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Elements in Urban Landscapes**

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Industrial Heritage as Qualifying Elements in Urban Landscapes

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Abstract

In most cities today former industrial sites have become core locations for cultural and other recreational activities. These robust cultural heritage sites require dialogue-based strategic planning to succeed in balancing the need between social, cultural, environmental and economic considerations. In order to qualify the post-industrial sites for industrial heritage and give them a second life, additions and subtractions have been necessary, and as such sites have been supplied with new qualities. It is the transformation of these sites into public spaces that is focus of this paper. In the discussion of the relationship between old buildings and new urban contexts some qualifying concepts are useful in the rethinking and redesigning of urban landscapes, and the discussion focuses on two of the concepts; appropriation and porosity (Clemmensen, Daugaard, & Nielsen, 2010). *Appropriation* is a quality in urban landscapes where people can interact with their environments and its material qualities. It refers to an ability to make use of, and turn the surroundings into, one's own. The concept *porosity* refers to 'a porosity of uses and activities' and represents an alternative concept to the traditional planning strategy of zoning. The former industrial buildings have proved to be both porous and robust and their status as cultural heritage sites is emphasized rather than threatened by adaptation into new use.

Keywords:

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1. Introduction

From Brown Fields to Cultural Arenas

This paper is based on a comparative study of two former Norwegian industrial sites, that have relatively recently been transformed into new cultural arenas; Papirbredden in Drammen and Vulkan in Oslo. Architectural interventions have prepared the post-industrial sites for new uses and left those parts of the built fabric that have been kept in various states of transformation.

The former industrial sites in questions did, for a long time, share the general character for such sites – they hosted a mixture of large production buildings, a series of sheds and storage areas of more temporary character, and vast outdoor transit areas. During the process of searching for new functions for these sites, massive “tidying up” processes have taken place, leaving empty “in-between-areas” to be filled with new purposes. The challenge of changing industrial areas, especially those that were formerly fenced in, into ‘visitable’ (Dicks, 2003) urban sites was left to the architects and developers who, in cooperation with heritage managers, became engaged in the planning of the new projects.

The transformation of former industrial sites into public spaces is the focus of this paper. The creation of public spaces that are accessible enable various functions and social interaction independent of age, gender and cultural belonging to take place and is a vital aspect of most recent urban planning initiatives. Gehl (1987) describes open space from a user’s point of view as being an arena that allows for different types of activities encompassing necessary, optional and social activities (as cited in Woolley, 2003). In the discussion of the relationship between old buildings and new urban contexts we will bring in some qualifying concepts in the rethinking and redesigning of urban landscapes, and will focus our discussion on two concepts; appropriation and porosity (Clemmensen et al. 2010). *Appropriation* is a quality in urban landscapes where people can interact with their environments and its material qualities. It refers to an ability to make use of, and turn the surroundings into, one’s own. The concept *porosity* refers to ‘a porosity of uses and activities’ and represents an alternative concept to the traditional planning strategy of zoning.

By directing the attention to the characteristics these areas have as public spaces and the relationship between planned and spontaneous new use, we ask the following research questions:

- What new functions were included in the initial plans for the areas?
- What is the relationship between the planned and the more spontaneous, alternative use of public space?
- Does the new character of these sites as cultural arenas function as mediators or barriers to social inclusion?

Public Spaces as Places for Interaction

Today most town planners naturally aspire to ensure well-functioning public spaces in their strategic thinking; this concerns more aspects than just form and aesthetics. Such areas are social spaces of encounter and communication in the cities. The idea of public spaces will be used in accordance with Franck and Paxson's (1989) socio-cultural studies as "places of interaction, social encounter and exchange, where a great diversity of people can go for a wide variety of activities" (as cited in Garcia-Ramon, Ortiz & Prats, 2004, p. 215).

Public space is part of the wider category of open space. The architect tends to think of him/herself as someone who has to bring "the user at the focus of attention" and must consider the situation with respect to daily urban living, moreover, they must utilize research that can back up assertions about the benefits and opportunities that open space can provide (Woolley, 2003, p. 255). The social benefits and opportunities of open space have been divided by Woolley (2003) into two main categories of functions: on the one hand, passive activities such as watching, reading, meeting friends or visiting the café, and on the other hand, active recreation that involve sporting activities in groups or on an individual basis, such as jogging and cycling. These reflections on social benefits and opportunities will inform our discussion on the relationship between the planned and the more spontaneous or alternative uses of the places found in our respective case studies.

Factors Influencing Processes of Inclusion and Exclusion

When focus has been directed to factors that are considered positive dimensions of such places, it is often emphasised that they can strengthen a sense of community. Places that provide the possibility for having a pause from daily routines and an opportunity for building bridges between people can have a direct influence on people's wellbeing by raising their spirit, thereby influencing general feelings of health and welfare (Cattell, Dines, Gesler, & Curtis, 2008).

Public spaces offer opportunities to gain "glimpses into other worlds". Particularly Hajer and Reijndorp (2001) mentioned this aspect in their discussion of the new challenges that planning for public domains in the post-industrial society raises. They note that, people tend to live in separate spheres. Public spaces are one of the common grounds where people with different backgrounds and worldviews can meet. By the mere fact that different cultural groups have different traditions for using public space, planning and architectural interventions provides options for making diversity visible and opens the space up for cultural exchange and interaction. People use places as part of their cultural repertoires and it may add to the particular flavour of a place and represent a dimension of vitality, adventure, and culture much appreciated and searched for in contemporary urban development (Borer, 2006).

However, some open spaces are exclusively used by one or a few individuals, while other spaces are seen as being available, or belonging, to

everyone. Inclusion and exclusion are not emotions that are awoken by the same spatial experiences by everyone (Woolley, 2003). According to David Sibley (1995) “the simple question we should be asking is: who are places for, whom do they exclude, and how are these prohibitions maintained in practice? ... Exclusions in social space may be unnoticed aspects in urban life” (Sibley, 1995, p. x-xiv). It is the fact that exclusions take place routinely, without most people noticing, which according to Sibley is a particularly important aspect of the problem (Sibley, 1995).

The above-mentioned themes are closely related to a planning discourse and also to what extent users are involved in plans and changes. Those directly or indirectly affected by planning decisions are often groups with limited socio-economic resources and tend to be the hardest to integrate in the decision-making (Olsson, 2003).

We return to these aspects of open spaces in the discussion when we ask whether the characteristics of new cultural arenas function as mediators or barriers to social inclusion in the two study areas.

Methodology

Part of a Larger Comparative Case Study

This analysis of industrial heritage as qualifying elements in urban landscapes is a result of a larger study of transformation from urban industrial sites to cultural arenas commissioned by the Norwegian Cultural Heritage Directorate. The study was carried out by an interdisciplinary research team; perspectives from geography, social science, art and urban planning history and ethnology were represented. In the main study the planning processes involved in the transformation of five former industrial sites was analysed.

The methods used in the main study were:

- Qualitative interviews with 11 key actors in the processes;
- Discursive analysis of a selection of central planning documents;
- Maps, photo documentation and on-site observations.

On-Site Observations of Activities in Public Open Space

In this section we will confine ourselves to describe the method used in the study of public space – observation. Observation as a qualitative method has obvious limitations. It is a highly personal approach where a large degree of personal judgement influences the places called on and the situations that attract attention. The numerous possibilities that present themselves as one engages in observations, leaves room for subjective reflections of what is taking place (Cattell et al., 2008). When the options to gain supplementary information through, for instance, conversations and interviews with the users of urban space is not used to any great extent there remains a chance that the researchers reaches conclusions based on insufficient basis evidence. The same can happen if ones base their findings solely on isolated visits to the areas.

However, when these uncertainties are taken into consideration, there remain important advantages to this method. As Neuman (2006) posits, our approach can be described as “using oneself as an instrument”. This involves striving to gain an outsider’s gaze (“attitude of strangeness”) to be able to question situations we often overlook in our daily routines (Neuman, 2006, p. 390). Taking on the view of an outsider can make it possible for the researcher to unveil aspects in a situation that the participants themselves are not aware of (Neuman, 2006). Along the way, ethical questions may arise; these, the researcher must deal with as they come, such as asking permission to photograph.

Two visits were made to the two studied sites in Drammen and Oslo in 2012, but systematic on-site observations were done at interim periods during one-week in the Spring of 2013. A site-map and a memo were prepared in advance; included in the memo were references to time/place, type of activities, age groups present, gender, nationality/ethnicity, user group, patterns of interaction, duration of visits, who intermingles, rules of conduct, the relationship between area and activities form description of the square (the relationship between green and grey areas – art and ornamentation etc.).

Results

Two Redundant Industrial Landscapes

The two locations, Papirbredden and Vulkan, were chosen for examination because they had certain similarities that could be examined more closely in a comparative study. Both in Drammen and Oslo, the studied redevelopment processes involved a number of different actors, including people from both the private and the public sector. The planning processes for this study have been analysed and presented elsewhere (Swensen, Berg, Holm & Stenbro, 2012; Swensen & Stenbro, 2013).

Papirbredden in Drammen is a section of a larger redevelopment process, in which large harbour areas and areas formerly used for industrial production along the river were redeveloped into residential areas, including a wide coastal track along both riverbanks. Papirbredden includes the site and parts of the old industrial plant of Drammen Paper Mills, which at its peak was one of the largest paper factories in Norway. In 2001 the municipality decided to develop this part of the city into an area of mixed use; combining cultural, educational and residential functions. At this stage, the old plant had already been included in the cultural heritage plan for the municipality but it had not been assigned protection status (either by use of the Planning and Building Act (PBA) or by use of the Norwegian Cultural Heritage Act (CHA)).

Vulkan is a regeneration project along Akerselva in Oslo named after the iron foundry and mechanical workshop established here in 1873. When the main workshop moved out in 1968, the buildings were rented out for various purposes until, in 1999, a decision was made to redevelop the site and revitalise parts of its industrial heritage. This regeneration project is one of a series of

regeneration projects situated along the main river (which was the major energy source for a series of industry plants) in the capital. The Minister for Environment initiated an action programme already in the 1980s when many of the plants had been shut down; this case is among the 31 total sites and/or single buildings that were defined as industrial heritage sites.

Transition from Industrial Landscapes to Cultural Arenas

General growth in the culture industry has functioned as the premise in the formulation of the planning documents in both cities, where culture in combination with other considerations has played a central role as a motivating factor (in cooperation with the education sector, active artists, the museum sector, etc.). The main development process in the two study sites took place during the first decade of the twenty-first century. The combination of culture and business plays a central role in the national political strategies, and is stressed in national documents from the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Trade and Commerce and Ministry of Environment (Kultur- og kirke departementet 2005, Miljøverndepartementet 2005, 2007, Nærings- og handelsdepartementet 2007). The tendencies to transform redundant industrial landscapes into cultural arenas is a phenomenon that is in accordance with, and largely influenced by, trends in major cities elsewhere in Europe, and this phenomenon has been analysed from various angles by numerous scientists (see for instance Biddulph, 2011; Evans, 2003 and 2009; Freestone & Gibson, 2006; Harvey, 1989; Miles & Paddison, 2005).

In the Akerselva-projects, of which Vulkan is a part, interdepartmental cooperation involving culture, higher education and trade has been promoted, and the municipality has been involved in large parts of the building processes through the city antiquarian. Today we see a series of cultural institutions such as the dance college, a deli market and a sport hall reside alongside hotels and residential buildings. Two former industrial buildings are protected and have become part of the new Vulkan complex, named after the old mechanical company.

Papirbredden is a section of a larger redevelopment process in Drammen city and is surrounded by a new residential area and a newly established pedestrian riverbank. The complex itself includes a public library, a public music scene and two university colleges. Particular buildings or parts of building complexes at Papirbredden were highlighted as valuable, and it was left to the developers and architects to suggest how heritage fragments could be worked into the final plans. Even though the public sector has proved to be a strong driver in the developmental urban processes in both case studies, private investors and real estate developers led the actual planning processes.

New Public Space – Form, Functions and Activities Observed

Due to their different topographical setting the infrastructural plans of the two areas have been organised differently.

In Vulkan the areas between the buildings are designed as shared space, which means that the motorised and pedestrian activities, and some activity partly caused by the present building operations in the area are neither separated in time nor space. Two main passageways are crossing each other, and at the cross point we find one of the two main squares in the areas. Since these spaces have few clearly defined borders it would be more accurate to describe them as widened pathways than as formal town square. As illustrated in Table 1 and Figure 1, nine public open spaces have been identified in Vulkan.

Table 1. *Vulkan – form, functions and activities observed*

VULKAN		
Form and function	Activities observed	Connection to the designated heritage
Central square ground level	People passing through the area; spontaneous stops (short meetings related to work; telephone calls etc.)	Entrance to the northern part of one of the two industry halls – today, deli market
Eastern steps	People passing through the area	Ends close to the northern part of one of the industry halls – today, food market
Pedestrian bridge	People passing through the area	Ends close to the northern part of one of the industry halls – today, deli market
Southern square	People passing through the area; spontaneous stops (telephone calls; mother with pram taking a rest; etc.)	Main entrance to the southern part of the two industry halls, today ,Dance house / dance college; also second entrance to the northern industry hall – today, deli market
Southern passageway	People passing through the area; children playing; a group of pensioners approaching the deli hall	Passes alongside the southern industry halls
Square - upper level	Empty (but furnished with benches and bicycle stalls)	None – but gives good overview of the area
Northern steps	People passing through the area; spontaneous stops (a group of students having lunch break at the steps)	Situated close to the boiler house of the former Gas plant in Oslo (1924), now a restaurant
Northern passageway	People passing through the area; people attending various service institutions	None
Passageway northern river bank	People passing through the area (a group of children and attendants from nearby kindergarten passing at the eastern metal bridge alongside the river)	None

Figure 1. Open Urban Spaces in Vulkan

			
Students at spontaneous lunch	The two heritage buildings	Shared space: public and cars	Taking a rest at the steps

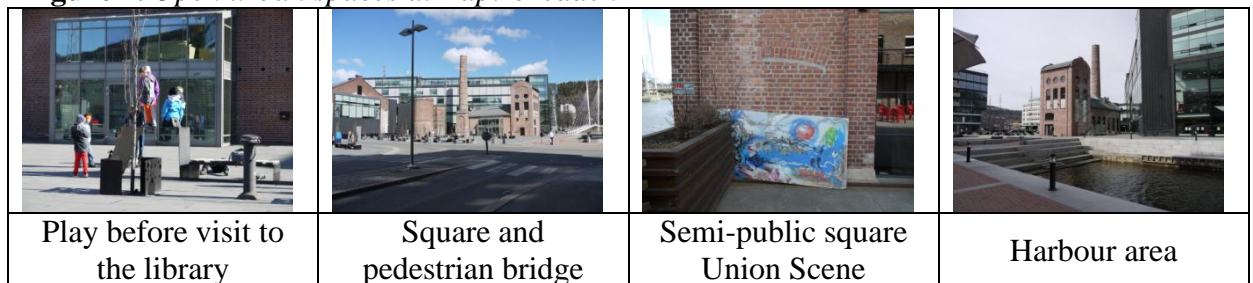
At Papirbredden we find two main organising elements; the wide river that floats along the eastern side of the former industrial plant and Grønland, a street that allows a certain amount of motorised traffic into the area. The pedestrians dominate the area, and there is a more distinct boarder between pedestrian and motorised zones at Papirbredden than in Vulkan. As illustrated in Table 2 and Figure 2, eight public open spaces have been identified in Papirbredden, of which one has a semi-private character.

Table 2. Papirbredden: Form, function and activities observed

PAPIRBREDDEN		
Form and function	Activities observed	Connection to the designated heritage
Square fronting Papirbredden	A continuous flow of people passing in and out (groups of people talking, smoking; people parking their bicycles; people passing on their way to other parts of town or into Papirbredden (college, library etc.); children playing while waiting to enter the library).	Three historic buildings/building-elements are included and partly built into the main complex. The building were referred as valuable heritage, but not listed.
Square at the western end of the pedestrian bridge (stone harbour with steps down to the river; including a water sculpture)	A continuous flow of people passing via the pedestrian bridge (walking, jogging or cycling). A few people at one of the four outside restaurants.	Situated vice a vice Papirbredden and its historic buildings/building-elements.
Square in a semi-atrium at the entrance to the Music Scene (Union Scene)	Limited degree (man on business leaving the Music Scene; a group of school children lining up to enter the Music Centre).	Building defined as valuable historic building by the heritage management.

Semi-private outside square belonging to Union Scene	Limited degree (man on business talking on a mobile phone; two people eating lunch).	Part of Union Scene, defined as valuable historic building by the heritage management.
Street (Fabrikkgata)	Limited degree (truck deliveries to Union Scene; a parking inspector on duty; a person heading into work).	Passes parts of Papirbredden with its historic buildings/building-elements and Union Scene.
Elvebredden (section outside Papirbredden)	Moderate activity (people walking, joggers; a couple resting in the sun)	Passes Union Scene and the eastern side of Papirbredden.
Ypsilon, pedestrian bridge	A continuous flow of people (walking, cycling, walking their dogs; joggers; groups of children heading to school; a beggar)	None
Grønland, traffic artery	Moderate activity (Mostly pedestrians on their way into Papirbredden or on their way to Ypsilon; a moderate amount of motorised activity into the area).	Passes Papirbredden with its historic buildings/building-elements and Union Scene.

Figure 2. *Open urban spaces at Papirbredden*



Discussion

We will start by summarising the main similarities and differences between the two redeveloped former industrial sites in question. They both share the character of being new planned urban landscapes. Their designated heritage consists of buildings or elements of buildings that have been conserved in situ, but they have been incorporated in a new urban setting. For both locations, the river continues to play a central role, but their recreational values are highlighted today. Culture was a key factor in the initial planning phase of both areas, later combined with more economic aspects as well, such

as promoting the areas as attractive residential areas. Both areas can be interpreted as results of a well intentional general plan, where interplay between buildings and open urban spaces has been given attention.

When looking closer at the open urban spaces, there are also some major differences that it is important to note. Papirbredden has strongly benefitted from the riverbank (“Elvebredden”) being the target area of Drammen city. In a Norwegian context, the city is often presented as a successful example of urban development and honoured with several prizes. The river has been in the planners’ focus for various waterfront development projects, and is today a recreational area highly appreciated by the town’s inhabitants. The riverbank walk starts right outside Papirbredden and, combined with the architect designed pedestrian bridge, brings a continuous flow of people walking, cycling and jogging through the area. Papirbredden has succeeded in combining activities of both active as passive character (Wooley, 2003).

In Vulkan, one can enjoy the view of the river when passing the newly constructed pedestrian river bridge and take a rest in one of the two restaurants with inviting outside areas. In the southern part of Vulkan the view of the floating river can be enjoyed only from the inside of the designated heritage buildings, such as the deli market and the house of dance. The river is not approachable for pedestrians outside, however. At the northern side a narrow metal pedestrian bridge has been built alongside the walls of the buildings. However, it has a rather provisional character and does not instigate long stays. Vulkan has somehow managed to turn its back to the river. In Vulkan pedestrians and motorized traffic seem to succeed in “sharing the space” (Hamilton-Baillie, 2008). There seems to be rather few bicyclists and joggers present in the area; this leads us to presume that the presence of motorised traffic might render it more difficult to combine activities of passive and active character. It is important however to add that the building activities are of temporary character, which makes it likely that the area will gradually become dominated by recreational activities.

A quality in urban landscape that Clemmensen et al. (2010) have drawn attention to is “porosity”. Both areas have elements of porosity in common: they have been planned with the intention of allowing different functions and interests to coexist, ensured here through a combination of creatively oriented learning institutions, cultural institutions, offices, restaurants and shops. In the southern part of Vulkan, you find apart from the Dance College, the entrance to a deli market, a bar, a hair salon, an art gallery and offices. There is some activity in the area. The cause of this activity is two-fold: people walk past the area and cars deliver merchandise to shops and builders in the area. Since this northern part of Vulkan is still dominated by building activities, it is too early to indicate how this section will function in the future. At present it is used, to a large extent, by students attending the schools and people visiting the area’s different service institutions: health centre for women, college of advertising, and members of various sports clubs. In addition, the offices of Bellona, the well-recognised Norwegian green movement, are situated here alongside an art shop and a couple of restaurants. The main leaseholders at Papirbredden are

two University Colleges and the City Library. There are also several offices rented out (e.g., a central developer, consultant firm), and on the ground floor there is a bookshop and a café. In the neighbouring quarter the musical arena, named Union Scene, is situated in a former industrial heritage building. The neighbouring quarter also houses a series of cultural institutions alongside the City's Minority Council and the County's Immigration Council.

Since Papirbredden is situated in a city marked by cultural diversity, the presence of diverse cultural institutions, the music scene, library and the two minority councils render probable that the new character of these sites as cultural arenas function as mediators to social inclusion. In Vulkan it is primarily The Health Centre for Woman and the sports arenas that bring cultural diversity into the area. The deli market aims at reaching a niche, and besides a series of food stalls offering exclusive delicatessen and branded goods, it houses a series of inside restaurants and pubs. It has, in other words, characteristics of being a semi-public, rather enclosed area.

Appropriation of space is a way of understanding spatial interventions in everyday life (Lefebvre, 1974 & 1991). Although the modern city is a dominated space, the citizens have a right to the city, to make it their own, to recreate – to appropriate it (Lefebvre, 1991; Olsson, 2003; Swensen et al., 2011). The concept stresses the individual as an active citizen. Appropriation is one of the qualifying concepts stressed by Clemmensen et al. (2010), who consider it a useful key when rethinking and redesigning urban landscapes. In the projects examined in this study, it became clear that people have gradually appropriated the new urban contexts, which are the consequences of the transformations, for new purposes, partly planned functions and partly spontaneous new purposes.

The common denominator in the two areas seems to be the presence of built industrial heritage. This heritage has provided a premise and framework to which the architects and planners, in cooperation with entrepreneurs and heritage managers, had to relate. Such areas sometimes fall into the category of being what Jones labels "awkward space" (2007) and Thompson labels "loose-fit places" (2002), but reflexive and experienced architects may, for these specific reasons, consider them a positive challenge. Spontaneous use of space requires a certain degree of flexibility in the planning, a mixture of fixed and movable landscape furniture. A conscious use of steps in the open urban space in Vulkan have enticed people to use them as benches, and in Papirbredden, inconspicuous, but very well thought-out trough iron sculptures inevitably make children include them in their play while waiting to enter the library.

Conclusion

The development of large areas formerly occupied by industrial plants and harbours is seldom considered a situation in which legal action is justified. The buildings in these development projects have generally been tackled as single heritage monuments (industrial or transport halls); therefore, many of the

adjoining structural elements, which represent disseminators of historical information, functional contexts and atmosphere, have been lost. In accordance with the dominant architectural modes today, the planners have primarily wished to accentuate the contrasts between old and new building forms. The two studied areas exemplify this trend.

The fact that designation as a heritage site sets a framework for development it is sometimes considered unnecessary restricting and excluding by certain planners and entrepreneurs. As this study has shown, this is not necessarily the case. However, it has shown the necessity that different competence is present at different phases in the planning processes. A balance between views that ensure that cultural historic values are safeguarded on one hand and competence on how to incorporate porous qualities into open urban space on the other should be sought.

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