

# GROUNDING GROWTH

Propositional Development Brief for Silvertown Quays

## **March 2015**

This brief was an assignment for BU1 Transforming Urban Areas at the Development Planning Unit (UCL). We would like to thank our tutors Giorgio Talocci and Giovanna Astolfo as well as the inspiring guest speakers that were invited during the term. And of course the numerous Royal Docks locals we who provided us with valuable insights during our two months of research.

## **Students**

Rob Baffour-Awuah, Carmen Campeanu, Alexandra Dominguez, Baku Hayashi, Andrea Lima, Saki Maruyama, Tasneem Nagi and Alex Pixley

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## Executive summary

This Design Report is the second stage of a 7-week research carried out in Newham, London. The work derives from an Urban Analysis that looked at the CULTURES and ECONOMIES present in the Royal Docks (RD) area with a focus on the Silvertown Quays Development (SQD).

The Report starts with a SYNTHESIS of the research carried out by all six groups who worked on the same brief, but followed different lenses of analysis. It leads to a SWOT analysis highlighting the possible routes for intervention. Based on these remarks we articulated a VISION for our urban interventions as well as the PRINCIPLES and GUIDELINES for implementing them within the RD area. Our two main themes are to make visible the invisible through emerging narratives and to blur the edges the new development might generate locally.

In order to achieve this we put together a set of DESIGN STRATEGIES and INTERVENTIONS – a theoretically informed toolbox – that addresses in practice the potentialities as well as the weaknesses revealed in our previous analysis.

While acknowledging the inherent limitations of our brief research, we CONCLUDE our Design Report with a series of recommendations for improving the urban fabric of the area.

# Abbreviations

- BVH** / Britannia Village Hall
- CR** / Cross Rail
- CSR** / Corporate Social Responsibility
- RD** / Royal Docks
- RDT** / Royal Docks Trust
- SQ** / Silvertown Quays
- SQD** / Silvertown Quays Development
- SNS** / Social Network Services
- TSP** / The Silvertown Partnership

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## Cultures & Economies in Regeneration

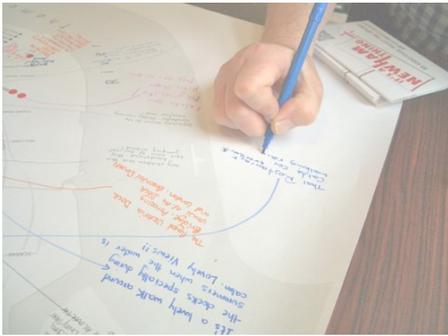
From the early stages of our research we were made aware of the discrepancies between the current social realities of Newham borough – ranked as one of the most deprived as well as diverse areas in the UK – and the new high-end development proposed for the Silvertown Quays. The area has been earmarked by the GLA as ripe for investment with billions of pounds of foreign money promised to transform Newham into a world-class destination. Narratives about a prosperous future and a luxurious urban transformation have built up a sense of anticipation in the area. However, suspicion and doubt loom above these developments with locals fearing the benefits of the investments will predominantly favour the wealthy.

With a focus on the local cultures and economies, our report aims to investigate how this multicultural and diverse area can generate a counter-movement, a bottom-up globalisation or an 'ordinary cosmopolitanism' as S. Hall (2012) names it, and to create a more socially equitable society, where development does not translate into convergence towards a standardised society. Our work is inspired by T. Bender's (2010) account of urban assemblages, which focuses on the use of the city as a generator for imaginaries. We applied P. Bourdieu's concept of habitus as a

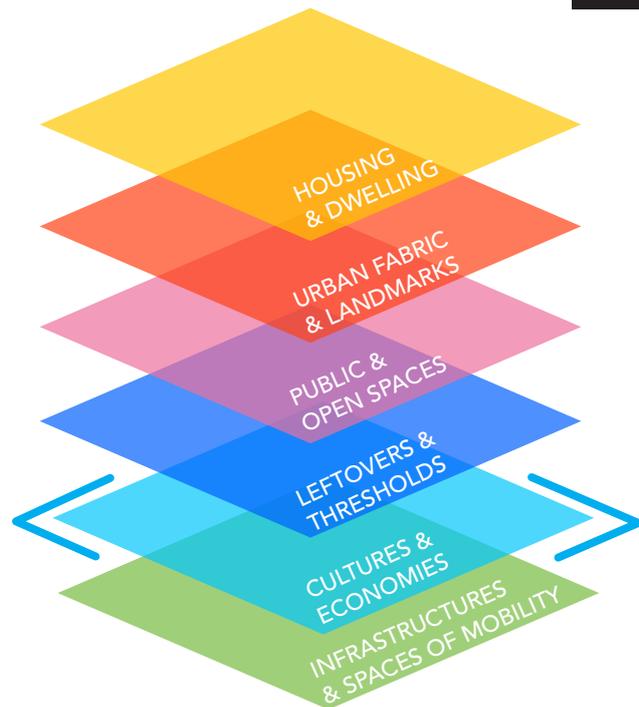
generative system of classifications (Bourdieu, 1979: 170) to understand the social dynamics of the city in a more nuanced manner. Our design proposals operate on two levels: first, by making the invisible visible, highlighting local narratives in order to braid them into the development's agenda; second, by attempting to blur the edges of the SQD, addressing the marginality it indirectly outlines by proposing an exclusionary habitus.

Ultimately, our interventions can be seen as a set of tactics, in de Certeau's sense, aimed at highlighting the potentialities of the area to become inclusive and truly diverse, both economically and socially. Through our limited work we seek to plant the seeds for change that, in time, can be incorporated into strategies for making the RD a better place.

We would like to acknowledge our presence and temporary role in the RD and the inherent limitations of our work. We are a group of students coming from various cultural and professional backgrounds. We take a critical stance towards the developments which will be reflected throughout this report.



1 / Building on existing people & initiatives: Community mapping at BVH



## 2 / Lenses of Analysis for Silvertown Quays

### Social

Newham is widely recognized as one of the most diverse boroughs in the United Kingdom. For many residents, English is not a first language nor the language spoken at home. While this presents some limitations in everyday life and interactions in the RD, this rich ethnic diversity represents a potential new vision of the area.

Though the area has sufficient open and public spaces, these are not well connected to the housing projects. A sense of disconnect alters residents' perception of the space surrounding them and also affects the dynamics within it. Even though some areas are mixed use in type, the general residential use makes difficult a more active and extroverted relationship with the public space. Neighbourhoods are like islands, completely disconnected from one another. The majority of RD residents work in other parts of London and use their RD houses as a dormitories rather than homes. Consequently, RD residents tend to have sparse contact with their neighbours. The detachment from living space challenges identity formation and community integration in the area.

Residents describe the area as a quiet place that lacks liveliness. There is little to do and little to see. However, there are some activities taking place in the summer that promise greater interaction than in the winter.

### Economic

Newham is characterized as one of the poorest boroughs in the United Kingdom. At present, the borough is buying into the 'arc of opportunity', envisioning that TSP will generate housing and business growth for the entire area. There is particular focus on 'emerging growth sectors, such as high technology and green industries' that engage a highly skilled demographic. These plans however, become problematic when it is noted that 20% of Newham residents lack any qualifications. The distribution of skills and access to employment in Newham are marked by dramatic inequality. Data on productivity and earnings suggest that on average people working in Newham earn higher wages than Newham residents.

The 'arc of opportunity' acts as a threshold opening the door of Newham to developers and investors. At the same time, the 'arc of opportunity' represents a social, economic and political barrier between the city and the inhabitants of the borough. Economic "opportunities" threaten to worsen already existing inequalities and thereby cause greater marginalization through top-down visions of development in the area. Moreover, continuously rising housing costs have been identified in the past 14 years, which can be expected to increase even more in future years and threaten residents who barely afford to live in the area now.

# Urban analysis

## Spatial

The Royal Docks experiences many types of transportation. The area is well served by the DLR, with five different DLR stations within walking distance of the Silvertown Quays. There are also a number of bus lines running through the Royal Docks. Additionally, a crossrail station will open up at Custom House between 2017 and 2019, reducing travel time from the Royal Docks to central London to about fifteen minutes. While the transportation in and around the Royal Docks area is overall quite good, only one bus line serves the south side of the canal (compared the several routes connecting the north side). Public transportation also connects the site primarily from the west. Connectivity and accessibility in the Royal Docks focuses on east-west movement neglecting north-south circulation, thereby segmenting the local population on a north-south axis

Despite the different public transportation options, there is still a strong focus on motor vehicle transportation in the RD. Wide streets and the large amount of space reserved in purpose for parking demonstrate an infrastructure serving automobiles first and foremost. Streets and highways divide the area, acting as physical barriers to pedestrian movement and creating a sense of fragmentation. The industrial constructions in the area work both as super blocks and visual and spatial barriers that disable proper ground dynamics. The building monoculture adds to a feeling of disconnect, turning streets into mainly spaces of transit rather than spaces of human interaction. Sidewalks are not well lit at night, further deterring pedestrians from traversing the area, or at least restricting the times of their movement.

There is ample public space in the RD, however, much of the existing open space is officially limited for residents and while entry is prohibited in other spaces. Generally, the use of space is extremely limited during

the daytime, with public spaces seemingly planned for scenic and aesthetic purposes rather than actual public use. There are few benches in the area, the lack of which discourages people from hanging around and congregating. Visually speaking, the area is also incredibly grey and could greatly benefit from more green spaces.

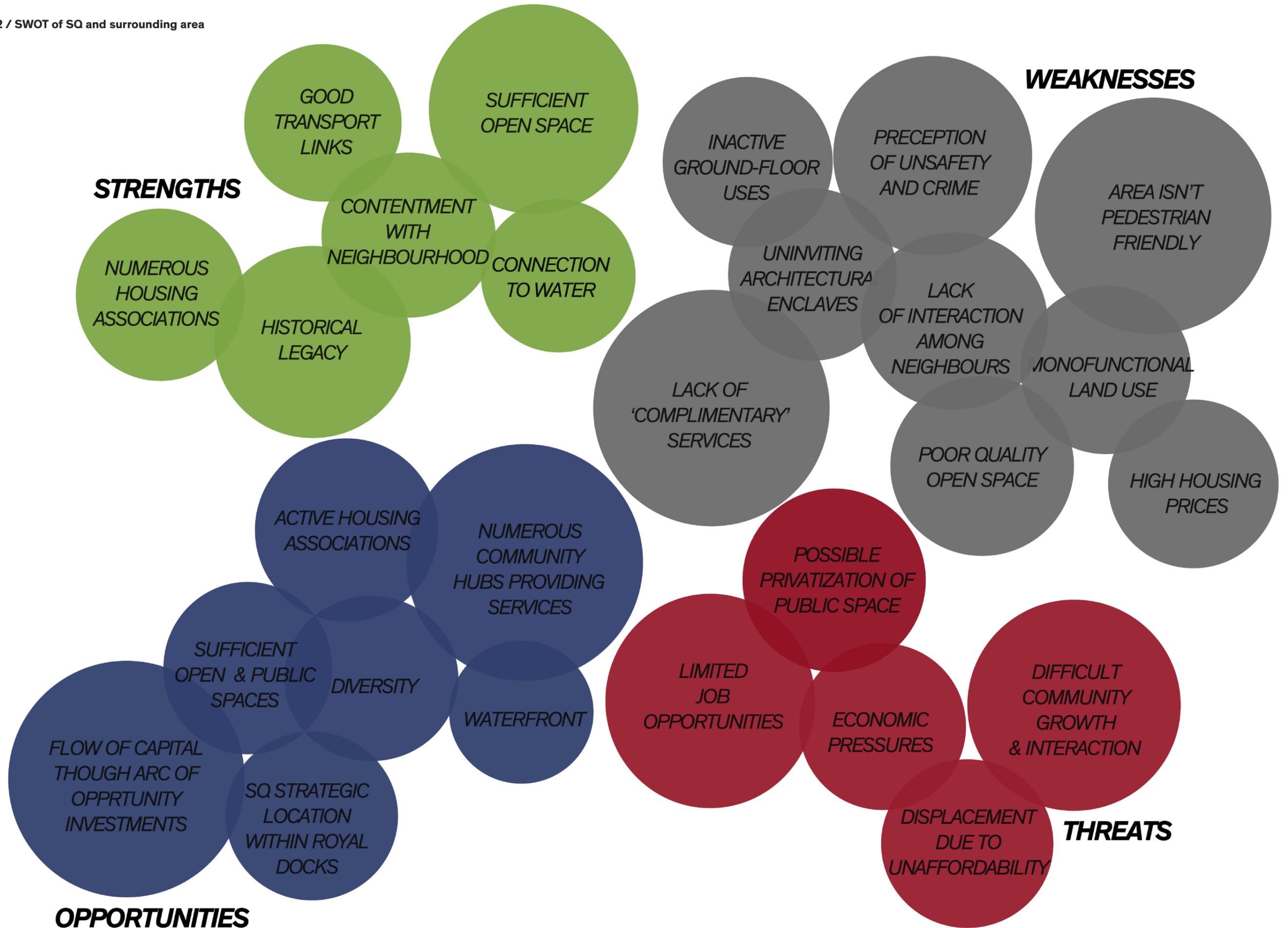
In general, the Royal Docks feels detached and fragmented. Physical barriers and poor pedestrian infrastructure dissuade residents and visitors alike from walking around the area. At the same time, the lack of benches deters congregation. Though the Royal Docks boasts an attractive waterfront, the pathways running around it could better be activated to encourage greater movement and circulation.

## Future Vision

At present, the future of the Royal Docks appears dependent on developers' imaginations. Developers impose a new vision for the city, one that is less concerned with tackling social issues but instead with making profit. The Silvertown Quays articulates a new vision for East London, where the area finds itself back on the international map but with severe implications for the existing residents. Developers don't plan to build on what is already exists in the Royal Docks, nor are they interested in creating something new and unique for the area. Instead, they want to copy cut and paste already established international trends, thereby doing what they consider to be "globalizing" or "modernizing" the Silvertown Quays. Their designs don't appear to be meant for the current population but instead, a new, young and professional one. Developers are focusing developments that will attract the outside, they are not looking at what already exists.

2

SWOT >>





4 / Notice board at the elementary school in Canning Town

## Vision

We envision the Royal Docks in general and the Silvertown Quays in particular, as a part of London that has potential to write its own history, one that transforms difference into diversity and socio-economic inequality into equity, addressed in all aspects of the lives of its residents.

The scale of our vision is focused on the locality of the space, foregrounding the invisible attributes and forces that galvanise the people of the Royal Docks. Through mutual understanding, our aim is to recognise the already existing local assets and to braid them into the discourse of the development while bridging the gap between the fragmented present and the gentrifying imaginaries of the future.

Ultimately, our goal is to blur the edges of the Silvertown Quays Development, currently described as an exclusionary enclave, by addressing the marginality it indirectly delineates, through the use of design interventions aimed at recalibrating the current narratives about the future of The Royal Docks.

# Principles & Guidelines

## I. Making visible the invisible

The scale of our vision is directed at the locality of the space, focussing on the invisible attributes and forces that galvanise the people of the RD. We aim to cultivate and encourage the emergence of alternative narratives about the RD, ones that are grounded in the present lives and practices of the locals. As T. Bender asserts, we believe urban imaginaries do not arise arbitrarily nor are they independent of history and experience, but are built upon the habitual use of the city (2010: 325). Understood in P. Bourdieu's sense, habitus is a generative system of classifications (Bourdieu, 1979: 170) that helps us to better understand the dynamics of the city. Therefore, through our brief we demand a more inclusive representation of the RD, one that also articulates the already existing habitats and narratives.

### A

Mapping the assets of the area around Silvertown Quays with the intention of making locals and other stakeholders aware of one another

### B

Cultivating alternative narratives with the aim of braiding them into the development's discourse: Humans of The Royal Docks.

### C

Focusing on visual communication and social media tools that make it easy for different people to engage and create new messages

## II. Blurring the edges

Currently described as an exclusionary enclave in official documents, SQD addresses exclusively the 'visionary edge' (TSP, 2014). However, next door to this development lies a different kind of edge, one that is marginal to the community imagined by the developer and one that is leader only to income deprivation and lack of resources. Our goal is to blur the edges of the SQD by addressing the marginality it indirectly delineates through design interventions that readjust the current narratives about the future of the RD. We address the need to tailor specific economic strategies according to the local realities. Moreover, we are aware of the many resources available in the area. We want to make these visible and more accessible to the people they are intended for.

### D

Economic Redistribution through long-term investment in the local skills

### E

Tailoring opportunities to the diverse local socio-economic dynamic

### F

Circulation of information beneficial to the rest of the communities living in the RD (grants, skill centres, etc.) and the enablement of collaboration between neighbourhoods

### G

Partnerships with the main stakeholders in the area (University of East London, Excel Centre, etc.) aimed at kindling stronger relationships with locals

## A Catalogue of Interventions

We propose a catalogue of interventions that highlight possibilities and contest existing practices. Inspired by existing people, places and initiatives in the RD, we encourage the growth of new and diverse imaginaries about the present and future of the area. Operating at the edge of dominant development discourse and its commodified spaces, we aim to create and expand physical, social and virtual space, where alternative narratives are articulated and shared to allow marginalized voices to be heard, seen and taken into consideration. Designed for encounter and exchange, our interventions will increase the co-production of knowledge amongst different groups working, living and developing in the RD.

## Narratives, Connections & Resources

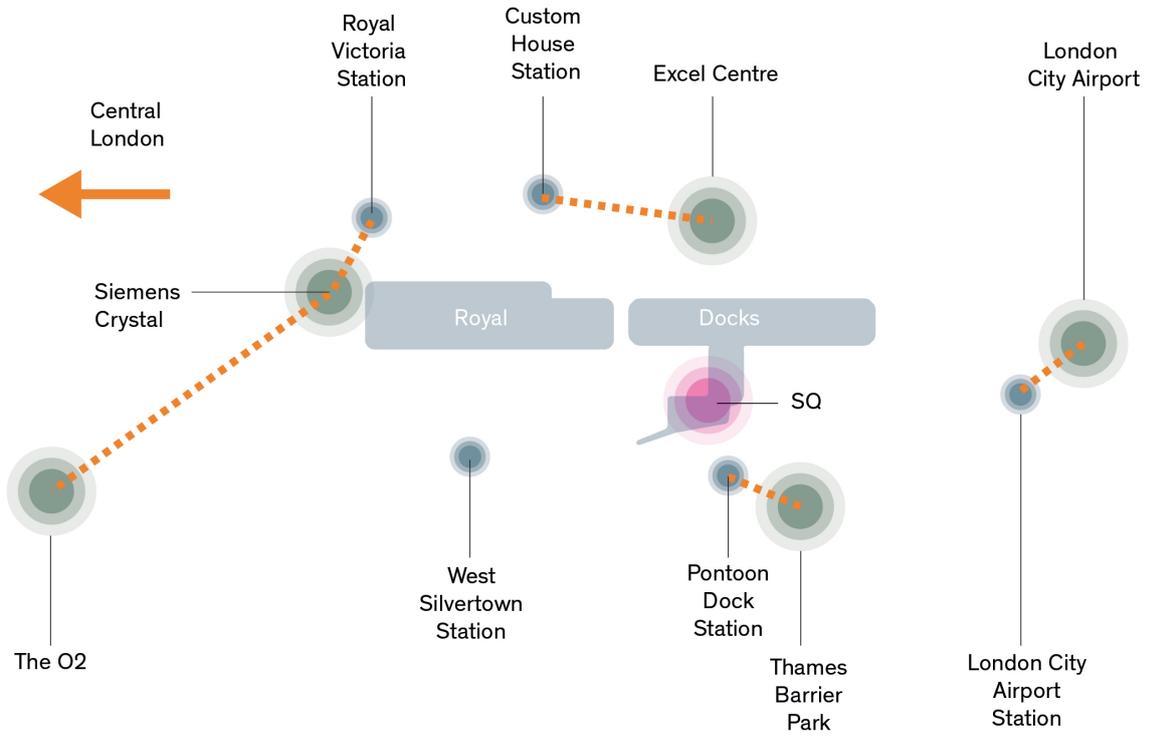
The compilation of critical interventions operates across multiple scales, and involves multiple stakeholders and timeframes. It can be considered a three-pronged strategy aimed at *cultivating narratives*, *connecting enclaves* and *channelling resources*. In the first place, personal and collective narratives about the RD will increase awareness of local assets and create a collective identity rooted in the diversity of the area. These narratives will be made visible through a variety of media, both in virtual and physical space, to amplify the voices of the local communities throughout the intensive period of redevelopment in the RD. The physical traces of these narratives can become part of the spatial identity of the Docks, while online platforms have the potential to connect people inside and outside of the RD. In second place, the *connecting enclaves* will break open “cracks in the spatial field” (Stevens and Dovey, 2004) for gatherings and communication. Through these cracks we hope to highlight spatial and cultural connections within isolated enclaves of people and places. Finally, in third place, the channelling of resources towards local groups and initiatives, is crucial to ensure that RD residents and businesses benefit from the redevelopment. This will be done by making visible and accessible the existing grant scheme of the RDT, while simultaneously negotiating TSP’s CSR for increased funding and

allocated spaces for local cultural and economic activities. Furthermore, existing initiatives for language and job training will be expanded upon and improved through collaboration with community hubs and with UoEL. Our multitude of interventions can be seen as seedlings we have thrown into the rich soil of the RD. Each seedling has the potential to grow, flourish and intertwine with others depending on how it is cared for and nourished.



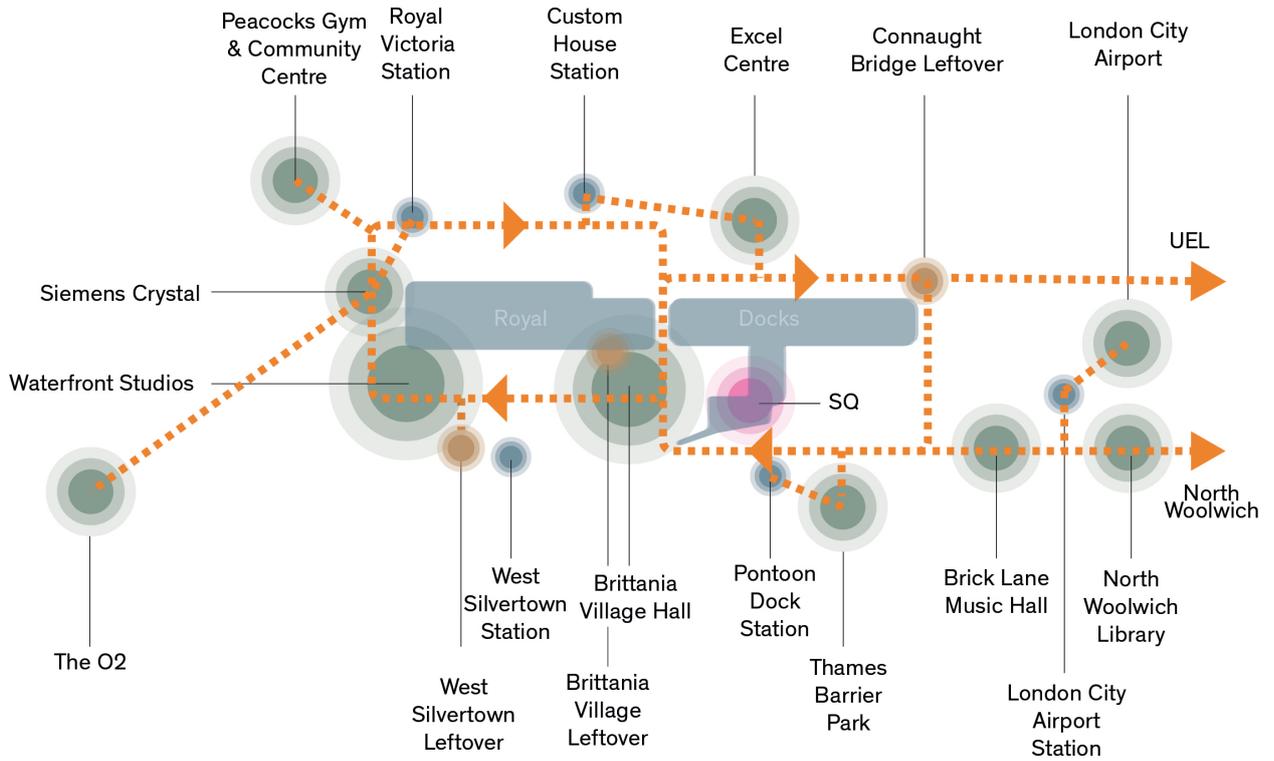
## Continuously in Transformation

Understanding urban transformation to be continuous, and considering the city to be an aleatoric project (Manolopoulou, 2013), our design strategy does not exclusively focus on the completion of SQ in 2018. For the “delivery of a vibrant and diverse community” (TSP, 2014), we consider the fragmented present as important as the utopian visions of the future. Our strategy begins with feasible interventions that can be implemented today and develop into more structural and long-term changes for the people of the Royal Docks.



**5 / Current hubs and flows of people**

4



**6 / Envisioned network of hubs and flows**

# Catalogue of interventions



## Cultivating Narratives

To collect, and stimulate the creation of, individual & collective narratives about RD, in order to amplify and render visible marginalized voices of the local communities



## Connecting Enclaves

To connect social and spatial enclaves within the RD, blurring their boundaries, through events and exchanges as well as spatial interventions for increase the appeal for pedestrians



## Channeling Resources

To make visible and expand existing resources such as grants and training, to make them more accessible to local people and groups



**Face Map** / An online geographical map composed of portraits giving insight into everyday life of the 'Humans of Royal Docks'



**'Silvertown Works'** / Campaign to promote existing small businesses in the Silvertown through advertising boards doubling as outdoor furniture



**Foursquare** / Create check-in points for existing small businesses in Silvertown as a part of 'Silvertown Works' campaign

**Online Presence & Portal** / Establishing online presence of neighborhood through social media & creating a portal linking to all Royal Docks community websites, activities & initiatives



**Projecting Stories** / Projecting personal stories from Newham website onto wall & street surfaces, with QR code to prompt people to upload their own story



**Multilingual Spatial Links** / Stencilling QR codes with multilingual tags in the area, stimulating people from diverse backgrounds to engage both online and offline with RD

**Words bridging Worlds** / Using spoken word art to counter acts of vandalism and create positive narratives by connecting community centres and engaged poetry groups



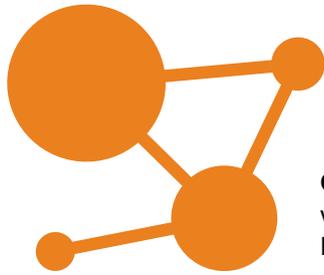
**Royal Docks Exploration** / Expand BVH's community walks to include regular walks around the RD exploring the past, present and future of the people & buildings populating the area

**Heritage Highlights** / Make visible and emphasize the historical landmarks of the Docks through physical explanation signs, spotlights and QR codes

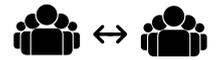


**More Murals** / Encourage local community hubs to engage people in making more murals that make visible their personal stories and diverse neighborhood identities





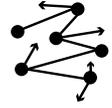
**Knowledge exchange** / Through exchange visits between community hubs, activities & training programs can be expanded



**Community Garden** / Expand the Crystal garden initiative in collaboration with BHV and other community hubs, thus greening the 'grey' urban spaces of RD while strengthening neighborhood relations through collective gardening



**Wayfinding for Walkability** / Imaginatively draw walking routes on the sidewalks, including the distance to various destinations, to encourage people to walk and discover the RD



**Summer in Silvertown** / Tap into 'Water City' proposal for East London to fund waterside festivals & activities, encouraging all citizens of Newham to enjoy the water as an urban common

**Streetfood Trucks** / A quick & flexible response to residents' desire for more restaurants, but also an opportunity to make visible the high diversity of ethnicities in RD through various cuisines



**Illuminated Paths** / Provide playful lighting that illuminates pedestrian routes, perhaps connect it with 'Wayfinding for Walkability' & 'Projecting Stories'

**'Paint a Zebra'** / Demand-driven development of pedestrian crossings & bike lanes, i.e. through an online game where people can (re-)draw the roads & crossings of the RD



**Streets for Diversity** / Incorporate familiar visual and spatial symbolism from migrant populations in the RD into the design of the streetscape and public realm



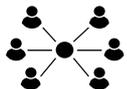
**Positive signage** / Transmit positive messages through public signage, such as reminding people of the rights they have in a certain place or suggesting fun activities



**Royal Docks Dough** / Draw money from The Silvertown Partnerships CSR to increase funds of the Royal Docks Trust



**Training for Opportunities** / Draw money from The Silvertown Partnerships CSR to increase funds of the Royal Docks Trust



**Access Grants** / Mobilize and connect community members around applying for and using Newham community event grants

**Scholarship Scheme** / A comprehensive scholarship scheme, in collaboration with UoEL, for Newham youth to be educated in the high-tech job sector envisioned for the Arch of Opportunity

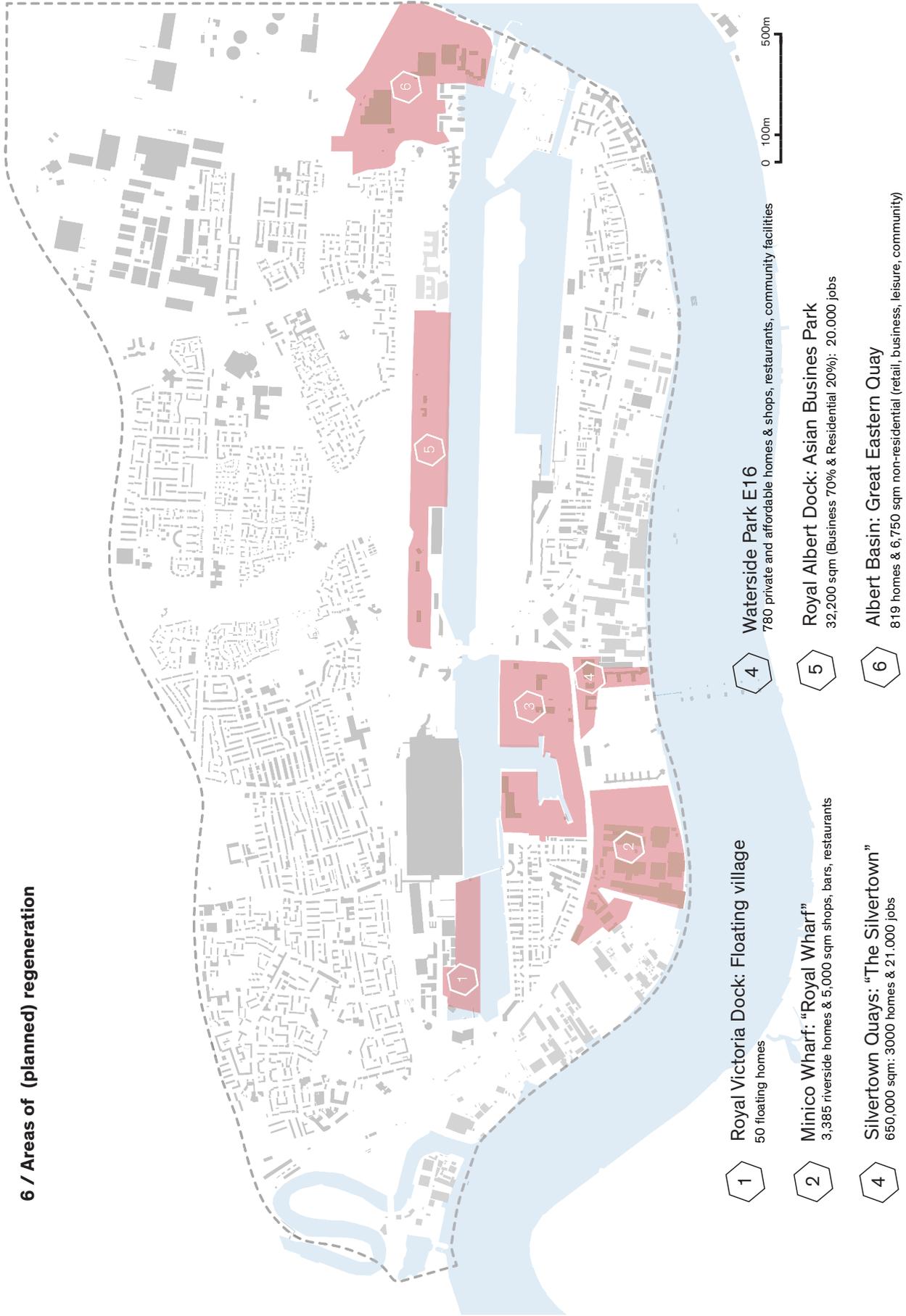


**Flexible Funding** / Make grant funding mechanisms more visible, more flexible and more attractive, to encourage Royal Docks residents to apply for funding more frequently

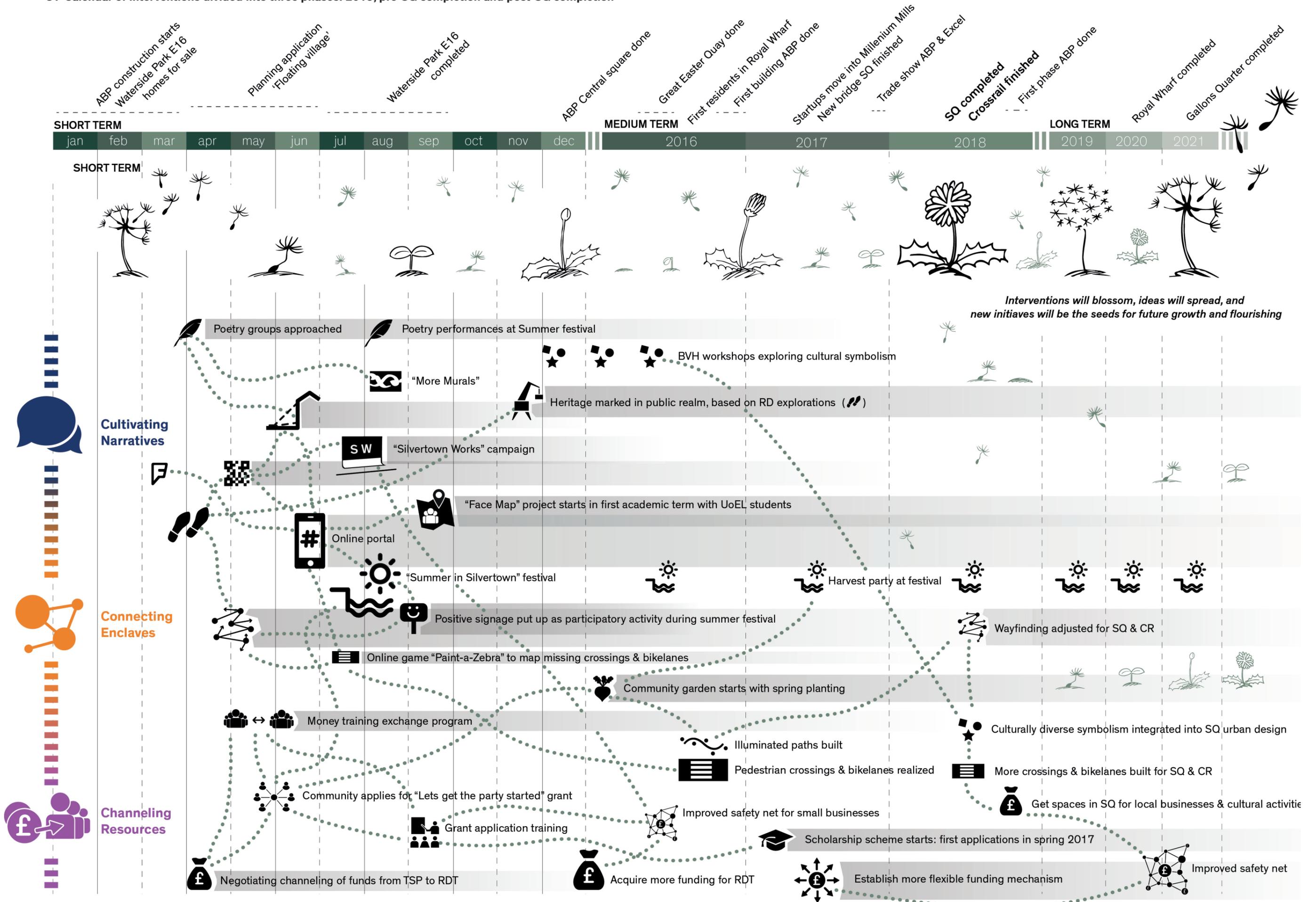
**Financial Safety Net** / Constructing a safety net for threatened small local businesses through funds from Royal Dock Trust, advertising from 'Silvertown Works' and work/retail space from TSP



## 6 / Areas of (planned) regeneration



8 / Calendar of interventions divided into three phases: 2015, pre-SQ completion and post-SQ completion



**9 / Hubs of situated potentiality with opportunity for intervention**

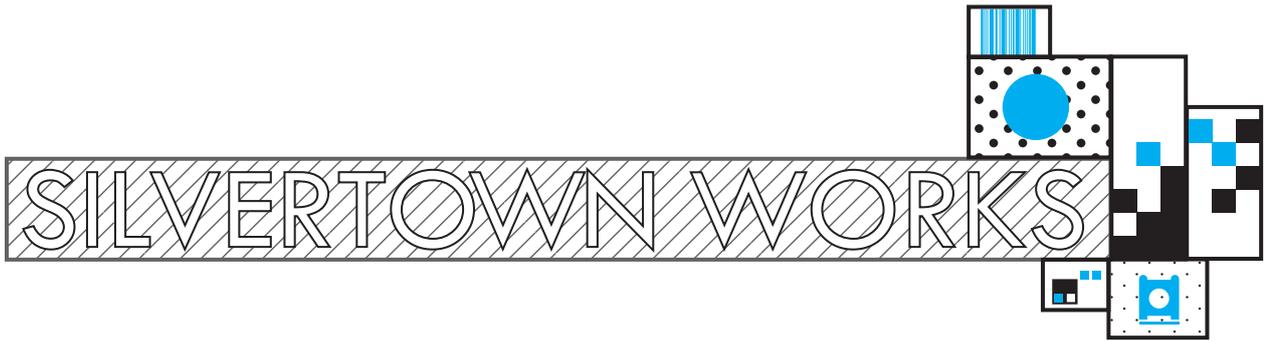


**RD regeneration & intervention sites**

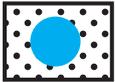


Economic

# Silvertown Works



## 10 / Proposed branding for local businesses in Silvertown



### Local Services

Includes services that support the local community including care, support and religious services.



### Retail

Includes services that support the community through a retail provision such as cafés, restaurants and other direct to customer retail services.



### Office and enterprise

Encompasses general office space which may include established businesses and office based start-ups. It also includes low impact production services including graphic services and media production.



### Service & logistics

Vehicle service and maintenance, storage, distribution



### Light industry

Manufacture of consumer goods such as clothes and other products



### Heavy industry

E.g. chemical, steel and cement production



11 / An example inspired by an IBM campaign showing how advertising can become a spatial element

## Local businesses and regeneration

The GLA backed strategic release of industrial land to meet London's urgent housing needs is particularly affecting Newham. Manufacturing and industrial jobs are predicted to continue declining. This has been taken to signal that land will be used inefficiently as more buildings and tracts of land become vacant (GLA Intelligence, 2013). The GLA has set a 48ha benchmark of industrial land to be released per annum, however, between 2006 and 2010, 86.75ha were released.

The quantitative methods used to analyse industrial land have been questioned by Ferm and Jones (2014) who recognize that this approach allows for speculation driven developments. In light of the GLA's figures, developers propose higher value residential developments in place of declining industry and manufacturing. Ferm and Jones support a shift to more qualitative methods of researching industrial land in London, such as Hall's approach in her South London streets analysis. These methods demonstrate the nuances in industrial land and highlight otherwise hidden networks between industry and the wider community.

The GLA designated Thameside West encompasses 47.7ha of industrial/employment land. Conversion of industrial land to mixed use/residential is already occurring at Minoco Wharf (Royal Wharf). A GLA consultation began in 2010 to help consolidate four safeguarded wharves in Thameside West, supporting changes in land use and the relocation of industry away from transport nodes, where mixed use/residential developments would ideally be located.

Businesses and services that aren't industrial risk being adversely affected by the proposed land use changes. As shown in our urban analysis, uses in Thameside West range from chemical coating to a care home. Easycare is a care home that acts as a hub for disabled children and adults in southern Newham. The business provides an essential service for the community and occupies a flexible space in the Waterside Business Centre. The centre's current location, with large vehicle movement, noise and dust from neighbouring industry, isn't suitable for the service it provides. David Macknight, the centre's owner, expressed a wish to stay in the area but felt it would prove difficult as suitable premises were scarce and new developments hadn't considered existing services. David felt that better 'visibility and awareness' of services like his within the community would help to establish a network and bring essential community services into the centre of new proposals.

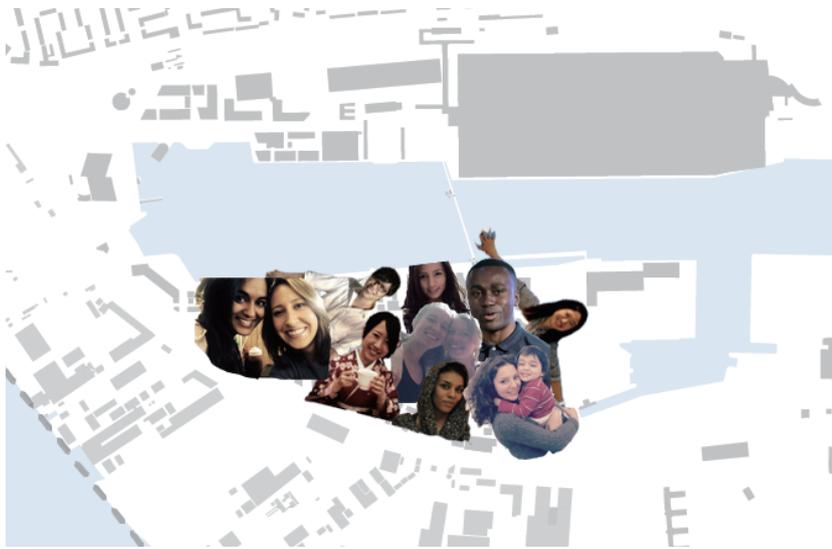
Silvertown Works provides a means to change the perception of industrial use land in the area. Through graphic means, the uses, instead of the land designations, are brought to the fore. The overarching aim is to make visible the existing uses, and enable discussion between the wider resident and business community of particular uses in the local area, thereby supporting the inclusion of these identified uses in future developments.

In this way the discussion can move beyond a reductive discussion around industrial vs residential. A richer discussion can focus on valued uses and efforts can be put towards their protection.



Social

# Face Map



## 12 / Face Map makes visible the diversity of RD

The RD is perceived as a fragmented area, consisting of different ethnicities, disconnected neighbourhoods, and different life styles. These perceived differences create invisible borders throughout the area.

The proposed intervention aims to blur borders by upgrading 'difference' to 'diversity'. The area is full of interesting people who impact their neighbours and co-workers lives indirectly but profoundly. Facebook enables us to highlight individuals' faces and their personal stories, which will help create feelings of recognition and familiarity and dispel distrust and notions of negative difference. By visualising the differences in an affirmative way, the map will help people to incorporate some of the positive effects of rapid globalization into their own narratives. Furthermore, through this rich map of cultures, we hope to attract favourable perceptions from outsiders, enabling residents to acquire a strengthened identity in the borough.

# Stories of the street



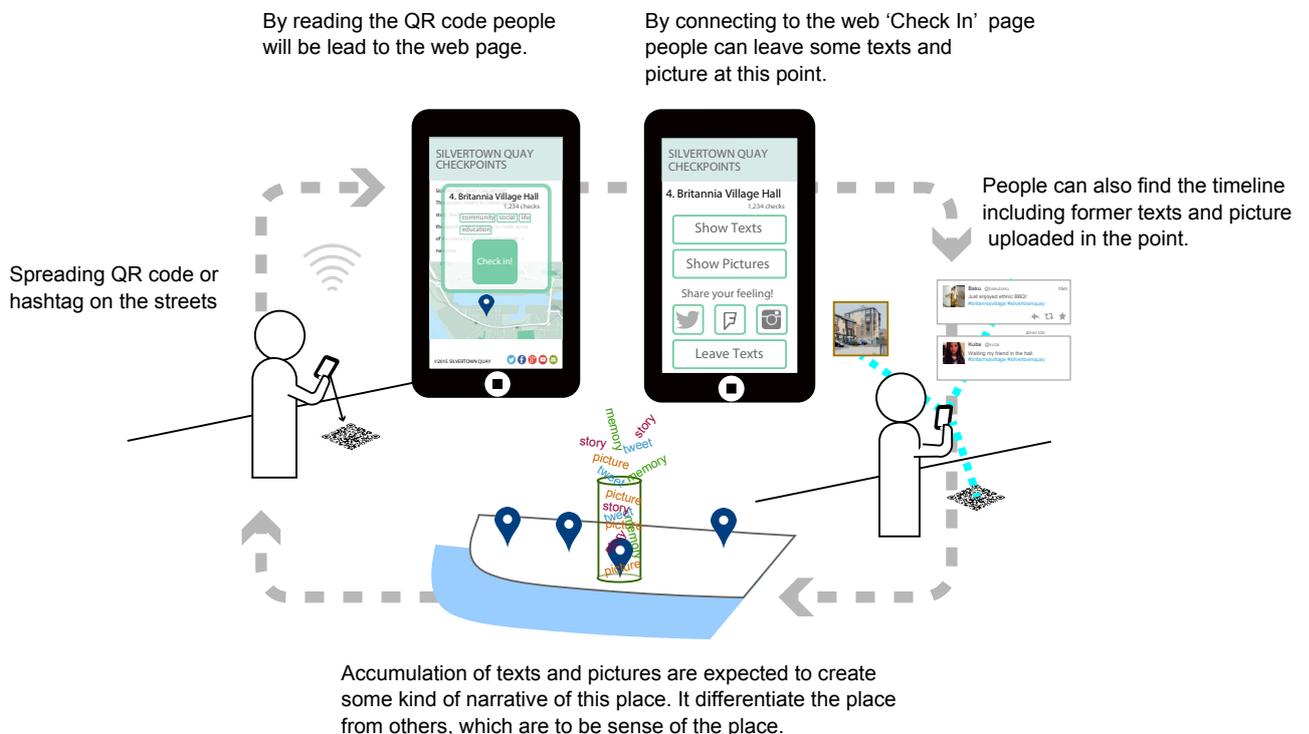
## Spatial

The RD appear mono-functional and devoid of social and cultural activities due to the homogeneous characteristics of its landscape. The area is filled with similarly shaped and similarly coloured buildings. Considering the residential nature of the space however, the area should actually be filled with stories.

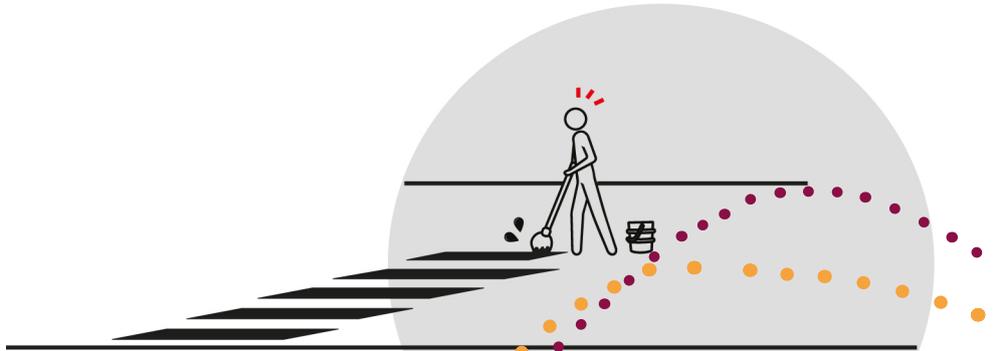
The purpose of this intervention is to enable residents to become aware of the rich textures of life in the RD through learning about their neighbours' stories via several SNS. The target group is young professionals. Young professionals tend to live in the area, but work and spend most of their free time in the city centre. They have few opportunities to meet other residents and for this reason, they tend not to know their neighbours. By 'reading' the texture of another life we hope

to encourage active imagination of spaces, which can enable a greater sense of attachment to the area.

The intervention is simple and feasible. We see great potential in the streets of the RD due to the area's homogeneous appearance. The target group traverses the streets, often looking down at the ground. Here, we will introduce check-in point, #, QR codes with graffiti art-style fonts, achieving a continuity with the area. When they walk over the tokens, residents and passers-by can scan the codes and connect to online resources through their smartphones, keeping track of these over time.



**13 / QR codes embedded the streetscape accumulate stories particular places over time**



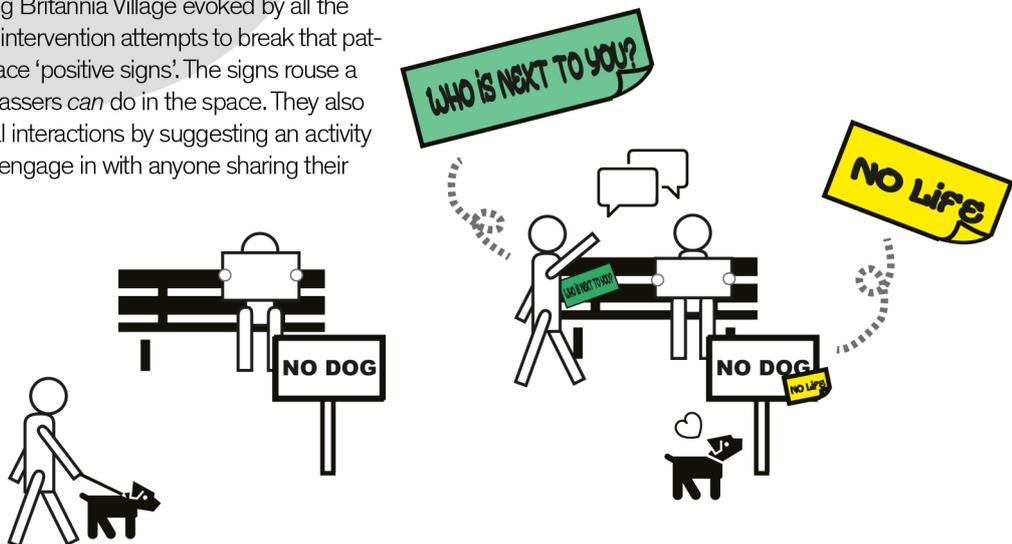
### PAINT A ZEBRA

Our goal to increase the areas walkability also manifests in increasing zebra crossing and bike lanes. Drawing on the 'It's a Newham Thing' mapping activities, the intervention compiles data on people's daily routes within the Royal Docks area to give visibility to local patterns of mobility and feed into the development infrastructure plans, ultimately situating the local hubs of interest within the broader vision.



### POSITIVE SIGNAGE

Responding to the psychological restrictions on the flow of people walking along Britannia Village evoked by all the 'do not...' signs, this intervention attempts to break that pattern by putting in place 'positive signs'. The signs rouse a realization of what passers *can* do in the space. They also provoke some social interactions by suggesting an activity that the reader can engage in with anyone sharing their space.

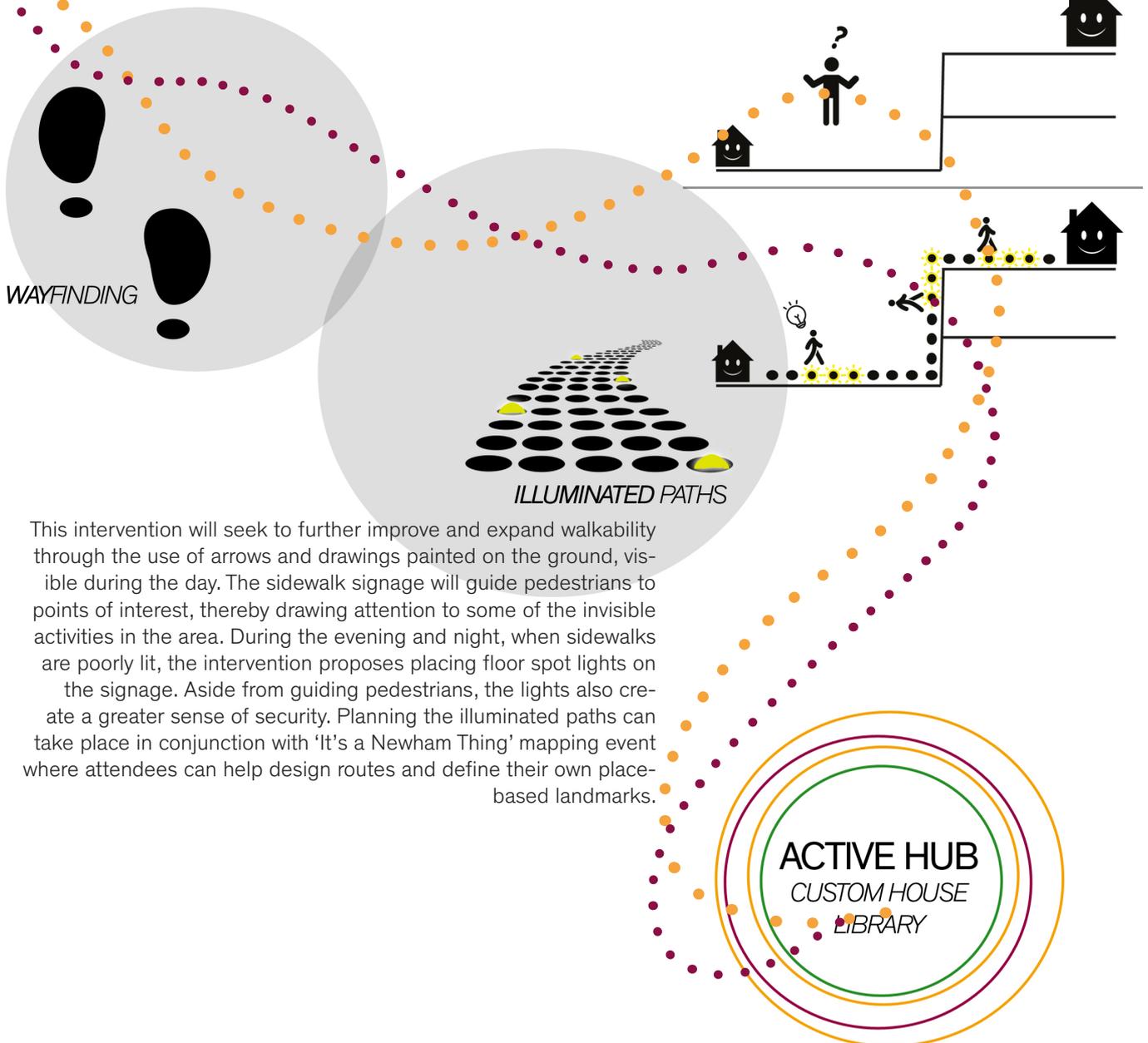


# Connecting places



Spatial

15 / Playfully engaging residents with the spatial experience of their neighborhood to blur boundaries of enclaves and produce inputs for the redevelopment plans



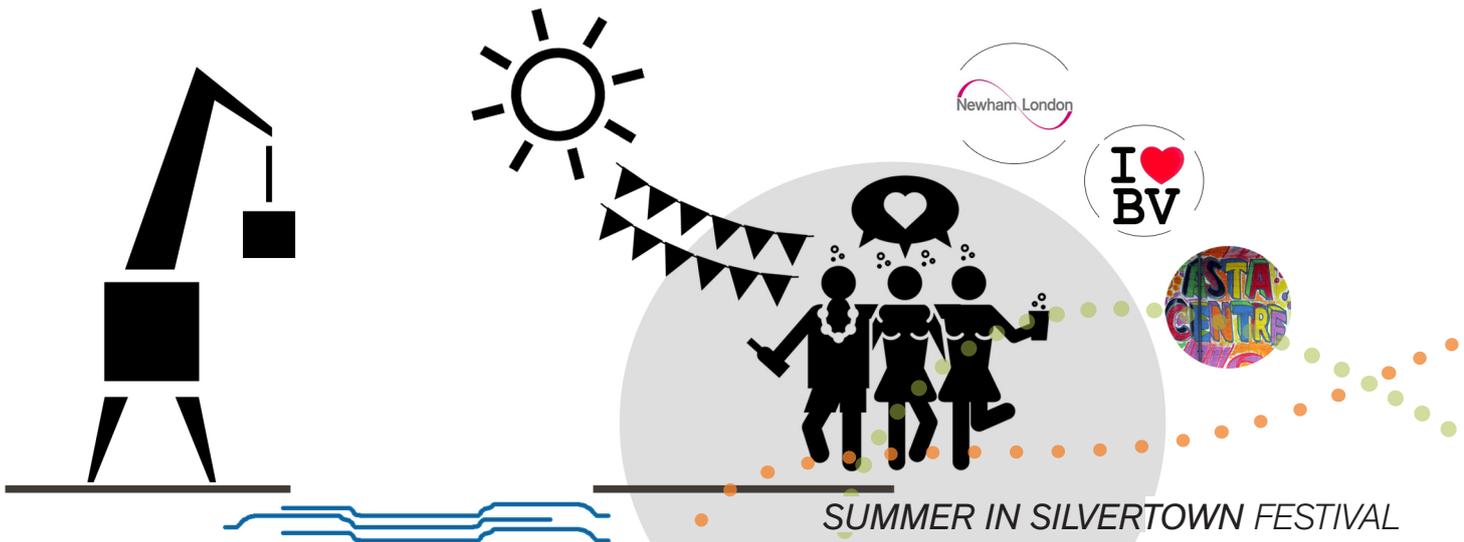
This intervention will seek to further improve and expand walkability through the use of arrows and drawings painted on the ground, visible during the day. The sidewalk signage will guide pedestrians to points of interest, thereby drawing attention to some of the invisible activities in the area. During the evening and night, when sidewalks are poorly lit, the intervention proposes placing floor spot lights on the signage. Aside from guiding pedestrians, the lights also create a greater sense of security. Planning the illuminated paths can take place in conjunction with 'It's a Newham Thing' mapping event where attendees can help design routes and define their own place-based landmarks.

15 / By linkin up these programs and events aimed at connecting people around the RD, sustainable partnerships between active community hubs are created



Social

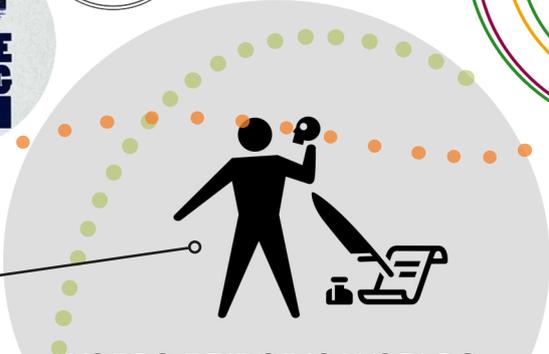
## Connecting People



### SUMMER IN SILVERTOWN FESTIVAL

Summer is when the area comes to life. Utilizing Newham's 'Let's Get the Party Started' fund, this intervention seeks to mobilize local communities in organizing a Royal Docks Summer Festival, facilitating collaboration among otherwise disconnected community hubs, activate underused spaces and more significantly showcase the accumulated narratives of RD constructing a place-based identity.





**WORDS BRIDGING WORLDS**

In light of the reported acts of vandalism, this intervention connects the creative writing workshops in local libraries and Newham's Writers Workshop to the Art Against Knives and Chill Pill groups who use Spoken Word art to promote religious and racial harmony, equality and diversity young people in socially or economically deprived communities and communities facing social or economic change. The workshops cultivate narratives that are celebrated and shared at the end in a reading event



**THE Crystal**  
A Sustainable Cities Initiative  
by Siemens

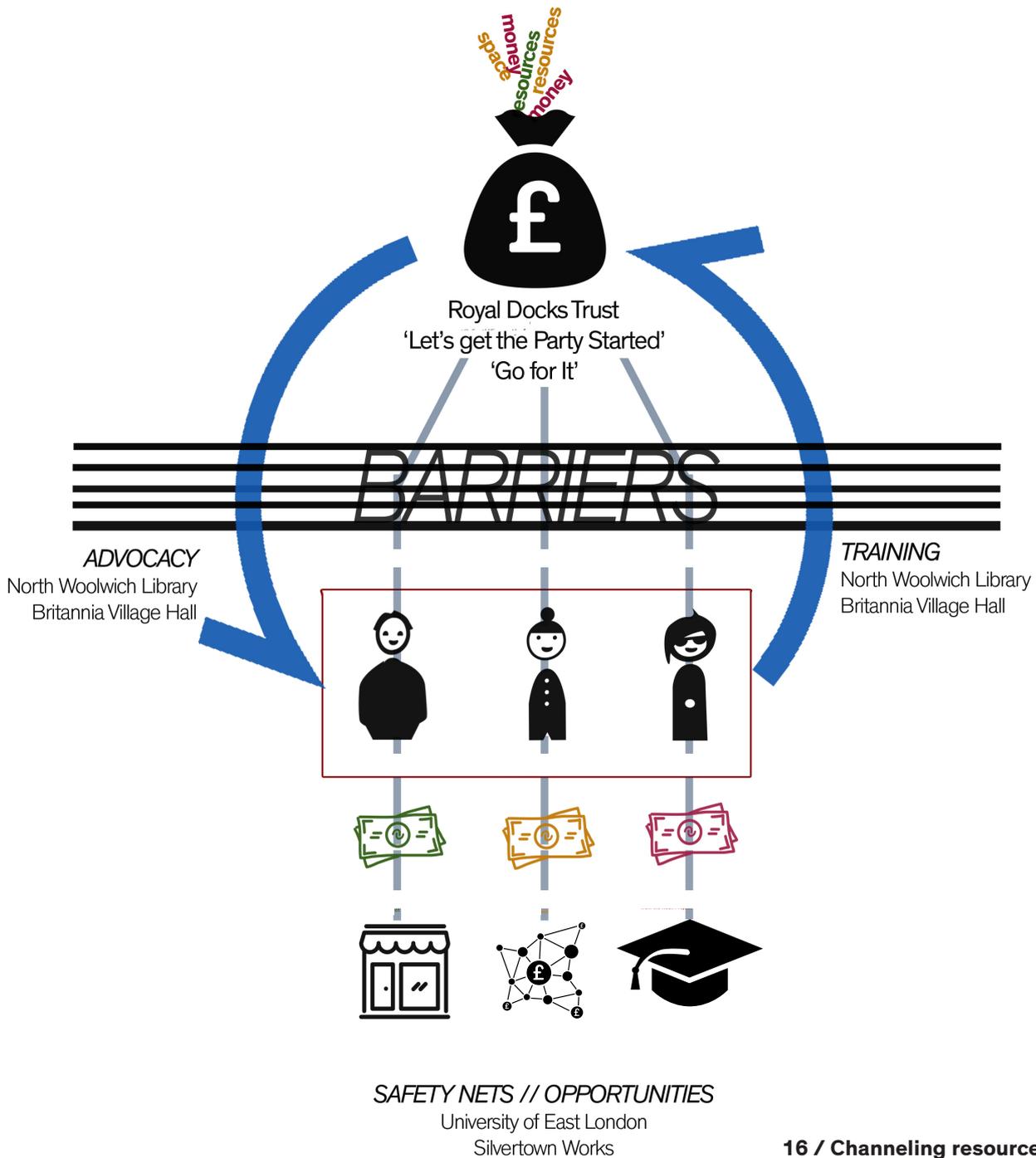


**COMMUNITY GARDEN**

Drawing on the currently on-going gardening workshop sponsored by The Crystal on its premises and publicized through Britannia Village Hall, this intervention seeks to expand this initiative to create small guerrilla gardening activities at the leftover spaces bridging the gap inbetween enclaves.



FUNDING  
DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



16 / Channeling resources

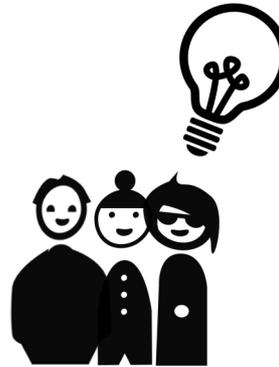
In the Royal Docks Parameters for Development (2011) the local borough and the Greater London Authority explain the potential benefits that the proposed developments could bring to local people and businesses as “increased job and business opportunities, improved skills and reduced local unemployment.” It limits these opportunities however, to the labour sectors of ‘construction’ and ‘service’ and the vague third category of “supporting the growth

of the green energy/ low carbon sector”, without expanding on mechanisms that would assure realizing these timid promises. We believe designing concrete mechanisms to ensure equity is crucial in the context of the rapid development of RD. Through our analysis we came to the realization that the socio-economic infrastructure necessary already exists. Figure 16 explains the framework we propose to unlock the latent potentials and resources.



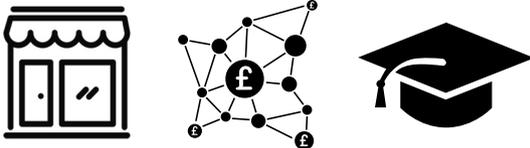
## Funding

At present, Newham residents have access to funds through the Royal Docks Trust. Among other things, the Trust provides funding of up to £1500 for: education and vocational training, general improvements to the physical and social environments and relief of poverty (Royal Docks Trust, 2014). Newham also provides two kinds of grants, namely: the 'Let's Get the Party Started' which provides support for events, and the 'Go For It Grants' for longer term projects or activities (Newham Council, 2014). We propose that the London government play an active role in channelling resources from development projects and their CSRs to contribute to those already active funds, using their model of work to tailor case-specific grant schemes (see opportunities/safety nets).



## Training & Advocacy

These grant schemes can act as a catalyst for community engagement and a motive for business innovation among RD residents. However, even when they are made available, barriers such as ignorance of their existence and difficulty with the application process due to language, still limit locals' ability to access them. Several community centres provide financial and grant application training and can play a vital role in mediating the gap between the residents and the grants. Our intervention here, is to create exchange programmes between these centres increasing their visibility and coordinating their different programmes.



## Opportunities & Safety nets

In the case of SQD, we have constructed two types of possible grant schemes:

**Silvertown Works:** Some of the funding could support small entrepreneurship and developing small businesses. Our research uncovered the presence of a group of businesses in the Silvertown area who arranged regular meetings in order to build a stronger business community and work towards establishing mutual aims.

**Scholarship Scheme:** The residents of RD, and Newham at large, currently don't possess the high tech skills needed for work in the Silvertown Quays projected technology hub. Recognizing education and training as hurdles in the area, we propose a scholarship programme to enable residents to become more competitive and eligible for the new high skilled jobs, possibly in collaboration with University of East London.



## Conclusion

During our research in the RD we discovered a wide range of community organisations and movements that work with and for the local community. These efforts were left out of the official discourse about the future prosperity of Newham, rendering them invisible.

We found many existing resources that were inaccessible due to the socially and spatially fragmented character of the area. In response, we articulate a strategy through our interventions that addresses these weaknesses and highlights existing opportunities and resources, so that locals will connect and make use of these assets. Once ties are created, we argue that a stronger sense of community and identity will emerge, making the local narratives and voices stronger.

Our interventions aim to blur the edges of the SQD, currently described as an exclusionary enclave. Our design proposals strive to reimagine the current narratives about the future of the RD and to address the marginality STD indirectly delineates.

We understand the limitations of this vision as local networks need to first achieve recognition by political and economic powers. Yet, our hope is that by planting the seeds for change, a better city will emerge.

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## Images

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