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THE SUSTAINABLE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL PARK? CONTRADICTIONS AND PERSISTENT ANTAGONISMS AT SYDNEY'S OLYMPIC PARK

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Abstract: Urban parks have long been used by policy makers to achieve specific policy goals. In recent years, two sets of policy goals have become commonly associated with park planning. The first set of goals can be characterized as being neoliberal, where parks have been built and reformed to generate certain economic and governmental outcomes. The second set of policy goals is associated with sustainability, where parks have been utilized as tools in such things as the mitigation of climate change and community building. The aim of this paper is to examine how these two sets of policy goals have come to coexist. The paper draws upon the case study of Sydney Olympic Park, a self-proclaimed exemplar of both entrepreneurial urban development and sustainability. The paper traces out the functional and institutional changes at the Park in order to read the relationship between neoliberal and sustainability policy goals. While predictable inconsistencies are found between the two sets of policy goals, the paper argues in conclusion that their contradictions have not generated a necessity to resolve their antagonistic relations. [Key words: Sydney, Olympic Games, neoliberalism, sustainability, parks.]

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INTRODUCTION

Since their inception, urban parks have been used to ameliorate societal problems (Cranz, 1982; Cranz and Boland, 2004; Lawson, 2007; Low et al., 2005; Madden, 2011). In recent years, the instrumentality of park design and management has become associated with two agendas: neoliberalism (Atkinson, 2003; de Magalhaes and Carmona, 2009; Madden, 2011) and sustainability (Aminzadeh and Khansefid, 2010; Chiesura, 2004; Cranz and Boland, 2004). Each agenda has associated with it a common set of policy goals. Examples of neoliberal policy goals include the desire to increase economic efficiencies by having parks managed and maintained by private companies and the introduction of revenue-generating functions in order that parks become self-sustaining (de Magalhaes and Carmona, 2009). Sustainability-related policy goals include the construction and reform of parks in order to reduce auto transit, remediate polluted lands, and generate social interaction (Cranz and Boland, 2004).

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The agendas of sustainability and neoliberalism always require a process of translation into the local context (Beauregard, 2005). As such, each urban park will have its own particular objectives and purposes. Recent examples include the desire to create new parkland landscapes at Millennium Park, Chicago (see Gilfoyle, 2006), the need for park planning to respond to the cultural requirements of particular immigrant groups (Low et al., 2005), the desire to produce space-deemed safe for certain patrons (Madden, 2011), and attempts to produce green space within new modes of public space management (de Magalhaes and Carmona, 2009). Across these examples, varying degrees of neoliberal

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(e.g., privatization, economic productive, self-funding) and sustainability (e.g., low eco-logical impact, carbon neutral, low toxicity) policy goals can be identified, and in each case they are being shaped by the local context.

It must also be stressed that neoliberalism and sustainability are not equivalent sets of policy agendas, goals, and discourses. While both are ideological constructs, neoliberal-ism is used rarely in policy and planning arenas, while sustainability is a staple part of planning and management discourse (see Gunder and Hillier, 2009; Quastel et al., 2012). It has been within academic debate where policy goals and reforms such as economic self-sufficiency, public–private partnerships, and redevelopment corporations have been iden-tified as "neoliberal" (Peck and Tickell, 2002). This arrangement is somewhat reversed with regard to sustainability, where there has been a proliferation of planning and policy discourse around the term and commentators have struggled to understand the underlying rationale and objectives at work (see Gunder and Hillier, 2009).

Neoliberalism and sustainability are, therefore, understood here as organizing agendas as opposed to a set of specific urban design guidelines or governance arrangements. A neoliberal agenda is embedded in general understandings about the nature of urban governance, where inter-urban competition, public–private partnership, capital attraction, and capture and state investment are considered unavoidable realities (Harvey, 1989). In contrast, sustainability agendas are much more explicitly discussed and promoted in policy debates. However, the specific meaning of sustainability remains vague and malle-able (Davidson, 2010). Both have to be continually (re)worked into certain policy goals and discourses across various contexts.

Using the case study of Sydney's Olympic Park (SOP), this paper examines how these two policy agendas and associated goals have been coordinated by, and across, a series of functional and institutional changes. It is argued that these changes have, in large part, become necessary because of the attempt to pair policy goals that are, at times, deeply contradictory. Developed as part of the 2000 Summer Olympic Games, SOP became symbolized as the "first green games" (Lochhead, 2005), the Games' planning committee being credited with creating a sustainability exemplar. Alongside building sporting venues, Olympic-related development included the remediation of over 600 acres of polluted brownfields that stood in the center of metropolitan Sydney. The site, therefore, emerged from the 2000 Olympics as a story of success; a site that had successfully hosted that exemplar of neoliberal governance, the mega-event (Harvey, 1989), and brought about vast local environmental improvements. Here, urban entrepreneurialism was see-mingly united with sustainable development. In the post-games governance of the site, a series of functional and institutional changes have been undertaken that have attempted to maintain this perceived story of success.

The paper examines these changes in order to trace out how the pairing of neoliberal and sustainability policy agendas has evolved. In assessing the changes, the paper finds that those demands generated by a locally-contingent form of neoliberal governance have often overridden many of the policy objectives associated with sustainability. However, this conflict between agendas cannot be simply read as an inevitable neoliberalization, since sustainability remains a consistent concern and presumed competitive advantage for the park. The two agendas, therefore, continue to exist in an uneasy co-dependent relationship, with neoliberal goals always dominant and sustainability goals moving in and out of prominence according to context and circumstance. In conclusion, the paper

reflects on the significance of this relationship for understandings of park planning. While current understandings of park planning evolution (Cranz, 1982; Cranz and Boland, 2004) focus upon change being iteratively generated as planning agendas become incongruous with the social context, the experience at SOP reveals a quite different relationship, one where the incongruity of policy goals and planning agendas has not generated a require-ment for park planning changes.

THE EVOLUTION OF PARKS: THE SUSTAINABLE MODEL

As urban planning emerged across the industrialized world in the 19th century, the urban park quickly became an integral part of city life (Cranz, 1982). Parks were viewed by many 19th century planners as a necessary antidote to the corrosive effects of urbanism (Hall, 2002). This antidotal role led many radical commentators to identify urban parks as counter-revolutionary devices. Peter Kropotkin, (1901[2007]) questioned the very premise of the park, arguing that they amounted to little more than bourgeois tokenism (also see Thompson, 1993). Kropotkin saw parks as a consequence of the failure to imagine an alternative society whereby the premise of the park — a space of escape from the rigors of industrial labor — would be redundant (Kropotkin, 1901; similar concerns were articu-lated by Edward Bellemy [see Hall, 2002]). Such critique would later be echoed by Herbert Marcuse (1964 [2002]) who saw parks as representing a reality where crucial choices were concealed: "… when cities and highways and National Parks replace the villages, valleys, and forests; when motorboats race over the lakes and planes cut through the skies-then these areas lose their character as a qualitatively different reality, as areas of contradiction" (p. 69). The urban park was, for Marcuse, a habitat of one-dimensional man.

Many studies have documented the various ways in which this inherently political character of parks has been manifested. The first urban parks are viewed as patrician landscapes, meant to be enjoyed by the lower social classes as part of an effort instilled within them as a virtuous work ethic (Croll, 1999; Tate, 2004). Bowker, (1990) captures this intentionality when describing how the city fathers of England's 19th century indus-trializing north provisioned green space:

> Attempts were made to influence working-class behavior and thinking, partly by giving the park priority over the pitch. Sport, it seems, was not really accepted as a "national recreation". Territorial control, civic pride and promotion, the interest of local employers and the pursuit of economic benefit, social harmony and citizenship were inextricably linked in the minds of Councillors… (Bowker 1990, p. 93)

This is not to claim that parks in early industrial cities were simply imposed on working class populations. Many working class communities fought for common recreational spaces in rapidly growing 19th and early 20th century cities (Rosenzweig, 1979; Taylor, 1997; Thompson, 1993). Rather, recognizing early urban parks as patrician landscapes serves to remind us about the ways in which processes of social formation and control have been present since inception (Cranz, 1982; Tate, 2004).

In her exploration of the origin and evolution of United States parks, Galen Cranz, (1982) claims that up until the 1980s there had been four phases of park development. In

each phase — the "pleasure ground" (1850–1900), the "reform park" (1900–1930), the   130
"recreation facility" (1930–1965), and the "open space system" (1965–) — the planning
rationale of the park has been transformed. It is in Cranz's (1982) second phase — the
"reform period", 1900–1930—that the social instrumentality of the urban park is best
illustrated. Park development during this period becomes directly driven by political
elites. These elites include the American Civic Association (ACA), an organization   135
centrally involved in the formation of the National Park Service (NPS). According to
Young (1996), the ACA, also an advocate of the City Beautiful movement, aggressively
and successfully promoted the social virtues of urban parks: "The Association believed
that urban parks would create a reformed society that exhibited four 'virtues'. These came
in two pairs: the first two—'public health' and 'prosperity'—addressed material concerns,   140
whereas the latter two—'democratic equality' and 'social coherence'—addressed norma-
tive issues" (p. 463). For the ACA, the park served to extinguish the class tensions of the
industrial city. The ACA was so committed to using the park as a social policy instrument
that it did not discriminate between parks by scale. In lobbying for the formation of the
NPS, the ACA claimed that small urban parks and large regional parks performed the   145
same purpose: "All parks were analogous… The society that followed on the heels of a
national park system they believed would have characteristics of health, wealth, equality,
and patriotism" (ibid. p. 469).

   According to Cranz (1982), the reform park fell out of favor in the early 1930s. Cranz
claims that during the 1930s, parks became more closely associated with recreational   150
activities, particularly in the context of an explosion of suburban development that
required the construction of sports and recreational facilities. At the same time, compar-
able park design ideas were incorporated within Australian (Freestone and Nichols, 2004)
and British (Aldridge, 1979) welfare state-led suburban development. This period of park
planning continued until the mid-1960 when it was replaced by an open space agenda.   155
This agenda emerged in the United States in response to urban riots and political unrest.
Cranz (1982) identifies New York Mayor John Lindsay's policy papers on reinvigorating
parks as tools of social control and reform as particularly influential in shaping, thinking
around urban parks, during the period. In terms of park design, Lindsay's influence was
seen in a shift away from standardized park design and a move towards more located and   160
place-based approaches to park planning. By thinking about the relative location of parks
they could become "part of a network of disparate open spaces linked together, hence the
term *Open Space System*" (Cranz and Boland, 2004, p. 104).

   This evolution of park design (Cranz, 1982; Cranz and Boland, 2004; Young, 2004)
reflects the various ways urban parks have been incorporated into social policy thought,   165
their being used as a tool to condition urban society and suppress tensions. As Young
(2004) claims:

   Often treated as a dispensable urban amenity during the latter half of the twentieth
   century and into the twenty-first, parks played a pre-eminent role in the nineteenth-
   and early-twentieth-century debates about creating a better American society.   170
   Proponents and opponents argued vehemently during these decades over the roles
   of saloons, education, housing, race, immigration, class relations, and various
   institutions in the creation of social "harmony" and the "good life". Parks stood
   out as a battleground (p. xi)

As various social problems emerged during the 20th century, the park emerged across the 175
Global North as part of a host of social policy solutions. However, in recent years, this
close connection between urban parks and social policy has been disrupted.

Cranz and Boland (2004) have proposed a fifth park model: the sustainable park.
This park, they claim, represents a replacement of social policy motives with environ-
mental policy motives: "Historically, urban parks responded to social problems and 180
expressed various ideas about nature, but they showed little concern for actual ecolo-
gical fitness. Today, in contrast, ecological problems may be counted among our most
pressing social problems" (ibid. p. 102). With environmental crisis a dominant social
concern, we have, therefore, witnessed a diminishing emphasis on the social instrumen-
tality of the urban park. Ecological crisis demands a new park model "… that focuses on 185
solutions to ecological problems and expresses new ideas about nature can build upon
the traditional social genesis of urban parks" (ibid. p. 102). This remit has been
translated into a host of park design and governance changes that have centrally
promoted environmental outcomes in places as diverse as Iran (Aminzadeh and
Khansefid, 2010) and the United States (Gobster, 2007). In some cases, this has 190
meant directing of the park development onto brownfield sites in order to remediate
environmental damage (DeSousa, 2003). In other cases, it has involved the construction
and management of park space with the intention of providing wildlife habitats and
restoring carbon sinks (Grund et al., 2002). In mirroring changes in urban planning
more generally, sustainability has become an important goal of park planning (Chiesura, 195
2004; Gunder and Hillier, 2009).

THE NEOLIBERAL CONTEXT

This embrace of sustainability has taken place within a broader context of neoliberal
governance. In some sense this appears contradictory, since the past decade has seen an
extensive documenting of the negative impacts that neoliberal reforms have had upon the 200
environment (Peet et al., 2011). Furthermore, many now argue that we understand
"environment" and by extension "sustainability" in intrinsically neoliberal ways (see
McCarthy and Prudham, 2004). For example, Swyngedouw, (2007) has argued that the
dominant couching of environmental crisis by the hegemonic "liberal cosmopolitical
'inclusive' politics" (p. 31) sees that "the social and ecological problems caused by 205
modernity/capitalism are external side effects; they are not an inherent and integral part
of the relations of global neoliberal capitalism" (p. 31). The promotion of sustainability
policy objectives within neoliberal forms of governance are viewed as completely inef-
fective in terms of ensuring certain ecological futures.

This tension has often been interpreted using regulation theory. Regulation theorists 210
have argued that sustainability functions not as a transformative concept to address
environmental and social problems, but as a construct meant to restage and obfuscate
the environmentally destructive practices of capitalist development. For example, Bridge
and McManus (2000) have described how the forestry and mining sectors in Canada and
the United States used sustainability narratives in order that their industry's destructive 215
economic and environmental consequences were incorporated and legitimized into
accepted business practice (also see Gibbs, 1996). Whitehead (2003) has, likewise,
drawn on regulation theory to explain how the economic and environmental

contradictions of urban development in the United Kingdom have been re-presented via
sustainability discourses: "the creation of sustainable cities is not simply a technocratic   220
exercises in town planning and urban design, but is part of a wider set of socio-ecological
processes of regulation" (1202). The argument here is that while sustainable city projects
have impacted urban development processes, these impacts are ultimately shaped and
conditioned by the demands of "neo-liberal state ideology and interurban economic
competition" (ibid.). Consequently the policy-led change cannot be interpreted as altering   225
longstanding capitalist urban development practices.

   Others have sought to revise the explanations of regulation theorists. In his examina-
tion of the United Kingdom New Labour government's sustainability policy agenda, Raco
(2005) claims that neoliberal economic development and sustainable development agen-
das existed as "parallel discourses" as opposed to sustainability being subservient to   230
neoliberalism: "a number of *rationalities* are evident and [that] actually existing develop-
ment programmes contain within them a variety of competing and conflicting agendas"
(343; *emphasis in original*). Sustainability and neoliberal development agendas, therefore,
played out variously and contingently for Raco (2005), leading him to call for "*detailed
critical empirical research* that teases out the rationalities and philosophies of state   235
practices" (344; *emphasis in original*).

   Recent literature on park and public space reform supports Raco's (2005) call.
Accounts of neoliberal park and public space reform have demonstrated the various
ways in which entrepreneurialism, with its concomitant privatization, speculation and
commodification, have transformed urban space in a multitude of ways. In the United   240
Kingdom, de Magalhaes and Carmona (2009) have argued neoliberalism has "translated
into privatisation, the creation of agencies and the flowing of power to subsidiary bodies
within and outside the formal boundaries of the state" (p. 117). In terms of public space,
parks included, they specify that, "public space might now involve a plethora of privatised
public sector bodies, utility providers, area based urban regeneration organisations, local   245
authority departments, semi-public delivery agencies and so forth, all responsible for parts
of the space, or for different services, or different operations within the same service" (p.
117). So while a predictable set of reforms emerge from the neoliberal state, the particular
form and configuration which these take has varied across space and time.

   De Magalhaes and Carmona (2009) argue that in terms of the management and design   250
of public space, it will take some time "to understand the long-term consequences of
transferring the management of parts of town centres to market forces or of local green
spaces to fragile and occasionally insular community organisations" (p. 128). Nor is it
clear if these changes have enabled the environmental goals associated with recent park
planning to be achieved. In the following sections, a case study of SOP is used to examine   255
the question of how the neoliberal policy goals (e.g., economic self-sufficiency, efficient
governance, private-led development) of a large urban park have been combined with
environmental and, to a lesser extent, related social sustainability goals.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK: A CASE STUDY

   SOP is a mega-event space featuring many of the hallmarks of neoliberal urban   260
development (Harvey, 1989; Searle and Bounds, 1999; Searle, 2002). However, the
Sydney Olympics distinguished itself as the "first green games", the first Olympics to

have made environmental sustainability a central legacy outcome. As SOP has been
developed post-Olympics, the site has witnessed a commitment to both neoliberal devel-
opment (i.e., entrepreneurial state investment, declining state presence, capital attraction)   265
and sustainability (i.e., low carbon footprint, ecological restoration, community building).
However, the Park does not represent a simple intertwining of these two agendas. As a
state-led development, the Park has been continually subject to the machinations of
changing state governments and bureaucracies. Planning and management schemes have,
therefore, been caught up with local politics, confirming Corner's (2007, 12) claim that   270
"[L]arge parks will always exceed singular narratives". Understanding the "park" in SOP is
also complicated by the fact that the design and management of the parklands has been
closely tied to ongoing urban development located at SOP, the site being divided into two
discrete sections: (1) "Parklands" (i.e., green spaces) and (2) "Town Centre" (i.e., site for
urban development around the Olympic stadia; see Figure 1). SOP's Parklands are, there-   275
fore, not planned and managed in isolation. Changes within the park must be read along-
side changes in the site's Town Centre. In the following examinations of the functional and
institutional changes at SOP, the inter-relating agendas of sustainability and neoliberalism
are, therefore, read both in and through local politics *and* the interaction between the
Parklands and Town Centre.   280

The paper draws on research conducted at SOP between 2008 and 2011. During this
period, unprecedented access was granted to officers of Sydney Olympic Park Authority
(SOPA) and other site stakeholders.[2] Semi-structured interviews were conducted with
SOPA officers working in urban design, operations, public domain management, educa-
tion, culture and arts, economic development, transport planning, and marketing. A
selection of these officers were interviewed twice, the first during 2008–2009 and then   285
again during 2011. A further set of interviews were conducted during 2008–2009 with
representatives of large businesses operating within the park, including the manager of the
Acer Arena, Accor hotels, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, and a major property
developer. Where permission was granted, interviews were recorded and subsequently
transcribed. The research project also included a study of public space usage that is not   290
drawn upon within the current paper.

Functional Changes

The two functionally distinct spaces within SOP, the Parklands and Town Centre, have
their own legislative frameworks. The Parklands area is governed under a specific set of
government regulations (SOPA, 2003, 2010b) that are designed to manage green space.   295
The Town Centre legislation focuses on real estate development and event management.
Since its foundation in 2001, SOPA has discretely managed both districts and the two
spaces remain closely intertwined. In particular, it is the need to populate the Olympic
venues and intensify urban development to maximize rental incomes that have impacted
the operation and management of the Parklands.   300

The specific functions of the Parklands and their relationship to surrounding develop-
ment have been defined in two Plans of Management (PMP) (SOPA, 2003, 2010b). In
2001, immediately after the Olympics, SOPA was charged with conducting two major
planning initiatives in order to create visions for both the Parklands and Town Centre.
These two visions, the *Plan of Management for the Parklands at Sydney Olympic Park*   305
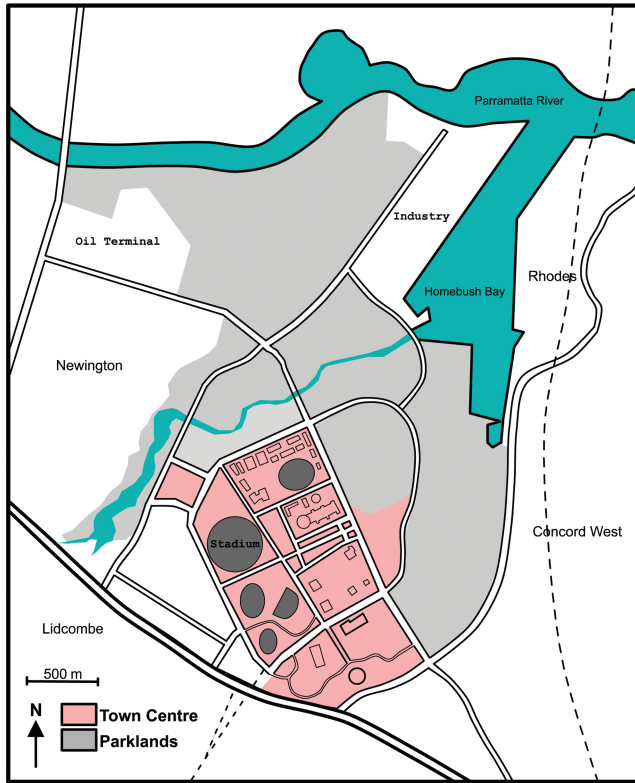
Fig. 1. Sydney Olympic Park Map.

(SOPA, 2003) and the *Vision 2025 Masterplan* (SOPA, 2004), were planned independently and were intended to provide legislation specifically for the demands of each site.

The 2003 PMP constructed a vision for the parklands within a set of heritage and nature discourses. A central theme of the document was that the Parklands should function around the concept of "spirit of place". This was defined as: 310

> … the sum of the various tangible and intangible layers of history that make the Parklands what they are today and what they will be tomorrow. This spirit includes the physical, intellectual, and intrinsic values, and the unique combination of these values in the Parklands (SOPA, 2003, p. 9).

The Parklands were to draw upon the layered history of the site to project a future   315
functionality. This is conceptualized within planning documents written by SOPA as a "landscape of hope", a space where past environmental and aboriginal histories could be embraced and future environments constructed. Planning was to respect and celebrate the environmental and cultural history of the site. The Olympic-funded remediation of this once industrial dumping ground was seen as a historical corrective. The PMP set out an   320

intent "to assist visitors to relate to the spirit of place through the Parkland Programs (such as environment, history, recreation and the arts), thus emphasising and enhancing the understanding of relationships between culture and nature" (p. 9). Protecting natural and cultural heritage, enhancing biodiversity, promoting ecologically sustainable development, and enriching life through education, recreation, and research all became goals for SOPA's management of the Parklands.

In practice, achieving these objectives has been wrapped up with the challenge of managing the post-industrial nature of the park. In the 2003 PMP, SOPA identified four major constraints on the functionality of the Parklands: the ongoing challenge of land remediation, the protection of threatened species (including turpentine woodland, salt marshes, and green and golden bell frogs), heritage protection of the now-redundant Royal Australian Navy Armory Depot, and the protection of flora and fauna in the Newington Nature Reserve. A great deal of concern in the early planning of the Parklands, therefore, involved dealing with the environmental constraints:

> The Plan of Management recognises that the majority of the physical landscape of the Parklands is not the result of natural, unplanned or incremental development. It is the deliberate result of remediating waste industrial land, acquiring Naval property of heritage significance and conserving disturbed remnant natural areas to create a series of different places consistent with the planned concept for the Parklands. The Plan also recognizes the Parklands are new and evolving and some future uses are yet to be imagined and some of the environmental complexity of the site is not yet fully understood (SOPA, 2003).

The innovative remediation techniques used to clean up the site-generated significant management demands and costs. In particular, these have been concerned with the leaching of toxins from contaminated soils. The 2003 PMP's embracing of the "spirit of place" was, therefore, accompanied by a host of environmental management tasks.

While the 2003 PMP generated a vision for the Parklands that was separate from the Town Center, development within the Town Center quickly acted to blur the distinction. The functions and brand identity of the Parklands has been extensively used to frame much of the Town Center's development. This has been most evident in ongoing attempts to have the Town Center become an exemplar of sustainable urban design. SOPA and real estate developers have drawn upon the Parklands reputation for environmental remediation for marketing purposes. In the Town Centre's *Master Plan 2030* (SOPA, 2010a) it states: "The Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games set a benchmark for innovative environmental design" (p. 34). The plan seeks to carry forward these benchmarks and aims at "ensuring the town is nationally and internationally recognised for excellence and innovation in urban design, building design and sustainability" (p. 34). The environmental remediation of the Parklands has, therefore, been used to promote real estate development within the Town Center, with corporate real estate developers such as General Property Trust (GPT) Limited having chosen to build flagship five-star green buildings within SOP.

Until 2010, the Parklands operated under a PMP that sought to protect the remediated environment, maintain green spaces in order to host activities including educational programs (e.g., schooling in cultural heritage and conservation), wildlife habitat

production and protection, leisure and exercise (e.g., cycle routes and walking paths),   365
bird watching, and arts events. The 2003 PMP was guided by heritage and nature
discourses that presented the Parklands as a space that provided a meeting and
educational resource which embraced sustainability and the protection of Australian
cultural heritage and biodiversity. In many ways, the Parklands continue to serve these
functions. However, in 2010, a new PMP was adopted that replaced much of this   370
framework.

The 2010 PMP states that its writing was necessitated by changing geographies
of economic development and population growth within the Sydney metropolitan region.
The updated plans removed the framing concepts of "spirit of place" and "landscape
of hope" and replaced them with a discourse centered on well-being and health. The   375
updated PMP again seeks to confirm and entrench the park's reputation as an international
exemplar of remediation and sustainability. However, it does so by developing a set
of permit-based tables that designate activities that are (1) allowed, (2) require a permit,
or (3) are non-permitted within various parkland districts. The discursive framing of
the 2003 PMP is replaced by a more utilitarian piece of legislation, a holistic planning   380
vision (i.e., framed around "spirit of place") replaced with a spatially-framed, permit-
based planning document. This, the 2010 PMP states, is required given the "changing
needs and expectations of the community". These changes include significant amounts of
real estate development within SOP's Town Center. Since 2001, the Town Center had
undergone intensive commercial development with investors such as Commonwealth   385
Bank, Novotel hotels, and GPT Management Limited building commercial operations
within the site.

Despite this recent growth, the Town Center continues to require further development
if the state government's entrepreneurial goal of having SOP be self-funding (or revenue
generating) is to be achieved. As a consequence, development now includes residential   390
towers on the edges of the Town Centre. The 2010 PMP, therefore, seeks to align the
Parklands future more closely with the development of the Town Centre. An emphasis on
health and well-being reflects the utilization of the park within worker and resident
"lifestyle" programs. This programming, developed by the SOP business association,
has sought to make SOP attractive to business park tenants, workers, and now residents,   395
through offering the Parklands as a health and recreational facility.

While new development within the Town Centre has brought new management
demands, it has been the introduction of a motor race into SOP that most explicitly
demanded a change in planning direction. In 2008, the then NSW State Premier, Nathan
Rees, passed legislation that installed a V8 Supercar race in SOP. To be conducted around   400
the Town Centre and along the boundary of the Parklands, the race has functionally and
symbolically transformed many parts of SOP. The race's presence has not aligned with the
conservation and heritage discourse of the 2003 PMP. Indeed, many of the complaints
voiced about the race have claimed its introduction completely contradicting the Park's
reputation for environmental improvement and conservation.   405

Installing the annual V8 Supercar race (the Telstra 500) has both transformed the
park's functions and institutions (see below). Most controversially, in order to con-
struct the race track, — which is installed and uninstalled each year — over 400
mature trees have been removed from the park. This number continues to rise year by
year as the race venue is progressively developed. Such changes have attracted a great   410

deal of criticism. As the NSW parliament passed the *Homebush Motor Racing (Sydney 400) Bill* in December 2008, NSW legislator Gordon Moyes complained "it took a lot of time and tax dollars, very careful design for the creation of a green and sustainable site" and that:

> The removal of hundreds of beloved and beautiful trees, landmarks to the local   415
> residents, is a terrible thing – every healthy mature tree in the urban environ-
> ment is working hard to filter our pollution-filled city air of car exhaust and
> industrial fumes, making the air breathable, and making the city livable
> (December 2008).

Other opponents voiced concern that the creation of a race track would threaten bird   420
species protected in international agreements, that access to the parklands would be
severely restricted by the event, that developments designed to be international exemplars
of sustainable building would be undermined, and that the government was unlikely to see
AQ1   a return on its $35m support of the race (NSW Auditor-General, 2010).
Those functions designated for the Parklands immediately after the Olympics have,   425
therefore, come under increasing pressure over the past decade. The growing size of the
Town Centre and the installation of a motor race have created new demands that
necessitated a new PMP. And while many of the functions (e.g., educational programs
in environment and culture) and protections (e.g., habitat preservation) of the Parklands
have remained, the park's entrepreneurial remit and changing state politics have generated   430
much change. This has particularly been the case at the interface of the Town Centre and
Parklands. Changes are reflected in a new management framework that is much more
aligned with the Town Centre's developmental objectives than the previous PMP. So,
while the Parklands continue to be framed using a discourse of sustainability and
celebrated as an exercise in remediation and habitat reconstruction, entrepreneurial activ-   435
ities within the Town Centre have both incorporated sustainability rhetoric and, conver-
sely, undermined past environmental achievements by installing more events within SOP.
The desire to establish an exemplary sustainable park has, therefore, progressively given
way to the neoliberal priorities of the state government that center on generating revenue-
raising urban development.   440

Institutional Changes

Functional changes within SOP are closely related to institutional changes. Since the
Olympics SOP has been administered by the NSW State Government and, as such, has
been shaped by changing political tides. The centralized powers of the NSW Planning
Minister[3] that have meant changes to the role and responsibility of SOPA have been   445
easily achieved. So, while being an urban development corporation affords SOPA
significant autonomy from the messy rigors of local democracy, its constituent bureau-
crats have to deal with the changing dictates that filter directly from state government
leadership. As the NSW State Government has struggled to balance budgets over the past
decade, it has looked to assets like SOP to provide greater returns. At SOP, the lever   450
primarily used by the state government to extract these returns has been institutional
reform.

SOPA was founded after the Olympics as an urban development corporation responsible for transitioning SOP into a functioning part of the metropolitan region (NSW 2001). The *Sydney Olympic Park Authority Act 2001* set out the authority's five main functions: 455

    (a) to promote, co-ordinate and manage the orderly and economic development and use of Sydney Olympic Park, including the provision and management of infrastructure,

    (b) to promote, co-ordinate, organise, manage, undertake, secure, provide and conduct cultural, sporting, educational, commercial, residential, tourist, recreational, entertainment and transport activities and facilities (including the Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre), 460

    (c) to protect and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of Sydney Olympic Park, particularly the Millennium Parklands,

    (d) to provide, operate and maintain public transport facilities within Sydney Olympic Park, 465

    (e) to liaise with and maintain arrangements with Olympic organisations, such as the International Olympic Committee and the Australian Olympic Committee Incorporated

With crown authority, SOPA has stood outside of local government processes, the 470 intention being to focus on generating investment returns. Since its founding, SOPA has developed a series of planning documents to direct development. Reflecting the continued entrepreneurial intent of the Games, these successive plans have slowly increased allowed floor space ratios within the park as the state has sought to maximize returns from real estate development. SOPA has, therefore, had two remits: develop the Town Centre and 475 protect the Parklands' environmental legacy. As these two goals have been concurrently pursued, the state government has changed leadership within SOPA and revised its institutional responsibilities to achieve entrepreneurial ends. It is the latter of these two revisions that the following section of the paper is concerned with.

Over the past decade, two major institutional changes have taken place within SOP. 480 First, in 2006 the State Government established the Parklands Foundation as a body that was to be responsible for managing parts of the Parklands and generating new philanthropic funding streams. Second, in 2008 the State Government created the Homebush Motor Racing Authority (HMRA). This body has managed SOP for extended periods, replacing SOPA as the managing authority during race-related activities. 485

The Parklands Foundation (2006–2008)

The Parklands Foundation was established in 2006 as a subsidiary corporation by SOPA under Section 58 of the *Sydney Olympic Park Authority Act* (2001) and disbanded in 2008. The act allows for a private (subsidiary) corporation to be formed where "the Authority has a controlling interest". The Parklands Foundation was, therefore, a govern- 490 mental instrument accountable to the NSW Minster of Planning via SOPA. The Foundation took responsibility for a number of SOPA's operational (e.g., GIS mapping

services) and revenue-raising functions. It was the latter function that was to be the focus of the Foundation's activities.

As a model from which to develop the Parklands Foundation, SOPA looked towards a host of famous 19th century urban parks: "The Parklands Foundation model has been inspired by some of the world's great parks, including Golden Gate National Park, San Francisco, Central Park, New York and Royal Parks, London" (Parklands Foundation, 2008, p. 3). The principle intent of adopting these models was to develop a quasi-independent management body that would raise funds to subsidize the public costs associated with running the Parklands. For example, in New York, Central Park is managed by Central Park Conservancy (CPC) under a contract for the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. CPC was founded in 1980 and is funded by donations from individuals, corporations, foundations, and public bodies. From these funds, the CPC covers 85% of the park's $US27m annual budget. The Royal Parks, London, is an executive agency of the national government's Department for Culture, Media and Sport. In May 2003, The Royal Parks Foundation was founded as a registered charity to help finance the annual £30m cost of maintaining the parklands.

The Parklands Foundation did not achieve the level of independence that these other bodies enjoy. While the Foundation was not technically part of the government, it was still the State Government who owned the land it was responsible for. Activities undertaken by the Foundation needed approval from SOPA. Furthermore, a third body was set up, the Parklands Advisory Committee, which reported to SOPA and gave guidance regarding the direction of the Parklands. It determined whether activities proposed by the Foundation should proceed. The Foundation also had its own Board of Directors, though there is cross-pollination across the three bodies. One representative from SOPA sat on the Board of the Foundation, and one representative from the Foundation sat on the Advisory Committee. Thus, although there was an attempt to separate the different bodies, they remained intertwined.

The Foundation's activities focused upon developing a set of user programs for the park and raising funds. It stated its mission as: "The Foundation was established to help add value to the future of Sydney Olympic Park by helping to attract community support through a number of opportunities, including tax-deductible donations from individuals and companies" (Parklands Foundation, 2008, p. 3). Reducing the public liability of managing the Parklands was therefore the Foundation's focus. By specifically identifying the benefits generated by enabling tax-deductible donations, the Foundation engaged in a competition between state and national government for taxation dollars. While Searle and Bounds (1999) have noted the utilization of state power and state land have been the principle means for NSW governments to be entrepreneurial, here the state government acted to capture revenue from personal and corporate taxes that would otherwise be received by the national government.

In order to generate personal and corporate donations, the Foundation focused on the sustainability branding of SOP. It identified the "green" reputation of the parklands as a potential asset for corporate donors:

> More companies are committing to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a way to drive greater staff, stakeholder and community engagement. One recent study showed that consumers purchasing decisions in the marketplace are more likely to

be influenced if a company has a legitimate association with a cause (Parklands Foundation 2008, p. 4).

The Parklands symbolic value was to be offered to corporations eager to associate themselves with environmental good:

> Linking your brand with the Parklands Foundation at Sydney Olympic Park is a powerful way to improve your brand image and position in the market. An association can empower and improve staff retention and help Companies build (cement) strong relationships with their customers and key stakeholders (ibid. p. 4).

The Foundation promoted the associational benefit to potential donors by stating: "92% of Australians believe that a great brand comes from a company with values and ethics" (ibid. p. 9).

The short-lived Foundation represents a complex interplay between sustainability and neoliberalism. Sustainability was perceived as an asset to be sold by the State Government via the Foundation. Through establishing the Foundation and offering corporate interests, the ability to support the Park in a tax efficient manner, the state saw an opportunity to reduce the costs associated with managing the Parklands. However, the marketable image of the Parklands was to become quickly undermined in 2008 when the state government pursued another speculative investment: the V8 Supercar race. With few donors and a growing controversy about the environmental damage brought on by the motor race, the Foundation was folded in late 2008.

Homebush Motor Racing Authority (2008–)

In mid-2008, the NSW State Government announced its support for holding a sports car race at SOP. The race organizers, V8 Supercars Australia, had been petitioning the state government in previous years for permission to hold a race within SOP, since its pre-existing race venue, Oran Park, was being sold for suburban real estate development. Up until 2008, the state government had rejected all proposals, since the prospective financial returns were inadequate to justify any state expenditure. Under newly-installed State Premier, Nathan Rees, this position changed. In December 2008, and despite widespread opposition, the *Homebush Motor Racing (Sydney 400) Bill* was passed. The state's five-year support of the Supercar race represented a significant shift in the park's development trajectory. In the previous five years, SOPA had developed a number of master planning documents for the Town Centre (SOPA, 2003, 2004, 2010a) and Parklands (2003, 2010b) that had carefully mapped out a post-event future for both spaces. Town Centre planning looked to blend existing event spaces with commercial and residential development, using the Parklands as an asset for prospective developers.

The *Homebush Motor Racing (Sydney 400) Bill* introduced a new governance institution to the park: the Homebush Motor Racing Authority (HMRA). The HMRA was created to oversee "… functions relating to the preparation for, and the management and conduct of and the works associated with, a Homebush motor race" (NSW, 2008, p. 4) for "the period during which a Homebush motor race may be conducted" (ibid. p. 6). During this period SOPA was to cede control of the park according to the HMRA's requirements: "The race

promoter is (…) responsible for the care, control, management and use of land within the declared racing area during the Homebush motor racing period and the rights or obligations of any other person in or in relation to the care, control, management and use of the land are suspended for the Homebush motor racing period" (ibid. pp. 10–11).

The HMRA is charged with ensuring the race promoter reinstalling the previous state of the park "within a reasonable time after the Homebush motor racing period" (ibid. p. 12). However, the legislation limits this reinstatement requirement to "so far as is practicable" (ibid. p. 12). These lax requires have caused significant concern for park users and surrounding councils, since the HMRA Bill (NSW 2008) also removed requirements for the authority to adhere to the National Parks and Wildlife Act and sections of the 1979 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. The HMRA and race promoter had been given almost complete executive power over the park, being freed from lines of political and environmental accountability. Oversight of the HMRA was to come from an Advisory board whose principle function was "to provide advice to the [HMRA] Chief Executive Officer" (ibid. p. 3). The Advisory Board consists of the CEO and four other members appointed by the NSW Planning Minister (now the NSW Minister for State and Regional Development). For a period of approximately three months each year, the HMRA replaced SOPA and its concomitant legislative frameworks.

These changes in the institutional structure at SOP, and related functional changes, have, for many, undermined the park's reputation as a sustainability exemplar. The HMRA has attempted to resolve this. After the inaugural Supercar race in December 2009, the HMRA coordinated planting of 445 new trees around the Parklands in order to mediate the earlier removal. In addition, the HMRA commissioned environmental impact reports on the protected frog and flying fox species living in SOP. Both reports concluded that no immediate damage had been inflicted on the protected populations, although both reports warned of the requirement to increase maintenance to ensure impacts to remain at low levels. Despite these moves, stakeholders and users of SOP remain unconvinced that the park's sustainability legacy remained intact. Real estate developers who had chosen to construct "green" projects within the park because of its reputation for sustainability commented the race's presence was wholly contradictory. They were frustrated that the longstanding entrepreneurial agenda of the park — to become attractive for real estate investment because of its sustainability record — had become discredited.

Since 2008, SOP has, therefore, become managed by two distinct institutions. On one hand, SOPA continues in its attempt to build upon the environmental remediation of the Olympics alongside an intensive development agenda within the Town Centre. On the other hand, the HMRA manages SOP for three months per year with a managerial remit that is largely absent of any objective other than to make the space function as a motor race venue.

AQ3   An Auditor-General's Report published in June 2010 (NSW Auditor-General, 2010) assessed the entrepreneurial performance of the V8 Supercar event. The primary concern of the report was whether or not the $35m state investment in the event had been justified. The audit conclusions are damning. The Audit claims that the government sought and received inadequate advice when approving the event, that it underestimated costs and over-estimated returns, and that it handled negotiations with the race promoters poorly. The latter complaint related to the government's lack of an adequate business plan and conflicts of interest between the State Premier and race organizers. The NSW government

has disputed the accounting standards used by the Audit-General and associated a lack of   625
investment return with economic downturn.

CONCLUSIONS

Functional and institutional changes at SOP demonstrate the difficulties faced when
balancing sustainability objectives alongside neoliberal urban governance. SOP became a
site celebrated for its environmental achievements, a remediation exemplar that replaced   630
highly contaminated brownfields with protected flora and fauna habitat. In many ways,
SOP is representative of the sustainable park epoch that Cranz and Boland (2004)
describe. However, at SOP, this model has over time been complicated as the NSW
State Government has sought to seize on achievements associated with sustainability
goals to accelerate revenue-raising urban development. In doing so, it has attempted to   635
pair sustainable development with urban development and governance practices that are
distinctively neoliberal (Harvey, 1989; Peck and Tickell, 2002). It has not been the case
that a neoliberal agenda has simply overridden a sustainability agenda or that a sustain-
ability agenda has served to simply legitimize a neoliberal development project. Rather,
the archetypal neoliberal development at SOP has, at times, enhanced, co-opted *and*   640
become antagonistic with a sustainability agenda. The perceived competitive advantage
of the 2000 games "green legacy" has, therefore, provided opportunities and restrictions
for neoliberal actors within the park in the post-games era.

The difficult relationship between intensive urban development and parkland protec-
tion and enhancement at SOP has evolved through a series of unfolding functional and   645
institutional changes that are deeply embedded within Sydney's metropolitan politics.
Functional changes within the Parklands (SOPA, 2010b) emerged from a state-led push to
intensify development and increase event-based revenues. While these changes are con-
nected to certain political interests, they are congruous with widespread neoliberal gov-
ernance practices in terms of them being justified via a rational of return on investment   650
and efficient government. This explanation can also be applied to related institutional
changes. SOPA was established as an urban development corporation to attract and direct
intensive private sector development. Yet, it has always been the intent of the state
government to shrink and eventually replace SOPA as part of its broader objective to
progressively reduce expenditures and raise revenues.   655

An examination of the co-existence of sustainability and neoliberal planning agendas at
SOP reveals a squeezing *and* celebration of sustainability programs and objectives within
a consistent entrepreneurial push (i.e., investment and rental returns). Yet, despite inter-
ventions that undermine the "sustainable park" model at SOP, it is striking that these two
stated agendas remain intertwined and co-existent. As a legitimizing device, sustainability   660
policies have proven ineffective since most actors, such as planners, developers, tenants,
and surrounding residents recognize that the state government has acted to reduce and/or
remove those commitments related to sustainability. But, at the same time, many of the
same actors are using sustainability claims associated with the park to forward their own
projects, for example, in the production of new public space designs by SOPA and the sale   665
of green certified buildings by developers.

To some degree, this situation can be explained by the fact that some areas of the
Parklands have been relatively untouched by the functional and institutional changes

described (e.g., nature walks and educational programs). However, if we are concerned with models of park design and management, this continued framing around sustainability requires more consideration. Many influential accounts of the historical development of parks (e.g., Cranz and Boland, 2004; Rosenzweig, 1992) discuss how models of park development have been constantly contested and consequently evolved over time. Contestations over the objectives of parks and the role of parks have often been described as important stakes in city politics. For example, Rosenzweig (1992, p. 7) argues of New York's Central Park: "Between the mid-nineteenth century and the present, New Yorkers continually debated the political status of Central Park as public property and its cultural value and use as an open public space". This type of contestation is not prevalent at SOP. Instead, we have witnessed state agencies contradicting their own planning objectives and actors within the park continuing their operations with varied responsiveness and, at times, pure disregard to such contradictory changes. Protests from non-state actors about this situation have been muted. The evolution and operation of a sustainable park model at SOP has, therefore, not relied on contestation and various resolutions.

Those examining the relationship between sustainability and neoliberalism have often concluded that the (potentially) radical requirements of sustainability (e.g., drastically reduced greenhouse gas emission and related reductions in economic growth and consumption) inevitably get removed from the world of policy making (Swyngedouw, 2007). Yet, what the case of SOP demonstrates is an ability to maintain a sustainability agenda, goals and associated policy programs when past environmental achievements are being threatened by new development, when protective legislation and institutions are being removed, and when many actors recognize outright the state government's disregard to substantive sustainability programs. We must necessarily recognize that the relations between neoliberalism and sustainability are always being worked out in particular spaces and times, through a wide range of sectoral and institutional processes (Beauregard, 2005; Colasanti et al., 2012; Edelson, 2011; Joassart-Marcelli et al., 2011; Raco, 2005). Yet, the case of SOP shows we must also think critically about the philosophical assumptions that underlie our expectations about how different planning agendas relate in practice. At SOP we have not witnessed significant conflicts over the antagonistic elements of sustainability and neoliberal agendas, but a deeply connected dialog that has contained within it contradictions without open conflict and proclamations without explicit commitments. If SOP is representative of general trends in planning, our established understandings about the generation (Rosenzweig, 1992) and iterative evolution (Cranz and Boland, 2004) of park models, therefore, urgently require critical reconsideration. The ways evolving planning agendas response to social tensions and antagonisms to direct park planning and governance might not be operating as previously presumed.

NOTES

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[3]Up until 2011, the NSW Planning Minister had extensive powers to directly oversee development   715
of "state significance" under Part 3A of Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

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