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| Institution: University of Liverpool | | |
| Unit of Assessment: UoA13 Architecture, Built Environment and Planning | | |
| Title of case study: Enhancing cultural understanding of Brutalism and saving Preston Bus Station | | |
| Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: Nov 2012 - present | | |
| Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit: | | |
| Name(s): Dr Christina Malathouni Dr Barnabas Calder | Role(s) (e.g. job title): Lecturer Senior Lecturer | Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: September 2012 – present November 2012 – present |
| Period when the claimed impact occurred: September 2013 - present | | |
| Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N | | |
| 1. Summary of the impact <p>The concrete monoliths of Brutalist architecture are deeply controversial buildings. Calder and Malathouni's research has enhanced cultural understandings of Brutalist architecture, shifting how these buildings are valued by the general public - from negative to positive - and changing the way heritage and architecture professionals engage with and protect them.</p> <p>Malathouni's research into the Brutalist "Preston Bus Station" changed the course of a fifteen-year heritage campaign. It created a landmark case in post-war concrete architectural heritage that has provided heritage activists and heritage professionals - nationally and internationally - with a new exemplar of collaborative working and retention. Calder's research has enhanced public understanding of Brutalism's architectural value and changed the way in which architecture critics and journalists think and write about Brutalism and advocate its significance.</p> | | |
| 2. Underpinning research <p>Collectively, the underpinning research within this case study has contributed new understandings of concrete Brutalist architecture and its continuing significance in two ways: (a) by highlighting the artistry and constructional innovation, craft and variety in the production of concrete buildings; and (b) by drawing attention to the role a wide range of stakeholders can play in decisions about the contemporary management and use of Brutalist buildings.</p> <p>Via original archival and context research, Malathouni wrote the third (successful) listing application to English Heritage [now Historic England] (3.1) for the Central Bus Station and Car Park, in Preston, Lancashire – "Preston Bus Station" (PBS). Malathouni's research revealed the pioneering use of Glass Reinforced Polyester (GRP) in the design and construction of the building, in conjunction with concrete. GRP had played a key role in the realisation of defining elements of the bus station, an important technical innovation missed by all earlier research on the building.</p> <p>That initial research was followed by an article, which presents the history of the Preston Bus Station listing and analyses its listing (3.2). The article relates the listing case to ongoing efforts to democratise heritage, by discussing the close collaboration between academic researchers, heritage professionals, and grassroots campaigners. It also reflects on the role of the original owners of the building (Preston City Council) and their ambivalent role as democratic representatives.</p> <p>Retrospectively, the research on GRP (3.1) was also invited for inclusion in a special issue on "Architectural Plastics" of the <i>DoCoMoMo Journal</i>, the journal of the International Committee for</p> | | |

Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement [DoCoMoMo] (3.3).

Calder's research exhaustively reveals the meticulous use of concrete in Brutalist buildings. In a 2015 article (3.4), he demonstrates the craftsmanship of post-war building construction by leading post-war English architect, Sir Denys Lasdun. Calder discusses this in detail in relation to two of Lasdun's most famous buildings, the National Theatre and the Royal College of Physicians. Calder's book (3.5), product of four years of research, investigates concrete buildings from the 1960s-70s ranging from the high-profile Barbican Estate and National Theatre to lesser-known university buildings and commercial projects. It establishes their design and construction processes, their subsequent histories and the heritage debates around them.

3. References to the research

- 3.1 Malathouni, Christina (2012). "Listing application for: Central Bus Station and Car Park, Tithebarn Road, Preston, Lancashire". Unpublished report to public body (English Heritage, now Historic England). 27 December 2012. [Available on request]
- 3.2 Malathouni, Christina, and Janet Durkin (2018). "Preston Bus Station: Architectural History, Politics and Democracy in a Post-World War II Designation Saga". *Fabrications: The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand*. 28:2, 160-184. DOI: 10.1080/10331867.2018.1443568]
- 3.3 Malathouni, Christina. "The Use of Glass Reinforced Polyester (GRP) in Preston Bus Station". *DoCoMoMo Journal*. Special issue on "Architectural Plastics". [Delayed, ms available on request]
- 3.4 Calder, Barnabas (2015). "'The sweetest music you will ever hear': structural and programmatic uses of concrete by Denys Lasdun & Partners". *The Journal of Architecture*. 20:3, 376-418. DOI: 10.1080/13602365.2015.1039046
- 3.5 Calder, Barnabas (2016). *Raw Concrete: The Beauty of Brutalism*. William Heinemann. ISBN: 978-0434022441. Available on request (University of Liverpool Library: NA968.5.B78.C14).

The **quality** of the underpinning research is demonstrated by publications in peer-reviewed journals and by a substantial monograph that has received positive reviews in academic, professional and general media (5.8.i).

4. Details of the impact

Brutalism is an architectural style of the 1960s-70s that has long been misunderstood, hated, and threatened with demolition - a plight paralleled by the threat of extinction that Victorian architecture had faced in the 1950s-60s. It comprises large concrete buildings that have often been dismissed as "ugly", "crude", "cheap" and "inhuman". Calder and Malathouni's research has enhanced cultural understandings of Brutalist architecture. Malathouni and Calder have engaged closely with stakeholders in important Brutalist buildings including Preston Bus Station, Royal College of Physicians London, National Theatre, and Barbican Estate. Their work has saved key buildings from demolition, enabled a key model of retention for Brutalist buildings, and influenced national press and international conservation organisations to champion Brutalism as a significant, important style.

Creating a landmark case in post-war concrete architectural heritage, and offering inspiration to heritage activists

Malathouni's research (3.1) changed the future of Preston Bus Station and made it a landmark case in post-war architectural heritage. The building had a notorious past as regards the heritage protection of Brutalist buildings: since the late 1990s its listing had been strongly supported by heritage experts (Historic England and the Twentieth Century Society), but twice rejected by

politicians. Malathouni's research re-opened the listing case for a third time, and after fifteen years under the threat of demolition, the building was listed at Grade II.

Just one month prior to Malathouni's listing application, Architecture Minister Ed Vaizey had noted how unlikely it was to have the listing case for the Bus Station reopened **(5.2.i)**. Re-opening the listing case, less than two years from the previous [second] listing assessment, English Heritage (now Historic England) called this "an exceptionally unusual case" **(5.2.ii)**. Normally at least five years should pass between successive listing assessments. The rapid re-opening of the case was due to Malathouni's research **(3.1)** offering new information not previously taken into consideration in the earlier listing assessments.

The significance of the listing was commemorated by the "Heritage Alliance Heroes Award 2014" awarded to the "Save Preston Bus Station" campaign, the only time a twentieth-century building has won this award **(5.3)**. A Professor at UCLAN, who was a fellow campaigner for "Save Preston Bus Station" and a Preston resident, acknowledged Malathouni's research as the "killer blow" of the campaign **(5.6.iv)**.

The case offered inspiration to heritage activists and both Calder and Malathouni have been invited to offer their experience to other campaigns in support of Brutalist buildings, including the Birmingham Central Library **(5.4.i)** and Dunelm House, Durham **(5.4.ii)**.

Exemplar collaborations between heritage professionals and grassroots initiatives

The listing of Preston Bus Station has been the subject of much discussion amongst heritage practitioners. It featured at events involving national and international heritage organisations such as ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites – a professional association that works for the conservation and protection of cultural heritage places around the world), in Chandigarh, India **(5.5.i)**; and ICOMOS-ISC20C (ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on 20th-Century Heritage), World Monuments Fund, Getty Conservation Institute (the world-leading conservation organisation based in Los Angeles, CA, USA, and lead on the "Conserving Modern Architecture Initiative"), Historic England, RIBA, and Twentieth Century Society, in London, UK **(5.5.ii)**. The Head of Buildings and Sites for The Getty Conservation Institute has provided a testimonial "in support of the research and advocacy work done by Christina Malathouni for the Preston Bus station", where she has recognised its listing as "a formative case study" and explained that she has used it "as an example ... in various training courses, lecture [sic] and in decisions on 20th century conservation" **(5.7.i)**. The Director of The Twentieth Century Society sees the listing of the bus station as having "a much broader role" which she related to an "international re-appraisal of Brutalism" and to increasing funding for Brutalist buildings by international heritage bodies such as The Getty **(5.6.c)**.

Malathouni worked side by side with heritage and architecture professionals as well as lay campaigners, as demonstrated by the diverse "Save Preston Bus Station" group included in the "Heritage Alliance Heroes Award 2014" **(5.3)**. Malathouni's research is therefore recognised as providing heritage professionals with a new exemplar about collaborative working across professional and grassroots initiatives. The pre-eminent expert in post-war architectural heritage in England and Senior Architectural Investigator for Historic England acknowledged how Malathouni worked closely with both heritage professionals and lay campaigners: "Christina [Malathouni] galvanised grass roots support in Preston and that has continued since the listing, there were then local groups joining in the campaign." **(5.6.a)** Malathouni's approach was also hailed by the Director of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) as "an exemplar approach" which can and should be "used as the hallmark for how you should proceed in these situations" **(5.6.b)**.

Following its listing, Preston Bus Station was successfully refurbished, winning four RIBA Awards and one RTP1 Award and leading the award-winning architecture critic of *The Observer* to hail Preston Bus Station as "the leading exemplar of retention" **(5.7.iv)**. The direct connection to Malathouni's research as the enabler of the listing of the building, was highlighted at the official re-opening of the building following its successful refurbishment, in July 2018, when the Lancashire County Council Leader declared: "Thankfully it was listed, which effectively saved it. ... And it is going to serve Preston and the people of Lancashire for generations to come." **(5.9.iii)**

Shifting public opinion – from negative to positive – and supporting custodians to manage and celebrate Brutalist buildings

Calder and Malathouni's research has enabled members of the general public and custodians of Brutalist buildings to understand their architectural value and change their opinion from negative to positive. Most Brutalism books have been picture-books, whereas Calder's research (3.4, 3.5) and outreach activities (5.7.ii, 5.8.ii) provide accessible explanations of the artistic significance and technical achievements of Brutalist buildings which enable general audiences to re-consider their negative perceptions of these buildings. Comments received via the Royal College of Physicians programme evaluation for Open House and London Festival of Architecture events confirm this: "It challenged my thinking of architecture. I've often looked at buildings from the 50's and 60's with distaste ... I was lucky enough though to attend the tour hosted by Mr Calder and found it fascinating." (5.7.ii). The award-winning architecture critic of *The Observer* places Calder's writings and research, especially his book (3.5), in a "leading role" in the "shift from negative to positive" in the appreciation of Brutalism (5.7.iv).

Similar changes in the attitudes of non-experts have been noted in the case of Preston Bus Station. A series of public events at the Harris Museum in Preston – partly funded by Arts Council England – mark the public interest in Brutalism and Preston Bus Station with 15,912 recorded visitors to the main exhibition over approximately two months (65 days), an average of 245 visitors per day, as well as another 638 visitors to supplementary events (5.5.iii, 5.5.iv). The building has actually become part of everyday parlance. A Senior Architectural Investigator of Historic England reflected on how you hear about it in the most unusual settings, including a broadcast cricket commentary, and noted that "without Christina's work that would not have happened" (5.6.a).

Overall, Brutalism and Preston Bus Station feature in numerous articles and other media coverage (5.8, 5.9). Calder's book has been reviewed and listed in a wide range of outlets and is regularly included in discussions about Brutalism (5.8.i). The media interest in Preston Bus Station has been following its listing saga from the early 2000s to its renewed threat and third (successful) listing application in 2012 and other positive developments enabled by its listing in 2013, such as its successful refurbishment, its various awards, and the celebrations for its 50th anniversary. This interest is unmistakeable in local media but expands far beyond that. Various aspects of the bus station's history have featured in national and international media, and in leading outlets of the architectural press. In particular, the renewed threat of demolition in December 2012 and Malathouni's third listing attempt were closely followed for over nine months - until the listing decision was announced in September 2013 and beyond. Regular reports appeared in the BBC News website, *The Guardian*, *Building Design*, and *Lancashire Evening Post*, whereas key developments were also reported by Channel 4, *The Telegraph*, *The Independent*, *RIBA Journal*, *Architects' Journal* (5.9.i), and also featured in international architectural websites, such as *World Architecture News* and *Dezeen* (5.9.i, pp. 4, 5). Its cause was supported by prominent figures of the architectural profession, including the then President of the RIBA (5.10.i), and internationally renowned architects such as Lord Richard Rogers (5.10.ii, 5.10.iii) and Rem Koolhaas (5.10.i). Following its listing, the building was repeatedly included in various "top lists", such as "the ten best underrated buildings in Britain" (5.9.ii) or "England's most unusual listed buildings" (5.9.i, p. 5), the former presenting the Bus Station's listing as part of "a sea-change in attitudes towards 20th-century architecture in recent years" (5.9.ii).

Changing the way in which architecture critics and journalists think and write about Brutalism

Finally, Calder and Malathouni's research has changed how professional architecture critics and journalists think and write about Brutalism. That is, non-academic experts who approach Brutalism from a strong knowledge base about architectural styles, theories and individual buildings have embraced Calder and Malathouni's research for their own professional development. A prominent journalist and editor of *RIBA Journal* acknowledges Calder's monograph (3.5) as the principal source on Brutalism (5.7.ii), and a leading writer and broadcaster on architecture notes that he has used Calder's monograph "to deepen and enrich my own understanding of Brutalism" (5.7.v). These distinguished critics and journalists also acknowledge Preston Bus Station as a key

Brutalist building (5.7.ii, 5.7.v) and Malathouni's research was crucial for national newspaper articles and a BBC2 film on the bus station (5.7.iv, 5.7.v).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- 5.1 **Documentation relating to Malathouni's listing application leading to the listing of Preston Bus Station:** (i) [also 3.1] Listing application (27 December 2012); (ii) English Heritage letter confirming Preston Bus Station listing; (iii) English Heritage Notification Report regarding the listing of Preston Bus Station
- 5.2 **Evidence on how unusual the re-opening of the listing case for Preston was:** (i) Culture minister Ed Vaizey comments that Preston Bus Station is "unlikely to come up for listing any time soon" (29 November 2012); (ii) English Heritage describes re-opening the listing of Preston Bus Station as 'an exceptionally unusual case' (1 March 2013)
- 5.3 **"Save Preston Bus Station" wins "Heritage Alliance Heroes Awards 2014"** (<https://www.theheritagealliance.org.uk/HHA-Winners-2014>)
- 5.4 **Calder's and Malathouni's expertise sought after by other campaigns:** (i) "Friends of Birmingham Central Library"; (ii) "Save Dunelm House"
- 5.5 **Professional and public events relating to the listing of Preston Bus Station:** (i) International ICOMOS conference programme (India, October 2013); (ii) "Brutalism Now" conference (London, October 2019); (iii) "Beautiful and Brutal: 50 years in the life of Preston Bus Station" project and exhibition (Harris Museum, Preston, summer and autumn 2019); (iv) Public participation in "Beautiful and Brutal: 50 years in the life of Preston Bus Station" project and exhibition
- 5.6 **"Brutalism Now" conference: Heritage professionals and campaigners on the listing of Preston Bus Station:** (a) Historic England; (b) Institute of Historic Building Conservation; (c) The Twentieth Century Society; (iv) UCLAN and "Save Preston Bus Station" campaign
- 5.7 **Testimonials on the importance of Calder and Malathouni's research on Brutalism and Preston Bus Station:** (i) The Getty Conservation Institute (USA); (ii) Royal College of Physicians; (iii) *The Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*; (iv) *The Observer*; (v) Historian, writer & broadcaster
- 5.8 **Sample of Barnabas Calder's presence in the media in relation to Brutalism**
- 5.9 **Sample of Preston Bus Station's presence in the media**
- 5.10 **Support for the Preston Bus Station campaign by prominent figures**