

**PUBLIC STATEMENTS**

(1) Evie Campion-Dye (on behalf of Dr Sam Carr)

Educationalist Henry Giroux has argued that,

“The futures we create for generations of young people who follow us arise out of our ability to imagine a better world, recognise our responsibility to others, and define the success of a society to the degree that it can address the needs of coming generations.”

We urgently need to consider this statement as we reflect upon the sort of society, institutions, spaces, and places we currently offer our young people.

Social geographers have suggested that government policy around urban regeneration has frequently lacked a meaningful focus on young people (Rogers 2003b), as well as other vulnerable minority groups such as the homeless (Daly 1998), the criminal (Beck and Willis 1995; Oc and Tiesdell 1997; Silverman and Della-Giustina 2001), and the disabled (Gleeson 1998).

It is not uncommon for government policy and society in general to adopt a prescriptive and judgemental approach to certain groups of people - based upon a perceived undesirability or anti-sociability of the things such people do in public spaces. According to research by the School of Environment and Development (Rogers, 2006) at the University of Manchester, legislation and town and city planning and management are at risk of beginning to extend such judgement and prescription to the ways in which public space is used and allocated.

As key users of public space, a powerful consumer demographic and the population of tomorrow, young people should be at the centre of urban development, place, and space. Yet, somehow they are most frequently thought about in terms of provision and protection or demonization and judgement (Valentine 2004).

Tensions between the perception of young people in policy can be linked to increasing public panic over the morality of young people, which has peaked in contemporary society. For example, the high profile given to the problem of “gangs” and “yobs,” has been a feature of the demonization of young people in the popular media (Anon 2004; Connor 2004; Craig 2004; Hastings 2004; Wheeler 2004) that has led to the increasing restriction of young people and their activities in public spaces (Eubanks-Owens 1997).

To date, youth policy has reflected a misunderstanding of youth as a political demographic and a “zero-tolerance” (Collins and Kearns 2001b) approach to “nuisance” behaviour (Cloke and Jones 2005) has created a perception of youth as a problem that needs to be solved.

However, there are several key groups that lobby tirelessly in defence of young people and their right to a voice in the cities in which they live. The National Youth Agency (NYA) and the Local Government Association (LGA) have coordinated a push for the inclusion of young people in local democracy in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), to which the UK has subscribed.

Research suggests that there is a need for children and young people to engage in autonomous activity that is free from the authorities that bind them in the home and school. These spaces must be seen (by adult members of society) as central to the successful transition of young people into autonomous and socially responsible adults. Yet, somehow young people are increasingly being eliminated from the urban landscape (Cloke and Jones 2005), by “designing out” or failing to “bring in” places and spaces they connect with.

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(2) Anna Caron

My name is Anna Caron and I live at 2 Alice Park and have lived here for 6 years with my husband and 2 young boys.

We do not accept that Alice Park is the ONLY suitable location in the East of Bath for a skate park. Why dig up a beautiful green space when you could put a skate park somewhere that is already concrete?

Alice Park is a small safe and quiet park which has a special ambience and during the week is mainly used by toddlers and dog walkers. It is plain to see that the Park is in need of major refurbishment and the funds could be better spent updating the playground & tennis courts. Now that the retirement homes development is going ahead across the road an all-weather perimeter walkway would be very much appreciated by wheelchair users as well. I play netball on the tennis courts in the summer and we have sustained many injuries due to the slippery, mossy & uneven surface.

A skate park is a very noisy option for such a peaceful park and during the summer months when the park is full of people having picnics, parties, playing frisbee, cricket etc. We do not think that the noise would be appreciated by anyone trying to use the park as they have been able to for so many years. The noise would very much affect us and the neighbouring houses particularly as it was decided that the ONLY suitable location would be directly in front of our home. During the summer when we must have our windows open, it's not dark until 10pm and the park is not locked or supervised at night how are we ever going to get any peace.

Alice Park is very open, kids on wheels move fast and a parent cannot always keep up. On the drawings there appears to be no fence surrounding the skate park to

prevent young children going near it or having accidents. There also appears to be no funds to maintain or landscape the skate park.

There is also the problem of anti-social behaviour that often comes with a skate park. The cafe has had its fair share of vandalism and break ins, the football goals stored in the park have been vandalised 3 times in the last few months and that is with nothing attracting people here at night.

The public consultation for the skate park was badly publicised and held in December, during the week when the park is quiet and we were not given the option of choosing 'no Skate Park' or other options such a playground/tennis courts refurbishment. Teenagers do need something to occupy them in their spare time but Skate boarding is a male oriented sport and we feel that the funds should be spent covering the needs of girls along with the whole community young and old.

When Herbert McVicar donated the park to the local community it was cordoned off into 2 areas and one half which is now the playground and the proposed site for the SP was reserved specifically for children under the age of 14. His motto in life which is carved on the front of our house is interpreted as 'All should be equal in the scheme of things'.