Dormancy in two regional cities and its relevance to the growth of Sydney
(The cases of Honeysuckle, Newcastle; Palmer Street, Townsville and Penrith)

Abstract:
The dormant cityscape continues to haunt many of our burgeoning, high growth cities. Former port lands, ‘brownfield’ sites and degraded suburban areas persist in these states for what appears to be decades without any apparent revival. Despite the usual forms of planning, zoning and controls they appear to display obstinacy over large time periods that continue to confound local and state planning authorities and leaders.

This article studies dormant cityscapes in two regional cities (Newcastle and Townsville) and their revival, to bring a clearer understanding to the nature and dynamics of dormancy. The cityscapes are viewed through a time-lapse, mechanistic view by charting of stimulus events over several decades to identify the often invisible forces at work. The results are discussed in light of a city area in the Sydney Basin (Penrith) and a view of its transformation timeline.

The often urgent political reliance on lineal, visible change is shown to confound our view, along with the ‘meta’ use of the economic/demographic lens to view our cities. Missing is a view of not only artefactual indicators but the invisible markers of change. This, along with a mechanistic ‘time-lapse’ view is discussed as a means of enhancing our knowledge of dormancy periods.

The study enhances our understanding of dormancy and the historical timelines that they operate under. In this way a revisionist view of this phenomenon informs planners and city leaders to understand dormancy and its revitalization, which goes beyond political urgencies.

Keywords: City growth, dormancy, cityscape , development processes.

Introduction
The force that through the green fuse drives the flower
Drives my green age; that blasts the roots of trees
Is my destroyer. Dylan Thomas

The Sydney basin and its finite boundaries, mean that the growth of the city continues to be confounded by a series of sometimes conflicting growth phenomena which operate in different ways. If we were to enter a helicopter and hover above the Sydney CBD and look out to the Blue Mountains we would see the most obvious clearly; the monotony of historical suburban sprawl up to the base of the mountains interrupted by the vertical outcrops of cityscapes like Parramatta, Liverpool and Penrith. The vertical high rise apartment complexes that are stimulated by the forces of urban consolidation spring across the basin and add another complexion and species. Bamboo amongst the wheat fields if you like.

Along the way we would see other lesser but nonetheless dynamic formations; the regional shopping centre, implanted into the former fields of red brick triple fronters and historical streetscapes, felling them to rise with fantastic new offerings within; from large module supermarkets to entertainment precincts and exotic international fashions. These in turn suck the life out of the historical streetscapes.

We view these formations with wonder and horror, as towers soar and familiar landmarks are felled; the streetscapes of our childhood are rendered unrecognizable. Yet while these cityscapes undergo a dynamic change from a long, stable, former use to slowly become museum pieces which then precipitate new zonings and development, some city areas seem obstinate; never to recover or transition to another use.
These are often historical formations which presaged the bold industrial eras of our cities; but then they were levelled in the wake of other growth patterns that surrounded them. Unheralded, dusty and dirty, these museum pieces are old port areas, brown field sites, former sub-urban areas and farms long past their rural heyday.

The dormant city area that seems stuck in this state confounds us and in some cases sits almost defiantly right in the middle of a city centre. Surrounded by the forces of change of the city but refusing, often for decades to recover and rejuvenate. Planners create maps and plans, politicians deploy policy and funds while professionals draw brave new concepts that envision their new uses. Little it seems will defibrillate the seemingly dead heart of these lands.

And whilst a former farm area might become ‘raw land’ for its ability to be re-zoned and developed, these dormant, brown field city areas are not ‘raw’ but are seemingly ‘fallow’, riddled with obstinate, industrial artefacts, often with toxins and strange unusual formations that are gated like a museum piece or an old theme park. Children sneak through rusty fences, the homeless sadly seek safety and shelter, rats crawl through the broken glass.

This paper brings these strange ‘fallow lands’ to light and views them through a fresh mechanistic and phenomenological lens that is drawn from the study of several cityscapes, with an emphasis here on two dormant cityscapes that seemingly ‘came to life’ after many decades.

The two key cityscapes are The Palmer Street Precinct in Townsville and the Honeysuckle Precinct in Newcastle. The cityscapes are part of a broader doctoral (Author 2014) (Awarded 2015) work of similar dormant areas in the Sydney Basin and in regional cities. The choice of polarization from a Sydney Basin view to remote regional view was precipitated by a simple concept. It was easier to see the dynamics of change; the time-lapse over many decades in a regional city where there are less complex histories at work that are more easily definable along with their geographies. This in turn helps us to view the Sydney example with a clearer lens.

The Townsville example has not been studied in this light until the author’s doctorate and the Newcastle case is more well-known having been the subject of earlier urban/political studies and papers (Stevenson 1993) but not through a phenomenological, artefactual lens. The paper draws considerably from relevant materials in the author’s doctorate and draws relevance to the Sydney basin by spending some time on a regional city within the basin also; Penrith with a particular focus on its ‘Penrith Progression’ (Penrith City Council 2014) which encompasses a vision for city growth, innovation, linkage and expansion. The author studied this case (2014-15) through engagement in a research/advisory capacity related to dormancy within the city area.

It is found that such cityscapes regenerate but not at the same pace nor with the same precipitation rate of the city that surrounds them. These areas have a particular growth pattern that lies somewhere between torpor, obstinacy and then massive proliferation. These states are however revealed to have some order in the form of three phases; dormancy, transition then sudden proliferation. It is as if there is a latent pent-up energy that is held within them that is suddenly released with extraordinary levels of property related development.

Understanding this and the visible and invisible stimuli helps us to not only understand the rise of the phoenix in these cases but a proliferation model that helps us understand and inform a new lens and measure for their rejuvenation.

The paper firstly introduces the Townsville and Newcastle precincts, their history of formation, dormancy then transition and proliferation. An analysis reveals a proliferation model that then informs the Penrith case and is a basis for further investigation and understanding of other dormant areas in the Sydney Basin.
Case Studies: Newcastle (Honeysuckle Precinct) and Townsville (Palmer Street Precinct)

Both Newcastle and Townsville are regional port cities with long histories related to mineral resources. In the Newcastle case it is coal and the (then) town was once called Coal River due to the rich coal resources which formed mines which led to the pattern of the current city layout. Later discoveries extended into the now Hunter Valley also known for its vineyards and wineries.

With Townsville the minerals are iron ore and nickel amongst others; dug and transported from the inner regions of Queensland from areas like Mt Isa. Figure 1 below, shows Townsville in far north Queensland and Newcastle 160km north of Sydney. Townsville’s historical importance and also great distance from the capital Brisbane meant it was called the ‘capital of the north’. Both regional cases, have seen stable historical growth based on these central resource economies, along with the vagaries of reliance on mineral resources as a primary source of income.

Both have seen city areas within their port precinct turn dormant; in the Newcastle case it is the old port rail goods yard area originally named for the Honeysuckle vines that lined the shores of the Hunter River. In Townsville’s case it was the original port area from the tall ship and steamer era of the town which allowed such ships to sail up to the centre of the town along Flinders Street.

![Figure 1. Case Studies, Townsville & Newcastle (Author 2014)](image)

In both case studies, the cities were the recipient of a grant from the Federal ‘Building Better Cities Programme’ (BBC) of the early 1990s which was precipitated by the nation building policies of the Hawke-Keating Federal government and inspired originally by Whitlam. The grants were won based on the creativity of concept for the rejuvenation of inner city areas.

For Newcastle the Honeysuckle precinct and its publicly owned port lands, which had lain dormant and gated for decades, it was to become a vibrant new mixed use precinct which was to include apartments, hotels, restaurants and corporate offices that would line the long port river front and finally (and still stubbornly) open up the city which sat behind it to the river itself.

For Townsville the old port properties along Palmer St which were predominantly privately owned were to become a new inner city village initially. This would expand in concept to become a burgeoning new ‘eat street’ precinct with new restaurant offerings, hotels and serviced apartments which rose out of a strange mix of old port industrial/warehouse uses and local restaurants.
In both cases the BBC grants precipitated new visions and plans. For Newcastle a Concept Master Plan and for Townsville a new city plan. Both experienced interesting commonalities however in the delayed physical development responses to the BBC stimulus and also to transitional influences caused by surrounding city stimulus developments. After this ‘transitional phase’ both then saw an eventual disproportionate, massive proliferation over a relatively short period which was then interrupted dramatically by the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) in 2008.

In the Honeysuckle Case the proliferation was pronounced with the advent of modern developments which rose in some cases alongside heritage buildings as shown thematically in Figure 2 below. One could suddenly walk the riverside, stay at new hotels and sip wine while gargantuan vessels (seemingly within reach) plied the port river area on their way to foreign destinations, engorged with coal.

![Figure 2. Honeysuckle New Developments alongside Historic Buildings (Google Maps 2014)](image)

In the Palmer Street case, so vividly represented in the Townsville Bulletin 2008 news article below (Figure 3), a proliferation of property developments in the order of half a billion dollars sprang to life in the hitherto sleepy port street which were to march toward the GFC. The proliferation was both precipitated and interrupted by this with a number of casualties in the property development sense.

![Figure 3. Townsville’s Palmer Street: Evolution of a Dining Mecca (Raggatt 2008)](image)
Study Method

The doctoral study supporting this paper used Case Study supported by Historical Analysis and Semi-structured Interviews as the central methods for data collection and analysis of the different precincts.

‘The case studies and case examples are conducted in line with principles outlined in Yin (2003) and Flyvbjerg (2006). The combination of factors related to the mechanism – its phenomenological nature, its revelation requiring an historical context, the lack of required control in its analysis and the exploratory form of the study supports the use of case study as a collection strategy as outlined by Yin (2003). Furthermore, as a complex phenomenon in its own right, case study, which includes practice, according to Flyvbjerg is better studied through a multi-faceted understanding. This involves a collection method that is not limited to the often “context independent” nature of statistical analysis which lacks the rich, context-based information offered by a case study” (Flyvbjerg 2006, p.5).’ (Author 2014)

Through artefactual time-lapse analysis as well as observing related visible and invisible stimuli in these two case studies, a picture of their physical realization was revealed which had similarities. These phases were revealed: Dormancy, Transition and Proliferation. When these phases were superimposed on each case study the nature and timing of physical change became more evident.

Dormancy-Transition- Proliferation Model

From this method and study, an exploratory theoretical model was created which informs the understanding of other city areas of a similar dormant nature. The model illustrates the three phases and from this emerged the notion of the concept of ‘historical acceleration’ in dormant cityscapes. The model is drawn from the author’s overall model for the property development mechanism and its influence on the growth of cities (Author 2014).

The Life Span Of Fallow Land

A Relative Scale

Figure 4. Dormancy-Transition-Proliferation (D-T-C) Model (Author 2014)

Figure 4 above shows the three phases and on a relative scale not only the longer period of dormancy but the notion of what is termed ‘historical acceleration’ of developments during the transition period and into the proliferation period.

The construction of this model included the understanding of a number of related factors including land ownership, title formation, land release and factors such as ‘value tension’ between the dormant area and the adjacent more vibrant city areas. Also observed was what is called here ‘porosity’ to the open marketplace. Put simply the fact that Palmer Street was made up of private properties which were
accessible to the open market over the decades of dormancy, meant a more organic initial minor growth pattern leading to eventual major proliferations.

The Honeysuckle lands were on the other hand publicly owned, gated, not accessible to the open market and were eventually released by a public development body (The Honeysuckle Development Corporation) based on a land release strategy. Due to this, the growth pattern toward proliferation was more restrained or here termed ‘empowered’ with a related inertia. In a further doctoral case study not covered specifically here but on the Railway Precinct in South Townsville which was a rail yard area gated for decades, there the lack of porosity led to another very strong ‘inertial’ proliferation.

The dormancy-transition-proliferation profiles of the Case Studies are brought to life in further detail in light of the D-T-C model, then a discussion of Penrith’s ‘Penrith Progression’ or city vision. The Palmer St and Honeysuckle cases below are substantially sourced from the doctoral materials (Author 2014). The Penrith case is discussed and drawn further from these examples.

**Townsville and the Palmer Street Precinct**

Townsville has a diverse, multi-sector economy including military, port, transport, government, tourism and mining and other derivative and sub-sectors. It has shown resilience throughout its history across many economic climates due to this diversity. It has a modern working port that sits in its harbour which is called Cleveland Bay. The port sits at the entrance to Ross Creek, an offshoot of Ross River, both of which flow into the bay (Figure 5).

Further upstream along Ross Creek one can see the remnants of the old port area, or ‘the inner harbour’ which allowed the tall ships of the pioneer era of Townsville to sail right up to the main centre of the town. Along the southern edge of Ross Creek is Palmer Street.

![Figure 5. The Port of Townsville and Palmer Street (Google Maps, Author 2014)](image)

**The Transformation of Palmer Street 1992 to 2008**

The modern development history of Palmer Street starts in 1992 with the closing of the northern end of the street to large vehicles (Figure 5 above). The road closure heralded a different future for the street, one that was slowly realised over two decades. It was also to manifest in a series of smaller spasms of growth and building proliferation as early as 1987 and culminating in a massive development boom leading up to the Global Financial Crisis in 2008.
Figure 6. Historical Dormancy-Transition-Proliferation Chart: Palmer Street, Townsville from 1970 to 2012, (Author 2014)
The proliferation chart (Figure 6) above shows the historical D-T-C profile of Palmer Street over a timeline from 1970 to 2012. The chart superimposes external stimuli that effected Palmer Street along with the key property developments along Palmer Street.

One can see at first glance the dormancy period from 1970 to the late 1980s which is then punctuated by two developments (Southbank and the Anchorage) to be followed by small restaurant offerings through the 1990s but no major developments. The chart then shows the two key direct stimulus events in the form of the BBC grant and the road closure in the mid-1990s. The activity then slows until the millennium when the 2000s decade shows a small wave, then a massive proliferation of hundreds of apartment developments rising in Palmer Street.

Parallel events are also charted i.e. the gentrification of South Townsville and the advent of professionals in the area, the national booms and busts of the 1980s to 1990s, the development of the Casino and the Strand ocean front esplanade are examples of each.

The chart brings to life the complexity of the factors that influenced the proliferation including the incredible effect of the GFC on non-completion of developments and the associated financial failure of some of the projects. This proliferation pattern when compared with the Honeysuckle Precinct was shown to have similarities with key events and stimuli.

**Newcastle and The Honeysuckle Precinct**

Newcastle has a rich coal port history and also suffered severe social shocks due to the 1989 Earthquake, historical redundancy of its steel-making capacity with the advent of international outsourcing and the demise of Broken Hill Proprietary Limited’s (BHP) operations in 1999 (The City of Newcastle 2014).

![Figure 7. The Honeysuckle Foreshores (Hunter Development Corporation 2009))](image)

Newcastle, together with the surrounding Hunter region has a multi-sectoral economy including port, government, education, health, transport, tourism, wine and mining amongst other derivative and sub-sectors.

Adjacent to the CBD and stretching three kilometres along the foreshore of the Hunter River, is a longitudinal strip of formerly dormant port land called Honeysuckle. This land was once used as a Rail Goods Yard, a remnant of the prior port era (Figure 7).

Running alongside the Honeysuckle foreshore strip, is the historic rail line (now in slow transformation to a light rail) which forms a significant physical barrier between the semi-dormant CBD and the once dormant Honeysuckle foreshore.
Honeysuckle, in a series of proliferations through the early to mid-2000s, was to be transformed into a modern hospitality and food precinct, with international standard apartments, modernised hotels and fine-dining establishments.

**Honeysuckle Precinct Development from 1970 to 2008**

On 18 October 1991 the Honeysuckle Concept Master Plan was officially launched. The historical depiction of the renewal of the Honeysuckle Rail Yards illustrates a longitudinal ‘island’, public land parcel which is land-locked between a rail line and a river used for port functions. Like the Railway precinct (Townsville) it existed in a state of public operation separate from the land market dynamics of the adjacent city. Its dormancy was sealed behind wire fences along with the historic uses.

Despite the associated injection of $AUD 100 million of funds into the precinct, it remained resistant to change and took five years to seed its first development (Honeysuckle Grove) and a decade to see the first real signs of proliferation (in 2002), with a ‘big bang’ occurring in spectacular form from 2003 to 2008. Of these, some of the final developments fell into the precipice of the GFC. It is easy to assume that the switch was turned on for Honeysuckle in 1992 with the BBC stimulus, however many factors and events were to provide catalysts in the lead up to, and parallel with, its transformation.

The proliferation chart over-page (Figure 9) charts the historical D-T-C profile of Honeysuckle Precinct over a timeline from 1970 to 2012 (like the Palmer Street case). The chart superimposes external stimuli that effected the precinct along with the key property developments along the precinct.

One can see again at first glance the dormancy period from 1970 to the mid-1990s which, unlike Palmer Street missed the boom and bust of the late 1980s. An initial development (Honeysuckle Grove) punctuates the mid-1990s but nothing else.

The chart shows the direct stimulus event in the form of the BBC grant in the mid-1990s but there is no development of any note until 2003 which occurs in one group, then a major group occurs in the second half of the decade which is halted by the GFC.

The chart brings to life the complexity of the factors that influence the proliferation including the closure of BHP, the decline of the CBD, and the destructive effect of the GFC on non-completion of developments and the associated financial failure of some of the projects.
Figure 9. Historical Dormancy- Transition- Proliferation Chart: Honeysuckle Precinct from 1970 to 2012 (Author 2014)
Immediately however it is seen that the delay in commencement of such projects is quite significant after the BBC stimulus; a period of 7 years!

The inertia is explained partly by the fact the land was publicly owned and not open to the broader property market in the way the Palmer Street land parcels were available organically. Instead the HDC set the scene for how the land was to be divided and released. The empowered release of land parcels does not always match the same result of land parcels that have been sitting in the open market for years

Relevance to Penrith

The two case studies so far are set in regional port cities with a commonality in terms of their resource economies, long term port related dormancy and proliferation patterns which were stimulated initially by the BBC grant. Palmer Street involved a street pattern with freehold land lots open to purchase on the free market over many years. Honeysuckle saw a gated publicly owned precinct that was not open to the free land market. Each proliferation pattern followed the Dormancy-Transition-Proliferation (D-T-C) model but with different natures, timing and release intensities. Both involved release of latent energies if you like but one was more pent up (Honeysuckle).

Penrith on the other hand sits at the western end of the Sydney Basin on the Nepean River and has emerged from a rural history at the centre of the food bowl of Sydney. Penrith now has a key multi-sector manufacturing, technology, research, health and education economy which services the ever expanding Sydney metropolitan basin. Penrith sits directly adjacent to the Broader Western Sydney Employment Area (BWSEA) which promotes employment clusters for an emerging early and mid-career generational worker. It is now recognized as a regional centre with importance to the overall plan for the growth of the basin and its western growth pattern (NSW Planning and Environment 2014)

The vision for Penrith includes not only economic imperatives but the need to create a vibrant cityscape for a new generation of workers with relevant housing and a diversity of offerings in a modern accessible city including street cafés, entertainment, theatre and fine dining establishments.

"Penrith is a leader in driving growth and transformation in Sydney’s greater west. Our robust and dynamic local economy is built on the strength of our strategic location, connectivity, industriousness and inventive culture" (Penrith City Council 2013)

A Revitalized City Centre

Penrith does not have a specific gated dormancy zone or precinct per se but a series of ‘dead spots’ that surround and include a central carpark area which is the subject of city plans and visions in the form of the Penrith Progression (Penrith City Council 2014) and an Economic Development Masterplan (Jacobs 2014).

Penrith’s existing city layout is a remnant of its rural past with predominantly one to two level shopfronts lining long streets which once served the pastoral needs of the related industry and population of the times, and which are now semi-dormant in places. The lower level skyline of these historic buildings is punctuated with occasional monolithic high rise buildings housing government departments and business tenants.

Westfield Shopping Centre sits at the western end of the old city pattern and has in effect shifted the central shopping district into a centre of gravity around Riley Street with supermarkets, fast food, cafes and high end fashion offerings. In the rest of the historic part of the city, the streets house residual retail offerings along the historical shop-fronted streetscapes. Panthers and the Lakes Recreational precincts sit at the western perimeter adjacent the Nepean River offering a diverse recreational, sport and adventure experience. The Nepean Hospital and University of Western Sydney campus sit at the eastern end of the city forming a health and education precinct which is relevant to the ageing population across the region and Australia.
A geographic, place-oriented economic Master Plan for the city centre was created parallel with the Penrith Progression in 2014. The plan for the city centre car park precinct (Figure 10 and 11) is shown below (Figure 12). The plan targets thousands of dwellings in and around this car park area upon a central park village theme.

Penrith’s Proliferation Pattern

Penrith is already experiencing its initial apartment proliferations in multi-apartment complexes that are occurring adjacent to the station and across the city. Especially visible (July 2017) are the multi – apartments around the precinct north of the Station (Urban Growth, Thornton Project).

Obstinate however, is a publicly owned and fully accessible car park which sits in what could be called the historical centre of gravity of the city with privately owned properties surrounding it. The properties are predominantly one to two level in scale with an eclectic mixture of retail and light industrial uses which have remained in their existing form for decades.
Although not a gated dormancy it is nonetheless a precinct stuck in a form of semi-dormancy. A brief historical time-lapse view of the above car park photo on Google Maps timeline shows no significant change since 2008 except the removal of a parking ramp.

Like the Palmer and Honeysuckle cases, the city car park is the subject of a Concept Master Plan but there is no similar significant and dedicated federal funded stimulus such as was evidenced in the Palmer and Honeysuckle cases. Due to the porous nature of the land pattern around the car park with land parcels open to the freehold market, it is likely that any transition and proliferation will be organic and stimulated by any new city or state based stimulus including the effect of new zonings.

The city zoned this central area (2010) as Commercial Core (B3), Residential and Mixed use (B4) with Public Recreation (RE1) which allows for apartment, office and retail uses with an upper height limit of approximately 6 to 7 level providing a new potential development profile (Penrith City Council 2010). This was similar to the Palmer Street case study with a porous open marketplace and a city plan that eventually introduced 10 to 12 storey height limits that are evident along Palmer Street.

The station and the area to the north has been the subject of development stimulus over the past few years with the resultant proliferation of apartments in the Thornton Project developed by Urban Growth.

Penrith’s Dormancy-Transition-Proliferation Status

Focusing on the old city centre car park area, the proliferation matrix over page (Table 1) places the three cases on a ‘Proliferation Factor Matrix’ which shows the factors contributing (in historical time-lapse sequence) to eventual proliferation. This is also drawn from analysis of the existing D-T-C charts from Palmer and Honeysuckle above.

The matrix charts the three precincts and compares factors such as land and property formations, State, local and direct stimulus events along with development control entities. It also shows the reliance on external private developer stimulus which was so important to the proliferation of Palmer and
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional City/ Dormant Precinct</th>
<th>Land Title Formation</th>
<th>Property Formation</th>
<th>Historical Local Stimulus Events</th>
<th>State Stimulus</th>
<th>Precinct Development or Control Body</th>
<th>New Master Plans and City Plans</th>
<th>New Zonings</th>
<th>External Private Developer Stimulus And first proliferation</th>
<th>Proliferation Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Townsville Palmer St</td>
<td>Freehold title parcels along main street.</td>
<td>Historical two to three storey retail streetscape mixed with semi industrial port warehouse/ goods facilities.</td>
<td>Casino/Breakwater, Cyclone-Strand Esplanade, Street Closure, Infrastructure.</td>
<td>BBC Grant 1999</td>
<td>Townsville City Council Reliant on private development</td>
<td>City Plan 2005</td>
<td>Mixed Development, Height Limits 10 to 12 stories.</td>
<td>Gateway, Accor, Ibis First Proliferations 2007</td>
<td>Porous, organic proliferation through City Council and private development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle Honeysuckle Precinct</td>
<td>Gated publicly owned land parcels consolidated for land subdivision and release.</td>
<td>Historical port rail goods yard with warehouses and storage facilities.</td>
<td>Foreshore Development, BHP Closure, CBD Dormancy, Regional Shopping Centres</td>
<td>BBC Grant 1993</td>
<td>Honeysuckle Development Corporation Reliant on private development</td>
<td>Concept Master Plan and 'The Scheme' 1993</td>
<td>Mixed Development Height Limits Changed to medium rise.</td>
<td>Becton, Crowne Plaza, Ibis First Proliferations 2002</td>
<td>Gated, empowered proliferation through public development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penrith Old City Centre Car Park</td>
<td>Publically accessible car park surrounded by Freehold title land parcels.</td>
<td>Historical one to two storey rural streetscape with mixed retail and light industrial uses.</td>
<td>Precinct development PHEP/ Panthers, Urban Growth and other Multi-apartment developments</td>
<td>Strategic Status vested through Plan for Growth of Sydney 2014, Badgerys Creek BWSEA</td>
<td>Penrith City Council Reliant on private development</td>
<td>Economic Development Master Plan 2014, Penrith Progression Plan 2014</td>
<td>Mixed Development, 7 stories.</td>
<td>Yet to occur</td>
<td>Yet to be revealed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Proliferation Factor Matrix (Showing Progressive Sequence) ---&gt;
Honeysuckle. It is suggested from this analysis that Penrith is still in the early transition stage for its city centre (carpark) area as depicted by the arrow in the chart below (Figure 13).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dormancy Period</th>
<th>Transition</th>
<th>Proliferation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Figure 13. Penrith City Centre Car Park Possible Dormancy Status (Along D-T-C timeline)**

In Penrith there is a combination of historic stimuli such as the development of local and state infrastructure along with the introduction of mixed development zones with height limits conducive to new development. As a result, the existing single and two storey property fabric will come under increased pressure for ‘buyout’ due to its increased potential value for development. The scale of developments proposed in the Economic Development Master Plan will further support the engine room for change. The transition of the public car park parcel will require careful strategic release given its potency to unlock the overall inner city precinct development and the surrounding land parcel structures.

Penrith may need to also consider the creation of a public development body to coordinate and stimulate the chorus of private development that will cling to and emerge around the public car park land parcel.

**Relevance to Sydney**

The paper has discussed Penrith’s city centre in light of two regional case studies of Palmer St (Townsville) and Honeysuckle (Newcastle). A matrix analysis of all three cases showed how many factors were similar between these regional centres which are so far apart geographically. It is seen that Penrith is at the start of its transition state along the D-T-C timeline. It has in place many of the necessary stimulus and structures for proliferation compared to the Palmer and Honeysuckle cases.

Sydney as a metropolitan basin enjoys a rich history of rejuvenation and redevelopment of dormant city areas of which the inner harbour areas from Woolloomooloo through Darling Harbour and to Pyrmont are prominent. The author’s doctorate and model includes a study of the City West Development Corporation along with several cases and vignettes through other dormant areas of the city.

The research provides a relative model and matrix which can be used to chart the dormancy and proliferation status of other dormant areas in the Sydney Basin. Although not predictive, the model organizes the complexity of large scale city areas and provides a lens through which our city planners, developers and politicians can chart a more certain view of how development might be stimulated and controlled so that more measured development replaces proliferation as a natural outcome.

The model also allows planners to monitor the status of dormant precincts in terms of not only visible stimulus but also invisible forces that are always at work in the city. Such forces precipitate the change from old uses to new uses, and therefore the changing face of our city formations.

Dormancy in the cases studied has a key end characteristic of proliferation. Proliferation unfortunately is a phenomenon which has a rampant character which is also predominantly delivered by the forces of private development.

A review of this phenomenon from the property development perspective shows also that proliferation has led to both massive success and equally polar bankruptcy outcomes to the development sector.

The community meanwhile gazes in wonder and horror at these proliferations which seemingly spring up like bamboo overnight but which have a long, rich and complex history of formation which requires greater understanding and for which a new lens and model is needed.

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