

Informative, Inclusive and Transparent Planning Methods for Sustainable Heritage Management

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Abstract—The paper will focus on management of heritage that integrates the local community, and argue towards an obligation to integrate this social aspect in heritage management. By broadening the understanding of heritage, a sustainable heritage management takes its departure in more than a continual conservation of the physicality of heritage. The social aspect, or the local community, is in many govern heritage management situations being overlooked and it is not managed through community based urban planning methods, e.g.: citizen-inclusion, a transparent process, informative and inviting initiatives, etc. Historical sites are often being described by embracing terms such as “ours” and “us”: “our history” and “a history that is part of us”. Heritage is not something static, it is a link between the life that has been lived in the historical frames, and the life that is defining it today. This view on heritage is rooted in the strive to ensure that heritage sites, besides securing the national historical interest, have a value for those people who are affected by it: living in it or visiting it. Antigua Guatemala is a UNESCO-defined heritage site and this site is being ‘threatened’ by tourism, habitation and recreation. In other words: ‘the use’ of the site is considered a threat of the preservation of the heritage. Contradictory the same types of use (tourism and habitation) can also be considered development ability, and perhaps even a sustainable management solution. ‘The use’ of heritage is interlinked with the perspective that heritage sites ought to have a value for people today. In other words, the heritage sites should be comprised of a contemporary substance. Heritage is entwined in its context of physical structures and the social layer. A synergy between the use of heritage and the knowledge about the heritage can generate a sustainable preservation solution. The paper will exemplify this symbiosis with different examples of a heritage management that is centred around a local community inclusion. The inclusive method is not new in architectural planning and it refers to a top-down and bottom-up balance in decision making. It can be endeavoured through designs of an inclusive nature. Catalyst architecture is a planning method that strives to move the process of design solutions into the public space. Through process-orientated designs, or catalyst designs, the community can gain an insight into the process or be invited to participate in the process. A balance between bottom-up and top-down in the development process of a heritage site can, in relation to management measures, be understood to generate a socially sustainable solution. The ownership and engagement that can be created among the local community, along with the use that ultimately can gain an economic benefit, can delegate the maintenance and preservation. Informative, inclusive and transparent planning methods can generate a heritage management that is long-term due to the collective understanding and effort. This method handles sustainable management on two levels: the current preservation necessities and the long-term management, while ensuring a value for people today.

Keywords—Community, intangible, inclusion, planning, heritage.

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I. INTRODUCTION

THE research group ‘Screening af Kulturmiljøer’ (SAK) is currently categorizing and mapping Danish heritage sites of the type ‘cultural environments’, which is comprised by a collection of buildings and its landscape [1]. In other words, a ‘cultural environment’ is not a single building or monument. The group evaluates the ‘cultural environments’ current status and the intrinsic abilities - such as the ability to contain habitation, tourism, business and/or culture. These abilities are interlinked with a sense of a contemporary substance: a value for the present day. The abilities are also interlinked with a connection to ‘people’. Habitation, tourism, business or culture are synonym for the heritage site being connected to a group of people, either the local community, visitors or a part of people’s daily routine. Many heritage sites can be categorized as ‘cultural environments’ and is thus interwoven with the people living in, visiting or using the site. This aspect suggests a management method that considers more than the physical heritage site and integrates the people affected by the heritage site.

II. INTRINSIC ABILITIES

The importance of historical references in the physical environment is partially due to the intrinsic accumulated knowledge. Heritage sites can have a national or global historical value, but it can also have a value for the local context, e.g. create a site-specific identity or carry a site-specific narrative valued by the local community. When dealing with the built environment the shapes, site and materials, and the sensing of these can be understood through phenomenology. The architectural theoretician Christian Norberg-Schulz describes in ‘Genius Loci’ from 1980 how a building must be understood in its physical, social and historical context. In relation to developing and managing the built environment, he states the following:

“To respect the genius loci does not mean to copy old models. It means to determine the identity of the place and to interpret it in ever new ways. Only then we may talk about a living tradition which makes change meaningful by relating it to a set of locally founded parameters.” [2]

Norberg-Schulz [2] argues that the genius loci – the spirit of the place – must be respected at any given site. Likewise, he describes how by doing so the identity of a place can be enhanced or reinterpreted in a transformation that relates to the local context. Another part of Norberg-Schulz’s ‘genius loci’ is the notion that the identification with the built environment varies according to individuals. His theory emphasises the

importance of contextual and local understanding.

III. TANGIBLE & INTANGIBLE

Australian professor Laurajane Smith describes in 'Uses of Heritage', from 2006, how heritage is of great importance to its context and connected to the local community. The quote below expresses Smith's view of heritage that - like 'genius loci' - has to be perceived as something beyond the physical object:

"Heritage is something vital and alive. It is a moment of action, not something frozen in material form. [...] There is an interlinked relationship between the activities that occur at places and the places themselves" [3]

Smith addresses the issue when defining heritage as tangible and intangible. This focus point is connected to the life evolve around and in the heritage sites, which furthermore are connected to the challenge with the management of heritage and the "physical" orientation.

UNESCO has categorized cultural heritage in two lists: an immaterial list of 508 cultural heritage subjects of an intangible nature [4], and a material list of 1121 subjects [4]. The latter is explained with clear guidelines for the preservation and development of the heritage. The subjects are frequently evaluated, and can be labelled with a notation of the site being 'in danger'. This label can result in the heritage subject being removed from the list. The basic threat is demolishing of the heritage due to tragedies such as war or natural disasters, but it can also be due to infrastructural developments, mass tourism or reconstructions of the buildings.

The immaterial list is not necessarily connected to something tangible, but there are exceptions. One of the exceptions is the Chinese traditional architectural craftsmanship for timber-framed structures, which in its essence is connected to the physical wooden structure, but since it is the craftsmanship that comprises the heritage it is registered on the UNESCO intangible list.

The example of the traditional Chinese architectural building method articulates one of the current imbalances when defining cultural heritage, and thus an imbalance in the fundament for preservation or development. Cultural heritage is comprised by a physical substance, but also an intangible value e.g.: a certain use, act or work, or in other words the value that it has for people.

'Cultural environments', described by the Danish research group SAK [1], is a type of heritage that in this paper is situated in-between the immaterial list and material list. 'Cultural environments' is a type of heritage that also contains *something intangible*. This is due to the fact that the 'cultural environments' is comprised by a built area, and this area is (with few exceptions) linked to people living, visiting and staying in it. These people give the heritage site value and ensure that the heritage site is alive - and not a mere backdrop or a historic monument in a glass displays. The people in the 'cultural environment' give the heritage site its value and the heritage site generates a value for these people in the present time.

On UNESCO's material heritage list, a few of the areas, as mentioned, have been labelled "in danger", but almost all the sites have a description of elements that pose a threat against the preservation of the heritage. One of the sites (that also could be categorized as a 'cultural environment') is Antigua Guatemala, which in 2017 had the following threats: "Commercial development, housing, and impacts of tourism, visitor and recreation" [5]. Other examples could be: the historic centre of the city of Salzburg in Austria, evaluated in 2019, where *housing* is one of the factors affecting the property [6] or the old city of Dubrovnik in Croatia, evaluated in 2018, where the impact of *recreation* is categorized as a threat [7]. These threats are a result of people living in and using the heritage site, and one can argue that it is the self-same people that give the heritage site value.

In 1897 the city of Budapest in Hungary was granted the honour of being placed on the UNESCO world heritage list. In 2009 Budapest was facing, among other threats, *housing* and *infrastructure* as factors that could affect the heritage site [8]. In 2011 the site was noted with an additional threat: "Identity, social cohesion, changes in local population and community" [9]. The reasoning behind the newly registered threat is interlinked with increased tourism and residents in Budapest, and this type of threat underlines the argument that heritage sites is comprised by more than its physical performance. Notions of *community* and *identity* in relation to the UNESCO defined threats blur the line between the tangible and intangible heritage.

IV. MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

'Cultural environments' cannot be categorised as static heritage objects to be saved and locked for future generations. When interwoven with a context of people, the 'cultural environment' has to be handled as a dynamic physicality - not a static entity. When understanding 'cultural environments' to be all heritage sites with a connection to people, one can argue that the *management* of heritage sites could be rephrased to the *development* of heritage sites. 'Management' refers to something that is being done in the present, and in the aspect of heritage sites, management is understood to handle threats towards the preservation of the heritage site whereas the word 'development' allows changes. Since 'cultural environments' is connected to people, it has to be able to be dynamic and be handled through means that lie in-between management and development.

The site-specific identity, sense of place and historical introspect were mentioned as phenomenological qualities and intrinsic abilities of the heritages site. These abilities can advantageously be valued in planning and in development schemes. The abilities described by SAK: culture, tourism, business and habitation, leads to the matter of unfolding the intrinsic abilities and potentials.

The Danish cultural ministry describes the Danish heritage with wording such as 'ours' and of a 'mutual' value, but the measures to which it is being handled is strictly 'top-down' [10]. Rules and regulations to preserve the buildings are often not inclusive of the life that is being lived in the heritage site

or can be unfolded within it. As mentioned, the notions of *community* and *identity*, in relation to the UNESCO defined threats, blur the line between the tangible and intangible heritage, but it also raises questions about the method used when handling heritage sites.

Citizen-inclusion is a common method in relation to urban design and city planning, but it is a new approach when handling heritage. Official and governmental organizations define what is worth preserving and how. When opening the definition of ‘cultural environments’ to be connected to the people it affects, the matter of *how* to deal with the heritage sites becomes vital.

If historical buildings and areas are being recognized to be ‘ours’ and of ‘mutual’ value, they should be managed and developed with an emphasis on the people living in it and visiting it. In other words, development methods of an inclusive nature (e.g. citizen-inclusion in urban planning) could be implemented in the development of the heritage sites – also in accordance to managing the heritage sites.

V.TWO DIFFERENT EXAMPLES

Different case examples show how heritage sites become a central part of their respective local communities. One example is how the municipality of the Australian city Ballarat placed cultural heritage in the focal point of a large regeneration strategy. Another example is how the Danish city Ebeltoft experienced a transformation by local initiative of an abandon industrial building, into a community centre. Both cases exemplify a management and development of heritage that is interlinked with the local community.

A. City of Ballarat, Australia

Ballarat is an inland city in Australia with a population of around 100.000. The city was in 2003 registered as a member of the International League of Historical Cities and in 2006 hosted the 10th World League of Historical Cities Congress. The tourism in Ballarat has not grown since the 1960s and it consists of around 15% of the economy of Ballarat and it employs 2870 people. In December 2017 the City of Ballarat presented a plan to sustain the heritage of Ballarat [13]. One of the main subjects of the plan was to gain an insight into the citizens’ attitude towards the different cultural heritage areas and elements. Two of the four aims are dealing with that aspect, namely the first and the last of the four:

“- Liveability: Making sure local people are central to our work in delivering the heritage plan.

- Prosperity: Aligning economic, social and heritage conservation goals

- Sustainability: Safeguarding our heritage resources in times of rapid change

- Accountability: Continuing to meet and expand on our legislated responsibilities and making transparent decisions to meet our community’s expectations.” [11]

‘Liveability’ and ‘accountability’ represent two of the four aims, and these two themes are concerned with the inhabitants of Ballarat. Wording such as *local people are central*, *transparent decision* and *meet our community’s expectations*

underlines the strive to include the local voices in the management and development of the heritage site. The City of Ballarat describes the reasoning behind the heritage plan with the following:

“Heritage is of critical importance to the Ballarat community and our city’s future. In whole-of-city consultations, the people of Ballarat said that of all the things they value about Ballarat, they love its heritage the most and want to retain it.” [11]

The plan tries to share the responsibility of the heritage and introduce a participatory planning approach that gives local people and stakeholders a central role. The participatory approach has been established by the Council’s Historic Urban Landscape (HUL), which is a pilot program by UNESCO.

The participatory planning invites the local community to contribute to the planning process. The participatory method empowers the local people and puts them in the centre of planning – and in this case in the centre of the heritage plan. The plan is supposed to run from 2017-2030. The City of Ballarat attempts, with this strategy, to open up the planning and management of their heritage. The project is still in the initiating phase, but it recognizes heritage as something that is tied to the people living in and around it.

The inclusion of the citizens is, in the case of Ballarat, met through public interventions and built improvement of the heritage, but also through textual descriptions and news. The means used are, among others: public interventions, visual communication and ordinarily information methods on news platforms. The combination of the two different methods targets a larger group of the local community compared to strictly using written communication, e.g. online news platforms.

In general, an invitation to participate in the heritage management is an invitation to influence the process, but also an invitation to be educated and informed about the heritage. The knowledge generates a deeper insight into the respective heritage, but it also generates a more collective perception. It can allow individual voices to be heard and create a layered, but common narrative for the area. The common narrative can be a powerful tool and generate an opportunity for the citizen, businesses, and government to streamline different efforts and enhance the site-specific identity. It is important that this is done without it being secluding, but instead a layered inclusive site-specific narrative.

B. Former Malt Facory in Ebeltoft, Denmark

In Ebeltoft, a small coastal city in Denmark, an old malt factory had been left for decay. The factory is located in the heart of the city. It has high towers, working as a landmark, and the contrasting appearance along with its powerful red colour makes the building unique in the cityscape.

By an intense effort, the citizen raised enough money to renovate the building and hereafter the municipality joined the project and contributed financially. The industrial building connects the city of Ebeltoft with its past and it expresses a new narrative of the city of Ebeltoft. Its visual appearance expresses the industrial part of the history of Ebeltoft that was

hidden and forgotten. The landmark has become a symbol of the engagement, commitment and collective effort.

The approach, in the case of the malt factory in Ebeltoft, is in its order opposite to the development of the heritage in Ballarat. In Ballarat the government and official institutions initiated the enhancement of the historical narrative of the city and as part of the process included the citizen. In Ebeltoft the initiative of the citizens secured a development plan for the historical building, which subsequently established a collaboration with the official institute (the municipality in this case).

C. Inclusive Approach

The two cases exemplified a management approach where the heritage was managed in a collaboration between the official government and the citizens. The management approach balanced the initiatives of the citizens and the official planning schemes.

A balance between official institutions and the lived life in the heritage site can, in the development process, generate a socially sustainable solution. The ownership and engagement that can be created among the local community can unofficially delegate the maintenance, preservation and accommodate a considerate development.

VI. URBAN PLANNING METHOD

As mentioned, an inclusive approach has often been used in urban planning, and with different desired outcomes: gain a knowledge about the citizen, generate a local engagement, co-create a design, etc.

Fezer describes in 'Urban Catalyst – The Power of Temporary Use' how small temporary designs (interventions) can act like acupuncture that, with a small needle, gives energy to an area beyond the small pin [12]. When one is working with interventions as a catalyst to activate an area, the main purposes is to explore the opportunities of the area and to change the perception of the area. An intervention in a heritage site can inform and invite the local community to influence the development.

An intervention can activate the heritage site, open a dialogue, and invite the local community and relevant parties to engage. The following process can be influenced by the gained knowledge from the intervention and the new relation with the people in the heritage site.

The benefit of a public intervention is its ability to visually communicate. An intervention in a heritage site can e.g. showcase the process, or it can unfold the narrative of the heritage site. An intervention is a mean that interacts with the physicality of the heritage site. The intervention can be informative, inclusive, and/or inviting. The intervention can inform about changes, be inclusive in the process of the intervention, or the intervention can invite people to participate and by thus be engaged in the management. Whether the design intervention is informative, inclusive and/or inviting, the intervention should be of a temporary nature: an intervention for a period of time. Temporary interventions can work as part of a process-oriented

development. A temporary intervention can act as a test and create a transparent development process, which is difficult to achieve through e.g. written news on online platforms. When working with informative, inclusive, and transparent planning approaches, it is crucial to reach a wide target group, both according to ethnicity, level of income, age, etc.

If the intrinsic abilities of the heritage site can support development and generate a strong local identity, the level of local inclusion should be prioritised on the same level as regular restoration or damage control. The UNESCO defined threats such as habitation, recreation or community is, as mentioned, interlinked with the people living in and visiting the heritage site, and these threats can likewise be minimised by an inclusive development and management method.

VII. CONCLUSION

Heritage sites are not static historical representations. Heritage sites can be understood as a line that represents a historical relevance, is comprised by a current use, and should be adaptable for the future use. Heritage sites cannot be conserved in glass displays.

For a sustainable heritage management, the people in and visiting the heritage site must be considered as part of the heritage site. The management of heritage becomes an issue of development, and an issue of developing with the people.

Cities like Antigua Guatemala, Dubrovnik, Salzburg and Budapest can be categorized as 'cultural environments' and they are thus comprised by their respective local community. The method of working with public interventions can inform, motivate, and allow a broad engagement in the local communities. In a symbiosis, the heritage site can influence the local community, and the local community can influence the development of the heritage site. It is the people living in, or visiting, the heritage site that gives it its value, and the heritage site is obligated to generate a value in the present.

The people in the heritage sites can be a safeguard to the preservation, but the measures of preservation need to be articulated on different levels: from citizen to preservation experts. The balance in developments, often used in urban planning such as citizen-involvement, can be a relevant method to generate a sustainable heritage management.

To generate sustainable heritage management the method needs to be linked with the development of the site, and include the people in the site through an informative, inclusive, and transparent approach.

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planning and urban design solutions (e.g. citizen-involvement, affordances of urban space, infrastructure of urban life, community engagement), but also thorough knowledge within the Danish architectural policies (e.g. management plans and regulations in relation to preservation). She has gained practical experience at the cultural bureau Urgent.Agency (2016-17) and the architecture firm Juul Frost Architects (2017-18).