Heritage has been increasingly prevented from participating in the recent transformations of the contemporary city due to its excessive preoccupation with preservation. Furthermore, heritage sites as extended portions of territory subject to preservation are very often defined as precincts with clear boundaries, in particular when referred to urban areas. The centres of European cities like Rome, Paris and London for instance all still have their historical nucleuses which are essential for the recognition of their city’s identity.

What happens, however, when the strong historic nucleus is missing, and isolate buildings scattered across the urban landscapes are supposedly entrusted with the role of perpetuating a city’s heritage and associated identity, as is the case in Perth, WA? This paper argues that to date heritage has not conceived of itself as a frame which
includes fragments that can be recombined in an urban field, in co-existence with a city's contemporary and former past.

Using two propositions, of heritage being indirectly the locus of the collective memory and the most representative tangible artefact of such memory, offered by Aldo Rossi in his The Architecture of the City (1982, 129-130), this paper observes, in line with Sennett's criticism, that due to recent changes in urban modes of production and living, the individual, social, and cultural identity of a post-colonial city inhabitant’s psyche is diminishing, making any connections between heritage and identity in places like Perth difficult.

The paper, nevertheless, argues that from the perspective of contemporary development of global and specifically post-colonial cities, the singular, social and urban identities are indispensable requisites for culturally sustainable cities. The preservation and recognition of heritage are the essential steps in facilitating mutual recognition as part of a dynamic form of urban identity enabling innovative and multicultural social relations and acknowledgment by means of its re-signification.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Dr Francesco Mancini

Dr Francesco Mancini is an Italian Architect and Senior Lecturer at Curtin University where he currently serves as Discipline Lead and Master Course Coordinator in the School of Design and Built Environment, Discipline of Architecture. Before joining Curtin University Dr Mancini has taught and researched since 1998 at the University of Roma Tre as a research fellow and as Adjunct Professor of Architectural Design in the Department of Architecture. Dr Mancini is an architectural theorist interested in Urban studies, Architectural language and critical design thinking. He taught with internationally eminent scholar and architect Peter Eisenman at The Cooper Union School of Architecture in New York. He also taught Architectural Design at the University of Waterloo School of Architecture Rome, the Pratt Institute Rome, the ISU College of Design Rome. He practiced in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and returned to Rome in 2001 to establish his own architectural practice. Mancini has served as a design advisor for the City of Rome, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Chief of Staff Defense. He is an author and has published on Peter Eisenman and on building typology. Mancini holds a PhD on Peter Eisenman’s work from the University of Florence.

Dr Tanja Glusac

Dr Tanja Glusac is a lecturer and Bachelor of Applied Science (Architectural Science) course coordinator, School of Built Environment, Curtin University. Dr Glusac holds a PhD in the field of Architecture with her interdisciplinary research focusing on the issues of territorialisation and re-territorialisation in relation to architecture and the spatial perception of migrants. In particular, she is interested in various preconceived notions and expectations surrounding the built environment and how these impact on both the way we view and experience any given new physical setting and context.