ARCHIVAL SPACE:
TOWARDS USER-CENTRED DESIGN

PETER LESTER
SCHOOL OF MUSEUM STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER
AHRC/MIDLANDS3CITIES
Social Space

“an approach which would analyse not things in space but space itself, with a view to uncovering the social relationships embedded in it”

Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (1991)
“Socio-spatial dialectics”

“Space is entwined with human experience… people and spaces exist in a dialectical relationship”

“Social relations exist, and only exist, in and through space”
Suzanne MacLeod, *Museum Architecture* (2013)
Professional groups with “an interest in the development of specialised knowledge… in order to establish their professional identity – and monopoly – as professionals”, influenced how buildings were made: they “gave rise to built environments which could not be understood without reference to the beliefs and ideologies of these groups”

The archive is designed “in the interest of the security and integrity of the archival documents… [whilst this is] inscribed in the archivists’ code of ethics[, it is] to a large extent rationalizations of appropriation and power”.

The archive is designed to offer something relevant and meaningful to its audiences

- “Archives+ should be relevant to young people and their lives”
- “The exhibition themes need to be outward-looking, provocative, and to give the collections an opportunity to develop to reflect today’s interests”
- “The opportunity for families to share information with children about their own culture would be of interest”

ARCHIVES+ CONSULTATION

• A need for personal experiences involving sharing and creating content, for example, in the exhibition, as well as in decision-making
  • “Children and families would enjoy the opportunity to contribute information about themselves in the exhibition or associated activity”
  • “Co-creation for schools is important. Schools should be given the opportunity to actively contribute to Archives+”
  • “Young people can contribute to decision-making and develop ownership from doing so”

Manchester City Council/Janice Tullock Associates, Activity and Interpretation Plan, 2012
ARCHIVES+ CONSULTATION

• Spaces should be designed to be used in new ways
  • “Archives+ needs to provide social spaces for young people to feel ‘at home’”
  • “Families want a place where they can interact and have a good time together as a group – engagement in historical themes is a bonus”
  • “If the exhibition is seen as a fun, educational place for families to spend time they will be motivated to visit”

A need for attitudinal change, to be more welcoming

- “Young people need to feel welcome”
- “Staffing and training needs for staff in the exhibition spaces needs to be reviewed to ensure that ALL staff provide not only a warm welcome, but are also able to engage with local communities and act as ‘enablers’ and encourage visitor engagement. Visitor engagement should be part of ALL job descriptions and personal training plans”

Manchester City Council/Janice Tullock Associates, Activity and Interpretation Plan, 2012
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• Peter Lester
• School of Museum Studies
• University of Leicester
• pal23@le.ac.uk
• @pablester