

Buildings as Objects

Competing Values of Built Heritage in Urban Renewal

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Abstract

The railyard of the Tampere city center, Finland, has been under a massive city development for about 10 years. This article examines how the city planners and different participants have interpreted and recreated the urban space within one controversial planning process and how the different interpretations of the existing buildings are expressed and responded to within such a process. The aim of our study is to conceptualize the interplay between the experts' and participants' interpretations about the role of architectural heritage in urban renewal. The studied materials consist of 1) the survey reports written by planning and heritage professionals during the process and of 2) the participants' comments collected in different phases of the process. We use content analysis methods to compare these two document types focusing on two specific buildings: the former railway workers' union house *Morkku* and the old depot office building. We examine these two buildings to understand how and why they were set into competitive position and eventually other one was demolished to make room for the other one. The experts who were involved in the planning of the site and evaluation of the buildings focused on the visual and architectural qualities, but their interpretations were challenged by participants who interpreted the buildings rather as *lived architecture* than as architectural place or cityscape. We pay attention to how a planning process can accelerate *canonization process* (Bonta 1975 and 1979) and widen the scope of heritage by exposing certain buildings to the threat of demolition and therefore to the public evaluation. The analysis of this process brings up and questions the established status of architectural examination at the core of evaluation of the built heritage. In this article, we claim that the urban renewal in historical sites looks at the heritage buildings with a visually oriented *expert gaze* that risks degrading their significance to mere particles of the cityscape. This gaze instrumentalizes the buildings and, as in the presented case, may even put them to competitive position. The expert gaze alone is not sufficient to interpret the variety of significances of the urban heritage. Narrow interpretations cause damage to both, the planning process, and the built environment. The article also discusses the themes of social, cultural, and environmental sustainability while addressing the dominance of traffic planning and visual aspects of the city.

Keywords: city renewal, city planning, cityscape, architectural preservation, interpretation, canonization



Introduction

“...the article builds understanding that the various conflicts between expert aesthetic judgement, public experience, and cultural and historical importance should be critically assessed.”

Urban renewal, and the management of built heritage within such a process, is undertaken by many different agencies, and mobilized for a variety of purposes (Pendlebury, J. & Porfyriou, H. 2017, 429). Our study focuses on two historical buildings that remained almost unnoticed and narrowly interpreted until the planning process initiated the discussion about their demolition or preservation. The article examines the value-based discourse about built heritage in terms of a specific planning process. The planning site in question is a Northern part of the former railyard in the city centre of Tampere, Finland. The planning process lasted from 2004 to 2014, but this article also examines some earlier steps in the evaluation of the existing buildings at the site, and covers some of the consequences of the planning process. This specific site was chosen for the analysis because it turned out quite unique by setting the two buildings in competitive position. From this perspective, the article builds understanding that the various conflicts between expert’s aesthetic judgement, public experience, and cultural and historical importance should be critically assessed.

The article discusses how the city planners and different participants interpret and recreate an urban space within one controversial planning process. The Finnish planning system is grounded on the Land Use and Building Act and characterized by a strong self-determination of independent municipalities giving them a planning monopoly. At the same time, the system is hierarchical consisting of national, regional, and municipal levels. Built heritage is taken into consideration in the planning legislation, especially in how it guides to the wide participation and impact assessments. However, there are still not sufficiently tools, or resources to use them, to efficiently identify built heritage and its significances within complicated planning processes. There are also different experts with different training and expertise evaluating the built heritage in the sectors of building control, city planning and heritage preservation, and despite their common goals, their diverse positions and backgrounds may lead to conflicting opinions.

Site and case description

The city of Tampere was founded in 1779 and it is the third biggest city in Finland, with a continuously growing population. The railway to Tampere from Helsinki, the capital of Finland, was built in 1876. It was situated outside of the city of that

time, but since then, the city has grown on both sides of the railway. The railway and the railyard have later been considered as a factor that splits the city centre and restricts the urban growth. Even though the planning area is situated at the very proximity of the city centre, it remained untouched by the city development for a long time, and the functions of the area have been *secondary* considering the central location of the site. The planning process was initiated to allow infill building and new functions at the site.

The northern railyard district has been considered as a border area, backyard, or a no-man's land. On the other hand, it has been active part of the railyard system and collective place for cultural activities, also a residential district with railway workers' houses. Later it used to be a place for underground activities and pop-up culture. By the time of the planning process, the area was more or less forgotten, it was mainly a crossroads surrounded with poorly maintained buildings. One important driver for the city planning was the traffic plan of the city centre that was prepared from the beginning of the milenium. The traffic plan proposal gained legal force in 2009, but its alignments influenced the city planning already during the preparation. The traffic plan defined Ratapihankatu, *Railyard Street*, as one of the most important gathering streets around the city centre.

This article focuses on this planning process, which is analyzed as an example of *heritage process*, also referred to as a *canonization process*. The planning process itself acts as a *disruptive event* that concretizes the dynamic character of the place, reveals its meanings with social, historical, and material dimensions, but at the same time also accelerates or even redirects the heritage process (Therkelsen & al. 2019, 2). We examine the interpretations about two specific buildings from the early 20th century, Morkku and depot office building (see Figure 1), that were located at the observed planning area. The article examines how different interpretations were expressed and responded to within the process (Allon, 2013, 253, Van Der Hoeven, 2020, 131).

Morkku used to be a railway workers' union house. The wooden house was built in 1907 after type drawings by Bruno Granholm, who was the national railway company's architect at the time. Depot building, in turn, has red-brick walls with plastered facades. The existing part of the building originally housed offices and was surrounded by lighter but larger constructions that were used as storages and garages. The office building was also designed by Bruno Granholm and built in 1907. The conclusion of the planning process was, mainly because of the alignment of the gathering street, that only one of these buildings could be preserved. The article examines the interpretations of these two buildings, expressed during the planning process, which led to setting them into competitive position.

Materials and methods

The Finnish planning regulations require numbers of surveys and investigations to gather background material for the planning as well as collecting comments and enabling citizens' participation in different phases of the planning process (see Figure 2). Anyone who has a relevant status regarding the planning site can be considered as a *participant* and be invited to leave comments, but normally all materials are openly accessible, and everyone can participate. The planning process of the Northern railyard lasted from 2004 to 2014. Over 250 comments were given to the plan proposals throughout the process. Given comments, as well as the survey reports written by the experts, represent different interpretations of the heritage and other values of the site. In this article, we compare these two document types, expert texts and participants comments describing and evaluating the two buildings and the urban space around them.

At the time of the planning process, the Land Use and Building Act (5.2.1999/132) obligated and regulated the participation in different phases of the planning process. *Communicative planning* is one term to conceptualize the practices required in this act. It is an approach to urban planning that gathers stakeholders and engages them in a process to make decisions together in a manner that respects the positions of all involved. In Finland such methods are mainly used in the biggest cities and the level of participation varies remarkably depending on each municipality's resources. Likewise, the act set requirements for *sufficient investigations* to be made during the planning process about the plan's social, cultural and environmental impacts. However, it did not state what kind of expertise is needed for accomplishing investigations on the cultural or historical values of the sites. This is why the quality and the substance of the reports may vary drastically.

Building history reports are typically written about buildings with historical or architectural value, which are about to face conservation, alterations, changes in their status in the cityscape, or demolition. This report type has evolved significantly in the past few decades and these reports have become a common practice in the planning processes. The building history report concerning the buildings presented in this study, was made at the early stage of the planning process in 2003. The aim of the report was to document and evaluate the architectural and historical value of five buildings at the Tampere railyard for the topical city planning needs. (Building history report, 2003.) The name of the report already alludes to the conclusions of the evaluation. The report is entitled as "*Depot building and other National Railroad Company's buildings on the Northern side of Itsenäisyydenkatu street*". The significance of one building, the depot building, is emphasized at the expense of the others. Soon after the building history report, the city planning office compiled a *cityscape investigation* on the planning area (Tampereen kaupunki, 2004). Unlike the building history report, this investigation type is neither common nor established. Such considerations are more typically included in the planning reports than to separate documents. The aim of this investigation was to evaluate and clarify the premises, objectives, and impacts of the planning process in terms of the cityscape. When regarding the built heritage and cultural landscape, the report is clearly grounded on the building history report. Thirdly, we have analyzed *city plan reports* from different planning phases (2012, 2014b) and how do their interpretations of the built heritage evolve from the early investigations (2003, 2004).

We have also analyzed the comments given by participants during the planning process from the 2009 until 2017. The comments were given in five phases: 1) at the beginning of the planning process, in 2009, 2) during the preparation of the city plan (drafts A and B), in 2012, 3) during the second preparation of the city plan (versions 1 and 2), in 2012, 4) for the proposal of the city plan, in 2013 and, 5) for the revised proposal in 2014. Participants' opinions evolved significantly throughout the planning process depending on the phase and the proposals that were delivered by the traffic and city planners. It is obvious, but still important to point out, that the participants only react on what is proposed to them by the professional. They cannot estimate or foresee what kind of other proposals might be presented later in the process.

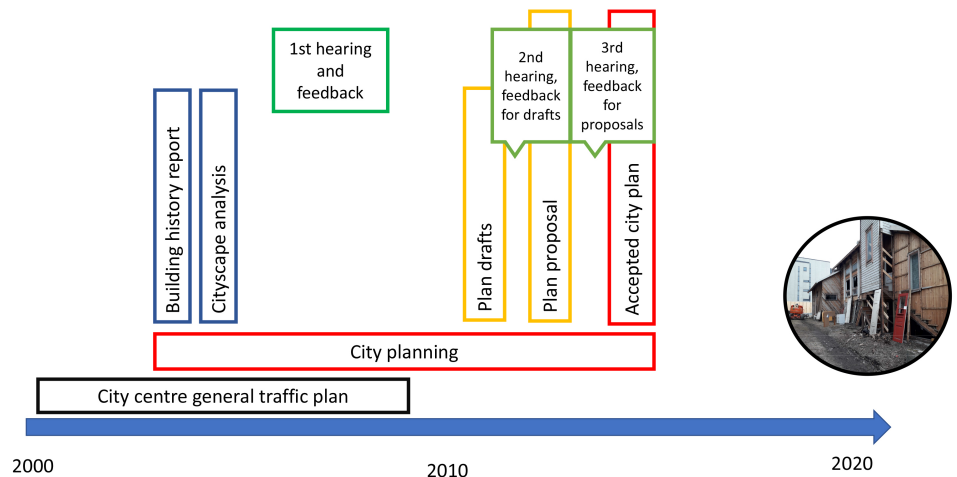


Figure 2. Analyzed materials and description of the city planning process: different documents, plans and communication.

Figure by: Iida Kalakoski

What is characteristic to the participants' comments was that they were emphasizing the need for building preservation. They were also pointing out the conflicting values in the city development. We analyzed these comments with content analysis methods, identifying expressions that were relevant for the analysis and classifying them under thematic categories. Through these categories we created an interpretation of the *city as a discourse*. This specific discourse focused on three main themes. Firstly, some comments discussed the ownership of the city and questioned who should be making the decisions about the preservation and demolition. Second main category consisted of comments that described historical buildings as visual elements of the city, either as ugly or as beautiful and "enriching". The comments of the third category considered city as a human-like actor, who can, for instance, "destroy its history" through demolition.

Theoretical framework

Our case study on Tampere railyard can be observed in relation to transformation of so-called *brownfields*, developing urban areas. The regeneration of brownfields is considered as an important potential to densify cities within the existing built fabric and to revitalize districts and neighborhoods (Rey, E. & al., 2021, 3). Transformations of industrial areas are among the best-known examples of such regeneration, but harbors, and railyards are often following similar steps in densifying cities. What is common to these previously enclosed areas, as the industrial sites or traffic areas, is that most people pass by them and relatively few people have personal experiences or memories from the actual sites. Therefore, the perceptions of the sites, the participants' comments, for example, may be derived from very little connection to the actual place. This may lead to aesthetically oriented urban development that disconnects the historical buildings from their original significance and presents them as mere visual objects. Our site is a combination of a *lived city* experienced and interpreted by citizens and a cityscape that was purely experienced from afar. Depot building was primarily used by the railway company, but Morkku was widely used by the community. This can be seen in the participants' comments, since many participants have personal memories from Morkku, but depot building is mainly evaluated as a visual element of the cityscape.

Such a visual interpretation has been referred to as *aestheticization* (Mattila & Ilmavirta 2013) or *objectification* (see ex. Urry 1990, 120, Van Der Hoven 2020, 132). Whereas the verb *aestheticize* refers to making something a target of aesthetic consideration, *objectifying* refers to degrading something to the status of mere object. This orientation privileges the perspective of professionals and

disregards the social meanings of the urban heritage (Van Der Hoven 2020, 132). Objectification also has the dimension of *instrumentality*; it withholds the aspect of treating something as a tool for another's purposes. In terms of urban development, such objectification often leads to operations that *homogenize* the urban landscape with selection, display or *beautification* that Kevin Walsh (1993) refers to as *purification*. Architects and city-planners are used to handle and produce visual materials and to base their argumentation on visual dimensions of the city. Therefore, these dimensions tend to be over-emphasized in the urban planning. Although the aesthetically biased interpretations of the urban heritage have been criticized for decades (Kärki, 1993, 71), they still seem to dominate the expert discourse. The communicative planning is partly developed to avoid over-emphasis of the objectification, to gather more versatile premises for the planning.

We refer to the expert-led approach with the concept of *expert gaze* to accentuate its emphasis on visual qualities of the city. The concept is inspired by John Urry's (1990) term of *tourist gaze* that refers to the set of expectations that tourists place on tourist attractions in the search for *authentic* experiences. We use the notion of *expert gaze* for the set of requirements that heritage experts and city planners place on built heritage in search for *harmonious cityscape*. The term *gaze* emphasizes the notion of aesthetic and objectifying nature of experts' considerations on built heritage and cityscape. Preoccupation with the visual aspects of the city is characteristic to urban planning processes and often aims at beautification and uniformity in style and scale. Transforming the physical environment is seen, according to Monica Degen (2017, 144), as the first and most important step in improving the status of certain area in the city.

Urban space is a physical and social environment that is defined by memories, interpretations, and narratives (Van Der Hoven 2020, 132). In this study we refer to discursive dimension of the city as a form of creating such an understanding of urban space. Discourse can have either public or private features. Public discourse gathers topics like identity, cultural symbols, and financial issues, and are typically produced by experts and authorities in the planning process (Lappi, 2013). In terms of heritage issues, it can be assimilated with *authorized heritage discourse* (AHD) conceptualized by Laurajane Smith (2006). AHD constitutes and reflects a range of social practices that are used to give meaning to certain historical narratives and collective and individual memories (Smith, 2012).

Instead, when it comes to private discourse, it tends to be more personal and versatile including notions of the city as *lived*, *experiential* and *socially constructed* space (Wallin 2019, Allon 2013, 255). Participants may present both, experts' and laymen's notions and therefore comprise features of public and private discourse. Earlier studies have pointed out that urban renewal projects transform a sense of place by creating new frames of reference in the built environment (Degen, 2017, 143). In Finnish social sciences, researchers have been studying participants' responses to planning processes (Wallin 2019, Wallin 2018, Leino, Santaoja & Laine 2018). In heritage studies, in turn, the role of experts in heritage discourse has been at the core of international discussion for about twenty years (Smith 2006, Hølleland & Skrede 2018). There have been studies also on different interest groups and their perception of the urban heritage in urban renewal (Ashworth G.J. & Tunbridge J. E. 2017, Pendlebury, J. & Porfyriou, H. 2017, 429). The aim of our study is to conceptualize the interplay between experts' and participants' interpretations about the role of architectural heritage in urban renewal. Heritage discourse is interpreted as an important driver for the process of *canonisation*, where the accumulation of expert interpretations establishes a certain perception of built heritage. In many cases, an official status as *significant*, recognized by the *expert gaze*, is a precondition for the heritage preservation. Even if the expert interpretations about the city and

heritage buildings aim to be objective, they tend to simplify the complexity of the issues, leading to the emphasis of the aesthetic and objectifying interpretations.

Art historian Juan Pablo Bonta (1975, 1979) has presented a nine-step model for analyzing how the interpretation of architectural works becomes canonized. As intended for the interpretation of works of visual arts, Bonta's model is based on the visual qualities of the analyzed objects. Bonta's model also emphasizes the significance of experts' recognition in the formation of a canon. We suggest that the model can be used for understanding how expert discourse influences on the establishment of the status of the significant elements of the cityscape or built heritage. In urban planning, this formulation takes place especially in professional writings such as in surveys and reports, which, when handling heritage issues, can be considered as a form of *authorized heritage discourse* (Smith 2006). Despite its age and its original orientation to art works, Bonta's model has recently been tested and considered as applicable for both built heritage and analyzing current discourses (Berger & Savolainen, 2023, Kalakoski et al. 2020).

There have been other attempts to define process of heritagization, or *patrimonialisation* in the Francophone literature (Davallon 2014; for an overview in English see Morisset 2010, 55), or in terms of tourist attractions, the steps of *sacralization* (MacCannell [1976] 1999). All these frameworks reveal that there is usually a certain chronology in how the interpretation develops, and since Bonta's model considers this chronology in most elaborate way and spans the longest timeline, we have found it the most useful for our analysis. Since such a process takes place and continues in the present, it is as much a result of today as it is of the past (Coomans 2018, 130). Thus, when conceptions change in the present, this change is reflected to the interpretations of the past, which explains why previously unacknowledged objects become recognized as heritage or existing heritage becomes viewed from previously overlooked angles. By following Bonta's steps, we can notice, that expert's intervention, such as city planning, accelerates the canonization process or may even redirect it.

Canonisation of Morkku and depot building

Based on earlier studies, Bonta's canonization model is applicable to individual buildings, built environments, and more conceptually, to heritage categories (Kalakoski et al. 2020). In this article, we use the same model to examine the canonization within the timeframe of a planning process. The model is used to create understanding about the case where the preservation of two buildings was set in the competitive position. The first section of this chapter is an overview of the nine steps of Bonta's model and how they occurred in the case of Morkku and depot building. The later sections analyze these steps more in detail.

Planning process of the Northern railyard as canonization

1) '*Blindness*' is characterised by a general ignorance towards the value of the heritage object (Bonta, 1975, 60, Kalakoski & al., 2020, 792). The historical buildings of the planning area remained mainly unnoticed until the early 2000's. This area was no-man's land and invisible part of everyday environment of the citizens. However, the buildings offered a place for underground activities.

2) '*Pre-canonical responses*' refer to early interpretations of the objects. They may vary remarkably, but characteristically, none of them outweigh the others in authority (Kalakoski & al., 2020, 792.). Two influential investigations in the 1980's and 1990's enunciated the depot building without mentioning any other buildings of the Northern railyard.

3) '*Canonical interpretation*' started to establish along with the planning process at the early 2000's (Kalakoski et al. 2020, 793). At the beginning of the process,

participants' comments focused on the preservation of the old buildings in general. Later, the voices for preservation of these specific buildings got louder.

4) '*Classification*' is the phase where the interpreted object is put into the context with other similar objects (Kalakoski et al. 2020, 793). For the buildings in Northern railyard, this happened together with the formation of *pre-canonical responses* and *canonical interpretation*, as the buildings were immediately interpreted within the framework of Finnish railyard architecture and their architectural style. The typicality and representativeness were part of the earliest recognition of the buildings. As the process went on, participants pointed out historical and social values over the architectural ones.

5) '*Authoritative interpretation*', where the authority establishes the *correctness* of the interpretation (Kalakoski et al. 2020, 793). In the case of Northern railyard, the superior status of the depot building was asserted along with the decision about the demolition of Morkku and its replacement with the depot building. Participants' opinions were not homogeneous anymore and the authoritative interpretation was questioned.

6) '*Dissemination*' expands the canonical interpretation from the experts' discourse to the consciousness of the public (Bonta 1975, 69, Kalakoski et al. 2020, 793). The planning process of Ratapihankatu was public from the beginning and discussed widely in the media. The dissemination and the acceptance of the preservation and demolition decisions were promoted intentionally through the media appearance and different campaigns.

7) '*Silence or oblivion*' is, according to Bonta (1975, 71), the phase when the established interpretation starts to seem banal and uninteresting. In the case of city planning, it could also be interpreted as the phase when all, or almost all, the participants accept the results of the process. In the studied case, this requires a wide acceptance for the demolition of Morkku and the new location, function, and status of depot building.

8) '*Reinterpretation*' restarts the interpretation process (Kalakoski et al. 2020, 793). In the case of depot building, the reinterpretation process has started along with the new use and the construction of the neighbouring districts. Reinterpretations brings the object back into focus to be evaluated in terms of changed cultural needs and interests.

9) '*Text analysis*', like this study, analyses the formation of the established interpretations and the foundations these interpretations were laid on (Bonta 1975, 66).

Expert's interpretations and discourse about the built heritage at the observed site are characterised by visual remarks about the scale, style and *degree of authenticity* of the existing buildings. Bonta's model looks at the architecture as a form of visual arts, and therefore it resonates well with the kind of expert gaze that we traced from our materials. Especially in urban planning processes, experts' attention is often driven by the visual values of the buildings and their role in the cityscape. Bonta's model, as well as the expert gaze, could be criticized for emphasising the visual aspects of the city. However, the focus on the senses in urban setting is justifiable as our engagement with the city is "*an embodied sensory encounter*" (Degen, 2017, 144).

Accumulation of experts' recognition

Blindness and precanonical interpretations

The existing classifications and evaluations are an interesting source for analysing the status of built heritage objects. “*Investigation on the building culture of central Tampere*” (Tampere, 1998) was published in 1998 and it has since been an influential publication for the evaluation and preservation of local built heritage. It brings out 335 significant buildings and sites with short descriptions. The investigation is an updated and completed version of an earlier investigation from 1986 (Tampere, 1986). Both investigations mention shortly the depot building, unlike any other buildings of the northern railyard.

Precanonical interpretations of the site are construed of ignorance and early recognition. Investigations from 1986 and 1998 demonstrate how easily an interpretation – and an ignorance – becomes established. Reconsidering the value of a heritage object or taking a new object from the obscurity to evaluation is a lot more difficult than citing earlier authorities or authorised discourse.

The formation of canonical interpretation

The *building history report* (2003) provided a basis for interpreting the buildings from the perspective of their status in the cityscape. The report creates an image of the railyard as an area that lacks visual uniformity and physical connections with the surrounding cityscape and city structure. These qualities were claimed to reduce the value of the existing buildings. The buildings of the site were also described as typical examples of conservative and standardized railway architecture, which also signifies that they were seen as a part of the category (railway architecture) and therefore *classified*.

Building history report states that out of the evaluated buildings, the depot building has the strongest significance to the railyard. It is claimed to form an architectural, functional, and material ensemble with the railway station and the railway roundhouses, that are situated outside of the planning area and classified as nationally significant built environment (see Figure 3). The functions of these three buildings are interpreted as more directly connected to the railway functions than those of the other buildings, such as Morkku, which used to be connected to the everyday lives of railway workers. The other buildings at the planning area are claimed to have value only in relation to the *primary* buildings such as depot building.

The depot building is also valued for the signs it bears from the Finland's civil war in 1918. This exemplifies how the war history is often emphasised over the work or social history that the railway workers' union house Morkku represented. Morkku was built by the volunteers, and it used to house railyard workers cultural and leisure time activities. Its architectural characteristics, in the eyes of experts, led to the decrease of its value. It was built based on type drawings, and, even more importantly, it had suffered from later alterations. Typicality and historical layers were not valued in terms of Morkku building. Its architectural values were considered diminutive.

Cityscape analysis (Tampere, 2004) was written in the city planning department of the City of Tampere. The report and its orientation to *cityscape*, to visual qualities of the built environment, is a good example of how the visually oriented expert gaze evaluates the city. As far as the significance of the historical buildings of the site was considered, the analysis derived from the previously presented building history report. The report analyses the state of the cityscape in 2004 and evaluated the impacts of the two alternative planning strategies to the cityscape.



Figure 3. Nationally significant built environment, *Tampere railyard area*, marked with red line, and the former location of depot building and Morkku marked with blue colour. They were situated just outside of the “significant area”.
Aerial photo: kartat.tampere.fi
Image processing: lida Kalakoski

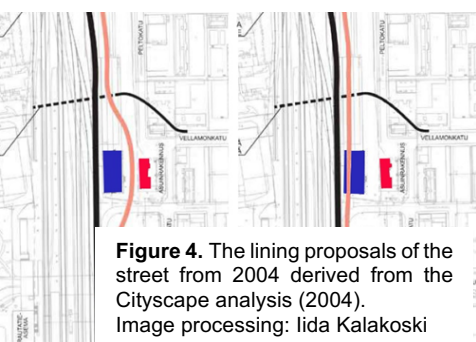


Figure 4. The lining proposals of the street from 2004 derived from the *Cityscape analysis* (2004).
Image processing: lida Kalakoski

The railyard was described as a visual and functional border in the cityscape and claimed to be a significant barrier to the traffic. Furthermore, the report examines the architectural and urban history of the site very visually, mainly as a history of the cityscape. The environment of the wooden railway buildings had changed dramatically since their construction and, in 2004, their scale, facades and building type appeared as disruptively different from the surrounding buildings, when the facades of the buildings were claimed to be uneven and discontinuous.

The cityscape analysis examined the status of railyard buildings in the cityscape in 2004 and compared it with scenarios presented in planning proposals. The report stated that the role of depot building in the cityscape was not sufficiently strong, and the alternative 1 was claimed to improve this role. The alternative 2, in turn, suggested its demolition. Both alternatives suggested the preservation of Morkku (see Figure 4). Furthermore, the Cityscape analysis stated that the alternative 1 would complicate the usability of Morkku by cutting down the surface of the surrounding lot. The alternative 2, in turn, would not cut down the size of the lot, but the environment would change dramatically. The cityscape analysis seems to be constructing justifications for the demolition of Morkku. Cityscape analysis claimed that, in relation to the railway, the original function of the depot building was *primary* whereas in the case of the wooden buildings, that used to serve housing and other everyday activities of the railway workers, was *secondary*. This notion is in line with the building history report's evaluations and consolidates the basis for the final decisions.

Authoritative interpretations

The draft plan of the area was announced in 2012 (Tampere, 2012). The draft plan report presented two planning alternatives 1 and 2, and their sub-alternatives. The alternatives 1 and 2 varied in the lining of Ratapihankatu street and in the preservation of depot building. The sub-alternatives varied in the massing of the new blocks and in the number of prospected inhabitants (see Figure 5). As in the previous report, the plan report also pointed out the diversity of the building masses within and around the planning area. Unlike the previous reports, the 2012 report acknowledged the positive impacts of the variation: the block houses are valuable in their integrity and volume, whereas the old buildings have value in their uniqueness. The historical and cultural values of the buildings were also announced, including the notion of the depot building bearing the memory from the civil war. Plan proposal report claimed that all suggested alternatives would facilitate the preservation of existing historical buildings and clarify their heritage status.

Draft plan was followed by the *plan proposal in 2014* (Tampere, 2014b, see Figure 6). The new proposal reacted on the given comments. The comments on the draft plan considered the traffic, environmental issues, functions, cityscape, the building volumes, historical buildings, etc. The most commented issue was the status of the depot building. This led to the investigation about the relocation of the building. The investigation prevailed that the relocation would be less complicated and less expensive than was expected. The plan proposal was modified based on comments and new investigations. The direct street line and the preservation of depot building were emphasised over other aspects. It required relocating the depot building by 30 metres from its original location at the spot where Morkku was located. This, in turn, required the demolition of Morkku. 12 comments were still assigned for this revised plan proposal concerning the demolition of Morkku and the relocation of depot building.

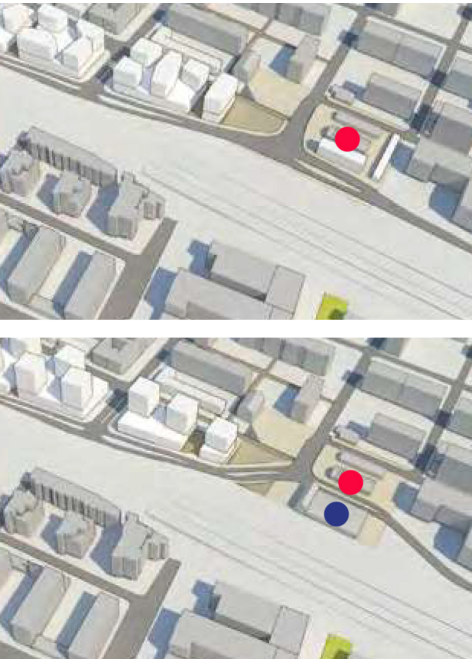
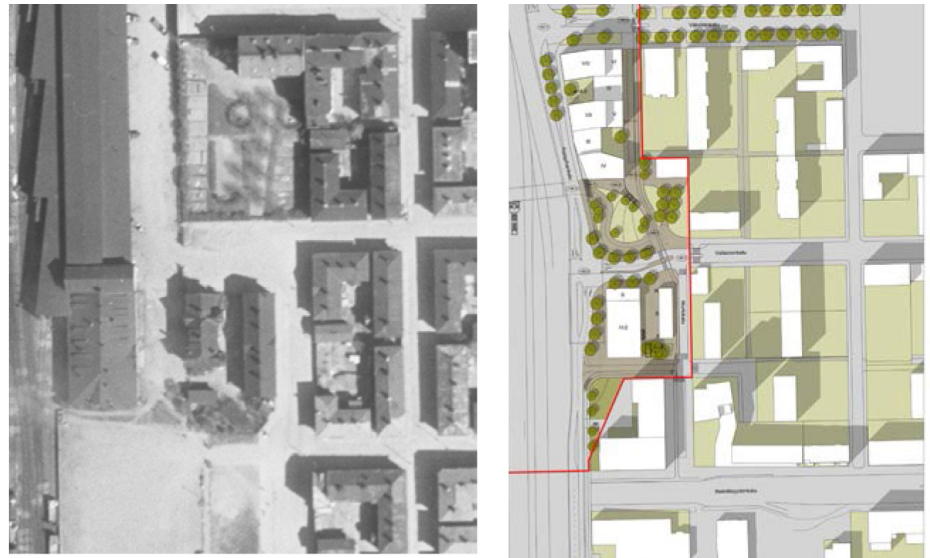


Figure 5. presenting the two sub-alternatives in 2012 (derived from the draft plan report 2012)
Image processing: Iida Kalakoski

Figure 6. Aerial photograph presenting the historical layout of the site (left), the proposal from 2014 (right) showing the proposed changes in the city structure. Both pictures derived from the planning report (2014).
Image processing: Iida Kalakoski



The plan was finalized giving emphasis to those voices that required the preservation of depot building, even though the comments were given in a situation where the status of Morkku seemed unthreatened, and only the depot building was threatened. The final plan was based on demolition, but it was claimed to sharpen the preservation status of remaining buildings, improve the quality of the environment, and give visibility to the preserved buildings.

Since the studied case is very recent, it is difficult to analyse the complete span of the canonisation process. Dissemination and oblivion phase, for example, are still on-going as the depot building has recently been renovated and the new use as a concert venue has barely started. The establishment of the new function and the new status of the depot building will eventually lead to wider acceptance of the demolition of Morkku. Depot building, in turn, will achieve the phase of reinterpretation, when the neighbouring districts are being accomplished.

Participants' interpretations

An important quality in the canonisation is how a certain early interpretation gains strength from the accumulation of like-minded responses. The process accelerates through unanimous notions, and it only gets interrupted if the opposing opinions are manifested clearly. The participants were not aware of the Morkku being threatened when they manifested for the preservation of depot building in the early phases of the planning process, and quite understandably, they mainly reacted to the scenarios that were presented in planning documents. Their intention was not to emphasize depot building's significance at the expense of Morkku.

*“Yet another empty square (...)
Where's the life?”*

Participants' opinions are experiences and interpretations of the city, emphasized with stories, memories, and facts. Participants' comments outlined a discourse which concerned city as an entity, as a phenomenon. People were not just talking about targeted buildings but also used individual buildings as instruments to interpret the city. Three concepts emerged as a result of the feedback analysis: (1) *Ownership of the city*, (2) *Image of the city*, and (3) *City as a subject*.

Ownership of the city

The ownership of the city became one key issue in the comments throughout the planning process. Such comments were questioning, who can define the value of the historical buildings and make decisions about the preservation, and for whom the buildings are preserved. Participants claimed that too many buildings

had already been torn down and therefore demolition should be prevented in the future.

“We are not able to understand the significance of our history and heritage, we are not able to recognise the valuable buildings or understand their value for the following generations.” (Comment on the draft 2012)

Uses of space are connected to the ownership of space. Some participants pointed out the problem of *planning a square* without content:

“Yet another empty square... This is how clear cutting of urban spaces are created. Where’s the life?” (Comment on the proposal 2013)

Image of the city

Identity of the city was another key issue in participants’ comments. The participants brought up the uniqueness of the city of Tampere and this specific site as a part of it. Some of the participants claimed that the area lacks an identity, but for some, the site clearly stands for railway history. The area was characterised as picturesque, idyllic place with historical identity. Cityscape, aesthetics, and authenticity of the site were appreciated. The results of previous city planning projects were also criticized, and instead of “empty squares”, unique and lively urban spaces were required.

“[The buildings] are unique and irreplaceable part of Tampere’s eventful history.” (Comment on the proposal 2013)

Some participants made difference between Morkku and depot building based on the idea of authenticity. This notion is in line with the expert gaze.

“Morkku is not that valuable, because it has been renovated” (Comment on the proposal 2013)

City as a subject

Thirdly, and quite interestingly, the commentators used expressions that personified the city. There were claims like *“Tampere hates its history”* and *“Tampere should honour its old buildings”*. These notions seem to consider city as a subject that has its own will. This also assimilates with the previous notions about the identity of the city. According to the participants, the city, which is characterized by dynamism and change, should also see value in its history and historical landmarks.

“Tampere destroys its history for one curve.” (Comment on the proposal 2013)

Tampere city has been characteristically a workers’ town. Still today some echoes of that time come up as in this comment:

“Tampere hates its history exceptionally strong (that nothing would be left on the workers` town)” (Comment on the proposal 2013)

As the discussion evolved, new interpretations and meanings were created and expressed in the comments. At the beginning, we could trace requests for preserving something because it is old and valuable. Later in the process, the rather objective notions on history and age gave way to the values of human activities, layered meanings, and cultural pluralism. At the same time, many of

“Tampere destroys its history for one curve.”

the comments were leaning on the experts' opinions derived from the planning reports and surveys.

Analysing the evolution of interpretations

In the studied case, two important interpretations became established through the expert gaze: 1) first, Morkku and depot building were set into a competitive position and 2) secondly, they were regarded as mere particles of the cityscape: their evaluation was based on scale, style, and state of their authenticity. The masonry depot building with slight late *art nouveau* character was interpreted as more architecturally and monumentally valuable for the cityscape, and therefore worthy of preservation. The wooden Morkku, whose significance was interpreted rather as social historical than architectural, was not seen as worthy of preservation.

Experts' interpretation was formulated based on the early investigations and became canonised during the planning process. It was clarified in the building history report and established by the planning reports. Experts' interpretations accumulated from a report to another, and eventually the final decision was in line with the evaluation of the 1980's investigation on the historically significant buildings, which only mentioned the depot building. The city plan evolved during the process under the pressure of participation. However, the authoritative interpretation, dating back to 1980's, remained influential and directed the final preservation decisions.

Participants' interpretations emphasized historical and aesthetical point of view in the beginning, but as the process went on, cultural meanings and humanistic perspective on the place became more important. Morkku and depot building were not part of participants' everyday lives in the way private interpretations and discourse as narrative project would require (Lappi, 2013). As mostly seen from afar, and therefore been quite unfamiliar to the participant, these buildings were open to versatile interpretations.

Treating objects as interchangeable with other objects, as in putting them into competitive position, amplifies the objectifying nature of the expert gaze. As Van Der Hoven (2020, 141) points out, it is important to avoid misleading dichotomies that associate the aesthetic understanding of heritage with the expert gaze and the social value of heritage with participant's perception. Such dichotomy accompanied with the objectification was an influential factor in justification of the relocation, such an unconventional and controversial conservation practice (Gregory, 2008). Another unusual practice was raffling of the useful building parts of demolished Morkku. It can be considered as a *carnivalization* of both: the demolition of Morkku and circular economy.

The discourse over the depot building and Morkku led into practices that were quite unconventional in Finnish preservation and heritage management. The depot building was relocated to replace the demolished Morkku. Even if these alternative practices were destructive, they also revealed the malleability of the historical environments and their capacity to adapt to different purposes and agendas (Madgin, 2010, 46). The relocation and the raffling of the building parts stand for the objectification and instrumentalization of heritage buildings. The buildings were degraded to the status of mere objects, as they were detached from their historical and urban context, and instrumentalised to serve techno-economic objectives such as traffic plan and the city strategy that emphasises circular economy (see Figure 7).



Figure 7. Morkku shortly after demolition. Usable building parts were distributed via lottery. Photograph by Anne Uosukainen 2020.

In earlier studies about the canonisation, the process has led into preservation, or even reconstruction of a building, as in the case of Barcelona pavilion. In the case of Morkku, the canonisation process led to demolition. However, the status of Morkku as built heritage was emphasized after, and due to, the demolition and the distribution of its building parts. These actions gave more publicity to Morkku and reinforced and diversified the interpretations of the building.

Conclusions

In this article, we looked at the establishment of status of historical buildings in Northern railway yard, in Tampere, as an example of so-called canonisation process. The process was atypical in two ways: first, it ended up setting two buildings into position where they were competing about their status and heritage value. Through the discourse, Morkku building first established its status as built heritage, but got eventually demolished to make room for depot building, which was then relocated to the very same spot, where Morkku used to stand.

Secondly, the process got challenged by participants' interpretations, which turned out as more versatile and unpredictable than experts' interpretations. Although the studied case never ended up as a clear conflict, it appeared to us as an expert-led process of investigation, referred here as canonisation, that resulted in a public debate and unexpected interpretations of the site. Whereas the experts focused on architectural qualities of the buildings, participants emphasized the cultural, historical, and functional qualities of the building and the site. The old interpretations got challenged or supplemented with new perspectives. Even if the planning process was authoritative by nature, it also offered an arena for different interpretations. Comments included participants' personal, individual, and collective memories. Old interpretations about historical buildings were challenged or supplemented with new interpretations.

This study emphasises how the aesthetically biased interpretations of the urban heritage still seem to dominate the expert discourse, even if they have been criticized for decades. Urban planning in Finland emphasizes the material and object-like nature of built heritage, whereas the participants tend to look at the city and the buildings more as interactive spaces, objectives, and products of the

private and public interpretations. Expert-led reports and investigations are problematic exactly for this reason. They emphasize the material and instrumental dimensions of the built environment. Experts' interpretations tend to recur, which reinforces the established status of certain interpretations. Analysing such processes and raising awareness of the risks of experts' interpretations could potentially help in understanding the potential conflicts between experts' aesthetic judgment and public experience.

In this article, we claimed that in the urban renewal, the historical sites are often evaluated with a visually oriented expert gaze that degrades them to mere particles of the cityscape. This gaze risks to instrumentalize buildings and, as in the presented case, may even put them to competitive position. The expert gaze alone is not sufficient to interpret the variety of significances of the urban heritage. Narrow interpretations cause damage to both, the planning process, and the built environment. While questioning the over-emphasis of the expert gaze, we also acknowledge that there can be different kinds of expertise in the process. Experts have different positions, backgrounds and trainings and there might be experts also among the participants. Likewise, while experts aim at objectivity, they also have their personal preferences and intentions, which direct their interpretations.

The planning processes have already been developed to a direction where participants are more and more informed, hear at an early state of the process, and are offered many opportunities to participate. However, the challenge is how to take their interpretations into consideration in actual planning. It might be relevant to evaluate if current executed reports ask the right questions and collect data taking into consideration different interpretations of the built heritage. Furthermore, the experts who are leading and participating to these processes should be aware of the canonisation processes and how they are culturally constructed and evolving over time.

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