

Introduction: New Directions in Landscape Heritage

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Globally, the heritage movement can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century when the way of valuing places and objects, including natural places, began to change. The development of various international charters in the twentieth century, particularly as a result of the destructive forces of war, saw an increasing awareness and an expansion of conservation activity paralleled by advances in theories and practices in this area. In general, architectural monuments were by far the most talked-about aspects, perhaps matching the growing movement focused on nature conservation, which sometimes ‘spilled over’ into urban landscapes. In the broadest sense, however, appreciation of cultural landscapes has been comparatively slow to take hold: it was largely not until the early 1970s that charters for their conservation and management appeared on the list of concerns in Australia.

Since the 1980s the appreciation of heritage and landscape has certainly grown. With advances such as the Burra Charter (1979) in Australia, which was in part a rejection of the architectural emphasis of European charters, significant cultural landscapes – both designed and organically evolved – have been identified and protected. Anecdotal evidence suggests that, in some parts of Australia, growing numbers of applications for registration are sitting on desks in bureaucratic domains charged with protecting and managing our heritage landscapes. In New Zealand, an ongoing concern is that registration of heritage sites is mismatched with their particular need for protection. More recently, the European Landscape Convention in 2004 (Council of Europe Treaty Series No. 176) and the draft recommendations for evaluating Historic Urban Landscapes (UNESCO, 2005) have elevated the topic to international status. Similarly, organisations such as Documentation and Conservation – Modern Movement (DOCOMOMO), predominantly formulated on the basis of modern architecture, have subcommittees actively promoting planning and landscape concerns to various degrees of success. Although methods for understanding and evaluating heritage landscape values are evolving, it is also clear that the range of issues and complexity of debate are far-reaching and complex. A sample of current issues includes tensions between colonial and indigenous landscapes and people, between natural, ecological and designed landscapes, and between sustainability and conservation agendas; and the peculiarities of dealing with living and changing landscapes (as distinct from static objects).

We feel the opportunity exists to further the discussion and debate about how heritage landscapes are conceptualised, valued and incorporated into broader issues concerning managing cultural heritage in the twenty-first century. How

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can we interpret heritage landscapes in the contemporary experience of physical landscape? How do we assign heritage values in the context of the breadth of landscape qualities? For example, how do we place heritage value on the failures of the past? How should landscapes that represent redundant ideas (particularly in terms of past management practices) be interpreted, if at all?

In this special issue we are particularly interested in new research methods and theoretical propositions as well as in case studies that highlight new scholarly approaches to understanding landscape heritage. Landscapes present particular challenges from a heritage perspective, and it is the contrasts and the comparisons that emerge in these research papers that should stimulate interest in reconsidering the value of heritage landscapes. All of the authors deal with the theme of urbanism at the large scale, but each approaches it in a subtly different way: urban visions unrealised, urban form expressed through language, the loss of urban form, and urban 'indicators' acting like punctuation in a larger fabric. The synergies between the papers offer confidence in the need for new directions for conceiving landscape heritage value yet, interestingly, only one paper was authored by an academic whose primary scholarship is in the field of landscape research. It should be acknowledged that all authors contributed to the 12th Australasian Urban History/Planning History Conference held in Wellington in February 2014.

Jacky Bowring considers landscape heritage in the context of both natural disasters and New Zealand's early urban planning history. She uses notions of utopia as a device to examine the role of landscapes in visioning and realising the recovery of Christchurch after the earthquakes of 2010–11. On a subject close to her heart, Bowring's essay offers the reader the opportunity to reflect on how landscape traditions such as the picturesque and, in contrast, naturalistic endemic plantings can provide a valuable resource for a city seeking to recover tangible and intangible ideas of utopia in its journey to recover from crisis. Although her reference to resilience is brief, she offers an alternative perspective on the conventional definition used in landscape architecture scholarship. Resilience in the context of disaster refers to the way a system (or community) copes, in contrast to a literal ecological interpretation, which focuses on a system's capacity to adapt to new conditions (Walker and Salt, 2012). Bowring provokes us to consider landscape's capacity to support both interpretations: the connection to the utopian roots is evident in the recovery of picturesque representations while, at the same time, new ideas for a naturalised version of the Avon River park provide a new representation of the picturesque that is particularly 'Christchurchian'. Thus the landscape becomes the medium for adapting to, and coping with, the process of reinterpretation as well as the recovery of the city's heritage.

Jane Grant, David Nichols and Paul Walker provide an extensive, carefully researched history of the failed venture to establish the new satellite town of Monarto in South Australia. The new town was to be built 60 kilometres southeast of Adelaide on the eastern side of the Mount Lofty Ranges but was abandoned, never to be realised, a victim of the broader federal urban agenda in the mid-1970s under then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. In a similar vein to Bowring, the authors explore the intersection between the emerging international movement of ecological design inspired by McHarg and the crisis of modern city planning exemplified by international planning design and design consultants,

Superstudio. In parallel with the extraordinary aims and ambitions for the proposed environmentally sensitive urban and landscape design was a large-scale reforestation proposal, which was at least partially enacted. As the authors explain, the unrealised ideals of urban planning, architecture and landscape architecture are in an uncanny way recalled in the serendipitous outcomes of Monarto's 'greening' – as seemingly desolate or obscure as that greening activity may appear to the passer-by today. The narrative resonates with probably countless other urban and rural experiments that have 'gone wrong' and, as the authors suggest, each of these 'failures' is a complex and distinctive narrative in its own right. The complex relationships between landscape, heritage and change over time, particularly when it comes to horticultural and ecological evolution, and the appreciation of relics, make for a compelling sense of landscape in the context of historical understandings and the traces of fabric with which one is presented.

The similarities and differences in approach to the special issue theme are evident in the above two papers. Whereas Bowring encourages the reader to critically examine how contemporary blueprints for the rebuilding of inner Christchurch draw on utopian vivid blue-green landscapes filled with happy citizens, Grant et al reflect on how the millions of trees planted in the place where the Monarto city centre would have stood bring Superstudio and its anti-city imagery to mind. At the same time, both papers evoke powerful images of how heritage interpretation can transcend the often prosaic approaches to heritage conservation when landscapes are considered. The authors' capacity to question meaning and value of the tangible heritage in the physical landscape is borne out in the story of these unrealised or yet to be realised historical places.

Urban settlement and experimentation with shifting urban populations also form the basis of Lauren Pikó's paper. Again, failure and lost aims are at the core, although in a different way and a different geographic context. Pikó explores the fate of Milton Keynes in England and the role that urban planning played in its conception and development. She considers metaphorical references to the new town as indicative of deeper social, political and economic agendas as well as the unfurling public perceptions – not only of Milton Keynes itself but also of national and transnational relations. She deals with the public perception of historical landscapes, and the way the landscape containing the past had 'implied a perception that visible historical continuity was psychologically beneficial to urban residents'. She looks at changing cultural values and landscapes, along with the language, specifically metaphors, that helps define them; how the link between what we build and what we believe and stand for runs deep into the shapes, forms and contexts. The extent to which such narratives could be linked to the valuing of landscape from a heritage point of view is clear, despite the connotations attached to built environments, that is, the historical synergies between practice and place that inform our relationship to landscape. It also raises the question of scale and heritage value generally and in terms of the wider English landscape within which Milton Keynes is set. In this case, 'interpretation' of a heritage landscape comes, quite literally, by way of language and its use and the contexts in which it is used (political change over time).

Saren Reid's essay invokes senses other than the visual to tell the story of experiencing the literally muddy interface between land and water in her account of the history of bathing in Perth during the late nineteenth to early twentieth

centuries. This paper theorises the haptic and olfactory experience of water and riverbed as it was manifested in the decline of two separate developments of the time. Reid's intent is to explore how the haptic and olfactory senses as well as the aesthetic experience make 'people increasingly familiar with both the river and their own bodies in ways that could not be attained through visual experience alone'. The purpose for this historical account becomes clearer as the author theorises the perceptual landscape in the context of the latest development of the Swan River shoreline, the Elizabeth Quay waterfront. Reid's critical analysis of the community's relationship to water, land and mud is based on the sanitising of users' experience of such elements and could be applied to many twenty-first century urban waterfronts replete with artificial beaches. Significantly, the justification for the development on heritage grounds includes the symbolic recovery of the pre-European Swan River foreshore; a similar justification has been used in the development of Barangaroo on the Sydney Harbour foreshore, as Cameron Logan recounts in his paper on the preservation of urban landscapes in Sydney over the past century. Reid's work in a little-researched area of landscape scholarship provides a meaningful addition to this field. Her exploration of the literal and visceral experience of water could be juxtaposed with Pikó's metaphorical exploration of water and the adjectives associated with 'liquid' used to describe the value and meaning of new town development. Reading Reid's account provokes us to consider the city's landscapes in a new way, in terms of the sounds and smells lost or the realisation of what new sensorial perceptions may have taken their place.

Finally, Cameron Logan explores the institutional role the National Trust of Australia (NSW) has played in stewarding urban landscapes around Sydney and along the shores of Sydney Harbour in particular. As with Reid's account of the Elizabeth Quay waterfront, and Bowring's discussion of the Avon River park, Logan's paper uses a recent controversy, the Barangaroo development on the Sydney Harbour foreshore, as a device to explore the historical nuances in the formation of a conservation ethic and the interrelationships of heritage organisations, activists, public bodies and designers, past and present. The conclusion Logan arrives at is not to form a view on the merits of the Barangaroo project but rather to contextualise that development in the lineage of key moments in the Australian heritage movement regarding the promotion and realisation of a heritage landscape for the foreshore of Sydney Harbour. Logan reflects on the need to question 'what it is we are trying to achieve when we protect places under the banner of heritage'. This is something that can be applied equally to the other papers in this special issue, and the ensuing discussions, we hope, will provide valuable material for comparison and debate.

REFERENCES

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