



Threads of Conservation

Social fabric • Fabric and place • Conserving fabric

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Alexandra Boukouvalas

Alexandra Boukouvalas completed a Bachelor of Arts majoring in both History and Archaeology with First Class Honours in 2013. Having worked intermittently in archaeology since 2011, she joined Rappoport Heritage Consultants in 2014. This current role involves field work, photography, research, historical assessment, report writing and liaising with various community stakeholders on diverse projects across Sydney and regional New South Wales.

A Metamorphosis of perspectives at The Hyde Park Barracks

Paper Abstract

This paper is an investigation of the evolving interpretation of the Hyde Park Barracks since 1975 when the decision was made to restore the historical fabric of the building and adaptively reuse it as a museum. The history of the changing conceptualization of this item presents an ideal study of a process of 'metamorphosis' of perspectives on the past at historic sites and the impulses which underpin it.¹

Space has been described by David Crouch as 'relational, dynamic, contingent' in character, something constantly 'in the making'.² As such, the space of the Hyde Park Barracks must be understood to have been conceptualised in different ways from different perspectives over time. We must look beyond a very neutral rendering of the place simply as a 'site' to understand the complex meaning and evocation that substantiates it.

The paper focuses on exploring the past thirty years of history of the Hyde Park Barracks as a public sphere, a 'civic laboratory' of public engagement and interaction with the past as part of a public discourse, as a place of public 'performance' through which those who use the site are seen to be active participants in the shaping of the past, and in the creation, contestation and negotiation of identity.³

¹ Robert Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire in France: Monuments, Museums and Colonial Memories* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 6.

² David Crouch, 'The Perpetual Performance and Emergence of Heritage' in Emma Waterton et al., eds., *Culture, Heritage and Representation: Perspectives on Visuality and the Past* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2010), p. 61.

³ Joanne Maddern, 'The Battle for Annie Moore: Sculpting an Irish American Identity at Ellis Island National Monument' in Niamh Moore et al., eds., *Heritage, Memory and the Politics of Identity: New Perspectives on the Cultural Landscape* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), p. 52.