

# The landscape-based approach: a future for sustainable urban heritage management?

**Citation for published version (APA):**

Veldpaus, L., & Pereira Roders, A. R. (2015). The landscape-based approach: a future for sustainable urban heritage management? In *Culture(s) in Sustainable Futures : theories, policies, practices : international conference, 6-8 May 2015, Helsinki, Finland* (SoPhi). University of Jyväskylä.

**Document status and date:**

Published: 01/01/2015

**Document Version:**

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of Record (includes final page, issue and volume numbers)

**Please check the document version of this publication:**

- A submitted manuscript is the version of the article upon submission and before peer-review. There can be important differences between the submitted version and the official published version of record. People interested in the research are advised to contact the author for the final version of the publication, or visit the DOI to the publisher's website.
- The final author version and the galley proof are versions of the publication after peer review.
- The final published version features the final layout of the paper including the volume, issue and page numbers.

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## **The landscape-based approach: a future for sustainable urban heritage management?**

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"As the future of humanity hinges on the effective planning and management of resources, conservation has become a strategy to achieve a balance between urban growth and quality of life on a sustainable basis." At least, that is what was agreed in the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape. The main aim is to enhance the quality of the cultural landscape – human environment – while acknowledging its dynamic nature and need for change to allow communities to (continue to) prosper. This landscape concept is inclusive, as it encompasses cultural, social, economic, and environmental factors, in space and time. Subsequently, a landscape-based approach is considered both holistic- and development- minded. It is not about allowing (or not) transformation in itself, but about guiding the nature of the transformation. It addresses the future quality of the (urban) landscape and the relationships forming it. It positions urban resources, including heritage, as active change agents. The discourse on (cultural) landscapes became central to urban heritage management over the past decades, driven by sustainable development and cultural diversity. This paper presents a short review of this discourse on the landscape-in relation to heritage in theory, and reflections in supranational (heritage) policy. Next, it will present a SWOT analysis on the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape in relation to this. Finally a research agenda will be suggested to raise further understanding for the future of the landscape-based approach as a strategy to balance urban growth and quality of life on a sustainable basis.

*Keywords: heritage management, historic urban landscape, heritage policy*