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Re-using ‘uncomfortable heritage’: The case of the 1933 Building, Shanghai

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This paper opens up a discussion over the processes of forgetting and remembering that occur in the adaptive reuse of quite commonplace buildings that, nevertheless, have been classified as ‘heritage’. For most buildings survival depends upon finding a new economic use once original use has ceased. At this point decisions are also made about what stories are carried forward from the building’s past. The principal case study discussed in this paper is the former Shanghai Municipal Abattoir, a modernist concrete sculpture now branded 1933 Shanghai. The paper delineates how a process of ‘strategic forgetting and selective remembrance’ has been undertaken, negotiating the bloody nature of the building’s past, in its reuse as an upscale commercial venue. Reuse is further considered within the wider frames of a 1920-1930s Shanghai urban branding ‘imaginary’ and as a ‘building of control and reform’ – a category of buildings developed from the eighteenth-century European Enlightenment-thinking. In reflecting upon this negotiation in the heritage making process with potentially difficult past events, we propose the category of ‘uncomfortable heritage’, as part of a wider spectrum of ‘dark heritage’, and conclude with a final reflection upon 1933 Shanghai as a heterotopic space.

Keywords: dark heritage; adaptive reuse; strategic forgetting and selective remembrance; buildings of control and reform; slaughterhouse, heterotopia

Introduction

This paper opens up a discussion about a surprisingly little explored field in heritage debates; over the processes of forgetting and remembering that occur in the adaptive reuse of quite commonplace buildings that, nevertheless, have been classified as ‘heritage’. In so doing we aim to link the often disconnected fields of heritage enquiry of architectural conservation (with a focus on materiality) and heritage studies (with a focus upon meaning). More broadly, we seek to argue for the importance of the quotidian in wider debates in the social sciences about forgetting and remembering (De Certeau 1984).

For most buildings continuing survival depends upon finding a new economic use once their original use has ceased; few buildings that are functionally redundant continue to stand as memorials of their former use. Furthermore, it is often redundancy at the level of individual buildings or across a building type that foregrounds the heritage-making and protection process, as the sense of a building belonging to the past develops. However, it is also at this point that there is necessarily a negotiation with former use and decisions made about which stories will be carried forward from the building's past. For many buildings this past will involve activities or associations that are unsavoury in some way and decisions will be made about what to remember and what to forget. In thinking about how the history of former uses is accommodated in the reuse process we build upon and extend the work of Joseph, Kearns and Moon (Kearns, Joseph, and Moon 2010; Joseph, Kearns, and Moon 2013; Moon, Kearns, and Joseph 2015), utilising their concept of 'strategic forgetting and selective remembrance'.

The principal case study considered is the former Shanghai Municipal Abattoir, now branded 1933 Shanghai or simply 1933. This modernist concrete sculpture, built for the business of slaughter, is now an upscale commercial venue and the bloody nature of the building's heritage has been carefully negotiated through the architectural and aesthetic strategies deployed in the reuse of the building and in its subsequent presentation and marketing. The reuse of 1933 Shanghai is contextualised in relation to local urban branding where an 'imaginary' pertaining to 1920-1930s Shanghai has been prevalent. More broadly, we position 1933 Shanghai as an example of a 'building of control and reform'; a category of new building types constructed from the eighteenth century on the basis of European post-Enlightenment thinking, but now increasingly redundant. The reuse of this group of buildings is particularly interesting as they generated new typologies of architectural form specific to their use; for example for

prisons, asylums, schools, hospitals and abattoirs. Redundancy and reuse for other purposes therefore demands not only a change of narrative, or rebranding, but a very particular negotiation with their architectural built form.

In reflecting upon this negotiation with potentially difficult past events in the heritage making process and building reuse, we propose our own category ‘uncomfortable heritage’ (as part of a spectrum of ‘dark heritage’) to conceptualise the problem of reuse, remembering and forgetting. Recent decades have seen the development of a substantial literature exploring the darker side of heritage (Uzzell 1989a, 1989b; Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996; Logan and Reeves 2009; Macdonald 2009; Huang 2017). Our focus, however, is upon a heritage that is more quotidian or every-day than is often covered in these works and where the uncomfortable is made manifest by the process of reuse. To problematise the reuse of uncomfortable heritage, we first introduce the concepts of ‘strategic forgetting and selective remembrance’ and ‘buildings of control and reform’ in the next section.

Re-using buildings of control and reform: strategic forgetting and selective remembrance

There often develops a pressure for selected examples of building types that become functionally redundant to be awarded heritage status. This process of constructing such buildings as ‘heritage’ creates a situation whereby there is simultaneously a policy emphasis on building retention and an economic imperative to find a new economic use, as it is usually unlikely that the original use is considered important enough to be memorialised through the building becoming a museum to its own history. The act of reusing buildings generally involves a process of negotiating the history of the building and foregrounding, suppressing or simply ignoring its history of use. For the purposes of this paper we have focused on a particular grouping of building types, which we have

labelled 'buildings of control and reform'. These are buildings associated with Enlightenment-thinking, which generated new ways of managing social issues that were ostensibly more humane and were certainly more controlling (Markus 1982). These are a particularly interesting group of buildings to consider as they generated new typologies of architectural form specific to their function. Redundancy and reuse for other purposes therefore demands a very particular negotiation with their architectural built form.

Jeremy Bentham is a pivotal figure in these emergent building types with, on the one hand, his humanitarian concerns and, on the other, his concept of the Panopticon and ideas of surveillance and power, most famously discussed by Foucault (1977). Thus from the eighteenth century we see new and evolving building typologies for the incarceration of criminals (prisons), housing the mentally ill (asylums) and for slaughtering animals (abattoirs). Each in requiring new ways of ordering activities, generates new and very specific ways of ordering and organising the lives and social action of humans and animals. To this list we could add schools, hospitals and workhouses as all being building types in which subjects with little or no power were classified and subject to regimes of disciplined control (Markus 1993; Weiner 1994). In studying such buildings the focus has often been upon their internal planning. Whilst building plans dictate elements of elevational expression they do not, however, constrain the choice of architectural vocabulary used such as classicism, gothic and so on. The outward architectural expression of these buildings was typically less experimental and connected to a wider architectural vocabulary, placing these new building types in familial relationship with longer established architectural forms. Sometimes elevational treatment was redolent of a fairly self-evident symbolism; thus prisons were often castellated and castle like, albeit as part of a strategy of containment

rather than in an effort to repel intruders. Conversely, asylums, whilst related to prisons in their planning, often assumed the architectural vocabulary of the country house, a more genteel and domestic appearance. Abattoirs were often concealed behind a classical façade, giving dignity to the business of death¹.

Reusing buildings for new uses typically involves creating a new narrative as part of a process of place-marketing (see for example Mengüşoğlu and Boyacıoğlu 2013). If a new use is generated through, for example, speculative commercial development, marketing material will be produced that tells a story about the past but also about the future. A process of decision-making will be undertaken over the presentation of the building involving decisions over how much of the previous functions and uses of the building are manifest in its new incarnation. Typically, in

¹ We appreciate this is a truncated discussion of an extensive subject that has been subject of much scholarly endeavour with a vast attendant literature on the Enlightenment and the social practices and architecture that the period produced. The key work we have drawn from in terms of our short discussion of the architecture of control and reform is Markus (1993). Markus, as part of a wider exploration of power in architectural production, focuses on the period of the Enlightenment and the first Industrial Revolution, which generated many new building types. One building group he focuses upon is those constructed to accommodate, classify and subject to disciplined control people with little power, as part of the formation or reformation of their character. This includes schools, prisons, hospitals and asylums and institutions for forced labour such as workhouses. However, each building type has its own extensive literature. For example, for psychiatric institutions significant works include Philo (1988), Taylor (1991), Stevenson (2000), Topp *et al.* (2007) and Yanni (2007). For abattoirs, significant works include Lee (2008), Giedion (1948) and Braham *et al.* (2007).

creating a new use for a building with an unsavoury past, there will be a process through which the building's representation and meaning changes.

There is a significant literature about remaking meanings in the reuse of psychiatric asylums (Lowin, Knapp, and Beecham 1998; Franklin 2002a, 2002b; Weiner 2004), with the work of Joseph, Kearns and Moon of particular note (Kearns, Joseph, and Moon 2010; Joseph, Kearns, and Moon 2013; Moon, Kearns, and Joseph 2015). Through case studies in New Zealand, the UK and Canada they document the widespread redundancy in the use of asylums, largely originating from the nineteenth century through to a period of mass decommissioning in the 1980s and 1990s. Often attractive locales for development, containing large buildings in extensive grounds at the periphery or in the suburbs of urban areas, they may have considerable appeal to development interests, especially for residential use. However, developers generally consider that the original function of the site carries a stigma, harmful for resale. Therefore, developers may seek to suppress and minimise evidence of the former asylum use, even if due to heritage protection substantial material remnants are required to remain. Typical strategies involve site renaming and the positioning of recycled buildings as being of architectural distinction, with any reference to former use avoided or minimised. Joseph, Kearns and Moon define this as a process of 'strategic forgetting'. However, at the same time, as these authors note, there can be local pressures to remember and memorialise the history of sites. The broad term they deploy for this process is remembrance, which 'can be triggered by memorialisation or may simply comprise of narratives of past use' (Joseph, Kearns, and Moon 2013, 138). How these forces combine and come to ground varies from place to place and the contingencies and dynamics of individual cases.

The combination of 'strategic forgetting and selective remembrance' has wider resonances and is a useful framing for the reuse of heritage more broadly, especially heritage with a difficult past. For example, in another example of asylum redundancy, Weiner (2004) describes the reuse of the Middlesex County Pauper Lunatic Asylum (later known as Colney Hatch) in north London as luxury housing, rebranded as Princess Park Manor. Here any reference to the former use of the site was more or less completely effaced in marketing material or on the ground; as Weiner bitterly concludes,

It is the developers, masquerading as preservationists, borrowing the language of architectural history who are transforming the past and robbing people of their history. (Weiner 2004, 204).

Similarly, Hillier and Richardson (2013) discuss the process of strategic forgetting and (very) selective remembrance of former uses in the regeneration of Newmarket, Melbourne, Australia. Abattoir buildings were demolished and administrative buildings retained in a landscape of historic cobbles aimed at creating a generic historic ambience. Often regarded as a model regeneration project, place has been re-branded and fabric retained only when it can be assimilated in a sanitised and aestheticised representation of past activities:

Through careful presentation, place marketers are able to gloss negative historical associations (the abattoirs) under powerful stories about heroic stories of community, male camaraderie, hard work and enterprise as represented by the conservation of the auction yards and administration buildings. (Hillier and Richardson 2013, 251-2).

However, whilst the dissonances created in the push for a new narrative of place are usually repressed, this is not always the case. For example, there are a number of instances of the reuse of prisons as upmarket hotels in cities as diverse as Boston,

Oxford and Istanbul, where the former use is highlighted to add an edgy element to the experience of a short-term hotel stay. Material comforts are not comprised, but a frisson added, through the use of prison vocabulary (in the former Boston Charles Street Jail, now the Liberty Hotel, the bar is called ‘Clink’) or through the use of a ‘prison aesthetic’ (for example by using an aesthetic strategy of exposed brick or whitewash) (Stickl 2013). Kezer (2004) documents this process in the case of the transformation of the Sultanahmet prison in Istanbul to the supremely upscale Four Seasons hotel, achieved with surprisingly little alteration to the building plan. Initially the hotel management de-emphasised the prison use before realising it could be packaged and sold. For example, etchings made by former inmates on the marble columns in the hotel lobby are now highlighted and have become part of the commodified hotel experience.

Conceptualising the materiality of reuse

In reuse projects relationships with past use are negotiated partly through the narratives created in marketing material and partly in the detailed material decisions taken over which fabric is kept and which removed and in the aesthetic strategies deployed. The focus in this section is upon physical change in building reuse. Detailed readings of physical change are scarce and the materiality of how buildings are reused to create a new sense of place deserves closer analysis.

The springing point for normalised principles of good practice in architectural conservation and the reuse of buildings, originating in the UK but with a pivotal influence on international practice, is the moralistic construction of heritage posited by Ruskin and his emphasis upon truth to material fabric. This approach, ‘modern conservation’, became international orthodoxy in the twentieth century with a culmination in the 1964 ICOMOS-foundational Venice Charter. The Charter, which takes the form of didactic instruction, emphasised material authenticity, forbade

conjectural restoration and stressed that valid contributions from all periods of building should be respected. Thus orthodox practice emphasises daily care, minimum intervention, distinguishing new work from old and the reversibility of interventions. The last half century or more has generated architectural theorising about this relationship between old and new. Carlo Scapa's work is one famous example of uncompromising modernist intervention that sought dialogue with the historic buildings and fragments he worked with. Working with historic fabric has been seen as a stimulus for creative contemporary design, in dynamic relation to older fabric, and various texts have highlighted the architectural possibilities of adaptive reuse (Cantacuzino 1975; Powell 1999; Latham 2000; Brooker and Stone 2004; Cramer and Breitling 2007; Thiébaud 2007). However, what underpins all these architectural approaches is ideas about the interaction of old and new fabric. They are silent about the relationships that exist between the past use and the new use of buildings, except insofar as it might be decoded in retained fabric.

The work of Luna (2013) presents an interesting exception that seeks to conceptualise the reuse process. He uses the analogy of a shell and sees reuse as being classifiable as autonomous, symbiotic or parasitic. Autonomous reuse implies a total disconnection from previous use; the shell is recycled and urban memory sustained through exterior urban fabric, but all traces of prior function are removed in recycling the interior. Symbiotic reuse implies a new use that has a connection with the past use of the building and enables memories of place to be carried forward. Luna cites festival markets such as Quincy Market in Boston or Covent Garden in London as examples. Finally, parasitic reuse implies a process where the new use feeds off the memory of the building in a more one-sided, less symbiotic way.

Luna's schema is a useful lens through which to consider the reuse of heritage buildings of control and reform. As previously described, the architectural form of such buildings can be divided between a specialised plan form and the use of a more familiar architectural language for elevational treatment. What we very often see in the recycling of these buildings is a strategy that emphasises these familial attributes. Thus, the elevational qualities that locate buildings in a wider narrative of architectural quality are celebrated and, conversely, the specificity of the building type, the plan form that clearly signals original purpose is often overridden and suppressed. In Luna's terms, we often have a strategy of autonomy; a disconnection is sought from previous use and the memories that this conveys. However, this is not always the case. The recycling of gaols as luxury hotels described above adopt a parasitic approach, whereby the old use is remembered in a highly selective commodified way to help sell the new use. Indeed, Luna specifically cites the Liberty Hotel in Boston as an example of such.

Reusing the buildings of control and reform involves a negotiation with past use both in terms of physical intervention and in terms of presentation. Local contingencies dictate the precise form this might take but it is likely to involve a process of strategic forgetting and selective remembrance. In this paper, we focus upon a specific case study; the reuse of Shanghai Municipal Council (SMC) Abattoir, now known as 1933 Shanghai. After briefly detailing the building's history the next section considers its subsequent conversion into the flagship of the local government's Creative Industry Cluster policy, aimed to transform industrial structures and sites into incubators for new creative industries.

The 1933 Building, Shanghai

Designed to optimise a disassembling process, taking apart living animals into meat products, SMC Abattoir was constructed as an extraordinary series of multi-storey

concrete structures, functionally dictated by the bloody business of slaughter. SMC was the governing body of the International Settlement in Shanghai and was mainly administrated by British expatriates. Designed by British architects at the Public Work Department of SMC, the SMC Abattoir deployed the humanitarian and hygienic principles on animal slaughtering laid down by the Model Abattoir Society in England (Richardson 1893; Ayling 1908). In addition to production line efficiencies the regulated abattoir enabled a steady supply of disease free meat to the Western settlers living in the international settlement. Construction was completed in 1933 (Figure 1).

The completed building consists of an outer rectangular structure for the animal stalls and carcass chilling rooms, and an inner ring-shape structure for the slaughter halls, with a central core (Figure 2). The two structures consequently formed two internal courts, with a series of bridges at different levels connecting the animal stalls to the slaughter halls and with further bridges to transport carcasses, connect the slaughter halls to the central core, the inspector's room and finally the chilling rooms in the west wing of the rectangular building (Figure 3). Thus, the mechanised process of the animal disassembling line was explicitly expressed in the spatial configuration of the abattoir design (He 2011; He and Zhu 2012; Wang and Pendlebury 2016; Zhu et al. 2016) and each element of the building carefully designed for maximum efficiency. For example, the bridges were given various sizes in response to the different types and sizes of animals, with widths narrow enough to prevent animals turning around and side walls high enough to avoid them looking outwards.

The abattoir passed from the British to Japanese occupying forces in 1937 and then the new Chinese authorities in 1946, retaining its original function until the late 1950s. Subsequently it was occupied by meat processing companies, food manufacturers and research institutes and later a pharmaceutical company. This gradual

conversion of the abattoir – from animal slaughtering, to meat processing and then medicine making – altered the internal layout of the building, and the original machinery and fixtures and fittings were mostly removed. The slaughterhouse became completely vacant in 2002 when the last tenant moved out (Figure 4) (Shanghai Creative Industry Investment Co. Ltd 2007).

The aestheticization of the machine for killing

The emptying of the building was followed quite quickly by two decisions that triggered transformation. First, the building acquired heritage status in 2005 (included in the Shanghai Municipality's Fourth Batch Heritage Architecture List). Second, however, it was the designation of the slaughterhouse as one of the municipal Creative Industry Clusters (CICs) and the determination of the government-owned Shanghai Creative Industry Centre (SCIC) to transform the slaughterhouse into a flagship CIC that proved to be pivotal in attracting investment. In 2006 local architect firms were invited to tender for the building contract for conserving the slaughterhouse and the IPPR (Shanghai) Engineering Design and Research Institute Co. Ltd. won the bid.

The chief project architect, Mr Chongxin Zhao, has published extensively on the conversion, reiterating his 'design concepts' (Zhao 2007a, 2007b, 2008). Zhao seeks to closely align his approach with key tenets of modern conservation, placing emphasis upon the retention of the original structure and materials, restoration to original designs and like-for-like repairs. He stresses making a clear distinction between the old fabric and the new and that the added new elements should 'speak of their own time' and should be reversible where possible. Previously added elements, whether partitions or surface layers, were stripped out. The concrete lattice-work of the Art-Deco façade was restored and later red paint removed throughout the building to reveal the bare aggregate concrete structure as it was first completed in the early 1930s (Figure 5).

Equally, however, original white paint and tiles on the columns and walls in the holding stalls and the slaughter halls were ripped off to reveal the raw concrete structure only previously evident at the construction stage and all the rough surfaces were plastered with cement so that the sculptural qualities of the architectural elements with curved shapes or streamlined designs could be enhanced² (Figure 6). New architectural interventions were restricted to black steel frames, clear glass panels and wooden walkway boards (Zhao 2007a, 2007b). The most conspicuous new addition is the multifunctional room on the top of the slaughter building. This glass-floor circular room was added to regain a lost covered area that held a water tank in the original design.

Thus, the conversion of 1933 Shanghai ostensibly closely follows internationally recognized benchmarks of conservation good practice. However, it is evident that whilst the material authenticity of the building was a strong driver in the conservation and conversion work, of equal or more significance was the aesthetic strategy deployed – with intent to exploit latent economic values perceived to be embedded in the sculptural aesthetics of its concrete structure.

Machine for consumption

SCIC was the first tenant of the partially refurbished 1933 building, hosting design week events in 2007, before it was open to the public in 2008 (Figure 7). The promotion of 1933 Shanghai (formerly known as 1933 Old Milfun) was set with a high-end tone and following the completion of conservation works in 2008 the building was radically transformed into upmarket commercial space; a ‘machine for consumption’. New uses introduced include office units, studios, exhibition and performance spaces, restaurants and other recreational facilities. The significance of 1933 Shanghai as a landmark for

² Interview with Mr Zhao conducted on 5 August 2015.

creative industry development was evident in the SCIC secretary-general Mr. Zengqiang He's expectation that 'This CIC should be as fashionable as Bund No. 18, as vibrant as Xintiandi, and as artistic as Tianzifang' (quoted in Zheng 2007, 24).

The premises are now managed by Shanghai Zhongheng Enterprise Management Consulting Co. Ltd., who rent the refurbished slaughterhouse from SCIC. The profit generated over seven years, half the length of the lease, paid the start-up costs, including the conversion cost. A large part of rental income has come from venue hiring for special events, gala dinners, conferences or exhibitions. Wedding venue leasing has been a major income source, with more than 150 requests for the building's use as a wedding venue every year³. The demand for office spaces has also been consistently high, although the turnover rate of retail space has fluctuated, as some shops struggle to sustain sufficient trade.

Visiting 1933 Shanghai today it is difficult to sense the blood and guts that would have once slopped about the building. The colonnaded walkway under the Art-Deco façade, where previously workers loaded carcasses, is now lined with a series of shop windows. The holding pens are divided into smaller units, used as offices, studios, cafes, clubs and restaurants. These commercial units are often given a distinct theme to show their affiliation to creative industries and there are some culturally 'creative' shops that sell products of traditional workshops, albeit observing the selling of Buddha statues and Buddhist prayer beads in a former slaughterhouse is somewhat bizarre. Restaurants are mainly located in the west wing or on the upper floors. The reuse of the slaughter halls in the cylinder building has been constrained by awkward connections to the surrounding rectangular building and the height difference between the slaughter

³ Interview with the Media Executive of Zhongheng on 26 June 2015.

floors and the peripheral circular walkway (where the cage for stunning cattle used to sit). As a result these spaces have been underused until recently, when the lower two floors were converted into a playground for an alternate reality game and for Halloween events.

The Basilica Hall and the Sky Theatre are the most popular event and wedding venues in the building. Branded with a 1930s retro style and featuring Art-Deco lattice windows and crystal chandelier lighting, the Basilica Hall on the fourth floor of the west block (previously used as a carcass cooling room) has been very popular among newly-wed couples and cultural elites (Figure 8 and Figure 9). It was used as the venue for the Royal Asia Society 150 Anniversary and for alumni reunion parties of Oxford and Cambridge Universities, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Les Hautes Etudes Commerciales⁴ (Zhongheng Enterprise Management Consulting Co. Ltd no date). The Sky Theatre, the newly added glass-floor circular room on the top of the slaughter building is also a popular wedding venue, but the use of this room is more multifunctional and it often hosts large-scale flagship events, including fashion shows, launch campaigns, theatrical performances, film premieres, trade fairs, sport events and so forth.

Strategic forgetting and selective remembrance at 1933 Shanghai, in the Shanghai cosmopolitan imaginary

The initial approach to the reuse of 1933 Shanghai strongly favoured a strategic forgetting of the building's history, with minimal remembrance. The marketing of the building as a wedding venue made the former use of the building as a slaughterhouse

⁴ Interview with Deputy Secretary-General of SCIC on 26 June 2015

taboo in the Zhongheng's marketing campaign⁵. Whilst the functional materiality of the building made its abattoir past impossible to completely ignore, this history was very much pushed into the background as Zhongheng sought to exploit the potential of 1933 as an elite location and event space. This also had a bearing on the physical conversion of the building. Using Luna's typology, the architect's deployed an autonomous strategy for reuse. In a similar fashion to the asylums discussed above, the conversion sought to emphasise the architectural tectonic qualities of the building, locating 1933 as an exciting and dramatic piece of modernism. The original design was recovered where it suited this purpose – accretions and later painting were removed – but where original fabric interfered with this approach – tiling and other painted services –these too were discarded. Ultimately what is key in the conversion is an aesthetic strategy that emphasises the sculptural drama of the building complex, rather than its original use and fabric. This was a building with architectural quality that could be located in a wider history of modernism in Shanghai and linked to the cosmopolitan Shanghai imaginary and its romanticisation of the International Settlement, the 1930s, art deco and a spirit of modernity more generally.

Local historic place-marketing narratives associated with specific periods of history have developed in different Chinese cities; for example, the Tang Dynasty in Xi'an and a period of Mercantile Ming and Qing capitalism in Wuhan. In Shanghai, there has been a discourse based upon 1920s and 1930s 'Cosmopolitanism', as part of a planning approach that has championed conservation and urban heritage as a driver for economic development (Ren 2008; Liang 2014). According to Ren,

⁵ Interview with the Media Executive of Zhongheng on 26 June 2015.

Since the turn of the millennium, several preservation-based redevelopment projects in Shanghai have generated significant investment returns, prompting developers and the city government to recognize the economic potential of historic buildings in promoting tourism, raising property values and catalyzing neighborhood renewal (Ren 2014, 1089).

Shanghai's 1920s and 1930s built architectural heritage has served an important role in urban branding and the production of a global imaginary of the city, a nostalgic imaginary of a glamorous and decadent 1920s and 1930s colonial past (Pan 2005; Jansson and Lagerkvist 2009; Law 2012). As Ren points out,

Not all histories are equally marketable. Only those with connections to the colonial period of Shanghai are actively preserved in an attempt to show that Shanghai was once an international metropolis (Ren 2008, 36).

However, there has not been a total absence of remembrance of the building's history as a slaughterhouse. The very functional materiality of 1933 embodied in concrete form would make that difficult. Interpretation boards telling the building's history exist around the site (albeit of a low key nature) and the history of the site has been drawn upon by some tenants. For example, some restaurant names explicitly refer to meat with names such as (roughly translated) Beastly Bull. Interestingly, this selective remembrance has become more evident in recent years, albeit as entertainment, representing a more parasitic approach to reuse. Events, such as those at Halloween, trade on the bloody history of the building.

The reuse of 1933 Shanghai exemplifies the process of strategic forgetting and selective remembrance common in the reuse of buildings of control and reform and, arguably, buildings more generally. The interventions made in the fabric respond to orthodoxies of conservation practice but these are mediated by a particular aesthetic approach that focuses upon the art deco and modernist architectonic qualities of the

building, repackaged as part of an imaginary of a cosmopolitan 1930s Shanghai. In doing so the dramatic sculptural qualities of the concrete structure are highlighted but its original function for mass animal slaughtering pushed to the background. Selected for remembrance is an anthropocentric viewpoint on architectonic advance and the presence of an art deco lexicon as an epitome of exuberance and glamour imagined to be prevailing in the heydays of Shanghai's international concession. Similarly, the building has been carefully marketed and presented to avoid overt reference to its original function, so strongly embedded in its material form. Spaces designed to house animals awaiting death, slaughtering and the processing of their meat have been reimagined as places for shopping, eating and play, for cultural events, fashion shows and wedding parties. Deliberately forgotten are the foul odours, noise and mess of livestock or the gruesome sight of animal carcasses hung upon conveyors in the Basilica Hall where sumptuous crystal chandeliers now softly illuminate wedding receptions, gala dinners and catwalks. The circular slaughter hall where millions of animals were stunned, killed, bled and skinned has become the location of showcase events.

Conclusion: re-using buildings and uncomfortable heritage

Buildings survive because they find new utility once original uses have ceased. Functional redundancy also triggers processes of heritage evaluation. It is at this point that decisions are made about which stories will be carried forward from the building's past. Whilst Joseph, Kearns and Moon (Kearns, Joseph, and Moon 2010; Joseph, Kearns, and Moon 2013; Moon, Kearns, and Joseph 2015) and others have documented the process of strategic forgetting and selective remembrance that occurs when buildings with difficult pasts are reused, explorations of the adaptive reuse of quotidian heritage buildings remain relatively scarce. Specifically, studies that focus upon strategies of architectural intervention are few in number. However, we argue that the

selectivity of architectural qualities and materiality in repurposing 1933 Shanghai appears to be commonplace in the reuse of ‘buildings of control and reform’.

Psychiatric asylums, prisons and slaughterhouses were all designed for a very specific use, with intent to enact reform and exert control as part of an embodiment of an Enlightenment ethos. These once state-of-the-art purpose-built facilities have increasingly become obsolete and redundant. Functional redundancy encourages their reappraisal as officially sanctioned heritage but also demands reuse. Reuse foregrounds the difficult nature of past activities and requires decisions on selection. In particular, the moment of changing from one function to another is a critical moment in making decisions over what to keep and what to discard in terms of both the material fabric of buildings and in terms of how they are to be narrated, both of which have profound effects on how the past of buildings are subsequently received and understood. To a large extent, contemporary architectural approaches to reuse preoccupied with how the new should be introduced to the old, have often seen material heritage as a neutral inheritance, unburdened by its past. Consequently, the literature on reuse has narrowly focused on issues of materiality or material authenticity. This leaves wider questions about the ethics of reuse – how the past should be sustained in physical fabric as a transmitter to retell the story of buildings and as a repository to harbour memories of the place – largely unaddressed.

It is this negotiation of both the materiality and the narratives in the reuse of buildings with difficult pasts that we term ‘uncomfortable heritage’, buildings that can cause discomfort because of their former use and the act of reuse itself.⁶ Our focus is upon a heritage ‘causing or involving discomfort or uneasiness’ (Oxford English

⁶ We acknowledge that the term has been previously used in a collection by Merrill and Schmidt (2011) in relation principally to dark tourism and war-related sites.

Dictionary 2016). This is not a heritage that will generally invoke significant pain, fear or revulsion but is more likely to engender unease or awkwardness. In proposing this category, we locate uncomfortable heritage within the dark heritage and dark tourism literature that has developed over recent decades, with a proliferation of terminology that seeks to define particular elements of a darkness spectrum. For example, Uzzell (1989a, 1989b) argued for the ‘hot interpretation’ of sites of war and conflict to arouse engagement with ‘heritage that hurts’ (Uzzell and Ballantyne 1998), Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) elucidated the idea of the ‘heritage of atrocity’ and drawing upon her studies of Nazi legacies in Nuremburg, Macdonald (2009) considered ‘difficult heritage’. Logan and Reeves (2009) similarly constructed their definition of ‘difficult heritage’ around ‘places of pain and shame’ and consider sites that are mostly to do with incarceration, ranging from wartime internment sites and civil or political prisons, to psychiatric asylums and refugee detention centres. Such discussions have been further expanded to issues of heritage management from the perspective of human rights (Silverman and Ruggles 2007) and slavery heritage (Dann and Seaton 2013; Araujo 2014). Other terms used include ‘unwanted heritage’, ‘unhappy heritage’, ‘reluctant heritage’ and ‘negative heritage’ (Lizon 1996; Light 2000, 2001; Meskell 2002; CEREFREA 2016). Parallel to the growth of work in the heritage field, tourism studies has developed an interest in sites of human death or suffering, focusing upon the demand side of sites of death and tragedy more than the supply side discussed above (Biran, Poria, and Oren 2011). Terms used include ‘disaster tourism’, ‘grief tourism’, ‘morbid tourism’ and ‘thana-tourism’, although all are derived from the broader thanatopic tradition (Seaton 1996; Seaton and Lennon 2004; Stone 2006). Stone (2006) sketched out a dark tourism spectrum, with the ‘darkest’ end of the spectrum

representing 'sites of death and suffering' and the 'lightest' end 'sites associated with death and suffering', most of which are created for entertainment purposes.

This body of work has been important in challenging the idea of heritage as 'a reassuringly warm and cuddly blanket' (Ashworth 2006, 393), beloved of place-marketeers. Yet this dark heritage literature, important though it is, passes by the experience of much heritage. There are often troublesome stories and pasts linked to the protected material remains that surround us that are less dramatic than those referred to above. This is a heritage that is more commonplace, more quotidian and, critically, this is a heritage that is rarely overtly memorialised. That is, when buildings stop being used for their original purpose (or the use that generates discomfort) they are unlikely to be retained as a memorial or museum to that use. These are buildings that usually need to find a new economic purpose to endure. It is our contention that it is the redundancy of the original purpose, accompanied by heritage status and the act of reuse that generates uncomfortable and dissonant characteristics. The buildings of control and reform represent a particularly clear example where the discomfort or awkwardness of former use has to be negotiated, in ensuring new occupants are comfortable and are able to enjoy the aesthetic appeal of a reused historic building, undisturbed by past use. As often as not, this negotiation is dictated by an economic imperative to capitalize on the commodity value of cultural heritage. A discreet obliteration of former use, therefore, is considered essential whereby the uncomfortable nature of heritage can be restyled. But a reluctance to deal with these histories, is to ignore the ghosts of history and pasts gone by, which can haunt the present no matter how hard we try to ignore them (Derrida 2006).

Strategies of strategic forgetting and selective remembrance enfold all building reuse and indeed all heritage making processes to a greater or lesser degree. However,

there is perhaps a trend of increasing selective exploitation of past narratives or a shift, in Luna's terms, from autonomous to parasitic strategies of reuse, something observed in recent years at 1933 Shanghai. One of the characteristic features of the post-industrial society is its voracious appetite for first-hand experiences (Pine and Gilmore 1999). Coinciding with the rise of the experience economy, the past decade has witnessed a trend in reuse that is eccentric for some, but fascinating for others (Singh 2004; Goeldner and Ritchie 2012). Similar to dark tourism's exploitation of horrible tales of bloody power, the grisly past of old castles and the promotion of guided tours to haunted houses for a great night out, buildings with uncomfortable pasts are perhaps no longer such a hard-sell but increasingly sought-after. For instance, brothels have been rebranded as boutique hotels such as L'Hôtel Grand Amour and Maison Souquet in Paris, proven popular for newly wedded couples on honeymoon or have been turned into trendy upscale restaurants or retro bars in Berlin, Lisbon, Brussels and Paris. Uncomfortableness embedded in the physical fabric of buildings with dissonant pasts is of mutating potential; such places can deliver a sense of edginess or quirkiness in their repurposing.

Coda: 1933 Shanghai as heterotopia

The reuse of the uncomfortable pasts of buildings may also have another more implicit function. In some instances such places might serve as site of 'other places' or heterotopias of deviation. In *Of Other Spaces: Utopia and Heterotopias*, Foucault (1997) defines heterotopias as sites and/or spaces that exist in relation to 'regular' or quotidian sites, 'but in such a way as to suspend, neutralize, or invert the set of relationships designed, reflected, or mirrored by themselves' (Foucault 1997, 332). Heterotopias of deviation are those sites where we place individuals whose behaviour exists outside of our common norms, including hospitals, asylums, prisons, or perhaps

care homes for the elderly.

Unlike the traditional butcher's shop, the slaughterhouse might be regarded as a site of deviation as it allows for the slaughter of animals beyond the gaze of meat eaters. The reuse of the SMC Abattoir as a new form of consumer space in Shanghai creates the possibility of a fractured or complex reflexive experience where the visitor is suddenly confronted with the innards of a space that they would not normally have the opportunity to wander in and explore. Arguably then, the reuse of buildings such as 1933 Shanghai can serve new social functions in that it not only meets the needs of consumers, tenants and conservationists but also allows visitors to reflect upon the uncomfortable social and physical spaces that exist within societies (Ballantyne 2016). The slaughterhouse allows reflection upon those aspects of the human condition that are regarded as 'necessary evils' such as meat production and permits us to continually respond and evaluate our relationships to these activities. Foucault's concept of heterotopia lends us insight into the important role of sites like 1933 Shanghai in severing as a mirror for the self and prompting reflections of human conduct. Consequently, perhaps 1933 Shanghai, as Hillier (2013, 873) suggests, should be a site that 'deliberately aims to make people feel uncomfortable through affective and thought-provoking encounters in which they participate rather than visit'.

Figures

Figure 1 External view of SMC Abattoir in the 1930s © Shanghai Creative Industry Investment Co. Ltd (SCII).

Figure 2 Cross-Section drawings of SMC Abattoir show the central core holding a water tank is connected to the ring-shape structure of the slaughter halls with an array of bridges, from which

with another array of bridges to the animal stalls and carcass chilling rooms of the outer rectangular structure ©SCII

Figure 3 Axonometric perspective showing the spatial configuration of the Abattoir © Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

Figure 4 External view of the building before conversion © Shanghai Creative Industry Centre (SCIC).

Figure 5 The restored art-deco façade © SCIC.

Figure 6 Internal view of the restored/plastered concrete structure © SCIC.

Figure 7 Creative Week Event © SCIC.

Figure 8 Basilica Hall, restored carcass chilling hall

Figure 9 Gala Dinner in Basilica Hall © SCIC.

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