ABSTRACT

“The conservation of historic structures is not a mechanical activity controlled by hard and fast formulae which correctly applied, will produce demonstrably correct solutions” (Earl 1996).

Local conservation efforts have matured substantially since its early beginnings some 30 years ago. As ‘conservationists’ move from concerning themselves with the retention of historical building elements to the concept of quality conservation, it is timely that we assess what quality conservation is all about.

In the author’s viewpoint, quality conservation entails adopting orthodox motives to conserve, application of well-tested methods and taking a long-term view to ensure the longevity of our built heritage. There is a need to take a holistic view of both the conservation process and the personnel involved.

The second issue addressed in this dissertation concerns the maintenance of conserved buildings. As more than half of the buildings earmarked for conservation have been restored, the author is of the view that maintenance should now be a key concern if we are to ensure the continued existence of our built heritage. Focus is placed on routine maintenance and the author attempts to address the problems associated with the maintenance of conservation development projects.