

# **Planners, Developers and Power: a Critical Discourse Analysis of the Redevelopment of Leith Docks, Scotland**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper applies critical discourse analysis techniques to two pieces of discourse produced during the early stages of the redevelopment of Leith Docks. This was a major policy document that had status as supplementary planning guidance and a sample of marketing discourses produced by the landowner and developer. The paper explores the utility and criticisms of critical discourse analysis as a methodology to show that it has inherent use in opening up areas of research in built environment policy, particularly regarding power. It then goes on to analyse discursive data from policy documents and semi-structured interviews with key actors in the development process to place the discourses in a social context. In doing so it shows how the planning authority used its political and professional power, through discourse to have power over development. Further, it shows how the landowner's and developer's power over the marketing discourse gave them power over the community's perceptions of what development was actually going to take place. The research evidence thus poses challenges for future planning policy, particularly where a developer is tasked to carry out consultation with due regard to the power of marketing discourses. Planning professionals and academics could usefully employ critical discourse analysis itself to further enlighten and strengthen the process of producing planning policy documents and develop reflexive practice.

**Key Words:** discourse analysis, planning; and governance