



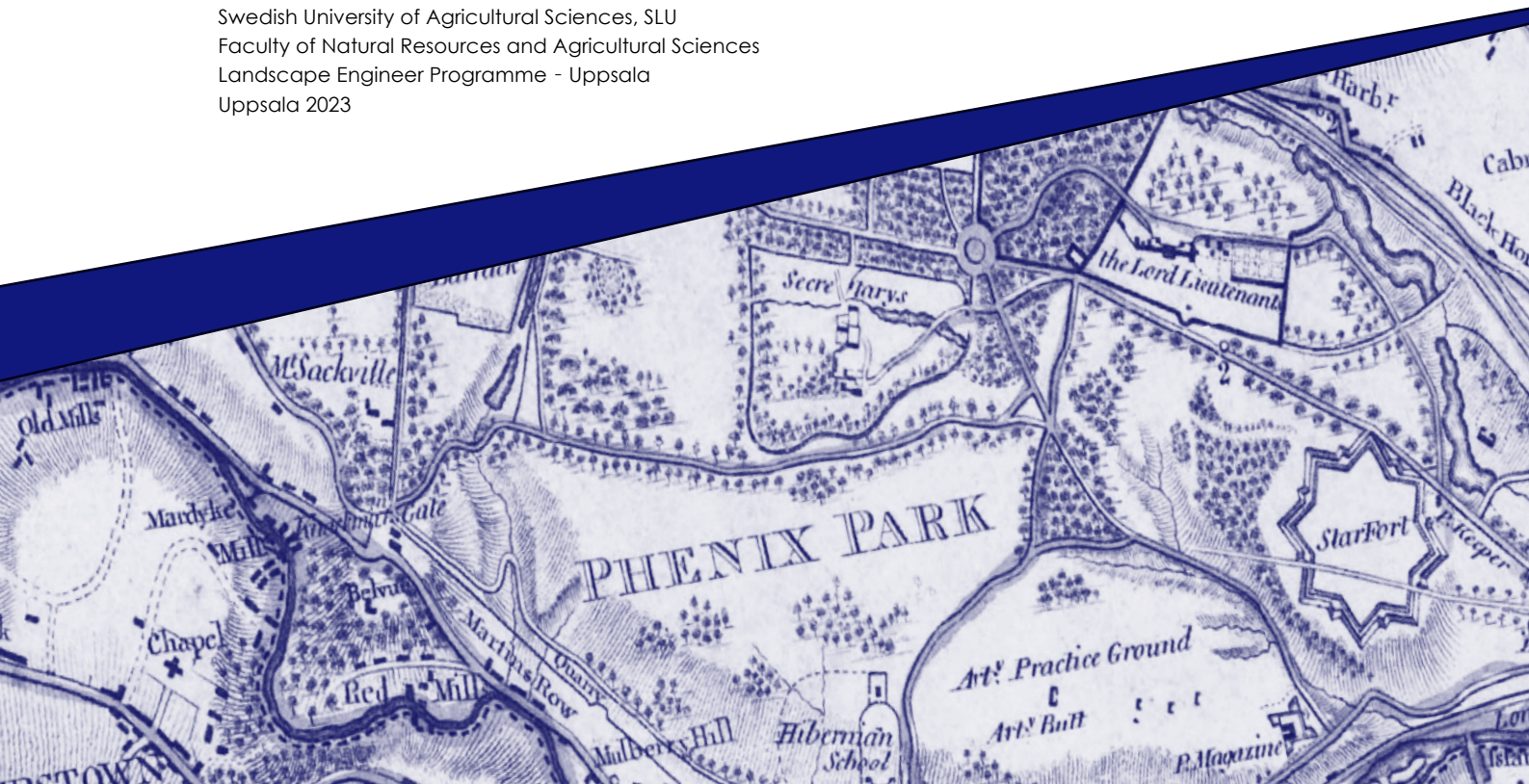
# APPROACHES TO THE PAST IN THE PRESENT

A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE PHOENIX PARK CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Independent project • 15 credits  
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, SLU  
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Landscape Engineer Programme - Uppsala  
Uppsala 2023



# APPROACHES TO THE PAST IN THE PRESENT: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE PHOENIX PARK CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

*DET FÖRFLUTNA I NUET: EN DISKURSANALYS AV PHOENIX PARK BEVARANDEPLAN*

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## **Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences**

Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences  
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# FOREWORD

This independent project comprised 15 credits and was completed as a concluding part of my undergraduate studies in landscape architecture at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

I want to thank my supervisor, Viveka Hoff, for your guidance and patience. Go raibh míle maith agat Daniel Kelly, for housing and guiding me through Dublin upon my visit. A last thank you to my parents for their encouragement and support.



**Malin Nordin**

January, 2023

# ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the challenges of managing urban heritage sites in today's rapidly evolving society. The management of such sites must adapt to meet the changing needs of society while preserving their historical and cultural value. One such site is Phoenix Park, located in the heart of Dublin, Ireland. The urban park, with its vast size and rich cultural heritage, is a historic landmark essential to the country's history and identity. For Phoenix Park to remain an urban green oasis and a vital part of Ireland's heritage, its management must balance commercial development and recreational use with preservation efforts. The study aimed to provide insights into the values and discourses surrounding heritage management and how they interact in the context of Ireland. Adopting a qualitative approach, the Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan was examined through discourse analysis to identify activated discourses, their core values, and their interactions. The results reveal parallel discourses on heritage, shaped by shared and opposing perspectives on managing the past. These perspectives can be reconciled by finding common ground with bridging values. This study's significance lies in its contribution to the broader field of heritage management by providing insights into the discourses shaping heritage management in Ireland. Policymakers, practitioners, and researchers could use the study's implications to develop better tools and guidance to manage heritage effectively, involve local communities and stakeholders in decision-making processes, and embrace a more comprehensive understanding of heritage values.

*Keywords:* heritage management, discourse, discourse analysis

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD .....	3
ABSTRACT .....	4
LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES .....	6
<b>CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
BACKGROUND.....	7
PURPOSE, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND DELIMITATIONS .....	7
THESIS OUTLINE .....	8
<b>CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>10</b>
PARALLEL DISCOURSES IN HERITAGE MANAGEMENT .....	10
<b>CHAPTER III: METHODS .....</b>	<b>14</b>
DATA COLLECTION.....	14
DATA ANALYSIS.....	15
LIMITATIONS .....	15
<b>CHAPTER IV: MANAGEMENT CONTEXT AND HISTORY OF PHOENIX PARK .....</b>	<b>17</b>
HERITAGE MANAGEMENT IN IRELAND .....	17
MANAGEMENT CONTEXT OF PHOENIX PARK .....	18
HISTORY OF PHOENIX PARK .....	21
<b>CHAPTER V: RESULTS .....</b>	<b>26</b>
HERITAGE AS PRESERVATION .....	26
HERITAGE AS CONSERVATION .....	27
HERITAGE AS HERITAGE PLANNING .....	29
<b>CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>32</b>
VALUES AS BRIDGES.....	32
TANGIBLE VALUES AND CONTINUITY .....	32
IMPLICATIONS AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS.....	35
LIMITATIONS AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH .....	35
CONCLUDING SUMMARY.....	35
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>38</b>

# LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

<b>Figure I.</b> An incomplete paradigm shift, adapted from Ashworth (2011:4).....	11
<b>Figure II.</b> Organisational Chart adapted from the Phoenix Parks Conservation Management Plan (2011).....	19
<b>Figure III.</b> Legislation and guidelines for the maintenance and regulation of Phoenix Park....	20
<b>Figure IV.</b> Adapted cover page of the Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan (2011). .....	20
<b>Figure V.</b> Adapted satellite image of Dublin, Ireland, with the Phoenix Park marked in red (2020). ESA/Copernicus Sentinel-2 (CC BY-SA 3.0 IGO). ....	21
<b>Figure VII.</b> A Prospect of the City of Dublin, from the Magazine Hill, in His Majesty's Phoenix Park, adapted from Mason, J. (1710-1783). ....	22
<b>Figure VIII and Figure IX.</b> Right: Taylor's map of the environs of Dublin, adapted from Taylor, J. (1816), with noteworthy fortifications and institutions marked in red. (CC BY-NC 2.5 CA). Left: Fraser's Map of Dublin and its Suburbs. Reduced From the Ordnance Survey with Additions to 1855, adapted from UCD Digital Library (2006), with the straightening of Chesterfield Avenue marked in red. (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0). ....	23
<b>Figure X.</b> Photo collage with various elements of Phoenix Park, taken by the author in November 2022.....	24
<b>Figure XI.</b> Map of the Phoenix Park with a selection of amenities marked out in white, made by the author.....	25
<b>Figure XII.</b> Photo collage with various elements of the Phoenix Park, taken by the author in November 2022.....	31
<b>Table I.</b> Difference between Discourses, adapted from Ashworth (2011) and Jensen et al. (2017).....	13

# CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

Urban heritage sites are locations that hold significant cultural and historical value. However, these sites face a unique challenge in today's fast-paced and ever-changing society. Urbanisation and development often lead to the loss of authenticity and the destruction or alteration of cultural heritage (UNESCO 2016). To address this issue, UNESCO has emphasised the importance of preserving urban heritage sites. The management of urban heritage sites must adapt to meet contemporary needs while preserving their history and cultural value. This requires striking a balance between commercial development, tourism, and recreational activities while safeguarding natural and historical features. The challenge lies in finding ways to manage urban heritage sites that allow for their protection and preservation while accommodating the needs of modern society.

One such site is Phoenix Park, located in the heart of Dublin, Ireland. The urban park is a historic landmark which dates to the seventeenth century, making it one of the oldest in the region. Spread over 1,700 acres, it is twice the size of New York City's Central Park. Popular among locals and tourists alike, Phoenix Park boasts a peaceful atmosphere, vast greenery and winding paths. The site is essential to Dublin's history and cultural heritage, connecting the city centre and neighbouring suburbs. For Phoenix Park to remain an urban green oasis and a vital part of Ireland's cultural heritage, its management must balance commercial development and recreational use with preserving its historical and cultural value. This challenge requires innovative and adaptive management that focuses on protecting the park's unique heritage and natural features while simultaneously generating revenue, providing access to the public, and meeting the needs of critical stakeholders.

Alongside the emergence of these conditions for urban heritage, a new paradigm in heritage management has gained ground. Critical heritage studies have brought about a growing recognition of the unequal power relations and diverse understandings of heritage. This new approach to heritage emphasises its democratic potential and promotes the use of heritage to achieve sustainable development. This shift has been called a "discursive turn" (Harrison 2013:110-112). A shared view among scholars is that heritage is a dynamic concept

shaped by continuous social, cultural, and individual processes (see Ashworth 2011; Smith 2006). Heritage scholars have established a framework to understand the development of heritage management paradigms over time (Ashworth 2011; Jensen et al. 2017). Each paradigm has a unique perspective on the value of heritage, which leads to distinct approaches to the objects of attention, the criteria used to evaluate heritage, and the purposes held by those involved. These paradigms run parallel through policy frameworks and practice, presenting opportunities and potential conflicts for the field of heritage management (Janssen et al. 2017:1667).

In 2006, Smith introduced the "authorised heritage discourse" (AHD) concept to describe the values and practices that govern heritage selection and management. The AHD is constructed by an expert-centred system of governance, which emphasises monumentality, grand scale, historical significance, scientific and aesthetic expert opinions, social consensus, and nation-building (Smith 2006:11). Smith argues that it is crucial to consider the social context and outcomes of these discourses as they significantly impact how heritage is perceived and managed. By examining the social consequences of the AHD, one can better understand how heritage is valued, preserved, and managed. According to Waterton et al. (2006), the dominant discourse influences how heritage is talked about, written, and represented. By identifying the discursive construction of heritage, we can uncover competing and conflicting discourses and the power relations between expertise and community interests. This recognition presents an opportunity to resolve conflicts and uncertainties in heritage management.

## **PURPOSE, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND DELIMITATIONS**

This thesis aims to provide insights into the different values of heritage, the evolving discourses surrounding heritage management, and their interactions in the context of Ireland. To achieve this, the study will apply a discourse analysis to the Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan published in 2011. The study will specifically address the following research questions:

- I. What values regarding heritage are expressed in the Plan?
- II. Which discourses on heritage management are constructed and activated by the Plan?
- III. How do the discourses on heritage management interact with each other in the Plan?

The study will focus on the period from 2007 to 2011, when the most recent Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan was developed and published. Additionally, the researcher will conduct site visits in November 2022 to gather complementary observations. The study will



use a qualitative research methodology, and all the empirical material used will be related to heritage management.

This study's significance lies in its contribution to the broader field of heritage management by providing insights into the discourses shaping heritage management in Ireland. The research emphasises the significance of shared values and stakeholder collaboration in heritage management. It highlights the importance of considering tangible and intangible values and local participation and knowledge. Policymakers, practitioners, and researchers could use the study's implications to develop better tools and guidance to manage heritage effectively, involve local communities and stakeholders in decision-making processes, and embrace a more comprehensive understanding of heritage values.

## **THESIS OUTLINE**

This chapter introduced the challenges of managing Phoenix Park in Dublin as an urban heritage site. The chapter outlined the thesis's aim to provide insights into the different values of heritage, the evolving discourses surrounding heritage management, and their interactions in the context of Ireland. Chapter II presents a framework to understand the evolution of different heritage management paradigms, adapted from Ashworth and Jensen et al. and a synchronic discourse analysis model developed by Oevermann and Mieg. Chapter III presents the data collection and analysis methods used in the thesis, which adopted a qualitative social constructivist approach. Chapter IV offers a historical overview of the management of Irish heritage and a more detailed presentation of Phoenix Park's management context and history. Chapter V presents the results of the synchronic discourse analysis of the Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan, departing from three discourses on heritage management. Chapter VI discusses the thesis's results, implications and practical applications, and limitations and areas for future research. It concludes with a summary.

## CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter presents a framework based on works by Ashworth (2011) and Jensen et al. (2017) to understand the evolution of different heritage management paradigms. The framework helps to explain how heritage is constructed through various discourses and emphasises the importance of values in managing heritage. Heritage management approaches are classified into the preservation, conservation, and heritage planning discourses. These approaches have unique perspectives on the nature of heritage values, which this thesis discusses. Finally, a synchronic discourse analysis model developed by Oevermann and Mieg is introduced, which aids in examining the interactions between different discourses.

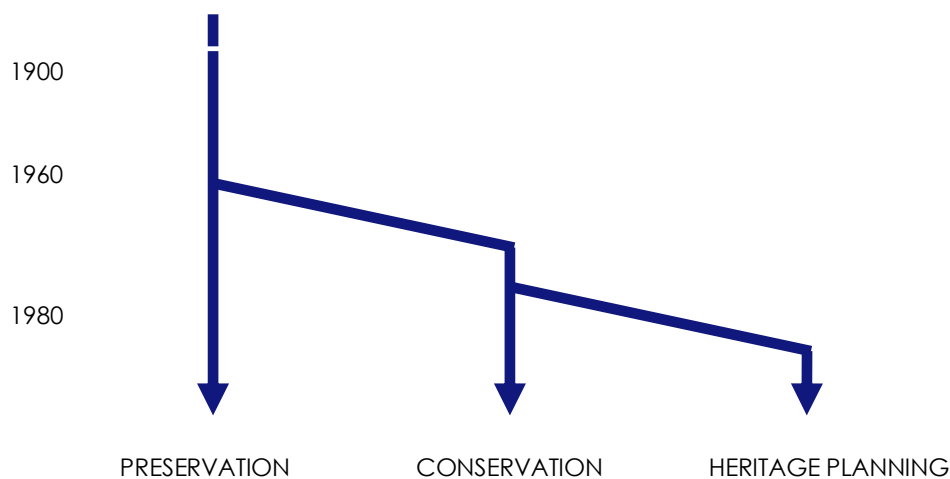
### PARALLEL DISCOURSES IN HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

A point of departure for the thesis is the conception of heritage as inherently constructed through discourses shaping how sites and objects are selected, managed, and protected as heritage (see: Ashworth 2011; Smith 2006). The discourses are reflected and reproduced through language and related practices connected to tangible sites and objects. Discourse analysis has its roots in the "linguistic turn" within the social sciences. It is used to deconstruct the subjective realities created using language (Börjesson and Palmblad 2009:10). One way of understanding discourse analysis is as the study of "language in action", namely the written and spoken statements on a particular object (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2018: 281). However, discourse is not limited to the use of language but also shapes the practices related to the concept in question (Smith 2006:14).

In the context of this thesis, values refer to the fundamental beliefs and principles that guide the decisions and actions of actors involved in heritage management. These values are the ultimate justifications for heritage management's basic assumptions, concepts, and objectives. In other words, the values expressed in heritage management implicitly and explicitly shape the perspectives and choices on managing and preserving heritage. An example of a value in heritage management is the principle of sustainability. This value

emphasises the importance of managing heritage to balance present and future needs. In practice, this value may manifest in various ways, such as ensuring the long-term viability of heritage sites and resources and promoting education and awareness about the importance of heritage conservation.

This thesis utilises a framework adapted from Ashworth (2011) and Jensen et al. (2017) to understand the development of different heritage management paradigms over time. The paradigms have developed in chronological order and coexist within contemporary heritage management. Each paradigm has a unique perspective on the nature of heritage values, which leads to distinct approaches to the objects of attention, the criteria used to evaluate heritage, and the purposes held by those involved (Ashworth 2011:4). The heritage management approaches have been divided into three parts that this thesis refers to as the preservation, conservation, and heritage planning discourses.



**Figure 1.** An incomplete paradigm shift, adapted from Ashworth (2011:4).

The *preservation discourse* emerged partly due to the Industrial Revolution in response to rapid economic and social changes (Ashworth 2011:5). The preservation discourse is based on the premise that socioeconomic and spatial changes constantly threaten our heritage. Its primary objective is safeguarding the most valuable remnants of the past, placing their significance in their therapeutic potential during rapid societal change (Jenson et al. 2017:1660). The preservation discourse assumes that the past is real, exists, and can be preserved through its sites, monuments, and historical narratives for the present and future (Ashworth 2011:5). This idea is similar to Smith's (2006) Authorised Heritage Discourse, which values monumentality, time depth, expert judgment, and nation-building.

The *conservation discourse* presents a broader definition of heritage management, emphasising preserving the entire historical environment instead of just individual monuments. It considers the contemporary use of structures a crucial factor when planning for their

preservation (Janssen et al. 2017:1662-1663; Ashworth 2011:9-10). The Conservation discourse aims to *preserve purposefully* rather than simply preserving for preservation's sake. Purposeful preservation involves maintaining the usefulness of heritage objects to modern needs while keeping their traditional appearance (Burke 1976:117). This shift allowed heritage management to integrate with contemporary development processes and a broader professional field (Jensen et al. 2017).

The latest approach to heritage management is the *heritage planning discourse*, which prioritises a more inclusive set of values from a more democratic point of view. This process-oriented approach is based on the idea that heritage results from conscious efforts to shape the past and memories to meet present needs (Ashworth and Tunbridge 1999:105). The meaning of heritage is based on the contemporary narrative associated with it rather than historical truth or inherent authenticity. The discourse emphasises the importance of protecting heritage based on future consumer demand and managing it accordingly (Ashworth 2011). It also acknowledges that heritage management is fundamentally political (Smith 2006). Including multiple heritage narratives in developing and managing heritage is stressed as a potential way of avoiding conflicts while increasing opportunities (Janssen et al. 2017).

Inspiration was taken from the synchronic discourse analysis model to understand how different discourses operate. Oevermann and Mieg (2014) initially proposed this analysis model to examine and explain the current transformations of industrial heritage sites. Synchronic discourse analysis investigates the coexisting parallel interests at a single transformation site. The authors argue that understanding the context of discourses and their interactions is crucial to comprehend the process and outcome of a transformational project (Oevermann and Mieg 2014:12-13). They also suggest that different core values on heritage may cause conflict or "clashes" between discourses during transformation. In successful transformation processes, values are negotiated among the various parties to mediate potential clashes. When facing conflicting objectives of other discourses, actors can use values as "bridges" to reconcile differences. These bridging values signify diverse actors' common interests and priorities (Oevermann and Mieg 2014:22-23).

The provided table served as a basis to distinguish between the various discourses in the Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan (2011). The study aimed to understand how the discourses expressed in the Plan corresponded with the "ideal" versions of the preservation, conservation, and heritage planning discourses. The interplay of these parallel discourses was examined by identifying the different objectives and values of heritage management conveyed in the Plan.

FOCUS	DISCOURSE		
	PRESERVATION	CONSERVATION	HERITAGE PLANNING
<b>GOAL</b>	Object	Ensemble	Message
<b>JUSTIFICATION</b>	Keep	Adaptive reuse	Use
<b>TIME</b>	Value	Value/Reuse	Utility
<b>CRITERIA</b>	Past	Past/Present	Present/Future
<b>PAST</b>	Intrinsic	Preserve	Extrinsic
<b>FOCUS</b>	Real	Given	Imagined
<b>AUTHENTICITY</b>	Object	Compromise	Experience
<b>CHANGE</b>	Immutable	Adaptable	Flexible
<b>ACTORS</b>	Experts	Policy makers	Users

**Table 1.** Difference between Discourses, adapted from Ashworth (2011) and Jensen et al. (2017).

# CHAPTER III: METHODS

This chapter presents the data collection and analysis methods in the thesis. The research followed a qualitative social constructivist approach that considered knowledge a socially constructed concept through human experiences, interactions, and conversations. The main objective was to gain insights into the different values of heritage, parallel discourses, and how they interacted. The Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan (2011) was the primary data source, and on-site visits were conducted for additional data collection. A synchronic discourse analysis was employed to identify multiple heritage management discourses constructed and activated in the Plan. This approach provided valuable insights into how Ireland's discourses on heritage management had evolved and how conflicting values could be negotiated to reach a consensus. The chapter concluded by discussing the research limitations and how they were mitigated.

## DATA COLLECTION

This thesis adopted a qualitative social constructivist approach, which asserts that knowledge is not an objective reality but rather a socially constructed concept that emerges from human experiences, interactions, and conversations (Alvesson and Sköldbberg 2018:35). The Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan (2011) was chosen as the principal data source for this study for several reasons. First, the Plan captures the values, objectives, and ideas for managing the Park, making it an ideal source for studying heritage management in Ireland. Second, the Plan is a comprehensive document that includes detailed information on the history and significance of the Park, as well as the challenges and opportunities involved in managing it. Third, a synchronic discourse analysis was conducted using the Plan as the immediate data source, revealing insights into the values and priorities in heritage management at Phoenix Park. The study also allowed for identifying different discourses on heritage management constructed and activated in the Plan, providing a deeper understanding of the complexities of managing an urban heritage site. Moreover, the site visits

conducted in November 2022 provided additional context and information about the Park. These visits allowed for first-hand data collection through observation and examination of physical evidence, which helped verify the accuracy and completeness of the information provided in the documents.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

The synchronic discourse analysis method was used to identify the multiple discourses on heritage management that were constructed and activated in the Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan. Through this analysis, the study aimed to examine the language used in the text and the contextual factors surrounding the discourse to understand the evolution of discourses on heritage management in Ireland. The study was guided by the theoretical background and the table (see Table I) with the differences between preservation, conservation, and heritage planning discourses. The synchronic discourse analysis method was used to identify keywords and themes expressed in the Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan, aligned with the focuses, values and strategic decisions of the three discourses and to examine how these discourses interacted. For example, the study identified discourses that aligned with the preservation perspective, which values the protection of heritage sites from any changes or modifications that may damage their authenticity. The study also identified discourses aligned with the conservation discourse, which values the repurposing of heritage sites to serve new functions compatible with their historical significance. This analysis provided insights into Ireland's evolving discourses on heritage management and how conflicting values may be negotiated to reach a consensus. By adopting a synchronic discourse analysis, the study highlighted the importance of understanding the different perspectives and discourses surrounding heritage management and how they can shape the decision-making process.

## **LIMITATIONS**

While the method choices used in this study have many strengths, there are also some potential limitations. Firstly, the qualitative social constructivist approach and synchronic discourse analysis rely heavily on the researcher's interpretation of data, which means that personal biases may influence the findings. However, by adopting a reflective approach throughout the research process, the researcher can mitigate this risk and ensure the results are as objective as possible (Fejes and Thornberg 2009). Secondly, the study's primary data source, the Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan, may create some limitations in terms of generalisability. While this document provides rich and detailed information about the

management practices in Phoenix Park, it may only partially capture the experiences and perspectives of some stakeholders involved in managing urban parks. Lastly, the study's focus on the social construction of knowledge around managing urban parks in Ireland may limit its applicability to other contexts. However, by exploring the different perspectives and discourses surrounding heritage management, the study provides valuable insights into how conflicting values can be negotiated to reach a consensus.



# CHAPTER IV: MANAGEMENT CONTEXT AND HISTORY OF PHOENIX PARK

This chapter offers a historical overview of the management of Irish heritage and a more in-depth presentation of Phoenix Park's management context and history. The Office of Public Works (OPW), a government agency responsible for managing the Park since 1860, was introduced. The chapter discusses the legislation and guidelines governing the maintenance and regulation of the Park and presents the Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan that was published by the OPW in 2011. The Plan includes a detailed history and description of the site, its legal and planning context, and its vision and strategic objectives for the 21st century. This chapter will give insights into the historical developments, policy changes, and challenges in conserving Ireland's heritage structures and natural resources.

## HERITAGE MANAGEMENT IN IRELAND

The management of Irish heritage has historically been shaped by British colonial settlement. The preferences of the colonial elite often influenced the construction of buildings, resulting in prominent architecture in urban regions and large estate houses outside the cities. The eminent structures in the country's urban centres were often viewed as symbols of colonial oppression, representing the dominance of the imperial state (Parkinson et al. 2016:40). After Ireland gained independence in 1922, preserving historic architecture was not widely acknowledged or prioritised. It was in the 19th century that conservation policies gradually developed. The National Monuments Advisory Council was established in the 1930s to increase the protection of national monuments. However, the council represented a narrow professional interpretation of heritage values (ibid. 2016:40).

Over time, the professional discourse on heritage management expanded to recognise that industrial and urban development posed a significant threat to Ireland's landscapes and towns. An Taisce (The National Trust for Ireland) was founded in 1948 by leading civil society members concerned about the negative impacts of modernisation and development (ibid.

2016:42). The political elite viewed it as a tool for nation-building, while professionals used it to reinforce their value system. The 1963 Local Government (Planning and Development) Act established local planning authorities and development control. Still, it also led to a conflict between the perceived public good and individual private property rights (ibid. 2016:43). A 1969 Foras Forbartha (Irish National Institute for Physical Planning and Construction Research) report recommended financial aid, heritage inventories, and a National Heritage Council. Still, the implementation was delayed due to the low priority given to heritage preservation. Eventually, a new National Heritage Council was formed in 1988 (ibid. 2016:44).

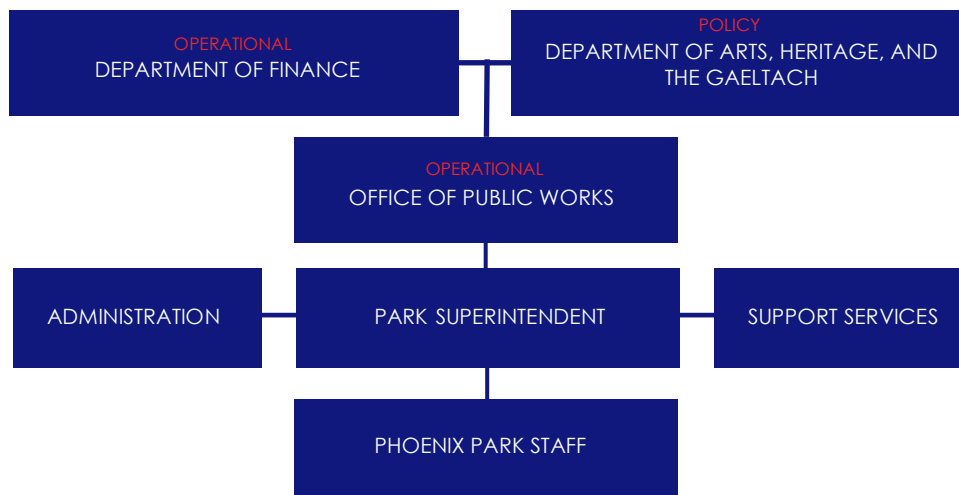
Ireland joined the Council of Europe in 1949 and the European Economic Community in 1973, establishing new international relationships and influences. The 1985 Granada Convention marked a turning point in Ireland's protection of architectural heritage, leading to significant changes in the development control system and the establishment of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage and a new Heritage Council. In the 1990s, funding cuts affected heritage preservation. However, there has been renewed interest in heritage for economic and social regeneration (ibid. 2016:44). Today, heritage regulation, financing, and operational management in the country are mediated primarily through government departments, with limited involvement from the local government. Ireland's non-governmental agencies and trust structures could be more robust by international standards. Unlike many European states, Ireland's heritage protection system is relatively new, with specific protection policies established as late as 2000 (ibid. 2016:45).

## MANAGEMENT CONTEXT OF PHOENIX PARK

Phoenix Park has a rich and complex history spanning over four centuries, and its management has undergone numerous changes. From its origins as a royal hunting ground to its current status as one of Europe's largest enclosed urban parks, Phoenix Park has witnessed significant developments and changes that have shaped its management context. The Office of Public Works (OPW) has managed the Park since 1860. The OPW is one of the Irish government's oldest and most influential operational arms. Today, the OPWs are responsible for Estate Portfolio Management, Heritage Services and Flood Risk Management. This includes caring for 780 heritage sites, including national monuments, historic parks, gardens, and buildings. OPW's responsibilities include developing policies for conserving each site's cultural and natural resources and providing infrastructure for public visitation. This is also the case for Phoenix Park (Office of Public Works 2019).

Two government ministers oversee the Phoenix Park as of 2011. The Minister for Finance handles operational policy and manages the Park through the Commissioners of Public Works. On the other hand, the Minister for Arts, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht is responsible for heritage policy, implementing the National Monuments and Wildlife Acts, and overseeing planning

legislation for developments that affect the Park's architectural, archaeological, and natural heritage. The OPW is responsible for employing an extensive workforce in the Park, including the Park Superintendent, who is accountable for day-to-day management and policy advice. The local park staff includes landscape and horticultural supervisors, general and office supervisors, craftspeople of various trades, including gardening and arboriculture staff, Park Rangers, general operatives, and guide staff (Office of Public Works 2011a:32-36).



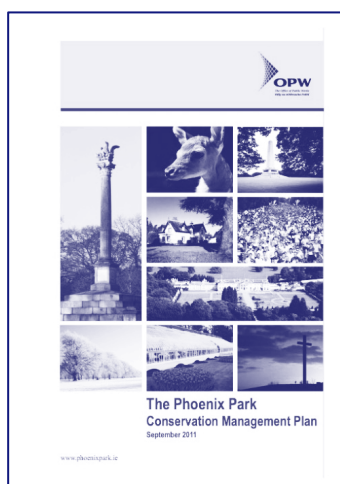
**Figure II.** Organisational Chart adapted from the Phoenix Parks Conservation Management Plan (2011).

The management of Phoenix Park must comply with various legislation, including building control, health and safety, and disability laws. The development within and around the Park is subject to the Planning and Development Acts from 2000 to 2010. The Planning and Development Act of 2000 covers architectural heritage under Part IV. The Dublin City Development Plan from 2005 to 2011 aims to preserve, enhance, and provide recreational amenities and open spaces. Phoenix Park is protected under the National Monuments Acts from 1930 to 2004. The Park has been a National Historic Park since its designation in 1986. This highlights the Park's historical elements but does not provide legal protection. The Phoenix Park Act of 1925 holds legislation for maintaining and regulating the site as a public park. International charters are also relevant to the Park's management, such as the UNESCO Recommendation concerning safeguarding of the Beauty and Character of Landscape and Sites (1962) and the 1985 Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (of which Ireland is a signatory) and ICOMOS Charters and Conventions, like The Venice Charter (1964) and Historic Gardens - The Florence Charter (1981). The documents mentioned above do, in turn, inform the Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan published in 2011.



**Figure III.** Legislation and guidelines for the maintenance and regulation of Phoenix Park.

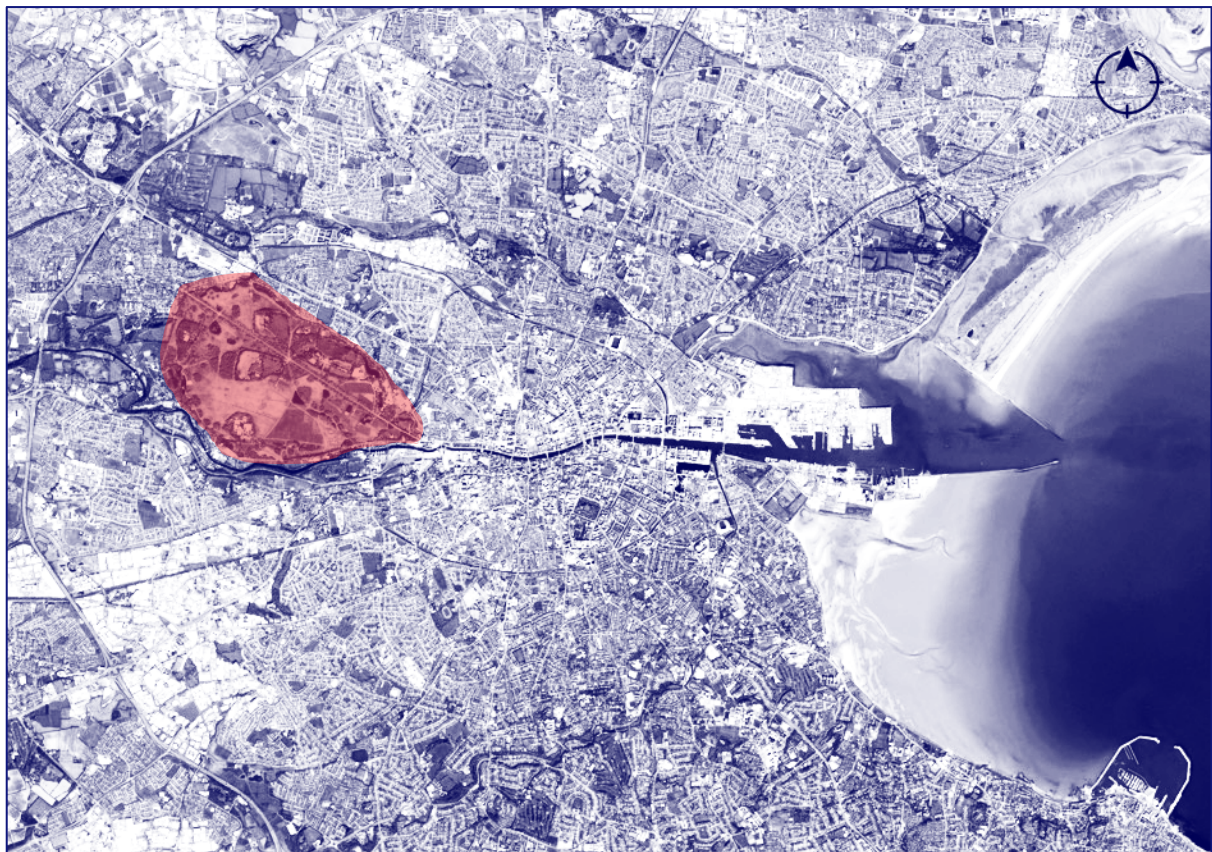
The Office of Public Works produces the Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan (2011). The purpose of the Plan was to provide guidelines and specific actions for the management of the Park to ensure its protection, conservation, and enhancement while also addressing contemporary needs. The Plan aimed to balance the unique landscape, environment, ecology, wildlife, built heritage, and vistas of Phoenix Park while also allowing for broader access and increasing opportunities for enjoyment, information, education, and recreation for now and into the future. The Plan is based on a range of baseline studies, which includes a Recreation and Planning Context Study, workshops held with stakeholders in 2007, and submissions from interested parties and the public. The preparation of the Plan was guided by The Conservation Management Plan Advisory Committee, comprising a team of experts in relevant disciplines such as built heritage, landscape architecture, conservation, and ecology. The document outlines Phoenix Park's history and legal and planning context. It also includes a vision and strategic objectives for the Park in the 21st century. The document highlights the principal issues, significance, pressures on the Park, policy issues and legal status. Topics included in the Plan were the landscape, nature, biodiversity, archaeology, architecture, access and movement, public use, and management. The Plan contains specific objectives, short-to-medium-term actions for each area, and maps to aid understanding.



**Figure IV.** Adapted cover page of the Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan (2011).

## HISTORY OF PHOENIX PARK

The Phoenix Park is a vast public urban park located west of Dublin's city centre and north of the River Liffey. Covering over 1,700 acres, it is one of the most significant landscapes of its kind in Europe and has a unique impact on the city's topography. The Park's significance lies in its historical continuity, vast scale, urban location, and tranquillity. The Park is a significant cultural and natural landmark that serves as a city park and a historic site. It is home to many public institutions, residences, and amenities, offering a backdrop for various activities. Given its location, it is heavily trafficked and used by people as a route between the city centre and suburbs. The growth of Dublin over the years has impacted the Park's role and potential, leading to changes in its position and use.



**Figure V.** Adapted satellite image of Dublin, Ireland, with the Phoenix Park marked in red (2020). ESA/Copernicus Sentinel-2 (CC BY-SA 3.0 IGO).

The site's history dates to the Stone Age, with evidence of settlements discovered on the Park's southern edge (McCullen 2011:13). The name "Phoenix" was first mentioned in 1619. Local historians believe that it comes from the Irish term "*fionn-uisce*", meaning "a well of clear water" (ibid. 2011:15). Ownership of the land came under the control of the King's representatives in Ireland in the 17th century (ibid. 2011:15). The construction of the Park began



in 1662 by order of Charles II. It was initially used exclusively by the British monarch for hunting deer. A boundary wall that stretched almost 9 kilometres was erected during this time (ibid. 2011:16-18).

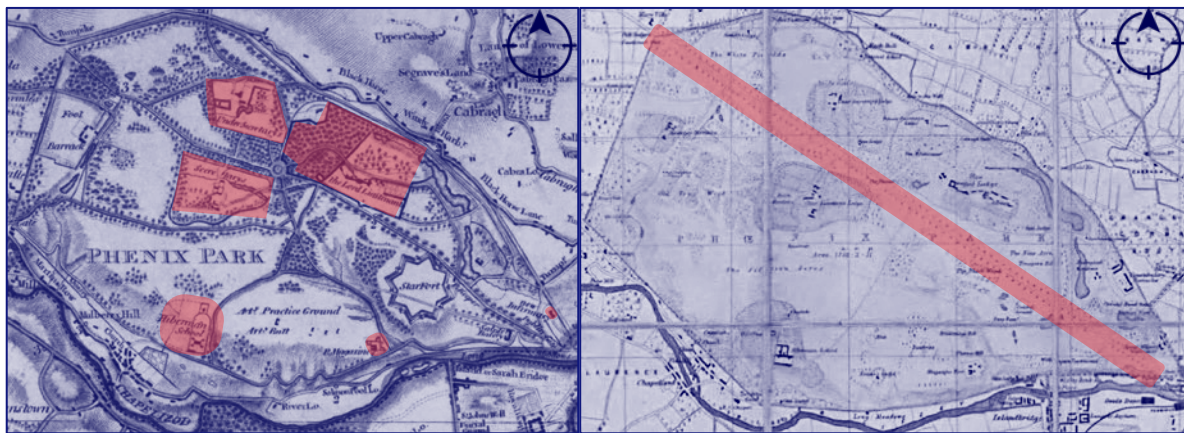


**Figure VI.** *A Prospect of the City of Dublin, from the Magazine Hill, in His Majesty's Phoenix Park, adapted from Mason, J. (1710-1783).*

During the 18th century, the Park was partially opened to the public for recreational purposes (ibid. 2011:50). However, most of the Park was dominated by military activity (ibid. 2011:34). Noteworthy fortifications and institutions include the Magazine Fort, the Royal Hibernian Military School, and the Royal Infirmary (ibid. 2011:3). The government took over lodges and lands previously used by Park Rangers and Keepers to provide homes for high-ranking government officials. Notable examples include the Viceregal Lodge, now known as Áras an Uachtaráin (Residence of the President), the Chief Secretary's Residence, now occupied by the U.S. Ambassador to Ireland, and the Under-Secretary's Residence, formerly the Papal Nunciature and now The Phoenix Park Visitor Centre (see *Figure VIII*).

At the beginning of the 19th century, the Park faced problems due to poor drainage and neglect. However, the situation improved when the Commissioners of Woods and Forests took over the management of the Park's public areas. They hired the architect and landscaper Decimus Burton to redesign the Park's layout, a project he worked on for almost 20 years, resulting in the most significant period of landscape transformation since the Park's inception. Burton's plans included constructing new gate lodges, planting trees, improving drainage,

restoring the boundary wall, and creating and repositioning the Park's roads (see *Figure IX*) (ibid. 2011:112-118).

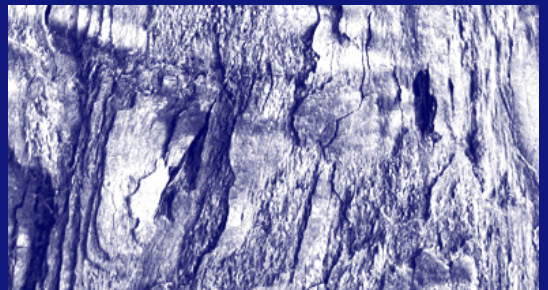


**Figure VII and Figure VIII.** Right: Taylor's map of the environs of Dublin, adapted from Taylor, J. (1816), with noteworthy fortifications and institutions marked in red. (CC BY-NC 2.5 CA). Left: Fraser's Map of Dublin and its Suburbs. Reduced From the Ordnance Survey with Additions to 1855, adapted from UCD Digital Library (2006), with the straightening of Chesterfield Avenue marked in red. (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

During the first decade of the 20th century, many trees and shrubs were replanted in the park. Throughout the century, the park hosted many important national and international events. These events were of religious, cultural, sporting, and charitable character. In 1979, the Papal Cross was erected in the park. Significant projects were completed towards the end of the century, such as re-erecting the entrance gate piers and linking walls at Parkgate Street. More facilities were provided to improve visitors' enjoyment and recreation (ibid. 2011:309-310).

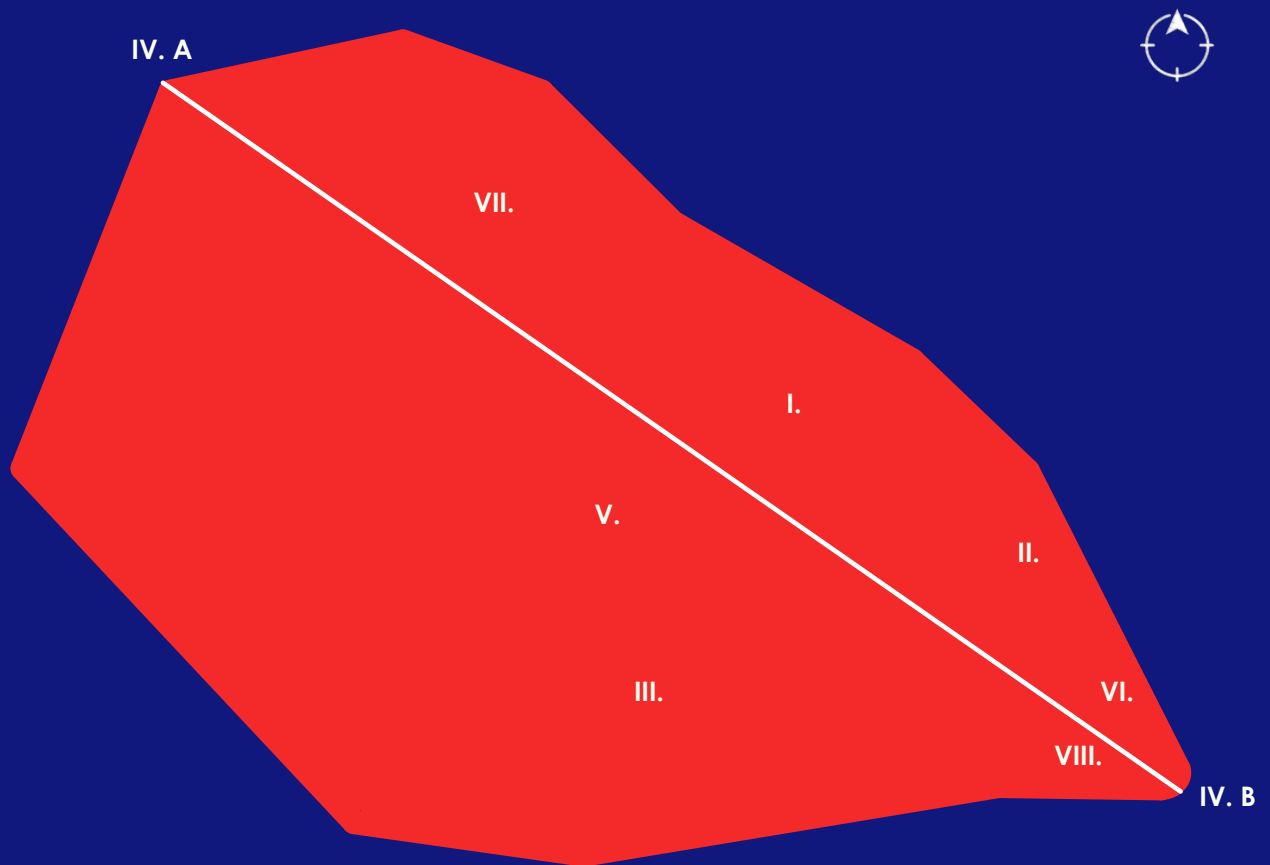
Today, the Park offers various services and facilities for visitors throughout the year. The public can access the main gates at Parkgate Street and Castleknock Gate while the side gates are open during the day. The Phoenix Park Visitor Centre is a popular attraction that offers an interpretive centre, an exhibition space, walled gardens, and a café, among other facilities. Áras an Uachtaráin (Residence of the President) is also located within the Park and open to visitors on specific dates. The Park is home to Dublin Zoo, which attracts over one million visitors annually. Other notable attractions within the Park include the Wellington Monument and the Victorian-style People's Gardens. Visitors can enjoy the views, seating areas, walking and cycling trails, and various sports facilities.





*Figure IX. Photo collage with various elements of the Phoenix Park, taken by the author in November 2022.*





**Figure X.** Map of the Phoenix Park with a selection of amenities marked out in white, made by the author.

- I.    ÁRAS AN UACHTARÁIN
- II.   DUBLIN ZOO
- III.  FOOTBALL AND HURLING FIELD
- IV.  CASTLEKNOCK (A) AND PARKGATE STREET (B) GATE
- V.    PAPAL CROSS
- VI.  PEOPLE'S GARDEN
- VII.  PHOENIX PARK VISITOR CENTRE
- VIII. WELLINGTON TESTAMONIAL

# CHAPTER V: RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of a synchronic discourse analysis of the Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan (CMP) published in 2011. The study examined the alignment between the Plan and three parallel discourses on heritage management, adapted from Ashworth's (2011) and Jensen et al. (2017) framework. These three discourses are preservation, conservation, and heritage planning. The study investigated the presence of these discourses in the language used to describe heritage, goals and objectives, and the management techniques employed in the Plan. The analysis identified various perspectives on preserving built heritage, resources, and future consumer demand. The results provide insights into Ireland's discourses on heritage management and the values that guide them.

## HERITAGE AS PRESERVATION

The Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for Phoenix Park overwhelmingly mentions heritage in the built environment context. The document has a dedicated chapter that outlines the Park's objectives for its built heritage, underscoring the significance of this aspect. Two of the Plan's objectives aim to "protect and conserve the historic landscape character" and "the historic setting and conserve the archaeological and architectural heritage" (Office of Public Works, 2011a:13). These objectives favour a perspective on significance as intrinsically fixed in the built fabric, which stipulates that the past can be preserved in the built environment. The Plan also refers to heritage legislation to support its stances on heritage, stating that "it is considered good conservation practice" to do so (ibid. 2011a:36).

The CMP states that socioeconomic and spatial changes constantly threaten the heritage of Phoenix Park. For instance, the Plan notes that "growth and development of Dublin has significantly increased pressures on The Phoenix Park, both for new development and through increased levels of use" (ibid. 2011a:16). Contemporary uses of the Park as a venue for various events threaten the Park's historic authenticity and integrity. Therefore, the management of the Park should "facilitate appropriate use of this valuable resource" (ibid. 2011a:16). From this

perspective, the Park's value as a resource must be balanced against the need for preservation, with the CMP stating that "priority must be accorded to the conservation of the landscape, even where this restricts or limits the achievement of other objectives relating to the Park" (ibid. 2011a:12).

The historic landscape referred to in the CMP is centred around elements maintained from and influenced by the era between 1750 and 1880. For example, the Park's essential character lies in its "designed landscape, derived from a 17th-century deer park and altered in the 19th century" (ibid. 2011a:16). The CMP prioritises the conservation of the built heritage as an approach to managing the historical past. The Plan's statements indicate that relevant values for the Park are authenticity and integrity. This gives the impression that the Plan only wishes to frame the site in ways that preserve its historical integrity, giving the Park a narrow narrative. These statements illustrate interpretations of age and continuity.

The CMP outlines the vision for Phoenix Park, which combines "its protection, conservation and, where appropriate, restoration as an essential and unique historic landscape with the facilitation of appropriate access and use through the accommodation of change in a planned, rational manner" (ibid. 2011a:12). The language used by the document implies that conservation professionals are the most qualified to manage the heritage site. The terms used suggest that their specialised knowledge is necessary for adequately protecting and managing these sites. For instance, "protection" and "restoration" indicate that conservation professionals have expertise in safeguarding heritage sites from damage and restoring them to their original state. Similarly, words like "appropriate" and "rational" suggest that conservation professionals are uniquely equipped to decide on the necessary actions for effectively managing heritage sites.

To summarise, the CMP presents a heritage management approach that focuses on preserving built heritage with concerns for the historical past. According to the Plan, the value of the Park lies in its historical authenticity and integrity, and it is essential to weigh its significance as a resource against the need for preservation. The CMP recognises that socioeconomic and spatial changes constantly threaten the heritage of Phoenix Park. The Plan's language suggests that only conservation professionals can appropriately manage heritage sites, reinforcing a heritage narrative focused on historical value.

## **HERITAGE AS CONSERVATION**

The CMP expresses an approach guided by a resource perspective, evident in its objectives. The Plan aspire to facilitate an "appropriate mix of recreational use and public appreciation" and "public access and sustainable use of resources" while "protecting the landscape and infrastructure of Phoenix Park" (ibid. 2011a:13). These objectives prioritise the protection of the historic landscape while promoting the Park's development in a way that

preserves its traditional appearance. Emphasis is put on protecting tangible heritage while maintaining the Park's usefulness. The CMP's planning objectives highlight how the park management is committed to integrating institutional development processes to safeguard and preserve Phoenix Park. The Plan states that the "level of statutory protection for The Phoenix Park is a primary concern" (ibid. 2011a:18). The CMP also recognises the site as a non-renewable resource requiring a sustainable heritage management approach. The CMP expresses the need to conserve the Park's "natural plant and animal species along with their habitats while improving biodiversity" and maintain "peace and tranquillity" (ibid. 2011a:13). These statements suggest that the Park's management must also look to future needs.

The Phoenix Park Visitor Centre is a notable example of the CMP's resource perspective in practice. The Center underwent restoration and additional building in the 1990s, incorporating modern materials with older stone structures (ibid. 2011a:74). The result is a facility with an interpretive centre, café, and exhibition space, to name a few amenities. The design incorporates sustainable materials such as Irish timber and jute and considers the natural environment by including natural light and ventilation while minimising its impact on the Park. The contemporary transformations of the built heritage integrate the concept of change into the care and continuity of managing the site.

The CMP acknowledges that Dublin's growth and development have put significant pressure on the Park, both through new construction and increased usage (ibid. 2011a:16). While the Plan takes a preservationist approach, it also presents another approach that views change as an opportunity to explore new partnerships and activities that prioritise the protection of the Park's landscape while achieving economic development. A central theme is the integration of tourism and the history of the Park as a unified resource. This approach is evident in the statement that the Park's management should "liaise and consult with interested and relevant parties and organisations" (ibid. 2011a:13).

The CMP invites a broader narrative through various new and extended site uses, such as exhibitions at the Visitor Centre and workshops arranged with local stakeholders in preparation for the CMP (ibid. 2011a:3;9). Another new use of the Park is an "imaginative educational programme of activities and guided tours" for children and adult visitors, including residents (ibid. 2011a:9). These actions suggest a new site branding, making the Park accessible to new groups and experiences while preserving its historic integrity. These activities link the Park with other tourist sites and the local cultural tourism network.

In summary, the CMP offers a heritage management approach based on a resource perspective. It aims to facilitate recreational use and public appreciation while safeguarding the landscape and infrastructure. Integrating tourism and the history of Phoenix Park as a unified resource while considering economic and environmental values is essential. The Phoenix Park Visitor Centre is a prime example of this approach in practice. It demonstrates a shift towards integrating heritage management into contemporary development processes.

## HERITAGE AS HERITAGE PLANNING

The first chapter of the CMP states that the Park's management "must ...address challenges and opportunities arising from the inevitability of change" (ibid. 2011:6). The statement highlights the need for the Park's management to be proactive in addressing challenges and opportunities that arise from the inevitability of change. It also implies that managing heritage is not only about protecting it but also about considering future consumer demand and managing it accordingly. The CMP's emphasis on managing change suggests that adopting a forward-thinking approach to managing heritage is critical to long-term sustainability.

The Plan prioritises preserving and conserving the Parks landscape in development matters. However, it also presents another approach that views change as inevitable and an opportunity to explore extended use options and transformations of the site. The CMP describes the Park as a "place where people go to experience heritage" (ibid. 2011a:12). This implies prioritising more inclusive values from a democratic point of view. In other words, the meaning of heritage is not dependent on historical truth or inherent authenticity but on the contemporary narrative associated with it.

The CMP recognises the need to incorporate local narratives into heritage management to foster community ownership and responsibility towards the Park's heritage. This is illustrated in the objective for the Park's management to consult with "stakeholders and members of the public about the conservation of The Phoenix Park" (ibid. 2011a:7). The Plan also does this by stating the Park's significance as a "resource for the people of Dublin... together with visitors to the city", who use it for various recreational, cultural, and sporting activities (ibid. 2011a:16). Furthermore, the CMP recognises the Park's "high level of public interest and appreciation" (ibid. 2011a:16). This suggests an aim to create an open and inviting atmosphere at the site, with a focus on the contemporary use of the site and the everyday needs of the local community and other park visitors.

One of the ways the Plan incorporates local narratives is by using the Phoenix Park Visitor Centre as a venue and backdrop for several events, with several exhibitions featuring the people who have lived and worked in the Park and their history. These narratives incorporate the heritage of the past and present of the region and the local community, emphasising the existing use and local relationships to the Park and the exploration of extended-use options. Using heritage in this manner allows for the needs of the present to be visible (ibid. 2011a:74). These activities allow for a rebranding of the history of Phoenix Park by adding new perspectives. The activities also link the Park to other existing tourist sites.

The CMP also recognises the importance of involving local stakeholders in the heritage management process. For example, in 2007, workshops were facilitated for local stakeholders to inform the project management team and the preparation for the Conservation Management Plan. Representatives from a variety of organisations, including the Office of

Public Works, Cycling Ireland, Irish Deer Society, An Taisce (The National Trust for Ireland), UCD (University College Dublin), Dublin City Council, Phoenix Park Visitor Centre, and several community development groups attended these workshops (Office of Public Works 2011b:93). This practical and symbolic incorporation of the local community allows for a more inclusive approach to heritage management.

To summarise, the CMP presents a heritage management approach emphasising the need to proactively manage the Park's heritage, considering the inevitability of change and future consumer demand. This discourse recognises the importance of incorporating local narratives and involving local stakeholders in heritage management. The document presents an approach that views change as an opportunity to explore extended use options and transformations of the site. It highlights the importance of adopting a forward-thinking approach to managing heritage for long-term sustainability.





**Figure XI.** Photo collage with various elements of the Phoenix Park, taken by the author in November 2022.

## CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the thesis's results, implications, and limitations to provide insights into the values and discourses surrounding heritage management in an Irish context. A discourse analysis of the Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan (2011) was conducted to examine the values and discourses on heritage management. The thesis results showed that core values and priorities play a central role in different approaches towards heritage management. Two themes mediating values within the Plan were identified and discussed under *Values as bridges* and *Tangible values and continuity*. The implications of the research include informing the development of more inclusive and effective heritage management policies. Finally, a concluding summary is provided.

### VALUES AS BRIDGES

A synchronic discourse analysis of the Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan (2011) was applied to examine the values and discourses on heritage management constructed and activated and how they interacted. The thesis results demonstrated how core values and priorities play a central role in different approaches towards heritage management. These values can either be shared or represent conflicting interests. When faced with multiple interests in managing and defining heritage, the values must be negotiated to avoid conflicts. The thesis departed from Overmennis and Meig's (2014) idea of "bridging values", which are shared values that can act as bridges, allowing for consensus without compromising the core values.

The CMP highlights the significance of local heritage stories in defining the heritage of the Park. The Plan recognises the value of regional heritage in strengthening the site's relevance in the local community, which is evident in its statement that the Park is a significant resource for the people of Dublin. This approach acknowledges the importance of local participation in managing the Park and values heritage's continuous and living aspects. Like the heritage planning discourse, involving local narratives is crucial as it highlights the significance of



community participation and knowledge. This approach eliminates the conventional hierarchy of experts and non-experts and promotes collaboration between residents and experts. By combining the expertise of professionals with the stories and memories of local inhabitants and not just considering the historical or economic aspects, more comprehensive plans can be developed that accurately reflect the diverse values individuals and groups attach to heritage.

Both the conservation and heritage planning discourses highly value the Park's heritage. However, there are varying perspectives on heritage that lead to different views. The conservation discourse views heritage as a resource for tourism and place-branding due to the Park's historical significance. In contrast, the heritage planning discourse considers heritage a resource for re-branding the Park to adapt to present and future needs. Despite their differing strategies, both discourses utilise the heritage stories of the Park to promote local tourism. The resource perspective is a common ground, emphasising the importance of present-day needs, a central tenet of both discourses. The shared values between the two perspectives help bridge the gap between the approaches to heritage management. They can serve as a basis for further collaboration between the discourses.

The CMP's approach to tangible heritage values reveals different approaches to development. The document states that the Park is a valuable resource for Dublin residents and visitors, offering a broad range of recreational, cultural, and sporting activities and a scientific knowledge source, per the conservation discourse. However, the CMP also states that the Park faces challenges due to the city's growth and the increasing demand for recreational facilities, which puts its historical integrity at risk, per the preservation discourse. The conflicting statements reveal interpretations of age and continuity that depart from different tangible heritage assumptions.

In summary, core values and priorities play a central role in different approaches towards heritage management and how these values can be shared or represent conflicting interests. The CMP recognises the value of regional heritage in strengthening the site's relevance in the local community and acknowledges the importance of local participation in managing the Park. The conservation and heritage planning discourses highly value the Park's heritage, but varying perspectives on heritage lead to different views. The CMP's approach to tangible heritage values reveals different approaches to development.

## **TANGIBLE VALUES AND CONTINUITY**

The tangible values of the heritage is another debated theme which reveals different approaches within the Conservation management plan. Within the CMP, conflicting values among the actors are exposed. Several restorations and changes have occurred since the Park's Construction, and the New developments are expressed to strengthen the site's heritage

values. By emphasising the historical continuity of the Park's built environment, it is perceived as a link between the tangible past of the Park and the intangible heritage practices of the Park. This approach to development in the Park allows them to incorporate contemporary substantial transformation as part of a continuous heritage.

There are different opinions regarding the value of new developments in the Park. While the conservation and heritage planning discourses argue that these developments are beneficial, the preservation discourse believes they are harmful. According to the preservationist views, the building fabric and the newer historic restorations of the Park have more value than what new developments can bring to the site. The conflicting statements reveal differing interpretations of age and continuity, with the discourses based on different assumptions about tangible heritage. The practice of continuous change of tangible heritage clashes with the approach that focuses on protecting the Park's historic building fabric.

The preservation discourse's value of the tangible fabric of the Park is firmly rooted in its historical past. Thus, new material additions are interpreted as foreign additions to the site rather than part of a continuous heritage. The particular context of Phoenix Park exposes how specific core values of the preservation- and heritage planning discourse are difficult to merge. Furthermore, the clash of discourses shows how tangible heritage values are separated from the intangible values and present uses of heritage within the preservation discourse. Another example of the difficulty of balancing tangible and intangible values is illustrated through the ambiguity of the CMP to the concept of heritage. The scepticism may stem from the fear that the intangible values and use of the Park disregard the protection of tangible features.

One aspect that makes the disagreement between the two discourses particularly evident is their statements and actions concerning heritage. Different levels of tangible transformation are permitted depending on the context and the specific heritage element of the Park, as stated by the Plan. Although the arguments are seen as straightforward by the discourse that expresses them, they are perceived as uncertain by parallel discourses. Communicating the context-dependent aspects that guide management decisions between stakeholders seems challenging. Due to these communication issues, the preservation discourse's flexible approach is also interpreted as uncertain by the heritage planning discourse.

To summarise, the discourse surrounding the tangible values and continuity of the heritage in Phoenix Park reveals conflicting opinions and approaches. While the heritage planning discourse emphasises historical continuity and allows for contemporary transformation, the preservation discourse values the tangible fabric of the Park rooted in its historical past. The clash of discourses highlights the difficulty of merging tangible and intangible heritage values and communicating context-dependent aspects between stakeholders.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS**

The study's findings provide valuable insights into the various values associated with heritage and how different discourses surrounding heritage management interact. It highlights the importance of shared values and the need to negotiate conflicting interests to avoid conflicts. This research also underscores the significance of considering both tangible and intangible values in heritage management and the importance of local participation and knowledge. The practical applications of this research are diverse. The findings can inform heritage management policies and practices, particularly in Ireland. The study's emphasis on shared values and collaboration between stakeholders can help develop more comprehensive and inclusive heritage management plans that reflect the diverse values different people and groups attach to heritage. The research's focus on local participation and knowledge can help promote community involvement in heritage management, encouraging greater engagement and ownership of heritage resources. This research can help heritage managers, policymakers, and other stakeholders develop more effective and sustainable strategies for managing heritage resources while respecting different stakeholders' diverse values and interests.

## **LIMITATIONS AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Although the thesis results cannot be generalised, several essential aspects of the study are worth noting. Firstly, it provides valuable insights into heritage management in Ireland, particularly the interplay between various discourses and values associated with heritage. These insights serve as a starting point for further research that examines similar issues in other contexts. Additionally, the study highlights the significance of considering local perspectives and narratives in heritage management, thereby making a valuable contribution to the field. Secondly, the study focuses on the Phoenix Park Conservation Management Plan (2011) and comprehensively analyses a specific document and its interaction with heritage management discourses. Although the sample size is limited, the in-depth analysis of the document offers a comprehensive understanding of the various discourses and values associated with heritage management in the Irish context. Thirdly, the study uses the synchronic discourse analysis methodology, which provides a unique perspective on heritage management and its interaction with different discourses. Although this methodology may not apply to specific research questions or contexts, it offers a valuable approach to examining complex issues related to heritage management. Lastly, the researcher encountered time and scope constraints during the research process. Nevertheless, these limitations also provide an opportunity for future research. For instance, managers and practitioners in heritage

management could be invited to participate as co-creators in similar research to provide valuable insights and experiences.

## **CONCLUDING SUMMARY**

In conclusion, this thesis has shed light on the values and discourses that shape the heritage management of Phoenix Park. The study has identified parallel discourses on heritage, reflecting shared and diverging perspectives on managing the past. The findings highlight the importance of shared values, negotiation of conflicting interests, and local participation and knowledge in heritage management. Specifically, the research offers practical applications for informing heritage management policies and practices and promoting community involvement in heritage management. Although the study's limitations include time and scope constraints, the insights gained from this research can serve as a starting point for future studies on similar topics in other contexts. The study's significance lies in its contribution to the broader field of heritage management by providing valuable insights into the discourses that shape heritage management in Ireland. By emphasising the importance of shared values and stakeholder collaboration, the implications drawn from this study can serve as a basis for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers to develop better tools and guidance to effectively manage heritage while involving local communities and stakeholders in decision-making processes.



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