

**EVALUATING THE LEVEL OF SUCCESS OF
ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION
INTERVENTIONS:
[AN EXPLORATORY STUDY BASED IN SRI LANKA]**

**I.G. Ravini Nimaya Wimalasuriya
(228423J)**

**Master of Science in
Architectural Conservation of Monuments and Sites (ACOMAS)**

**Department of Architecture
Faculty of Architecture**

**University of Moratuwa
Sri Lanka**

November 2025

**EVALUATING THE LEVEL OF SUCCESS OF
ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION
INTERVENTIONS:
[AN EXPLORATORY STUDY BASED IN SRI LANKA]**

**I.G. Ravini Nimaya Wimalasuriya
(228423J)**

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
Master of Science in Architectural Conservation of
Monuments and Sites (ACOMAS)

Supervised by:

**Archt. Varuna de Silva (Internal)
Archt. (Dr.) Nilan Cooray (External)**

**Department of Architecture
Faculty of Architecture**

**University of Moratuwa
Sri Lanka**

November 2025

Declaration

I declare that this is my own work, and this dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any other University or Institute of higher learning and to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where the acknowledgement is made in the text. Further, I hereby grant the non-exclusive right to the University of Moratuwa to reproduce and distribute my dissertation, in whole or in part in print, electronic or other medium. I retain the right to use this content in whole or part in future works (such as articles or books).

29/11/2025

Signature

Date

The above candidate has carried out research for the Masters dissertation under my supervision.

Name of the Supervisor (Internal) : **Arch. Varuna de Silva**

Signature

Date

Name of the Supervisor (External) : **Arch. (Dr.) Nilan Cooray**

Signature

Date

Abstract

Evaluating the Level of Success of Architectural Conservation Interventions: An Exploratory Study Based in Sri Lanka

Wimalasuriya I.G.R.N.

Sri Lanka, despite its rich history of architectural conservation, faces challenges in evaluating the level of success of conservation interventions due to the absence of a standardized evaluation mechanism. Current evaluations tend to be ad-hoc, case-specific, subjective, and inconsistent. Hence, this research aimed to address this gap by developing an '*Architectural Conservation Rating System of Sri Lanka (ACRS-SL)*', a standardized, objective, yet flexible framework for evaluating conservation interventions. The study undertook a comprehensive review of existing literature, analysing factors and criteria influencing the level of success of conservation interventions, through thematic analysis. Accordingly, 61 evaluation criteria, including 03 mandatory and 58 general criteria, under 12 sub themes and 04 corresponding major themes were identified. Furthermore, the ACRS-SL system has adopted an 'Average Percentage Score System' to replace the 'Weighted Cumulative Score Systems' in previous research attempts, providing greater flexibility and adaptability to different contexts. To minimize subjectivity, a two-way assessment model has been proposed to be implemented, ensuring more accurate evaluations through cross-checking. Conservation experts' input from in-depth interviews and application to 12 diverse test cases in Sri Lanka helped to refine the rating system and validate its applicability across different degrees of interventions and, various building typologies, historical periods, and conservation challenges. While this research did not critically analyse individual test cases upon the rated scores, it presents a foundation for future studies to further validate and refine the system. The potential development of ACRS-SL into a web or mobile-based application is also recommended to enhance its practical use. In conclusion, the ACRS-SL system offers an objective yet flexible and adaptable approach to evaluating architectural conservation interventions, providing a standardized tool that can be applied globally to improve the planning, decision-making, and outcomes of architectural conservation projects.

Keywords: Architectural Conservation, Average Percentage Scoring, Conservation Rating System, Evaluation Mechanisms, Sri Lanka

Dedication

I am profoundly honoured to dedicate this dissertation to Dr. Roland Silva, whose exceptional contribution to the field of Heritage Conservation in Sri Lanka have deeply inspired and guided me as an early career professional. His tireless dedication, innovative approaches, and unwavering commitment to preserve our cultural heritage have set a benchmark in Sri Lankan history. Dr. Silva's visionary leadership, the effort he made to nurture the next generation of professionals, and his expertise in the field, have not only enriched the discipline but also have ignited a lasting inspiration for all aspiring scholars and professionals.

I sincerely wish he was alive to witness this research, as it would have allowed me to engage in a deeper conversation with him, given his vast experience. Hence, this research, which is purely intended with further enhancing the decision-making and planning process of architectural conservation intervention efforts to achieve higher success rates, is dedicated to the legacy in the domain of heritage conservation in Sri Lanka, late Dr. Roland Silva.

I. G. Ravini Nimaya Wimalasuriya

01.05.2025

Acknowledgement

Undertaking my MSc degree in ACOMAS was a transformative experience in my life, which not only provided me with invaluable knowledge but also exposed me to numerous new experiences. This journey allowed me to learn, relearn, and challenge myself beyond classroom sessions, extending to practical applications in real-world settings, and several field visits. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to the Course Coordinator, the Head of the Department, and all the academic staff members of the ACOMAS program for their continuous guidance and support, which has been instrumental in reaching the milestone of this research study.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my two research supervisors, Archt. Varuna de Silva and Archt. (Dr.) Nilan Cooray, for their unwavering dedication in guiding and supervising me throughout this research dissertation. Their keen interest in my field of study and the trust they placed in me have been a constant source of motivation. Their valuable insights, encouragement, and guidance played a crucial role in the successful completion of this study.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to all the conservation experts who participated in the in-depth interviews for this research. Their willingness to share their knowledge and perspectives, despite their busy schedules, has been invaluable. I am also deeply grateful to all the authors of the materials I referenced during this study, whose work contributed significantly to my research.

Additionally, I would like to thank the non-academic staff members of the department for their continued support throughout the two years of the degree program. Their valuable assistance in various areas has played an important role in my success.

Lastly, I am forever grateful to my parents, whose unwavering love, encouragement, and patience have been the pillars of my life. Their support has continuously guided me towards achieving my personal and professional goals.

Table of Content

Declaration	i
Abstract	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgement.....	iv
Table of Content.....	v
List of Figures	viii
List of Tables.....	ix
List of Abbreviations.....	x
List of Appendices	xi
 Chapter 1:	 1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 General Overview	1
1.2 Statement of Problem.....	3
1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Study	3
1.4 Significance of the Study	4
1.5 Method, Scope and Limitations	4
1.6 Structure of the Dissertation	5
 Chapter 2:	 7
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	7
2.1 Context for the Study	7
2.1.1 Conservation Definitions and Approaches	7
2.1.2 Theoretical and Philosophical Evolution of Architectural Conservation: Global context	8
2.1.3 History of Architectural Conservation in Sri Lanka	11
2.1.4 Degrees of Architectural Conservation Interventions	12
2.1.5 Major International Charters and Local Guidelines on Architectural Conservation.....	13
2.1.6 Concept and Theories of Evaluation	15
2.1.7 Existing Evaluation Mechanisms in Related domains	16
2.1.8 Existing Evaluation Mechanisms Used for Other Heritage Awarding Purposes.....	18

2.2 Pre-Research	21
2.2.1 Importance/ Need for an Evaluation Mechanism for Architectural Conservation interventions	21
2.2.2 Scholarly Efforts to Develop a Standard Evaluation Mechanism	22
2.3 Justification of the Research Gap	33
Chapter 3:	34
METHODOLOGY.....	34
3.1 Review of Research Methodologies adopted in previous research attempts....	34
3.2 Research Methodology for this Study	35
3.2.1 Research Approach.....	35
3.2.2 Research Strategy	35
3.2.3 Methodological Choice	36
3.2.4 Research Data Collection and Sampling	36
3.2.5 Data Analysis	38
3.2.6 Research Design in brief	43
3.2.7 Data Presentation.....	43
3.2.8 Ethical Clearance.....	44
Chapter 4:	46
DATA ANALYSIS	46
4.1 Data Analysis: Phase 01 (Inductive segment)	46
4.1.1 Mandatory Criteria	48
4.1.2 Conservation Project Planning and Management.....	49
4.1.3 Technical Requirements and Quality of the Intervention	50
4.1.4 Long-term Impacts	51
4.1.5 Sustainability and Inheritance to Posterity	53
4.2 Data Analysis: Phase 02 (Deductive segment)	54
4.2.1 Analysis of Expert Feedback via In-depth interviews.....	55
4.2.2 Analysis of Rated scores	55

Chapter 5:	59
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	59
5.1 The Architectural Conservation Rating System of Sri Lanka (ACRS-SL)	59
5.1.1 Structure of the Rating System.....	59
5.1.2 Evaluation Form	60
5.1.3 Evaluation Methodology	72
5.1.4 Customizability of the rating system.....	73
5.1.5 Scoring Mechanism.....	74
5.2 Potential Usability of the Rating System.....	75
5.3 Limitations of the research	76
5.4 Directions and Recommendations for Future Studies	77
Chapter 6:	78
CONCLUSION	78
Bibliography.....	80
Appendices.....	86

List of Figures

Figure	Description	Page
Figure 2.1	Example of a simple decision-matrix with scores on a five-point scale	28
Figure 2.2	Example of a decision-matrix (made in Excel™) highlighting the best scores in each criterion in green	29
Figure 2.3	Accreditation process model to evaluate interventions on a heritage monument	32
Figure 3.1	Screenshot from QDA Miner Lite™ showing the manual data coding of conservation texts	40
Figure 3.2	Identification of optimal criteria and generation of themes from the dataset (Code-theme format)	41
Figure 3.3	The process of developing the ACRS-SL system	42
Figure 3.4	Illustrated version of the current research design in brief	43
Figure 4.1	Radar chart presenting the expert scores for each criterion section of the test cases	57
Figure 5.1	Levels of Accreditation of ACRS-SL Rating System	74

List of Tables

Table	Description	Page
Table 2.1	Major International Charters on Architectural Conservation	13
Table 2.2	Major Local Guidelines on Architectural Conservation	14
Table 2.3	Summary of the Criteria proposed by different scholars	25
Table 3.1	Data Collection and Sampling Methods	36
Table 4.1	Identified Criteria (Codes) organized by Sub-themes and Major Themes	46
Table 4.2	The summary of opinions, suggestions and constructive criticism received during the expert interviews	55

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
ACRS-SL	Architectural Conservation Evaluation Rating System of Sri Lanka
ASC	Archaeological Survey of Ceylon
CCF	Central Cultural Fund
CIDA	Construction Industry Development Authority
DoA	Department of Archaeology, Sri Lanka
GBRS	Green Building Rating Systems
GHF	Galle Heritage Foundation
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
ICCROM	International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
NIBS	National Institute of Building Sciences, USA
OUV	Outstanding Universal Value
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
SLIA	Sri Lanka Institute of Architects
UGC	University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
URA	Urban Redevelopment Authority of Singapore
WHS	World Heritage Site

List of Appendices

Appendix	Description	Page
Appendix 1	Prevailing terms and definitions for different degrees of conservation interventions	85
Appendix 2	Green Rating System-Sri Lanka for Existing Buildings	87
Appendix 3	CIDA Construction Excellence Awards, Sri Lanka	93
Appendix 4	Evaluation Criteria used for Galle Heritage Awards-2023	94
Appendix 5	Evaluation Criteria used for UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards	96
Appendix 6	Evaluation Criteria for Architectural Heritage Awards, Singapore	97
Appendix 7	List of Interviewees (Conservation Experts)	98
Appendix 8	Request letter sent to Conservation Experts seeking their consent	99