

**Svava Riesto, *Biography of an Industrial Landscape: Carlsberg's Urban Spaces Retold*. Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2018. 201 pp., 88 figs.**

V. Camille Westmont<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The University of the South, Sewanee, TN, United States of America*

Corresponding author: V. Camille Westmont (vcwestmont@gmail.com)

Received 18 September 2019 | Accepted 30 September 2019 | Published 8 May 2020

Riesto's *A Biography of an Industrial Landscape* provides a detailed narration of the social and physical transformation of the Carlsberg Breweries site in Copenhagen, Denmark. The study follows the redevelopment of the site following the relocation of Carlsberg's operations to a new location. Riesto's work documents this process beginning while the factory was still in use, through a redevelopment design competition, and to the selection and early implementation of the winning design entry. Although Riesto outlines the creation of the site by tracing its history back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, she pays particular attention to the site's post-World War II industrial urban landscape and the open spaces within this landscape—spaces that link structures and which are often overlooked as industrial heritage in themselves. This perspective fills a vitally important gap in the current literature on industrial landscapes. The use of a landscape biography approach that blends current critical perspectives on redevelopment with a multifaceted history of the site situates this work within the growing field of heritage landscape studies. The book identifies the site as an example of the “paradigm of transformation,” as workers, design consultants, city officials, members of the local community, and others all provide different interpretations of the site's heritage resources that subsequently impact the final redevelopment plan in various ways and to varying extents<sup>1</sup>.

The study begins with a discussion of previous theoretical conceptualizations of urban landscapes in order to situate Riesto's landscape biography approach within a longer tradition of landscape theory. Riesto draws particularly on the work of Sébastien Marot for framing her approach to the Carlsberg Breweries site open spaces. Marot's conception of landscapes as dialectical entities that are continually in flux through the interactions of people and sites is nicely adapted to the open industrial spaces that Riesto seeks to describe. This framework es-

tablishes a means of illuminating the constant invention of the landscape that, when paired with the landscape biography approach, provides a long-view of the changes people have made to natural and built landscapes and the intentionality behind those changes.

After presenting the theoretical discussion, Chapters 2, 3, and 4 explore the study's central evidence and arguments. Each chapter is used to assess a different aspect of the Carlsberg Breweries landscape and how different aspects of the landscape were brought into being and are now reimagined through the redevelopment process. Chapter 2 introduces the site of the Carlsberg Breweries, including its history and the modern efforts undertaken to define the breweries landscape. Riesto begins with the property's history starting in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and examines how the area was re-shaped physically throughout the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The chapter also examines the social motivations for these changes, such as attempts to maintain social order via the built environment, which helps connect the built environment to larger social movements. Within this history, Riesto emphasizes the role that physical spaces, especially gardens, played in the social landscape. This social and architectural history provides a backdrop for the study's discussion of heritage designations at the site. Riesto utilizes the design competition submissions to discuss the definitions and boundaries of the site, highlighting especially the impact that perceptions of the site's boundary can have on the framing of the Carlsberg Breweries site as urban heritage.

The site's spaces, defined here in a broad sense, are presented in Chapter 3. The chapter contains multiple standalone concepts that fall loosely under the heading of 'space', including a review of the design competition entries' and municipal plan's treatment of key spaces, a discussion of the ways that the physical features shaped and were shaped/reshaped by industrial needs over time, a glimpse of the creation of vernacular social

spaces during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and a brief look at the role of water in the development of the site. With such a broad subject—the social and industrial connotations of open spaces at an industrial site over the course of over a century and a half by multiple stakeholders, including future projections of these spaces—the internal logic can at times be difficult to follow, but the overall discussion is effective at capturing Riesto's multifaceted argument.

Chapter 4 introduces the cellars and cellar corridors of the site. Riesto particularly focuses on the roles of the cellars in the redevelopment efforts by examining the winning design's utilization of the cellars as a means for legitimizing their vision of the site's urban form. Rather than serve a functional purpose, the cellars and corridors are flattened in the winning design and used to dictate the locations of roads and open spaces. Riesto discusses the proposed but discarded uses for the cellars and the cellars' popular imaginative potential in order to underscore their abandonment in the planning processes. Riesto concludes her study by reiterating her central points: industrial open spaces are an under-theorized form of heritage within heritage management. She recommends engaging with these landscapes as constantly changing dynamic entities with a multiplicity of meanings.

Undoubtedly, Riesto's study makes a significant contribution to the literature on industrial landscape redevelopment and the role of heritage within these plans. I find the study's repeated efforts to emphasize 20<sup>th</sup> century heritage, including bottom-up forms of heritage valuation, within the broader discussion of 19<sup>th</sup> century heritage at the site to be particularly noteworthy. The study's focus on a singular site allows Riesto to explore the minutiae of her chosen example to a degree that comparative evaluations cannot. This study takes an uncommon tack and is dutifully rewarded with a coherent, comprehensive discussion of heritage negotiation and creation at this particular site. This study provides a framework for future scholars who seek to weave historic, current, and future place-based heritage discussions into a singular monograph.

A particular strength of this work is its contribution to the broader field of urban heritage management. Riesto's work on Carlsberg demonstrates a new way of approaching urban heritage: by evaluating the nuances and contestations within delineations of heritage through shifting the perspective. Riesto puts the landscape first rather than the goals of the redevelopment. Putting the

emphasis on the landscape helps to highlight indelible parts of the built environment that can be overlooked or disregarded during redevelopment, such as the infrastructure. This is an uncommon way of approaching urban heritage and can serve as a model for future work in this field.

Furthermore, by centering open spaces as the subject of study, Riesto highlights another form within the built environment that is often not given adequate attention or, in extreme cases, ignored entirely. Riesto's mastery of the redevelopment designs related to the Carlsberg Breweries site shows in her careful deployments of the designs to compare treatments of spaces. For example, her discussion of the different values ascribed to the Carlsberg Square open space demonstrates her careful consideration of these plans. The study's critiques of forcing Gehlian configurations of open space onto existing postwar landscapes is sharp and warranted. Repeated, glancing references to the economic implications of the redevelopment of space help to drive home the unstated valuation of heritage based on its potential to generate revenue.

My only concern with the study is the lack of discussion prefacing its reliance on the redevelopment design competition plans. Although Riesto introduces her use of the designs, both realized and unrealized, as a way to examine what aspects of the landscape received attention in the redevelopment plans, she doesn't expressly address why these designs are an appropriate means for achieving insights on heritage designations. Her later revelation that at least one of the design entries implies that the designers never visited the site raises further concerns about the applicability of this source to this study. While I can see how studying these types of sources is warranted because of their ability to define heritage despite a level of unfamiliarity with the site, a more explicit discussion or critique of the roles of planning documents in defining heritage would have been welcome.

In spite of this, I believe this study to be an effective example of a biographical landscape approach being used to inspire a deeper discussion of who defines heritage in industrial contexts and why, especially as it relates to industrial spaces. This work confronts heritage scholars with the importance of evaluating the built environment in all its forms, including in unbuilt spaces. This work makes a significant contribution to our understanding of heritage from a landscape biography lens.

## Endnotes

1. Kolen, J. C. A. "Rejuvenation of heritage." *Scape 2* (2006): 50–53.