

## **PROMOTING THE VALUE OF FRENCH ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE IN HUE IN THE ASPECT OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Hue is the center of culture in the Central region, the cradle that formed the country of Dang Trong. The architecture and planning of Hue in the colonial period were in fact oriented to build on the basis of respecting the local identity and natural conditions. However, the French heritage in Hue is gradually lost under the influence of urbanization and inadequate investment by the government. The balance in preserving French heritage and exploiting its value in tourism development is a story that is worth discussing. Managing, preserving and promoting the value of French heritage in tourism development is considered as a step in sustainable tourism development, "reviving" French architectural values, diversifying tourism types.

**Key world:** Heritage, architectural heritage, tourism, solution.

### **1. Introduction**

Cultural heritage is a term being used to express the material and spiritual products which were distilled from the past and had historical, cultural and scientific values. Reality has proven that cultural differences, multi-faceted and the diversity of cultural heritage are the important factors that not only create attraction for image promotion but also bring out the economic benefit.

Hue is the center of culture in the Central region, the cradle that formed the country of Dang Trong. Hue's environment and landscape is like a charming painting, a diverse natural space, which is created by the convergence of hills, mountains, dunes, and rivers. Convergence and interfering of nature have created a place for cultural harmony. As Professor Tran Quoc Vuong once commented, Hue is a typical region of the interweaving, fusion, acculturation and interference of Cham - Vietnamese - Chinese languages and cultures. Hue in the colonial period was planned and built by the French methodically and scientifically, taking the Perfume River as the layout axis of the urban development planning. The architecture and planning of Hue in the

colonial period were in fact oriented to build on the basis of respecting the local identity and natural conditions. French architecture did not fade the inherent beauty of Hue urban area, but contributed to make Hue from a perfect feudal city into the integration of Western architecture. However, the French heritage in Hue is gradually lost under the influence of urbanization and inadequate investment by the government. The balance in preserving French heritage and exploiting its value in tourism development is a story that is worth discussing. Managing, preserving and promoting the value of French heritage in tourism development is considered as a step in sustainable tourism development, "reviving" French architectural values, diversifying tourism types. In the city that is known as the "city of heritage". Let Hue be not only an attractive tourist destination but also contribute to maintain the continued development of the French architectural heritage in Hue.

## **2. Theoretical basis and research methods**

### **2.1.1. Heritage concept**

Heritage is a multi-meaning word, most of are related to its general interpretation of it is inheritance from the past (Herbert, 1995). The term 'heritage' has been used in relation to the natural world, referring to mountains and rivers, buildings and monuments, art and social customs and traditions. A distinction is often made between natural heritage, which draws its qualities from nature, and man-made heritage which is associated with people or events, including historical building or monument (Ruth Mc Manuth, 1997). Legacy has been described as whatever you want it to be. Heritage can be of anything that someone wishes to preserve or collect, and passes on to future generations (Petter Howard, 2003). According to Lauren Smith, heritage activity is a range of activities including remembering, celebrating, communicating and passing on knowledge and memories, affirming and expressing identity and society, and cultural values and meanings (Lauren Smith, 2006). According to Lauren Smith (2006) heritage is a social process concerned with creating and maintaining certain cultures with different values. Smith also explained that what makes art effects valuable and meaningful - what makes them become heritage is the cultural processes and activities going on around it today. Heritage is also understood as the processes of identifying with the symbolism of specific cultures and social events, and thus giving them value and meaning. Western interpretations of 'heritage' tend to emphasize the physical basis of heritage and attach inherent cultural value or significance to these.

As quoted by Rodney Harrison in Oxford English Dictionary heritage is defined as property which is or may be inherited; an inheritance, things of value, such as historic buildings that have been passed down from previous generations and relate to things of historical or cultural value

worth of preservation. The emphasis here is the important focus on inheritance and preservation, as well as the focus on 'property', 'thing' or 'building'. Heritage is something that can be passed on from generation to generation or, something that can be preserved or inherited and something that has historical or cultural value. Heritage can be understood as an object, piece of property, a building or a place that can be owned and 'passed on' to others (Rodney Harrison, 2010).

According to the Law on Cultural Heritage approved by the 10th National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam at its 9th session, cultural heritage is “a spiritual and material product of historical and cultural value, science, handed down from generation to generation”. According to the Amendment article of the Law on Cultural Heritage No. 32/2009/QH12 (Article 1), intangible cultural heritage is defined as spiritual products associated with communities or individuals, objects and related cultural spaces, having historical, cultural and scientific value, expressing the identity of the community, constantly being recreated and handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth". (According to the Law amending and supplementing a number of articles of the Law on Cultural Heritage No. 32/2009/QH12, dated June 18, 2009). According to the Law on Cultural Heritage of Vietnam No. 28/2001/QH10 (Article 4, Chapter 1), tangible cultural heritage should be understood as “material products of historical, cultural, scientific, including historical - cultural relics, scenic spots, relics, antiquities, national treasures".

### **2.1.2. Heritage tourism concept**

“Heritage tourism” is a difficult phrase to define and categorize. It is a term that can be understood as "cultural tourism", "art tourism", "ethnic tourism" or "indigenous tourism", and they are often used interchangeably (Michael Hitchcock, Victor T.King and Michael J.G.Parnwell, 2010).

Some people define heritage tourism simply as people visiting heritage sites or viewing historical resources. Others suggest that heritage tourism is the process of personal connection with the objects or places that defines heritage tourism. Even more specifically, some observers argue that heritage tourism is based on the inquiry process of people who want to learn something new or enhance their lives in some way. All of these perspectives are important components of heritage tourism (Timothi, 2011). According to Timothi, Heritage tourism includes all elements handed down by humans from the past through that tourists have experiences and seek spiritual meaning, education or beliefs (Timothi, 2011). Heritage tourism is defined as visiting to historical sites and cultural landmarks, attending special events and festivals, seeing the streets with shows or visiting museums (Bob McKercher and Hilary du Cros, 2002). The authors believe that: Heritage tourism is a way of participating in any unlimited series of activities or experiences where

cultural space is one of the attractions of heritage tourism, participants experiences can be understood as heritage tourists. The scale of visitation of heritage tourism can vary from a single building to a cluster of buildings, a streetscape, an area within a population, an entire city or town, an area or arguably the entire nation (Bob McKercher and Hilary du Cros, 2002). Agreeing with this view, two authors Whyte, Hood and White have argued that: the movement of people to cultural attractions in cities in countries other than their usual place of residence, with the intention of gathering new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs and all human movements to specific cultural attractions, such as heritage sites, expressions art and culture – art, art and drama (Whyte, Hood and White, 2012).

Heritage tourism is also understood as cultural tourism activities that include the use of cultural heritage assets such as archaeological sites, museums, castles, palaces, historic buildings, famous landmarks, etc. buildings, ruins, art, sculpture, crafts, galleries, festivals, events, music and dance, folk art, theatre, "primitive culture," literature cultures, ethnic communities, churches, cathedrals and other things that represent people and their cultures (Miller, 1997).

## **2.2. Research Methods:**

Within the scope of this article, the research questions we want to ask are:

- What is the value of French architectural heritage in contemporary life?
- What is the current status of the value of French heritage architecture today?
- What should be done to promote the value of French architectural heritage?

### **1. Methods of collecting and processing secondary data:**

In order to understand the management of French architectural works in Hue, we study and evaluate statistics in the statistical work of the Department of Heritage, Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Thua Thien Hue province presented in 2019 on promulgating a draft to promulgate regulations on the management of typical French architectural works in Hue city.

### **2. Primary data collection and processing methods:**

To collect primary data, we use in-depth interview method: in social research, this method is commonly used. In-depth interview is an information collection method in which the interviewee will answer a number of questions composed by the researcher. In-depth interviews help researchers delve into aspects of the feelings, motivations, history, and attitudes of the informant. Interviewers must know what they want the informant to say. The interview form was conducted in a semi-structured form with two prepared subject areas: managers and travel agencies. The

content of the interview is divided into 3 main parts analyzing the value of French architectural works in Hue, the management of French architectural works in Hue and the strengths of French architecture in Hue in tourism exploitation.

Based on those two research methods, the study will show the conflicts in the management of French heritage in Hue with tourism development, thereby proposing some solutions to exploit the value of the French heritage system in Hue towards sustainable tourism development.

### **3. Value of French architectural heritage in Hue:**

#### **3.1 Introduction to French architectural heritage in Hue**

The birth and development of French colonial architecture in Hue went through important milestones: In 1874, the GiapTuat Peace Treaty was signed, France had the right to appoint a missionary in Hue. The event marked the birth of the Embassy of TrungKy on the south bank of the Perfume River, paving the way for the appearance of a series of colonial architectural works later. The year 1919 marked the second colonial exploitation of France after the World War. Due to political changes and economic fluctuations, each subsequent period has a change in the quantity and style of colonial architecture. In the period of 1875 – 1945, a commercial center called "City of Merchandise" was established by the French. In addition, in the 1880s, due to too much pressure from the colonial regime, the Nguyen dynasty had to cede an area in the northeast part of the Citadel to France. This area is then known as the "Concession land to the French" or the Big Gills card. The French also erected a system of defensive walls around (Luong Lan Phuong, 2018). The French heritage buildings in Hue are divided into: Concession area and Western quarter. The first French concession in Hue: the legation building (l'hotel de la legation - this is the first powerful building built on the southern concession area of Huong River, MangCa (Le Mang-Ca) : Concession area north of Perfume River.

The second area is the planning of the Western Quarter, which is considered as the urban expansion of the French to the south of the Perfume River, opposite to the old urban area of the Nguyen Dynasty. Through this approach, the French showed us that they had a sense of respect for the historical architectural complex of the Nguyen Dynasty that had been formed and existed before. (Luong Lan Phuong, 2018). In about 80 years (1875-1954), the French built and completed a small town on the south bank of the Perfume River with a separate form which was different from the traditional local specifications on the opposite bank. Western Area, this model of a small urban area built according to this new architecture has existed in parallel with the traditional urban style for a long time, until now it has become an old urban area, or rightly spoken a neighborhood with European architectural style. The French, soon built in Saigon, imported here the architectural style from the mother country without having time for

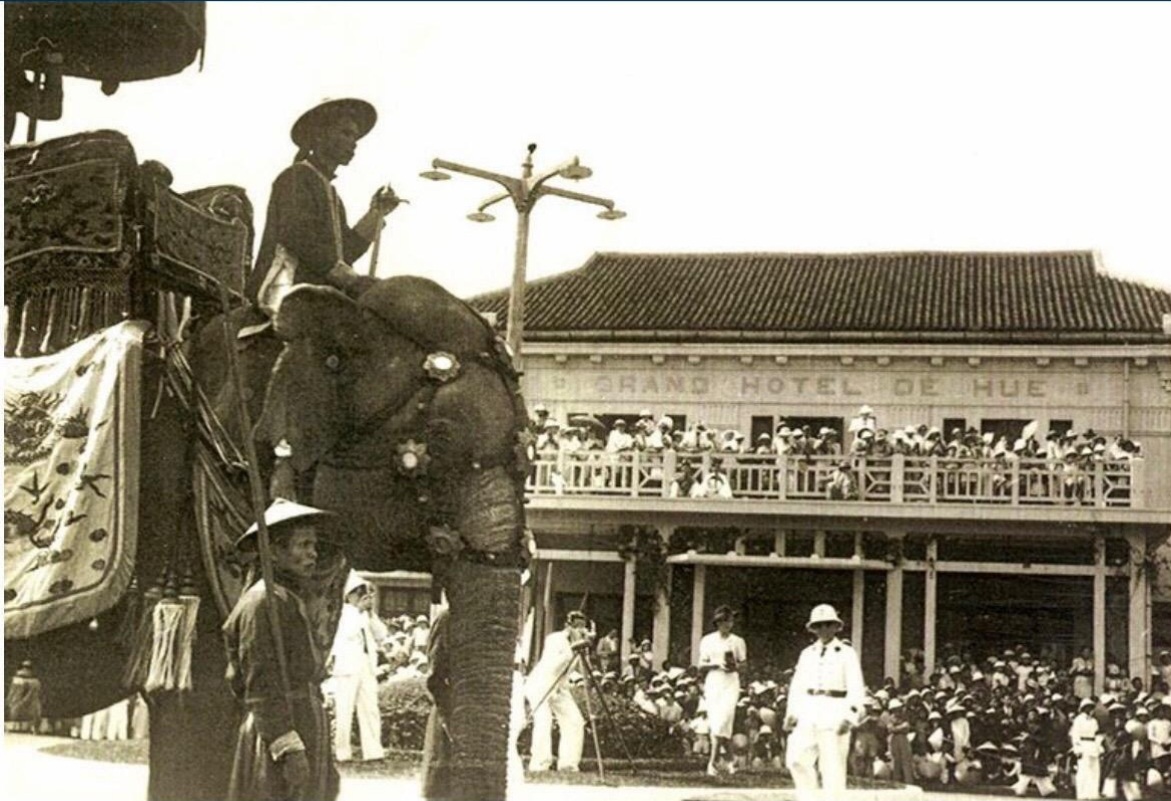
transformation. Built in Hanoi later, with more visionary policies, especially in the condition that there is enough time to adapt and assimilate, the French succeeded in the localization of architecture. In Hue, it is different, the existence of the Nguyen court, especially the existence of art and culture of Hue which is full of vitality, has partly dominated the architecture of the French, given its unique features individually, in symbiosis, led to unexpected aesthetic manifestations and effects. Except for the French-style buildings (such as the City People's Committee), the architecture of other buildings on the south bank, typically the villas on Ly ThuongKiet street, or alternately built on the north bank was the skillful combination of indigenous and French elements (Hoang Dao Kinh, 2011).

The French arranged colonial architectures of the public category and villas appearing first and most often on Le Loi Street (Jules Ferry) running along the south bank of the Perfume River, starting from Truong Tien Bridge and ending at Hue station. This place converged works with unique architecture such as TrungKy House of Representatives (now Hue University Institute), Cong Su Palace (destroyed, now City Children's Cultural House), Quoc Hoc School, Hai Ba Trung School (Dong Khanh), War Veterans Statue, Native Hospital (Hue Hospital), Grand hotel de Hue (Morin Hotel), EcolePallerin (Hue Conservatory of Music), Public Court (BaoHoa) Hue Culture Museum), Culture Club (Diem PhungThi Museum), Headquarters of the Union of ThuaThien Hue Literary and Arts Associations (Villa 26 Le Loi), Sports Club (Festival Restaurant), Phu Thu TrungKy (La Residence Hotel), Indochina Bank (destroyed, now the Learning Resource Center), Apostolic Nunciature (destroyed, now Hue University of Pedagogy).

The French colonial architecture in Hue city mostly had a simple facade, in the early colonial period, it was in the pre-colonial style, but later on, the architecture became closer to the native architecture, forming a distinctive Indochinese architectural colors lines, or had variations tending to the liberal Modern style.

There are a number of typical French architectural works that still exist to this day such as: Hospital (Hue Central Hospital), Le Grand Hotel de Hue (Saigon Morin Hotel), Public Court (Hue Cultural Museum), Railway Station, Quoc Hoc School, Dong Khanh School (now Hai Ba Trung School), Redemptorist Order, Pellerin School (Hue Conservatory of Music), War Veterans Statue, Club Sports (Service Center, Tourism Festival), TrungKy House of Representatives (Hue University), ThienHuu school (Hue University of Science).





Morin hotel – one of the typical works built on the road running along the south bank of Huong river

According to a survey by the Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism of ThuaThien - Hue province, the current French architectural works are divided into two groups with representative examples as follows:

Group works 1 (projects currently being managed and used by state agencies):

a) Villa works using the headquarters function: Headquarters of Hue Culture Museum; Exhibition House Diem PhungThi; Festival Center.

b) School works: Quoc Hoc School; Hai Ba Trung School; Classrooms at Le Loi Primary School; Classroom A&amp; Hue University of Science; Row of classrooms of Hue Industrial College.

c) Other works: Quoc Hoc stele (also known as Monument to fallen soldiers in Hue); Freedom Stadium.

Group works 2 (the ones currently being managed and used by organizations):

a) Head office building: Hue Railway Station; Hue University Authority.

b) Hotel project: Saigon Morin Hotel.

c) Villa works using hotel and service functions: Hue Festival Restaurant; La Residence Hue Hotel; Le Domaine de Cocodo Hotel.

d) Religious works: Redemptorist Church (also known as Our Lady of Perpetual Help church); Phu Cam Parish Church; Hue Archbishop's Court; Sacred Heart Monastery; Hue Major Seminary; Children of the Immaculate Conception; Hue Carmel University; Franciscan Church; Chapel (Saint Paul Congregation).

e) Other works: Van Nien Water Plant.



Hue Railway Station - an architectural work built in the neoclassical style

### **3.2 Value of French architectural heritage in Hue:**



Urban planning in Hue with the presence of French architectural works is known as the Western style of street planning and infrastructure construction. When the French architects designed the planning of the Western Urban, they followed the planning principle of using transitional spaces (flower gardens, trees, grass) along the Perfume River to create the necessary setbacks... New neighborhoods were created to meet the travel and daily living needs of a modern and civilized lifestyle: "The planning and construction of the French in Hue during the colonial period created Hue great value, contributing to the formation of new nuances for an old feudal city, and at the same time making a positive change from a traditional architectural format to a civilized modern architecture". (Luong Lan Phuong, 2018). In addition, in the overall planning of Hue, "French architects have researched and selected appropriate planning and construction methods by designing roads, flower gardens, lawns, campus and other buildings." The project created the harmony of the southern area. Therefore, without affecting the landscape of the Perfume River and not in conflict with the works in the north of this river, today these values have contributed to the appearance of the city with cultural identity. These values are the architectural language expressing a historical period of Hue city, they show the richness of types and the outstanding landscape design. These masterpieces have contributed to the value of the heritage city, a land with 7 heritage sites recognized by UNESCO. In terms of style, French architecture imported into Vietnam exists in many different styles "French architectural works in Hue are quite diverse and rich with many different genres such as public buildings, villas, office... These works have architectural styles imported from France and are combined with traditional indigenous architecture. That has given Hue a distinctive architectural style, contributing to the architectural fund of Hue in particular and Vietnam in general." (Nguyen Ngoc Tung, 2017). During the process of coming to Hue, the French planned and built a methodical and scientific way for this land. Many French architectural works were built with a rich diversity of architectural styles creating unique values for Hue architecture. "French architecture does not infringe on the beauty of the whole of Hue but also beautifies the uniqueness of the ancient capital land" (Tran Van Dung, 2017).

#### **4. Some solutions and recommendations for the development of French architectural heritage in Hue:**

Cultural tourism is a rather special type of tourism, based on the national cultural identity with the participation of the community in order to preserve and promote traditional cultural values. For cultural heritages, it is necessary to have an appropriate conservation and development orientation to avoid affecting the original inherent values. French architectural works in Hue are in danger of being lost and changed by the process of urbanization. According to the results of field surveys by specialized agencies, in 2000, Hue city still had about 240 architectural works

built during the French period, but up to now, this number is decreasing year by year. Many ancient architectural works were demolished due to the expiration of their useful life, some of which were changed and renovated, such as the Saigon Morin Hotel, from 2nd floor to 4th floor. Then Indochina bank branch was demolished to build Hue University Learning Resource Center. In April 2017, the French villa at 5 Ly ThuongKiet, in front of the Heritage Hotel, was also demolished. Recently, in mid-June, 2021, the old villa located at 3 Dong Da Street, Hue City, managed by the State, was also violated. The tenants of the cafe arbitrarily removed the original lime mortar, chiseled the walls of the villa, etc., causing serious damage. The People's Committee of Hue City made a record, asking for more than 80 million VND in compensation, forcing the house to be restored to its original state. Facing this situation, we think it is necessary to set specific orientations to preserve, promote and exploit the value of the monument. Exploiting the potential, developing tourism must always go hand in hand with restoration, conservation and embellishment of the landscape of architectural works. On the one hand, anti-degradation, not to build new works, but only to restore to preserve and restore the original value of the heritage. "Behavior compatible with the current situation and in accordance with the natural laws of urban heritages is a combination of conservation and renovation, specifically understood as the conservation of objects that are relics; maintaining the basic characteristics of the morphology and appearance of the street; partial restoration of architectural parts with reasons and grounds for doing so; upgrading and adapting to the new needs of degraded houses and buildings; embellishment and qualitative landscape architecture; adding new buildings and houses in accordance with the established general scenery (not required to fake antiques); improve or modernize the technical infrastructure system. For the urban - heritage like Hue, the way to Then Indochina bank branch was demolished to build Hue University Learning Resource Center. In April 2017, the French villa at 5 Ly ThuongKiet, in front of the Heritage Hotel, was also demolished. Recently, in mid-June, 2021, the old villa located at 3 Dong Da Street, Hue City, managed by the State, was also violated. The tenants of the cafe arbitrarily removed the original lime mortar, chiseled the walls of the villa, etc., causing serious damage. The People's Committee of Hue City made a record, asking for more than 80 million VND in compensation, forcing the house to be restored to its original state. Facing this situation, we think it is necessary to set specific orientations to preserve, promote and exploit the value of the monument. Exploiting the potential, developing tourism must always go hand in hand with restoration, conservation and embellishment of the landscape of architectural works. On the one hand, anti-degradation, not to build new works, but only to restore to preserve and restore the original value of the heritage. "Behavior compatible with the current situation and in accordance with the natural laws of urban heritages is a combination of conservation and renovation, specifically understood as the conservation of objects that are relics; maintaining the basic characteristics of

the morphology and appearance of the street; partial restoration of architectural parts with reasons and grounds for doing so; upgrading and adapting to the new needs of degraded houses and buildings; embellishment and qualitative landscape architecture; adding new buildings and houses in accordance with the established general scenery (not required to fake antiques); improve or modernize the technical infrastructure system. For the urban - heritage like Hue, the way to be different. Conservation must go hand in hand with Development. Development must be combined with Conservation. In essence, Conservation is retention, Development is change. Two opposing categories. In reality, it is very rare to see peaceful coexistence between them. However, it is possible, when we behave politely and culturally” (Hoang Dao Kinh, 2011). In addition, functional agencies need to decentralize the management and use of French architectural heritage works, with specific regulations on responsibilities and powers in the management, protection, repair and service of French architectural heritage to satisfy needs of the community and tourism activities. Raising awareness and understanding of the value of the works in a profound way, only on the basis of understanding will people be interested in protecting the heritage, limiting damage to it, considering it as their necessary work and only then will the value of the heritage be absorbed in a natural, sustainable, and pervasive way through many generations. The exploitation of works must highlight the unique values of those works, which is to create attraction for visitors, tourists are also the soul of tourism activities, the tourism industry. New unique and unique architectural process has high attractiveness and competitiveness. In addition to highlight the unique and attractive values of the works that need to be fully exploited for the destination: on the one hand, it is necessary to exploit other products to supplement and create links in the tourism program; on the other hand, it is necessary to consider the needs of guests in terms of travel, accommodation, sightseeing, shopping, entertainment, etc. it is also vital to perform a synchronous coordination between organizations related to serving guests, ensuring quality, bringing reputation.

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