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MAINTENANCE OF SHARED SPACES: COURTYARDS OF TBILISI

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MAINTENANCE OF SHARED SPACES: COURTYARDS OF TBILISI

Conceptual Paper

Abstract

Purpose
The courtyard dwellings of Tbilisi form a critical part of the city’s architectural identity. However, the multiple occupation of these buildings is blamed for confounding their prospects for repair and consequent valorisation as a world heritage site. Models for the shared ownership of residential blocks, have been adapted globally. Some have established communal sources for rehabilitation and maintenance applicable to historic buildings. This paper assesses the relevance of such precedents to the complex and urgent context of Tbilisi’s threatened architectural heritage.

Design/methodology/approach
The paper uses existing literature and data to establish a hypothesis in support of adopting a collaborative approach for the maintenance and rehabilitation of shared buildings in a challenging and specific context. Using socio-economic data to characterise the occupants of such buildings and current critical sources, the paper investigates how existing collective communities can be empowered to capitalise from their unique social frameworks.

Findings
It finds evidence to support theoretical claims that there is scope for co-operative networks to flourish there.

Originality/value
This paper addresses a critical problem in the formulation of conservation plans for Old Tbilisi, it tests the relevance of global exemplars for community repair programmes by reference to existing data for the care of the predominantly domestic architecture of Old Tbilisi at a time of rapid change.

Introduction
The courtyard houses of Tbilisi, Georgia form a critical part of the city’s specific identity, as do the decorative cantilevered balconies of its houses. They collate vernacular architectural
influences, techniques, ornaments and details from both east and west. The bulk of the small central area is made up from a patchwork of such domestic buildings.

The intensified occupation of these buildings during the Soviet era has been blamed for challenging their prospects for long-term repair (US-USSR JWG 1975). Models for the shared ownership of residential blocks, originally developed in France in the middle ages (Leyser 1958) have been adapted to many different contexts globally (Dredge and Coiacetto 2011). Some have succeeded in establishing communal sources for rehabilitation and maintenance that are relevant to historic buildings. This paper asks whether such precedents can be relevant to the challenging context of the Tbilisi courtyard houses?

The architectural value of the unique three sided courts of Tbilisi has long been established but still fails to muster support with such complex stakeholder arrangements. Bi-lateral efforts to preserve the capital’s unique architectural legacy have failed on numerous occasions (Khimshiashvili 2001). In the 1970s and 80s it was reported that state sponsored evacuation was enabling sensitive repair and reconstruction; the restored area of Kibalchich Rise, Baratashvili Street and the Embankment were presented at that date as a triumph. However, both constructional methods and principles of rehabilitation have been criticised (Tsitsishvili 1985). Finding the means to work within intensive and impoverished domestic occupation is a key concern and the first hurdle to unravel. Van Assche identifies the “labyrinthine character of property rights” as a specific challenge to preservation calls in Old Tbilisi (Van Assche, Salukvadze et al. 2009). The argument for community led heritage management in Waterton and Smith’s terms in this case requires the instigation of, by and for the building’s occupants, owners and agents - a change of practice more than policy (Waterton and Smith 2011).

Heritage policy has passed through many hands (Suny 1994 p.321) during a period of political flux. Economic prospects and new scope for potential development pose both hope and risk for happier horizons yet the fragility of the city’s actual fabric remains at risk. International groups have sought to raise the status of the issue. Ultimately re-conceptualising the economic status of its historic identity is the critical task, however, tackling those issues in practice calls for more than policy change, it requires the mobilization of trust in complex relationships to support a very fragile tenure.

This paper explores the potential for pre-existing social networks together with an enhanced professional skills base to inform a principle of rehabilitation. It draws comparisons with experiences in other countries and acknowledges challenges and opportunities raised by the specific domestic context of Tbilisi.

*Insert Figure 1* - 3-4 Ingrokova Street: Vulnerable shared access through a delicate timber structure - Author’s image

_Poverty and heritage in a post-cosmopolitan city_
Suny concludes his seminal history of Georgia with the statement: “The key to the future lies in what a people selects from its past, how it imagines itself as a community and continues to make itself as a nation” (Suny 1994 p.335). In theorising heritage, Smith has emphasised the significance of everyday practices (Smith 2006 p.273). In representing Tbilisi’s architectural heritage, as is the case in many historic cities, the domestic building stock, although not of the highest heritage value, is collectively understood to define the regional identity of the city. The “old” centre, although almost entirely rebuilt in the 19th century, has been successively identified as its architectural capital (Frederiksen 2012 p.127). The confluence of architectural references that have inspired sympathetic concern, perhaps in part because of their borrowed nature were admired by nineteenth century tourists (Chanishvili 2013 p.12). However, as Van Assche and Manning have noted, although there is a strong will to retain the old city and for new buildings to associate themselves with its rich identity, few want to live there (Van Assche, Salukvadze et al. 2009 p.243-317), (Manning 2009 p.71-102). Frederiksen notes that the threat of “renovation taxes” has encouraged multi-generational families to leave their historic home (Frederiksen 2012 p.129).

The challenge is significant and the obstacle of poverty must not be overlooked. The Caucasus Barometer 2013 recorded high levels of unemployment and noted that 61% of Tbilisi Respondents did not have a job and of those, 25% had never had a job with 41% being unemployed for more than five years (CRRC 2013)\(^1\). There is a gulf between actual and required levels of income in the city; survey results showed 38% of Tbilisi respondents earned less than 250USD per month although 90% felt that an income of 400 USD or more was a minimum income to lead a normal life (CRRC 2013)\(^2\).

It has been acknowledged that the very complexity of the ownership context of these multiple occupied homes has served to secure their survival, no one having the authority to radically alter them (Van Assche and Salukvadze 2011 p.13). Poverty has been defined rhetorically as “the best conservator” or the “friend of preservation”, this is in part because people who are unable to afford to transform their environments become victims of them and their physical environments in turn are protected from change. By contrast the key principle behind environmental design standards is that people should not be victims of their environments. This presents something of a conundrum for a city such as Tbilisi. Whilst its heritage is recognised for its contribution to its identity and these central areas are praised for their architectural qualities, newcomers specifically choose to live in other areas. This is a true crisis because it threatens both buildings and livelihoods. Extracting communities further destroys their historic integrity. The question arises as to whether, in this instance it is possible to avoid such a pathway and to generate a more active stewardship from within the specific society it serves.

The Caucasus Barometer 2013 reveals an economy in transition; whilst only 26% of the Tbilisi household respondents didn’t own an automatic washing machine and 11% did not possess a fridge, 95% owned a cell phone and 70% had a PC (CRRC 2013)\(^3\). The issue of maintenance, of

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\(^1\) Caucasus Barometer Survey 2013: HAVEJOB: SETTYPE: UNEMYRS: SETTYPE
\(^2\) ibid. SETTYPExPERSINC: INCSOURCE
\(^3\) ibid. SETTYPExOWNWASH: OWNFRDG: OWNCALL: OWNCOMP:
municipality and the adoption of responsibility for the environment is a challenging political issue in a society that is struggling financially and on the cusp of change.

One of the most difficult aspects of leasehold law is the establishment of reasonable conditions for the care of shared areas. To put the wellbeing of the building ahead of the wellbeing of its occupants is a monstrous suggestion. On the other hand to propose the collaborative adoption of responsibility for the environment touches upon social ideals held close across the political spectrum. In this way the relatively mundane notion of municipal maintenance has risen to great political significance historically (Dogliani 2002). Today, the potential for identity acknowledged through shared heritage is at the core of ambitions for an agenda of Social Cohesion.

*Insert Figure 2- 2 Lermontov St: Shared access at the point of collapse - Author’s image*

**Buildings of Tbilisi**

The buildings that are under discussion here are not the architectural trophies of Georgia, the churches nor even the noted Darbazi houses (Tsitsishvili 1985, Sevan 1997 p.44)\(^4\) which have been claimed to be the oldest type of dwelling, cited in both Greek and Roman commentary (Dzanberidze 1973)\(^5\). Tbilisi was razed to the ground in 1795 in the Persian wars. The buildings are an agglomeration of intricately decorated and somewhat flimsily constructed houses. Whereas nineteenth century buildings which are characterised by overhanging balconies and three sided courtyards, some, such as 3 Ingrokova St (fig.1) and 2 Lermontov St (fig.2) were in fact architect designed for wealthy individuals, most are un-designed. They are extremely photogenic in their state of decay and inspire pity. Tatarashvili emphasises the value of the city’s art nouveau buildings with their articulation of a particular and very specific Eurasian identity (Tatarashvili 1998 p.308-312). The buildings at once express French neoclassical details and bring decorative skills from Persian craftsmen, demonstrate construction techniques that have learnt from vernacular traditions of earth-roofing that stretch to Tibet and decorative woodwork from North Africa. In this respect they are architecturally truly cosmopolitan, the term is applied to the city from the nineteenth century (Chanishvili 2013 p.1-5). In making so many references they draw visitors to empathise with them, to join into their collective memory. Three key features of Tbilisi’s domestic architecture addressed here demonstrate the social aspects of its historic built fabric; the flat roofs, the overhanging balconies and the courtyards.

Manning has asserted the social nature of Tbilisi architecture, describing it as “the very image of an open society, a balancing of individual and collective” (Manning 2009 p.98) - indeed their balconies and courts serve to blur conventional public-private boundaries. Before 1828 houses had flat mud roofs; *Banami*, which instigated a form of shared semi-public use as an entertainment space. These were no longer allowed after a Russian decree of 1828 (Chanishvili 2013 p.15). It is probable that the regular maintenance of such spaces - they would need to be

\(^4\) it appears only the Darbazi in Tbilisi is that survives is that of Porakishvili at 11 Chekhov Street

\(^5\) p.28 - cites Xenophon, Strabo, Vitruvius
swept for weeds seasonally (Ionas 1997), also contributed to a sense of social cohesion. These roofs today are largely all lost, replaced by a shallow pitched rusted zinc skyline which resembles Mediterranean terracotta in its shallow pitch in the poorly printed technicolour of Soviet era tourist guides.

**Insert Figure 3- 3 sided court at 3 Sioni St: Multi-storyed arches visually connecting separate dwellings in a courtyard - Author’s image**

The second aspect is the three sided courtyards. Courtyards are the most common arrangement of houses globally, the Tbilisi three-sided form is particular to the city (fig.3) (Howard 1997). Opening rooms into a shared semi private enclosure enables a degree of social discourse across a space that cannot be shared with the street. This is critical today when these buildings are often significantly over crowded. The courtyard as a three-sided form is not like a fortified Pompeian house or a sex segregated Islamic house, it is a portal in itself, opening onto the street in an urbane manner unique to Tbilisi. It is to a great extent the most significant contribution to urban design made by the city as Mania has noted (Mania 2010).

The context of such courtyards is pressurised when it becomes overcrowded; 48% of households in Tbilisi now have three or more adults living in them (CRRC 2013). The fact that the space is shared, not privately owned, not state operated, not municipally controlled, not co-owned, lends it a spatially democratic aspect. To remove the specific conditions of co-habitation and joint responsibility that establish that condition is to destroy as much as the built fabric can maintain.

**Insert Figure 4- Balcony detail at 17 Dadiani St: Overhanging the street - Author’s image**

Thirdly, the deep balconies, with impossibly large cantilevers impose individualism over the collective in a unique way. Emerging in the 1830s (fig.4), the balconies allowed people to share their private lives with the street, sometimes eating and sleeping on them (Chanishvili 2013 p.15). They have been used to characterise the city both socially and politically as well as physically (Manning 2009). They have been characterised in cartoons as offering a means of arguing without entering the arena, a means of tempting lovers without descending to the street. They are a mode of address, a means to present one’s private life in the public sphere. The intricacy of the carving and the ostentatious craftsmanship denote an articulation of care in human endeavour. Like handmade lace on the clothes of kings, wealth is denoted by a visible quantity of human work.

**Complex Property Ownership and responsibility problems**

In 1996 a World Bank report highlighted the emerging problem of a lack of legal framework surrounding the emerging potential for co-ownership of residential property in former Soviet

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6 Caucasus Barometer Survey 2013: HHASIZE:SETTYPE
states (Renaud 1996). Van Assche and Salukvadze point to the legal complexity of ownership as a cause of inaction in Old Tbilisi (Van Assche and Salukvadze 2013 p.96) and argue for the institution of “unambiguous property rights” in conjunction with an overhauled planning system, warning against an over-reliance upon private investment (Van Assche and Salukvadze 2011). Georgia is a state in transition, its planning and conservation policy has a trajectory that has been noted for its stilted progress. What are the actual conditions of tenure in Tbilisi and how can they be compared with other examples around the world?

Recent dramatic changes in the property market demonstrate the capacity for transformation but also point to an urgency in terms of risk for rapid change. Ironically, as is often the case, the very poverty that has sustained an un-modernised environment becomes the key feature of its value. Property is valued by its comparative relationship to its neighbours, in order that an identity can be commodified and sold to remote markets. Where a historic environment is so specifically defined as the old centre of Tbilisi, this presents specific economic opportunities but also risks destruction and re-building. Manning has noted that the reconstruction of decorative elements in previous restorations excluded the restoration of basic services. However, at the time it was argued that a focus on the provision of services dominated rehabilitation efforts (Manning 2009 p.97) (Stepanov 1970 p.3), in any event the current situation is universally recognised as inadequate.

The benevolence of mixed cultural identity of Tbilisi has been made much of (modernism modernity) however at a more detailed scale, the domestic cohabitation of shared spaces there is a further iteration of this condition. Neighbourliness and co-operation are core components of such living conditions as is borne out in survey data. Using raw social survey data in Georgia it is possible to gain some insight and draw at least an economic frame of reference. There is a need for an alternative and less cynical path to be trodden.

**Examples**

Given the cultural context of Tbilisi and the precipitous state of its potential transition, it is relevant to draw parallels across the world. In France in 2000, 20% of all dwellings were flats in co-ownership schemes and a legal framework of co-ownership, copropriété is established there, in the USA and Canada, condominiums and in Scotland, legal frameworks for flat ownership are derived from the common-law notion of Tenement (Cole and Robinson 2000 p.595-6). The tenement system, literally derived from the Latin ‘to hold’, is derived from feudal systems of land ownership. New provisions of the Tenements (Scotland) Act (2004) demanded the inclusion of schemes for management and maintenance within the deeds, the act sets out the means to determine the boundaries of flats and the allocation of common parts and defines these divisions horizontally. Later provisions have been made to set out provisions for the setting of notices to demand repair. *Strata Title*, developed in Australia, forms the basis for models in Indonesia, South Africa, Singapore, Malaysia and New Zealand (Dredge and Coiacetto 2011). The system was developed to relate to the rights and title definitions of properties divided vertically onto different levels, it also makes provision for management and is the model upon which the increasingly popular “Common Interest Development” model is based. In contrast to the Scottish
Tenement system, in the USA when a condominium is established there is a requirement for the owners to incorporate as a legal entity, forming a “homeowner association” the legislative requirement for this vary from state to state. These systems of tenure have been adapted and used all over the world, providing a significant body of experience to draw upon. Nevertheless, they are not necessarily applicable to all economic and urban contexts. For example, if the system was established at the time of construction, the opportunity to delineate areas of responsibility and to demarcate physical boundaries is much simpler. In addition, the adaptation of pre-existing legal agreements under differing political and legal frameworks may not offer a straightforward transition. In the absence of uniform guidance, organisations such as the Urban Land Institute, formed in 1936, have developed to promote best practice internationally. Webster and Le Goix emphasise the likelihood of privatised commonhold systems of tenure becoming more prevalent globally (Webster, Chris et al. 2005), however, whether such systems are applicable in the complex post-Soviet context of Tbilisi remains to be established.

Forms of legal ownership are very varied and the impact of numerous stakeholders including lenders, insurers and agents present often conflicting concerns (Lemberg 1979 p.704-5). Van der Merwe’s comparative discussion of the development of legal provisions for shared ownership internationally noted a distinction between systems that envisaged maintenance as a right or a duty and the complexity of shared or individual provisions for structural or servicing elements of the building (Van der Merwe 2002). Yip points out that whereas co-operatives enable inhabitants to lease from a jointly owned stake, condominiums enable residents to purchase individual units but makes the ownership of and responsibility for shared areas less direct (Yip and Forrest 2002 p.706). In the vastly different but challenging developmental economic context of Hong Kong the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme has succeeded in engaging the support of existing tenants and the government landlord in co-ordinating a preservation plan that retained the existing trades in situ. Such arrangements are obviously closely related to the economic conditions of the context and the extent of work required.

A number of projects have already enabled old buildings in Tbilisi to be re-furbished and “slum-dwellers” to be re-housed successfully (Van Assche and Salukvadze 2011 p.13), however it seems desirable to aim higher in terms of being able to maintain people in their familiar districts (should they wish it). Fan has also observed a tendency for top-down processes in China and a predilection for using heritage as an economic resource over resident’s interests (Fan 2013), citing an instance where residents were relocated in the old town of Yangzhou. A current example in Hong Kong, “the blue house cluster (Commissioner 2014)”, has recently succeeded in maintaining its trade tenants in lieu of re-furbishing the domestic parts of the block. The potential for self-management to be a positive step in a renewal process has been established (Wekerle, Draicevic et al. 1980). A study in 1987 observing maintenance in low income condominiums noted a strong correlation between social cohesion and maintenance, concluding that self-management was less expensive and more effective. The paper found that renewal policies that encouraged residents involvement through Building Committees of unpaid elected residents in their management had a significant impact on the quality of subsequent maintenance (Werczberger and Ginsberg 1987). Is it possible that the pre-existing social environment and
ownership in Tbilisi presents an opportunity for such developments in the context of historic buildings?

It is notable in reviewing literature on the subject that whilst the complexity of the architect’s work in the refurbishment of historic shared residential buildings was acknowledged in the 1970’s (Lemberg 1979), the trend of heritage management rhetoric towards the community to some extent eclipses mention of the need for qualified input. Indeed Van Assche emphasises the mediating role of a new “guild of developers” in search of a more participatory planning system, placing architects negatively as destructive visionaries: “Developers are, more than in other transnational countries, influenced by the values and appreciations of the architecture profession, and the special attention of the president” (Van Assche and Salukvadze 2013 p.99-100). Yet a study in Malaysia (Muhamad Ariff and Davies 2011) has highlighted the need for professional advice to be made available to Maintenance Committees. Here the example of the Parisian Compagnie des Architectes de copropriété (Compagnie 2014) is particularly relevant. A list of architects offering specifically accredited conservation skills is offered to historic co-owned buildings in the city. Clearly the extended history and economic stability of the city provides an enviable context for such practices, however, it seems feasible that local professional groups in Tbilisi, such as Tiflis Hamkari (Elisashvili 2011) may ultimately establish such a facility.

If a professional support network were in place, such as in the French Archicopro, there appears to be capacity for high levels of organised participation. A survey on volunteering in Tbilisi revealed that 61% of respondents identified that there was commonly residents an elected neighbour who would organise people or solve a problem him or herself (CRRC 2011)⁷.

**Neighbourliness, cosmopolitanism and community Co-ops in Tbilisi**

In arguing for greater rigour to be taken in measures used to evaluate the improvement of social cohesion in historic urban environments, Landorf has defined three dimensions of social sustainability as *Social equity, Social coherence* and *Needs satisfaction* and sets out the means for these to be evaluated at a local level (Landorf 2011). He asserts the notion that *community action* contributes to social sustainability. This is promising in the case of Tbilisi where evidence suggests capacity for such activity is relatively strong, a 2013 survey noted that 61% of Tbilisi Respondents felt it was important for a good citizen to do volunteer work and that 36% of respondents had helped to clean a public space in the last six months (CRRC 2013)⁸.

A significant finding in the Malaysian context is the importance of reinforcing social connections between co-residents and between generations (Muhamad Ariff and Davies 2011). In Tbilisi there is an established pattern of prolonged co-residence with parents (Roberts, Pollock et al. 2009). High levels of unemployment pose a significant impact on the place of home and the interaction with the public in everyday terms. The community in such a context may become increasingly familial. A survey noted that 48% of households in Tbilisi have three adults or more living in

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⁷ Volunteering and civic participation in Georgia survey 2011: SETTYPExNEIORGEL:REEBLPR:

⁸ Caucasus Barometer Survey 2013: SETTYPExMPGCVW, SETTYPExCOMCLNER
them (CRRC 2013)\(^9\), 49% of respondents stated that they were never alone during the day (CRRC 2011)\(^10\).

Salukvdzde noted that maintenance was a key issue that remained unresolved in the privatisation of land ownership and cadastral reforms of the 1990s (Salukvdzde 1999). Yet of 90% of survey respondents in Tbilisi who perceived that common space in their area got regularly cleaned, only 26% said it was cleaned by the government, 42% said it was cleaned by neighbours rotating with just 8% saying it was cleaned by a person or company hired by a neighbour (CRRC 2011)\(^11\). These figures indicate existing forms of co-reliance.

Van Assche and Sukadze draw focus to the somewhat random experience of “elite control” in protecting the heritage of Tbilisi (Van Assche and Salukvdzde 2011 p.16). The Caucasus Research Resource Center’s (CRRC) Survey on volunteerism and civic participation 2011 revealed that 75% of respondents in Tbilisi stated had a positive attitude to their neighbour\(^2\). 61% of respondents in Tbilisi identified that there was commonly an elected neighbour who would organise people or solve a problem him or herself. The largest group of respondents (31%) suggested that if a tree blocked their neighbourhood entrance, all the neighbours together would solve the problem (CRRC 2011)\(^3\). The Caucasus Barometer 2013 noted that 37% of Tbilisi Respondents had helped a neighbour or friend with household chores in the last six months (compared with 59% of rural respondents)\(^4\) and that 36% of Tbilisi Respondents had helped to clean a public space in the last six months (compared with 37% of rural respondents)\(^5\). Only 16% of Tbilisi Respondents believed close people would not be at all likely to help repair their apartment or house (CRRC 2013)\(^6\).

Suny notes that “Georgianess can never be surgically separated from the complex exchange that went on with her neighbours” (Suny 1994 p.333). At an urban scale, the “ownership” of Tbilisi and its cultural identity was uniquely mixed (Chanishvili 2013 p.7) and this is perhaps an idea that can be translated to help understand the smaller scale. Frederiksen has characterised the Tbilisi consumer as “caught between the unattainable and the inferior” (Frederiksen 2012 p.131). During the Soviet era, the focus on the provision of services dominated rehabilitation efforts (Stepanov 1970 p.3). The benevolence of NGOs in Georgia since the 1990s in general appears to have been received with mixed feelings (Frederiksen 2012 p.132) – Only 2% of respondents in Tbilisi perceived that NGOs addressed issues concerning regional development, municipal services or local issues and none believed that they addressed arts and culture most (CRRC 2011)\(^7\). Detailed survey data has been produced to establish the Georgian attitude to the roles of NGOs. This demonstrates that collaborative networks exist already whereby there are elections for person to look after issues concerning their immediate community. The Caucasus Barometer

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\(^9\) ibid. HHASIZE:SETTYPE
\(^10\) Volunteering and civic participation in Georgia survey 2011: TIMEALON:SETTYPE
\(^11\) ibid. SETTYPERxREGCLEAN:COMCLLOG:COMCLNEC:COMCLCOM
\(^12\) ibid. TIMEALON: NEIORGAT: SETTYPE
\(^13\) ibid. NEIORGRP: SETTYPE: NEIORGEL:SETTYPE: REEBLPR: SETTYPE
\(^14\) Caucasus Barometer Survey 2013: ACTCHORE:
\(^15\) ibid. SETTYPE: ACTCLEAN:
\(^16\) ibid. EXPREP: SETTYPE:
\(^17\) Volunteering and civic participation in Georgia 2011 survey: NGOAREGD: SETTYPE: NGOACULT: SETTYPE:
2013 noted that 61% of Tbilisi Respondents felt it was important for a good citizen to do volunteer work (CRRC 2013)\textsuperscript{18}. In contrast to the condominium examples of other nations, it might be assumed that in the case of Tbilisi, whereas there is insufficient economic stability to employ managers there might be better capacity to develop such networks from within.

**Conclusion**

The concept of identity has been cited here as a core component of social sustainability. It is critical that any attempt at legislative reform takes hold of these lessons and is sensitive to the correlation between land tenure and identity. The notion might be expanded and applied to the whole issue of urban renewal in the city of Tbilisi. At a more detailed scale, in the domestic cohabitation of shared spaces, there is a further iteration of the risks and opportunities of this condition. Neighbourliness and co-operation are core components of sustaining such living conditions. Survey data suggests significant potential to foster trust in this area were adequate support networks to be put in place. It is critical that new professional networks are adapted to be most productive in collaboration with existing conditions. Whilst the tenure is as fragile as the buildings, it appears from this reading that the specific social, economic and physical environment could provide potential for a demonstration project engendering the cherished values of sustainability and social cohesion to flourish in this specific historic context. As legal arrangements in Scotland and the USA are refined to address legal issues of tenure and management agreements for co-habited buildings and no doubt lend finesse to future arrangements, the more specific and ‘bottom up’ practices demonstrated in the French example of the Parisian Compagnie des Architectes de copropriété (Compagnie 2014) provides demonstrably valuable pathways for the treatment of historic buildings under such conditions. The ambition to establish frameworks for the more effective protection of the historic centre of Tbilisi is shared by many yet the complexities of governance have successively restricted their effectiveness in practice. The challenge in Tbilisi is related closely to significant challenges for building conservation and economic constraint, here it is suggested that an incremental opportunity lies in the apparent willingness and need for collaboration at a small scale.

**Acknowledgements**

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\textsuperscript{18} Caucasus Barometer Survey 2013: IMPGCVW: SETTYPE: ICITHELP: SETTYPE


