

"The Olympic Park model, its opportunities and challenges: reflections on Sydney, Beijing and London"



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Paper Abstract

Along with the long history of the Olympic movement, the Olympic Park - with its concentration of sports stadia - has evolved as a unique urban quarter. The Olympic Park has been favoured as the setting for these four-yearly global events by both the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and host cities, due to the practicality of managing and planning the complexity of the Olympic Games. Building the Olympic Park as a focal point of the Games has also contributed to the creation of a central focal point associated with various messages of the host city. Construction of the Olympic Park is also greatly associated with the host city's aspiration of regenerating post-industrial site, and various host cities employed it as a trigger to implement massive urban regeneration.

Nevertheless, the legacy of the Olympic Park is often problematic, and how such an Olympic Park can subsequently be transformed from the global competition field for the Games to a place satisfying more local needs is a critical issue for the IOC as much as the host city. In particular, concerns relate to the financial viability and social accessibility of the post-Olympic Park. In response to this, recent Olympic cities have started to look at an alternative way of transforming the post-Olympic Park from a sport dominated precinct to a more mixed-use urban quarter. Sydney, Beijing and London constructed (or is constructing) the identical Olympic Park for the Olympic Games, but unlike the previous Olympic Parks, these cities intend to transform the Olympic Park into a more complex urban precinct where sports and other commercial / residential functions are included. Mixed-use urban development has been considered as the agent of urban sustainability, since it has a great potential to bring the social and economic diversity in a designated place. But does this model also work for the sustainability of the Olympic Park?

The paper will examine fundamental opportunities and constraints in creating the Olympic Park for the host city in the first place, and then discuss further possibility of the mixed-use Olympic Park model, referring to the case in Sydney, Beijing and London.

About the Speaker – a brief CV

After obtaining a Master of Architecture from Waseda University (Tokyo, Japan), Hiromasa was involved in a range of international architectural / urban design projects, and received various prizes for his design work. Since 2006, Hiromasa has been undertaking his PhD Research on "the legacy of Olympics for the City" at the Cities Programme in the London School Economics. He was awarded a research grant by the International Olympic Committee, and also selected as a Visiting Research Fellow by the Australian Centre for Olympic Studies in 2008.