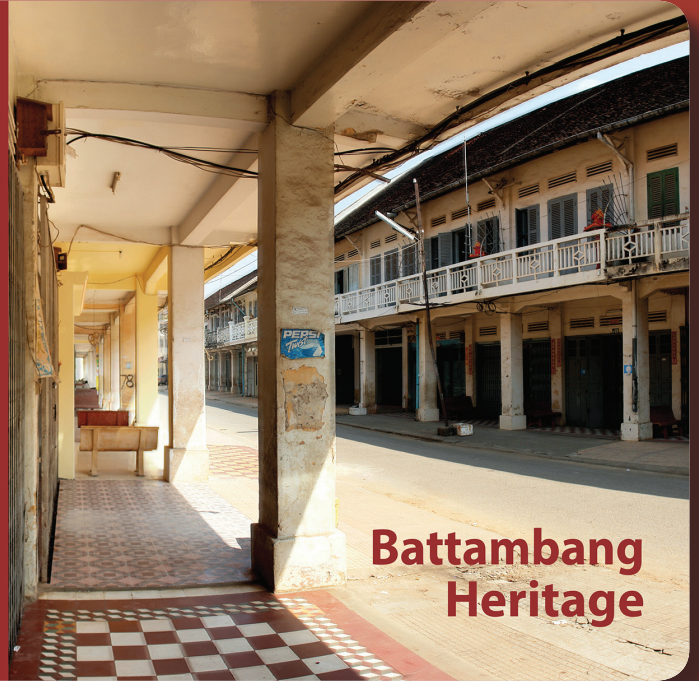


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Battambang Heritage

Walter Koditek



**Battambang
Heritage**

INTRODUCTION

When most people think about Cambodian heritage, what most probably comes to mind are the ancient monuments of Angkor, the glorious achievements of the Khmer civilization, built for their god-kings between the 9th and 12th century and listed as UNESCO World Heritage since 1992. However, in the shadow of Angkor there exists a much younger and basically unknown cultural heritage in Cambodia. The country has inherited a rich and diverse architecture dating from the last 150 years of the country's ever changing urban past.

Despite continuous transformation and widespread loss of this comparatively 'recent' built heritage, there are some smaller cities and towns across the country where the architectural heritage is still in a rather good condition and worthy of preservation. Among them is Battambang, a provincial capital of about 150,000 inhabitants in the northwest of Cambodia.

The photographs in this book were taken in over more than a decade between 2007 and 2018. The city has changed a lot during that period. Economic development and modernisation of the country triggered rapid urban growth and a sometimes seemingly unregulated building boom.

When I arrived in Battambang in 2007 I immediately fell in love with the laid back atmosphere of the city and its 'old world charm'. Over the years I saw many positive developments, but was also witness to the gradual decline of the architectural heritage of the city. This acted as a spur for me to write and publish this book.

The book is neither meant to be a complete inventory of the architectural heritage of the city, nor is it a detailed guidebook for the discerning visitor. It does not aim to be historically or architecturally comprehensive but rather offers a personal view of the unique 'sense of place' of the city, as well as some useful background information.

In selecting the photographs, I have tried to capture the qualities of the city's historic urban landscape with its streetscapes and buildings and their hidden details and colours. Battambang offers a wealth of Cambodian cultural heritage both tangible and intangible. The book focuses on the architecture, with short excursions into the traditional cultural landscape, the performing arts, and the religious and the culinary heritage of the country.

Walter Koditek
Hong Kong, March 2018

