

Activity 1: Identifying Values and Writing a Statement of Significance

Instructions for Participants

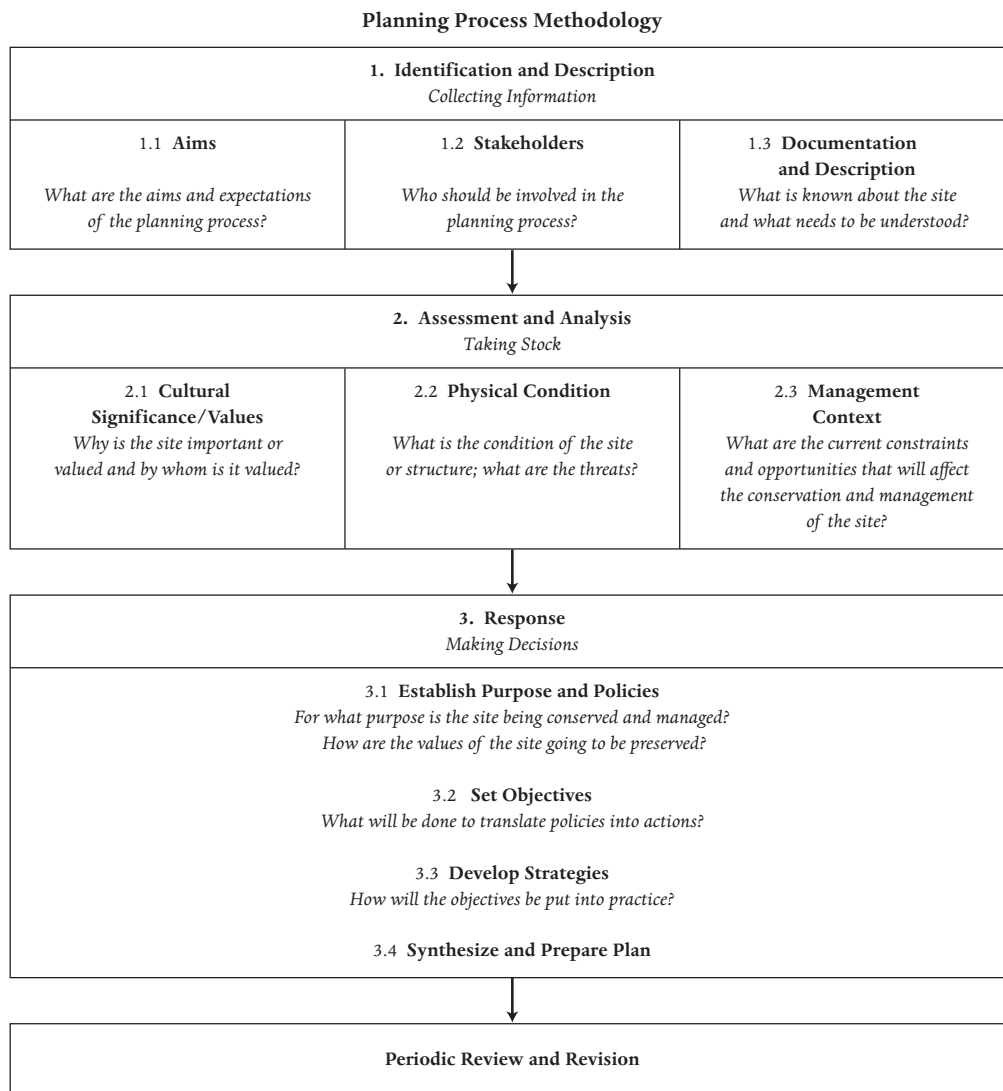
STEP 1: IDENTIFY AND DESCRIBE THE RANGE OF VALUES FOR JARASH ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

Using the worksheet for step 1 (provided by the instructor), describe the values of the site of Jarash according to the value categories on the worksheet. Indicate whether each value is long term, meaning that it has been in existence for a relatively long period of time and the value will not be subject to change quickly, or short term, meaning

that the value may have been in existence for a relatively short time or is related to the immediate needs of certain stakeholders. You should consider the value categories that compose cultural significance contained in the Burra Charter guidelines on cultural significance (see sidebar, p. 36), as well as address other national and local values. As a guide, you should review the sample statement of values for Petra Archaeological Park and World Heritage Site (see sidebar, p. 37).

STEP 2: WRITE A STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR JARASH OF UP TO ONE PAGE IN LENGTH

Your task in step 2 of this exercise is to write a statement of significance for Jarash archaeological site. Pearson and Sullivan define such a statement as follows: “In the context



▲ Flowchart showing a values-based process for developing a site management and conservation plan. Reproduced from Demas (2000).

Guidelines to the Burra Charter: Cultural Significance, rev. ed. 1988¹

New guidelines to accompany the revised Burra Charter (1999) will be available soon. The following guidelines apply to the previous version of the charter and are not directly compatible with the revised charter.

These guidelines for the establishment of cultural significance were adopted by the Australian national committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (Australia ICOMOS) on April 14, 1984, and revised on April 23, 1988. They should be read in conjunction with the Burra Charter.

The following is an excerpt from the Burra Charter guidelines on cultural significance (1988).

2.0 THE CONCEPT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

2.1 Introduction

In the Burra Charter cultural significance means “aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations”.

Cultural significance is a concept which helps in estimating the value of places. The places that are likely to be of significance are those which help an understanding of the past or enrich the present, and which will be of value to future generations.

Although there are a variety of adjectives used in definitions of cultural significance in Australia, the adjectives “aesthetic”, “historic”, “scientific” and “social”, given alphabetically in the Burra Charter, can encompass all other values.

The meaning of these terms in the context of cultural significance is discussed below. It should be noted that they are not mutually exclusive, for example, architectural style has both historic and aesthetic aspects.

2.2 Aesthetic value

Aesthetic value includes aspects of sensory perception for which criteria can and should be stated. Such

criteria may include consideration of the form, scale, colour, texture and material of the fabric; the smells and sounds associated with the place and its use.

2.3 Historic value

Historic value encompasses the history of aesthetics, science and society, and therefore to a large extent underlies all of the terms set out in this section.

A place may have historic value because it has influenced, or has been influenced by, an historic figure, event, phase or activity. It may also have historic value as the site of an important event. For any given place the significance will be greater where evidence of the association or event survives in situ, or where the settings are substantially intact, than where it has been changed or evidence does not survive. However, some events or associations may be so important that the place retains significance regardless of subsequent treatment.

2.4 Scientific value

The scientific or research value of a place will depend upon the importance of the data involved, on its rarity, quality or representativeness, and on the degree to which the place may contribute further substantial information.

2.5 Social value

Social value embraces the qualities for which a place has become a focus of spiritual, political, national or other cultural sentiment to a majority or minority group.

2.6 Other approaches

The categorisation into aesthetic, historic, scientific and social values is one approach to understanding the concept of cultural significance. However, more precise categories may be developed as understanding of a particular place increases.

of a conservation plan, a statement of significance is defined as a succinct summary of the reasons why the place is of value” (Pearson and Sullivan 1995, 130). In the practice of values-based heritage management, a statement of significance is typically used as a guiding document for making management decisions so as not to harm a site’s values but rather to protect and enhance them, and for making decisions based on values about selecting management priorities and determining what site interventions and activi-

ties are appropriate and inappropriate. A well-written statement of outstanding universal value, which is similar to a statement of significance, is a requirement for inscribing a site on the World Heritage List.²

Use the descriptions of long-term values, which may also be called heritage values, that you prepared in step 1 as a basis for writing the statement of significance. The statement should be comprehensive, addressing the range of the most important long-term values attributed

Sample Statement of Values

Statement of Values for Petra Archaeological Park and World Heritage Site, Jordan (excerpted from: Jordan Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and U.S. National Park Service 2000, vol. 2, sect. 1: 3–5)

Site Values

Site values are those that must be preserved in order to retain the essential character of the site. These values are what should be most closely monitored by site management. The interpretive program, in its turn, should be designed to educate the public about these values and so to enlist the support of the visitor in the preservation effort.

UNESCO has identified two broad categories of management values:

1. Cultural and
2. Contemporary socio-economic.

Among the first of these categories (cultural), four types of values can be seen:

- a. Identity values, which are the particular meanings attached to a cultural site by human groups;
- b. Scientific and historical values, which are largely determined by the potential for research at the site to contribute to scientific and historical knowledge;
- c. Rarity values, which comprise the degree to which the site represents type, style, builder, period, region, or some combination of these better than comparable sites; and
- d. Aesthetic or artistic values, such as those of architectural composition or the integration of man-made and natural topography to form an outstanding cultural landscape.

Such values as they relate to Petra are as follows:

- 1a. **Identity Values:** Petra is an icon for Jordanian identity. The image of Al-Khazna, perhaps the best known of the Nabataean tombs, is likely to be found in Jordanian offices and homes, on the letterheads of Jordanian organizations, and, today, on Jordanian web sites. Several tribal groups in the region of Petra have close traditional

associations with the lands inside Petra Archaeological Park, and some have inhabited those lands at various times in the past.

- 1b. **Scientific and Historical Values:** At Petra, scientific and historical values are related not only to histories of specific groups like the Nabataeans or Romans, but also to broad historical and cultural developments. Petra contains material pertinent to several threshold developments in human society, including the development of agriculture, complex hydrological systems, global trading systems, modern temporal and spatial perceptions, world religions, political empires, and cultural hegemonies.
- 1c. **Rarity Values:** The preservation of archaeological materials and context at Petra is excellent. These materials are related to important cultures that existed for more than 10,000 years. It is rare that so great a cross-section of important archaeological material has been so well preserved. For example, the historic core area of the site contains large deposits of artifactual material that are in all likelihood in excellent stratigraphic context, and which contain well-preserved material eminently suited to providing accurate dates (pottery shards and coins, for example). Preservation has been facilitated in part by the arid environment at Petra. Plaster, painting on plaster, and stone itself have survived in much better condition than has similar material in many other places.
- 1d. **Aesthetic Values:** Although these values are impossible to quantify and difficult to define, there is virtual unanimity that Petra possesses outstanding aesthetic value. The harmony of the architecture and the natural landscape there is probably without parallel.
2. **Contemporary Socio-economic Values:** Visitation to Petra constitutes an enormously important source of revenue for Jordan. Tourism has become the largest portion of Jordan's economic base, and Petra is by far the site most visited and most productive of income and jobs. Groups local to Petra are highly dependent upon tourism.

to the site, but also succinct. It should be a few paragraphs to one page in length. The statement should not be a mere listing of all possible values but instead should clearly communicate the key reasons why the site is important. It should not address short-term or quickly changing values that relate to the immediate interests of stakeholders, such as economic gain, tourist revenues, or the benefits of the Jarash Festival. As a guide, see the sample statement of significance for Petra Archaeological Park and World Heri-

tage Site (see sidebar, p. 38). Your statement should address the relative importance of Jarash in comparison with sites of a similar type both regionally and internationally, touching on whether the site is rare, unique, and representative of a particular culture and period, and whether it has high or low integrity and authenticity and high or low scientific research potential. Caution should be used, however, in not overstating its significance. Because the statement of significance is used to help make decisions about

Sample Statement of Significance

Statement of Significance for Petra Archaeological Park and World Heritage Site, Jordan (excerpted from Jordan Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and U.S. National Park Service 2000, vol. 2, sect. 1: 1–2)

The city of Petra contains remarkably preserved ancient structures and monuments of enormous aesthetic and historical value, and subterranean archaeological sites that contain invaluable information about the ancient world. The spectacular tombs and the remains of standing structures seen by visitors today were originally the creation of the Nabataeans, Arab nomadic pastoralists who developed interests in the desert caravan trade hundreds of years before constructing the city. From southern Arabia they moved into the canyon system, where they would build Petra in about the fourth century B.C.E. Perhaps two centuries earlier, the Edomites migrated to southern Palestine following the destruction of Jerusalem (ca. 586 B.C.) and the depopulation of Judea at the hands of the Babylonians. Operating not only from Petra in the region that in the Bible is called Edom, but throughout Moab and other regions from southern Syria to the western Sinai as well, the Nabataeans after the fourth century B.C.E. controlled the spice and incense trade from Arabia to Mesopotamia.

Petra flowered in the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E. This was made possible in an extremely arid environment by the engineering of a sophisticated hydrological system. The system brought water in channels and clay pipes from springs located atop the high limestone escarpment just to the west of Petra, notably from Ain Musa, located in present-day Wadi Musa. The system also harvested the meager yearly rainfall and mitigated the effects of the rare downpours that would otherwise have produced destructive flash floods.

Rome annexed Petra in 106 C.E., motivated by the desire to ensure access to trading routes that linked the Empire to the mid-East, India, and Asia. A growing reliance on sea rather than land routes as well as the ascendancy of Pal-

myra eventually caused commerce through Petra to decline. Many buildings were never rebuilt after a severe earthquake in 363 C.E., although not long after that event Petra was designated the seat of a Byzantine bishopric. Recent archaeological excavations at Petra have indicated a substantial complex of structures associated with this last function; but by the middle of the seventh century C.E., Petra appears to have been largely deserted. In the twelfth century, Crusader forts were built at the present location of the Petra world heritage site and then soon abandoned. Petra was “lost” to the Western world until its “rediscovery” during the early nineteenth century.

In continually seeking to improve their position in a trading network that included Greece, Persia, Rome, India, and Arabia and that stretched ultimately to China, the Nabataeans provided a conduit for goods and ideas among these groups. The architecture of Petra that survives today testifies to the exchange of cultural traits that occurred on a global scale even in ancient times. Tombs and buildings display Assyrian, Egyptian, Hellenistic, Babylonian, and Roman characteristics incorporated into a Nabataean style that, especially in its earlier expressions, owes much to the architectural tradition of the East.

Visible to the visitor to Petra today are roots that run even more deeply than those just mentioned. Beida, an archaeological site excavated in the 1950s and still open to public view, is located just outside Petra proper and is an example of one of the earliest settled communities. It is a Neolithic, prepottery settlement from circa 6,500 B.C.E. displaying masonry construction, a squared plan, spatial complexity, and evident areas of specialization remarkable at this early date. The excavated village at Umm al-Biyara was inhabited by the Edomites during the Iron Age, ca. the seventh century B.C.E. The Edomites are a group that figures importantly in Christian, Islamic, and Jewish traditional histories. A visit to the High Place of Sacrifice, which may date to a time before the occupation of the area by the Nabataeans but was used by them, provides an experience that resonates with accounts of rituals as they appear in these histories, and is one of the best preserved of all such ritual complexes.

protecting and conserving a site, it should be as persuasive as possible.

Drafting a statement of significance normally requires in-depth documentation and assessment of a site’s values, but in step 2 you will write the statement based on the values of Jarash elicited from the information about the site in the background sections of this publication. The statement should not mention

specific stakeholders but instead focus solely on the significance of the site.

The statement of significance that you write will be used in a later activity in which you will develop recommendations for the conservation and management of Jarash.