

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

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