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PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

FROM MONUMENTS TO LIVING HERITAGE: REVISITING THE VENICE CHARTER IN THE CONSERVATION OF YOUNGER INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

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ABSTRACT: The *Venice Charter* of 1964 has been the benchmark for tenets governing architectural conservation and set forth pivotal principles that shaped conservation practices for decades. The charter was conceived during a time when heritage was primarily associated with physical monuments; however, since then, the conception of cultural heritage has transformed significantly now encompassing immaterial aspects, the democratisation of heritage values, and diverse sustainability considerations.

This research aims at exploring the strengths, limitations, and adaptability of the *Venice Charter* in light of evolving perspectives on heritage. The paper delves into the charter's historical context, asking whether it remains a guiding beacon or a potential hindrance. A key focus of the research is the examination of obstacles associated with the conservation of younger industrial heritage in the face of contemporary challenges posed by sustainability imperatives. The inherent complexities of managing heritage structures marked by ongoing developmental histories and changes are explored through two cases of industrial heritage dealing with the concept of 'living heritage'. In the context of a future where resource responsibility and reuse are paramount matters, firm definitions of original material as defined in the *Venice Charter*, as well as a static perception of conservation, may pose challenges, particularly for unintentional monuments situated in complex environments or marked by evolving narratives through time. Marking the 60th anniversary of the *Venice Charter,* this research sheds light on the charter's legacy and its validity in the contemporary landscape of heritage protection as well as its future role in our ever-changing societal context.

KEY WORDS: Industrial heritage, living heritage, sustainability, conservation doctrines, change

For six decades, the *Venice Charter* has been pivotal in guiding the protection and care of architectural heritage, influencing conservation practices worldwide. However, as the understanding of cultural heritage has transcended beyond physical monuments to include intangible aspects, democratisation, and sustainability considerations, this study explores the charter's adaptability in the contemporary heritage landscape. By delving into its historical context and role in conservation efforts, the research examines whether the charter remains a guiding beacon or a potential hindrance. More specifically, the research focuses on the concept of 'living heritage' and addresses the challenges associated with the conservation of younger industrial heritage in a Danish context. The process of deindustrialisation in Denmark has resulted in the obsolescence, neglect and vacancy of numerous industrial sites. These structures, which serve as significant testimonies to the development of the welfare state and modern forms of life, have recently been poised to be recognised as heritage.

A case study analysis highlights the need for a broader understanding of cultural heritage, departing from the traditional definition of heritage as objects of particularity and uniqueness. From an analytical perspective, the research assesses the *Venice Charter*'s legacy and future role in heritage protection. Finally, the findings will be put into perspective with the environmental challenges facing contemporary society.

1. Cultural heritage efforts in the post-war period

The post-war period is characterised by profound societal transformations, including globalisation, reconstruction after wartime destruction, economic expansion, and social changes. The aftermath of the Second World War led to the formation of several international alliances aimed at fostering peace, cooperation, and cultural dialogue[1]. Notably, the United Nations (UN) was established in 1945, followed by the creation of UNESCO, dedicated to promoting cultural diversity and heritage protection. In the post-war years, the concerted efforts within the cultural realm were eminent, leading to the emergence of key advisory bodies focusing on the conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage sites and monuments: ICOM in 1946, ICCROM in 1956, and ICOMOS in 1965[2]. The founding of ICOMOS was the logical consequence of the Second International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments held in Venice in 1964, manifested in the adoption of a seminal document, the *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites*, otherwise referred to as the *Venice Charter*. A key document reassessing the initial, basic principles stated in the *Athens Charter* of 1931 while broadening its scope through the incorporation of recent evidence and advancements in the field.

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1 Bryld C. J. (2007). *Verden før 1914—I dansk perspektiv* (1st ed.) (pp. 149-150). Systime.

2 Wong L. (2016). *Adaptive Reuse: Extending the Lives of Buildings* (1st edition) (p. 96). Birkhäuser.

2. Transformative tenets of the Venice Charter

The *Venice Charter* of 1964, with its 16 articles, covers six key areas: defining historic monuments, conservation and restoration objectives, site management, excavation, and documentation. Departing from the unity-of-style approach to restoration as advocated by Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc in the 19th century, the *Venice Charter* endorses that valid contributions from all periods in a monument's history must be respected (Article 11). Additions may only be permitted if they preserve the architectural integrity and compositional harmony with the monument (Article 13). Relying on an approach of contrast and juxtaposition, the charter stipulates that additional work on the monument must be distinct from the original, bearing a contemporary stamp (Articles 9 & 12). It recognises restoration as a specialised discipline requiring interventions based on thorough historical and archaeological studies, consequently laying the foundation for scientific methodologies in the analysis and care of heritage[3]. In this relation, the *Venice Charter* treats monuments not solely as artistic creations but also as historical evidence (Article 3), acknowledging their role as tangible records of history.

The *Venice Charter* marked a pivotal shift in the cultural heritage perception by broadening the definition of a 'historic monument' to include not only individual structures but also its 'setting' (Article 1), thus valuing larger environments of historical significance. This expansion of the monument in scale responded to 1960s critiques against modernist urban planning and functionalist rationale. During this period, there was a strong emphasis on the perceived obsolescence of past structures, resulting in the demolition of numerous historical areas to facilitate urban renewal and modernisation efforts[4]. In reaction, an increasing number of architects began to recognise the importance of the temporal depth of the city as an essential foundation for adding any new built layer[5]. Aldo Rossi is one among other architects who criticised the tabula rasa tendencies, regarding the city as 'the locus of collective memory', emphasising how the different monuments of the city serve as points of historical and cultural reference[6]. It is important to note that, despite the *Venice Charter*'s more holistic focus on monuments, it does not address historic cities or urban landscapes apart from the immediate settings of a monument. This omission does not result from a lack of comprehension of historical urban areas; rather, it reflects the expertise of the charter's original contributors, who were primarily restorers and art historians rather than specialists in urban conservation[7].

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3 Jokilehto J. (2017). *A History of Architectural Conservation* (2nd edition) (p. 303). Routledge.

4 Albrektsen K. (2023). *Transformativ byomdannelse: Undersøgelse af konfliktområder i de indledende faser af kommunal byplanlægning i omdannelsen af eksisterende bykvarterer* [Doctoral dissertation (p. 85). Aarhus School of Architecture]. Danish Portal for Artistic and Scientific Research. https://adk.elsevierpure.com/da/publications/transformativ-byomdannelse-unders %C3%B8gelse-af-konfliktomr%C3%A5der-i-de-i

5 Fouseki K., Guttormsen T., Swensen G. (2021). *Heritage and Sustainable Urban Transformations: Deep Cities* (p. 17). London: Routledge.

6 Rossi A., Eisenman P. (1982). *The Architecture of the City* (Reprint edition) (p. 130). MIT Press.

7 Bandarin F., Van Oers R. (2012). *The Historic Urban Landscape – Managing Heritage in an Urban Century* (p. 39). Wiley-Blackwell.

3. From monuments to 'living heritage': The evolving heritage discourse in doctrinal documents

During the last 60 years, several charters have expanded upon the core principles of the *Venice Charter,* supporting legal and administrative frameworks for cultural heritage protection[8].

Subsequent international charters witness shifts in the hegemonic attribution of value to heritage and the continual nuance of the cultural heritage concept. By analysing the charters from a historical perspective, they themselves become historical evidence and reflections of the changing heritage discourse through the last century.

The *Nara Document* (1994) values cultural diversity, community engagement, and intangible elements like 'spirit and feeling' in assessing authenticity judgements (Article 13), highlighting more experiential and atmospheric aspects of heritage beyond physical structures. In addition, the *Burra Charter* of 1979[9] addresses diversity and multivocality, advocating for greater community involvement in heritage management (Article 12 & 26.3). It stresses that places of cultural significance enrich people's lives by fostering a profound sense of connection to community, landscape, and "to the past and lived experiences" (preamble). Recognising 'social' and 'spiritual' values as elements of cultural significance (Article 1.2), the charter highlights the multifaceted nature of heritage, inherently intertwined with people and their life worlds, or *Lebenswelt*, to use the Heideggerian term.

The inclusive concept of heritage is further addressed in the *Faro Convention* of 2005[10], elevating democratisation and active participation of all societal groups in heritage-related decision-making processes. In this view, heritage is seen as a process where the authority to define its value is not limited to experts or the *Authorized Heritage Discourse* termed by Professor of Heritage and Museum Studies Laurajane Smith[11]. Instead, all stakeholders have agency in determining what constitutes heritage and how it should be safeguarded. The democratisation of cultural heritage gave rise to the conceptual framework and heritage paradigm, *New Heritage*, elaborated in the Council of Europe's *Heritage and Beyond*[12]. This *New Heritage* paradigm emphasises the common, ordinary, and local, viewing heritage as a shared foundation for development rather than an object of backwards-looking preservation[13].

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8 Jokilehto J. (2017). *A History of Architectural Conservation* (2nd edition) (p. 313). Routledge.

9 "The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance". The Burra Charter was revised on three occasions, most recently in 2013.

10 "Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society".

11 Smith L. (2006). *Uses of Heritage.* Routledge.

12 Therond D., Trigona A. (Eds.). (2009). *Heritage and beyond* (pp. 7-8). Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

13 Fairclough G. (2009). New heritage frontiers [in:] D. Thérond, A. Trigona (Eds.). *Heritage and beyond* (p. 30). Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Values:	Tangible	→	Intangible
Scale:	Solitary Monument	→	Environment / Landscape / Place
Stakeholders:	Expert-driven	→	Inclusive, Democratic
Management:	Top-down	→	Bottom-up
Character:	Particularity / Uniqueness	→	Ordinaryness / Commonscapes
Concept:	Static	→	Living, Dynamic

Fig. 1 Diagram illustrating the evolving concept of heritage to encompass immaterial aspects, the democratisation of heritage values, and the inclusion of diverse stakeholders. It should not be interpreted as a set of dichotomies but as a progression toward a broader understanding

4. The concept of 'living heritage'

As illustrated by the preceding analysis, the task of defining heritage itself can be complex and ambiguous, and this complexity is further compounded when adding a 'living' dimension to it. By 'living', it alludes to a non-stationary, transient character, something changeable or marked by change. In the opening phrase of the *Venice Charter*, historic 'monuments' are depicted as "living witnesses of their age-old traditions" (preamble). Nonetheless, the charter specifies that monuments are 'living' only to the extent that they have endured as witnesses to the passage of time, reducing them to remains of previous eras[14]. In this sense, the heritage concept in the Venice Charter still relies on a static perception of the monument, avoiding change.

If cultural heritage can be deemed as 'living', it can inherently also be considered as 'dead'[15]. This anthropomorphic attribution of heritage has been elucidated by the Danish architect Johannes Exner, articulated in his article *The Existence of the Historical Building in Life and Death*[16]. Metaphorically, he describes the building as a 'historical being', akin to the life of a human, representing a process that commences with birth, as it is built, and concludes with death[17]. Subsequently, after the construction of the building, decay immediately sets in. The changes which the building undergoes over time constitute a part of its 'life' and its historical narrative. Exner posits that the conservation of a historic building should not be regarded as a fixed, reverential contemplation of the edifice itself, but rather as a dynamic, critical process that considers the building's position within its historical lifecycle or 'existence'. This approach effectively animates the structure and allows it to resonate with contemporary relevance and meaning. Exner argues that the original substance of a building embodies an inevitable temporality, which gives us a sense of identity. Alongside, this temporality holds narrative value, bearing witness to traces from earlier periods and events that the building has undergone. Exner's appreciation for the

[14] Walter N. (2021). *Narrative Theory in Conservation: Change and Living Buildings* (pp. 3, 23). Routledge.

[15] Riis N. V. (2019). Den levende bygningskultur - et forhold mellem menneske og bygning [in:] A. Høi (Ed.). *Levende Bygningskultur: En essaysamling* (p. 91). Realdania. https://realdania.dk/publikationer/faglige-publikationer/levende-bygningskultur

[16] The title is translated by the author from Danish: "Den historiske bygnings væren på liv og død".

[17] Exner J. (2007). Den historiske bygnings væren på liv og død [in:] E. Braae, M. F. Hansen(Eds.). *Fortiden for tiden: Genbrugskultur og kulturgenbrug i dag* (p. 66). Aarhus: Arkitektskolens Forlag.

effects of time on a historical building is reminiscent of John Ruskin's view on architecture, particularly emphasised in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, published in 1849. Ruskin believed that age inherently contributed to beauty, with the greatest glory of a building lying in the patina, the marks of age and passage of time[18]. This aesthetic value attributed to age itself is further encapsulated by Alois Riegl's concept of Age-Value or *Alterswert*, which emphasises the simple, tangible antiquity of an object. According to Riegl, Age-Value is not only an indicator of the object's historical significance but also a source of beauty and its ability to exude a certain historical authenticity, continuity and changeability[19].

Change will invariably be a present factor in built heritage, whether it manifests physically as alterations in use, modifications in structure, natural decay or in the attribution of values, memories or emotions of each individual or group. With every act of building or interaction with a building, we enact change[20]. Resonating with the New Heritage mindset declaring that "the overall objective is not necessarily preservation, but the management of change, to which the end preservation is just one means"[21], conservation has commonly been described as the management of change.

UNESCO defines 'living heritage' as focusing more on intangible aspects than on material ones, describing it as a "source of community-based resilience" and a driver of sustainable development[22]. This includes practices, knowledge, and cultural expressions passed down through generations, linking 'living heritage' to social sustainability and a community-centric perspective[23].

The 'living heritage' concept recognises cultural heritage as a dynamic entity that influences the present and future. It encompasses intangible, social, and intergenerational aspects alongside historical buildings marked by change and evolving narratives.

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18 Ruskin J. ([1864] 2017). *The Seven Lamps of Architecture.* Dover Publications, Inc.

19 Riegl A. ([1903] 2011). Den Moderne Monumentkult. *Passepartout, 17. årgang* (32) (pp. 186-191).

20 Albertsen N., Boris S. D., Boye A. M., Daugaard M., Hjortshøj R., Martens Gudmand-Høyer S., Hupalo M., Geert Jensen B., Ahrenkiel Jørgensen A., Krag M. M. S., Morgen M. A., Nielsen T., Olesen K., Pasgaard J. C., Thorborg C., Toft A. E. (2018). *Concepts of Transformation* (p. 3). Aarhus: Arkitektskolens Forlag.

21 Fairclough G. (2009). New heritage frontiers [in:] D. Thérond, A. Trigona (Eds.). *Heritage and beyond* (p. 30). Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

22 UNESCO. (n.d.). *Sustainable development and living heritage.* Retrieved [25-03-2024], from https://ich.unesco.org/en/sustainable-development-and-living-heritage

23 UNESCO. (2019). *Living Heritage and Education: Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.* UNESCO. https://www.unesco-centerbg.org/wp-new/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/46212-EN.pdf

5. Case studies

The following examination investigates two instances of younger industrial heritage in Denmark – Maltfabrikken ("The Malt Factory") in Ebeltoft and the South Harbor district in Aarhus - aiming to examine their heritage value and conservation challenges. Characterised by resilient materiality, rationality, and signs of use, these sites embody 'living heritage', bearing witness to ongoing changes and developmental histories. Analysing them through the lens of the Venice Charter, the study will assess the charter's relevance in managing and conserving such heritage sites today.

5.1. Maltfabrikken

Fig. 2 Maltfabrikken, Ebeltoft, Denmark

The origins of Maltfabrikken can be traced to 1857 when the production of malt began in a simple warehouse. As the late 19th century progressed, the factory underwent significant transformations, evolving into a fully operational malt house. This evolution was characterised by steady expansion and the adoption of technological advancements, which allowed for increased production efficiency and improved quality[24]. For many years, Maltfabrikken operated actively as an industrial site and an important workplace for the village until its closure in 1998. The site then fell into a state of abandonment and neglect, leading to years of deterioration and demolition of parts of the facility[25]. However, local enthusiasts took matters into their own hands, seeking funding and partnerships, purchasing public shares, and ultimately buying the factory in 2013. The efforts of the community set the stage for its transformation into a cultural community centre that officially opened its doors in 2020[26].

Maltfabrikken serves as an example of heritage as a *cultural process*, referring to the notion used by Laurajane Smith. Smith posited that heritage is an embodied cultural performance encompassing meaning-making, affect, and emotion as integral components of heritage formation[27]. This was crucial in the preservation process of Maltfabrikken, where its attributed value as heritage and its potential re-writing into the future relied heavily on communal affiliation rather than on the Authorized Heritage Discourse.

The project intersects conservation, restoration, and transformation disciplines, notably adhering to *Venice Charter* principles during its restoration phase. Thorough registration, documentation, and valuation of the site have informed the interventions and the different historical periods of the factory are appraised and architecturally accentuated. Similarly, unconventional traces from the recent past have been preserved, such as vandalistic graffiti recounting the less illustrious story of the factory's prolonged vacancy (Fig. 3).

This 'as found' conversion strategy closely aligns with Exner's conception of the historical building as a 'living being' that embodies the changes and experiences accumulated over its lifetime. Rather than treating the building as a static entity frozen in time, this perspective encourages an appreciation for its dynamic nature and the myriad influences that have shaped it throughout its existence. This approach goes beyond merely adhering to Article 11 of the *Venice Charter,* which mandates respect for valid contributions from all periods of the monument's history. The 'as found' strategy invites a deeper exploration of what constitutes 'validity' in the context of a historical period. It raises critical questions about which elements of the building's history should be emphasised and celebrated, and why certain periods or changes might be privileged

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[24] Møller L. G. (2011). *S.B. Lundbergs Maltfabrik i Ebeltoft: En historisk undersøgelse og en dokumentation af en industrivirksomhed i Ebeltoft* (pp. 13-14). Museum Østjylland. https://maltfabrikken.dk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/S.-B.-Lundbergs-Maltfabrik-Ebeltoft-af-Lea-Glerup.pdf

[25] Christiansen J. H. (2020). Maltfabrikken i Ebeltoft: En vellykket transformation til multifunktionelt kulturhus. *Fabrik & Bolig*, 38 (p. 117). https://tidsskrift.dk/fabrikogbolig/article/view/128311

[26] Eybye B. T. (2020). Maltfabrikken: Hele historien. *ARKITEKTEN*, nr. 06 (p. 73). https://arkitektforeningen.dk/arkitekten/maltfabrikken-hele-historien/

[27] Smith L., Campbell G. (2015). The elephant in the room: Heritage, affect and emotion [in:] *A Companion to Heritage Studies* (p. 2). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

over others. How do we reconcile the differing aesthetic and functional priorities of various eras or events, and what implications do these choices have for our understanding of cultural heritage? The 'as found' approach challenges the tendency to understand a historical period exclusively through an art historical lens, proposing an alternative persepctive that considers the multifaceted dimensions of historical understanding. It highlights the significance of examining how people interact with a building, as evidenced by the graffiti and acts of vandalism observed in the case of Maltfabrikken. These interactions reveal narrative values that extend beyond conventional artistic merit. The appreciation of the factory's period of abandonment provides an illustrative example of a kind of 'non-historical' period that has acquired substantial significance, not on the basis of its artistic attributes, but due to the rich stories and emotional connections that it evokes through these interactions.

Fig. 3 Vandalistic graffiti recounting the less illustrious story of the factory's prolonged vacancy

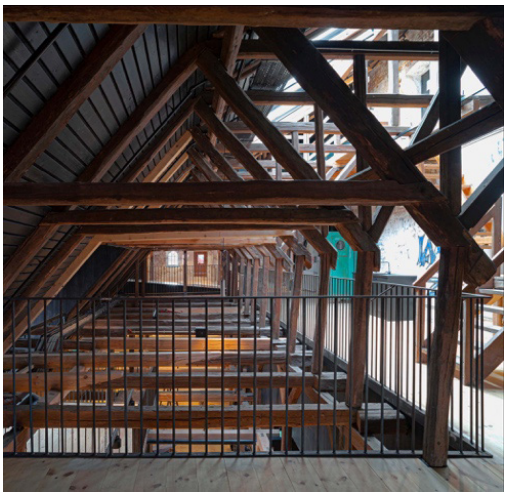

Fig. 4

Fig. 5

Aligning with *Venice Charter's* Article 12, old and new material in Maltfabrikken is distinguishable while ensuring their harmonious integration. The timber construction has been repaired and supplemented with new pine timber, distinguished by its lighter colour and saw-cut surface (Fig. 4). Serving as visible, curated repairs, the masonry has similarly been restored using new bricks in standard format (Fig. 5). Older building components appear 'untouched', with decay aesthetically accentuated in a Ruskin manner, contrasting with the new, 'fresh' additions. Interventions add a new layer to the factory's historical narrative, creating a palimpsest wherein the various temporal traces of the building, akin to geological sediments, lie as layers of significance, continually overwritten with new meaning. Addressing an 'unintentional monument' like Maltfabrikken, which is marked by evolving narratives through time, poses challenges to firm definitions of 'original material' and 'architectural composition', as outlined in the *Venice Charter* (Article 9). It is not solely the Maltfabrikken's initial, 'most original' structures that constitute the site's inherent cultural and historical values; rather, it is the mutable history, alterations, changes, and ongoing interactions with the site that hold paramount importance.

5.2. The South Harbour district

The South Harbour in Aarhus is a predominantly industrial environment featuring slaughterhouses, harbour infrastructure, and heavy industry enterprises from different historical periods. Over the past decades, the area has comprehensively transformed into a diverse urban district of creative industries, office spaces, and social service centres for marginalised communities. Similarly to the case of Maltfabrikken, the value of the South Harbour district as something to conserve and take care of has grown from the bottom-up, from within the gradual social intervention with the place and the slow outsourcing of industrial functions replaced with new enterprises. The locale has evolved organically, shaping its identity from grassroots initiatives, which continue to undergo reshaping. Resonating with Jokilehto's notion of living heritage, the district is "continuously recreated"[28].

[28] Jokilehto J. (2010). The idea of Conservation - an overview [in:] M. S. Falser, W. Lipp, A. Tomaszewski (Eds.). *Conservation and Preservation: Interactions between Theory and Practice: In memoriam Alois Riegl (1858-1905)* (p. 30). Firenze: Edizioni Polistampa.

Fig. 6 The South Harbour district in Aarhus. Credit: Niels Rysz Olsen

In the South Harbour, the heritage value is tied to the entirety, emphasising that the significance of the area stems from the collective impact of buildings on the district's identity rather than their individual architectural merits. This perspective challenges the *Venice Charter*'s primary focus on monuments and their immediate 'setting'. More nuanced, holistic approaches to heritage conservation in historic cities and broader urban landscapes have been addressed in subsequent charters. Amongst others, these include *The European Charter of the Architectural Heritage* of 1975, which incorporates less prominent buildings within historic towns and villages as cultural heritage, The *Granada Convention of 1985*[29], linking heritage conservation with urban planning, and UNESCO's *Nairobi Recommendations* of 1976[30] that emphasises the importance of safeguarding historic areas as a part of people's daily lives.

Scottish urbanist and biologist Patrick Geddes viewed the city as an evolving organism comprising physical and social segments that continuously change and interact within a complex network. In his work *Cities in Evolution* from 1915, Geddes advocated for studying historic cities to understand their functioning and to develop management strategies for the care of collective

29 "Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe".

30 "Recommendations on the Legal Protection of Translators and Translations and the Practical Means to Improve the Status of Translators".

spaces[31]. This holistic approach underscores the interconnectedness of heritage and its role in shaping contemporary urban environments. Geddes' analogy of the city as a living organism is an apt image of the South Harbour heritage as an environment in constant change responding to the community's engagement and meaning-making with the locale. In this case, the 'living' dimension of heritage is closely tied to the utilisation of the site.

In Steward Brand's book *How Buildings Learn*, he explores the concept of buildings evolving over time through adaptation and modification in response to the needs and behaviours of their users[32]. Discussing how buildings 'learn' from their users and surroundings, evolving to accommodate new functions, technologies, and social dynamics, Brand advocates for a more flexible and adaptive approach to architecture that acknowledges the inevitability of change and supports buildings' capacity to learn and grow alongside the people who inhabit them[33]. This emphasis on use and adaptability also appears in the Danish Conservation Authority's methodological guidelines for assessing the heritage values in historic architecture, where one of the main points in the introduction is that "protection comes through use"[34,35]. Resonating with Article 5 of the *Venice Charter*, the South Harbour case accentuates the importance of utilisation in cultivating socially beneficial purposes for heritage. Contrary to the charter's stipulations regarding preserving a building's original layout, the South Harbor case advocates for an approach that embraces adaptive reuse while ensuring heritage's continued resonance and pertinence within the evolving urban context. This process of meaning-making and engagement is crucial in ensuring the continued vitality and relevance of cultural heritage in contemporary urban landscapes. By prioritising adaptability and user engagement, not only are historical structures safeguarded, but communities are also empowered to actively shape their environments, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and belonging. Ultimately, this approach paves the way for a future where cultural heritage is not viewed as static, but as a vibrant, living part of the urban fabric that evolves with the people it serves.

5.3. Conclusion on case studies

The presented cases shed light on the intricate management of younger industrial heritage by analysing the two cases of Maltfabrikken and Aarhus' South Harbor district in Denmark. Both cases demonstrate the transformative power of bottom-up heritage conservation initiatives, emphasising the significance of community, change and utilisation in fostering sustainable conservation practices. They underscore the importance of incorporating non-experts into

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31 Bandarin F., Van Oers R. (2012). *The Historic Urban Landscape – Managing Heritage in an Urban Century* (p. 12). Wiley-Blackwell.

32 Walter N. (2021). *Narrative Theory in Conservation: Change and Living Buildings* (p. 7). Routledge.

33 Brand S. (1994). *How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They're Built* (pp. 2, 10, 90). New York: Viking.

34 Translated by the author from Danish: "beskyttelse går gennem benyttelse".

35 Kulturarvsstyrelsen. (2012). *VAF: Vejledning til Vurdering af Fredningsværdier. Kulturarvsstyrelsen* (p. 3). https://slks.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/SLKS/Omraader/Kulturarv/Bygningsfredning/Fredninger/Dokumenter/Vejledning_til_vurdering_af_fredningsvaerdier.pdf

the decision-making processes of cultural heritage and preserving what is valuable in people's everyday lives. This understanding transcends the traditional heritage concept as 'the grand, the old, and the beautiful' by also encompassing commonscapes and ordinary environments of cultural heritage. In accordance with Rodney Harrison's view of "heritage as a concept [that] is constantly evolving"[36], the cases illustrate this changing nature of cultural heritage. Furthermore, the two cases highlight the importance of acknowledging heritage as a 'living' phenomenon, where change is accepted as a fundamental condition rather than being consistently counteracted. To quote Laurajane Smith: "Heritage is something vital and alive. It is a moment of action, not something frozen in material form"[37].

6. Living heritage as an agent of sustainable development

The concept of 'living heritage' acknowledges that cultural heritage extends beyond historical confines, actively engaging with the present and possessing the capacity to shape the future. Regarding conservation as a progressive, future-oriented movement carries significant potential as a contributive source for sustainable development. In light of the extensive ecological crises facing contemporary society, architectural heritage can be said to have gained renewed relevance as an active participant in the green transition. Currently, construction accounts for 38% of total CO2 emissions[38] and generates 34% of all waste in OECD countries[39]. Six out of nine planetary boundaries have been crossed[40], underscoring the need for reuse of the existing building stock to play an even more prominent role in future architectural practices. This might apply especially to the more common, non-monumental heritage. Over the next decade, we will face the novel challenge of reconsidering the majority of our built environment as something increasingly historically accented[41]. In alignment with the holistic definition of sustainable development provided in the Brundtland Report, described as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"[42], architectural

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36 Harrison R. (2013). *Heritage: Critical Approaches* (1st Edition) (p. 6). Routledge.

37 Smith L. (2006). *Uses of Heritage* (p. 83). Routledge.

38 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). (2020). *2020 Global Status Report for Buildings and Construction: Towards a Zero-emission, Efficient and Resilient Buildings and Construction Sector.* Nairobi. https://globalabc.org/news/launched-2020-global-status-report-buildings-and-construction

39 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) & International Solid Waste Association (ISWA). (2015). *2015 Global Waste Management Outlook* (p. 89).

40 Richardson K., Steffen W., Lucht W., Bendtsen J., Cornell S. E., Donges J. F., Drüke M., Fetzer I., Bala G., von Bloh W., Feulner G., Fiedler S., Gerten D., Gleeson T., Hofmann M., Huiskamp W., Kummu M., Mohan C., Nogués-Bravo D., Rockström J. (2023). Earth beyond six of nine planetary boundaries. *Science Advances*, 9(37) pp. 1, 4). https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.adh2458

41 Mortensen L. R., Braae E. (2017). The Commonplace as Heritage—Younger Industrial Landscapes. *Nordic Journal of Architectural Research*, 29(2), Article 2 (p. 179). http://arkitekturforskning.net/na/article/view/1119

42 Brundtland G. H. (1987). *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future*. United Nations General Assembly. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf

heritage can be viewed as a resource for sustainable endeavours. This comprehensive aspect of the sustainability concept lies in its ability to contextualise present-day development within a broader historical framework, connecting current progress with both past and future endeavours and assigning a central role to heritage to be passed on to future generations. This applies to both the potential of cultural heritage for social sustainability, in accordance with UNESCO's definition, as well as its material, resource-related dimension.

Broadening the scope of heritage conservation to encompass not only cultural and historical aspects but also environmental sustainability poses new challenges and ways of regarding our common heritage. The Italian urban designer Paola Viganò extends the metaphor of the palimpsest further by introducing the concept of energy alongside its memorial dimension. While much sustainability research concentrates on the energy efficiency or performance of buildings, Viganò suggests incorporating the concept of embodied energy as heritage, referring to the energy used in constructing a building and its remains as a legacy within any built environment[43]. This introduces an additional facet to Exner's 'as found' approach, extending the heritage concept to include not only historical, cultural, and architectural elements but also planetary considerations.

7. Conclusion

For over half a century, the *Venice Charter* has provided a foundational framework for heritage conservation. However, as our societal context and perception of heritage expand, so must our approaches to conserving heritage. This article has navigated the transition from viewing heritage as static monuments to embracing a broader, more inclusive concept of 'living heritage'—one that incorporates not only the physical and intangible aspects but also the environmental implications of heritage conservation.

The case studies exemplify this transition, highlighting the importance of community engagement, adaptability, and sustainability in heritage practices. These examples underscore the necessity of moving beyond the traditional paradigms endorsed by the *Venice Charter* towards a more flexible, responsive approach that acknowledges heritage as an active participant in contemporary society and a driver of sustainable development.

The principles of adaptability and reuse evident in the case studies challenge the *Venice Charter*'s focus on material authenticity and the conservation of original architectural compositions. While the charter's approach remains relevant for more monumental forms of heritage, it is less applicable to the 'ordinary' heritage, such as industrial sites, which thrive on flexibility, evolving forms, and diverse material uses. Despite Article 11's emphasis on respecting contributions from all periods, there is a risk of a bias towards age value, where older layers are privileged, thus sidelining additions from the recent past. While the *Venice Charter* still provides valuable guidelines for conserving historical evidence, it requires reinterpretation to address contemporary

[43] Fouseki K., Guttormsen T., Swensen G. (2021). *Heritage and Sustainable Urban Transformations: Deep Cities* (p. 28). London: Routledge.

realities, particularly in urban environments where heritage is interconnected with complex social, cultural, and environmental relations. As we confront environmental challenges and the imperative of resource responsibility, the principles of harmonious integration, repair over replacement, and preservation over new construction, outlined by the *Venice Charter*, gain new relevance. Yet, they require a reinterpretation that entails a broader understanding of heritage as encompassing not only historical or artistic dimensions but also social and planetary aspects.

In summary, while the *Venice Charter* remains a foundational document, its principles must be expanded to incorporate flexible, dynamic approaches that reflect the living, changing nature of heritage. Recognising cultural heritage as a living entity that connects the past, present, and future can inspire innovative conservation strategies that are socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable, and culturally enriching. In doing so, we ensure that heritage conservation remains relevant and impactful in shaping a sustainable future where the preservation of our collective history supports the well-being of our planet and its inhabitants.

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