Touristification of Industrial Waterfronts: The Rocks and Darling Harbour

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Abstract—Industrial heritage reflects the traces of an industrial past that have contributed to the economic development of a country. This heritage should be included within the scope of preservation to remind of and to connect the city and its inhabitants to the past. Through adaptive conservation, industrial heritage can be reintroduced into contemporary urban life, with suitable functions and unique identities sustained. The conservation of industrial heritage should protect the material fabric of such heritage and maintain its cultural significance. Emphasising the historical and cultural significance of industrial areas, this research argues that industrial heritage is primarily impacted by political and economic thinking rather than by informed heritage and conservation issues. Waterfront redevelopment projects create similar landscapes around the world, transforming industrial identities and cultural significances. In the case of The Rocks and Darling Harbour, the goal of redevelopment was the creation of employment opportunities, and the provision of places to work, live and shop, through tourism promoted by the NSW State Government. The two case study areas were pivotal to the European industrial development of Sydney. Sydney Cove was one of the largest commercial wharves used to handle cargo in Australia. This paper argues, together with many historians, planners and heritage experts, that these areas have not received the due diligence deserved in regards to their significance to the industrial history of Sydney and modern Australia.

Keywords—Industrial heritage, post-industrial city, transformation of waterfronts, tourism, consumption.

I. INTRODUCTION

SINCE British settlement some 200 years ago, Australia has transformed itself from a convict colony to a nation [2] of 24 million people with one of the highest living standards in the world. Industrial facilities embody the heart of a nation's economic development, with considerable historical and social significance. However, they also present difficult challenges for conservationists due to their transformation over time into prestigious areas suitable for redevelopment and financial return. In Sydney, a number of industrial areas have been transformed to accommodate new uses. A lack of political will to conserve these places or the willingness to erase the working class history has resulted in the destruction of significant heritage values. Ian Baxter[2] believes that greater efforts should have been made to conserve the industrial past: 'We have already lost too much' [3].

"Australia's major ports have been the birthplace of

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[2] Ian Baxter is the Director of the Heritage Council of Western Australia. He argues that industrial facilities represent the core of a nation's economic development; thus they need to be considered within the realm of aesthetic, historic, social and scientific values.

the nation, home to the tight-knit communities… The waterfront is our greatest asset and our greatest vulnerability, but we've given it cavalier treatment" [1].

This paper discusses the transformation of industrial waterfronts from places of production to places of consumption, which have become the driving force of cities and have affected the visual form of cities. Consumption can refer to any activity associated with the selection, purchase, use, maintenance, repair, and any disposal of any product or service [4]. In the era of industrial production, consumption is understood as the consumption of manufactured goods; however, in a post-industrial society, it is more about the consumption of services, knowledge and ideas. These changes have also influenced how we see places - increasingly for shopping, tourism, and recreation and leisure activities as well as high value residential precincts, and how we approach heritage and tourism sites [5].

This paper is therefore broadly concerned with two former industrial waterfronts: The Rocks and Darling Harbour. These waterfronts have been transformed and repositioned largely as leisure precincts as a result of economic and urban restructuring processes that have occurred between the 1970s and the 1990s. This process has led to the transformation of industrial cities into decentralised urban agglomerations. Production has been removed from the city centre and mass consumption has given way to more differentiated and specialised consumption [6].

II. A SPATIAL APPROACH TO THE TRANSFORMATION OF FORMER INDUSTRIAL WATERFRONTS

The Rocks and Darling Harbour, which used to be the major commercial ports of Sydney - places of manufacturing, of warehouses and woolstores, places dedicated to the production, distribution and transportation of goods [7], have been subjected to redevelopment in different time periods in line with the intentions of different governmental approaches. At present, two case studies provide an examination of how politics have influenced the continuity and discontinuity [8] of the transformations of the Rocks and Darling Harbour. These transformations, carried out with the intention of altering the character of the entire city, significantly changed the urban places [9], [10].

The research presented in this paper is derived from a spatial approach and utilises a multi-sited study. The study of different locations allows the researcher to look at a social phenomenon from different perspectives and evaluate it within different contexts, but it also pinpoints existing connections between locations and their social processes [8]. This

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approach refers to Soja's [8] notion of 'space', which claims that 'first space' expedites the process of urbanisation and that this process fuels itself by increasing the attraction. Moreover, 'space' is associated with the division of labour and reproductive powers and is clearly related to property. 'Space' is also integrated with exchange relationships and patterns, institutions and knowledge. 'Space' can be bought; it has exchange value as well as change value. Thereby, 'space' intervenes in the mode of production in terms of results, reason and justification. But also, it changes along with the mode of production. This change shows that space evolves in conjunction with society. Thus 'space' has a history [11].

Inspired by the first approaches to waterfront developments that occurred in Boston, Baltimore, Seattle, San Francisco and London [12]-[17], The Rocks and Darling Harbour have been transformed into highly attractive tourism precincts. These two central areas of Sydney have become the spaces that are compatible with the pleasures and preferences of the new middle class, consisting of professional staff, top-level managers in multinational companies, architects and artists. Business centres, shopping centres, and new office and residential areas have been developed as a part of the capital that was directly absorbed by the spatial investments [18].

This research links these types of transformations to the creation of fashionably produced urban spaces and to a reconstructed past [8]. The reconfiguration of former industrial places has been accepted as a success story with the construction of high-rise and office spaces, pubs and shops, restored buildings and, most importantly, with a mix of public- and private-sector investments, such as in Darling Harbour, London's Canary Wharf, New York's Battery Park City, San Francisco, the Baltimore and Boston inner harbours and Shanghai Pu Dong [19], [20]. However, the failure to integrate the industrial history and cultural significance of the community should also be considered. Most historic city centres, such as in London, Prague and Singapore, have new functions and commercial activities and the historic urban fabric has changed. Very few have maintained the integrity of their heritage, such as in Toledo, St Petersburg and Siena [21]. The Rocks may have been physically preserved, but the industrial history of its community has not. Soja's [8] 'third space', here, allows an examination of space from a point of view of local and lived space, as this describes the industrial historical concept of study areas.

Transformation is associated with a changing industrial economy and landscape, which results in the loss of industrial heritage and local community. Redevelopment and urban renewal allowed the loss of connection of the tangible artefacts with the memory of the industrial past. The industrial past is integral to the cultural significance of these places. Cultural significance, as argued in the Burra Charter[3], enriches

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[3] The Burra Charter is a set of principles that have been adopted to create a nationally accepted standard for heritage conservation practice in Australia. The Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance, known as the Burra Charter, was first adopted at Burra in 1979. The Burra Charter defines the basic principles and procedures to be followed in the conservation of heritage sites [22].

people's lives, and can provide a connection to community and landscape [22]. References [48] and [49] argue that heritage has become part of a burgeoning new 'culture of display' that capitalises on new forms of cultural consumption. This can be problematic because, on the one hand, heritage has the potential to offer a representation of local life that is thought-provoking, accessible and that provides an expression of local identities but, conversely, it can become a form of commodification and performance that is increasingly alienated from either local communities or forms of new culture, or both.

Within the specific timeframe (1970–1990) of the research, tourism has also emerged as an alternative tool to support economic growth. Tourism is commonly seen as a valuable driver of economic growth; however, its impact on cities is double-edged. References [5], [27], [28], [33], [34] have further discussed tourism as a modern way of consuming leisure activities. This research argues that the increase in tourism precipitates the loss of city centres' historical identity. Cities, originally and legitimately meant to be places of social, cultural and economic action for people, have evolved into realms of commerce and business under the pressure of the self-reproduced production–distribution–consumption cycle of capitalism [23]. Social and economic change in historic cities, the centres of which have become places of culture and leisure, has caused the loss of many traditional functions and meanings. Tourism-led transformations such as those in Venice, Quebec, Marrakech and Lijiang show that those places have lost their traditional life during the process [21]. Through the case studies, this research reveals that The Rocks and Darling Harbour have experienced the same loss.

The research design is influenced by the following objectives: to investigate the process of the redevelopment of the industrial waterfront of The Rocks and Darling Harbour including political decisions and debates relating to the waterfront redevelopment; to assess the need for the transformation and the demolition of industrial buildings; to analyse the role of tourism and to understand the perceptions towards industrial heritage within the process; as well as to evaluate the changing understanding of heritage. The similarities and differences between the two case study areas highlight the effect of gentrification and urban renewal in the 1970s (The Rocks) and waterfront redevelopment in the 1980s (Darling Harbour). Gentrification/renewal and redevelopment are considered two common forms of urban transformation, aiming to stimulate economic activity via the improvement of existing urban spaces. Both schemes were used not only to revitalise redundant/disused spaces located on increasingly valuable waterfront sites with good transportation links, but also to utilise these areas to revive the entire city and to stimulate economic growth. While there is no exact separation point between these forms, the gentrification/renewal schemes were more common in the 1970s but the redevelopment schemes were characteristically developed in the 1980s [24].

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III. The Governments' Intentions in Developing the Industrial Landscapes Located on the Urban Waterfronts of Darling Harbour and The Rocks

The research process strongly focused on the political and economic rationale behind the urban transformation projects at Darling Harbour and The Rocks.

The collapse of the Fordist production model in the mid-1970s made urban transformation necessary to refunction deserted industrial areas; more insidiously, the subsequent advent of a new post-industrial capitalism order dictated the modalities of the transformation. As decision-makers embraced neoliberal policies, urban planning became an instrument of economic development strategies aimed at courting capital-holders. In a context of increased mobility of capital, city managers tried to woo investors by favouring the urban development projects that boasted the highest return on investment. The economically-challenged historic communities were swept aside from the city centre to make room for higher-value taxpayers. As consumption became the new powerhouse of the economy, former precincts of production were morphed into precincts of consumption to cater to the needs of the new affluent middle-class. To emerge in the fierce competition amongst cities across the world and capture tourism revenue, Sydney looked to boost its profile and advertise its attractiveness through impressive physical development inspired by the example of successful touristic waterfronts.

Because of their economic potential, such urban transformation became key to electoral and political tactics - as illustrated by the eagerness of Premier Wren's government to have the new Darling Harbour up and running by 1988, the year of the Bicentenary celebrations and coincidently that of elections. Unmonetisable concerns such as the preservation of historical heritage or the retention of low-income historic communities held little sway in this result-driven agenda, and they were indeed overlooked by decision-makers, who condoned non-democratic decision-making processes to thwart possible interference. In Darling Harbour, the state government came up with a coercive–legislative mechanism (including amended and new laws and decrees and a new planning authority bypassing the traditional decision channels) to carry out the redevelopment, which reflected hegemonic power in the decision-making process. The decisions made at that time were and still are controversial as the redevelopment created an 'abstract space' [11], an exchange value–oriented appropriation of space by capitalists and state actors who were interested in the abstract qualities of space, including size, width, location and profit, but not heritage.

In the case of The Rocks, it took loud local and industrial/unionised mobilisation to talk neoliberal policy-makers out of their demolition plans and have them consider that preserved heritage items could be staged to further enhance the destination's profile.

IV. Consideration of Industrial Heritage within the Transformation Decisions

In Darling Harbour, the demolition of many industrial heritage items (detailed in the case study) and the lack of the representation of industrial history demonstrates a sadly missed opportunity in the creation of the contemporary public space. It is not possible to call such practices urban transformation, since they just provide a spatial change and ignore the historical factors of the process.

Ever since, the interest in preserving, reusing and refunctioning industrial heritage has grown. The transformation of cities has directly or indirectly affected the heritage sites to which these cities are home, and has drawn attention to heritage protection issues that had previously been ignored. Preservation is now included and emphasised in the planning process and agenda [25]. The latest plan of redevelopment for Darling Harbour testifies to this renewed understanding of industrial heritage. Apparently impervious to the irony, developers now attempt to promote the heritage of the waterfront by displaying on the project's website historical information and photographs, as in Fig. 1, of the very structures that had been scheduled for demolition by the Bicentenary redevelopment. This laudable intention signals a reappraisal of industrial heritage and a better acknowledgement of Darling Harbour's industrial and working class heritage as a valuable part of the collective memory of an industrialised nation. Yet, this belated homage celebrates traces of identity that are no longer visible. However, the research supports the view that the heritage that was valued and preserved as a driver for tourism, in The Rocks for instance, is merely a flattened and sanitised version of the past. In line with the authorised heritage discourse (AHD), it handpicks what is, in hindsight, perceived as valuable about the past [26]. Although the current understanding of heritage is effective in preserving the physical elements of the built environment, it is less successful in protecting the social and cultural sustainability of historic city centres [21]. This research observed that the increased interest in preserving industrial heritage could not prevent the deterioration of the immaterial aspects - the lives of working class communities, the identities and histories of their places - of the study areas. Even when the physical elements are saved from the bulldozers, the misunderstanding of the value of industrial heritage, the lack of community and tourist awareness and of political responsiveness inevitably induce a commodification of industrial culture and heritage. In The Rocks, even though the desire to experience an insight into the intimate past [27] was a major driver in the redevelopment, the telling of the true story of the place [28] was ignored. Although the heritage of The Rocks was saved from destruction, the opportunity to reactivate and market the area through tourism here again created an abstract space where alienation, commodification, fragmentation and homogenisation have come to dominate everyday life practices.

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Fig. 1 Darling Harbour as an industrial and commercial waterfront [40]

Fig. 2 Long line of trucks near The Rocks area waiting for wharf space, 12 July 1934 [41]

Based on these examples, industrial heritage issues seem to boil down to a choice between commodification and destruction. Still, according to reference [25], the actual conservation of the 'industrial landscape' through the preservation of the 'spirit of place' could be better addressed with planning processes and policies dedicated to retain the historical integrity and authenticity of the places. Reference [43] suggests an ideological change which calls for creating synergies between socio-economic development and conservation strategies and identifying new roles and resources to maintain them in a sustainable way. This is also addressed in the UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape [44] through the recognition of the need to better integrate and frame urban conservation strategies within the larger goals of overall sustainable development which involves identification, conservation and management of heritage within their broader urban contexts, by considering the interrelationships of their physical forms, their spatial organization and connection, their natural features and settings, and their social, cultural and economic values.

V. CONSIDERATION OF THE COMMUNITIES IN DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS

This study has shown that local communities can wield strong influence on the decision-making process provided that governments are willing to cooperate. 'The Resident Action Group' was influential in saving historic industrial and residential sites in The Rocks from destruction and gentrification plans that ignored the historical character and the local community. This movement reflected and embodied the lived dimensions and the value–oriented use of space that is produced through everyday life practices and the affective–symbolic aspects of the residents. The representation of space here can be conceptualised as 'lived space' in which social relations are experienced and perceived depending on particular symbols and signs [11], such as heritage. The co-dependent relationship between industrial heritage, history and community accounts for the increased attachment to heritage and concerns about its preservation have provided residents of the working-class neighbourhood a cause to stand for. As demonstrated in The Rocks, they fought for their turf, showed resilience against the hegemonic power of government and participated in the decision-making process.

On the opposite side, the redevelopment of Darling Harbour suffered from a lack of public consultation and of community involvement. The NSW Government undermined the transparency for the public and ignored the relation of the working class community to the area. If a more realistic approach, including both the heritage identity and the community's opinions, had been adopted, Darling Harbour could have been a more interesting place and a better testament to the history of Sydney's industrial development [29]. The findings suggest that redevelopment processes can draw immense benefit from an understanding of the community, of the communities' use of land, and of its expectations from future developments. For example, what level of access is desired? Is an increase in tourism desired? Instead of business orientated development policies aimed at serving the vested interests of dominant stakeholders, development plans combining public engagement, public access and economic development suitable for all the residents of the city can result in a stronger plan to revitalise the waterfront district to the benefit of all. Maintenance of heritage is always expensive and requires some mechanisms to fund the restoration projects. At this point, the sustainable development approach addressed in the UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape [44] suggests policy, governance and management should involve a variety of stakeholders, including local, national, regional, international, public and private actors in the urban development process.

Whatever their role and involvement in the redevelopment processes, the communities in both these areas have been dramatically altered by the transformation. As significant commercial ports, both The Rocks and Darling Harbour used to be tight-knit, self-sufficient natural environments welding social and economic aspects as two sides of the same coin; but the large scale transformation encouraged the areas to focus on external resources (labour force, capital, product, cultural production and consumers) [30] and disrupted their social fabric. Most members of 'the community' involved in the 1970 - 1990s study period have left, been displaced or are now so elderly they may no longer be alive. As a consequence, these community members could not be involved in the

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research.

VI. TOURISM'S ROLE IN THE REDEVELOPMENT OF TWO CONTRASTING INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPES

This research has already explored how tourism has been embraced as an economic tool to recreate a new place identity based on consumption. Contrary to the popular opinion that urban redevelopment aestheticises the cities, the research suggests that the tourism-led remaking of contemporary cities fossilises them by creating 'the locus of consumption' through the integrated workings of culture and capital [31]-[33].

Urban tourism has created considerable income and a significant number of jobs in facilities such as hotels and restaurants, but has become 'the mode of consumption' [34] and commodification in The Rocks, as in many other places around the world. Tourists' intention in visiting The Rocks seems to be more about consumption rather than an interest in the heritage of the place. The specific commercial uses of space, such as the back street cafes and pubs, shape tourists' experience in The Rocks. As a precinct, it is a focal point and site of intense consumption [35]. Tourists spend their free time in search of fun and spend their money on entertainment and distraction. They are motivated by curiosity because they are on holidays, freed from concerns about the social and cultural life of their home society [36]. The visitor profile of The Rocks (in the year ending September 2014) and the visitor profile of Darling Harbour (in the year ending June 2015)

show that the most popular activities for domestic and international visitors are eating out at cafes and restaurants, sightseeing, shopping and travelling for business purposes (Tourism Research Australia, 2014 - 2015). In this respect, the consumption-based tourist experience accepts a clean and sanitised version of the history of The Rocks which attracts visitors. Reference [45] advertises The Rocks with the slogan "Explore Sydney's colourful convict history in the Rocks". Tourists recognise The Rocks as a themed version of the past, but the industrial identity of the area did not contribute to the development of the cultural character of the present. The redevelopment aimed to transform The Rocks into a desirable place in which to live, work and play. This new commercial and economic structure of a city-based tourism industry has led to the standardisation of the historic Rocks area, now somewhat similar to other historic city centres. Consequently, this research suggests that the government and business stakeholders who seek to promote and profit from tourism can have a negative influence on historic city centres. However, and here lies the paradox inherent in the post-industrial tourism experience, tourists arguably do not want the same experiences that they can find in any one of a hundred cities around the world [37]. In this sense, this research has contributed to the understanding that authenticity may be an important component of tourism because it can offer a unique experience.

Industry of employment, top responses	The Rocks (Sydney - NSW)	%New South Wales	%	Australia	%
Employed people aged 15 years and over					
Legal and Accounting Services	24	9.2	74,557	2.4	209,182	2.1
Depository Financial Intermediation	17	6.5	60,696	1.9	148,232	1.5
Auxiliary Finance and Investment Services	15	5.7	40,452	1.3	89,668	0.9
Computer System Design and Related Services	12	4.6	53,474	1.7	139,409	1.4
Creative and Performing Arts Activities	9	3.4	12,102	0.4	30,557	0.3

Of the employed people in The Rocks (Sydney - NSW) (State Suburbs), 9.2% worked in Legal and Accounting Services. Other major industries of employment included Depository Financial Intermediation 6.5%, Auxiliary Finance and Investment Services 5.7%, Computer System Design and Related Services 4.6% and Creative and Performing Arts Activities 3.4%.

Fig. 3 The occupation chart of the residents of The Rocks [42]

The Rocks has been identified as the priciest location in Sydney. The area is a desirable place but it has become an expensive place to live in. A minimum wage earner would need to work nearly 22 hours a day, seven days a week (Sydney Morning Herald, 09/06/2015). The resident population in 1970 was about 200; in 1984 it reached 400 due to the development of the Sirius Housing Commission. According to the Annual Report published in 1984 by Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority, the plan was to increase this number to 1200. However, the Census Statistics in 2011 shows that there are 683 in The Rocks (Australian Bureau of Statistics). Their employment status (industry of employment) confirms the rise of the service sector in the city centre (see Fig. 3).

Although this research makes a contribution to understanding urban transformation in the context of tourism, it approaches the case study areas from a spatial perspective

rather than from tourists' experiences. As a result, this research suggests the necessity of future research into how tourists perceive the heritage of The Rocks and Darling Harbour and what they know about the industrial history of these two places. A more phenomenological approach could be adapted to measure tourists' consciousness and interest in industrial heritage.

VII. MOVING AHEAD

The investigation has shown that change continues in Darling Harbour; the 'Disneyfication' becomes even more visible with the Ferris wheel installed for Christmas and Valentine's Day, acting as the 'star of the show'. The new revitalisation of Darling Harbour, 'Darling Harbour Live', brings still more buildings to the waterfront. And again, the NSW government calls the transformation 'visionary'. The masterpieces of the redevelopment of the Bicentenary, the

convention and the exhibition centre, are being rebuilt and reconstructed in order to develop Sydney's image as the go-to destination for business meetings and events. After removing all train lines in the 1980s, the project now aims to link Exhibition and Convention light rail stations with new access points into Darling Harbour.

They got rid of some of the railway heritage which today would be absolutely recognised as national significance because of their technology, scale and rarity [37].

Once more, the partnership between the government and private developers (comprising Lendlease, HOSTPLUS, Capella Capital, AEG Ogden, Spotless and First State Super) is effective in the transformation process.

Thalis stated that "twenty five years is a major investment and only 25 years after it was finished, if you are demolishing it all; that is a demonstration of failure" [37]. Meanwhile, in The Rocks, the heritage debate is still on-going. The Sirius[4] apartment building and the historic Millers Point are under threat of a large-scale urban development project. The Government's prominent desire to gentrify key areas suggests that residents may be relocated once more. Policymakers continue to make assumptions about communities and heritage. Ironically, back in the 1980s the heritage community was concerned about the building of the Sirius housing commission apartments and now they are concerned about them being demolished. This shows how thinking shifts with time and what is new becomes old and part of 'tradition'. In light of these happenings, this research has to concur with the view that the combination of community and heritage is still not as effective as decision-makers in government hoped, because they continue to only include the comforting aspects of history in order to promote what heritage should be [38].

Similar transformations are going on in various parts of Sydney. The researcher followed with particular interest the waterfront redevelopment project in Barangaroo, a former industrial land sitting on the western edge of the CBD, the East Darling Harbour site. It showed that change in cities is inevitable, that the competition between global cities is relentless, that mistrust for political decisions never ends and that heritage debates gain different momentums in various cases. "Barangaroo is a once in a lifetime opportunity to create a vibrant new place to live, work and visit" [46]. This branding sentence strongly reminds of the aggressive marketing strategy for The Rocks and Darling Harbour. Obviously, another waterfront redevelopment project will present a mix of uses, including commercial, residential, retail and dining, along with a new landmark hotel and a casino. What are Sydneysiders' opinions about this project? According to Prof Reinmuth[5], "the optimism that met the initial design competition for the redevelopment of the site in

2005 quickly gave way to controversy, which in turn has become a flashpoint for the articulation of the endemic mistrust the citizens of New South Wales feel for our political processes" [47].

The researcher concurs with Jack Mundey who stated that it is important for 'ordinary people' to be involved in the decision making process when it comes to significant developments, such as that in Barangaroo. It is believed that government decision-makers, policy makers and heritage professionals need to have a positive relation with communities, and that communication, collaboration and public presentation need to be included in the process of redevelopment projects [38].

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