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To cite this article: Rebecca Madgin, David Webb, Pollyanna Ruiz & Tim Snelson (2017): Resisting relocation and reconceptualising authenticity: the experiential and emotional values of the Southbank Undercroft, London, UK, International Journal of Heritage Studies, DOI: [10.1080/13527258.2017.1399283](https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2017.1399283)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2017.1399283>



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Published online: 13 Dec 2017.



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Resisting relocation and reconceptualising authenticity: the experiential and emotional values of the Southbank Undercroft, London, UK

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ABSTRACT

In 2013 the Southbank Centre proposed the redevelopment of a complex of buildings including a famous skate spot known as the Undercroft. The 2013–14 campaign to protect the Undercroft drew strongly on heritage arguments, encapsulated in the tagline, ‘You Can’t Move History: You Can Secure the Future’. The campaign, which was ultimately successful as the Undercroft remains open and skateable, provides a lens through which three key areas of heritage theory and practice can be examined. Firstly, the campaign uses the term ‘found space’ to reconceptualise authenticity and places a greater emphasis on embodied experiences of, and emotional attachments to, historic urban spaces. Secondly, the concept of found space opens up a discussion surrounding the role of citizen expertise in understanding the experiential and emotional values of historic urban spaces. Finally, the paper concludes by considering the place for found space and citizen expertise within current heritage discourse and practice. The paper is accompanied by the award-winning film ‘You Can’t Move History’ which was produced by the research team in collaboration with Paul Richards from BrazenBunch and directed by skater, turned filmmaker, Winstan Whitter.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 29 June 2017

Accepted 27 October 2017

KEYWORDS

Experience; emotion; found space; authenticity; citizen expertise

Introduction

The tagline, ‘You Can’t Move History: You Can Secure the Future’, encapsulated the battle at the heart of the campaign to retain the ‘oldest recognised and still skated skateboarding space in the world’ (www.llsb.com/about), which is located in the Undercroft of the Southbank Centre and was first skated in 1973. The skate spot came under threat from the planned redevelopment of the Southbank Centre, the UK’s largest arts centre which is based on the south bank of the River Thames. As part of this redevelopment the Southbank Centre proposed to close the existing skate ‘spot’ and to relocate it to a purpose-built skate ‘park’ 120 metres away. This distinction is vital as a skate ‘spot’ refers to an organically created space based on appropriating existing land, whereas a skate ‘park’ refers to a purpose-built park which is then used by skaters. The relocation plans were rejected by Long Live Southbank (LLSB), the campaign group set up by skaters and other members of the Undercroft community, as they could

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not countenance the loss of the Undercroft. At the root of this was their belief that the skate spot was authentic and by default the skate park was inauthentic.

This paper analyses the reasons why the Undercroft skate spot was seen by the campaigners as authentic. In particular, the paper reframes authenticity to include the embodied experiences of, and emotional attachments, to the space that were derived from the everyday practices of generations of skaters. In so doing it engages with emerging work that sees authenticity as something that is ‘negotiated’, ‘performed’ and ‘experienced’ (Gregory 2008; Zhu 2015). The paper also reframes the skaters not just as campaigners but as holders of a form of expertise that is derived from their intimate knowledge of, and familiarity with, the skate spot. This knowledge and familiarity does not fit neatly into existing categories of architectural or historic importance but enables an examination of why and how individuals become so emotionally invested in the built environment that they actively resist change. In these ways, the paper is of relevance for both the heritage sector and broader place-making agendas that seek to understand why, in certain cases, like the Southbank Undercroft, you can’t move history.

The paper uses the concept of *found space* to reconceptualise authenticity, which is defined, by the authors, as ‘organically created spaces in which individuals and collectives conduct their everyday practices in ways which were not created or pre-determined by built environment professionals’. This concept drove a lot of the rhetoric around the campaign and was based on a belief that the skateboard community first *found* the space in 1973 and therefore they assumed a figurative ownership over its current and future use whereas in fact the skaters did not legally own the Undercroft. Contrary to existing heritage practices, the significance of the Undercroft was not rooted in the material fabric *per se* but rather in what the space *enabled* in terms of the practice of skateboarding. In line with this viewpoint, three connected tropes were revealed during the research process. Firstly, finding the space back in 1973 gave, in the opinion of the campaigners, the skate spot irrefutable authenticity. Secondly, the campaigners felt that the proposed skate park was inauthentic because it could never be found. Thirdly, and finally, was the campaigners’ belief that the skaters were the guardians of authenticity, based on their unrivalled knowledge and experience of the found space. Together these tropes generated LLSB’s desire to resist relocation.

The paper is structured as follows. The literature review, which immediately follows, examines changing definitions of authenticity by focusing on experience, emotion, and expertise. It then outlines the methodological approach of the project and provides contextual detail on the case study. The third section explores the findings of the research by deconstructing three components of found space. The final section considers the wider relevance of found space in the context of reconceptualising authenticity.

Authenticity, experience, emotion and expertise

Contemporary authenticity refers to the dynamism of social life, in contrast to the fixity of behaviour implied by terms such as an ‘authentic experience’

Silverman 2015, 85

The contention of this paper is that authenticity is not solely rooted in the materiality of a historic site but rather is fluid and connected to the everyday practices that take place in, and are shaped by, the built fabric. This version of authenticity is therefore ‘dynamic, performative, culturally and historically contingent, relative’ rather than ‘stable’ (Silverman 2015, 69). This version aligns with ideas within international heritage discourse which acknowledge that whilst ‘attributes such as spirit and feeling do not lend themselves easily to practical applications of the conditions of authenticity’, they ‘are important indicators of character and sense of place, for example, in communities maintaining tradition and cultural continuity’ (UNESCO 2015, 22). However, the paper argues that this reconceptualisation of authenticity needs to go one stage further to authenticate not just experience, and emotion, but to also recognise the felt experience and emotions generated by individual users.

'Feeling' is an ephemeral and elusive concept yet it is an inescapable aspect of urban landscapes. Indeed, 'the lived sensation, the feel, and emotional resonance of place, defines much of the routine and tumult of city life' (Duff 2010, 881). There is very little consensus of what characterises the 'feel' of place yet there is an emerging body of work in heritage studies and cultural geography that focuses on the experiential and emotional values of heritage landscapes (Gregory 2015; Jones and Leech 2015; Tolia-Kelly, Waterton, and Watson 2017).

Emotion is largely seen as the 'elephant in the room' (Smith and Campbell 2015, 433) of heritage studies. However, an emerging body of work has examined its presence in a variety of heritage contexts (Voase 2007; Tolia-Kelly, Waterton, and Watson 2017). Smith argued that 'emotional or subjective activity' is not acknowledged outside of the Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD) which instead favoured 'facts', 'remembrance' or 'commemoration' (2006, 58). This view can be applied more broadly across the built environment sector as planners 'largely resist recognising emotion' because 'Western culture downplays the role of emotion in human behaviour' (Baum 2015, 498). This view however fails to recognise that the 'continued existence of familiar surroundings may satisfy a psychological need, which even if irrational, is very real' (Hubbard 1993, 363). This supposedly 'irrational' need has driven a number of community campaigns, some of which led to conservation-led urban regeneration schemes in late twentieth-century Britain (Madgin 2010) and leads more broadly to pro-environmental behaviour (Carrus et al. 2014). However, it is not enough to simply identify emotions, such as love, joy, and fear, but rather to consider how these positive and negative emotions are connected to the emotional attachments that develop between people and place. These attachments are often derived from the cumulative lived experience of places which in turn can underpin the desire to prevent change.

Understanding what comprises this relationship between experience and attachment is an underdeveloped aspect of research yet existing research has identified the importance of sensory engagements including sight (Pocock 2002), sound (Butler 2011), smell (Bembibre and Strlic 2017) and touch (Jones 2009) whereas other work examines the mental stimulation involved in physical engaging with urban spaces (Stones 2016). These kinds of experiences are downplayed within heritage management and especially in an English context which still privileges architectural and historic interest. Indeed, Emerick has called for the heritage sector in England to 'end the tyranny of Ruskin and Morris' (2014, 219) and instead adopt a more inclusive approach to heritage management. The introduction of Communal Value, defined as 'the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory' (Historic England 2008, 7), as one of six *Conservation Principles* by English Heritage (now Historic England) marked a move towards a more inclusive approach. However, the principle still, in 2017, has no legislative weight within heritage designation. Any focus on 'collective experience' within Communal Value is vague but is supplemented by the sub-category Social Value which is 'associated with places that people perceive as a source of identity, distinctiveness, social interaction and coherence' (Historic England 2008, 31–32).

The guiding policies and practices within the English system do not, therefore, go as far as the rhetoric within international charters such as the Burra Charter, the Faro Convention, and the Quebec Declaration, that 'for many places associations will be linked to aspects of use, including activities and practices' (Burra 2013, 24.1). The Burra Charter goes further into the concept of use as it states that 'sensory experiences' are a crucial element of cultural significance whereas the Quebec Declaration includes 'colours' and 'odours' of places as crucial elements of the 'spirit of place' (2008, 2). Furthermore, the ICOMOS Declaration of San Antonio (1996), built on the Nara document (1994) to state that the use, function, and identity of a site are integral components of determining authenticity (Gregory 2008). In these ways, the international charters provide a recognition that whilst material fabric does have value we also need to be aware that this value is intimately connected to the feel, use, and experience of place.

The ideas contained within the various international charters have also opened up a highly contentious debate concerning experts and expertise. Contained within this is a desire to move away from the Authorised Heritage Discourse towards a more plural and inclusive understanding of experts and expertise. This is most explicit in the Declaration of San Antonio which states that

historic research and surveys of the physical fabric are not enough to identify the full significance of a heritage site, since only the concerned communities that have a stake in the site can contribute to the understanding and expression of the deeper values of the site as an anchor to their cultural identity (1996, point 4).

The Burra Charter moves this one stage further to suggest that

Groups and individuals with *associations* with the *place* as well as those involved in its management should be provided with opportunities to contribute to and participate in identifying and understanding the *cultural significance* of the place. Where appropriate they should also have opportunities to participate in its *conservation* and management (2013, 26.3).

Requiring groups/individuals to participate in identifying cultural significance moves the debate from seeing communities as ‘concerned’ and towards seeing them as experts. Recent research in heritage studies has extended this further to suggest that in the light of these moves ‘we are all experts’ and then to question whether in fact ‘we need experts’ (Schofield 2014, 2). This paper argues that before we assert the totalising premise that ‘we are all experts’ we first have to better understand what forms of expertise ‘we’ all have, ‘where’ this expertise is located, how it is derived, and crucially how this knowledge can help us to better understand the contemporary significance of historic places (Madgin and Taylor 2015).

Fairclough believes that ‘knowing how to live in a place... is a form of expertise that deserves greater recognition’ (in Schofield 2014, 245). However, what exactly comprises this expertise is often vague and summarised in phrases such as ‘sense of place’ and/or ‘place identity’ (Schofield and Szymanski 2010). This paper introduces the concept of ‘citizen expertise’, defined as having intimate knowledge of, and familiarity with, particular places, as a way to try to deconstruct what comprises a form of expertise that is frequently alluded to, but rarely pinned down, in international charters and heritage studies. We suggest that rather than focus on totalising premises, advancing our understanding of experts and expertise requires that we interrogate why and how communities become ‘concerned’, how places become an ‘anchor’ of identity (San Antonio 1996, point 4) and how this is tied to people’s contemporary use of historic places. To achieve this the paper focuses on how the cumulative lived experiences of the Southbank Undercroft embedded profound emotional attachments to the skate spot which in turn drove the campaigners to resist relocation.

Accessing experiences and emotions

The difficulty in understanding the experiential and emotional dimensions of heritage is partly explained by the methodological tools used to assess the value of the historic environment. The categories of age, historic, and architectural interest have achieved the beacon status of irrefutable objectivity and as such sit at the heart of designation. However, these categories have assumed their objective status as a result of the passage of time and the continual reinforcement of a set of values dominated by a narrow field of specialists, namely architectural historians and archaeologists (Smith 2006; Emerick 2014). In fact, these existing categories are based on subjective notions of, for example, nationally important architects, or a belief in the linear construction of time so that older equates to better, or that certain buildings symbolise nationally important events. A different epistemological position based on social constructivism would suggest that this evidence is not objective but rather shaped by a minority of elite views reinforced over time since the Inspectors of Monuments developed a way of assessing importance (Delafons 1997).

Alongside this ontological belief is a methodological challenge to collect evidence that can support a better understanding of the experiential and emotional values of historic spaces. Qualitative social research methods are not ‘mainstream’ within heritage practice (Jones 2017, 24) nor within heritage training as the profession is motivated by ‘speed, efficiency, and compliance’ (Wells 2017, 26). Furthermore, it is doubtful that quantitative methods that rely on surveys to measure heritage value can ever truly capture the emotional and experiential values of the historic environment. Indeed, surveys have been criticised for producing ‘exceedingly thin depths of meaning’ and as such are a ‘poor choice for trying to discern the reasons for people’s values, perceptions and behaviours’ (Wells 2015, 46–47).

The research team strongly felt that the methods we chose needed to capture the everyday practices that took place within the Undercroft and as such we focused on mobile methods including *in situ* oral histories and walking interviews. This enabled us to identify both the significance of the physical skate spot as well as to build an understanding of the different experiences of the same space over time. Whilst we recognised that some skaters embraced the relocation to a skate park, our research was premised on understanding why a significant number of skaters felt so strongly about the importance of the space that they actively resisted relocation. As such oral histories and interviews were primarily carried out with skaters/members of the campaign, long-time users of the skate spot, and with creative professionals involved in documenting the site, including photographers and film makers. In addition to this we interviewed stakeholders involved in the decision-making processes surrounding the future of the skate spot. In total we carried out 25 oral histories/interviews. Furthermore, we also accessed a large body of archival material, from campaign documents, planning documents, skateboard magazines, newspaper articles, photographs, and film that had been generated about the Southbank Undercroft.

Crucially, the research team also wanted to show the experiences and emotions of the Undercroft and the ways in which the skaters interacted with the space to different audiences. We worked in collaboration with Paul Richards from BrazenBunch, and a long-time Southbank skater and film maker, Winstan Whitter, to produce a twenty-minute film that could convey the experiences of skating at the Undercroft. Whereas this paper presents a sustained analysis of the experiential and emotional values of the Undercroft, the film is designed to allow a sensorial engagement with skating to be experienced as it conveys the sights, sounds, and uses of the space.

This film, entitled 'You Can't Move History' was awarded the 'Best Research Film, 2016' in the Arts and Humanities Research Council 'Research in Film Awards' and is designed to act as a companion to this paper. All participants have been anonymised in the paper except where their words are spoken within the accompanying film. To watch the twenty-two minute film please see <https://vimeo.com/146671695>.

The Southbank Undercroft

The Undercroft is known as the 'oldest recognised and still skated skateboarding space in the world' (www.llsb.com/about) and is located in the supporting structures of the Southbank Centre which comprises the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Haywood Gallery and Purcell Room and thus is one part a much larger entity. This complex of buildings emerged from the ideas for the Festival of Britain in 1951 to demonstrate the vigour of British architecture following the ravages of World War II.

Despite these origins, and the Undercroft's status as the world's oldest 'recognised' and 'continually skated' skate spot, it did not have listed status and thus securing listed building consent to authorise demolition was not needed. The latest application to list the complex of buildings that comprise the Southbank Centre was rejected despite the support of Historic England who believed the buildings to be 'Britain's finest collection of post-war public buildings' (LLSB 2014, 35). The application was refused by the Secretary of State and instead the complex was instead given immunity from listing. That the national listing application was refused is a legacy of the hierarchical system of designation in England in which politicians rather than professional heritage experts can have the final say. In some cases, this protects the future of areas of historic buildings, as with Covent Garden in 1973, and in other cases it ensures development can take place without recourse to the historic values identified by professional heritage experts.

The English system does however allow for local historic significance to be assessed. The Southbank Centre was locally listed by Lambeth Council in March 2013 (Lambeth 2015, 1) and remains an integral element of the larger South Bank Conservation Area which was designated in 1982, also by the local authority. Within the English system however local importance does not provide legal protection to prevent the loss of the Undercroft. Instead the LLSB campaign team turned towards two relatively new tools which have been incorporated within land use legislation: Asset of Community Value (ACV) and Village and Town Green (VTG) status. ACV and VTG recognise the long-term use of space in ways

that the Communal Value element of Historic England's *Conservation Principles* cannot. Under an ACV 'community assets can be nominated by parish councils or by groups with a connection to the community' (Sandford 2017, 3). An ACV is designed to 'give many more communities the opportunity to take control of assets and facilities in their neighbourhoods by levelling the playing field [and] by providing the time for them to prepare a proposal' (DCLG 2011, 5). In essence, it means that the community has an opportunity to purchase the site should it come up for sale but does not enforce a legal obligation on the seller to sell to the community group. Despite this it was felt that the ACV status could go further by giving

additional weight to the use of the area in the consideration of a planning application, in that we would then be able to argue that a material consideration for Lambeth to take into account was the fact that clearly this was a use that furthered the social wellbeing of the local community (Participant Ten).

In addition to the ACV status the campaign team also applied for status as a Village or Town Green (VTG) which recognised that local people 'indulged in lawful sports, and pastimes...for at least 20 years' (Commons Act 2006, 7). Lambeth Council rejected the Southbank Centre's appeal as the Council believed that the 'significance of the Undercroft as a meeting point for the skateboarders is because it has this 'home grown' quality by a reasonably defined group of urban users' (Lambeth 2014, 3). The Village Green decision was never resolved legally but was halted when Southbank Centre and LLSB agreed to cease legal procedures in return for the long-term guarantee that the Undercroft would remain open and skateable under a section 106 planning agreement.

The ability of the planning system to validate the significance of the 'oldest recognised and still skated skateboarding space in the world' as opposed to the invalidation provided through the national heritage system demonstrates anomalies within the built environment sector. However, the ideas behind the Asset of Community Value and Village and Town Green status are similar to those in the Burra Charter, the Faro Convention, and the Quebec Declaration, and offer an example of how the heritage and planning sectors could work together to assess the future use of historic spaces. Both the Burra Charter and the ACV/VTG recognise the importance of 'use' and that the management of the space should, in the case of the Burra Charter, allow for the 'continuation of activities and practices which contribute to the cultural significance of place' (2013, article 7). However, unlike traditional heritage practices, ACV status lasts, in the first instance, for five years, and so enables the fluidity of engagement with spaces to be formally recognised and continually assessed as to their ongoing cultural significance. Further, receiving ACV status does not hold the material fabric hostage to traditional preservation practices of maintenance and restoration but rather legitimises the community-identified spirit of place and acknowledges that a central component of this is fluidity. The sections that follow demonstrate, however, that the continuous change of the Undercroft both enabled skaters to develop their practice and contributed to their profound attachments to the skate spot.

Reconceptualising authenticity: found space

This paper argues that the Undercroft obtained authenticity through lived experience of the space which was captured within the concept of found space. However, as Simon, the LLSB's legal representative acknowledged, defining the concept provided a real problem

...it is easy to look at a building and work out why architecturally or historically it's of importance...but the way in which space is used changes subtly over time, and it takes quite a lot to get under the skin of, well...why is it important? ... And the really important thing is, what's so special about this being *found space* rather than something that's been created and why wouldn't a replacement space under the Hungerford Bridge cut it...? (author italics)

Put simply, the concept of found space was elusive and distinct from existing evaluations of historic spaces. As such there was confusion surrounding the nature of found space and why it was of central importance to the campaign. This paper now turns to deconstruct three components of found space.

Discovery

A need to discover, find, or reinterpret existing spaces lies at the heart of the practice of skateboarding. Skateboarding started in post-World War II America as a way to replicate the feeling of surfing (Borden 2001). Surfers in America found the curved sides of drained swimming pools in the suburban villas of the Los Angeles hills could satiate their senses. Over time, the search for an adrenaline rush spread to urban areas and in particular the spaces and material forms of Modernist and particularly Brutalist architecture. The Southbank Centre was seen as a place whereby 'English kids' could try to 'emulate' the experience of skating that were seen in the 'amazing images' shown in 'American magazines' that showed 'guys riding inclines and slopes' (Participant Nine).

The Southbank Undercroft was never designed for skateboarding and was instead discovered by skaters who felt they were 'the people who actually seek out the useless areas of concrete they (architects) leave around' (*The Guardian*, 12 March 1989). The 'banks' of the Undercroft were viewed by skaters as 'perfect to replicate the waves' and showed that skating was not seen as a sport but rather an 'art form' that was about 'interpreting your environment and finding new ways to interact with it' (Participant Two). The perceived authenticity of the Undercroft was directly connected therefore to the appropriation of the materiality by the skaters

...you can't create what is The Undercroft and the South Bank area, it can never be created 'cause it wasn't created in the beginning, because it was a space that was built as a car park that ended up being disused and nobody using a dead space and then some people found an alternative use which is perfect for skating, for BMX-ing and things.

Participant One

This appropriation was not, however, just restricted to 1973 when the space was first found but rather the spirit of continually re-interpreting their environment that had first motivated the surfers was sustained at the Undercroft. This ability to interpret an environment that wasn't designed for skating was inadvertently strengthened during what was perceived by some of the participants as a war of 'attrition' between the skaters and the Southbank Centre (Participant Eight).

The Southbank Centre maintained the Undercroft throughout and at times the activities of the skaters clashed with those of the other activities hosted by the Centre. Skaters recalled a number of strategies that were initiated to disrupt skating (LLSB 2015b, 9–17). These included dropping gravel and stones on the space as well as watering the concrete slabs and reducing the Undercroft to a third of its original space. However, rather than reducing the desire to skate, these barriers enabled the skaters to continually reinterpret the physical spaces of the Undercroft

There was loads of banks that we skated, different heights everywhere and they put all these iron railings in front of all of them. It kind of stopped us skating the most interesting parts of the spot, and then it kind of reduced skating... So that was where we progressed to skate more, then we ended up skating the stairs more and we ended up skating the big banks more as well, which are still here today.

Participant One

These strategies to disrupt skating in effect helped skaters to both improve their craft as 'people started then jumping over the barriers from the top level' and to increase their enjoyment of the space '...and that was a great thing to see' (Participant One). However, the relationship between the Southbank Centre and the skaters was not always conflictual as shown by their partnership in 2004 with Rich Holland resulting in skateable structures as part of 'The Side Effects of Urethane' installation. The Undercroft was therefore seen as offering 'the same amount to each generation' (Participant Five) due to its capacity for continual discovery.

This incessant need for discovery is also now driving the collaborative working partnership between LLSB and the Southbank Centre. Following the decision to halt the relocation of the skate spot through a section 106 planning agreement, LLSB and the Southbank Centre jointly received planning permission to restore the Undercroft to the size as found in 1973 (<http://www.llsbdonate.com>). Two thirds of the original skate spot, defined as that first found in 1973, is currently behind hoardings. However, LLSB believe that this original space has a 'a special significance of its own' (LLSB 2015b,

31) and that they want to ‘reignite the full potential of the found space’ (LLSB 2015b, 38). The ability to discover and interpret the skate spot remains one of the key aspects of the campaigners’ belief in the authenticity of found space.

Embodied experiences

The brutalist architecture is of great value to many, but equally important is the intangible heritage of feelings, memories, atmosphere and many more things that one cannot quite put a finger on.

Participant Six

The desire to continually interpret the environment was inextricably connected to the feel of skateboarding – a term used by UNESCO in their consideration of authenticity. From the surfers who wanted to replicate the feel of riding the waves to the skaters who sought out challenging spaces, the need for mental, physical, and sensorial stimulation was paramount. The Undercroft was seen as stimulating the ‘creative mind of the skateboarder’ (Jason) as the skaters continually sought to engage with their environment and find new ‘tricks’ which were not seen as the goal of skateboarding but rather they were seen as the ‘language’ through which they were able to ‘interpret our environment’ (Henry). A deep knowledge of the Undercroft was ingrained through the continual use of the space as the skaters knew ‘instinctively’ where the ‘cracks are, where the drain covers are, where there is a slightly raised paving slab’ (Participant Six). This knowledge helped them to develop tricks and embedded a profound connection between the skaters and physical spaces. These connections were not transitory but rather were deeply embedded in the memory of the interviewees

(I can remember) ...it as a space and an atmosphere, I know exactly...I can remember the space exactly as it existed in its entirety, because I traversed it so many times, but it’s just the atmosphere of it...

Participant Nine

This recollection of one of the earlier generations of skaters was matched by a further skater as he could still remember the ‘feel of it’ as he was ‘flying out of the banks as high as you can or hitting the banked wall trying to see how high you can get’ (Participant One). One of the skaters took this mental recollection further to imply that his body also remembered the space as he explained that the spaces of the Undercroft are ‘integrated with my muscle memory, the things I feel and I can feel skating there from miles away’ (Jason). The skaters had all skated other places but considered these feelings and experiences to be unique to the Undercroft.

Whilst a rich sensory environment was evoked by the skaters’ recollections of the Undercroft, sound was the most dominant sense. A number of skaters, both young and old, talked about the ‘noise that comes with those kinds of places, the way the noise reverberates around in that enclosed... with that low ceiling’ (Participant Nine). The unique feeling of skating the Undercroft was developed by the aural environment as one of the contemporary generation believed that ‘people can tell you exactly the way it sounds...’ but ‘nowhere sounds like the Southbank’ (Jason). These were not momentary or fleeting recollections but rather deeply held visceral reactions to a space that were embedded in the memory, both mind and body, of the skaters. The found space of the Undercroft did not just exist in the nostalgic memory of an imagined skate spot but rather was ingrained within the sensory experience of the continually challenging space. This combination ensured an intimate relationship between individual skaters and the Undercroft developed as they learned to traverse the terrain of the skate spot.

Similarly, the perceived sensorial environment of the skate park was used as a way to inauthenticating the design proposals. Skate parks were deemed to have ‘no vibe’ (Participant Seven) and it was stated that the feeling of skating Southbank is ‘completely different to the feeling of skating a skate park’ (Louis). Skaters stated that you ‘couldn’t move the vibe’ nor could you ‘recreate the scene... and the whole vibe that has been accumulated over forty years as the heart of British skateboarding’ (Bexx 2013). This vibe related to the unique atmosphere that existed within the vortex that was the Undercroft and was strongly connected to the sensorial experiences of the space. Sound became a crucial way of inauthenticating the proposed skate park: ‘a fundamental flaw (in the proposed location

of the Hungerford skate park) was the noise factor of the high volume of trains. Anyone who knows anything about skateboarding would know how important being able to hear other skateboarders around you is' (LLSB 2015a) Recreating the feel, sound, and atmosphere of the Undercroft was thus deemed impossible by the LLSB campaign members

However, despite this recognition, proponents of the new skate park mobilised other examples of skate parks being built and used and even the relocated 'Big O' in Montreal which was 'celebrated as a victory for skateboarders' (Borden in Lombard 2015, 100). This tunnel, was originally *found* by Canadian skaters and like the Undercroft was believed by the skaters to be 'overwhelmingly mystical. It was just too perfect' (Walsh 2013). Although the relocation was contentious it did ensure that, to a large extent, the key components of atmosphere, feel, and history could be maintained within the relocated skate spot as it was moved *en masse* and thus not recreated or divorced from context. However, when something is recreated by building new rather than moving piece-by-piece it is more difficult to recreate these key components. For example, West Ham United's move to the London Stadium has resulted in a difficult adjustment period as the new stadium couldn't replicate the

atmosphere, the seething mass of people, the tension in the air, sometimes it left visiting teams defeated before they arrived. You could feel the breath of the fans, they were that close. You could hear every word they shouted at you... now, the fans seem miles away from the pitch and they seem to be disenchanted with the new experience
The Mirror, 25 September 2016

The material fabric of the stadium, just as with the Big O and the Undercroft, are important considerations yet it was the visceral relationship developed within the physical space that the campaigners wanted to preserve. For the campaigners' physical relocation to a purpose-built skate park would irrevocably disrupt their relationship with the Undercroft and therefore could not be countenanced.

Emotional attachments to the Undercroft

Whilst experience of place is important Johnson believes that we need to 'distinguish between the *primary experience* of place which triggers an immediate, emotional and unreflective response, and the more reflective processes which, over time, lead to attachment' (1992,12). The attachment to the 'modern day heritage site' (Participant Fifteen) was not seen as a static marker to a completed history but rather was an active process based on the cumulative experiences of the Undercroft: '...you can put a room full of history about Southbank, but it's not about that, because that's finished... But the ongoing process is what matters, the evolution of it' (Domas). The skaters were emotionally attached to the Undercroft as a result of the cumulative experiences of the skate spot which had turned the spot into what they saw as the 'Mecca' of skateboarding (LLSB 2014, 50).

These attachments were comprised of a number of different emotions including love, pride, joy, and fear. Although these emotions are presented in this paper as positive and negative binaries, this is more for ease of expression rather than to deny the complexity of emotional attachments and co-existence of positive and negative emotions. Often the skaters juxtaposed what would be conventionally known as positive (love, joy, pride) and negative (fear, anxiety) emotions within the same conversation. Contained within this is a realisation that while a range of emotions can exist at the same time one may be fleetingly more dominant. For example, it is important to note that negative emotions were mobilised as part of the campaign to ensure that the positive emotional expressions of love, joy and pride could assume dominance within the campaigners' rhetoric of resistance. Emotional reactions to historic spaces are thus complex and multi-layered yet a textual analysis of the words and phrases used along with the physical actions of campaigning reveal why experience and emotion were an inextricable aspect of the belief that you can't move history.

The skaters repeatedly demonstrated their love for the space. The LLSB campaign team's own Cultural and Heritage Assessment Report stated that the 'existing fabric has been cherished and loved by the users' (2014, 48). For example, the skaters talked of how their 'lives were shaped by the space' in which they were 'surrounded by this amazing architecture' which other people said was 'really

brutal and banal' but that they had 'grown to love it' (Winstan). Love was a recurring theme within the interviews as a different skater talked of their 'great familiarity with the architecture' and how this bred a positive attachment to the Undercroft: 'from love comes familiarity and from familiarity comes love' (Participant Six).

Participants each expressed their pride in being able to skate the Undercroft. This was twofold: firstly, the history of the site was a consistent source of pride and their position as central to UK skateboarding was particularly evocative of this. Secondly, their pride was also related to what might be termed associative value as the Undercroft had produced 'four world champions of slalom' who 'learnt their skills and developed their talents here' (Participant Five). Pride was closely related to respect, both for the skaters and also for the architectural forms that had enabled the skaters to become world champions. Indeed, this pride and respect was demonstrated through the LLSB team's continual use of the architectural pillars as a motif throughout the campaign

I think that people seem to really respect the logo, I mean actually the logo is literally the pillars in there, the pillars are a really integral part of the whole space so it's just showing it again in its purest form.

Participant Eleven

The pillars became the reference point of the campaign and were seen across the LLSB blog, social media pages, and merchandise as well as being incorporated on the official letters sent by the campaign team. The iconic design of the pillars, venerated by architectural historians, was also matched by the affection for them by the members of LLSB.

The joy of skating the space was consistently referenced by the skaters who felt the space was 'loads funner' (Participant Six) although, in an instance of the juxtaposition of positive and negative language, they recognised that the 'structure itself doesn't lend itself to be somewhere that's particularly friendly, it's a difficult building, it's brutal architecture but it had a life. It's just got a sense of freedom' (Participant Eleven). The experience of skating thus ingrained a deep sense of attachment to the physical fabric yet, contrary to traditional heritage practices concerning restoration and maintenance, the skaters were not protective over maintaining the purity of the space. Rather they were attached to the dents, marks, and scratches in the surfaces of the Undercroft. They did not see the marks as a negative consequence of skating but rather a crucial part of exploring the space which helped to deepen the relationship between the practice of skateboarding and the physical form of the Undercroft. Indeed, the stones were thought to carry the cultural memory of the previous generations of skateboarders: '...in the stones itself there is marks of tricks that people have done that nobody even remembers anymore, but that somebody might have saw, that never left them' (Jason). The stones were seen as the transmitter of joy and their unsanitised existence was crucial to maintaining the authenticity of the skate spot.

Fourthly and finally, the fear of losing the spaces, complete with the dents, marks, and scratches, was evident and helped to draw out the previously latent and hidden meanings of the space. Common across the skaters was a belief that the threat to their existing space had made them confront the possibility of loss. In the abstract loss was seen as usual: '...everyone felt that this is just what happens, skate spots have been lost all over the world and it was just one of those'. However, the skaters felt that the reality of impending loss gave rise to an imperative to act: '...started to think about what we would actually do with our lives if this place wasn't here and what an effect it would have on our community that we really started to realise, damn, we have to do something' (Participant Two). This was supported by an explicit acknowledgement that 'pretty much the whole skate scene were quite frustrated and anxious about that (loss) happening' (Participant Twelve). A range of emotions, both positive and negative, derived from the cumulative lived experiences of the Undercroft thus underpinned a profound emotional attachment between the campaigners and the skate spot which in turn fuelled their belief that this piece of history could not be moved.

Conclusion: the authenticity of found space

This paper argues embodied experiences of, and emotional attachments to, the Southbank Undercroft were crucial components of both found space and citizen expertise. In turn, the paper argues that the concept of found space is broadly analogous to authenticity, as defined in a number of international heritage charters. The ‘feel’ of the Undercroft was a central element of why history could not be moved and more broadly opens a discussion on why some historic places are seen as so important that they cannot be replicated or demolished. The paper thus provides empirical evidence that starts to refute the belief that there ‘remains much to learn about how the urban landscape continues to influence the individual experiencing of urban space’ (Adams and Larkham 2016, 2005). Historic urban spaces are uniquely placed to enable this kind of examination as ‘affective and emotional connections to a locale... need time to establish themselves between individual bodies and their surrounding environment’ (Jones and Evans 2012, 2326). This paper has demonstrated the ways in which generations of skaters developed emotional attachments to the Southbank Undercroft and how these were generated as a result of repeated embodied experiences within a physical space that enabled sensorial stimulation. These experiences and attachments were seen as so powerful that the campaigners could not countenance the relocation of the skate spot to a skate park 120 metres away.

The concept of found space provides a useful lens to interrogate emerging ideas surrounding the authenticity of heritage sites in two connected ways. Firstly, it incorporates ideas from the Burra Charter, Faro Convention, and Quebec Declaration surrounding the importance of embodied, sensory, and lived experiences as aspects of authenticity. Secondly, in line with the San Antonio Declaration it questions whether the embodied, sensory, and lived experiences of historic spaces should be seen as a valid form of expertise. In this perspective, ‘the understanding of the authenticity of a heritage site depends on a comprehensive assessment of the significance of the site by those who are associated with it or who claim it as part of their history (San Antonio 1996, point 2). This belief moves closer to a recognition that we cannot understand authenticity without considering the views of citizens who have an ‘association’ with, or ‘claim’ to, the space. This paper has argued that the skaters had an intimate knowledge of, and familiarity with, the Undercroft, which doesn’t fit neatly into existing categories of architectural or historic importance, but is an integral aspect of why the space was seen by them as important. One of the skaters summarised this by stating that ‘I’m not a historian, I’m not an architectural student... I’ve been skating it for the last 12 years of time, I know what I’m talking about’ (Participant Five). They recognised that their knowledge was at odds with that situated within the formal heritage and planning sectors but that their familiarity with the space gave them a deep understanding of the historic and contemporary value of the space. In this way, they held a form of citizen expertise that develops the rhetoric within various international charters and engages with the fierce debate that questions both who is an expert and whether we need experts. Rather than suggest that ‘we are all experts’ (Schofield 2014) this paper has tried to articulate a particular form of knowledge and expertise held by long-term users of a space. However, the paper also acknowledges that whilst, in theory users of spaces may hold valid forms of knowledge and expertise, translating this into practice is fraught with complexity.

On a practical level, the rhetoric contained within the Burra Charter, Faro Convention, and San Antonio and Quebec declarations presents a number of challenges to the English heritage and planning systems. For example, the reality of incorporating citizen expertise within an existing legislative context is fraught with difficulty and complexity. If an ‘association’ or ‘claim’ is needed to understand authenticity then how can this be determined? How can claims to space be evaluated in the context of multiple, distinct, conflictual, or overlapping forms of citizen expertise or rather whose lived, embodied, sensorial experiences and emotional attachments should be privileged within decision making? How can claims to space based on figurative ownership be evaluated in a system built on the sanctity of private property rights? Furthermore, within a context in which authenticity is seen as lived, performative and fluid, why should we be seeking to validate a moment in time that is then protected in perpetuity?

This paper does not seek to elevate citizen expertise, defined as an intimate knowledge of and familiarity with historic spaces, above other forms of expertise but instead suggests that a continued focus on community governance in heritage and planning will necessitate a broader consideration of how to manage the future of historic spaces. If nothing else, considering the lived, sensorial and embodied experiences of, and emotional attachments to, historic spaces alongside traditional assessments of physical fabric, could help to open up a constructive dialogue concerning why certain groups resist changes to the urban environment by providing a 'deeper understanding' of the meaning of historic places (San Antonio 1996, point 4). In the case of the Undercroft this happened too late to prevent the campaign but is now being realised in the ongoing collaborative venture of Long Live Southbank and the Southbank Centre to restore the Undercroft to its original size, signified by the change in the tagline from 'You Can't Move History' to 'You Can Make History' (llsddonate.com).

In conclusion, interrogating the concept of found space exposes the deep relationships that people have with places and in particular exposes a view that runs contrary to western heritage traditions, namely material fabric is not the sole reason for valorisation. Continuing to see authenticity as located within the *existence* of physical fabric without broadening it to consider the social experiences it has *enabled*, and continues to *enable*, betrays the rich attachments that exist between people and historic places. Furthermore, authenticity is not solely determined by professional heritage experts but is also ascribed from below by everyday users whose cumulative experiences of historic spaces give them a form of expertise that does not fit easily into the privileged categories of architectural and historic interest. Seeing authenticity in these ways helps us to understand why history could not, in this case, be moved. The Long Live Southbank campaigners were not just fighting to retain the remnants of a material past but rather to ensure they could preserve their relationship with the Undercroft, or put simply, to keep finding their found space.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge the Arts and Humanities Research Council (Grant Number: AH/M006158/1), Long Live Southbank, and our project partners, BrazenBunch and Heritage Lottery Fund. We would also like to thank filmmaker Winstan Whitter and producer Paul Richards, and all of the participants involved in the research. In addition, we'd like to thank two anonymous referees for their comments as well as colleagues who have given us feedback at various conferences and seminars.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Funding

This work was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council [grant number AH/M006158/1].

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