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Urban heritage as an action-based planning strategy

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This text is based on the research project *Sustain Urban Heritage* which seeks knowledge about how to change how the Danish planning system can manages heritage in the planning, both ensuring the urban heritage and a more site-specific development. How to change the planning process from a focus on development to transformation, based on an understanding of the urban heritage? The intention of a change towards a transformation perspective is to strengthen the tools of the planning process towards a more site-specific development and a better integration of the urban heritage in urban districts of the future

Today, we map urban heritage through value-based methods primarily focusing on monumentality and originality of the architecture. A focus creating an isolated perspective on heritage and often a loss of the 'general' and everyday heritage - which leaves a project-based city with singular historical monuments.

My research project is based on an understanding of the urban heritage as an action, living and processual (Fairclough 2009, Smith 2015). An understanding forming the basis for investigations of the planning process of a transformation of Spinderikvarteret, a former working-class neighbourhood in Vejle, Denmark.

Residents and building owners are involved through dialogue walks as an approach to understanding the urban heritage of Spinderikvarteret as not just buildings, but as contrasts between time, objects and humans. The dialogue walks and the subsequent process intend to examine the urban heritage as something not valued but created through actions and the process itself, in order to form the basis for an urban heritage-based transformation.

In this text, I discuss the possibilities of a changed understanding of urban heritage, how this can push the understanding of urban planning towards urban transformation, as well as what problems the planning processes have according to this approach.