Landscape Biographies
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A Biography for an Emerging Urban District

Discovering Open Spaces in the Former Carlsberg Breweries, Copenhagen

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Abstract
Abandoned industrial sites are often the starting point for urban redevelopment, forcing the involved actors to discuss which qualities are discarded, protected, and reused. Landscape biography can qualify such negotiation and ultimately influence how industrial sites are dealt with. The following is a case study of the ongoing redevelopment of the Carlsberg brewery in Copenhagen. The author emphasizes open spaces as important elements in the brewery's emergence, and as possibly valuable figures for its future development. By bridging knowledge from the humanities and the design disciplines, deeper knowledge of the complex and often unseen open spaces of industry can be gained.

Keywords: landscape biography, urban space design, industrial heritage, open space, urban redevelopment

Introduction
The city always changes. Urban projects are interventions in the city's dynamics. Each urban project alters a part of the city – its materiality and contexts and how we perceive and understand it. Heritage experts and designers involved in such processes constantly make choices as to which qualities of a site are discarded or reused and how this happens. These assessments and the values that they are based on are, however, not always articulated and openly discussed.

Much of the urban development in Europe today takes place on sites that are already built; it is urban re-development. Often, the starting points are abandoned industrial sites, and that entails a special challenge; while old factories, massive warehouses or rusty train tracks have become widely recognized as beautiful, significant, and easily reusable, large parts of such
sites are often automatically rejected as something that cannot potentially have value. Industrial distribution spaces, transportation networks, and young production buildings, for instance, tend to escape attention in professional surveys during redevelopment. Such blind alleys are unnecessarily narrow and may prevent us from discovering qualities that can enrich the future city.

During the 20th century, industrial remnants have increasingly become protected as heritage. In Denmark industrial buildings began to be protected as heritage in the 1980s, which is a bit later than many other Northern European countries (Braae, 2003; Jørgensen, 2003a; Jørgensen, 1991; Selmer, 2007; Sestoft & Elgstrøm, 1985). However, as the Carlsberg example will show, we still lack tools, methods and concepts to recognize many qualities of large-scale industrial sites.

The architecture of the 20th century has mostly been protected on the scale of each building, while the urban scale and open spaces have been heavily underexposed in heritage management (Prudon, 2005 and Docomomo, 2008). Yet, urban sites and open spaces have been a growing concern in heritage protection since the Venice Charter (ICOMOS, 1964). In Denmark, for instance, the Legislation on Listed Buildings was revised in 1966, so that not only a building but also its proximate open spaces could be listed. All over Europe different concepts, legislations and survey methods for addressing open spaces and entire urban sites have been developed; such as the German and Dutch concepts ‘Ensemble’ and ‘biotope’. In Denmark, urban sites have been framed with the concept ‘Kulturmiljø’, which was launched in the late 1980s as a bridge between environmental, cultural and aesthetic perspectives on heritage. The Survey of Architectural Values in the Environment (SAVE) was developed in order to grasp urban sites rather than singular buildings in local preservation (Algreen Ussing, 1992). The SAVE method encourages consideration of historical environments and their open spaces during planning and it was first developed in studies of pre-modern towns (Riesto, 2011A and 2011B). The SAVE method encourages the search for certain aspects, such as visual axes, which can be found in pre-modern towns. The qualities that are particular to sites for the mass production and distribution of goods, on the other hand, can be hard to grasp with the SAVE method in its present form (Riesto, 2011A and 2011B). Many qualities of the industrial landscape thus easily become overlooked.

The above may sound like a tribute to the accelerating growth of heritage. In the last five or so decades, more and more objects have become targets for heritage protection for several reasons, one of them a wish to make this field less reductive and include traces of workers, women and
Figure 16.1  Copenhagen Topography

Carlsberg (circle) is situated on one out of few elevations in this flat coastal city – on a moraine called Valby Hill that slopes 18 meters towards the north-east.
Diagram Vogt Landscape Architects

Figure 16.2  Carlsberg Brewery Site in Copenhagen

The Carlsberg site is a conglomerate of layers from different time-periods. The highest part of the Hill (front), has buildings and open spaces of different sizes and shapes and two large landscape gardens from the 19th century (left and right). The lowest part is characterized by large rectangular buildings and expansive asphalt surfaces from the 20th century (back). The white line shows the property border.
Photo courtesy Carlsberg Ltd Properties
This chapter is not a plea for retaining every bit and piece of the industrial landscape. Rather, it is an attempt to deepen the ground for intervening in industrial sites. When we imagine what the city can become we always relate back to something that is already known – creativity evolves in dialogue with previous solutions. Knowing the physical environment that is actually here better, then – and that includes seemingly non-aesthetic industrial sites – can thus give professionals and users a broader range of possibilities, both to create a shared heritage and to shape, use and experience tomorrow’s city. But how can such a widened appreciation of industrial sites be developed?

This chapter presents a landscape biography of Carlsberg – a former brewery in central Copenhagen and one of the most ambitious and complex urban redevelopment projects in Northern Europe in these years. By way of this case study, I attempt to explore how landscape biography can deepen the basis on which professionals intervene in urban transformation processes. This biography analyses the transitory situation from gated production plant to urban district in the intense period of planning between 2006 and 2009. Numerous surveys of Carlsberg were made in these years, which open up the possibility of a broad range of site-readings and possible interventions.

The biography opens with an introduction to the Carlsberg site and those readings of it that have been most dominant in the urban project. Then, two alternative surveys are presented. Based on perspectives in these surveys, I then study the transformative history of this site. Finally, the prospective of landscape biography for former industrial urban redevelopment sites is discussed.

The Carlsberg Site – Seen and Overlooked

The Carlsberg brewery was founded in 1847 in what was then a rural area outside Copenhagen. The site is situated on one of the few elevations in this flat coastal city – on a moraine called Valby Hill (figure 16.1). The brewery has been continuously extended and rearranged, and in the 20th century it became increasingly surrounded by the city. Carlsberg appears as a conglomerate of a large variety of built structures and open spaces and two large landscape gardens on the highest elevations to the west (figure 16.2). To the west, the highest part of the hill, are buildings and open spaces of different sizes and shapes and two large landscape gardens from the 19th
century. The eastern part is characterized by large rectangular buildings and expansive asphalt surfaces from the 20th century.

Not only a brewery, but also farms, dwellings, and several firms have resided here, some of which merged into the Carlsberg Breweries during the last century. Since 2006, the site has been planned as an urban district with a mix of housing, retail and cultural institutions. The world-wide enterprise Carlsberg Ltd, which still owns these founding premises, has commissioned a ‘vibrant urban district’ in which the ‘spirit of the place’ is reinforced (Carlsberg Ltd., 2006, 6). Carlsberg Ltd. organized a highly promoted international ideas competition to which some 221 design teams from 35 different countries responded (Carlsberg Ltd., 2006, 6). The winning proposal by Danish Entasis architects became the master plan for the urban project. Simultaneously, the Heritage Agency of Denmark classified the Carlsberg Breweries as the first Industrial Site of National Significance, and carried out a survey with the intent to list selected buildings and gardens prior to the construction of the new buildings (The Heritage Agency of Denmark, 2009).

In the summer of 2008, architects from Entasis, along with representatives from Carlsberg Ltd., the Heritage Agency of Denmark, and Copenhagen City’s planning department, spent a week walking the site together. The urgent goal was to agree on what to acknowledge as valuable and preserve during the realization of the new master plan, which prescribed 60,000 m² of new buildings here. On-site negotiation was new to everyone in the group and one out of numerous new forms of collaboration in this urban project.

The group walked from one building to the next and their task of negotiating values often appeared straightforward. For example, at the point illustrated in figure 16.3, they all agreed that a 19th-century chimney was worth preserving, apparently without a need to articulate why. The chimney to the left, a 1970s structure more than twice as tall that is visible from the city, was not explicitly assessed. One member of the group, however, a cultural historian and advisor to the municipal planners, argued that the tall chimney should be retained, too, because it had played an important role for Carlsberg’s power production. However, the rest of the group hastily rejected her appreciation. In fact, the representative from Carlsberg Ltd. questioned the value of retaining either one of the chimneys. ‘If a chimney is preserved,’ he asked, ‘who is going to own it? Who will ensure maintenance?’

From the perspective of the architects of the master plan and the restoration architects – who together formed the majority of the group and did not articulate their arguments – the old chimney with ornaments was considered beautiful and thus valuable. From the perspective of a
When a group of designers and representatives from the Heritage Agency of Denmark assessed the Carlsberg redevelopment site, all agreed that the decorated 19th century chimney (bottom of page) was worth preserving, apparently without a need to articulate why. The high chimney (top of page) was largely ignored.

Photo by the author
historian, both chimneys were appreciated because they can equally document a technological development. From the fiscal perspective of the owner and potential investors, the value of both chimneys was questioned.

I looked from a special perspective as well. As someone working in the field of landscape architecture, I turned and walked around, curious about the parking lot that we were in: a wide-open terrace with an inviting view. The space is paved with asphalt and enclosed by vegetation on two sides, a row of chestnut trees on one side and shrubs on the other. A row of different buildings creates an interesting wall of niches that relate this enormous space to the scale of the human body. But like the young chimney, such open spaces were not widely recognized by the assessment group.

Overlooked Spaces

Three observations from this on-site workshop are striking. First, each professional applied a specialist perspective that allowed him or her to grasp particular aspects of the site. By combining insights obtained in different fields (technological-historical, architectural-historical, bodily, perspectives concerning reuse, etc.), I hypothesize, we can discover more about this site. Industrial sites are complex and contain multiple physical and intangible layers. If we can enhance the understanding of how various layers, for instance, of different actors and time-periods, interrelate, then professionals in urban redevelopment processes can be better able to spot potential that is otherwise unseen.

The second observation from the Carlsberg on-site workshop is this: an old built structure with ornaments was much more likely to be recognized than one from the late 20th century. This is striking, since approximately half of the surface of the Carlsberg site bears significant marks from the period after 1950. This automatic prioritization of the oldest history repeats the interest expressed in most of the literature about these breweries (Glamann, 1995, 1990a & b; Zanker-von Meyer, 1982). Also, the public perception of the site has been preoccupied with 19th-century history, in particular with the first brewers J.C. Jacobsen (1811-1887) and Carl Jacobsen (1842-1914). These fascinating directors have played a central role in Danish cultural, political, and technological history and narratives about them are part of the company’s promotion on the Danish beverages market (Carlsberg Ltd., 2006). Carlsberg’s storytelling goes well with the established practices for
heritage surveys, which encourage professionals to associate what is oldest with the highest value. The Danish law for listing buildings, for example, only deals with objects older than 50 years, although there are a few exceptions. Such mechanisms of downscaling young history are striking, since most of the Danish industrial sites are heavily marked by development after 1945 (Dansk Bygningsarv, 2011).

The third observation: while the Carlsberg assessment group explicitly approached many built objects, open spaces – that connect the buildings – went relatively unnoticed. The group walked a route that relied on a tacit understanding of the site as a collection of built objects. This is paradoxical, since urban space is an important part of the plan for the new Carlsberg district (Entasis, 2007 and 2008; Copenhagen Municipality, 2009). The plan relies on the idea that a vivid urban district does not solely evolve from well-functioning buildings, but that attractive urban spaces are crucial.

The assessment group did, however, note some of Carlsberg’s existing open spaces. It was never said or discussed why the group took a closer look at some open spaces and not others, but certain principles can be deducted. Those spaces that were discussed were enclosed by hedges, walls or buildings, so that they could be dealt with as entities with clear distinctions. They were prominent squares and gardens made to represent the breweries. Most of these spaces are characterized by an axial relationship to ornamented buildings; a straight line can be drawn on a plan from the façade through the space. This spatial organization principle – enclosed axial spaces – is rare in the Carlsberg area. There may be other kinds of open spaces that can be unravelled by another kind of investigation, which will be tested in this article.

Landscape Biography for Urban Redevelopment Sites

The following study presupposes that no open spaces are indistinct, including industrial parking lots and distribution zones. Rather, open spaces are always organized according to certain formation processes. Investigating such processes can allow us to discover other qualities. In an attempt to reappraise open spaces of industrial sites, this chapter is informed by Dutch research in landscape biography (Roymans et al., 2009, Kolen, 2005; Roymans, 1995; Van der Knaap & Van der Valk, 2006). There are four arguments for the relevance of a landscape-biographical approach here.

First, the Dutch researchers have demonstrated the potential of transgressing specialist fields and developed concepts to understand landscapes
as relational constructs. Second, landscape biography is not an isolated academic history. Instead, the aim is to carry out applied research that can at the same time contribute to the present-day transformation of landscapes and also critique the practices that are currently in use. Being reflexive and at the same time participating is not without difficulty. However, such a double perspective is productive if we want to qualify the redevelopment projects that are going on, whether researchers engage directly with such projects or not. Third, as indicated in the term biography, from the Greek *bios* (life), this research tradition provides a productive way to acknowledge that the environment always changes, which is a fruitful perspective for heritage protection (Kolen, 2005; Tietjen *et al.*, 2007). Landscape biography puts change at the centre of attention and enables a combination of different synchronic and diachronic perspectives at once. Fourth, Dutch landscape biographers provide a productive framework for studying industrial sites as layered; imprints from different time periods intertwine in complex ways that may be characterized by reuse, durability, reordering, repetition or

**Figure 16.4  Masterplan**

Entasis’ master plan turns the brewery into a dense fabric of block-buildings and high-rises. Those buildings enclose narrow streets and trapezoid squares and have publicly accessible functions like cafés and shops on ground level. Entasis Architects
rapid change. Industrial sites are not only layered in terms of time, but are also affected by multiple actors, which sometimes conflict.

Landscape biography implies to engage with a broad range of sources; the materiality of the present site, historical and contemporary representations, archive records, cultural-historical literature, heritage acts, planning documents and more (see Ronnes, Chapter 9). I hereby explore how this investigatory framework can be applied to industrial sites with special focus on their open spaces.

This chapter argues that pulling together insights from the design disciplines with cultural-historical perspectives is productive because they can illuminate different aspects. Doing this I presuppose that design proposals are not autonomous invention, but produce situational knowledge (Von Seggern et al., 2008; Tietjen, 2011; Prominski, 2004). Architects, landscape architects, and urban designers often apply heuristic strategies that are not explicitly articulated to outsiders, and not necessarily reflected upon systematically (Schön, 1983). Nevertheless, design proposals – both those built and those never realized – can be considered as investigations of a specific site. Site survey and design intervention are two sides of the same coin.

### Carlsberg: An Unexpected Turn

The Carlsberg master plan prescribed a vivid city district with ‘classical urban activities’ like shopping, events, dining and more (Copenhagen Municipality, 2009, Part II, 30). The plan turns the plant into a dense fabric of block-buildings and high-rises with publicly accessible functions at ground level (figure 16.4). Density is vital to this plan, and Entasis argues that it can contribute to an ecologically sustainable city where car traffic is reduced because of short distances (Entasis Architects, 2007). Furthermore, the architects argue that a dense city fabric also contributes to the desired urbanity; narrow streets and plazas can enhance a populated and pleasant atmosphere, like in the historical cores of Copenhagen, San Gimignano or Rome.

What kind of reading of the existing Carlsberg site is implicit in this plan? Entasis applies a conception of the city in which some types of urban form – the narrow square – can encourage a desired atmosphere and other types – the extensive open space – are problems that must be removed. This view is in line with a dichotomy established in the post-war critique of modern architecture (Cullen, 1961; Gehl, 1971; Riesto, 2011b). Entasis’s perception went well with Carlsberg Ltd.’s goal of profiting economically...
from the urban project. Building on the large spaces would make them attractive to trade.

In 2008 the financial crisis hit Carlsberg Ltd.’s brewing activities and the board no longer supported the announced construction of new buildings on the Copenhagen premises. The realization of the master plan was suspended and Carlsberg Ltd. began to look for co-investors. Many of Carlsberg’s existing buildings currently function as offices, galleries and cultural institutions on short-term renting contracts, allowing new user groups to appropriate this formerly restricted production area. As I write, Carlsberg has found investors for some of the areas.

With the recession in 2008, the established scenario of a fast growing and populated urban district became difficult to sell. Alternative stories about the future Carlsberg seemed necessary to support the urban project.
Although not constructing any buildings on this site yet, Carlsberg Ltd. was commissioning architects to design certain houses and open spaces, so that realization could move ahead as soon as funding was established. In 2008 Carlsberg Ltd. asked the Swiss landscape architecture office Vogt to make an overall design for the urban spaces in the new district. While Entasis had already defined where the main plazas and streets should be, Vogt's task was to further detail the quality of those spaces. In the landscape plan that they came up with, Vogt illuminates layers of Carlsberg that were underexposed.

**Design Survey I – Topography**

Vogt's main idea is to split the site into three different parts. The urban spaces in each of these parts are then designed using distinct materials (figure 16.5). The separation is not due to different phases in the history of the breweries, or to the functions in the future district. Instead, those three parts relate to three elevations of Carlsberg's terrain slope.

*Figure 16.6  Urban Space Concept*

The lowest level will have squares with dynamic, fluctuating water reminding of tidal changes, as in the photos shown here. On the highest level, water is planned to appear in the urban spaces as springs or pools that collect rainwater. The middle level is a zone with steady water in canals and basins.

Vogt Landscape Architects
These levels determine the appearance of vegetation, stone and water in this design concept. For example, on the highest level street trees and vegetation in urban spaces will be species that can be found on high natural altitudes around the world, such as sugar maple and Scots pine. The mid-elevation is planned with species from middle altitudes, e.g. oak and lime, while the lowest level is designed with vegetation typical of low-lying and coastal areas, such as ash and birch. This selection does not refer to actual botanical requirements and has no immediate connection to the existing vegetation on this site, but instead narrates that this is a hill.

Similarly, water is treated differently on each level. On the highest level, water is planned to appear in the urban spaces as springs or pools that collect rainwater. The middle level is a zone with steady water in canals and basins; while the lowest level will have squares with dynamic, fluctuating water reminiscent of tidal changes (figure 16.6). Some of these water basins are to be connected by pipes to recycle water and prepare the site for urban storm water, which is a growing challenge due to climate changes. Such aspects are not only solved technically, but also communicated by the different appearances of water in this plan.

With this plan Vogt introduces a reading of Carlsberg that elevates topography as a binder and main characteristic of this diverse site. This provides an alternative to the perceptions in the on-site workshop, which focused on selected objects: old buildings and enclosed, prominent spaces. Vogt’s scope inspired the following biographical investigation into Carlsberg’s sloping terrain, starting with two simple questions: what characterizes Carlsberg’s terrain in the present? And how did it come to be this way?

**Landscape Biography of a Hill**

The hilly landscape of Carlsberg is not always indicated on maps, but it is obvious to any visitor, walking upwards and downwards in a way that kinaesthetically contrasts with the way people usually move in the flat city of Copenhagen. The experience of walking up the hill is striking, not just because of the physical effort required, but because the pedestrian will pass numerous levels, slopes and retaining walls and passages between them. Many spots on the Carlsberg site allow for lingering views towards the city, and the terrain unfolds in a variety of shapes: as terraces, as stairs, and as soft or steep slopes that are emphasized by towers, sculpture and high trees. The hill is seldom regular on this site, but separates into various levels, especially in the oldest part of Carlsberg to the west.
A key to understanding these multiple levels better is to look at what exists below them. Cellars are literally the foundation of the Carlsberg breweries’ early success. First Carlsberg was the only producer and later the market leader of the popular dark (‘Bavarian’) beer, which led to an income in the 19th century that is almost beyond comprehension. Bavarian beer requires longer fermentation than top-fermented beer and this long fermentation period was a technological challenge; the beer had to be kept from spoiling in warm summer months until cooling machines were installed at Carlsberg in 1878-1879. In the mid-19th century, Carlsberg’s planners solved this problem by carving cellars that were filled with natural ice. Excavating such cellars vertically down into flat ground would have demanded many work hours. Knowing this, Carlsberg’s founder decided to locate the brewery on Valby Hill so that the workers could dig into the hill. Excavating into a slope is easier and thus salary could be saved. The terrain also contributed to efficient transportation once the cellars were established; the slope could be modelled into terraces on which horses pulled barrels in and out of a cellar exit directly at road level. The brewers thus introduced a perception and use of Valby Hill as an economic asset. Fermenting and storing beer underground and the related practice of

Figure 16.7 Carlsberg Breweries 1889

Old Carlsberg is a remarkable landscape of terraces in different shapes and sizes. Drawing from 1889. Courtesy Carlsberg Ltd Archive
moving barrels in and out of the cellars have determined how Valby Hill is modelled into a remarkable three-dimensional complexity on this site.

Whoever carves a cellar is left with spare soil, sand or other materials. The massive and almost continuous cellar excavations at Carlsberg have been accompanied by different ways of dealing with these extra materials, impacting heavily on the terrain. The director’s villa of the first Carlsberg complex shows this clearly. It can be seen on a drawing (figure 16.7): this building is located at the very left and marked by a flag. A large landscape garden descends from this villa’s garden façade. The building stands on a high base that makes it look prominent and allows for entrances on two stories, in accordance with the recommendations by the much-read villa expert J.C. Loudon (Loudon, 1833). The material for this terrain work came from cellar excavations.

At the northern side of the garden the terrain is formed into two densely planted peaks. These were planned by brewer J.C. Jacobsen, who later described them as ‘mountains’ and ‘a considerable adornment for Carlsberg’ (Glamann, 1990b, 89–90). Hills were a favoured motif in landscape gardens in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It was considered attractive to place landscape gardens in places with a dramatic terrain. If this was not possible, then hills and other elements could be created. In this case, the hills were made with a large amount of spare soil after a cellar expansion in 1867. These mounds exemplify how Carlsberg’s terrain has not solely been shaped according to industrial rationales. Rather, technological agendas are mixed with contemporary aesthetic ideals. The history of technology and architectural ideas can thus not be separated if we are to understand the multi-layered formation of Carlsberg’s terrain.

The industrial pioneers were not the first to associate Valby Hill with special value. The first known human activities here date back to the Bronze Age, when burial mounds were created on what was then called Sun Hill, probably a place for worship (Larsen, 1989). Valby Hill later became an agricultural area that profited from the slope’s wind-protected micro-climate. The Danish royal family discovered this hill in the 1600s and 1700s and erected the Frederiksberg castle and garden on its highest point. The royal family’s fascination is related to ideas that spread among the privileged in Europe at the time: the elite favoured a retreat to elevated ground outside the city in what the Italians would call the Villa Sub-urbana (Magnani, 2008).

While the royal family may have enjoyed the castle as a retreat, it in fact became the beginning of an urbanization process that surrounded it with other buildings. In the 1800s the walled city of Copenhagen was a criticized
phenomenon; overpopulation epidemics, difficulties in getting fresh water, and a growing lack of space became main topics for discussion. Those who could afford it escaped and sought the fresh air beyond the city ramparts. For a generation of young merchants, artists and intellectuals, Valby Hill was a pleasant alternative to the city (Jørgensen, 2009). Valby Hill was celebrated by the cultural elite as an arcadia with ‘flowing fields of corn, wide meadows and views over Kalvebod beach’ (Nystrøm, 1942, 13). Valby Hill became the building site of multiple single-family houses with gardens, a cultural milieu, later called the Danish Golden Age, that the art-loving founders of Carlsberg inscribed themselves into a generation later. Carlsberg, then, is as much a cultural site as an industrial one. Its development is connected to changing perceptions of Valby Hill and to cultural movements. Vogt’s design project engages with this history of interpreting, using and physically altering Valby Hill, and it adds new layers to it.

Design Survey II – Transportation Equipment

The year after Vogt’s plan, Carlsberg Ltd. commissioned another design project. In 2010 neither the planned buildings nor Vogt’s urban space design were realized. In order to ensure that this highly communicated urban project was still attractive to potential tenants and investors, Carlsberg came up with the idea of making temporary installations in the outdoors.

Figure 16.8 Urban Space Installation

In the design of Keinicke & Overgaard this shed roof becomes a “rope forest” (Rebskov) and a distinct place to play, linger and to discover.

Photo: Peter Nørby, Courtesy Carlsberg Ltd Properties
The idea was to attract people to the area and keep momentum by filling a
time-gap of approximately five years, before building would begin and the
long-lived project of the master plan would be realized.

The designers, a Danish architectural office called Keinicke & Overgaard,
illuminated new aspects of the site. Their design intervention was not
confined to those parts of Carlsberg that the master plan had destined
as future urban spaces. Instead, Keinicke & Overgaard chose to intervene
close to those buildings that housed the most activity: a bottling station that
was reused as a dance theatre, a storage building that now functioned as a
sports hall. The spaces close to these buildings had large, asphalt surfaces
with thermo-plastic signals, which the designers treated as an ornament
and drew more on the surface. Much of the existing equipment that was
there had lost its industrial function when production closed in 2008 and
was not immediately legible to the new users. The designers treated such
former utilitarian structures as triggers of the imagination and reused
existing equipment as sports facilities, urban furniture and ornaments.
With strong colours and lighting, the designer’s intervention enhances the
appropriation of the brewery by the art public, people doing certain sports,
young clubbers and other desirable user groups. One example is a shed roof,
which becomes a ‘rope forest’ and a distinct place to play, linger and discover
(figure 16.8). Just like the Vogt plan, this design project reveals certain
layers of the Carlsberg site that have been overlooked in previous acts of
the redevelopment process. Informed by this design it is relevant to further
investigate: what characterizes the spaces that this project illuminates?
And how did they come to be this way?

**Landscape Biography of a Route**

On closer inspection the shed is one of many roofed areas in the youngest
part of the brewery site. This part is characterized by expansive distribution
spaces, where goods were stored prior to transport. During the 20th century
the processes of mass-produced brewing have not changed as radically as
many other industries. Rather, optimizing has mainly been a matter of
improving vessels and distribution. One challenge has been to protect beer
on the way from the bottling station to the truck that drives it to customers.
Beer easily spoils if exposed to sunlight in this process. The many roofs
in eastern Carlsberg thus articulate the industrial rationales of efficient
distribution.
In the late 20th century, 400-700 tankers drove through Carlsberg every day. The tanker route has been highly significant in the insider’s perception of Carlsberg’s open spaces. As the brewery functions were still active in 2008, I asked the workers I encountered which open spaces they called by names. The places that they named and which were significant to them were all connected to functions in the process complex of the tanker route, such as storage, distribution, and transportation (figure 16.9). The space called the Airfield, for instance, is where drivers and other workers would meet and have a chat after working hours. The name is probably related to all the parked vehicles that would stand in a meticulous system on this extensive plateau in the evening and made it look a bit like an airfield. This is the parking lot with the two chimneys, visited during the on-site workshop (figure 16.3).

Like many of Carlsberg’s large distribution spaces, the Airfield has a large plain surface where vehicles can drive efficiently and goods can be stored despite the hilly terrain. As transport was increasingly handled by lorries and tankers, Carlsberg’s sloping terrain was pushed into small strips between the new plain surfaces. These slopes may easily be considered...
mere left-over space and go unnoticed, as they have in the recent planning of Carlsberg’s redevelopment. However, on closer inspection the planted terrain strips played a significant role in the everyday life at the breweries. They allowed for multiple short-cuts and pedestrian routes through this truck-dominated area. The green slopes were popular meeting places for Carlsberg’s workers, as a study of historical photos from the mid-20th century showed (figure 16.10).

The workers who met here were denied access to Carlsberg’s landscape gardens, which were strictly for the management, their family and honorary guests. Taking a break on the green slopes was an alternative to the controlled bodily movements along the assembly line and in other specialized activities. These strips were planted with grass and sometimes with shrubs that prevented access and the possibility of lingering. Here, the planners may have reacted to the everyday recreational use. However, the green slopes are where people moved around and where they met in the breaks, especially those slopes situated between areas for male and female workers.

Although not initially planned as such, several of the green strips turned out to have qualities as recreational spaces. They are part of the

![Informal Hang-outs](image-url)
highly differentiated spatial system of the tanker route, which provides different types of perception and use when moving around and when lingering. The complex composition of this route is not recognized if space is reduced to a hierarchy where axial prominent squares are believed to be universally better than other types of spaces, as occurred during the on-site workshop.

**Unravelling Surveys of Carlsberg**

The biography showed that those open spaces overseen in the on-site workshop turned out to be constitutive elements in the formation of the Carlsberg site. This biography exemplified that by showing two spatial figures characteristic to this former brewery: Carlsberg’s complex topography and the differentiated spatial system of the tanker route.

The two design concepts discussed here highlighted these aspects. It is thus relevant to ask: what is the role of landscape-biographical knowledge in urban redevelopment processes? Is the landscape biographer only writing what the designers have already done anyway? These questions require a closer look at the circumstances of those design projects.

Vogt’s design for Carlsberg dealt especially with people’s relationship with nature. Vogt’s interest in how natural processes and human activities inter-relate informed my transformative history of Carlsberg’s terrain. However, this design project is not a neutral source of information. While inscribing itself in the history of Carlsberg’s topographical processes, Vogt’s survey relies on certain ideas about the future city. Founding partner of the studio, Günther Vogt, elevates complexity as a valuable spatial principle that can comply with contemporary life. He also argues that the modern dualism between nature and city should be dissolved: ‘The potential of the urban landscape is the city’s heterogeneity [...]. Nature can be found in the city in many different forms. The development of this diversity is only possible in the heterogeneous structure’ (Vogt 2006, 101).

Vogt calls for a city that offers enhanced experiences of sun, wind, rain and other climatic phenomena. This idea of what constitutes a good city is radically different from Entasis’s concern with a populated atmosphere, founded on built density. Not surprisingly, the landscape architect is interested in landscape aspects. Notably, Vogt does not treat landscape as an authentic image that should be restored. Rather, landscape processes become a junction between the past and the future of this site in a conceptual
design approach that connects storm water management with the cultural history of the hill. By emphasizing topography the Swiss designers activate a set of positive associations that can be traced back centuries. The hill has been interpreted and re-interpreted in different ways. The celebration of Valby Hill is a long-lived cultural tradition, although countered by industrial distribution rationales of the tanker in the late 20th century. This shows that understanding urban sites means dealing with something that has already been interpreted and re-interpreted, and that those past activities influence our current ones.

And yet, Vogt’s project can also be seen as a handy tool for Carlsberg Ltd. When the planned construction had been postponed, the master plan’s aim of a populated urban district with commercial activities had become difficult to sell. Vogt’s project introduced a new narrative connected with positive associations towards nature in general and Valby Hill in particular. The rhetoric of Vogt’s project also directly corresponds with the corporate storytelling. The plan was accompanied by a written description, which included statements like: ‘One man [founding director J.C. Jacobsen, ed.]. One hill. One vision’ (Vogt Landscape Architects, 2010, 3).

This strong overlap between Carlsberg Ltd.’s economic interests and Vogt’s ideas about a new kind of urban nature is important. It testifies that nature is not a free zone of ‘good’, separate from power. Instead, what we call nature is inextricably linked to human activity. Landscape biography can play a significant role here by allowing a critical discussion of the rhetoric of an urban project. I have elaborated on the potential of studying the changing topography of an industrial urban site, but that should not be considered as an absolute value.

The other aspect stressed in this biography is the tanker route. It provides an enriching alternative to the conception of space that was applied in the on-site workshop. Keinicke & Overgaard had been commissioned to keep up the pace of the urban project hit by the 2008 recession. Strong colour and light effects were activated in their designs to communicate with a hip, young and art-loving audience, who were believed to be pioneers of an economically favourable development. In this design, the route becomes a game board for appropriation by new user groups.

Keinicke & Overgaard’s project relied on a hands-on physical approach that engaged creatively with some parts of the abandoned equipment. This inspired my further investigation into the spatial properties of this route. The designers had walked the site and relied on an immediate visual encounter, where they spotted some things to reuse. The biographical
investigation presented here also engaged investigatory techniques from other disciplines. The archival photos of workers’ breaks showed that the largely overlooked green slopes were significant as shortcuts for travel and as social hubs for the workers, and as zones of social control. These green slopes have been ignored during the dominant steps of the redevelopment process, such as heritage inventories, design proposals and plans. Obviously the present and future users of an abandoned production area often differ radically. However, studying how previous users have acted in the space can be a key to insight into what these spaces can accommodate and how.

Naming is another example of vernacular practices. The named spaces remained largely unseen in the redevelopment. However, those spaces cover large parts of the site and provide a visitor with a succession of different spatial experiences when perceived in motion. A spatial flow like this route slips away from attention if an a priori preference for the historical enclosed square or axes is applied, as it was in the initial planning of Carlsberg. While axial spaces can be studied on a map, the spaces of motion, which often characterize industrial sites, require other investigatory techniques. One such technique can be studying naming and practices by vernacular actors. Those should, however, not be upheld as absolute values.

Prospects for Future Landscape Biography

Landscape biography as conceptualized here adds important knowledge to the redevelopment of the Carlsberg breweries. Open space is a complex matter – neither surveying space nor associating it with value is straightforward. Architects, landscape architects and urban designers have developed various concepts for studying and discussing space. Design proposals can provide a richer basis for understanding open spaces beyond the canonical heritage assessment, which in the case shown here tended to favour one spatial organization principle and ignore others.

In line with the interdisciplinary tradition of landscape biography, I thus encourage a closer inter-connection between heritage protection and design practice. Including design projects as sources in a landscape biography may be key to overcoming a difficulty that has been noted in the Dutch research. While stressing the ‘implementation potential in heritage management, landscape design and spatial planning’ (Roymans et al., 2009, 352), researchers have also described how there are obstacles
in establishing a dialogue with designers in practice (Roymans et al., 352-353). By providing detailed studies of open space and by including design proposals as sources, landscape biographies can strengthen a meaningful dialogue with these important actors in reusing, redeveloping and altering the city.

Architectural proposals should, of course, not be treated as neutral sources of information. Rather, they must be discussed as to the presumptions and sets of values that they are based on. Also, the way a design commission is framed, and the formal and informal collaborations involved in a redevelopment process all affect how a site is understood and ultimately dealt with. Such analyses can allow for a reflection of how and when reductions for future acts are made, in heritage inventories, on-site negotiation, competitions, plans, and commissions. It is the job of landscape biographers to keep on reflecting on existing perspectives, reveal conflicting viewpoints and even provide knowledge about the site that is suppressed by the dominant stakeholders. Such reflection can qualify the urban redevelopment processes at different stages: the making of visions, competitions, programming, policies, design proposals, heritage surveys and more.

This biography dealt solely with heritage inventories and design proposals that were made by or for dominant stakeholders. It would be relevant to connect such perspectives with others by less dominant actors or outsiders to an urban redevelopment project. Landscape-biographical knowledge will not make a history where all can agree on a total synthesis. It can, however, be a dynamic platform to articulate and discuss tacit values, while also constantly providing new and alternative ways to understand these sites.

About the Author

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**Documents and Plans**


