

Conservation of Architectural Timberwork of the Kandyan Period

A report submitted to this University or to another University or to another institution in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a degree or other qualification.

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Abstract

The Kandyan period buildings which are of predominantly timber construction form a valuable part of our cultural heritage. Conservation of these structures require special skills and expertise to consolidate them without damaging their authenticity. Degeneration of the timberwork of these buildings is caused by the activity of decay causing agencies and the changes instigated during the periodic renewal process.

The objective of this thesis was to identify the nature and causes of degeneration seen on the timber elements of these buildings and to provide recommendations for the conservation of the same. The study was based on a qualitative approach and relied primarily on observations made at site, on records and documentation relating to the conservation of the structures and on past examples and experience.

The findings show that the degeneration of the Kandyan period timberwork, was instigated often by the combined or interrelated action of human, biological and climatic factors. The necessity was seen for preventive measures to prolong the life of timber elements to minimize the need for renewal, and for research to be carried out to find methods and material that are economical and adaptable to local conditions, based on their performance in the past. Using traditional concepts, methods and techniques for this end, seems to be the most valid solution.

Key words

Kandyan period buildings – The buildings recorded as existing at the time the British took over the ancient Kandyan kingdom of Sri Lanka, in 1815 A.D.

Conservation – The process through which the material, historical and design integrity of built heritage are prolonged through carefully planned interventions

Traditional – The passing down of elements of a culture from generation to generation / a time honoured practice

Authenticity – Is considered to mean genuine in terms of the physical fabric of the heritage property regarding its form and design, material and substance, location and setting.

Degeneration – The state or process of being or becoming degenerate; decline or deterioration in terms of material and physical content of buildings

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