

Fact sheet 13

Identifying heritage values

Lipe developed what are still key terms of reference through which types of resource value, can give meaning and importance to cultural materials of the past across a range of interests as summarised below:

Associative/symbolic value; the essence of physical cultural remains and their authenticity, that can transmit cultural information about the past. Powerful as symbols of the past that can also be bound up in 'Communal value' in terms of collective memory for those who relate to it by proximity but also in terms of society's needs in general for continuity through time.

Informational value; emerges from formal 'expert' research, in particular from multidisciplinary approaches and having to make 'best projections' of what kind of resources/elements will be most useful for future study.

Aesthetic value; complex and culturally specific, there is power in aesthetics to symbolise and commemorate a past culture. These values can also relate to actions from nature and man on a resource in how it looks today, its evolution through time that can also enhance its symbolic value.

Economic value; cultural resources have to compete with alternative uses of space and are not exempt from being reduced to costs and benefits in monetary terms. Hence, decisions re cultural resources to study, preserve, display, neglect and destroy all have an economic dimension. There are several pathways that resources enter the 'market' as: utilitarian value as a means to serve a present day need, modern quarrying, but also includes adaptive re-use but can these values conflict with symbolic/associative and aesthetic values that led to it becoming a cultural resource in the first place. Informational value may still be

inherent in a cultural resource even if elements have been incorporated into another function, such as a park or farm. Destruction of the resource for more pressing economic uses, as long as detailed recording has been undertaken, means that some informational value can still be accessible. Associative and aesthetic value in economic terms can be in conflict with associative/symbolic value if present day use means a severing of its power to evoke a remembrance of a past culture. Although any contemporary use of a resource will be different from its use in the past, there is need to assess the extent to which alternative uses will enhance or detract from associative and aesthetic values and degrees to which these are economically feasible.

Mason has added further to assessing values of cultural resources, such as 'social value' that may not capitalise directly on the historical value of the cultural resource, but rather on use of the place for social gatherings and cohesion that may be related to special interest groups, community identities or on other feelings of affiliation to the place. Cultural resources may also have spiritual and religious value in terms of evoking wonder and awe. In addition, economic values may also be perceived in terms of 'use' and 'non-use' value. The former refers to goods and services that can flow from the cultural resource (market value) such as admission fees, cost of land, goods and services that flow from it. In the latter, non-use value refers to the way in which individuals are willing to allocate economic resources to acquire or protect cultural resources. This may be broken down into three sets of values that relate to the type of heritage consumption: (1) Existence value (individuals value the heritage for its mere existence); (2) Option value (that it might be consumed in the future); (3) Bequest value (bequeathed as an asset for future generations).