

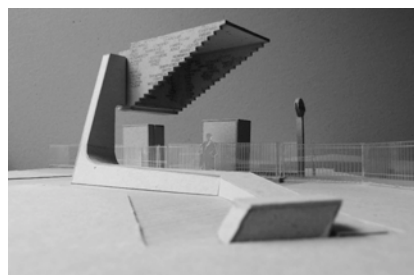
Excavating Buried Memories: Tracing Difficult Pasts in the Landscape of the London Underground

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The analysis of planned and realized memorials to traumatic events and their associated memorial campaigns reveals a politics of memory in the London Underground. This politics of memory is: mediated by processes of transformation and contestation; determined by factors including accountability and community; and influences the timing, location, aesthetics and degree to which London Underground's difficult pasts are publically displayed.



Balham
Blitz bombing 1940



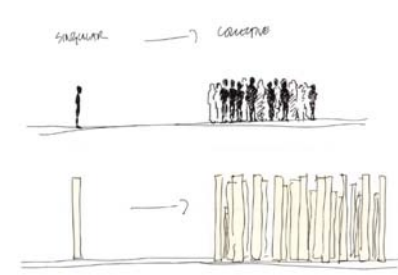
Bethnal Green
Tube shelter disaster 1943



Moorgate
Tube crash 1975



King's Cross
Fire 1987



King's Cross, Aldgate & Edgware Road
Terrorist attacks 2005



Stockwell
de Menezes' death 2005

This paper presents early research, which contributes to a wider PhD project that will investigate buried forms of social memory in the London Underground and Berlin UBahn through the application of a holistic cultural landscape approach. It focuses on the politics of memory surrounding traumatic events that have occurred in the landscape of the London Underground. Six case studies are considered and are grouped into three pairs to serve as an analytical device that enables their individual comparison and collective comprehension. The historical background of each case study is reviewed before their associated memorial projects and campaigns are considered. The characteristics of these projects and campaigns is established using a range of data and a mixed methodology which involved the review of historical accounts, press reports, public planning applications, archive material, and online sources in conjunction with field surveys and interviews.

The **Bethnal Green** tube shelter disaster remains difficult to reconcile with the narratives of resilience and unity associated with the collective memory of the Blitz. The Blitz bombing of **Balham** underground station has been memorialised in a standardised manner and integrated with the wider design principles and corporate identity of the London Underground. Efforts to have the disaster memorialized have focused on memorial projects, which adopt prevailing international memorial aesthetics and appeal to the national project of the London 2012 Olympics.

The **Moorgate** tube crash and **King's Cross** fire both caused significant loss of life but have resulted in disparate memorial responses. The campaign to have Moorgate memorialised has been forced to give up efforts to have a plaque placed at the station and is now pursuing an off-site memorial through the public planning process. The King's Cross fire was memorialised soon after the event at multiple locations within the station during ongoing legal proceedings.

The events surrounding the terrorist attacks of July 2005 have resulted in varied memorial responses. The terrorist attacks were memorialised by plaques at the **King's Cross, Russell Square, Aldgate and Edgware Road** stations in time for the attack's first anniversary and an official public memorial that emphasised singular and collective loss was unveiled on the fourth. The memorialisation of de Menezes' death at **Stockwell** station was part of a wider political and judicial campaign led by his family, friends and the wider London Brazilian community. The memorial design and campaign strategy reflected its vernacular and contested nature.

The case studies demonstrate that a politics of memory surrounds the memorialisation of traumatic events in the landscape of the London Underground. This politics is mediated by, amongst others, the processes of transformation and contestation, which, along with determining factors relating to notions of accountability and community, combine to influence the timing, location and aesthetics of proposed and realised memorials and their associative campaigns, and as such, determine whether London Underground's difficult pasts remain buried or, alternatively, gain display to the wider public.



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