

Pangani's Historic Buildings

Vibrant networks of trade have connected Africa, India and Arabia for at least the last two millennia.

Pangani, one of several entrepôts along the Swahili Coast, ideally situated at the river mouth, saw goods trans-shipped from ocean-going vessels to river craft and caravans for dispersal inland. Similarly, goods from the African interior arrived for loading and exporting afar.

Like Stone Town, Zanzibar, Pangani has a number of stately, historic 18th and 19th century buildings constructed by African, Omani and Indian merchants, from the proceeds of this flowing trade and commerce.



A mashua carrying cargo between the mainland and outer islands.



Pangani water-front ca1900 Koloniales Bildarchiv, Bildnummer 006-1139-11. Photo Hebebrand.

Unlike Stone Town, Pangani is not a UNESCO World Heritage Site, so the buildings are largely crumbling and falling into disrepair.

Stigma attached to certain buildings associated with the slave trading and ownership prevents measures being taken to inhibit decay. Trees are allowed to grow unhindered, in the belief that eradication of the buildings will encourage social amnesia. Voices calling for the buildings to be used to memorialise those inhumane practices, lest in forgetting they are allowed to recur, are still not strong in Pangani.



Nature has been allowed to take over this building associated with the trade in slaves.

Basically there are no funds, locally, to renovate and restore. Even the ornate buildings in India Street, once a thriving commercial area little tainted by the slave trade, lack the business today to keep their shops open.



Ornate building in India Street.

Only three buildings have had work carried out on them: Pangarithi, the Cultural Centre, restored by Uzikwasa; the Boma, used for government administration; and, because it is in constant use, ironically, the Customs House, where once thousands of slaves passed through.

The inhabitants are rightly proud of their heritage. However regional as well as



Cultural Centre south and east sides.

international visitors are often unaware of this illustrious past; and the cultural heritage is not presented to its full potential. In collaboration with local communities, Tanzanian scholars and heritage organisations, CONCH strives to raise awareness of Tanzania's rich cultural heritage.

ArchaeoLink is working with the UK Arts & Humanities Research Council-funded *Co-Production Networks for Community Heritage in Tanzania* (CONCH) project researchers and Pangani community members to develop educational programmes showcasing this facet of the Swahili Coast's rich cultural history.