

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: GAZETTING IN KENYA: A COMPARISON TO AMERICAN PRESERVATION STRATEGIES

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The protection of historic places in Kenya is called ‘gazetting’ from the practice of publishing protected sites in the official *Gazette*. This thesis examines gazetting and compares this Kenyan model of historic preservation to that of the United States. The thesis hypothesis is stated as “Current gazetting procedures are inadequate for the conservation of Kenya’s heritage and would benefit from modifications using American models.”

Thesis chapters cover the Kenyan legislation, the bureaucratic process, the sites and trends of actual declarations of protection, objections by owners, the American historic preservation model, and analysis and recommendations. The methods used for assembling this material included interviews undertaken with twenty-four Kenyan participants in the gazetting process. Newspaper archives, *Gazette* records and legal texts, and the office files of the National Museums of Kenya were examined. Sites of problematic gazettements were visited and photographed.

Kenya's system is shown to be centralized and national, run by conservation professionals, and dependent on criminal penalties to protect heritage sites. The system is comprehensive in the African context and has done an excellent job with archeological sites and objects. Challenges facing the protection of Kenyan historic sites include lack of resources, bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption, lack of public awareness, weak involvement of local communities, and absence of economic incentives.

In the last decade, however, The Kenyan system has shown itself less well adapted to the current trend to protect the historic built environment, particularly privately owned properties. Since American preservation is oriented toward such more recent and privately owned heritage, the thesis hypothesis has proven particularly true in dealing with current Kenyan concerns.

Comparison to the U.S. shows the American historic preservation system to be decentralized and local rather than centralized and national, based on incentives rather than penalties, and driven by economic realities rather than curatorial decisions. A series of recommendations urges greater local participation and economic incentives to make Kenyan historic preservation more appealing and widespread. With a new reform administration just elected, the time is right to revitalize Kenya's heritage protection regime with proven strategies from the U.S.