

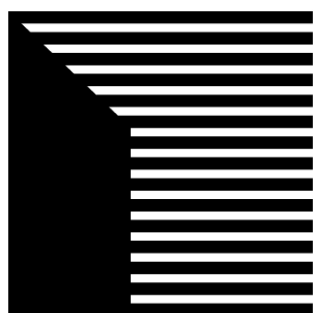


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# **CURBATHERI**

**Curating sustainable urban transformations  
through heritage –**

**DEEP CITIES:  
WP3 OVERVIEW REPORT WITH LESSONS  
LEARNED  
WP3, DELIVERABLE D3.1a.**



**DEEP CITIES**

Curating sustainable urban transformations  
through heritage



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## Work Package 3: Laboratories

### Summary Report

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## Introduction

Work Package 3 (WP3) was led by researchers at the University of Stirling (and the University of Edinburgh, following Bonacchi's move in March 2022). It aims to build on WP1 and WP2 by developing and refining a suite of mixed online and offline methods to assess the values assigned by different stakeholders to urban heritage and its transformation. The methods were trialled intensively through three cases studies: the site of the Gas Works in Canongate (Edinburgh, UK), the Royal Arsenal Gatehouse and Beresford Square in Woolwich (London, UK) and the neighbourhood of San Donato (Florence, Italy). The case study assessments engaged with a wide range of stakeholders including heritage managers, urban planning professionals, business owners, local residents, and other online and offline communities of attachment/interest associated with the case study sites. The key findings and implications have been discussed with urban planning and heritage stakeholders at participatory workshops held in Edinburgh, London and Florence.

This WP3 Report provides an overview of the work conducted. Details of the objectives, methods and engagement with stakeholders are followed by a discussion of the key findings and lessons learned. WP3 research was also complemented by several dissertations carried out by Masters' students at University College London (2018-2021) and the University of Stirling (2020-21). These are summarised in a dedicated section below. For full details of WP3 case study sites, methods, analysis and findings, see the individual case study reports (WP3 Deliverables, D3.1b, D3.1c, D3.1d).

## WP3 objectives

1. To identify the values associated to urban heritage in Woolwich and Canongate by individuals and community groups who use public Facebook pages and other social media through automated and manual data retrieval and analysis.
2. To identify the values associated with urban heritage in Woolwich and Canongate via offline participatory research, qualitative interviews, and a survey.
3. To synthesise and communicate the results of the research via a report and a journal article.

## Methods

The methods employed in WP3 build on prior research by Bonacchi (Bonacchi et al. 2018; Bonacchi and Krzyzanska 2019; Bonacchi 2022) focusing on heritage-making on social media and digital methods of heritage value capture, and Jones (2017, 2018), Jones and Leech (2015) and Robson (2021a and 2021b) focusing on social values and qualitative, participatory methods.

The suite of mixed methods employed in WP3 case studies includes the following:

1. Qualitative semi-structured interviews (in person or via videocall) with key stakeholders, local resident communities, and communities of attachment and interest, to explore the role of the deep city in urban development and unfolding relations between people and place;
2. Rapid ethnography, including short structured interviews with people present at the sites, walking (transect) interviews, and place-based observation / behaviour mapping to identify patterns of movement and practice at and around case study sites;



3. Participatory activities (individual or in groups) including photo-elicitation, future visioning, and participatory mapping, often organised in collaboration with community organisations / social institutions (such as schools or interest groups);
4. Development and use of a bespoke crowdsourcing application launched through the MicroPasts platform (crowdsourced.micropasts.org), to facilitate memory-mapping and explore people's sense of place;
5. Creation of an online questionnaire survey;
6. Text mining using R Free and Open Source software, alongside integrated on-platform analysis of images, to investigate the nature of people's interactions with case studies on relevant social media fields. The platforms involved included:
  - a. Twitter
  - b. Facebook
  - c. Flickr
  - d. Reddit
  - e. YouTube.

Mixed qualitative and semi-quantitative data-intensive approaches were taken to the analysis as appropriate to the data. For the offline research (including interviews, observation and participatory visualisation/mapping), analysis involved close reading and qualitative analysis of concepts, themes and discourses (see Jones 2018; Robson 2021a and 2021b). For the online research, data-intensive topic modelling, term frequencies and associations, sentiment and cluster analysis was conducted, alongside close reading and qualitative discourses analysis of select examples (Bonacchi et al. 2018; Bonacchi and Krzyzanska 2019).

### Engagement with stakeholders

The methods employed in WP3 facilitate engagement with a wide range of stakeholders including: local residents (past and present); people who work (or have worked) in the vicinity; people with family connections; local business owners; members of community/civic groups (inc. heritage-related); people with specific attachments or amenity interests, and , in the case of San Donato, schools. Engaging these communities through qualitative, offline methods and data-intensive online research is key to understanding the contemporary social values associated with the WP3 case studies and the impact of urban transformation.

Professionals working in the urban planning, heritage management and conservation sectors (e.g. architects, local authorities, conservators, etc.) constituted key stakeholder groups for WP3; targeted from the perspective of their expertise, but also from the point of view of informing and supporting their practice in future. Preliminary consultation with these key actors informed our understandings of the role of the case study sites in urban planning and development and the impact of urban transformation on the surviving heritage. Heritage professionals directly involved in the case study sites were also included in the qualitative semi-structured interviews to gain an understanding of the values they associate with the case study sites. Finally, professional stakeholders were invited to project workshops in London and Florence where the key findings and implications of WP3 were discussed, with a view to their application in people-centred urban planning processes.



## Training

The WP3 team provided guidance and resources for the other Deep Cities (CURBATHERI) partners in WP3 methods. Two dedicated online training workshops focusing on the online and offline methods respectively were provided for the Florence team to support them in carrying out the San Donato case study research.

## Case Studies

WP3 focused on three of the Deep Cities (CURBATHERI) place-based case studies. These places were selected because they represent rich histories of urban transformation, often leading to fragmentation or dislocation of heritage. They are also subject to recent or current urban development creating 'live' debates about urban transformation. Together, the case studies exemplify contrasting arrays of management and context dynamics, as well as contested heritage values.

Led by the University of Stirling (now Stirling and Edinburgh) UK team, the WP3 research is exemplified by the two UK case studies: the remains of the Old Gas Works at 179a Canongate in Edinburgh, and the Royal Arsenal Gatehouse and Beresford Square, in Woolwich, London. WP3 methods were also applied to the San Donato case study by the Florence research team, whereas the Oslo and Barcelona case studies and partners provided the basis for wider comparative discussions about WP3 findings.

Individual WP3 case study reports have been prepared for the Canongate, Woolwich, and San Donato case studies. These illustrate the nature of the findings produced by the WP3 mixed methods, as well as the implications for values-based urban planning (see 'lessons learned' below for a summary). These reports also provide detailed contextual information about the built environments characterising these case studies, including their deep histories and urban development, as well as their contemporary socio-economic characteristics. Here, we provide brief introductions to the WP3 case studies for orientation.

### *The remains of the Gas Works at 179a Canongate, Edinburgh, UK*

Canongate is a place of residence, employment, entertainment, education, and ceremony at the heart of a national capital city, which is also part of a World Heritage site. There are a wide range of users and communities with interests in the area. However, just as regeneration and development have led to fragmentation of heritage, there is also evidence that planning decisions have contributed to fragmentation of communities. A shift from owner-occupied and social housing to holiday lets, hotels and student accommodation has contributed to this, coupled with regional and global infrastructure developments and priorities. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (Scottish Government 2020) reveals that Canongate is a relatively deprived district of central Edinburgh in socio-economic terms, and census data also suggests that it has one of the city's more mobile and potentially transitory populations.



WP3 research focused on the surviving architectural remains at 179a Canongate and wider spaces once occupied by the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Old Gasworks, Edinburgh (See Canongate Case Study Report for full details). This area of North Canongate has had a variety of occupation phases and uses from the deep to the recent past, some of which are more evident in the present-day upstanding structures than others. It was an important industrial area in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but most of the associated build heritage has been lost with large-scale urban redevelopment. Most recently, the remaining buildings associated with the Gasworks at 179a Canongate were used as a market and entertainment venue. However, they are currently standing empty awaiting an approved redevelopment, which will see most of the structures demolished, with the exception of selective facades. This redevelopment is part of the contested New Waverley masterplan where tensions revolve around the prioritisation of civic infrastructure and corporate developments versus local residents' desire for community spaces and services.

#### *The Royal Arsenal Gatehouse and Beresford Square, Woolwich, London, UK*

Woolwich Town Centre has witnessed several decades of economic decline and associated social deprivation. After being designated within the London Plan as an opportunity area, the area has been the target of large-scale regeneration projects, including the Royal Arsenal Riverside (RAR) project and the ongoing Woolwich Town Centre regeneration. Built heritage has played a prominent role in these regeneration projects, especially the RAR development. However, intangible heritage and less monumental structures valued by local stakeholders have been overlooked. One of the significant and widely recognized effects of the regeneration processes is the dislocation they have created between the 'gentrified' Royal Arsenal development and Woolwich Town.

The focal point for the WP3 case study is the Royal Arsenal Gatehouse in Beresford Square, a Grade II listed building constructed in 1828 with two further phases added in 1859 and 1891. The Gatehouse served as the main entrance to the Royal Arsenal site for workers until production ceased in the 1960s. The realignment of the A206 in 1986 separated the Gatehouse from the rest of the Arsenal site, a dislocation further emphasised by construction of a new gated entrance to the RAR development on the other side of the road. The Gatehouse stands at the North-East end of the now pedestrianised Beresford Square, location of a public market since 1888 (the market was granted its royal charter in 1618) and a space associated in the past with public gatherings and performance. It is identified as a key building in the recent Woolwich Conservation Area Appraisal on account of it symbolising the relationship between the Arsenal and the town centre, as well as its distinctive contribution to the character of Beresford Square and the wider conservation area.

#### *San Donato, Florence, Italy*

In the last two decades, San Donato has seen rapid and fundamental transformation from an industrial neighbourhood, dominated by the FIAT Factory in the early to mid-twentieth century to a metropolitan service centre and transport node. These regeneration-led urban developments including the Palace of Justice, the San Donato Park and other green spaces, a new University of Florence campus, a new tramline, and a combination of new student housing and upscale residential neighbourhoods. The urban landscape has been completely transformed and the population is





equally dynamic. Older working class residents, whose families were associated with the FIAT Factory live alongside students, recent immigrants, students and new residents who have moved into the new property developments, creating a diverse community in terms of ethnicity and socio-economic backgrounds.

The WP3 research focused on the social values associated with historic layers of material heritage and their impact on neighbourhood identity, in the context of a fast-changing and intense development urban area. These layers include a Roman epigraph (relating to a road) dated to 1st century A.D. A number of historic buildings and fragments dating to the Middle Ages, including the church of San Donato in Polverosa and a Cistercian Convent. Modern phases of activity include a luxurious villa and 42-acre parkland, created by the Russian aristocratic Demidoff family following purchase of the land in 1825-1827, and the FIAT automobile factory and residential quarters for factory workers. In 2010-2011, the church of San Donato and part of the Villa Demidoff were restored, although the villa was privatised and is inaccessible to the public. Much of the FIAT factory has been demolished, except for the thermal tower which, in the future, will host art exhibitions and other events.

### [Related student dissertations research at UCL and Stirling](#)

Seven dissertations conducted by students taking the MSc Sustainable Heritage at UCL between 2018 and 2012 (supervised by Kalliopi Fouseki) are relevant to the Woolwich case study. These explored the dynamics of urban transformation and the role of heritage in the sustainable transformation of the Royal Arsenal Riverside (RAR) and the Woolwich Town Centre. Collectively, the dissertation research examined the approaches taken to regeneration and how change has impacted the historic area in the physical/geographic, social and economic context. It did so by exploring the role of heritage in the process of urban transformations through its values and meanings to local communities and stakeholders, and the potentials for social cohesion and future sustainable development of the area.

One dissertation was conducted by a student taking the MSc Heritage at the University of Stirling (supervised by Chiara Bonacchi), focusing on the values tourist and other visitors associate with North Canongate and its industrial heritage (including the Old Gas Works).

Collectively, the dissertation research involved a variety of qualitative, quantitative and mixed research methods utilizing primary and secondary data as well as specific geographic/spatial software for data collection and analysis. The following methods were applied:

- Semi-structured interviews;
- Online questionnaires publicised through Facebook pages and other social media;
- Analysis of social media data (Twitter and Facebook);
- Analysis of documents, historical maps and photos;
- In-situ observations.

In summary, UCL dissertations reveal the 'disconnection' created between the RAR area and Woolwich Town by the regeneration processes; something which is also confirmed by the WP3 case



study research focusing on the Beresford Gate and Square. Although the RAR regeneration project prioritised conservation of the historic arsenal structures, this has privileged values associated with the tangible heritage over and above values derived from its intangible heritage. Although not all the people who participated in the UCL dissertation research expressed an explicit interest in heritage, many of them think that Woolwich heritage is special and unique. However, the potential to mobilise heritage in pursuit of community cohesion and the public good, in particular to contribute to sense of identity and belonging has not been successfully mobilised by the RAR regeneration project. The dissertation research suggests that duration and geographical location of residence in Woolwich is a factor influencing degrees of attachment to heritage, reinforced by the physical and socio-economic differentiation symbolised by the historic Arsenal Walls running between the RAR housing development and the Town Centre. The great majority of survey respondents in the dissertations attributed heritage values to Beresford Square Market which is located next to this boundary. Yet, there is discrepancy between the new residents of the Royal Arsenal Riverside, and those outside of this development who have been living in the area for more than 20 years and feel a stronger connection and with community and attachment to place.

One dissertation was conducted by a student taking the MSc Heritage at the University of Stirling (supervised by Chiara Bonacchi). This dissertation examined the meanings associated with North Canongate by tourists and other visitors to the area. This involved both quantitative and qualitative analysis of social media data to identify values attributed to North Canongate as a space of connection and transit between other places of interest to the north and the south. The research revealed that while Canongate and Edinburgh Old Town generally are a very significant in terms of tourist values, the Gasworks and associated industrial heritage lack major tourist value.

Note: A dedicated report on the UCL dissertation research at Woolwich has been prepared for the Deep Cities project by Kalliopi Fouseki and Lorika Hisari. This provides further details on the findings and implications of the student research relevant to several other work packages (especially WP2).

### WP3 findings – social values of heritage and urban transformation

The findings of the WP3 case studies are laid out in the individual cases study reports and we do not intend to reproduce them here (see CURBATHERI deliverables D3.1b, D3.1c and D3.1d). In summary, each of the case studies revealed a rich tapestry of contemporary social values associated with the case study sites by multiple, at times overlapping, communities of residence, attachment and interest. These values relate to both tangible and intangible heritage, and the relationships between people, places and objects. The research highlighted the role of built heritage in mediating social memory and producing a sense of ‘pastness’ and time depth that was valued by many participants. Furthermore, many of the values expressed were associated with specific aspects of the built environment and related functions, events, activities, affective qualities and personal/familial connections.

It is also important to emphasise, however, that social values may not be evident in the tangible historic fabric of the ‘deep city’ and much depends on maintaining connections and experiences of past and present uses of built heritage, rather than focusing merely on the preservation of aesthetically pleasing fragments. It is also important to maintain the connection between values derived from lived experience and relatively recent social memory or familial oral histories. At the



same time, significant phases in the biography of places can be silenced or lost, even when tangible traces survive in the urban environment. This is evident in the case of the Magdalene Asylum, located at 179a Canongate prior to the expansion of the Gas Works, and the Woolwich Royal Arsenal, a place of restriction and secrecy during its working life as an arms factory.

Whilst the historic environment is frequently incorporated into the design and implementation of urban development (and particularly regeneration), WP3 case study research demonstrated that regeneration projects can result in fragmentation of both the built heritage and the practices and communal memories that are associated with it. There is also a palpable sense in which physical fragmentation is mirrored by fragmentation and/or dislocation of communities themselves, with some people being marginalised and oppositional social distinctions created ('them' and 'us'). The complexity of the relationships between the tangible and intangible forms of heritage associated with the 'deep city', the multiple stakeholders and communities involved, and the diverse values associated with it, mean that achieving a holistic approach to the role of heritage in urban transformation is challenging. However, WP3 research offers important insights, methods and tools to support professionals involved in urban planning, heritage management and regeneration to achieve sustainable futures for urban communities and their heritage. In particular, it has developed an innovative approach to researching values in online and offline environments using a combination of mixed qualitative and data-intensive methods.

#### Lessons learned: [integrating values-based approaches in urban planning](#)

1. WP3 research demonstrates the importance of qualitative and community participatory methods in revealing the diversity and complexity of values (including conflicting and contradictory ones), as well as the range of communities with a stake in the built heritage and wider place under discussion.
2. It also shows that combining offline F2F and online methods is effective in accessing a wide range of diverse constituencies and associated meanings and values. It shows that different offline and online contexts provide the space for different kinds of value production and expression and facilitate differential access to diverse stakeholders. Preliminary identification of relevant communities, stakeholders and key contacts was an important first step and something that was built on as more nuanced understandings emerged during the process.
3. The use of offline and online methods in conjunction provided fruitful cross pollination. For example, images shared through online communities were used in offline photo elicitation activities, or offline discussions suggesting key words to be used in online searches.
4. Face-to-face, qualitative and participatory methods can be used with communities of location, attachment and interest to facilitate a depth of understanding through exploration of the values and conflicts associated with heritage in the context of urban transformation. The numbers of participants will vary depending on the time available and nature of activities (e.g. around 25-30 people were directly involved in the Woolwich and Canongate studies but over 100 people were involved in the San Donato study)
5. Online methods are very productive in facilitating access to a potentially wider range of (often slightly different) communities of attachment and interest, and accessing data generated by large numbers of participants (e.g. for Canongate 6000 Tweets were analysed quantitatively using data mining software and 100 Flickr images). They are particularly useful in contexts where



communities have become fragmented and/or displaced due to urban transformation and therefore have a limited presence in the area today. Or where communities have become alienated from consultation processes associated with urban planning and regeneration and are therefore reluctant to participate in further offline meetings or activities.

6. In both online and offline environments, it is useful to engage and collaborate with existing community networks, events, physical hubs and online platforms to facilitate access to a range of stakeholders and widespread participation. Developing trust and rapport with key contacts, such as community leaders and organisational 'gatekeepers', is crucial and can take time. Where this is not possible (either due to issues of access or timescales) the success of the research methods can be compromised. For example, in the Canongate case study, where there was evidence of consultation fatigue and alienation from development decision-making, it was difficult to elicit participation in F2F offline methods through community organisations and gatekeepers. As a result, the planned methods had to be modified, and direct approaches made to people at the site, gradually building up networks of participants.
7. Above all, the suite of mixed methods developed through WP3 need to be applied flexibly and creatively to adapt to different urban environments, socio-economic contexts, demographic characteristics and phases in planning and regeneration. For instance, in the case of 179a Canongate, the site of the Old Gasworks was already out of public use and inaccessible whilst awaiting approved re-development, two years in advance of our research. This meant it was necessary to adapt the planned offline methods to engage local residents (as mentioned above) and also rely more heavily on online methods. In contrast, a new phase of investment and regeneration in the Woolwich Town Centre, alongside high levels of civic engagement and community activism, meant that rapid F2F offline research was able to reach a diverse range of participants (both through gatekeeper referrals and linking with community-led activities).
8. Contested values and tensions surrounding change in these case studies often related to increased privatisation of urban space or constraints on communal practices and relations, alongside loss of historic features and places associated with public discourses, personal and social memory, and lived experience.
9. Finally, WP3 emphasises the need to conceive of heritage conservation beyond fragments and architectural facades. The entangled tangible and intangible heritage of the 'deep city' can play a powerful role in leading urban transformation. Urban planning and regeneration should involve a rounded approach to multi-layered conservation and transformation of the 'deep city', encompassing meanings, memories and senses of place associated with past and present uses or associations. This should help to reduce tensions associated with urban governance, planning and development, whilst also supporting values-led approaches to the transformation of the 'deep city', creating more sustainable urban futures.



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