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Encounters and content sharing in an urban village: Reading texts through an archaeological lens

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Abstract

Archaeology provides a framework of analysis and interpretation that is useful for disentangling the textual layers of a contemporary lived-in urban space. The producers and readers of texts may include those who planned and developed the site and those who now live, visit and work there. Some of the social encounters and content sharing between these people may be artificially produced or manufactured in the hope that certain social situations will occur. Others may be serendipitous. With archaeology's original focus on places that are no longer inhabited it is often only the remaining artefacts and features of the built environment that form the basis for interpreting the social relationships of past people. Our analysis however, is framed within a contemporary notion of archaeological artefacts in an urban setting. Unlike an excavation, where the past is revealed through digging into the landscape, the application of landscape archaeology within a present day urban context is necessarily more experiential, visual and based on recording and analysing the physical traces of social encounters and relationships between residents and visitors. These physical traces are present within the creative content, and the built and natural elements of the environment. This chapter explores notions of social encounters and content sharing in an urban village by analysing three different types of texts: the design of the built environment; content produced by residents through a geospatial web application; and, print and online media produced in digital storytelling workshops.

10.1 Introduction

Archaeology can provide a theoretical lens to help understand, "the ways in which past spaces were actively used to structure particular senses of place, forms of identity, social relations and political power" (Giles, 2007). This chapter discusses how this approach to reading of past spaces can be applied to a contemporary urban space, that is, a master-planned 'urban village' in Australia. The urban village concept emerged in the United Kingdom in the late 1980s and gained popularity with developers and prominent advocates such as Prince Charles in the 1990s. With the support of Prince Charles the first urban village was constructed at Poundbury in the UK (Franklin & Tait, 2002, p. 251). The urban village concept is closely associated with new urbanism, an urban planning movement in the United States (Biddulph, 2000, pp. 72-73). Urban villages and new urbanism emphasise notions of neighbourhood, community, and pedestrian-friendly urban design, and draw on urban design theories from the early 20th century.

The case study for this chapter is the Kelvin Grove Urban Village (KGUV, www.kgurbanvillage.com.au), located 2 km off the central business district of Brisbane, Australia. KGUV is a joint development between the Queensland State Government and Queensland University of Technology (QUT). Planning for the development began in 2000 and the first residents moved into the Village in 2006. KGUV is a master planned development '... based on a traditional village design, with a vibrant town centre and a rich mixture of shops, cafés, restaurants and businesses' (Department of Housing & QUT, 2007). The development is of mixed tenure with a range of accommodation available including secure apartment blocks with resort type facilities, government subsidised housing, student accommodation. Other uses include the QUT Centre for Health and Physical Activity, the Australian Red Cross Blood Service headquarters, QUT's Creative Industries Precinct and the Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation. The entire KGUV is due to be fully completed by 2012, although a majority of lots and buildings have already been constructed and are being occupied by residential and commercial tenants and residents.

We take a discipline that is traditionally concerned with places in the past and uncovering hidden evidence of human society, and apply it to analyse an extant living space in order to produce insights into how encounters and content shape the operation of public spaces. The overarching interpretive frame is that of 'reading texts.' We direct our attention to three types of texts in the site in question: the space itself; content of an exploratory web application that is available to local residents called *HistoryLines*; and, public documents that describe and record various aspects of the history of the urban village site and its present development. Put another way; we read encounters and content across three media (space design; local encounters facilitated by a web application; public/oral history accounts produced in the context of digital storytelling workshops) to understand the operation of public space in an urban village. The archaeological lens can focus on both the physical and online space of such an urban site. What becomes apparent in our study is that in order to fulfil the intent of the design of the space – permeability, heterogeneous design and social sustainability – not only the physical manipulation of the site but the construction and maintenance of the accompanying digital space is required. Archaeology is traditionally concerned with the artefacts of human culture and that now necessarily includes new media and digital content. This chapter introduces a contemporary urban village development and argues for the application of the archaeological lens in this type of research environment. We discuss our findings in terms of three categories of readings, namely:

1. Our analysis begins with the section on 'Readings of movement and places in between' that moves away from a conventional interpretation of explicit text and language. Three major features of the urban village are read via an archaeological lens in order to investigate the tension between the *design of space* and the *use of space*. Of note for this chapter is evidence for planned and serendipitous social encounters. Physical traces of movement within and between the features were recorded and analysed using archaeological methods of reading the humanly constructed landscape as text. This study relies on a basic distinction between how space has been designed (and framed in an ongoing way via marketing, promotional and neighbourhood development strategies) and the actual uses people make of the space once it has been built. Utilising an

archaeological lens necessitates an intimate enquiry into the relationship between the material artefacts of a place and the socialities present there. Ordinarily, urban villages are studied within the disciplines of sociology and urban design (see for example, Biddulph, 2003). However it is archaeology's 'quest for sensuous knowing and corporeal knowledge' (Pearson & Shanks, 2001, p. 150) that makes the approach to this study relevant and innovative. Discontinuities between the *designed space*, as represented within the Master Plan and associated marketing material, can then be tested against the *used place* as represented by the material culture and physicality of KGUV.

2. Our 'Readings of the past for the future' explore the two-fold significance of this chapter and the *HistoryLines* project. By utilising archaeological theory and methodology an integrated model of inquiry has been developed which can clearly analyse the boundaries – and the manipulation and permeability of those boundaries – of encounters that are shared within both place-based and new media domains. Communication, content sharing and social encounters are experienced through a linking of the past with the present. Archaeology demonstrates that such social practices have always been an essential element of communication and a means of consolidating socialities in the present. We propose that our model of inquiry into how communication technologies can work to support and activate social encounters in certain urban settings has important implications for understanding the future.

3. 'Readings between the conceived and perceived space' investigates the *Sharing Stories* project whereby this textual artefact bridges the divide between the intent of the original design of the urban village and the use of place. The KGUV master plan proposes a site where links to the historical past are to be made explicit within the space. However to enhance the relevance and social meaning of features such as storyboards and history plaques, the recording of personal accounts of history of the site represent content sharing which activates static landscape features via digital storytelling.

10.2 Archaeology in a contemporary urban setting

The fundamental theoretical basis to be utilised in this thesis is the assumed connection between the landscape and social realities (Gosden & Head, 1994). Furthermore, material culture is understood as not only representative of social realities but also as effective in the creation of those realities and social relationships (Pearson & Shanks, 2001). The idea that material culture is not just a static representation of human activity is essential for this study. If the buildings, pathways and artefacts of KGUV were just simply the material outcome of social processes at this particular urban site, then using an archaeological framework could be criticised as arbitrary because the social realities of the Village could have been more easily mapped using other methods such as ethnography (see for example Laurel, 2004; Pink, 2006) or space syntax for example (O'Neill et al. 2006; http://spacesyntax.com/; http://spacesyntax.net/; http//www.vr.ucl.ac.uk/people/alan/). However, to reach useful empirical outcomes for future master-planned urban design projects it is essential to view material culture as active and creative of social realities.

Of significance for this study is the criticism that archaeology's traditional "orientation towards depth, concealment, mystery and revelation is quite obstructive, for it enhances the belief that the past is entirely separate from the present: it is 'somewhere else' that has to be accessed in a particular way" (Thomas, 1994). The planning and development team of this urban renewal project has implemented strategies to link the past with the present and to engage new residents in the creation and interaction with these links in various social forms of creative expression. We argue that this is where the meeting between studying a contemporary and lived-in space within an archaeological framework becomes fruitful and meaningful. For the purposes of analysing the space of this currently occupied urban village, socialities are considered to have physical expression, and regardless of what social or economic requirements stimulated this expression, it can be studied and is retrievable as archaeological evidence (Perring, 1991, p. 274). The textual and physical evidence of the process of how *designed space* becomes *use space* is turned around and viewed archaeologically. Instead of viewing the site from the privileged position of the planner the process can be understood from the

'ground-up.' The physical space and how people may or may not be using, contesting and manipulating various features can be more precisely understood by the experiential and observational process of the archaeologist. (For an example of similar methods utilised by archaeologist Jonna Hansson in a contemporary urban locale, see Pearson & Shanks, 2001, pp. 147-151.) Data collected and analysed within this framework can then render the design of future master-planned places more critical and aware of the use of such places.

The idea of investigating the social and ideological significance of heterogeneous design and the urban village, and how the past and present are linked and utilised as a means of consolidating or enhancing this product for the benefit of the users and/or the producers, has been stimulated by research and interpretative accounts of particular places and features in the prehistoric and early historical landscapes of Britain (for example, Bradley in Barclay, 1994; Edmonds ,1993; Giles, 2007; Gosden & Lock, 1998; Thomas, 1997; Tilley, 1994; Watson, 2001). These interpretive accounts utilise theories about the relationship between landscape, movement, space, time and human experience – thus providing the theoretical bases and assumptions for reading the culturally created landscape of the case study site in terms of social significance and impact. Beyond the theoretical aspects of utilising archaeology in this study's reading of contemporary urban space are some direct correlations with past peoples' use of space that emerge from the archaeological literature (Gosden & Lock, 1998), and how we are attempting to construct and design space now. One outstanding feature of the KGUV is the diverse range of historical links made to the past. The various ways in which users of the space are encouraged or directed to interact with these physical or conceptual links can be observed by a close reading of the space that looks not only at the design and physical shape of the KGUV, but also looks for remnants and evidence of how people are *choosing* to utilise and inhabit the space. Looking for such 'remnants' is a typical form of evidence for the archaeologist; the original intent or design may be unknown.

Fig. 10.1: Aerial shot of the Kelvin Grove Urban Village master plan – courtesy of the KGUV development team

10.3 Readings of movement and places in between

The spatial analysis in this section focuses on three main features of the village: The Village Centre residential towers; the affordable housing at Ramsgate Street and Musk Avenue; and, Kulgun Park which runs parallel between these two major zones of residential accommodation. The two types of accommodation were chosen as they make up two of the original accommodation zones that were occupied early in life of the KGUV and were designed and built for different socio-economic groups. Kulgun Park was chosen as an important feature of analysis because it is richly embedded with artwork, language and symbols that link that past with the present of the KGUV. The physicality of the park's structure is also striking in that even at a glance it is clear that this structure effectively forms a boundary between the Village Centre and the affordable housing buildings (Fig. 10.2). Some of the key features of the site are intended to be its permeability, inclusivity and social sustainability. One of the positioning statements in the Master Plan is that this urban village will be "A Connected Environment: A vibrant mix of activities and styles and places. Complete, liveable and sustainable, *achieving integration on line and in life*" (KGUV master plan, 2004). So, the notions of permeability, inclusivity, social sustainability and designing for heterogeneity can be tested for by this selection of data sources.
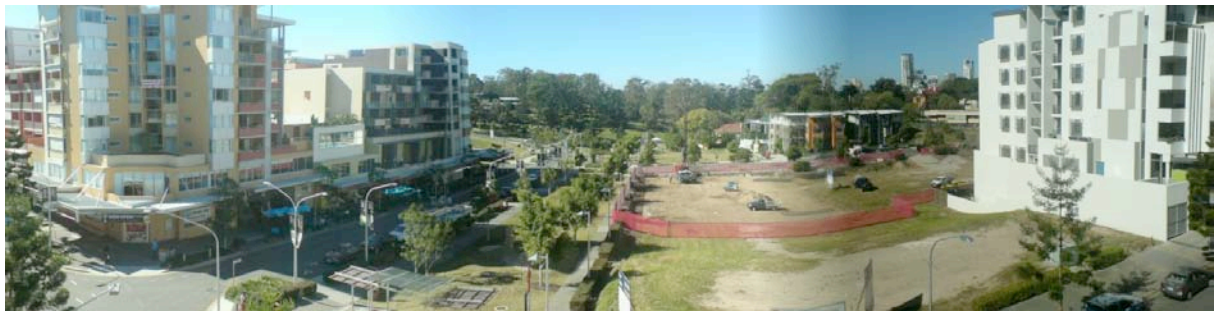

Fig. 10.2: Kulgun Park between the Village Centre on the left and the Musk Ave affordable housing complex on the right

Biddulph's extensive critique of the urban village phenomenon highlights the marketability of the concept and how its popularity in part stems from how marketing and promotion and design and spatial organisation gives the impression of a traditional village layout and atmosphere (Biddulph, 2000). The textual layering of marketing and promotion then enhances the design of the space according to Biddulph and furthers in the creation of the other to consolidate and legitimise the new development. Is this the case at KGUV? Throughout this section a range of archaeological theories and empirical research is drawn upon to help build a methodology for assessing the design and purpose of KGUV. Specifically, it is the potential for social encounters and how the design may operate and be experienced by those residing in and using the space.

Boundaries, walls and gates have always had degrees of social significance historically and philosophically. Archaeology has long been concerned with boundaries and status markers that help to uncover the cultural and personal significance of how people lived. An archaeological interpretation therefore fits nicely with Ziller's assertion that "community is not a place" (2004) but is more to do with relativities, and that differences in status are crucial for the health and well-being of a whole society (not just those who are disadvantaged). Archaeology traces networks and connections across time and space and often uncovers tensions and conflict as well. When presented with a site containing artefacts, buildings, human remains, etc., a picture of life can be constructed which must include difference. Links and pathways between groups are often uncovered due to the spread and preservation of similar artefact types and styles. With this theoretical and methodological perspective in mind we analyse the following three features of the KGUV.

1. The affordable housing buildings at Ramsgate Street and Musk Avenue, located within view of the café strip of the Village Centre, were built as residences for lower income earners who meet certain financial and social criteria in order to be subsidised by the government. The external appearance of these apartment blocks blends with the rest of the site's architecture and they were built for environmental sustainability. Rainwater tanks are located on every floor and balconies and foliage ostensibly work together to provide ventilation and protection from heat.

2. The four accommodation towers of the Village Centre form the pivotal residential zone for the whole village. As the name clearly suggests this is located at the geographical and social centre of the site. The Village Centre also contains retail shops, the Community Hub and a row of restaurants and cafés that form the active street life of the site. Clearly, residents of this accommodation zone are in a privileged position in that they can access facilities faster and more easily than any other group of residents. In fact, they do not have to even exit the complex to fulfil daily requirements or leisure activities in the main food outlets. Access to the accommodation towers is strict and security controlled as are the use of the facilities contained within the boundaries of the apartment blocks. Residents may enter and exit their home without ever meeting inhabitants from other accommodation zones as car parks are located within the basement of the structure and can be accessed via a lift system. The pathways between the Village Centre and the affordable housing buildings may conversely need to be utilised by the residents of the latter if they are to enter into and interact with the facilities located within and around the limits of the whole Village Centre complex. So, there is the potential for social flow *from* the affordable housing buildings but not *to* them. Also, visitors are necessarily drawn to the Village Centre as this is the retail and social hub of the Village. They too are not required to leave the boundaries of the Village Centre and would effectively be discouraged from doing so due to the next feature to be discussed.

3. Kulgun Park forms what is in effect a border between the Village Centre and the two more visible affordable housing complexes. This long, narrow park is bounded by parallel footpaths, which are embedded with small plaques relating historical content of the area's social, military and educational past. In order to easily access either residential complexes from the other the park would have to be crossed, not along the pathways which would greatly increase the distance travelled, but by cutting across the boundaries of the park. The artwork within the park, and indeed the name 'Kulgun' reflects the area's Indigenous history and what was once a waterway. The design and creative aspects of this park is richly embedded with ancient and historical pasts but in reality acts as a boundary between different groups of residents and prevents visitors venturing beyond the Village Centre. Further, and quite the opposite to the Village Centre, the affordable housing complex is not a destination for anyone other than its own residents.

It is clear then that a boundary exists within the urban village that limits and defines certain socio-economic groups and the potential social encounters between them and visitors. Most notably in the theorisation of boundedness, is the work of anthropologist Mary Douglas in her book 'Purity and Danger' (1975). In her theorisation of the boundaries of the body and the way in which they inscribe the borders or limits of the socially hegemonic, she makes the important link between the material and ideological or socio-political. Her analysis suggests that, 'what constitutes the limit of the body is never merely material, but that the surface, the skin, is systematically signified by taboos and anticipated transgression: indeed, the boundaries of the body become ... the limits of the social' (Butler, 1990). The archaeology of boundedness also rests on the assumption that, 'the conceptual boundaries have their physical correlates and can, therefore, be recognized archaeologically' (Dark, 1995). Just as it has been claimed that the boundaries of the body are 'never merely material,' we argue that the boundaries of the KGUV are not just physically manifested limits. Boundaries are a means of social classification, and are constructed within the context of societies' practices, ideals, beliefs, languages and values (Lawrence 1996). This is a key insight for the design of digital media.

Boundaries operate culturally to produce and maintain identity through a logic of exclusion and the creation of the 'other.' The logic of this construction is that structures such as walls attempt to

delineate and consolidate in opposition to a necessary, and excluded, disempowered group of others. This way of thinking about the production of identity draws on theorists such as Kristeva, whose work on subjectivity in particular utilises the 'structuralist notion of a boundary constituting taboo for the purposes of constructing a discrete subject through exclusion' (Butler, 1990). Thinking about boundaries in this way is useful for this chapter and how one of the key features of heterogeneous design – *inclusivity* – is constructed and experienced in both tangible and tacit ways. For example, clearly the KGUV is not just defined by its physical boundaries but also exists and attempts to incorporate the socialities of the wider area in various ways. Viewing this urban place at the beginning of its development allows us to understand how the physical and symbolic boundaries put in place by development and marketing, are initially negotiated and possibly manipulated by the users and residents of the site. How people negotiate the space in its infancy provides a basis for projecting how the space and social encounters within it may develop in the future.

Fig. 10.3: Tacit boundaries at the Kelvin Grove Urban Village

The recognition that boundaries can operate in both productive and prohibitive ways, or that they can simultaneously – indeed necessarily – produce structures of inclusion and exclusion is discussed extensively in anthropological discourse on spatial organisation (e.g., Carlisle, 1996; Lawrence, 1996; Pitten, 1996; Rodman & Cooper, 1996). In her study of boundaries in France, Susan Carlisle recognises how boundaries can establish specific social definitions. Specific to the interests of this chapter is the notion of *outsiders* which is constructed on the basis of 'I am not you; there is a line between you and me.' Boundaries can also establish *possession* on the basis of 'this is mine; there is a line around my belongings' (1996). Carlisle demonstrates, as does this study, how boundaries can function in these ways at different levels in society. For instance, the physical boundary can defend certain cultural values by 'protecting' vertical hierarchical class distinctions (ibid). At the outset it would appear that the boundaries of the KGUV operate in very different ways due to the heterogeneous and inclusive nature of the planning and development of the built space. There is the construction of *presence* and *absence* as a means of disestablishing certain social connections. The

appreciation that boundaries can operate in this way is influenced by Rodman and Cooper's discussion of waterfront and housing co-op boundaries in Toronto (1996). Another key feature of this boundary of the KGUV is that it is not clearly permeable and easily negotiated. So in one sense there is an attempt to enclose and define the space as containing buildings and zones which are separate and different, but to also create a space which invites visitors to explore – and attempts to maintain connections to – the spatial and temporal history of the area.

We find that the planners and developers of the KGUV have inscribed certain features in the space that appear to control and manipulate potential social encounters. What at the point of its planned origins appears to be a place designed for social encounters is in fact a used space where shared encounters may largely be limited by the design of the place and its pathways of movement. Of interest for this chapter is Kulgun Park and how this feature of public space and historical meaning forms a site of tension and lack of permeability. It is not only movement of residents between the two areas that is interrupted by this park but also importantly it is the flow of visitor movement from the Village Centre that is also manipulated and controlled. So, Kulgun Park, and the very nature of the organisation of the village where visitor activities are centred within a complex that exclusively accommodates a specific group of people, work together to deactivate what was intended to be a heterogeneous place of inclusivity and permeability where a range of serendipitous and organised social encounters could be expected to occur.

This spatial analysis demonstrates how the *use of the* space is operating quite differently from the intentions of the *design* of the space. Just like the ancient manipulations of landscape discussed above (Gosden & Lock, 1998) the planners and developers of the KGUV have inscribed certain features in the KGUV urban landscape that would appear to prevent social encounters beyond the limits of individual buildings or spaces. It is not so much the distinctions between the two accommodation zones that mark boundaries or difference in this case. In fact, the appearance of the buildings themselves is similar architecturally. Both building types incorporate environmentally sustainable features such as large sun-shades, balconies and rainwater harvesting systems. The materials used on the exteriors are different but at a glance there is a homogeneous appearance throughout the village. In contrast to criticisms discussed above with regards to the appearance of buildings in UK case studies, the residential buildings in this case study do not immediately indicate socio-economic difference. However, it is the tacit boundaries within the village, Kulgun Park in particular, that effectively mark who belongs where and how movement occurs between major zones within the landscape.

10.4 Readings of the past for the future

The text studied in this section is content produced through a local web application called *HistoryLines*. This component is part of a suite of new media tools we are developing to help us explore the use of narrative and new media in community engagement and urban planning processes (Foth et al. 2008). *HistoryLines* uses a custom-designed Google Maps interface to illustrate residential history and migrational churn (Klaebe et al. 2007). It brings a cross section of new residents together to trace and map where they have lived in the course of their lives. When the longitude and latitude coordinates are collated and augmented with short personal narratives, overlapping and common lines become visible (Fig. 10.4). The stories at these intersections in time and space stimulate interest and offer opportunities for further personalised networking.
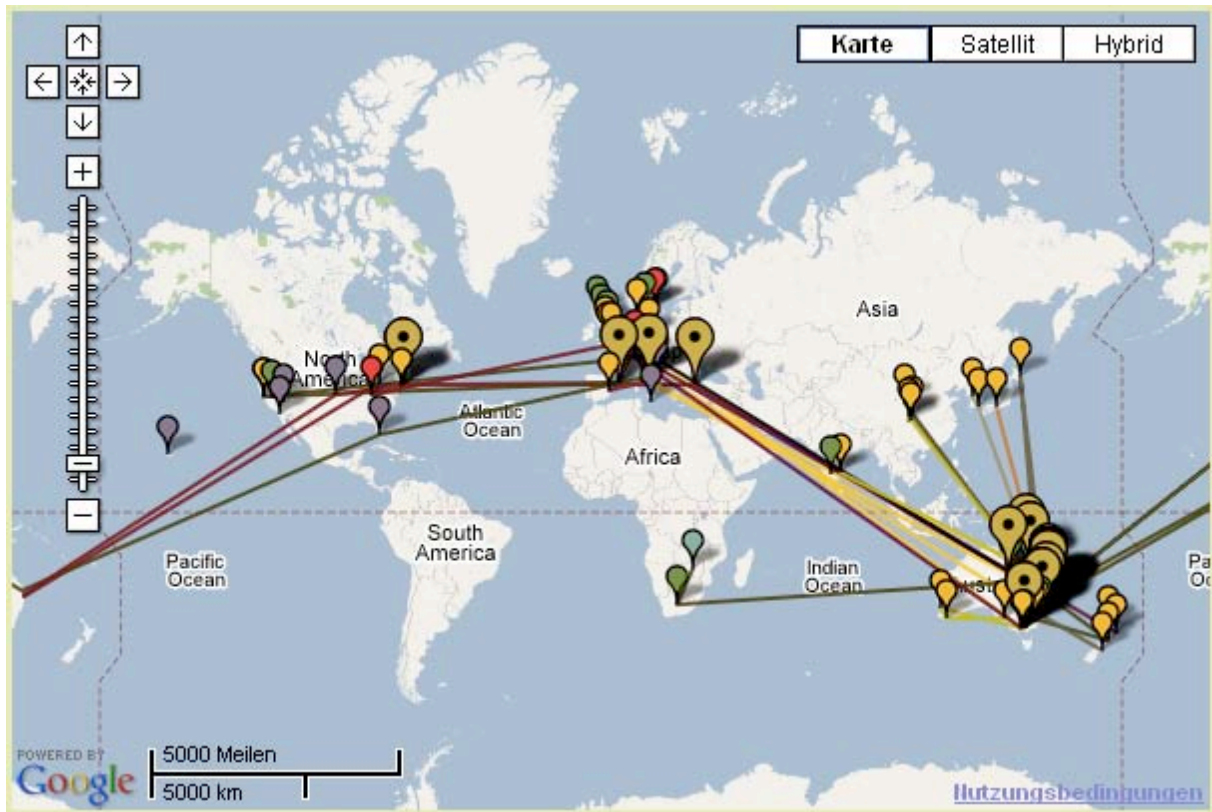
Fig. 10.4: HistoryLines

As a community driven service, *HistoryLines* encourages people to participate in the content creation process. We employ recent Web 2.0 technology to allow KGUV residents to become authors and publish their personal history to a shared online community database. More specifically, we have created a custom-designed, content management framework for KGUV residents to digitise their history by tagging places where they have lived in the past and attaching comments, multimedia content and contact details. In order to provide an instinctive and user-friendly interface for the data input, we use a Google Maps mash-up application, so people can directly pinpoint places where they have lived in the past.

HistoryLines is an experiment to test how urban computing can be used to facilitate a social network of storytelling, themed around community history and place making. *HistoryLines* is a concept that allows individuals to leave their own 'historical footprint' online and connect with others who they 'cross paths with.' By leaving narrative notes about the places contributors have visited using the categories: *Live, Work, Play* and *Study*, others can connect and use the information to lessen the anxiety of their own transition from one community to another. The contributors are also able to visually see connections between their lines and those drawn by other residents and contact them if they wish with commonality to draw from. While still in early development, *HistoryLines* has the potential to visually represent common themes using historical narrative, so as to foster a better understanding of our neighbours collectively and of our community members individually. *HistoryLines* is thus an experiment to translate the 'six degrees of separation' theory underlying global social networking sites such as *MySpace* and *Facebook* for local community engagement in a master-planned community site.

The associated *HistoryLines* workshops held locally at the KGUV allow residents to engage with each other's past, but it also provides means for serendipitous social encounters through content sharing of photos, annotations and stories. A typical scenario might be that a participant submits a range of previous locations to the application: He was born in Wagga Wagga in New South Wales. He then moved to Sydney to study. During his life, he also lived in Sydney in the suburb of Bondi Beach, then

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moved up to Queensland and spend most of his life in Brisbane's suburb of Fairfield before settling into the KGUV. Stories and anecdotes can be left at various points. Another participant might encounter crossovers of their shared history lines. She might be prompted to ask about his residency at Bondi Beach, because she, herself, or a family member lives down there. Shared experiences, previously unknown and without further significance, all of a sudden become the focal point for conversation and shared interests and exchange.

Fig. 10.5: At the end of a HistoryLines workshop, participants share the results

The outcome of the *HistoryLines* workshops was a richly constructed encounter between residents from different buildings within the site. Our interactions with study participants indicate that – except for serendipity – such social encounters would not have occurred without this initiative. However, the initial opportunity to get to know each other increases the chances for residents to encounter each other again in a less anonymous manner, such as whilst shopping at the Village Centre, or walking the dog in the park. The manifold implications for the design of this heterogeneous site in terms of its physical and online/digital space centre around the quest to challenge and re-think traditional understandings of 'community' and 'village living.' Social encounters in the urban village that go beyond personal friendship networks and advance the social fabric of the urban environment depend on the provision of public spaces – both physical and digital (Foth & Sanders, 2008). What matters in this context are the quality of these spaces to foster social encounters as well as how well they bridge the physical and digital city.

This construction of part of the digital space of the Kelvin Grove Urban Village is a powerful link to the past: personal histories and serendipitous encounters within the digital mapping of those histories help to consolidate the present for the residents of the village whose pasts' are varied spatially and personally. As people in the past manipulated the landscape in different ways to help prescribe and consolidate certain social encounters (and possibly content sharing) so, too, do we now. The landscape has widened however and the digital horizon needs appropriate methods for interpretation.

10.5 Readings between the conceived and perceived space

The Kelvin Grove Urban Village site has a rich and varied history, including its Indigenous, military, educational, residential and natural history. In a similar way to the *HistoryLines* project, the *Sharing Stories* project was a targeted community development initiative aimed at engaging members of the community. Whereas *HistoryLines* focused on the history of the new residents and where they came from, the goal of the Sharing Stories project was to preserve, honour, interpret and publish the history of the site that is now home to the KGUV. Oral histories, visual art, photographs, archival information and digital stories were collected, created and shared from the past and the present by students and community participants who chose to share their memories, inspirations and research about the KGUV site.

The workshops and related community engagement events such as openings and exhibitions that formed part of the *Sharing Stories* project provided an opportunity for members of the KGUV community to meet, interact and encounter each other. The community in this context consists of historic witnesses that used to have a personal affiliation with the site of what is now the KGUV – from Indigenous origins, to military, commercial, educational and residential usage – as well as present stakeholders such as the urban planning and design team, members of the neighbourhood and students from local schools. Especially the digital storytelling workshops brought a diverse group of people together over a period of focused creative work.

Teresa Mircovich

Igor and Teresa Mircovich arrived in Australia from a WWII refugee camp.

Nigel Stevens

Nigel Stevens joined the National Service in 1951 and was stationed at the Kelvin Grove Barracks.

Ann Staples

Ann Staples lived on Victoria Park Road for 63 years.

Stephen Pincus

Stephen Pincus is the QUT Project Director for the Kelvin Grove Urban Village.

John Duncan

John Duncan has been associated with Kelvin Grove's military history since 1953.

Ailsa Skippen

Ailsa Skippen has a long association with Kelvin Grove.

Norma Mills

Norma Mills has had ties to Kelvin Grove and its surrounding areas since 1936.

Penny Somerville

Penny Somerville is the Department of Housing's Principal Project Officer for Kelvin Grove Urban Village.

Judith Cox

Kelvin Grove has featured prominently in Judith Cox's life.

Rex Kirkham

Rex Kirkham joined the National Service at Kelvin Grove in 1951.

Fig. 10.6: A selection of digital stories published on the Sharing Stories website at http://www.kgurbanvillage.com.au/sharing/digital/

Digital stories are short, personally narrated multimedia tales (Freidus & Hlubinka, 2002; Lambert, 2002; Meadows, 2003). In a series of workshops led by Dr Helen Klaebe and run by specialist trainers from the Creative Industries Faculty at QUT, people from a wide range of age groups and experience levels worked together to produce digital stories related to the history of the Kelvin Grove Urban Village area. During the workshop, the participants, with the assistance of the trainers, developed their personal memories and stories into scripts, recorded voiceovers, and used professional video editing software to produce a personal documentary film of broadcast quality. The digital stories are made to a formula of around two minutes, 250 words, and a dozen images – but the results are as diverse as the individual participants who made them (Fig. 10.6). The public screenings of these digital stories provided further opportunities for creators to meet each other as well as for members of the audience to ask questions and interact with the participants with a view to honour and celebrate the history of the KGUV site.

The *Sharing Stories* project produced and published a comprehensive social history collection of the KGUV (Klaebe, 2006). Klaebe and Foth also reported in detail on those processes involved in running the *Sharing Stories* project that utilise new media to engage with the community development

strategies of the KGUV (Klaebe & Foth, 2007). For the purpose of this chapter, we want to draw attention on the notion of ecology in the social production of space. In the context of the KGUV, we use Lefebvre (1991) to distinguish between the phase of the *conceived* space when the designers and developers come together to plan the KGUV space; the *perceived* space that is communicated to a target audience of buyers and residents through marketing material, maps and plans, project websites; and the *lived* space consisting of the actual lived experience of tenants and residents that inhabit the KGUV (Klaebe et al., 2009). Whereas the *HistoryLines* project is positioned to connect the conceived space with the lived space, the *Sharing Stories* initiative was thought of and commenced much earlier with a view to build a bridge between the conceived space and the perceived space. In a way, the project functioned as a research probe for the design and planning team in that it combines opportunities for research data collection and analysis with community development outcomes. It was funded at the planning and development stages as a vehicle to inform the representations of space whilst preserving the history and heritage of KGUV. The local and historical content that *Sharing Stories* produced has informed the marketing material and the planning and design documentation of KGUV, but has also found its way into tangible representations of space in the form of for example, plaques embedded in the foot paths and other signage with historic anecdotes and citations.

10.6 Conclusions

Section 10.3 outlined a number of problems located at the point of the original design of KGUV which translate to a lack of permeability within the site where movement is restricted and controlled between different zones within the site. The hoped for inclusivity and social encounters presented in the master plan appear to be currently prevented by the physical shape of the site and the specific features of Kulgun Park and the Village Centre. Further developments on the other side of Kulgun Park opposite the Village Centre might change these dynamics if they create new destinations that attract residents and visitors to cross this tacit boundary and thus re-appropriate the park as a link and destination in its own right.

Essentially, a comparison of these levels of analyses reveals that certain social encounters may not occur within a master-planned landscape without themselves being 'master-planned.' In a heterogeneous space designed to include distinct groupings based on disparate geographical and socio-economic personalities and backgrounds social encounters may not occur without support and facilitation. In the case of this urban village this is in part being carried out through the *HistoryLines* initiative and also within the digital place of *Sharing Stories*.

To an extent content sharing is limited to those *within* certain zones – rather than *between* – of this heterogeneous public space. This formation of boundaries between different groups within the perceived space becomes more explicit within the spatial analysis where the lived-in space is explored. Barnes et al. (2007) neatly summarise the interplay of actors in this process of urban (re)development and associated marketing: "The seductiveness of the urban village concept relies upon appealing to nostalgia for an ideal 'community' linked to a main street with heritage architecture and lifestyle consumption. But, ultimately, such a vision is limited ... in favour of a desirable, middle-class professional social group" (p. 351). So, what was conceived in the master plan is translated and narrated differently in the perceived space according to who is producing and reading the various marketing texts. The lived experience, yet again, can be quite different. Both *HistoryLines* and *Sharing Stories* are examples of attempts to bring these distinct spaces closer together. The sharing of creative content and the personal interaction between participants and community members are key elements of this strategy.

Other features in the landscape that serve to link the past to the present may in fact prevent encounters being shared between different residents and users of the space because of their physical organisation. Clearly, these features also need support and associated cultural intervention in order to be activated and meaningful within the space. The landscape of the KGUV viewed through the lens of archaeology shows that social encounters in such a master-planned site can be enhanced and played-out in both constructed and serendipitous ways. The digital space where *HistoryLines* and parts of *Sharing Stories*

are produced and accessed is an example of where the socialities and artefacts of a landscape have moved beyond the physical boundaries of the site. The workshops that facilitate these initiatives allow for present and hopefully future face-to-face encounters. The shared and recorded content links personal pasts and serendipitous encounters that may have occurred in the past. However, these encounters only have meaning because they are shared in the present with consequences for the future. The experiential cycles of the *HistoryLines* application have depth and meaning that could be applied to places of social fragmentation and isolation and where the 'place' itself cannot function alone to fulfil the goals and desired outcomes of particular models of urban design. It will be exciting to see how people continue to negotiate this evolving space between the physical and the digital.

Acknowledgements

Biographies

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Greg Hearn has been a national leader in assessing the effects and outcomes of new digital technologies for more than 10 years. His consulting and research has focused on the cultural impacts and opportunities of global communication networks for a range of organizations and industries. In 1994, Hearn was a consultant to the Broadband Services Expert Group, the national policy group that formulated Australia's foundation framework for the information superhighway. He was also involved in high-level consultancy and applied research with organizations including British Airways and many Australian government agencies, focusing on adaptation to new media technologies. He has authored or co-authored more than 16 major industry reports. Hearn has also worked internationally, and has been a visiting fellow at Brunel University's Centre for Research in Innovation, Culture and Technology in the UK, and Cornell University in the US. From 1990 to 1996, Hearn was assistant director of QUT's Communication Centre, and led many research project teams and successfully negotiated and executed industry research. In 1999, he received the Henry Mayer Prize for writing the most provocative theoretical article in the *Australian Journal of Communication*.

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