

OPENING ARCHIVES CASE STUDY

SPECTACLE MEDIA

Silwood Video Archive Project



HERITAGE DOMAIN:

Community Heritage.

PROJECT OVERVIEW:

Two decades ago, Spectacle took a collection of video cameras, microphones, tripods, and cables to the Silwood Estate in southeast London. They had been asked to work with residents for a few weeks - teaching them how to shoot video and make a short film as part of the planned regeneration work in the area. After a few months, the funding ended, but Spectacle never left. For twenty years the Silwood Community Video Group has been filming in and around the Silwood Estate, documenting daily life and changes created by regeneration.

The aim of this project was to open the Silwood video archive for the first time since filming began and invite the Silwood community to watch, comment on, and hopefully begin a participatory editing process to draw out the stories of Silwood. 17 workshops took place with members of the Silwood Community and clips from the Silwood archive were digitised and uploaded onto Vimeo. These clips covered a variety of themes including: the destruction of the estate, location shots of buildings which no longer exist, planning meetings which showcased spaces and buildings which were never built, promises made and not fulfilled, poems, and interviews with residents, past and present.

PROJECT STATS (data accurate as of April 2022):

- 10 residents took part in video archive workshops and a further 26 engaged digitally via subscription to a weekly project newsletter.
- 10 unique participants engaged through 170 engagements.
- 392 clips from the Silwood Archive were digitised and made publicly available.
- A new video was published; *Neighbourly Encounters*, which explored the theme of a missing statue that was removed from the estate.
- 1,660 individuals engaged with the project via social media and the videos received 427 views via Youtube.

SUCCESSES:

- Workflow models were developed for digitising, archiving, cataloguing, and uploading video footage onto a community platform.
- An approach was developed for archive-based participatory workshops with the community that can be transferred to future projects.
- Participants were excited by the workshops - there was a lot of interest in the archives, including within the younger generation, even though the material went back 20 years.

LEARNINGS:

- The need for capacity, support and more up-front resources to support with audience engagement.
- The cataloguing process can be slow and time consuming and there is room for errors with Vimeo.
- Strategies are needed to engage the younger generation of residents who do not have a designated space to meet on the estate.

TOP TIP FOR WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES AND ARCHIVES:

Data organisation is key!

LINK TO DIGITAL OUTPUTS:

<http://www.spectacle.co.uk/spectacleblog/category/silwood-video-group/>

<https://vimeo.com/manage/folders/6171993>

SPECTACLE
VIDEO · PRODUCTION · DISTRIBUTION · TRAINING · ARCHIVE

 the audience agency



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Opening Archives was an action research project, designed and led by The Audience Agency, supporting 10 organisations to explore archives, community engagement and digital tools. It was funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund in 2021/22.