

“All bars have a lifespan, and sometimes you don’t want to remember them afterward. I think that’s the case for me with the Foundry.”

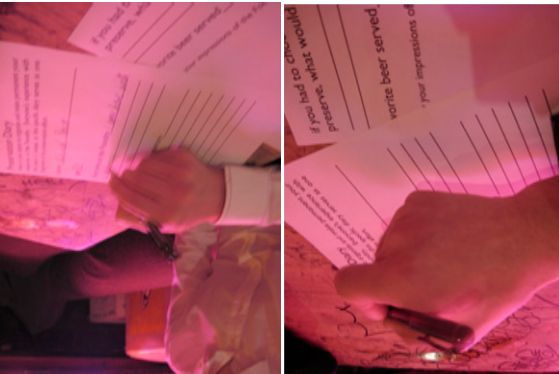
“I’ve heard there’s a similar project going on involving the photographing of ‘regulars and irregulars’ of the bar for some sort of record. You might want to check it out.”

“What’s the point, man? The place is going to close anyway. Its not nearly as good as it used to be.”

Via facebook:

I was given a lot of helpful feedback, both negative and positive, throughout the process. Below are some examples of what was said to me at different stages of the project.

Observations and Feedback:



At the event:

“You’re really capturing the spirit of the place in the book. The toilet graffiti page is spot on.”

“I don’t think you’ll get a lot of people here to actually fill this out. Most of the people who come here are too concerned with their own pseudo art to want to engage in anyone else’s. Maybe try giving out free beers to everyone that takes one.”

“Cool idea, even if it is a bit hokey. The low quality of the books kind of gives it a DIY feel that suits the place.”

I found it interesting that people were generally more willing to engage with the project when they were actually given a physical e-book. It seemed like those willing to fill them out had fun with it. I also noticed that it tended to spark a lot of debate over the validity of the space and whether or not it should be redeveloped. I was glad to see that the project got people to start thinking critically about the physical space surrounding them and that it made people generally more aware of the redevelopment.

I was less satisfied with my online correspondence. Although I was expecting a higher volume of response online, I received almost no replies. Even the few replies that I actually got seemed apathetic to the project. I have a feeling this is due to the fact the most of the energy surrounding the Foundry currently has to do with saving it, and preserving its memory through a booklet might have come off as somewhat silly.

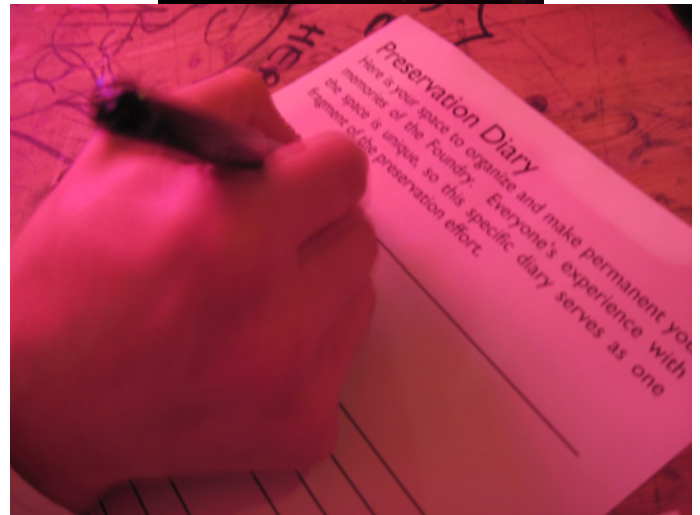
Recently, amid much controversy, plans have been released to redevelop the Foundry, a bar and exhibition space near Hoxton Square, into the newest incarnation of Artotel, a chain of small luxury hotels catering to the arts community. However, those who oppose the plan feel as though this transformation of the site will actually destroy art culture, rather than help to promote it.

The Foundry: lost and found project aims to engage with and analyze people’s conceptions of the urban space in which they live, work and play. Primarily the project asks participants to reconsider the notion of preservation of a physical space. If we lose the physical manifestation of a building, a park, or other urban expression of redevelopment, does that mean that the essence of the particular space is lost forever? Is it possible to somehow capture that essence and preserve it in another form, to make it available long after the space in question has disappeared?

Overview:

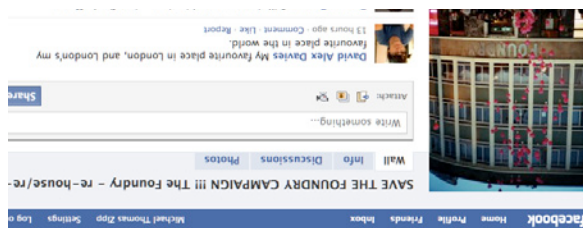
foundrylostandfound.wordpress.com

Foundry : lost and found
Research and Documentation



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Michael Zipp



My first action after learning of this proposal was to read online accounts of the process both by media figures such as the Londonist and personal blogs. Additionally, I discovered a facebook group of over 3000 members supporting the rehousing and relocating of the Foundry. The group's page was full of first hand accounts of events in the space, as well as many calls for the foundry to stay exactly as it is. It was clear that I was not the only one who thought the closing would be detrimental to the arts scene in Hoxton.

I began my research for Foundry: lost and found inadvertently one night in early October when I included the bar as a stop in a late-night gallivant through East London. I was immediately intrigued by the space's cultural richness, the interesting patrons, the rich layers of graffiti, and the bar's dicey history. Several beers and about 100 photographs later, I was informed that the Foundry would be closing in a few months, due to a redevelopment of the land.

Process:

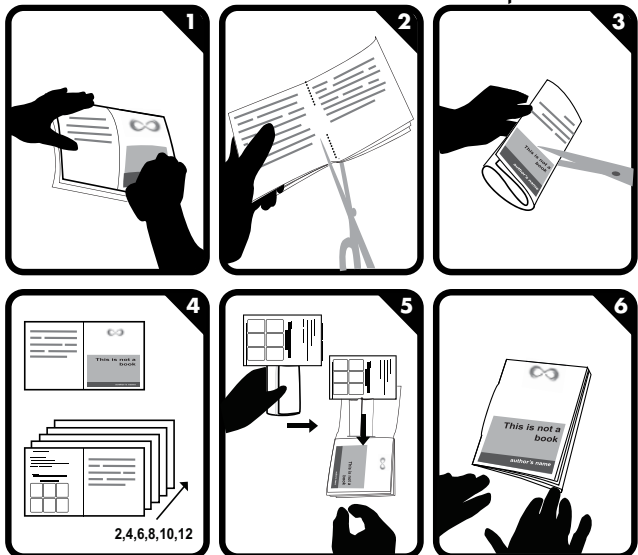
Key to this investigation was the creation of a 'preservation diary,' made available to patrons of the Foundry. Inspired by *Remembering Minto*, a project initiated to preserve the stories of residents of a doomed Australian community, the preservation diary provides a space to capture personal accounts of the Foundry, a place that has clearly held great cultural significance for many people over many years. If nothing else, the preservation diary is meant to serve as a proper eulogy for the Foundry.



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Made by Michael Zipp for City As Material Course
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<http://cityasmaterial.wordpress.com/>
<http://foundrylostandfound.wordpress.com>

made with www.bookleteer.com from proboscis

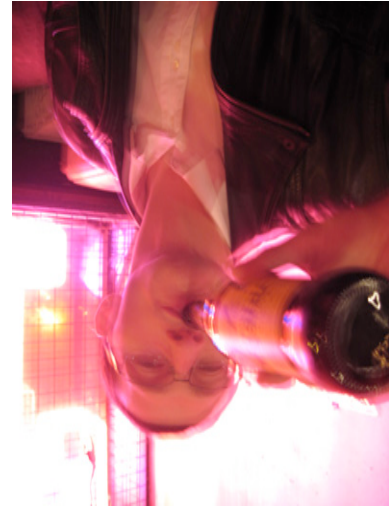


Regarding the purpose and structure of the project, upon completion, I realized that perhaps the Foundry was not the more appropriate venue. Currently, most people involved with the Foundry, physically and through the facebook group are primarily concerned with actively saving the bar, whereas my project would best benefit from a space that is not going to be physically preserved. Despite the public outcry to 'save the Foundry,' it seems to me that the case is mostly a cut and dry matter of private ownership and development.

Another issue I needed to deal with was the limited demographic I was able to reach out to. I would have liked to engage a wider demographic of people at all stages of the project. Had I been able to talk to the developer of the proposed hotel, the current property owners, managers at the bar, local council members, and other community members, the results of the project might have been much more profound.

There are several things that could have been changed about the Foundry: lost and found project, however, the most prominent issue that I ran into was managing time. Ideally, the entire project would have benefited from being stretched across several more weeks. This would have given me more time to observe the space and would have made it easier to disseminate the preservation diary to regular customers and other patrons who would have best received it.

Critical Analysis:



On Wednesday December 2nd, I visited the space again to hand out the preservation diaries and to directly engage with patrons. Although it was pretty early in the night and the space was pretty empty, I was able to get a few interested people to fill out the diaries. They all seemed fairly intrigued by the idea, even though they expressed that it was unlikely to do any good for actually keeping the Foundry open. After explaining that the purpose of the project was to explore non-spatial preservation, the group seemed a lot more receptive.

The Events:

I began to use the facebook group as a tool to reach out to people concerned about the closing of the Foundry. I collected stories from most vocal members of the group, gathered together the most appropriate comments made to the group's wall, and asked for photo submissions for the project. Although I did not get as much of a response from this as I might have hoped, a few people were more than willing to help out.

Using this collection of stories and photos, as well as information and quotes I acquired from talking to people at the bar itself, I assembled the preservation diary, an e-book created for Foundry supporters to record their memories and impressions of the space. The diary was made available online at the project's web page (foundrylostandfound.wordpress.com) and several printed copies were left in key areas in the bar for people to pick up. I hoped that this would spark interest and make people more aware of the redevelopment plan. Also, in the spirit of the immense amount of graffiti in the space, I tagged the bar with stickers in several areas, containing the blog's web address.

