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Skatepark, Knightsridge Adventure Project, Livingston





'Our work, our dedication' – a brief history

This is a 21st century story of young skaters campaigning to get their skatepark built and, to quote the young people themselves, is about 'work and dedication'.

The story starts in 1968, when Knightsridge was created as part of the Livingston New Town scheme. A landmark for local communities, the clubhouse of the Knightsridge Adventure Project ('The Vennie') has been located right in the heart of the area since this time. Community activity has flourished during the years and has helped create a youth club, a play park and community allotments. In 2013 a local group of 13–14 year old skaters decided to start fundraising to add a skatepark to the mix, quickly raising over £100.

This achievement inspired the local council to grant £65,000 to the Vennie's skaters to build the skatepark. The design was conceived by the young people in collaboration with local architects and contractors and features a V-shaped plan – 'V' for Vennie. Since its construction in 2013, the skatepark has become a community hub and an important place for young people.

To celebrate this success, the skaters approached the Scotland's Urban Past team to record their skatepark through measured drawings, and to create a film entirely produced by them, from story-boarding to filming and editing. Amidst skating stunts and graffiti, in the film the young people reveal the stories behind the construction of the skatepark, telling us why they value this place and conversely how this place has added value to their lives.



Is a skatepark heritage?

For the Vennie's young people skating is a 'way of expressing themselves' and 'brings people together', and the skatepark is a space that keeps them from 'hanging about the streets' and 'out of trouble'. The values they attach to the skatepark are broad ranging, spanning the social, cultural and economic spheres and contributing to the cultural significance of the place.

This project highlighted the question of what heritage really is and what should be recorded for posterity. This question is the real focus of the Scotland's Urban Past programme.

Scotland's Urban Past aims to discover the stories of the places that matter to people, encouraging community groups from Scotland's towns and cities to come forward with projects to celebrate their heritage. Before the Vennie became the first skatepark in the National Record of the Historic Environment – we had to add the term skatepark to our glossary!

Other Scotland's Urban Past projects that disrupt traditional ideas of heritage and followed, one example being a Parkour group in Edinburgh who demonstrated through a film how they interpret and use their urban environment as a playground.

*These community-led projects contribute to a more comprehensive representation of the spirit of a place – the so called *genius loci*. They add new layers of significance and new values to places through personal stories, and are well-worth recording, and celebrating.*

So, what will be next?

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<https://canmore.org.uk/site/347666/livingston-knightsridge-east-road-knightsridge-adventure-project>

<https://vimeo.com/129761475>

<https://scotlandsurbanpast.org.uk/>



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