

THE SUSTAINABILITY GAP: A CASE STUDY OF OLYMPIC DEVELOPMENT  
IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA AND BEIJING, CHINA

by  
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A THESIS

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“The Sustainability Gap: A Case Study of Olympic Development in Sydney, Australia and Beijing, China,” a thesis prepared by Andrea Blaser in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science degree in the Interdisciplinary Studies Program: Historic Preservation. This thesis has been approved and accepted by:

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A media uproar occurred in 2006 after a wrecking ball flattened an Imperial-era hutong neighborhood in Beijing. While this kind of news story would often be ignored as just another example of the Chinese government destroying cultural history in the name of progress, the story of Qianmen had a new twist. Not only was Qianmen a protected heritage area under a 2002 Beijing Municipal Government Conservation Plan, but the destruction was said to have happened because of the upcoming 2008 Summer Olympic Games. Was the development of Qianmen in step with Olympic ideals and sustainable development?

This thesis explores the sustainable development agenda of the International Olympic Committee, *Agenda 21*, in order to analyze the agenda, its impact in driving development policies in host cities Sydney, Australia and Beijing, China, and to what

extent planners incorporated historic preservation into Olympic development policies in both cities.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

***The greenest building is the building already built.***

In 2006, *New York Times* reporter Jim Yardley introduced the United States to Qianmen, a small hutong neighborhood in Beijing dating to the Ming and Qing dynasties. Once home to a thriving commercial community, the small neighborhood was undergoing a dramatic transition that included the demolition of protected heritage resources. As I would find upon visiting this Qianmen DaJie (Qianmen Street) for the first time, Olympic logos and mascots adorned the site, promoting a transition that was demolishing cultural resources. Erected in their place will be new buildings attempting to duplicate the look and feel of the original structures that once lined Qianmen DaJie. While the use of Olympic imagery at the Qianmen development may be an example of local Olympic organizers using the power of Olympic symbols in order to advertise a new and exciting development in the heart of old Beijing, all indications point to the use of Qianmen DaJie as a venue for the Olympic Marathon during the 2008 Summer Olympic Games.

While this kind of development is illegal in the eyes of *Conservation Planning of 25 Historic Areas in Beijing Old City*, a conservation plan released by the Beijing Municipal Government in 2002, this kind of development has a complicated relationship with the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The IOC informs host cities of the high

standards attached to Olympic development, with a set of guidelines titled *The Olympic Movement's Agenda 21: Sport for Sustainable Development*. While *Agenda 21* contains provisions for heritage protection, they have failed to prevent the destruction of protected historic resources in Qianmen.

The situation in Qianmen demonstrates different weaknesses within *Agenda 21*, which I will be addressing in this thesis. First, although a development which can be linked to an Olympic event is underway in an area designated for conservation by Beijing Municipal authorities, the IOC has done nothing to step in and stop construction or publicly speak out against it, even though their logos adorn the south side of the development. This has more than likely occurred because of Qianmen's location miles south of the main area of Olympic development in Beijing, the Olympic Green. Located between the fourth and fifth Ring Roads, the Olympic Green is home to the landmark stadiums and buildings which will be associated with the legacy of the Games once they are completed in August, 2008. Because of the scale and impact of such projects in these areas with the highest concentration of events and venues, the IOC in turn concentrates their oversight on these areas.

This lack of oversight of small developments located on the periphery, supporting larger-scale developments of Olympic venues and infrastructure, has proven to be a weakness of the IOC and *Agenda 21*. While some hosts of the Olympic Games, such as Sydney, Australia, were afforded the opportunity to redevelop a blighted areas of the city large enough to host most all of the sporting events in 2000, many cities do not have the same opportunity. As seen in Beijing, events will be hosted in numerous areas of the city,

and events such as sailing and equestrian competitions will be hosted in different cities. As the Olympics have come to represent an opportunity for cities to finish needed infrastructure requirements or become a vehicle for various forms of urban renewal, development has become a major theme of hosting the games.

This push for new development in order to maximize the world spotlight also makes the Games more prestigious, and therefore elite. Only large metropolitan areas with the infrastructure and funding needed to support this kind of event are considered to be hosts for the Games. More than likely, these cities will have to utilize existing facilities throughout the city, build new venues, and provide adequate transportation resources for tourists in between. Hosting a mega-event such as the Olympic Games spawns numerous forms of small development in the periphery of larger venues, most of which relates to the tourism industry and general urban improvements. These developments are highly unregulated by the IOC, and are therefore completed in concert with local laws and procedures, which may not reflect the values of sustainable development as outlined in *Agenda 21*, or the values of the Olympic Movement.

In a place like Sydney, Australia, there are strong laws which protect significant cultural resources. The *Australia International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Burra Charter*, which works in accordance with the *Australian Natural Heritage Charter*, work together to protect historic landscapes. In the Australian view, buildings and natural settings are meshed together, creating a context of understanding that is important to conserve historic landscapes as a whole. As stated in Article Five of Conservation Principles in the Burra Charter, “Conservation of a place should identify

and take into consideration all aspects of cultural and natural significance without unwarranted emphasis on any one value at the expense of others.”<sup>1</sup>

In developing countries, such as China, there may be very different approaches to heritage conservation and guidelines concerning these issues may be executed in different ways. In matters of preservation, the national law, *Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics*, is largely concerned with the preservation of buildings and sites of national importance. Heritage sites that are of a significant local importance are dealt with at lower levels of government, equating to varying degrees of results. As I will discuss in Chapter IV, the conservation efforts to protect the hutong neighborhoods of Beijing have sprung from a grassroots level, causing the creation of city-wide legislation to protect these valuable, at-risk areas of cultural heritage. What will also be explained in Chapter IV is a phenomenon of non-compliance with these conservation mandates in Beijing, as a lack of public participation in the preservation process has also created a lack of transparency and accountability.

In contrasting approaches to preservation of the historic built environment in two different host cities of the Olympic Games, this thesis will serve to show that the IOC's *Agenda 21* lacks the robust policies and procedures required to propagate the protection of cultural resources as a tool to develop sustainably in host cities. As I will discuss in the following chapters, preservation of historic built environments, both located amidst large Olympic developments and tourist attractions on the periphery of host cities, is an essential and important tool to sustainable development. Compounded with the IOC's

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<sup>1</sup> Australia International Council on Monuments and Sites, *Burra Charter* (Burwood, Victoria: Australia International Council on Monuments and Sites, 1999), <http://www.icomos.org/australia/burra.html> (accessed May 1, 2008).

desire to develop sustainably, the IOC has created an outline for these actions to occur, but has not implemented measures to insure their success where local preservation laws differ in approach, or go un-enforced. The study of these cultural contexts are important in not only opening the door to further research which can aid in the implementation of a more effective sustainability agenda for the IOC, but will also demonstrate that preservation of the built environment acts as an important tool for any country attempting to develop sustainably. Allowing for the preservation of existing structures not only enriches the cultural environment, bringing a specific awareness of place and local history, but also aids in the preservation of natural and finite resources. The positive cultural and environmental legacy that preservation can provide seems to be the desired outcome of development in Olympic host cities. What this thesis intends to address is whether the IOC is providing the necessary tools for this to occur over varying cultural and developmental environments. What kind of positive sustainability measures have been seen in two very different host cities of the Olympic Games, how has the local context and laws affected these outcomes, and where does *Agenda 21* fit into these local contexts?

### **The Olympic Games, Prestige, and Development**

With its drama, athletic superiority and heroism, the Olympic Games have seen unparalleled success as a global effort to unite different cultures from around the world under the flag of goodwill through competition. While the Games were initially intended to be a local Greek sporting event in 776 BC, its popularity began to soar as men from

around the world recognized the merits of regularly bringing athletes from around the world together in the name of sport. Today, these Games are still held not only to foster international relations through competition, but also to serve as a vehicle for host cities to achieve global recognition and a bankable legacy. The numbers support the theory: in a global survey which asked participants to rate word association to the image of the Olympic Rings, 82% said they associated the rings with “first class sporting event.” Other high scoring words or phrases were “success” at 74%, “high standards” also at 74%, “excellence” at 74%, and “international cooperation” scored 73%.<sup>2</sup>

Not only are the Games held in high esteem throughout the world, but they also deliver great economic progress and opportunity to potential host cities around the world. With an estimated 3 billion international viewers who watch the opening ceremony each year, the Games represent the ultimate opportunity for a city to show itself to the world, inviting a surge of global tourist dollars which can deliver an economic boon both during and after the Games.<sup>3</sup> In order to prepare for such exposure to the world, these host cities plan for years, creating new built environments while reshaping the old, that will serve to accommodate Olympic crowds, sporting events, and world media, and act as landmark public areas capturing the legacy of the Olympic Games for years to come.

While this development can be a positive change for host cities, it can also be mismanaged and rushed in order to meet construction deadlines as the world waits

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<sup>2</sup> Holger Preuss, *The Economics of Staging the Olympics: A Comparison of Staging the Olympic Games 1972-2008* (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2004), 158.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.



patiently for the Games.<sup>4</sup> When this tendency to rush development is taken into consideration along with the fact that cities such as Beijing are investing \$14.3 billion into hosting the games but are only investing \$2.1 billion into costs related to sports facilities, one can discern that a sizeable portion of total costs are being spent on infrastructure improvements necessary to accommodate the influx of tourists associated with the Games.<sup>5</sup> Although the host city is contractually tied to the IOC and is therefore obligated to impart the values of the Olympic Movement in all actions pertaining to the Games, a great weakness in this contractual agreement is exposed when examining the nature and expanse of urban revitalization movements in host cities. While this kind of development can be directly linked to a city hosting the Olympics and the need to re-evaluate urban infrastructure and beautification in the planning process, the IOC has little oversight for these potentially damaging endeavors.

The blame for this lack of oversight and potential break from Olympic values cannot be solely placed on host organizations and countries. As a delegate at the 2007 World Conference on Sport and the Environment, hosted by the IOC's Sport and Environment Commission, I was present at this meeting of IOC commissioners, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) officers, Beijing 2008 officials, and former Olympic athletes in Beijing. As a participant who was looking forward to discussions on sustainable development, I was disappointed to realize that while sessions were advertised as addressing issues related to development, such as "Sport and Sustainable

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 18.

Development: Contradictions or Complementarities,” conversations pertaining to sustainable development were limited to environmental issues. At one particular parallel session, “A Positive Legacy for Beijing’s Local Community,” I was personally excited to hear that the Deputy Director of the Construction and Environment Department of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG) would be speaking about environmental protection efforts undertaken by his organization in planning for the Games. Once he began speaking, this excitement quickly diminished as he prefaced his presentation with the statement, “I will not be discussing development today.” While all other parallel sessions offered scheduled time after presentations for delegates to ask question of the panel, this particular session did not.

As the conference would wear on, delegates would learn of adequate ways to offset their carbon emissions, the importance of planting trees, and were educated on the unique environmental challenges facing different geographic regions when attempting to plan for an Olympics. While I attended every session that was advertised as a discussion on sustainable development, not one speaker discussed the role of sustainable development as it relates to the preservation of historic neighborhoods within the Olympic Movement, and UN officials involved with development affairs were not present at the event.

### **Preface on Sustainability and the Importance of Historic Preservation**

Two of the hottest buzzwords within the architectural community today are sustainability and sustainable development. As the world population becomes

increasingly aware of the decline in the abundance of natural resources and the importance of minimizing the human footprint on the natural landscape, communities have been coming together in order to create architectural solutions to address these global problems. As a result, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification is quickly becoming an architectural standard, and mixed use developments that maximize available land are becoming normal developments as business leaders outside of the architectural community are beginning to see the merits of sustainable architecture and development.

Sustainability in relation to infrastructure and development concerns itself with the availability of natural resources for the use of humans in their daily life. As awareness has grown of the finite nature of resources, efforts have been made by both organizations and individuals alike to analyze their consumption of natural materials.

At its essence, sustainability is concerned with creating a limited impact on the environment while extracting a positive gain for human development. The ultimate goal is to develop a way of building cities that limits the need for private transportation, utilizes density to eliminate urban sprawl from creeping into valuable agricultural lands, and uses natural resources for energy and building construction in a sustainable fashion that will preserve these resources for generations.

One problem within the growing sustainability movement is that preservation of the existing built environment is largely ignored. While many miss the direct link between preservation of the built environment and sustainability, these two processes go hand in hand when one considers reducing consumption as a means of reducing the

impact of man-made products and technologies on the environment. Given that one of the goals of the sustainability movement is to reduce consumption, the architectural and development communities can better achieve this goal if they reuse and integrate historic buildings and structures within local communities.

A clear example is seen in the use of Chinese steel in new buildings. If builders do not reduce consumption of Chinese steel, they will continue to use a product that is produced under little to no environmental regulation. While certain measures can be taken to reduce the amount of energy used and carbon released by new buildings during construction and subsequent use, the amount of carbon emitted into the atmosphere in the process of making the steel used for its internal structure negates any measures taken on the part of the building design or technology to mitigate its impact on the environment.<sup>6</sup>

What this means for sustainable planning and design, purely in regards to material use, is that if a real need exists for an immediate impact pertaining to environmental sustainability, there needs to be a sharp increase in the amount of buildings that are adaptively reused or preserved, utilizing materials and energy that already exist. If the desire is there to decrease the impact building programs have on the natural environment, the architectural and heritage conservation communities can start making a difference immediately by increasing the amount of buildings they reuse within their local communities, resulting in lowered consumption of both unsustainable and polluting resources.

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<sup>6</sup> Adam Davidson, "Cutting Greenhouse Emissions May Rest with China," National Public Radio, May 14, 2007, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=10172700> (accessed May 21, 2007).

Although preservation of the built environment is a strategy that can be implemented in order to reduce consumption of natural and finite materials, it is also an important tool in the preservation of endangered cultural landscapes. Increasingly, international organizations are beginning to recognize the merits of preserving elements of the built environment as a form of safeguarding cultural diversity. This was demonstrated at the *United Nations Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, in which the following principles were established for the promotion of cultural expression:

Since culture is one of the mainsprings of development, the cultural aspects of development are as important as its economic aspects, which individuals and peoples have the fundamental right to participate in and enjoy ... Cultural diversity is a rich asset for individuals and societies. The protection, promotion and maintenance of cultural diversity (is) an essential requirement for sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations.<sup>7</sup>

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which has long been a world leader in the protection of tangible and intangible cultural resources, also cites the importance of cultural resources in sustainable development. In a recent address in Afghanistan marking the safeguarding of the Minaret of Jam, UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura cited the importance of preservation not only to rebuilding war-torn areas threatened by conflict, but also as an avenue to propagate sustainable development:

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<sup>7</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions" (Paris: UNESCO, 2005), [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=31038&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=31038&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) (accessed May 25, 2007).

For many years now, the Organization has been coordinating complex operations to safeguard heritage damaged or threatened by conflicts. The experience gained through these initiatives clearly demonstrates that the safeguarding of cultural heritage involves more than merely restoring ancient architectural treasures. Such activities can make a determinant contribution to sustainable development, social cohesion and regional and national reconciliation.<sup>8</sup>

While the IOC has only made a tentative link between sustainable development and heritage safeguarding, UNESCO and other UN organizations have made this connection and continue to promote preservation of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage in developing areas. While the IOC has room to improve their approach to preservation of the built environment, some recent Olympic hosts have taken the initiative themselves to include heritage conservation as a priority within their sustainability agendas.

As I will note in Chapter III, the planning committee for Sydney Olympic Park recognized the need to preserve cultural heritage, or significant tangible historic resources, as an integral element of its sustainability agenda and created a conservation plan for the historic buildings of the Abattoir district at the Homebush Bay. Not only were these forgotten butcher's buildings restored, but other remnants of an industrial past, such as the aging Newington Armory and the former state Brickworks, were also preserved as cultural landmarks. As a general standard in their sustainability guidelines, the Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA) lists "Heritage" as one of the environmental focus areas within its sustainability strategy, and openly states the importance of heritage

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<sup>8</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "Address by Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, on the occasion of the inauguration of the exhibition on the Safeguarding of the Minaret of Jam in Afghanistan" (Paris: 176th session of UNESCO's Executive Board, April 10, 2007).

conservation in overall sustainability goals.<sup>9</sup> As seen by the success of Sydney Olympic Park as not only a top-rate venue for the Olympic Games but as a nature reserve and sustainability park, this integrated approach to sustainability, which does not fall short of preservation of the existing built environment, is a successful model for sustainable planning that can be used as a template for future host cities.

### **Methods and Reasoning**

This thesis was conducted as a case study of two sites of the Olympic Games: the site of the 2000 Summer Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, and the site of the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing, China. These individual sites were chosen because of their different approaches towards incorporating preservation of the existing historic built environment within sustainability agendas. These case studies are supplemented with an in-depth look at the organizational structure of the IOC and an analysis of the Olympic Movement detailing how it came to support its own version of the United Nations' sustainability agenda, *Agenda 21*. This agenda will also be analyzed in order to evaluate its effectiveness in propagating sustainable development at the Olympic sites in Sydney and Beijing. Overall, this thesis was conducted with qualitative research methods with goals-based evaluation to establish if the IOC is meeting its sustainability goals in both Sydney and Beijing, as well as an outcome evaluation to determine if the IOC is reaching its desired outcome under current IOC sustainability guidelines.

Because this topic is of current interest and of an evolving nature, a vast majority of sources cited in this thesis are from the news media, and sources are usually

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<sup>9</sup> Sydney Olympic Park Authority, *Towards Sustainability: Sustainability Strategy for Sydney Olympic Park* (Sydney: Sydney Olympic Park Authority, 2002), 45.

international media companies. While many of these media resources do a competent job of covering international events, getting even-handed and informative information about events in China can be daunting. With media controls in place, which usually filter out the most sensitive of stories, all information coming out of China must be carefully analyzed for any bias from either the Chinese or the western perspectives. As I found from living in China for a month, the news there is overwhelmingly positive, covering stories which would not be seen in the western media. News outlets such as CCTV and Xinhua, the state-run media outlet, deliver daily stories outlining such accomplishments as Communist Party Leader Hu Jintao espousing the merits of scientific development, or the steady economic rise of Chinese industries. On the other hand, stories of lead poisoning from Chinese products in the United States are all but absent from the Chinese media. Similarly, as I found while conducting my own research, Chinese government censors routinely block web pages of many western media outlets.

Because of this irregularity of reliable information related to current events in China, staying in the field to research for a prolonged amount of time was necessary not only to gather pertinent information, but to also gain a sense of context for the events at hand. Although I visited a local Non-governmental Organization (NGO) involved in advocating for the preservation of Beijing hutongs, or alleyway neighborhoods, I did not conduct an interview for use in this thesis, as I was unable to gain access to Olympic officials in China for a balanced review of first-hand information.

Adding to this decision was the sensitive nature of the issue in China, which dissuaded me from conducting personal interviews as part of my research method.



Rather, I used an analysis of published accounts as well as field observations during my visits to both China and Australia, which included attendance at the 2007 World Conference on Sport and the Environment, hosted by the IOC in October of 2007 in Beijing. This field work exposed both the similarities and differences between rhetoric and reality. For example, while taking notes at every presentation at the Beijing conference, I witnessed the process in which matters are resolved at the IOC, and how the decision-making process is conducted within the organization.

I also visited the corporate offices of Sydney Olympic Park in Homebush Bay while researching in the field, and had an informal discussion with Lead Planner Craig Bagley. The SOPA invited me into their office, spoke to me about the park and its history, and allowed me to borrow a mountain bike to see the park from a different perspective than that of a pedestrian. This allowed me to discover the wide array of trail systems throughout the park, enabling me to explore the many attractions of the over 600-hectare park.

While I was not afforded the opportunity to have such a thorough examination of the Olympic Green in Beijing as it was still under construction at the time of my visit in October 2007, I was able to see construction of the spotlight venues, the Bird's Nest, Water Cube, and National Stadium. I was also given a tour of a showroom for the Athletes Village, and got an early look at Forest Park, which was still in the process of being planted. While I was granted no personal access to BOCOG officials or their

headquarters, I was present at numerous presentations by BOCOG officials at the World Conference on Sport and the Environment.<sup>10</sup>

To supplement this unique access to the IOC, I also used photographs to capture and tell the stories of both Olympic sites. I took all photographs seen as figures throughout this thesis (all sketch maps and renderings were created by Edward Niedermeyer) as I explored both Homebush Bay and Beijing. Because of the lack of information from official sources, these photographs are an important segment of my research, as some even stand as proof of Olympic involvement at construction sites where officials have denied any participation in the past. This photographic evidence is key in supporting the argument I make in this thesis.

This thesis has been prepared with planners in mind, who work on issues related to Olympic development and sustainable development. A key audience for this work will be not only those that work on issues related to development amidst large and temporary events, but also to preservationists and cultural resources professionals who have an interest in issues related to sustainable development. This thesis is also targeted to the IOC and to those involved in the Olympic Movement, with the hope of sparking a debate on sustainable development, heritage conservation, and the legacy of the IOC.

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<sup>10</sup> The 7<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Sport and the Environment was held in Beijing, China in October of 2008. Speakers from the BOCOG at the event included Yu Xiaoxuan, Liao Sautung, Liu Jun, and Liu Jingmin.

## CHAPTER II

### THE IOC AND AGENDA 21

#### **What Is the IOC and the Olympic Movement?**

Inspired by the ancient Greek Olympic Games, French educator Baron Pierre de Coubertain created the International Olympic Committee with other like-minded individuals on 23 June 1894 at the International Athletic Congress of Paris. The IOC is a non-profit organization that propagates the Olympic Movement and the spirit of Olympism. As outlined in the Olympic Charter, the mission and role of the IOC is:

1. To encourage and support the promotion of ethics in sport as well as education of youth through sport and to dedicate its efforts to ensuring that, in sport, the spirit of fair play prevails and violence is banned;
2. to encourage and support the organization, development and coordination of sport and competitions;
3. to ensure the regular celebration of the Olympic Games;
4. to cooperate with the competent public or private organizations and authorities in the endeavor to place sport at the service of humanity and thereby to promote peace;
5. to take action in order to strengthen the unity and to protect the independence of the Olympic Movement;
6. to act against any form of discrimination affecting the Olympic Movement;
7. to encourage and support the promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures with a view to implementing the principle of equality of men and women;
8. to lead the fight against doping in sport;
9. to encourage and support measures protecting the health of athletes;
10. to oppose any political or commercial abuse of sport and athletes;
11. to encourage and support the efforts of sports organizations and public authorities to provide for the social and professional future of athletes;
12. to encourage and support the development of sport for all;

13. to encourage and support a reasonable concern for environmental issues, to promote sustainable development in sport and to require that the Olympic Games are held accordingly;
14. to promote a positive legacy from the Olympic Games to the host cities and host countries;
15. to encourage and support initiatives blending sport with culture and education;
16. to encourage and support the activities of the International Olympic Academy (“IOA”) and other institutions which dedicate themselves to Olympic education.<sup>11</sup>

As outlined in the Olympic Charter, not only is the IOC responsible for the promotion of fair sport within the world community, but IOC members have recognized their responsibility within the environmental movement as well with the addition of mission and goal number thirteen, which outlines the need for a reasonable concern for environmental issues and sustainable development within the IOC. This 1996 addition to the Olympic Charter has strong roots within the Olympic Movement, which acts as the moral compass for the IOC.

Also discussed in the Olympic Charter is the Olympic Movement. The Olympic Movement can be defined as the universal and permanent actions of the IOC and all actors associated with the organization, although its origins lie in the philosophy of Coubertain and his reasoning behind introducing the spirit of the ancient Olympic Games into the modern era. The mission of the Olympic Movement is to facilitate:

1. Choice of the host city
2. Organization of the Olympic Games
3. Promotion of women in sport
4. Protection of athletes
5. Development through sport

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<sup>11</sup> The International Olympic Committee, *Olympic Charter* (Lausanne, Switzerland: The International Olympic Committee, 2004), 10-12.

6. Promotion of sustainable development
7. Respect for the Olympic Truce
8. Promotion of culture and Olympic education

The IOC, as the head of the Olympic Movement, is the sole propagator of Olympism and the Olympic Movement. It alone sets the priorities for the Olympic Movement, and ensures these policies are implemented within all facets of the Games. As stated within the Olympic Charter, all organizations, persons, and athletes who agree to be guided by the Olympic Charter are bound to the priorities of the Olympic Movement:

Under the supreme authority of the International Olympic Committee, the Olympic Movement encompasses organizations, athletes, and other persons who agree to be guided by the Olympic Charter ... the three main constituents of the Olympic Movement are the International Olympic Committee ("IOC"), the International Sports Federations ("IFS") and the National Olympic Committees ("NOCs"). Any person or organization belonging in any capacity whatsoever to the Olympic Movement is bound by the provisions of the Olympic Charter and shall abide by the decisions of the IOC.<sup>12</sup>

The Olympic Movement encompasses everyone from referees for sporting contestants to technicians, and includes the Organizing Committees of the Olympic Games (OCOGs). With this kind of power, the IOC has the ultimate say in the direction and focus of not only the Olympic Games, but all activities and participants who represent any part the Olympic Games, Olympic Charter, or Olympic Movement.

This is important to remember when considering the perceived freedom of host cities and their OCOGs within the planning process leading up to the Games. While individuality and creativity of the host cities and OCOGs is encouraged, the IOC has the ultimate ability to decide if the Games are in accordance with the Olympic Movement

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 10.

and Olympic Charter, and can make appropriate corrections or punishments, as deemed appropriate by the IOC. This is enforced by a signed contract that binds the host city and accompanying OCOG to the rules and regulations outlined in the Olympic Charter.

Not only are the OCOGs legally bound to properly represent the IOC and the Olympic Movement, but one must also consider the great political consequences which could arise from a city's non-compliance with the Olympic Charter:

The IOC's exertion of power, which can be called a traditional power according to Webster, is solely based on the power of reward. The IOC can only keep its current position in the Olympic Movement as long as the benefit of the Olympics is obvious to bid cities ... the IOC could damage the image of the city and the organizers by not publicly praising the Games, by holding back financial funds, or it could even withdraw the Games from a city and the OCOG as a last resort.<sup>13</sup>

Assessing this situation, it is clear that the IOC and the host city need each other to succeed. The host city, looking for international prestige and economic promise, is willing to abide by the Olympic Charter as long as the Olympic Games are a positive event that advances their community in the eyes of the world. The IOC on the other hand, has a great amount of control over the OCOG and host city, but needs to stay viable and relevant in a global community. This has become increasingly difficult as evolving concerns have arisen about the negative qualities that Olympic development has wrought on numerous communities throughout the world.

The negative impacts of Olympic development are predominately seen in communities that cannot defend themselves against the sheer political force of the Games or the Olympic Movement. As building programs have become larger by the decade for OCOGs, there is growing concern from scholars such as Helen Jefferson Linskyj that

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<sup>13</sup> Preuss, *Economics*, 280.

host cities are using the Games as an opportunity to disenfranchise under-represented citizens in the name of development and progress:

The problems of the disadvantaged populations, particularly in relation to housing and homelessness, were exacerbated by the Olympics. Police powers were enhanced in an attempt to render urban problems invisible to the outside world, and many citizens were disenfranchised in the face of a public spending spree presented as a private enterprise ... huge Olympic construction and infrastructure projects served as visible symbols of a new era in city building, while Olympic spirit and world-class city rhetoric was used to conceal the true impact of the Olympic industry on poverty, homelessness, systematic racism, and other pressing social problems.<sup>14</sup>

To counter these types of concerns, the IOC is beginning to take a stand on environmental issues such as sustainable development. However, while *Agenda 21* is a positive step in the right direction, there is still progress to be made if the IOC plans to hold itself to its sustainable development goals.

### **Agenda 21 and the Olympic Movement**

In response to a growing public outcry for more regulation pertaining to on-site and off-site development for the Games, the IOC has taken initial steps towards creating a more environmentally sensitive planning process “to encourage and support a reasonable concern for environmental issues, to promote sustainable development in sport and to require that the Olympic Games are held accordingly.”<sup>15</sup>

This has come in the form of *Agenda 21*. Based on the United Nation’s Agenda 21, the document was the brainchild of the IOC Commission on Sport and the

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<sup>14</sup> Helen Jefferson Lenskyj, *Inside the Olympic Industry: Power, Politics, and Activism* (Albany, New York: State of New York Press, 2000), 152.

<sup>15</sup> International Olympic Committee, *Olympic Charter*, 12.

Environment, which itself is a newer addition to the IOC family, born at the Centennial Olympic Congress held in Paris in 1994.<sup>16</sup> Outlining new environmental standards for host cities, the agenda also serves to establish the newly recognized link between the large-scale development of Olympic sites and environmentalism:

The Olympic Movement, whose goal, according to the Olympic Charter, is 'To contribute to building a peaceful and better world', agrees with the analysis undertaken by the UNCED, and sets its action in the framework of sustainable development. Because of the universality of sport, the Olympic Movement has the ability to play an active part in the taking of measures favoring sustainable development. For this reason, the Olympic Movement should have its own Agenda 21.<sup>17</sup>

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) *Agenda 21* is an extensive forty-chapter document that outlines the role of sustainable development in the international fight against environmental degradation. While the IOC agenda is based on the same principles of the UNCED version, it has been adapted for sport. Hence, there are a few key differences between the documents:

1. Section 7.20 (b) of the UNCED Agenda 21 gives the recommendation to "Improve the urban environment by promoting social organization and environmental awareness through the participation of local communities in the identification of public service needs, the provision of urban infrastructure, the enhancement of public amenities and the protection and/or rehabilitation of older

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<sup>16</sup> International Olympic Committee, *Olympic Movement's Agenda 21: Sport for Sustainable Development* (Lausanne, Switzerland: International Olympic Committee, 1999), 7.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.



building, historic precincts and other cultural artifacts.”<sup>18</sup> The IOC Agenda 21 only has limited guidelines pertaining to the protection or rehabilitation of historic structures regarding venue construction, and does not place the same importance on community involvement within the planning process.

2. Section 7.20 (e) of the UNCED Agenda 21 gives the recommendation to “Promote the formulation of environmentally sound and culturally sensitive tourism programs as a strategy for sustainable development of urban and rural settlements and as a way of decentralizing urban development and reducing discrepancies among regions.”<sup>19</sup> The IOC Agenda 21 does not address culturally sensitive tourism strategies whatsoever, even though tourist inflow is one of the main points used by the IOC to emphasize the economic impact brought to a city via hosting the Games generating income for emerging global cities.

3. Section 7.20 (g) of the UNCED Agenda 21 gives the recommendation to “Empower community groups, non-governmental organizations and individuals to assume the authority and responsibility for managing and enhancing their immediate environment through participatory tools, techniques, and approaches embodied in the concept of environmental care.”<sup>20</sup> Again, the IOC does not

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<sup>18</sup> United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), *Agenda 21* (Paris: UNCED, 1992), <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/english/agenda21toc.htm> (accessed May 27, 2007).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

advocate for strong community voices, and does not have built in community participation within their Agenda 21.

4. Section 7.30 (c) of the UNCED Agenda 21 gives the recommendation to “Develop fiscal incentives and land use control measures, including land-use planning solutions for a more rational and environmentally sound use of limited land resources.”<sup>21</sup> There are no such incentives for land-use controls in the IOC Agenda 21.

5. Section 5.34 of the UNCED Agenda 21 gives the recommendation “Demographic concerns, including concerns for environmental migrants and displaced people, should be incorporated in the programs for sustainable development or relevant international and regional institutions.”<sup>22</sup> The IOC’s Agenda 21 has no mention of concern for those that may be displaced by development, and has no set guidelines for proper compensation for those that have their property seized by local authorities for Olympic-related development. In cities such as Beijing, the number of relocated citizens may be as high as 15,000 for the installation of parklands alone.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG), “Tour of the Olympic Green” (Beijing: The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual World Conference on Sport and the Environment, October 27, 2007).

In comparing these two documents, the contrast in approaches to sustainable development exposes many essential protective elements missing from the IOC's *Agenda 21*, some of which are accepted international standards for sustainable development. The IOC's *Agenda 21* lacks the human element contained within the UNCED *Agenda 21* that delves into the context in which urban spaces are developed. Subject areas addressed in the UNCED *Agenda 21* that are lacking in, or void from, the IOC's version are the need to involve the immediate community in planning discussions, the importance of preserving the built environment and cultural/heritage areas, how planning efforts need to address land use and demographic concerns such as sprawl and displacement, and the importance of addressing the effects of tourism in vulnerable communities. The document outlines a holistic approach to sustainable development that endeavors to address the impact of development on affected communities. Taking these ideas into account while developing, by measuring impacts on the social, cultural, and natural environment of an area, provides the opportunity for development to occur that is valued at the local level, providing greater incentive for indefinite use.

Although this type of development scenario appears to be the goal of the IOC in host cities, *Agenda 21* does not provide the guidelines necessary to achieve this scenario, unless local laws and regulations support these actions. While the IOC would argue that *Agenda 21* is still a working document that will be shaped over time, it cannot be overstated that there will continue to be development actions that do not agree with *Agenda 21*, international sustainable development charters such as the UNCED *Agenda 21*, and the ideals of the Olympic Movement until a more comprehensive agenda has

been formed. Such generalities contained within *Agenda 21* that state “Sustainable development is only conceivable if accompanied by the satisfaction of those cultural and material needs that are essential for all individuals to live with dignity and play a positive role in the society to which they belong,” aim for a high standard of development, but provide no tools to achieve these goals, or any helpful outline of how they will be accomplished.<sup>24</sup>

One of the few sections in *Agenda 21* that addresses protection of the existing built environment is 3.2. Objectives listed are the re-use of existing sport facilities when appropriate, confining the creation of new facilities to cases in which demand satisfies the need, and that facilities should comply with local legislation and be designed to fit in the with surrounding landscape, man-made or natural.<sup>25</sup> Also stated is, “Sports activities, facilities and events must be so arranged as to ensure the protection of conservation areas, the countryside, the cultural heritage and natural resources as a whole.” The only measure of implementation mentioned for the building or conversion of facilities, or the planning of large-scale sports events, is the completion of an environmental impact study by organizers of the event, “...carried out to ensure respect for the cultural, social, and natural environment.”<sup>26</sup> No guidelines for these studies are outlined in the document, and no process is outlined for review of the study, or actions after review.

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<sup>24</sup> International Olympic Committee, *Agenda 21*, 23.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

While *Agenda 21* shows a limited concern for existing buildings both being re-used for events and those within proximity to large venues, the document does not address developments that occur on the periphery of these structures. While large-scale venues continue to be the focus of building programs in host cities, also part of the Olympic legacy is the city-wide improvements which transform host cities. Even if one were to assume that all new sports facilities were constructed with the utmost care to not only the environment but to the cultural heritage of the surrounding area, massive construction programs are undertaken in host cities to create pedestrian areas, fountains, transportation systems, athlete housing, public art displays, as well as the general destruction of “unseemly” areas of the city, as seen in the preparations for the 2008 Games in Beijing.

It is unfortunate that *Agenda 21* largely ignores these supporting facilities and developments. For an organization to carefully prepare a document on sustainable development, stating that after its adoption, “...the promotion of sustainable development became one of the fundamental objectives of the Olympic Movement,” it seems unusual that care was not taken to include detailed procedures for the IOC’s desired outcome for preservation of the cultural, natural, and social environment, and that these considerations were not extended to a wider context in host cities. This seems unusual given that the agenda on which it was based, the UNCED *Agenda 21*, was at its creation adopted by over 178 governments from around the world in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Its principles and plans for

full implementation have since been strongly affirmed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2002.

It is also a disappointment considering how large of a component culture, or the ways of life and structures associated with them in each host city, has become within the Olympic Movement. As one of the three pillars of Olympism, along with sport and environment, culture has been set aside in the IOC's rush to become a more environmentally-friendly organization. What they may have overlooked is that a comprehensive sustainability agenda presents the opportunity to address cultural preservation, tangible and intangible, in planning for the Games, while also addressing matters of environmental conservation. In one agenda, the opportunity is presented to advocate for the protection and promotion of all three core pillars of the IOC. In outlining an approach to sustainable development which focuses on environmental protection, advocacy for and interest in environmental issues related to the Olympics have been steadily increasing, but an opportunity to also increase advocacy for and interest in cultural and heritage issues has been lost in the process.

What this has created is an agenda which sets high goals of achieving sustainable development in host cities, but which lacks the components to make this happen, unless local laws buttress the agenda's few recommendations. Existing local laws will also dictate what forms of development will be acceptable in areas with historic built environments, both protected and unprotected, even if they are undertaken in ways which stand in opposition to portions of *Agenda 21* and the sustainable development policies it attempts to propagate.

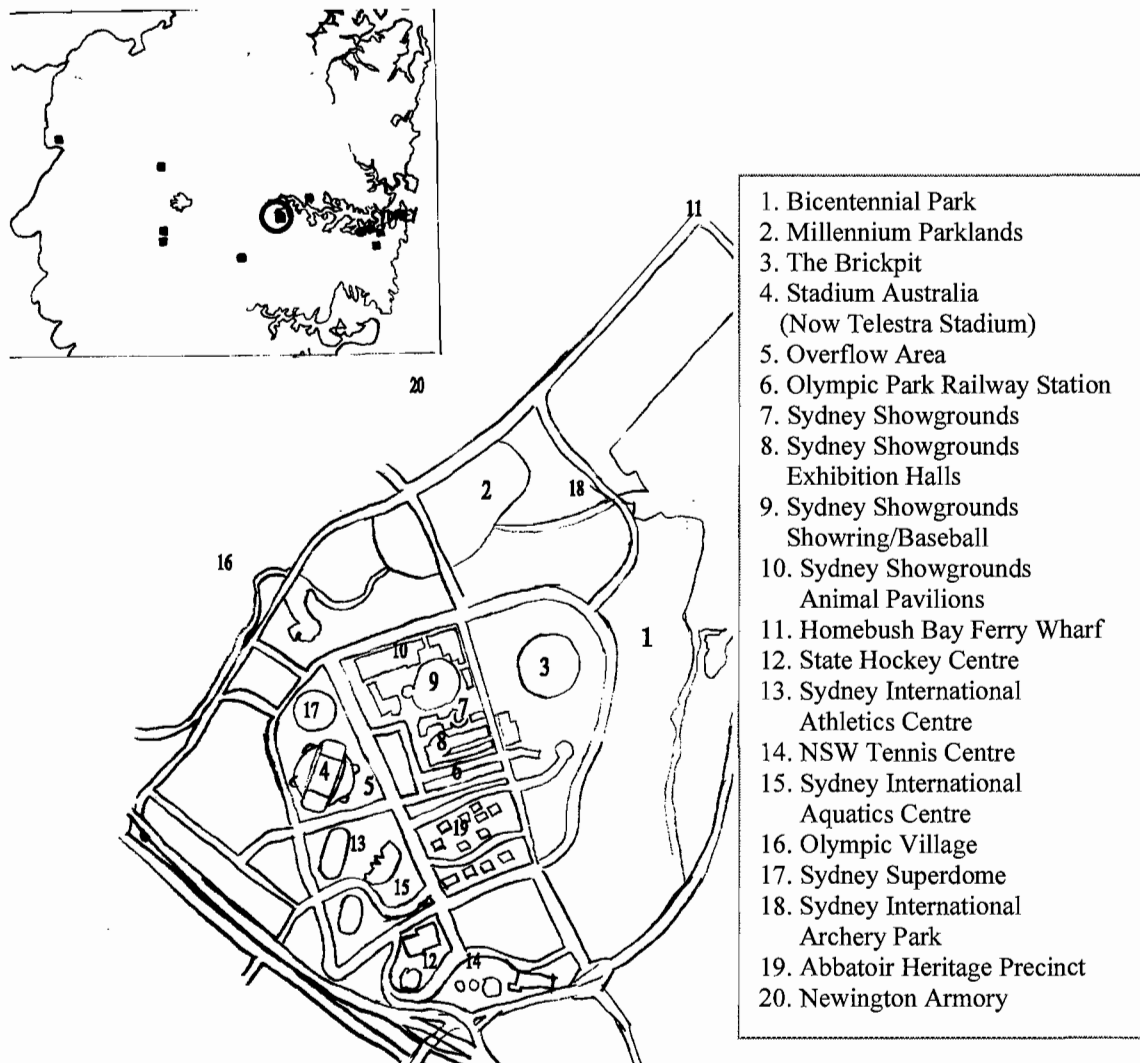
## CHAPTER III

### CASE STUDY: SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK

#### **Introduction to Sydney Olympic Park**

Nestled in the geographic center of the Sydney metropolitan area, Sydney Olympic Park is bordered by the Parramatta river to the north, Parramatta Road to the south, Homebush Bicentennial park to the east, and the suburb of Newington to the west (Figure 1). Standing as a testament to an intricate planning process leading up to the 2000 Summer Olympic Games, what used to be a secluded and forgotten government industrial landscape has been transformed into a sustainable sporting and recreation facility. Located on 1,581 acres of land, 1,050 of which are parklands, the site was faced with certain development because of its strategic location in the metropolitan area, and yet faced a dismal outlook because of contamination throughout the site in the form of dioxin, a powerful carcinogen that not only effects animals, but is also harmful to humans. Clean up for the site cost over \$197 million, but was welcomed as part of a self-described “best practice” sustainability agenda set by the Olympic Co-Ordination Authority (OCA), which focused on sustainable development and environmental management throughout the planning processes.

But not all planning efforts focused on the existing environment: planners used over \$2.5 billion to construct a state of the art sporting complex. The complex included



**Figure 1.** A sketch map of venue and heritage precinct locations at Sydney Olympic Park. Inset is a map containing the distribution of venues outside of Homebush Bay, including an equestrian center, shooting center, regatta center, and a football stadium. The large circle on the inset map notes the location of Homebush Bay within metropolitan Sydney.



an up-to-date water collection and recycling system, solar technology, and sustainable material use. These sustainable buildings were then skillfully blended within the natural beauty and industrial history of the site to create a world-class facility that accommodates 6.64 million visitors each year.

It must be noted that the governing body of the park, the Sydney Olympic Park Authority, is an office of the New South Wales government. The preceding authority before and during the games, the OCA, was also an extension of the New South Wales government, therefore putting all development at the site under state rules and guidelines. This meant that all lands deemed as heritage areas and all parklands containing endangered species did have certain detailed protections under the laws of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) *Burra Charter*, which is the official Australian heritage conservation guideline, and the *Australian Natural Heritage Charter*, which is constructed to work alongside the Burra Charter in order to preserve Australia's historic, cultural and natural landscapes as inseparable entities.

While there was a minimum amount of protection for heritage and natural resources deemed necessary by law, the OCA acted in best practice with regard to their level of sensitivity towards the existing natural and cultural resources at the park. Some examples of this sensitivity include remediation of 395 acres of land containing nine million cubic meters of waste, creating a water recycling system which saves more than 850 million liters of water per year, as well as continued use of energy efficient lighting throughout the park.<sup>27</sup> The OCA also adaptively reused numerous historic structures,

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<sup>27</sup> Sydney Olympic Park Authority, *Recycled Water at Sydney Olympic Park: Winning with Water* (Sydney: Sydney Olympic Park Authority, no date).

giving new life to industrial buildings that could have been threatened by new development if not seen for their full potential by park planners. Some examples of this are the Abattoir administration buildings, which were used both during and after the Olympics as administration offices (Figure 2), and small explosives workshops that have been converted into art galleries and cafes at the Newington Armory.

What was once a dump, Abattoir, Brickworks, and wild wetlands have now found use once again for the city of Sydney. Not only serving as a memorable host to the 2000 Summer Olympic Games, the park offers nature and recreation trails, sporting facilities, and historic educational areas. Facilities planned for construction include a hospital that will specialize in orthopedics, more residential and commercial buildings to fill public overflow areas and which compliment existing businesses that have already relocated to the park, and new hotels to better accommodate travelers. The park authority is also planning for the construction of a sports-centered educational campus.

As the park authority would argue, one cannot appreciate the progress that has been made at this site until one can truly understand the circumstances that planners faced in 1994, when they were charged with the development of a contaminated industrial landscape in a prime real-estate area of Sydney. The New South Wales government had to make a decision: should they clean up the land, parcel it off, and sell to private investors, or should they create a site for the Olympics that would rival the best in the world?



**Figure 2.** Building C of the Abbatoir Heritage Precinct. Formerly used as locker rooms and lavatories from 1913-1988, it served as the Heritage Café during the 2000 Olympics, and is now a general-use building for the Sydney Olympic Park Authority.

### **History of Homebush Bay**

Australia's English settlement first began in the late eighteenth century, as this long-forgotten continent was given a new life by Captain James Cook, who claimed the land for the British Empire in 1770. While there was an existing indigenous population which inhabited the land, the British felt that this new place would serve well as a penal colony, and therefore assembled the First Fleet, which would become the first group of English settlers to sail into Sydney Cove to establish a convict settlement in 1788.

Upon seeing the Homebush Bay area from the Parramatta River just days after the initial landing, the area was described as The Flats by one Lieutenant Bradley, which

probably lent the inspiration for its ensuing name, the Liberty Plains, given in honor of the first Australian settlers in 1793.<sup>28</sup> While it was wild, marshy and hard to develop, the land was parceled off quickly, and Thomas Laycock was the first settler to be granted land. Upon being granted the 100 acres of land in 1794, he promptly named the area Home Bush and began farming the land immediately.

While Laycock was one of the largest land owners in Sydney for a time, the landscape would not see a drastic change until 1807, when John Baxland arrived as one of the first free settlers in Australia. He quickly acquired 1270 acres of marshy land in the Homebush area, and named his new estate Newington, after his family Estate in Kent.<sup>29</sup> Although Baxland had acquired the land with the intent to raise livestock and cure meats, he was asked after his purchase by the British Ministry to set up a salt manufacturing plant due to the frontage of his property on the salty Paramatta river, and soon produced eight tons of salt each week for the Sydney market.<sup>30</sup>

Baxland, along with another major landowner and horse breeder, D'Arcy Wentworth, would come to shape the industrial past of Homebush Bay. As the years would wear on, the Crown would come to buy most of the land in this area, utilizing this industrial land for state purposes as needed. One of these first acquisitions by the government was the purchase of the Wentworth Estate, which changed hands of ownership in 1907 to the Minister of Public Works as Parliament had identified the need

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<sup>28</sup> Graham Brooks and Associates, *Abattoir Heritage Precinct, Sydney Olympic Park Conservation Management Plan* (Sydney: Sydney Olympic Park Authority, 2003), 12.

<sup>29</sup> Sydney Olympic Park Authority, *Colonial History at Homebush Bay 1788-1901* (Sydney: Sydney Olympic Park Authority, 1999), 2.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

for a new Abattoir (Figure 3). The existing facility in Glebe was seen as a failure, as its proximity to the city and issues with pollution led the government to believe that a more secluded site would be advantageous for production. This new start allowed for a greater amount of planning and a more expansive facility, which would include slaughterhouses, administration buildings, refreshment rooms, stables, a power-house, and complete accommodation for diseased animals, among other buildings.<sup>31</sup>

Because this was the first major government enterprise to occupy the land at Homebush, adequate roads and railway communication were established, and the landscape was sculpted by the Director of the Sydney Botanic Gardens, J. H. Maiden. The complex was to be surrounded by a wind break created by trees and supplemented with a garden on the grounds of the administration building, which can still be seen today at the original site. The arrangement of the complex was very linear, and lent itself well to a production atmosphere.

While many of the buildings on site were merely work stations and reflected this day-to-day use, careful planning was utilized in the design and construction of the administration buildings, which would be central to the function of the entire facility. Under the guidance of W.L. Vernon, the Government Architect's Department drew up plans for these buildings from 1908 to 1909, utilizing a Federation Arts and Crafts style for the main building, which showcased contrasting colors and texture, dominant roofs,

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<sup>31</sup> Graham Brooks and Associates, *Abattoir Heritage Precinct*, 15.



**Figure 3.** Building A of the Abbatoir Heritage Precinct, pictured above, acted as the administration building for the new abbatoir in Homebush Bay. Once central to the abbatoir complex, it is now situated in the heart of Sydney Olympic Park. Building A presently houses the Australian Paralympic Committee and Sport Knowledge Australia.

and tall chimneys, among other characteristic design cues from this style.<sup>32</sup> Smaller out buildings which contained such services as locker rooms were completed in a Federation Bungalow style, complimenting the main building, as well as filling out the landscaped gardens to create a clear vision through the heart of the Abattoir facilities.

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<sup>32</sup> Graham Brooks and Associates, *Abattoir Heritage Precinct*, 21.

While the Abattoir would serve Australia as one of the largest facilities of its kind in the world, as its buildings began to age, the government felt that the continued upkeep of these buildings was too much to bear, and in 1980 all operations were stopped at Homebush Bay. With 1600 workers at its peak of employment, the Abattoir had been a major force in shaping the site as it is seen today, even after the massive development that was undertaken at the site in preparation for the 2000 Summer Olympic Games. Not only was the Administration and surrounding outbuildings restored and used during and after the Games, but much of the landscaping associated with the site was saved as well. Examples of this can be seen in a row of palm trees located north of the Administration Building that have been left in place, fig trees that were once used to shade the animals in their paddocks have been relocated to create a fig grove to shade park visitors, and planners have incorporated the patterns made by fencing around the site into the master plan.<sup>33</sup>

The Abattoir, while one of the largest occupiers of the site, was not the only government program to call Homebush Bay its home. An armaments depot and brick works also functioned on this site at the same time as the Abattoir, operating through most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The armaments magazine and depot was established even earlier than the Abattoir, as the area on the northwest edge of the site which was owned by Baxland, otherwise known as Newington, would be bought by the government in 1882 as a storage facility that would serve the military in Sydney, via the Parramatta river. While it

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<sup>33</sup> Patrick Bingham-Hall, *Olympic Architecture: Building Sydney 2000* (Sydney: Watermark Press, 1999), 38.

originally served as a gun powder magazine for the Army, the Navy eventually took possession of the site and used it as a reserve weapons depot before expanding the facility in 1922. With continued expansion in 1924, which included requesting land from the Abattoir in order to meet the storage demands of the Navy, the site became the major armaments facility to supply Sydney, and additional expansion occurred 1938 in light of the growth of the Japanese military and growing tensions in Europe.<sup>34</sup>

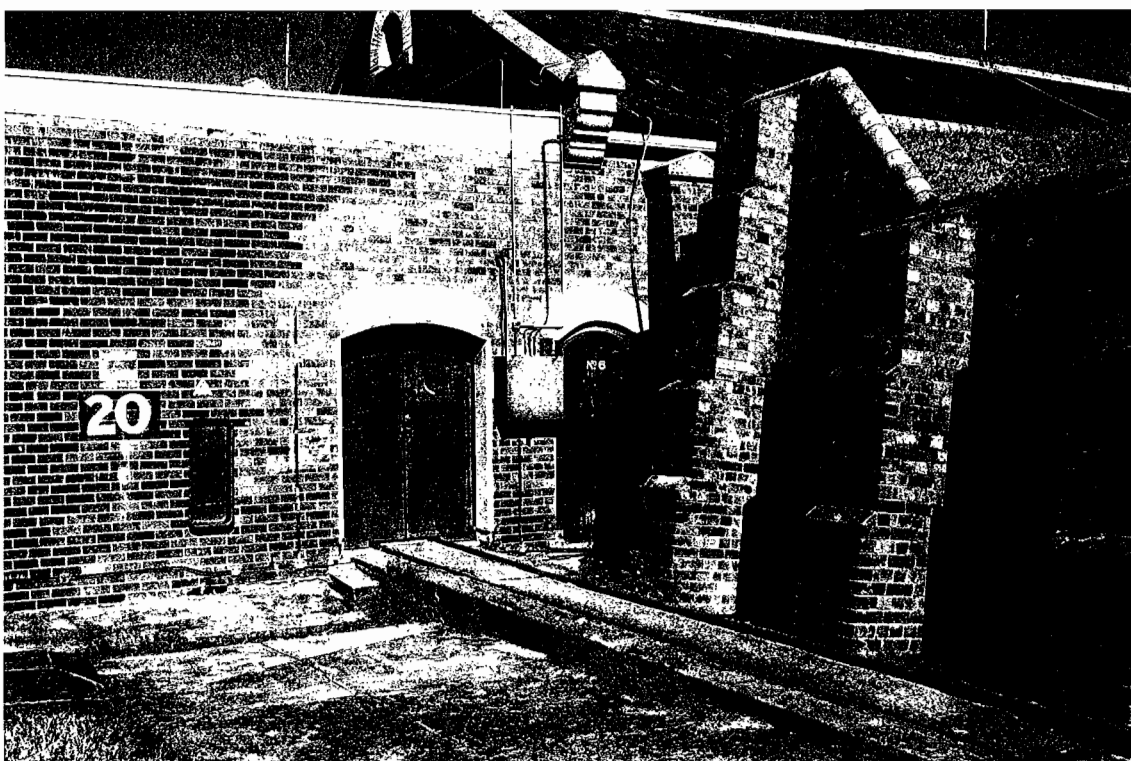
While there were many explosives laboratories and workrooms on site, the main function of the depot during World War II was to house and re-supply weapons from ships that had entered Sydney Harbor for repairs, which had to be de-ammunitioned before work could commence as part of the Sydney ammunition pipeline (Figure 4). The pipeline itself was established to ensure that boats, once docked in the harbor, could dispose of spent stock and have remaining ammunition checked for safety and quality while the boat itself received regular maintenance to ensure performance. Once this was completed, a fresh supply of either new ammunition or existing stock that was deemed safe to use was brought aboard, and the warships would go back out to sea.

What this meant for Newington was that once the boats were cleaned of their ammunition stock, the ammunition was first sent to the Defense Area Orchard Hills (modern-day Kingswood), after which it was sent to Newington. After work on the stock was completed, the ammunition was then sent down the Parramatta River to Sydney Harbor, where the warships would be re-stocked at ammunition buoys near Garden

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<sup>34</sup> Graham Brooks and Associates, *Millennium Parklands Heritage Precinct, Sydney Olympic Park Conservation Master Plan* (Sydney: Sydney Olympic Park Authority, 2003), 34.





**Figure 4.** Building No. 20 at the Newington Armory. Ammunition stock arrived on ships traveling the Parramatta River, and was transported using a rail system to different buildings within the armory for maintenance.

Island.<sup>35</sup> While the arrangement went on for many years in coordination with other sites along the pipeline, when the Australian Defense Department adopted North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) safety standards for the transport, storage and handling of explosives in 1981, the site was hard-pressed to contort itself to the new standards. The new rules effectively outlined that the greater the amount of explosives stored in one location, the greater the distance needed to be in-between stores, which would better ensure the safety of those working at weapons sites.<sup>36</sup> Seeing that Newington was constricted by development on all sides, and other stations along the pipeline were also

<sup>35</sup> Graham Brooks and Associates, *Millennium Parklands*, 36.

<sup>36</sup> Graham Brooks and Associates, *Millennium Parklands*, 36.

becoming aged and outdated, the facility stopped most operations right away and officially closed in 1999 with the relocation of these facilities to other areas of Sydney.

Today, many of these facilities still stand at the Newington Amory heritage area, as one can find everything from the explosives workshops and common rooms for the workers, to the railway system used by trolleys which transported the munitions to and from the river, as well as the cranes which lifted the munitions onto ships for transport back down the river to Sydney Harbor. The remaining buildings are also integrated with near-by parks and bike paths, and some of the buildings are being rented out as artist studios, with such buildings as No. 18 being used as an art gallery for pieces produced on-site at the armory. Another small building, located next to the river, has been turned into an outdoor public barbeque area and café, where park visitors can cool down from an afternoon bike ride or walk through the park. With its undeniable historical value, this precinct is listed on the Australian Register of the National Estate due to its “significant, rare and extensive military-industrial landscape with intact cultural and natural features.”<sup>37</sup> This listing on the Register of the National Estate affords the precinct certain protections. The Commonwealth Minister is not allowed to instigate any adverse affects upon the property unless it is unavoidable, at which point the affect must be minimized. While state and local governments, as well as private industry, are not held by this restriction, governments are required to consult with the Australian Heritage Council if their actions may cause an affect on listed properties.

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<sup>37</sup> Sydney Olympic Park Authority, *Parklands 2020 and Plan of Management – Summary* (Sydney: Sydney Olympic Park Authority, 2003), 17.

While the Abattoir serves day-to-day purposes for the administration of the park, and the armory serves as a historical look back to the military history of Homebush Bay, the third and final pillar to industry on this site, the Brick Pit, has become a natural and cultural preserve for visitors to enjoy, giving them a much different experience from both the administration buildings of the Abattoir, and the recently abandoned site of the armory.

Called the Brick Pit because of the State brickworks that inhabited the site for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this area stands on the eastern side of the Homebush site, between the urban center of the modern park (or historically, the Abattoir) to the west, and the Bicentennial Parklands, which lie to the east. The site was first proposed to house a brickworks in 1910 by Arthur Griffith, the Minister of Public Works, who saw a growing monopoly of brick yards controlled by the Metropolitan Brick Company.<sup>38</sup> Seeing through some research that if the government established its own brickworks instead of buying from the monopolized private market that they could save 50% on public construction costs, the government went ahead with plans to build the brickworks near the other government industries housed at Homebush Bay.

While there was some anger from the private market that the government brickworks would negatively impact private businesses, kilns and necessary buildings were quickly erected, and brick making began in 1911. The brickworks would function as a government operation until 1932, when ownership was sold to Brickworks Limited

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<sup>38</sup> Graham Brooks and Associates, *Abattoir Heritage Precinct*, 27.

after that year's election as the new government drafted policy which looked down upon government interference in public enterprise.

Soon after, sales of bricks began to drop off as World War II began to impact the local economy. With a building slump and too many bricks on hand, the brickworks were temporarily taken for use by the Naval Armaments Depot to store ammunition, and one of the pits was filled with water for use in case of a fire.<sup>39</sup> But once the war ended and the construction industry began to boom again, the brickworks stayed open and viable, this time under government control. This continued until 1988, when it was seen that the government no longer needed to own its own brickyard, and production was halted for the last time.

While numerous proposals surfaced discussing how to go forward with development in this area, all proposals came to a halt when it was discovered that the Green and Golden Bell Frog had made a home of the Brick Pit. This, along with the geological and cultural history of the site, forced the OCA to re-analyze the site upon the completion of cultural and environmental studies for the area. It was decided that an interpretive center which would not interfere with the wildlife, but which would give visitors the opportunity to survey the area, was the best option for the site. This decision resulted in the installation of the Ring Walk (Figure 5). A stunning circular feature which grants visitors the opportunity to enjoy the view through binoculars, the Ring Walk allows one to listen to oral histories of men who worked at the brickworks, learn about the endangered frogs in the area, and do so while standing above part of the park's extensive water filtration system. The Brick Pit, as a step in the water filtration system

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



**Figure 5.** The Ring Walk, hovering over the Brick Pit, blends views of the former state brickworks and the adjacent Bicentennial Parklands with informational panels detailing wildlife conservation efforts happening on-site.

nicknamed WRAMS (Water Reclamation and Management Scheme), collects storm water, which is then naturally filtered and used for toilets and watering throughout the park, reducing fresh water usage. As well, the area is known to be home to numerous species of migrating birds that seasonally make a home in the adjacent Bicentennial Park.

Together with the Abattoir and the Newington Armory, these historic areas create cultural landscapes that have been important to the development of Sydney as the largest metropolitan area in Australia, and have been major forces in shaping the city's industrial landscape.

### **Sustainability at Sydney Olympic Park**

After the closure of the Abattoir in 1980, the brickworks in 1988, and the certain closure of the Armory after new NATO regulations in 1981, the New South Wales government began exploring future development opportunities for the site. While government planners knew that the land would be highly sought after by private developers because of Homebush Bay's prime location in the Sydney metropolitan area, as described in an exploratory planning document in 1989 this was greatly offset by "... the severe environmental degradation that results from this area being used as a locus for many of the least desirable uses of the metropolis over the last 100 years."<sup>40</sup> The study also noted that:

The proposals for Homebush Bay are seen as a political minefield on several accounts. The two overriding factors are the high level of risk and uncertainty associated with some intentions and the financial and political problems associated with the presence of extensive known and yet-to-be (known) toxic wastes, contaminants and other environmentally hazardous materials which are widespread throughout the site.<sup>41</sup>

It had become very clear from the beginning of the planning process that any development at the Homebush area would have to be extremely positive in order to change the public perception of the site, as no future development would be able to succeed if the site was seen as a toxic. This being said, the only plan put forward by planners at the time was a guaranteed clean-up, giving the government the flexibility to develop on the land or sell it to private developers upon further research (Figure 6).

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<sup>40</sup> John Toon, *Homebush Bay Development Concept Assessment* (Sydney: Planning Research Center, University of Sydney, 1989), 1.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.



**Figure 6.** After a large-scale clean-up of dioxin in Homebush Bay, the resulting by-product was mounded in different areas throughout the park, adding a variety of landforms to the surrounding landscape. Planners wanted to deal with the by-product sustainably, choosing not to transport it off-site.

While three different options arose for development of the site, all with varying levels of inclusion from private developers, the New South Wales government had always preferred using the site as an athletics center of some kind. It was known that the Royal Agricultural Society (RAS) needed a new showground, and planners saw an immediate opportunity to not only relocate the grounds to this expansive area, but also

saw an opportunity open for reinforcement of the showground with other sporting facilities. This, in turn, opened the possibility for an Olympic bid for the 2000 Games, which could maximize site potential and downplay the widely held negative perception of the site. This option was seen as a safe bet, as construction would begin on the RAS Showground and a new Aquatic Centre, which would cement the sporting theme of the site. If the bid for the Games would not come to fruition, then other options, such as building a racetrack and retail centers, could be put on the table as viable uses for the site. While private development was always a partial option for site development, there was a strong sense from the beginning of the planning process that the government wanted the land to bring an environmental and sporting legacy to western Sydney. Even before planners had officially decided to commit to a functioning sports facility in Homebush, environmental guidelines contained within the *Sydney Environmental Regional Plan No. 24* aimed to:

- Facilitate proper use of government lands at Homebush;
- enable relocation of the RAS Showground and develop international sporting facilities;
- provide recreational and open space system for western Sydney;
- promote better access to the site with adequate public transport and parking; and
- identify and conserve natural and cultural environmental heritage.<sup>42</sup>

The *Sydney Environmental Regional Plan*, which would go on to influence ensuing environmental guidelines at the Olympic site, includes extensive protections for heritage areas. These heritage aims and objectives include conservation of the

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<sup>42</sup> Minister of Planning, *Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No. 24: Homebush Bay Redevelopment Area* (Sydney: Minister of Planning, 1990), 1.



environmental heritage of the land, integration of heritage conservation into the planning and development control process, providing public involvement in the matters relating to the conservation of the environmental heritage of the land, and ensuring that new development is undertaken in a manner that is sympathetic to, and does not detract from, the heritage significance of the items and their settings, as well as streetscapes and landscape and the distinctive character that they impart to the land.<sup>43</sup>

While the aims are fairly general within the plan, further inspection will show that there are very specific protections for heritage items. As section 2.7 outlines:

1. A person must not, in respect of a heritage item:
  - (a) demolish or alter the building or work;
  - (b) damage or remove the relic;
  - (c) excavate for the purpose of exposing the relic;
  - (d) damage or despoil the place or tree;
  - (e) erect a building on or subdivide land on which the heritage item is situated or which comprises the place, or;
  - (f) damage any tree on land on which the heritage item is situated, or on the land which comprises the place, except with the consent of the consent authority.<sup>44</sup>

These protections would eventually form the *Environmental Guidelines for the Summer Olympic Games* in 1993, a comprehensive document that was created as a “... contribution by the Sydney 2000 Olympic Bid to the Olympic Movement ... offered in a spirit of goodwill to further the fundamental principles of the Olympic Charter.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 13-14.

<sup>45</sup> Sydney Olympics 2000 Bid Limited, *Environmental Guidelines for the Summer Olympic Games* (Sydney: Sydney Olympics 2000 Bid Limited, 1993), 1.

Written years before the implementation of the IOC's *Agenda 21*, the document opens with the following statement from former IOC Vice-President Richard Pound:

It is natural that the IOC, as a leader of a world-wide humanistic movement, should be concerned with the integration of the activities of the Olympic Movement with the well-being of the world in which we live. Indeed, the Olympic Movement is predicated on the holistic principles of balance between body and mind, between action and contemplation, between sport and culture. It would be inconceivable for the IOC to divorce itself from recognition of the desirable balance between the needs of the present and those of the future.<sup>46</sup>

Based on the principles adopted at the United Nations Earth Summit and Australian National Ecologically Sustainable Development policies, the document outlines the commitment of Sydney Olympic planners to ecologically sustainable design in the belief that “these principles provide the appropriate basis for planning to host an Olympic Games.”<sup>47</sup> As well, the document states that Olympic host cities should commit themselves to energy conservation and use of renewable energies, water conservation, waste avoidance and minimization, protecting human health with appropriate standards for air, soil and water quality, and the protection of significant natural and cultural environments.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, the issue of development is addressed, as it was recognized by the Sydney bid that hosting the games could act as a catalyst to explore ecologically sustainable design ideas that would go beyond mere compliance, but which would conform to the principles of:

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., forward.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

- Thorough assessment of opportunities to use or adapt existing facilities, together with consideration of long-term financial viability of all new facilities;
- building and infrastructure design that considers environmental issues;
- building material selection being subject to consideration of environmental implications; and
- environmental and social impact assessments, with community participation in the planning process.<sup>49</sup>

Following a theme seen through the planning documents associated with Sydney Olympic Park, there are strong protections listed for the cultural environment of the Homebush site, as the *Environmental Guidelines* outline that Olympic host cities should not only take sweeping protections for the natural environment, but also conduct heritage assessments, so that significant heritage items can be dealt with as sensitively as possible.

This theme continues in *Towards Sustainability: Sustainability Strategy for Sydney Olympic Park*, a more up-to-date and comprehensive sustainability agenda that was compiled in 2002 to ensure the continued stability of the site as it goes through constant cycles of growth and change after hosting the games. Committed to sustaining a site that is both sensitive to existing natural and cultural environments in the face of growth, the document is part of an effort to constantly improve upon environmental performance and ensure best practice environmental management (Figure 7).

What is significant about this document, which is in an accumulation of years of environmental protection policies, is that heritage is now included under the umbrella of resource conservation. While heritage protection had always been addressed in a positive light by the Sydney Olympics 2000 Bid, the OCA, and SOPA (which was formed in 2001), this is the first time that the well-rounded sustainability agenda of Sydney

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 5.



**Figure 7.** In the spirit of re-use, the former cauldron which held the Olympic flame throughout the 2000 Games has been modified, and now serves as a fountain. The overflow area where it stands will be in-filled with residential and commercial development as part of a 2020 Master Plan developed by SOPA. In the background is a streetlight which is powered by solar panels.

Olympic Park is seen with categorized areas of heritage protection in order to promote the park as sustainable. Now, instead of an amalgamation of environmental conservation bylaws from numerous government entities, there exists Environmental Performance Areas, which are divided into Biodiversity, Resource Conservation, Site Impacts, and Involving People.

What the New South Wales government has found in this combination is a full-bodied approach to sustainability, where conserving water and utilizing renewable resources is just as important as raising awareness on environmental issues throughout

the local community. They have come to see in their struggle to redefine Homebush Bay that protection of the natural environment was not enough to make Sydney residents change their perception of the industrial site, and that a comprehensive approach was needed in order to create an entirely new site at Homebush Bay that would serve the enormous needs of not only an Olympic site, but would also serve as a cultural and natural preservation area which would bode well for continued use by the surrounding community after the Games had concluded.

This document stands as a testament to the weakness of the IOC's own *Agenda 21*. While *Towards Sustainability* is refined in its definitions and considerations, *Agenda 21* stands as a document with little substance, using wide definitions and simplistic declarations of "should" and "would be best" in hopes of solving complex and layered problems. While this makes sense to some extent because the IOC's agenda must be upheld on an international scale and SOPA's agenda pertains to a very specific site, it is clear that if the OCA had planned for the Olympic site using the IOC's agenda alone as a measure of what was sustainable behavior and responsible planning, the site would be an incredibly different place today.

### **The Local Preservation Context**

In part, what has made Sydney Olympic Park a continually successful recreational area (now with as many as 8 million visitors a year) has been such measures as local preservation guidelines which protect the historic cultural and natural landscapes of Australia (Figure 8). Preservation of historic landscapes in Australia is attained through



**Figure 8.** Highlighting the cultural history of Homebush Bay was a priority for planners and sustainability managers at Sydney Olympic Park. While no physical traces remain of the Aboriginal population that once inhabited the area, Aboriginal artwork is used throughout the park as a reminder of Australia's native population and Homebush Bay's layered history.

the use of both national and regional preservation legislation, as heritage items are designated as either significant at the national, regional, or local level.

At the national level, the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage, and the Arts is the responsible government agency in charge of ensuring preservation of cultural heritage. This agency is charged with the administration of the national heritage

protection law, *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999*, which protects places of national environmental significance. Types of resources that can be classified as places of national environmental significance are World Heritage properties, National Heritage places, wetlands of international importance, listed threatened species and ecological communities, migrating species, Commonwealth marine areas, and nuclear actions.

Two major heritage lists exist at the national level: the Commonwealth Heritage List and the National Heritage List. The nomination process for listing properties is open to the public, but the nomination process can take more than a year to complete, as once a year, the Minister of the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage, and the Arts compiles a list of the most deserving candidates for each list, which is then presented to the public and opened for discussion. At this point in the process, public opinion may take a site out of consideration, or it may be concluded that it is appropriate to put a site on a different heritage list than the one it was initially nominated to. Once listed on either the National Heritage List or the Commonwealth Heritage List, historic properties must receive special consideration when changes are proposed that would alter the historic character of the site.

The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage, and the Arts is supported in their efforts by Australia ICOMOS and the Australian Heritage Council. Created by the *Australian Heritage Council Act 2003*, the council acts as the government's independent body of heritage experts. These experts advise the Minister of the department on heritage

issues, nominates properties to the National Heritage List and the Commonwealth Heritage List, and promotes the identification, assessment, and conservation of heritage.

The majority of heritage activities take place at the regional level, as properties of national significance face a stringent application process which limits the amount of listed heritage sites. In New South Wales, the regional government in charge of heritage matters is the Department of Environment and Climate Change. It is their responsibility to manage the natural and cultural heritage of New South Wales, and do so in the form of the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Services, the Department of Planning's heritage branch, the Heritage Council of New South Wales, and the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales. It is within their power to require environmental impact statements, or EIS, for any developments that are linked to infrastructure, government projects, or projects deemed large enough to require a review of the potential impact of construction on the surrounding cultural and natural environment.<sup>50</sup>

Properties identified as significant at the regional level can be considered for listing on the state heritage Register. Incentive programs are also available, which allow monetary benefits to owners of heritage properties to preserve heritage sites. As a minimum level of recognition, it is possible to have properties considered as significant at the local level, where the resource is then included in local planning efforts. Non-governmental organizations play an important role in educating the public of these

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<sup>50</sup> Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, "National Heritage," *About Australia's Heritage*, <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/about/national/index.html> (accessed August 1, 2008).



programs and their monetary and cultural incentives, and include the National Trust of Australia and the Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales.<sup>51</sup>

While numerous laws and procedures are in place to protect heritage properties in Australia at both national and local levels, a document drafted by Australia ICOMOS, with the intention of serving as conservation guidelines for cultural resource management professionals, is arguably the most important document concerning heritage conservation planning in Australia. This document, the Burra Charter, is one of the foremost preservation documents in the world. Noted for its emphasis on the preservation of historic landscapes, its influence can be seen within the approach of park planners to preservation of the historic built environment at Sydney Olympic Park.

One such example is the Millennium Parklands Heritage Precinct (MPHP). This precinct was nominated by SOPA for inclusion in the New South Wales State Heritage Register on the basis that the area, which includes the Newington Armory, Narrawang Wetlands, and assorted parks, should be identified as one comprehensive listing.<sup>52</sup> While the different components that make up the nomination could have been listed on their own accord, a comprehensive approach was adopted, "...in recognition of the place as an integrated cultural landscape having both natural and cultural features and a multitude of historic layers."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, "Heritage Organizations in New South Wales," *About Australia's Heritage*, <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/organisations/state/nsw.html> (accessed August 1, 2008).

<sup>52</sup> Graham Brooks and Associates, *Millennium Parklands*, 9.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

When analyzing Sydney's approach to sustainable development, it must be noted that while SOPA had considerable challenges to overcome in transforming Homebush bay into a suitable site for the Olympics, it had a much different set of challenges than those seen in Beijing, which I will discuss in Chapter IV. Unlike Beijing, which has a dense urban population and a lack of open and available areas to develop for such large-scale events as the Olympics, Sydney was afforded the opportunity to develop a fairly remote area, building from the ground up. As will be seen in Beijing, many buildings were inevitably destroyed, as few undeveloped areas remain in the city. Sydney was also able to develop one site for most all of the Olympic events at the 1,581-acre Homebush Bay site, while in Beijing, events will be held not only in different locations around the city, but also different locations around the country in such cities as Qingdao and Hong Kong.<sup>54</sup>

Although a different set of operational challenges faced both host cities where I conducted case studies, this is typical, as each past and future host city will, or already has, experienced its own unique set of development challenges. The contrasts demonstrated between Beijing and Sydney are not uncommon to host cities of the Olympics, and they will continue to be seen as the IOC selects host cities from all corners of the world.<sup>55</sup> What is common between Sydney, Beijing, and future host cities is the existence of historic built environments that must be evaluated for significance. While

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<sup>54</sup> All sailing events will be taking place in Qingdao, which is located on the northeast coast of China. All Equestrian events will be taking place in Hong Kong. A new facility was constructed at each site for these events.

<sup>55</sup> On July 4, 2007, the IOC chose Sochi, Russia to host the 2014 Winter Olympics. It narrowly beat-out PyeongChang, South Korea for the bid, while Salzburg, Austria finished a distant third in voting.

these historic areas not only provide the opportunity to preserve and display local cultural contexts, they also provide an additional avenue to aid in environmental protection through the conservation of resources, while promoting cultural understanding and diversity.

CHAPTER IV  
CASE STUDY: BEIJING'S OLYMPIC AMBITION

**Introduction to Beijing's Olympic Development**

As measured by population, China is the largest country in the world. It contains one sixth of the world's population – an estimated 1.3 billion people. With competitive advantages afforded by vast quantities of cheap labor and natural resources, it is also one of the largest industrial hubs in the world. Producing mobile phones, apparel, textiles, data processing equipment, and steel, China is the third largest exporter of goods in the world economy, explaining in part the exponential growth of their gross domestic product (GDP), which increases at a rate of over eleven percent annually.<sup>56</sup>

This explosion onto the world economic stage has been building for quite sometime, as the history of Beijing alone is one that spans four to five thousand years. Even before the tenth century BC, settlements in the basin area of Beijing began to appear, as tribal groups and their leaders battled for supremacy of the surrounding lands. It was at this time that the city of Ji was established approximately north of Guang'anmen Gate in present-day Beijing. The city would become the administrative center of the Guangyan Commandery in the third century BC, one of thirty-six prefectures in China's

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<sup>56</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook* (Langley, Virginia: Central Intelligence Agency, 2008), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html> (accessed March 2, 2008).

fist feudal empire.<sup>57</sup> Ji would quietly continue its position as a strategic outpost for centuries, until the Qidans descended from the north to take Ji as their second capital. Naming the city Nanjing, or Southern Capital, the Qidans, led by emperor Taizong of the Liao Dynasty (916-1125), would use Ji as a stronghold in an attempt to conquer the central plains of China, building palaces and structures throughout the city.<sup>58</sup>

The Liao were eventually defeated in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century by the Nuzhen, who controlled the city until Kublai Kahn and his Mongol armies established the Yuan dynasty in 1274. While Nanjing was initially given provincial status, it was eventually named the capital of the Mongol empire by Kahn. The city was given a Han Chinese name, Dadu, and became the political center of China once the Mongols unified the country.

It was around this time that Beijing began to take its modern shape. Buildings from previous dynasties were burned to the ground, while new, magnificent palaces in lake districts were constructed. Moats were dug, walls erected, and city streets constructed, laying the groundwork for the ancient city center still reflected in the city plan today. While the city flourished and the population grew under Mongol control, Ming troops would seize Dadu in 1368, ushering in the Ming dynasty. The name of the city was changed yet again to Beiping, or Northern Peace.

It was during the Ming dynasty and that of the Qing, which together spanned the years of 1644-1911, that Beijing would become one of the most prestigious and powerful

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<sup>57</sup> The People's Republic of China, "Beijing: A Guide to China's Capital City," *The People's Republic of China Official Web Portal*, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/beijing/30785.htm> (accessed August 4, 2008).

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

cities in China. It was during the Ming dynasty that Dadu became officially known as Beijing, or Northern Capital, when Emperor Yongle named Beijing the official capital of the county in the 1400s. Extensive development projects were carried out, shifting the Mongol defense walls and creating the Inner City, where the Forbidden City was later constructed. The Ming emperors and Manchu emperors of the Qing accentuated the axial city plan created by Kublai Kahn in the Yuan dynasty and created the urban network of hutongs (alleyways) and siheyuan (courtyard homes) still seen in the capital city in the present day. It was during this era when most of the historic buildings and landmarks along the present central axis of Beijing were constructed, as palaces, temples, and monuments were erected throughout the center of the city.

Once the Qing dynasty fell in 1911 to northern warlords, China was lost and in need of a new direction. This kind of bold new leadership would emerge in the form of the Chinese People's Liberation Army led by Mao Zedong decades later in 1949. Communism took hold of the country, as isolationist views concerning world politics kept the Chinese people at a distance from the rest of the world. The new leadership advocated for keeping urban populations small and manageable, while keeping rural populations busy with collectivized farming. Both the city and rural lands were used as tools to serve the people, as attempts were made to equalize these areas as to limit the excess and capitalism often associated with life in the city. Social mobility was limited for many Chinese, as children were educated from an early age in their future trades, working in factories to help support the industrial needs of the nation. In the city, the

Communist leadership seized control of private homes, forcing multiple families to share single-family homes, as occurred in siheyuans of central Beijing.

After the death of Mao and the subsequent leadership of Deng Xiaoping, who acted as the Head of State of the Communist Party of China (CPC), China began to open its doors to the rest of the world after decades of isolation. Taking a piecemeal approach, the CPC slowly opened state industries to increase private business exposure, allowed for more imports and exports to pass over Chinese borders, and allowed greater investment in private industries. This build-up of Chinese industry and commerce has led to over \$75 billion in direct foreign investments in Chinese industries, while over 5,000 Chinese companies have direct investments in 172 countries around the world.<sup>59</sup>

This economic opening of China has also led to the country's social opening, exposing its long and storied past to tourists coming from all corners of the globe. While historic Chinese cities such as Beijing have long been popular destinations for Asian tourists, it is now a popular destination for foreign tourists, as records indicate that in October of 2007 alone, 472,000 overseas tourists visited Beijing, an increase of 13.6% over the previous year.<sup>60</sup> Over 3.23 million visits were made to Beijing by foreign nationals over a ten-month period reaching from January to October of 2007, in which the United States was the number one source of tourists.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Xinhua News Agency, "Overseas tourist visits to Beijing hit new monthly high," *Chinatour*, <http://www.chinatour.com/data/data.htm> (accessed March 2, 2008).

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

While tourists are slowly choosing to visit China and other Asian destinations because of their attractive mixture of rich cultural histories and affordable accommodations, the 2008 Olympics in Beijing have been a large tourist draw. While China has already taken great strides in opening itself to the lucrative international tourism business, the Chinese tourism industry saw the Olympics as an opportunity to begin a large-scale expansion of this market, exposing international visitors to an open and developing China.

Although tourism is important, hosting an Olympic Games is about much more than the money and future prospect of increasing the annual number of international visitors; it is also about prestige (Figure 9). While China has made great leaps in economic progress and the creation of a working middle class, the country still struggles to create a positive global image. Seen as one of the largest polluters in the world, a propagator of sweatshops and child labor, and recently saddled with an uprising of Monks in Tibet, China has suffered incredibly in the eyes of the world press.<sup>62</sup> Hosting the Olympics, which are recognized around the world as games of goodwill and world-class sporting competition, provided Beijing with the opportunity to address both issues of increasing international tourism and building prestige in the world community.

The building programs that comprise the venues and Olympic areas for the 2008 Games reflect this emphasis on prestige and tourism. The focal point of these projects are found on the Olympic Green, located between the fourth and fifth Ring Roads in north Beijing. Near the location of the 1985 Asian Games on the historic north to south axis of

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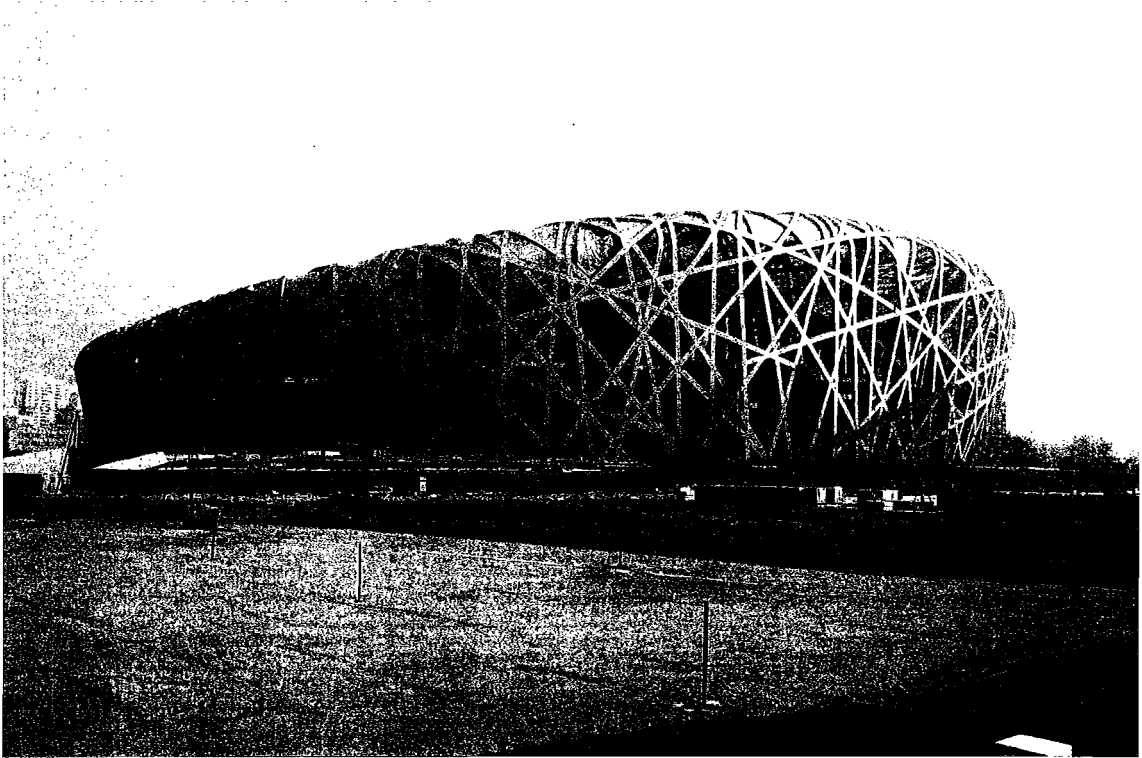
<sup>62</sup> Katrin Bennhold and Elisabeth Rosenthal, "Olympic Torch Goes Out, Briefly, in Paris," *New York Times*, April 8, 2008.



the city, the Green was planned by the firm Sasaki, and is filled with architectural standouts designed by international architects.

The most prominent of these structures is the Bird's Nest (Figure 9). Designed by Swiss architects Herzog & de Mueron, the twisted steel outline of this structure has become an iconic figure in Beijing. As I would witness around the city, stores selling official Olympic merchandise would offer models, coins, and other memorabilia with the Bird's Nest prominently pictured on them, as the structure has become a point of pride for Beijing residents. While overshadowed by the Bird's Nest, the Water Cube, designed by the Australian firm PTW, stands prominently alongside the Bird's Nest on the southern edge of the Olympic Green. Located to the south are additional venues that were originally associated with the Asian Games. To the north, the National Stadium, assorted athletic facilities, the athlete's village, media center, and Forest Park comprise the remaining areas of the Green.

While the Olympic Green is the focal point of these Olympics, development has not been confined to this area. Numerous venues are located in different areas throughout the city, and equestrian and sailing events were held outside of Beijing in Hong Kong and Qingdao. As the events were spread throughout Beijing and the country, numerous developments have been occurring which vary in size and purpose, including development that is intended to boost infrastructure. Some examples are the construction of a new National Theater designed by French architect Paul Andreu (Figure 10), a new



**Figure 9.** Beijing has a number of prestige project underway associated with the Olympic Games, as landmark buildings such as the Bird's Nest (pictured above under construction) are already drawing throngs of tourists to the ancient city. (Herzog and de Mueron, 2008)

airport terminal designed by Norman Foster, and the landmark CCTV tower, designed by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas.

These new developments have given China a reputation as an architectural playground, where cutting-edge architects can see their most fantastic designs become a reality. As I would come to find while exploring Beijing, this way of thinking has increasingly been translated from modern developments over to small historic neighborhoods in the urban core of Beijing. Seen as prime real estate because of their proximity to world-renowned locations such as Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, and the Temple of Heaven, new trends of tearing down these neighborhoods in order to



**Figure 10.** The new National Theater, designed by French architect Paul Andreu, emerges on the skyline beyond restored and reconstructed siheyuan in central Beijing. This contrast between historic forms and new architecture is becoming a common sight in Beijing.

build reconstructions filled with more internationally-appealing businesses have become common in Beijing.

One of these historic neighborhoods being developed, Qianmen, is located in the heart of old Beijing, just south of Tiananmen Square. Although it is a protected conservation area under a protection plan created by the Beijing Municipal City Planning Commission, development is currently underway to transform this neighborhood on the historic north to south axis of Beijing into a new tourist destination. Complicating the matter is the use of Olympic logos and imagery on the south end of the development.

The development in Qianmen, which is putting historic resources in a conservation area under threat, raises complicated questions relating to the IOC's approach to sustainable development. Although available information points to the Olympic Marathon running directly through the Qianmen development, making it an Olympic venue, nothing has been done to halt construction in this conservation area. Qianmen is a development on the periphery of larger projects, located miles away from the legacy venues that are the focal point of the Olympic Green. Does this mean, though, that the development in Qianmen is any less associated with the 2008 Olympics in Beijing? Is the demolition of an endangered building form and ancient streetscape in line with the goals of *Agenda 21*? Are the Qianmen demolitions a sustainable action?

### **Beijing and Qianmen History**

Beijing is an ancient city, and still shows its age to this day. While other cities such as Shanghai and Hong Kong have made a name for themselves because of their international-style skyscrapers and pristine shopping and tourist districts, Beijing still bears a scarred face that has incurred many changes over the centuries. One unique characteristic that sets Beijing apart from other Chinese cities is its hutong neighborhoods, which consist of small alleyways (hutong) lined by traditional courtyard homes (siheyuan). Closed off to the street, these homes are enclaves for those inside, as they provide a private place to escape the 18 million Beijingers outside of the stone exterior walls. While many of the siheyuan, or quadrangles, have lost their historic integrity due to infill during the Cultural Revolution, the hutongs are still the same alleys

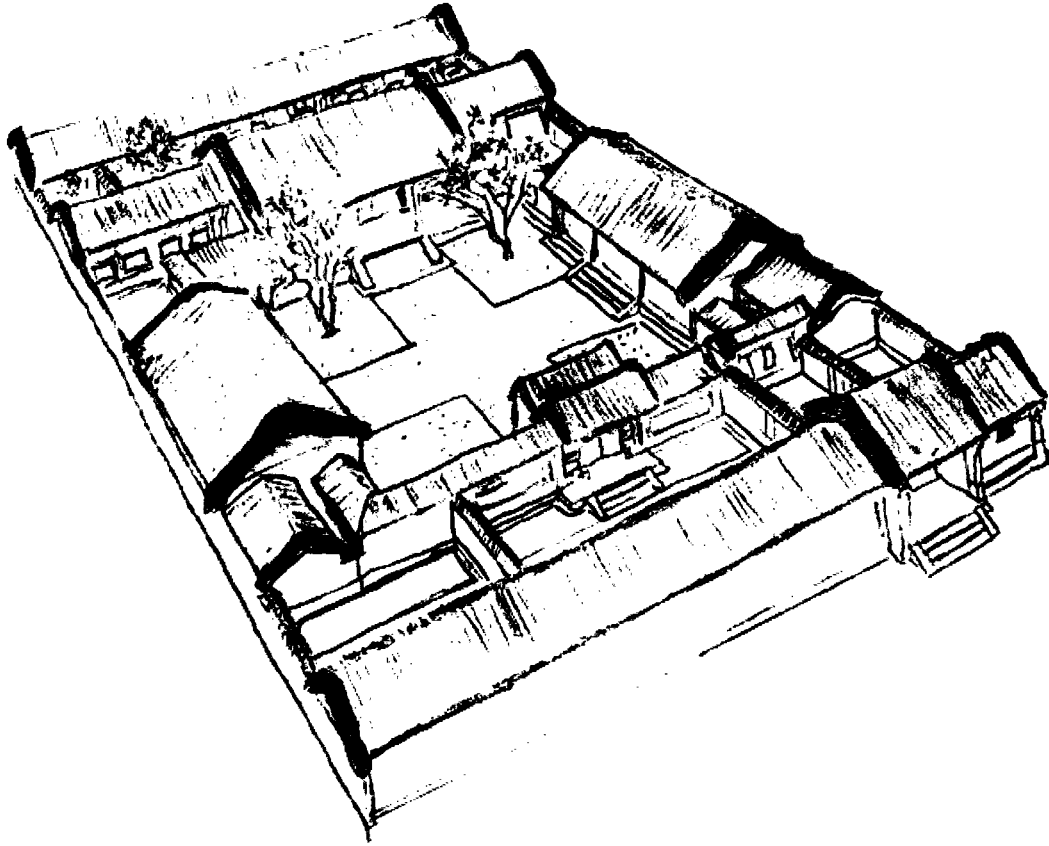
which existed hundreds of years ago, clamoring with activity as they did during the age of the emperors.

The siheyuan form-type became popular in the Ming (1386-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, when Beijing was still known as Peking. Private homes centered around a courtyard, siheyuan in Beijing have the same basic features despite variances in size (Figure 11). The basic concept of the home was to provide families privacy from the bustling streets when the outer gates were closed, while providing an outdoor area in the courtyard. Outer rooms open to this communal area, as to bring all family members harmoniously together. While the basic plan of the siheyuan was widely used in Beijing during the Ming and Qing dynasties, the outer gates to these residences told the stories of those inside, as certain decorative elements would indicate the class and rank of the home owner. For instance, if forty-nine knobs were found on one door panel, this would indicate that it was the home of a son of a prince.<sup>63</sup> Other outer elements, such as stone drums that guard the doorways, were also indicators of the life of those inside.

The siheyuan in Beijing are often located in hutong neighborhoods. The hutong are a distinct urban network of alleyways unique to Beijing. Located in the old city, many of these hutong are too narrow for motorized vehicles, creating a quiet communal area for local residents free of the modern-day traffic that clogs the major arteries surrounding these neighborhoods. It creates a distinct feel and daily pattern for those who still live in these neighborhoods, as life is centered in these winding alleyways. The hutong are where neighbors congregate to gossip, where all daily foods and goods are purchased,

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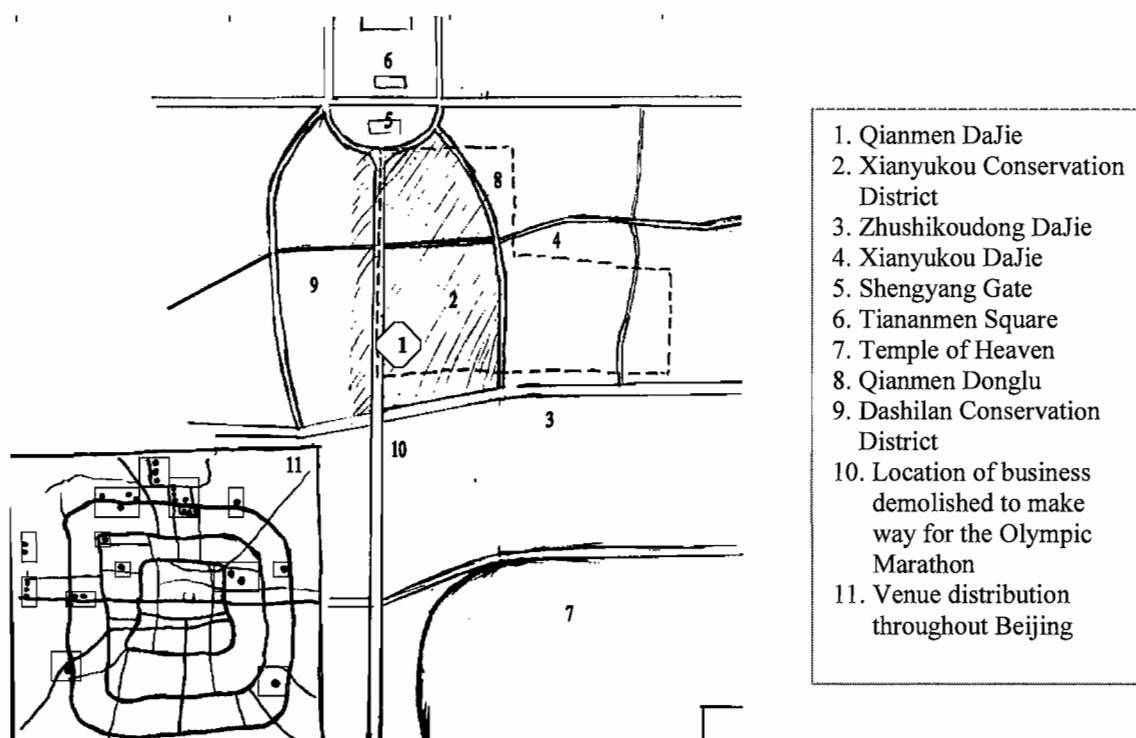
<sup>63</sup> Ma Bingjian, *Quadrangles of Beijing* (Beijing: Beijing Arts and Photography Publishing House, no date), 11.



**Figure 11.** A sketch drawing of a typical floorplan of a Beijing siheyuan.

and even where the communal bathrooms are located. Always alive, and even more so at night, these side streets are often seen as the soul of this very old city amidst modernization.

One of these hutong neighborhoods, Qianmen, lies directly upon the central axis of this ancient city (Figure 12). A center of commercial activity for hundreds of years, this area has flourished because of its location directly south of the wall that separated the Manchunobles of the Qing Dynasty in the Inner City from the Han Chinese in the Outer



**Figure 12.** A sketch map of the Qianmen area, with an inset map showing venue distribution in Beijing. Areas of interest are keyed by number. The hatched area indicates the location of the Qianmen development. The L-shaped overlay marks the location of the Xianyukou Conservation District.

City. The Qianmen Gate was the gateway between these two worlds, from which nobles would pass into the world of commoners to eat, drink, and be entertained. Qianmen quickly became a red light district of sorts for these nobles, as the neighborhood clamored with brothels, opera houses, and more commercial vendors than any other location in China during the late imperial age.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Evelyn S. Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (London: University of California Press, 1998), 26.

But as the days of emperors have faded from memory and modern international culture has begun to flush over Beijing, pressure has been applied to the Municipal Government to clean up these once vibrant areas, transforming them into western-style centers of commerce. Born of the rapidly expanding economy, this transformation is seen throughout Beijing by the day, as small siheyuan stand meekly across the street from western hotels, restaurants, and international shopping centers. While these modern and recognizable brands may provide a comfortable enclave for foreign tourists visiting Beijing, they replace cultural relics that house local markets and shops that are operated by local Beijing residents. This eliminates those businesses that not only deliver essential daily goods for the residents of the hutong, but also provide a far more authentic shopping experience to the ever-growing number of heritage tourists visiting Beijing every year.

This transformation has been especially abrupt in the hutong around Qianmen DaJie, where billboards that proclaim “All Brands Co-exist Harmoniously: An Ancient Streetscape for Tourists” stand next to computer simulations of the future Qianmen. Sleek new shopping centers are juxtaposed against historic courtyards in an idealized streetscape which half captures the historic feel of the area, while also introducing western commercial ventures (Figure 13).

It is not surprising that Qianmen has been targeted for such a transformation. Located adjacent to the southern edge of Tiananmen Square and reaching a half mile to Zhushikou, a major east to west traffic artery in the area, the project area for the Qianmen





**Figure 13.** Billboards, like the one above, hide the construction activities on Qianmen DaJie from view.

redevelopment spreads over fifty-four acres in a prime area of Beijing.<sup>65</sup> With a bursting tourist flow of over 120,000 people daily, Qianmen real estate has become very valuable. Local and foreign tourists come to the area to see the Forbidden City, the Great Hall of the People, Mao's Mausoleum, Tiananmen Square (all located directly north of Qianmen), and the Temple of Heaven, located just southeast of the project area.

But while local businesses, flush with cash and a hunger for prime real estate, are vying for space in areas with high tourist volumes, it is predominately international brands that will take their place in this "historic streetscape."<sup>66</sup> International brands have

<sup>65</sup> SOHO China, *SOHO China Limited Global IPO* (Beijing: SOHO China Limited, 2007), 11.

<sup>66</sup> SOHO China, *Qian Men Avenue* (Beijing: SOHO China Limited, 2007), 19, 25.

been an important vehicle for the Chinese in creating an image of glamour and sophistication on the world scene. Combined with the potential to exploit historic areas for their cultural assets, areas such as Qianmen have come under threat of destruction so that redevelopment may occur.

For enterprising developers in Beijing, the new trend is to create a warm and inviting place where two different cultures, the exotic and the familiar, come in to balance with one another to create a haven for tourist dollars (Figure 14). Sadly enough, historic urban settings are a perfect target for this kind of development. Not only do they afford the opportunity to draw in cultural tourists with traditional businesses and crafts, but they also draw in foreign visitors who want a slice of luxury, or even locals who want to experience a taste of western life. Developers and city officials alike can then proclaim that they have restored and revitalized a decaying and outdated area of the city, pumping its veins full of life and foreign investment.

This process was first popularized by American architect Ben Woods, who in his quest to bring romance to Shanghai unknowingly coined the term “Xintiandi-ing it.” Given the opportunity to transform a small neighborhood located near the French Concession area of Shanghai (which was home to the building where the first Chinese Communist Party meeting was held in 1921), local residents were relocated in order to create a new development geared towards luring in Shanghai elite and western tourists looking for an authentic but foreign-friendly Chinese experience.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Paul Goldberger, “Shanghai Surprise: the Radical Quaintness of the Xintiandi District,” *The New Yorker*, December 26, 2005, [http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/12/26/051226crsk\\_skyline?currentPage=1](http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/12/26/051226crsk_skyline?currentPage=1) (accessed December 1, 2007).



**Figure 14.** As demonstrated at Yu Yuan Gardens in Shanghai, historic sites located in the urban core of large Chinese cities draw in large amounts of tourists each year but are vulnerable to new development.

To the untrained eye of the average tourist Xintiandi would appear to be a historic neighborhood, but architect Woods would be the first to admit that only a few façades of the original buildings are still standing. To Woods, the original fabric of these structures reduce the true commercial value and potential of the area, which is anchored in the historic essence of place. While many in China would call this development a restoration, by western standards Xintiandi is a reconstruction, or new construction resembling the old, at best. While Woods has utilized some remnants of the original architecture and used some local design cues in the new construction, the original buildings that made the area historic have now made way for those that have been built in a hybrid vision that

utilizes both modern and historic images. This approach to working with historic structures is not surprising, seeing that architect Woods has been quoted in a recent interview as saying, "I disdain preservation."<sup>68</sup>

This mixture of western styling, open-air restaurants, and upscale brands in an historic atmosphere has been an unabashed success in Shanghai, especially in the desired markets of wealthy western tourists and upper class Shanghainese. With a meal for two hovering around \$60.00 US, the average worker in Shanghai could only afford to eat in Xintiandi if they saved a month's worth of wages to pay the bill.<sup>69</sup> But in an evolving China which is constantly playing catch-up with western countries, these developments are not only welcome as new and fresh lifestyle malls, but are also hailed as signals of China's coming out in the western luxury market, even if disguised as a renovation of historic Chinese architecture.

Because of his Xintiandi fame, Woods has not had a lack of new projects come his way. More developers want to repeat the success of Xintiandi, using the same blueprint, and the same architect who masterminded the historic-yet-modern motif that has made him famous. While he could work in any city he wanted, Woods was lured to Beijing to help design the new Qianmen development. Headed by SOHO China, the development was completed in time for the 2008 Olympic Games, ready for the unprecedented flow of international tourists that descended upon Beijing.

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<sup>68</sup> Ron Gluckman, "Shanghai's Stylish Xin Tian Di," *Dynasty*, July 2003, <http://www.gluckman.com/XinTianDi.html> (accessed December 1, 2007).

<sup>69</sup> Goldberger, "Shanghai Surprise," *The New Yorker*, December 26, 2005.

SOHO China is a company that knows how to make money. One of the largest developers of land in Beijing's Central Business District, the company had a 2007 Initial Public Offering (IPO) on the Hong Kong stock exchange which raised \$1.65 billion in a sale of 31% of the company, with a list of major investors that includes Saudi Prince Alwaleed bin Talal.<sup>70</sup> Founded by a young husband and wife team who started their financial careers in the United States with such firms as Goldman Sachs, SOHO has steadily made a name for itself in Beijing by constructing upscale residential developments that stand out even in the cutting-edge architecture scene in China. One of the newest additions to their large and prestigious portfolio is Commune by the Great Wall, a luxury hotel by any standard. Offering private houses or luxury suites situated in a picturesque landscape at the foot of the Great Wall of China, SOHO is quickly making a name for itself inside of China, as well as in the international architectural community, as being the firm with the golden touch.

SOHO's newest project, the Qianmen development, could not be further from the calm beauty of the Chinese mountains. Nestled in the clamoring heart of an ancient city, SOHO is using \$276,942,724 USD of the proceeds from their IPO to purchase development rights in the Qianmen area, and is looking to leverage an additional \$576,163,782 USD to purchase other available parcels for future development.<sup>71</sup> Even though the setting may not be as romantic, the Qianmen project alone could drastically

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<sup>70</sup> Shu-Ching Jean Chen, "SOHO China Scintillates After IPO," *Forbes*, October 8, 2007, [http://www.forbes.com/markets/2007/10/08/china-soho-realestate-markets-equity-cx\\_jc\\_1008markets04.html](http://www.forbes.com/markets/2007/10/08/china-soho-realestate-markets-equity-cx_jc_1008markets04.html) (accessed October 15, 2007).

<sup>71</sup> SOHO China, *SOHO China Limited Global IPO*, 17.

cut SOHO's earnings if the project does not materialize, as their net profit is expected to rise to Chinese Yuan (CNY) 2.63 billion (\$379 million USD) in 2008 if the project sees completion, or to CNY 1.86 billion (\$271 million USD) if it does not.<sup>72</sup>

The development in Qianmen, which is not only placing a historic built environment in harm's way but is also being advertised with Olympic imagery, begs to question what line of reasoning is being used by Beijing Olympic officials in their sustainable development policies. Why has the development been overlooked, and how can officials justify these actions?

### **Sustainability in Beijing**

Just as any world-power that has come before it, China is now suffering the inevitable growth pains that result from the transition from being a developing country, to a country which is not only on the cutting edge of world technology, but that also meets and exceeds international standards for social equity and quality of life. While the economic growth that has spawned great opportunities for many Chinese, it has also brought with it many controversial issues that are now being faced by the Chinese government. Human rights is one of these issues, along with government corruption. But more than this, perhaps the topic of environmental degradation is one that is important not only for the Chinese people, but also for the international community. Air pollution is not only making Chinese around the country sick, but is also affecting the air quality in

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<sup>72</sup> Amy Or, "Soho China seeks up to \$1.65 billion in Hong Kong IPO," *Market Watch*, <http://www.marketwatch.com/news/story/soho-china-seeks-up-165/story.aspx?guid=%7BEDA8926A-68CF-46B3-B806-6DC953BC8FE4%7D> (accessed October 8, 2007).

countries such as the United States, which can measure pollutants from China that have wafted over the ocean to its western shore.<sup>73</sup>

The IOC knew that improving air quality would be the top priority once Beijing submitted its bid for the 2008 Summer Olympic Games (Figure 15). Since the bid was accepted in 2001, the IOC and the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG) have worked within the IOC's sustainability agenda, *Agenda 21*, in hopes that beyond hosting a games free from scenes of athletes in facemasks, Beijing's environmental track record would be put on a new course towards a greener, healthier city. This has resulted in many positive programs within the city: children are being taught ways their families can lead more sustainable lives everyday; trees and green belts are being planted around the city; public transportation is getting a needed update bringing it up to European standards for emissions; and gas-powered scooters and motorcycles that once dirtied street-level air have been replaced with electric bikes after an outright ban leading up to the Olympics. All of these measures have succeeded in leaving some sort of environmental legacy that, from all indications, has made a small impact in the city.

But as reported in 2007 in the *New York Times*, air pollution has become worse each year despite these positive measures.<sup>74</sup> In recognition that these policies did not have the intended effect, immediately before and during the Olympics, Chinese authorities temporarily shuttered industrial plants across the region and largely the

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<sup>73</sup> Joseph Kahn and Jim Yardley, "Choking on Growth Part I: As China Roars, Pollution Reaches Deadly Extremes," *New York Times*, August 26, 2007.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.



**Figure 15.** An overview of Forest Park, stretching over nearly 1,500 acres at the Olympic Green in Beijing. While the entire park has been planted in hopes of providing a green belt that will help alleviate the city's air pollution, as illustrated above, pollution becomes so thick at times that visibility is limited to just a few miles.

banned use of private automobiles around Beijing. Even with these drastic measures, air pollution remained a top concern throughout the Olympics and many athletes donned facemasks and limited their exposure to the outdoors. Uncontrollable domestic growth and international exports continually push Chinese industry to invest more money into environmentally degrading industries. Just as other nations developed into world powers by harnessing natural resources for use in industrial production mills and factories, China is experiencing its own industrial era, becoming the bulk producer of the world's goods. Taxed with not only producing for the world economy, but also supporting the world's largest population, it is understandable that in the name of prosperity China has turned to



the use of coal to power industry. Widely available and affordable, this resource has literally fueled China's rise to power, propelling the country into great international importance as the world's source for cheap exports, labor, and production capabilities.

Coal remains affordable amidst rising prices for natural gas, and is an attractive option compared to the security and environmental risk posed by nuclear power facilities. The downside of coal is that it is widely seen as one of the dirtiest forms of energy production in the world. As NASA Climatologist James E. Hansen recently stated in an interview with the *New York Times* in 2008, if any momentum is to be gained in stabilizing our climate, "We need a moratorium on coal now...with (a) phase-out of existing plants over the next two decades."<sup>75</sup> And yet, many countries, including China and India, the two most heavily-populated countries in the world, rely on coal as a primary energy resource.

Coal is seen as harmful to the environment because of the levels of carbon dioxide that are released into the atmosphere while processing the fuel for energy. Compared to processes that convert natural gas to electricity, coal produces almost twice as much carbon dioxide emissions per unit of electricity.<sup>76</sup> In developing countries where the coal is of a lower grade and machines are not as efficient, the numbers are even worse.<sup>77</sup> While efforts are underway in numerous countries, including the United States, to create carbon-capture processes, such as capturing the carbon underground in order to mitigate

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<sup>75</sup> Elisabeth Rosenthal, "Europe Turns Back to Coal, Raising Climate Fears," *New York Times*, April 23, 2008.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

coal's harmful effects to air quality, only test facilities have been established thus far in Europe and the United States. The largest of these facilities in the United States, a carbon-capture project in Illinois, was recently shut down after the federal government had spent over \$1 billion on the project, which was never completed because of cost overruns.<sup>78</sup>

While international demand for Chinese goods has fueled much of the recent growth seen in Chinese industrial sectors, which are some of the largest consumers of China's electricity, the economic boom that has followed has radically expanded China's domestic markets as well. Regions now flush with money are building bigger and faster than ever before, as cities such as Shanghai and Beijing near populations of 20 million. Because different levels of government still maintain control of most land despite a landmark property rights measure adopted in 2007, municipal governments are responsible for the housing of millions in these cities. In place of regular upkeep and maintenance of existing structures, municipalities struggling to keep up with new building demands often tear down the old and forgotten structures to build ever newer and bigger high rises (Figure 16).<sup>79</sup> Built with domestically-sourced construction materials under loose (if any) environmental regulation, this creates increased domestic demand for coal-fired power plants, steel production, and the consumption of numerous natural resources. Compounding this problem is the subsidization of oil and the growing middle class, as China becomes one of the largest buyers of cars in the world. Supplied

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Li Ling Hin, *Urban Land Reform in China* (London: MacMillan Press LTD, 1999), 61.



**Figure 16.** This siheyuan in the Xisi conservation district has been marked with “chai”, the symbol for demolition in Mandarin. The large character encircled in white is painted onto buildings that are scheduled for demolition in Beijing, and is becoming a common sight in historic areas.

by direct access to Russian oil pipelines, and flush with foreign currency, the Chinese government earns the goodwill of its emerging middle class by subsidizing gas at the pump, leading to 1,000 new vehicles joining Beijing’s clogged roads every day (UNEP 2007).<sup>80</sup>

What many do not realize is that this scenario not only contributes to the haze of pollution hovering above Beijing, but it also sets the stakes higher for preservation of the built environment. Reflecting the mantra that many preservationists have begun to repeat,

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<sup>80</sup> United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), *Beijing 2008 Olympic Games: An Environmental Review* (Nairobi, Kenya: UNEP, 2007), 95.

the greenest building is the building already built. In a place like China, where building materials are created under heavily-polluting circumstances, the carbon-cost in replacing an existing structure is as high as any other location in the world. When cultural benefits are also considered in this equation, not only can the preservation of historic built environments reduce consumption of natural materials and reduce the need for polluting industries powered by coal, but it also preserves endangered cultural areas that are fragile and susceptible to being lost in a sweep of modernization. The preservation of historic built environments in China is a sustainable action that preserves both environment and culture, which are both stated goals by the IOC and BOCOG.

Two of the major plans of action that guide sustainable development decisions within the BOCOG are the *Beijing 2008: Environmental Innovation and Improvement* document, and the *Beijing Olympic Action Plan*. While the *Environmental Innovation and Improvement* document contains limited mention of the cultural environment, the *Action Plan* is comprehensive in detailing protections that will be implemented for historic and cultural areas. Section 4, Article 1 states that:

Protecting and displaying the historical and cultural heritage of the city - the Plan to Protect the Historical and Cultural Heritage of Beijing will be fully implemented. Special attention will be given to the protection of the old royal city and the historical buildings situated along the ancient city axis and within the 25 historical and cultural protection areas, the protected major historical and cultural sites, the ancient urban water systems and the layout of the ancient city. To showcase the features of the ancient capital, the ancient buildings in the areas along the axis line, the old royal city, the Chao-Fu road, the Imperial College and Shichahai area will be well renovated; some historical relics, such as the former imperial gardens of Yuanmingyuan and the city wall built in the Ming dynasty will be restored; and such world heritages as the Great Wall and the Forbidden City will be placed on the top of the protection list. In the renovation of the old city, the quadrangles (siheyuan), which bear the features of the old

city, will be carefully dealt with and protected in different ways; and records concerning the origin, connotations, and incidents related to the historical places will be entirely or partially inscribed on the spot by permanent means.<sup>81</sup>

This document compliments a long list of similar documents that aim to preserve the heritage areas associated with major historic sites around Beijing, such as *Beijing Regulation for Historical and Cultural City Protection*. While regulations exist that aim to protect heritage areas, the local context in which they are applied does not guarantee that they will be followed.

### **The Local Preservation Context**

From the first stirrings that a project was underway in the area, residents and reporters have been linking the Qianmen development to the Olympics coming to town. One of the first people to bring the situation to the world's attention was *New York Times* reporter Jim Yardley, who has specialized in covering issues related to the lead-up in Beijing to the Olympics.

While demolition in the face of hosting the Olympic Games has been a reality faced in the past by other host cities (such as Atlanta in 1996), the destruction taking place in Qianmen seemed out of the ordinary for such a historic place. As Yardley reported in his July 12, 2006 front page article:

A short walk from Tiananmen Square and the Great Hall of the People, a historic neighborhood named Qianmen is an eerie picture of destruction.

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<sup>81</sup> The Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG), *Beijing Olympic Action Plan* (Beijing: BOCOG, 2003), <http://en.beijing2008.cn/06/93/article211929306.shtml> (accessed May 1, 2008).

Ancient homes lie in rubble. Scavengers squat in alleyways and wait to ransack vacated buildings. The reason for this destruction is the 2008 Olympic Games, which have turned much of the city into a noisy, disjointed construction zone. New subway lines and new roads are under construction, even an entire new downtown. On the city's northern rim, at least 25,000 laborers are building the Olympic stadiums and village. And yet amid such grandiose projects, it is modest Qianmen, once the domain of the Qing Dynasty opera singers and classical scholars, that is prompting an uneasy question. Will the Olympics, which organizers promised would enhance the city's "cultural heritage," instead help finish off what remains of old Beijing?<sup>82</sup>

This question still haunts many today, just as it did in the summer of 2006. Since the printing of Yardley's article, sections of Qianmen have come to look like war zones, as historic houses have been literally torn in half to make way for new roads and intersections (Figure 17). Even Qianmen DaJie itself has recently begun to transform, as walls have been Erected to hide an internal transition from view, where buildings that have stood for generations are now being torn down to make way for the new, Xintiandi version of Qianmen. This Qianmen will feature an Apple flagship store and other international brands, standing alongside places of entertainment, boutique hotels, and at least some renovated courtyards homes that will sell for over \$1,000,000 US.<sup>83</sup> A trolley will run the course of Qianmen DaJie, as the area will only be open to pedestrians to stimulate shopping in the area.

This development, which is transforming the essence of Qianmen from that of Qing dynasty commercial district brimming with local merchants to a modern, happening place for foreigners, is occurring within direct violation of a landmark preservation plan

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<sup>82</sup> Yardley, "Olympics Imperil Historic Beijing Neighborhood," *New York Times*, July 12, 2006.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.



**Figure 17.** Shown above is Xianyukou DaJie, in the Xianyukou conservation district. In preparation of widening and paving the street, numerous homes were torn down or irretrievably damaged in the process.

which was enacted in 2002. Titled *The Conservation Planning of 25 Historic Areas Beijing Old City*, the plan, published by the Beijing Municipal Planning Commission, defines the twenty five historic areas located throughout the walls of the old city, their predominant use, details their historic significance, quantifies and categorizes all resources in the area, and outlines what measures are recommended for their continued protection. Qianmen DaJie and parts of SOHO's Qianmen development fall within the Xianyukou conservation district, which has been recommended by the planning commission for continued preservation and slow development over time that will respect

the remaining high-integrity resources.<sup>84</sup> The plan utilizes a simple system which does not outline indefinite protections allowing buildings to stand forever by disallowing new development, but calls for organic and slow development which will blend with remaining historic resources for as long as the historic buildings can be maintained and productive.

Created and accepted by the Municipal Government with the motivation of protecting the remaining historic and predominately residential areas of the urban core that date to the imperial age, over time the plan has been proven ineffective at preserving the disappearing cultural areas that it was created to protect. Numerous instances reflect what happened in Dongsibatiao, where despite the protective designation of being one of the twenty-five historic areas in the preservation plan, developers were allowed to tear down historic courtyard homes in order to build new office buildings. While construction was halted after angry residents alerted the press, other protected areas have not been so lucky as to escape the wrecking ball. The neighboring historic district to Qianmen, Dazhilan, has already seen the large-scale destruction that is currently on display on Qianmen DaJie.

While the BOCOG has vehemently denied any involvement with the Qianmen project, especially in the wake of damaging international press about the destruction of China's heritage, the BOCOG has quietly continued to show their physical presence at the site.<sup>85</sup> While no reports have been made on the matter in the press, I personally

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<sup>84</sup> Liu Ruiling and Zhou Xiaojie, ed., *Conservation Planning of 25 Historic Areas in Beijing Old City* (Beijing: Beijing Municipal Planning Bureau, 2002).

<sup>85</sup> Jim Yardley, "Olympics Imperil Historic Beijing Neighborhood," *New York Times*, July 12, 2006.



witnessed billboards blocking construction activities from view along Zhushikou that contained Olympic imagery mixed with architect's drawings of the new Qianmen as a way of publicizing the development, and linking it to the 2008 Games (Figure 18).

Covered with everything from the Paralympic logo, Beijing 2008 logo, Beijing 2008 mascots and the Olympic Rings themselves, there was no denying that the BOCOG was aware of if not involved in this development.

This evidence is quite damning, as no one person or organization is allowed to use these logos without the express consent of the BOCOG, a right that is protected by the Central Government and Beijing Municipal Government.<sup>86</sup> Because of China's notorious black market, copyright protection of these images and other Olympic-related material have been highly guarded by all actions taking place in direct violation of their own Municipal Government's conservation plan for the area, which calls for slow redevelopment while preserving as much of the historic fabric as possible. This approach also flies in the face of the Olympic Charter, which states that, "The use of an Olympic emblem must contribute to the development of the Olympic Movement and must not detract from its dignity."<sup>87</sup> Also listed in the charter as basic principles of Olympism are responsible concern for environmental issues and the promotion of sustainable

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<sup>86</sup> Embassy News, "Beijing Unveils the Emblem of the 2008 Beijing Olympics," *Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Nepal*, <http://np.china-embassy.org/eng/News/t167222.htm> (accessed February 2, 2008).

<sup>87</sup> IOC, *Olympic Charter*, 25.



**Figure 18.** Olympic logos and mascots are seen next to computer drawings showing the future shops that will line Qianmen DaJie. While billboards depicting the finished development are located on the northern side of the development which receives heavy tourist flow, the Olympic imagery is only shown on the southern end along Zhushikoudong DaJie.

development, the promotion of a positive legacy in host cities and countries, and the support of initiatives which blend sport with culture and education.<sup>88</sup>

Sun Ruoyu, whose restaurant was closed in 2006, adds to the story. An Australian citizen who had returned to her native China to run the family business on Qianmen DaJie, only dozens of feet south of the Qianmen development, she was stunned to be served a notice from the Municipal Government saying that she had no choice but to relocate, as the buildings along her street were being demolished to make needed room

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 12.

along the route for the Olympic marathon.<sup>89</sup> In defiance, Sun decided to refuse relocation, and has since waged a public campaign in attempt to alert the public and media about the government and IOC sanctioned demolitions destroying family businesses in the name of the Olympic Games. Sun has successfully kept bulldozers at bay for two years through her public protest, which has garnered the attention of the international press. Officials have successfully torn down a portion of the base of the building, but Sun continues to live in the building despite its structural problems and constant fear of demolition.<sup>90</sup>

Information released by the BOCOG pertaining to the marathon has been scant, but what has been publicized on their website is that the marathon will start in Tiananmen Square, and will pass by several Beijing landmarks, including the Temple of Heaven and Yongding Gate, before concluding at the Bird's Nest on the Olympic Green. Considering that the Qianmen development is the direct route which links Tiananmen Square, Sun's business, the Temple of Heaven, and the Yongding Gate, while also considering the decision to use Olympic imagery to promote a highly controversial development on a central axis between these areas of interest, would indicate that there is a high probability that the Qianmen development is in fact an outdoor venue for the Olympic marathon (please see Appendix A for an update).

While this can only stand as an assumption at this time, based on available information gathered in the field and released by the BOCOG, if it is true that Qianmen DaJie will host the marathon, it is also be true that the Qianmen development stands in

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<sup>89</sup> Jim Yardley, "Little Building Defies Beijing's Olympic Ambitions," *New York Times*, August 8, 2008.

<sup>90</sup> Karen Meirik, "No Room for History in the New Beijing," *Asia Calling*, August 9, 2008, <http://asiacalling.kbr68h.com/index.php/archives/1847> (accessed August 10, 2008).

direct violation of *Agenda 21*. As an outdoor venue, the Qianmen development would be in direct contradiction with clause 3.2.2, which states that:

Sports activities, facilities and events must be so arranged as to ensure the protection of conservation areas, the countryside, the cultural heritage and natural resources as a whole. They will also have to be situated in such a way as to minimize the environmental impact of the infrastructure associated with them, such as housing, traffic arteries, communications, electricity supplies, water and food supplies, and waste disposal and processing. The use of a site must go hand in hand with protective measures. Provisions must be made for compensation in the event of irreversible change.<sup>91</sup>

While the *Conservation Plan for Twenty Five Areas of Beijing Old City* may have been violated by the Beijing Municipal Government on different occasions, it nonetheless defines Qianmen and the greater Xianyouku area as a conservation district, which requires protection in the eyes of the IOC if used as a competition venue. An added layer of protection has also been applied with the *Action Plan*, which states that, “Special attention will be given to the protection of the old royal city and the historical buildings situated along the ancient city axis and within the 25 historical and cultural protection areas,” and “In the renovation of the old city, the quadrangles (siheyuan), which bear the features of the old city, will be carefully dealt with and protected in different ways.”<sup>92</sup>

Although violations have occurred of Beijing Municipal laws and IOC regulations, preservation experts in Beijing would tell you that this is a common occurrence. While in Beijing, I spoke with professionals affiliated with a local non-governmental organization, the Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center, about the

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<sup>91</sup> IOC, *Agenda 21*, 34.

<sup>92</sup> BOCOG, *Action Plan*, <http://en.beijing2008.cn/06/93/article211929306.shtml>.

challenges of heritage protection in a city that is constantly changing with new development. One man, who has extensively researched the Qianmen area, passed on a story of being interviewed about the demolitions in Qianmen by CCTV, only to have the interview not air because it was deemed too controversial.

While voices have been stifled in attempt to speak about preservation, this is not the only obstacle facing preservationists in China. In speaking to a director of a non-governmental organization that emphasizes heritage protection, he explained to me that in China, there is a different view of culture than in other places in the world. In China, only the government at its various administrative levels can deem buildings as cultural relics worthy of protection. If the State government deems a building a cultural relic, as outlined in Article 5 of the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics*, the State then takes ownership of that building:

Sites of ancient culture, ancient tombs and cave temples are owned by the State. Such immovable cultural relics as memorial buildings, ancient architectural structures, stone carvings, murals, and typical architectural structures of the modern and contemporary times, designated for protection by the State, except where otherwise provided for by regulations of the State, are owned by the State.<sup>93</sup>

The *Protection of Cultural Relics* takes special care to outline the ownership and responsibilities of cultural relics in Article 9:

People's government at various levels shall attach importance to the protection of cultural relics and correctly handle the relations between economic and social development and the protection of cultural relics so as to ensure the safety of the cultural relics. Capital construction and the development of tourism shall be governed by the principle for the work

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<sup>93</sup> Standing Committee of the Ninth National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, *Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics* (Beijing: Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, 2002), 64.

concerning the protection of cultural relics, and such activities may not cause damage to cultural relics.<sup>94</sup>

Beyond statements of who is responsible for the maintenance and protection of structures, the law briefly addresses archaeological artifacts and limits on allowing Chinese cultural relics to leave the county. What the law does not stipulate are any sort of criteria to which professional judgments can be made in order to establish a baseline criteria defining what a cultural relic is. There is no public participation in this process, as the various forms of State and local governments are the only entities that can deem structures as cultural relics, and are the responsible parties for their protection. No baseline measures for protection or management plans are outlined, but the document states what may come to bear if the measures within the law are not followed.

The law does make considerations for historic cities and districts, as they can be officially designated as famous villages, towns, or cities based on the density and historic value of cultural artifacts in the area. At the county level and higher, these regions are slated for greater consideration within urban plans, are required to have a special plan for their protection. Other protections outlined for cultural relics would appear to bode well for those structures located in urban areas, as Article 20 outlines the necessity of citing construction projects away from immovable cultural relics, and Article 17 stipulates that no additional construction, digging, blasting, or drilling may take place in an area of a historical or cultural site, unless specifically authorized by the people's government which gave the site its initial designation as a cultural relic. Furthermore, Article 26 states:

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 65-66.

The principle of keeping the immovable cultural relics in their original state shall be adhered to in their use, and the users shall be responsible for the safety of the structures and the cultural relics attached to them, see to it that the immovable cultural relics are not damaged, rebuilt, or dismantled and that no additional structures are built on the site.<sup>95</sup>

With such laws in place at the national level, it would seem that such developments as Qianmen would not be allowed to occur. Historic buildings within a conservation area are being torn down, rebuilt, and appear to not be receiving the protections they are due under State law. But as stipulated throughout the document, the various levels of government that deem buildings or areas historic can just as easily destroy these areas, with little to no oversight from the State government. Because the public is not involved in this process, there is no public oversight of these decisions. Qianmen can be torn down despite the fact that it is in a protected conservation area because it was the city that deemed the 25 areas of the old city as historic, and the city who is allowing them to be torn down.

While ripe for corruption with its lack of accountability measures, this system has also caught the attention of preservationists around the world who are saddened by the destruction of Chinese culture due to development-related pressures. The Getty Institute and the Australian Heritage Commission have both teamed with the National Committee of China ICOMOS in order to study this environment, and drafted a document that they think will help inform a new generation of preservationists in China. Together, the group has drafted *Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China*, which sets forth guidelines for the conservation and management of cultural resources in China.

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 75.

The document, which thoroughly outlines and defines conservation and cultural resource management, is successful in its aim to fill the gaps that exist in the *Protection of Cultural Relics. Principles for Conservation* acknowledges that Chinese laws do not give the proper guidance needed to ensure the protection of cultural relics, and calls upon China as a signatory of the UNESCO *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* to contribute to international conservation theory.<sup>96</sup> It also goes on to provide important definitions vacant from the *Protection of Cultural Relics*, such as what constitutes a heritage site, and how its existing condition must be preserved.

While *Principles for Conservation* is a step in the right direction, and the principles have been implemented at two heritage sites in China under the guidance of the State Administration for Cultural Heritage (SACH), a recent article published by Fengqi Qian in the *International Journal of Heritage Studies* argues that the implementation of measures outlined in the document has proven difficult for Chinese heritage professionals. As China ICOMOS is affiliated with the SACH, the *Principles for Conservation* remain largely unknown and referenced within China:

Although the international ICOMOS organization is constitutionally independent of government and, as a national committee of that organization, China ICOMOS should be a non-government organization, in fact China ICOMOS operates as an affiliation of SACH, which reports to the Ministry of Culture. Because of the top-down system, the writing of the China Principles took place without most people in the profession knowing, even though it involved a number of high-profile experts in the field. In 2000, after three years of development, the China Principles were approved by SACH. However, interviews with provincial heritage officials, professionals and academics in that year revealed that they were

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<sup>96</sup> Neville Agnew and Martha Demas, eds. *Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Trust, 2002), 16.



largely unaware of the work on the China Principles, or, indeed, about the existence of China ICOMOS itself.<sup>97</sup>

Qian also sites a lack of protection for historic landscapes as a major flaw of the document. Unlike the *Burra Charter*, which works with the intention of preserving historic and cultural landscapes, the *Principles for Conservation* focus on protecting individual cultural relics, failing to address current issues in China pertaining to the preservation of threatened historic urban landscapes:

There are 103 state-listed “historically and culturally famous cities” in China, but urban redevelopment in recent years is rapidly eroding the historic landscape in these cities. In many cases, the redevelopment is inimical to the cultural significance and the historic landscape of these cities. Many neighborhoods have been altered so much that they are now unrecognizable even to people who used to live there, and consequently these cities are losing their identity. While it has been pointed out that most of the “historically and culturally famous cities” no longer live up to their reputation, there are no specific guidelines at the national level to regulate redevelopment practice. As explained above, the China Principles, though claiming to be applicable to this category, do not actually aim to address issues relating to the conservation of historic towns or urban settings, and thus leave a major gap in the conservation system.<sup>98</sup>

Although the hutong neighborhoods have tremendous cultural value, it would be easy for foreigners to overly romanticize their present conditions. Many historic neighborhoods have fallen into disrepair and living in the siheyuans of these areas is a struggle given that they do not have many of the amenities of more modern housing. This has been, in part, used as a justification for demolition rather than restoration. However, this is not uncommon. Disinvestment in historical resources worldwide oftentimes

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<sup>97</sup> Fengqi Qian, “China’s Burra Charter: The Formation and Implementation of the China Principles,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 13, No. 3 (2007): 255-264.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

“justifies” the need for demolition. For the people living in the historic urban areas of Beijing, in the siheyuan lining hutong neighborhoods, the issue of conservation can be overwhelming. Living conditions in these areas have usually become substandard, as approximately sixty-five percent of all housing in hutong neighborhoods are public housing.<sup>99</sup> Most residents are not educated in how to maintain their homes, and lack the incentive to do so because they can be relocated at any time. Despite this lack of maintenance by the government and homeowners alike, eighty percent of surveyed residents suggested that hutongs should be preserved and passed down to future generations as an important piece of Chinese cultural heritage.<sup>100</sup>

While the hutongs are important pieces of cultural heritage to not only the people who live there, but the greater Beijing community, the IOC had what seemed to be much more pressing matters to attend to in Beijing. With an air quality problem that is still making international headlines, the destruction sanctioned by the BOCOG in Qianmen was the last thing the IOC wanted to address. Already with their hands full, would the IOC really want to expose the unethical use of their imagery, the un-humanitarian use of forced evictions, or the violations to their sustainability agenda and moral compass, the *Olympic Charter*?

The IOC and BOCOG are required to work together in order to create a positive image for the Games. This need for a positive image has resulted in such publications as *Beijing 2008 Olympic Games: An Environmental Review*. Authored by UNEP consultant

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<sup>99</sup> Tibet Heritage Fund International (THS), *Beijing Hutong Conservation Study* (Berlin: THS, 2002), 34.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

Paolo Revellino, who made a name for himself as spearheading an impressive sustainability program for the 2006 Olympic Games in Torino, Italy, the publication aims to soothe the fears of the public by ensuring that the BOCOG has met the environmental goals set out before them when they signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UNEP in 2005, which aimed at making the 2008 Games environmentally-friendly.<sup>101</sup> A forward written by the Executive Director and United Nations Under-Secretary-General Achim Steiner states that:

Beijing's bid was notable for the broad reach of its environmental commitments, which ranged far beyond the immediate concerns of planning for the Games to an ambitious programme for greening and cleaning China's capital. As the IOC Evaluation Commission noted in 2001, the measures that Beijing had proposed would leave "a major environmental legacy for Beijing from the Olympic Games..." What we discovered-and what this report shows-is that the award of the Games has provided a formidable impetus to cleaning up Beijing and improving its environment. While the city and the county have many challenges remaining, I think we can all genuinely take heart from the commitment that has been applied.<sup>102</sup>

Steiner is right to point out the concerted effort by the Chinese to host the Olympics in the face such adversity. As the most populous country in the world, China faces environmental problems that would cause any country great distress. But as stated in *Environmental Protection, Innovation, and Improvement*:

The Beijing Olympic Games are to be held in a country full of great zeal and love for the Games, which will open a vast and vigorous market for the Olympiad; the Beijing Olympic Games are to be held in the world's largest developing country which will become an example for the

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<sup>101</sup> UNEP, *Beijing 2008 Olympic Games*, 11.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

Olympic Games to be held in other countries that have similar conditions.”<sup>103</sup>

The Beijing Olympics presented an opportunity for the IOC to show that even in an isolated, authoritarian state such as China, the principles which underlie the idea of Olympism can universally be applied and accomplished. What instead has come from these Games is a realization that in order to accomplish the positive goals of the IOC, such as those outlined in *Agenda 21*, the IOC must take an unpopular position of leveraging their position as a powerful international body in order to insure compliance with their regulations. If Beijing is indeed an example of how the IOC will approach hosting the Games in developing countries, there is much to be learned in how to better balance the needs and customs of the host city, while also complying with international demands for baseline environmental and cultural requirements.

Development in Qianmen, a protected cultural area in Beijing, is just one example of how the IOC's policies have failed to bring their desired results in a host city that does not already comply with international standards in-line with those of the IOC. While *Agenda 21* is a laudable first effort that attempts to bring sustainable development to host cities of the Olympic Games, events that have occurred in Beijing reveal that the agenda can and should be strengthened. Not only can the agenda's language be re-worded as to outline tangible goals, ways of achieving them, and possible consequences if this does not happen, but there is also room to consider periphery developments that are integral at the local level in hosting the Olympics, but which are deemed out of the purview of both

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<sup>103</sup> The Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG), *Beijing 2008: Environmental Protection, Innovation, and Improvement* (Beijing: BOCOG, 2007), 6.

local OCOGs and the IOC. Even though Qianmen was essentially an Olympic venue, it slipped through the cracks for this very reason.

I suggest that these peripheral developments do the most harm to host cities and their residents. A 2007 study conducted by the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) estimates over 1.25 million Beijing residents will have been displaced by Olympic-related development by the completion of the Games.<sup>104</sup>

In Qianmen, an opportunity was missed to display local culture unique to Beijing that would both advocate for heritage conservation and sustainable development in a country where these processes are disjointed and inconsistent. Utilizing a positive model for the conservation of cultural heritage not only bolsters the sustainability effort of the IOC, but serves to act as a living legacy for host cities. This scenario, which presents positive outcomes for all parties involved, should be the driving force in implementing such policies as *Agenda 21*.

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<sup>104</sup> Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions, *Fair Play for Housing Rights: Mega-Events, Olympic Games and Housing Rights* (Geneva: Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions, 2007), 12.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Sydney and Beijing: A Contrast in Approaches to Sustainability**

As discussed in Chapter II, sustainability is not an easy topic to address; as a growing phenomenon, the sustainability movement and consequent sustainable development movement continually evolve into a more refined state. Reflecting on my own journey, which started more than two years ago delving into the sustainability world, much has changed. More people and organizations are looking to implement sustainable practices into their organizations and everyday lives, as more information becomes available on the negative effects humans can have on the environment.

When I began my research, few preservationists were choosing to research sustainability, as the topic appeared to be better-suited for environmental experts. At the time, many were overlooking the potential role of the built environment in sustainable development practices. But as an on-coming environmental era is emerging in the face of global warming, pollution, and the scarcity of fossil fuels, mere technological patches, such as solar panels and filtration systems, are becoming outdated modes of sustainable action when deployed on their own. Instead, factoring in the human act of consumption is now being considered as an essential part of the sustainability equation.

While many organizations, such as the IOC, attempt to address such issues as environmental degradation by encouraging driving less and the purchase of carbon offsets, they tend to overlook the role of development all together. This is surprising, considering a substantial 48% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions are related to the construction and operation of buildings.<sup>105</sup> This is an important statistic, especially when compared to the 27% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions caused by transportation, which is largely the focus of most sustainability agendas.<sup>106</sup>

While the IOC as an organization has made a good first effort to be an advocate for sustainable development, it is clear through the different approaches seen to sustainability in Sydney and Beijing that individual countries will decide what kind of effort to make when addressing sustainable development issues. As seen in the approach to sustainability in Sydney, SOPA took a holistic approach, which encompassed everything from using natural water filtration systems and sustainably-sourced constructions materials to preserving the historic cultural elements located on-site. But these actions should have been no surprise, considering the environmental and cultural preservation laws that SOPA planners were bound by in Australia.

Beijing, on the other hand, has a complicated context surrounding historic preservation. While rules and regulations are in place pertaining to cultural relics and conservation districts, these regulations often go un-enforced because of the constant state of development in China. This creates a situation ripe for developers to come into

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<sup>105</sup> Richard Moe, "Sustainable Stewardship: Historic Preservation's Essential Role in Fighting Climate Change," (Portland, Oregon: Lecture, 27 February 2008).

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

protected conservation areas in desired locations, such as Qianmen, and proceed to destroy valued historic resources without fear of retribution from the local or national government. Contrasting the two very different approaches to meeting sustainability standards under *Agenda 21* serves to show a valuable lesson. While loose sustainability regulations meant to bolster the IOC's image in a new environmentally-conscious era can bring positive results in countries where infrastructure already supports such goals and aims, the IOC's regulations risk failure in countries that do not already have such support systems in place. Russia will be the next chapter in this story. While the desire of the IOC to respect the autonomy of the host country through loose regulations pertaining to development is perhaps just, it is also in contradiction with the tradition of the host country's OCOG having contractually-outlined control over Olympic imagery, fundamentally binding the host to the values-based core of the IOC. For a number of years, host countries and the IOC work together to not only plan and hold a successful Games that will benefit all involved, but also work together to preserve the name and image of the Olympic Games. Without the explicit consent of the host organization to work towards these goals, it is not within the IOC's interest to award them the prize that hosting the Games.

Hosting the Games is quite the prize to be won. The economic, social, health, and development benefits are recognized by countries around the world, as they spend millions of dollars during the bidding process alone to fight for the chance to play host to the Games. For a city like Beijing, the opportunities are even more staggering, as the county has spent billions in preparation for August 2008. It can boost the image of a



country, be a needed stimulus for economic development, can help fast track infrastructure improvements that can boost a city to the next level, and offers a level of prestige which only a short list of world cities share.

While the IOC offers unprecedented opportunities for enterprising cities such as Beijing to reinvent themselves and show themselves to the world, they are missing an incredible opportunity to be recognized as a leader in the global movement to develop sustainably. Beijing and the IOC cannot be denied accolades for the list of positive accomplishments that have taken place in Beijing leading up to the Games, and many positive environmental measures have been taken in Beijing which will leave a lasting impact around the country as a whole. The problem is not that no action has been taken to improve the environment in Beijing, but that more could have been done by the IOC to protect the cultural and natural environments of Beijing that are under constant pressure of destruction. With stronger wording of existing regulations and the addition of measures that encourage accountability, the IOC could aid in the propagation of sustainable development, preserving sensitive natural and cultural environments of all Olympic host cities.

One of the best qualities of the Olympics is the ability of organizers to bring together stakeholders from all corners of the globe, so that a greater understanding of cultural differences can be achieved. Preservation of the historic built environment achieves a balance of cultural awareness and sustainable development that can be highly beneficial to Olympic organizations as a whole, and should be incorporated in a more substantive way in host cities of the Olympic Games.

In analyzing both sustainability programs in Australia and China, the difference between the two in approaching sustainability and sustainable development could not be further from each other. Even under the guiding force of *Agenda 21*, the IOC and BOCOG have been so focused on one environmental problem, air quality, that they have lost sight of other unsustainable activities surrounding the Games, such as the destruction of cultural heritage in Qianmen. This single-minded approach to sustainability only serves to pump up one cause, while alienating and ignoring other root causes of environmental degradation. As demonstrated in Sydney, a multi-pronged approach to sustainable development not only serves to preserve endangered cultural landscapes, but it also adds to the health and strength of sustainable development policies looking to make a positive change in surrounding communities.

### **Recommendations for Further Research and Action**

It is my conclusion that more research should occur pertaining to the sustainability agenda of the IOC to insure that situations, such the demolitions in Qianmen, are avoided in future Olympic host cities. As the IOC begins to consider giving more developing countries the opportunity to host the largest and most prestigious sporting event in the world, problems similar to those seen in Qianmen are more likely to occur, not only endangering the Olympic legacy itself, but also endangering cultural heritage, the poor, and the disadvantaged.

More research needs to be conducted regarding the link between preservation of fragile cultural landscapes and the fight against global warming. While this line of

thinking is not obscure, it is still not in the mainstream, and until it makes its way into the thoughts of those who develop sustainable development policies, cultural heritage and those who live in susceptible historic areas are in danger of development pressures brought along with the Olympic Games. Considering the high standards that also come with these Games and its imagery, it is imperative that the IOC analyze *Agenda 21* and define its strengths and weaknesses, in order to improve protection of conservation areas in all host cities, not just the few in which *Agenda 21* is buttressed by strong domestic law and subsequent environmental protections.

As for action pertaining to the IOC and *Agenda 21*, it is my recommendation that the IOC consider not only a review of *Agenda 21* and its efficiency in attaining the goals set out in the agenda and the Olympic Charter, but that they also consider a separate system for a submittal of an Environmental Impact Statement-type document that would evaluate the impact of Olympic development on the historic built environment of host cities. The process could be loosely based on such protocol as Section 106 Review in the United States, where any actions taken by organizations receiving federal monies that may disturb sensitive cultural resources, such as significant archaeological sites or historic resources, must go through an evaluation process completed by government certified cultural resource specialists. These specialists evaluate cultural resources in the area, and report to the agencies involved as to their significance. Upon this review, State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) then review the information, and either concur or disagree with the findings. If findings are positive for valuable cultural materials, then a

process is set into place to either avoid the resources during construction activities, or mitigate any potential adverse effects.

This process was first considered in the 1960s, when the impact of large-scale federal construction projects was becoming evident at the local level. Federal programs reaching back to the New Deal era had built everything from dams to the interstate highway system while providing numerous jobs to the unemployed in a time of economic need, spurring wide-spread economic growth while strengthening the country's infrastructure. What eventually came to light in the 1960s was the large-scale destruction involved this otherwise positive process, as important archaeological sites and landmark buildings were being destroyed at an alarming rate.

Beginning with the United States Conference of Mayors, there was an outcry from the local level that while these government building programs were integral to the development of cities and regions around the country, construction was not properly balanced with preservation of significant historic sites. This movement began to gain momentum, and eventually helped to create the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) in 1966. Language within the act reflects the feelings of the era, as the public strongly believed that existing laws were not acting to protect historic resources. Take, for example, some of the following statements from Section 1 of the NHPA:

(b) The Congress finds and declares that-

(1) the spirit and direction of the Nation are founded upon and reflected in its historic heritage;

(2) the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American People;

(3) historic properties significant to the Nation's heritage are being lost or substantially altered, often inadvertently, with increasing frequency;

(4) the preservation of this irreplaceable heritage is in the public interest so that its vital legacy of cultural, educational, esthetic, inspirational, economic, and energy benefits will be maintained and enriched for future generations of Americans;

(5) in the face of ever-increasing extensions of urban centers, highways, and residential, commercial, and industrial developments, the present governmental and nongovernmental historic preservation programs and activities are inadequate to ensure future generations a genuine opportunity to appreciate and enjoy the rich heritage of our Nation;

(6) the increased knowledge of our historic resources, the establishment of better means of identifying and administering them, and the encouragement of their preservation will improve the planning and execution of Federal and federally assisted projects and will assist economic growth and development; and

(7) although major burdens of historic preservation have been borne and major efforts initiated by private agencies and individuals, and both should continue to play a vital role, it is nevertheless necessary and appropriate for the Federal Government to accelerate its historic preservation programs and activities, to give maximum encouragement to agencies and individuals undertaking preservation by private means, and to assist State and local governments and the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States to expand and accelerate their historic preservation programs and activities.<sup>107</sup>

This act would create the Section 106 process with the intent of being reactionary to federal action. Section 106 addresses the threat of destruction to significant historic resources either directly by Federal agencies, or indirectly through non-Federal organizations paying for projects with Federal dollars:

The head of any Federal agency having direct or indirect jurisdiction over a proposed Federal or federally assisted undertaking in any State and the head of any Federal department or independent agency having authority to license any undertaking shall, prior to the approval of the expenditure of any federal funds on the undertaking prior to the issuance of any license,

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<sup>107</sup> *National Historic Preservation Act*, Public Law 102-575, 16 U.S.C. 470 (1966).

as the case may be, take into account the effect of the undertaking on any district, site, building, structure, or object that is included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. The head of any such Federal agency shall afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation established under Title II of this Act a reasonable opportunity to comment with regard to such undertaking.<sup>108</sup>

Section 106 is balanced by Section 110, a proactive measure forcing federal agencies to identify historic resources and properties under their control. Together, these actions create a system where significant historic properties are both proactively identified, or identified through their location in proximity to construction projects receiving federal dollars. Identification of resources is key, as once identified as a significant resource, measures can be taken to either protect the resource or mitigate any adverse effects that it may incur (adverse effects being those that alter character-defining features of significant resources).

While this process is one that was conceived in the United States, the way in which it is implemented, identifying and evaluating significant historic resources at the local level, is one that, in theory, can be universally adopted. This kind of emphasis on the local perception of what is significant while having a set standard for what is historic is an approach that could be implemented into a comprehensive plan for the protection of cultural resources in host cities. The same double-pronged approach of proactive and reactive policies pertaining to the identification, protection, and mitigation of historic resources within the Section 106 and Section 110 processes could be implemented both during the bidding and planning processes leading up to the Games.

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<sup>108</sup> *National Historic Preservation Act*, Public Law 102-575, 16 U.S.C. 470f (1966).

Section 106 has additional points of procedure that would work well within the structure of the IOC. First, if a federal agency has their own procedures in place that achieve the same results as the Section 106 process, the agency does not have to use the procedures outlined within Section 106. Likewise, it is the federal agency who is responsible to comply with Section 106, the NHPA as a whole, and other federal laws concerning cultural resource management and protection. If we think of host cities as the federal agencies if a similar process were established within the IOC, if their country already required them to complete a similar process of identification and avoidance/mitigation of historic resources (take for instance the identification and protection of historic resources in Australia) they would only need to prove their completion of this process to the IOC. It would also be upon the host city, not the IOC, to comply with outlined procedures and bear the consequences of non-compliance.

Section 106, crafted at a time when development required balance with preservation, is a process, and not an outcome. It is not necessarily a process of protection, but is a process of identification, which then informs federal agencies of their potential impacts on important remnants of culture and history, and which ends in a legally-binding agreement outlining protection and mitigation, as well as destruction. Not only would introducing this process leave a positive legacy of responsible action when potentially harming a sensitive environment with construction activities, but this would also leave the door open for developments to proceed, no matter how harmful, if deemed necessary by the host city and OCOG.

While not a perfect process, it would allow the IOC to review construction activities in the host city, let problems be noted officially in the record, and would put the onus on the host organization to either relocate problem construction activities, or mitigate any damages to significant cultural resources. Mitigation, which can range from data recovery at archaeological sites and the installation of educational plaques to commemorate significant buildings for the loss of structures, can be flexible and creative. On the scale of the Olympic Games, mitigation of the destruction of significant resources could serve to enhance cultural understanding for local residents and visiting tourists, even if the resource itself was destroyed to make way for development.

In providing an avenue for mitigation and review to occur if this process does not already exist in the host country, it would at the very least allow such activities as recordation of historic areas to occur before demolition. At best, resources could be designated as significant by local officials, at which point decisions would need to be made as to how best to proceed with development in the most sensitive way possible. A Section 106-inspired process would put important decisions pertaining to cultural resources in the hands of the host city, giving them the autonomy to choose what to do, but also forcing them to slow down and contemplate their decision before destroying areas of cultural heritage, which are vital elements of the Olympic spirit and legacy for both the host city and the IOC.

My final recommendation advocates for continuing education and research, done on the behalf of the IOC, relating to the value of historic preservation. If it is truly the goal of the IOC to propagate cultural understanding and environmental protection,



preservation of the historic built environment is an avenue in which both of these goals can be achieved.

### **Limitations of this Study**

As this study was conducted with constraints on both the time and budget, there have been limitations to my research. The first limitation to this study is the lack of further investigation into other cities that have hosted the Olympics since the adoption of *Agenda 21* in 1999. An investigation of other cities, which may have had similar or different approaches to sustainable development and historic preservation, would have added to the strength of the information provided in this thesis, allowing for less generalized conclusions. The chosen sites for case studies, Sydney and Beijing, can be seen as a limitation in itself, as each site was developed under varying circumstances. While documented contrasts in their approaches to preservation of the historic built environment and the implementation of *Agenda 21* help to reveal weaknesses within the agenda, a third case study could have balanced this study, leading to more thorough recommendations.

The second limitation to this study was duration of study at each site. Although I lived in Beijing for one month to study the development in Qianmen, because of the constantly evolving nature of Olympic-related construction within the city, more time would have been optimal in order to gain a better context of development in Beijing. I had even less time to research Sydney Olympic Park, as I visited Sydney for just one

week in the summer of 2007. Had I more time to research the park, a comprehensive analysis involving greater detail could have been developed for use in this study.

The third limitation of this study can be construed as an “apples versus oranges” approach seen in the choice of case study locations. While the case study conducted in Australia focuses on the preservation of facilities within the main Olympic park in Sydney, the case study conducted in China pertains to a site located on the periphery of Beijing’s Olympic Green. While both case studies serve to analyze the IOC’s influence on sustainable development policies through a study of the host city’s approach to preservation of the historic built environment, the difference between the highlighted developments in Sydney and Beijing can result in host cities approaching sustainability in very different ways. While this approach to conducting the two case studies can be seen as a limitation, it also serves to highlight the differing circumstances faced by host cities of the Olympic games, and the resulting need of flexible and comprehensive IOC sustainability guidelines that have ability to address development concerns faced in all host cities of the Olympic Games.

## APPENDIX

### CURRENT EVENTS UPDATE

It had been a long trek for Romania's Constantina Tomescu by the time she approached the Bird's Nest. Clearly leading a pack of world-class marathon runners towards the finish line, she had somehow managed to break away since the race began over two hours earlier in Tiananmen Square. From the start line, the tightly-bunched group of runners rounded the square, passing such monuments as the Great Hall of the People, Chairman Mao's Mausoleum, and the outer gates of the Forbidden City.

After taking one scenic loop around the square, runners paraded by the Planning Exhibition Hall, heading east towards Chongwen before turning south to the Temple of Heaven. Racing through the rose bushes of the grounds, runners went southeast, skirting by Yongding Gate before turning right on Qianmen DaJie. From here, the race would push north, back to Tiananmen Square, before winding through northwest Beijing and eventually crossing the finish line at the Bird's Nest.

From the aerial views shown of Qianmen DaJie during the race, it appeared as if construction had not yet been completed. Large walls still hid construction areas from view, but all of the buildings that ran through the heart of SOHO China's Qianmen development along Qianmen DaJie had been completed just a few weeks before the Olympics officially opened to the world. Shiny new store fronts completed in various

traditional styles lined the streets, and tracks had been set in place for the streetcars to begin carrying shoppers from one end of the street to another. Visitors would have to wait for their first ride in the replica streetcars, as their debut was delayed for the running of the men's and women's Olympic marathons.

Photographs provided to me by David Fundingsland spelled a similar picture to what I had witnessed as I watched the marathon broadcast live from Beijing on August 16, 2008. While some design cues from the Ming and Qing dynasties were called upon in order to bring a historic appearance to the street, these details were lost in a storm of new brick and glass doors that could only be a product of modern China. In certain areas of the development, particularly the south end, no effort was made to even recreate the look or feel of an ancient era, as a mish-mash of historic replicas gave way to modern design (Figure 19).

The Qianmen that had been torn down to make way for the new development was not a perfect streetscape. Modern buildings stood next to historic businesses that had been passed down from generation to generation. This mix of modern and historic is seen throughout Beijing, as soaring land values create pressure to redevelop priceless historic urban areas. Qianmen, which sits on the powerful north to south axis of Beijing, was bound to be targeted with new development.

As I look back to the *New York Times* story that sparked my interest in Olympic development, I can't help but remember the BOCOG proclaiming their innocence in the



**Figure 19.** Visitors crowd Qianmen DaJie to see the newly-opened development days before the Olympic Games in the top photograph, taken by David Fundingsland. Below, the same view of Qianmen looking north from Zhushikoudong DaJie towards the Qianmen Gate during field studies in October, 2007.

mass destruction that was about to take place in Qianmen. I will also never forget reading their denials, then witnessing first hand the way in which their name, reputation, and imagery were being used to advertise the development. The experience went full circle as I watched talented women from around the world racing through the Qianmen development, in one of the most prestigious track and field events in the world.

When residents of Qianmen claimed that they were being pushed out of their homes because the Olympics were coming to Beijing, they were right. There has been no legal recourse for their evictions or the demolition of historic and protected buildings, and the IOC has effectively stated their agreement with these actions through their resounding silence. This silence is troublesome considering the high moral standards that drive the IOC as an organization, and the extent to which documents such as *Agenda 21* have been drafted in order to prove the IOC's moral relevance to new generations of the Olympic family, who have growing concerns about human rights and environmental sensitivity.

While a good first step has been made by the IOC in making a formal declaration that sustainable development is a priority to them in host cities, this statement of intent has not procured balanced results. As demonstrated in Beijing, while the IOC may not have the intent to harm, if their policies cannot function independently of local laws because of a lack of implementation and accountability measures, high standards of development will not likely be reached in countries where sustainable development measures do not already exist.

As the IOC looks to include a larger portion of the world's population in the Olympic family, namely looking to markets in Africa, Asia, and Russia, a trend of

developing countries being awarded the Games is beginning to emerge. These countries are less likely to be equipped with development laws that meet the standards set out by the IOC in *Agenda 21*, opening the door for similar scenarios of destruction in historic areas to continue. Unless the IOC is willing to re-evaluate *Agenda 21* and work towards strengthening its impact in developing countries, development decisions tied to the Olympic Games will continue to weaken the organization in the eyes of the world, and will work against the goodwill and positive impacts that come with hosting the Games.

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