An aerial photograph of a large naval dockyard. The water is dark, and several large ships are docked at various piers. The dockyard buildings are dense and multi-story, with a mix of red and grey roofs. A prominent white structure, possibly a ship's hull or a large building, is visible in the lower-left foreground. The overall scene is industrial and maritime.

# Dockyards as Nodes of Naval Architecture, Maritime Traditions and Cultural Heritage

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# Doing Things Differently: how do countries dispose of their surplus defence land? Do these differences offer losses or gains to ex-defence communities and sustainable reuse of historic structures?

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## **Abstract**

At a time when thousands of civilians are killed and millions displaced in Gaza, the Russian war is devastating Ukraine, Chinese manoeuvres alarm Taiwan and its allies, as do North Korea's missile tests, the questions raised in this paper might seem particularly untimely. Since the start of the Ukraine conflict, Britain's air bases have been on maximum alert. Front-line NATO air bases such as RAF Marham in Norfolk, the base for Britain's F-35 fighter jets, had a £500m upgrade.<sup>1</sup> The UK's Defence Secretary predicted in July 2023 that Britain might face war on three fronts: threats of a military showdown with Russia, a Cold War with China and intervention to combat terrorist groups in Africa. Melting of the ice sheets in the Arctic is opening a new northern east–west route where Russia and China are rapidly expanding their military capability and economic interests, a risk to NATO.<sup>2</sup>

However, while responses to war or perceived military threats result in some countries' expansion of armed services, in others such as the UK, cuts in military spending and changes in the ways wars are conducted have long resulted in reductions in service personnel and

consolidation of defence facilities onto fewer bases. As a consequence, geopolitical and technological change is rendering older defence sites all over the world obsolete and surplus to current requirements. Military landholdings remain immense: in thirteen advanced economies 1 per cent of their land area is dedicated to defence. Many sites have been keys to national defence for centuries. Driven by military expansion or recession and governments' desire to maximise capital receipts, property dedicated to national defence or developed by occupying forces or allies has become obsolete and is being disposed of and redeveloped.

There are unanswered questions about this wide-spread but under-reported process. Where are the defence sites, and what do they contain? Why do they close? Who defines what is worth keeping: is it the culture ministry, the local authority or local experts? Are there special procedures for the disposal of historic defence sites? Who is responsible for disposing of them – and what is their remit? How is the transition from naval, air force or army to civilian use managed? What happens to bases built and then abandoned by occupying forces or by allies? Who is responsible for cleaning up military contamination? Who has the power to influence these unusual and complex sites' transition to civilian uses? There's an expectation of public benefit when publicly owned land is sold or transferred – but how is this measured? What happens to the former workforce and the local community? Making new civilian plans for these sites is difficult when little is known about them: whether they are contaminated and what by; whether the surviving buildings have been maintained in good repair or not; who will pay for existing or new infrastructure costs to connect them to the surrounding area. Understanding the site's detailed history and the structures that survive is key to working out what it might become. How much physical change will be necessary, whether there are controls on what's permissible, and how it will be financed – are also vital.

Do ex-defence communities lose or gain from the new land uses? What are the new activities on the site? Do they meet local needs?

What are the achievements of the successor owners? How can the outcomes, environmental, economic and social, be measured within different cultures and political systems? Do they make contributions to sustainability? The complex challenges of reusing them – for example as sites for civilian industry, housing, tourism and museums, education, leisure and open space – are considerable. As this paper is published in the Naval Dockyards Society's *Transactions*, many cited case studies are dockyards (naval shipyards). That said, given the immense variety of ex-defence properties, are lessons gained from reusing particular sites transferable – between sites, country-wide, or between very different cultures and political systems? Questions posed by this wide-ranging enquiry into different countries' practice in turn offer multiple answers. My underlying theme is, can disposal systems – and the outcomes for local ex-defence communities – be improved?

These challenging transformations to sustainable new civilian life have rarely been studied via cross-cultural analysis which aims at identifying good practice or offering transferable guidelines. This absence leaves communities, governments, developers and planners with untested land use configurations, partnership structures and financing strategies. There is an expectation that the disposal of publicly owned land should result in public social, economic and environmental benefits, but these will not necessarily occur if the land is valued in solely financial terms and is disposed of by ministries of defence with a remit to achieve the highest price – as it is in the UK, where the money accrues to the Treasury and central government departments. Other countries have contrasting disposal models, which vary the degree to which ex-communities influence the process – and whether they gain from the outcomes. In Italy and Germany there is also a crucial difference from the UK: disposals of state-owned land are the responsibility of government agencies independent of their Ministries of Defence, rather than the UK MOD's Defence Infrastructure Organisation. Furthermore, in France and the US, ex-defence communities are offered specific help to rebuild their local economies.

## **1. Research and sharing experience**

Military, naval and air force sites of hot and cold war and national defence may in time become valued cultural legacies in their own right. Over the centuries, as forts and city walls become obsolete, they may be preserved and reused. A select few are protected by conservation regulations, and may even gain World Heritage status. Historic naval bases so designated include the Arsenale in Venice, Suomenlinna in Finland, Karlskrona in Sweden, Kronstadt in Russia and Maritime Greenwich in the UK. The Fortifications of Vauban, twelve groups of fortified buildings and sites along the borders of France designed by renowned military architect Vauban, were designated a World Heritage Site in 2008. The German Atlantic Wall built by the German occupying forces between 1942 and 1945 along the coasts of France, Belgium, the Channel Islands, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and Norway is recognised as a trans-national Cultural Landscape – if not yet as a World Heritage Site.<sup>3</sup> In a country with such a rich and complex history as India there are many surviving fortifications from different eras. A serial nomination for forts of Rajasthan was successfully inscribed onto the World Heritage Site list, and another, designation of the Maratha Forts, is underway. Tourism – or as explored in this paper, defence heritage tourism – has replaced military activity. The Red Fort in Delhi was a garrison for many years post-independence, but is now a major tourist attraction, while colonial-era forts from the Portuguese, Dutch and French occupations of India also survive. In Goa the Portuguese-era forts are mostly tourist attractions. The Portuguese converted one of them into a prison for those fighting for freedom from colonial rule. It remained a prison until about ten years ago, and is now a gallery and party venue, though the alterations and additions are not to a high standard.<sup>4</sup>

Other fortifications and defence structures have been demolished and their sites reused – for example for ring roads in Vienna and other cities. As valuable sources of building materials, their stone and brick were often recycled: stone from the two walled cities in Portsmouth is evident in barrack walls, sea defences and in later buildings.

The differing fortunes of historic ex-defence sites are most productively studied in relation to their countries' financial and statutory frameworks, including planning systems, the effects of

in conservation and renewal. Now that war, their prime purpose, takes different forms, specialised defence sites may now forsake their traditional hostilities for peaceful exchanges of regeneration experience. In the view of the few researchers in this area, learning from different countries' experience of these complex transformations from military to civilian life via international networking is the key to understanding their potential contributions to local economic, social and environmental reconstruction. In many countries redundant defence sites are first offered to other government departments. Properties of historic importance within current Indian army and air force bases tend to be utilised as officers' messes though 'generally – all of the armed force assets and cantonment areas are hands off:' those working with Defence Units may have to sign non-disclosure agreements. Indian Border Police, civilian police and administration offices are housed in former defence buildings.<sup>5</sup> As said, if not required by other government functions, there are contrasting systems of disposing of redundant state land – by defence ministries or by independent government agencies. The terms by which their ownership is transferred also vary across a wide spectrum, from free transfer and sale at military use value to local authorities to meet community needs to commercial sale to the highest bidder. These considerable differences impact on how the sites are subsequently reused and who gains from the disposal and redevelopment process.

The United States and perhaps Russia and China can afford to leave a huge proportion of redundant sites fallow, while European countries, short of land, have a commitment to varying degrees to remediate their brownfields and reuse them. This contrast is a product of geography and history, but the United States has exemplary transfer processes to offer, particularly for its former military sites, which provide useful lessons to other countries. Connor Ryan's paper 'Democracy, military bases and marshmallows' describes the struggle between politicians' desire to keep their local bases open in the face of widespread closures all over the United States and the development of the Base Closure and Realignment Act (BRAC) which ultimately



gave ex-defence communities the option of determining the new land uses in favour of local benefit.<sup>6</sup> I explore this topic further in the section on public interest. Earlier US academic literature was the first to

examine defence disposals and redevelopments.<sup>7</sup> Post-closure, Touchton and Ashley stress the importance of Federal funding, contamination and economic output in the surrounding county. Communities may be missing valuable knowledge about how military redevelopment works around the country. Usefully, active and closing bases in the United States belong to the national Association of Defense Communities, where they can share experience. Its directors include ‘community advocates, experts in redevelopment, leaders in military-community partnerships, and those with knowledge of national and military and defense policy issues’ and public and private sector people.’<sup>8</sup> This lobby, along with current research, offers new directions for redevelopment scholarship and a first step for developing best practices to help ex-defence communities redevelop mothballed bases.

Particular research themes are emerging, such as the physical and intangible remains of the Cold War. These were explored by Historic England’s Wayne Cocroft and Roger Thomas in their book *Cold War Building for Nuclear Confrontation 1946–1980* (English Heritage 2003), and by the European Cold War heritage Network’s seminar series co-ordinated by Ben de Vries of the Dutch Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed.<sup>9</sup> The March 2023 session explored Cold War Heritage in Southern Europe, including the transformation of the Italian government’s nuclear bunker under Mount Soratte north of Rome from a top-secret location to an international Cold War museum.

My research has long focussed on futures for defence heritage. In my PhD thesis (2002) I documented whether local communities in Portsmouth, Plymouth and Waltham Abbey in Essex were able to influence the land use outcomes when military sites were closed and redeveloped. I concluded that a high degree of community involvement led to less conflict and more historic structures being



beneficially reused.<sup>9</sup> In 2000 the University of the West of England published my *Vintage Ports or Deserted Dockyards: differing futures for naval heritage across Europe*.<sup>11</sup> I first explored this multi-faceted topic as far as dockyards are concerned in my lecture to the Naval Dockyards Society's AGM in 2003. In 2009 at a Wessex Institute of Technology conference on Sustainable Development and Planning I explored why military sites across the world become redundant and their redevelopment as a subset of brownfields. I was inspired by Alan Berger's *Drosscape: Wasting Land in Urban America*.<sup>12</sup>

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Since then I have expanded focus to a wider range of military sites including articles on historic naval hospitals and the evolution of naval medicine, as well as knowledge gained on site visits for conferences and on the Society's field trips. Post-defence experience in Taiwan, China, the Netherlands, the UK and the United States was explored by various authors in *Sustainable Regeneration of Former Military Sites* which I edited with Professor Samer Bagaeen.<sup>13</sup> My paper to the Military Landscapes conference in La Maddalena naval base in 2017 added further analysis,<sup>14</sup> and at the end of my recent book, *Barracks, Forts and Ramparts: Regeneration Challenges for Portsmouth Harbour's Defence Heritage*,<sup>15</sup> I set out a research agenda to explore other countries' experience of post-defence planning – on which I am now embarked. In September 2021 my paper 'Transformations of former military sites to new civilian life: a research agenda' to the international conference organised by IUAV in Venice began to fill in the bigger picture.<sup>16</sup> I continue to research this topic in this paper. As will be appreciated, this is a very far-reaching challenge, which is only at its beginning, so that coverage so far is limited in both its geographical and administrative scope.

Research via international contacts is a key focus of the proposal in 2020 to set up a dedicated network by the Defence Heritage group of conservation professionals, specialist interest groups and academics hosted by the University of Portsmouth. But even though defence forces work together in international alliances, there still may be ingrained UK government resistance to policy change in disposal and redevelopment of closed bases, perhaps fuelled by Brexit's

xenophobia.<sup>17</sup>

## **2. Ownership, disposal, public interest, local benefit**

Areas for investigation include definitions of the legal status and ownership of state land. These vary, from the Spanish ‘bienes communes’ and Italian ‘beni comuni’ which may be owned by nobody, owned by a group, or owned by all by right.<sup>18</sup> In Poland military properties belong to the State Treasury, managed by the Ministry of Defence (MOD). German land owned or used by the armed forces is a small part of the portfolio managed by the Federal government owned agency Bundesanstalt für Immobilienaufgaben (BImA) with autonomous local offices working with their local Länder. Similarly in Italy from 1999 the State Property Agency (Agenzia del Demanio) was created to manage state real estate. According to Camerin it has ‘a variable and ambiguous relationship with the Ministry of Defence’ but ‘has benefited [from] wide decision-making autonomy in the management and disposal of its assets.’<sup>19</sup> In India a recent ordinance was brought out to reduce the land holdings of the army and free up the land for civil populations in the Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh regions.<sup>20</sup>

As governments regroup their military operations, as well as outright land sales, privatisation results in civilian firms operating inside active bases, including several nations’ dockyards. The British privatised theirs in 1987, so now Portsmouth naval base is run by a private company/Service Provider, KBS Maritime. Several defence firms providing services and products to the navy including BAE Systems operate inside the base. In 1961 General de Gaulle rationalised the three French services, creating ‘a multidisciplinary synergy capable of constructing the French nuclear deterrent force’. The Directorate of Naval Construction (DCN) was no longer under the direction of the naval general staff. The transformation of DCN into a limited company took place in May 1983. In 1991 DCN International was created, a company retained by the state to export products of naval construction. In 2001 French naval construction was fully privatised, with the state underwriting the capital.<sup>21</sup> In the UK military land is nearly always owned or leased by the MOD, although

there are examples of ‘commons’: communally owned land used for grazing animals, reverting to local ownership once the state no longer uses them for defence, as in the case of Greenham Common where US cruise missiles were once based.<sup>22</sup> The privatised Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) is responsible to the MOD for managing and disposal of the defence estate. As in Norway, until 2006 the British MOD had Crown Exemption from civil law, including planning and historic buildings legislation, which of course had implications for their maintenance and future survival. Military sites – white spaces on maps until the advent of Google Earth – are not included in local plans. In England the public only have the right of access to 8 per cent of the land, though there is a right to roam in Scotland as in Norway. Military secrecy means these enclaves are often unknown to their host communities, except to those who worked or lived there. When they become available for reuse

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they present an enormous challenge for sustainable reuse – to a very wide range of stakeholders: design professionals: architects, urban designers, planners and landscape architects – but also to developers, financiers, environmental regulators and, last but not least, to local communities and local governments, who may be unaware that these sites exist or not have any idea about their potential.

Examples of experience in overseas bases are what is happening to the United States’ ones located in its allies, Japan and South Korea. The Japanese government pays for the brick-and-mortar facilities; America pays its personnel while Japanese workers are, in most cases, paid by the government of Japan. Operations are conducted by the respective services and come out of their individual budgets. There is pressure to reduce the size of the American footprint in Japan, so old buildings are being scrapped without replacement, decreasing the Japanese cost. Tachikawa Air Base was closed by the USAF in the mid-1970s and has reverted to housing. There is a US push to reduce the footprint of Misawa Air Base, where deconstruction has taken place, with most, if not all, unoccupied buildings demolished by local contractors, but it takes considerable effort to construct new buildings. Relocation of bases may be controversial. Agreement in 1995 to

relocate the US Marine Corps air station, currently in an area on the island surrounded by houses to a coastal site, has aroused political opposition, which wants the entire complex removed. But the US and Japanese government 'are fixed in keeping it in Okinawa'. As well as the large Air Force base it has a naval hospital and several bases for the Marine Corps – which together account for well over 60 per cent of all American personnel in Japan. Interestingly, the Japanese also have a problem with establishing bases. A radar site was supposed to be established in northern Japan. However, the local governments were opposed to it and ultimately the whole plan was scrapped. In another case, a monitoring station was proposed to be built on an island near Taiwan, to monitor the PLA Navy operations near Japanese waters and for transiting through international shipping lanes. The local government approved the plan but only after it was able to extort considerable amounts of funding from the government to cover the cost of the 'inconvenience' to the islanders . . . the complement of the station is about one hundred.<sup>23</sup> The US government is transfer-

ring most of the very large Yongsan Garrison in central Seoul to the South Korean government, while retaining a small portion of land to keep open the Dragon Hill Lodge military resort hotel and as a future site to relocate the US Embassy in Seoul. Korean officials are currently debating the future uses of the land being returned, as a large park or a site for more affordable housing.<sup>24</sup> There are suspected severe levels of benzene and petroleum hydrocarbon contamination which will have to be dealt with.<sup>25</sup>

A deeply controversial case where a government refused the right of local people to determine their future in the face of powerful nations' expanding defence capability is what happened to the British government's last colony. In 1965 the Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean were severed from Mauritius. The local people were forcibly removed to Mauritius, the Seychelles and Britain, in order to develop the strategic US base Diego Garcia. The islands were excluded by Britain from Mauritius' independence in 1968, which the International Court of Justice ruled in 2019 was illegal because it violates the rules of international law on self-determination and

territorial integrity.<sup>26</sup>

Once no longer operational, governments may use ex-defence sites to house refugees and migrants. Refugees into Germany are housed in Berlin's Flughafen Tempelhof, key to the Berlin Airlift in 1948–49. Defence sites' secure boundaries may also result in their use by governments as prisons. Despite continued criticism by Amnesty International and the US Congress, prisoners, some of whom have not faced trial, are still held in Guantanamo Bay, a US naval base in Cuba converted to a prison in 2002 following the September 11 attacks on mainland America. Refugees and migrants fleeing wars and the consequences of climate change who cross the Channel to Britain are housed in Napier Barracks in Kent, in other closed UK air force bases such as RAF Manston and Wethersfield, and in a barge to house asylum seekers in the former naval base of Portland Harbour in Dorset.<sup>27</sup>

### **3. Redundancy and Disposal**

Critical to the eventual land use outcomes are government and state land-disposal procedures. As said, disposal arrangements vary across a spectrum from free transfer to local interests to sale to the highest bidder. In Sweden there is a midway example of sale of the victualling island of Karlskrona naval base at military use value to

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the local authority, which planned new land uses with the local community and then sold the site on to developers, gaining the increased land value from the grant of planning permission. Many countries, including the UK, the US and India, first offer redundant sites for reuse by other government departments. If not required by them, according to the UK 1992 Treasury rules the state owns or leases all state property and assumes the right to dispose of it, usually by selling it to the highest bidder at maximum planning value within three years, with the proceeds ultimately accruing to the relevant ministry: in this case the MOD. There is provision for UK public land to be sold at less than market value 'Where there are wider public benefits . . . such as economic, environmental and social value

factors'.<sup>28</sup> The MOD's Defence Infrastructure Organisation which is responsible for the defence estate says that 'Officials within DIO work diligently on behalf of the MOD to maximise the potential benefits from the sale of any surplus assets. The Department is obliged by Her Majesty's Treasury Managing Public Money protocols to maximise sale receipts which are re-invested in operational requirements. Treasury guidelines state that transactions such as sales between Departments should generally be at full market value even if transferred to other public sector bodies (including publicly sponsored housing associations). If no other government departments express an interest, the site is sold in a way which achieves best value for the taxpayer. This is usually via the open market.'<sup>29</sup> Sale of whole sites to the highest bidder results in developers ensuring they get planning permission for new land uses which produce a high financial return. These may bring less benefit to the local community but result in greater monetary recompense to the national Treasury and to government departments. In 2021 the National Audit Office criticised the MOD's site disposal process for not achieving its disposal targets.<sup>30</sup> In response to the Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust's local evidence of defence land disposal, the NAO's director of defence value for money audit said: 'we did take a broader view of their approach to estate optimisation. In particular, we acknowledge the importance of early engagement with local authorities (paragraph 3.22) and the need for MOD to give greater consideration to the impact of its wider environmental commitments (paragraph 3.26)'.<sup>31</sup> In 2022 the Cabinet Office announced a new strategy, including selling off £1.5bn

worth of state-owned buildings and cutting £500m from the estate's operating costs. But in December that year the Public Accounts Committee criticised the Cabinet Office for poor management and a 'lack of ambition' which left the taxpayer to pay for costly leases and maintenance charges on the government's £158bn portfolio of government property.<sup>32</sup>

Where developers make more financial gain from the grant of planning permission than the purchase price, the Treasury claims 'clawback' from these excess profits.<sup>33</sup> This happened at least twice in

the redevelopment of Gunwharf, the former HMS Vernon in Portsmouth. Changes to the current disposal system to include local benefit were proposed in 2017 by the Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust and the Royal Town Planning Institute South (Appendix 1) and in 2022 by the two Portsmouth MPs. In response to Parliamentary Questions the MOD Minister Jeremy Quin MP still insisted that, for example, they had obtained the best price for the historic Haslar Naval Hospital, despite the government's rejection of the Veterans' Village, an entirely appropriate proposal which would have linked the army veterans at the Royal Hospital Chelsea with naval pensioners and their wives/husbands in flats – which would have reused all the buildings.<sup>34</sup> Quin was shown evidence of the subsequent massive clawback the developers who bought the site had to pay the Treasury, related to the substantial profits from their early sale of the historic houses of the hospital's senior staff.<sup>35</sup> Haslar Hospital is now a gated community with expensive new residences and some converted buildings, but the historic hospital is so far largely unrestored.

A contrasting example is that regulations to provide social housing from the profits gained by increased planning value resulted in 292 homes being built at Erskine Barracks in Wiltshire, sold in 2014. A veterans' care community and an enterprise hub for new jobs were also constructed as part of a partnership between developers Redrow, OurEnterprise and the community group Wilton Community Land Trust.<sup>35</sup> But in London with much higher land values these regulations were not followed in the sale of the Old War Office in central London to the Hinduja brothers. They bought the property from the MOD in 2014 for £350m. They were allowed by Westminster planning authority, where more than four thousand families are homeless, not to provide the ninety-eight social housing units required under the local authority's planning

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rules. The Hinduja brothers only paid a £10m contribution towards provision for housing for key workers elsewhere rather than the calculated £39.6m. One of the eighty-five flats in the £1.2bn development went for £40m.<sup>36</sup>



Some countries also offer ex-defence communities valuable advice and other help such as funding to reconstruct their local economies, while others do not. The French Ministry of Defence has a directorate responsible for defence estate conversion, the DAR Accompagnement régional (defense.gouv.fr) with regional offices whose remit is to facilitate restructuring and support affected local communities. As long ago as 1927 Rochefort on the River Charente, founded by Louis XIV as a dockyard town to face the Atlantic, was offered special central government help after closure towards the costs of conversion. Like France, the US Department of Defense (DoD) has the Office of Economic Adjustment, recently renamed the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (ODLCC), to help communities adversely impacted by base closures. Once the list of recommended closures of military sites by the Base Reuse and Closure Commission (BRAC) is accepted by legislators, the ODLCC agency offers help to local communities with reuse planning – well in advance of the exit of military personnel. Community and base work together to determine a reuse plan. ODLCC funds are available to local communities to hire planning staff and consultants to prepare the actual planning document, as well as for other types of planning and economic studies. In most cases the community or region forms a base conversion committee to work with the agency throughout the Base Reuse process. An agreed plan of recording, decontamination, regeneration of the local economy, new public access to base facilities, ecological and environmental protection follows, controlled and inherited by local interests. As the plan is formulated, there are several disposal mechanisms for conveyance of DoD sites to new users: Public Benefit Conveyances, Homeless Assistance Conveyances, Negotiated Sale to public bodies for public purposes at fair market value, and Advertised Public sales to the highest bid, but these must be ‘approved by the military’. Parts of the site may be sold piecemeal, as long as the land uses conform to the agreed masterplan, which may include decontamination with help and funding from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the most polluted sites. Fiscal tools including tax breaks

and access to special funds enable the redevelopment to take place. In May 2022 it was announced that the United States Bipartisan

Infrastructure Law included an unprecedented \$1.5 billion investment in EPA's Brownfields program over the next two years, including up to \$10m per grant, a 50 per cent increase, up to \$10m per Assessment grant: a ten-fold increase, up to \$5m per Cleanup grant with no cost-share required out of a total of \$160m, up to \$5m in Revolving Loan Fund grants, \$1m in job training grants in order to maximize Brownfields' economic, environmental, and social performance and 'transform communities into sustainable and environmentally just places, enhance climate resiliency, and more.'<sup>37</sup>

There is an expectation that the disposal of publicly owned land should result in public social, economic and environmental benefits, but these will not necessarily happen if the land is valued in solely financial terms. Benefit to ex-defence communities is not a stated priority in the UK – in contrast to the United States. As described above, the positive US Base Reuse Process allows local communities to form bodies to take on sites, plan them to meet local needs, and receive them free. They are only put up for sale by the Department of Defense if there is no local interest or capacity to take them on. This variation directly affects the land use outcomes, and especially the extent to which the local community gains or does not do so.

A related concept then arises: how is 'the public interest' in these transactions to be defined? Is there a conflict between the national and the local interest in the redevelopment of such sites? For once defence dependent communities, base conversion is a profoundly important and symbolic land use exchange, but research into reconstruction – and in particular its implications for the historic defence estate – is rare, though there has been more in the United States, Italy and Germany as well as time-limited exchanges of experience between similar places funded by the EU.

To convert military installations into 'true common goods' Camerin suggests this is best achieved by bottom-up approaches, generally driven by citizens, who may require their 'right to the city'.<sup>38</sup> The more common top-down approaches and public consultation are discussed in *Barracks, Forts and Ramparts*.<sup>39</sup> The American 'eminent domain' only applies to land acquisitions for the public good, not to

disposals. In 2009 the UK MOD identified a lack of community

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benefit from disposal of defence land. Their rationale, increased efficiency of resource exploitation, has not necessarily been achieved, if the MOD's disastrous selloff of service family housing to Annington Homes for £1.662bn in 1996 is anything to go by. Most properties were leased back on two-hundred-year underleases, leaving the Ministry responsible for maintaining and upgrading them, costing at least £2bn more than Annington paid for them, a terrible deal for the state and for the taxpayer, according to Brett Christophers, who says that there have been no in-depth examinations of what public land disposal in Britain has meant for those living in the vicinity of disposal sites, except for Julian Dobson's study *In the Public Interest? Community Benefits from Ministry of Defence Land Disposals*.<sup>40</sup> In Dobson's investigation into how to reconcile the two seemingly irreconcilable approaches – maximum cash return to the Treasury versus local gain in jobs, new facilities, open space, housing – he found 'a lack of overarching academic research and little to suggest the issue has been high on the national policy agenda' and 'minimal interest in the issue from central government'.<sup>41</sup> He identified a perennial tension between short-term budgetary exigencies of the public bodies selling land and the long-term needs of the local community. Community benefits tend not to correlate with sale price or 'value for money'. Choices were made between the desire to maximise capital receipts from public land disposal and using it for social benefit. It was not surprising that benefit to local communities from a more considered approach has been ignored by the Ministry of Defence in favour of maximum financial return to the defence budget. A competing narrative to the logic of cost-saving and maximising the immediate financial return to the taxpayer is that the public good is best served by using public assets and their potential development to benefit the communities most impacted by them.<sup>42</sup>

If evaluation of outcomes is assessed in terms of local benefit to ex-defence communities, how can these be measured, when these sites and countries' disposal systems are so diverse? If the reuse is to be

sustainable, how is this defined? If local benefit rather than gain to the public purse is a priority, positive factors that result in sustainable reuse might include genuine community consultation with built-in feedback and commitment by local authority planners in agreed local plans, long timescales, public investment in new infrastructure, and vision, creativity and if necessary

risk-taking/entrepreneurship in regeneration proposals by developers tailored to local plans to meet local needs. Relevant measures include the extent of public access, proportions of buildings beneficially reused, new public and private housing, job creation and new public facilities that might be devised to compare the environmental, social and economic outcomes of naval, military and air force site renewal.<sup>43</sup>

There is evidence in UK policy development that the notion of ‘value’ is beginning to be seen in terms of broad public benefits and not only in cash terms. Treasury guidance on asset ownership issued in 2008 and the 2017 Cabinet Office Guide define value for money as ‘optimising net social costs and benefits . . . based on the interests of society as a whole.’ While it assumes that assets are employed most efficiently in private ownership, it warns that ‘externalities’ affecting social welfare should be taken into account. But of course, it is one thing to articulate a definition of value designed to encourage creative and long-term thinking about the future of land and property assets, and another to put such thinking into practice ‘in the hurly-burly of negotiations with developers, target-setting by central government and continuing cuts in public finances’.<sup>44</sup>

Defence ministries, sometimes jointly with ministries of culture, have maintained and made imaginative reuse of military and naval buildings. There needs to be acceptance that the revitalisation process is long term, and that public funds may be needed for new infrastructure. Examples I explored are the transformation of Brooklyn Navy Yard in New York at the NDS conference on dockyards in the Atlantic in 2019, of Suomenlinna in Helsinki at the conference on the Baltic in 2021 and Portsmouth Harbour in 2023. Governments and local authorities in their planning, economic development, and in some cases developer roles can, if their

relationship with defence estates organisations and the local community is productive, achieve creative work to bring these complex and difficult sites back into productive use.

In most European countries there are defence heritage sites where aspects of the transition to civilian uses have gone well, and the buildings have been beneficially reused. Where they are disposed of at nil or low value, and time is allowed for local determination of land use to emerge with the fullest public participation, this process appears to offer significant gains over the British system which requires maximum price, which may result in land uses that are not

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necessarily what local communities need. Its short-termism also militates against many long-standing conservation and environmental policies and good long-term planning.

#### **4. Who defines defence heritage?**

Specialist voluntary research bodies often pioneer this process. The international Fortress Study Group was set up in 1975 to advance the study of post-medieval artillery fortifications throughout the world. Its journal *Fort* and newsletter *Casemate* disseminate new research and scholarly articles, news and reviews. The group organises visits to fortifications in different parts of the world. Its specialist fortifications library is held at Fort Nelson in Hampshire as part of the Royal Armouries Collection. SAVE Britain's Heritage 1993 report *Deserted Bastions: Historic Naval and Military Architecture* was the first to celebrate the UK's built defence heritage and draw attention to the threats to its survival. The Naval Dockyards Society founded in 1995 publishes research and news in this journal *Transactions* and in its newsletter *Dockyards*.

As mentioned above, examinations of the reuse of brownfield land – or 'drosscapes' – do include ex- military sites. One of the stranger developments for those interested in the surviving material culture of war is publications focused on abandoned places, including military sites. In 1975 Paul Virilio published his seminal book, *Bunker archéologie*, translated by George Collins as *Bunker Archaeology*

(Princeton Architectural Press). Many more recent books and websites followed, about bunkers, pillboxes and the archaeology of war, including *The Atlantikwall as military archaeological landscape = L'Atlantikwall come paesaggio di archeologia militare*,<sup>45</sup> Urbanks' *Abandoned Cold War Germany*<sup>46</sup> and other websites about former Soviet bases in eastern Europe are often put together by urban explorers. While Cal Flynn's *Islands of Abandonment* explores *Life in the Post-Human Landscape*, including the once fortified Inchkeith island in the Firth of Forth Scotland and the return of rare wildlife in the buffer zone between Turkish and Greek Cyprus,<sup>47</sup> several recent picture books celebrate a wide geographical range of abandoned military places' poetic, picturesque and emotional resonance in large format photographs.<sup>48</sup> Why this focus on war-related ruins continues to develop would be interesting to

examine. Perhaps distance from actual hot war allows more nuanced and even sentimental responses to develop, especially to picturesque ruins. Few of the sites featured in these books have found new uses.

Definitions of what constitutes heritage vary. Not only are there are considerable variations between countries in what constitutes a protected historic monument – but in the US for lesser than federally protected property, between districts. In the Netherlands. 'A monument on the grounds of the Heritage Act is an immovable property that is part of cultural heritage. For example, historic buildings, defenses, gardens, parks or statues. A monument can consist of several properties . . . A protected city or village view is under the Heritage Act, an area consisting of iconic buildings with historical characteristics. Four separate rules apply to these areas: a zoning plan for a protected place is much more detailed than a normal zoning plan. Within a protected cityscape or village, not every building has to be a monument.'<sup>49</sup> The UK's definitions of cultural heritage derive from the ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter (2002): 'Heritage is a broad concept and includes the natural as well as the cultural environment. It encompasses landscapes, historic places, sites and built environments, as well as bio-diversity, collections, past and continuing cultural practices, knowledge and living experiences. It records and expresses the long processes of

historic development, forming the essence of diverse national, regional, indigenous and local identities and is an integral part of modern life. It is a social dynamic reference point and positive instrument for growth and change. The particular heritage and collective memory of each locality or community is irreplaceable and an important foundation for development, both now and into the future.’<sup>50</sup> As a federal country Belgium’s three regions, Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels, each has its own powers over town planning, historic building protection and other areas which are controlled by three different legislations and three different historic buildings departments.<sup>51</sup>

In the wider European sphere, in 2017 the Council of Europe Convention on Offenses relating to Cultural Property provided for inventories or databases of cultural property,<sup>52</sup> which is an essential stage in protecting it from damaging change. How old buildings have to be before they can be legally protected from damaging change varies from country to country. In the UK it’s thirty years and in Belgium it used to be a hundred years.

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In a country as vast and complex as India, ‘3676 historic buildings are currently Centrally Protected Monuments or declared as National Monuments and Archaeological and Remains Act of 1958 (modified AMSAR 2010)’ and there are forty World Heritage Sites recognised for their Outstanding Universal Value by UNESCO. But a conservatively estimated 100,000 largely unprotected buildings need urgent attention nationwide and important historic buildings have not survived. How many of these are defence heritage sites is as yet unknown. There is currently an impetus both to document and map India’s heritage wealth and in particular to protect twentieth- century buildings including colonial-era sites.<sup>53</sup>

Since many defence sites contain significant historic structures, a further question is who defines military heritage: is it the culture ministry or the ministry of defence? The roles played by ministries of culture in determining appropriate futures for surplus historic defence property vary. After the end of the Cold War the contraction and



rationalisation of the UK Ministry of Defence estate, prompted by a growing awareness of public interest in military historic buildings, stimulated the government agency English Heritage into realising that wider public understanding of military sites was needed, and that, where necessary, the surviving structures on them should be conserved, they commissioned thematic reports on typical defence architecture, dockyards (government shipyards), barracks, and military airfields, to identify what was historically significant across the country and worth legal protection. The Barracks Review and associated book of 1998<sup>54</sup> raised barracks' profile at a critical moment, while Jonathan Coad's *The Royal Dockyards, 1690–1850: Architecture and Engineering Works of the Sailing Navy* of 1989<sup>55</sup> did the same for naval bases. Many barracks now protected were transformed from candidates for demolition into highly sought-after real estate. Together these scholarly and well-illustrated volumes added immeasurably to our knowledge. In the Netherlands the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) and the Cultural Heritage Agency (RCE), together with the Central Government Real Estate Agency (RVB) and the Government Architect, are involved in taking 'cultural heritage into account at an early stage in the disposal/sale process.' In the UK heritage agencies such as Historic England, Historic Scotland and Cadw advise central government, including the Defence Infrastructure Organisation,

the property arm of the Ministry of Defence (MOD). Historic England recommends which defence sites should be legally protected to the Minister of Culture, though now the owner can comment before the decision whether to list properties for their historic or architectural interest is taken. Historic England and its equivalents in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland also have a say in the redevelopment of historic defence sites.

The extent and variety of these are considerable. In 2012 the UK's MOD said it was responsible for over half of the government's historic environment assets, including 'over 800 listed buildings and 700 scheduled monuments; in excess of 10,000 archaeological monuments and eight registered parks and gardens. Areas of the MOD estate fall within 10 UK World Heritage Sites and a number of

MOD sites have been designated as, or are within local planning authority conservation areas. Overseas, MOD is responsible for important historic environment features such as the classical remains on the Cyprus sovereign bases, historic buildings of Gibraltar and a number of features on training areas in Germany.’ ‘While it inherited prehistoric archaeology and historic houses it and its forerunners also created facilities such as barracks, airfields, dockyards, and training centres such as the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst and the Britannia Royal Naval College. The Defence Infrastructure Organisation is responsible for the MOD’s estate and sustainable development policy.’ It is policy to sustainably manage and continually improve the estate, including the heritage assets. Heritage plays an important role in improving the quality of life for those who work and live on the estate and its role is recognised in enhancing the ethos of the services. As a government department, the MOD has a duty to be exemplary in the management of its historic estate and has adopted the DCMS Protocol of the Care of the Government Historic Estate.’<sup>56</sup> The number and frequency of decayed historic defence sites listed on Historic England’s Buildings at Risk register tell a different story. Portsmouth naval base’s Naval Academy of 1733 continues to deteriorate while no new use is found for it, as do forts and other military structures in southern Hampshire.

Historic England’s *The Disposal of Heritage Assets Guidance Note for government departments and non-departmental public bodies* (2015) says that public bodies have an important role in promoting regeneration and sustainable development through the disposal of their

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surplus land and property. They should first try to reuse them themselves. Accepting the highest purchase offer is not always appropriate. Any options for reuse should be considered before deciding to sell, and unused heritage assets need to be actively protected. ‘Where a heritage asset has an economically viable use and has been kept in good repair, normal methods of open market sale will be used. However, special disposal procedures may be necessary in exceptional cases to secure appropriate ownership, repair or use of the

asset.’ (8.10). Government departments should take steps to ensure that purchasers of vulnerable heritage assets have the resources to maintain them. Options for partnerships with the private sector should be explored. Where outstandingly important buildings are involved, alternative beneficial uses may be difficult to find and these might involve such a degree of change that their special interest is compromised.<sup>57</sup>

Investigation of the extent to which defence sites’ original military values and character are retained in the new adaptive uses is a key element of our research. In Germany when an investor acquires decommissioned historic sites, whether German, Allied, or NATO with structures of cultural or historical significance, when they intend to pull down historic buildings, permission would first have to be obtained from the Amt für Denkmalpflege / Denkmalschutz at state and local government level. These have the final say and a veto over partial or complete demolition. In Italy, as already said, the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage has a very conservative attitude which imposes constraints which leave little opportunity for change or creativity in reuse.<sup>58</sup> In Sweden the law on the disposal of state property applies to all government property including listed and heritage buildings.<sup>59</sup> Once redundant, as in other countries, sites are offered to other government departments and agencies. The National Property Board (Statens fastighetsverket) determines whether a listed property is considered part of the governmental history of Sweden. Listed property can be transferred to the National Property Board. Military properties owned by the state in use by the Swedish Armed Forces are handled by Fortifikationsverket. The Swedish National Heritage Board (Riksantikvarieämbetet) decides in each case whether to approve a new non-governmental owner. This is not permitted if there is a risk that the transfer may decrease its cultural-historical value. Local governments are then asked if there is a need to use the site for ‘society/municipality building purposes’. The market price depends on what they intend to use it for. If the plan says ‘military use’ the price may be slightly lower, but in the majority of cases, understandably, local governments have no plans for their military areas. Once in local government ownership, neighbours and other stakeholders have a say about the proposed new land uses. As already

mentioned, purchase at military use value enabled Karlskrona local authority to consult the community about their needs that might be met on Stumholmen. They then granted planning permission to developers for those uses, gaining from the enhanced value by selling on for redevelopment. If the municipality does not require the land, it may otherwise be sold to the highest bidder. Most of the disposal of Swedish military property took place in the 1990s and early 2000s. In the last ten years only a few listed buildings have been disposed of by Fortifikationsverket. Today these 'are very much part of a living military heritage, and reuse within the military is now the main option instead of selling'.<sup>60</sup>

Japan's redundant naval base Maizuru offers a positive example of post-defence survival and reuse following transfer to the local government. Built in the Meiji (1868–1912) and Taisho eras (1912–1926), its brick buildings were primarily used to house machinery and to store naval munitions. Twelve of the dockyard buildings survive. Of these, four are still occupied by the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force, whose ships are docked nearby. The eight others are considered nationally important cultural properties, now called Maizuru Brick Park. They are owned and managed by Maizuru local government. They were converted into a museum, gift shop, restaurant and hireable event spaces. Red Brick Building No. 5 of 1918 built to house torpedoes is so large a railway runs through it and a large crane in the ceiling was used to lift the heavy artillery. It serves as a multi-purpose hall for exhibitions, bazaars and music events throughout the year. Above the dockyard are the Kitasui Water Purification Plants of 1901–1920 which supplied fresh water to the battleships and naval base. Its water tanks are 6m high. It's accessible on special walking tours.<sup>61</sup>

Historic defence sites are particularly vulnerable to neglect and decay when they are owned by ministries or agencies which have no remit or funds to keep them in good repair. The big problem in the UK is

that where the MOD has no use for a historic building – as they point

out – they are not funded to keep it in good condition, which may result in long-term decay and ultimately lead to demolition, ‘controlled ruination’ or escalation in eventual reuse costs. Until 2006 the MOD was exempt from civil planning law: free to alter or demolish historic buildings without obtaining permission from the local authority. It still cannot be prosecuted if the building is in an active base. Establishing whether this is the case in other countries would be useful. If commercial developers paid a high price, they might clear the site to obtain high financial return from land uses such as leisure/ retail and high-end housing, which may not be what locals need. Viable long-term conservation is heavily reliant on cooperation and joint-working between a wide variety of interests and disciplines. As the most challenging historic sites to conserve for future generations are often located in the most economically and socially disadvantaged areas, there are lessons conservationists and historians focused on military landscapes could share – even between countries with widely different political systems.

## 5. Routes to reuse – institutional experiment

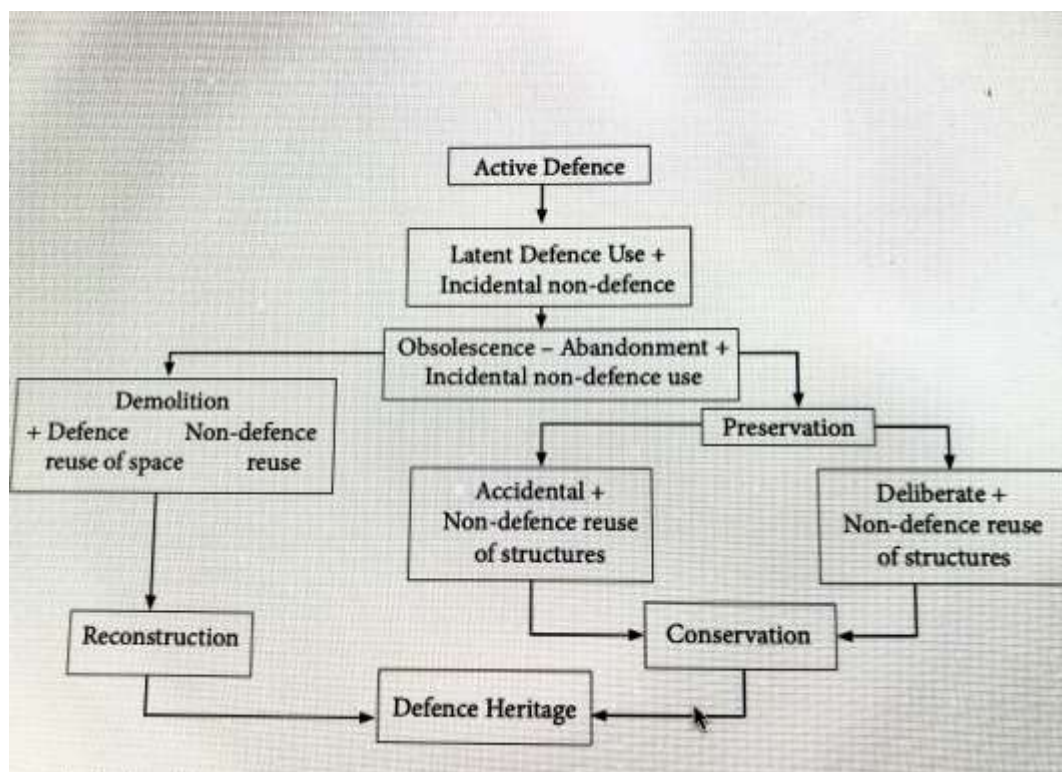


Fig. 1. (Right) Re-use of redundant defence works: a schema. (From *War and the City*, Gregory J. Ashworth, Routledge 1991, p. 156)

As Greg Ashworth set out in this diagram, there are two main routes to reuse for active defence sites, once they have passed from active defence use to obsolescence and abandonment: demolition or to preservation, which then lead either to conservation or redevelopment.

For heritage dominated sites which cannot be sold to developers, different administrative structures have been set up by UK Government to take them on: Historic Trusts – Chatham in 1984, Portsmouth 1985, Royal Gunpowder Mills at Waltham Abbey in 1991 and the Greenwich Foundation in 1998. The Royal Naval College Greenwich Foundation leased major historic buildings to the University of Greenwich and Trinity Laban College of Music. Maritime Greenwich was declared a World Heritage Site in 1997. While this designation does not directly entail funding, the essential WHS Management Plan which is regularly reviewed by ICOMOS aims to ensure that the historic buildings are restored and used appropriately, and that any new development does not detract from the site's historic value. The Chatham and Portsmouth trusts were considerably underfunded for their essential task

of restoring and converting to productive use the historic buildings and infrastructure they had been gifted. A different model was Plymouth Development Corporation (1993–98) which was given Mount Wise, Royal William Yard and Mount Batten with £55m of subsidy to regenerate these three sites within five years. Despite spending millions of pounds, their rehabilitation process was by no means complete when it was dissolved – evidence that a much longer timescale is needed to achieve positive regeneration of these heritage laden sites. In one case Gosport Borough Council was 'gifted' the deeply contaminated ordnance depot Priddy's Hard by the MOD – but without a government 'dowry' to redevelop it, other sources of finance had to be found. The Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust, whose dowry in 1985 was also insufficient to tackle long-term decay in its historic buildings, is now the owner and developer of the Hard's historic core, working with housing developers and a brewery with the necessary financial resources.<sup>62</sup>

In contrast to the Plymouth example, the US Development Corporations, Brooklyn and Philadelphia, have long-term remits, and they also benefit from tax breaks and innovative funding. The United States Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process outlined above was set up under President Clinton in 1995. As this diagram shows it has two related parallel and co-ordinated courses of action – by the Federal government and by the local community.

Where the local capacity exists, a local Base Reuse body of local government and property interests is constituted. This consults local people, and the process culminates in implementation of the local plans for the site at the same time as the government disposes of the property. An example is Brunswick Naval Air Station (BNAS). Founded in 1943, it was once one of Maine's largest employers. Marked for closure by BRAC in 2005, BNAS was officially disestablished in 2011. The Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority (MRRA) partnered with the US Department of Commerce Economic Administration. The MRRA was given 1,650 acres, approximately 80 per cent of the total base, for redevelopment at the time of closure. The MRRA applied for 'foreign trade zone' status from the US Department of Commerce Foreign-Trade Zone Board in 2010, and received this status in 2012.<sup>63</sup> Foreign trade zones are ports of entry to the United States where goods from overseas can arrive duty-free to be processed or incorporated in products

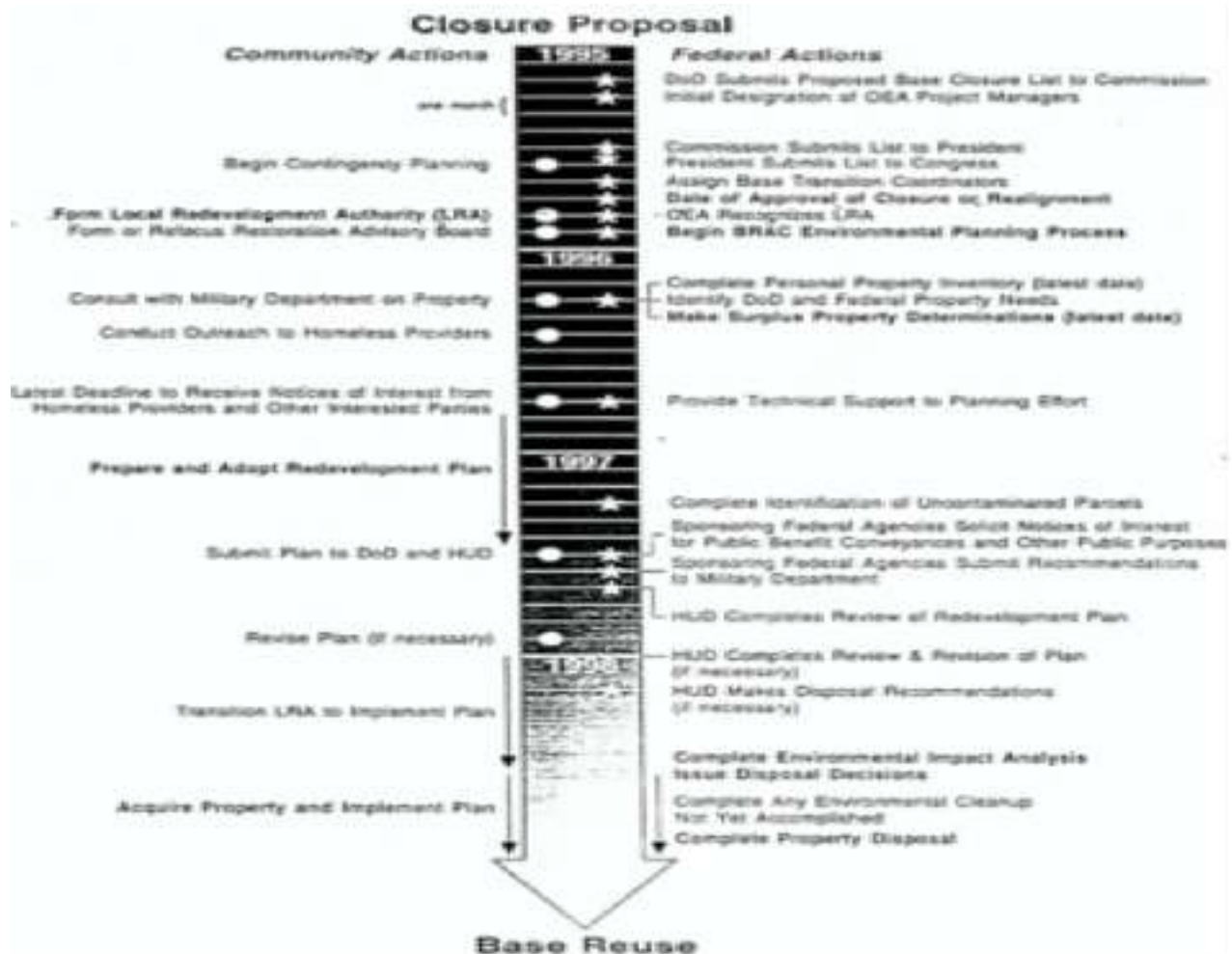
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Fig. 1. (Right) Re-use of redundant defence works: a schema. (From *War and the City*, Gregory J. Ashworth, Routledge 1991, p. 156)

Fig. 2. (Below) US Base Realignment and Closure Process.

Doing Things Differently: how do countries dispose of their surplus defence land?





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before being sold in the U.S market or, in some cases, exported to foreign customers.<sup>64</sup>

In Philadelphia and Brooklyn New York the successor bodies were Development Corporations, but unlike Plymouth Development Corporation in the UK which was only appointed for five years (1993– 1998), their task was not time limited. Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation in New York was eventually created to take on the dockyard which had been purchased by New York city council in the 1960s with the aim of job creation to replace the thousands of jobs lost when the yard closed; no housing was permitted. The Philadelphia and New York development corporations continue to be successful in creating jobs, reusing buildings and raising funds, or finding other investors, aided by positive tax breaks and investment.<sup>65</sup> Rising energy and running costs as well as maintenance

and restoration of older buildings are a challenge to public bodies which take on historic defence sites. The UK's Heritage Lottery Fund, whose income comes from people buying lottery tickets, has been vital in financing not only restoration and conversion of historic buildings, but in paying for new ones, such as the award-winning Mary Rose Museum housing King Henry VIII's flagship in Portsmouth.

As specialised ports, former dockyards are sometimes redeveloped as commercial ports – but modern port operations which require large tracts of land for containerisation and new operational buildings may lead to the loss of their historic and cultural integrity.<sup>66</sup> Key historic buildings are lost. In Sheerness Dockyard in Kent the Great Quadrangle Storehouse of 1824–29 by Edward Holl, a massive five-storey building with 60,000 square feet of storage space which was listed Grade II, was demolished by the Medway Ports Authority – on the grounds that the economic well-being of the Isle of Sheppey which was so dependent on the continued prosperity of the port of Sheerness was paramount.<sup>67</sup> Royal Engineer Col. Green's pioneering iron-framed multistorey Grade I Boat Store of 1856–60 also in Sheerness Dockyard has been on the Heritage at Risk Register for many years. Peel Ports which owns the port would like to demolish it. Similarly, key dry docks and other buildings in Wales's Pembroke Dock were filled in or demolished in civilian expansion of the port. Regeneration through heritage has been perhaps recently gaining traction in Europe, where until the Ukraine war armed forces were reducing. However, where armed forces are

expanding and need more land the pressures on the surviving historic environment are different. When the oldest defence establishment in Asia, Mumbai's historic dockyard, established in 1735, was no longer required by the Indian Navy, its defence and maritime land was divided between three landowners, the Indian Navy, the Mumbai Port Trust (MbPT) and the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd, which are public sector companies owned by the government of India. As the navy expands there is pressure to build naval housing or office space – at 'a risk for the vast inventory of major and minor historic structures that lie within its precincts.'<sup>68</sup>

Commercial developers recognise the potential of ex-defence sites which are located in central positions. As Ann Coats says, former dockyards are so rich in material culture and are attractive development sites because they are so large, and have diverse buildings.<sup>69</sup> But raising sufficient funding to rehabilitate these industrial complexes is vital for private developers, and getting a balance between reused buildings, profit-able new ones and financing new infrastructure is their crucial act. Berkeley Homes, developer of Woolwich Arsenal in London, had to pay for a new Crossrail station to attract new residents to their site. To relieve congestion on the centuries-old lowest River Medway crossing in Kent and to assist with redevelopment of Chatham Dockyard which closed in 1982, the Rochester Bridge Trust developed the £80m Medway Tunnel, which opened in 1996.<sup>70</sup> The dockyard was divided into three: Chatham Heritage, a development zone; Chatham Maritime, and a Freeport.

When public authorities take on former defence sites, standing historic buildings may still not survive. Hampshire County Council transformed the Royal Victoria Hospital (1856) on Southampton Water into the Royal Victoria Country Park, but the huge quarter of a mile-long military hospital building which treated troops injured in the Crimea, the Boer War and both world wars was entirely demolished in 1966, except for the former chapel and YMCA building, now used as an interpretation centre and a cafe. The poignant graveyard on the hill above is the last resting place of thousands of young men and women lost in wars. The officers' mess, sold separately, was converted into flats inside a gated community, while the mental health complex became Hampshire's police headquarters. Not all former military landscapes can be publicly accessible. Tours of the former Royal Gunpowder

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Works at Waltham Abbey Essex are only possible by minibus: it was impossible to clear the grounds of the explosives and flammable materials accumulated over the years – though Essex's largest heronry benefits from the isolation.

Are there transferable lessons between sites in particular countries – or between countries with widely different cultures? What would be useful are inter- nationally usable prototypes, which identify routes to the achievement of successful regeneration of defence land, particularly of historic sites, which achieve social and cultural gains as well as financial returns. The EU has funded many such exchanges of experience, but usually only between a few similar defence areas and mostly limited to two years. Examples include Net- work Demilitarised, RENDOC, KONVER, Renaval, SHARP (Sustainable Historic Arsenals Regeneration Partnership), ARCHWAY (Access and Regeneration of Cultural Heritage in Walled Towns), AsiaUrbs linking walled cities Portsmouth, Obidos in Portugal and Xingcheng in Liaoning Province China, and ASCEND: Achieving the Socio-Economic Re-use of former Military Land and Heritage and MAPS (Military Areas as Public Spaces). In most of these the policy outcomes are usually specific to the partner sites and local authorities involved rather than being transferable to other places. Good Practice guides such as those produced by SHARP (2004–2007) which linked historic arsenals in England, Spain, Est- onia and Malta are rarer. This partnership produced a dynamic model.

SHARP's *Regeneration through Heritage Understanding the Development Potential of Historic European Arsenal* set out a regeneration process in detail, as did MAPS (2016–2018), which linked eight European local authorities with military sites to work out regeneration processes together. MAPS' Model Management Framework Redefining the function, social role and accessibility of former military heritage, to promote development sustainability and inclusive- ness, was co-ordinated by the University of Piacenza, one of a number of centres of Italian expertise. I spoke at their final workshop in Serres in Greece when MAPS' framework was launched: however, accord- ing to Leitner and Sheppard, these EU projects took time to negotiate, were expensive to evaluate and had little input from citizens' groups.<sup>71</sup> The partners in these projects were mostly local authorities, which may differ in how they consult their communities. But

Fig. 3. The ASCEND model.



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in my experience, if local people are offered opportunities to learn how to participate in shaping their communities' physical and economic future – or when they initiate such actions themselves – as happened at Plymouth Mount Wise – they participate fully and the outcomes are beneficial.<sup>72</sup>

## **6. Adaptive reuse of military sites and their contribution to regeneration and to tackling climate change**

Understanding the site – its history, evolution, location, the standing structures, their condition and potential for adaptive reuse – is the key to success. One definition of this is ‘Adaptive reuse is the conscious decision to preserve the past while planning for the future, breathing new life into neglected neighbourhoods.’<sup>73</sup> The carbon footprint of demolition – the waste of building materials which cost energy to manufacture, transport and assemble – is considerable, not to mention the airborne pollutants generated in the process and in subsequent demolition. The loss of particular cultural identities when older buildings disappear is another powerful driver to restoration and rehabilitation instead of demolition. ‘Heritage organisations have traditionally defined architectural value in terms of historic interest and aesthetic merit. But they are quickly learning to pitch their arguments in different terms. To talk about the costs – environmental and financial – implicit in demolition. To reiterate the mantra that the greenest building is the one that already exists. Data on the carbon cost of demolition and rebuilding has become the most valuable weapon in the conservationist’s armoury . . . But it doesn’t tell us how to identify more nebulous measures of value: artistic work; social purpose, historic resonance; civic pride.’<sup>74</sup>

If the UK’s target of achieving carbon neutrality is to be achieved by 2050, recycling, reusing and adapting existing buildings is an important contribution to cutting the country’s carbon emissions.<sup>75</sup> Historic England’s 2020 Heritage counts report says that ‘The historic environment has a close connection to economic activity. A great many of our jobs and enterprises are dependent on, attracted to or based in historic buildings and spaces.’<sup>76</sup> Their Heritage and Economy report sets out the economic profile of the heritage sector, with summaries of research on the economic value of heritage which show that it is inherently sustainable and is an integral part of a low-carbon economy. Heritage assets in productive use contribute to regeneration and the competitive advantage of places, and they can also be a catalyst for inclusive growth and an important part of the wellbeing economy. Heritage employment growth outstripped the rest of the UK economy, growing almost twice as fast between 2011 and 2019. The conservation, use, and re-use of our heritage assets exemplify the fundamental principles of the circular economy. The cost of reducing

pollution as measured by the marginal abatement cost (MAC) is generally lower for a retrofitted historic building than for an equivalent new building. It has been estimated that for every €1 million invested in energy renovation of buildings, an average of eighteen jobs are created in the EU.<sup>77</sup> But of course, as already said, definitions of heritage and conservation regulations differ widely.

Physical challenges and opportunities for adaptation are as different as the structures are. The large covered spaces which once housed naval construction lend themselves to other uses. In Tallinn a submarine manufacturer Noblessner built twelve submarines in 1912–17. After Estonia gained independence in 1918 smaller vessels were manufactured there. In the Soviet era, ‘Factory no 7’ repaired ships damaged in World War II, vessels for the navy and renovating trawlers as well as constructing metal structures used in ports. After the restoration of Estonian independence in 1991 it continued this work for another ten years. From 2001 it was owned by the BLRT Grupp, which was responsible for its redevelopment. It now houses art galleries, shops, a marina, a brewery and restaurants with sea views. The educational PROTO Invention Factory explores key inventions and prototypes.<sup>78</sup> Brooklyn’s very large storage buildings have been adapted by adding windows for small scale manufacturing, and in one case a rooftop city farm which absorbs rain that would otherwise overload city drainage. Since 1997 Corfu’s Central Library, the oldest public library in Greece, and the island’s archives have been appropriately housed in the former English barracks in the Old Fortress.<sup>79</sup> The lateral vaults with raised floors on the upper level offer meeting and research rooms, specialist libraries and storage, accessed by a central corridor.

The restoration and conversion in 2009 of Spitbank Fort in the Solent approach to Portsmouth Harbour a mile from Southsea seafront was a particular challenge, which illustrates the complexity of converting historic defence sites. The architect had detailed negotiations with the planning authority, which included unravelling the complex listed building and planning issues for a building site in the middle of the sea. As lead designer she developed a scheme for a new use as a luxury venue, coordinating the design work from other consultants

(structural, mechanical & electrical, fire), since the historic structure had very limited services not fit for the new use. She negotiated with the planning authority for a Change of Use application, unravelled the complexities of a Scheduled Ancient Monument and resolved planning issues. Liaison with the Palmerston Forts Society and the Local Conservation Officer to acquire all available information relevant to the structure was useful, as well as working closely with an expert from English Heritage for the planning application. She prepared tender documents and dealt with the main contractor for the duration of the project. The client managed the project and inspected the works as they proceeded.<sup>80</sup>

However, some specialised military buildings are more challenging to adapt. The five massively armoured concrete WWII German submarine pens on the French Atlantic coast constructed from 1941 to 1943 by Operation Todt and other submarine shelters in Germany and Norway are too solid to demolish. The armoured lock in St Nazaire houses the *S-637 Espadon*, ‘une squalle silencieux’, while the enormous grey spaces of the submarine pens have in some cases been radically stripped out and the docks filled in. They have become gigantic public open spaces, housing new activities not only inside but on the roofs, where there are gardens. A bar, restaurant and the tourist office in contrasting lightweight materials are visible, and cinema and conference facilities are sheltered within the structure. The huge available volume and dock of one pen has been brilliantly exploited in l’Escal d’Atlantique, a reconstruction of the interior of an ocean liner, to celebrate the many ocean liners built in Sainte-Nazaire. In Lorient one pen houses the interpretation for the submarine *Flore* and another offers protected water to train yachtsmen how to survive capsizing at sea.<sup>81</sup>

Bourdeaux’s submarine bunker is used for temporary art exhibitions and the Bassins des lumières is a digital arts centre. In Norway Bergen’s submarine pen houses local archives in its temperature-controlled environment. In West Berlin one of the Teufelsbergs, one of the 80m hills of WWII debris, was crowned in the Cold War with the American listening station housed in a flamboyant dome with Disney-like detailing, extensively researched by John Schofield and



Wayne Cocroft of Historic England.<sup>82</sup> There was talk of demolishing it or converting it into a hotel, but as far as I know, this hasn't happened.

Residential military buildings such as barracks offer more easily adaptable spaces – whether it's for education, for schools, colleges and universities as in Malta, Barcelona, Portsmouth, Plymouth, or for offices, as in Gibraltar, where Xapo Bank Headquarters now occupy a limestone barracks of 1817 in the historic centre. A long linear walkway serves as the main circulation space. Most offices are organised around the courtyard where the circulations cross. 'The coolness and robustness' of the limestone walls and timber structure are offset by wood and leather fittings.<sup>83</sup> In contrast, Gibraltar's Rosia Bay water tanks in the Royal Navy's Victualling Yard of 1799–1804 fared less well. They were utilised by the Ministry of Defence until April 2004, when they were transferred to the Government of Gibraltar. When the government planned to demolish them and construct two hundred affordable flats with underground car parking on the site in February 2006 the Gibraltar Heritage Trust sought a legal remedy, but had to drop its case for fear of legal costs. Marcus Binney, Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London and Architecture Correspondent of *The Times*, wrote about the controversy in his column, 'Nelson caves to be turned into a car park.'<sup>84</sup> Dr Ann Coats, then Secretary of the Naval Dockyards Society and author of *History of the Rosia Water Tanks*, described them as 'A unique engineering monument to Royal Navy ingenuity and Gibraltarian craftsmanship, transforming Gibraltar into an invincible fortress. They enabled Nelson and Admiral Lord St Vincent to maintain their fleets in the Mediterranean, blockading Toulon and vanquishing the French at the Battle of the Nile.'<sup>85</sup> Appeals were made to the Governor of Gibraltar Sir Francis Richards to list the tanks. Despite the pleas, neither the tanks nor the Victualling Yard were listed in 2006. Listing was limited to the entrance to the yard. The water tanks were demolished in August that year despite strong opposition. The government's actions were the subject of local and international criticism. The Irish developers did not have enough funding to finish the development, which was completed by the government.<sup>86</sup>

In my NDS paper ‘Dockyards in Art; Art in Dock- yards’ (2011) I explored how art galleries, exhibitions and art installations in historic and new buildings enrich local culture and offer gains to the local economy.<sup>87</sup> Recent research into the effect of artists’ workspaces in residential developments in London including Woolwich Arsenal offers evidence that they are an important component of commercially successful development. ‘Data suggests there is a financial value to benefits that creative industries bring to residential areas, expressed in house price data.’<sup>88</sup> Inspired by the transformation of two disused military islands, Governors Island in New York and Naoshima in Japan, into islands of art and culture, San Francisco Bay’s two islands, Yerba Buena and Treasure Island, are being turned into a new offshore neighbourhood and art destination. Treasure Island was a manmade Depression-era project to host the Golden Gate International Exhibition in 1939, later occupied by the US Navy. On Yerba Buena, Hiroshi Sugimoto’s ‘Point of Infinity’, a tapering 21m needle of polished steel is the first commission towards the city’s goal: a walkable community of eight thousand homes surrounded by water and parks and world-class works of art.<sup>89</sup> Historic citadels such as the one in Cascais in Portugal are likely to enjoy the highest degree of protection, and in this example art is an important part of the land-use mix. The barracks inside the citadel now contain the five-star Pestana Cidadela Cascais: its website says that it is one of the first hotels in Europe to have an Art District on site. ‘This historic hotel is surrounded by studios, galleries, and museums with views of the sea and the Cascais marina.’<sup>90</sup>

The transformation of Vauban Barracks in Freiberg in southern Germany has often been highlighted as an outstanding example, not only of sustainable reuse of existing structures, but of the positive and beneficial involvement of the people of the city. It was originally developed as a military base in 1936, taken over by occupying French forces after WWII, and abandoned by the military in 1992. Its redevelopment was planned as a model sustainable district. Construction began in 1998; the first residents moved in in 2001. All the homes are built to low consumption energy standards and one hundred units to the Passivhaus standard. Some are heated by a combined heat and power station burning wood chips, and many have

solar or photovoltaic cells. The Solar Settlement of fifty-nine homes is the first housing community in the world to produce a positive energy balance which is fed back into the city's grid, giving each home the profit. Most transport is on foot or cycle. Car owners must buy a space in the multi-storey car parks on the periphery, while they can use the citywide car-sharing club which has ten cars in the district.<sup>91</sup>

However, sometimes 'controlled ruination' is the only way forward. Celebrating the British National Trust's 125th anniversary in 2020, the east of England regional director identified seven principles creating a sustainable conservation model, since not everything is equally important and conservation is the careful management of change. A policy of controlled ruination was adopted at Orford Ness in Norfolk for the rapidly assembled specialised structures built to house the development and testing of atomic weapons. They were recorded, but allowed to slowly decline, making visits to the site an eerie and unsettling experience.

## **7. How are local people consulted – and are their views taken into account in post- defence planning?**

As already said, military sites' secure perimeters exclude public access in the name of national security. The first stage towards reuse, establishing what is there, followed by imagining what it might become is peculiarly difficult when planners, developers and local people don't know about them. Closure leads to loss of jobs and income and contraction of the local economy, often long dominated by government policy. Renewal strategies need to involve local people, but how are they to be consulted, and will their views be taken into account? Locals' active participation as full partners in the decision-making on new land uses is perhaps the apogee, rarely achieved, though it is the basis of the United States base reuse system. 'Consult and ignore' is the more common experience in the planning process in the UK. Riley's illustration of the pressures on port development illustrates this power imbalance.

But where local people's aspirations and needs are taken into account and met in the new land uses, the time taken in decision-making is

often reduced since there is less opposition. This is also true of the next stage, when new owners take possession. What happens to the former workforce is not examined here.

To take the hardest cases first, the greatest challenge to post-defence planning by the surrounding communities are those bases built,

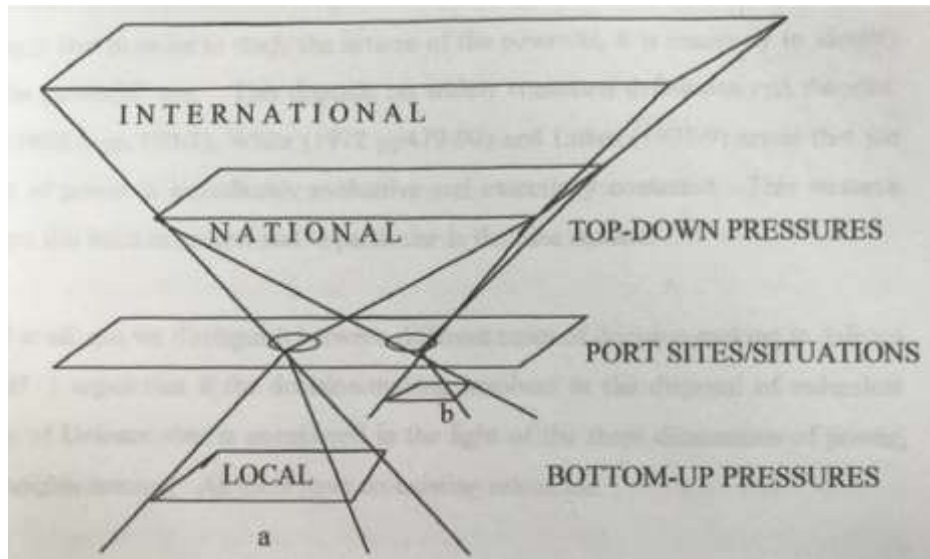


Fig. 4. Riley's model of pressures shaping ports. (Hoyle et al., 1988)<sup>92</sup>

maintained and supplied by hostile invading forces, heavily guarded, supplied by air and then abandoned. Before the Velvet Revolution the USSR maintained as many as seventy-four military sites in what was then Czechoslovakia as well as many others in other countries in the Eastern Bloc, all built in preparation for a war that never happened. To take one example, Boží Dar near the town of Milovice, one of the fastest growing suburban areas in the country, less than thirty miles northeast of Prague, was a top-secret Soviet base supplied solely by air and housing as many as 10,000 personnel, surrounded by forty-four hardened hangars and munition stores. The runway was extended and widened to one of the largest in central Europe. From 1990–91, 22,071 soldiers, many military vehicles and war materials left Boží Dar by train, road and air. In 1992 the base was given back to the Czech government by Russia, which claimed that its value as real estate would make up for the cost of clearing its five hundred crumbling housing blocks, hangars and barracks, where nuclear warheads had been stored. The site was seriously polluted by explosives and buried live ammunition. The abandoned military base

was looted and vandalised – and used as settings for Czech TV programmes. The Department of Landscape and Urban Planning in the Faculty of Environmental Science of the Czech University of Life Science in Prague is undertaking a long-term study of the site.<sup>93</sup>

In 1939 all the local inhabitants were deported from Paldiski in Estonia, another top-secret Soviet military naval base, as also happened in Porkkala in Finland a few years later. At the beginning of the 1990s ‘this top restricted town’ was surrounded with barbed-wire fences, since it was a training centre for the crews of nuclear submarines. At its maximum there were over 16,000 Soviet soldiers and officers stationed in nine different military units, including training for the use of nuclear ballistic missiles and submarines. The last Russian military ship left Paldiski in August 1994, leaving two nuclear reactors, terrible undocumented pollution and huge piles of debris . . . For several years visits were promoted as ‘Shock Tourism: Come and see the terrible mess left by the Soviets’.<sup>94</sup> Colonial era survivals such as the black and white bungalows and military apartment blocks in Queenstown Singapore offer more ambiguous examples of reuse. These survivors of the British empire which the UK army left in 1971 have recently been revalued as ‘little bohemia’: where ‘alternative ideas, ideas and lifestyles may be tolerated, without contaminating the Asian values of the majority living in public housing estates’ according to Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew. He highlighted the integration of old landmarks into new environments as essential to ‘retaining the memories and the character of the place’ reused to house an elitist community, isolated physically and ideologically from the rest of ‘conservative’ Singapore society, as an intellectually stimulation and creative environment. About 60 per cent of the black and white houses and flats were conserved while the rest and the ageing dis- used military barracks were demolished. Art galleries were built in this new ‘Wessex Estate Centre’ and the Colbar, or Colonial Bar, dating from 1953 was taken down for road widening and relocated in 2002 at its centre.<sup>95</sup>

Before reuse can even begin, the challenge of undocumented pollution has first to be addressed – and so does the symbolic value of the property, which may mean different things to different

communities with a stake in it. As Zeynep Aygen says in her book, ‘The importance of local community participation in historic building conservation has not been fully adopted by policymakers . . . There is evidence that the success of transfrontier conservation projects in contested territories and divided cities depends heavily on community participation. It is essential that the participation of local non-governmental organisations is ensured by international NGOs’ who attempt reconciliation through heritage tourism and building conservation projects. But as they seek ‘to create more awareness of their project and to find international donors to secure funding, local NGOs may be marginalised and lose their motivation’. This may have been what happened in attempts to preserve the walled city of Famagusta in Cyprus, where the case for its recognition as a World Heritage Site was intended to involve both the local civil society and a European one via a public–private partnership. Initiated by Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot individuals from Famagusta, a Structured Design Dialogue process to restore the whole walled city as a centre of cultural tourism was proposed. But disputes arose as a result of underlying agendas in both communities, revealing, according to one expert, unresolved issues of conflict over such matters as ‘lack of consensus on the use of place and building names, political, economic and administrative risks, no acknowledgement of heritage sites in the contested northern territory of the country, unresolved problems relating to historic properties and, last but not least, lack of genuine political will and feasible plans on both sides.’ ‘Ultimately, according to Jaramillo who had assessed heritage sites in the walled city, ‘cultural heritage is a collective asset, not institutional property’, a judgement which chimes with the idea of the public interest – and the return to it once publicly owned sites change hands.’<sup>96</sup>

Also critical is identifying who should be invited to participate, and whether what they say actually influences the plans. Inquiry by Design is one method – where participants design what they would like to see, often around a large model or plan. The MOD commissioned the Prince’s Foundation to conduct an Inquiry by Design with selected participants into the future of Haslar Hospital in Gosport. They had used this method before, but not for a historic site.

How- ever, the inquiry's findings were not followed in the subsequent sale of the site. The recommendations were to restore the eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings for a Veterans' Village, which would have been an entirely appropriate new use, but as already mentioned this did not happen.<sup>97</sup>

Local authority development briefs should reflect local needs with the full participation of local people. Portsmouth's development brief for HMS Vernon, now known as Gunwharf, set very few parameters because the city wanted to see as much development as possible – and the MOD would gain from the high value investment in high-end housing, shopping and leisure. There isn't much social housing, and the planned artists' studios based on the development at the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront in Capetown by the same developers didn't materialise. Lower skilled jobs in retail and catering replaced the high skills of the Vernon's research establishment.

Anticipation that the UK MOD intends to sell a site containing significant historic buildings, consulting the local community about declaration of a conservation area by the local authority before disposal, was a positive process for the future planning of both Caterham Barracks in Surrey and HMS Daedalus in Gosport. Another example of anticipation of release and creative interaction is the seriously contaminated Royal Gunpowder Works in Essex. The town council, English Heritage and the Defence Land Agent together worked with local people to make a plan for the site's future which was acceptable to all. Developers too use this method, which by enabling local input smooths the path to planning permission. The developers of Ashurst Barracks in Kent, Linden Homes, did so, and consensus with local people about the development was achieved. Another method of consultation is community action planning. Developers who use this benefit greatly from reduction in objections when they apply for planning permission, because most people have worked together to say what they would like to see happen. In 1997 Berkeley Homes held two such events in the Slaughterhouse at Royal Clarence Victualling Yard in Gosport, which I attended. We all used Post-it notes to show our preferences and visions for its future. The Mount Wise community, who lived in council tower blocks above the

dockyard in Devonport Plymouth, one of the Development Corporation sites, held their own community planning event, to which Peter Goodship of Naval Base Property Trust and I were invited to offer our advice. The MOD management respected their commitment and local knowledge. Devonport High Street was eventually returned to civilian use. Some sites became symbolic of a much wider protest. The nuclear missile storage bunkers at Greenham Common were central to NATO deterrent policy. In the 1980s the site came to international attention as the centre of protests against nuclear weapons because of the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp held outside its gates.<sup>98</sup> It's now reverted to being a public common.

Christiana in Copenhagen is an example of 'from the ground up' development of an alternative community: Freetown, or Christiana, is an eighty-four-acre anarchic enclave founded in 1971 when a brigade of young squatters and artists took over the Badsmandsstraede base on the island of Amager in the borough of Christianshavn at the edge of Copenhagen, just to the south of Denmark's main naval base, Holmen. Its inhabitants proclaimed it a 'free zone' – beyond the reach of Danish law. A majority vote in Parliament in 1989 eventually legalised the squat and acknowledged the residents' contribution to the communal running costs of Christiana's postal services, rubbish collection and children's nurseries. In 2007 its military buildings were declared protected structures. An international community of about a thousand residents now live there. Private cars are banned, as are hard drugs. The city tolerated the cannabis trade there, but it took many years of confrontation between the 'hippy commune' and the police and the city authorities who took legal action against the occupiers. In 2023 gang violence associated with open cannabis trading was still an issue. But eventually in 2009 it became a regular part of the city – where the inhabitants now pay their taxes, while they demonstrate how to live a low-carbon sustainable way of life. It's now a tourist attraction.<sup>99</sup>

As I found in my Ph.D. thesis and in other case studies quoted here, there is a correlation between commercial value/location, the range of possible uses, the level of heritage importance, the degree of conflict and the depth of public involvement. Where there is a sustained effort



to listen to, take into account and incorporate local people's ideas to proposed redevelopment there is little conflict – which would otherwise delay the redevelopment – and reduce the developers' profit.

Further topics, for which there is not space to examine here, include location, wildlife conservation – for example on the site of the Iron Curtain – financing change, and tourism.

## **8. Dissemination of good practice**

How is good practice in these specialised cases to be disseminated? The Fortress Study Group has a world- wide reach. In Europe there are long established international military heritage organisations such as the Council of Europe, EFFORT and ATFORT. Internationally ICOFORT established by ICOMOS has country branches. Its Charter on Fortifications and Related Heritage and guidelines for their Protection, Conservation and Interpretation was adopted in 2019. The Bonn International Centre for Conversion's initial focus on reuse of defence land<sup>100</sup> was reflected in its partnership with the US Association of Defense Communities to redevelop former military bases in Ukraine after the end of the Cold War. In 2015 and 2017 two BICC publications examined practice in reuse of military land in Germany and Western Europe. Pertinently, the second author made suggestions on how conversion could inform a systematic field of academic inquiry in the twenty-first century. However in 2021 BICC ceased researching conversion because of a lack of resources, changing its focus to a broader understanding of peace and conflict research.<sup>101</sup>

In 2017 the four-day international conference 'Military Landscapes' arranged by the University of Cagliari with support from the Italian Ministry of Defence held in La Maddalena Naval Base in the north of Sardinia explored a very wide range of post-defence experience of reusing military sites. Key military property decision-makers were present to hear the lessons learnt – which would not have been the case in the UK. I issued a questionnaire to delegates (Appendix 2) asking about how the different countries disposed of surplus government property. I received several interesting replies. Also in

2017 Federico Camerin examined the European experience. His 2021 book contains a literature review of former military sites at international level.<sup>102</sup> Apart from these European projects and the book edited by Samer Bagaeen and me, wider cross-cultural research on the regeneration of former defence sites at yet hardly exists. Our book published by Routledge in 2016 examines the transition from military to civilian life for these complex, contaminated, isolated, heritage laden

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and often contested sites in locations ranging from urban to remote in twelve case studies, and shows that the process is far from easy. The vexed issue of who pays for decontamination was not explored.

As mentioned earlier, the international Futures for Defence Heritage group of academics, specialised interest groups in Portsmouth including academics and building conservation professionals have two aims: documentation and identification of best practice – to inform the case for change to the UK Treasury-dominated system of financial return.<sup>103</sup> Getting endorsement from the MOD and DIO for research council funding proved elusive. In the October 2023 European Week of Regions and Cities there was a special session, ‘Breaking down the barriers of former military sites in Europe. Perspectives for urban regeneration’, organised by Federico Camerin with several case studies.

## **9. Conclusion**

Mechanisms for wider dissemination of experience and good practice on regenerating defence sites on a national scale are rare, except as mentioned earlier for the US Association of Defense Communities, a national lobby in Washington DC to which active and closing bases and local authorities belong. Members share information and experience of post-defence planning via a weekly newsletter and annual conferences as defence facilities are closed and redeveloped – at which point they leave as they move on to civilian futures.

This widely varied selection of case studies demonstrates key

principles: that the range from highest sale price to free transfer of these sites affects the eventual end land uses; that institutional experiment and financial incentives play their part in successful renewals; that conservation agencies, local planning authorities and formerly defence-dependent communities may find it difficult to ensure maintenance and survival of unused historic defence buildings; that community determination and direct public involvement may overcome seemingly intractable problems; and that long timescales may be needed for complete regeneration. The best outcomes involve active and more equal involvement of all the many parties to these difficult but rewarding transformations. There is much more to be learnt from cross-cultural comparisons.

But are governments receptive to the findings of cross-cultural research, especially when there are considerable differences in government structures? Unusually, compared with other finance ministries around the world, in the UK the Treasury is three things at once: ‘a budgetary ministry, controlling government expenditure; a financial ministry responsible for public credit and taxation; and an economics ministry, with a brief to stimulate economic growth. In France, Germany, the US, Japan, Canada and Australis these roles are all, in differing ways, separated out . . . It fundamentally shapes the mindset and incentives of the British state . . .’ It causes the problem of ‘government by accountant’; ‘as public investment is routinely diverted to meet short-term pressures . . . It makes policymaking more volatile and less consultative.’<sup>104</sup> ‘Government by accountant’ may explain why the out- comes of defence land disposals in the UK continue to be measured in financial terms. Its short-termism militates against many longstanding conservation and environmental policies and good long-term planning.

Fig. 5. The Defense Communities National Summit.



To analyse such a widespread process in more detail will clearly require much more research and wider vehicles for dissemination. Would countrywide associations and an international network modelled on the US example to identify successful examples of sustainable regeneration, be useful? Positive and sustainable reuse may be defined as the creation of new long lasting economic, social and cultural activity which benefits ex-defence communities, offers employment at the same or higher skill levels than those lost to replace the income and work of the soldiers, sailors, airmen and civilian staff who were employed in defence facilities, as well as the adaptive reuse or reconfiguration of the surviving structures including those protected as heritage – plus new buildings to house sustainable activities and cultural facilities – and accessible public open space. But are ministries of defence listening? As allied ministries of defence work together and share experience, a cross-cultural approach when their bases close may perhaps also be perceived to of benefit to them.

## **Biography**

Celia's long-term interest in the future of ex-defence sites has been stimulated by seeing the transformation of those around Portsmouth Harbour since 1970. Her MSc dissertation compared experience in Venice Arsenale, Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham, and in 2000 her study of post-defence experience of European dockyards was

published by UWE. In 2017 Celia Clark was a keynote speaker in Serres Greece to the final workshop of the EU MAPS project (Military Areas as Public Spaces) linking eight European countries together. In 2020 she outlined a research agenda to an international conference convened by IUAV in Venice.

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## **Appendix 1. Sustainable Regeneration of Former Defence Sites**

**RTPI/HBPT Seminar 13 October 2017**

Planners, local government officers, developers, architects, surveyors, academics and local community representatives took part in a lively examination of the disposal of redundant defence sites in the southeast and their sustainable regeneration. This seminar, the third to be held in the region, where many defence sites have found new civilian life or are on the disposal list, was sponsored by the Royal Town Planning Institute South East and the Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust. Their aim was to come up with recommendations to the Defence Infrastructure Organisation of the Ministry of Defence for improvements to the care of historic defence sites and to disposal procedures. Following presentations by Dr. Celia Clark, Conservation Officer Rob Harper of Gosport Borough Council, Clare Charlesworth of Historic England, David Craddock of Elite Homes, Commander Martin Marks OBE chair of Lee-on-the-Solent Community Association, architect Deniz Beck and Dr. Ann Coats, chair of the Naval Dockyards Society, the final session of the seminar was a discussion with a panel of speakers, chaired by Suella Fernandes MP.

## Policy Recommendations

These findings by the speakers and seminar participants, drafted by Dr Celia Clark trustee of Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust with contributions by Dr Ann Coats are hereby presented to the Defence Select Committee – with a plea to the MOD DIO:

DAY 2: Dockyards as heritage

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Doing Things Differently: how do countries dispose of their surplus defence land?

- 
- to institute a more orderly and locally responsive disposal process,  
[L]  
[SEP]
  - to address neglected maintenance of historic defence buildings, and  
[L]  
[SEP]
  - to encourage new sustainable uses for them via the Chair: New Forest MP Julian Lewis. [L]  
[SEP] **1. Before release – at national level**

[L]  
[SEP] Essential: regular communication between the DIO and local authorities via MOD local community liaison representatives to discuss proposed closures and disposals needs to be early, clear, transparent and timely – in order that local authorities, communities and developers have time in which to respond positively. [L]  
[SEP]

- Encourage regular meetings between local planning authorities and the MOD/Defence Infrastructure Organisation – at sub-regional level, to involve the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire, to address disposals, the economic aspects of Heritage Assets and their sustainable reuse. At regional level to involve the Local Government Association. [L]  
[SEP]
- Share experience between local authorities and local community groups – perhaps via a dedicated website or e-publication. [L]  
[SEP]
- Seek, by local and national media, to publicise the effects of defence cuts on local communities. A campaign to win over hearts and minds to the potential of defence sites for local regeneration. [L]  
[SEP]
- Consider setting up a national group of all sectors concerned with defence sites, on the model of the USA Association of Defense Communities, to share experience and to influence government. [L]  
[SEP]
- A national forum for all participants in the regeneration process would be useful to share experience and good practice. The US Association of Defense Communities is a forum and lobby [L]  
[SEP] in Washington DC. Method: dedicated infranet, [L]  
[SEP] website, publications, regular seminars . . . ? [L]  
[SEP]
- Good practice guides: The EU has funded several [L]  
[SEP] good practice guides eg *ASCEND: Achieving the Socio-Economic Re-use of Former Military Land and Heritage. Model Management Framework*. Another was *Regeneration through Heritage. Understanding the Development Potential of Historic European Arsenals* in which English Heritage was a partner. Would a UK

based good practice guide linked to <sup>[1]</sup>~~[SEP]~~the forum proposed above, based on successful examples of sustainable regeneration, be useful?

Historic England's Heritage At Risk Registers (HAR) are intended as a spur to action – to renewed maintenance and to searches for new uses – via defence reuses, disposal to the civilian property market or transfer to civilian bodies as community assets. Many defence sites particularly in the southeast, are on the Register. They need maintenance – or disposal to new owners for reuse.

It is not acceptable for the MoD to state that 'austerity measures will continue to provide challenges for MOD heritage management. The effects are already being experienced with a decline in the condition of listed buildings and the scaling back of condition assessments as a result of budgetary constraints.' (*MOD Heritage Report 2011–2013*, 2014, para. 41.) With Crown immunity removed, the MoD must comply with planning statutes. Doing nothing is no longer an option.

For example, the key historic buildings in Portsmouth naval base are of particular concern to the Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust and the Naval Dockyards Society. Although they are discussed by the DIO and the local authority conservation officer, these negotiations are not in the public realm.

Sites left empty for too long whilst MoD makes up its mind to sell, lead to significant deterioration – for example Daedalus wardroom. The crucial route to sustainable regeneration for them and others on the register is for new and appropriate uses to be found, so that operational budgets also finance conservation. This is the best way to secure their conservation and future. Vacant buildings are at greater risk of deterioration than occupied ones, where problems are more likely to be addressed before they become critical. Repairs to vacant buildings should be given due importance, and allocating a risk category may aid this. (Ibid. p. 31 *Managing Heritage Assets* Historic England, 2009.) The effect of deferring work, causing 'structural or weather tightness issues' and 'fabric deterioration' (ibid. p. 30), should be taken into account when deciding priority and urgency where buildings are vacant (as with all the structures on the At Risk

Register). Moreover, these structures may exhibit ‘severe’ vulnerability due to being in a ‘coastal / high rain’ area, which is clearly the case with Ports- mouth Dockyard.

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*Leaflet 12: Historic Environment* (Ministry of Defence, 2010, paras. 12–52) declared that ‘the MOD is committed to resolving its HAR issues and ensuring assets do not become at risk. The MOD HAR Officer’s role is to work with internal and external stakeholders to establish risks and develop a plan for the sustainable future of each MOD HAR asset. Performance on HAR is reported in the MOD Stewardship Report, Heritage Report and Sustainable Development Report. It is also a MOD Sustainable Development Key Performance Indicator’.

Quadrennial inspection reports on all listed buildings and quinquennial inspection reports for scheduled monuments in the naval estate should be designed to prioritise maintenance and repairs. An effective Conservation Management Plan should be drawn up by the MoD, DCMS, Historic England and local authorities.

From the developers’ point of view, historic military sites need a different/open approach in terms of planning and conservation requirements. There is a need to look at ‘Bigger Picture’ benefits rather than specific losses to historic elements of buildings and landscape. The onus should be on creating partner- ships with owners of Historic Sites to facilitate best design, and to deliver appropriate density to create best value. Good Design and a creative approach is key to success.

‘We must breathe new life into unused Military Historic Sites by working in a collaborative and pro- active way to deliver the best possible outcome for all parties’: David Craddock Elite Homes.

The cost of enabling development is substantial – and the developer can’t pay all. The economic drivers need to be understood. Developers can’t take on a site with indefinite costs, and fixed site contracts are not possible on historic sites.



Clawback where the developer pays the Treasury a proportion of the profit subsequently made over the first purchase price has operated several times at Gun- wharf and elsewhere. These moneys, generated in the southeast region, might usefully fund a MOD Conservation Group referred to below.

There needs to be a mechanism to enable enforcement against neglect of listed buildings regardless of ownership. The exclusion of active defence sites from local authorities' powers to issue Urgent Works and Repairs Notices requiring repairs to decayed historic buildings needs to be removed, especially where

the MOD have no use for them and they have long been empty and unused.

## **2. At site level**

The issues that arise are: urgency versus resource constraints, multi-designations adding to their complexity, flood risk, coastal erosion, contamination, poor access, depressed land values, the unique and complex form of many structures, the complexity of unravelling sites' significance, the many Buildings at Risk, the complexity of accessing funds and the failure to recognise the economic value of heritage.

Understanding a historic site is an essential stage in determining its sustainable future. Its setting, plan form and layout, condition, building materials and architectural features need to be taken into account. Priority should be given to retaining and enhancing its local character and distinctiveness and to enhancing its historic setting. The more significant a heritage asset, the greater the weight that should be given to its conservation and its capacity for change, and to the amount of detail in a planning application. Local planning authorities can assist developers' understanding these issues. This understanding, also enriched by Archaeological Management Plans and Conservation Management Plans should be used to inform the constraints and opportunities available. Historic features should be retained where possible. A Condition report and artefact survey were carried out to identify the significance of Point Battery Ports- mouth.

New buildings should be sited so they are sensitive to the historic plan

form of the site and its wider setting in the landscape. Enabling development should be considered in order to secure the future of historic buildings of high significance and sensitivity to change. Short-term solutions might include moth-balling, temporary uses, carrying out urgent repairs, securing it and protecting it from fire . . .

Neglected maintenance has allowed the condition of the named structures to deteriorate, so eventual remedial costs will escalate. As a stitch in time saves nine, funds allocated to maintenance of unused defence property are a worthwhile investment in the potential for future use – by the MOD or subsequent owners.

It is important to identify who is to pay for maintenance and restoration of infrastructure such as dock walls, culverts, basins, caissons, cranes, water, electricity and sewerage services. These may need to be separately funded via a sinking fund, which service charges to the new occupiers would not cover.

Specialist defence structures are particularly difficult to find sustainable new uses for. Gosport examples are the listed Submarine Escape Training Tower, and the unique Cavitation Tunnel.

**3. Planning stage<sup>[SEP]</sup> Genuine community consultation** – bottom-up as well as top-down – needs to be built into the regeneration process, especially where no public access was previously available. Methods include Heritage Open Days, site visits inviting feedback, Community Planning Events, Enquiry by Design, Planning for Real, public exhibitions . . . Local residents are resistant to change. Developers who gain public support for their proposals benefit from faster and less contested process toward planning consents.

Section 106 Agreements can be used by local authorities to secure funding from subsequent sales of parts of sites by the new owners against the costs of conservation – as was done at Haslar Hospital.

For developers, a particular challenge is to overcome the protectionist approach that the very many consultees seem to have! These include:

- Historic England <sup>[SEP]</sup>

- Natural England [L][SEP]
- Environment Agency [L][SEP]
- Highways Agency [L][SEP]
- County Ecologist [L][SEP]
- County Archaeologist [L][SEP]
- Local authority Conservation Department, [L][SEP]Planning Officers,  
Council Committee [L][SEP]
- Parish Council [L][SEP]
- Local residents. [L][SEP]A further problem is overlaps between scheduling and listing, making consents complex and time consuming. These designations need to be simplified. [L][SEP]LPAs need to be properly informed as to the significance of a site's heritage assets and landscaped setting and must stress the importance of 'front-loading' detailed site and building appraisals. Frequent site meetings for major sites are necessary and this needs resourcing. Excellent practice is the close supervision by Gosport's Conservation Officer of large sites such as Haslar Hospital via two weekly meetings on site which saves time and paper trails. [L][SEP]

### The Way Forward: Greater Collaboration & Under- standing

- To achieve the best out of every site all parties have to appreciate and consider other consultees and stakeholders position as well as their own;
- A loss in one area can and should be a gain in another;
- To constantly expect the developer to bear the costs and to take all of the risks will mean fewer sites like these will get brought back to life;
- To appreciate that the costs of enabling these developments to go

ahead arising from abnormal conditions is substantial and that something has to be done to make it possible to pay for the long-term regeneration of the Historic elements of the sites.

A positive and constructive approach to conservation is key.

Masterplanning of large ex-defence sites responsive to their history and historic layout – in accordance with local authority local plans and economic priorities – is a useful process in determining sustainable reuse.

Hybrid Outline Consents. For complicated, multi-phased redevelopments it is not reasonable to expect the developer to know precisely when each building will be tackled. Mass, form, layout, texture need to be considered before giving consent, then dealt with on a detailed basis, phasing the work on a critical path. Phasing also helps developers to secure and fund the reuse of large sites.

It is important to promote the intrinsic value of large military-heritage sites to the wider community, and their economic potential.

Recreation of lost employment including work using specialist high skills should be a priority in redevelopment as well as housing. CEMAST College, Innovation Centres, Solent Airport, business development are all very positive examples of what can be done on an ex-MOD site.

Housing development should always be closely related to transport, education and social facility planning.

Experiments in sustainable redevelopment such as Eco-towns may be appropriate to the redevelopment of ex-defence sites.

Both national and local Defence museums contribute substantially to the local economy.

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Other plans and supplementary planning guidance need to be taken into account. An example is Portsmouth's Seafront Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document. 'The ARTches Project', was out-

lined within the Seafront Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document, dated April 2013.

#### **4. Design phase**

The key to the success of the conversion of the Battery in Broad Street Old Portsmouth into artists' studios and cafe was striking a balance between the provision of modern fixtures and conveniences for a variety of contemporary uses and the restoration and preservation of the historic fabric of the building. To this end, the design was driven by a focus on reversible and non-destructive work rather than material alterations. This essentially allowed (should the need arise) for the removal of any additions and the reversion of the structure to its current state with minimal visible changes.

#### **4. Construction phase**

Contamination and Pollution during redevelopment. Listed / historic buildings are very expensive to upgrade and bring into modern-day use – often they are considered not commercially viable. Much of Daedalus's soil is contaminated with oils, asbestos, aircraft solvents etc. The plan is to seal it in.

Building dust/debris problems during redevelopment need much earlier, tighter control. The Dust Management Plan was far too late with too little enforcement. It recognised Daedalus as a 'High Risk' site with 'Sensitive Receptors' (i.e. neighbours!). Limited water supplies in some parts of the site were not considered. Serious cost implications to the contractors have been seen in a leaked email obtained under an FOI request.

Problems with the modern trend of using sub-contractors. There must be a named, responsible site manager with full control of sub-contractors and able to stop unplanned, Bank Holiday removal of unwanted hedges, for example. Unauthorised demolition is completely unacceptable.

#### **5. Funding**

Lottery bids for funding by local authorities for Grade I listed

buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments should say that they are considered to be of exceptional national interest.

## **6. Ways forward**

Research about defence disposals and sustainable redevelopment in the UK and other countries is deposited in the Portsmouth History Centre of Portsmouth Central Library. This database, being developed with Portsmouth School of Architecture Conservation studies, is available for students and other researchers, to learn from experience and good practice.

The current state of the historic structures is such that their conservation requires both an immediate and a long-term broad-based plan of action. In order for them to be restored to a useful condition, they should receive more of the operational naval base budget, with a higher level of annual maintenance than at present. This target could be managed through a MoD Conservation Group or a Heritage Partnership Agreement, as recommended in *Leaflet 11: Historic Environment MOD conservation groups* (Ministry of Defence, 2010) which set out the benefits and functions of MoD Conservation Groups; *Leaflet 11; Historic Environment MOD conservation groups* (Ministry of Defence, 2010); and MOD Leaflet 12 2010.

These buildings were built of predominantly local materials with public money, to defend the country. They constitute public heritage; the Local Authority should be taking a leading role in its conservation. For listed structures to be restored to a useful condition, they should receive more of the operational defence budget, with a higher level of annual maintenance than at present. Quadrennial inspection reports on all listed buildings and quinquennial inspection reports for all scheduled monuments should be undertaken.

## **7. Conclusion**

We respectfully request that the Defence Select Committee consider endorsement of these proposals and transmission of them to the Ministry of Defence Infrastructure Organisation.

Charlie Fraser-Fleming, Chair, Hampshire Buildings Preservation

Trust

## Appendix 2: The Search For Sustainable Futures For Historic Military Landscapes, Questionnaire for delegates

1. As part of ongoing research, I would be very grateful if you could inform me about how your country disposes of surplus Government Property.

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- Name [L][SEP]
- Address and email [L][SEP]
- Your country [L][SEP] 2. Who owns military establishments in your country? Is it the War Ministry/Ministry of Defence – or the army, navy or air force – or a property agency? Details: [L][SEP] 3. Are closed military sites offered first to other government departments? Yes/No [L][SEP] 4. If your government wants to dispose of a military establishment, what action does it take? Details: [L][SEP] 5. Who controls the disposal and redevelopment process? Is it: [L][SEP]
- the War Ministry/Ministry of Defence [L][SEP]
- their property agency eg the MOD Defence [L][SEP] Infrastructure Organisation in the UK [L][SEP]
- the army, navy or air force [L][SEP]
- another body Details: [L][SEP] 6. Are there special arrangements for disposing of historic defence sites? Yes/No Details: [L][SEP] 7. Are surplus defence sites: [L][SEP]
- sold to developers who pay the highest price with [L][SEP] planning permission to make a profit from high- [L][SEP] end development? Yes/No [L][SEP]
- sold at military use value – before planning [L][SEP] permission is granted

for new uses? Yes/No

- sold to local authorities/commune? Yes/No
- transferred free to local authorities/commune? Yes/No
- transferred free to community groups or charities? Yes/No
- other arrangements? Details: 8. Types of military buildings and sites: please add examples and details:
  - castles
  - forts
  - batteries
  - barracks
  - naval bases
  - docks
  - air force bases • military towns • military lines • training grounds • others

9. Are unused military buildings well maintained or neglected? Yes/No Details:

10. Is the defence ministry or the army, navy or air force funded to maintain unused military buildings— or is some other ministry or government agency responsible for keeping them in good repair? Details:

11. Are government agencies or the army, navy or air force involved in the process of finding new uses for historic military sites? Details:

12. Timescale: is there a time limit on the transition process from military to civilian uses? Yes/No Details:

13. Are delays in redevelopment of closed sites sometimes beneficial?



Yes/No Details:

14. What part does the local planning authority/ commune play in determining the new uses? How do they consult the local community about new uses, which would benefit them? Details:

15. Please give examples of new uses for former defence buildings and sites in your country.

16. Can the system of disposal of ex-defence sites and their transition to civilian uses be improved in your country? Yes/No. If so, how?

17. Are there ways in which local communities who are going through this transition from military to civilian can share experience in your country? If not, would it be a good idea? How could this be arranged?

If you would prefer to discuss these questions via inter- view or email, that would be very welcome! Please get in touch! Many thanks for your help!

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