent. Interview preparations with the interpreter proved essential. The interpreters with whom I had the privilege to collaborate had little if any knowledge of the topic of study and were young Tibetan academics, fluent in Chinese and Tibetan, with reasonable-to-good English. With the interpreters abilities to build trust with the respondents, and despite the above mentioned systemic limitation of
the author’s, interviews gave much inter-supporting if not new or controversial input (section on a lifeworld interpreted, 3.4.2).

*Direct observation and architectural documentation* – All buildings cases were visually surveyed and photographed as planned (1995, 2000 and 2005) and in-between when considered under specific threat. Urban development interventions were of particular concern by often affecting more than one individual property built form and building-plot characteristics. The method of architectural documentation attempted used in the LHCA project had been that of the InterSave methodology (‘Survey of the Architectural Values in the Environment’; http://www.sns.dk/ byer-byg/Netpub/INTRSAVE/tekt/intersav.htm; Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001).

![Fig. 273 Labrang Nyingpa Manor on Barkor South. The central open courtyard is the natural traditional focus of the residents activities in this wonderful historical building. Unlike other courtyard mansions, the Labrang Nyingpa main building does not have a large private courtyard with outbuildings, but is accessed direct from the street (Barkor South). This may have been different earlier, with the route of Barkor Street believed to have changed over time. However, records are not available of the built form situation before Aufschnaiter survey of 1948; 2003](image-url)
The methodology was ‘initiated’ by the Granada Convention (1985) in which ‘architectural heritage’ was defined wider than earlier (chapter 2). However, due to circumstances of context (lack of access to, and possibly no definable civil society), again it proved impossible to make full use of the potentials of the SAVE methodology.

Secondary sources

**Cartographic studies** – The available cartographic material provided a combination of quantitative and qualitative research components. No cadastral records were available for Lhasa. The only documentation of ownerships and plots was than contained in Peter Aufschnaiter’s Survey of Lhasa made in 1948. The Municipal Survey maps (1986) made available for the LHCA-project was of primary importance also to this study, although clearly faulty in not reflecting the significant construction activity after 1985. Municipal Surveys (ordnance survey maps) of Lhasa, assumed first made around 1960 were not made available, and early and recent maps versions were seen in use in the Lhasa Urban Planning Department. Cartographic studies compared with in-site observations provided material responses to ‘what’- and ‘how’-questions, and input for describing morphological periods.

With a recognised lacuna in available material, the following maps constituted the base for cartographic investigations: i) Ryder and Cowie 1904, ii) Aufschnaiter 1948, iii) Lhasa Municipality 1986, iv) LHCA 1995, and v) the author’s map revisions 1995-2005.

**Public document analysis** – A lack of access to public documents and restricted dialogue with government representatives and politicians did limit the research process and hence very likely also the outcome. The two planning documents made available have been presented and discussed in chapter 5.

**Literature and archival studies** – A varied text base was studied (from development thinking through conservation theory and practice to cultural and architectural history of Lhasa and the region) in order to provide a relevant contextual background to the study. Library collections and archives were accessed in London, Oxford and Oslo during the first half of the study period. The majority of the academic literature on Tibet and Lhasa today belongs to traditional fields of ‘Tibetology’. A wealth of relevant information and knowledge on Lhasa is assumed to lie in Buddhist and Bön monastery libraries – although still inaccessible.

Numerous requests turned down for access to material that outside China would be publicly accessible may have affected interpretation by reconstructing simple input as complicated. With
information kept internal, for political elite only, one might well ask to what extent information received in Lhasa can be ‘trusted’.

Using international examples of ideology and methodology on the study subject and data could prove to be counterproductive in the context of Lhasa, as would also be not recognising one’s own cultural position, bias or ethnocentricity inevitably brought into the research process. Study of urban form and built typology in Asia and the Trans-Himalayan region especially represents a recent research activity, and contextually relevant studies with which to compare-analyse study findings were hence not available. Of very few relevant studies are mentioned those by Gu and Whitehand on urban form of Chinese historic cities, and by Amundsen (on dzongs), Alexander and Larsen/Sinding-Larsen on built typology in the Tibetan region (bibliography).

Observations were made through several media, but the researcher throughout remained dependent on a ‘four-sided relationship’ of i) ‘reality’, ii) source interpretation, iii) translation and iv) analysis (translation as independent dimension added to the conventional triangle of ‘reality’–source interpretation–analysis in consequence of my own distance and bias in terms of language and cultural background). The issues of the researcher’s position as participant and his relationship as empathic interviewer are central here, also as relating to the ‘significant other’, represented by respondent and study subject.

As a case of hermeneutic research, interviewing was used to elicit interpretations of attitudes, culture and conditions of life of residents of old Lhasa and government representatives in terms of idioms, expressed values and motivations.

For an interviewee, ‘system-speak’ might be safe and available for use vis-à-vis the poorly informed foreigner.

The function of filtering that language always has on knowledge became both clear in the Lhasa research – with consequences remaining rather hidden. To most Western researchers in Tibet, language would remain a complex issue. Local versions of Tibetan were said used between interviewee and interpreter. The same can be said for the English used between interpreter and researcher. From the English language with its common-place and plentiful so-called scientific technical-intellectual terms, the interviews had to move into Tibetan language, idioms and mode of expression. It remains uncertain to what extent this affected the interviews.

Tibetans with ‘in-depth’-knowledge of English were difficult to find in Lhasa, also amongst the academics. A Lhasa interpreter, with whom you may have wide and meaningful dialogues in the teahouse, would normally have limited knowledge the research topic of some-one else. From a
language (English) where technical-intellectual terms are common-place, one moves into areas of lacuna – or where terms do exist, they may be so overpainted in Tibetan-Chinese context that statement from the interviewee might become near untranslatable for the interpreter and incomprehensible to the researcher.

Interviews should reflect issues regarded as important by Old Lhasa respondents, and provide a diversity of lifeworlds from differing socio-economic, occupational and educational backgrounds – potentially documenting complementary views.

Interviewing in a controlled society such as Lhasa posed particular methodical challenges. Source anonymity would be essential, as respondents willing to provide input might later consider this done at some level of personal ‘inconvenience’ to themselves or their families. To prevent any chance of tracing, all interview material has therefore been transformed with ‘full cover’ of origin in the geography of person and place. This is not done under the influence of any degree of ‘Lhasa paranoia’ (a condition well known to local Tibetans and most expatriates who have spent any longer period of time in Lhasa), but as locals and visitors alike are subject to the authorities investigative eyes. ‘Personalised’ research material has occasionally been interpreted as ‘misused’ by a researcher despite the best of intentions – as well illustrated by the case of ‘The bookseller of Kabul’ and subsequent legal processes (Seierstad, 2003).

The research fieldwork built in a significant measure of flexibility to ensure that categories of ‘respondents’ were met on their own terms (location, time and pace of communication). Whilst the researcher had the privilege of selecting topics to be raised, respondents on several occasions changed or avoided them – the researcher in such a process potentially becoming a ‘coloniser’. Maintaining a dual role as observer and participant is not easily administered as regards role acceptance and objectivity. Writing that presents the researchers (superficial) understanding could present a fake homogeneity of ‘the other’ as someone of a group that does not exist (Ellingsen, 2002:27). A potentially wider interview material might reduce this potential danger.

8.4 Study limitations and yields

The research process has been influenced by numerous factors, few contributing to a more open process, the majority factors experienced as constricting or limiting.

The initial study scope was seen in retrospect to have been ‘expansively’ sketched, in a naïve belief that a long professional ‘journey’ in architecture and cultural heritage would provide necessary clarity and steering. Efforts to correct this underway may have marred the study.
8.4.1 On research limitations
Constricting or limiting factors have ranged from government-stated restrictions concerning permission to research (topic, place and time), via possible misinterpretations of social-political circumstances by the author and wishing not to ‘cause problems’, to the researcher’s own knowledge- and capacity related limitations.

As Lhasa remains less extensively researched than many historic environments in China, also international archives generally remain limited. Early in the research process it became clear that public documents are in Lhasa generally not circulated outside a closed political-administrative environment. Efforts to access such material hence supported a perception that information was equated with power, and provided only on a basis of ‘need-to-know’ in a legacy of Chinese and Tibetan secrecy.

Conjecture presumed present at sources and in interpretation may substantially have affected information reliability and validity, exposing the study to considerable ‘uncertainty’ that remains open to the scrutiny by others through future studies.

The intention to triangulate data by means of the range of methods used was difficult by the impact of factors such as these: i) a lack of dialogue with public sector representatives, ii) limited information available, iii) most respondents relative lack of knowledge on Lhasa in the past and present, and iv) their uncertainty as regards which topics were ‘allowed’ discussed openly – all the above perceived as research process shortcomings.

Inside the triangle of respondent, interpreter and researcher ‘continuous’ translation and interpretation was needed in view of this author’s lack of Tibetan and Chinese language knowledge. The researcher thus remained more distanced from respondents and the study subject than desired. Circumstances such supported the study focus on the ‘direct observable’ that became stronger through the study process.

Respondents believed to have come forward spontaneously may in fact have been selected by their building supervisors as individuals who could be relied upon in dialogue with a foreign researcher and local but unknown interpreter.

The majority of Tibetans are by tradition extraordinarily polite, and can appear timid as regards speaking to foreigners. This is seen as reflecting the ‘scepticism’ with which the authorities still (1995) regarded locals’ contact with foreigners. Interview situations may thus more often than realised have meant the respondent ‘producing’ polite and ‘punishment-free’ responses to ‘well-intended’ and possibly naïve questions from a researcher without adequate cultural knowledge.

The potential of language to filter meaning and knowledge has been raised earlier and remained a concern throughout the interview process.
Respondents’ educational background assumed to influence their interview responses, they provided input mainly on issues of personal lifeworlds, stating all else as ‘political’ and for them beyond discussion – including shared matters concerning territoriality and identity.

Related to methodology and cultural context – and reflecting on the research in retrospect – findings from studies of built and urban form in Lhasa appear more tentative than those of comparative studies in a Western urban context might be. Much of the content and statements in the study therefore needs to be recognised as argued from inferred rather than documented derivation. Although most was based on a review of parallel written, cartographic and visual’ sources, much would remain as conjecture until further studies. My early expectation of critical and constructive discussions with the respondents was achieved to a much lesser degree than anticipated, much for reasons described above.

Maintaining open contact with relevant government levels in Lhasa proved a major task throughout the study, as did also gaining access to reliable and valid information – and fully ‘understanding’ the information received.

Validating data and aspects of the research process were made difficult by definable and unspecific (only assumed?) forms of control on information and dialogue – even a conventional triangulation of data appeared difficult to achieve.

The issue of social exclusion was raised by respondents (Bjønness in Erring and Høyem, 2002:248; chapter 2; as topic considered beyond the study scope) although discussed reluctantly. To the author this indicated an increasing concern for the disparity between implemented governance policy and citizens needs. The presented study does not provide much direct insight as regards roles played by different stakeholders, or by the different parts of the town – relationships considered more complex than a convenient dualistic urban analysis of good and bad might indicate (ibid).

Causes of change related to the drivers of ideology and economy and expressed in the program for ‘Western Region Development’ chapter 5, are for this discussion seen mainly to further values of modern Chinese society vis-à-vis increasingly stigmatised Tibetan cultural traditions. To the Tibetan population, needs to cure ‘urban ills’ by ‘slum clearance’, of ‘modernising’ and needs of ‘a new system’ and ‘demographic placement’ have been used as major reasons by central government for an intense focus on economic development.

Processes of de-mixing land use, relocation of civic core functions, reduction of public services and changes in ownership (private to public towards private) have affected community structures in Old
Lhasa also during the study period. Gentrification of main areas of the historic core is evident as poorer Tibetan residents have been ejected into a large and less expensive ‘hinterland’ outside Lhasa City (with less work opportunity).

Cultural-territorial issues of spatial appropriation (contest over potential of space and economic opportunity) may have contributed to change the historic core from ‘economic provider’ into an ‘economic receiver’. New infrastructure systems, alien to the scale and character of a historic kernel have fast become indispensable to a changing and growing population.

Society’s interaction with the environment – whether by ‘stewardship, economic exploitation, ‘scientisation’, and visual consumption’ (Urry, 1995) – in Old Lhasa seems focused on economic exploitation through property development and ‘heritage for tourism’.

The needs of serviced urban land to accommodate fast growing poor urban populations – recognised internationally as a dramatic global challenge (Jencks, 2000) – is in Lhasa seen in a yearly take-over of large acreages of cultivated land and cultural landscape for urban development.

The researcher’s focus on the local as a possible representation of ‘orientalism’ – as ‘the other’ is in focus instead of social- and power-relations – is here related to a perspective of my professional experience. Insufficient knowledge of and access to how power is constituted, brokered and operated in Lhasa have been apparent through the study process – and linked to less than adequate knowledge and understanding of social processes associated with change.

The process of preparing the interpreter and respondent on topics of discussion may have opened for an interview process of leading questions. Alternatively, the interview could have meant more indiscriminate talking from different perspectives, resulting in further dialogue uncertainty.

Interviews proved informative but somewhat repetitive in terms of output and therefore disappointing in terms of the spread of material and views they brought. Respondents’ relative fear of authorities could be one reason for this; anxiety vis-à-vis the visiting strangers and the process could be as important.

Direct observations produced much so-called facts. A weak basis of analysis provided by a distinct dearth of access to public documents and actual policy, however, may have resulted in much of that observation carried out and remaining in a vacuum. The author needs to be realistic as regards the relatively weak basis of narrative on the growth and development of Old Lhasa that has emerged through this study. In summarising impacts of process and context, research meeting conventional research principles in terms of ‘facts’ and ‘hypotheses’ for Old Lhasa has had to be accepted with an unconventionally low amount of supporting data.
8.4.2 On the researcher’s role

Empathy with the ‘Tibetan situation’ is ‘easy’, one could say unavoidable in Lhasa where one overarching system is recently introduced and appears to dominate. This may have contributed to a recognised imbalance in the representation of Tibetan and non-Tibetan focus in the study narrative – a potential distinct flaw in the research as implemented.

In the ‘real’ context of Lhasa today, and beyond the study narrative, a balanced approach would be recognising potential for adaptation and synthesis-making on issues and action in society that today appear confrontational. Inherent may be intellectual-emotional ‘bias’ and ‘privileged position’ (chapter 3.4.2) that have negatively affected the research conclusions.362

A researcher would inevitably bring significant pre-understanding into a research process. The recognised restricted access to ‘facts’ in Lhasa, matched with respondents’ anticipated ‘distortions’, distance and bias is believed to have affected the researchers view on which topics could be raised and approached, and how they could be studied (chapter 3.4.2).

Throughout the study it was important albeit in periods difficult to retain a sense of ‘respect’ towards the implementers of the overall process of transformation affecting Old Lhasa. Less difficult indeed was one’s sense of humility and respect towards the Lhasa citizens, the respondents, and the activity of maintaining a ‘non-aggressive’ research approach in this ‘alien’ and vulnerable, inspiring and exasperating geo-cultural environment.

The above can have made the author overlook investigating or following up vital issues. On the other hand more trust and openness has possibly been received from the respondents than had more pressure towards respondents’ personal boundaries been openly applied.

The fieldwork called for a significant measure of flexibility to ensure that as many categories of potential respondents as possible were met on their own terms, particularly as regards location, time and pace of communication. The researcher had the privilege of selecting topics to be raised, and respondents on several occasions changed or avoided them – the researcher in such a process potentially playing the role of a ‘coloniser’. Maintaining a dual role as observer and participant is not easily administered as regards role acceptance and objectivity, and a potentially wider base of interview material, potential shortfalls in the analysis and reflection could be overcome. In this, understanding expressed through the researchers writing could present a fake homogeneity of ‘the other’ as someone of a group that does not exist (Ellingsen, 2002:27).

In the context of Lhasa, the continuous search for ‘trust-worthy facts’ may be explained in ‘operating’ a double hermeneutics, or possibly triple, and being located inside a polygon of ever-present changing interpretation constituted by respondent, interviewer, interpreter and study subject.

This author’s lack of language skills represented a huge practical and intellectual barrier. Coupled with it lack of access to important Buddhist and Tibetan texts this may have led to misinterpreting
important values, perceptions and facts. To try to understand a socio-cultural context so complex and far from one’s own would admittedly present challenges also with more extensive cultural knowledge available.

In a lacuna of contextually relevant studies, the danger of any data classification somehow reflecting the researcher’s own cultural context, an element present of aesthetisation: i.e the researcher transforming what is seen into his own known context and by means of his own bias – despite a will to understand. The size of that window would depend on the researcher’s perspective and skills of vision and interpretation. Added to aspects of orientalism (Said, xx), here could also be aspects of insubstantialisation: the research being used as a backdrop for the drama of the writer’s self – potentially to be drawn into a range of representation on Lhasa and Tibet (chapter xx).

Both researcher and reader may in retrospect with good reason ask whether – and to which extent – ‘truthful’ interpretation on ‘Lhasa’ would be feasible in circumstances such as those described in this study. A central issue here being how each interview narrative would reflect the researchers own bias, understanding of representations, reproduction of accepted myths, behaviour as ‘social institutions’ and ideologies. As reflection and retrospect are often said to provide ‘better’ illumination, the question remains whether the researcher has spent his time and resources wisely. This author believes the answer is a clear yes.

8.4.3 Study yields
The potential yields of the study were earlier outlined as i) contributing towards information, knowledge and transparency on Old Lhasa as historical settlement, and ii) on Lhasa urban conservation issues, iii) to safeguard the remains of Old Lhasa as a living historic Tibetan environment, and iv) to contribute towards a wider discourse on urban conservation and development in Lhasa and China.

By presenting a width of material collected from a diverse and dispersed range of sources, the presented study has hopefully contributed towards knowledge on the growth and development of Lhasa as historical settlement in the past and present. In focus have been characterising Old Lhasa through by compiling information from earlier dispersed sources, and monitoring change today in selected areas of townscape. The study further presents for a first time a comprehensive (albeit not necessarily complete) description of issues and events that have affected urban conservation and planning in Lhasa before and particularly during the study period 1995-2005, with an emphasis on issues related to the Lhasa World Heritage designation in 1994.

In chapter 9 Recommendations are outlined proposals to safeguard the now reduced characteristics and resources of Old Lhasa as a living historic Tibetan environment.
In overall terms, the discussion ranging from the selected theoretical base for the study, the context description, methodology and field based case-studies, the study shall hopefully be seen to contribute also towards the wider – and ‘delicate’ – discourse on urban conservation principles and urban development in Lhasa and China.

The study has also aimed to throw light on areas of potential conflict between current international conservation doctrine and the needs-potentials of a historic urban landscape in processes of change (tangible-intangible).

Endnotes

346 The Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 (Rio Plus 10). With its focus on for instance diversity (environmental and cultural), local community governance and livelihood, Rio Plus 10 emphasised how development is understood not only in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence. Refer to Article 3 of the ‘UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity’ (2001) and the ‘ICOMOS Paris Declaration’ ICOMOS 17th General Assembly, Paris December 2011. Several researchers, amongst them Petter Næss (1995:121) had argued that sustainable development defined as ‘environmental protection fundamental to long-term maintenance of natural life-supporting systems’ therefore cannot ‘include a dimension of culture or cultural heritage in any form.

347 To what extent this also relates to the socio-economic situation in Lhasa is not known, and would require a living conditions survey, and beyond the scope of this study.

348 There seems to be no consensus on the term; it is often used as synonymous with denoting extreme want.


350 The Operational Guidelines to the Convention require and presume stakeholder and local community advice and involvement whenever heritage resources, cultural or natural, are considered for the World Heritage List, including at the level of site management. The other C’s of the UNESCO Strategic Objectives are Credibility, Conservation, Capacity building and Communication as stated in the 2002 Budapest Declaration.

351 The initiative was made by ICOMOS Norway and this author in 2007-2008, with a national seminar in Oslo (2008) and an international invited workshop in Oslo (2011) on the topic of World Heritage and Human Rights. The international organisation Sites of Conscience is already active in this field, with a number of member World Heritage sites as symbols of a striving for human rights and peace (the Hiroshima Peace Memorial, Japan; Auschwitz Birkenau Concentration and Extermination Camp, Poland; Robben Island, South Africa).

352 The work by several researchers questions the universality of delineating nature-culture as binary opposites (Pannell, 2006; Strathern, 1980) raising interesting questions about the attribution of what is a product of a Western intellectual tradition to ‘the thought systems of other peoples’ (Strathern, 1980: 176).

353 Such as in the 1972 WH Convention, Nara 1994, 2003 Immaterial Culture Convention, Faro 2005

354 David Pannell, 2006: ‘despite the ‘perpetuation of a nature-culture dichotomy …to generate other polarised binary relationships, such as “indigenous and non-indigenous”, “mainstream” in contrast to “minority groups”, conservationists versus developers, and so on’. As open questions remain how the humanist discourse of the Convention intersects with scientific, environmental, nationalist, and Indigenous land rights debates, in the process alerting us to the power relations involved in the production of World Heritage.

8 Theory and methodology revisited

And naturally a continuous object of anxiety over experienced and potential impacts as regards loss of traditional rights and entitlements. In Macau and Helsinki, historic centres and monuments resonate with the cultural specificities of the local community, while in Val d’Orcia World Heritage status takes a back seat to the local experience of place as being at home-in-the-world. These and many other World Heritage properties represent ‘new sources of hope’ (Tsing 2001: 188) and ongoing challenges to the manufacture of history and heritage on a global scale.

This raises additional issues such as how to address those social problems and economic pressures, which impact upon the cultural viability of the group. This issue of cultural viability, accentuated by the growing realisation that the way of life of many Indigenous people is “now under severe threat”, begs the question as to whether “preserving” small, essentially non-Westernised Indigenous populations in their ‘natural’ habitats is the proper business of those implementing the World Heritage Convention” (Fowler 2003: 56).

As a pertinent question, particularly given the historical fact that many of the state parties to the Convention have woefully neglected their fiduciary duty to their Indigenous citizens. This question also highlights the fact that ultimately the protection of cultural landscapes, heritage and values pivots upon the sustainable involvement of, and support for, those groups and communities who are the traditional custodians of the cultural values expressed in the landscape.

Simon Blackburn in the Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy (1996) described ethnomethodology as “the study of common social knowledge, in particular as it concerns the understanding of others and the varieties of circumstance in which it can take place’ (Blackburn, 1996:126).

System-speak and public rhetoric and cultural script - both sides are using available vocabulary, metaphors, conventions and ways of talking about issues, ie ways for how to talk about issues, accepted and available, and that one part believes the other part to understand.

Processes of polarisation, segregation, spatial restructuring and cultural degradation, and leading to social exclusion (Bjønness in Erring and Høyem, 2002:248).

Social development from 2008 onwards indicate that issues of reciprocal cementing of social structures and built environment deserve special study before a constrictive transformation of Lhasa has a chance to progress.

Fundamental to historiographic source criticism of bias. In critical theory, pluralism is a possible strategy that with varying the viewpoints may facilitate critical insights. In critical analysis it is more important to counteract a dominant view – can be achieved by negation.
Chapter 9

RECOMMENDATIONS
9.1 Introduction

Chapter 9 is divided into the sections ‘Introduction’ (9.1), ‘A base to build from?’ (9.2), ‘Supporting urban conservation in Lhasa’ (9.3), ‘Further research proposals’ (9.4), and a short ‘Closing remarks’ (9.5). The purpose of this chapter is to outline a frame for urban conservation in Old Lhasa.

Fig. 274 The new tunnel approach from the airport (2005) and railway link (2006) to Lhasa has further ‘opened up’ the mysteries and potential of Lhasa and Tibet to large populations of non-Tibetans – both as settlers and visitors; 2005

9.2 A base to build from?

Issues pertaining to perceptions of territoriality may by governments easily be interpreted as raising political demands related to independence – and in the context of Lhasa recognised as potentially highly controversial. It is therefore emphasised that the discussion in this chapter, as throughout the study, has aimed to focus on urban conservation of the historical urban landscape within a perspective seen as feasible for the government (municipal, regional and national levels).

The study has confirmed initial serious concerns over the approaches to urban conservation implemented in Old Lhasa, with ongoing ‘ordinary-making’ of unique heritage resources. Challenges facing the future of Old Lhasa as historical urban landscape are closely associated with current and developing social and urban development policies. Here an expanding economy and property market has over two decades only been instrumental in replacing traditional built form with a ‘vulgarised’ planning-constructional vocabulary more akin to pan-Chinese urban environments than to Lhasa as place.
Whilst ‘ideology’ is recognised as a major factor to transform Old Lhasa after 1959 (main factors discussed in chapters 2, 6 and 8), the variable impacts of legal, developmental (urban and social planning) and financial issues – the potentials and new conditions that have enabled the ‘new’ industry of property development – should be given equal importance.

Urban conservation currently has little influence on government decision-makers and -making, as expressed in the shared and fragmented responsibilities of government authorities for this field confirm. Hierarchical top-down processes of the contemporary PRC political-bureaucratic environment present in Lhasa appear to provide little room for (potential or future) community participatory processes. Whilst a ‘need’ of a top-down and hierarchical approach is recognized as necessary in reflection of the overall political-social structure, this author considers it essential that parallel bottom-up or ‘grass-roots’ approaches be supported – approaches that involve the real guardians of the built heritage: the Old Lhasa Tibetan community. A discernible absence of public awareness or even concern within the community of residents towards their unique historical urban environment is recognised as related to the above – here simplistically referring to as an absence of a civil society empowered to play a meaningful role in local community development.

9.3 Supporting urban conservation in Old Lhasa

Urban conservation principles for Old Lhasa need to be expressed through a conservation management plan that should link and integrate the objectives, needs and mechanisms of urban planning with those of urban conservation also through shared education and onsite capacity building. The objectives of such a plan could in general be stated as a) retaining the specificity of place, respecting extant heritage values, b) allow change but within an approach of minimising physical intervention to the urban historical fabric, and c) establish a management regime that links all disciplines involved in the urban environment. The ‘principles’ should i) define a process and ii) formulate a plan document and iii) a plan of implementation, as well as iv) procedures for outcome monitoring. Recommendations to be made need to support a normative contextual framework that reflects Lhasa realities and potentials, and be realistic for implementation and institutional anchoring with main stakeholders in Lhasa. Main stakeholders to address would be i) the local community, ii) the private-public sector and iii) the government (central, regional and municipal levels; 5.8.2 and 6.1).

Main impacts on Old Lhasa urban heritage resources are in the study described as resulting principally from urban planning and development action, and demographic change. The combined impact of these factors may render ‘conventional urban conservation measures’ ineffective or indeed irrelevant.
Hence, at this point I consider it important to express a general uncertainty as regards potential positive impacts of recommendations made for urban conservation in a historical environment as heavily transformed as that of Old Lhasa.

To develop a concrete conservation plan for Old Lhasa would necessitate to i) determine stakeholders interests and scope, ii) assess and determine the specificity of place, iii) formulate a scope for management based on current and assumed future resources, iv) determine conservation objectives and processes, v) identify stakeholders responsibilities and resources for action and implementation, all in accordance with the ‘principles’ referred to above.

The fragile built heritage (materials and building methods) needs protection from excessive use before the fabric of built structures is physically worn out. A regime of visitor volume control is needed that protects the interests of primary stakeholders.

Only a robust and varied range of land-use can contribute to slowing down fast processes of ‘touristification’ and associated growing mono-functionality in Old Lhasa. Ongoing heritage commodification or regeneration (heritage valorisation as commonly phrased in Chinese documents) transform living sacred sites into museum precincts whereby also pilgrims (all categories of devotees) could soon be turned into fee-charging living ‘museum artefacts’ (Lijiang WH town, Yunnan Province).

Lhasa benefits from relatively robust current legislation to protect its urban heritage resources. This advantage, restricted by shortages in capacity and expertise at municipal and regional levels of heritage management and urban planning authorities needs to be realised through immediate plans for cross-field capacity building that could make municipal and regional level heritage management and urban planning agencies more operative than is the case at present. Also in Lhasa, capacity building to strengthen urban conservation should include building social mechanisms of community awareness, participation and transparency to empower and raise levels of equity for the Old Lhasa population.

Without the local community being permitted and expressing a sense of ownership of environment and resources, the considerable distance today apparent between government and the local community is likely to become permanent.

Academic institutions in Lhasa need to play their role in urban conservation and planning. The ‘entrepreneurial’ ability and opportunity of the growing private sector in Lhasa – although regarded by Tibetan respondents as an extended arm of the government – carry with it vital and needed potentials. Engagement by the sector towards local communities is by this author regardless seen as much needed.

### Specific recommendations

The very few pre-1950 historical-traditional structures extant require immediate Regional Level permanent protection. Living knowledge and traditional skills need to be maintained if the considerable
potentials of social, cultural and economic capital represented in the built heritage shall survive – although such resources appear at present little heeded by government.

‘Old Lhasa Historical Town Authority’ - should be set up as a regional level (TAR) joint urban conservation, management and development agency and tasked with co-ordinating all activities within a redefined (enlarged) central historical district to include all World Heritage designated areas and adequate buffer-protection zones.

A mechanism is recommended for transfer of rights to develop and construct from Old Lhasa into designated areas of new Lhasa, whereby legitimate Old Lhasa property owners may realise built area potential of Old Lhasa plots in parts of the urban environment where higher densities and increased building bulk and heights are accepted.

The three separate World Heritage area sites and buffer zones need to be finally declared by China and approved by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. An enlarged buffer zone that links the three WH areas and separates the new from the traditional urban environments is recommended. The enlarged buffer zone should include areas of traditional ‘meadows’ (‘Lhasa lingkas’) to provide the historic kernel with appropriate ‘breathing space’ vis-à-vis the surrounding expanding urban landscape. Without this, urban development will soon have integrated Old Lhasa with the new Lhasa monotonous urban fabric – ‘without a seam showing’ – and include a protected corridor linking the WH sites and buffer zones of Jokhang-Barkor and Potala-Shöl with Norbulingka.

The visual links between Jokhang and Potala Palace (Marpori Hill), and of Potala from Beijing Shar Lam, Barkor and as such vistas still exist from other viewpoints need to be emphasised and protected through municipal and regional formal documents. Admitting that physical connections appear unrealistic, the emphasis must be to protect visual linkages and views between the major Lhasa power points, as already proposed in The Lhasa Atlas (Larsen and Sinding-Larsen, 2001).

To re-establish a balanced built form in Old Lhasa – old-new, small-large, low-tall, bulky-slim – selected recent construction should be demolished and rebuilt as traditional on both sides of Barkor Street, where recent inappropriate street furniture should be replaced. The current ‘pressure-cooker’ townscape should be ‘vented’ by openings in the form of traditional incidental pedestrian spaces. The present degree of vehicular access into and through Old Lhasa needs to be reviewed and restricted.
Overarching recommendations and comments

The ‘Old Lhasa Historical Town Authority’ (OLHTA) authority should be established and given overall responsibility for integrated territorial urban conservation in Lhasa, supervised by the relevant national agencies (Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Construction, national level). The leader of the authority should report direct to the TAR-Lhasa leadership. A major authority mandate would be to mobilise internal community resources and to identify and develop projects to enhance the remains of traditional urban landscape in Old Lhasa. A Management Plan’ for the historical district should be integrated with overall municipal development plans.

In a perspective of sustainable development, the authority should develop an integrated neighbourhood-based urban conservation and development approach that would provide residents with user-rights and participation potentials. Judged as conducive to the Lhasa context, neighbourhood-based ‘maintenance brigades’ should be given responsibilities and resources.

The overall objective would be to address issues of territoriality through supporting efforts of social and cultural justice and opportunity in the old town (ITUC or Integrated Territorial Urban Conservation; ICCROM), and in accordance with the emerging principles and practice of the Historical Urban Landscape (HUL) concept. The authority would take over activities earlier proposed for the ‘Old Lhasa Cultural Resource and Development Centre’ (1994-onwards), a proposal that was unfortunately not adopted by the Chinese authorities.366

Important experience is being gained in China on urban conservation and local community and urban development, particularly through the initiatives and activities of the ‘Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Centre’. Working in several cultural minority areas, the institution, a first legally recognised Chinese NGO, will not take on a project unless the local community is getting actively involved and a driver in its implementation. Local awareness and sense of ownership is regarded as a prerequisite for sustainable community efforts. To build community awareness a community-based cultural events project may link the ‘old’ and ‘new’ by focus on cultural-religious festivals, sports, with an outreach program.

Cross-field, on-site and eco-oriented training is needed to better integrate planning with environmental understanding, and to improve knowledge and socio-cultural interpretation of space, underlying values and impacts of change, cross-disciplinary and eco-oriented training programmes for urban planners and architects. This should be made a joint focus area for academic institutions and government agencies in Lhasa.
The Lhasa Municipal Cultural Relics Bureau appears reluctant towards on-site heritage management. Only limited Tibetan capacity and expertise being available in Lhasa, most major historical sites are restored by personnel from outside Tibet, and was in 2005 still understood to express a government policy of ‘preferring’ contractors from outside Tibet. Specific interventions are needed to lift the knowledge levels of Lhasa-based management authorities and education-research institutions in architecture, urban conservation and planning, as in contemporary conservation doctrine (and expressed little interest in the research, documentation and building repairs in Old Lhasa carried out by the few permitted external groups, mainly the Network (LHCA) and Tibet Heritage Fund, THF. Making Lhasa less dependent on expertise from the Chinese motherland is overdue and will take time.

To contribute towards building a needed and relevant facts and knowledge base for urban conservation and planning, institutions in Lhasa such as Tibet University and Tibet Academy of Social Science should be commissioned to carry out heritage audits and heritage impact assessments - together with initial external expertise as relevant. The purpose of the commissioning would be to i) review and as relevant re-confirm the significance of Lhasa heritage categories and resources, ii) build local knowledge and expertise, and iii) contribute towards a realistic heritage management to better address the pressures of economic and urban development, international tourism and community development.

The current development and conservation plans for Lhasa (1995-2015 Master Development and Conservation Plans) remains unknown outside the political environments in Lhasa and Beijing. This should be made public, and as relevant be revisited and updated with a mechanism to periodically review the relevance of conservation plans to be built into the planning process, all public material made accessible – with design guidelines. Local urban planners, architects, and designers need training in norms and practice of international conservation and urban planning in order to mitigate negative impacts on heritage resources caused by the development pressure – with specific construction restrictions on land-use, building heights and overall densities for the remaining areas inside the extended Old Lhasa buffer zone (AKHCSP in North Pakistan and elsewhere, and others).

‘Disaster-prevention’ planning should be a priority for Old Lhasa sites and neighbourhoods under specific pressure (several candidate areas), and in dialogue with the local population.

In summary – WH Recommendations made by the WH Committee (1995 onwards; AS-L 2002/2003) took years to be accepted by the national authorities, and as ‘implemented’ by the national-regional authorities are still interpreted to fall short of the form adopted by the WH Committee. The shift in urban conservation from simple remedies to prevent fabric degradation towards means for improving livelihood and community resources, also economic such as those provided by an existing building stock, put new demands on urban governance. Demolition of pre-1950 historic-traditional buildings in Lhasa needs to be stopped, with blanket Regional Level protection issued for all extant structures and associated
spaces. Similarly, recent construction (1970s-1990s) inside, along and outside Barkor Street (with housing and department stores) should be demolished and rebuilt as traditional Tibetan buildings. Structures built in the period 1950-1980 constitute important albeit in part painful evidence of a dramatic period of recent socio-cultural transformation. Selected buildings and danwei (work-unit) compounds should be protected as important social-cultural heritage. It is not clear how, when or if at all it shall be possible for the national and regional authorities to establish financial and institutional capacities required for appropriate recommendations to be meaningfully developed and implemented. ‘Discrepancies’ and opportunities such as those described above, well known from many nations and historical towns, require vital resources to be made good: namely most of all political will and ability – and backed by knowledge of, empathy with and respect for cultural diversity and continuity. It takes enlightened leaders to initiate and administer forward-looking policies – so also in the complex field of urban development and conservation. In order to ensure social-material authenticity, in Old Lhasa, the historical holy town should remain a living Tibetan environment. An ‘only strategy’ for rescuing Old Lhasa from its own success as tourist destination and extinction as historical urban landscape might be reconstructing the historical kernel (the extended Barkor area, much of it reasonably well documented). Endorsing the current new construction approach appears in contrast to be increasingly detrimental to the historical environment.

Fig. 275 Lhasa World Heritage. The present buffer zones (see chapters 5 and 6) are proposed extended to create a continuous are for which a new set of conservation and development guidelines – and binding legislation – needs to be established. The new area is here shown in dotted red line. The three most used koras are shown in continuous blue line (Lingkor – outer kora; and left to right: Tsekor – kora to the Potala Palace; and Barkor – kora to Jokhang Temple). The areas defined by red dotted lines are proposed included as vital landscape links between the historical urban area and the river that constitutes a vital part of the larger sacred geocultural landscape of Lhasa. The proposal indicates some of the potential and complexity of the ‘historic urban landscape’ as concept – and its need of ‘new’ approaches to interpreting value, and of new guidelines; 2007
With the above I argue for a proactive urban conservation and development approach of minimal intervention that permits the needs of development within a perspective of respecting cultural place and time, allowing for managed social change and with community participation – in clear contrast to the approach of ‘interventionist conservation or stylistic restoration’ or comprehensive new construction that remains so well known in the urban conservation field in Asia.

9.4 Further studies
A number of topics may appear needed and suitable for further research, some of which would build on earlier or current ‘Network for University Cooperation Tibet-Norway’ research activity in Lhasa and Tibet – others seeking multi- and cross-disciplinary collaborations also elsewhere. Some topics may, however, not be given research permission by the Chinese authorities. Here are proposed –

Benefits and costs of the historic environment
What are the benefits and costs of the historic environment to society? – Relationships between built heritage, identification of place and potential economic regeneration interventions need to be investigated through specific cases in transformation. Knowledge – and policies – that may ensure a sustainable tourism in Lhasa is essential for its future as a significant historic urban landscape – and visitor destination.

Lhasa is a major destination not only for Tibetan pilgrims and international Himalaya-explorers, but for domestic (PRC) and international tourism.

The inscription of Lhasa on the World Heritage List has contributed significantly to increasing visitor-volumes as well as to the range of services being asked and arranged for (endnote? – and see earlier sections re ‘the Lijiang syndrome’, 6.4.3 and others).

The prime – today that means all – heritage resources are therefore under increasing pressure, their use as objects for a globalising tourism in serious conflict with their assumed carrying capacities as part of a traditional ‘vulnerable’ environment.

Can this situation be turned into safeguarding the unique heritage resources for future generations, or shall the remains of an authentic urban fabric – and its few extant holy monumental structures – be consumed during a short and intense period of economic development? Old Lhasa has to some extent already become a ‘tourism estate’, serviced by non-indigenous staff and companies. Similarly: at what cost conservation?
Urban conservation practice

Knowledge of Tibetan traditional architecture, building skills and of conservation traditions remain little known and documented beyond a small group of Tibetan and Chinese experts, with potentials in interdisciplinary research significant. Similarly, built typologies of the larger region (Himalaya and trans-Himalayas) deserve to be more researched than is the case and should be initiated as research area for collaborating institutions in the region (such as TU, Tibet University and TASS, Tibet Academy of Social Science, with selected TAR public sector agencies) and elsewhere.

Traditional and modern architecture and construction with a follow-up of the Lhasa Atlas project and updating of the LHCA database with buildings, spaces, spatial structure and environmental conditions as overall assessment would provide the government with essential and new tools.

Related to the above would be a study of how World Heritage Operational Guidelines, and specific Committee decisions, are reflected in Lhasa World Heritage management procedures. This could also be related to practice in China towards international urban conservation doctrine, and looking ahead towards the impacts of concepts ‘inherent’ in the Historic Urban Landscape paradigm.

A comparative regional study of urban form in a Buddhist cultural context

The development of urban form and morphology in a Buddhist cultural frame could be studied in a comparative study of development of historic settlements and their urban morphologies in the Kathmandu Valley (Nepal, with Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur) and Tibet (Lhasa, Gyantse and Shigatse). A part of such research should be a study into ‘Lhasa roots’: Newari culture artisans and benefactors are documented to have exerted significantly influence on Lhasa from its early history onwards - a ‘Newari presence’ during certain periods possibly ‘appropriating’ the Lhasa settlement. In whose ‘image’ was Lhasa developed, initially and then from the 17th century onwards?

Livelihood and urban governance

Studies concerning living conditions, urban governance and stakeholder empowerment may not easily be granted research permissions in Lhasa at present times, however vital such research is considered in throwing real light on the processes of change to which Lhasa is subjected. To survey particular socio-cultural and political aspects of Old Lhasa context to produce new knowledge and insights on impacts on livelihood conditions by ongoing socio-economic and cultural transformations. Dependence of formal-informal economy livelihoods on the heritage resources may link into investigations on changes affecting Tibetan tangible and intangible cultural layers and at present little known beyond the Tibetan population itself.
Participatory processes and dialogue between government and local community might highlight the enigma of how and to what extent stakeholders outside the formal government sphere are involved in any decision-making processes. In the same vein, potentials of ‘action and participatory planning’ methodologies should be addressed in the context of Lhasa and its historic urban landscape.

Few if any of the above represent stand-alone research areas but are interdependent as one issue leads to another in a quest of wrestling new knowledge from the historic settlement.

For the outlined topics a shared perspective is present – namely that of a living community in a historic urban landscape in development – Old Lhasa – as guardian of unique and fragile heritage resources cherished by not only a Lhasa-based community but by millions of Tibetan Buddhists and international visitors.

### 9.5 Closing remarks

The study has tried to tell parts of a complex story, and to present new material – or at least material from less known and dispersed sources. In efforts of general focus on change to built heritage and urban form in Old Lhasa, I have also tried to profile one of Old Lhasa’s less vocal stakeholder categories: Tibetan residents.

It is inevitable during the course of such work to ask the question why the above task should be done, or indeed whether it is important. Well. The ‘story’ – and with more layers still, as for all stories involving people and their past and present – needs to be told. Unique values of built heritage and cultural traditions are near extinction in Lhasa. General awareness of the values and their imminent disappearance need to be invoked perhaps less with the international community than in Lhasa, Tibet and China.

Lhasa represents a unique case and context – in the past as in the present. My experience in Lhasa from the mid-1990s onwards tells me, however, that in the present context of necessary political ‘subservience’ to the central government, action in areas that may raise issues of tradition, identity and continuity appear to become complex beyond the normal.

The 1994 inscription of the Potala Palace Ensemble by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee provided formal international recognition of Tibet's architectural heritage, and a clear signal and support to China to protect such resources. The overall significance of the Lhasa WH property, and represented by its outstanding universal value (OUV), authenticity and integrity, were not much discussed in a strong wave of support to inscribe. The proposals to extent the Potala WH property with Jokhang Temple Monastery and Barkor (2000), and Nobulingka (2001) met a similar atmosphere of enthusiastic approval.
However, as discussed in the text presented, China as State Party to the Convention has been perceived as somewhat less than enthusiastic in meeting the World Heritage Committee’s numerous requests to submit official documents and respond in practice to the committee’s recommendations.

It is thus entirely possible that a re-investigation today of the issues of the Lhasa WH property significance would not pass a critical assessment by the Committee and its relevant Advisory Bodies (ICCROM and ICOMOS). Important components of the primary monuments are ‘restored’ using ‘questionable’ expertise, techniques and materials (Potala and Jokhang especially). The traditional townscape – into the early 1990s a unique and last example of traditional Tibetan urban environments – has been significantly transformed by demolition of most of the pre-1950s buildings, now replaced with new ‘Tibetanised’ construction. On the other hand, the ‘temperature and climate’ of the WH Committee – and its responses towards nominations presented – have changed substantially since the mid-1990s.

The traditional street structure remains a major heritage component in Old Lhasa, together with a still majority Tibetan population – and dispersed ‘islands of historical-traditional buildings.

Although possibly a professionally correct decision, a hypothetical decision to transfer the Lhasa WH property to the WH List in Danger – or indeed to de-list Lhasa – could for much of the international community seem like a cultural-political betrayal of the ‘Tibetan cause’.

A World Heritage designation thus serves to stop excessive development from taking place, also in ‘liberal’ urban government situations – and may hopefully over time assist to instil permanent respect for upkeep of traditional testament, cultural diversity and support cultural continuity.

The study had hoped to contribute to reducing further loss of historical-traditional buildings and spatial structures that during the study period has caused significant reduction of the heritage value of Old Lhasa – by urging the authorities to adopt an immediate ‘recognise-protect-rescue’ strategy. Little has been achieved in this regard.

The central question of local versus national culture appears despite all ‘good intentions’ to be clearly answered in the case of Lhasa – with Old Lhasa increasingly representing a commercially commodified ‘product’ that remains within the direct control of the central government.

Beyond a hard and simple ‘save-it-all’ appeal to the authorities, it has here not been considered meaningful to present recommendations and plan proposals built on conventional criteria and mechanisms. Awaiting more transparency, dialogue and participation potential in coming times, it shall hopefully soon be possible to construct an appropriate strategy for the remains of this proud and unique holy historical urban landscape.
A tradition of senior government staff routinely circulating between regional and municipal authorities across China, with normal ‘stops’ of 2-3 years only, may restrict their local knowledge and influence on the political-bureaucratic government structure beyond purely political and administrative issues. To reflect the recent recommendations on the historic urban landscape, adopted by the UNESCO General Assembly in Nov 2011, additional legislation and guidelines need to be developed from national level downwards – beyond the conventional borders of heritage conservation towards one of integrated conservation planning and management as indicated in the recommendations – although these are admittedly not yet appropriately reflected on.

External input as regards experience, processes and mechanisms of building community awareness and participatory processes is needed, such as that available through the impressive ‘systemic’ and operational capacity of the ‘Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center’, a small grassroots, registered Chinese NGO actively involved with protecting cultural heritage in minority areas across China (http://en.bjchp.org/).

Tibet University has recently embarked on educational and research activity to enable their informed participation, and need government support. Although remaining conjecture, this is based on close contacts with the academic institutions in Lhasa since the mid-1990s.

Proposed as facility for education and research on cultural resource conservation and development to be located at a Network partner institution in Lhasa. This author negotiated the first proposal already in 1994 with PRC officials and UNESCO on behalf of Norwegian institutions (UNESCO Norway and the Directorate of Cultural Heritage). The negotiations 1994-97 were due to political circumstances unfortunately not successful (chapter 1).

Although Lhasa may be less exposed to devastating natural disasters than for instance Kathmandu, the city is located within the Himalayan ‘earthquake belt’. Amongst positive impacts of ‘disaster prevention planning’ would be clearer recognition within community and government that also built heritage constitute an exposed and limited resource.

General knowledge building is urgently required not only in the field of traditional architecture but in contemporary architectural design and urban conservation planning – essential capacity building needed.