Sustainable Regeneration of Former Military Sites
Sustainable Regeneration of Former Military Sites

*Sustainable Regeneration of Former Military Sites* is the first book to analyze a profound land use change happening all over the world: the search for sustainable futures for property formerly dedicated to national defense now becoming redundant, disposed of and redeveloped. The new military necessity for rapid flexible response requires quite different physical resources from the massive fixed positions of the Cold War, with huge tracts of land and buildings looking for new uses.

The transition from military to civilian life for these complex, contaminated, isolated, heritage laden and often contested sites far from easy. There is very little systematic analysis of what follows base closures, leaving communities, governments, developers, and planners experimenting with untested land use configurations, partnership structures, and financing strategies.

With twelve case studies drawn from different countries, *Sustainable Regeneration of Former Military Sites* enables the diverse stakeholders in these projects to discover unique opportunities for reuse and learn from others’ experiences of successful regeneration.

**Samer Bagaeen** is a town planning academic, Trustee of the Royal Town Planning Institute, Distinguished Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, Trustee of the Town and Country Planning Association, Member of the Urban Land Institute and Academician of the Academy of Urbanism. He writes on community-university engagement, urban governance and sustainable regeneration.

**Celia Clark**’s articles and conference papers document the international transition of former defence sites to civilian uses. She initiated regional professional seminars and biennial international conferences on Defence Sites Heritage and Future for academics, built environment professionals, local governments and local communities to exchange experience of their successful regeneration.
Bagaeen and Clark present a unique collection of state-of-the-art case studies on the regeneration and re-use of military brownfields. This book explores practices from around the world to provide rich and new insights into how to transform sites once used for military purposes into new, and often innovative civilian uses. It usefully provides insights in to how to do this, set within wider understandings of the processes that bring about the redundancy of defence lands.

Gordon Dabinett, Professor of Regional Studies, University of Sheffield, UK

This book offers fascinating insights into the challenges and opportunities involved in transforming redundant military sites into beneficial new uses. Rich comparative evidence from across the world ensures that the book will make an important contribution to the brownfield literature.

David Adams, Ian Mactaggart Chair of Property and Urban Studies, University of Glasgow, UK

Opportunities to reuse former defence estate, arising from a local peace dividend or a geopolitical shift, are often eagerly grasped by the public and private sectors. Former airfields, old barrack sites, and even large naval bases have been brought back to life through local or national regeneration efforts. In that way, demand for housing or new employment may be met through successful redevelopment. This new volume by Bageean and Clark brings together a collection of reviews and case studies examining the sustainable regeneration of military brownfields, written by researchers and by practitioners. It shines a light on the contexts in which reuse happens and the challenges it faces, drawing out crucial lessons for future practice.

Professor Nick Gallent, Head of the Bartlett School of Planning, University College London, UK

As the geopolitical world and military strategies of nations change, so the physical remnants of defence are left behind. Military and defense sites are littered across countries, lying idle but serving as assets that can be drawn upon to contribute to ongoing development and infrastructure needs. This volume provides a very welcome contribution to the study and practise of military and defence base regeneration across the globe. Written by internationally renowned scholars, the book sets out some key challenges and opportunities that academics and practitioners can learn from.

Professor Mark Tewdwr-Jones FAcSS FRGS FRTPI FRSA, Director, Newcastle City Futures, Newcastle University, UK
Routledge Research in Planning and Urban Design
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Sustainable Regeneration of Former Military Sites
Edited by
Samer Bagaeen and Celia Clark
This book is dedicated to both of our families, especially to Deane, Amera, Olivia and Victor
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When we first approached Routledge in 2013 about putting together this volume, we argued, in making the case for the book, that tracking military base redevelopment is important for communities and in the main overlooked in the academic literature. This remains the case today. The subject matter continues to be of interest to the military and to civilian communities. In October 2015, in the United States, Barack Obama vetoed the fiscal 2016 Defense Authorization Bill, insisting that American lawmakers pass a budget that properly funds national security as well as economic security. This latter, along with regeneration, are two areas highlighted through the case studies in this book. Our belief is that, as built-environment professionals working in the myriad spheres noted in this book, need to look, learn and share our and others’ experiences when it comes to regenerating former military sites. This book is the first step in that direction.

Recent publications note how there is very little systematic knowledge of what follows base closure. We believe that this omission is significant: planning and redevelopment agencies are unable to draw on similar communities’ experiences or take national trends into account because no systematic information or established prototype exists for what works. Communities, local and central government, developers, designers and planners are left experimenting with untested land-use configurations, partnership structures and implementation and financing strategies. The chapters in this book show how many professionals are working across boundaries in order to bring about sustainable regeneration and economic development, which we believe go hand in hand.

Furthermore, this topic will remain the subject of considerable interest as more military land becomes surplus to requirements in response to geopolitical and economic change and developments in military technology. While countries in countries such as the United States have a national lobbying group of former defense-dependent communities to share experience, most other countries do not, and this book is a contribution toward that endeavor, despite the many differences in governance, local government, planning, the property sector, public consultation mechanisms and outcomes.
Preface and guide to the book

Samer Bagaeen and Celia Clark

This book identifies the factors that contribute to successful sustainable regeneration of former military and defense sites, which might be defined as the creation of new, long-lasting economic, social and cultural activity to replace the jobs of the soldiers, sailors, airmen and civilian staff who once worked there, as well as adaptive reuse or reconfiguration of the surviving structures and the addition of new ones to house sustainable activities.

This book is aimed at the wide range of professional people involved in the process of bringing military sites back into civilian use. They are too numerous to be named here but they include planners, architects, surveyors, developers and financiers, community groups, heritage organizations and, more importantly, the military itself.

Serving as an introduction to this volume, the first chapter sets the scene for the reader by introducing some of the issues and debates around the sustainable regeneration for former military sites. It also sets out the purpose and scope of the book, reviews the subject and connects it to broader fields of study including, in addition to planning and urban studies, heritage and conservation, the subjects of politics and war studies.

Our aim is to inform economic, environmental and social decision-making on the futures for these special sites. It is aimed at policy-makers, practitioners and academics. Our intention here is that the book is seen by the reader and user as a first principles/handbook informing ongoing redevelopment policy that will most likely go on to influence economic, environmental, urban and political processes around the world. Specifically, the book’s international case studies explore and categorize redevelopment projects of former military sites as case studies in brownfield regeneration to create a portrait of global redevelopment activity of interest to a wide global readership interested in the subject areas of development, regeneration and the military.

We report on some of the existing mechanisms to assist successful reuse of similar sites. These include EU projects linking similar formerly defense-dependent communities in order to exchange experience such as
Network Demilitarized, and several specifically focused on former naval bases: the RENDOC network of historic dockyard managements, which held two important European conferences in Chatham and Karlskrona and a spin-off, NAVARCH, which produced a four-language description of typical dockyard structures in France, England, Finland and Sweden. The SHARP project, linking historic arsenals including Woolwich in London produced a good-practice guide for the repurposing of historic defense sites.

The book is notionally divided into two parts. The first, comprising Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, considers issues around background and policy looking at the experience of the United States’s Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) program and the experience of the Ministry of Defence and its various arm’s-length bodies in the United Kingdom. This part also examines aspects related to community engagement with base and military sites regeneration programs. The reader is invited here to reflect on the power relationships in the redevelopment process and how local communities and interests can take the driving seat to determine the land-use outcomes and to share experience via organizations such as the United States Association of Defense Communities and others.

The second part of the book, from Chapter 6 onwards, comprises a series of case studies of military sites and the processes around their regeneration. In putting together this volume, we have attempted to address consistency challenges across all of the case studies by allowing the individual authors to address key aspects of the process, for example, location, effects of the disposal process, long/short timescales, international links, community engagement and preserving heritage. We have also attempted to ensure that the case studies are representative of the challenges and opportunities facing different kinds of communities.

It is our hope that the readers will find the case studies well illustrated as in-depth examples of international projects around the reuse of former military sites. They illustrate the myriad agents involved in the process – many more than in ordinary land-use change – and their interaction.

Each case study makes a contribution to key aspects of the process: location, challenges to sustainable reuse, contamination, remoteness/inner-city location, who pays for investment in new infrastructure, the interplay of participants, long/short timescales, international links and eventual land uses. The authors come from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines including heritage, planning, architecture, landscape architecture, economic development, environmental management and real estate development. Some of the authors are current and former officers in the US Navy and Marine Corps.

We also note how in the redevelopment of publicly owned land, particular ethical and policy questions arise. These are also addressed through the case studies. Particular attention is also given to the following
Preface and guide to the book

questions: Where does the public interest in these disposals lie? Is there a conflict between the national and the local public interest? How can economic, environmental, social and cultural sustainability be achieved on these complex and unusual sites? And, ultimately, how do different countries’ systems of reducing surplus military land impact on the eventual land uses and site reuse?
1 Framing military brownfields as a catalyst for urban regeneration

Samer Bagaeen

All over the world – driven by recession, defense cuts or expansion in military spending, changes in military technology, geopolitics and finance ministries’ expectations of financial return – property dedicated to national defense, sometimes for centuries, is becoming redundant and is being disposed of and redeveloped. In the context of reductions in defense spending, changing requirements for defense estate property result in defense ministries combining formerly separate facilities for training, education, catering and depots onto core, tri-service sites. Wars still occur, but the new military necessity for rapid flexible response requires quite different physical resources from the massive fixed positions of the Cold War, rendering huge tracts of land and buildings – some of them historic, contaminated, in central urban areas or remote – redundant and looking for new uses.

The redundancy process has accelerated over the last 20 years. The redevelopment of defense sites is a complex planning challenge, differing from ordinary changes of use because of the unusually wide range of interested stakeholders and their expectations. In the United Kingdom (UK) in particular and in many countries around the world, bringing these brownfield sites back into active use has taken on a new urgency among policymakers, developers, campaigning organizations and other stakeholders in the development process in order to address a growing housing crisis (O’Brien and Henderson 2015). In terms of the academic and policy literature on brownfield regeneration, very little of this literature is about military brownfields. One good example is Dixon et al.’s Sustainable Brownfield Regeneration: Liveable Places from Problem Spaces (2007), which examines how brownfield regeneration has become a major policy driver in the UK and other developed countries, but without explicit reference to those vacated by the military.

Brownfield regeneration is seen as the panacea needed to address a national housing shortage in the UK (CPRE 2014). Williams et al. (2015: 379) report on the “long-standing rationale in favour of focusing new development within existing cities, mainly on brownfield land”. Previously developed land, or brownfield land, is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The UK’s
The National Land Use Database (NLUD) defines vacant land as previously developed land that is now vacant and could be redeveloped without treatment where treatment includes any of the following: demolition, clearing of fixed structures or foundations, decontamination and leveling.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) in the UK has had, and, as land reverts to civilian uses, continues to have, a substantial impact on the patterns of settlements, both urban and rural, even though it is not a civilian planning authority. Greed and Johnson (2014: 25) note that it did so because it had rights over “vast areas of land for training” and because “it is not subject to the normal planning control for its own activities”. The MoD could, Greed and Johnson point out, “build service housing in the countryside without going through normal planning procedures” (2014: 25). Special provisions could also apply for the disposal of forces housing and army camps in countryside areas (2014: 48). This was the case, of course, until 2006 when provisions to remove Crown immunity from planning controls were included in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the 2004 Act). Hart (2015: 177) explains how Part 7 of the 2004 Act “brought an end to Crown immunity from planning control”. The countryside in some parts of the UK is particularly prone to defense activities – the MoD owns, for example, over 90,000 acres of forestry and over 10 percent of the land mass of the English county of Wiltshire (Greed and Johnson 2014: 181).

In addition to sites in the countryside, urban defense sites are proving quite lucrative (see Wright 2015). Writing for the Sunday Times, Wright reports on how the “great Ministry of Defence property sell-off is kick-starting a wave of residential schemes steeped in military history”. The apartments she refers to, in the Old War Office Building, on Whitehall in London, close to the heart of the UK government, will sell at between £4 million and £35 million to start with, as subsequent sales may result in higher prices given the nature of the London property market.

No matter where we look, and the case studies in this book are no exception, the state appears to be heavily involved in the process of converting former military sites into civilian use. This is a natural outcome given that the state is the landowner in the case of most of these sites. Where this becomes of particular interest to the state is when a landownership portfolio is in highly lucrative and desirable locations, and when the uplift in land value can generate much-needed income for the state. Hooks and Getz (1998) highlight a growing interest and body of evidence pointing toward the distinctiveness of the state’s political and military policies and the impact of these policies on economic processes on the sites concerned. More recently, others such as Doussard (2014) have focused on the windfall economic gains, or losses, that can ensue from military realignment and base closure and redevelopment. In the United States, individual states are often dependent on their ability to raise income from properties through taxation. When military sites are therefore set for closure, it has