

The Use of Heritage and Environmental Justice in Urban Regeneration: The Case for Constitution Hill, Johannesburg

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ABSTRACT:

The South African cityscape has been redeveloped through precinct planning and urban regeneration initiatives. Various conceptual planning tools like sustainable development have re-shaped these cities — this study tested the potential of heritage, and environmental justice as means for driving this urban regeneration. The paper determines the potential links between urban regeneration, sustainable development, environmental justice and heritage — through testing the success of these interventions by assessing shifts in the psychological landscape of the city. Secondly, the paper traces the extent, to which users of these spaces buy into and support objectives of the regeneration interventions. Through interviews with all stakeholders at Constitution Hill, the study determines the extent to which visitors' understandings of urban regeneration, heritage and environmental justice influences the physical landscape. Conceptually, an environmental justice approach informing regeneration is not fully implemented at Constitution Hill, affecting the role of environmental justice in the building of future sustainable cities.

Key words: Environmental Justice, Heritage, Sustainable Development & Urban Regeneration.

INTRODUCTION

South African cities have seen a recent change in the urban landscape, which has been directed by various efforts to modify the form and function of particular nodes in the contemporary city. Whilst these interventions have resulted in spatial changes in the city fabric, they have been underpinned by particular motivations linked to the development and redistribution of human, social, economic and environmental capital within those urban spaces. Changes in the spatial formation of South African cities need to be understood with respect to the values underpinning that change; thus the success of urban regenera-