

training young people and for studying conservation techniques. The Cultural Property Protection Act came into force in 1963. This act has been revised many times, reflecting social development and the changing social environment in heritage management. In 2011, it was divided into three different acts dealing, respectively, with general principles, regulations for archaeological remains, and repairing heritage. The Cultural Heritage Administration, which had been under the Ministry of Culture, Media, Sports and Tourism, became an independent institute enabling heritage related decision-making to be centralised and leading to more efficient management. The establishment of the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage in 1969 (formerly under the department of Cultural Heritage Management) has contributed to the stable and balanced development of survey, excavation and conservation work.

The government's decisions and management over the last 60 years have been regarded as trustworthy and have not been questioned by the public. This is because of a lack of public knowledge and interest. As a result, the field of conservation philosophy and principles, which needs the input of public ideas and discussions, is less developed compared to other areas. Over these years, conservation principles in Korea have followed international canons, such as charters, without modifying them when applying them to local practice.

Despite the negative result of a less developed conservation philosophy, there is no doubt that such a government-led model in decision-making and heritage management has worked efficiently in Korea during the second half of the twentieth century. However, such top-down management has been questioned and there has been a demand for reform over the last few years since public involvement in and knowledge of heritage conservation has increased. Several public campaigns have been launched against the demolition of historical buildings, and private institutes, such as the Korean National Trust have been established to monitor government policies. Such developments encourage government to share its role with the private sector, so that public opinion and non-governmental expert involvement can contribute to conservation decisions.

Public interest and involvement as a player to balance conflicting opinions

Examples of growing public knowledge and influence on decision-making are shown in two different cases of conserving colonial buildings which were built by the Japanese: the headquarters building of the colonial government and the city hall of Seoul. The headquarters building in the central area of Gyeongbok Palace was a royal palace of the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910). It was used as the seat of colonial power to rule Korea for 45 years in the first half of the twentieth century and had served as a physical reminder to