

Understanding the Cultural Significance of Living Railway Heritage: Need for New Approaches

Comprender el significado cultural del patrimonio ferroviario vivo:
Necesidad de nuevos enfoques

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Abstract

Railway heritage has a unique character. While railway sites are industrial and cultural landmarks, many of them still continue to be in use. Their evolving nature plays a role in shaping their importance, but this aspect is less explored in their management. Special approaches are needed to understand the ‘cultural significance’ of living railway heritage and to manage change and continuity which characterise it. This also brings into question how the cultural heritage notions such as authenticity relate to the living railway heritage sites, where function, technology and safety are prime concerns.

Using a case of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, Mumbai, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, this paper looks at how the cultural significance of this site is to be understood in the light of its living nature. It outlines limitations in the current conservation practices and suggests sustainable practices for its conservation and management, which are hoped to form basis for managing other railway sites in India.

Keywords: cultural significance, railway stations, living heritage, functionality

JEL Codes: L92, R40, Z10

Resumen

El patrimonio ferroviario tiene un carácter único. Aunque los lugares de interés ferroviario han sido hitos industriales y culturales, muchos siguen en uso. Su naturaleza evolutiva juega conforma su importancia, aspecto que ha sido poco explorado en su gestión. Se necesitan enfoques especiales para comprender el “significado cultural” del patrimonio ferroviario vivo y para gestionar el cambio y la continuidad que lo caracterizan. Esto también pone en tela de juicio como ciertas nociones del patrimonio cultural, como la autenticidad, se relacionan con los lugares del patrimonio ferroviario vivo, en los que la función, la tecnología y la seguridad son primordiales.

Con el ejemplo de la terminal de Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Mumbai, parte del patrimonio mundial de la UNESCO, el texto examina cómo debe entenderse la importancia cultural de un sitio a la luz de su naturaleza viva. Se describen los límites de las actuales prácticas de conservación y se sugieren otras sostenibles para su conservación y gestión, aplicables a la gestión de otros lugares ferroviarios de la India.

Palabras clave: significado cultural, estaciones de ferrocarril, patrimonio vivo, funcionalidad

Códigos JEL: L92, R40, Z10

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Understanding Railways as ‘Heritage’: Challenges and Opportunities^φ

Railway heritage is a fascinating area of research. The railway system encompasses various objects and sites including locomotives, trains so also stations, bridges and viaducts, etc., which together form an important legacy of our past. Railway heritage embodies industrial, technological, architectural and engineering dimensions as well as socio-cultural-economic values.

Though a lot has been written about railways, the subject of railway heritage is not discussed with the same enthusiasm in the heritage discourses as other forms of heritage such as churches, palaces and so on. As Peter Burman and Michael Stratton (1997, ix) write, “The railway heritage is all too often taken for granted – by travellers, enthusiasts and conservation professionals alike – as a solid and safe aspect of our inheritance from the Victorian period. But its future has never been secure.” Though part of nostalgia for everyone, railways received less attention in the field of heritage studies and conservation. Christian Barman wrote in 1950 in his book *An Introduction to Railway Architecture* that equal treatment was needed for railway architecture, same as all the other forms of architecture of the time. He stated, “[But perhaps] the best way to study railway building is, after all, to see it as part of the architectural family to which our mills and warehouses, our market halls, our waterworks buildings and all the other industrial architecture of the period also belongs. It is not too much to ask that this architecture should now be treated seriously by historians and topographers who have too long spoken of it either not at all or with contempt. The owners of these buildings, and public authorities of every kind, might then be encouraged to keep them and watch over them as people watch over things of worth in which they take great pride.” (Barman 1950, p.39). The reason for less recognition to railway heritage perhaps lay in

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its very nature. The railways and railway stations, as a functional utility, were bound to evolve with time. Therefore, the principles of the conventional cultural heritage practice, including the notions such as authenticity, based on the tenets of Ruskin and Morris and those in the conventions such as *Athens Charter* (1931) and *Venice Charter* (1964) could not be applied to the railway heritage in entirety, as Peter Burman (1997) has already discussed in his article *Philosophies for conserving the railway heritage*.

The destruction of railway structures in the 1960s, especially the demolition of Penn station in New York and Euston Arch in London wrought a movement for the protection of railway heritage. It was focussed on salvaging obsolete railway structures from getting lost and finding adaptive reuse for them. This period also coincided with the increase in interest in industrial archaeology and heritage. There were growing efforts towards protecting industrial heritage such as mills, mines and many other industrial complexes after they became unused as the economy entered a ‘post-industrial’ phase. With its focus on “the buildings and structures built for industrial activities, the processes and tools used within them and the towns and landscapes in which they are located, along with all their other tangible and intangible manifestations” (See The Nizny Tagil Charter 2003), the industrial heritage highlighted technological and scientific value and universality of this heritage, among other aspects. It thus brought a new notion of aesthetic, different from how the conventional cultural heritage was viewed. The railway sites also did fit within these mandates, and railway heritage came to be identified closely with industrial heritage.

In the recent years, industrial heritage conservation movement has been further reinforced through organisations such as TICCIH¹, ICOMOS², and also through Charters, principles and guidelines (see *Dublin Principles* 2011, *Industrial Heritage Re-tooled* 2012), etc. which focus on identifying, documenting, protecting, conserving as well as communicating the importance of vast industrial heritage. While these and other texts on industrial heritage have encompassed a large category including mills, mines, sites linked with energy and transport, etc. several other writings focussed particularly on railway heritage. To cite a few publications, the book *Conserving the Railway Heritage* (Burman and Stratton 1997) outlined various challenges current in railway conservation and also the philosophies for conserving railway heritage. The publication *Railways as World Heritage Sites* highlighted the potential of railways to be included on the World Heritage Sites’ List and described the criteria for the same. It emphasized railways as “socio-technical systems”, with “continuity through change” as their characteristic (Coulls 1999, p.7). In the past decades, interest in railway heritage research has further grown, and many efforts have also been undertaken to protect, conserve and promote railway heritage.

¹ TICCIH – The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage.

² ICOMOS – International Council on Monuments and Sites.

The understanding of railways as heritage offers a huge potential and a great opportunity for the study of the past and an uninterrupted link to the present and future. Focussed particularly on railway stations, they have become grand markers of the success of the railway system, so also the industrial revolution. The railway architecture has dominated landscapes since the mid-19th century, especially with grand railway stations making their appearance on the scene. The railway stations have been termed by Théophile Gautier as "...cathedrals of the new humanity, ...meeting point of nations, the centre where all converges...." (Quoted in Richards and MacKenzie 1986, p.3). It is true in a sense that railway stations not only combined considerations regarding the architectural, artistic techniques and tastes of the time, but also offered an excellent response to the engineering and planning needs. The railways and the stations continue to be the focal points in the urban development planning even today. They have been integrated and internalised into life in almost every country and encompass and affect every aspect of life. When introduced, they were instrumental in changing the notions of time, place and distance. Many railway systems and sites are still in use and have continued to serve the primary purposes for which they were constructed. Railways even today, are a major employer and play a role in driving the economies of the countries to a great extent, so also influence the social lives of people. In short, along with their cultural and industrial character, these sites are also 'living' heritage. Conserving and managing this functioning railway heritage presents specific challenges given their multi-layered nature.

In order to develop policy guidelines for this living railway heritage, it is therefore necessary to establish the unique nature of this heritage and understand how its significance is shaped. While taking approaches from the previous writings that are relevant for the living railway heritage, it is also necessary to revisit the notion of significance in the light of the evolving idea of heritage itself and in line with the current trends in the field, which have advanced the understanding of how heritage and its significance is constructed. Moreover, emphasis needs to be placed on how this shifting perspective should reflect in conservation practice. One approach particularly useful for the functioning railway heritage is the 'living heritage approach'. Considered as complementary to the existing cultural heritage practices, this approach was largely developed by ICCROM from the early 2000s. It particularly highlights continuity of 'use (or the function) for which it [the object or site] was originally intended', of key importance for the living heritage discussion. It emphasizes three aspects that of diversity, continuity and community, overlooked by the conventional conservation approach. (Wijesuriya 2010 quoted in Wijesuriya 2015). This approach further stresses on the continuity of community connections, cultural expressions and care. It also recognises the strong ties of heritage with the community and has introduced the concept of 'core community', identifying people for which these places and sites were created and whose association with these sites continues. In short, in its philosophy, it has emphasized "continuity, which invariably brings change as the primary driver for the definition, conservation and management of heritage." (Wijesuriya 2015). While

this approach is relevant for the living railway heritage, it needs to be combined with other perspectives, thereby developing a holistic view for managing this heritage.

This paper focuses on the living railway heritage of India, particularly railway stations. In India, many railway stations, built in the late 19th and early 20th century still continue to be in use. Following the advancements in technology and as a result of the changing needs of transport and society, the stations have undergone alterations, modifications and expansions, but they still continue offer rich glimpses into the past. Today, many of these stations, located at the prime spots in the cities and towns, are subject to the pressure from development lobbies. In conserving these sites, being the places with continued original functional value, all the conventional heritage approaches and the standard judgements of authenticity and integrity cannot be employed for these sites in the same way as other heritage sites. But at the same time, care should be taken that development does not overrule the historic traces that these sites still preserve. While plans for transforming Indian stations into ‘World Class Stations’ are underway, it has become even more crucial to develop policies, which can achieve this delicate balance. While some successful examples of regeneration of railway stations can be seen in London and elsewhere in Europe from which inspirations can be drawn, a more coherent policy needs to be charted, aligning with the character and challenges for the railway heritage in India.

The next section establishes this aspect, using a case of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus³, a railway terminus located in the city of Mumbai. Being a World Heritage Site since 2004 and seen as a prime example of architecture, it has spearheaded the heritage movement for railway architecture in India. At the same time, CSMT is one of the busiest stations in India and a balance between continuity and change needs to be achieved for which it is important to revisit how its significance is shaped, in the light of its functioning nature. This will also bring to light how the use of conventional policies for its conservation is tilting the balance away from its functional value as a railway headquarters and a terminus. The status of the UNESCO World Heritage Site has accelerated the pace of heritagisation⁴, which has brought further limitations in its holistic understanding as the next sections will show. It is important to broaden the understanding of its heritage and significance and develop a more holistic policy for its management, the approach which would be useful for other railway stations as well.

³ Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus – hereafter referred to as CSMT.

⁴ Heritagisation is ‘a process by which objects and places are transformed from functional ‘things’ into objects of display and exhibition’ (see Harrison 2013, p. 69, see also Walsh 1992). The author has discussed the aspects of heritagization and its consequences after the inscription of CSMT as a World Heritage Site in another research article in detail. (Basel / Berlin: Birkhäuser 2020, accepted).

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus: Crossroads of Industry, Culture and Society

CSMT has to its credit the honour of running the first ever railways in India, rather in Asia on 16th April 1853. Started by the Great Indian Peninsula Railway Company⁵, the establishment of the railways in Mumbai can be attributed to the joint initiatives by the British industrialists, businessmen, statesmen and the local British and Indian merchants, traders and elites who were eyeing commercial benefits through the endeavour. The railways, with their integral connection with the Port, and also the hinterland, enhanced trade and commerce to a great extent, thereby bringing wealth to the city. The cotton trade accelerated by the railways, changed the fortunes of Bombay⁶, especially during the American Civil War (1861-65), when the Indian cotton was in huge demand and was sold at enormous prices. While the railways of the subcontinent helped industries and mills in Britain prosper, their role in influencing industry in India cannot be ignored. In Bombay, in particular, the establishment of textile mills can be attributed also to the enhanced transport of raw materials realised by the railways. By the end of the 19th century, Bombay became a transport hub with its well-established railways and a developed port. More than half of the country's business was handled in Bombay. (Evenson 1989: 40).

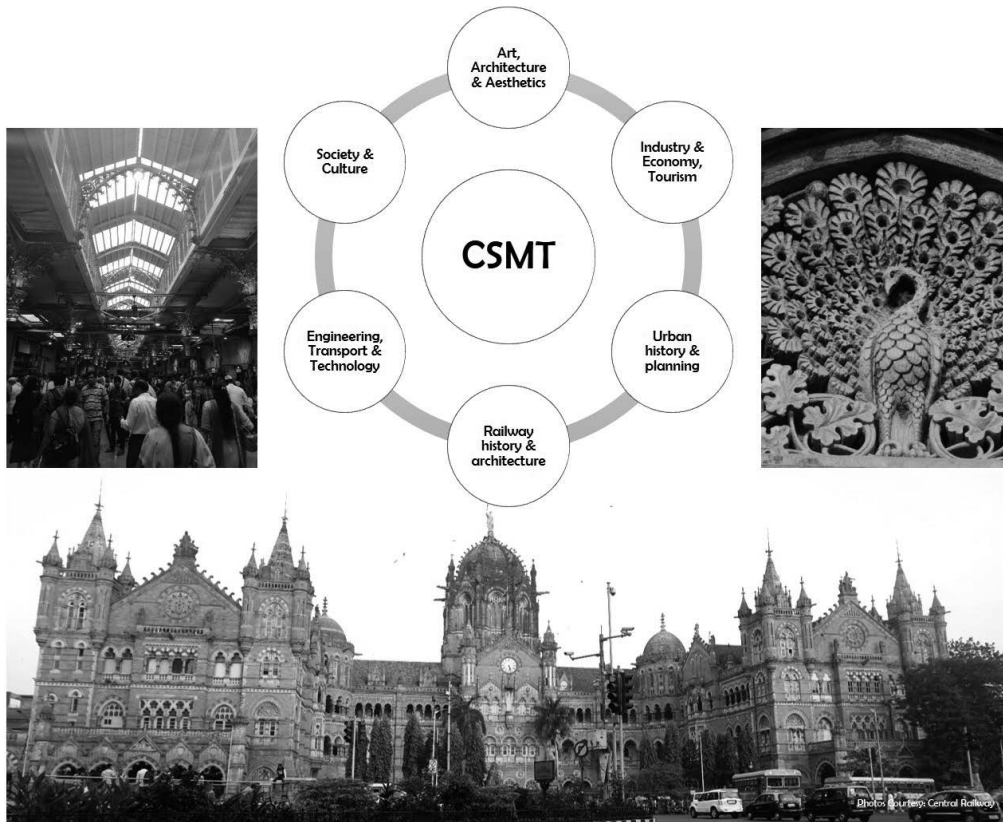
The demand for railways was not limited to the transport of goods. At the time of their establishment, it was not clear as to how the Indians would take to the railways. However, the railways established themselves quite quickly and became a popular mode of transport for people. As the use increased, the need for a proper terminus was felt at Boree Bunder⁷, which was served at the time by a precarious wooden station. In the late 1870s, the plans for the construction of a new station and offices were finalised and a modern grand station with four platforms was opened in early 1882. The station was planned as a two-sided type with arrival and departure on the either side of the station, with a concourse joining the platforms to the southern end. An administrative building connected with it was planned in such a way, that the northern wing housed the public conveniences such as the booking offices, waiting and refreshment rooms and the rest of the building housed the offices of the railway company. The station was built by the GIPR railway engineers on the established prototypes, but the imposing iron roof and columns and richly ornamented concourse gave the station its grandeur. Up-to-date facilities with intricately decorated booking hall and waiting rooms, lavish refreshment rooms were made available for the travelling public, carried out under the guidance of architect Frederick William Stevens, who designed and supervised the construction of the administrative building.

⁵ Great Indian Peninsula Railway Company – hereafter referred to as GIPR.

⁶ Bombay was renamed Mumbai in 1995. For historical references, name Bombay is used.

⁷ The original name of CSMT was Boree Bunder. It was named Victoria Terminus in 1887. It was renamed Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus in 1996, commemorating the 17th century sovereign king named Shivaji. Its name was changed again in 2017 as Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus.

Figure 1
Understanding the values associated with Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj
Terminus (CSMT), A Living Railway Heritage Site



From the mid-19th century, designing grand railway stations and elaborate offices for the railway companies had become a norm, as a testimony to their success and achievements. The rivalry between different companies made this competition for gaining prestige through architecture and engineering even more fierce. For Stevens, these elegant examples of railway architecture in Europe offered an inspiration, which also seemed to have aligned well with his own ambitions for professional accomplishment. The product of his meticulous planning was a Neo-Gothic building so opulent that it soon overshadowed all the previous grand constructions in Bombay. The octagonal dome of the building with a 'statue of progress' on top offered a perfect allegory representing the important role that the railways played in Bombay and in India. The merging of commerce, agriculture and engineering which the railways effected was also immortalised on the façade with the sculptural scheme adorning the gables. The grand design, abundance of material used in construction, intricate sculpturing and decoration, provided for both locally and from England, offered an

indication to the dominance of the railways in making Bombay the '*urbs prima in Indis*' – the first city of India. Named Victoria Terminus on the occasion of the reign of Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887, and completed in entirety a year later, the Terminus came to define the architectural climax for the city of Bombay.

CSMT also became instrumental in guiding the urban development of the surrounding region right from its construction, and came to be seen as a northern tip in the axial planning of the Fort area of South Bombay (Dwivedi and Mehrotra 2001, p. 100). The railways also determined the larger layout of the city of Bombay further dividing it east and west, as the developments took place on the either side of the railway line.

The railways being a technical system, also embraced the technological evolutions and continued to advance over time. In early 1925, CSMT witnessed the inauguration of the first electric suburban train in India and it introduced an era of electrification, which had profound impact on modernising the railways. The changes brought in by the technology improved the speed and comforts offered by the railways. The new transport developments such as motor cars, buses, trams (discontinued in 1960s), initially seen as competitors, actually complemented the railways, in which the railways and the stations became important nodes, where different transport systems converged.

Along with substantial contribution to industry, economy, architecture and urban planning and an integral association with technology, both CSMT and the railways governed the social life in Mumbai to a great extent. The new class structures that emerged in society, especially the formation of 'middle class' in Bombay was largely influenced by the railways. As Ian Kerr (2007, see chapter 5, pp.88-111) and other authors (see also Richards and MacKenzie 1986, see chapter 6, pp.137-159) have shown, the railways had a profound impact on society; caste, race and religious distinctions were also altered due to the travel on the trains. The railways, not only resolved differences, but also created new social divisions, well reflected in separate booking halls, refreshment rooms, etc. at CSMT and other railway stations. The railways also gave rise to new professions and became a source of livelihood for many. CSMT and the railways also earned a place in popular writing, music, films, and even souvenirs like postcards, stamps abounded.

Following the Indian Independence, the railways were reorganised and GIPR became the Central Railway, a branch of Indian Railways, with CSMT continuing to be its headquarters. The role that the railways play in the socio-economic-cultural life of Mumbai continues uninterrupted. While CSMT has expanded to 18 platforms with constant improvements in keeping with the technological advances and with the changing needs of time and society, the growing dependence on the railways is evident through the number of people who use the railways every day. About 4.5 million

commuters travel by the Central Railway daily⁸, with CSMT being one of the principal termini handling heavy suburban traffic, along with the long-distance services.

The main administrative building, already established as a symbol of Mumbai, has gained the attention of heritage professionals as ‘an architectural marvel’ since the 1980s and has been subjected to an elaborate conservation programme in the past decades. This impetus through the heritage movement also paved the way for the inscription of this building along with a part of the railway station – originally dating to the 1880s, into the UNESCO World Heritage Sites’ List on 2nd July 2004. In the last fifteen years, the main administrative building has remained in focus with a number of schemes being carried out for the promotion of its heritage value. It is being evident that the current conservation plan for CSMT is largely guided by the classical cultural heritage practices, which bring limitations to protecting and sustaining its multi-faceted values, extending beyond architecture and aesthetics. The conservation practices at CSMT do not take cognizance of its multi-layered nature as railway heritage.

The idea of ‘what is heritage’ has evolved over the years and the understanding of CSMT as heritage needs to be revisited in order to understand what constitutes the significance of living railway heritage, which will then bring to notice the shortcomings in the current approaches at CSMT.

Establishing the Cultural Significance: Recognising the Nature of Living Railway Heritage

With the proliferation of heritage especially from the 1970s, its conservation has become a primary concern and a number of charters and guidelines have been developed for the protection and promotion of heritage. The term ‘cultural significance’ emerged in the heritage conservation discussion with *The Burra Charter* (2013). The Charter was first adopted by Australia ICOMOS in 1979. Gradually, it was more widely recognised and globally accepted. The Charter has undergone revisions a number of times, the most recent being in 2013. *The Burra Charter Process* illustrated in the text and also the supplementary notes provide guidelines for assessing cultural significance. This Process upholds the cultural significance of a place as a crucial factor in the future management and decision-making related to heritage sites. Writing in 1997, Peter Burman saw it as the “best and most helpful tool we have yet” and something which could be applied to the study of railway heritage as well. (Burman 1997, p.32). Though not without limitations, *The Burra Charter* has been an important method for formulating Cultural Significance even today. It has become an integral part of the Operational Guidelines and the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

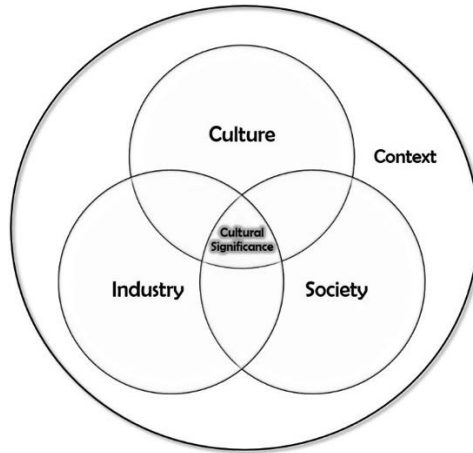
⁸ <https://www.firstpost.com/india/mumbai-local-trains-can-accommodate-only-25-commuters-with-social-distancing-says-railways-8965011.html> (accessed 20. December 2020).

in the nomination process of the World Heritage Sites, but at the same time, it is applicable and also being used widely for many heritage sites.

Cultural Significance is a value-based approach and looks at how heritage represents various values such as social, scientific, aesthetic, historic or spiritual, etc. for the past, present and future generations. In order to understand how cultural significance of living railway heritage is shaped, it is important to first recognise its unique nature. As already discussed in the earlier part of this paper, the three paradigms of cultural, industrial and living heritage are current in the cultural conservation practice. It needs to be made clear that even though the industrial and living heritage approaches form the subset of cultural heritage, they individually use diverse analytical lenses towards heritage, and embody a different notion of aesthetic, values and therefore of cultural significance. The functioning railway heritage, with its unique character, encompasses the elements of all three. Looking at CSMT, its cultural significance lies at the crossroads of culture, society and technology within the context of the city, and therefore fits into all these categories, as also elaborated in the previous section. It is very much a part of the country's industrial past, and also continues to show traces of the technological development till today. At the same time, being a product of particular architectural, artistic and aesthetic trends of the time, it has become a cultural landmark for the city and also for the Indian Railways. In its continuity of original function, CSMT integrates the living dimension as well. Therefore, its significance has to be understood at the intersection of these three approaches.

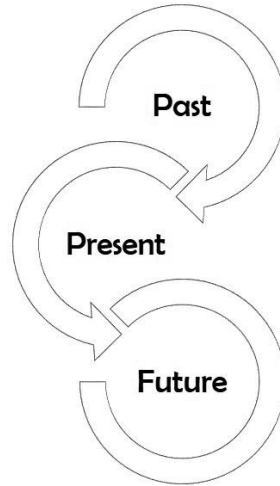
An aspect of importance in determining significance is also the recognition that the component parts and also the context and setting contribute to our understanding of heritage and its importance. In the case of railway heritage, the larger urban context it is set in, and also the trains, engines or even the way the spaces and facilities are devised at the railway stations can contribute to the shaping of heritage. In short, significance needs to be viewed as a product of interaction between the place, society as well as other variables like technology, culture, economy and so on. Any change in the variables and their interrelation is bound to change or alter the significance of the site.

Figure 2.
Cultural Significance of Living Railway Heritage at the intersection of culture, industry and society



What further distinguishes the functioning built railway heritage from any other heritage is the futuristic notion. The importance of railway is not to be seen only in the role it has played in the past, but it also encompasses the present. In fact, its value transcends beyond into the future, as it has become a necessity of public life. Christian Wolmar writes in his book *Blood, Iron, and Gold: How the Railways transformed the World*, “Railways may have lost out to the car and the lorry, and in America and other big countries, to the aeroplane, but the fact that they survived and now thrive shows their resilience and flexibility. Trains may be of the past, but they are still the future.” (Wolmar 2009, p.334). In Mumbai, the railways have become a lifeline for its residents. The use of the railways has been constantly growing and they have been an indispensable element in affording mobility to a large number of city’s population. The role of the railways in the life of the people of Mumbai has been discussed by the author elsewhere (see Bhatawadekar and Adhikari 2018). The railways will continue their stronghold in a country like India, where the majority of the population still actively uses railways for transport. The evolution of CSMT over the years offers a glimpse into how it has changed to accommodate the needs of time and will continue to do so, being a transport facility.

Figure 3
Living railway heritage, as a transport facility, is characterised by ‘continuity through change’ and is oriented towards future.



The functioning character of railway heritage brings to the forefront the notions of change and continuity. In maintaining use for the present and future, efficiency and modernity become the paramount values when it comes to transportation. Thus it ought to respond to the changing needs of society and traffic with time. It is bound to develop with the increasing demands of the society and with evolving technology. It is therefore vital to recognise that these functional demands will have an impact, while devising the significance of the living railway heritage.

In understanding significance, the limitation of *The Burra Charter* can be viewed in its focus on values as intrinsic. However, heritage is now increasingly being seen as a socio-cultural construct, “more usefully seen as constituted and constructed [...]”. (Wu and Hou 2015, p.39). Significance is therefore understood as extrinsic to the site and determined by how people value the site. This recognition of people’s role in determining heritage has also led to a critical review of UNESCO and professional heritage bodies and their rather narrow-minded approaches, mostly seen as fabric-based and homogenising rather than allowing for diversity. (see Smith 2006). This calls for broadening the understanding of heritage and its significance as shaped through processes, which are also daily and mundane. People’s daily associations add further layers of meaning to the place and enhance its significance. Especially with regard to the railways of Mumbai, the dependence on them constantly produces rich meaning-making, characterised by memory, nostalgia and sense of belonging, which gets transferred to the stations as they are anchors in the railway experience of people. This needs to be taken into account while comprehending CSMT’s significance.

Recognition of this intangible dimension integral to its tangible character will allow for a more holistic understanding of what constitutes the cultural significance of the site.

For CSMT, it is crucial that beyond its architecture and aesthetics, its engineering and technological values need to be taken cognizance of, along with its functioning nature and continuity with demands for the future, so also its association with commuters. Once this unique nature of the living railway heritage is established, the limitations in the current practices of conservation come to the fore, as discussed in the next section.

Heritage Conservation at CSMT: Limitations in the Current Practices

In the past few decades, architectural heritage conservation has established itself strongly in India. Mumbai, in particular, has spearheaded the movement, becoming the first city in the 1990s to create a listing of heritage structures based on their values, in which the dominance of architecture is evident. The inscription of CSMT also reflects this preference towards architecture. The World Heritage status promotes CSMT as “an outstanding example of Victorian Gothic Revival architecture in India, blended with themes deriving from Indian traditional architecture.”⁹ The current conservation practices at CSMT also align with conventional heritage approaches. However, this narrow perspective has rather limited the vast potential that this living heritage site presents.

An elaborate restoration programme is already underway to revive the architectural and aesthetic splendour of the exterior as well as the interior. The principles of authenticity are being adhered to in replacing the new additions by the like-material of the original period. The same approach is adopted for the tiles, doors, lamp designs, etc. with the aim to recreate the old charm. Later additions are being demolished or taken down, an example being the pulling down of a toilet block (built at a later period— probably post-Independence), which catered to the needs of the offices housed in the administrative building. While architectural homogeneity can be visually pleasing, taking the administrative building back to the 1880s contradicts with the very spirit of the site, i.e. its evolving and functioning nature. Architectural restoration is a rather superficial touch afforded to the building, when the functional character has undergone change over the years to incorporate the changing norms of the society. Restoring the architectural elements, where possible, as a testimony to the past, is essential. However, excessive focus on a single phase in CSMT’s history currently evident at the site is rather obliterating the multiple processes it has undergone, which are central to establishing its importance. Through its multiple administrative buildings and station, CSMT presents a rich story of not only the evolution of the station in the last 140 years, but also mirrors the continuous progress

⁹ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/945> (accessed 26. June 2020).

the city and society itself has undergone. This story is not highlighted in the current restoration efforts. The establishment of a museum, open-air heritage galleries, photo exhibitions at the site are all a product of the interest in promoting the heritage value of CSMT, based on its material fabric and architectural aesthetics. While these efforts have helped enhance the recognition of the site as cultural heritage, its engineering and technological importance remains underrepresented.

The industrial heritage discussion is in nascent stages in India. Though railways have been recognised as the integral aspects of India's rich industrial heritage, railway stations as a testimony to the industrial and technological progress is an under-studied topic. The station has been constantly evolving, with the addition of new materials and various improvements, which all mirror the technological innovations. The traces of the past still survive and not much emphasis is laid on studying the engineering aspect as an embodiment of industrial and technological progress at CSMT in particular and the evolution of railways in general.

Right from its construction, CSMT has served a primary function of transport. Commuters form the very essence of the site, 'a core community' as outlined in the living heritage approach. The relation between commuters and CSMT has been instrumental in shaping the way the place has been perceived as heritage. Thousands of people use CSMT every day and have established a close connection with the site. This intangible dimension is rather subsided, in the conservation strategies adopted at CSMT, due to the attention focussed on the material fabric. It has also always served as the administrative headquarters and the continuity of this original function is also at the very core of its significance. However, the discussions about converting the entire administrative building into a museum¹⁰ contradict the very uniqueness, i.e. its continued use, which characterises the site.

Rather than following the conventional heritage practices which do not provide solution for this functioning site, it is necessary to rethink the conservation policies to be adopted for it, and how could different values be harmonized, which would further enhance its significance.

Managing the Living Railway Heritage: Approaches and Strategies

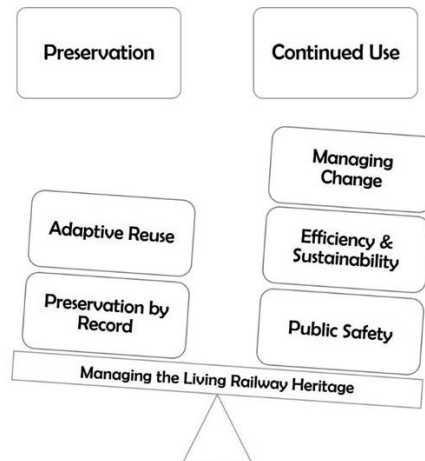
Managing the living railway heritage is an exercise of 'managing change and continuity'. As Derek Worthing and Karen Gwilliams note, "The term conservation can be seen as a holistic concept which implies identifying what is culturally important about a place and protecting those values whilst allowing the place to change and

¹⁰ <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/railways-plan-to-turn-csmt-into-museum-chugs-into-controversy-5073994/> (accessed 20. December 2020). The plan for converting the entire building into a museum has been shelved for now.

evolve, i.e. conservation is a dynamic rather than static process.” (Worthing and Gwilliams 2002, p. 565). With the growing emphasis on sustainability from the 1980s, it has become even more important to widen the scope of heritage conservation to integrate it with the sustainability concerns. As Graham Fairclough writes, “Conservation should not merely be change’s witness but a central part of its very process, the better to direct it sustainably.” (Fairclough 2001, p.23).

The question is, how to manage change and continuity in the case of the functioning railway heritage? As the living heritage approach reiterates, “...there are greater implications for the conservation and management of heritage where the continuity of the original function is evident.” Following the discussion in the previous sections, it is clear that the importance of this heritage can be best seen in its continued use, for which it was constructed. Emphasizing what John H. Yates has already concluded, “Beneficial use on an operational railway will usually be first choice; adaptation for new uses will often be acceptable; preservation by record will be the last resort.”(Yates 1997, p.131). Railway stations, being integral parts of the railway system, this statement is valid for the stations as well.

Figure 4
In striking a balance between preservation and use for the living railway heritage, maintaining use at the site is more challenging.



Maintaining use on site requires reconsidering the notion of authenticity, which has been an integral part of the cultural heritage discussions. In the early charters related to cultural heritage, authenticity was seen primarily in form, fabric and craftsmanship. Its definition and scope was further expanded with the *Nara Document on Authenticity* (1994), by looking at “form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling, and other internal

and external factors.” Authenticity as espoused in the *Nara Document* integrated intangible values, and also acknowledged that authenticity was to be determined based on the cultural context. Yet, in many cases of cultural conservation, there is still an excessive focus on maintaining or reverting to the original material, design and form and this way of reconstruction or restoration results in mere aesthetic mending or beautification. At CSMT, it is important to espouse the wider notion of authenticity, which integrates various aspects of authenticity within the larger context. What needs to be avoided is “the continued reliance on a constructed notion of ‘authenticity’ invested in the building-as-object over and above building-as-process.” (Marchand 2001, p.150).

Looking at heritage as a process calls for recognising various phases and changes that the site has witnessed, which have ensured the continuity of its function and also established its importance. It is important to ensure that the site presents a continuous story than only a selected image of a particular period. This focus will also help in judgements on what to preserve and what changes to bring about. As Robert Thorne adds, “Railway termini demand an appraisal that takes full account of their past, including the recognition that we cannot simply carry on regarding them as they have been regarded before.” (Thorne 1997, p.196). Design standards to ensure maintenance of the architectural character, which will also allow for change, in line with its functionality, but at the same time minimal alteration to respect the historical value of the site will bring all values at par with each other, rather than clashing with one another. Moreover, while new change needs to be incorporated on site, retaining the existing structures so far as possible and improving their usability is crucial to ensure sustainability on site. The larger context of the site and the relative importance of the site’s different elements should be the key considerations while devising any plan for its conservation.

While professional standards of care are needed to ensure that the site preserves its authenticity and completeness in sufficient form, as Sir Neil Cossons (1997, p.7) has stressed, it is important to draw a line between necessity and frill in restoration and between priorities for commuter needs for the efficient functioning of the site. If alteration, reconstruction or restoration at the site could be aligned with the aspects important to enhance the functionality, efficiency and public safety of the place, rather than mere aesthetical handling of the site, it is possible to retain the significance of the living railway heritage. Moreover, even though the World Heritage Status demands adherence to particular rules, the continuation of function in the administrative building also requires that the changing needs of working are taken care of, along with maintaining the architectural importance.

With this clear emphasis, the tendency of musealisation would also be kept to the minimum, to present the story of how the place has come to be, rather than drastically altering the function of the whole site into a museum.¹¹ Traditionally, museums have been considered as an ideal way to preserve heritage for posterity. However, as Steve Pilcher suggests, “Railways are a means of transport, and cannot be fully appreciated in a static ‘museum’ form.” (Pilcher 1997, p.133). As John H. Yates asks, “[...] would the character of St Pancras Station be better conserved by physically preserving it as a railway museum, or by adapting it to take Eurostar trains?” (Yates 1997, p.130). It has to be kept in mind that the museum is a possible alternative for the adaptive reuse when the structure has already lost its original use, and should not be an option for the living heritage. In one sense, CSMT, with its continued function, is rather a living stage, which offers rich glimpses into the continued connections between the past and the present, with directions into the future. The conservation practice needs to ensure that the living nature of heritage is maintained so far as possible, as the best strategy for its sustenance.

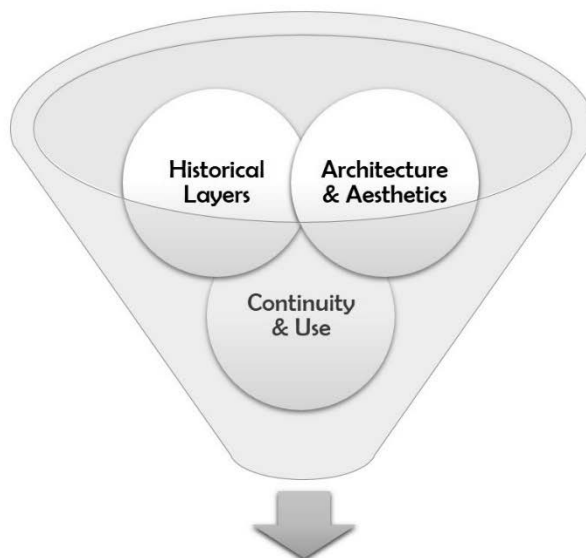
The association between people and heritage and their role in the conservation process has been recognised, so also the need to involve them in discussions and decision making. As discussed earlier, the living heritage approach highlighted this connection (see also *The Faro Convention 2005*) and stressed “the potential for a community-led, interactive and inclusive approach” (Wijesuriya 2015, p.11). However, usually the significance judgements in the heritage conservation context are top-down decisions, determined by the experts and institutions. Adopting a bottom-up approach can help capture wider emotions and memories, which are otherwise neglected. Observations, surveys and interviews can point to the complex associations that people have with the site. In strengthening the relation between people and the place, heritage will be better maintained. “[This means] being prepared to welcome changes that improve the way the stations work, particularly from the passengers’ point of view. Keeping a station in efficient use is the best form of conservation.” (Thorne 1997, p.189). It is of vital importance to allow the railways and the stations to thrive and change. It is actually in its continuity and association with people that the railway heritage will be best preserved and sustained and will continue to mirror the cultural, social, economic as well as technological transformations that the society has undergone.

To conclude, it is important to evaluate various aspects of the heritage site such as architecture and aesthetics, its historical continuity and also the need for change required to ensure its efficient use. Choosing the right balance between these factors will ensure that both continuity and change are well-managed for the living railway heritage.

¹¹ There is already a nice balance between function and museum in the administrative building. A small museum in the building is open to visitors during specific hours and visitors also get a guided tour of the building.

Figure 5

The living railway heritage can be managed effectively by filtering and using the right combination of different values associated with the site.



Managing the Living Railway Heritage

For this, it is essential that heritage itself is seen in the wider perspective, so also the idea of authenticity and integrity. Adequate research and knowledge base is necessary for establishing the significance of heritage by recognising its multi-layered nature. All the stakeholders have to be considered in the decision-making process. It is to be noted that this management approach is not only useful for CSMT, but also for other railway stations in India, where the constant dilemma between preservation and change is witnessed. CSMT, being the principal station in India and also a well-preserved landmark, offers a potential to set the tone for sustainable management for the railway architecture in India, so that the railway sites can continue to evolve, and simultaneously will also retain and present the continuous links between the past, present and future. Recognising the unique living nature of railway heritage by broadening the understanding of heritage and significance and adopting sustainable practices for its management will ensure that the tangible and intangible is integrated into a coherent narrative, peoples' needs are met, and the balance of change and continuity is achieved for the living railway heritage.

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